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# INTRODUCING BARCELONA



Feast on the work of Gaudí, the city's favourite son, at his quirky Modernista gem Casa Batlló (p107)

Sun-kissed and lapped by the Mediterranean, Barcelona is a dynamo where people work hard and play hard. A magnet for architecture buffs, foodies and night owls, it is a pleasure for all the senses.

Life pulsates at high pressure through the streets of this compact city. An economic powerhouse, 'Barna' displays a zest for life, artistic genius and sense of style few cities can rival. It also seems to be in a permanent state of self-renewal, its skyline constantly altering as neglected districts come in for their beauty treatment.

Barcelona's medieval boom period left it with one of Europe's most impressive Gothic legacies. Centuries later the Modernistas, led by Antoni Gaudí, cast an unparalleled whimsical Art Nouveau splash across the city. Today a phalanx of international design stars is adding to this impressive heritage with landmark 21st-century buildings.

In this cauldron of culinary activity, monument-gazing can create a substantial appetite. Traditional restaurants and alfresco seafood eateries rub shoulders with a new wave of designer dens run by the city's avant-garde chefs.

Barcelona's hedonistic streak infects everyone, from the voluble gents playing dominos at La Barceloneta's beaches to the gay body builders sun-worshipping nearby. Club sounds waft over the sand from waterfront chill-out lounges. At night students pack century-old taverns while fashionistas sip *caipirinhas* in designer cocktail bars before hitting the clubs.

## BARCELONA LIFE

With 1.59 million inhabitants (and 3.1 million more in the greater Barcelona area), Barcelona is Spain's second city. Compact and densely inhabited, it manages to exude both a metropolitan and small-town air. It has some enviable trump cards: a beautiful medieval core, the wacky delights of Modernista architecture and a sunny disposition.

The bulk of Barcelonins wouldn't live anywhere else. Many outsiders seem to agree – the city's resident foreign population tripled between 2000 and 2006. Tourism increases year on year, with 7.1 million visitors pouring in during 2007.

Some view this growth as a mixed blessing. Noise and drunkenness in the streets are unpleasant side effects, and prices are being pushed up. Everything from rent to eating out has risen sharply in recent years, and a study in early 2007 had Barcelona at number 31 in a list of the 143 most expensive cities in the world.

The city's leaders also promote Barcelona as a business, conference and research centre. Half the city's visitors are there on business and, by 2009, Barcelona will be second only to Milan in available trade-fair space in Europe.

Ordinary Barcelonins love their city but are aware of its shortcomings. They watched in disbelief as much of the city was left without power during a major blackout in August 2007 and the suburban train network descended into chaos, largely due to work on the long delayed AVE high-speed rail link with Madrid.

Sensitivity over regional identity is never far from Spanish political debates. As Prime Minister Zapatero tried to negotiate a more generous Catalan devolution statute in 2005–06 (see p31), the right-wing Partido Popular (PP) accused him of 'breaking up Spain'. In the run-up to the March 2008 national elections, the PP railed against the use of Catalan in Catalan schools.

In the end, the political sparring provides juice for lively chat in the bars – at the very least adding animation to an already animated city!



Soaking up the afternoon sun on Plaça Reial (p70)



# GETTING STARTED

Compact and easy to get around by public transport, Barcelona is geared to tourism and you will find plenty of information on all major tourist attractions. At the same time, it is full of mystery and invites you to spend long days of meandering and discovering. The monuments and museums, mainly concentrated in a relatively small area, could keep you busy for a week or more, but inevitably some of your time will be dedicated to simply hanging out in cafés, bars, eateries and at the beach. Consider setting aside a day or two for excursions (p244), most easily done by train. Consider booking hotels, sought-after restaurants and shows before leaving home (see p20). Take care on arrival, as petty crime directed at tourists laden with cameras and bags is, unfortunately, common.

## WHEN TO GO

Barcelona is a year-round destination, as ideal for a long weekend city break as for a six-month sabbatical. It is a good idea to time a trip with one eye on events and the other on the weather (see p271). Many associate Barcelona with the summer sun, but August can be a poor choice – the city broils and swarms with tourists as the locals disappear to more salubrious climes. It is certainly better to come around mid-June or September. If beach time is not a priority, you can easily find sunny (if chilly) weather and fewer crowds in January and February. You stand a good chance of striking rain from April to May and October through November.

## FESTIVALS

Whether it's being chased by fire-spitting demons or joining parades of giants, meandering through the decorated streets of Barcelona's *barris* (neighbourhoods) with beer in hand, or crowding into a mega-concert at the Fòrum, the city proffers a plethora of festivals. Many are steeped in colourful tradition, while others are modern affairs focused on concerts, theatre or sport. Some envelop the entire city; other lively local *festes* are limited to a particular *barri*. Events take place throughout much of the year, although there is more activity in the warmer months. For a list of official public holidays in Barcelona, see p274.

## January

### ANY NOU/AÑO NUEVO (NEW YEAR'S DAY)

Like Cap d'Any/Noche Vieja (New Year's Eve) anywhere, this occasion can create

but not always fulfil expectations. Many locals arrange parties in their homes as restaurants, bars and clubs fill to bursting and charge like wounded bulls. Rowdy folks also gather around Plaça de Catalunya.

### REIS/REYES

Epifania (Epiphany) on 6 January is also known as the Dia dels Reis Mags/Dia de los Reyes Magos (Three Kings' Day), or simply Reis/Reyes, perhaps the most important day on a Barcelona kid's calendar. According to tradition, this is when they receive gifts (although Christmas has made heavy inroads). The holiday itself is quiet, but on 5 January children delight in the Cavalcada dels Reis Mags (Parade of the Three Kings), a colourful parade of floats and music.

### FESTES DELS TRES TOMBS

A key part of the festival of Sant Antoni Abat, the patron saint of domestic and carriage animals, is this Feast of the Three Circuits, a parade of horse-drawn carts in the Eixample near the Mercat de Sant Antoni every 17 January.

## February

### BARCELONA VISUALSOUND

[www.barcelonavisualsound.org](http://www.barcelonavisualsound.org), in Catalan  
This 10-day festival brings together audiovisual creators in a celebration of emerging stars in the making of anything from video to multimedia art.

### BARNASANTS

Each year the city's main live-music venues host a bevy of Spanish and Latin American

singer-songwriters for concerts spread over a period from the end of January until about mid-March.

### CARNESTOLTES/CARNAVAL

Celebrated in February or March, this festival involves several days of fancy-dress parades and merrymaking, ending on the Tuesday 47 days before Easter Sunday. The *Gran Rua* (Grand Parade) takes place on the Saturday evening from 5.30pm. Down in Sitges (p255) a much wilder version takes place. The gay community stages gaudy parades and party-goers keep the bars and clubs heaving for several days running.

### FESTES DE SANTA EULÀLIA

[www.bcn.cat/santaaulalia](http://www.bcn.cat/santaaulalia)  
Coinciding roughly with Carnival, this is the feast of Barcelona's first patron saint, Eulàlia (or 'la Laia' for short). The Ajuntament (town hall) organises a week of cultural events, from concerts through to performances by *castellers* (human-castle builders; see p227).

### FESTIVAL DE JAZZ

[www.jazzterrasa.org](http://www.jazzterrasa.org), in Catalan  
A major season of jazz concerts from mid-February to mid-March in the nearby city of Terrassa.

## March & April

### DIVENDRES SANT/VIERNES SANTO (GOOD FRIDAY)

Transport yourself to southern Spain with the Easter processions from the Església de Sant Agustí in El Raval on Good Friday. They start at 5pm and end in front of La Catedral three hours later.

### RALLI BARCELONA-SITGES

[www.rallyesitges.com](http://www.rallyesitges.com)  
Dozens of classic cars converge on Barcelona towards the end of March for this annual rally. You can see the cars on show on the Saturday morning in Plaça de Sant Jaume, or position yourself on the route here or in Sitges.

### DIA DE SANT JORDI

Catalonia celebrates the feast of its patron saint, St George, on 23 April. At the same time, the Dia del Llibre (Day of the Book)

is observed – men give women a rose, women give men a book, publishers launch new titles and La Rambla and Plaça de Sant Jaume fill with book and flower stalls.

### FERIA DE ABRIL DE CATALUNYA

Andalucía comes to town with this traditional southern festival staged by and for the city's big Andalusian population. It lasts for about a week from late April and has recently been held in the Fòrum.

### FESTIVAL DE MÚSICA ANTIGA DE BARCELONA

[www.auditori.com](http://www.auditori.com)

A month-long festival of ancient music, which reaches back centuries and across cultures to create a varied series of concerts at l'Auditori.

## May

### L'OU COM BALLA

A curious tradition, the 'Dancing Egg' is an empty shell that bobs on top of the flower-festooned fountain in the cloister of La Catedral. This spectacle is Barcelona's way of celebrating Corpus Christi (the Thursday following the eighth Sunday after Easter Sunday).

### FESTA DE SANT PONÇ

To commemorate the patron saint of beekeepers and herbalists, locals fill Carrer de l'Hospital in El Raval on 11 May with the chatter and bustle of a street market.

### PRIMAVERA SOUND

[www.primaverasound.com](http://www.primaverasound.com)  
For three days in late May (or early June) the Auditori Fòrum and other locations around town a host of international DJs and musicians.

### FESTIVAL DE FLAMENCO DE CIUTAT VELLA

[www.tallerdemusics.com](http://www.tallerdemusics.com)

One of the best occasions to see great flamenco in Barcelona, this festival is held over four days at the CCCB (p80). In the district of Nou Barris, a smaller three-day festival is usually held around the middle of the month in a local civic centre. Keep your eyes open for flyers.



## June

### SÓNAR

[www.sonar.es](http://www.sonar.es)

Sónar is Barcelona's celebration of electronic music and is said to be Europe's biggest such event. Locations and dates change each year.

### DE CAJÓN FESTIVAL FLAMENCO

[www.theproject.es](http://www.theproject.es)

A major flamenco fest running for a week in June and early July in one of the city's major venues.

### FESTIVAL DEL GREC

[www.barcelonafestival.com](http://www.barcelonafestival.com), in Catalan

This eclectic programme of theatre, dance and music runs for most of the summer. Performances are held all over the city, including at the **Teatre Grec** (Map pp140–1; Passeig de Santa Madrona; M Espanya) amphitheatre on Montjuïc from which the festival takes its name.

### DIA DE SANT JOAN/DÍA DE SAN JUAN BAUTISTA

The night before the Feast of St John the Baptist (24 June), the people of Barcelona hit the streets or hold parties at home to celebrate the Berben de Sant Joan (St John's Night), which involves drinking, dancing, bonfires and fireworks.

### DIA PER L'ALLIBERAMENT LESBIÀ I GAI

Día del Orgullo Gay (Gay Pride Day) celebrations take place on the Saturday nearest 28 June and are a boisterous affair, centering on a demonstration and party on Plaça de l'Universitat. Various organisations (including the Arena clubs, p205) are planning a more ambitious event for celebrations in 2009 and beyond.

## July

### SUMMERCASE

[www.summertime.com](http://www.summertime.com)

Since 2006 this weekend music festival in mid-July has drawn huge crowds for top contemporary acts (among those in 2008 were M.I.A., Primal Scream, Blondie and, in revival, The Stranglers) to the Parc del Fòrum.

## August

### FESTA MAJOR DE GRÀCIA

[www.festamajordegracia.org](http://www.festamajordegracia.org), in Catalan

This local festival, which takes place over about nine days around 15 August, is one of the biggest in Barcelona. More than a dozen streets in Gràcia are decorated by their inhabitants as part of a competition for the most imaginative street. People pour in to listen to bands in the streets and squares, fuel on snacks and drink at countless street stands.

### FESTA MAJOR DE SANTS

The district of Sants launches its own week-long version of decorated mayhem, held around 24 August, hard on the heels of Gràcia.

### FESTES DE SANT ROC

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

## September

### DIADA NACIONAL DE CATALUNYA

Catalonia's national day commemorates, curiously, Barcelona's surrender on 11 September 1714 to the Bourbon monarchy of Spain, at the conclusion of the War of the Spanish Succession (see p21).

### FESTES DE LA MERCÈ

[www.bcn.cat/merce](http://www.bcn.cat/merce)

This four-day fest sparks a final burst of pre-winter madness. Nostra Senyora de la Mercè (Our Lady of Mercy), Barcelona's co-patron saint, is celebrated in the city's *fiesta major*. There's a swimming race across the harbour, a fun run, outstanding free concerts (such as Barcelona Acció Musica, or BAM; [www.bcn.cat/bam](http://www.bcn.cat/bam)) and a bewildering programme of cultural events. Adding to the local colour are all the ingredients of a major Catalan *fiesta*: *castellers*, *sardanes* (traditional Catalan folk dancing), parades of *gegants* and *capgrossos* (giants and big heads), and a huge *correfoc*.

### WEEKEND DANCE

[www.weekenddance.es](http://www.weekenddance.es)

This two-city dance-music festival takes place over a weekend in Madrid and

## POO-POOING CHRISTMAS

A Catalan Christmas wouldn't be the same without the *pessebres* (nativity scenes). A giant one is set up in Plaça de Sant Jaume and you can see a display of them in an annex of the **Església de Betlem** (p61). These cribs are common throughout the Catholic world, particularly in the Mediterranean.

What makes them different here is the scatological presence – along with the baby Jesus, Mary, Joseph and the three kings – of the *caganer* (crapper), a chap who has dropped his pants and is doing number twos (a symbol of fertility for the coming year).

On a similar note, the *caga tió* (poop log) is a wooden beast that 'lives' in the kitchen or dining room in the run-up to Christmas and has to be 'fed' (traditionally things like dry bread and water) so that on Christmas Day it will *cagar* (shit) gifts. Once, the gifts were sweets. In some families they tend to be more substantial nowadays.

The whole thing developed from a country tradition of placing a huge *tió* (tree trunk) in the fireplace – its gifts in the misty past were simply the benefits of heat and light. Somewhere along the line the story became more, shall we say, sophisticated. You can buy your own *caganers* and let kids have a go hitting a *caga tió* with a stick to get a present at the Fira de Santa Llúcia, a Christmas market in front of La Catedral, in the weeks leading up to Christmas.

Barcelona's Parc Fòrum. Half the bands play each in one city the first night and swap over for the other.

### MOSTRA DE VINS I CAVES DE CATALUNYA

An excellent chance to taste a wide range of Catalan wine and *cava*, this expo is usually held at Maremàgnum (p92) over four days towards the end of September.

### FESTA MAJOR DE LA BARCELONETA

Barcelona's party-goers usually have only a short wait until the next opportunity for merrymaking. Although on a small scale, La Barceloneta's gig, to celebrate the local patron saint, Sant Miquel, on 29 September, lasts about a week and involves plenty of dancing and drinking (especially on the beach).

## October

### FESTIVAL DE TARDOR

[www.ribermusica.org](http://www.ribermusica.org), in Catalan

Four days of live music, workshops and more in bars and other locations around La Ribera.

### FESTIVAL DE CINE ERÓTICO

[www.ficeb.com](http://www.ficeb.com)

One of Europe's biggest porn-film fairs takes place in L'Hospitalet de Llobregat, between Barcelona and El Prat airport, over about five days during early October. Whatever you make of this business, there's no doubting it attracts a lot of attention!

## November

### FESTIVAL INTERNACIONAL DE JAZZ DE BARCELONA

[www.theproject.es](http://www.theproject.es)

For most of the month, the big venues (from the Auditori down) across town host a plethora of international jazz acts. At the same time, a more home-spun jazz fest takes place for about a month in bars across Ciutat Vella.

## December

### NADAL/NAVIDAD (CHRISTMAS)

Catalans tend to have their main Christmas dinner on Christmas Eve, although many have a big lunch the following day. An odd event to mark the occasion is the annual (freezing) 200m swimming dash from Maremàgnum to the Moll de les Drassanes.

### PRIMAVERA CLUB

[www.primaverasound.com](http://www.primaverasound.com)

The winter equivalent of Primavera Sound in May (p17).

## COSTS & MONEY

A 2008 study showed that Barcelona had, in one year, shot from 56th to 31st in a ranking of more than 100 cities by expense. A mid-range hotel double room can cost anything from €70 to €250, and a midrange dinner averages €21 to €70. On the other hand, simple, filling set lunchtime meals cost around €10. Many museums have free admission days (see the Neighbourhoods chapter, p94). Staying in

a modest hotel, sticking to set lunches and dining out well (but without splurging), you can bargain on spending €100 to €150 a day. Those on a strict budget, who stay in hostel dorms and survive on *entrepans* (filled rolls) or make up their own meals, should be able to get by on about €50 to €60 a day.

## INTERNET RESOURCES

The following sites will get you started on a virtual research tour of Barcelona:

**Barcelona** ([www.bcn.cat](http://www.bcn.cat)) The Town Hall's official website, with plenty of links.

**Barcelona in Progress** (<http://bcnip.blogspot.com>, in Spanish) A blog that captures swathes of news on Barcelona.

**Barcelona Turisme** ([www.barcelonaturisme.com](http://www.barcelonaturisme.com)) The city's official tourism website.

**Barcelonareporter.com** ([www.barcelonareporter.com](http://www.barcelonareporter.com)) An English language news site.

**BCN Nightlife** ([www.bcn-nightlife.com](http://www.bcn-nightlife.com)) Info on bars, clubs and parties across town.

**Le Cool** (<http://lecool.com>) A free weekly guide to what's happening in Barcelona (and other cities).

**Lonely Planet** ([www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com))

**Ruta del Modernisme** ([www.rutadelmodernisme.com](http://www.rutadelmodernisme.com)) The site that covers Barcelona's Modernista heritage, sites, events and more.

## SUSTAINABLE BARCELONA

Water shortages are a problem throughout Spain. A severe drought in the past years has left Catalan dams at a low ebb and, in 2008, Barcelona began to import boatloads of water from as far off as Almería (southern Spain) and Marseille (France). Heavy rains in May alleviated the situation but water waste remains an issue. You can do your part, for

### ADVANCE PLANNING

You might want to book a few things in advance. Many of the more popular hotels fill up fast, especially during trade fairs. To know which dates to avoid, check the trade-fair calendar at [www.firabcn.com](http://www.firabcn.com).

If you are keen to eat in certain restaurants, book a table (by phone) to avoid disappointment on arrival. Similarly, those planning a night at the opera or similar outings should consider booking through the venues' websites or ticketing agencies like: **Tel-Entrada** ([www.telentrada.com](http://www.telentrada.com)); **ServiCaixa** ([www.servicaixa.com](http://www.servicaixa.com)); **Tick Tack Ticket** ([www.ticktackticket.com](http://www.ticktackticket.com)); and **El Corte Inglés** ([www.elcorteingles.es/entradas](http://www.elcorteingles.es/entradas), in Spanish).

example, by not sending off towels for washing each day in your hotel and making sure you don't litter in the streets (a problem that has led to the hosing down of the city every night).

Air pollution is a problem (see p43) and driving around Barcelona is impractical anyway, so consider using public transport (most buses run on gas). Bike hire is an option but the introduction of a system of bicycles as public transport, the exponential explosion of bike tour companies and the wholly inadequate network of bike lanes can make getting around by bike frustrating for cyclists, pedestrians and drivers alike!

Instead of flying to Barcelona, consider lengthening your trip and travel there by train. Direct overnight sleepers run from Paris, Geneva and Milan. From London you could start with the Eurostar and spend a day in Paris en route.

In 2008 Catalonia and 23 other European regions (including Tuscany and Provence) formed a sustainable tourism network aimed at rendering tourism compatible with the environment, local quality of life and maintenance of local traditions.

# THE AUTHOR

## Damien Simonis



In 1990, during a continental foray from a rain-sodden London, Damien found himself in pre-Olympics Barcelona. He had never before set foot in Spain. What was it about this town? The crowded produce markets, the dimly-

lit *colmados* (treasure caverns of all sorts of weird and wonderful foods), the noisy terraces where chatter mixed so easily with wine, the Gaudí colours, the mysterious narrow lanes of the Barri Gòtic, the seaside? Perhaps it was all this and some unifying, undefinable quality that got under his skin. Eight years later Damien turned up in a Rambla-side *pensión* on assignment for Lonely Planet and that old magic started flowing again. A chat in a bar and he had scored a room in a top-floor flat in Gran Via. Barcelona was for years a second home and is now our restless correspondent's main base.

### DAMIEN'S TOP BARCELONA DAY

A great way to kick-start the day is with everyone else, leaning up against a bar over a *café amb llet* (coffee with milk), an orange juice and a pastry (preferably something nice

and creamy like a *canya*). A quick read of the paper to find out where we stand on the latest round of squabbling over Catalan autonomy and FC Barcelona's results and it's time to hit the streets.

There are few monuments in the world like La Sagrada Família (p104), not only for its uniqueness but because it is one of the few where you never quite know what it will look like each time you pass by! A visit to the Museu Picasso (p83) or the CaixaForum (p142) to catch the latest temporary art exhibition takes care of the day's artistic nourishment.

Lunch beckons. I head into the narrow lanes of La Barceloneta for a slap-up meal of fish or finger-licking *mariscos* (seafood; p178). The choice of area has a double purpose, for what's a day in Barcelona without a couple of hours lazing on the beach? I then like to wander back through El Born, poking my nose into cheese and sweet shops, lingering for a glass of wine at La Vinya del Senyor (p202) and working north to the Mercat de Santa Caterina (p87). A little gourmet shopping here and off home for a late siesta before heading out again into the night.

First an elegant meal in one of the many gems scattered across the grid maze of l'Eixample. From there, it's a short taxi ride into the heart of the Barri Gòtic for some jazz at the Harlem (p200). If the spirit is willing, another taxi whisks us up into La Zona Alta for a dance at Sutton the Club (p212). As dawn breaks, it is a short and somewhat dazed stroll home.

### LONELY PLANET AUTHORS

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# BACKGROUND

## HISTORY

### SIGNS FROM THE DISTANT PAST

The area around present-day Barcelona was certainly inhabited prior to the arrival of the Romans in Catalonia in 218 BC. By whom, and whether or not there was an urban nucleus, is open to debate.

Pre-Roman coins found in the area suggest the Iberian Laietani tribe may have settled here. As far back as 35,000 BC, the tribe's Stone Age predecessors had roamed the Pyrenees and begun to descend into the lowlands to the south. In 1991 the remains of 25 corpses were found in Carrer de Sant Pau in El Raval – they had been buried around 4000 BC. It has been speculated that, in those days, much of El Raval was a bay and that the hillock (Mont Tàber) next to Plaça de Sant Jaume may have been home to a Neolithic settlement.

Other evidence hints at a settlement established around 230 BC by the Carthaginian conqueror (and father of Hannibal), Hamilcar Barca. It is tempting to see in his name the roots of the city's own name. Some archaeologists believe that any pre-Roman town must have been built on the hill of Montjuïc.

### ROMANS, VISIGOTHS & ISLAM

The heart of the Roman settlement of Barcino (much later Barcelona) lay within what would later become the medieval city – now known as the Barri Gòtic. The temple was raised on Mont Tàber. Remains of city walls, temple pillars and graves all attest to what would eventually become a busy and lively town. Barcino was not a major centre, however. Tarraco (Tarragona) to the southwest and the one-time Greek trading centre of Emporion (Empúries) to the north were more important. The Latin poet Ausonius, however, paints a picture of contented prosperity – Barcino (founded in the reign of Caesar Augustus) lived well off the agricultural produce in its hinterland and from fishing. Oysters, in particular, appeared regularly on the Roman menu in ancient times. Wine, olive oil and *garum* (a rather tart fish paste and favourite staple of the Romans) were all produced and consumed in abundance.

As the Roman Empire wobbled, Hispania (as the Iberian Peninsula was known to the Romans) felt the effects. It is no coincidence that the bulk of Barcelona's Roman walls, vestiges of which remain today, went up in the 4th century AD. Marauding Franks had visited a little death and destruction on the city in a prelude to what was to come – several waves of invaders flooded across the country like great Atlantic rollers. By 415 the comparatively Romanised Visigoths had arrived and, under their leader Athaulf (a narrow lane in the Barri Gòtic is named after him), made a temporary capital in Barcino before moving on to Toletum (Toledo) in the 6th century. In the wake of their departure, the town and surrounding territory was left largely lawless. As various epidemics struck, local revolts against weak Visigothic rule were frequent.

In 711 the Muslim general Tariq landed an expeditionary force at present-day Gibraltar (Arabic for Tariq's Mountain). He had no trouble sweeping across the peninsula all the way

c 4000 BC

Jasper implements discovered around Carrer del Paradís indicate that a Neolithic settlement may have thrived around the present-day Plaça de Sant Jaume at this time.

218 BC

In a move to block supplies to the Carthaginian general Hannibal, waging war against Rome in Italy itself, Roman troops under Scipio land at Empúries, found Tarraco (Tarragona) and take control of the Catalan coast.

15 BC

Caesar Augustus grants the town of Barcino, possibly established under his auspices, the rather long-winded title of Colonia Julia Augusta Faventia Paterna Barcino.

into France, where he and his army were only brought to a halt in 732 by the Franks at Poitiers.

Barcelona fell under Muslim sway but they seem not to have been overly impressed with their prize. The town is mentioned in Arabic chronicles but it seems the Muslims resigned themselves early on to setting up a defensive line along the Riu Ebro to the south. Louis the Pious, the future Frankish ruler, retook Barcelona from them in 801.

The *comtes* (counts) installed here as Louis' lieutenants hailed from local tribes roaming on the periphery of the Frankish empire. Barcelona was a frontier town in what was known as the Frankish or Spanish March – a rough-and-ready buffer zone south of the Pyrenees.

## A HAIRY BEGINNING

The plains and mountains to the northwest and north of Barcelona were populated by the people who by then could be identified as 'Catalans' (although surviving documentary references to the term only date from the 12th century). Catalan, the language of these people, was closely related to the *langue d'oc*, the post-Latin lingua franca of southern France (of which Provençal is about the only barely surviving reminder).

The March was under nominal Frankish control but the real power lay with local potentates (themselves often of Frankish origin, however) who ranged across the territory. One of these rulers went by the curious name of Guifré el Pelós, or Wilfred the Hairy. This was not a reference to uneven shaving habits: according to legend, old Guifré had hair in parts most people do not (exactly which parts was never specified!). He and his brothers gained control of most of the Catalan counties by 878 and Guifré entered the folk mythology of Catalonia. If Catalonia can be called a nation, then its 'father' was the hirsute Guifré.

Guifré and his immediate successors continued, at least in name, to be vassals of the Franks. In reality, his position as 'Comte de Barcelona' (Count of Barcelona; even today many refer to Barcelona as the *ciutat comtal*, or city of counts) was assured in his own right.

# top picks

## BOOKS ON THE HISTORY OF BARCELONA

- **Barcelona** (Robert Hughes; 1992) A witty and passionate study of the art and architecture of the city through history. It is neither flouncing artistic criticism nor dry history, rather a distillation of the life of the city and people and an assessment of its expression. He followed up with the briefer, more personal *Barcelona the Great Enchantress* in 2004.
- **Barcelona – A Thousand Years of the City's Past** (Felipe Fernández-Armesto; 1991) A fascinating history of the city from medieval days to the 20th century, organised not in chronological order but rather by themes such as Barcelona and the Sea and Barcelona and Europe.
- **Homage to Barcelona** (Colm Tóibín; 1990) An excellent personal introduction to the city's pre-Olympic life and artistic and political history by an Irish writer who lived there.
- **Homage to Catalonia** (George Orwell; 1938) Orwell's classic account of the first half of the 1936–39 Spanish Civil War as he lived it in Barcelona and on the front line in Catalonia, moving from the euphoria of the early days in Barcelona to disillusionment with the disastrous fighting on the Republican side.
- **Historia de Barcelona** (María Pomés & Alicia Sánchez; 2001) Spanish readers will appreciate this straightforward, chronological account of the city, which presents plenty of curious social history alongside the usual political events.

## THE COMTES DE BARCELONA

By the late 10th century, the Casal de Barcelona (House of Barcelona) was the senior of several counties (whose leaders were all related by family ties) that would soon be a single, independent principality covering most of modern Catalonia except the south, plus Roussillon (today in France).

This was the only Iberian Christian 'state' not to fall under the sway of Sancho III of Navarra in the early 11th century. The failure of the Franks to come to Barcelona's aid when it was plundered by the Muslims under Al-Mansur in 985 led the counts to reject Frankish suzerainty. So a new entity – Catalonia – acquired tacit recognition across Europe.

Count Ramon Berenguer I was able to buy the counties of Carcassonne and Béziers, north of Roussillon, and Barcelona would maintain ambitions in France for two more centuries – at one point it held territory as far east as Provence. Under Ramon Berenguer III (1082–1131), sea trade developed and Catalonia launched its own fleet.

A system of feudal government and law evolved that had little to do with the more centralised and absolutist models that would emerge in subsequent centuries in Castilla, reconquered from the Muslims. A hotchpotch of Roman-Visigothic laws combined with emerging feudal practice found its way into the written bill of rights called the 'Usatges de Barcelona' from around 1060.

Justice in those days was a little rough by modern standards: '...let them (the rulers) render justice as it seems fit to them: by cutting off hands and feet, putting out eyes, keeping men in prison for a long time and, ultimately, in hanging their bodies if necessary.' Was there an element of misogyny in the Usatges? 'In regard to women, let the rulers render justice by cutting off their noses, lips, ears and breasts, and by burning them at the stake if necessary...'

## MARRIAGE OF CONVENIENCE?

In 1137 Ramon Berenguer IV clinched what must have seemed an unbeatable deal. He was betrothed to Petronilla, the one-year-old heiress to the throne of Catalonia's western neighbour Aragón, thus creating a joint state that set the scene for Catalonia's golden age.

This state, known as the Corona de Aragón (Crown of Aragon), was ruled by *comtes-reis* (count-kings, ie counts of Barcelona and kings of Aragón). The title enshrined the continued separateness of the two states, and both retained many of their own laws. The arrangement was to have unexpected consequences as it tied Catalonia to the destiny of the rest of the peninsula in a way that ultimately would not appeal to many Catalans. In the meantime, however, the combined state had the critical mass needed for expansion. Curiously, while the bulk of the following centuries' conquests and trade would be carried out by the Catalans from Barcelona, the name Catalonia would be largely subsumed into that of Aragón. After all, the counts of Barcelona were from hereon the kings of Aragón. Strictly speaking, there never was a Catalan kingdom.

## MEDITERRANEAN EMPIRE

Not content to leave all the glory of the Reconquista to the Castilians, Jaume I (r 1213–76) set about his own spectacular missions. At only 21 years of age, he set off in 1229 with fleets

AD 415

Visigoths under Athaulf, with captured Roman empress Galla Placidia as his wife, make Barcino their capital. With several interruptions, it remains so until the Visigoths move to Toledo (central Spain) in the 6th century.

718

Only seven years after the Muslim invasion of Spain launched from Morocco at Gibraltar, Barcelona falls to Tariq's mostly Arab and Berber troops on their blitzkrieg march north into France.

801

After a year-long siege, the son of Charlemagne and future Frankish king Louis the Pious, wrests Barcelona from Muslims and establishes the Spanish March under local counts.

985

Al-Mansur (the Victorious) rampages across Catalan territory and devastates Barcelona in a lightning campaign. The city is largely razed and much of its population marched off as slaves to Córdoba.

1137

Count Ramon Berenguer IV is betrothed to one-year-old Petronilla, daughter of the king of Aragón, creating a new combined state that would be known as the Corona de Aragón.

1225–29

At 18 years old, Jaume I takes command of the realm and four years later he conquers Muslim-held Mallorca, the first of several dazzling conquests that lead him to be called El Conqueridor (the Conqueror).



from Tarragona, Barcelona, Marseilles and other ports. His objective was Mallorca, which he won. Six years later he had Ibiza and Formentera. Things were going so well that, prodded by the Aragonese, for good measure he took control of Valencia (on the mainland) too. This was no easy task and was only completed in 1248 after 16 years of grinding conquest. Still, it would be hard to begrudge the tireless king his sobriquet of El Conqueridor (The Conqueror). All this activity helped fuel a boom in Barcelona and Jaume raised new walls that increased the size of the enclosed city tenfold.

The empire-building shifted into top gear in the 1280s. Jaume I's son Pere II (1240–85) took Sicily in 1282. The easternmost part of the Balearics, Menorca, fell to Alfons II in 1287 after prolonged blood-letting. Most of its people were killed or enslaved and the island remained largely deserted throughout its occupation. Malta, Gozo and Athens were also briefly taken. A half-hearted attempt was made on Corsica but the most determined and ultimately fruitless assault began on Sardinia in 1323. The island became the Corona de Aragón's Vietnam.

In spite of the carnage and the expense of war, this was Barcelona's golden age. It was the base for what was now a thriving mercantile empire and the western Mediterranean was virtually a Catalan lake.

## THE RISE OF PARLIAMENT

The rulers of the Casal de Barcelona and then the *comtes-reis* of the Corona de Aragón had a habit of regularly making themselves absent from Barcelona. Initially, local city administration was in the hands of a viscount, but in the course of the 12th and 13th centuries local power began to shift.

In 1249 Jaume I authorised the election of a committee of key citizens to advise his officials. The idea developed and, by 1274, the Consell dels Cent Jurats (Council of the Hundred Sworn-In) formed an electoral college from which an executive body of five *consellers* (councillors) was nominated to run city affairs.

In 1283 the Corts Catalanes met for the first time. This new legislative council for Catalonia (equivalent bodies sat in Aragón and Valencia) was made up of representatives of the nobility, clergy and high-class merchants to form a counterweight to regal power. The Corts Catalanes met at first annually, then every three years, but had a permanent secretariat known as the Diputació del General or Generalitat. Its home was, and remains, the Palau de la Generalitat.

The Corts and Council increased their leverage as trade grew and their respective roles in raising taxes and distributing wealth became more important. As the *comtes-reis* required money to organise wars and other enterprises, they increasingly relied on impresarios who were best represented through these two oligarchic bodies.

Meanwhile, Barcelona's trading wealth paid for the great Gothic buildings that bejewel the city to this day. [La Catedral](#) (p61), the [Capella Reial de Santa Àgata](#) (p68) and the churches of [Santa Maria del Pi](#) (p70) and [Santa Maria del Mar](#) (p83) were all built within the city's boundaries during the late 13th or early 14th centuries. King Pere III (1336–87) later created the breathtaking [Reials Drassanes](#) (Royal Shipyards; p78) and also extended the city walls yet again, this time to include the El Raval area to the west.

## DECLINE & CASTILIAN DOMINATION

Preserving the empire began to exhaust Catalonia. Sea wars with Genoa, resistance in Sardinia, the rise of the Ottoman Empire and the loss of the gold trade all drained the city's coffers. Commerce collapsed. The Black Death and famines killed about half of Catalonia's population in the 14th century. Barcelona's Jewish population suffered a pogrom in 1391.

After the last of Guifré el Pelós' dynasty, Martí I, died heirless in 1410, a stacked council elected Fernando (known as Ferran to the Catalans) de Antequera, a Castilian prince of the Trastámara house, to the Aragonese throne. This Compromiso de Caspe (Caspe Agreement) of 1412 was engineered by the Aragonese nobility, which saw it as a chance to reduce Catalan influence.

Another Ferran succeeded to the Aragonese throne in 1479 and his marriage to Isabel, queen of Castilla, united Spain's two most powerful monarchies. Just as Catalonia had been hitched to Aragón, now the combine was hitched to Castilla.

Catalonia effectively became part of the Castilian state, although it jealously guarded its own institutions and system of law. Rather than attack this problem head on, Fernando and Isabel sidestepped it, introducing the hated Spanish Inquisition to Barcelona in 1487 (a local, milder version of the Inquisition had operated on Catalan territory since 1242, with headquarters in the Palau Episcopal – see p67). The local citizenry implored them not to do so as what was left of business life in the city lay largely in the hands of *conversos* (Jews at least nominally converted to Christianity) who were a particular target of Inquisitorial attention. The pleas were ignored and the *conversos* packed their bags and shipped out their money. Barcelona was reduced to penury. Fernando and Isabel's successors, the Habsburg Holy Roman Emperor Carlos V (Carlos I of Spain), and his son, Felipe II, tightened Madrid's grip on Catalonia, although the region long managed to retain a degree of autonomy.

Impoverished and disaffected by ever-growing financial demands from the crown, Catalonia revolted in the 17th century in the Guerra dels Segadors (Reapers' War; 1640–52) and declared itself to be an independent 'republic' under French protection. The countryside and towns were devastated, and Barcelona was finally besieged into submission.

## WAR OF THE SPANISH SUCCESSION

By the beginning of the 18th century Spain was on the skids. The last of the Habsburgs, Carlos II, died in 1700 with no successor. France imposed a Bourbon, the absolutist Felipe V, but the Catalans preferred the Austrian candidate, Archduke Carlos, and threw in their lot with England, Holland, some German states, Portugal and the House of Savoy to back Austria. In 1702, the War of the Spanish Succession broke out. Catalans thought they were onto a winner. They were wrong and in 1713 the Treaty of Utrecht left Felipe V in charge in Madrid. Abandoned by its allies, Barcelona decided to resist. The siege began in March 1713 and ended on 11 September 1714.

There were no half measures. Felipe V abolished the Generalitat, built a huge fort (the Ciutadella) to watch over Barcelona, and banned writing and teaching in Catalan. What was left of Catalonia's possessions were farmed out to the great powers.

1283

The Corts Catalanes, a legislative council for Catalonia, meets for the first time and begins to curtail unlimited powers of sovereigns in favour of the nobles and powerful trading class in the cities.

1323

Catalan forces land in Sardinia and launch a campaign of conquest that would only end in 1409. Their most fierce enemy was Eleonora de Arborea, a Sardinian Joan of Arc. Sporadic revolts continue until 1478.

1348

An outbreak of plague devastates Barcelona. Two-thirds of the city's population may have died. Further waves of the Black Death, a plague of locusts in 1358 and an earthquake in 1373 deal further blows.

1670

Barcelona's first bullfights are held for the Viceroy, the Duke of Osuña, in the Pla del Palau. Fourteen bulls succumb to the toreros in an activity that would become popular in the 19th century.

1714

Barcelona loses all autonomy after surrendering to the Bourbon king, Felipe V, on 11 September at the end of the War of the Spanish Succession.

1770

A hurricane strikes Barcelona, causing considerable damage. Among other things, the winds destroy more than 200 of the city's 1500 gaslight street lamps.

## A NEW BOOM

After the initial shock, Barcelona found the Bourbon rulers to be comparatively light-handed in their treatment of the city. Indeed, its prosperity and productivity was in Spain's national interest. Throughout the 18th century, the Barcelonins concentrated on what they do best – industry and commerce.

The big break came in 1778, when the ban on trade with the Spanish American colonies was lifted. Since the Conquistadors opened up South America to Spanish trade, Barcelona had been sidelined in a deliberate policy to favour Seville and its satellite ports, deemed as loyal to Madrid. That ban had been formalised after the defeat of 1714. Some enterprising traders had already sent vessels across the Atlantic to deal directly in the Americas – although this was still technically forbidden. Their early ventures were a commercial success and the lifting of the ban stimulated business. In Barcelona itself, growth was modest but sustained. Small-scale manufacturing provided employment and profit. Wages were rising and the city fathers even had a stab at town planning, creating the grid-based workers' district of La Barceloneta.

Before the industrial revolution, based initially on the cotton trade with America, could really get underway, Barcelona and the rest of Spain had to go through a little more pain. A French revolutionary army was launched Spain's way (1793–95) with limited success, but when Napoleon turned his attentions to the country in 1808 it was another story. Barcelona and Catalonia suffered along with the rest of the country until the French were expelled in 1814 (Barcelona was the last city in the hands of the French, who left in September).

By the 1830s, Barcelona was beginning to ride on a feel-good factor that would last for most of the century. Wine, cork and iron industries developed. From the mid-1830s onwards, steamships were launched off the slipways. In 1848 Spain's first railway line was opened between Barcelona and Mataró.

Creeping industrialisation and prosperity for the business class did not work out so well down the line. Working-class families lived in increasingly putrid and cramped conditions. Poor nutrition, bad sanitation and disease were the norm in workers' districts, and riots, predictably, resulted. As a rule they were put down with little ceremony – the 1842 rising was bombarded into submission from the Montjuïc castle. Some relief came in 1854 with the knocking down of the medieval walls but the pressure remained acute.

In 1869 a plan to expand the city was begun. Ildefons Cerdà designed l'Eixample (the Enlargement) as a grid, broken up with gardens and parks and grafted onto the old town, beginning at Plaça de Catalunya. The plan was revolutionary. Until then it had been illegal to build in the plains between Barcelona and Gràcia, the area being a military zone. As industrialisation got underway this building ban also forced the concentration of factories in Barcelona itself (especially in La Barceloneta) and surrounding towns like Gràcia, Sant Martí, Sants and Sant Andreu (all of which were subsequently swallowed up by the burgeoning city).

L'Eixample became (and to some extent remains) the most sought-after chunk of real estate in Barcelona – but the parks were mostly sacrificed to an insatiable demand for housing and undisguised land speculation. The flourishing bourgeoisie paid for lavish, ostentatious buildings, many of them in the unique, Modernista style.

There seemed to be no stopping this town. In 1888 it hosted a Universal Exhibition. Little more than a year before, work on the exhibition buildings and grounds had not even begun, but they were all completed only 10 days late. Although the exhibition attracted more than two million visitors, it did not generate the international attention some had hoped for.

Still, changing the cityscape had become habitual in modern Barcelona. La Rambla de Catalunya and Avinguda del Paral·lel were both slammed through in 1888. The Monument a Colom and Arc de Triomf, rather odd monuments in some respects (Columbus had little to do with Barcelona and tangible triumphs were in short supply), also were built that year.

## BARCELONA REBORN

Barcelona was comparatively peaceful for most of the second half of the 19th century but far from politically inert. The relative calm and growing wealth that came with commercial success helped revive interest in all things Catalan.

The Renaixença (Renaissance) reflected the feeling in Barcelona of renewed self-confidence. The mood was both backwards- and forwards-looking. Politicians and academics increasingly studied and demanded the return of former Catalan institutions and legal systems. The Catalan language was readopted by the middle and upper classes and new Catalan literature emerged as well.

In 1892 the Unió Catalanista (Catalanist Union) demanded the re-establishment of the Corts in a document known as the *Bases de Manresa*. In 1906 the suppression of Catalan news-sheets was greeted by the formation of Solidaritat Catalana (Catalan Solidarity, a nationalist movement). Led by Enric Prat de la Riba, it attracted a broad band of Catalans, not all of them nationalists.

Perhaps the most dynamic expression of the Catalan Renaissance occurred in the world of art. Barcelona was the home of Modernisme, Catalan Art Nouveau. While the rest of Spain stagnated, Barcelona was a hotbed of artistic activity, an avant-garde base with close links to Paris. The young Picasso spread his artistic wings here and drank in the artists' hang-out, *El Quatre Gats* (Map pp64–5), a Modernista tavern that today is a somewhat mediocre eatery.

An unpleasant wake-up call came with Spain's short, futile war with the US in 1898, in which it lost not only its entire navy, but its last colonies (Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines). The blow to Barcelona's trade was enormous.

## MAYHEM

Barcelona's proletariat was growing fast. The total population grew from 115,000 in 1800 to over 500,000 by 1900 and over one million by 1930 – boosted, in the early 19th century, by poor immigrants from rural Catalonia and, later, from other regions of Spain. All this made Barcelona ripe for unrest.

The city became a swirling vortex of anarchists, Republicans, bourgeois regionalists, gangsters, police terrorists and hired *pistoleros* (gunmen). One anarchist bomb at the Liceu opera house on La Rambla in the 1890s killed 20 people. Anarchists were also blamed for the Setmana Tràgica (Tragic Week) in July 1909 when, following a military call-up for Spanish campaigns in Morocco, rampaging mobs wrecked 70 religious buildings and workers were shot on the street in reprisal.

In the post-WWI slump, unionism took hold. This movement was led by the anarchist Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (CNT), or National Workers' Confederation, which embraced 80% of the city's workers. During a wave of strikes in 1919 and 1920, employers hired assassins to eliminate union leaders. The 1920s dictator General Miguel Primo de Rivera opposed bourgeois-Catalan nationalism and working-class radicalism, banning the CNT and even closing Barcelona

1808

In the Battle of Bruc outside Barcelona, Catalan militiamen defeat occupying Napoleonic units in June. Nonetheless, Barcelona, Figueras and the coast remain under French control until Napoleon is ejected from Spain in 1814.

1873

Antoni Gaudí, 21 years old and in Barcelona since 1869, enrolls in architecture school, from which he graduates five years later, having already designed the street lamps in Plaça Reial.

1895

Málaga-born Pablo Picasso, 13, arrives in Barcelona with his family. His art teacher father gets a job in the Escola de Belles Artes de la Llotja, where Pablo is enrolled as a pupil.

1898

Spain loses its entire navy and last remaining colonies (the Philippines, Cuba and Puerto Rico) in two hopeless campaigns against the United States of America, dealing a heavy blow to Barcelona businesses.

1914

The Mancomunitat de Catalunya, a first timid attempt at self-rule (restricted largely to administrative matters) and headed by Catalan nationalist Enric Prat de la Riba, is created in April.

July 1936

General Franco launches the Spanish Civil War in Morocco. In Barcelona, General Goded leads army units to take the city for Franco but is defeated by a combination of left-wing militia, workers and loyalist police.

## DIVE, DIVE, DIVE

It could have been the Spanish Navy's V2, a late-19th-century secret weapon. Narcís Monturiol i Estarriol (1819–85), part-time publisher and all-round utopian, was fascinated by the sea. In 1859, he launched a wooden, fish-shaped submarine, the *Ictíneo*, in Barcelona. Air shortages made only brief dives possible but Monturiol became an overnight celebrity. He received, however, not a jot of funding.

Undeterred, he sank himself further into debt by designing *Ictíneo II*. This was a first. It was 17m long, its screws were steam driven and Monturiol had devised a system for renewing the oxygen inside the vessel. It was trialed in 1864 but again attracted no finance. Four years later, the vessel was broken up for scrap.

If the Spaniards had had a few of these when they faced the US Navy off Cuba and in the Philippines in 1898, perhaps things might have turned out differently!

football club, a potent symbol of Catalanism. But he did support the staging of a second world fair in Barcelona, the Montjuïc World Exhibition of 1929.

Rivera's repression only succeeded in uniting, after his fall in 1930, Catalonia's radical elements. Within days of the formation of Spain's Second Republic in 1931, leftist Catalan nationalists of the ERC (Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya), led by Francesc Macià and Lluís Companys, proclaimed Catalonia a republic within an imaginary 'Iberian Federation'. Madrid pressured them into accepting unitary Spanish statehood but, after the leftist Popular Front victory in the February 1936 national elections, Catalonia briefly won genuine autonomy. Companys, its president, carried out land reforms and planned an alternative Barcelona Olympics to the official 1936 games in Nazi Berlin.

But things were racing out of control. The left and the right across Spain were shaping up for a showdown.

## THE CIVIL WAR

On 17 July 1936, an army uprising in Morocco kick-started the Spanish Civil War. Barcelona's army garrison attempted to take the city for General Franco but was defeated by anarchists and police loyal to the government.

Franco's Nationalist forces quickly took hold of most of southern and western Spain; Galicia and Navarra in the north were also his. Most of the east and industrialised north stood with Madrid. Initial rapid advances on Madrid were stifled and the two sides settled in for almost three years of misery.

For nearly a year, Barcelona was run by anarchists and the Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista (POUM; the Marxist Unification Workers' Party) Trotskyist militia, with Companys as president only in name. Factory owners and rightists fled the city. Unions took over factories and public services, hotels and mansions became hospitals and schools, everyone wore workers' clothes (in something of a foretaste of what would later happen in Mao's China), bars and cafés were collectivised, trams and taxis were painted red and black (the colours of the anarchists) and one-way streets were ignored as they were seen to be part of the old system.

The anarchists were a disparate lot ranging from gentle idealists to hardliners who drew up death lists, held kangaroo courts, shot priests, monks and nuns (over 1200 of whom were

killed in Barcelona province during the civil war), and also burnt and wrecked churches – which is why so many of Barcelona's churches are today oddly plain inside. They in turn were shunted aside by the communists (directed by Stalin from Moscow) after a bloody internecine battle in Barcelona that left 1500 dead in May 1937.

Barcelona became the Republicans' national capital in autumn 1937. The Republican defeat in the Battle of the Ebro in southern Catalonia in summer 1938 left Barcelona undefended. Republican resistance crumbled, partly due to exhaustion, in part due to disunity. In 1938 Catalan nationalists started negotiating separately with the Nationalists. Indeed, the last resistance put up in Barcelona was by some 2000 soldiers of the Fifth Regiment that had fought so long in Madrid! The city fell on 25 January 1939.

That first year of occupation was a strange hiatus before the full machinery of oppression began to weigh in. Within two weeks of the city's fall, a dozen cinemas were in operation and the following month Hollywood comedies were being shown between rounds of Nationalist propaganda. The people were even encouraged to dance the *sardana*, Catalonia's national dance, in public (the Nationalists thought such folkloric generosity might endear them to the people of Barcelona).

On the other hand, the city presented an exhausted picture. The Metro was running but there were no buses (they had all been used on the front). Virtually all the animals in the city zoo had died of starvation or wounds. There were frequent blackouts, and would be for years.

By 1940, with WWII raging across Europe, Franco had his regime more firmly in place and things turned darker for many. Catalan Francoists led the way in rounding up victims and up to 35,000 people were shot in purges. At the same time, small bands of resistance fighters continued to harry the Nationalists in the Pyrenees through much of the 1940s. Lluís Companys was arrested in France by the Gestapo in August 1940, handed over to Franco, and shot on 15 October on Montjuïc. He is reputed to have died with the words 'Visca Catalunya!' ('Long live Catalonia!') on his lips. The executions continued into the 1950s. Barcelonins reacted in different ways. Most accepted the situation and tried to get on with living, while some leapt at opportunities, occupying flats abandoned by 'Reds' who had been forced to flee. Speculators and industrialists in bed with Franco began to make money hand over fist while most people barely managed to keep body and soul together.

## FROM FRANCO TO PUJOL

Franco had already abolished the Generalitat in 1938. Companys was succeeded as the head of the Catalan government-in-exile in Mexico by Josep Irla and, in 1954, by the charismatic Josep Tarradellas, who remained its head until after Franco's demise.

Franco, meanwhile, embarked on a programme of Castilianisation. He banned public use of Catalan and had all town, village and street names rendered in Spanish (Castilian). Book publishing in Catalan was allowed from the mid-1940s, but education, radio, TV and the daily press remained in Spanish.

In Barcelona, the Francoist Josep Maria de Porcioles became mayor in 1957, a post he held until 1973. That same year, he obtained for the city a 'municipal charter' that expanded the mayor's authority and the city's capacity to raise and spend taxes, manage urban development and, ultimately, widen the city's metropolitan limits to absorb neighbouring territory. He was responsible for such monstrosities as the concrete municipal buildings

March 1938

In just three days of day and night air raids on Barcelona carried out by Fascist Italian bombers based in Franco-controlled Mallorca, 979 people are killed and 1500 wounded.

1939

On 26 January, the first of Franco's troops, along with Italian tanks, roll into Barcelona from Tibidabo and parade down Avinguda Diagonal. Thousands flee the city towards the French border.

1940

Hitler's henchman and chief of the SS, Heinrich Himmler visits Barcelona, stays at the Ritz, enjoys a folkloric show at Poble Espanyol and has his wallet stolen.

1957

The Francoist Josep Maria de Porcioles becomes mayor of Barcelona and remains in charge until 1973. He presides over a willy-nilly building spurt in the city and builds the first *rondas* (ring roads).

1980

Right-wing Catalan nationalist Jordi Pujol is elected president of the resurrected Catalan regional government at the head of the CiU coalition; he remains in power without interruption until 2003.

1992

Barcelona is catapulted to the world stage as it hosts the summer Olympic Games. In preparation for the games, the city undergoes a radical renovation programme whose momentum continues to the present.



## BARCELONA, OPEN CITY

It made little difference to Benito Mussolini, General Franco's overbearing Fascist comrade-in-arms, that Barcelona possessed few military targets worthy of note beyond its port and railway, or that it had been declared an open city precisely to avoid its destruction.

In a trial run for the horrors that would rain down on Europe in WWII, Italian bombers based in Mallorca (joined towards the end of the war by Germany's terrifying Junkers JU87 Stuka dive-bombers), carried out air raids on the largely defenceless city (only three Italian planes were brought down over Barcelona in the entire war) regularly from 16 March 1937 to 24 January 1939, a day before Nationalist troops marched in. Mussolini ordered the raids with or without Franco's blessing, which the latter often withheld, realising that indiscriminate bombing of civilians would hardly boost his popularity. Indeed, Franco prohibited attacks on urban centres in March 1938, after three days of relentless raids that cost almost 1000 lives, but the Italians paid no heed. By the end of the war, almost 3000 Barcelonins had been killed, with 7000 wounded and 1800 buildings destroyed.

In a radio broadcast on 18 June 1940, as the Battle of Britain began, Winston Churchill declared: 'I do not underrate the severity of the ordeal which lies before us but I believe our countrymen will show themselves capable of standing up to it like the brave men of Barcelona.' He might have added women and children, who together formed the bulk of the bombers' victims.

on Plaça de Sant Miquel in the Barri Gòtic. His rule marked a grey time for Barcelona. Barely regulated urban expansion was the norm and decades of grime accumulated on the face of the city, hiding the delightful flights of architectural fantasy that today draw so many visitors.

By the 1950s, opposition to Franco had turned to peaceful mass protests and strikes. In 1960, an audience at the city's **Palau de la Música Catalana concert hall** (p87) sang a banned Catalan anthem in front of Franco. The ringleaders included a young Catholic banker, Jordi Pujol, who would later rise to pre-eminence in the post-Franco era. For his singing effort he wound up in jail for a short time.

Under Franco a flood of 1.5 million immigrants from poorer parts of Spain, chiefly Andalucía, Extremadura and the northwest, poured into Catalonia (750,000 of them to Barcelona) in the 1950s and '60s looking for work. Many lived in appalling conditions. While some made the effort to learn Catalan and integrate as fully as possible into local society, the majority came to form Spanish-speaking pockets in the poorer working-class districts of the city and in a ring of satellite towns. Even today, the atmosphere in many of these towns is more Andalusian than Catalan. Catalan nationalists will tell you it was all part of a Francoist plot to undermine the Catalan identity.

Two years after Franco's death in 1975, Josep Tarradellas was invited to Madrid to hammer out the Catalan part of a regional autonomy policy. Eighteen days later, King Juan Carlos I decreed the re-establishment of the Generalitat and recognised Josep Tarradellas as its president. Twenty years after his stint in Franco's jails, Pujol was elected Tarradellas' successor at the head of the rightwing Catalan nationalist *Convergència i Unió* (CiU) coalition in April 1980. A wily antagonist of the central authorities in Madrid, he waged a quarter-century war of attrition, eking out greater fiscal and policy autonomy and vigorously promoting a re-Catalanisation programme, with uneven success.

Politics aside, the big event in post-Franco Barcelona was the successful 1992 Olympics, planned under the guidance of the Socialist mayor, Pasqual Maragall. The Games spurred a burst of public works and brought new life to areas such as Montjuïc, where the major events were held. The once-shabby waterfront was transformed with promenades, beaches, marinas, restaurants, leisure attractions and new housing.

## A LEFTWARD LURCH & TUNNEL VISION

Pujol remained in power until 2003, when he stepped aside to make way for his designated successor, party colleague Artur Mas. Things didn't go according to plan, as Pasqual Maragall pipped Mas at the post and formed an unsteady three-party coalition government in November 2003.

Maragall's principal achievement was reaching agreement between his *Partit Socialista de Catalunya* (PSC), his coalition partners *Iniciativa Verds-Esquerra Unida* (Green Initiative-United Left) and independence-minded *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya* (ERC, Republican Left of Catalonia), and the opposition *CiU* on a new autonomy statute (*Estatut*). Since the demise of Franco, Spain has devolved considerable powers to the regions, which are officially known as *comunitats autònomes* (autonomous communities). All the Catalan parties (with the exception of the right-wing centralist *Partido Popular*, or PP) agreed on the need to acquire still greater powers through a new statute. The proposed statute was submitted to the national Spanish parliament for consideration in 2005 and was the subject of tough bargaining.

In early 2006, Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero's governing *Partido Socialista Obrero Español* (PSOE, Spanish Socialist Workers' Party, of which the PSC is a branch) and *CiU* struck a deal, behind Maragall's back, to approve a modified version of the *Estatut*.

Maragall reluctantly went along with the deal but his ERC allies protested and forced the dissolution of the Catalan parliament and snap elections in autumn 2006. Maragall, accused of weakness in the face of the ERC by the PSOE, was obliged to make way for Madrid's preferred candidate, José Montilla. In a virtual re-run, Montilla won by such a narrow margin that he was forced to re-establish the weak three-party coalition of his predecessor.

Catalans approved the new *Estatut* in a referendum in 2006 but within months it was being claimed that Madrid was dragging its feet on implementation. In September 2007 Barcelona and Madrid agreed on a budget package for Catalonia that went some way to calming waters. Meanwhile, the PP launched an appeal in the Constitutional Court to repeal the *Estatut*, which it claims grants too much autonomy.

The ERC, whose ultimate objective is Catalan independence (a 2007 poll of Catalans suggested 60% wanted a referendum on independence, although only 18% wanted to separate Catalonia from Spain), made spectacular political gains in the 2003 Catalan elections and 2004 national elections.

Jordi Hereu, the PSC candidate who had replaced Joan Clos as mayor in 2006, came out on top in the city's 2007 elections – just. ERC came off worse than expected and returned to opposition rather than accept a reduced role in a coalition government. This left Hereu running a minority government. Since then, the ERC (which in the March 2008 national elections lost five of its eight seats in Madrid) has played a spoiler role at the municipal and regional level, doing an about-face and voting with other opposition parties to freeze plans for the controversial high-speed rail tunnel across central Barcelona. Given that the tunnel has already been given the go-ahead, these votes amount to little more than grandstanding.

January 1994

The Gran Teatre del Liceu, Barcelona's opera house, burns to the ground as a spark from a welder's blowtorch sets the stage area alight. It is rebuilt and reopens in 1999.

2003

Popular former mayor of Barcelona, Pasqual Maragall becomes the first Socialist president of Catalonia (with a wobbly three-party coalition) in tight elections after Pujol steps aside in favour of *CiU*'s Artur Mas.

2006

The Catalan government negotiates a new autonomy statute with Madrid in a compromise that leaves many unsatisfied and ultimately leads to the fall of Maragall. His replacement, after snap elections, is fellow Socialist José Montilla.

December 2007

Some 200,000 demonstrate in Barcelona over months of rail chaos due to work on the high-speed AVE train link to Madrid. The event quickly degenerates into a pro-independence march.

January 2008

A group of 15 Pakistanis and Indians, mostly resident in Barcelona, is arrested on suspicion of planning suicide bomb attacks on the metro system in the Catalan capital.

March 2008

Socialist Prime Minister, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero wins second four-year term in office at Spanish national elections, with 169 seats (seven short of an absolute majority) to the right-wing opposition *Partido Popular*'s 153 seats.

The tunnel (which will run below the street next to two Gaudí monuments, the Sagrada Família and La Pedrera, on its 6km route between Estació Sants and a new transport junction at La Sagrera) has sparked opposition from directly affected neighbours and management of the Sagrada Família. The latter claims vibrations due to tunnelling and train traffic will imperil Barcelona's number-one cultural sight. The city, regional and national governments rubbish such claims. Experts are divided.

Assurances that everything will be all right, however, ring hollow to many Barcelonins after the years of chaos and suffering caused by construction of the high-speed line from Madrid to Estació Sants. Not only did it arrive six years late (in early 2008), but it caused damage to nearby housing, intolerable living conditions as works proceeded apace 24 hours a day, and the collapse for months in the latter half of 2007 of the underfunded local train network unleashed by the line works (including the caving in of a rail tunnel). This suggests to many that those responsible can hardly guarantee problem-free construction of the planned tunnel. Few who tried to catch a train into central Barcelona from the airport in much of 2006 and 2007 will have failed to notice just how appalling the situation was.

And no-one has forgotten the 2005 implosion of a metro tunnel under construction in the suburb of El Carmel, which destroyed four apartment blocks and left more than 1200 people homeless.

For years, Barcelona and the regional Catalan government have railed against Madrid's lack of investment in infrastructure in Catalonia, from transport to electricity supply. As if the rail chaos were not enough, part of the city was plunged into darkness for several days in July 2007 in a chain reaction of burn-outs at city sub-stations.

## ARTS

Once home to Picasso and Miró, Barcelona has had an on-and-off run as a centre of artistic creation. Today, art galleries and museums abound, world-class exhibitions are standard fare and there is a hum in the air. While cinema is largely the preserve of Madrid, Barcelona is Spain's publishing capital and many of the country's top writers are Catalans. If only to reach a broader market, many of them choose to write in Spanish. On the other hand, a bevy of musicians, from stalwarts with an international following to eager young rock bands, cheerfully belt out their songs in Catalan, a tradition that started in part as a way of flouting Francoist cultural repression. For many a young local, Catalan rock rocks!

## PAINTING & SCULPTURE

### The Middle Ages

Many anonymous artists left their work behind in medieval Catalonia, mostly in the form of frescoes, altarpieces and the like in Romanesque and Gothic churches. But a few leading lights managed to get some credit. Gothic painter Ferrer Bassà (c 1290–1348) was one of the region's first recognised masters. Influenced by the Italian school of Siena, his few surviving works include murals with a slight touch of caricature in the [Monestir de Pedralbes](#) (p124).

Bernat Martorell (1400–52), a master of chiaroscuro who was active in the mid-15th century, was one of the region's leading exponents of International Gothic. As the Flemish school gained influence, painters like Jaume Huguet (1415–92) adopted its sombre realism, lightening the style with Hispanic splashes of gold, as in his *Sant Jordi* in the [Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya](#) (MNAC; p139). Another of his paintings hangs in the [Museu Frederic Marès](#) (p68).

In the latter museum you may be overwhelmed by the collection of medieval wooden sculpture. Mostly anonymous sculptors were busy throughout Catalonia from at least the 12th century, carving religious images for the growing number of churches. Although saints and other characters sometimes figured, by far the most common subjects were Christ crucified and the Virgin Mary with the Christ child sitting on her lap.

Another source of exquisite sculpture lies in VIP sarcophagi. Examples range from the alabaster memorial to Santa Eulàlia in [La Catedral](#) (p61) to the pantheon of count-kings in

the [Reial-Monestir de Santa Maria de Poblet](#) (see the boxed text, p260) outside Barcelona.

### Fortuny's Century

Little of greatness was achieved in Catalan painting and sculpture from the end of the Middle Ages to the 19th century. Barcelona neither produced nor attracted any El Grecos, Velázquezes, Zurbaráns, Murillos or Goyas.

By the mid-19th century, Realisme was the modish medium on canvas, reaching a zenith with the work of Marià Fortuny (1838–74). The best known (and largest) of his paintings is the 'official' version of the *Batalla de Tetuán* (Battle of Tetuán; 1863), depicting a rousing Spanish victory over a ragtag Moroccan enemy in North Africa. Fortuny, whom many consider the best Catalan artist of the 19th century, left his native turf for Italy in 1857, where he died in Rome. He had lived for a time in Venice, where his lodgings now constitute a gallery of his works.

### Modernisme & Noucentisme

Towards the end of the 19th century, a fresher generation of artists emerged – the Modernistas. Influenced by their French counterparts (Paris was seen as Europe's artistic capital), the Modernistas allowed themselves greater freedom in interpretation than the Realists. They sought not so much to portray observed 'reality' as to interpret it subjectively and infuse it with flights of their own fantasy.

Ramón Casas (1866–1932) and Santiago Rusiñol (1861–1931) were the leading lights of Modernista painting. The former was a wealthy dilettante of some talent, the latter a more earnest soul who ran a close second. Both were the toast of the bohemian set in turn-of-the-20th-century Barcelona. The single best collection of works by these two artists is on show in the [Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya](#) (MNAC; p139).

In a similar class was Josep Llimona (1864–1934), the most prolific and prominent sculptor of the late 19th century and on into the 1930s. His works can be seen scattered about town today, ranging from the statue of Ramon Berenguer el Gran on the square of the same name just off Via Laietana to friezes on the [Monument a Colom](#) (p71). He is often classed as a Modernista but his style was in constant development across a long career.

From about 1910, as Modernisme fizzled, the more conservative cultural movement Noucentisme (loosely '20th centuryism') sought, in general, to advance Catalonia by looking backwards. The Noucentistas demanded a return to a 'healthier' classicism, clarity and 'Mediterranean light' after the 'excesses' of the Modernistas. From about 1917, a second wave of Noucentistas challenged these notions, which had begun to feel like an artistic straitjacket.

Among the Noucentistas, Joaquim Sunyer (1874–1956) and Isidre Nonell (1876–1911) were clearly influenced by the likes of Cézanne; some of their works can be seen in the MNAC. They were soon to be overshadowed by true genius.

### 20th-Century Masters

#### PABLO PICASSO

Born in Málaga in Andalucía, Pablo Ruiz Picasso (1881–1973) was already sketching by the age of nine. After a stint in La Coruña (in Galicia), he landed in Barcelona in 1895. His father had obtained a post teaching art at the Escola de Belles Artes de la Llotja (then housed in the stock exchange building) and had his son enrolled there too. It was in Barcelona and Catalonia that Picasso matured, spending his time ceaselessly drawing and painting.

After a stint at the Escuela de Bellas Artes de San Fernando in Madrid in 1897, Picasso spent six months with his friend Manuel Pallarès in bucolic Horta de Sant Joan, in western Catalonia –

## top picks

### BEST MUSEUM FOR...

- **Ancient History Buffs:** [Museu d'Història de la Ciutat](#) (p67)
- **Lovers of the Sea and Gothic Architecture:** [Museu Marítim](#) (p78)
- **Devotees of Romanesque Art:** [Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya](#) (p139)
- **Aficionados of Pre-Colombian Art:** [Museu Barbier-Mueller d'Art Pre-Colombí](#) (p87)
- **Kids and Chocoholics:** [Museu de la Xocolata](#) (p89)

he would later claim that it was there he learned everything he knew. In Barcelona, Picasso lived and worked in the Barri Gòtic and El Raval (where he was introduced to the seamier side of life in the Barri Xinhès).

By the time Picasso moved to France in 1904, he had explored his first highly personal style. In this so-called Blue Period, his canvases have a melancholy feel heightened by the trademark dominance of dark blues. Some of his portraits and cityscapes from this period were created in and inspired by what he saw in Barcelona. Plenty of pieces from this period hang in the [Museu Picasso](#) (p83).

This was followed by the Pink (or Rose) Period, in which Picasso's subjects became merrier and the colouring leaned towards light pinks and greys.

Picasso was a turbulent character and gifted not only as a painter but as a sculptor, graphic designer and ceramicist. Down the years, his work encompassed many style changes. With *Les Femmes d'Alger* (O.J. no. 1) (Ladies of Avignon; 1907), Picasso broke with all forms of traditional representation, introducing a deformed perspective that would later spill over into cubism. The subject was supposedly taken from the Carrer d'Avinyó in the Barri Gòtic, in those days populated with a series of brothels.

By the mid-1920s, he was dabbling with surrealism. His best-known work is *Guernica* (in Madrid's Centro de Arte Reina Sofía), a complex painting portraying the horror of war, inspired by the German aerial bombing of the Basque town Gernika in 1937.

Picasso worked prolifically during and after WWII and he was still cranking out paintings, sculptures, ceramics and etchings until the day he died in 1973.

## JOAN MIRÓ

By the time the 13-year-old Picasso arrived in Barcelona, his near contemporary, Joan Miró (1893–1983), was cutting his teeth on rusk biscuits in the Barri Gòtic, where he was born. He spent a third of his life in Barcelona but later divided his time between France, the Tarragona countryside and the island of Mallorca, where he ended his days.

Like Picasso, Miró attended the Escola de Belles Arts de la Llotja. He was initially uncertain about his artistic vocation – in fact he studied commerce. In Paris from 1920, he mixed with Picasso, Hemingway, Joyce and friends, and made his own mark, after several years of struggle, with an exhibition in 1925. The masterpiece from this, his so-called realist period, was *La Masia* (Farmhouse).

It was during WWII, while living in seclusion in Normandy, that Miró's definitive leitmotifs emerged. Among the most important images that appear frequently throughout his work are women, birds (the link between earth and the heavens), stars (the unattainable heavenly world, the source of imagination), and a sort of net entrapping all these levels of the cosmos. The Miró works that most people are acquainted with emerged from this time – arrangements of lines and symbolic figures in primary colours, with shapes reduced to their essence.

In the 1960s and '70s, Miró devoted more of his time to creating sculpture and designing textiles, largely employing the same kinds of symbolic figures as those in his paintings. He lived in Mallorca, home of his wife Pilar Juncosa, from 1956 until his death in 1983. The [Fundació Joan Miró](#) (p143), housed in Montjuïc, has the single largest collection of Miró's work in the world today.

## SALVADOR DALÍ

Although he spent precious little time in Barcelona, and nothing much of his can be seen in the city, it would be churlish to leave Salvador Dalí i Domènech (1904–89) out of the picture. He was born and died in Figueres, where he left his single greatest artistic legacy, the [Teatre-Museu Dalí](#) (p249).

# top picks

## GALLERIES

- [CaixaForum](#) (p142) A beautifully restored Modernista factory that hosts top art exhibitions.
- [Museu Picasso](#) (p83) A unique insight into the early years of Picasso's career.
- [Fundació Joan Miró](#) (p143) A grand canvas of this local boy's life's work.
- [Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona](#) (p79) Barcelona's main contemporary art palace, with constantly changing exhibitions.
- [Fundació Antoni Tàpies](#) (p109) A Modernista home for a selection of the great Catalan contemporary painter's work and exhibitions of other artists.

## STREET TREATS

Barcelona hosts an array of street sculpture, from Miró's 1983 *Dona i Ocell* (Map pp140–1), in the park dedicated to the artist, to [Peix](#) (Fish; Map pp98–9), Frank Gehry's shimmering, bronze-coloured headless fish facing Port Olímpic. Half-way along La Rambla, at Plaça de la Boqueria, you can walk all over Miró's *Mosaïc de Miró*. Picasso left an open-air mark with his design on the façade of the [Col·legi de Arquitectes](#) (Map pp64–5) opposite La Catedral in the Barri Gòtic.

Others you may want to keep an eye out for are *Barcelona's Head* (Map p93) by Roy Lichtenstein at the Port Vell end of Via Laietana and Fernando Botero's characteristically tumescent *El Gat* (Map pp76–7) on Rambla del Raval.

Just plain weird is what looks like a precarious pile of square rusty containers on Plaça de Sant Sebastià. Made in 1992 by Rebecca Horn, it is called [Homenatge a la Barceloneta](#) (Tribute to La Barceloneta; Map p93). Odd tribute. A little further south is the 2003 [Homenatge als Nedadors](#) (Tribute to the Swimmers; Map p93), a complex metallic rendition of swimmers and divers in the water by Alfredo Lanz. Odder still, while on the subject of tributes, is Antoni Tàpies' 1983 [Homenatge a Picasso](#) (aka *L'Estel Ferit*, the Wounded Star; Map p84–5) on Passeig de Picasso, a glass cube set in a pond and filled with, well, junk.

Antoni Llena's [David i Goliat](#) (Map pp98–9), a massive sculpture of tubular and sheet iron, in the Parc de les Cascades near Port Olímpic's two skyscrapers, looks like an untidy kite inspired by Halloween. Beyond this, Avinguda d'Icària is lined by architect Enric Miralles' so-called *Pergoles* – bizarre, twisted metal contraptions.

And who is taking the mickey at the bottom end of Rambla de Catalunya? The statue of a thinking bull is simply called [Meditation](#) (Map pp108–9), but one wonders what Rodin would make of it.

One of the best known pieces of public art whimsy is Xavier Mariscal's [Gamba](#) (Prawn, although it is actually a crayfish; Map p93) on Passeig de Colom. Stuck here in 1987 on the roof of the Gambrinus bar, when this strip was lined by popular designer bars (which unfortunately disappeared in the late 1990s), it has remained as a kind of seafood symbol of the city (and was restored in 2004).

For a comprehensive look at street art (and much more), go to the city of Barcelona's main website ([www.bcn.cat](http://www.bcn.cat)) and click on Art Públic (under La Ciutat/The City). Here you will find a host of files on public sculpture, along with a host of other categories of art and architecture.

Prolific painter, showman, shameless self-promoter or just plain weirdo, Dalí was nothing if not a character – probably a little too much for the conservative small-town folk of Figueres.

Every now and then a key moment arrives that can change the course of one's life. Dalí's came in 1929, when the French poet Paul Éluard visited Cadaqués with his Russian wife, Gala. The rest, as they say, is histrionics. Dalí shot off to Paris to be with Gala and plunged into the world of surrealism.

In the 1930s, Salvador and Gala returned to live at Port Lligat on the north Catalan coast, where they played host to a long list of fashionable and art-world guests until the war years – the parties were by all accounts memorable.

They started again in Port Lligat in the 1950s. The stories of sexual romps and Gala's appetite for young local boys are legendary. The 1960s saw Dalí painting pictures on a grand scale, including his 1962 reinterpretation of Marià Fortuny's *Batalla de Tetuán*. On his death in 1989, he was buried (according to his own wish) in the Teatre-Museu he had created on the site of the old theatre in central Figueres, which now houses the single greatest collection of Dalí's work.

## The Present

Artistic life did not come grinding to a halt with the demise of Miró and Dalí. Barcelona has for decades been a minor cauldron of activity, dominated by the figure of Antoni Tàpies (1923–), an elder statesman of Catalan contemporary art. Early in his career (from the mid-1940s onwards) he seemed keen on self-portraits, but also experimented with collage using all sorts of materials from wood to rice. Check out his [Fundació Antoni Tàpies](#) (p109).

Joan Brossa (1921–98) was a cultural beacon in Barcelona, a poet, artist and man of theatre. His 'visual poems', lithographs and other artworks in which letters generally figure, along with all sorts of objects, make his world accessible to those who can't read his Catalan poetry. Get a taste at the [Fundació Joan Brossa](#) (p113).

Barcelona-born Jaume Plensa (1955–) is possibly Spain's best contemporary sculptor. His work ranges from sketches through to sculpture, and video and other installations that have



been shown around the world. In 2008 he took centre stage as a guest sculptor at Arco, Madrid's international contemporary art fair. He has left grand pieces of public sculpture in more than 35 locations around the world.

Joan Hernández Pijuan (1931–2005) was one of the most important 20th-century abstract painters to come out of Barcelona. Having studied, like Picasso and Miró, at the Llotja, he produced work concentrating on natural shapes and figures, often using neutral colours on different surfaces.

Xavier Corberó (1935–), influenced by his friend Salvador Dalí, has created a mixed oeuvre of difficult-to-classify sculptures that betray something of the dream-nightmare quality so often apparent in Dalí's work.

Susana Solano (1946–) is a painter and sculptor, one of the most important at work in Spain today and certainly one of Barcelona's best. She often uses steel in her works, such as *Huella Desnuda Que Mira* (Naked Trace Looking), and frequently designs for large open spaces. But her palette is broad, extending to video installations, collages, jewellery and smaller-scale sculpture.

Jordi Colomer (1962–) makes heavy use of audiovisual material in his artworks, creating highly imaginative spaces and three-dimensional images. Somewhat hallucinatory videos such as *Simo* and *Pianito* shot him to fame in the late 1990s, but his latest work *Prototipos* (2005) embraces sculpture (of a sort) with a selection of what look like weird white classic cars.

Some of the paintings of Joanpere Massana (1968–), born in the province of Lleida but educated in Barcelona, are a little reminiscent of Tàpies, with his use of different materials and broad brushstrokes to create striking images. He also does installation art. David Casals (1976–), who only finished his degree at the University of Barcelona in 1999, already has behind him an impressive series of exhibitions for his paintings, which include thoughtful landscapes done in acrylic on paper or wood.

To see the work of these and other artists head first to the **Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona** (Macba; p79), where you will get a good introductory look at what is happening in contemporary local art. **CaixaForum** (p142) and the **Centre d'Art Santa Mònica** (p61) are excellent public galleries. The latter concentrates on contemporary artists, including a bevy of emerging Catalan talent.

The private commercial gallery scene has traditionally been concentrated on and around Carrer del Consell de Cent, between Passeig de Gràcia and Carrer d'Aribau. A handful of classic galleries operate in the Barri Gòtic, of which the long-standing **Sala Parés** (p155) is the most interesting if you want to tap into shows by a broad range of Catalan artists working today. Also worth keeping an eye on is the Art Barcelona association of more than 25 art galleries ([www.artbarcelona.es](http://www.artbarcelona.es)). You can see what's on show in these galleries on the website. A bigger umbrella group of more than 100 art galleries throughout Catalonia is the Gremi de Galeries d'Art de Catalunya. Check out their useful website ([www.galeriescatalunya.com](http://www.galeriescatalunya.com)).

## LITERATURE

Barcelona is the beating heart of Spanish publishing. All the literary big-hitters, such as Tusquets Editores (run by the formidable Esther Tusquets, Catalonia's formidable first lady of letters), Seix-Barral, Anagrama, Planeta and Quaderns Crema, are based here. Catalonia teems with world-class writers.

## From Law Codes to the Segle d'Or

The earliest surviving documents written in Catalan date from the 12th century and include the *Homilies d'Organyà*, a religious work.

The first great Catalan writer was Ramon Llull (1235–1315), who eschewed the use of Latin and Provençal. His two best-known works are *El Llibre de les Bèsties* (Book of Beasts) and *El Llibre d'Amic i Amat* (Book of the Friend and the Loved One), the former an allegorical attack on feudal corruption and the latter a series of short pieces aimed at daily meditation.

The count-king Jaume I was a bit of a scribbler himself, writing a rare autobiographical work called *Llibre dels Feys* (Book of Deeds) in the late 13th century.

Everyone has a 'golden century', and for Catalan writers it was the 15th. Ausiàs March (1400–59), from Valencia, forged a poetic tradition that inspires Catalan poets to this day.

Several European peoples claim responsibility for producing the first novel. The Catalans claim it was Joanot Martorell (c 1405–65), with *Tirant lo Blanc* (Tirant the White Knight). Cervantes himself thought it the best book in the world. Martorell was a busy fighting knight and his writing tells of bloody battles, war, politics and sex. Some things don't change!

## Renaixença

Catalan literature declined after the 15th century and only began to make a comeback with the economic boom of the 19th century, which brought a renewal of interest in intellectual circles in all things Catalan. The revival of Catalan literature is commonly dated to 1833, when homesick Carles Aribau (1798–1862) penned the rather saccharine poem *A la Pàtria* (To the Homeland) in Madrid. Catalonia's bard was, however, a country pastor called Jacint Verdaguer (1845–1902), whose *L'Atlàntida* is an epic that defies easy description. Verdaguer's death in a farmhouse outside Barcelona (**Parc de Colserola**; see p134) was greeted as a national tragedy.

Modernisme's main literary voice was the poet Joan Maragall (1860–1911). Also noteworthy is the work of Víctor Català (1873–1966), actually Caterina Albert. Her principal work, *Solitud* (Solitude), charts the awakening of a young woman whose husband has taken her to live in the Pyrenees.

## Into the 20th Century

What Verdaguer was to poetry, Josep Pla (1897–1981) was to prose. He wrote in Catalan and Spanish and his work ranged from travel writing (after Franco's victory in 1939 he spent many years abroad) to histories and fiction.

Mercè Rodoreda (1909–83), who spent many years in exile after the Spanish Civil War, published one of her best-known works, *Plaça del Diamant* (The Time of the Doves) in 1962. It recounts life in Barcelona before, during and after the war, through the eyes of a struggling working-class woman.

In the 1930s, George Orwell (1903–50) was one of many idealistic leftists who flooded into Barcelona to join the fight against Franco's Nationalist forces. His account of those difficult days, *Homage to Catalonia*, is a classic.

Juan Goytisolo (1931–), who lives in Marrakech, started off in the neo-Realist camp but his more recent works, such as the trilogy made up of *Señas de Identidad* (Marks of Identity), *Reivindicacion del Conde Don Julián* (Count Julian) and *Juan sin Tierra* (John the Landless), are decidedly more experimental and by far his most powerful writings. Much of his work revolves around sexuality, as he equates sexual freedom (he is bisexual) with political freedom.

Goytisolo's contemporary, Jaime Gil de Biedma (1929–90), was one of Spain's key 20th-century poets.

Montserrat Roig (1946–91) crammed a lot of journalistic and fiction writing (largely in Catalan) into her short life. Her novels include *Ramon Adéu* (Goodbye Ramon) and *El Temps de les Cireres* (The Time of the Cherries).

Manuel Vázquez Montalbán (1939–2003) was one of the city's most prolific writers, and is best known for his Pepe Carvalho detective novel series and a range of other thrillers. Montalbán shared with his character Pepe a predilection for the semi-obscurity of El Raval, where he ate frequently at **Casa Leopoldo** (p174). Among his works available in English are thrillers such as *Murder in the Central Committee* and *Galíndez*. The latter is about the capture, torture and death of a Basque activist in the Dominican Republic in the 1950s. The kinds of character that pop up in Carvalho's world would have had a lot in common

## top picks

### BOOKS

- **La Sombra del Viento** (The Shadow of the Wind; 2004), Carlos Ruiz Zafón
- **La Ciudad de los Prodigios** (The City of Marvels; 1986), Eduardo Mendoza
- **Homage to Catalonia** (1938), George Orwell
- **Plaça del Diamant** (The Time of the Doves; 1962), Mercè Rodoreda
- **La Catedral del Mar** (Cathedral of the Sea; 2006), Ildefonso Falcones



with the tortured French writer, Jean Genet, whose 1949 novel, *Journal du Voleur* (Diary of a Thief) is set in the then much dodgier streets of El Raval.

Barcelona writer Joan Sales i Vallès (1912–1983) left behind some powerful novels, such as *Incerta Glòria* (Uncertain Glory) and *El Vent de la Nit* (Night Wind), on the Spanish Civil War, love and defeat.

Jorge Semprún (1923–), who wound up in a Nazi concentration camp for his activities with the French Resistance in WWII, writes mostly in French. His first novel, *Le Grand Voyage* (The Long Voyage), is one of his best. It is his account of the agonising journey of a young Spaniard who had fought with the French Resistance on his way to the Buchenwald concentration camp – it is his own story.

Mario Lacruz (1929–2000) was better known as a publisher than as a novelist but after his death a curious manuscript, written in English in the 1960s, was discovered. *Gaudí, Una Novela*, posthumously published in Spanish and Catalan, is an intriguing novel about the architect.

## The Present

One of Montalbán's contemporaries, Juan Marsé (1933–) is another iconic figure on the Barcelona literature scene. Among his outstanding novels is *El Embrujo de Shanghai* (The Shanghai Spell). Set in Gràcia, it was brought to the screen in a memorable film by Fernando Trueba in 2002. The story revolves around characters struggling along in the wake of the civil war and a 14-year-old's timid discovery of love. Rather more rough and tumble is *Canciones de Amor en el Lolita's Club* (Love Songs in Lolita's Club), an excursion into the seedy world of prostitution and pimps.

Eduardo Mendoza (1943–) is one of Barcelona's finest contemporary writers. His *La Ciudad de los Prodigios* (The City of Marvels) is an absorbing and at times bizarre novel set in the city in the period between the Universal Exhibition of 1888 and the World Exhibition of 1929.

Enrique Vila-Matas (1948–) has won fans way beyond his native Barcelona and his novels have been translated into a dozen languages. In *Paris No Se Acaba Nunca* (Paris Never Ends), Vila-Matas returns to the 1970s, when he rented a garret in Paris from Marguerite Duras and penned his first novel.

The runaway success story in the bookstore in recent times has been *La Sombra del Viento* (The Shadow of the Wind), by Barcelona-born, US-based Carlos Ruiz Zafón (1964–). This engaging, multi-layered mystery story plays out over several periods in Barcelona's 20th-century history. Hot on Zafón's tail is Ildefonso Falcones (1945–) with his *La Catedral del Mar* (Cathedral of the Sea), a historical novel set in medieval Barcelona and telling the story of construction of the [Església de Santa Maria del Mar](#) (p83) in La Ribera, a Gothic beauty raised in record-, and for many of its workers, back-breaking time. It is not timeless literature but offers interesting insights into medieval life in Barcelona.

Quim Monzó (1952–) is perhaps the highest profile author writing in Catalan today. He churns out a stream of short stories, columns and essays. His wide-ranging work is marked by a mordant wit and an abiding interest in pornography. He revised his best stories and published them under one volume, *Vuitanta-sis Contes* (Eighty-six Short Stories), in 1999.

A rarity on the local literary scene is Matthew Tree, a born and bred Brit who has lived in Catalonia since the mid-1980s and writes predominantly in Catalan. His *Aniversari* (2005) is a penetrating look at his adopted home, at once an insider's and outsider's view.

## CASANOVA IN JAIL AGAIN

That incorrigible Venetian lover and one-time inmate of the Piombi jail in Venice's Palazzo Ducale, Giacomo Casanova (1725–98) arrived in Barcelona in 1769, having been expelled from Paris and spent some time trundling around Spain in search of a little peace and work. Seemingly unable to keep out of trouble, Casanova got tangled up with a lively ballerina, who happened to be the lover of the governor of Catalonia. It is perhaps unsurprising that Casanova wound up behind bars in the Ciutadella castle. After 40 days' incarceration, he was set free and moved on to Perpignan, back on French territory, where he presumably breathed a sigh of relief.

## MUSIC

### Contemporary

Curiously, it was probably the Franco repression that most helped foster a vigorous local music scene in Catalan. In those dark years, the Nova Cançó (New Song) movement was born in the 1950s to resist linguistic oppression with music in Catalan (getting air time on the radio was long close to impossible), throwing up stars that in some cases won huge popularity throughout Spain, such as the Valencia-born Raimon (1940–).

More specifically loved in Catalonia as a Bob Dylan–style 1960s protest singer-songwriter was Lluís Llach (1948–), much of whose music was more or less anti-regime. Joan Manuel Serrat (1943–) is another legendary figure. His appeal stretches from Barcelona to Buenos Aires. Born in the Poble Sec district, this poet-singer is equally at ease in Catalan and Spanish. He has repeatedly shown that record sales are not everything to him. In 1968 he refused to represent Spain at the Eurovision song contest if he were not allowed to sing in Catalan. Accused of being anti-Spanish, he was long banned from performing in Spain.

A specifically local strand of rock has emerged since the 1980s. Rock Català (Catalan rock) is not essentially different from rock anywhere else, except that it is sung in Catalan by local bands that appeal to local tastes. Among the most popular and long-lived groups are Sau, Els Pets (one of the region's top acts), Lax'n Busto and the Valenciano band, Obrint Pas.

The annual summer [Senglar Rock music festival](#) ([www.senglarrock.com](http://www.senglarrock.com)) is *the* date for Catalan rock music, usually spiced up with some international acts. Since 2005 it has been held over three days in Lleida, but the dates and location tend to change each year.

The Pinker Tones is a Barcelona duo that has quickly scaled the heights of international popularity with an eclectic electronic mix of music, ranging from dizzy dance numbers to film soundtracks. Their second album, *The Million Colour Revolution*, is their best. Another Barcelona band with international ambitions and flavours is Macaco. Their latest album, *Ingravitto*, is an eloquent expression of this, with lyrics in several languages and a musical mix inspired by anything from reggae to Manu Chao (the French-Latino singer-songwriter who for years has lived in Barcelona). When people talk about 'Raval sound' (after the name of the still somewhat seedy old town district), this is the kind of thing they mean.

Far greater success across Spain has gone to Estopa, a male rock duo from Cornellà, a satellite suburb of Barcelona. The guitar-wielding brothers sing a clean Spanish rock, occasionally with a vaguely flamenco flavour. Pastora is a Barcelona trio that peddles a successful brand of soft Spanish pop.

Sabadell-born Albert Pla (1966–) is one of the most controversial singer-songwriters on the national scene today. Swinging between his brand of forthright rock lyrics, stage and cinema, he is a multifaceted maestro. His latest CD, *Vida y Milagros*, is as good as any.

For a pleasing combination of rock and folk, Mesclat is a group to watch out for and particularly popular on their home turf. Band members come from all over Catalonia. They have cut a couple of CDs, *Mesclat* and *Manilla*.

## THE POWER OF PAU

Pau Casals (1876–1973) was one of the greatest cellists of the 20th century. Born in El Vendrell, in southern Catalonia, he was playing in the orchestra of the Teatre del Liceu by the age of 20 and, in 1899, he debuted in London and Paris. He chose exile in southern France after Franco's victory in the civil war. In 1946 he declared he would not play in public any more as long as the Western democracies continued to tolerate Franco's regime. One of the most moving moments of his career came when he accepted a request to play before the UN General Assembly in New York in 1958. The concert was transmitted by radio around the world and that same year he was a candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize.

In his later years he worked increasingly as a conductor. He was also a prolific composer of operatic songs, although the bulk of his works remain unpublished. He died in Puerto Rico in 1973, and his remains were brought back to El Vendrell in 1979. You can visit the beachside [Museu Pau Casals](#) (☎ 977 68 42 76; [www.paucasals.org](http://www.paucasals.org); Avinguda Palfuriana 67, Sant Salvador, near El Vendrell) in the house he had built as a summer retreat in 1910. Take the regular *rodalies* train from Barcelona (Passaig de Gràcia) to Sant Vicenç de Calders (€4.10, one hour 10 minutes). And don't forget your swimming costume!

To get a further look into the Barcelona music scene, have a listen to [Scanner.BCN](http://www.bcn.cat/scannerbcn) (www.bcn.cat/scannerbcn). Jazz lovers curious about what's cooking in Barcelona can tune into [Barcelonajazzradio](http://www.barcelonajazzradio.com) (www.barcelonajazzradio.com).

Badalona boy Àngel Molina is possibly the most sought-after DJ in Spain, not just his near-native Barcelona. He is what you might call a thinking person's DJ, mixing all sorts of sounds and indulging in a little experimentation rather than pounding a techno board. See also [p197](#).

## Classical, Opera & Baroque

Spain's contribution to the world of classical music has been modest, but Catalonia has produced a few exceptional composers. Best known is Camprodon-born Isaac Albéniz (1860–1909), a gifted pianist who later turned his hand to composition. Among his best-remembered works is the *Iberia* cycle.

Lleida's Enric Granados i Campiña (1867–1916) was another fine pianist. He established Barcelona's conservatorium in 1901 and composed a great many pieces for piano, including *Danzas Españolas*, *Cantos de la Juventud* and *Goyescas*.

Other Catalan composers and musicians of some note include Eduard Toldrà (1895–1962) and Frederic Mompou (1893–1987).

Montserrat Caballé is Barcelona's most successful voice. Born in Gràcia in 1933, the soprano made her debut in 1956 in Basel (Switzerland). Her home-town launch came four years later in the [Gran Teatre del Liceu](#) ([p71](#)). In 1965, she performed to wild acclaim at New York's Carnegie Hall and went on to become one of the world's finest 20th-century sopranos. Her daughter, Montserrat Martí, is also a singer and they occasionally appear together. Another fine Catalan soprano was Victoria de los Angeles (1923–2005), while Catalonia's other world-class opera star is the renowned tenor Josep (José) Carreras (1946–).

Jordi Savall (1941–) has assumed the task of rediscovering a European heritage in music that predates the era of the classical greats. He and his wife, soprano Montserrat Figueras, have, along with musicians from other countries, have been largely responsible for resuscitating the beauties of medieval, Renaissance and baroque music. In 1987, Savall founded La Capella Reial de Catalunya and two years later he formed the baroque orchestra Le Concert des Nations. You can sometimes catch their recitals in locations such as the [Església de Santa Maria del Mar](#) ([p83](#)).

## CINEMA

In 1932 Francesc Macià, president of the Generalitat, opened Spain's first studios for making 'talkies' and a year later Metro Goldwyn Mayer had a dubbing studio in Barcelona. But since Franco's victory in 1939, pretty much all cinematic production has taken place in Madrid.

José Juan Bigas Luna (1946–) is one of Catalonia's best known directors, responsible for the hilarious *Jamón, Jamón* (1992). His latest flick, *Yo Soy la Juani* (I am Juani; 2006), takes us into the life of a modern young woman in the tough world of Barcelona's outer suburbs.

Ventura Pons (1945–) is a veteran of Catalan theatre and film-making who cranks out movies with almost frightening speed. *Barcelona (Un Mapa)*, which came out in 2007, looks at six urban characters gathered together but essentially lonely in an Eixample apartment.

Gràcia-born Isabel Coixet (1960–) has had some ups and downs with some original films. She reached a high point (and four Goyas, the Spanish equivalent of the Oscars) for *Vida Secreta de las Palabras* (The Secret Life of Words; 2005), in which a taciturn nurse arrives on a moribund North Sea oil platform to take care of a burns patient. She turns out to be a torture victim of the wars in the former Yugoslavia.

Despite his years, Vicente Aranda (1926–) remains prolific, making anything from the surprising and not altogether successful 2006 blockbuster based on the medieval classic tome,

## LONGING FOR CUBA

The oldest musical tradition to have survived to some degree in Catalonia is that of the *havaneres* (from Havana) – nostalgic songs and melancholy sea shanties brought back from Cuba by Catalans who lived, sailed and traded there in the 19th century. Even after Spain lost Cuba in 1898, the *havanera* tradition (a mix of European and Cuban rhythms) continued. A magical opportunity to enjoy these songs is the *Centada d'Havaneres*, an evening concert held in Calella, on the Costa Brava, on or around 1 July. Otherwise, you may stumble across performances elsewhere along the coast or even in Barcelona, but there is no set programme.

*Tirant Lo Blanc*, to his adaptation of Juan Marsé's *Canciones de Amor en el Lolita's Club* in 2007.

Vilanova i la Geltrú's Sergi López (1965–) has asserted himself as a prominent and versatile actor across Europe (especially in France) in films like Stephen Frears' *Dirty Pretty Things* (2002), a bizarre murder story set in the illegal immigrant scene in London. He plays a nasty fellow who meets an unpleasant end.

Barcelona's tourism folk have set up a website ([www.barcelonamovie.com](http://www.barcelonamovie.com)) with suggested walking tours taking in spots where various films have been shot in Barcelona. Print 'em out and follow in the footsteps of Almodóvar or Jean-Baptiste Grenouille, the unpleasant character of *Perfume: The Story of a Murderer*.

## THEATRE

Barcelona rivals Madrid as a centre of theatrical production in Spain. The bulk of dramatic theatre on Barcelona's stages is done in Catalan, whether local fringe stuff or interpretations of Ibsen and Shakespeare.

Several outstanding local theatre companies have a far wider appeal. One of the world's wackiest theatre companies is [La Fura dels Baus](#) ([www.lafura.com](http://www.lafura.com)). These guys turn theatre spaces (or warehouses, or boats...) into a kind of participatory apocalypse and can, as with their *Boris Gudonov* act in 2008, in which they turned their audiences into hostages in a terrorist situation, reach (or pass) the limits of what many might consider good taste. [Tricicle](#) ([www.tricicle.com](http://www.tricicle.com))

is a three-man mime team easily enjoyed by anyone. [Els Comediants](#) ([www.comediants.com](http://www.comediants.com)) and [La Cubana](#) ([www.lacubana.com](http://www.lacubana.com)) are highly successful comedy groups that owe a lot to the impromptu world of street theatre. [Els Joglars](#) ([www.elsjoglars.com](http://www.elsjoglars.com)) are not afraid to create pieces full of social critique, while [Dagoll Dagom](#) ([www.dagolldagom.com](http://www.dagolldagom.com)) is Catalonia's very own bells-and-whistles musical theatre company. Lavish and somewhat all-over-the-place performances are their speciality, with lots of kitschy high drama. They switch between home-grown material and original interpretations of Broadway classics.

See [p218](#) for theatrical locations.

## DANCE

### Contemporary

Barcelona is the capital of contemporary dance in Spain, and Ramon Oller is the city's leading choreographer, working with one of the country's most established companies, [Metros](#) ([www.metrosdansa.com](http://www.metrosdansa.com)), which he created in 1986. Its dance is rooted in a comparatively formal technique.

Other dance companies worth keeping an eye out for are [Cesc Gelabert](#) ([www.gelabertazzopardi.com](http://www.gelabertazzopardi.com)), run by the choreographer of the same name; [Mudances](#) ([www.margarit-mudances.com](http://www.margarit-mudances.com)), run by Àngels

# top picks

## FILMS SHOT IN BARCELONA

- [Perfume: The Story of a Murderer](#) (Tom Tykwer; 2006) Starring Ben Wishaw as the psychopathic Jean-Baptiste Grenouille, this film is based on the extraordinary novel by Patrick Süskind and is partly shot on locations across town and around Catalonia (including Girona, the Castell de Sant Ferran in Figueres and Tarragona).
- [Vicky Cristina Barcelona](#) (Woody Allen; 2008) – Barcelona was all agog in 2007 as Woody Allen, Scarlett Johansson, Penelope Cruz and Javier Bardem wandered around shooting Allen's vision of Barcelona. Bardem's character, a painter, gets Cruz and Johansson all hot and sweaty in this light romantic romp.
- [Todo Sobre Mi Madre](#) (All About My Mother; Pedro Almodóvar; 1999) One of the Spanish director's most polished films, partly set in Barcelona. A quirky commentary that ties together the lives of the most improbable collection of women (including a couple of transsexuals).
- [L'Auberge Espagnole](#) (The Spanish Apartment; Cédric Klapisch; 2002) A young Parisian from the suburbs, Xavier, goes to Barcelona to learn Spanish for business. It ain't easy when university classes are given half the time in Catalan, but Xavier has no yen to return to Paris.
- [El Taxista Ful](#) (Jo Sol; 2005) Taxi driver José R lives on the edge, because the cabs he drives around Barcelona are stolen. Making a living isn't easy in the big city. Loosely based on a true story.

## THE RETURN OF LA RUMBA

Back in the 1950s, a new sound mixing flamenco with Latin (salsa and other South American dance flavours) emerged in *gitano* (Roma people) circles in the bars of Gràcia and the Barri Gòtic. The main man was Antonio González, known as El Pescailla (married to the flamenco star Lola Flores). The guy who took this eminently Barcelona style to a wider (eventually international) audience was Matarò-born *gitano* Peret. By the end of the 1970s, however, Rumba Catalana was running out of steam. Peret had turned to religion and El Pescailla lived in Flores' shadow in Madrid. A plaque to the latter's memory graces Carrer Fraternitat 1, in Gràcia. But Buenos Aires-born Javier Patricio 'Gato' Pérez discovered Rumba in 1977 and gave it his own personal spin, bringing out several popular records, such as *Atalaya*, until the early 1980s. After Pérez, it seemed that Rumba was dead. Not so fast! New Rumba bands, often highly eclectic, have emerged in recent years. Papawa, Barrio Negro and El Tío Carlos are names to look out for. Others mix Rumba with anything from reggae to ragga. Melendi, from Asturias in Spain's north, has rocketed to national popularity with his mix of Rumba and rock and is the proof that, even beyond Barcelona, Rumba rocks!

Margarit; [Lanónima Imperial](http://www.lanonima.com) (www.lanonima.com), run by Juan Carlos García; and [Mal Pelo](http://www.malpele.org) (www.malpele.org), run by Maria Muñoz and Pep Ramis. All tend to work from a base of 'release technique', which favours 'natural' movement, working from the skeleton, over a reliance on muscular power. [Sol Píco](http://www.solpico.com) (www.solpico.com) is a younger company that does provocative dance sets on a big scale, while [Marta Carrasco](http://www.martacarrasco.com) (www.martacarrasco.com) does dance that spills over more heavily into theatre. Butoh style aficionados should check out the work of Andrés Corchero and Rosa Muñoz.

## Flamenco

For those who think that the passion of flamenco is the preserve of the south, think again. The *gitanos* (Roma people) get around, and some of the big names of the genre come from Catalonia. They were already in Catalonia long before the massive migrations from the south of the 1960s, but with these waves came an exponential growth in flamenco bars as Andalusians sought to recreate a little bit of home.

First and foremost, one of the greatest *bailaoras* (flamenco dancers) of all time, Carmen Amaya (1913–63) was born in what is now Port Olímpic. She danced to her father's guitar in the streets and bars around La Rambla in pre-civil war years. Much to the bemusement of purists from the south, not a few flamenco stars today have at least trained in flamenco schools in Barcelona – dancers Antonio Canales (1962–) and Joaquín Cortés (1969–) are among them. Other Catalan stars of flamenco include *cantaors* (singers) Juan Cortés Duquende (1965–) and Miguel Poveda (1973–), a boy from Badalona. He took an original step in 2006 by releasing a flamenco album, *Desglaç*, in Catalan. Another interesting flamenco voice in Catalonia is Ginesa Ortega Cortés (1967–), actually born in France. She masters traditional genres ably but loves to experiment. In her 2002 album, *Por los Espejos del Agua* (Through the Water's Mirrors), she does a reggae version of flamenco and she has sung flamenco versions of songs by Joan Manuel Serrat and Billie Holiday.

An exciting combo formed in Barcelona in 1996 and which defies classification is the seven-man, one-woman group Ojos de Brujo (Wizard's Eyes), who meld flamenco and rumba (see [above](#)) with rap, ragga and electronic music. Their latest CD, *Techari*, is the smoothest and most exciting yet.

See [p217](#) for information on where to see flamenco performances.

## Sardana

The Catalan dance *par excellence* is the *sardana*, whose roots lie in the far northern Empordà region of Catalonia. Compared with flamenco, it is sober indeed but not unlike a lot of other Mediterranean folk dances.

The dancers hold hands in a circle and wait for the 10 or so musicians to begin. The performance starts with the piping of the *flabiol*, a little wooden flute. When the other musicians join in, the dancers start – a series of steps to the right, one back and then the same to the left. As the music 'heats up' the steps become more complex, the leaps are higher and the dancers lift their arms. Then they return to the initial steps and continue. If

newcomers wish to join in, space is made for them as the dance continues and the whole thing proceeds in a more or less seamless fashion.

For information on where and when to see locals indulging in their traditional two-step, see [p218](#).

## ENVIRONMENT & PLANNING

A report published in 2007 claimed that, with an average 50 micrograms of toxic particles per cubic metre of air, Barcelona had a worse air pollution problem than such megalopolises as New York, Mexico City and Tokyo. The single biggest source (85%) of unhealthy air is private vehicles, although industry plays its part and, paradoxically, sea breezes don't help either.

In reaction, parking and traffic restrictions in central Barcelona have been tightened. In 2008 a speed limit of 80km/h throughout Barcelona and 16 surrounding municipalities (including on highways) was introduced with the aim of cutting emissions by 30% in the metropolitan area.

The city's buses are being progressively replaced by new models powered by compressed natural gas – more than 250 are in service. The city transport authority is experimenting with hydrogen fuel cell and hydrogen combustion powered buses, as well as with bio-diesel fuelled buses. This contribution to the reduction of air pollution is, in itself, minimal. Combined with growing density and efficiency of public transport networks that encourage people not to drive their own cars, however, it is hoped to make a real impact on the pollution problem in the long term.

Noise pollution is a problem, especially in parts of the old city (notably around El Born and in El Raval). Rowdy traffic, late-night rubbish collection, day-long construction and road works, and the screaming and shouting of revellers, all contribute to insomnia. Main roads are gradually getting a layer of noise-reduction asphalt to reduce traffic noise. But for many, double or even triple glazing is the only answer (not particularly comfortable in summer).

Although much depends on the goodwill of citizens, rubbish disposal is not too bad. Large, brightly coloured containers have been scattered about the city for the separated collection of paper, glass and cans, and they are emptied daily. Emptying is one thing, but the disposal of waste produced in Barcelona is a major problem. Some of it is transported as far off as Murcia, in southern Spain!

Every night the city streets are hosed down, but every day they wind up dirty again. Some areas (such as much of Ciutat Vella) are worse than others (such as l'Eixample). This does not exactly contribute to reducing water consumption, which at the time of writing was looking like one of Barcelona's bigger challenges. With Catalan dams at all-time lows (January 2008 was the hottest January on record), plans were enacted to import water by tanker or train from as far away as Almería and Marseille. Reports in 2008 estimated that, throughout Catalonia, about a quarter of water was lost through leakage on its way from distribution centres to end-users. A temporary reprieve from the drought came with heavy rains in May of that year, which took dams from 20% back to 50% of capacity. Some water had already been imported by boat but the sense of emergency had temporarily passed. A desalination plant is due to open in El Prat de Llobregat in 2009, and it is hoped that it will ease the long-term water problem by covering 20% of Barcelona's needs.

Barcelona gets a lot of sun and the huge photovoltaic panel at El Fòrum is symbolic of the city's stated intentions to increase solar energy output. Town bylaws require the installation of solar panels on new buildings of more than 12 apartments, although ecologists doubt this rule is being enforced.

## THE LAND

Barcelona spreads along the Catalan coast in what is known as the Pla de Barcelona (Barcelona Plain), midway between the French border and the regional frontier with Valencia. The plain



averages about 4m above sea level. Mont Tàber, the little elevation upon which the Romans built their town, is 16.9m above sea level. To the southwest, Montjuïc is 173m high.

Urban sprawl tends to be channelled southwest and northeast along the coast, as the landwards side is effectively blocked off by the Serralada Litoral mountain chain, which between the Riu Besòs and Riu Llobregat is known as the Serra de Collserola. Tibidabo is the highest point of this chain at 512m, with commanding views across the whole city.

Badalona to the northeast and L'Hospitalet to the southwest mark the municipal boundaries of the city – although, as you drive through them, you'd never know where they begin and end. To the north, the Riu Besòs (so successfully cleaned up in recent years that otters have been spotted in it for the first time since the 1970s!) in part marks the northern limits of the city. The Riu Llobregat, which rises in the Pyrenees, empties into the Mediterranean just south of L'Hospitalet. On the southern side of the river is El Prat de Llobregat and Barcelona's airport.

## GREEN BARCELONA

Serious concentrations of green are few and far between in Barcelona, but there are some exceptions. Closest to the town centre is the pleasant Parc de la Ciutadella.

The main green lung is Montjuïc, which rises behind the port. Extensive landscaped gardens surround the Olympic stadium, swimming pools, art galleries, museums, cemeteries and the fort, making it a wonderful spot for walks.

The city is bordered to the west by the Serra de Collserola, which serves as another smog filter and is laced with walks and bicycle paths. Declared a Natural Park in September 2006, it has for years been under pressure from urban development (much of it illegal) around and in it. In 2008 the town hall announced plans to limit further construction and, in some cases, to tear down existing, illegal residences. That said, the same town hall has enthusiastically backed the construction of a giant roller coaster in the Parc d'Atraccions, to the consternation of some neighbours.

About 35% of the trees that line Barcelona's streets and parks are plane trees. Others include acacias and nettle trees.

## URBAN PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

The eminent British architect and town planner, Lord Richard Rogers, declared in 2000 that Barcelona was 'perhaps the most successful city in the world in terms of urban regeneration'.

That process, which got under way in earnest with the 1992 Olympic Games, thunders ahead. No sooner is one area given a new look, than another becomes the subject of modernisation.

Development continues at the mini-Manhattan that is the Diagonal Mar project on the northeast stretch of coast. A great chunk of El Poblenou (117 blocks to be precise), once an industrial and warehouse zone, is slowly being converted into a hi-tech business district, dubbed 22@bcn, or 22@ for short. Although take-up of office space by such cutting edge firms has been slow to date, the 22@ development was hailed by the CNBC European Business magazine in 2008 as one of the best urban renewal projects in Europe.

To the north, the Sagrera area will be transformed by the new high-speed railway station and transport interchange, while the completion of the giant new trade fair area, a single giant justice and courts complex, and nearby office complexes along Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes in L'Hospital de Llobregat and in the Zona Franca is transforming the area between central Barcelona and the airport. For more on landmark buildings in these areas, see p51.

Further funds have been released for the renovation of the city centre. Slowly, parts of the Barri Gòtic, La Ribera and El Raval that were depressed and abandoned have been or are being brought back to life. In El Raval a new boulevard, La Rambla del Raval, was opened in 2001 and is finally attracting attention. The streets around it remain dodgy, but plans are in place for a new hotel (designed by local doyen of architecture Oriol Bohigas) and shopping complex. Further north, the emblematic Macba and CCCB arts centres, both opened in 1995 in part of the effort to renew the upper half of El Raval, have since been joined by

the new home of the Universitat de Barcelona's Philosophy, Geography and History faculties (Map pp108–9). Many other depressed parts of the city (such as the densely populated hillcock area of El Carmel) have been singled out for major improvements in the coming years too. No-one can say that Barcelona is resting on its laurels.

## GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

The Generalitat de Catalunya (the regional Catalan government) was resurrected by royal decree in 1977. Its power as an autonomous government is enshrined in the statutes of the Spanish constitution of 1978, and by the Estatut d'Autonomia (devolution statute). The Govern (executive) is housed in the Palau de la Generalitat on Plaça de Sant Jaume. The Generalitat has wide powers over matters such as education, health, trade, industry, tourism and agriculture.

The Ajuntament (town hall) stands opposite the Palau de la Generalitat in Plaça de St Jaume and has traditionally been a Socialist haven. Never has the Socialists' hold on city government been so tenuous. Since the 2007 municipal elections, Jordi Hereu has led a minority government with the Greens, totalling 18 seats (three shy of an absolute majority). Opposition comes from the moderately right-wing Catalan nationalist CiU coalition under Xavier Trias (12 seats), their independence-minded left-wing counterparts ERC (Jordi Portabella), with four seats, and the PP with seven slots. For more on the recent machinations at city and regional level, see p31.

Elections to the Ajuntament and Generalitat take place every four years. They are free and by direct universal suffrage. The members of each house then vote for the president of the Generalitat and the mayor.

Barcelona is divided into 10 *districtes municipals* (municipal districts), each with its own *ajuntament*.

## MEDIA

Much of the Spanish media makes little effort to hide its political affiliations. The respected national daily, *El País*, born out of the early days of democracy in the 1970s, is closely aligned to the PSOE (Spanish Socialist Workers' Party). Many Catalans find its political coverage overwhelmingly biased towards that party. *ABC*, on the other hand, is a long-standing organ of the conservative right and readily identified with the Partido Popular. Similarly hawkish is *El Mundo*.

Catalans, by their choice of paper, make political statements. Reading the local Spanish-language and slightly conservative *La Vanguardia* is a clear vote for local product, while *Avui*, a loss-maker that is backed by the Generalitat, is stridently Catalan nationalist.

It is little different in the electronic media. While they sometimes have interesting programming, the most important local stations, such as the Catalan government's TV-3 and Canal 33, push an almost constant Catalanist line. Documentaries on the civil war, the horrors of the Franco period and so forth abound, while investigative journalism on some of the dodgier sides of Catalan government since 1980 are noticeable by their absence.

## FASHION

For years, Barcelona and Madrid ran competing *haute couture* shows but the end came in 2006 when the Generalitat pulled the plug on funding. Alternative shows were staged in 2007, but by 2008 it was all over.

But it was not all bad news. The Bread and Butter urban wear fashion show, which was born in Berlin in 2000 and in 2005–06 was staged in both cities, moved definitively to Barcelona in 2007.

### MUCHO GUSTO, MR CUSTO

Custo (actually Custodio Dalmau) and his brother David, from Lleida and now based in Barcelona, have become hot fashion property since breaking into the tough US women's fashion market in the early 2000s. Indeed, the light and breezy brand has become something of a cult obsession with women around the world. Their ever-cosmopolitan, inventive and often provocative mix of colours, especially in their hallmark tops, are miles away from the more conservative, classic fashion tastes that still dominate some sectors of Barcelona high society.



## LANGUAGE

Barcelona is a bilingual city. The mother tongue of born-and-bred locals is Catalan, which belongs to the group of Western European languages that grew out of Latin (Romance languages), including Italian, French, Spanish and Portuguese. By the 12th century, it was a clearly established language with its own nascent literature. The language was most closely related to *langue d'oc*, the southern French derivative of Latin that was long the principal tongue in Gallic lands. The most conspicuous survivor of *langue d'oc* is the now little-used Provençal. Catalan followed its speakers' conquests and was introduced to the Balearic Islands and Valencia. It is also spoken in parts of eastern Aragón, and was for a while carried as far afield as Sardinia (where it still survives, just, in Alghero).

Alongside Catalan, Spanish is also an official (and for many non-Catalans the only) language. It is probably fair to say that Spanish is the first language of more people in the greater Barcelona area than Catalan. For more information, see the Language chapter on [p282](#).

The city teems with its own designers. Names range from the ebullient Custo Barcelona (a hit on New York's catwalks) to the international *prêt-à-porter* phenomenon of Mango. Based outside the city in the Vallès area, it has more than 900 stores throughout the world (in locations as far-flung as Vietnam and London's Oxford St), and has come a long way since opening its first store on Passeig de Gràcia in 1984. Mango is one of Spain's largest textile exporters, specialising mainly in women's fashion.

Other local design names worth keeping an eye out for include Joaquim Verdú, who has been making men's and women's clothes since 1977; Antonio Miró, who designed the Spanish team's uniforms for the 1992 Olympic Games and also does a line in furniture; David Valls, Josep Font, Armand Basi, Purificación García, Konrad Muhr, Josep Abril, Sita Murt and TCN. Along with the Dalmau brothers of Custo Barcelona, another runaway renegade is Uruguay-born but Barcelona-bred Jordi Labanda. Better known in his earlier days as a cartoonist and illustrator (the cheerful Sandwich&Friends fast food outlets are gaily decorated with his distinctive, bright, clear-cut urban murals), he was propelled to international fame and fortune as a fashion designer after moving to New York in 1995 and, after publishing illustrations in the *New York Times*, switching his pen to hip women's design.

With so much talent popping up around them, it is hardly surprising that Barcelonins like to dress with such style – they have no shortage of outlets in which to hunt down offerings from their favourite designers. The city's premier shopping boulevards, Passeig de Gràcia, Rambla de Catalunya and Avinguda Diagonal, are lined with the best of both international and Spanish rag-trade fashion labels. If l'Eixample is the brand-happy shopping mecca for fashion victims, there's plenty more in the old town. Both the Barri Gòtic and La Ribera are peppered with boutiques which sport all sorts of youthful fashion, apparently unfettered by convention or macroeconomic considerations. Conversely, if it's grunge and secondhand clothing you're after, we highly recommend heading for Carrer de la Riera Baixa in El Raval.

### WAR OF WORDS

Since Barcelona was crushed in the War of the Spanish Succession in 1714, the use of Catalan has been repeatedly banned or at least frowned upon. Franco was the last of Spain's rulers to clamp down on its public use.

People in the country and small towns largely ignored the bans, but intellectual circles in Barcelona and other cities only 'rediscovered' Catalan with the *Renaixença* at the end of the 19th century (see [p27](#)). Franco loosened the reins from the 1960s on, but all education in Catalan schools remained exclusively in Spanish until after the dictator's demise in 1975.

Since the first autonomous regional parliament was assembled in 1980, the Generalitat (Catalan government) has waged an unrelenting campaign of *normalització lingüística* (linguistic normalisation). The Generalitat reckons 95% of the population in Catalonia understand Catalan and nearly 70% speak it. In Valencia, about half the population speak it, as do 65% in the Balearic Islands. The big problem is that not nearly as many write it. Even in Catalonia, only about 40% of the population write Catalan satisfactorily.

In Catalonia today it is impossible to get a public-service job without fluency in Catalan. And just as Franco had all signs in Catalan replaced, Spanish road signs and advertising are now harder to find. On the other hand, dubbing of films into Catalan is nearly non-existent and studies show that adolescents mostly watch Spanish-language TV. In 2008 the regional government decided to pour €2.4 million into the promotion of dubbing films in Catalan and €36 million into subsidies to encourage the production of Catalan-language movies.

The Catalan schooling model, in which all subjects are generally taught in Catalan (although Spanish is frequently the main vehicle of communication between kids in the playground), has drawn praise from the European Commission, which sees it as a successful model for the preservation of Catalan. It has also attracted venom from the right-wing Partido Popular, which claims Spanish is being driven underground. Depending on who you ask, both languages are on the edge of extinction! In fact, both are probably perfectly safe.

The media play a key role in the diffusion and preservation of Catalan and complex content rules mean that certain radio and TV stations must include a minimum fixed percentage of programming in Catalan (including even music played). On certain chat programmes you'll occasionally strike hosts speaking Catalan, with their interlocutors answering in Spanish.

The Catalan government hailed the decision in 2005 allowing the use (albeit not obligatory) of Catalan in EU institutions as 'historic'.

How odd that the many weird and wonderful buildings that attract planeloads of tourists to Barcelona every day barely raised an eyebrow until the 1990s. As seaside tourism took off in Spain from the 1960s, Barcelona was ignored. The bulk of its Modernista (Catalan Art Nouveau) masterpieces lay buried under decades of grime, neglected by locals and unknown to outsiders. Business-minded Barcelona was sitting on a goldmine, but nobody realised it.

Gaudí was vaguely known for his unfinished architectural symphony, La Sagrada Família. But no-one gave a fig for La Pedrera, his gracefully curvaceous piece of whimsy on Passeig de Gràcia.

How things have changed. Gaudí stood at the pinnacle of Modernisme, which since the 1992 Olympic Games has been rediscovered for the burst of joyous creativity its architects brought to construction in Barcelona from the late 1800s to the 1920s.

The Modernistas produced an extraordinary opus. Barcelona's last such building boom had come at the height of the Middle Ages, when its great Gothic churches, mansions and shipyards were raised, together creating what survives to this day as one of the most extensive Gothic old city centres in Europe.

Although the medieval wrecking balls put paid to most of it, there was architecture before Gothic. On the site of the original Roman town rose a busy centre full of Romanesque monuments. Some evidence of both periods can still be admired.

## ROMAN REMNANTS

What Caesar Augustus and friends called *Barcino* was a standard Roman rectangular (more or less) town. The forum lay about where Plaça de Sant Jaume is and the whole place covered little more than 10 hectares.

