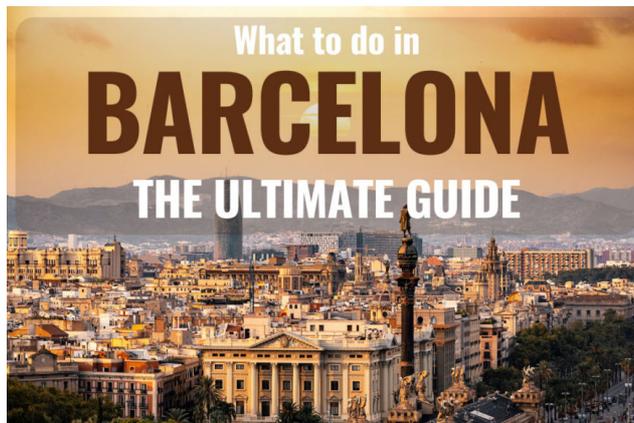


What To Do In Barcelona: The Ultimate Guide

 runnerbeantours.com/what-to-do-in-barcelona-the-complete-guide



If you are reading this, maybe you have chosen to come to my city and are trying to decide what to do in Barcelona.

Or maybe you are just looking for your next holiday destinations and Barcelona popped up as a very interesting option.

Whatever the case, I have written this comprehensive article to guide you on the best things to do in Barcelona (if you are already coming) or to make the decision easier for you (if you are still making up your mind).

After going through the different options I am sure you will give Barcelona a go. There is just so much to do... and for every taste!

1- Marvel at Gaudí's architecture

A lot of visitor's main reasons for coming to my city is to take in the weird and wacky creations of Antoni Gaudí, a radical, yet brilliant, artist from the turn of the 20th century.

Images of his creations headline blogs and guidebooks alike.

Sagrada Familia

Let's start with my favourite tour site: Sagrada Familia.

This is an amazing church with sandstone towers that stretch into the heavens.

It will be the tallest church in the world when it is finished. That's right! It is still being built, which surrounding cranes give testimony to.



Marvel at the interior of Gaudí's Sagrada Família, Barcelona's icon and main attraction.

For me, the interior can not be missed. The columns resemble a stone forest and the ceiling their canopy.

The stained-glass windows are everywhere, bouncing a rainbow of colours off the stone interior.

My advice is to go in the afternoon to get the best effect.

If you are feeling fit and unafraid of heights, tag on a tower visit to your ticket. The views are definitely worth it.

MY LOCAL TIP: *Sagrada Família is, officially, the number 1 tourist attraction in Barcelona so book ahead online to skip the lines and to avoid disappointment.*

BUY TICKETS SAGRADA FAMILIA

Casa Milà (La Pedrera)

Carved from pale limestone and decorated with mangled wrought-iron balconies, this building really sticks out as an original.

I love giving tours here because it was so revolutionary for its time.

Completed in 1912 and not appreciated by the general public, it is now considered a stroke of genius.



The unforgettable roof terrace of Casa Milà also known as La Pedrera.

The jewel of this structure is the sculpted roof terrace.

Chimneys, water tanks and ventilation shafts moulded in a way that sets your imagination on fire.

A lovely bonus is the show apartment furnished from the era transporting you back through time. Look out for the wooden gramophone. It is my favourite decorative piece.

MY LOCAL TIP: *There is a surcharge for tickets bought at the site so, to avoid this and the queues, book online. Pick a time slot an hour and a half before closing time as there are a lot fewer visitors.*

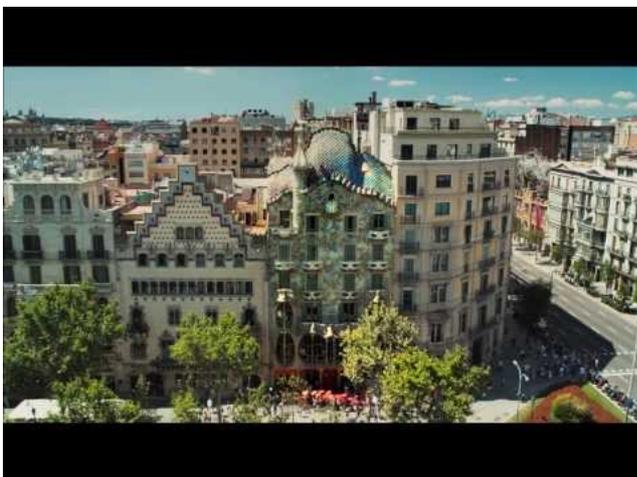
BUY TICKETS LA PEDRERA

Casa Batlló

For all lovers of all that is Art Nouveau, do not miss this curvy masterpiece.

It has to be the most over the top apartment building that Gaudí ever designed.

From the shiny glass tiles to the iron skull balconies, topped with a ceramic dragon roof, this house is a photographer's dream.



Watch Video At: <https://youtu.be/G7pPXEG26zQ>

Want to explore inside? You will be given a fun tablet that is interactive with its surroundings.

The interior is just as magical as outside. Curvaceous walls, dripping ceilings, impossible carpentry and a sea-inspired patio.

MY LOCAL TIP: *Buy your ticket online as it works out quite a bit cheaper. Be aware that the basic online ticket does not entitle you to skip the line (which are long in high season).*

BUY TICKETS CASA BATLLÓ

Park Güell

Curious to see where the great Gaudí lived? Then visit the amazing Park Güell that looks down onto the city of Barcelona.

The monumental zone (requires a ticket) contains a riot of colour and mosaic.

From the gingerbread houses (free entry with your pass) to the Grecian market, it is all quite breathtaking.



Lose yourself in the fairytale of Park Güell.

Climb the ceremonial stairs and get your photo taken with the iconic lizard (be prepared to queue).

Finish off by sitting on the world's longest bench to drink in the views of Barcelona.

If you still have the energy you can explore the beautiful free zones afterwards.

MY LOCAL TIP: *The Monumental Area can be entered for free before the staff put the temporary boundaries in place. Once you enter the monumental zone you can stay as long as you want but be aware that once you leave you can't go back in.*

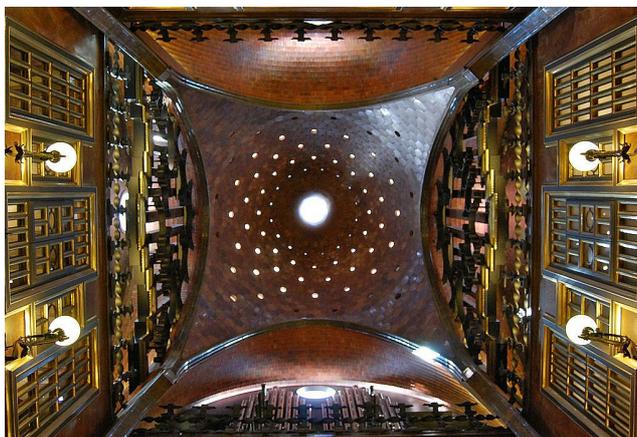
BUY TICKETS PARK GÜELL

Palau Güell

Not to be confused with Park Güell above, this is a hidden jewel designed by Gaudí in his earlier years.

It was commissioned by his good friend Eusebi Güell who lived in the whole building with his family.

The bonus of this site is that it is less than half the price of other apartment buildings to visit and you rarely have to queue.



Look up and gaze onto the amazing starry night ceiling of Palau Güell. Photo by [Tomàs Badia Navarro](#)

With warm wooden and stone interiors and a and colourful mosaic chimneys, we see the promise of a young architect.

