

EXCLUSIVO BARCELONA

BARCELONA RELOCATION GUIDE

by
brs relocation services

CONTENTS

1. HISTORY	09	7. RENTAL AND PROPERTY MARKET	61	Schools following the Spanish curriculum with emphasis on English	80	Golf	117
Barcino	09	Apartments and houses	61	Schools Terms	82	Horseback riding	119
Aragon Kingdom	10	Rental Contracts	62	Higher Education	82	Running, hiking and cycling	120
18 th and 19 th Centuries	10	Rental Conditions	62	International Business Schools	83	Sailing and Water sports	120
Primo de Ribera	11	Tenant & Landlord Responsibilities	63	Language Schools	84	Skiing	121
First Republic	11	Buying a property in Barcelona	63	Private Tutoring	85	Other sports	121
Franco	11	Utilities & Telephone services	64	9. TRANSPORT	87	Other leisure activities	121
Democracy	11	Electricity	64	Getting Oriented	87	Cooking Classes	121
2. CATALAN CULTURE	15	Water	64	By plane	87	Dance lessons	122
The Catalan identity	15	Landline telephones	65	By sea	92	Guitar lessons	122
The Catalan language	15	Mobile phones	65	Public Transportation	92	Piano lessons	122
The Catalan cuisine	16	Internet	66	By rail	93	12. CULTURE, LEISURE AND ENTERTAINMENT	125
3. VISITING BARCELONA & CATALUNYA	19	Television	66	By bus	95	Museums and Art Galleries	125
Catalonia	19	Radio	67	By taxi	96	Music and Dance	130
North of Barcelona	20	IT & Web designer	67	By bike	96	Music	130
South of Barcelona	24	Household Services	68	Private Transportation	97	Dance	130
The City of Barcelona	25	Electricians and plumbers	68	Car import	97	Theatre	131
4. ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES	31	Locksmiths	68	Parking	97	Sport and Other live events	132
Resident Permits	31	General Repairs	69	Car rentals	98	Sport	132
EU citizens	31	Domestic Help	69	10. THE SPANISH HEALTH SYSTEM	101	Cinemas	133
Non EU citizens	32	Professional agencies	70	Public Healthcare	101	Buying tickets	134
City Hall Registration	33	Babysitters & au pairs	71	Hospitals and clinics	101	Bullfighting	134
Social Security Number	33	8. EDUCATION	73	Doctors and dentists	103	Kid-friendly attractions	135
Driving Licenses	33	Choosing a school	73	Medical specialists	105	In Barcelona	135
Banking	34	The Spanish School System	73	Maternity and Paternity	109	Outside Barcelona	136
5. ACCOMMODATION	37	Local schools	75	Maternity	109	Parks and Gardens	137
Hotels & Aparthotels	37	Nurseries and Kindergarten	76	Paternity	110	Beaches	139
Pensions, budget hotels and Guesthouse	48	International and Bilingual Schools ..	78	People with disabilities	110	Newspapers and magazines	140
Short-term serviced apartments	48	Schools following the American curriculum	78	Private health insurance	110	Books about Barcelona	141
6. WHERE TO LIVE IN BARCELONA	51	Schools following the British curriculum	79	11. SPORTS AND LEISURE	113	Business Spanish textbooks	143
Neighbourhoods in Barcelona	51	Schools following other foreign curriculum	79	Public Sports and Fitness Centres	113	International Community	143
Surrounding of Barcelona	56			Private Sports and Fitness Clubs	114	Foreign Consulates	143
				Football	116	Social Interaction and Business Networking	145

