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GUIDE TO BARCELONA

We welcome you to Barcelona -- Benvinguts! The information compiled in this guide should help with your trip planning to our beautiful city and our little corner of paradise in northeast Spain.

Barcelona is an excellent destination for people of ages to enjoy. Situated on the Mediterranean Sea, Barcelona as a cosmopolitan city is full of museums, theatres and cinemas, extensive nightlife, and a wide range of sport activities. The diverse range of commerce and industry present in this region of Spain make it an excellent place for work, study, rest, play and inter-cultural exchange. Barcelona is the capital of Catalunya, an area that is bustling with first rate tourism and has a long tradition of international commerce. In fact, this area of Spain was the number one tourist destination for the past three years straight. Especially in the winter months, we enjoy weather unparalleled in the rest of the European continent.

With a population of about 3 million located throughout the city and suburbs, Barcelona is stretched out on a plain on the northern corner of Spain's Mediterranean coast, referred to as the Costa Dorada. The city is a blend of modern and medieval, progress and traditionalism, all while remaining typically Mediterranean. It is the most cosmopolitan and economically active city in Spain. The expansion of the city, which really started with the demolition of the walls that surrounded Old Town in the mid-1800s, was just the beginning of urban renewal projects that would transform Barcelona. The Universal Exhibition of 1888, the International Exhibition of 1929, and the Olympic Games of 1992 all created new districts and structures, new communications networks and better services in a metropolitan area that has become one of the most progressive and commercially sophisticated in Europe.



The city of Barcelona is modern and cosmopolitan, but has inherited many centuries of history. Its geographic location and the open character of its inhabitants are the reasons why the city is being culturally enriched all the time. It has a valuable architectural and monumental heritage, the most splendid exponents of which are its Gothic and Modernism buildings. Five of its buildings have been designated World Heritage Sites. Having the entire city as an place of discovery guarantees that visitors will enjoy taking a stroll around its streets that are replete with charm.

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AN ORIENTATION OF THE CITY

We will start your orientation of the city from the Monument a Colom (Columbus Monument), located at the end of Las Ramblas on the harborfront, on Passeig de Colom, a tree-lined avenue that runs parallel to the shoreline. At the Columbus monument, you can take the elevator to the top observational platform with breath-taking views of the harbour (Port Vell) and the Old Town (Barri Gòtic or Casc Antic). From the harbor, the city slopes upward toward Tibadabo – the highest point in Barcelona – the sea to the east, the mountain to the west, Llobregat River to the south and Besos River to the north.

From the **Ciutat Vella** -- the city's historical neighborhood that centers around Las Ramblas and includes the Barri Gòtic, La Ribera, and El Raval, we orient ourselves north. The **Barri Gòtic** is bordered by Las Ramblas and **Via Laietana**. East of Via Laietana lies the maze-like neighborhoods of **Born** and **La Ribera**, which borders Parc de la Ciutadella and the Estació de França train station. Here you will find the Arc de Triump and the Ronda de Sant Pere, which connects the old quarter of the textile manufacturers with the lower area of L'Eixample and home to the large Catalan textile companies. Beyond Parc de la Ciutadella is **Poble Nou** and the **Vila Olímpic**, with its twin towers and an assortment of malls, discos, and restaurants. Further north, you arrive at Besos de Mar and the Forum.

Going south from Las Ramblas you come upon **El Raval**, a neighborhood heavily populated with immigrant communities as well as modern art galleries. Beyond El Raval rises **Montjuïc**, the second highest point in Barcelona, and its neighborhoods with gardens, museums, the 1992 Olympic grounds, a castle, and other tourist attractions such as the Military Museum.

Directly in front of the Columbus Monument is **Port Vell**, where you can walk across the shopping and entertainment complexes **Moll d'Espanya** and **Maremagnum**. Here you can visit the Aquarium and the IMAX Theatre. Up from the Ciutat Vella, is **L'Eixample (the Ensanche – "expansion")**, with its parallel and perpendicular gridded streets so atypical of European urban planning, and location of most of the Modernist masterpieces. L'Eixample starts at Plaça Catalunya. This square, which is about the same size as St. Peter's square in Rome, is considered to be the city's "Center. In the middle there is a large open area with fountains at either end and surrounded by gardens containing statues by such famous sculptors as Gargallo and Clará. The periphery is made up of large buildings -- El Corte Ingles, Banco de España, the Triangle Shopping Mall, and several banks. The large amount of banks found here have made this area of town known as Barcelona's main business area and is where the Barcelona Exchange is located. **Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes** defines the lower edge of L'Eixample and **Passeig de Gràcia**, the main commercial street, bisects the neighborhood. **Avinguda Diagonal** marks the upper limit of the grid-planned neighborhoods, separating L'Eixample from the **Zona Alta**, which includes Pedralbes, Sarrià, Gràcia, and Horta, some of the older neighborhoods in the foothills. The peak of Tibidabo, the northwest border of the city and the highest point in Barcelona, offers the most panoramic views of the city.

The historic centre is imbued with a bohemian atmosphere which you can discover as you walk through the Gothic Quarter, and the Ribera and Raval districts. This is one of the world's best-preserved medieval quarters.

And finally, the very best vantage point for great views without going to the top of any mountain is at the Corte Ingles Plaça Catalunya, top floor cafeteria.

GET A BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF THE CITY.....

Offered by the City of Barcelona, the GeoShow3D Lite software allows visitors a site of the city right on their computer screen. Visit them at the city's website.

<http://www.bcn.es/volvirtual/english>

or visit QDQ's 3D show of BCN at

<http://3d.qdq.com/>



Whatever your interests, be sure not to miss a stroll along Las Ramblas. It is one of the city's landmark sights, a bustling thoroughfare where flower stalls and performance artists jostle for space. There are actually several "Ramblas" in Barcelona, so be careful when you get in a taxi and ask to be transported to "Ramblas". The most famous Rambla, of course, is the one coming out of the Plaça Catalunya toward the marine front – the city's most emblematic avenue, where the life seems to be never-ending, since both during the day and night one can observe the most colourful performances. This rambla ends at the Columbus' Monument. The other four "ramblas" extend from the Plaça Catalunya to the Port Vell: Rambla de Canaletes, with a XIX century fountain; Rambla de los Estudios, where is the Real Academia de Artes y Ciencias; Rambla de Sant Josep, with the Palacio de la Virreina and the Mercado de San Josep (better known as El Mercat de la Boqueria); Rambla del Caputxins, with the famous Teatro del Liceo; Rambla de Sta. Mónica, with the Centro de Arte Santa Mónica. Plus there is La Rambla de Catalunya, running from the Plaça Catalunya to Diagonal -- in the opposite direction than the more-frequently visited Las Ramblas, toward the mountain. Ends with a bronze giraffe (La Girafa Coqueta) reading a book, right across the street from McDonalds.



However, if Barcelona is famous for anything, it must be the buildings in the L'Eixample neighborhood of the city, especially the right side. If you take a walk around this neighbourhood you will be able to admire architectural masterpieces such as the Sagrada Família and La Pedrera, architectural wonders inherited from Antoni Gaudí and the other architects of the city's home-grown art-nouveau movement, modernisme. Other Gaudi gems include La Casa Milà, on Passeig de Gràcia, with various chimneys reminding Indian totems. Casa Batlló roof resembles the back of the famed dragon our beloved patron saint, Sant Jordi, performed his epic slaying on, with his cross firmly implanted on the dragon's back. Actually they look more like fish scales, but that is another story. The marvel about this house is that there are no straight lines – even its walls are curved. Follow the famous Ruta del Modernismo that makes access to the interiors of the main modernist buildings possible. The Hospital Sau Pau is exquisite, as is the Casa Milà. You should also include stops at Palau Güell, Parc Güell, and the Palau de la Música Catalana. The L'Illa de la Discòrdia takes its name from the fact that the three buildings elevated together represent totally different styles: Casa Lleó Morera, Casa Amatller, Casa Batlló. And, you can discover the "Raspall Route" of Modernism architectural style of summer homes and chalets in the Valles Central of Barcelona. Guided tours of the houses, gardens, fountains and parks of this unique urban planning design. Virtual tour online at www.turismevalles.net.



In Barcelona city, which overlooks the sea, you can enjoy a whole host of open spaces such as beaches, the Olympic Marina, Tibidabo or Montjuïc and its surroundings. All in all, it is the ideal city to discover exceptional monuments and surprising places. Check out the city's Public Art website at

http://www.bcnweb13.bcn.es/NASApp/gmocataleg_monum/CambialdiomaAc.do?idioma=ca&pagina=welcome. The city itself provides good background information for self-guided tours All nicely contained within an area bordered by the mountains to the west, the sea to the east, and two rivers north and south.

El Port Vell has plenty of bars and restaurants in a harbour atmosphere. Those who wish to buy something should enter the shopping mall, Maremàgnum; the cinema fans should go towards the Imax; while the nature lovers shouldn't miss the visit in the L'Aquari and its glass tube running through the shark tank. Montjuïc provides precious panoramic views of Barcelona. There you can visit the graveyard (el Cementeri del Sud-Oest) from whence the mountain got its literal name (*Mountain of the Jews*), the Castle with the Army Museum (el Museu de l'Exèrcit) and one of the most wonderful parks in the city. At the foot of the mountain, visit the Olympic Stadium (Estadi Olímpic) or (during the summer months) get a day pass to swim in the pool. Further down the mountain, you'll get to the Plaça d'Espanya, but first pass by the Art Museum and the Font Màgica, that illuminates the whole square during the night performances with a wide range of colours to the accompaniment of different music styles. The stairways down the mountain leading to Plaça d'Espanya look toward Tibidabo, Barcelona's highest hill (about 500m) to the Temple of the Sacred Heart (Temple del Sagrat Cor), that is lit up at night resembling a castle in the sky.

