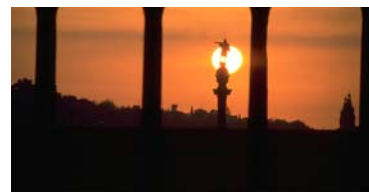


BEST ✓
programs

Welcome to Barcelona!

2005

Information Brochure



Since the early 1990s, when preparations for the Olympic Games wrenched it into modernity, Barcelona remains well in the vanguard of Spanish cities in terms of prosperity, stability and cultural activity. Barcelona is a city with more than 2000 years of history that is confident and progressive, looking towards the rest of Europe for its inspiration and its *style*. And style is what attracts one to Barcelona.

The beauty of its old Gothic quarter combines dramatically with the singular buildings of modernity expressed by the world-famous architect Gaudí and the Modernist (Art Nouveau) style. There's a pride in the city which is expressed in its remarkable cultural energy. In art, too, the city boasts a stupendous legacy, from important Romanesque and Gothic works to major galleries containing the life's work of the Catalan artists like Joan Miró and Antoni Tàpies, and - perhaps the greatest draw of all - a representative collection of the work of Pablo Picasso.

Table of Contents

	Page
Introduction to Programs	3
History	4
Barcelona Attractions	6
Useful Information	8
Communications	
Transportation	
English Language Publications	
Spanish Language Publications	
Health	
Insurance	
Gyms	
Lodging	
Culture	16
Cultural Shock	
What to Expect Living with a Spanish Family	
What to Expect Living in Shared Flats	
Making the Adjustment to Customs & Traditions	
Safety	21
General Information & Tips	
What to do if you are robbed	
Police	
Offences	
Terrorism	
Credit Cards	
Consulates	
Western Union	
Free time	26
General	
Cinema	
Discotheques	
Web Site Contacts	

Introduction to Programs

Come to the source and experience modern Spain or Belgium in an economical way. *BEST* offers three programs to choose from, each consisting of an intensive Spanish or French language course in one of our centrally located, fully-equipped language schools combined with other attractive options. Keep reading....

1. Study –Internship Program in Belgium - French language in combination with an internship in a Belgian company

Immerse yourself in a two or three month program in the heart of the European Union. First, prioritize your language skills which we will bring up to par in a one-month crash course. Then apply that knowledge to your professional field of interest in an internship in a Belgian company.

2. Study-Internship Program in Spain - Spanish language in combination with an internship in a Spanish company

Self-improve while you enjoy yourself to the limit. For people interested in improving their Spanish while increasing their professional experience. The internship program offers two weeks of intensive Spanish classes followed by an internship in a Spanish company. We hand pick companies for interns, placing them in any field of their choice. Options in Madrid, Barcelona, Palma de Mallorca, Granada, and Malaga.

3. Work-Study Program - 40 hours in an established Spanish academy in Madrid while living with a Spanish family as an au pair

This option is intended for young women who are passionate about the Spanish culture, but are financially limited by Madrid's high living costs. It combines studying 40 hours in an established academy in Madrid while living with a Spanish family to assist the children in learning English.

4. Live and Study in Spain for Japanese - Learn Spanish while seeing Spain

1 to 2 month cultural immersion program with daily Spanish classes and cultural activities like visits to the Real Madrid and Prado Museums. Available for Madrid or Barcelona. Optional internship in Spanish firm for all fields of interest.

History

Barcelona has emerged from a wannabe history. With Castilian kings pumping cannonballs over the city walls and anarchists disagreeing on which shoulder to hang their rifles, the city shrank in the shadow of greater cities and powers for centuries.

Though founded around 230 BC, probably by the Carthaginians, and invaded by the Visigoths and then the Muslims, the history of the city in some ways only truly began after armies from what is now France pushed back the Muslims in AD 801. At the time, the plains and mountains to the northwest and north of Barcelona were populated by the people who by then could be identified as 'Catalans' (although surviving documented references to the term only date to the 10th century).

In the 12th century, Catalonia grew rich on pickings from the fall of the Muslim caliphate of Córdoba. The Catalans managed to keep their creative beacon alight through to the 14th century, when Barcelona ruled a mini-empire that included Sicily, Malta, Sardinia, Valencia, the Balearics, the French regions of Rousillon and Cerdagne and parts of Greece. But by the 15th century, devastated by the plague, spectacular bank crashes, and the Genoese squeezing its markets, the empire ran out of steam. While the Catalans may have hoped that union with the kingdom of Castile would pump cash back into the coffers and vitality onto the streets, heirs to the crowns of Castile and Aragón were more interested in juicing Catalonia to finance their own imperial ambitions.

A 1462 rebellion against King Joan II ended in a siege in 1473 that devastated the city. Barcelona was more or less annexed into the Castilian state, but was excluded from the plundering of the Americas that brought fantastic riches to 16th-century Castile. By now, the peasants had started to revolt. Disaffected Catalans resorted to arms a number of times, and the last revolt, during the War of the Spanish Succession, saw Catalonia siding with Britain and Austria against Felipe V, the French contender for the Spanish throne. That was their undoing. Barcelona fell in 1714 after another shocking siege, and as well as banning the Catalan language, Felipe built a huge fort, the Ciutadella, to watch over his ungrateful subjects in town.

After 1778 Catalonia was permitted to trade with America, and the region's fortunes gradually turned around. Spain's first industrial revolution, based on cotton, was launched there, and other industries based on wine, cork and iron also developed. By the 1830s, the European Romantic movement virtually rescued Catalan culture and language just as it was in danger of disappearing. The Catalan Renaixença, or Renaissance, was a crusade led by poets and writers to popularise the people's language. A fervent nationalist movement sprang up around the same time, and was embraced by all parties of the political spectrum.

The decades around the turn of the 20th century were a fast ride, with anarchists, Republicans, bourgeois regionalists, gangsters, police terrorists, political gunmen called *pistoleros* and centrists in Madrid all clamouring for a slice of the action. This followed an explosion in Barcelona's population - from around 115,000 in 1800 to more than half a million by 1900, then over a million by 1930 - as workers flocked in for industrial jobs. As many as 80% of the city's workers embraced the anarchist CNT by the end of WWI, and industrial relations hit an all-time low during a wave of strikes in 1919-20 when employers hired assassins to kill union leaders.

Within days of Spain's Second Republic forming in 1931, Catalan nationalists declared a republic within an 'Iberian Federation'. Catalonia briefly gained genuine autonomy after the leftist Popular Front won the February 1936 Spanish general election, and for nearly a year revolutionary anarchists and the POUM (the Workers Marxist Unification Party) ran the town. Get 10 anarchists in a room, though, and you'll have 11 political opinions; in May 1937 infighting between communists, anarchists and the POUM broke out into street fighting for three days, killing at least 1500 people.

