

## 7 Can Comillas and Can Nadal Jacint Verdaguer and Caldes

In the late-19th century, Caldetes was the summer holiday resort chosen by many of Barcelona's best-known families.

Claudi López Bru, second Marquis of Comillas, decided to settle in Caldes due to the fame of the local spa centres and proximity by rail to Barcelona. The architect J. Oriol Mestres – the father of Apel·les Mestres – was commissioned to build the house in 1883. Unfortunately, the house the Marquis of Comillas built in Caldes was replaced in the 1980s by an apartment block.

Jacint Verdaguer discovered the town during visits he made to his cousin, Joaquim Salarich, who lived in Caldes, and due to his professional relations with the Comillas family. He thus became a frequent visitor to Caldes, writing his poem "Vora la mar" (Beside the Sea) here on 10 January 1883. The house of Josep M. de Nadal Vilardaga, one-time mayor of Barcelona, Can Nadal, which stood opposite the Comillas house, was more fortunate. It has survived until the present, standing out thanks to the neo-Moorish motifs on the façade.



## 8 The fondes (guest houses) Apel·les Mestres and Caldes



The first sea baths in Caldes opened to the public towards the end of the 19th century. Those using these baths spent long periods in the town, as treatments were similarly prolonged. We know of five fondes, guest houses, from this period, all located in the lower part of the town, and which were frequented by those using the baths. These were: the Fonda Borràs, the Fonda Vidal, the Fonda Mateu, the Fonda Titus and Fonda La Providència. All were comfortable hotels offering excellent services, and some were even considered luxury establishments.

The outstanding personalities of the day used to stay at one or other of these fondes. One such was Apel·les Mestres, renowned as a writer, musician and, above all, draughtsman. Mestres spent long periods at Caldes between 1885 and 1897, usually staying at

the Fonda Borràs. The artist was greatly attached to Caldes, particularly to the fisher folk, and this is reflected in both his pictorial and theatrical work. Many of his drawings from life depict places, landscapes and people from Caldes, just as his "marines" (one-act plays) have their origin in our town.

## 9 Mills

Several water-driven mills once stood along the Riera. These were known as the MOLÍ DE DALT (the upper mill), at the crossroads with Carrer de la Mercè; the MOLÍ DEL MIG (the middle mill), at the point where the building known as El Rector now stands; and the MOLÍ DE BAIX (the lower mill), where the Riera meets Passatge de Sant Pere.

## 10 The Chapel of El Carme

The Chapel of El Carme, which stands beside the train station, was built at the behest of Elvira Gibert de Pi so that railway company workers could attend Mass on Sundays.

The first Mass was celebrated here on 3 July 1882, and the chapel soon became the centre of religious life for summer visitors and patients, patrons of the local fondes (guest houses) and baths, as the parish church was some distance from the coast.

## 11 Caldes first becomes a popular summer resort

In the final quarter of the 19th century, Caldes received many visitors, some seeking treatment at the town's spas, others well-to-do families who established their summer homes here. This first wave of summer residents built houses along Carrer de Santa Teresa and Carrer del Callao. Although structurally similar to housing in the fishing village, these summer residences were differentiated by the ornamentation on the façades and by the quality of the materials used.



## 12 The sea baths

In the 19th century, the attractions of seawater were added to the prestige the thermal waters already enjoyed in Caldes.

There was already a seawater spa in Caldes, the Josep Santarromana baths, built in around 1870 on the eastern outskirts of the town. The Marcel·lí baths, situated on the beach opposite the station, were established in 1875, whilst the Colón baths opened in 1881 in an impressive wooden building equipped with all the latest technical advances of the time. Finally, the Esteve baths stood on the beach near the river mouth.

The most outstanding was the Colón baths complex, which also contained a restaurant and a casino, and was eventually converted into a hotel. Its site is now occupied by the Hotel Colón, which offers patrons the benefits of thermal water treatment and thalassotherapy, faithfully continuing the activities originally generated in Caldes by its spa waters and privileged situation beside the sea.

