

Hostelworld Guide for Barcelona



Ever since the Olympic Games were held in Barcelona in 1992, it has enjoyed a new lease of life. Since those games people have really begun to notice the Catalan capital. The mind-boggling thing is how it wasn't so popular beforehand? Thanks to one Antoni Gaudi, it is where you will find some of the world's most fascinating architecture. It is also where you will find Las Ramblas, one of the world's most vibrant strips. Oh, and then there's the nightlife, the shopping, the restaurants, the people... the list goes on.

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The Essentials

Getting There

By plane: Barcelona's airport is 12km from the city centre. The easiest way to get to the city centre is via train (station is between terminals 1 & 2). The train will bring you to Plaça de Catalunya and the journey takes approximately 30 minutes.

By train: If you are travelling to the Catalan capital your train will terminate in Estació Central-Sants, Plaça del Països Catalans, Barcelona's main train station.

By bus: Estació del Nord is the city's main bus terminal. It is just five minutes walk from the city centre and beside a metro station.

Getting Around

On foot: Using Plaça Catalunya as your focal point, Barcelona is easy to get around. From here you can reach Barcelona's best known areas and buildings.

By metro: Comprising of 5 lines, Barcelona's metro system is efficient and easy to use. Each line is a different number/colour.

By bus: Most bus routes run through the city centre and, in particular, through Plaça Catalunya.

By taxi: Taxis are black and yellow. You know they're free when they've a green light in the front.

Useful phrases

Hello: Hola
Goodbye: Adios
Please: Por favor
Thank you: Gracias
You're welcome: De nada
Yes: Si
No: No
Of course: De acuerdo
Excuse me: Perdona
How are you?: Como estas?
Open: Abierto
Closed: Cerrado
What is your name?: Cual es tu nombre?
My name is...: Mi nombre es...
How much?: Cuanto Cuesta?
May I have the bill?: Me puede traer la cuenta?

Climate

The beginning of the calendar year in Barcelona begins with a couple of chilly months, with temperatures hovering around 9°C-11°C. By March the days become far milder and in April the average temperature is approximately 15°C. Once summer arrives Barcelona becomes an extremely hot, clammy city and temperatures can stay at nearly 30°C for three months on end. It isn't until the following October that the days start to become cool again until winter finally returns. The wettest months are May, September and October.

Average Monthly Stats

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
C	9	9	11	13	16	20	23	23	21	17	12	10
MM	38	37	47	47	43	37	27	43	76	96	51	43
☀	5	6	6	7	8	9	10	9	7	6	5	4

C: Average Temp Centigrade
MM: Average Rainfall
☀: Average Hrs Sunshine

Useful Information

Language: Catalan, Spanish
Currency: Euro
Electricity: 220 Volts AC/50Hz. 2-pin plug.
Area Code: +34 (Spain), 093 (Barcelona)
Emergency Code: Ambulance 061, Fire 080, Police 091
Time Zone: Central European Time (GMT+1)
Central Post Office: Plaça d' Antoni Lopez
Main Tourist Office: Plaça de Catalunya

Consulates

USA: +34 (0)93 280 22 27
UK: +34 (0)93 366 62 00
Canada: +34 (0)93 204 27 00
Australia: +34 (0)93 490 90 13
South Africa: +34 (0)91 436 37 80*
Ireland: +34 (0)93 491 50 21
Germany: +34 (0)93 292 10 00
Italy: +34 (0)93 467 73 05
New Zealand: + 34 (0)93 209 03 99
France: +34 (0)93 270 30 00

*Embassy in Madrid

Cheap Eats

Travel Bar Port, Passeig de Colom 11, Barri Gotic If you're really broke, but still want a decent meal, locate this bar as it is where you will find the €1 meal. These are generally pasta and rice dishes and, and out of manners, it's expected that you buy a beer to wash it down with. It's good fun at night also. *Open daily from 9am-3am.*

Fresco, Ronda Universidad 29, El Raval Specialising in 'all-you-can-eat' buffets, Fresco is great value for money. You can choose from an wide range of salads, while if you're looking for something a bit more substantial you can stuff yourself with pizza and pasta to your heart's content. *Open daily from 12.30pm-1am.*

