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10 Must-Dos When In Barcelona

By Steven Cronin

High spirits and vitality govern in abundance when in Barcelona. This infectious capital of Catalonia, and second largest city in Spain, exudes soul and energy, living life to the full. Barcelona's verve is matched by its magnificent architecture, characterised by one man's signature, Antonio Gaudi.

1. Las Ramblas

Running from seafront through to Placa de Catalunya, Las Ramblas is a fusion of market stalls and street entertainment. Watch out for the mime artists, though keep a hand on your wallet.

2. Sagrada Familia Church

In progress since 1882, La Sagrada Familia is perhaps Antonio Gaudi's most magnificent achievement. As yet unfinished, the ongoing construction of this gothic masterpiece is financed through tourism.

3. Picasso Museum

Born in Malaga, Pablo Picasso moved to Barcelona during his teen years. Though many of his greatest works are in private hands, the Picasso Museum on the Carrer Moncada is well worth a visit.

4. Casa-Museu Gaudi

A pink, Alice-in-Wonderland house is the setting for the Gaudi museum. Gaudi lived in this surreal location between 1906 and 1926 with his niece. Exhibits in the museum include furniture, drawings and portraits designed by the great man himself.

5. The Poble Espanyol

Completed in 1929, the 'Spanish Village' is a compilation of buildings representing the collective architectural characteristics of Spain. A celebration of all things Spanish, the village has become a

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gathering place to dine and be entertained.

6. Bishop's Palace

After being destroyed by fire, Bishop Juan Bautista Grau i Vallespinós commissioned Antonio Gaudi to design a new, more magnificent palace in 1887. Upon the bishop's death, and consequent interference from the diocese, Gaudi abandoned the project. It was not inhabited until 1961.

7. Gothic Quarter

On the site of an ancient Roman village, the Gothic Quarter is a contrast of contemporary and medieval architecture, incorporating the magnificent 14th century cathedral.

8. Olympic Stadium

During 1992, the eyes of the world focused on the Olympic Stadium in Barcelona as they hosted the Olympic Games. Today a popular athletics facility, the stadium was a redesigned version of the original built in 1929.

9. Passeig de Gracia

As one of the major shopping areas of Barcelona, Passeig de Gracia caters for the modest, and also those who prefer the more sophisticated boutiques. Bars and restaurants also line the thoroughfare.

10. Lover's Day

On behalf of those looking for romance, Barcelona obliges with its own version of St Valentines, known as Lover's Day, celebrated every April 23rd.

Steven Cronin owns the City Breaks website featuring city break special offers from luxury hotels to budget accommodations. For more information please visit

<http://www.sargas.co.uk>

A Culture-Fest In Barcelona

By Rent City Apartments

Barcelona is one of those cities you can visit again and again. Its fantastic location, within reach of some of Spain's most beautiful coastline, together with its history, architecture and huge cultural programme is what makes it one of Europe's most popular city destinations.

So, how can you max-out on culture when you visit Barcelona? Here are just a few suggestions:

10 Must-Dos When In Barcelona

1. The Picasso Museum

Barcelona is awash with museum, both public and private, and the Picasso Museum is a must-see on any tourist's itinerary. Picasso trained in Barcelona, and so the museum displays a comprehensive selection of the work he created whilst studying in the city. It is an important collection that shows his technical skills and his growth as an artist. In addition, there is a collection of over 40 ceramic pieces, which were donated to the museum by Jacqueline Picasso in the 1980s. Housed in magnificent medieval palaces, and with classical music concerts as well as the art collection, the Picasso Museum is not to be missed.

2. The Architecture

Costing you nothing but tired feet at the end of the day, you can view the history of Barcelona through its buildings. From its Roman Walls, visit the Gothic quarter, where the Cathedral, public and private buildings all take you back in time to the city's Medieval period. See Modernisme buildings that are also World Heritage Sites and modern buildings such as those built for the 1992 Olympic Games, and you'll have walked through thousands of years of Barcelonian history in just one day.

3. Festivals

Like any major city, Barcelona hosts a number of festivals each year. One of the most popular and best-known is the Barcelona Grec Summer Festival, which encompasses a wide range of productions and performers. In addition, festivals such as the Ciutat Vella Flamenco Festival and the Barcelona Guitar Festival give visitors a true taste of Spanish art and culture.

There's a whole lot of other cultural activities and events to keep you busy on your visit to this amazing city - and you'll want to come back for more

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