

THE MONASTERY OF CURA (ALGAIDA)

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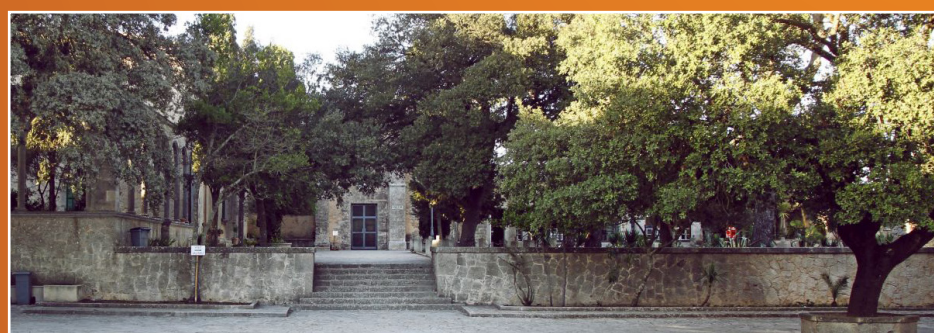
The Monastery of Cura is one of the most sacred places on Majorca and one of its most spectacular viewpoints. It stands at the top of the mountain Puig de Randa, 548 metres above sea level. In this real “sacred mountain” there are two further monasteries: Sant Honorat and Gràcia, which used to be old hermitages built shortly after King James I’s Conquest in the 13th century. According to legend, the great Majorcan sage and mystic Ramon Llull was the first hermit to ever live in Randa around 1274.

The mountain Puig de Randa is currently recognised as ANEI (“Àrea Natural d’Especial Interès”, meaning “Natural Area of Special Interest”) because of its natural and scenic values. The weather there is dry and is said to be healthy. On a very bright day, from the top you can see 36 Majorcan villages, the Cabrera archipelago and even Ibiza. It is a beautiful, welcoming place that is run by the TOR Franciscans (Third Order Regular).



GARDEN

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The small garden of the monastery brings the *Canticle of the Sun* to mind, written by Saint Francis of Assisi, the first ecologist in history according to many people.

But who was Saint Francis of Assisi really? He was born in Assisi, Italy, in 1182. He was son to a rich Italian cloth merchant. However, he decided to live a simple life based on austerity, prayer and devotion to others. He had many followers and was canonised two years after his death (1226). He was the founder of the Franciscan Order, which defends austerity, the love for God and the love for the whole Creation.

OUTER PORTAL

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A stone portal crowned by a cross welcomes visitors when they reach the Monastery of Cura. It dates from 1682 and was restored in 1916. The portal features the coat of arms of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis of Penance (with the initials OPC), Ramon Llull’s half-moon and the initials JHS (“Jesus, Saviour of men” in Latin). On the lintel is a passage of the book *Blanquerna*, written in Catalan by Ramon Llull in 1282: “*Dear son, greet Our Lady because she gives us health and she blesses us.*”



RAMON LLULL

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A statue of Ramon Llull (Raimundo Lulio) welcomes visitors when they enter the garden of the Monastery of Cura, on the right-hand side. It is easy to recognise the Majorcan sage: he has a beard, wears humble clothes and holds a quill and a scroll in his hands. Ramon Llull was born in 1232 and died in 1315. He was a very important mystic and wise man linked with the Franciscan order. He is considered to be the most universal Majorcan citizen of all time. He travelled all around the Mediterranean and met kings and popes with the aim of promoting the conversion of “infidels” by means of philosophical reasoning. He was also the creator of the literary Catalan language and the promoter of the relationship between cultures. When he was 30 years old he retired to a mountain on Majorca, where he lived as a hermit in a cave. According to legend, he retired to Puig de Randa, where he reportedly achieved enlightenment, which made him write *Ars Magna*, his most ambitious philosophical work.



MONASTERY

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The poet Maria Antònia Salvà (1869-1958) from Lluçmajor (Majorca) wrote a poem at the beginning of the 20th century in which she complained about the dilapidated Monastery of Cura. The Third Order Regular (TOR) Franciscans started taking care of the monastery in 1913 and boosted the restoration of the monastery. The restoration was actually Bishop Pere Joan Campins' idea, who had visited the ruins in 1906 with two architects: Antoni Gaudí and Joan Rubió. The monastery we see today was built in the 1950s by the Majorcan architect Josep Ferragut. Once the restoration works were completed, the friars established Majorca's novitiate in the monastery, which remained active between 1956 and 1987. Today, the monastery houses the Franciscan community of Cura. The main entrance to the building is crowned by a statue of the great Majorcan sage Ramon Llull, since he was closely linked both with the Franciscan Order and the mountain.

MUSEUM

7

The charming museum of the monastery is located in the old Grammar Room. The museum is dedicated to Ramon Llull and the history of Cura. The display cases and the shelves exhibit old books and documents. The museum also houses works of art and items related to worship, popular religiosity and the agricultural past of Randa and its surroundings. In addition, it is a place where conferences and concerts are held.



GRAMMAR ROOM

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The “Grammar Room” refers to the Latin boarding school that the Monastery of Cura used to house in the past. But why was there a school at the top of the mountain? Perhaps it has to do with the fact that teachers preferred an isolated place so that students could focus on Latin, a very difficult language to learn that was a requirement for university admission. The origins of the school go back to the 15th century, when Lullist Pere Joan Llobet started giving classes in Ramon Llull's Art. The actual Grammar Room was founded in the 16th century respecting Ramon Llull's mystic and philosophical aura. The school had 150 students in 1558. In addition to Grammar, they were also instructed in Rhetoric, Latin and Greek.

Nevertheless, after three centuries of prestige, the school of Cura had to close its doors. The Lullist chair was moved to Palma, since the city was better connected and easier for the students to reach. The actual Room was the teaching room. At the end was an altarpiece dedicated to Saint Catherine, patron of students, which was later replaced by a bookcase featuring a painting of Ramon Llull.



ROSEBUSH PATIO

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In front of the main entrance to the church is a wild rosebush. It is decorated with ceramic tiles that depict some verses by the great poet María Antonia Salvà from Lluçmajor (Majorca). The verses are dedicated to this beautiful bush. It brings us to mind the bramble bush into which Saint Francis of Assisi threw himself in an attempt to overcome temptation. In contact with his body, the bramble bush turned miraculously into a wonderful rosebush without thorns.



CHURCH

9

The Church of Cura is the heart of the monastery, since it houses the Gothic statue of the Virgin of Cura. The statue was carved in stone from Santanyí and dates from the early 16th century. The church is the oldest building in the monastery and is located where a group of chapels used to stand in the past. It has several inscriptions, which leads to think that it was built gradually: The oldest date (1662) is in the Christ Chapel. The facade of the church features a beautiful belfry with one bell. As you enter the building you find a nativity scene on the right, which can be admired all year long following the Franciscan tradition of the nativity scene in Greccio (Italy). The wooden sculpture of Christ dates from the 17th century. On the right of the chancel is a door that leads to the Room of the Virgin of Cura, patron saint of students and one of the most venerated virgins on Mallorca (in Catalan, the word “cura” actually means “care” and “healing”).



SHOP

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In the shop visitors can buy the famous “Licor Randa”, a spirit manufactured following a traditional Franciscan recipe.

