
LA SELVA MARÍTIMA, FISHING HERITAGE ROUTE

Blanes, Lloret de Mar and Tossa de Mar, located on the southern Costa Brava, are home to some important tangible and intangible maritime heritage, such as chapels, fishermen's districts and monuments to seafarers' wives, and fishing retains a strong presence in all three towns today in the form of fish markets, local cuisine and special words passed down the generations.

BLANES

The port and the fish auction

Sa Palomera Rock in Blanes, where the Costa Brava begins, marks the entrance to the S'Auguer fishermen's district and to a town that boasts one of Catalonia's most important fish markets, where daily auctions are held.

1. Sa Palomera (41.670590, 2.791990)

Large rock where the Costa Brava begins - Blanes

On the western edge of Blanes Bay, at the end of the seafront promenade, the point that joins Blanes and S'Abanell beaches. In the town centre.

This 20-metre-high rock formation is the iconic symbol of Blanes. Together with the Sa Pujola and Es Portell islets, it forms the point where the town's two main beaches meet: Blanes Beach or Bay and S'Abanell Beach.

The vantage point of this rock formation offers visitors a panoramic view stretching from the town's seafront to the Tordera Delta, which empties into the sea two kilometres further south.

The rock itself contains the foundations of an ancient round stone structure, reddish in colour, which suggests that it may have had the function of a fire tower, serving to guide sailors. Sa Palomera may be named after the *paloma*, the rope used to drag boats out of the water. The rock still offers shelter to small artisanal fishing boats that

operate in this area.

2. S'Auguer (41.671360, 2.789181)

Old fishermen's district - Blanes

On the western edge of Blanes Bay

This fishermen's district is located on the southern edge of the town, at the foot of Padrets Hill, between Passeig de Marina and Carrer de s'Auguer. Its main streets are Sant Andreu de sa Palomera, S'Auguer, Sant Pere Pescador and Méndez Núñez. It was the first fishermen's district in Blanes. The so-called *Blanda* (Roman necropolis) was located here and it was also a site of shipbuilding activity.

3. Es Portal (41.674944, 2.790609)

Place where fish was traditionally sold. Today the activity takes place in Plaça dels Dies Feiners - Blanes

Plaça de la Verge Maria and Plaça del Dies Feiners. In the town centre. The two squares are very close to each other in the town centre.

The town's fish stalls, which since ancient times had been located under the arcades of Es Portal in Plaça Verge Maria, right in the town centre, were moved to Plaça dels Dies Feiners, even closer to the sea, when the municipal stalls were built at the end of the 1960s. Here they keep alive the tradition of the old open-air stalls, continuing to offer customers fresh fish from the Costa Brava. The stalls, which have their own boat, cater for today's commercial demands and are still owned by the municipal authorities.

Plaça de la Verge Maria, also known as Plaça del Peix (Fish Square), conserves the Es Portal mediaeval gate, along with the arcades named after the gate and the old counter from which fish was sold, dating from 1901.

4. Chapel of Mare de Déu de l'Esperança (41.675977, 2.795664)

Chapel devoted to Our Lady of Hope, protector of seafarers, built by the town's jurors - Blanes

C/ Nostra Sra. de l'Esperança, 67- C/ J. Roig i Raventós. In the town centre. Visit it on the Blanes "Chapels Route".

This gable-roofed chapel, with two *oeil-de-boeuf* (oval) windows on its façade, is located in the town centre, although the site is outside the old town walls and close to the natural port. The sgraffito work on the façade and the ex-votos in the form of miniature ships in the interior highlight the chapel's links with the town's maritime history. The original chapel complex, comprising the apse and sacristy, dates back to the 16th

century. The arcaded porch was added later on. Its present-day appearance is the result of restoration work carried out in 1920.

5. Blanes Port and Fish Market (41.674434, 2.800769)

The heart of the fresh fish market. The engine of the primary fishing sector of La Selva - Blanes

Esplanada del Port, s/n. On the eastern edge of Blanes Bay, at the end of seafront promenade. Visits to the fish market organised by the Blanes Fishermen's Guild.

The natural bay that forms Blanes Beach was established by the Romans as a small port and served for centuries as a port for fishing, for the transportation of people and goods, and, at certain times, for military purposes.

Thanks to its enviable geographical location, Blanes became a trading hub for many boats on Mediterranean routes: fishing boats were moored on the beach while larger boats were anchored a few metres from the coast. It was not until 1916 that the construction of the port proper began. Part of this port, of which the old fish market remains, was up and running in the 1930s. The port was extended years later, with the addition of the Sailing Club in the 1960s and the new fish market in 1994.

The most recent additions to the port, dating from 2011, comprise a fishing dock and a marina, created through the construction of a new dyke and breakwater, and through the extension of the outer harbour.

