

Barcelona, Spain

Overview

Introduction

Barcelona, Spain's second-largest city, is inextricably linked to the architecture of Antoni Gaudi. His most famous and unfinished masterpiece, La Sagrada Familia, is the emblem of the city.



Like the basilica, Barcelona takes traditional ideas and presents them in new, even outrageous, forms. And the city's bursts of building and innovation give the impression that it's still being conceived. Both the church and the city can be tough places to get a handle on, yet their complexity is invigorating rather than forbidding.

Since it hosted the Summer Olympics in 1992, Barcelona has been on the hot list of European destinations. The staging of the Universal Forum of Cultures in 2004 also raised the city's profile. Over the past decade, better infrastructure, increased cruise ship traffic and a reputation for gastronomic excellence have put Barcelona at the forefront of European city destinations. Such popularity may make it harder to land a hotel room, but it has only added to the sense that Barcelona is a place to visit as much for its energetic, cosmopolitan character as for its unique attractions and lively beach culture.

Highlights

Sights—La Sagrada Familia; La Pedrera; La Catedral (La Seu); Santa Maria del Mar.

Museums—Museu Picasso; Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya; Fundacio Joan Miro; Museu d'Historia de la Ciutat; Museu Maritim de Barcelona; Caixaforum.

Memorable Meals—Lunch at Escriba Xiringuito on the seafront; high-end Mediterranean fare at Tragaluz; fashionable, inventive dishes at Semproniana; Albert Adria's Nikkei cuisine at Pakta; creative, seasonal Catalan fare at Gresca.

Late Night—Flamenco at Los Tarantos; drinks and a view at Mirablau; wine at La Vinya del Senyor; dancing at Otto Zutz.

Walks—La Rambla, the Barri Gotic and the Born; along the waterfront; Montjuic; Park Guell; Collserola woodlands.

Especially for Kids—Zoo de Barcelona; a ride on the roller coaster at Parc d'Atraccions del Tibidabo; the ComsoCaixa science museum.

Geography

Barcelona is a large city with many districts, but the most popular attractions are found in a handful of areas that, for the most part, flow into one another. Beginning on the waterfront, Port Vell (Old Port) encompasses the harbor area and Barceloneta, a neighborhood that was once home to fishermen and has been renovated. The Vila Olímpica (Olympic Village) lies just east of Port Vell; it has its own marina and dozens of bars, restaurants and night clubs. The Old Port, too, has undergone extensive renovation in the past decade or so and is now the city's seaside recreation area.

La Rambla, Barcelona's famous boulevard and almost a district unto itself, begins at Port Vell and extends inland to Placa Catalunya. La Rambla is the heart of the central city, and it forms the boundary between El Raval, the neighborhood to the west of the boulevard, and the Barri Gotic (the Gothic Quarter), which lies to the east.

The Barri Gotic, the oldest part of Barcelona, has many bars, restaurants, museums and historic sites. Adjoining it on the east side of Via Laietana are the old quarters of Sant Pere and La Ribera, with its fine medieval mansions and trendy shopping and nightlife around the old Born market (now closed to shoppers but preserved as a historic site).

Continuing inland from the Barri Gotic, you'll enter the Eixample, an upscale shopping and residential area, crisscrossed by wide avenues, where many of the *modernisme* buildings are located. Adjoining it to the northwest is the chic villagelike district of Gracia, which has many pleasant restaurants and eclectic shops and galleries. Beyond Gracia, the city climbs the lower slope of Mount Tibidabo.

Montjuic, a prominent castle-topped hill covered with parks, gardens and pathways west of Port Vell, is easily visible from the central city. Museums and other attractions are found on this high ground.

The renovated district of Pobleu is more detached from the other areas and is found on the beachfront farther to the east at the end of the T5 tram line.

History

As with many places in Europe, Barcelona's history has much to do with invasions and conquest. The Romans founded the original settlement, named Barcino, in 133 BC, and the town was later held by the Visigoths, the Moors and the Christian Carolingian Empire under Charlemagne's son, Louis the Pious. In AD 988, Barcelona won independence from the Carolingian kings and became the dominant political and military force in the region of northeastern Spain later known as Catalonia—or Catalunya, in the native Catalan tongue. (Much of the city's character stems from the fact that it identifies itself more as part of Catalonia than of Spain.)

By the late 1400s, Catalonia was politically linked with other regions of Spain, but the region continued to enjoy autonomous rights and privileges until the early 1700s. That changed after the War of Succession, when Catalonia backed the losing side led by Archduke Charles of Austria. Spain's King Philip V abolished Catalonia's government and laws and made Castilian (Spanish) the language of official business, rather than Catalan. This was but one of many conflicts between Catalonia and the central authority of Spain.

By the late 1800s, Barcelona had become one of Spain's most industrialized areas, and the factories spawned significant wealth and a dynamic middle class. Industrial profits underwrote the *modernisme* movement in architecture—Barcelona's version of art nouveau that was spearheaded by architect Antoni Gaudi. The industrial riches did not trickle down to the working class, however, and radical movements—

especially anarchism—found willing converts in the city's poorer districts. A violent uprising in 1909 was a precursor to the upheaval unleashed by the Spanish Civil War in the late 1930s, when Barcelona was ruled by leftist trade unions for several years. The city remained a stronghold of the losing Republican cause until the end of the war and paid the price afterward. During the long reign of Francisco Franco (1939-75) the Catalan identity and language were viciously suppressed.

Catalonian home rule was restored after Franco's death in 1975, and the Catalan language was declared co-official with Castilian. Beginning in the late 1970s, a forward-looking urban policy was adopted in Barcelona, and the regeneration reached its peak in preparation for the 1992 Summer Olympics. Since then, its popularity as a tourist and recreation center has continued to grow.

Politically, the city and region have become increasingly detached from Madrid's centralist rule; in 2010, more than a million Catalans demonstrated in favor of independence from the rest of Spain. That same year their official abolition of bullfighting—effective from 2012—was in effect a further rejection of deep-rooted Spanish traditions.

Potpourri

Under Franco's regime, Catalan was forbidden in all forms—printed, written or taught. Now the city offers free courses to anyone who would like to learn it.

Although Antoni Gaudi created some of the most extravagant buildings ever made, he was a humble and religious man who rejected vanity in all its forms. When he was struck down by a tram in 1926, his clothes were so shabby that police assumed he was a vagrant. He died three days later in a hospital in the dilapidated Barri Xino district.

It has been estimated that to build the central spire of the Sagrada Familia, which will rise 560 ft/171 m high, the subterranean pylons would have to weigh 8,000 tons each for it to withstand an earthquake or gale-force winds of 100 mph/161 kph.

Barcelona's colorful Fiesta de Sant Medir, held in the Gracia district in early March and dating from Roman times, honors Saint Emeterio, or Sant Medir, the patron saint of broad beans. During the festivities, thousands of sweets are handed out to delighted children.

The name of Mount Tibidabo comes from the story of Christ's wanderings in the wilderness, when the Devil took him to a mountaintop and offered to give him all that he could see if Jesus would fall down and worship him. *Tibi dabo* means "I give" in Latin.

During Franco's reign, a supervisor known as "la Moral" watched over the dance floor at La Paloma concert hall and parted couples with his stick if they danced too close or tried to sneak a kiss.

The stadium on Montjuic, called Estadi Olympic, was intended to host the People's Olympics in 1936, but Franco's coup the day before the scheduled opening kicked off the Spanish Civil War and put an end to the games. Catalans had to wait till 1992 when, in the newly refurbished stadium, Montjuic hosted the Summer Olympic Games that made Barcelona internationally famous.

See & Do

Sightseeing

Sooner or later, you must take a walk down La Rambla, Barcelona's famous thoroughfare, so you may as well make it sooner. It's a great introduction to the city, and it will put you in good position to see other nearby attractions.

If you head northeast from La Rambla, you'll enter the twisting, ancient streets of the Barri Gotic (Gothic Quarter). Find your way to the grandiose La Seu cathedral as you explore the district. Nearby is the Museu d'Historia de Barcelona (City History Museum). The Barri Gotic also holds several other treasures, so you may want to plan more than one day in the area. The highlights are the Museu Picasso (get there early to avoid the lines) and another magnificent Gothic church, Santa Maria del Mar. It's fun just to amble through the streets, however, especially in the evening, when you can sample many restaurants and bars in the contrasting Raval (earthy-international) and Born (avant-garde chic) districts.

You'll need at least a day to take in the famous sights from the *modernisme* movement in architecture. Before you start, stop in the tourist office in Placa Catalunya (and other locations), where you can get maps, a guidebook and discount vouchers to the city's 115 *modernisme* monuments. For more information, visit <http://www.rutadelmodernisme.com>.

Begin at Manzana de la Discordia, on Passeig de Gracia in the Eixample district, where you can see three adjacent buildings designed by the best-known architects of the movement. Next, head a few blocks north to Antoni Gaudi's amazing building La Pedrera (or Casa Mila), which houses residential apartments, offices and an exhibition center. Plan at least two hours to see them and to walk around among the rooftop sculptures. From the roof, you'll be able to see the spires of Sagrada Familia in the distance, and that's your next stop. (You can walk there in a leisurely half-hour jaunt or catch the metro's Blue Line at the Diagonal Station near La Pedrera.) Close out the day at Gaudi's intricately surrealistic church. Be sure to go up in the spires for a vertigo-inducing look at the church and the city. A visit to Gaudi's Parc Guell, on the northern side of the city, is also recommended, though you will probably have to fit it into another day. An hour-long audio tour of Gaudi's Barcelona is available for free from the official tourist authority website and can be downloaded to your mobile phone or MP3 player. It also contains information about the buildings, complete with photographs and maps. <http://www.barcelonaturisme.com/wv3/en/page/1464/mobile-apps.html?>

Montjuic, the hill rising southwest of the city center, merits a day of its own. Both the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya and Fundacio Joan Miro are found on Montjuic, as are several less cultural and more hedonistic attractions, including Poble Espanyol (a theme "village" incorporating architectural styles from all over Spain and a host of shops and restaurants), the Olympic stadium and Pavello Barcelona. Just strolling around this multifaceted green area is pleasant, and it offers some splendid panoramic views of the city and the Mediterranean coastline. Figure your route ahead of time, however, as Montjuic covers a lot of territory and the attractions are widely spaced.

Historic Sites

El Born Centre de Cultura i Memòria

Placa Comercial 12
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-256-6851

<http://www.elbornculturaimemoria.barcelona.cat/el-centre>

Dating from the late 1800s, the old iron marketplace in El Born district was for a century the city's principal wholesale market. A decade ago the authorities started to dig underneath its foundations with the aim of turning the space into a library. What they found—a swath of urban remains dating from 1714, the year the city was under siege during the Spanish War of Succession—prompted them instead to turn the space into a memorial. The archaeological ensemble can be seen via an elevated floor, and there is an exhibition that explains the on-going significance of this historic battle.

Daily 10 am-8 pm. Free.

Hospital de la Santa Creu i Sant Pau

Sant Antoni Maria Claret 165, Eixample
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-556-5775 for information regarding guided tours

<http://www.santpau.cat>

Designed by Domènec i Montaner, one of the most renowned architects of the *modernisme* movement, this unusual hospital complex was built between 1902 and 1930. Located on the site of the old Santa Creu Hospital, which dates from 1401, the Hospital de Sant Pau is the largest single example of Catalan *modernista* architecture. Packed with sculptures and mosaics, it is a UNESCO World Heritage site. The site no longer receives patients (new medical facilities have been built close by), and after an extensive and masterful restoration the site's various pavilions accommodate cultural events and associations. You are free to wander around the grounds, though a guided tour is the best way to see the dazzling interiors.

There are guided tours in English daily at noon and 1 pm. 10 euros admission, 16 euros for a guided tour.

La Catedral (La Seu)

Placa de la Seu 3, Barri Gòtic
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-428-262

<http://www.catedralbcn.org>

The heart of the Old City, this Gothic monster (with the imposing and mostly unused formal name of Església Catedral Basílica de Barcelona) was mostly built between 1298 and 1448 on the site that once held a Roman temple and later a mosque. The facade was not completed until the 1890s, and some feel that its neo-Gothic style is jarring, although it looks nice illuminated at night. Very spacious and soothing, the interior is notable for its volume, with three naves of almost equal width. The crypt of Barcelona's first patron saint, martyr Santa Eulàlia, lies behind the altar. You can see some of the older furnishings in the church's Sala Capitular (Chapter House Museum). Above all, don't miss the open-air cloister with its gently splashing fountain and restful garden patrolled by white geese. You can also visit the rooftop terrace for a close-up look at the towers and views over the Gothic quarter.

Cathedral open Monday-Friday 8 am-12:45 pm and 5:15-7:30 pm, Saturday and Sunday 8 am-noon and 5:15-8 pm. Cloister open daily 8:30 am-12:30 pm and 1-5:45 pm. Cathedral admission is free; elevator to the roof is 3 euros. An all-inclusive ticket is 7 euros.

La Pedrera

Provenca 261-265, Eixample
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 902-400-973 or 93-484-5164 (for group reservations)

<http://www.lapedrera.com>

Built between 1906 and 1910, this large apartment building is one of Antoni Gaudi's masterworks. Its official name is Casa Mila, but it's better known as La Pedrera (the Quarry), a reference to its stony exterior appearance, with balconies that look like caves. Though Sagrada Familia is the Gaudi building that draws the biggest crowds, we think La Pedrera gives a better sense of the architect's astounding designs. It is also a UNESCO World Heritage site. The complex includes residential apartments, offices and an exhibition center.

Daily tours of the Espai Gaudi (loft and roof) and the Pedrera Apartment of Caixa Catalunya are available November-February 9 am-6:30 pm and March-October 9 am-8 pm (last tours of the day 30 minutes before closing). Individuals can rent audioguides and purchase tickets online; groups of 10 or more must book a guided tour in advance. 16.50 euros adults, 4 euros audioguides.

La Rambla

This tree-dappled avenue is the heart, soul and central hub of Barcelona, not to mention a world-famous thoroughfare lined with remarkably diverse architectural styles. Although it is technically five streets (Rambla de Santa Monica, Rambla des Caputxins, Rambla de St. Josep, Rambla d'Estudis and Rambla Canaletes), the separation has not been clear for at least two centuries, and all are generally referred to as La Rambla. At least once during your visit, you should plan to stroll its full length, from Placa Catalunya to the statue of Christopher Columbus presiding over the port. Throughout the day and night it surges with people and offers a variety of amusements. Street performers line the boulevard, the most common being the human statues of one sort or another. You may see mimes and jugglers. There are also flower vendors, and lots of outdoor cafes where you can take a seat and watch the informal parade flow past you. The end near the port has an open-air artisan market where you can find attractive gifts and souvenirs from 10:30 am till dusk on Saturday and Sunday.

La Sagrada Familia

Carrer de Mallorca 401, Eixample
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-208-0414

<http://www.sagradafamilia.cat>

The amazing Templo Expiatorio de la Sagrada Familia, to give it its full name, has to be seen to be believed. Even then it's hard to comprehend. The foundation stone was laid in 1882, and Antoni Gaudi worked on the building for more than 40 years, leaving it unfinished when he died in 1926. It remains unfinished, though work continues amid controversy: What few plans and models Gaudi left behind were destroyed or badly damaged at the outset of the Spanish Civil War, and those directing the current work are more or less guessing at the architect's intentions. You'll have no trouble distinguishing the portions that are pure Gaudi and those that are more recent additions, based on the color and condition of the stonework. Nonetheless, it's a must-see for all visitors to Barcelona (expect big crowds). Additions include color mosaics as well as materials such as carbon fiber, which did not exist during Gaudi's lifetime but are

needed today to make the structure earthquake-proof. Upon completion, the building will nearly double in height.

Start your visit in the church, then take an elevator that ascends one of the massive church spires for a great view of the city and the ongoing church construction that is expected to be finished in 2026. Also, don't miss the Gaudi House Museum located in the basement of the Passion facade. The museum focuses on Gaudi's works, especially emphasizing his work on the church.

Daily April-September 9 am-8 pm, October and March 9 am-7 pm, November-February 9 am-6 pm. Basic admission 15 euros adults.

Manzana de la Discordia

Passeig de Gracia 43 (between Consell de Cent and Arago), Eixample
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-216-0306

<http://www.casabatllo.es>

The name translates to "Block of Discord," a reference to the three contrasting *modernista* buildings that stand close together along Passeig de Gracia. On the southern corner is Domenech i Montaner's ornate Casa Lleo Morera. A few doors up, at No. 41, is the intriguing geometric Casa Amatller by Puig i Cadafalch, which is open for guided tours and has a library and exhibition space dedicated to historic Spanish photography. Next door, at No. 43, is Antoni Gaudi's wonderful fairy-tale Casa Batllo with its carnival-mask balconies—a building that would look more at home in Disneyland than it does on a busy city street. See it at night, when it sparkles under lights. You can visit Casa Batllo using self-guided audio tours.

Casa Batllo daily 9 am-9 pm; Casa Amatller daily 11 am-6 pm. Casa Batllo 23.50 euros adults; Casa Amatller 15 euros adults.

