



nileGUIDE

ALL YOU NEED TO PLAN YOUR PERFECT TRIP



My Barcelona Trip

Hong Kong, Barcelona, 7 Days

Table of contents:

Guide Description 2

My List 3

Hong Kong Snapshot 6

Barcelona Snapshot 10

Guide Description

AUTHOR NOTE: barcelona!

contact:

tel: 90-220-23-45 for reservations

fax: 93-255-30-02

www.hotelcasafuster.com/

location:

Passeig de Gràcia
132

Barcelona CT 08008

1 Hotel Casa Fuster

DESCRIPTION: Opened in 2004 for the first time as a hotel, Casa Fuster is one of the city's most emblematic modernist buildings. In the early 20th century it served as private home for the Fuster family, before being bought by a state electricity company in 1960. Recently acquired by the Center Group, which invested 68 million euros (\$78.2 million) in its ambitious face-lift, the Casa Fuster is now classified as a five-star deluxe hotel. The result is a combination of sheer luxury and state-of-the-art amenities. The renovation has been meticulous in the foyer and downstairs Café Viennese, once a well-known meeting spot for the city's intelligentsia. A Belle Epoque color scheme in mauve, magenta, and taupe has been adopted in the rooms, many with balconies that look onto the elegant Passeig de Gràcia. In keeping with the period architecture, drapery, cushions, and padding are abundant, giving the hotel a slightly over-stuffed feel for some. But if it's total indulgence you are after, plus a chance to live like the turn-of-the-20th-century bourgeoisie, the Casa Fuster offers everything you could possibly want: from Loewe toiletries to hydro-massage showers and an extremely high staff-to-guest ratio. Unlike other luxury hotels such as the Arts or La Florida, the Casa Fuster also has the added advantage of being located in the city center, with some of the best shopping and sightseeing on its doorstep. Check their website for special deals. © Frommer's



Photo courtesy of Hotel Casa Fuster

contact:

tel: 852/2549 5123

fax: +852 2559 9458

www.hkmmms.org.hk

location:

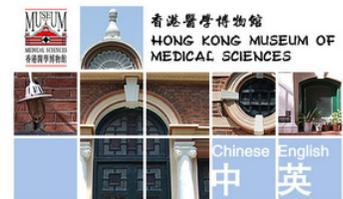
2 Caine Lane
Hong Kong

hours:

Tues-Sat 10am-5pm; Sun and holidays 1-5pm

2 Hong Kong Museum of Medical Sciences

DESCRIPTION: This museum charts the historical development of medical science in Hong Kong. It's located in the century-old, Edwardian-style former Pathological Institute, which was founded to combat the colony's most horrific outbreak of bubonic plague, in 1894. Back then, British patients were treated upstairs, while the Chinese were relegated to the basement rooms. Several rooms remain almost exactly as they were, including an autopsy room and a laboratory filled with old equipment, while others serve as exhibition rooms devoted to such areas as the development of dentistry and radiology (note the X-ray of the bound foot) and the appalling living conditions in Tai Ping Shan, where the 1894 outbreak occurred (the cause of the plague was identified in Hong Kong shortly thereafter). But what makes the museum particularly fascinating is its unique comparison of traditional Chinese and Western medicine, and its funding of research into Chinese medicine. Included is a display on traditional Chinese herbs. You can easily spend 30 minutes here. © Frommer's



chinese

contact:

tel: +852 2739 2139
fax: +852 2311 5229
<http://www.lcsd.gov.hk/CE/CulturalService/HKFA/english/engindex.html>

location:

50 Lei King Road
Hong Kong

hours:

Main Foyer: M-Su 10a-8p or
15 minutes after the end of
the last screening, Box Office:
F-W Noon-8p

3 Hong Kong Film Archive

DESCRIPTION: The Hong Kong Film Archive has been established for the preservation and research of local films. The main functions include collecting and documenting film prints and related materials, and publishing film biographies. The archive houses a 110-seat cinema, an exhibition hall, a research and study centre with individual viewing booths, cold storage for film prints, conservation laboratories, and a computerized cataloguing system recording film-ographic and technical information. Screenings, exhibitions and lectures on special topics are held throughout the year. © wcities.com



wcities

contact:

tel: +852 2724 3682
fax: +852 2813 0490

location:

Pro Shop, 1/F, 31 Mody Road
Hong Kong

4 Windsurfing

DESCRIPTION: In 1996, Hong Kong's Lee Lai Shan won an Olympic gold medal for windsurfing, which catapulted the sport into popularity locally. A good place to start looking for information is the Pro Shop (details below)--they will let you know what you need in terms of equipment and can put you in touch with various rental businesses as well. For more advice or rental information, try the Stanley Windsurfing Centre (+852 2813 2882) or the Windsurfing Centre at Sha Ha, near Sai Kung (+852 2792 5605). The Windsurfing Association of Hong Kong (+852 2504 8255) is another excellent resource. © wcities.com

contact:

tel: +852 2849 7654
fax: +852 2849 6237
<http://www.thepeak.com.hk/>

location:

Garden Road
Hong Kong

5 Peak Tram

DESCRIPTION: No visit to Hong Kong is complete without a visit to the Peak. What is the most authentic way of getting there? The Peak Tram no doubt. Before the Peak Tram opened, hardly anyone travelled to the Peak. Part of the experience is watching the faces of tourists glow with delight as they climb the steepest slopes of Victoria Peak on the Tram. The Tram, which is itself an attraction, dates back to 1888 with new and larger cars installed in 1989. These cars are pulled by 1,500m steel cables wound on drums. Passengers sit back for a literally vertical ride enjoying panoramic views as the car steadily makes its way to the top. The Peak Tram station is located right opposite the Hong Kong US Embassy and the best way to get to the Tram station would be to take the bus. Expect long queues if you go right before 7pm, the peak is a tourist haven and you will be able to take postcard pictures of Victoria Harbour line. © NileGuide



contact:

tel: +852 2387 4224
<http://www.lcsd.gov.hk/beach/en/swim-location-hk.php>

location:

6 Lei Chung Uk Swimming Pool

DESCRIPTION: Whether you are a hard-core fitness freak, or just looking for somewhere to escape the heat, there are many options for swimming in the Kowloon area. Remember to call first

25 Kwong Lee Road
Hong Kong

to check on hours and facilities available. Most public pools are administered by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, and are accessible by public transport. Enjoy! © wcities.com

hours:
7a-9p M-Su

Hong Kong Snapshot

Local Info

Cosmopolitan, international and a vivid city of the future, boasting an astonishing blend of beautiful mountain parks and vibrant modern architecture. Crowded, chaotic, but always charismatic, Hong Kong remains the gateway to China, and remains renowned as the 'Pearl of the Orient'.