My favourite room is the main salon that comes with a fold-out altarpiece and a starry sky at night ceiling. Trust me, your jaw will drop too as you cast your eyes upwards.

MY LOCAL TIP: *Every first Sunday of the month it is free entry. It is the only day of the month that there are serious queues. If you want to take advantage of this offer, arrive early to avoid disappointment.*

BUY TICKETS PALAU GÜELL

More Gaudí works in Barcelona

Casa Vicens was the very first house Gaudí designed. It is located in the very hip neighbourhood of Gràcia.

You can't miss the colourful tiled top in the distance which is a celebration of the geometric interlaced curvy wrought iron.

Torre Bellesguard is one of the latest additions to the [Gaudí route in Barcelona](#).

Built over the ruins of the old king's medieval palace, this is one of the very few Gaudí buildings still inhabited.



Watch Video At: <https://youtu.be/7GH2pYn9XUs>

MY LOCAL TIP: If you have the Barcelona card you can get a big discount on the entrance fee for Casa Vicens.

BUY TICKETS CASA VICENS

BUY TICKETS TORRE BELLESGUARD

2- Discover the other Modernisme masterpieces

Gaudí is our shining star of architecture at the turn of the 20th century. People blindly flock to his work not realising there are many beautiful Art Nouveau buildings by his contemporaries which are just as fabulous!

Block of Discord

A common question I get asked when showing my guests this amazing block of houses is “*which one is by Gaudí?*”.

It is a fair question as all the buildings are beautiful and not to be overlooked.

We have already discussed Casa Batlló so let’s chat about the other ones.



Casa Lleó i Morera, Casa Amatller and Casa Batlló, the most spectacular houses at the Block of Discord. Photo by [ChristianSchd](#), [Xavier Badia Castellà](#), [Amadalvarez](#), [Balou46](#) / [CC BY-SA](#)

At Casa Lleó Morera, by Lluís Domènech i Montaner, you can pick out the delicate white mulberry (“*morera*”) flowers decorating the outside.

It has a beautifully carved exterior but, unfortunately, not open to visitors anymore.

I often ask the doorman if I can enter the hallway to show my clients the beautifully tiled entranceway with the original carved wooden lift.

Next door to Casa Batlló sits the amazingly decorative Casa Amatller, by Josep Puig i Cadafalch.

This is open to the public and is a must for lovers of fine art and craft.

They limit the tours and the number of people on them making it a super personal experience.

MY LOCAL TIP: *Don't miss the stained-glass skylight at the entranceway of Casa Amatller and the fab hot chocolate they serve inside their cafe!*

BUY TICKETS CASA AMATLLER

Palau de la Musica Catalana

This has to be one of my top picks in Barcelona.

It was commissioned by the choir company in 1905 so they could hold their concerts here.

The beautiful red bricks interlaced with stunning mosaic catches your eye from the outside.

However, the exterior can be considered quite plain compared to the interior.



Modernisme galore at Palau de la Musica Catalana.

Imagine attending a concert surrounded by over the top sculptures, colourful tiles and wrought iron creations, topped with the most impressive stained-glass skylight.

Some purists say it is too distracting when listening to concerts here!

If you prefer, you can just book a sightseeing tour around instead.

MY LOCAL TIP: *If attending a concert, arrive around half an hour early and go straight in. You can use this time to explore each floor as there are different sculptures, surprises and views to be discovered on each level.*

BUY TICKETS PALAU DE LA MUSICA

Hospital de la Santa Creu i Sant Pau

Now, if I was sick, this is the hospital I wouldn't mind going to!

Created by the great Domènech i Montaner, the design took into account all the discoveries made in health care during the 19th and 20th centuries.

It has lots of light, spaced out dorms, therapeutic gardens and beautifully decorated features throughout.



Watch Video At: <https://youtu.be/rhFuUP9GCss>

Sant Pau is still a functioning hospital but in 2009 built more modern facilities for patients close by.

You can now tour some of the faithfully restored 20th-century pavilions and learn fascinating insights to design complimenting treatments at the time.

For me, it is just too gorgeously decorated to actually be an infirmary.

MY LOCAL TIP: *Their sightseeing timetable is a little irregular so always check their website for times to visit.*

BUY TICKETS SANT PAU HOSPITAL

Casa de les Punxes

This is one of Barcelona's landmark buildings. All the locals know the "House of Spikes".

Inspired by the legend of Saint George and the dragon, it resembles a medieval castle with delicate spikes topping its numerous turrets.

I love pointing it out to guests on private chauffeured tours as it is so stunning.

Commissioned in 1903 for 3 sisters who could not bear to live far apart, this building is huge.

The good news is that in 2017 they opened up some of the spaces for visitors.

With a lot of the original interior gone, they rely on mixed media and interactive exhibits to give insight to the structure and its architect Puig i Cadafalch.

MY LOCAL TIP: *The roof terrace is a great location to sit for a drink on holiday. Check out the combo ticket of roof bar and gallery entrance.*

BUY TICKETS CASA DE LES PUNXES

3- Walk around the traditional neighbourhoods

One way to get a real flavour of the city is exploring some of its local neighbourhoods.

The contrasting boroughs of Barcelona all have something special to offer from modern and trendy to old and traditional.

Gothic Quarter

Fall hopelessly in love with the oldest and most charming neighbourhood of the city.

Wander through small winding streets full of character and 2,000 years of history.

At the heart of this barri is the magnificent old Cathedral. Go into light a candle or gaze at the 13 geese who reside in its Gothic cloister.



Gargoyles and Gothic architecture at the beautiful Gothic Quarter of Barcelona.

I love relaxing with a glass of wine while sampling great local food in the many bars and

eateries that dot this area.

Ancient stores beside hip modern ones offer out of the box sale opportunities for the shopaholics too.

Each establishment and street drip with character and atmosphere.

MY LOCAL TIP: *There is a lot of history and important buildings that can easily get overlooked while exploring on your own. For inside knowledge and a pleasant couple of hours, take a Free Walking Tour of the area.*

Gràcia

This is the cool neighbourhood of Barcelona, full of charming squares and terraces.

Artists and hipsters flock to this part of town and it has a very edgy feel to it.

One-off shops, funky bars, great bakeries... Don't expect the traditional Old Spanish style here.



The streets of Gràcia come to life during their festival in August. Photo by [Photogra Fer](#)

My family and I never miss the Gràcia Festival in August.

The streets are transformed into fun themed worlds as residents spend weeks drawing painting and modelling sculptures for their road.

This is all combined with free music concerts, local competitions and displays. It's a great party atmosphere.

MY LOCAL TIP: *Go on the first few days of the festival while the decorations are still fresh.*

Barceloneta

If seafood is your passion, then check out the Barceloneta neighbourhood.

This is the old Fisherman's Quarter of the city and is located on a little peninsula jutting out to sea.



Watch Video At: <https://youtu.be/qddmBKuaNEo>

In the past, it was a real working-class area with a boisterous lively vibe on the streets.

Nowadays, it is a very popular destination for tourists seeking out those great fish dishes while soaking in vistas to the sea.

Despite its fame, there is still that feeling of tight community here where traditions are upheld.

My favourite old-style bars are La Cova Fumada and La Bombeta, both of whom boast “La Bomba” as their tapa speciality.

MY LOCAL TIP: Avoid Passeig de Borbó with throngs of people and waiters trying to sell their menu. Head into the small interior streets here you get a more local flavour.

El Born

This was the very first neighbourhood that I lived in when I arrived in Barcelona.

Not unlike the Gothic Quarter, it has a lot of narrow winding streets and oozes with charm.

Full of bars and restaurants coupled with a lot of artisan shops, it's a very pleasant way to while away a few hours.