Palau de la Musica Catalana

Carrer Palau de la Musica 4-6, Barri Gotic
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 902-475-485

<http://www.palaumusica.org>

Another *modernista* landmark, this one was designed by Domenech i Montaner and built around the beginning of the 20th century. It's now a UNESCO World Heritage site, as well as a focal point for the city's classical music scene. Although it's impressive from the outside, try to take a tour or see a performance at the hall so you can get a look at the magnificent stained-glass ceiling and other interior design elements.

Guided 50-minute tours in English are offered daily on the hour 10 am-3 pm (till 6 pm in August). Times are subject to change because of concerts and other events. Tours are 18 euros adults. Buy tickets online or at the box office daily 9:30 am-3:30 pm.

Pavello Barcelona

Ave. Francesc Ferrer i Guardia 7, Montjuic
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-423-4016

<http://www.miesbcn.com>

The current Barcelona Pavilion (also known as the Mies van der Rohe Pavilion) is an exact replica of the German architect's influential work of modern architecture, originally built in 1929 for the International Exposition. (Don't confuse modern with Barcelona's *modernisme* style, which is known as art nouveau in most of the world.) The pavilion's stark, simple lines are a forerunner of many architectural designs in subsequent decades: It looks a lot like libraries and other public buildings from the 1960s. The pavilion is small, and there's not a lot to see inside except Mies van der Rohe's famous Barcelona chairs (which the caretaker won't let you sit on).

Daily 10 am-8 pm. 5 euros adults.

Santa Maria del Mar

Placa de Santa Maria 1, La Ribera
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-310-2390

<http://www.santamariadelmarbarcelona.org>

This soaring Catalan Gothic church sits in the heart of the medieval city's maritime district. Designed by the architect Berenguer de Montagut, this structure is considered by many to be Barcelona's most beautiful church. The foundation stone was laid to celebrate the conquest of Cerdana, which completed the Catalan domination of the region. Its relatively swift construction, between 1329 and 1384, made for an unusual unity of style. The interior, too, is uplifting in its exquisite simplicity and elegance, partly because its baroque trappings were burned during the Spanish Civil War. It also has perfect acoustics and serves as a wonderful setting for concerts and choir recitals, especially during the evenings when it's all lit up. Guided tours are available and include a trip to the rooftop.

Monday-Saturday 9 am-1 pm and 5-8:30 pm, Sunday 10 am-2 pm and 5-8 pm.

Museums

CaixaForum

Ave. Francesc Ferrer i Guardia 6, Montjuic
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-476-8600

<http://www.fundacio.lacaixa.es>

This is a cultural center that has one of the most important contemporary art collections in Spain, containing more than 700 permanent works that represent the evolution of contemporary art. One of the most famous works is *Schmerzraum*, an installation made of sheets of lead, iron and silver, by Joseph Beuys. Many international artists such as Donald Judd, Jannis Kounellis, Bruce Naumann, Gerhard Richter and Sigmar Polke are also represented. Concerts, artistic and literary conferences, and various other activities take place regularly in the museum building, which dates from 1909 and is considered a work of art itself. A media library, bookstore and restaurant are also available to visitors.

Open daily 10 am-8 pm, till 11 pm Wednesday in July and August. 4 euros adults.

Camp Nou Experience

Carrer d'Aristides Maillol 12, Les Corts
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-496-3600

<http://www.fcbarcelona.com>

Essential for soccer fans: The museum presents the history of the FC Barcelona team (also known as Barca) with audiovisuals, glittering trophies, and an amazing assortment of shirts, photos and stadium models. A visit to the museum lets you gaze upon the hugely impressive Camp Nou stadium and also visit Barca's ice-skating rink. Arrive early, and it's recommended to purchase tickets in advance.

Monday-Saturday 10 am-6:30 pm (till 8 pm April-October), Sunday and holidays 10 am-2:30 pm. 23 euros adults.

CosmoCaixa

Carrer d'Issac Neuton 28 (Metro: Avinguda Tibidabo or Vallcarca)
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-212-6050

<http://www.cosmoaixa.com/es/cosmoaixa-barcelona>

A large, hands-on science museum that is great for the whole family. You can explore the Amazon, space in 3-D, evolution and more. You could spend hours discovering science through the many displays and interactive labs.

Tuesday-Sunday 10 am-8 pm. 4 euros adults, free for children younger than 16.

Fundacio Antoni Tapies

Arago 255, Eixample
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-487-0315

<http://www.fundaciotapies.org>

In addition to a broad collection of the late Catalan artist's work, the foundation also mounts temporary exhibitions focusing on contemporary artists. It's housed in a restored landmark of *modernista* architecture, formerly the offices of a publishing company.

Tuesday-Sunday 10 am-7 pm. 7 euros adults.

Fundacio Joan Miro

Parc de Montjuic, Montjuic
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-443-9470

<https://www.fmirobcn.org>

One of the world's largest collections of Joan Miro's work, including paintings, graphic work, drawings, sculptures and tapestries. They're housed high above the city on Montjuic hill in a Mediterranean-style building with galleries that are bathed in natural light. Climb to the roof terrace for some great views. The Fundacio also stages temporary exhibitions, screenings, seminars and concerts in its vocation as a platform for contemporary culture. There's an on-site restaurant that serves delicious Mediterranean dishes in a garden courtyard.

Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 10 am-6 pm November-March, 10 am-8 pm April-October; Thursday 10 am-9 pm, Saturday 10 am-8 pm; Sunday 10 am-3 pm. 12 euros adults.

G Experiencia

Larrard 41 (near Park Guell)
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-285-4440

<http://www.gaudiexperiencia.com>

That's G as in Gaudi. It would be easy to dismiss this as a Gaudi theme park, but the interactive exhibits and 4-D audiovisual experience (the fourth dimension is provided by moving chairs in the screening room) are actually an informative and entertaining presentation of Gaudi's life and creative output.

Daily 10 am-7 pm (till 5 pm October-March); last 4-D show 30 minutes before closing. 9 euros adults.

Museo de Cera de Barcelona

Passatge de la Banca 7
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-317-2649

<http://www.museocerabcn.com>

Housed in a 19th-century neo-Renaissance building at the bottom of La Rambla, Barcelona's wax museum boasts 350 life-size figures. A blend of famous historical and fictional characters can be found in various settings designed to depict typical scenes of contemporary and historical life.

Monday-Friday 10 am-1:30 pm and 4-7:30 pm, Saturday and Sunday 11 am-2 pm and 4:30-8:30 pm. Open 10 am-10 pm nonstop during the summer. 15 euros adults. Audioguide is 3.50 euros.

Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona

Plaça del Angels 1 (Metro: Universitat)
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-412-0810

<http://www.macba.cat>

Often referred to as MACBA, this museum showcases works by contemporary artists the world over, but it's the museum building that often gets attention. Designed by U.S. architect Richard Meier and opened in 1995, the dazzling white structure is the flagship of the ambitious renovation of the Raval district. Inside, the museum has lots of natural light and ramps for walking ease. Various temporary exhibits augment the main collection.

Late June-late September: Monday, Wednesday and Thursday 11 am-7:30 pm; Friday 11 am-10 pm; Saturday 10 am-10 pm; Sunday and holidays 10 am-3 pm. Late September-late June: Monday and Wednesday-Friday 11 am-7:30 pm, Saturday 10 am-9 pm, Sunday and holidays 10 am-3 pm. Admission 8 euros adults. Free guided tours in English on Monday at 6 pm, Wednesday-Friday at 4 and 6 pm, Saturday at 4 pm.

Museu de la Xocolata

Carrer del Comerc 36, La Ribera
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-268-7878

<http://www.museuxocolata.cat>

This museum presents Barcelona as you've never seen it before: made out of chocolate. The Olympic stadium, Gaudi's buildings and other Barcelona landmarks are all formed from the intoxicating sweet stuff. An initiative of the Provincial Guild of Pastry Chefs and City Hall, the museum is housed in the old Sant Agusti convent (suitably equipped with arctic-level air-conditioning to prevent Barcelona from melting). The museum also whisks you through the history of the "bitter drink" of the Aztecs and enlightens you about chocolate as medicine, food and aphrodisiac. And, of course, there's a scrumptious cafe and shop with consumable chocolate.

Monday-Saturday 10 am-7 pm, until 8 pm in the summer, Sunday 10 am-3 pm. 6 euros adults.

Museu del Disseny (DHUB)

Place de les Glories Catalanes 37-38, Eixample
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-256-6800

<http://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/museudeldisseny>

The city's ambitious new Design Museum gathers together collections previously on show in smaller museums accross the city. Visitors get to ponder over the value and impact of design in everyday life through viewing objects, furniture and gadgets that have been made in Spain. The costume collection is a catwalk through the ages, from medieval garb to contemporary brands such as Desigual, whilst the graphic art collection exposes Spain's strong heritage in poster and commercial art. There are *modernista* pieces too; furniture and artifacts from the city's art nouveau heyday.

Daily 10 am-8 pm. 6 euros adults.

Museu del Modernisme Catala

Balmes 48, Eixample
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-272-2896

<http://www.mmcat.cat>

All things *modernisme*: painting, sculpture, stained glass, furniture, and other applied and decorative arts. Temporary exhibitions and lectures as well.

Tuesday-Saturday 10:30 am-7 pm, Sunday 10:30 am-2 pm. 10 euros adults.

Museu d'Historia de Catalunya

Placa da Pau Vila 3, Port Vell
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-225-4700

<http://www.mhcat.net>

A lively, interactive overview of the history of Catalonia is housed in a restored port building. Artifacts, hands-on exhibits, audiovisuals and animated models reconstruct the social and human complexity of

each period. Guidebooks in English are available. A restaurant, 1881, is located on the fourth floor which has a rooftop bar offering impressive views of the city. A gift and book shop are also on-site.

Tuesday and Thursday-Saturday 10 am-7 pm, Wednesday 10 am-8 pm, Sunday and holidays 10 am-2:30 pm. 4.50 euros adults, free on the first Sunday of each month.

Museu d'Historia de la Ciutat

Placa del Rei s/n (Palau de Mar), Barri Gotic
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-256-2100

<http://museuhistoria.bcn.cat>

This institution is actually a collection of museums. The main branch incorporates the ensemble of monumental buildings on Placa del Rei. The underground levels there reveal fascinating subterranean layers of the city's ancient history, including some remains from the Roman colony Barcino. An entire ancient street and a fourth-century Christian basilica are also preserved just where they were discovered during city excavations in the 1930s. Exhibits on the upper floors chart later developments in Barcelona.

The different spaces have different opening times but they are generally Tuesday-Saturday 10 am-7 pm (until 8 pm April-September), Sunday and holidays 10 am-8 pm. 7 euros adults, free after 3 pm on Sunday.

Museu Egipci de Barcelona

Valencia 284
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-488-0188

<http://www.museuegipci.com>

This museum specializes in ancient Egyptian culture and is home to the Fundacion Clos collection, which has 700 original artifacts in its possession. The main focus is on the pharaohs and their concept of life after death. In addition, visitors can enjoy theatrical re-enactments of ancient Egyptian cultural life and various temporary exhibitions featured throughout the year.

Monday-Saturday 10 am-8 pm in summer, 10 am-2 pm and 4-8 pm in winter; Sunday 10 am-2 pm. There are free guided tours in Spanish Saturday at 5 pm. 11 euros. Special prices apply to theatrical presentations.

Museu Europeu d'Art Modern

Barra de Ferro 5, El Born
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-319-5693

<http://meam.es>

The collection in this lovely restored 18th-century neoclassical palace focuses on figurative art in paintings and sculpture from the 19th century to the present day.

Tuesday-Sunday 10 am-8 pm. 9 euros adults.

Museu Frederic Mares

5 Placa de Sant Iu
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-256-3500

<http://w110.bcn.cat/portal/site/MuseuFredericMares>

This museum was created around the collections donated to the city by sculptor Frederic Mares in 1946. He continued adding to the collection throughout his lifetime. In addition to an extensive Hispanic sculpture collection and many of Mares' own works, the museum also contains photographs, fans, pipes, jewelry, clocks, toys, pharmacy bottles, gargoyles, opera glasses and other ephemera that give an insight into 19th-century customs and lifestyles.

Tuesday-Saturday 10 am-7 pm, Sunday 11 am-8 pm. Admission is 4.20 euros.

Museu Maritim de Barcelona

Avinguda de les Drassanes s/n, Port Vell
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-342-9920

<http://www.mmb.cat>

This is one of Barcelona's most popular museums, housed in the breathtaking Drassanes (Royal Shipyards), which date from the 1200s. Original and replica boats showing the changes in sea travel over the centuries and photographs depicting the shoreline of Barceloneta as a turn-of-century fishing village are just a few of the interesting items on display.

Daily 10 am-7:30 pm. General admission 7 euros adults, free after 3 pm on Sunday.

Museu Monestir de Pedralbes

Baixada del Monestir 9 (Metro: Reina Elisenda or Palau Reial), Pedralbes
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-256-3434

<http://www.bcn.cat/monestirpedralbes>

The Royal Monastery of Santa Maria de Pedralbes was founded in 1326 and is a splendid example of Gothic forms and structures. In addition to the church, visit the three-story cloister and the Chapel of Sant Miquel with its 14th-century murals. The infirmary, vaulted refectory, kitchen, and everyday objects and furniture give you the feel of what life used to be like in a convent. In fact, the adjacent building is still home to a community of nuns.

The church can be visited for free daily 11 am-1 pm. Hours for the other buildings are Tuesday-Friday 10 am-5 pm, Saturday 10 am-7 pm, Sunday 10 am-8 pm April-September; Tuesday-Friday 10 am-2 pm, Saturday and Sunday 10 am-5 pm October-March. Last entry 30 minutes before closing. 7 euros adults.

Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya

Palau Nacional
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-622-0376

<http://www.mnac.cat>

Located in the Palau Nacional (Montjuic), this museum (often referred to as MNAC) includes one of the world's most important collections of Romanesque art, including delicate murals rescued from the walls of tiny mountain churches in Catalonia. It also exhibits Gothic, Renaissance and baroque works. The interior of the palace, built for the International Exhibition of 1929, was partially remodeled by Italian architect Gae Aulenti in the early 1990s. The museum's front steps (or the rooftop for 2 euros) offer a spectacular view of the city.

Tuesday-Saturday 10 am-6 pm in winter and 10 am-8 pm in summer; Sunday and holidays 10 am-3 pm. 12 euros adults; audioguide 3.50 euros per person. Temporary exhibitions require a separate fee; combined tickets for permanent and temporary exhibits available. Free on the first Sunday of each month.

Museu Picasso

Montcada 15-23, La Ribera
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-256-3000

<http://www.museupicasso.bcn.cat>

The museum's focus is on the early formative years of Pablo Picasso (1895-1904), many of which were spent in Barcelona. The collection includes drawings, representational and cubist paintings, and works from the artist's Blue and Pink Periods, housed in five adjacent medieval palaces. One of the highlights is the collection of interpretations that Picasso did of Velazquez's *Las Meninas*.

Tuesday-Sunday 10 am-7 pm (Thursday until 9:30 pm). 11 euros adults, 4.50 euros for temporary exhibits. Free on the first Sunday of every month and every Sunday after 3 pm. Tickets can be purchased in advance online, which saves time waiting in lines.

Poble Espanyol

Ave. Francesc Ferrer i Guardia 13, Montjuic
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-508-6300

<http://www.poble-espanyol.com>

The name translates to Spanish Village. Built for the International Exhibition of 1929, it is an open-air museum that includes replicas (often on a smaller scale) of buildings, squares and bridges found throughout the country. It was revamped for the 1992 Olympics and turned into a local nightlife hot spot with numerous bars and restaurants. It's still open in the daytime, however, and has an arts-and-crafts center with more than 40 workshops where you can view and purchase traditional goods. Numerous children's activities and concerts are also held frequently on-site.

Monday 9 am-8 pm, Tuesday-Thursday and Sunday 9 am-midnight, Friday 9 am-3 pm, Saturday 9 am-4 pm. 12 euros adults.

Neighborhoods & Districts

Barri Gotic

The Gothic Quarter is the oldest portion of Barcelona, a warren of narrow streets on the northeast side of La Rambla. It was originally the site of the Roman settlement and the area later encompassed by the medieval walls. Now it's one of the city's most interesting districts, packed with shops, bars and restaurants, many of them occupying centuries-old buildings. Sights of note include the cathedral, a number of museums and surviving bits of Roman walls. The nerve center of the old city, Placa Sant Jaume, goes back to Roman times, when it formed the intersection of the north-south and east-west roads. It's an excellent starting point from which to explore the rest of the Gothic Quarter.

Farther to the east you'll find the La Ribera and El Born areas. Several of the handsome old mansions there now house museums, including the Museu Picasso. Nestled between Parc de la Ciutadella and Via Laietana, El Born offers an eclectic mix of designer fashion outlets and small artisan shops for you to explore during the day, and plenty of bars, restaurants, nightclubs and terraces to sample at night.

