



Close to the centre of Catalonia, a little over a hundred kilometres from Barcelona, Solsona is a small town full of history, traditions and artisan culture.

Whoever steps on its streets is seduced by its peace, its solemn buildings where we can find carved wooden heads on the beams adorning the houses, the torches with which the streets were lit in the past, and the pleasures of a **gastronomy tied to the land**.

This entire surrounding area by is characterized by a natural environment, ranging from magnificent mountains in the north to gentle, rolling landscapes in the south...



You can visit the emblematic **Castellvell** (old castle), which is an essential part of the Solsona landscape, and gives visitors a panoramic view of the town and its surrounding area. Visit the **Romanesque crypt** and the modernist cemetery in Oliu, walk or cycle to the riverside park at **la Mare de la Font**, a natural area that has been designed for all the family or follow the signposted routes through the rural surroundings. You can download different routes at www.solsonaturisme.com.

Enjoy the experiences offered by local companies: kayaking, canyoning, skiing, golf, hiking, mountain biking, flying in a hot-air balloon, bathing in a saltwater swimming pool (as if you were in the Dead Sea) or horseback riding in untouched natural landscapes, discover the native fauna of the Pyrenees, guided tours, prehistoric routes, local cuisine and a wide range of possibilities invite you to discover our territory (SOLSONÈS).

You can download the catalogue at:



solsonaturisme.com



The Catalan town with the most giants per square meter

During the year there are two very different festivals: **Carnival**, at the end of winter, with continuous partying, and the solemn Festa Major (town festival), from the 7th to the 11th of September, with a rigorously regulated solemnity.

The **Carnival of Solsona**, declared a festival of national touristic interest, is not only one of the most popular Mardi Gras celebrations in Catalonia, but also surely one of the most irreverent. For a full week, the streets are invaded by the Giants, which dance and spin, and their long padded arms whack unwitting spectators in the face. The typical Carnival costumes are replaced here by colourful blouses.

Lovers of order and elegance will prefer the **Festa Major**, acknowledged as a festival of national interest. It is a ceremony that dates back to the 17th century, when the Mare de Déu del Claustre was proclaimed patron saint of the city. Following a strict protocol, some Giants that remind us of the figures of the baroque statuary come out to dance. The immemorial Drac (dragon), of enigmatic and threatening beauty, is the same one that danced more than three centuries ago.

- **Weekly market:** Fridays
 - **January:** Els tres tombs for Sant Antoni
 - **February:** Carnival
 - **March:** Potato and Truffle Fair
 - **Easter:** Caramelles
 - **May:** Sant Isidre Fair
- **June:** Corpus
 - **Summer:** AIMS Festival and concerts
 - **September:** Festa Major (town festival)
 - **October:** SolsoTerra Fair and Birra Fest
 - **December:** Tió Fair



Check out **guided tours** and let yourself be carried away:

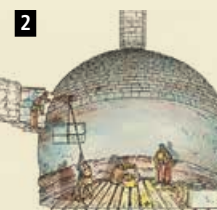
 entradessolsones.com





Tourist Office. The Solsonès Interpretation Centre and Reproduction of a knife-making workshop.

Ctra. de Bassella, 1
Tel. +34 973 48 23 10



Ice Well. A circular floor structure covered with a dome, which was used to store ice during the winter. The ice was then sold from spring to autumn. It was in use from the 17th to the 19th century.

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The Bridge Gateway. Remains of the original walls can be seen in various places, as well as the three towers in the Vall Calent area. The walled enclosure was accessed through open gates that were closed in the evening with wooden doors. Three of these doors are still preserved today. The Bridge Gateway, completed in 1805, became the main entrance to the city once a stone bridge with twelve arches was built towards the end of the 18th century and then destroyed in 1939. The old medieval gateway was situated further up, where its remains can be seen on the pavement.



Cathedral. From the early Romanesque church (1070-1163) still remain the three apses, the bell tower, the cloister, the cellar and the canon's dining hall. The current cathedral is an example of Gothic architecture, and it was built between the 13th and the 17th century. To the left of the transept there is a the Mercè chapel, with a baroque altarpiece. To the right there is a chapel dedicated to the **Virgin Claustre** (12th century) and which is catalogued as one of the most important Catalan Romanesque sculptures. The door leading out into the Church square is a neoclassical design (1780) with a relief of Saint Augustine in ecstasy. And in the Palace square there is a Baroque façade of the Assumption (1769).

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Church Fountain. One of the three Gothic fountains in the city dating from the 15th century.

Episcopal Palace. Commissioned by Bishop Lasala in the 18th century, its main façade, together with that of the Virreina Palace in Barcelona, is one of the most important examples of Catalan neo-classical design.

Museum. Located inside Episcopal Palace, it's one of the first museums founded in Catalonia. Highlights include the prehistoric and medieval art collections and a collection of salt sculptures, made with salt from the mines in Cardona.

Tel. 973 48 21 01



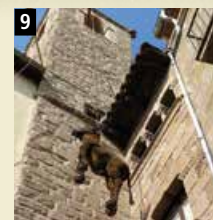
Museumised remains of the moat and the medieval wall in the private courtyard of the Episcopal Palace. It shows how the moat, which was full of water, was used to defend the fortified grounds in the 14th century. It is

four metres deep, dug into natural rock, which protected the population from possible enemy attacks.