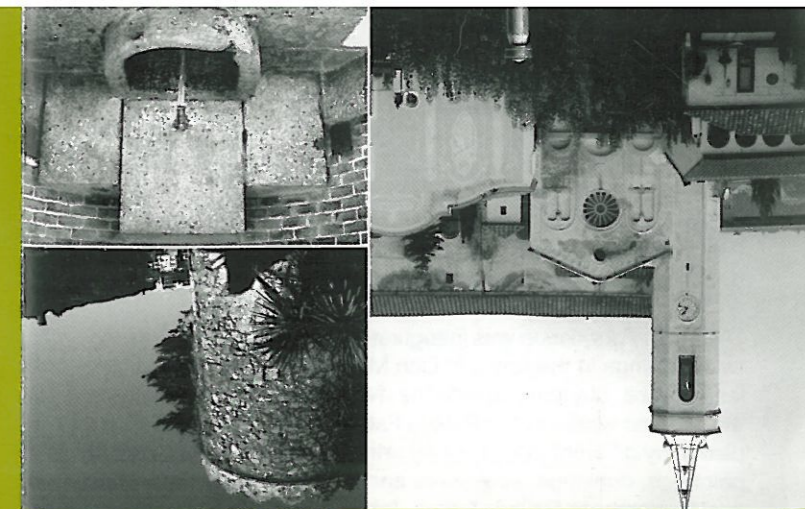


## 13 Passeig dels Anglesos. The second wave of summer visitors to Caldes

The second wave gradually occupied the area between the railway line and the beach, bringing Carrer de la Ciutat de la Paz and Passeig dels Anglesos (the "English Promenade") into being. Nearly all the houses on this promenade were built between 1917 and 1920, though the area was not urbanised, based on the English garden city model, until 1925. Passeig dels Anglesos, given the same name as a similar promenade in Nice, was soon lined by the houses of ostentatious nouveau riche families.

## 14 Caldes and Joan Maragall

The poet Joan Maragall began to spend periods in Caldes with his family in spring 1901, as his various illnesses required him to "take the waters". The family took a house at 20, Carrer de la Paz. Many of Maragall's works from this period are full of references to the town, particularly the five "Sea Views" ("Vistes al mar") written in Caldes in 1901. In 1907, he wrote some of the verses for "Seguit de les vistes al mar", published in 1911 under the title "Seqüències". These "Sequences" also included the poem "El pi d'Estrac" (The Pine of Estrach), inspired by the place where Maragall used to meet and talk to his friend, Salvador Albert.

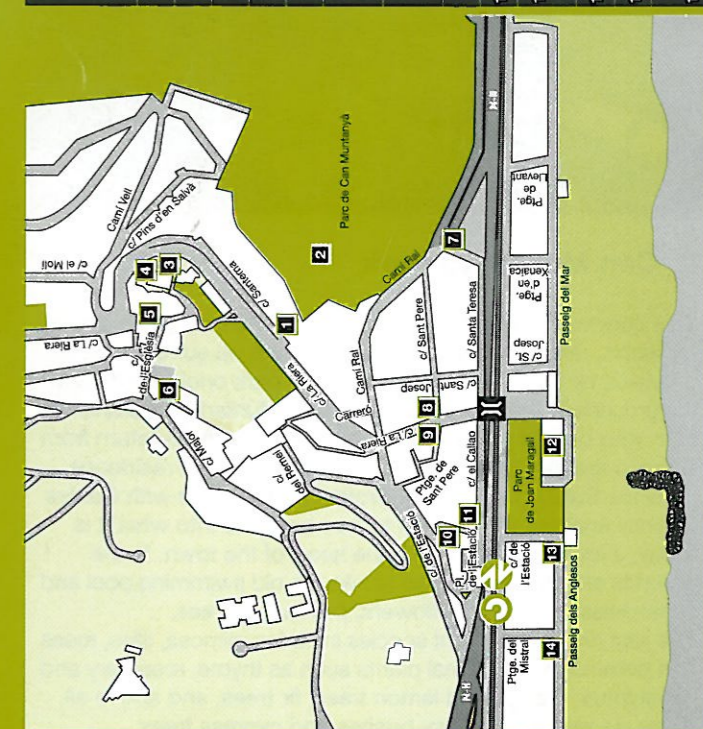


*Caldes, poets, personalities and legends*

## Self-Guided Tourist and Cultural Route:

# Cultura a Caldes!

Self-Guided Tourist and Cultural Route
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## 1 The Palau Foundation

The Palau Foundation is a cultural centre whose mission is to collect and show to the public the paintings and sculptures of Josep Palau i Fabre, along with his private library, which contains Palau's literary and biographical works, as well as personal documents.

