



Barcelona

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HISTORY



Barcelona, city, seaport, and capital of Barcelona Provincia (province) and of Catalonia Comunidad autónoma (autonomous community), northeastern Spain, located 90-miles (150-km) south of the French border. It is Spain's major Mediterranean port and commercial center and is famed for its individuality, cultural interest, and physical beauty.

In the Beginning

The first vestiges of the area date back to 2500 BC. and the existence of the first settlement dates from between 2000 and 1500 BC. According to Rufo Festo Avieno, a Latin poet born at the end of the fourth century, Barcelona and its surroundings was home to two Iberian villages: one on Mont Tàber, whose name is unknown. This hamlet has been called Barcilo, Barcinom or Barkeno by various historians and is believed to be the origin of the name Barcelona. The other settlement was called Laye and was founded on Montjüic. It was inhabited by the Laietani.

Count Borrell II

In the year 988, Count Borrell II secured the county of Barcelona's independence from the Carolingian empire. He then expanded the entire region, and it later became known as Catalonia.

Political Authority Freedom

When the Industrial Revolution began to gather strength in the 19th century, Barcelona's contributions to the cause once again returned it to its status of a great and powerful city. It only got better from there, and Barcelona was honored with the opportunity to host the World's Fair in 1888. As Barcelona continued to thrive, a huge demand went up for more political freedoms against the Francoist dictatorship that Catalonia had been laboring under for several decades. Following the death of the dictator, Catalonia finally regained its complete political authority in 1977, and Barcelona was free to become one of the most important and elaborate cities in all of Spain. It continues to attract important events today, which include the hosting of the Olympic Games in 1992 and the Universal Forum of Cultures in 2004.



MONEY



Barcelona has long been an expensive city, but prices are still lower than they are an hour north across the French border. Euro is the currency that is widely used in Spain. You will find the banknotes in denominations of 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200 and 500 Euro. Coins are available in 1 and 2 Euro as well as 1, 2, 5, 10, 20 and 50 cents.

Credit Cards

Credit cards are the safest way to carry money. They provide a record of all your expenses and offer relatively good exchange rates. You can get cash advances on your credit cards at banks or ATMs, provided you know your PIN. You'll pay interest from the moment of withdrawal, even if you pay your monthly bill on time. American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard, and Visa credit cards are all widely accepted in Spain.

Debit Cards

Debit cards are widely accepted in large towns and tourist areas. You might still find smaller independent retailers who do not accept card payment, however. It's best to keep a small number of euros on you, just in case.



Visitors From The USA

Exchange rates of participating countries are locked into the common currency, fluctuating against the dollar. Exchange rates may be more favorable when you arrive in Barcelona but it's helpful to have at least some money in local currency when you get there. Currency and traveler's checks can be changed at all the local airports. When paying with a credit card, a photo ID is often required, even for chip cards where you're required to enter your PIN (for US travelers without chip cards, just indicate that you'll give a signature).

ATMs

Barcelona abounds with banks, many of which have ATMs. ATMs are in plentiful supply around Plaça de Catalunya, and along Via Laietana and La Rambla. Most ATMs allow you to use international debit or credit cards to withdraw money in euros. There is usually a charge (around 1.5% to 2%) on ATM cash withdrawals when abroad.

HELPFUL INFO

Climate

The climate of Barcelona is the Mediterranean, with mild, relatively rainy winters and hot, sunny summers. The monthly average temperature ranges from 9 °C (48 °F) in January to 24.5 °C (76 °F) in August. The best time to visit Barcelona is spring, from mid-April to mid-June. September, too, is a good month, but it is quite rainy. Summer, from mid-June to August, can be hot and muggy, though it is the best time for a beach holiday. Winter is usually mild, but sometimes it can get a bit cold and it can rain.

Electricity

The electrical current in Spain is 220-volts, 50-cycles alternating current (AC); wall outlets take Continental-type plugs, with two round prongs. An adapter from flat to round prongs is a must for computers and hair dryers.



Technology & Communication

Internet access via Wifi is available in virtually all Barcelona hotels. In addition, many cafés and bars are Internet hotspots and have signs indicating it in their windows. An important piece to pack is the adapter that translates flat-edged plugs or triple plugs to round dual ones. Wi-

Fi is common throughout Barcelona. Spain's telephone system is efficient, and direct dialing is the norm everywhere. Only cell phones conforming to the European GSM standard will work in Spain. All Spanish area codes begin with a 9; for instance, Barcelona is 93 and Bilbao is 94. The 900 code indicates a toll-free number. Numbers that begin with 901 and 902 charges the caller for the call. Numbers starting with a 6 indicate a cellular phone; note that calls from landlines to cell phones (and vice versa) are significantly more expensive.

Infrastructure & Transport

Famed for its architectural treasures, Barcelona has striking Gothic cathedrals, fantastical Modernista creations and avant-garde works from more recent days. The most developed part of Spain's infrastructure is the train system, which is one of the best in Western Europe. With regard to roads, Spain's 343,389-kilometers (213,382-miles, in 1999) of a paved highway are similarly radial in design and 9,063-kilometers (5,632-miles) of it is expressway (1997). Due to its long coastline, Spain depends heavily on maritime transport for the import and export of goods to both European states as well as those at the outside of Western Europe. Its merchant marine and fishing fleet is among the largest and most important in the world. Traffic is heavily concentrated in the ports of Bilbao, Algeciras, Tarragona, and Barcelona. Although Spain's infrastructure is similar to the rest of Western Europe, there is nevertheless an ongoing process of upgrading roads, airports, seaports, and railroads through public, private, and joint investment.



