

Ajuntament de Tortosa



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de Tortosa

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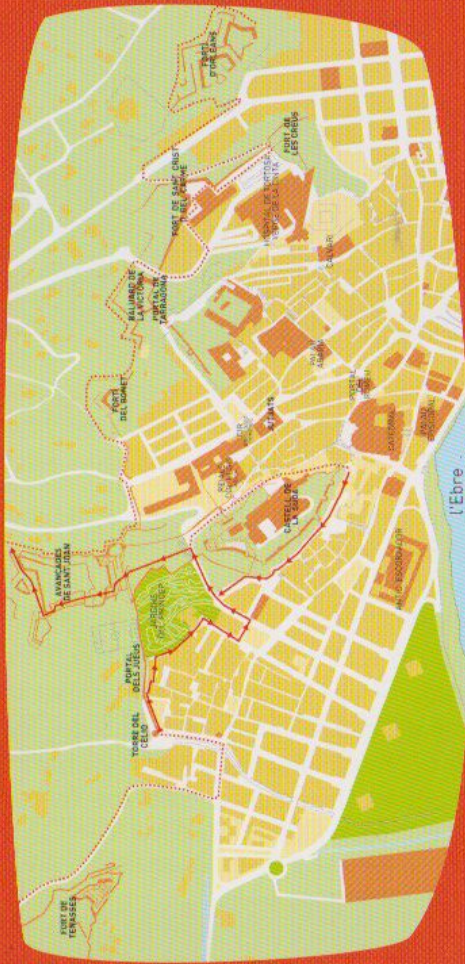
CATALUNYA



Generalitat de Catalunya  
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Terres de l'Ebre



SAETA.net - Photography: Joaquín Ismael, Guillermo Barberá, Joan Carles Prats

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The Walk of the

# Fortifications

St John's Advanced Fortifications

TORTOSA  TURISME

[www.tortosaturisme.cat](http://www.tortosaturisme.cat)

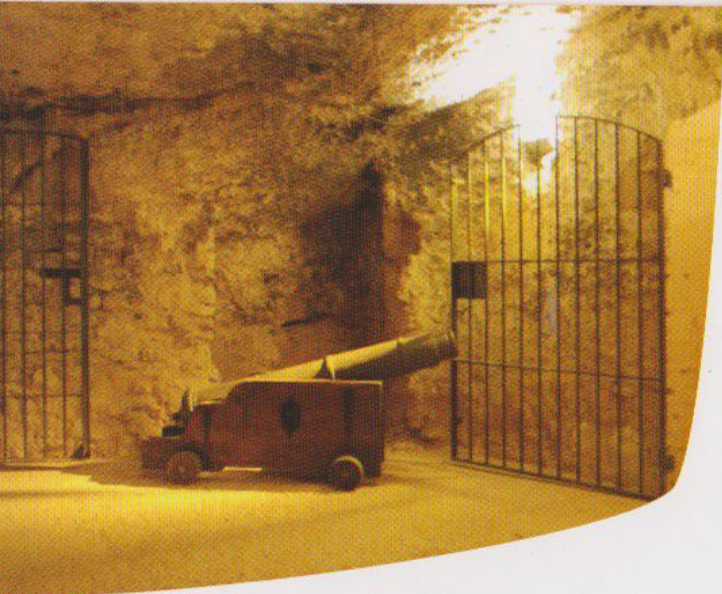
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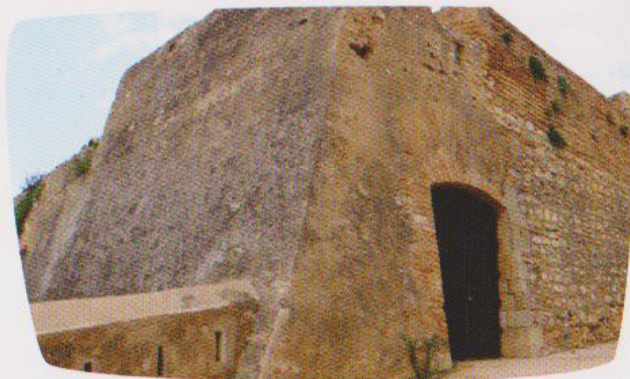
Tortosa had been known as a stronghold for many years before these fortifications. The fact that it controlled the stretch of the river Ebre down to its river mouth as well as the overland route (the Via Augusta), the only route between Barcelona and Valencia, made it into a city of great importance strategically and commercially.