In medieval times, it was where a lot the guilds had business and the working class lived.

It doesn't have as many monumental sites as the Gothic Quarter but my favourite church is located here: Santa Maria del Mar. It is a basilica not to missed and just as beautiful as the Cathedral.

MY LOCAL TIP: *If you are interested in Catalan politics, check out [El Born Cultural & Memorial Centre](#). Focused on the War of Spanish Succession, it is a pivotal event in Catalan history.*

El Raval

El Raval is a great multicultural neighbourhood with a lively gritty vibe.

Myself and my partner head here when we need to buy spices and special ingredients for our [Indian cooking](#).

Full of great bars and small international eateries, it is always easy to find affordable and tasty grub.



A beautiful building at El Raval neighbourhood.

Photo by [Fred Romero](#) / [CC BY](#)

El Raval, although bang in the centre, has never quite been that gentrified.

There are pockets of drug selling and prostitution so do be aware of your surroundings when wandering around at night.

Don't let this put you off too much and, if you like that noisy authentic bustle with a variety of local hip and not so hips establishments, give this barrio a go.

MY LOCAL TIP: *Every Saturday and Sunday on Rambla del Raval there is a lovely small open market selling arts, crafts, clothes and accessories of local designers.*

4- Be inspired by Barcelona's Art galleries

Barcelona has always been a popular destination for art lovers with a wide array of great art galleries.

From Picasso to Miró, from Romanesque to Art Nouveau, there is something for everyone.

Catalonia's National Art Museum (MNAC)

Stop the clock. This is the largest and most important Art Museum in Catalonia.

My jaw dropped the first time I saw it, perched on top of a huge monumental staircase full of statues and fountains. It is just stunning.

Once you climb those stairs (there are also escalators for the not-so-fit), at the top you get fabulous views of the city and surrounding hills.



Part of the impressive Romanesque collection at Catalonia's National Art Museum. Photo by M.N.A.C.

Inside, it houses probably the best collection of Romanesque frescos in the world which are very cleverly displayed.

The Gothic section packs a punch with its beautiful gold alter piece paintings.

The 19th and 20th-century highlight for me is the decorative Art Nouveau furniture.

MY LOCAL TIP: *The museum is free to enter on Saturday afternoons after 3 pm and on the first Sunday of the month.*

BUY TICKETS MNAC

Picasso Museum

Everyone knows the name Picasso. But who was he really?

Explore this beautiful museum and discover his origins.

Picasso himself donated important works of his childhood and youth and they are chronologically displayed. You are taken step by step through his early years.

Be awed by his later childlike styles. My favourite room is his many interpretations of the famous Velazquez's work *Las Meninas*.

In this video, Rick Steves gives you a taste of the Picasso Museum by bringing you on a magical tour through its corridors.



Watch Video At: <https://youtu.be/XaDSAaSO6oM>

As if all this wasn't enough, the museum is housed in a gorgeous Gothic palace.

It is one of the most popular sites in the city so queues and tickets selling out quickly are drawbacks to this attraction. My advice is to definitely book in advance.

MY LOCAL TIP: *The museum is free every Thursday from 6 pm to 9 pm and all day the first Sunday of the month. Tickets are mandatory and they open for purchase online a few days before the date.*

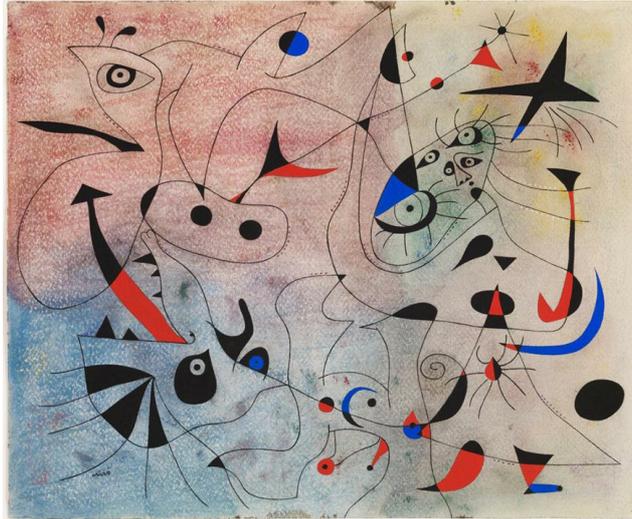
BUY TICKETS PICASSO MUSEUM

Joan Miró Foundation

This is a favourite of mine and, if you like Joan Miró, you shouldn't miss it.

Tucked away in the green of Montjuïc Hill, this grey cube-like building melds perfectly with its surroundings.

Miró had a hand in the design and it works wonderfully displaying his work.



You can find works by Miró like “Morning Star” at Joan Miró’s Foundation. Photo by [Fundació Joan Miró](#)

Inside, you are rewarded with a beautiful calm space and a massive collection of impressive Miró works.

From quirky phallic sculptures to carefully composed splashed compositions, it is a lovely overview of the artist and his range.

MY LOCAL TIP: Round off the visit by catching the cable car (or walking 15 minutes) to the top of Montjuïc Hill. The views are definitely worth it.

BUY TICKETS JOAN MIRÓ FOUNDATION

MACBA

For lovers of modern and contemporary art, this is worth putting on your list.

They host a lot of travelling exhibitions with strong links to our social conscious.

With continually changing works and artists, it is pot luck whether the current show will appeal to you.



MACBA’s building is a piece of art in itself. Photo by [Alexander.Hüls](#)

I love the spacey layout and modern design of the interior which serves as a great backdrop for the mixed media displays.

Expect every form of expression, from video to poetry, photography, sculpture and painting.

MY LOCAL TIP: *This museum is included in the [ArtTicket](#), a great way to enjoy six of the most important galleries in Barcelona at a big discounted price.*

BUY TICKETS MACBA

BUY ARTICKET

5- Enjoy a live music show

Being the second-largest city in Spain, Barcelona has a large selection of venues to catch a live show.

So for music lovers out there, read on for a few of my favourites.

Opera at Liceu

For lovers of opera, this is an institution of the city.

Located bang smack in the middle of [Las Ramblas](#) you can't get more central than this.

The building is gorgeous, originally dating from 1847 though it has gone through a few fires and rebuilds.



For Opera lovers, there is no better setting than the Liceu Theatre.

You can catch major productions here as it is one of the leading opera houses in Europe.

It also has the honour of being one of the biggest in the world seating 2,292 spectators.

Opera is not the only offering. You can catch ballet, symphonies and music concerts so it's worth checking out the programme.

MY LOCAL TIP: *The theatre has seats where you can't see the stage but can take in the amazing sight of the interior. In the old times, it was more important to be seen attending this social affair. Nowadays, these seats are very reasonably priced so, if you can't catch a tour, this could always be an option. Acoustics are great.*

BUY TICKETS LICEU THEATRE

Magic Fountain of Montjuïc

Imagine watching water bobbing in time to the music.

Throw in changing colours to suit the melody's mood, mix it up with stunning location and views and you have the unmissable Magic Fountain of Montjuïc.

I always bring family and friends when they visit as it is quite breathtaking.



Awe at the stunning colour and music show of Barcelona's Magic Fountain.

This is a free attraction for everyone so expect crowds.

The fountain overlooks the immense Plaça d'Espanya which is well connected by public transport.

It is located on the grounds of the main pavilion of the 1929 World Fair so the backdrop is monumental, to say the least.

MY LOCAL TIP: *The main pavilion now houses Catalonia's National Art Museum. On Saturday evening (after 3 pm) you can enter for free. Combine a free cultural art visit rounded off by a magical dancing fountain show afterwards!*

Flamenco show

Not strictly from the north of Spain but you can still find premium quality shows here.