One of the places where you can have a rest, after the long and exhausting visit, is the Park Ciutadella. There are still some buildings reminding from the old fortress: el Arsenal (the present seat of Parliament of Catalonia), The Governor's Palace (today Instituto de Bachillerato Verdaguer) and The Castrense Chapel. It also contains some important museums: El Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, El Museu Martorell de Geologia, El Museu de Zoologia and Parc Zoològic. In its central part there is a monumental cascade and a lake where you can rent boats by the hour.

You will always find something exciting to do in the city of Barcelona. The city has over 50 museums, showcasing permanent collections of works by artists such as Picasso (www.museupicasso.bcn.es/index.htm). If you would like to visit the area of town where Picasso lived and worked, head out to Calle La Merce, just south of Calle Escudellers where Picasso had a studio - on Calle Escudellers Blancs, a small road that comes off of Calle Escudellers. Here he created some of his paintings from the Blue Period.

Other permanent exhibits feature works from Joan Miró (www.bcn.fjmiro.es/) and Antoni Tàpies. At the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya (MNAC -- www.mnac.es/) you can see one of the world's most important collections of Romanesque art. It also has famous collections of contemporary art housed in museums such as the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA - www.macba.es/controller.php) and CaixaForum. Or, spend the entire day going to Figueres to visit the Dalí Museum (<http://www.salvador-dali.org>), the biggest and most visited museum in Spain after El Prado in Madrid. The Barcelona Museum of Contemporary Culture (www.cccb.org/cat/cccb.htm) Museum of History (www.cccb.org/cat/cccb.htm) and the Museum of Archeology (www.mac.es) offer interesting displays. Most museums stage temporary exhibitions, and most of the public museums are open free of charge, especially the first Sunday of every month.

Catalunya en Miniatura is the only museum housing a collection of miniature monuments and buildings from throughout Spain. Can Balasch de Baix in Torrelles de Llobregat. For a complete listing of museums go the Generalitat's website at www.gencat.net. Also, the Generalitat now offers virtual tours of the Museum of Catalonia History sites. By taking an interactive flight over a 3D digital map, you can move around the country visiting the various branches of the museum. http://geo3d.mhcat.net/mhcat/english/menu_eng.htm. and for the 3D software guide and download visit <http://geo3d.mhcat.net/mhcat/english/especs.htm>

If you are more a sports enthusiast than a museum-visitor, the city of Barcelona also hosts a number of sporting events. Barça – one of our hometown teams – has football, professional basketball, handball and hockey teams. Entries are available either at the stadium of Camp Nou or online at www.laicaixa.es (many other entries, too) Served or directly at www.fcbarcelona.com. Our other hometown football team, Espanyol, also sells tickets online at Served. For dates and times, click on the links to CAMP NOU - ESTADIO FC BARCELONA for Barça tickets or ESTADI OLÍMPIC DE MONTJUÏC for Espanyol tickets. You will also find areas where you can play sports in the open air. There are public football fields in front of the Hospital de Vall D' Hebron (metro line L3, Vall d' Hebron stop). Attraction parks are located at Tibidabo and Universal Studios/Port Aventura (about an hour away), and the old harbour area, the Port Vell. Between the Barceloneta district and The River Besos, the city has over four kilometres of perfectly equipped beaches which are frequented year-round. Barcelona also has an Olympic harbour which provides excellent conditions for water sports. Barcelona is the third most important trading port in the Mediterranean and a favorite stopover point for luxury cruise liners. The medieval shipyards bear witness to the splendour of maritime trade and the Catalan naval fleet of the Middle Ages. You can learn about medieval naval transports at the Maritime Museum (Museo Nautico www.diba.es/mmaritim) or at L'Escola dels Treballs del Mar "Consortio El Far" <http://elfar.diba.es/>) and even ride a traditional Latin boat.

With its relatively-flat terrain and bike paths clearly marked, Barcelona is turning into a bike-friendly city. Here you will find bike paths, bike rentals, bike group tours, and even a school to learn the safety of biking in the city. Find your route, online and in English, at the city's website: http://www.bcn.es/turisme/english/turisme/rutes/bicis_fr.htm. But keep in mind, there are lots of motos in the city, so keep your eyes open for traffic! The bike trail project "Bàsic Xarxa de "Carril Bici", sponsored by the Generalitat de Catalunya, proposes 19 different itineraries for biking over 220 kms in Catalunya. As we mentioned, there are many, many bike lanes throughout the city. Take a group tour or rent a bike by the day. There are enterprises that will even deliver a bike to your flat. There are about 30,000 cyclists here in Barcelona who can take advantage of over 100 kilometres of bike lanes which criss-cross the entire city. The city hosts an interactive website (<http://www.bcn.es/bicicleta/eng/index.htm>) "Getting Around Barcelona By Bike" that provides a PDF guide to biking in the city. Our choice for the best bike trail in Barcelona -- along the beach at Barceloneta, of course. Much of the 4 kilometers of beach provides for great biking, along with all kinds of marine sports, or simply walk the boardwalk along most of the beach front or grab tapas and drinks in any of the dozen beach front and marina restaurants, bars and dance clubs.

Other sports activity in Barcelona including:

AMERICAN FOOTBALL: American football is not widely followed by the locals but you'll not find a seat to be had in any pub or at the Hard Rock Café come Super Bowl time. Barcelona does have a youth team, the Bufals, and a professional team, the **Barcelona Dragons**, who play regularly in the Estadi Olímpic against other teams in the World League of American Football. The season is from April to June. Tickets are available from *Servicaixa* or El Corte Inglés, and cost around 12€. Information: 934 254 949 or 934 811 092.

BOWLING: *AMF Bowling* is located on C/Sabino de Arana 6 (phone: 933 305 048; Metro María Cristina; 11am-1.30am). Planet Bowling, Parc Comercial Barnasud, Gavà (phone: 936 383 650; 11am-1.30am; about 15km south of Barcelona on the road to Sitges).

HORSE-BACK RIDING: *Escola Municipal d'Hípica La Foixarda*, Avda Montanyans 1, Montjuïc tel 934 261 066. Offers classes for adults and children and sessions.

ICE-SKATING: *Skating*, c/Roger de Flor 168, Eixample tel 932 452 800; Metro Tetuan; Mon 5-10pm, Tues-Thurs 10.30am-1.30pm & 5-10pm, Fri 10.30am-1.30pm & 5pm-midnight, Sat 10.30am-2pm & 4.30pm-midnight, Sun 10.30am-2pm & 4.30-10pm; **Palacio de Hielo**, at the Camp Nou Stadium, c/Arístides Maillol 12 tel 934 963 600; Metro Palau Reial; Mon-Thurs 10am-1.45pm & 4-7pm, Fri 10am-1.45pm & 4-8pm, Sat & Sun 5-9pm.

ROLLER SKATING: There is no roller skating rink in Barcelona. There are, however, places you can rent roller skates and blades: *Edelweiss*, Gran Via 527 (tel 934 548 300; Metro Urgell. **Scenic**, c/Marina 22, Vila Olímpica (tel 932 211 666; Metro Ciutadella; ?4.50 an hour). Popular places for skating are: Arc de Triomf (Metro Arc de Triomf); Parc Joan Miró (Metro Espanya); Barceloneta, next to the Palau del Mar (Metro Barceloneta); Plaça de les Glòries (Metro Glòries) and the Port Olímpic (Metro Ciutadella). On Tues & Thurs at 10pm, you can skate with a group leaving from the skate shop, Scenic (c/Marina 22) in the Vila Olímpica, or look for an informal group who meet in front of the cathedral at 11pm on Thurs

RUGBY: Barça has a rugby team, as does CN Barcelona. www.rugbycatala.org

SAILING: The Centre Municipal de Vela, Port Olímpic 100 (tel 932 211 499; Metro Ciutadella offers short weekend courses in *sailing* and *windsurfing*.

SPORTS CENTERS: There are many sports centers and gyms throughout the city that offer one-day admissions:

C.F. Can Caralleu	c/Esports 8, Sarrià tel 932 037 874	www.claror.org/CanCaralleu.htm
Complex Esportiu Barceloneta	Pg Marítim s/n tel 932 210 010	www.claror.org/maritim.htm
DIR	A chain of private gyms with several locations throughout Barcelona. Some have pools. Many have classes such as aerobics and pilates. Different campuses have different hours, and depending on the hour of entry the cost of the pass is determined.	www.dirfitness.es
Esportiu Claror	Carrer Sardenya, 333 Tel: 93 476 13 90	www.claror.org/esportiuclaror.htm
Fitness Lleure	C/ Hurtado, 5. Tel: 932 123 580	www.fitnesslleure.com/
Frontó Colom,	La Rambla 18 Tel 933 024 025	www.frontocolom.com/
Holmes Place	Balmes 44 Tel: 932 722 000.	www.holmesplace.com
LA Fitness	C/Bruc between Mallorca and Valencia	
Polisportiu Perill	c/Perill 16-22, Gràcia; Tel 934 594 430	
Poliesportiu Sagrada Família	Carrer Cartagena, 231 Tel: 93 435 05 66	www.claror.org/sagradafamilia.htm

SWIMMING: Besides the beach, there are plenty of public pools throughout the city. Many include gym facilities that can be used with admission to the pool. In L'Eixample, for example, there are eight municipal facilities, some with on-site fitness centers:

NAME	ADDRESS	Fitness Facilities on site
Poliesportiu Municipal Joan Miró	Diputació 17-19	✓
Poliesportiu Municipal Estació del Nord	Napoles 42-44	✓
Pista Poliesportiva Municipal Jardins Indústria	St. Antoni Maria Claret 146	
Poliesportiu Municipal Aiguajoc	Comte Vorrell 21-35	✓
Pistes poliesportives Municipals Parc de L'Escorxador	Tarragona 1	
Piscina Sant Jordi	Paris 114	✓
Instal·lacions Esportives Escola Industrial	Viladomat 262	
Poliesportiu Municipal Sagrada Família	Cartegena 231-239	✓

Other pools can be found at www.bcn.es.