Bar del Pi, Plaça Sant Josep Oriol 1, Barri Gotic Even though the selection of tapas here is limited, this is one of Barcelona's most famous tapas bars. Most tapas are under €3 and if you're lucky a pianist will be tickling the ivory keys of the downstairs piano. *Open Mon-Sat 9am to 11pm; Sun 9am to 10pm.*

Organised Chaos



Can Paixano, C/de la Reina Cristina 7, Barceloneta Going for a bite to eat in this small champagne bar in La Barceloneta is extremely enjoyable but equally challenging. Specialising in cheap tapas and meat-filled bread rolls, hardly anything costs more than €3. Better still, they sell bottles of champagne for €4! Get down early. *Open daily from 9am-11pm.*

El Cafeto, Ronda de Sant Antoni 32, El Raval For a quick breakfast in nice surroundings you can't go wrong in this small eatery. For just €2.20 you can get a white coffee and a croissant/donut. They also do lunch combo specials for €5 along with a selection of tapas which can be ravished any time of day. *Open Mon-Sat from 8am-10pm.*

After Dark

Bosc de les Fades, Pasaje de la Banca, La Rambla If you've ever wanted to know what it would've been like to go out in Middle Earth you need to visit this unique drinking hole. In this bar tucked down a small alley at the bottom of Las Ramblas (look for the sign to the wax museum), it's not people you have to weave your way through, it's trees. Busy at the weekends, there is a good atmosphere here. *Open daily from 10am-1.30am.*

Bar Borneo, C/del Rec 49, El Born While there are many bars located in Barcelona's trendy El Born district, this one sticks out from the rest of the bunch. And like so many bars in the Catalonian capital it doesn't get going until after midnight. Once it does though, it attracts a cool clientele who enjoy laid back tunes while having a few beers. *Open Tues-Sat from 7pm-3am.*

Gay / Lesbian Barcelona

Barcelona doesn't have one sole gay area, but there are many bars and clubs frequented by its ever-growing gay community around L'Eixample and Gracia (north of Las Ramblas). **Dietrich** (C/Consell de Cent) hosts nightly drag shows, while **Punto BCN** (C/de Muntaner 63-65) is the oldest gay bar in L'Eixample. **Bahia** (C/de Seneca, 12) is the city's most popular bar among lesbians.

Bikini, C/deu i Mata 105, L'Eixample With three rooms to choose from, most people will find something to please them in one of Barcelona's biggest clubs. It has different themed nights also. BKN (the main room) is packed every night as thousands dance to the best tunes, while Arutanga is where you can get down to more traditional Spanish tunes. *Open Tues-Sun midnight-5.30am; admission charge.*

Bar Marsella, C/de Sant Pau 65, El Raval If you like absinthe then this is where to go. 80% of people who drink here have the toxic liqueur in front of them. If you like paint, however, you should steer clear. It looks like it hasn't seen a paintbrush in years. This only adds to its 'rustic charm' I suppose. *Open nightly from 10pm-2.30am.*

Cafe de l'Opera, Las Ramblas 74, La Rambla There are many places to enjoy a beer or coffee on Las Ramblas, but this one opposite the Liceu Opera House is the best of the bunch as there isn't a nicer place to people watch on Barcelona's famed strip. *Open daily from 8.30am-2am.*

Don't Miss

Camp Nou, Av. Aristides Maillol, La Zona Alta Home to Barça, one of the world's most famous football clubs, Camp Nou is an amazing football stadium. Whether you visit for a game or for the tour and museum, no visit is complete without going to it. *Museum open Mon-Sat 10am-6.30pm (8pm Apr-Oct), Sun 10am-2.30pm; admission €17.*

An Unfinished Masterpiece



La Sagrada Família, C/de Mallorca 401, L'Eixample Gaudi's most famous work is also Barcelona's #1 attraction. Ironically, the building isn't finished and Gaudi neither started nor finished building this temple. It is said that it will be completed in 2015. *Open daily from 9am-6pm (8pm Apr to Sept); admission €12.50.*

Museu Picasso, C/ de Montcada 15-23, Barri Gotic This museum is a key reference for understanding the years that shaped Picasso. It is home to over 3,800 works by the artist which range from rough sketches to some of his most celebrated paintings. *Open Tues-Sun 10am-8pm, closed Mon; admission €10.*