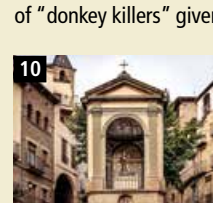


Main Square. The square with its porticos is where the most important celebrations are held, such as Corpus Christi, the Town Festival and Carnival, as well as the weekly market on Tuesdays and Fridays.

House no. 5 is **Ca l'Aguilar**, which was home to important merchants and noblemen, and where the mother of Gaspar de Portolà, discoverer of California, was born.



The Clock Tower. Back to before 1500, the tower had one bell that was rung in case of fire or war, and another one that was used to tell the time. The digitalisation of the clock and the installation of a new bell has allowed the Town Council to recover the civilian tolling of the bell to mark deaths, festivities and plenary sessions. In a small corner of this bell tower people hang the fake Carnival donkey, a tradition that reflects the nickname



of "donkey killers" given to the people from Solsona. **Saint Joan Square.** In the middle of the square there is a fountain dating back to the 15th century, which was previously called the Main Fountain. The chapel built above it is dedicated to Saint John (18th century). House no. 1 in the square is Cal Cabanes, an ancestral home belonging to one of the main families in Solsona.



The House of painter Francesc Ribalta (1565-1628) no. 18 in Castell Street. He was one of the first to introduce the Baroque realist style, which became very popular through the works of painters such as Velázquez and Zurbarán.



Morató House. House no. 19, has an unusual architecture for this city; it is the home of the Morató family, a line of sculptors dating back to the 18th century. Carles Morató

set up his workshop there, and created numerous altarpieces and sculptures all over Catalonia. The main altarpiece in the **Santuari del Miracle** is his best known piece of work, one of the most eminent works of Catalan Baroque art. The building was



restored to hold the new **library** and the medieval square next to it has become its entrance.



Town Hall. Made out of carved stone and dating back to the beginning of the 16th century its façade bears the city shield and also the family shield of merchant Puigdepons, who commissioned the building. One of the roads alongside the building is Sant Pau Street, the old Jewish quarter.



Lo Cal Boig. At no. 5 Les Llices Street we find the **Carnival Giants' house** and an area for the festival performances. This is a place where the youngest visitors can see Solsona's most famous

Giants up close, whilst older visitors can discover the origins and the main stars of the festival.

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The Castle Gateway. The first castle in Solsona was right next to this gateway. Lords solemnly entered the city for the first time through this gateway, but first they had to swear that they would uphold the town's privileges and customs.

This was the main entrance to the city until the end of the 18th century.



Washboards. Since ancient times there has been a moat next to the castle gateway, outside the walls, and women used it to wash their clothes. It was restored in 1779 and was restructured as a washing area. The current reconstruction dates back to 1994.



Vall Fred Tower. In 2009, remains of a 14th century semicircular tower were discovered during public works. It is possible to see the tower floor traced on the pavement. It is calculated that there were

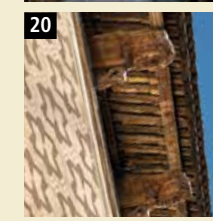
about a dozen similar buildings along the city wall.



Sant Isidre Square - Castle Fountain. This 15th century Gothic fountain used to supply water to the castle.



Llobera Gateway. This gateway dates back to the 14th century, and above it there is the Santa Anna Chapel, the patron saint of the Llobera family.



Llobera Street. This street is named after the Llobera family, and it is lined with merchant houses made from carved stone, and adorned with barbian style beam ends and ironwork balconies. In Sant Pere square there was an old hospital for the poor. This square includes the home of August Font, a local architect, and it displays modernist sgraffitos. Some of those beam ends can be seen.



Llobera Hospital. This Gothic building dating back to the first half of the 15th century. In her will and testament written in 1411, Francesca de Llobera, a merchant's daughter, left her legacy for the building of a hospital for the poor. Successively this building has been a hospital, a college for the Dominican monks, a literary university, a seminary and a school. It currently houses the regional country council office headquarters.



The Giants Room. Solsona is well known for its unique parade of Giants. The Giants and the other elements are a custom that originates in the medieval Corpus Christi processions. However, the

first references date back to the 17th century in the celebration of the Festa Major (town festival). In 37 Sant Llorenç Street we can find the room where most of the Giants have been stored since 1710. The room preserves all the comparsaria (different carnival groups) and explains the evolution of the celebration.

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Remains of a 14th century craftsman's house, at number 46B. Converted into a small hotel in 2006, where modern structures are lovingly combined with the old ones, respecting the stone walls, wooden ceilings and the medieval arches.



Remains of a 14th century craftsman's house, at number 45. Between 2005 and 2006, during an archaeological dig, the remains of four buildings destroyed during the Carlist wars were discovered. They were duly documented, and now the remains of a 14th century medieval cellar have been preserved.



Modernism. Solsona has various buildings from the Modernist era, which are worthy examples of this popular architectural style. The Hotel Sant Roc, built in 1929, is one of the most important modernist buildings in Solsona. The construction work was led by the architect Bernardí Martorell, who also constructed the Sant Esteve cemetery in Oliu.