There remain some impressive leftovers of the 4th-century walls that once comprised 70 towers. In the basement of the Museu d'Història de la Ciutat (p67) you can inspect parts of a tower and the wall, as well as a whole chunk of the Roman town unearthed during excavations. On the edge of what was the forum stand stout columns of the temple raised for emperor worship, the Temple Romà d'Augusti (p72). A little further north along what was once one of the roads leading out of the Roman town, sarcophagi of modest Roman tombs (p72) are visible.

## ROMANESQUE

Little remains of Barcelona's Romanesque past – largely swept aside to make way for what were considered greater Gothic spectacles. A tour through northern Catalonia should more than satisfy your curiosity as to what form the Catalan version of this first great wave of Christian-European architecture took.

Lombard artisans from northern Italy first introduced the Romanesque style of building to Catalonia. It is characterised by a pleasing simplicity. Churches tended to be austere, angular constructions, with tall, square-based bell towers. There were a few notable concessions to the curve – almost always semicircular or semicylindrical. These included the barrel vaulting inside the churches, the apse (or apses).

The main portal and windows are invariably topped with simple arches. If builders were feeling daring, they might adorn the main entrance with several arches within one another. From the late 11th century, stonemasons began to fill the arches with statuary.

In Barcelona you can see only a few Romanesque remnants. In La Catedral the 13th-century Capella de Santa Llúcia (p67) survives, along with part of the cloister doors. The 12th-century former Benedictine Església de Sant Pau del Camp (p80) is also a good example, especially the cloisters.

The counterpoint to Romanesque architecture was the art used to decorate churches and monasteries built in the style. Contrary to popular belief, these buildings were not bare stone, but gaily painted inside and out. Barcelona is the place to see this art, as the best of Romanesque

frescoes from around Catalonia are preserved in the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya (p139).

## GOTHIC GRANDEUR

This soaring style took off in France in the 13th century and spread across Europe. Its emergence coincided with Jaume I's march into Valencia and the annexation of Mallorca and Ibiza, accompanied by the rise and rise of a trading class and a burgeoning mercantile empire. The enormous cost of building the grand new monuments could thus be covered by the steady increase in the city's wealth.

The style of architecture reflected the development of building techniques. The introduction of buttresses, flying buttresses and ribbed vaulting in ceilings allowed engineers to raise edifices that were loftier and seemingly lighter than ever before. The pointed arch became standard and great rose windows were the source of light inside these enormous spaces. Think about the hovels that labourers on such projects lived in and the primitive nature of building materials available, and you get an idea of the awe such churches, once completed, must have inspired. They were not built in a day. It took more than 160 years, a fairly typical time frame, to finish La Catedral (p61). Its rival, the Església de Santa Maria del Mar (p83), was one for the record books, taking only 59 years to build.

Catalan Gothic did not follow the same course as the style typical of northern Europe. Decoration here tends to be more sparing and the most obvious defining characteristic is the triumph of breadth over height. While northern European cathedrals reach for the sky, Catalan Gothic has a tendency to push to the sides, stretching its vaulting design to the limit.

The Saló del Tinell (p68), with a parade of 15m arches (among the largest ever built without reinforcement) holding up the roof, is a perfect example of Catalan Gothic. Another is the present home of the Museu Marítim, the Drassanes (p78), Barcelona's medieval shipyards. In their churches, too, the Catalans opted for a more robust shape and lateral space – step into the Església de Santa Maria del Mar or the Església de Santa Maria del Pi (p70) and you'll soon get the idea.

Another notable departure from what you might have come to expect of Gothic north of the Pyrenees is the lack of spires and pinnacles. Bell towers tend to terminate in a flat or nearly flat roof. Occasional exceptions prove the rule – the main façade of Barcelona's Catedral, with its three gnarled and knobby spires, does vaguely resemble the outline that confronts you in cathedrals in Chartres or Cologne. But then it was a 19th-century addition, admittedly to a medieval design.

Perhaps the single greatest building spurt came under Pere III. This is odd in a sense because, as Dickens might have observed, it was not only the best of times, but also the worst. By the mid-14th century, when Pere III was in command, Barcelona had been pushed to the ropes by a series of disasters: famine, repeated plagues and pogroms.

Maybe he didn't notice. He built, or began to build, much of La Catedral, the Drassanes, the Llotja stock exchange, the Saló del Tinell, the Casa de la Ciutat (which now houses the town hall) and numerous lesser buildings, not to mention part of the city walls. The churches of Santa Maria del Pi and Santa Maria del Mar were completed by the end of the 14th century.

# top picks

## BARCELONA ARCHITECTURE BOOKS

- **Barcelona Architecture & Design** (Jürgen Forster) A handy guide to all sorts of buildings, parks, designer hotels and restaurants for the contemporary design lover.
- **Catalunya: Guia de la Arquitectura Moderna 1880–2007** (Col.legi d'Arquitectes de Catalunya) An exhaustive presentation (available in English) of modern Catalan architecture in and beyond Barcelona.
- **El Gòtic Català** (Francesca Español) Full of photos, this is as close to a specialised look at Catalan Gothic building as you'll find (in Catalan).
- **Gaudí: The Man & His Work** (Joan Masso Bergos) A beautifully illustrated study of the man and his architecture, based on the writings of one of his confidants.
- **La Ruta del Modernisme** (Published by Barcelona Town Hall) An extensive guide to 115 Modernista buildings across the city. It comes with discounted entry to many sights.
- **Gaudí** (Gijs van Hensbergen) A nicely crafted biography of one of architecture's most extraordinary yet elusive characters.

## OH, HOW AWFULLY GOTHIC!

The lofty Gothic buildings of medieval Europe inspire awe in their modern visitors. But as early as the 16th century, when Renaissance artists and architects turned to the clean lines of Classical Antiquity for inspiration, all things medieval looked crude, rough and, well, frankly barbarian, just like the ancient Germanic tribes of Goths that had stormed across Europe centuries before. To label something Gothic became the ultimate insult. This attitude spread across Europe. In Barcelona, many private homes built in Gothic style would get a baroque make-over later, but thankfully most of the major monuments were left alone. Not until the 19th century did this extraordinary heritage again awaken admiration, to such an extent that in some north European countries in particular it led to a wave of Gothic revival building.

Gothic had a longer use-by date in Barcelona than in many other European centres. By the early 15th century, the Generalitat still didn't have a home worthy of its name, and architect Marc Safont set to work on the present building on Plaça de Sant Jaume (p69). Even renovations carried out a century later were largely in the Gothic tradition, although some Renaissance elements eventually snuck in – the façade on Plaça de Sant Jaume is a rather disappointing result.

Carrer de Montcada (p83), in La Ribera, was the result of a late-medieval act of town planning. Eventually, mansions belonging to the moneyed classes of 15th- and 16th-century Barcelona were erected along it. Many now house museums and art galleries. Although these former mansions appear forbidding on the outside, their interiors often reveal another world, of pleasing courtyards and decorated external staircases. They mostly went through a gentle baroque make-over in later years.

Most of Barcelona's Gothic heritage lies within the boundaries of Ciutat Vella but a few examples can be found beyond, notably the Museu-Monestir de Pedralbes (p124) in Sarrià.

## RENAISSANCE TO NEOCLASSICISM

The strong Barcelonin affection for Gothic, coupled with a decline in the city's fortunes that slowed urban development, seems to have largely closed Barcelona to the Renaissance and baroque periods that blossomed elsewhere in Europe (and elsewhere in Spain). The handful of examples of baroque in Barcelona are generally decorative rather than structural.

Among the more important but restrained baroque constructions are the Església de la Mercè (p73), home to the medieval sculpture of Mare del Déu de la Mercè (Our Lady of Mercy; Barcelona's co-patron with Santa Eulàlia); the Església de Sant Felip Neri (p73); and the Jesuits' Església de Betlem (p61), largely destroyed in the civil war and since rebuilt. Also worth a look is the courtyard of the Palau de Dalmases (p83), in Carrer de Montcada, which has been reworked from the original Gothic structure.

The Palau de la Virreina (p61), just across Carrer del Carme from the Església de Betlem, is, depending on which expert you read, a rococo or neoclassical building raised in the 1770s. If anything, it is hybrid. More definitely neoclassical and built around the same time is Palau Moja (p61), across La Rambla.

## THE MODERNISTAS

The urban expansion programme known as l'Eixample (the Enlargement), designed to free the choking population from the city's bursting medieval confines, coincided with a blossoming of unfettered thinking in the arts. Nowhere was this more apparent than in architecture. The feverish speculation that took place on the land opened up between Barcelona and Gràcia in the late 19th and early 20th centuries ensured architects had plenty of work. What the developers could not have predicted was the calibre of those architects.

Leading the way was Antoni Gaudí i Cornet (1852–1926). Born in Reus and initially trained in metalwork, he obtained his architecture degree in 1878. Gaudí personifies, and largely transcends, a movement that brought a thunderclap of innovative greatness to an otherwise middle-ranking European city. This startling wave of creativity subsided as quickly – the bulk of the Modernistas' work was done from the 1880s to about 1910.

Modernisme did not appear in isolation in Barcelona. To the British and French the style was Art Nouveau; to the Italians, Lo Stile Liberty; the Germans called it Jugendstil (Youth Style); and the Austrians, Sezession (Secession). Its vitality and rebelliousness can be summed up in those epithets: modern, new, liberty, youth and secession. A key uniting element was the sensuous curve, implying movement, lightness and vitality. This leitmotif informed much Art Nouveau thinking, in part inspired by long-standing tenets of Japanese art.

For all that, there is something misleading about the name Modernisme. It suggests 'out with the old, in with the new'. In a sense, nothing could be further from the truth. From Gaudí down, Modernista architects looked to the past for inspiration. Gothic, Islamic and Renaissance design all had something to offer. At its most playful, Modernisme was able to intelligently flout the rulebooks of these styles and create exciting new cocktails. Even many of the materials used by the Modernistas were traditional – the innovation came in their application.

As many as 2000 buildings in Barcelona and throughout Catalonia display some Modernista traces. And Gaudí and his contemporaries also undertook a handful of projects beyond Catalonia. Everything from rich bourgeois mansion blocks to churches, from hospitals to factories, went up in this 'style', a word too constraining to adequately describe the flamboyant breadth of eclecticism inherent in it.

It is one thing to have at hand an architect of genius – it is still more remarkable that several others of considerable talent should have been working at the same time. But the proliferation of their work was due, above all, to the availability of hard cash – as with most great artists, genius required muse and patron. Gaudí and friends had no shortage of orders. The l'Eixample urban expansion project provided a virgin playing field where, potentially, anything went. As the landmark efforts of Gaudí and co went up and their owners preened themselves with pride at their own startling modernity, a cash-rich keeping-up-with-the-Joneses chain reaction took place. For a couple of decades, there probably wasn't an architect worth his salt in Barcelona who didn't try his hand at a little inspired innovation in order to satisfy clients.

## AFTER MODERNISME

As quickly as the fad had gathered pace, so it was swept aside. By the time Gaudí died in 1926, he had been left behind and alone in his creative 'craziness'. In the aftermath of WWI especially, Modernisme seemed stale, self-indulgent and somehow unwholesome.

While other movements replaced Modernisme in fine arts and literature, architecture took a nose dive. From the 1920s until the civil war, a host of sober neoclassical and neo-baroque edifices went up. A wander along Via Laietana provides plenty of examples. At the same time, the 1930s was a period of timid experimentation inspired by the Bauhaus school of thought. Surprising angular, utilitarian blocks of flats and public buildings popped up in ad hoc fashion around the city. The occasional flash of Art Deco caprice added a touch of interest.

In the aftermath of the civil war there was little money, time or willingness for architectural fancywork. Apartment blocks and offices, designed with a realism and utilitarianism that to most people now seem deadly dull, were erected. One of the greatest urban-planning crimes was the erection of the incredibly ugly town hall office block just behind the Ajuntament, smack in the middle of the oldest part of the city. In the opening years of the 21st century, the top few floors were gingerly dismantled.

The 1960s and 1970s were the years of sprawl, when rank upon rank of anonymous apartment blocks were planted like corn crops across great swathes of peripheral Barcelona to absorb waves of migration from across Spain. A lot of it ain't pretty, as a drive through l'Hospitalet or along Avinguda de la Meridiana will confirm.

There were occasional highlights. In 1971, Barcelona's Josep Lluís Sert (1902–83) built the light, white Fundació Joan Miró (p143) on Montjuïc.

## BARCELONA TODAY

Barcelona's latest architectural revolution began in the 1980s. The appointment then of Oriol Bohigas (1925–) as head of urban planning by the ruling socialist party marked a new beginning (he was regarded as an elder statesman for architecture). The city set about its biggest phase of renewal since the heady days of l'Eixample in the late 19th century.



## THE MEN WHO MADE MODERNISME

Gaudí and the two architects who most closely followed him in talent, Lluís Domènech i Montaner (1850–1923) and Josep Puig i Cadafalch (1867–1957), were all Catalan nationalists. Puig i Cadafalch, in fact, was a senior politician and president of the Catalan Mancomunitat (a shadow parliament that demanded Catalan autonomy) from 1916 to 1923.

The political associations are significant, as Modernisme became a means of expression for Catalan identity. It barely touched the rest of Spain; where it did, one frequently finds the involvement of Catalan architects.

A quick comparison of work by Gaudí, Domènech i Montaner and Puig i Cadafalch is enough to illustrate the difficulty in defining what exactly constitutes Modernisme. It is marked, if anything, by its rule-breaking eclecticism.

As Gaudí became more adventurous he appeared as a lone wolf. With age he became almost exclusively motivated by stark religious conviction and devoted much of the latter part of his life to what remains Barcelona's call sign – the unfinished La Sagrada Família (p104). His inspiration in the first instance was Gothic. But he also sought to emulate the harmony he observed in nature. Straight lines were out. The forms of plants and stones were in. Gaudí used complex string models weighted with plumb lines to make his calculations (you can see examples in the upstairs mini-museum in La Pedrera, p106). The architect's work is at once a sublime reaching-out to the heavens, and yet an earthy appeal to sinewy movement.

This is as much the case in La Sagrada Família as in other key works, like La Pedrera and Casa Batlló (p107), where all appears a riot of the unnaturally natural, or the naturally unnatural. Not only are straight lines eliminated, but the lines between real and unreal, sober and dream-drunk, 'good sense' and play are all blurred.

For contrast, look from Casa Batlló to Puig i Cadafalch's Casa Amatller (p107) next door, where the straight line is very much in evidence. This architect also looked to the past (observe the fanciful Gothic-style sculpture) and to foreign influence (the gables are borrowed from the Dutch), and created a house of startling beauty and invention. Domènech i Montaner, too, looked into the Gothic past. He never simply copied, as shown by the Castell dels Tres Dragons – built as a café-restaurant for the Universal Exhibition in 1888 and now home to the Museu de Zoologia (p88) or the Hospital de la Santa Creu i de Sant Pau (p111). In these buildings, Domènech i Montaner put his own spin on the past, in both decoration and structure. In the case of the Castell dels Tres Dragons, the main windows are more of a neoclassical borrowing, and Islamic touches can be made out in the detail.

## Materials & Decoration

Modernista architects relied on the skills of artisans that have now been all but relegated to history. There were no concrete pours (contrary to what is being done at La Sagrada Família today). Stone, unclad brick, exposed iron and steel frames, and copious use of stained glass and ceramics in decoration, were all features of the new style – and indeed it is often in the décor that Modernisme is at its most flamboyant.

The craftsmen required for these tasks were the heirs of the guild masters and had absorbed centuries of know-how about just what could and could not be done with these materials. Forged iron and steel were newcomers to the scene, but the approach to learning how they could be used was not dissimilar to that adopted for more traditional materials. Gaudí, in particular, relied on these old skills and even ran schools in La Sagrada Família workshops to keep them alive.

Iron came into its own in this period. Nowhere is this more evident than in Barcelona's great covered markets: Mercat de la Boqueria (p61), Mercat de Sant Antoni and Mercat de la Llibertat (p119), just to name the main ones. Their grand metallic vaults not only provided shade over the produce, but were also a proclamation both of Barcelona's dynamism and the success of 'ignoble' materials in grand building.

The Rome-trained sculptor Eusebi Arnau (1864–1934) was one of the most popular figures called upon to decorate Barcelona's Modernista piles. The appearance of the Hospital de la Santa Creu i de Sant Pau is one of his legacies and he also had a hand in the Palau de la Música Catalana (p87) and Casa Amatller.

## Digging For Modernista Gems

Barcelona has plenty of Modernista traces. All of the major Modernista buildings are discussed in more detail in the Neighbourhoods chapter (p56). The city has organised a [Ruta del Modernisme](http://www.rutadelModernisme.com) (www.rutadelModernisme.com), a planned route that takes you to the major sights and many lesser known ones; see p113 for details. Tourist offices can provide pamphlets and other material on a great range of Modernista sights. Many Modernista buildings are private houses and/or offices and cannot be entered.

In the run-up to the 1992 Olympics, more than 150 architects beavered away on almost 300 building and design projects. The Port Vell waterfront was transformed with the creation of the Maremàgnum shopping and entertainment complex (p159). The long road to resurrecting

Montjuïc took off with the refurbishment of the Olympic stadium and the creation of landmarks like Arata Isozaki's (1931–) Palau Sant Jordi (p145) and Santiago Calatrava's (1951–) Torre Calatrava (p145).

The Port Olímpic area was also transformed, with the creation of a marina and two skyscrapers, one arguably still Barcelona's hottest hotel, the Hotel Arts (p235).

In the hangover after 1992, landmark buildings still went up in strategic spots. Rarely was one built without the ulterior motive of trying to pull the surrounding area up by its bootstraps. One of the most emblematic of these projects is the gleaming white, undulating Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (Macba; p79), which opened in 1995.

Ricard Bofill's (1939–) team designed the Teatre Nacional de Catalunya (p219) – a mix of neoclassical and modern design. Across the road, the l'Auditori (p217) was designed by Madrid-based Rafael Moneo (1937–). Though not the prettiest of buildings, it has become one of the city's top venues for classical music.

Henry Cobb's (1926–) World Trade Center, at the tip of a quay jutting out into the waters of Port Vell, is like a cruise ship ready to weigh anchor. With its offices, luxury hotel and restaurant, it is an attractive port-side business hub.

One of the biggest recent projects is Diagonal Mar. A whole district has been built (work continues) in the northeast coastal corner of the city where before there was a void. High-rise apartments, waterfront office towers and five-star hotels – among them the as yet unfinished Hotel Habitat Sky (Map pp98–9) by Dominique Perrault, one of two towers by the Frenchman in the area – mark this new district. There's also a sprawling shopping centre and two key structures. One is the blue, triangular Edifici Fòrum (p97) by Swiss architects Herzog & de Meuron. The other is Josep Lluís Mateo's (1949–) Centre de Convencions Internacional de Barcelona (CCIB; p97), a huge convention centre. Add a tree-lined marina, the future waterfront zoo, swimming areas, green zones along the nearby Riu Besòs and a new marina across the river in Sant Adrià del Besòs and the extent of the project becomes clear.

The most visible addition to the skyline came in 2005. The shimmering, cucumber-shaped Torre Agbar (p96) is a product of the imagination of French architect Jean Nouvel (1945–), a big step in the regeneration of the area around Plaça de les Glòries Catalanes in the city's northeast.

Southwest, on the way to the airport, the new Fira 2 trade fair along Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes (see p44) will by 2009 be marked by two landmark twisting towers (one a hotel, the other offices) designed by Japanese star architect and confessed Gaudí fan, Toyo Ito (1941–). The jellyfish-like entrance to the new fairgrounds is especially eye-catching. Nearby, Arata Isozaki has contributed a building to the business park development known as D38, on Passeig de la Zona Franca. Lord Richard Rogers (1933–), long an admirer of Barcelona's systematic architectural reinvention of itself, had a hand in the process with the landmark business hotel, Hesperia Tower, in L'Hospitalet, virtually over the road from Ito's towers. It is topped by a flying saucer-shaped restaurant run by Santi Santamaria (see p255).

The heart of La Ribera got a fresh look with its brand-new Mercat de Santa Caterina (p87). The market is quite a sight, with its wavy ceramic roof and tubular skeleton, designed by one

# top picks

## NOTABLE BUILDINGS

- **Casa Amatller (p107)** Puig i Cadafalch's Modernista–Gothic romp has a Dutch air about it.
- **Casa Batlló (p107)** Gaudí renovated this block of flats to make it look like a sinewy deep-sea beast.
- **Edifici Fòrum (p97)** A strange blue triangle hovers by the beach like an enormous UFO.
- **Església de Santa Maria del Mar (p83)** Broad and noble, and constructed in record time, this is Barcelona's proudest Gothic church.
- **Hospital de la Santa Creu i de Sant Pau (p111)** With its dainty pavilions, ceramic décor and gardens, this hospital works artistic as well as medical wonders.
- **La Pedrera (p106)** Its detractors called it 'the quarry' for its wavy stone structure.
- **La Sagrada Família (p104)** Gaudí's unfinished masterpiece is still in construction.
- **Palau de la Música Catalana (p87)** This Modernista caprice is home to Catalan music.
- **Pavelló Mies van der Rohe (p145)** A touch of interwar German new wave building brought back to life.
- **Torre Agbar (p96)** Jean Nouvel's multicoloured cucumber illuminates Barcelona's night sky.



of the most promising names in Catalan architecture until his premature death, Enric Miralles (1955–2000). Miralles' Edifici de Gas Natural, a 100m glass tower near the waterfront in La Barceloneta, is extraordinary for its mirror-like surface and weirdly protruding adjunct buildings, which could be giant glass cliffs bursting from the main tower's flank. The nearby beachside Parc de Recerca Biomèdica de Barcelona (PRBB, Barcelona Biomedical Research Park), designed by Manel Brullet and Albert de la Pineda, is running as a European centre of research excellence. Its central building, just back from the beach, is an eye-catching elliptical affair.

## ...AND BARCELONA TOMORROW

Planned but with an uncertain finishing date is the complete overhaul of the Plaça de les Glòries Catalanes roundabout and surrounding area (the Torre Agbar represents a startling debut, and other towers are springing up nearby). The area will be transformed in a series of projects by MBM (Martorell, Bohigas & Mackey). Their design museum, which will contain several of the city's collections, is a daring project that looks something like a tip-truck. Beneath the roundabout they will create a Cripta del Tresor (Treasure Crypt) as part of the museum space. Zaha Hadid (1950–) will chime in with her redesign of Plaça de les Arts in front of the Teatre Nacional de Catalunya. Hadid has designed another characteristically novel building, which will look like so many rectangular dinner plates stacked in precarious fashion and serve as the campus of the Universitat del Llevant in the Fórum area. In the same vicinity, the national telecommunications company, Telefónica, will get a daring new sliver of a skyscraper headquarters for its Catalonia operations, designed by Enric Massip-Bosch. Elsewhere in the nascent hi-tech zone of 22@, a giant cube of a building with partly inflatable façade (to reduce energy consumption) will be part of the Parc Barcelona Mèdia multimedia complex, and is due to open in late 2009.

Further away from the centre, in the much-neglected (until now) district of La Sagrera, construction of a major transport interchange for the high-speed AVE train from Madrid, metro and buses will be complemented by a characteristically out-there project from Frank Gehry (1929–). He will finally get to leave a more substantial mark on the city than his Peix sculpture at the Port Olímpic, with five twisting steel and glass towers that will feature a large degree of solar energy self-sufficiency.

Meanwhile, Lord Richard Rogers is busy transforming the former Les Arenes bullring on Plaça d'Espanya into a singular, circular leisure complex, with shops, cinemas, jogging track (!) and more. The complex renovation that aims to maintain the façade is due for completion by the end of 2008.

Not to be left out, Sir Norman Foster won the design competition for FC Barcelona's planned new-look Camp Nou stadium in 2007. The overhaul will create a kind of glow-in-the-dark sponge cake affair and is planned for completion in 2012. FC Barcelona's rival team, Espanyol, is also to get a new stadium, considerably less spectacular, outside the Barcelona municipality in Cornellà.

Local boy Ricardo Bofill is creating an 88m spinnaker-shaped hotel (Hotel W, owned by the Starwood chain) right on the Mediterranean shoreline at the southern end of the Barceloneta beaches. It is due to open in 2009. Bofill, who has handled much of the restructuring of the city's airport down the years, also designed the new south terminal.

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## NEIGHBOURHOODS

### top picks

- La Sagrada Família (p104)
- Museu Marítim (p78)
- Església de Santa Maria del Mar (p83)
- La Pedrera (p106)
- Casa Batlló (p107)
- Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya (p139)
- L'Aquàrium (p92)
- Museu d'Història de la Ciutat (p67)
- Museu Picasso (p83)
- Palau de la Música Catalana (p87)

# NEIGHBOURHOODS

For Barcelonins, the *barri* (*barrio* in Spanish), or local district, is everything. Those born and raised in them are proud to say '*Sóc del barri!*' ('I am from this neighbourhood!'). A *barri* has little to do with official municipal boundaries (Barcelona is officially divided into 10 districts); in fact, it can often be a vague term that might mean just the surrounding few streets.

We start in the Barri Gòtic and La Rambla, the medieval heart of the municipal district known as Ciutat Vella (Old City), which also covers edgy El Raval and lively La Ribera.

El Raval stretches southwest of La Rambla, Spain's best-known boulevard, and was long a sordid slum, home to prostitutes, drug dealers and a louche nightlife. A whiff of those bygone days remains, but hip bars and restaurants are springing up all over, along with art galleries, university faculties and slick hotels.

The southern half of La Ribera was medieval Barcelona's financial district, where bars have long since replaced the bourse. La Ribera was cut off from the 'Gothic Quarter' by the creation of the rumbling traffic corridor of Via Laietana in 1908.

The old town is fronted by Port Vell and La Barceloneta. The 'Old Port' is a combination of pleasure-boat marina and leisure zone with restaurants, cinemas and bars. A brief, sunny stroll takes you into the narrow lanes of the one-time working-class zone of La Barceloneta, a cauldron of seafood eateries with clear signs of gentrification. Beyond its narrow streets, the Mediterranean laps the city's crowded central beaches.

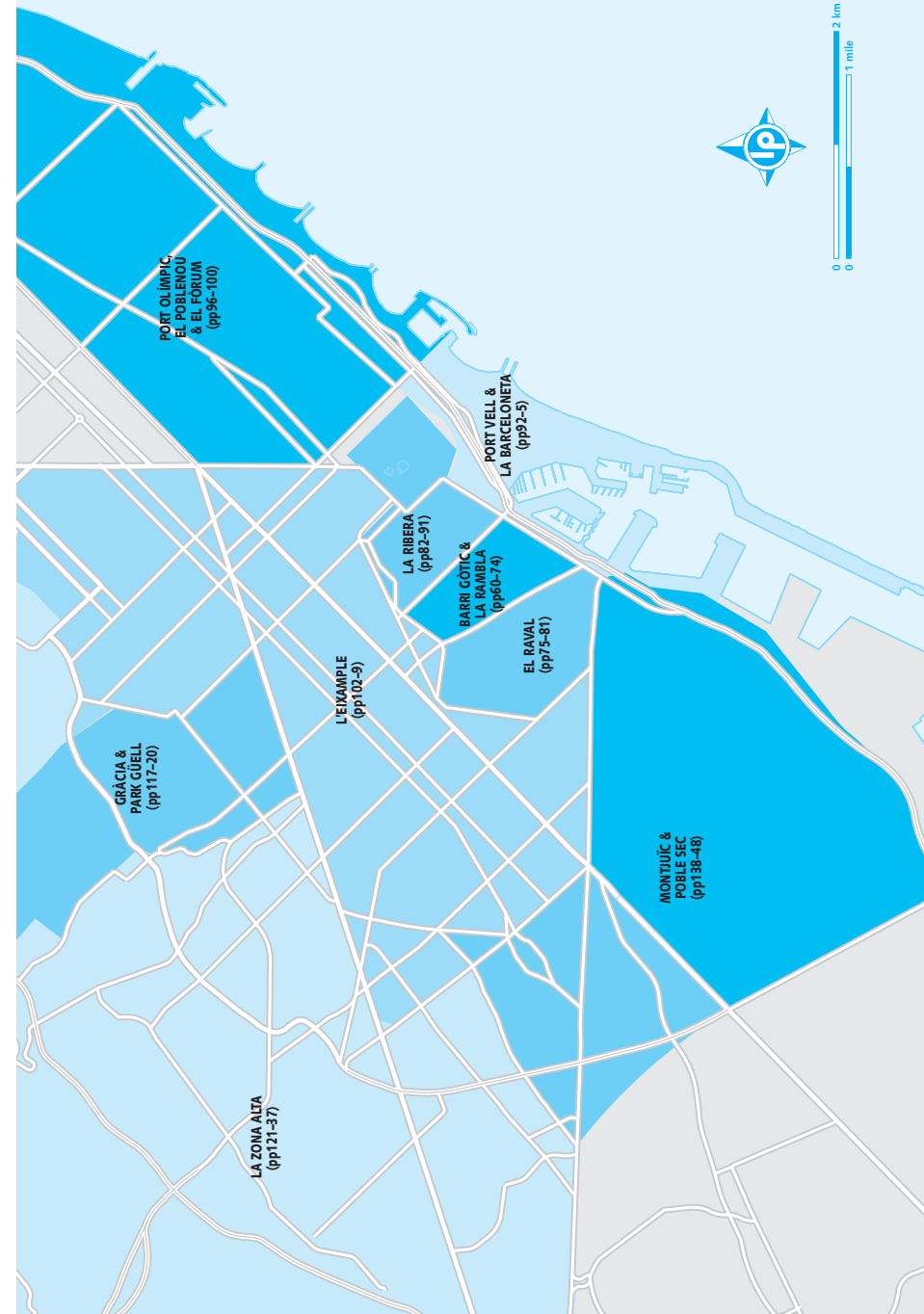
Where La Barceloneta ends, a new chapter in Barcelona's urban history begins. Port Olímpic, El Poblenou and El Fòrum reflect contemporary Barcelona's drive to renew itself. The port was built for the 1992 Olympics, as were the apartments stretching behind it in the southwest edge of the city's former factory district, El Poblenou. The first hi-tech tenants are moving into shining new buildings in the first stages of the remake of this extensive district (see p44). Long shunned as a place to live, its warehouse lofts and big apartments have increasingly attracted homebuyers' attention since the late 1990s. Crowds flock to the nearby beaches that stretch northeast of Port Olímpic but they peter out in El Fòrum, a residential, business and pleasure district where skyscrapers sprouted out of nothing in the first years of the 21st century... and continue to sprout today.

The last time Barcelona went on such an urban-planning drive was towards the end of the 19th century, with the creation of l'Eixample. Its Modernista treasures, from La Pedrera to La Sagrada Família, attract hordes of visitors to its grid streets, which also hide countless gems for foodies, drinkers and shoppers.

L'Eixample filled the gap between Barcelona and Gràcia and Park Güell. Originally a separate town, with its sinuous, narrow lanes and web of lively squares, Gràcia retains an atmosphere utterly its own, with Park Güell a Gaudi fantasy to its north.

From here, the city rises up towards the hills of Collserola. The slopes of Barcelona in the district of Sarrià-St Gervasi are known as La Zona Alta (the High Zone, synonymous with snobbery) and take in sought-after Pedralbes and Tibidabo, with its amusement park. For simplicity's sake, we include the more down-to-earth Les Corts, south of Avinguda Diagonal, in this section. It is a residential district and home to the Camp Nou football stadium.

Finally, we visit Montjuïc, Barcelona's Olympic hill and green lung, Poble Sec (a once-poor area now home to a growing Latin American population) and Sants, a busy working-class neighbourhood that offers little for visitors but is full of life.



# ITINERARY BUILDER

Barcelona is remarkably compact and boasts good public transport, making it easy to see a lot. You can use the Metro to reach key attractions (La Sagrada Família, Park Güell, the Barri Gòtic and perhaps even the beaches) in one long but satisfying day. Walkers can criss-cross most of central Barcelona without even thinking about a Metro ticket.

# HOW TO USE THIS TABLE

The table below allows you to plan a day's worth of activities in any area of the city. Simply select which area you wish to explore, and then mix and match from the corresponding listings to build your day. The first item in each cell represents a well-known highlight of the area, while the other items are more off-the-beaten-track gems.

AREA	ACTIVITIES	Sights	Museums	Eating	Shopping	Drinking & Nightlife	Arts, Sports & Activities
Barri Gòtic & La Rambla	La Catedral (p61)	Monument a Colom (p71)	Museu d'Història de la Ciutat (p67)	Pla (p173)	Caelum (p154)	Club Soul (p198)	Gran Teatre del Liceu (p71)
	Gran Teatre del Liceu (p71)		Museu Frederic Marès (p68)	Agut (p173)	Herboristeria del Rei (p154)	Manchester (p199)	Sala Tarantos (p218)
			Centre d'Interpretació del Call (p71)	Bar Celta (p174)	Papabubble (p155)	Harlem Jazz Club (p200)	UBAE Frontón (p224)
El Raval	Palau Güell (p79)	Antic Hospital de la Santa Creu (p78)	Museu Marítim (p78)	Casa Leopoldo (p174)	El Indio (p156)	Bar Marsella (p200)	Mailuna (p224)
	Església de Sant Pau Del Camp (p80)		Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (Macba) (p79)	Bar Central (p175)	GI Joe (p156)	Boadas (p201)	Teatre Romea (p219)
			Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona (CCCB) (p80)	Biocenter (p176)	Teranyina (p157)	Moog (p202)	Teatre Lliantol (p219)
La Ribera	Església de Santa Maria del Mar (p83)	Palau de la Música Catalana (p87)	Museu Picasso (p83)	Comerç 24 (p176)	Casa Gispert (p157)	La Fianna (p202)	Palau de la Música Catalana (p217)
	Parc de la Ciutadella (p88)		Museu Barbier-Mueller d'Art Pre-Colombi (p87)	Cal Pep (p176)	Custo Barcelona (p157)	La Vinya del Senyor (p202)	Tablao Nervión (p218)
			Museu de la Xocolata (p89)	Bubó (p177)	Vila Viniteca (p158)	Magic (p203)	
Port Vell, La Barceloneta, Port Olímpic, El Poblenou & El Fòrum	L'Aquàrium (p92)	Transbordador Aeri (p94)	Museu d'Història de Catalunya (p94)	Can Majó (p179)	Maremàgnum (p158)	CDLC (p203)	Poliesportiu Marítim (p225)
	Beaches (p96)			Vaso de Oro (p179)		Beach bars (p203)	Club Natació Atlètic-Barcelona (p225)
				Xiringuito d'Escribà (p180)		Razzmatazz (p205)	Icària Yelmo Cineplex (p220)
L'Eixample	La Sagrada Família (p104)	La Pedrera (p106)	Museu de la Música (p111)	Casa Dario (p181)	Cubiña (p160)	Dry Martini (p205)	L'Auditori (p217)
	Casa Batlló (p107)		Fundació d'Antoni Tàpies (p109)	Igueldo (p182)	Camper (p159)	Michael Collins Pub (p206)	Teatre Nacional de Catalunya (p219)
			Fundació Francisco Godia (p111)	Inopia (p184)	Xampany (p163)	Antilla BCN (p207)	Teatre Tivoli (p220)
Gràcia & Park Güell	Park Güell (p117)	Casa Viçenc (p119)	Fundació Foto Colectania (p119)	Restaurant Roig Robi (p186)	Érase una Vez (p163)	La Baignoire (p208)	Sala Beckett (p219)
	Mercat de la Llibertat (p119)			Bilbao (p186)	Red Market (p163)	Raim (p209)	Teatreneu (p220)
				Envalira (p187)		Sabor a Cuba (p209)	Flotarium (p224)
La Zona Alta	Parc de Collserola (p134)	Parc d'Ataccions (p134)	CosmoCaixa (Museu de la Ciència) (p121)	El Racó d'En Freixa (p189)	La Botiga del Barça (p163)	Berlin (p210)	Football at Camp Nou (p124)
	Camp Nou (p124)		Museu-Monestir de Pedralbes (p124)	Can Travi Nou (p189)	La Vinya (p163)	Otto Zutz (p211)	Fundació Mas i Mas (p216)
			Palau Reial de Pedralbes (p133)	Bar Tomàs (p190)		Mirablau (p211)	Renoir-Les Corts cinema (p221)
Montjuïc, Sants & Poble Sec	Castell de Montjuïc (p143)	Poble Espanyol (p145)	Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya (p139)	El Peixerot (p191)	Elephant (p163)	Barcelona Rouge (p212)	Tablao de Carmen (p218)
	Jardí Botànic (p146)		Fundació de Joan Miró (p143)	Tapioles 53 (p191)		Maumau Underground (p213)	Teatre Mercat de les Flors (p218)
			CaixaForum (p142)	Quimet i Quimet (p192)		Sala Apolo (p213)	Teatre Lliure (p219)



# BARRI GÒTIC & LA RAMBLA

Drinking & Nightlife [p198](#); Eating [p173](#); Shopping [p154](#); Sleeping [p231](#)

La Rambla is Spain's most talked-about boulevard. It certainly packs a lot of colour into a short walk, with bird stalls, flower stands, historic buildings, a pungent produce market, overpriced beers and tourist tat, a little loose night fauna around its lower end and a ceaselessly changing parade of people from all walks of life. Once a river and sewage ditch on the edge of medieval Barcelona, it still marks the southwest flank of the Barri Gòtic, the nucleus of old Barcelona.

The medieval city was constructed on the Roman core, which in succeeding centuries slowly spread north, south and west. The Barri Gòtic is a warren of narrow, winding streets and unexpected, uneven squares, and is home to a dense concentration of budget hotels, bars, cafés and restaurants. Few of its great buildings date from after the early 15th century – the decline Barcelona went into at that time curtailed grand projects for several centuries. An early port of call for new visitors to Barcelona is Plaça de Catalunya, which roughly marks the northern boundary of the Barri Gòtic. Apart from transport connections, it is also home to the main branch of the city's tourist office (see [p279](#)).

The square hums for much of the day. South American, pan flute-playing bands often set up at its La Rambla end, and other buskers can be seen hard at work in front of the punters sipping coffee at Café Zurich. Shoppers stream in and out of El Corte Inglés and the El Triangle shopping centre, while hordes charge down from here into La Rambla.

La Rambla proceeds 1.25km southeast gently downhill towards the waterfront. Yes, it's clichéd, but it is a lively introduction to the city. Human statues compete for the attention of passers-by with newsstands seemingly burdened with half the city's porno magazine supply. Flower stands and bird stalls succeed one another. Among the sober 18th-century mansions are scattered overpriced eateries and bars, Dunkin' Donuts and Burger King, and the enticing Mercat de la Boqueria. The highbrow Liceu opera house offers theatre inside...and outside. Around here at night the local transvestite population comes out to play, vying for attention with female prostitutes further down La Rambla. As the night wears on, revellers cascade up, down and across the boulevard, in search of the next bar or a rare taxi.

Imagine the northeast side of La Rambla lined by a brooding medieval wall. Inside it lies the labyrinth of the Barri Gòtic. To penetrate quickly to its core, follow Carrer de Ferran, an early-19th-century scar driven through the city, to Plaça de Sant Jaume, lined on either side by the seats of city and regional governments. A step away stand the remaining columns from the city's Roman temple and further north is its successor, the grand Gothic La Catedral. This is the core of a 2000-year-old city. To the west of the Generalitat unfold the tiny lanes of what was once the Call, or Jewish quarter. Between the cathedral and Plaça de Catalunya are busy shopping streets, a street dedicated to hot chocolate, another lined with antique shops and remnants of a Roman cemetery.

Heading southeast towards the sea, there is a noticeable change. Although much has been improved since the early 1990s, the streets around Plaça Reial still exude a slight whiff of lawlessness. Pickpockets are on the move (be careful on and around Carrer dels Escudellers too) and a crew of substance abusers congregates around the triangular Plaça de George Orwell (locally known as Plaça del Trippy). Taverns, tearooms and food options from ham to sushi abound. Bars of all sorts, from pseudo-Irish pubs to ill-lit holes in the wall, populate this area, and the acrid smell of urine in the streets late at night is testimony to the roaring trade they do.

With three Metro lines, FGC trains and *rodalies* trains all arriving at Plaça de Catalunya, not to mention airport buses and trains, and night buses and taxis, there is no problem arriving at the north end of the Barri Gòtic. Other strategic Metro stops include Liceu and Drassanes on Línia 3 and Jaume I on Línia 4.

## top picks

### BARRI GÒTIC & LA RAMBLA

- La Catedral (opposite)
- La Rambla (opposite)
- Museu d'Història de la Ciutat (p67)
- Museu Frederic Marès (p68)
- Plaça de Sant Jaume (p69)

## LA RAMBLA [Map pp64–5](#)

**M** Catalunya, Liceu or Drassanes

Flanked by narrow traffic lanes and plane trees, the middle of La Rambla is a broad pedestrian boulevard, crowded every day until the wee hours with a cross-section of Barcelonins and out-of-towners. Dotted with cafés, restaurants, kiosks and newsstands, and enlivened by buskers, pavement artists, mimes and living statues, La Rambla rarely allows a dull moment.

It takes its name from a seasonal stream (*raml* in Arabic) that once ran here. From the early Middle Ages on it was better known as the Cagalell (Stream of Shit) and lay outside the city walls until the 14th century. Monastic buildings were then built and, subsequently, mansions of the well-to-do from the 16th to the early 19th centuries. Unofficially, La Rambla is divided into five sections, which explains why many know it as Las Ramblas.

The initial stretch from Plaça de Catalunya is **La Rambla de Canaletes**, named after a turn-of-the-20th-century **drinking fountain**, the water of which supposedly emerges from what were once known as the springs of Canaletes. It used to be said that Barcelonins 'drank the waters of Les Canaletes'. Nowadays, people claim that anyone who drinks from the fountain will return to Barcelona, which is not such a bad prospect.

The second stretch, **La Rambla dels Estudis** (Carrer de la Canuda to Carrer de la Portaferriça) is also called La Rambla dels Ocells (birds) because of its twittering bird market.

Just north of Carrer del Carme, the **Església de Betlem** was constructed in baroque style for the Jesuits in the late 17th and early 18th centuries to replace an earlier church destroyed by fire in 1671. Fire was a bit of a theme for this site: the church was once considered the most splendid of Barcelona's few baroque offerings, but leftist arsonists torched it in 1936.

**La Rambla de Sant Josep**, named after a former monastery dedicated to St Joseph, runs from Carrer de la Portaferriça to Plaça de la Boqueria and is lined with verdant **flower stalls**, which give it the alternative name La Rambla de les Flors.

The **Palau de la Virreina** (La Rambla de Sant Josep 99) is a grand 18th-century rococo mansion (with some neoclassical elements) housing an arts/entertainment information and ticket office run by the Ajuntament. Built by the then corrupt captain-general of Chile (a Spanish colony that included the Peruvian

silver mines of Potosí), Manuel d'Amat i de Junyent, it is a rare example of such post-baroque building in Barcelona.

Across La Rambla at No 118 is an equally rare example of a more pure neoclassical pile, **Palau Moja**, which houses government offices, the Generalitat's bookshop and exhibition space. Its clean, classical lines are best appreciated from across La Rambla.

Next, you are confronted by the bustling sound, smell and taste-fest of the **Mercat de la Boqueria**. It is possibly La Rambla's most interesting building, not so much for its Modernista-influenced design (it was actually built over a long period, from 1840 to 1914, on the site of the former St Joseph monastery) as for the action of the food market (see [p183](#)).

At Plaça de la Boqueria, where four side streets meet just north of Liceu Metro station, you can walk all over a Miró – the colourful **Mosaïc de Miró** in the pavement, with one tile signed by the artist.

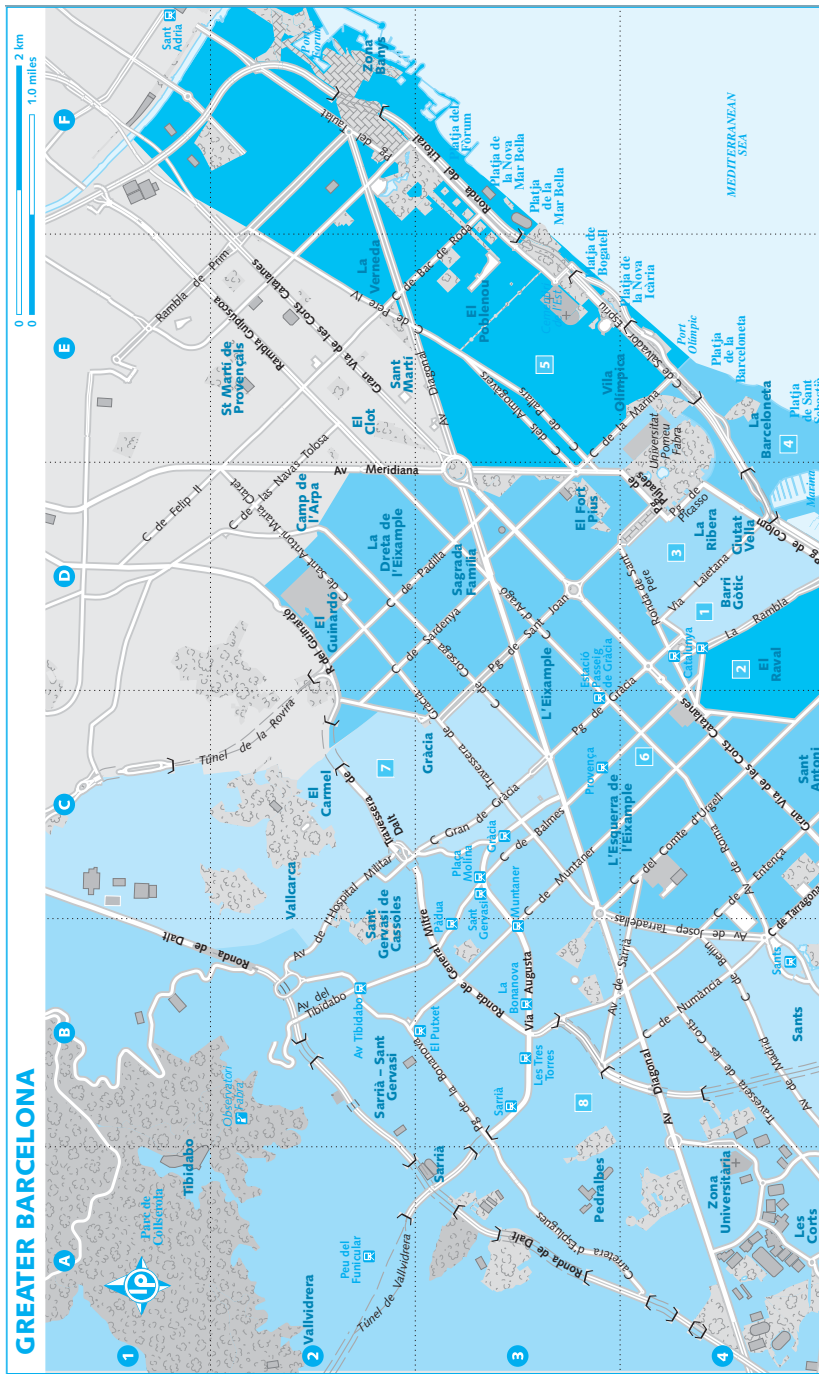
**La Rambla dels Caputxins** (aka La Rambla del Centre), named after another now nonexistent monastery, runs from Plaça de la Boqueria to Carrer dels Escudellers. The latter street is named after the potters' guild, founded in the 13th century, whose members lived and worked here (their raw materials came principally from Sicily). On the western side of La Rambla is the **Gran Teatre del Liceu** (p71).

Further south on the eastern side of La Rambla dels Caputxins is the entrance to the palm-shaded **Plaça Reial**. Below this point La Rambla gets seedier, with the occasional strip club, peep show and hookers. The final stretch, **La Rambla de Santa Mònica**, widens out to approach the **Monument a Colom** (p71) overlooking Port Vell. La Rambla here is named after the Convent de Santa Mònica, which once stood on the western flank of the street and has since been converted into an art gallery and cultural centre, the **Centre d'Art Santa Mònica** (☎ 93 316 28 10; La Rambla de Santa Mònica 7; admission free; 🕒 11am–8pm Tue–Sat, 11am–3pm Sun & holidays; 📍 Drassanes).

## LA CATEDRAL & AROUND [Map pp64–5](#)

☎ 93 342 82 60; [www.website.es/catedralbcn](http://www.website.es/catedralbcn), in Catalan & Spanish; Plaça de la Seu; admission free, special visit €5; 🕒 8am–12.45pm & 5.15–8pm, special visit 1–5pm Mon–Sat, 2–5pm Sun & holidays; 📍 Jaume I

Approached from the broad Avinguda de la Catedral, Barcelona's central place of



worship presents a magnificent image. The richly decorated main (northwest) façade, laced with gargoyles and the stone intricacies you would expect of northern European Gothic, sets it quite apart from other churches in Barcelona. The façade was actually added in 1870 (and is receiving a serious round of restoration), although it is based on a 1408 design. The rest of the building was built between 1298 and 1460. The other façades are sparse in decoration, and the octagonal, flat-roofed towers are a clear reminder that, even here, Catalan Gothic architectural principles prevailed.

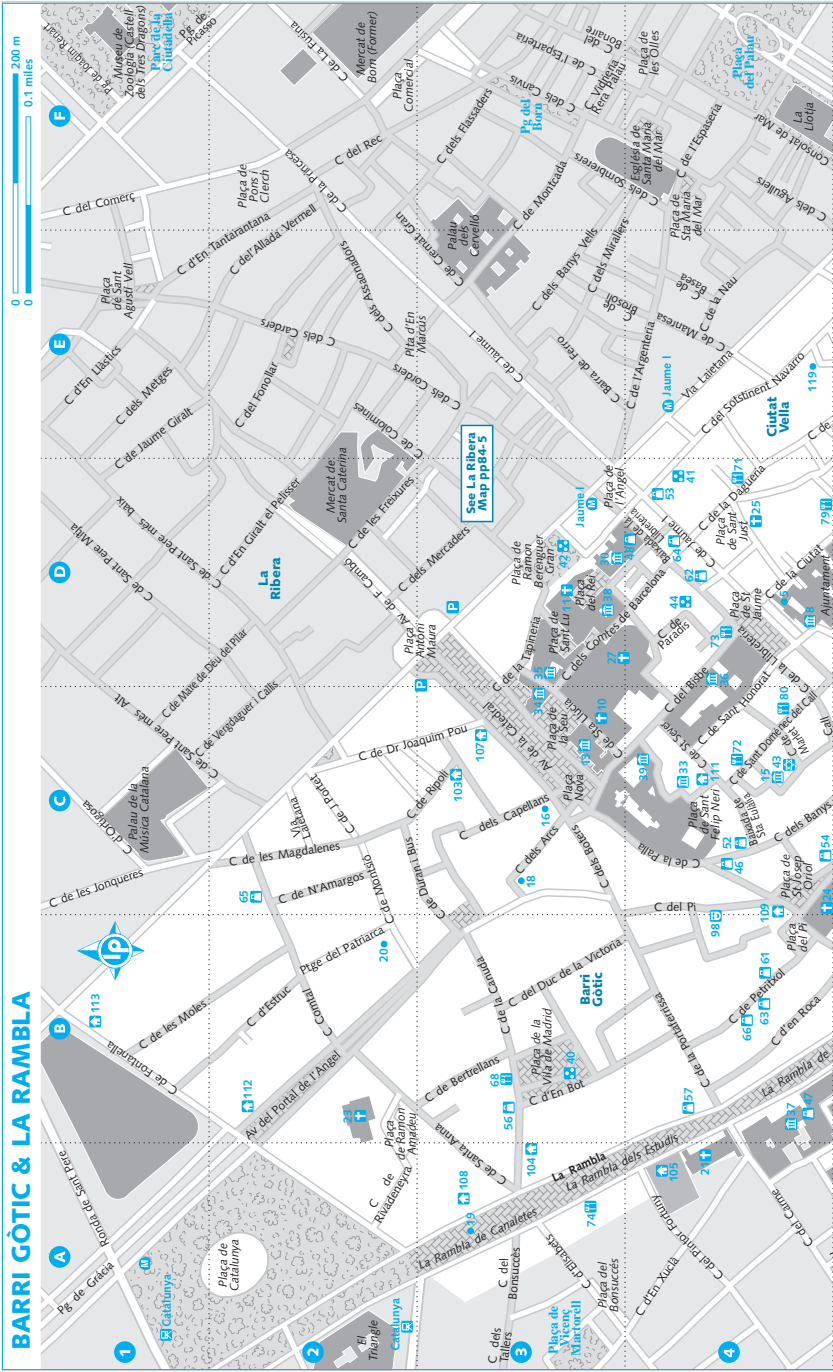
The interior is a broad, soaring space divided into a central nave and two aisles by lines of elegant, slim pillars. The cathedral was one of the few churches in Barcelona spared by the anarchists in the civil war, so its ornamentation, never overly lavish, is intact.

In the first chapel on the right from the northwest entrance, the main Crucifixion figure above the altar is **Sant Crist de Lepant**. It is said Don Juan's flagship bore it into battle at Lepanto and that the figure acquired its odd stance by dodging an incoming cannonball. Further along this same wall, past the southwest transept, are the wooden **coffins** of Count Ramon Berenguer I and his wife Almodis, founders of the 11th-century Romanesque predecessor to the present cathedral. Left from the main entrance is the baptismal font where, according to one story, six North American Indians brought to Europe by Columbus after his first voyage of accidental discovery were bathed in holy water.

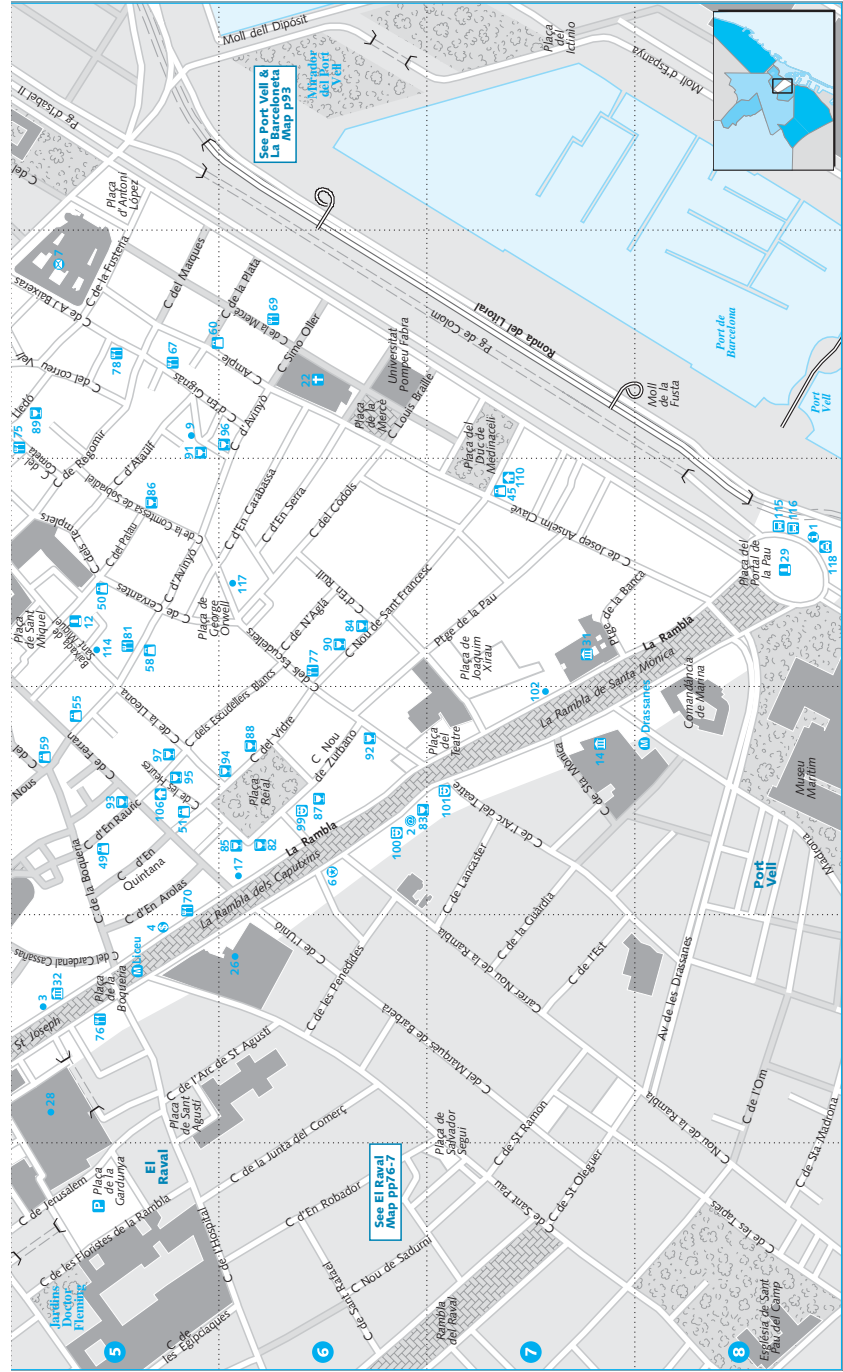
In the middle of the central nave is the late-14th-century, exquisitely sculpted timber **coro** (choir stalls; admission €2.20). The coats of arms on the stalls belong to members of the Barcelona chapter of the Order of the Golden Fleece. Emperor Carlos V presided over the order's meeting here in 1519. Take the time to look at the workmanship up close – the Virgin Mary and Child depicted on the pulpit are especially fine.

A broad staircase before the main altar leads you to the **crypt**, which contains the tomb of Santa Eulàlia, one of Barcelona's two patron saints and more affectionately known as Laia. The reliefs on the alabaster sarcophagus, executed by Pisan artisans,





BARRI GÒTIC & LA RAMBLA



## BARRI GÒTIC & LA RAMBLA

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recount some of her tortures and, along the top strip, the removal of her body to its present resting place.

For a bird's-eye view (mind the poop) of medieval Barcelona, visit the cathedral's roof and tower by taking the lift (€2.20) from the Capella de les Animes del Purgatori near the northeast transept.

From the southwest transept, exit by the partly Romanesque door (one of the few remnants of the present church's predecessor) to the leafy **claustre** (cloister), with its fountains and flock of 13 geese. The geese supposedly represent the age

of Santa Eulàlia at the time of her martyrdom and have, generation after generation, been squawking here since medieval days. They make fine watchdogs! One of the cloister chapels commemorates 930 priests, monks and nuns martyred during the civil war.

Along the northern flank of the cloister you can enter the **Sala Capitular** (Chapter House; admission €2; ☎ 10am–12.15pm & 5.15–7pm Mon–Sat, 10am–12.45pm & 5.15–7pm Sun). Although it's bathed in rich red carpet and graced with fine timber seating, the few artworks gathered here are of minor interest. Among

them figure a *pietà* by Bartolomeo Bermejo. A couple of doors down in the northwest corner of the cloister is the **Capella de Santa Llúcia**, one of the few reminders of Romanesque Barcelona (although the interior is largely Gothic). Walk out the door on to Carrer de Santa Llúcia and turn around to look at the exterior – you can see that, although incorporated into La Catedral, it is a separate building.

Upon exiting the Capella de Santa Llúcia, wander into the 16th-century **Casa de l'Ardiaca** (Archdeacon's House; ☎ 9am–9pm Mon–Fri, 9am–2pm Sat) opposite, which houses the city's archives. You may stroll around the supremely serene courtyard, cooled by trees and a fountain; it was renovated by Lluís Domènech i Montaner in 1902, when the building was owned by the lawyers' college. Montaner also designed the postal slot, which is adorned with swallows and a tortoise, said to represent the swiftness of truth and the plodding pace of justice. You can get a good glimpse at some stout **Roman wall** in here. Climb the stairs to the next level, from where you can look down into the courtyard and across to La Catedral.

You may visit La Catedral in one of two ways. In the morning or afternoon, entrance is free and you can opt to visit any combination of the choir stalls, chapter house and roof. To visit all three, it costs less (and is less crowded) to enter for the so-called 'special visit' between 1.00pm and 5pm.

Across Carrer del Bisbe is the 17th-century **Palau Episcopal** or Palau del Bisbat (Bishop's Palace). Virtually nothing remains of the original 13th-century structure. The Roman city's northwest gate stood here and you can see the lower segments of the Roman towers that stood on either side of the gate at the base of the Palau Episcopal and Casa de l'Ardiaca. In fact, the lower part of the entire northwest wall of the Casa de l'Ardiaca is of Roman origin – you can also make out part of the first arch of a Roman aqueduct.

Across Plaça Nova from La Catedral your eye may be caught by childlike scribbles on the façade of the **Col·legi de Arquitectes** (Architectural College). It is, in fact, a giant contribution by Picasso done in 1962, representing Mediterranean festivals and much ridiculed by the local press when it was unveiled.

## MUSEU D'HISTÒRIA DE LA CIUTAT

Map pp64–5

☎ 93 256 21 00; www.museuhistoria.bcn.cat; Carrer del Veguer; adult/child under 7yr/senior & student €6/free/4 (incl Museu-Monestir de Pedralbes & Park Güell Centre de Accollida), from 4pm 1st Sat of month free; ☎ 10am–2pm & 4–7pm Tue–Sat, 10am–3pm Sun Oct–Mar, 10am–8pm Tue–Sat, 10am–3pm Sun Apr–Sep; ☎ Jaume I Leap back into Roman Barcino with a subterranean stroll and then stride around parts of the former Palau Reial Major (Grand Royal Palace) on Plaça del Rei (King's Sq, the former palace's courtyard), among the key locations of medieval princely power in Barcelona, in what is one of Barcelona's most fascinating museums. The square is frequently the scene of organised or impromptu concerts and is one of the most atmospheric corners of the medieval city.

Enter through **Casa Padellàs**, just south of Plaça del Rei. Casa Padellàs was built for a 16th-century noble family in Carrer dels Mercaders and moved here, stone by stone, in the 1930s. It has a courtyard typical of Barcelona's late-Gothic and baroque mansions, with a graceful external staircase up to the 1st floor. Today it leads to a restored Roman tower and a section of Roman wall (whose exterior faces Plaça Ramon de Berenguer el Gran).

Below ground is a remarkable walk through about 4 sq km of excavated Roman and Visigothic Barcelona. After the display on the typical Roman *domus* (villa), you reach a public laundry (outside in the street were containers for people to urinate into, as the urine was used as disinfectant). You pass more laundries and dyeing shops, a 6th-century public cold-water bath and more dye shops. As you hit the *Cardo Minor* (a main street), you turn right then left and reach various shops dedicated to the making of *garum*. This paste, a fave food across the Roman Empire, was made of mashed-up fish intestines, eggs and blood. Occasionally prawns, cockles and herbs were added to create other flavours. Further on are fish preserve stores. Fish were sliced up (and all innards removed for making *garum*) and laid in alternate layers with salt to preserve (left sitting in troughs for about three weeks before being ready for sale and export).

Next come remnants of a 6th- to 7th-century church and Episcopal buildings,



## NIGHT PASSAGES

On hot summer nights in July and August, the Museu d'Historia de la Ciutat (along with its branches: Museu-Monestir de Pedralbes, Park Güell Centre de Acollida, Museu-Casa Verdaguera, Espai Santa Caterina and the Refugi 307 air-raid shelter) stages guided tours and other nocturnal events. For programmes, check out No Tanquem A La Nit ([www.notanquemalanit.cat](http://www.notanquemalanit.cat), in Catalan).

followed by wine-making stores, with ducts for allowing the must to flow off and ceramic, round-bottomed *dolia* for storing and ageing wine. Ramparts then wind around and upward, past remains of the gated patio of a Roman house, the medieval Palau Episcopal (Bishops' Palace) and into two broad vaulted halls, with displays on medieval Barcelona.

You eventually emerge at a hall and ticket office set up on the north side of Plaça del Rei. To your right is the **Saló del Tinell**, the banqueting hall of the royal palace and a fine example of Catalan Gothic (built 1359–70). Its broad arches and bare walls give a sense of solemnity that would have made an appropriate setting for Fernando and Isabel to hear Columbus' first reports of the New World. The hall is sometimes used for temporary exhibitions, which may cost extra, and mean that your peaceful contemplation of its architectural majesty is somewhat obstructed.

As you leave the Saló you come to the 14th-century **Capella Reial de Santa Àgata**, the palace chapel. Outside, a spindly bell tower rises from the northeast side of Plaça del Rei. Inside, all is bare except for the 15th-century altarpiece and the magnificent *techumbre* (decorated timber ceiling). The altarpiece is considered to be one of Jaume Huguet's finest surviving works.

Head down the fan-shaped stairs into Plaça del Rei and look up to observe the **Mirador del Rei Martí** (lookout tower of King Martin), built in 1555, long after the king's death. It is part of Arxiu de la Corona d'Aragón and so the magnificent views over the old city are now enjoyed by a privileged few.

From Plaça del Rei it's worth taking a detour northeast to see the two best surviving stretches of Barcelona's **Roman walls**, which once boasted 78 towers (as much a matter of prestige as of defence). One is on

the southwest side of Plaça Ramon de Berenguer el Gran, with the Capella Reial de Santa Àgata atop. The square itself is dominated by a statue of Ramon de Berenguer el Gran done by Josep Llimona in 1880. The other is a little further south, by the northern end of Carrer del Sotstinent Navarro. The Romans built and reinforced these walls in the 3rd and 4th centuries AD, after the first attacks by Germanic tribes from the north.

### **PALAU DEL LLOCTINENT** Map pp64–5

**Carrer dels Comtes de Barcelona; admission free;**  
🕒 10am–7pm; 🚶 Jaume I

The southwest side of Plaça del Rei is taken up by this palace, built in the 1550s as the residence of the Spanish *lloctinent* (viceroy) of Catalonia and later converted into a convent. From 1853, it housed the Arxiu de la Corona d'Aragón, a unique archive with documents detailing the history of the Crown of Aragón and Catalonia, starting in the 12th century and reaching down to the 20th. Gracefully restored in 2006, its courtyard is worth wandering through. Have a look upwards from the main staircase to admire the extraordinary timber *artesonado*, a sculpted ceiling made to seem like the upturned hull of a boat. It was done in the 16th century by Antoni Carbonell. Exhibitions, usually related in some way to the archives, are also staged. In 2008, precious documents relating to Jaume I El Conqueridor were on show. Indeed, it was in his reign that systematic copying and storage of royal and government documents began in earnest – forming the initial nucleus of the Arxiu. When you walk outside the main entrance, look at the *putti* on the right side of the main façade below the window – one seems to be showing a bellows up the other's backside. And have a glance at the walls of La Catedral. See all the grooves cut into the stone? It's believed that the viceroy's soldiers used the church walls to sharpen their weapons.

### **MUSEU FREDERIC MARÈS** Map pp64–5

☎ 93 256 35 00; [www.museumares.bcn.es](http://www.museumares.bcn.es); **Plaça de Sant Lu 5-6; adult/child under 16yr/senior & student €4.20/free/2.40, Wed afternoons & 1st Sun of month free;** 🕒 10am–7pm Tue–Sat, 10am–3pm Sun & holidays; 🚶 Jaume I

This eclectic collection is housed in what was once part of the medieval Palau Reial

Major, on Carrer dels Comtes de Barcelona. A rather worn coat-of-arms on the wall indicates that it was also, for a while, the seat of the Spanish Inquisition in Barcelona. Frederic Marès i Deulovol (1893–1991) was a rich scrapper, traveller and obsessive collector. He specialised in medieval Spanish sculpture, huge quantities of which are displayed in the basement and on the ground and 1st floors – including some lovely polychrome wooden sculptures of the Crucifixion and the Virgin. Among the most eye-catching pieces is a reconstructed Romanesque doorway with four arches, taken from a 13th-century country church in the Aragonese province of Huesca.

The top two floors hold a mind-boggling array of knick-knacks, from toy soldiers and cribs to scissors and 19th-century playing cards, from early still cameras to pipes, from fine ceramics to a room that once served as Marès' study and library, but is now crammed with sculpture. The shady courtyard houses a pleasant summer café (Cafè de l'Estiu).

### **CASA DE LA PIA ALMOINA (MUSEU DIOCESÀ)** Map pp64–5

☎ 93 315 22 13; [www.arqbcn.org](http://www.arqbcn.org), in Catalan; **Avinguda de la Catedral 4; adult/child under 7yr/senior & student €6/free/3;** 🕒 10am–2pm & 5–8pm Tue–Sat, 11am–2pm Sun; 🚶 Jaume I  
Barcelona's Roman walls ran across present-day Plaça de la Seu into what subsequently became the Casa de la Pia Almoina. The city's main centre of charity was located here in the 11th century, although the much-crumbled remains of the present building date to the 15th century. Today it houses the Museu Diocesà (Diocesan Museum), where a sparse collection of medieval religious art is on display, usually supplemented by a temporary exhibition or two.

### **PLAÇA DE SANT JAUME** Map pp64–5

🚶 Jaume I

In the 2000 or so years since the Romans settled here, the area around this square (often remodelled), which started life as the forum, has been the focus of Barcelona's civic life. Facing each other across it are the Palau de la Generalitat (seat of Catalonia's regional government) on the north side and the Ajuntament (Town Hall) to

the south. Both have fine Gothic interiors, which, unhappily, the public can enter only at limited times.

Founded in the early 15th century on land that had largely belonged to the city's by-then defunct Jewish community to house Catalonia's government, the **Palau de la Generalitat** (🕒 free guided visit 10am–1pm 2nd & 4th Sun of month plus 23 Apr, 11 Sep & 24 Sep) was extended over the centuries as its importance (and bureaucracy) grew.

Marc Safont designed the original Gothic main entrance on Carrer del Bisbe. The modern main entrance on Plaça de Sant Jaume is a late-Renaissance job with neo-classical leanings. If you wander by in the evening, squint up through the windows into the **Saló de Sant Jordi** (Hall of St George) and you will get some idea of the sumptuousness of the interior.

If you *do* get inside, you're in for a treat. Normally you will have to enter from Carrer de Sant Sever. The first rooms you pass through are characterised by low vaulted ceilings. From here you head upstairs to the raised courtyard known as the **Pati dels Tarongers**, a modest Gothic orangery (opened about once a month for concert performances of the palace's chimes; see p216). The 16th-century **Sala Daurada i de Sessions**, one of the rooms leading off the patio, is a splendid meeting hall lit up by huge chandeliers. Still more imposing is the Renaissance Saló de Sant Jordi, whose murals were added last century – many an occasion of pomp and circumstance takes place here. Finally, you descend the staircase of the Gothic **Pati Central** to leave by what was, in the beginning, the building's main entrance.

Facing the Palau de la Generalitat, and otherwise known as the Casa de la Ciutat, the **Ajuntament** (☎ 010; admission free; 🕒 10am–1pm Sun) has been the seat of city power for centuries. The Consell de Cent, from medieval times the city's ruling council, first sat here in the 14th century, but the building has lamentably undergone many changes since the days of Barcelona's Gothic-era splendour.

Only the original, now disused, entrance on Carrer de la Ciutat retains its Gothic ornament. The main 19th-century neo-classical façade on the square is a charmless riposte to the Palau de la Generalitat. Inside, the **Saló de Cent** is the hall in which the town council once held its plenary sessions.

The broad vaulting is pure Catalan Gothic and the *artesonado* ceiling demonstrates fine work. In fact, much of what you see is comparatively recent. The building was badly damaged in a bombardment in 1842 and has been repaired and tampered with repeatedly. The wooden neo-Gothic seating was added at the beginning of the 20th century, as was the grand alabaster *retablo* (retable, or altarpiece) at the back. To the right you enter the small **Saló de la Reina Regente**, built in 1860, where the Ajuntament now sits. To the left of the Saló de Cent is the **Saló de les Croniques** – the murals here recount Catalan exploits in Greece and the Near East in Catalonia's empire-building days.

Behind the Ajuntament rise the awful town hall offices built in the 1970s over Plaça de Sant Miquel. Opposite is a rare 15th-century gem, **Casa Centelles**, on the corner of Baixada de Sant Miquel. You can wander into the fine Gothic-Renaissance courtyard if the gates are open.

## PLAÇA DE SANT JOSEP ORIOL & AROUND

Map pp64–5

**M Liceu**  
This small plaza is the prettiest in the Barri Gòtic. Its bars and cafés attract buskers and artists and make it a lively place to hang out. It is surrounded by quaint streets, many dotted with appealing cafés, restaurants and shops.

Looming over the square is the flank of the **Església de Santa Maria del Pi** (☎ 8.30am–1pm & 4.30–9pm Mon–Sat, 9am–2pm & 5–9pm Sun & holidays), a Gothic church built in the 14th to 16th centuries. The bulk of it was completed in 1320–91. With its 10m diameter, the beautiful rose window above its entrance on Plaça del Pi is claimed by some to be the world's biggest. The interior of the church was gutted when leftists ransacked it in the opening months of the civil war in 1936 and most of the stained glass is modern. Perhaps one happy result of the fire was the destruction of the 19th-century, neo-Gothic seating, which therefore had to be replaced by the 18th-century baroque original.

The third chapel on the left is dedicated to Sant Josep Oriol, who was parish priest here from 1687 to 1702. The chapel has a map showing the places in the church where he worked numerous miracles

## MANIC MONDAYS

Many attractions shut their doors on Monday but there are plenty of exceptions. Among the more enticing ones are: Casa-Museu Gaudí (Park Güell); Gran Teatre del Liceu; Jardí Botànic; La Catedral; La Pedrera; La Sagrada Família; Monument a Colom; Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (Macba); Museu de l'Eròtica; Museu de la Xocolata; Museu del Futbol Club Barcelona; Museu Marítim; Palau de la Música Catalana and the Pavelló Mies van der Rohe.

(he was canonised in 1909). According to legend, a 10th-century fisherman discovered an image of the Virgin Mary in a *pi* (pine tree) he was intent on cutting down to build a boat. Struck by the vision, he instead built a little chapel, later to be succeeded by this Gothic church. A pine still grows in the square.

## PLAÇA REIAL

Map pp64–5

**M Liceu**  
Just south of Carrer de Ferran, near its La Rambla end, Plaça Reial is a traffic-free plaza whose 19th-century neoclassical façades hide numerous eateries, bars and nightspots. It was created on the site of a convent, one of several destroyed along La Rambla (the strip was fairly teeming with religious institutions) in the wake of the Spain-wide disentailment laws that stripped the Church of much of its property. The lampposts by the central fountain are Antoni Gaudí's first known works.

Residents here have a rough time of it, with noise a virtual constant as punters crowd in and out of restaurants, bars and *discotecas* (clubs) at all hours. Downright dangerous until the 1980s, the square retains a restless atmosphere, where unsuspecting tourists, respectable citizens, ragged buskers, down-and-outs and sharp-witted pickpockets come face to face. Don't be put off, but watch your pockets.

The southern half of the Barri Gòtic is imbued with the memory of Picasso, who lived as a teenager with his family in Carrer de la Mercè, had his first studio in Carrer de la Plata (now a rather cheesy restaurant) and was a regular visitor to a brothel at Carrer d'Avinyó 27. That experience may have inspired his 1907 painting *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*.

## GRAN TEATRE DEL LICEU

Map pp64–5  
☎ 93 485 99 00; [www.liceubarcelona.com](http://www.liceubarcelona.com); La Rambla dels Caputxins 51–59; admission with/without guide €8.50/4; ☎ guided tour 10am, unguided visits 11.30am, noon, 12.30pm & 1pm; **M Liceu** If you can't catch a night at the opera, you can still have a look around one of Europe's greatest opera houses, known to locals as the Liceu. Smaller than Milan's La Scala but bigger than Venice's La Fenice, it can seat up to 2300 people in its grand horseshoe auditorium.

Built in 1847, the Liceu launched such Catalan stars as Josep (aka José) Carreras and Montserrat Caballé. Fire virtually destroyed it in 1994, but city authorities were quick to get it back into operation. Carefully reconstructing the 19th-century auditorium and installing the latest in theatre technology, technicians brought the Liceu back to life in October 1999. You can take a quick turn around the main public areas of the theatre or join one of two guided tours.

On the guided tour you are taken to the grand foyer, with its thick pillars and sumptuous chandeliers, and then up the marble staircase to the **Saló dels Miralls** (Hall of Mirrors). These both survived the 1994 fire and the latter was traditionally where theatre-goers mingled during intermission. With mirrors, ceiling frescoes, fluted columns and high-and-mighty phrases in praise of the arts, it all exudes a typically neobaroque richness worthy of its 19th-century patrons. You are then led up to the 4th-floor stalls to admire the theatre itself.

The tour also takes in a collection of Modernista art, El Cercle del Liceu, which contains works by Ramon Casas.

## MONUMENT A COLOM

Map pp64–5  
☎ 93 302 52 24; Plaça del Portal de la Pau; lift adult/child under 4yr/senior & child 4–12yr €2.50/free/1.50; ☎ 9am–8.30pm Jun–Sep, 10am–6.30pm Oct–May; **M Drassanes**

High above the swirl of traffic on the roundabout below, a pigeon-poop-coiffed Columbus keeps permanent watch, pointing vaguely out to the Mediterranean (to his home town of Genoa?). Built for the Universal Exhibition in 1888, the monument allows you to zip up 60m in the lift for bird's-eye views back up La Rambla and across the ports of Barcelona. It was

in Barcelona that Columbus allegedly gave the delighted Catholic monarchs a report of his first discoveries in the Americas after his voyage in 1492. In the 19th century, it was popularly believed here that Columbus was one of Barcelona's most illustrious sons. Some historians still make that claim.

## ESGLÉSIA DE SANTS JUST I PASTOR

Map pp64–5

☎ 93 301 74 33; [www.basilicasantjust.cat](http://www.basilicasantjust.cat), in Catalan; Plaça de Sant Just 5; admission free; ☎ 11am–1pm & 5–9pm Wed–Sat, 11am–2pm & 5–8pm Tue, 10am–1.30pm Sun; **M Liceu**

This somewhat neglected, single-nave church, with chapels on either side of the buttressing, was built in 1342 in Catalan Gothic style on what is reputedly the site of the oldest parish church in Barcelona. Inside, you can admire some fine stained-glass windows. In front of it, in a pretty little square that was used as a set (a smelly Parisian marketplace) in 2006 for *Perfume: The Story of a Murderer*, is what is claimed to be the city's oldest Gothic fountain.

On the morning of 11 September 1924, Antoni Gaudí was arrested as he attempted to enter the church from this square to attend Mass. In those days of the dictatorship of General Primo de Rivera, it took little to ruffle official feathers, and Gaudí's refusal to speak Spanish (Castilian) to the overbearing Guardia Civil officers who had stopped him earned him the better part of a day in the cells until a friend came to bail him out.

## CENTRE D'INTERPRETACIÓ DEL CALL

Map pp64–5

☎ 93 256 21 22; [www.museuhistoria.bcn.cat](http://www.museuhistoria.bcn.cat); Placeta de Manuel Ribé s/n; admission free; ☎ 10am–2pm Wed–Fri, 11am–6pm Sat, 11am–3pm Sun & holidays; **M Jaume I**

Once a 14th-century house of the Jewish weaver Jucef Bonhiac, this small visitor's centre is dedicated to the history of Barcelona's Jewish quarter, or Call. Glass sections in the ground floor allow you to inspect Mr Bonhiac's former wells and storage space. The house, also known as the Casa de l'Alquimista (the Alchemist's House), hosts a very modest display of Jewish artefacts, including ceramics excavated in the area of the Call, along with explanations and maps of the one-time Jewish quarter.

The area between Carrer dels Banys Nous and Plaça de Sant Jaume was the heart of the city's medieval Jewish quarter, or Call Major, until the Jews were expelled in the late 15th century. The Call Menor extended across the modern Carrer de Ferran as far as Baixada de Sant Miquel and Carrer d'En Rauric. The present Església de Sant Jaume on Carrer de Ferran was built on the site of a synagogue.

Even before their expulsion in 1492, Jews were not exactly privileged citizens. As in many medieval centres, they were obliged to wear a special identifying mark on their garments and had trouble getting permission to expand their ghetto as the Call's population increased (as many as 4000 people were crammed into the tiny streets of the Call Major).

### SINAGOGA MAJOR Map pp64–5

☎ 93 317 07 90; [www.calldebarcelona.org](http://www.calldebarcelona.org); Carrer de Marlet 5; admission €2 donation; ☎ 11am–6pm Mon–Sat, 11am–3pm Sun; 🚶 Liceu

When an Argentine investor bought a run-down electrician's store with an eye to converting it into central Barcelona's umpteenth bar, he could hardly have known he had stumbled onto the remains of what could be the city's main medieval synagogue (some historians cast doubt on the claim). Remnants of medieval and Roman-era walls remain in the small vaulted space that you enter from the street. Also remaining are tanners' wells installed in the 15th century. The second chamber has been spruced up for use as a synagogue. A remnant of late-Roman-era wall here, given its orientation facing Jerusalem, has led some to speculate that there was a synagogue here even in Roman times. There were four synagogues in the medieval city but, after the pogroms of 1391, this one (assuming it was the Sinagoga Major) was Christianised by the placing of an effigy of St Dominic on the building. A guide will explain what is thought to be the significance of the site in various languages.

### TEMPLE ROMÀ D'AUGUSTÍ Map pp64–5

Carrer del Paradis; admission free; ☎ 10am–2pm Mon–Sat; 🚶 Jaume I

Opposite the southeast end of La Catedral, narrow Carrer del Paradis leads towards Plaça de Sant Jaume. Inside No 10, itself

an intriguing building with Gothic and baroque touches, are four columns and the architrave of Barcelona's main Roman temple, dedicated to Caesar Augustus and built to worship his imperial highness in the 1st century AD. You are now standing on the highest point of Roman Barcino – Mont Tàber (a grand total of 16.9m, unlikely to induce altitude sickness). You may well find the door open outside the listed hours. Just pop in.

### ROMAN TOMBS Map pp64–5

Plaça de la Vila de Madrid; 🚶 Catalunya

Along Carrer de la Canuda, a block east of the top end of La Rambla, is a sunken garden where a series of Roman tombs lie exposed. The burial ground stretches along either side of the road leading northwest out of Barcelona's Roman predecessor, Barcino.

### MUSEU DE L'ERÒTICA Map pp64–5

☎ 93 318 98 65; [www.erotica-museum.com](http://www.erotica-museum.com); La Rambla de Sant Josep 96; adult/senior & student €7.50/6.50; ☎ 10am–midnight Jun–Sep, 11am–9pm Oct–May; 🚶 Liceu

Observe what naughtiness people have been getting up to since ancient times in this Erotica Museum, with lots of Kamasutra and 1920s flickering porn movies. The museum caters to all tastes. For those red-faced about entering such a scurrilous place, there really is a lot of sound historical material, such as Indian bas-reliefs showing various aspects of Tantric love, 18th-century wood carvings depicting Kamasutra positions (can normal people really engage in all these gymnastics?), Japanese porcelain porn and the like. An array of modern, vaguely erotic artwork also lends intellectual weight to the exercise. Altogether more fun are the 18th-century S&M torture room, the rather complicated, dildo-equipped 'pleasure seat' and early-20th-century skin flicks.

### MUSEU DE CERA Map pp64–5

☎ 93 317 26 49; [www.museocerabcn.com](http://www.museocerabcn.com); Passatge de la Banca 7; adult/child under 5yr/senior & child 5–11yr €7.50/free/4.50; ☎ 10am–10pm daily Jun–Sep, 10am–1.30pm & 4–7.30pm Mon–Fri, 11am–2pm & 4.30–8.30pm Sat, Sun & holidays Oct–May; 🚶 Drassanes

Inside this late-19th-century building you can stand, sit and lounge about with 300

wax figures. Frankenstein is here, along with a rather awkward-looking Prince Charles with Camilla. As if to show us what she feels, Princess Di is elsewhere giving Mother Teresa a hand. *Star Wars* characters prance in sci-fi style, making poor old Don Quixote look a little forlorn. Dalí had to be in the crowd, along with more exotic figures like Ali Bey, the 18th-century Barcelona-born spy in Mecca. The museum also houses a hall of horror (how could it not?!).

### ESGLÉSIA DE LA MERCÈ Map pp64–5

Plaça de la Mercè; 🚶 Drassanes

Raised in the 1760s on the site of its Gothic predecessor, the baroque Església de la Mercè is home to Barcelona's most celebrated patron saint. It was badly damaged during the civil war. What remains is, however, quite a curiosity. The baroque façade facing the square contrasts with the Renaissance flank along Carrer Ample. The latter was actually moved here from another nearby church that was subsequently destroyed in the 1870s.

### DALÍ ESCULTOR Map pp64–5

Carrer dels Arcs 5; admission €8; ☎ 10am–10pm; 🚶 Liceu

One of the best things about this collection is its superb location in the Reial Cercle Artístic (Royal Art Circle) building just near La Catedral. This somewhat hyped display offers 60-odd little-known sculptures by a man who was largely renowned for his paintings. Documents, sketches and photos by and of the artist complete the picture. If you can't visit his [museum-mausoleum \(p249\)](#) in Figueres, this is no substitute, but does provide some clues to the life and work of the moustachioed maestro.

### MUSEU DEL CALÇAT Map pp64–5

☎ 93 301 45 33; Plaça de Sant Felip Neri 5; admission €2.50; ☎ 11am–2pm Tue–Sun; 🚶 Jaume I

This obscurely located Footwear Museum is home to everything from Egyptian sandals to dainty ladies' shoes of the 18th century. The museum and cobblers' guild, which has its roots in the city's medieval past, was moved here shortly after the civil war.

## HIDDEN TREASURES IN THE BARRI GÒTIC

### Walking Tour

#### WALK FACTS

Start Roman Tombs  
Finish Centre Cívic Pati Llimona  
Distance 1.5km  
Duration 30 minutes  
Transport 🚶 Catalunya or Liceu

#### 1 Roman Tombs

On Plaça de la Vila de Madrid is a sunken garden with various [Roman tombs \(opposite\)](#) lined up. It is speculated that they were in a burial ground along a branch road connecting Roman Barcino with the Via Augusta, which linked Rome and Cádiz.

#### 2 Església de Santa Anna

In a tranquil square just off busy Carrer de Santa Anna lies this rarely visited church. The unassuming Església de Santa Anna dates from the 12th century, but little remains of the original Romanesque structure. The Gothic cloister is a shady haven – if you can get in. It's open sporadically.

#### 3 Palace Walls of Guifré el Pelós

Stroll along Carrer de N'Amargos and muse on the plaque at No 8. It claims the palace garden walls of the first Comte (Count) of Barcelona, Guifré el Pelós (Wilfred the Hair; see [p22](#)), stood here. Carrer de N'Amargos was the first street in Barcelona to get gas lighting.

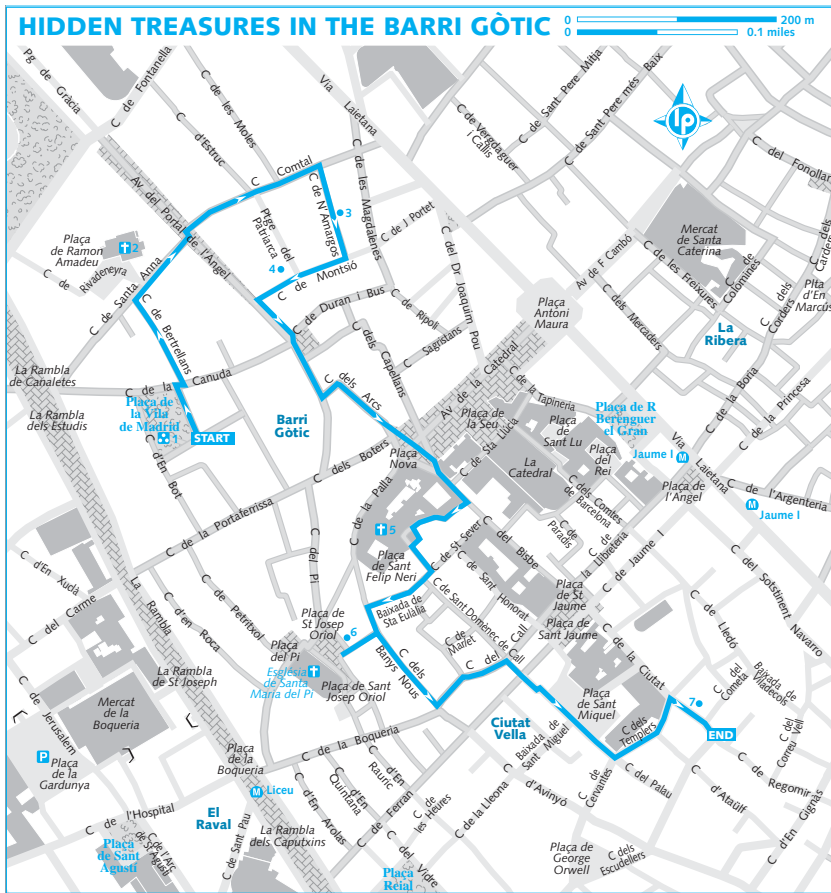
#### 4 Els Quatre Gats

Near the supposed site of Wilfred's palace is a Modernista icon at Carrer de Montsió 3. 'The Four Cats', a colourful if mediocre restaurant, started life as Casa Martí (1896), built by Puig i Cadafalch. From 1897 to 1903, it was *the* hang-out for Modernista artists and other bohemians, from Picasso to composer Enric Granados.

#### 5 Església de Sant Felip Neri

The baroque façade of the Església de Sant Felip Neri (completed in 1752) has been shattered by the impact of machine-gun fire. One story says that pro-Franco troops carried out summary executions here shortly after they





marched into the city in 1939. An eerie silence hangs over the square.

### 6 Palau de Fiveller

Gracing Plaça de Sant Josep Oriol (at No 4), just opposite the silent stone flank of the **Església de Santa Maria del Pi** (p70), stands Palau de Fiveller, a one-time private mansion dating from 1571. The façade dates from the 18th century.

### 7 Centre Cívic Pati Llimona

Remains of Roman Barcino's southernmost city gate, as well as parts of the 3rd- and 4th-century city wall, line Carrer de Regomir. To get a closer look at the ruins, enter the **Centre Cívic Pati Llimona** (☎ 93 268 47 00; admission free; ☒ 9am-2pm & 4.30-8.30pm). Just beyond the gate at No 13 stands a 15th-century mansion, **Casa Gualbes**.

## EL RAVAL

Drinking & Nightlife p200; Eating p174; Shopping p156; Sleeping p233

Long one of the most rough-and-tumble parts of Barcelona, El Raval is becoming so hip in a grungy, inner-city way that they've even invented a verb for rambling around El Raval – *ravalejar*.

El Raval (an Arabic word referring to the suburbs beyond the medieval walls that long lined La Rambla) has had a chequered history. Its bottom half is better known as the Barri Xinès, a seedy red-light zone that even today, after decades of efforts to clean it up, retains a touch of its dodgy feel.

For centuries the area has been home to prostitutes, louche lads and, at times, a bohemian collection of interlopers. In the 1920s and '30s especially, it was a popular playground with Barcelonins of many classes, busy at night with the rambunctious activity in taverns, *cafés concerts*, cabarets and brothels. Carrer Nou de la Rambla, where Picasso lived for a while, was particularly lively. By the 1960s, many of the brothels and bars had shut down, but there was still plenty of activity, especially when the American fleet came to town. This was also the haunt of Pepe Carvalho, the dissolute star of Barcelona writer Manuel Vázquez Montalbán's much-loved detective stories (see p37).

Recent waves of immigration have changed the make-up of El Raval completely. It has become the main centre for the city's busy Pakistani population, and has sizeable contingents from North Africa and the Philippines. It is estimated that the percentage of migrants living in El Raval has gone from 3% to 55% since the mid-1990s.

Just as great an impact has come from the explosion of bars and restaurants. While it may never attain the popularity of El Born, El Raval has arrived. Suddenly swarms of more adventurous locals and curious visitors have opened up the area to joyous exploration, especially by night.

Bounded by La Rambla in the east and Ronda de Sant Antoni, Ronda de Sant Pau and Avinguda del Paral·lel to the west and south, El Raval started life as a higgledy-piggledy suburb of medieval Barcelona. Here and there, we stumble across reminders of the area's long history, from Romanesque cloisters to the medieval shipyards of Les Drassanes.

Carrer de l'Hospital, named after the city's 15th-century hospital and once the road to Madrid, roughly divides the area in two. The northern half has an almost respectable air about it. It is certainly full of diversity. From the Meridien hotel on expensive Carrer del Pintor Fortuny you are a couple of blocks away from the colourful Mercat de la Boqueria produce market, a feast of contemporary art at the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (Macba), art galleries, the University of Barcelona's history, geography and philosophy faculties (with some 6000 students), the journalism school of Universitat Ramon Llull and the Massana conservatorium. At night, students fill the bars on Carrer de Valldonzella and Carrer de Joaquín Costa.

Carrer de l'Hospital marks a crossroads. Home to an unassuming mosque (virtually opposite the national library and one of five in the district), the street is lined with bars that are more reminiscent of Tangier than Spain. The street fills with faithful male Muslims around midday on Fridays for the week's main prayers. The western end of the street has been largely taken over by Pakistanis and North Africans, who have opened *cafés*, halal butcher shops and barbers. In La Rambla del Raval, which replaced a whole slum block in 2000, Pakistanis sometimes play cricket, while a youthful set of hedonists checks out kebab shops and a growing assortment of bars.

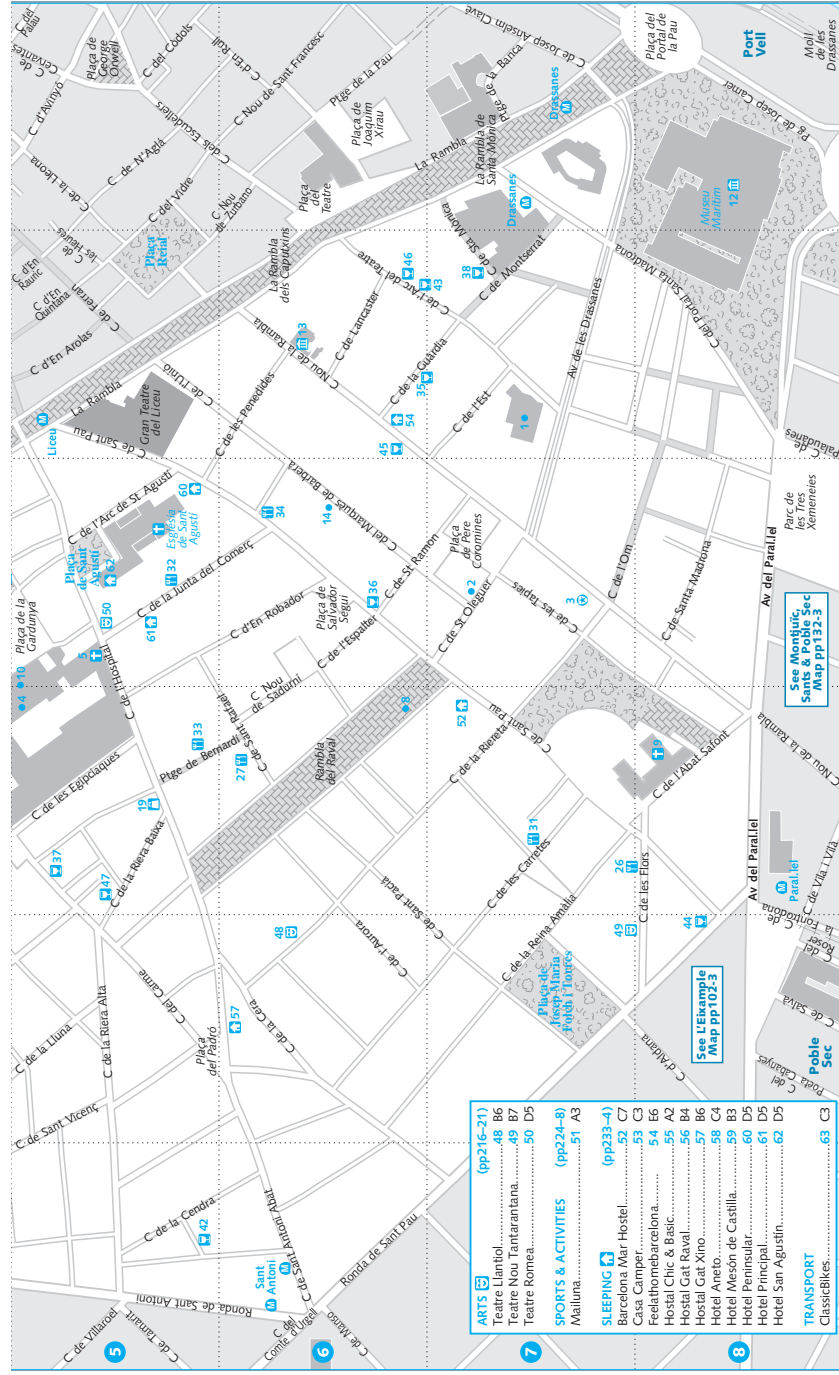
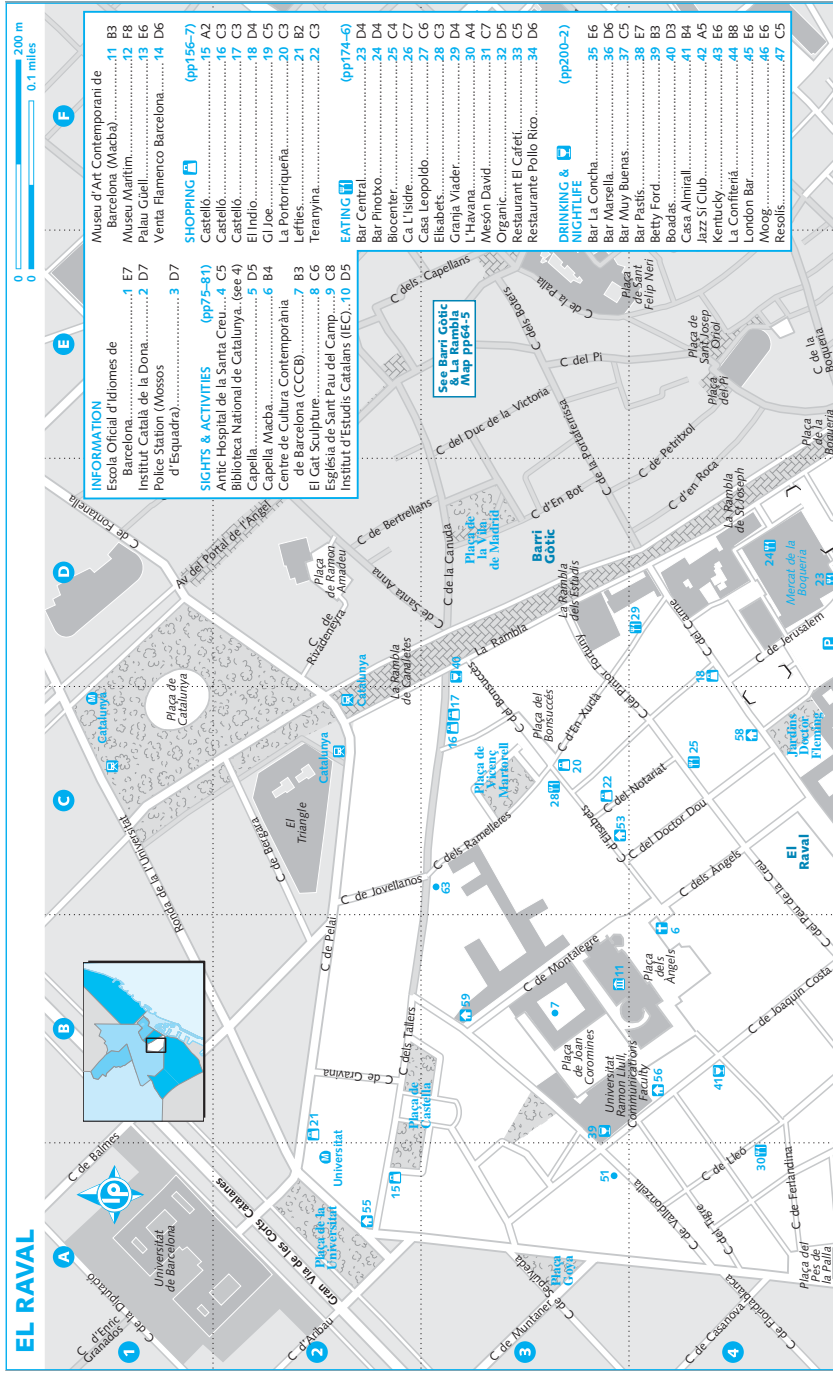
Between Carrer de l'Hospital and the waterfront, El Raval retains some of its dodgy flavour of yore. A five-star hotel and the city's central cinema archive are planned for the area bound by the Rambla del Raval and Carrer de Sant Pau (where excavations have uncovered traces of the city's 17th-century women's prison). But for the moment, the latter street remains a haunt of

## top picks

### EL RAVAL

- **Museu Marítim** (p78)
- **Antic Hospital de la Santa Creu** (p78)
- **Palau Güell** (p79)
- **Església de Sant Pau del Camp** (p80)
- **Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona** (Macba; p79)





junkies and dealers, while Carrer de Sant Ramon is particularly busy with streetwalkers – some traditions die hard. Some fine old bars have stood the test of time in these streets. Increasingly their customers are a mix of locals and tourists.

El Raval is encircled by three Metro lines. Línies 1, 2 and 3 stop at strategic points right around the district, so nothing is far from a Metro stop. The Línia 3 stop at Liceu is the most strategic exit point.

### MUSEU MARÍTIM Map pp76–7

☎ 93 342 99 20; [www.museumaritimbarcelona.cat](http://www.museumaritimbarcelona.cat); **Avinguda de les Drassanes**; **adult/child under 7yr/senior & student €6.50/free/3.25, 3–8pm 1st Sat of month free**; ☎ 10am–8pm; **M** **Drassanes**  
Venice had its Arsenal and Barcelona the Reials Drassanes (Royal Shipyards), from which Don Juan of Austria's flagship galley was launched to lead a joint Spanish–Venetian fleet into the momentous Battle of Lepanto against the Turks in 1571.

These mighty Gothic shipyards are not as extensive as their Venetian counterpart but they're an extraordinary piece of civilian architecture nonetheless. Today the broad arches shelter the Museu Marítim, the city's seafaring-history museum and one of the most fascinating in town.

The shipyards were, in their heyday, among the greatest in Europe. Begun in the 13th century and completed by 1378, the long, arched bays (the highest arches reach 13m) once sloped off as slipways directly into the water – which lapped the seaward side of the Drassanes until at least the end of the 18th century.

The centre of the shipyards is dominated by a full-sized replica (made in the 1970s) of Don Juan of Austria's flagship. A clever audio-visual display aboard the vessel brings to life the ghastly existence of the slaves, prisoners and volunteers(!) who at full steam could haul this vessel along at 9 knots. They remained chained to their seats, four to an oar, at all times. Here they worked, drank (fresh water was stored below decks, where the infirmary was also located), ate, slept and went to the loo. You could *smell* a galley like this from miles away.

Fishing vessels, old navigation charts, models and dioramas of the Barcelona waterfront make up the rest of this engaging museum. Temporary exhibitions, often on wholly unrelated subjects, are also held. The pleasant museum café offers courtyard seating. A palm-top audio-guide, which allows you to email content to yourself when you're finished, is available.

Outside and partly obscured by rampant vegetation on the Avinguda del Paral·lel

side of the building are the most significant remnants of the **city walls**, erected here in the 13th century and later extended under count-king Pere el Cerimoniós (1336–87).

### ANTIC HOSPITAL DE LA SANTA CREU Map pp76–7

☎ 93 270 23 00; **Carrer de l'Hospital 56**; **M** **Liceu**  
Behind the Mercat de la Boqueria stands what was, in the 15th century, the city's main hospital. The restored Antic Hospital de la Santa Creu (Former Holy Cross Hospital) today houses the **Biblioteca Nacional de Catalunya** (National Library of Catalonia; admission free; ☎ 9am–8pm Mon–Fri, 9am–2pm Sat), as well as the **Institut d'Estudis Catalans** (Institute for Catalan Studies).

The library is the single most complete collection of documents (estimated at around three million) tracing the region's long history. The hospital, which was begun in 1401 and functioned until the 1930s, was considered one of the best in Europe in its medieval heyday.

Entering from Carrer de l'Hospital, you find yourself in a delightfully bedraggled, vaguely tropical garden that is home to bums, earnest students on a break and a cheerful **bar-café**. Off the garden lies the entrance to the prestigious Massana conservatorium and, up a sweep of stairs, the library. You can freely visit the most impressive part, the grand reading rooms beneath broad Gothic stone arches, where you can also see temporary displays of anything from old records to medieval monastic hymnals.

Otherwise, it is possible to join a tour on 23 April (Sant Jordi) and one day late in September (the date changes), when the entire building throws itself open for guided visits.

The visit takes you through the library's public areas and others usually closed to the public, such as the **Museu del Llibre Frederic Marès**, a former private ward in the hospital whose bright tile decoration of the stations of the cross was done in the 17th century. Marès donated 1500 documents and books to the library, some of which are on display.

He also sculpted the medallions of great figures of Catalan culture. Antoni Gaudí wound up in the Via Crucis ward in 1926 after being run over by a tram. He died here.

Approaching the complex down a narrow lane from Carrer del Carme or from Jardins del Doctor Fleming (the little park with swings), you arrive at the entrance to the Institute, which sometimes opens its doors for expositions. If it's open, wander into what was the 17th-century Casa de Convalescència de Sant Pau, which housed recovering patients from the hospital. At first, it hosted just seven men and five women. By the end of the 17th century, there were 200 beds and 400 mattresses and patients received meat and desserts (more than many might have hoped for outside). The hospice operated until the early 20th century. The building, which centres on a cloister, is richly decorated with ceramics (especially the entrance vestibule). In the centre of the cloister is a statue of St Paul, after whom the house is named. Up on the first floor at the far end is what was an orange garden, now named after the Catalan novelist Mercè Rodoreda.

**La Capella** (☎ 93 442 71 71; [www.bcn.cat/virreina](http://www.bcn.cat/virreina) expositions; admission free; ☎ noon–2pm & 4–8pm Tue–Sat, 11am–2pm Sun & holidays), the former hospital's Gothic chapel, is worth poking your nose into for the frequent temporary exhibitions.

### PALAU GÜELL Map pp76–7

☎ 93 317 39 74; [www.palauaguell.cat](http://www.palauaguell.cat); **Carrer Nou de la Rambla 3–5**; admission free; ☎ 10am–2.30pm Tue–Sat; **M** **Drassanes**

Welcome to the early days of Gaudí's fevered architectural imagination. This extraordinary Modernista mansion, one of the few major buildings of that era raised in Ciutat Vella, gives an insight into its maker's prodigious genius. He built it just off La Rambla in the late 1880s for his wealthy and faithful patron, the industrialist Eusebi Güell. Although a little sombre compared with some of his later whims, it is still a characteristic riot of styles (Gothic, Islamic, Art Nouveau) and materials. After the civil war, the police occupied it and tortured political prisoners in the basement.

Up two floors are the main hall and its annexes (closed for renovation at the time of writing). The hall is a parabolic pyramid – each wall an arch stretching up

### GOD'S ARCHITECT

Gaudí, virtually a pauper and doubtless ruminating on how to solve some architectural conundrum on his unfolding masterpiece, was run over by a tram in 1926. His story is far from over. The rector of La Sagrada Família, Lluís Bonet Armengol, is promoting Gaudí's beatification. In March 2000, the Vatican decided to proceed with the examination of the case for canonising him – at the time of writing no decision had been taken. Says Bonet Armengol, Gaudí's contemporaries 'knew he was God's architect'. Pilgrims already stop by at the crypt of La Sagrada Família (p104) to pay homage to him. One of the key sculptors at work on the church, the Japanese Etsuro Sotoo, converted to Catholicism because of his passion for Gaudí.

three floors and coming together to form a dome. The roof is a mad Gaudian tumult of tiled colour and fanciful design in the building's chimney pots.

Picasso – who, incidentally, hated Gaudí's work – began his Blue Period in 1902 in a studio across the street at Carrer Nou de la Rambla 10. Begging to differ with Sr Picasso, Unesco declared the Palau, together with Gaudí's other main works (La Sagrada Família, Casa Batlló, La Pedrera, Park Güell, Casa Vicens and Colònia Güell crypt) a World Heritage site.

The ground floor and basement reopened to the public in early 2008 after renovation. When the rest will open is unclear.

### MUSEU D'ART CONTEMPORANI DE BARCELONA (MACBA) Map pp76–7

☎ 93 412 08 10; [www.macba.es](http://www.macba.es); **Plaça dels Àngels 1**; **adult/concession €7.50/6, Wed €3.50**; ☎ 11am–8pm Mon & Wed, 11am–midnight Thu–Fri, 10am–8pm Sat, 10am–3pm Sun & holidays late Jun–late Sep, 11am–7.30pm Mon & Wed–Fri, 10am–8pm Sat, 10am–3pm Sun & holidays late Sep–late Jun; **M** **Universitat**

The ground and 1st floors of this great white bastion of contemporary art are given over to exhibitions from the gallery's own collections (some 3000 pieces centred on three periods: post-WWII, around 1968 and the years since the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989). You may see works by Antoni Tàpies, Joan Brossa, Paul Klee, Miquel Barceló and a whole raft of international talent, depending on the theme(s) of the ever-changing exposition.

The gallery also presents temporary exhibitions and has an extensive art bookshop. Outside, the spectacle is as intriguing as inside. While skateboarders dominate the space south of the museum (considered one of Europe's great skateboard locations), you may well find Pakistani kids enjoying a game of cricket in Plaça de Joan Coromines.

Across the main skateboard-infested square, the renovated 400-year-old Convent dels Àngels church houses the **Capella Macba** (Plaça dels Àngels; **M** Universitat), Macba regularly rotates selections from its permanent collection. Although largely gutted, the Gothic framework of the one-time convent church has been left intact.

### CENTRE DE CULTURA CONTEMPORÀNIA DE BARCELONA (CCCB) Map pp76–7

☎ 93 306 41 00; [www.cccb.org](http://www.cccb.org); Carrer de Montalegre 5; 2 exhibitions adult/child under 16yr/senior & student €6/free/4.40, 1 exhibition €4.40/free/3.30; 🕒 11am–8pm Tue–Wed & Fri–Sun, 11am–10pm Thu; **M** Universitat

A complex of auditoriums, exhibition spaces and conference halls opened here in 1994 in what had been an 18th-century hospice, the Casa de la Caritat. The expansive courtyard, with a vast glass wall on one side, is spectacular. With 4500 sq metres of exposition space in four separate areas, the centre hosts a constantly changing programme of exhibitions, film cycles and other events.

### ESGLÉSIA DE SANT PAU DEL CAMP

Map pp76–7  
☎ 93 441 00 01; Carrer de Sant Pau 101; admission free; 🕒 doister 10am–2pm & 5–7pm Tue–Fri, 10am–2pm Sat; **M** Paral.lel

Back in the 9th century, when monks founded the monastery of Sant Pau del Camp (St Paul in the Fields), it was a good walk from the city gates amid fields and gardens. Today, the church and cloister, erected in the 12th century and partly surrounded by the trees of a small garden, are located on a fairly down-at-heel street and surrounded by dense inner-city housing. The doorway to the church bears rare Visigothic sculptural decoration, predating the Muslim invasion of Spain. Inside, the beautiful Romanesque cloister is the main reason for dropping by.

## MODERNISTA WINING & DINING IN EL RAVAL

### Walking Tour

#### WALK FACTS

Start Casa Almíral  
Finish London Bar  
Distance 2km  
Duration 45 minutes  
Transport **M** Liceu

#### 1 Casa Almíral

Long run by the Almíral family that opened it in the mid-19th century, this corner **tavern** (p201) on Carrer de Joaquín Costa preserves much of its Modernista décor, especially in the picture windows opening on to the street and the counter and display cabinet.

#### 2 Bar Muy Buenas

You'll recognise similarly sinuous curves as you enter **Bar Muy Buenas** (p200), on Carrer del Carme. Opened as a milk bar in the late 19th century, it retains much of its original decoration. It's a welcoming, cosy spot for a tippie and snacks.

#### 3 La Confiteria

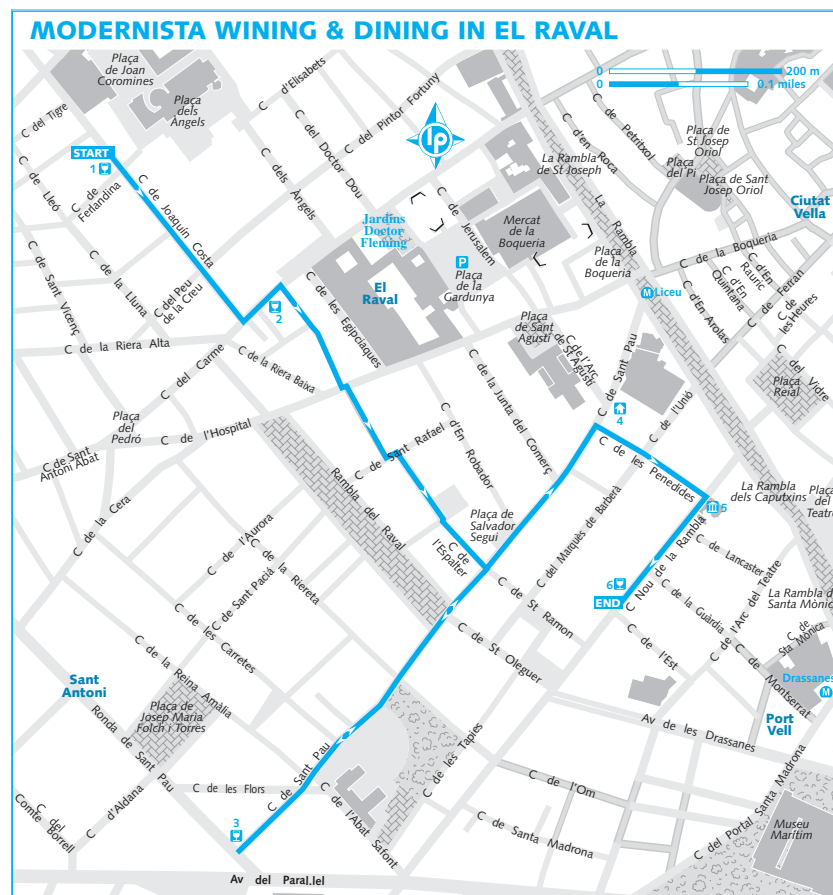
At Carrer de Sant Pau, past the Romanesque church, drop by **La Confiteria** (p201), once a barbershop and then a long-time confectioner's. It was lovingly restored for its reconversion into a classy bar in 1998. Most of the elements, including façade, bar counter and cabinets, are the real McCoy.

#### 4 Hotel España

This hotel is known above all for its two dining rooms, part of the 1903 design by Domènec i Montaner. To the left of reception is the Sala Arnau (Arnau Room), featuring a magnificent alabaster fireplace designed by Eusebi Arnau. Moderately priced traditional Catalan fare is served.

#### 5 Palau Güell

While wandering around El Raval, you should not miss its Modernista star, one of Gaudí's earlier big commissions, **Palau Güell** (p79), a remarkable building. If passing by at night while doing a round of the bars, make a note to return here by day!



#### 6 London Bar

A classic of Barcelona nightlife for over a century, the **London Bar** (p201) displays Modernista décor and is run by the same family

of the waiter who founded it in 1910. In its heyday, it opened 24 hours and attracted the likes of Picasso and Miró for countless swifties.



# LA RIBERA

Drinking & Nightlife p202; Eating p176; Shopping p157; Sleeping p234

In Roman times, a scattering of *villae* (country houses) and small farms covered the fields here beyond Barcino's walls. In the 6th century, the area was dominated by a Christian necropolis. The first monastery was raised in the 11th century.

By the beginning of the 13th century, two busy communities had developed: Vilanova de Sant Pere, clustered around the convent of Sant Pere de les Puelles, and Vilanova de la Mar, huddled around the Romanesque predecessor to the present Església de Santa Maria del Mar. Between the two, a busy tradesmen's district thrived around Carrer dels Corders (Ropemakers' St). Many streets retain the names of the trades once practised along them.

Vilanova de la Mar, from where merchants carried out their vital trade across the Mediterranean, became the richest part of the city. It was later known as La Ribera, a name that later still referred to the whole area.

Carrer de Montcada was laid to link the tradesmen's workshops with the then-waterfront merchants and soon became the address. Its rich legacy of Gothic and baroque mansions attests to its primacy until well into the 18th century, when the creation of the Ciutadella swept away a whole chunk of La Ribera and trade focus shifted to Port Vell.

Passeig del Born was Barcelona's main square from the 13th to the 18th centuries. Jousting tournaments, executions and other public entertainments took place here in the Middle Ages and it was the hub of the city's vital maritime trade. Barcelonins used to say '*roda el món i torna al Born*' ('go around the world and return to the Born'), and the merchants and ship owners who lived and dealt around here no doubt saw it as the navel of their world. Not far away, one of Europe's first stock exchanges came to life at La Llotja.

Via Laietana, a rumbling, traffic-choked thoroughfare that connects the waterfront with the east side of l'Eixample, marks the southwest side of La Ribera, while the Parc de la Ciutadella closes off its northeast flank. The creation of Via Laietana in 1908 saw the destruction of 2000 houses and displacement of 10,000 people. A great swathe of Barcelona's medieval history thus disappeared in what many considered little more than a speculative manoeuvre.

To the south, parallel ribbons of main road and highway cut it off from the sea and La Barceloneta, and the grid streets of l'Eixample round it off to the north.

Carrer de la Princesa, ramrod straight between Via Laietana and the park, was laid in the 1820s and cuts La Ribera in half. The gentrified southern half is generally known as El Born, after busy, bar-lined Passeig del Born. Capped at one end by the magnificent Gothic Església de Santa Maria del Mar, it runs into the former Mercat del Born.

Several important streets feed south into El Born. From the Jaume I Metro stop, restaurant-lined Carrer de l'Argenteria (whose name dates to the 16th century, when it was lined with silversmiths) leads to the Església de Santa Maria del Mar. Carrer de Montcada, with its majestic houses (now mostly occupied by the Museu Picasso, other museums and art galleries), reaches El Born from Carrer de la Princesa.

