

Some Informal Advice and Tips for your Barcelona Visit

1. Things to visit

1. **Las Ramblas:** Most touristic street in Barcelona. It is worthwhile to walk in down from “**Plaza de Catalunya**” all the way to the seaport. A nice time to do it is early in the morning, with less tourists, but it is most lively (with actors in the streets, etc...) in the weekend evenings. **It is the place where you have to be most careful with pickpockets!**

Going down La Rambla, there are two places worthwhile stopping by:

- a. **La Boquería Market:** Amazing food street market where you can buy everything and take great pictures.
- b. **Liceo:** The old opera house. It got burned in the early nineties but it has been rebuilt. If you have the time, it is worthwhile to go see a play. The building is also very nice. Another nice place to listen to music is “**Palau de la Musica**” which is not far from there (the inside can also be visited and are worthwhile).

2. Gaudi´s:

- a. Buildings in “**Paseo de Gracia**” (walking distance from Plaza de Catalunya): Both “**La Pedrera**” and “**Casa Batlló**” are beautiful outside and inside. I would just visit the inside of one of the two, as there are usually big lines.
 - b. **Sagrada Familia:** Gaudi´s project of building a modernist cathedral. It is unfinished and the new arts are not as nice, but it is quite impressive. It may not be worthwhile to pay the entrance fee unless you want to go up one of the towers for a great view of the city.
 - c. **Parc Güell:** A beautiful park designed by Gaudi. Try to avoid crowds in the weekends. The access is a bit difficult but the views of Barcelona are amazing and so is the architecture.
3. **Borne Area:** The old part of the city (down Las Ramblas to the left, close to the see). Very small walking streets with great shopping (including nice shoe shops such as Camper and Vialis), nice places to have tapas. Other things you need to do here:
 - a. **Picasso Museum:** In a beautiful building and with very good explanations. The exhibits complement very well the other museum in Paris.
 - b. **Santa María del Mar:** Beautiful gothic church in the inside (the outside is kind of ugly), which is actually much nicer than the Cathedral (cleaner lines, less decorated). It is quite special.
 4. **Montjuic:** One of the hills surrounding Barcelona and where the **Olympic stadium** is located. It is nice for the views of the sea and for a few the garden areas. You can visit the “**Mies Vande Rohe**” **Pavillion**, which is there since the Expo and, at around 20:00 there is a cheesy although spectacular water fountain show at the bottom of the hill.

5. **Tibidabo:** The other mountain surrounding Barcelona, which can be accessed also with a rail train. Spectacular views of the city (probably the best ones) from “**Merbellé**”, where you can have a drink or dinner at sunset (another nice place is “**La Venta**”). If you go all the way up, there is an **old attraction park** which is quite charming.
6. **Beach:** The beaches are not specially nice and are quite dirty and touristic. However as you move to the north (if you are looking to the sea, going to your left) they get better and there are a few nice beach places where you can have good paella and sangria.

2. Eating

1. **Ciutat Condal:** (Rambla catalunya/Gran via) have the nicest Tapas in town. Always packed but worth waiting. Try sliced artichokes, boquerones en vinagre o whatever you choose from the counter. Avoid any other restaurants around plaza Catalunya and La Rambla as they are not very good and pricey.

2. **Thai Lounge** (Valencia/Enric Granados) Best Thai in Barcelona

3. **Kibuka** (C/ Verdi or Goya) Brazilian/ Japanese fusion restaurant, always packed, and not very comfortable seating but most people agree is one of the best Japanese restaurants in town. If you decide to go, queue at 8:30 sharp in goya or book a table in Verdi. The area, Gracia is full of nice cafes and bars where bohemians go to movies and walk around.

4. **Semproniana** (Roselló 148 <http://www.semproniana.net/>) My wife’s favourite cataln restaurant in BCN. Creative Catalan cuisine, not too pricey, not an ordinary decoration. The same people have an Italian restaurant by Catedral del Mar (Santa María del Mar in Borne) called **Petra** (C/sombrerers).

5. **Xemei** (<http://barcelona.salir.com/xemei>) Small Venetian restaurant close to Montjuic, one of the best Italian I’ve tried. They have about 8 tables so always book a table to seat as they have another restaurant next door where you eat seating in a stool. Ask for “burrata”.

6. **Da Greco** (Jardinets de Gràcia, at the top of Paseo de Gracia, once you cross Diagonal to your right) Pedro’s favourite’s italian restaurant ever. It is in a very convenient location and has a curious baroque decoration as it maintain former hotel’s decoration. To be avoided if you suffer from high cholesterol. The staff is friendly and for every pasta plate you choose, they will offer another one for the table “to try”. If you decide to go, do not miss the carpaccio, risotto de parmigiano, raviolis de ceps.

7. **La paradeta** This is a traditional Barcelona place, this people own a fish place in la boqueria market. So basically you buy the seafood or fish by weight and decide whether you want it boiled, roasted or fried. There is no service, you have to collect your food once it is cooked and there are no tablecloths but the seafood is delicious for a very good value. We strongly recommend “tallarinas a la plancha” loads of them. They have

two places one by Sagrada Familia (Passatge, simó) and the other one in the Born (comercial,7). Check the opening hours I do not think they are open on Sundays or Saturdays.

<http://www.laparadeta.com/>

So far this are our regular restaurants if you want to have something more special try:

8. 7 portes (Passatge Isabel II, 14) Traditional catalan restaurant, well known for their paella and rices... avoid any other touristic places offering paella as it is no the "real thing".

<http://www.7portes.com/angles/index.htm>

9. Coure (Passatge Marimon, 20) Small, modern restaurant offering creative cuisine. Pick the menu for 35€. Always book a table.

<http://www.verema.com/restaurantes/2181-restaurant-coure-barcelona>

3. Drinks

In Mervelle, just below the tibidabo you have to be there before dawn to enjoy the sunset and afterwards the city light. Afterwards there is traditional catalan restaurant called **La Venta** (<http://www.restaurantelaventa.com/>)

If you are around Sagrada Familia try Samba Brasil is an old fashion pub were you can have the best caipirinhas... in the world (Lepant, 297)

For a place with a view

Try **Bestial** or Aqua both by the beach, they serve traditional food. <http://www.bestialdeltragaluz.com/>

<http://www.aguadeltragaluz.com/>

4. Shopping

La Rambla de Catalunya and **Born neighbourhood** are the nicest shopping areas. If you are looking for a **mall L'Illa** is the probably the best one (<http://www.lilla.com/>)

In Paseo de Gracia you will find **Vinçon** household designer house built in a modernistic house. Upstairs you will have access to the backcourt where you will be able to see a different view from the la Pedrera House

La Boqueria, most emblematic market in town, worth looking around and buying a fresh squeezed juice.

5. Spanish Shoes

Vialis for women (l'Illa Mall at C/Diagonal or c/Vidreria 15 in the born).

Camper men and women (Rambla Catalunya 122, valencia 249)

Casas (Puerta del angel, 38)