

## Antoni Gaudí in Barcelona

The number one tourist attraction in Spain is the Sagrada Familia (Holy Family) basilica in the city of Barcelona. Designed by Catalan architect, Antoni Gaudí (1852-1926), the basilica has been under construction since 1882. Gaudí started working on it in 1883 when the original architect resigned. He worked the rest of his life on the project; it was only about one-quarter finished when he died approximately 43 years later. Gaudí is buried in the basilica's crypt. After Gaudí's death, the church's construction was stalled by the Spanish Civil War and a fire set by revolutionaries, which partially destroyed Gaudí's plans and plaster models. The church was consecrated by Pope Benedict XVI in 2010 and proclaimed a minor basilica. Prior to the 2020 pandemic, the church had been under constant construction since the Spanish Civil War with an estimated date of completion of 2026. With Spain's pandemic lockdown, the date of completion has been pushed back.



Influenced by oriental styles, revivalist Gothic and Moorish architecture, and Art Nouveau, and inspired by the natural world (plants and animals, Gaudí's architectural style has been described as "fantastical." When Gaudí graduated from the Barcelona Higher School of Architecture in 1878, the director of the school reportedly declared that "We have given this academic title either to a fool or a genius. Time will show." Time has clearly shown that Gaudí was a genius.

Gaudí's name has become almost synonymous with the city of Barcelona. His first project after graduation was the design of lampposts. The photo below is of a lamppost in the Plaça Reial that Gaudí designed in 1879.



Casa Vicens was Gaudí's first masterpiece. Built as a summer house for the Vicens family between 1883 and 1885, it was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2005.



Gaudí designed Palau Güell for the industrial tycoon, Eusebi Güell, in an Art Nouveau style. Built between 1886 and 1888, the palace was home to the Güell y López family until they moved to Park Güell. Here are several photos of the exterior and interior of Palau Güell.





Between 1888 and 1890, Gaudí led the construction of a building to be used as a convent and boarding school, commissioned by the Congregation of St. Teresa. Gaudí conceived the Teresian College of Barcelona as a Gothic Revival castle with a façade that combined stone and brick.



Casa Calvet, designed by Gaudí for a textile manufacturer as both a commercial building and residence, and built between 1898 and 1900, is considered to one of the architect's most conventional works. This was partly due to its location in one of the more elegant sections of Barcelona. Nevertheless, it still has modernist elements.



Torre de Bellesguard, also known as Casa Figueras, is a neogothic manor house with modernist details designed by Gaudí for Jaume Figueras. The architect was inspired by the castle that had previously stood on the site, built for the King of Aragon in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The house, which was built between 1900 and 1909, displays Gaudí's iconic mosaic detailing.





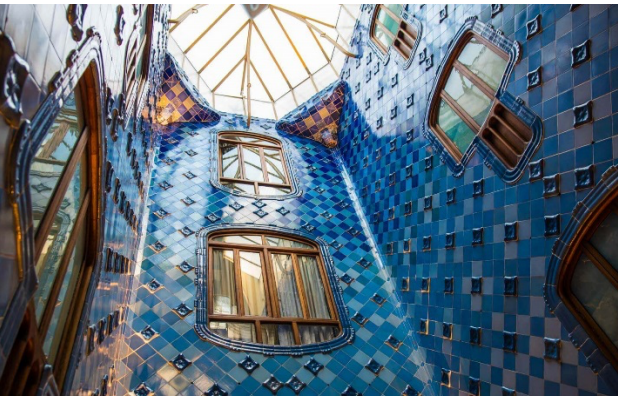
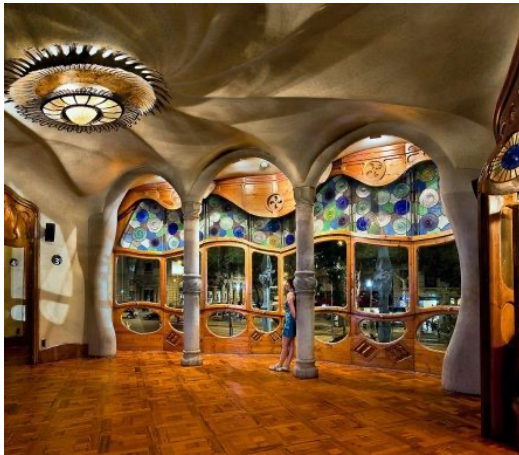
Park Güell is a public park in Barcelona designed by Gaudí for Eusebi Güell. It was originally intended to be a private residential park for approximately single-family homes, integrating nature and architecture. Gaudí worked on the project from 1900 to 1914. Ultimately, it was unsuccessful, became city property and eventually a public park, covering more than 40 acres. It was named a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1984 and remains one of the top tourist attractions in Barcelona. The photos below depict the some of the features of the park.



Casa Batlló was originally designed by one of Gaudí's architecture professors. When the textile industrialist, Josep Batlló, purchased the property, he gave full creative freedom to Gaudí, including even demolishing the existing building. Gaudí chose not to demolish it; instead, between 1904 and 1906, the building was completely renovated, with a totally new façade, revising the internal partitioning and creating a work of art of the interior. The façade underwent a full restoration in 2019, no small task, as it is composed of five different materials (glass, ceramic, stone, iron and wood), all of which required different treatments and professionals. This is a link to a video about the restoration.

<https://www.casabatllo.es/en/restoration/>

Casa Batlló's roof is particularly impressive. Not only is it shaped like a dragon's back, it offers a direct view to Sagrada Familia. (The legend of Saint George—or Sant Jordi in Catalan—is a frequent theme in Gaudí's work.)



Casa Milà, also known as La Pedrera (The Quarry), was perhaps Gaudí's most iconic work. Commissioned by the industrialist, Pere Milà and his wife. The couple lived on the main floor and rented out the other apartments. Built from 1906-1912, it was Gaudí's last work of civic architecture.



