



# Welcome to Barcelona

From sunrise over the Mediterranean to the last dance-floor whirl of an action-packed night, Barcelona holds your attention 24 hours a day. Its combination of natural attractions, hedonism and serious cultural cachet makes it one of the world's great cities.

Barcelona's architectural treasures span millennia. Temple columns, ancient city walls and subterranean stone corridors provide a window into the Roman era. Then skip a thousand years to the Middle Ages by taking a stroll through the Gothic quarter, all shadowy lanes, tranquil plazas and soaring churches. Later bloomed the sculptural masterpieces of Modernisme, a heady mix of ingenuity and whimsy created by Gaudí and contemporaries. La Sagrada Família, still under construction, is already one of the planet's most sublime buildings.

Barcelona has long inspired artists too, including Salvador Dalí, Pablo Picasso and Joan Miró, whose works are on bold display in the city's myriad museums.

Art of another sort adorns the groaning bar tops and stylish plates of Barcelona's tapas bars and avant-garde restaurants. Catalan cooking has a long tradition of using flavourful, market-fresh ingredients, garnished with a soupçon of French savoir faire. The molecular wizardry of modern Catalan gastronomy gives it a real twist.

Add to this spending lazy days on the beach, paddling or cruising the deep blue sea, strolling into classy boutiques and quaffing sessions in sociable *cava* bars and you have just a fraction of the intoxicating cornucopia that is Barcelona.

Its combination of natural attractions, hedonism and serious cultural cachet makes it one of the world's great cities.

View over Port Vell from Teleférico del Puerto (p63)

Gràcia & Park Güell Gaudí's fairy-tale

woodland park and the intriguing district of Gràcia, full of barrio

life, await exploration. (Map p254)

# \* BARCELONA \*

Camp Nou, Pedralbes & La Zona Alta A medieval monastery,

April

the

ouilt on

since

ect by

naya

IN -

ke at

ona on

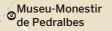
vsky

district,

on La

Planet

an intriguing museum and lofty Tibidabo – all capped by football thrills at Camp Nou.



### La Sagrada Família & L'Eixample

Modernisme rules in the city's 19th-century 'extension', replete with masterpieces by Gaudí and others. (Map p254)



A once-seedy area that's now home to cutting-edge museums and bohemian bars and eateries. (Map p249)



Museu Nacional d'Art @ de Catalunya (MNAC)



Estació Sants

Tibidabo Mountain (1km)

> Montjuïc, Poble Sec & Sant Antoni

Home to manicured parks, excellent museums and cinematic city views. (Maps p249 & p256)

Güell

### La Ribera

Palau de

la Música

Catalana

Quadrat d'Or

Museu Frederic Marès

La Rambla®

Palau 🗗

Museu<sub>@</sub>

Marítim

Güell

**OLa Pedrera** 

Casa

Batlló

Mercat de la Boqueria®

Fundació

Gardens

of Montjuic

Colònia Güello

**⊜**Joan Miró

Passeig de Gràcia 🖨

MACBA (Museu d'Art

Contemporani de Barcelona) @

La Sagrada

Família

The trendiest part of the old town, with firstrate tapas, medieval architecture and a stunning Modernista concert hall. (Map p250)



La Ribera Museu Picasso ⊜ SEI Born Basílica de Santa



### Barceloneta & the Waterfront

Pretty beaches, a waterfront promenade and bountiful seafood make for a memorable day on the Mediterranean.

### La Rambla & Barri Gòtic

Stroll Barcelona's famous boulevard, then lose yourself in the Gothic guarter. (Map p250)

### **Contents**

Top Experiences......

La Sagrada Família..

Plan Your T	rip
-------------	-----

This Year in Barcelona	4
Hotspots For	18
Top Days in Barcelona	20
Need to Know	28
What's New	30
For Free	31
Family Travel	32

La Rambla	42
Mercat de la Boqueria	48
Casa Batlló	52
Museu Nacional d'Art	
de Catalunya	56
Fundació Joan Miró	60
La Catedral	64
Park Güell	
Camp Nou	72
La Pedrera	76
Museu Picasso	80
Walking Tour: Hidden Treasures	
in the Barri Gòtic	86
Museu Marítim	88
Palau Güell	92
MACBA	94
Tibidabo	96
Museu-Monestir de Pedralbes	102

Palau de la Música Catalana...

112

. 116

120

..122

124

Foodie Trails in La Ribera ..

Basílica de Santa Maria

Museu Frederic Marès ...

Gardens of Montjuïc ..

Walking Tour: Modernisme in

Museu d'Història

Exploring El Fòrum.

de Barcelona.

L'Eixample...

del Mar..

