

Press Pack 2015





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Introduction

Catalonia is a Mediterranean destination with a millenary history, its own culture and language and a wealthy historical and natural heritage.

Population. 7.5 million

Surface area. 32,107 km²

Cities. The capital is Barcelona. Girona, Tarragona and Lleida are province seats. There are also county seats and many other towns with a remarkable heritage and monuments spread all over the territory.

Territory. Catalonia offers a great scenic variety:

- The Catalan Pyrenees with their 3000 metre peaks dominate the northern area of the country. Especially interesting is Val d'Aran, a valley draining into the Atlantic Ocean that has preserved its own culture, language (Aranese) and government bodies.
- 580 kilometres of Mediterranean coastline cover Costa Brava, Costa Barcelona, Barcelona, Costa Daurada and Terres de l'Ebre.
- The four Catalan province seats feature a great heritage. Handsome old quarters, buildings from Romanesque to Art Nouveau and a wide range of museums are worth a visit. Besides the province seats, we find inland towns with a distinctive character and noteworthy heritage, like Berga, Figueres, Granollers, Igualada, Manresa, Montblanc, Olot, Reus, Ripoll, La Seu d'Urgell, Sabadell, Solsona, Terrassa, Tortosa, Vic, Vilafranca del Penedès and Vilanova i la Geltrú, among many others.

Climate. Generally speaking, Catalonia enjoys a temperate and mild Mediterranean climate, characterised by dry, warm summers and moderately cool winters.

Catalonia, a tourist destination. Catalonia offers many attractions for all sorts of visitors: culture, relax, nature, families, sports, business, etc. Its great capacities and excellent facilities place it among Europe's prime tourist areas.

Catalonia welcomes more than 20 million tourists a year, more than half from abroad, making it one of Europe's main tourist destinations. At roughly 12% of GDP, tourism is one of Catalonia's main sources of wealth and hence one of its strategic priorities.

Communications network

Roads. Catalonia has a good road network that enables travel to any main European city in less than twelve hours. Its large commercial airports, Barcelona, Girona, Lleida and Reus, as well as the main cities in the country are well connected by motorway.

Rail. The railway network offers good communications, both within Catalonia and abroad. There is a well-developed commuter train network in the Barcelona metropolitan area, with connections between the city and the tourist coastal areas in Maresme and Garraf joined together under the Costa Barcelona brand. Apart from state-run Renfe, there is also Ferrocarrils de la Generalitat (FGC) operating in Catalonia, with a network extending from Barcelona to cities such as Igualada, Manresa, Terrassa and Rubí. The renewed Montserrat and Núria rack railways are also run by this company.

High speed train. The high speed rail network is under constant expansion. Andalusia in southern Spain can be reached in six hours from Barcelona thanks to a bypass around Madrid. Spain's capital is just two and a half hours away, Tarragona and Lleida being stops en route in Catalonia. After completion of the high speed line to France via Girona, Paris can be reached within 6.25 hours, with further direct connections to Marseille, Lyon and Toulouse. Hence Catalonia is very well communicated with other cities in Europe, making it the true hub of a vast Mediterranean Euroregion.

Thanks to its scenic variety, Catalonia has become an appealing destination for many travellers. While the Pyrenees are an ideal place for skiing, winter tourism, hiking and active tourism, the Catalan coastline combines steep cliffs with hidden coves, long sandy beaches and a wide range of water sports. The nine protected seaside areas in Catalonia—Cap de Creus Natural Park, Aiguamolls de l'Empordà Natural Park, Montgrí, Baix Ter i Illes Medes Natural Park, Delta del Llobregat Natural Reserve and Delta de l'Ebre Natural Park, plus El Montnegre i el Corredor, Serralada de Marina, Serralada del Litoral and El Garraf parks—ensure environmental conservation while offering a combination of sustainable tourism and leisure.

Airports. Catalonia has five commercial airports.

- **Barcelona.** Over 37 million passengers used Catalonia's main airport in 2014, thus topping the figures from the previous year. Its T-1 terminal has meant a quantum leap in air passenger mobility. With a maximum capacity of 55 million passengers a year, it has been growing ever since it started operating. The old T-2 terminal is served by several low-cost airlines. Future plans for the airport include La City, a 150 hectare area with hotels, office buildings and all kind of facilities.

- **Girona-Costa Brava (Girona).** Situated 100 kilometres from Barcelona and 15 from Girona, Girona-Costa Brava airport is strategically located for tourism (being the closest airport to Costa Brava), trade and business. It welcomes over 2 million passengers every year.

- **Reus-Costa Daurada (Reus).** Located 110 kilometres from Barcelona and 13 from Tarragona, it is the closest airport to Costa Daurada and Terres de l'Ebre. It welcomes around a million passengers every year.

- **Lleida-Alguaire (Alguaire).** Located 15 km from Lleida, it is the first airport planned, built and run by the Government of Catalonia. It allows promoting Catalonia as a top winter and mountain tourism destination. With a customs post, the airport can now handle flights from countries outside the Schengen area, such as Russia and the United Kingdom. Some regular flights are also operated, while the premises are further used for testing, numerous sports events and prototype development.

- **Andorra-La Seu d'Urgell.** The Government of Catalonia, the Government of Andorra and the Spanish Ministry of Public Works have reached an agreement to develop the premises into a public infrastructure able to handle regular flights from 2015. The airport was reopened in June 2010 following adaptation works on the premises and the runway. It is planned to become the main Pyrenees airport and the gate to Andorra. The installation of a customs post shall enable operating flights from non-Schengen countries.

Ports

- **Barcelona.** The largest cruising port in Europe, Barcelona welcomed more than 2.3 million cruise passengers in 2014. Thanks to its safety, service quality, the lure of the city and Catalonia and proximity to the airport, virtually all cruise ships sailing on the Western Mediterranean stop over in Barcelona. The port has ten terminals, seven of which are devoted solely to cruises. Given the high demand for berths, the port authority is modernising the existing terminals, building new ones and enlarging the port to the south. There are also regular ferry lines to Rome, Livorno, Sardinia, Genoa, Tangier, Tunis and Algiers served from the three purpose-built terminals. Regarding goods transportation, all docks between Ponent and Sud have railway access.

- **Palamós.** Palamós has been consolidating its position as a stopover port for cruise ships year after year, making it only second to Barcelona in Catalonia. 34 cruise ships with more than 38,000 passengers berthed at Palamós in 2014, some of them for the first time.

- **Roses.** Having joined the cruise port network recently, Roses closed a record year, welcoming ten ships and a total 3700 passengers, almost four times the previous season. Together with Palamós, the port is marketed under the Costa Brava Cruise Ports brand, aimed at promoting cruise passenger traffic and developing the related tourist offer in both this municipality in Alt Empordà county and all of Costa Brava.

- **Tarragona.** Tarragona is very well positioned regarding goods traffic, being one of Southern Europe's main ports. It has the basic conditions to be a stopover for cruises, with good facilities, high-quality service and an attractive hinterland. A big investment plan is under way to increase both goods and passenger traffic. The port has two exclusive cruise berths plus Port Tarraco marina for smaller cruise boats.

- **Sant Carles de la Ràpita.** Located in Terres de l'Ebre, this port joined in last year as a cruise destination. Last summer, it welcomed the first ship, the Star Flyer, a luxury four-masted sailing ship that berthed three more times during the season with almost a thousand passengers in total.

- **Vilanova i la Geltrú.** Centrally located along the Catalan coast 40 km from Barcelona, Vilanova i la Geltrú has suitable facilities, services and access for small cruise ships sailing through the Mediterranean.

Catalunya Bus Turístic is an initiative that allows discovering all secrets of Catalonia, with trips from Barcelona to enjoy Montserrat and Gaudí's Colònia Güell Crypt; Dalí's art in Figueres and the city of Girona; some of the most renowned wineries to see how cava (sparkling wine) is produced and taste acknowledged wines; or enjoying a shopping day in La Roca Village.

www.catalunyabusturistic.com

Catalonia, a quality destination

Following European rules on tourist quality, Catalonia has developed a set of tools and regulations aimed at ensuring its competitiveness as a destination where **quality** in its widest sense is a **key value**. These tools make the **Tourist Quality System of Catalonia** and are under the supervision of the quality and innovation commission of the Tourism Panel of Catalonia. The architecture of the Tourist Quality System of Catalonia is divided into three functional development areas: **categorisation, specialisation** and **excellence**.

A tourist **category** identifies the distinctive characteristics of each business, while tourist **specialisation** determines the service features aimed at a specific user group. **Excellence** enables ensuring that customer expectations are fulfilled according to the characteristics of the business providing the service.

Membership to the Catalan tourist quality system is on a **voluntary basis**. There are increasingly more professional businesses every year striving for improving quality so customers may benefit from a top-notch offer.

This excellence in service quality is proven by the increasing number of Catalan businesses holding renowned certificates every year such as **ISO 9001, ISO 14001, EMAS, ECOLABEL**, the **Integrated System for Tourist Quality at Destinations (SICTED)** and the **Environmental Quality Guarantee**. The latter, created by the Government of Catalonia, shall encourage businesses to commercialise environmentally friendly products and services.

The **Gastronomic Hotel** certificate has become consolidated in 2014, having now over 30 member businesses. A very specific and widely accepted product, it identifies hotels spread all over Catalonia with a common denominator: a friendly, familiar atmosphere, 60 rooms maximum and top-quality Catalan cuisine based on local seasonal produce and served at any meal, including breakfast, lunch and dinner.

This label adds to the **wheat ear** and **key** schemes rating rural tourism houses as well as tourist **apartments and housing units for tourist use respectively**.

Tourist attractions

UNESCO World Heritage in Catalonia

The following sites in Catalonia have been declared World Heritage by UNESCO:

- **Palau de la Música Catalana.** Barcelona. Art Nouveau. Built by Lluís Domènech i Montaner between 1905 and 1908.

- **Hospital de Sant Pau.** Barcelona. Art Nouveau. Built by Lluís Domènech i Montaner in 1902.

- **Poblet Monastery.** Vimbodí (Tarragona). Built in the 12th and 13th century, the largest Cistercian monastery in Europe.

- **Roman Tarraco.** Tarragona. In the second half of the 1st century BC, Tarraco was given the status of a colony according to Roman law and became the capital of Hispania Citerior. Important remains from those times are preserved in the city and the neighbouring towns of Altafulla, Constantí and Roda de Barà. Tarragona is part of the Spanish World Heritage Cities network.

- **Mediterranean cave art in the Iberian Peninsula.** There are 27 sites in Catalonia with listed paintings found in caves, grottoes and shelters.

- **Romanesque churches in Vall de Boí.** Some 150 kilometres from Lleida, in Alta Ribagorça county, eight churches and one chapel make one of the most significant sets of Catalan Romanesque art regarding both its architecture and paintings:

- Sant Climent de Taüll
- Santa Maria de Taüll
- Sant Joan de Boí
- Santa Eulàlia d'Erill la Vall
- Sant Feliu de Barruera
- La Nativitat de Durro
- Sant Quiric de Durro
- Santa Maria de Cardet
- Assumpció de Còll

- The work of Antoni Gaudí:

- Park Güell. Barcelona. First garden city experience.
- Palau Güell. Barcelona.
- La Pedrera (Casa Milà). Barcelona.
- Casa Batlló. Barcelona.
- Colònia Güell Crypt. Santa Coloma de Cervelló (Barcelona). Unique structure built in stone and brick.
- Casa Vicens. Barcelona.
- Sagrada Família Crypt. Barcelona. Built between 1884 and 1889, Gaudí's oldest religious work.
- Nativity Façade at the Sagrada Família. Barcelona.