Religious services	147	Lamps and lighting	187
13. HEALTH AND BEAUTY	149	Markets	187
Spa and Massage	149	Removal companies and storage	188
Hairdressers	150	Shoes	188
Beauticians and Nutritionists	150	Sporting goods	189
Shops	150	Stationery, gift wrapping, cards and other paper products	190
14. RESTAURANTS AND NIGHTLIFE	153	Supermarkets	191
Restaurants	154	Technical Services	191
Asian	154	Toys	192
Brunch and light meals	155	Travel websites	193
Burgers	155	Wine and liquor	193
Catalan	155	16. PRACTICAL INFORMATION	195
Creative and fusion	158	Estancos	195
French	159	Postal Services	195
Italian	160	Holidays	196
Mediterranean	161	Mealtimes	197
Michelin-starred restaurants	163	Local Time	197
Seafood	165	Tipping and Bargaining	198
Spanish	166	Water	198
Tapas Bars	166	Opening Hours and Working Hours	198
Discos and nightclubs	167	Addresses	198
Terraces and bars	169	Pets	198
15. SHOPPING A-Z	171	17. USEFUL CONTACT INFORMATION	203
Opening times	171	Useful websites	203
Antiques	172	Important telephone numbers	204
Baby equipment	172	18. USEFUL VOCABULARY	209
Bakeries and chocolate shops	173		
Bookstores	174		
Clothing	175		
Delicatessen	179		
Department stores and malls	180		
Do-it-yourself	183		
Electronics and computers	183		
Furniture	184		
Jewelry	186		

WELCOME TO BARCELONA

Barcelona is one of the most dynamic and exciting cities on the western Mediterranean seaboard. The city is part of Catalonia (Catalunya to its inhabitants), a nation of six million people occupying a 32,000-km² territory in the northeast of the Iberian Peninsula. To the north, Catalonia is separated by the Pyrenees from France. It is bordered by the Mediterranean Sea to the east, Aragón to the west and Valencia to the south.

Barcelona's coastal location means that it enjoys a warm, welcoming climate and pleasant temperatures all year round. Rainfall is occasionally heavy, but instead of dampening the spirit, it only helps to maintain the city's many green areas.

Barcelona is a city of contrasts. It combines mountain with sea; wide avenues with narrow streets; modern skyscrapers with medieval buildings; and quiet, small-town charm with the lively buzz of a bustling cosmopolitan city. Wherever you're from and no matter how long you plan to stay, you will find a lot of things to love in beautiful Barcelona.



1. HISTORY

Barcino

Barcelona's history is closely linked to that of Catalonia. However, while Catalonia's history as a nation began in the 9th century AD, there is much older archaeological evidence for the existence of Barcelona. In the 4th, 3rd and 2nd centuries BC, small villages were clustered in the hills of the so-called Pla de Barcelona (Barcelona Plains), an area between the Mediterranean Sea, the Besós and Llobregat Rivers and the Collserola Mountain Range. The Laietanians occupied the area of Barcelona.

During the reign of Emperor Augustus, the Roman colony of Julia Augusta Favencia Paterna Barcino was established, and this territory became a part of Hispania Citerior, whose capital was Tarraco (today's Tarragona). Numerous ruins of the ancient Roman colony can still be admired today, such as certain parts of the fortified wall that surrounded the city, the temple of

Augustus, the Necropolis, and a number of other ruins that can be seen in the underground floor of the Museu d'Història de la Ciutat.

In the 5th century AD, Barcino, like the rest of Roman Hispania and Gaul, was invaded by the Visigoths, who came from the north of Europe. The invaders made Toledo the capital of the territory, thus opening a period of decline for Barcelona.

The city was invaded by the Muslims in the 8th century, but their stay did not leave any lasting change in the city. In 801, the Franks, led by Louis the Pious conquered Barcelona. The city was part of the Frankish Empire's march to the south, known as the Hispanic March. Over a century later, when this territory was divided into counties, Borrell II (950–992) separated it from the Frankish Empire, and Barcelona consequently became the capital of an independent state in 988.

Aragon Kingdom

The marriage of Ramón Berenguer IV and Queen Petronila of Aragon brought about the union of Catalonia and the kingdom of Aragon, starting a period of expansion and the conquest of territories in what is now the south of France. James I the Conqueror (1213–1276) changed the direction of the expansion towards the Mediterranean, absorbing the island of Mallorca, Ibiza and some territories of the Kingdom of Valencia. Barcelona also expanded and a second fortified wall was constructed.

Nearly 200 years later, in 1410, Martin the Humane died without heirs. In Caspe in 1412, the decision was made, to elect Ferdinand I of Aragon as King, thus switching the dynasty to that of the Trastámara, of Castilian origin.

