

A BRIEF HISTORY OF BARCELONA.

Barcelona is the second largest city in Spain, with a population of over 1,5 Million. It is an open, cosmopolitan and tolerant city that owes much of its current character to its long history. The founding of Barcelona as a city began with the Romans. Towards the end of the 1st century B.C. the so-called *Barcino* was established around what was then the Táber Mountain, located exactly where we find the busy Plaza Sant Jaume today, Nowadays, the home of the city hall and the Generalitat de Catalunya.

After the Roman occupation, between the 5th and 8th centuries, Barcelona's rule was transferred from the Visigoths to Muslim control, and reconquered in 801 by Charlemagne's troops. After that, the Counts of Barcelona became increasingly independent and expanded through Catalanian territory. Starting the 12th century, during the Middle Ages, Barcelona experienced an era in which it flourished in all aspects of city life. It is considered the hearth of the Crown of Aragon territories, which included the kingdom of Valencia, the Balearic Islands, and settlements in Naples, Sicily, Sardinia and Athens in the thirteenth century.

This flourishing period came to an end during the 15th century, since the marriage of Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella of Castile in 1469 united the two main kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula and moved the center of political power to Madrid. Catalan discontent increased in the course of time due to facts like wars between France and Spain as part of the Thirty Year's War, because local peasants were forced to quarter Castilian troops. It caused the Pau Claris' ephemeral proclamation of Catalan Republic and the well known "Guerra dels Segadors" (Reapers's war), between 1640 and 1659. Later, Catalan nobility sided with the Habsburgs against the Bourbon Philip V, during the Succession War in Spain (1701-1714). This war ended in the city's conquest by Franco-Castilian troops, Philip's coronation, the abolition of Catalan Autonomy and an enormous degree of repression. *The Fossar de les Moreres*, located next to the Santa Maria del Mar church, recalls this defeat and a lit flame represents the remembrance of all Catalonians who fell during the Succession War.

The first half of the 19th century was marked by uprisings and upheaval. Furthermore, the Ildefons Cerdá plan was approved in 1859. This plan laid forth the idea for Barcelona's Eixample as we know and enjoy it today: a classic grid structure built around public spaces. Starting in the late 19th and early 20th century, Barcelona became the centre of a cultural avant-garde that concerned itself with all forms of advances made in the scientific, technological and artistic fields. While a new generation of industrialists and politicians, rooted in the bourgeoisie, concerned themselves with the urban advancements that would convert Barcelona into a modern city, the intellectual world moved in a different direction. An example is modernism, which spirit touched all of the city's artistic spheres, including architecture. The ultimate exponent of this architecture was, of course, Antoni Gaudí with universal creations such as the Sagrada Família, Casa Milà or La Pedrera, Casa Batlló and Parc Güell.

The 20th century also brought dark times to the city. In 1909 Barcelona lived through its sadly famous Tragic Week marked by several altercations, barricades and the burning of convents. A few years later Primo de Rivera installed himself as a dictator. However, Barcelona managed to organise the International Fair of 1929. A period under republican rule in 1931 returned hope to the city but more difficult times lay ahead. In 1936 the Spanish Civil War broke out, during which Barcelona would suffer through one of its hardest periods. Thousands of people were forced into exile abroad while the bombings devastated the city. In 1939, when the Civil War ended and Franco's dictatorship began, Barcelona lost many of its freedoms, including the self-government it had achieved in the past and the unrestricted use of the Catalanian language, which was once again prohibited.

The post-war period unfolded in this environment until the 1960's, when a surge in economic and industrial growth attracted a wave of migration from different parts of Spain. Urban and housing infrastructure increased at an incredible rate and often without any defined criteria, which led to the growth of "dormitory neighbourhoods" in the city's outskirts. Franco's death in 1975 finally brought democracy to Spain. Barcelona reinstated the Generalitat and regained its place as the capital of an autonomous Catalonia. Just as it had in previous years, Barcelona continued its growth on an industrial and cultural level

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AEROPORT · AEROPUERTO
AIRPORT

Dilluns a dissabtes i festius
Lunes a sábados y festivos
Monday to Saturday and
public holidays
05:30 a.m. 00:15 a.m.