Dining Out129	
The Best132	
Barceloneta & the Waterfront134	
Camp Nou, Pedralbes	
& La Zona Alta136	
El Raval 137	
Gràcia & Park Güell138	
La Rambla & Barri Gòtic139	
La Ribera 143	
La Sagrada Família & L'Eixample 145	
Montjuïc, Poble Sec	
& Sant Antoni 148	

Treasure Hunt	.151
The Best	154
Barceloneta & the Waterfront	156
Camp Nou, Pedralbes	
& La Zona Alta	157
El Raval	158
Gràcia & Park Güell	159
La Rambla & Barri Gòtic	162
La Ribera	165
La Sagrada Família & L'Eixample	167
Montjuïc, Poble Sec	
& Sant Antoni	169

Bar Open	171
The Best	
Barceloneta & the Waterfront	
Camp Nou, Pedralbes	
& La Zona Alta	178
El Raval	178
Gràcia & Park Güell	181
La Rambla & Barri Gòtic	183
La Ribera	185
La Sagrada Família & L'Eixample	186
Montjuïc, Poble Sec	
& Sant Antoni	189

Bar Can

Sh

& La EIR Grà La F La F La S

Mor & S

Acti Spe Cou Tou

Ac

Re

Acc Trav Whe

00-title-opener-bo-bar3.indd 2 11/05/2018 3:06:50 PM

### **CONTENTS PLAN YOUR TRIP 3**



29	Showtime193	3
132	Barceloneta & the Waterfront19	6
134	Camp Nou, Pedralbes	
	& La Zona Alta	7
136	El Raval19	
137	Gràcia & Park Güell19	8
138	La Rambla & Barri Gòtic19	9
139	La Ribera	
143	La Sagrada Família & L'Eixample 20	1
145	Montjuïc, Poble Sec	
	& Sant Antoni20	2
148		
	Active Barcelona20	5
151	Activities	8
154	Spectator Sports	
156	Courses	
<b>A</b>	Tours	0
157		
158		
159	Rest Your Head 213	3
162	Accommodation Types21	6
165	Travellers with Disabilities	
167	Where to Stay21	7
	<u>-</u>	
169		

### In Focus

Barcelona Today	220
History	222
Architecture	
Modern Art	230
Catalan Culture	232

### **Survival Guide**

Directory A-Z	236
Transport	239
Language	242
Behind The Scenes	243
Index	244
Barcelona Maps	248
Symbols & Map Key	257





. 171 . 174 . 176 . 178 . 178 . 181 . 183 . 185 . 186



### This Year in Barcelona



Barcelona is a place where there's always something happening. Traditional fiestas maintain a riotous blend of popular religion, devil-may-care revelry and time-honoured customs. Meanwhile, concerts, festivals and modern celebrations keep things ticking right through the year.

From left: Festes de la Mercè (p14); Primavera Sound (p10); Festa Major de Gràcia (p13)



### THIS YEAR IN BARCELONA PLAN YOUR TRIP 5







### This Year in Barcelona



Barcelonins head to the Pyrenees for action on the ski slopes, while others simply enjoy a bit of post-holiday downtime (school holidays go to around 8 January).

### Reis (Reves)

5 lan

On 5 January, the day before Epifanía (Epiphany), children delight in the Cavalcada dels Reis Mags (Parade of the Three Kings; pictured above), a colourful parade of floats and music, spreading bonhomie and boiled sweets in equal measure.

#### **☆** Barcelona World Race 12 Jan

This nonstop round-the-world sailing race (www.barcelonaworldrace.com) starts and ends in Barcelona and only happens every two years or so. Two-person crews kick off the next edition here...next stop: Sydney, Australia

### \* Festes dels Tres Tombs 17 Jan

In addition to live music and gegants (papier-mâché giants worn over the shoulders of processionists), the festival dedicated to Sant Antoni features a parade of horse-drawn carts in the neighbourhood of Sant Antoni (near the Mercat de Sant Antoni) every 17 January.

### ☆ Mozart Requiem

28 Ian

The Palau de la Música Catalana (p106) sees the Balthasar Neumann choir and ensemble, conducted by Thomas Hengelbrock, take on Mozart's unfinished masterpiece. Kerll's Non sine guare mass precedes it. It's one of a series of winter and spring concerts.

### Sabartés por Picasso por Sabartés

Jan-24 Feb

This exhibition at the Museu Picasso (p80) documents the painter's relationship with Jaume Sabartés, a writer and intellectual who was an important Barcelona conduit for the artist-in-exile and instrumental in establishing the museum.