In the following period, Barcelona established itself as a legal and administrative entity, with the creation of its own government, the Generalitat. Ferdinand II of Aragon (1479–1516) then took the throne and, by marrying Isabel of Castile, the Crown of Aragon (as the union of the kingdoms of Catalonia, Aragon, Valencia and Mallorca was called) became united to that of Castile, and Barcelona ceased to be the seat of the monarchy. Furthermore, the discovery of America shifted the Crown's economic interests from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic shores, grinding the Aragonese Crown's and Barcelona's economy to a halt and causing its subsequent decline. During the reign of the Spanish Habsburgs, the monarchs lived far from Barcelona.



18th and 19th Centuries

In 1702, yet another succession problem arose when Charles II of Spain died without leaving an heir. Catalonia favoured Archduke Charles of Austria, while the rest of Spain supported Philip, Duke of Anjou, the French claimant to the Spanish throne. This subsequently caused conflict between the two territories. Philip of Anjou won in 1714, and all the Catalan and Barcelona institutions were suppressed and replaced with the political, administrative and legal rule of Castile. Barcelona was then reduced to provincial status. However, the 18th century was a period of demographic and economic growth for the city. By the end of the century, Barcelona's population had tripled, and an industrial surge brought about many physical changes.

In the 19th century the walls surrounding the city were torn down, and Barcelona regained the status of capital of a Principality. This title was consolidated with the 1888 Universal Exhibition, an event promoted by an enterprising bourgeoisie.

At the turn of the century Barcelona underwent a period of political unrest, marked by hegemonic periods of anarchism and fratricidal struggles for power. The renewal of the war with Morocco and the period's recruitment system led to a general strike and a popular insurrection, known as the Setmana Tràgica. During this tragic week, military troops, organized a severe repression with the bourgeoisie's support.

Primo de Ribera

In 1923, after the failure of the Commonwealth of Catalonia, an attempt at autonomous government, Spain went through a period of dictatorship. Supported by the bourgeoisie, the dictator Primo de Ribera rose to power, a hard blow not only for the workers' organizations but also for cultural and political Catalanism.

The Pla Cerdà, urban planner Ildefons Cerdà's urban renewal project for Barcelona, was approved and begun in the mid-19th century. However, it was only with the International Exhibition of 1929 and the start of mass immigration to the city of Barcelona that its real implementation came about. The plan joined the villages around Barcelona to the city.

First Republic

The Principality regained its autonomy with the fall of Primo de Ribera in 1931 and the establishment of the first Catalan Republic, with Francesc Macià as president. A Republic was also instituted in Spain. However, an economic recession, political unrest and the government's lack of power favoured extreme ideologies. This sparked a rebellion of the troops in 1936, led

by General Francisco Franco. The Civil War that followed, in which Catalonia stood by the legally established Republic, was an extremely bloody affair. The war ended with the fall of Barcelona and Madrid and the loss of the Republicans in 1939. For Catalonia, it marked the beginning of an era of prohibition of all manifestations of Catalan identity.

Franco

The dictatorial policy of General Franco led Spain, and therefore Catalonia, to isolation, and kept them separated from the economic, social and cultural growth experienced by other developing and developed countries. During the 1960's and 70's, however, partly due to an imposed political stability, a tentative opening and economic growth occurred, from which Catalonia especially benefited.

Democracy

With the death of General Franco in 1975, Juan Carlos I was proclaimed King of Spain. With the help of the most progressive factions of the previous regime and the democratic parties, most of which survived clandestinely, he sowed the seed of what became the first democratic elections in 1977. In October of the same year, Josep Tarradellas, the last president of the Generalitat before the Civil War, returned to Catalonia. This contributed to a renewal of nationalist and autonomous ideas for most Catalans, a process that culminated in 1979 with the proclamation of Catalonia's new administrative status as an Autonomous Community. The first elections to the Autonomous Government were held in 1980,

with the victory of a coalition of a nationalist and a liberal party: the Democratic Convergence of Catalonia and the Democratic Union of Catalonia. These parties have played a key role in the Spanish government on a number of occasions, whenever the ruling party did not have absolute majority in Parliament.