Entertainment abounds. Eat, drink and be merry in countless venues and sites. Here you will find a range of cuisine from the typical tapas to any type of international menus and even the McDonalds, KFC and Subway eateries. You'll find a pub, café or bar on virtually every street, catering to the Spaniards who often have a drink after work and on the weekend. Be aware that prices vary according to the area you are in, the time of the day (more expensive at night and on the weekends) and whether you sit at the bar or at a table. Some of the top recommendations on what to eat and drink here:

Allioli – sauce made from mayonnaise with olive oil and a bit of garlic for potatoes

Bacallà prepared in different ways, with tomato, garlic and honey.

Botifarra amb mongetes is a typical Catalan dish, very easy to prepare: you just need a sausage, white beans and a bit of olive oil

Canelones a la catalana an Italian pasta stuffed with minced meat, served with béchamel sauce

Crema catalana a type of pudding made from eggs with caramel on top

Escalivada is a typical dish in the rural areas of Catalonia. Containing red paprika, aubergine, onion and olives

Esqueixada is cod fish, tomato, onion, paprika and black olives

Fideuà is macaroni with octopus, prawns, cockles, etc.

Mel i matò dessert made from goat cheese with honey

Pa amb tomaquet bread with squashed tomato and a bit of olive oil and salt on top

Rape a la marinera angler fish served with sauce from white wine, almonds, garlic, prawns...

Suquet de peix fish soup: angler fish, squids and other sea food

Cava (Catalan champagne – can't call it champagne because it's not made with grapes from Champagne, France but tasty just the same)

Cerveza (beer) 'una mediana' is a bottle of 33 ml; 'un quinto' is a bit smaller. The most famous brands are: Xibeca and Estrella.

Cubata (a drink) a cocktail with rum and coca-cola

Clara Fanta and beer mix

Calimotxo wine and coca-cola

Sangría

Typical tapas include **patatas bravas**, **croquetas** (cheese, chicken and fish), and **chorizo / butifarra** (sausage).

Visual guide on what to order:

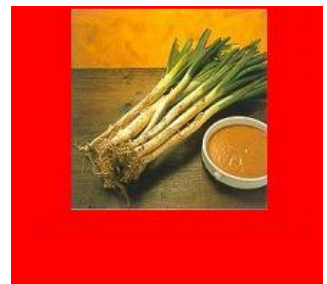
Paella (pa . e . ya) is the most typical rice dish available in Spain. You can order either paella del mar (sea), which contains a variety of shellfish, fish and other seafood, paella del monte (mountain), which is made with meats – cow, rabbit, lamb and sausage, or paella marymonte with a combination of seafood and meats. Saffron gives it its yellow color. Most restaurants will serve for the number of people ordering with generous portions.



Patatas Bravas (pa . ta . tas . bra . vas) is one of the widely available tapas dishes and is served in bars all over Barcelona. The sauce has a slight bite from Tabasco sauce, hence the name *bravas*, which means "fierce."

Patatas Alioli (pa . ta . tas . a . li . oli) is also a widely available tapas dish served in bars.... lightly fried potatoes covered in a warm garlicky mayonaisse sauce.

Calçots (cal . zots) are only available during the spring months and are a local delicacy. They are a type of scallion roasted on an open fire and dipped in romanesco sauce or salvitxada, accompanied by red wine or cava. Eating calçots can be pretty messy, so don't be surprised if your waiter or waitress offers you rubber gloves and a bib before serving your calçots.



Tortilla Española (tor . ti . ya . es . pa . nyol) is a type of potato cake made with eggs. It is perhaps the most Spanish of tapas. It comes with onions (tortilla con cebolla) or without onions (tortilla sin cebolla), with spinach (tortilla con espinaca), with artichoke (tortilla con alcachofas) or between two pieces of bread (bocadillo de tortilla).

Barcelona tap water from the sink is safe to drink but is an acquired taste. Bottled water can be purchased very cheaply from local supermarkets. The price for bottled water is tripled or quadrupled when purchased at tourist areas like Las Ramblas or at bars.

Lunch: 13.00h to 15.30h. Lunch is the main meal of the day in Spain. You begin with a primer plato: salad, soup, paella, spaghetti and then a main course: meat, fish, or chicken generally served with potatoes. Spaniards drink water or wine during their meals. Lunch, especially when eating out, is followed by dessert: flan, cake, fruit and coffee or tea.

Menú del día: Served in most restaurants and cafeterias, an inexpensive, filling and well-rounded meal at lunchtime. Most restaurants post a sign outside or inside the window indicating the choices available. You choose a first and second plate, a drink, dessert and coffee. Most "menús" cost between 8€ and 10€, but could be as high as 20€ in the tourist areas.

Dinner: 21.00h to 23.00h. Spaniards eat dinner late and light. At home, most Spaniards have soup, sandwiches, fish, tortilla and yogurt. On the weekends and when eating out, dinner tends to be heavier and served later.

****TIP:** When eating out, the price varies depending on where you choose to sit. Sitting at the bar is cheaper than at a table, and sitting outdoors tends to be more expensive than sitting inside.

Tapas: Late afternoons/ evenings and weekends, are usually reserved for bar hopping where small appetizers are served to accompany your drink. It is not unusual to skip dinner and visit several tapas bars or restaurants in an evening, ordering one or two tapas at each place.

In a recent online survey asking for recommendations of places with typical foods as well as good rather inexpensive meals, the following were made:

La Cervecería Catalana (C/ Mallorca and Rambla de Catalunya – L'Eixample)

La Gavina (Port Vell)

El Merendero de la Mari (Port Vell)

Mi Burrito (C/ Ferrán and Pas L'Ensenyança, Old Town)

Los Caracoles (Calle Escudellers 14 – Old Town)

TXACOLIN (Basque food) (C/ Marquç de L'Argentera, 19 – Old Town)

Ciudad Condal, Rambla de Catalunya, 18, L'Eixample

Comerç 24 and Santa Maria - C/Comerç, 24 (El Born)

La Plata (C/ la Merce)

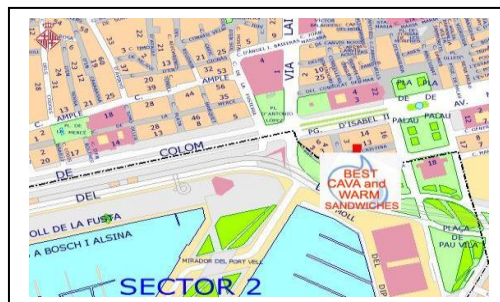
La Vinya del Senyor (in front of Santa Maria del Mar – El Born)

Can Culleretes (c/ Quintana 5 – Old Town)

Da Greco's (C/ Passeig de Gràcia 116 bis – L'Eixample)

La Fonda (Carrer del Escudellers – Old Town)

And for the best cava and sandwich place in town, Can Paixano: From Laietana, cross the intersection at Passeig de Colon and take a left. The first alley take a right and turn left at the next alley you come to. Walk half-way down the block and on your left hand side there will be an entry to the cava bar. Great warm sandwiches, tapas and flowing cava – very cheap and delicious!



The web page for bars and restaurants in Barcelona can be found at <http://www.webares.com/english/pinx0500.htm>. For other entertainment, clubs and dance halls, jazz clubs, and other social venues await you. L'ovella Negra is always packed with students

and travellers having a drink, meeting people and having a good time. In the Barceloneta beach area, Opium, Shoko, Sotavento and other popular places to meet are located. Pubs a plenty - Ryans pub and the George Payne Irish Bar - where drinks are reasonably priced and the ambiance is festive. We even have movies in their original format (i.e. English if they are from an English-speaking country like the U.S., Canada, UK, Australia, New Zealand or South Africa) at the Yelmo Cineplex at Icaria.

Shop till you drop – along Passeig de Gràcia for upscale (take the Tomb Bus that follows the shop line), the area around Plaça Urquinaona for wholesale and bargain prices, and the number of malls like Gran Via, Glories, or Lilla for variety. There is also an outlet mall **La Roca** (www.LaRocaVillage.com) about 1 hour outside of Barcelona toward Girona that has bus service from Barcelona four times a day (9h00, 12h00, 16h00 – except in August -- and 20h00) leaving from the Fabra & Puig metro stop. Sales, or Rebaixes (Catalan) / Rebajas (Spanish) are in full force right after Christmas: in fact two sale periods follow Christmas: immediately following Christmas the sales are in the area of 20% - 40%. In February the reductions go up to 70%. Again during the summer months (mid-June to mid-August) there are additional sales prior to the introduction of the fall lines.

