

HISTORY • 1 H 15

Tarragona and the Cistercian Route by motorhome

Roman Tarraco, with its seaside amphitheatre and the Pont del Diable aqueduct, plus the three great monasteries of the Cistercian Route and walled Montblanc.



START AND FINISH

Les Franqueses del Vallès

DURATION

4 rental nights

APPROX. DISTANCE

360 km

BEST TIME

All year • best in spring and autumn

MILEAGE

1,200 km included (300 km/day) • extra km €0.40

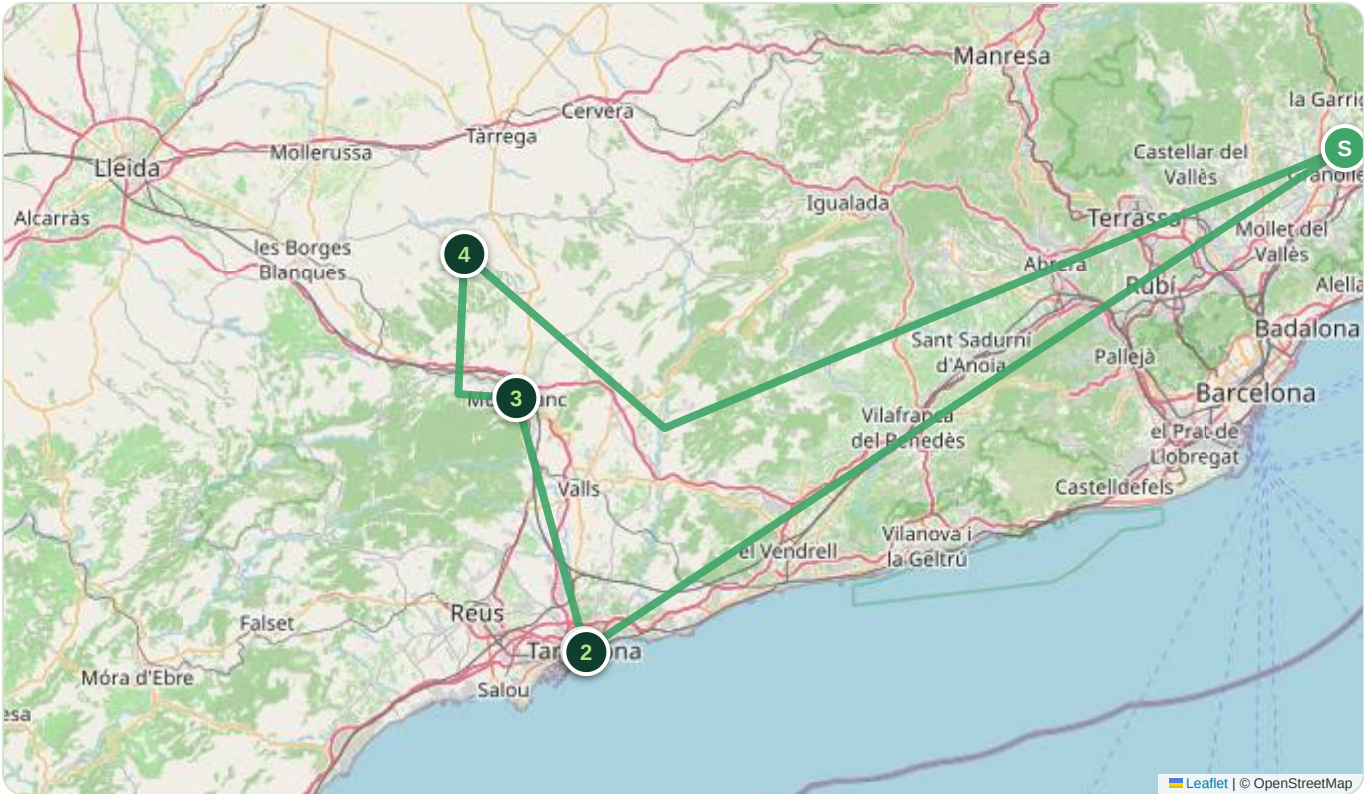
INDICATIVE PRICE

from €500 rental in low season

This route brings together two chapters of Catalan history less than an hour apart. On the coast, Tarragona preserves much of Tarraco, the Roman capital of Hispania Citerior: amphitheatre, circus, walls and the Pont del Diable aqueduct, all UNESCO World Heritage. Inland, the Cistercian Route links three medieval monasteries that are still lived in: Poblet, also World Heritage, Santes Creus and Vallbona de les Monges.

