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A Day in Barcelona



Barcelona, Spain

1. Why Visit Barcelona

Barcelona has been a major tourist destination ever since the successful 1992 Olympics, and its kaleidoscopic appeal continues to attract millions of visitors each year. Strolling the side streets and wide avenues of Barcelona will take you from spectacular Gaudí architecture to Roman ruins to the dynamic and picturesque old town and port areas. From exquisite fine dining to “tapas” (appetizers) and “cava” (Catalan sparkling wine), Barcelona is a gastronomic paradise. With a wide range of entertainment at all hours, you could find yourself visiting museums by day, attending the opera in the evening, and chilling out at one of the popular late-night jazz clubs well past your normal bedtime. Come visit Barcelona to discover your own hidden treasures around every corner. We invite you to pick and choose from our favorites below for your day (or more) in our city. We have used the Catalan names for streets and plazas since that is how they are generally shown on street signs and maps. The abbreviation C/ stands for “street” in either Catalan (carrer) or Spanish (calle). “Plaça” is pronounced with a soft “c” and sounds like the Spanish “plaza”.

2. When to Visit - all year round

With its rich cultural offerings, Barcelona is a “visit anytime” city. Throughout the year some festival or event is likely to be taking place during your visit. Here are a few of the many interesting events on Barcelona’s yearly calendar.

April 23: Saint George’s Day (Dia de Sant Jordi) honors Catalunya’s patron saint. Not a public holiday, but a festive air fills the streets. The Ramblas, Passeig de Gràcia, and Plaça de Sant Jaume are lined with stalls selling books and roses, the traditional symbols of the day.

Mid-May: Formula One (Spanish Grand Prix) at Montmeló racetrack, whose official name is Circuit de Catalunya. Montmeló is also the venue for the MotoGP.

June 23: Saint John’s Eve (Verbena de Sant Joan). Celebrated at night with bonfires and fireworks throughout the city. A popular venue is the beach, where people linger to watch the sun come up. Saint John’s Day (June 24) is a public holiday with little fanfare.

June to August: Festival del Grec. Barcelona’s annual performing arts festival is a cultural feast of music, dance, and drama presented in numerous venues. Many events take place in the Teatre Grec, a reproduction of a Greek theater on Montjuïc. www.grec.bcn.cat



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Mid-August: Festa Major de Gràcia. The neighborhood of Gràcia spills out onto the streets for this annual celebration with live music, street entertainers, parades, fireworks, fantastic decorations. Gràcia's week-long "big party" usually starts on August 15, a public holiday (Assumption of the Virgin Mary).

September: Festa de La Mercè. September 24 is a public holiday for Barcelona's patron saint, La Mercè (Our Lady of Mercy). The city dedicates its biggest festival to La Mercè, starting some days before the 24th. The huge celebration takes to the streets and plazas with live music, traditional dancing, giant figures on parade, fire-breathing dragons on the run, human towers on the rise, and more - topped off with a spectacular fireworks display. www.bcn.cat/merce

October/November: Festival de Jazz The annual Jazz Festival draws internationally known bands and solo artists to Barcelona's clubs and concert stages. www.barcelonajazzfestival.com

December 1-22: Christmas Market (Fira de Santa Llúcia). Every year, in a tradition more than 200 years old, the space outside the cathedral becomes a big holiday market and crafts fair offering figures for nativity scenes, seasonal decorations, gift items, and other wares. Among the crafts, you will see some unusual figures that are unique to a Catalan Christmas. www.firadesantallucia.cat

January 5: Three Kings Parade (Cavalcada de Reis). The festive atmosphere in Spain continues past the New Year until January 6, or "Dia de los Reyes". Spanish children traditionally receive their holiday gifts on this day. The little ones go to bed on January 5 believing the Three Kings will bring them toys during the night. January 6 is a national holiday, but the public celebrations take place on the eve, when the Three Kings visit cities and towns all over Spain. In Barcelona the Kings arrive in the early evening by boat, eagerly awaited at the port by crowds of wide-eyed children with their parents. After greeting the public, the Kings ride through the streets in a big parade of eye-catching floats. The royal pages toss candies from the floats, to the delight of the children who are the target audience of the cavalcade. If you can't make it to the parade route, try to watch the Cavalcada de Reis on television!