If you are in the market for antiques, go here first: the Boulevard dels Antiquaris on Passeig de Gràcia 55 (www.bulevarddelsantiquaris.com), next to Boulevard Rosa shopping center. For antique records, Carrer dels Tallers (off the Ramblas) is the place for you. There are a lot of small antique shops on Carrer de la Palla near the Cathedral and Museu del Calçat near Plaça Nova. The other main street for antique shops is Carrer Consell de Cent in the Eixample area. On Saturday mornings you'll find a flea market at Port Vell near the Columbus monument and at Glories at Encants. Also, the square outside the Barcelona Cathedral holds a flea market of sorts on Thursday mornings, and regularly there are vendors stalls of arts and handicrafts at the Portal del Angel near the Plaça Catalunya and on Las Ramblas around the Drassanes metro stop.

Tourist offices in Barcelona are aplenty. Pl. Catalunya, Sants Railway Station, Pl. Sant Jaume Tourist office, Airport, on La Rambla de Catalunya for information about Catalunya, at the Pl Espanya metro station about Montserrat and Vall de Nuria.

English-language publications: Catalonia Today is the local newspaper while the Metropolitan is a glossy monthly publication covering Barcelona and Catalunya, and the Broadsheet covers Spain as a whole. Pick up a copy of the Guia del Ocio, on sale every Friday, Barcelona's comprehensive guide on how to have fun and includes restaurant, nightlife, and theater listings, as well as info on the week's cultural events and performances.

These are some of our favorite links for information about Barcelona:

www.bcn.es - The City of Barcelona, with information in English, Spanish and Catalan

www.barcelonaturisme.com -- The official tourist promotion of Barcelona

www.gencat.net/turistex_nou/territoire.htm -- the official tourist promotion of Catalunya

www.bcninternet.com/fr/tourism.php - BCN Internet with much information

Other favorite links include the following:

<http://www.bcn.es/virtual/english/> for a bird's eye view of Barcelona. GeoShow3D Lite software allows visitors a site of the city right on their computer screen. Visit them at the city's website.

The Generalitat (government body of Catalunya) hosts a website for transportation issues. Visit them online at <http://www10.gencat.net/ptop/AppJava/cat/mobilitat/index.jsp>

The regional tourism agency (Agència de Promoció Turística de la Diputació) maintains an online service at: www.diba.es/turismetotal

The Barcelona Card offers public transport and 100 discounts or free entrance (museums, performances, entertainment centres, night clubs, restaurants and others). They can be purchased at any Tourist Information Centre, Casa Batlló, El Corte Inglés, L'Aquàrium (shop) and the Poble Espanyol de Montjuïc. For more information about the discounts: <http://www.barcelonaturisme.com>

Like mountain biking? Go online for some handy information for biking in Catalunya. 100 km of signposted itineraries, starting at a reception point with tourist information and services for bikes. <http://www.gencat.net/turisme/btt/uk/centrosbtt.htm>

AREA HISTORY 101

While today Catalunya is an autonomous region of Spain, it counts on a history stretching back over 2500 years. References to the Catalan people date to the 10th Century, with the origins of the Catalan nation being credited to Wilfred the Hairy, Count of Barcelona, who established a hereditary system of succession. Before his death, he managed to unify the county of Barcelona with the rest of the Carolingian territories. In the year 988 Count Borrell II achieved independence from the Carolingian kings for the County of Barcelona and became the dominant political and military force in the region later known as Catalonia. By the Middle Ages, the region had become the commercial center of a vast Mediterranean Empire because of its ports and strategic location. At that time Catalunya was its own nation, and Barcelona was its capital. The 15th Century brought a financial decline to the area, as both the discovery of America and Sevilla's trade monopoly shifted commercial routes away from the Mediterranean. Then came the Industrial Revolution that gave birth to a thriving aristocracy able to commission great architectural wonders. Hometown heroes of Domènech i Montaner, Puig i Cadafalch, and the legendary Antoni Gaudí gave life to the Modernism Movement and set the stage for Barcelona being the world's showcase of avant-garde architecture. Then came the 1992 Olympic Games, which produced the most extensive changes to the city in all its history -- urban planning at its finest, with the creation of parks and roads -- resulting in an enviable infrastructure with one of the best public transportation systems on earth.

In the 1800s the political tendency of Catalanism started gaining ground and there was a resurgence of interest in Catalan institutions, traditions and culture. However, the Catalan national identity was totally repressed by the Spanish Civil War. The use of Catalan in public was forbidden and the language retreated into the home. Not until Franco's death and the new Spanish constitution of 1977 did Catalonia regain a measure of self government with the Estatut de Autonomia. Today the government of the region is parliamentary in form, and a new resurgence of Catalan pride has given strength to the Catalan language, with all education and public sector activities taking place in this Romance language that is similar to Spanish and French. The Catalan people have learned to become natural polyglots, but no need to worry -- here, Spanish is spoken by everyone.

MORE ABOUT THE CATALAN LANGUAGE

You would be surprised how similar Catalan is to Spanish. The natives switch between the two flawlessly. It is spoken widely throughout this area, from the south of France down the coast to Valencia and over to the Balearic islands of Mallorca and Menorca, in Italy and is the official language of Andorra. Written Catalan is more the shortened version of Spanish -- words normally lose their endings -- estació instead of estación, departament instead of departamento, transports instead of transportes. An important Catalan word to learn: lliure = free, as in entry into a museum without having to pay. More Catalan vocabulary available online at <http://www.catalanencyclopaedia.com/>

KEEPING LOCAL TIME

Eating times are a bit strange here in Barcelona. Breakfast is between 9am and 11am and is similar to other countries on the continent. Lunch is served in restaurants between 1pm and 3pm. However, don't forget that dinner time in Barcelona is very late. Sometimes we will start dinner at 10:00 at night and many restaurants will not even open until after 8:00. And speaking of odd schedules, we love our mid-day break. Most businesses close their office from 2:00

p.m.to 4:00 p.m. Normal office hours are from 8:30 to 2:00 and from 4:00 to 8:00. Banks are open from 8:30 to 2:00 or 2:15 (depending on the bank). The savings banks (anything that has "Caixa" in it – La Caixa, Caixa de Terrasa, etc) are normally open on Thursday evenings, from 4:00 to 8:00 except in the summer. Conventional banks (BBVA, Santander, Sabadell, etc) are normally open on Saturday morning except in the summer. Major commercial centers and shopping areas (grocery stores, etc.) will operate uninterrupted.

If you need shopping after the stores have closed, there is a chain of Opencor supermarkets (part of the Corte Inglés empire). Although they do not have an extensive offering of products, they are convenient - open 365 days a year, from 08h00 in the morning till 02h00 in the wee hours of the night. The closest to the flats in L'Eixample are located at Marina, 304-308 (next to Sagrada Família) and Passeig Sant Joan, 138 (just past Diagonal). Others are located throughout the city: Gran Via de les Corts Catalans, 407-409 (close to Plaça Espanya); Ronda Sant Pau, 34-36 (between Paral·lel and the Sant Antoni market); Ronda Sant Pere, 33 (between Plaça Urquinaona and Passeig Sant Joan); Maria Barrientos, 2- 4 (between Nou Camp and Gran Via de Carles III); Ronda General Mitre, 38-44 (between Via Augusta and Diagonal); Calvet, 33-37 (just north of Plaça Francesc Macià); Gran de Gracia, 29-33 (close to Diagonal).

FYI

From 1 January 2006 laws against smoking in public places came into effect and stiff fines will be imposed for smoking in areas such as enclosed public spaces, areas where food is prepared and sold, public transport, designated areas of bars and restaurants, and any places that cater for children. Quite a shock for an area that has been ingrained with cigarette smoke for such a long time. Some bars still permit smoking, so look for the signs posted at the entry (green you can smoke; red you cannot) before entering.

Restaurant bills usually include service charges, but additional tips are welcomed for services rendered.

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

If you are staying just in Barcelona, we do not recommend renting a car to see the city. The metropolitan area of Barcelona counts with one of the best transit systems in Europe. Visitors can access virtually any point in the metropolitan area through public transportation, a system of metro, buses, trolleys and trams that crisscross the city with a prompt and efficient rendering of services. The distances are usually very short and having a car is more of a hassle than it's worth. If you need a car for any of the day trips we recommend, our suggestions are that you rent it for a day or two and park it at public garages, which charge anywhere from 19€ to 24€ a day.

Transports Metropolitans de Barcelona is the public transportation system for the Barcelona metropolitan area, with 10 metro lines and hundreds of busses intersecting the entire city. You can go virtually anywhere in Barcelona with TMB. Their user-friendly website provides everything you need to plan your travels around Barcelona - in English!