Eixample

This area of the city was first built in the mid-1800s after the medieval walls were demolished and Barcelona was allowed to expand. The Eixample (pronounced *eye-SHAAM-pla*) was laid out according to a plan drawn up by top local planner Ildefons Cerda and is made up of a uniform grid of avenues with the corners of each block "flattened" or pushed in to make a hexagon out of a square—it's easy to identify on maps. The Eixample quickly became a fashionable residential and shopping area (which it remains). It's the prime area in which to view the buildings of the *modernisme* movement. At the western edge of the Eixample is the Parc Joan Miro, with palm trees and the colorful totemic landmark of Miro's *Woman and Bird*. It's especially pretty when lit up at night.

El Raval

On the opposite side of La Rambla from the Barri Gotic, El Raval once had a reputation as a famous red-light district (also known as the Barrio Chino, or Barri Xino), and although today street walkers still parade, there are far fewer of them than before. The area has undergone extensive revamping, making it a fascinating mixture of the old and the ultramodern. One of Gaudi's buildings, the Palau Guell, lies just a half block off La Rambla. Many fashionable bars and restaurants are also in the area, attracting a young, bohemian crowd, and its range of down-to-earth eating spots is the most ethnically varied in the whole city. Toward the port, the neighborhood can still be a bit dicey at times, however, so be cautious if visiting after dark.

Gracia

Stroll up the Passeig de Gracia, cross the Diagonal, and you're in Gracia on the northern edge of Eixample, formerly a town in its own right before it was swallowed by Barcelona's growth. Turn into the warren of narrow streets and enjoy a more private Barcelona with an atmosphere of its own. The district is characterized by independent design, and art and cinema movements, and is home to myriad specialist shops, trendy bars and restaurants. You can find old-fashioned herbalists and junk shops as well as stylishly renovated stores, superb delicatessens and two municipal food markets. Placa del Sol and Placa Rius i Taulet are the main squares where you can enjoy a drink on a cafe terrace. The nightlife, which attracts people from all over town, centers on Carrer Verdi. The area is also famous for its spectacular street parties and celebrations in August.

Montjuic and Poble Sec

You'll need at least a full day to enjoy all that this landmark hill, the largest green area in the city, has to offer. It has a prominent castle, museums, various parks and botanical gardens, and the stadium and other facilities used in the 1992 Olympic Games as well as Poble Espanyol, a village that includes facsimiles of buildings from throughout Spain. Numerous ways of getting up the hill include escalators, buses, cable cars and a funicular train. At the foot of Montjuic, Poble Sec is a cozy, cul-de-sac of a neighborhood fast garnering a reputation for eclectic tapas bars and cafes.

Port Vell

Moll d'Espanya del Port Vell s/n
Barcelona, Spain

The old port area, which surrounds the point where La Rambla meets the sea, doesn't appear old: It has been the site of renovation in recent decades. The statue of Columbus at the foot of La Rambla makes a convenient starting point for exploring this area. (Take the small elevator to the top to get your surroundings in perspective.) Nearby, in the old royal shipyard building, is the Museu Maritim de Barcelona. To the northeast is La Barceloneta, the traditional fishermen's district and home to the best seafood restaurants in town. For practical purposes, La Barceloneta can be thought of as part of Port Vell, although it's really a totally different district with a character all its own.

Vila Olimpica

The area of the Olympic Village was once a wasteland of derelict factories, railroad tracks and warehouses, vestiges of its former glory days as a thriving industrial zone. Today, it's a stylish residential district. With its fountains and gardens, shopping malls and cinema complexes, it is also a popular leisure space for locals and visitors alike. It includes 2.5 mi/4 km of beach and the Port Olympic, packed with restaurants, bars and discos. On Sunday, it seems as if the whole of Barcelona is down in the Vila Olimpica area; the restaurants are crammed then, so if you can see it on another day, you'll enjoy a quieter and more relaxing visit.

Parks & Gardens

Parc de Cervantes

Ave. Diagonal 706
Barcelona, Spain

On the edge of the city and stretching to the foothills, this luxuriant park is a favorite haunt of bikers and joggers. It has children's play areas, a pine-shaded picnic area and some vintage olive trees. The rose garden has more than 10,000 plants, which flower at different times April-November.

Daily 10 am-6 pm December-February, 10 am-7 pm March and November, 10 am-8 pm April and October, 10 am-9 pm May-September.

Parc de la Ciutadella

Passeig Pujades and Passeig Picasso, La Ribera
Barcelona, Spain

Charmingly old-fashioned in its geometric layout, the Parc Ciutadella is leafy and restful, yet filled with surprises such as the flamboyant waterfall and fountain (whose designer was assisted by the student Antoni Gaudi), the sculpture of the dainty *Lady With the Umbrella* by Roig i Sole, rare trees and a boating lake (boat rental is 10 euros). Originally a citadel built in 1715 to keep Barcelona in line after the War of the Spanish Succession, this area was handed over to the city in 1869 and turned into a park. Barcelona

started on its cosmopolitan journey when the park was chosen as the site for the Universal Exhibition of 1888, the gateway to which was the Arc de Triomf (Triumphal Arch). Still standing is the Castell dels Tres Dragons, the original cafe-restaurant built for the Exhibition, along with the Hivernacle (conservatory) and the shady Umbracle (tropical hothouse). The southeast end of the park is taken up by the zoo.

Daily 8 am-6 pm.

Park Guell

Olot 7

Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-409-1831

<http://www.parkguell.cat>

Gaudi's dreamland creation and now a UNESCO World Heritage site, Park Guell has been painstakingly restored and is a must-see. It was originally planned as a housing development, but only a few buildings were completed, including the gingerbread gatehouse. Some of Barcelona's most famous visual symbols are in the park: Gaudi's mosaic dragon (or lizard), the monumental plaza with its colorful serpentine bench made in *trencadis* (interwoven fragments of multicolored ceramic) and fabulous views of the city. The park stretches up the hill, with twisting paths through the woods.

Monumental Plaza open daily 8 am-9:30 pm May-October, 8 am-8 pm late March to late April, 8:30 am-6 pm late October to early March. Last entry 30 minutes before closing. Free admission to the park; monument section is 8 euros adults; 5.50 euros adults for the Gaudi House-Museum, where the architect spent the last 20 years of his life (museum closes earlier than the park).

Wineries, Breweries & Distilleries

Miguel Torres

M. Torres, 6, 08720

Vilafranca del Penedes, Spain

Phone: 93-817-7400

<http://www.torres.es>

A 30- to 40-minute bus or car ride west of the city takes you to the wine-producing town of Vilafranca del Penedes and Torres, Catalunya's top bodega. There, for a small fee, you can learn how wine is made (and ask lots of questions); multimedia presentations are offered along with a physical tour through working vineyards. Wine tastings and a shop are also on-site.

One-hour tours in English available Monday-Friday at 10 am, 1 and 3 pm; Saturday at 10 am and 3 pm; Sunday at 10 am. 8.50 euros adults.

Other Options

Font Magica in Placa Espanya

Placa Carles Buigas 1, Montjuic

Barcelona, Spain

<http://www.bcn.cat/parcsijardins/fonts/magica.html>

Let the changing forms and colors of the Font Magica, originally designed for the International Exposition of 1929, mesmerize you. As the water jets dance to music, a fanlike light show plays from behind the

dome of the Palau Nacional. There is not much in the area in terms of food and drink, so be prepared when going there, especially if taking children.

The fountain operates on the half-hour Thursday-Sunday 9-11 pm June-August; Friday and Saturday 9-10 pm April-October; Friday and Saturday 7-8:30 pm November-March. Free.

Zona Forum

This once industrial swath on the city's northernmost seafront was completely renovated for the 2004 Universal Forum of Cultures. The legacy of this event is a state-of-the-art complex with extensive facilities for exhibitions, concerts and cultural events. The forum complex forms part of a tourist route on the double-decker Barcelona Bus Turistic and can also be reached by the tramline specifically built for the Forum. It's a good place for children, with an adventure playground and the Museu Blau science and nature museum. Its vanguard architecture alone makes it worth a visit, as do its less crowded beaches.

Recreation

The most popular recreation area in Barcelona is the seafront, especially near Vila Olimpica. Walkers, joggers, bicyclists and in-line skaters all make use of the area, where they can be mobile without the worries of automobile traffic. The city's beaches are there, too, extending from Barceloneta eastward. What's more, Port Olympic at Vila Olimpica offers opportunities for sailing and other watersports.

Nightlife

Barcelona has always had a reputation as a party town. It's still true, though the emphasis now has more to do with trendy designer bars than seedy sailor dives. The rougher places are still there, though, especially in earthy districts such as Raval, should you wish to find them. Like other parts of Spain, Barcelona's club scene hits its peak in the wee hours and doesn't end till morning—many dance venues remain open until 5 am, though quieter bars close around 3 am.

Try to set aside one evening for a stroll through the Barri Gotic, in particular the El Born area, and see what bars and bodegas the twisting streets lead you to. In warm weather, you'll find that lots of outdoor plazas become extensions of the surrounding bars, and performers such as jugglers and musicians often stop by to put on a quick show. Those looking for a little more excitement will find the clubs of Port Vell and Vila Olimpica not too far away. The gay crowd might enjoy the bars in Eixample around the Placa Universitat.

There are more options outside the city center. In general terms, the higher up and farther away from the sea you go, the more upmarket the scene. A young, affluent crowd hangs out in bars and clubs around Santalo, Mari Cubi and Placa Francesc Macia. Tibidabo, with its wonderful views of the city, offers an incomparably elegant setting.

Regardless of where you end up going, be sure to dress up if you're going to the clubs. Men should wear a button-up shirt with collar and nice shoes or they will be turned away. Smaller bars tend not to have a dress code.

Performing Arts

Given Barcelona's other artistic leanings, it's not surprising that the performing arts are well-represented in the city.

Theater has always enjoyed great vitality in Barcelona, and several dance companies call Barcelona home. There's also opera, chamber music, jazz, symphony and flamenco productions.

Shopping

The industrious Catalans have often been dubbed a nation of shopkeepers, and Barcelona does have a staggering number of shops of every kind and in every neighborhood. Barri Gotic and El Raval, in particular, have many quirky little shops with long family traditions, struggling for survival in the face of rising rents, malls and big-name merchants. A little shopping time spent around Placa Catalunya will introduce you to El Corte Ingles department store and El Triangle shopping mall.

Large or small, many of the city's merchants play to the city's love of design. In clothes, look for Catalan designers such as Antonio Miro and Adolfo Dominguez, and large stores such as Mango, Zara and Desigual (which is less expensive than in other European cities). Leather shoes, bags, wallets and belts can be particularly stunning and a good value. Some of the best choices are the Spanish brands: Loewe, Yanko, Farrutx and Camper. Even if you never set foot in a store, you'll get to appreciate the city's sense of style by strolling past elaborate window displays.

Food and drink are also highly prized in Barcelona and make good souvenirs. Stock up on olives and cheese (ask to have it vacuum packed or *sous vide* for overseas travel) at La Boqueria market on La Rambla, cold-pressed virgin olive oil in OroLiquido, and Spanish wine at a large grocer such as Colmado Quilez. If you don't mind carting (or shipping) heavy parcels home, treat yourself to an earthenware cooking pot, a cast iron *plantxa* or the more portable ceramic tapas dishes and metal paella pans.

To guide you through this cornucopia, the city has mapped out various routes that (<http://barcelonashoppingline.com>) link the different shopping areas, and also happen to be dotted with many of the most interesting tourist sights. The Barcelona Card pass will give you a discount at a number of shops on the route: They're identified by the Shopping Line logo—four colored diamonds in a white circle within a blue circle.

Shopping Hours: Generally, Monday-Saturday 9 or 10 am to 1:30 or 2 pm and 4:30 or 5 pm to 7:30-9 pm. Neighborhood food stores and bakeries generally open around 8 am, have a long break at lunch and are open again 5-9 pm. The department stores, shopping malls and many of the larger stores on the main shopping streets stay open at lunchtime and until 10 pm. In summer, many shops close on Saturday afternoon. Sunday opening is regulated, though open to debate: The big stores and malls are allowed to open on around 10 Sundays each year, including the four Sundays before Christmas. Otherwise, you'll mostly find only convenience stores and gift shops open on Sunday. The exceptions are the Maremagnum shopping center at the port-end of the Las Ramblas, and a smattering of small boutiques in El Born, El Raval and the Barri Gotic.

Department Stores

El Corte Ingles

Placa Catalunya 14
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 901-122-122

<http://www.elcorteingles.es>

Spain's most emblematic department store, where you can find anything and everything. The huge branch in Placa Catalunya is the most convenient for Barcelona visitors. It can get uncomfortably crowded, but tired shoppers can take a breather and enjoy the view from the rooftop cafeteria. Around the corner of Portal de l'Angel is a branch specializing in sports and leisure.

Monday-Saturday 9:30 am-9:30 pm.

Markets

Els Encants Vells

Ave. Meridiana 69 (Metro: Glories)
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-246-3030

<http://www.encantsbcn.com>

A wondrous assortment of junk and jumble awaits at Barcelona's well-loved flea market. Selection and prices are best early in the morning.

Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday 9 am-8 pm (although the main activity occurs until 3 pm).

La Boqueria

La Rambla 91, Raval
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-318-2017

<http://www.boqueria.info>

Also known as Mercat de Sant Josep, this is the oldest and most marvelous of Barcelona's 40 bustling municipal food markets. It absolutely should not be missed, and with its location just off La Rambla, it's not likely you'd accidentally pass by. Loaded with stall after stall of fresh fruit, fish, meat and vegetables, it's full of bright colors and exotic smells. Of particular interest are the egg stall, with not only chicken but other unique types of eggs, and the stalls with chorizo, jamon iberico and *butifarra* sausages. Seek out the Pinotxo bar for a breakfast of tasty coffee and churros. Great tapas are served all day in the many bars inside.

Monday-Saturday 8:30 am-8:30 pm (Monday is not the best day to visit because a large number of stalls are closed).

Mercat se Santa Caterina

Ave. de Francesc Cambo 16
Barcelona, Spain

Smaller and much less crowded than La Boqueria is this market in the La Ribera district. It was designed by renowned architect Benedetta Tagliabue, and its wavy roof covered in colorful mosaics has become a

landmark in the district. Inside, it's a typical food market with plenty of fresh meats, cheeses, fruit and vegetables to choose from; there's a few restaurants within the market, too—don't leave before you've eaten at Cuines de Caterina.

Monday-Saturday 7:30 am-3:30 pm.

Shopping Areas

Diagonal Mar Centre Comercial

Ave. Diagonal 3 (Metro: El Maresme/Forum)
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-567-7637

<http://www.diagonalmarcentre.es>

If you happen to be in the Forum area of Sant Marti, visit this new indoor shopping center containing many familiar brands such as United Colors of Benetton, Desigual and Intimissimi. There are also places to grab a snack, as well as a post office and cinema.

Monday-Saturday 10 am-10 pm.

El Triangle

Placa Catalunya 1-4
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-318-0108

<http://www.eltriangle.es>

A smart mall in Placa Catalunya, with a combination of small shops and big-name stores such as Sephora, Urban Outfitters and FNAC.

Monday-Saturday 10 am-10 pm.

Las Arenas

Gran Via de les Corts Catalans 373-385 (Metro: Espanya)
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-289-0244

<http://www.arenasdebarcelona.com>

Modern shopping mall built into a historic bullfighting ring still visible from the outside; it's worth the visit just for the unique experience. Inside the shops vary, from cosmetics to clothing to food stores and include restaurants, a movie theater and a rooftop terrace with panoramic views.

Daily 10 am-10 pm.

L'illa

Ave. Diagonal 557
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-444-0000

<http://www.lilla.com>

Housed in the unmistakable white building known as the Recumbent Skyscraper, this elegant and airy commercial center has numerous fashion shops and boutiques, a food market, an FNAC department store, lots of superb little stalls, coffee bars, eateries and a huge branch of the Caprabo supermarket.

Monday-Saturday 10 am-9:30 pm.

Maremagnum

Moll d'Espanya 5 (Metro: Drassanes), Port Vell
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-225-8100

<http://www.maremagnum.es>

At this Port Vell shopping center, you'll find Mango, H&M and other popular chain stores, as well as shops catering to families, a Barca shop, and several coffee shops, tapas bars and restaurants.

Open daily 10 am-10 pm; restaurants open until 1 am.

Specialty Stores

Biosca i Botey

Carrer Girona 148, Eixample
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-238-7373

<http://www.bioscabotey.es>

There are a lot of lamp stores in Barcelona (part of the city's love of design), but this one's a standout. It has a stylish inventory, from the trendiest little designer lamp to the weird and wonderful, with studio lighting and an antiques department, too. You probably won't take a lamp home with you, but it's impossible not to be lured in by the glowing colors and shapes you'll see in the window.

Monday-Saturday 10 am-2 pm and 4:30-8:30 pm.

Cacao Sampaka

Consell de Cent 292, Eixample
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-272-0833

<http://www.cacaosampaka.com>

Purveyors of eye-catching, high-quality artisanal chocolate goodies. Chef Albert Adria is one of the investors, so you know the flavors will be unique.

