

La Panderola
Itinerary
English
Mucc

Self-guided itinerary

Features

- Free access.
- Walking tour, wheelchair accessible.
- Duration: approximately 60 minutes.
- Number of stops: 6.

Instructions

The itinerary can be followed using an audio guide or a printed or digital guide.

- The audio guide, the digital map and the digital guide can be downloaded on a mobile device from the websites:
www.mucc.es/panderola and www.agh.uji.es
- The audio guide can also be accessed online without downloading the files at:
<https://audioviator.com/en/audioguia/panderola>
- The printed guide is available at the Tourist Info office and at the locations of the Museu de la Ciutat de Castelló (Ethnological Museum, Castell Vell, Sea Museum, and Roman Villa of Vinamargo).



Audio guide,
guide and map



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La Panderola Itinerary

Introduction

La Panderola, officially known as the Steam Tramway from Onda to the Grau of Castellón, was a narrow-gauge railway (0.75 meters between rails) that operated in the region of La Plana between 1888 and 1963. Its original purpose was to facilitate the transport of oranges and other goods (especially tiles) to the port of Castelló for export, although it eventually became a key element for the mobility of the population in the towns it connected (Castelló and Grau, Almassora, Vila-real, Onda and Borriana). Actually, for a while it even reached peaks of over one million passengers, making it one of the most heavily used secondary railways in Spain.

It ran for 75 years, under private management until 1931 and thereafter under state administration. Its longest route, between Grau of Castelló and Onda, covered 28 kilometres. Its popular name, *La Panderola* (literally "the cockroach"), was most likely given because of the black colour of the steam locomotives. The tramway, which –except for its branch between Vila-real and Grau of Borriana— ran within towns, left a lasting mark on urban development, and became an identity symbol for the region. For this reason, Vila-real, Borriana, and Grau of Castelló have preserved locomotives and carriages, now turned into monuments.

La Panderola itinerary through the city of Castelló links the Grau station with El Sequiol, the former football field, which no longer exists. Six stops are proposed to explore this unique railway: the starting point is La Panderola Square in Grau, where the terminal station was located; next is the Castelló station (Borrull Square); then Escultor Viciano Street (popularly known as *La Vieta*) and La Paz Square, where the tramway had a small stop; afterwards, Pelayo del Castillo Street; Herrero Street, and finally, El Sequiol, at the corner of Herrero and Maestro Bretón Streets.