Note: An interesting place to go for information about cultural events is the Palau de la Virreina at Ramblas, 99. This lovely Palau (palace) from the 18th century is now used for art and photography exhibitions. The ground floor has an information center and ticket office run by the city's Cultural Institute. For online information, see the city's cultural website (www.barcelonacultura.bcn.cat) and the website of the Barcelona Tourist Office (www.bcshop.barcelonaturisme.com).

3. Must See/Do NOT Miss Attractions

Plaça Catalunya: The city's main plaza would be hard to miss indeed. It is located in the heart of Barcelona, and is a bustling hub for tourists and locals alike. The double-deck bus tours that leave from here are a popular way to get to know the city (see section 9. Transportation Recommendations). The main Tourist Office is located under Plaça Catalunya, and it is here that you can ask lots of questions, get maps and brochures, and buy tickets for the bus tour. You can also buy useful discount cards here. The Barcelona Card provides free public transport and discounts for a long list of museums and attractions. The Articket Card saves time and money for visiting seven art museums; with it you can skip ticket-buying lines and get your entrance ticket promptly. See www.bcshop.barcelonaturisme.com for details on discount tickets and how to buy them online before coming to Barcelona.

Sagrada Família: C/ Mallorca, 401 www.sagradafamilia.org Antoni Gaudí and Barcelona are closely linked. Examples of Gaudí's innovative, often fantastic, architecture abound in the city. The Sagrada Família temple is his most famous work and attracts crowds of visitors. This unfinished masterpiece is rich in unusual architectural elements and allegorical images. Construction is ongoing, lending a dynamic feeling to the visit. Take the elevator to the top for great views. Regular guided tours in English; or you can rent the audio guide. Online options



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for avoiding the ticket-buying lines are: www.bcshop.barcelonaturisme.com or www.ticketmaster.es

Parc Güell: C/ d'Olot This unique park is one of Gaudí's most spectacular creations. Surrealistic gate houses, a fountain presided over by a colorful ceramic dragon, walkways formed by rustic stone arcades, a huge hall filled with columns supporting a roof terrace above, and an undulating ceramic bench along the edge of this terrace is among the imaginative delights here. The park spreads out on a hill that affords magnificent views.

Picasso Museum: C/ Montcada, 15-23 www.museupicasso.bcn.es The museum highlights the work of Pablo Picasso (1881-1973), the world-famous Spanish artist who spent his formative years in Barcelona. The extensive collection of Picasso's works - including paintings, drawings, and engravings - occupies interconnected medieval palaces in the Born area. Walk around this picturesque neighborhood, look in at the crafts workshops and specialty shops, stroll around the big, colorful Santa Caterina market and discover the restaurant there, and visit the medieval Santa Maria del Mar church with its beautiful stained glass windows. (Plaça de Santa Maria, 1)

Montjuïc: Overlooking the port, the Montjuïc mountain is a huge park dotted with attractions. Ask at your hotel or the Tourist Office about the numerous transportation options for Montjuïc. One way is to take a taxi to the Castell de Montjuïc at the top. After visiting this fortress (spectacular views of Barcelona), you can walk down, although it is a long walk. Consider making your way down partly on foot and partly by city buses. Attractions you can visit along the way include the Olympic Stadium, Poble Espanyol (replicas of buildings from different regions in Spain), and the Palau Nacional (home to the MNAC/Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya featuring centuries of Catalan art). A bit further down is CaixaForum, a wonderful arts and cultural center housed in a former textile factory designed by the modernist architect Josep Puig i Cadafalch.

Two Montjuïc cable car rides afford panoramic views from the sky: (1) Transbordador Aéreo (from Barceloneta across the harbor to the Miramar of Montjuïc and vice versa). (2) Telefèric de Montjuïc (from within the park to the Castell de Montjuïc and vice versa). An interesting combination is to take the Montjuïc Funicular from the Paral.lel metro station in the city. The end of the Funicular ride is near the Telefèric access - and only a short walk from the Fundació Joan Miró, where paintings, sculptures and other works of the great Catalan artist are on display.

Camp Nou: C/ Arístides Maillol www.fcbarcelona.com If "Futbol" is your passion, you will not want to miss a visit to Camp Nou. This impressive stadium is the headquarters of the Barcelona Futbol Club. The museum at Camp Nou celebrates the club's history with excellent photo exhibits and audiovisual displays. The museum visit includes a chance to see the inside of the stadium - and to imagine how it looks when filled with cheering spectators. Don't forget to pick up a Barcelona Club T-shirt!