Monday-Saturday 9 am-9:30 pm.

Caelum

Carrer de la Palla 8, Barri Gotic
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-302-6993

<http://www.caelumbarcelona.com>

Everything sold there has been produced by monks and nuns in Spanish monasteries. In the cafe downstairs, you can sample such culinary delicacies as cakes, cookies, sweets, honey, marzipan, wines and spirits.

Open Monday-Thursday 10:30 am-8:30 pm, Friday and Saturday 10:30 am-11 pm, Sunday 10:30 am-9 pm.

Camper

Pelai 13-37, Eixample
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-302-4124. For the other locations, phone 93-217-2384

<http://www.camper.com>

Footwear is fun at this cheerful shop, which has elevated Mallorcan peasant sandals into a fashion trend with international appeal. Flat-soled and wedge styles come with round toes, bold stripes and bright colors and designs. Other options range from sturdy leather shoes to plastic boots to funky high heels. Also at Rambla de Catalunya 122 and other locations.

Monday-Saturday 10 am-10 pm.

Can Ravell

Arago 313, Eixample
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-457-5114

<http://www.ravell.com>

A good spot to go foraging for local food products, like ham and other cured meats, cheeses, prepared dishes, canned goods, and the shopping list goes on. It also has a restaurant on the premises in case you can't wait to enjoy your purchase.

Tuesday-Saturday 10 am-9 pm, Sunday 10 am-3 pm.

Casa Munich

Carrer Antic de Sant Joan 4, Barri Gotic
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-319-9608

<http://www.munichsports.com>

The colorful sneakers of that old Catalan brand have become fashionable all over the world, but only in a few shops will you find the very sought-after special editions, which are presented there like icons in front of walls striped in black and white. There are other locations in L'Illa at Avenida Diagonal and Maremagnum.

Monday-Saturday 11 am-9 pm.

Cereria Subira

Baixada Llibreteria 7
Barcelona, Spain

Specializing in candles of every imaginable color, shape and size, this old store (founded in 1761) still has its original decor and is quite a sight in itself.

Monday-Thursday 9:30 am-1:30 pm and 4-8 pm, Friday and Saturday 10 am-8 pm.

Colmado Quilez

Rambla de Catalunya 63, Eixample
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-215-2356

<http://www.lafuente.es>

This is a wonderful grocery store that's jammed with cheeses, wine, meats and practically anything else you could want.

Monday-Friday 9 am-2 pm and 4:30-8:30 pm, Saturday 9 am-2 pm.

Custo

Placa de les Olles 7
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-268-7893

<http://www.custo-barcelona.com>

The designer T-shirts and trendy clubwear are popular with the international club set. Spanish actress Penelope Cruz reportedly adores the label. There are multiple locations throughout Barcelona, including the flagship store, but the company's empire is growing all over the world.

Monday-Saturday 10 am-9 pm.

Foix de Sarria

Mayor de Sarria 57, Sarria
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-203-0714

<http://foixdesarria.com>

This pastry shop, one of the most select in town, has a sort of hushed, reverential, almost museumlike air. It was founded in 1886 and belonged to the family of the famous Catalan poet J.V. Foix. Located in the main square of the Sarria neighborhood (not far from Museu Monestir de Pedralbes), it is famous for its *petxines de Sarria*—shell-shaped candies made of almond and bitter chocolate. Around Easter, they have a stunning chocolate sculpture display. Multiple locations—check website.

Daily 8 am-9 pm.

Herboristeria del Rei

Vidre 1, Barri Gotic
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-318-0512

<http://www.herboristeriadelrei.com>

This stately shop specializing in herbal concoctions is as much a local landmark as it is a business. Once purveyors to royal houses, it now peddles herbal remedies, essential oils, natural cosmetics and candles.

Monday 4-8 pm, Tuesday-Saturday 10 am-8:30 pm.

Jaime Beriostain

Carrer de Pau Claris 167
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-515-0779

<http://www.beriestain.com>

This lifestyle store from the titular fashionable interior designer retails in the stuff that makes his work so distinctive: retro furniture, freshly cut flowers, colorful pottery from France and Catalonia, striped table linens and scented candles. The shop includes a cafe that features it all, and is a chic place for lunch or afternoon tea.

Monday-Saturday 10 am-9 pm, Sunday 11:30 am-7:30 pm.

La Manual Alpargatera

Avinyo 7
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-301-0172

<http://www.lamanualalpargatera.es>

A shoe shop specializing in the timelessly popular rope-soled espadrilles. Have a pair custom-made or choose from the shop's mind-blowing selection. Either way, be sure to see them being made by hand in the back room. The shop itself is also interesting—a haven of wrought-iron lamps and wooden beams unchanged since the 1940s.

Monday-Saturday 9:30 am-1:30 pm and 4:30-8 pm.

La Patisserie

Aragon 228
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-451-8401

<http://www.lapastisseriabarcelona.com>

A must-visit for true pastry connoisseurs. Pastry chef of the world in 2011, Josep Maria Rodriguez Guerola has created some of the most delectable and creative pastries you will ever find. Enjoy them in the shop with a coffee or tea.

Open Monday-Saturday 9 am-2 pm and 5-8:30 pm, Sunday 9 am-2:30 pm.

L'Arca de l'Avia

Banys nous 20, Barri Gotic
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-302-1598

<http://www.larca.es>

This high-quality vintage shop is a veritable "grandmother's chest," as the name denotes. Antique textiles, particularly those that might have found their way into a bride's trousseau, such as wedding dresses, veils, linens and curtains. Centuries-old laces are also proudly displayed.

Monday-Saturday 11 am-2 pm and 4:30-8:30 pm.

OroLiquido

Carrer de la Palla 8
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-302-2980

<http://www.oroliquido.es>

This upscale boutique for Spanish olive oils has a great selection of Catalan offerings. The shop always has oils out to sample, from light to more intense flavors, and the staff is happy to help you choose an oil to suit your tastes.

Open daily 10:30 am-8:30 pm.

Papabubble

Ample 28
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-268-8625

<http://www.papabubble.com>

Sweet teeth will definitely feel at home there. Hand-made candies and lollipops in all colors, shapes and sizes. The packaging can also be customized.

Monday-Friday 10 am-2 pm and 3-7 pm, Saturday 10 am-8 pm.

Vila Viniteca

Carrer Agullers 7-9, El Born
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 90-232-7777

<http://www.vilaviniteca.es>

Great selection of 6,000 different Catalan and Spanish wines. Wonderful cavas, sherries, brandies and some very rare finds. Also sells international wines. Tastings offered.

Monday-Saturday 8:30 am-8:30 pm.

Vinus Brindis

Plaza Sant Gregori Taumaturg 7
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-240-4230

<http://www.vinusbrindis.com>

This local wine shop specializes in Catalan wines and also offers free wine tastings during the week. Some employees speak English and will be able to guide you through the familiar and unfamiliar wines and grape varieties.

Monday 5-9 pm, Tuesday-Saturday 10:30 am-2:30 pm and 5-9 pm, Sunday 10:30 am-2:30 pm.

Dining

Dining Overview

Catalan cuisine resembles that of other Mediterranean countries and makes use of nuts, garlic, olive oil, tomatoes and herbs. Truly traditional Catalan restaurants often feature many rich sauces and protein-centric dishes. One of the simplest and yet most delicious dishes (the one Catalans particularly yearn for when abroad) is *pa amb tomaquet*: a large slice of fresh country bread (toasted or not) rubbed with tomato and drizzled with virgin olive oil. It may be topped with Iberian ham, cheese and anchovies or served along with meat, chicken or fish *a la brasa* (cooked over a charcoal fire).

Other local specialties include *esqueixada* (a salad of raw salt cod with onions and peppers), *espinacs a la catalana* (spinach sauteed with raisins and pine nuts) and *bacalla a la llauna* (salt cod with tomato, garlic and parsley). If you have a sweet tooth, *crema catalana* (a cinnamon- and citrus-flavored custard) is a must for dessert.

Many restaurants advertise as serving *cuina de mercat* or *cocina de mercado*, meaning they use whatever is in season at the local market: Freshness is of the essence. There are restaurants serving dishes from other regions of Spain, as well, and places specializing in the cuisine of other countries are also common.

Tapas, one of the first items people visiting Spain want to try, are traditionally from Andalucia, in the most southern part of Spain and are not local to Barcelona. However, you will find some amazing places to try tapas in Barcelona.

Paella is a traditional Valencian dish that you can find all over Barcelona. For a more authentic dish, go for the *fideua*, which is a local dish much like paella but made with pasta.

You can eat well anywhere in the city, although many of the most emblematic restaurants are clustered in the Barri Gotic and the Raval, with Barceloneta and the Olympic port being a must for seafood and the sheer pleasure of eating outdoors. Eixample and Sant Gervasi are often the places for the more modern and new-style Catalan cuisine, and Gracia is full of restaurants, many of them very inexpensive and popular with students and younger visitors. Poble Sec is turning into a gastronomic theme park, thanks to the multiple restaurants owned by Ferran and Albert Adria of the famed three-Michelin-starred El Bulli. In fact, many restaurants that have opened in Barcelona over the past few years are headed by chefs that had cooked at El Bulli and created their own spaces after its closure in 2011.

Like most Europeans, the Catalans begin their day with a light breakfast that may include *bollos* (rolls), *melindros* (lady fingers) and pastries. Lunch is served about 1:30 pm at the very earliest, with peak time

being 2-4 pm. *Berenar* or *merienda* is an afternoon snack taken at around 4 or 5 pm to get you through to a late dinner, which isn't served until 9 pm or later. The best bargains are available at lunch, when most restaurants offer the *menu del dia* or set lunch. Even the most basic (for little more than 10 euros) offer a choice of starter course, main course of meat or fish and dessert, plus a drink.

Expect to pay within these general guidelines for a dinner for one, not including drinks, tax or tip: \$ = less than 20 euros; \$\$ = 20 euros-40 euros; \$\$\$ = 41 euros-70 euros; \$\$\$\$ = more than 70 euros.

Local & Regional

ABaC

Ave. Tibidabo 1, Sant Gervasi
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-319-6600

<http://www.abacbarcelona.com>

A contemporary classic that is part of the Hotel ABaC, this restaurant occupies a spacious and stylish dining room. Its talented young chef Jordi Cruz has gained it two Michelin stars.

Tuesday-Saturday for lunch and dinner. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Aqua

Passeig Maritim de la Barceloneta 30
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-225-1272

<http://www.grupotragaluz.com/restaurantes/agua>

Refined Spanish-Mediterranean cuisine served in a great location right on the beach. Beautiful people congregate on the terrace, but you can also enjoy the view through a large window from the cozy, tastefully designed interior.

Daily noon-11:30 pm. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Butipa

Ramelleres 16
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93205030

<http://www.butipa.cat>

Local street-food vendor, specializing in the delicious local sausage called *butifarra* made in nearby Vic. Not only are these sausages delicious, they are also inexpensive and quick for those on the go. Some casual indoor seating is available, and there are vegetarian options. Enjoy a Moritz beer or local soda with your meal. Small space but worth a visit.

Daily 11 am-11 pm. \$. No credit cards.

Cafe de L'Academia

Carrer Lledo 1, Barri Gotic
Barcelona, Spain

Charming restaurant located on the Placa Sant Just, one of the most beautiful squares in Barcelona, in a Gothic building dating from the 15th century (not to mention the lovely terrace in summer). The Catalan food, using only the freshest ingredients, is excellent and surprisingly affordable: It's one of the best bets in Barcelona for lunch, which can cost as little as 15 euros. Try the eggplant terrine with goat cheese followed by codfish au gratin.

Monday-Friday 1-3:30 pm and 8-11 pm. Reservations highly recommended. \$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Cal Pep

Carrer Placa De las Ollas 8, La Ribera
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-310-7961

<http://www.calpep.com>

One of the best culinary shows in town. Seafood tapas and fresh seasonal fish dishes are prepared in an open kitchen in full view of diners. The cave-like interior enhances the theatrical atmosphere. A line begins to form outside the door before the place even opens, so be sure to get there early.

Monday 7:30-11:30 pm, Tuesday-Saturday 1-11:30 pm. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Casa Calvet

Carrer de Casp 48, Eixample
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-412-4012

<http://www.casacalvet.es>

Dine on excellent Mediterranean food with Asian touches, served in a former office building designed by Antoni Gaudi. Try the duck liver with oranges, and rosemary ice cream for dessert. Wonderful game dishes in the fall.

Monday-Saturday 1-3:30 pm and 8:30 pm-11 pm. Reservations required. \$\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

El Gran Cafe

Carrer d' Avinyo 9
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-318-7986

<http://cacheirorestaurants.com/gran-cafe>

One of the oldest restaurants in Barcelona. It features old-fashioned decor and traditional Catalan dishes, but also boasts a selection of more innovative dishes. With its warm, welcoming atmosphere and round tables, it's a great place for a night out with friends or family.

Daily for lunch and dinner. \$-\$\$\$.

El Nacional

Passeig de Gracia 24-bis, Eixample
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-518-5053

<http://www.elnacionalbcn.com>

This spectacular space, converted from an old garage by local designer Lazaro Rosa-Violan, is actually four restaurants and bars in one, each with a different gastronomic style and identity. You can choose from tapas, fresh salads and deli dishes, to grilled fish and raw oysters. Even if you only opt for a glass of cava and a few olives at the central bar, it's worth going for the decor and setting alone.

Daily noon-2 am. Reservations recommended.

Els Quatre Gats

Montsio 3, Barri Gotic
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-302-4140

<http://www.4gats.com>

Founded in 1897, The Four Cats is one of Barcelona's most famous historic restaurants. It maintains the traditional look designed by modernist architect Puig i Cadafalch that attracted such famous personalities as Pablo Picasso and Antoni Gaudi in their day. Indeed, Picasso hung many of his earliest paintings on the restaurant's walls and designed the first menu. We recommend the 18-euro menu for lunch (Monday-Friday), which includes a choice of two courses and dessert. Despite the tourist crowd, the atmosphere is still interesting, although the food is rather average.

Daily 8 am-1 am. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Embat

Mallorca 304, Eixample
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-458-0855

<http://www.restaurantembat.com>

This small, chef-owned Catalan restaurant operates on a desire to continue serving great food, but at affordable prices. Expect a simple interior, friendly service and fresh ingredients.

Tuesday-Saturday 1-3:45 pm, Thursday-Saturday 8:30-11 pm as well. Reservations recommended. \$\$.

Freixa Tradicio

Sant Elies 22
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-209-7559

<http://www.freixatradicio.com/en>

Classic Catalan cuisine is served in this upscale, family-owned restaurant. Since the 1980s, chef Freixa has been making some of the finest local dishes in the Sant Gervasi district of Barcelona. Great service and attention to detail will greet you when you arrive to taste dishes such as the Catalan cannelloni or Crema Catalana. The menu is divided by region in Catalonia, which gives you an even better idea of the cultural differences within the region.

Tuesday-Saturday 1-3:30 pm and 9-11:30 pm, Sunday 1-3:30 pm. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$.
Most major credit cards.

Gresca

Calle Provenca 230, Eixample
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-451-6193

<http://www.gresca.net>

Not to be missed, as this small, family-owned place could be the best value for the money if you are interested in an excellent three-course lunch for less than 20 euros. Chef Raphael Pena creates unique takes using the freshest local products and some very modern cooking techniques.

Monday-Friday 1:30-3:30 pm and 8:30-10:30 pm, Saturday 8:30-10:30 pm. Reservations recommended. \$\$.
Most major credit cards.

Hisop

Passatge Marimon 9, Sant Gervasi
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-241-3233

<http://www.hisop.com>

One of the great chefs of Barcelona, Oriol Ivern creates unique and memorable plates with touches of molecular gastronomy and local, seasonal produce. It's perhaps more avant-garde than other restaurants of similar pricing—don't let the simple dining room deceive you. A wine-tasting menu is offered to pair with the tasting menu, but unless you are a strong drinker, you might find it to be too much.

Monday-Friday 1:30-11 pm, Saturday 8:30-11 pm. Reservations required. \$\$\$\$.
Most major credit cards.

La Camarga

Aribau 117, Eixample
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-323-6655

<http://lacamarga.com/en>

This restaurant features imaginative and delicious Mediterranean cooking based particularly on fresh vegetables and fish, in addition to some excellent rice dishes.

Daily for lunch and dinner. Reservations recommended. \$\$.
MasterCard or Visa preferred.

L'Antic Forn

Villarroel 182, Eixample
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-430-0826

<http://www.lanticfornvillarroel.com>

A traditional and cozy Catalan restaurant that focuses on market-fresh and seasonal ingredients and grilled meats. Set menus for lunch (12 euros) and dinner (26.50 euros). Definitely try the *calcots* (a type of scallion served with a sauce) when it's in season. Daily 1-5 pm and 8 pm-midnight. \$\$.
Most major credit cards.

