

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Belchite, a small city founded by the Romans, was the scene of a major battle in 1937 of the Spanish Civil War. Surrounded by Republican troops and international brigades, including the Lincoln Brigade, the city was defended house by house in intensive battles for two weeks until finally the 600 soldiers that remained of the original 3000 defending the town made an attempt to escape to the Nationalist city of Zaragoza; only 120 troops made it there alive. After retaking the town, the Nationalist leader Franco prohibited reconstruction, wanting the town to remain in ruin as a symbol and monument of the civil war; excursions to the town were compulsory for all Spanish students.



The goal of the 2025 project in the old quarter will be: 1- Excavating the medieval synagogue and documenting all the civil war materials on a site plan. 2- Researching on the origins of Belchite via a test pit in the medieval quarter.



LOCATION

Belchite is located in the north-east of Spain, in the province of Aragon, 45 minutes from the provincial capital, Zaragoza. The current population of 1500 inhabitants live in the new town, which was built at a distance from the battlefield in 1939 by prisoners of war from the international brigades. The town depends mainly on agriculture for its livelihood.



HOW TO GET THERE

Daily trains and buses depart for Zaragoza from Madrid and Barcelona. From Zaragoza, there is a bus service to Belchite, making ten trips a day, that leaves from the central bus station. A timetable will be supplied.

NB: High speed trains running from Madrid and Barcelona to Zaragoza may be costly. In this case, the bus may be a less expensive option.

DATES

First team - 19 July- 1 st of August.

Second Team - 2 August - 15 th august.

Third team - 16 th August - 29 th August.

WORK SCHEDULE

On the first day there will be a guided tour of the ruins of the old city, as an introduction to the project, and on the same day talks will be given on the history of the area, the work schedule for the project and safety guidelines for the works of clearing. Team members will work five days a week, leaving a day free to visit the battlefield and a rest day. Work at the excavation will begin at 7am on weekdays in order to avoid high midday temperatures. In the afternoon, after the lunch break, there will be laboratory tasks and a series of seminars on different aspects of the Spanish Civil War. Between lunch and the laboratory work, team members will have access to the municipal swimming pool.



ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation will be provided in the new village, just a 10-minute walk from the excavation site.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

Travel insurance: It is essential to have travel insurance.

Climate and clothing: Due to high temperatures, you will need only summer clothing and you will need to bring sunscreen.

Necessities: If you need to purchase necessities or require medical attention, you will find supermarkets, a pharmacy and a medical centre in Belchite.

FEE

The fee for 15 days of fieldwork is €1000. *Accepted participants can receive a scholarship, **making the total program fee € 500 per two-week cycle.***

This includes accommodation, work materials, and various lectures and cultural excursions. In the town where we stay we have very cheap supermarkets and restaurants for the food. Also our accommodation has a kitchen and laundry for free.

ASSOCIATED INSTITUTIONS

The Spanish Association of Military Archaeology.

BOOKING YOUR PLACE: Contact the director, Alfonso Fanjul. Email. schoolofarchaeology@gmail.com tell us the dates you want to come, who you are, and then if there are spots in that team, pay the half of the fee in advance to book one.

PROJECT MANAGER . Qualifications include: Doctorate in Archaeology, Autonomous University of Madrid; Degree in Prehistory, University of Salamanca; Degree in History, University of Oviedo; President, Spanish Association of Military Archaeology; Manager, Cuetu Civil War Museum, Lugones, Asturias; Recipient, several cultural research awards; Manager, numerous archaeological excavations relating to the civil war.

Published works of interest include:

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