Which country is Hong Kong in? Is Hong Kong part of China?

The handover of Hong Kong took place in 1997 and since then Hong Kong has been a Special Administrative Region belonging to China but its colonial roots and British influence on all walks of life can still be seen easily. Under the 'One country two systems' slogan, Hong Kongers have gotten used to the laissez faire attitude of the Hong Kong Government in juxtaposition to China. As one of the freest economies in the world, nearly seven million people are crammed and make a living from the mere 1,100 square kilometres that make up the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR). Hong Kong is second to Tokyo in terms of population density. The pace of life is quick and Hong Kong is renowned for its efficiency and rush hour traffic.

What does Hong Kong mean?

The official language in Hong Kong is Cantonese rather than Mandarin but English is commonly spoken as well. In Cantonese, which is a different dialect from Mandarin, 'Hong Kong' mirrors the Cantonese pronunciation 'Heung Gong' meaning fragrant harbour. The name stems from the fact that Hong Kong's harbour used to be a humid sleepy fishing village with plenty of boats parked around the harbour.

The skyline of Hong Kong is one of the most awe inspiring and panoramic in the world. Some of Hong Kong's favourite skyscrapers include but are not limited to the HSBC building, Bank of China Tower, IFC and Central Plaza complimented by numerous high rise residential apartments. Not just a city of skyscrapers, there is also lush countryside in Sai Kung, Tai Mo Shan and small rural communities in Peng Chau, Cheung Chau as well as Lamma Island.

© NileGuide

Restaurants Insights

Hong Kong is dubbed as a culinary heaven not for no good reason, the food is a paradise, tantalizingly diverse and innovative. From sophisticated fine dining in Eastern, Western, Fusion as well as international buffets to street food outlets serving local delicacies, there is something for everyone and every budget and food is available everywhere you go at every corner and at all hours. If you want to spring for a dream meal you can do that too. The vast majority of Hong Kong's 10,000 odd restaurants serve Cantonese food, of course. Cantonese is by far the most popular Chinese cuisine in Hong Kong, but Chiu Chow, Shanghainese, Sichuanese and Northern are also widely available. Because of Hong Kong's close proximity to China, Hong Kong Restaurants are incredibly blessed with an army of incredible and artistic culinary Chinese chefs who pride themselves in their innovative and artistic culinary skills, serving up signature dishes from around China.

For a real dining experience in Hong Kong, eating out in the street cafes and stalls is a must. At these informal outlets, and Temple street night market is especially worth a mention where you can experience local dai pai dong food in the surrounding streets. Famous throughout Hong Kong and beyond, the 'greasy goose' restaurants at Yue Kee Sham Tseng have been popular for many years. The famous Sham Tseng Roast goose is specially air dried for some hours after initial basting with honey, oil and spices. This process, apparently, helps to crisp the skin and makes the flesh moist and tender. Sham Tseng siu ngor (roast goose) is renowned all over Hong Kong and weekend evenings are especially popular times to visit Sham Tseng, and the goose restaurants are one of those perennial local favourites that too many visitors to Hong Kong never see or experience. Well worth trying!

One of Tsim Sha Tsui's most popular venues for late night tong shui (Chinese sweet soups), Honeymoon Dessert has been around for years and packs in the crowds, especially on weekends when

he queue for a table can easily stretch out into the street. Yet another popular one is Tong Pak Fu Like many culinary phenomena that newcomers either love or loathe, Chinese tong shui must be tried at least a few times before a firm like it or not decision can be reached.

In fact, all the flavours of the world are showcased here. Japanese food is the most popular Asian food after Chinese, and a plethora of Japanese restaurants with famous international brand names such as Nobu and Zuma have opened their doors here to the well heeled crowds. In contrast, there are inexpensive Japanese cafes and small outlets like Yoshinoya and Genryoku Sushi serving an array of Japanese street food Japanese style.

Authentic Thai tastes can be surprisingly difficult to find, and many enthusiasts find a culinary pilgrimage to Orchid Thai Food every so often is well worth the journey. It is unsurprisingly most patronized by expat Thais and those Hong Kong Chinese who appreciate the authenticity on offer here.

If you are having a bad noodle day, don't despair: you've in fact come to the right place- Hong Kong is where East eats West and you'll find bangers and mash at the Stag's Head, lasagne at Fat Angelo's as well as Curry Chicken at Gaylord's before you can say 'beef congee'. Central is the best pick for Western Restaurants, especially Soho, though you'll find a fair few offering alfresco dining in Tsim Sha Tsui's Knutsford Terrace.

© NileGuide

Nightlife Insights

Soho is the place to be for the lively atmosphere of Hong Kong nightlife. Chic restaurants, upbeat bars and cafes, make a beeline for South of Hollywood Road, or Soho for short. The area consists of Stanton's Wine bar and Cafe, Drop, Prive as well as the Fringe Club.

While Soho has its appeal to a younger expat crowd by day and night, Lan Kwai Fong by D'Arguilar Street in Central is the place to be when the lights are low and you are in the party mood. The place is buzzing with clubs, funky bars, pubs and restaurants that swell up with crowds of merrymakers and drinkers partying till the

Hong Kong Snapshot continued

crack of dawn. It is party central for the 'in crowds and night owls'.

Although Wanchai had a reputation during the Vietnam War as an anything goes red light district, today it's mainly a centre for shopping, business and more upmarket entertainment. If you want to see how far Wanchai has come, check out Klong Bar, Ang grill and La Bamba. Royal Arms retains some of its old character with hostess bars along Lockhart Road, and part upbeat fun with lots of zippy club action and late night cover band venues at the western ends of Jaffe and Lockhart Road.

Yau Ma Tei is well known for all manner of cheap and cheerful items, from inexpensive clothing to copy watches to plastic toys and gadgets. Temple Street is still a lot of fun to wander around if you want to see the local Hong Kong nightlife and is as popular with locals out for a low cost nightlife in Kowloon as tourists. To the right of Temple Street are complexes which house a plethora of English speaking, tourist friendly fortune tellers. The temple has a curious arrangement whereby the individual worshiper draws the lost but not the slip of paper explaining what the lot means. This is where fortune tellers come in to give you a vague interpretation.

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Things to Do Insights

Hong Kong culture:

What to do in Hong Kong?

All right, so you have settled into your hotel, you have ordered room service, you are all set for your big meeting tomorrow and you are bored. What to do? Never fear, the answer is here! Movies, dance, music, museums or horse racing, one thing is for sure: Hong Kong will not disappoint.