Mam i Teca

Lluna 4, El Raval
Barcelona, Spain

If you're looking for a light meal or just prefer to nibble the night away in a languorous setting, look no further than this cozy tapas bar, with a handful of tables and soft jazz music. Traditional tapas are treated with loving care by the resident foodies who source top-quality Spanish ingredients such as air-cured tuna, fresh anchovies and a variety of cheeses to create Catalan specialties. But the daily specials are inspired.

Daily 1-4 pm and 8 pm-midnight (closed for lunch Tuesday and Saturday). \$\$.

Restaurant Gaig

Corsega 200 (at the corner of Aribau), Eixample
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-429-1017

<http://www.restaurantgaig.com>

Multiple generations of the Gaig family have nurtured this business for more than a century, and a distinct spirit of innovation and sound service on the part of the current husband-and-wife team keeps it going. Refined Catalan dishes are served in a sophisticated contemporary setting.

Tuesday-Saturday 1:30-3:30 pm and 8:30-11 pm, Sunday 1:30-3:30 pm. \$\$\$.

Semproniana

Rossello 148, Eixample
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-453-1820

<http://www.semproniana.net>

Located in a former printing office, this restaurant affords a welcome break from style and design with its nonmatching furniture, ceramic plates and other flea-market finds. But the food is some of the most inventive and delicious you will find in the city for such reasonable prices; servings come in various sizes. Favorites include codfish moussaka, partridges with cinnamon sauce, and *civet* of hare with jam. The star of the dessert menu is the *delirium tremens*, an understandably small slice of pure chocolate bliss.

Monday-Friday 1:30-4 pm and 9-11 pm, Saturday 9-11 pm. Reservations required. \$\$.

Taktika Berri

Carrer de Valencia 169, Eixample
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-453-4759

<http://www.taktika-berri.vipgourmet.com>

This is one of the best and most popular tapas bars in Barcelona, so reservations are highly recommended. Since the food is Basque, tapas there are called *pintxos* and are just delicious. Full meals are excellent, too, with an emphasis on fresh seafood. Do not expect a menu—the waiter will tell you what's available. The light, fruity Basque wines go very well with the food.

Monday-Friday 1:30-4 pm and 8:30-11 pm, Saturday 1:30-4 pm. Reservations recommended. \$-\$\$\$.
Most major credit cards.

Tragaluz

Passaje de la Concepcio 5, Eixample
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-487-0621

<http://www.grupotragaluz.com/restaurantes/tragaluz>

Two restaurants in one: Japanese food on the first floor and Mediterranean cuisine on the second floor, where fresh ingredients are served in endlessly imaginative combinations such as pork with figs or steamed hake with applesauce. This restaurant has won design awards as well, and is one of Barcelona's most fashionable eating places (don't miss the restrooms by Olympic-design darling Mariscal).

Daily 1:30-4 pm and 8-11:30 pm. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$\$.

Cuisines

French

Cafe de Paris

Mestre Nicolau 16
Barcelona, Spain

This classic French restaurant with chic ambience enjoys a well-deserved reputation for the quality of its meat: The Cafe de Paris entrecote is a house specialty. Appetizing home-style stews, too.

Monday-Saturday 1-4 pm and 8:45 pm-midnight. Reservations required. \$\$-\$\$\$.

Italian

La Burrata

Balmes 283 (Metro: Fontana), Sant Gervasi
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-500-8525

<http://www.laburrata.com>

Amazing pizza is found in this Neapolitan-owned and -run restaurant in the Sant Gervasi neighborhood. In the morning, the dough can be seen rising in the window, to be cooked in the wood-fired oven at night. Other lovely dishes such as gnocchi with *burrata* are available. Casual and good for families.

Monday-Saturday 1-4 pm and 8 pm-midnight. \$\$.

Murivecchi

Princesa 59, El Born
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-315-2297

<http://www.restaurante-murivecchi.com>

Exquisite Neapolitan cuisine. The individual pizzas are big enough to share, and the homemade desserts are fabulous. The lunch menu is particularly good and worth considering if you are visiting the Museo Picasso (about a five-minute walk) around midday.

Daily 1-4 pm and 8 pm-midnight. Reservations recommended for dinner. \$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Latin American

Caleuche

Sant Pau 116, Raval
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-441-9796

<http://www.caleuche.es>

Caleuche specializes in Patagonian cuisine with a Mediterranean influence. An earthen oven produces large pizzas (the house specialty). Other dishes include Argentinian-style empanadas (savory pastries filled with meat, cheese and more), salads and pastas.

Daily 9 am-12:30 am. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Spanish

Amaya

La Rambla 20
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-302-1037

<http://www.restauranteamaya.com>

This big restaurant is one of the best options on La Rambla and serves dishes from the Basque region of Spain. Lots of seafood on the menu, including unusual items such as eel. Tables are set up outside April-October. It can get very crowded, especially on Sunday.

Daily 1-4 pm and 7-11 pm. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Bilbao

Perill 33, Gracia
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-458-9624

<http://www.restaurantbilbao.com>

You couldn't find a better place to eat the authentic Mediterranean diet. This well-loved local favorite on one of Gracia's most narrow streets serves whatever's in season, fresh and simply cooked in the traditional style: artichokes sauteed with ham, wild mushrooms with garlic and parsley, meat or fish *a la plantxa*. Homemade desserts and a good wine list. Though not inexpensive, the quality makes it an unbeatable value. The *menu del dia* is an especially good bargain.

Monday-Friday 1-11 pm, Saturday 2-11 pm. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$.

Carlitos

Calvet 50, Sant Gervasi
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-125-4636

<https://www.facebook.com/RestauranteCarlitos>

Known for some of the best *croquettas* (fried bechamel with a variety of fillings) in Barcelona, this is a great place to try some amazing tapas.

Tuesday and Wednesday 9 am-midnight, Thursday-Saturday 9 am-3 am. Reservations recommended. \$\$.

Els Sortidors del Parlament

Parliament 53, Eixample
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-441-1602

<http://www.elssortidors.com>

Beautifully designed with classic colors and a respect to the historical architecture of this old motorcycle repair shop, this is possibly the most spacious tapas bar in Barcelona. Delicious traditional dishes and a house vermouth. The blood-sausage gratin is divine.

Monday-Thursday 5 pm-midnight, Friday-Sunday noon-midnight. Reservations not accepted. \$-\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Panxa del Bisbe

Rabassa 37, Gracia
Barcelona, Spain

Although a bit outside the normal tourist area, this is a great space for small groups and it has wonderful plates to share. Local wines.

Monday-Saturday 1:30-3:30 pm and 8:30 pm-midnight. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Quimet&Quimet

Poeta Cabanyes 25
Barcelona, Spain

The Quim family has run this iconic tapas bar since 1914. It has a more traditional atmosphere, and with standing room only, encourages you to drink. There are excellent beers, but the highlight is the Spanish and international wines that grace all the walls of the small space. Enjoy some cured seafood and *pintxos* while taking in the environment. Cash preferable.

Monday-Friday noon-4 pm and 7-10:30 pm, Saturday noon-4 pm. Reservations not accepted. \$-\$\$.

Rincon de Aragon

Carme 28 (near the La Boqueria market), Raval
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-302-6789

<http://elrinconbarcelona.com>

With all the seafood places in town, you may get a craving for some good meat, and this is the place to get it. Both the cooking and the decor suggest the simplicity of the mountain regions near the Aragonese town of Teruel, known throughout Spain for its delicious rustic cuisine. Simple dishes, such as the roast lamb, are cooked perfectly. Expect the best beef, pork and lamb in Barcelona.

Daily 1-11:30 pm. Reservations recommended. \$-\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Taktika Berri

Carrer de Valencia 169, Eixample
Barcelona, Spain

This is one of the best and most popular tapas bars in Barcelona, so reservations are highly recommended. Since the food is Basque, tapas there are called *pintxos* and are delicious. Full meals are excellent, too, with an emphasis on fresh seafood. Do not expect a menu—the waiter will tell you what's available. The light, fruity Basque wines go well with the food. Reservations recommended.

Monday-Saturday 1:30-4 pm and 8:30-11 pm. \$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Ten's

Rec 79, El Born
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-319-2222

<http://tensbarcelona.com>

This small and casual restaurant in the Park Hotel specializes in generous portions of creative tapas by chef Jordi Cruz.

Daily 1:30-3:30 pm and 8-11:30 pm. \$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Tickets Bar

Ave. Parallel 164, Eixample
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 606-225-545

<http://www.ticketsbar.es>

This is *the* tapas place in Barcelona. One of the Adria brothers' creations, it is more like entering a carnival than a restaurant. If you want a spot, reservations are required and you will need to book online three months in advance. While you can expect some molecular-style tapas, it also has more traditional tapas in creative plates. If you don't know what to order, your waiter will be happy to make suggestions based on your taste preferences.

Tuesday-Friday 6:30-10:30 pm, Saturday 1-3 pm and 7-10:30 pm. Reservations required. \$\$\$\$.

Vegetarian

La Bascula

Flassaders 30, Barri Gotic
Barcelona, Spain

Run as a cooperative, this cafe does not impress at first glance. However, hidden in the back is a wonderful, intimate dining area, sporting mismatched furniture and regularly filled by a young and vibrant clientele. The service is friendly, and the quality of the food is very good. Highly recommended for light lunches or afternoon teas.

Friday-Saturday 1-11 pm, Sunday 1-7 pm. Reservations not accepted. \$. No credit cards.

Seafood

Els Pescadors

Placa Prim 1, Poble Nou
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-225-2018

<http://www.elspescadors.com>

This is one of the best places in town to eat fresh fish. The old-style tavern decor, relaxed atmosphere and high-quality wine list enhance the experience. During summer months, we recommend sitting on the terrace, an oasis of calm in the bustling city.

Daily 1-4 pm and 8-11 pm. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Escriba Xiringuito

Ronda Litoral 42, Vila Olimpica
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-221-0729

<http://www.xiringuitoescriba.com>

This restaurant looks right out over the beach, and staff will drag tables into the sun for you. There's lots of room inside, but the outdoor tables are what's prized: Locals mill on the seafront, aperitif in hand, while waiting for one to open up. It has delicious fish dishes. For an appetizer, don't miss the *pica-pica*, a selection of tapas including crispy fried-vegetable tidbits, sardines and croquettes. Be sure to have dessert; the place belongs to a famous family of chocolatiers who also operate an excellent pastry shop on La Rambla (if you go there, have the hot chocolate).

Daily 1-4:30 pm and 8-11 pm. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$\$. Visa and MasterCard only.

Suquet de l'Almirall

Passeig Joan de Borbo 65, Port Vell
Barcelona, Spain

Phone: 93-221-6233

<http://www.suquetdelalmirall.com>

One of the most interesting seafood restaurants in town, it beautifully blends tradition and innovation. Enjoy perfectly prepared paella and a host of other rice and fish dishes, or try a selection of half portions

of the chef's suggestions. The restaurant has a sunny terrace and enjoys the tangy sea air of Barceloneta. Extensive wine cellar.

Tuesday-Saturday 1-4 pm and 8-11 pm, Sunday 1-4 pm. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$\$. MasterCard and Visa only.

Security

Etiquette

Business travelers will find a moderately affluent city (in spite of current economic challenges), in step with the age of high technology but still maintaining many of its traditions.

Appointments—You may find it valuable to have a local intermediary who can assist in establishing business appointments. Schedule meetings well in advance. As a visitor, you should be punctual but allow a 15-minute grace period for anyone you are meeting. Catalonians pride themselves on their efficiency and timeliness.

Personal Introductions—Handshakes are the typical greeting. Last names with the appropriate Spanish title are used. If your acquaintance has a professional title, you will learn it when introduced; if not, *senor* (male) and *senora* (married female) are appropriate. The title and the person's last name should be used until you are instructed otherwise. Note that it is typical for Spanish people to have two surnames, one from their father and one from their mother. The father's surname will be given first during the introduction, and that's the name that is used to address or speak of the person. Thus, Federico Garcia Lorca would be addressed as "Senor Garcia." Invest in business cards with the information printed in English on one side and Spanish on the other.

Negotiating—Business is typically preceded by small talk and pleasantries. Negotiations can be a more extended process than in northern European countries. Companies tend to be hierarchical, so focus on individuals of equal rank or higher. You are an outsider and must ingratiate yourself. Thus, expect many questions about your business, background and family. Intuition, as much as objective fact, is important in their impression of you, so remain warm and friendly in your demeanor. Anticipate that many of the people important to a decision may not be present at any given meeting.

Business Entertaining—Lunch and dinner are the meals most commonly attended by business associates. Lunch is usually the more productive for deal-making, but business discussions should be saved for the very end of the meal, during coffee. Know that dinner is usually served quite late—9 or 10 pm. Spaniards often fill the gap between lunch and dinner by snacking on tapas at cafes and taverns.

Body Language—Conversations take place at close quarters, and polite conversational touching may be practiced.

Gift Giving—In business contexts, gifts are typically given at the conclusion of successful negotiations. Gifts should be opened and appreciated immediately. Appropriate personal gifts when visiting a home include flowers, wine or chocolate, but avoid lilies, as they are associated with funerals.

Conversation—If you don't speak Spanish or Catalan, try to learn at least a few phrases well. In Barcelona, Catalan is spoken on an equal footing with Spanish, and the locals are generally impressed when foreigners take the time to learn the language. Food, sports and travel are good topics, but if you bring up FC Barcelona and soccer in general be prepared for in-depth, detailed conversation.

Be aware that, in many regards, Spain is still a country of regions: Many people will identify more strongly with their local area than with the country as a whole. Catalonians consider themselves members of an autonomous nation, even though many people in the rest of Spain oppose this view—tread lightly with the topic.

Personal Safety

In general, Barcelona is a reasonably safe city to walk around in, even late at night. The biggest danger is petty crime—pickpocketing, bag snatching and assorted scams. Thieves tend to ply their trade in the busy tourist spots such as La Rambla, the Barri Gotic, El Raval, in clubs or bars, down by the port, on the metro and on buses.

A few precautions will help keep you out of trouble: Don't carry money, credit cards or documents in back pockets, breast pockets or backpacks. Leave valuables in a safe-deposit box at your hotel, including your passport (a photocopy of your passport is sufficient to carry with you). Wear purses, bags and cameras slung around your neck or across your chest and keep them close to your body in crowds. Don't set them down at your feet or in adjacent seats in outdoor cafes or on trains and buses—keep your hand on them at all times. Do not leave cell phones or valuables on restaurant tables, especially on terraces.. Never leave any item of value unattended or inside a parked car.

In an emergency, dial 112.

For more information, contact your country's travel-advisory agency.

Health

Barcelona's tap water is safe to drink; however, many people prefer bottled water, which is easily available and inexpensive. Sanitation levels are high, but it's wise to exercise caution with tapas that look old and tired. It's also sensible to avoid mayonnaise when the weather's hot.

Spanish law prohibits smoking in all enclosed (and some open) public areas. With its regulations coming into line with most of the rest of Europe, smoking is banned totally in cafes and restaurants, and only allowed in certain specified areas of hotels. Smoking outdoors is banned in children's play areas, around schools and near hospitals. However, smoking at outdoor cafes is quite common, so avoid those areas if you are sensitive to cigarette smoke.

If you travel into the countryside, protect yourself from ticks, which are quite prevalent and can carry disease. There are also poisonous caterpillars that are found between January and April, typically near pine trees. Do not handle them; the hairs have a toxin that is rather painful.

The beaches of Barcelona are safe and typically do not have any waves or currents, but recently there have been an increasing number of shark sightings, so pay attention to the flags and lifeguards. Jellyfish can also be numerous in the warmer months of July and August. Be sure to wear plenty of sunscreen at the beach, or when walking around.

Most doctors have some knowledge of English, and many speak it reasonably well. Hotels will likely arrange to find an English-speaking doctor for you. In an emergency, your best bet is to go to the emergency department of any of the big public hospitals, all of which are open 24 hours a day. Be sure to have your health insurance information available and contact your home health insurance agency as soon as possible to advise them of the situation. While Barcelona is known for a high-quality, inexpensive public health system, you will pay much higher prices unless you are a resident.

Two hospitals in or near the city center are Centre Perecamps, Drassanes 13-15, Raval (phone 93-441-0600), and Hospital Clinic i Provincial, Villarroel 170, Eixample. Phone 93-227-5400. Pediatric emergencies are best handled at Hospital Sant Joan de Deu, Passeig de Sant Joan de Deu 2, Les Corts. Phone 93-600-9783.

If you need a prescription filled on short notice, be aware that every neighborhood has at least one pharmacy open 24 hours a day. Their addresses will be posted in the windows of other pharmacies and will be published in the newspaper under *Farmacias de Guardia*.

For an ambulance, dial 061 or 93-300-2020.

For more information, contact your country's health-advisory agency.

Disabled Advisory

Barcelona is quite attentive to making the city accessible to locals and visitors alike. Sidewalks are wide and well-maintained, and ramps or elevators have been installed wherever possible. Unfortunately, the Gothic Quarter, Born and Raval have historic buildings that cannot be fitted as easily as the more modern areas. Luckily, only 16 of all 156 metro stations can *not* accommodate the disabled—the overwhelming majority of stations are accessible. All buses have automatic extending ramps, making them completely accessible. The public transit agency offers a list of all buses and metro stops that are equipped for the disabled at <http://www.tmb.cat/en/transport-accessible>.

