



# BESALÚ

THE MEDIEVAL JOURNEY

PHOTO GUIDE

COSTA BRAVA PIRINEU DE GIRONA



Costa Brava  
Pirineu de Girona



Diputació de Girona



**G!rona** Patronat de Turisme  
Costa Brava Girona

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# THE PHOTOGRAPHERS



## PETE HECK

Pete Heck is a photographer from Western Canada and has been traveling with his wife non-stop since 2009. His adventures have brought him to over 50 countries and he's now visited Costa Brava, Girona and the Pyrenees multiple times. Pete's photography portfolio consists of a variety of imagery from sweeping landscapes to urban scenes. Day or night you'll always find Pete with a camera in hand.



## SHERRY OTT

Sherry Ott is a travel writer and photographer who has been travelling around the world since 2006. She's been to Costa Brava, Girona, and the Pyrenees multiple times and particularly likes the challenge of photographing old stones in different ways. She tends to focus on the little details of a place that give it character and texture.



## ABOUT THIS BOOK

**How many times have you looked at photos from a location, and wondered:**

**Where did they take that shot?**

**How did they get that angle?**

**What time of day is the best time to capture that sight?**

**How did they get that perspective?**

Take a journey through medieval towns of Costa Brava and Girona Pyrenees. The region is full of imposing castles, walled cities, and ruins of centuries past. Medieval towns this old and beautiful should be captured to give you lasting holiday memories.

You don't want your photos to be lost in the sea of average vacation pictures like everyone else's! This book's goal is to move your travel pictures from average to great as you traverse the most beautiful medieval villages in both Costa Brava and Girona Pyrenees.

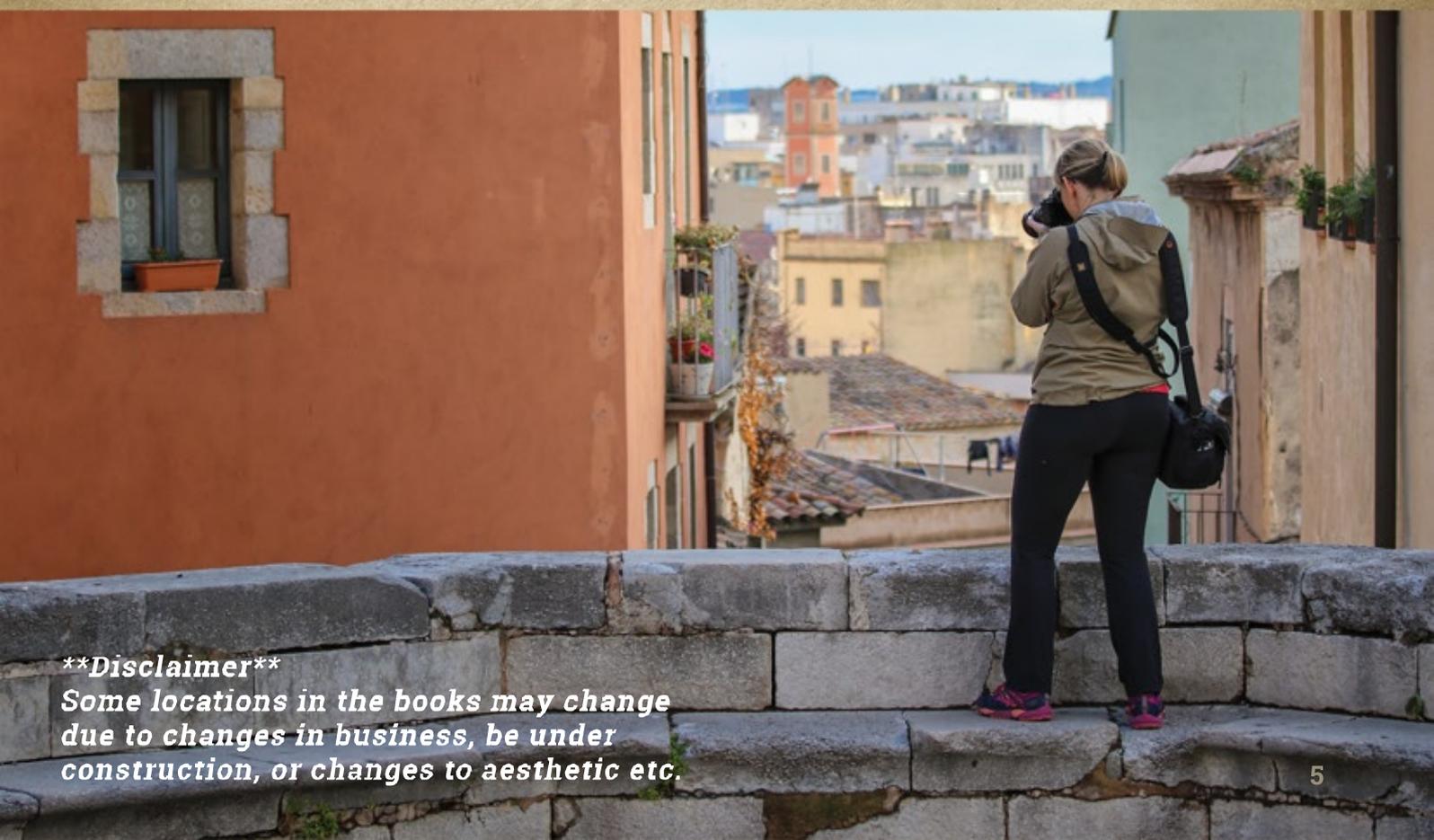
You don't need an expensive camera to capture your vacation like a pro, you just need some ideas of where to go and how to set up the shot. This ebook is aimed at amateur and intermediate photographers who want to get a photography concept of a location.