Dilluns a dissabtes i festius
Lunes a sábados y festivos
Monday to Saturday and
public holidays
06:00 a.m. 01:00 a.m.

Información sobre transportes públicos: 010
De lunes a sábado de 8:00 a 22:00h.
Precio teléfono información (0,55€ / 3 minutos)

FREQÜÈNCIA DE PAS / FRECUENCIAS DE PASO / FREQUENCIES IN TRANSIT

Dilluns a dissabtes i festius Lunes a sábados y festivos Monday to Saturday and public holidays	05:30 – 07:00 cada / every 15 min 07:00 – 07:32 cada / every 12 min 07:32 – 09:28 cada / every 7-10 min 09:28 – 21:22 cada / every 6 min 21:22 – 22:15 cada / every 8 min 22:15 – 01:00 cada / every 15 min
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TRANSPORTATION.

The **Metro** system in Barcelona is fast, efficient and clean, and in the summer is a haven from the heat with its air-conditioned trains. Buy a T-10 ticket (10 tickets in zone 1) and as with other public transport you can change lines as much as you like for an hour and a quarter at a price of only 56 cents per voyage! You can even change to a bus and then a train on the same ticket – do "mark" the ticket each time you enter a new transport. See the metro map for routes available at the end of this dossier.

Taxis are an easy and affordable way to get around the city. They all run on meters so you know you are getting a fair deal (almost always) and most drivers are friendly and helpful when you can't pronounce "Eixample" in the least bit accurately. From the airport it is normal to add on a charge for baggage so don't be surprised when the price suddenly jumps up a little at the end of the journey. This is not just a "foreigner" charge.

Most journeys around the city come in at under 5 Euros – especially reasonable if there are 4 of you in the car. Taxis to the airport should cost around about 25-30 Euros from the centre, depending on time and traffic congestion.

From/To Airport:

You can take the train to the airport ("rodalies") from Barcelona Sants Station or Plaça Catalunya and you may use the Aerobus, as well. See the timetable on the left.

HIGHLIGHTS. WHAT TO SEE IN BARCELONA'S NEIGHBOURHOODS

Old Town: Gothic Quarter & El Raval (Metro Stops: Plaça Catalunya, Urquinaona, Drassanes, Liceu, Jaume I)

Barcelona's old town, or *Ciutat Vella*, is the heart of the city. It's made up of many small neighborhoods, full of old-world character, linked by narrow, winding streets. Students, foreigners and artists thrive in this area, attracted by its sense of history and cosmopolitan feel along with its trendy bars, concert halls and good restaurants.

Start your tour from Plaça Catalunya and take Les Rambles towards the sea. On the right, you'll find the Raval district with its museums, art galleries and notorious red-light area, *Barri Xines*. On your left, the medieval Barri Gòtic (Gothic Quarter) is home to the cathedral, peaceful Plaça del Pi, art galleries and lots of cafes serving delicious hot chocolate (*Granges*). If you go even further left, across busy Via Laietana, you'll come to Born market, in La Ribera district. This trendy neighborhood is also home to the graceful Santa Maria del Mar Church and the impressive Museu Picasso.

Barceloneta (Metro Stops: Barceloneta)

At the end of Les Rambles you can find this fishermen's neighbourhood. However Barceloneta now also has a very different side, a cosmopolitan, tourist-driven life of its own, bars and cafes booming out music day and night. The beach is obviously the main attraction of Barceloneta, there are also chiringuitos scattered around, where you will find some of the best seafood on offer. If you fancy a beautiful view there are lots of restaurants facing out towards the marina.

Poble Sec (Metro Stops: Paral·lel, Poble Sec, Plaça Espanya)

Paral·lel is an avenue that cuts down from picturesque Plaça Espanya right down to the World Trade Centre at the tip of the port. Poble Sec is an area spreading out from the middle of Paral·lel.