The Republican effort across Spain was troubled by similar infighting, which destroyed any chance they may have had of defeating Franco's fascist militia. Barcelona, the last stronghold of the Republicans, fell to Franco's forces in January 1939, and the war ended a few months later. Thousands of Catalans fled across the border to France, Andorra and further a field. Franco wasted no time in banning Catalan and flooding the region with impoverished immigrants from Andalusia in the vain hope that the pesky Catalans, with their continual movements for independence, would be swamped. But the plan soured somewhat when the migrants' children and grandchildren turned out to be more Catalan than the Catalans. Franco even banned one of the Catalans' joyful expressions of national unity, the *Sardana*, a public circle dance.

But they'd barely turned the last sods on El Supremo's grave when Catalonia burst out again in an effort to recreate itself as a nation. Catalan was revived with a vengeance, the Generalitat, or local parliament, was reinstated, and today, people gather all over town several times a week to dance the *Sardana*. While there's still talk of independence, it remains just talk. Meanwhile, Barcelona is the country's most happening town, and seems set to stay that way.

The 1992 Olympics allowed Barcelona to once again strut its stuff on the world stage, projecting an image of cultural prosperity. It hasn't looked back since. The once-shabby waterfront has been transformed with promenades, beaches, marinas, restaurants, leisure attractions and new housing. The games may be receding from the public mind but the impetus created has hardly slowed. Enormous projects to 'rehabilitate' vast tracts of rundown central Barcelona continue and the city's profile continues to rise. These days, Barcelona needs no introduction.

Barcelona Attractions

Barri Gòtic

Barri Gòtic, the enchanting centre of old Barcelona, is a maze of dark streets crammed with cafes, bars and the cheapest accommodation in town. Spend a day wandering among wonderful, medieval buildings and some of the most awe-inspiring architecture ever to leave a draughtsman's desk.

Most of the buildings date from the 14th and 15th centuries, when Barcelona was at the height of its commercial prosperity and before it had been absorbed into Castile. A masterpiece of its medieval heritage, the Barri Gòtic's *catedral, La Seu* is one of the great Gothic buildings in Spain. The quarter is centred on the Plaça de Sant Jaume, a spacious square, the site of a busy market and one of the venues for the weekly dancing of the *sardana*. Two of the city's most significant buildings are here, the Ajuntament and the Palau de la Generalitat.

Gràcia

A fully fledged suburb since the end of the 19th century, Gràcia is home to a combination of artists, students and intelligentsia mixed with average Joseps, who lend it a down-to-earth atmosphere. There are lovely parks to enjoy during the day and at night the square becomes a popular and vivacious meeting place.

Its strong artistic and political communities create a lively (and, strangely, not intimidating) scene. Plaça del Sol is a pleasant place to sit during the day, surrounded by cafes and serene 19th-century architecture.

La Pedrera

La Pedrera was designed by Gaudí and built between 1905 and 1910 as an apartment/office block. Formerly called the Casa Milà, it's better known as La Pedrera (the quarry) because of its uneven grey stone facade that creates a wave effect, an effect further emphasized by elaborate wrought-iron balconies.

Visitors can tour the building and go up to the roof, where giant multicoloured chimney pots jut up like medieval knights. On summer weekend nights, the roof is eerily lit and open for spectacular views of Barcelona. One floor below the roof is a modest museum dedicated to Gaudí's work.

La Rambla

La Rambla is a tree-lined pedestrian boulevard packed with buskers, mimes and itinerant salespeople selling everything from lottery tickets to jewellery. It's actually five separate streets strung end to end and covers the entire sightseeing gamut from sublime to seedy.

The noisy bird market on the second block of La Rambla is worth a stop, as is the nearby Palau de la Virreina, a grand 18th-century rococo mansion, with arts and entertainment information and a ticket office. Next door is La Rambla's most colourful market, the Mercat de la Boqueria (see below). Just south of the Boqueria the Mosaic de Miró punctuates the pavement, with one tile signed by the artist.

The next section of La Rambla boasts the Gran Teatre del Liceu, the famous 19th-century opera house. Below the Plaça Reial, La Rambla becomes decidedly seedy, with strip clubs and peep shows. La Rambla terminates at the lofty Monument a Colom (Monument to Columbus) and the harbour. You can ascend the monument by lift.

Just west of the monument, on Avinguda de les Drassanes, stand the Reials Drassanes (Royal Shipyards), which house the fascinating Museu Marítim. It has more seafaring paraphernalia than you'd care to wag a sextant at - boats, models, maps, paintings, ships' figureheads and 16th-century galleys.

La Sagrada Família

La Sagrada Família is truly awe-inspiring. Even if you don't have much time, don't miss it. The most ambitious work of Barcelona's favourite son, Antoni Gaudí, the magnificent spires of the unfinished cathedral imprint themselves boldly against the sky with swelling outlines inspired by the holy Montserrat. The spires are encrusted with a tangle of sculptures that seem to breathe life into the stone. Gaudí died in 1926 before his masterwork was completed and, since then, controversy has continually dogged the building programme.

Nevertheless, the southwestern (Passion) facade, with four new towers, is almost done, and the nave, begun in 1978, is progressing. Some say the shell should have been left as a monument to Gaudí, but today's chief architect, Jordi Bonet, argues that the completion of la Sagrada Família must progress, as the building is intended to atone for sin and appeal to God's mercy on Catalunya.

Montjuïc

Montjuïc, the hill overlooking the city centre from the southwest, is home to some fine art galleries, leisure attractions, soothing parks and the main group of 1992 Olympic sites. Approach the area from Plaça d'Espanya and on the north side you'll see Plaça de Braus Les Arenes, a former bullring where the Beatles played in 1966. Behind it lies Parc Joan Miró, where stands Miró's highly phallic sculpture *Dona i Ocell (Woman and Bird)*. Nearby, the Palau Nacional houses the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, which has an impressive collection of Romanesque art. Stretching up a series of terraces below the Palau Nacional are fountains, including the biggest, La Font Màgica, which comes alive with a free lights and music show on summer evenings. In the northwest of Montjuïc is the 'Spanish Village', Poble Espanyol. At first glance it's a tacky tourist trap, but it also proves to be an intriguing scrapbook of Spanish architecture, with very convincing copies of buildings from all of Spain's regions. The Anella Olímpica (Olympic Ring) is the group of sports installations where the main events of the

1992 games were held. Down the hill, visit masterpieces of another kind in the Fundació Joan Mirá, Barcelona's gallery for the greatest Catalan artist of the 20th century. This is the largest single collection of his work.

Museu Picasso

Barcelona's most visited museum shows numerous works tracing the artist's early years and is especially strong on his Blue Period, with canvases like *The Defenceless*, as well as ceramics and early works from the 1890s. The rest of the museum traces Picasso's life and travels.

The stunning stone mansions that house the museum are situated on the Carrer de Montcada, which was, in medieval times, an approach to the port. The 1st floor is devoted to Picasso's Blue Period. The 2nd floor displays his impressionist-influenced works, produced in Barcelona and Paris between 1900 and 1904. The haunting *Portrait of Señora Canals* (1905), from his Pink Period, is also on display. Among the later works, all painted in Cannes in 1957, is a complex technical series entitled *Las Meninas*, which consists mostly of studies on Diego Velázquez's eponymous masterpiece.