- **La Patum.** UNESCO declared the ancestral La Patum festival in Berga (Barcelona), celebrated on the festivity of Corpus Christi, a Masterpiece of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

- **Castellers.** A genuine piece of Catalan folk culture featuring up to ten-storey human towers, it was recognised by UNESCO as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2010.

An application has been brought before the UNESCO to have Catalan cuisine declared Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The scenic variety of its territory, the wide range of products, its degree of protection and the fact that Europe's oldest recipe book is written in Catalan, among many other considerations, support this recognition backed by institutions, professionals from the gastronomy business and a wide representation of society.

Beaches

With its **580 kilometre coastline** and almost **350 coves and beaches**, Catalonia is still one of the best so-called sun & beach destinations.

This sort of tourism can be **completed** with fine **heritage** and protected **nature**, which can be enjoyed along numerous signposted walking or cycling paths. **Nautical tourism**, **family holiday** destinations, **gastronomy** and **sports tourism** aimed at both professionals and amateurs are suitable to complete a seaside holiday in great style.

The **Government of Catalonia** is heavily working on **prevention, control and improvement** of coastal waters and beaches, while each municipality is in charge of cleaning its main beaches every day during the summer season.

The **Allgemeiner Deutscher Automobil Club (ADAC)**, with more than 17 million member families and a high reputation among German public opinion as an unbiased organisation with tourism expertise, certifies year after year the **quality of Catalan beaches**, which are characterised by their water quality, large environmentally friendly leisure offer and countless tourist facilities, many of which are adapted to be accessible to any kind of users.

Beyond the **blue flags** and **quality certificates** at a vast number of Catalan beaches, facilities provided in the coastal municipalities and the numerous marinas and water sports businesses, it is the millions of tourists coming back to Catalonia every year who provide the best quality proof.

Natural parks and protected areas

30% of the Catalan territory enjoys some degree of special protection. Apart from one national park, there are 13 natural parks spread all over Catalonia, as well as marine and natural reserves, natural sites of national interest and a dozen natural protected areas managed by the Barcelona Provincial Council.

Aigüestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici National Park, belonging to the Spanish national park network, is the area enjoying the highest protection. Almost 14,000 hectares are covered by the national park itself, plus a further 26,000 of peripheral area. Noteworthy are also **Montseny Natural Park** and **Terres de l'Ebre**, both declared a **Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO**.

Tourist accommodation

Hotel accommodation

The offer is subject to strict regulations enforced by the Government of Catalonia, which looks after hotel rating. According to these regulations, there are two groups of accommodation: hotels (H) and boarding houses or hostels (P), plus another category within the hotel group, hotel-apartments (HA).

As regards **classes**, the range goes from Grand Luxe to 1 star in hotels, whereas boarding houses or hostels have no specific rating. Some hotels are part of the world's most renowned chains, such as The Leading Hotels of the World or Relais & Châteaux, and many have some sort of quality certificate.

Some specific brands have been developed recently, such as **Petits Grans Hotels de Catalunya**, which includes 40 hotels with up to fifteen rooms, usually located in heritage buildings and providing a very comfortable atmosphere. Noteworthy are also **Gourmet Hotels**, featuring family businesses characterised by fine food and their location in a prime natural environment, as well as **Cases Fonda de Catalunya**, a traditional accommodation and food option including 29 businesses firmly rooted in their local community.

Generally speaking, Catalan hotels are modern and comfortable. In Barcelona, a large number of hotels have been developed all over the city following to the increase of tourism experienced in recent years, especially along the coastline stretching from the Olympic Village to the Forum of Cultures area, where congress and convention facilities were built in 2004. The area around the Montjuïc-2 fairgrounds, very close to the airport, has also seen its top-range hotel offer increase considerably.

Catalonia has currently **more than 2800 accommodation** units with **almost 300,000 beds**. Some of them have become specialised in segments such as golf, health and wellness tourism, winter sports, water sports and active tourism. Services provided by Catalan hotels usually include an excellent food offer, which definitely contributes to Catalonia's great gastronomic reputation.

Camp sites

Catalonia has a network of roughly **350 camp sites**, with an offer of 100,000 camping plots and a total accommodation capacity exceeding **270,000 places**. They are classified into four categories: luxury (L), 1st class, 2nd class and 3rd class. Although they tend to concentrate on the coastal areas and the Pyrenees, they can be found all over the territory.

Thanks to the mild Mediterranean weather allowing for a long summer season, Catalonia is an excellent destination for campers and caravaners. Moreover, members of renowned clubs like the Automobile Touring Club of the Netherlands (ANWB) with nearly 4 million associates or the German ADAC automobile club with 17 million member families honour Catalan camp sites year after year, rating them among the best in Europe for their high quality.

Catalan Camping and Holiday Town Federation

www.campingscatalunya.com

Tourist apartments and housing units for tourist use

Tourist apartments and housing units for tourist use take an important share in Catalonia's accommodation offer. They are spread over almost all of the territory, yet concentrating rather on the coastal areas. There are apartments for all tastes: big or small, in cities, on the beach, in the mountains or for skiing.

Hereunder are some tourist apartment associations:

Costa Brava-Girona Tourist Apartment Association (ATA)

www.apartamentos-ata.com

Costa Daurada Tourist Apartment Association (AT)

www.atcostadaurada.org

Barcelona Tourist Apartment Association (APARTUR)

www.apartur.com

Rural tourism accommodation

The offer in rural tourism accommodation encompasses more than **2200 businesses** providing **over 17,000 beds**. It includes different types, from village houses to isolated country houses. There are different associations by geographic areas, commercialising their member rural tourism homes. A voluntary rating system by **wheat ears** is in place.

Accommodation is classified as follows:

- **“Cases de Pagès” or agro-tourism accommodation:** accommodation units where the owner, a professional farmer, has agricultural, stockbreeding or forestry earnings and users can become familiar with the work of the agricultural business they are attached to.
- **Rural accommodation:** accommodation units where the owner has no obligation of earning an income from farming but must actually live in the same county or dwelling, depending on the mode.

There are four modes for each of these two groups: **“masia”** (house shared with owners), **“masoveria”** (independent house rented out as a whole), **shared village house** and **independent village house**. Each group is identified with a specific sign.

Catalan Confederation of Rural Tourism - Concatur
www.ecoturismecatalunya.com

Rural Tourism and Agro-Tourism Confederation of Catalonia - Turalcat
www.turalcat.com

The Directorate General of Tourism at the Catalan Department of Enterprise and Labour edits an e-guide, available on www.establimentsturistics.gencat.cat, for each different sort of tourist accommodation (hotels, camp sites, apartments and rural tourism), a guarantee for users as businesses listed are subject to Catalan legislation.

Tourist Brands

Catalonia is made up of nine tourist brands gathered under and promoted by tourism boards.



Costa Brava

Costa Brava is a prime Mediterranean destination, its climate, landscape, coastline, natural environment and culture being its main assets. It features many tourist products such as sun & beach, cultural, enogastronomic and active & nature tourism as well as other more specific ones such as golf, wellness and business tourism.

The distinctiveness of **Costa Brava** is made of its long beaches and little coves surrounded by vegetation and steep cliffs reaching from Portbou to Blanes along 220 km, many of them flying the blue flag. It features a wide offer in water sports and “vies braves” (wild ways) that provide the opportunity of discovering this unique and varied area from a different perspective. Roses, Castelló d’Empúries, Sant Pere Pescador and L’Escala are located on the Gulf of Roses, the only bay in the Mediterranean that is a member of “The World’s Most Beautiful Bays”, having joined the club in 2012.

Some of the most relevant personalities in the 20th century found here what they were looking for to feed their creativity, being the first to leave a tangible footprint. Visitors must not miss the **Dalí Triangle** composed of the Dalí Museum-Theatre in Figueres, the Salvador Dalí Museum-House in Portlligat and the Gala Dalí Castle in Púbol. Ferran Adrià, an icon of avant-gardist 21st century Catalan cuisine, is still active at Costa Brava, being involved in the **El Bulli Foundation** project, a future cuisine creativity and research centre open to the world through the Internet, which will be starting in 2016.

The Girona province is well known for featuring sixteen restaurants with a total **20 Michelin stars**, spearheaded by El Celler de Can Roca in Girona by the Roca brothers, currently the world’s best restaurant according to Restaurant Magazine, as well as Miramar in Llançà by Paco Pérez and Les Cols in Olot by Fina Puigdevall. The wines and sparkling wines from the Empordà Denomination of Origin are also noteworthy. Their quality can be discovered along the **Empordà DO Wine Route**.

The big natural diversity of the land is another distinctive feature of the region. There are **four natural parks** along the coastline, of which Cap de Creus was Catalonia’s first protected coastal area; inland, Montseny Natural Park has been declared a Biosphere Reserve by the UNESCO.



The regional capital **Girona** is a well communicated mid-sized city, half-way between the coast and the Pyrenees and one of the cities with the highest living standard in Spain. It is a popular city break all year round, thanks to its cultural, heritage and shopping offer.

The coast is dotted with charming villages such as **Cadaqués, Begur, Calella de Palafrugell, Palamós** and **Tossa de Mar**, besides tourist resorts like **Roses, Platja d'Aro, Lloret de Mar** and **Blanes** as well as the medieval villages of **Peralada, Castelló d'Empúries, Monells, Pals** and **Peratallada** located inland.

The offer in **cultural tourism** attracts millions of visitors: Iberians, Greeks and Romans discovered the wealth of this area centuries ago, as proves the Empúries site. Romanesque art has left true architectural gems like Sant Pere de Rodes monastery. Castles and fortresses, medieval villages, the Jewish heritage, the great works of Art Nouveau and Dalí's surrealist footprint have shaped the identity of this area and its people, completed by craftsmanship, industrial heritage, music festivals and traditional folk festivals of national interest.

Costa Brava features all sorts of **accommodation**, from the classic hotel offer featuring prominently small and charming family-run businesses, holiday hotels and accommodation on the seafront to rural accommodation, tourist apartments and camp sites. In all, Costa Brava has an offer of roughly 600,000 beds.

Active visitors will find a spectacular way of discovering the Costa Brava scenery through different sports such as trekking and cycling along networks of signposted trails like the Green Routes, Itinerànnia and GR-92 following the watch paths along the Girona coast as well as road cycling, golf and adventure activities and sports.



Costa Barcelona

This tourist brand encompasses six counties: Alt Penedès, Vallès Occidental and Oriental inland, the latter including the Montseny range, a natural park and Biosphere Reserve, as well as Maresme, Baix Llobregat and Garraf along the coast.

This region has a clear commitment **towards quality** as all counties within Costa Barcelona participate in the System for Tourist Quality at Destinations (SICTED) and hold the “Commitment for Tourist Quality” label aimed at improving tourist experience and satisfaction.

Costa Barcelona features a **great leisure offer**. More than two and a half million visitors come to the area every year, with almost 10 million overnight stays. The accommodation offer amounts to roughly 82,500 beds.