4. Favorite Walks or Areas of Town

Port Vell (Old Port): You can walk all along the waterfront, which offers a gamut of visitor attractions - from boat trips at one end of the harbor to a museum of Catalan history at the other end. The walkway below the museum is lined with seafood restaurants overlooking the water. Boat rides around the port are fun for all ages. The excursion boats called Golondrinas provide frequent service throughout the day (www.lasgolondrinas.com). The Catamaran Orsom operates during the day and offers themed evening cruises and private charters (www.barcelona-orsom.com).

The Ramblas and La Boqueria: The Ramblas stretches from the Plaça de Catalunya to Port Vell. Take in the sights along this bustling pedestrian thoroughfare and stop at La Boqueria along the way. Stroll through this enormous, colorful food market and enjoy the lively scene. If



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you're thirsty or hungry, many stalls and stand-up snack bars offer juices, cut-up fruit, and a variety of other food and refreshments to eat on site or take away.

Passeig de Gràcia and Rambla de Catalunya: A walk on the majestic Passeig de Gràcia takes you past iconic modernist buildings by Antoni Gaudí and his contemporaries. The Manzana de la Discòrdia, or Block of Discord, is so called because it has a trio of emblematic buildings with widely divergent styles: Casa Lleó Morera, Casa Amatller, and Casa Batllò - designed respectively by Lluís Domènech i Montaner, Josep Puig i Cadafalch, and Gaudí. A few blocks away is Gaudí's La Pedrera with its fantastic facade of undulating curves. Casa Batllò and La Pedrera can be visited but often have long lines. The Rambla de Catalunya, parallel to Passeig de Gràcia, is a tree-lined pedestrian promenade with inviting outdoor cafes. For an extra treat, use C/ Aragó to cross between Passeig de Gràcia and the Rambla de Catalunya. Take a look at the Fundació Antoni Tàpies towards the middle of the block (C/ Aragó, 255). This striking building by Domènech i Montaner is capped by an amazing sculpture by Tàpies, a leading Catalan abstract artist. The Fundació houses an extensive collection of the artist's works; well worth a visit.

Tibidabo: You can see this hill from the Rambla de Catalunya. The amusement park at the top makes this a great outing for kids. Getting up to Tibidabo is part of the fun - starting with a train, then an antique tram, and finally a funicular to the top. The views from Tibidabo are spectacular. www.tibidabo.cat

Guided Walking Tours: Guided walks in English are an option for seeing and learning a lot about Barcelona in a couple of hours. Barcelona Turisme - the city's official tourism bureau - offers walking tours at set prices (www.bcshop.barcelonaturisme.com). Some private companies offer "free" walking tours - the customer decides how much to donate or tip. Two of these companies are Runner Bean Tours (www.runnerbeantours.com) and Travel Bound (www.travelbar.com/es/free-walking-tour).

5. "Hidden Treasures" - off the main tourist track

Walk Around a Buried Roman City

City History Museum (Museu d'Història de la Ciutat-MUHBA)
Plaça del Rei (near the Cathedral); enter on C/ Veguer
www.museuhistoria.bcn.es

The museum sits over ruins of the early Roman city of Barcino. An elevator takes you below the earth - and 2,000 years back in time - to part of the original city excavated by archeologists. Walkways take you past actual remains of streets, workshops, and other archeological finds. Models and displays fill out the picture of everyday life in Barcelona during the time of the Romans. The museum visit also includes other exhibits, such as one on Barcelona through the Middle Ages. The introductory audiovisual presentation is an excellent way to start your visit to the museum.

Go to a Museum in a Medieval Shipyard

Maritime Museum (Museu Marítim-MMB)
Av. de les Drassanes (by the harbor)
www.mmb.cat

When you visit this museum, you actually stand inside a centuries-old shipyard that produced sailing craft in Catalunya's seafaring heyday. The huge shipyard is a fitting space for this museum devoted to the sea and sailing. Interesting and entertaining for all ages.



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Discover a Treasure Trove of Shoes

Shoe Museum (Museu del Calçat)
Plaça Sant Felip Neri (near the Cathedral)

A fascinating collection of footwear fills this small museum. The shoes are originals, from the 17th century to more recent times. The museum is a labor of love of the city's shoemaker's guild, whose origins go back to the 1200s. While you are at the Plaça Sant Felip Neri, take time to study the wall of the church facing the square. The Sant Felip Neri church was bombed during the Civil War and the damage can still be seen.

