

“The Temple of the Sagrada Familia”

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Partial Front Facade Exterior View

According to our local tour guide, Gaudi famously believed that his client, God, was in no hurry. Regarding its long gestation period, a comment from one member of our tour group: “perhaps the Temple should never be finished – that it’s perpetual state of construction is central to its charm.”

The Temple of the Sagrada Familia is a building with a basilica ground plan and a main nave with five bays and a crossing (transepts).



The Scene of the Birth of Jesus

Globetrotters that have an interest in visiting a cosmopolitan city with charm, let it be Barcelona, Spain. As our tour group experienced, this city is made for seeing on foot, with full winding lanes that emerge into secluded squares dotted with palm trees and ringed with café’s and boutiques. We found the city’s architecture to be playful and colorful. Unique rows of symmetrical iron balconies are punctuated with fanciful details; bay windows, turrets, painted tiles, hanging lanterns, flower boxes and carved sculptures. Catalan architects, including Antoni Gaudi, forged the Catalan Modernist style, which is echoed in the city’s skyline with curvy, playful fantasy buildings-culminating in Gaudi’s over-the-top Temple of the Sagrada Familia. This is the most famous of Gaudi’s works. This Temple has been under construction since 1892 and it’s not expected to be completed until 2030.



Sculptures on the Exterior Facade

Upon entering the Temple, our tour group observed direct light through stained-glass windows in the façade and its reflected pattern on the structural elements to create a magical symphony of colors that change with the hours, days and months of the year. Gaudi used paraboloids and square surfaces in the ceilings of the naves to provide for continuous natural and artificial lighting that bathes the entire space and the whole Temple from the vaults.



Model of the Nave and Aisles in Gaudi's Workshop

A surprising feature of Gaudi's work is the great importance that he attaches to movement in the generation of pillars compared to other structural elements whose generation is static. The interior of the Temple consists of a "forest of columns", although these "arboreal columns" are imbued with a geometric precision much greater than the exemplars that we find in nature. Gaudi's columns are generated by a deployment of sternotomy in which polygons and curves alternate and intersect to generate continuous yet changing volumes. All the columns in the Temple, particularly those in the central nave (with 6, 8 10 and 12 sides) are generated by the same mechanism - double twisted columns. Despite the great artistic and spatial wealth of the Temple interior, to a large extent achieved by the arboreal columns, the geometric law of generating each one of them and their ramifications, which join the vaults, the overall structural concept of this Temple is certainly unique.

The architectural work of the La Sagrada Familia is remarkable for its range of forms, textures and polychromatic theme and for the free expressive

way in which these elements of Gaudi's arts seem to be composed. The complete geometries of Gaudi's Temple so coincide with its architectural composition that the whole, including its surface, gives the appearance of being a natural object in complete conformity with nature's laws.

Barcelona with its cosmopolitan feel, relaxed pace of life, breathtaking architecture, fantastic gastronomy and unbeatable climate, really is a city that has everything. Throughout our tour, we experienced the friendliness of the Catalan people. The cafés are filled by day and people crowd the streets at night, pausing to fortify themselves with a perfectly composed bite of seafood and drink at a tapas bar. Barcelona's lively culture plays an unstoppable role in Spain's most cosmopolitan and European Center.



View of the Interior Columns to Mirror Trees and Branches