The areas are safe and primarily residential but there is much entertainment to be had as well. This includes popular bars, theatre and even a club. However, whilst Paral·lel is a busy thoroughfare during the day, the areas are quiet and just a 10-20 minute walk to the centre of the city and Las Rambles. A good choice if you want to be central but away from the crowds of tourists that populate more central areas. Montjuic and Plaça Espanya are also very close by.

If you are looking for a bit of culture then not to worry there is more than enough to be found in Plaça Espanya which has 2 art museums and Poble Espanyol which was built for the 1929 World Fair and is a "village" constructed from different examples of Spanish regional architecture. Also very near Poble Sec/ Paral·lel is the Mercat Sant Antoni which is a large market selling primarily food products, a good place to have a wander and overload your senses.

Sants (Metro Stops: Mercat Nou, Plaça de Sants, Sants estació, Tarragona)

The area of Sants is a 10 minute metro ride out of the centre of town and is very much an area within itself. The Barcelona Sants train station (**Estació de Sants**) is the focal point of the area and is one of Barcelona's largest and most well-connected stations with direct trains to the airport and destinations outside of Barcelona.

The area of Sants itself doesn't have that many attractions but the ease with which you can travel to areas of interest is a plus point. You could walk to gorgeous Plaça Espanya and Montjuic where there are attractions such as Poble Espanyol, the Magic Fountain and the Fira Barcelona events halls. In the other direction you may want to stroll to Camp Nou, Barcelona FC ground, or do a spot of shopping in *L'illa* complex on Diagonal.

As for social life, there are many lovely restaurants in the area, as well as a few decent bars and the internationally known Space club is a 2 minute walk from the station.

L'Eixample (Metro Stops: Urgell, Plaça Universitat, Hospital Clínic, Marina, Glòries, Diagonal...)

When the old town became overpopulated in the mid-19th century, the city expanded inland, north of Plaça Catalunya. The streets of the new suburb, called L'Eixample, or "The Extension", were laid out in a grid pattern. Catalan *modernista* (Art Nouveau) architects designed a number of striking buildings in the area around Passeig de Gràcia, Diagonal and Rambla Catalunya.

You'll find the extraordinary Sagrada Família on the right-hand side of L'Eixample if you're coming from the Old Town. This controversial church, unfinished because of the untimely death of its architect, Antoni Gaudí, in 1926, has become the city's most visited monument. As Barcelona expanded, villages were absorbed within the city boundaries giving rise to districts like the charming Gràcia, Les Corts, Sarrià and Hortà-Guinardò, up in the hills.

Gràcia (Metro stops: Diagonal, Lesseps, Vallcarca, Fontana, Joanic)

Gracia neighborhood is located north of the Eixample, at the end of Passeig de Gràcia. Parc Güell lies north of Gracia. It was originally a village set apart from the rest of the city. However, when the Eixample was built in the late 19th century, it served to connect old Barcelona and Gracia. Gracia is immediately recognizable for its narrow streets. It's known as a hip area with an active and politically-conscious community. Here you'll find a number of lively plazas, bars and restaurants. Gràcia is not a touristy section of Barcelona. Nevertheless, it's certainly worth the visit if you enjoy strolling around quaint streets and want to escape the "big city" feel for a small town, alternative vibe. The Plaça del Sol, Plaça de Rius i Taulet and Plaça de la Virreina are vibrant centers of activity and good places to look for outdoor food and drink.

Green Areas

Montjuïc Hill, in the southwest of the city, offers many attractions including the Olympic stadium and other facilities used for the 1992 Olympic Games, along with the impressive Fundació Miró. The best way to get to the hill is to take the cable car from the nearby harbor.

Barcelona's other major green area is 1800-foot Tibidabo Hill to the northwest, with its panoramic views of the city, amusement park on the summit and Torre de Comunicaciones de Collserola (Collserola Communications Tower).

Both Montjuïc and Tibidabo offer good sports facilities as well, like tennis, jogging, and horseback riding. It's easiest to get there by car, though you could also take the cable car to Montjuïc, which the kids will love. The cable car also offers a great view of the city.