During this period, Barcelona never stopped developing. Important evidence of this development is the city's hosting of the 1992 Olympic Games, with Pasqual Maragall as mayor. This was an extraordinary boost for the city in all aspects, especially urban development. Thus, by the end of the 20th century, Barcelona had become one of the most dynamic and attractive cities of Europe, in the eyes of both its people and its many visitors from all over the world.





2. CATALAN CULTURE

The Catalan identity

The Catalans have a long tradition of cultural uniqueness and independence distinct from the rest of Spain. They often consider themselves more European than Spanish, and have always had strong ties to the rest of Europe, especially to France. Catalans are serious and rooted in the mercantile tradition of hard work and thrift, yet they can be light-hearted, and they know how to enjoy life to the fullest. With outsiders they may seem distant and reserved, but when surrounded by friends and family they are extroverted and lively.

The Catalan language

In Barcelona, as in the rest of Catalonia, there are two official languages: Catalan, the language of the region, and Spanish, the official language of

Spain. Most Catalans can be considered balanced bilinguals, as they can switch effortlessly between Catalan and Spanish.

Spanish is widely used in Barcelona, and a large number of residents are immigrants or descendants of immigrants who have Spanish as mother tongue.

However, a significant part of Catalonia's population consider Catalan their native tongue and language of identity. Catalan is the main language of instruction in schools and universities in Catalonia. Local government bodies and institutions conduct business in Catalan. Most street signs and business signage in and outside Barcelona are also in Catalan.

The Catalan language holds a very special place in the hearts and minds of the people of Catalonia, so using it during your stay will enrich your

living experience in Barcelona. But with Catalan's resemblance to other Romance languages such as Spanish, French and Italian, and the free introductory courses offered by the Catalan government and other institutions, learning this beautiful living language should be an easy task.

Go to

www.intercat.cat/lingcat

For more information on the Catalan language and Catalan language policy.

To learn Catalan Online, visit :



www.parla.cat

The Catalan cuisine

Catalan cooking is above all a version of the famous Mediterranean diet. It combines healthy, natural ingredients with unique Catalan flavours. Notable is the multitude of local fish and seafood dishes such as suquet, a kind of fish stew. Rice is the base for a number of gastronomic delights such as arròs a banda and arròs negre.

Vegetables are another crucial component, eaten raw in traditional salads, or cooked as in espinacs a la catalana (spinach), escalivada (red peppers and aubergines) and samfaina (peppers, tomato, onion and garlic). A typical Catalan vegetable, the calçot or spring onion, is the centre of a festive countryside gathering called the calçotada, where it is grilled over hot coals. Meat also plays an important role in Catalan cuisine, with Catalan beef and pork products being exported all over Europe.





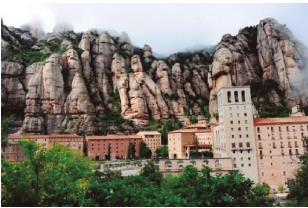
3. VISITING BARCELONA & CATALUNYA

Catalonia

Catalonia's 32,000 square kilometres of varied climate and landscape make it a fascinating region for tours and holidays. A change of scenery and environment is never more than a few hours away.

The highest peaks in Catalunya are found in the Pyrenees Mountain Range. The mountain scenery's natural beauty is breath-taking because of its many forests and valleys. The Pyrenean valleys are surrounded by high summits with alpine meadows, fir forests and crystal-clear lakes.

If you cannot resist the call of the sea, Catalonia offers a wide range of coastal scenery. Its outstanding 400-kilometre coastline is one of its main tourist attractions. The rugged coast of the Costa Brava begins south from the French frontier to the town of Blanes, just north of Barcelona, with its wild beauty. This area is characterized by rocky shores, secluded coves and islands where the roots of pine trees struggle for a foothold down to the water's edge.



North of Barcelona

Montserrat

The mountain and monastery of Montserrat are some of the most emblematic places in Catalonia, not only for its beautiful landscape, but also for its historical, political and religious significance. You can visit the monastery in one day. Walk around to discover deserted hermitages or sample the regional gastronomy. Train leaves every hour from the Plaça Espanya FGC station.