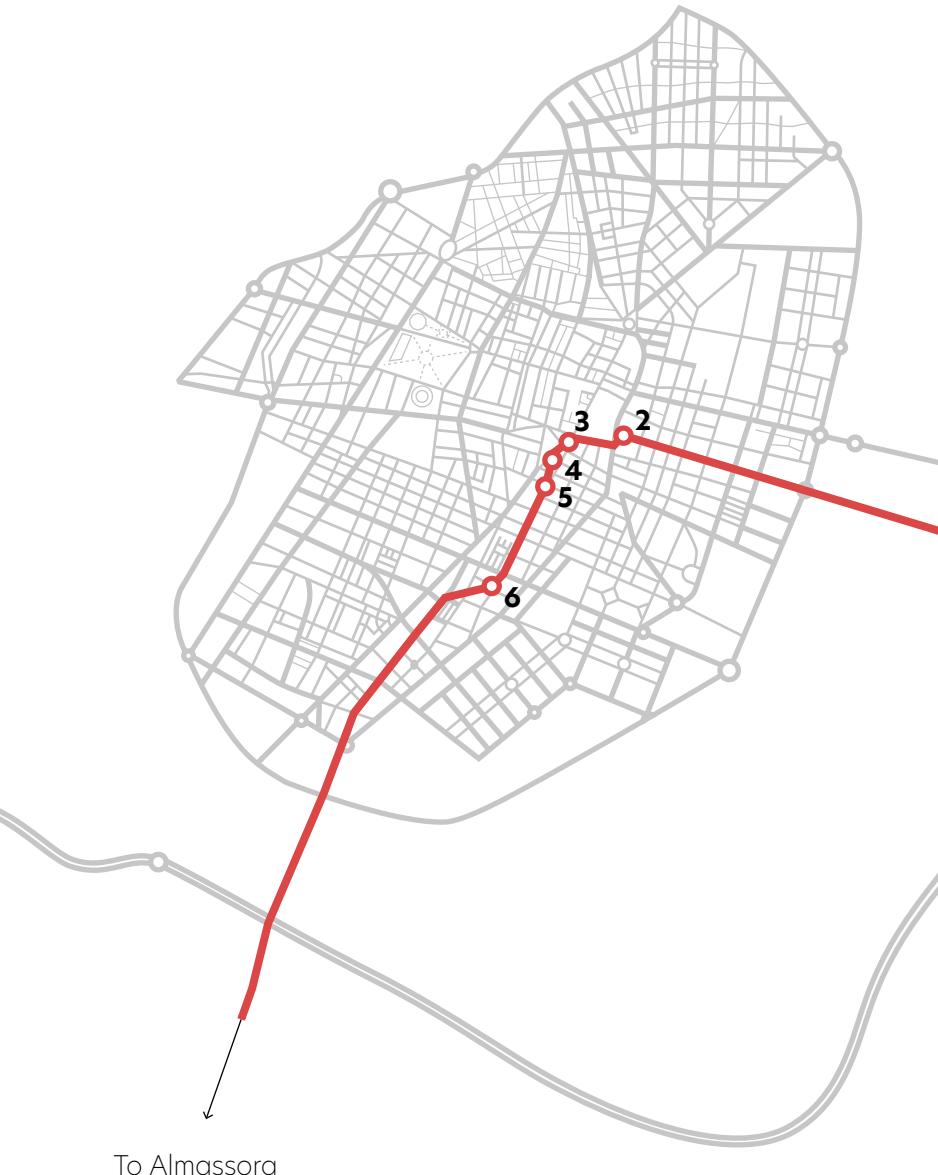


La Pau Square
Castelló de la Plana Municipal Archive (AMC). Sucine Collection 691



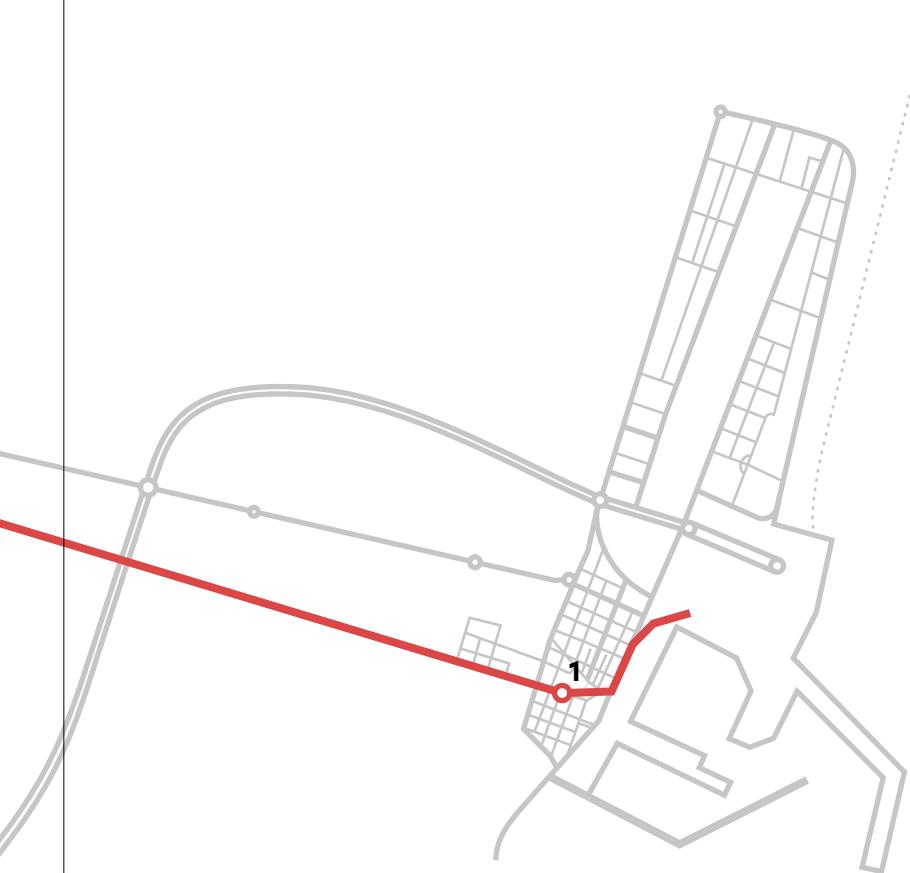
La Panderola itinerary

Itinerary Map



To travel the Castelló-Grau-Castelló route (4 km):

The Castelló-Grau-Castelló bus leaves every 20 minutes from Borrull Square (Castelló) and La Panderola Square (Grau de Castelló), following the same route as La Panderola.