Where in the early 1990s there were a few dowdy bars and eateries, El Born is now jammed with colourful restaurants, packed bars and endless fashion outlets, with the likes of Custo Barcelona leading the way. It is a heterodox, cosmopolitan jumble in a magnificent Middle Ages setting.

Northwest of Carrer de la Princesa, the area's physiognomy changes. A mess of untidy streets wiggles northwards around the brand-new Mercat de Santa Caterina and on towards the Modernista Palau de la Música Catalana. North African and South American immigrant communities call this part of La Ribera home.

The expanse of the Parc de la Ciutadella is a rare gift in a city so densely packed and lacking in serious greenery, but it started life as an ominous 18th-century citadel, of which little more than the name remains.

Metro Línia 4 coasts down the southwest flank of La Ribera, stopping at Urquinaona, Jaume I and Barceloneta. Línia 1 also stops nearby, at Urquinaona and Arc de Triomf (the nearest stop for the Parc de la Ciutadella).

## ESGLÉSIA DE SANTA MARIA DEL MAR Map pp84-5

☎ 93 319 05 16; Plaça de Santa Maria del Mar; admission free; 🕒 9am-1.30pm & 4.30-8pm; 📍 Jaume I

At the southwest end of Passeig del Born stands the apse of Barcelona's finest Catalan Gothic church, Santa Maria del Mar (Our Lady of the Sea). Built in the 14th century, Santa Maria was lacking in superfluous decoration even before anarchists gutted it in 1909 and 1936. This only serves to highlight its fine proportions and purity of line.

Built with record-breaking alacrity for the time (it took just 59 years), the church is remarkable for its architectural harmony. While many grand European churches betray several styles because they took so long to build, Santa Maria del Mar benefited aesthetically from the haste. The main body is made up of a central nave and two flanking aisles separated by slender octagonal pillars, creating an enormous sense of lateral space. This was built as a people's church. The city's porters (*bastaxos*) spent a day each week carrying on their backs the stone required to build the church from royal quarries in Montjuïc. Their memory lives on in reliefs of them in the main doors and stone carvings elsewhere in the church.

Keep an eye out for music recitals, often baroque and classical, here. The acoustics aren't the best, but the setting more than makes up for that.

Opposite the church's southern flank, an eternal flame burns brightly over an apparently anonymous sunken square. This was once *El Fossar de les Moreres* (the Mulberry Cemetery), named after the mulberry trees that once grew here and originally the site of a Roman cemetery. It's also where Catalan resistance fighters were buried after the siege of Barcelona ended in defeat in September 1714.

## CARRER DE MONTCADA Map pp84-5

📍 Jaume I

An early example of deliberate town planning, this medieval high street was driven

down towards the sea from the road that in the 12th century led northeast from the city walls. It would, in time, become the snootiest address in town for the city's merchant class, and the bulk of the great mansions that remain today date to the 14th and 15th centuries (although they were often tampered with later). This area was the commercial heartland of medieval Barcelona.

Five of the mansions on the east side of the street have been linked to house the *Museu Picasso* (below). Across the road, others house the *Museu Barbier-Mueller d'Art Pre-Colombí* (p87) and a future activities department for the yet-to-be-born *Centre de Diseny* (p89). Several other mansions on this street are commercial art galleries where you're welcome to browse. The biggest is the local branch of the prestigious Parisian *Galeria Maeght* (No 25; see p158) in the 16th-century Palau dels Cervelló. If you can, peek into the baroque courtyard of the originally medieval *Palau de Dalmases* (No 20), now a hideously expensive place to sip wine.

At the corner of Carrer dels Corders and the northern end of the street, just beyond the 19th-century Carrer de la Princesa, stands a much meddled-with Romanesque chapel, the *Capella d'En Marcús*, once a wayfarers' stop on the road northeast out of medieval Barcelona.

## MUSEU PICASSO Map pp84-5

☎ 93 256 30 00; www.museupicasso.bcn.es; Carrer de Montcada 15-23; adult/senior & child under 16/student €9/free/3, temporary exhibitions adult €5.80, 1st Sun of month free; 🕒 10am-8pm Tue-Sun & holidays; 📍 Jaume I

The setting alone, in five contiguous medieval stone mansions, makes the Museu Picasso worth the detour (and the probable queues). The pretty courtyards, galleries and staircases preserved in the first three of these buildings are as delightful as the collection inside is unique. One word of warning: the collection concentrates on the artist's formative years, sometimes

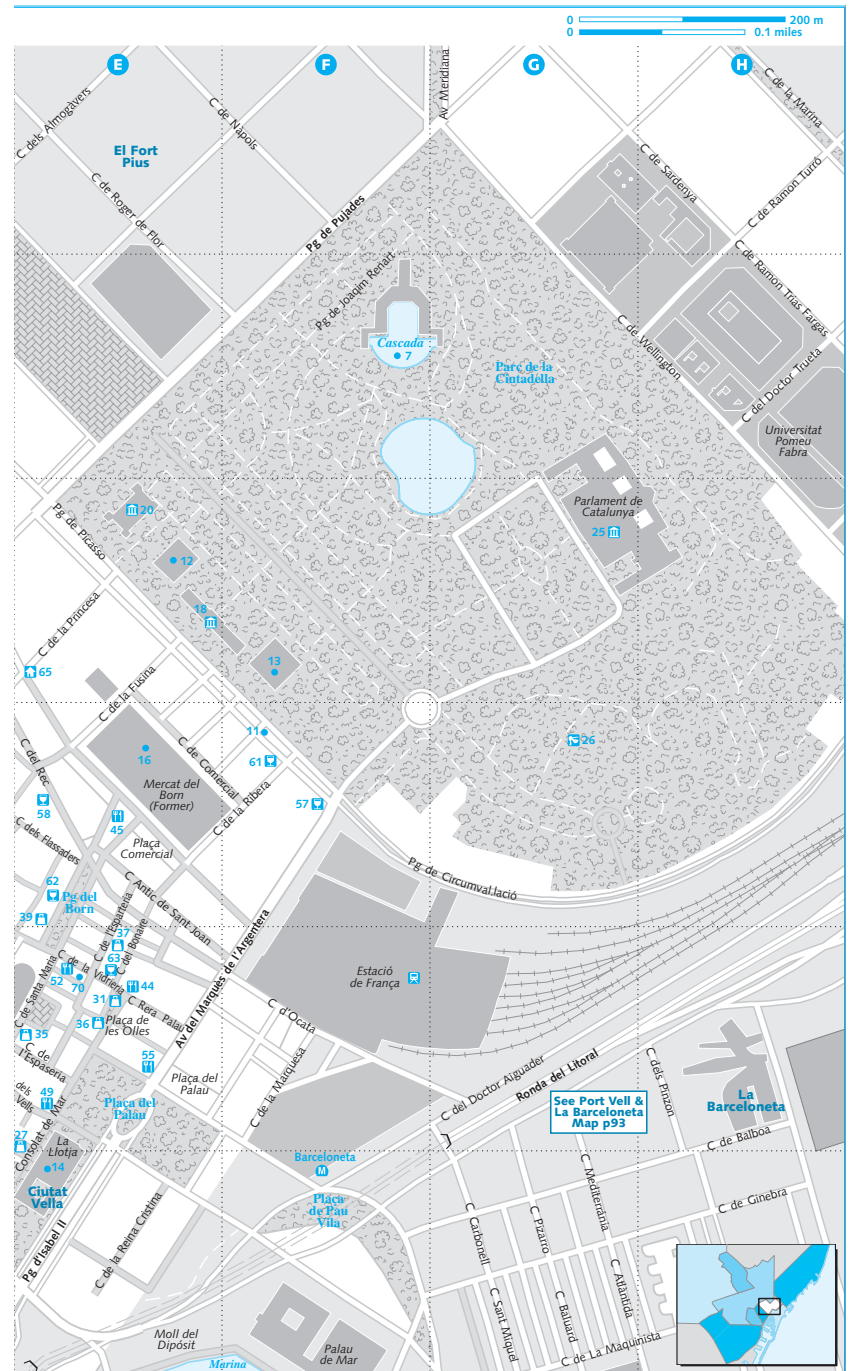
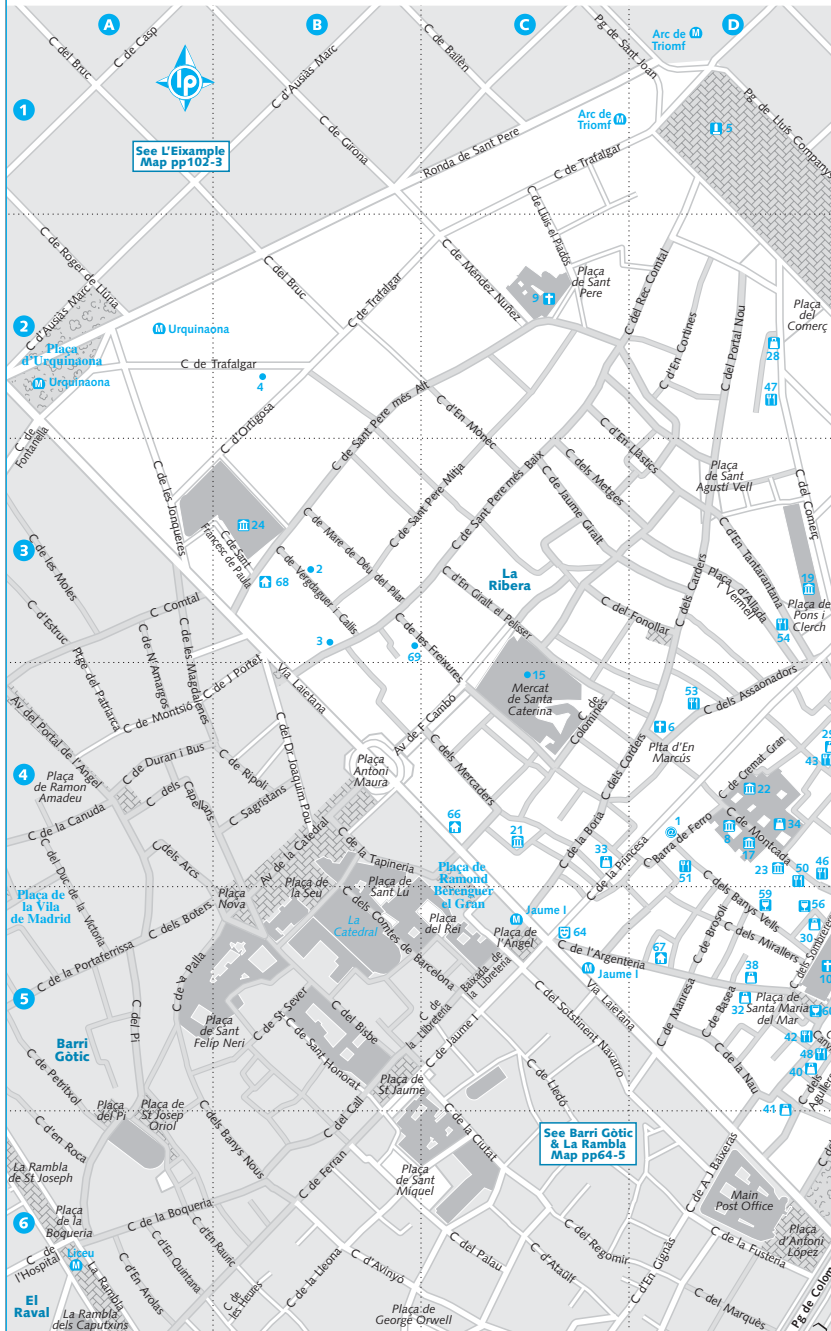
# top picks

## LA RIBERA

- Església de Santa Maria del Mar (opposite)
- Museu Picasso (opposite)
- Palau de la Música Catalana (p87)
- Museu Barbier-Mueller d'Art Pre-Colombí (p87)
- Parc de la Ciutadella (p88)



## LA RIBERA



## LA RIBERA

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disappointing for those hoping for a feast of his better-known later works (best found in Paris).

The permanent collection is housed in **Palau Aguilar**, **Palau del Baró de Castellet** and **Palau Meca**, all dating to the 14th century. The 18th-century **Casa Mauri**, built over medieval remains (even some Roman leftovers have been identified), and the adjacent 14th-century **Palau Finestres** accommodate temporary exhibitions. A further building, a former orphanage on Carrer dels Flasersaders that will be largely given over to administration, reception of groups and workshops, was acquired in 2007.



The collection, which includes more than 3500 artworks, is strongest on Picasso's earliest years, up until 1904, but there is enough material from subsequent periods to give you a deep impression of the man's versatility and genius. Above all, you feel that Picasso is always one step ahead of himself, let alone anyone else, in his search for new forms of expression.

A visit starts with sketches and oils from Picasso's earliest years in Málaga and La Coruña – around 1893–95. Some of his self-portraits and the portraits of his father, which date from 1896, are evidence enough of his precocious talent. *Retrato de*

*la Tía Pepa* (Portrait of Aunt Pepa), done in Málaga in 1897, is a key painting and the enormous *Ciència i Caritat* (Science and Charity) is proof to doubters that Picasso fully mastered the academic techniques of portraiture. In Room 10 hang paintings from his first Paris sojourn, while Room 11 is dedicated to the first significant new stage in his development, the Blue Period. His nocturnal blue-tinted views of *Terrats de Barcelona* (Rooftops of Barcelona) and *El Foll* (The Madman) are cold and cheerless, yet somehow alive.

A few cubist paintings pop up in Rooms 13 and 14. From 1954 to 1962 Picasso was obsessed by the idea of researching and 'rediscovering' the greats, in particular Velázquez. In 1957, he made a series of renditions of the latter's masterpiece, *Las Meninas*, now displayed in Rooms 15 and 16. It is as though Picasso has looked at the original Velázquez painting through a prism reflecting all the styles he had worked through until then. The last rooms contain engravings and some 40 ceramic pieces completed throughout the latter years of his unceasingly creative life. Things like a plate with a fish on it are typical, if not overly practical at the average dining table!





## MUSEU BARBIER-MUELLER D'ART PRE-COLOMBÍ

 93 310 45 16; [www.barbier-mueller.ch](http://www.barbier-mueller.ch); Carrer de Montcada 12-14; adult/child under 16yr/senior & student €3/free/1.50, 1st Sun of month free;  11am-7pm Tue-Fri, 10am-7pm Sat, 10am-3pm Sun & holidays;  Jaume I

Inside the medieval Palau Nadal you plunge into the world of centuries-old South American art and crafts. The artefacts on show are part of the treasure-trove of pre-Columbian art collected by Swiss businessman Josef Mueller (who died in 1977) and his son-in-law Jean-Paul Barbier, who directs the Musée Barbier-Mueller in the heart of old Geneva in Switzerland. Together, the museums form one of the most prestigious collections of such art in the world.

In blacked-out rooms the eerily illuminated artefacts flare up in the gloom. South American gold jewellery introduces the collection, followed by rooms containing ceramics, jewellery, statues, textiles and other objects.

## PALAU DE LA MÚSICA CATALANA

 pp84-5  
 902 475485; [www.palaumusica.org](http://www.palaumusica.org); Carrer de Sant Francesc de Paula 2; adult/child/student incl guided tour €10/free/9;  50min tours every 30min 10am-6pm Easter & Aug, 10am-3.30pm Sep-Jul;  Urquinaona

This concert hall is a high point of Barcelona's Modernista architecture. It's not exactly a symphony, more a series of crescendos in tile, brick, sculpted stone and stained glass.




Built by Domènec i Montaner between 1905 and 1908 for the Orfeo Català musical society, with the help of some of the best Catalan artisans of the time, it was conceived as a temple for the Catalan Renaissance (Renaissance). The palace was built in the cloister of the former Convent de Sant Francesc, and since 1990 it has undergone several major changes. The latest (in 2004) greatly improved its facilities as well as adding an outdoor café and increasing performance space.

The Palau, like a peacock, shows off much of its splendour on the outside. Take in the principal façade with its mosaics, floral capitals and the sculpture cluster representing Catalan popular music. Wander inside the foyer and restaurant areas to admire the spangled, tiled pillars. Best of all, however, is the richly colourful auditorium upstairs,

with its ceiling of blue-and-gold stained glass and shimmering skylight that looks like a giant, crystalline, downward thrusting nipple. Above a bust of Beethoven on the stage towers a wind-blown sculpture of Wagner's Valkyries (Wagner was top of the Barcelona charts at the time it was created). This can only be savoured on a guided tour or by attending a performance – either is highly recommended.

The original Modernista creation, now a World Heritage site, did not meet with universal approval in its day. The doyen of Catalan literature, Josep Pla, did not hesitate to condemn it as 'horrible', but few share his sentiments today. Montaner himself was also in a huff. He failed to attend the opening ceremony in response to unsettled bills.

## MERCAT DE SANTA CATERINA

 pp84-5  
[www.mercatsantacaterina.net](http://www.mercatsantacaterina.net), in Catalan; Avinguda de Francesc Cambó 16;  8am-2pm Mon, 8am-3.30pm Tue, Wed & Sat, 8am-8.30pm Thu & Fri;  Jaume I

Come shopping for your tomatoes at this extraordinary-looking produce market, built by Enric Miralles and Benedetta Tagliabue to replace its 19th-century predecessor. Finished in 2005, it is distinguished by its kaleidoscopically weird wavy roof, held up above the bustling produce stands, restaurants, cafés and bars by twisting slender branches of what look like grey steel trees.

The multicoloured ceramic roof (with a ceiling made of warm, light timber) recalls the Modernista tradition of *trencadis* decoration (such as that in Park Güell). Indeed, its curvy design, like a series of Mediterranean rollers, seems to plunge back into an era when Barcelona's architects were limited only by their (vivid) imagination. The market roof bares an uncanny resemblance to that of the Escoles de Gaudí at La Sagrada Família.

The market's 1848 predecessor had been built over the remains of the demolished 15th-century Gothic Monestir de Santa Caterina, a powerful Dominican monastery. A small section of the church foundations has been glassed over in one corner as an archaeological reminder (with explanatory panels), the **Espai Santa Caterina** (admission free;  8.30am-2pm Mon-Wed & Sat, 8.30am-8pm Thu-Fri).

**PARC DE LA CIUTADELLA** Map pp84–5

**Passeig de Picasso;** ☎ 8am–6pm Nov–Feb, 8am–8pm Oct & Mar, 8am–9pm Apr–Sep; 🚶 Arc de Triomf  
Come for a stroll, a picnic, a visit to the zoo or to inspect Catalonia's regional parliament, but don't miss a visit to this, the most central green lung in the city. Parc de la Ciutadella is perfect for a little winding down (or getting over a hangover).

After the War of the Spanish Succession (p25), Felipe V razed a whole swathe of La Ribera to build a huge fortress (La Ciutadella) whose main object was to keep watch over Barcelona. It became a loathed symbol of everything Catalans hated about Madrid and the Bourbon kings, and was later used as a political prison. Only in 1869 did the central government allow its demolition, after which the site was turned into a park and used for the Universal Exhibition of 1888. Part of the wall was discovered in 2008, during work on a new sports centre being built near the zoo (right), and architects plan to incorporate some of it as a historical reminder in the new centre.

The monumental **cascada** (waterfall) near the Passeig de Pujades park entrance, created between 1875 and 1881 by Josep Fontserè with the help of an enthusiastic young Gaudí, is a dramatic combination of statuary, rugged rocks, greenery and thundering water. All of it perfectly artificial! Nearby, hire a rowboat to paddle about the small lake.

To the southeast, in what might be seen as an exercise in black humour, the fort's former arsenal now houses the **Parlament de Catalunya** (☎ 93 304 66 45; www.parlament.cat; 🗺 free guided visit in Catalan 4–6pm 1st Fri of month). A symbol of Catalan identity, the regional parliament also opens to the public on 11 and 12 September. Head up the sweeping Escala d'Honor (Stairway of Honour) and through several solemn halls to the Saló de Sessions, the semicircular auditorium where parliament sits. At the centre of the garden in front of the Parlament is a statue of a seemingly heartbroken woman, *Desconsol* (Distress; 1907), by Josep Llimona.

The Passeig de Picasso side of the park is lined by several buildings constructed for, or just before, the Universal Exhibition. The medieval-looking caprice at the top end is the most engaging. Known as the Castell dels Tres Dragons (Castle of the Three Dragons), it houses the **Museu de Zoologia** (right).

To the south is **L'Hivernacle**, an arboretum or mini-botanical garden with a pleasant café

# top picks

## FOR KIDS

- **Beaches** (p96)
- **L'Aquàrium** (p92)
- **Museu de la Xocolata** (opposite)
- **La Sagrada Família** (p104)
- **Museu Marítim** (p78)
- **Tibidabo & Parc d'Attraccions** (p134)
- **Park Güell** (p117)
- **Transbordador Aeri** (p94)

in its midst. Next come the **Museu de Geologia** (below) and **L'Umbracle**, another arboretum. On Passeig de Picasso itself is Antoni Tàpies' typically impenetrable **Homenatge a Picasso**. Water runs down the panes of a glass box full of bits of old furniture and steel girders.

Northwest of the park, Passeig de Lluís Companys is capped by the Modernista **Arc de Triomf** (Map pp84–5), designed by Josep Vilaseca as the main exhibition entrance, with unusual, Islamic-style brickwork. Josep Llimona did the main reliefs. Just what the triumph was eludes us, especially since the exhibition itself was a commercial failure. It is perhaps best thought of as a bricks-and-mortar embodiment of the city's general *fin de siècle* feel-good factor.

**ZOO DE BARCELONA** Map pp84–5

☎ 93 225 67 80; www.zoobarcelona.com; **Passeig de Picasso & Carrer de Wellington; adult/child under 4yr/senior/child 4–12yr €15.40/free/8.15/9.30; 🗺 10am–7pm Jun–Sep, 10am–6pm mid–Mar–May & Oct, 10am–5pm Nov–mid–Mar; 🚶 Barceloneta**  
The zoo can make a fun distraction for kids although the comparatively limited space makes it a bit of a squeeze for the 7500 critters (everything from geckos to gorillas). A new site being built on the coast of the El Fòrum site northeast of the city centre will eventually relieve the crowding.

**MUSEU DE CIÈNCIES NATURALS**

Map pp84–5  
☎ 93 319 69 12; www.bcn.es/museuciencias; **Passeig de Picasso; adult/concession €3.70/2.10; 🗺 10am–6.30pm Tue–Sat, 10am–2.30pm Sun; 🚶 Arc de Triomf**

The Natural Sciences Museum is actually two in one: the Museu de Zoologia, housed

in the Castell dels Tres Dragons, a caprice designed by Domènec i Montaner; and the Museu de Geologia. The former is the more interesting half for the building itself and for the content. Montaner put the 'castle's' trimmings on a pioneering steel frame. The coats of arms are all invented and the whole building exudes a teasing, playful air. It was used as a café-restaurant during the Universal Exhibition of 1888. If you like stuffed animals, model elephants and the inevitable skeletons of huge creatures, the charmingly fusty zoology museum is the place for you. The bulk of the permanent collection is on the 1st floor. Most people would have to have rocks in their heads to spend much time in the geology museum, but then again, budding geologists may well want to examine the seemingly endless cabinets of stones, minerals and fossils.

**MUSEU DE LA XOCOLATA** Map pp84–5

☎ 93 268 78 78; http://pastisseria.com; **Plaça de Pons i Clerch s/n; adult/child under 7yr €3.90/free, 1st Mon of month free; 🗺 10am–7pm Mon & Wed–Sat, 10am–3pm Sun & holidays; 🚶 Jaume I**  
Chocoholics have a hard time containing themselves in this museum dedicated to the fundamental foodstuff. How not to launch yourself at the extraordinary scale models made out of chocolate? A little salivation for sweet teeth is inevitable as you trawl around the displays (in part of the former Convent de Sant Agustí) that trace the origins of chocolate, its arrival in Europe and the many myths and images associated with it. Among the informative stuff (with panels in various languages) are chocky models of buildings such as La Pedrera and La Sagrada Família, along with characters such as Winnie the Pooh. It's enough to have you making for the nearest sweet shop, but you don't have to – they sell plenty of chocolate right here! Kids and grown-ups can join guided tours or take part in chocolate-making and tasting sessions, especially on weekends.

**MUSEU DEL REI DE LA MAGIA** Map pp84–5

☎ 93 319 73 93; www.elreydelamagia.com in Catalan & Spanish; **Carrer de l'Òli 6; admission €3, with show €8; 🗺 6–8pm Thu, with show 6pm Sat & noon Sun; 🚶 Jaume I**

This museum is a timeless curio. Run by the same people who have the nearby

**magic shop** (p157) on Carrer de la Princesa, it is the scene of magic shows, home to collections of material that hark back to the 19th-century origins of the shop and it is the place for budding magicians of all ages to enrol in courses. Seeing is believing.

**CENTRE DE DISSENY** Map pp84–5

**Carrer de Montcada 12–14; 🚶 Jaume I**  
Until 2008, the 13th-century Palau dels Marquesos de Llió and part of the Palau Nadal next door (both buildings underwent repeated alterations into the 18th century) were home to the **Museu Textil i d'Indumentària** (p133). It is being transformed into an activities department for a yet-to-be-born Design Centre, in which at least part of the present Museu de les Arts Decoratives (now housed in the Palau de Pedralbes) will one day have a place. In the meantime, the building's courtyard, with its café-restaurant, makes a delightful stop.

**ESGLÉSIA DE SANT PERE DE LES PUELLES** Map pp84–5

**Plaça de Sant Pere s/n; admission free; 🚶 Arc de Triomf**

Not a great deal remains of the original church or convent that has stood here since early medieval times. The church's pre-Romanesque Greek-cross floor plan survives, as do some Corinthian columns beneath the 12th-century dome and a much-damaged Renaissance vault leading into a side chapel. It was around this church that the first settlement began to take place in La Ribera beyond the original city walls. In 985, a Muslim raiding force under Al-Mansur attacked Barcelona and largely destroyed the convent, killing or capturing the nuns.

**MERCAT DEL BORN** Map pp84–5

**Plaça Comercial; 🚶 Barceloneta**  
Excavation in 2001 at the former **Mercat del Born**, a late-19th-century produce market built of iron and glass, unearthed great chunks of one of the city districts flattened to make way for the much-hated **Ciutadella** (see opposite). Historians found intact streets and the remains of houses dating as far back as the 15th century. Excitement was such that plans to locate a new city library in the long-disused market were dropped.



Instead, the archaeological site will become a museum and cultural centre (due for completion in 2010).

### LA LLOTJA Map pp84–5

**Carrer del Consolat de Mar s/n; M Jaume I**  
The centrepiece of the city's medieval stock exchange is the fine Gothic Saló de Contractacions, built in the 14th century. Pablo Picasso and Joan Miró attended the art school that from 1849 was housed in the Saló dels Cònsols. These and five other halls were encased in a neoclassical shell in the 18th century. The stock exchange was in action until well into the 20th century and the building remains in the hands of the city's chamber of commerce. Two or three times a year they open their doors to the public (call ☎ 902 448448).

## SINS OF GLUTTONY IN LA RIBERA

### Walking Tour

#### 1 Mercat de Santa Caterina

A glutton's guide to La Ribera has to begin in this modern reincarnation of a 19th-century market (p87). A close rival to La Boqueria, it stands overflow with fish, cold meats, cheeses,

countless varieties of olives, an olive oil and vinegar specialist, **Oltsoliva** (p158), bars and a good restaurant.

#### 2 Museu de la Xocolata

Barcelona is awash in specialist chocolate stores, whether traditional *granjas* for enjoying thick hot chocolate with a pastry through to modern dens of chocolate delinquency. Where better to get introduced to the history behind this seductive food than the **Museu de la Xocolata** (p89)?

#### 3 Tot Formatge

Say 'All Cheese!' And not just Spanish classics like the strong-on-the-nose Cabrales from Asturias, *manchego* from Castilla-La Mancha or breast-shaped *tetilla*. These guys present a collection of fine cheeses from around the country and Europe, so you may run into your favourite cheddar, Gouda or Camembert at **Tot Formatge** (p158).

#### 4 Casa Gispert

Welcome to the house of nuts. Since the mid-19th century, **Casa Gispert** (p157) has been toasting up all sorts of nuts and other goodies. The walls are lined with jars of dried

fruit, honeyed hazelnuts and other tasty morsels.

#### 5 La Botifarrerria

In between all the bars on Passeig del Born is this mecca for sausage lovers. **La Botifarrerria** (p158) offers the most startling array of sausages and all sorts of other gourmet goodies. Aromatic cheeses, cold meats, ready-to-eat snacks and more form the colourful armoury of this delectable store.

#### 6 El Magnífico

Coffee represents a significant element in Catalan and Spanish tradition. This magnificent **store** (p157) offers a range of fine coffees from around the world. The family has a long history in the business, and this is a Barcelona institution.

#### 7 Vila Viniteca

No food experience is complete without wines and to investigate some of the enormous variety of Catalan and Spanish drops, visit **Vila Viniteca** (p158), one of the city's top stores. There are many foreign wines on hand and it also occasionally hosts tasting events.

### WALK FACTS

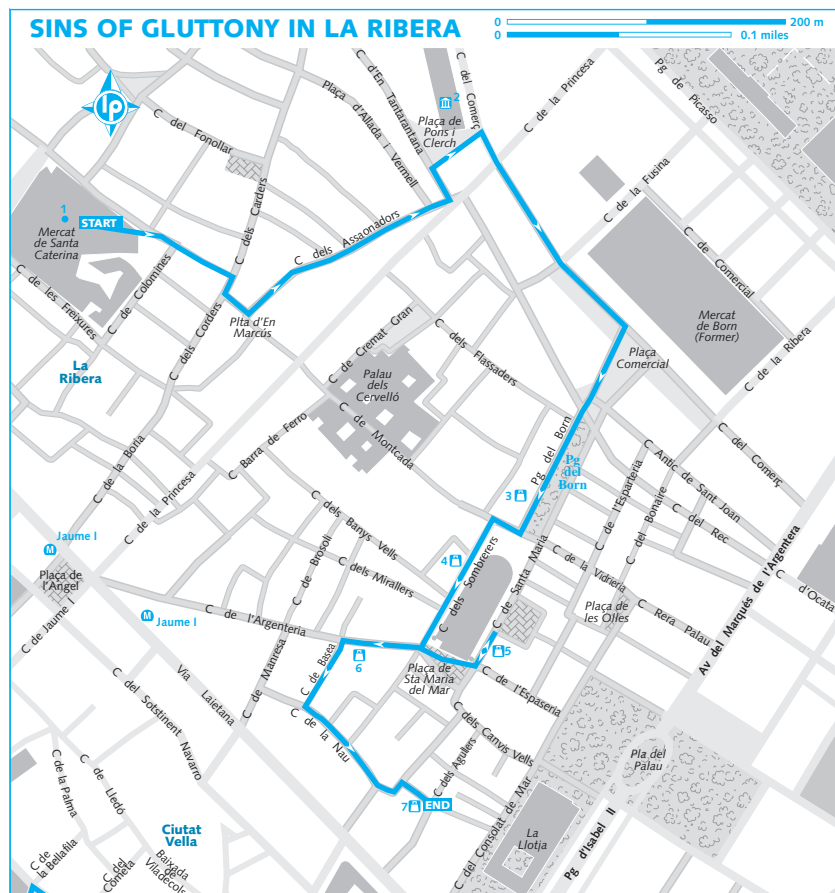
Start Mercat de Santa Caterina

Finish Vila Viniteca

Distance 2.2km

Duration 45 minutes

Transport M Jaume I





# PORT VELL & LA BARCELONETA

Drinking & Nightlife p203; Eating p178; Shopping p158; Sleeping p235

Barcelona's old port at the bottom of La Rambla, once such an eyesore that it caused public protests, has been transformed beyond recognition since the 1980s. Abandoned warehouses and general junk are a distant memory, replaced by chic shopping, harbourside munching, movies on the sea, discos and Irish pubs, parking for yachts and a huge aquarium.

La Barceloneta is a mid-18th-century fishermen's quarter laid out by military engineer Juan Martín Cermeño to replace housing destroyed to make way for La Ciutadella. The cute houses along narrow streets were later subdivided into four separate 30-sq-metre abodes and subsequently converted into six-storey rabbit warrens. The attentive eye will pick out some of the few remaining original houses.

By the 19th century, La Barceloneta had become an industrial slum, home to the city's gas company, the Nueva Vulcano shipyards and La Maquinista ironworks and steam engine plant (which shut in 1965). What remains of Barcelona's fishing fleet, about 70 vessels and 400 fishermen who land 10 tonnes of fish a day, ties up along the Moll del Relotge. A complete overhaul of this area is planned for the coming years, as the number of fishermen dwindles.

The area is rapidly gentrifying, but retains a sea-salty authenticity about it, especially in the numerous seafood eateries scattered about its labyrinthine web of back streets – it is estimated there is a bar or restaurant for every 120 local residents!

Port Vell is at the waterside end of La Rambla. It is not only a haven for yachts: **Maremàgnum** ([www.maremagnum.es](http://www.maremagnum.es)), a multistorey mall of shops, cheerful chain restaurants, bars, cinemas and clubs, was built out of what had been nasty old docklands on Moll d'Espanya. It is linked to Moll de la Fusta (Wood Dock) by the **Rambla de Mar**, a rotating pedestrian bridge. Virtually opposite, the new **World Trade Center**, designed by Henry Cobb, juts out like the prow of a cruise ship into the harbour. To the southwest stretch the ferry docks for boats to the Balearic Islands and Italy, while a second arm of Port Vell, another chic yachties' hang-out, is backed by the tight streets of La Barceloneta.

On La Barceloneta's seaward side are Platja de Sant Miquel (popular with a late-arriving, party-exhausted gay set), Platja de Sant Sebastià and Platja de la Barceloneta, Barcelona's central city beaches. Once dirty and unused, they have now been cleaned up and are popular on summer days. Passeig Marítim de la Barceloneta, a 1.25km promenade from La Barceloneta to Port Olímpic – through an area formerly full of railway sidings and warehouses – makes for a pleasant stroll if you manage to dodge the in-line skaters. Behind them rise some interesting new buildings, including the cylindrical Parc de Recerca Biomèdica de Barcelona (PRBB, Barcelona Biomedical Research Park) and Enric Miralles' Edifici de Gas Natural, a 100m glass tower.

Metro Línia 3 takes you to Port Vell (Drassanes stop), while the yellow Línia 4 is best for La Barceloneta. Several buses also converge on La Barceloneta, such as the No 64 that charges down Carrer de Muntaner and Avinguda del Paral·lel, Passeig de Colom and finally Passeig de Joan de Borbó. The No 17 races down Carrer de Balma, Via Laietana and Passeig de Joan de Borbó.

## L'AQUARIUM Map p93

☎ 93 221 74 74; [www.aquariumbcn.com](http://www.aquariumbcn.com);  
Moll d'Espanya; adult/child under 4yr/4-12yr/senior  
over 60yr €16/free/11/12.50; 🕒 9.30am-11pm Jul  
& Aug, 9.30am-9.30pm Jun & Sep, 9.30am-9pm  
Mon-Fri & 9.30am-9.30pm Sat & Sun Oct-May;  
🚶 Drassanes

It is hard to help a slight shudder at the sight of a shark gliding above you, displaying its full munching apparatus. But this, the 80m shark tunnel, is the highlight of one of Europe's largest aquariums. It has the world's best Mediterranean collec-

tion and plenty of gaudy fish from as far off as the Red Sea, the Caribbean and the Great Barrier Reef. All up, some 11,000 fish (including about a dozen sharks) of 450 species are in residence here.

Back in the shark tunnel, which you reach after passing a series of themed fish tanks with everything from bream to seahorses, various species of shark (Whitetip, Sand Tiger, Bonnethead, Blacktip, Nurse and Sandbar) flit around you, along with a host of other deep-sea critters, from flapping rays to bloated sun fish. An interactive zone, Planeta Agua, is

## PORT VELL & LA BARCELONETA

**See La Ribera** Map pp84-5

**See Barri Gòtic & La Rambla** Map pp64-5

**See Port Olímpic, El Poblenou & El Fórum** Map pp98-9

0 400 m  
0 0.2 miles

**INFORMATION** (pp158-9) (see 11)

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World Trade Center.....(see 34)

**SIGHTS** (pp92-5)

Barcelona's Head Sculpture.....2 B2  
BCN Skytour.....3 B5  
Edifici de Gas Natural.....4 C2  
Església de Sant Miquel del Port.....5 C2  
Gamba Sculpture.....6 B2  
Golondrina Excursion Boats.....7 A3  
Sculpture a la Barceloneta.....8 C3  
Homenatge als Nedadors.....9 C3  
L'Aquàrium.....10 B3  
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Museu d'Història de Catalunya.....12 B2  
Orsom.....13 A3  
Pailebot de Santa Eulàlia.....14 A3

**SHOPPING** (pp158-9) (see 11)

Maremàgnum.....(see 11)

**EATING** (pp178-80)

Can Majó.....15 C3  
Can Maño.....16 C2  
Can Paixano.....17 B2

**DRINKING & NIGHTLIFE** (pp203-4)

Catwalk.....23 D1  
CDLC.....24 D1  
Chiringuito del Mar.....25 C4  
LeKasBah.....26 B2  
Monasterio.....27 B2  
Opium Mar.....28 D1  
Santa Marta.....29 C3  
Shòko.....30 D1  
Sugar Club.....(see 34)  
Vaso de Oro.....22 B2

**SPORTS & ACTIVITIES** (pp224-8)

Club Natació Atlètic-Barcelona.....32 C4  
Poliesportiu Marítim.....33 D1

**SLEEPING** (p235)

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Hostel Sea Point.....35 C3  
Hotel 54.....36 B2  
Hotel del Mar.....37 B2  
Hotel Marina Folch.....38 C3

**TRANSPORT**

Acciona Transmediterrànea  
Fast Ferry Dock.....39 A3  
Acciona Transmediterrànea Ferry  
Terminal.....40 A4  
Acciona Transmediterrànea Ferry  
Terminal.....41 A4  
Barnabike.....42 B2  
Biciclot.....43 D2  
Ciclo Bus Barcelona.....44 C3  
Cooltra.....45 C3  
Grandi Navi Veloci.....46 A5  
Grimaldi Ferries.....(see 40)  
Motoloco.....47 C3  
Transportador Aeri  
(Torre de Jaume I).....48 A4  
Transportador Aeri  
(Torre de Sant Sebastià).....49 C4

host to a family of Antarctic penguins and a tank of rays that you watch close up.

Divers with a valid dive certificate can **dive** (€300; 🕒 9am-2pm Wed, Sat & Sun) in the main tank with the sharks.

## MUSEU D'HISTÒRIA DE CATALUNYA

Map p93

☎ 93 225 47 00; [www.mhcat.net](http://www.mhcat.net); Plaça de Pau Vila 3; adult/senior & child under 7yr/student €4/free/3, 1st Sun of month free; 🕒 10am-7pm Tue & Thu-Sat, 10am-8pm Wed, 10am-2.30pm Sun & holidays; 📍 Barceloneta

The Palau de Mar building facing the harbour once served as warehouses (Els Magatzems Generals de Comerç), but was transformed in the 1990s into something quite different. Below the seaward arcades is a string of good restaurants. Inside is the Museum of Catalonian History, something of a local patriotic statement, but interesting nonetheless. It has been shrouded in controversy since opening in 1996 and the money is on it closing in the coming years. Plans revealed in 2008 have already awakened opposition and would see this museum combined with the [Museu d'Arqueologia de Catalunya](#) (p146) and the [Museu Etnològic](#) (p146) to create a grand Museu de la Societat (Society Museum). When this might happen seems wide open.

In the meantime, the permanent display covers the 2nd and 3rd floors, taking you, as the bumf says, on a 'voyage through history' from the Stone Age through to the early 1980s. It is a busy hodgepodge of dioramas, artefacts, videos, models, documents and interactive bits: all up, an entertaining exploration of 2000 years of Catalan history. See how the Romans lived, listen to Arab poetry from the time of the Muslim occupation of the city, peer into the dwelling of a Dark Ages family in the Pyrenees, try to mount a knight's horse or to lift a suit of armour. When you have had enough of all this, descend into a civil-war air-raid shelter or head upstairs to the rooftop restaurant and café. The temporary exhibitions are frequently just as interesting as the permanent display.

## PAILEBOT DE SANTA EULÀLIA

Map p93

Moll de la Fusta; adult/child €2.40/1.20, with Museu Marítim ticket free; 🕒 noon-7.30pm Tue-Fri, 10am-7pm Sat & Sun & holidays May-Oct, noon-5.30pm Tue-Fri, 10am-5.30pm Sat & Sun & holidays Nov-Apr; 📍 Drassanes

# top picks

## IT'S FREE

Entry to some sights is free on occasion, most commonly on the first Sunday of the month. Free days are noted throughout the listings in this chapter. The following are most likely to attract your attention:

- [CaixaForum](#) (p142) Always.
- [Catedral](#) (p61) Always, except 1pm to 5pm.
- [Església de Santa Maria del Mar](#) (p83) Always.
- [Estadi Olímpic](#) (p144) Always.
- [Jardins del Laberint d'Horta](#) (p135) Wednesdays and Sundays.
- [Museu Barbier-Mueller d'Art Pre-Colombí](#) (p87) First Sunday of the month.
- [Museu de la Xocolata](#) (p89) First Monday of the month.
- [Museu d'Història de Catalunya](#) (left) First Sunday of the month.
- [Museu d'Història de la Ciutat](#) (p67) 4pm to 8pm first Saturday of the month.
- [Museu Frederic Marès](#) (p68) Wednesday afternoons and first Sunday of the month.
- [Museu Marítim](#) (p78) 3pm to 8pm first Saturday of the month.
- [Museu Picasso](#) (p83) First Sunday of the month.
- [Palau Reial de Pedralbes](#) (p133) First Sunday of the month.
- [Park Güell](#) (p117) Always.
- [Temple Romà d'Augustí](#) (p72) Always.

Along the palm-lined promenade Moll de la Fusta is moored a 1918 three-mast schooner restored by the Museu Marítim. You can see it perfectly well without going aboard, and there's not an awful lot to behold below decks. On occasion it sets sail for demonstration trips up and down the coast.

## TRANSBORDADOR AERI

Map p93

Passeig Escullera; one way/return €9/12.50; 🕒 11am-8pm mid-Jun-mid-Sep, 10.45am-7pm Mar-mid-Jun & mid-Sep-late Oct, 10.30am-5.45pm late Oct-Feb; 📍 Barceloneta or 🚏 17, 39 or 64 This cable car strung across the harbour to Montjuïc provides a bubble-eye view of the city. The cabins float between Miramar (Montjuïc) and the Torre de Sant Sebastià (in La Barceloneta), with a midway stop at the Torre de Jaume I in front of the World Trade Center. At the top of the Torre de Sant Sebastià is a spectacular restaurant, [Torre d'Alta Mar](#) (p179).

## ESGLÉSIA DE SANT MIQUEL DEL PORT

Map p93

☎ 93 221 65 50; Plaça de la Barceloneta; admission free; 🕒 7am-1.30pm Mon-Fri, 8am-1.30pm Sat; 📍 Barceloneta

Finished in 1755, this sober baroque church was the first building completed in La Barceloneta. Built low so that the cannon in the then Ciutadella fort could fire over it if necessary, it bears images of St Michael (Miquel) and two other saints considered protectors of the Catalan fishing fleet: Sant Elm and Santa Maria de Cervelló. Just behind the church is the bustling marketplace, worth an early morning browse. Ferdinand Lesseps, the French engineer who designed the Suez Canal, did a stint as France's general consul in Barcelona and lived in the house to the right of the church.

## AROUND THE PORT & ALONG THE BEACH

### Walking Tour

#### 1 Maremàgnum

Reached on foot by the elegant Rambla de Mar footbridge, Maremàgnum (which encloses a marina) is a bubbling leisure centre, with chirpy waterside restaurants, bars, shops and cinemas. In September it hosts a four-day taste fest of Catalan wines and *cava* (Catalan sparkling wine; see p19).

#### 2 L'Aquàrium

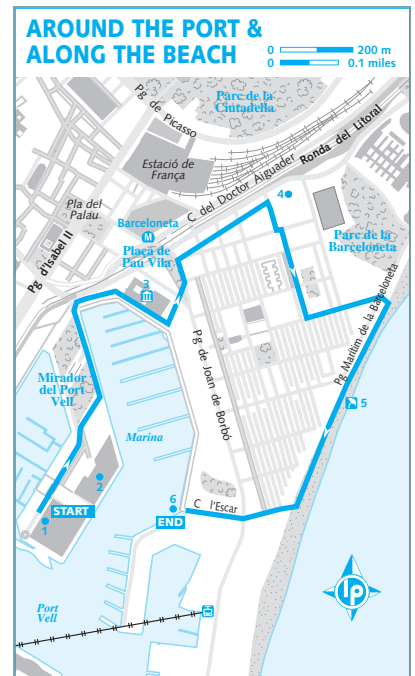
One of Europe's largest aquariums, [L'Aquàrium](#) (p92) offers a host of sea critters. The most spectacular is a varied collection of sharks, accompanied by many other fish, swimming about and above visitors who walk through an 80m transparent tunnel.

#### 3 Museu d'Història de Catalunya

Housed in former warehouses, this [museum](#) (opposite) provides a potted history of Catalonia. It also boasts a top-floor restaurant/bar with terrace, while downstairs a series of seafood eateries faces a marina. For a tapas experience, seek [Vaso de Oro](#) (p179).

#### 4 Edifici Gas Natural

Local architect Enric Miralles showed daring with his somewhat kooky, 100m-high tower, housing the city offices of a major Spanish gas company. Set back a few blocks from the



## WALK FACTS

Start Maremàgnum

Finish Moll del Rellotge

Distance 4.2km

Duration 1¼ hours

Transport 📍 Drassanes

beach, the [Edifici Gas Natural](#) (p54) commands attention with its jutting glass protrusions.

#### 5 Platja de la Barceloneta

Barcelona's inner-city beach is packed with people and activity. A series of bars on the sand churn out meals, cocktails and music for the hordes of sun-worshippers. Up in the northeast corner, a string of hip bar-restaurants get especially busy on languid summer nights.

#### 6 Moll del Rellotge

A stroll just west from the beach leads to Moll del Rellotge, where you may catch sight of the remaining men and vessels of the city's once-proud fishing fleet. Snooping around here confirms how much modern Port Vell has changed.



# PORT OLÍMPIC, EL POBLENOU & EL FÒRUM

Drinking & Nightlife p204; Eating p204; Sleeping p235

On the approach to Port Olímpic from La Barceloneta, the giant copper *Peix* (Fish) sculpture by Frank Gehry glitters brazenly in the sunlight. Port Olímpic was built for the 1992 Olympic sailing events and is now a classy marina surrounded by bars and restaurants. Behind it rise two lone skyscrapers, the luxury Hotel Arts Barcelona and Torre Mapfre office block.

From the marina, a string of popular beaches stretches along the coast northeast to the El Fòrum district, which marks the city's northern boundary. Strollers, cyclists and skaters parade on the broad beachside boulevard (dotted with seafood eateries) and admire the ranks of scantily clad flesh on warm summer days. The beaches are dotted with *chiringuitos*, snack bars that stay open until the wee hours for cocktails and dance tunes.

Inland, the southwest end of El Poblenou, a one-time industrial workers' district dubbed Barcelona's Manchester in the 19th century, was converted into the Vila Olímpica, modern apartments that housed athletes and were sold off after the Olympics. That was just the beginning.

Now, long after the excitement of the Games, the rest of El Poblenou is gradually being transformed in an ambitious urban regeneration scheme. At its heart is the planned hi-tech zone, 22@bcn, on which work began in 2000. Its symbol is Barcelona's most spectacular modern architectural icon, Jean Nouvel's Torre Agbar, finished in 2005. Tower blocks of hotels, offices and apartments continue to go up. A 2008 study showed that more than 1000 businesses had opened or relocated to 22@bcn since the idea was launched.

The El Fòrum and Diagonal Mar projects in the city's northeast corner created something out of nothing: a high-rise residential area with grand congress buildings, multistar hotels, a giant solar panel, sea-water baths, a new marina, a future zoo and lots of space for summer concerts and fun fairs.

Metro Línia 4 traverses the area with key stops in Ciutadella-Port Olímpic for the first of the beaches and Maresme Fòrum for the Fòrum area. An alternative that passes the Torre Agbar is the T4 tram, which starts at Ciutadella-Port Olímpic, also stops at Fòrum and terminates on the north side of the Riu Besòs in Sant Adrià de Besòs.

## BEACHES Map pp98–9

📍 **Ciutadella, Bogatell, Llacuna or Selva de Mar** or 📍 **36 or 41**

A series of pleasant beaches stretches northeast from the Port Olímpic marina. They are largely artificial but this doesn't stop an estimated 7 million bathers from piling in every year! Each autumn, storms wash much of the sand out to sea and the town hall patiently replaces it for the following season. From 2009, a series of underwater barrages in front of some of the beaches should reduce the waves caused by these storms and save a lot of trouble.

The southernmost beach, **Platja de la Nova Icària**, is the busiest. Behind it, across the Avinguda del Litoral highway, is the Plaça dels Champions, site of the rusting three-tiered platform used to honour medallists in the sailing events of the 1992 Games. Much of the athletes' housing-turned-apartments are in the blocks immediately behind Carrer de Salvador Espriu.

Just in from the next beach, **Platja de Bogatell**, is the **Cementiri de l'Est** (Eastern Cemetery);

📍 902 076902; Carrer de Taulat 2; 🕒 8am–6pm), created in 1773. It was positioned outside the then city limits for health reasons. Its central monument commemorates the victims of a yellow-fever epidemic that swept across Barcelona in 1821. The cemetery is full of bombastic family memorials, but an altogether disquieting touch is the sculpture *El Petó de la Mort* (The Kiss of Death), in which a winged skeleton kisses a young, kneeling but lifeless body. There's a good skateboard area with half-pipes at the north end of the beach.

**Platja de la Mar Bella** (with its brief nudist strip) and **Platja de la Nova Mar Bella** follow, leading into the new residential and commercial waterfront strip, the Front Marítim, part of the Diagonal Mar project.

## TORRE AGBAR Map pp98–9

📍 93 342 21 29; [www.torreagbar.com](http://www.torreagbar.com); Avinguda Diagonal 225; 🕒 10am–7pm Mon–Sat, 10am–2pm Sun; 📍 Glòries

Barcelona's very own cucumber-shaped tower, Jean Nouvel's luminous Torre Agbar

(the city water company's headquarters), is the most daring addition to Barcelona's skyline since the first towers of the Sagrada Família went up. A little less adventurous than Sir Norman Foster's Swiss Re Tower in London, it stands out all the same. Completed in 2005, it shimmers in shades of midnight blue and lipstick red, especially at night. Temporary exhibitions (usually on a watery theme) are sometimes held in the foyer. Unfortunately, the rest of the interior is off-limits.

Nouvel was also behind the stylised **Parc Central del Poblenou** (Avinguda Diagonal), about halfway between the tower and El Fòrum. It is an odd park, with stylised metal seats, and items of statuary. Barcelona is sprinkled with parks whose principal element is cement. This is supposed to be different but the plants and trees won't fully bloom before 2010, so the jury is out on the result. The ugly cement walls that protect it from surrounding traffic noise will one day be made prettier by sprawling bougainvillea.

## EL FÒRUM Map pp98–9

📍 93 356 10 50; [www.bcn.es/parcdelforum](http://www.bcn.es/parcdelforum); 📍 El Maresme Fòrum

A work still in progress, this northeast corner of the city has been transformed beyond recognition. Where before there was wasteland, half-abandoned factories and a huge sewage-treatment plant, there are now high-rise apartment blocks, luxury hotels, a brand-new marina (Port Forum), a shopping centre and a major conference centre.

The most striking architectural element is the eerily blue, triangular *2001: A Space Odyssey*-style **Edifici Fòrum** building by Swiss architects Herzog & de Meuron. The navy blue raised façades look like sheer cliff faces, with angular crags cut into them as if by divine laser. Grand strips of mirror create fragmented reflections of the sky, bringing splotches of heavenly movement to play.

The building is home to a permanent exhibition dealing with the urban planning, **Barcelona Propera** (admission free; 🕒 11am–8pm Tue–Sun). The display kicks off with walls plastered in postcards old and new, each wall presenting a theme (La Rambla, Gaudí etc). The various plans, models and videos of future developments are perhaps of limited interest to people passing through, but the

## BURYING THE PAST

Buried beneath the concrete, congress centre, bathing zone and marina created in the Fòrum lies the memory of more than 2000 people executed in the fields of the Camp de la Bota between 1936 and 1952, most of them under Franco from 1939 on. To their memory, *Fraternitat* (Brotherhood), a sculpture by Miquel Navarro, now stands on Rambla de Prim.

highlight is worth a look. The 1:1000 scale model of the entire city (called *Barcelona Riu a Riu*, Barcelona River to River) took five months to create. The detail is breathtaking. There are also occasional temporary exhibitions. Tours of the Fòrum area, including the sewage treatment plant, are sometimes organised here.

Next door, Josep Lluís Mateo's **Centre de Convencions Internacional de Barcelona** (CCIB) has capacity for 15,000 delegates. The huge space around the two buildings is used for major outdoor events, such as concerts (eg during the Festes de la Mercè) and the **Feria de Abril** (p17).

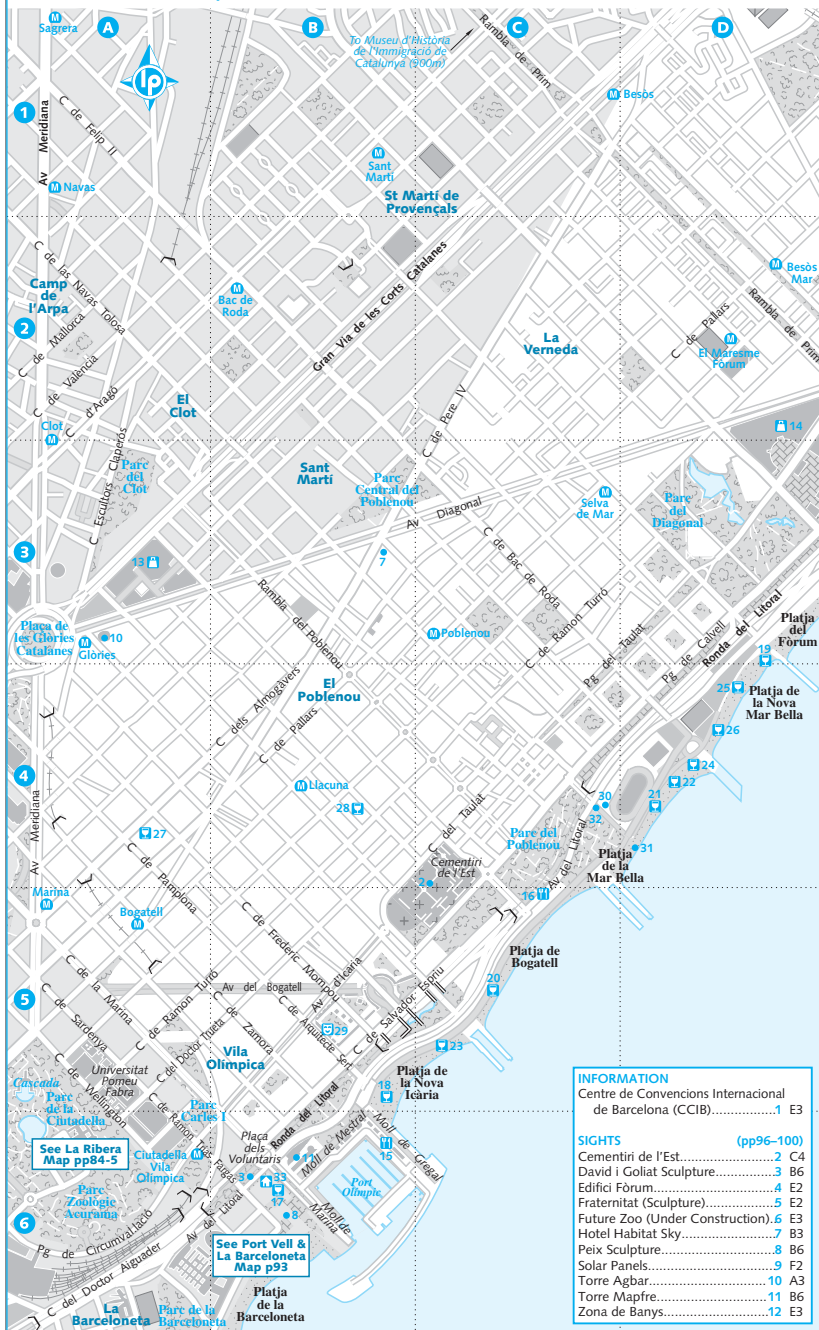
About a 300m stroll east from the Edifici Fòrum is the **Zona de Banys** (🕒 11am–8pm daily in summer), with kayaks and bikes for rent, the option to learn diving and other activities. This tranquil seawater swimming area was won from the sea by the creation of massive cement-block dykes. At its northern end, like a great rectangular sunflower, an enormous photovoltaic panel turns its face up to the sun to power the area with solar energy. Along with another set of solar panels in the form of porticoes, it generates enough electricity for 1000 households. Just behind it spreads the enormous **Port Forum**, Barcelona's new (and third) marina. The whole area is unified by an undulating esplanade and walkways that are perfect for walking, wheelchair access, bikes and skateboards.

In summer, a weekend **amusement park** (🕒 11am–2.30pm & 5–9pm Sat & Sun Jun–Sep) is set up with all the usual suspects: rides, shooting galleries, snack stands, inflatable castles, dodgem cars and so forth.

One hundred metres southwest of the CCIB is the **Parc del Diagonal**, designed by Enric Miralles and containing pools, fountains, an educational botanical walk (with more than 30 species of tree and plant) and modern sculptures.

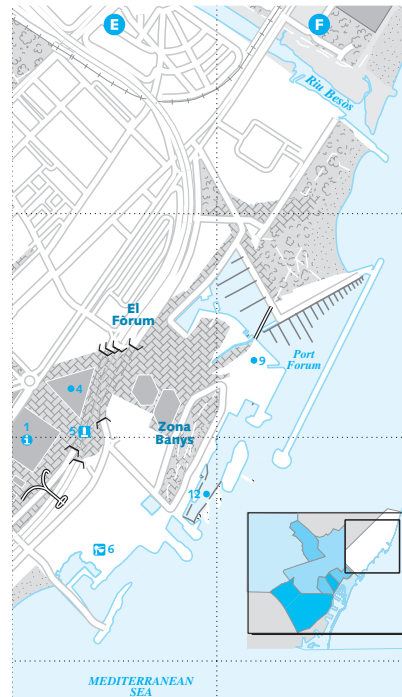


## PORT OLÍMPIC, EL POBLENOU &amp; EL FÒRUM



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Edifici Fòrum.....	4 E2
Fraternitat (Sculpture).....	5 E2
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Hotel Habitat Sky.....	7 B3
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Solar Panels.....	9 F2
Torre Agbar.....	10 A3
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0 400 m  
0 0.2 miles



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Hotel Arts Barcelona.....	33 B6

## THE NEW BARCELONA

## Walking Tour

## 1 Edifici Fòrum

The giant blue triangle that is the **Edifici Fòrum** (p97) is an impossible-to-miss creation at the heart of the El Fòrum development. Like a UFO, it seems to hover just above the ground.

## 2 Zona de Banyes

Especially good value for kids, this protected bathing area is a popular summer attraction for families. Just behind it looms a giant solar panel, a symbol of modern Barcelona. Stretching out further inland from the bathing area, kids on swings and other amusements share the space with rollerbladers and strollers.

## 3 Parc del Diagonal

Parc del Diagonal was created out of nothing as part of the redevelopment of this northeast corner of the city. Surrounded by expensive, high-rise apartment blocks, it is a thoroughly modern park, with a didactic botanical walk, sculptures, fountains and pools.

## 4 Beaches

Lining the coast from El Fòrum southwest towards Port Olímpic are the city's **beaches** (p96). In summer, snack-cum-cocktail bars open along these strands for those moments when swimming and sunbathing aren't enough. The water and sand tend to be cleaner than at Platja de la Barceloneta.

## 5 Cementiri de l'Est

A world away from the hedonism and flesh of Platja de Bogatell, this centuries-old **cemetery** (p96) makes for a peaceful stroll. Orderly lanes are lined by monumental family mausoleums, statues of mythical figures, angels and occasionally the sorely missed deceased.

## WALK FACTS

Start Edifici Fòrum

Finish Port Olímpic

Distance 4.2km

Duration 1¼ hours

Transport Maresme Fòrum



### 6 Port Olímpic

The marina of Port Olímpic is lined on both sides by back-to-back restaurants and bars. In summer it is especially popular with both

locals and tourists – it swarms by day as part of Barcelona’s busy beachside promenade, and heaves at night as the tacky bars swing into action.

## L’EIXAMPLE

Drinking & Nightlife p205; Eating p180; Shopping p159; Sleeping p235

In the 1820s, ranks of trees were planted on either side of the road linking Barcelona (from the Portal de l’Àngel) and the town of Gràcia. Thus was born the Passeig de Gràcia, a strollers’ boulevard. A regular horse-drawn coach service linked the city and town. All around were fields and market gardens. In time, gardens were built along the road, along with snack stands and outdoor theatres. It must have been pleasant, given the stifling overcrowding in Barcelona.

For the city was bursting at the seams. As the 1850s approached, industrialisation fed a population boom. A progressive government bit the bullet and had the medieval walls knocked down between 1854 and 1856. In 1859, a competition was held to design l’Eixample (Extension) of the city.

Work on l’Eixample began in 1869 to a design by architect Ildefons Cerdà, who specified a grid of wide streets with diamond intersections formed by their chamfered (cut-off) corners. Each block was supposed to have houses on just two sides, open space on the others and parkland in between, but speculators were soon building houses on all four sides of each block. Cerdà’s greenery failed to survive the intense demand for l’Eixample real estate. Building continued until well into the 20th century. Wealthy bourgeois families snapped up prime plots along and near Passeig de Gràcia, erecting fanciful buildings in the eclectic style of the Modernists.

Along l’Eixample’s grid streets are the majority of the city’s most expensive shops and hotels, a range of eateries and several nightspots. The main sightseeing objective is Modernista architecture, the best of which – apart from La Sagrada Família – are clustered on or near the main shopping avenue, Passeig de Gràcia. The stars include Gaudí’s La Pedrera and the Manzana de la Discòrdia, which comprises three Modernista gems by the three top architects of the period. Never is the old axiom about looking up as you wander more true than here. As you pound the pavement, a seemingly endless parade of eye-catching façades will keep aesthetes pleased. Of course, the equally ancient wisdom about looking down (to avoid stepping into you know what) holds equally true.

For its inhabitants, l’Eixample is several *barris* in one. La Dreta de l’Eixample (the right side of l’Eixample), stretching northeast from Passeig de Gràcia to Passeig de Sant Joan, contains some of the most sought-after real estate. Beyond, it takes on a dowdy feel, even around La Sagrada Família, a *barri* unto itself. L’Esquerra de l’Eixample (the left side of l’Eixample), running southwest from Passeig de Gràcia, changes character several times. As far as Carrer d’Aribau is also prime land. Indeed, the whole area between Carrer d’Aribau, Passeig de Sant Joan, Avinguda Diagonal and the Ronda de Sant Pere has been known since the early 20th century as the *Quadrat d’Or* (Golden Square). It is jammed with pricey shops purveying everything from teak furniture to designer clothes, from gourmet nibbles to shoes. The obvious two boulevards to start on are Passeig de Gràcia (with a growing line-up of international names and the highest commercial rents in Spain) and the much more appealing parallel, tree-lined Rambla de Catalunya. Flats on Passeig de Gràcia can sell for several million euros.

At night, the left side of l’Eixample has its own flavour. From Thursday to Saturday nights Carrer d’Aribau becomes a busy nightlife axis, with an assortment of bars north of Carrer de Mallorca (and spilling north over Avinguda Diagonal). Closer to the Universitat is the heart of the ‘Gaixample’, a cluster of gay and gay-friendly bars and clubs in an area bounded by Carrer de Balma and Carrer de Muntaner. The former also perks up at night as various music bars, largely frequented by a rowdy, juvenile set, fling open their doors. Just to add a little spice, streetwalkers come out to play along Rambla de Catalunya, while more discreet goings-on take place in the girlie bars and massage parlours nonchalantly sprinkled about the area.

Four Metro lines crisscross l’Eixample, three stopping at Passeig de Gràcia for the Manzana de la Discòrdia. Línia 3 stops at Diagonal for La Pedrera, while Línies 2 and 5 stop at Sagrada Família. FGC lines from Plaça de Catalunya take you one stop to Provença, in the heart of the l’Eixample. Numerous buses also ply the roads, so there is always an alternative for tired feet.

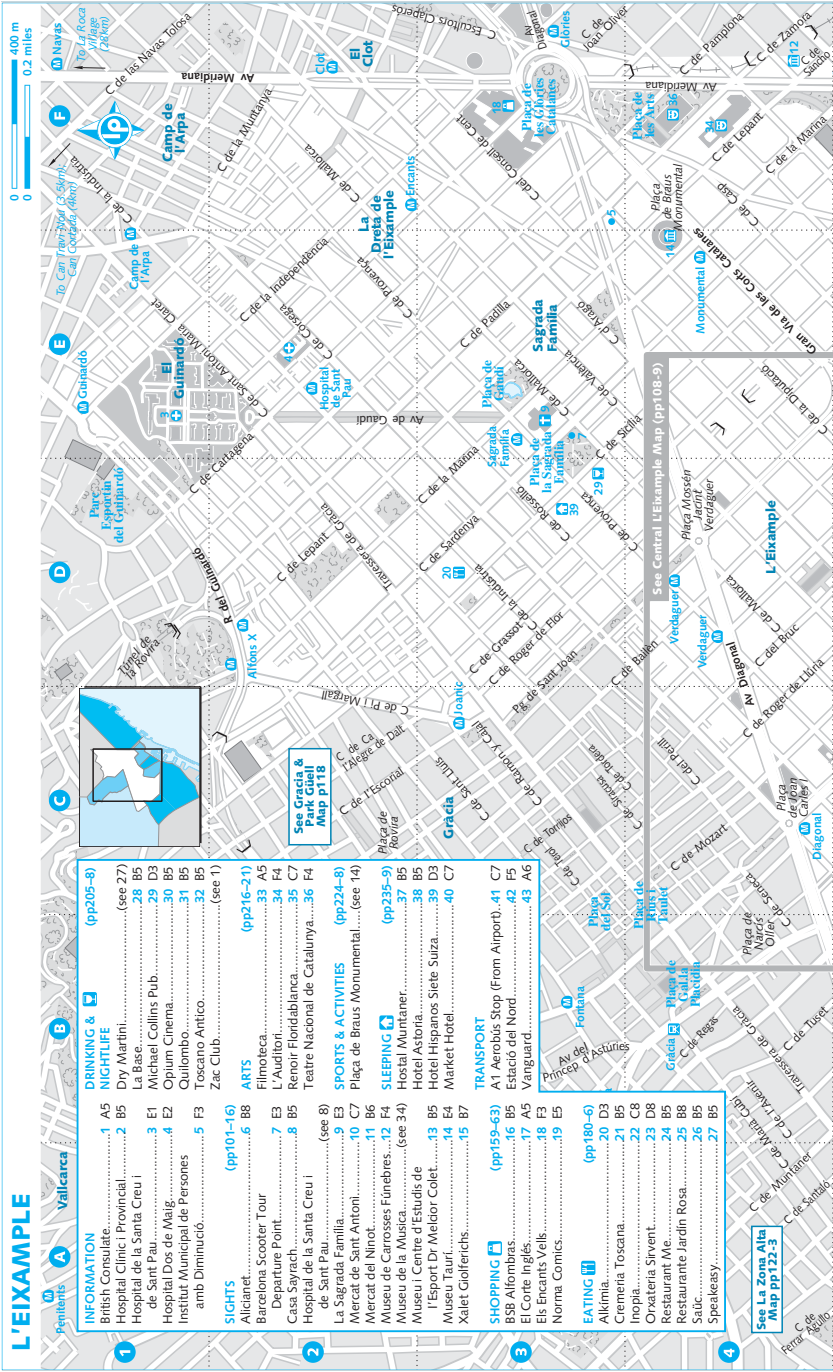
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L'EIXAMPLE



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## LA SAGRADA FAMÍLIA Map pp102–3

☎ 93 207 30 31; [www.sagradafamilia.org](http://www.sagradafamilia.org);  
Carrer de Mallorca 401; adult/senior & student €8/5,  
combined with Casa-Museu Gaudí in Park Güell  
€9/6; 🕒 9am–8pm Apr–Sep, 9am–6pm Oct–Mar;  
📍 Sagrada Família

If you have time for only one sightseeing outing, this should be it. La Sagrada Família inspires awe by its sheer verticality and, in the true manner of the great medieval cathedrals it emulates, it's still under construction after more than 100 years. When completed, the topmost tower will be more than half as high again as those that stand today. Unfinished it may be, but it attracts more than 2.8 million visitors a year, double most of its rivals for tourists' interest. It is the most visited monument in Spain.

The Temple Expiatori de la Sagrada Família (Expiatory Temple of the Holy Family) was Antoni Gaudí's last great hurrah, an all-consuming obsession. Given the commission by a conservative society that wished to build a temple as atonement for the city's sins of modernity, Gaudí saw its completion as his holy mission. As funds dried up he contributed his own, and in the last years of his life he was never shy

of pleading repeatedly with anyone he thought a likely donor.

This is a building site but the completed sections and the museum can be explored at leisure. Fifty-minute guided tours (€3.50) are offered up to four times daily. Alternatively, pick up one of the audio tours (€3.50), for which you need to leave ID as security. Enter from Carrer de Sardanya and Carrer de la Marina. Once inside, you can spend a further €2 per ride on lifts that take you inside one of the towers in both the Nativity and Passion façades.

These two façades, each with four skyscraping towers, are the *sides* of the church. The main Glory Façade, on which work is underway, closes off the southeast end on Carrer de Mallorca.

Gaudí devised a temple 95m long and 60m wide, able to seat 13,000 people, with a central tower 170m high above the transept (representing Christ) and another 17 of 100m or more. The 12 along the three façades represent the Apostles, while the remaining five represent the Virgin Mary and the four Evangelists. With his characteristic dislike for straight lines (there were none in nature, he said), Gaudí gave his

towers swelling outlines inspired by the weird peaks of the holy mountain Montserrat outside Barcelona, and encrusted them with a tangle of sculpture that seems an outgrowth of the stone.

At Gaudí's death, only the crypt, the apse walls, one portal and one tower had been finished. Three more towers were added by 1930 – completing the north-east (Nativity) façade. In 1936, anarchists burned and smashed everything they could in the church, including the workshops, plans and models. Work only began again in 1952.

The **Nativity Façade** is the artistic pinnacle of the building, mostly created under Gaudí's personal supervision. You can climb high up inside some of the four towers by a combination of lifts and narrow spiral staircases – a vertiginous experience. Do not climb the stairs if you have cardiac or respiratory problems. The towers are destined to hold tubular bells capable of playing complicated music at great volume. Their upper parts are decorated with mosaics spelling out '*Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, Hosanna in Excelsis, Amen, Alleluia*'. Asked why he lavished so much care on the tops of the spires, which no-one would see from close up, Gaudí answered: 'The angels will see them.'

Three sections of the portal represent, from left to right, Hope, Charity and Faith. Among the forest of sculpture on the manger portal you can see, low down, the manger surrounded by an ox, an ass, the shepherds and kings, and angel musicians. Some 30 different species of plant from around Catalonia are reproduced here, and the faces of the many figures are taken from plaster casts done of local people and the occasional one made from corpses in the local morgue!

Directly above the blue stained-glass window is the Archangel Gabriel's Annunciation to Mary. At the top is a green cypress tree, a refuge in a storm for the white doves of peace dotted over it. The mosaic work at the pinnacle of the towers is made from Murano glass, from Venice.

To the right of the façade is the curious **Claustre del Roser**, a Gothic style mini-cloister tacked on to the outside of the church (rather than the classic square enclosure of the great Gothic church monasteries). Once inside, look back to the intricately decorated entrance. On the lower right-hand

## A HIDDEN PORTRAIT

If you take a careful look at the central images of the Passion Façade, you will spy a special tribute from sculptor Josep Subirachs to Gaudí. The central sculptural group (below Christ crucified) shows, from right to left, Christ bearing his cross, Veronica displaying the cloth with Christ's bloody image after wiping his face, a pair of soldiers and, watching it all, a man called the Evangelist. Subirachs used a rare photo of Gaudí, taken a couple of years before his death, as the model for the Evangelist's face.

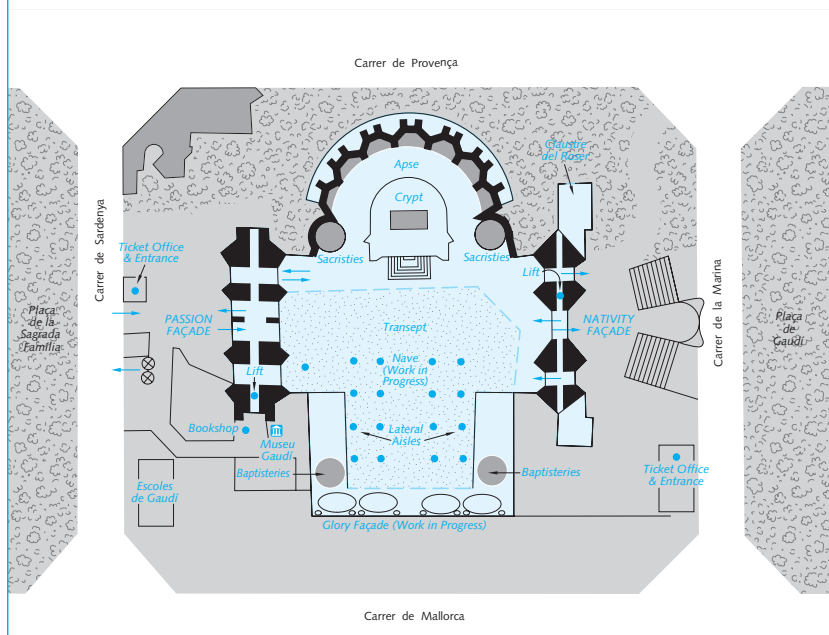
side you'll notice the sculpture of a reptilian devil handing a terrorist a bomb. Barcelona was regularly rocked by political violence and bombings were frequent in the decades prior to the civil war. The sculpture is one of several on the 'temptations of men and women'.

The southwest **Passion Façade**, on the theme of Christ's last days and death, was built between 1954 and 1978 based on surviving drawings by Gaudí, with four towers and a large, sculpture-bedecked portal. The sculptor, Josep Subirachs, continues to add to its decoration. He has not attempted to imitate Gaudí, producing angular, controversial images of his own. The main series of sculptures, on three levels, are in an S-shaped sequence starting with the Last Supper at the bottom left and ending with Christ's burial at the top right.

The main **Glory Façade** will, like the north-east and southwest façades, be crowned by four towers (taller than the other eight) – the total of 12 representing the Twelve Apostles. Gaudí wanted it to be the most magnificent façade of the church. Inside will be the narthex, a kind of foyer made up of 16 'lanterns', a series of hyperboloid forms topped by cones.

The semicircular apse wall at the north-west end of the church was the first part to be finished (in 1894). The soaring interior of the church is progressing apace. The nave and transept have been roofed over and a forest of extraordinary angled pillars is in place. As the pillars soar towards the ceiling, they sprout a web of supporting branches that creates the effect of a forest canopy. The image of the tree is in no way fortuitous – Gaudí envisaged such an effect. Everything was thought through, including the shape and placement of windows to create the mottled lighting effect one would see with

## LA SAGRADA FAMÍLIA



## TREMORS BELOW GROUND AND ABOVE THE LAW

In early 2008, tunnelling companies were given the go-ahead to create a 6km tunnel for the AVE high-speed Madrid–Barcelona train. It will link Estació Sants with the future second railway station in La Sagrera, crossing L'Eixample and passing under streets next to La Sagrada Família and La Pedrera.

Since the collapse of several blocks of flats in 2005 in the district of El Carmel because of tunnelling for a Metro line, locals have little faith in the safety of such projects and neighbourhood groups have protested long and loud against the new tunnel. Protesting louder than anyone, the administrators of La Sagrada Família claim the tunnel will endanger the city's most visited monument. At the time of writing, La Sagrada Família's lawyers had managed to hold up the start of work by demanding full access to the tunnel plans. So far this has been denied. One lawyer decried the lack of transparency on the plans: 'How bad can their plans be that they don't want to reveal them?'

Amid the brouhaha, it came to light in 2007 that La Sagrada Família doesn't have a building permit! In 1885, Gaudí delivered a request to modify the original project but obtained no response. This administrative void has never been filled. And residents on Carrer de Mallorca concerned about the AVE tunnel might have other worries. A 1916 plan to create an open space in front of the Glory façade would mean knocking down several blocks of flats and moving 150 families elsewhere. The church's administration insists this plan should be made reality.

sunlight pouring through the branches of a thick forest. Unusually, the pillars are made of four different types of stone. They vary in colour and in load-bearing strength, from the soft Montjuïc stone pillars along the lateral aisles through to granite, dark grey basalt and finally burgundy-tinged Iranian porphyry for the key columns at the intersection of the nave and transept. Tribunes built high above the aisles can host two choirs; the main tribune up to 1300 people and the children's tribune up to 300.

The **Museu Gaudí** in the church's crypt houses material on Gaudí's life and work, including models, photos and other material on La Sagrada Família. You can see a good example of his plumb-line models that showed him the stresses and strains he could get away with in construction. A side hall towards the eastern end of the museum leads to a viewing point above the simple crypt in which the genius is buried. To the right, in front of the Passion Façade, the **Escoles de Gaudí** is one of his simpler gems. Gaudí built this as a children's school, creating an original, undulating roof of brick that continues to charm architects to this day. Inside is a re-creation of Gaudí's modest office as it was when he died, and explanations of the geometric patterns and plans at the heart of his building techniques.

Guesses on when construction might be complete range from the 2020s to the 2040s. By then, it will almost certainly be necessary to renovate some of the older parts of the church. In the meantime, the entire roof will be completed by 2010, from which time onwards it will be possible to celebrate Mass.

### LA PEDRERA Map pp108–9

📍 902 400973; [www.fundaciocaixacatalunya.es](http://www.fundaciocaixacatalunya.es); Carrer de Provença 261-265; adult/student & EU senior €8/4.50; 🕒 9am-8pm Mar-Oct, 9am-6.30pm Nov-Feb; 🚶 Diagonal

This hallucinatory, undulating beast is yet another madcap Gaudí masterpiece, built between 1905 and 1910 as a combined apartment and office block. Formally called Casa Milà, after the businessman who commissioned it, it's better known as La Pedrera (The Quarry) because of its uneven grey stone façade, which ripples around the corner of Carrer de Provença. In spite of appearances, the building is coated in a layer of stone rather than built out of it. The wave effect is emphasised by elaborate wrought-iron balconies. Pere Milà had married the older and far richer Roser Guardiola and knew how to spend her money (he was one of the city's first car-owners and Gaudí built parking space into this building, itself a first). With this apartment building he wanted to top anything done in L'Eixample.

The Fundació Caixa Catalunya has opened the top-floor apartment, attic and roof, together called the **Espai Gaudí** (Gaudí Space), to visitors. The roof is the most extraordinary element, with its giant chimney pots looking like multicoloured medieval knights (they say the evil imperial soldiers in the movie series *Star Wars* were inspired by them). Gaudí wanted to put a tall statue of the Virgin up here too: when the Milà family said no, fearing it might make the building a target for anarchists, Gaudí resigned from the project in disgust. Mrs

Milà was no fan of Gaudí and it is said that no sooner had the job been completed than she had all his personally designed furniture tossed out!

One floor below the roof, where you can appreciate Gaudí's taste for McDonald's-style parabolic arches, is a modest museum dedicated to his work. You can see models and videos dealing with each of his buildings.

On the next floor down you can inspect the apartment (El Pis de la Pedrera). It is fascinating to wander around this elegantly furnished home, done up in the style a well-to-do family might have enjoyed in the early 20th century. The sensuous curves and unexpected touches in everything from light fittings to bedsteads, from door handles to balconies, can hardly fail to induce a heartfelt desire to move in at once. All those curves might seem admirable to us today, but not everyone thought so at the time. The story goes that one tenant, a certain Mrs Comes i Abril, had complained that there was no obvious place to put her piano in these wavy rooms. Gaudí's response was simple: 'Madame, I suggest you take up the flute.'

Some of the lower floors of the building, especially the grand 1st floor, often host temporary exhibitions. On hot August evenings, La Pedrera stages '30 Minuts de Música', mini-concerts held on the roof at 7pm, 8pm and 9pm (€5) through August.

### CASA BATLLÓ Map pp108–9

📍 93 216 03 66; [www.casabatllo.es](http://www.casabatllo.es); Passeig de Gràcia 43; adult/student & senior €16.50/13.20; 🕒 9am-8pm (on occasion these hours can be shortened); 🚶 Passeig de Gràcia

This is Gaudí at his hallucinogenic best, and one of the strangest residential buildings in Europe. The façade, sprinkled with bits of blue, mauve and green tile and studded with wave-shaped window frames and balconies, rises to an uneven blue-tiled roof with a solitary tower.

It is one of the three houses on the block between Carrer del Consell de Cent and Carrer d'Aragó that gave it the playful name *Manzana de la Discordia* or 'Apple (Block) of Discord' (see the boxed text, right). The others are Cadafalch's **Casa Amatller** (right) and Domènech i Montaner's **Casa Lleó Morera** (p109). They were all renovated between 1898 and 1906 and show how eclectic a 'style' Modernisme was.

Locals know it variously as the *casa dels ossos* (house of bones) or *casa del drac* (house of the dragon). It's easy enough to see why. The balconies look like the bony jaws of some strange beast and the roof represents Sant Jordi and the dragon. If you stare long enough at the building, it seems almost to be a living being. It is by far the weirdest contribution to the *Manzana de la Discordia*. Before going inside, take a look at the pavement. Each paving piece carries stylised images of an octopus and a starfish, Gaudí designs originally cooked up for Casa Batlló.

When Gaudí was commissioned to refashion this building, he went to town inside and out. The internal light wells shimmer with tiles of deep sea blue. Gaudí eschewed the straight line, and so the staircase wafts you up to the 1st floor, where the main salon looks on to Passeig de Gràcia. Everything swirls: the ceiling is twisted into a vortex around its sun-like lamp; the doors, window and skylights are dreamy waves of wood and coloured glass. The same themes continue in the other rooms and covered terrace. Two grand salons, often used for receptions and other special events, await on the 2nd floor. As you walk out onto the rooftop terrace, the floor on either side is obscurely transparent and shot with more curvaceous motifs. Twisting, tiled chimney pots add a surreal touch to the roof.

### CASA AMATLLER Map pp108–9

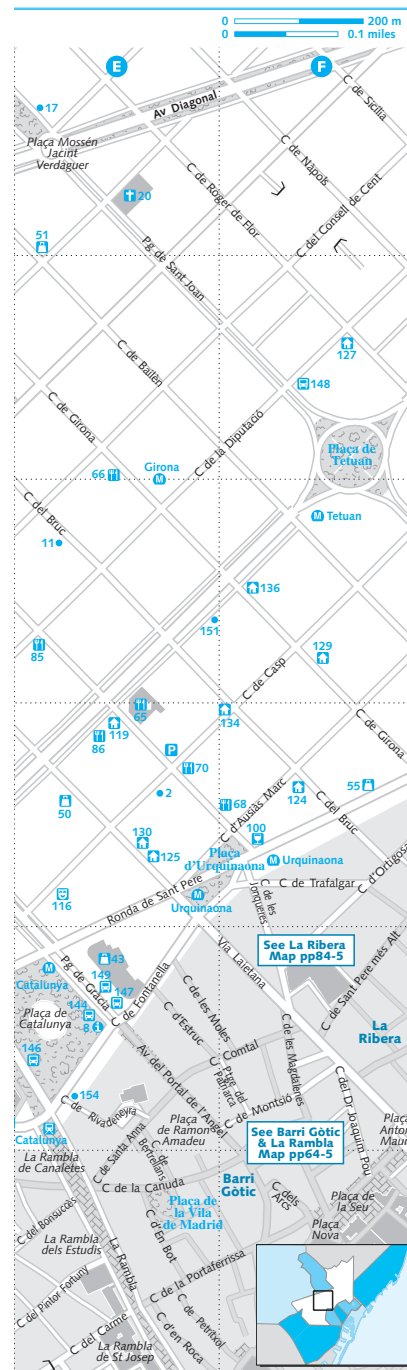
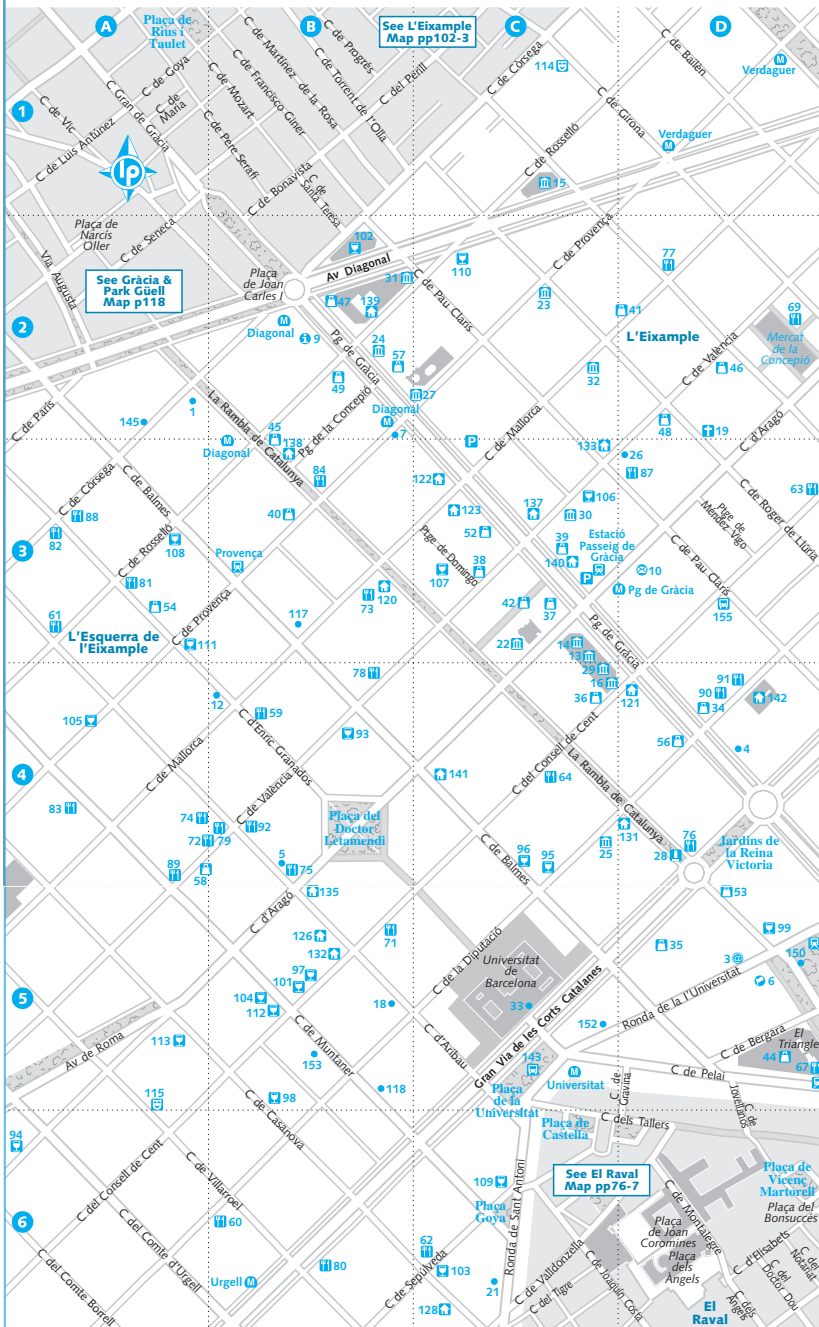
📍 93 487 72 17; [www.amatller.org](http://www.amatller.org); Passeig de Gràcia 41; admission free; 🕒 10am-8pm Mon-Sat, 10am-3pm Sun; 🚶 Passeig de Gràcia

Doubtless one of Puig i Cadafalch's most striking bits of Modernista fantasy, Casa Amatller combines Gothic window frames with a stepped gable borrowed

## HOW DO YOU LIKE THEM APPLES?

Despite the Catalanisation of most Barcelona names since 1980, the *Manzana de la Discordia* has kept its Spanish name to preserve a pun on *manzana*, which means both 'block' and 'apple'. According to Greek mythology, the original Apple of Discord was tossed onto Mt Olympus by Eris (Discord), with orders that it be given to the most beautiful goddess, sparking jealousies that helped start the Trojan War. The pun won't transfer into Catalan, whose word for block is *illa*, and for apple, *poma*.

## CENTRAL L'EIXAMPLE



(deliberately) from Dutch urban architecture. But the busts and reliefs of dragons, knights and other characters dripping off the main façade are pure caprice on the part of Cadafalch. The pillared foyer and staircase lit by stained glass are like the inside of some romantic castle.

The building was renovated in 1900 for the chocolate baron and philanthropist Antoni Amatller (1851–1910). Casa Amatller may at some point soon be at least partly opened to the public, so keep an eye out for queues. For now, you can wander in to the foyer, admire the staircase and lift, and head through the shop to see the latest temporary exhibition out the back. It is also possible, in the morning (times vary), to join a guided tour (€8) of the foyer and Amatller's photo studio. Amatller, who gave Cadafalch the job of redoing the house, was a keen traveller and photographer (his shots of turn-of-the-20th-century Morocco are absorbing and sometimes some are on show). The tour also includes a tasting of Amatller chocolates made in the house's original kitchen.

**CASA LLEÓ MORERA** Map pp108–9

Passeig de Gràcia 35; **M** Passeig de Gràcia Domènech i Montaner's contribution to the Manzana de la Discordia (1905), with Modernista carving outside and a bright, tiled lobby in which floral motifs predominate, is perhaps the least odd-looking of the three main buildings in the block. If only you could get inside – they are private apartments. The 1st floor is quite giddy with swirling sculptures, rich mosaics and whimsical décor.

**FUNDACIÓ ANTONI TÀPIES** Map pp102–3

☎ 93 487 03 15; [www.fundaciotapiés.org](http://www.fundaciotapiés.org); Carrer d'Aragó 255; adult/child under 16yr €6/4; ☎ 10am–8pm Tue–Sun; **M** Passeig de Gràcia The Fundació Antoni Tàpies is both a pioneering Modernista building (completed in 1885) and the major collection of a leading 20th-century Catalan artist.

The building, designed by Domènech i Montaner for the publishing house Editorial Montaner i Simón (run by a cousin of the architect), combines a brick-covered iron frame with Islamic-inspired decoration. Tàpies saw fit to crown it with the meanderings of his own mind – to some it looks like a pile of coiled barbed wire, to



## CENTRAL L'EIXAMPLE

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others...well, it's difficult to say. He calls it *Núvol i Cadira* (Cloud and Chair).

Antoni Tàpies, whose experimental art has often carried political messages (not always easily decipherable) – he opposed Francoism in the 1960s and '70s – launched the Fundació in 1984 to promote contemporary art, donating a large part of his own work. The collection spans the arc of Tàpies' creations (with more than 800 works) and contributions from other contemporary artists. In the main exhibition area (Level 1, upstairs) you can see an ever-changing selection of about a dozen of Tàpies' grander works. For a historical perspective on his work, head for the basement Level 3, where you'll find displays of his drawings and colourful canvases from the 1940s and 1950s, a far cry from his mixed-materials creations for which he later became better known.

## HOSPITAL DE LA SANTA CREU I DE SANT PAU Map pp102-3

☎ 902 076621; www.santpau.es; Carrer de Cartagenà 167; ☑ Hospital de Sant Pau Domènec i Montaner excelled himself as both an architect and a philanthropist with this Modernista masterpiece, long considered one of the city's most important hospitals. He wanted to create a unique environment that would also cheer up patients. The whole complex, including 16 pavilions (together with the Palau de la Música Catalana a joint World Heritage site), is lavishly decorated and each pavilion is unique. Among the many artists who contributed statuary, ceramics and artwork was the prolific Eusebi Arnau. You can wander around the grounds at any time, and it is well worth the stroll up Avinguda de Gaudí from La Sagrada Família.

The hospital facilities have mostly been transferred to a new facility on the premises, freeing up the century-old structures. Part of the Modernista site will become a museum dedicated to Montaner, medicine and the 600-year history of the hospital (first established in El Raval in the early 15th century; see p78), along with a Modernisme Centre, but not before 2009. You can join a guided tour for €5 (10.15am and 12.15pm in English, 11.15am in Catalan and 1.15pm in Spanish).

## MUSEU DE LA MÚSICA Map pp102-3

☎ 93 256 36 50; www.museumusica.bcn.cat; Carrer de Padilla 155; adult/senior & student €4/free; ☎ 10am-9pm Sat, Sun & holidays, 11am-9pm Mon & Wed-Fri; ☑ Monumental Some 500 instruments (less than a third of those held) are on show in this new museum housed on the 2nd floor of the administration building in l'Auditori, the city's main classical music concert hall (p217).

Instruments range from a 17th-century baroque guitar, through to lutes (look out for the many-stringed 1641 *archilute* from Venice), violins, Japanese kotos, sitars from India, eight organs (some dating to the 18th century), pianos, a varied collection of drums and other percussion instruments from across Spain and beyond, along with all sorts of phonographs and gramophones. There are some odd pieces indeed, like the *buccèn*, a snakehead-adorned brass instrument.

Much of the documentary and sound material can be enjoyed through audio-visual displays as you proceed through the theme-based exhibition. You'll be given an audio device to allow you to listen to how some of the instruments sound as you wander through. However, it's sometimes a trifle hard to hear the recording above the continually changing ambient music that is part of this pleasing display.

The museum also organises occasional concerts in which well-known musicians perform on rare instruments held in the collection.

## FUNDACIÓ FRANCISCO GODIA

Map pp108-9  
www.fundacionfgodia.org; Carrer de la Diputació 250; ☑ Passeig de Gràcia Francisco Godia (1921-90), head of one of the great establishment families of Barcelona, liked fast cars (he came sixth in the 1956 Grand Prix season driving Maseratis) and fine art. An intriguing mix of medieval art, ceramics and modern paintings make up this eclectic private collection, which from 2009 will occupy the ground and 1st floors of Casa Garriga Nogués, a carefully restored Modernista house originally built for a rich banking family by Enric Sagnier in 1902-05. Jaume Huguet is represented by *Santa Maria Magdalena*, a bright, Gothic representation of Mary Magdalene dressed in red ermine. Godia's interests ranged from the

Neapolitan baroque painter Luca Giordano through to Catalan Modernism and Valencia's Joaquim Sorolla. Antoni Tàpies leads the way into the museum's modern pieces.

Also on display is a ceramics collection, with some exquisite pieces from such classic Spanish pottery-production centres as Manises in Valencia, Toledo and Seville.

### FUNDACIÓ SUÑOL Map pp108–9

☎ 93 496 10 32; [www.fundaciosunol.org](http://www.fundaciosunol.org); Passeig de Gràcia 98; adult/concession €5/2.50; ☎ 4–8pm Mon–Wed, Fri & Sat; **M** Diagonal

Rotating exhibitions of portions of this private collection of mostly 20th-century art (some 1200 works in total) offers anything from the photography of Man Ray to sculptures by Alberto Giacometti. Over two floors of exhibition space, you are most likely to run into Spanish artists, anyone from Picasso to Jaume Plensa, along with a sprinkling of others from abroad. It makes a refreshing pause between the rush of often crowded Modernista monuments on this boulevard. Indeed, you get an interesting side view of one of them, La Pedrera, from out the back (where stairs lead down to *Nivell Zero*, a space for temporary exhibitions of works from outside the Suñol collection).

### MUSEU EGIPCI Map pp108–9

☎ 93 488 01 88; [www.fundclos.com](http://www.fundclos.com); Carrer de València 284; adult/senior & student €7/5; ☎ 10am–8pm Mon–Sat, 10am–2pm Sun; **M** Passeig de Gràcia

Hotel magnate Jordi Clos has spent much of his life collecting ancient Egyptian artefacts, brought together in this private museum, with some 700 objects spread over an airy seven-floor exhibition space. It's divided into different thematic areas (the pharaoh, religion, daily life etc). In the basement is an exhibition area and library, displaying volumes including original editions of works by Carter, the Egyptologist who led the Tutankhamen excavations.

### MUSEU DEL PERFUM Map pp108–9

☎ 93 216 01 21; [www.museudelperfum.com](http://www.museudelperfum.com); Passeig de Gràcia 39; adult/student & senior €5/3; ☎ 10.30am–2pm & 4.30–8pm Mon–Fri, 11am–2pm Sat; **M** Passeig de Gràcia

Housed in the back of the Regia perfume store, this museum contains everything

from ancient Egyptian and Roman scent receptacles to classic Eau de Cologne bottles – all in all, some 5000 bottles of infinite shapes, sizes and histories. Also on show are old catalogues and advertising posters.

### PALAU DEL BARÓ QUADRAS (CASA ASIA) Map pp108–9

☎ 93 238 73 37; [www.casaasia.es](http://www.casaasia.es); Avinguda Diagonal 373; ☎ 10am–8pm Mon–Sat, 10am–2pm Sun; **M** Diagonal

Puig i Cadafalch designed Palau del Baró Quadras (built 1902–06) for the baron in question in an exuberant Gothic-inspired style. The main façade is its most intriguing, with a soaring, glassed-in gallery. Take a closer look at the gargoyles and reliefs, among them a pair of toothy fish and a knight wielding a sword – clearly the same artistic signature of the architect behind the *Casa Amatller* (p107). Décor inside is eclectic, but dominated by Middle Eastern and Oriental themes. The setting is appropriate for its occupants. Casa Asia is a cultural centre celebrating the relationship between Spain and the Asia-Pacific region. Visiting the varied temporary exhibitions (mostly on the 2nd floor) allows you to get a good look inside this intriguing building. Take in the views from the roof terrace.

### CASA DE LES PUNXES Map pp108–9

Avinguda Diagonal 420; **M** Diagonal  
Puig i Cadafalch's Casa Terrades is better known as the Casa de les Punxes (House of the Spikes) because of its pointed turrets. This apartment block, built between 1903 and 1905, looks like a fairy-tale castle and has the singular attribute of being the only fully detached building in *l'Eixample*.

### ESGLÉSIA DE LA PURÍSSIMA CONCEPCIÓ I ASSUMPCIÓ DE NOSTRA SENYORA Map pp108–9

Carrer de Roger de Llúria 70; ☎ 8am–1pm & 5–9pm; **M** Passeig de Gràcia

One hardly expects to run into a medieval church on the grid pattern streets of the late-19th-century extension of the city. And yet that is just what this is. Transferred stone by stone from the old centre in 1871–88, this 14th-century church has a pretty 16th-century cloister with a peaceful garden. Behind is a mixed Romanesque-Gothic bell tower (11th to 16th century),

## MODERNISME UNPACKED

Aficionados of Barcelona's Modernista heritage should consider the *Ruta del Modernisme* pack ([www.rutadelmodernisme.com](http://www.rutadelmodernisme.com)). For €12 you receive a guide to 115 Modernista buildings great and small, a map and discounts of up to 50% on the main Modernista sights in Barcelona, as well as some in other municipalities around Catalonia. The discounts are valid for a year. For €18 you get another guide and map, *Sortim*, which leads you to bars and restaurants located in Modernista buildings around the city. The proceeds of these packs go to the maintenance and refurbishment of Modernista buildings. The *Ruta del Modernisme* guide (in various languages) is available in bookstores. You can then take it to one of three Centres del Modernisme to obtain the discount cards, or you can buy the lot at those centres. They are located at the main tourist office at Plaça de Catalunya 17 (p279), the *Hospital de la Santa Creu i de Sant Pau* (p111) and the *Pavellons Güell* (p134) in Pedralbes.

moved from another old town church that didn't survive, Església de Sant Miquel. This is one of a handful of such old churches shifted willy-nilly from their original locations to *l'Eixample*.

### PALAU MONTANER Map pp108–9

☎ 93 317 76 52; Carrer de Mallorca 278; adult/child & senior €5/2.50; ☎ guided visit only 10.30am in English, 11.30am in Catalan & 12.30pm in Spanish Sat, 10.30am in Catalan, 11.30am in Spanish & 12.30pm in Catalan Sun; **M** Passeig de Gràcia

Interesting on the outside and made all the more enticing by its gardens, this creation by Domènech i Montaner is spectacular on the inside. Completed in 1896, its central feature is a grand staircase beneath a broad, ornamental skylight. The interior is laden with sculptures (some by Eusebi Arnau), mosaics and fine woodwork. Both the interior and exterior feature decoration depicting themes related to the printing industry. It is advisable to call ahead if you want to be sure to visit, as the building is sometimes closed to the public on weekends too.

### UNIVERSITAT DE BARCELONA

Map pp108–9

☎ 93 402 11 00; [www.ub.edu](http://www.ub.edu); Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes 585; admission free; ☎ 9am–9pm Mon–Fri; **M** Universitat

Although a university was first set up on what is now La Rambla in the 16th century, the present, glorious mix of Romanesque, Gothic, Islamic and Mudéjar architecture is an eclectic caprice of the 19th century (built 1863–82). Wander into the main hall, up the grand staircase and around the various leafy cloisters. On the 1st floor, the main hall for big occasions is the Mudéjar-style *Paranimfo*. Take a stroll in the gardens out the back.

### FUNDACIÓ JOAN BROSSA Map pp108–9

☎ 93 467 69 52; [www.fundaciojoanbrossa.cat](http://www.fundaciojoanbrossa.cat); Carrer de Provença 318; admission free; ☎ 10am–2pm & 3–7pm Mon–Fri; **M** Diagonal

Pop into this basement gallery to get an insight into the minds of one of the city's cultural icons, Joan Brossa, a difficult-to-classify mix of poet, artist, theatre man, Catalan nationalist and all-round visionary. You'll see a panoply of objects as art (like *Porró amb Daus*, a typical Spanish wine decanter with dice), followed by samples of his visual poems (see p35).

### MUSEU DE CARROSSES FÚNEBRES

Map pp102–3

☎ 902 076902; Carrer de Sancho d'Àvila 2; admission free; ☎ 10am–1pm & 4–6pm Mon–Fri, 10am–1pm Sat, Sun & holidays; **M** Marina

If late-18th-century to mid-20th-century hearses (complete with period-dressed dummies) are your thing, then this museum, probably the city's weirdest sight, is where to contemplate the pomp and circumstance of people's last earthly ride. From the reception desk, you are taken into the rather gloomy basement by a security guard. Along with a metallic Buick hearse and a couple of earlier motorised hearses are lined up 11 horse-drawn carriage-hearses in use in the 19th and early 20th centuries – four of them with horses and accompanying walkers in powdered wigs and tricorne hats. It's a strange little display and easily done in half an hour. The funeral company claims it is the biggest museum of its kind in the world.

### MUSEU I CENTRE D'ESTUDIS DE L'ESPORT DR MELCIOR COLET

Map pp102–3

☎ 93 419 22 32; Carrer de Buenos Aires 56–58; admission free; ☎ 9am–5.30pm Mon–Fri; ☎ 27, 32, 59, 66, 67 or 68

Puig i Cadafalch's 1911 Modernista caprice, the Casa Company, looks like an odd Tyrolean country house, and is marvelously out of place. A collection of photos, documents and other sports memorabilia stretches over two floors – from a 1930s pair of skis and boots (how did they get down mountains on those things?) to the skull-decorated swimming costume of a champion Catalan water-polo player. A curio on the ground floor is the replica of a stone commemoration in Latin of Lucius Minicius Natal, a Barcelona boy who won a *quadriga* (four-horse chariot) race at the 227th Olympic Games...in AD 129.

### MUSEU TAURÍ [Map pp102–3](#)

☎ 93 245 58 03; Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes 749; adult/child €5/4; 🕒 11am–2pm & 4–8pm Mon–Sat, 10am–1pm Sun Apr–Sep; 🚇 Monumental Housed in the Plaça de Braus Monumental bullring, this bullfighting museum displays stuffed bulls' heads, old posters, *trajes de luces* (bullfighters' gear) and other memorabilia. You also get to wander around the ring and corrals.

### XALET GOLFERICHS [Map pp102–3](#)

☎ 93 323 77 90; www.golferichs.org, in Catalan & Spanish; Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes 491; 🕒 10am–2pm & 5–9pm Mon–Sat; 🚇 Rocafort This quirky country-style mansion could not look more out of place on one of the city's busiest boulevards. Its owner, businessman Macari Golferichs, wanted a Modernista villa and he got one. Brick, ceramics and timber are the main building elements of the house, which displays a distinctly Gothic flavour. It came close to demolition in the 1970s but was saved by the Town Hall and converted into a cultural centre. Opening times can vary depending on temporary exhibitions and other cultural activities.

### ESGLÉSIA DE LES SALESES [Map pp108–9](#)

☎ 93 265 39 12; Passeig de Sant Joan; 🕒 10am–2pm & 5–9pm Mon–Sat; 🚇 Tetuan A singular neo-Gothic effort, this church is interesting above all because of who built it. Raised in 1878–85 with an adjacent convent (badly damaged in the civil war and now a school), it was designed by Joan Martorell i Montells (1833–1906), who happened to be Gaudí's architecture professor.

Indeed, the church offers some hints of what was to come with Modernisme, with his use of brick, mosaics and sober stained glass.

## MORE MODERNISME IN L'EIXAMPLE

### Walking Tour

#### 1 Casa Calvet

Gaudí's most conventional contribution to L'Eixample is **Casa Calvet** (Carrer de Casp 48), built in 1900. Inspired by baroque, the noble ashlar façade is broken up by protruding wrought-iron balconies. Inside, the main attraction is the staircase, which you can admire if you eat in the swank restaurant (p180).

#### 2 Cases Cabot

Josep Vilaseca (1848–1910) was one of many architects working in Modernista Barcelona whose names have not come down to us as stars. His two contiguous **Cases Cabot** (Carrer de Roger de Llúria 8–14), built 1901–04, are quite different from one another. The doorway of the house at Nos 8–10 has particularly fine decoration.

#### 3 Casa Pia Batlló

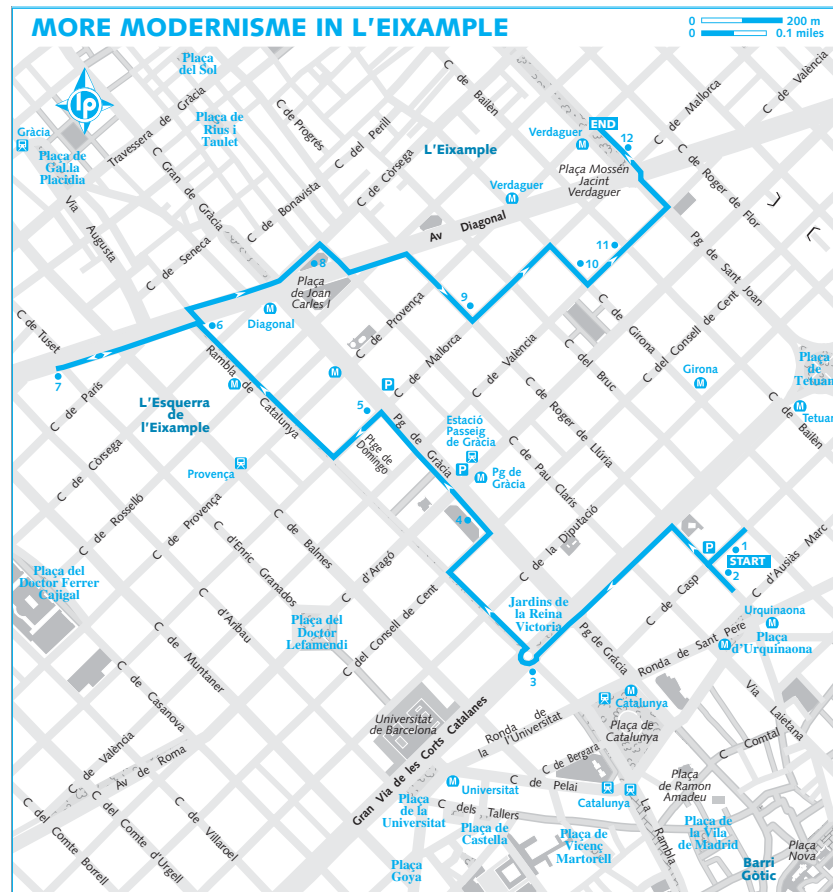
Vilaseca's eclectic **Casa Pia Batlló** (Rambla de Catalunya 17), built between 1891 and 1896, is interesting in its use of ironwork, especially along the 1st- and top-floor galleries around the three façades of the building. Stonework is pre-eminent, and pseudo-Gothic touches, such as the witch's hat towers, abound.

#### 4 Casa Mulleras

In among the big three of the Manzana de la Discordia (p107), **Casa Mulleras** (Passeig de Gràcia 37), built in 1906 by Enric Sagnier (1858–1931), is a relatively demure Modernista contribution. The façade transmits a restrained classicism, but it's not devoid of light floral decoration

### WALK FACTS

**Start** Casa Calvet  
**Finish** Casa Macaya  
**Distance** 3.8km  
**Duration** 1½ hours  
**Transport** 🚇 Urquinaona



and a fine gallery. The inside is similarly sober and clean-lined.

#### 5 Casa Enric Batlló

Another apartment building by Vilaseca is **Casa Enric Batlló** (Passeig de Gràcia 75), built from 1895 to 1896 and now part of the **Comtes de Barcelona hotel** (p237). Lit up at night, the brickwork façade is especially graceful.

#### 6 Casa Serra

Puig i Cadafalch let his imagination loose on **Casa Serra** (Rambla de Catalunya 126), built 1903–08, a neo-Gothic whimsy that is home to government offices. With its central tower topped by a witch's hat, grandly decorated upper-floor windows and tiled roof, it must have been a strange house to live in!

#### 7 Casa Sayrach

It's worth walking two blocks west of Casa Serra to see **Casa Sayrach** (Avinguda Diagonal 423–425), built in 1915–18 by Manuel Sayrach (1886–1937); it's one of the last Modernista buildings, is home to a chic restaurant and vaguely resembles La Pedrera. While not as nutty as Gaudí's efforts, the stone façade is all curves.

#### 8 Casa Comalat

Built in 1911 by Salvador Valeri (1873–1954), **Casa Comalat** (Avinguda Diagonal 442) is striking. The Gaudí influence on the main façade, with its wavy roof and bulging balconies, is obvious. Head around the back to Carrer de Còrsega to see a more playful façade, with its windows stacked like cards.



## 9 Casa Thomas

Built 1895-98 and 1912, [Casa Thomas](#) (Carrer de Mallorca 291) was one of Domènech i Montaner's earlier efforts – the ceramic details are a trademark and the massive ground-level wrought iron decoration (and protection?) is magnificent. Wander inside to the [Cubiña design store](#) (p160) to admire his interior work.

## 10 Casa Granell

The colourful [Casa Granell](#) (Carrer de Girona 122), built between 1901 and 1903 by Jeroni Granell (1867–1931), is a peculiar building, with its serpentine lines (check out the roof) and gently curving decorative façade framing the stolid rectangular windows. If you get the chance, take a peek inside the entrance and stairwell, both richly decorated.

## 11 Casa Llopis i Bofill

[Casa Llopis i Bofill](#) (Carrer de València 339), built in 1902, is an interesting block of flats designed by Antoni Gallissà (1861–1903). The graffiti-covered façade is particularly striking to the visitor's eye. The use of elaborate parabolic arches on the ground floor is a clear Modernista touch, as are the wrought iron balconies.

## 12 Casa Macaya

Constructed in 1901, Puig i Cadafalch's [Casa Macaya](#) (Passeig de Sant Joan 108), has a wonderful courtyard and features the typical playful, pseudo-Gothic decoration that characterises many of the architect's projects around the city. The building now belongs to the La Caixa bank and is occasionally used as the setting for temporary exhibitions, when visitors are permitted to enter.

# GRÀCIA & PARK GÜELL

Drinking & Nightlife [p208](#); Eating [p186](#); Shopping [p163](#); Sleeping [p239](#)

Once a separate village north of l'Eixample, and then in the 19th century an industrial district famous for its Republican and liberal ideas, Gràcia was definitively incorporated into the city of Barcelona (the town had been 'annexed' and then won its 'freedom' several times down the century) in 1897, much to the disgust of the locals.

In those days, it had some catching up to do, as the town had poor roads, schools and clinics, and no street lighting or sewers. In the 1960s and '70s it became fashionable among radical and bohemian types, and today it retains some of that flavour – plenty of hip local luminaries make sure they are regularly seen around the bars and cafés of Gràcia. A little way north of the *barri*, and within the municipal district of the same name, lies another of Gaudí's extraordinary creations – Park Güell.

You know you are in Gràcia when you hit the maze of crowded narrow streets and lanes that characterise the *barri*. The official district of Gràcia extends beyond, taking in the residential valley of Vallcarca, which nuzzles up alongside Park Güell.

Gràcia itself is bounded by Carrer de Còrsega and Avinguda Diagonal in the south, Via Augusta and Avinguda del Príncep d'Astúries to the west, Carrer de Sardanya to the east and Travessera de Dalí to the north.

Plunge into the atmosphere of its narrow streets and small plazas, and the bars and restaurants on and around them. The liveliest are Plaça del Sol, Plaça de Rius i Taulet and the tree-lined Plaça de la Virreina. On Plaça de Rovira i Trias, to the north of Gràcia, you can sit on a bench next to a statue of Antoni Rovira, Ildefons Cerdà's rival in the competition to design l'Eixample in the late 19th century. Rovira's design has been laid out in the pavement so you can see what you think of it.

FGC trains get you closest to the sights in Gràcia (alight at Gràcia). Metro Línia 3 (Fontana stop) also gets you close, leaving you in Carrer Gran de Gràcia and close to a network of busy squares described on [p119](#).

## PARK GÜELL [Map p118](#)

☎ 93 413 24 00; Carrer d'Olot 7; admission free;

🕒 10am-9pm Jun-Sep, 10am-8pm Apr, May & Oct, 10am-7pm Mar & Nov, 10am-6pm Dec-Feb;

📍 Lesseps or Vallcarca or 🚶 24

North of Gràcia and about 4km from Plaça de Catalunya, Park Güell is where Gaudí turned his hand to landscape gardening. It's a strange, enchanting place where his passion for natural forms really took flight – to the point where the artificial almost seems more natural than the natural.

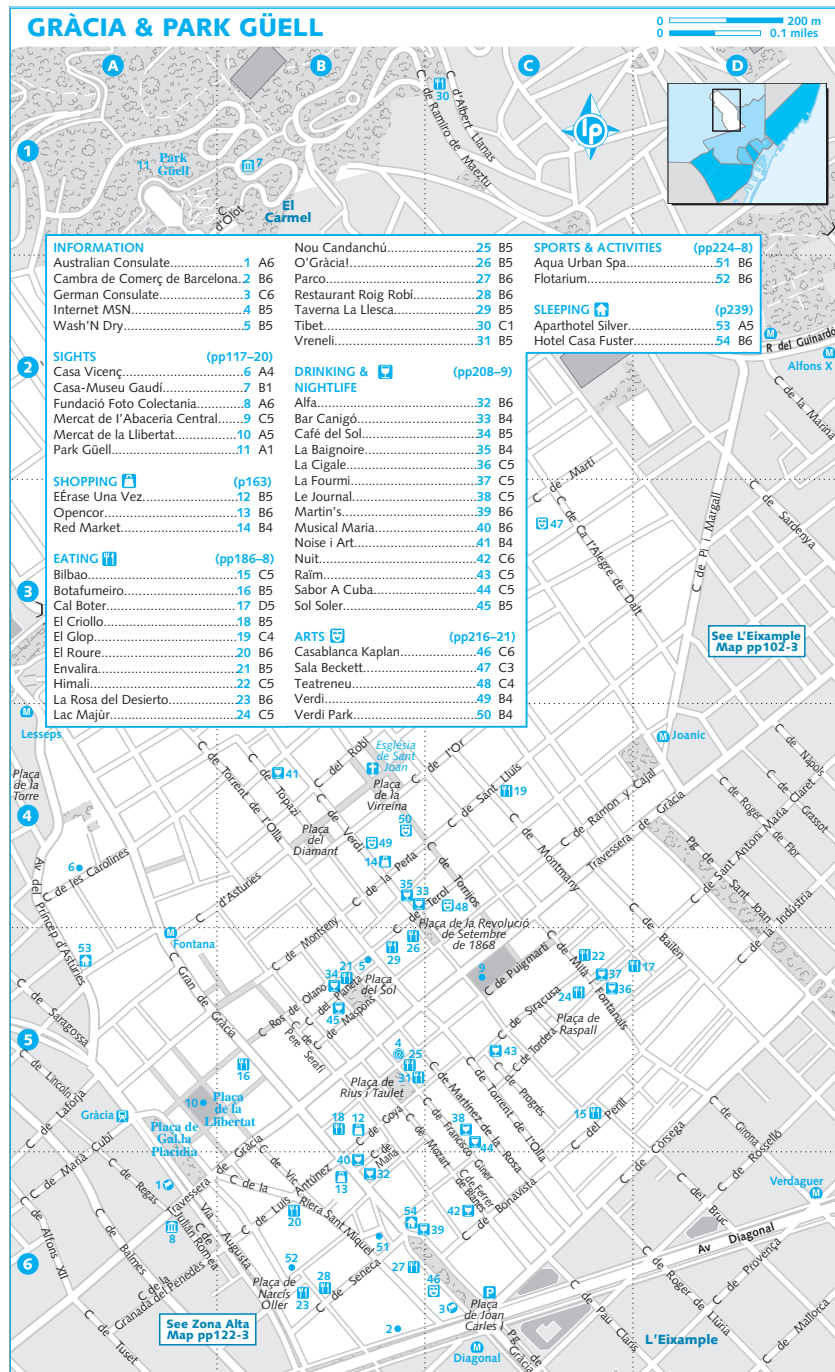
Park Güell originated in 1900 when Count Eusebi Güell bought a tree-covered hillside (then outside Barcelona) and hired Gaudí to create a miniature city of houses for the wealthy, in landscaped grounds. The project was a commercial flop and was abandoned in 1914 – but not before Gaudí had created 3km of roads and walks, steps, a plaza and two gatehouses in his inimitable manner. In 1922 the city bought the estate for use as a public park.