In the 1960s, many Andalusians flocked to Barcelona looking for work and with them

came that passionate style: Flamenco.

From small bars to grand shows including food, you can pick what suits.

These are some of the Flamenco venues I recommend for a good quality show:

Tablao Flamenco Cordobés



Watch Video At: <https://youtu.be/rVLuS6EbC1c>

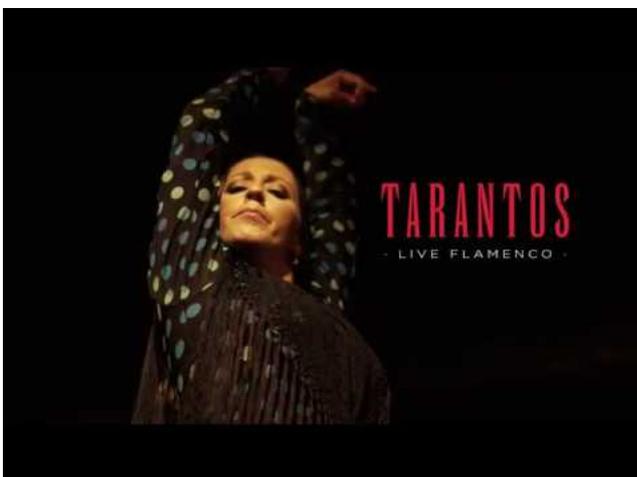
Located in La Rambla since 1970, this is an institution in Barcelona where many famous singers and dancers have performed.

The interior is also quite beautiful. It was designed by the same people who restored La Alhambra in Granada so expect Arabic influence everywhere.

Like in most Flamenco venues, you have the option of adding dinner to your ticket.

BUY TICKETS TABLAO FLAMENCO CORDOBES

Tarantos



Watch Video At: <https://youtu.be/cHltdEUNc8o>

Another classic place in the centre.

Like the previous one, it is also a small venue so you can appreciate the performers a lot better.

This place doesn't offer dining and their bar is quite dear so my advice is to have a drink somewhere else after the show while discussing the experience.

Performances last for about 30 minutes so it is a great option if you are looking for a more affordable introduction to Flamenco.

BUY TICKETS TARANTOS

Palacio del Flamenco



Watch Video At: <https://youtu.be/dOyD8aTv4Fs>

Set in an old theatre, this place is a lot bigger with a capacity of around 400.

The quality is still great though and, being not so small, prices are more affordable.

The main room is just a restaurant to sample a 3-course meal while enjoying the show.

BUY TICKETS PALACIO DEL FLAMENCO

MY LOCAL TIP: Always make sure that for flamenco shows you are at the front or have booked into a layered seating venue. For the dancing, you need to see the fancy footwork at play which means seeing the full stage, not just the top part.

Music Festivals

I love going to live concerts, so it is a great bonus that this city hosts a lot of great music festivals.

From rock to electronic to jazz, there is something to suit everyone's taste.

Please remember these are city music festivals so bringing your tent to a field is not an option!



Sonar Festival is a must for fans of electronic music. Photo by [Sonar](#)

Two big names are the Primavera and the Sonar festivals.

I always know Sonar is happening when I see the hoards of cool hipsters heading towards the fair areas. If electronic music is your thing, this is a cutting edge festival.

Primavera Sound is more my scene, with an array of different music styles and artists. Definitely worth checking who's playing as it might just be your favourite band.

MY LOCAL TIP: *Some of the festivals sell out quite quickly so don't wait until you arrive to buy your ticket!*

6- Immerse yourself in Catalan traditions at a local festival

I can't get over how many festivals take place in Barcelona every year!

There seems to be a party happening every week in the different boroughs.

I have listed three big ones but there are other neighbourhood celebrations worth checking out like Barceloneta, Sants and Poblenou.

Santa Eulalia (February)

My son is passionate about Catalan giants and fire breathing dragons, so every year we attend this festival to see these and much more.

Based in the centre, there is a very local feel with surprisingly few spectators (probably due to the winter cold!).



The winter festival in Barcelona celebrates its patron saint: Santa Eulalia Festival. Photo by Alzinous

Santa Eulalia is a beloved old patron saint of the city, a young girl from Roman times who was put to death for her Christian faith.

Her feast day is the 12th of February so, if you are here then, check the programme out.

The festivities are held over a few days, and, you never know, I might run into you there!

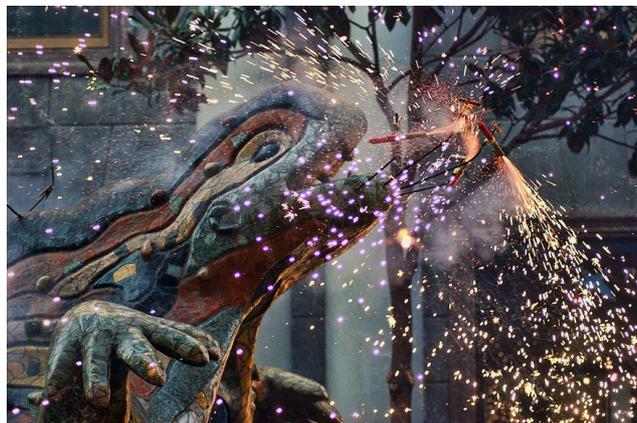
MY LOCAL TIP: *Eulalia herself is entombed inside a beautifully carved sarcophagus located in the crypt of the Cathedral. It only opens to the public on her saint's day so don't miss this special opportunity.*

Festes de Gràcia (August)

Gràcia is a fun and hip neighbourhood with a great arty vibe and its local festival is the most popular neighbourhood party in the city.

Various streets are decorated in themes with each avenue fighting out for the most creative look using recycled materials.

We make the pilgrimage here every August with our son to explore the borough.



Bangers and fire during the traditional correfoc at Gràcia Festival. Photo by [Curimedia](#) / [CC BY](#)

Nighttime festivities include lots of live music and bars selling takeaway mojitos on every corner.

The crazy partying goes on till all hours (I don't think the residents get much sleep).

Daytime sees traditional dances, human castles, kids shows, jigsaw and cooking competitions.

Don't miss it if you are around!

MY LOCAL TIP: *Nighttime is pretty crowded and noisy and inevitably the decorations get damaged. Go early in the festival to see them in their full glory.*

La Mercè (September)

This festival tops all other festivals in the city and has a huge and varied programme.

From concerts to projections, from parades of giants to fire runs, La Mercè is not one to miss!

There are activities all over the city and careful planning is needed if you want to get the most of your time here.



Watch Video At: <https://youtu.be/Vf1lOLtvmGE>

La Mercè is the Virgin of Mercy who was made a patron saint of the city in the 17th century.

She replaced poor Saint Eulalia in popularity who cries her heart out every La Mercè Day, on the 24th of September.

Many locals believe this myth and will always bring an umbrella with them.

MY LOCAL TIP: *The programme of events is huge and a little daunting to wade through. We have made a list of spectacular favourites that run every year to make planning easier.*

7- Take a walking tour to discover the city

A priority for me when on a city break is to dive into the history of the place by taking a walking tour.

Guidebooks are great but I love that personal introduction to a city that only a local can give you.

It's important to go with a good company to get a lively and informative tour. Here are my recommendations.

Free Walking Tours

These walking tours have become all the rage throughout the world and Barcelona is no different.

It's an amazingly fair system as you pay what you feel the tour is worth at the end!

If you feel the guide did a poor job you can just walk away with no obligation.