There are many attractions in Costa Barcelona extending over more than a hundred kilometres of coast in Maresme, Baix Llobregat and Garraf counties, with noteworthy towns like **Sitges, Mataró and Castelldefels**. **Arenys de Mar** features an important fishing port, **Sant Pol de Mar** still preserves its nice old town and places in **Alt Maresme** such as Calella, Pineda de Mar, Santa Susanna and Malgrat de Mar provide a big offer in activities adding to their clear orientation towards tourism.

The towns of **Sitges** and **Vilanova i la Geltrú** in **Garraf** county are perched on the sea. The former features Es Baluard in the old quarter as its main cultural attraction, with former palaces now hosting museums. This is completed with fine beaches and a big offer in leisure and restaurants. Vilanova i la Geltrú in its turn has always been looking to the sea, with a large fishing and leisure port, besides maintaining some deeply rooted traditions. Inland, **Vilafranca del Penedès** and **Sant Sadurní d’Anoia** are the wine and cava (sparkling wine) capital respectively, featuring a great offer in **wine tourism** that is well present throughout Alt Penedès county.

Sant Cugat in Vallès Occidental is a modern town featuring also some of Catalonia’s most interesting Romanesque heritage. In Vallès Oriental, the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya race-track gathers large groups of motor sports fans. It not only hosts the Formula 1 and Motorcycling Grand Prix but also offers a large variety in activities for all audiences. Terrassa boasts



Masia Freixa, built in the early 20th century, and offers an Art Nouveau route through the city. Costa Barcelona offers a hundred kilometres of **urban beaches**, featuring all sorts of services and well linked with Barcelona. There are also the **nautical resorts** of Santa Susanna and Vilanova i la Geltrú, and it is an excellent **golf** destination. Hot baths can be enjoyed in towns like Caldes d'Estrac, Caldes de Montbui and La Garriga, known for the quality of their thermal waters, and nature lovers can explore the vast **natural park network**, including El Montnegre i el Corredor, Serralada Litoral and Serralada Marina close to the shore and Montserrat inland, with its unique, peculiar rounded shapes, as well as El Garraf and Montseny parks.

The balance between sea, plain and hills shapes a gentle landscape and an excellent climate that make the area a land wealthy in **produce**, together with a fine cuisine based on **fish** and **seafood**. These climate conditions have also allowed developing winegrowing, with three of Catalonia's twelve Denominations of Origin: **Penedès, Alella** and internationally reputed **Cava**.

Among the rich cultural and monumental heritage stands out the Colònia Güell Crypt, an Art Nouveau gem by Gaudí located in Baix Llobregat and a UNESCO World Heritage site. The Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya racetrack is the place to be for motorsports lovers, with its Formula 1 and Motorcycling Grand Prix. All this is completed with the rich and manifold cuisine and the agenda full of festivals and traditions in Costa Barcelona.



Barcelona

Barcelona is the capital of Catalonia and one of Europe's largest cities. Its cultural and leisure attractions have made it one of Catalonia's most visited places in recent years.

The National Art Museum of Catalonia (MNAC) and the **Picasso Museum** spearhead the offer in museums, completed by the **Museum of Catalan Modernism** and the **heritage bequeathed by Gaudí**, including recently renewed Palau Güell, and Art Nouveau architecture with nine World Heritage buildings. New tourist attractions include visits to Torre Bellesguard, built by Antoni Gaudí between 1900 and 1909, and the Art Nouveau site of Hospital de Sant Pau by architect Lluís Domènech i Montaner (1850-1923).

Noteworthy are also shopping and services; markets like Boqueria on the popular Rambla street and Santa Caterina nearby the cathedral; the Barri Gòtic, bearing witness to the city's medieval past, including the Born Cultural Centre in the former wholesale market, now become a historical landmark; and the different charming quarters with their traditional festivals.

Barcelona is also fully equipped to host congresses and conventions. Professional tourism is consolidated, with major events taking place such as the Mobile World Congress, the world's largest mobile phone trade fair that will stay in Barcelona until 2018, or EIBTM, the planet's biggest show in the convention branch, which will continue to be held in the city until 2016. Cruise tourism has equally increased considerably in recent years following improvement works in the port, which has become the biggest cruise port in Europe.

The city's gastronomic potential has made it one of its new tourist appeals. Barcelona combines the cultural footprint of over 2000 years of history and the anthropological heritage thus created with its new thriving chefs who have contributed, amongst others, to make Barcelona the first Gourmand city outside France in 2002.

Other programmed routes allow discovering Gothic Barcelona, Art Nouveau Barcelona, Pablo Picasso's Barcelona and gastronomic Barcelona with a route through the old quarter



following the footsteps of history and some of the best places to enjoy the city's gastronomy. Visitors can also take the Barcelona Bus Turístic that covers the most significant sights in the city. In summer, there are 4.5 km of beach to enjoy.

Turisme de Barcelona features an online platform to market products and services. This initiative allows every tourist to create their own travel package, buying products and booking accommodation at one same site. All the necessary information is available on www.barcelonaturisme.cat in the BCNSHOP section. The Barcelona Bus Turístic, Barcelona Walking Tours and the Barcelona Card are among the products that can be acquired through the internet. Turisme de Barcelona runs a network of 20 tourist information offices spread all over the city, where visitors can obtain information and advice in 12 languages.

I-015



www.barcelonaturisme.cat

Costa Daurada

Costa Daurada encompasses Tarragonès, Alt Camp, Conca de Barberà, Baix Camp, Priorat and Baix Penedès counties. It is characterised by a highly varied, top-range tourist offer with a rich and diverse cultural heritage, clear specialisation in families and a specific focus on wine tourism and gastronomy.

The coast is one of its main attractions. Along nearly a hundred kilometres, it features from small secluded coves between cliffs to large beaches with fine sand and shallow waters, ideal for **family holidays**. The offer is completed by cultural centres and leisure facilities like the **Pau Casals museum and auditorium** and **PortAventura** theme park, the main leisure centre on Costa Daurada.

Inland, the **Montsant**—now a natural park—, **Prades** and **Mussara** ranges provide a laid-back rural landscape, where vineyards predominate together with other typical Mediterranean crops like olives, cereals, almonds and hazelnuts. **Five Denominations of Origin** prove the quality of local wines, one of which—**Priorat Qualified DO**—enjoys a great international reputation.



Present-day Tarragona used to be **Roman Tarraco**, the capital of the province of Hispania Citerior in times of the Roman Empire. It hosts one of the world's largest Roman sites, declared World Heritage by the UNESCO, which places it only second to Rome worldwide.

Very close nearby is **Reus**, Antoni Gaudí's birthplace, with its great Art Nouveau architectural heritage. **Local Gaudí Centre** is an interpretive centre providing explanations on the basics of Antoni Gaudí's architecture.

Another attraction in the area is the Cistercian Route including Poblet—a World Heritage site—, Santes Creus and Santa Maria de Vallbona monasteries, the latter in Terres de Lleida. A hiking trail marked as GR-175 links them all along 104 km. Art Nouveau wine cellars are a further attraction of Costa Daurada, where visitors can taste and purchase products made there.

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www.costadaurada.info

Terres de l'Ebre

Terres de l'Ebre encompasses the four counties on the river Ebro on its nearly 130 kilometre stretch through Catalonia: Baix Ebre, Montsià, Terra Alta and Ribera d'Ebre. **The landscape and gastronomy** in these counties feature a **great diversity**. Cupped oyster and local mussel culture in the calm and warm waters of the Ebro Delta is completed with fish and seafood from the Mediterranean and the distinctive inland cuisine.

Citrus fruits, especially clementines with Protected Geographical Indication, quality wines made in Terra Alta with a Denomination of Origin of their own, rice from the Delta, one of the area's most important crops, and honey, a quality product rounding up any sort of desserts, have all become distinctive gastronomic and tourist icons of Terres de l'Ebre.

The Ebro is the area's main artery, playing a key role in its history and economy. Along the coast from L'Ametlla de Mar to Les Cases d'Alcanar lies the fascinating world of the **Ebro Delta**, a wetland taking 320 square kilometres, a part of which is a natural park. Inland can be found **Els Ports Natural Park**, a paradise for wild goats with peaks towering up to almost 1500 metres, whereas other natural areas like the Montsià, Pàndols, Cavalls and Cardó mountain ranges provide a good opportunity to get in touch with nature. **Bird-watching** can be done in Terres de l'Ebre anytime during the year.

Terres de l'Ebre has a rich and varied tourist offer, with **monuments and cultural heritage** found in many towns such as Tortosa with its interesting Jewish quarter, Horta de Sant Joan that fascinated young Picasso, Miravet's old town perched on top of a rock overlooking the Ebro, Tivissa with Castellet de Banyoles, one of Catalonia's most relevant Iberian sites, La Fatarella with its unique arcaded streets in the town centre and Ulldecona with some fine **cave paintings** classed as World Heritage by UNESCO. The **Ebro Battle Studies** Centre



in Gandesa and several interpretive centres in different towns have been created to provide an insight into the strong impact caused on the area by the Ebro battle during the Spanish Civil War. Another option for cultural tourism is the Terres de l'Ebre **Green Route** leading along a hundred kilometres from Tortosa to Arnes, though plans are being undertaken to extend it to the Ebro Delta. The route can be done by bike, on foot or on horseback.

The Ebro Delta provides a landscape changing according to the season. It was formed by sediments brought by the river over millions of years. A part of it is covered by a natural park, one of the most significant and unique natural areas in the whole Mediterranean. Different outdoor activities can be done here, including birdwatching, river navigation, fishing “a la paupa”, a revived mode of catching fish by hand, cycling and enjoying numerous unspoilt beaches. This combination of environmental protection and agricultural use has earned the Ebro Delta international recognition.

Most of Terres de l'Ebre has been awarded the Biosphere Reserve status in 2013, thus acknowledging the value of the whole ecosystem of which the Ebro is the spine, a lively and partly navigable river playing a role of utmost importance.



Pirineus

The Pirineus brand includes the tourist offer of the Lleida, Girona and Barcelona Pyrenees plus Val d'Aran. It encompasses Alt Empordà, Alta Ribagorça, Alt Urgell, Berguedà, Cerdanya, Garrotxa, Pallars Jussà, Pallars Sobirà, Ripollès, Solsonès and Val d'Aran counties, the latter of which forms a brand of its own due to its distinctiveness.

The Catalan Pyrenees offer visitors a splendid range of attractions: **great scenery** including Catalonia's highest peak, Pica d'Estats (3143 metres), on the limit between Pallars Sobirà county and the French department of Ariège, beautiful valleys such as Camprodon, Núria, Vall de Boí, Valferrera and Cardós, **villages** with a wealth of Romanesque art heritage, numerous **mountain and adventure sports** as well as **active tourism**. Mountain bikers will find almost a hundred signposted routes and several mountain biking centres scattered across the region.

Winter tourism is particularly important in the area, with ten alpine and six Nordic ski resorts. La Molina was the first ski resort in Spain and a pioneering winter sports site. A great economic driver of the mountain counties, winter tourism has been the forerunner of the alternative offer provided by ski resorts, with year-round proposals suitable for all audiences.

The local offer is completed with a tasteful mountain cuisine based on local produce, golf and health & wellness tourism, with good service facilities allowing full enjoyment of the scenery both in winter and in summer.