You will be taken to the exact places where the photos were shot, provided tips on how to recreate the shot, and be inspired to utilize these tips on your own as you walk the historic cobblestone paths. If you are using a phone camera or point and shoot, then just know that you may not be able to compose as wide of a shot as a DSLR can.

You'll be introduced to five medieval towns in Costa Brava and Girona Pyrenees. Girona, as the largest town in the region, has 6 different walks leading you through the old town, best views, riverwalk, gardens, delicious markets, and you'll even be transported back to medieval times with a Game of Thrones filming walk.

The journey will bring you inland to go beyond Besalú's famous Romanesque bridge and capture its other ancient sights. You'll head to the Costa Brava coast to see the best intact walled coastal city in the region, Tossa de Mar. Next you head north to the foothills of the Pyrenees to visit Castelló d'Empúries and to photograph its water filled moat with a backdrop of old city walls. Finally you'll walk through the ancient, rutted, original streets of medieval Peratallada.

**After following these photo walks, you'll walk away from each of these towns with a gallery of professional looking photos and memories.**



**\*\*Disclaimer\*\***

***Some locations in the books may change due to changes in business, be under construction, or changes to aesthetic etc.***



# INFORMATION

## - BESALÚ -

Besalú is a gateway to the Pyrenees and sits in the volcanic region of La Garrotxa in Catalonia. It served as an important medieval town with a rotation of Roman, Visigoth, and Moorish rulers; and even an independent country at one point. However what you see today in the cobblestone town is mainly dated from the 11th to 14th centuries.

The crowning glory and gateway to the town is the 12th Century Romanesque bridge over the River Fluvià. It is also known for the restored mikveh, a ritual Jewish bath, and the remains of a synagogue near the river's edge, all reminding you of the thriving Jewish community here in the 11th and 12th century.

From a photography standpoint, this is a beautiful town to capture since it's so intact and had been painstakingly restored in many areas. You can spend hours capturing angles of the bridge alone; walking over it, viewing it from the river bed, and from various lookouts in the town. And on the weekend, you'll find local fishermen dotting the river banks and bringing life to your photos.



## PHOTOGRAPHY TIPS

The walk will take approximately 1-2 hours (depending on how many photos you take).

The two churches are only open during services (schedules are posted on the doors), so try to plan your photography walk around those if possible. Otherwise you'll have to stick to photos of the exterior only.