Features of the TMB website include:

- * Where I am
- * Where I want to go
- * Maps
- * Timetables
- * Travelcards
- * Information on entry ports into Barcelona

This interactive website allows visitors to find the most appropriate means of transport between any two sites within the metropolitan area (www.tmb.cat) in English, Spanish and Catalan, although they are currently switching systems and are in beta once again.. Printed guides, *Guia d'Autobuses Urbans de Barcelona*, free at tourist offices and in Metro stations, maps out the city's bus routes and the seven Metro lines; the small book *Guia Facil del Bus per Mour't per Barcelona* describes the routes in even more detail. The Barcelona Metro runs during the workweek (Monday to Thursday), Sunday, and holidays from 5:00 a.m. to 12:00 a.m. Friday, Saturday & Holidays eves other holiday 5:00 a.m. to 2:00 a.m. Normal buses (red numbered with no letter) typically run until 11:00 p.m. and normally arrive every 10-15 minutes during rush hour and every 30-45 minutes during off-peak hours. Nit buses (N-plus a number) take over the

night routes for the normal buses. NitBUS service pickup when the regular bus system and Metro close. Sixteen different lines run 10:30pm-4:30am, usually every 20-30 min., depending on the line; a few run until 5:30am. Almost all the buses have stops near the Plaça Catalunya; a Metro pass is valid on the Nitbus. The buses stop in front of most club complexes and work their way through the Ciutat Vella and the Zona Alta. Maps are available at estancos (tobacco shops) and marked by signs in Metro stations. Phone: 901 51 11 51. The Tomb Bus does what it says, literally "round trip bus", travelling along the major shopping streets between Plaça Catalunya and Plaça Pius XII, primarily on Passeig de Gràcia and Diagonal. Runs every 7 minutes on Monday through Friday, and every 15 minutes on Saturday. The "Tibibús" runs between Plaça Catalunya and Tibidabo, but only when the Tibidabo amusement park is open. Catch the bus at the Plaça Catalunya (in front of El Corte Inglés), Passeig de Gràcia ("Jardinetes"/Diagonal), Gran de Gràcia/pl. Lesseps, Parc Güell/Baixada de la Glòria, Ticià/ pg. Vall Hebron, and Tibidabo (from where more buses run to the Collserola Tower).

Barcelona's tram system is divided into two subsectors: **Trambaix** serves the western end of the Diagonal between Plaça Francesc Macià and destinations in the Baix Llobregat, L'Hospitalet de Llobregat, Cornellà, Sant Joan Despí, Esplugues de Llobregat, Sant Just Desvern, and Sant Feliu de Llobregat; **Trambesòs** serves the area between the Zoo and the Forum, with stops at the L'Auditori/Teatro Nacional, Plaça de les Glòries, Ca l'Aranyo (Glories Shopping Center and Agbar Building), Diagonal Mar, and the Fòrum area in the delta of the river Besòs.



If you plan to use public transportation extensively, consider buying one of the several *abonos* (passes) available, all of which work interchangeably for the Metro, bus, urban lines of the FGC commuter trains, and the Nitbus.

The **T-10** pass is valid for 10 rides and saves you nearly 50% off the cost of single tickets. The **T-Día** pass is good for a full day of unlimited travel, while the **T-Mes** and the **T-Trisemestre** offer the same for one month and 90 days respectively. **T-Joven** passes are discounted for young adults under the age of 21. The **T-50/30** buys 50 trips in a 30-day period. The **3 Dies** gets you three days of unlimited travel; the **5 Dies** is good for five days. Both save you money if you use the Metro more than three times per day. It is advisable to hold on to your ticket until

you leave the Metro -- an uniformed official may ask to see it. Riding without a ticket carries a €42 fine.

Dramamine anyone? [Las Golondrinas](http://elfar.diba.es) provides tours of the Port and the Barcelona coastline and have glass-bottom boats in their fleet to view the Mediterranean Sea floor. There are also traditional Latin boats and other maritime-related activity operated by Consortio El Far (<http://elfar.diba.es>)

The **Montjuïc cable car (funicular)** connects at the Paral·lel metro stop (green line L3 and purple line L2) to take passengers up the mountain. Normally it deposits passengers at the cable car that connects to the Montjuïc castle, but this is currently under construction. If you want to go to the castle during the week, best bet to take a taxi. During the weekend, there is a special TMB bus that goes up to the castle.

Tramvia Blau covers a 1.4-kilometre route between the Av. Tibidabo and the foot of the Funicular. Its fleet is comprised of seven vehicles, among which an open tramcar and one dating from 1901. Managed by TBM.

The **Teleférico Cable Car** transport service links the Tower of Sant Sebastià (Sant Sebastià beach) with the Jaume I Tower (World Trade Center) and Miramar (Montjuïc mountain). Service is operated by Teleféricos de Barcelona S.A.
Telephone at Torre de Jaume I: 93 441.50.71
Telephone at Torre de Sant Sebastià:
93 225.27.18



Ferrocarrils de la Generalitat de Catalunya (www.fgc.net) are the trains of Catalunya, and carry passengers the short distances within and outside Barcelona, and are the favoured method of transportation to the Saint Gervasi, Bonanova and other neighbourhoods toward Tibidabo. They also sponsor specialized travel to La Molina for skiing, the "cremallera" (funicular) for travel to Montserrat, and the Vall de Nuria express.

RENFE (www.renfe.es) is the train network of Spain, and is used for more of the long-distance travel within the country and connections to other train systems in Europe, but also have the rodalies (cercanias or suburban lines) as well as the regional train for travel outside Barcelona to other areas of Spain and Europe.

Two tourist bus companies cover two routes (north and south) that circle the city, stopping at 40 main points of historic, cultural and artistic interest in the city of Barcelona. Both use open top double-decker buses -- hop on / hop off -- which allow passengers to discover the city. An informative guide about each of the stops is issued with the ticket, as well as a discount voucher booklet you can use at the main sights and landmarks

There are also local taxis that are flagged down by outstretching your hand and waving. All taxis in Barcelona are closely regulated and metered, charging a combination of time and distance. A green light indicates their availability. On weekends and at nights you may have to wait up to 30min. in some locations; long lines form at popular club spots like the Port Olímpic. A *lliure* or *libre* sign in the windshield or a lit green light on the roof means they are vacant; yellow means they are occupied. Taxi prices are set according to official rates. A "2" indicate the rates charged during the week between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.; a "1" corresponds to weekend rates and times before 7 a.m. and after 7 p.m. A "3" is for rates outside the metropolitan area.

Need a taxi? Fonotaxi 93 300 11 00 / Radio taxi verd 93 266 39 39 / Taxi Groc 93 490 22 22

Barnataxi 93 357 77 55 / Taxi Radiomovil 93 358 11 11 / Taxiamic 93 358 11 11
Taxi-adaptado 93 357 77 55

ARRIVING IN BARCELONA

Barcelona is serviced by three airports. The main international airport is **BCN El Prat, with two terminals**, located approximately 30 minutes from the city center. Two smaller airports (**Girona** to the north and **Reus/Salou** to the south) serve as hubs for reduced-rate airlines operating flights to other cities in Europe. These both are located approximately 1.5 hours away from Barcelona and are serviced by regularly-scheduled buses that meet the arrival/departure of flights.

EL PRAT: Transportation from the Barcelona International Airport ("El Prats de Llobregat") to the city center takes about 30 minutes by taxi, and 45-60 minutes by train or bus. Contact information for the actual airport: Telephone: (0)932 983 838; Fax: (0)932 983 737; Email: bcninfofi@aena.es; Website: www.aena.es. Tourist information desks (tel: (0)934 784 704 or 780 565) are located in all terminals. You can check on arrival and departures online at "INFOVUELOS" section of the www.aena.es website, selecting Barcelona as the airport for "salidas" (departures) or "llegadas" (arrivals). **TAXI:** Most taxis can conveniently fit passengers and luggage for 2-3 persons. Queue up at the indicated taxi area in front of the terminal. Price: Fare is approximately €60 euros (depending on the hour of the day and day of the week, and includes an airport supplement) to the center of town (Plaça Catalunya). **TRAIN:** The train station is located close to the airport Terminal 1, and there are shuttles between Terminal 2 and the train platform. Trains run about twice an hour and will bring passengers to stations connect with the metro and buses--- and Badalona (40 minutes). **BUS:** The *AeroBus* (blue) goes from the airport, loops around from the airport and back, stopping at Plaça Espanya, on the Gran Via, Plaça Catalunya and the Sants Train terminal. Look for the bus shelter outside both terminals. You can also take the *Aero Bus* back to the airport from Plaça Catalunya, Plaça Espanya or Sants Estacio. Buy your tickets on the bus. Bus runs from 06h00 until midnight every 15-30 minutes

GIRONA: Transportation from Girona (Costa Brava) to Barcelona is coordinated to meet passengers from Ryan Air flights. The *Barcelona Bus* picks up at the Girona airport within 30 minutes of flights arrivals and takes about 1 hour via the freeway. The *Barcelona Bus* "terminal is located at the Estacio Nord, served by metro line L1 (red line – Arc de Triumf). You can buy your tickets on the bus. Schedule of travel times are online at Ryan Air's website or phone: (34) 902 361 550. The train also goes to Girona, but then passengers must take a taxi from the train terminal to the airport.

REUS/SALOU: Transportation from Reus-Salou (Costa Duarda) to Barcelona is also coordinated to meet passengers from Ryan Air flights. The bus, *Hispano Igualadina / Transportes de Catalunya* picks up at the Reus Salou airport and takes about 1 hour 20 minutes. The terminal is at the Sants Estacio train station, and you can also catch it at Plaça Maria Cristina. Price: Buy your tickets at the bus service kiosk by the luggage carousel at the airport, or on the bus in Barcelona.