Hong Kong traditions:

Cantonese Opera: Shriill Pleasure In a style that critics describe as "the sound of cats mating to music," the proud tradition of Cantonese Opera is alive and well in Hong Kong. Actually, learning a little about this art form beforehand, and getting a synopsis of the plot, can make watching Cantonese Opera very rewarding. The costumes and stylised gestures, along with the often acrobatic dancing and high-pitched

singing, make for a unique entertainment experience.

There are several varieties of Chinese Opera, but the Cantonese style tends to have the most outstanding physical choreography. The form is now taught in a special program at the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, and performances can be seen at many venues around town. Civic Theatres such as the Shatin Town Hall, or the North District Town Hall will happily provide more information. In addition, there is often a major opera company performing at the annual Hong Kong Arts Festival in February and March.

Canto Pop: What It Is, and How to Avoid It

Canto Pop is the term used to describe Hong Kong's particular brand of pop music. Think Celine Dion meets Karaoke. Sugary, and generally composed of bland tunes that rip off mid-70s hits by the Eagles, it is definitely an acquired taste! However, if a good, clean melodic puppy-love tune is the order of the day, then Canto Pop is the answer.

The best way to hear Canto Pop is to ride the local buses, on which loudspeakers pipe in local radio broadcasts. For anyone hankering after a live performance, there are the occasional concerts at the Hong Kong Coliseum or the Queen Elizabeth Stadium by huge stars like Faye Wong, Andy Lau or Leon Lai.

Dance: Something for Everyone Most of the city's arts festivals feature dance as a major component. Whether it be ballet, modern dance or the traditional Chinese Lion Dance, there is usually lots of movement to be found at venues such as the Hong Kong Arts Centre, Shatin Town Hall, Kwai Tsing Theatre, and Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts.

The Hong Kong Ballet performs strong renditions of classical ballets, while the City Contemporary Dance Company creates modern, innovative pieces. The colourful Lion Dance is usually performed at the opening of new businesses, at weddings or at other events where the organizers want to ward off evil spirits. Chinese New Year is a great time to see a lion dance on the street or near a temple.

Theatre: What a Buzz Aside from the many major international touring productions that stop off in Hong Kong, there is lots going on in the local theatre

scene, both in Cantonese and English. The Fringe Club is the hub of theatre activity in town. It also puts on the annual City Festival, a multi-disciplinary festival that features a blend of up-and-coming theatre artists with more well-known performers. In addition, the Kwai Tsing Theatre lines up a challenging season of new commissioned works as well as classics.

Movies: Everybody was Kung-fu

Fighting Most people think Hong Kong cinema is all about violence and martial arts and they are right, for the most part. Heroes such as Bruce Lee and Jackie Chan have spawned a whole slew of violent martial arts films with overblown tragic plots and fast action.

Aside from seeing the latest films, sitting in a big, comfy, air-conditioned theatre, such as the AMC Festival Walk, can also be a great way to escape the heat of summer.

As well as all the usual cinematic offerings, there is a strong indie film scene, mainly featured at the Hong Kong International Film Festival, while art house and foreign films can be found at venues such as the Goethe-Institut (mainly German films) and the Broadway Cinemateque.

Museums and Galleries: So Much to Do, So Little Time

From the scientific rigours of the Space Museum to the modern art installations in the galleries at the Fringe Club, from the informative and unique Law Uk Folk Museum to the bizarre (and definitely worth a visit) Police Museum, there is no shortage of cultural venues in Hong Kong. Of course, there is also the Hong Kong Cultural Centre, and the fantastic Marine Land at Ocean Park, and a quick stroll through Central will reveal many intriguing little antique stores and galleries, so take your pick! Those who dismissively suggest that modern Hong Kong gives no attention to its own past should visit the Hong Kong History Museum. The Hong Kong Story is justifiably one of the museum's most popular permanent exhibits, and remains one of the best ways to gain a broad overview of Hong Kong's past. Well-curated thematic galleries take the visitor through various stages of Hong Kong's development.

Horse Races To experience the complete insanity of a crowd in Hong Kong, a visit to one of the city's horse-racing tracks—the Happy Valley Racecourse or the Shatin Racecourse—is a must. Intense gambling

Hong Kong Snapshot continued

and socializing mixed with the excitement of first-rate horse racing; who knows who will be the winner. No group of people enjoys a flutter as much as Hong Kong, and horse racing worth more than \$1 billion annually, remains the most popular form of gambling in Hong Kong. Be prepared for a lot of noise at the races. If you are in Hong Kong for less than 21 days and are over 18 years old, its best to buy a tourist ticket, which allows you to jump the queue, sit in the members enclosure and walk around next to the finish area.

Essential Booking Information Cityline:
(+852) 2314 4228 URBTIX:(+852) 2734
9009 Hong Kong Tourist Association:(+852)
2508 1234
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Travel Tips

Getting There:

By Air:

Hong Kong International Airport has, since its inception, been awarded the World's best airport year after year and the Hong Kong Chek Lap Kok airport second to Chicago's O' Hare airport in terms of passenger traffic and the amount of cargo it handles. Offering 14 hour service on numerous airlines to destinations around the globe. Because of Hong Kong's geographical location as the gateway to China, plenty choose to stopover in Hong Kong and spend a few days touring the city when transferring flights.

There are a number of transit services that provide transportation from Hong Kong International Airport to destinations in and around urban Hong Kong. From the airport, there are MTR Airport Express trains(+852 2881 8888/http://www.mtr.com.hk/prehome/index.html), as well as a number of Cityflyer buses that are bound to cover the location that you want to get to. Limousines are definitely abundant and of course taxis will get you to the city in less than an hour.

Hong Kong MTR:

The MTR train comes every 2 minutes so there is no such thing as missing the train in Hong Kong. Getting around Hong Kong and visiting any point of interest couldn't be easier with the quick, clean and efficient MTR. Burgeoning demand has led to the steady increase of MTR lines and currently the MTR consists of ten lines. The three major lines are the blue Island line, the

red Tsuen Wan line and the green Kwun Tong line. Rail service to and from the New Territories is provided by East Rail as well as the Ma On Shan line, West rail and the Light Rail Transit System.

Taxis:

Red taxis serve urban Hong Kong Island and Kowloon, while the New Territories ones are green and the Lantau taxis are only allowed to travel on Lantau Island and nowhere else. Taxi flags start at HKD 18 and crossing there are cross harbour tolls.