Fishermen do drive their cars up to the riverbank near the bridge in the mornings (mainly on weekends), so you may have a hard time getting a wide angle medieval feel of the bridge with cars parked in your frame.

If you want to get your images with little to no people in them, then you have to go early in the morning (before 9AM) or evening (after 8PM). It's a very popular tourist town during the day and is filled with people everywhere you look.

Entrance to the Mikveh Jewish Bath is only allowed with a guide. Check with the tourist office (<http://www.Besalu.cat/>) and go with a guide or group to get inside. You can also just stop by the tourist office in person in Besalú and join a group.

Nighttime can be a lot of fun to capture the town of Besalú. At dusk a beautiful blue falls over the city, but wait for the streetlights to come on. Once they do you'll need a tripod or somewhere to rest your camera to limit the shake. For an easy shot, some smart phones will have a 'night' setting, but the results may not be that appealing. To achieve a star effect on the lights you will need a low aperture (high f-stop number)







## 01. FROM BESALÚ BRIDGE INTO THE CITY

f / 7.1 | 1/1000 | ISO 100

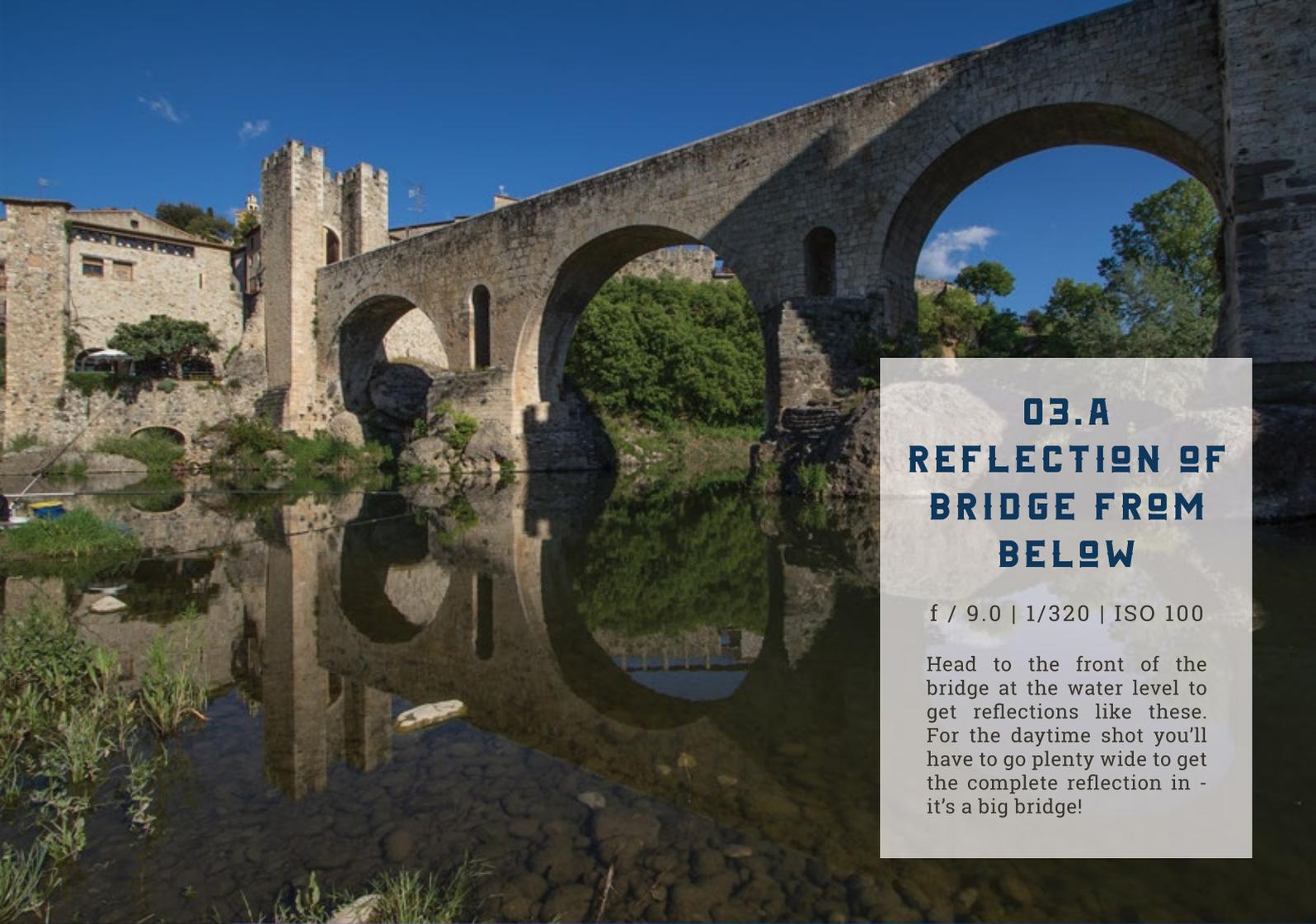
There are so many great angles and shots on this very 'human looking' bridge! As you enter the city you can play with the composition of completely symmetrical, or get a little depth of field and texture in the shot like this shot. Focus on the textures of the side of the bridge but be sure to keep the rest in soft focus and wide enough to see how the bridge leads you into the city. .