DISTANCE TO OTHER AREAS FROM BARCELONA:

Tarragona: 98 kms
Valencia: 350 kms
Madrid: 621 kms
Sevilla: 1,025 kms
Andorra: 201 kms

Girona: 100 kms
Castellon: 284 kms
Granada: 868 kms
Santiago de Compostela: 1,174 kms
French border: 175 kms

Lleida: 156 kms
Zaragoza: 296 kms
Pamplona: 437 kms

GREAT DAY TRIPS FROM BARCELONA:

Montserrat – our favorite for serenity, spiritual escape and nature walks. In addition to the nature paths to hike, there is a beautiful monastery, Romanesque church, and visitors center. Part of the mountain ranges of Montseny and Montnegre, Montserrat is famous for its pilgrimages. And don't forget the famous Montserrat Boy's Choir from the Escolania, Europe's oldest conservatory for children, singing every Sunday in the Cathedral.
www.monserratvisita.com. At Plaça Espanya (metro lines L3 green and L1 red), get off the metro and onto the [Ferrocarril de la Generalitat de Catalunya](http://www.fgc.cat) (FGC) train R5 train. There are several ticket dispensers, but it's best to visit the dedicated Montserrat booth at the PI Espanya prior to boarding the train. You can also go to the train ticket window and tell the agent where you want to go. The train ticket costs 12€ round trip and takes about 1 hour from Barcelona to Montserrat, with the earliest train at 5:24am and trains leaving Plaça Espanya every hour. The Montserrat monastery and other sites are high on the top of the mountain, and there are two ways to get up there (in addition to taxi or tour bus): cable car or the Cremallera (tram or rack rail) up to the mountain. You can also take the mountain cable car by getting off the train two stops before the tram station at Montserrat-Aeri (www.aeridemontserrat.com/) It's a five-minute ride up the mountain with spectacular views! If you prefer taking the Cremallera, you must get off the Barcelona-Montserrat train at Monistrol de Montserrat. Four kilometres of the train's route are in rack traction to cover a difference in height of almost 550 metres between Monistrol-Vila and Montserrat stations. The last tram down to the train is around 7 p.m., so don't miss it. Do bring your warm clothes, as it gets windy up there. If you wish to spend the night at the Abat Cisneros -- the hotel located at the monastery -- email reservations at reserves@larsa-montserrat.com. Other information about Montserrat can be found at their website http://www.abadiamontserrat.net/html/eng/index_serveis.htm

Costa Brava – Our vote for the best, funnest day trip from Barcelona goes to the Costa Brava, about one hour north. Take the train at Sants Estació and get off at Blanes (located 50 kilometres from Barcelona and 25 kilometres from Girona), one of the best beaches on the coast. There is the Red Bus that does the circular trip from the train terminal to the main square (Plaça Catalunya). Visit the Marimurtra Botanical Gardens by taking the city's tourist bus that leaves you at the gates, the Jardín Botánico Pinya de Rosa for more specialized plants of the region, or the 13th century medieval Sant Joan Castle, also accessible on the city's tourist bus.

Many people fly into Girona, a little over an hour from Barcelona, with the low budget airlines like Ryan Air. From there many tourists commute to Barcelona, but did you know that Girona and its surrounding cities have the best beaches of the Costa Brava. The walled city built in the 1st Century B.D. is a popular destination for tourists and locals alike, with mild winters and cool summers. It is a confluence of cultures. With a historic Jewish quarter and important Modernism architecture. Stroll along the river on cobbled streets, or take the tourist train around the city for an intimate look at history. The Dali Museum is close to Girona in the town of Figueres, where you can also visit the Casa de Port Lligat, Pubol Castle, and another of Dali's favorite spots the town of Cadaqués, a short drive to the beach.

If you're visiting Blanes in the summer, catch the firework festival in July, one of the largest, where competition among pyrotechnic wonders from around the world compete for the coveted prize. Or rent a boat with built-in slides - great fun at the beach. You can also rent umbrellas and chairs there, as well as snorkling equipment.

In Blanes, you can play chess on a giant sidewalk chessboard. Also visit the other botanical gardens in Blanes, the Jardí de Pinya de Rosa. We found a great hostel right on the beach at the Plaça Catalunya -- operated by Kiku -- clean, bright, and room for everyone! Take a glass-bottom boat ride up and down the coast -- the boat comes right up onto the beach -- stopping at Lloret de Mar, Tossa de Mar and Roses. Rent a paddle boat specially equipped with slides for lots of fun. While in Lloret de Mar visit the Aiguamolls nature park, and Europe's biggest water park, Water World (open only in the summer). Another worthwhile beach to visit on the Costa Brava is Estarit, with its long, wide beach, a nice harbour, and old town that is pedestrian-friendly. Centre for scuba and snorkeling, with boat trips to the Islas Medes. Llança is a fishing village in northern Costa Brava, surrounded by national parklands, including the Aiguamolls of

the Emporda, the Albera Park, the Cap de Creus and the Medes Islands. Diving centers offer equipment and boat service, and there are golf courses and parachuting nearby. Tamariu is a small fishermen village without any high built hotels or apartment houses but with fabulous reefs having easy access for incredible shore dives. Kayaking also available. At Cardona, visit the magnificent castle that towers over the River Cardener from the top of the mountain has played a part in history of Catalunya. Marineland Catalunya (<http://www.asproocio.es/marineland/cataluna/index.php?lang=en>) in Palafrons, Girona, combines a marine zoo with a water park. The marine zoo section includes a Dolphinarium, which has been one of the most successful breeding program in Europe. There are regular dolphin and sea lion shows, as well as others featuring free-flying parrots and birds of prey. In addition, there are several collections of underwater creatures indigenous to this area of the Mediterranean.

Vall de Núria – At Vall de Núria, (www.valldenuria.com) visitors can enjoy the splendors of nature all year round. Getting there is half the fun, on the tram crossing dramatic inclines and cascading waterfalls. When summer arrives, Vall de Núria's range of summer activities and services are tailor-made for mountain holiday enthusiasts. Visitors can choose from a host of different activities: guided excursions and climbs, horse-riding and pony-trekking, archery, miniature golf, canoeing and boat trips on the lake.

Skiing – Feeling like having some snow fun or just want to do something different for a change - hit the slopes! Barcelona and its coastline is known for its fun in the sun on pristine beaches, but from November to March, ski season takes front and center stage. Although not as well known as the Alps, the Pyrenees offers first class wintersports venues. The slopes await skiers and snowboarders at La Molina and Vall de Nuria, about 150 kms from Barcelona and accessible by train. You can buy a package which includes the train ride plus the ski-pas (forfeit) which you can buy at any RENFE station in Barcelona. The "Alp 2500" pass includes access to 133km of skiable area. Be sure to check the weather forecast, as ski resorts have cannons for artificial snow to guarantee skiing even if there has been no snow. La Molina is about 3 hours from Barcelona toward Andorra. The ski resort is surrounded by mountains of more than 2500 meters. There are 40 ski-runs at La Molina, catering to all levels, with a total of 50 kilometres of ski slopes, 12 ski lifts and 7 ski schools. The station also has two children's snow parks with their own telebaby, a crèche for toddlers, a Dog Sledge Circuit round the lake, and a Snow Quads Circuit. La Molina also has facilities for schools, offering educational activities for students of all ages. There is a choice of courses and workshops on the environment, mountains and skiing. Ski and weather report online at www.lamolina.com/ing/esqui/estatclose.asp

At Vall de Nuria, There are 10 ski-runs accommodating a wide range of ability levels, with a total of more than 17 hectares of ski slopes and 4 ski lifts. Its ideal size and relaxed atmosphere make it perfect for all the family. There are special facilities for young children including a telebaby, a Snow Park (with organised activities for the 3 to 10 age-group) and a Dog Sledge Circuit. There are also guided routes of varying levels of difficulty for mountain skiing and snowshoeing.

If you are going to **Andorra** to hit the slopes or enjoy the thermal baths, check out the official website of Andorra that features a webcam of various entry points into the country, and an updated weather service -- important if you are driving in the winter. About 200 km from Barcelona, Andorra is actually another country (well, technically a principality, governed by Spain and France). It is because of Andorra that Catalan is an official language of the United Nations. You can drive or take a bus. Once you get there and get over the spectacular scenery, you can start to enjoy many the many attractions. Andorra la Vella is the "downtown" area with all the shopping -- tax-free! Andorra has the largest ski station in the Pyrenees, with skiing and snowboarding runs for all levels. In the summer, there are nature hikes, horse-back riding, and one of the best thermal spas we have found.....Caldea. (www.caldea.ad/idiomes.html) . Treat yourself to a wide range of spa treatments for you and the kids, relax in the indoor and outdoor pools, or just tour the beautiful glass and steel architectural wonder. With an office in Barcelona, it's best to book before you go, as there are time slots allotted, especially for massages. Andorra has many ski resorts ideal for everyone; from beginner to expert, skier, snowboarder, trekkers or people who just want to have fun in the snow. Andorra hosts two main ski areas: Grandvalira (larger, able to accommodate experienced skiers and snowboarders wanting to go off piste),

and Vallnord. Grandvalira consists of several ski resorts such as Pas de la Casa, Grau Roig, Soldeu and Encamp. Vallnord consists of three ski resorts. Pal, Arcalis and Arinsal. These two areas about half an hour by bus from each other. As with most ski areas, it is cheaper to ski during the week than on the weekends.

Ripoll -- Visit the heart of Catalunya to Ripoll, with spectacular views up toward the Pyrenees and down toward the surrounding valley. One of the most famous monasteries of the region, the medieval Benedictine monastery in Ripoll built in 879, features some of the finest examples of Romanesque architecture in Europe. Probably not exactly exciting for the kids, but finding the remains of "Wilfred the Hairy" might be. You see, legend has it that it was the bloody fingers of Sir Wilfred (in Catalan, Guifré el Pelós), mortally wounded during his army's attempts to recapture the region from Moorish invaders, drawn across his golden shield -- that inspired the flag of Catalunya. Visit the Ethnographic Museum or attend the Festival of the Wool in early May.