● Stops

1. Grau Station (La Panderola Square, Grau of Castelló) /
2. Castelló Station (Borrull Square) / **3. La Vieta Street - La Paz Square (Escultor Viciano Street, corner with La Paz Square) /**
- 4. Pelayo del Castillo Street / 5. The Trolleybus Network of La Plana (15, Herrero Street - Dávalos Factory) / 6. El Sequiol (Herrero Street - Maestro Bretón Street)**



Stop 1. Grau Station

La Panderola Square, Grau of Castelló

La Panderola route begins at the Grau station. It was the first one built due to its strategic location next to the port, through which much of the transported products were exported, and also because construction materials for the railway infrastructure arrived there. It was the terminal and departure station of the tramway, covering an area of 10,143 m² and including all auxiliary facilities: a passenger building with ground and first floors, a platform, a goods quay, a water crane, an engine depot, garages and a warehouse. Some of these buildings are still preserved today with different uses, and the latest renovation of the park that now occupies the former station site has even reproduced, on the pavement, the rails of some of the old tracks. On one side of the square, you can also see Locomotive No. 1 and a carriage.

In 1934, a project was drafted to relocate the station inside the port, at the Levante dock, but it never moved beyond the proposal stage. From Grau, the tracks followed a straight line of 4.2 kilometres which, according to reports from 1888, passed through "a delightful countryside full of orange trees, wheat, vineyards, orchards, and farmhouses." Today, this route is still visible, as it corresponds to the current cycle path along Hermanos Bou Avenue.

Track installation began on 4 June 1888 and the section to Castelló was officially inaugurated on 13 August. In summer, the route was extended to a small halt next to the present-day casino in the port (Serrano Lloberas Dock) to provide bathers with easier access to the beach. The tramway came to play a key role in communications between Castelló and Grau, especially on public holidays such as San Pedro's Day, when the trains were completely packed.

Castelló Station

Photo: Repositori de la Universitat Jaume I.

Photo Collection Gil Roca: <http://hdl.handle.net/10234/195689>



Stop 2. La Panderola Station in Castelló

Borrull Square

In the past, Borrull Square was the location of La Panderola station in Castelló. Over time, the former railway esplanade has been transformed into a true urban hub, and today it is both a strategic reference point and a common meeting place for local residents. Its past railway use has made the square somewhat unusual, as it is an open space surrounded by streets and avenues, but not a square in the traditional sense.

Castelló Station was the most important of the route. Thousands of people passed through it each year, accounting for between 25% and 40% of all La Panderola passengers. In 1930, for instance, 292,320 passengers departed from here and 307,762 arrived.

Initially, these facilities were only a small halt, since the company intended to locate the station at La Paz Square, close to orange warehouses. Finally, in 1890, the station ceased to be provisional, as the company decided that its location was convenient: close to the city, more comfortable for passengers and the area was owned by the railway company.

The station grounds were enclosed by a fence that surrounded both the tracks and the buildings. The passenger building was on the north-west side, with its main façade facing what is now Borrull Square. Toilets were attached to Hermanos Bou Avenue. The passenger platform, 92 meters long, was located in the central area together with the goods quay. The water crane was at the southern end, near the entrance from La Magdalena Street (today Escultor Viciano Street).

A total of seven tracks were used by the trains: two between the platform and the station building; one between the platform and the goods quay, and four dead-end tracks for loading.

La Pau Square

Photo: Jeremy Wiseman

Collection: Enrique Andrés Gramage



Moyano Street
Photo: Jeremy Wiseman
Collection: Enrique Andrés Gramage



Stop 3. La Vieta Street - La Paz Square

Escultor Viciano Street, at the corner with La Paz Square

When La Panderola was still just a project, there was some opposition to the idea of a tram running through the city centre. Yet, despite this resistance, no one could deny the opportunities it represented for Castelló. In fact, unlike the broad-gauge railway, which limited the city's expansion, La Panderola was perceived as less problematic since, in fact, it functioned more like a tram—compatible with traffic and other urban uses of its time. Even so, its circulation through the historic centre was not conflict-free, and accidents were also frequent.

Although the initial plan had been to run outside the city limits of the time, changes to the original project meant that it finally entered along the old La Magdalena Street, today Escultor Viciano Street, which soon became popularly known as *Carrer de la Vieta* due to the striking presence of the rails. The route then continued to La Paz Square, where there was a small halt near the central kiosk in which passengers could buy tickets and wait for the train on benches provided for that purpose.

