

Gràcia & Park Güell



Neighbourhood Top Five

- ❶ Getting lost along the winding paths of **Park Güell** (p156) and exploring its more-natural-than-nature sculptures, mosaics and columns, then resurfacing on one of the park's sunny plazas.
- ❷ Checking out the swirling patterns of the facade of **Casa Vicens** (p158), Gaudí's first commission.
- ❸ Wandering around and taking in the sun on one of **Gràcia's many squares** (p159).
- ❹ Getting high on chocolate with the locals at **La Nena** (p160).
- ❺ Taking in a local band or even some live poetry at **Heliogàbal** (p163).

For more detail of this area see Map p296 ➔

Explore: Gràcia & Park Güell

Once a separate village north of L'Eixample, and an industrial district famous for its republican and liberal ideas, Gràcia was incorporated into the city of Barcelona in 1897, much to the disgust of the locals. The neighbourhood retains its distinct character today, with a boho feel that varies between chic and downtrodden, and a demographic that includes young families and students.

You know you are in Gràcia when you hit the maze of crowded narrow streets and lanes that characterise it. The heart of the neighbourhood is bounded by Carrer de Còrsega and Avinguda Diagonal in the south, Via Augusta and Avinguda del Príncep d'Astúries to the west, Carrer de Sardanya to the east and Travessera de Dalt to the north.

Start the day in Gràcia by exploring Park Güell and move down to the centre of the neighbourhood. If you walk from the park, cut across the traffic-choked Travessera de Dalt and go down Carrer de Verdi, where you will find wonderful cafes, bars and shops; Plaça del Sol, a raucous square populated by cool bars and (often loud) drunks; Plaça de la Vila de Gràcia (formerly Plaça de Rius i Taulet), dotted with cafes and restaurants; Plaça de la Revolució de Setembre de 1868, a family-friendly square with a playground and ice-cream parlour; and the tree-lined Plaça de la Virreina, a particularly lovely square with cafes, shops and a chilled-out feel. On Plaça de Rovira i Trias you can sit on a bench next to a statue of Antoni Rovira, Ildefons Cerdà's rival in the competition to design L'Eixample in the late 19th century. Rovira's design has been laid out in the pavement, so you can judge his merits for yourself.

Local Life

- ➔ **Markets** Locals get their fresh produce from Mercat de la Llibertat (p158), the neighbourhood's emblematic larder – queue up and sample some wonderful food.
- ➔ **Independent stores** Wander up Carrer de Verdi for an insight into what Gràcia does best. Independent boutiques and food shops abound on this tree-lined little street.
- ➔ **Old-time bars** Gràcia still has plenty of tapas bars that have been around forever, such as El Roure (p160).

Getting There & Away

- ➔ **Underground Rail** Metro Línia 3 (Fontana stop) leaves you halfway up Carrer Gran de Gràcia and close to a network of busy squares. To enter Gràcia from the other side, take Línia 4 to Joaníc.
- ➔ **On Foot** Strolling up Passeig de Gràcia from Plaça de Catalunya is a wonderful way to reach the neighbourhood, but it does take around 40 minutes.

Lonely Planet's Top Tip

A wonderful way to take in Gràcia's atmosphere is from a cafe or restaurant on one of its many squares. Arrive after dusk and watch as the place comes to life in the post-work hours.

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Botafumeiro (p162)
- ➔ Les Tres a la Cuina (p158)
- ➔ Sol i Lluna (p160)
- ➔ El Tossal (p160)

For reviews, see p158 ➔

Best Places to Drink

- ➔ Viblioteca (p162)
- ➔ Raïm (p162)
- ➔ El Roure (p160)

For reviews, see p162 ➔

Best Entertainment

- ➔ Heliogàbal (p163)
- ➔ Verdi (p163)
- ➔ Sala Beckett (p163)

For reviews, see p163 ➔