It has to be said, the guide does their utmost on tour to make sure their guests have a great time.



Runner Bean Tours offers two different Free Walking Tours in Barcelona, one in the Gothic Quarter and another one about Gaudí.

Gorka and I started Runner Bean Tours in 2010 when there was no other Free Tour in Barcelona.

I have to say that showing our city to visitors is still a dream job for us.

After more than 10 years, we are very proud to have an amazing group of local guides as part of the team.

There are two Free Tours on offer: one to discover the nooks and crannies of the Gothic Quarter and the other one focused on the architecture of Barcelona's favourite son, Antoni Gaudí.

I work as a guide myself so don't forget to say hi if you happen to join me on one of my walks.

***MY LOCAL TIP:** I always recommend booking the tours at the beginning of your stay as it will give you a very nice introduction to the city. Then, you can explore deeper with a lot more knowledge about what you are seeing.*

BOOK GOTHIC QUARTER FREE TOUR

BOOK GAUDÍ FREE TOUR

Spanish Civil War Tour

For those history buffs out there, this has to be one of the most complete tours I have ever been on.

Run by Nick Lloyd, this passionate guide will take you on a 4-5 hour experience you won't forget in a hurry!



Learn about the fascinating and tragic story of the Spanish Civil War on a walking tour with Nick Lloyd.

Wandering around the Gothic Quarter pointing out sights of relevance during the Civil War, he brings the story of this tragic era to life with photos and newspaper cuttings, cleverly building up the layers to give you a fascinating insight.

You can put your feet up halfway through the tour as the second half is discussion time and it's absorbing, to say the least.

MY LOCAL TIP: Nick Lloyd has written an excellent book called *"Forgotten places: Barcelona and the Spanish Civil War"*, based on Civil War and focused on Barcelona. Nick always has copies on hand and is worth buying if you want to explore and read more.

BOOK SPANISH CIVIL WAR TOUR

Tapas & Food Tours

One fast track way to get introduced to the food scene of the city is to take a food tour.

Not only you get brought to local establishments but you also get the lowdown on the traditional dishes.

An added bonus is meeting other like-minded foodies for a bit of social life while on holiday.



It's all about delicious food and local places at The Barcelona Taste.

A lot of the food tours on offer are tapas orientated.

Tapas are small dishes of food shared by friends over a drink during the evening or over the weekend.

Because they are little portions, it is a great way to try a variety of dishes on a guided visit.

However, be aware it is usually a basic affair so if you are looking for something a bit more upscale, research companies that offer a more gourmet style wander!

MY LOCAL TIP: My recommendation for a food tour company is definitely The Barcelona Taste. They only work with small groups (6 tops) making it a very personal experience. Most importantly, they are a small family company based only in Barcelona so you would also help support the local economy. Vegetarians and people with gluten allergies are also welcome.

BOOK TAPAS TOUR

8- Gorge yourself through Barcelona's food scene

Great food and superb cooking are a huge part of Spanish life. Barcelona, being a cosmopolitan city, has an exciting and buzzing food scene.

That alone is a great excuse to visit us!

La Boqueria food market

Welcome to the most famous food market in Barcelona!

Not to be missed by foodies and those of you interested in the culinary culture of Spain.

Gawk at sheep brains, skinned rabbits and bulls' balls, some of the more exotic meats available on stands.

Buy fresh fruit salads for breakfast, feast on small cones of cured ham and top it off with

a glass of wine.



You can find anything at the colourful stalls of La Boqueria Food Market.

The heart of this establishment is in the centre. Just follow your nose to those fabulous fish stands.

Locals will make the pilgrimage here to browse and buy fish for those special occasions.

The variety, choice and freshness are hard to beat anywhere else in the city.

MY LOCAL TIP: To get the full experience of this market, go in the mornings, Tuesday to Saturday, as a lot of local stands close in the afternoon.

Other food markets

If you wanted to try out a less hectic local market in the centre, try out Santa Caterina or Sant Antoni.

Santa Caterina with its eye-catching colourful roof is difficult to miss. There is less of a selection but has a friendly atmosphere with a couple of great restaurants to choose from.



The beautifully restored Sant Antoni Food Market, a delight for the eyes and the senses.
Photo by [Enric](#) / [CC BY-SA](#)

Sant Antoni (1882) is the pride of the neighbourhood, having been faithfully restored, and is just a gem to look at!

The food section goes hand in hand with clothes stands so you can combine shopping and food at this one!

MY LOCAL TIP: *The food markets are closed on Sundays here in Barcelona. However, if you venture to Sant Antoni that day you will find a cool second-hand book fair which also includes comics, cards and miniature figures on sale. It's a great atmosphere and worth checking out.*

Tapas indulgence

What's not to love about tapas? It's my favourite way of eating.

Small plates of food distributed in the centre of the table, shared with friends over a nice glass of wine or beer!

A great way of trying lots of different dishes in a fun and social way.



Watch Video At: <https://youtu.be/1hKOq4LVhwY>

Tapas, while originally from the south of Spain, is a tradition that has been embraced by the people of Barcelona.

From cheap bars offering happy hour deals to expensive gourmet restaurants with tasting experiences, you won't be short of choices in this city.

MY LOCAL TIP: *If you would like to try it yourself, check our grandma [Spanish omelette recipe](#), one of the most traditional tapas that you will find at every bar Spain.*

Sweets & desserts galore

I am a fan of rich sticky desserts and sometimes in traditional restaurants, the selection tends to be quite light and not very exciting.

However, one thing I can not fault here is the churros and chocolate tradition. A cup of thick rich hot chocolate served with fried batter sticks coated with sugar.

My advice is to go to an establishment that specialises in this treat to get the freshest and best quality.

Granja Viader or Granja Dulcinea are both great options.



Granja Dulcinea is one of the most traditional places in Barcelona to try chocolate and churros.

Photo by [Granja Dulcinea](#)

Another joy of the city is the fabulous patisseries (in the centre, La Colmena is a great example).

Some mornings I buy freshly baked chocolate croissants and doughnuts for my family. Barcelona, being a big city, has a bakery on every corner.

The smell of freshly baked delights are difficult to resist and is a great option for an easy stress-free breakfast.

MY LOCAL TIP: You have to try a *xuixo*, at least once in your lifetime. This is a delicacy from Girona of sugar-coated fried batter filled with custard.

Cooking classes

A cooking class is always on my bucket list when visiting an exciting food destination.

What better way to dig into a dish than making it yourself.

In Barcelona, you are not stuck for choice when it comes to cooking classes.



All the secrets of Spanish cuisine unveiled at the fantastic cooking classes of Barcelona Cooking.

Some classes include a market visit so you can learn about the ingredients and how the locals shop.

Paella as the main course and Crema Catalana as dessert seem to be the most offered on a lot of courses.

This is all paired with a nice wine that you can enjoy with other students while you gobble down all that you have made.

MY LOCAL TIP: I did a class with Candido at Barcelona cooking and it was excellent! They are a small local business and centrally located on Las Ramblas so their market visit is at the world-famous La Boqueria.

9- Climb the hills for the best viewpoints

I love viewpoints when the climb is not too hard and the crowds not too big. It gives you a more contemplative side to a city.

Read on for the most popular lookout points of Barcelona.

Montjuïc

Montjuïc Hill rises up from the sea and gives you a great vantage point for the port and central Barcelona.

It's also huge with its back sloping down into Plaça d'Espanya affording fabulous views of different areas of the city.

Locals flock to the parks, gardens and green areas for walks at the weekend so it can be quite busy then.



The Castle of Montjuïc is a great spot to enjoy fabulous sunsets over Barcelona.