La Panderola was frequently photographed as it passed through La Paz Square, thanks to the magnificent urban scenery it created—particularly from the second half of the 20th century, when the use of steam traction on such lines began to seem somewhat exotic.

Today visitors can still see in the square a ceramic plaque depicting La Panderola passing through this spot, as well as lights embedded in the pavement that, at night, trace the path of the old railway line.

Pelayo del Castillo Street
Unknown font



Stop 4. Pelayo del Castillo Street

Pelayo del Castillo Street

The impact of La Panderola tracks in Castelló may have been less decisive in shaping the city's layout than in other towns, but it is no less visible. Its influence on the urban fabric can still be seen along various sections of the route, in streets that form unusual diagonals, such as Islas Baleares Street in the Grau, and, in Castelló, Maestro Bretón Street in the southern part of the city or Pelayo del Castillo Street, located just behind the Teatro Principal.

As Carlos Sarthou noted in his work *Geografía General del Reino de Valencia* (*General Geography of the Kingdom of Valencia*), at the beginning of the 20th century, the southern section of the line still ran along the outskirts of the city, specifically along the old Camí de l'Horta, then a non-urban area surrounded by orange groves and numerous orange warehouses. This circumstance was decisive in choosing the location of the main station in the original project –unlike what happened in other municipalities, where railway facilities attracted businesses instead.

Thus, until 1963, the growth of the city occurred in parallel with La Panderola. Its tracks helped consolidate what is now Herrero Street (which replaced Camí de l'Horta) and marked the city's southern expansion, taking land from the countryside and leaving their imprint on the map. Only the line's path can explain the peculiar shape of the urban lay-out in this area, such as Pelayo del Castillo Street, a narrow, almost useless alleyway only used by local residents. It also explains why the Teatro Principal has a corner cut at an angle, precisely to leave space for the tracks to pass.

On this stretch, a train coming from Grau, after crossing La Paz Square, would leave the Teatro Principal on its left and continue along Pelayo del Castillo Street, moving diagonally until it reached the intersection of Sagasta Street and Herrero Street.

La Panderola and the trolleybus

Photo: Fred Mattheus

Collection: Enrique Andrés Gramage



Stop 5. The Trolleybus Network of La Plana

15, Herrero Street (Dávalos Factory)

The Trolleybus Network of La Plana (RTLP) was launched in 1942 by the *Diputació* of Castelló to modernise public transport in the region of La Plana and replace the steam tram. Designed by engineer Adolfo Machinandiarena, it aimed to connect the towns of Benicàssim, Castelló, Vila-real, Borriana, Nules and La Vall d'Uixó.

The difficult economic situation of the time delayed its implementation and eventually compromised the project, which was ultimately limited to the section between Grau of Castelló and Vila-real, inaugurated in 1961. The Trolleybus Network of La Plana project coincided with another one, promoted by the government, to electrify La Panderola –although this was never carried out, and the two systems coexisted until 1963.

The trolleybus line, which overlapped with the tram route in several sections, ran along today's Hermanos Bou Avenue, Guitarrista Tárrega Street, Asensi Street, Herrero Street, Orfebres Santalínea Street, País Valencià Square and Valencia Avenue, from where it continued toward Vila-real. The return way ran along the same route.

The delay in its launch, together with the development of other transport modes and the socio-economic changes of those two decades, resulted in dysfunctions and low passenger demand, which ultimately led to its dismantling in January 1970.

Its short-lived existence should not obscure the fact that the Trolleybus Network of La Plana represented an attempt to create a metropolitan public transport network powered entirely by electricity –the direct predecessor of today's Tram.

Some elements of the Trolleybus Network of La Plana are still preserved, most notably *El Cocherón*, a heritage building of the *Diputació* of Castelló on Valencia Avenue, outside the city centre. In addition, about fifty rosettes (like the one visible on the façade of the Dávalos warehouse), used as anchors for the overhead wires, can still be found scattered across Castelló and Vila-real.





Stop 6. El Sequiol

Herrero Street, at the corner with Maestro Bretón Street

Until 1947, Club Deportivo Castellón played its matches at El Sequiol, a football ground located where the IES Joan Baptista Porcar now stands (76, Herrero Street). Its proximity to La Panderola route meant that many fans used the tram to travel to the games, with special services organised for the most popular matches.

Although there was no officially designated stop at this location, La Panderola slowed down as it passed by, allowing supporters to hop on and off while it was still moving. The whistle of the locomotive even came to be considered a good omen of a goal for the *albinegro* team.