By Bus:

Double decker buses that are found throughout London are ubiquitous in Hong Kong. Hong Kong bus service is reliable and so interconnected that it is impossible to find a place that isn't serviced by a bus or mini bus of some kind. Single as well as double decker buses are operated by KMB(Kowloon Motor Bus), New World First Bus, and Citybus. The quickest if not the best way to see which bus you want to take by asking anyone waiting at the bus stop and they will be sure to point you to the right bus.

By Mini bus:

Green mini buses cover Hong Kong, Kowloon and the New Territories and are by far one of the most local Hong Kong way of getting to places. Hong Kong is all about speed and when people find that buses take too long or stops too frequently along the line, there will then be a minibus route that most people want to get to but are not patient enough to wait for the bus. It is the unspoken and unwritten rule that when you want to get off the mini buses you must yell out to the driver that you want to get off before the stop.

Red Mini buses are a lot more flexible in their routes and the driver is free to choose and operate 24 hours, they also cover both Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories.

By Ferry:

The Star Ferry used to be the only form of transport if you wanted to travel between the Kowloon Peninsula and Hong Kong Island but not its role is slowly reduced to a popular sightseeing trip for families and tourists alike. Named one of the fifty things to do in a lifetime by the National Geographic Magazine, the Star Ferry takes you to and from Tsim Sha Tsui to Wanchai

and Central and vice versa. There are also Hung Hom to Central and Hung Hom to Wanchai routes which serve locals as well as tourists. The two most frequented lines are the Tsim Sha Tsui to Central and Tsim Sha Tsui to Wanchai ferry lines. Star Ferry tours of the harbour are also recommended.

Getting Around:

An Octopus card is all that you need, a stored value ticket which is found in every single Hong Konger's wallet. With its growing functionality as instant cash at various supermarkets and convenience stores, it primarily enables you to save the hassle of rummaging for exact change and waiting for the person in front of you to get their change as you board all transport. Octopus cards can be used on all forms of public transport in Hong Kong and the one and only exception is taxis.

Second only to Tokyo in terms of interconnectness, the Hong Kong transportation system is a marvel for it allows over seven million people to get to places in under an hour's time in orderly fashion. The MTR is the easiest way of getting around Hong Kong and a map of the Hong Kong rail system is all you need. Otherwise buses and mini buses are the perfect way to accessing areas that are not covered by the MTR and there are always taxis.

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Fun Facts

1. Fun Fact: The household size has decreased from 4.3 to 3 over the past three decades.
2. Interesting Fact: To many Hong Kong people, their dreams are to own a home.
3. Public transport fun fact: 7 in 10 people take buses and 35% take taxis every week.
4. Fun fact about travel: the number of people taking an air trip outside Hong Kong has leapfrogged 7 times in 30 years from 4% in 1975 to 30% in 2009.
5. Random Fact about shopping: Jusco and Sogo are among the top 3 department stores visited.
6. True fact or False fact? Hong Konger's personal income increased 16 times in 30 years.

Hong Kong Snapshot continued

7. Interesting fact: Cha Charn Teng (Hong Kong styled cafe) unique in Hong Kong are visited by half of people in Hong Kong on a weekly basis.

8. Another Interesting fact about Hong Kong dining habits: More and more people frequently visit fast food restaurants,

outpacing their visits to other types of restaurant.

9. Weird fact: The first McDonalds offered customers the very first American Big Mac in Hong Kong was located at Paterson Street, Causeway Bay in 1975.

10. Fun fact: The world's longest outdoor covered escalator system leading from Central to the Mid-Levels was up and running in 1993.

11. Interesting fact: The Big Buddha on Lantau Island, the world's tallest outdoor seated bronze statue was unveiled in 1993.

12. Random Fact: Hong Kongers are renowned for being hard working, fast, flexible and energetic. Hong Kongers have among the world's highest cinema attendance per capita.

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Barcelona Snapshot

Local Info

Rich in history and design, renowned for its state of the art architecture, cutting edge cuisine, gorgeous landscapes and thriving night life, Barcelona is a place that will pull you in and make it hard to leave. Nestled between the Mediterranean and the Pyrenees, Barcelona is an ideal fusion between the 'old' and the 'new'. Just a twenty-minute walk and one can find themselves transported through the ages between the Gothic Quarter's medieval alleyways and Roman Ruins into the Eixample neighborhood full of Gaudi's magnificent art nouveau(modernism) masterpieces. It's a city laden with hidden streets, niche courtyards, quaint boutiques, rustic tapas bars, wide open patios and terraces and a never ending 'joie de vivre'. It's not hard to understand why Barcelona is the 16th most visited city and an artistic, architectural and culinary leader across the globe.

Spain's second largest city(behind Madrid) and the capital of Catalonia, Barcelona is home to some of the world's most intriguing and exceptional architectural structures, including Gaudi's Sagrada Familia, Casa Batllo, La Pedrera, Parc Guell and the Cathedral amongst many other breathtaking buildings. Thanks to the 1992 Olympics Barcelona was brought 'back to life' and resumed its place on the world stage as a top tourist destination. The '92 Olympics can take credit for the clean up of Barcelona's waterfront, the creation of Olympic village and the construction of the grade sports' stadiums atop Montjuic. Today Palau Sant Jordi and Camp Nou are used to host concerts, festivals and of course, FC Barcelona's football matches

When it comes to Barcelona's beaches, there is no shortage of options. Barcelona's beautiful coastline includes both natural and man-made beaches that stretch for miles. The Costa Brava is particularly serene and its where you'll be able to find some of the clearest water with the whitest sandy beaches, only an hour or less outside of the city. In Barcelona itself there are plenty

of great places to tan, swim, kite surf or just enjoy some sangria at one of the many chiringuitos(beach side huts) along the boardwalk.

With regards to bars and clubs, Barcelona is not lacking. It's a city with something for everyone, whether you're into funk, hip hop, electronic, house, pop, 80's rock or top 40, it's one of the easiest cities to stumble from place to place and enjoy an affordable, exciting and very eclectic night out.

Barcelona is rare in that it's one of those cities that truly has it all. Whether you're looking to relax by the water, hike in the mountains, explore art galleries, boutique shop, learn about architecture, savor delicious food or party until noon the following day, this is a city with infinite options one that will continuously keep you on your toes.

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History

The 1992 Olympic Games turned the world's eye to this age old city that has been, and continues to be, a modern presence in Spain. Barcelona has many districts, giving it the feel of a large, Roman city with an old, Gothic atmosphere. As a powerful Mediterranean port and the capital of Catalonia, this rich, historical past is the foundation on which the new city was based. Barcelona's residents are open-minded and cosmopolitan, bringing a Bohemian flavor to the city that lies between the mountains and sea.

