



ENG

# DISCOVER INCA

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through the evolution  
of the city



**GUIDED TOURS  
TO INCA'S HERITAGE**



Ajuntament d'Inca



#2

# Industry in Inca. The world of shoes

Speaker: Miquel Pieras Villalonga, historian.

## The sculptures of the shoemakers<sup>3</sup>

### La Quartera square

This sculptural ensemble is comprised of two pieces: a life-size male and a female shoemaker, who are sitting on chairs working. The female figure is dying a shoe with a brush. The male figure is handling the sole of a shoe with some pliers. These bronze sculptures date back to the year 2003 and are the work of Rosa G. Ferrándiz (Barcelona 1933-2015). Ferrándiz produced an abundance of sculptural works, above all on female themes, with a characteristic Mediterranean beauty, based on a figurative, classical and traditional style, using materials such as bronze, iron and marble. The two sculptures represent the traditional shoemakers who handcrafted footwear in Inca until well into the 20th century.

The oldest written references to artisanal shoemakers in Inca go back to the 13th century. In 1280 we hear of a cobbler who lived in Inca: Ramon Batle. We know that there were at least 5 cobblers in Inca in 1329. The most significant year of the medieval period is 1458, when the Inca cobblers' guild was established, the first guild outside of Palma. We know that the guild celebrated its feast on the day of its patron saint, Saint Mark. The chapel of Saint Mark of the shoemakers' guild is located in the church of Sant Francesc of Inca, and still conserves its guild's coat of arms. The cobblers of Inca chose Saint



Mark as a patron because his biography is related to footwear. According to an ancient legend, Saint Mark the Evangelist was the bishop of Alexandria. One day he had to go out to preach the gospel, but his sandals were broken. Mark visited a cobbler, Anianus, to have them mended, but Anianus had a cut on his hand. Mark miraculously healed his hand and Anianus was able to mend the sandals. In time, Anianus succeeded Mark as bishop of Alexandria.

The guild system of the shoemakers of Inca worked as it did all over Europe. There were some master cobblers who made the footwear in their little workshops, aided by some skilled workers, the officials, and apprentices, always using very simple, rudimentary tools. The trade was usually transmitted from parents to children. The production of footwear was dedicated to the local markets of Mallorca, but we also know that some was exported. The manufacture of footwear in Inca retained guild-like characteristics right up until the early 20th century.

### **The monument to Antoni Fluxà Figuerola<sup>4</sup>** **Bisbe Llopart street, 99**

The monument to Antoni Fluxà Figuerola was designed by the sculptor Joan Borrell Nicolau (1888-1951), but executed by Horacio de Eguía (Gernika, 1914 - Palma, 1991). It is a monument with a rectangular sandstone base, on which there is a pedestal formed by different superposed bodies, with an allegorical female sculpture, two bronze reliefs related to the manufacture of footwear (one shows an elderly cobbler working manually in his workshop, and the other depicts a young man working in front of a machine in a factory), and a commemorative inscription. On the top is a bronze bust of Antoni Fluxà. Borrell was a fairly prolific sculptor on Mallorca. Two of his sculptures are in Inca, "Faith" and "Hope", in the municipal cemetery. Also by this artist is the sculpture of brother Juníper Sierra and that of Ramon Llull, both in Palma. The sculptor Horacio de Eguía created classical forms, with figures full of serenity, devoid of all shrillness, and of the utmost simplicity, always within the confines of realism.

Traditionally, Antoni Fluxà (1853-1918) has been considered the father of Inca's footwear manufacturing with modern, industrial systems. Fluxà was born into a family of artisans from which different branches emerged who also





dedicated themselves to the footwear and leather industries; some of them live on today in Inca, manufacturing footwear brands that are famous the world over. Antoni Fluxà was the catalyst who enabled the transition process from artisanal production to industry in Inca. In the late 19th and early 20th century, he brought different craftsmen together in his workshop and opened up new markets in which to sell his production. Simultaneously with other entrepreneurs, Fluxà began mechanising the manufacture of footwear in 1915. For this reason he built a large factory (Carrer del Bispe Llompart, 169) based on a project by the architect Guillem Reynés (1877-1918). Up until 1898, the footwear market in Inca had been local, but also relied on exports to Cuba. But when Spain lost this colony, Fluxà sought out new markets. We know that he travelled around Spain in search of new clients, and probably to several European countries. The poor reputation of Mallorcan footwear at the time, due to the low quality of the products and manufacture, were a barrier for Fluxà, but thanks to his effort and the improvement of this bad reputation, footwear made in Inca met with a very good reception in the external markets.