It is in the Lleida Pyrenees where Catalonia's only **national park, Aigüestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici**, is located. Yet there are more protected areas in the Catalan Pyrenees, like **Alt Pirineu Natural Park**, the largest in Catalonia with almost 70,000 hectares; **Zona**



Volcànica de la Garrotxa Natural Park featuring the biggest volcanic area in the Iberian Peninsula with around forty volcanic cones, providing a distinctive natural setting that is unique in Europe; and **Cadí-Moixeró Natural Park** with Pedraforca as its landmark. All in all, protected areas in the Pyrenees amount to 331,661 hectares, half of Catalonia's total.

From a cultural perspective, La Seu d'Urgell cathedral, Santa Maria monastery in Ripoll and churches like Sant Quirze de Pedret and Sant Jaume de Frontanyà in Berguedà county are some of the finest examples of **Catalan Romanesque** art worth visiting in Pirineus. Yet the most outstanding are the **Romanesque churches in Vall de Boí**, the architecture and mural paintings of which earned them recognition by the UNESCO as World Heritage, as well as La Patum festival in Berga, declared a Masterpiece of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2005.

The accommodation offer in Pirineus concentrates on ski resorts, towns and villages, mostly in the shape of small family businesses. They are completed with camp sites, rural tourism accommodation, tourist homes and apartments as well as hostels.

Within its Pirineus programme, the Catalan Tourist Board has edited a specific hiking guide covering a total 19 multi-stage treks across the whole Catalan Pyrenees. It is available in Catalan, Spanish, English, French, German, Dutch and Hebrew at the catalunya.com website.



www.visitpirineus.com

Terres de Lleida

This brand encompasses Noguera, Pla d'Urgell, Segarra, Urgell, Segrià and Garrigues counties, where a **great variety in sports and active tourism**, a unique culture, **local gastronomy** and **top-range rural tourism** can be enjoyed all year round, all of which surrounded by a generous agricultural setting that yields a wide range of products, especially **sweet fruit** and **olive oil**, both of which feature their denomination of origin and quality labels.

Lleida, the capital of Segrià county and the province bearing the city's name, is located in a unique natural setting overlooked by the impressive silhouette of the Seu Vella. It is the largest city and the economic hub of inland Catalonia, with an economy based on the agrofood industry and services of all kinds. The city's cultural life has experienced a significant boost thanks to new facilities and offers such as the **Knights Templars Interpretive Centre in Gardeny**, the Castell del Rei nearby the Seu Vella, the **Diocesan and County Museum** and **La Lleida Secreta** route tracing the old urban layout of the city through its archaeological remains.

The opening of Lleida-Alguaire airport together with the high-speed railway link and recently opened **La Llotja Congress** Centre place the Lleida area, its capital and by extension the Pyrenees as destinations with large potentialities **regarding tourism and conventions**.



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Other attractions in the area are the **Montsec Astronomy Park**; **Santa Maria de Vallbona monastery**, which forms the Cistercian Route together with Poblet and Santes Creus in Costa Daurada; the **Sió Castles Route**, a tourist circuit encompassing about twenty castles in Segarra, Urgell and Noguera counties, with its new interpretive centre in Concabella; recovered **Ivars-Vila-sana lake** in Pla d'Urgell county, Catalonia's largest inner lake and an ideal place for nature lovers, especially birdwatchers; the **Wine and Olive Oil routes**; the **Vaulted Hut Route**, a guided circuit along different dry stone constructions in Les Garrigues county; and **Camí de Sant Jaume** (St James' Way in Catalonia), one of the latest big tourist initiatives that covers most of Terres de Lleida.

The Montsec range between Noguera and Pallars Jussà counties boasts one of Catalonia's skies with the lowest light pollution. For this reason, the Montsec Astronomy Park was created some years ago, a project combining astronomic research with dissemination programmes for a larger public. After several studies, Montsec was given the Starlight Tourist Destination status under the auspices of the UNESCO in early 2013.

I-023



www.lleidatur.cat

Val d'Aran

Located in the Western Pyrenees, Val d'Aran is a high mountain area covering 620 sq km. Its location and morphology encourage a varied distinctive climate, fauna, flora and landscape as well as a unique history that can be seen best in the region's own language, Aranese.

The **artistic wealth** of Val d'Aran is one of the best preserved treasures in the Pyrenees. Almost isolated over centuries, the valley has bequeathed to our days a wealthy, varied artistic heritage, featuring great stylistic pieces of all times with an output ranging across all disciplines (architecture, painting, stone and wood carving), sometimes carried out with great mastery, sometimes with endearing plainness.

Val d'Aran is a destination to be **experienced during any time of the year**. In winter it provides an awesome backdrop for snow lovers. Its prime location, the quality of its snow and its tourist offer have made the area one of the most popular destinations throughout the Pyrenees. Baqueira Beret, to many the best ski resort in the Pyrenees, has earned an international reputation with its skiable 153 km. During the rest of the year, Val d'Aran transforms to show all its natural charm.

Aigüestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici National Park, peaks above 3000 metres, breathtaking lakes and waterfalls and magic forests make a natural offer providing a wide and varied range of activities. Sports-minded visitors will find walking, mountain biking or horse riding trails, plus a great variety of whitewater activities in the Garonne river, climbing over via ferratas, archery, adventure parks in the trees, etc.



With its **unique landscape** and a wide **range of ecosystems**, Val d'Aran is among the areas with the most varied fauna and flora in the Pyrenees. Guided walks and the Aran Park fauna park provide an insight into all this biodiversity changing with the seasons.

With more than 13,000 beds, 3000 of which in 4 and 5-star hotels, Val d'Aran also invites to enjoy a good rest. The offer is completed with a focus on **wellness, health and relaxing**. Apart from the spa services provided by several hotels, Val d'Aran has two thermal baths with health mineral waters: Termes Baronia de Les and Banhs de Tredòs, the highest spa in Europe at 1740 m above sea level.

Cuisine also plays an important role in the Val d'Aran tourist offer. Over 180 restaurants invite to have a taste at both traditional dishes made with local produce ("òlha aranesa", pates, game stew...) and trend cuisine (duck made in 100 different ways, sturgeon or caviar), all of which spiced with Aranese knowledge and warm hospitality.

The creation of the Val d'Aran Convention Bureau is a new opportunity to consolidate the area as a congress tourist destination, taking advantage of existing tourist and sports facilities and services.

I-025



www.visitvaldaran.com

Paisatges Barcelona

The land in inner Catalonia, with its rich natural heritage located very close to the city of Barcelona, covers Anoia, Bages and Osona counties. It is dominated by the large plains of the Central Depression surrounded by mountains, with towns like Vic, Manlleu, Manresa, Cardona and Igualada, bearing a **great history and monuments as well as a long market tradition**. There are also **magnificent monasteries**, the most outstanding being Montserrat alongside others like L'Estany, Lluçà, Sant Benet de Bages and Sant Pere de Casserres.

Likewise, there are **attractive mountain areas** like Montseny, a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve bordering with Costa Barcelona, as well as Guillerries and Collsacabra around Sau reservoir, a magnificent place for water sports. The monastery and mountain of **Montserrat** is much more than just a protected natural area; the natural park combines unique geological formations with numerous hiking trails and climbing routes. There is also Castell de Montseny Park with its famous castle surrounded by gardens, the origin of which dates back to the 10th century.

Geotourism is becoming an increasingly relevant tourist product. Over 36 million years ago, the **geographical centre of Catalonia** was underneath a sea that disappeared as the Pyrenees rose, a process that left us spectacular rock formations and a wealth in natural resources that have shaped Catalonia's landscape and society. The Geological and Mining Park of Catalonia is a project that exploits the land's geological and mining assets as well as its tourist attractions, placing them under the umbrella of geotourism, thus providing an interesting first-rate tourist offer that blends culture, nature, geology, mining and gastronomy. In Bages county, tourist attractions include Coves de Salnitre in Collbató, Coves del Toll in Moià and Muntanya de Montserrat Natural Park. In Cardona, Muntanya de Sal Cultural Park, the castle, now a "Parador de Turismo" (state-run hotel), and the adjacent Romanesque Sant Vicenç collegiate church make one of the area's most relevant tourist assets.



Vic, the capital of Osona county, features some important heritage expanding around arcaded Plaça Major or Plaça del Mercadal. Remains of the old walls, a Roman temple and medieval, baroque and Art Nouveau buildings can be found in the town centre, yet its most notable landmarks are the cathedral with mural paintings by Josep Maria Sert inside and the Episcopal Museum boasting one of Europe's best medieval art collections. The charming villages of Rupit and Pruit, placed amidst an utmost attractive ancestral environment, are well worth a visit.

Igualada, the capital of Anoia county, has a long history related with the leather industry. One of its main attractions is the Leather Museum featuring also the Anoia County Museum; it is located in two sites, Cal Bover factory and Cal Granotes, a former tannery. The county hosts the biggest international balloon meeting in the country, the European Balloon Festival Igualada. An interesting side trip leads to Capellades to visit the Paper Mill Museum and see how paper was made in former times.

Top gastronomy and especially dry sausages play a distinctive role in the whole region, together with Pla de Bages DO wines and a unique **wine tourism heritage** with the Vall del Flaquer Wine Vat Route, its vineyard huts and the extraordinary Tines de l'Escudelletà i d'en Ricardo vat collection.

The Sant Benet heritage site in Sant Fruitós de Bages nearby Manresa combines different singular projects: the Romanesque monastery, an architectural and cultural gem; the Fundació Alícia under the leadership of chef Ferran Adrià and cardiologist Valentí Fuster, devoted to popularising good food and health; and four-star Món hotel with meeting rooms for congresses.



Tourist Experiences

The CATALAN TOURIST BOARD (CTB) is the official body of the Government of Catalonia in charge of promoting and supporting marketing of Catalonia's tourist resources, both in the rest of Spain and abroad. Its purpose is to consolidate the image of the country as a diverse top-range tourist destination.

A strategic goal of the CTB is to work out an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable tourist model for Catalonia. Sustainability has become a main decision-making criterion for customers when choosing a holiday or breakaway destination.

Based on this key requirement, the CTB promotes the different tourist experiences and products by **categories**:

- Holidays to enjoy the Mediterranean lifestyle on the Catalan coast
- Escapes around Catalonia to get away from it all
- Routes to discover a small country with a great culture
- Stays to enjoy nature, adventure, mountains and the rural environment
- Opportunities to hold different meetings
- Trips to cultivate specific interests

Each of these categories encompasses different **product lines**:

- Activities in natural and rural areas
- Accessible Catalonia
- Towns and villages with character
- Sports
- Wine tourism
- Gastronomy
- Great icons and routes of Catalonia
- 100% hiking and cycling tourism
- Business tourism
- Senior tourism
- Family holidays

Brands, labels, endorsed products and rankings

Following the Tourist Marketing Plan guidelines, the CTB is working in developing new products and proposals contributing to adding value and differentiating Catalonia's tourist offer by means of innovative cooperation models with the Catalan tourist industry. The aim of this model is to create a brand and label scheme generating attractive top-end proposals that fulfil a set of standards based on demand behaviour and requirements.

Brands: They designate a homogeneous offer of a product marketable under a brand concept. Brands are defined by the CTB and based on a joint cooperation platform with the industry. The first one to be created has been Catalonia Wine Tourism.

Labels: They are a way of dividing resources and the offer into categories based on specific criteria. Labels are defined, endorsed and awarded by the CTB, which is also in charge of making sure that the requirements are fulfilled. Existing labels include: Gastronomic Hotels, Family Holiday Destination (FHD), Sports Tourism Destination (STD) and Road Cycling Tourism.