Romans arrived in Tarragona, making it their first priority, and giving Barcelona subordinate status. Later in the Visigothic period, this Roman capital par excellence, also had a downward fall.

After a century of Muslim dominion, there was a period of intense commercial activity and religious coexistence between Jews, Christians and Muslims. With the arrival of the Christian governors to the city, the Muslim community was forced into a prisoner zone named The Call. In present day, The Call is located around the streets

Palla, Banys Nous, Bisbe and Plaça Sant Jaume. Already, the large city had been named the Condal City, acting as the mighty capital of Old Catalonia. Following the expansionist interests of Corona de Aragón, Barcelona developed a powerful naval base. Catalano-Aragonese's power extended as far as Sicily, Sardinia, Malta, Naples, Albania, Corsica and part of Greece. They pioneered, establishing social norms, marine rules and other customs that would later be imitated in other European cities. In the 15th century, the Maxima institution of self-government of Catalonia was given an admirable seat in the Palau de la Generalitat. The medieval growth of the city is represented in its Gothic architecture, with magnificent works like the cathedral, the churches of Sant Just, and Sant Jaume, and the basilicas of Santa Maria del Pi and Santa Maria del Mar

After the 15th-century reign of Castilla, Barcelona, Catalonia and the Kingdom of Aragón fell into a deep economic and political depression because of the marriage between Isabel and Fernando(the famous post-Muslim era Catholic monarchs). During these years, conquest and colonization in America damaged Mediterranean commerce during the height of Turkey's great marine power. The final blow came when Archduke Carlos of Austria, whom Barcelona supported, lost the War of Spanish Succession.

During the Industrial Revolution and the period of cultural renaissance, the city grew to its maximum splendor. With this came the literary rebirth of the Catalan language and the modernist movement, in which artists and architects alike created a city that would be admired worldwide. All these movements were led by the industrial bourgeoisie, and influenced by the nationalistic movements of the European countries that resisted the Castellanizadora force. The houses built in the Barcelonian Eixample display architecture from a diverse range of historical influences. Ildefons Cerdà, influenced by local folklore, designed rectangular buildings for the bourgeois. The most well-known and loved

Barcelona Snapshot continued

artist during this period was Antoni Gaudí, who designed remarkable, modernist works, such as the La Sagrada Família, Casa Milà (La Pedrera), the Casa Batlló, and the Parc Güell.

During the postwar period and Francisco Franco's dictatorship, a political and cultural repression occurred across Spain until Franco's death in 1975. Since then, democracy has reigned. Under the mandate of Pasqual Maragall, the city began the construction of infrastructures necessary for the 1992 Olympic Games. Some of these structures are the Olympic Vila, of accentuated modern design, the Anella Olímpica of Montjuïc and the Port Olímpic.

©

Hotel Insights

From cheap hostels to modern, luxurious five-star hotels, Barcelona offers its guests a variety of lodging choices in every neighborhood.

Gothic Quarter, Raval & La Ribera

Whether you wish to stay in a newly renovated hotel by the Plaça Reial, or pass the night with like-minded backpackers at a more economical accommodation like Kabul, you will not be at a loss for options. If you enjoy the relaxing atmosphere of a modernist building, Le Meridien on Rambla dels Estudis is a perfect choice. Many of the three-star hotels within the Barri Gòtic maintain the medieval architecture characteristic of the neighborhood inside and out. Hotel Gotico is just one of these beauties, located close to Plaça Sant Jaume. For a more high-end place in the same district, Hotel Colón, located in front of the Catedral La Seu, offers excellent views of the city.

Without leaving the heart of the city, there are numerous other cozy accommodations, such as the Hotel Rivoli Ramblas. Also nearby is the recently renovated yet wallet-friendly Hotel Husa International, which allows you to watch colorful tourists walk Las Ramblas from your room window.

Pedralbes

If you're looking for an upscale room in an elegant hotel, don't miss the Hotel Rey Juan Carlos I, located at the end of Diagonal. Another hotel that combines luxury and comfort seamlessly is the grand Gran Hotel Princess Sofia, suiting even the finickiest traveler. The top floor restaurant offers panoramic views and a menu as exquisite as that of the Hotel Rey Juan Carlos I.

Port Olímpic (Olympic Port)

This neighborhood's most fascinating piece of architecture is surely the Hotel Arts Barcelona, which you should at least take a photo of, even if you can't afford to stay there.

Les Corts

The Hilton Barcelona offers comfort and relaxation, living up to its reputation. Here you will enjoy calm gardens, a central location by the shopping and business district, and panoramic views of the city and the sea.

L'Eixample

The sleek, marble entryway of Hotel Majestic sits on Passeig de Gràcia, one of the most elegant avenues to walk down in all of Barcelona. Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes, where the Hotel Palace is located, is another one of the most emblematic areas in the city. The Regina is located within walking distance of the commercial district.

Arc de Triomf & Urquinaona

Hotel NH Pòdium on Bailén street is a four-star option with a beautiful neoclassical façade.

Sants

Comfortable, no-nonsense Hotel NH Numància is conveniently located near the Sants train station.

Montjuïc & Plaça Espanya

You will not have a hard time finding a hotel within easy reach of the Muntanya de Montjuïc, a popular hill that offers a pleasant view of the city. Located right on Plaça Espanya is the four-star AC

Diplomatic, and on Avinguda del Paral·lel you'll find the Barcelona Plaza (facing the Palau Nacional). The nearby Expo Hotel offers exceptional service in a modern ambiance. From here, you can enjoy a rejuvenating stroll to Plaça Espanya by crossing Tarragona Avenue and passing Miró's sculpture, Dona i l'Ocell ("Woman with Bird"), and la plaza de toros Arenas de Barcelona along the way, which has not been used since 1977.

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Restaurants Insights

Barcelona's many restaurants and bars offer the best of Catalonia's diverse cuisine. Other Mediterranean countries, like France and Italy, have heavily influenced Catalan cooking, which features lots of fresh fruit and vegetables, seafood, pork and veal.

Catalans love cold meats or (embutidos) of all sorts, especially pork sausage (butifarra). The staple dish is butifarra amb mongetes, a stew of pork sausage and white beans. Escudella is a traditional stew made with sausage, chickpeas, pasta and a giant pork meatball. It's generally eaten at Christmas time and followed by crema catalana, a sweet egg custard topped with caramelized sugar that has become a popular dessert throughout Spain. Fish is also a major part of the Catalan diet. Zarzuela is a tasty seafood casserole that originated in Barcelona and spread to other parts of the country. Bacallà a la llauna is cod cooked in a tin dish. In summer, you can enjoy lighter dishes like escalibada (red peppers mixed with eggplant and onions) and andesqueixada (red peppers with cod and onions). Or head for one of the many farmhouse (masia) restaurants on the outskirts of the city and try some traditional dishes. If you're lucky, the restaurant will serve calçotada, a sauce (calçots) made from tender spring onions served on an oven-fired tile, followed by grilled meat. Catalan dishes are usually accompanied by pan con tomate, country-style bread smeared liberally with ripe tomato, olive oil and salt.

