



Passion for Culture in Palma de Mallorca

Ajuntament de Palma

English

Castell de Bellver
Museu d'Història de la Ciutat

Photography: MAZMEN FOTOGRAFIA

Palma History Museum



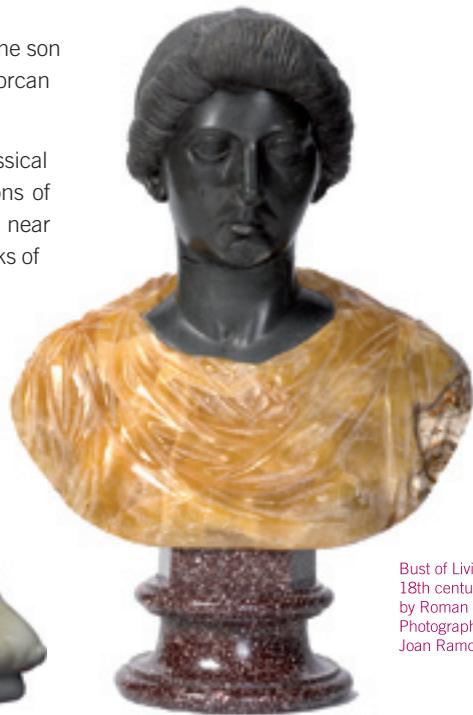
Palma History Museum offers a brief overview of the legacies that numerous civilizations have left on our city. From Talayotic settlements through to the 20th century, it also encompasses the Roman conquest in 123 BC and the foundation of the present city, the Muslim period from 903 AD, the Catalan conquest in 1229, the establishment of the Kingdom of Mallorca (1276-1349), the construction of Palma's Renaissance walls and their demolition in 1903.

Plan of Palma (c.1647)
Photography: Joan Ramon Bonet

On the upper floor of the castle is the Collection Antoni Despuig (Palma 1745 - Lucca 1813). The son of the Count and Countess of Montenegro, was one of the most remarkable figures of the Mallorcan Enlightenment, a patron of the arts and assiduous member of intellectual circles of the time.

During the years that he lived in Rome, he gathered together an important collection of classical sculptures and epigraphic materials at a time when it was very common for private collections of antiques to be made. Some items came from excavations that he himself sponsored in Ariccia, near Rome. Likewise, as was typical then, Despuig commissioned numerous copies of historical works of art that he liked, while also purchasing others from antique dealers who offered them to him.

An important part of this collection can be found at Palma History Museum. It was bought by Palma City Council in 1923, thanks to the intervention of the Societat Arqueològica Lul·liana (Lullian Archaeological Society) and a group of Majorcan experts.



Bust of Livia.
18th century copy by Roman workshop
Photography: Joan Ramon Bonet



Borghese hermaphrodite.
18th century copy by Roman workshop
Photography: Magdalena Rosselló



Castell de Bellver
Museu d'Història de la Ciutat

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Please visit www.cultura.palma.es for opening hours

ACCESS:

Bus 50 (touristic bus). Castell de Bellver stop.

Buses EMT Palma 3, 20 and bus 46 (El Terreno)

- Bus stop Pl. Gomila, walking distance (20 min. aprox.) through c/Bellver and upstairs.
- Bus stop c/ Joan Miró 16, walking distance (20 min. aprox.) through Bellver woods (no indications displayed).
- Bus stop c/ Joan Miró 16, walking distance 2,5 Km. through c/ Camilo José Cela and road.

A **taxi rank** is situated at the beginning of c/Camilo José Cela (Phone n. 971 401 414).

Private vehicle. Access through c/ Camilo José Cela to the Bellver Castle parking area.

PRICES

General admittance	€4
Residents of Palma	€2,5
Travel agencies	€2
Pensioners. Children aged 14 to 18 Adults holding a carnet jove or similar Approved cultural groups Public institutions	€2
Sunday visits Children under the age of 14 Schools Groups of students accompanied by a teacher Disabled groups Accredited teaching staff Members of ICOM	Free entry