Products with a higher recognition endorsed by third parties (slow food, gastronomic guides, specialist publications, etc.) and user-made rankings will also be promoted.

Activities in natural and rural areas

Catalonia boasts a **wealthy natural heritage**, with natural parks and other protected natural areas, ideal for leisure, adventure activities and enjoyment of nature. This allows visitors knowing the country's history as well as its natural and cultural heritage in an easy and pleasant way.

Adventure experiences and active tourism

Catalonia's **extraordinary biodiversity** allows visitors doing rafting and hydrospeed on its rivers as well as river and sea kayaking, canyoning, hang gliding, paragliding, flying in a balloon or light aircraft, parachuting, horse riding and rock climbing. The coast boasts a great diversity in its seabed: to the north, the Costa Brava with over thirty scuba diving centres and two marine reserves—Cap de Creus Natural Park and Illes Medes—plus Illes Formigues joining soon; further south are Costa Barcelona and Costa Daurada.

Rural tourism

Rural tourism in Catalonia has consolidated as a quality accommodation offer, reaching a strong footprint across its territory and a high penetration in the Catalan market.

More than **2000 rural tourism businesses** registered with the Tourism Registry of Catalonia make Catalonia one of Spain's main destinations as regards the number of homes and beds.



With the aim of meeting the most recent challenges and requirements, rural tourism businesses follow a **5-class** rating scheme based on the following parameters: house environment and building type, inner rooms, outdoor area, furniture and equipment, commercialisation conditions, services provided to guests (food, welcome, health, etc.) and cultural, nature, family and rural tourism activities offered to guests.

This rating scheme has been set out jointly by the Catalan rural tourism industry and the Government of Catalonia. It is a pioneering scheme in Europe aiming at becoming a key tool to consolidate and grow this tourist product in the future. The certification process is voluntary and open to all rural tourism businesses in Catalonia. The **five categories** within the scheme are graphically identified by **wheat ears**, resulting in the following rating: Basic - 1 wheat ear; Comfort - 2 wheat ears; Grand Comfort - 3 wheat ears; Superior - 4 wheat ears; Superior Premium - 5 wheat ears.

Birdwatching

Catalonia's strategic location and geographic diversity make it a **prime birdwatching destination**. The Aiguamolls de l'Empordà, the Ebro and Llobregat deltas, Ivars-Vila-sana lake, the Segre, Cinca and Ebro river junction known as Aiguabarreig, Els Ports, Montserrat, Cap de Creus, Aigüestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici National Park, Cadí-Moixeró, Mont-rebei i La Terreta and Vall de Núria are some of the most interesting areas. Many existing birdwatching facilities in Catalonia are accessible for persons with reduced mobility.

Fun in the snow

With such **charming areas** like Cerdanya, Núria Valley, Aigüestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici National Park and Val d'Aran, the Catalan Pyrenees are an ideal destination to enjoy the snow.

Catalonia has been pioneering in **skiing** as La Molina ski resort in the Girona Pyrenees opened in 1943, the first in all Spain. Four years later Vall de Núria followed, also in the Girona Pyrenees.

Skiing attracts over two million visitors every year. There are 16 ski resorts in the Catalan Pyrenees, providing a varied offer, the largest in Spain. The overall skiing area encompasses 600 kilometres of slopes and a capacity to carry around 165,000 skiers per hour.

The **10 alpine ski resorts** are Baqueira Beret, Boí Taüll Resort, Espot Esquí, La Molina, Masella, Port Ainé, Port del Comte, Tavascan, Vall de Núria and Vallter 2000. There are in addition **6 Nordic ski resorts** with cross-country slopes and snow racket routes. These are Aransa, Guils Fontanera, Lles, Sant Joan de l'Erm, Tuixén-La Vansa and Virós-Vall Ferrera.

The Pyrenees also provide opportunities for other **snow-related activities**, such as snow racket walks, snow bikes, surfing, Telemark skiing, dog sled riding, ice climbing and heliskiing. In addition to most ski resorts, different companies provide this sort of services. All this is completed with a **wide accommodation offer** with all imaginable comfort, **traditional mountain cuisine** that stays up-to-date and numerous personal wellness centres.

All-year sports and leisure facilities have turned ski resorts into tourist destinations beyond the winter season, featuring now a significant summer offer. Thanks to their top facilities, the Catalan Pyrenees are the venue of numerous national and international competitions every season.



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Accessible Catalonia

The Catalan Tourist Board engages in making Catalonia an accessible destination for everybody. It considers that the concept of accessible tourism has to be based on the principle that tourism is a fundamental social right for all human beings. For the disabled and persons with reduced mobility as well as the rest, anything under the leisure and tourism label is crucial for quality of life. Therefore the Catalan tourist industry is increasingly aware of the need to remove architectural and communication barriers and adapt most places so the disabled and persons with reduced mobility can enjoy top-quality holidays and leisure.

Catalonia has positioned itself as one of Europe's most accessible tourist destinations. This is proven by its 26 identified accessible proposals and destinations, which show that accessible tourism has actually come true in Catalonia.

These 26 tourist proposals chosen for their high degree of accessibility provide a complete tourist experience with a whole set of services and facilities adapted to the needs of disabled tourists or persons with reduced mobility: accommodation, restaurants, museums, side activities, beaches, etc. The areas and proposals identified are:

- Vall de Boí
- Val d'Aran
- Pallars Sobirà
- La Seu d'Urgell
- La Molina-La Cerdanya
- La Garrotxa
- Costa Brava-Alt Empordà
- Costa Brava-Baix Empordà
- Lleida
- Vic-Osona
- Maresme
- Barcelona
- Ebro Delta
- Garraf-Sitges
- Costa Daurada
- Penedès-Accessible Wine Tourism
- Dalí Route
- Cistercian Route
- Route of the Monasteries along St. James' Way in Catalonia
- Industrial Tourism
- St. James' Way for Everybody
- Terra Alta and Sebes Natural Reserve
- Tarragona-World Heritage
- Montseny and Sant Llorenç del Munt Natural Parks
- Lloret de Mar
- El Montsec-Starlight

According to its promotion plan, the Catalan Tourist Board has a specific website, www.turismeperatohom.com/en, providing information on the offer in accessible tourism in Catalonia not only in the selected 26 accessible tourist destinations and proposals, but also those facilities, resources and services elsewhere also catering for persons with disabilities and/or reduced mobility. The website complies with the highest accessibility and usability standards. It provides information on accessibility according to the type of disability (physical, auditory or visual impairment or persons with reduced mobility). The website is available in Catalan, Spanish, English, Italian, German and French and contains videos with contents in two sign languages (Catalan-LSC and Spanish-LSE) plus International Sign (IS).

Proposals for all tastes

Over 150 km of accessible Green Ways and paths. The accessible Green Way stretch in Terra Alta one of the few Green Ways in all Spain adapted to visually impaired people.

An example of best practices regarding accessibility is found in Camins de Vent, Vol de Coloms and Globus Kon-Tiki, companies specialising in balloon flights, the only in Spain having gondolas adapted to persons with reduced mobility.

Some scuba diving centres, riding schools and kayaking businesses have adapted their offer to become accessible to persons with reduced mobility and disabled tourists. L'Escala sailing school has become a reference in adapted sailing, and La Molina ski resort is pioneering in adapted skiing as it arranged its facilities for the disabled several years ago, allowing them access to winter sports.

Especially remarkable is action taken by many museums and monuments in Catalonia to improve accessibility to persons with sensorial disabilities (deaf, hearing impaired, blind and visually impaired). Plans in Braille and high relief, audio descriptions and tactile scale models have positioned La Pedrera among Europe's most accessible museums for the blind and visually impaired. With the inclusion of sign guide devices, the National Art Museum of Catalonia (MNAC) became the first in all Spain providing this service to the deaf in two sign languages (Catalan and Spanish) plus International Sign (IS). There are also numerous beaches along Catalonia's coast with facilities for persons with disabilities or reduced mobility. Apart from promoting this entire offer, the CTB is working in its marketing. To do so, there are travel agents specialising in this sort of products.

Among other specific recognitions, St. James' Way for Everybody won recently the 1st European CHARTS 2014 Award for its task in promoting cultural and sustainable tourism. This tourist proposal has been chosen from among 27 nominees from all over Europe as a role model of excellence and best practices within the field of cultural and sustainable tourism. The CHARTS project is a European initiative focusing on the role of culture and cultural heritage as an added value to developing sustainable tourism.

The commitment and effort to implement a true tourism for everybody has led the Catalan Tourist Board to join the European Network for Accessible Tourism (ENAT) and take part in the Accessible Tourism group within the Network of European Regions for a Sustainable and Competitive Tourism (NECSTouR). Within this network, five destinations (Catalonia, Flanders, Scotland, Île de France and Veneto) have engaged in developing accessible tourism in Europe and are bringing forward best practices in this area, with different recommendations to be implemented by all EU countries as a part of their tourism policies.

I-030



Towns and villages with character

Catalonia offers a great scenic variety, from the high Pyrenean ranges to the Mediterranean Sea, including plains dotted with plenty of crop fields, rivers with spectacular waterfalls, marshlands where water birds nest and dunes along the river mouths. This landscape is home to towns and villages with character—places dating from the Middle Ages or much earlier, when the Roman armies built communication ways criss-crossing the country in what were the first highways. Whether it is towns with a Roman imprint like Tarragona or Empúries, Romanesque like Boí, Ripoll, Sant Cugat or La Seu d’Urgell, Gothic like Lleida or Solsona, medieval like Besalú, Camprodon, Cardona, Girona or Vic, characterised by Art Nouveau like Barcelona, Mataró, Reus or Terrassa or simply charming seaside villages like Cadaqués, Calella de Palafrugell or Sitges, where countless artists found a source of inspiration—all these places feature a wide range of experiences that will definitely inspire visitors through all senses.

Catalunya Premium

Visitors can also enjoy the most exclusive proposals all over the territory. Catalonia provides ideas for the premium tourist segment to enjoy unique accommodation by the sea or amidst a delightful mountain landscape, together with a sophisticated cuisine, beauty and wellness programmes, a tailor-made cultural offer, exclusive shopping and once-in-a-lifetime sports experiences.



The pleasure of thermal waters

Catalonia has been one of Europe's largest thermal hotbeds over history. The properties of its medicinal mineral waters have been attracting all sorts of visitors for centuries. Whether thermal, from the sea, relaxing, healing or simply for drinking, water is one of Catalonia's main appeals.

Catalonia's thermal tradition dates back to Roman times. Prominent spa towns include Benifallet, Caldes d'Estrac, Caldes de Malavella, Caldes de Montbui, El Vendrell, La Gariga, Sant Climent Sescebes, Sant Hilari Sacalm and Santa Coloma de Farners. They boast a great wealth in mineral waters that can be enjoyed in baths. The tourist offer is completed with cultural heritage, nature, leisure, gastronomy, festivals and traditions.

Apart from these towns, the health and wellness offer throughout Catalonia is wide, varied and of high quality. It includes 18 traditional thermal baths usually found in unique locations at an underground health mineral water well. Their waters are mineralised or become thermal through their depth or resting time in the water table. These centres have now adapted their facilities to new accommodation trends, offering quality standards in accordance with the modern hotel industry. All this is completed with a wide first-class offer of wellness, thermal leisure and thalassotherapy centres all over the country.