Visit the Medieval Jewish Quarter

Associació Call de Barcelona
C/ Marlet, 5
www.calldebarcelona.org

The Barri Gòtic (Gothic Quarter) in the heart of the old town has a street called "Call". The Call was the name given to the Jewish quarter of medieval Catalan cities. In recent years the ancient synagogue of Barcelona's Call has been restored, and informative markers have been posted on streets of this historic quarter. To visit the synagogue, enter on C/ Marlet, 5. The Associació Call de Barcelona offers guided tours in English.

Feast Your Eyes at a Concert Hall

Catalan Concert Hall (Palau de la Música Catalana)
C/ Palau de la Música, 4-6 and C/ Sant Pere Més Alt
www.palaumusica.org

The old town's Palau de la Música is an impressive example of modernist architecture. The century-old building was designed by Lluís Domènech I Montaner, a Gaudí contemporary. The Palau's daring and delightful mixture of sculptures, mosaics, stained glass and other elements is a visual celebration of music and Catalan culture. Attending a concert would be an ideal way to see the interior hall and enjoy the Palau's myriad charms. Taking one of the guided tours is another option. Otherwise, you can always look at the Palau from the outside. Feast your eyes on the richly decorated facade facing C/ Sant Pere Més Alt. Go inside for refreshments if the bar is open; the setting is lovely.

Note: Barcelona has two other major theaters for music: (1) Gran Teatre del Liceu, Ramblas, 51-59 (www.liceubarcelona.com), the city's prestigious opera house. (2) L'Auditori, C/ Lepant, 150 (www.auditori.org), a contemporary concert hall designed by the acclaimed Spanish architect Rafael Moneo; also houses the wonderful Music Museum (museumusica.bcn.cat). There are several other venues for popular or rock concerts as Barcelona draws some of the biggest names in show business in the world to its stages.

Watch THE Dance of Catalunya

Starting at noon on Sundays, men and women gather in front of the Cathedral to perform the *Sardana*, a dance unique to Catalunya. Participants form circles and hold hands, then raise their arms to perform the sardana in time to the music. The band, called a *cobla*, plays an unusual assortment of instruments. The resulting music has a distinctive sound. Dancers come and go spontaneously during the course of the event, which lasts one to two hours. Circles get bigger and new ones are formed as more people join in the dancing.



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Enjoy a Unique Free Show at the Magic Fountain

Head for the Magic Fountain at the foot of Montjuïc to see a spectacular after-dark show. The display combines light, color, and water in shifting patterns accompanied by music. The usual summer schedule is Thursday-Sunday, 9:00-11:00 pm with musical shows every half-hour. The rest of the year (October-April): Friday-Saturday, 7:00-9:00 pm. Scheduling may change - best to ask at your hotel or the Tourist Office. To get to the Magic Fountain, take the metro to the Plaça Espanya station and walk uphill. The fountain is a short distance below the Palau Nacional.

6. Restaurants and Tapas Bars

Wonderful restaurants abound everywhere, depending on what you are looking for. Barcelona is the place to eat fish, shellfish, vegetables, “pa amb tomaquet” (toasted bread with tomato and olive oil), and drink good wines from Catalunya and other regions of Spain. Many restaurants are child-friendly. It’s common to see children eating out with the family, especially on weekends for the midday meal. Restaurants usually open at 1:00 or 1:30 pm for lunch and 8:30 pm for dinner; reservations recommended. At informal places, such as cafes and tapas bars, you can have a light meal practically at all times and children are usually welcome.

Tapas are small servings of a wide variety of hot or cold dishes. You can have tapas as starters or make a meal of them. It’s fun to sample a variety of tapas in a group-the more tasters and dishes ordered, the merrier. Tapas bars specialize in these appetizer-size dishes, but many restaurants also serve tapas.

A few of our favorite Tapas Bars:

La Estrella de Plata
Pla del Palau, 9
Tel. 93 319 60 07

Cervecería Catalana
C/ Mallorca, 236
Tel. 932160368
Very popular with locals and tourists; go early before crowds show up.

Cervecería Moritz
Ronda Sant Antoni, 39-41
Tel. 93 426 00 50
In the old Moritz beer factory remodeled by the famous French architect Jean Nouvel.

