

A Moveable Feast:

Two Days in Barcelona

Barcelona is a copious feast for all the senses, but those best catered for are sight, smell and – oh boy – taste! Plunge into Ciutat Vella (the Old Town) to fuel your gastronomic fantasies.

FROM LA BOQUERIA TO THE BEACH

Get a kick-start with a sticky hot chocolate and cream (*suís*) at **Granja Viader** (Carrer d'En Xuclà 4), a century-old dairy bar secreted down a narrow lane in El Raval. A few metres away, you'll see **La Portorriqueña** (Carrer d'En Xuclà 25), purveyor of chocolate goodies and coffee beans from around the world since 1902.

A couple of blocks south, sneak in the side approach to one of Europe's greatest produce markets, the Modernist **Mercat de la Boqueria** (www.boqueria.info). Stands overflow with the catch of the day, cheeses, sausages, fresh fruit and vegetables and candied sweets. Peckish already? Stop at **Bar Central**, towards the back of the market, for fresh tapas.

Emerge onto Barcelona's boulevard, **La Rambla**, cross it and make for Plaça del Pi. You may stumble across the fortnightly **Fira de l'Alimentació**, a food fair held Friday to Sunday by local artisan producers of anything from ham to honey. Further hot chocolate stops line **Carrer del Petritxol**. For heavenly sweets handmade in convents all over Spain, venture into **Caelum** (Carrer de la Palla 8).

Food and culture can be complementary so take a break from gastronomy for a while. Carrer de la Palla leads straight to the Gothic **Catedral** (Plaça de la Seu). From there it's a short stroll to the **Museu d'Història de la Ciutat** (Carrer del Veguer; www.museuhistoria.bcn.es) the city museum, which includes ruins of Roman Barcelona.

Lunch beckons; try **Cafè de l'Acadèmia** (Carrer de Lledó 1; ☎ 93 319 82 53) for Catalan dishes with some inventive twists. To get there, wander up Carrer de la Dagueria, with its traditional lace boutiques and irresistible **Formatgeria La Seu** (Carrer de la Dagueria 16; www.formatgerialaseu.com), an aromatic cheese shop set in a former butter-making factory. After a meal on the tiny medieval square, slope down Carrer de Lledó and slip into **La Clandestina** (Carrer de Viladecols 2bis) for a soothing tea or smoke on the Oriental *narghile*, known to some as the hubble bubble. Which reminds us: drop by **Papabubble** (Carrer Ample 28) afterwards for handmade boiled sweets.

Feel like a seaside snooze? After calling by the boisterous champagne bar **Can Paixano** (Carrer de la Reina Cristina 7) for a rosé cava, catch some rays at **La Barceloneta**. An early evening cocktail at a summer beach bar (open to 1am) could be capped by sumptuous seafood at **Suquet de l'Almirall** (Passeig de Joan de Borbó 65; ☎ 93 221 62 33). Follow with more cocktails at **CDLC** (Passeig Marítim 32; www.cdclbarcelona.com) and dancing at **Catwalk** (Carrer de Ramon Trias Fargas s/n).

ROUND LA RIBERA

Rise and shine! Snap into action with breakfast at one of the cafés in the daring, 21st-century produce market **Mercat de Santa Caterina** (Avinguda de Francesc Cambó 16), followed by a culture shot at the **Museu Picasso** (Carrer de Montcada 15-23).

Around here are some wonderful food shops. Take a look at **Casa Gispert** (Carrer dels Sombrerers 23) for nuts and dried fruit and **El Magnífico** (Carrer de l'Argenteria 64) for coffee before sitting down to sip a wine from the endless list at **La Vinya del Senyor** (Plaça de Santa Maria

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del Mar 5), in the shadow of Barcelona's finest Gothic church, **Santa Maria del Mar**.

Suitably charged, head for **Vila Viniteca** (Carrer dels Agullers 7; www.vilaviniteca.es), one of the finest wine shops in town, and make a selection to take home. At No 9 they have another store devoted to gourmet food products. For lunch, try **Centre Cultural Euskal Etxea** (Placeta de Montcada 1; www.euskaletxeak.org) for some Basque *pintxos* (snacks) washed down with *txacoli* wine.

Fashion shoppers will notice the **Custo Barcelona** (Plaça de les Olles 7; www.custo-barcelona.com) outlet across the square, while foodies will be more taken with **Tot Formatge** (Passeig del Born 13), for cheeses from Spain and beyond.

Duck up narrow Carrer dels Flassaders for some hidden gems: **Montiel** (No 19), stacked high with cheeses, regional liquors, honeys, sausages and more (you can eat here too); **Café de la Princesa** (No 21), a curio shop with restaurant, and **Casa Mauri** (No 32), a timeless chocolate stop perfect for a hot cuppa. While on the subject, pop into the **Museu de la Xocolata** (Plaça de Pons i Clerch s/n; www.museuxocolata.com) before a digestive stroll in **Parc de la Ciutadella**.

Hang around the bars on **Passeig del Born** while trying to decide where to tickle your tastebuds tonight. For avant-garde adventure, toss up between **Comerç 24** (Carrer del Comerç 24; ☎ 93 319 21 02; www.comerc24.com) and **Àbac** (Carrer del Rec 79-89; ☎ 93 319 66 00). For dessert, seek out the devilish **Espai Sucre** (Carrer de la Princesa 53; ☎ 93 268 16 30; www.espaisucre.com), a temple to sugary haute-cuisine.

Note: Sunday is a sadder day for the senses in Barcelona, with many markets and shops shut and, in the evening, many restaurants too. While we've tried to include places

that will be open on the day of rest, if you'd like to hedge your bets, ask at the tourist office (www.barcelonaturisme.com) for details of tours of the surrounding Penedès wine region in the morning, and visit the Chocolate Museum and La Barceloneta beach in the afternoon.

SLEEPING

Budget:

Hostal Levante (☎ 93 317 9565; www.hostallevante.com) For friendly, sunny digs in the core of the Barri Gòtic, look no further.

Midrange:

Hotel Banys Orientals (☎ 93 268 846; www.hotelbanyorientals.com) A gem of a boutique beauty in the heart of La Ribera.

Top End:

Hotel Neri (☎ 93 304 0655; www.hotelneri.com) A tempting fusion of centuries of history and stylish 21st-century comfort.

For more reviews of Barcelona accommodation, check out the Sleep section on www.lonelyplanet.com/accommodation.

By Damien Simonis

For the complete guide to Barcelona grab a copy of Lonely Planet's *Barcelona* guide; or get right under the skin of the city with *Best of Barcelona*. Both books are available online at shop.lonelyplanet.com.