Often the coldest (and seemingly the longest) month in Barcelona, February sees few visitors. Nonetheless, some of the first big festivals kick off, with abundant Catalan merriment amid the wintry gloom.

### ☆ Nights at the Opera

Jan-Jun

The Gran Teatre del Liceu (p199: pictured above) opera season runs right through winter and spring. While there are better-known works performed (Liudmyla Monastyrska sings Tosca in June), February sees the world premiere of a new Catalan opera, L'Enigma di Lea, that should be intriguing.

### \* Festes de Santa Eulàlia 12 Feb

Around 12 February this big winter fest (http://lameva.barcelona.cat/santaeulalia) celebrates Barcelona's first patron saint with a week of cultural events, including parades of gegants, open-air art installations, theatre, correfocs (fire runs) and castells (human castles).

### Art at the Gates of 1968

Jan-Mar

At the Museu Nacional d'Art De Catalunva (MNAC; p56), this exhibition examines the nascent Pop Art movement in Catalonia in the Francoist '60s. The movement laid the groundwork for the cultural flowering after the end of the dictatorship.

#### Jaume Plensa Jan-Apr

A major exhibition at MACBA (p94) concentrates on this prominent Catalan sculptor and installation artist, covering bases from his early work of the 1980s to challenging, up-to-the-minute material.

### This Year in Barcelona



After chillier days of winter, March brings longer, sunnier days, though still cool nights (light-jacket weather). There are relatively few tourists and fair hotel prices.

### ★ Carnestoltes (Carnaval)

### 28 Feb-6 Mar

Seven weeks before Easter, the carnival (http://lameva.barcelona.cat/carnaval; pictured above) involves several days of fancydress balls, merrymaking and fireworks, ending on the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday. More than 30 parades happen around town on the weekend. Down in Sitges a wilder version takes place.

### ♣ Festa de Sant Medir 3 Mar

This characterful religious procession in Gràcia includes throwing sweets to the masses, who await with buckets and bags to catch the treats.

# ☆ Barcelona OberturaSpring Festival 4-17 Mar

A top-notch line-up of classical musicians and singers makes this festival an exciting prospect. Choral performances, opera, chamber music and orchestral works are scheduled across two venues, with some high-profile Russian artists featuring.

### ♣ Barcelona Marathon

10 Mar

Runners converge on Barcelona every March to participate in the city's spring marathon; it usually starts and finishes at Plaça d'Espanya, passing Camp Nou, La Pedrera, La Sagrada Família, Torre Agbar, El Fòrum, Parc de la Ciutadella, Plaça de Catalunya and La Rambla.

### **☆ Disney on Ice** 14-17 March

A guaranteed hit with the children, this spectacular Disney show takes place at the Palau Sant Jordi (p203) over four consecutive days. You might have to rely on re-sales for tickets.

### ₱ Barcelona Beer Festival

#### mid-late Mar

Craft beer has hit the scene in full force in Barcelona. Come see the latest tastemakers in action at this three-day beer and food fest (www.barcelonabeerfestival. com), with over 300 craft beers on hand. So many beers, so little time!





Spring arrives with a flourish, complete with wildflowers blooming in the countryside, Easter revelry and school holidays, although April showers can dampen spirits. Book well ahead if coming around Easter.

### ★ Setmana Santa 14-21 Apr

On Palm Sunday people line up to have their palm branches blessed outside the cathedral, while on Good Friday you can follow the floats and hooded penitents in processions from the Església de Sant Agustí (Plaça de Sant Agustí 2), located in El Raval.

### ☆ Barcelona Open 20-28 Apr

The city's premier tennis tournament, an important fixture of the international clay-court season, sees some top names slug it out.

### 🔻 Día de Sant Jordi 23 Apr

Catalonia honours its patron saint, Sant Jordi (St George), on 23 April. Traditionally men and women exchange roses (pictured above) and books – and La Rambla and Plaça de Sant Jaume fill with book and flower stalls.

# ★ Feria de Abril de Catalunya

26 Apr-5 May

Andalucía comes to the Parc del Fòrum with this weeklong southern festival featuring flamenco, a funfair and plenty of food and drink stalls.

### X Alimentaria late Apr

Though it's a serious trade fair (www. alimentaria-bcn.com) rather than a gastro festival, this is well worth visiting for foodies. A highlight is the show cooking area, where top chefs demonstrate their skills.

### \* Passejada Amb Barret 29 Apr

Inspired by New York's Easter Parade, this 'Stroll with a Hat' welcomes spring with a casual walk along Rambla de Catalunya. Make sure you wear your hat!

### This Year in Barcelona



With sunny, pleasant days and clear skies, May can be one of the best times to visit Barcelona. The city slowly gears up for summer with the opening of the chiringuitos (beach bars).