## 02. REFLECTION SHOT BACK OF BRIDGE

f / 13.0 | 1/40 | ISO 100

This is a unique angle of the bridge in Besalú. The water is nearly always calm on this side, but you have to be creative how to get the shot. You will need to climb up onto an old bridge foothold and stay balanced. The results are worth the effort.



### 03.A REFLECTION OF BRIDGE FROM BELOW

f / 9.0 | 1/320 | ISO 100

Head to the front of the bridge at the water level to get reflections like these. For the daytime shot you'll have to go plenty wide to get the complete reflection in - it's a big bridge!



### 03.B REFLECTION OF BRIDGE FROM BELOW

f / 14.0 | 20" | ISO 100

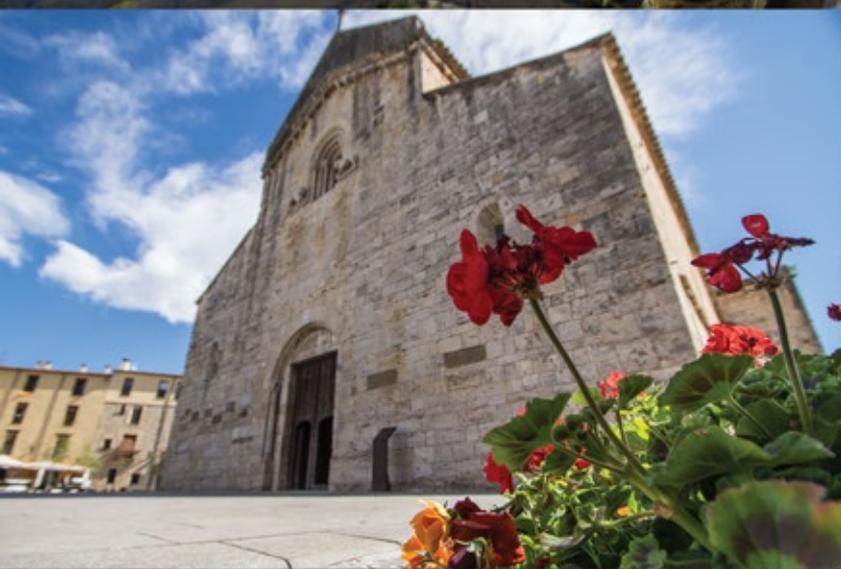
Early morning and at dusk will be the best time for reflections as the water is usually still and the light is optimal.



## 04. CREEK BED AND VIEW OF BESALÚ

f / 8.0 | 1/400 | ISO 100

Leave the bridge behind for now and focus on this great view of the old city and the Jewish area from this point. If you don't have a particularly great sky to work with at this stop, then be sure to get down low and get the rocks in the foreground.