As a side offer to thermal tourism, there are several routes to enjoy nature as well as water museums. The most noteworthy examples are Montseny Natural Park with its wealth in underground mineral water, most of which is bottled; La Selva county, the natural continuation of Montseny down to the Costa Brava; and Sant Hilari Sacalm, dubbed the one hundred well town.



Sports

Catalonia has a great sporting tradition and stands out for its high organisational capacity, with **numerous international tournaments** taking place every year. The 1992 Olympic Games opened Barcelona to the world from both a sports and a tourist perspective. From then onwards, Catalonia has been hosting countless international events year after year, such as the Catalonia has a great sporting tradition and stands out for its high organisational capacity, with numerous international tournaments taking place every year. The 1992 Olympic Games opened Barcelona to the world from both a sports and a tourist perspective. From then onwards, Catalonia has been hosting countless international events year after year, such as the Formula 1 Grand Prix of Spain and the Moto GP Grand Prix of Catalonia at the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya.

This sporting tradition has triggered the foundation of many clubs in different sports, the teams and athletes of which are amongst the world's best. This is the case of **FC Barcelona**, several times European and world football champion, with some of the world's finest players in its squad such as Leo Messi. **RCD Espanyol** is the other Catalan team in the Spanish first league, besides other historic clubs playing in lower divisions.

In **basketball**, Catalonia is represented by three teams in the ACB league, which is considered the world's second best after the NBA. Also here, FC Barcelona is one of Europe's most prominent clubs. Together with Joventut Badalona, it was pioneering in introducing basketball into Catalonia. Both clubs have brought forward current NBA players Pau and Marc Gasol and Ricky Rubio.

As far as **other sports** are concerned, the Márquez brothers, Marc and Àlex, dominate motorcycling, being current Moto GP and Moto 3 champions respectively; Núria Picas and Kilian Jornet clearly dominate mountain running; swimmer Mireia Belmonte holds several



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world records; and the Spanish championship-winning synchronised swimming and water polo teams have their base in Catalonia. Roller hockey, figure skating and field hockey are other sports with a long-standing tradition in Catalonia, featuring teams that dominate the European and international scene.

Water sports and golf

Catalonia is also a fine destination for **water sports**, which can be done mainly at the sea, but also in rivers, lakes and reservoirs. There is a network of **43 marinas**, all equipped with suitable facilities for sailors, and seven nautical resorts: Roses Cap de Creus, L'Estartit Illes Medes and Sant Feliu de Guíxols in Costa Brava; Santa Susanna and Vilanova i la Geltrú in Costa Barcelona; Salou, Cambrils, Mont-roig-Miami Platja, Vandellòs-L'Hospitalet i l'Ametlla de Mar in Costa Daurada; and Sant Carles de la Ràpita-Delta de l'Ebre in Terres de l'Ebre.

The mild Mediterranean climate and a natural environment that combines the beauty of the mountains with wide beaches make Catalonia a **perfect place for golf lovers** and one of Europe's main golf destinations. Looking back to a long-standing, century-long golf tradition, its offer is widespread and varied. Catalonia has **37 golf, 5 par 3 and over 40 pitch & putt courses**. These are part of resorts or lie close to facilities specifically designed for golf players and amateurs as well as accompanying persons, featuring a great side offer generally related to health and wellness, gastronomy, culture and leisure. One of these courses, **PGA Catalunya Resort**, has been declared "Europe's Golf Resort of the Year 2015" by the International Association of Golf Tour Operators (IAGTO).

I-034



Sports Tourism Destination (STD)

This is a specialisation label awarded by the Catalan Tourist Board to recognise destinations characterised by offering top-range resources and services aimed at sports-loving visitors. The CTB has developed this brand according to four main target groups: tourists making sports-based holidays, tourists spending part of their holidays doing sports, supporters and attendants of internationally renowned sports events, and top-level athletes.

Apart from fulfilling tourist requirements, municipalities certified as STD comply with a set of overall sports standards, such as featuring top facilities to do different sports, specifically those the destination is specialised in, as well as an accommodation offer adapted to the needs of athletes.

The **13 municipalities certified** as an STD in different categories—plus others currently in the certification process—are:

Destinations ensuring top-level sports practice:

High mountain (mountain biking, skiing, cycling, climbing and hiking)

- Val d'Aran (high mountain) www.visitvaldaran.com

Water sports (sailing and scuba diving)

- L'Ametlla de Mar (in process) www.ametllamar.cat

Football, rowing and kayaking (flatwater or whitewater)

- Banyoles-Pla de l'Estany (flatwater rowing) www.turismeiesport.cat



- La Seu d'Urgell (whitewater kayaking) www.turismeseu.com and www.parcolimpic.cat
- Sort (whitewater kayaking) www.sortturisme.com/
- Castelldefels (flatwater rowing and kayaking) www.castelldefels.org/esports
and www.castelldefelsturisme.com
- Amposta (flatwater rowing) www.turismeamposta.cat
- Salou (football) www.visitsalou.cat

Multi-sports destinations:

- Lloret de Mar (track & field, football, teams and swimming) www.lloretdemar.org
- Santa Susanna (football, teams, sailing and cycling) www.stasusanna-online.com
- Calella (football, track & field, swimming and running) www.calellabarcelona.com
- Blanes (football, teams, sailing and running) www.visitblanes.net
- Cambrils (football, track & field, sailing and cycling) www.cambrils.cat/turisme

European reference centres:

- Castelló d'Empúries-Empuriabrava (parachuting) www.castelloempuriabrava.com



Wine tourism

Catalonia boasts a **winemaking heritage** dating back 2000 years in history, since the Greeks and Romans arrived in Empúries. At over 65,000 hectares of vineyards and an annual output above 380 millions of bottles of wine and cava (sparkling wine), Catalonia is a wine tourist destination with a considerable potential.

Wine tourism can be enjoyed in any of Catalonia's **twelve denominations of origin**, which give an insight into a diverse, attractive landscape, from breeze-swept vineyards by the sea-side to those extending over the large inland plains or climbing up the slopes. Year-round proposals include visits to over **300 wine cellars**, strolls through vineyards, rich heritage to enjoy as well as wine and food pairing.

Much more than just twelve denominations of origin

Twelve denominations of origin certify the quality of Catalan wines and structure the offer in wine tourism. These are: Alella DO, Conca de Barberà DO, Costers del Segre DO, Empordà DO, Montsant DO, Penedès DO, Pla de Bages DO, Priorat DOQ, Tarragona DO and Terra Alta DO, plus Cava DO and Catalunya DO.

Catalonia features some **well-structured wine tourist routes** such as Priorat, Lleida-Costers del Segre and Empordà DO wine routes as well as Penedès and Alella DO Wine Tourism.

Large world-famous wineries, traditional family-run wine cellars, Art Nouveau buildings known as “wine cathedrals”, modest huts and vats amidst vineyards, centennial manor houses, avant-gardist architecture—all of them provide a glimpse into the world of Catalan wine.



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Catalonia's wine-making history can also be discovered by visiting the different **museums and interpretive centres** devoted to wine and cava. The most prominent examples include Castell del Vi (Falset), CAT Teià-Vallmora Archaeological Park, Fassina CIC-Cava Interpretive Centre (Sant Sadurní d'Anoia), the Cork Museum (Palafrugell), Castell de Peralada Wine Museum (Peralada) and Vinseum (Vilafranca del Penedès).

Wine tourism in Catalonia can also be combined with some of the more than **120 wine gastronomic gatherings** held along the year and all sorts of active proposals to discover the vineyards in a different way: walking, by e-bike, Segway, mountain bike, 4WD, on horseback or even by helicopter or sailing boat. A wine therapy session is a great way of closing a day in style. There are twenty **travel agents** in Catalonia **specialising** in organising complete high-end wine tourist experiences.

Wine tourism in Catalonia is designed to be also enjoyed by handicapped people and persons with reduced mobility.

The Catalan Tourist Board has initiated the Catalonia Wine Tourism programme to develop, foster and consolidate this tourist product and position Catalonia as a prime destination in wine tourism.

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Gastronomy

Discovering a country's gastronomy, strolling along market stalls, savouring and chatting with its cuisine makers, travelling along wine routes- all this and much more makes **enogastronomic tourism**.

Gastronomy is a part of a nation's **cultural heritage**. Catalan cuisine dates back to times immemorial, with a long tradition of recipes gathered in ancient handbooks. An example for it is the **Llibre de Sent Soví**, a Catalan recipe book from the 14th century, considered one of Europe's oldest and a landmark in early Catalan cuisine.

Catalonia is playing an **international leading role** in gastronomy. Ferran Adrià, Carme Ruscalleda, Joan Roca, Carles Gaig and Sergi Arola, among others, have become ambassadors of our culture. Catalonia features **60 stars** in the 2015 **Michelin Guide**.

In addition to the great names of Catalan cuisine, the gastronomic landscape also features the **Cuisine Associations of Catalonia**, groups of restaurants and other food establishments whose offer is based on local produce, the cuisine and the territory they represent. They are the following:

In Costa Brava:

- Cuina de l'Empordanet
- Cuina del Vent
- Girona Bons Fogons
- Grup Gastronòmic del Pla de l'Estany
- Joves Cuiners

In Costa Barcelona:

- Club de Tast del Gremi d'Hostaleria de Sitges
- Corbera Sabors
- Cubat
- Cuina Vallès
- CuinaVO

In Barcelona:

- Barceloneta Cuina

In Costa Daurada:

- Cuines del Vendrell

- El Gust és Nostre (Calafell)

- Tarragona Gastronómica

In Pirineus:

- Cuina Pirinenca de Cerdanya
- Cuina Volcànica
- Cuines de la Vall de Camprodon
- Fogons de la Vall de Ribes
- La Xicoia
- El Club dels Sabors del Berguedà

In Terres de l'Ebre:

- Cuina La Ràpita-Delta de l'Ebre
- Club de Gastronomia de l'Ametlla de Mar
- L'Essència de l'Arròs d'Amposta

In Terres de Lleida:

- Noguera Cuina

In Paisatges Barcelona:

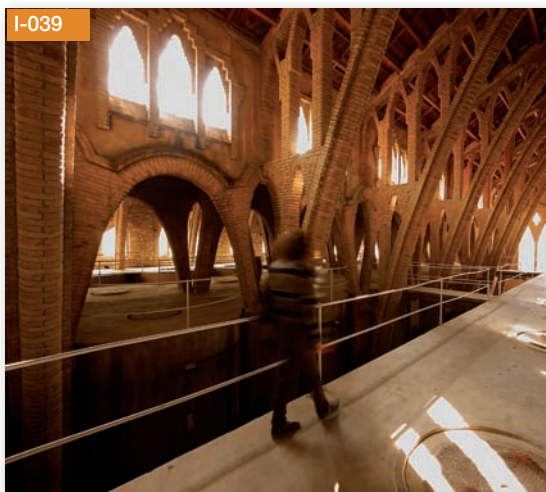
- Osona Cuina

Catalonia cultivates and produces a large basket of **quality products**. Some of them have different origin and food quality labels such as the denominations of origin and protected geographic indications. **Organic products** take a relevant position in the Catalan agrofood offer and are audited and certified by the Catalan Organic Production Council (CCPAE). The **Slow Food** movement in its turn is gaining support year after year. This international association intends to safeguard food, raw materials and growing and processing techniques passed on by local tradition consolidated over time. A total 46 restaurants from all over Catalonia have been awarded the km0 label by the Slow Food association this year.