# ☆ D'A - Festival Internacional de Cinema d'Autor de Barcelona | late Apr-early May

This well-curated film festival (www. dafilmfestival.com) presents a selection of contemporary art-house cinematic works over a few days.

### **☆** Salón del Cómic early May

Spain's biggest comics event (www.ficomic. com) takes place over three days. It's generally in early May but has been held as early as late March, so keep an eye out.

### **☆ Spanish Grand Prix** mid-May

One of the fixtures of the motor-racing calendar, the Spanish Grand Prix (pictured above) is held at the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya, northeast of the city.

# ☆ Primavera Sound late May or early Jun

For one week the open-air Parc del Fòrum stages an all-star line-up (www. primaverasound.com) of international bands and DJs. There are also associated concerts around town, including free open-air events at the Parc de la Ciutadella and the Passeig Lluís Companys.



### ☆ Ciutat Flamenco mid-May

One of the best occasions to see great flamenco in Barcelona, this concentrated festival (www.ciutatflamenco.com) is held over four days in May at the Teatre Mercat De Les Flors and other venues.



Tourist numbers are soaring as Barcelona plunges into summer. Live music festivals and open-air events give the month a festive air.

### **★ Cors Muts** 10 Jun

After a weekend of out-of-town revelry over Pentecost (or 'Second Easter' weekend), these gaudily-dressed bands of musicians return to the *barrios* of Raval and Barceloneta in a big parade on the Monday afternoon

### ☆ Sónar mid-Jun

Usually held in mid-June, Sónar (www. sonar.es) is Barcelona's massive celebration of electronic music and technology, with concerts, DJs, exhibitions, sound labs, record fairs and urban art.

# **☆ Festival Pedralbes**mid-Jun-early Jul

This summertime fest (www.festival pedralbes.com) takes place in lovely gardens and stages big-name performers – many of them old-timers (Beach Boys, Sting, Blondie) – from mid-June to early July.

### 

### Balla 20 Jun

On Corpus Christi, L'Ou com Balla (the Dancing Egg) bobs on top of flower-festooned fountains around the city. There's also an early-evening procession from La Catedral and traditional Catalan folk dancing.

### **★** La Revetlla de Sant Joan

### 23 Jun

On 23 June locals hit the streets or hold parties at home to celebrate the Revetlla de Sant Joan (St John's Night), which involves drinking, dancing, bonfires and fireworks. In Spanish, it's called 'Verbenas de Sant Joan'.

### A Pride Barcelona

### late Jun or early Jul

The Barcelona Gay Pride festival (www. pridebarcelona.org; pictured above) is a week of celebrations held late June or early July with a crammed program of culture and concerts, along with the traditional Gay Pride march on Sunday.

### This Year in Barcelona



Prices are high and it's peak tourist season, but it's a lively time to be in the city, with sun-filled beach days, open-air dining and outdoor concerts.

5-15 Jul

### ★ World Roller Games

Covering a range of disciplines from roller derby to artistic skating via hockey and skateboarding, this is the second edition of this world championship (www.wrg2019. com).

#### **☆** Rock Fest Barcelona early Jul

This three-day summer festival (www. rockfestbarcelona.com) pulls some very big names indeed from the hard rock and metal end of the spectrum.

#### ☆ Cruïlla mid-Jul

This well-attended music festival (www.cru illabarcelona.com; pictured above) runs over three days and features an eclectic line-up covering everything from rock to flamenco.

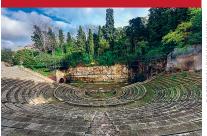
#### ☆ Sala Montjuïc Jul-early Aug

Picnic under the stars while watching a movie at this open-air cinema (www.sala montjuic.org), which also features concerts.

### ☆ Festival del Grec

Jul

The major cultural event of the summer is a month-long fest (http://grec.bcn. cat) with dozens of theatre, dance and music performances held around town, including at the Teatre Grec amphitheatre (pictured below) on Montjuïc, from which the festival takes its name



#### **☆** Brunch in the Park Jul-Sep

Every Sunday from late June to September, you can enjoy a day of electronic music (http://barcelona.brunch-in.com) at an outdoor space on Montiuïc. It attracts a mix of young families and party people.



The heat index soars; barcelonins leave the city in droves for summer holidays as huge numbers of tourists arrive. It's a great time to hit the beach.

### ☆ Música als Parcs Jun-Aug

Music in the Parks is a series of open-air concerts held in different parks and green spaces around the city. More than 40 different concerts feature classical, blues and jazz groups.

