

Description of the route

1. STARTING POINT

The starting point of the itinerary is Catalunya square, from where you climb up the steps to the city wall at La Infancia gardens.

2. CITY WALLS

The building of this stretch of the city wall commenced in 1362, following orders from *Pere el Cerimoniós*, who wished to protect the districts that had sprung up outside the original walled enclosure. The itinerary passes over Les Beates gate and on to a sentry box, along the west side of the former La Mercè bastion (now Jardins de la Muralla). It then passes over Nou gate and Els Socors gate, the latter being of strategic importance as it linked the city to the fortresses at the quarries.

3. GENERAL PERALTA TOWER

Look eastwards from General Peralta tower for a good view of the *nummulite* rock formations in one of the many quarries of the area, source of the stone used for the buildings in the historic city centre.

Then cast your gaze from north to south to take in the contrast between old, monumental Girona and the more modern urban districts beyond. The old buildings (the walled enclosure, churches such as Sant Feliu, the Cathedral with its wide flight of steps, and most of the surrounding buildings) are striking for the greyish-ochre shades of the *Girona stone* used in their construction.

From this point onwards, descend from the city wall to continue along the walk that follows the walls or you can choose to continue by the alternative route, following the city wall to Gironella tower.

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The stone of Girona

This itinerary runs through a district known as Les Pedreres (The Quarries), in the east of the city, beside the Old Town. The name evokes the origin of the district and its function in the history of Girona.

The route runs along La Ferradura way, formerly a favourite walking place for Girona inhabitants until the quarries were developed into today's residential area. On the way, you will learn something about the so-called Girona stone, its composition, and its formation millions of years ago. The path passes by the old quarries, and demonstrates the widespread use of this stone in the architectural heritage of Girona. It also affords remarkable views over the city.

The name Girona stone comes from the fact that it is found in the area surrounding the city and has been quarried here since ancient times. This calcareous sedimentary rock originated from the deposit of carbonates and remains of living organisms formed in the shallow tropical sea that covered this area 50 million years ago. The whitish, grey-blue stone contains many fossils of which *nummulites* are the most frequently found.



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The stone of Girona



4. GIRONELLA TOWER

You now come to the Gironella tower vantage point, an old mediaeval construction integrated into Girona city walls, which was destroyed in 1814 during the retreat of the French troops. However, the origins of the tower go back to Roman times. From this high point, you can enjoy beautiful views of the Sant Daniel valley and the mountain of Montjuïc. Afterwards, return to link up once again with the main route.

5. CITY WALL BLOCKS

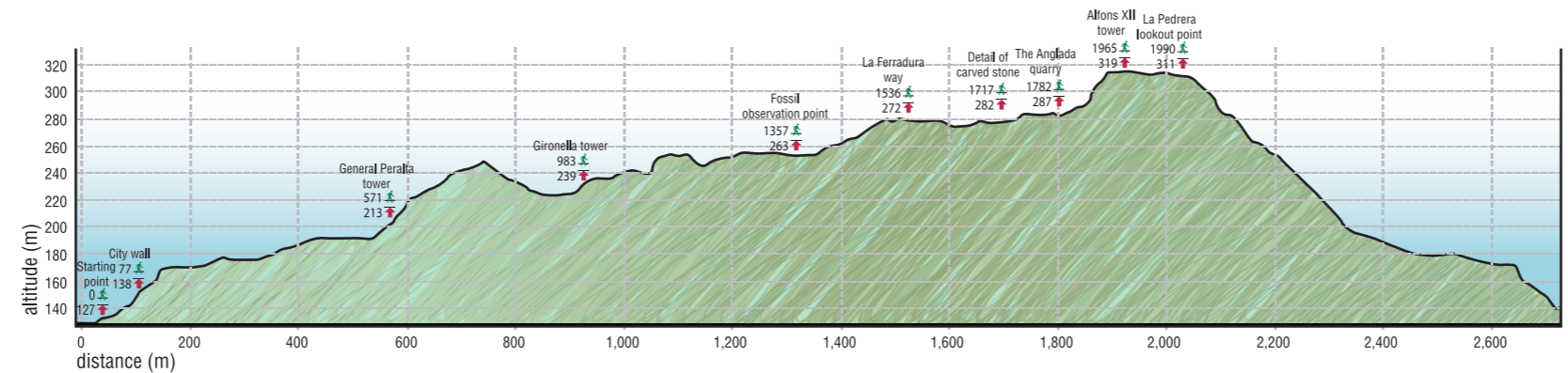
Close observation of the blocks used to build the city wall shows that calcareous *nummulite* rock was the most common building material. We can also see, to a lesser extent, other materials such as plutonic rock, basalt, sandstone and fragments of bricks or tiles.

6. FOSSIL OBSERVATION POINT

Here there is a point for observing fossils. If you look closely at the stone, you will see *nummulites*, i.e., "giant" single-cell organisms protected by a carbonated shell, which used to inhabit the seabed of the shallow waters that covered this area millions of years ago. These are not the only fossils present in the stone; on closer observation, you will also see remains of other organisms, such as ostreids, bivalves, snails, shells and corals.

7. LA FERRADURA WAY

Now take La Ferradura (Horseshoe) way, the name of which evokes the form the route of the road draws. This pleasant stretch of the route takes you to the amphitheatre formed by the walls of the quarry, crossing small fields and orchards in a context of splendid views over the city.



The stone of Girona (one way)
 Distance: **2.7 Km**
 Approximate time: **1h**
 Difficulty: **Easy**
 Maximum Height: **319 m**

More information about nature routes around Girona
www.girona.cat/turisme

App Girona Rutes



8. DETAIL OF CARVED STONE

At the entrance to the quarry, you will see some carved stone blocks that call to mind the former stone-working trades: quarrymen, stonebreakers, stonecutters, stone carvers, hewers, pavers, porters, bearers etc. These trades, documented from the 14th century onwards, were organised into a system of guilds and brotherhoods, which continued to exist until the liberal reforms of the early 19th century. The quarries were areas of great dynamism and activity and proved work for many people.

9. THE ANGLADA QUARRY

You are now at the Anglada quarry, one of the last to be in operation of the many that existed in this sector of the city. Although there were also quarries at other points such as Montjuïc or Pont Major, this sector had the highest concentration, taking advantage of the many points where the valuable Girona stone surfaced due to the geology and terrain.

10. ALFONS XII TOWER

The highest point of the itinerary is Alfons XII tower. The path around its perimeter affords a magnificent panoramic view of the city. This 19th-century tower stands on the site of a former stronghold built in 1675 as a watchtower for Condestable fortress, originally part of the east and southeast defence system of Girona. In 1814, French troops blew up the stronghold, along with the other nearby fortresses. The tower was built as a small fort during the Third Carlist War (1872-1876), using the stones from the ruined watchtower, in the style of late 19th-century defence works.

11. LA PEDRERA LOOKOUT POINT

A few yards from the tower there is a lookout point affording splendid views of the city, with the Pyrenees on the horizon, among which you can make out the peaks of Canigó and Puig Neulós. You will also be able to observe some natural stone outcrops on the surroundings. The route ends by going down the Caputxins steps and back to the starting point.