## 05.A MONESTIR DE SANT PERE

f / 4.0 | 1/500 | ISO 100

In the summer months there are flowers in bloom around Sant Pere, so try to add some colour to the shot by getting down really low with your widest angle possible and shoot back up at the church. You can even try placing your camera on the ground for a shot. Sometimes having a subject such as the church alone in the photo can be boring so try and use subjects to offer some contrast and make the photo more visually appealing.



## 05.B MONESTIR DE SANT PERE

f / 2.8 | 1/30 | ISO 800

When shooting inside the church it's only possible during service hours. Ask the local tourist board when service is and it is best to arrive 30 minutes before or stay afterward as to not disrupt the attendees during service. Note that most churches do not allow tripods, but monopods usually are allowed.



## 06. CHAIRS DOWN ALLEY

f / 9.0 | 1/60 | ISO 125

These chairs next to 3 Arcs Hotel added a pop of colour to the brown stone walls and the beautifully intact pointed archway. It's a narrow alley so you may have to shoot this vertical to get in the entire scene as you don't want to cut off the point of the arch.



## 07. GLIMPSE OF ESSLÉSIA DE SANT VICENÇ

f / 11.0 | 1/100 | ISO 100

Getting a complete picture of Església de Sant Vicenç is nearly impossible since there are other buildings surrounding it so closely that you aren't able to move far enough back to get the whole church in view, even with a wide angle lens. Look for other unique ways to get in entire facade of the church by moving further down the alley and taking a vertical shot. Consider playing around with depth of field and make the church the centre of attention.



## 08. ESGLÉSIA DE SANT VICENÇ

f / 9.0 | 1/320 | ISO 800

This was once used as a private entrance by the Baron to enter the church. It certainly has a more appealing appearance than the front of the church but it can be a challenge to fit the whole door into your composition. If you can't fit it all, consider a cropped image or shoot from the bottom looking upwards.



## 09. STEPS UP TO IRON DOOR

f / 7.1 | 1/25 | ISO 125

Another good example of leading lines. The steps naturally guide your eye up to the iron door. Find ways to lead the eyes of your viewers to your subject you want to highlight in the photograph.



## 10. TREE IN PLAZA

f / 16.0 | 1/100 | ISO 100

The iconic tree in the main plaza. Note that this is a seasonal image and in spring time the branches are still bare and you can get some cool shadows with the sun above. In summer, this tree will be very full of leaves and you may not even recognize the scene.



## 11.A PLAZA BY DAY

f / 8.0 | 1/200 | ISO 100

The row of columns and arches stands out in this shot. Go early for few people and vendors in your shot! It also helps to minimize the unavoidable harsh shadows in the narrow streets.



## 11.A PLAZA BY NIGHT

f / 20.0 | 13" | ISO 250

Also take a peek at night, the streets are usually void of people and cars.



## 12.A TWO SHOTS ALONG THE STREET

f / 8.0 | 1/100 | ISO 100

The arch down the street creates a natural frame while a leather lock on an old wooden door, albeit easy to miss, has a beautiful detailed look.