### **★** Festes de Sant Roc mid-Aug

For four days in mid-August, Plaça Nova in the Barri Gòtic becomes the scene of parades, the *correfoc*, a market, traditional music and magic shows for kids.

### **♣** Festa Major de Gràcia around 15 Aug

Locals compete for the most elaborately decorated street in this popular weeklong Gràcia festival (www.festamajordegracia. org; pictured above) held around 15 August. The fest also features free outdoor concerts, street fairs and other events.

### **≛** Circuit Festival

mid-Aug

Running for about two weeks, this is a major gay fiesta (www.circuitfestival.net) with numerous party nights, including an epic final all-day, all-night bash in a waterpark. There's a parallel lesbian event, GirlieCircuit (www.girliecircuit.net).

### \* Festa Major de Sants late Aug

The district of Sants hosts a five-day fest (www.festamajordesants.net) with concerts, outdoor dance parties, *correfocs* and elaborately decorated streets.

### This Year in Barcelona



After a month off, barcelonins return to work, although several major festivals provide ample amusement. Temperatures stay warm through September, making for fine beach days.

### Diada Nacional de Catalunya

11 Sep

Catalonia's national day (pictured above) curiously commemorates Barcelona's surrender on 11 September 1714 to the Bourbon monarchy of Spain, at the conclusion of the War of the Spanish Succession.

### Mostra de Vins i Caves de Catalunva

late Sep

At this wine and cava event, you can taste your way through some of the top wines of Catalunya, It's usually held on Passeig Lluís Companys near the Arc de Triomf over four days, coinciding with the Festes de la Mercè at the end of September.

### ♣ Festa Major de la Barceloneta

around 29 Sep

This big September celebration in Barce-Iona honours the local patron saint, Sant

### 🕸 Festes de la Mercè

around 24 Sep

Barcelona's co-patron saint is celebrated with fervour in this massive five-day fest (www.bcn.cat/merce). The city stages sporting events, free concerts, dance performances, human towers of castellers, parades of gegants and a fiery correfoc (fire run).



Miguel, on 29 September. It lasts about a week and involves plenty of dancing and drinking, especially on the beach.



While northern Europe shivers, Barcelona eniovs mild October temperatures and sunny days. With the disappearance of the summer crowds, and lower accommodation prices, this is an excellent month to visit.

#### A Liber 2-4 Oct

This major international book fair (www. libereurope.eu) brings together authors, publishers and keen readers for a few days at the beginning of October.

#### ★ Mercat de Mercats mid-Oct

The 'market of markets' is a celebration of Catalan cooking (pictured above) and those wonderfully locally sourced ingredients that have made Barcelona such a foodie destination. Over one weekend in October, this food fair features great foods, wines and workshops. Held in front of La Catedral.

### **☆** Symphony for the Ears

L'Auditori (p196) is a modern building with amazing acoustics, and seeing a show here is a must for music lovers. Visit www. auditori.cat to see the program and buy tickets.

### **Human Castles**

One of the highlights of a traditional Catalan festival is the building of human castells (castles). Teams from across the region compete to build towers up to 10 'storeys' tall.



### ☆ Festival de Jazz de Barcelona throughout Oct

With an excellent program of highquality concerts throughout the month. this long-standing festival (www.jazz. barcelona) is a musical highlight.

### This Year in Barcelona



Cooler days and nights arrive in Barcelona, along with occasional days of rain and overcast skies. For beating the crowds (and higher summer prices), though, it's an excellent month to visit.

### ♣ Día de Todos los Santos

All Saint's Day is traditionally when locals visit the tombs of family members, then get together for the Castanyada, when roasted chestnuts and other winter foods are eaten

#### **☆** LOOP Barcelona mid-Nov

LOOP features video art and avant-garde films shown in museums, theatres and non-traditional spaces (like food markets) around the city. It usually runs for a few days and its timing can vary substantially, so check the dates.

#### ☆ L'Alternativa mid-Nov

Showcasing feature-length and short films, plus premieres by new directors, the Barcelona Independent Film Festival (www. alternativa.cccb.org) includes free and ticketed events

### ☆ Camp Nou

Nov

See a football match at Camp Nou (p72), hallowed ground for football fans across the globe. There are likely league, cup or Champions League games to choose from this month. Or take a selfguided tour of the stadium and learn about the sport's most famous players at FC Barcelona's museum.



### ☆ Festival Mil-lenni

### late Nov-May 2020

Running from November to May every year, this festival (www.festival-millenni.com) consists of a series of high-profile concerts in various venues around town.



As winter returns barcelonins gear up for Christmas, and the city is festooned with colourful decorations. Relatively few visitors arrive, at least until Christmas, when the city fills with holidaving out-oftowners.