Mirador del Mar is my favourite platform and gives you lovely sights of the waterfront.

Take the port cable car there if you are not scared of heights and finish with a glass of wine at the panoramic bar.

Another great view is from Montjuïc Castle that perches on top of this mass.

Again, a cable car ride (*Teleferic de Montjuïc*) will offer more spectacular vantages of Barcelona.

MY LOCAL TIP: *Montjuïc Hill is also a haven for nature and wildlife lovers. If you are one, we highly recommend Monica's [Green Tour of Barcelona](#). This is a great opportunity to learn about the Mediterranean trees and flora while having a chance of seeing the local amphibians, reptiles, birds and maybe even a wild boar.*

BUY TICKETS MONTJUÏC CABLE CAR

Tibidabo

Looming high over Barcelona is the Hill of Tibidabo. You can't miss it as a beautiful church crowns the very top.

Locals even use it to give directions towards the mountain or towards the sea.

At 512ft high, you can get an amazing panoramic of the whole urban landscape so bring your camera!



Watch Video At: <https://youtu.be/OuyzVMsZhQY>

It's a bit of a trek to get there and I always drive up.

Buses can be caught from Plaça Catalunya or you can take a more roundabout route involving metro, bus and cog-train.

Once at the top, you can visit the 19th-century church, have fun in the theme park or go for a hike or bike ride along the many trails of this reserve.

***MY LOCAL TIP:** Saturday and Sundays are super busy with locals visiting the theme park or taking hikes. If you want to skip the theme park, go during the week for a more relaxed experience.*

BUY TICKETS TIBIDABO AMUSEMENT PARK

Turó de la Rovira

This viewpoint, not only offers fantastic panoramic views but also fires the imagination.

Defence guns were installed here during the Spanish Civil War to defend the city from air raids.

The circular walls that enclosed these hunks of metal and their operators are still visible.

You can almost taste sitting there tensely waiting to hear the sirens for attacking planes approaching.

After the Civil War, a shantytown was established here and the remains of abandoned houses are still visible.

Makeshift housing that went up for refugees it was called the neighbourhood of the cannons.

Pulled down in the 1990s, it adds another layer of history to this site.

For sunset, it seems to be a mecca for backpackers with cans of beer seeing twilight into the city.

MY LOCAL TIP: *On route from the metro is Bar Las Delicias, one of the best traditional tapas restaurants I have tried in Barcelona. Huge portions, cheap prices it is mobbed by locals so try and book ahead.*

10- Learn at the city's best museums

Like every big city, Barcelona has a diverse range of great museums to help give you more of an insight into the place and its culture.

Read on to find the museum that might suit you on your trip.

City History Museum

Fancy taking a trip through time? This fascinating museum takes you back over 2000 years to the time of the Romans.

I love the fact you start the tour underground and actually get to walk through the excavated streets of the old city.

It's beautifully lit and really interesting descriptions give you a sense of life in those times.

You inevitably ascend and each floor above brings you nearer our timeline.

It's great to see Barcelona slowly growing and changing over the centuries through maps, models and paintings.

Don't miss the amazing 14th-century Royal Banqueting Hall although no food is on offer nowadays!

MY LOCAL TIP: *Got the Barcelona card? Well, visit this museum without charge! Alternatively, you can go on the first Sunday of the month or Sunday afternoons after 3 pm, also for free.*

Catalonia's History Museum

This is one of my favourites for learning history. A beautiful old red brick building that faces on to the old port.

It's huge inside with different floors that take you on a journey through different eras.



Learning all about Catalonia's history at the MHCAT. Photo by MHCAT.

Don't expect old dusty antiques on display. This is all about the narrative and interaction.

Pull a rope to see how much a knight's armour weighed. Walkthrough a garden planted by the conquerors from Africa to learn how this revolutionised agriculture in Spain.

With models and scenes, these displays help bring the past to life.

MY LOCAL TIP: It is worth doing a little research on Catalonia's history first to help the tour move fluidly.

Maritime Museum

What's not to love about this place? Model boats, old maps, touchable screens... it all makes for a very pleasant afternoon.

Kids and adults alike love this museum as it is very approachable and sea life is made exciting.

It's a great way to learn about an important part of Barcelona's past and I can't drag my son away from the miniature ships.



The impressive galleon replica at Barcelona's Maritime Museum. Photo by MMB.

The building is vast being an old ship making yard with origins back as far as the 12th century.

You can even board a lifesize replica of a 16th-century galleon within this huge building.

I have to say, my favourite part is the display of old maps throughout the centuries. The world's perimeters have certainly shifted from the olden times!

MY LOCAL TIP: *This is one of those museums that are free on Sunday afternoons and the first Sunday of the month. Expect a lot of loud families visiting during this time.*

Frederic Marès Museum

Quirky and endearing would be the words I use to describe this sweet little museum.

Frederic Marès was an artist and a fanatic collector!

When he died, he left his diverse collection to the people of Barcelona which is now housed in an old gorgeous Gothic Royal palace.



Watch Video At: <https://youtu.be/YyuDZIRpVqI>

I have to say it is a very eclectic museum. From old Roman statues to medieval crucifixes to matchbox collections.

If travelling with kids, check out the top floor with old puppet theatres, comic books and more.

Round of with a coffee in its beautiful medieval courtyard (it is my favourite hideaway to take guests on private tours).

MY LOCAL TIP: *It is free on the first Sunday of the month and every Sunday after 3 pm. Even during free times, this museum is never very busy!*

11- Go sporty with soccer

Football is huge in Barcelona and locals take great pride in the F.C Barcelona team.

Expect to see a mass of purple and blue t-shirts on the day of matches and sound effects of cheers and bangers when goals are scored!

Camp Nou

Some people say that the F.C. Barcelona football team is the best in the world.

Now, you can argue all you want but I have met fans who have travelled overseas at great expense just to see Barça play.

It ranks as the 3rd most visited tourist site in the city!

The Camp Nou building is a big pull itself.

Immense in size, with a sea of seats surrounding the pristine pitch, it is the largest soccer stadium in Europe.

It comes equipped with its own museum stocked with memorabilia, photos, trophies and a good insight into the history of the team.

There are a variety of tickets and tours available so check their website carefully to see what suits.

For a nice soccer-filled splurge, you can book a private tour discovering all the locations in the old city related to Barcelona (and there are a lot!) while ending with a visit to where all the dreams are made: Camp Nou Stadium.

The guide is Dani Sánchez, fan and expert in everything Barça. You can't go wrong with him.

***MY LOCAL TIP:** The museum closes depending on the timetable of the matches being played at the stadium. Check times so not to be disappointed.*

BUY TICKETS CAMP NOU STADIUM

BOOK F.C. BARCELONA & CAMP NOU PRIVATE TOUR

Soccer match

Seeing one of the biggest soccer stadiums in the world and all the trophies of a football team is always a treat.

But enjoying a live soccer match of the Spanish league can make the holiday of any football fan.

I am sure that you won't forget in your lifetime the experience of Messi scoring an amazing goal.



Attending a soccer match in Barcelona is one of the highlights for any football fan.

I strongly recommend booking the tickets in advance as they do sell out for the most popular games (who doesn't want to see a Barça-Real Madrid or a European league match?).

In any case, be ready to pay big bucks if you decide to purchase them with one of the illegal vendors outside the stadium. I strongly advise against this.