Casa Batlló/La Pedrera, Passeig de Gracia, L'Eixample Situated on the same avenue, these are two of Gaudi's most famous buildings. The former was described as 'a house of sea forms, representing waves on a stormy day' by Dali. The latter is where you will find the most photographed chimney tops in the world. *Open from 9am-8pm (La Pedrera to 6.30pm Nov-Feb); admissions vary.*

Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA), Plaça del Angels 1, El Raval Housing a fascinating collection of post-1940s contemporary art, MACBA is one of the city's newest museums. *Open Mon, Wed, Thurs, Fri 10am-7.30pm, closed Tue, Sat 10am-8pm, Sun 10am-3pm; admission €7.50.*

Mark Your Calendar

January - Festes del Tres Tombs To honour St Anthony, patron saint of domestic and carriage animals, hundreds of horsemen and carriages march down Ronda de Sant Antoni and Las Ramblas with various bands to accompany them.

February - Carnival If you're lucky enough to be in Barcelona in February you'll be treated to ten days of parades, parties and more.

March - Barcelona Marathon Athletes from all over the world travel to Barcelona to run in this 26 mile race. To keep up the spirits of the runners, the streets along the route are lined with street entertainers and musicians.

April - Dia de Sant Jordi Falling on April 23rd, Dia de Sant Jordi is like Catalunya's very own Valentine's Day. Men all over the city give women roses and in return they get, eh, a book. Charming.

June - Barcelona Pride Barcelona's annual gay festival is one of the biggest in Europe. For many the best part of the festival is the outlandish parade which marches through the city centre.

July - European Balloon Festival This hot-air balloon festival 50km inland from Barcelona in the town of Igualada is worth the trip to see over forty hot-air balloons soar into the sky.

August - Festa Major de Gracia The northern suburb of Gracia is the home to one of Barcelona's biggest festivals every August. Over the festival's seven days over one million people join in the festivities making it one not to miss.

September - Festes de la Merce This, the largest festival on the Catalonian capital, has been compared to Rio's carnival in the past! During the event parades march through the city streets while parties pulsate the squares.

September/October - Festa de la Barceloneta A real local affair, if you like the sound of partying on the beach you're guaranteed to enjoy yourself at this annual festival in the suburb of Barceloneta.

November - Barcelona Jazz Festival This annual festival is one of Europe's longest-running and attracts top jazz acts from both home and abroad.

December - Fira de Santa Llúcia A large Christmas market is set up at the cathedral for this festival which marks the beginning of Christmas.

Neighbourhood Watch

Barri Gotic It's easy to forget you are in a bustling city as you wander round the maze of streets that make up Barcelona's Gothic Quarter. Located on the east side of Las Ramblas, in the heart of the district is the city's cathedral, while other highlights include Plaça de Sant Jaume.

Montjuïc Referred to locally as a mountain, Montjuïc is more a hill. Meaning 'Hill of the Jews', it was named after a Jewish necropolis that once stood here. It is home to some of the city's top art attractions, most notably and Museu Nacional d'Art De Catalunya (Parc Montjuïc). Another popular attractions include the open-air Poble Espanyol (Spanish Village) and art gallery CaixaForum, both on Av. Marquès de Comillas.

Calling all night owls...



El Born While it isn't recognised officially as a neighbourhood in its own right (El Born is technically part of La Ribera), ask any local how to get here and they'll know exactly where you're looking for. They also might ask you if they can join you for a drink as it is to numerous bars. Its main drag is Passeig El Born and lined along both sides are bar after bar after bar.

L'Eixample This enormous neighbourhood north of Plaça de Catalunya is known for its grid-like layout and tree-lined avenues. Along these you will find stores belonging to the world's top designers and the city's top hotels. Its main artery is Passeig de Gracia which, along with Las Ramblas, is the best place for people watching in the city.

Gracia If you want to get away from the crowds for a number of hours jump on a train from Plaça de Catalunya bound for Gracia. Few tourists explore this part of northern Barcelona, leaving its bars and restaurants that line its narrow lanes to just you and the locals.

Retail Therapy

Las Ramblas If you're feeling a tad lonely on your travels, or your travel buddies are beginning to get under your skin, you may feel like you need a new companion. If so, this is where to find him/her. All along Las Ramblas there are stalls selling pigeons, cockerels, budgies - even lizards!