## 12.B TWO SHOTS ALONG THE STREET

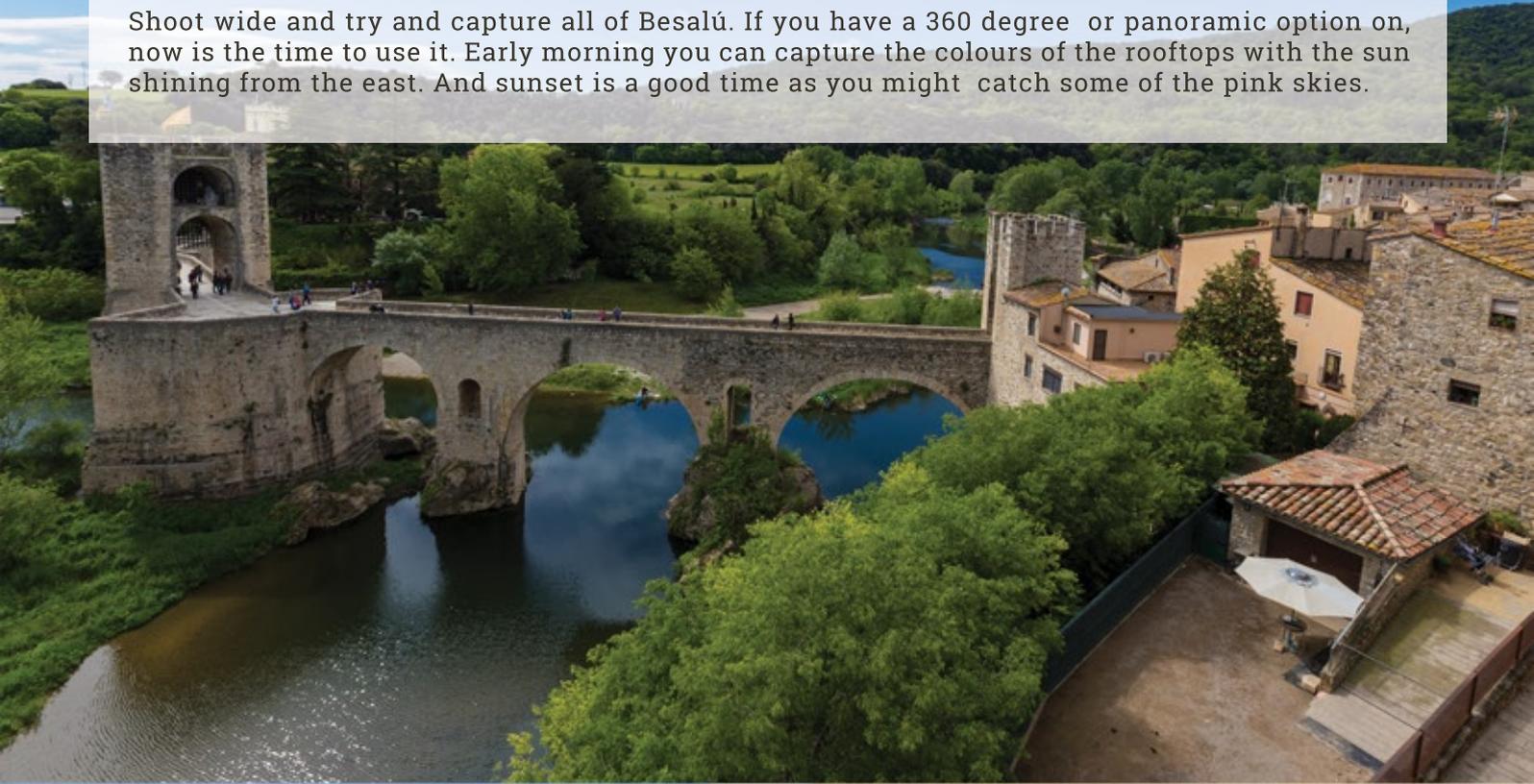
f / 4.0 | 1/80 | ISO 320

Be sure to stop and notice the small, fine details.

## 13. VIEW FROM ABOVE

f / 10.0 | 1/125 | ISO 100

Shoot wide and try and capture all of Besalú. If you have a 360 degree or panoramic option on, now is the time to use it. Early morning you can capture the colours of the rooftops with the sun shining from the east. And sunset is a good time as you might catch some of the pink skies.



## 14. ESGLÉSIA DE SANT MARTÍ

f / 8.0 | 1/250 | ISO 100

Just barely outside the city walls Església de Sant Martí is worth the short walk. Be sure to stand far enough back to include the road on the side of the picture as a leading line. After you take the shot from afar, walk up the stairs and see if the gate is open and go inside the grounds. There's a beautiful old door as well as a small cemetery in the back of the church.



## 15. CHAIRS ON WALL

f / 7.1 | 1/400 | ISO 100

Look up! Besalú has chairs in odd places all over the city. You'll likely walk down this street many times before you notice these two high up on the wall. To get the steepness perspective of the chairs on the wall, stand very close to the wall and experiment with placing the camera on the wall and shooting up. Keep in mind the lines formed by the top of the buildings create a nice composition.