Camp Nou

Home of F.C. Barcelona, one of Europe's premier sides with a cabinet full of trophies to prove it.

The Sardana

Traditional Catalan dance, performed weekly outside the cathedral and a national festivals, with everyone encouraged to join in.

USEFUL INFORMATION

Communications

Internet Cafes

You will find Internet Cafés with high-speed connections everywhere within the city. However, high speed in Spain is much slower than every other country in Europe. Still in Barcelona, you will find prices inexpensive, around 1,00€ to 1,20€ an hour. A café that serves food and drink while you surf will most likely cost more. Most Spanish language schools provide free Internet access.

For free wireless (wifi hotspots) connection go to:

Hotel Apsis Atrium Palace - full hotel coverage - Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes, 656

Hotel Apsis Millenni - full hotel coverage - Ronda Sant pau, 14

Hotel Regina - Free wifi wireless coverage in the lobby and common areas. - Vergara street 2 & 4

Hotel Condes de Barcelona - Free wifi wireless coverage in the lobby and common areas. - Passeig de Gràcia, 73-75

Personal Computers

If you are considering bringing your own laptop computer there are a few things you may want to keep in mind. Internet access in your apartment or home in Spain will probably not be available, and if there is access, remember that you will need to know how to reconfigure your computer for it. However, a personal computer is always useful for other things like downloading pictures from your digital camera or using your computer for music and entertainment.

Telephone Calls

The rate per minute for international phone cards can range from 0,30€ to 0,35€. The *Happy Card*, which can be bought for either 6€ or 15€ in any small shop or *Tabacalera* store, otherwise known as "un estanco," is especially cost efficient for calls to the United States. Whichever phone card you may buy, make sure to check that the pin number is not scratched off and that the card works before you leave the office.

The most economical method to phone internationally is in a Phone center (or known locally as a *locutorio*), a small store with individual phone booths. Phone calls are limitless and you are charged after the completion of your call. Calls per minute made within the European Union are 0,15€ and 0,10€ to the United States.

Cellular phones are a necessity when living and commuting in a large city. For the seasonal resident, the prepaid, contractless phones are what we recommend. The *Corte Inglés* or *The Phone House* sell new phones with minutes for 65€ to 90€. Beware that phone calls made before 4:00pm are significantly more expensive; the difference of 0,66€ to 0,12€. In which case, text messaging is the cheapest alternative, costing 0,15€ per message.

Information tel 010. The city's English-language information line can answer just about any question about Barcelona. The *Generalitat* now has a similar service at 012.

Post office

The main post office (*Correus*) in Barcelona is at Pl d'Antoni López, facing the water at the end of Pg de Colom (Mon-Sat 8am-8pm). There is another post office at c/Aragó 282 (Mon-Fri 8am-9pm, Sat 9am-2am). Each city neighbourhood also has its own post office, though these have far less-comprehensive opening hours and services.

In Barcelona the post offices are open from 8am to noon and again from 5 to 7.30pm, though the main post office in Barcelona (see above) and big branches in larger towns and resorts have considerably longer hours.

<http://www.correos.es>

You can have letters sent **poste restante** (general delivery) to any post office in Spain: they should be addressed (preferably with the surname underlined and in capitals) to *Lista de Correos* followed by the name of the town and province. To collect, take along your passport and, if you're expecting post, ask the clerk to check under all of your names - letters are often to be found filed under first or middle names. In Barcelona, poste restante letters will go to the main post office. Alternatively, American Express in Barcelona (Passeig de Gràcia 101, metro: Diagonal, tel: (093) 217 0070) will hold mail for a month for card and cheque holders.

Outbound post takes around four days to a week to the UK, five to 10 days to North America. You can buy **stamps** at tobacconists (look for the brown-and-yellow *tabac* sign) as well as at post offices (the rate is the same for postcards as for letters: for Spain 0.27€, for Europe 0.52€ and for North America and beyond 0.77€). Use the yellow post boxes. You can also send letters "urgent" - ask at the *tabac* for the latest price and use the red letter boxes; there's one at the main post office.

Transportation

Traveling around the city is relatively simple, unless you have a car. The metro and bus systems are well priced, safe and convenient. And the taxis are among the cheapest in Europe.

By Metro and FGC

Barcelona's public transportation system (info: 010) is quick, cheap, and all-around excellent. The *Guia d'Autobuses Urbans de Barcelona*, free at tourist offices and in Metro stations, maps out the city's bus routes and the five Metro lines; the small book *Guia Facil del Bus*, also free, describes the routes in even more detail.

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** (€6) is valid for 10 rides and saves you nearly 50% off the cost of single ticket. €1.10 per *sencillo* (single ride). The **T-Día pass** (€4.20) is good for a full day of unlimited travel, while the **T-Mes** (€38.80) for one month. The **T-50/30** (€25) buys 50 trips in a 30-day period. These passes save you money if you use the Metro more than three times per day.

Metro

(tel: 93 486 07 52; www.tmb.net). Automatic vending machines and ticket windows sell Metro passes. Stations are indicated by red diamonds with the letter "M" inside of them. Hold on to your ticket until you leave the Metro---an official with a white-and-red pin-striped shirt may ask to see it. Riding without a ticket carries a hefty fine of €40. Most trains run M-Th 5am-midnight, F-Sa 5am-2am, Su and holidays 6am-midnight.

Ferrocarrils de la Generalitat de Catalunya (FGC)

FGC (tel: 93 205 15 15; www.fgc.es). Commuter trains with main stations at Pl. de Catalunya and Pl. de Espanya. Service to **Montserrat** (from Pl. de Espanya). Blue symbols resembling two interlocking "V"s mark connections with the Metro. The commuter line charges the same as the Metro (€1) until Tibidabo. After that, rates go up by zone: zone 2 destinations €1.50, zone 3 destinations €2.10. Metro passes are valid on FGC trains. Information office at the Pl. de Catalunya station open M-F 7am-9pm.

Renfe

Trains that run all over Spain, are again very cheap by European standards. The more popular train routes are more expensive, like the swanky *Ave*, fast train to Sevilla, or a train to Barcelona. The main stations for journeys are Estació de França and Passeig de Gràcia. For information you can call 902 24 02 02 (902 24 34 02 from outside of Spain).

Buses

Although the long distant buses are cheap and show bad films, they are a great way to see the countryside. If you only take one bus journey in Spain, make the one to Granada; the sea of olive trees that rolls over the southern sierra is staggeringly beautiful.