#### A Fira de Santa Llúcia late Nov-Christmas

Held from late November to Christmas, this holiday market (www.firadesantallucia.cat) has hundreds of stalls selling all manner of Christmas decorations and gifts - including the infamous Catalan nativity scene character, the caganer (the crapper).

#### 24 Dec-6 Jan Christmas

Christmas in Spain is a two-week affair. with the major family meals on the night of Christmas Eve. New Year's Eve and 6 January.

### 🗱 Nochevieja (New Year's Eve)

On 31 December, the fountains of Montiuïc (Font Màgica) take centre stage for the biggest celebration in town. Crowds line

31 Dec

### Christmas Crappers

At Christmas some rather unusual Catalan characters appear. The caganer (crapper) is a chap with dropped pants who balances over his unsightly offering (a symbol of fertility for the coming year). There's also the caga tío (poop log), which on Christmas Day is supposed to cagar (crap) out gifts.



up along Avinguda Reina Maria Cristina to watch a theatrical procession and audio-visual performance (plus castells), followed by fireworks at midnight.

# **Hotspots For...**



- ◆ MACBA (p94; pictured above) The city's top destination for contemporary art, with amazing views to boot.
- Fundació Joan Miró (p60) A comprehensive collection of this local's works, in a brilliant building.
- X Els Quatre Gats (p142) Admire the Modernista decor in this historic restaurant.
- X Tickets (p149) If food can be art, then this is the most spectacular performance in town.
- ☆ Gran Teatre del Liceu (p199) Enjoy state-of-the-art acoustics in this atmospheric venue on La Rambla.



- Mercat de la Boqueria (p48; pictured below) This legendary produce market is a cornucopia of sights and smells.
- La Ribera Stroll this intriguing district and browse its gourmet shops.
- **Cinc Sentits** (p147) Delight in the superb tasting menu at this top-notch modern restaurant.
- X Disfrutar (p147) Have the meal of your trip at this highly inventive molecular gastronomy restaurant.
- **★ Espai Boisà** (p209) Learn to whip up some classic tapas and Catalan dishes in this excellent cooking school.





- Teleférico del Puerto (p63) Old-fashioned cable car with awesome perspectives.
- Basílica del Sagrat Cor de Jesús (p99) Worth the trip for the mesmerising view.
- X Barraca (p135) Superb seafood to match the sublime sea outlook.
- Martínez (p149) Paella and tapas high up on Montjuïc.
- Mirablau (p178) At the foot of Tibidabo, with magnificent vistas out over the city.







- Park Güell (p68) Stroll the gardens and admire the views among Gaudí's Modernista fantasies.
- Barri Gòtic (pictured above)

  Amble around the historic centre and explore its hidden corners.
- X La Vinateria del Call (p140) This exquisite little old-town eatery is perfect for cosy dining.
- **Caelum** (p142) Beautiful medieval cafe with a candlelit downstairs.
- **❖ Swing Maniacs** (p210) Learn swing dancing at a drop-in course, then hit the dance floor.



- Museu d'Història de Barcelona (p113; pictured above) Probe the city's Roman past.
- ◆ Temple d'August (p67) Examine the best of Barcelona's ancient temples.
- Via Sepulcral Romana (p47) This assemblage of tombs originally stood outside the city limits.
- **Aqua Urban Spa** (p208) Relax in bathhouse style.
- X La Granja (p142) Check out the section of old city wall in this cafe.

# **Top Days in Barcelona**



Must-Sees

On your first day in Barcelona, visit the city's major highlights: stroll La Rambla, explore the atmospheric lanes of the Barri Gòtic and linger over the stunning artistry of La Sagrada Família. History, great architecture and a celebrated food market are all part of this sensory-rich experience.

# Day 1

### 1 La Rambla (p42)

Start with La Rambla. Don't miss the human statues, the Miró mosaic, and key buildings facing La Rambla, including the 18th-century Palau de la Virreina.

- La Rambla to Mercat de la Bogueria
- \* Find the market's entrance on La Rambla's west side.

### 2 Mercat de la Boqueria (p48)

Packed with culinary riches, this staggering food market is the favoured stomping ground for chefs and conjurors, weekend cooks and hungry-looking tourists. Don't leave without having a few snacks – perhaps from one of the delectable tapas bars in the back.

- Mercat de la Boqueria to Barri Gòtic
- ♣ Head back down La Rambla, then turn left into Plaça Reial after passing Carrer de Ferran.





### 3 Barri Gòtic

Delve into Barcelona's old city. Cross picturesque Plaça Reial (p47) before wandering narrow lanes that date back to at least the Middle Ages. Make your way to the magnificent La Catedral (p64), then visit the Temple d'August (p67).