The role of **crafts** at the table is also important. The ties between cuisine, produce and the land shall point out the role of craftspeople manufacturing products related with gastronomy, for either the kitchen or the table, like basketry, wooden spoons and forks, blown glasses and earthenware pots.

Gastronomy is a part of the landscape and travelling, thus making it possible to know a country through its food. In Catalonia there are numerous gastronomic gatherings and routes that allow discovering the land this way. More than 300 **enogastronomic events and shows** take place during the year. Biannual events such as the Gastronomic Forum held in Barcelona for the first time in 2014 within the Hostelco show, Alimentaria Barcelona, the Catalan Wine and Cava Show and Mercat de Mercats, also in Barcelona, as well as the Health and Slow Food Fair in Lleida are noteworthy.

The Catalan Tourist Board and the Directorate-General of Tourism are working in developing olive oil tourism, a quality product that could become a new attraction for Catalonia and encourage economic development especially in the inland counties. Olive oil tourism has a great growth potential, as Catalonia is a major producer of high quality olive oil and boasts a great wealth in resources.



Great icons and routes of Catalonia

Culture is **Catalonia's hallmark**, a country of artists and entrepreneurs drawing its innovation spirit and cosmopolitanism from its past. Being a millenary country, Catalonia boasts a unique artistic and monumental heritage in Europe, making it a preferred cultural tourism destination. As a result of this historical and cultural legacy, UNESCO has declared a total **nine World Heritage** sites, including two Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity, plus two Biosphere Reserves in Catalonia (cf. Tourist Attractions).

Catalonia's cultural potential is manifold and follows the track of history from the Neanderthal man to the present, including Iberians, Greeks and Romans, as well as **different architectural styles**, from Romanesque, Gothic and Art Nouveau to the present day, in which renowned architects like Jean Nouvel, Norman Foster, Richard Meier, Enric Miralles, Benedetta Tagliabue, Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron have left their imprint to create the symbols of the new Barcelona that is looking for a prominent place in the world. **Art Nouveau architects** like Gaudí, Domènech i Montaner, Puig i Cadafalch and Josep M. Jujol left their works scattered all over the country. Apart from renowned writers, Catalonia also boasts the creations of **great geniuses of art**, like the members of the so-called Catalan painting school (Joaquim Vayreda, Hermen Anglada Camarasa, Ramon Casas, Isidre Nonell, Joaquim Torres-Garcia, Albert Ràfols Casamada, etc.) or contemporary artists such as Dalí, Picasso, Miró and Tàpies. Their work can be admired in museums.

This is added by **routes** that have become consolidated as prime tourist attractions, like Camí de Sant Jaume (the Catalan stretch of St. James' Way), Camí dels Bons Homes (Good Men's Way), Catalunya Jueva (Jewish Catalonia), Ruta dels Íbers (Iberian Route), Ruta del Císter (Cistercian Route) or the various routes associated to cultural, industrial and religious heritage, including the Ignatian Way, which celebrates its jubilee year in 2015.

There is further an endless offer in cosmopolitan **Barcelona** and other cities such as **Tarragona**, **Girona** and **Lleida**, ideal places for urban tourism combining their cultural lure with a wide range of leisure options. In this respect, the offer in musical tourism is large, with unique venues like the Girona Auditorium, La Llotja in Lleida as well as the Gran Teatre del Liceu, the Auditori and the Palau de la Música Catalana in Barcelona.

Several towns also organise summer **music festivals** in heritage sites and areas of special artistic interest, such as the Castell de Peralada International Festival, the International Music Festival in Torroella de Montgrí, the habanera singing in Calella de Palafrugell and the International Music Festival in Cantonigròs. In this respect, great cellist **Pau Casals** is also

noteworthy. His birthplace **El Vendrell** (Costa Daurada) features the Vil·la Casals museum house and the Pau Casals Auditorium with a fine music programme.

Catalonia has more than **400 museums and arts** centres devoted to all periods and styles, completed by a vast exhibition programme. Three of its finest examples are the National Art Museum of Catalonia (MNAC), housing one of the world's largest collections of Romanesque art and an Art Nouveau collection, the Museum of Contemporary Art of Barcelona (MACBA) and the Museum of Science and Technology of Catalonia (mNACTEC), located in the Art Nouveau Vapor Aymerich, Amat i Jover building in Terrassa, with branches scattered throughout Catalonia.

Sanctuaries and monasteries can be found all over Catalonia, most of them devoted to the Virgin Mary. The most noticeable shrines are in Montserrat, Catalonia's main spiritual centre located in an astonishingly shaped mountain, and Núria in a Pyrenean valley.

There are also several pilgrimage routes in Catalonia. One of them is the Cistercian Route between three monasteries of that religious order in Conca de Barberà, Alt Camp and Urgell counties, featuring Poblet, a World Heritage site. The Camí de Sant Jaume (Catalan stretch of St. James' Way) links Catalonia with Santiago de Compostela, while the Camí Ignasià (Ignatian Way) crosses the country in seven stages to Manresa. In a nearby cave on the river Llobregat, Ignatius of Loyola wrote his Spiritual Exercises

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100% hiking and cycling tourism

The Catalan footpath network is linked to the European and Peninsular networks thanks to its almost **9000 kilometres of signposted ways**, more than half of which are part of the long distance footpaths (GR), the rest being short distance (PR) and local ones (SL). Some routes are noteworthy for their **uniqueness**: Camí dels Bons Homes (Good Men's Way) follows the ancient routes of the Cathar exiles; Carros de Foc (Fire Chariots) connects different huts in Aigüestortes National Park; Porta del Cel (Gate to Heaven) links four huts in Alt Pirineu Natural Park; Cavalls del Vent (Wind Horses) leads through Cadí-Moixeró Natural Park; and Estels del Sud (Southern Stars) is a trek through Els Ports Natural Park.

Other interesting routes are Ignatius Route through half Catalonia; Picasso Way in the Pyrenees; Camí de Sant Jaume (St. James' Way), the pilgrimage way between Sant Pere de Rodes and Alcarràs; Els Tres Monts (The Three Mountains) linking three significant natural areas, Montseny, Sant Llorenç del Munt i l'Obac and Montserrat; Ruta dels Refugis (Hut Route) through Montsant Natural Park and the Prades range; Ruta del Ter (Ter Route) along the course of that river; Camins del Bisbe i Abat Oliba (Bishop and Abbot Oliba Ways) through Paisatges Barcelona; and the Itinerànnia footpath network in the Girona Pyrenees.

There is a wide offer to discover and enjoy Catalonia by **bike**. The Green Ways (Vies Verdes), cycling paths along abandoned railway lines, and some cycling route networks like that in Baix Empordà are most notable. For mountain bikers, Catalonia has a complete network of mountain biking centres spread all over the country, a pioneering project in



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Spain set up seventeen years ago. The Transcatalunya mountain bike route covering more than 1200 kilometres allows exploring the land by stages, linking the Catalan mountain biking centres.

Mountain biking centres in Catalonia are freely accessible areas with a minimum 100 kilometres of signposted ways starting from a visitor centre with tourist information and cycling services. The **18** mountain biking centres composing the network offer a total 302 routes with **over 6400 kilometres of signposted ways** and different degrees of difficulty.

The Catalan Tourist Board has created the road cycling tourism project to disseminate the opportunities provided in Catalonia to enjoy this product. It is an initiative involving currently six municipalities: Blanes, Lloret de Mar, Santa Susanna, Calella, Cambrils and Mont-roig del Camp, which are ready to welcome cycling tourists, providing municipal facilities and services, bike rental companies, cycling routes and hotels designed at this specific sort of tourism by catering for all related needs.



Business tourism

Catalonia is one of Europe's **most dynamic destinations** and Spain's leading economic, industrial and business region. Its strategic position, the mild Mediterranean climate and one of Europe's highest living standards make it an ideal place to live and do business.

Organisers of meetings will find **good facilities**, a **big variety of locations**, **unique settings** and **highly qualified specialist services** in Catalonia, which add to a long-standing tourist expertise. There are many reasons to choose Catalonia as the venue of an event, like great organisational skills, a wide side offer and the status of its capital Barcelona as an international landmark in business tourism.

Catalunya Convention Bureau  **Catalunya Convention Bureau**

To consolidate Catalonia as a destination for meetings, congresses, conventions and incentive trips, the Catalan Tourist Board created the **Catalunya Convention Bureau (CCB)** five years ago, a promotion and marketing programme supported by more than 120 specialised member companies and associations. The joint effort of public authorities and the business sector provides organisers of events with all possible tools facilitating the choice of Catalonia as a qualified business tourism destination.

The main **goals** of the Catalunya Convention Bureau are to position Catalonia in the global business tourism market, bundling and coordinating the business created by this industry in the country as well as promoting, disseminating and supporting specialised companies in the different markets.

The **Catalonia Congresses and Events** programme by the CCB has resulted in a catalogue featuring nine destinations with capacity to host congresses as they provide modern facilities and a big organisational expertise in this area. The destinations are Barcelona, Sitges, Castelldefels, Girona, Lloret de Mar, Tarragona, Reus, PortAventura and Lleida.

Main services for organisers:

- Exhaustive knowledge of Catalonia and its resources geared at business tourism.
- Free, unbiased, professional advice on facilities, companies and tourist services specialising in organising meetings and in making post-meeting, social and incentive programmes.
- Contact and intermediation with associated companies.
- Support to nominations to capture congresses.

- Familiarisation trips, prospectations, actions to communicate the offer and specific programmes.

Based in Barcelona, the Catalunya Convention Bureau welcomes professionals of the meeting industry at any of the twelve offices held by the Catalan Tourist Board in Spain, France, the UK, Germany, Italy, Scandinavia, the US, Russia, China, the Benelux, Southeast Asia and South America.

The Catalunya Convention Bureau has a website, **www.catalunya.com/mice**, and a **sales guide** containing all the necessary information to organise any kind of meeting in Catalonia. This publication is edited in Catalan, Spanish, English, French and German and includes the offer of over 130 CCB member companies and organisations. It is distributed to agencies specialising in the organisation of congresses, conventions and incentive trips as well as associations and companies looking for a destination and facilities to hold their events and meetings.

The Catalonia Conventions, Incentives and Events online catalogue brings together the complete offer in Catalonia regarding meeting facilities and proposals for post-meeting or incentive-related activities. The catalogue is divided into four sections: urban (Barcelona, Girona, Lleida, Tarragona), Mediterranean coast (Costa Barcelona, Costa Daurada, Costa Brava), Pyrenees (Pyrenees and Val d'Aran) and inland landscapes.



Family holidays

Most tourists visiting Catalonia are families. Hence, Catalonia has been pioneering in Europe in looking for a certified label for destinations suitable for family holidays.

Family Holiday Destination (FHD)



The Catalan Tourist Board has developed the Family Holiday Destination (FHD) brand, a specialisation label ensuring that a destination has an offer in accommodation, restaurants and leisure adapted to the needs of families: miniclubs with wardens, children playgrounds, water and theme parks, children seats and menus in restaurants, children swimming pools, identification wristbands, safety at all destinations, a wide children animation programme at the accommodation and in the street, connected rooms, availability of cradles and push-chairs, socket protectors, etc.