Prices valid until December 31st, 2013

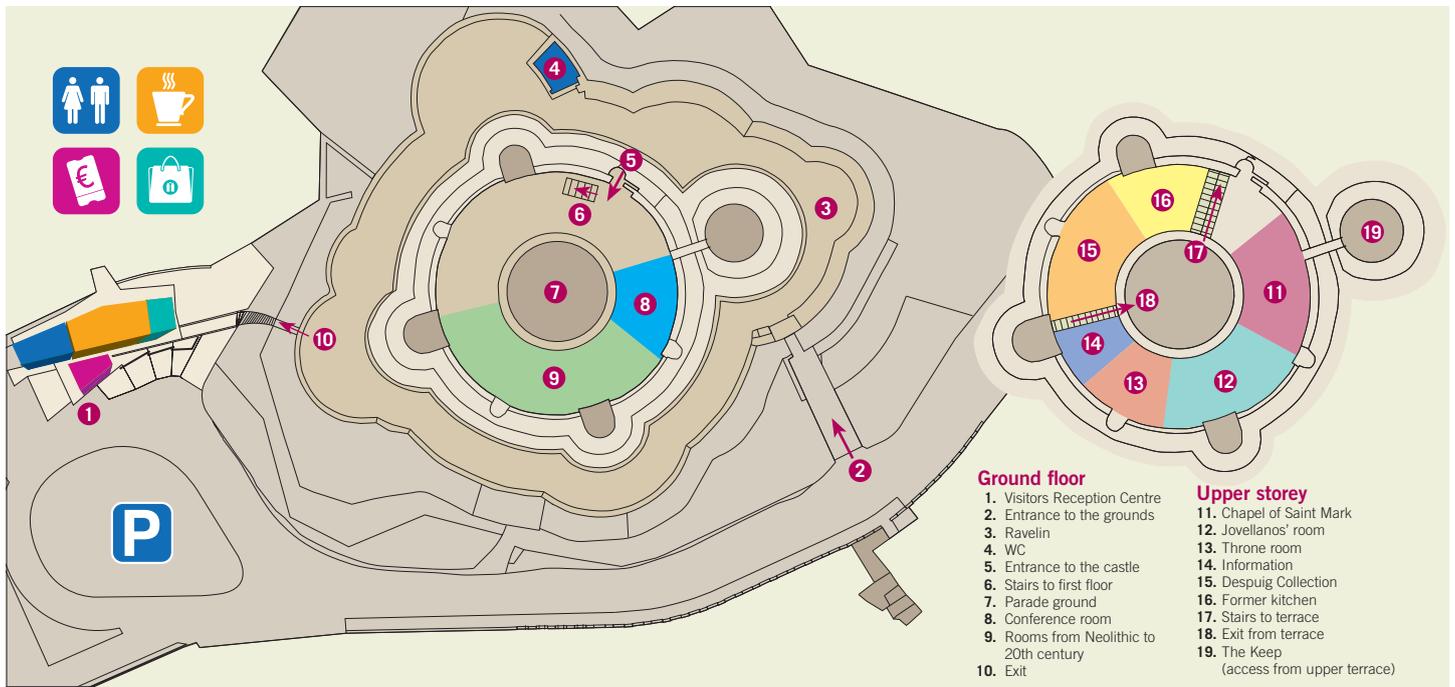
GUIDED TOURS in English

Mondays - Saturdays at 11 a.m.
Free service, subject to availability

Colabora



DL: PM/41-11



The Parade ground. Photography: Bruno Cabot

Bellver Castle

Bellver Castle is undoubtedly one of the most original, emblematic buildings in Mallorca's history. It was built between 1300 and 1311 on the instructions of King James II of Mallorca and is to be found some three kilometres from the city centre of Palma, on a hill some 112 metres above sea level. It has a very specific original design, made up of a Gothic building that forms a perfect circle around a courtyard of the same shape, with four big towers facing the four points of the compass. The keep faces north and it is separated from the rest of the castle, while the other towers are buttressed to the main body. Although attempts have been made to find earlier circular castles that may have inspired Bellver's construction, everything seems to indicate that it is an innovative, genuinely new work of architecture.

The material used for building Bellver castle is sandstone, an easily workable material widely found throughout the Balearics. Most of the sandstone was quarried from the caves in the subsoil of the castle, and from other quarries from Bellver woods, Portals Vells and Santanyi.

Bellver: defensive fortress and royal residence

Bellver castle was constructed in keeping with defensive strategies planned by the Royal House of Mallorca. The hilltop constituted an excellent lookout point for keeping a close watch on any external threat by land or sea.

Bellver was also conceived as a fortified palace where governors could safely take refuge in times of jeopardy.

Despite its defensive nature, the castle's interiors were elegant and refined, worthy of a royal residence, and ideal for the enjoyment of its privileged inhabitants.



The Keep



Photography: Rafael Blanc

The keep, better protected and separate from the rest of the building, was intended as a last resort if a siege were to occur. Traditionally, homage ceremonies were held in this sort of tower, when the keeper of the castle, as the ultimately responsible for the fortress, would swear an oath of fealty and obedience to his lord or king and promise to defend the castle.

For many years the keep was also used as a prison. A substantial amount of graffiti is the main proof of it.

Bellver Castle post 1343

After being a royal residence, Bellver castle housed the most emblematic figures of the island and it also started to serve as an occasional prison.

During the Spanish War of Succession (1700-1715) the castle was converted into one of the island's main prisons. The castle was especially useful when highly influential political and social figures needed to be silenced and kept in isolation. Prominent people such as the enlightened man of letters Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos, the French astronomer and politician François Arago or liberal military officer Luis de Lacy were imprisoned at Bellver. During the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) the castle witnessed some of the saddest and bitterest episodes of its history with the imprisonment of more than 800 republicans, all supporters of the lawfully elected democratic government.

The Ravelin

Work on these outer defences began in the 14th century, with it being documented as a bank. In the mid 16th century, this singular feature was successively enlarged and adapted to fit in with developments in artillery, for the defence of the city and its harbour. In 1713, during the succession conflict after the death of Charles II, supporters of Charles of Austria built a new line of irregular-shaped defences to withstand attacks of the Bourbon Philip of Anjou's army.

The inner rooms

It is inside the castle that its exquisite grandeur can be seen to full effect, while it can also be observed that it was conceived to act as a royal residence as well as a fortress, finished off in refined, elegant style. Originally, the rooms on the ground floor were mainly used for storing supplies. On the upper storey were the royal chambers the official chambers for meetings, receptions and ceremonies, and the chapel of Saint Mark.

Pau Marimon Ribas



Altar frontispiece in the Chapel of Saint Mark, c. 1550. Photography: Joan Ramon Bonet