***MY LOCAL TIP:** These type of tickets can be quite expensive so, if you are not a huge football fan but still want to enjoy the experience, try booking tickets for the R.C.D. Espanyol. This is the second team in Barcelona but they are also in the first league so you are definitely getting a first-class game.*

BUY TICKETS F.C.- BARCELONA MATCH

BUY TICKETS R.C.D. ESPANYOL MATCH

12- Head outdoors for open-air sightseeing

The weather in Barcelona never gets too cold so open-air sightseeing is a viable option any time of the year.

With majestic parks and gardens spread throughout the city or sunny sandy beaches surrounding the coastline, you can spend a full day touring without seeing the interior of any monument!

Las Ramblas

This is our famous boulevard that cuts through the old heart of the city.

It's a beautiful ramble and crops up as one of the must do's in all the guide books.

For an easy stroll downwards, start in Plaça Catalunya and end at the Columbus Statue by the edge of the sea.



Las Ramblas is the most popular boulevard in Barcelona. Photo by [jrthibault](#).

Las Ramblas' name derives from the dry riverbed that filled in over the years.

During the 18th and 19th centuries, it became the grand paseo that it is today.

Nowadays, Las Ramblas gets pretty crowded and is quite touristy. The restaurants can overcharge so my advice is to enjoy the walk but duck into a side street for lunch or a drink!

MY LOCAL TIP: *If you want to explore La Rambla in a different way, check out [these blog posts](#). It is a self-guided walking tour (divided into 3 parts) which points out the main sights as well as more hidden places.*

Ciudadella Park

I've enjoyed many a lazy picnic in the green of this grand park.

Located on the fringes of El Born, locals head here for walks and general social outdoor gatherings.

Don't be surprised to see musicians, Thai chi, ping-pong matches and dance practise all happening in this open space.



The spectacular central fountain at Parc de la Ciutadella is always a delight for the eyes.

It was built in the grounds of the 1888 Universal Exhibition and still retains a lot of the fair's 19th-century landmarks.

The central fountain is its crowning glory and is quite spectacular. Just look for the golden figure of Aurora driving her golden chariot across the sky and you'll find your way there.

MY LOCAL TIP: *The best way to experience this park is definitely by picnicking here. Pack a few sandwiches and towel and soak up the ambience of this green area for a few hours.*

City beaches

One thing that makes Barcelona quite appealing is its beaches.

Families and sun-worshippers like to combine a cultural visit with some seaside fun.

You can laze in the heat on loungers with umbrellas that are for rent in high season.

For the more active, volleyball nets, ping-pong tables and exercise machines are scattered throughout the city's shoreline.



Barcelona's beaches are a great place to sport, play or just relax soaking in the Mediterranean sun.

I love taking my son down to the beach during the summer. The beautiful calm waters of the Mediterranean makes it perfect for taking a dip.

For those singletons out there, you can round off with a beer or a cocktail from the numerous *xiringuitos* (seaside bars) on each beach.

MY LOCAL TIP: *My recommendation would be Bogatell beach, next to the neighbourhood of Poble Nou. It is quieter, cleaner and you can head up Rambla of Poble Nou for some great tapas afterwards.*

Labyrinth of Horta Park

This is a bit of a trek to get to, but definitely worth it.

For a very small fee, you can enter the oldest conserved gardens of Barcelona.

They started in 1791 and are majestically beautiful. It feels like you are stepping back in time (with style and money).



Watch Video At: <https://youtu.be/oV5NBY6aPJo>

The gardens are Neoclassical in design so expect lots of statues of Greek and Roman gods.

There are areas perfectly manicured and landscaped, the highlight being a 2-metre high hedge labyrinth.

It is great fun getting to its centre where you are greeted by Eros, the God of Love.

Other parts are wilder where you can stroll through forests of planted trees and admire the size of someone's backyard!

MY LOCAL TIP: *It only costs a couple of euros to enter but you can take advantage of the free entry days Wednesday and Sunday.*

Botanical Gardens

For all those enthusiastic gardeners out there, this is another attraction to add to your list.

Here in Barcelona, our botanical gardens are in two locations (which causes endless confusion for visitors!).

The first, my favourite, is the Historical Botanical Gardens.

It's super cool. Located in a depression, you wander downwards through lush vegetation and you can feel that the trees and plants are from an era gone by.



The cactus collection at Barcelona's New Botanical Gardens

The modern bigger gardens have a more organised layout and lack the character of the old one.

On the plus side, it's easier to navigate with different zones representing different countries.

Both Gardens are located on Montjuïc mountain, the older park being a lot handier to get to by public transport.

MY LOCAL TIP: *The Botanics in Barcelona don't get many visitors except on the first Sunday of the month and Sunday afternoons after 3 pm when it is free entry.*

Poble Espanyol

Think of that buzzing year 1929 when the International Exhibition was held in Barcelona.

This tiny little setting was built as an exhibit in its own right.

The little shops and houses reflect architecture from different Spanish regions and inside, handicrafts were displayed.

The massive main square hosted bullfights, traditional dances, parties and showed off Spanish culture to its fullest.

Nowadays, it has recovered some of its former glory.

Artisans have been reinstated where you can see them diligently working away.

Wander around the pristine streets to get a taste for the typical Spanish town.

Remember that no one lives here so it really is a tourist attraction full of curious visitors like yourself.

MY LOCAL TIP: Displays and activities are still hosted here, including the famous flamenco show Tablao de Carmen. Check out their website to see what events are happening so you can get the most out of your visit.

BUY TICKETS POBLE ESPANYOL

13- Search for bargains at a local street market

One thing I always make time for on holiday is heading to a street market for a bit of holiday shopping.

Here in Barcelona, we have some great markets that vary greatly in character to each other.

Els Encants

For those bargain hunters out there that love a nice market visit on their holiday, look no further.

Antiques, furniture, dodgy goods, material stands, cheap mass-produced tat... Els Encants has it all.

You can't miss the structure! Just look for the amazing mirrored ceiling. It shines like sails on the horizon.

Once inside, you can look up to see every stand reflected so there is no way of getting lost!



Find little treasures at Els Encants Flea Market.

Photo by Encants Barcelona

Feeling hungry after all that shopping? There is a tiny buzzing food court located on the upper level.

Squeeze in on shared benches and chat to random people while taking in views of the city.

For those like myself with weak bladders, toilets are free and numerous within.

MY LOCAL TIP: While bargaining is not a custom in Spain, this is a flea market. Many nationalities are selling their goods and most vendors are open to a little bit of haggling.

Palo Alto Market

This one is a more upscale affair, attracting hipsters and craft lovers with cash to buy something original.

It runs one weekend a month and I always end up in a queue to get in.

Once in, it's a buzzy atmosphere with cool music, little bars to grab a drink and some great food stands.



Support local artisans at Palo Alto Market. Photo by Palo Market Fest

In general, it is an outdoor affair, although some of the stands are inside the old converted outhouses.

There is a cutting edge contemporary design area, cool vintage stands and crafty artisan stands.

You will need a half-day and it is worth checking out their website to see what concerts or workshops are happening.

I love spending a lazy Sunday morning here and definitely recommend it.

MY LOCAL TIP: There is a charge in so I recommend pre-buying your tickets on-line to get a discount.

14- Drink your way through the city

There is nothing like unwinding with an alcoholic beverage in hand while on holiday.

Let me fill you in on what the local drinking trends are in Barcelona so you can make the most out of your experience.

Vermouth culture

Picture a lazy Sunday morning, sitting in a nice terrace, a few olives on the table and a delicious sweet glass of vermouth in hand.

Before kids, this was a popular way of mine to spend a Sunday morning before heading out to lunch.

Traditionally it has always been an aperitif to build your appetite towards a big lunch. And trust me, it works!