Most---but not all---buses arrive at the **Barcelona Nord Estació d'Autobuses**, C. Ali-bei, 80 (tel: 902 30 32 22). The small Nord station features a sandwich shop, restaurant, candy shop, a butcher, money exchange, and luggage storage. The building also houses an office of the **Guardia Urbana**, the local police. (tel: 93 265 61 32. Metro: Arc de Triomf, exit to Nàpols. Info office open daily 7am-9pm.) Buses that go there include #54 along Gran Via (a block from Pl. de Catalunya) and N11. A taxi from Pl. de Catalunya to the station will cost approximately €4. Other buses, particularly **international buses**, arrive at the **Estació d'Autobuses de Sants** station, next to the train station in Pl. Països Catalans. The following companies operate out of Estació Nord:

Eurolines

(tel: 902 40 50 40; www.eurolines.es). Transportation to **London** (25hr., 8:45am and 5:45pm, €92).

Sarfa

(tel: 902 30 20 25; www.sarfa.com). Sarfa buses stop at many beach towns along the Costa Brava, north of Barcelona. Open daily 8am-9pm. To: **Cadaqués** (2½hr., 11:15am and 8:25pm, €15.15); **Palafrugell** (2hr., 13 per day, €11.40); **Tossa del Mar** (1½hr., 10 per day 9am-9pm, €7.50).

Linebús

(tel: 93 265 07 00). Open M-F 8am-8pm, Sa 8:30am-1pm and 5-8pm. To **Paris** (13hr., M-Sa 8pm, €80). Also has daily service to southern France and Morocco. Discounts for travelers under 26 and over 60.

Alsa Enatcar

(tel: 902 42 22 42; www.alsa.es). To: **Alicante** (9hr., 3 per day, €32.46);

Madrid (8hr., 13 per day, €22.08); **Valencia** (4hr., 16 per day, €20.46); **Zaragoza** (3½-4½hr., 20 per day, €17.74); **Naples** (24hr., 5:15pm, €113).

For online reservation and sale of bus tickets see www.movelia.es. Here you will find many, if not most, of the array of companies and routes.

Left-luggage At Sants Estació the *consigna* is open daily from 4am-midnight and costs 2.40-3.60 a day. There are lockers at the Estació de França, Passeig de Gràcia and the Estació del Nord for 2.40 (all 6am-11.30pm).

Taxis

Black-and-yellow **taxis** (with a green roof-light on when available for hire) are inexpensive, plentiful and well worth using, especially late at night. There's a minimum charge of €1.80 (€2 evenings, weekends and holidays) and after that it's around €0.70 per kilometre. Taxis won't take more than four people and charge extra for baggage and on public holidays, for picking up from Sants and for a multitude of other things. Asking for a receipt should ensure that the price is fair. **Cabs** can be called on the following numbers: tel 934 902 222; tel 934 331 020; tel 933 003 811; tel 933 577 755; tel 933 199 268; and tel 933 215 700.

English Language Publications

If your Spanish is a bit rusty or you just fancy reading something in English you'll find British daily newspapers, *USA Today* and the *International Herald Tribune* on sale in Barcelona. Also check out:

Barcelona Metropolitan (est. 1995; monthly)

Culture, art, music, listings for Barcelona, and information for residents and visitors.

"Our aim is to help resident foreigners in Barcelona come to grips with life in the city, through practical information and articles on local culture and traditions." You can pick up a (free) copy from hotels, bars, cinemas showing English-language films and some Turismes.

Editor: Richard Schweid

Publisher: Esther Jones

E-mail: bcnmet@mx2.redestb.es

Tel.: 93.215.1426

Barsalona

User's guide for bar-hunting available from newsstands, which has an English-language section at the back.

Spanish Language Publications

Guía del Ocio

To find out what's going on at the cinema, in the bars, clubs, museums, exhibitions and theatres, where to eat and more, you should get the *Guía del Ocio* (free time guide), which comes out every week, costs 1 euro, and is sold in all newspaper kiosks. It not only has where to eat, but also the general prices and nationality of the food served, in special categories. The only problem is that you have to be a bit careful with the cinema times they put down, i.e. turn up half an hour before the time written, because they sometimes get it wrong. You can find it on the Internet too. There is a summarized culture and entertainment guide in English at the end of the printed edition. The website for Guía del Ocio is www.guiadelocio.com.

Segunda Mano

"Segunda Mano" is a classified newspaper which comes out several times a week and has a large section of rentals and shared living situations. They are online at <http://www.segundamano.es>. Our advice is not to underestimate the power of personal contacts and recommendations in Spain, for whatever it is that you might need. Then, if all else fails proceed with caution and refer to the "Segundo Mano".

Barcelona Divina (€3)

Lifestyle magazine found in designer bars and clothing shops

Venus, Micro and B-guide

Bimonthly as well as free, glossy magazines which, amidst the ads, contain bar and club news and reviews.

Health

1. The tap water in Spain is drinkable.
2. Genetically modified foods are not on sale, especially not in the market places.
3. Despite all the meat scares that have been rushing around Europe over the last few years, Spain's meat quality remains very good.
4. Organic products are very hard to find.
5. Condoms cannot be bought as openly as in Britain or the United States, you generally have to ask for them in a pharmacy, but they have all brands.
6. The pill is available in pharmacies without prescription. The morning after pill, however, is hard to come by and sometimes pharmacies do not stock it for reasons of conscience. In case of an emergency, a doctor will advise what you should best do.
7. *Farmacias de guardia* are pharmacies that stay open all night. These vary, as they are normal pharmacies that take it in turns to stay open for a night shift. If you need to go to the pharmacy at night, you can

either phone 098, or look in that day's newspaper, or find any pharmacy and look at the sign or list in the window.

8. The most central **health-food stores** are: Comme-Bio, Via Laietana 28; Herbolari Ferran, Pl Reial 18; and Santiveri, Ptge Bacardi in the Boqueria market (with another branch at C/ Balmes 5; Metro Universitat).

Insurance

If you hold a European passport, and you filled out an E-111 form before coming to Spain, then any medical treatment will be refunded in part or in full, but you will have to pay up front. If you do not have this, then medical insurance is a wise idea.

BEST participants have insurance through *Mapfre*, the biggest national insurance company in Spain. It includes travel, accident and health insurance, covering: medical (doctor's visits, hospitalization and prescription), accident (life, transport, lodging, extended stays, prior returns, medicine transport, messages, return of class costs up to 12 €/day for 25 days), reimbursement for airline delays (min. 6 hr.), other costs due to transport delays (hotel and ground transportation), delays due to overbooking, loss of luggage (total and partial), covering of costs due to delays in luggage arrival, transport of lost luggage once found, cancellation costs, death, life and permanent injury, civil responsibility. It does not cover loss from robbery but it does cover the cost of replacing documents if you are robbed. No deductible.

Gyms

If you are determined to keep fit a well-equipped gym is easy to find in Barcelona. Most gyms charge an enrolment fee and offer cheaper rates if you use the gym in the mornings during specific hours. Ask about student discounts and rates. With your student ID, most gyms will offer you a better deal. In addition, a basic gym membership usually does not include other activities such as the cardiovascular room (treadmill, stair master, bicycles, elliptical), yoga, tai chi, aerobics, spinning, etc. That is usually a separate fee, but reasonable. All gyms will charge you 4-5 euros extra for the gym ID. This bit of information is usually never mentioned on the *hoja informativa* (information sheet with prices and gym services) nor does anyone feel obliged to say this when you pay. The following gyms are ones that I've tried out. If none of these are easily accessible to you, consult the ever so useful "páginas amarillas" for more information.

