

LONELY PLANET GUIDEBOOKS

We are recommended in the following editions:



Runner Bean Tours (☎63 610 87 76; www.runnerbeantours.com; 🕒11am year-round & 4.30pm Apr-Sep) comprises several daily thematic tours. It's a pay-what-you-wish tour, with a collection taken at the end for the guide. The Old City tour explores the Roman and medieval history of Barcelona, visiting highlights in the Ciutat Vella (Barri Gòtic, El Raval and La Ribera). The Gaudí tour takes in the great works of Modernista Barcelona. It involves two trips on the Metro. Both tours depart at 11am from Plaça Reial (and also at 4.30pm from April through September) and last for about 2 and a half hours. It's wise to book ahead, as tour numbers are limited. Runner Beans also runs a Kids and Family Walking Tour; check the website for departure times and to book a spot.

Local Knowledge

Don't Miss List

BY GORKA REGIDOR, TOUR GUIDE
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TOURS



1 CRYPT OF SANTA EULÀLIA

References to the patron saint of Barcelona can be found all over the cathedral but nowhere is as striking as in the crypt. In the centre, an Italian 15th-century alabaster sarcophagus stands where Eulàlia's remains supposedly still lie within. The crypt only opens on the 12 February, Saint Eulàlia's Day, but you can take a peek from the outside. Add 50 céntimos to the box and let the place light up for a more intimate experience.

2 MAIN NAVE

If there is an organ concert going on, sit down on one of the benches, relax and wonder at the magnificence of this Catalan Gothic stone masterpiece. The sounds from the 15th-century carved wooden organ surround the whole place with magic and mystery.

3 THE CHOIR

In 1519, the Order of the Golden Fleece, the elite of Europe's nobility, were invited to Barcelona by the king of Spain, Charles I. A visit to the cloister is a voyage to old times with the coat of arms of each participant painted on the back of the chairs. Try to find Henry VIII of England!

4 CLOISTER

A glimpse of Paradise where the 13 geese in honour of Saint Eulàlia live. While you walk around, look at the tombstones on the floor and find shoes, scissors and the different symbols of the medieval guilds (including shoemakers, tailors and carpenters). If you are here during the Corpus Christi, marvel at one of Barcelona's most popular traditions: the *Ou Com Balla* (dancing egg).

5 EXTERIOR GARGOYLES

There are 160 different gargoyles in the cathedral. Always a good excuse to lift your eyes to the sky and discover not only the obvious dragons and mythological beasts, but also elephants, unicorns and medieval warriors. Great for the young ones and for the not so young.