The tram route continued along what is now Maestro Bretón Street, cutting diagonally across a grid of straight streets, and then along Almassora Avenue, heading toward the neighbouring town. Nearby, at the corner of Herrero Street and Maestro Bretón Street, stands a tribute sculpture to La Panderola steam locomotive, created by Felipe Fauvell in 2009.

Once out of Castelló and through the town of Almassora, the line continued to Vila-real, before going up to Onda. In 1907, a new branch was inaugurated between Vila-real and Grau of Borriana, which in 1948 was extended with a section connecting Borriana to its port. This final stretch, however, remained in service for barely eight years.

In this way, La Panderola came to form a network that connected the entire region of La Plana, enabling both passenger traffic and transport of goods—mainly oranges and tiles from Onda — to the ports of Castelló and Borriana.

Despite serving as a backbone for the whole region of La Plana and carrying nearly one million passengers annually in its final years, the lack of investment, the failure of the electrification project and the rise of private vehicles rendered the old steam tram increasingly obsolete, leading to its definitive closure on 31 August 1963.



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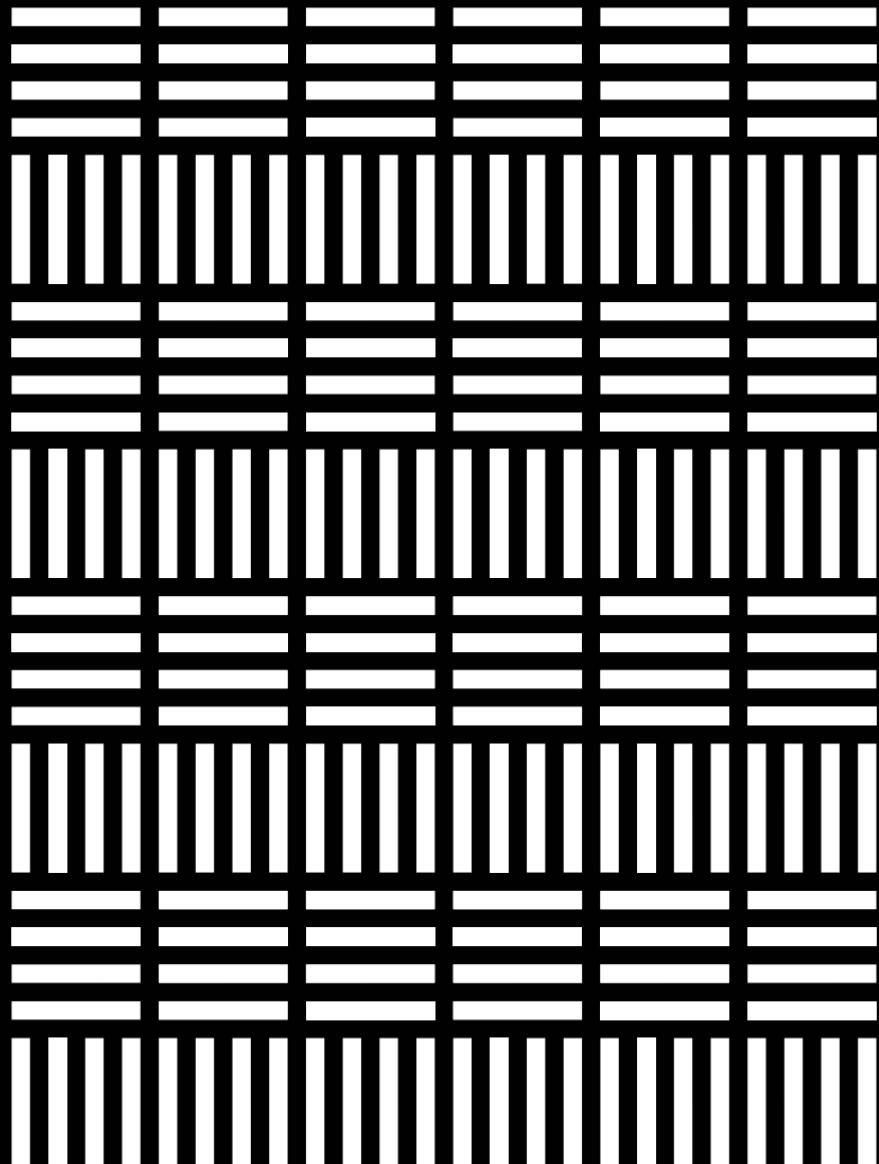
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