Bonanova

C/ Bigai, 6. Tel.: 93 418 62 16.

DIR

Tel.: 93 415 55 50. Chain of modern gyms all over Barcelona. Call to find the one closest to you.

Club Iradier

C/ Iradier, 18 bis (off of "Bonanova"). Tel.: 93 254 17 17. Contact person: Mina Figueras. An exclusive women's health club and spa which offers a discounted price and waiver of the joining fee for students.

Training Pedralbes

c/ Doctor Joaquim Albarrán, 16. Tel.: 93 205 34 62. Smaller, more personal gym. Gives student discount.

Lodging

The BEST participants that live in shared apartments or host families will need to be ready to confront different living customs. The shared apartments are usually regulated by a landlord. Each landlord has his or her own rules about how you should keep up the apartment, if you can or cannot have guests over, and other living issues.

Families also have their own customs, and the best advice for you is to just come with an open mind. Again, you should be aware of the attitude the family has towards visitors in the home. It is not very likely that your family or landlord will allow guests and/or friends of yours in the house or apartment.

For more on this subject see "**What to Expect**" in the Culture section, page 16.

Many of you also want to know about lodging for friends and relatives who come to visit. Barcelona has many hostels which have websites but deciding among them can be a difficult task. We recommend searching either Global Hostel Reservations

<http://reservation.mytravelguide.com/mytravelguide.org/index.php> or

Accommodations Abroad

<http://www.accommodationsabroad.com/index.cfm>

- **WHAT is a hostel/hostal?** Hostels, called "hostales" in Spanish & "hostals" in Catalán, are usually very quaint (small), family owned and operated hotels and can be found in some of the most historical, interesting, and active parts of the city at very good prices. Hostels in Spain should not be confused with Youth-Hostels which are called "albergues juveniles" in Spanish.
- **WHERE to stay?** Many people prefer to stay somewhere along Las Ramblas, the main "vertical" street which runs alongside the Gothic Quarter from the Plaça de Catalunya all the way to the tower of Christopher Columbus at the beach. It is loaded with cheap hostels that are clean and well situated. Some prefer to stay in the largely pedestrian, old Gothic Quarter itself while others prefer the more modern locations around the Placa Catalunya or in the Eixample district. Wherever you stay, most every place in Barcelona is accessible by their elaborate metro system. The standard price for a decent room is 20€ to 25€/night. Be sure to remember, however, that a hostel is not a first class hotel and they may have different customs in how they do business. You may find that you are more controlled and that the owners are always watching what you are up to.

CULTURE

Be prepared for a bit of a culture shock when you come to Spain. Spanish people have very different ideas about many things. But the best thing to do is to realize that *you* are the visitor, and that the burden of cultural adjustment is upon you. Even though the Spanish style of life is not completely different from your own, there will be significant changes to which you will have to adjust. Besides, if everything were exactly the same as what you are used to, where would the fun be? With this in mind here are some other differences you should be prepared for.

Try to look at the differences as something to learn from, or something to enjoy. If you have that attitude, we can assure you that Spain and its people will not let you down.

Cultural Shock

Spain is a western country with attitudes, habits, and a standard of living that is similar to Britain and the United States. This doesn't mean that you won't need time to get used to the sights, sounds, tastes and smells of your new surroundings, though. This overseas adjustment period is what people generally call "culture shock".

Jeremy Packer's *Jobs and Careers Abroad* states:

"Everyone who moves to another country will experience, to a greater or lesser extent, a phenomenon known as 'culture shock'. It is as well to be aware of this before you go, and to be prepared for its effects ranging from elation to disappointment, according to the person, the environment, and the experience he or she has. You should understand that living abroad has its highs and lows, and that this is to be expected.

There are several stages in this process which you can expect to go through, beginning with what is known as the Honeymoon Stage, when you do not let small irritations spoil your enjoyment and admiration of your new environment. The next is Crisis and Disintegration, as you become more aware of differences in values and behavior: isolation and a search for comfort and security are its consequences. It is quite normal to go through this stage. Indeed, the time to worry is when you don't!

Then there is a period of readjustment or 'reintegration', which begins with a return to your own values and beliefs, and a rejection of the new culture. You keep company with people from your own, or similar countries...You may cling to stereotypes about your own country which you find reassuring. But all this is not entirely negative. You are beginning to assert yourself, and to find your own space in this new and unfamiliar world. With time, and growing self-esteem, you move towards a state of autonomy. You can

then enjoy the positive aspects of the new culture; and are less concerned with the negative differences, but accept them for what they are."

Some strategies for beating culture shock are:

1. Being aware of the symptoms, which can include physical and psychological effects ranging from headaches and tiredness to sleep problems and irritability.
2. Good preparation is important, for example contacts with people from that country before your departure.
3. Find out about the country before you go there.
4. Try to avoid mixing only with expatriates and other foreigners.
5. Reduce stress by keeping healthy with physical exercise.
6. Write down the bad things and the good things to see if you can find a way of changing the bad things or of finding a way to live with them.

What to Expect Living with a Spanish Family

If you have a host family they are a very important part of your over all language immersion experience because you will not only have the opportunity to learn about the culture but also you will be able to practice Spanish.

🏠 Helpful hints

- Normally you will eat the same food as the family.
- Most Spanish people tend to eat meals much later than you may be used to. Breakfast usually consists of coffee and biscuits. Lunch is the most important meal of the day; usually served between 2 pm and 4 pm. Dinner is a lighter meal usually served around 10 pm.
- Unless you have indicated special diet restrictions on your application form, you should not expect your family to make you special meals.
- If you cannot live without your favorite type of food, we recommend you buy it in a local supermarket. These kinds of food are normally imported and very expensive by Spanish standards.
- You will probably be offered many things you are not used to eating like fish with eyes, octopus, blood sausage, pigs' ears, and tripe, to name some of the strangest ones. Be prepared to either try them or to refuse them with delicacy.
- If for some reason you are having dinner elsewhere, please be courteous and notify your family of your change of plans. Sitting down for a family meal once a day is very common in Spanish homes.
- Make sure to close and lock doors and gates properly- it may seem silly, but many locks here seem to have tricks to them. LEARN THEM before you get locked out or lock someone else out.
- Leave your bedroom tidy and presentable when you go out.
- Do your best to conserve water and electricity- this means turning

the lights off when you are not in your room. Make sure to close taps properly.

- Do not wake the family if you are returning home late.
- Do not use the family belongings without permission.
- Do not wash personal belongings by yourself- follow the family laundry routine and ask what the family thinks is best.
- Communicate with your family.
- If you do not feel comfortable discussing something with your family, please ask *BEST* to assist you with the situation.
- FINALLY- overnight guests are NOT allowed!

