

[High/Low]


Barcelona

Spain's second-largest city, Barcelona is the proud capital of the Catalonia region, with a distinct language and culture. There's something for every interest: ancient, modern, food, beach, architecture, or partying till dawn. —Andrew Bender

GO

Worth It: Swirling curves, fairy-tale spires, and colorful broken-tile accents by Catalan architect Antoni Gaudí (1852–1926) define Barcelona architecture. Get up close and up high at **La Sagrada Família**, Spain's most famous basilica. Tickets from \$17. (011) 34-93-198-07-05; sagradafamilia.org/en. **Casa Batlló** is creepily charming, nicknamed "House of Bones" for its stonework details. Tickets, \$21–\$24. (011) 34-93-216-03-06; casabatllo.es/en. Learn to make classic local dishes, including *pan con tomate* (savory tomato bread) and *croquetas de jamón* (ham croquettes), at **Espai Boisa Cooking School**. \$478 for two people. (011) 34-93-192-60-21; espaiboisa.com.

On the Cheap: Getting lost is part of the experience in the narrow cobblestone lanes of **Barri Gòtic** (Gothic Quarter), inhabited since Roman times and filled with ancient churches, one of Europe's oldest synagogues, modern boutiques, and plazas for relaxing—all without opening your wallet. Reasonably priced hilltop **Parc Güell**, designed by Gaudí, features offbeat Doric columns and a giant tiled salamander. Tickets from \$8. (011) 34-93-409-18-31; parkguell.cat/en.

 Currency exchange at press time:
\$1 USD = m.0.91

EAT

Indulge: Eat up the energy at new **El Nacional**, which has four distinct culinary areas and four bars under one grand roof. Try grilled fish, paella, and *fideuà* (Catalan-style paella made with noodles instead of rice) at La Llotja; or T-bones or ox burgers at La Braseria steakhouse. Main dishes range from \$11–\$36. (011) 34-93-518-50-53; elnacionalbcn.com/en.

Budget Bites: Shoehorn yourself amid the throngs dining on diminutive dishes at intimate **Quimet & Quimet**. Cheese plates, mussels, and *montaditos* (toasts) topped with the likes of salmon with yogurt and truffle-honey pair beautifully with the extensive wine selection. Tapas start at \$2. (011) 34-93-442-31-42.

STAY

Big Spender: Make the Mediterranean coast at the ultramodern **W Barcelona**, with its 26 stories unfurling like a glass sail over the sand. A spa, a rocking rooftop bar, and eye-catching restaurants are all within steps of beach fun. Rates start at \$214. (011) 34-93-295-28-00 or (877) 946-8357; w-barcelona.com.

Smart Saver: Not just food fans will savor the lively new **Praktik Bakery Hotel**, which was built to include a working bakery. Rooms can be small, but the clever design—bakery-tile walls, industrial lamps, and rain showers—makes up for it. Rates start at about \$100. (011) 34-93-488-00-61; hotelpraktikbakery.com.



Parc Güell

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