## 16.A SYNAGOGUE BATHS

f / 5.0 | 1/25 | ISO 2000

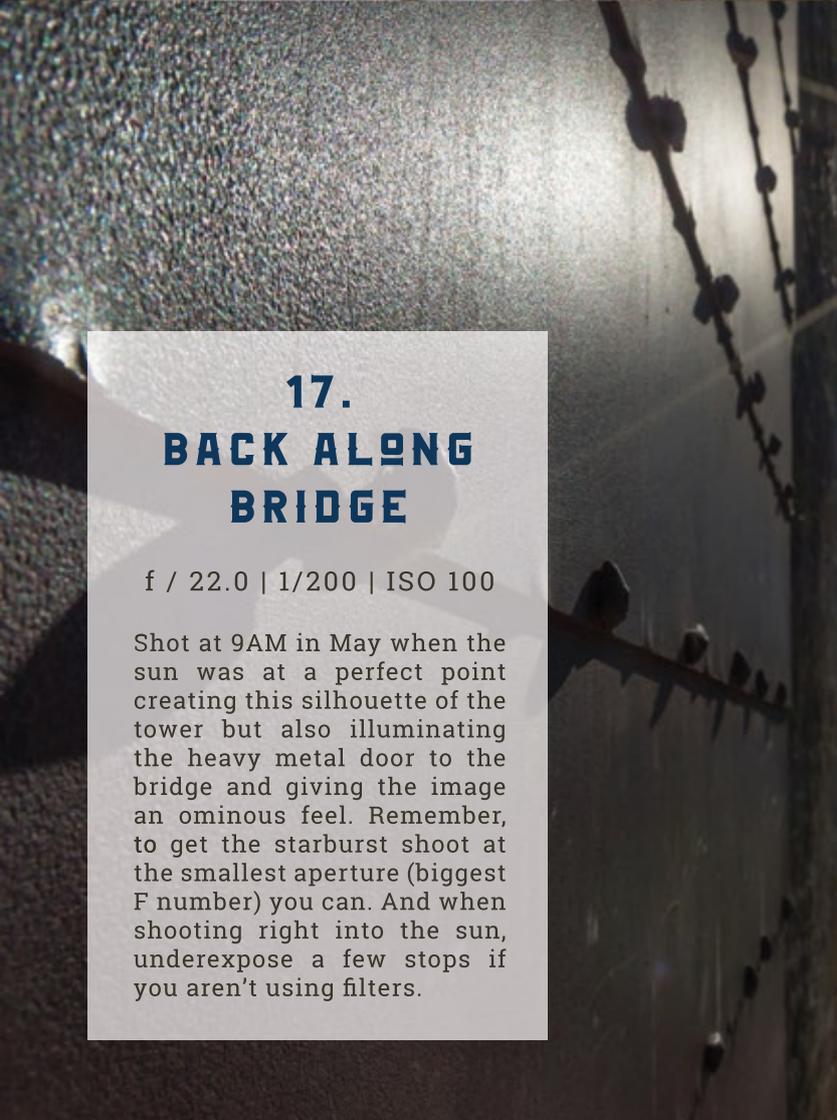
The Inquisition nearly eradicated all evidence of Jewish life in Spain. It was in 1964 that this Mikveh was discovered and restoration began. The Mikveh is under lock and key, but with a guide you can get access to it. It's a small, dark space so a tripod and wide angle lens help get the shots you want.



## 16.B SYNAGOGUE BATHS

f / 5.0 | 1/50 | ISO 6400

The menorah happened to be placed inside so it was a great piece to use if you have to abandon the wide shot and instead focus on some details of the bath. If you go with a larger group, hang towards the back and try to stay longer to get the shot you want with fewer people.



## 17. BACK ALONG BRIDGE

f / 22.0 | 1/200 | ISO 100

Shot at 9AM in May when the sun was at a perfect point creating this silhouette of the tower but also illuminating the heavy metal door to the bridge and giving the image an ominous feel. Remember, to get the starburst shoot at the smallest aperture (biggest F number) you can. And when shooting right into the sun, underexpose a few stops if you aren't using filters.





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