Barcelona Snapshot continued

There are eight different areas in Catalonia that produce good quality wines. The region is famous for its white wines from the Penedés area and cava, sparkling white wines. There are also quality red wines, particularly from the Priorato area.

Gothic Quarter, Raval & La Ribera

Basque cuisine is served in Irati and Zure Etxea. You'll find three famous traditional Catalan restaurants worth visiting in the area around Monumento a Colón (Columbus Monument): Ca l'Isidre, Botafumeiro and Casa Leopoldo. For bullfighting memorabilia and tapas, try Los Toreros on Calle Xuclà, close to Las Ramblas. There are also some seafood restaurants with great views in the Maremàgnum, an ultra-modern shopping center by the harbor, close to Las Ramblas.

This part of town is also great for drinks—you'll find traditional, old-fashioned bars and cafés as well as trendy, modern places with stylish interior decor, like Glacià at the Plaça Reial. Nearby, check out Sidecar. There's a good selection of pubs on Calle Escudellers on your way into the well-known Plaça George Orwell. For pure modernist style inside and out, try El Ascensor. If you want to sit outside and enjoy an impressive view with your drinks, try the square that looks on to Santa Maria del Mar, Plaça del Pi or Sant Felip Neri.

L'Eixample

This part of town has quite a few Galician restaurants like the famous Beltxenea, which offers a variety of traditional dishes. Don't miss the finger foods at Tapa Tapa.

Barceloneta & The Born

There are plenty of reasonably-priced seafood restaurants down by the harbor that specialize in paella and the Catalan equivalent, fideuà, which is noodle-based rather than rice-based. Arròs negre is a kind of paella cooked in a stock of squid's ink. Can Ramonet and Set Portes are two of the best places for rice dishes in this district. Munch on great tapas at Moncho's.

If it's drinks you seek, Passeig del Born is lined with trendy bars and the adjacent

streets are full of well-preserved medieval houses and mansions. This area attracts couples and groups in their 30s and 40s looking for sophisticated, relaxing and intimate bars like the Miramelindo, Salero and Gimlet.

Port Olímpic

The seafood restaurants at Port Olímpic display their fresh fish in cases by the door and many offer sea views.

Horta, Guinardó & Alfons X

Lots of informal tapas restaurants are located along Passeig de Gràcia and Rambla Catalunya. Traditional tapas are small portions of things like *pescaïto frito* (mixture of deep-fried Mediterranean fish), *patatas bravas* (chunks of potato, deep-fried and served with spicy garlic sauce), *calamares a la romana* (squid rings fried in batter) and *boquerones en vinagre* (marinated anchovies). For the best tapas in the whole city, try La Esquinica. However, make sure you come early because there is a line every night.

Plaça Catalunya

It's tapas central at Ciudad Condal, but this bustling square knows no bounds in terms of culinary diversity.

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Nightlife Insights

Barcelona has become a fashionable tourist destination. Television coverage of the 1992 Olympic Games stimulated lots of interest in the city around the world. Visitors are attracted by the mild climate, Mediterranean waterfront, sunshine, art, culture, friendly people and unique Catalan features, like Antoni Gaudí's modernist architecture. It's easy to have fun in Barcelona. There are colorful local fiestas (holidays and festivals) throughout the year along with a wide variety of national and international cinema, theater, music and dance festivals and performances. The city's nightclubs offer great music and atmosphere every night of the week, and are especially busy from Thursday to Sunday.

Museums & Galleries

Art lovers should head straight for MNAC (Catalonia's National Art Museum), with its exhibits of Catalan Romanesque art, and MACBA (Barcelona's Museum of Contemporary Art). Nearby, you'll find galleries devoted to individual artists, including Museu Picasso, Fundació Miró and Antoni Tàpies.

Architecture

To see the best examples of Catalonia's unique Gothic architecture, you should check out Basílica de Santa Maria del Mar and Basílica de Santa Maria del Pi. For the best in modernist architecture, head for Pedrera, Casa Batlló, Sagrada Família, and Parc Güell.

Nightlife

The most popular nightclubs are within walking distance of each other down by the harbor area, in Port Olímpic and Maremàgnum. The variety is endless. You'll find places playing techno, salsa, rock, Spanish pop music and more. Karma is a popular club in this area.

Live Music

L'Eixample district has many live music venues, including the famous Luz de Gas. Bikini, a popular nightclub, also hosts concerts during the evenings. To enjoy alternative and Spanish local bands, take the metro to Razzmatazz, Sidecar or BeCool. You'll also find live shows in the Gòtic district.

Discos & Clubs

In the Maremàgnum and Port Olímpic you'll find a number of discos with plenty of atmosphere and different kinds of music. These two districts have a very cosmopolitan feel, given that they are mostly frequented by tourists from all over the world. To merge with the locals, take public transportation to L'Eixample, Barri Gòtic or Poble Nou.

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Things to Do Insights

Barcelona is a stunning city that is full of historic and entertaining sites. If you simply

Barcelona Snapshot continued

walk down any street in Barcelona you'll stumble upon hidden gems and wonders. Whether you have a guided tour or a self-guided tour, you'll be sure to be amazed.

Las Ramblas

The best way to get a feel for Barcelona is to take a walk along Les Rambles (Las Ramblas in Spanish). Start from Plaça Catalunya and head down Rambla de Canaletes, which gets its name from its 19th-century iron fountain. Carry on into Rambla dels Estudis, named after the university that was here until the early 18th century. Locals call it Rambla dels Ocells (Street of the Birds) because the caged birds for sale keep up a noisy chatter all day long. Across the Rambla, on the corner of Calle Portaferrissa, you'll see the late 18th-century Palau Moja. This former palace, now headquarters of the regional government's contemporary history and culture department, has an excellent bookshop. When you come to the third street, Rambla de Sant Josep, you'll suddenly be hit by a wave of color. Flower sellers have been a feature of this pedestrian area for over 200 years, hence the popular name for it, Rambla de les Flors (Street of Flowers). Carry on through Plaça de la Boqueria, past Joan Miró's huge mosaic in the middle of the pavement, and into the fourth street, Rambla dels Caputxins, where you'll find Gran Teatre del Liceu. At the top of the fifth and final street, Rambla de Santa Mònica, you'll come to Teatre Principal. You'll also find the Museu de Cera (Wax Museum) to the left and hordes of pavement artists, performers and musicians in the center of the pedestrian area. Finish your walk by going to the top of Monumento a Colón (Columbus Monument) for aerial views of the city. Or carry on into the harbor area of Port Vell and Maremàgnum, a modern shopping center.

