

RIBES DE FRESER  
**CASTLE OF ST PERE**  
 Mediaeval fortress



The town of Ribes de Freser arose in the shadows of the Castle of Sant Pere, today an archaeological site invoking the life in the Middle Ages, from its founding by the Counts of Cerdanya around the year 1000 until its abandonment in the 16th century. The ruins of the castle are an archaeological sign of the Middle Ages, and the construction dates back to the 11th century. From the time it was abandoned, the surroundings of the town and the castle were populated by a colony of singular characters called 'golluts' or dwarfs due to their physical deformations related to a popular legend.



## GEOGRAPHIC COORDINATES

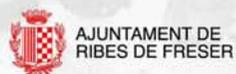
Latitude: 42° 18' 35.28" N  
 Longitude: 2° 10' 18.3" E

## OTHER PLACES OF INTEREST

Joan Triadú Exhibition  
 Hydroelectric Power Stations  
 Church of Santa Maria  
 Romanesque Hermitages  
 Springs  
 Rack Train Museum

## GUIDED TOURS

Contact the Tourist Office  
[www.vallderibes.cat](http://www.vallderibes.cat) – 972 72 77 28



AJUNTAMENT DE  
 RIBES DE FRESER



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## HISTORY



The Castle of Sant Pere is an 11th century fortress which initially had but a small tower where the capital keeper and his family lived. Its function was to watch over the border between the County of Cerdanya, to which Ribes belonged, and that of Besalú. In 1276, the Ribes Valley became part of the kingdom of Majorca, which was when a veritable defence network was built due to the growing conflict between the two brotherly monarchies.

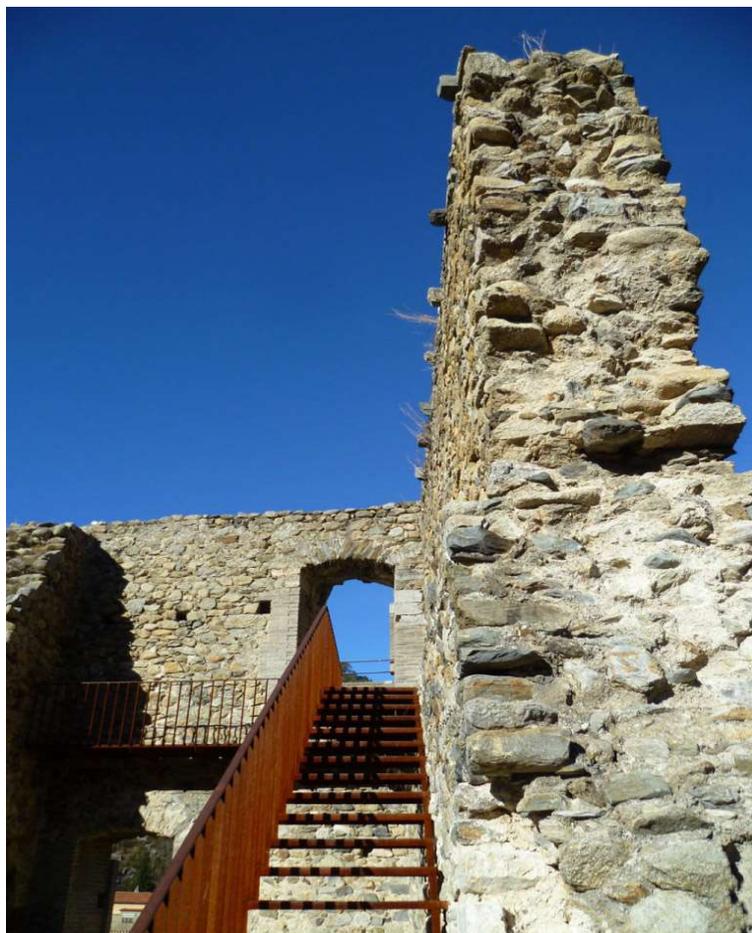
The fortress suffered several seizures and incursions over the years, which left it damaged, although they continued to repair it to face new attacks. It was in 1374 when the castle took on its current appearance, with different superimposed terraces: an upper terrace on which a large rectangular building was built, and still partially stands, which worked as the tower of homage and the sovereign headquarters; and two lower terraces with the castle chapel, revealed by the recent archaeological work, and other rooms for living and storage, which worked as a jussà complex. At the same time, around the north a deep moat was dug to enormously improve the defensive possibilities of the complex by isolating it from the rest of the hill where it was located. Water was provided by a small covered cistern with a stone vault, located in the north east corner.

In the 15th century, the fortress was severely damaged by the earthquakes that affected Catalonia in 1427 and 1428. During the war of 1462-1472, we find some sparse information referring to the castle, and work was done once more on it in the 17th century when the new border was created with the French monarchy due to the loss of the counties of Roussillon and Cerdanya through the so-called Treaty of the Pyrenees (1659).

The Hispanic monarchy tried to create a new network of fortifications based on pre-existing castles and fortresses to prevent possible attacks, while the French systematically destroyed the Castle of Sant Pere. Finally, after this time, only sporadic occupation of the hill in the mid-19th century is detected, when it was used as cemetery around the castle, and much more recently there is the legend of the dwarfs of Ribes.



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## RESTORATION



The restoration project promoted by the Council of Ribes de Freser and Girona Provincial Council has aimed to give value to the fortress. The action started at the end of the nineteen eighties with the consolidation of the visible elements as well as a small archaeological intervention.

Since 2005, different interventions have been made in order to assure the preservation of the complex once excavated, and to open it up to visits and study. The project initially aimed to make the monument accessible from the top, by building a metal bridge over the moat to allow access to the tower of homage.

However, following the archaeological interventions that have allowed the structure and the original operation of the complex to be understood, given that the castle chapel was found, and also the southern entrance to the fortress, as was typical of mediaeval castles, a route has been set up for visits, adapted to the monument's layout, to try to maximise the original roots. Therefore the main access has been recovered by opening the contention wall which covered it, making an embankment cutting and maintaining the enclosure walls built when it was no longer being used as a fortress.

As a result, the rock has had to be cut to make staircase (restoring the original steps) which follows the path, and an elevated ramp very close to ground following the former traces of the original access slope. The remaining access is also follow the original traces but with raised elements to leave them in view and to thus show the contrast between the new and the original stone elements.

In 2016, the work on the castle chapel and the north-west part of the complex will be finished, and the informative panels to guide visitors have been put in place.