You can also request a taxi equipped for wheelchairs. Phone 93-420-8088. <http://www.taxi-amic-adaptat.com>.

Contact Oficina d'Informacio Turistica for additional information about hotels, transportation and services for those with disabilities. Phone 93-285-3834.

Other good sources of advice and information include Accessible Barcelona (<http://www.accessiblebarcelona.com>, a website created by an Englishman, Craig Grimes, who lives in Barcelona and uses a wheelchair (<http://www.craiggrimes.com>), and the Municipal Institute for People with Disabilities, Valencia 344, Eixample. Phone 93-413-2775. <http://w110.bcn.cat/portal/site/BarcelonaAccessible>.

Facts

Dos & Don'ts

Do be careful where you light up. Spain's antismoking law took effect in 2011. The law bans smoking in enclosed public spaces, which include bars, restaurants, hotel lobbies, casinos, clubs, office buildings, open-decked tourist buses and airports. There is also a ban on smoking in outdoor spaces around schools, hospitals and children's playgrounds.

Do keep your eyes open for pickpockets. The areas around La Rambla and La Sagrada Familia are particularly dicey. In addition to light-fingered pickpockets, there are also a number of tricks thieves use to distract and defraud you. To reach into your front pockets, someone may approach you with a magazine or clipboard and practically press it into your chest, talking excitedly all the time. This is just a cover for them entering your pockets and removing your valuables. Leave your valuables in the hotel safe and take only as much cash as you'll need.

Don't confuse Catalan with Spanish or refer to Catalan as a dialect. They are distinct languages representing different cultures.

Don't expect to eat lunch before 1 pm, or dinner before 8 pm at most restaurants. The Catalans eat later than most visitors, so use the time before to try out some tapas like the locals do.

Do dress modestly in the city. Spain is a conservative country, so skimpy tops and too-brief clothing are inappropriate for visits to churches. Catalonians normally dress well and stylishly, but the younger generations are embracing a more relaxed attire. Even then, shorts are tailored and often worn with button-up or polo shirts instead of T-shirts. Bathing suits are only for the beach and will mark you for a tourist if worn elsewhere in the city, as will flip-flops.

Don't litter. You may see some people throwing trash in the street, but most people are tidy and have great respect for public areas.

Don't preface a question or restaurant order with too many polite formalities. Catalans are a friendly people, but when it comes to these situations, they prefer you get straight to the point. A simple *gracias* or *merci* will suffice at the end.

Geostats

Passport/Visa Requirements: Passports are needed by citizens of Australia, the U.S. and Canada and must be valid for at least six months after your trip. A tourist visa is not required for a visit of three months or less. Proof of onward passage and sufficient funds are needed by all. Reconfirm travel document requirements with your carrier before departure.

Population: 1,600,000.

Languages: Catalan, Spanish.

Predominant Religions: Christian (Roman Catholic).

Time Zone: 1 hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (+1 GMT). Daylight Saving Time is observed from the end of March to the end of October.

Voltage Requirements: 220 volts. 50 Hz.

Telephone Codes: 34, country code; 93, city code;

Money

Taxes

The value-added tax in Spain is called by its abbreviation IVA (pronounced *ee-bah*). The basic rate is a whopping 21%. There is a reduced rate of 10% which applies to such things as passenger transport, hotels and restaurants. The lowest rate of 4% applies to such items as basic food and drink (not purchased at a restaurant) and pharmaceuticals.

Visitors to Spain not residing in the European Union are eligible for a reimbursement of the tax that they pay on some merchandise. The procedure can be a bit complicated, but it's basically as follows: The tax refund is valid only for purchases of 90.15 euros (taxes included) or higher. Look for stores displaying a "tax-free" sticker and request an invoice and an IVA refund form detailing the value, tax rate and nature of the purchase. When departing Spain, you will need to have the completed form stamped by customs—do this before you check your luggage, because they may need to see the purchased items. This is important even if you will be returning home from another EU country. If you are departing the EU from another member country, final processing of your refund claim will be handled by that country's customs. You can mail in the stamped form up to three months from the date of purchase and wait to receive your refund in the form of a check in euros, or you can get an immediate cash refund (minus a service charge) at the Tax-Free Shopping refund window, which is usually located in the departure area of airports.

Tipping

Tipping in Spain is not based on a set formula. Wait staff will be delighted if you leave something as a way of saying you were pleased with the service. In higher-end restaurants, it is common to leave at least 5%-10%. The norm in bars or cafes would be to leave small change or round up the bill. Taxi drivers do not expect a tip.

If you are staying in a hotel that offers room service or other hotel staff services, be sure to leave a few euros for each request.

Weather

There is really no best time to visit Barcelona, nor a worst. Thanks to its location on the Mediterranean, it enjoys a mild, pleasant climate year-round. December-February is the chilliest period, although the sun shines most of the time. Even in winter, locals sunbathe on the beaches (in "suntraps" by the seawall) and eat and drink on terraces. The hardier ones even occasionally take a dip; you may not want to follow their example, however, as the water is surprisingly cold.

In January, the average temperature rarely falls below 50 F/10 C and is often considerably higher. Really cold spells are typically few and far between, although recent years have seen an increasing number of cold spells and even some snow.

Summers aren't necessarily hot—the average high in July and August is 78 F/25 C—but the high humidity can make them somewhat uncomfortable. School vacation runs late June to mid-September, and those who are able to do so spend the entire summer away from the city. Most shops and businesses take their annual vacations in August, leaving the city relatively empty.

Rain is infrequent, but can be heavy when it occurs, and thunderstorms can be violent.

What to Wear

It won't take you long to learn that Barcelona is a style-conscious city, so it's a good idea to have some options other than jeans and T-shirts. For the heat of summer, take along the coolest clothes possible. Fashionable trousers and sleeveless tops are fine, but bathing gear is strictly for the beach. Sunscreen and a hat will be useful accessories.

In autumn and spring, it can be chilly in the morning and evening, so take along a jacket and sweater. The winter tends to be relatively mild, but it is wise to take along hats, gloves, scarves and so forth, and to be prepared for very cold spells, which can appear without much warning.

Business visitors should stick to plain, conservative business suits with ties for the men and the equivalent for women: dark colors in winter, lighter in summer. Above all, pack comfortable walking shoes. Loafers are typical footwear for men in the city.

Transportation

The best way to get around in Barcelona is on foot (a centrally located hotel will put you within walking distance of many of the best attractions) and by public transport, especially the efficient subway system, the metro. There are a number of multiride tickets and travel passes available for use on the nine metro lines, the city railway network and a huge fleet of buses.

The city's old tram network has also been resurrected, renovated and streamlined; modern, speedy, and almost-noiseless trams now regularly coast up and down Avenida Diagonal and northeast along the coast to the former industrial suburb of Sant Marti. Another alternative for getting around the city center are the ecological taxis that resemble a cross between rickshaws and bicycles, though they're not the best choice if you happen to be in a hurry or want to go farther afield.

The hugely popular Bus Turistic is a great way to visit the main sights of Barcelona. For general information on all city transportation services, visit http://www.tmb.cat/en_US/home.jsp.

Air

Barcelona Airport (BCN), also known as El Prat, is 7 mi/12 km south of the city, near the town of El Prat del Llobregat. The airport has one of the fastest-growing traffic flows in Europe, and it is a hub for Mediterranean destinations. In spite of its rapid growth, the airport has been doing a good job of maintaining efficiency and comfort.

The airport consists of two terminals, T1 and T2. The T1, covering 133 acres/54 hectares, handles more than 30 million passengers a year. Services at the facility include a spa, fitness center, hair salon and four VIP lounges, as well as more than 50 shops and 30 bars and restaurants. Business travelers have access to a large business center, and there is Wi-Fi throughout the terminal. The granite structure was designed with sustainable practices, including the installation of hundreds of solar panels.

Both terminals have numerous shops, restaurants, bars and cafes on-site, as well as banks, ATMs, a Wi-Fi network and airline-related services. Phone 91-321-1000 for information. <http://www.aena.es/csee/Satellite/Aeropuerto-Barcelona/es/Inicio.html>.

Girona Airport (GRO) is also worth considering, as it has regular flights between many major European cities and is well-connected to Barcelona's Estacio del Nord (<http://www.barcelonanord.com>) in the city center (Metro stop: Arc de Triomf) via a 75-minute bus service. Bus tickets cost 16 euros one way and 25

euros round-trip. Phone 90-213-0104 for information. <http://www.aena.es/csee/Satellite/Aeropuerto-Girona-Costa-Brava/es/Inicio.html>.

Connecting Transportation

Best way:

If you are headed for the city center, the Aerobus is inexpensive (5.90 euros one way; 10.20 euros round-trip) and almost as fast as a taxi (about 30 minutes, depending on traffic). It can also accommodate all the luggage you have on the plane. You can purchase tickets from automatic machines with a credit card, or from the staff at bus stops by card or cash. However, you can only use cash to buy a ticket from the driver. It stops at Placa Espanya, Comte Urgell/Gran Via and Placa Universitat and ends at Placa Catalunya, at the top of La Rambla. There is a bus stop outside each terminal, with buses leaving every five minutes starting between 5 and 5:30 am. Phone 90-210-0104. <http://www.aerobusbcn.com>.

Other options:

Taxis are probably the most expensive option, but they will take you right to your destination. A typical fare from the airport to the center of Barcelona is around 35 euros. Be prepared to wait in line for a few minutes at the rank outside your terminal. Taxis are metered. For general information on using taxis and a list of current fares, see <http://www.taxibarcelona.cat/tabid/2099/Default.aspx>.

The Renfe train is the least expensive way into town, around 2.15 euros depending on final destination. At the airport, it operates only from Terminal 2, but there is a free shuttle bus from Terminal 1. Just follow the signs. Train service between Barcelona and the airport is via line C2 Norte (Macanet-Sant Celoni-Airport). Renfe Trains depart every half-hour and in central Barcelona stop at Sants, Arc de Triomf and Clot-Arago stations. Phone 902-240-202. <http://www.renfe.com>.

The new line 9S metro service departs from T2 and finishes at the Zona Universitaria metro stop (line 3) on the western flank of the city. On the way its stops at the Fira metro stop, making this a handy option for visitors to the Gran Via trade fair complex. Tickets cost 4.50 euros one-way.

Major rental car agencies have branches at the airport, and terminal T1 has parking for more than 11,000 cars.

Bus

Barcelona is served by a large number of bus companies that operate regular lines to other cities and towns in Spain and to the rest of Europe. Most long-distance buses, both national and international, arrive and depart from one of two stations. Estacio d'Autobusos is at Barcelona-Nord, Ali Bei 80 (next to Arc de Triomf metro station). Estacio d'Autobusos Barcelona-Sants is next to Barcelona-Sants railway and metro station. Some buses to and from other towns in Catalonia stop elsewhere in the city.

Car

The minimum driving age in Spain is 18, although most car rental companies will not rent to anyone younger than 21. Because it has a good public-transportation system, and because its automobile congestion is legendary, the first rule about driving in Barcelona is to avoid it if at all possible. If you can't avoid it, carefully study a good map well in advance of your arrival and plan the route to your destination within the city. Do not speak on the phone or text while driving, and follow the speed limits; the camera and radar regulation in Spain is very advanced, and you can get a ticket for going 3 mi/5 km over the speed limit.

Driving is on the right side of the road, although Barcelona has a rather extensive and complex grid of one-way streets. Use a detailed city map to locate a parking garage (indicated with a P) near your destination—though these are often expensive (20 euros or more per day). It's always difficult—if not impossible—to find a space on the street.

Remove all valuables from the car, no matter where you have it parked. Don't be tempted to park in a loading zone or other restricted area, as cars will be towed and it is very expensive.

Public Transportation

Transports Metropolitans de Barcelona (TMB) runs both the bus and subway systems, and there are also FGC trains that operate in the greater Barcelona area. There is an integrated fare system, which allows you to use one travel card on several modes of transport, including the metro; urban, metropolitan and interurban buses; the tram system; FGC trains; and Rodalies de Catalunya trains. This system allows you to use four different types of transport and make up to three changes within the zones for which your travel card is valid. There are six travel zones, although most of what you need is in Zone 1. The various options are detailed on the TMB website. <http://www.tmb.cat/en/bitllets-i-tarifas>.

It will almost certainly be worth your while to buy a Barcelona Card. It covers travel on the Aerobus, metro, TMB buses and FGC trains. In addition, it grants you discounts at museums, shops, restaurants and on the Barcelona Bus Turistic. Cards are good for three to five days and are on sale at the tourist information offices at Placa Catalunya, Placa Sant Jaume, Sants railway station, Cortes Ingles stores, at other tourist attractions or online. <http://bcnshop.barcelonaturisme.com/shopv3/en/product/1/barcelona-card.html>.

Free maps of the public transportation system are available at the customer service centers at several locations, including the Sants train station and metro stations at Universitat, Diagonal and Sagrada Familia. <http://www.tmb.cat>.

FGC Trains

This railway network is run by the Catalan government and offers service in the city and to the surrounding region. You can take FGC trains from Placa Catalunya to the uptown residential district of Sant Gervasi and to the foot of Mount Tibidabo. Stations are marked by bright orange signs with a chain icon in white. Automated ticket machines have instructions in (slightly weird) English. Barcelona, Spain. Phone 93-205-1515. <http://www.fgc.es>.

TMB Buses

TMB operates a fleet of more than 800 buses, all of which are adapted for wheelchair access. Bus stops, some of which have shelters with maps, have a black bus icon on a white background. The TMB system also includes several trams, funicular trains and a cable car. Regular buses generally operate 5:30 am-11 pm. 2.15 euros single-ticket fare. Barcelona, Spain. Phone 902-075-027. <http://www.tmb.cat>.

TMB Metro

There are nine subway lines in Barcelona that are clearly color-coded on maps and signs. To locate a metro stop, look for signs with the white M in a red diamond shape on a red background. Fare cards can be purchased from ticket windows or vending machines inside the stations. The metro operates Monday-Thursday, Sunday and holidays 5 am-midnight; Friday 5 am-2 am; Saturday nonstop. The fare for a one-way journey within zone one is 2.15 euros. Barcelona, Spain. <http://www.tmb.cat>.

Ship

Barcelona is among the Mediterranean's leading cruise ports and has several passenger terminals. The terminals are extremely close to the city center in the old port, watched over by the promontory of Montjuic.

Taxi

Taxis are plentiful and can usually be hailed on the street fairly quickly. A bright green light on the top and a sign in the windshield saying *Llibre/Lliure* (Free) indicate that the taxi is available. There are taxi ranks at metro, bus and train stations, in main squares and many other locations as well. You can also call for a pickup, but most companies will start the meter at the time they receive the call, not from the time you get in the cab.

Special services, including seven-seat vehicles and English-speaking drivers, can be hired from some of the telephone-taxi firms. The cabs are metered, and the official rates and supplements are shown in English on a sticker inside the rear window. A supplement is charged for each item of baggage handled by the driver, though this fee is often waived.

Carry small bills: Drivers are not required to carry large amounts of change. More and more cabs these days accept credit cards. When giving the driver your destination, you'll have better luck stating the nearest intersection rather than the street number.

Train

Barcelona has two principal stations for long-distance trains. Barcelona-Sants on Placa Paisos Catalans is the busier of the two. It handles many of the trains bound for other destinations in Spain as well as some international routes. Estacio de Franca at Ave. Marques d'Argentera 6 handles a few of the many international trains.

RENFE, the Spanish national railway, operates most long-haul trains in Spain, whether bound for Spanish cities or international destinations. Its well-designed website provides schedules and fares in English. Phone 90-232-0202. <http://www.renfe.es/ingles>.

FGC, the Catalan railway organization, operates trains throughout the region as well as local city lines. Two commuter lines run to nearby towns and villages, one from Placa Catalunya and one from Placa Espanya. <http://www.fgc.es/eng/index.asp>.

Cartagena, Spain

Overview

Introduction

Cartagena is a historic coastal city on the southern coast of Spain. Founded by Hasdrubal 2,000 years ago in memory of his home city of Carthage in North Africa, it became an even more important city under the Romans, who named it Cartago Nova and made it capital of their province of Carthagesis. The restored Roman Theater is one of the key sights, along with the 18th-century Arsenal building, which imposingly proclaims its later importance as a naval base. (Incidentally, in a small square in the city center you can also see a model of the world's first submarine, created by Cartagena resident Isaac Peral).



The old heart of Cartagena is pedestrian friendly, though hilly, so take your walking shoes. The TuristBus, which is a double-decker sightseeing bus, departs from near the port entrance. The city is still trying to shake off a dowdy image it's acquired in recent years, and though it certainly looks sprucer and feels a little more trendily atmospheric these days, tourists tend to stay in nearby resort towns such as La Manga, Mazarron and Aguilas and travel to Cartagena for the day to visit the Naval and Maritime Archeology museums, and see the baroque and modernist architecture of many buildings in the old quarter.