Just inside the main entrance on Carrer d'Olot, which is immediately recognisable by the two Hansel-and-Gretel gatehouses, visit the park's [Centre d'Interpretació](#) (☎ 93

285 68 99; adult/child under 16yr/student €2/free/1.50;

🕒 11am-3pm) in the [Pavelló de Consergeria](#), the typically curvaceous, Gaudían former porter's home that hosts a display on Gaudí's building methods and the history of the park. There are nice views from the top floor. For €6 you get entry here and to the [Museu d'Història de la Ciutat](#) (p67) and the [Museu-Monestir de Pedralbes](#) (p124).

The steps up from the entrance, guarded by a mosaic dragon/lizard (a copy of which you can buy in many downtown souvenir shops), lead to the [Sala Hipòstila](#) (aka the Doric Temple), a forest of 88 stone columns (some of them leaning like mighty trees bent by the weight of time), intended as a market. To the left curves a gallery whose twisted stonework columns and roof give the effect of a cloister beneath tree roots – a motif repeated in several places in the park. On top of the Sala Hipòstila is a broad open space whose centrepiece is the [Banc de Trencadís](#), a tiled bench curving sinuously around its perimeter and designed by one of Gaudí's closest colleagues, architect Josep Maria Jujol (1879–1949). With Gaudí and Co, there is always more than meets the eye. This



## GAUDÍ OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

Gaudí, like any freelancer, was busy all over town. While his main patron was Eusebi Güell and his big projects were bankrolled by the wealthy bourgeoisie, he took on smaller jobs too, especially earlier in his career. One example is the **Casa Vicenç** (below) in Gràcia. Another is the **Col·legi de les Teresianes** (Map pp122-3; ☎ 93 212 33 54; Carrer de Ganduxer 85-105; 🗺️ FGC Tres Torres), to which he added some personal touches in 1889. Although you can see parts of the wing he designed (to the right through the entrance gate) from the outside, the most unique features are those hardest to see – the distinctive parabolic arches inside. Unfortunately, it is no longer possible to visit the school. Gaudí fanatics might also want to reach **Bellesguard** (Map pp122-3; Carrer de Bellesguard; 🗺️ FGC Avinguda Tibidabo or 🚊 60), a private house he built in 1909 on the site of the ancient palace of the Catalan count-king, Martí I. You can get a reasonable idea of the house peering in from the roadside. The castle-like appearance is reinforced by the heavy stonework, generous wrought iron and a tall spire. Gaudí also worked in some characteristically playful mosaic and colourful tiles.

giant platform was designed as a kind of catchment area for rainwater washing down the hillside. The water is filtered through a layer of stone and sand and drains down through the columns to an underground cistern!

The spired house to the right is the **Casa-Museu Gaudí** (☎ 93 219 38 11; admission €4; 🕒 10am-8pm Apr-Sep, 10am-6pm Oct-Mar), where Gaudí lived for most of his last 20 years (1906-26). It contains furniture by him and other memorabilia. The house was built in 1904 by Francesc Berenguer i Mestres as a prototype for the 60 or so houses that were originally planned here.

Much of the park is still wooded, but it's laced with pathways. The best views are from the cross-topped **Turó del Calvari** in the southwest corner.

The walk from Metro stop Lesseps is signposted. From Vallcarca stop it is marginally shorter and the uphill trek eased by escalators. Bus 24 drops you at an entrance near the top of the park.

The park is extremely popular (it gets an estimated 4 million visitors a year), and its quaint nooks and crannies are irresistible to photographers – who on busy days have trouble keeping out of each other's pictures. With so many visitors, the park is inevitably damaged by some. Treat this unique place with respect.

## CASA VICENÇ Map p118

**Carrer de les Carolines 22; 🗺️ FGC Plaça Molina**  
The angular, turreted 1888 Casa Vicenç was one of Gaudí's first commissions. Tucked away west of Gràcia's main drag, Carrer Gran de Gràcia, this private house (which cannot be visited) is awash with ceramic colour and shape. As was frequently the case, Gaudí sought inspiration in the past,

in this case the rich heritage of building in brick so typical of the Mudéjar style found in much of Spain reconquered from the Muslims. Mudéjar architecture was created by Spanish Arabs allowed to remain in Spain after the Christian conquests.

## MERCAT DE LA LLIBERTAT Map p118

☎ 93 415 90 93; **Plaça de la Llibertat**; admission free; 🕒 5-8pm Mon, 8am-2pm & 5-8pm Tue-Fri, 7am-3pm Sat; 🗺️ FGC Gràcia  
Built in the 1870s and covered over in 1893 in typically fizzy Modernista style, employing generous whirls of wrought iron, this market is emblematic of the Gràcia district, full of life and all kinds of fresh produce. The man behind it was Francesc Berenguer i Mestres (1866-1914), Gaudí's longtime assistant.

## FUNDACIÓ FOTO COLECTANIA

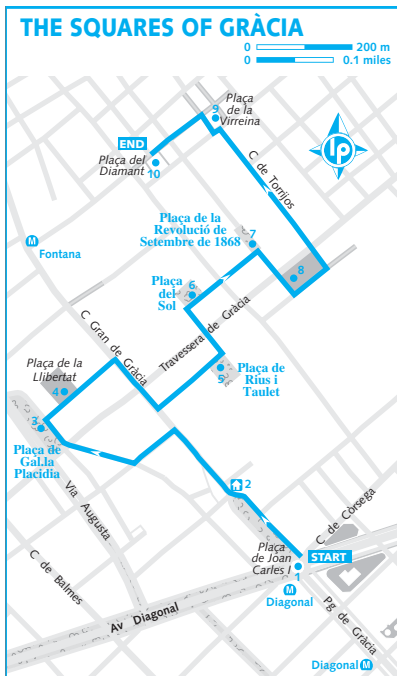
Map p118  
☎ 93 217 16 26; [www.colectania.es](http://www.colectania.es); **Carrer de Julián Romea 6, D2**; admission free; 🕒 11am-2pm & 5-8.30pm Tue-Sat, 5-8.30pm Mon; 🗺️ FGC Gràcia  
Photography lovers should swing by here to see the latest exhibition; they change over about three times a year. When you reach what seems like offices, head through to the back on the ground floor, where two floors of exhibition space await.

## THE SQUARES OF GRÀCIA

### Walking Tour

#### 1 Plaça de Joan Carles I

The obelisk here honours Spain's present king for stifling an attempted coup d'état in February 1981, just six years after Franco's death. Under the dictatorship, the avenue that passes through the square was known as Avenida



de Francisco Franco. To Barcelonins it was simply 'la Diagonal'. That name stuck.

### 2 Casa Fuster

Where Carrer Gran de Gràcia leads you into Gràcia proper, a grand Modernista edifice now turned hotel, **Casa Fuster** (p239), rises up in all its glory.

### 3 Plaça de Gal·la Plàcidia

The square recalls the brief sojourn of the Roman empress-to-be, Galla Plàcidia, here as captive and wife of the Visigothic chief Athaulf in the 5th century AD. She had been hauled across from Italy, where she hastily returned upon her captor-husband's death.

### 4 Plaça de la Llibertat

Liberty Sq is home to the bustling Modernista produce market of the same name. It was designed by one of Gaudí's colleagues, Francesc Berenguer (see p119), who was busy in this part of town, although he was never awarded a diploma as an architect.

### 5 Plaça de Rius i Taulet

This popular square was named after the mayor under whom Gràcia was absorbed by Barce-

## WALK FACTS

Start Plaça de Joan Carles I  
 Finish Plaça del Diamant  
 Distance 2.3km  
 Duration 1 hour  
 Transport Diagonal

lona, Francesc Rius i Taulet. It is fronted by the local town hall (designed by Berenguer). At its heart stands the Torre del Relloige (Clock Tower), long a symbol of republican agitation.

### 6 Plaça del Sol

Possibly the rowdiest of Gràcia's squares, Plaça del Sol (Sun Sq) is lined with bars and eateries and comes to life on long summer nights. The square was the scene of summary executions after an uprising in 1870. During the 1936–39 civil war, an air-raid shelter was installed.

### 7 Plaça de la Revolució de Setembre de 1868

This busy, elongated square commemorates the toppling of Queen Isabel II, a cause of much celebration in this working-class stronghold. Today, locals gather on benches for a chat or pop into one of the bars or restaurants for refreshment. For agitated stomachs, check out **0 Gràcia!** (p187).

### 8 Mercat de l'Abaceria Central

The Mercat de l'Abaceria Central opens out one block away from the revolutionary square. It is a no-nonsense produce market, where you can dig up cheap clothes, essential kitchen stocks or stop by for coffee at one of the cafés.

### 9 Plaça de la Virreina

Pleasant terraces adorn this pedestrianised square, notable for its shady trees and presided over by the 17th-century Església de Sant Joan. It was largely destroyed by anarchists during the unrest of the Setmana Tràgica (Tragic Week) of 1909 (see p27). Rebuilt by Berenguer, it was damaged again during the civil war.

### 10 Plaça del Diamant

Two blocks southwest of Plaça de la Virreina is this once down-at-heel square, which lies at the heart of one of the best-known works of 20th-century Catalan literature, Mercè Rodoreda's eponymous novel. It also housed a civil war air-raid shelter, which may one day be opened to the public.

## LA ZONA ALTA

Drinking & Nightlife p209; Eating p188; Shopping p163; Sleeping p239

Welcome to posh Barcelona. For some, the Quadrat d'Or in l'Eixample remains prime real estate, but most locals with healthy bank accounts opt for the spacious mansions with private gardens and garages that dot the 'High Zone', a loose name for the heights where Barcelona's topography climbs to the Collserola hills marking the city's inland limits.

The highest point in this wooded range is Tibidabo (512m), with its amusement park, luxury hotel and bombastic church. It's great for the fresh air and on a good day you can see inland as far as Montserrat. Tibidabo gets its name from the devil, who, trying to tempt Christ, took him to a high place and said, in Latin: *'Haec omnia tibi dabo si cadens adoraberis me'* ('All this I will give you if you fall down and worship me').

Apart from expensive residential living, the other high points in La Zona Alta are the Parc de Collserola, the CosmoCaixa science museum and monuments of Pedralbes further southwest.

The leafy(ish) suburb of Sarrià is a magnet for much of the serious money in Barcelona. Taken at its broadest, it covers the area arching between Avinguda de Tibidabo (and its cute blue tram) and Via Augusta. At the turn of the 20th century, when this was still largely untouched countryside, wealthy families built whimsical fantasy residences along Avinguda de Tibidabo. More recent are the gated, alarmed mansions further west.

The heart of Sarrià is Plaça de Sarrià, and its main street, Carrer Major de Sarrià, is lined with shops, restaurants and bars. Downhill is the equally residential *barri* of Sant Gervasi, between Gràcia, Avinguda Diagonal and the thundering Ronda del General Mitre freeway.

The better parts of Pedralbes, to the southwest, also attract money for their space and quiet but there is no shortage of apartment-block clumps interspersed amid the greenery, especially along Avinguda Diagonal. The same freeway has its highlights, such as the Palau Reial de Pedralbes.

Wedged between Avinguda Diagonal and Carrer de Sants is a more middle-class residential area, Les Corts. Dominated by Camp Nou, the temple to Barcelona's star football team, it is also home to much of the modern Universitat de Barcelona campus (in an area known as the Zona Universitària).

### COSMOCAIXA (MUSEU DE LA CIÈNCIA) Map pp122–3

93 212 60 50; [www.fundacio.lacaixa.es](http://www.fundacio.lacaixa.es), in Catalan & Spanish; Carrer de Teodor Roviralta 47-51; adult/student €3/2; 10am-8pm Tue-Sun; 60 or FGC Avinguda de Tibidabo

This bright, modern science museum is housed in a Modernista building (completed in 1909). Kids (and kids at heart) are fascinated by some of the displays here. Indeed, the museum is one of the most visited in the city! The single greatest highlight is the re-creation over 1 sq km of a chunk of flooded Amazon rainforest (Bosc Inundat). More than 100 species of genuine Amazon flora and fauna (including anacondas, colourful poisonous frogs

## top picks

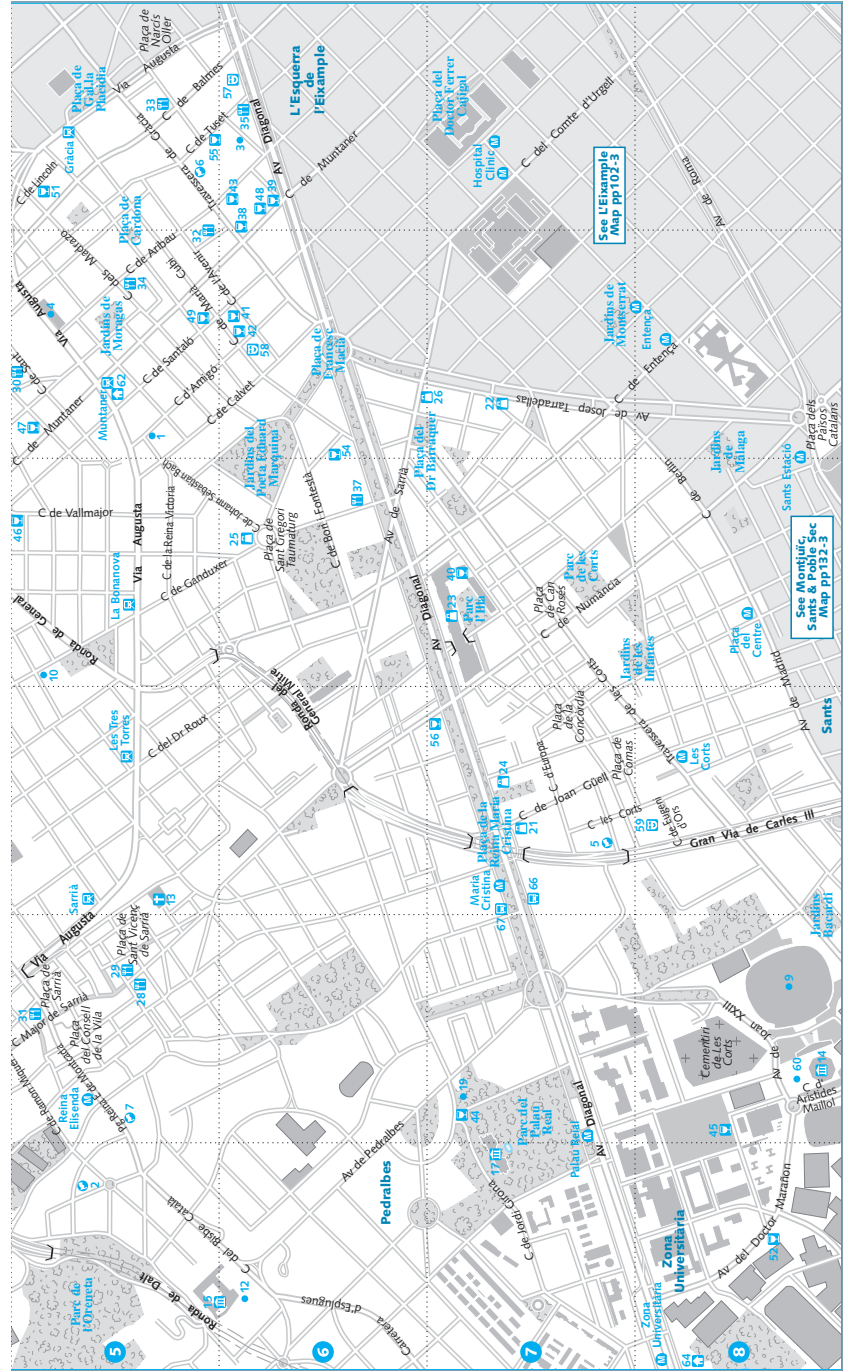
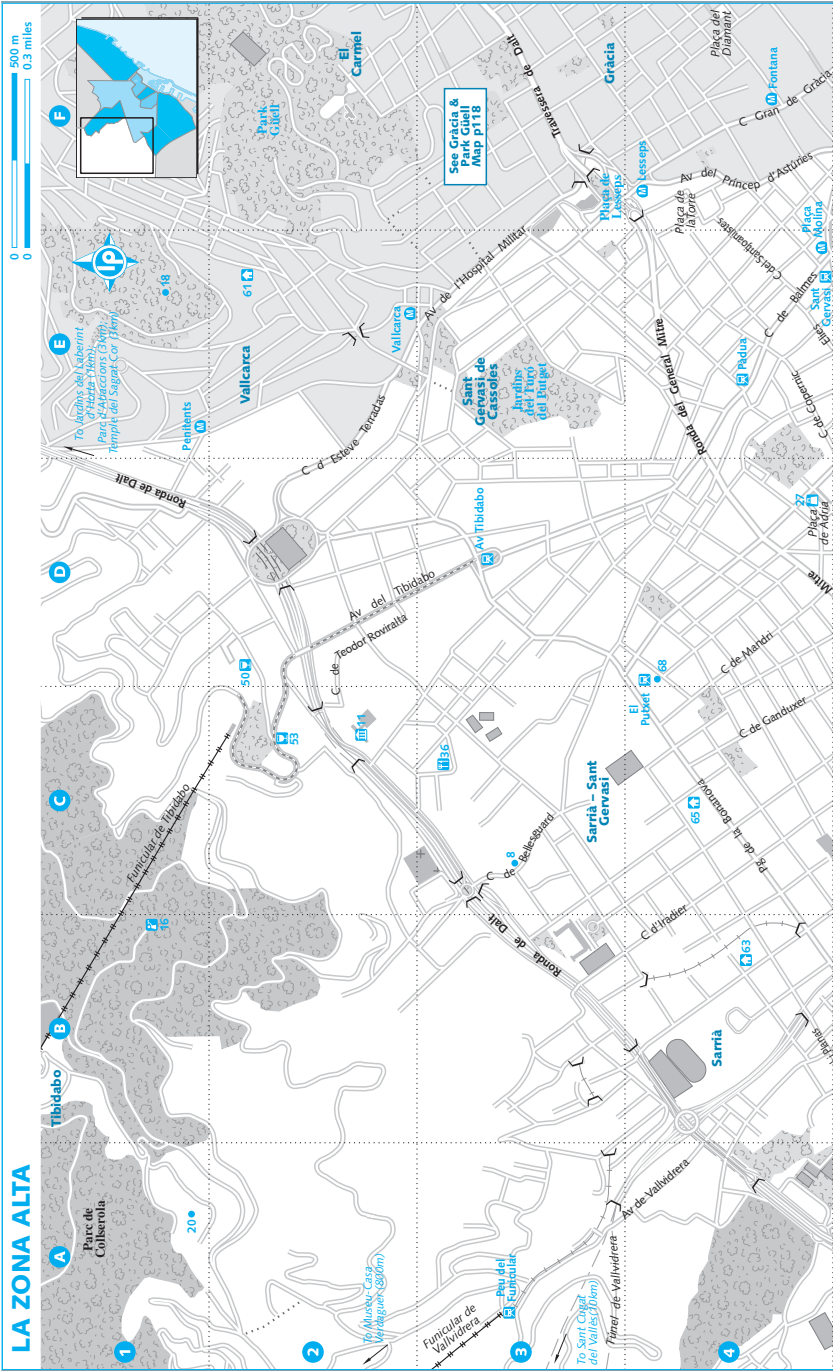
### LA ZONA ALTA

- CosmoCaixa (p121)
- Museu-Monestir de Pedralbes (p124)
- Palau Reial de Pedralbes (p133)
- Camp Nou (p124)
- Jardins del Laberint d'Horta (p135)
- Parc d'Atraccions (p134)

and caymans) prosper in this unique, living diorama in which you can even experience a tropical downpour. In another original section, the Mur Geològic, seven great chunks of rock (90 tonnes in all) have been assembled to create a 'geological wall'.

These and other permanent displays on the lower 5th floor (the bulk of the museum is underground) cover all sorts of fascinating areas of science, from fossils to physics, from the alphabet to outer space. To gain access to other special sections, such as the Planetari (planetarium), check out the timetable for guided visits. Most of these activities are interactive and directed at children and cost €2/1.50 per adult/child.





## LA ZONA ALTA

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de Pedralbes in a residential area that until the 20th century was countryside but which remains a divinely quiet corner of Barcelona.

The architectural highlight is the large, elegant, three-storey cloister, a jewel of Catalan Gothic, built in the early 14th century. Following its course to the right, stop at the first chapel, the **Capella de Sant Miquel**, whose murals were done in 1346 by Ferrer Bassà, one of Catalonia's earliest documented painters. A few steps on is the ornamental grave of Queen Elisenda, who founded the convent. It is curious, as it is divided in two. This side in the cloister shows her dressed as a penitent widow, while the other part, an alabaster masterpiece inside the adjacent church, shows her dressed as queen.

As you head around the ground floor of the cloister, you can peer into the restored refectory, kitchen, stables, stores and a reconstruction of the infirmary – all giving a good idea of convent life. Eating in the refectory must have been a whole lot of fun, judging by the exhortations to *Silentium* (Silence) and *Audi Tacens* (Listen and Keep Quiet) written around the walls. Harder still must have been spending one's days in the cells on the ground and 1st floors in a state of near-perpetual prayer and devotional reading. On the subject of reading, a young Catalan novelist, Bea Cabezàs (born 1976) set her 2008 historical novel, *El Monestir de les Ombres* (The Convent of Shadows), here.

Upstairs is a grand hall that was once the **Dormidor** (sleeping quarters). It was lined by tiny night cells but they were long ago removed. Today a modest collection of the monastery's art, especially Gothic devotional works, and furniture grace this space. Most is by largely unknown Catalan artists, with some 16th-century Flemish works, and was acquired thanks to the considerable wealth of the convent's mostly high-class nuns.

On some Sunday mornings, a breakfast tour is held in Catalan (10.30am) and Spanish (11.30am). Sip hot chocolate, munch on pastries and then follow the tour (€7.50).

Next to the convent, the sober church is an excellent example of Catalan Gothic. Just west of the convent, where Carretera d'Esplugues meets Carrer del Bisbe Català, is a peaceful park, the **Hort de Pedralbes**.

## PALAU REIAL DE PEDRALBES

Map pp122–3

☎ 93 280 16 21; Avinguda Diagonal 686; both museums adult/student €3.50/2, 1st Sun of month free; ☎ 10am–6pm Tue–Sat, 10am–3pm Sun & holidays, park 10am–6pm daily; 📍 Palau Reial Across Avinguda Diagonal from the main campus of the Universitat de Barcelona is the entrance to **Parc del Palau Reial**. In the park is the Palau Reial de Pedralbes, an early-20th-century building that belonged to the family of Eusebi Güell (Gaudí's patron) until they handed it over to the city in 1926 to serve as a royal residence – among its guests have been King Alfonso XIII, the president of Catalonia and General Franco.

The palace houses two museums. The **Museu de Ceràmica** (www.museuceramica.bcn.es) has a good collection of Spanish ceramics from the 13th to 19th centuries, including work by Picasso and Miró. Spain inherited from the Muslims, and then further refined, a strong tradition in ceramics – here you can compare some exquisite work (tiles, porcelain tableware and the like) from some of the greatest centres of pottery production across Spain, including Talavera de la Reina in Castile, Manises and Paterna in Valencia, and Teruel in Aragón. Upstairs is a display of fanciful modern ceramics from the 20th century – here they have ceased to be a tool with aesthetic value and are purely decorative.

Across the corridor, for now, the **Museu de les Arts Decoratives** (www.museuartsdecoratives.bcn.es) brings together an eclectic assortment of furnishings, ornaments and knick-knacks dating as far back as the Romanesque period. The plush and somewhat stuffy elegance of Empire- and Isabelline-style divans can be neatly compared with some of the more tasteless ideas to emerge on the subject of seating in the 1970s. It is planned eventually to house these collections in a brand-new design museum in Plaça de les Glòries Catalanes. When this will happen is open to speculation and, in the meantime, some of the collection will get a new temporary home in what was until 2008 the **Museu Tèxtil i d'Indumentària** (www.museutextil.bcn.es) in La Ribera. The bulk of that museum's collection is now on show here. Its 4000 items range from 4th-century Coptic textiles to 20th-century local embroidery, but best is the big collection of clothing from the 16th

Outside, there's a nice stroll through the extensive Plaça de la Ciència, which has a modest garden with Mediterranean flora laid out at one end.

## CAMP NOU

Map pp122–3  
☎ 93 496 36 00; www.fcbarcelona.com; Carrer d'Aristides Maillol; adult/senior & child €8.50/6.80; ☎ 10am–8pm Mon–Sat, 10am–2.30pm Sun & holidays mid-Apr–mid-Oct, 10am–6.30pm Mon–Sat, 10am–2.30pm Sun & holidays mid-Oct–mid-Apr; 📍 Collblanc

Among Barcelona's most-visited museums is the **Museu del Futbol Club Barcelona** near the club's giant Camp Nou (aka Nou Camp) stadium. Barça is one of Europe's top football clubs, and its museum is a hit with football fans the world over.

Camp Nou, built in 1957 and enlarged for the 1982 World Cup, is one of the world's biggest stadiums, holding 100,000 people. The club has a world-record membership of 156,000 (and growing). Football fans who can't get to a game (see p226) should find a visit to the museum worthwhile. The best bits are the photo section, the goal videos and the views out over the stadium. Among the quirkier paraphernalia

are old sports board games, a 19th-century leather football, the life-sized diorama of old-time dressing rooms, posters and magazines from way back and the *futbolín* (table soccer) collection.

You can join a **guided tour** (adult/child €13/10.40; ☎ until 1hr before museum closing time) of the stadium, starting in the team's dressing rooms and heading out through the tunnel, on to the pitch and winding up in the presidential box. On match days there are no tours and the museum opens from 10am to 1pm.

## MUSEU-MONESTIR DE PEDRALBES

Map pp122–3

☎ 93 203 92 82; www.museuhistoria.bcn.cat; Baixada del Monestir 9; admission €4 (incl Museu d'Història de la Ciutat & Park Güell Centre d'Interpretació); ☎ 10am–5pm Tue–Sat, 10am–3pm Sun Jun–Sep, 10am–2pm Tue–Sat, 10am–3pm Sun Oct–May; 📍 FGC Reina Elisenda or 📍 22, 63, 64 or 75

This peaceful old convent, first opened to the public in 1983 and now a museum of monastic life (the remaining 20 nuns have moved into more modern neighbouring buildings), stands at the top of Avinguda

(Continued on page 133)



## TRANSPORT: LA ZONA ALTA

Transport options vary wildly depending on where you want to go. Metro Línia 3 will get you to the Jardins del Laberint d'Horta and Palau Reial de Pedralbes. From the latter you could walk to the Museu-Monestir de Pedralbes. Otherwise, take an FGC train to the monastery. FGC trains are generally the easiest way of getting close to most of the sights in and around Tibidabo and the Parc del Collserola.

### Tibidabo Transport

Take an FGC train to Avinguda de Tibidabo from Catalunya station on Plaça de Catalunya (€1.30, 10 minutes). Outside Avinguda de Tibidabo station, hop on the *tramvia blau*, Barcelona's last surviving tram, which runs between fancy Modernista mansions (particularly Casa Roviralta at 31 Avinguda de Tibidabo) to Plaça del Doctor Andreu (one way/return €2.50/3.70, 15 minutes, every 15 or 30 minutes 10am to 8pm late June to early September, 10am to 6pm Saturdays, Sundays & holidays mid-September to late June) – it has been doing so since 1901. On days and at times when the tram does not operate, a bus serves the route (€1.30).

From Plaça del Doctor Andreu, the Tibidabo funicular railway climbs through the woods to Plaça de Tibidabo at the top of the hill (one way/return €2/3, five minutes). Departures start at 10.45am and continue until shortly after the Parc d'Atraccions closing time.

An alternative is bus T2, the 'Tibibús', from Plaça de Catalunya to Plaça de Tibidabo (€2.30, 30 minutes, every 30 to 50 minutes on Saturdays, Sundays & holidays year-round & hourly from 10.30am Monday to Friday late June to early September). Purchase tickets on the bus. The last bus down leaves Tibidabo 30 minutes after the Parc d'Atraccions closes. You can also buy a combined ticket that includes the bus and entry to the Parc d'Atraccions (€24).

century to the 1930s. In time, the *crème de la crème* of each of the two collections will form the bedrock of the new design museum.

Over by Avinguda de Pedralbes are the stables and porter's lodge designed by Gaudí for the Finca Güell, as the Güell estate here was called. Known also as the **Pavellons Güell** (☎ 902 076621; guided tour adult/senior & child under 18yr €5/2.50; 🕒 10.15am in English, 11.15am in Catalan, 12.15pm in English & 1.15pm in Spanish Fri-Mon), they were built in the mid-1880s, when Gaudí was strongly impressed by Islamic architecture. Outside visiting hours, there is nothing to stop you admiring Gaudí's wrought-iron dragon gate from the outside.

### PARC D'ATRACCIONS off Map pp122–3

☎ 93 211 79 42; [www.tibidabo.es](http://www.tibidabo.es); Plaça de Tibidabo 3-4; adult/child shorter than 1.2m €24/9; 🕒 noon-10pm or 11pm Wed-Sun Jul-early Sep, other closing times vary (from 5pm to 9pm) Sat, Sun, holidays & some other days in warmer months The reason most Barcelonins come up to Tibidabo is for some thrills (but hopefully no spills) in this funfair, close to the top funicular station. Among the top attractions are the seven minutes in Hotel Krueger, a hostelry of horrors inhabited by actors portraying Dracula, Hannibal Lecter and other fantasies. The Dididado 4D cinema (basically 3D with the appropriate

glasses and some sound and movement effects thrown in), downstairs from Hotel Krueger, puts on 10-minute films that seem to pop out at you. El Pndol is one of the newest rides. A giant arm with four passengers drops them at a speed that reaches 100kmh before swinging outward. Not for the squeamish. A massive new big dipper is planned for late 2008. Far tamer options abound, from the L'Avió (a 1920s prop plane) to a mini-steam train and magic castle. A curious sideline is the Museu d'Autòmats, around 50 automated puppets going as far back as 1880 and part of the original amusement park. You can still see some of these gizmos at work. Various cheaper tickets with limited rides are also available.

### PARC DE COLLSEROLA Map pp122–3

☎ 93 280 35 52; [www.parcollserola.net](http://www.parcollserola.net); Carretera de l'Església 92; 🕒 FGC Peu de Funicular, then Funicular to Baixador de Vallvidrera Barcelonins needing an escape from the city without heading too far into the countryside seek out this extensive, 8000-hectare park in the hills. It is a great place to hike and bike and bristles with eateries and snack bars.

Pick up a map from the **Centre d'Informació** (🕒 9.30am-3pm). Aside from nature, the principal point of interest is the sprawling **Museu-Casa Verdaguier** (☎ 93 204 78 05;

[www.museuhistoria.bcn.cat](http://www.museuhistoria.bcn.cat); Vil·la Joana, Carretera de l'Església 104; admission free; 🕒 10am-2pm Sat, Sun & holidays), 100m from the information centre and a short walk from the train station. Catalonia's revered and reverend writer Jacint Verdaguer (see p37) lived in this late-18th-century country house before his death on 10 July 1902. On the ground floor is a typical 19th-century country kitchen, with coal-fired stove and hobs in the middle. Upstairs you can see a raft of Verdaguer memorabilia (from original published works through to photos and documents) as you wander through the rooms. The bed in which he died remains exactly where it was in 1902. Labels are in Catalan only.

Beyond, the park has various other minor highlights, including a smattering of country chapels (some Romanesque), the ragged ruins of the 14th-century Castellciuro castle in the west, various lookout points and, to the north, the 15th-century Can Coll, a grand farmhouse. It's open 9.30am to 3pm on Sundays and holidays and is now used as an environmental education centre where you can see how richer farmers lived around the 17th to 19th centuries.

Bus 111 runs between Tibidabo and Vallvidrera (passing in front of the Torre de Collserola).

### TEMPLE DEL SAGRAT COR

off Map pp122–3

☎ 93 417 56 86; Plaça de Tibidabo; admission free; 🕒 8am-7pm

The Church of the Sacred Heart, looming above the top funicular station, is meant to be Barcelona's answer to Paris' Sacré Coeur. The church, built from 1902 to 1961 in a mix

### PERPETUAL ADORATION

Since 1966, devout citizens of Barcelona have taken turns to maintain a permanent vigil of the Holy Sacrament on show in the Temple del Sagrat Cor. Adoradors Diurns (Day Adorers) and Adoradors Nocturns (Night Adorers) donate an hour of their time each month to praying. The idea is that there should be someone praying before the Holy Sacrament 24 hours a day. Night Adorers without a car spend the night in the church, and are picked up by bus at 10.30pm and taken back down at 6am the following day. When not praying, they stretch out in monastery-style cells or indulge in a chat with their fellow adorers.

of styles with some Modernista influence, is certainly as visible as its Parisian namesake, and even more vilified by aesthetes. It's actually two churches, one on top of the other. The top one is surmounted by a giant statue of Christ and has a **lift** (€2; 🕒 10am-2pm & 3-6pm Mon-Sat, 10am-2pm & 3-7pm Sun) to take you to the roof for the panoramic (and often wind-chilled) views.

### TORRE DE COLLSEROLA Map pp122–3

☎ 93 211 79 42; [www.torredecollserola.com](http://www.torredecollserola.com); Carretera de Vallvidrera al Tibidabo; adult/child/senior €5/3/4; 🕒 11am-2.30pm & 3.30-6pm Wed-Sun Mar-Oct; Funicular de Vallvidrera then 🚶 111 Sir Norman Foster designed the 288m-high Torre de Collserola telecommunications tower, which was built between 1990 and 1992. The external glass lift to the visitors' observation area, 115m up, is as hair-raising as anything at the nearby Parc d'Atraccions. People say you can see for 70km from the top on a clear day. If ever anyone wanted to knock out Barcelona's TV and radio sets, this would be the place to do it. All transmissions are sent from here, and repeater stations across Catalonia are also controlled from this tower.

### JARDINS DEL LABERINT D'HORTA

off Map pp122–3

☎ 93 428 39 34; Carrer dels Germans Desvallés; adult/student €2/1.25, Wed & Sun free; 🕒 10am-sunset; 📍 Mundet

Laid out in the twilight years of the 18th century by Antoni Desvallés, Marqués d'Alfarras i de Lupià, this carefully manicured park remained a private family idyll until the 1970s, when it was opened to the public. Many a fine party and theatrical performance was held here over the years, but it now serves as a kind of museum-park. The gardens take their name from a maze in their centre, but other paths take you past a pleasant artificial lake (*estany*), waterfalls, a neoclassical pavilion and a false cemetery. The latter is inspired by 19th-century romanticism, characterised by an obsession with a swooning, anaemic (some might say silly) vision of death.

The labyrinth itself, in the middle of these cool gardens (somehow odd in this environment, with modern apartments and ring roads nearby), can be surprisingly frustrating! Aim to reach the centre from the bottom end, and then exit towards the



## A WANDER THROUGH OLD SARRIÀ

Hugging the left flank of thundering Via Augusta, the old centre of Sarrià is a largely pedestrianised haven of peace. Probably founded in the 13th century and only incorporated into Barcelona in 1921, ancient Sarrià is formed around sinuous, narrow **Carrer Major de Sarrià** (Map pp122–3), today a mix of old and new, with a low-key sprinkling of shops and restaurants. At its top end is the pretty **Plaça de Sarrià** (from where Passeig de la Reina Elisenda de Montcada leads west to the medieval Monestir de Pedralbes), where you'll want to check out **Foix de Sarrià** (p190), an exclusive pastry shop. As you wander downhill, duck off into **Plaça del Consell de la Vila**, **Plaça de Sant Vicenç de Sarrià** and Carrer de Rocaberti, at the end of which is the **Monestir de Santa Isabel**, with its neo-Gothic cloister. Built in 1886 to house Clarissan nuns, whose order had first set up in El Raval in the 16th century, it was abandoned during the civil war and used as an air-raid shelter.

ponds and neoclassical pavilion. This is a good one for kids. At Mundet Metro, take the right exit upstairs; on emerging, turn right and then left along the main road (with football fields on your left) and then the first left uphill to the gardens (about five minutes).

Scenes of the film adaptation of Patrick Süskind's novel *Perfume* were shot in the garden.

### PARC DE LA CREUETA DEL COLL

Map pp122–3

[www.bcn.cat/parcsijardins](http://www.bcn.cat/parcsijardins), in Catalan & Spanish; Passeig Mare de Déu del Coll 77; admission Sun €5.20, Mon–Sat €4.15 (less for children depending on age); ☎ 10am–8pm late Jun–mid-Sep; 🚶 Penitents

Not far from Park Güell is this refreshing public park with artificial lake – a pleasant, meandering, splashing pool. The pool, along with swings, showers and snack bar, makes a relaxing family stop on hot summer days and is strictly a local affair. The park area is open all year; only the lake-pool closes outside summer. The whole park seems set inside a deep crater, on one side of which is suspended an enormous cement sculpture, *Elogio del Agua* (Eulogy to Water) by Eduardo Chillida. You can wander the trails around the high part of this hill-park and enjoy views of the city and across to Tibidabo. From the Penitents Metro station, it's a 15-minute walk. Enter from Carrer Mare de Déu del Coll.

### OBSERVATORI FABRA

Map pp122–3  
☎ 902 502220; Carretera del Observatori s/n; admission €8

Inaugurated in 1904, this Modernista observatory is still a functioning scientific foundation. It can be visited on certain

evenings to allow people to observe the stars through its grand old telescope. Visits (generally in Catalan or Spanish) have to be booked. The easiest way here is by taxi. Or take the funicular to Tibidabo and then bus 111 to the Torre de Collserola and walk about 15 minutes.

## CAMP NOU TO SARRIÀ

### Walking Tour

#### 1 Camp Nou

For many, a pilgrimage to the **football stadium** (p124) of one of Europe's most exciting teams, FC Barcelona, is a logical first point of call. A tour of the club's museum includes a peek inside the grounds.

#### 2 Palau Reial de Pedralbes

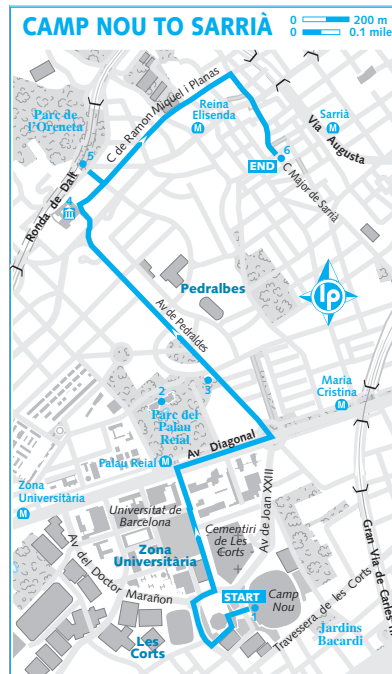
Set in immaculately kept grounds, themselves a joy to wander, the elegant **Palau Reial de Pedralbes** (p133) is fronted by pools and statues. Inside are two museums, one devoted to Spain's rich heritage in ceramics and porcelain, the other to the decorative arts.

#### 3 Pavellons Güell

At the northern limit of the ground of Palau Reial de Pedralbes is a Gaudí curiosity. The **Pavellons Güell** (p134) include a porter's lodge and former stables of the Güell family, the original owners of what later became the Palau Reial.

### WALK FACTS

Start Camp Nou  
Finish Carrer Major de Sarrià  
Distance 4km  
Duration 1½ hours  
Transport 🚶 Collblanc



### 4 Museu-Monestir de Pedralbes

A stroll up pleasant Avinguda de Pedralbes from the Palau Reial leads to an oasis of another time, the peaceful **Museu-Monestir de Pedralbes** (p124). Still functioning until recently, this Gothic convent provides a tantalising insight into the life of nuns down the centuries.

### 5 Parc de l'Oreneta

Just behind the Museu-Monestir de Pedralbes rise the green slopes of the Parc de l'Oreneta. For a gentle walk and perhaps a picnic lunch, it is a quiet green space that on weekdays attracts few visitors.

### 6 Carrer Major de Sarrià

Back down at the convent, you could head east for Carrer Major de Sarrià, the pleasant pedestrianised high street of what was the medieval village of Sarrià. Wander the pleasant streets and squares in the immediate area and try the city's best *patates braves* at **Bar Tomàs** (p190).

# MONTJUÏC, SANTS & POBLE SEC

Drinking & Nightlife p212; Eating p190; Shopping p163; Sleeping p240

Montjuïc, overlooking the city centre from the southwest, may only be a hill in dimension, but it's a mountain of activity. Home to some of the city's finest art collections (including the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, CaixaForum and Fundació Joan Miró), it also hosts several lesser museums, curious sights like the Poble Espanyol, the sinister Castell de Montjuïc and a remake of Mies van der Rohe's 1920s German pavilion. The bulk of the Olympic installations of the 1992 Games are also here. Throw in various parks and gardens and you have the makings of an extremely full day (or two). It has its nocturnal side too, with the engaging La Font Màgica, several busy theatres and a couple of skeleton-shaking dance clubs.

The name Montjuïc (Jewish Mountain) suggests the presence of a one-time Jewish settlement here, or at least a Jewish cemetery. Some speculate the name also comes from the Latin Mons Jovis (Mt Jupiter), after the Roman God. Before Montjuïc was turned into parks in the 1890s, its woodlands had provided food-growing and breathing space for the people of the cramped Ciutat Vella below.

Montjuïc also has a darker history: its fort was used by the Madrid government to bombard the city after political disturbances in 1842, and as a political prison up until the Franco era. The first main burst of building on Montjuïc came in the 1920s when it was chosen as the stage for Barcelona's 1929 World Exhibition. The Estadi Olímpic, the Poble Espanyol and some museum buildings date from this time. Montjuïc got a thorough make-over for the 1992 Olympics, and it is home to the Olympic stadium and swimming complex.

For information, head for the **Centre Gestor del Parc de Montjuïc** (Map pp140–1; Passeig de Santa Madrona 28; ☎ 10am–8pm Apr–Oct, 10am–6pm Nov–Mar) in the Font del Gat building (a nice late-Modernista job done in 1919 by Puig i Cadafalch), a short walk off Passeig de Santa Madrona, east of the Museu Etnològic. It also has a pleasant bar-restaurant. A couple of other info points operate around the park.

The south side of the hill is bounded by the container port to the southeast and, beyond the southwest cemeteries, the Zona Franca commercial zone.

Sloping down the north face of the hill is the tight warren of working-class Poble Sec ('Dry Village', so called because its first fountain was only installed in 1854). Though short on sights, it hides a couple of interesting little bars and eateries. The only reminders of its more industrial past are the three chimney stacks making up the Parc de les Tres Xemeneies (Three Chimneys Park) on Avinguda del Paral·lel. They belonged to La Canadenca, an enormous power station. The avenue itself was, until the 1960s, the centre of Barcelona nightlife, crammed with theatres and cabarets. A handful of theatres and cinemas survive, and one, the Sala Apolo, managed to convert itself successfully into a club.

Poble Sec, birthplace of popular singer Joan Manuel Serrat (p39), was long a working-class district, left wing and Republican in orientation. Because it lay downhill from the castle on Montjuïc, development was largely prohibited until the second half of the 19th century. Many of the working class Catalans have left, replaced by immigrants (now more than a quarter of the local populace), predominantly Caribbean and Latin American.

The swirling traffic roundabout of Plaça d'Espanya marks the boundary between the *barri* of Sants and Barcelona's seaside oasis hill, Montjuïc. From the roundabout unrolls the most majestic approach to the mountain, Avinguda de la Reina Maria Cristina, flanked by buildings of the Fira de Barcelona, the city's main fairgrounds.

Before you rises the monumental façade of the Palau Nacional (which houses the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya). Approaching Montjuïc on foot this way has the advantage of allowing you to follow a series of escalators up to Avinguda de l'Estadi.

Where the grid system of l'Eixample peters out listlessly at Carrer de Tarragona, Sants begins, marked by the city's main railway station. Once a village, the working-class *barri* of Sants was gradually swallowed up by Barcelona in the late 19th century.

Avinguda de Madrid divides Sants from Les Corts, which we have included in the La Zona Alta section (p121).

## MUSEU NACIONAL D'ART DE CATALUNYA

Map pp140–1

☎ 93 622 03 76; www.mnac.es; Mirador del Palau Nacional; adult/senior & child under 15yr/student €8.50/free/6, free on 1st Sun of month; ☎ 10am–7pm Tue–Sat, 10am–2.30pm Sun & holidays; 📺 Espanya

From vantage points across the city, the bombastic neobaroque silhouette of the so-called Palau Nacional (National Palace) can be seen halfway up the slopes of Montjuïc. Built for the 1929 World Exhibition and restored in 2005, it houses a vast collection of mostly Catalan art spanning the early Middle Ages to the early 20th century. The high point is the collection of extraordinary Romanesque frescoes, but there is plenty of other material to keep you busy for hours.

Built under the centralist dictatorship of Miguel Primo de Rivera, there is a whiff of irony in the fact that it has come to be one of the city's prime symbols of the region's separate, Catalan identity.

Head first to the Romanesque art section, considered the most important concentration of early medieval art in the world. It consists of frescoes, woodcarvings and painted altar frontals (low-relief wooden panels that were the forerunners of the elaborate altarpieces that adorned later churches), transferred from country churches across northern Catalonia early in the 20th century. The insides of several churches have been re-created and the frescoes – in some cases fragmentary, in others extraordinarily complete and alive with colour – have been placed as they were when *in situ*.

The two most striking fresco sets follow one after the other. The first, in Àmbit 5, is a magnificent image of Christ in majesty done around 1123. Based on the text of the Apocalypse, we see Christ enthroned on a rainbow with the world at his feet. He holds a book open with the words *Ego Sum Lux Mundi* (I am the Light of the World) and is surrounded by the four Evangelists. The images were taken from the apse of the Església de Sant Climent de Taüll in northwest Catalonia. In Àmbit

7 are frescoes done around the same time in the nearby Església de Santa Maria de Taüll. This time the central image taken from the apse is of the Virgin Mary and Christ child. These images were not mere decoration. Try to set yourself in the medieval mind of the average citizen: illiterate, ignorant, fearful and in most cases eking out a subsistence living. These images transmitted the basic personalities and tenets of the faith and were accepted at face value by most.

Opposite the Romanesque collection on the ground floor is the museum's Gothic art sections. In these halls you can see Catalan Gothic painting (look out especially for the work of Bernat Martorell in Àmbit 32 and Jaume Huguet in Àmbit 34), and that of other Spanish and Mediterranean regions. Among Martorell's works figure images of the martyrdom of St Vincent and St Llúcia. Huguet's *Consagració de Sant Agustí*, in which St Augustine is depicted as a bishop, is dazzling in its detail.

As the Gothic collection draws to a close, you pass through two separate and equally eclectic private collections, the Cambò bequest and works from the Thyssen-Bornemisza collections that, until 2005, hung in the Museu-Monestir de Pedralbes. Works by the Venetian Renaissance masters Veronese (1528–88), Titian (1490–1557) and Canaletto (1697–1768) feature, along with those of Rubens (1577–1640) and even England's Gainsborough (1727–88).

From here you will pass into the great central hall, topped by a majestic dome. This area is sometimes used for concerts. Up on the next floor, after a series of rooms devoted to mostly minor works by a variety of classic 17th-century Spanish Old Masters, the collection turns to modern Catalan art. It is an uneven affair, but it is worth looking out for Modernista painters Ramon Casas (Àmbit 71) and Santiago Rusiñol (Àmbit 72). Also on show are items of Modernista furniture and decoration.

If you have any energy left, check out the photography section, which encompasses work from mostly Catalan snappers

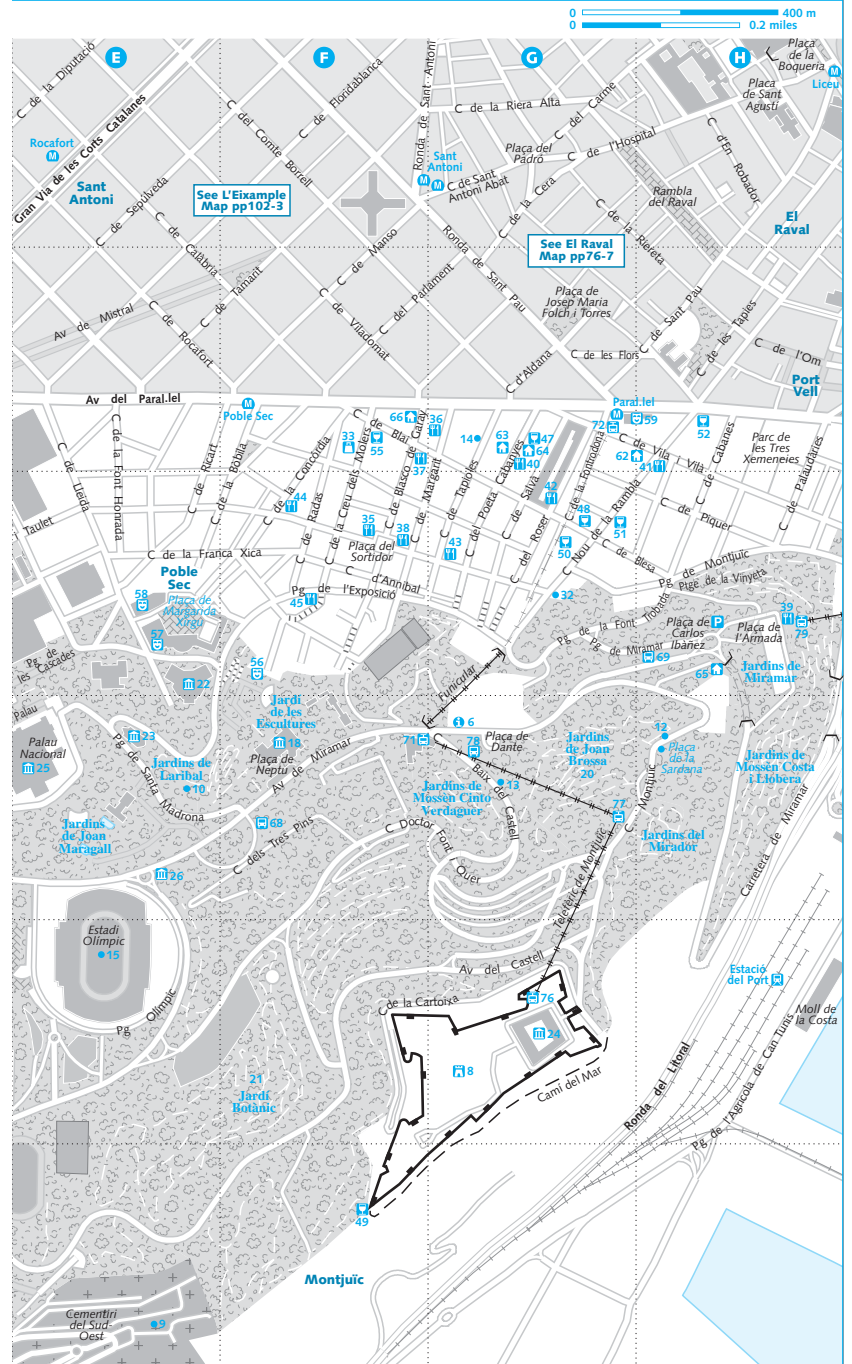
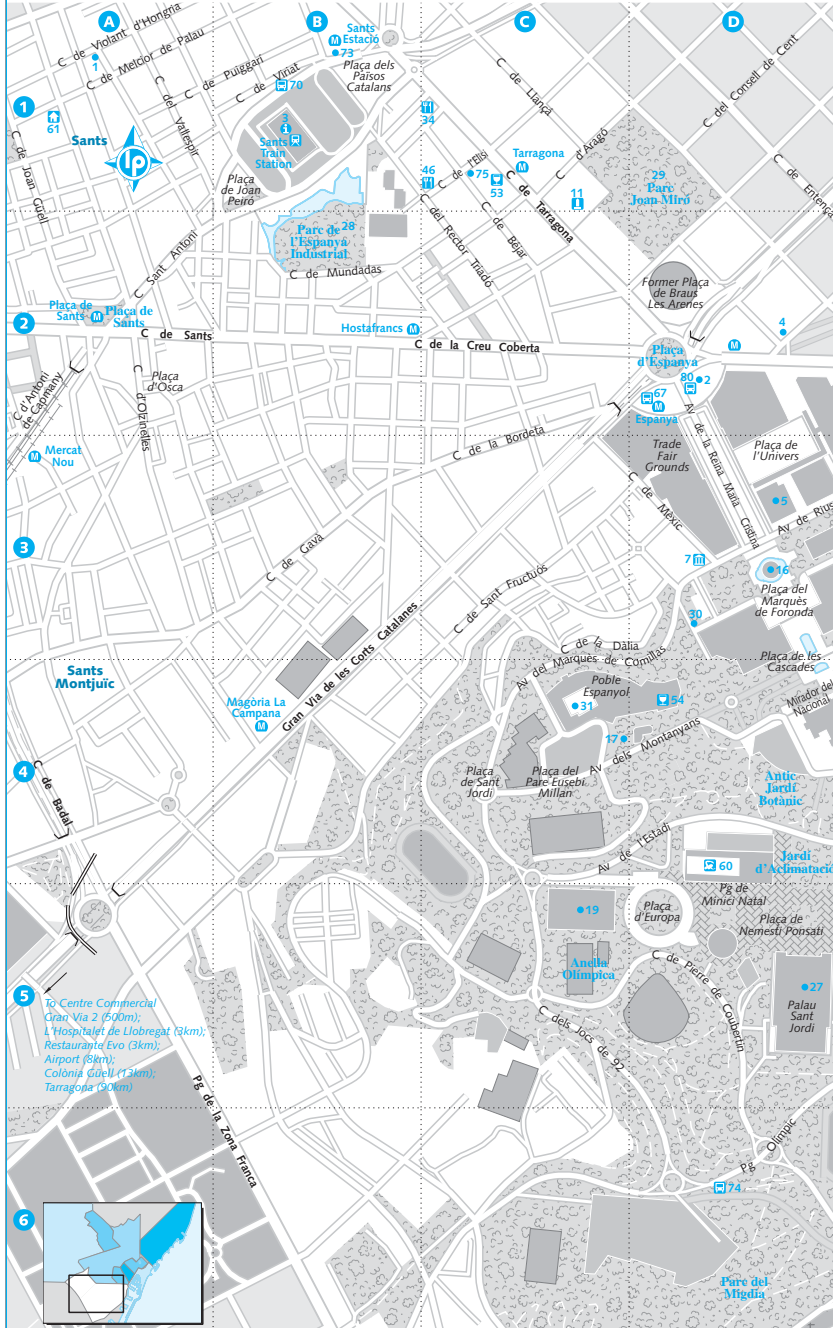
## top picks

### MONTJUÏC, SANTS & POBLE SEC

- Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya (opposite)
- CaixaForum (p142)
- Fundació Joan Miró (p143)
- Poble Espanyol (p145)
- Font Màgica (p145)



# MONTJUÏC, SANTS & POBLE SEC





## MONTJUÏC, SANTS & POBLE SEC

<b>INFORMATION</b>	Parc de l'Espanya Industrial.....28 B2	<b>ARTS</b> 📺	(pp216–21)
Coordinadora Gai-Lesbiana	Parc Joan Miró.....29 D1	Sala Apolo.....	(see 52)
Barcelona.....1 A1	Pavelló Mies van der Rohe.....30 D3	Tablao de Carmen.....	(see 31)
Fira de Barcelona.....2 D2	Poble Espanyol.....31 C4	Teatre Grec.....	56 F3
Oficina d'Informació de	Refugi 307.....32 G3	Teatre Lliure.....	57 E3
Turisme de Barcelona.....3 B1	Servei d'Informació	Teatre Mercat de les Flors.....	58 E3
ONCE.....4 D2	Esportiva.....	Teatre Victòria.....	59 H2
Palau de Congressos.....5 D3			
Tourist Information Booth.....6 G4			
<b>SIGHTS</b>		<b>SPORTS &amp; ACTIVITIES</b>	(pp224–8)
(pp130–40)	<b>SHOPPING</b> 🛍️	Piscines Bernat Picornell.....	60 D4
CaixaForum.....7 D3	(pp163–4)		
Castell de Montjuïc.....8 G5	Elephant.....33 F2		
Cementiri del Sud-Oest.....9 E6		<b>SLEEPING</b> 🛏️	(pp240–1)
Centre Gestor del Parc de	<b>EATING</b> 🍴	Alberguinn.....	61 A1
Montjuïc.....10 E4	(pp190–2)	Hostal Abrevadero.....	62 H2
Dona i Ocell Sculpture.....11 C1	El Peixerot.....34 C1	Hostal Oliveta.....	63 G2
Entrance to Jardins de Joan	El Sortidor.....35 F3	Hostal Mambo Tango.....	64 G2
Brossa.....12 H4	La Bella Napoli.....36 G2	Hotel AC Miramar.....	65 H3
Entrance to Jardins de Joan	La Bodegueta.....37 F2	Melon District.....	66 F2
Brossa.....13 G4	La Tomaquera.....38 F3	Rent a Bedroom.....	(see 66)
Església de Santa Madrona.....14 G2	Miramar.....39 H3		
Estadi Olímpic.....15 E5	Oleum.....(see 25)	<b>TRANSPORT</b>	
Font Màgica.....16 D3	Quimet i Quimet.....40 G2	A1 Aerobús Stop	
Fundació Fran Daurel.....17 C4	Restaurant Elche.....41 H2	(From Airport).....	67 D2
Fundació Joan Miró.....18 F4	Rosal 34.....42 G3	Bus Terminus No 55.....	68 F4
Institut Nacional d'Educació	Tapioles 53.....43 G3	Bus Terminus Nos 50 & PM.....	69 H3
Física de Catalunya.....19 C5	Taverna Can Margarit.....44 F3	Estació d'Autobusos de Sants.....	70 B1
Jardins de Joan Brossa.....20 H4	Xemei.....45 F3	Estació Parc Montjuïc	
Jardí Botànic.....21 F5	Zarauz.....46 C1	(Funicular & Telefèric).....	71 F4
Museu d'Arqueologia de		Funicular (Paral.lel).....	72 G2
Catalunya.....22 E3	<b>DRINKING &amp; 🍷</b>	Hertz.....	73 B1
Museu Etnològic.....23 E4	(pp212–3)	Hispano-Igualdina Bus Stop.....	(see 70)
Museu Militar.....24 G5	Barcelona Rouge.....47 G2	Line PM Bus Stop.....	74 D6
Museu Nacional d'Art de	Gran Bodega Saltó.....48 G3	Pepear.....	75 C1
Catalunya.....25 E4	La Caseta del Migdia.....49 F6	Telefèric de Montjuïc (Castell).....	76 G5
Museu Olímpic i de l'Esport.....26 E4	Maumau Underground.....50 G3	Telefèric de Montjuïc (Mirador).....	77 G4
Palau Sant Jordi.....27 D5	Plataforma.....51 G3	Terminus Bus No 61.....	78 G4
	Sala Apolo.....52 H2	Transbordador Aeri (Miramar).....	79 H3
	Space.....53 C1	Tren Turístic.....	80 D2
	Terra.....54 D4		
	Tinta Roja.....55 F2		

from the mid-19th century on. Coin collectors will enjoy the Gabinet Numismàtic de Catalunya, with coins from Roman Spain, medieval Catalonia and some engaging notes from the civil war days. After all this, you can relax in the museum restaurant, which offers great views north towards Plaça d'Espanya. Finally, students can use the **Biblioteca General d'Història de l'Art** (🕒 9.30am–6.30pm Mon–Fri, 9.30am–2pm Sat), the city's main art reference library.

### CAIXAFORUM Map pp140–1

☎ 93 476 86 00; [www.fundacio.lacaixa.es](http://www.fundacio.lacaixa.es), in Catalan & Spanish; **Avinguda del Marquès de Comillas 6–8**; admission free; 🕒 10am–8pm Tue–Fri & Sun, 10am–10pm Sat; 🇪🇸 Espanya

The Caixa building society prides itself on its involvement in (and ownership of) the arts, in particular all that is contemporary. Its premier art expo space in the city hosts part of the bank's extensive collection from around the globe. The setting is a completely renovated former factory, the

Fàbrica Casaramona, an outstanding Modernist brick structure designed by Puig i Cadafalch. From 1940 to 1993 it housed the First Squadron of the police cavalry unit – 120 horses in all.

Now it is home to major exhibition space. On occasion portions of La Caixa's own collection of 800 works of modern and contemporary art go on display, but more often than not major international exhibitions are the key draw (in 2008 anything from an audiovisual Charlie Chaplin retrospective to 'Etruscan Princes', with artefacts and statuary from several major museums).

In the courtyard where the police horses used to drink is a steel tree designed by the Japanese architect Arata Isozaki. It is possible to join one-hour tours of the building at 11am on the first Sunday of the month. On Wednesdays during July and August CaixaForum often remains open until midnight and offers music recitals.

## CASTELL DE MONTJUÏC & AROUND

Map pp140–1

☎ 93 329 86 13; adult/senior & student €3/1.50;

🕒 9.30am–8pm Tue–Sun late Mar–late Oct, Nov–

mid-Mar, 9.30am–5pm Tue–Fri, 9.30am–7pm Sat,

Sun & holidays late Oct–late Mar; 🇪🇸 PM, Telefèric

The forbidding Castell (castle or fort) de

Montjuïc dominates the southeast heights of

Montjuïc and enjoys commanding views

over the Mediterranean. It dates, in its

present form, to the late 17th and 18th

centuries, and for most of its dark history it

has been used to watch over the city and

as a political prison and killing ground.

Anarchists were executed here around the

end of the 19th century, fascists during the

civil war and Republicans after it – most

notoriously Lluís Companys in 1940. The

castle is surrounded by a network of

ditches and walls (from which its strategic

position over the city and port become

clear).

It houses the **Museu Militar**, a time-warp

bastion of the army, in all probability

destined for a limited existence. For now,

you enter a courtyard (which until mid-

2008 was lined with a dozen pieces of

artillery), off which rooms are filled with

a ragbag of weapons old and new, as well

as uniforms, yellowing maps and fighting

men's gewgaws. Stairs lead down to an

other series of halls lined with more of the

same, along with castle models and even

an equestrian statue of Franco, half hid-

den in a nondescript corner. Sala (room) 15

has a few token Republican flags added in

recent years to the ranks of army flags and

regimental standards.

Sala 19 is the temporary home to **Museu**

**del Còmic i la Il·lustració**, with examples of

Spanish comics mostly dating from the

early post–civil war period to modern

times, anything from Walt Disney transla-

tions to Capitán Trueno, Mariló ('the ideal

publication for young girls'), local favourites

like Mortadelo and Zipi y Zape, and more.

Some are in Catalan, which seems to give

the lie to claims that all publications in

Catalan were banned in Franco's days.

If the Town Hall has its way, the museum

will be turned into a peace museum in an

attempt to exorcise some of the awful

ghosts that waft around here. Perhaps the

tombstones (in Sala 18), some dating to

the 11th century, from the one-time Jew-

ish cemetery on Montjuïc will get a more

imaginative exhibition space too.

Best of all are the excellent views from the castle area of the port and city below. You can eat amid the cannons at the museum café.

Around the seaward foot of the castle is

an airy walking track, the **Camí del Mar**, which

offers breezy views of city and sea. Towards

the foot of this part of Montjuïc, above the

thundering traffic of the main road to Tarrago-

na, the **Jardins de Mossèn Costa i Llobera** (admis-

sion free; 🕒 10am–sunset) has a good collection

of tropical and desert plants – including a

veritable forest of cacti. Near the Estació

Parc Montjuïc funicular/Telefèric station are

the ornamental **Jardins de Mossèn Cinto Verdaguer**

(admission free; 🕒 10am–sunset). These sloping,

verdant gardens are home to various kinds

of bulbs and aquatic plants. Many of the

former (some 80,000) have to be replanted

each year. They include tulips, narcissus,

crocus, varieties of dahlia and more. The

aquatic plants include lotus and water lilies.

From the **Jardins del Mirador** opposite the

Mirador Transbordador Aeri station you

have fine views over the port of Barcelona.

A little further downhill, the **Jardins de Joan**

**Brossa** (admission free; 🕒 10am–sunset) are charm-

ing, landscaped gardens on the site of a

former amusement park near Plaça de

la Sardana. These gardens contain many

Mediterranean species, from cypresses to

pinces and a few palms. There are swings

and things, thematic walking trails and

some good city views.

**FUNDACIÓ JOAN MIRÓ** Map pp140–1

☎ 93 443 94 70; [www.bcn.fjmiro.es](http://www.bcn.fjmiro.es); **Plaça de**

**Neptu**; adult/senior & child €8/6; temporary exhibi-

tions €4/3; 🕒 10am–8pm Tue–Wed, Fri & Sat,

10am–9.30pm Thu, 10am–2.30pm Sun & holidays

Jul–Sep, 10am–7pm Tue–Wed, Fri & Sat, 10am–

9.30pm Thu, 10am–2.30pm Sun & holidays Oct–May;

🇪🇸 50, 55, PM or Funicular

This shimmering white temple to the art of

one of the stars of the 20th-century Span-

ish firmament seems to rest at ease amid

the greenery of its privileged position on

the mountain.

Joan Miró, the city's best-known 20th-

century artistic progeny, left his home town

this art foundation in 1971. Its light-filled

buildings, designed by close friend and

architect Josep Lluís Sert (who also built

Miró's Mallorca studios), are crammed with

seminal works, from Miró's earliest timid

sketches to paintings from his last years.

## THE BEATING HEARTS OF SANTS AND LES CORTS

Sants and Les Corts were swallowed up by rank upon rank of housing blocks from the early 20th century on, and you can wander the streets and think nothing has been built here much before the civil war. And you would largely be right. But both started as villages and you can still get a whiff of this today.

Tucked in behind Estació Sants and the odd Parc de l'Espanya Industrial (p147) is a tight web of narrow streets around **Plaça d'Osca** (Map pp140–1) that were at the heart of the rural settlement of Sants from the 18th century. There's nothing specific to see, but it remains a slice of mostly working-class Barcelona that is light years removed from central Barcelona, the modernity of the 21st-century high-speed AVE trains that glide into the nearby train station and traffic-choked Carrer de Sants.

Les Corts is today an upper-middle-class residential district largely devoid of interest. The exception is pretty pedestrianised **Plaça de la Concòrdia** (Map pp122–3), its immediately surrounding streets and, to a lesser extent, nearby **Plaça de Can Rosés** and **Plaça de Comas**. Their two- and three-storey houses give some idea of what the area was like before it was swallowed up by the expanding Barcelona in 1897.

This is in fact the greatest single collection of the artist's work, comprising around 300 of his paintings, 150 sculptures, some textiles and more than 7000 drawings spanning his entire life. Only a smallish portion is ever on display. The exhibits tend to concentrate on Miró's more settled last 20 years, but there are some important exceptions.

In some respects, Miró's earlier work is the most intriguing, mainly because it's the least known. The bulk of it is contained in the Sala Joan Prats and Sala Pilar Juncosa (named after his wife). The first depicts the young Miró moving away, under surrealist influence, from his *relative* realism (for instance his 1917 painting of the *Ermita de Sant Joan d'Horta*), towards his own unique, recognisable style. This section includes the 1939–44 Barcelona series of tortured lithographs – Miró's comment on the Spanish Civil War. The huge 1st-floor galleries burst with the colour and light of his better-known work from the 1960s onwards. Here you can see grand-scale canvases and a sprinkling of sculpture.

Another interesting section is devoted to the 'Miró Papers', which include many preparatory drawings and sketches, some on bits of newspaper or cigarette packets. A *Joan Miró* is a collection of work by other contemporary artists, donated in tribute to Miró and held in a basement hall. The museum library contains Miró's personal book collection.

Outside on the east flank of the museum is the **Jardí de les Escultures** (admission free; ☎ 10am–dusk), a small garden with various odd bits of modern sculpture.

### ESTADI OLÍMPIC Map pp140–1

**Avinguda de l'Estadi; admission free; ☎ 10am–6pm Oct–Mar, 10am–8pm Apr–Sep; ☎ 50, 61 or PM**

First opened in 1929, the 65,000-capacity stadium was given a complete overhaul for the 1992 Olympics. You enter from the northern end, in the shadow of the dish in which the Olympic flame burned. At the opening ceremony a long-range archer set it alight by spectacularly depositing a flaming arrow into it. Well, more or less. He actually missed, but the organisers had foreseen this possibility. The dish was alive with gas, so the arrow only had to pass within 2m of it to set the thing on fire. The stadium is used by the city's second football side, Espanyol, as they wait for a brand-new stadium to be built. It rocks to the rhythms of such world acts as the Rolling Stones when they come to town too.

Just east over the road is the **Museu Olímpic i de l'Esport** (☎ 93 292 53 79; www.fundaciobcn.cat/olimpica.es; Avinguda de l'Estadi s/n; adult/senior & child/student €4/free/2.50; ☎ 10am–8pm Wed–Mon Apr–Sep, 10am–6pm Wed–Mon Oct–Mar), an all-flashing, all-dancing and information-packed interactive museum dedicated to the history of sport and the Olympic Games. After picking up tickets you wander down a ramp that snakes below ground level and is lined with displays on the history of sport, starting with the ancients. From the original Olympics you pass all sorts of displays: anything from a 1930s discus and early-20th-century dumbbells to a McLaren Formula 1 car and a section devoted to sport and colonialism (ie, games like cricket and polo, which flourished in India under the British Raj). On the basement floor is a special section devoted to Barcelona's 1992 Olympics,

with another on the collection of Olympic stamps, art and more of the former head of the International Olympic Committee, Barcelona's Juan Antonio Samaranch.

West of the stadium is the **Palau Sant Jordi**, a 17,000-capacity indoor sports, concert and exhibition hall opened in 1990 and designed by Isozaki.

The Anella Olímpic (Olympic Ring) describes the whole group of sports installations created for the games. Westernmost is the **Institut Nacional d'Educació Física de Catalunya** (INEFC), a kind of sports university, designed by Ricard Bofill. Past a circular arena, the Plaça d'Europa, with the slender white **Torre Calatrava** communications tower behind it, is the **Piscines Bernat Picornell** building, where the swimming events were held (now open to the public; see p225). Separating the pool from the Estadi Olímpic is a pleasant garden, the **Jardí d'Acclimatació**.

### FONT MÀGICA Map pp140–1

**Avinguda de la Reina Maria Cristina; admission free; ☎ every 30min 7–8.30pm Fri & Sat Oct–late Jun, 9.30–11.30pm Thu–Sun late Jun–Sep; ☎ Espanya**

With a flourish, the Magic Fountain erupts into a feast of musical, backlit liquid life. It is extraordinary how an idea that was cooked up for the 1929 Exposition has, since the 1992 Olympics, again become a magnet. On hot summer evenings especially, this 15-minute spectacle (repeated several times through the evening) mesmerises onlookers. The main fountain of a series that sweeps up the hill from Avinguda de la Reina Maria Cristina to the grand façade of the Palau Nacional, La Font Màgica is a unique performance in which the water at times looks like seething fireworks or a mystical cauldron of colour. On the last evening of the Festes de la Mercè in September, a particularly spectacular display includes fireworks.

### POBLE ESPANYOL Map pp140–1

☎ 93 508 63 00; www.poble-espanyol.com; Avinguda del Marquès de Comillas; adult/child/senior & student €8/5/6; ☎ 9am–8pm Mon, 9am–2am Tue–Thu, 9am–4am Fri & Sat, 9am–midnight Sun; ☎ Espanya or ☎ 50, 61 or PM

Welcome to Spain! All of it! This Spanish Village is both a cheesy souvenir-hunters' haunt and an intriguing scrapbook of Spanish architecture built for the Spanish

crafts section of the 1929 Exhibition. You can wander from Andalucía to the Balearic Islands in the space of a couple of hours' slow meandering, visiting surprisingly good copies of characteristic buildings from all the country's regions.

You enter from beneath a towered medieval gate from Àvila. Inside, to the right, is an information office with free maps. Straight ahead from the gate is the Plaza Mayor (town square), surrounded with mainly Castilian and Aragonese buildings. Elsewhere you'll find an Andalusian *barrio*, a Basque street, Galician and Catalan quarters and even a Dominican monastery (at the eastern end). The buildings house dozens of restaurants, cafés, bars, craft shops and workshops (such as glass-makers), and some souvenir stores. ☎ 93 423 41 72; www.fundaciobcn.cat; admission free; ☎ 10am–7pm), an eclectic collection of 300 works of art including sculptures, prints, ceramics and tapestries by modern artists ranging from Picasso and Miró to more contemporary figures, including Miquel Barceló. The foundation also has a sculpture garden, boasting 27 pieces, nearby within the grounds of Poble Espanyol (look for the Montblanc gate).

At night the restaurants, bars and especially the discos become a lively corner of Barcelona's nightlife.

### PAVELLÓ MIES VAN DER ROHE

Map pp140–1  
☎ 93 423 40 16; www.miesbcn.com; Avinguda del Marquès de Comillas s/n; adult/child under 18yr/student €4/free/2; ☎ 10am–8pm; ☎ Espanya

Just to the west of La Font Màgica is a strange building. In 1929 Ludwig Mies van der Rohe erected the Pavelló Alemany (German Pavilion) for the World Exhibition. Now known by the name of its architect, it was removed after the show. Decades later, a society was formed to rebuild what was in hindsight considered a key work in the trajectory of one of the world's most important modern architects. Reconstructed in the 1980s, it is a curious structure of interlocking planes – walls of marble or glass, ponds of water, ceilings and just plain nothing, a temple to the new urban environment. A graceful copy of a statue of *Alba* (Dawn) by Berlin sculptor Georg Kolbe (1877–1947) stands in one of the exterior areas.

## TRANSPORT AROUND MONTJUÏC

Metro Línia 3 runs through Poble Sec. The closest stops to Montjuïc are Espanya, Poble Sec and Paral.lel. You *could* walk from Ciutat Vella (the foot of La Rambla is 700m from the eastern end of Montjuïc). Escalators run up to the Palau Nacional from Avinguda de Rius i Taulet and Passeig de les Cascades. They continue as far as Avinguda de l'Estadi.

### Bus

Bus 50 runs to Montjuïc along Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes via Plaça de l'Universitat and Plaça d'Espanya. Bus 61 runs (six times a day, Monday to Friday only) along Avinguda del Paral.lel to Montjuïc via Plaça d'Espanya. Bus 55 runs across town via Plaça de Catalunya and Carrer de Lleida past the Museu d'Arqueologia to terminate at the Funicular station. The PM (Parc de Montjuïc) line does a circle trip from Plaça d'Espanya to the Castell de Montjuïc. It operates every 20 minutes or so from 8am to 8pm on weekends and holidays.

The **Bus Turístic** (p266) also makes several stops on Montjuïc.

Bus Montjuïc Turístic (adult/child €3/2) operates two hop-on, hop-off circuits (red and blue) in single-deck, open-top buses around the park. The blue line starts at Plaça d'Espanya and the red at Plaça del Portal de la Pau, at the waterfront end of La Rambla. There are a total of 22 stops, five interconnecting the two routes. The service operates every 40 minutes, from 10am to 9pm, daily from May to September.

### Metro & Funicular

Take the Metro (Línia 2 or 3) to the Paral.lel stop and pick up the **funicular railway** (Map pp140–1; ☎ 9am–10pm Apr–Oct, 9am–8pm Nov–Mar), part of the Metro fare system, from there to Estació Parc Montjuïc.

### Transbordador Aeri

The quickest way to get to the mountain from the beach is this cable car that runs between Torre de Sant Sebastià in **La Barceloneta** (p94) and the Miramar stop on Montjuïc.

### Telefèric de Montjuïc

From Estació Parc Montjuïc, this **cable car** (information ☎ 93 328 90 03; adult/child one way €5.70/4.50; ☎ 10am–9pm Jun–Sep, 10am–7pm Apr–May & Oct, 10am–6pm Nov–Mar) carries you to the Castell de Montjuïc via the Mirador (a lookout point).

## MUSEU D'ARQUEOLOGIA DE CATALUNYA

Map pp140–1

☎ 93 424 65 77; [www.mac.es](http://www.mac.es); Passeig de Santa Madrona 39-41; adult/child €3/2; ☎ 9.30am–7pm Tue–Sat, 10am–2.30pm Sun; 🚗 55 or PM

The archaeology museum, housed in what was the Graphic Arts palace during the 1929 Exposition, covers Catalonia and related cultures elsewhere in Spain. Items range from copies of pre-Neanderthal skulls to lovely Carthaginian necklaces and jewel-studded Visigothic crosses. There's good material on the Balearic Islands (rooms X to XIII) and Empúries (Emporion), the Greek and Roman city on the Costa Brava (rooms XIV and XVII). The Roman finds upstairs were mostly dug up in Barcelona.

## MUSEU ETNOLÒGIC

Map pp140–1

☎ 93 424 64 02; [www.museuetnologic.bcn.cat](http://www.museuetnologic.bcn.cat), in Catalan; Passeig de Santa Madrona 16-22; adult/child under 12yr/senior & student €3.50/free/1.75, 1st Sun of month free; ☎ noon–8pm Tue–Sat, 11am–3pm Sun late Jun–late Sep, 10am–7pm Tue & Thu, 10am–2pm Wed & Fri–Sun late Sep–late Jun; 🚗 55

Barcelona's ethnology museum presents a curious permanent collection, Ètnic, in which several thousand wide-ranging items are on show in three themed sections, Orígens (Origins), Pobles (Peoples) and Mosaics. Along with lots of material from rural areas of Catalonia and parts of Spain, the museum's collections include items from as far afield as Australia, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Japan and Morocco, along with a handful of objects from other parts of Europe. The Spanish collections range from Andalusian ceramics to extraordinary traditional festive dress from the remote Pyrenean valley, Vall d'Ansó.

## JARDÍ BOTÀNIC

Map pp140–1

☎ 93 426 49 35; [www.jardibotanic.bcn.es](http://www.jardibotanic.bcn.es); Carrer del Doctor Font i Quer 2; adult/child under 16yr/student €3.50/free/1.70, last Sun of month free; ☎ 10am–8pm Jun–Aug, 10am–7pm Apr–May & Sep, 10am–6pm Feb–Mar & Oct, 10am–5pm Nov–Jan; 🚗 50, 61 or PM

Across the road to the south of the Estadi, this botanical garden was created atop

what was an old municipal dump. The theme is 'Mediterranean' flora and the collection of some 40,000 plants includes 1500 species that thrive in areas with a climate similar to that of the Med, including the Eastern Mediterranean, Spain (including the Balearic and Canary Islands), North Africa, Australia, California, Chile and South Africa. The garden is being extended.

## PLAÇA D'ESPANYA & AROUND

Map pp140–1

### Plaça d'Espanya; ☒ Espanya

The whirling roundabout of Plaça d'Espanya, distinguished by its so-called Venetian towers (because they are vaguely reminiscent of the belltower in Venice's St Mark's Sq), is flanked on its northern side by the façade of the former **Plaça de Braus Les Arenes** bullring. Built in 1900 and at one point one of three bullrings in the city, it is being converted into a shopping and leisure centre by Lord Richard Rogers.

Behind the bullring is the **Parc Joan Miró**, created in the 1980s – worth a quick detour for Miró's phallic sculpture *Dona i Ocell* (Woman and Bird) in the western corner. Locals know the park (which apart from Miró is a dispiriting affair) as the Parc de l'Escorxador (Abattoir Park), as that's what once stood here – not surprising given the proximity to the bullring.

A couple of blocks west and just south of Estació Sants is the odd **Parc de l'Espanya Industrial**. With its pond, trees, children's swings, bar, loads of cement and the odd, sci-fi prison-camp searchlight towers, it is a strange park indeed.

## CEMENTIRI DEL SUD-OEST

Map pp140–1

☎ 93 484 17 00; ☎ 8am–5.30pm; 🚗 PM

On the hill to the south of the Anella Olímpica you can see the top of a huge cemetery, the Cementiri del Sud-Oest or Cementiri Nou, which extends down the southern side of the hill. Opened in 1883, it's an odd combination of elaborate architect-designed tombs for rich families and small niches for the rest. It includes the graves of numerous Catalan artists and politicians. Among the big names are Joan Miró, Carmen Amaya (the flamenco dance star from La Barceloneta), Jacint Verdaguer (the 19th-century priest and poet to whom the rebirth of Catalan literature

is attributed), Francesc Macià and Lluís Companys (both nationalist presidents of Catalonia, the latter executed by Franco's henchmen in the Castell de Montjuïc in 1940), Ildefons Cerdà (who designed l'Eixample) and Joan Gamper (the founder of the FC Barcelona football team, aka Hans Gamper). Many victims of Franco's postwar revenge were buried in unmarked graves here – the last of them in 1974. From the PM bus stop it's about an 800m walk southwest. Otherwise, Bus 38 from Plaça de Catalunya stops close to the cemetery entrance.

## REFUGI 307

Map pp140–1

☎ 93 256 21 22; Carrer Nou de la Rambla 169; admission €3; ☎ 30-min tours 11am–2pm Sat & Sun; ☒ Paral.lel

Barcelona was the most heavily bombed city from the air during the Spanish Civil War and was dotted with more than 1300 air-raid shelters. Local citizens started digging this one under a fold of Montjuïc in March 1937. In the course of the next two years, the web of tunnels was slowly extended to 200m, with a theoretical capacity for 2000 people. People were not allowed to sleep overnight in the shelter, as when raids were not being carried out work continued on its extension. Vaulted to displace the weight above the shelter to the clay brick walls (clay is porous, which allowed the bricks to absorb the shock waves of falling bombs without cracking), the tunnels were narrow and winding. Coated in lime to seal out humidity and whitewashed to relieve the sense of claustrophobia, they became a second home for many Poble Sec folks. When the civil war ended, Franco had some extensions made as he considered the option of entering WWII on Hitler's side. When he dropped this idea, this and other shelters were largely abandoned. In the tough years of famine and rationing of the 1940s and 1950s, families from Granada took up residence here rather than in the shacks springing up all over the area, as poor migrants arrived from southern Spain. Later on, an enterprising fellow grew mushrooms here for sale on the black market. The half-hour tours (in Catalan or Spanish, book ahead for English or French) explain all this and more.



## VIEWS & GARDENS ON MONTJUÏC

### Walking Tour

#### 1 Castell de Montjuïc

Long synonymous with oppression, the dark history of **Castell de Montjuïc** (p143) is today overshadowed by the fine views it commands over the city and sea. The ride up on the Telefèric is the perfect way to get there. And from here on it's all downhill!

#### 2 Jardins del Mirador

A short stroll down the road or the parallel Camí del Mar pedestrian trail leads to another fine viewpoint over the city and sea, the Jardins del Mirador. Take a weight off on the park benches or pick up a snack.

#### 3 Jardins de Joan Brossa

Further downhill is the multi-tiered Jardins de Joan Brossa (the entrance is on the left just beyond Plaça de la Sardana, with the sculpture of people engaged in the classic Catalan folk dance). More fine city views can be had

from among the many Mediterranean trees and plants.

#### 4 Jardins de Mossèn Cinto Verdaguer

Exiting the Jardins de Joan Brossa at the other (west) side, you cross Camí Baix del Castell to the painstakingly laid out Jardins de Mossèn Cinto Verdaguer. This is a beautiful setting for a slow meander among tulip beds and water lilies.

#### 5 Fundació Joan Miró

Joan Miró left a broad collection of his works to the city in his specially designed hillside foundation (p143). You can discover his earliest, tentative artistic attempts and continue right through to the characteristic broad canvases for which he is known.

#### 6 Jardins de Laribal

Dropping away behind the Fundació Joan Miró, the Jardins Laribal are a combination of terraced gardens linked by paths and stairways. The pretty sculpted watercourses along some of the stairways were inspired by Granada's Muslim-era palace of El Alhambra. Stop for a snack at the Centre Gestor del Parc de Montjuïc.

#### 7 Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya

Even if the escalators aren't working, it is worth climbing the steps to this ochre beast to see one of Europe's finest collections of Romanesque art, salvaged from countless churches and chapels sprinkled over northern Catalonia. Further collections range from Gothic to Modernisme.

## THE OUTSKIRTS

Two key architectural sights lie on the edge of town. Gaudí's crypt in the Colònia Güell provides eye-catching insights into his theories of architecture, while the grand cloisters of the monastery at Sant Cugat del Vallès take us travelling back centuries. Also curious is the immigration museum on the northwest edge of town.

Sant Cugat del Vallès lies about 15km north of central Barcelona, over the Serra de Collserola hills. The Colònia Güell is in Santa Coloma de Cervelló, about 15km west of Barcelona on the west bank of the Riu Llobregat.

#### COLÒNIA GÜELL off Map pp140–1

☎ 93 630 58 07; [www.coloniaguellbarcelona.com](http://www.coloniaguellbarcelona.com); Santa Coloma de Cervelló; adult/student & senior crypt €4/2.50, 1hr tour of crypt €5/3.50, 2hr tour of crypt & Colònia Güell €8/6; ☎ crypt 10am–2pm & 3–7pm Mon–Fri, 10am–3pm Sat, Sun & holidays May–Oct, 10am–3pm Nov–Apr; 🚆 FGC lines S4, S7, S8 or S33

Apart from La Sagrada Família, Gaudí's last big project was the creation of a Utopian textile workers' complex for his magnate patron Eusebi Güell outside Barcelona at Santa Coloma de Cervelló. Gaudí's main role was to erect the colony's church. Work began in 1908 but the idea fizzled eight years later and Gaudí only finished the crypt, which still serves as a working church.

This structure is a key to understanding what the master had in mind for his *magnum opus*, La Sagrada Família. The mostly brick-clad columns that support the ribbed vaults in the ceiling are inclined at all angles in much the way you might expect trees in a forest to lean. That effect was deliberate, but also grounded in physics. Gaudí worked out the angles so that their load would be transmitted from the ceiling to the earth without the help of extra buttressing. Similar thinking lay behind his plans for La Sagrada Família, whose Gothic-inspired structure would tower above any Middle Ages building, without requiring a single buttress. Gaudí's hand is visible down to the wavy design of the pews. The primary colours in the curvaceous plant-shaped stained-glass windows are another reminder of the era in which the crypt was built.

Near the church spread the cute brick houses designed for the factory workers and still inhabited today. A short stroll away, the 23 factory buildings of a Modernista industrial complex, idle since the 1970s, have been brought back to life in a €60 million project under the direction of

local building star Òscar Tusquets. Shops and businesses have moved into the renovated complex. You can pick up a map at the information centre and wander around or join guided visits of the crypt alone or the crypt and former factory complex at noon on weekends. Other tours take place at 10am and 2pm too if there are enough people. In theory, several languages are catered for but, for anything beyond Catalan and Spanish, you need to call ahead to make sure a guide is available for your language. Group tours can be booked ahead for weekdays.

#### SANT CUGAT DEL VALLÈS off Map pp122–3

☎ 93 675 99 51; [www.museu.santcugat.cat](http://www.museu.santcugat.cat), in Catalan; Plaça Octavià; adult/senior & under 16yr €3/free; ☎ 10am–1.30pm & 3–8pm Tue–Sat, 10am–2.30pm Sun & holidays Jun–Sep, 10am–1.30pm & 3–7pm Tue–Sat, 10am–2.30pm Sun & holidays Oct–May; 🚆 FGC lines S1, S2, S5 or S55 Marauding Muslims razed the one-time Roman encampment-turned-Visigothic monastery of Sant Cugat del Vallès to the ground in the 8th century. These things happen, so after the Christians got back in the saddle, work on a new, fortified Benedictine monastic complex was stoically begun. What you see today is a combination of Romanesque and Gothic buildings. The lower floor of the cloister is a fine demonstration of Romanesque design and it's the principal reason for making the effort to come. In particular, the decoration of the 72 pairs of columns, with scenes ranging from pious scriptural events to completely medieval fantasy, is captivating. The former monastery holds occasional temporary exhibitions.

From the train station, head left out of the station along Avinguda d'Alfonso Sala Conde de Egara and turn right down Carrer de Ruis i Tauler, followed by a left into Carrer de Santiago Rusiñol, which leads to the monastery.

### WALK FACTS

Start Castell de Montjuïc

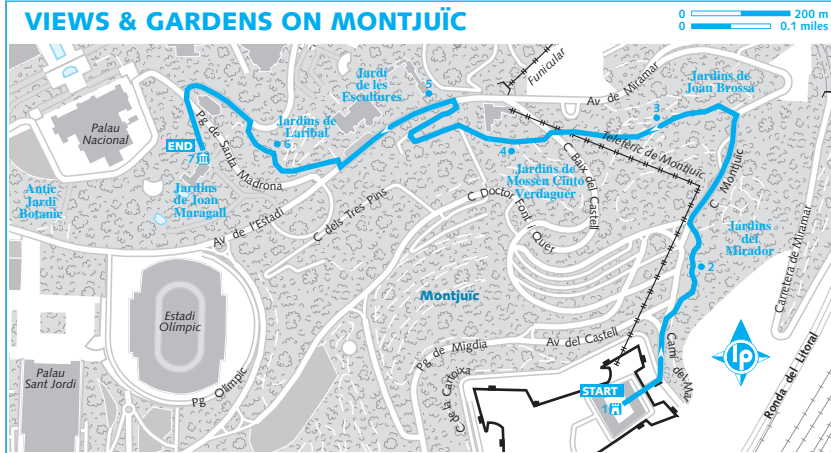
Finish Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya

Distance 2.5km

Duration 1 hour

Transport 🚆 Telefèric de Montjuïc (Castell)

## VIEWS & GARDENS ON MONTJUÏC



## MUSEU D'HISTÒRIA DE L'IMMIGRACIÓ DE CATALUNYA

off Map pp98–9

☎ 93 381 26 06; [www.mhic.net](http://www.mhic.net); Carretera de Mataró 124, Sant Adrià de Besòs; admission free; 🕒 10am–2pm & 5–8pm Tue & Thu, 10am–2pm Wed, Fri & Sat May–Sep, 10am–2pm & 4–7pm Tue & Thu, 10am–2pm Wed, Fri & Sat Oct–Apr; 📍 Verneda

The star piece of this museum dedicated to the history of immigration in Catalonia is a wagon of the train known as El Sevillano, which in the 1950s trundled between

Andalucía and Catalunya, jammed with migrants on an all-stops trip that often lasted more than 30 hours! The one-room exhibition in the former country house, Can Serra (now surrounded by light industry, ring roads and warehouses), contains a display of photos, text (in Catalan) and various documents and objects that recall the history of immigration to Catalonia from the 19th century on. There's also an engaging video with images of migrant life decades ago and today.

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## SHOPPING

### top picks

- Herboristeria del Rei (p154)
- Caelum (p154)
- Papabubble (p155)
- Custo Barcelona (p157)
- Vila Viniteca (p158)
- Antonio Miró (p159)
- Cubiña (p160)
- Joan Murrià (p161)
- Vinçon (p163)
- Xampany (p163)



If your doctor has prescribed an intense round of shopping therapy to deal with the blues, then Barcelona is the place. Across Ciutat Vella (Barri Gòtic, El Raval and La Ribera), l'Eixample and Gràcia is spread a thick mantle of countless boutiques, historic shops, original one-off stores, gourmet corners, wine dens and more designer labels than you can shake your gold card at. You name it, you'll find it here, anything from chocolate to Mango.

Barcelona is undoubtedly a style city and this is evident in its flagship design stores (such as Vinçon and Cubiña) – whether you are looking for homewares, gifts or decoration. Even the souvenirs have flair. Fashion, in the broadest possible sense, occupies a sizable wedge of the city's retail space. Local names such as Mango, Custo Barcelona, Antonio Miró and Purificación García jostle side by side with big Spanish names in *haute couture* and *prêt-à-porter* (such as Zara and Adolfo Domínguez). There is no shortage of French, Italian and international fashion either, with most of the major brands on show. Almost every taste is catered to, with loads of youthful designers, club and streetwear, grunge dealers and secondhand operators.

Stylish department stores, local and imported, are scattered about the centre of town. The biggest name is El Corte Inglés.

Look around and compare prices. They are generally inflated in high-end boutiques on or around Passeig de Gràcia, although you may still find better prices than for the same items in your home city.

For high fashion, design, jewellery and several department stores, the principal shopping axis starts on Plaça de Catalunya, proceeds up Passeig de Gràcia and turns left (west) into Avinguda Diagonal, along which it proceeds as far as Plaça de la Reina Maria Cristina. The densely packed section between Plaça de Francesc Macià and Plaça de la Reina Maria Cristina is an especially good hunting ground.

The heart of l'Eixample, bisected by chic Passeig de Gràcia, is known as the Quadrat d'Or (Golden Sq; the boulevard itself is known as the Milla d'Or, or Golden Mile) and is jammed with all sorts of glittering shops. Passeig de Gràcia has developed into a who's who of international shopping (Armani, Bulgari, Cartier, Bang & Olufsen, Max Mara, Ermengildo Zegna, Hermès, Tommy Hilfiger, Gucci, Chanel and Hugo Boss are just some of the tenants).

The heart of the Barri Gòtic has always been busy with small-scale merchants, but the area has come crackling to life since the mid-1990s, and local shopkeepers like to think of the whole area as 'Barnacentre'. Some of the most curious old stores, whether purveyors of hats or of candles, lurk in the narrow lanes around Plaça de Sant Jaume. The once-seedy Carrer d'Avinyó has become a minor young-fashion boulevard. Antique stores line Carrer de la Palla and Carrer dels Banys Nous.

## CLOTHING SIZES

### Women's clothing

Aus/UK	8	10	12	14	16	18
Europe	36	38	40	42	44	46
Japan	5	7	9	11	13	15
USA	6	8	10	12	14	16

### Women's shoes

Aus/USA	5	6	7	8	9	10
Europe	35	36	37	38	39	40
France only	35	36	38	39	40	42
Japan	22	23	24	25	26	27
UK	3½	4½	5½	6½	7½	8½

### Men's clothing

Aus	92	96	100	104	108	112
Europe	46	48	50	52	54	56
Japan	5		M	M	L	
UK/USA	35	36	37	38	39	40

### Men's shirts (collar sizes)

Aus/Japan	38	39	40	41	42	43
Europe	38	39	40	41	42	43
UK/USA	15	15½	16	16½	17	17½

### Men's shoes

Aus/UK	7	8	9	10	11	12
Europe	41	42	43	44½	46	47
Japan	26	27	27½	28	29	30
USA	7½	8½	9½	10½	11½	12½

Measurements approximate only, try before you buy

La Ribera is a nothing less than a gourmand's delight. Great old stores and some finger-licking newbies deal in speciality foodstuffs, from coffee and chocolate to cheese. Amid such wonderful aromas, a crop of fashion and design stores (particularly along Carrer del Rec between Passeig del Born and Avinguda del Marquès de l'Argentera, and side streets) caters to the multitude of yuppies who have moved into the *barri* (neighbourhood).

In El Raval you'll discover old-time stores that are irresistible to browsers, and a colourful array of affordable, mostly secondhand clothes boutiques. The central axis here is Carrer de la Riera Baixa, which plays host to everything from '70s threads to military cast-offs. Carrer dels Tallers is also attracting a growing number of clothes and shoe stores (although CDs and musical instruments remain its core business).

Art galleries, designer outlets and quality bookstores all huddle together along the streets running east of the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (Macba) towards La Rambla.

Gràcia is also full of quirky little shops. In particular, check out Carrer de Verdi for anything from clothes to bric-a-brac.

Barcelona certainly has no shortage of shopping malls. One of the first to arrive was **L'illa del Diagonal** (Map pp122–3; ☎ 93 444 00 00; www.lilla.com; Avinguda Diagonal 549; 📍 Maria Cristina), designed by star Spanish architect Rafael Moneo. The **Centre Comercial Diagonal Mar** (Map pp98–9; ☎ 902 530300; www.diagonalmar.com; Avinguda Diagonal 3; 📍 El Maresme Forum) by the sea is one of the latest additions. The city's other emporia include: **Centre Comercial de les Glòries** (Map pp98–9; ☎ 93 486 04 04; www.lesglories.com; Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes; 📍 Glòries), in the former Olivetti factory; **Heron City** (☎ 902 401144; www.heroncitybarcelona.com; Passeig de Rio de Janeiro 42; 📍 Fabra i Puig), just off Avinguda de la Meridiana, about 4km north of Plaça de les Glòries Catalanes; and the **Centre Comercial Gran Via 2** (off Map pp140–1; ☎ 902 301444; www.granvia2.com; Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes 75; 📍 FGC Ildefons Cerdà) in l'Hospitalet.

In general, shops are open between 9am or 10am and 1.30pm or 2pm and then again from around 4pm to 8pm Monday to Friday. Many shops keep the same hours on Saturday, although some don't bother with the evening session.

Large supermarkets, malls and department stores such as El Corte Inglés stay open all day from Monday to Saturday, between about 10am and 10pm. Many fashion boutiques, design stores and the like open from about 10am to 8pm Monday to Saturday.

A handful of shops open on Sundays and holidays, and the number increases in the run up to key consumer holiday periods (such as during the weeks leading up to Christmas and Reis).

# top picks

## SHOPPING STRIPS

- Avinguda del Portal de l'Àngel** (Map pp64–5) With El Corte Inglés leading the way, this broad pedestrian avenue is lined with everything from shoe shops to patisseries, and feeds into Carrer dels Boters and Carrer de la Portaferrissa, characterised by stores offering light-hearted costume jewellery and young streetwear.
- Avinguda Diagonal** (Map pp122–3) The boulevard is loaded up with international fashion names, department stores and design boutiques, suitably interspersed with eateries to allow weary shoppers to take a load off.
- Carrer d'Avinyó** (Map pp64–5) Once a fairly squalid old-town road (where Picasso and his friends used to frequent houses of ill repute), Carrer d'Avinyó has morphed into a dynamic young fashion street.
- Carrer del Rec** (Map pp84–5) Another threads street, this one-time stream is lined with bright, sometimes quirky boutiques. Check out Carrer de Bonaire and Carrer de l'Esparteria too. You'll find discount outlets and original local designers.
- Passeig de Gràcia** (Map pp108–9) This is the premier shopping boulevard, chic with a capital 'C', but mostly given over to big name international brands.
- Carrer de la Riera Baixa** (Map pp76–7) The place to look for a gaggle of stores flogging preloved threads.
- Carrer de Petritxol** (Map pp64–5) For chocolate shops and art.
- Carrer del Consell de Cent** (Map pp108–9) The heart of the private art gallery scene in Barcelona, between Passeig de Gràcia and Carrer de Muntaner.
- Carrer dels Banys Nous** (Map pp64–5) Along with nearby Carrer de la Palla, the place to look for antiques.

# BARRI GÒTIC & LA RAMBLA

A handful of interesting shops dot La Rambla, but the real fun starts inside the labyrinth. Young fashion on Carrer d'Avinyó, a mixed bag on Avinguda del Portal del Àngel, some cute old shops on Carrer de la Dagueria and lots of exploring in tight old lanes awaits.

## ANTINOUS Map pp64-5 Books

☎ 93 301 90 70; [www.antinouslibros.com](http://www.antinouslibros.com), in Spanish; Carrer de Josep Anselm Clavé 6; M Drassanes Gay and lesbian travellers may want to browse in this spacious and relaxed gay bookshop, which also has a modest café out the back. This is the place for porn mags, postcards of muscle-bound fellows and an awful lot of highbrow lit on homosexual issues mixed in with rather lower-brow lit to groan to.

## CAELUM Map pp64-5 Food

☎ 93 302 69 93; Carrer de la Palla 8; ☎ 10.30am-8pm Tue-Thu & Sun, 11.30am-11pm Fri & Sat, 5-8pm Mon; M Liceu Centuries of heavenly gastronomic tradition gathers from across Spain in this exquisite medieval space in the heart of the city. Sweets (such as the irresistible marzipan from Toledo) made by nuns in convents across the country make their way to this den of delicacies.

## CASA BEETHOVEN Map pp64-5 Music

☎ 93 301 48 26; La Rambla de Sant Josep 97; M Liceu This isn't any old sheet-music shop. In business since 1880 and with an air more of a museum than of a store, Casa Beethoven's customers have included Montserrat Caballé, Josep Carreras and Plácido Domingo. They keep up with the times, and you're as likely to find music by Metallica as by Mozart. On Saturdays small concerts are sometimes held.

## CERERIA SUBIRÀ Map pp64-5 Candles

☎ 93 315 26 06; Baixada de la Llibreteria 7; M Jaume I Even if you're not interested in myriad mounds of colourful wax, pop in just so you've been to the oldest shop in Barce-

## IT'S SALE TIME

The winter sales start shortly after Reis (6 January) and, depending on the store, can go on well into February. The summer sales start in July, with stores trying to entice locals to part with one last wad of euros before they flood out of the city on holiday in August. Some shops prolong their sales to the end of August.

Iona. Open since 1761, and at this address since the 19th century, it has a voluptuous, baroque feel about it.

## EL INGENIO Map pp64-5 Masks & Costumes

☎ 93 317 71 38; Carrer d'En Rauric 6; M Liceu In this whimsical fantasy store you will discover giant Carnaval masks, costumes, theatrical accessories and other fun things. You can pick up some 'devil's batons' to do a little fiery juggling, a monocycle or clown make-up.

## GOTHAM Map pp64-5 Design

☎ 93 412 46 47; Carrer de Cervantes 7; M Jaume I Look back with fondness at the furniture and lights here, which date back to at least the 1960s, and in some cases the '30s. Much of it is restored and given a bright, decorative once-over. Retro design freaks will fall in love with this place.

## HERBORISTERIA DEL REI Map pp64-5 Herbs & Medicinal Plants

☎ 93 318 05 12; [www.herboristeriadelrei.com](http://www.herboristeriadelrei.com); Carrer del Vidre 1; M Liceu Once patronised by Queen Isabel II, this timeless corner store flogs all sorts of weird and wonderful herbs, spices and medicinal plants. It's been doing so since 1823 and the décor has barely changed since the 1860s. Some of the products have, and you'll find anything from teas to massage oil nowadays. Film director Tom Tykwer shot scenes of *Perfume: The Story of a Murderer* here.

## L'ARCA DE L'ÀVIA Map pp64-5 Vintage Clothes & Accessories

☎ 93 302 15 98; Carrer dels Banys Nous 20; M Liceu Grandma's chest is indeed full of extraordinary remembrances from the past, when young ladies used to put together a trousseau of clothes and other items for their wedding. You might find anything from

old silk kimonos to wedding dresses from the 1920s. Some items sold here wound up being used in the film *Titanic*.

## LA CONDONERIA Map pp64-5 Condoms

☎ 93 302 77 21; Plaça de Sant Josep Oriol 7; M Liceu Run out of kinky coloured condoms? Need a fresh batch of lubricant? Pick up these vital items and a host of bedside novelties and naughty bits here.

## LA MANUAL ALPARGATERA Map pp64-5 Shoes

☎ 93 301 01 72; Carrer d'Avinyó 7; M Drassanes The bright white shopfront is a local landmark. Everyone from the Pope to Michael Douglas has ordered a pair of espadrilles (rope-soled, canvas shoes or sandals) from this store that holds its own against Nike and co. It also does a line in sun hats and bags.

## LE BOUDOIR Map pp64-5 Lingerie & Erotica

☎ 93 302 52 81; [www.leboudoir.net](http://www.leboudoir.net); Carrer de la Canuda 21; M Catalunya Need to spice up the bedroom situation? Take a stroll around this sensual shop, where anything from lacy, racy underwear to exuberant sex toys is available. Transparent handcuffs might be fun, or perhaps a bit of slap and tickle with a whip and mask?

## LLIBRERIA & INFORMACIÓ Map pp64-5 Books

☎ 93 302 64 62; La Rambla dels Estudis 118; M Liceu This is a good first stop for books and pamphlets on all things Catalan, ranging from huge coffee-table tomes on all facets of Catalan art and architecture through to turgid tracts on Catalan law. You can skip the latter, but the former are exquisite. The shop stocks very little in English (and even less in Spanish).

## LOFT Map pp64-5 Fashion

☎ 93 301 24 20; Carrer d'Avinyó 22; M Jaume I Of the numerous hip fashion stores that have converted this once-slummy alley into a threads mecca for young men and women about town, Loft is one of the longest-established and biggest. It carries

labels such as Diesel Style Lab and other cutting-edge names.

## OBACH Map pp64-5 Millinery

☎ 93 318 40 94; Carrer del Call 2; M Liceu Since 1924 this store in the heart of the Call (Jewish quarter) has been purveying all manner of headgear for men. Time seems to have stood still here, and one assumes the bulk of the clientele belongs to a senior generation. Hats off to a remarkably long-lived institution.

## PAPABUBBLE Map pp64-5 Candied Sweets

☎ 93 268 86 25; [www.papabubble.com](http://www.papabubble.com); Carrer Ample 28; M Liceu It feels like a step into another era in this candy store, where they make up pots of rainbow-coloured boiled lollies, just like some of us remember from corner-store days as kids. Watch the sticky sweets being made before your eyes. For all its apparent timelessness, this is a relatively new venture. Started by Australians in Barcelona, this sweet reminiscence has spread, with shops in Amsterdam, New York and Tokyo.

## QUERA Map pp64-5 Books

☎ 93 318 07 43; Carrer de Petritxol 2; M Liceu Crammed into a tiny bookshop is a treasure-trove of travel material, mostly on Catalonia and the Pyrenees. It specialises in maps and guides, including a host of stuff for walking, and has been in business since 1916.

## RAG SHOP Map pp64-5 Fashion

☎ 93 319 78 61; Carrer de la Llibreteria 14; M Jaume I Light dresses, tops and other items, mostly a mix of cotton and modern fibres like elastane, appeal to those seeking a casual, unfussy look. Skunkfunk, a ballsy Basque Country brand that is taking the urban women's *prêt-à-porter* world by storm, leads the way here.

## SALA PARÉS Map pp64-5 Art

☎ 93 318 70 20; [www.salapares.com](http://www.salapares.com); Carrer del Petritxol 5; M Liceu Picasso had works on sale here a century ago in what is one of the city's most venerable and still-dynamic private galleries. In business since 1877, the gallery has

maintained its position as one of the city's leading purveyors of Catalan art, old and contemporary.

### TANUS 13 Map pp64–5 Clothes & Accessories

☎ 93 315 01 55; **Carrer de Jaume I 13**; **M** Jaume I Handmade printed dresses and boldly coloured, handmade leather bags, purses and pouches fill this corner store. Those with an eye for the original, whether stylish uptown ladies or inner-city grunge lovers, will surely find something to catch the eye.

### VILLEGAS CERÀMICA Map pp64–5 Ceramics

☎ 93 317 53 30; **www.villegasceramica.net**; **Carrer Comtal 31**; **M** Urquinaona

For some curious ceramics that have nothing to do with traditional wares, poke your head in here. Arresting items include cat's-head clocks, in which the eyes move back and forth, or pottery statues of stretched human figures.

### XOCOA Map pp64–5 Food

☎ 93 301 11 97; **www.xocoa-bcn.com**; **Carrer del Petritxol 11**; **M** Liceu

Shield your eyes from the ultra-bright rose-and-white décor and prepare yourself for a different kind of chocolate. Carefully arranged inside this den of dental devility are ranks and ranks of original chocolate bars, chocolates stuffed with sweet stuff, gooey pastries and more.

## THE URGE TO RUMMAGE

Lovers of old books, coins, stamps and general bric-a-brac can indulge their habits uninhibited at several markets. They generally get going from 9am and wind down around 8pm. The coin and stamp collectors' market and the old-books peddlers around the **Mercat de Sant Antoni** usually pack up by 2pm.

The Barri Gòtic is enlivened by an **art and crafts market** (Plaça de Sant Josep Oriol; **M** Liceu) on Saturday and Sunday, the antiques **Mercat Gòtic** (Plaça Nova; **M** Liceu or Jaume I) on Thursday, and a **coin and stamp collectors' market** (Plaça Reial; **M** Liceu) on Sunday morning.

Just beyond the western edge of El Raval, the punters at the Modernista **Mercat de Sant Antoni** (Map pp102–3; **M** Sant Antoni) dedicate Sunday morning to old maps, stamps, books and cards.

Once a fortnight, gourmands can poke about the homemade honeys, sweets, cheeses and other edible delights at the **Fira Alimentació** (Plaça del Pi; **M** Liceu) from Friday to Sunday. Ask at the **Oficina d'Informació de Turisme de Barcelona** (p279) for the dates.

Some annual markets are also worth looking out for. In May, stands set up in the **Portal de l'Àngel** (Avinguda del Portal de l'Àngel; **M** Catalunya) for the **Fira del Llibre Antic** (Antique Book Fair). The same spot hosts the **Fira de Terrissa** (Pottery Fair; five days starting around 20 September) and the similar **Fira Ceramistes** (Ceramicists Fair; around 23 December to 5 January).

The **Fira de Santa Llúcia** (**M** Liceu), on and around Avinguda de la Catedral, is held in December. You can buy figurines, including many models of that infamous Catalan Christmas character, the *caganer* (crapper; see p19), to make your own Nativity scene.

## EL RAVAL

The area boasts a handful of art galleries around the Macba, along with a burgeoning secondhand and vintage clothes scene on Carrer de la Riera Baixa. Carrer dels Tallers is one of the city's main music strips.

### CASTELLÓ Map pp76–7 Music

☎ 93 318 20 41; **www.discoscstelllo.es**; **Carrer dels Tallers 3, 7 & 79**; **M** Catalunya

These three stores are part of a large family business that has been going since 1935 and which is said to account for a fifth of the retail record business in Catalonia.

### EL INDIÓ Map pp76–7 Fabrics

☎ 93 317 54 42; **Carrer del Carme 24**; **M** Liceu

Take a giant leap back into the late 19th century. You probably won't be in the market for bolts of cloth while in Barcelona, but admire the Modernista shopfront before simply wandering in for a look around this time-warp store.

### GI JOE Map pp76–7 Fashion

☎ 93 329 96 52; **Carrer de l'Hospital 82**; **M** Liceu

On the corner of Carrer de la Riera Baixa, which is lined with secondhand clothes shops, is this army-surplus warehouse. Get your khakis here, along with urban army fashion T-shirts. Throw in a holster, gas mask or sky-blue UN helmet for a kinkier effect.

### LA PORTORRIQUEÑA Map pp76–7 Coffee

☎ 93 317 34 38; **Carrer d'En Xuclà 25**; **M** Catalunya

Coffee beans from around the world, freshly ground before your eyes, has been the winning formula in this store since 1902. It also offers all sorts of chocolate goodies. The street is good for little old-fashioned food boutiques.

### LEFTIES Map pp76–7 Fashion

☎ 93 317 50 70; **Carrer de Pelai 2**; ☎ 10am–9pm Mon–Sat **M** Universitat

Don't mind being seen in last year's Zara fashions? Lefties (ie leftovers) could be the browsing spot for you, with men's, women's and kids' cast-offs from the previous year at silly prices. You could fill a wardrobe with perfectly good middle-of-the-road threads and your bank manager would be none the wiser.

### TERANYINA Map pp76–7 Textiles

☎ 93 317 94 36; **Carrer del Notari 10**; **M** Catalunya

Artist Teresa Rosa Aguayo runs this textile workshop in the heart of the artsy bit of El Raval. You can join courses at the loom, admire some of the rugs and other works that Teresa has created and, of course, buy them.

## LA RIBERA

The former commercial heart of medieval Barcelona is today still home to a cornucopia of old-style specialist food and drink shops, a veritable feast of aroma and atmosphere. The late 1990s injected a flood of hip little fashion stores.

### ANTICH Map pp84–5 Accessories

☎ 93 310 43 91; **http://lacasaantich.com**; **Carrer del Consolat de Mar 27–31**; **M** Barceloneta

Traditionally this street was lined with purveyors of bags and related travel goods. The Antich clan, in business since 1910, offers a range of travel cases and bags of various known brands. More interesting is their own line of handmade articles, from suitcases to leather tool bags.

### CAFÉ DE LA PRINCESA Map pp84–5 Boutique

☎ 93 268 15 18; **www.cafeprincesa.com**; **Carrer dels Flassaders 21**; **M** Jaume I

In a dark lane named after the blanket-makers that once worked here is this odd combination of cooperative store, art gallery and restaurant (entry to the latter is from Carrer de Sabateret). Its members make many of the oddities on sale, but others are objects imported from such disparate locations as Prague and Colombia. Leather bags, toys and clothes make up just part of the offerings.

### CASA GISPERT Map pp84–5 Food

☎ 93 319 75 35; **www.casagispert.com**; **Carrer dels Sombrerers 23**; **M** Jaume I

Nuts to you at the wood-fronted Casa Gispert, where they've been toasting nuts and selling all manner of dried fruit since 1851. Pots and jars piled high on the shelves contain an unending variety of crunchy tidbits, some roasted, some honeyed, all of them moreish.

### CUSTO BARCELONA Map pp84–5 Fashion

☎ 93 268 78 93; **www.custo-barcelona.com**; **Plaça de les Olles 7**; **M** Jaume I

The psychedelic décor and casual atmosphere lend this avant-garde Barcelona fashion store a youthful edge. Custo presents daring new women's and men's collections each year on the New York catwalks. The dazzling colours and cut of anything from dinner jackets to hotpants are for the uninhibited. They have four other outlets around town.

### EL MAGNÍFICO Map pp84–5 Food

☎ 93 319 60 81; **www.cafeselmagnifico.com**; **Carrer de l'Argenteria 64**; **M** Jaume I

All sorts of coffee has been roasted here since the early 20th century. The variety of coffee (and tea) available is remarkable – and the aromas hit you as you walk in. Across the road, the same people run the exquisite and much newer tea shop, **Sans i Sans** (☎ 93 319 60 81; Carrer de l'Argenteria 59).

### EL REY DE LA MAGIA Map pp84–5 Magic

☎ 93 319 39 20; **www.elreydelamagia.com**, in Catalan & Spanish; **Carrer de la Princesa 11**;

☎ 11am–2pm & 5–8pm Mon–Fri, 10am–2pm Sat; **M** Jaume I

For more than 100 years, the people behind this box of tricks have been keeping locals both astounded and amused.



Should you decide to stay in Barcelona and make a living as a magician, this is the place to buy levitation brooms, glasses of disappearing milk and decks of magic cards.

### GALERIA MAEGHT Map pp84-5 Art

☎ 93 310 42 45; Carrer de Montcada 25; ☎ 10am-2pm & 3-7pm Tue-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat; **M** Jaume I This high-end gallery, housed in one of the fine medieval mansions for which this street is known, specialises in 20th-century masters. It is as enticing for the building as the art.

### LA BOTIFARRERIA Map pp84-5 Food

☎ 93 319 91 23; Carrer de Santa Maria 4; **M** Jaume I

As they say, 'sausages with imagination!' Although this delightful deli sells all sorts of cheeses, hams, fresh hamburger patties, snacks and other goodies, the mainstay is an astounding variety of handcrafted sausages. Not just the pork variety, but stuffed with anything from orange and onion to apple curry!

### OLISOLIVA Map pp84-5 Food

☎ 93 268 14 72; [www.olisoliva.com](http://www.olisoliva.com), in Spanish; Avinguda de Francesc Cambó; **M** Jaume I Inside the **Mercat de Santa Caterina** (p82), this simple, glassed-in store is stacked with olive oils and vinegars from all over Spain. Taste some of the products before deciding. Some of the best olive oils come from southern Spain. The range of vinegars is astounding too.

### OLIVE Map pp84-5 Food

☎ 93 310 58 83; Plaça de les Olles 2; **M** Barceloneta

Wander into this stone-faced, mock-Gothic building and immerse yourself in an array of olive oils, fragrances, essences, vinegars and even juices. It's a delightful spot for self-indulgence.

### OUTLET Map pp84-5 Clothes

☎ 93 268 72 49; Carrer de l'Esparteria 12; **M** Barceloneta

Discounted fashions from the previous year from designers like Hugo Boss, G-Star, Armani Jeans or Viktor & Rolf find their way into this chaotic store, where you can look forward to anything up to half price.

### TOT FORMATGE Map pp84-5 Food

☎ 93 319 53 75; Passeig del Born 13; ☎ 5-8pm Mon, 9am-2pm & 5-8pm Tue-Fri, 10.30am-1.30pm Sat; **M** Jaume I

On entering, the aromas of an international assembly of fine cheeses waft towards you. Little platters are scattered about with samples of a handful of the store's products, which together form a bright display of the best of local and European cheeses.

### VILA VINITECA Map pp84-5 Drink

☎ 93 268 32 27; [www.vilaviniteca.es](http://www.vilaviniteca.es), in Spanish; Carrer dels Agullers 7; ☎ 8.30am-8.30pm Mon-Sat; **M** Jaume I

One of the best wine stores in Barcelona (and Lord knows, there are a few), this place has been searching out the best in local and imported wines since 1932. On a couple of November evenings they organise what has by now become an almost riotous wine-tasting event in Carrer dels Agullers and surrounding lanes, at which cellars from around Spain present their young new wines. At No 9 they have another store devoted to gourmet food products.

## PORT VELL & LA BARCELONETA

Aside from the shopping-mall fun of Maremàgnum, there are precious few outlets for maxing out your cards along the waterfront.

## top picks

### BEST KEPT SECRETS

- **Café de la Princesa** (p157) A Pandora's box of disparate goodies down a hidden medieval lane.
- **Herboristeria del Rei** (p154) Ancient herbs and traditional remedies.
- **La Portorriqueña** (p157) Timeless coffee merchant in El Raval.
- **Sala Parés** (p155) A historic private art gallery.
- **Caelum** (p154) Traditional sweets from Spanish convents.
- **El Ingenio** (p154) Masks and costumes.
- **Norma Comics** (p162) An amazing collection of comics and super-hero models.
- **Papabubble** (p155) Boiled sweetsies, just like in Grandpa's day.

