



BARCELONA

TOP SIGHTS AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCES

Andy Symington
Sally Davies, Catherine Le Nevez

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.

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Camp Nou, Pedralbes & La Zona Alta

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



Museu-Monestir de Pedralbes

La Sagrada Família & L'Eixample

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



El Raval

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



Montjuïc, Poble Sec & Sant Antoni

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

Tibidabo Mountain
(1km)

Park Güell

La Sagrada Família

La Ribera

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



El Fòrum
(4km)



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 quarter. (Map p250)

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Plan Your Trip This Year in Barcelona

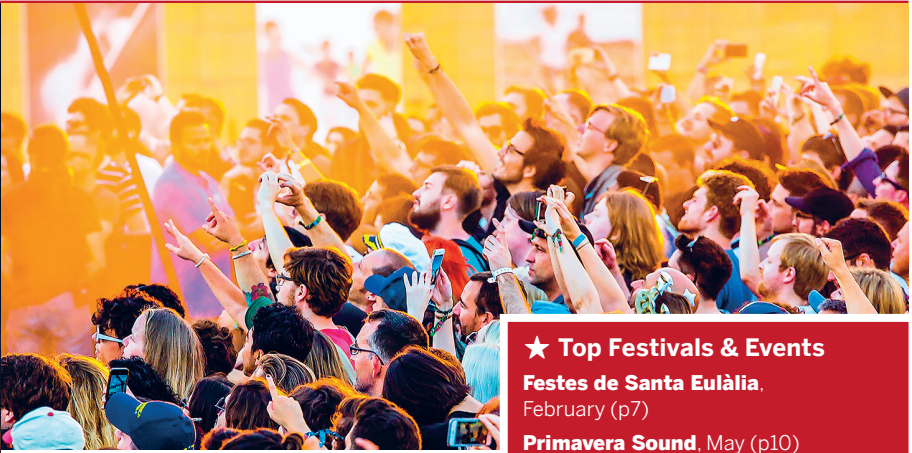
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Barcelona

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.



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★ Top Festivals & Events

Festes de Santa Eulàlia,
February (p7)

Primavera Sound, May (p10)

Festival del Grec, July (p12)

Festa Major de Gràcia, August (p13)

Festes de la Mercè, September (p14)



MARCIN D'SOUPX ©

Plan Your Trip

This Year in Barcelona



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January

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 (Reyes)

5 Jan

On 5 January, the day before Epifania (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 Jan

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 quare* 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.