What to Expect Living in Shared Flats

- Leave the common rooms clean and presentable.
- Wash dishes after use.
- Do not wake up flat mates when returning late.
- Do not invite "just made" friends to stay in the residence.
- Damage or technical fault should be reported immediately.

Making the Adjustment to Customs & Traditions

Eating out

In general, Spaniards eat lunch anywhere from 1:30 to 3:30, and dinner is frequently at 10:00.

The best way to find out about eating out is to consult the *Guía del Ocio* mentioned above in the section Spanish Language Publications. Some advice is to eat out at lunchtime rather than in the evening if you want a good menu at a cheap price. This is when you'll see the signs outside saying '*Menú del día*' with a list of the specialty food for the day. A *menú del día* usually costs around 9 euros and you can expect to get three courses and with drink included, and then you'll find out why everyone has a siesta after lunch! In the evening it's more difficult to find such good prices, and a meal of the same quality might cost you 20€ or more.

Restaurants

Waiters are very slow, wait for them to take your order, and don't go up to the bar to order. The concept of service is different. Sitting and waiting should be observed as comfort time to enjoy the company that you are spending it with. Waiters will never ask you to leave. Again, the concept of noise in restaurants is something that you may not be used to; people go to out to have a good time so the noise level is high.

Tipping is not the norm in Spain. Simply leaving your change or a few coins is usually satisfactory. About 1€ per person is good for a meal.

Eating with both a fork and a knife is the style and common table manners. The knife is used not only to cut food but also to push food onto the fork.

Asking to take your left over food home with you (i.e. doggie bag) is virtually unheard of and often considered cheap.

Family

In general families stay together much longer than you may be used to. The Spanish lifestyle is very family oriented. It is common for three generations of families to be living together under the same roof. It is a way to increase the household income and to help one another. In addition, most young people don't leave home until they marry and doing so is often interpreted as a lack of love for their parents.

Although families have animals as pets, they are usually not as pampered as pets in the United States.

Noise level

Quiet and peaceful households are a rarity. Whether it is dogs barking, car horns beeping, street noise, neighbors or relatives visiting or a señora banging around in the kitchen making a meal, much of Spain is noisier than what you might be used to. People often talk loudly. They are not yelling at you.

Greetings

You'll be happier here if you learn to greet and bid farewell. It is considered very, very bad manners if you don't. Try to greet people whenever it might be necessary; getting into taxis, coming into a roomful of people, walking into a small store, coffee house, elevator, etc. When entering a shop, it is often customary to say *Buenos Dias*, *Buenas tardes*, or *Buenas noches* and *Adios* or *Gracias* when leaving even if you don't know the people.

Spaniards tend to place more emphasis on physical contact than North Americans. When men greet men, they shake hands. When men greet women or vice versa, they apply a light kiss on both sides of the person's face. Conversations occur at a much closer physical distance than you may be accustomed to in the US. Moving away to establish distance is considered unfriendly.

In store lines

Expect to encounter people pushing their way to the front of the line. Many times, a person will enter the shop where there is a line and say *Quien es la última?*, they want to know who is the last person in line and you may need to say, "Yo" (me).

Dress

Most Spaniards dress nicely all the time. They almost never wear shorts. Shorts are normally only worn when going to the beach or by tourists. There are some dress restrictions at some nightclubs/ discos. Also, dress better when entering churches or for meetings or interviews. Going barefoot is considered unhealthy.

La Siesta

Most shops close some time between 1 pm – 5 pm, so get what you need before they close, or after they open for evening hours.

Catalan language

Catalan is its own language and, therefore, it is incorrect to say to Catalans that it is a dialect of Spanish. Some feel so strongly about their identity that they don't consider themselves Spaniards.

Concept of time

Most Spaniards do not plan ahead and many things are spontaneous. Impromptu dinners and outings are normal. For example people start planning summer vacations in April or May.

Job Market

It is very difficult to find a job in Spain, especially for non-residents. There is unemployment in Spain. Labor laws are strict and confining. Trade unions are powerful calling general strikes at least once a year.

Housing

You will find, if you are trying to rent your own apartment, that procedures are quite unpredictable. For example, telephone installations, when you ask for a new line, can take a long time and cost over 100€.

Conservation

Gasoline, electricity and the telephone are very expensive and should always be conserved, i.e. turning off lights when leaving the room, making sure that radios are not left turned on in your rooms. etc.

Smoking

The general attitude towards smoking is lenient in Spain. They base their idea on the belief that smokers have their rights too. So, often "no smoking" signs are more of a suggestion than an obligation. Some restaurants have no smoking sections but most do not.

Machismo

An unaccompanied woman will probably hear the flirtatious comments many men will call out, such as *mi amor* or *guapa*. Yet when women dressed professionally pass, fewer comments are thrown. It is annoying, but not threatening, (and the men who are making the comments really do intend it to be a compliment). Spanish men enjoy flirting with women, but rarely does it involve contact. The best advice is to ignore it, don't make eye contact, and keep on walking. As a general rule, women should try to be more formal in their interaction with men they encounter in everyday situations (taxi drivers, shopkeepers, etc.), as sometimes men mistake informality with an interest in forming a deeper relationship. Also, keep in mind that you should not give eye contact to beggars on the street; they will not stop bothering you if you show any interest.

In Spain today, the machismo is still strongly present; however, the role of the women is increasing and as she increases her social status, the machismo decreases. In fact, compared to the United States, the woman's role in government is exemplary. At this time exactly eight men and eight women make up Prime Minister Zapatero's cabinet. Spanish women also have more maternity allowances than American women. It is Spanish custom for women to keep their maiden surnames after marriage. In many aspects, as these points prove, the Spanish woman is not as underprivileged as some tend to think.

Safety

General Information and Tips

Spain is very safe compared to London or New York; people are constantly out in the streets, the metro is well policed by security companies and used by everyone at all times. On the night buses, everyone is usually thinking about going to bed. So don't be unduly paranoid. Most of Barcelona is as safe (or dangerous) as any other city you may be used to - and as mentioned, the potential for violent street crime is much lower than in Britain and the United States. Once you're away from the city and into the Catalan countryside you'll be less troubled. Most of the region is rural, friendly and safe.

That is not to say that a minimum precaution isn't necessary, a certain amount is sensible, so don't leave your brains at the border. A good general rule is not to do anything in Spain which you would not do at home.

Petty crime has recently reached a near-crisis point situation. Because robbery without injury is treated as a misdemeanour under Spanish law, snatchers know that they can operate with near impunity. So the statistics for this type of robbery are on the rise. But if you're careful where you put your purse or wallet, this won't be a problem. Always be on your guard against bag-snatching. Tourists should stay alert to possible threats, and follow certain basic security strategies given below.

The culture of street life in Barcelona means that it is always crowded, so be careful of pickpockets. You may encounter beggars too so beware of people accosting you to give you or sell you flowers, herbs, small Catalan-flag stickers, or who in any other manner try to distract you. One typical trick is the "helpful" person pointing out bird excrement (shaving cream or something similar) on your jacket while an accomplice relieves you of your possessions.