### MAREMÀGNUM Map p93 Shopping Centre

☎ 93 225 81 00; [www.maremagnum.es](http://www.maremagnum.es); Moll d'Espanya; ☎ 10am-10pm; **M** Drassanes Created out of largely abandoned docks, this chirpy shopping centre, with its bars, restaurants and cinemas, is pleasant enough for a stroll virtually in the middle of the old harbour. You'll find outlets for anything from Calvin Klein underwear to Brazilian flip-flops (Havaianas). Football fans will be drawn to the paraphernalia at **FC Barcelona** (☎ 93 225 80 45). The big news is that shops here open on Sundays, pretty much unheard of anywhere else in the city.

## L'EIXAMPLE

Most of the city's classy shopping spreads across the heart of l'Eixample, in particular along Passeig de Gràcia, La Rambla de Catalunya and adjacent streets. All about are dotted a surprising array of speciality stores, anything from gloves to glues.

### ADOLFO DOMÍNGUEZ Map pp108-9 Fashion

☎ 93 487 41 70; [www.adolfo-dominguez.com](http://www.adolfo-dominguez.com); Passeig de Gràcia 32; **M** Passeig de Gràcia

One of the stars of Spanish *prêt-à-porter*, this label produces classic men's and women's garments from quality materials. Anything from regal party gowns to kids' outfits (that might have you thinking of British aristocracy), the broad range generally oozes a conservative air, with elegant cuts that make no concessions to rebellious urban ideals.

### ALTAÏR Map pp108-9 Books

☎ 93 342 71 71; [www.altair.es](http://www.altair.es); Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes 616; ☎ 10am-8.30pm Mon-Sat; **M** Universitat

Enter the world of travel in this extensive bookshop, mecca for guidebooks, maps, travel literature and all sorts of other books likely to induce a severe case of itchy feet. It has a travellers' notice board and, downstairs, a travel agent.

### ANTONIO MIRÓ Map pp108-9 Fashion

☎ 93 487 06 70; [www.antoniomiro.es](http://www.antoniomiro.es), in Spanish; Carrer del Consell de Cent 349; ☎ 10am-8pm Mon-Sat; **M** Passeig de Gràcia

Antonio Miró is one of Barcelona's *haute couture* kings. The entrance to the airy store, with dark hardwood floor, seems more like a hip hotel reception. Miró concentrates

## THE ALMOST 24-HOUR STORE

The El Corte Inglés department store runs a chain of general stores, Opencor, where you can pick up papers, books, snacks, drinks and other life necessities 18 hours a day (8am to 2am), except for 1 January, 1 May, 11 September and 25 December. It had 17 branches around the city at last count. You'll find one at **Ronda de Sant Pere 33** (Map pp108-9) and another at **Carrer Gran de Gràcia 29** (Map p118).

on light, natural fibres to produce smart, unpretentious men's and women's fashion. High-end evening dresses and shimmering, smart suits lead the way. Or you could just settle for an Antonio Miró T-shirt.

### ARMAND BASI Map pp108-9 Fashion

☎ 93 215 14 21; [www.armandbasi.com](http://www.armandbasi.com); Passeig de Gràcia 49; ☎ 10am-8pm Mon-Sat; **M** Passeig de Gràcia

Local design star Basi appeals to a 30s and 40s crowd with a slick line in casual elegance. Suits that are perfect without ties and made to impress at dinner or in the town's top clubs match with stylish evening dresses. More casual shirts, trousers, tops and frocks broaden the range. Leather jackets and footwear complete the picture.

### BAGUÉS Map pp108-9 Jewellery

☎ 93 216 01 73; [www.bagues.com](http://www.bagues.com); Passeig de Gràcia 41; **M** Passeig de Gràcia This jewellery store, in business since the 19th century, is in thematic harmony with its location in the Modernista Casa Amatller. Some of the classic pieces of jewellery to come out of the Bagués clan's workshops have an equally playful, Modernista bent.

### BSB ALFOMBRAS Map pp102-3 Rugs & Carpets

☎ 93 410 74 41; Carrer de París 174; **M** Hospital Clinic

Designer carpets and rugs are strung up like the modern works of art they are. Hand-knotted rugs maintain tradition in production as does the use of fine Tibetan wool and Chinese silk, but designs are contemporary and challenging.

### CAMPER Map pp108-9 Shoes

☎ 93 215 63 90; [www.camper.com](http://www.camper.com); Carrer de València 249; **M** Passeig de Gràcia

What started as a modest Mallorcan family business (the island has a long shoemaking tradition) has over the decades become the Clarks of Spain. Camper shoes, from the eminently sensible to the stylishly fashionable, are known for solid reliability and are sold all over the world.

### CASA DEL LLIBRE Map pp108–9 Books

☎ 902 026407; [www.casadellibro.com](http://www.casadellibro.com), in Spanish; Passeig de Gràcia 62; ☎ 9.30am–9.30pm Mon–Sat;  Passeig de Gràcia

With branches elsewhere in Spain, the 'Home of the Book' is a well-stocked general bookshop with reasonable sections devoted to literature in English, French and other languages. The website is a good place to look for Spanish literature if the shop is a walk too far.

### CUBIÑA Map pp108–9 Design

☎ 93 476 57 21; [www.cubinya.es](http://www.cubinya.es); Carrer de Mallorca 291;  Verdaguer

Even if interior design doesn't ring your bell, a visit to this extensive temple to furniture, lamps and just about any home accessories your heart might desire, is worth it just to see this Domènech i Montaner building. Admire the enormous and whimsical wrought iron decoration at street level before heading inside to marvel at the ceiling, timber work, brick columns and windows. Oh, and don't forget the furniture.

## DEATH BY CHOCOLATE

If Spain has been importing cocoa from its South American colonies since the 16th century, the pastry-makers of Barcelona have been doing it greatest justice. The city's love affair with chocolate is exemplified in the existence of a museum dedicated to the stuff (p89). Traditional purveyors of fine chocolates such as **Escribà** (p186) have long operated alongside *granjas* and other similar outlets for sipping cups of the thick hot stuff (several of which you'll find in the Eating chapter; p166). Since the 1980s, and especially in recent years, they have been joined by a slew of chocolatiers whose creativity seems to know no bounds. Along with **Bubó** (p177), **Cacao Sampaka** (p186) and **Xococo** (p156), chocoholics should search out the following:

**Bocamel** (Map pp84–5; ☎ 93 268 72 44; [www.bocamel.com](http://www.bocamel.com); Carrer del Comerç 8;  Arc de Triomf)

**Chocolat Factory** (Map pp108–9; ☎ 93 215 02 73; [www.chocolatfactory.com](http://www.chocolatfactory.com); Carrer de Provença 233;  Diagonal)

**Enric Rovira** (Map pp122–3; ☎ 93 419 25 47; [www.enricrovira.com](http://www.enricrovira.com); Avinguda de Josep Tarradellas 113;  Entença)

**Oriol Balaguer** (Map pp122–3; ☎ 93 201 18 46; [www.oriolbalaguer.com](http://www.oriolbalaguer.com); Plaça de Sant Gregori Taumaturg 2;  FGC La Bonanova)

**Pastisseria Natcha** (Map pp122–3; ☎ 93 430 10 70; [www.natcha.cat](http://www.natcha.cat); Avinguda de Sarrià 45;  Hospital Clínic)

**Richart** (Map pp122–3; ☎ 93 202 02 40; [www.richart.com](http://www.richart.com); Carrer de Muntaner 463;  FGC La Bonanova)

## EL BULEVARD DELS ANTIQUARIS

Map pp108–9 Antiques

☎ 93 215 44 99; [www.bulevarddelsantiquaris.com](http://www.bulevarddelsantiquaris.com); Passeig de Gràcia 55–57; ☎ 10am–8pm Mon–Sat;  Passeig de Gràcia

More than 70 stores are gathered under one roof (on the floor above the more general Bulevard Rosa arcade) to offer the most varied selection of collector's pieces, ranging from old porcelain dolls through to fine crystal, from Asian antique furniture to old French goods, from African and other ethnic art to jewellery.

## EL CORTE INGLÉS

Map pp108–9 Department Store

☎ 93 306 38 00; [www.elcorteingles.es](http://www.elcorteingles.es), in Spanish; Plaça de Catalunya 14; ☎ 10am–10pm Mon–Sat;  Catalunya


The 'English Court' is Spain's flagship department store, with everything you'd expect, from computers to cushions, high fashion to homewares. The top floor is occupied by a so-so restaurant with fabulous city views. El Corte Inglés has other branches, including at **Avinguda Diagonal 617** (Map pp122–3) and **Avinguda Diagonal 471–473** (Map pp102–3) near Plaça de Francesc Macià.

## ELS ENCANTS VELLS

Map pp102–3 Flea Market

☎ 93 246 30 30; [www.encantsbcn.com](http://www.encantsbcn.com), in Catalan; Plaça de les Glòries Catalanes; ☎ 7am–6.45pm Mon, Wed, Fri & Sat;  Glòries

## HUNTING FOR OLD STUFF

Antique lovers could set aside a Sunday morning for a trip to **Mercantic** (☎ 93 674 49 50; [www.mercantic.com](http://www.mercantic.com); Carrer de Rius i Taulet 120, Sant Cugat del Vallès; ☎ 9.30am–3pm;  FGC lines S1, S2, S5 or S55), a collection of gaily painted timber huts occupied by antique and bric-a-brac dealers selling everything from restored furniture to dusty old telephones. The first Sunday of the month is delivery day, when the stall-holders take delivery of a new wave of old stuff. The permanent market, with some 80 stall-holders, is open during the week too (9.30am to 8pm Tuesday to Saturday). There's an activities and play area for children. A date to watch is the Antiquaris Barcelona antiques fair ([www.antiquarisbcn.com](http://www.antiquarisbcn.com)), usually held around the first week of April.

Also known as the Fira de Bellcaire, the 'Old Charms' flea market is the biggest of its kind in Barcelona. The markets moved here in 1928 from Avinguda Mistral, near Plaça d'Espanya. It's all here, from antique furniture through to secondhand clothes. A lot of it is junk, but occasionally you'll stumble across a *ganga* (bargain).

### FARRUTX Map pp108–9 Shoes

☎ 93 215 06 85; [www.farrutx.es](http://www.farrutx.es); Carrer de Rosselló 218;  Diagonal

Another Mallorcan shoemaker, Farrutx specialises in exclusive upmarket footwear for uptown gals. You might fall for high-heeled summer sandals or elegant winter boots. There are matching bags too, and even a line in T-shirts.

### FLORISTERIA NAVARRO

Map pp108–9 Florist

☎ 93 457 40 99; [www.floresnavarro.com](http://www.floresnavarro.com); Carrer de València 320; ☎ 24hr;  Diagonal

You never know when you might need flowers. What better way to follow up the first night of a new romance than with a bunch of roses? No problem, because this florist never closes!

### GRATACÒS Map pp108–9 Fashion

☎ 93 238 73 53; [www.gratacos.com](http://www.gratacos.com) in Spanish; Passeig de Gràcia 108;  Diagonal

In town for a wedding and left your dress behind? Perhaps you should pop by this luxury women's clothing store, a classic in Barcelona since 1940. Specialists in top-class materials, it produces lavish dresses for the most exclusive of cocktail gatherings.

### JOAN MURRIÀ Map pp108–9 Food

☎ 93 215 57 89; Carrer de Roger de Llúria 85;  Passeig de Gràcia

Ramon Casas designed the century-old

Modernista shopfront advertisements featured at this culinary coven. For a century the gluttonous have trembled here at this altar of speciality food goods from around Catalonia and beyond.

### JORDI LABANDA STORE

Map pp108–9 Clothes

☎ 93 496 14 03; Carrer de Rosselló 232;  Diagonal

Uruguay-born and Barcelona-raised cartoonist Jordi Labanda made a name for himself with his colourful pointed portraits of contemporary 30-somethings in top-flight magazines and newspapers, and murals in the Sandwich & Friends fastish food chain. Now he also does original women's clothes, in which he has toned down the colours but remains playful in design. In all his work there is an element of biting social commentary, so these are thinking-women's clothes!

### LAIE Map pp108–9 Books

☎ 93 318 17 39; [www.laie.es](http://www.laie.es), in Catalan & Spanish; Carrer de Pau Claris 85; ☎ 10am–9pm Mon–Fri, 10.30am–9pm Sat;  Catalunya or Urquinaona

Laie has novels and books on architecture, art and film in English, French, Spanish and Catalan. Better still, it has a great café where you can examine your latest purchases or browse through the newspapers provided for customers in true Mitteleuropean style.

### LOEWE Map pp108–9 Fashion

☎ 93 216 04 00; [www.loewe.es](http://www.loewe.es); Passeig de Gràcia 35; ☎ 10am–8.30pm Mon–Sat;  Passeig de Gràcia

Loewe is one of Spain's leading and oldest fashion stores, founded in 1846. It specialises in luxury leather (shoes, accessories and travel bags), and also has lines in perfume, sunglasses, cufflinks, silk scarves and jewellery. This branch opened in 1943 in the Modernista Casa Lleó Morera.

**LUNIC** Map pp108–9 Fashion & Accessories

☎ 93 457 52 75; Carrer de València 341;  
 📍 Verdaguer

The eye is unfailingly attracted to this corner shop, with its lipstick-red walls and sanded white furniture. All about hangs an eclectic collection of handbags, from glaring red leather to more modest hues, with broad appeal. Daring ladies' hats offer further inspiration. Those in search of light summer dresses, in a seemingly limitless variety of colours but mostly straightforward in style, have come to the right place.

**MANGO** Map pp108–9 Fashion & Accessories

☎ 93 215 75 30; www.mango.com; Passeig de Gràcia 65; ☎ 10am–9pm Mon–Sat;  
 📍 Passeig de Gràcia

At home in the basement of a modest Modernista town house (check out the white, cast-iron columns inside) and a dozen other locations around town, Mango offers a locally produced, affordable and mostly casual fashion for women and, since 2008, men (with the new HE collection). Smart but easy evening wear, skirts, jackets, high heels and leather bags for her contrast with collarless shirts, jeans, khaki and T-shirts for him.

**MARC 3** Map pp108–9 Posters & Paintings

☎ 93 318 19 53; Rambla de Catalunya 12;  
 ☎ 10am–8pm Mon–Sat; 📍 Catalunya

A yawning cavern of posters, prints and original paintings awaits those who need to dress their walls. You can go for the tried and true Robert Doisneau kissing scenes or some wonderfully obscure reproduction adverts.

**MAS BACUS** Map pp108–9 Drink

☎ 93 453 43 58; Carrer d'Enric Granados 68;  
 📍 FGC Provença

Not only a fine-wine store, this place has the added attraction of housing a gourmet snack stop. Call in to see what they proffer for tasting out back before contemplating a wine purchase. Or just taste some wines by the glass (around €2.50). Tastings are possible from 11am to 10.30pm Tuesday to Saturday.

**NORMA COMICS** Map pp102–3 Comics

☎ 93 244 84 23; www.normacomics.com, in Spanish; Passeig de Sant Joan 7–9; 📍 Arc de Triomf

**DANONE'S BARCELONA ROOTS**

The yoghurt at the heart of the French foodstuffs multinational, Danone, was first made and sold in Barcelona in 1919, when Isaac Carasso started a company he called Danone (after Danon, the diminutive of his son Daniel's name). Daniel opened a Paris branch 10 years later, which in 1967 would join French cheese company to create Gervais-Danone. Six years later, a glass and packaging group, BSN, swallowed up Gervais-Danone and eventually shed its glass business to put food products at the centre of its business. By now a thoroughly French multinational, few remember that its popular tub of yoghurt first saw the light of day in post-WWI Barcelona.

With a huge range of comics, Spanish and international, this is Spain's biggest dealer – everything from Tintin to some of the weirdest sci-fi and sex comics can be found here. Also on show are armies of model super heroes and other characters produced by fevered imaginations. Kids from nine to 99 can be seen snapping up items to add to their collections.

**PURIFICACIÓN GARCÍA**

Map pp108–9 Fashion

☎ 93 487 72 92; www.purificaciongarcia.es, in Spanish; Passeig de Gràcia 21; ☎ 10am–8.30pm Mon–Sat; 📍 Passeig de Gràcia

Ms García has an enormous spread of offerings over two floors in this generous corner store. Not only is the building extraordinary but so too are her collections, if only because of their breadth. You'll find women's cardigans and men's ties, as well as light summer dresses and jeans. Evening wear, daywear, and accessories for both men and women of most ages and tastes (including a huge range of leather handbags of all sizes and colours) abound.

**REGIA** Map pp108–9 Perfume

☎ 93 216 01 21; www.regia.es in Catalan & Spanish; Passeig de Gràcia 39; ☎ 9.30am–8.30pm Mon–Fri, 10.30am–8.30pm Sat; 📍 Passeig de Gràcia  
 Reputed to be one of the best perfume stores in the city and in business since 1928, Regia stocks all the name brands and also has a private [perfume museum](#) (p112) out the back. Aside from the range of perfumes, Regia sells all sorts of creams, lotions and colognes. It also has its own line of bath products.

**VINÇON** Map pp108–9 Design

☎ 93 215 60 50; www.vincon.com; Passeig de Gràcia 96; ☎ 10am–8.30pm Mon–Sat; 📍 Diagonal  
 An icon of the Barcelona design scene, Vinçon has the slickest furniture and household goods (particularly lighting), local and imported. Not surprising really, since the building, raised in 1899, belonged to the Modernista artist Ramon Casas. Head upstairs to the furniture area – from the windows and terrace you get close side views of La Pedrera.

**XAMPANY** Map pp108–9 Drink

☎ 610 845011; Carrer de València 200; ☎ 4.30–10pm Mon–Fri, 10am–2pm Sat; 📍 Passeig de Gràcia  
 Since 1981, this 'Cathedral of Cava' has been distributing bubbly to the local citizenry. It's a veritable Aladdin's cave of cava, with bottles of the stuff crammed high and into every possible chaotic corner of this dimly lit locale.

**GRÀCIA & PARK GÜELL**

A wander along the narrow lanes of Gràcia turns up all sorts of surprises, mostly tiny enterprises producing anything from printed T-shirts to handmade table lamps. They tend to come and go, so you never quite know what you might turn up.

**ÉRASE UNA VEZ** Map p118 Fashion

☎ 93 217 29 77; Carrer de Goya 7; 📍 Fontana  
 Once Upon a Time is the name of this fanciful boutique that brings out the princess in you (and not a pumpkin in sight). They offer women's clothes, almost exclusively evening wear, to suit most tastes and occasions. Local designers such as Llamazares y de Delgado and Zazo & Brull are behind these sometimes sumptuous creations.

**RED MARKET** Map p118 Fashion

☎ 93 218 63 33; Carrer de Verdi 20; 📍 Fontana  
 Several funky fashion boutiques dot this street, best known to locals for the queues outside the art-house cinema. Here you run into bright, uninhibited urban wear and accessories. Red dominates the décor more than the threads, and various brands of various things, from shoes to tops, are on offer.

**LA ZONA ALTA**

Although many of Barcelona's better-off folks descend from the 'high zone' to L'Eixample to shop, there are still plenty of trendy little boutiques scattered around La Zona Alta. Passeig de la Bonanova, for example, has quite a liberal spread. It's perhaps a little far off to be of too much interest to tourists but nevertheless can make for an interesting shopping experience.

**LA BOTIGA DEL BARÇA**

Map pp122–3 Souvenirs

☎ 93 492 31 11; http://shop.fcbarcelona.com; Carrer de Aristides Maillol s/n; ☎ 10am–9pm Mon–Sat; 📍 Collblanc

For some, football is the meaning of life. If you fall into that category, your idea of shopping heaven may well be this store at the football museum next to Camp Nou stadium. Here you will find shirts, key rings, footballs – pretty much anything you can think of, all featuring the famous red and blue colours. It has branches all over town, including at [Maremàgnum](#) (p159) and [Carrer de Jaume I 18](#) (Map pp64–5).

**LA VINIA** Map pp122–3 Drink

☎ 93 363 44 45; www.lavinia.es, in Spanish; Avinguda Diagonal 605; ☎ 10am–9pm Mon–Sat; 📍 Maria Cristina

This huge, modern wine store with designer pretensions takes anything but a traditional approach to its products. In classy supermarket style, La Vinia (a shop that originated in Madrid) presents a seemingly endless selection of wine both from around Spain and the rest of the world.

**MONTJUÏC, SANTS & POBLE SEC**

Poble Sec and Sants are busy, mostly working-class districts with a smattering of shops, but few that stand out.

**ELEPHANT** Map pp140–1 Books

☎ 93 443 05 94; www.ifant.biz; Carrer de la Creu dels Molers 12; ☎ 10am–8pm; 📍 Poble Sec  
 This bright little English bookshop is a bit off the main tourist track, but is a helpful



## AN OUTLET OUTING

For the ultimate discount fashion overdose, head out of town for some outlet shopping at [La Roca Village](#) (off [Map pp102–3](#); ☎ 93 842 39 00; [www.larocavillage.com](#); La Roca del Vallès; 🕒 11am–8.30pm Mon–Fri, 10am–10pm Sat). Here, a village has been given over to consumer madness. At a long line of Spanish and international fashion boutiques you'll find clothes, shoes, accessories and designer homewares at (they claim) up to 60% off normal retail prices. To get here, follow the AP-7 tollway north from Barcelona, take exit 12 (marked Cardedeu) and follow the signs for La Roca. The [Sagalés bus company](#) (☎ 902 130014; [www.sagales.com](#)) organises shuttles from Monday to Friday (at 9am, noon and 4pm; €2.70 each way; 50 minutes) from outside the Fabra i Puig Metro station (the service doesn't run in August). Alternatively, take a *rodalies* train to Granollers and pick up the shuttle (Monday to Friday only) or taxi there.

haven of books in Her Majesty's tongue. They range from fiction to children's, with a smattering of reference works and a

healthy secondhand section. Indeed, the business in pre-loved tomes has largely overtaken the line in new books.

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## EATING

### top picks

- Bodega de Sepúlveda (p184)
- Can Cortada (p189)
- Comerç 24 (p176)
- Xiringuito d'Escribà (p180)
- Restaurant Me (p182)
- Bilbao (p186)
- Hisop (p189)
- Igueldo (p182)
- Rosal 34 (p190)
- Ca L'Isidre (p174)

What's your recommendation? [www.lonelyplanet.com/barcelona](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/barcelona)

You could come to Barcelona for the food alone. The options seem limitless, from a rusting grill in a centuries-old farmhouse in the outer suburbs to great pots of fish stew near the waterfront. Barcelona is one of the best places in the country to sniff out what the food writers have predictably dubbed *nueva cocina española*.

For some years now, those lovers of fine dining north of the Pyrenees, the French, have been singing the culinary praises of Barcelona and wider Catalonia. Catalonia has a rich tradition of fine food, and its cuisine, alongside that of the Basque Country to the west, is considered to be Spain's finest. As well as the traditional wide variety of seafood, a whole new culture of inventive gourmet dining has mushroomed in Barcelona since the 1990s, catapulting the city into the foodie limelight. Local chefs, led by the inimitable Ferran Adrià and his contemporaries, Sergi Arola and Carles Abellán, have become international cooking icons, raising the status of their kitchens to that of artistic laboratories.

The innards of Ciutat Vella, from El Raval across the Barri Gòtic to La Ribera (especially in the humming El Born area), teem with places offering everything, from the classics of Spanish and Catalan cuisine complete with atmospheric tiled walls and creaking timber-beam roofs, to the latest in molecular inventions. For a shoal of seafood possibilities, explore La Barceloneta.

In l'Eixample, the variety of menus is unlimited. Forget the barnlike tapas joints along Passeig de Gràcia and head inland, southwest to the area bordered by Carrer d'Aribau. Although quieter, you'll find a handful of options in the streets immediately northeast of Passeig de Gràcia too.

There is no shortage of high-end offerings along and around the west end of Avinguda Diagonal, which cater to the business market and the city's beautiful people. Here, and scattered across La Zona Alta, are some of the most exclusive A-list joints in town.

And what is a great meal without fine wine to accompany it? Aside from being Spain's main producer of bubbly, Catalonia is rich in wine districts, which produce everything from the dark and heavy reds of El Priorat to light whites from the Penedès. Catalonia's vineyards are among the nation's best and most varied.

Food terminology throughout this book is given in Catalan/Spanish (Castilian) or Catalan alone, except in the few cases where the Spanish term is used in both languages. Rather than descend into the murky depths of linguistic polemics, the idea is to reflect what you are most likely to see and hear in the city's restaurants.

## HISTORY

The Romans didn't just bring straight roads, a large temple and a functional sewerage system to the little town of Barcino. They also brought with them their culinary habits, which included such fundamentals as olives and grapes. We can perhaps be grateful that another Roman favourite, *garum* (a kind of tart fish paste that could survive long sea voyages), did not survive the demise of the empire.

Catalan cooking is one of several regional Spanish cuisines, all of which have been influenced to some extent by common factors. One particular spin comes from the country's long history of Muslim occupation, reflected in the use of spices such as saffron and cumin and, in desserts, the predominance of honeyed sweets, almonds and fruit. Other major sources of culinary inspiration were imports brought back from South America, whence came everyday staples such as potatoes, tomatoes, and of course chocolate.

At the heart of Catalan cooking is a diversity of products and traditions. Some dishes are referred to as *mar i muntanya* (surf and turf; a mix of seafood and meats), a term which perhaps best sums up the situation. Barcelona has always been enamoured of edible marine inhabitants (Roman annals suggest big, juicy local oysters were once a common item on ancient menus), while the Catalan hinterland, especially the Pyrenees, has long been the hearth of a much chunkier, heartier cooking tradition. From wintry mountain stews to an array of sausages and a general fondness for charcuterie and venison, the Catalan countryside contributes much to

the Spanish dinner table. To these basic ingredients the Catalans add a rich array of sauces, betraying a strong French influence on their culinary habits.

Furthermore, Barcelona has long attracted migrants, at first from the rest of Spain and, since the 1990s, from all over the world. Thus, the city is jammed with Galician seafood restaurants, Basque tapas bars and, since the mid-1990s, foreign cuisines have landed – big time. While cheap and cheerful Chinese establishments have always been here, until the early 1990s, you could count Japanese, Thai and Indian restaurants on the fingers of one hand. All this has changed. Suddenly *pizzeria*, sushi restaurants, tandoori temptations, Thai, Korean and kebabs are everywhere. The number of non-Spanish restaurants in Barcelona has more than quadrupled since the start of the 21st century.

You name it, Barcelona's got it. It might all seem old hat to veteran foodies arriving from London, Paris, New York or Sydney, but here in Spain the new ethnic eateries are a remarkable addition to what was already an exceptional local scene. And however well-travelled the international palate, surprises are always on hand through local dishes and the ebullient atmosphere of timeless eateries. ¡Buen provecho!

## ETIQUETTE

You may not arrive in Barcelona with jet lag but, due to the rather different Spanish eating habits, your tummy will think it has abandoned all known time zones.

*Esmorzar/desayuno* (breakfast) is generally a no-nonsense affair eaten at a bar on the way to work. A *café amb llet/café con leche* (coffee with milk) with a *pasta* (pastry), such as a cream-filled *canya* or croissant, is the typical breakfast. If you can, try an *ensaimada*, a Mallorcan import. This whirl-shaped pastry has the consistency of a croissant and is dusted with icing sugar. It can be a trifle messy to eat, but it's worth it! If you prefer a savoury start, you could go for the oddly named *bikini*, nothing more than a classic toasted ham and cheese sandwich. A *torrada/tostada* is simply buttered toast.

*Dinar/comida* (or *almuerzo*; lunchtime), between 2pm and 4pm, is generally the main meal of the day, although modern work and living habits are changing this for some people. Many workers opt for the cheap and cheerful, set-price *menú del día* at lunch, while some restaurants offer more elaborate versions both at lunch and dinner time. (See [p172](#) for more information.) A simpler version is the *plat combinat/plato combinado* (combined dish) – basically a meat-and-three-veg dish that will hardly excite taste buds, but will have little impact on your budget, meaning that you can eat solidly and economically at lunch and then splash out at dinner!

Barcelonins generally don't even start thinking about *sopar/cena* (dinner) much before 9pm. A full meal can comprise an *entrant/entrante* (starter), *plat/plato principal* (main course) and *postre* (dessert). In some places the first two are referred to as the *primer plat/primer plato* (first course) and *segon plat/segundo plato* (second course). You will generally be asked what you would like *de primer* (for your first course) and then *de segon* (for your second course). You can skip the starter without causing offence.

Instead of heading for a sit-down meal, some locals prefer to *tapear* or *ir de tapeo* (go on a tapas crawl, also known as *picar* or *pica-pica*). This is the delightful business of standing around in bars and choosing from a range of tasty little tidbits. You can stay in one place or move from one to another, and you basically keep munching and drinking until you've had enough.

Generally diners order water and a bottle of wine – separate glasses for each are provided (in Spain the larger glass is generally for the water). In midsummer (mostly at lunchtime), you might also ask for some Casera (lemonade) to mix with your heavy red wine and make *tinto de verano* (summer red).

In many simpler restaurants you will keep the same knife and fork throughout the meal. Once your order is taken and the first course (which could range from a simple *amanida/ensalada rusa* – cold vegetable salad thick with potatoes and mayonnaise – to an elaborate seafood item) is in place, you may find the

### PYJAMA PARTY

If a waiter proposes '*pijama*', it is not an invitation to head home for bed and jammies. It is rather a suggestion to try one of the country's most lurid desserts. It consists of tinned peach (and maybe pineapple) slices, a clump of flan, two balls of ice cream (say strawberry and vanilla) and covered in whipped cream with chocolate topping! After that you may well want to have a lie down.



level of service increases disconcertingly. This especially becomes the case as you reach the end of any given course. Hovering waiters swoop like eagles to swipe your unfinished dish or lift your glass of wine, still tinged with that last sip you wanted to savour. Simply utter *'Encara no he terminat' / 'Todavía no he terminado'* ('I haven't finished yet') – you'll be flashed a cheerful smile and your waiter will leave you to finish in peace.

Spain is a smokers' paradise and restaurants seem to be a favourite place for this activity. Not only do Spaniards smoke with satisfaction at the conclusion of a filling meal, many smoke between courses, regardless of whether fellow diners have finished or not. A 2006 law provided some relief by requiring all establishments bigger than 100 sq metres to become nonsmoking (with the option of setting up costly, separately ventilated smokers' areas). Smaller places were given the choice of becoming smoking or nonsmoking. No prizes for guessing which most of them went for.

Don't jump out of your seat if people pass your table and address you with a hearty *'bon profit! / ¡buen provecho!*' They're just saying 'enjoy your meal!'

## SPECIALITIES

The basics are simple enough: bread and olive oil. And lots of garlic. No Catalan would eat a meal without bread, and olive oil seems to make its way into just about every dish. Catalans find it hard to understand why other people put butter on bread when *pa amb tomàquet / pan con tomate* (bread sliced then rubbed with tomato, olive oil, garlic and salt) is so much tastier! There are many local brands of olive oil, but one of the best is Borges, which has been produced in Tàrraga, in Lleida province, since 1896. Spices, on the other hand, are generally noticeable by their absence. If you're told something is *picante* (spicy, hot) you can generally be sure it is little more than mild.

A typical *carta* (menu) begins with starters such as *amanides/ensaladas* (salads), *sopes/sopas* (soups) and *entremeses* (hors d'oeuvres). The latter can range from a mound of potato salad with olives, asparagus and anchovies to an array of cold meats, slices of cheese and olives. The more upmarket the restaurant, the more imaginative the offerings.

The basic ingredients of later courses can be summarised under the general headings of *pollastre/pollo* (chicken), *carn/carne* (meat), *mariscos* (seafood), *peix/pescado* (fish) and *arròs/arroz* (rice). Meat may be subdivided into *porc/cerdo* (pork), *vedella/ternera* (beef) and *anyell/cordero* (lamb). If you want a *guarnici/guarnición* (side order), you may have to order it separately. This may be the only way to get a decent serve of *verdures/verduras* (vegetables), which for many locals seem to be anathema.

Often much more fun than a full sit-down meal is snacking on bite-sized goodies known as tapas. A *tapa* is a tiny serving; if you particularly like something you can have a *media ración* or even a full *ración*. Two or three of the latter, depending on what they are, can easily constitute a full meal.

The origin of the *tapa* appears to lie in the old habit of serving drinks with a lid (*tapa*) on the glass, perhaps to keep out pesky bugs. The *tapa* might have been a piece of bread and at some point a couple of morsels on the *tapa* became par for the course – usually salty items bound to work up a greater thirst. In some bars you will still get a few olives or other free snacks with your beer, but since tapas were always more a southern Spanish thing, it is not overly common – in Barcelona, if you want something, you pay for it.

Since the mid-1990s the number of Basque tapas bars has increased exponentially. They generally work like this: you order drinks (try the slightly fizzy white wine, *txacolí*) and ask for a plate. Many of the tapas are *montaditos* (a sort of canapé), which could range from a creamy Roquefort cheese and walnut combination to a chunk of spicy sausage. They all come with toothpicks. These facilitate their consumption, but serve another important purpose too: when you're ready to leave, the toothpicks are counted up and the bill presented.

If you opt for *tapes/tapas*, it is handy to identify some of the common items: *boquerons/boquerones* (white anchovies in vinegar – delicious and tangy); *mandonguilles/albóndigas* (meatballs); *pebrots/pimientos de Padrón* (little green peppers from Galicia – some of which are hot); *patates braves/patatas bravas* (potato chunks bathed in a slightly spicy tomato sauce, sometimes mixed with mayonnaise); *gambes/gambas* (prawns, either done *al all/al ajillo*, with garlic, or *a la plantxa/plancha*, grilled); *chipirons/chipirones* (baby squid); and *calamars/calamares a la Romana* (deep-fried calamari rings).

## CATALAN FAVOURITES

Here are some typical Catalan dishes. For a basic food glossary, see the Language chapter (p284).

### Starters

**Amanida catalana** (Catalan salad) Almost any mix of lettuce, olives, tomatoes, hard-boiled eggs, onions, chichory, celery, green peppers and garlic, with tuna (almost always canned), ham or sausage, and either mayonnaise or an oil and vinegar dressing.

**Calçots amb romesco** *Calçots* are a type of long spring onion, delicious as a starter with *romesco* sauce. They are only in season in late winter/early spring, when Catalans get together for a *calçotada*, the local version of a BBQ. The *calçots* are the amusing part of the event, as the black ash in which they are grilled inevitably winds up on hands and, when people are feeling naughty, perhaps in their neighbour's face! This is usually followed by an enormous meal with countless meat and sausage courses.

**Escalivada** Red peppers and aubergines (sometimes onions and tomatoes too), grilled, cooled, peeled, sliced and served with an olive oil, salt and garlic dressing.

**Esqueixada** Salad of *bacallà/bacalao* (shredded salted cod) with tomatoes, red peppers, onions, white beans, olives, olive oil and vinegar.

### Main Courses

**Arròs a la cassola/arroz a la catalana** Catalan paella, cooked in an earthenware pot, without saffron.

**Arròs negre** Rice cooked in black cuttlefish ink.

**Bacallà a la llauna** Salted cod baked in tomato, garlic, parsley, paprika and wine.

**Botifarra amb mongetes** Pork sausage with fried white beans.

**Cargols** Snails, almost a religion to some, often stewed with *canill/conejo* (rabbit) and chilli.

**Escudella** A meat, sausage and vegetable stew, the sauce of which is mixed with noodles or rice and served as a soup. The rest is served as a main course and is known as *carn d'olla*. It's generally available in winter only.

**Fideuà** Similar to paella, but using vermicelli noodles as the base, it is usually served with tomato and meat and/or sausage or fish. There is also a cuttlefish ink version. You should receive a little side dish of *allioli* (pounded garlic with olive oil, often with egg yolk added) to mix in as you wish – if you don't, ask for it.

**Fricandó** A pork and vegetable stew.

**Sarsuela/zarzuela** Mixed seafood cooked in *sofregit* (fried onion, tomato and garlic sauce) with seasonings.

**Suquet de peix** A kind of fish and potato hotpot – there are all sorts of variations on this theme, depending on what type of seafood you toss in.

**Truita de botifarra** Sausage omelette, a Catalan version of the famous Spanish tortilla.

### Desserts

**Crema catalana** A cream custard with a crisp, burnt-sugar coating.

**Mel i mató** Honey and fresh cream cheese – simple but delicious.

**Muscat** A serving of dried fruits and nuts, sometimes mixed with ice cream or a sweetish cream cheese and served with a glass of sweet muscatel.

The essence of Catalan food lies in its sauces for meat and fish. These sauces are so ubiquitous in more traditional eateries that they may not be mentioned on menus. There are five main types: *sofregit* (fried onion, tomato and garlic); *samfaina* or *chanfaina* (*sofregit* plus red pepper and aubergine or courgette); *picada* (based on ground almonds, usually with garlic, parsley, pine nuts or hazelnuts, and sometimes breadcrumb crumbs); *allioli* (pounded garlic with olive oil, often with egg yolk added to make more of a mayonnaise); and *romesco* (an almond, red pepper, tomato, olive oil, garlic and vinegar sauce, also used as a salad dressing).

The Catalan version of the pizza is the *coca*, often made in the shape of a long, broad tongue. There are many variations on this theme, savoury and sweet. The former can come with tomato, onion, pepper and sometimes sardines. The sweet version, often almond-based, is more common and is a standard item at many a *fiesta* (festival) such as Dia de Sant Joan

in June (see p18). Catalans also like pasta, and *canelons* (similar to Italian cannelloni) is a common dish.

*Bolets* (wild mushrooms) are a Catalan passion – people disappear into the forests in autumn to pick them. There are many, many types of *bolets*; the large succulent *rovellons* are a favourite. *Trompetas de la muerte* (trumpets of death) are a veritable delicacy and generally available during summer and autumn. A trip to the Boqueria market in central Barcelona around October will reveal even more varieties.

The main centres of cheese production in Catalonia are La Seu d'Urgell, the Cerdanya district and the Pallars area in the northwest. Although some traditional cheeses are becoming less common, you can still come across things like *formatge de tupi* (goat's cheese soaked in olive oil) in produce markets and specialist cheese shops.

You will also find all sorts of sausages, most using pork as a base. Some generic names include *botifarra*, *fuet* (a thin, whip-like dried pork sausage) and *llonganissa*. The names often seem to apply to very different sausages, depending on where you buy them. Some are spicier than others.

Of course, fish and seafood are major components of the region's cuisine. Only 15% of Catalonia's needs are fished in Catalan waters: much of what ends up on Catalan tables comes from the Bay of Biscay, France, the UK and as far off as South Africa (cod in particular in the last case). In 1996 only about 15% of all produce on sale at Barcelona's main wholesale market (Mercabarna) was imported; in 2007, more than half of the fish came from abroad.

Apart from more standard approaches such as serving up steamed, baked or fried fish, the Catalans like to mix it up a little, by way of fish soups and stews. *Suquet*, which combines several types of fish with potatoes, is the best known, while *sarsuela* is richer in its variety of fish ingredients. Other themed stews often go by the name of *caldereta*, where one item (usually lobster) is the star ingredient.

Dessert is a mixed bag. Many of the better restaurants go to great lengths to tempt you into enormous sins of gluttony. At simpler eateries, especially at lunch, dessert might simply be a choice of fruit, *flan* (crème caramel) or *gelat/helado* (ice cream). If you opt for ice cream, don't be surprised to be shown a list of manufactured goodies similar to what you'd grab at the beach.

## WHERE TO EAT

Many *tavernes/tabernas*, *cervecerías/cervezerías* (beer bars) and *cellers/bodegas* (wine cellars) offer some form of solid sustenance. This can range from *entrepans/bocadillos* (filled rolls) or *flautas* (a slimmer version), *tapas* and *raciones* to full meals served in *menjadores/comedores* (sit-down restaurants) out the back. For a full meal, you will most frequently end up in a *restaurant/restaurante*. Other establishments you may come across include a *marisquería*, which specialises in seafood, or a *mesón* (big table), which might (but not necessarily) indicate a more modest eatery.

## VEGETARIANS & VEGANS

Vegetarians, and especially vegans, can have a hard time in Spain, but in Barcelona a growing battery of vegetarian restaurants offers welcome relief. Be careful when ordering salads (such as the *amanida catalana*), which may contain popular 'vegetables' such as ham or tuna.

## COOKING COURSES

If you find you like Barcelona's food so much you want to cook some yourself, there are several cooking courses available. For details, see p272.

## BEVERAGES

For an introduction to local wines and other alcoholic drinks, see the Drinking & Nightlife chapter (p194).

## MUNCHING IN MUSEUMS

Several museums and other sights house great restaurants and cafés. Keep in mind the following. The most attractive museum snack stop in the Barri Gòtic is the Café d'Estiu (Map pp64–5; ☎ 10am–10pm Apr–Sep) in the leafy courtyard of the Museu Frederic Marès (p68). In the medieval courtyard of the future Centre de Disseny (p83) sits the charming Tèxtil Cafè (Map pp84–5; ☎ 93 268 25 98; ☎ 10am–midnight Tue–Sun), where you can enjoy light meals (such as vegetarian couscous and salads), cake and coffee in between visits to the surrounding museums.

At the Museu Marítim (p78), a fine *café-restaurant* (☎ 93 317 52 56; ☎ 10am–8pm, restaurant lunch Mon & Tue, lunch & dinner Wed–Sat) is housed beneath the vaults of the shipyards. The restaurant sprawls into the gardens outside. Nearby, the Centre d'Art Santa Mònica (p61) has a *café-restaurant* with a pleasant, 1st-floor terrace.

The Museu d'Història de Catalunya (p94) offers a great rooftop terrace *café* and restaurant, La Miranda del Museu (Map pp93; ☎ 93 225 50 07; ☎ 10am–7pm Tue & Thu–Sat, 10am–8pm Wed, 10am–2.30pm Sun & holidays, restaurant Tue–Sun).

On Montjuïc you have a couple of options: the *café* in the Fundació Joan Miró (p143), and Oleum (Map pp140–1; ☎ lunch Tue–Sun), a restaurant with good views in the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya (p139).

## Coffee, Tea & Hot Chocolate

The coffee in Spain is strong and slightly bitter. A *café amb llet/café con leche* (generally drunk at breakfast only) is about half coffee, half hot milk. Ask for *grande* or *doble* if you want a large cup, *en got/vaso* if you want a smaller shot in a glass, or a *sombra* if you want lots of milk. A *café sol/café solo* (usually abbreviated to just *un solo*) is a short black or espresso; *un (café) tallat/(café) cortado* is a short black with a little milk (more or less the same as a *macchiato* in Italy). For iced coffee, ask for *café amb gel/café con hielo* – you'll get a glass of ice and a hot cup of coffee, to be poured over the ice. If you want to skip the caffeine, ask for a *café descafeïnat/café descafeïnado* (decaf) – most people ask for it *de maquina* (from the coffee machine) because *de sobre* (the sachet stuff) is nothing special. If you want your cuppa supercharged, for example with a shot of Baileys (very popular), ask for a *cigaló/carajillo de Baileys* (or whatever your heart desires).

Barcelonins prefer coffee, but you can also get many different styles of *té* (tea) and *infusiones* (herbal teas such as camomile). Locals tend to drink tea black. If you want milk, ask for it to come a *part/a parte* (separately) to avoid ending up with a cup of tea-flavoured watery milk.

A cup of *xocolata calenta/chocolate caliente* (hot chocolate) is an invitation for sticky fingers – it is generally a thick, dark, sweet tooth's dream and could easily be classed as a food. A local version, topped with thick cream, is known as a *suís*.

## Fruit & Soft Drinks

*Suc de taronja/zumo de naranja* (orange juice) is the main freshly squeezed juice available, often served with sugar. Ask for *natural*, otherwise you may get a puny bottle of runny concentrate. Unfortunately, *natural* also means room temperature in these parts, so if you are proffered a bottle when asking for *natural* you'll need to explain that you want it *espremut/exprimido* (squeezed).

*Refrescos* (cool drinks) include the usual brands of soft drinks, local brands such as Kas and, in summer, *granissat/granizado* (iced fruit crush). A *batut/batido* is a flavoured milk drink.

*Orxata/horchata* is a Valencian drink of Islamic origin. Made from the juice of *chufa* (tiger nuts), sugar and water, it is sweet and tastes like soy milk with a hint of cinnamon. You'll come across it both fresh and bottled, but this is a drink that should be consumed freshly made. A naughtier version is a *cubanito*, made by adding a fat dollop of chocolate ice cream.

## PRACTICALITIES

### Opening Hours

Most restaurants and eateries open from 1pm to 4pm and from 8pm to midnight. Bars and cafés that offer *tapas* generally adhere to similar hours as far as food goes, although you can often purchase snacks from the bar outside these times. A few places open through the day, typically from 1pm to 1.30am. Restaurants listed in this chapter are open for lunch and dinner unless stated otherwise. No specific times are given unless they vary considerably from the norm.

# top picks

## TAPAS

- Bar Celta (p174)
- Cal Pep (p176)
- Inopia (p184)
- Tapaç 24 (p183)
- Taktika Berri (p181)
- Vaso de Oro (p179)

and meat grilled on oak, such as the *bouillabaisse con cigalitas de playa* (little sea-water crayfish).

## CAFÈ DE L'ACADÈMIA

Map pp64–5

Catalan €€

☎ 93 319 82 53; Carrer de Lledó 1; meal €30-35;

☒ Mon-Fri; ☒ Jaume I; ☒

This café offers a mix of traditional dishes with the occasional creative twist. At lunchtime, local Ajuntament (town hall) office workers pounce on the *menú del día* (for around €13.50). In the evening it is rather more romantic, as soft lighting emphasises the intimacy of the timber ceiling and wooden décor. Offerings range from *chuletón* (huge T-bone steak) for two to *guatlla farcida de foie d'ànec i botifarra amb salsa de ceps* (quail stuffed with duck foie and sausage with a mushroom sauce). Take lunch outside in the shadow of the Gothic Església de Sants Just i Pastor.

## LOS CARACOLES Map pp64–5 Spanish €€

☎ 93 302 31 85; Carrer dels Escudellers 14; meal

€30-35; ☒ daily; ☒ Drassanes; ☒

Run by the fifth generation of the Bofarull family, 'The Snails' started life as a tavern in 1835 and is one of Barcelona's best-known, if somewhat touristy, restaurants. Several interlocking rooms (consider asking for the small medieval-looking banquet room), with centuries of history seemingly greased into the tables and garlic-clad walls, may well distract you from the rotisserie chickens (no doubt you'll see them rotating on your way in) and snails that are the house specialities. Locals still dine here and the ambience alone makes it worth dropping by, if only for a tipple at the bar.

## BARRI GÒTIC & LA RAMBLA

First things first. Skip the strip. La Rambla is fine for people-watching but no great shakes for the palate. Instead venture off into the streets that wind into the Barri Gòtic and your tum will be eternally grateful. Inside the medieval labyrinth, choices abound. If you had to pinpoint any one area it would be the half of the *barri* (neighbourhood) between Plaça de Sant Jaume and the waterfront, especially towards Via Laietana. On and around Carrer de la Mercè a huddle of old-time tapas bars survives, down-dirty and simple, as if caught in a time warp in postwar Spain. Some are simply dirty; others are wonderful, immutable finds. All are laden with dollops of atmosphere.

### PLA Map pp64–5

Fusion €€

☎ 93 412 65 52; www.pla-repla.com; Carrer de

Bellafla 5; meal €45-50; ☒ dinner; ☒ Liceu; ☒

You could be forgiven for thinking you have waltzed into a dark designer cocktail bar. Actually it's a medieval den (with a huge stone arch) of devious culinary mischief, where the cooks churn out anything from *bacallà amb salsa de pomes verdes* (salted cod in a green-apple sauce) to grilled kangaroo.

### COMETACINC Map pp64–5

Fusion €€

☎ 93 310 15 58; www.cometacinc.com; Carrer

del Cometa 5; meal €35; ☒ dinner Wed-Mon;

☒ Jaume I; ☒

In this grand medieval space the kitchen churns out a constantly changing menu that crisscrosses all boundaries. The candlelit tables over two floors set the mood for, say, some *tonyina vermella a la brasa amb confitura agre-dolça de albercoc* (charcoal-grilled red tuna with chutney).

### AGUT Map pp64–5

Catalan €€

☎ 93 315 17 09; Carrer d'En Gignàs 16; meal

€35; ☒ dinner Tue-Sat, lunch Sun, Sep-Jul;

☒ Jaume I; ☒

Deep in the Gothic labyrinth lies this classic eatery. A series of cosy dining areas are connected by broad arches, while high up, the walls are tightly lined by artworks. There's art in what the kitchen serves up too, from a succulent variety of seafood

If the local opening times have your tummy in a panic, don't worry. Plenty of restaurants in more touristy parts of town open early for foreigners – you pay for this with often mediocre food and the almost exclusive company of other tourists. Many bars and restaurants offering tapas and *raciones* have them on the bar before and after appointed main meal times, which means you can almost always pick up something to eat.

Many restaurants take a day off during the week and most are shut on Christmas Eve and on New Year's Eve (or Christmas Day and New Year's Day). Some close over Easter, and a good deal also shut for most or all of the month of August. Beware that Sunday and Monday evenings can be frustrating, as this is when most places take time off.

Meal times are important events in the daily life of the average Barcelonin. People take the time to enjoy their food, and where possible they still have a full sit-down meal at lunchtime. Lunch can easily go on for a couple of hours. Dinner is frequently a lighter affair.

## How Much?

Barcelona is not the cheap night out it once was, but lunch can be an economical affair if you opt for the set *menú del día*.

You are rarely likely to spend much more than €100 for a top quality meal. In the course of this chapter, restaurants are listed in each neighbourhood by price, from top end to budget.

The *menú del día*, a full set meal (usually with several options), water and wine, is a great way to cap prices at lunchtime. They start from around €8-10 and edge up to €15 for slightly more elaborate offerings. Many restaurants listed here offer this cost-saving option.

At high-end restaurants you can occasionally opt for a *menú de degustación*, a tasting menu involving samples of several different dishes. This can be a great way to get a broader view of what the restaurant does and has the advantage of coming at a fixed price.

## Booking Tables

At many of the midrange restaurants and simpler taverns with *menjadors/comedores* (dining rooms) you can usually turn up and find a spot without booking ahead. At high-end restaurants, and for dinner especially, it is safer to make a booking. Thursday to Saturday nights are especially busy.

## Self-Catering

Shopping in the big produce markets such as Mercat de la Boqueria and complementing your purchases with a quick run around the many *supermercats/supermercados* around town will provide you with all the cheese, sausages, fruit and drink you could need. Supermarkets close to the city centre include **Carrefour Express** (Map pp64–5; La Rambla dels Estudis 113; ☒ 9am-10pm Mon-Sat; ☒ Catalunya), near the northern end of La Rambla, and **Superservis** (Map pp64–5; Carrer d'Avinyyó 13; ☒ 8am-2pm & 4-8pm Mon-Sat; ☒ Liceu), in the heart of Barri Gòtic. For freshly baked bread, head for a *horn/panaderia* (bakery). For a gourmet touch, the food section of **El Corte Inglés** (Map pp108–9; ☎ 93 306 38 00; Plaça de Catalunya 14; ☒ Catalunya) has some tempting local and imported goodies. The **Zona Alta branch** (Map pp122–3; ☎ 93 366 71 00; Avinguda Diagonal 617; ☒ Maria Cristina) also has a food section. Specialist food shops abound; see the Shopping chapter for details. For more on markets, see the boxed text To Market, To Market (p183).

## Tipping

Many eating establishments have a cover charge, usually up to a few euros per head. A service charge is often, but by no means always, included in the bill, so any further tipping becomes strictly a personal choice. Catalans (and other Spaniards) are not overwhelming tippers. If you are particularly happy, 5% to 10% on top is generally fine.

## PRICE GUIDE

Some call it *la dolorosa* (the painful one) but sooner or later you will have to ask for *el compte, sisplau* (the bill, please). The price ranges used here indicate the cost per person of a full meal (starter, main and dessert), including a bottle of modest house wine:

€€€	€71 and above
€€	€21 to €70
€	up to €20



**BAR CELTA** Map pp64-5 Galician €

☎ 93 315 00 06; Carrer de la Mercè 16; meal €20; ☎ noon-midnight; M Drassanes

This bright, straightforward bar-cum-restaurant specialises in *pulpo* (octopus) and other sea critters like *navajas* (razor clams). It does a good job: even the most demanding of Galician natives give this spot the thumbs up. Sit at the zinc bar, order a bottle of Ribeiro and the traditional Galician *tazas* (little white cups) and tuck into your *raciones*.

**MILK** Map pp64-5 Bar-Restaurant €

☎ 93 268 09 22; www.milkbarcelona.com; Carrer d'En Gignàs 21; meal €10-15; ☎ 11am-4pm; M Jaume I

Known to many as a cool cocktail spot, the Irish-run Milk's key role for Barcelona night owls is providing morning-after brunches. Avoid direct sunlight and tuck into pancakes, salmon eggs Benedict and other hangover dishes in the penumbra.

**BAGEL SHOP** Map pp64-5 Bagels €

☎ 93 302 41 61; Carrer de la Canuda 25; meal €10; ☎ 9.30am-9.30pm Mon-Sat, 11am-4pm Sun; M Liceu; ☎

Searching for a smoked salmon and cream cheese bagel? You've found the spot for this and a whole army of savoury and sweet bagels. Take a seat in the long, narrow eatery out back or simply order to go in this Canadian-run touch of North America.

**CAN CONESA** Map pp64-5 Snacks €☎ 93 310 57 95; Carrer de la Llibreteria 1; rolls & toasted sandwiches €3-5; ☎ Mon-Sat; M Jaume I  
Locals (especially workers from the Ajuntament and Generalitat at lunchtime) have been lining up here for the succulent *entrepans* (filled rolls), toasted sandwiches and other snacks since the 1950s.**CAFÈ DE L'ÒPERA** Map pp64-5 Café €

☎ 93 302 41 80; La Rambla 74; ☎ 9am-3am; M Liceu; ☎

Opposite the Gran Teatre del Liceu is La Rambla's most intriguing café. Operating since 1929, it is pleasant enough for an early evening tippie or coffee and croissants. Head upstairs for an elevated seat above the busy boulevard. Can you be tempted by the *café de l'Òpera* (coffee with chocolate mousse)?

**CAJ CHAI** Map pp64-5 Café €

☎ 93 301 95 92; Sant Domènec del Call 12; ☎ 3-10pm; M Jaume I

Open and bright, this is a tea and tea-infusion connoisseur's paradise. Make your choice, order a pastry and settle in for a nice cuppa and chat.

**SALTERIO** Map pp64-5 Café €

Carrer de Sant Domènec del Call 4; ☎ 5pm-midnight; M Jaume I

If it got any mellower here, with its gentle Middle Eastern music and low whispering, you'd nod off. The wait for the mint tea is worth it – it's filled with real mint, as good as in Morocco.

**EL RAVAL**

For contrast alone, El Raval is possibly the most interesting part of the old town. Timeless classics of Barcelona dining are scattered across what was long the old city's poorest *barri*, and since the late 1990s, battalions of hip new eateries and artsy restaurants have also sprung up, especially in the area around the Museu d'Art Contemporani (see p79). Some of the cheapest eats in town, full of character, lurk along El Raval's streets. From Carrer de Sant Pau north towards Carrer de Pelai, the university and Ronda de Sant Antoni is where you'll find most of these haunts.

**CA L'ISIDRE** Map pp76-7 Catalan €€€

☎ 93 441 11 39; www.calisidre.com; Carrer de les Flors 12; meal €90-100; ☎ Mon-Sat, closed Easter &amp; three weeks Aug; M Paral.lel

Lurking in an unappealing backstreet off El Raval, Ca L'Isidre is an old-world gem. Immaculately kept dining areas stretch away from the entrance, dominated by warm timber and tiles. Quietly efficient waiters waft about the place, which is frequently filled to capacity. King Juan Carlos and superchef Ferran Adrià love it.

**CASA LEOPOLDO** Map pp76-7 Catalan €€

☎ 93 441 30 14; www.casaleopoldo.com; Carrer de Sant Rafael 24; meal €60; ☎ Tue-Sat, lunch Sun, Sep-Jul, closed Easter; M Liceu; ☎

Long hidden in the slum alleys of El Raval, this was writer Manuel Vázquez Montalbán's favourite restaurant; it figures constantly in the urban wanderings of his detective character, Pepe Carvalho (see p38). Several rambling dining areas in this 1929

classic have magnificent tiled walls and exposed timber-beam ceilings. The mostly seafood menu is extensive and the wine list is strong. Surf and turf Catalan classics, like *mandonguilles amb sipia i gambes* (rissoles with cuttlefish and shrimp) are done to perfection.

**BIBLIOTECA** Map pp76-7 Mediterranean €€

☎ 93 412 62 21; Carrer de la Junta del Comerç 28; meal €35-40; ☎ dinner only Mon-Fri, lunch &amp; dinner Sat; M Liceu

No, it's not the district library, but a pleasing study in original and inventive cooking. Taking Navarran and Mediterranean cuisine as a base, the chef produces such items as *cervol estofat amb pasta fullada i puré* (a steaming venison pie). The long, narrow restaurant with high ceilings is light and airy.

**L'HAVANA** Map pp76-7 Catalan €€

☎ 93 302 21 06; Carrer del Lleó 1; meal €25-30; ☎ Tue-Sat, lunch Sun; M Sant Antoni

Little seems to have changed in this cavernous, family-run place since it opened in the 1940s. The front dining area, with frosted glass windows, Modernista design touches and spaciouly spread tables, is a touch more severe than the better lit rear area. A great starter is the *combinat*, with three mussels, a smidge of *amanida russa* (roughly potato salad), *esqueixada* and more. Meat and fish options follow, and the *calamars farcits* (stuffed calamari) is filling. Round off with home-made *crema catalana*.

**RESTAURANT EL CAFETÍ**

Map pp76-7 Catalan €€

☎ 93 329 24 19; Passatge de Bernardí; meal €25-30, menú de dia €12; ☎ Tue-Sat, lunch Sun; M Liceu; ☎

Down a narrow arcade off Carrer de Sant Rafael, this diminutive upstairs eatery is crammed with antique furniture and offers traditional local cooking, with one or two unorthodox variations. Paella and a dozen other rice dishes dominate, but you might prefer the chicken grilled in cream of *cava* or a *cassola mar i muntanya* (a surf and turf casserole).

**ELISABETS** Map pp76-7 Catalan €€

☎ 93 317 58 26; Carrer de Elisabets 2-4; meal €20-25; ☎ lunch Mon-Thu &amp; Sat, lunch &amp; dinner Fri, Sep-Jul; M Catalunya

This unassuming restaurant is popular for no-nonsense local fare. The walls are lined with old radio sets and the *menú del dia* (around €9.75) varies daily. If you prefer *a la carta*, try the *ragú de jabalí* (wild boar stew) and finish with *mel i mató*.

**BAR CENTRAL** Map pp76-7 Tapas €

☎ 93 301 10 98; Mercat de la Boqueria; meal €20; ☎ lunch Mon-Sat; M Liceu

Hiding out towards the back of Barcelona's best-known market is this fabulously chaotic lunchtime bar. Marketeers, local workers and the occasional curious tourist jostle for a stool – get there early or be prepared to wait. Order a few generous *raciones*, and make one of them the grilled fish of the day.

**BAR PINOTXO** Map pp76-7 Tapas €

☎ 93 317 17 31; Mercat de la Boqueria; meal €20; ☎ 6am-5pm Mon-Sat, Sep-Jul; M Liceu

Of the half-dozen or so tapas bars and informal eateries within the market, this one near the La Rambla entrance is about the most popular. Roll up to the bar and enjoy the people-watching as you munch on tapas assembled from the products on sale in the stalls around you.

**MESÓN DAVID**

Map pp76-7 Spanish €

☎ 93 441 59 34; Carrer de les Carretes 63; meal €15-20; ☎ Tue-Sun; M Paral.lel

With its smoky timber ceiling, excitable waiting staff and generally chaotic feel, this is a tavern the likes of which they don't make any more – a slice of the old Spain. Plonk yourself down on a bench for gregarious dining, such as house specialities *caldo gallego* (a sausage broth), and the main course of *lechazo asado* (a great clump of roast suckling lamb).

**RESTAURANTE POLLO RICO**

Map pp76-7 Spanish €

☎ 93 441 31 84; Carrer de Sant Pau 31; meal €15; ☎ daily; M Liceu; ☎

The 'Tasty Chicken' is true to its name with fast, cheap, abundant grub. Head upstairs and carve out a space amid the noise of garrulous punters, then rattle off your order to a high-speed waiter. Chicken, meat and various other options can be put together to help you fill to bursting. Skip the paella, though.

**ORGANIC** Map pp76–7

Vegetarian €

☎ 93 301 09 02; [www.antonioorganicickitchn.com](http://www.antonioorganicickitchn.com), in Spanish; Carrer de la Junta de Comerç 11; meal €14-20; ☎ noon-midnight; (M) Liceu; ☒ As you wander into this sprawling vegetarian spot, to the left is the open kitchen, where you place your order. Choose from a limited range of options that change from day to day. The place has an easy cafeteria feel and the servings are generous and imaginative. The salad buffet is copious, desserts good and they do tasty pizzas too. The same people have a stand in the Mercat de la Boqueria that's open from 9am to 7pm, Monday to Saturday.

**BIOCENTER** Map pp76–7

Vegetarian €

☎ 93 301 45 83; Carrer del Pintor Fortuny 25; meal €10-15; ☎ 1-5pm Mon-Sat, 8-11.15pm Wed-Sat; (M) Catalunya; ☒ Head past the coffee bar and the dining area, with its warm exposed brickwork and dark timber tables, to the kitchen at the back to order your *menú del dia* (around €11.45). Top with as much salad as you can handle at the open salad buffet.

**GRANJA VIADER** Map pp76–7

Café €

☎ 93 318 34 86; Carrer d'En Xuclà 4; ☎ 9am-1.45pm & 5-8.45pm Tue-Sat, 5-8.45pm Mon; (M) Liceu

For more than a century people have flocked down this alley to get to the cups of home-made hot chocolate and whipped cream (ask for a *suis*) ladled out here. Together with one of the many pastries on display, the offerings here make for the sweet tooth's ideal breakfast. The Viader clan invented Cacaolat, forerunner of kids' powdered chocolate beverages.

**LA RIBERA**

If you'd mentioned El Born (El Borne in Spanish) in the early 1990s you wouldn't have raised much interest. But now, on the gentrification fast track, the area is peppered with bars, dance dives, groovy designer stores and restaurants. El Born is where Barcelona is truly cooking – avant-garde chefs and fusion masters have zeroed in on this southern corner of La Ribera to conduct their culinary experiments. If you don't want to play such wild games, there's plenty of the traditional stuff to choose from too. One or two ethnic eateries add some delightful variation.

**EL PASSADÍS DEL PEP**

Map pp84–5

Seafood €€€

☎ 93 310 10 21; [www.passadis.com](http://www.passadis.com); Plaça del Palau 2; meal €70-80; ☎ Tue-Sat, dinner Mon, Sep-Jul; (M) Barceloneta; ☒ There's no sign, but locals know where to head for a seafood feast. They say the restaurant's raw materials are delivered daily from fishing ports along the Catalan coast. There is no menu – what's on offer depends on what the sea has surrendered on the day. Just head down the long, ill-lit corridor and entrust yourself to their care.

**COMERÇ 24** Map pp84–5

International €€

☎ 93 319 21 02; [www.carlesabellan.com](http://www.carlesabellan.com); Carrer del Comerç 24; meal €50-60; ☎ Tue-Sat; (M) Barceloneta; ☒

The black-red-grey décor in the rear dining area lends an edgy New York feel to this cauldron of culinary creativity. Chef Carles Abellán and his crew, in their little yellow kitchen, whip up a series of eccentric small dishes, of which you'll want four or five to approach a full meal. His ideas range from *pizza-sashimi de tonyina* (little tuna sashimi pizza) to *arròs d'ànec i foie* (intense duck and foie gras rice dish). Prepare yourself for the tasting menu and leave the rest up to Abellán.

**CAL PEP** Map pp84–5

Tapas €€

☎ 93 310 79 61; [www.calpep.com](http://www.calpep.com); Plaça de les Olles 8; meal €45; ☎ lunch Tue-Sat, dinner Mon-Fri, Sep-Jul; (M) Barceloneta; ☒

It's getting a foot in the door here that's the problem. And if you want one of the five tables out the back, you'll need to call way ahead. Most people are happy elbowing their way to the bar for some of the tastiest gourmet seafood tapas in town. Pep recommends *cloïsses amb pernil* (clams and ham – seriously!) or the *trifàsic* (combo of calamari, whitebait and prawns).

**CAFÉ DE LA PRINCESA**

Map pp84–5

Mediterranean €€

☎ 93 268 15 18; [www.cafeprincesa.com](http://www.cafeprincesa.com); Carrer Sabateret 1-3; meal €35-45; ☎ Mon-Sat, lunch only Sun; (M) Jaume I; ☒

Little of the original 14th-century building remains (the soaring columns and high glass ceiling of the 'cloister' are all new) but the location remains unique. Pick your way through *bacallà* (cod) specialities or

**BARCELONA'S GOURMET GAUDI**

He presents his latest culinary inventions like a child who has just made a fabulous mud pie. Indeed, if Ferran Adrià came up with a mud dish, it wouldn't come as much of a surprise. Born in 1962, this self-taught chef has rocketed to the forefront of international *haute cuisine* with his fearless experimentation. The Gaudi of gourmets, he has been dubbed by his three-star Michelin colleague from the Basque Country, Juan Maria Arzak, 'the most imaginative cook in all history'. The rough-spoken Adrià has been made a doctor honoris causa at Barcelona University (UB).

During the 1980s Adrià worked his way up to head chef at a good, if unspectacular, Franco-Catalan restaurant, El Bulli (see p255), in a splendidly wild spot on the Costa Brava. By the early 1990s he was co-owner of the business and had begun to let rip, converting El Bulli into one of the country's most exclusive restaurants, where anything from essence of carrot to solidified edible coffee might have appeared on the menu.

Aided by brother Albert and a staff of more than 50, Adrià runs El Bulli for six months of the year – dinner only. What the lucky guests get to eat is entirely a matter of chance. He spends the rest of the year like a mad scientist in El Bulli Taller, his kitchen workshop on Carrer de la Portaferriera, virtually across the road from the Mercat de la Boqueria in central Barcelona. He has also branched out, opening fast-food eateries in Madrid and Barcelona, a hotel in Seville and even lending his name to bags of potato chips (which are nothing remarkable, it has to be said).

Adrià (voted the world's best chef by a committee of 60 gastronomy journalists in 2006) is not alone. One of his disciples, fellow Catalan Sergi Arola, couldn't resist the call of a place at Hotel Arts Barcelona, where he runs Arola. Another El Bulli alumnum, Carles Abellán, has received acclaim at his dramatic Comerç 24 (opposite), the focus of special kitchen effects in El Born, and more recently at his earthier Tapaç 24 (p183). Meanwhile, brother Albert has a hit on his hands with gourmet tapas at Inopia (p184).

perhaps a *carré de cabrito glaseado a la miel con setas* (rack of honey glazed kid meat with mushrooms). You may be accompanied by a little live music.

**TANTARANTANA**

Map pp84–5

Mediterranean €€

☎ 93 268 24 10; Carrer de Tantarantana 24; meal €30; ☎ dinner Mon-Sat; (M) Jaume I

Surrounded as it is by the furiously fashionable, front-line nuclei of *nueva cocina española*, this spot is a refreshing contrast. There is something comforting about the old-style marble-top tables, upon which you can sample simple but well-prepared dishes such as risotto or grilled tuna served with vegetables and ginger. It attracts a 30-something crowd who also enjoy the outdoor seating in summer.

**WUSHU** Map pp84–5

Pan-Asian €€

☎ 93 310 73 13; [www.wushu-restaurant.com](http://www.wushu-restaurant.com), in Spanish; Avinguda del Marqués de l'Argentera 1; meal €25-30; ☎ 1pm-midnight Tue-Sat, lunch Sun; (M) Barceloneta; ☒

This Australian-run wok restaurant serves up an assortment of tasty pan-Asian dishes, including pad Thai, curries and more. What about kangaroo *yakisoba*? Pull up a pew at the nut-brown tables or sit at the bar. Wash down with Tiger beer or one of a handful of wines.

**PLA DE LA GARSA** Map pp84–5

Catalan €€

☎ 93 315 24 13; Carrer dels Assaonadors 13; meal €25; ☎ dinner; (M) Jaume I; ☒

This 17th-century house is the ideal location for a romantic candlelit dinner. Timber beams, anarchically scattered tables and soft ambient music combine to make an enchanting setting over two floors for traditional, hearty Catalan cooking, with dishes such as *bacallà amb cigronets del Pla de Llerona* (salted cod with chickpeas). They also have a good cheese selection.

**BUBÓ** Map pp84–5

Patisserie-Restaurant €€

☎ 93 268 72 24; [www.bubo.ws](http://www.bubo.ws); Carrer de les Caputxes 6 & 10; meal €20-30; ☎ 4pm-midnight Mon, 10am-midnight Tue-Thu & Sun, 10am-2am Fri & Sat; (M) Barceloneta; ☒

Carles Mampel is a sweet artist, literally. It is difficult to walk by his bar and pastry shop without taking a seat outside to try one of his fantasy-laden creations. They are limitless in style and number. Try saying no to a mousse of Giandua with mango cream, caramelised hazelnuts with spices and hazelnut biscuit. You could dip in for lunch. Try the set menu, which consists of a couple of *amuse-gueules* and six varied savoury tapas.

**HABANA VIEJA** Map pp84–5

Cuban €€

☎ 93 268 25 04; Carrer dels Banys Vells 2; meal €20-25; ☎ Mon-Sat; (M) Jaume I

## HOTEL DINING HIGHS

There was a time when about the saddest thing you could do was eat at your hotel. How that has changed in some cases! A number of Barcelona's hotels are high-end, elegant restaurants and veritable havens for gourmet highs. You don't even need to be a hotel guest to dine in them. Some of the best are:

- Actual (Grand Hotel Central, p234)
- Arola (Hotel Arts Barcelona, p235)
- Drolma (Hotel Majèstic, p236)
- East 47 (Hotel Claris, p236)
- El Comeder del Axel (Axel Hotel, p236)
- Gaig (Hotel Cram, p237)
- La Terraza (Hotel Claris, p236)
- Lasarte & Loidi (Comtes de Barcelona, p237)
- Moo (Hotel Omm, p236)

Since the early 1990s this Cuban hideaway, the first of its kind in Barcelona and still one of the best, has offered old island faves such as the stringy meat dish *ropa vieja* (literally 'old clothes') and rice dishes. With its antique light fittings and predilection for timber furnishings, this Ribera house could easily be an Old Havana eatery.

## CENTRE CULTURAL EUSKAL ETXEA

Map pp84–5 Basque €€

☎ 93 310 21 85; Placeta de Montcada 1; tapas €20-25, meal €35-40; ☎ Tue-Sat, lunch Sun; ☎ Jaume I

Barcelona is awash with a wave of Basque eateries, but few have the genuine feel. This one started off as a cultural centre and captures the essence of San Sebastián. Choose your *pintxos*, sip *txacolí* wine and remember to keep the toothpicks so the staff can count them up and work out your bill. A full sit-down meal out the back might include *txangurro a la donostiana* (a flambéed spider crab).

## ORÍGEN 99.9% Map pp84–5 Catalan €

☎ 93 310 75 31; www.origen99.com; Carrer de la Vidriera 6-8; meal €15-20; ☎ 12.30pm-1am; ☎ Jaume I; ☎

This is a treasure chest of Catalan regional products, with shelves groaning under the weight of bottles and packets of goodies. It also has a long menu of bite-sized dishes, such as *ànec amb naps* (duck and turnip) or *civet de senglar* (jugged boar), that you can mix and match over wine by the glass. At the L'Eixample branch (Map pp108–9; ☎ 93 453 11 20; Carrer d'Enric Granados 9; ☎ 1pm-1am; ☎ Universitat) you can dine outside. Several others are scattered around town.

## CASA DELFIN Map pp84–5 Spanish €

☎ 93 319 50 88; Passeig del Born 36; meal €15-20, menú del día €11; ☎ 6am-7pm Mon-Sat; ☎ Barceloneta

While surrounding restaurants may serve up exquisitely designed Sino-Moroccan-Venezuelan creations, the bustling waiters at the 'Dolphin House' content themselves with serving bountiful Spanish classics. And they are right to do so. Finding a free lunchtime table at their sprawling terrace requires a modest portion of luck. Choose from more than 30 tried-and-true dishes.

## EL XAMPANYET Map pp84–5 Tapas €

☎ 93 319 70 03; Carrer de Montcada 22; meal €15; ☎ Tue-Sat, lunch Sun; ☎ Jaume I

Nothing much has changed for decades in this, one of the city's best-known *cava* bars. Plant yourself at the bar or seek out a table against the decoratively tiled walls for a glass or three of *cava* and an assortment of tapas, such as the tangy *boquerons en vinagre* (white anchovies in vinegar). It's the atmosphere that makes this place.

## PORT VELL & LA BARCELONETA

In the Maremàgnum complex (Map p93) on the Moll d'Espanya you can eat close to the water's edge at a handful of fun if fairly slapdash joints. For good food and atmosphere, head around to La Barceloneta, a traditional haven of simple seafood cooking and, in spite of rampant gentrification and publicity, still laden with everything from good-natured, noisy tapas bars to upmarket seafood restau-

rants. Almost everything shuts on Sunday and Monday evenings.

## TORRE D'ALTA MAR Map p93 Seafood €€€

☎ 93 221 00 07; www.torredealta.com; Torre de Sant Sebastià, Passeig de Joan de Borbó 88; meal €70-80; ☎ Tue-Sat, dinner Sun-Mon; ☎ Barceloneta or ☎ 17, 39, 57 or 64; ☎

Head to the top of the Torre de Sant Sebastià and instead of the Transbordador Aeri, take a ringside seat for the best city views and fine seafood (a few meaty alternatives such as steak tartare are thrown in). The setting alone, high up above the city and port, makes this a unique dining experience, perfect for a romantic couple.

## SUQUET DE L'ALMIRALL

Map p93 Seafood €€

☎ 93 221 62 33; Passeig de Joan de Borbó 65; meal €45-50; ☎ Tue-Sat, lunch Sun; ☎ Barceloneta or ☎ 17, 39, 57 or 64; ☎

A family business run by an alumnus of Ferran Adrià's El Bulli, the order of the day is top-class seafood with the occasional unexpected twist. A good option is the *pica pica marinera* (a seafood mix) or you could opt for the tasting menu, or one of the various marine rice dishes on offer. Grab one of the few outdoor tables.

## CAN MAJÓ Map p93 Seafood €€

☎ 93 221 58 18; Carrer del Almirall Aixada 23; meal €30-40; ☎ Tue-Sat, lunch Sun; ☎ Barceloneta or ☎ 45, 57, 59, 64 or 157

Virtually on the beach (with tables outside in summer), Can Majó has a long and steady reputation for fine seafood, particularly its rice dishes and cornucopian *suquets* (stews). Simpler options include oven-cooked fish. Sit outside behind the little blue picket fence.

## CAN ROS 1911 Map p93 Seafood €€

☎ 93 221 45 79; Carrer del Almirall Aixada 7; meal €30-35; ☎ Thu-Tue; ☎ Barceloneta or ☎ 45, 57, 59, 64 or 157; ☎

The fifth generation is now at the controls in this immutable seafood favourite. In a restaurant where the décor is a reminder of simpler times, there's a simple guiding principle – give the punters succulent fresh fish cooked with a light touch. They also do a great chunky *fideuà amb cloïsses i gambes* (noodles with clams and prawns) and a generous *suquet*. Otherwise you

could try the *mariscata*, a mixed seafood platter for two.

## CAN RAMONET Map p93 Seafood €€

☎ 93 319 30 64; Carrer de la Maquinista 17; meal €30; ☎ Barceloneta; ☎

Perching at one of the little tables across the lane is the perfect way to pass a warm summer evening, perhaps over some *vieires al cava* (scallops in *cava*). Or step inside and enjoy your tapas around a barrel-cum-table. Rice dishes cost €15-17 and the catch of the day is around €20-22. They claim to have been in business since 1763.

## RESTAURANT SET (7) PORTES

Map p93 Seafood €€

☎ 93 319 30 33; www.7portes.com; Passeig d'Isabel II 14; meal €30; ☎ 1pm-1am ☎ Barceloneta; ☎

Founded in 1836 as a café and converted into a restaurant in 1929, this is a classic. In the hands of the Parellada clan, which runs several quality restaurants in and beyond Barcelona, it exudes an old-world atmosphere with its wood panelling, tiles, mirrors and plaques naming some of the famous – such as Orson Welles – who have passed through. Paella is the speciality, or go for the surfeit of seafood in the *gran plat de marisc* (literally 'big plate of seafood'). We dare you to finish it!

## VASO DE ORO Map p93 Tapas €

☎ 93 319 30 98; Carrer de Balboa 6; meal €20; ☎ Barceloneta; ☎

This must be one of the world's narrowest bars. At either end, the space balloons a little to allow for a handful of tables. Squeeze in and enjoy the show. Fast-talking, white-jacketed waiters will serve up a few quick quips with your tapas of grilled *gambes* or *solomillo* (sirloin) chunks. Want something a little different? Ask for a *flauta cincuenta* – half lager and half dark beer.

## CAN MAÑO Map p93 Spanish €

☎ 93 319 30 82; Carrer del Baluard 12; meal €15-20; ☎ Mon-Sat; ☎ Barceloneta

The owners have been dealing with an onslaught of punters for decades and swear they are going to retire soon (but they never do). You'll need to be prepared to wait before being squeezed in at a packed table for a raucous dinner (or lunch) of *raciones* (listed on a board at the back) over a bottle of *turbio*, a cloudy white plonk.



## CAN PAIXANO Map p93 Tapas €

☎ 93 310 08 39; Carrer de la Reina Cristina 7; meal €15-20; ☎ 9am-10.30pm; **M** Barceloneta; ☒ Tucked away amid the bright tacky lights of cheap electronics stores in what could almost be a backstreet in southeast Asia, this lofty old champagne bar has long run on a winning formula. The standard tippie is bubbly rosé in elegant little glasses, combined with bite-sized *bocadillos* (filled rolls). This place is jammed to the rafters, and elbowing your way to the bar to ask harried staff for menu items can be a titanic struggle.

## PORT OLÍMPIC, EL POBLENOU & EL FÒRUM

This yachties' pleasure port is lined on two sides by dozens of restaurants and tapas bars, popular in spring and summer but mostly underwhelming. A more upmarket series of places huddles at the northeast end of Platja de la Barceloneta – it's hard to beat the sand, sea and palm tree backdrop. Otherwise, the search for culinary curios will take you behind the scenes into the depths of El Poblenou, where a few gems glitter.

## EL CANGREJO LOCO Map pp98-9 Seafood €€

☎ 93 221 05 33; [www.elcangrejoloco.com](http://www.elcangrejoloco.com); Moll de Gregal 29-30, Port Olímpic; meal €45-60, menú del día €22; ☎ daily; **M** Ciutadella Vila Olímpica; ☒ Of the hive of eating activity along the docks of Port Olímpic, the 'Mad Crab' is the best. It inevitably has a thoroughfare feel, attracting swarms of tourists, but the difference is that the food is generally of a reasonable quality. Fish standards such as *bacallà* and *rap* are served in various guises and melt in the mouth, as does the *sarsuela*.

## XIRINGUITO D'ESCRIBÀ

Map pp98-9 Seafood €€

☎ 93 221 07 29; [www.escriba.es](http://www.escriba.es); Ronda Litoral 42, Platja de Bogatell; meal €40-50; ☎ lunch only daily; **M** Llacuna

The clan that brought you Escribà sweets and pastries also operates one of the most popular waterfront seafood eateries in town. This is one of the few places where one person can order from their selection of *paella* and *fideuà* (normally reserved for a

## GLUTTONY WITHOUT GLUTEN

Those with a gluten intolerance can find eating out in any town a problem. In Barcelona you get your hands on all sorts of snacks and products and put together your own meals at **Syngluten** (☎ 93 356 33 07; [www.syngluten.com](http://www.syngluten.com), in Spanish; Avinguda Diagonal 3) in the Diagonal Mar shopping mall (Map pp98-9).

minimum of two people). Prices are higher than average, but quality matches. You can also choose from a selection of Escribà pastries for dessert – worth the trip alone.

## L'EIXAMPLE

This huge grid area can seem a little daunting but the first thing to remember is that most of the many varied and enticing restaurants are concentrated in the *Quadrat d'Or* between Carrer de Pau Claris and Carrer de Muntaner, Avinguda Diagonal and Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes. There is no shortage of perfectly acceptable bar-restaurants (often with street-side tables) that offer reasonable *menús del dia* and stock-standard dishes *a la carta*. In among these places are sprinkled real finds, whether offering local or international cuisine.

## SAÜC Map pp102-3 Catalan €€€

☎ 93 321 01 89; [www.saucrestaurant.com](http://www.saucrestaurant.com); Passatge de Lluís Pellicer 12; meal €70-80; ☎ Tue-Sat; **M** Hospital Clínic; ☒

Pop into this basement place down a little Eixample laneway and you enter a soothing sanctuary. Sober designer décor, dominated by ochres, creams and buttercup yellows, allows you to concentrate on what emerges from the kitchen, with surprises like *vieires*, *mongetes de Santa Pau*, *tripetes de bacallà i peus de porc* (scallops, broad beans, cod and pigs' trotters). The tasting menu comprises an appetiser, five courses, then a cheese selection and two desserts (€68). They've even opened a branch in Beijing.

## CASA CALVET Map pp108-9 Catalan €€€

☎ 93 412 40 12; [www.casacalvet.es](http://www.casacalvet.es); Carrer de Casp 48; meal €70-80; ☎ Mon-Sat; **M** Urquinaona; ☒ An early Gaudí masterpiece loaded with his trademark curvy features now houses a swish restaurant (just to the right of the building's main entrance). Dress up and

ask for an intimate *taula cabina* (wooden booth). You could opt for a *lasanya de llamàntol, verdures, tomàquet i formatge fresc* (lobster lasagne with vegetables, tomato and fresh cheese). They have a tasting menu also available for €72.

## NOTI Map pp108-9 Mediterranean €€€

☎ 93 342 66 73; [www.noti-universal.com](http://www.noti-universal.com); Carrer de Roger de Llúria 35; meal €70-75, menú del día €19; ☎ Mon-Fri, dinner Sat; **M** Passeig de Gràcia; ☒

It's hard to believe that this was once home to a newspaper, the *Noticiero Universal*. The news now is that Noti is a serious culinary player with muted club sounds and it's under siege by the city's glitterati. The ample, square dining room is plastered with mirrors that seem to multiply the steely designer tables. Try a *lenguado laqueado a la soja y miel, arroz thai rebosado en sésamo negro* (sole coated in soya and honey, with Thai rice battered in black sesame) or perhaps a meat dish – anything from beef tartare to chicken curry. Start the evening with the cocktail of the day at the bar.

## SPEAKEASY Map pp102-3 International €€€

☎ 93 217 50 80; Carrer d'Aribau 162-166; meal €70; ☎ Mon-Fri, dinner Sat; **M** Diagonal This clandestine restaurant lurks behind the Dry Martini bar (p205). You will be shown a door through the open kitchen area to the 'storeroom', which is lined with hundreds of bottles of backlit, quality tipples. Dark tones in the décor, a few works of art, low lighting, light jazz music and smooth service complete the setting. What's on the menu depends on the markets and cooks' whim. The *cochinillo ibérico deshuesado* (deboned Iberian suckling pig) is a carnivore's tender dream.

## CASA DARÍO Map pp108-9 Seafood €€

☎ 93 453 31 35; [www.casadario.com](http://www.casadario.com), in Spanish; Carrer del Consell de Cent 256; meal €50-60; ☎ Mon-Sat Sep-Jul; **M** Passeig de Gràcia; ☒ Step into the timeless world of silver service and ample helpings of the fruits of the sea. Waiters serve tables with hushed efficiency and present a seafood feast as only the folks from the northwest Atlantic region of Galicia know how. Opt for one of the set menus (around €50) and you will be served endless rounds of seafood wonders, many of which are flown in daily from

Galicia. You can treat yourself to anything from *cañallas* (sea snails) to *nécoras* (small crabs that abound on the Galician coast).

## CINC SENTITS Map pp108-9 International €€

☎ 93 323 94 90; [www.cincsentits.com](http://www.cincsentits.com); Carrer d'Aribau 58; meal €50-60; ☎ Tue-Sat, lunch Mon, Sep-Jul; **M** Passeig de Gràcia

Enter this somewhat overlit realm of the 'Five Senses' to indulge in a tasting menu (from €46 to €65), consisting of a series of small, experimental dishes. What's on offer changes from one day to the next, but think wine reduction sauces, *pols de cansalada* (bacon fat powder), cuttlefish noodles and other unique elements in a brief menu that offers a balance of fish and meat. An optional wine-matching component adds to the bill. Less ambitious but cheaper is the set lunch at €29. You'll either love it or be somewhat puzzled by it!

## CATA 1.81 Map pp108-9 Tapas €€

☎ 93 323 68 18; [www.cata181.com](http://www.cata181.com); Carrer de València 181; meal €50; ☎ dinner Mon-Sat Sep-Jul; **M** Passeig de Gràcia

If you like an Al Capone-style conspiratorial feel, call ahead to book the little room out the back, past the busy, compact kitchen. Surrounded by shelves of fine wines packed to the rafters, you will be treated to a series of dainty gourmet dishes, such as *raviolis amb bacallà* (got dumplings) or *truita amb tòfona* (thick potato tortilla with a delicate trace of truffle). The best option is to choose from one of several tasting menu options ranging from €28 to €45. Since wines feature so highly here, let rip with the list of fine Spanish tipples.

## TAKTIKA BERRI Map pp108-9 Basque €€

☎ 93 453 47 59; Carrer de València 169; meal €50; ☎ Mon-Fri, lunch Sat; **M** Hospital Clínic

Get in early here as the tapas bar teems with punters from far and wide, anxious to wrap their mouths around some of the best Basque tapas in town. The hot morsels are all snapped up as soon as they arrive from the kitchen, so keep your eyes peeled. The seated dining area out the back is also good. In the evening it's all over by about 10.30pm.

## ALKÍMIA Map pp102-3 Modern Catalan €€

☎ 93 207 61 15; Carrer de l'Indústria 79; meal €45-50; ☎ Mon-Fri; **M** Verdaguer

Jordi Vila, a culinary alchemist, serves up refined Catalan dishes with a twist in this elegant, white-walled locale well off the tourist trail. Dishes such as his *arròs amb nyora i escamarlans* (rice with crayfish and a sweetish chilli) have earned Vila his first Michelin star.

## ALBA GRANADOS

Map pp108–9 Spanish-Mediterranean €€

☎ 93 454 61 16; [www.albagranados.com](http://www.albagranados.com); Carrer d'Enric Granados 34; meal €45-50; ☎ Mon-Sat; ☎ FGC Provença; ☎

In summer ask for one of the romantic tables for two on the 1st-floor balcony. Overlooking the trees, it is a unique spot, with little traffic. Inside, the ground- and 1st-floor dining areas are huge, featuring exposed brick and dark parquet. The menu offers a little of everything but the best dishes are the meat offerings, such as *carrillera de ternera* (a dark, soft meat from the neck of the cow).

## IGUELDO

Map pp108–9 Basque €€

☎ 93 452 25 55; Carrer del Rosselló 186; meal €45-50; ☎ Mon-Sat; ☎ Diagonal; ☎ White and maroon décor and smooth lines tempt patrons into this refined, contemporary Basque option. Sink into a white leather chair or perch at the back bar for *chuletón a la parrilla* (one kilo of grilled chop for two), or an intense *cochinillo confitado con peras* (suckling pig prepared with pears). Igueldo is a winner at lunch with a *menú del día* (€20) that include choices such as *penne con txipirones* (pasta with tiny cuttlefish).

## RESTAURANT ME

Map pp102–3 Pan-Asian €€

☎ 93 419 49 33; Carrer de París 162; meal €45-50; ☎ dinner Mon-Sat; ☎ Hospital Clínic ☎ The Vietnamese-American chef whips up wonders in the kitchen at this surprise fusion establishment. At a time when fusion is often synonymous with nothing in particular, they manage to create superb Asian dishes. The curry *vietnamita* is a symphony of seafood critters with noodles in a green curry, while the *confit de pato a las siete especias* is a succulent, vacuum-cooked duck thigh with bok choy and orange. Occasionally dishes with a more local bent or a playful New Orleans intrusion (crab with creole sauce and corn bread) stimulate the palate further.

## SENSE PRESSA

Map pp108–9 Spanish €€

☎ 93 218 15 44; Carrer d'Enric Granados 96; meal €45-50; ☎ Tue-Sat, lunch Mon; ☎ Diagonal Tiny tables for two await in this split-level basement eatery. It serves up exquisitely prepared Spanish dishes, with a wide range of meat and fish options, depending on the season and chef's whim. You might start with *mini-carxofes saltejades amb pernil* (sautéed mini-artichokes with ham) and follow with the *fetge d'oca al vi d'Oporto* (goose liver in port). Splurge on a *suquet de llamantiol amb mongetes grosses* (lobster and bean stew).

## PATAGONIA

Map pp108–9 Argentine €€

☎ 93 304 37 35; Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes 660; meal €40-45; ☎ Mon-Sat; ☎ Passeig de Gràcia; ☎ An elegant Argentinean beef-fest awaits in this stylish new arrival. Start with *empanadas* (tiny meat-crammed pies). You might want to skip past the *achuras* (offal) and head for a hearty meat main, such as a juicy beef *medallón con salsa de colmenillas* (a medallion in a morel sauce) or such classics as *bife de chorizo* (sirloin) or Brazilian *picanha* (rump). You can choose from one of five side dishes to accompany your pound of flesh.

## YAMADORY

Map pp108–9 Japanese €€

☎ 93 453 92 64; Carrer d'Aribau 68; meal €35-40; ☎ Mon-Sat; ☎ FGC Provença Yamadory remains one of the steadiest ambassadors of Japanese cooking in the city. As the door slips closed behind you, the first thing you notice is the hushed atmosphere of the place. Divided into several different dining areas with a contemporary Japanese décor, it is notable for its gliding efficiency. Head upstairs to sit on a floor-level tatami. The sushi, sashimi, udon and tempura are all good.

## CHICOA

Map pp108–9 Catalan €€

☎ 93 453 11 23; Carrer d'Aribau 73; meal €35; ☎ Tue-Sat, lunch Sun; ☎ Hospital Clínic; ☎ It looks as rustic on the inside as out, with ceramic plates decorating the walls, stone arches and dark wood all over. For traditional Catalan cooking, this is an address that loyal locals come back to time and again. Indeed, time seems to have stood still here since they opened back in the

## TO MARKET, TO MARKET

One of the greatest sound, smell and colour sensations in Europe is Barcelona's most central produce market, the **Mercat de la Boqueria** (Map pp64–5; [www.boqueria.info](http://www.boqueria.info); La Rambla). It spills over with all the rich and varied colour of plentiful fruit and vegetable stands, seemingly limitless varieties of sea critters, sausages, cheeses, meat (including the finest Jabugo ham) and sweets. It is also sprinkled with half a dozen or so unassuming places to eat, and eat well, with stallholders at lunchtime. According to some chronicles there has been a market on this spot since 1217! Mind you, nowadays it's no easy task getting past the gawping tourists to indicate the slippery slab of sole you're after, or the tempting piece of Asturian *queso de cabra* (goat's cheese).

La Boqueria is not the only market in Barcelona. The city is bursting with bustling markets, which for the most part are tourist-free. Try **Mercat de Sant Antoni** (Map pp102–3; Carrer de Mallorca 157; ☎ Hospital Clínic); **Mercat de Santa Caterina** (Map pp84–5; Avinguda de Francesc Cambó; ☎ Jaume I); **Mercat del Ninot** (Map pp102–3; Carrer de Mallorca 157; ☎ Hospital Clínic); **Mercat de la Llibertat** (Map p118; Plaça de la Llibertat; FGC Gràcia); **Mercat de l'Abaceria Central** (Map p118; Travessera de Gràcia 186; ☎ Fontana) and **Mercat de la Concepció** (Map pp102–3; Carrer de València 332; ☎ Girona). Markets generally open from Monday to Saturday from around 8am to 8pm (although some close around 2pm on Saturday). They are all at their animated best in the morning.

1970s. A speciality of the house is anything to do with *bacallà* (salted cod).

## THAI GARDENS

Map pp108–9 Thai €€

☎ 93 487 98 98; [www.thaigardensgroup.com](http://www.thaigardensgroup.com); Carrer de la Diputació 273; meal €35, menú del día €14; ☎ Mon-Sat; ☎ Passeig de Gràcia; ☎ One of the first and still one of the best for Thai food in Barcelona. Tables for two set in quiet corners contrast with great round-party sittings amid a veritable forest of tropical greenery. The set meal (€29) allows you to try a broad range of dishes and can be a good idea for larger groups.

## DE TAPA MADRE

Map pp108–9 Catalan €€

☎ 93 459 31 34; Carrer de Mallorca 301; meal €35; ☎ daily; ☎ Verdaguier; ☎ A chatty atmosphere greets you from the bar from the moment you swing open the door. A few tiny tables line the window, but head upstairs for more space in the gallery, which hovers above the array of tapas on the bar below, or go deeper inside past the bench with the ham legs. Choose from a range of tapas or opt for a full meal. The *arròs caldós amb llagostins* (a hearty rice dish with king prawns) is delicious.

## TAPAÇ 24

Map pp108–9 Tapas €€

☎ 93 488 09 77; [www.carlesabellan.com](http://www.carlesabellan.com); Carrer de la Diputació 269; meal €30-35; ☎ 8am-midnight; ☎ Passeig de Gràcia Carles Abellán, master of Comerç 24 (p176) in La Ribera, runs this delightful basement tapas haven. Abellán and his crew, in the

entirely visible kitchen out back, do gourmet versions of old faves. Specials include the *bikini* (toasted ham and cheese sandwich – here the ham is cured and the truffle makes all the difference!), a thick black *arròs negre de sípia* (squid ink black rice), the McFoie-Burguer, and for dessert, *xocolata amb pa, sal i oli* (delicious balls of chocolate in olive oil with a touch of salt and wafer).

## CA LA NURI

Map pp108–9 Catalan €€

☎ 93 215 55 23; [www.calanuri.es](http://www.calanuri.es); Carrer del Consell de Cent 377; meal €30; ☎ Tue-Sat, lunch Sun; ☎ Passeig de Gràcia; ☎ With its white and grey tones, and schools of silver fish shapes seemingly skudding like wind-driven clouds along one wall, this is a classic for Catalan seafood and rice dishes. They have various set lunch menus, such as *fideuà*, *arròs negre* and seafood paella. Another good one is the *arròs de l'avia Nuri* (Grandma Nuri's rice), a paella-style dish in which all the seafood creatures have been peeled.

## RELAIS DE VENISE

Map pp108–9 French €€

☎ 93 467 21 62; Carrer de Pau Claris 142; meal €30; ☎ daily Sep-Jul; ☎ Passeig de Gràcia; ☎ You can eat anything you want here, so long as it's meat. Indeed, there's just one dish, a succulent beef *entrecôte* with their secret 'sauce Porte-Maillot' (named after the location of the original restaurant in Paris), chips and salad. It is served in slices and in two waves so that it doesn't go cold. The setting does not lack elegance although it is a little barnlike.

**DOLSO** Map pp108–9 Desserts €€

☎ 93 487 59 64; [www.dolso.es](http://www.dolso.es), in Spanish; Carrer de València 227; meal €25-30; ☎ Tue-Sat & lunch Mon; M Passeig de Gràcia; ☒

There is a good reason for saying 'no' to dessert in nearby restaurants and coming here for the final dish of the evening. A constantly changing menu of sugary delights, from standards such as tiramisù to concoctions like the *nemesi de chocolate* (a chocolate pastry with cream of passion fruit), makes dessert in this laid-back spot a great temptation. A small selection of savoury dishes, such as the *coques* (a kind of open toasted broad baguette with toppings like goat cheese with honey and nuts) means that you can contemplate a full meal.

**INOPIA** Map pp102–3 Gourmet Tapas €€

☎ 93 424 52 31; Carrer de Tamarit 104; meal €25-30; ☎ dinner Tue-Sat, lunch Sat; M Rocafort Albert Adrià, brother of Barcelona's star chef Ferran and something of a kitchen celebrity himself, runs this popular corner tapas temple. If you can't grab one of the handful of tables, don't worry; just grab a standing spot inside or out and select a *pincho moruno de pollo* (chicken bites on a skewer) or the lightly fried, tempura-style vegetables (fresh from La Boqueria market). Wash down with house red or Moritz beer and finish with the *4 bombones con vino dulce de Castaño* (4 pralines with a heavenly sweet red dessert wine).

**KOYUKI** Map pp108–9 Japanese €€

☎ 93 237 84 90; Carrer de Còrsega 242; meal €25-30; ☎ Tue-Sat, dinner Sun M Diagonal

This unassuming basement Japanese diner is one of those rough-edged diamonds that it pays to revisit. Take a seat at one of the long tables and order from the cheesy menu complete with pictures courtesy of the Japanese owner – you won't be disappointed! The variety of *sashimi moriawase* is mixed, generous and constantly fresh. The *tempura udon* is a particularly good thick and hearty noodle option. You can then splash it all down with a Sapporo beer.

**BODEGA DE SEPÚLVEDA**

Map pp108–9 Catalan €€

☎ 93 323 59 44; Carrer de Sepúlveda 173bis; meal €25; ☎ Mon-Sat; M Universitat; ☒

This tavern has been showering dishes (which they like to call tapas) on its happy

diners since 1952. Without a booking, you'll have to hang around at the bar for a while and take in some of the goodies on show. The main dining area is out the back and downstairs, with a small, low-ceilinged non-smoking area upstairs. The range of dishes is a little overwhelming and mixes traditional (cold meats, cheeses and Catalan faves like *cap i pota*, a dish of chunks of fatty beef in gravy) with more surprising options like *carpaccio de calabacín con bacalao y parmesán* (thin zucchini slices draped in cod and parmesan cheese). You can hang out until 1am.

**CERVESERIA CATALANA**

Map pp108–9 Tapas €€

☎ 93 216 03 68; Carrer de Mallorca 236; meal €25; ☎ daily; M Passeig de Gràcia; ☒

This place, translated as 'Catalan Brewery', is good for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Come in for your morning coffee and croissant, or wait until lunch to enjoy choosing from the abundance of tapas and *montaditos* (canapés). You can sit at the bar, on the pavement terrace or in the restaurant at the back. The variety of hot tapas, mouth-watering salads and other snacks draws a well-dressed crowd from all over the *barri*. This joint's staff run an equally good place not far off, *Ciudad Condal* (Map pp108–9; ☎ 93 318 19 97; La Rambla de Catalunya 18; meal €20-25; ☎ daily; M Catalunya).

**CASA AMALIA** Map pp108–9 Catalan €€

☎ 93 458 94 58; Passatge del Mercat 4-6; meal €20-25; ☎ Tue-Sat, lunch Sun; M Girona

For hearty Catalan cooking using fresh produce, mainly sourced from the busy market next door, this restaurant is a popular stop. The orange and white decorated joint has split level dining that makes the most of its space. On Thursdays during winter they offer the Catalan mountain classic, *escudella*. Otherwise you might like to try light variations on local cuisine, such as the *bacallà al alloli de poma* (cod in an apple-based *alloli* sauce). The four-course *menú del día* is exceptional lunchtime value at €11.

**BALTHAZAR** Map pp108–9 Mediterranean €€

☎ 93 217 82 50; Carrer de Rosselló 189; meal €20-25; ☎ daily; M Diagonal; ☒

Balthazar offers a spacious and buzzy dining atmosphere and an extensive menu

of Catalan and Mediterranean dishes, which are good without being spectacular. Locals converge here for stylish, economical dining. After all, where else might you encounter a *carpaccio de bou amb encenalls de pomesà* (beef carpaccio with parmesan cheese shavings) for €6.60? The *menú del día* also wins the hearts of savers at €8.70.

**CASA ALFONSO** Map pp108–9 Spanish €€

☎ 93 451 39 46; [www.casaalfonso.com](http://www.casaalfonso.com); Carrer de Roger de Llúria 6; meal €20; ☎ 9am-1am Mon-Sat; M Urquinaona

In business since 1934, Casa Alfonso is perfect for a morning coffee or a tapas stop at the long marble bar. Timber-pannelled and festooned with old photos, posters and swinging hams, it attracts a faithful local clientele at all hours for their *flautas* (thin custom-made baguettes with your choice of filling), hams, cheeses, hot dishes and home-made desserts. Consider rounding off with an *alfonsito* (a mini Irish coffee).

**EL RINCÓN MAYA** Map pp108–9 Mexican €€

☎ 93 451 39 46; Carrer de València 183; meal €20; ☎ Tue-Sat, dinner Mon; M Passeig de Gràcia

Getting a seat in this Mexican eatery can be a real trial. The setting is warm, modest and thankfully devoid of the excesses of pseudo-Mexican décor. The pocket-sized serves of nachos, guacamole and fajitas all burst with flavour. You'll also discover lesser-known items like *tacos de pibil* (pork tacos) and *tinga*, little pasta pockets of chicken. The owner-chef spent much of his life in the restaurant business in Mexico City. On quieter nights, he'll emerge from the kitchen to chat animatedly with his guests.

**RESTAURANTE JARDÍN ROSA**

Map pp102–3 Chinese €€

☎ 93 325 71 95; Avinguda Mistral 54; meal €15-20; ☎ daily; M Espanya

As in any other city, there's no shortage of cheap and cheerful Chinese joints, but this is the real McCoy. Go for the first part of the menu where you'll find anything from pig blood soup and black chicken in ginger to frogs' legs and strips of eel with leek. The chintzy décor one normally associates with Chinese eateries is considerably more sober here.

**AMALTEA** Map pp108–9 Vegetarian €€

☎ 93 454 86 13; [www.restaurantamaltea.com](http://www.restaurantamaltea.com); Carrer de la Diputació 164; meal €10-15; ☎ lunch Mon-Sat, dinner Fri & Sat; M Urgell; ☒

The ceiling fresco of blue sky sets the scene in this popular vegetarian eatery. The weekday set lunch (€10) offers a series of dishes that change frequently with the seasons. Get in early for dinner Monday to Thursday (when they close at 10pm) and savour an *escalopa de seitan* (seitan escalope) and *empanadillas* (pastry pocket) stuffed with spinach or *hiziki* algae and tofu. At night, the set two-course dinner menu (€14.50) offers good value. The home-made desserts are also tempting. The place is something of an alternative lifestyle centre, with yoga, t'ai chi and belly-dancing classes.

**L'ATZAVARA** Map pp108–9 Vegetarian €€

☎ 93 454 59 25; Carrer de Muntaner 109; meal €10-15; ☎ lunch Mon-Sat; M Hospital Clínic; ☒

A hushed air reigns in this brightly lit place – it could almost be grandma's tearoom. A limited and varying *menú del día* (€9.90) is offered, and while servings are hardly huge, the food is tasty. The menu changes regularly but you might encounter a scrumptious *paella d'arròs integral amb verdures* (whole rice vegetable paella) or an oven-baked *pastís camperol* (vegetable pie).

**CAFÈ DEL CENTRE** Map pp108–9 Café €€

☎ 93 488 11 01; Carrer de Girona 69; ☎ 8am-midnight Mon-Fri; M Girona

Step back a century in this café, in business since 1873. The timber-top bar extends down the right side as you enter, fronted by a slew of marble-topped tables and dark timber chairs. It exudes an almost melancholy air but gets busy at night.

**CAFÈ ZURICH** Map pp108–9 Café €€

☎ 93 317 91 53; Carrer de Pelai 39; ☎ 8am-11pm Sun-Fri, 10am-midnight Sat; M Catalunya; ☒

It doesn't quite exude the atmosphere of the café of the same name that once occupied this prime spot, but not even the hardest of hearts can deny the location is impeccable. Pull up an outdoor pew for the human circus that is Plaça de Catalunya, or huddle over a paper on the mezzanine on a winter's day. In summer it stays open as late as 1am.



**CACAO SAMPKA** Map pp108–9 Chocolate €

☎ 93 272 08 33; [www.cacaosampka.com](http://www.cacaosampka.com); Carrer del Consell de Cent 292; ☎ 9am–9pm Mon–Sat; **M** Passeig de Gràcia; ☒

Chocoholics will be convinced they have died and passed on to a better place. Load up in the shop or head for the bar out the back where you can have a classic *xocolata calenta* and munch on exquisite chocolate cakes, tarts, ice cream, sweets and sandwiches!

**ESCRIBÀ** Map pp108–9 Chocolate €

☎ 93 454 75 35; [www.escriba.es](http://www.escriba.es); Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes 546; ☎ 8am–3pm & 5–8pm Mon–Fri, 8am–8pm Sat, Sun & holidays; **M** Urgell; ☒ Antoni Escribà carries forward a family tradition (since 1906) of melting Barcelonins' hearts with remarkable pastries and criminal chocolate creations. Try their Easter *bunyols de xocolata* (little round pastry balls filled with chocolate cream). Escribà has another branch in a Modernista setting at [La Rambla de Sant Joseph 83](#) (Map pp64–5).

**MAURI** Map pp108–9 Pastries €

☎ 93 215 10 20; [La Rambla de Catalunya 102](#); ☎ 8am–9pm Mon–Sat, 8am–3pm Sun; **M** Diagonal; ☒

Since it opened in 1929, this grand old pastry shop has had its regular customers salivating over the endless range of sweets, chocolate croissants and gourmet delicatessen items.

**CREMERIA TOSCANA** Map pp102–3 Gelato €

☎ 93 539 38 25; Carrer de Muntaner 161; ☎ 1–9pm Tue–Sun; **M** Hospital Clínic; ☒

Yes, you can stumble across quite reasonable ice cream in Barcelona, but close your eyes and think yourself across the Mediterranean to the real ice cream wizards. This corner *gelateria* is a slice of Italy. Creamy *stracciatella* and wavy *nocciola*...and myriad other flavours await at the most authentic gelato outlet in town. Buy a cone or a tub! They have another branch in [El Born](#) (Map pp84–5; ☎ 93 268 07 29; Carrer dels Canvis Vells 2; ☎ 1–9pm Mon–Thu, 1am–midnight Fri, noon–1am Sat, noon–midnight Sun; **M** Barceloneta).

**ORXATERIA SIRVEN** Map pp102–3 Ice Cream €

☎ 93 441 76 16; [Ronda de Sant Pau 3](#); ☎ 10am–2.30pm & 4.30–9pm; **M** Sant Antoni

A haven of *orxata/horchata* (tiger-nut drink), this busy locale serves up the best you'll try without having to catch the train down to this drink's spiritual home, Valencia. You can get it by the glass or take it away by the bottle. This place also purveys ice cream, *granissat* (iced fruit crush) and *turrón* (nougat).

**GRÀCIA & PARK GÜELL**

Spread right across this busy *barri* are all sorts of enticing options, from simple tapas bars to top-class seafood. Gràcia is loaded with Middle Eastern and, to a lesser extent, Greek restaurants, which are chirpy and good value. Several good value, classic Catalan taverns tick along nicely with a strong local following. There's little of interest, however, around Park Güell.

**BOTAFUMEIRO** Map p118 Seafood €€€

☎ 93 218 42 30; [www.botafumeiro.es](http://www.botafumeiro.es); Carrer Gran de Gràcia 81; meal €70–80; ☎ 1pm–1am; **M** Fontana; ☒

It is hard not to mention this classic temple of Galician shellfish and other briny delights but, perhaps overconfident after years as one of Barcelona's premier eateries, it runs the danger of pricing itself out of the market. Share a few *medias raciones* to taste a range of marine offerings or share a *safata especial del Mar Cantàbric* (seafood platter) between two. You can also try *percebes*, the strangely twisted goose barnacles harvested along Galicia's north Atlantic coast.

**RESTAURANT ROIG ROBÍ**

Map p118 Catalan €€

☎ 93 218 92 22; [www.roigrobi.com](http://www.roigrobi.com); Carrer de Seneca 20; meal €70; ☎ Mon–Fri, dinner Sat; **M** Diagonal; ☒

This is an altar to traditional cooking, but with an unusual delicacy. The *mandonguilles de lluç amb bolets i sipia* (salt cod meatballs with mushrooms and cuttlefish) are delicious. Even the simplest items, like *croquetes de pollastre* (chicken croquettes) are prepared to perfection.

**BILBAO** Map p118 Northern Spanish €€

☎ 93 458 96 24; Carrer del Perill 33; meal €40; ☎ Mon–Sat; **M** Diagonal

It doesn't look much from the outside, but Bilbao is a timeless classic where reservations for dinner are imperative. The back dining room, with bottle-lined walls, stout

timber tables and a yellowing light evocative of a country tavern, will appeal to carnivores especially, although some fish dishes are also on offer. Consider opting for a *chuletón* and wash down with a good Spanish red.

**LA ROSA DEL DESIERTO**

Map p118 Moroccan €€

☎ 93 237 45 90; Plaça de Narcís Oller 7; meal €35–40; ☎ Tue–Sat, lunch Sun; **M** Diagonal

The arched doorway gives a clue as to the North African flavour of this long-standing favourite for couscous. It offers eight nine varieties of the stuff, from vegetarian to 'imperial' (with *merguez*, North African sausage, and a skewer of *kefta*, lightly spiced minced meat), along with other Moroccan faves like *tajine* (a kind of casserole). Take your place amid piles of cushions and finish with a refreshing mint tea.

**PARCO** Map p118 Japanese €€

☎ 93 238 78 22; Passeig de Gràcia 119; meal €35–40; ☎ Tue–Sun; **M** Diagonal

The Italian love affair with Barcelona manifests itself here with this branch of the stylish Milan sushi-restaurant-cum-cocktail-bar. With a little fusion music in the background, start the evening with a round of bulbous cocktails before ordering plates of sushi and sashimi. Lighting is low, while red and black dominate the décor. Those unlucky enough to miss out on a lounge may find themselves uncomfortably perched on backless chairs.

**TIBET** Map p118 Catalan €€

☎ 93 284 50 45; Carrer de Ramiro de Maetz 34; meal €35; ☎ Wed–Sat & Mon, lunch only Sun; **M** Alfons X or **B** 24 or 39

In a semi-rustic setting not far from Park Güell this restaurant has as much to do with Tibet as the author of this book does with Eskimos. For 50 years they have been sizzling meat on the grill and dishing up snails, one of the house specialities. There's not an item of seafood in sight.

**CAL BOTER** Map p118 Catalan €€

☎ 93 458 84 62; Carrer de Tordera 62; meal €30–35; ☎ Tue–Sun; **M** Joanic

A classic eatery that draws families and noisy groups of pals for *cargols a la llauna* (snails sautéed in a tin dish), *filet de bou a*

*la crema de foie* (a thick clump of tender beef drowned in an orange foie sauce), and other Catalan specialities, including curious *mar i muntanya* combinations like *bolets i gambes* (mushrooms and prawns). Finish with a *xarrup de llimona amb mar de cava* (lemon sorbet drowned in *cava*). The *menú del dia* (lunch Tuesday to Friday) comes in at a good-humoured €8.70.

**O' GRÀCIA!** Map p118 Catalan €€

☎ 93 213 30 44; Plaça de la Revolució de Setembre de 1868 15; meal €30–35; ☎ Mon–Sat; **M** Fontana; ☒

This is an especially popular lunch option, with the *menú del dia* being outstanding value for around €10. The *arròs negre de sepia* makes a good first course, followed by a limited set of meat and fish options with vegetable sides. Serves are decent, presentation careful and service attentive. *A la carta*, you have tasting menu options ranging from €23 to about €30.

**ENVALIRA** Map p118 Catalan €€

☎ 93 218 58 13; Plaça del Sol 13; meal €25–30; ☎ Tue–Sat, lunch Sun; **M** Fontana

Surrounded by cool hangouts, Lebanese eateries and grunge bars, you'd barely notice the modest entrance to this delicious relic, seemingly from another era. Past the handful of tables by the bar you head into the tiny dining room out the back, where the décor seems not to have changed since the 1950s. Serious waiters deliver all sorts of seafood and rice dishes to your table, from *arròs a la milanesa* (savoury rice dish with chicken, pork and a light cheese gratin) to a *bullit de lluç* (slice of white hake boiled with herb-laced rice and a handful of clams). You could start with a *sopa ¼ hora* ('quarter hour soup', a fish and rice broth).

**LAC MAJÜR** Map p118 Italian €€

☎ 93 285 15 03; Carrer de Tordera 33; meal €20–25; ☎ Mon–Sat; **M** Verdaguer

You could easily miss this cosy little slice of northwest Italy as you stride along this quiet and unusually leafy lane. Inside, all sorts of home-cooking delights await, including house specials *gnocchi* and *trofie*. The latter are little twists of pasta, usually served with pesto sauce in Liguria. Try the *mascarpone* and ham variant followed by, say, a *saltimbocca alla romana* (a veal slice cooked with ham, sage and sweet marsala wine).

**EL GLOP** Map p118 Catalan €  
☎ 93 213 70 58; [www.tavernaelglop.com](http://www.tavernaelglop.com); Carrer de Sant Lluís 24; meal €20; **M** Joanic  
Step inside this raucous eatery decked out in country Catalan fashion, with gingham tablecloths and no-nonsense, slap-up meals. The secret is hearty serves of simple dishes, such as *bistec a la brasa* (grilled steak), perhaps preceded by *albergínies farcides* (stuffed aubergines) or *calçots* in winter. Try the *tocinillo*, a caramel dessert, to finish. Open until 1am, it's a useful place to have up your sleeve for a late bite.

**NOU CANDANCHÚ** Map p118 Tapas €  
☎ 93 237 73 62; Plaça de Rius i Taulat 9; meal €15-20; ☎ Wed-Mon; **M** Fontana  
The liveliest locale on the square, Nou Candanchú is a long-time favourite for myriad reasons. Many flock to its sunny terrace just for a few drinks. Accompany the liquid refreshment with one of the giant *entrepans* for which this place is famous. Otherwise, it offers a limited range of tapas and does some reasonable grilled meat dishes.

**TAVERNA LA LLESCA** Map p118 Catalan €  
☎ 93 285 02 46; Carrer de Terol 6; meal €15-20; ☎ Mon-Sat; **M** Fontana  
Head out to the back of this wonderfully boisterous eatery where the name of the game is hearty servings of meat (which you can temper with a little salad if you want), washed down with throaty house red. A good option is *entrecot de vedella* (beef entrecôte), which arrives in generous portions.

**HIMALI** Map p118 Nepalese, Vegetarian €  
☎ 93 285 15 68; Carrer de Milà i Fontanals 60; meal €15-20; ☎ Tue-Sun; **M** Joanic  
Spacious and simple, with gruff service and paper place mats, this is a great spot for cheap Nepalese food and vegetarian dishes. You could pick up a filling lentil-based *dal bhat* or a *sabji tarkari* (mixed vegetable curry). Carnivores are catered for with options such as mixed grills with rice and naan, or *kukhurako fila* (roast chicken in walnut sauce).

**EL CRIOLLO** Map p118 Argentine €  
☎ 93 218 01 02; Carrer de Sant Domènec 10; meal €10-15; ☎ Tue-Sun; **M** Fontana  
Longing for Argentine *empanadillas*, or Cabsha chocolate cookies? Need a sup-

ply of *mate*? This is a cheerful stop for a snacky meal to take away or eat in. It doubles as a general store for mostly Argentine products. The *tarta de pollo* is scrumptious, but the *empanadillas* (anything from spicy beef to spinach) are the star attraction.

**EL ROURE** Map p118 Tapas €  
☎ 93 218 73 87; Carrer de la Riera Sant Miquel 51; meal €15-20; ☎ Mon-Sat; **M** Fontana  
This old-time locals' bar is what Hemingway meant by a 'clean, well-lighted place'. Sidle up to the bar or pull up a little wooden chair and tuck into a choice of good-value tapas from the bar, washed down by a few cold Estrellas. The choice is abundant. The *bunyols de bacallà* are delightful battered balls of cod that demand to be gobbled up. The place is full-to-bursting most of the time.

**VRENELI** Map p118 Café €  
☎ 93 217 61 01; Plaça de Rius i Taulat 8; ☎ 8am-9pm Tue-Fri, 9am-9pm Sat-Sun; **M** Fontana  
For banana or carrot cake and a cup of coffee on a grey winter's day, this long, narrow bar with soft mood music is a good place to come in from the cold.

## LA ZONA ALTA

Some of the grandest kitchens in the city are scattered across La Zona Alta, from Tibidabo across Sant Gervasi (as far down as Avinguda Diagonal, west of Gràcia) to Pedralbes. Plenty of places of all cuisines and qualities abound, often tucked away in quiet, unassuming residential streets far from anything of interest to tourists. Eating in La Zona Alta can be both a culinary and, with a couple of notable exceptions, a genuine local experience.

**VIA VENETO** Map pp122-3 Catalan €€€  
☎ 93 200 72 44; [www.viavenetorestaurant.com](http://www.viavenetorestaurant.com); Carrer de Ganduxer 10; meal €90-120; ☎ Mon-Fri, dinner Sat, closed three weeks in Aug; **F**GC La Bonanova; ☎  
Dalí used to regularly waltz into this high-society eatery after it opened in 1967. The vaguely Art-Deco setting (note the oval mirrors), orange-rose tablecloths, leather chairs and fine cutlery must cater perhaps to more conservative souls, but the painter was here for the kitchen exploits. Catalan dishes dominate the menu and

the mouth waters at the mere mention of, say, *San Pedro asado y lacado con pancetta, dátiles y tomate confitado* (a beautiful white fish coated in bacon and dates with crystallised tomato). The service is so good you barely notice the presence of the waiters.