Sitges -- a favorite for seaside dining. accessible by train or bus. Here you can visit the museum of Cau Ferrat, with a valuable collection of objects of metal, glass and paintings of the epoch of Modernism, and Palacio Maricel, home of a summer-university. Sitges is only 40 minutes from Barcelona by train (less than €10 euros on the RENFE train). With 17 beaches spread over 4 kms, Sitges has about 24,000 inhabitants and is an ideal place to visit during the day or over the weekend. It is referred to as the St Tropez of Spain due to the high property prices and excellent living environment.

Tarragona -- a short train ride away, visit the Roman thermal baths

Poble de Claramunt -- 62 kms. from Barcelona stands the castle of Claramunt. Declared a heritage site, it is part of the Frontier Castles built in the 9th and 10th centuries against Saracen attacks.

Canteras de Llobregot -- Visits to El Roure quarry where you can see how limestone, marble, granite and other stones are extracted. You can watch the conversion from blocks into sheets. Guided tours. Warehouse and workshop. Take the train to Sant Vicenc de Castellet, Bages, Phone: 93 833 16 00.

Places to visit closer to Barcelona are the Casino of Sant Pere de Ribes, the vineyards of Penedés with a wine-museum in Vilafranca and the home of the "Cava", the famous Spanish sparkling wine, Sant Sadurn d'Anoia.

Churches? Everyone has heard about the city's most famous temples of worship -- the Sagrada Familia (Barcelona's most visited monument) and the Cathedral. However, the city and surrounding areas is home to many beautiful works from the Romanesque and Gothic eras. Visit the church of Santa Maria del Pi (pi = pine tree in Catalan), 14th Century, that retains some of its original stained glasswork. The name of the church, the two squares around it and the street (Carrer de Pi) it is on were all named after the pine tree outside this church. The church is the site of many free choral performances. Another 14th Century must-see Gothic church is Esglesia de la Concepció, one that was moved stone by stone from Old Town to L'Eixample. Originally it formed part of the ancient Monastery of Jonkeres (twelfth century). Visit the serene cloister next door to the church. The Castell I Canonica de Sant Vincenç is a masterpiece of early Catalan Romanesque architecture and with magnificent views of the Pyrenees, Sant Vicenc offers three naves, a crypt, a gothic cloister and abbey courtyard with castle remains above. At Cardona, Bages, Barcelona.

Monasteries? The most visited in this area is the Monastir de Pedralbes, built in 1326 by Queen Elisenda de Montcada, whose name has been retained for the street on which the monastery is located. It has inner courtyard, gardens, and a well from the Renaissance era. For more about monuments, monasteries and other memorable sites to visit while you are here in Barcelona, check out <http://www.spain.info/> and enter Barcelona on the right hand side of the page at the bottom of the search criteria. Sant Cugat has an 11th Century Monastery. The

Romanesque church of *Sant Pere* with remains from the 6th century in its interior, and *Sant Miquel* with its extraordinary baptistery. The textile museum of *Biosca*, in the center of this area traditionally dominated by textile industry, reminds visitors of the "industrial revolution". Sabadell offers an interesting paleontological museum and the monastery of *Mare de Déu de la Salut*. In Badalona visit the monastery of *Sant Jeroni de la Murtra* and the Roman settlement of the Second Century B.C. There are more Roman ruins in Mataró, a blooming industrial town with a beautiful medieval center. Along the coast, make sure you visit Arenys de Mar, with its awesome cemetery and the crypts of some of the most important families in Catalunya. The name, read reverse: Syrena, makes reference to the mythic mermaids of that area. While you're in that area, stop by Llabaneres, a lovely sea-side town.

The Catalonia wine country rivals the more famous regions of France, Germany and California for its fine wines and signature "cava", the sparkling wine with a local moniker to differentiate the spirits from that originating in the champagne region. The area is bustling with festivities during harvest time.

OTHER SHORT TRIPS FROM BARCELONA:

Barcelona's prime Mediterranean location makes the city an ideal gateway to the **Balearic Islands**, which are renowned for their beaches, clubs, and resorts. The main ferry station is **Estació Marítima**, in Port Vell. (M: Drassanes.) Head down Las Ramblas to the **Monument a Colom**. Columbus points straight toward the Estació Marítima. Cross the street and walk right, along the waterfront, until you see the large Trasmediterrànea building on your left. Two companies operate out of Estació Marítima. Both offer discounts for students and seniors. Tickets are available at any travel agency or at Estació Marítima. **Trasmediterrànea** (902 45 46 45; fax 93 295 91 34), in Estació Marítima-Moll Barcelona, Moll de Sant Bertran. Ferry and high speed transport to Mahon, Palma and Ibiza from 36,10 €.. **Turbocat** (902 18 18 88; in Estació Marítima-Moll Barcelona, Moll de Sant Bertran. In the summer months only to: **Ciutadella** (3½hr., 1 per day, €65) and **Alcúdia** (5hr., 1 per day, €62). Low cost flights (with advance purchase) from Barcelona to Mallorca and Menorca are available from Vueling and Span Air.

FEASTDAYS AND FESTIVALS IN BARCELONA

Catalans love a good festivo and you can count on a holiday occurring every month. Being a traditionally Catholic nation, Spaniards celebrate many major church holidays by taking the day off. Keep in mind that most commercial establishments will be closed and taxi will charge the higher off hour rates.

JANUARY..... New Years in Barcelona is like Carnival -- people don their masks and take to the streets, trying to eat 12 grapes during the last 12 seconds of the year. This tradition is said to bring good luck - if you are able to do it. January, 5th brings the procession of the "Three Magi", or the Second Christmas, celebrated throughout Spain

FEBRUARY..... February 13th is the Fiesta of Santa Eulalia, a traditional children's holiday that is celebrated in the streets of Barcelona.

MARCH..... On March, 3rd there is the popular festival of San Medir, with processions and choirs singing in the streets.

APRIL..... The festival of Sant Jordi, Catalunya's most loved and honored Patron Saint, is celebrated on April, 23rd. It will be hard to find a woman without a rose in her hand on this feast of the books and roses. Best viewed on the Rambla de Catalunya (one of the "other" Ramblas, between Gran Vía and Diagonal, where the sidewalks are converted into vendors' stalls.

MAY..... May is when the poetic Jocs Florals (flower games), and the festival of Sant Ponç in Calle del Hospital take place. May 1st is the world celebration of the worker and celebrated. St Anastasia (in Lleida only). Mid-May is the Grand Prix – Formula One at the Circuit de Catalunya. Ticket information and purchases can be made at www.circuitcat.com. If you are a true die-hard fan and don't mind investing a little extra in your F1 experience, then rent a

helicopter for an incomparable and astonishing view of the Circuit. For information call +34 93 720 5522 or send a fax to +34 93 712 3722.

JUNE..... June 15th is the Feast of Corpus Christi, which features processions of traditional and very picturesque masks, and "l'ou com balla", the festival of the "dancing egg", around the cathedral. Peek into the gardens at the cloister around the corner from the cathedral to see the real dancing egg! The feast of Sant Joan is celebrated the night of the 23rd of June with fire works and parties in every Catalan town. In Barcelona, you can find bonfires on the beach at Barceloneta and fireworks from the beach and from Montjuic and Tibidabo. The celebration history is linked to the Summer solstice and has pagan roots. At the end of the month starts the festival of Grec with open-air concerts and dance performances, specially in the "Greek Theater" of Montjuic. The actual feastday is June 24th and holiday hours are kept.

JULY..... July 25th is the Epistle of St James in Girona.

AUGUST..... August brings the festival of Gracia (one of the older Barcelona neighborhoods previously its own town) with beautifully decorated streets. August 15th is the Feast of the Assumpció, where most commercial establishments will be closed for business.

SEPTEMBER..... September 11th is the National Feast of Catalunya. This year the festival of La Merce, Barcelona's largest public festival, will include some 500 different activities, and more than 3000 performers. These performers will be swarming all over the city, occupying all the main squares and most of the large streets, such as Passeig de Gracia. Public transportation (metros and buses) will be available 24 hours a day over the weekend of the 24th. Shops and restaurants will be open as usual. Good disability access during the festival, with special marked places for those with wheelchairs. There will be human towers, especially in the Old Town area of Plaça Sant Jaume (where the Generalitat is located) and the Gegants (giants) wandering the streets. On the 22nd, the Gegants will be in a night time parade, starting at 22h00, between the Plaça Sant Jaume and Las Ramblas down Carrer Ferran. The Correfoc (literally running fire) feature people dressed up as dragons putting off fireworks, will take place this year around the Plaça Sant Jaume. The local food show, featuring samplings of over 400 different wine and cava vintages, will take place in the Moll de la Fusta. Piromusical features Pep Sala in concert with the fireworks at Av. Maria Cristina on Montjuic. Other Merce events include performances of "sardanas" (the national dance of Catalunya), especially in the Plaça de Sant Jaume and important sports events, free concerts, theatre shows, air balloon displays and more. More information available at the <http://www.bcn.es/merce/> closer to September. In Lleida, September 29th is St Michael's feastday celebrations.

OCTOBER..... Columbus Day (Día de la Hispanidad) is celebrated on October 12th. No trick-or-treating on Halloween here, but the American Society will host its annual party. In Girona, October 29th is San Narciso.

NOVEMBER..... November 1st is All Saints Day.