Taktika Berri
C/ Valencia, 169
Tel. 93 453 47 59

Cal Pep
Plaça de les Olles, 8
Tel. 93 310 79 61



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Waterfront Restaurants

Port Vell (Old Port) and the adjoining Barceloneta are full of restaurants featuring seafood, fish, and other specialties. A few of our favorites:

Barceloneta

Moll dels Pescadors (Barceloneta)

Tel. 93 221 21 11

Very large, overlooking Port Vell; nautical decor.

Can Ramonet

C/ Maquinista, 17 (Barceloneta)

Tel. 93 319 30 64

Also has a good place for tapas in the bar area. Open 12 noon to midnight.

Merendero de la Mari

Plaça de Pau Vila, 1 (Port Vell)

Tel. 93 221 15 55

On the port side of the Palau de Mar, the large red brick building that houses the museum of Catalan history.

El Suquet de l'Almirall

Passeig Joan de Borbó, 65 (Barceloneta)

Tel. 93 221 62 33

Catalan seafood next to Port Vell. The chefs have a cookbook.

La Cova Fumada

C/ Baluard, 56 (Barceloneta)

Tel. 93 221 40 61

Family-run bodega serving simple, delicious food - marinated sardines, fried artichokes, squid. Very popular with locals and others, so go early.

Other Favorites

Teresa Carles

C/ Jovellanos, 2

Tel. 93 317 18 29

Delicious vegetarian food - warm atmosphere. Open 9 am to midnight.

Sésamo

C/ Sant Antoni Abat, 52

Tel. 93 441 64 11

Vegetarian cooking with a gourmet flair; also has a tapas menu.

Elche

C/ Vilá i Vilá, 71

Tel. 93 441 30 89

Famous for its paella and other rice specialties; varied menu. Family-run restaurant close to theater district has been open since 1959.

Els 4 Gats

C/ Montsio, 3 (old town)

Tel. 93 302 41 40

Historic atmosphere; modernist building designed by Puig i Cadafalch.



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Cafè de l'Academia
C/ Lledó, 1 (old town)
Tel. 93 319 82 53

Catalan/Mediterranean dishes, quality food, reasonable prices. Intimate restaurant in 15th-century building. Best to reserve - same advice for the next two.

Casa Calvet
C/ Casp, 48
Tel. 93 412 40 12

Fine cuisine in ornate Gaudi building. Richly decorated interior has some Gaudí-designed furniture.

La Dama
Av. Diagonal, 423
Tel. 93 202 06 86

Housed in a beautiful modernist building. Elegant atmosphere both inside and outside.

Michelin Stars and Famous Chefs

A sampler of Barcelona restaurants with Michelin stars. Many have chefs who are famous all over the world. Reservations advised. The first five are centrally located.

Lasarte **
C/ Mallorca, 259
Tel. 93 445 32 42

Bears the personal stamp of Martin Berasategui. Highly creative menu featuring inventive dishes and traditional Basque specialties.

Gaig *
C/ Aragó, 214
Tel. 93 429 10 17

Catalan cuisine brought up to date by chef Carles Gaig. Attractive contemporary setting; impeccable service; splendid wine cellar.

Cinc Sentits *
C/ Aribau, 58
Tel. 93 323 94 90

A gourmet's delight - the name is Catalan for "five senses". Three tasting menus offer different options for sampling the culinary savvy of chef Jordi Artañal.

Moo *
C/ Roselló, 265
Tel. 93 445 40 00

Signature cuisine overseen by the famous Roca brothers, with Felip Llufrus head chef. Located in the trendy Hotel Omm.

Caelis *
Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes, 668
Tel. 93 510 12 05

Creative cuisine from chef Romain Fornell. Housed in the luxurious Palace Hotel, with a separate entrance.

Hofmann *
C/ La Granada del Penedés, 14
Tel. 93 218 71 65

Mediterranean and international cuisine. An acclaimed cooking school as well as a restaurant, both overseen by chef Mey Hofmann.



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Alkimia *

C/ de la Industria, 79
Tel 93 207 61 15

Family-run establishment near the Sagrada Familia. Chef Jordi Vilá offers new Catalan cuisine; two tasting menus.

Dos Cielos *

C/ Pere IV, 272
Tel. 93 367 20 70

On the 24th floor of the ME Barcelona Hotel; spectacular views. Chefs Sergi and Javier Torres, who are twins, offer creative international cuisine.

