

Guided tours now offered for Poblenu cemetery

Tours also to be offered for Montjuic, Barcelona's largest cemetery

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Barcelona has joined cities such as Paris and London in starting to offer guided tours of historic cemeteries.

As of June 8, guided tours are being offered for the Poblenu cemetery, known as *Cemebtiri Vell*, or Old Cemetery.

Similar tours are in the works for the Montjuic cemetery, Barcelona's largest and perhaps most famous cemetery.

The Poblenu cemetery was founded in 1775 by bishop Josep Climent. It was originally envisioned as a cemetery which reflected the revolutionary ideas of the 19th century, but was later converted into a place for the bourgeoisie of the time to bury their dead.

It had to be reconstructed in the latter part of the 19th century after the original site was destroyed by Napoleon's troops in 1813.

The cemetery, which covers 52,000 square metres and has 27,000 sepulchres, is the second largest in Barcelona after Montjuic, which covers more than 550,000 square metres and has more than 150,000 sepulchres.

Montjuic is known for being the burial place for nobility, business leaders, politicians and also famous figures such as painter Joan Miró.

Inaugurated in 1883, it had previously been known as the South-West cemetery.

The Montjuic castle was built on top of an ancient Jewish cemetery —

Montjuic means, in essence "Jew Hill" — and today there is a Holocaust memorial bearing the names of Holocaust victims.

In the Poblenu cemetery, tours are available for individuals for groups free of charge.

University of Chicago professor Elisa Martí has recently published a book and DVD about the cemetery which covers its construction, history and information about some of the more distinguished individuals who were buried there, including musician and poet Josep Anselm Clavé.

The tour route has approximately 30 stops, the last one being the most famous sculpture of the cemetery called "The Kiss of Death".



The Poblenu cemetery is the second largest cemetery in Barcelona.

Three more Catalan beaches meet European standards

Catalonia has 90 blue flag beaches. Since last year, three more beaches were flagged, but one lost the status in the Girona region. Among flagged beaches, the Barcelona region gained 22, that's two more than the previous year. The blue flag recognises the level of health, cleanliness, safety and environmental management of beaches, as spelled out by the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE), an organisation formed by 34 NGOs and non-profits.

In the greater Barcelona area, 31 beaches were considered for the blue flag. 22 of them, along the coastline of 10 different municipalities, actually qualified. Garraf county, with Sitges leading the way, has obtained the most blue flags, 11



Barcelona gains two more blue flags, giving it a total of 22

in total: seven in Sitges, three in Vilanova and one in Cubelles. Barcelona beaches have five blue flags and the Maresme, six.

The province of Tarragona has the most blue flags in Catalonia.

This year it was given another, making it 37 in all. Tarragona county gained 13 flags, Salou with four, followed by the municipalities of Cambrils, Tarragona and Torredembarra, with three each.

Noise pollution a target for civic campaign

Barcelona's city council has decided to make noise pollution one of the central themes of its civic responsibility campaign, with a special emphasis on outdoor cafés and bars, which tend to cause conflicts between business owners, patrons and residents.

So far this year the city has denied licenses to 84 establishments for reasons related to noise and management of outdoor terraces. The situation becomes more complicated in summer, when many open air cafés stay open later into the night.

The city will monitor establishments in different districts which have been the subject of noise complaints in the past in districts such as Arc del Teatre, el Eixample, and Sarrrià-Sant Gervasi.

A total of more than 400 estab-

lishments will be monitored throughout the city.

Special signs will be posted in these areas to remind people of the problems of noise pollution. In 2003, there were more than 300 complaints to police related to noise.

The city is also sending special leaflets to citizens with guidelines and recommendations related to noise pollution.

In addition the traditional problem of noise related to the city's nightlife, there will also be a special emphasis on traffic noise and noise that comes from the interior of people's homes such as playing radios and televisions too loudly.

The campaign is also designed to clamp down on excess noise produced by motorbikes and motor-scooters on the streets of Barcelona.

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