In Case Of An Emergency

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Language

The region of Catalonia has two official languages. Spanish and Catalan, of which are both spoken. In offices and schools, Catalan is the dominant language. Similarly, many lectures at the University are held in Catalan. Road signs and labels e.g. in museums are usually bilingual.

Visitors to Barcelona come off well with Spanish, although the locals are happy about a greeting in Catalan.



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LGBT Travel

Despite fierce opposition from the Catholic Church, Spain legalized same-sex marriage in 2005. It became the fourth country in the world to do so. A poll just prior to the legislation passing found that over 60% of Spaniards favored the legalization of same-sex marriage. Gay and lesbian married couples can also adopt children. As a rule, Barcelona is pretty tolerant and the sight of gay or lesbian couples arm in arm is generally unlikely to raise eyebrows. Transgenderism, too, is increasingly accepted.

Religion

The most widely practiced religion in Barcelona is Catholicism but secularization is strong, in line with the Spanish and Western European trends. After Christianity, Islam is the second largest religion. The city also has the largest Jewish community in Spain, with an estimated 3,500 Jewish residents.



Getting There

Plane

Barcelona airport, with several terminals, is located 16-kilometers south of the city and is also known as Barcelona-El Prat.

Train

Barcelona has direct railway links including important cities like Paris, Lyon, Marseille, Toulouse, and the high-speed train runs to Madrid, southern and eastern Spain.

Car

Barcelona is well connected and has a large number of car parks.

Bus

The bus station in Barcelona that has the most national and international connections is Barcelona Nord Bus Station. Buses also depart from Barcelona Sants station and other areas of the city.

Boat

Barcelona has become the Mediterranean's foremost cruise ship harbor. It has nine passenger terminals, seven for cruise liners and four for ferries.

Driving

Major routes throughout Spain bear heavy traffic, especially in peak holiday periods. Spain has one of the highest traffic accident rates in Europe, and the roads are shared by a mixture of local drivers, immigrants, and non-Spanish travelers on vacation, some of whom are more accustomed to driving on the left-hand side of the road.

The country's main cities are well connected by a network of four-lane *autovías* (freeways). The letter N stands for a national route (*Carretera Nacional*), either four- or two-lane. An *Autopista* (AP) is a toll road. At the tollbooth plazas (the term in Castilian is *peaje*; in Catalan, *peatge*), there are three systems to choose from—automatic, with machines for credit cards or coins; manual, with an attendant; or *telepago*, an automatic chip-driven system mostly used by Spanish drivers.

THE EXPERIENCE

Culture

The cultural roots of Barcelona go back centuries. The people of this city love arts and entertainment and so, Barcelona has numerous venues for live music, operas, theatres, orchestras and more. As the capital and chief cultural center of Catalonia, Barcelona is also the 'literary hub' of all works created in the Catalan language. The city hosts international conferences and expositions. Sports are another aspect of its rich culture. Barcelona shot to fame after it successfully hosted the 1992 Summer Olympics. Barcelona celebrates a number of festivals that are both religious and cultural. Some festivals include Epiphany, Formula One Spanish Grand Prix, Primavera Sound Festival and Barcelona Independent Film Festival.

Bucket List

Take a day trip to Montserrat

Visit the Picasso Museum

Visit the fairies themed bar

Learn how to salsa for free

Take a chupito or two

Wander through the Gothic Quarter

Hike up Montjuïc

See a Flamenco show

Family Travel Highlights

See a Flamenco show

Take a tour at the Museu De La Xocolata

Hop on the magical carousel at the Tibidabo Amusement Park

Watch a movie under the stars

Watch talented young skaters in front of MACBA

Play beach volleyball at Barceloneta

Join a free walking tour

Tourism Authority

The Tourist Office of Spain and its website provides valuable practical information about visiting the country. Turisme de Barcelona has two main locations: Plaça de Catalunya, in the center of town, open daily 8:30–8:30; and Plaça Sant Jaume in the Gothic Quarter, open weekdays 8:30–8, Saturday 9–7, and Sunday 9–2. Other tourist information stands are near the top of La Rambla just below Carrer Tallers, at the port end of La Rambla (just beyond the Columbus monument) and at the main entrance of the Sagrada Família. There are smaller facilities at the Sants train station, open daily 8–8; the Palau de la Virreina, open Monday–Saturday 9–9 and Sunday 10–2; the Glories tourist point in the center of the @22 district, open Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday 10–5; and the Palau de Congressos, open daily 10–8 during trade fairs and conventions only. For general information in English, dial 010 between 8 am and 10 pm any day except for Sunday.



PISTACHIO VERDE
62,10

CEREZA
DESSECCADA

ARANDANO AZUL

FRONDA
DE...
P.V.P.

ARANDANO ROJO
21,00
P.V.P.

VERDURA DESECADA
31,90
P.V.P.
€ KILO

Foods To Try

Bombas

Blistered Peppers

Spanish Omelet

Manchego Cheese

Pa amb tomàquet

Croquetas

Bocadillos

Paella

Gazpacho

Drinks To Try

Sangria

Cava

Leche de Pantera

Vermouth

Beer (Cerveza)



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ES

CENTRE ESPORTIU MUNICIPAL COLON

ATENCIÓ Zona Escolar

l'oliva

AMAVA

16

GOLFI

1892

Photography Hot Spots

Sagrada Familia

Casa Batlló

The Magic Fountain

Mercado de la Boqueria

La Barceloneta

The Gothic Quarter

Arc de Triomf

Palau de la Música Catalana

Souvenirs To Buy

Pair of Espardenyes

Barca Jersey

artisan turrón

Caganer figurine

la Típica Candela

Pinza't

Porró