- Barri Gòtic to Cafè de l'Acadèmia
- \* Cross Plaça de Sant Jaume, walk along Carrer de la Ciutat and take the first left.

# 4 Lunch at Cafè de l'Acadèmia (p140)

Arrive early to get a seat at this small atmospheric restaurant serving excellent Catalan cuisine. The multicourse lunch special is fantastic value.

- Cafè de l'Acadèmia to La Sagrada Família
- M Take Line 4 north from Jaume I; transfer at Passeig de Gràcia for Line 2 to Sagrada Família.

### 5 La Sagrada Família (p36)

Roll the drums, turn on the stage lights and get ready for Spain's most visited sight. This one-of-a-kind religious monument is as unique as the Pyramids and as beautiful as the Taj Mahal.

- La Sagrada Família to Tapas 24
- M Take Line 2 back to Passeig de Gràcia. Walk southeast down the street of the same name, then take the second left.

# **6** Evening Bites at Tapas 24 (p145)

This great basement spot does a smart line in innovative takes on traditional tapas. It's a top place for a light bite or a full meal.

# **Top Days in Barcelona**



Mar i Muntanya (Sea & Mountain)

This itinerary takes you along the promenade that skirts the Mediterranean, then into the old fishing quarter of Barceloneta before whisking you up to the heights of Montjuïc for fine views, fragrant gardens and superb art galleries – including two of the city's top museums.

### Barceloneta Beach

Start the morning with a waterfront stroll; this scenic but once derelict area experienced a dramatic makeover around the 1992 Olympics. Look north and you'll see Frank Gehry's shimmering fish sculpture, while to the south rises the spinnaker-shaped tower of the W Hotel.

- Barceloneta Beach to Can Ros
- ★ Look for Carrer del Almirall Aixada just north of the rectangular beach sculpture. Can Ros is about 350m back from the beach on this road.

### 2 Lunch at Can Ros (p136)

Take your pick of the seaside restaurants if you want the view, but otherwise head back a few streets to this family-run gem, which has been dishing up excellent seafood for generations.

- Can Ros to Teleférico del Puerto
- \* Walk to the southern end of Barceloneta and you'll see the cable car to your right.





### 3 Teleférico del Puerto (p63)

After lunch take a scenic ride on this aerial cable car for fantastic views over the port and the dazzling city beyond. At the top, you'll arrive in Montjuïc, a minimountain that's packed with gardens – both sculptural and floral – as well as hosting a few first-rate museums

- Teleférico del Puerto to Fundació Joan Miró
- Take the cable car up to Montjuïc, disembark and follow the main road 800m west.

### 4 Fundació Joan Miró (p60)

See a full range of works by one of the giants of the art world. Paintings, sculptures and drawings by the prolific Catalan artist are displayed along with photos and other media. Outside is a peaceful sculpture garden with views over Poble Sec.

- Fundació Joan Miró to Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya
- Follow the path through the sculpture gardens east, take the steps up to the main road and continue east to the museum.

# Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya (p56)

Not to be missed is the incomparable collection of artwork inside this enormous museum. The highlight is the impressive Romanesque collection – rescued from 900-year-old churches in the Pyrenees. Out front, you can take in the view over Plaça d'Espanya to the distant peak of Tibidabo.

- Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya to Tickets
- ♣ Descend toward Plaça d'Espanya. Turn right before the fountain, left on Carrer de Lleida and right on Avinguda del Paral·lel.

### 6 Dinner at Tickets (p149)

You'll need to book weeks in advance, but it's well worth the effort to score a table at Tickets, one of Barcelona's hottest attractions. The celebrated restaurant, run by the Adrià brothers, showcases an everchanging menu of molecular gastronomy.

From left: Barceloneta Beach: Teleférico del Puerto

# **Top Days in Barcelona**



Like adjacent Barri Gòtic, La Ribera has narrow cobblestone streets and medieval architecture galore. Yet it's also home to high-end shopping, a brilliant Modernista concert hall and a treasure trove of artwork by Picasso. Great restaurants and a fanciful green space complete the Ribera ramble.

### 1 Museu Picasso (p80)

You can see Picasso's early masterpieces inside this inspiring museum, which contains some 3500 of his works. Perhaps just as impressive as the artwork are the galleries themselves – set in a series of merchant houses dating back to the 1300s.

- Museu Picasso to El Born
- \* Stroll southeast along Carrer de Montcada.

### Window Shopping in El Born

The medieval streets of El Born hide an abundance of shopping intrigue, from magic shops to purveyors of fine wines, along with plenty of eye-catching fashion boutiques.

- El Born to Cal Pep
- Walk across Plaça de les Olles.

