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The monument in honor of Columbus is a 60m tall structure located at the end of the Ramblas, right at the entrance of the port to Barcelona, Spain.

It was constructed in time for the famous Universal Exposition in 1888. The monument marks the very site where Columbus arrived after his famous first trip, and where he met with King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella to report about his adventure. The Catholic monarchs (Isabella and Ferdinand) financed his exploratory trips to America, as well as his discovery of the New World.

Description of the monument to Columbus

The bronze statue of Columbus is 7m tall and was sculpted by the artist Rafael Atche. The right hand of the explorer is supposedly pointing west towards the New World, while he holds a scroll or map in the other hand. Interestingly enough, the statue was sited pointing East instead of West. The statue of Columbus stands set on top of a massive 40 m Corinthian-style column.

The Ark of the Sea is an educational research center that helps facilitate the reproduction of some of the species facing the danger of extinction. It is endowed with innovative technologies to take care of dolphins and sea turtles. We can visit the building that represents the Arctic, which is designed to appear just like an iced igloo. Biologists can monitor whales and walruses in this specially simulated habitat. There are a few penguins in the Ocean building that can be seen lazing around, playing, or diving into the pool from the ice-like rocks.

The pedestal of the column is octagonal and presents four winged angels of victory facing the four cardinal points of the world. Under it, are griffins and medallions portraying celebrities related to Columbus life, like King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, the Marquises of Moya and the Pinzon brothers.

Against the buttresses are depicted the four realms portrayed as four figures: El Principado de Catalonia, and the kingdoms of Leon, Aragon and Castilla.

On the vast octagonal plinth are eight panels depicting scenes of Columbus first trip to the New World, all built in bronze. The scenes represent Columbus and his son begging for food in the Monastery of la Rabida, Columbus meeting with the Catholic monarchs Isabella and Ferdinand in Cordoba, and Columbus in Santa Fe, leaving the port of Palos de la Frontera in his Carabella back in 1492, the arrival of Colombus in the New World, and another one in which he is explaining his project to the monks of La Rabida. Between the bas reliefs are the coats of arms of the eight cities Columbus visited.

The base is circular, with a diameter of 20m. Two lions flank each one of the four staircases in the circle.

There is an elevator that takes the visitors all the way up the column, to a small balcony from where one can have a breathtaking view of the city of Barcelona.

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