There are many ploys, so mind any type of contrived distraction like someone dropping money, photos, spilling something on you, bumping into you, telling you that you dropped something, etc. Another method is to cover the hands with a large map, a newspaper or with a garment over their arms under which they "work" without being seen. Do not carry things of value with you. Mind your possession on busses (long and short distance) and in fast food establishments.

Pickpockets in Spain are magicians with kid gloves. Artists and professionals. I guarantee you they can lift almost anything off you without you taking the slightest notice. This said, experience unfortunately, is the best teacher. Most of the pick pocketing is done on public transportation (40%) and in tourist areas of the city. You won't lose your life, but you may lose your wallet, your passport and your credit cards. They target tourists, so look as little like a tourist as possible. This isn't easy since there seems to be generalized tourist attire which we fall into while travelling for comforts sake. This includes shorts, sandals, white socks, unironed clothes, etc. One of these could pass but combined with a general look of disconcerted interest that most visitors have, they are sitting pigeons for the pickpockets.

This is what you can do to avoid being victimized:

- ✦ Do not flaunt your possessions: your camera, wallet, guidebooks or maps.
- ✦ Don't leave any bags unattended anywhere.
- ✦ Do not wear expensive jewelry or provocative clothing.
- ✦ Don't carry your money together with your credit cards and other valuables. I carry all my paper money loose in my handbag, my credit cards in a case and my change in a purse. If one of them is robbed, at least I have saved the others.
- ✦ Photocopy everything - your credit cards and your passport. Carry the copy of your passport. Keep the copy of your credit cards for emergencies.
- ✦ Carry only the amount of cash that you are prepared to lose. Use the ATM machines that are all over town.

To reiterate:

- ✦ Carry the following with you at all times:
 - A copy of your passport (keep originals in safe place)
 - Try not to carry more than 50 € with you in cash
 - Name, address, and number of your family or place of lodging
 - A map of the city
 - One ATM/credit card
- ✦ Money belts under your clothing work well but fanny packs, which you may think are safest of all, are dead ringers.
- ✦ Do not count money in front of people.

Other helpful pointers:

- ✦ Be aware of your surroundings!
- ✦ Walk in a group at night and avoid poor neighborhoods.
- ✦ Do not get into a taxi if there are other people with the taxi driver.
- ✦ Be sure that taxis take you to your door late at night and not to the corner or nearest metro stop.
- ✦ Do not consume or transport illegal drugs. The laws in Spain are severe with respect to this topic.

- ◀ Never offer money to the police. If you encounter a situation that you do not understand, insist on talking with someone from your host family or to someone at BEST.
- ◀ Make sure that someone knows where you are at all times. If you are traveling on weekends, leave emergency phone numbers with your family and friends. If you are delayed on your return, call your host or friends and let them know.
- ◀ Buy a **cell phone** and keep it on you and turned on at all times.
- ◀ Be careful when crossing streets (even if you have the green light). In many drivers' views, pedestrians do not have the right-of-way and stop and traffic signs seem like mere suggestions.

What to do if you're robbed

If you're robbed, you need to **go to the police** to report it, not least because your insurance company will require a police report. Don't expect a great deal of concern if your loss is relatively small - but do expect the process of completing forms and formalities to take ages.

In the unlikely event that you're **mugged**, or otherwise threatened, *never* resist; hand over what's wanted and run straight to the police who will be more sympathetic on these occasions. Ask for the Centro Atención Policial which is specifically designed to help tourists, with English-speaking officers, legal and medical advice, and practical help if you've lost your money and credit cards.

The police

There are four types of **police**: the Guàrdia Civil, the Policia Nacional, the municipal police known as the Guàrdia Urbana, and the Catalan Mossos d'Esquadra, all of them are armed.

Offences

There are a few **offences** you might commit unwittingly that it's as well to be aware of.

- It is illegal to go without some kind of **identification** at all times, and the police can stop you in the street and demand it. In practice they're rarely bothered if you're clearly a foreigner, but it might happen.
- **Nude bathing** or **unauthorized camping** are activities more likely to bring you into contact with officialdom, though a warning to cover up or move on is more likely than any real confrontation. **Topless** tanning is commonplace at all the trendier resorts, but in country areas, where attitudes are still very traditional, you should take care not to upset local sensibilities.
- If you have an **accident** while driving, try not to make a statement to anyone who doesn't speak fluent English.

- It is illegal not to offer assistance to someone who has had an accident. Cell phones are handy for this reason. You should insert the **EMERGENCY NUMBER** for all types of incidences in all of Europe: 112.
- In theory at least, any **drug** use is now forbidden. You'll see signs in some bars saying "*no porros*" (no joints), which you should heed. However, the police are in practice little worried about personal use. Larger quantities (and any other drugs) are a very different matter.

Should you be **arrested** on any charge, you have the right to contact your **consulate**, and although they're notoriously reluctant to get involved they are required to assist you to some degree if you have your passport stolen or lose all your money. If you've been detained for a drugs offence, don't expect any sympathy or help from your consulate or from BEST Programs.

Terrorism

The Catalonia region (particularly Barcelona) has been the occasional target of attacks by the Basque terrorist group **ETA**. You may already know this, but they carry out car bombings in Spain every so often. Many ETA members have been arrested in France and Spain in the last couple of years. It does happen, but rarely. I wouldn't be too concerned about travelling in Spain. Take it from a New Yorker -- terrorism isn't worth worrying about. The chances of your being in exactly the wrong place at exactly the wrong time are slim to none.

Recent Madrid bombing have brought to light that ETA is not the most powerful or active of terror groups. The Islamic terrorists Al Qaeda were the perpetrators of the March 11th bombing of Spanish commuter trains in Madrid.

If you follow the travel advisories put out by the State Department, they are not saying that Spain is less safe. Since 9-11 we have to realize this can happen anywhere. How rarely Spanish terrorism is in the news is a reflection of how much risk they pose to the average person. Spain is *much* safer than the United States, and -despite the urban legends- one of the safest countries in the world. Madrid is *not* a "hotbed" of anything. The odds against a visitor being affected by terrorism are astronomical. Regarding bombs, terrorism, etcetera, if you haven't been hit by lightning yet where you live the chances are equally good that you won't get a lightning strike in Spain. I urge anyone interested in visiting the country should go and follow through with their plans. It's a beautiful and vibrant country. Something like this can happen anywhere, anytime. Avoiding Spain won't make your life safer. We've seen it before in New York, Washington, Moscow, Isreal, Tokyo...in none of these places was it expected. The surprise factor is part of terrorism, which never hits the same place twice. I hope that people realize that this human tragedy that is *not* specific to Spain, and that Spain remains one of the world's safest countries.

Credit Cards

[American Express](#)

Passeig de Gràcia 101
metro: Diagonal
tel: (093) 217 0070

Credit Card Cancellations

To cancel lost or stolen credit cards, call the following numbers in Madrid:

Access/MasterCard tel 915 192 100.