### 3 Lunch at Cal Pep (p143)

For lunch, head to this bustling eatery for some of the city's tastiest seafood tapas.

- Cal Pep to Basílica de Santa Maria del Mar
- \* Stroll northwest along Carrer de la Vidriería and turn left on Carrer de Santa Maria.





# Basílica de Santa Maria del Mar (p116)

A few blocks away, this captivating church is built in the style of Catalan Gothic. The 14th-century masterpiece soars above the medina-like streets surrounding it.

- Basílica de Santa Maria del Mar to Parc de la Ciutadella
- \* Walk northeast on Carrer de Santa Maria and continue around the former Mercat del Born site to the park.

### 5 Parc de la Ciutadella (p84)

After the compact streets of La Ribera, catch your breath and stroll through the open green expanse of this manicured park. You'll find sculptures, a small zoo, the Parlament de Catalunya and the centrepiece, a dramatic if utterly artificial waterfall dating from the 19th century.

- Parc de la Ciutadella to Palau de la Música Catalana
- \* Take Carrer de la Princesa back into El Born and turn right after 200m, making your way northwest.

### O Palau de la Música Catalana (p106)

Designed by Domènech i Montaner in the early 1900s, this intimate concert hall is a Modernista work of art, with luminescent stained glass and elaborately sculpted details throughout. Come for a concert, but it's also worth returning for a guided tour.

- Palau de la Música Catalana to El Xampanyet
- \* Make your way back (southeast) to Carrer de Montcada.

### **7** El Xampanyet (p185)

Just up the road, El Xampanyet is a festive spot to end the night. Sample mouthwatering bites and let your cup brim with ever-flowing cava (Catalan sparkling wine). It's usually crowded but friendly; just politely elbow your way in.

From left: Boutique shop in El Born; Stained-glass skylight of Palau de la Música Catalana

# **Top Days in Barcelona**



**Art & Architecture** 

This tour takes you up to the enchanting (if accidental) park Gaudí designed overlooking the city, down the elegant architectural showpiece avenue of Passeig de Gràcia and into El Raval. There you'll find the city's top contemporary art museum anchoring Barcelona's most bohemian neighbourhood.

### Park Güell (p68)

Go early to Park Güell to beat the crowds and see the early morning rays over Barce-Iona and the Mediterranean beyond. Stroll the expanse of the park, ending your visit at Casa-Museu Gaudí (p70), where you can learn more about the life and work of the great Catalan architect.

Park Güell to Gràcia

M Take Line 3 from Vallcarca to Fontana.

### 2 Gràcia

The village-like feel of Gràcia makes for some great exploring. Stroll from plaza to plaza along the narrow shop-lined lanes. stopping perhaps at open-air cafes along the way. Good streets for browsing include Carre de Verdi, Travessera de Gràcia and Carrer de Torrijos.

Gràcia to Botafumeiro

\* Walk southwest along Travessera de Gràcia and turn right on Carrer Gran de Gràcia.





### 3 Lunch at Botafumeiro (p139)

One of Barcelona's best seafood restaurants. If the tables are full, you can usually get a spot at the bar.

- De Botafumeiro to Passeig de Gràcia
- \* Amble southeast along Carrer Gran de Gràcia, which leads into Passeig de Gràcia after 400m.

### 4 Passeig de Gràcia

Head to L'Eixample to see high-concept architecture. Passeig de Gràcia is a busy but elegant boulevard lined with exquisite Modernista buildings, including Gaudí's La Pedrera (p76) and Casa Batlló (p52).

- Passeig de Gràcia to MACBA
- Continue on Passeig de Gràcia, cross Plaça de Catalunya to La Rambla and turn right on Carrer del Bonsuccés

### **5** MACBA (p94)

A few streets away from Plaça d'Espanya you'll reach the city's top contemporary art gallery, MACBA. It houses an excellent range of Catalan and European works from WWII to the present.

- MACBA to El Raval
- \* Walk along Carrer dels Àngels and turn left on Carrer del Carme.

### **6** El Raval

Spend the early evening strolling the lively multicultural street scene of El Raval. Stop for a breather in the pretty courtyard of the Antic Hospital de la Santa Creu (p51) and check out Gaudí's Palau Güell (p92).

- El Raval to Kov Shunka
- M Take Line 3 from Paral·lel to Catalunya.

### **7** Dinner at Koy Shunka (p142)

Top off your night with a feast at Koy Shunka, where the haute cuisine is a magnificent marriage of Catalan creativity and Japanese tradition. The tasting menus are worth the hefty price tags.

From left: View of the city from Park Güell; Casa Batlló on Passeig de Gràcia