**HOFMANN** Map pp122-3 Mediterranean €€€  
☎ 93 218 71 65; [www.hofmann-bcn.com](http://www.hofmann-bcn.com); Carrer de Granada del Penedès 14-16; meal €80-100; ☎ Mon-Fri; **M** Jaume I; ☎  
Perhaps it was inevitable that the renowned cuisine school's restaurant should move from La Ribera to the money uptown. It's worth following them to their new designer locale to taste the efforts of the trainee chefs and their instructors. Dishes are generally elegant renditions of classic Mediterranean food, followed by such delicious desserts that some people prefer a starter and two sweets, skipping the main course.

**EL RACÒ D'EN FREIXA** Map pp122-3 Mediterranean €€€  
☎ 93 209 75 59; [www.elracodenfreixa.com](http://www.elracodenfreixa.com); Carrer de Sant Elies 22; meal €70-100; ☎ Tue-Sat Sep-Jul; **F**GC Sant Gervasi  
On a quiet residential street deep in the Zona Alta, this hushed designer hideaway offers all sorts of little surprises from one of Spain's top chefs, Ramon Freixa. Let's see: what about the Big Duck, a hamburger of duck meat served with bread made of cereals, crystallised red onion and frozen mustard, for a starter? You can follow with one of six seafood options. A coolly elegant place, with clean cream-hued lines and flawless service, it's little wonder Freixa has a Michelin star and has twice been voted Spain's chef of the year by the country's *Gourmetour* good food guide.

**HISOP** Map pp122-3 Mediterranean €€€  
☎ 93 241 32 33; [www.hisop.com](http://www.hisop.com); Passatge de Marimon 9; meal €70-80; ☎ Mon-Fri & dinner Sat; **M** Diagonal; ☎  
The hippest entrance on this restaurant-jammed uptown lane definitely belongs to Hisop, an elegant dining option where flavour and service are a priority. Black, white and burgundy dominate the dining room décor. Consider the four-course seasonal tasting menu – you might wind up with a melt-in-your-mouth deer sirloin done in truffle, and for dessert a light chocolate

and olive-flavoured ice-cream biscuit with a froth of tofu. The wine list is impressive and service immaculate.

**LA BALSÀ** Map pp122-3 Mediterranean €€  
☎ 93 211 50 48; [www.labalsarestaurant.com](http://www.labalsarestaurant.com); Carrer de la Infanta Isabel 4; meal €70; ☎ lunch Tue-Sun, dinner Mon-Sat; **F**GC Avinguda del Tibidabo; ☎  
With its grand ceiling and the scented gardens that surround the main terrace dining area, La Balsa is one of the city's top dining experiences. The menu changes frequently and is a mix of traditional Catalan and off-centre inventiveness. Lounge over a cocktail at the bar before being ushered to your table. The place is famous for its August dinner buffet (around €28).

**CAN TRAVI NOU** off Map pp102-3 Catalan €€  
☎ 93 428 03 01; [www.gruptravi.com](http://www.gruptravi.com); Carrer de Jorge Manrique s/n, Parc de la Vall d'Hebron; meal €45-50; ☎ Mon-Sat, lunch Sun; **M** Montbau; **P** ☎  
Yes, it has been discovered by tourists. But who can blame them? This expansive 18th-century mansion has several dining areas that stretch out across two floors. The warm colours, grandfather clock and a wholesome, rustic air make for a magical setting for a Catalan splurge. The *risotto de formatge* (cheese risotto) makes a hearty starter but the generous mains will please you even more. The *arròs caldós amb llamàntol i cloïsses* (rice stew with lobster and clams) is irresistible and they also do some tender grilled steaks.

**CAN CORTADA** off Map pp102-3 Catalan €€  
☎ 93 427 23 15; [www.gruptravi.com](http://www.gruptravi.com); Avinguda de l'Estatut de Catalunya s/n; meal €40; **M** Montbau; **P** ☎  
More than anything else, it is the setting and the hearty welcome that makes this 11th-century estate (complete with the remains of a defensive tower) worth the excursion. Try for a table in the former cellars or on the garden terrace. Lots of Catalan fare, like *pollastre amb escamarlans* (chicken and crayfish), dominates the menu.

**JOSÉ LUIS** Map pp122-3 Spanish €€  
☎ 93 200 83 12; Avinguda Diagonal 520; meal €40; **M** Diagonal  
Welcome to Madrid! Long established in the Spanish capital, the Barcelona branch

occupies a privileged spot. It is said this place introduced the *montadito* (delicious little canapés) to Barcelona. Pick and choose from these and a long list of *pinchos* and *raciones*, including the all-time Madrid favourite, *callos* (tripe). Otherwise you could sit down in the elliptical basement for a classy meal served by brisk waiters in black jackets and bow ties. Mains of fish and meat come in at about €20. You can also opt for morning *bocadillos* at the bar.

**INDOCHINE** Map pp122–3 Pan-Asian €€  
☎ 93 201 99 84; [www.indochinebarcelona.com](http://www.indochinebarcelona.com); Carrer d'Aribau 247; meal €35-40; ☎ daily; ♿ FGC Plaça Molina; ☒

This uptown Asian eatery could almost pass for a florist. Once through the French doors and greenery you will be presented with a selection of Thai, Vietnamese and Cambodian dishes. The result is a little westernised, but the food is enticing nonetheless. You could start with a light green-papaya salad and follow with *pescado al estilo camboyano* (Cambodian-style fish, lightly steamed and done in a vegetable sauce). Those with flexible legs can opt to sit on the floor.

**BAR TOMÀS** Map pp122–3 Tapas €  
☎ 93 203 10 77; Carrer Major de Sarrià 49; meal €15; ☎ Thu-Tue; ♿ FGC Sarrià

Many Barcelonins have long claimed that Bar Tomàs is by far the best place in the city for *patates braves*, prepared here with a special variation on the traditional spicy tomato and mayonnaise sauce. The place is a rough-edged bar, but that doesn't stop the mostly well-off citizens of Sarrià piling in, particularly for lunch on weekends.

**CAFFÈ SAN MARCO** Map pp122–3 Café €  
☎ 93 280 29 73; Carrer de Pedro de la Creu 15; ☎ 9am-9.30pm; ♿ FGC Reina Elisenda

For one of the best coffees you're likely to have, it is hard to beat this place. A charming atmosphere where you can settle in to read the paper or simply watch passers-by.

**FOIX DE SARRIÀ** Map pp122–3 Pastries €  
☎ 93 203 04 73; [www.foixdesarria.com](http://www.foixdesarria.com), in Spanish; Plaça de Sarrià 12-13; ☎ 8am-8pm; ♿ FGC Reina Elisenda

Since 1886 they have been selling the most exquisite cakes and sweets in this exclu-

sive pastry shop. You can take them away or head out back to sip tea, coffee or hot chocolate while sampling the little cakes and other wizardry.

## MONTJUÏC, SANTS & POBLE SEC

Montjuïc is largely bereft of notable eating options, for the obvious reason that it is mostly parks and gardens. In gruff old Poble Sec, however, you'll turn up all sorts of priceless nuggets, from historic old taverns offering Catalan classics to a handful of smart, new-wave eateries. The pickings in Sants are slimmer, but there are still some worthy exceptions.

**ROSAL 34** Map pp140–1 Mediterranean €€  
☎ 93 324 90 46; [www.rosal34.com](http://www.rosal34.com); Carrer del Roser 34; meal €45-65; ☎ Tue-Sat, lunch Sun; ♿ Poble Sec

This place is seriously stylish. Exposed brick and stone walls and a sinuous bar, accompanied by wafting lounge sounds, set the scene for a gourmet experience. You can opt for one of two tasting menus or search the fairly extensive menu for such full-flavoured numbers as *ventresca de tonyina de sorra amb alberginia fumadada i agridolç de gerds* (grilled tuna meat, served with smoked aubergine and a sweet-and-sour raspberry sauce).

**XEMEI** Map pp140–1 Italian €€  
☎ 93 553 51 40; Passeig de l'Exposició 85; meal €45; ☎ Wed-Mon; ♿ Paral.lel; ☒

With its half-dozen rough preloved tables, gentle jazz and ebullient Venetian owner, Xemei is a slice of Venice on the side of Montjuïc hill. Portions of such delicacies as *bigoi in salsa veneziana* (thick spaghetti in an anchovy and onion sauce) or *paccheri* (a Neapolitan tubular pasta) in a thick cuttlefish sauce are probably not enough, so adopt Italian tradition and opt for a second course such as *suprema de San Pedro con tomatito y espárragos* (a tender white Mediterranean fish with cherry tomatoes and asparagus).

**MIRAMAR** Map pp140–1 Mediterranean €€  
☎ 93 443 66 27; [www.club-miramar.es](http://www.club-miramar.es), in Spanish; Carretera de Miramar 40; meal €40-50; ☎ Tue-Sat, lunch Sun; ♿ 50 & PM

## HIGH IN THE SKY

For a five-star dining experience beneath a transparent UFO-style dome, 105m above Hotel Hesperia Tower in l'Hospitalet de Llobregat, grab a cab for **Restaurant Evo** (☎ 93 413 50 30; [www.restauranteevo.com](http://www.restauranteevo.com); Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes 144; ☎ Mon-Sat; ♿ Hospital Bellvitge; ♿ ☒). This is gourmet dining literally under the stars (of which one comes from Michelin). Lean lines dictate décor, with lacquer-finished tables, low white chairs and light arched into the structure of the dome. The highpoint is the presentation of Mediterranean market cooking (say, the *cocotte de setas, verdure, cigalas y tocino* – a casserole with mushrooms, vegetables, crayfish and pig fat), with noble touches (like Mollet eggs and caviar).

With several terraces and a cool designer main dining area, this restaurant's main draw is the views it offers over Barcelona's waterfront. Built just above the Transbordador Aeri cable car station, you can linger over a coffee or tuck into an elegant meal. Set tasting menus are on offer for €32 or €48 or you can try *a la carta*. The *bacallà confitat al pil-pil de fava tonka i praliné d'ametlles amb verduritas* (glazed cod in a slight hot sauce with tonka beans, an almond cream and vegetables) is tempting.

**EL PEIXEROT** Map pp140–1 Seafood €€  
☎ 93 424 69 69; Carrer de Tarragona 177; meal €40-50; ♿ Sants Estació or Tarragona; ☒

Twinned with the restaurant of the same name in Vilanova, a seaside town southwest of Barcelona, El Peixerot has sea-blue décor and is rather ugly from the outside. Inside, it's big and boisterous, but service is rapid and the food is always good. It's famous for fresh seafood (sold by weight) and rice dishes. And Michelin likes it.

**TAPIOLES 53** Map pp140–1 Mediterranean €€  
☎ 93 329 22 38; [www.tapioles53.com](http://www.tapioles53.com); Carrer de Tapioles 53; meal €35-45; ☎ dinner Tue-Sat; ♿ Paral.lel; ☒

A stylish place housed in a former umbrella factory, this gem is run by Australian-born chef, Sarah Stothart, who has been cooking around the world for years. It shows in her limited yet constantly changing international menu. Ingredients are sourced daily from the city's markets. Asian touches are sometimes present but you might just as easily find yourself with a Moroccan-style *tajine*. Start at the bar and proceed to one of the stout timber tables. Book ahead.

**ZARAUTZ** Map pp140–1 Basque €€  
☎ 93 325 28 13; Carrer de l'Elisi 13; meal €30-35; ☎ 8am-11.30pm Mon-Sat Sep-Jul; ♿ Tarragona; ☒

A short hop away from the train station, you can take in some quality Basque tapas at the bar any time of the day, or retire to the restaurant for a full meal, such as *carpaccio de bou amb formatge Idiazabal* (Argentine beef carpaccio with a tangy Basque cheese). The owner is a dessert specialist, so save some room. It's a rough-and-tumble looking joint but don't let that put you off.

**RESTAURANT ELCHE** Map pp140–1 Paella €€  
☎ 93 441 30 89; Carrer de Vila i Vilà 71; meal €30; ♿ Paral.lel

With tables spreading over two floors and old-world service and settings, this spot has been doing some of Barcelona's best paella (of various types) and *fideuà* (similar to paella, but using vermicelli noodles as the base) since the 1960s. Other places come and go, but this classic never seems to wilt.

**LA BODEGUETA** Map pp140–1 Catalan €€  
☎ 93 442 08 46; Carrer de Blai 47; meal €30; ☎ lunch Fri-Sun, dinner daily; ♿ Paral.lel

For a homey Catalan atmosphere (complete with wine barrels, an old frigidaire and Gingham tablecloths), pop by this cheery spot. Options are limited to classic local favourites such as a thick *entrecot al pebre* (pepper steak) for carnivores or a reasonable *graellada de verdure* (mixed grilled vegetables) for gentler souls. Wash down with a generous ceramic jug of house red (€6) and you have the makings of hearty night out.

**TAVERNA CAN MARGARIT** Map pp140–1 Catalan €€  
☎ 93 441 67 23; Carrer de la Concòrdia 21; meal €30; ☎ dinner Mon-Sat; ♿ Poble Sec

For decades they have been dishing out dinner to often raucous groups in this former wine store. Traditional Catalan cooking is the name of the game. Surrounded



by aged wine barrels, take your place at old tables and benches and perhaps order the *conejo a la jumillana* (fried rabbit served with garlic, onion, bay leaves, rosemary, mint, thyme and oregano).

**QUIMET I QUIMET** Map pp140–1 Tapas €€

☎ 93 442 31 42; Carrer del Poeta Cabanyes 25; meal €25-30; ☎ Mon-Fri, lunch Sat; 📄 Paral.lel; ☒

A tapas bar which has seemingly been around forever, Quimet i Quimet is a family-run business that has been passed down from generation to generation. Although there's barely space to swing a calamari, this bottle-lined, standing-room-only place is a treat for the palate. Just look at all those gourmet tapas waiting for you! Let the folk behind the bar advise you, and order a drop of fine wine to accompany. Or opt for their behind-the-counter malt beer, especially bottled for them in Belgium.

**LA TOMAQUERA** Map pp140–1 Catalan €

☎ 93 441 85 18; Carrer de Margarit 5; meal €20; ☎ Tue-Sat; 📄 Poble Sec

The waiters shout and rush about this classic, while carafes of wine are sloshed about the long timber tables. You can't book, so it's first in, first seated (queues are the norm). Try the house speciality of snails or go for hearty meat dishes. The occasional

seafood option, such as *cassola de cigales* (a crayfish hotpot) might also tempt. And cash is king.

**EL SORTIDOR** Map pp140–1 Mediterranean €

☎ 93 441 85 18; Plaça del Sortidor 5; meal €15; ☎ lunch Mon-Sat, dinner Fri; 📄 Poble Sec

Step back in history. Hot food has been dished up here since 1908. The ceramic-fronted fridge, tiled floor and bar seem to have changed little since then – but appearances can deceive. Turin-born Flavio runs this place, and offers a typical *menú del dia* that isn't that typical – how many Catalans have eaten handmade *pappardelle* (a broad ribbon pasta from Italy)? On Friday nights he serves up couscous and live Irish music. And on other nights he'll only open for a reservation of 20 or more!

**LA BELLA NAPOLI** Map pp140–1 Pizza €

☎ 93 442 50 56; Carrer de Margarit 12; pizza €8-10; ☎ Wed-Sun, dinner Tue; 📄 Paral.lel

There are pizza joints all over Barcelona. And then there's the real thing, the way they make it in Naples. This place even feels like Naples. The waiters are mostly from across the Med and have that cheeky southern Italian approach to food, customers and everything else. The pizzas are second to none and the atmosphere sunny.

## DRINKING & NIGHTLIFE

### top picks

- Otto Zutz (p211)
- Elephant (p211)
- Shôko (p204)
- Dry Martini (p205)
- Terrazza (p213)
- Harlem Jazz Club (p200)
- Sala Apolo (p213)
- Razzmatazz (p205)
- Bar Marsella (p200)
- Barcelona Pipa Club (p198)
- Space (p213)
- Sutton the Club (p212)

What's your recommendation? [www.lonelyplanet.com/barcelona](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/barcelona)

Heading out into the night in Barcelona will rarely leave you in the cold. The sheer number of bars, pubs and taverns could keep the curious drinker shifting from one spot to the next for weeks, if not months.

Most locals do their partying from Thursday to Saturday. The hefty influx of tourists, students and foreign residents with irregular hours means that you can usually find places busy in the Barri Gòtic, El Born (La Ribera) and El Raval any night, while other areas that attract mostly local punters are quiet until Thursday night.

There is also a good spread of clubs and, although city bylaws make it virtually impossible to open major new dance and gig venues, Barcelona is already blessed with a rich line-up of places to hide in until dawn, and a handful where you can stay inside until the middle of the day too (on weekends).

The live music scene is vigorous, if a little limited in terms of variety. Barcelona does not have a big local band scene. That said, depending on the night, you can see anything from ear-splitting Spanish pop-rock (popular with the locals but perhaps a little tiresome for the international set) to the latest in house, hip-hop and funk. You can catch a live jazz set on just about any night, and flamenco (often cheesy but sometimes top-class) is another perennial favourite. A handful of major venues welcome all sorts of acts, Spanish and international, throughout the year.

The city's casino, **Casino de Barcelona** (Map pp98–9; ☎ 93 225 78 78; www.casino-barcelona.com/ing; Carrer de la Marina 19-21; ☹ 11am-5am; 📍 Ciutadella Vila Olímpica) in Port Olímpic, is the place for those who are feeling lucky or fiscally well-endowed. As well as the usual one-armed bandits and more sophisticated games, there are restaurants, bars and a club.

## WHAT TO DRINK

### Wine

Spain is a wine-drinking country and *vi/vino* (wine) accompanies all meals (except breakfast!). Spanish wine, whether *blanc/blanco* (white), *negre/tinto* (red) or *rosat/rosado* (rosé) tends to have quite a kick, in part because of the climate but also because of grape varieties and production methods. That said, the long-adhered-to policy of quantity over quality has for some time given way to a subtler approach. It is still possible to find cheap, kick-arse wine that makes your mouth pucker, but the palette of varieties has become much more sophisticated since the 1980s.

At the bottom end of the market (apart from true *garrafón* in the form of almost giveaway Tetrabriks), an entirely drinkable bottle of table wine can easily enough be had for around €5 in supermarkets and from wine merchants (especially the old kind, a slowly dying breed, where they will fill your bottle from giant casks). However, the same money in a restaurant won't get you far. Apart from *vi/vino de la casa* (house wine), which is commonly ordered at lunchtime by the litre or half-litre, you will pay an average of €10 to €15 for a reasonable bottle, and considerably more

### GETTING THE LOCAL LOWDOWN

There is no shortage of guides to Barcelona's nightlife, both in print and on the web. **Guía del Ocio** (€1; www.guiadelocio.bcn.es, in Spanish), the city's weekly entertainment mag, is available from newsstands. Look for the free mags and booklets distributed around some bars. They include *Micro*, *Go Mag*, *Mondo Sonoro*, *Metropolitan*, *Nit*, *Gig*, *Salir* and the rivers of flyers that flow through many bars. For the latest events, register online with **Lecool** (www.lecool.com). Also take a look at **Agentes de la Noche** (www.agentesdelanoche.com, in Spanish), **Barceloca** (www.barceloca.com), **BCN-Nightlife** (www.bcn-nightlife.com), **Barcelonarocks.com** (www.barcelonarocks.com), **ClubbingSpain.com** (www.clubbingSpain.com, in Spanish), and **LaNetro.com** (http://barcelona.lanetro.com). These sources are a good starting point but may not always be up-to-date. Also bear in mind that, in most cases, many places pay for their listing, so 100% impartiality cannot be guaranteed.

for something classier. You can also generally order wine by the *copa* (glass) in bars and restaurants, although the choice will be more limited. Not generally available in bars is the acquired taste of *calimocha*, a mix of Tetrabrik red wine and coke, beloved of penniless partying students across the country.

As in the other major wine-producing countries of the EU, there are two broad categories: table wine and quality wine. The former ranges from the basic *vi de taula/vino de mesa* to *vi de la terra/vino de la tierra*, the latter being a wine from an officially recognised wine-producing area. If a region meets certain strict standards, it receives DO (*denominación de origen*) status. Outstanding wine regions get DOC (*denominación de origen calificada*) status. In Catalonia, there are 12 DOs (known as appellations), including a regional one (DO Catalunya) and a general one for *cava*. Some of the DOs cover little more than a few vineyards. Unfortunately classifications are not always a guarantee of quality, and many drinkers of Spanish wine put more faith in the name and reputation of certain producers or areas than in the denomination labels.

The bulk of DO wines in Catalonia are made from grapes produced in the Penedès area, which pumps out almost two million hectolitres a year. The other DO wine-making zones (spread as far apart as the Empordà area around Figueres in the north and the Terra Alta around Gadesa in the southwest) have a combined output of about half that produced in Penedès. The wines of the El Priorat area, which tend to be dark, heavy reds, have been promoted to DOC status, an honour shared only with those of the Rioja (which have been categorised as such since 1926). Prices have accordingly shot up and most locals in that part of Catalonia can no longer afford their own wine! Drops from the neighbouring Montsant area are frequently as good (or close) and considerably cheaper.

Most of the grapes grown in Catalonia are native to Spain and include White Macabeo, Garnacha and Xarel·lo (for whites), and Black Garnacha, Monastrell and Ull de Llebre (Hare's Eye) red varieties. Foreign varieties (such as Chardonnay, Riesling, Chenin Blanc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Pinot Noir) are also common.

The bulk of production in and around the Penedès area is of white wine. Of these the best-known drop is *cava*, the regional version of champagne. The two big names in bubbly are Freixenet and Codorníu. Connoisseurs tend not to get too excited by these, however, preferring the output of smaller vintners. The main name in Penedès wine is Miguel Torres – one of its stalwart reds is Sangre de Toro. See p257 for tips on wineries to visit.

There is plenty to look out for beyond Penedès. Raïmat, in the Costers del Segre DO area of Lleida province, produces fine reds and a couple of notable whites. Good fortified wines come from around Tarragona (p259) and some nice fresh wines are also produced in the Empordà area in the north.

Sangría is a red wine and fruit punch (usually with lemon, orange and cinnamon), sometimes laced with brandy. It's refreshing going down, but can leave you with a sore head. Indeed, the origins of the drink go back to the days when wine quality was not great and the vinegary taste needed a sweetener. Another version is *sangría de cava*, the same drink made with sparkling white. *Tinto de verano* (summer red) is a mix of wine and Casera, which is a brand of *gaseosa*, similar to lemonade. It is both a means of sweetening tart table wine and avoiding lunchtime hangovers. As its name suggests, it is also popular as a refreshing summertime lunch tippie.

### Beer

The most common way to order *cervesa/cerveza* (beer) is to ask for a *canya*, which is a small draught beer (*cervesa/cerveza de barril*). A larger beer, which comes in a straight glass, (about

### BARCELONA'S NEW OLD BEER

Moritz, a crisp lager that was once Barcelona's most popular beer, has made an extraordinary comeback since 2004. Brewed since 1856 by a company founded by Alsatian brewer Louis Moritz, Moritz went broke in 1978 but his descendants (who kept the brand) are back in action. The three late-19th-century buildings at Ronda Sant Antoni 39-43 (Map pp108–9) that once housed the subterranean brewery are being turned into a leisure and cultural centre (under the direction of French architect Jean Nouvel), with bar-restaurant (under Carles Abellán), demonstration brewery and museum, in addition to the company headquarters. The façades have been restored and the centre is due to open by 2009.



## SOMETHING GOOD BURNING

With Catalan impresarios making money hand over fist in sugar plantations in Cuba and other South American colonies from the late-18th century, it is hardly surprising they developed a taste for one of its by-products, *rom/ron* (rum). In 1818 the Pujol liquor company set up a rum distillery in Catalonia, and since then Ron Pujol has been one of the dominant local brands for this sweet firewater. Today it produces all sorts of rum and rum-based drinks, including the classic Ron Pujol (42%), Pujol & Grau (38%, a lighter, white rum) and Ron 1818, based on the original recipe made in the Antilles. Closer to the Brazilian *cachaça* is Caña Pujol (50%). But the great Catalan drink, especially popular in summer festivals, is *rom cremat* (burned rum). Litres of rum are poured into a shallow ceramic bowl, to which 100 grams of sugar is added per litre, strips of lemon zest (half a lemon) and a stick of cinnamon. The lot is then set alight and constantly *remanat* (stirred and ladled) for about 20 to 30 minutes. About a third of the alcohol is burned off. When the surface appears to be completely alight, with no spaces, your rum is well burned and ready. A small cup of good coffee is poured into the mix to extinguish (this takes some minutes). If you then have to put on a lid to put out remaining flames, you've stuffed it and haven't burned the rum properly!

300mL) is sometimes called a *tubo*. A pint is a *gerra/jarra* and is usually relevant only in pseudo-Irish pubs. A small bottle of beer is called a *flascó/botellín*. A 200mL bottle is called a *quinto* (fifth) and 330mL is a *tercio* (third). Either bottle is often referred to as a *mediana*. If you just ask for a *cerveza* you may get bottled beer, which tends to be marginally more expensive.

The main Catalan brewery is Damm, established by Alsatian immigrants in the 19th century. Their lager-style Estrella Damm is the most common beer in Barcelona (other Damm variants include the potent and flavoursome malt Voll Damm). San Miguel, founded in Lleida in the 1940s, is also widely drunk and the company (with several breweries around Spain) is owned by the Mahou beer conglomerate. Damm company produces 15% of all Spain's beer, as does San Miguel.

A *clara* is a shandy – a beer with a hefty dash of lemonade (or lemon Fanta).

## Other Drinks

There is no shortage of imported and local top-shelf stuff in Barcelona – *coñac* (brandy) is popular. Larios is a common brand of gin (but it doesn't get too many rave reviews from resident Brits!).

On occasion you may be asked if you'd like a *chupito* to round off a meal. This is a little shot of liqueur; the idea is to help digestion. Popular and refreshing Spanish *chupitos* are *licor de manzana verde* (green apple liqueur) and *licor de melocotón* (peach liqueur), both transparent, chilled and with around 20% alcohol.

A popular drink across Spain that swings between sweet liqueur and something a little harder is Ponche Caballero. If you wander into a Galician restaurant you might come across their version of grappa, a clear firewater made with crushed grapes and called *orujo*. The Catalan firewater is *ratafia*, a particularly Pyrenean drop tasting vaguely similar to Kahlua.

South American cocktails such as the Brazilian *cachaça*-based *caipirinha* and the Cuban rum-based *mojito* are especially popular – many bars will whip these up for you in no time.

For tap water in restaurants you could ask for *agua de l'aixeta/agua de grifo*, but you're bound to get a funny look. People rarely opt for Barcelona tap water (and with good reason – it's bloody awful). *Agua/agua mineral* (bottled water) comes in innumerable brands, either *amb gas/con gas* (fizzy) or *sense gas/sin gas* (still).

## BARS

As the hordes of stag- and hen-night partiers demonstrate, there is no shortage of places to get a drink or six in Barcelona. Indeed, there is more drinking, bar-hopping and carousing to be done here than most average mortals can bear. The trick is finding the right zone for you on the right night.

Most visitors converge on Ciutat Vella (Old City) and as a result, you can be sure of plenty of activity seven nights a week. The lower end of the Barri Gòtic, especially on and around Plaça Reial and Carrer dels Escudellers, is usually packed, from the series of tourist-infested pseudo-

Irish boozers on Carrer de Ferran, to cool dance locals and relatively quieter bars hidden away in side lanes. In La Ribera the place to be is Passeig del Born and the lanes that branch off it.

In El Raval the scene is more spread out – from the student faves of Carrer de Joaquín Costa to the mixed set on and around La Rambla del Raval, Carrer Nou de la Rambla and Carrer de Santa Mònica. Some of the city's classic old bars are scattered about here.

Waterfront action comes in three flavours. It is by far busiest in summer, when a set of hip bars along La Barceloneta beach attracts a crowd of chilled-out folk, while the barnyard action of Port Olímpic (replicated to a lesser degree in the bars of Maremàgnum) is home to a strange of mix of youngsters from the 'burbs, sailing folk, and marauding stag- and hen- night groups from abroad. The third scene is the summer-only beach bar option (see p203).

In l'Eixample, Carrer d'Aribau is charged. The action spreads north across Avinguda Diagonal into La Zona Alta, with bars and several clubs that, as a rule, attract a mostly well-dressed, up-town crowd with the occasional cashed-up tourist thrown into the mix. The bars of Gaixample (gay l'Eixample) are clustered around the Carrer del Consell de Cent end of Carrer d'Aribau.

The squares and some streets of Gràcia are laced with bars, as sleepless local residents are constantly reminded. The scene in the area is remarkably homogenous – basically a young, somewhat rowdy, grunge student set. They are mostly locals but out-of-towners, especially of the Erasmus student programme variety, mix in as well.

A handful of options sparkle in Poble Sec, while some clubs are spread across the city, from La Barceloneta to Montjuïc and La Zona Alta.

You can pay anything from €2 to €4 for a 330mL bottle of Estrella beer (draught costs a little less) – it all depends on where and when you order it. Indeed, drink prices reflect the area you're in. In Gràcia, you're likely to find good cocktails and *combinats* (mixed drinks) for €5.50, and many bars offer happy hours. In the old town the same drinks will nudge closer to €8, while in l'Eixample, La Zona Alta and the waterfront (and of course the clubs) you are looking at €10–12 for the same poison.

Most bars are at their liveliest from around 11pm and close between 2am (Sunday to Thursday) and 3am (Friday and Saturday). A handful of places, bless 'em, keep their doors open as late as 5am. That there are not more is largely the result of irate neighbours and the increasingly rigorous application of noise regulations.

Note that drinking in the streets, on the beach and other public places away from bars is illegal and can attract hefty fines.

## Etiquette

One rule of drinking etiquette to observe closely in bars: never ask for or suggest having one last drink. Catalans always order the *penúltima* (next but last), even if it really is the last drink of the evening. To mention the *última* (last) is bad luck, since it sounds like one's last drink on earth. Of course, the problem with ordering a *penúltima* is that frequently it ends up being just that...

## CLUBS

Barcelona's clubs (*discotecas*) come alive from about 2am until 6am, and are at their best from Thursday to Saturday. Indeed, many open only on these nights.

A surprising variety of spots lurk in the old-town labyrinth, ranging from plush former dance halls to grungy subterranean venues that fill to capacity.

Along the waterfront it's another ball game. At Port Olímpic a sun-scorched crowd of visiting yachties mixes it up with tourists and a few locals at noisy, back-to-back dance bars right on the waterfront. The best spots are over on La Barceloneta side. You'll also find the city's only ice bar there, if that sort of thing tickles your fancy.

## TURNTABLE KINGS

Barcelona is crawling with DJs, some local and others passing through. Among the locals, David Mas shines out, regularly spinning his mixes at places like CDLC, Shōko and Sugar Club earlier in the evening and then often winding up headlining locations such as Otto Zutz later on. Right up there with him are Jekey, Sergi Domene, Jordi Martin, Chus Soler and Toni Bass, among many others.

A sprinkling of well-known clubs is spread over the classy parts of town, in l'Eixample and La Zona Alta. As a rule of thumb they attract a beautiful crowd, while the bulk of the city's gay nightlife is concentrated in L'Eixample.

Cover charges range from nothing to €18. If you go early, you'll often pay less. In almost all cases the admission price includes your first drink. Bouncers have last say on dress code and your eligibility to enter. Some places stage live music before converting into clubs.

## LIVE MUSIC

Barely a night goes by without a band filling the night air with the sounds of anything from world music to jazz. A circuit of well-established jazz clubs is always busy, while bands, local and international, turn up in clubs around the city. Jazz fans are also in for a treat in November, when the city's annual jazz festival is staged (see p19).

Start time is rarely before 10pm. Admission charges range from nothing to €20 – the higher prices often include a drink. Note that some of the clubs listed in this chapter sometimes stage concerts. Some bars also intermittently proffer live music.

To see big-name acts, either Spanish or from abroad, you will pay more and probably wind up at venues such as the 17,000-capacity Palau Sant Jordi on Montjuïc, the Teatre Mercat de les Flors or the Fòrum. Truly big acts play the Estadi Olímpic.

## BARRI GÒTIC & LA RAMBLA

La Rambla holds little interest, so leave it to those content to settle for expensive pints and plunge into the narrow streets and back alleys of the lower end of the Barri Gòtic. Check out Carrer dels Escudellers, Carrer Ample (and the parallel Carrer d'En Gignàs and Carrer del Correu Vell) and the area around Plaça Reial.

**BARCELONA PIPA CLUB** Map pp64–5 Bar  
☎ 93 302 47 32; www.bpipaclub.com; Plaça Reial 3; ☎ 11pm–4am Sun–Thu, 11pm–5am Fri & Sat; 🍷 Liceu

This pipe-smokers' club is like an apartment, with all sorts of interconnecting rooms and knick-knacks – notably the pipes after which the place is named. Buzz at the door and head two floors up. Generally it is for members only until 11pm.

**CLUB SOUL** Map pp64–5 Bar  
☎ 93 302 70 26; Carrer Nou de Sant Francesc 7; ☎ 10pm–2.30am Mon–Thu, 10pm–3am Fri & Sat, 8pm–2.30am Sun; 🍷 Drassanes

Known to most by its old name of Dot, this remains one of the hippest hang-outs in this part of town. Each night the DJs change the musical theme, which ranges from deep funk to Latin grooves. The tiny front bar is for drinking and chatting (get in early for a stool or the sole lounge).

Out back is where the dancing is done. On Sundays they start early with a little live jazz.

**GLACIAR** Map pp64–5 Bar  
☎ 93 302 11 63; Plaça Reial 3; ☎ 4pm–2.30am; 🍷 Liceu

This classic, with marble bar and timber seating inside and aluminium tables and chairs outside beneath the porch, remains a favourite for warm-up drinks and watching the free street theatre of Plaça Reial.

**LA CLANDESTINA** Map pp64–5 Bar  
☎ 93 319 05 33; Baixada de Viladecols 2bis; ☎ 10am–10pm Sun–Thu, 9am–midnight Fri & Sat; 🍷 Jaume I

Berets and goatees go down well in this right-on, wi-fi equipped teashop, where you can also opt for a beer, relax over a Middle Eastern narghile (the most elaborate way to smoke), get a head massage or eat carrot cake.

## top picks

### GAY & LESBIAN CLUBS

- DBoy (p207)
- Metro (p208)
- Dietrich Gay Teatro Café (p207)
- New Chaps (p206)
- Aire (p207)

**MANCHESTER** Map pp64–5 Bar  
☎ 663 071748; www.manchesterbar.com; Carrer de Milans 5; ☎ 7pm–2.30am Sun–Thu, 7pm–3am Fri & Sat; 🍷 Liceu

A drinking den that has undergone several transformations down the years now treats you to the sounds of great Manchester bands, from the Chemical Brothers to Oasis, but probably not the Hollies. It has a pleasing rough and tumble feel, with tables jammed in every which way.

**SCHILLING** Map pp64–5 Bar  
☎ 93 317 67 87; Carrer de Ferran 23; ☎ 10am–2.30am Mon–Thu, 10am–3am Fri & Sat, noon–2am Sun; 🍷 Liceu

A gay-friendly favourite with a classy low-lit feel. Perch at the bar, take a little table or slink out the back to the lounges, while various snacks are served up. Whatever you choose, it's a congenial place for a drink and some knowing eye contact.

**SINATRA** Map pp64–5 Bar  
☎ 93 412 52 79; Carrer de les Hores 4–10; ☎ 9pm–2.30am; 🍷 Liceu

Lurking back a block from boisterous Plaça Reial is this no less raucous location. It's largely patronised by foreigners (Spanish-speaking staff are hard to locate!) who flop into splotchy cowhide pattern lounges, perch on long stools beneath the mirror ball and sip Desperados beer while listening to '80s tracks.

**SÍNCOPA** Map pp64–5 Bar  
Carrer d'Avinó 35; ☎ 6pm–2.30am; 🍷 Liceu

Lovers of self-conscious grunge will want to pop in here for the mellow music and conversation. It's a saunter from Plaça de George Orwell (or Plaça del Trippy to those who hang around here taking drugs).

**SUGAR** Map pp64–5 Bar  
www.sugarbarcelona.com; Carrer d'En Rauric 21; ☎ 8pm–2.30am Sun–Thu, 8pm–3am Fri & Sat; 🍷 Liceu

This funky cave is proof that you can go a long way with very little. Throw a few cushions around the entrance cubby hole and benches, add bar, DJ, red lighting, cocktails and stir. A fun (and often jammed) place to hang about before clubbing.

**CLUB FELLINI** Map pp64–5 Club  
☎ 687 969825; www.clubfellini.com; La Rambla 27; ☎ 12.30–5am Mon–Sat May–Sep, Thu–Sat Nov–Apr; 🍷 Drassanes

This place comes into its own on those slow Monday nights when there's nothing happening elsewhere. Pop along for rock 'n' roll and indie rock at the Nasty Mondays session. The club has three spaces: the Bad Room for house, electro and punk; the Red Room for pop and rock; and the Mirror Room, a bigger more chilled space, dedicated to anything from house to disco. It has an appealingly tacky feel and shares its entrance with a strip joint. That doesn't put off a mixed, relaxed crowd. There's no particular dress code.

**KARMA** Map pp64–5 Club  
☎ 93 302 56 80; www.karmadisco.com, in Spanish; Plaça Reial 10; admission €8; ☎ midnight–5.30am Tue–Sun; 🍷 Liceu

Sick of the metallic sounds of the new century? What about some good, mainstream indie music (during the week)? At weekends it becomes unpredictable, with anything from rock to 1980s disco fever. The odd Madonna track even pops up. A golden oldie in Barcelona, tunnel-shaped Karma is small and becomes quite tightly packed with a good-natured crowd of locals and out-of-towners.

**LA MACARENA** Map pp64–5 Club  
Carrer Nou de Sant Francesc 5; admission up to €5; ☎ 11pm–4am Sun–Thu, 11pm–6am Fri & Sat; 🍷 Drassanes

You simply won't believe this was once a tile-lined Andalusian flamenco musos' bar. Now it is a very dark dance space, of the kind where it is possible to sit at the bar, meet people around you and then stand up for a bit of a shake to the DJs' electro and house offerings, all within a couple of square metres.

**NEW YORK** Map pp64–5 Club  
☎ 93 318 87 30; Carrer dels Escudellers 5; admission €10; ☎ midnight–6am Thu–Sat; 🍷 Drassanes

This one-time dive has converted itself into a grunge club with a big following. The age group is basically 18 to 30 and the music mix is broad. Friday night is best, with anything from reggae to Latin rhythms.

## A LEGENDARY LEGIONNAIRES' DRINK

Carrer Ample was once lined by a motley lot of grubby, ill-lit but timeless bars. A couple of rough-and-ready Asturian taverns remain and they offer *leche de pantera* (panther's milk). Huh? This is a mix of liquor (various high-octane drinks can be used) and condensed milk and originated with the North Africa-based Spanish foreign legion. Legionnaires, they say, add a smidge of gun powder to give the drink further oomph!

### HARLEM JAZZ CLUB Map pp64–5 Live Music

☎ 93 310 07 55; Carrer de la Comtessa de Sobradell 8; admission up to €10; 🕒 8pm–4am Tue–Thu & Sun, 8pm–5am Fri & Sat; 📍 Drassanes This narrow, smoky, old-town dive is one of the best spots in town for jazz. Every now and then it mixes it up with a little rock, Latin or blues. It attracts a mixed crowd who maintain a respectful silence during the acts. Get in early if you want a seat in front of the stage.

### JAMBOREE Map pp64–5 Live Music & Club

☎ 93 319 17 89; www.masimas.com/jamboree; Plaça Reial 17; 🕒 9.30pm–6am; 📍 Liceu Since long before Franco said *adiós* to this world, Jamboree has been bringing joy to the jivers of Barcelona, with headline jazz and blues acts of the calibre of Chet Baker and Ella Fitzgerald. Concerts usually start around 11pm, and after all the live stuff finishes at about 2am, Jamboree takes on a different hue, as a club. Sounds under the low arches range fairly inevitably from hip-hop through funk to R&B. It's a labyrinthine place, with various, low-ceilinged, interconnecting spaces and attracts a mostly foreign mixed-age crowd.

### SIDECAR FACTORY CLUB

Map pp64–5 Live Music

☎ 93 302 15 86; www.sidecarfactoryclub.com; Plaça Reial 7; admission €7–15; 🕒 10pm–3am Tue–Thu, 10pm–6am Fri & Sat; 📍 Liceu With its entrance on Plaça Reial, you can come here for a meal before midnight or a few drinks at ground level (which closes by 3am at the latest), or descend into the red-tinged, brick-vaulted bowels for live music most nights. Just about anything goes here, from UK indie through to coun-

try punk, but rock and pop lead the way. Most shows start at 10pm (Thursday to Saturday). DJs take over to keep you dancing until dawn on weekends.

## EL RAVAL

What happened in the El Born area in the mid-1990s may be happening here now – new bars and clubs are opening up along the long, slummy alleys. Beside them, some great old harbour-style taverns still thrive – dark, wood-panelled and bare except for the odd mirror and vast arrays of bottles behind the bar. The area around Carrer de Sant Pau retains its edgy feel, with drug dealers, pick-pockets and prostitutes mingling with the streams of nocturnal hedonists.

### BAR LA CONCHA Map pp76–7 Bar

☎ 93 302 41 18; Carrer de la Guàrdia 14; 🕒 5pm–3am; 📍 Drassanes

If it were a theme bar, the theme would be actress Sara Montiel: there are more than 250 photos of her here. This kitsch fetish unites a largely gay and transvestite crowd. The music ranges from *paso dobles* (a kind of lively ballroom dance music) to modern Spanish.

### BAR MARSELLA Map pp76–7 Bar

Carrer de Sant Pau 65; 🕒 10pm–2am Mon–Thu, 10pm–3am Fri & Sat; 📍 Liceu

Hemingway used to slump over an *absenta* (absinthe) in this bar, which has been in business since 1820. It still specialises in absinthe, a drink to be treated with some respect. Your glass comes with a lump of sugar, a fork and a little bottle of mineral water. Hold the sugar on the fork, over your glass, and drip the water onto the sugar so that it dissolves into the absinthe, which turns yellow. The result should give you a warm glow.

### BAR MUY BUENAS Map pp76–7 Bar

☎ 93 442 50 53; Carrer del Carme 63; 🕒 7.30am–2.30am; 📍 Liceu

This bar started life as a late-19th-century corner store. The Modernista décor and relaxed company make this a great spot for a quiet *mojito*. You may catch a little live music or even a poetry reading, and can nibble on a limited menu of Middle Eastern tidbits.

### BAR PASTÍS Map pp76–7 Bar

☎ 93 318 79 80; Carrer de Santa Mònica 4; 🕒 7.30pm–2am Sun–Fri, 7.30pm–3am Sat; 📍 Drassanes

A French cabaret theme (with lots of Piaf in the background) dominates this tiny, cluttered classic. It's been going, on and off, since the end of WWII. You'll need to be in here before 9pm to have a hope of sitting, getting near the bar or anything much else. On some nights it features live acts, usually performing French *chansons*.

### BETTY FORD Map pp76–7 Bar

☎ 93 304 13 68; Carrer de Joaquín Costa 56; 🕒 6pm–2am Mon–Thu, 6pm–3am Fri & Sat; 📍 Universitat

This enticing corner bar is one of several good stops along the student-jammed run of Carrer de Joaquín Costa. They do some nice cocktails and the place fills with an even mix of locals and foreigners, generally not much over 30 and with an abundance of tats and piercings.

### BOADAS Map pp76–7 Bar

☎ 93 318 88 26; Carrer dels Tallers 1; 🕒 noon–2am Mon–Thu, noon–3am Fri & Sat; 📍 Catalunya One of the city's oldest cocktail bars, Boadas is famed for its daiquiris. The bow-tied waiters have been serving up unique drinkable creations since Miguel Boadas opened it in 1933. Joan Miró and Hemingway drank here. Miguel was born in Havana, where he was the first barman at the immortal La Floridita. He passed on in 1967, but the bar remains in the family. They specialise in short, intense drinks such as the Joan Miró, a whisky with a drop of Dubonnet and Grand Marnier, and the house special is the sweetish Boadas, with rum, Dubonnet and Curaçao. Or try a nice, dry Giorgio (vodka, a few drops of Calvados and a hint of whisky). Skip the *mojitos*.

## KICKING ON

The magic word is 'afters'. While the law imposes a closing time of 3am at the latest for bars in Barcelona, those in need of further fun and not in the mood for clubs do not necessarily have to head home for a beer from the fridge. Indeed, those still in need of fun even after the clubs disgorge their punters at 6am can find succour. Ask around for the nearest 'afters' (which may not be near, but hey, taxis are affordable). A handful of these mysterious places, with locked doors and spyholes, are scattered about the city. We can't give away any names – by their very nature (in the legal twilight zone) they don't advertise themselves. But take heart – if you find one you'll be able to drink away until 8am or later. It's no wonder some people confuse day with night in Barcelona!

### CASA ALMIRALL Map pp76–7 Bar

☎ 93 318 99 17; Carrer de Joaquín Costa 33; 🕒 7pm–2.30am; 📍 Universitat

In business since the 1860s, this unchanged corner bar is dark and intriguing, with Modernista décor and a mixed clientele. There are some great original pieces in here, like the marble counter, and the cast-iron statue of the muse of the World Fair, held in Barcelona in 1888.

### KENTUCKY Map pp76–7 Bar

☎ 93 318 28 78; Carrer de l'Arc del Teatre 11; 🕒 10pm–3am Tue–Sat; 📍 Liceu

A haunt of visiting US Navy boys, this exercise in smoke-filled Americana kitsch is the perfect way to finish an evening – if you can squeeze in. All sorts of odd bods from the *barri* and beyond gather. An institution in the wee hours, this place often stays open as late as 5am.

### LA CONFITERÍA Map pp76–7 Bar

☎ 93 443 04 58; Carrer de Sant Pau 128; 🕒 11am–2am; 📍 Paral.lel

This is a trip into the 19th century. Until the 1980s it was a confectioner's shop, and although the original cabinets are now lined with booze, the look of the place has barely changed in its conversion into a laid-back bar. A quiet enough spot for a cuppa and chat during the day, it fills with theatre-goers and local partiers later at night.

### LONDON BAR Map pp76–7 Bar

☎ 93 318 52 61; Carrer Nou de la Rambla 34–36; 🕒 7.30pm–3am Tue–Sun; 📍 Liceu

Open since 1909, this Modernista bar started as a hang-out for circus hanks and was later frequented by the likes of Picasso, Miró and Hemingway (didn't they have any work to do?). At the time of writing, renovations were being carried out to allow the return of off-the-wall music acts out the back. As popular as it was in Picasso's time,



## SMOKE SCREEN

Although national smoking laws in place since January 2006 mean that in any bars or clubs bigger than 100 sq metres smoking should be restricted to specific areas or banned altogether, this seems to be observed rather more in the breach. So for now, at least, you will still emerge from a big night out smelling like an ashtray.

this place fills to the brim with punters at the long front bar and rickety timber tables.

## RESOLÍS

Map pp76-7 Bar  
 ☎ 93 441 29 48; Carrer de la Riera Baixa 22;  
 ☎ 10am-1am Mon-Sat; M Liceu  
 Long a drab dive, the bar is a tasteful image of its former self. The timber panelling, mirror-back bar and teeny tables all hark back to other times, but without the grime.

## MOOG

Map pp76-7 Club  
 ☎ 93 301 72 82; www.masimas.com/moog; Carrer de l'Arc del Teatre 3; admission €12; ☎ midnight-6am; M Drassanes  
 This fun and minuscule club is a standing favourite with the downtown crowd. In the main dance area, DJs dish out house, techno and electro, while upstairs you can groove to a nice blend of indie and occasional classic pop throwbacks.

## JAZZ SÍ CLUB

Map pp76-7 Live Music  
 ☎ 93 443 43 46; www.tallerdemusics.com; Carrer de Requesens 2; admission €4-8; ☎ 6-11pm; M Sant Antoni  
 A cramped little bar run by the Taller de Músics (Musicians' Workshop) serves as the stage for a varied programme of jazz through to some good flamenco (Friday nights). Thursday night is Cuban night, Sunday is rock and the rest are devoted to jazz and/or blues sessions. It makes for a mellow start to a long night in El Raval. Concerts start around 9pm but the jam sessions can get going as early as 6.30pm.

## LA RIBERA

Along and near Passeig del Born you'll find stacks of possibilities. Since the early 1990s, when you could find little more than a couple of sad old bars for sad old punters, the place has been completely transformed.

## ALMA

Map pp84-5 Bar  
 ☎ 93 319 76 07; Carrer de Sant Antoni dels Sombrerers 7; ☎ 8.30pm-2.30am Tue-Sat; M Jaume I  
 Doc Martins boots, tats and mullets are part of the unofficial dress code in this easy-going back-lane bar. The music and lighting are kept low, and there's erotic art on the brick walls. Mixed drinks and cocktails cost €4 during happy hour (8.30-10.30pm).

## DIOBAR

Map pp84-5 Bar  
 ☎ 93 319 56 19; Avinguda del Marquès de l'Argentera 27; ☎ 10pm-3am; M Barceloneta  
 Downstairs from an indifferent Greek restaurant, this basement DJ bar is worth a few gyros sandwiches beforehand. Generally the vibe is house and deep house. A few of the friends you make here will no doubt head off to *Catwalk* (p204) later after closing.

## GIMLET

Map pp84-5 Bar  
 ☎ 93 310 10 27; Carrer del Rec 24; ☎ 10pm-3am; M Jaume I  
 Transport yourself to a Humphrey Bogart movie. White-jacketed bar staff with all the appropriate aplomb will whip you up a gimlet or any other classic cocktail (around €8) your heart desires.

## LA FIANNA

Map pp84-5 Bar  
 ☎ 93 315 18 10; www.lafianna.com; Carrer dels Banys Vells 15; ☎ 6pm-1.30am Sun-Wed, 6pm-2.30am Thu-Sat; M Jaume I  
 There is something medieval about this bar, with its bare stone walls, forged iron candelabras and cushion-covered lounges. But don't think chill-out. This place heaves and as the night wears on it's elbow room only. Earlier in the evening you can indulge in a little snack food too.

## LA VINYA DEL SENYOR

Map pp84-5 Bar  
 ☎ 93 310 33 79; Plaça de Santa Maria del Mar 5; ☎ noon-1am Tue-Sun; M Jaume I  
 Relax on the *terrasa*, which lies in the shadow of Santa Maria del Mar, or crowd inside at the tiny bar. The wine list is as long as *War and Peace* and there's a table upstairs for those who opt to sample by the bottle rather than the glass.

## MIRAMELINDO

Map pp84-5 Bar  
 ☎ 93 319 53 76; Passeig del Born 15; ☎ 8pm-2.30am; M Jaume I

A spacious tavern in a Gothic building, this is a classic for mixed drinks, while soft jazz and soul sounds float overhead. Try for a comfy seat at a table towards the back before it fills to bursting. Several similarly barn-sized places line this side of the *passeig*.

## MUDANZAS

Map pp84-5 Bar  
 ☎ 93 319 11 37; Carrer de la Vidrieria 15; ☎ 10am-2.30am; M Jaume I  
 This was one of the first bars to get things into gear in El Born and it still attracts a faithful crowd. It's a straightforward place for a beer, a chat and perhaps a sandwich. Oh, and they do a nice line in Italian grappas.

## MAGIC

Map pp84-5 Club  
 ☎ 93 310 72 67; Passeig de Picasso 40; ☎ 11pm-6am Wed-Sun; M Barceloneta  
 Although it sometimes hosts live acts in its sweaty, smoky basement, it's basically a straightforward, subterranean dance club offering rock, mainstream dance faves and Spanish pop.

## PORT VELL & LA BARCELONETA

A bevy of bars open until the wee hours in the Maremàgnum complex, which proves particularly popular in July and August. Options range from Irish pubs to salsa spots.

## CHILLIN' ON THE BEACH

Summer lounging on the beach is not just about towels on the sand. Scattered along Barcelona's strands is a series of hip little beach bars bringing chilled club sounds to the seaside. Sip on your favourite cocktail as you take in the day's last rays. There's no need to head straight home at sundown either, as these places keep humming from about 10am until midnight-1am (Easter to October), depending on the forces of law and order and how good business is. Along the beaches of La Barceloneta (from Platja de Sant Miquel up to Port Olímpic), there are five spots. A good one is *Chiringuito del Mar* (Map p93).

Better are those northeast of Port Olímpic. There are three on Platja de Nova Icària, including *Dockers* and *Inercia* (Map pp98-9; http://dockersbcn.com, Spanish). The Pachá club people have one on Platja de Bogatell, *El Chiringuito* (Map pp98-9; www.elchiringuitogroup.com). The zaniest of these beach bars are probably those on Platja de la Mar Bella, starting with *El Dulce Deseo de Lorenzo Club de Mar* (Map pp98-9). It and *El Misterioso Secreto de Amparo* (Map pp98-9) attract a body beautiful crowd of bronzed gays and lipstick lesbians. One more, *Mochima* (Map pp98-9; www.mochimabar.com, in Spanish), is also popular with a more mixed hetero crowd. Finally, three further beach bars, *Nueva Ola*, another *Mochima* & *El Chiringuito* (Map pp98-9), line Platja de la Nova Mar Bella.

But by far the best beach booty experience takes place outside Barcelona, a train ride to the northeast in Mataró. *Lasal* (www.lasal.com; ☎ May-Sep), on Platja Sant Simó (northeast of the marina), offers top local DJs, food and a great party atmosphere.

Otherwise a couple of notable venues await on La Barceloneta waterfront.

## CDLC

Map p93 Bar  
 ☎ 93 224 04 70; www.cdclbarcelona.com; Passeig Marítim de la Barceloneta 32; ☎ noon-3am; M Ciutadella Vila Olímpica  
 Seize the night by the scruff at the Carpe Diem Lounge Club, where you can lounge in quasi-Asian surrounds. Ideal for a slow warm-up before heading to the nearby clubs, if you can be bothered lifting yourself back up onto your feet, that is. You can come for the food or wait until about midnight, when they start to roll up the tables and the DJs and dancers take full control.

## LEKASBAH

Map p93 Bar  
 ☎ 93 238 07 22; www.ottotzut.es; Plaça de Pau Vila s/n; ☎ 11pm-2.30am Sun-Thu, 11pm-3am Fri & Sat; M Barceloneta  
 From the narghiles to the Moroccan furniture, everything here is designed to induce a chilled feel, aided by the slow music (anything from reggae on a Monday to electro beats on Sunday). On warmer nights you may prefer the *terrasa*.

## SANTA MARTA

Map p93 Bar  
 Carrer de Guitert 60; ☎ 10.30am-7pm Sun-Mon & Wed-Thu, 10.30am-10pm Fri & Sat; M Barceloneta, ☎ 45, 57, 59 & 157  
 Foreigners who have found seaside nirvana in Barcelona hang out in this chilled bar back from the beach. A curious crowd of

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rastas, beach-bums and switched-on dudes chat over light meals and beer inside or relax outside over a late breakfast.

**SHÔKO** Map p93 Bar  
☎ 93 225 92 00; [www.shoko.biz](http://www.shoko.biz); Passeig Marítim de la Barceloneta 36; ☎ 8pm-3am Tue-Sun; **M** Ciutadella Vila Olímpica

Too cool for anything really, let alone school, this chilled restaurant and bar is all far-out concepts. Wafting over your mixed Asian-Med food is an opiate mix of Shinto music and Japanese electro. As the food is cleared away, the place turns into a funky beat kinda place, into which you may or may not enter without dinner, depending on the bouncer's mood.

**SUGAR CLUB** Map p93 Bar  
☎ 93 508 83 25; Moll de Barcelona; ☎ 11pm-3am Wed-Sat; **M** Drassanes

Set inside the World Trade Center, this is a dapper restaurant-club with DJ sounds and a snappily dressed crowd. The food is fusion funky and skipped without remorse, but the music served up can be top class, with local DJs such as David Mas at the turntables.

**Vaixell Luz de Gas** Map p93 Bar  
☎ 93 209 77 11; moored on Moll del Dipòsit; ☎ noon-3am Mar-Nov; **M** Barceloneta

Sit on the top deck of this boat and let go of the day's cares. Sip wine or beer, nibble tapas and admire the yachts. On shore they play some good dance music at night.

**CATWALK** Map p93 Club  
☎ 93 224 07 40; [www.dubcatwalk.net](http://www.dubcatwalk.net); Carrer de Ramon Trias Fargas 2-4; admission €15; ☎ midnight-6am Thu-Sun; **M** Ciutadella Vila Olímpica

A well-dressed crowd piles in here for good house music, occasionally mellowed down with more body-hugging electro and funk. Alternatively, you can sink into a fat lounge for a quiet tittle and whisper. Popular local DJ Jekey leads the way most nights.

**OPIUM MAR** Map p93 Club  
☎ 902 267486; [www.opiummar.com](http://www.opiummar.com); Passeig Marítim de la Barceloneta 34; ☎ 8pm-6am; **M** Ciutadella Vila Olímpica

Whites, shimmering silver and dark contrasts mark the décor of this seaside dance

## MAKING A SPLASH

Guys and gals board their metal steeds on hot summer nights to bear down on one of the top outdoor club scenes in town (or rather out of town since it's in neighbouring L'Hospitalet de Llobregat). **Liquid** (☎ 670 221209; [www.liquidbcn.com](http://www.liquidbcn.com); Complex Esportiu Hospitalet Nord, Carrer de Manuel Azaña 21-23; ☎ Jun-Sep) says what it is. A palm-studded islet is surrounded by a bottom-lit azure moat that tempts surprisingly few folks to plunge in while dancing the night away in this megaclub. Local and foreign DJs keep the punters, a mixed crowd from all over town, in the groove in a series of different internal spaces, as well as poolside.

place. While much of the action (accompanied by the thumping beat of house and techno) revolves around the central bar, there are plenty of separate spaces to sneak off to as well. It only begins to fill with a 20- and 30-something crowd from about 3am and is best in summer, when you can spill outside overlooking the beach. The beachside outdoor section works as a chilled restaurant-café by day (1-8pm).

**MONASTERIO** Map p93 Live Music  
☎ 93 319 19 88; [www.salamonasterio.com](http://www.salamonasterio.com), in Spanish; Passeig d'Isabel II 4; ☎ 9pm-3am; **M** Barceloneta

Wander downstairs to the brick vaults of this jamming basement music den. There's a little of everything, from a fine flamenco session followed by samba on Sunday night, blues jams on Thursdays and an anything-goes talent night on Mondays. They have Murphy's on tap, along with several other imported beers.

## PORT OLÍMPIC, EL POBLENOU & EL FÒRUM

Several options present themselves along the coast. The line-up of raucous bars along the marina at Port Olímpic is one. More chilled are the beach bars (see the boxed text, p203). In deepest Poblenou you'll find some clubs, among them one of Barcelona's classics, Razzmatazz.

**RAZZMATAZZ** Map pp98-9 Club & Live Music  
☎ 93 272 09 10; [www.salarazzmatazz.com](http://www.salarazzmatazz.com); Carrer dels Almogàvers 122 or Carrer de Pamplona 88; admission €15-30; ☎ 1-6am Fri & Sat; **M** Marina or Bogatell

Bands from far and wide occasionally create scenes of near hysteria in this, one of the city's classic live music and clubbing venues. Five different clubs in one huge post-industrial space attract people of all dance persuasions and ages. The main space, the Razz Club, is a haven for the latest international rock and indie acts. The Loft does house and electro, while the Pop Bar offers anything from garage to soul. The Lolita room is the land of techno pop and deep house, and upstairs in the Rex Room, guys and girls sweat it out to high rhythm electro-rock.

**SALA MEPHISTO** Map pp98-9 Live Music  
☎ 659 163652; [www.mephistobcn.com](http://www.mephistobcn.com); Carrer de Roc Boronat 33; ☎ 10pm-5am Fri & Sat; **M** Llacuna

Heavy metal, Gothic and hard-rock fans converge on this one-time workshop for concerts by groups from all over Europe. The music determines the crowd, so expect pale people in theatrically dark clothing. Long-haired lads with tats and leather mingle with pale wraiths in flowing black dresses and heavy make-up. It's all in the name of good fun.

## L'EIXAMPLE

Much of middle-class l'Eixample is dead at night, but several streets are exceptions. Noisy Carrer de Balma is lined with a rowdy adolescent set. Much more interesting is the cluster of locales lining Carrer d'Aribau between Avinguda Diagonal and Carrer de Mallorca. They range from quiet cocktail bars to '60s retro. Few get going much before midnight and are generally closed or dead Sunday to Wednesday. Lower down, on and around Carrer del Consell de Cent and Carrer de la Diputació, is the heart of Gaixample, with several gay bars and clubs (see the boxed text, p198).

**ÁTAME** Map pp108-9 Bar  
☎ 93 454 92 73; Carrer del Consell de Cent 257; ☎ 7pm-3am; **M** Universitat  
Cool for a coffee in the early evening, Átame (Tie Me Up) heats up later in the

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night as the gay crowd comes out to play. There is usually a raunchy show on Friday night and a happy hour on Thursdays.

**BACON BEAR** Map pp108-9 Bar  
Carrer de Casanova 64; ☎ 6pm-2.30am; **M** Urgell  
Every bear needs a cave to go to, and this is a rather friendly one. It's really just a big bar for burly gay folk. On weekends the music cranks up enough for a bit of bear-hugging twirl.

**DRY MARTINI** Map pp108-9 Bar  
☎ 93 217 50 72; Carrer d'Aribau 162-166; ☎ 1pm-2am Sun-Thu, 1pm-3am Fri & Sat; **M** FGC Provença

Waiters with a discreetly knowing smile will attend to your cocktail needs here. The house drink, taken at the bar or in one of the plush green leather lounges, is a safe bet. The gin and tonic comes in an enormous mug-sized glass – a couple of these and you're well on the way! Out the back is a restaurant, **Speakeasy** (p181).

**LA CAMA 54** Map pp108-9 Bar  
☎ 93 325 91 20; Carrer de Sepúlveda 178; ☎ 6pm-3am Tue-Sat, 5.45-11am Sat & Sun; **M** Urgell

Welcome to the city's cheerful, gay karaoke bar, a curious place that attracts a very mixed crowd in terms of age and sexual orientation. The biggest attraction is its dawn sessions on Saturday and Sunday mornings, perfect if you want to kick on after the clubs.

**LA CHAPELLE** Map pp108-9 Bar  
☎ 93 453 30 76; Carrer de Muntaner 67; ☎ 6pm-2am Mon-Thu, 6pm-3am Fri & Sat; **M** Universitat  
A typical, long, narrow Eixample bar with white-tiled walls like a 1930s hospital, it houses a plethora of crucifixes and niches that far outdoes what you'd find in any other 'chapel'. This is a relaxed gay meeting place that welcomes all comers. No need for six-pack bellies here.

**LA FIRMA** Map pp108-9 Bar  
[www.lafiradub.com](http://www.lafiradub.com), in Spanish; Carrer de Provença 171; admission €8-12; ☎ 10.30pm-3am Thu-Sat; **M** FGC Provença

A designer bar with a difference. Wander in past distorting mirrors and ancient fair-ground attractions from Germany. Put in

coins and listen to hens squawk. Speaking of squawking, the music swings wildly from whiffs of house through '90s hits to Spanish pop classics.

### LES GENS QUE J'AIME Map pp108-9 Bar

☎ 93 215 68 79; Carrer de València 286; ☎ 6pm-2.30am Sun-Thu, 6pm-3am Fri & Sat; **M** Passeig de Gràcia

This intimate basement relic of the 1960s follows a deceptively simple formula: chilled jazz music in the background, minimal lighting from an assortment of flea-market lamps and a cosy, cramped scattering of red velvet-backed lounges around tiny dark tables.

### LIKA LOUNGE Map pp108-9 Bar

☎ 93 467 26 11; www.likalounge.com; Passatge de Domingo 3; ☎ 6pm-3am; **M** Passeig de Gràcia The publicity noise about Barcelona's only 'ice bar' (a bar with a strip of ice to sit your drinks on) is a bit of a distraction. But this backstreet cocktail lounge is a low-lit, fashionable place to sip on creative combinations. The Pornstar Martini, with Cointreau, passionfruit and a side glass of *cava*, hits the spot. Through the back is a second smaller bar, and DJ sounds cover a broad, mainstream spectrum.

### MEDITERRÀNEO Map pp108-9 Bar

☎ 678 211253; Carrer de Balmes 129; ☎ 11pm-3am; **M** Diagonal

This smoky jam joint is a great hang-out that few tourists seem to bother with. Order a beer and chat at one of the tiny tables while waiting for the next act to tune up at the back. Sometimes the young performers are surprisingly good.

### MICHAEL COLLINS PUB Map pp102-3 Bar

☎ 93 459 19 64; Plaça de la Sagrada Família 4; ☎ noon-2am Sun-Thu, noon-3am Fri & Sat; **M** Sagrada Família

Locals and expats alike patronise this place, one of the city's best-loved Irish pubs. To be sure of a little Catalan-Irish *craic*, this barn-sized storming pub is just the ticket.

### NEW CHAPS Map pp108-9 Bar

☎ 93 215 53 65; Avinguda Diagonal 365; ☎ 9pm-3am; **M** Llorens

Leather lovers get in some close-quarters inspection on the dance floor and more,

especially in the dark room, downstairs past the fairly dark loos in the vaulted cellars.

### PREMIER Map pp108-9 Bar

☎ 93 532 16 50; Carrer de Provença 236; ☎ 6pm-2.30am Mon-Thu, 6pm-3am Fri & Sat; **M** FGC Provença

A little cross-pollination has happened in this funky little French-run wine bar. The rather short wine list is mostly French, or you can opt for a Moritz beer or a *mojito*. Hug the bar, sink into a lounge or hide up on the mezzanine. One warning – it gets smoky in here.

### PUNTO BCN Map pp108-9 Bar

☎ 93 453 61 23; Carrer de Muntaner 63-65; ☎ 6pm-3am; **M** Universitat

It's an oldie but a goodie. A big bar over two levels with a crowd ranging from their 20s to their 40s and beyond, this place fills to bursting on Friday and Saturday nights. It's a friendly early stop on a gay night out, and you can shoot a round of pool if you feel so inclined.

### QUILOMBO Map pp102-3 Bar

☎ 93 439 54 06; Carrer d'Aribau 149; ☎ 7pm-2.30am daily Jun-Sep, Wed-Sun Oct-May; **M** FGC Provença

Some formulas just work, and this place has been working since the 1970s. Set up a few guitars in the back room, which you pack with tables and chairs, add some cheapish pre-prepared *mojitos* and plastic tubs of nuts, and let the punters do the rest. They pour in, creating plenty of *quilombo* (fuss).

### SWEET CAFÉ Map pp108-9 Bar

www.sweetbcn.com, in Spanish; Carrer de Casanova 75; ☎ 8pm-3am Wed-Sun; **M** Urgell

This tunnel of a bar is like the lining inside a long illuminated stick of fluorescent lipstick-red candy. Gay-friendly in the Gaixample, but open to all and sundry, it occasionally hosts live music, expositions and other events. Themed parties, from trans to bears, are a regular feature.

### TOSCANO ANTICO Map pp102-3 Bar

☎ 93 225 50 91; Carrer d'Aribau 167; ☎ 8pm-2am Tue-Thu, 8pm-3am Fri & Sat; **M** Diagonal

Bored with running the family Tuscan restaurant in Milan, the young Italian owners

of Toscano have transported the classy Milanese *aperitivo* to Barcelona, mixing it with local energy. On the bar are snacks *alla Milanese*, to be taken (free) with generous cocktails. Let the bar staff fix you a special, unlisted concoction and grab one of the handful of tiny tables out back.

### AIRE Map pp108-9 Club

☎ 93 487 83 42; www.arenadisco.com, in Spanish; Carrer de València 236; ☎ 11pm-3am Thu-Sat; **M** Passeig de Gràcia

A popular locale for lesbians, the dance floor is spacious and there is usually a DJ in command of the tunes, which range from hits of the '80s and '90s to techno. As a rule, only male friends of the girls are allowed entry, although in practice the crowd tends to be fairly mixed. Things can heat up on Thursday nights with live music.

### ANTILLA BCN Map pp108-9 Club

☎ 93 451 45 64; www.antillasalsa.com, in Spanish; Carrer d'Aragó; ☎ 11pm-6am; **M** Urgell

The *salsateca* in town, this is the place to come for Cuban *son*, merengue, salsa and a whole lot more. If you don't know how to dance any of this, you may feel a little silly (as a guy) but women will probably get free lessons. The guys can come back at another time and pay for classes (see p272).

### ARENA CLASIC Map pp108-9 Club

☎ 93 487 83 42; www.arenadisco.com, in Spanish; Carrer de la Diputació 233; admission €6-12; ☎ 12.30-6am Fri & Sat; **M** Passeig de Gràcia

Around the corner from Arena Madre, this place is a little more sedate than its partner, and tends to get more of a mixed crowd. The dominant sound is commercial house music.

### ARENA MADRE Map pp108-9 Club

☎ 93 487 83 42; www.arenadisco.com, in Spanish; Carrer de Balmes 32; admission €6-12; ☎ 12.30-6am; **M** Passeig de Gràcia

Popular with a hot young crowd, Arena Madre is one of the top clubs in town for boys seeking boys. Keep an eye out for the striptease shows on Mondays, drag queens on Wednesdays and a combination of disco and Latin music to get those butts moving. Heteros are welcome but a minority.

### CITY HALL Map pp108-9 Club

☎ 93 238 07 22; www.ottozutz.es, in Spanish; La Rambla de Catalunya 2-4; admission €12; ☎ mid-night-5.30am Wed-Sun; **M** Catalunya A corridor leads to the dance floor of this place, located in a former theatre. House and other electric sounds dominate, including a rather forward-sounding session of electroclash called *Fucked!* on Wednesdays. Look forward to deep house on Saturdays and the more chilled Zen Club, an electronic Sunday session.

### DBOY Map pp108-9 Club

www.dboyclub.com; Ronda de Sant Pere 19-21; ☎ midnight-6am Fri-Sun & holidays; **M** Urquinaona Once known as Salvation and a key club on the gay circuit, it has been given a complete overhaul (as well as the new name), with stunning lighting. Electronic music dominates the dance nights here. The Sunday night La Madame sessions are highly popular.

### DIETRICH GAY TEATRO CAFÉ Club

Map pp108-9  
☎ 93 451 77 07; Carrer del Consell de Cent 255; ☎ 10.30pm-3am; **M** Universitat

It's show time at 1am, with at least one drag-queen gala each night in this cabaret-style locale dedicated to Marlene Dietrich. Soft house is the main musical motif and the place has an interior garden.

### DISTRITO DIAGONAL Club

Map pp108-9  
☎ 607 113602; www.distribodiagonal.com; Avinguda Diagonal 442; admission after 4am €15; ☎ 11pm-8.30am Fri & Sat; **M** Diagonal

A huddle of tables offers quiet time at the front of this red-hued club. To move your booty to deep house and garage, slide past the long bar to the raised dance area out the back. All sorts of strange nocturnal beasts wind up in this club, one of the precious few locations available to all-nighter drinkers. After all, it's open even after most have turfed out their punters!

### LA BASE Map pp102-3 Club

Carrer de Casanova 201; ☎ 10pm-3am Mon-Fri, midnight-5am Sat & Sun; **M** Hospital Clínic This heavy, heated gay bar and club has something for just about everyone: nude



## HOTEL HANG-OUTS

Hanging out in certain hotel bars has become cool in Barcelona. So much so that locals like to hang out in some of them too! The ground-floor lounge **Bar Moodern** in **Hotel Omm** (p236) is one of *the* places for beautiful people to preen and be seen. When you're finished lounging around upstairs, you can head into the basement **Ommsession Club** (☎ 93 445 40 00; 🕒 11.30pm-3am), a smallish but *fashion* dance venue, straight downstairs from Bar Moodern.

Other options worth considering include the **East 47** bar-restaurant (downstairs) and rooftop terrace bar-restaurant at the **Hotel Claris** (p236), the too-cool-for-school gay options (the **Chillout** cocktail bar and the summer rooftop **Skybar**) at **Hotel Axel** (p236) and the poolside rooftop cocktail bar at **Hotel Majestic** (p236). On La Rambla, **Hotel 1898** (p231) runs **Bar Lobo** out the back.

nights, rude nights, leather cruising evenings and dark rooms. There's even music!

### METRO Map pp108-9

Club

☎ 93 323 52 27; [www.metrodiscobcn.com](http://www.metrodiscobcn.com); Carrer de Sepúlveda 185; 🕒 midnight-5am Sun-Thu midnight-6am Fri & Sat; 📺 Universitat

Metro attracts a casual gay crowd with its two dance floors, three bars and very dark room. Keep an eye out for shows and parties, which can range from parades of models to bingo nights (on Thursday nights, with sometimes interesting prizes). On Wednesday nights there's a live sex show.

### OPIUM CINEMA Map pp102-3

Club

☎ 93 414 47 99; Carrer de París 193-197; 🕒 9pm-3.30am Wed-Sat; 📺 Diagonal

Reds, roses and yellows dominate the colour scheme in this wonderful former cinema. Barcelona's beautiful people, from a broad range of ages, gather to drink around the central rectangular bar, dance a little and eye one another up. Some come earlier for a bite. Wednesday nights are for R&B and Brazilian music, while Thursday is models night, when the bouncers might be a little tougher on whom they let in.

### ZAC CLUB Map pp102-3

Live Music

☎ 657 918555; [www.zac-club.com](http://www.zac-club.com), in Spanish; Avinguda Diagonal 477; admission €12-15; 🕒 9pm-6am Thu-Sat; 📺 Hospital Clínic

In what was originally Barcelona's classic La Boîte, the Zac Club has now emerged as a live-music venue, with a broad range of concerts held on most nights of the week. The small stage is occupied by bands from 9pm to about midnight, from which point the place converts into a small, somewhat congenial club.

## GRÀCIA & PARK GÜELL

Gràcia is a quirky place. In many ways it's its own world, with rowdy young beer-swillers who should probably be studying, trendy music bars and a couple of the city's big clubs.

### ALFA Map p118

Bar

☎ 93 415 18 24; Carrer Gran de Gràcia 36; 🕒 11pm-3.30am Thu-Sat; 📺 Diagonal

Aficionados of good old-fashioned rock with a mix of '90s hits love this unchanging bar-cum-miniature disco, a Gràcia classic. Take up a stool for a drink and chat or head for the no-frills dance area just beyond.

### BAR CANIGÓ Map p118

Bar

☎ 93 213 30 49; Carrer de Verdi 2; 🕒 5pm-2am Mon-Thu, 5pm-3am Fri & Sat; 📺 Fontana

Especially welcoming in winter, this corner bar overlooking Plaça de la Revolució de Setembre de 1868 is an animated spot to simply sip on an Estrella beer around rickety old marble-top tables, as people have done here for decades. There's also a pool table.

### LA BAIGNOIRE Map p118

Bar

Carrer de Verdi 6; 🕒 4pm-3am; 📺 Fontana

This inviting, tiny wine bar is always packed. Grab a stool and high table and order fine wines by the glass (beer and cocktails available too). It's perfect before and after a movie at the nearby Verdi cinema.

### LA CIGALE Map p118

Bar

☎ 93 457 58 23; Carrer de Tordera 50; 🕒 6pm-2.30am Sun-Thu, 6pm-3am Fri & Sat; 📺 Joanic  
A very civilised place for a cocktail (or two for €8 before 10pm). Prop up the zinc

bar, sink into a secondhand lounge chair around a teeny table or head upstairs. Music is chilled, conversation lively and you're likely to see Charlie Chaplin in action on the silent flat-screen TV. You can also snack on wok-fried dishes. The same brothers run **La Fourmi** (Map p118; Carrer de Milà i Fontanals 58; 📺 Joanic) around the corner, which is just as pleasant and equally good for breakfast.

### LE JOURNAL Map p118

Bar

Carrer de Francisco Giner 36; 🕒 6pm-2.30am Sun-Thu, 6pm-3am; 📺 Fontana

Students love the conspiratorial basement air of this narrow bar, whose walls and ceiling are plastered with newspapers (hence the name). Read the headlines of yesteryear while reclining in an old lounge. For a slightly more intimate feel, head upstairs to the rear gallery. It's a smokers' paradise.

### MUSICAL MARIA Map p118

Bar

Carrer de Maria 5; 🕒 9pm-3am; 📺 Diagonal

Even the music hasn't changed since this place got going in the late 1970s. Those longing for rock 'n' roll crowd into this animated bar, listen to old hits and knock back beers.

### NOISE I ART Map p118

Bar

☎ 93 217 50 01; Carrer de Topazi 26; 🕒 6pm-2.30am Tue-Wed, 7pm-3am Thu-Sat, 6pm-1.30am Sun; 📺 Fontana

Step back into the 1980s in this retro den. Red, green and other primal colours dominate the décor in a place where you might encounter Boney M on the video music play. Drape yourself on the circular red lounge, have a light meal (served up on old LPs) at red-lit tables alongside floor-to-ceiling glass windows, or perch yourself at the bar. The daiquiris may not be the best you've ever had, but probably the biggest!

### NUIT Map p118

Bar

Carrer de Ferrer de Blanes 3; 🕒 7pm-3am Tue-Sun; 📺 Diagonal

Low-key mood music, silent video projections, a little psychedelic lighting and a generally dark atmosphere in a generous space make this a tempting option, away from the typically claustrophobic bars of

Gràcia. Watch for their happy hours and cocktails of the day at around €4.

### RAÏM Map p118

Bar

Carrer de Progrés 34; 🕒 1pm-2am; 📺 Diagonal  
The walls in Raïm are alive with black-and-white photos of Cubans and Cuba. Tired old wooden chairs of another epoch huddle around marble tables, while grand old timber-lined mirrors hang from the walls. They just don't make old Spanish taverns like this anymore.

### SABOR A CUBA Map p118

Bar

☎ 600 262003; Carrer de Francisco Giner 32; 🕒 10pm-2.30am Mon-Thu, 10pm-3am Fri & Sat; 📺 Diagonal

Ruled since 1992 by the charismatic Havana-born Angelito is this home of *ron y son* (rum and sound). A mixed crowd of Cubans and fans of the Caribbean island come to drink *mojitos* and shake their stuff in this diminutive, good-humoured hang-out.

### SOL SOLER Map p118

Bar

☎ 93 217 44 40; Plaça del Sol 21-22; 🕒 noon-1am; 📺 Fontana

A pleasant place with old tile floors, timber panelling and little marble tables perfect for an early beer, glass of red and chat. Drop by earlier in the day for wi-fi (available to 6.30pm) and, if hunger strikes, order in some bar snacks (the chicken wings are delicious).

### MARTIN'S Map p118

Club

☎ 93 218 71 67; [www.martins-disco.com](http://www.martins-disco.com); Passeig de Gràcia 130; admission Sat €12; 🕒 midnight-6am Tue-Sun; 📺 Diagonal

Martin's is theoretically for men only, although the occasional lady slips in. It's not quite the daring place it once was – after all, how risqué can a gay bar get nowadays? – but local queers of all ages feel comfortable here.

## LA ZONA ALTA

North of Avinguda Diagonal, the *pijos* (cashed-up mamma's boys and papa's girls) are in charge. Whether you sample the bars around Carrer de Marià Cubí (and surrounding streets) or try the clubs around Carrer

d'Aribau or Tibidabo, expect to be confronted by perma-tanned Audi and 4WD-driving folks in designer threads. What do you care? The eye candy more than compensates for the snobby. Late-night transport to some clubs (such as Mirablau and Rosebud) is easiest by taxi.

### ARS Map pp122-3

Bar

☎ 93 414 36 90; Travessera de Gràcia 40; ☎ 11pm-3am Thu-Sat; **M** Diagonal

An attractive cocktail lounge is squeezed like toothpaste into this long locale (that's how they build things here!). Décor is predominantly white, with split levels (each level with its own bar) and a smattering of leather lounges and stools. Drinks are a little pricey but the casually cool 30-something crowd loves it. They offer wi-fi and sometimes have art exhibitions.

### BERLIN Map pp122-3

Bar

☎ 93 200 65 42; Carrer de Muntaner 240; ☎ 10am-1am Mon-Wed, 10am-3am Thu-Sat; **M** Diagonal or Hospital Clinic

This elegant corner bar offers views over Avinguda Diagonal. There is a cluster of tables outside on the 1st floor and designer lounges downstairs. Service can be harried but the location is excellent for starting an uptown night. All ages and creeds snuggle in and many kick on to **Luz de Gas** (p211), virtually next door, afterwards.

### BIKINI Map pp122-3

Club &amp; Live Music

☎ 93 322 08 00; www.bikinibcn.com; Carrer de Déu i Mata 105; admission €10-20; ☎ midnight-6am Wed-Sun; **M** Entença **6, 7, 33, 34, 63, 67** or **68**

This grand old star of the Barcelona nightlife scene has been keeping the beat since the darkest days of Franco. Every possible kind of music gets a run, depending on the night and the space you choose, from Latin and Brazilian hip-jigglers to 1980s disco. It frequently stages quality local and foreign acts, ranging from funk guitar to rock. Performances generally start around 9pm or 10pm (the club doesn't happen until midnight).

### BOCAYMA Map pp122-3

Bar

☎ 93 237 94 08; Carrer de l'Avenir 50; ☎ 11pm-2am Tue-Wed, 11pm-3am Thu-Sat; **M** FGC Muntaner

Bocayma starts in quiet fashion with patrons gathered around its low tables lined up on one side of the rear bar area. Two backlit bars also keep the drinks coming to this low-lit honey pot of good-looking 20- and 30-somethings. After 1am the music takes off and punters rev up for an outing to nearby clubs. It often opens beyond its official hours.

### BUBBLIC BAR Map pp122-3

Bar

☎ 93 414 54 01; www.bubblicbar.com; Carrer de Marià Cubí 183; ☎ 11pm-2am Tue-Wed, 11pm-3am Thu-Sat; **M** FGC Muntaner

Many bars around here are tight on space, and the nonsmoking section upstairs in this bar is not much different. In the smoke-filled dungeon, however, several bars run alongside dance areas where you can shake your moving parts to a mixed medley of anything from rock to house and trance.

### LA FEMME Map pp122-3

Bar

Carrer de Plató 13; ☎ 7pm-2am Mon-Thu, 7pm-3am Fri & Sat; **M** FGC Muntaner

One of the few spots in town that gay women can call their own, this basement music bar for lesbians and their friends is simple enough but something of a classic on the (limited) scene.

### MARCEL Map pp122-3

Bar

☎ 93 209 89 48; Carrer de Santaló 42; ☎ 10am-2am Mon-Thu, 10am-3am Fri & Sat; **M** FGC Muntaner

A classic meeting place, Marcel has a homey but classy old-world feel, with a timber bar, black and white floor tiles and high windows. They offer a few snacks and tapas as well. Space is somewhat limited and customers inevitably spill out onto the footpath.

### BÚCARO Map pp122-3

Club

☎ 93 209 65 62; Carrer d'Aribau 195; admission Fri & Sat €10; ☎ 11pm-4am Sun-Wed, 11pm-6am Fri & Sat; **M** Diagonal

Take a 'quiet' drink at the lounges scattered at the front end of the bar, and be regaled with anything from 1980s hits through to Latin pop. Out the back are two more bars and a swirl of people moving between them and the tiny dance floor, with sounds ranging from Spanish pop to house.

### ELEPHANT Map pp122-3

Club

☎ 93 334 02 58; www.elephantbcn.com, in Spanish; Passeig dels Til·lers 1; admission Wed, Thu & Sun free, Fri & Sat €15; ☎ 11pm-3am Wed, 11pm-5am Thu-Sun; **M** Palau Reial; **P** Getting in here is like being invited to a private fantasy party in Beverly Hills. Models and wannabes mix with immaculately groomed lads who most certainly didn't come by taxi. A big tent-like dance space is the main game here, but smooth customers slink their way around a series of garden bars in summer too. There's also a two-storey 'tower'.

### LUZ DE GAS Map pp122-3

Club &amp; Live Music

☎ 93 209 77 11; www.luzdegas.com; Carrer de Muntaner 244-246; admission up to €20; ☎ 11.30pm-6am; **M** Diagonal then **6, 7, 15, 27, 32, 33, 34, 58** or **64**

Several nights a week this club, set in a grand former theatre, stages concerts ranging through soul, country, salsa, rock, jazz or pop. You can hang back in the relative obscurity of the bars or plunge down into the pit and boogie away before the grand stage. It's like being at a rock concert of old. From about 2am, the place turns into a club that attracts a well-dressed crowd with varying music taste, depending on the night. It gets a little sweaty in the dedicated club room Sala B, which opens on Friday and Saturday nights only.

### MIRABLAU Map pp122-3

Club

☎ 93 418 58 79; Plaça del Doctor Andreu; ☎ 11am-6am

Gaze out over the entire city from this privileged balcony restaurant on the way up to Tibidabo. Wander downstairs to join the folk in the tiny dance space. In summer you can step out on to the even smaller terrace for a breather.

### OTTO ZUTZ Map pp122-3

Club

☎ 93 238 07 22; www.ottozutz.es; Carrer de Lincoln 15; admission €15; ☎ midnight-5.30am Tue-Sat; **M** FGC Gràcia

Beautiful people only need apply for entry to this three-floor dance den. Downstairs, shake it all up to house, or head upstairs for funk and soul. DJs come from the Ibiza rave mould and the top floor is for VIPs (although at some ill-defined point in the evening the barriers all seem to come down). Wednesday and Thursday nights

## RETURN OF THE HOLE IN THE WALL

For decades from 1912, the **Kiosco La Cazalla** (Map pp76-7; Carrer de l'Arc del Teatre; ☎ 10am-9pm Mon-Wed, 10am-2.30am Thu-Sat; **M** Drassanes) served passers-by beer, wine or a glass of morello cherry-based firewater known as *cazalla*. This little-known Andalusian beverage, often served with a few raisins floating in it, is an acquired taste (some Italians claim it is similar to sambuca). After years closed up, the hole in the wall just off La Rambla (claiming to be Barcelona's smallest bar) is back in business. A shot of 50-proof *cazalla* costs €1.50.

tend to be dominated by hip-hop, R&B and funk. Friday and Saturday it's house.

### PACHÁ Map pp122-3

Club

☎ 93 334 32 33; www.clubpachabcn.com; Avinguda del Doctor Gregorio Marañón 17; admission €15; ☎ midnight-6am Wed-Sun; **M** Palau Reial A huge metallic dance hall with raised sides (the better to observe fellow patrons from), a back bar and an ever-changing menu of resident DJs makes this Spain-wide classic a magnet for a combination of the best dressed and young rebels. Upstairs is a more exclusive restaurant with lounge club and terrace. Exchange students have their night on Wednesdays, while the first Sunday of each month has a chilled Ibiza import, the Sundown Tea Dance sessions.

### ROSEBUD Map pp122-3

Club

☎ 93 418 88 85; www.rosebud.es, in Spanish; Carrer d'Adrià Margarit 27; ☎ 11pm-4am Wed-Thu, 11pm-6am Fri & Sat Inspired in name only by the film *Citizen Kane*, Rosebud is an assault on the senses, with blaring music (mostly '80s and '90s) and flashing lights. Go-go dancers keep punters in rhythm and three bars operate inside downstairs, with another upstairs on the balcony and bar service in the garden. Those under 30-something may find it a little, well, 'old'. From Tibidabo it looks like an enormous glasshouse.

### SALA BECOOL Map pp122-3

Club

☎ 93 362 04 13; www.salabecool.com; Plaça de Joan Llongueras 5; admission €12; ☎ 10pm-6am Thu-Sat; **6, 27, 32, 59, 66, 67** or **68**

Electro is the leitmotif in this middle-sized dance place dominated by a single giant mirror ball at the stage end, where earlier in the night you might catch a concert. The secondary Redrum space runs at a slower pace, with indie music to the fore. A mixed but largely good-looking crowd from the surrounding La Zona Alta area pack it in.

### SUTTON THE CLUB Map pp122-3 Club

☎ 93 414 42 17; [www.thesuttonclub.com](http://www.thesuttonclub.com); Carrer de Tuset 13; admission €15; ☎ 11.30pm-6am Tue-Sat; **M** Diagonal

A classic disco with mainstream sounds on the dance floor, some hopping house in a side bar and a fair spread of eye candy, this place inevitably attracts just about everyone pouring in and out of the nearby bars at some stage of the evening. The main dance floor is akin to a writhing bear pit. Jump in!

### UP & DOWN Map pp122-3 Club

☎ 93 254 51 94; [www.updownbarcelona.com](http://www.updownbarcelona.com); Carrer de Numància 179; admission after 3am €15; ☎ midnight-6am Tue-Sat; **M** Maria Cristina

An uptown club that has its moments, Up & Down attracts a mixed crowd, tending more to 30s and above. Upstairs is for drinking and revival music while downstairs you can dance to a mainstream mix of international tracks. Leather sofas and even leather padding on the pillars recalls an age when clubs were called discos. Although it can feel passé, this place gets packed early in the week when other venues can be limp.

### ESPAI MOVISTAR Map pp122-3 Live Music

[www.espacio.movistar.es](http://www.espacio.movistar.es), in Catalan/Spanish; Carrer de Pascual i Vila s/n; **M** Palau Reial This giant big top, complete with a stage and space for 2000 punters, is an interesting concert space that attracts some major Spanish and foreign acts (Bryan Adams played here in spring 2008). It also offers an internet café, bar, exhibition space and more.

### JAZZROOM Map pp122-3 Live Music

☎ 93 319 17 89; [www.masimas.com/jazzroom](http://www.masimas.com/jazzroom); Carrer de Vallmajor 33; admission €10-20; ☎ 9pm-3am; **R** FGC Muntaner

Run by the Mas i Mas group that owns Jamboree, this is a good if awkwardly

located spot for occasional jazz sessions: be sure to look up the programme before heading there as it is not always open. Start times vary – often nothing happens before 11pm. On weekends it can stay open as late as 5am.

## MONTJUÏC, SANTS & POBLE SEC

A couple of curious bars in Poble Sec (literally 'Dry Town'!) make a good prelude to the clubs that hold sway up in the wonderfully weird fantasy world of the Poble Espanyol. A couple of clubs on the lower end of Avinguda del Paral.lel are worth seeking out too.

### BARCELONA ROUGE Map pp140-1 Bar

☎ 93 442 49 85; Carrer del Poeta Cabanyes 21; ☎ 11pm-2am Tue-Thu, 11pm-3am Fri & Sat; **M** Poble Sec

Decadence is the word that springs to mind in this bordello-red lounge-cocktail bar, with acid jazz, drum 'n' bass and other soothing sounds drifting along in the background. No, you're not addled with drink and drugs, the corridor leading out back to the bar really is that crooked. The walls are laden with heavy-framed paintings, dim lamps and mirrors, and no two chairs are alike. Stick to simple drinks, as the €10 glamour cocktails are on the watery side.

### GRAN BODEGA SALTÓ Map pp140-1 Bar

Carrer de Blesa 36; ☎ 7pm-3am Wed-Sat, noon-2am Sun; **M** Paral.lel

You can tell by the ranks of barrels that this was once an old-fashioned wine store. Now, after a little homemade psychedelic redecoration, with odd lamps, figurines and old Chinese beer ads, this is a magnet for an eclectic barfly crowd. Mohicans and tats abound, but the crowd is mixed and friendly.

### LA CASETA DEL MIGDIA Map pp140-1 Bar

☎ 93 301 91 77 or 617 956572; [www.lacaseta.org](http://www.lacaseta.org); Mirador del Migdia; ☎ 6pm-2.30am Thu-Sat, 10am-1am Sun Jun-Sep, 10am-7pm Sat & Sun Oct-May; **M** Paral.lel then Funicular

The effort of getting to what is, to all intents and purposes, a simple *chiringuito* (makeshift café-bar) is well worth it. Walk below the walls of the Montjuïc castle

along the dirt track or follow Passeig del Migdia (watch out for signs for the Mirador del Migdia). Stare out to sea over a beer or coffee by day. As sunset approaches the atmosphere changes, as lounge music (from sambas to funk) wafts out over the hammocks. If the cocktails don't inebriate you, the smell of the pines will.

### MAUMAU UNDERGROUND Bar

Map pp140-1  
☎ 93 441 80 15; [www.maumauunderground.com](http://www.maumauunderground.com); Carrer de la Fontrodona 33; ☎ 11pm-2.30am Thu & Sun, 11pm-3am Fri & Sat; **M** Paral.lel

Funk, soul, hip-hop – you never know what you might run into in this popular Poble Sec music and dance haunt, housed in a former factory. Above the backlit bar, a huge screen spews forth weird and wonderful images, which contribute to the relaxed lounge effect. On occasion it might transmit the latest Barça match instead.

### TINTA ROJA Map pp140-1 Bar

☎ 93 443 32 43; [www.tintaroja.net](http://www.tintaroja.net), in Spanish; Carrer de la Creu dels Molers 17; ☎ 8.30pm-2am Thu, 8.30pm-3am Fri & Sat; **M** Poble Sec

A succession of nooks and crannies, dotted with what could be a flea market's collection of furnishings and dimly lit in violets, reds and yellows, makes the 'Red Ink' an intimate spot for a drink and the occasional show in the back – with anything from actors to acrobats. Tango aspirants can take class here on Wednesday nights. You never quite know what to expect in this one time *vaqueria*, where they kept cows out the back and sold fresh milk at the front!

### PLATAFORMA Map pp140-1 Club

☎ 93 329 00 29; Carrer Nou de la Rambla 145; admission €10; ☎ midnight-6.30am Thu-Sat; **M** Paral.lel

With two adjoining dance halls, 'Platform' has the sense of a slightly clandestine location in an otherwise quiet residential street. Inside this friendly, straightforward dance dive, far from the glittery Ibiza look, popular tunes from the 1980s and 1990s

(along with timeless rock and drum 'n' bass on Thursdays) attract nostalgics in their 30s and younger partiers with a taste for the 'old fashioned'.

### SALA APOLO

Map pp140-1

Club & Live Music

☎ 93 441 40 01; [www.sala-apollo.com](http://www.sala-apollo.com), in Catalan/Spanish; Carrer Nou de la Rambla 113; admission €6-12; ☎ 12.30am-6am Wed-Sat, 10.30pm-3.30am Sun; **M** Paral.lel

This is a fine old theatre where red velvet dominates, and you feel as though you're in a movie-set dancehall scene featuring Eliot Ness. The team provides house, techno, funk and break-beat sounds from Thursday to Sunday nights in both the main theatre and adjacent Sala 2 dance space. Earlier in the evening, concerts generally take place. Tastes are as eclectic as possible, from local bands to name international acts.

### SPACE Map pp140-1 Club

☎ 93 426 84 44; [www.spacebarcelona.com](http://www.spacebarcelona.com); Carrer de Tarragona 141; admission €15; ☎ midnight-6am Thu-Sun; **M** Tarragona

Inspired by the eponymous megaclub in Ibiza, this is one of the big-hitters. House is the main baseline in this sprawling designer club, where the nights can get rather hot and scantily clad. Check out the Sunday session with local star DJ Toni Bass.

### TERRRAZZA Map pp140-1 Club

☎ 687 969825; [www.latterrazza.com](http://www.latterrazza.com), in Spanish; Avinguda del Marqués de Comillas s/n; admission €18; ☎ midnight-6am Fri & Sat May-Oct; **M** Espanya

One of the most popular summertime dance locations, inside the fantasy land of Poble Espanyol this outdoor club attracts bright young things from around the city for Ibiza-style nights of pure hedonism. Wacky dress or undress rules and the main danger is not passing bouncers' muster. If you're in, you're in for a wild night. The latest in electronic music, with a techno and house base, is pumped out by local and international DJs.



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## THE ARTS

### top picks

- Gran Teatre del Liceu (p217)
- Palau de la Música Catalana (p217)
- Sala Tarantos (p218)
- Teatre Lliure (p219)
- Teatre Mercat de les Flors (p218)
- Renoir Floridablanca (p221)
- Verdi (p221)

What's your recommendation? [www.lonelyplanet.com/barcelona](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/barcelona)

Barcelona's reputation as party city is well established but the presence of wall-to-wall bars does not preclude other cultural pursuits. Indeed, the city bristles with stages that host anything from comic opera to high drama. Dance companies are thick on the ground and popular local theatre companies, when not touring the rest of Spain, keep folks strapped to their seats. Flamenco also has a place here. International acts, from orchestras to contemporary dance troupes, regularly stop by Barcelona.

Institutions as diverse as CaixaForum (p142), the Fundació Joan Miró (p143), La Casa Elizalde (p277), the Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona (CCCB; p80), Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (Macba; p79) and La Caixa's (p106) stage concerts of varying types, from world music to blues, from classical to klezmer (Jewish music).

The daily papers are good for cinema listings and the **Palau de la Virreina arts information office** (Map pp64–5; ☎ 93 301 77 75; La Rambla de Sant Josep 99; ☎ 10am–8pm; 📄 Liceu) has oodles of information on theatre, opera, classical music and more.

The easiest way to get hold of tickets (*entradas*) for most venues throughout the city is through the Caixa de Catalunya's **Tel-Entrada** (www.telentrada.com) service or **ServiCaixa** (www.servicaixa.com). With the latter service, you can pick up tickets purchased online at La Caixa bank's ServiCaixa ATMs (note that not all La Caixa's holes in the wall offer this service). Another one to try for concerts is **Tick Tack Ticket** (☎ 902 105025; www.ticktackticket.com). There's a ticket office (*venta de localidades*) on the ground floor of **El Corte Inglés** (Map pp108–9; ☎ 902 400222; www.elcorteingles.es, click on *entradas*, in Spanish; Plaça de Catalunya) and at some of its other branches around town (you can also buy tickets through El Corte Inglés by phone and online), and at the FNAC store on the same square.

You can purchase some half-price tickets at the Caixa de Catalunya desk in the tourist office (Plaça de Catalunya). To qualify, you must purchase the tickets in person no more than three hours before the start of the show you wish to see. The system is known as Tiquet-3.

For cinema bookings, see p220.

## CLASSICAL MUSIC & OPERA

Barcelona is blessed with a fine line-up of theatres for grand performances of classical music, opera and more. The two historic music houses are the Gran Teatre del Liceu and the Palau de la Música Catalana. The former is the city's opera house and the latter puts on an infinitely more eclectic programme, from choral to Portuguese *fado*. Both have been given a 21st-century remake, the Liceu because it was burned to the ground and the Palau because it so badly needed it! The modern Auditori is home to the city's orchestra.

The *Guia del Ocio* (p194) has ample listings, but the monthly *Informatiu Musical* leaflet has the best coverage of classical music (as well as other 'highbrow' genres). You can pick it up at tourist offices and the Palau de la Virreina, which also sells tickets for many events.

### CONCERT DE CARILLÓ Map pp64–5

www.gencat.net/presidencia/carillo; Palau de la Generalitat, Plaça de Sant Jaume; admission free;

🕒 noon 1st Sun of month; 📄 Jaume I

Some 5000kg of bronze in 49 bells (a carillon) swings into action for monthly 'concerts' in the seat of the Catalan government, allowing spectators a rare chance to get inside. In the pretty Gothic Pati dels Tarongers, an internal terrace lined with orange trees at the heart of the building, the audience is treated to a midday performance of just about anything, from classical to especially cooked up pieces for the Carilló, all with bells on. There are no reservations – just turn up.

### FUNDACIÓ MAS I MAS Map pp122–3

☎ 93 319 17 89; www.fundacionmasimas.org; Carrer de Marià Cubí 199; admission €5; 🕒 6–8.30pm Sun–Wed, 6pm–midnight Thu–Sat; 📄 FGC Muntaner

Long a point of pilgrimage for Barcelona drinkers and shut down in 2007 for breaking noise regulations, this place has been

recycled as a respectable spot for short, intense half-hour sessions of chamber music played every hour.

### GRAN TEATRE DEL LICEU Map pp64–5

☎ 93 485 99 00; www.liceubarcelona.com; La Rambla dels Caputxins 51–59; 🕒 box office 2–8.30pm Mon–Fri & 1hr before show Sat & Sun; 📄 Liceu

Barcelona's grand old opera house, restored after a fire in 1994, is one of the most technologically advanced theatres in the world (see p71). To take up a seat in the grand auditorium, returned to all its 19th-century glory but with the very latest in acoustic accoutrements, is to be transported to another age. Local VIPs are frequently present, in a sign that one of the social *raisons d'être* of opera – seeing and being seen – has not been lost in modern times. Red plush seating and stage curtains stand in regal contrast to the glistering gold of the five tiers of boxes. As well as opera, you can see world-class dance chamber music and recitals. Tickets can cost anything from €7.50 for a cheap seat behind a pillar to €150 for a well-positioned night at the opera.

### L'AUDITORIUM Map pp102–3

☎ 93 247 93 00; www.auditori.org; Carrer de Lepant 150; admission €17–65; 🕒 box office noon–9pm Mon–Sat; 📄 Monumental

Barcelona's modern home for serious music-lovers, L'Auditori (designed by Rafael Moneo) puts on plenty of orchestral, chamber, religious and other music. L'Auditori is perhaps ugly on the outside (to the less kind-hearted it looks like a pile of rusting scrap metal) but beautifully tuned on the inside, showing that one can't judge a book by its cover. Home to the Orquestra Simfònica de Barcelona i Nacional de Catalunya, the theatre (with three auditoriums) has its interesting points too, with plenty of glass surfaces and an enormous skylight. The chamber music stage, the Sala Martorell, boasts acoustics as close to perfect as imaginable.

### PALAU DE LA MÚSICA CATALANA

Map pp84–5

☎ 902 475485; www.palaumusica.org; Carrer de Sant Francesc de Paula 2; 🕒 box office 10am–9pm Mon–Sat; 📄 Urquinaona

A feast for the eyes, this Modernista pudding is also the city's traditional venue for

classical and choral music. Just being here for a performance is an experience. Sip a pre-concert tippie in the foyer, its tiled pillars all a-glitter. Head up the grand stairway to the main auditorium, a whirlpool of Modernista whimsy that is seen at its best before lights are dimmed for the show. With a front row box seat, you seem projected towards the sculpture-framed stage. The Palau has a busy and wide-ranging programme that includes many groups and orchestras from abroad. You could pay €10 or less for a cheap seat in a middling concert and up to €150 or more for prestigious international performances.

### PALAU ROBERT Map pp108–9

☎ 93 238 40 00; www10.gencat.net/probert; Passeig de Gràcia 107; admission €3; 📄 Diagonal

Once a month concerts are held in the peaceful gardens at the back of this fine building or its main hall. Concerts are usually held around 8pm on a Wednesday. You need to pick up a pass the afternoon before (between 5pm and 7pm) or on the morning of the performance (from 10am to noon), as places are limited.

## DANCE

Some fine local contemporary dance companies (see p41), along with international visiting companies from time to time, maintain a fairly busy performance programme across town. Look for leaflets at Palau de la Virreina and watch theatre listings. For ballet and other big spectacles, you need to wait for acts to arrive from abroad.

You can see traditional dance, whether the local *sardanes* (the national dance of Catalonia) in the streets or flamenco throughout the year. The quality of flamenco performances can vary wildly but the touristy *tablaos* (restaurants featuring flamenco) should not be completely dismissed, as on occasion major names turn up in them. Several other locations also offer the chance to see this fiery dance.

## FLAMENCO

Although some major flamenco artists grew up in Barcelona's *gitano* (Roma) neighbourhoods, seeing good performances of this essentially Andalusian dance and music is not always easy. A few *tablaos*, where punters see flamenco while eating dinner, are scattered about. They are touristy but occasionally host



good acts, so you need to keep a keen eye out for the names. You can also catch flamenco on Friday nights at the **Jazz Sí Club** (p202). Flamenco clubs (*penas*) are scattered about Barcelona's outer suburbs but are a rather hermetic phenomenon. If you are in Barcelona in May, try to catch **Festival de Flamenco de Ciutat Vella** (p17) or the festival in the district of Nou Barris in the same month. For other occasional concerts, check out [www.barcelonaflamenco.com](http://www.barcelonaflamenco.com).

### SALA TARANTOS Map pp64–5

☎ 93 319 17 89; <http://masimas.com/tarantos>; Plaça Reial 17; admission €6; 🎫 performances 8.30pm, 9.30pm & 10.30pm daily; 🏠 Liceu

Since 1963, this basement locale has been the stage for some of the best flamenco to pass through or come out of Barcelona. You have to keep your eye on the place because top-class acts are not a daily diet. For lower-grade stuff, a one-hour *tablaó* takes place three times a night. On an altogether un-flamenco note, Wednesday nights (from 11.30pm) is WTF (What the Fuck) Vocal Jams night, where some daring souls try their luck singing in a live virtual-reality show.

### TABLAO CORDOBÉS Map pp64–5

☎ 93 317 57 11; [www.tablaocordobes.com](http://www.tablaocordobes.com); La Rambla 35; show only €35, with dinner €68; 🎫 shows 8.15pm, 10pm & 11.30pm; 🏠 Liceu This *tablaó* is typical of its touristy genre and has been in business since 1970. Artists perform on a tiny hardwood stage with a vaulted backdrop that is supposed to make us think of Granada's El Alhambra. Generally people book for the dinner and show, although you can skip the food and just come along for the performance (about 1½ hours). You need to arrive about 1½ hours before the show for dinner, which is an indifferent assortment of paella, other hot dishes and salads. Some great names have come through here, so it is not always cheese.

### TABLAO DE CARMEN Map pp140–1

☎ 93 325 68 95; [www.tablaodecarmen.com](http://www.tablaodecarmen.com); Carrer dels Arcs 9, Poble Espanyol; show only €35, with dinner €69–94; 🎫 shows 7.45pm & 10pm Tue–Sun; 🏠 Espanya

Named after the great Barcelona *bailaora* (flamenco dancer) Carmen Amaya, the set-up here is similar to that at the *Tablaó Cordobés*, although it is somewhat larger

and the pseudo-Andalucian décor has a colder, more modern look. While it is true the shows do not excite connoisseurs, the quality can at times be quite high. Not a few up-and-coming flamenco stars tread the boards here on their way up.

### TABLAO NERVIÓN Map pp84–5

☎ 93 315 21 03; [www.restaurantenervion.com](http://www.restaurantenervion.com) in Spanish; Carrer de la Princesa 2; show & set dinner €35, show only with one drink €12; 🎫 shows 10pm–1am Fri; 🏠 Jaume I

For very tourist-oriented flamenco, this place has unbeatable offers. Come along to the second show at midnight and the only obligation is to have a drink for €6. If you come at 11pm, you pay €12 for the show and a drink (beer or sangria). Or you can do the whole dinner and show thing from 10pm. This place believes in participation, so you can organise stag and hen's nights where you, too, can have a twirl with the dancers.

## SARDANA

In Barcelona the best chance you have of seeing people dancing the *sardana* is at noon on Sunday in front of La Catedral. Other possibilities are at 6.30pm on Saturday and 7pm on Wednesday. You can also see the dance during some of the city's festivals. For more on this traditional dance, see p42.

## CONTEMPORARY

### TEATRE MERCAT DE LES FLORS

Map pp140–1

☎ 93 426 18 75; [www.mercatflors.org](http://www.mercatflors.org); Carrer de Lleida 59; admission €15–20; 🎫 box office 11am–2pm & 4–7pm Mon–Fri & 1hr before show; 🏠 Espanya

Next door to the Teatre Lliure (opposite) and together with it known as the Ciutat de Teatre (Theatre City), this is a key venue for top local and international contemporary dance acts. Dance companies perform all over Barcelona but this spacious modern stage is Number One.

## THEATRE

Most local theatre is performed in Catalan or Spanish, although foreign companies, especially of a more avant-garde hue, are occasionally welcomed too. Some well-established Barcelona companies (see p41) provide a broad palette of drama, comedy and even

## THE FURIOUS FURA DELS BAUS

Keep your eyes peeled for any of the eccentric (if not downright crazed) performances of Barcelona's La Fura dels Baus theatre group ([www.lafura.com](http://www.lafura.com)). It has won worldwide acclaim for its brand of startling, often acrobatic, theatre in which the audience is frequently dragged into the chaos. The company grew out of Barcelona's street-theatre culture in the late 1970s and, although it has grown in technical prowess, it has not abandoned the rough-and-ready edge of street performances. In 2008, the group again raised eyebrows with its Boris Gudonov show, in which the audience becomes hostage in a scene uncomfortably reminiscent of the 2002 Moscow Theatre hostage disaster, in which at least 129 civilians died when security forces retook the building from Chechen terrorists. Whatever La Fura team does, it makes sure the element of surprise is on its side.

musicals. Smaller, experimental theatre groups also have an enthusiastic local following, and dozens of often tiny repertory theatres are scattered across the city. They try their hand at anything from Shakespeare revisited to new, home-grown drama. The monthly guide *Teatre BCN* has the latest listings and can be picked up at the Palau de la Virreina.

### SALA BECKETT Map p118

☎ 93 284 53 12; [www.salabeckett.com](http://www.salabeckett.com); Carrer de Ca l'Alegre de Dalt 55bis; 🎫 box office 10am–2pm & 4–8pm Mon–Fri & 1hr before start of show; 🏠 Joanic

One of the city's principal alternative theatres, the Sala Beckett is a smallish space that does not shy away from challenging theatre, contemporary or otherwise and usually performs in Catalan.

### TEATRE LLANTIOL Map pp76–7

☎ 93 329 90 09; [www.llantiol.com](http://www.llantiol.com); Carrer de la Riereta 7; admission €5–10; 🏠 Sant Antoni

At this curious place in El Raval all sorts of odd stuff, from concerts and ballads to magic shows, is staged. On Saturday nights at 12.30am there is a regular cabaret-variety slot, a bit of a throwback to another era. This unlikely backstreet happens to be host to a nest of artists' studios. The box office opens 15 minutes before shows start.

### TEATRE LLIURE Map pp140–1

☎ 93 289 27 70; [www.teatrelliure.com](http://www.teatrelliure.com); Plaça Margarida Xirgu 1; admission €13–26; 🎫 box office 5–8pm; 🏠 Espanya

Housed in the magnificent former Palau de l'Agricultura building on Montjuïc (opposite the Museu d'Arqueologia) and consisting of two modern theatre spaces (Espai Lliure and Sala Fabià Puigserver), the 'Free Theatre' puts on a variety of quality drama (mostly in Catalan), contemporary dance and music.

### TEATRE NACIONAL DE CATALUNYA

Map pp102–3

☎ 93 306 57 00; [www.tnc.es](http://www.tnc.es); Plaça de les Arts 1; admission €12–32; 🎫 box office 3–8pm Tue–Sat & 1hr before show; Plaça de les Arts 1; 🏠 Glòries or Monumental

Ricard Bofill's ultra-neoclassical theatre, with the bright, airy foyer, hosts a wide range of performances, principally drama (anything from King Lear in Catalan to La Fura dels Baus) but occasionally dance and other performances. The cream-coloured Sala Gran is reserved for big productions, while the Sala Petita and the Sala Tallers are for smaller-scale and more intimate plays and dance.

### TEATRE NOU TANTARANTANA

Map pp76–7

☎ 93 441 70 22; [www.tantarantana.com](http://www.tantarantana.com); Carrer de les Flors 22; 🎫 box office 30min before show; 🏠 Paral.lel

Apart from staging all sorts of contemporary and experimental drama, this cosy theatre (room for about 150 spectators) also has a kids' programme, including pantomime and puppets. These shows tend to start at 6pm (noon on Sundays).

### TEATRE PRINCIPAL Map pp64–5

☎ 902 332211; [www.grupbalana.com](http://www.grupbalana.com); La Rambla 27; 🎫 box office 5–8pm Tue–Sun; 🏠 Liceu

There has been a theatre on this spot since the 16th century. Renovated in 2006, the theatre tends to concentrate on local productions of West End musicals. It also serves occasionally as a live concert stage too.

### TEATRE ROMEA Map pp76–7

☎ 93 301 55 04; [www.focus.es](http://www.focus.es) in Catalan & Spanish; Carrer de l'Hospital 51; 🎫 box office 4.30–8pm Tue–Sun; 🏠 Liceu

Deep in El Raval, this 19th-century theatre was resurrected at the end of the 1990s

and is a reference point for quality drama. It usually fills up for a broad range of interesting plays, often classics with a contemporary flavour, in Catalan and Spanish.

### TEATRE TÍVOLI Map pp108–9

☎ 902 332211; [www.grupbalana.com](http://www.grupbalana.com); Carrer de Casp 8-12; ☎ box office 1hr before show; **M** Catalunya A grand old theatre with three storeys of boxes and a generous stage, the Tívoli has a fairly rapid turnover of drama, with pieces often not staying on for more than a couple of weeks. Among its 2008 offerings was *Ay Carmela!*, a civil war story of a travelling comedy duo caught between the warring sides.

### TEATRE VICTÒRIA Map pp140–1

☎ 93 443 29 29; [www.teatrevictoria.com](http://www.teatrevictoria.com) in Catalan & Spanish; Avinguda del Paral.lel 67-69; admission €12-45; ☎ box office 5-8pm & 1hr before show; **M** Paral.lel

This modern (and, on the street, rather nondescript-looking) theatre is on what used to be considered Barcelona's version of Broadway. It often stages ballet, contemporary dance and even flamenco, but otherwise the stage is used by well-known local companies, such as Tricicle. This trio of comic mimes has been doing the rounds with their version of 'intelligent humour' for more than 20 years.

### TEATRENEU Map p118

☎ 93 285 37 12; [www.teatreneu.com](http://www.teatreneu.com); Carrer de Terol 26; ☎ box office 30min before show; **M** Fontana or Joanic

This lively theatre (with a bustling, rambling downstairs bar facing the street) dares to fool around with all sorts of material, from monologues to social comedy. Occasionally it changes the pace and opts for world music, but either way it has a busy programme.

## CINEMAS

Spain is proud of its dubbing industry, which could sound warning bells. The other great Mediterranean centre of dubbing, Italy, offers those who don't like it few opportunities to avoid it. In Barcelona, fortunately, there is no shortage of cinemas showing foreign films with subtitles and original soundtracks. They are marked 'vo' (*versión original*) in movie listings.

The best movie listings are in the daily *El País* newspaper. A ticket usually costs €6 to €7, but most cinemas have a weekly *día del espectador* (viewer's day), often Monday or Wednesday, when they charge around €4.80 to €5.50. In some cinemas you can book by phone or online. Otherwise, you'll need to join the queue. In addition to the following mainstream cinemas, classic movies are sometimes shown in such diverse locations as La Pedrera (p106), Sala Apolo (p213), FNAC record and book stores in the El Triangle shopping centre on Plaça de Catalunya (Map pp108–9) and the L'illa del Diagonal shopping mall (Map pp122–3), CaixaForum (p142), the CCCB (p80) and civic centres.

Outdoor cinema screens are set up in summer at the Castell de Montjuïc (p143) and in the Fòrum (p97).

### BOLICHE Map pp122–3

☎ 93 218 17 88; Avinguda Diagonal 508; **M** Diagonal

With four screens, this cinema is located at a central point within walking distance of central Gràcia, a good selection of bars and restaurants in l'Eixample (eg around Carrer d'Aribau) and others in the immediate area north of Avinguda Diagonal (for this book's purposes, the beginning of La Zona Alta).

### CASABLANCA KAPLAN Map p118

☎ 93 218 43 45; Passeig de Gràcia 115; **M** Diagonal A smallish local cinema (with three screens) that always shows movies in the original language.

### CASABLANCA GRÀCIA Map pp108–9

☎ 93 459 03 26; Carrer de Girona 173-175; **M** Girona Often you'll find this cinema nearly empty, which in one sense is good – you should have no concerns about finding the movies here sold out!

### FILMOTECA Map pp102–3

☎ 93 410 75 90; Avinguda de Sarrià 31-33; admission €3-4; **M** Hospital Clínic

Also known as Cine Aquitania, it specialises in film seasons that concentrate on particular directors, styles and eras of film.

### ICÀRIA YELMO CINEPLEX Map pp98–9

☎ 93 221 75 85; [www.yelmocineplex.es](http://www.yelmocineplex.es) in Spanish; Carrer de Salvador Espriu 61; **M** Ciutadella Vila Olímpica

A vast cinema complex that always screens movies in the original language – this place always has the biggest choice of such films in town. In the complex you'll find several cheerful eateries, bars and the like to keep you occupied before and after the movies.

### MALDÀ Map pp64–5

☎ 93 481 37 04; [www.cinemalda.com](http://www.cinemalda.com); Carrer del Pi 5; **M** Liceu

In the heart of the Barri Gòtic, one screen turns around several movies in the course of the afternoon and evening. They occasionally put on Bollywood hits.

### MÉLIÈS CINEMES Map pp108–9

☎ 93 451 00 51; Carrer de Villarroel 102; admission €3-5; **M** Urgell

A cosy cinema with two screens, the Méliès specialises in old classics from Hollywood and European cinema.

### RENOIR FLORIDABLANCA Map pp102–3

☎ 93 426 33 37; [www.cinesrenoir.com](http://www.cinesrenoir.com) in Spanish; Carrer de Floridablanca 135; **M** Sant Antoni With seven screens, this is one of a small chain of art-house cinemas in Spain

showing quality flicks. It is handily located just beyond El Raval, so you can be sure that there is no shortage of post-film entertainment options nearby.

### RENOIR-LES CORTS Map pp122–3

☎ 93 490 55 10; [www.cinesrenoir.com](http://www.cinesrenoir.com) in Spanish; Carrer de Eugeni d'Ors 12; **M** Maria Cristina or Les Corts

With six cinemas, this is a somewhat distant alternative from central Barcelona for original versions.

### VERDI Map p118

☎ 93 238 79 90; [www.cines-verdi.com](http://www.cines-verdi.com) in Spanish; Carrer de Verdi 32; **M** Fontana

A popular original-language movie house in the heart of Gràcia, handy to lots of local eateries and bars for pre- and post-film enjoyment.

### VERDI PARK Map p118

☎ 93 238 79 90; [www.cines-verdi.com](http://www.cines-verdi.com) in Spanish; Carrer de Torrijos 49; **M** Fontana

Sister to the Verdi, the Verdi Park is a block away and follows the same art-house philosophy.