The Palau Foundation was inaugurated in May 2003. Occupying two buildings in the town, in Can Muntanyà and the Casa de les Monges, standing beside the river bed, the site contains the Catalan works in the Palau i Fabre Collection, some 50 pieces by different 20th-century artists. The collection features paintings, drawings, sculptures and engravings by masters contemporary to Palau's father, Josep Palau i Oller, including Josep Mompou, Torres García and Gargallo, and later, outstandingly such artists as Rebull, Grau Sala, Clavé and Mallol Suazo. The Palau Collection also features works by Miró and Tàpies, found here alongside Latin-American artists the collector met in Paris, such as Sergio de Castro and Manuel Felguérez.

The second floor is devoted to works by the artist who most fascinated Josep Palau i Fabre: Pablo Picasso, whose friend and biographer Palau was. The works were acquired by Palau himself or given to him by Picasso in recognition and thanks to his most outstanding biographer.

In the Casa de les Monges building, the Palau Foundation branches out with a new room dedicated to artists active today and whose work helped to change Josep Palau i Fabre's initial intention to focus exclusively on Picasso. The works in this new space are by such artists as Miquel Barceló, Perejaume and Pepe Yagües.



## 2 Can Muntanyà Park

This park was opened to the public in 1987 as a green space for walks, leisure and relaxation in the natural surroundings provided by this lovely landscape. The park originally formed the grounds of the house built by Adolfo Muntanyà, a Granollers man who bought this site in the town centre on his return from Cuba in around 1934 to build himself a luxurious residence (now the Palau Foundation). Property exchanges with Caldes Council enabled this garden to be converted into what it is today, a lovely public park in the heart of the town. In the grounds are four ponds, two kiosks, an old swimming pool and an impressive variety of flowers, plants and trees.

The vast diversity of plant species includes mimosa, lilies, roses and geraniums; medicinal plants such as thyme, rosemary and eucalyptus; orange and lemon trees, fir trees, and above all, pines, as well as mulberry bushes and cypress trees.



## 3 Thermal baths

The thermal baths at Caldes d'Estrac date back to the 19th century and are publicly owned. The waters, which emerge from the source at a temperature of 38.8°C, are mesothermal, hypotonic, with medium mineralization. They are recommended for chronic diseases of the locomotor apparatus, osteoarticular trauma and the illnesses affecting the respiratory apparatus. The building, which dates to 1818, occupies a single floor, its roof formed by a flat brick arch.

A legend which surrounds the thermal water spring beside the public baths tells the story of how Caldes came to have these waters thanks to the intercession of the so-called fairy-like Water Lady (Dona d'Aigua).

According to this legend, the Torre dels Encantats ("Tower of Enchantments") was, many years ago, the home of a water lady who could be seen on the platform of this tower at full moon, wearing a long, white dress with a silver star in her hair. She would throw herself into the air from the top of the tower, going down to the beach to bathe in the moonlight.

Despite the presence of this water lady, an unequivocally good sign for the town, harvests were becoming worse every year in Caldes, and famine and misery were everywhere. People blamed the water lady for these misfortunes, as they had begun when she first appeared in Caldes.

The general feeling was that the water lady should be expelled and the tower destroyed, as it was now believed to be cursed. But, amongst all these voices, one old man called for prudence and moderation. Was it not better to ask the water lady for grace and favour rather than to awaken her ire?

So it was that a committee of burghers made their way to the Torre dels Encantats to ask the water lady to give her protection to the townsfolk. The lady generously agreed to this, inviting all the people of the town to meet her the next day at noon. Everyone was waiting for her next day in the main square at the due time, and the water lady appeared before them as a mere mortal, calling on the people to follow her along a stony path beside the river, saying:

A silver river runs through the entrails of this mountain. I shall open up a way for it, and this will be your future prosperity. She touched the rock with her magic wand and the health-bringing water we now know as thermal waters began to flow.

## 4 The Chapel of El Remei

This advocacy of the Virgin is documented in Caldes since 1657, and Our Lady of Remedies is now the town's patron saint. This tiny chapel contains a statue of Our Lady in painted wood, Her face blackened. In Her right hand is a bunch of flowers, in Her left hand She holds the Child. The statue of Our Lady of Remedies we can admire today dates to the 1940s, as the original disappeared during the Civil War, whether destroyed or buried by someone seeking to protect the image is not known.