L'Eixample

Start this tour of grid-shaped Eixample, the city's commercial and business district, at Plaça Catalunya. Go up Passeig de Gràcia and look out for Gaudí's hexagonal pavement designs on the way. After

crossing Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes and Consell de Cent, you'll arrive at the so-called Manzana de Discòrdia or, "Block of Discord." This name arose because three different architects, with widely differing styles, built the three Modernist buildings grouped here. On the left is Lluís Domènech i Montaner's Casa Lleó Morera, dating from 1906, with its elaborately decorated entrance hall and staircase. A few doors up, at no. 41, you'll come to the striking facade of Josep Puig i Cadafalch's Casa Amatller, dating from 1900. Next door is Gaudí's spectacular Casa Batlló. Turn left on to the wide Calle Aragó, cross over Rambla de Catalunya and you'll see another of Lluís Domènech i Montaner's works that has been converted into Fundació Tàpies. Go back to Passeig de Gràcia, continue north one block and on the right you'll find an extraordinary Modernist apartment building, Gaudí's Casa Milà, also known as La Pedrera, whose upper floors and rooftop are open to the public. You can spend all day exploring Eixample and its many other Modernist architectural gems, like Les Punxes or the Conservatory.

Olympic Barcelona

If you want to tour the facilities used in the 1992 Olympic Games head to Muntanya de Montjuïc (Montjuïc hill). The Montjuïc hill, or "hill of the Jews," got its name from the Jewish community that once settled on its steep slopes. One of the best ways to get to the top is by walking from Plaça Espanya, with its luminous fountains, up to the Palau Nacional (National Palace). This building now houses Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya (MNAC), which displays one of the world's finest collections of Romanesque art. Carry on a little further to Poble Espanyol (Spanish Village), where Spain's regional styles of architecture have been reproduced. The walk to Castell de Montjuïc (Montjuïc castle), on the far eastern corner of the hill, is worthwhile for the panoramic views. This 17th-century castle is home to the Museu Militar (Military Museum). In between the Spanish Village and the castle, you might want to stop at the so-called Olympic Ring or Anella

Olímpica (Anillo Olímpico). This is where you'll see the famous sports facilities built for the 1992 games. These include the 55,000-seat Olympic stadium, Estadi Olímpic, and Palau Sant Jordi, a sports and concert hall. On the way along Avenida de l'Estadi towards the cable car, you'll pass a large white building, Fundació Miró. This museum is dedicated to well-known Catalan artist, Joan Miró.

The Gothic Quarter

The medieval Barri Gòtic (Gothic Quarter) is officially confined to the area between Avenida de la Catedral, Via Laietana, Calle Jaume I, Plaça Sant Jaume and Calle Bisbe. However, there are points of interest in the streets and squares nearby. Start your walk in the cathedral square (Plaça de la Catedral), opposite the Catalan Gothic cathedral. Take a little alleyway, Montjuïc del Bisbe, along to the peaceful square, Plaça Sant Felip Neri. Many of the buildings in this area were built on the old Roman wall, including the Palau Episcopal (Episcopal Palace) in Plaça Nova and 16th-century Casa de l'Ardiaca off Calle Santa Llúcia. The 14th century Casa del Degà and Casa de la Canonja are also located in Plaça de la Seu. From behind the cathedral, go down Baixada de Santa Clara to Plaça del Rei. From here, head for the large Plaça Sant Jaume, one of the most popular squares in the city, where popular demonstrations and gatherings take place. The Catalan regional government headquarters are located here in the 14th-century palace Palau de la Generalitat, alongside the Casa de la Ciutat (Ajuntament) (Town Hall).

Barcelona is a beautiful and breathtaking city and you can easily enjoy the sites on your own; however, professional tours have a lot to offer. These tours can provide you with more historical information and can take you to locations you might not have known about. If you choose to go on a guided tour there are a lot of options.

Bus Tours Barcelona Bus Turístic (http://www.tmb.net/en_US/turistes/busturistic/busturistic.jsp)

Barcelona Snapshot continued

Bike Tours Fat Tire Bike Tours(+34 93 301 3612<http://www.fattirebiketoursbarcelona.com/>)

Boat Tours Las Golondrinas(+34 93 442 3106<http://www.lasgolondrinas.com/>) Sailing day trip along the Costa Dourada from Barcelona to Sitges(+34 93 285 3834<http://www.euroadventures.net/ViewProduct.asp?ProductID=1128&AF=51>)

Wine Tours Barcelona Tour Guides(<http://barcelonatourguides.com/eng/winerytour.htm>) Cava Winery Tour from Barcelona(+34 93 285 3834<http://www.euroadventures.net/ViewProduct.asp?ProductID=1082&AF=51>) Parés Baltà(+34 93 890 1399<http://www.paresbalta.com/>)

Architecture Tours Barcelona Tour Guides(<http://barcelonatourguides.com/eng/allbarcelonaguidedtour.htm>) Contrasts of Barcelona's Gothic& Modernist(+34 986 22 1399<http://www.euroadventures.net/ViewProduct.asp?ProductID=1165&AF=51>) Gaudi's Barcelona and Panoramic City Tour(+34 93 285 3834<http://www.euroadventures.net/ViewProduct.asp?ProductID=1081>)
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Travel Tips

Getting There

By Air

The Barcelona Airport is located 6.2 miles southwest of the city and has over 32 airlines transporting visitors both domestically and internationally.