### **The Footwear and Leather Museum<sup>5</sup>**

The appearance of a footwear industry based on the manufacture of good-quality products and other economic and social factors made Inca grow both demographically and in terms of the urban area. From the late 19th and early 20th century on, the town of Inca experienced a modernisation process that was closely linked to the evolution of the local industry and in particular the

leather and footwear sector. In 1915, a military barracks was inaugurated on the Palma road, designed by the architect Francesc Roca (1874-1940), with modifications by the architect Guillem Reynés (1877-1918), which is now the site of the Footwear and Leather Museum. In addition, a powerful workers' movement emerged in Inca, in the form of workers' associations and unions, with strikes and new forms of leisure like football or cinema. In 1875 the railway arrived, and in 1888 the first textile factory; in 1898 the gas factory became operational, in 1905 electricity came, and by 1927 there were 22 footwear factories. In 1943 the first leather articles and goods factory appeared. The population also grew considerably, from 7,579 inhabitants in the year 1900 to just over 30,000 in the year 2014. The growth of the footwear sector slowed during the post-war period, during the 'forties and early 'fifties of last century. In the year 1941 there were 46 footwear workshops but in 1965 we find 113, as well as several factories for heels, glues, tanned skin, plaiting, cardboard boxes or machinery repairs. Inca and its outlying district were the most industrialised areas of the Balearic Islands, but the lack of modernisation of some processes, the dispersion of the workshops, the competition of the tourist sector and the increase in price of raw materials have led to the closure of most of the factories over the last 30 years. However, some entrepreneurs and brands have survived, and produce high-quality footwear that is exported all over the world.

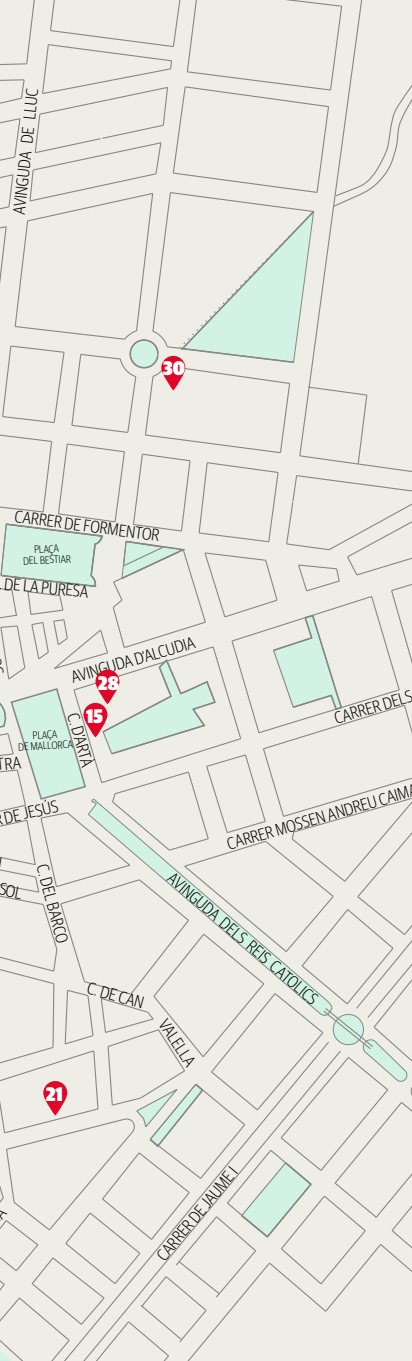


The Footwear and Leather Museum was inaugurated some years ago in what was a building of the General Luque military barracks. The ground floor of the building contains the administration offices, conference rooms and temporary exhibition halls. On the first floor there is an exhibition of the history of footwear, and of tools and machines ceded by individuals and local business people. All kinds of tools are displayed, which were formerly used by the

master artisans, along with a fairly significant collection of machines from the 20th century that were used in local factories until a few years ago.







- 1 Sant Domingo
- 2 Sant Francesc
- 3 Les escultures del sabater i la sabatera
- 4 Monument a Antoni Fluxà Figuerola
- 5 El Museu del Calçat i de la Pell
- 6 Sa Quartera
- 7 Can Fluxà
- 8 Can Mir
- 9 Teatre Principal
- 10 Can Janer
- 11 Can Florencio
- 12 Antic Hotel Domingo/Centre Parroquial
- 13 Can Amengual/Cas Metge Cifre
- 14 Ca n'Ensenyat
- 15 Antic Club Velocipedista d'Inca
- 16 Can Beltran
- 17 Antiga tintoreria de Bartomeu Fiol
- 18 Can Fiol/Can Ramis
- 19 Can Ribot
- 20 Can Marquès
- 21 Can Piritis
- 22 Merceria La Florida
- 23 La Lealtad
- 24 La Giralda
- 25 Casa del fotògraf Fiol
- 26 Cas Baster
- 27 Can Fullana
- 28 Cas Metge Amengual/Can Domènech
- 29 Església parroquial de Santa Maria
- 30 El pou de la Font Vella
- 31 Església de Sant Bartomeu
- 32 El molinar d'Inca
- 33 El primer call d'Inca
- 34 Can Monroig i el call d'Inca





- 35** Santa Magdalena
- 36** Talaiot de s'Ermita
- 37** Cementeri d'Inca
- 38** Son Vivot

L'EDITA:



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