DECEMBER..... December 6th is Constitution Day. December 8th is the Día de la Imaculada (Immaculate Conception). On December, 13th the expositions of Christmas displays begin and the neighborhoods compete against each other for the most spectacular displays of lights. They celebrate Christmas day in full force here (December 25th) and, in Catalunya, will take off the following day, too, December 26th, to celebrate Sant Esteve

For more information on local holidays and feastday celebration, visit the Barcelona Town Council website at <http://www.bcn.cat> Click on the *English* language link. Once you're at the English homepage look for the link that says "*Website Map*" (right-hand side of the page near the top) and click, looking for the index to the town council site. Look for the title headed "*What else do you want to know?*" Then click on the link called "*Diary*". You'll then be taken to the main page for the Barcelona events database. To find an event that is occurring during any time of the year, click on the link "*A to Z all Barcelona events*" You'll then be taken to a page that will enable you to search for an event during the time in which you are visiting Barcelona.

Keep an eye open for performances of opera and concerts taking place at the Palau de la Musica, the Liceu, the L'Auditori and the Teatro Nacional. For more on what's on when, go to <http://www.whatsonwhen.com/pages/Barcelona.jml> and click on the month you will be visiting.

WEATHER

Being located right on the Mediterranean mitigates against extreme temperatures in Barcelona. Having said that, however, we are prone to sporadic spells of extreme weather, and you may experience a cold snap during your winter stay or a heat spell if you come in summer.

Winters are among the mildest of the continent. If you are coming during December through February, best bring a coat, as temperatures can dip to 0 degrees, especially at night, for short periods of time. Winter temperatures average about 12°C (about 53°F), and snow is very rare, though rain does occur occasionally, so bring an umbrella in the event it does rain. Spring in Barcelona is beautiful, with temperatures ranging from about 13°C to 20°C or (about 55°F to 70°F). Summer in Barcelona is hot, with temperatures in August reaching up to 34°C (or about 95°F.) Autumn in Barcelona is very pleasant with a mix of warmer and cooler days. Temperatures range from about 21°C to 15°C (or 69°F to 59°F.) with rain likely to fall intermittently.

Check out the up-to-date local weather conditions at the city's website, <http://www.bcn.es/temps/english/> or at the Generalitat's website <http://www10.gencat.net/ptop/AppJava/es/mobilitat/mes/tempscat.jsp>

PERSONAL SECURITY

During your stay in Spain, you need to be careful and look after your personal possessions (e.g. credit card, passport). Barcelona, like every other big city, has its share of crime. If you are cautious, you should be fine. Watch your wallet all the time. Men are recommended to put their wallets in their front pockets, and women if possible, should avoid carrying a purse. If you must do so, make sure the strap is across your chest (not over your shoulder) and that your hand is on it at all times. Pickpockets abound in Barcelona, especially in the metro and train stations, and tourist areas. Carry as little money as possible, the same goes for credit cards. It would be a good idea to keep a record and photocopy of your passport number or National Identification Document and of your credit cards. Keep these at your flat in case the originals are lost or stolen. The photocopies will be of help if you need to report any stolen documents. Carry a photocopy of your passport; leave the original at home. Spanish police have the right to request identification at any time. If this occurs, show them the photocopy of your passport. It is best not to carry a lot of money and travellers cheques with you. Although Barcelona is one of the safest cosmopolitan cities in Europe, better to exert caution. The local police -- Mossos de Escuadra -- are the most wonderful resource we have for safety. But please beware of avoiding potentially unsafe situations: do not travel alone after dark, especially in the "Raval" sector of town. Never surrender your personal property to persons posing as police officers. And be vigilant of pickpockets, especially in the heavily congested tourist areas such as Las Ramblas. Please leave your valuables and jewellery at home, as we cannot be responsible for loss of personal property. Also, be advised that Spanish law requires that photographic identification be carried at all times. This may be a passport, driving license or national identity card. It is highly recommended that you carry with you at least a photocopy of your passport should you be asked for this.

MORE ON SPAIN

Country Name: Spain

Languages spoken: Barcelona has co-official language of Castilian Spanish and Catalan. All government offices conduct their business in Catalan, and the local education system is in Catalan. However, the majority of native people here speak Spanish fluently and are perfectly adapted as a bilingual society.

Area: 504,782 sq. kms.

Borders: Andorra, France, Portugal. Ceuta and Melilla share borders with Morocco

Capital of the Country: Madrid. Country divided into 17 Autonomous Communities (Catalunya being one of them)

Population of Spain: 46 million **Population of Barcelona:** 1.8 million in the city with an additional 4 million living in the surrounding metropolitan area. **Number of Tourists visiting Catalunya per year:** 11 million

Currency: Euro (EUR)

Governing system of Spain: Parliamentary monarchy, with the current Chief of State being King Juan Carlos I, and the President of Spain being Jose Luis Rodríguez Zapatero of the PPC party. **Governing system of Catalunya:** Parliamentary with the head of government being the President, currently serving under a shared-power system referred to as the tripartit (three-party). President of Catalunya: Jose Montilla

MEDICAL INFORMATION

There is always a drugstore “de guarda” (available during any time of the day or night). Look for a flashing red or green cross. There are also pharmacies in open 24 hours: Information Service telephone number 010 or 93 200 09 96 or online at www.farmaciesguardia.coma

COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR LOVED ONES

Mobile Phones: If you want to get a mobile phone once you get to Barcelona, or you want to know what the telephone companies' best deals are, you'll get all this information and more at FNAC in Plaza Catalunya: Centro Comercial Fnac-Triangle, Plaza Cataluña 1-4, 08002 Barcelona. Telf: 93 344 18 00. You might also be able to buy a SIM chip for your mobile phone, cost: approximately 25€.

Sending Mail Home From Barcelona: Airmail (*por avión*) takes five to eight business days to reach the US or Canada; service is faster to the UK and Ireland and slower to Australia and New Zealand. Surface mail (*por barco*), while considerably less expensive than air mail, can take over a month, and packages will take two to three months. Registered or express mail (*registrado* or *certificado*) is the most reliable way to send a letter or parcel home, and takes four to seven business days. The Correos de España does not provide overnight mail. If you absolutely need something somewhere overnight, try booking the package service provided by Iberia. Two day service is available through FedEx, DHL or UPS. Stamps (*sellos*) are sold at post offices and tobacco shops (look for the burgandy and yellow signs Tabacs) Bus and metro passes are also sold here. Most shops are open from 10.00h to 14.00h and 17.00h to 20.00h Monday to Friday, and Saturday from 10.00h to 14.00h Mail letters and postcards from the yellow mailbox with the Correos de España emblem or at the the post office.

Telephones: The country code for Spain is 34. The city code for Barcelona is 93; a number that begins with 93 is a call within the city. Other areas in Catalunya use the code 97. You must dial this city code, even within the city; it is not charged as a long distance call. These phone numbers can appear in either format: 93 555 55 55 or 935 555 555. A number that begins with the three-digit prefix 900 is a tollfree number; 902 and other three digit prefixes are toll numbers. All numbers that begin with a 6 in Spain are cell phones. To make an international call, dial 00 before the country code and phone number. Your best value in making international calls is to buy a calling card (in denominations of 5€, 10€ and 20€). To save money, tell the shop owner where you are calling and ask which card gives the best rates to that particular location (he or she will have detailed rate lists behind the counter). Beware that with some cards, calling mobile phones at home will be significantly more expensive than with others. Some kioscos, especially in the metro sell calling cards, as do many tourist shops along Las Ramblas. Choose your phone card based on who you want to call. For local calls or calls from payphones, the cards that you insert into the payphone are best; for international calls or calls made from private phones, the telephone cards with a Personal Identification Number (PIN) and a toll-free access number are best. Instead of inserting this card into the phone, call the access number and follow the directions on the card. These cards can be used to make international as well as domestic calls, and may offer discount rates on calls to certain countries. or visit one of the thousand or so “locutorios” throughout the city, where you can have privacy within separate phone booths. Here at the locutorios you can send faxes and rent a computer to check your email or do word processing. Many post offices also have a mini locutorio for phone calls only.

It is also possible to bring an international calling card from home, issued by your phone company. Calls are billed collect or to your account. These sometimes have slightly more expensive rates than the cheapest cards that you can find in Barcelona, but the convenience of billing and the security that they provide may make them worth it. You can frequently call collect without even possessing a company's calling card just by calling their access number and following the instructions. Placing a collect call through an international operator is more expensive, but may be necessary in case of an emergency.

TIME DIFFERENCES

Barcelona is one hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT), and 2 hours ahead during daylight savings time. We are six hours ahead of the US/Canadian east coast, nine hours ahead of the west coast. Same time as Johannesburg in the summer (1 hour behind in the winter), eight hours behind Sydney (10 in the winter) and 10 hours behind Auckland (12 in the winter). Spain observes daylight savings time.

ELECTRICITY

Our appliances in Spain are either 220 or 230 volts, AC, 50Hz. Generally, round two-pin plugs and screw-type lamp fittings are used. An all-around adaptor set is recommended. Changing the plug, however, does not change the voltage (110V and 60Hz used in the U.S. and Canada). So please be aware of the need to use both an adaptor (to change the shape of the plug) and a transformer (to convert the voltage) when using foreign appliances in Spain.

VALUE-ADDED TAX – VAT – REFUNDS

Value-added TAX (VAT), similar to sales tax, is called IVA – impuesto sobre el valor añadido. It is levied on both products and services such as restaurants. When in doubt about whether tax is included, ask – ¿Está incluido el IVA? Non-EU residents are entitled to a refund of IVA paid on purchases of more than 60€ provided they take the goods out of the country. If you wish to get a refund on IVA paid, make sure you ask for a “formulario” from the sales clerk. Take it to the tax refund counter at the airport prior to boarding your plane out of Spain.

Benvinguts a Barcelona!