Two outstanding fiestas, both declared of National Touristic Interest, are the Holy Week processions and the Romans and Carthaginians parade, a fascinating variant on the ubiquitous Moors and Christians fiestas of neighboring Alicante province.

An nearby offbeat attraction is the Mining Park at La Union (whose paths meander through a starkly arid and austere landscape dotted with derelict mine shafts) that commemorates the town's once thriving mining industry.

Port Information

Location

There are two possible docks for cruise ships—one is close to the tourist center, but the other is much farther away. Cruise ships docking at the farther one should offer shuttles, but if not, many taxis are available nearby.

Malaga, Spain

Overview

Introduction

Long known primarily as a transport hub for the Costa del Sol, with the biggest airport in southern Spain, Malaga is now giving incoming passengers a reason to stick around. The strategy of positioning itself as an urban cultural center, in contrast to its smaller, strictly sun-and-beach-resort neighbors, appears to be paying off. Of course, being the birthplace of Pablo Picasso is no bad thing, and city officials have leveraged that to great advantage, attracting big-name art collections to settle there. In fact, Malaga even comes across as a bit museum-crazy, focusing on everything from wine production to the global development of music to automobile design.



Although the urban sprawl may be unappealing at first glance, the Old City of Malaga is actually green, lively and conveniently compact, with its cultural and entertainment offerings in close proximity to beaches. The redevelopment of the port into a retail and leisure area, along with the second-largest cruise ship facility in Spain, make Malaga even more attractive and accessible.

Highlights

Sights—Admiring the Alcazaba's outer ramparts and the interior details of its palace; taking in the panoramic view from the Castillo de Gibralfaro; appreciating the Cathedral of Malaga's majesty, both inside and out.

Museums—Seeing the full range of Picasso's talent at Museo Picasso; journeying through art of the 20th and 21st centuries in the Centre Pompidou Malaga; the impressive variety of temporary exhibits at the Centro de Arte Contemporaneo.

Memorable Meals—Splurging on the 20-dish tasting menu at Michelin-starred Jose Carlos Garcia; sipping local wines and munching Iberian cured meats and cheeses while enjoying the incredible atmosphere at Bodega El Pimpin; trying an *espeto de sardinas* or *pescaito frito* at a beachside chiringuito.

Late Night—Wine and fantastic tapas at El Meson de Cervantes; sipping on a cocktail in the classy lounge at Puerta Oscura.

Walks—Window-shopping your way down Calle Marques de Larios and through the lanes of the Old City; strolling through the tropical lushness of the Parque de Malaga or the Jardin Botanico-Historico La Concepcion; promenading along the Paseo Maritimo.

Especially for Kids—A fun, hands-on music lesson from a virtual teacher at the Museo Interactivo de la Musica; cycling along the seaside promenade.

Port Information

Location

The port of Malaga, right in the city, has three cruise ship berths and two terminals offering all the usual passenger-handling and hospitality services, including tourist information desks. Shuttle buses run at frequent intervals taking passengers to and from the Old City. Within walking distance is Muelle Uno, an open-air shopping center that has restaurants and bars overlooking the marina; it's also home to the Centre Pompidou Malaga art museum. Adjacent to that is Muelle Dos, which features an attention-grabbing tall white pergola along the quayside, as well as even more restaurants and a museum dedicated to the sea life of the western Mediterranean. Just across the street from there is the lush Parque de Malaga and, beyond that, Malaga's Old City. The nearest beach is about a 10-minute walk.

See & Do

Sightseeing

Malaga offers a full plate when it comes to sightseeing. Its historical monuments range from a Roman theater to medieval Arab fortresses to 18th- and 19th-century palaces and villas. The city is especially ambitious when it comes to museums, converting stately homes, factories, a wholesale market and a military hospital into exhibition spaces for a wide range of art.

City Sightseeing Malaga (<http://www.citysightseeing-tours.com/spain/Malaga>) runs a hop-on, hop-off bus service with commentaries in various languages that takes in most of the city's main attractions, including the Castillo de Gibralfaro, the beach, and museums and sites outside the city center.

Historic Sites

Alcazaba

Alcazabilla 2
Malaga, Spain

This citadel of defensive structures and palaces, built by Muslim dynasties beginning in the 11th century, is one of the oldest and best-preserved in Spain. Two of its original three outer walls, more than 100 towers and several small palaces remain today, sprawling up the hillside. The Alcazaba gives visitors a lot to tour, so give yourself plenty of time and take your camera.

Daily 9 am-8 pm (6 pm in winter). 2.20 euros.

Castillo de Gibralfaro

Camino de Gibralfaro 11
Malaga, Spain

The remains (mostly ramparts) of the Arab castle are perched on the hill above the Alcazaba. There is an interpretation center, and even better, some amazing views of the city and coastline.

Daily 9 am-8 pm (6 pm in winter). 2.20 euros.

Cathedral of Malaga

Molina Lario 9 (entrance around the corner on Calle Cister)
Malaga, Spain

Built on the site of the main mosque in 1528, the Cathedral of Malaga took two centuries to reach its current state, which is still technically unfinished. Its south tower might never be completed, but the structure is still a breathtaking piece of architecture. The cathedral is best known for its two 18th-century organs that have more than 4,000 pipes between them and are still in working order.

Monday-Friday 10 am-6 pm, Saturday 10 am-5 pm, Sunday 8:30 am-7:45 pm for various services. 5 euros. Free on Sunday, but you must be respectful if a mass is in progress.

Teatro Romano

Alcazabilla s/n
Malaga, Spain

This Roman amphitheater from the First century AD was rediscovered in 1951. A small interpretation center provides some context, and its facade displays extracts from the *Lex Flavia Malacitana*, legal statutes declaring Malaga a *municipium* of the Roman Empire.

October-April Tuesday 10 am-6 pm, Wednesday-Saturday 9 am-7 pm, Sunday 10 am-4 pm. May-September Tuesday noon-8 pm, Wednesday-Saturday 9 am-8:30 pm, Sunday 10 am-4 pm. Free.

Museums

Centre Pompidou Malaga

Pasaje Doctor Carillo Casaux s/n
Malaga, Spain

Phone: 951-926-200

<http://www.centrepompidou.es>

This is the first branch of the renowned French art center outside France. The exhibition of paintings, sculptures, installations, videos and films, presented in five thematic sections, takes you on a well-explained journey through 20th- and 21st-century art. It includes works by such notable artists as Picasso, Francis Bacon, Frida Kahlo, Giacometti, Magritte and Fernand Leger. It also hosts two or three temporary exhibitions a year.

September-June daily except Tuesday 9:30 am-8 pm. June-September daily except Tuesday 11 am-10 pm. 7 euros for the permanent collection, 9 euros for the temporary collection and temporary exhibition.

Centro de Arte Contemporaneo

Alemania s/n
Malaga, Spain

Phone: 952-120-055

<http://www.cacmalaga.eu>

The CAC hosts more than a dozen excellent temporary exhibitions of international contemporary artists each year, in addition to its small but sound permanent collection (encompassing works from the last third of the 20th century and pieces by living artists).

September-June Tuesday-Sunday 10 am-8 pm. June-September Tuesday-Sunday 10 am-2 pm and 5-9 pm. Free.

Coleccion del Museo Ruso

Ave. Sor Teresa Prat 15
Malaga, Spain

Phone: 951-926-150

<http://www.coleccionmuseoruso.es>

Works on long-term loan from the State Russian Museum in St. Petersburg. The collection has 15th- to 20th-century paintings, including medieval gilded icons and works by Kandinsky and Chagall. Highlights of Russian cinema are also screened in the auditorium.

September-June Tuesday-Sunday 9:30 am-8 pm. June-September Tuesday-Sunday 11 am-10 pm. 6 euros for the permanent collection, 8 euros for the permanent collection and the temporary exhibition.

Fundacion Picasso, Museo Casal Natal

Plaza de la Merced 15
Malaga, Spain

Phone: 951-926-060

<http://www.fundacionpicasso.malaga.eu>

Housed in the childhood home of Picasso, the Picasso Foundation Museum features an extraordinary collection of his family's personal effects and tokens of his earlier life. Explore the four floors and hallways that Picasso himself once wandered, admiring some of his earliest works and family life.

Daily 9:30 am-8 pm (closed Tuesdays November-March). 2 euros (includes audioguide). Free on Sunday.

Museo Automovilistico

Ave. Sor Teresa Prat 15
Malaga, Spain

Phone: 951-137-001

<http://www.museoautomovilmalaga.com>

An impressive museum devoted to automobile design, but it also includes a broader look at art and fashion, drawing interesting and surprising connections between those worlds.

Tuesday-Sunday 10 am-7 pm. 7.50 euros.

Museo Carmen Thyssen Malaga

Plaza Carmen Thyssen, Compania 10
Malaga, Spain

Phone: 902-303-131

<http://www.carmenthyssenmalaga.org>

A private and extensive collection with a strong focus on 19th- and early 20th-century Spanish paintings depicting romantic landscapes and everyday life and customs in Andalusia.

Tuesday-Sunday 10 am-8 pm. 6 euros.

Museo de Artes Populares

Pasillo de Santa Isabel 10
Malaga, Spain

Phone: 952-217-137

<http://www.museoartespopulares.com>

The exhibits in this centuries-old inn explain the day-to-day life in Malaga at the end of the 19th century, focusing on skilled trades (blacksmith, baker, fisherman, printer) and how wine and oil were processed.

Monday-Friday 10 am-5 pm, Saturday 10 am-2 pm. 4 euros.

Museo del Vino

Plaza de los Vineros 1
Malaga, Spain

Phone: 952-228-493

<http://www.museovinomalaga.com>

Everything you ever wanted to know about the history and culture of winemaking in the Malaga region. And it's "interactive" insofar as you get to try two local wines.

Monday-Friday 10 am-5 pm, Saturday 10 am-2 pm. 5 euros.

Museo Interactivo de la Musica

Palacio Conde de las Navas, Beatas 15
Malaga, Spain

Phone: 952-210-440

<http://www.mimma.es>

An interesting museum exploring the origins of music and its development around the world. One section encourages visitors to play instruments, such as the violin, udu, cello, guitar and didgeridoo, all under the tutelage of a virtual teacher. Informative, fun and interactive.

Monday 10 am-2 pm, Tuesday-Saturday 10 am-2 pm and 4-8 pm. 4 euros adults, free for children age 6 and younger.

Museo Picasso Malaga

Palacio de Buenavista, San Agustin 8
Malaga, Spain

Phone: 952-127-600

<http://www.museopicassomalaga.org>

The Picasso Museum holds more than 230 works (donated by the artist's daughter-in-law and grandson) and covers the majority of the renowned painter's varying styles. Guided tours are offered in English on Wednesday at 11:30 am (book through the ticket office up to one hour ahead of time).

Daily 10 am-7 pm (till 8 pm in summer, till 6 pm in winter). 8 euros, includes audioguide. To avoid waiting in line, we recommend you purchase an advance ticket on the museum's website.

Neighborhoods & Districts

Casco Antiguo

Malaga's Old City is its cultural and commercial heart, with the highest concentration of historic sites, museums, restaurants, bars and shops being found there. It is bordered by the Guadalmedina River on the west, the Alcazaba and Gibralfaro hill on the east and the port on the south—a large part of the district is restricted to pedestrians. Calle Marques de Larios is the primary shopping street, ending in the lovely Plaza de la Constitucion. From there, Calle Granada winds through the district, ending at Plaza de la Merced, another emblematic square. The triangle to the southwest of the historic center, next to the port, has been dubbed Soho Malaga for its artsy character. Check out the interesting, large-scale graffiti art.

Parks & Gardens

Jardin Botanico-Historico La Concepcion

Camino de Jardin Botanico 3 (take bus line 2 to the final stop and then walk about 15 minutes)
Malaga, Spain

Phone: 951-926-180

<http://www.laconcepcion.malaga.eu>

This romantic and beautiful arboretum and botanical garden just outside the city was once part of a private estate. It boasts a wide range of Mediterranean, tropical and subtropical species, including one of the best palm tree collections in Europe (around 100 types).

Tuesday-Sunday April-September 9:30 am-7:30 pm, October-March 9:30 am-4:30 pm. 5.20 euros.

La Alameda Principal and El Parque de Malaga

This beloved green space is right in the heart of the city. The Alameda begins after you cross the river, shaded by a double row of huge ficus trees. The park opens up right after that, with an abundance of tropical and subtropical species. Although it's squeezed between the buzzing Old City and the port, with a busy boulevard running straight through it, the park is still a nice shady spot to take a walk or sit on a bench and have a rest.

Shopping

Malaga's main shopping district is in the Old City, centered around Calle Marques de Larios. Fashion chains line both sides of the street, and there are plenty of other shops and boutiques to be found in the nearby side lanes.

Clothing and accessories are good buys. Nice souvenir items such as hand-embroidered silk shawls (*mantillas*), bags and other products made of natural leather, Spanish wines and liqueurs, cold-pressed extra virgin olive oil and other gourmet products, local ceramics, CDs of flamenco and other Spanish music, and decorative fans are widely available.

Shopping Hours: Generally, Monday-Friday 9:30 or 10 am to 1:30 or 2 pm and 5 to 8 pm. Saturday hours are similar in the morning, but many small stores do not open again in the afternoon. Almost all shops are closed Sunday unless they sell souvenirs or goods/services related to tourism. Department stores, shopping mall stores and big chain-affiliated shops generally don't close for lunch or siesta. In August, many smaller businesses close completely, or have reduced hours. Many department stores and other shops are open Sundays in December.

Department Stores

El Corte Ingles

Ave. de Andalucía 4 and 6
Malaga, Spain

Phone: 952-076-500

<http://www.elcorteingles.es>

The biggest and best department store in the city, it sells clothing, accessories, home furnishings and electronics, and it has a supermarket.

Monday-Saturday 10 am-10 pm.

Markets

Mercado Central de Atarazanas

Atarazanas 10
Malaga, Spain

The city's central market, dating from 1879. A monumental gate that once served as the entrance to the Muslim city's shipyards was preserved and incorporated into the newer glass-and-steel structure. Dozens of vendors sell fresh produce, meats, fish, a wide range of olives and prepared dishes. A great place to shop or just take in the local sights, sounds and smells—or enjoy a beer and a tapa.

Monday-Saturday 8 am-2 pm.

Shopping Areas

Larios Centro

Ave. de la Aurora 25
Malaga, Spain

Phone: 952-369-393

<http://www.larioscentro.com>

The largest and busiest shopping mall in the city center. Its two floors have stores selling mostly clothing and shoes, sporting goods, eyewear and home furnishings. There are also restaurants, fast-food outlets and a supermarket.

Most stores are open Monday-Saturday 10 am-10 pm.

Muelle Uno

Muelle Uno, Port of Malaga
Malaga, Spain

<http://www.muelleuno.com>

The port's fashionable commercial center has a range of interesting shops selling clothing, jewelry, accessories and other goods. Sidewalk vendors peddle art and handicrafts. The development also incorporates pre-existing structures, like an old lighthouse and a former chapel for sailors, and it includes a playground and exercise area.

Most shops are open Monday-Saturday 10 am-10 pm.

Dining

Dining Overview

It should come as no surprise that fresh fish and seafood dishes are high on the list of Malaga specialties. *Pescaito frito* (a single variety or an assortment of small fish or filets) and *espeto de sardinas* (skewers of grilled sardines) are just two local stand-outs. Cured meats from nearby mountain villages, in addition to fresh seasonal produce and high-quality beef, pork and lamb, are also frequently featured on menus.

Common meat items include *jamon iberico* or *jamon de Trevelez* (air-cured ham), *rabo de toro* (stewed oxtail), *solomillo* (sirloin), *lomo* (pork tenderloin), *albondigas* (meatballs) and *chuletas de cordero* (lamb chops). Sausage varieties include chorizo, *salchichon* and *morcilla* (black pudding). Popular seafood dishes include *bacalao* (cod, either fresh or salt-preserved), *atun* (tuna), merluza (hake), *cazon* (dogfish), salmon, *chipirones* (small squid), *chocos* (cuddlefish), *gambas* (shrimp), *langostinos* (larger prawns), *sardinas* (sardines, usually grilled) and *boquerones* (anchovies, usually fried).

Croquetas, made of a range of ingredients like *bacalao* or ham and cheese, are much loved. Some of the more popular vegetables include *espinacas* (spinach, often paired with chickpeas), *berenjenas* (eggplant—try the fried version with molasses) and *alcachofas* (artichokes). Traditional cold soups include gazpacho and *salmorejo* (a thicker version of gazpacho topped with chopped hard-boiled egg and pieces of cured ham). Another cold soup, *ajo blanco* (a puree of almonds, water, garlic, olive oil and vinegar), is a traditional dish of Malaga.

In many restaurants and tapas bars, you'll find friends and families sharing plates of tapas or *raciones* (larger portions) rather than ordering individually. Multiple-course menus of the day usually allow you to choose from several items in each course.