Watch Video At: <https://youtu.be/Jw6aloBlBoo>

Once considered an old man's tippie, the vermouth drink has become trendy with many specialised bars cropping up all over the city.

The norm is a deep red colour, a wine that has been blended with spices and served from the barrel on tap.

Trusty vermouth establishments will blend their own and can get cult followers and once you try it. You will see why!

MY LOCAL TIP: *For a very traditional experience, I recommend trying Bodega Cal Pep, in Gràcia. Of course, they make their own blend. Order a small salty tapa (anchovies or olives) to help wash it down.*

Cava wineries

If you like champagne, then I recommend you give cava a whirl during your holiday.

Inspired by the French bubbly beverage, the Catalans tried their hand at creating sparkling wine using the same methods in the 19th century.

By law, we were not allowed to call it champagne because it is produced in Spain so we gave it the name “cava” which derives from cave or cellar.

The good news is that we don't charge as much as the French but the taste is just as great.



The wonderful cellars at Codorníu. Photo by Codorníu

If you are to visit any cellar, I would recommend Codorníu.

Firstly, it is stunning as Art Nouveau cellars were added in 1895 designed by Puig i Cadafalch, a contemporary of Gaudí.

They were also the first ones to produce sparkling wine in Spain and have a long-standing reputation.

Freixenet is another mainstream name but, of course, there are many more producers, especially in the Penedès region.

MY LOCAL TIP: *Hiring a car might get you to many more cellars. Plan a route in the Penedès region and pre-book the smaller cava producers as their timetable will be more to demand.*

Craft beer bars

Welcome to the latest drinking rage here in Barcelona.

Traditionally, the beer to order here is Estrella Damm, a light refreshing beer that slides down nicely on a hot day. You will still see this label on many of the bottles in outdoor terraces.

However, for those looking for something more adventurous, the craft beer scene has taken a stronghold over the city.



Enjoying a beer tasting at one of the local breweries. Photo by [Edge Brewing](#)

From microbreweries to brewpubs to bars specialising in artisan beers, you won't be lacking here in Barcelona.

[Edge](#) is a very popular brewery and offers tours and tastings on request.

I have been to a few open door parties here myself and loved the hip vibe and fantastic beer.

A recommended brewpub is the BlackLab that offers an [Asian influenced menu](#) and has a great open door space, sometimes with live music.

MY LOCAL TIP: *If serious about craft beer, check out the annual [Barcelona Beer Festival \(BBF\)](#). It is held outside the centre in an exhibition area. They organise talks, pairings, traditional beer games and there is even a Kids' Zone where you can leave the children with monitors as you wander around.*

15- Explore outside Barcelona on a day trip

While there are so many wonderful things to do in Barcelona, it is always nice to get out for a day trip to take in some of our gorgeous surroundings.

Check out my favourite day or half-day [excursions from Barcelona](#).

Montserrat

Montserrat translates to English as “serrated mountain” and when you first see it you will understand why!

Shooting upwards out of the landscape, it literally takes your breath away with rounded forms and the jagged top.

Over the years, I have done a few treks through this rocky range and it's not unusual to see rock climbers tackling the vertical walls.



The imposing Hill of Montserrat, a paradise for nature and history lovers.

For many, another huge draw of this mountain is its religious importance.

The beautiful Benedictine Monastery houses the sacred Black Madonna whom people flock to with prayers and requests.

You can view the gifts and written prayers on display to the virgin and expect queues to get a glimpse of this famous statue.

Don't miss visiting the great Art collection and listening to the unmissable Boys' Choir that performs most days.

MY LOCAL TIP: *If you are interested in taking a closer look at the Black Madonna, arrive before 10 am as queues can be quite long after that time.*

BOOK MONTSERRAT PRIVATE TOUR

Girona

I love Girona. The old centre is just stunning, like stepping back to medieval times.

Beautiful churches and palaces, narrow cobbled streets, beautiful Arabic baths... it really sets your imagination on fire.

This is probably why Game of Thrones chose it as one of the destinations to film scenes for their epic series.



Watch Video At: <https://youtu.be/ICa7LKPUVOw>

The centre is small enough to take in for a day trip while the river that runs through the centre helps you keep your bearings.

The channelled water gives an almost Venetian feel and makes for a very pretty photo opp on its many bridges.

Take a break from exploring by having lunch at one of the local restaurants in the centre. All in all a great day out.

MY LOCAL TIP: *Girona is quite local and Spanish people eat their main meal midday. Restaurants offer a menu of the day (3 courses and drink) at a great price during the week so take advantage.*

BOOK GIRONA PRIVATE TOUR

Cadaqués, Figueres & Dalí Museum

This day trip is a must for all those Salvador Dalí fans out there and for those who would like to find out about this artist.

Cadaqués is a pretty seaside town where Dalí's spent his summers.

It still retains much of its charm, with pebble cobbled streets, gorgeous whitewashed houses and the smell of the salty seawater.

Dalí's own house is just outside Cadaqués, in Portlligat and well worth a visit.

Don't forget to explore the wild Cap de Creus Natural Park and marvel at its wild landscapes and wind-shaped rocks. These were the inspiration for many a Dalí painting.



The Salvador Dalí Museum is an extravagant piece of art in itself. Photo by [Museu Salvador Dalí](#).

Round off with a visit to the [Dalí museum in Figueres](#) and have fun with the playful layout.

Dalí bought the destroyed theatre and converted it into a journey of surrealism.

And guess where the artist is buried? That's right, you can pay your respects to the man himself.

MY LOCAL TIP: *This is a very full day. If you are making your own way there, get a very early start to make the most of your visit. Distances are deceptive as the roads bend and curve a lot in this area and can take a while to navigate.*

BOOK GIRONA & DALÍ MUSEUM PRIVATE TOUR

Sitges

Sticky ice creams, sandy beaches and pretty Art Nouveau architecture all come to mind when I think of Sitges.

It's a popular seaside town which gets flooded with day-trippers during summer holidays and weekends.

If you like seafood, there is plenty on offer in the restaurants here and if you still have energy, a lively night scene round off with.

Many Barcelonans will head to Sitges for carnival as it is a bigger and better party than in Barcelona.

It is also a popular hub for the LGBTI community with plenty on offer.

The internationally renowned Fantasy (horror & sci-fi) Film Festival is also hosted here. If you are around and a fan, don't miss it. You can even join the zombie parade!

MY LOCAL TIP: *There is no need to hire a car for this one. It is very well connected by train with the stop being quite central. Only takes about 30-40 minutes from*

Barcelona's central stations.

Tarragona

One of my favourite day trips is to bundle the family together and head an hour south to Tarragona.

Once the Roman capital of Northern Iberia, it really sets the imagination on fire.

The centre is a mish-mash of grand Roman structures and modern architecture.

Add a splash of green with trees and parks and it makes for a really pleasant city getaway.



Tarragona's Roman Amphitheatre is one of the highlights of a visit to the Roman city.

There is plenty to see, from the Roman Amphitheatre to the old Roman Circus, with plenty of museums to keep you informed.

My recommendation is to get a map from the tourist office and a general ticket that allows access to all key sights.

MY LOCAL TIP: *If getting there by car, don't miss the two-storey aqueduct (Pont del Diable) just before reaching the town. It's only 4km outside Tarragona and you can even walk across it! To get there from Tarragona, take the N-240 towards Lleida.*

Phew! That's me rounding off my recommendations of things to do in Barcelona while on holiday. I hope it helps you with planning.

I am certain you will love Barcelona just as much as I do. We might even cross paths on tour or on the street!

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Main photograph by [tyler hendy](#) in [Pexels](#)