The military and defensive centre of Tortosa had as its key the river Ebre and the fact that it flowed through Catalunya, Aragon and Valencia meant that its importance only increased through the centuries.



The most emblematic group of fortifications in the city of Tortosa is the Arabian Castle "Castell de la Suda" which dates from the tenth century. Tortosa, in addition to the castle, also preserves part of the medieval walled constructions built in the fourteenth century. These can be found in different parts of the city and you can even see some of the original gates that limited access to the old city centre.

Here we ought to point out that the city enjoys one of the most extensive and well preserved groups of fortifications within the whole of Catalunya. There you can find all the typical elements found in a complex construction of this type. That is to say, different moats/ditches defended by bastions with their gun emplacements for the cannon, other architectural elements such as parapet walks, guard posts and covered entrances located between the different areas of the fortifications.



### The Advanced Fortifications of St John's castle

European monarchies contracted the best military engineers of the time, men with great architectural and engineering knowledge. In 1642 Luis de Gandolfo was in Tortosa fortifying the city. This Italian engineer drew up the project for the advanced defenses of St Joan, one of the most important works within the plans for the fortification of the Tortosa of the seventeenth century.

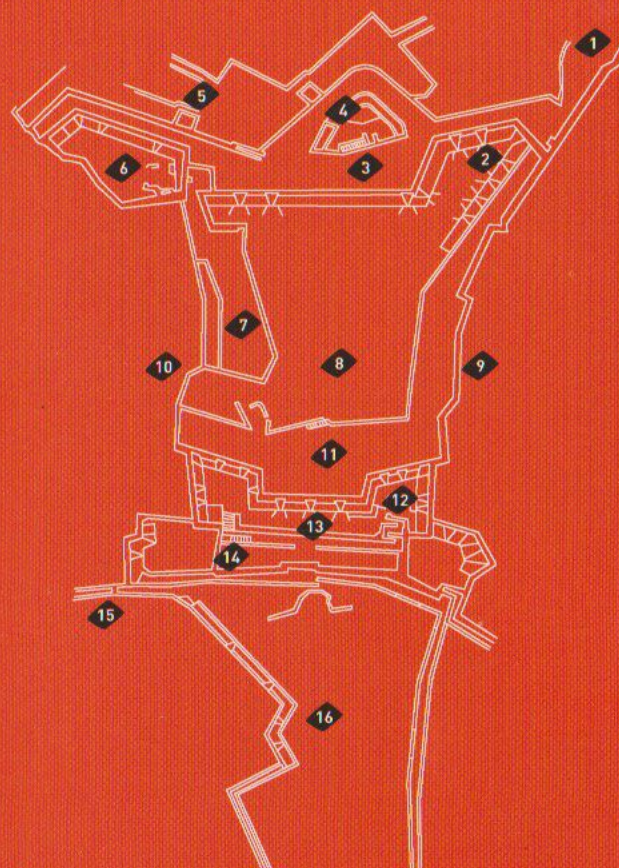


This collection of forts, also known as the Hornabec, started to be built in the second half of the century. It is comprised of two main groups of fortifications, typical of the time, together with a fort on the approaches.

The entrance to the interior is through the first main area of the fortification. This first part has a long open ditch that finishes in an arrow shape and even though it forms part of a larger complex it could easily be considered to be independent. The elevated sections are dominated by different forts and bastions, all interconnected. (These include the first advanced fortifications, the approach road, covered gun emplacements, guardposts, the main ditch, the parade ground, the north and south secondary walls and the inner ditch).

The second section of forts is formed by two half battlements in a polygonal shape connected by sections of wall. In the western extreme this section of wall connects to the wall that dates back to the seventeenth century, separated from the eighteenth century section by a narrow and deep ditch.

Finally there is the defensive section from the fourteenth century, this section unifies all of the different defensive parts that have been built along the different historical periods of the fortifications.



- 1 Access road
- 2 First advanced fortifications
- 3 Main ditch
- 4 Ravelin
- 5 Open path
- 6 Covered gun emplacement
- 7 Connection and cave (counter breastwork: lower connection wall)
- 8 Parade ground
- 9 Counter breastwork south
- 10 Counter breastwork north
- 11 Interior ditch (Breastwork)
- 12 First line of defences arsenal (exhibition)
- 13 Upper bastion
- 14 Interior ditch of the medieval fort
- 15 Medieval wall
- 16 St John's Escarpment