Neichel *

C/ Beltrán i Rózpide, 1-5
Tel. 93 203 84 08

International cuisine in the residential area of Pedralbes. Alsatian-born chef Jean Louis Neichel, his Spanish wife Evelyn, and their son Mario run this elegant and traditional restaurant.

7. THE Place(s) to Have Refreshments and Take in the Atmosphere

Cafè d'Estiu

Plaça Sant Iu, 5-6

www.cafedestiu.com

An open-air terrace with a charming atmosphere, hidden away in the patio of the Frederic Marès Museum (near the cathedral). Serves sandwiches, quiches, cakes; also breakfast. Open April - September.

La Vinateria del Call

C/ Sant Domènec del Call, 9

www.lavinateriadelcall.com

Atmosphere of an old tavern; hidden away in an ancient street in the old Jewish quarter. Varied selection of good wines, from low-priced to expensive.

Caelum

C/ de la Palla, 8 (old town)

www.caelumbarcelona.com

One-of-a-kind shop occupies site of former medieval public baths. Sells pastries, cookies, preserves, and liqueurs made by monks and nuns at various monasteries in Spain. You can enjoy beverages and pastries downstairs. Normally open 10:30 am to 8:30 or 9:00 pm, but summer hours may differ. Phone 93 302 69 93 for information.

Visit Up

C/ Bergara, 8 (near Plaça Catalunya)

www.hotelpulitzer.es

Rooftop terrace bar at Hotel Pulitzer. Cool atmosphere, beautiful view, good music. Relax and enjoy a drink at sunset or under the night sky. (This is only one of many rooftop terrace bars in Barcelona. To find your own favorites, look at www.rooftopbars.org/city_Barcelona)

8. Day Trips from Barcelona - all can be done with public transportation

Montserrat: The dramatic, oddly-shaped peaks of Montserrat are suggested by its name, which means "serrated mountain". A historic monastery, caves, walking trails, and panoramic views are among its mountain-top attractions. A popular way to get there starts with a 90-minute train ride, followed by an exciting ride up the mountain by cable car or rack railway. Montserrat



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combination tickets - which include several types of transport and admission to displays - can be purchased in advance at the FGC office on C/ Pelai (Triangle building near Plaça Catalunya). www.cremallerademontserrat.cat and www.fgc.net

Colònia Güell: First set up in 1890, the Colònia Güell was a utopian project that combined a textile factory, houses for its workers, and amenities to improve their quality of life: a theater, school, shops, gardens, and church. Gaudí and other modernist architects were involved in the construction of the colònia (industrial village). The church that Gaudí designed, now known as the crypt, is a UNESCO World Heritage site. The textile mill closed down in 1973, but the spirit of the Colònia Güell lives on. Visitors today can stroll around and admire its modernist buildings in a rural village setting. Guided visits available. Colònia Güell is a half-hour train ride from Barcelona. www.coloniaguellbarcelona.com

Sitges: This seaside town is only 30 minutes away from Barcelona by train. Beaches, historic architecture, and picturesque streets are among its charms. www.sitgestur.cat

Tarragona: An hour's train ride takes you to this coastal town with a rich Roman heritage. Well-preserved ruins include the amphitheatre and magnificent walls. www.tarragonaturisme.cat

Girona: The city of Girona stands on an ancient Roman site at the intersection of four rivers. Walk along the top of a Roman wall, explore the old Jewish quarter, visit the cathedral, and enjoy many other cultural offerings to be found here. Girona is just a little over an hour by train from Barcelona. www.girona.cat/turisme

Figueres: The Salvador Dali Theatre-Museum in Figueres calls itself "the largest surrealist object in the world". Its five floors are largely devoted to creations by the surrealist artist. Figueres, Dali's birthplace, is a half-hour beyond Girona by train. www.salvador-dali.org

Good Trips for Kids

Port Aventura: This huge theme park has hundreds of rides, many designed especially for children. Port Aventura is located on the southern coast about 100 kilometers from Barcelona; reachable by train. www.portaventura.es

Vilanova i la Geltrú: The Museu del Ferrocarril (Railway Museum) offers the largest collection of steam engines in Europe and other train-travel memorabilia. Vilanova is about 45 minutes from Barcelona by train; can be combined with nearby Sitges. www.museudelferrocarril.org

9. Transportation Recommendations

Within the City

Public Transport: Barcelona has an excellent public transport network that integrates the metro system, buses, trams, local trains, cable cars and funiculars. Just about every place of interest to visitors can be reached by public transport (free with the Barcelona Card). The TMB (metropolitan transport authority) has a comprehensive website that provides route finders, timetables and other transport information in English: www.tmb.cat

Multi-journey fare cards are cheaper per ride than single-journey tickets. There are various types available at metro and train stations. A very good option is the T-10 card for 10 journeys in one zone. Changes are allowed between different forms of transport for the same journey up to 75 minutes. The T-10 can be used by several people at the same time; punch it for each person going through the turnstile. The T-10 for one zone is all you need for places within Barcelona. For out-of-town excursions, buy a specific round-trip ticket.