Barcelona International Airport(BCN)+34 932 983 838<http://www.barcelona-airport.com>

Aer Lingus(+34 902 502 737/ <http://www.aerlingus.com/>) Air Berlin(+34 902 320 737/ <http://www.airberlin.com/>) Air Europa(+34 93 298 3328/ <http://www.air-europa.com/>) Air France(+ 34 901 112 266/ <http://www.airfrance.com/>) British Airways(+34 902 111 333/ <http://www.britishairways.com/>) Delta Airlines(+34 934 782 300/ <http://www.delta.com/>) EasyJet(+34 902 299 992/ <http://www.easyjet.com/>)

www.easyjet.com/) Lufthansa(+34 93 379 3766/ <http://www.lufthansa.com/>) Spanair(+34 902 131 415/ <http://www.spanair.com/>) Swiss(+34 901 116 712/ <http://www.swiss.com/>) TAP Air Portugal(+351 707 205 700/ <http://www.flytap.com/>) Virgin Express(+34 93 226 6671/ <http://www.virgin-express.com/>)

From the Airport

Bus: Several bus lines leave Barcelona Airport for Barcelona's city center(mostly from Terminal B if not indicated otherwise):

The Airbus(A1)(+34 934 156 020/ <http://www.emt-amb.com/>) and **Line N17**(+34 933 187 074/ <http://www.emt-amb.com/>) takes passengers from terminals A, B, C, and the Cargo terminal to the center of Barcelona, the Plaza de Catalunya. The Airbus leaves the airport every 7 to 15 minutes from 6a to 1a. bus fare: EUR4. Line N17 buses leave for the city center every 20 minutes from 10:05a to 5:05a. Departures from Plaza de Catalunya, from 11p to 5a every 20 minutes.

Directbus(+34 902 109 276/ <http://www.autocarsnadal.com/>) leaves the airport seven times a day between 7:45a and 10:45p for Sants Station, Barcelona.

Line 46 takes passengers to Plaza de Espana every half hour from 5:30a to 12:45a. A single ticket costs EUR1.30

Mon-Bus(+34 938 937 060/ <http://www.monbus.org/>) links Barcelona and several other cities. Buses run every hour between 7:40a and 11:40p. Check website for details.

Novatel Autocars takes passengers to Andorra bus station five times a day On-way ticket: EUR31; return: EUR52.

The Ràpid Aeroport(Alsa) leaves the airport for Figueres, Girona, Lleida, Reus, Port Aventura and Tarragona several times a day. Prices range between EUR12-30.

Taxi: Taxi ranks are located in front of Terminals A, B and C. For fares to various locations check:+34 932 235 151/ <http://www.taxibarcelona.cat/>. Per baggage item an extra fee of EUR1 is expected.

Train: Renfe Line 10 suburban train(+34 902 240 202) leaves the airport from 6a to 10:30p every half hour. The ride takes about 30 minutes and drops passengers off at Barcelona Sants, among various other stops. A single ticket costs EUR2.50.

Car Rentals: Traveling by car is generally a good idea if you are looking to do some out-of-city sightseeing. The province has beautiful views to offer, and rental cars are a sure-fire way to get where you want for a fixed price. Avis(+34 932 983 600/ <http://www.avis.es/>) Europcar(+34 093 7276851/ <http://www.europcar.com/>) Hertz(+34 932 983 637/ <http://www.hertz.es/>) National ATESA(+34 932 983 433/ <http://www.atesa.es/>) Sol-Mar(+34 934 788 795/ <http://www.solmar.es/>)

By Train

Both domestic and international trains come and go to Barcelona. The main train station is Estació Sants(+34 902 1575 07), 1.6 miles west of Las Ramblas. Direct overnight trains also connect from Paris, Geneva, Lisbon and Milan, as well as services from various French cities and across Spain. To find out about short and long distance train trips, check the Spanish National Railway Network(RENFE)(<http://www.renfe.es/>) website.

By Bus

Buses are a cheaper alternative to trains, though not so comfortable. Estació del Nord, the main inter-city bus station, is one mile northeast of Las Ramblas, close to Arc de Triomf metro. Check the Barcelona Local Transport Train, Metro, and Bus operator(TMB),(<http://www.tmb.net/>) for specific information on all ground transportation.

By Boat

You can get to Barcelona by ferry via the Balearic Islands(<http://www.balearia.ferries.org/>) and Italy. From the Balearics there are standard boats, on which you can get beds in cabins of up to four people and high-speed boats on which sleepers are not necessary.

Getting Around

Barcelona Snapshot continued

Public Transport

Barcelona's extensive public transportation system makes it possible to visit without a car. The TMB system(local transport, bus, train, tram and metro<http://www.tmb.net/>) is the city's major public transportation source. For train, metro and tram times, bus schedules, and tourist travel passes, this site is most helpful in planning that trip to the museum or movie. The Spanish National Railway Network(RENFE)(<http://www.renfe.es/>) website also contains information about alternative local train routes that connect the most visited places of Barcelona.

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Fun Facts

1: Fun Fact: On average, everyday, seven days a week, 150,000 people walk along La Rambla.

2: FC Barcelona is the biggest privately owned stadium in the world(seating 100,000 people) and is also one of Barcelona's most visited tourist attractions.

3: Interesting Fact: Barcelona and Spanish drivers in general, are some of the worst in the world. According to recent statistics, an accident occurs on average, every nineteen

seconds during weekdays between Monday to Thursday and rises to one accident every sixteen seconds, on Fridays. It's safer to walk or take public transport.

4: Weird Fact: When Gaudí was creating the sculptures of the Nativity Facade on the Sagrada Familia, he used corpses of dead babies, only 2-3 days old, in order to prepare the scene of the soldier and the innocents. The soldier in the scene has six toes on one of his feet and this is because the man who was modelling for Gaudí, also had six toes.

5: Random Fact: The most walked on street in Spain, is Portal de L'Angel. Approximately 3,500 people walk down this shopping street every hour.

6: Interesting Fact: There are two Spanish legends concerning the founding of Barcelona. One legend says that it was founded by Hercules, 400 years before the building of Rome. According to the other legend, the city was founded by the Carthaginian Hamilcar Barca, father of Hannibal, in the 3rd century BC and that it got its name from the great Barca family of Carthage.

7: Antoni Gaudi was not the first architect to work on the Sagrada Familia. Architect, Francesc del Villar, was actually the first one who was commissioned to design

the church on that site. A year into the project he resigned and Gaudi took over and completely revamped the design.

8: Fun Fact: Barcelona is to thank for World Book Day. La Diada de San Jordi is one of the biggest, most widely celebrated festival days in Barcelona which takes place on April 23rd and is a celebration of love and literacy.

9: Random Fact: Flamenco is not traditional or well known in Barcelona or Catalunya. Catalans prefer rock and roll and the 'rock catala' scene has become famous during the last 20 years.

10: Weird Fact: When Gaudí graduated in 1878 from Barcelona's School of Architecture, the director said:"Gentlemen, we are here today in the presence of either a genius or a madman."

11: It is said that Catalans are not very generous and they are always counting money, so much so, that their traditional dance, Sardana, also involves counting the steps.

12: Fun Fact: If 'spanglish' is the mix of english and spanish, 'catanyol' is the mix of catalan and spanish and is often widely used in Barcelona.

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