## SPORTS & ACTIVITIES

### top picks

- Football match (p226)
- Mailuna (p224)
- Pollesportiu Marítim (p225)
- Castells (p227)
- Formula One (p227)



# SPORTS & ACTIVITIES

Barcelona offers those with a hangover every chance to eliminate toxins by getting out and flexing other muscles besides the elbow. Options abound, from swimming and sailing to marathon running. There are plenty of gyms, and for those whose feelings of guilt over the excesses of the previous night don't translate to physical exertions, the city's football and basketball teams provide class-A excitement when they play at home. Otherwise you can indulge in a massage, day spa or a spot of floating!

For information on where you can practise sports in Barcelona, try the **Servei d'Informació Esportiva** (Map pp140-1; ☎ 93 402 30 00; Avinguda de l'Estadi 30-40, Montjuïc; 🕒 8am-2pm & 4-6pm Mon-Thu, 8am-2pm Fri), located in the same complex as the Piscines Bernat Picornell on Montjuïc.

## HEALTH & FITNESS

The folks of Barcelona have become as fit and health conscious as those of any other city and the number of places to indulge in a little well-being of one sort or another is multiplying.

## SPAS & MASSAGE

Many of the better hotels have wellness centres, among them Hotel Arts (p235), Hotel Omm (p236) and the Hesperia Tower in L'Hospitalet. You can also get soothing spa treatment outside Barcelona (see p246).

### AQUA URBAN SPA Map p118

☎ 93 238 41 60; [www.aqua-urbanspa.com](http://www.aqua-urbanspa.com); Carrer Gran de Gràcia 7; 75min session €51; 🕒 9am-9.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-8.30pm Sat; 📍 Diagonal With sessions for anything from stress to tired legs (helpful for diehard sightseers!), this spa offers smallish pool and shower areas, along with steam baths, Roman baths and a series of beauty treatment options.

### FLOTARIUM Map p118

☎ 93 217 36 37; [www.flotarium.com](http://www.flotarium.com); Plaça de Narcís Oller 3; 1hr session €35; 🕒 10am-10pm daily; 📍 Diagonal

Come and float in zero gravity and feel the stress ebb away. Each flotarium, like a little space capsule with water, is in a private room, with shower, towels and shampoo, and Epsom salts that allow you to float as if in the Dead Sea. An hour of sensorial relaxation, isolated from the madding crowds outside.

### MAILUNA Map pp76-7

☎ 93 301 20 02; [www.mailuna.net](http://www.mailuna.net); Carrer de Valldonzella 48; 1hr massage €45-60; 🕒 5-11.30pm Mon, 1-11.30pm Tue-Sat; 📍 Universitat

Mailuna is a bit of wellness universe. Not only do they offer all sorts of massages (Ayurvedic, Swedish, Thai and more), it's also a restaurant, aromatherapy setting, wellness goods store and more. Stop by for a tea and you'll feel better already.

### MASAJES A 1000 Map pp108-9

☎ 93 215 85 85; [www.masajes1000.net](http://www.masajes1000.net), in Spanish; Carrer de Mallorca 233; 5min massages €4; 🕒 7am-1am; 📍 Passeig de Gràcia

All stressed out by sightseeing in the nearby Modernista gems on Passeig de Gràcia? Pop by for a quick, invigorating massage. This is one of four outlets of this chain that are scattered around Barcelona.

## GYMS

Barcelona is crawling with places for a workout, but most gyms cater to long-term members.

### UBAE FRONTÓN Map pp64-5

☎ 93 302 32 95; La Rambla de Santa Mònica 18; admission €12.85; 🕒 8am-10pm Mon-Fri, 9am-7.30pm Sat, 9am-2pm Sun & holidays; 📍 Drassanes

Smack in the heart of the old city, this gym offers a fitness room with all manner of exercise equipment, including a section with bicycles, step and other cardio machines, and a small swimming pool. There are various multiday passes too.

## SWIMMING

Barcelona has several good options for those who want to get in some more serious lap swimming than is possible at the city's beaches.

## SWIMMING AU NATUREL

There are a couple of options for skinny-dippers in Barcelona. In addition to the ill-defined nudists' strip at the southwest end of Platja de la Mar Bella, which provides good opportunities for sunbathing, and the predominantly gay strip at Platja de Sant Miquel, you can also get it all off year-round at the Piscines Bernat Picornell, the Olympic pool on Montjuïc. On Saturday nights, between 9pm and 11pm, the pool (with access to sauna and steam bath) is open only to nudists (adult/child & senior €4.80/3.45). On Sundays between October and May the indoor pool also opens for nudists only from 4.15pm to 6pm.

## CLUB NATACIÓ ATLÈTIC-BARCELONA

Map p93

☎ 93 221 00 10; [www.cnab.org](http://www.cnab.org); Plaça de Mar s/n; adult/under 10yr €10.10/5.85; 🕒 6.30am-11pm Mon-Fri, 7am-11pm Sat, 8am-5pm Sun & holidays Oct-mid-May, 8am-8pm Sun & holidays mid-May-Sep; 📍 Barceloneta 🕒 17, 39, 57 or 64

This athletic club has one indoor and two outdoor pools. Of the latter, one is heated for lap swimming in winter. Admission includes use of the gym and private beach access. Membership costs €34 a month plus €69 joining fee.

## PISCINES BERNAT PICORNELL

Map pp140-1

☎ 93 423 40 41; [www.picornell.com](http://www.picornell.com), in Catalan; Avinguda de l'Estadi 30-38; adult/15-25yr/senior & under 15yr €9.20/5.60/5.15, outdoor pool adult/6-14yr & senior €5.10/3.55; 🕒 6.45am-midnight Mon-Fri, 7am-9pm Sat, 7.30am-4pm Sun, outdoor pool, hrs vary; 🕒 50, 61 or PM

Included in the standard entry price to Barcelona's official Olympic pool on Montjuïc is use of the gym, saunas and spa bath. Membership costs €51 to join and €34.40 a month.

## POLIESPORTIU MARÍTIM Map p93

☎ 93 224 04 40; [www.claror.cat](http://www.claror.cat), in Catalan; Passeig Marítim de la Barceloneta 33-35; Mon-Fri €14.40, Sat, Sun & holidays €17; 🕒 7am-midnight Mon-Fri, 8am-9pm Sat, 8am-4pm Sun & holidays; 📍 Ciutadella Vila Olímpica

Water babies will squeal with delight in this thalassotherapy (sea-water therapy) sports centre. In addition to the small pool, there is a labyrinth of hot, warm and freezing-cold spa pools, along with thundering waterfalls for massage relief.

## ACTIVITIES CYCLING

Although cycle lanes have been laid out along many main arteries, the city centre is not the most relaxing place for a bike ride. Hillier (but less stressful) is Montjuïc, or you could head up into the Parc de Collserola (p134) with a mountain bike. For information on bicycle hire, see p265.

## GOLF

Head out of town if you enjoy belting small round objects around the greenery.

## CLUB DE GOLF SANT CUGAT

☎ 93 674 39 08; [www.golfsantcugat.com](http://www.golfsantcugat.com), in Spanish; Carrer de la Villa s/n, Sant Cugat del Vallès; Mon-Thu €65, Fri-Sun & holidays €150; 🕒 8am-dusk Mon-Fri, 7am-dusk Sat & Sun; 📍 FGC Sant Cugat

This 18-hole course was designed by Scottish experts in 1917 to meet the needs of a firm of British and American engineers working on electricity projects in Catalonia.

## SAILING

On sunny weekends the Med off Barcelona is alive the swollen sails of pleasure craft. You can join in.

## BASE NAUTICA MUNICIPAL Map pp98-9

☎ 93 221 04 32; [www.basenautica.org](http://www.basenautica.org), in Spanish; Avinguda de Litoral s/n; 📍 Poblenou Have you come to Barcelona to become a seadog? If so, head to this place, just back from Platja de la Mar Bella, and enrol in a course in pleasure-boat handling, kayaking or windsurfing (€179 for 10 hours tuition).

## SPECTATOR SPORTS BASKETBALL

FC Barcelona's Winterthur FCB basketball team is almost as successful as the city's glamorous football outfit, with 14 premier league victories, 20 Copas del Rey and four European titles since 1946. One of its star players, local boy 2.16m Pau Gasol, has played in the NBA league in the USA since 2001 (now with the Los Angeles Lakers) but he returns home to play in the national Spanish team.

## A WOMAN'S TOUCH

On FC Barcelona's official website ([www.fcbarcelona.com](http://www.fcbarcelona.com)) you'll find information not only on the champion football side, but on the club's basketball, handball and even their roller-skate hockey teams. But you'd never know that FC Barcelona has a women's football team. Indeed, you'd be hard pressed finding out that, since 2001, 14 women's teams have been fighting it out each year for the Superliga Femenina premiership. FC Barcelona's women's team is full of fight, but it's a different ball game. On average, fewer than 500 spectators come to watch FC Barcelona women's matches and in the short history of the league they have tended to hang around the bottom of the table. Indeed, since 2006 they have been playing in the 2nd division (or Liga Nacional).

The team plays (generally on Saturday afternoons) in the **Palau Blaugrana** (Map pp122–3; ☎ 902 189900; [www.fcbarcelona.com](http://www.fcbarcelona.com); Carrer d'Aristides Maillol; M Collblanc), next door to the Camp Nou football stadium in Les Corts. Tickets can be purchased direct at Palau Blaugrana, on the phone and online. Ticket prices oscillate between €11 and €58, depending on position and match.

## BULLFIGHTING

Hemingway called it death in the afternoon and, like so many things in Barcelona, it is a subject of controversy and political demagoguery. In 2004 the city council narrowly voted for a symbolic declaration that Barcelona was anti-bullfighting. Animal rights groups, who oppose *la lidia* (bullfighting), were delighted. But there was more to the vote than meets the eye. Promoted by the Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (ERC, Republican Left of Catalonia) independence party, the declaration stands in line with the common claim that bullfighting is a Spanish cultural imposition on Catalonia, largely loathed by many Catalans. During the Civil War years, vegetarian anarchists banned bullfighting in Republican Barcelona.

The Salamanca-based Matilla family, which took over Barcelona's bullfight business in 2007, remains in combative mood, showing no sign of ceding to suggestions that the ring could be used to house the Els Encants market, which will one day have to move from its present home on Plaça de les Glòries Catalanes (see p159).

The bullfight season is staged at the **Plaça de Braus Monumental** (Map pp102–3; ☎ 93 245 58 02; cnr Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes & Carrer de la Marina; ☎ ticket office 11am–2pm & 4–8pm Mon–Sat, 10am–6pm Sun; M Monumental). The fight starts at around 6pm (sometimes 7pm), mostly on Sunday afternoons from Easter to late September. Tickets are available at the arena or through

ServiCaixa. You can also pick up tickets at **Toros Taquilla Oficial** (Map pp108–9; Carrer de Muntaner 26; ☎ 11am–2pm & 4–8pm Wed–Fri, 11am–2pm & 4–7pm Sat; M Universitat). Prices range from €20 to €120. The higher-priced tickets are for the front row in the shade – any closer and you'd be fighting the bulls yourself.

On an afternoon ticket there are generally six bulls and perhaps three star matadors (those bullfighters who do most of the fighting and then kill the bull at the end). The matador leads a *cuadrilla* (team) of other fighters who make up the rest of the colourful band that appears in the ring. It is a complex business, but in essence the matadors aim to impress the crowd and jury with daring and graceful moves as close to an aggressive, fighting bull as possible. While the death of the bull is generally inevitable (its meat is later sold), this in no way implies the bullfighter always gets off scot-free. It is a genuinely dangerous business, and being gored and tossed by several hundred kilos of bull is no fun.

## FOOTBALL

Football in Barcelona has the aura of religion and for much of the city's population, support of FC Barcelona is an article of faith. But the city has another hardy (if less illustrious) side, Espanyol. FC Barcelona is traditionally associated with the Catalans and even Catalan nationalism, while Espanyol is often identified with Spanish immigrants from other parts of the country.

It all started on 29 November 1899, when, four years after English residents had first played the game here, Swiss Hans Gamper founded FC Barcelona (Barça). His choice of club colours, the blue and maroon of his hometown, Winterthur, have stuck. The following year, Espanyol was formed. It distinguished itself from the other sides, ironically, by being formed solely of Catalans

and other Spaniards. Most other sides, including FC Barcelona, were primarily made up of foreigners.

By 1910 FC Barcelona was the premier club in a rapidly growing league. The first signs of professionalism emerged – paid transfers of players were recorded and Espanyol's management charged spectators. Barça, who had 560 members (compared to about 156,000 today), claimed victory at that year's national championship.

A match at **Camp Nou** (Map pp122–3; ☎ 902 189900; Carrer d'Aristides Maillol; ☎ box office 9am–1.30pm & 3.30–6pm Mon–Fri; M Collblanc) can be breathtaking. The stadium is going to get a spectacular sprucing up in coming years (see p54).

After several years in the wilderness, FC Barcelona hit its straps and won the 2004–2005 and 2005–2006 championships. The good run was interrupted the following year by a victorious Real Madrid and in 2008 the bridesmaid scenario repeated itself. Not only did the side slump in the final months of the premiership (which Madrid won easily), it failed to take any other honours. The final humiliation came when Manchester United defeated them in the Champions League semifinals.

Barça is one of only three teams (the others are Real Madrid and Athletic de Bilbao) never to have been relegated to the second division. Since the league got fully under way in 1928, Barça has emerged champion 18 times, second only to archrivals Real Madrid (with 30 victories). Between them the two have virtually

monopolised the game – only seven other teams have managed to come out on top (four of them only once or twice) in 70 years of competition.

Tickets are available at Camp Nou, as well as by phone and online. You can also purchase them through the ServiCaixa ticketing service. To purchase tickets by phone or online, nonclub members must do so at least 15 days before the match. Tickets can cost anything from €14 to €170, depending on the seat and match. The ticket windows open on Saturday morning and in the afternoon until the game starts. If the match is on Sunday, it opens Saturday morning only and then on Sunday until the match starts. Usually tickets are *not* available for matches with Real Madrid.

You will almost definitely find scalpers lurking near the ticket windows. They are often club members and can sometimes get you in at a significant reduction. Don't pay until you are safely seated.

The city's other club, Espanyol, based at the **Estadi Olímpic** (Map pp140–1; Avinguda de l'Estadi; ☎ 50, 61 or PM), traditionally plays a quiet second fiddle to Barça. The club is building a new stadium in the suburb of Cornellà.

## FORMULA ONE

Every April since 1991, the dashing knights in shining motorised armour have come to the Montmeló track, about a 30-minute drive north of Barcelona. A seat for the Grand Prix race at the **Circuit de Catalunya** (☎ 93 571 97

## CASTLES IN THE AIR

It's difficult to know how to classify making human castles, but to many a Catalan, the *castellers* (castle builders) are as serious in their sport as any footballer.

The 'building' of *castells* (castles) is particularly popular in central and southern Catalonia. Teams from all over the region compete during summer and you are most likely to see *castellers* in town festivals. The amateur sport began in the 1880s, and although Barcelona's home teams are not among the best, it is always fun to watch. When teams from other towns come to compete, it can be quite exciting.

Without delving too deeply into the complexities, the teams aim to erect human 'castles' of up to 10 storeys. These usually involve levels of three to five people standing on each others' shoulders. A crowd of team-mates and supporters forms a supporting scrum around the thickest lads at the base. To successfully complete the castle, a young (light!) child called the *anxaneta* must reach the top and signal with his/her hand. Sometimes the castle then falls in a heap (if it has not already done so) but successful completion also involves bringing the levels back down to earth in orderly fashion. The death of an *anxaneta*, who struck her head in a fall from the top of a *castell* in 2006, provoked calls for these children to wear helmets. In the end, nothing came of the demands, as it was pointed out that there had been just three fatal accidents in the entire history of the activity.

Home and away teams sometimes converge on Plaça de Catalunya, Plaça de Sant Jaume and other city squares for friendly competitions during the various festivals. Ask the tourist office (p279) for more details. Beyond Barcelona competition events can be seen in many towns, including Vilafranca del Penedès (p257) and Tarragona (p259).

71; [www.circuitcat.com](http://www.circuitcat.com)) can cost anything from €123 to €483. If you purchase before mid-March, tickets are slightly cheaper. Purchase tickets by phone, at the track, online with ServiCaixa or at advance ticket-sales desks in El Corte Inglés department stores. You can get a regular *rodalies* train to Montmeló (€1.40, 30 minutes) but will need to walk about 3km or find a local taxi (about €10) to reach the track. On race days the [Sagalés bus company](#) (☎ 902 130014; [www.sagales.com](http://www.sagales.com)) often runs buses to the track from Passeig de Sant Joan (between Carrer de la Diputació and Carrer del Consell de Cent).

## SAILING

The annual [Trofeo Conde de Godó](#) ([www.regatagodo.com](http://www.regatagodo.com), in Spanish) is Barcelona's prestigious yachting competition, held off the city's coast over three days at the end of May and drawing crews from around the country.

In 2007 a new round-the-world regatta, the [Barcelona World Race](#) ([www.barcelonaworldrace.com](http://www.barcelonaworldrace.com)) saw two-person yachts leaving the city in November. The participants, led by winners Jean-Pierre Dick and Damian Foxall, straggled back over the month of February the following year. The next one will be held in 2010.



## lonely planet Hotels & Hostels

Want more Sleeping recommendations than we could ever pack into this little ol' book? Craving more detail – including extended reviews and photographs? Want to read reviews by other travellers and be able to post your own? Just make your way over to [lonelyplanet.com/hotels](http://lonelyplanet.com/hotels) and check out our thorough list of independent reviews, then reserve your room simply and securely.

## SLEEPING

### top picks

- Hotel Banys Orientals (p234)
- Hotel Axel (p236)
- Hotel Constanza (p237)
- Alberg Mare de Déu de Montserrat (p240)
- Hotel Omm (p236)
- Hotel Neri (p232)
- Market Hotel (p238)
- Hostel Goya (p238)
- Hotel Comtes de Barcelona (p237)
- Hostel Mambo Tango (p241)

What's your recommendation? [www.lonelyplanet.com/barcelona](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/barcelona)

# SLEEPING

Barcelona's hotel-building boom continues apace. This is good news for everyone. Some fine, up-to-the-minute hotels in a broad price bracket have opened in historic buildings and key locations, the number of options near the sea has increased, and new high-end digs have popped up in various strategic spots. Between 1997 and 2007, hotel space in the city doubled. More than 40 more hotels (almost all three stars and up) will be built by 2011. As competition grows, many of the more established spots are obliged to upgrade – at the upper levels, this means more hotel pools, spas, designer bars and chic dining.

## ACCOMMODATION STYLES

The city has hundreds of hotels in all categories and a good range of alternatives, including numerous youth hostels.

If dorm living is not your thing but you are still looking for a budget deal, check around the many *pensiones* and *hostales*. These are family-run, small-scale hotels, often housed in sprawling apartments. Some are fleapits, while others are immaculately maintained gems.

Hotels cover a broad range. At the bottom end there is often little to distinguish them from better *pensiones* and *hostales*, and from there they run up the scale five-star luxury.

A cosier (and sometimes more cost-effective) alternative to hotels can be short-term apartment rental. A plethora of firms organise short lets across town. Typical prices are around €80 to €100 for two people per night. Among these services are: **Feelathomebarcelona.com** (Map pp76–7; ☎ 902 343644, 651 894141; www.feelathomebarcelona.com; Carrer Nou de la Rambla 15); **Barcelona On Line** (Map pp108–9; ☎ 933437993/94; www.barcelona-on-line.es; Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes 662); **Barcelona Apartments** (Map pp122–3; ☎ 934145528; www.barcelonapartments.com; Via Augusta 173); **Apartment Barcelona** (Map pp108–9; ☎ 932157934; www.apartmentbarcelona.com; Carrer de València 286); **Lodging Barcelona** (Map pp108–9; ☎ 93 467 78 00; www.lodgingbarcelona.com; Carrer de Balmaes 62), which also offers accommodation options on *apartamentos flotantes* (boats) in Port Vell; **Rent a Flat in Barcelona** (Map pp64–5; ☎ 93 342 73 00; www.rentaflatinbarcelona.com; Carrer de Fontanella 18); and **Oh-Barcelona .Com** (Map pp64–5; ☎ 93 467 37 81; www.oh-barcelona.com; Avinguda del Portal de l'Àngel 42). If you're looking to do a short-term house swap, check out the ads on www.loquo.com. Want to sleep on a local's couch? Try your luck at www.couchsurfing.com.

## Longer-term Rentals

The **Universitat de Barcelona** (Map pp108–9; ☎ 93 402 11 00; Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes 585; 🏛️ Universitat), the **British Council** (Map pp122–3; ☎ 93 241 99 77; Carrer d'Amigó 83; 🇬🇧 FGC Muntaner) and **International House** (Map pp84–5; ☎ 93 268 45 11; Carrer de Trafalgar 14; 🇺🇸 Arc de Triomf) have notice boards with ads for flat shares. An option for students coming to Barcelona to study is the private **Rent a Bedroom** (Map pp140–1; ☎ 93 217 25 83; www.rentabedroom.com; Avinguda Paral.lel 101). It can organise rooms in share houses for between €300 and €700 per month, inclusive of bills.

The free English-language monthly *Barcelona Metropolitan*, found in bars and some hotels, carries rental classifieds in English, as does another monthly freebie, *Catalunya Classified*. Check out the ads at www.loquo.com too. Otherwise, get a hold of *Anuntis*, the weekly classifieds paper. The last few pages of the *Suplement Immobiliària* (Real Estate Supplement) carry ads for shared accommodation under the heading *lloguer/hostes i vivendes a compartir*. Expect rent of €350 a month or more for a room. You may need to add your share of bills (gas, electricity, water, phone and *comunidad* – building maintenance charges).

## CHECK-IN & CHECK-OUT TIMES

Always confirm your arrival, especially if it's going to be late in the afternoon or evening. Generally there is no problem if you have paid a deposit or left a credit-card number. While you can check in at any time of the morning, you may not get access to your room until after

noon. Most of the time you will be able to leave your luggage at reception and go for a wander until the room is ready.

Check-out time is generally noon, although some places can be a little draconian and set a leaving time of 11am or, in rare cases, even 10am!

## RESERVATIONS

Booking ahead is recommended, especially during peak periods such as Easter, Christmas/New Year, trade fairs and throughout much of summer (although August can be quite a slack month owing to the heat). You may be asked for a credit-card number and be charged a night's accommodation if you fail to show up. If you prefer to check rooms personally, you could book for the first night or two and then seek an alternative place once in Barcelona.

You can book accommodation at the tourist office at Plaça de Catalunya (p279).

## ROOM RATES

Even in deep low season, you're unlikely to pay less than €18 to €20 for a dorm bed in a youth hostel. In small *pensiones* or *hostales* you are looking at a minimum of around €35/55 for basic *individual/doble* (single/double) rooms, mostly without a private bathroom. (It is occasionally possible to find cheaper rooms, but they can be unappetising.) For around €100 to €140, there are extensive options for good doubles across a broad range of hotels and areas. The top-end category in this guide starts at €250 for a double, but can easily rise to €500 (and beyond for suites).

Some places, especially at the lower end, offer triples and quads, which can be good value for groups. If you want a double bed (as opposed to two singles), ask for a *llit/cama matrimonial*. Single travellers are penalised, frequently paying around two-thirds (or more) of the double-room rate (especially in those places that have no single rooms).

Some hotels, particularly at the lower and mid levels, maintain the same prices year round. Others vary the rates for *temporada alta* (high season), *temporada media* (mid-season) and *temporada baja* (low season). Low season is roughly November to Easter, except during the Christmas/New Year period. Whenever there is a major trade fair (they are frequent), high-season prices generally apply. Conversely, business-oriented hotels often consider weekends, holiday periods and other slow business times to be low season. Booking on the web is sometimes cheaper than turning up at the door.

Virtually all accommodation is subject to IVA, the Spanish version of value-added tax, at 7%. This is often included in the quoted price at cheaper places, but less often at more expensive ones. Ask: '¿Está incluido el IVA?' ('Is IVA included?'). In some cases you will be charged IVA only if you ask for a receipt.

## BARRI GÒTIC & LA RAMBLA

La Rambla is lined with hotels, *pensiones* and fleapits, and in the labyrinth of the Barri Gòtic are scattered countless others. Carrer de Ferran is lined with popular but mostly cramped, noisy options – a little too close to ranks of pseudo-Irish pubs for comfort. Many of the smaller joints are nothing special, catering to

## PRICE GUIDE

Prices in this chapter are divided into three categories and are high-season maximums. Prices can fluctuate enormously, especially at the higher end. If a place interests you but seems too expensive, check it out anyway – you may find lower rates for your dates. Many hotels have a several prices for several kinds of room – all these variations are impossible to set out in the listings below. Rooms come with private bathrooms (which at low-end places often means a shower, not a full bathtub) unless otherwise stated. These price categories are for doubles:

€€€	over €250 a night
€€	€70–250 a night
€	under €70 a night

an at-times rowdy party crowd. But there are some real gems too.

**HOTEL 1898** Map pp64–5 Hotel €€€

☎ 93 552 95 52; www.nnhotels.es; La Rambla 109; d €270–372; 🇲🇮 Liceu; 🇵🇭 🇵🇸 🇵🇹 🇵🇷

The former Compañía de Tabacos Filipinas (Philippines Tobacco Company), whose business was cut short when the islands swapped Spanish for American masters

in 1898, has been resurrected as a luxury hotel. Some of the rooms are smallish but deluxe rooms and suites have their own terraces, and all combine modern comfort and elegance, with parquet floors and tasteful furniture. Some of the suites (up to €1600) have access to a private indoor pool, while all guests can use the outdoor one.

#### **HOTEL NERI** Map pp64–5 Design Hotel €€

☎ 93 304 06 55; [www.hotelneri.com](http://www.hotelneri.com); Carrer de Sant Sever 5; d from €248; Liceu;

Occupying a beautifully adapted, centuries-old building that backs on to the quiet Plaça de Sant Felip Neri, this is a tranquil, luxury stop. The light, sandy stone and timber furnishings give the 22 rooms a rustic feel, although they come with cutting-edge technology, including plasma-screen TVs and infrared lights in the designer bathrooms. Choose from a menu of sheets and pillows, and sun yourself on the roof deck, where you can also take a shower and order a drink.

#### **HOTEL COLÓN** Map pp64–5 Hotel €€

☎ 93 301 14 04; [www.hotelcolon.es](http://www.hotelcolon.es); Avinguda de la Catedral 7; standard s €160, d €188-246; Jaume I;

The privileged position opposite the cathedral lends this hotel a special grace. A range of rooms (142 in all), from modest singles to diaphanous doubles and suites, offers quiet, elegant accommodation. Decoration varies considerably (from hardwood floors to carpet) and the top-floor superior rooms with terrace are marvellous (about another €60 on top of the standard double-room rate).

#### **HOTEL MEDINACELI** Map pp64–5 Hotel €€

☎ 93 481 77 25; [www.gargallohotels.es](http://www.gargallohotels.es); Plaça del Duc de Medinaceli 8; s/d €130/150; Drassanes;

### ROOMS FOR TRAVELLERS WITH DISABILITIES

Many hotels claim to be equipped for guests with disabilities but reality frequently disappoints. Check out [www.accessiblebarcelona.com](http://www.accessiblebarcelona.com) for help with finding genuinely accessible accommodation. For more information on facilities for travellers with disabilities in Barcelona, see p279.

Within the stately shell of a grand old building, on a pleasant square just inland from the waterfront, is this modern hotel. The 44 rooms are pleasant enough and mostly spacious, if unimaginative. The location is second to none, however, putting you within strolling distance of the heart of the Barri Gòtic and seaside.

#### **HOTEL JARDÍ** Map pp64–5 Hotel €€

☎ 93 301 59 00; [www.hoteljardi-barcelona.com](http://www.hoteljardi-barcelona.com); Plaça de Sant Josep Oriol 1; d €79-106; Liceu;

This fairly spartan option has a couple of attractive doubles with a balcony over one of the prettiest squares in the city. If you can snare one of them, it is worth putting up with the general mayhem that seems to reign here. The remaining rooms are all doubles and the basic interior ones are not particularly attractive.

#### **HOTEL CONTINENTAL** Map pp64–5 Hotel €€

☎ 93 301 25 70; [www.hotelcontinental.com](http://www.hotelcontinental.com); La Rambla 138; s/d €82/92; Catalunya;

You can imagine being here in 1937, when George Orwell returned from the front line during the Spanish Civil War, and Barcelona was tense with factional strife. Rooms at the Continental are a little spartan, but have romantic touches such as ceiling fans, brass bedsteads and frilly bedclothes. You will pay €20 more for a double with a balcony overlooking La Rambla. Take breakfast in bed.

#### **HOSTAL CAMPI** Map pp64–5 Hostal €

☎ 93 301 35 45; [hcampi@terra.es](mailto:hcampi@terra.es); Carrer de la Canuda 4; d €62, s/d without bathroom €31/54; Catalunya

This is an excellent budget deal that appeals mostly to younger backpackers. The best rooms at this friendly, central *hostal* are doubtless the doubles with their own loos and showers. They are extremely roomy and bright. Located just off La Rambla, you are protected from much of the street noise.

#### **ALBERG HOSTEL ITACA** Map pp64–5 Hostel €

☎ 93 301 97 51; [www.jo-oh.com/itaca](http://www.jo-oh.com/itaca); Carrer de Ripoll 21; dm €18, d €50-55; Jaume I;

A bright, quiet hostel option near La Catedral, Itaca has spacious dorms (sleeping six, eight or 12 people), with parquet floors, pleasant spring colours and a couple of doubles with private bathroom. They also

have an apartment for six people (€100 per night). You can make use of the upstairs kitchen and book exchange.

## EL RAVAL

A handful of good hotels and some youth hostels lie scattered in or on the periphery of this mildly wild side of the old town.

#### **CASA CAMPER** Map pp76–7 Design Hotel €€€

☎ 93 342 62 80; [www.camper.es](http://www.camper.es), in Spanish; Carrer d'Elisabets 11; s/d €240/284; Liceu;

An original designer hotel in the middle of El Raval, Casa Camper belongs to the Mallorcan shoe company of the same name. The massive foyer looks more like a contemporary art museum entrance, but the rooms are the real surprise. Slip into your Camper slippers and contemplate the Vinçon furniture. Across the corridor from your room is a separate, private sitting room with balcony, TV and hammock. You can contemplate the city from the rooftop.

#### **HOTEL SAN AGUSTÍN** Map pp76–7 Hotel €€

☎ 93 318 16 58; [www.hotelsa.com](http://www.hotelsa.com); Plaça de Sant Agustí 3; s/d €123/171; Liceu;

This former 18th-century monastery opened as a hotel in 1840, making it the city's oldest (it's undergone various refits since then!). The location is perfect – a quick stroll off La Rambla on a curious square. Rooms sparkle, and are mostly spacious and light-filled. Consider an attic double with sloping ceiling and bird's-eye views.

#### **HOTEL MESÓN DE CASTILLA**

Map pp76–7 Hotel €€

☎ 93 318 21 82; [www.mesoncastilla.com](http://www.mesoncastilla.com); Carrer de Valldonzella 5; s/d €117/149; Catalunya;

Some Modernista touches give character to the 1st floor of this elegant hotel. Heavy wooden furniture in several timeless sitting rooms contrasts with playful stained glass, murals and Gaudiesque window mouldings. Rooms have a classic charm and you can breakfast (included in the price) on the small terrace.

#### **HOSTAL GAT RAVAL** Map pp76–7 Hostal €€

☎ 93 481 66 70; [www.gataccommodation.com](http://www.gataccommodation.com); Carrer de Joaquín Costa 44; d €80, s/d without bathroom €50/70; Universitat;

# top picks

## STYLE HOTELS

- **Casa Camper** (left) Original idea with Vinçon furniture and hammocks.
- **Hotel Banys Orientals** (p234) Bite-sized boutique gem in the old town.
- **Hotel Constanza** (p237) A midrange jewel with bright colours and fresh flowers.
- **Hotel Omm** (p236) Fantasy-filled hotel with a 'peeling' façade.
- **Hotel Prestige** (p237) Chill in the hyper-modern ambience and the Zeroom.

There's pea-green and lemon-lime décor in this hip 2nd-floor *hostal* located on a bar-lined lane dominated by resident migrants and wandering bands of uni students. The individual rooms are pleasant and secure, but only some have private bathrooms. The staff also run the more upmarket *Hostal Gat Xino* (Map pp76–7; ☎ 93 324 88 33; [www.gataccommodation.com](http://www.gataccommodation.com); Carrer de l'Hospital 149-155; s/d/ste with terrace €66/84/130; Liceu; ) nearby.

#### **HOTEL PRINCIPAL** Map pp76–7 Hotel €€

☎ 93 318 89 70; [www.hotelprincipal.es](http://www.hotelprincipal.es); Carrer de la Junta del Comerç 8; s €70, d 90-130; Liceu;

This hotel has clean-lined rooms complete with parquet floors, hairdryers and original art depicting Barcelona. All rooms have double-glazing and flat-screen TVs, and you can sunbathe on the roof. For €175, they have a big room with private terrace.

#### **HOSTAL CHIC & BASIC** Map pp76–7 Hostal €€

☎ 93 302 51 83; [www.chicandbasic.com](http://www.chicandbasic.com); Carrer de Tallers 82; s/d €60/80-102; Universitat;

The theme colour is predominantly white, with exceptions like the screaming orange fridge in the communal kitchen and chill&basic area where you can make yourself a cuppa or sandwich. Rooms are also themed lily white, from the floors to the sheets. Finishing touches include the plasma-screen TVs and the option of plugging your iPod or MP3 player into your room's sound system. The street can get noisy.



**HOTEL PENINSULAR** Map pp76–7 Hotel €€

☎ 93 302 31 38; [www.hpeninsular.com](http://www.hpeninsular.com); Carrer de Sant Pau 34; s/d/t/q €55/78/95/120; M Liceu; ☎ ☑

An oasis on the edge of the slightly dicey Barri Xines, this former convent (which was connected by tunnel to the Església de Sant Agustí) has a plant-draped atrium extending its height and most of its length. The 60 rooms are simple, with tiled floors and whitewash, but mostly spacious and well-kept. There is wi-fi throughout.

**HOTEL ANETO** Map pp76–7 Hotel €€

☎ 93 301 99 89; [www.hotelaneto.com](http://www.hotelaneto.com); Carrer del Carme 38; s/d €55/75; M Liceu; ☎ ☑

This budget bargain is in a handy spot on one of the more attractive streets of El Raval's upper half. The best of the 15 rooms are the doubles with the shuttered balconies looking onto the street.

**BARCELONA MAR HOSTEL**

Map pp76–7 Hostel €

☎ 93 324 85 30; [www.barcelonamar.com](http://www.barcelonamar.com); Carrer de Sant Pau 80; dm €16-27, d €42-60; M Paral. lel; ☎ ☑

This is a no-nonsense hostel with double rooms and dorms which sleep six to 16 people. Not only are you within stumbling distance of plenty of bars on Rambla del Raval and beyond, it's open 24 hours and there's free access to internet, lockers, kitchen and luggage storage. Quiet it ain't and you need to watch your pockets in the streets at night.

**LA RIBERA**

After years of almost a complete absence of hotels in La Ribera, things are beginning to change. A few good ones operate on the area's fringes and a growing number of the sometimes bombastic buildings on thundering Via Laietana (along which the town hall is considering reducing traffic) are being converted into top-end hotels.

**GRAND HOTEL CENTRAL**

Map pp84–5 Design Hotel €€

☎ 93 295 79 00; [www.grandhotelcentral.com](http://www.grandhotelcentral.com); Via Laietana 30; d €230; M Jaume I; ☎ ☑

With super-soundproofed rooms not smaller than 21 sq metres, this design hotel, complete with rooftop pool, is leading the way. Rooms are decorated in style, with high

ceilings, muted colours (beiges, browns and creams), dark timber floors and subtle lighting. LCD TVs and MP3 players are standard.

**HOTEL BANYS ORIENTALS**

Map pp84–5 Boutique Hotel €€

☎ 93 268 84 60; [www.hotelbanysorientals.com](http://www.hotelbanysorientals.com); Carrer de l'Argenteria 37; s/d €89/107; M Jaume I; ☎ ☑

Book well ahead to get into this magnetically popular designer haunt. Cool blues and aquamarines combine with dark-hued floors to lend this clean-lined, boutique hotel a quiet charm. All rooms, which are on the small side, look onto the street or back lanes. They have more spacious suites in two other nearby buildings.

**CHIC & BASIC** Map pp84–5 Hotel €€

☎ 93 295 46 52; [www.chicandbasic.com](http://www.chicandbasic.com); Carrer de la Princesa 50; d €96-171; M Jaume I; ☎ ☑

In a completely renovated building with high vaults in the façade are 31 spotlessly white rooms. There are high ceilings, enormous beds (room types are classed as M, L and XL) and lots of detailed touches such as LED lighting, TFT TV screens and the retention of many beautiful old features of the original building, such as the marble staircase. Have a drink in their ground-floor White Bar.

**PENSIÓ 2000** Map pp84–5 Pensión €€

☎ 93 310 74 66; [www.pensio2000.com](http://www.pensio2000.com); Carrer de Sant Pere més Alt 6; s/d €66/86, without bathroom €54/67; M Urquinaona; ☑

This 1st-floor, family-run place is opposite the anything-but-simple Palau de la Música Catalana (p87). Seven reasonably spacious doubles (which can be taken as singles) all have mosaic-tiled floors. Two have ensuite bathroom. Children from five to 12 pay just €25. Eat brekkie in the little courtyard.

**top picks****BUDGET OPTIONS**

- Alberg Mare de Déu de Montserrat (p240)
- Hotel Marina Folch (opposite)
- Hostal Girona (p239)
- Hostal Mambo Tango (p241)
- Hostal Campi (p232)

**PORT VELL & LA BARCELONETA**

There's just a handful of seaside options around Port Vell and La Barceloneta, ranging from a youth hostel to a grand five-star.

**GRAND MARINA HOTEL**

Map p93 Hotel €€€

☎ 93 603 90 00; [www.grandmarinahotel.com](http://www.grandmarinahotel.com); Moll de Barcelona s/n; r €278-385; M Drassanes; P ☎ ☑

Housed in the World Trade Center, the Grand Marina Hotel has a maritime flavour that continues into the rooms, with lots of polished timber touches and hydro-massage bathtubs. Some rooms on either side of the building offer splendid views of the city, port and open sea. The rooftop gym and outdoor pool have equally enticing views.

**HOTEL 54** Map p93 Hotel €€

☎ 93 225 00 54; [www.hotel54barceloneta.com](http://www.hotel54barceloneta.com); Passeig de Joan de Borbó 54; s/d €135/145-190; M Barceloneta; ☎ ☑

This place is all about location. Modern rooms, with dark tile floors, designer bathrooms and LCD TVs are sought after for the marina and sunset views. Other (cheaper) rooms look out over the lanes of La Barceloneta. You can also sit on the roof terrace and enjoy the harbour views.

**HOTEL DEL MAR** Map p93 Hotel €€

☎ 93 319 33 02; [www.gargallohotels.es](http://www.gargallohotels.es); Pla de Palau 19; s/d €102/118; M Barceloneta; ☎ ☑

The nicely modernised Sea Hotel is strategically placed between Port Vell and El Born. Some of the rooms in this classified building have balconies with waterfront views. You're in a fairly peaceful spot but no more than 10 minutes' walk from the beaches and seafood of La Barceloneta, and the bars and mayhem of El Born.

**HOTEL MARINA FOLCH** Map p93 Hotel €€

☎ 93 310 37 09; Carrer del Mar 16; s/d €45/75; M Barceloneta; ☎

A simple digs above a busy seafood restaurant, this hotel has just one teeny single and nine doubles of varying sizes and quality. The most attractive are those looking out towards the marina. The rooms

are basic enough but the location is unbeatable, just a couple of minutes from the beach.

**HOSTEL SEA POINT** Map p93 Hostel €

☎ 93 231 20 45; [www.seapointhostel.com](http://www.seapointhostel.com); Plaça del Mar 1-4; dm €22; M Barceloneta ☎ 17, 39, 57 or 64; ☎ ☑

Right on the beach in a rather ugly high-rise (but hey, you don't have to look at the high-rise) is this busy backpackers' hostel. Rooms are cramped and basic but you will not find a room closer to the beach. They organise activities such as bike tours (and rentals). You pay extra for lockers, sheets and towels.

**PORT OLÍMPIC, EL POBLENOU & EL FÒRUM**

For years the breathtakingly located Hotel Arts Barcelona has been *the* place to stay in Barcelona. It is getting some tower hotel competition in the Fòrum area, mostly aimed at a business crowd.

**HOTEL ARTS BARCELONA**

Map pp98–9 Hotel €€€

☎ 93 221 10 00; [www.ritzcarlton.com](http://www.ritzcarlton.com); Carrer de la Marina 19-21; r from €425; M Ciutadella Vila Olímpica; P ☎ ☑

In one of the two sky-high towers that dominate Port Olímpic, this is Barcelona's most fashionable hotel, frequented by VIPs from all over the planet. It has more than 450 rooms with unbeatable views, and prices vary greatly according to size, position and time of year. Luxury suites shoot into five-figure sums. Services range from personal bath butlers to the new spa facilities on the 43rd floor, to fine dining in Arola, run by the Michelin-starred Sergi Arola.

**L'EIXAMPLE**

It comes as little surprise that this extensive bourgeois bastion should also be home to the greatest range of hotels in most classes. The grid avenues house some of the city's classic hotels and a long list of decent mid-range places.

**HOTEL MAJÈSTIC** Map pp108–9 Hotel €€€

☎ 93 488 17 17; [www.hotelmajestic.es](http://www.hotelmajestic.es); Passeig de Gràcia 68; d €266-406; **M** Passeig de Gràcia; **P** ☒ ☑ ☒ ☒ ☒

This sprawling, award-winning option has the charm of one of the great European hotels. The rooftop pool is great for views and relaxing. The standard rooms (no singles) are smallish but the suites are stunning. You can get your newspaper of choice via satellite.

**HOTEL CLARIS** Map pp108–9 Design Hotel €€€

☎ 93 487 62 62; [www.derbyhotels.es](http://www.derbyhotels.es); Carrer de Pau Claris 150; d €251-401; **M** Passeig de Gràcia; **P** ☒ ☑ ☒ ☒

The designer upgrade of the 19th-century Palau Vedruna has resulted in one of the city's most stylish hotels. It houses plenty of art, from 19th-century Turkish kilims through two ancient Roman statues and a collection of Egyptian artefacts. Rooms show all sorts of colour combinations, some bordering on the garish. The rooftop restaurant bar is the perfect place for summer cocktails. Sit by the pool and enjoy the views.

**HOTEL MURMURI**

Map pp108–9 Design Hotel €€€

☎ 93 550 06 00; [www.murmuri.com](http://www.murmuri.com); La Rambla de Catalunya 104; d €290; **M** Diagonal; ☒ ☑ ☒ ☒

Large rooms with a contemporary feel and efficient service are hallmarks of this new hotel, splendidly located at the top end of La Rambla de Catalunya. With touches like iPod adaptor and smart lobby bar, it is a

good spot, as long as you obtain a decent internet room rate – the official start price for standard rooms of €450 is, to put it politely, inflated.

**HOTEL OMM** Map pp108–9 Design Hotel €€€

☎ 93 445 40 00; [www.hotelomm.es](http://www.hotelomm.es); Carrer de Rosselló 265; d €257; **M** Diagonal; **P** ☒ ☑ ☒ ☒

Design meets plain zany here, where the balconies look like strips of skin peeled back from the shiny hotel surface. The idea would no doubt have appealed to Dalí. In the foyer a sprawling, minimalist and very popular bar opens before you. Light, clear tones dominate in the ultramodern rooms, of which there are three categories: Omm room (standard), Superior and Suite.

**ST MORITZ HOTEL** Map pp108–9 Hotel €€

☎ 93 412 15 00; [www.hcchotels.com](http://www.hcchotels.com); Carrer de la Diputació 262bis; s/d €198/224; **M** Passeig de Gràcia; **P** ☒ ☑ ☒ ☒

This upmarket hotel has 91 fully equipped rooms and boasts an elegant restaurant, terrace bar and small gym. Some of the bigger rooms, with marble bathrooms, even have their own exercise bikes. You can dine in the modest terrace garden.

**HOTEL HISPANOS SIETE SUIZA**

Map pp102–3 Hotel €€

☎ 93 208 20 51; [www.barcelona19apartments.com](http://www.barcelona19apartments.com); Carrer de Sicília 255; r (for up to 4 people) €214-278; **M** Sagrada Família; **P** ☒ ☑ ☒

Within spitting distance of the towering madness that is La Sagrada Família is this

original lodging option. Wander in past seven vintage Hispano-Suiza cars to one of 19 apartments, which have two double rooms with separate bathrooms (note the super showers!), a lounge, fully equipped kitchen, washer-drier and terrace. There is also a suite (for up to six people).

**COMTES DE BARCELONA**

Map pp108–9 Hotel €€

☎ 93 445 00 00; [www.condesdebarcelona.com](http://www.condesdebarcelona.com); Passeig de Gràcia 73-75; d €193; **M** Passeig de Gràcia; **P** ☒ ☑ ☒ ☒

Also known by its Spanish name, the most attractive half of the Comtes (Condes) de Barcelona occupies the 1890s Modernista Casa Enric Batlló. Across the road stands a more modern extension. Inside both, clean, designer lines dominate, with hardwood floors, architectural touches reminiscent of the Modernista exterior and luxurious rooms. The standard rooms are, at 25 sq m, the smallest. All come with touches like Bulgari bath products. The pool on the roof is a great place to relax after a hard day's sightseeing.

**HOTEL PRESTIGE** Map pp108–9 Design Hotel €€

☎ 93 272 41 80, 902 200414; [www.prestigepaseodegracia.com](http://www.prestigepaseodegracia.com); Passeig de Gràcia 62; d €192-245; **M** Passeig de Gràcia; **P** ☒ ☑ ☒

The stark, steel-framed entrance can be a little intimidating, but don't be shy; once inside you find yourself in a 21st-century designer set (housed in a well-preserved 1930s edifice). The design theme continues in the rooms, with Bang & Olufsen TVs and soft back-lighting above expansive beds. Inside the block is a pretty garden and among the hotel's amenities is Zerom, a library and a music room to relax in. You can also take on the services of a personal shopper – highly appropriate in this neck of the woods!

**HOTEL CRAM** Map pp108–9 Hotel €€

☎ 93 216 77 00; [www.hotelcram.com](http://www.hotelcram.com); Carrer d'Aribau 54; s/d €167/182; **M** Passeig de Gràcia; **P** ☒ ☑ ☒ ☒

The standard rooms are indeed a little cramped, but full of designer twirls and a light, white and timber toned décor, all hidden behind an (often illuminated) 1892 façade. Wide-screen LCD TVs, comfortable Treca beds and high-pressure showers all make up for space shortages. Hang out on the roof terrace or dine downstairs in one the city's most exclusive restaurants, Gaig.

**FIVE ROOMS** Map pp108–9 Boutique Hotel €€

☎ 93 342 78 80; [www.thefiverooms.com](http://www.thefiverooms.com); Carrer de Pau Claris 72; d €160; **M** Urquinaona; ☒ ☑ ☒ ☒

Like they say, there are five rooms in this 1st-floor flat which lies virtually on the border between L'Eixample and the old centre of town. Each of them is different and features include broad, firm beds, stretches of exposed brick wall, restored mosaic tiles and minimalist décor (with brilliant white dominating).

**HOTEL ASTORIA** Map pp102–3 Hotel €€

☎ 93 209 83 11; [www.derbyhotels.es](http://www.derbyhotels.es); Carrer de Paris 203; d €137-180; **M** Diagonal; **P** ☒ ☑ ☒ ☒

Nicely situated a short walk from Passeig de Gràcia, this three-star is equally well placed for long nights out in the restaurants, bars and clubs of adjacent Carrer d'Aribau. Room décor and types vary wildly – you might have black-and-white floor tiles or dark parquet. The hotel has its own mini gym and wi-fi connection and boasts paintings by Francesc Guitart.

**HOTEL CONSTANZA**

Map pp108–9 Boutique Hotel €€

☎ 93 270 19 10; Carrer del Bruc 33; s/d €90/120; **M** Girona or Urquinaona; ☒ ☑ ☒

This boutique beauty has stolen the hearts of many a visitor to Barcelona. Even smaller single rooms are made to feel special with broad mirrors and strong colours (reds and yellows complemented by black furniture). Design touches abound, and little details like flowers in the bathroom add charm. Suites and studios are further options.

**HOSTAL CÈNTRIC** Map pp108–9 Hostal €€

☎ 93 426 75 73; [www.hostalcentric.com](http://www.hostalcentric.com); Carrer de Casanova 13; s/d €78/111; **M** Urgell; ☒ ☒

The *hostal*, in a good central location just beyond the old town, has rooms starting from basics with shared bathroom and ranges to renovated rooms with private bathroom facilities and air-con. Midrange ones are similar, but a little older and without air-con.

**FASHION HOUSE** Map pp108–9 B&B €€

☎ 637 904044; [www.bcn-fashionhouse.com](http://www.bcn-fashionhouse.com); Carrer de Bruc 13; s/d/t without bathroom €75/110/115; **M** Urquinaona; ☒ ☒

The name is a little silly but this typical, broad 1st-floor Eixample flat contains eight

**GAY STAYS**

Barcelona has a few excellent gay-friendly options, one in the heart of the old town and fairly simple, another a full design explosion in the heart of the Gaixample.

**Hotel Axel** (Map pp108–9; ☎ 93 323 93 93; [www.axelhotels.com](http://www.axelhotels.com); Carrer d'Aribau 33; s/d from €144/197;

**M** Universitat; ☒ ☑ ☒ ☒) Favoured by a mixed fashion and gay set, Axel occupies a sleek, refurbished corner block and offers modern touches in its designer rooms. Plasma-screen TVs, a light colour scheme and (in the double rooms) king-sized beds are just some of the pluses. Take a break in the rooftop pool, the Finnish sauna or the spa bath. The rooftop skybar is open for cocktails from May to September.

**Hotel California** (Map pp64–5; ☎ 93 317 77 66; [www.hotelcaliforniabcn.com](http://www.hotelcaliforniabcn.com); Carrer d'En Rauric 14; s/d €75/130;

**M** Liceu; ☒ ☒) This friendly and central hotel has 31 straightforward but fastidiously sparkling clean rooms, with light, neutral colours, satellite TV and good-sized beds. Meet new friends in the bustling breakfast room and avail yourself of room service 24 hours a day.

**Casa de Billy Barcelona** (Map pp108–9; ☎ 93 467 41 24; [www.casabillybarcelona.com](http://www.casabillybarcelona.com); Rambla de Catalunya; d €70-120; **M** Passeig de Gràcia; ☒ ☒) This option is set in a typical late-19th century apartment overlooking a tree-lined shopping avenue in the heart of the city, and a stone's throw from the Gaixample bars. Three of the five rooms look on to the avenue. There is a three-night-minimum policy.

rooms of varying size done in tasteful style, with 4.5m-high ceilings, parquet floors and, in some cases, a little gallery onto the street. Bathrooms are located along the broad corridor, one for every two rooms. Breakfast is served in the main dining room.

### HOTEL D'UXELLES Map pp108–9 Hotel €€

☎ 93 265 25 60; [www.hotelduxelles.com](http://www.hotelduxelles.com);  
Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes 688; s/d €86/106;  
M Tetuan; ☎ ☎

A charming simplicity pervades the rooms here. Wrought-iron bedsteads are overshadowed by flowing drapes. Room décor varies (from blues and whites to beige-and-cream combos), with a vaguely Andalusian flavour in the bathrooms. Some rooms have little terraces (€16 extra). Get a back room if you can as Gran Via is incredibly noisy. Hotel d'Uxelles has similar rooms in another building across the road.

### HOTEL PALACIOS Map pp108–9 Hostal €€

☎ 93 301 30 79; [www.hostalpalacios.com](http://www.hostalpalacios.com);  
Rambla de Catalunya 27; s/d €69/99-129;  
M Passeig de Gràcia; ☎ ☎

Housed in a classified building, this up-market *hostal* offers lovely rooms with high ceilings, heavy curtains, original tile floors, sun streaming through balcony doors and a clutter of old-style furnishings. The 'suites', which can be taken as triples, are roomy and worth the extra money.

### HOTEL GOYA Map pp108–9 Hostal €€

☎ 93 302 25 65; [www.hostalgoya.com](http://www.hostalgoya.com); Carrer de Pau Claris 74; s/d €70/96-113; M Passeig de Gràcia; ☎

The Goya is a gem of a spot on the chichi side of l'Eixample. Rooms have a light colour scheme that varies from room to room. In the bathrooms the original mosaic floors have largely been retained, combined with contemporary design features. The lower floors were being renovated at the time of writing.

### MARKET HOTEL Map pp102–3 Boutique Hotel €€

☎ 93 325 12 05; [www.markethotel.com.es](http://www.markethotel.com.es);  
Passatge de Sant Antoni Abad 10; s/d/ste  
€80/93/112; M Sant Antoni; ☎ ☎

Attractively located in a renovated building along a narrow lane just north of the grand old Sant Antoni market (which unfortunately is going to be shut for years of much-needed renovations), this place

## top picks

### HOTEL POOLS

- Comtes de Barcelona (p237) Unbeatable rooftop indulgence.
- Hotel Arts Barcelona (p235) Look down on the beach and do some short laps.
- Hotel Majèstic (p236) Panoramic views from the rooftop dipping pool.
- Hotel Rey Juan Carlos I (opposite) Keep fit in the indoor and outdoor pools.
- Grand Marina Hotel (p235) Small but nicely placed for portside views.

has an air of simple chic. Room décor is a pleasing combination of white, dark nut browns, light timber and reds. Downstairs is a busy restaurant serving up Catalan and Med cuisine.

### HOTEL CENTRAL Map pp108–9 Hostal €€

☎ 93 245 19 81; [www.hostalcentralbarcelona.com](http://www.hostalcentralbarcelona.com);  
Carrer de la Diputació 346; s/d/t €50/85/106;  
M Tetuan; ☎ ☎

In a pretty early-20th-century apartment building you'll find 13 renovated rooms (all nonsmoking and most with own bathroom). They are not excessively big but are pleasant and clean.

### HOTEL OLIVA Map pp108–9 Hostal €€

☎ 93 488 01 62; [www.lasguias.com/hostaloliva](http://www.lasguias.com/hostaloliva);  
Passeig de Gràcia 32; d €80, s/d without bathroom  
€37/62; M Passeig de Gràcia; ☎

A picturesque antique lift wheezes its way up to this 4th-floor *hostal*, a terrific, reliable cheapie in one of the city's most expensive neighbourhoods. Some of the single rooms are barely big enough to fit a bed but the doubles are large, light and airy, with tiled floors and dark old wardrobes.

### HOTEL MUNTANER Map pp102–3 Hostal €€

☎ 93 323 30 88; [www.hostal-centro.net](http://www.hostal-centro.net); Carrer de Muntaner 175; s/d €40/75, s/d without bathroom  
€25/40; M Hospital Clínic; P ☎

Within a five-block walk of Passeig de Gràcia and Diagonal, this is a busy residential location surrounded by restaurants and bars (especially along nearby Carrer d'Aribau, a block away). Crisp, simple rooms

are comfy and light. Be aware of traffic noise at the front of the house – a room deeper inside will guarantee tranquillity.

### HOSTAL GIRONA Map pp108–9 Hostal €

☎ 93 265 02 59; [www.hostalgirona.com](http://www.hostalgirona.com);  
Carrer de Girona 24; r €66; M Girona

This 2nd-floor family-run *hostal* is a basic but clean and friendly spot of the old world. The atmosphere is Catalan and somewhat frozen in time but good value. Rooms range from poky singles with communal bathroom to airy doubles with balcony (but beware of traffic noise in summer when you'll have to keep the windows open).

### HOSTAL ARIBAU Map pp108–9 Hostal €

☎ 93 453 11 06; [www.hostalaribau.com](http://www.hostalaribau.com); Carrer de Aribau 37; s/d/t €60/65/80, s/d without bathroom  
€45/55; M Universitat; ☎

Handily located within brisk walking distance of Ciutat Vella and in a busy part of l'Eixample, this is a straightforward family-run *hostal*.

### CENTRIC POINT Map pp108–9 Hostal €

☎ 93 215 65 38; [www.centricpointhostel.com](http://www.centricpointhostel.com);  
Passeig de Gràcia 33; dm €21-27, d €50;  
M Passeig de Gràcia; ☎ ☎

Hard to believe you can sleep at such low prices on the city's most expensive avenue! This busy *hostel* in a completely renovated building attracts a young backpacking crowd. They have an info service, big bar and common room, and can organise tours.

## GRÀCIA & PARK GÜELL

Staying up in Gràcia takes you out of the mainstream tourist areas and gives you a more authentic feel for the town. All the touristy bits are never far away by Metro and the restaurant and bar life in Gràcia is great on its own.

### HOTEL CASA FUSTER Map p118 Hotel €€€

☎ 93 255 30 00; [www.hotelcasafuster.com](http://www.hotelcasafuster.com);  
Passeig de Gràcia 132; d €407; M Diagonal;  
P ☎ ☎ ☎

This sumptuous Modernista mansion (built in 1908–11) at the top end of the city's showcase boulevard has been transformed into one of Barcelona's most luxurious hotels. Standard rooms are plush, if small-

ish. Period features have been restored at considerable cost and complemented with hydro-massage tubs, plasma TVs and king-size beds. The Café Vienés, once a meeting place for Barcelona intellectuals in the building's heyday, is the perfect spot for an apéritif before heading out at night.

### APARTHOTEL SILVER Map p118 Hotel €€

☎ 93 218 91 00; [www.hotelsilver.com](http://www.hotelsilver.com);  
Carrer de Bretón de los Herreros 26; s €79-120, d  
€85-145; M Fontana; ☎

There are no fewer than five types of rooms here, from chintzy, tiny basic rooms to the very spacious 'superior rooms'. We recommend aiming for the better rooms. All come with a kitchenette and some have a terrace or balcony. There is a little garden too.

## LA ZONA ALTA

Except for a certain business clientele, this mostly residential area is a little too far from the action for most people. Several exceptional places are well worth considering if being in the centre of things is not a priority.

### HOTEL REY JUAN CARLOS I

Map pp122–3 Hotel €€€

☎ 93 364 40 40; [www.hrjuancarlos.com](http://www.hrjuancarlos.com);  
Avinguda Diagonal 661-671; d from €225;  
M Zona Universitària; P ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎

Like an ultramodern lighthouse at this southwest gateway to the city, the glass towers of this luxury mega-hotel hold spacious rooms, most with spectacular views. The hotel has pools and a gym, along with extensive gardens which belonged to

## top picks

### ROOMS WITH A VIEW

- Hotel Arts Barcelona (p235) Waterfront rooms with panoramic views up and down the coast.
- Hotel Rey Juan Carlos I (above) Bird's-eye views across the city from the west.
- Grand Marina Hotel (p235) Low-level views back up La Rambla, across the port.
- Hotel AC Miramar (p240) Depending on your room, vistas out to sea, of the port and city.
- Hotel 54 (p235) Sunset views across the marina.



the farmhouse that stood here until well into the 20th century. It houses its own conference centre and often has tempting weekend deals to attract nonbusiness customers. With the Metro close by, you can be in central Barcelona in about 20 minutes.

### HOTEL TURÓ DE VILANA

Map pp122–3 Design Hotel €€

☎ 93 434 03 63; [www.turodevilana.com](http://www.turodevilana.com);  
Carrer de Vilana 7; s/d €160/182;

📍 FGC Les Tres Torres or 🚶 64; 📞 📺 📺

This bright, designer hotel in residential Sarrià has hardwood floors, a warm colour scheme, marble bathrooms and plenty of natural sunlight in its 20 rooms. There is not a lot to do in the immediate vicinity, but for those who like the idea of being able to dip in and out of central Barcelona at will, this is an attractive option.

### HOTEL ANGLÍ Map pp122–3 Hotel €€

☎ 93 206 99 44; [www.hoteleurostarsangli.com](http://www.hoteleurostarsangli.com);  
Carrer d'Anglí 60; d €149; 📍 Sarrià;

📞 📺 📺 📺 📺

Hotel Anglí is a comfortable business hotel. Glass dominates the three-storey design – yes, the semi-transparent tower is lit up in various hues at night. Huge firm beds are set in rooms where floor to ceiling windows and expanses of mirrors add to the sense of light. The buffet breakfast is good and from the rooftop pool you can look out and contemplate the Collserola hills.

### ALBERG MARE DE DÉU DE MONTSERRAT Map pp122–3 Hostel €

☎ 93 210 51 51; [www.xanascat.cat](http://www.xanascat.cat); Passeig de la Mare de Déu del Coll 41-51; dm under 26yr or ISIC card-holders/others €20.45/24.30; 📍 Vallcarca then 🚶 28 or 92; 📞 📺

This 209-bed hostel is 4km north of Barcelona's city centre. The main building is a magnificent former mansion with a *Mudéjar*-style lobby set in a leafy location high up above the expanse of the city. Most rooms sleep six and you can buy towels for €4 if you've lost yours. The common areas are extensive and relaxed. The one catch is the midnight curfew. The website provides details of all youth hostels in Barcelona and wider Catalonia, so you can look into your options if this one doesn't appeal.

## MONTJUÏC, SANTS & POBLE SEC

Several options are strung out along and near the Poble Sec side of Avinguda del Paral·lel, as well as near the train station in Sants. There's one luxury hotel on the mountain itself.

### HOTEL AC MIRAMAR Map pp140–1 Hotel €€€

☎ 93 281 16 00, 902 292293; [www.ac-hotels.com](http://www.ac-hotels.com);  
Plaça de Carlos Ibáñez 3; r €330-495; 🚶 50 or PM; 📞 📺 📺

Welcome to the only hotel on the hill, a designer five-star job. Local architect Oscar Tusquets took the shell of a building built for the 1929 World Fair (as a hotel!) and later the Barcelona HQ of Spanish national TV (1959–83), and created this olive-green block where all rooms have broad balconies and views over the port, city or park. The modern rooms feature neutral décor, with deep browns, creams and beiges dominating the colour scheme. Comfort touches include a gourmet restaurant, wi-fi access, spa, and a designer pool (with bar) set in gardens.

### HOSTAL ABREVEDERO Map pp140–1 Hostal €€

☎ 93 441 22 05; [www.hostalabrevedero.com](http://www.hostalabrevedero.com);  
Carrer de Vila i Vilà 79; s/d €65/85; 📍 Paral·lel;

📞 📺 📺

A bright new *hostal*, with simple rooms (some of them quite spacious), this place is worth contemplating if you want to stay just outside the old centre and close to Montjuïc. Light-hued yellows and whites in the décor and spotless bathrooms are standard. They have lockers for left luggage too, if you wish to skip town for a few days without dragging your life around with you.

### MELON DISTRICT Map pp140–1 Hostal €€

☎ 93 329 96 67; [www.melondistrict.com](http://www.melondistrict.com); Avinguda Paral·lel 101; s/d €43/54; 📍 Paral·lel; 📞 📺 📺

Whiter than white seems to be the policy in this brand-spanking new student residence, where you can stay the night or book in for a year. Erasmus folks and an international student set are attracted to this hostel-style spot, where the only objects in the rooms that aren't white are the green plastic chairs. There are meeting

lounges, a café and a laundrette on the premises.

### HOSTAL OLIVETA Map pp140–1 Hostal €

☎ 93 329 23 16; Carrer del Poeta Cabanyes 18; s/d €40/60, without bathroom €30/50; 📍 Paral·lel; 📞

Six squeaky-clean little rooms huddle above a simple family eatery just off busy Avinguda del Paral·lel in Poble Sec. It's hard to argue with the prices and you get to live just beyond the tourist hubbub. A short walk across the lower half of El Raval will have you on La Rambla.

### HOSTEL MAMBO TANGO Map pp140–1 Hostel €

☎ 93 442 51 64; [www.hostelmambotango.com](http://www.hostelmambotango.com);  
Carrer del Poeta Cabanyes 23; dm €26; 📍 Paral·lel; 📺

A fun, international hostel to hang out in, the Mambo Tango has basic dorms (sleeping from six to 10 people) and a welcoming, somewhat chaotic atmosphere. This playful vibe is reflected in the kooky colour scheme in the bathrooms. Advice on what to do and where to go out is also always on hand.

### ALBERGUINN Map pp140–1 Hostel €

☎ 93 490 59 65; [www.alberguinn.com](http://www.alberguinn.com);  
Carrer de Melcior de Palau 70-74; dm €25; 📍 Sants; 📺

This hostel is handily located close to Sants railway station and in a gritty, untouristy part of the city. Alberguinn offers crisp, clean dorm accommodation, and you'll also find lockers, washing machines, a kitchen and a common room for watching the TV.

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## EXCURSIONS

# EXCURSIONS

Barcelona is just the beginning. Once you break through the choking ring of satellite suburbs and dormitory towns surrounding the capital, one of Spain's most diverse regions unfolds before you. Catalonia (Catalunya to the locals), a land with its own language and proud history setting it apart from the rest of Spain, offers everything from golden beaches to wicked ski runs, medieval monasteries to Roman ruins, top-quality wines to the art of Salvador Dalí. A weekend to Barcelona could easily be converted into a couple of weeks exploring the bustling city's hinterland.

The region, covering 31,932 sq km, is bounded by the mighty Pyrenees range and the French frontier to the north, the Mediterranean Sea to the east and the inland region of Aragón to the west.

Barcelona is the big boy nowadays, but in the times of ancient Rome it was Tarragona that lorded it over this neck of the empire. Evidence in this sunny port town of Roman grandeur includes the forum, amphitheatre and remains of the circus (chariot race track). To the northeast of Barcelona, the intensely Catalan town of Girona (you'll be lucky to hear Spanish) flourished during the Middle Ages. Its tightly packed medieval centre remains largely intact. To the north of Girona lies Figueres, stronghold of the hallucinatory genius of Salvador Dalí.

Catalonia is not all high culture. Myriad beaches, coves and seaside locales dot the breathtakingly rugged spectacle of the Costa Brava northeast of Barcelona. Another fine strand southwest of town is Sitges, loaded with bars and an obligatory stop on the gay partygoers' European circuit. Those who take their hedonism with more restraint can trundle around the Penedès wine country west of Barcelona. And to uplift the soul, the jagged mountain range of Montserrat makes the perfect antidote to a seaside hangover.

## ANCIENT CITIES

**Tarragona** (p259) is a busy port and beachside city with an unfair amount of sunshine! Southwest of Barcelona, it is *the* place in Catalonia for those wanting to know what the Romans ever did for any of us. Apart from the well-preserved vestiges of the city's amphitheatre, circus (where chariot races were held) and forum, Tarragona has an archaeological museum replete with ancient artefacts. Inland and to the northeast of Barcelona lies another Roman settlement, **Girona** (p246). With its closely cluttered medieval buildings in the crowded

old town centre, Girona makes an enchanting counterpoint to the sprawl of the region's capital.

## DALÍ MANIA

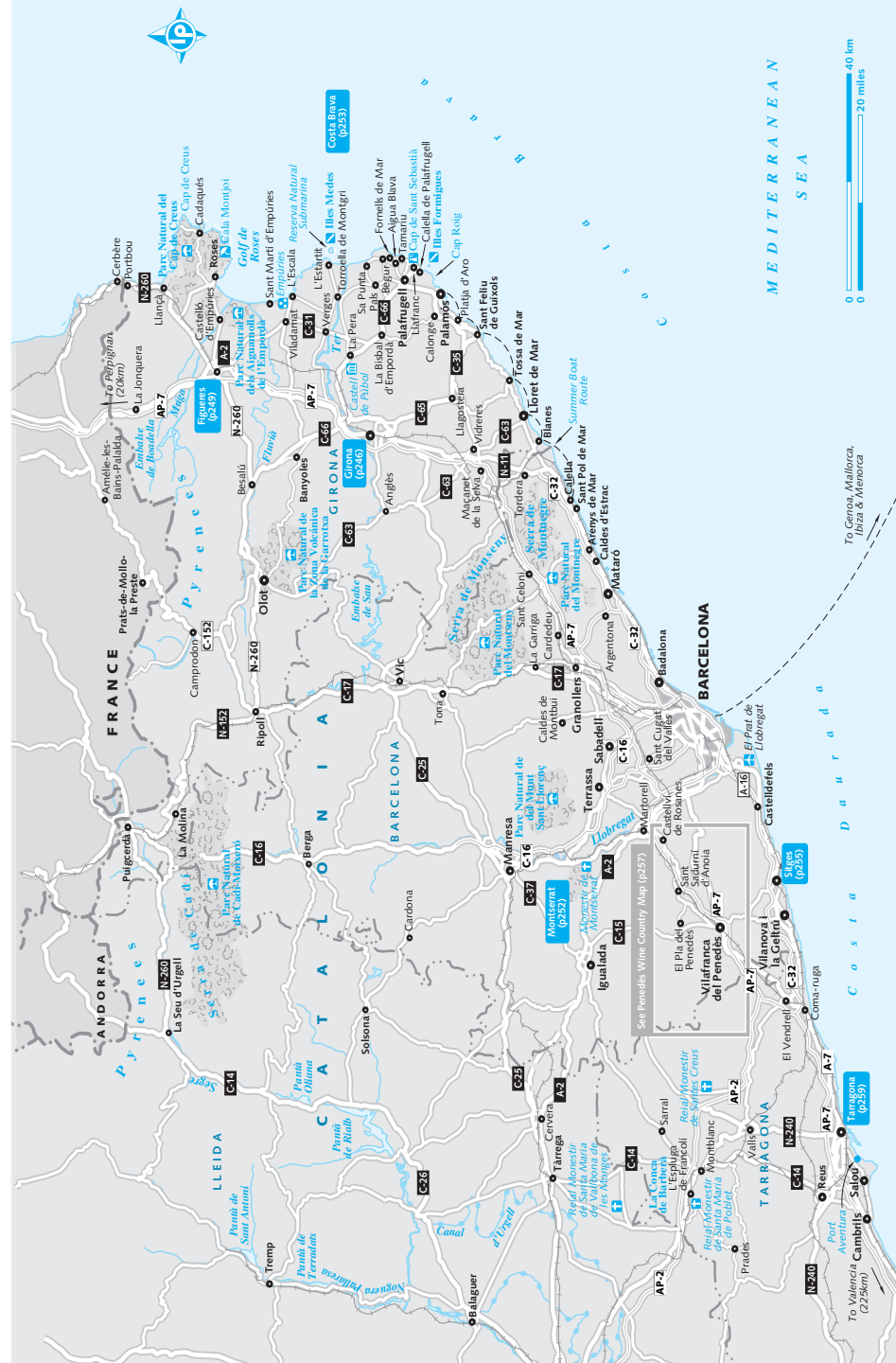
Zany Salvador Dalí, with his upturned handlebar moustache, outlandish dream paintings and outrageous lifestyle, is surely the most colourful character to emerge from 20th-century Catalonia. For all his globetrotting, he left the greater part of his artistic legacy on home turf. The core rests in his theatre-museum-mausoleum in **Figueres** (p249), a half-hour north of Girona by train. Enthusiasts can seek out more of his work in several nearby locations, including the magical coastal towns of **Cadaqués** (p254) and **Port Lligat** (p251).

## WINE, PARTIES & PIETY

Barely 50km west of Barcelona stretch the vineyards of one of Spain's premier wine-making regions, the **Penedès** (p257). Most of the national production of *cava*, the local version of bubbly, pours out of this region. Alongside known names such as Freixenet and Codorníu, countless smaller wineries are in constant ferment.

## ORGANISED TOURS

The Bus Turístic that takes people around Barcelona (see p266) has been such a success that the concept has been extended in the form of **Catalunya Bus Turístic** (Map pp64–5; ☎ 93 285 38 32; Plaça de Catalunya), a series of day tours from Barcelona to various parts of the region. There are two routes: Girona and Figueres; and Vilafranca del Penedès (Torres winery visit), Montserrat and Sitges. Both run daily (except Monday) from March to October, leaving at 8.30am and returning at 8pm, and cost €66. The tours leave from Plaça de Catalunya.





## BUBBLES AND MUD

For some, a day at the beach just isn't enough (and a little impractical in winter!). Never fear, for wellness is here. Indeed, it always was. Since Roman days, thermal baths have operated in various parts of Catalonia. Now there are 20 across the region, and several of them less than 40km from Barcelona.

In **La Garriga**, a pretty town 36km north of the city, are two fine historic installations that have been modernised. **Termes La Garriga** (☎ 93 871 70 86; www.termes.com; Carrer dels Banyes 23; ☎ 9.30am-8pm Mon-Sat, 9.30am-1.30pm Sun) sits atop waters that bubble out at temperatures as high as 60°C. All sorts of treatments are possible, from mud baths to aroma massage. For €32 you can spend half a day (three hours) wandering between a couple of pools, sauna and various showers. You have to book ahead. The other luxury option here is the five-star **Gran Hotel Blancafort** (☎ 93 860 56 00; www.balnearioblancafort.com; Carrer de la Mina 7; s/d from €130/260), which is out of the centre. After bathing, go for a stroll around town, especially along the street hugging the railway line, and admire mansions, many of them Modernista, built by Barcelona's wealthy elite as summer retreats around the turn of the 20th century.

In the pleasant seaside town of **Caldes d'Estrac**, 36km northeast of Barcelona, the Romans loved to slop around in the thermal waters. You can emulate them in the **Balneari de Caldes d'Estrac** (☎ 93 791 26 05; Carrer de la Riera 29; admission €6.10; ☎ 9am-1.30pm & 4-8pm Mon-Sat, 9am-3pm Sun). These public baths were built in the early 19th century, although people have been bathing in the waters for at least a couple of millennia. Come up on the train for a day and split your time between the baths (you are given about 20 minutes) and other extra treatments if you wish, lunch and the beach. Or you could stay at the luxury **Hotel Colón** (☎ 93 791 04 00; www.hotel-colon.net; Plaça de les Barques s/n; d €194) and use its modern spa facilities. It offers all sorts of packages.

**Caldes de Montbui**, 28km north of Barcelona, hosts three thermal bath hotels. You can use the facilities even if you don't stay in the hotels, although the price can mount depending on what you opt for. **Broquetes Balneario** (☎ 93 865 01 00; www.grupbroquetes.com; Plaça de la Font del Lleó 1) is the town's historic spa hotel, in front of the Roman baths, and a public fountain (Font del Lleó) from which water has been spouting forth at a scorching 74°C since the 16th century. Founded in the 18th century and rebuilt several times, it is a predominantly Modernista building. Inside it boasts an original Roman *vaporarium*, a 2nd-century AD steam bath. A session in the **thermal pool and cervical showers** (☎ 9am-1.30pm & 4.30-8.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1.30pm & 4.30-9.30pm Sat & Sun) costs €22 (or €28 for two people). This gives you 20 minutes, plus the use of the outdoor heated pool. Book ahead. **Hotel Termes Victoria** (☎ 93 865 01 50; www.termesvictoria.com; Carrer de Barcelona 12) is a luxury spa hotel. You can use its facilities (thermal pool session €15.40; ☎ 8am-1pm & 4-9pm Mon-Sat, 8am-2pm Sun). The town is hardly stunning but worth a wander. If you find it open, the **Museu Delger** (Carrer del Dr Delger; ☎ noon-1pm 1st & 2nd Sun of month), an 18th-century mansion stuffed with period furniture, is worth a look. Ask at the **tourist office** (☎ 93 865 41 40; www.caldesdemontbui.org; Plaça de la Font del Lleó 20; ☎ 11am-2pm & 5-8pm Tue-Sat, 11am-2pm Sun). Caldes d'Estrac and La Garriga are easily reached by *rodalies* trains from Barcelona. Caldes de Montbui is more easily reached by car or Sagalés bus (from Passeig de Sant Joan, 65 minutes, €2.70).

Barely 20km south of Vilafranca del Penedès, **Sitges** (p255) was a modest fishing village a century ago. It is now a party animal's haven, with a notable gay leaning, and the scene of frenzied beachside Carnival festivities in February.

On another plane altogether is Catalonia's most revered mountain and monastery, **Montserrat** (p252), northwest of Barcelona. People come here to venerate the Black Madonna, explore the monastery's art treasures and walk in the weirdly shaped mountains.

## RUGGED COAST

Too often dismissed because of its tainted package-holiday image, the bulk of the **Costa Brava** (Rugged Coast, p253) is a joyous spectacle of nature. Blessed with high blustery cliffs,

myriad inlets and minuscule coves alternating with long expanses of golden sand and thick stands of hardy pine, it begs to be explored.

## GIRONA

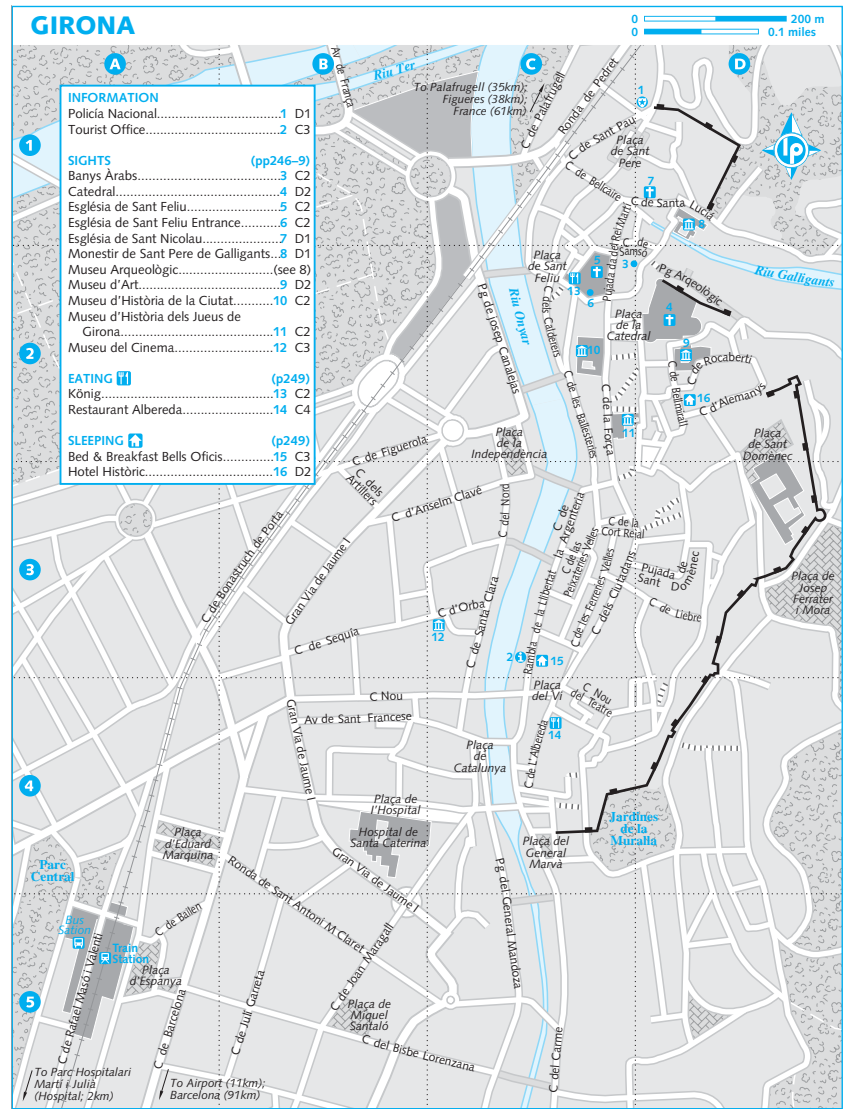
Northern Catalonia's largest city, Girona (Gerona in Spanish) is draped in a valley 36km inland from the Costa Brava and 91km northeast of Barcelona. Its medieval centre, which seems to struggle uphill above the Riu Onyar, exudes a quiet, contemplative magnetism.

The Roman town of Gerunda lay on the Via Augusta, the highway from Rome to Cádiz (Carrer de la Força in Girona's old town follows part of its line). Wrested from the Muslims by the Franks in AD 797, Girona became capital of one of Catalonia's most important counties, only falling under the

sway of Barcelona in the late 9th century. Its medieval wealth produced a plethora of fine Romanesque and Gothic buildings that survived repeated assaults and sieges to give us pleasure today.

The narrow streets of the old town climb in a web above the east bank of the Riu Onyar. Commanding the northern half of the city with its majestic baroque façade placed high over a breezy square and stairway, the **Catedral**

(☎ 972 21 44 26; www.catedraldegirona.org; Plaça de la Catedral; museum adult/child under 7yr/child 7-16yr/senior & student €5/free/1.20/3, Sun free; ☎ 10am-8pm Apr-Oct, 10am-7pm Nov-Mar) makes an obvious starting point for exploration. Most of the edifice, which has been altered repeatedly, is a great deal older than its exterior suggests. Wander inside to appreciate this. First you find yourself in Europe's widest Gothic nave (23m), but other treasures await in and beyond the



cathedral **museum**. Head through the door marked 'Claustre Tresor'. The collection includes the masterly Romanesque *Tapís de la Creació* (Creation Tapestry) and a priceless Mozarabic illuminated *Beatus* manuscript from AD 975. Beyond the museum you emerge in the beautiful, if somewhat wonkily shaped, 12th-century Romanesque **cloister**; the 112 stone columns display whimsical, albeit weathered, sculpture. During services (especially 10am to 2pm Sundays) you can only visit the museum and cloister.

Next door to the cathedral, in the 12th- to 16th-century Palau Episcopal, the **Museu d'Art** (☎ 972 20 38 34; www.museumart.com; Pujada de la Catedral 12; adult/child under 16yr/senior & student €2/free/1.50; ☹ 10am-7pm Tue-Sat Mar-Sep, 10am-6pm Tue-Sat Oct-Feb, 10am-2pm Sun & holidays) boasts an extensive collection that ranges from occasionally delirious-looking Romanesque woodcarvings to rather more dour early-20th-century paintings.

Girona's second great church, the **Església de Sant Feliu** (Plaça de Sant Feliu; ☹ 11am-1pm & 4-6pm), is downhill from the cathedral. The 17th-century main façade, with its landmark single tower, is on Plaça de Sant Feliu, but the entrance is around the side. The nave has 13th-century Romanesque arches but 14th- to 16th-century Gothic upper levels. The northernmost of the chapels, at the far western end of the church, is graced by a masterly Catalan Gothic sculpture, Aloï de Montbrai's alabaster *Crist Jacent* (Recumbent Christ). It looks like it is made of perfectly moulded ice-cream.

The **Banyes Àrabs** (Arab Baths; ☎ 972 21 32 62; Carrer de Ferran Catòlic; admission €1.80; ☹ 10am-7pm Tue-Sat Apr-Sep, 10am-2pm Tue-Sat Oct-Mar, 10am-2pm Sun & holidays), although modelled on Muslim and Roman bathhouses, is actually a 12th-century Christian affair in Romanesque style. It's the only public bathhouse discovered in medieval Christian Spain. Possibly in reaction to the Muslim obsession with water and cleanliness, in Christian Europe washing came to be regarded as ungodly (and water was feared as a source of germs and illness). Europe must have been the smelliest continent on earth! The bathhouse contains an *apodyterium*

(changing room), followed by the *frigidarium* (cold water room) and *tepidarium* (hot water room), and the *caldarium*, a kind of sauna. Across the street from the Banyes Àrabs, steps lead up into lovely gardens that follow the city walls in what is called the **Passeig Arqueològic** (Archaeological Walk) up to the 18th-century Portal de Sant Cristòfol gate, from which you can walk back down to the cathedral.

About 100m north of the Banyes Àrabs across the bubbling Riu Galligants stands the 11th- and 12th-century Romanesque **Monestir de Sant Pere de Galligants** (☎ 972 20 26 32; www.mac.es/girona; Carrer de Santa Llúcia s/n; adult/senior & child €2.30/free; ☹ 10.30am-1.30pm & 4-7pm Tue-Sat Jun-Sep, 10am-2pm & 4-6pm Tue-Sat Oct-May, 10am-2pm Sun & holidays), a modest monastery with a lovely cloister. Get up close to the pillars that line the cloister. The closer you look the weirder the medieval imagination seems – all those bizarre animals and mythical monsters! The monastery also houses the **Museu Arqueològic**, with exhibits that range from prehistoric to medieval times, and include Roman mosaics and some medieval Jewish tombstones. Just opposite the monastery is the pretty Lombard-style 12th-century Romanesque **Església de Sant Nicolau**. It is unusual for its octagonal belltower, and it also has a triple apse in a trefoil plan.

South along Carrer de la Força about 100m off the stairway leading up to Plaça de la Catedral, the **Museu d'Història de la Ciutat** (City History Museum; ☎ 972 22 22 29; www.ajuntament.gi/museuciutat; Carrer de la Força 27; adult/senior & child under 16yr/student €3/free/2; ☹ 10am-2pm & 5-7pm Tue-Sat, 10am-2pm Sun & holidays) traces Girona's history from ancient times to the present. Dioramas, explanatory boards, videos and all sorts of objects ranging from Neolithic tools to the whining musical instruments used to accompany the *sardana* (traditional Catalan folk dance) help bring the town's story to life. Learn about the 18-month siege of the town by Napoleon's troops, which cost half Girona's population their lives.

Carrer de la Força lies at the heart of the Call (the Jewish quarter). Until 1492, when Jews had to convert to Catholicism or leave Spain, Girona was home to Catalonia's second most important Jewish community after Barcelona. For an idea of medieval Jewish life, visit the **Museu d'Història dels Jueus de Girona** (Jewish History Museum, aka the Centre Bonastruc Ça Porta; ☎ 972 21 67 61; Carrer de la Força 8; adult/child under 16yr/senior & student €2/free/1.50; ☹ 10am-8pm Mon-Sat Jun-Oct, 10am-6pm Mon-Sat Nov-May, 10am-3pm Sun & holidays). Named after Jewish Girona's most illustrious figure, a

## TRANSPORT: GIRONA

Distance from Barcelona 91km

Direction Northeast

Travel time Up to 1½ hours

Car Take the AP-7 motorway via Granollers.

Train At least 20 trains daily from Barcelona Sants station (€5.90 to €6.70).

13th-century Cabbalist philosopher and mystic, the centre is rather bare but hosts limited exhibitions. It is a focal point for studies of Jewish Spain and claims to have the biggest collection of Jewish funeral stones and sarcophagi in the country.

There is not a great deal to see in the modern half of Girona, on the west bank of the Riu Onyar. One outstanding exception is the **Museu del Cinema** (☎ 972 41 27 77; www.museudelcinema.org; Carrer de Sèquia 1; adult/child under 16yr/senior & student €4/free/4; ☹ 10am-8pm Tue-Sun May-Sep, 10am-6pm Tue-Fri, 10am-8pm Sat, 11am-3pm Sun Oct-Apr), housed in the Casa de les Aigües. Shadow puppets and magic lanterns introduce the Col·lecció Tomàs Mallol, a display that details the precursors to and story of the motion-picture business. Take a close look at some of the images for fairground magic lantern shows in the 18th century, like the devilish character working a bellows in someone's backside!

## INFORMATION

**Parc Hospitalari (Hospital) Martí i Julià** (☎ 972 18 25 00; Carrer del Doctor Castany s/n)

**Policia Nacional** (☎ 091; Carrer de Sant Pau 2)

**Tourist office** (☎ 972 22 65 75; www.ajuntament.gi/turisme; Rambla de la Llibertat 1; ☹ 8am-8pm Mon-Fri, 8am-2pm & 4-8pm Sat, 9am-2pm Sun)

## EATING

**König** (☎ 972 22 57 82; Carrer dels Calderers 16; meals €8-15 ☹ daily) For a quick sandwich, *entrepà* (filled roll) or simple hot dish, 'King' boasts a broad outdoor terrace shaded by thick foliage.

**Restaurant Albereda** (☎ 972 22 60 02; www.restaurantalbereda.com, in Catalan & Spanish; Carrer de l'Albereda 9; meal €40; ☹ Tue-Sat, lunch Mon; ☹) The town's top restaurant serves Catalan cuisine with interesting twists, such as the *fidueada de ceps i calamarcets* (a noodle dish with mushrooms and tiny squids). There are also tasting menus for €53.

## SLEEPING

**Hotel Històric** (☎ 972 22 35 83; www.hotelhistoric.com; Carrer de Bellmirall 4/a; s/d €109/122; ☎ ☹) A bijou hotel in a historic building in the heart of old Girona. The eight pretty, spacious rooms are individually decorated, and there are also apartments.

**Bed & Breakfast Bells Oficis** (☎ 972 22 81 70; www.bellsficis.com; Carrer dels Germans Busquets 2; r €35-85; ☹ ☹ ☹) With just five rooms, this family-run option is perfectly placed just off Rambla de la Llibertat. The rooms are all very different. The two best ones have balconies overlooking the Rambla. The biggest (€85) has ample space for four people.

## FIGUERES

Just 12km inland from the Golf de Roses, Figueres (Figueras in Spanish) might generously be described as a humdrum town with a single serious attraction: Salvador Dalí. Born here in a two-storey 1898 Modernista house (being restored and destined to be a museum on Dalí's early days from 2010) at Carrer de Monturiol in 1904, Dalí maintained ties with his home territory in all his long years of pergrination between Barcelona, Madrid, Paris and the USA.

Towards the end of the Spanish Civil War in 1939, Figueres' theatre was largely destroyed by fire and subsequently left to rot. In 1961, the by-now world-renowned eccentric Dalí had the money to buy the site and work on one of his wackier projects, the **Teatre-Museu Dalí** (☎ 972 67 75 00; www.salvador-dali.org; Plaça de Gala i Salvador Dalí 5; adult/student €11/8; ☹ 9am-8pm Jul-Sep, 9.30am-6pm Mar-Jun & Oct, 10.30am-6pm Nov-Feb), which he completed in 1974. It is at once art gallery, final testament and mausoleum. It was, and remains, the greatest act of self-promotion of a man who had made a supreme art form of such activities. But make no mistake, Dalí was a unique artistic talent, as the contents of his theatre-museum amply demonstrate. It is a multidimensional trip through one of the most fertile (or febrile) imaginations of the 20th century, full of surprises, tricks and illusions, and containing much of Dalí's life's work. Admission includes entry to Dalí Joies (Dalí Jewels). The site is closed on Mondays from October to May. In August, it also opens at night (open 10pm to 1am) for a maximum of 500 people (booking essential; admission €12). You are treated to a glass of *cava*.

## FIVE IN ONE

The M5 ticket gives you half-price entry at four of Girona's five museums. You pay full price at the first museum you visit, where you pick up the ticket. It is valid for six months.





The building aims to surprise from the outset. The fuchsia wall along Pujada del Castell is topped by a row of Dalí's trademark egg shapes and what appear to be female gymnasts ready to leap. Bizarre sculptures greet visitors outside the entrance on Plaça de Gala i Salvador Dalí. One can only imagine the parish priest at the adjacent centuries-old **Església de Sant Pere** looking with disapproval (Franco was still in charge in those days) upon this loopiness as it emerged from the theatre ruins.

Inside, the ground floor (level one) includes a semicircular garden on the site of the original theatre stalls. In its centre is a classic piece of weirdness, **Taxi Plujós** (Rainy Taxi), composed of an early Cadillac – said to have belonged to Al Capone – and a pile of tractor tyres, both surmounted by statues,

with a fishing boat balanced precariously above the tyres. Put a coin in the slot and water washes all over the inside of the car. The Sala de Peixateries (Fish Shop Room) off here holds a collection of Dalí oils including his **Autoretrat tou amb tall de bacon fregit** (Soft Self-Portrait with Fried Bacon) and **Retrat de Picasso** (Portrait of Picasso). Beneath the former stage of the theatre is the crypt, with Dalí's surprisingly plain tomb.

The stage area (level two), topped by a glass geodesic dome (restored in 1998), was conceived as Dalí's Sistine Chapel. The large egg-head-breasts-rocks-trees backdrop was part of a ballet set, one of Dalí's ventures into the performing arts. If proof were needed of Dalí's acute sense of the absurd, **Gala Mirando el Mar Mediterráneo** (Gala Looking at the Mediterranean Sea) would be it. From

## DALLYING WITH DALÍ DELIRIUM

Dalí left his mark in several locations around Catalonia, particularly at his seaside residence in Port Lligat and inland 'castle', Castell de Púbol.

**Port Lligat**, a 1.25km walk north of Cadaqués, is a tiny fishing settlement on a quiet, enchanting bay. God knows what serious-minded fishermen thought of Dalí's seaside residence, antics and international jet-set pals. Dalí spent time (more than half his adult life) here, in what was originally a fisherman's hut, from 1930 until 1982. Dalí had not come by choice. His father had forbidden him to return to the family house in Cadaqués after Dalí presented what was for his father an intolerable painting in Paris. Across an image of the Sacred Heart, Dalí had written: *Parfois je crache par plaisir sur le portrait de ma mère* (Sometimes I spit for fun on my mother's picture). His father never forgave him this insult to his deceased wife. By Dalí's standards the myriad white chimney pots and two egg-shaped towers on the house he 'grew' out of the original cabin are rather understated. It is now a museum, **Casa-Museu Salvador Dalí** (☎ 972 25 10 15; www.salvador-dali.org; adult/student & senior €10/8; ☎ 10.30am-9pm mid-Jun–mid-Sep, 10.30am-6pm Tue-Sun mid-Sep–mid-Jan & mid-Mar–mid-Jun, closed mid-Jan–mid-Mar, bookings essential).

The **Castell de Púbol** (☎ 972 48 86 55; www.salvador-dali.org; Plaça de Gala Dalí; adult/student & senior €7/5; ☎ 10am-8pm mid-Jun–mid-Sep, 10am-6pm Tue-Sun mid-Mar–mid-Jun & mid-Sep–Oct, 10am-5pm Tue-Sat Nov-Dec), in the village of La Pera, just south of the C-66 road between Girona and Palafrugell, forms the southernmost point of the Dalí triangle. He bought the Gothic and Renaissance mansion – which includes a 14th-century church – in 1968 for his wife, Gala, who lived here without him (apparently lusting after local young lads to the end of her days) until her death at 88 in 1982. An inconsolable Dalí then moved in himself, but abandoned the place after a fire (which nearly burnt him to a crisp) in 1984 to live out his last years in Figueres. Dalí did the castle up in his own inimitable style, with lions' heads staring from the tops of cupboards, statues of elephants with giraffes' legs in the garden and a stuffed giraffe staring at Gala's tomb in the crypt.

the other end of the room, the work appears, with the help of coin-operated viewfinders, to be a portrait of Abraham Lincoln. One floor up (level three) is the Sala de Mae West, a living room where the components, viewed from the right spot, make up a portrait of Ms West: a sofa for her luscious, wet lips, twin fireplaces for nostrils, impressionist paintings of Paris for those come-to-bed eyes.

A separate section displays **Dalí Joies** (Dalí Jewels), the magnificent Owen Cheatham collection of 37 pieces of jewellery in gold and precious stones designed by Dalí. Dalí did the designs on paper (his first commission was in 1941) and the jewellery was made by specialists in New York. Each piece, ranging from the disconcerting *Ull del Temps* (Eye of Time) through to the *Cor Reial* (Royal Heart), is unique. They changed hands several times until the foundation that runs the museum acquired them in 2001 for a cool €5.5 million.

On La Rambla, the town's main boulevard about 100m south of the dazzling display of Dalían dizziness, lie what are, by comparison, two rather staid museums. The **Museu de l'Empordà** (☎ 972 50 23 05; www.museuemporta.org; La Rambla 2; adult/senior & child/student €2/free/1; ☎ 11am-7pm Tue-Sat, 11am-2pm Sun & holidays) is a worthy institution that combines Greek, Roman and medieval archaeological finds with a sizable

collection of art, mainly by Catalan artists. Admission is free with a Teatre-Museu Dalí ticket. The **Museu del Joguet** (☎ 972 50 45 85; www.mjc.cat; Carrer de Sant Pere 1; admission €5; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-7pm Sat, 11am-6pm Sun Jun-Sep, 10am-6pm Tue-Fri, 10am-7pm Sat, 11am-2pm Sun & holidays Oct-May) has more than 3500 Catalonia- and Valencia-made toys from the pre-Barbie 19th and early 20th centuries. One wonders to what children the Grochu Marx doll would have appealed.

The **Museu de la Tècnica de l'Empordà** (☎ 972 50 88 20; www.mte.cat; Carrer dels Fossos 12; adult/child under 10yr/senior & student €3/free/2; ☎ 10am-7pm Tue-Fri, 10am-1pm & 4-7pm Sat, 11am-2pm Sun & holidays) is a treasure chest of old mechanical masterpieces, from typewriters and watches through to sewing machines, heaters and cash registers.

The sprawling 18th-century **Castell de Sant Ferran** (☎ 972 50 60 94; www.lesfortalesescatalanes.info, in Spanish, Catalan & French; admission €3; ☎ 10.30am-8pm Easter & Jul–mid-Sep, 10.30am-3pm mid-Sep–Jun), on a low hill 1km northwest of the centre, was built to withstand the most vicious of sieges but never got the chance to show its mettle. Built in 1750, it saw almost no action. Spain's Republican government held its final meeting of the civil war in the dungeons on 1 February 1939. The Castell is still partly owned by the military, who don't at all mind divisions of tourists manoeuvring around inside.



## TRANSPORT: FIGUERES

Distance from Barcelona 129km

Direction Northeast

Travel time 1½ to 2¼ hours

**Car** Take the AP-7 motorway via Granollers and Girona. From central Girona it should not take more than 30 minutes.

**Train** At least 17 trains daily from Barcelona Sants station via Girona (€8.55 to €9.80).

## INFORMATION

**Hospital** (☎ 972 67 50 89; Ronda del Rector Aroles s/n)

**Policia Nacional** (☎ 091; Carrer de Pep Ventura 8)

**Tourist office** (☎ 972 50 31 55; www.figueresciutat.com; Plaça del Sol; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Sat, 10am-2pm Sun Jul-Sep, 8am-3pm & 4.30-8pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-1.30pm & 3.30-6.30pm Sat Easter-Jun & Oct, 8am-3pm Mon-Fri Nov-Easter) Hours can be a trifle unpredictable.

## EATING

**Mesón Castell** (☎ 972 51 01 04; Pujada del Castell 4; meals €35-40; ☎ Mon-Sat) A bustling, rustic eatery where you can sample tapas at the bar or head to the sit-down restaurant for robust local cooking (including lamb and suckling pig).

## SLEEPING

**Hotel Rambla** (☎ 972 67 60 20; www.hotelrambla.net; La Rambla 33; s/d €56/70; ☎ ☎ ☎) Right in the heart of the city with comfortable, modern rooms behind a 19th-century façade. Larger doubles cost a little more (€80).

## MONTSERRAT

Shimmering bizarrely in the distance as you drive the C-16 toll road between Terrassa and Manresa is the emblematic mountain range of Catalonia, Montserrat (Serrated Mountain). So dear is it to Catalan hearts that it has long been a popular first name for girls (generally Montse for short). Lying 50km northwest of Barcelona, the serried ranks of wind- and rain-whipped rock pillars (reaching a height of 1236m) were formed from a conglomeration of limestone, pebbles and sand that once lay beneath the sea. With the historic Benedictine monastery, one of Catalonia's most important shrines, perched at 725m on the mountain range's flank, it makes a great outing.

From the range, on a clear day, you can see as far as the Pyrenees, Barcelona's Tibidabo hill and even, if you're lucky, Mallorca.

A rack-and-pinion railway or your own wheels can be used to ascend the mountain as far as the monastery. From here, the main road curves (past a snack bar, cafeteria, information office and the Espai Audiovisual) round and up to the right, passing the blocks of the Cel·les Abat Marcel, to enter Plaça de Santa Maria at the centre of the monastery complex.

The **Monestir de Montserrat** (☎ 93 877 77 01; www.abadiamontserrat.net; ☎ 9am-6pm) was founded in 1025 to commemorate a vision of the Virgin on the mountain. Wrecked by Napoleon's troops in 1811, then abandoned as a result of anticlerical legislation in the 1830s, it was rebuilt from 1858. Today a community of about 80 monks lives here. Pilgrims come from far and wide to venerate **La Moreneta** (Black Madonna), a 12th-century Romanesque wooden sculpture of Mary with the infant Jesus that has been Catalonia's official patron since 1881. A bit like children refusing to believe claims that Santa Claus does not exist, Catalans chose to ignore the discovery in 2002 that their Madonna is not black at all, just deeply tanned by centuries of candle smoke.

The two-part **Museu de Montserrat** (☎ 93 877 77 77; Plaça de Santa Maria; adult/student €6.50/5.50; ☎ 10am-6pm) has a collection ranging from ancient artefacts, including an Egyptian mummy (the collection of Egyptian artefacts counts more than 1000 items), to occasional works by Caravaggio, Monet, Degas, Picasso and others (including an ample parade of Catalan painters). The **Espai Audiovisual** (adult/senior & student €2/1.50, with Museu de Montserrat free; ☎ 9am-6pm) is a walk-through multimedia space that illustrates the monks' daily life.

From Plaça de Santa Maria you enter the courtyard of the 16th-century **basilica** (admission incl La Moreneta €5; ☎ 9am-8.15pm Jul-Sep, earlier closing rest of yr). The façade, with its carvings of Christ and the 12 Apostles, dates from 1901, despite its 16th-century Plateresque style. For La Moreneta, follow the signs to the **Cambri de la Mare de Déu** (La Moreneta; ☎ 8-10.30am & 12.15-6.30pm Mon-Sat, 8-10.30am, 12.15-6.30pm & 7.30-8.15pm Sun & holidays), to the right of the basilica's main entrance.

The **Escolania** (www.escolania.net; admission free; ☎ performances 1pm & 6.45pm Mon-Fri, 11am & 6.45pm Sun), reckoned to be Europe's oldest music

## TRANSPORT: MONTSERRAT

Distance from Barcelona 46km

Direction Northwest

Travel time One hour

**Bus** A daily bus (€43) from Barcelona with **Julià Tours** (Map pp108-9; ☎ 93 317 64 54; Ronda de l'Universitat 5, Barcelona) leaves for the monastery at 9.30am (returning at 3pm). The price includes travel, all entry prices, use of funiculars at Montserrat and a meal at the self-service restaurant.

**Car** Take the C-16. Shortly after Terrassa, follow the exit signs to Montserrat, which will put you on the C-58. Follow it northwest to the C-55. Head 2km south on this road to the municipality of Monistrol de Montserrat, from where a road snakes 7km up the mountain.

**Train** The R5 line trains operated by **FGC** (☎ 93 205 15 15) run from Plaça d'Espanya station in Barcelona to Monistrol de Montserrat up to 18 times daily starting at 5.24am. They connect with the rack-and-pinion train, or **cremallera** (☎ 902 31 20 20; www.cremalleraedemontserrat.com), which takes 17 minutes to make the upwards journey and costs €4.10/6.50 one way/return. One way/return from Barcelona to Montserrat with the FGC train and **cremallera** costs €8.70/15.70. For various all-in ticket options, check out the above website or www.fgc.net.

school, has a boys' choir, the **Montserrat Boys' Choir**, which sings in the basilica once a day, Sunday to Friday, except in July and August. See the latest performance times (which can change) on the web page. It is a rare (if brief) treat as the choir does not often perform outside Montserrat. The choir has sung hymns since the 13th century. The 40 to 50 **escolanets**, aged between 10 and 14, go to boarding school at Montserrat and must endure a two-year selection process to join the choir.

To see where the holy image of the Virgin was discovered, take the **Funicular de Santa Cova** (one way/return €1.70/2.70; ☎ every 20min 10am-5.35pm Apr-Oct, 11am-4.25pm Nov-Mar) down from the main area. You can explore the mountain above the monastery by a network of paths leading to some of the peaks and to 13 empty and rather dilapidated little chapels. The **Funicular de Sant Joan** (one way/return €4.15/6.60; ☎ every 20min 10am-5.40pm Apr-Oct, 10am-7pm mid-Jul-Aug, 11am-4.30pm Nov-Mar) will carry you from the monastery 250m up the mountain in seven minutes. Children pay about half price on the funiculars. If you prefer to walk, the road leading past the funicular's bottom station winds 3km up the mountain and around to the top station.

From the Sant Joan top station, it's a 20-minute stroll (signposted) to the **Sant Joan chapel**. Enjoy the views as you look west from the trail. More exciting is the hour's walk northwest along a path marked with occasional blobs of yellow paint to Montserrat's highest peak, **Sant Jeroni** (1236m), from which there's an awesome sheer drop on the north-eastern side.

If you want to stay overnight, check the monastery website for the limited options. You'll also find a couple of self-service restaurants and snack bars.

## COSTA BRAVA

The rugged Costa Brava stretches from bland Blanes (about 60km northeast of Barcelona) to the French border. At its best it is magnificent. At its worst it fully lives up to its reputation as a beach-holiday inferno. Lloret de Mar and parts of the Golf de Roses are the worst offenders, where you can almost hear all that northern European flesh sizzling on the beaches in between lager top-ups. Don't run away! The bulk of the coast is one of nature's grand spectacles, with rugged cliffs plunging into crystalline water, interrupted at improbable points by ribbons of golden sand, tiny hidden coves and shady pine stands. Some towns have managed to retain great charm, and one of the most ancient sites of settlement in Spain, Empúries, is here.

Driving is the easiest way to explore the coast. What follows is a taster. To reach all these spots you need to reckon on at least one overnight stay. In July and August finding lodgings without a reservation can be problematic.

Leaving the strobe-light silliness of Lloret de Mar behind, the road slices back inland into the coastal hills before setting you down in **Tossa de Mar**. A small white town backing onto a curved bay that ends in a headland protected by medieval walls and towers, Tossa is an enticing location. Artist Marc Chagall called it his Blue Paradise. The place has sprawled

since Chagall stopped by in the 1930s, but Tossa has retained some of the integrity of a beachside village.

The walls and towers on the headland, **Mont Guardí**, at the southern end of the main beach, were built in the 12th to 14th centuries. The area they girdle is known as the **Vila Vella** (Old Town). Wandering around Mont Guardí you come across ruins of a castle and a lighthouse (with restaurant and bar attached); the sunsets here are superb. **Vila Nova** (New Town), a tangle of 18th-century lanes, stretches away from the old nucleus and makes for a pleasant stroll. The main beach, **Platja Gran**, tends to be busy. Further north along the same bay are some quieter, smaller beaches.

The 21km drive from Tossa to **Sant Feliu de Guíxols** is a treat, the most breathtaking driving stretch of the coast. From here the coast road continues through the not unpleasant Spanish resort of **Platja d'Aro**, on through the more offensive **Palamós** and inland to **Palafrugell**, a local transport hub that funnels you into another prime stretch of the Costa Brava. Again, uncompromising rock walls are interspersed with coves and hideaways. Among the places you can fan out to are **Calella de Palafrugell**, **Llafranc**, **Tamaríu**, **Aigua Blava** and **Fornelles de Mar**. A coastal walking path links the first three.

Jagged cliffs and pine stands give way to a long stretch of beach beyond Sa Punta to **L'Estarrit**, the diving centre of the coast fronted by the marine reserve of the **Illes Medes**. From here roads redirect you inland to **L'Escala**, a low-key resort town on the southern tip of the **Golf de Roses** bay, and the nearby ruins of **Empúries** (☎ 972 77 02 08; <http://ftp.mac.es/empuries>; adult/senior & child/student €3/free/2.50; 🕒 10am-8pm

Jun-Sep, 10am-6pm Oct-May). Founded around 600 BC, it was probably the first, and certainly one of the most important, Greek colonies in Iberia. It came to be called **Emporion** (literally 'market'). In 218 BC, Roman legions landed here to cut off Hannibal's supply lines during the Second Punic War. By the early 1st century AD, the Roman and Greek settlements had merged. **Emporiae**, as the place was then known, was abandoned in the late 3rd century after raids by Germanic tribes.

A small **museum** separates the Greek town from the larger Roman town on the upper part of the site. While the **Museu d'Arqueologia de Catalunya** (p146) in Barcelona has a bigger and better **Empúries** collection, highlights of the larger Roman town include the mosaic floors of a 1st century BC house, the forum and walls. Outside the walls are the remains of an oval amphitheatre.

A string of brown-sand beaches stretches north from the ruins and leads to the cheerful 15th-century hamlet of **Sant Martí d'Empúries**. On **Plaça Major** four restaurant-bars compete for your business.

Next, head for the windswept **Parc Natural del Cap de Creus**. As well as boasting Spain's most easterly point (Cap de Creus), the area bursts with hiking possibilities, coves and the eternally attractive seaside town of **Cadaqués**, a strange mix of whitewashed fishing village and minor hedonists' hang-out. The area was the stomping ground of Dalí and a host of other jet-set figures through the 1960s and 1970s. Today it is ideal for strolling, lazing around on nearby beaches and, in the evening, eating and drinking. It can get quite lively on weekends. Nearby is **Port Lligat** (see Dallying with Dalí Delirium, p251).

## TRANSPORT: COSTA BRAVA

**Distance from Barcelona** Tossa de Mar 77km; Palafrugell 125km; Empúries 153km; Cadaqués 164km (or 199km via Empúries)

**Direction** Northeast

**Travel time** 1½ to 2¼ hours

**Car** Take the AP-7 motorway from Barcelona and peel off at exit 9 for Tossa de Mar, exit 6 for Palafrugell and around, exit 5 for L'Escala and Empúries and exit 4 for Cadaqués (via Roses). You can also follow the coast for parts of the trip. From Barcelona take the C-32 to Blanes and then (often congested) single-carriage roads to Tossa de Mar via Lloret de Mar. The single-carriageway A-2 coast road is slower still. From Tossa it is possible to follow the coast (the initial 21km stretch to Sant Feliu de Guíxols is breathtaking) to Palafrugell and beyond.

**Bus** The company **SARFA** (☎ 902 302025; [www.sarfa.com](http://www.sarfa.com)) runs buses from Barcelona's Estació del Nord to Tossa de Mar (€9.85, 1½ hours, seven to 18 times daily) and to Palafrugell (€15.05, two hours, seven to 13 times daily). Local buses connect to Calella, Llafranc and Tamaríu. Up to four buses a day run from Barcelona to L'Escala and Empúries via Palafrugell (€17.65, 1½ hours). For Cadaqués, buses to/from Barcelona (€19.90, 2¼ hours) operate from two to five times daily.

## COOKING UP A THREE-STAR STORM

Once a simple bar and grill clutching on to a rocky perch high above the bare Mediterranean beach of Cala Montjoi and accessible only by dirt track from Roses, 6km to the west, **El Bulli** (☎ 972 15 04 57; [www.elbulli.com](http://www.elbulli.com); Cala Montjoi; meals €200+; 🕒 Apr-Sep; 📍) is now one of the world's most sought-after dining experiences (usually fully booked a year in advance), thanks to star chef Ferran Adrià (see p177). While easily Catalonia's internationally best-known dining experience, it has two stablemates as three-star Michelin eateries (in all Spain there are only six; the other three are in the Basque Country). **Can Fabes** (☎ 93 867 28 51; [www.canfabes.com](http://www.canfabes.com); Carrer de Sant Joan 6, Sant Celoni; meals €120-150; 🕒 Tue-Sat) has long attracted a steady stream of gastronomists from Barcelona (53km to the south). Chef Santi Santamaria (the first Catalan chef ever to be awarded three Michelin stars) is a local boy who started up here in 1981. Dishes based on local products (seafood landed at Blanes, for example) are at the core of his cooking, which, while loaded with creative touches, makes no attempt to reach Adrià's kooky levels. Some people like the food so much they stay in Santamaria's design digs on the same property. Barely 25km east, on the coast at **Sant Pol de Mar**, is another foodie's fave. **Sant Pau** (☎ 93 760 06 62; Carrer Nou 10; meals €120-150; 🕒 lunch & dinner Tue-Wed & Fri-Sat, dinner only Thu, closed most of May & Nov) is a beautifully presented mansion whose garden overlooks the Mediterranean. Observe the cooks at work on local seafood and farm products downstairs before heading upstairs to dine. Carme Ruscalleda is the driving force. Some 20 other restaurants scattered around Catalonia have a Michelin star (and just one has two), in addition to 14 in Barcelona, so the French clearly find the region fruitful territory for the discerning palate!

## INFORMATION

**Cadaqués tourist office** (☎ 972 25 83 15; [www.cadaques.org](http://www.cadaques.org), in Catalan; Carrer del Cotxe 2; 🕒 9am-9pm Mon-Sat, 10am-1pm Sun Easter-Sep, 9.30am-1pm & 3-6pm Mon-Sat, 10am-1pm Sun Oct-Easter) Opening hours are unpredictable.

**Tossa tourist office** (☎ 972 34 01 08; [www.infotossa.com](http://www.infotossa.com); Avinguda del Pelegrí 25; 🕒 9am-9pm Mon-Sat, 10am-2pm & 5-8pm Sun & holidays Jun-Sep, 10am-2pm & 4-8pm Mon-Sat Apr, May & Oct, 10am-2pm & 4-7pm Mon-Sat Nov-Mar)

## EATING

**Casa Nun** (☎ 972 25 88 56; Plaça del Port Ditxos 6, Cadaqués; meals €30; 🕒 lunch & dinner Fri-Mon, dinner only Thu) Head for the cute upstairs dining area (snag a window seat) or take one of the few tables outside overlooking the port. Catch of the day is always a good bet.

**Casamar** (☎ 972 30 01 04; Carrer de Nero 3, Llafranc; meals €30; 🕒 Wed-Mon mid-Mar-mid-Jan) All sorts of marvels pour out of the hotel's restaurant kitchen, from peach ravioli to succulent lamb ribs.

**La Cuina de Can Simon** (☎ 972 34 12 69; Carrer del Portal 24, Tossa de Mar; meals €45-50; 🕒 Wed-Sat, lunch Sun; 📍) Tossa's culinary (Michelin) star is housed in the former stone dwelling of a fisherman. This place serves up an imaginative array of creative local and Mediterranean cuisine, such as black rice with artichokes and shrimp dumplings.

## SLEEPING

**Hotel Diana** (☎ 972 34 18 86; [www.diana-hotel.com](http://www.diana-hotel.com); Plaça d'Espanya 6, Tossa de Mar; s/d €66/102, d with sea view €126; 📍) A small-scale, older hotel fronting Platja Gran with 21 simple but light rooms, a Gaudi-built fireplace in the lounge, Modernista décor and stained glass in the central covered courtyard. Prices shoot higher still in August.

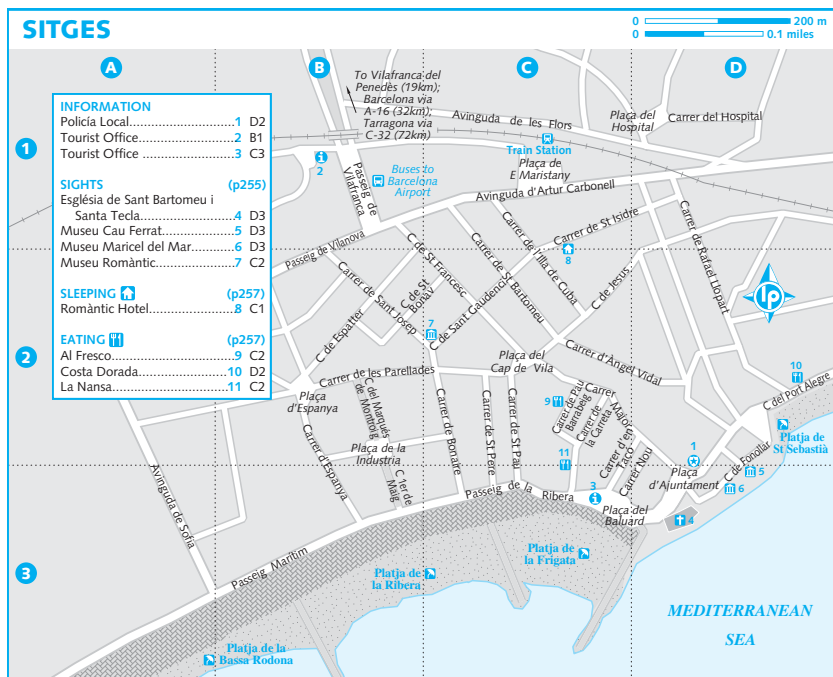
**Hotel La Residència** (☎ 972 25 83 12; [www.laresidencia.net](http://www.laresidencia.net); Avinguda de la Caritat Serinyana 1, Cadaqués; s/d €70/95; 📍) Right in the heart of the town, with a dozen rooms ranging from simple doubles to extravagantly decorated suites.

## SITGES

Jet-setters, honeymooners and international gay partygoers descend on this once-quiet fishing village from spring to autumn. Just 32km (a half-hour by train) southwest of Barcelona, Sitges boasts a long sandy beach, groovy boutiques for fashionistas, a handful of interesting sights and nightlife that thumps from dusk 'til dawn. In winter, Sitges can be dreary, but it wakes up with a vengeance for **Carnaval** (see p17) in February, when the gay crowd puts on an outrageous show.

Sitges has been fashionable in one way or another since the 1890s, when it became an avant-garde art-world hang-out. It has been one of Spain's most unconventional, anything-goes resorts since the 1960s.

The main landmark is the **Església de Sant Bartomeu i Santa Tecla** parish church, atop a rocky



## TRANSPORT: SITGES

**Distance from Barcelona** 32km

**Direction** Southwest

**Travel time** 30 minutes

**Car** The best road from Barcelona is the C-32 toll road. More scenic is the C-31, which hooks up with the C-32 after Castelldefels, but it is often busy and slow.

**Train** Four *rodalies* trains an hour, from about 6am to 10pm, run from Barcelona's Passeig de Gràcia and Estació Sants to Sitges (€2.60, 38 to 46 minutes from Passeig de Gràcia depending on intermediate stops).

elevation that separates the 2km-long main beach to the southwest from the smaller, quieter Platja de Sant Sebastià to the northeast.