Mercat de Sant Antoni, Ronda de Sant Pau, El Raval Dating back to 1882, this market sells all kinds of everything. Stalls in one half sell clothes such as bikinis, ties and shoes while the other half is where you'll find foods of every colour and description. *Open Mon, Wed, Fri, Sat & Sun from 10am-8pm.*

Ave del Portal de l'Angel, La Rambla Thanks to stores such as Zara, Benetton and other well-known brands, this broad pedestrianised street is one of the most popular shopping streets in Barcelona's city centre. Running parallel to Las Ramblas, it begins at the eastern side of Plaça Catalunya.

Try not to get lost...



El Corte Inglés, Plaça de Catalunya, La Rambla Unquestionably Spain's most famous department store, you can find anything you want in Barcelona's flagship El Corte Inglés. There are seven floors to explore, and on them you will find pretty much anything you're looking for. This includes sports goods, books, clothes, CDs, stationary, perfume, electrical goods and more. *Open daily from 10am-10pm.*

C/de la PorlaFerrissa, Barri Gotic, Barri Gotci Something of a tale of two streets, this narrow pedestrianised street in the Barri Gotic has two distinct parts. On the Las Ramblas side you'll find all the high street brands that such as Jack & Jones, Body Shop, River Island and Mango, while at the other end it's a far more trendier affair. Here you'll find independently run stores which all house the latest fashions, from makeup to trainers to clothes.

Budget Tips

Buy a T-10 for public transport A single journey on Barcelona's metro/bus network costs €1.25. As you'll need to use some mode of transport at least three times, rather than paying for single journeys, buy a T-10 (ten journeys) for €6.90. It gives ten journeys for less than the price of six.

The Garden of Gaudi



Visit Parc Guell Located in the Gracia part of town, Parc Guell is Barcelona's most famous park. It has several trademark landmarks, such as the dragon at the entrance, the serpentine bench on the upper terrace, the Doric columns that support this, and much more. It also boasts breathtaking views of the city. *Open daily 10am-7pm; admission free.*

Visit Catedral de la Seu, Plaça de la Seu Found in the heart of the Barri Gotic, this cathedral was built between the 13th and 15th centuries, although the spire and façade weren't added until the late 19th century. While the interior of the cathedral is breathtaking, make sure to visit Capella de Lepanto in the same grounds where you'll find a pond of white geese. *Open daily from 8.30am-1.30pm & 4pm-7.30pm; admission free.*

Ramble along Las Ramblas One of Europe's most famous streets, there is something going on along the Ramblas twenty four hours a day. Pet stalls, flower sellers, human statues, buskers, magicians and other street entertainers make it one of the liveliest streets in the world.

Catch the light show 'Font Màgica de Montjuïc' This watershow at the fountain in Plaza Carles Buïgas in Montjuïc is truly unforgettable. The display of music, water acrobatics and lights generates over 50 kinds of shades and hues, to classical, pop and other types of music. *Spring & summer: Thurs-Sun 9pm-11pm; Autumn & Winter: Fri & Sat 7pm-9pm.*

A Day in Barcelona...



Begin your day at Barcelona's number one attraction, La Sagrada Família. The stroll through it is fascinating as you learn the story behind this unfinished temple.



Make your way to Passeig de Gracia to check out Casa Batlló and La Pedrera, two of Gaudi's most fascinating buildings.



Soak up the atmosphere along Las Ramblas! Walking towards the port, take a left up C/de la Boqueira, then another left up to Plaça de St Josep Oriol. Go for lunch in Bar del Pi.



Explore the atmospheric Barri Gotic. Try not to get lost in its labyrinthine streets. Check out Cathedral de la Seu, one of the most beautiful cathedrals in Western Europe.



Make your way back to Las Ramblas. Veer off into Plaça Reial, grab a coffee and admire Gaudi's lamposts.



Walk down to the waterfront, one of Barcelona's newest developments. This is where you will find the city's aquarium, IMAX theatre, plus endless shops and restaurants.



Not far from the waterfront (and Barceloneta metro station) is Can Paixano (see 'Cheap Eats'). Begin your night here with some cheap food and even cheaper champagne!



Things don't really get going until after midnight so before moving on to the liveliest bars, sip a bottle of wine with some friends in Plaça de Santa Maria del Mar.



Finish off the night bar hopping in the city's trendy 'El Born' district. Whether its cocktails or beers you're after, you'll find it here!