For train reservations, call the Ferrocarrils de la Generalitat de Catalunya (FGC)

Tel.: 93 877 7701

Girona

On your way to the Costa Brava or to the Dalí Museum, you can stop in Girona and visit the city's charming medieval old town with its famous Jewish quarter, el Call, and its Gothic cathedral.

Teatre-Museu Dalí

Though the museum is in Figueres, in the Costa Brava area, you can easily visit it in a day from Barcelona. Salvador Dalí's genius makes the trip really worth it, and it is not surprising that it is the most visited museum in Catalonia. The building housing the museum is an attraction in itself.

The museum is open 1 November to 28 February from 10:30 a.m. to 6 p.m., 1 March to 30 June and 1-30 October from 9:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and 1 July to 30 September from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. It is closed on 1 January, 25 December and all Mondays between 1 October and 31 May

www.salvador-dali.org

La Garrotxa

Although the last eruption occurred more than 10,000 years ago, the region of La Garrotxa, with its fascinating nature reserve, is still the best example of volcanic landscape in Spain and one of the most interesting in Europe. Add to this an incredibly beautiful landscape with rich, diverse plant life and a fine gastronomic culture; it is easy to understand why this area is well loved not only by tourists, but also by locals.

The most interesting places to visit are: Olot, capital of La Garrotxa, Castellfollit de la Roca, with its houses almost hanging from the cliffs, La Fageda d'en Jordà, a beech-tree forest famous

for its red and gold colours during autumn, the village of Santa Pau, and the Santa Margarida volcano. If you still have one or two days left, we recommend you to go back to Barcelona through Ripoll, capital of the Ripollès region, and through Vic, capital of the Osona region, where you can admire wonderful examples of Catalan Romanesque architecture.

Though you can get everywhere by public transport, this is not recommended if you want to visit several places. It is possible to reach Olot by coach.

For coach information, call TEISA

Tel.: 93 215 35 66 (Barcelona)
Tel.: 972 26 01 96 (Olot)

Costa Brava

The Costa Brava, spreading from the French border to Blanes, 60 kilometres north of Barcelona, is the most popular coast in Catalonia for tourists. Although mainly known for its beaches and tourist resorts, the region has some very important cultural and historical attractions.

If sea, sun, sand and nightlife are your cup of tea, do not miss Platja d'Aro or Lloret de Mar. If instead you dream of small, less touristy coves, we recommend Tossa de Mar, with its magnificent castle, Calella de Palafrugell, where you can stop and have a typical beverage called cremat, Begur, with its coves, and our favourite, Cadaqués, a small fishing village in the north of Catalonia that has maintained its charm through the years. From Cadaqués you can go to see Dalí's house in Port Lligat or spend the day in the beautiful and wild Cap de Creus.

If you are looking for some culture and history, besides the Dalí Museum in Figueres, we recommend visits to the ancient Greek site of Empúries, founded in 550 BC, Pals, a fully preserved medieval village, and La Bisbal, known for its ceramics. Further north, close to Rosas and Cadaqués, lies Sant Pere de Rodes, a Benedictine monastery, with a church universally recognised to be the precursor of the Catalan Romanesque style.

La Bisbal, 129 kilometres north of Barcelona, is the ceramic capital of Europe. It is a medium-size town full of shops selling plates, plants, statues, garden ornaments and every kind of handmade ceramic object you can imagine.

Blanes, 83 kilometres north of Barcelona, boasts a botanical garden overlooking the sea. It is a Mediterranean fishing town with modern tourist facilities.

TIPS

Hotel Aiguablava, nice sea view
Platja de Fornells s/n
17255 Begur (Girona) - Espanya
www.hotelaguablava.com
Tel.: +34 972 62 20 58 - 972 62 45 62
Fax: +34 972 62 21 12
E-mail: hotelaguablava@aguablava.com

Tourist Information Centre

Pl. Catalunya, s.n. 17300 Blanes (Girona)
Tel.: 972 330 348 • Fax: 972 334 686

Breda

64 kilometres north of Barcelona, is a small town near Hostalric with ceramic factories.