Three **museums** (adult/child/student €3.50/free/1.50; ☎ 10am-1.30pm & 3-6.30pm Tue-Fri, 10am-7pm Sat, 10am-3pm Sun Oct-Jun, 10am-2pm & 5-9pm Tue-Sun Jul-Sep), which offer a combined ticket (adult/child/student €6.40/free/3.50), serve as a timid counterweight to the hedonism. The **Museu Cau Ferrat** (☎ 93 894 03 64; Carrer de Fonollar s/n) was built in the 1890s as a house-cum-studio by artist Santiago Rusiñol. The house is full of his own art and that of his contemporaries. The interior, with its exquisitely tiled walls

and lofty arches, is enchanting. Next door is the **Museu Maricel del Mar** (☎ 93 894 03 64; Carrer de Fonollar s/n), with art and handicrafts from the Middle Ages to the 20th century.

The **Museu Romàntic** (☎ 93 894 29 69; Carrer de Sant Gaudenci 1), housed in a late-18th-century mansion, re-creates with its furnishings and dioramas the lifestyle of a 19th-century Catalan landowning family. It also has a collection of several hundred antique dolls – and some of them are mighty ugly! Many of Sitges' grand old residences were built in the 19th century by locals who had made good (often in dubious businesses such as cotton-raising using slave labour) in South America and were commonly dubbed *Americanos* or *Indians*.

At night, head down to the 'Calle del Pecado' (Sin St), actually Carrer de Marqués de Montroig, and its extension, Carrer del 1er de Maig for wall-to-wall bars that will kick your Sitges nocturnal life off with decibels.

## INFORMATION

**Policia Local** (☎ 704 101092; Plaça d'Ajuntament)

**Tourist office** (☎ 93 810 93 40; www.sitgestur.com; Carrer de Sinya Morera 1; ☎ 9am-8pm mid-Jun–mid-Sep, 9am-2pm & 4-6.30pm Mon-Fri Oct-Jun)

**Tourist office** (☎ 93 811 06 11; Passeig de la Ribera s/n; ☎ 10am-2pm & 4-8pm daily mid-Jun–mid-Sep, 10am-2pm & 4-7pm Fri & Sat, 10am-2pm Sun-Thu mid-Sep–mid-Jun) A branch office.

## EATING

**Al Fresco** (☎ 93 894 06 00; Carrer de Pau Barrabeig 4; meals €25-30; ☎ dinner Tue-Sat, lunch Sun mid-Jan–mid-Dec; ☎) Hidden along a narrow stairway that masquerades as a street, it serves light curries and other surprises. There's also a tasting menu (€29) on Wednesday nights.

**Costa Dorada** (☎ 93 894 35 43; Carrer del Port Alegre 27; meals €30; ☎ Fri-Tue, lunch Wed Jan-Nov) Old-world service in a 1970s atmosphere, perfect for seafood, paella and *fideuà* (which is similar to paella but uses vermicelli noodles as the base).

**La Nansa** (☎ 93 894 19 27; Carrer de la Carreta 24; meals €35; ☎ Thu-Mon, closed Jan) Cast just back from the town's waterfront and up a little lane in a fine old house is this seafood specialist. They do a great line in paella and other rice dishes.

## SLEEPING

**Romàntic Hotel** (☎ 93 894 83 75; www.hotelromantic.com, in Spanish & Catalan; Carrer de Sant Isidre 33; s/d €80/110, s/d with shared bathroom €68/95) Three adjoining 19th-century villas are sensuously restored in period style, and have a leafy dining courtyard. If there are no rooms available, ask about their other boutique hotel, Hotel La Renaixença.

## PENEDÈS WINE COUNTRY

Rivers of still white and bubbly, among Spain's best wines, spring forth from the area around the towns of Sant Sadurn d'Anoia and Vilafranca del Penedès. **Sant Sadurn d'Anoia**, a half-hour train ride west of Barcelona, is the capital of *cava*. **Vilafranca del Penedès**, 12km further down the track, is the heart of the Penedès DO region (*denominación de origen*, see p194), which produces light, still whites. Some good reds and rosés also gurgle forth here.

A hundred or so wineries around Sant Sadurn produce 140 million bottles of *cava* a year – something like 85% of the national output. *Cava* is made by the same method

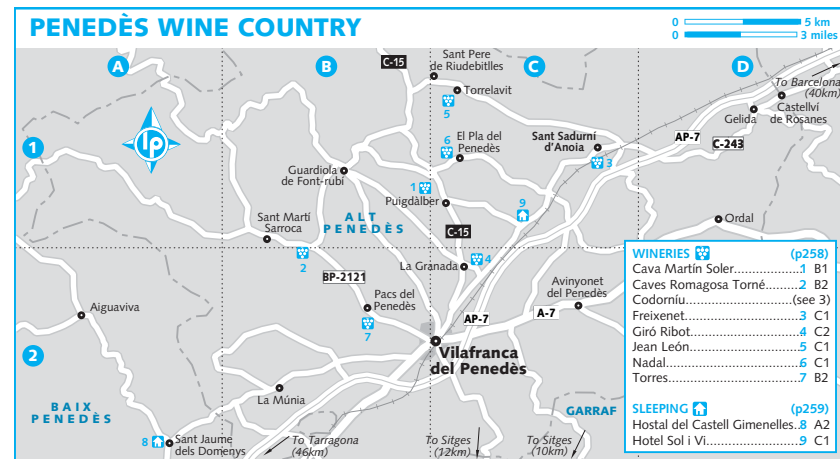
## TRANSPORT: PENEDÈS WINE COUNTRY

**Distance from Barcelona** Vilafranca del Penedès 48km

**Direction** West

**Travel time** 30 to 45 minutes

**Car** Head west along Avinguda Diagonal and follow the signs for the AP-7 motorway, then take either the Sant Sadurn d'Anoia or Vilafranca del Penedès exits. **Train** Up to three *rodalies* trains an hour run from Plaça de Catalunya and Estació Sants in Barcelona to Sant Sadurn d'Anoia (€2.60, 45 minutes from Plaça de Catalunya) and Vilafranca (€3.20, 55 minutes from Plaça de Catalunya).





## IN SEARCH OF THE PERFECT TIPPLE

To do a tour of the Penedès area you will need your own transport. For suggestions on wine routes, also look up [www.enoturismealpenedes.net](http://www.enoturismealpenedes.net). Do not expect to wander into any old winery. Many only open their doors to the public at limited times. The more enthusiastic ones will show you how wines and/or *cava* (the Catalan version of champagne) are made and finish off with a glass or two. Tours generally last about 1½ hours and may only be in Catalan and/or Spanish. Groups must book. You can search [www.dopenedes.es](http://www.dopenedes.es) for wineries and this list should get you started:

**Cava Martin Soler** (Map p257; ☎ 93 898 82 20; [www.cavamartinsoler.com](http://www.cavamartinsoler.com); Puigdalber; ☎ 9am-1pm & 3-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat, Sun & holidays) Located 8km north of Vilafranca in a 17th-century farmhouse surrounded by vineyards, this winery only makes *cava*.

**Caves Romagosa Torné** (Map p257; ☎ 93 899 13 53; [www.romagosatorne.com](http://www.romagosatorne.com); ☎ 10am-1pm & 4-7pm Mon-Sat) This winery at Finca La Serra is on the road to Sant Martí Sarroca. *Cava* is, again, the star. Head on for a look at nearby Sant Martí Sarroca.

**Codorníu** (Map p257; ☎ 93 891 33 42; [www.codorniu.es](http://www.codorniu.es); Avinguda de Jaume Codorníu s/n, Sant Sadurní d'Anoia; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat, Sun & holidays) The Codorníu headquarters is in a Modernista building at the entry to Sant Sadurní d'Anoia by road from Barcelona. One of the biggest names in *cava*, it made its first bottle in 1872.

**Freixenet** (Map p257; ☎ 93 891 70 00; [www.freixenet.es/web/eng](http://www.freixenet.es/web/eng); Carrer de Joan Sala 2, Sant Sadurní d'Anoia; ☎ 1½hr tours 10am-1pm & 3-4.30pm Mon-Thu, 10am-1pm Fri-Sun) Easily the best-known *cava* company internationally, Freixenet owns myriad wine producers in and beyond Catalonia.

**Giró Ribot** (Map p257; ☎ 93 897 40 50; [www.giroribot.es](http://www.giroribot.es); Finca el Pont s/n, Santa Fe del Penedès; ☎ 9am-2pm & 3.30-6.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm & 4-7pm Sat, 10am-2pm Sun) The magnificent winemaker's farm buildings ooze centuries of tradition. These vintners use mostly local grape varieties to produce a limited range of fine *cava* and wines (including muscat). The times given are for the shop. To visit the cellars, call ahead.

**Jean León** (Map p257; ☎ 93 899 55 12; [www.jeanleon.com](http://www.jeanleon.com); Carrer del Comerç 22, Torrelavit; tours per person €6; ☎ 9.30am-5.30pm Mon-Sat, 9.30am-1pm Sun) Born in Santander as Ceferino Carrión in 1928, Jean León uses cabernet sauvignon and other grape types imported from prestigious vineyards in France to create a unique name in wines. Visits must be booked in advance.

**Nadal** (Map p257; ☎ 93 898 80 11; [www.nadal.com](http://www.nadal.com); El Pla del Penedès; tour per person €3; ☎ tours 11.30am, 3.30pm & 5.30pm Mon-Fri, 11.30am Sat, 10.30am & noon Sun & holidays) Nadal is just outside the hamlet of El Pla del Penedès. The centrepiece is a fine *masia* (Catalan country farmhouse) where you can join organised visits.

**Torres** (Map p257; ☎ 93 817 74 87; [www.torres.es](http://www.torres.es); tours per person €5; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm Sat, 9am-1pm Sun & holidays) About 3km northwest of Vilafranca on the BP-2121 near Pacs del Penedès, this is the area's premier winery. The Torres family tradition dates from the 17th century, but the family company, in its present form, was founded in 1870. Torres produces an array of reds and whites of all qualities, using many grape varieties, including Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot Noir and more locally specific ones such as Parellada, Garnacha and Tempranillo.

as French champagne (of course, the French harrumph at such observations) and is gaining ground in international markets. If you happen to be in town during October, you may catch the Mostra de Caves i Gastronomia, a *cava*- and food-tasting festi.

The epicentre of the Penedès wine-producing district is the large yet somewhat straggly Vilafranca del Penedès. Spreading itself around the pleasant old town centre is a less captivating and sprawling new town that seems as though it's been under repair for years.

The mainly Gothic **Basilica de Santa Maria** stands at the heart of the old town. Contruction began in 1285, and since then, it has been much restored. It is possible to arrange visits of the bell tower in summer at around sunset. Ask at the tourist office.

The basilica faces the **Vinseum** (☎ 93 890 05 82; Plaça de Jaume I, Vilafranca; adult/child under 12yr/child 12-17yr €5/free/3; ☎ 10am-2pm & 4-7pm Tue-Sat, 10am-2pm Sun & holidays) across Plaça de Jaume I. Housed in a Gothic building, a combination of museums here cover archaeology, art, geology and bird life, along with an excellent section on wine.

## INFORMATION

**Tourist office** (☎ 93 818 12 54; [www.turismevilafranca.com](http://www.turismevilafranca.com); Carrer de la Fruita 13, Vilafranca; ☎ 9am-1pm & 4-7pm Tue-Sat, 4-7pm Sun) A good source of information on wineries.

## EATING

**Cal Ton** (☎ 93 890 37 41; Carrer Casal 8, Vilafranca; meals €35-40; ☎ Wed-Sat, lunch only Sun & Tue) Hidden away down a narrow side street, Cal Ton has a crisp, modern décor and inventive Mediterranean chow.

**Fonda Neus** (☎ 93 891 03 65; Carrer de Marc Mir 14-16, Sant Sadurní d'Anoia; meal €25; ☎ Mon-Fri, lunch Sun) This classic Catalan eatery has been given an overhaul but retains a rustic flavour. Meats prepared in *cava* predominate. It has a few basic rooms too (singles/doubles €55/85).

## SLEEPING

**Hostal del Castell Gimanelles** (☎ 977 67 81 93; [www.gimanelles.com](http://www.gimanelles.com); Sant Jaume dels Domenys; r €77-130; ☎) Seven rooms with antique furniture arranged in a typical Penedès farmhouse and surrounded by vineyards, just west of the town of Sant Jaume dels Domenys.

**Hotel Sol i Vi** (☎ 93 899 32 04; [www.solivi.com](http://www.solivi.com); s/d €61/81; ☎) Occupying a renovated *masia* (Catalan country farmhouse) in Subirats, 4km south of Sant Sadurní on the C-243a road to Vilafranca, Hotel Sol i Vi has spacious rooms, a restaurant and country views.

## TARRAGONA

A hustling port city, Tarragona was once Catalonia's leading light. Roman and

Category	Name	Symbol	Grid
INFORMATION	Guàrdia Urbana	A2	A2
INFORMATION	Tourist Office	2	C2
SIGHTS	Amfiteatre Romà	3	C3
SIGHTS	Catedral	4	D1
SIGHTS	Entrance to Cathedral, Cloister & Museu Diocesà	5	C1
SIGHTS	Forum Romà	6	B3
EATING	Museu Casa Castellarnau	7	C2
EATING	Museu Nacional Arqueològic de Tarragona	8	D2
EATING	Passeig Arqueològic	9	C1
EATING	Pretori i Circ Romans	10	C2
SLEEPING	Hotel Lauria	11	C3
SLEEPING	Pensión Plaça de la Font	14	C2
TRANSPORT	Balcó Bus to Beaches	15	D2

## DETOUR: THE MONASTERIES ROUTE

The verdant oasis of La Conca de Barberà lies 30km west of Vilafranca del Penedès. Vineyards and woods succeed one another across rolling green hills (largely hidden from the ribbon of motorway that cuts through them), studded with the occasional medieval village and a trio of grand Cistercian monasteries (a combined ticket to all three is available for €7). With your own vehicle, it is possible to extend a Penedès wineries excursion to some of these magnificent sights. For information on the area around the monasteries, check out the Ruta del Cister (Cistercian Route) website ([www.larutadelcister.info](http://www.larutadelcister.info)).

Following the AP-7 motorway southwest from Vilafranca, take the AP-2 fork about 18km west, then take exit 11 north for the medieval **Reial Monestir de Santes Creus** (Royal Monastery of the Holy Crosses; ☎ 977 63 83 29; Plaça de Jaume el Just s/n; adult/child €3.60/2.40, Tue free; 🚗 10am-1.30pm & 3-7pm Tue-Sun mid-Mar–mid-Sep, 10am-1.30pm & 3-5.30pm Tue-Sun mid-Sep–mid-Jan, 10am-1.30pm & 3-6pm Tue-Sun mid-Jan–mid-Mar). Cistercian monks moved in here in 1168 and from then on the monastery developed as a major centre of learning and a launch pad for the repopulation of the surrounding territory. Behind the Romanesque and Gothic façade lies a glorious 14th-century sandstone cloister, chapter house and royal apartments where the *comtes-reis* (count-kings; rulers of the joint state of Catalonia and Aragón) often stayed when they popped by during Holy Week. The church, begun in the 12th century, is a lofty Gothic structure in the French tradition.

Back on the AP-2, travel another 22km to the medieval town of Montblanc, still surrounded by its defensive walls, and then L'Espuga de Francolí, beyond which you continue 3km to the fortified **Reial Monestir de Santa Maria de Poblet** (Royal Monastery of Santa Maria in Poblet; ☎ 977 87 00 89; adult/student €4.20/2.40; 🚗 10am-12.45pm & 3-6pm Mon-Sat, 10am-12.30pm & 3-5.30pm Sun & holidays mid-Mar–mid-Oct, 10am-12.45pm & 3-5.30pm Mon-Sat, 10am-12.30pm & 3-5.30pm Sun & holidays mid-Oct–mid-Mar), the jewel in the crown of the Conca de Barberà and a Unesco World Heritage site. Founded by Cistercian monks from southern France in 1151, it became Catalonia's most powerful monastery (it is said to be the largest Cistercian monastery in the world) and the burial place of many of its rulers. A community of Cistercian monks moved back in after the Spanish Civil War and did much to restore the monastery to its former glory after decades of ruin. High points include the mostly Gothic main cloister and the alabaster sculptural treasures of the Panteón de los Reyes (Kings' Pantheon). The raised alabaster sarcophagi contain such greats as Jaume I (the conqueror of Mallorca and Valencia) and Pere III.

Swinging away north from Montblanc (take the C-14 and then branch west along the LP-2335), country roads guide you up through tough countryside into the low hills of the Serra del Tallat and towards yet another Cistercian complex, the **Reial Monestir de Santa Maria de Vallbona de les Monges** (Royal Monastery of St Mary of Vallbona of the Nuns; ☎ 973 33 02 66; adult/child €2.50/2; 🚗 10.30am-1.30pm & 4.30-6.45pm Tue-Sat, noon-1.30pm & 4.30-6.45pm Sun & holidays Mar-Oct, 10.30am-1.30pm & 4.30-6pm Tue-Sat, noon-1.30pm & 4.30-6pm Sun & holidays Nov-Feb). It was founded in the 12th century and is where around 20 nuns still live and pray. You will be taken on a guided tour, probably in Catalan, in which it will become clear that it has even today not yet fully recovered from civil war damage.

medieval vestiges testify to its two greatest epochs. The Romans established the city as Tarraco in the 2nd century BC, and in 27 BC Augustus elevated it to the capital of his new Tarraconensis province (stretching from Catalonia to Cantabria in the northwest and to Almería in the southeast). Abandoned when the Muslims arrived in AD 714, it was reborn as a Christian archbishopric in 1089.

The superb **Catedral** (☎ 97 723 86 85; Pla de la Seu; admission €3.50; 🚗 10am-1pm & 4-7pm Mon-Sat mid-Mar–May, 10am-7pm Mon-Sat Jun–mid-Oct, 10am-5pm Mon-Sat mid-Oct–mid-Nov, 10am-2pm Mon-Sat mid-Nov–mid-Mar) was built between 1171 and 1331 on the site of a Roman temple (probably dedicated to Caesar Augustus), combining Romanesque and Gothic features, as typified by the main façade on Pla de la Seu. The same combi-

nation continues inside in the grand cloister, with Gothic vaulting and Romanesque carved capitals. One of the latter depicts rats conducting what they imagine to be a cat's funeral, until the cat comes back to life! The rooms off the cloister house the **Museu Diocesà**, with an extensive collection ranging from Roman hairpins to some lovely 12th- to 14th-century polychrome woodcarvings of a breastfeeding Virgin. The interior of the cathedral, which is over 100m long, is Romanesque at the northeast end and Gothic at the southwest (a result of the prolonged construction period). The aisles are lined with 14th- to 19th-century chapels and hung with 16th- and 17th-century tapestries from Brussels. As a mark of reverence for St Thecla, Tarragona's patron saint, her arm is kept as a permanent and rather gruesome souvenir

in the Capella de Santa Tecla on the southeast side. All sorts of tall tales abound about St Thecla, who was apparently so impressed by St Paul's preaching on virginity that she called off her impending wedding to follow his advice (and then him). Paul's teaching and her example were not always popular, and she escaped several attempts to have her put to death, and wound up living as a hermit.

The so-called **Museu d'Història de Tarragona** (MHT, History Museum; [www.museutgn.com](http://www.museutgn.com); adult/concession each attraction €2.45/1.25, ticket to all MHT elements €9.25/4.60; 🚗 9am-9pm Mon-Sat, 9am-3pm Sun Easter-Sep, 9am-7pm Mon-Sat, 10am-3pm Sun & holidays Oct-Easter) is actually an ensemble of elements that includes four separate Roman sites (which together with Roman sites around the province constitute a Unesco World Heritage site) and a 14th-century noble mansion, the **Museu Casa Castellarnau**.

The **Castellarnau mansion** (☎ 977 24 22 20; Carrer dels Cavallers 14) is furnished in 19th-century fashion and sheds light on how the other half lived through the centuries. For the Roman stuff, start with the **Pretori i Circ Romans** (☎ 977 23 01 71; Plaça del Rei), which includes part of the vaults of the Roman circus, where chariots would thunder along in dangerous, and often deadly, races. The 300m-long circus stretched from here to beyond Plaça de la Font. Near the beach is the well-preserved **Amfiteatre Romà** (☎ 977 24 25 79; Plaça d'Arce Ochotorena), where gladiators hacked away at each other, or wild animals, to the death. In its arena are the remains of 6th- and 12th-century churches built to commemorate the martyrdom of the Christian bishop Fructuosus and two deacons, believed to have been burnt alive here in AD 259. There was certainly no lack of excitement in Roman Tarraco! East of Carrer de Lleida are remains of the **Fòrum Romà** (☎ 977 24 25 01; Carrer del Cardenal Cervantes), dominated by several imposing columns. The **Passeig Arqueològic** ([www.museutgn.com](http://www.museutgn.com)) is a peaceful walk around part of the perimeter of the old town between two lines of city walls; the inner ones are mainly Roman while the outer ones were put up by the British in the War of the Spanish Succession.

The **Museu Nacional Arqueològic de Tarragona** (☎ 977 23 62 09; [www.mnat.es](http://www.mnat.es); Plaça del Rei 5; adult/senior & child under 18yr/student €2.40/free/1.20; 🚗 9.30am-8.30pm Tue-Sat, 10am-2pm Sun & holidays Jun-Sep, 9.30am-1.30pm & 3.30-7pm Tue-Sat, 10am-2pm Sun & holidays Oct-May) gives further insight into Roman Tarraco, although

most explanatory material is in either Catalan or Spanish. Exhibits include part of the Roman city walls, frescoes, sculpture and pottery. A highlight is the large, almost complete **Mosaic de Peixos de la Pineda** (Fish Mosaic) which depicts local fish and sea creatures that many can only dream about in these times of overfishing. In the section on everyday arts you can admire ancient fertility aids including an outsized stone penis, symbol of the god Priapus.

The town beach, **Platja del Mirador**, is clean but crowded. **Platja Arrabassada**, 1km northeast across the headland, is better, and the aptly named **Platja Llarga** (Long Beach), beginning 2km further out, stretches for about 3km. Local buses 1 and 9 from the Balcó stop on Via Augusta go to Platja Arrabassada and Platja Llarga.

About 11.5km southwest of Tarragona is **Port Aventura**, a massive and popular Disney-style theme park.

## INFORMATION

**Guàrdia Urbana** (☎ 977 24 03 45; Av Prat de la Riba 37)

**Hospital Joan XXIII** (☎ 977 25 22 85; Carrer del Dr Mallafre Guasch 4)

**Tourist office** (☎ 977 25 07 95; [www.tarragonaturisme.es](http://www.tarragonaturisme.es); Carrer Major 39; 🚗 9am-9pm Mon-Sat, 10am-3pm Sun Jul-Sep, 10am-2pm & 4-7pm Mon-Sat, 10am-2pm Sun & holidays year-round)

## EATING

**Quim Quima** (☎ 977 25 21 21; Carrer de les Coques 1bis; meals €35; 🚗 lunch only Tue-Thu, lunch & dinner Fri & Sat) This

## TRANSPORT TARRAGONA

**Distance from Barcelona** 96km

**Direction** Southwest

**Travel time** One to 1½ hours

**Car** Take the C-32 toll road along the coast via Castelldefels or the AP-7 (if following Avinguda Diagonal west out of town).

**Train** At least 38 regional and long-distance trains per day run to/from Barcelona's Passeig de Gràcia via Sants. The cheapest fares (for Regional and Catalunya Express trains) cost €5.15 to €5.80 and the journey takes one to 1½ hours. Long-distance trains (such as Talgo, Arco and Euromed trains) are faster but more expensive – as much as €17.70 in tourist (standard) class.

rambling medieval mansion with a charming courtyard is a fine setting for anything from fondue to crepes.

**Aq** (☎ 977 21 59 54; Carrer de les Coques 7; meals €45-55; 🕒 Tue-Sat) This is a bubbly designer haunt with stark colour contrasts (black, lemon and cream linen), slick lines and intriguing plays on traditional cooking, such as *bacallà amb crema de pèsols i calçots* (cod with a cream of pea and spring onions).

## SLEEPING

**Hotel Lauria** (☎ 977 23 67 12; www.hlauria.es; Rambla Nova 20; s/d €46/64; 🚿 🚿) Pleasant enough rooms with parquet floors, with a good location and a modest pool and sun deck.

**Pensió Plaça de la Font** (☎ 977 24 61 34; www.hotelpdelafont.com; Plaça de la Font 26; s/d €55/70; 🚿) Reasonable pension with its own restaurant on a characterful, busy old town square.



# TRANSPORT

## AIR

After Madrid, Barcelona is Spain's busiest international transport hub. A host of airlines, including many budget airlines, fly directly to Barcelona from around Europe. One important exception is budget airline Ryanair, which uses Girona and Reus airports (buses link Barcelona to both).

Most intercontinental flights require passengers to change flights in either Madrid or another major European hub.

Iberia (and its Barcelona-based low-cost subsidiary Clickair), Air Europa, Spanair and Vueling all have dense networks across the country and, while flights can be costly, you can save considerable time by flying from Barcelona to Madrid and other major cities.

General sites that list competitive fares include:

**Cheap Tickets** ([www.cheaptickets.com](http://www.cheaptickets.com))

**ebookers** ([www.ebookers.com](http://www.ebookers.com))

**Expedia** ([www.expedia.com](http://www.expedia.com))

**Flightline.co.uk** ([www.flightline.co.uk](http://www.flightline.co.uk))

**Lastminute.com** ([www.lastminute.com](http://www.lastminute.com))

**Openjet** ([www.openjet.com](http://www.openjet.com))

**Opodo** ([www.opodo.com](http://www.opodo.com))

**Skyscanner** ([www.skyscanner.net](http://www.skyscanner.net))

**Travelocity.co.uk** ([www.travelocity.co.uk](http://www.travelocity.co.uk))

**TripAdvisor** ([www.tripadvisor.com](http://www.tripadvisor.com))

## Airlines

Most airlines have information desks at the airports they serve. The following airlines all fly to and from Barcelona.

**Air Berlin** (AB; ☎ 902 320737, in Germany 0180 573 78 00; [www.airberlin.com](http://www.airberlin.com))

**Air Europa** (UX; ☎ 902 401501; [www.aireuropa.com](http://www.aireuropa.com))

**Alpi Eagles** (E8; ☎ in Italy 899 500058)

**American Airlines** (AA; in the US 1 800 433 73 00; [www.aa.com](http://www.aa.com))

**British Airways** (BA; ☎ 902 111333, in the UK 0870 850 9850; [www.britishairways.com](http://www.britishairways.com))

**Clickair** (XG; ☎ 902 254252; [www.clickair.com](http://www.clickair.com))

**Continental** (CO; ☎ 900 961266, in the US 1 800 231 0856; [www.continental.com](http://www.continental.com))

## THINGS CHANGE...

The information in this chapter is particularly vulnerable to change. Check directly with the airline or a travel agent to make sure you understand how a fare (and ticket you may buy) works and be aware of the security requirements for international travel. Shop carefully. The details given in this chapter should be regarded as pointers and are not a substitute for your own careful, up-to-date research.

**Delta** (DL; ☎ 901 116946, in the US 800 221 1212; [www.delta.com](http://www.delta.com))

**EasyJet** (U2; ☎ 807 260026, in the UK 0905 821 0905; [www.easyjet.com](http://www.easyjet.com))

**FlyGlobeSpan** (Y2; ☎ in the UK 0871 271 04 15; [www.flyglobespan.com](http://www.flyglobespan.com))

**Germanwings** (4U; ☎ 91 625 97 04, in Germany 0900 191 91 00; [www.germanwings.com](http://www.germanwings.com))

**Iberia** (IB; ☎ 902 400500; [www.iberia.es](http://www.iberia.es))

**Jet2** (LS; ☎ 902 881269, in the UK 0871 226 1737; [www.jet2.com](http://www.jet2.com))

**Lufthansa** (LX; ☎ 902 220101, in Germany 0180 583 84 26; [www.lufthansa.com](http://www.lufthansa.com))

**Meridiana** (IG; ☎ in Italy 892928; [www.meridiana.it](http://www.meridiana.it))

**MyAir** (8I; ☎ in Italy 899 500060; [www.myair.com](http://www.myair.com))

**Ryanair** (FR; ☎ 807 220032, in the UK 0871 246 00 00, in Ireland 0818 303 030; [www.ryanair.com](http://www.ryanair.com))

**Singapore Airlines** (SQ; ☎ 902 012514; [www.singaporeair.com](http://www.singaporeair.com))

**Sky Europe** (NE; ☎ 807 001204, in Slovakia 02 3301 7301, in Hungary 06 1777 7000; [www.skyeurope.com](http://www.skyeurope.com))

**Spanair** (JK; ☎ 902 131415; [www.spanair.com](http://www.spanair.com))

**Sterling Airlines** (NB; ☎ 91 749 66 43, in Denmark 70 10 84 84; [www.sterling.dk](http://www.sterling.dk))

**Swiss** (LX; ☎ 901 116712, in Switzerland 0848 700 700; [www.swiss.com](http://www.swiss.com))

**Thomson Fly** (TOM; ☎ in the UK 0871 231 46 91; [www.thomsonfly.com](http://www.thomsonfly.com))

**Transavia** (HV; ☎ 807 075022, in the Netherlands 0900 0737; [www.transavia.com](http://www.transavia.com))

**US Airways** (US; ☎ 901 117073, in the US 800 428 4322; [www.usairways.com](http://www.usairways.com))

**Vueling** (VY; ☎ 902 333933; [www.vueling.com](http://www.vueling.com))

**Windjet** (IV; ☎ 900 996933; [w2.volawindjet.it](http://w2.volawindjet.it))

## CLIMATE CHANGE & TRAVEL

Climate change is a serious threat to the ecosystems that humans rely upon, and air travel is the fastest-growing contributor to the problem. Lonely Planet regards travel, overall, as a global benefit, but believes we all have a responsibility to limit our personal impact on global warming.

### Flying & Climate Change

Pretty much every form of motor transport generates CO<sub>2</sub> (the main cause of human-induced climate change) but planes are far and away the worst offenders, not just because of the sheer distances they allow us to travel, but because they release greenhouse gases high into the atmosphere. The statistics are frightening: two people taking a return flight between Europe and the US will contribute as much to climate change as an average household's gas and electricity consumption over a whole year.

### Carbon Offset Schemes

Climatecare.org and other websites use 'carbon calculators' that allow travellers to offset the greenhouse gases they are responsible for with contributions to energy-saving projects and other climate-friendly initiatives in the developing world – including projects in India, Honduras, Kazakhstan and Uganda.

Lonely Planet, together with Rough Guides and other concerned partners in the travel industry, supports the carbon offset scheme run by climatecare.org. Lonely Planet offsets all of its staff and author travel.

For more information check out our website: [www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com).

## Airports

Barcelona's **El Prat airport** (☎ 902 404704; [www.aena.es](http://www.aena.es)) lies 12km southwest of the city at El Prat de Llobregat. The main airport building contains three terminals. Terminal A handles the bulk of international arrivals and departures by non-Spanish airlines. Terminal B handles international and domestic flights by Spanish airlines and a handful of other European airlines. Terminal C is largely for the Pont Aeri (Puente Aereo), the Barcelona–Madrid shuttle. A new south terminal, designed by local architect Ricardo Bofill, should be operational by late 2008. Since none of the planned rail links will be in place for years, the new terminal will be linked to the existing terminal building by bus.

In the main building, the arrivals halls are on the ground floor; departures are on the 1st floor. The **tourist office** (🕒 9am–9pm) is on the ground floor of Terminal B. A smaller office on the ground floor of Terminal A operates the same hours. Lockers (which come in three sizes) can be found at the car park entrance opposite Terminal B. You pay €3.70/4.20/4.80 for 24 hours. There are plans to install special lockers for skis, snowboards and other bulky items. Each terminal has a lost-luggage office on the arrivals floor.

**Girona-Costa Brava airport** (☎ 902 404704; [www.aena.es](http://www.aena.es)) is 12km south of Girona and about 80km north of Barcelona. You'll find a **tourist office** (☎ 972 18 67 08; 🕒 8am–8pm), ATM and lost-luggage desks. **Reus airport** (☎ 902 404704;

[www.aena.es](http://www.aena.es)) is 13km west of Tarragona and 108km southwest of Barcelona.

## BICYCLE

Bike lanes have been laid out along quite a few main roads (including Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes, Avinguda Diagonal, Carrer d'Aragó, Avinguda de la Meridiana and Carrer de la Marina) and a growing, if ad hoc, network of secondary streets, so it is possible to get around on two environmentally friendly wheels. A waterfront path runs northeast from Port Olímpic towards Riu Besòs. Scenic itineraries are mapped for cyclists in the Collserola parkland, and the *ronda verde*, a 72km cycling path that extends right around the city's outskirts, is about 60% complete.

City laws make it illegal for cyclists to use bus lanes and footpaths, meaning that, where bike lanes are not present, the cyclist is condemned to a fair amount of traffic-dodging. Barcelona has a long way to go before becoming a seriously bike-friendly town.

You can transport your bicycle on the Metro on weekdays (except between 6.30am and 9.30am or 4.30pm and 8.30pm). On weekends and holidays, and during July and August, there are no restrictions. You can use FGC trains to carry your bike at any time and Renfe's *rodalies* trains from 10am to 3pm on weekdays and all day on weekends and holidays.

**Bicing** ([www.bicing.com](http://www.bicing.com), in Catalan/Spanish) is a resident-only public bicycle system. Folks pay

## GETTING INTO TOWN

### Barcelona El Prat Airport

Transport from Barcelona's El Prat airport is proving increasingly inadequate to meet the growing flow of passengers.

The **A1 Aerobús** (☎ 93 415 60 20) runs from the airport to Plaça de Catalunya (Map pp108–9; €4.05, 30 to 40 minutes depending on traffic) via Plaça d'Espanya (Map pp140–1), Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes (Map pp102–3) and Plaça de la Universitat (Map pp108–9) every six to 15 minutes (depending on the time of day) from 6am to 1am. Departures from Plaça de Catalunya are from 5.30am to 12.15am and go via Plaça d'Espanya. Buy tickets on the bus or from machines at the airport (if they are working!). Considerably slower local buses (such as the No 46 to/from Plaça d'Espanya and a night bus, the N17, to/from Plaça de Catalunya) also operate.

Train operator Renfe ([www.renfe.es](http://www.renfe.es)) runs the C10 line every half hour between the airport (from 6am to 10.29pm) and Estació de França (Map pp84–5) in Barcelona (handy for La Barceloneta and El Born). It stops at Estació Sants (the main train station) and Passeig de Gràcia along the way. The first service leaves from Estació de França at 5.20am and the last at 10.42pm. When all works well, the full trip takes about 35 minutes. A one-way ticket costs €2.60 (unless you have a multi-ride ticket for Barcelona public transport – see p269).

A tunnel to extend this rail line to the new south terminal has been mooted, and one day (no-one is game to predict when), a new Metro line (line 9) will connect the city with the airport (it was originally planned for 2004). Line 1 will also be extended to the airport. In theory, the high-speed AVE Barcelona–Madrid train line should also have a branch line to the airport.

A taxi to/from the city centre – about a half-hour ride depending on traffic – costs €18 to €22. Occasionally, unscrupulous drivers overcharge, so keep an eye on the meter; fares and charges are posted inside the passenger side of the taxi. For those with their own wheels, parking is available at each terminal (€1.60 an hour to a maximum of €17.45 a day). Expensive **guarded parking** ([www.parkingvipbarcelona.com](http://www.parkingvipbarcelona.com), in Catalan/Spanish; €70 for the first 2 days) is also available.

**Mon-Bus** (☎ 93 893 70 60) has regular direct buses from the airport to Sitges (€2.85; p255). In Sitges you can catch it at Passeig de Vilafranca near the taxi stand. The trip takes about 35 minutes and runs hourly.

**Alsa** (☎ 902 422242; [www2.alsa.es](http://www2.alsa.es)) runs the Aerobús Ràpid bus service several times daily from Barcelona airport to various cities including Girona, Figueres, Lleida, Reus, Port Aventura and Tarragona. Fares range from €12.40/22.30 one-way/return to Tarragona up to €25/45 one-way/return to Lleida.

### Girona-Costa Brava Airport

**Sagalés** (☎ 902 130014; [www.sagales.com](http://www.sagales.com)) runs hourly bus services from Girona-Costa Brava airport to Girona's main bus/train station (€2.05, 25 minutes) in connection with flights. The same company runs direct Barcelona Bus services to/from Estació del Nord bus station (Map pp102–3) in Barcelona (one way/return €12/21, 70 minutes). Regular trains run between Girona and Barcelona (€5.90 to €6.70, up to 1½ hours).

A taxi into Girona from the airport costs €15 to €18. To Barcelona you will pay around €120 to €130. Parking costs an average €0.95 an hour or €8.65 a day.

For greater flexibility at greater cost, check out **Resorthoppa.com** ([www.resorthoppa.com](http://www.resorthoppa.com)). They put on minibuses to destinations around the region, including Barcelona.

### Reus Airport

Buses run between Reus airport and Barcelona (Estació d'Autobusos de Sants; Map pp140–1) to meet flights (€11/18 one-way/return, 1½ hours). Other buses serve Reus (€3, 10 minutes) and local coastal destinations. Check Ryanair's website ([www.ryanair.com](http://www.ryanair.com)) for the latest timetables. There is limited free parking from 8am to 11pm.

an annual fee and ride these red and white bikes from one stop (scattered all over town, including near many Metro stations) to another – effectively an alternative system of public transport.

## Hire

A growing array of companies have bicycles for hire. They include:

**BarcelonaBiking.com** (Map pp64–5; ☎ 656 356300; [www.barcelonabiking.com](http://www.barcelonabiking.com); Baixada de Sant Miquel 6) City and mountain bikes.

**Barnabike** (Map p93; ☎ 93 269 02 04; [www.barnabike.com](http://www.barnabike.com); Carrer del Pas de Sota la Muralla 3; per hr/24 hrs €4/18; 🕒 10am–9.30pm) rents out an assortment of bikes (including kick bikes) and karts, Trikkes (odd three-wheel contraptions), electric bikes and bikes for kids.

**BEB** (Map pp108–9; ☎ 93 451 15 53; www.beb.com.es; Carrer d'Enric Granados 61; rental per day €20; 🚲 9am–9pm) offers more relaxed cyclists the option of renting motorised bikes. You are provided with bike, battery and charger. Discounts are available for longer periods. Bookings must be made a day in advance.

**Biciclot** (Map p93; ☎ 93 221 97 78; www.biciclot.net; Passeig Marítim 33; per hr/day €5.50/€18; 🚲 10am–3pm & 4–8pm Apr–Sep, 4–6pm Oct–Nov, 10am–3pm Sat & Sun & holidays Dec–Mar; 📍 Ciutadella Vila Olímpica) Handy seaside location.

**Ciclo Bus Barcelona** (Maps pp108–9, p93 & pp64–5; ☎ 93 285 38 32; per hr/half-day/full day/two days/week €4.50/11/15/21/56) Barcelona Town Hall lays on this bicycle hire service in three locations: Plaça de Catalunya (Easter to October only), Passeig de Joan de Borbó (Easter–Oct only) and Plaça del Portal de la Pau (Monument a Colom). You can also buy a card for 10 hours (€15), to be used when you want.

**ClassicBikes** (Map pp76–7; ☎ 93 317 19 70; www.barcelonarentbikes.com; Carrer dels Tallers 45; per hr/day €6/15; 🚲 9.30am–3.30pm & 4–8pm) You can book a bike online, and they have foldable bikes.

**Un Cotxe Menys** (Map pp84–5; ☎ 93 268 21 05; www.bicicletabarcelona.com; Carrer de l'Esparteria 3; per hr/half-day/full day/week €5/11/15/70; 🚲 10am–2pm & 4–6pm Mon–Fri; 📍 Jaume I) This business also organises bike tours.

## BOAT

### Balearic Islands

Passenger and vehicular ferries operated by **Acciona Trasmediterránea** (Map p93; ☎ 902 454645; www.trasmediterranea.es; 📍 Drassanes) to/from the Balearic Islands, dock around the Moll de Barcelona wharf in Port Vell. Information and tickets are available at the terminal buildings along Moll de San Beltran (Map p93) along Moll de Barcelona (Map p93) or from travel agents. Standard fares for a 'Butaca Turista' (seat) from Barcelona to any of the islands are €46.50 on standard ferries or €75 on high-speed catamaran ferries. Cabins for up to four people are also available on overnight standard ferries.

Another company with links between Barcelona and the Balearic Islands is **Baleària** (☎ 902 160180; www.balearia.net).

## Italy

**Grandi Navi Veloci** (Map p93; ☎ 902 410200, 93 443 98, in Italy 010 209 4591; www1.gnv.it; Moll de San Beltran; 📍 Drassanes) runs daily high-speed, luxury

ferries between Genoa and Barcelona. The journey takes 18 hours. Ticket prices depend on season and how far in advance you purchase. An economy-class airline-style seat can cost as little as €16 in winter, while a single cabin suite in high season can cost €199. The same company runs weekly (year-round) ferries between Barcelona and Tangiers, in Morocco, too. **Grimaldi Ferries** (☎ 902 531333, in Italy 081 496444; www.grimaldi-ferries.com) operates similar services from Barcelona to Civitavecchia (near Rome, 20 hours) and Livorno (Tuscany, 19½ hours) up to six days a week. An economy-class airline-style seat costs from €29 in low season to €72 in high season on both routes.

## BUS

### Barcelona

**Transports Metropolitans de Barcelona** (TMB; ☎ 010; www.tmb.net) buses run along most city routes every few minutes from 5am or 6am to 10pm or 11pm. Many routes pass through Plaça de Catalunya and/or Plaça de la Universitat. After 11pm a reduced network of yellow *nitbusos* (night buses) runs until 3am or 5am. All *nitbus* routes pass through Plaça de Catalunya and most run every 30 to 45 minutes.

### BUS TURÍSTIC

This hop-on hop-off service, run by TMB, operates from Plaça de Catalunya (Map pp108–9) and Plaça de la Porta de la Pau (Map pp64–5), and covers three circuits (44 stops) linking virtually all the city's main sights. Tickets are available online (www.tmb.net) and on the buses, and cost €19 (€11 for children from four to 12 years) for one day of unlimited rides, or €23 (€15 for children) for two consecutive days. Buses run from 9am to 8pm and the frequency varies from every five to 25 minutes. Buses do not operate on Christmas Day or New Year's Day.

The two key routes take about two hours; the blue route covers the south of the city (including the old town, Montjuïc and the waterfront) and the red route goes further north (taking in La Sagrada Família, Park Güell, Pedralbes and Camp Nou). The third (green route), from Port Olímpic to the Fòrum, runs from mid-March to September and takes half an hour.

## Catalonia

Much of the Pyrenees and the entire Costa Brava are served only by buses, as train services are limited to important railheads such as

Girona, Figueres, Lleida, Ripoll and Puigcerdà. Various bus companies operate across the region. All of the following operate from **Estació del Nord** (Map pp102–3; ☎ 902 303222; www.barcelona.nord.com; Carrer d'Ali Bei 80; 📍 Arc de Triomf), except Hispano-Igualadina and TEISA:

**Alsina Graells** (☎ 902 422242; www2.alsa.es) Part of the Continental-Auto group, it runs buses from Barcelona to destinations west and northwest, such as Vielha, La Seu d'Urgell and Lleida.

**Barcelona Bus** (☎ 902 130014; www.sagales.com, in Catalan & Spanish) Runs buses from Barcelona to Girona (and Girona-Costa Brava airport), Figueres, parts of the Costa Brava and northwest Catalonia.

**Hispano-Igualadina** (Map pp122–3; ☎ 902 447726; www.igualadina.net; Estació Sants & Plaça de la Reina Maria Cristina) Serves central Catalonia.

**SARFA** (☎ 902 302025; www.sarfa.com) The main operator on and around the Costa Brava.

**TEISA** (Map pp108–9; ☎ 972 20 48 68; www.teisa-bus.com; Carrer de Pau Claris 117; 📍 Passeig de Gràcia) Covers a large part of the eastern Catalan Pyrenees from Girona and Figueres. From Barcelona buses head for Camprodon via Ripoll and Olot via Besalú.

## Long-Distance

Long-distance buses leave from Estació del Nord (above). A plethora of companies operates to different parts of Spain, although many come under the umbrella of **Alsa-Enatcar** (☎ 902 422242; www.alsa.es). For other companies, ask at the bus station. There are frequent services to Madrid, Valencia and Zaragoza (up to 20 a day) and several daily departures to distant destinations such as Burgos, Santiago de Compostela and Seville.

**Eurolines** (www.eurolines.com), in conjunction with local carriers all over Europe, is the main international carrier. Its website provides links to national operators; it runs services across Europe and to Morocco from Estació del Nord, and **Estació d'Autobusos de Sants** (Map pp140–1; Carrer de Viriat; 📍 Sants Estació), next to Estació Sants Barcelona. For information and tickets in Barcelona, contact Alsa-Enatcar. Another carrier is **Linebus** (www.linebus.com, in Spanish).

## CAR & MOTORCYCLE

### Driving

An effective one-way system makes busy city traffic flow fairly smoothly. Driving in the Ciutat Vella area is largely illegal and frustrat-

ing where permitted. Note that, as of 2008, a speed limit of 80km/h is in force in Barcelona and 16 neighbouring municipalities.

The AP-7 *autopista* (motorway) is the main toll road from France (via Girona and Figueres). It skirts inland around the city before proceeding south to Valencia and Alicante. About 40km southwest of Barcelona, the AP-2, also a toll road, branches west off the AP-7 towards Zaragoza. From there it links up with the A-2 dual carriageway for Madrid (no tolls). Several other shorter tollways fan out into the Catalan heartland from Barcelona.

As a rule, alternative toll-free routes are busy (if not clogged). The A-2 is the most important. From the French border it follows the AP-7, branches off to the coast and then drops into Barcelona, from where it heads west to Lleida and beyond.

Barcelona is 1930km from Berlin, 1555km from London, 1145km from Paris, 1300km from Lisbon, 1200km from Milan, 780km from Geneva and 690km from Madrid.

Coming from the UK you can put your car on a ferry from Portsmouth to Bilbao with **P&O Ferries** (☎ in the UK 0871 664 5645; www.poferries.com) or from Plymouth to Santander with **Brittany Ferries** (☎ in the UK 0870 907 6103; www.brittany-ferries.co.uk). From either destination there is still a fair drive to Barcelona. Another option is to take a ferry to France or the Channel Tunnel car train, **Eurotunnel** (☎ in the UK 0870 535 3535; www.eurotunnel.com). The latter runs round the clock, with up to four crossings an hour (35 minutes) between Folkestone and Calais during high season.

Vehicles must be roadworthy, registered and have third-party insurance. Ask your insurer for a European Accident Statement form, which can simplify matters in the event of an accident. A European breakdown assistance policy is a good investment. EU national driver's licences are accepted, while other nationalities require an international driver's licence.

## Hire

Avis, Europcar, National/Atesa and Hertz have desks at El Prat airport, Estació Sants and Estació del Nord. Rental outlets in Barcelona include:

**Avis** (Map pp108–9; ☎ 902 248824, 93 237 56 80; www.avis.com; Carrer de Còrsega 293–295; 📍 Diagonal)

**Cooltra** (Map p93; ☎ 93 221 40 70; www.cooltra.com; Passeig de Joan de Borbó 80–84) You can rent scooters here for around €20 a day, or as little as €90



a month in low season, plus add insurance. They also organise scooter tours.

**Europcar** (Map pp108–9; ☎ 93 302 05 43; www.europcar.com; Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes 680; 📍 Girona)

**Hertz** (Map pp140–1; ☎ 93 419 61 56; www.hertz.com; Carrer del Viriat 45; 📍 Sants)

**MotoLoco** (Map p93; ☎ 93 221 34 52; www.motoloco.es; Passeig de Joan de Borbó 80-84) A similar deal on scooter rental, and virtually next door, to Cooltra.

**National/Atesa** (Map pp108–9; ☎ 902 100101, 93 323 07 01; www.atesa.es; Carrer de Muntaner 45; 📍 Universitat)

**Pepecar** (Map pp108–9; ☎ 807 414243; www.pepecar.com; Plaça de Catalunya; 📍 Catalunya) Specialises in cheap rentals with a mix of cars (the Smart cars for two people are the cheapest). They have four branches, including one near Sants train station at Carrer de Béjar 68 (Map pp140–1), and another near the airport at the Hotel Tryp Barcelona Aeroport. Note that the phone number is expensive to call and customers are encouraged to book on the website.

**Vanguard** (Map pp102–3; ☎ 93 439 38 80; www.vanguardrent.com; Carrer de Viladomat 297; 📍 Entença) For motorbikes.

## Parking

Parking in the Ciutat Vella is virtually only for residents, with some metered parking available. The narrow streets of Gràcia are not much better. The broad boulevards of l'Eixample are divided into blue and green zones, which, for visitors, means the same thing: limited meter parking. Fees vary but tend to hover around €2.35 to €2.85 per hour. Many car parks charge similar rates.

Anything marked in yellow usually means you are permitted to stop for up to 30 minutes for *càrrega* (loading) and *descàrrega* (unloading) only. Most of these zones operate from 8am to 2pm and 4pm to 8pm Monday to Saturday.

Note that many car parks will not accept camper vans – it can be a real problem parking one of these in central Barcelona.

Parking motorbikes and scooters is easier. On occasion you'll see spaces marked out especially for bikes. Parking on the pavements is illegal, but many do it.

If you get towed, call the **Dipòsit Municipal** (car pound; ☎ 901 513151). Depending on where your car was nabbed, you will be directed to one of several pounds around town. You will pay €147 for the tow and €1.90 per hour (maxi-

mum of €19 per day). The first four hours your car is held are free.

## METRO & FGC

The easy-to-use **TMB Metro** (☎ 010; www.tmb.net) system has six numbered and colour-coded lines. It runs from 5am to midnight Sunday to Thursday, from 5am to 2am on Friday, and from 5am to 5am on Saturday and days immediately preceding main holidays. Line 2 has access for people with disabilities and a handful of stations on other lines also have lifts. Line 11, a short suburban run, is automated, and in the future the other lines will also run without the need of a driver. See pull-out map for a map of the Metro system.

Suburban trains run by the **Ferrocarrils de la Generalitat de Catalunya** (FGC; ☎ 93 205 15 15; www.fgc.net) include a couple of useful city lines. All lines heading north from Plaça de Catalunya stop at Carrer de Provença and Gràcia. One of these lines (L7) goes to Tibidabo and another (L6 to Reina Elisenda) has a stop within spitting distance of the Monestir de Pedralbes. Most trains from Plaça de Catalunya continue beyond Barcelona to Sant Cugat, Sabadell and Terrassa. Other FGC lines head west from Plaça d'Espanya, including one for Manresa that is handy for the trip to Montserrat.

Depending on the line, these trains run from about 5am (with only one or two services before 6am) to 11pm or midnight Sunday to Thursday, and from 5am to about 1am on Friday and Saturday.

## TAXI

Taxis charge €1.75 flagfall (€1.85 from 9pm to 7am weekdays and all day Saturday, Sunday and holidays) plus meter charges of €0.78 per kilometre (€1 at night and on weekends). A further €3 is added for all trips to/from the airport, and €0.90 for luggage bigger than 55cm x 35cm x 35cm. The trip from Estació Sants to Plaça de Catalunya, about 3km, costs about €8 to €10. You can call a **taxi** (☎ 93 225 00 00, 93 300 11 00, 93 303 30 33, 93 322 22 22, 704 101112) or flag them down in the streets. The call-out charge is €3.09 (€3.86 at night and on weekends). In many taxis it is possible to pay with credit card and, if you have a local telephone number, you can join the T033 Ràdio taxi service for booking taxis online (www.radiotaxi033.com, in Spanish). You can also book online at www.catalunyataxi.com. General information is available on ☎ 010.

## TICKETS & TARGETES

The Metro, FGC trains, *rodalies/cercanías* (Renfe-run local trains) and buses come under one zoned-fare regime. Single-ride tickets on all standard transport within Zone 1 (which extends beyond the airport), except on Renfe trains, cost €1.30.

*Targetes* are multiride transport tickets. They are sold at most city-centre Metro stations. The prices given here are for travel in Zone 1. Children under four years of age travel free. Options include:

Monthly transport pass (€46.25) – unlimited use of all public transport.

Targeta T-10 (€7.20) – 10 rides (each valid for 1¼ hours) on the Metro, buses, FGC trains and *rodalies*. You can change between Metro, FGC, *rodalies* and buses.

Targeta T-50/30 (€29.80) – 50 trips within 30 days, valid on all transport.

Targeta T-DIA (€5.50) – unlimited travel on all transport for one day.

Two-/three-/four-/five-day tickets (€10/14.30/18.30/21.70) – unlimited travel on all transport except the A1 Aerobús; buy them at Metro stations and tourist offices.

## Fines

The fine for being caught without a ticket on public transport is €40 (a minimum that theoretically can be raised to €6000!), in addition to the price of the ticket. If you pay on the spot you get 50% off the fine. There's also a minimum €30.05 fine for smoking on the Metro.

**Fono Taxi** (☎ 93 300 11 00) is one of several taxi companies with taxis adapted for those with disabilities. **Taxi Amic** (☎ 93 420 80 88; www.terra.es/personal/taxiamic, in Spanish) is a special taxi service for people with disabilities or difficult situations (such as transport of big objects). Book at least 24 hours in advance if possible.

## Trixis

These three-wheeled **cyde taxis** (☎ 93 310 13 79; www.trixi.info; Plaça dels Traginers 4) operate along the waterfront (11am to 8pm daily) between March and November). They can take two passengers and cost €10/18 per half-hour/hour. Children aged three to 12 pay half-price. You can find them near the Monument a Colom and in front of La Catedral.

## TRAIN

Train is the most convenient overland option for reaching Barcelona from major Spanish centres like Madrid and Valencia. It can be a long haul from other parts of Europe, where budget flights frequently offer a saving in time and money. For information on travelling from the UK, contact the **Rail Europe Travel Centre** (☎ in the UK 0844 848 4064; www.raileurope.co.uk; 1 Regent St, London SW1). For travel within Spain, information is available at train stations or travel agents. A network of *rodalies/cercanías* serves towns around Barcelona (and the airport). Contact **Renfe** (☎ 902 240202; www.renfe.es) for information on these services.

The high-speed Tren de Alta Velocidad Española (AVE) between Madrid and Barcelona began operating in 2008 (four years late!). Seventeen trains per day run in each direction, seven of them non-stop (two hours, 40 minutes). One-way prices range from around €40 (on the condition that they are purchased online at least 15 days before travel) to €163 (for an open ticket valid for a year). The line will eventually (perhaps by 2012) extend to Perpignan, in southern France, to connect with the French high-speed TGV network.

Another high-speed AVE train, known as Euromed, runs on standard, wide-gauge Spanish tracks, and connects Barcelona with Valencia and Alicante.

Most long-distance (*largo recorrido* or *Grandes Líneas*) trains have 1st and 2nd classes (known as *preferente* and *turista*). After the AVE, Euromed and several other similarly modern trains, the most common long-distance trains are the Tren Articulado Ligerio Goicoechea Oriol (Talgos). They are cheaper, slower and tend to stop at all stations en route.

A *trenhotel* is a sleeping-car train with up to three classes: *turista* (for those sitting or in a couchette), *preferente* (sleeping car) and *gran clase* (for those who prefer to sleep in sheer luxury!).

The main international and domestic train station in Barcelona is **Estació Sants** (Map pp140–1; Plaça dels Països Catalans; 📍 Sants Estació), located 2.5km west of La Rambla. Direct overnight

trains from Paris, Geneva, Lisbon and Milan arrive here, as do services from a number of other cities across Spain and France.

Estació Sants is equipped with a tourist office, a telephone and fax office, currency exchange booths open between 8am and 10pm, ATMs and a **consigna** (left-luggage lockers; small/big locker for 24hr €3/4.50; 🕒 5.30am-11pm).

A second train station is being constructed at the other end of the city in La Sagrera.

## TRAM

**TMB** (📞 902 193275; [www.trambcn.com](http://www.trambcn.com)) runs three tram lines (T1, T2 and T3) into the suburbs of greater Barcelona from Plaça de Francesc Macià and are of limited interest to visitors. The T4 line runs from behind the zoo (near the Ciutadella Vila Olímpica Metro stop) to Sant Adrià via Glòries and the Fòrum. The T5 line runs from Glòries to Badalona. All standard transport passes are valid.

## BUSINESS HOURS

Generally Barcelonins work Monday to Friday from 8am or 9am to 2pm and then again from 4.30pm or 5pm for another three hours. In the hot summer months, many work an *horario intensivo* (intensive timetable), from around 7am to 3pm.

Banks tend to open between 8.30am and 2pm Monday to Friday. Some also open from around 4pm to 7pm on Thursday evenings and/or Saturday mornings from around 9am to 1pm. See Post, p277, for post office opening times.

Museum and art gallery opening hours vary considerably but as a rule of thumb most places are open between 10am and 6pm (some shut for lunch from around 2pm to 4pm). Most museums and galleries close all day Monday and at 2pm Sunday. For shop opening hours, see p152.

## CHILDREN

One of the great things about Barcelona is the inclusion of children in many seemingly adult activities. Going out to eat or sipping a beer at a *terrazza* (terrace) on a late summer evening needn't mean leaving children with minders. Locals take their kids out all the time and don't worry too much about keeping them up late.

The daytime spectacle of La Rambla (p61) fascinates kids as much as adults. And while the latter might like to sneak a look at the Museu de l'Eròtica, kids will happily lose themselves in the Museu de Cera (wax museum; p72) further down the boulevard. Nearby, head to the top of the Monument a Colom (p71) for the views or to the Golondrinas harbour tour by boat (p277). The shark tunnel and children's activities at L'Aquàrium (p92) are guaranteed success. You might also score points with the nearby 3-D Imax cinema.

The Transbordador Aeri (p94), across the harbour between La Barceloneta and Montjuïc, is another irresistible attraction; and to the north of town the Tramvia Blau, the blue tram that runs to the Tibidabo funicular station (see p134) may also raise a smile. While on Tibidabo, scare the willies out of your youngsters in the Hotel Kruger horror house at the Parc d'Atraccions amusement park (p134).

Of the city's museums, the ones most likely to capture children's imagination are the Museu Marítim (p78), the Museu de la Xocolata (p89) and the interactive CosmoCaixa (p121).

In summer, you will be rewarded with squeals of delight if you take the kids to one of the city's pools (p224) or the beach (p96). In cooler weather parks can be a good choice. A roam around Montjuïc, including exploration of its Castell (p143), should appeal. The sheer weirdness of Gaudí's Park Güell (p117) will have older children intrigued, and everyone likes getting lost in the maze of the Jardins del Laberint d'Horta (p135). The Zoo de Barcelona (p88) is a universal child-pleaser.

You could take younger kiddies (maximum age 11) along to Happy Parc (Map pp108–9; ☎ 93 317 86 60; www.happyparc.com in Catalan/Spanish; Carrer de Pau Claris 97; per hr €4; ☎ 5–9pm Mon–Fri, 11am–9pm Sat & Sun) for a play on the slides and other diversions.

For general advice on travelling with children, grab a copy of Lonely Planet's *Travel with Children*.

## Baby-sitting

Most of the mid- and upper-range hotels in Barcelona can organise a baby-sitting service. A company that many hotels use and that you can also contact directly is 5 Serveis (☎ 93 412 56 76; Carrer de Pelai 50). They have multilingual *cangueros* (baby-sitters). Rates vary, but in the evening expect to pay around €10 an hour plus the cost of a taxi home for the baby-sitter.

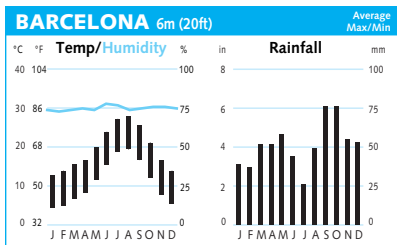
Tender Loving Cangueros (☎ 647 605989; www.tlcangueros.com) offers English-speaking baby-sitters for a minimum of three hours (per hour €7).

## CLIMATE

Barcelona enjoys a Mediterranean climate, with cool winters and hot summers. July and August are the most torrid months, when highs can reach 37°C. The seaside location promotes humidity, but sea breezes can bring relief. A hotel room with a fan or air conditioning can make all the difference to a good night's sleep.

In the depths of winter, especially in February, it gets cold enough (average lows of 6.7°C) for you to wish you had heating in your room,





but by March things begin to thaw out. January tends to be sunny, though not warm.

Rainfall is highest in autumn and winter. During September and into October the city often gets a wash down in cracking thunderstorms.

As Barcelona is downwind from the Pyrenees, cold snaps are always on the cards and the April–May period is particularly changeable. At its best May can be the most pleasant month of the year – clear and fresh.

## COURSES

### Language Courses

With its bilingual mix Barcelona may not be the ideal location for embarking on Spanish (Castilian) courses, but there is no shortage of places to do so. The cost of language courses depends on the school, the length of the course and its intensity. Across Catalonia, more than 220 schools teach Catalan. Pick up a list at the [Llibreria & Informació Cultural de la Generalitat de Catalunya](#) (Map pp64–5; ☎ 93 302 64 62; Rambla dels Estudis 118; 📍 Liceu).

Non-EU citizens who want to study at a university or language school in Spain should have a study visa. This type of visa is renewable within Spain but only with confirmation of ongoing enrolment and proof that you are able to support yourself.

Some schools worth investigating follow:

**Babylon Idiomas** (Map pp102–3; ☎ 93 488 15 85; www.babylon-idiomas.com; Carrer del Bruc 65; 📍 Girona) This small school offers a high degree of flexibility – you can study for a week or enlist for a half-year intensive course in Spanish. The big selling point is class size, with a maximum of eight students per class. A week of tuition (30 hours) costs €267.50.

**Escola Oficial d'Idiomes de Barcelona** (Map pp76–7; ☎ 93 324 93 30; www.eoibd.es; Avinguda de les Drassanes s/n; 📍 Drassanes) Part-time courses (around 10 hours a week) in Spanish and Catalan (per semester €175) are offered. Because of the demand for Spanish, there is no guarantee of a place.

**International House** (Map pp84–5; ☎ 93 268 45 11; www.ihes.com/bcn; Carrer de Trafalgar 14; 📍 Arc de Triomf) Intensive courses from €390 for two weeks. It can also organise accommodation.

**Universitat de Barcelona** (Map pp108–9; ☎ 93 403 54 78 for Catalan, 93 403 55 19 for Spanish; www.ub.edu/slc for Catalan, www.eh.ub.es for Spanish; Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes 585; 📍 Universitat) Intensive courses (40 hours tuition over periods ranging from two weeks to a month €413) in Spanish year-round. Longer Spanish and Catalan courses are also available.

### Other Courses

**Alicianet** (Map pp102–3; ☎ 93 310 38 78; www.alicianet.net; Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes 432; 📍 Rocafort) Offers various levels of flamenco class. Single classes cost €15, or you can enrol in courses (up to 20 hours a week). One-on-one classes cost €50.

**Antilla BCN Escuela de Baile** (Map pp108–9; ☎ 93 451 45 64 or 610 900558; www.antillasalsa.com; Carrer d'Aragó 141; 10 1-hr classes once a week €110; 📍 Urgell) The place to learn salsa and other Caribbean dance.

**Cook & Taste** (Map pp64–5; ☎ 93 302 13 20; www.cookandtaste.net; La Rambla 58; half-day workshop €60; 📍 Liceu) Learn to whip up a paella or stir a gazpacho in this Spanish cookery school.

**Dom's Gastronom Cookery School** (☎ 93 674 51 60; Passeig del Roser 43, Valldoreix; 8 hours of classes over 4 days €100) Cordon bleu–trained chef Dominique Heathcoate holds cookery classes in anything from Catalan, Spanish and French cuisine to tapas and autumn mushroom cooking. Valldoreix is about a 30-minute train ride from Plaça de Catalunya on the line to Sabadell and Terrassa, and Dominique can arrange pick-up from the train station. Groups are catered for.

**Escuela de Baile José de la Vega** (Map pp108–9; ☎ 93 454 31 14; Carrer d'Aribau 19; 📍 Oct-Jun; per month €55; 📍 Universitat) People come from all over town to learn to dance flamenco at this school, which offers classes twice a week.

**Venta Flamenco** (Map pp76–7; ☎ 670 437577; www.flamencobarcelona.com; Carrer del Marquès de Barberà 6; 📍 Liceu) This modest flamenco store organises classes in flamenco dancing, singing and music.

### CUSTOMS

People entering Spain from outside the EU are allowed to bring one bottle of spirits, one bottle of wine, 50mL of perfume and 200 cigarettes into Spain duty free. There are no duty-free allowances for travel between EU countries. For duty-paid items bought at normal shops in one EU country and taken into

another, the allowances are 90L of wine, 10L of spirits, unlimited quantities of perfume and 800 cigarettes.

## DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

It cannot be stressed enough that newcomers to Barcelona must be on their guard. Petty theft is a problem in the city centre, on public transport and around main sights. Report thefts to the national police. You are unlikely to recover your goods but you will need to make this formal *denuncia* for insurance purposes. To avoid endless queues at the *comisaría* (police station), you can make the report by phone (☎ 902 102112) in various languages or on the web at [www.policia.es](#) (in Spanish; click on 'Denuncias'). The following day you go to the station of your choice to pick up and sign the report, without queuing. You can also report losses to the Catalan police, the Mossos d'Esquadra ([www.gencat.net/mossos](#), in Catalan). They have a handy (and busy) **police station** (Map pp76–7; Carrer Nou de la Rambla 80; 📍 Paral.lel) near La Rambla. You could also try the **Guardia Urbana** (local police; Map pp64–5; La Rambla 43).

## DISCOUNT CARDS & TICKETS

The **ISIC** (International Student Identity Card; [www.isic.org](#)) and the **Euro-26 Card** ([www.euro26.org](#)) are available from most national student organisations and allow discounted access to some sights. Students generally pay a little more than half of adult admission prices, as do children aged under 12 and senior citizens (aged 65 and over) with appropriate ID.

Possession of a Bus Turistic ticket (see p276) entitles you to discounts to some museums.

**Articket** ([www.articketbcn.org](#)) gives you admission to seven important art galleries for €20 and is valid for six months. The galleries are the Museu Picasso (p83), Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya (MNAC; p139), the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MaCa; p79), the Fundació Antoni Tàpies (p109), the Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona (CCCB; p80), the Fundació Joan Miró (p143) and La Pedrera (Fundació Caixa Catalunya; p106). You can pick up the ticket through **Tel-Entrada** (☎ 902 101212; [www.telentrada.com](#)) and at the tourist offices at Plaça de Catalunya, Plaça de Sant Jaume and Sants train station.

Something a little different is the Arqueo-Ticket, designed for those with a special interest in archaeology and ancient history.

The ticket (€17) gets you entry to the Museu Marítim (p78), Museu d'Història de la Ciutat (p67), Museu d'Arqueologia de Catalunya (p146), Museu Egipci (p112) and Museu Barbièr-Mueller d'Art Pre-Colombià (p87). You can get it at participating museums and tourist offices.

If you want to get around Barcelona fast and visit multiple museums in the blink of an eye, the **Barcelona Card** ([www.barcelonacard.com](#)) might come in handy. It costs €24/29/33/36 (a little less for children aged four to 12) for two/three/four/five days. You get free transport (and 20% off the Aerobús), and discounted admission prices (up to 30% off) or free entry to many museums and other sights, as well as minor discounts on purchases at a small number of shops, restaurants and bars. The card is available at the tourist offices and online.

The Ruta del Modernisme pack (p113) is well worth looking into for visiting Modernista sights at discounted rates.

Night owls and shopaholics should check out the **Go and Connect card** ([www.goandconnect.com](#)). Valid for six months/one year (€12/15), the card offers a wide range of discounts (anything from a cut price haircut to free entry to some clubs).

## ELECTRICITY

The electric current in Barcelona is 220V, 50Hz, as in the rest of continental Europe. Several countries outside Europe (such as the USA and Canada) use 110V, 60Hz, which means that some appliances from those countries may perform poorly in Barcelona. It is always safest to use a transformer. Plugs have two round pins, as in the rest of continental Europe.

## EMBASSIES

Most countries have an embassy in Madrid. Look them up under *Embajada* in that city's *Páginas Amarillas* (Yellow Pages). Various countries also maintain consulates in Barcelona:

**Australia** (Map p118; ☎ 93 490 90 13; Plaça de Gal.la Placidia 1-3; FGC Gràcia)

**Canada** (Map pp122–3; ☎ 93 204 27 00; www.canada-es.org; Carrer d'Elisenda de Pinós 10; FGC Reina Elisenda)

**France** (Map pp108–9; ☎ 93 270 30 00; www.consulfrance-barcelone.org; Ronda de la Universitat 22B; 📍 Universitat)

**Germany** (Map p118; ☎ 93 292 10 00; www.barcelona.diplo.de; Passeig de Gràcia 111; 📍 Diagonal)

**Ireland** (Map pp102–3; ☎ 93 491 50 21; Gran Via de Carles III 94; 📍 Maria Cristina)

**New Zealand** (Map pp122–3; ☎ 93 209 03 99; Travessera de Gràcia 64; FGC Gràcia)

**UK** (Map pp102–3; ☎ 93 366 62 00; Avinguda Diagonal 477; 🏠 Hospital Clinic)

**US** (Map pp122–3; ☎ 93 280 22 27; http://barcelona.us consulate.gov; Passeig de la Reina Elisenda de Montcada 23–25; FGC Reina Elisenda)

## EMERGENCY

The following are the main emergency numbers:

**Ambulance** (☎ 061)

**Catalan state police** (Mossos d'Esquadra; ☎ 088)

**EU standard emergency number** (☎ 112)

**Fire brigade** (Bombers; ☎ 080, 085)

**Guardia Civil** (civil police; ☎ 062)

**Guàrdia Urbana** (local police; ☎ 092)

**Policia Nacional** (national police; ☎ 091)

## GAY & LESBIAN TRAVELLERS

Homosexuality is legal in Spain and the age of consent (with certain conditions) is 13 years old, as for heterosexuals. Spain made history when the national parliament passed laws allowing same-sex marriages in 2005. Barcelona hosted the 12th Eurogames, the European games for gays and lesbians, in July 2008.

Barcelona has a busy gay scene, but the region's gay capital is no doubt the saucily hedonistic Sitges (p255), a major destination on the international gay party circuit. Gays take a leading role in the wild Carnival celebrations (p17) there in February/March.

The city's tourist board publishes *Barcelona – The Official Gay and Lesbian Tourist Guide* biannually. The free biweekly *Shanguide*, jammed with listings and contact ads, is sometimes available in gay bookshops. Although Madrid-centric, you'll find useful tips on Barcelona too. Magazines with at least some listings and also available in gay bookshops include *Nois* ('boys' in Catalan) and *Gay Barcelona* (www.gaybarcelona.com). The annual, worldwide *Spartacus* guide is often on sale at newsstands along La Rambla.

Check out the following websites:

**Coordinadora Gai-Lesbiana** (www.cogailes.org) A good site presented by Barcelona's main gay and lesbian organisation, with nationwide links. Here you can zero in on information ranging from bar, sauna and hotel listings through to contacts pages.

## KEEPING YOUR NOSE CLEAN

Since 2006 tougher city bylaws make drinking in the streets, urinating in the streets and various other vexatious pastimes illegal. You can be fined on the spot and, theoretically, serious misbehaviour can attract penalties of up to €3000. You should take this seriously as local police have no qualms about enforcing these laws.

**GayBarcelona.com** (www.gaybarcelona.com) News and views and an extensive listings section covering bars, saunas, shops and more in Barcelona and Sitges.

**LesboNet.Org** (www.lesbonet.org, in Spanish) A lesbian site with contacts, forums and listings.

**Nación Gay** (www.naciongay.com, in Spanish) News on the gay community across Spain.

**Shangay.com** (www.shangay.com, Spanish only) For news, art reviews, contacts and *Shanguide* listings. You have to register to get full access.

Organisations include the following:

**Casal Lambda** (Map pp84–5; ☎ 93 319 55 50; www.lambdaweb.org; Carrer de Verdader i Callis 10; 🏠 Uquinaona) A gay and lesbian social, cultural and information centre in La Ribera.

**Coordinadora Gai-Lesbiana** (Map pp140–1; ☎ 93 298 00 29; www.cogailes.org; Carrer de Violant d'Hongria 156; 🏠 Plaça del Centre) The city's main coordinating body for gay and lesbian groups. Some lesbian groups are to be found at Ca la Dona (see p280). It also runs an information line, the **Línia Rosa** (☎ 900 601601).

## HOLIDAYS

For Barcelonins the main holiday periods are summer (July and August), Christmas–New Year and Easter. August is a peculiar time as Spain largely grinds to a halt. Tourists flock in regardless of the heat, but many locals escape to cooler climes. Finding accommodation can be more difficult around Christmas and Easter. For information on the city's colourful festivals and other events, see p16.

## Public Holidays

The following is a list of national public holidays:

**New Year's Day** (Any Nou/Año Nuevo) 1 January

**Epiphany/Three Kings' Day** (Epifanía or El Día dels Reis/Día de los Reyes Magos) 6 January

**Good Friday** (Divendres Sant/Viernes Santo) March/April

**Easter Monday** (Dilluns de Pasqua Florida) March/April  
**Labour Day** (Dia del Treball/Fiesta del Trabajo) 1 May

**Day after Pentecost Sunday** (Dilluns de Pasqua Granda) May/June

**Feast of St John the Baptist** (Dia de Sant Joan/Día de San Juan Bautista) 24 June

**Feast of the Assumption** (L'Assumpció/La Asunción) 15 August

**Catalonia's National Day** (Diada Nacional de Catalunya) 11 September

**Festes de la Mercè** 24 September

**Spanish National Day** (Festa de la Hispanitat/Día de la Hispanidad) 12 October

**All Saints Day** (Dia de Tots Sants/Día de Todos los Santos) 1 November

**Constitution Day** (Dia de la Constitución) 6 December

**Feast of the Immaculate Conception** (La Immaculada Concepció/La Inmaculada Concepción) 8 December

**Christmas** (Nadal/Navidad) 25 December

**Boxing Day/St Stephen's Day** (El Dia de Sant Esteve) 26 December

## INTERNET ACCESS

Barcelona is full of internet centres. Some offer student rates and also sell cards for several hours' use at reduced rates. Here are a handful of options:

**Bornet** (Map pp84–5; ☎ 93 268 15 07; Carrer de Barra Ferro 3; per hr/10hr €2.80/20; 🕒 10am–11pm Mon–Fri, noon–11pm Sat & Sun & holidays; 🏠 Jaume I)

**easyInternetcafé** (Map pp108–9; www.easyeverything.com; Ronda de la Universitat 35; per hr €2.50; 🕒 8am–2am; 🏠 Universitat) There is another branch at La Rambla 31 (Map pp64–5; 🕒 8am–2.30am; 🏠 Liceu) upstairs from the Sports Bar.

**Internet MSN** (Map p118; Carrer del Penedès 1; per min €0.02; 🕒 9.30am–2.30am; 🏠 Fontana)

## MAPS

Tourist offices offer free city and transport maps. Also handy is Michelin's ring-bound

## WI-FI ACCESS

A growing number of hotels offer their guests wi-fi access. A paying wi-fi service operates at the airport and at train stations. City bars and restaurants are latching on to the service. The Fresh & Ready fast food chain is one, and seven branches of Starbucks offer pay-as-you-go wi-fi.

*Barcelona*, scaled at 1:12,000, or Lonely Planet's *Barcelona City Map*.

## MEDICAL SERVICES

All foreigners have the same right as Spaniards to emergency medical treatment in public hospitals. EU citizens are entitled to the full range of health-care services in public hospitals, but must present a European Health Insurance Card (enquire at your national health service) and may have to pay up front.

Non-EU citizens have to pay for anything other than emergency treatment. Most travel-insurance policies include medical cover.

For minor health problems you can try any *farmàcia* (pharmacy), where pharmaceuticals tend to be sold more freely without prescription than in places such as the USA, Australia or the UK.

If your country has a consulate in Barcelona, its staff should be able to refer you to doctors who speak your language.

Hospitals include the following:

**Hospital Clínic i Provincial** (Map pp102–3; ☎ 93 227 54 00; Carrer de Villarreal 170; 🏠 Hospital Clínic)

**Hospital de la Santa Creu i de Sant Pau** (Map pp102–3; ☎ 93 291 90 00; Carrer de Sant Antoni Maria Claret 167; 🏠 Hospital de Sant Pau)

**Hospital Dos de Maig** (Map pp102–3; ☎ 93 507 27 00; Carrer del Dos de Maig 301; 🏠 Hospital de Sant Pau)

Some 24-hour pharmacies follow:

**Farmàcia Álvarez** (Map pp108–9; ☎ 93 302 11 24; Passeig de Gràcia 26)

**Farmàcia Clapés** (Map pp64–5; ☎ 93 301 28 43; La Rambla 98)

**Farmàcia Torres** (Map pp108–9; ☎ 93 453 92 20; www.farmaciaabierta24h.com, in Spanish; Carrer d'Aribau 62)

## MONEY

As in 14 other EU nations (Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal and Slovenia), the euro is Spain's currency.

## Changing Money

You can change cash or travellers' cheques in most major currencies without problems at virtually any bank or *bureau de change* (usually indicated by the word *canvi/cambio*).



Barcelona abounds with banks, many with ATMs, including several around Plaça de Catalunya and more on La Rambla and Plaça de Sant Jaume in the Barri Gòtic.

The foreign-exchange offices that you see along La Rambla and elsewhere are open for longer hours than banks, but they generally offer poorer rates. Also, keep a sharp eye open for commissions at *bureaux de change*.

**Interchange** (Map pp64–5; ☎ 93 342 73 11; Rambla dels Caputxins 74; ☎ 9am–10.30pm; M Liceu) represents American Express and will cash Amex travellers' cheques, replace lost cheques and provide cash advances on Amex cards.

## Credit Cards

Major cards such as Visa, MasterCard, Maestro and Cirrus are accepted throughout Spain. They can be used in many hotels, restaurants and shops. Credit cards can also be used in ATMs displaying the appropriate sign. Check charges with your bank. If your card is lost, stolen or swallowed by an ATM, you can telephone toll free to immediately stop its use:

**Amex** (☎ 900 994426)

**Diners Club** (☎ 901 101011)

**MasterCard** (☎ 900 971231)

**Visa** (☎ 900 991124)

## Travellers' Cheques

Travellers' cheques are being left behind by plastic. Amex, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted brands (the latter two are also sold by Travelex). If you lose your cheques, call a **24-hour freephone number** (☎ for Amex 900 994426, for Visa 900 948973, for MasterCard 900 948971).

**Travelex** ([www.travelex.com](http://www.travelex.com)) issues prepaid Cash Passports. Load funds onto the card before you travel and use it like any cash card in Visa ATMs worldwide.

## NEWSPAPERS & MAGAZINES

A wide selection of national daily newspapers from around Europe (including the UK) is available at newsstands all over central Barcelona and at strategic locations such as train and bus stations. The *International Herald Tribune*, *Time*, *Economist*, *Der Spiegel* and other international magazines are also available.

*El País* includes a daily supplement devoted to Catalonia, but the region also has

a lively home-grown press. *La Vanguardia* and *El Periódico* are the main local Spanish-language dailies. The latter also publishes a Catalan version. The more conservative and Catalan-nationalist-oriented daily is *Avui*. *El Punt* concentrates on news in and around Barcelona.

The most useful publication for expats is *Barcelona Metropolitan*, with news, views and listings information. *Pilote Urbain* is a French equivalent. *Catalonia Today* is a slim newsheet put out by the owners of *El Punt*.

Conservative Spaniards tend to read the old-fashioned *ABC*, while most of the left-of-centre crowd study *El País*, which identifies with the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE). *El Mundo* is a robustly right-wing publication in competition with the more respectable *ABC*. One of the best-selling dailies is *Marca*, devoted to sport.

## ORGANISED TOURS

Organised tours range from walking tours of the Barri Gòtic or Picasso's Barcelona to organised spins by bicycle.

The Oficina d'Informació de Turisme de Barcelona organises a series of guided walking tours under the name of **Barcelona Walking Tours** (Map pp108–9; ☎ 93 285 38 34; Plaça de Catalunya 17-5; M Catalunya). One explores the Barri Gòtic (adult/child €11/4.50; 10am daily in English, noon Saturday in Spanish and Catalan), another follows in Picasso's footsteps and winds up at the Museu Picasso, to which entry is included in the price (adult/child €15/6.50; 10.30am Tuesday to Sunday in English, 11.30am Saturday in Spanish and Catalan) and a third takes in the main jewels of Modernisme (adult/child €11/4.50; 4pm Friday and Saturday in English, 4pm Saturday in Spanish, all tours in both English and Spanish at 6pm June to September). It also offers a 'gourmet' tour of traditional purveyors of fine foodstuffs across the old city (adult/child €15/6.50; 11am Friday and Saturday in English, 11am Saturday in Spanish and Catalan). It includes a couple of chances to taste some of the products. All tours last two hours and start at the tourist office.

**Barcelona Guide Bureau** (☎ 93 268 24 22; [www.bgb.es](http://www.bgb.es); Via Laietana 54) places professional guides at the disposal of groups for tailor-made tours of the city. Several languages are catered for.

**Bus Turístic** (Map pp64–5; ☎ 010; [www.tmb.net](http://www.tmb.net)) is a hop-on hop-off service that links virtually all the major tourist sights. See p266 for more information.

## BICYCLE TOURS

Barcelona is awash with companies offering bicycle tours. Tours typically take two to four hours and generally stick to the old city, the Sagrada Família and the beaches. Operators include:

**Bike Tours Barcelona** (Map pp84–5; ☎ 93 268 21 05; [www.biketoursbarcelona.com](http://www.biketoursbarcelona.com); Carrer de l'Esparteria 3)

**Barcelona By Bike** (☎ 93 268 81 07; [www.barcelonabybike.com](http://www.barcelonabybike.com))

**Fat Tire Bike Tours** (Map pp64–5; ☎ 93 301 36 12; [www.fattirebiketoursbarcelona.com](http://www.fattirebiketoursbarcelona.com); Carrer dels Escudellers 48)

**BarcelonaBiking.com** (Map pp64–5; ☎ 656 356300; [www.barcelonabiking.com](http://www.barcelonabiking.com); Baixada de Sant Miquel 6)

For a trip around the harbour, board a **Golondrina Excursion Boats** (Map p93; ☎ 93 442 31 06; [www.lasgolondrinas.com](http://www.lasgolondrinas.com); Moll de les Drassanes; adult/under 4yr/4–10yr/student & senior €10.50/free/4.80/7.70; M Drassanes) *golondrina* (swallow) from Moll de les Drassanes in front of Monument a Colom. The one-hour round trip takes you to Port Olímpic, the Fòrum and back again. The number of departures depends largely on the season and demand. If you just want to discover the area around the port, you can opt for a 35-minute excursion to the breakwater and back (adult/child under four years/child aged four to 10 years €5/free/2.50).

**Orsom** (Map p93; ☎ 93 441 05 37; [www.barcelona-orsom.com](http://www.barcelona-orsom.com); Moll de les Drassanes; ☎ Apr–Oct; adult/4–10yr/11–18yr & senior €12.50/6.50/9.50; M Drassanes) has similar trips to those of Golondrina Excursion Boats on a giant catamaran. There are up to three departures per day. The third, leaving at 6pm, includes a jazz band and costs a little more (€14.90/6.50/12.90). Check departure times and availability in advance.

Cultural organisation **La Casa Elizalde** (Map p108–9; ☎ 93 488 05 90; [www.casaelizalde.com](http://www.casaelizalde.com); Carrer de València 302; M Passeig de Gràcia) runs several Barcelona walks (which generally occupy a Saturday morning and cost up to €9 per person) and one-day or weekend excursions outside the city – tours are in Catalan.

**SegwayBCN** (Map pp122–3; ☎ 934948462; [www.segwaybcn.com](http://www.segwaybcn.com), in Spanish; Carrer de Bigai 11–13) offers urban and even country tours on two-wheel people-movers! Tours start from €30 for 30 minutes with a minimum of four people.

**My Favourite Things** (☎ 637 265405; [www.myft.net](http://www.myft.net); tours from €26–32) offers tours for no more than

10 participants based on numerous themes: anything from design to food, from in-line-skating tours to sailing trips. Some of the more unusual activities cost more.

**Barcelona Vibes** (Map pp64–5; ☎ 93 310 37 47; [www.barcelonavibes.com](http://www.barcelonavibes.com); Carrer de Milans 7) offers everything from luxury private tours of the city in a chauffeur-driven Mercedes to trips around Catalonia. You can hire a Harley or sign for a city tour by Segway. If it can be booked or organised, they can probably do it.

See **BCN Skytour** (Map p93; ☎ 93 224 07 10; [www.cathelicopters.com](http://www.cathelicopters.com); Heliport, Passeig de l'Escullera; tour per person €80; ☎ 10am–7pm) for a 10-minute thrill at 800m above the city by helicopter that truly gives a bird's-eye view of the city. A 35-minute trip for €240 per person takes in Montserrat (p252). You can take the Golondrina tour boat (left) or a taxi to the heliport.

**Barcelona Scooter** (☎ 93 285 38 32; €45; ☎ 10.30am Sat), run by Cooltra (see p267), offers a four-hour tour around the city by scooter in conjunction with the city tourism office. Departure is from in front of La Sagrada Família on Carrer de Sardenya.

**Gocar** (Map pp84–5; ☎ 902 301333; [www.gocartours.es](http://www.gocartours.es); Carrer de Freixures 23bis; per hour/day €35/€99) has GPS-guided 'cars' (actually two-seat, three-wheel mopeds) that allow you to tour around town, park where motorbikes are allowed and listen to commentaries on major sites as you go. The GPS system makes it virtually impossible to get lost.

**Itour** (Map pp108–9; ☎ 93 467 15 84; [www.itourgps.com](http://www.itourgps.com); Carrer de Provença 292; per day €10.30) is a GPS gadget with maps of Barcelona that will lead you to (and provide some info on) sights, restaurants and more.

## POST

Correos (☎ 902 197197; [www.correos.es](http://www.correos.es), in Spanish) is Spain's national postal service. Barcelona's **main post office** (Map pp64–5; ☎ 8.30am–10pm Mon–Sat, noon–10pm Sun; M Jaume I) is just opposite the northeast end of Port Vell at Plaça d'Antoni López. Another handy branch for travellers lies just off Passeig de Gràcia at **Carrer d'Aragó 282** (Map pp108–9; ☎ 8.30am–8.30pm Mon–Fri, 9.30am–1pm Sat; M Passeig de Gràcia). Many other branches tend to open between 8.30am and 2.30pm Monday to Friday and from 9.30am to 1pm on Saturday.

*Segells/sellos* (stamps) are sold at most *estancos* (tobacconists' shops) and at post offices throughout the city.



A postcard or letter weighing up to 20g costs €0.60 from Spain to other European countries and €0.78 to the rest of the world. The same would cost €2.84 and €3.02, respectively, for *certificado* (registered) mail. Sending such letters *urgente*, which means your mail may arrive two or three days sooner than usual, costs €3.10 and €3, respectively. You can send mail both *certificado* and *urgente* if you wish.

Ordinary mail to other western European countries usually takes around three to four days; to North America and Australasia anything from one to two weeks. Delivery times to Spain are similar to those for outbound mail. All Spanish addresses have five-digit postcodes; using postcodes will help your mail arrive a bit quicker.

*Lista de correos* (poste restante) mail can be addressed to you anywhere in Catalonia that has a post office. It will be delivered to the place's main post office unless another is specified in the address. Take your passport when you pick up mail.

A typical *lista de correos* address looks like this:

Jenny JONES  
Lista de Correos  
08080 Barcelona  
Spain

## RADIO

The Spanish national network, **Radio Nacional de España** (RNE; [www.rtve.es/radio/](http://www.rtve.es/radio/)), has several stations: RNE 1 (738AM; 88.3 FM) has general interest and current affairs programmes; RNE 3 (98.6 FM) presents a decent range of pop and rock music; RNE 5 (576AM; 99FM) concentrates on sport and entertainment. Among the most listened-to rock and pop stations are **40 Principales** ([www.los40.com](http://www.los40.com), in Spanish; 93.9 FM), **Onda Cero** ([www.ondacero.es](http://www.ondacero.es), in Spanish; 94.1 FM) and **Cadena 100** ([www.cadena100.es](http://www.cadena100.es), in Spanish; 100 FM).

Those wanting to get into some Catalan can tune into **Catalunya Ràdio** ([www.catradio.cat](http://www.catradio.cat); 102.8 FM), **Catalunya Informació** (92 FM) and a host of small local radio stations.

You can also pick up the **BBC World Service** ([www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)) on, among others, 6195kHz, 9410kHz and 12,095kHz (short wave). **Voice of America** (VOA; [www.voiceamerica.com](http://www.voiceamerica.com)) can be found on a number of short-wave frequencies, including 1593kHz, 9865kHz, 11,765kHz and 15,205kHz.

## TAXES & REFUNDS

Value-added tax, or VAT, is otherwise known as IVA (*impuesto sobre el valor añadido*, pronounced 'EE-ba'). IVA is 7% on accommodation and restaurant prices and is usually – but not always – included in quoted prices. On retail goods the IVA is 16%. IVA-free shopping is available in duty-free shops at all airports for people travelling between EU countries.

Non-EU residents are entitled to a refund of the 16% IVA on purchases costing more than €90.15 from any shop, if the goods are taken out of the EU within three months. Ask the shop for a Cashback (or similar) refund form showing the price and IVA paid for each item and identifying the vendor and purchaser. Then present the form at the customs booth for IVA refunds when you depart from Spain (or elsewhere in the EU). You will need your passport and a boarding card that shows you are leaving the EU, and your luggage (so do this before checking in bags). The officer will stamp the invoice and you hand it in at a bank at the departure point to receive a reimbursement.

At Barcelona airport look for the customs booth directly opposite the bar on the ground floor of Terminal A (by the arrivals doors). Branches of the Caixa and BBVA banks (both about 50m to the right of the customs window) will deal with Cashback refunds (7am to 11pm daily). Otherwise you can use the envelope provided to have the tax paid back to your credit card or by cheque. For more information, check out the [Euro Refund website](http://www.eurorefund.com) ([www.eurorefund.com](http://www.eurorefund.com)).

## TELEPHONE

The ubiquitous blue payphones are easy to use for international and domestic calls. They accept coins, *tarjetas telefónicas* (phone-cards) issued by the national phone company Telefónica and, in some cases, credit cards. *Tarjetas telefónicas* come in €6 and €12 denominations and are sold at post offices and tobacconists.

Public telephones inside bars and cafés, and phones in hotel rooms, are nearly always more expensive than street payphones.

*Locutorios* (call centres) are another option. You'll mostly find these scattered about the old town, especially in and around El Raval. Check rates before making calls.

To call Barcelona from outside Spain, dial the international access code, followed by the code for Spain (☎ 34) and the full number (including Barcelona's area code, ☎ 93, which is an integral part of the number).

The access code for international calls from Spain is ☎ 00. To make an international call, dial the access code, wait for a new dial tone, then dial the country code, area code and number.

You can dial an operator to make reverse charge calls to your own country for free – pick up the number before you leave home. You can usually get an English-speaking Spanish international operator on ☎ 1008 (for calls within Europe) or ☎ 1005 (rest of the world). For international directory inquiries, dial ☎ 11825. A call to this number costs €2.

Dial ☎ 1009 to speak to a domestic operator, including for a domestic reverse-charge call (*llamada por cobro revertido*). For national directory inquiries, dial ☎ 11818.

Mobile-phone numbers start with 6. Numbers starting with 900 are national toll-free numbers, while those starting with numbers between 901 and 905 come with varying conditions. A common one is 902, which is a national standard-rate number. In a similar category are numbers starting with 803, 806 and 807.

## Mobile Phones

Spain uses GSM 900/1800, which is compatible with the rest of Europe and Australia but not with the North American GSM 1900 or the system used in Japan. If your phone is tri- or quadband, you will probably be fine. You can buy SIM cards and prepaid call time in Spain for your own national mobile phone (provided what you own is a GSM, dual- or tri-band cellular phone and not code-blocked). You will need your passport to open any kind of mobile-phone account, prepaid or otherwise.

## TIME

Spain is one hour ahead of GMT/UTC during winter, and two hours ahead during daylight saving (the last Sunday in March to the last Sunday in October). Most other western European countries are on the same time as Spain year-round, the major exceptions being the UK, Ireland and Portugal, which are one hour behind. Spaniards use the 24-hour

clock for official business (timetables etc) but often switch to the 12-hour version in daily conversation.

## TOURIST INFORMATION

Several tourist offices operate in Barcelona. A couple of general information numbers worth bearing in mind are ☎ 010 and ☎ 012. The first is for Barcelona and the other is for all Catalonia (run by the Generalitat). You sometimes strike English-speakers, although for the most part operators are Catalan/Spanish bilingual. In addition to the following listed tourist offices, information booths operate at Estació del Nord bus station and at Portal de la Pau, at the foot of the Monument a Colom at the port end of La Rambla. At least three others set up at various points in the city centre in summer. In addition to what follows, check out [www.turismetotal.org](http://www.turismetotal.org) for info on Barcelona province.

**Oficina d'Informació de Turisme de Barcelona** Plaça de Catalunya (Map pp108–9; ☎ 93 285 38 32; [www.barcelona.turisme.com](http://www.barcelona.turisme.com); Plaça de Catalunya 17-5, underground;

☎ 9am–9pm; 📺 Catalunya); Ajuntament (Map pp64–5; Carrer de la Ciutat 2; ☎ 9am–8pm Mon–Fri, 10am–8pm Sat, 10am–2pm Sun & holidays; 📺 Jaume I); Estació Sants (Map pp140–1; Estació Sants train station; ☎ 8am–8pm Jun–Sep, 8am–8pm Mon–Fri plus 8am–2pm Sat, Sun & holidays Oct–May; 📺 Sants Estació); El Prat airport (Terminal B arrivals hall, Terminal A arrivals hall; ☎ 9am–9pm) The Plaça de Catalunya tourist information office concentrates on city information and can help book accommodation. Expect to queue.

**Palau de la Virreina Arts Information Office** (Map pp64–5; ☎ 93 301 77 75; Rambla de Sant Josep 99; ☎ 10am–8pm; 📺 Liceu) A useful office for events information and tickets.

**Palau Robert regional tourist office** (Map pp108–9; ☎ 93 238 80 91; [www.gencat.net/probert](http://www.gencat.net/probert); Passeig de Gràcia 107; ☎ 10am–7pm Mon–Sat, 10am–2.30pm Sun; 📺 Diagonal) A host of material on Catalonia, audiovisual resources, a bookshop and a branch of Turisme Juvenil de Catalunya (for youth travel).

## TRAVELLERS WITH DISABILITIES

Some hotels and public institutions have wheelchair access. Most buses in Barcelona are wheelchair accessible and a growing number of Metro stations are theoretically wheelchair accessible (generally by lift, although there

have been complaints that they are only any good for parents with prams). Lines 2 and 11 are completely adapted, as are two-thirds of stops on Line 1. About half the stops on the remaining lines have been adapted. The problem then is access from platforms to trains – more often than not the gap between the two makes getting aboard a trial. The Catalan government maintains that all stations will be fully adapted by 2012.

You can order special taxis; see p269. Most street crossings in l'Eixample are wheelchair-friendly.

For more information on what the city is doing to improve accessibility, check out the city council website ([www.bcn.es](http://www.bcn.es)). **Barcelona Turisme** ([www.vienaeditorial.com/barcelona](http://www.vienaeditorial.com/barcelona) accessible) also publishes the *Accessible Barcelona Guide* in several languages. Other services include the following:

**Accessible Barcelona** (☎ 93 428 52 27; [www.accessiblebarcelona.com](http://www.accessiblebarcelona.com)) Craig Grimes, a T6 paraplegic and inveterate traveller, created this Barcelona-specific accessible travel site, easily the most useful doorway into the city for the disabled.

**Institut Municipal de Persones amb Disminució** (Map pp102–3; ☎ 93 413 27 75; Avinguda Diagonal 233) This organisation has information for people with disabilities in Barcelona, although it is aimed mostly at permanent residents.

**ONCE** (Map pp140–1; ☎ 93 325 92 00; Carrer de Sepúlveda 1; M Plaça d'Espanya) The national organisation for the vision-impaired can help with information, including lists of places such as restaurants where Braille menus are provided. It has a guide to Barcelona in Braille.

## VISAS

Spain is one of 24 member countries of the Schengen Convention, under which 22 EU countries (all but Bulgaria, Cyprus, Ireland, Romania and the UK) plus Iceland and Norway have abolished checks at common borders. Switzerland is in the process of becoming a member and Cyprus was set to join by the end of 2008.

EU nationals require only their ID cards to live and work in Spain, except nationals of Bulgaria, Cyprus and Romania, who do not need visas for tourist visits but don't yet have the full freedom to live and work legally. Nationals of many other countries, including Australia, Canada, Israel, Japan, New Zealand and the USA, do not require visas for tourist visits to Spain of up to 90 days. Non-EU nationals who are legal residents of one

Schengen country do not require a visa to visit another Schengen country.

All non-EU nationals entering Spain for any reason other than tourism (such as study or work) should contact a Spanish consulate, as they may need a specific visa. Citizens of countries not mentioned above should check whether they need a visa with their Spanish consulate.

## WOMEN TRAVELLERS

Think twice about going by yourself to isolated stretches of beach or down empty city streets at night. It's inadvisable for women to hitchhike alone – and not a great idea even for two women together.

Topless bathing is OK on beaches in Catalonia and also at swimming pools. While skimpy clothing tends not to attract much attention in Barcelona and the coastal resorts, tastes in inland Catalonia tend to be somewhat conservative.

**Ca la Dona** (Map pp108–9; ☎ 93 412 71 61; <http://caladona.pangea.org>; Carrer de Casp 38;

M Catalunya) The nerve centre of the region's feminist movement which includes many diverse women's groups.

**Centre Francesca Bonnemaison** (Map pp84–5; ☎ 93 268 42 18; [www.bonnemaison-ccd.org](http://www.bonnemaison-ccd.org); Carrer de Sant Pere més Baix 7; M Urquinaona) A women's cultural centre with more than 80 women's groups and feminist associations, putting on expositions, staging theatre productions and promoting social groups.

**Institut Català de la Dona** (Map pp76–7; ☎ 93 317 82 81; [www.gencat.net/icdona](http://www.gencat.net/icdona); Plaça de Pere Coromines 1; M Liceu) It can point you in the right direction for information on marriage, divorce, rape/assault counselling and related issues for long-termers, social activities, women's clubs etc. The hotline for victims of assault is ☎ 900 900120.

## WORK

Nationals of Switzerland, Norway and Iceland and all EU countries (apart from Bulgaria, Cyprus and Romania) may work in Spain without a visa, but for stays of more than three months they are supposed to apply for a *tarjeta de residencia* (residence card) within the first month.

Virtually everyone else is supposed to obtain a work permit from a Spanish consulate in their country of residence and, if they plan to stay more than 90 days, a residence visa. Quite a few people work, discreetly, without bothering to tangle with the bureaucracy. If

you are offered a contract, your employer will usually steer you through the labyrinth of paperwork.

The easiest source of work for foreigners is teaching English (or another foreign language). Schools are listed under *Acadèmies de Idiomes* in the Yellow Pages.

Sources of information on possible teaching work – school or private – include foreign cultural centres (the British Council, Institut Français etc), language schools, foreign-language bookshops and university notice boards. Cultural institutes you may want to try include:

**British Council** (Map pp122–3; ☎ 93 241 99 77; [www.britishcouncil.org/es/spain.htm](http://www.britishcouncil.org/es/spain.htm); Carrer d'Amigó 83; M FGC Muntaner)

**Institut Français de Barcelona** (Map pp122–3; ☎ 93 567 77 77; [www.institutfrances.org](http://www.institutfrances.org); Carrer de Moia 8; M Diagonal)

**Institute for North American Studies** (Map pp122–3; ☎ 93 240 51 10; [www.ien.es](http://www.ien.es); Via Augusta 123; M FGC Plaça Molina)

Translating and interpreting could be an option if you are fluent in Spanish (and/or Catalan) and a language in demand. Bar work in Irish pubs and boat scrubbing in the marinas and the like are other possibilities.

## Doing Business

The main business district in Barcelona is along the western end of Avinguda Diagonal. The big banks cluster here with several major business-oriented hotels. Another centre of activity is the World Trade Center in Port Vell. A hi-tech district, known as 22@bcn, is emerging in the former industrial area of Poblenou. The giant congress centre in Fòrum attracts international get-togethers on the northeast coast of the city.

People wishing to make the first moves towards expanding their business into Spain should contact their own country's trade department (such as the BERR in the UK). The commercial department of the Spanish embassy in your own country should also have information – at least about red tape.

In Barcelona your next port of call should be the **Cambra de Comerç de Barcelona** (Map p118; ☎ 902 448448; [www.cambraabcn.es](http://www.cambraabcn.es); Avinguda Diagonal 452; M Diagonal). It has a documentation centre and business-oriented bookshop, the Llibreria de la Cambra.

With more than 80 trade fairs a year and a growing number of congresses of all types, Barcelona is an important centre of international business in Europe. The **Fira de Barcelona** (Map pp140–1; ☎ 902 233200; [www.firabcn.es](http://www.firabcn.es); Plaça d'Espanya; M Espanya) organises fairs for everything from fashion to technology, furniture, recycling, jewellery and classic cars. The information office offers business services (such as communications), meeting rooms and other facilities for people working at trade fairs.

The **main trade fair** (Fira M1; Map pp140–1) is located between the base of Montjuïc and Plaça d'Espanya, with 115,000 sq metres of exhibition space and a conference centre. Fira M2 (Fair No 2), southwest of Montjuïc, continues to expand along Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes and totals 180,000 sq metres.

On the waterfront, the **World Trade Center** (Map p93; ☎ 93 508 80 00; [www.wtcbarcn.com](http://www.wtcbarcn.com); M Drassanes) at Port Vell offers a variety of meeting rooms and conference centres. The **Centre de Convencions Internacional de Barcelona** (CCIB; Map pp98–9; ☎ 93 230 10 00; [www.ccb.es](http://www.ccb.es); Rambla de Prim 1-17) in the northeast of the city near the waterfront can host 15,000 people (see p97).

The **Barcelona Convention Bureau** (Map pp108–9; ☎ 93 368 97 00; Rambla de Catalunya 123; M Diagonal) also organises conventions and other events.

# LANGUAGE

Catalan (*català*) and Spanish (more appropriately known as *castellano*, or Castilian), have equal official status in Catalunya. The recognition of Catalan is the end result of a vigorous regional government campaign that began when the province gained autonomy at the end of the 1970s. Until the disaster of the Battle of Muret in 1213, Catalan territory extended well across southern France, taking in Roussillon and reaching into Provence. Catalan was spoken, or at least understood, throughout these territories and in what is now Catalunya and Andorra. In the couple of hundred years that followed, while the losses of French territory were being compensated by their Mediterranean empire building, the Catalans spread their language south into Valencia, west into Aragón and east to the Balearic Islands (Illes Balears/Islas Baleares). The language also reached Sicily and Naples, and the Sardinian town of Alghero is still a partly Catalan-speaking outpost today.



In Barcelona you'll hear as much Spanish as Catalan, and we've provided some Spanish to get you started (see p285 for some basic Catalan). Your chances of striking English speakers are also not so bad. Elsewhere in the province, don't be surprised if you get replies in Catalan to your questions in Spanish. However, you'll find that most Catalans will happily speak to you in Spanish, especially once they realise you're a foreigner.

If you want to learn more Spanish than we've included here, pick up a copy of Lonely Planet's comprehensive but user-friendly *Spanish Phrasebook* or *Fast Talk Spanish*.

## SOCIAL

### Meeting People

Hello.  
¡Hola!  
Goodbye.  
¡Adiós!  
Please.  
Por favor.  
Thank you.  
(Muchas) Gracias.  
Yes.  
Sí.  
No.  
No.  
Excuse me.  
Perdón.  
Sorry!  
Perdón/Perdóneme.  
Do you speak English?  
¿Habla inglés?  
Does anyone speak English?  
¿Hay alguien que hable inglés?  
Do you understand?  
¿Me entiende?  
Yes, I understand.  
Sí, entiendo.  
No, I don't understand.  
No, no entiendo.

Pardon? What?  
¿Cómo?  
Could you please ...?  
¿Puede ... por favor?  
speak more slowly **hablar más despacio**  
repeat that **repetir**  
write it down **escribirlo**

### Going Out

What's there to do in the evenings?  
¿Qué se puede hacer por las noches?  
What's on ...?  
¿Qué hay...?  
locally **en la zona**  
this weekend **este fin de semana**  
today **hoy**  
tonight **esta noche**  
Where are the ...?  
¿Dónde hay ... ?  
places to eat **lugares para comer**  
nightclubs **discotecas**  
pubs **pubs**  
gay venues **lugares gay**

Is there a local entertainment guide?  
¿Hay una guía del ocio de la zona?

## PRACTICAL

### Question Words

Who? ¿Quién? (sg)  
¿Quiénes? (pl)  
What? ¿Qué?  
Which? ¿Cuál? (sg)  
¿Cuáles? (pl)  
When? ¿Cuándo?  
Where? ¿Dónde?  
How? ¿Cómo?  
How much? ¿Cuánto?  
How many? ¿Cuántos?  
How much is it? ¿Cuánto cuesta?  
Why? ¿Por qué?

### Numbers & Amounts

0 **ceró**  
1 **uno/una** (m/f)  
2 **dos**  
3 **tres**  
4 **cuatro**  
5 **cinco**  
6 **seis**  
7 **siete**  
8 **ocho**  
9 **nueve**  
10 **diez**  
11 **once**  
12 **doce**  
13 **trece**  
14 **catorce**  
15 **quince**  
16 **dieciséis**  
17 **diecisiete**  
18 **dieciocho**  
19 **diecinueve**  
20 **veinte**  
21 **veintiuno**  
22 **veintidós**  
30 **treinta**  
40 **treinta y uno**  
50 **cuarenta**  
60 **cincuenta**  
70 **sesenta**  
80 **setenta**  
90 **ochenta**  
100 **noventa**  
1000 **cien**  
2000 **mil**  
**dos mil**

### Days

Monday **lunes**  
Tuesday **martes**  
Wednesday **miércoles**

Thursday **jueves**  
Friday **viernes**  
Saturday **sábado**  
Sunday **domingo**

### Banking

I'd like to change some money.  
**Me gustaría cambiar dinero.**  
I'd like to change a traveller's cheque.  
**Me gustaría cobrar un cheque de viaje.**

Where's the nearest ...?

¿Dónde está ... más cercano?  
ATM **el cajero automático**  
foreign exchange **la oficina de cambio**  
office

Do you accept ...?

¿Aceptan ...?  
credit cards **tarjetas de crédito**  
debit cards **tarjetas de débito**  
traveller's cheques **cheques de viaje**

### Post

Where's the post office?  
¿Dónde está Correos?

I want to send a ...

**Quería enviar ...**  
fax **un fax**  
parcel **un paquete**  
postcard **una postal**

I want to buy a/an ...

**Quería comprar ...**  
aerogramme **un aerograma**  
envelope **un sobre**  
stamp/stamps **un sello/sellos**

### Phones & Mobiles

I want to buy a phone card.  
**Quería comprar una tarjeta.**

I want to make a ...

**Quería hacer ...**  
call (to ...) **una llamada (a ...)**  
reverse-charge/ **una llamada a cobro**  
collect call **revertido**

Where can I find a/an ...?

¿Dónde se puede encontrar un ...?  
I'd like a/an ...  
**Quería un ...**  
adaptor plug **adaptador**  
charger for my **cargador para mi**  
phone **teléfono**



mobile/cell phone for hire **mòvil para alquilar**  
 prepaid mobile/cell phone **mòvil de prepagó**  
 SIM card for your network **tarjeta SIM para su red**

## Internet

Where's the local internet cafe?  
**¿Dónde hay un ciber (café) cercano?**

I'd like to ...  
**Quería ...**  
 get internet access **conectarme (a internet)**  
 check my email **revisar mi correo electrónico**

## Transport

What time does the ... leave?  
**¿A qué hora sale el ...?**

boat **barco**  
 bus **autobús**  
 bus (intercity) **autocar**  
 plane **avión**  
 train **tren**

What time's the ... bus?  
**¿A qué hora hay el ... autocar/autobús?**  
 first **primer**  
 last **último**  
 next **próximo**

Is this taxi free?  
**¿Está libre este taxi?**  
 Please put the meter on.  
**Por favor, ponga el taxímetro**  
 How much is it to ...?  
**¿Cuánto cuesta ir a ...?**  
 Please take me (to this address).  
**Por favor, lléveme (a esta dirección).**

## FOOD

breakfast **desayuno**  
 lunch **comida**  
 dinner **cena**  
 snack **tentempié**  
 to eat/to drink **comer/beber**

Can you recommend a ...?  
**¿Puede recomendar un ...?**  
 bar **bar**  
 café **café**  
 coffee bar **cafetería**  
 restaurant **restaurante**

A table for ..., please.  
**Una mesa para ..., por favor.**  
 Is service/cover charge included in the bill?  
**¿Está incluido el servicio en la cuenta?**  
 Do you have a menu in English?  
**¿Tienen un menú en inglés?**  
 I'm a vegetarian.  
**Soy vegetariano/a. (m/f)**  
 Do you have any vegetarian dishes?  
**¿Tienen algún plato vegetariano?**  
 I'm allergic to peanuts.  
**Soy alérgico/a a los cacahuetes. (m/f)**

What is today's special?  
**¿Cuál es el plato del día?**  
 What would you recommend?  
**¿Qué recomienda?**  
 What's the speciality here?  
**¿Cuál es la especialidad de este restaurante?**  
 I'd like the set lunch, please.  
**Quería el menú del día, por favor.**  
 The bill, please.  
**La cuenta, por favor.**  
 I'll have what they're having.  
**Tomaré lo mismo que ellos.**  
 Good health/Cheers!  
**¡Salud!**  
 Thank you, that was delicious.  
**Muchas gracias, estaba buenísimo.**

For more detailed information on food and dining out, see p166.

## Food Glossary

Here is a brief glossary of some food terms that could come in handy. Items listed below are in Catalan/Spanish where they start with the same letter. Where the two terms start with different letters, or where only the Catalan or the Spanish term is provided, they are listed separately and marked (C) for Catalan or (S) for Spanish. If an entry is not marked at all, it is because it takes the same form in both languages.

aceite (S)	oil
aigua/agua	water
alcachofa (S)	artichoke
ametlla/almendra	almond
anyell or xai (C)	lamb
arròs/arroz	rice
bacallà/bacalao	salted cod
bogavante (S)	a type of lobster common on local menus
boqueros/ boqueroses	white anchovies in vinegar

## A LITTLE BIT OF CATALÀ

These Catalan words and phrases might win you a few smiles and perhaps help you make some new friends!

Hello.	<i>Hola.</i>	Wednesday	<i>dimecres</i>
Goodbye.	<i>Adéu.</i>	Thursday	<i>dijous</i>
Yes.	<i>Sí.</i>	Friday	<i>divendres</i>
No.	<i>No.</i>	Saturday	<i>dissabte</i>
Please.	<i>Sisplau/Si us plau.</i>	Sunday	<i>diumenge</i>
Thank you (very much).	<i>(Moltes) gràcies.</i>	0	<i>zero</i>
You're welcome.	<i>De res.</i>	1	<i>un, una (m/f)</i>
Excuse me.	<i>Perdoni.</i>	2	<i>dos, dues (m/f)</i>
May I?/Do you mind?	<i>Puc?/Em permet?</i>	3	<i>tres</i>
I'm sorry.	<i>Ho sento/Perdoni.</i>	4	<i>quatre</i>
What's your name?	<i>Com et dius? (inf)</i>	5	<i>cinc</i>
	<i>Com es diu? (pol)</i>	6	<i>sis</i>
My name's ...	<i>Em dic ...</i>	7	<i>set</i>
Where are you from?	<i>D'on ets?</i>	8	<i>vuit</i>
Do you speak English?	<i>Parla anglès?</i>	9	<i>nou</i>
I (don't) understand.	<i>(No) ho entenc.</i>	10	<i>deu</i>
Could you speak in Castilian please?	<i>Pot parlar castellà sisplau?</i>	11	<i>onze</i>
How do you say ... in Catalan?	<i>Com es diu ... en català?</i>	12	<i>dotze</i>
I'm looking for ...	<i>Estic buscant ...</i>	13	<i>tretze</i>
How do I get to ...?	<i>Com puc arribar a ...?</i>	14	<i>catorze</i>
Turn left.	<i>Giri a mà esquerra.</i>	15	<i>quinze</i>
Turn right.	<i>Giri a mà dreta.</i>	16	<i>setze</i>
near/far	<i>a prop/lluny de</i>	17	<i>disset</i>
		18	<i>divuit</i>
		19	<i>dinou</i>
Monday	<i>dilluns</i>	20	<i>vint</i>
Tuesday	<i>dimarts</i>	100	<i>cent</i>

botifarra  
 café amb llet/  
 café con leche  
 caldereta  
 carxofa (C)  
 cava  
 ceba/cebolla  
 cervesa/cerveza  
 chupito  
 cordero (S)  
 costella/chuleta  
 cranc/cangrejo or centollo  
 formatge (C)  
 gambes/gambas  
 gelat (C)  
 helado (S)  
 huevos (S)  
 llagosta/langosta  
 llamàntol (C)  
 llenties/lentejas

Catalan pork sausage  
 coffee with milk  
 a seafood stew  
 artichoke  
 Catalan version of champagne  
 onion  
 beer  
 a shot (small glass of spirits)  
 lamb  
 cutlet  
 crab  
 cheese  
 prawns  
 ice cream  
 ice cream  
 eggs  
 lobster  
 a type of lobster common on local menus  
 lentils

menjador (C)  
 menú del dia (S)  
 montaditos (S)  
 nueva cocina española  
 oli (C)  
 ous (C)  
 paella (S)  
 patates braves/  
 patatas bravas  
 pebre/pimienta  
 peix/pescados  
 queso (S)  
 rap/rape  
 ratafia (C)  
 ternera (S)  
 torrada/tostada  
 trucha (S)  
 truita (C)  
 vedella (C)  
 vi/vino

dining room, sit-down restaurant  
 fixed-price meal, mostly available at lunchtime  
 canapés  
 new cuisine  
 oil  
 eggs  
 rice, seafood and meat dish  
 potato chunks bathed in a slightly spicy tomato sauce  
 pepper  
 fish  
 cheese  
 monkfish  
 a local, high-octane liquor  
 beef  
 open toasted sandwich  
 trout  
 omelette/tortilla, trout  
 beef  
 wine

## EMERGENCIES

Help!

¡Socorro!

It's an emergency!

¡Es una emergencia!

Could you help me, please?

¡Me puede ayudar, por favor?

Where's the police station?

¿Dónde está la comisaría?

Where are the toilets?

¿Dónde están los servicios?

Call ...!

¡Llame a ...!

the police	la policia
a doctor	un médico
an ambulance	una ambulancia

## HEALTH

Where's the nearest ...?

¿Dónde está ... más cercano?

(night) chemist	la farmacia (de guardia)
-----------------	--------------------------

doctor	el médico
--------	-----------

hospital	el hospital
----------	-------------

I need a doctor (who speaks English).

Necesito un doctor (que hable inglés).

I have (a/an) ...

Tengo ...

diarrhoea	diarrea
-----------	---------

fever	fiebre
-------	--------

headache	dolor de cabeza
----------	-----------------

pain	dolor
------	-------

## GLOSSARY

Items listed below are in Catalan/Spanish (Castilian) where they start with the same letter. Where the two terms start with different letters, or where only the Catalan or the Spanish term is provided, they are listed separately and marked (C) for Catalan or (S) for Spanish. If an entry is not marked at all, it is because it takes the same form in both languages.

**ajuntament/ayuntamiento** – town hall

**artesonado** (S) – Mudéjar wooden ceiling with interlaced beams leaving a pattern of spaces for decoration

**avinguda** (C) – avenue

**Barcelonin** (C) – inhabitant/native of Barcelona

**Barcino** – Roman name for Barcelona

**barri/barrio** – neighbourhood, quarter of Barcelona

**caganer** (C) – crapper, a character that appears in Catalan nativity scenes

**Call** (C) – Jewish quarter in medieval Barcelona

**capella/capilla** – chapel

**carrer/calle** – street

**casa** – house

**castellers** (C) – human-castle builders

**cercanías** (S) – local trains serving Barcelona's airport, suburbs and some outlying towns

**comte/conde** – count

**església** (C) – church

**farmàcia/farmacia** – pharmacy

**fiesta/fiesta** – festival, public holiday or party

**FGC** (C) – Ferrocarrils de la Generalitat de Catalunya;

local trains operating alongside the Metro in Barcelona

**fundació/fundació** – foundation

**garum** – a spicy sauce made from fish entrails, found throughout the Roman Empire

**gegants** – huge figures paraded at *festes*

**Generalitat** (C) – Catalan regional government

**guiiri** – foreigner (somewhat pejorative)

**hostal** – commercial establishment providing one- to three-star accommodation

**iglesia** (S) – church

**IVA** – *impost sobre el valor afegit/impuesto sobre el valor añadido*, or value-added tax

**masia** – Catalan country farmhouse

**mercat/mercado** – market

**Modernisme** (C) – the turn-of-the-19th-century artistic style, influenced by Art Nouveau, whose leading practitioner was Antoni Gaudí

**Modernista** – an exponent of Modernisme

**Mudéjar** (S) – a Muslim living under Christian rule in medieval Spain; also refers to their decorative style of architecture

**palau** (C) – palace

**passatge** (C) – laneway

**pensió/pensión** – commercial establishment providing one- to three-star accommodation

**plaça/plaza** – plaza

**platja/playa** – beach

**Renaixença** – Rebirth of interest in Catalan literature, culture and language in the second half of the 19th century

**rodalies** (C) – see *cercanías*

**saló** (C) – hall

**sardana** – traditional Catalan folk dance

**s/n** (S) – *sin número* (without number)

**tablao** – restaurant where flamenco is performed

**teatre** – theatre

**terrassa/terazza** – terrace; often means a café or bar's outdoor tables

**turista** – second class; economy class

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