Beer and wine are the most common drinks. Rioja and Ribero del Duero (tintos, or reds) and Rueda (blanco, or white) are good Spanish choices for wine. Malaga is famous for its sweet wines based on muscatel grapes.

Breakfast is usually light, consisting of coffee or tea, freshly squeezed orange juice and toasted bread (*tostadas*) topped with either tomato pulp and olive oil or butter and marmalade. Sweet baked goods are also popular. You can get breakfast in any bar or cafe. Another option for first thing in the morning, or last thing at night, is churros and chocolate.

In Spain, lunch generally starts at 2 pm, and dinner often begins at 9 pm or later, especially in summer.

Expect to pay within these general guidelines, based on the cost of dinner for one, not including drinks, tax or tip: \$ = less than 15 euros; \$\$ = 15 euros-30 euros; \$\$\$ = 31 euros-60 euros; and \$\$\$\$ = more than 60 euros.

Local & Regional

Aire Gastrobar

Ave. de Pries 16, 29
Malaga, Spain

Phone: 952-609-489

<http://airegastrobar.es>

A pleasant atmosphere paired with creative cuisine reflecting the aromas, flavors and colors of the Mediterranean. You can enjoy tapas in the gastrobar or on the terrace, or a more formal dining experience in the upstairs salon. A tasting menu for a minimum of two people is available.

In winter, Tuesday-Saturday for lunch and dinner, Sunday for lunch only. In summer, Monday for dinner, Tuesday-Saturday for lunch and dinner. Reservations recommended. \$\$-\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Bodega el Pimpin

Granada 62
Malaga, Spain

Phone: 952-228-990

<http://www.elpimpi.com>

A local institution, as the many oak wine barrels signed by celebrities and VIPs attest. The most atmospheric part is the original bodega bar, divided into different rooms, serving an extensive menu of cured meats and cheeses and other local dishes; they offer a menu of the day. There's a section devoted to local fish and seafood called Pimpi Mariscos and the Espacio Gastronomico highlights local culinary traditions with a shop and organized chats and food and wine tastings. There is a fine terrace for alresco dining, too.

Daily for lunch and dinner. Reservations recommended. \$\$-\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Cafe de Paris

Velez Malaga s/n
Malaga, Spain

Phone: 952-225-043

<http://www.rcafedeparis.com>

Local chef Jose Carlos Garcia earned his first Michelin star at this restaurant, which is more traditional in terms of food and decor compared to his eponymous restaurant in Muelle Uno. Dishes like anchovy lasagna with *porra antequerana* (a thick gazpacho) underscore the menu's Andalusian roots with international twists.

Monday for lunch, Tuesday-Saturday for lunch and dinner. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

El Meson de Cervantes

Alamos 11
Malaga, Spain

Phone: 952-216-274

<http://www.elmesondecervantes.com>

Restaurant and bar serving tasty and inventive tapas and larger portions. Try the tuna with a puree of cauliflower, the Iberian ham with grilled artichokes and asparagus or the pork with pumpkin.

Daily except Tuesday for dinner. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Jose Carlos Garcia

Plaza de la Capilla
Malaga, Spain

Phone: 952-003-588

<http://www.restaurantejcg.com>

This Malaga-born, Michelin-starred chef showcases innovative Spanish haute cuisine at his minimalist, glass-enclosed restaurant facing the yacht marina. The open kitchen offers equally interesting views. The tasting menu, which includes as many as 20 different small dishes, is pricey but well worth it. Professional service and a cozy terrace. There are only six tables in the dining room.

Tuesday-Saturday for lunch and dinner. Reservations required. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Uvedoble

Cister 15
Malaga, Spain

Phone: 951-248-478

<http://www.uvedobletaberna.com>

This small bar-style restaurant with delicious tapas and larger portions is a good spot for a casual meal. It does an excellent job with croquettes, *ensaladilla rusa* (potato salad with shrimp) and *ajo blanco* (a cold soup made with almonds). After that, move on to any of the meat or fish dishes.

Monday-Saturday for lunch and dinner. \$-\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Seafood

El Tintero

Playa del Dedo s/n
Malaga, Spain

Phone: 952-206-826

<http://www.restauranteltintero.com/puerto>

This no-frills beachside restaurant is quite a distance outside the city center, but it's worth the trip just for the experience. Waiters circulate through the dining area carrying large trays of fish and seafood dishes and barking out their names—you choose what looks good to you, and don't be timid or you might go hungry. It's a bit like a fish auction, or dim sum Malaga-style.

Daily for lunch and dinner. \$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Los Mellizos

Sancha de Lara 4 and 7
Malaga, Spain

Phone: 952-220-315

<http://www.losmellizos.net>

A good spot to indulge in local fish and seafood—the popular *pescaito frito* or paella are good choices. It has two dining areas across the street from one another, as well as a sidewalk terrace.

Daily for lunch and dinner. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Security

Etiquette

Spain has made steady economic progress and is a vital member of the European Union. Business travelers will find a moderately affluent country, in step with the age of high technology but still maintaining many of its traditions.

Appointments—You may find it valuable to have a local intermediary who can assist in establishing appointments. Schedule meetings well in advance. As a visitor, you should be punctual but anticipate that your hosts may be less prompt.

Personal Introductions—Handshakes are the typical greeting. Last names with the appropriate Spanish title are used. If your acquaintance has a professional title, you will learn it when introduced; if not, *senor* (male), *senora* (married female) and *senorita* (unmarried female) are appropriate. The title and the person's last name should be used until you are instructed otherwise.

Note that it is typical for Spanish people to have two surnames, one from their father and one from their mother—women do not take their husband's surname. The father's surname will be given first during the introduction, and that's the name that is used to address or speak of the person. Thus, "Francisco Vargas Alvarez " would be addressed as "Senor Vargas." Dual-sided business cards—one side in Spanish, one in English—are appropriate.

Negotiating—Business is typically preceded by small talk and pleasantries. Negotiations can be a more extended process than in northern European countries. Companies tend to be hierarchical, so focus on those people of your equal rank or higher. At the same time, the opinion of everyone in the company is important. You are an outsider and must ingratiate yourself. Thus, expect many questions about your business, background and family. Intuition as much as objective fact is important in their impression of you, so remain warm and friendly in your demeanor. Anticipate that many of the people important to a decision may not be present in any given meeting.

Business Entertaining—Lunch and dinner are the meals most commonly attended by business associates. Lunch is usually the more productive for deal-making, but the business discussions should be saved for the very end of the meal, during coffee. Know that dinner is usually served quite late—9 or 10 pm, often preceded sometime after 5 pm by a snack (*merienda*) or *aperitivo* (drink and tapa).

Body Language—Conversations take place at close quarters, and polite conversational touching may be practiced. Even in some business environments it is common to greet and say goodbye to women by kissing them on both cheeks, but a man should allow the woman to initiate this.

Gift Giving—In business contexts, gifts are typically given at the conclusion of successful negotiations. Gifts should be opened and appreciated immediately. Appropriate personal gifts when visiting a home include flowers or chocolate, but avoid chrysanthemums, dahlias or 13 of anything.

Conversation—If you don't speak Spanish, try to learn at least a few phrases well. Spanish culture is always a good topic, as is Spanish literature if you are knowledgeable. Do not criticize bullfighting should the topic arise. Soccer is a good topic, since Spain has some of the top players and teams in the world.

Personal Safety

In general, Malaga is no more dangerous than similarly sized cities in western Europe, though travelers should exercise common sense and remain aware of their surroundings. Petty thievery is the most common threat for visitors. Pickpockets and purse snatchers are as common in Spain as in any other modern Western country. Always keep a hand on your purse or travel bag, especially at outdoor cafes. Never leave valuables in your car, and take a lock to secure your belongings if you're traveling by train.

In an emergency, dial 112 and ask for *policia* (police), *ambulancia* (ambulance) or *bomberos* (firefighters). This number can be dialed free of charge from any telephone, including cell phones.

For the latest information, contact your country's travel-advisory agency.

Health

Spain has modern medical and dental facilities, but take along all prescription and nonprescription drugs you'll need for your trip—your brand names might be unfamiliar to some pharmacies in Spain. Pharmacies maintain late hours on a rotating basis. You will find a sign posted near the door instructing which pharmacy is open late on a particular day.

In general, you can eat the food and drink the tap water without issue. The sun is quite strong, so take sunglasses, a hat and plenty of sunscreen. Be sure to take along a comfortable pair of walking shoes.

For more information, contact your country's health-advisory agency.

Facts

Dos & Don'ts

Do be careful where you light up. Spain's antismoking law bans smoking in enclosed public spaces, which includes bars, restaurants, hotel lobbies, casinos, clubs, cinemas, theaters, office buildings, open-decked tourist buses and airports.

Don't expect the language to sound the same as it does in Mexico or many other Spanish-speaking countries. For instance, the letter *z* and the letter *c* when it precedes an *i* or an *e* are pronounced as *th*. (For example, Ibiza is pronounced *e-BEETH-a*). In Andalusia (the region where Malaga is located), the letter *s* is barely audible when it falls at the end of a word.

Don't wear shorts in churches. In fact, it's best to save them for the beach. Spanish people generally dress well, especially in cities, and you will stand out as a tourist by wearing shorts, skimpy tops or other too-casual clothes.

Do take a siesta. Many museums, shops and businesses shut down for the afternoon siesta, generally 1-4 pm. It's an opportunity to refresh and recharge yourself, as well as to avoid the hottest part of the day. If you must be out, wander quietly through residential streets during those hours.

Do be adventurous when it comes to sardines and anchovies. Along the Andalusian coast, they are mostly served fresh: *espetos de sardinas* (grilled sardines) and *boquerones fritos* (fried anchovies). Don't compare them to the canned versions. Even the locals are affectionately referred to as *boquerones*.

Geostats

Passport/Visa Requirements: A passport is needed by citizens of the U.S. and Canada. A tourist visa is not required for a visit of up to three months. Reconfirm travel document requirements with your carrier before departure.

Population: 568,479.

Languages: Castilian Spanish (official).

Predominant Religions: Christian (Roman Catholic).

Time Zone: 1 hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (+1 GMT). Daylight Saving Time is observed late March to late October.

Voltage Requirements: 220 volts.

Telephone Codes: 34, country code;

Money

Taxes

A value-added tax (called IVA) of 21% is added to the price of most goods and services (10% at restaurants). With a little paperwork, nonresidents from outside the European Union can obtain a tax refund for purchases made in Spain. To obtain the refund, you must spend more than 90 euros in a single store displaying a "tax-free" sticker. You won't get all the tax back, because part of it is retained as a commission.

You need to present three things to the VAT refund officer at the airport before departure to get a refund: the article you purchased, the receipt and a refund form (which must be picked up at the place of purchase). Note that only unused articles are eligible for a refund. If everything is in order, the VAT refund officer will give you a final form to be mailed in for your refund. (For your own convenience, see the VAT officer before checking your bags and have your purchases in an easy-to-reach place.)

Some larger stores have a streamlined process: They handle most of the paperwork and then mail the refund to you, sometimes minus a fee. Private VAT refund services, located at the airport, will give you an immediate refund minus a fee, which is usually a percentage of the refund.

If you are traveling to other countries in the European Union, you can claim your refunds only at your exit point from the EU. In other words, if you buy goods in Spain, then travel on to Portugal and France, and later depart the EU from Paris, you have to claim the VAT refunds from all three countries at the airport in Paris.

Tipping

Although a service charge is usually included in the bill, for good service in a restaurant you can tip 5%-10% of the total amount. Taxi drivers will appreciate it if you round up the fare to an even amount, or tip 10% of the fare.

Weather

April-June, September and October are the best times to visit. July and August are generally very hot, and it can be a bit cool in October at higher elevations. Sweaters are often needed for evenings.

Winter, though generally mild, can be rainy, foggy and windy. We think winter is on the cool side. The temperature cools dramatically at high altitudes.

What to Wear

Spain is a fashion-conscious country, and people generally dress stylishly and neatly. It's best to save shorts for the beach, and wear skirts, cropped trousers, fashionable long shorts or lightweight slacks elsewhere. Never wear shorts or sleeveless shirts in a church.

The summer sun is intense, so take a hat, sunglasses and sunscreen to avoid overexposure. Take a light jacket or sweater with you for mornings and evenings in autumn and spring, and warmer clothes for winter months. Above all, pack comfortable walking shoes.

For business, men should wear plain, conservative business suits and ties—dark colors in winter, lighter in summer. Women should dress conservatively in a business environment.

Transportation

The Old City, where you're likely to spend most of your time, is pedestrian-friendly. In fact, parts of it are off-limits to cars altogether. Beaches and sites outside the city center can be reached by local buses or taxis. Malaga also has two Metro lines serving mostly residential neighborhoods and two suburban rail lines (called *cercanias*) that connect towns on the western coast and inland; the coastal line makes a stop at the airport. Bike lanes and paths along the seaside promenade make cycling another good option—the terrain is mostly flat.

The Aeropuerto Malaga-Costa del Sol (AGP), just west of the city, is well connected to Malaga and the surrounding area via highways and public transport. Line A Express buses run every half hour between the airport and Paseo del Parque (making a stop at the bus station along the way); travel time of 15 minutes, single fare of 3 euros. The C1 suburban rail line will take you to Malaga's central train station in about 10 minutes for 1.80 euros. Either option is good, although the bus takes you closer to the Old City. The same rail line in the opposite direction will take you to Torremolinos and Fuengirola. Marbella is also connected to the airport and city by bus. Traveling by taxi between Malaga's city center and the airport will cost around 20 euros.

Bus

The Estacion de Autobuses, next door to Malaga's central train station, services long-distance buses and regional routes. Popular bus companies include Alsa (<http://www.alsa.es>) and Avanza and Portillo (<http://www.portillo.avanzabus.com>).

Car

Roads are good, and major international car rental agencies are readily available. The downside to driving is the traffic—it can be horrible. Street parking is scarce and parking garages can be costly.

Driving is on the right side of the road. Talking on a cell phone while driving is prohibited. By law, you must carry a spare set of light bulbs, a warning triangle and a yellow reflective jacket—to be worn in the event of a roadside emergency—in the passenger compartment, not the trunk.

Citizens of the U.S. and Canada are required to have an International Driver's License (available in your home country through AAA or a similar automobile association).

Train

Estacion Malaga Maria Zambrano, Malaga's central train station, services long-distance and local trains. High-speed AVE trains travel to Madrid in just two and a half hours, making a stop in Cordoba. Avant trains travel to Seville in less than two hours. Timetables, fares and booking are available at <http://www.renfe.com>.

Arrecife, Canary Islands

Overview

Introduction

Lanzarote Island is the northernmost and fourth largest island of the Canaries.

Port Information

Location

Cruise ships dock in the cargo port, which is about 3 mi/5 km from the town center. The city provides free shuttles to Charco de San Grines, which is close to Charco, an inlet of water with bars and restaurants. The main shopping street, Calle Leon y Castilla, is less than a mile/kilometer from Charco.



Tenerife, Canary Islands

Overview

Introduction

Santa Cruz is the largest city on Tenerife, which is the largest island in the Canary Islands chain. The harbor is a major source of revenue and is often a stop on cruises between Europe and the Caribbean. Santa Cruz hosts one of the world's largest Carnivals, second only to the festival held in Rio de Janeiro.



The island capital itself is an elegant city of wide avenues, intimate plazas, modern sculptures and flower-filled parks. It's a good place to visit a museum or art gallery or simply wander around and take in the colonial architecture of its older buildings.

Port Information

Location

Santa Cruz is Tenerife's main port. Depending on where your ship docks, the city could be as far as a 15-minute, uphill walk away. Some cruise lines provide shuttles.

Taxis wait at the port gates for those who want to travel privately or go farther from the city. To reach the bus station, turn left out of the port and walk about a mile/kilometer along the promenade. The nearest beach, Playa de las Teresitas, is 5 mi/8 km from the port and is accessible by taking the No. 918 bus.

Gibraltar, Gibraltar

Overview

Introduction

Gibraltar, a British colony is grafted onto a steep, rocky Spanish hillside at the mouth of the Mediterranean Sea 310 mi/500 km south of Madrid.



Gibraltar merits at least a half-day's visit. The Rock, which has been British since 1704, is only 2 mi/5 km long, but it has several attractions, among them St. Michael's Cave (outfitted as a hospital during World War II and now an auditorium), the Gibraltar Museum (historical displays from the Stone Age to the present) and a 12th-century Arab castle.

Be sure to read the tombstones at the town graveyard—many of the British sailors killed during the Siege of Gibraltar (1779-83) are buried there.

Also climb or take the cable car to the top of the Rock to see the view from Europa Point. At the halfway station, you'll meet the Barbary apes, Europe's only wild apes. There is also a laser show depicting famous battles for the Rock.

If you tire of Spanish cuisine, stop in a pub and get an order of steak-and-kidney pie or fish-and-chips (the contrast may revive your interest in Spanish food).

Gibraltar is so cramped for space that the airport runway is crossed by a main road—signals stop traffic long enough for airplanes to land.