

# Sant Jordi's Day

Barcelona  
April, 23rd



**Roses, books and lovers: Barcelona is full of them on 23 April. In Catalonia the World Book Day becomes an especially romantic festivity.**

**The people in Catalonia celebrate the day of their patron saint, Sant Jordi, with a curious tradition. If you want to know what it's about, its origin and how to enjoy this day, please carry on reading...**

## What is the Festival of Sant Jordi and when is it?



It is one of the most original celebrations in Catalonia and takes place in spring, on 23 April. It is a very popular festival that combines culture and romanticism, celebrating both World Book Day and Valentine's Day. On this day, it is custom for couples to exchange gifts: the men receive a book and the women receive a rose. However, this has developed over time, so both men and women can receive books and roses. Book and flower stalls are set up along the streets of Barcelona. The streets fill with people walking around stalls, looking for a gift for their beloved, and for their family and friends too. You will find the latest publications, see well-known artists signing copies of their books, and of course, smell the scent of the roses.

## What can you see and do in Barcelona on 23 April?



It is a day for walking around the city and enjoying the atmosphere of the festival. Streets such as [La Rambla](#), Paseo de Gracia, Paseo de Sant Joan and Rambla de Catalunya are must-visits because they are full of stalls selling books and roses, as well as literary activities such as workshops and recitals. It is also easy to enjoy the 'sardanas' (traditional dances) and the popular 'castells' (human towers) throughout the day in places such as the Plaza Sant Jaume. Sant Jordi day is also an opportunity to visit buildings such as the [Town Hall](#), the [Palau Güell](#), the art nouveau complex of Sant Pau, the Ateneo and the [Palau de la Generalitat](#), where special activities or open days with free tours are usually organised. One of the most special tours is the [Casa Batlló](#), where Gaudí's architecture depicts the legend of Sant Jordi and the dragon, which is related to the festival.

## What is the origin of the festival?

This curious festival comes from a mixture of traditions from different periods. It coincides, on one hand, with the fact that Sant Jordi has been the patron saint of Catalonia since the 15th century and on the other hand, it comes from the famous legend of Saint George and the dragon (the knight defeats the dragon, who was terrorising the village and the princess, and after penetrating the dragon with his sword, Saint George gave the princess one of the beautiful red roses that spilled out of the beast's body) and the old medieval tradition of visiting the Chapel of Sant Jordi in the Palacio de la Generalitat, where a rose fair or 'lovers fair' used to take place. This is why Sant Jordi is also the patron saint of lovers in Catalonia.