It is designed for 4 rental nights: collect on day 1 in the afternoon and return on the morning of day 5. It covers about 360 km in total, well under the 300 km a day included on 3 to 6 day rentals with Segimon Rental, and you reach Tarragona on the AP-7 without crossing Barcelona. In low season you can do it in 3 nights by leaving out Vallbona; from April to June and in September and October the minimum is 4 days, and in July, August, Christmas and Easter it is 7, so you could carry on south with our Ebro Delta route.

Route map (approximate line)



Route plan

Day 1	Pick-up • Tarragona
Day 2	Tarraco: amphitheatre, circus, walls • Pont del Diable
Day 3	Montblanc • Poblet Monastery
Day 4	Vallbona de les Monges • Santes Creus

Day-by-day itinerary

Day 1 • Pick-up and drive to Tarragona

Collect the motorhome between 16:00 and 19:00 in Les Franqueses del Vallès and head south on the AP-7, bypassing Barcelona: in roughly 1 h 15 you are in the Camp de Tarragona. Sleep at a campsite or authorised area on the nearby coast. If you arrive in daylight, a stroll to the Balcó del Mediterrani, at the end of the Rambla Nova, is a good way to begin.

Day 2 · Roman Tarraco and the Pont del Diable

Start at the amphitheatre, right above the sea, where you can also see the remains of a Visigothic and a Romanesque church. Then climb into the Part Alta: the vaults of the Roman circus and the Pretori tower, followed by the Passeig Arqueològic, a path around the outside of the walls, with huge cyclopean blocks at its base. The cathedral, part Romanesque and part Gothic, crowns the old town. The Part Alta has narrow streets and many underground car parks cannot take a 2.74 m high vehicle, so leave the motorhome in an open-air car park outside the centre. In the afternoon, about 10 minutes north, the Pont del Diable, the Les Ferreres aqueduct, is a short walk from the signposted parking area.

Day 3 · Montblanc and Poblet

In about 40 minutes you reach Montblanc, in the Conca de Barberà. Its walled town is one of the best preserved in Catalonia; park outside the walls and walk in through one of the gateways. Tradition places the legend of Saint George and the dragon here, celebrated every April with the town's Medieval Week. Ten minutes away, the Royal Monastery of Poblet, a World Heritage Site, is the largest Cistercian monastery in Catalonia and holds the tombs of several kings of the Crown of Aragon; a community of monks still lives there. Check opening times and tickets, as there are periods when it cannot be visited. Spend the night in the area.

Day 4 · Vallbona de les Monges and Santes Creus

Drive about 25 minutes north on minor roads to Vallbona de les Monges, the most important Cistercian convent in Catalonia, home to a community of nuns since the Middle Ages; visits are guided, so check times. Then roughly an hour east takes you to Santes Creus, in the Gaià valley, with a Gothic cloister and the tombs of Peter the Great and James II. Spend the night in the Alt Camp or the Penedès: on day 5 the AP-2 and AP-7 get you to the Vallès in roughly an hour to return the motorhome between 9:00 and 12:00.

What you will see



Amfiteatre de Tarragona



Pont del Diable



Monestir de Poblet

Where to sleep

The Tarragona coast has plenty of campsites and several motorhome areas, busier in summer. In the Conca de Barberà and the Alt Camp the choice is smaller, but you will still find campsites and some municipal areas: check them first on Park4Night or Campercontact and book ahead for bank holidays, Easter and Montblanc's Medieval Week.

Remember that wild camping is generally not permitted in Catalonia. Parking wherever any vehicle may park is legal in Spain (DGT instruction 08/V-74), but without putting out the awning, chairs or levelling ramps and without emptying any water. To fill up with water and empty grey water, use campsites or service areas.

Practical tips

- In Tarragona, forget underground car parks: at 2.74 m high the V66 will not fit in most of them. Look for open-air car parks and walk up to the Part Alta.
- The monasteries keep their own hours and sometimes close for community life: check opening times and tickets for each one before planning your day.
- The roads between Poblet, Vallbona and Santes Creus are minor and narrow in places but easy enough taken slowly; avoid driving into the old town centres.
- Tarragona gets very hot at midday in summer: see the Roman sites first thing and save the cooler monasteries for the afternoon.
- If you have spare days, the Penedès is on your way home: see our Montserrat and Penedès route.

Information and bookings

segimonrental.com/en/routes/tarragona-and-cistercian-route/

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Indicative itinerary. Check road conditions, opening times and restrictions before setting off. Up-to-date information on our website.