Disabled travelers: The TMB website (www.tmb.cat) has a metro map showing all stations that have wheelchair access. Buses are adapted for people with reduced mobility.



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Taxis: An affordable alternative to public transport. Barcelona taxis are black-and-yellow; a green light on top indicates availability. The Taxi Amic company has taxis adapted for disabled travelers. www.taxi-amic-adaptat.com

Barcelona Bus Turístic: A popular way to get to know the city – explore the sights at your own pace. With the same ticket you can use three different routes (intersecting at some points) with stops at more than 40 attractions in all. You can get off at any stop, visit a site, then catch the next Bus Turístic that comes along. The Blue Route (northern) and Red Route (southern) last about two hours each; the Green Route (coastal) takes about 40 minutes. To avoid long lines at the main Plaça Catalunya stop, try starting at one of the intermediate points instead. www.barcelonabusturistic.cat

Other Ways to Wheel Around Town

Barcelona by Bike: Many streets in Barcelona have bike lanes. Renting a bike is an enjoyable way to see the city. Budget Bikes offers rentals and tours. Four locations (three in city center and one in Barceloneta; this one also has scooters). www.budgetbikes.eu

Go Car Tours: Zip around in your own little yellow car. Your car becomes your personal tour guide. Good for two passengers. Located in front of Santa Caterina Market. www.gocartours.es/barcelona

Segway Tours: Guided tours on a Segway HT personal transportation device. Glide along while sightseeing. www.barcelonasegwayglides.com

Getting to Barcelona

By Plane: Numerous international and Spanish carriers offer flights to Barcelona. The airport at El Prat de Llobregat is just 12 km from the city. Transport into Barcelona is by Aerobus, train or taxi. www.barcelona-airport.com

By Train: Many international, national, and regional trains arrive daily at Estació Sants, the city's principal station. RENFE is the national rail system: www.renfe.es
An excellent site for information on train service: www.barcelona-tourist-guide.com

By Bus: The main bus station is Estació del Nord. Buses to Barcelona are usually cheaper than trains and there are extensive routes throughout Spain and Europe run by a variety of bus companies. www.barcelonanord.com

10. Things to Avoid/Safety

Thousands of people visit Barcelona each year without incident, but street crimes against tourists do occur. Here are a few tips to help you avoid theft.

Basic rule: Be alert, don't get distracted, and avoid people getting too close to you. Look out for pickpockets and purse snatchers in crowded tourist areas such as Plaça Catalunya, the Ramblas, and around the Picasso Museum and the Sagrada Família. Carry your shoulder bag in front with the strap around your neck. In restaurants, never hang your bag over the back of your chair, and don't leave it on the floor. Keep an eye on your cell phone.

Thieves often work in teams. One person distracts a victim while another performs the robbery. They use various distractions - wave a map at you and ask for directions, "accidentally" spill something on you, offer you a flower, ask you to sign a paper, etc. DON'T STOP - just walk away!



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Be alert when using the metro, including going up the escalators in the stations. If someone suddenly stumbles or bends down on the step right in front of you, this may be a scam to distract you. Watch out for your valuables as there may be an accomplice directly behind you. Be aware of potential pickpockets when you are rushing to board a metro car with other passengers crowding through the doors. And be careful when riding crowded buses serving tourist areas or the airport.

Carry limited cash and a photocopy of your passport page or ID, not the original. Leave your passport and other valuables in the hotel safe or other secure place. Keep a separate record of your credit card numbers, etc.

Be alert - and enjoy Barcelona. As in any big city, taking a few precautions can help you have a trouble-free visit.

11. Helpful Websites

www.bcnshop.barcelonaturisme.com

www.barcelona-tourist-guide.com

www.barcelonaconnect.com

www.secretsofbarcelona.com

www.barcelonayellow.com