

Monday

Visit Montserrat (near Barcelona)

Montserrat is one of the most popular and unique treasures that Catalonia has to offer. First and foremost a sanctuary, Montserrat is of religious and historical significance. Once the place of a religious sighting, it has now come to symbolise one of the most important sites for religious pilgrimage in the world.

The Monastery's unique location at the very heart of Montserrat Mountain also ensures that is an ideal location for nature lovers - the geology, flora and fauna of the natural park mean that you can while away hours on the many walks that begin at the Monastery.



With over two million visitors each year, Montserrat has adapted to cater to the needs of large groups of tourists. Alongside the monastery and basilica there are two museums, a selection of shops and eateries and guided tour services around the area.



The main body of Montserrat Monastery has been well adapted to ensure that it is manageable to get around if you are a limited mobility traveller. There are also convenient links to the remote Monastery by car, train, rack railway and cable car.

Whether you are young or old, religious or academic, you will find something of interest at Montserrat. Some people come for the famous choir who sing in the basilica every day, others come for the walks around Montserrat Mountain. Some people are on pilgrimages to see the Black Madonna statue whilst others are interested in the impressive architecture of the monastery buildings. Whatever your reason for coming to Montserrat, chances are, you will leave with some unforgettable memories.



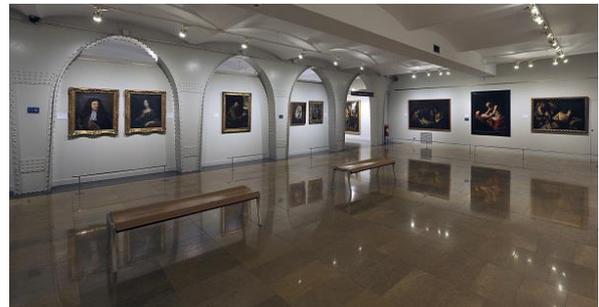
Map of Montserrat Monastery

Montserrat Monastery is a very unique place - it is like a very small village right at the top of Montserrat Mountain. Therefore, whilst you are there it is helpful to have a map to find your way around.



Museum at Montserrat

The main museum at Montserrat is a large art museum, housing six different permanent collections and playing host to two temporary exhibitions. A lot of visitors to Montserrat are not aware of the treasures that lie within the museum. Take a stroll around and you will find the likes of Picasso, Dali and Caravaggio nestled in amongst less well-known artists. There are over 1300 pieces housed in the museum covering a broad historical period: the earliest exhibit is an Egyptian sarcophagus from 13th century BC and the most recent exhibit is a sculpture from 2001 by Josep M Subirachs.



Most of the works of art that are housed in the Montserrat Museum have been donated to the monastery by private citizens. The Monks at the Monastery see it as their duty to display the artworks for those visiting Montserrat as a promotion of culture. This ideology originates from a previous monk at Montserrat called Father Bonaventura Ubach. He collected archaeological, ethnological and zoological artefacts during travels to the Middle East and brought them back to the Monastery. By bringing back these artefacts he encouraged an interest in the Middle East and in 1926 the Monks at Montserrat translated the Bible into Catalan from the Middle Eastern languages.

Espai Audio Visual Museum at Montserrat

The Montserrat interactive museum, Espai Audio Visual, is one of two museums in Montserrat. It offers the opportunity to see the workings of day to day life at Montserrat Monastery. Through the use of audio and visual aids you can learn more about Montserrat and all that it stands for. It is also known as Montserrat Portes Endins (Inside Montserrat).

The Espai Audio Visual is split into different sections: Mountain, Presence, Monastery, Sanctuary and Culture. Each sections gives you an insight into a different area of life at Montserrat.



In the Mountain and Presence areas you will be given an overview to the Monastery and its position in the mountain. There is also information on the history of Montserrat and how it came to be on the mountain.

The Monastery section will provide you with images of the inside of the Monastery - offering you an insight into areas of Montserrat that are only accessed by the Monks themselves.

In the Culture section you will gain an insight into the cultural and academic areas of the Monastery. You will see images of the Vermell - an ancient manuscript that is held in the Monastery library. You will also see videos of the library itself and the famous boy's choir.



The Sanctuary section of the museum provides images of the Montserrat hostel and basilica.

At the end of the museum you will be given the opportunity to watch a 15 minute audiovisual video. This will give you an insight into a complete day at Montserrat Monastery. You will see the music that takes place at the Basilica at daybreak right up to the final daily choral concert at the Monastery - called the Vespers.

Montserrat Espai Audio Visual Museum is located opposite the Cremallera funicular station at the heart of Montserrat Monastery.