American Express tel 915 720 303.

Diners Club tel 915 474 000.

Visa tel 913 512 512.

Visa International Lost card hotline 900 99 1124

Consulates

Australian Consulate

Gran Via Carles III 98
tel: (093) 330 9496

British Consulate

Av. Diagonal 477
tel: (093) 419 9044

Canadian Consulate

Via Augusta 125
tel: (093) 209 0634

United States Consulate

Passeig Reina Elisenda 32
tel: (093) 280 2227

Western Union

If you need emergency cash over the weekend when all banks and American Express offices are closed, you can have money wired to you from **Western Union** (tel. **800/325-6000**). To find out where and when to pick up the money in Spain, call toll free 900-633-633. The person answering will be an English speaker. Western Union has several offices in Barcelona; the one located at Ramblas 41 is open from 9:30 AM until midnight.

(www.westernunion.com). You must present valid ID to pick up the cash at the Western Union office. However, in most countries, you can pick up a money transfer even if you don't have valid identification, as long as you can answer a test question provided by the sender. Be sure to let the sender know in advance that you don't have ID. If you need to use a test question instead of ID, the sender must take cash to his or her local Western Union office, rather than transferring the money over the phone or online.

FREE TIME

Madrid is a great place to spend free time, because there are a million things to do. Whatever you're into, there's going to be something for you. Here we've given you some basics, and ways of finding out more. There is only a little bit of information about the areas to go out, to act as a taster, the rest is up to you to explore and find what you like and don't like.

General

In Spain, people generally tend to go out later and stay out later, so be prepared for some long nights! There are two 'shifts' for going out in Barcelona; the first is for people up to the age of about 17, and is from around 8 p.m. until around 12 a.m. After that they all go home and the biggies come out, the streets hitting maximum fiesta at around 1.30 or 2 in the morning. At this time in many of the popular places you will struggle to get into bars and have to weave your way down streets which become pedestrian through sheer force of numbers. *La marcha* is very, very important in Spain.

Spain is a nation that consumes a lot of alcohol, and while it is often in the form of straight beer or wine, they have some interesting variations; *Kalimocho* is a favorite amongst the younger crowd, it is a mixture of bad cola and bad red wine and ice cubes. The idea is that you mix them both to take away the taste of the other. You can often buy kalimocho in cheap bars, always sold in *minis* which are one-liter plastic glasses; also *tintos de verano* are popular. That's wine with lemon or orange pop. It's similar to sangria, without the fruit. *Copas* are your basic mixed spirit drink, which come in tube like glasses with lots of ice. You will be blown away when you see the bar staff free pouring whatever spirit you asked for, often until you tell them to stop. For the price you pay, which is usually between 3 and 6 euros, they're good value. *Una caña* is a glass of beer (around 2€ or less) and you will rarely hear people ask for *una cerveza*, but *una caña* instead. You have no choice over the type of beer, but its all cold lager. *Una clara* is a mix of draft beer and lemon soda. *Mojito* is a fabulous Cuban drink made from rum, sugar and mint. *Sidra* is cider, but when it's from Asturias, the great cider region in the north of Spain, it's a little different because you get it in the bottle with a wide based glass, and you have to pour it yourself, which is an art form for professionals and a disaster for beginners. I'll say no more, go and check it out!

Finally, you've probably heard all about *tapas*, the pieces of food you often get with a drink, which can vary in size and quality depending on the bar, the barman, the weather... Basically, you should always get a *tapa* with any alcoholic drink, and if you don't get one, ask for one! It's in this way that the Spaniards keep going all night; a mixture of drink, food and walking from place to place. If you wonder why they say *tapa*, it means "cover" and originally referred to the piece of bread which accompanied the appetizer and covered it.

Cinema

In Spain the norm is to dub foreign films. There is a highly respected school of actors who train to do this, but it still doesn't make up for the fact that their lips don't move with the words! Cinema is hugely popular in Spain and so the big cinemas perhaps fear that subtitling everything would ruin the industry. So if you don't mind seeing a film dubbed, then you have a massive range of cinemas to choose from, many of them on Gran Via, going down towards Plaza de España. There are also many cinemas that show films in v.o.s., which means original version subtitled in Spanish (*version original subtitulada*), and these show all the biggest films, albeit a couple of weeks or months later, and have more European cinema too. Again the *Guía del Ocio* gives you a list of all the cinemas which show films in v.o.s. Tickets cost around 6€ normally with Wednesday being a discount day during the week. Many cinemas sell tickets in advance at the box office or by phone with a credit card.

Discotheques

Barcelona is one of Europe's hippest. Naturally, if you go clubbing you'll wind up paying much more for drinks than you would at the bar next door, but in general clubbing in Barcelona is less expensive than in the UK or elsewhere in northern Europe. Admission prices are difficult to predict: some places are free before a certain time, others charge a few euros entry, a few only charge if there's live music, many charge €6-18 just for dancing (this usually includes a free *consumició*, your first beer or soft drink), and in several entry depends on what you look like rather than how much is in your pocket. If there is free entry, don't be surprised to find that

there's a minimum drinks charge of anything from €3-6 - if you're given a card as you go in and it's punched at the bar, be prepared to pay a minimum charge. If you're not sure of where to go, have a beer on a Plaça Reial terrace and someone will come to your table with free passes and coupons for clubs. Also note that the distinction between a music-bar and a disco is between a closing time of 2 or 3am and 5am - with a corresponding price rise. Barcelona stays open **very late** at the weekends, if you can take it; some of the places we've listed feature a second session of action sometime between 5am and 9am.

Of course, there are MANY, MANY other clubs. Look in *Guia del Ocio* (comes out on Thurs.) or any other entertainment publication in our publication section for recommendations.

BE CAREFUL WITH YOUR BELONGINGS AT CLUBS AND DISCOTHEQUES!


Contacts: Interesting Web Sites

Spain

- www.barcelonaturisme.com/ Official organization for the promotion of tourism with information on main attractions.
- www.barcelona2004.org/eng/ (in English) Forum Barcelona 2004
- www.tmb.net/en_US/home.jsp (in English) Transport guide to Barcelona
- www.movelias.es Online reservation and sale of bus tickets
- www.guiadelocio.com (Spanish entertainment guide)
- www.barcelona.com/barcelona/Jahia/lang/en/pid/1 (Tourist info)
- www.in-spain.info/spain-top-20.htm (Best in Spain info guide)
- www.softguides.com/barcelona/info/info_tourist.html (city guide everything)
- www.qdq.com/fotos_qdq.cfm (a city map with photographs of every street and building facade)
- www.lanetro.com (Great maps of cities all over Spain)
- www.segundamano.es (Classified newspaper)
- www.museumusei.com (Spanish museum gift shop)

General

- www.mappy.com (Put the street address and city in the search engine and get a street map of the area)
- www.hostelworld.com (Find a hostel anywhere)

This booklet is a collaborative effort.
Our  advice to you is to read it and help those who follow you by sending us your feedback.

Thank you and have a great time!

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