It is interesting to note that Our Lady of Remedies, patron saint of Caldes, is the only one of this name with its own story. The advocacy is documented in Caldes since 1657 by the Dominican monk Narcís Camós.

Camós explains that the image of Our Lady was found thanks to two cows from Can Simon (a farm later known as Can Busquets) which always left the rest of the herd when put out to graze, making for the same spot just below the church every time, and mooing insistently. Their curiosity aroused, the local people dug around this spot, finding the statue of Our Lady. A tiny chapel was built on the site to commemorate the place where those two cows had indicated the presence of this "found Virgin".

In this chapel even today, we can see the furrow of land in which the image of Our Lady was found.

The image was installed on the Altar of Sant Elm in the town church but moved miraculously to the high altarpiece, indicating that Our Lady wished to be the town's main advocacy.

Other miracles are also attributed to this image of the Virgin. During one of their raids on the coast, Turkish corsairs sacking the town attempted to steal the statue from the church. However, they could take Her image only as far as the threshold of the door, and were unable to carry Her any further.

Once the terrible raid had ended, a gentleman, Montserrat Pi, went to the church and, seeing the image by the door, returned it to the high altar, noting that one of its fingers (others say an arm) had been broken off. Montserrat Pi returned the member to its place and thereafter Our Lady gave him the power of curing with medicines that he himself made when anyone suffered dislocation of an upper member.

On the death of Montserrat Pi, these curative powers passed to his son and later to his grandson, though they gradually faded and were finally lost.



## 5 Parish Church of Santa Maria

The parish church, devoted to St Mary, has medieval origins and was once the chapel attached to a hospital. The most important remains conserved from this period are the stone over the doorway in the church front, inscribed with a Latin invocation of the Mother of God, and the holy water stoup, which takes the form of a capital.

Construction of the present church began in 1805, though the building did not acquire its final form until after the Spanish Civil War (1936-39).

## 6 Watch- and defence towers

In the 16th century, raids by Turkish corsairs forced the coastal population to take measures to defend itself. Thus began the construction of watchtowers here. Those conserved, all circular in form are: Torre Verda ("Green Tower"), Torre Can Busquets and Torre dels Encantats (the latter linked to Caldes by legend).

The Torre dels Encantats is thought to date back originally to the mid-11th century, and some experts believe it possible that it was built as part of a fortress that stood here at that time. The circular walls that characterise the construction today were added in the 16th century. In the 19th century, the tower was used as an intermediate station in the optic telegraph system.

Its name ("Tower of Enchantments") refers to a legend popularised about Caldes by J. Salarich. Long ago, the story goes, the local people began to see phantasmagorical forms walking around the tower. However, these apparitions were not ghostly forms, but members of the escort of the Saracen Princess Fatima, who had come to Caldes to seek the cure for her terrible illness.

According to the legend, the princess had learned about the curative properties of the waters of Caldes from her slave Leonor, captured by the Saracens some years before whilst she walked along the beach. Every night, Fatima came down from the tower with her retinue to take the waters, all of them dressed in the white robes that gave them such a mysterious, phantasmagorical appearance.

Leonor was a beautiful young Caldes maiden captured by corsairs who come to raid the town. So beautiful was she that the pirates did not harm her, and the girl became slave to Princess Fatima, who suffered from leprosy. No doctor had been able to cure her illness until Leonor, who had won the princess's confidence, advised her to try the thermal waters in her home town. So it was that Fatima decided to go to Caldes, accompanied by Leonor, and to take up residence in the tower on the outskirts of the town.

The treatment was successful, and Fatima was not only cured of her illness, but also became a friendlier, more generous, kinder person. In thanks for her assistance in curing the princess, Leonor was set free. And the story does not end here: whilst in Caldes, Fatima came to know a distinguished townsman, Busquets, with whom she fell in love and finally married. This gentleman is linked to the other watchtower in Caldes, the Tower of Can Busquets.

Today, this legend serves to heighten the fame that the thermal waters of the town enjoy, their curative properties having attracted countless visitors to Caldes over the centuries. In memory of them, the gegants (giants) of Caldes, giants brought out for festive occasions, represent two characters from this legend: Fatima and Busquets.