Head over to the fishing dock at dusk from Monday to Friday and you'll see all the fishing boats arriving back at the port loaded with fish that is immediately auctioned at the fish market, which is one of the largest in Catalonia in terms of sales volume. On days when the boats don't go out, you can see their fishing nets spread out on the esplanade of the dock, along with other fishing gear, which, although modern, is connected to the ancient fishing techniques of *Blandae*, the Roman Blanes.

6. Chapel of Sant Francesc (41.678033, 2.806061)

Chapel built in gratitude for a fishing concession – Blanes

C/ de l'Ermida, 10. Close to Bona Cove (or Cove of Sant Francesc), in the town of Blanes. Visit it on the Blanes "Chapels Route".

This chapel, with a rectangular nave and a façade crowned by a bell gable, dates from 1681, as indicated on the stone lintel of the doorway. It seems that its origins lie in the resolution of a conflict between the owners of the *almadraba* (tuna trap) fishing operation of Bona Cove and the community of the Convent of Sant Francesc. When



the conflict was resolved in favour of the owners of the *almadraba*, they took Saint Francis Xavier of the Society of Jesus as the patron saint of their activity.

7. Chapel of Mare de Déu del Vilar (41.714421, 2.777144)

Seafarers' chapel - Blanes

Santuari del Vilar, 106. 9 km from Blanes, on El Vilar Hill. Visit it on the Blanes "Chapels Route".

Although tradition has it that the statue of Our Lady of El Vilar was found on 5 August 1012, the earliest documentation on the chapel dates from the 14th century. Its present-day appearance (comprising the chapel, the attached house and the exterior courtyards) dates from 1951, when the chapel was reconstructed after being destroyed in the Spanish Civil War.

As in the case of the other chapels and sanctuaries associated with seafaring life and occupations, the chapel contains several ex-votos placed there in gratitude to the Virgin for her protection. One of the most important ex-votos is the one placed there by the Girona-born writer Joaquim Ruyra, in gratitude for the success of his short story *El rem de trenta-quatre (The Long Oar)*.

LLORET DE MAR

Open-air museum devoted to Lloret's relationship with the sea

Lloret de Mar's close relationship with the sea can be seen in the architecture of the *Indianos* (emigrants who returned home after making their fortune in the Americas), in the building where fishing nets were dyed and in the *Tirada a l'Art* celebration, a tribute to the hard life of local fishermen.

8. Chapel of Santa Cristina (41.687703, 2.816253)

Chapel built in gratitude for a fishing concession - Lloret de Mar

Santa Cristina Beach. 3.5 km from Lloret de Mar. Reached along the GI-682 road (Blanes - Lloret). Free admission, subject to opening hours.

The earliest mention of the Chapel of Santa Cristina dates back to 1354. It is dedicated to the town's patron saint, Saint Christina of Bolsena, protector of seafarers. When Lloret de Mar became wealthy thanks to overseas trading in the Americas in the 18th century,

it expressed its gratitude to Saint Christina by extending the chapel, which became a sanctuary with the markedly neoclassical appearance we see today. Noteworthy elements include the main altar and several ex-votos placed there in gratitude to the saint, along with a collection of miniature boats.

9. Dona Marinera (Seafarer's Wife) (41.695224, 2.844852)

Sculpture dedicated to the wives of fishermen and sailors – Lloret de Mar

Coastal footpath to Banyes Cove

Standing 2.4 metres tall, the Dona Marinera (Seafarer's Wife) by Ernest Maragall is also known as the "Venus of Lloret". This bronze sculpture, of a female figure who is waving to someone as she looks out to sea, is a tribute to the wives of fishermen and sailors.

It stands at one of Lloret de Mar's main vantage points, above the southern section of the town's Platja Gran (Main Beach), with views of this beach and of Banyes Cove. Legend has it that whoever makes a wish while looking out to the horizon and touching the statue's right foot will see their wish come true.

10. Maritime Museum (41.699584, 2.850767)

Museum of Lloret's maritime history – Lloret de Mar

Can Garriga. Passeig de Camprodon i Arrieta, 2. Admission subject to opening hours and applicable price

Can Garriga is a building dating from the end of the 19th century. Its construction was commissioned by Enric Garriga i Mataró, a native of Lloret who made his fortune in the Americas. This *Indiano* house is now home to the Maritime Museum. The museum is structured into five themed sections: "Sons of the Sea", "Mediterranean", "Gateway to the Ocean", "Lloret after Sailing Ships" and "Beyond the Beach".

The Maritime Museum also constitutes the gateway to discovering Lloret's maritime heritage, integrated in a route comprising various sites of interest, known as the Open Museum of Lloret – MOLL.

11. Es Tint (41.700803, 2.851984)

Old building where fishing nets were dyed – Lloret de Mar

Carreró de St. Miquel, 6 - Lloret de Mar

In order to improve the durability of nets, generally made of hemp, esparto and, later on, cotton, they were dyed in a liquid produced by boiling water with pine bark in a

cauldron. This practice, common throughout the Mediterranean region, declined with the emergence of nylon nets. The adoption of this artificial material signalled the end of the net dyeing industry and the dyeing facilities gradually closed down. All that remains of the industry on the Costa Brava are two facilities turned into visitor centres, one of which is located in Lloret de Mar.

