

Barcelona

From the ancient Principality of Catalonia to the 1992 Olympics, Barcelona has long been a vibrant city. Its unique personality finds expression in everything from the fairytale architecture of *modernisme* patriarch Antoni Gaudí to the neighbourhood-wide street parties and exciting food culture. We've ventured beyond the tourist-beaten tracks of Barri Gòtic to bring you independent retailers, old-world tapas bars, thought-provoking galleries and plenty more.

Need to know

Get to grips with the basics

- 01 **Words on the street:** There is a difference between the Spanish language (Castilian) and Catalan and it's worth learning a few Catalan phrases. If you're lucky you may even receive a smile for your efforts.
- 02 **Take your time:** Small shops typically close for lunch between 13.00 and 16.00. However, larger shops and multinational outlets stay open all day. Most retail offerings close on Sundays.
- 03 **Party people:** Catalonia celebrates three saints' days, including that of Barcelona's patron saint Sant Jordi (Saint George). On said day men buy women roses and women present men with a book.
- 04 **A city to savour:** When eating out remember that dinner at 22.00 or later is the norm; anything before 20.00 is sacrilege.
- 05 **To the letter:** There's one mistake that the majority of visitors to the city make time and time again. Barça is the nickname for FC Barcelona, while Barna is the diminutive for the city. "I'm flying to Barna to watch Barça." Got it?

Hotels

Go to your room

- 1 Margot House, Dreta de l'Eixample
Little house on the passeig

Perhaps the city's most surprising stopover, Margot House (pronounce the "t") has just nine rooms. Small but comfy, it's replete with wooden finishes.

46 *Passeig de Gràcia*, 08007
+34 93 272 0076
margothouse.es

- 2 Mercer Hotel Barcelona, Barri Gòtic
On the ramparts

Made up of original Roman-era walls and 14th-century pointed archways, this 28-room affair is located down a steep street in Barri Gòtic.

7 *Carrer dels Lledó*, 08002
+34 93 310 7480
mercerbarcelona.com

- 3 The Serras Hotel Barcelona, Barri Gòtic
Work of art

The 1846 façade was designed by Francesc Daniel Molina. And it met with approval: Pablo Picasso lived in the building for about a year from 1896.

9 *Passeig de Colom*, 08002
+34 93 169 1868
hoteltheserrasbarcelona.com

Food and drink

Barcelona's best bites

- 1 Succulent, El Raval
Soul food with style

The snout-to-tail cooking at Succulent blends Catalan soul food with a healthy dose of good presentation. The vibe is casual; people don't come here to be seen, they come here to eat well.

43 *Rambal del Raval*, 08001
+34 93 443 6579
succulent.com

- 2 Bar Gresca, L'Antiga Esquerra de l'Eixample
Catalan comfort food

The wine list at this informal bistro boasts 400 new bottles a month, something owner and head chef Rafa Peña, his tongue firmly in cheek, attributes to being "on the right side of alcoholic".

230 *Carrer de Provença*, 08036
+34 93 451 6193

- 3 Cometa Pla, Barri Gòtic
Natural goodness

From the intimate dining room and delicate food of restaurant Pla to the home-style tapas of Bar del Pla, Jaume Pla's respected family of restaurants offers excellent variety. The menu here celebrates seasonal fruit and vegetables – try the onion tarte tatin.

5 *Carrer del Cometa*, 08002
+34 646 197 845
cometapla.cat

- 4 Caravelle, El Raval
Brewing coffee and beer

Care and thought are evident in every inch of this restaurant-turned-café and microbrewery, from the homemade cold brew to the milk, delivered daily from the nearby village of L'Ametlla del Vallès. Don't miss the Moroccan-style baked eggs.

31 *Carrer del Pintor Fortuny*, 08011
+34 93 317 9892
caravelle.es

- 5 Mont Bar, L'Antiga Esquerra de l'Eixample
Epic wine list

This modern bistro boasts a list of more than 300 wines from myriad international regions. The vast offering provides endless pairing opportunities with chef Domenico Ungaro's modern menu of tapas and larger plates.

220 *Carrer de la Diputació*, 08011
+34 93 323 9590
montbar.com

Retail

Spending time

- 1 Norman Vilalta, L'Antiga Esquerra de l'Eixample
Footwear with fair

From humble beginnings in the Patagonian port of Puerto Madryn, Norman Vilalta has become Barcelona's most progressive shoemaker. The Argentinian learned his craft in Florence and channels his natural artistic air into a bespoke approach.

5 *Carrer d'Enric Granados*, 08007
+34 93 323 4014
normanvilalta.com

- 2 Cortana, Dreta de l'Eixample
Fairytale pieces

A whimsical ode to the age-old textile industry of the Balearic Islands, Cortana stocks pieces imbued with founder and designer Rosa Esteva's Mallorcan provenance. Her women's label combines waif-like silhouettes with a sense of pared-back wonder.

290 *Carrer de Provença*, 08008
+34 93 487 2070
cortana.es

- 3 Kettal, Dreta de l'Eixample
Outdoor settings

This much-loved Spanish outdoor-furniture brand can be found in gardens around the globe. Its flagship showroom boasts its best collaborations, from Patricia Urquiola to Jasper Morrison.

316 *Carrer d'Aragó*, 08009
+34 93 488 1080
kettal.com

- 4 Brutus de Gaper, Bogatell
Vast design collection

Lightshades hang from the roof of this huge warehouse, while the floor overflows with Dutch designers such as Cees Braakman, as well as Nordic and Italian pieces that reflect their love of retro rationalism.

60 *Carrer de Pamplona*, 08005
+34 93 639 3013
brutusdegaper.com

Vocabulary

Talking the talk

- 01 Adéu: Bye
- 02 Barri: Neighbourhood
- 03 Bon dia a tothom: Hello, everybody
- 04 Molt de gust: Pleasure to meet you
- 05 De res: You're welcome
- 06 Moltes mercès: Thank you
- 07 Si us plau: Please



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