12. Sa Caleta (41.699832, 2.859092)

Mooring zone for fishing boats on the beach - Lloret de Mar

Sa Caleta

This cove, overlooked by En Plaja Castle, is tucked away on the northern edge of Lloret de Mar Beach. It used to be a mooring zone for Lloret's fishing boats, managed by the Lloret Fishermen's Guild, and a few leisure fishing boats still moor there today. The winch, located within the cove is still operational and serves to pull boats onto the sand from the sea. At the back of the cove there are some small fishermen's huts that are used to store fishing gear.

13. Canyelles Cove Port (41.704129, 2.880757)

Non-urban beach with the only port in Lloret de Mar

Cala Canyelles – Lloret de Mar. Accessed from the road that leads to Tossa de Mar. In high season, visitors must leave their vehicles in one of the official parking zones.

Canyelles Cove is the furthest beach from Lloret de Mar town centre. It is located to the north of the town and is a coarse sand beach with the only port in Lloret de Mar. In fact, it comprises two small coves separated by a large rock known as the Roca del Mig (Middle Rock) or Carquinyoli Rock. Until the end of the 1940s, it was one of the places where the *tirada a l'art* fishing technique was practised, consisting of casting nets from small rowing boats positioned a few metres from the shore and then dragging them onto the beach by hand from the shore. Today it is home to what remains of Lloret de Mar's fishing fleet.

TOSSA DE MAR

Maritime cuisine

In this fishing town, protected in ancient times by its walls, gastronomy has become the common thread connecting the fishing tradition and today's maritime culture.

14. Tossa Lighthouse (41.715594, 2.934421)

Essential infrastructure for sailing and fishing – Tossa de Mar

Passeig de Vila Vella – town centre

Built in 1917 in the highest part of the Tossa headland, the 15-metre-tall Tossa de Mar lighthouse, still operational, is the youngest lighthouse on the Costa Brava. It was built in order to meet the need to guide fishing and transportation vessels between Palamós and Calella, on the Maresme Coast.

At night, its white light, with groups of three flashes followed by a single flash, still guides fishing boats today. During the day, the lighthouse is open to visitors and offers an obstacle-free view of the sea stretching out from the Tossa headland.

The lighthouse is now home to the “Tossa Lighthouse. A century of maritime signals on the Costa Brava” interpretation centre, which explains the history and technology of the lighthouse, helping visitors to understand how it has evolved in parallel with the transformation of its setting.

15. Es Racó (41.717884, 2.933383)

Mooring zone for fishing boats on the beach – Tossa de Mar

Beach area between the walkway of the Riera de Tossa (dry riverbed) and the old walls.

Es Racó is a coarse sand section of beach located at the southern edge of Tossa de Mar's Platja Gran (Main Beach), right next to the town's old walled enclosure, the Vila Vella (Old Town). Thanks to its location, sheltered from the wind, Es Racó is the best place to moor boats out of the water, and this is where the town's small gear fishing boats are kept.

16. Ses Peixateries (41.717747, 2.932236)

Place where fish was sold until the mid-1990s – Tossa de Mar

C/ Ses Peixateries – town centre

This part of the Tossa's Vila Nova (New Town - outside the old town walls) has always been known as “Ses Peixateries” (“The Fish Stalls”), since this is the place where fish was auctioned and sold until 1994. This space, covered by a porch, conserves the old counter from which fish was sold, along with the sculpture of a fishwife, by Ció Abellí, created in tribute to and in remembrance of the fishwives who worked here.

17. Chapel of Mare de Déu dels Socors (41.718513, 2.931971)

Seafarers' chapel in the town centre – Tossa de Mar

C/ de la Mare de Déu dels Socors – town centre

It is said that the construction of this 16th-century single-nave chapel was commissioned by a sailor, Antoni Caixa, as a token of his gratitude to Our Lady of Perpetual Help after he was saved from a shipwreck. Located on the Camí Ral (Royal Way) connecting Girona to Lloret de Mar (the present-day Carrer dels Socors), it became a place of worship for seafarers of all kinds.

Its present-day appearance, with a gable roof and double-arched bell gable, dates from the 18th century, when this detached chapel was remodelled. It remains a place of worship open to visitors.

18. Remendadora (Fishing Net Mender) (41.720645, 2.932795)

Sculpture dedicated to the women who repaired fishing nets – Tossa de Mar

Jardins de l'av. de Palma – town centre

This bronze sculpture was created by the artist Josep Puig in tribute to the town's *remendadores* (fish net menders). The mothers, wives or daughters of fishermen traditionally carried out the work of mending fishing nets. Their work began on the beach once the boats reached shore. Once the fish was unloaded, the nets were stretched out in the sun to dry. Fish net mending is one of the most ancient maritime trades plied by women.