There are currently eighteen FHD certified destinations both on the coast and inland:

On **Costa Brava**:

- **Blanes** / www.visitblanes.net
- **Calonge-Sant Antoni** / www.calonge-santantoni.com
- **Castell-Platja d'Aro** / www.platjadaro.com
- **Lloret de Mar** / www.lloretdemar.org
- **Roses** / www.visit.roses.cat
- **Sant Feliu de Guíxols** / www.visitguixols.com
- **Torroella de Montgrí - l'Estartit** / www.visitestartit.com

On **Costa Barcelona**:



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- Calella / www.calellabarcelona.com
- Malgrat de Mar / www.turismemalgrat.com
- Pineda de Mar / www.pinedademar.cat
- Santa Susanna / www.stasusanna-online.com

On **Costa Daurada:**

- Calafell / www.turisme.calafell.cat
- Cambrils / www.cambrils.cat
- Salou / www.visitsalou.cat
- Vila-seca la Pineda Platja / www.lapinedaplatja.info

Inland:

- Berga / www.turismeberga.cat
- Muntanyes de Prades / www.prades.cat
- Valls d'Àneu / www.vallsdaneu.org/es

In addition to the current eighteen FHD certified destinations, there are further eleven in the process of certification: Castelldefels, El Vendrell, Sant Pere Pescador and Vilanova i la Geltrú on the coast as well as Vall de Boí, Vall de Camprodon, Vall de Núria-Vall de Ribes, Port Ainé-Sort, La Molina-Masella, Vall d'en Bas and enlarged Muntanyes de Prades inland.

The FHD label encompasses about 600 partner businesses having made an effort to adapt and improve their offer, thus providing an optimum service to families. The range goes from accommodation to leisure including water parks, museums, nautical businesses and resorts and restaurants with an offer adapted to cater for children.



Senior tourism

Following its purpose of promoting tourism for all, the Catalan Tourist Board has created a tailor-made programme for senior tourists together with the regional tourist boards and hotel associations. Eleven municipalities in Catalonia take part in it. They are: Caldes d'Estrac, Calella, Cambrils, L'Ampolla, L'Hospitalet de l'Infant, La Pineda Platja, Lloret de Mar, Malgrat de Mar, Pineda de Mar, Salou and Santa Susanna.

Catalonia Senior Tourism is specifically aimed at people aged 55+. It is a programme adapted for the low season, when Catalonia still enjoys nice weather together with a fine cultural and leisure offer. This initiative intends to foster the tourist industry during the off-peak season.

For this reason, the three and four-star hotels taking part in the programme meet a set of requirements ensuring the well-being and safety of senior visitors. Such requirements include drug keeping service, a health-care centre less than five kilometres away and a chemist less than one kilometre away, access for persons with reduced mobility and adapted menus.

Being a tourist destination fully adapted to the needs of senior visitors and catering for their full comfort, Catalonia boasts a scenic variety ranging from the Pyrenees to the Mediterranean Sea. Its very well preserved territory plays the whole gamut from 3000 metre-high peaks to wide golden sand beaches. This diversity of landscapes is completed with interesting heritage, good communications, top-quality tourist services and excellent cuisine. All of this benefits from the year-round mild Mediterranean climate, which makes Catalonia a destination suitable for tourism at any season.

A specific regulation and an audit programme make sure that partner businesses to the Catalonia Senior Tourism programme fulfil the requirements.

What's New 2015

Tourist experiences online

The Government of Catalonia has created a platform to sell travel packages through the internet. It is the first public administration in Europe implementing a tool of this kind, which allows doing the whole purchasing process within one same platform without needing to go to the travel agents' websites. This portal is focused on fostering inland tourism and all tourist policies contained within the Strategic Tourism Plan and the Tourist Marketing Plan of Catalonia. This new sales channel shall serve as a support to small and medium-sized companies having difficulties in creating their own platforms and accessing the big distribution channels. It is also aimed at providing a tourist offer different from that found in the usual sales channels.

www.catalunya.com

2015: year of inland and mountain tourism

The Catalan Tourist Board devotes 2015 to promoting inland and mountain tourism. Several specific marketing and promotion actions will be done over the year, focusing specifically on this product and the related offer. Fostering tourism in inland counties is a major tourist policy of the Government of Catalonia, in an effort to promote this beautiful area providing tourist resources and proposals to any target group.

The inland and mountain regions of Catalonia feature a wide variety of attractions: diverse landscapes with peaks, valleys and fields, towns with a strong character and noteworthy heritage, gastronomy and wine with an identity of their own and sports such as alpine and cross-country skiing, climbing, golf, hunting and fishing as well as active and adventure tourism proposals such as rafting, kayaking, balloon flights, scuba diving and multiple sign-posted hiking and mountain bike routes.

www.catalunya.com

1st Family Tourism Congress

The 1st Family Tourism Congress will close the year devoted to family tourism by the Catalan Tourist Board. The congress aims at positioning Catalonia as a landmark destination in family tourism. It is intended to be held in different places around Catalonia on a regular basis. The main goals of the congress are an analysis by both national and international experts and professionals of the current offer, to showcase role models and examples of leading family tourist destinations as well as to highlight the future perspectives of the branch.

www.catalunya.com

Catalan ski resorts are FHD

Within the Family Holiday Destination (FHD) programme, the Catalan Tourist Board of the Government of Catalonia is undertaking the certification of destinations with a ski resort as FHD. Thus, it is planned that during 2015, the certification process is completed for Vall de Boí with Boí-Taüll Resort, Vall de Camprodon with Vallter 2000, Vall de Núria-Ribes with Vall de Núria, Port Ainé-Sort with Port Ainé and La Molina-Masella with La Molina and La Masella ski resorts. They will add to Espot Esquí, which was certified as an FHD as early as 2013, together with Valls d'Àneu.

Catalonia is further celebrating the Year of Family Tourism this year, the Catalan Tourist Board's great promotional action with the aim of strengthening Catalonia's position as an ideal destination for families with children. Around 350 Catalan tourist businesses are involved in this theme year, providing almost 500 proposals and activities, including special promotions for families with children such as 2 for 1, discounts up to 50% and special offers for large families.

There are currently 18 destinations featuring the FHD label: Blanes, Calonge-Sant Antoni, Lloret de Mar, Roses, Torroella de Montgrí-L'Estartit, Castell-Platja d'Aro and Sant Feliu de Guíxols on Costa Brava; Calella, Malgrat de Mar, Pineda de Mar and Santa Susanna on Costa Barcelona; Calafell, Cambrils, Salou, Vila-Seca/La Pineda Platja and Muntanyes de Prades on Costa Daurada; and Valls d'Àneu and Berga in the Pyrenees. Apart from these already certified destinations, Castelldefels, El Vendrell, Sant Pere Pescador and Vilanova i la Geltrú on the coast as well as Vall d'en Bas and the second phase of Muntanyes de Prades inland are currently in the certification process.

This year will also see the first certifications of large Family Tourist Facilities (FTF) describing Catalonia's large tourist infrastructures suitable for families. Some examples include the Barcelona Zoo, Tibidabo, Poble Espanyol, Catalunya en Miniatura, Cim de les Àligues, the Dalí Museum, the Gaudí Centre, Montsec Astronomic Park and Món Natura.

www.catalunya.com

Ignatian way jubilee year

The Ignatian Way follows the route covered by Ignatius of Loyola from his natal Azpeitia in the Basque Country to Manresa in Bages county, where he meditated and wrote his well-known Spiritual Exercises in a cave nearby the river Llobregat. This route has become a tourist attraction and will celebrate the first jubilee year from 31 July 2015 to 31 July 2016. The Ignatian Way jubilee shall reach out to those who, meeting the conditions set by canon law (mass, confession and prayer for the Pope's intentions), complete the pilgrimage along the Ignatian Way in an according spirit and following some of the Spiritual Exercises, visiting an Ignatian

sanctuary along the way and doing a work of charity before or during pilgrimage. The Ignatian Way covers 184 kilometres in Catalonia, divided into seven stages.

www.caminoignaciano.org

Catalonia goes for the 2022 Ryder Cup

The Costa Brava will be a candidate to host the Ryder Cup in 2022. Eleven institutions, organisations and companies are working to bring the world's most renowned golf tournament to the Girona area. The bid is backed by the fact that PGA Catalunya Resort has been chosen as Spain's best golf course for three consecutive years and declared "Europe's Golf Resort of the Year 2015" by the International Association of Golf Tour Operators (IAGTO). Furthermore, Barcelona, the Costa Brava and Catalonia are prime tourist destinations, apart from their long-standing record in hosting world-class sports events.

www.es.costabrava.org

Travel bloggers in Lloret de Mar

Lloret de Mar will host the Travel Blogger World Congress in Europe, TBEX EU 2015, which will gather 800 travel bloggers, virtual media writers and content creators. Being located at one end of the Costa Brava, Lloret de Mar has been for many years a consolidated tourist destination, providing premium convention facilities and an excellent accommodation and leisure offer. This is completed with its charming setting characterised by wide beaches and sheltered coves between cliffs. The event will take place from 30 April to 2 May.

<http://www.lloretcb.org/es/evento/tbex-europe-2015/>

Film locations in Catalonia

The Catalan Department of Culture and the Barcelona City Council have created a new digital platform (web portal) containing all the information needed for shooting films in Catalonia. The portal includes a directory with more than 900 media companies and features over 1100 public and private film-friendly locations all over Catalonia.

The website is a platform of the Catalunya Film Commission (CFC) and the Barcelona Film Commission. It provides quick and intuitive information, including how to ask for specific shooting permits. A total 3101 film productions were made in Catalonia in 2013, 63 of which were large productions. 24 of them were shot exclusively in the city of Barcelona.

www.bcnatfilmcommission.com/ca

Art museum network of Catalonia

Spearheaded by the National Art Museum of Catalonia (MNAC), 14 museums intend to create a specialised network encompassing art museums from all over the country. The network will include the Víctor Balaguer Library and Museum in Vilanova i la Geltrú, the Girona Art Museum, the Vic Episcopal Museum, the Solsona Diocesan and County Museum, the Cau Ferrat Museum in Sitges, the Garrotxa Museum in Olot, the Jaume Morera Art Museum in Lleida, the Lleida Diocesan and County Museum, the Empordà Museum in Figueres, the Museum of Reus, the Museum of Valls, the Museum of Manresa and the Sabadell Art Museum. The goals are improving documentation and knowledge of and accessibility to collections, joint working programmes, a better use of each museum's resources and, above all, allowing visitors a large overview over artistic creation in all Catalonia.

www.museunacional.cat/es/red-de-museos-de-arte

I Student Tourism Congress

The first Student Tourism Congress will be held in Barcelona on 17 and 18 April within the B-Travel International Show (formerly the Catalonia International Tourist Show).

The congress intends to be a meeting point where experts on tourist training, university education and professionals from the branch will have the opportunity of networking with students and entrepreneurs, creating an innovation, discussion and knowledge hub.

There will be discussions on subjects such as tourist communication and marketing strategies, experiential tourism, online reputation, brands in tourist destinations, the economic impact of sports and leisure events, new forms of accommodation and commercialisation, social, sustainable and responsible tourism, social media and keys to be entrepreneurial. Speakers include Ferran Adrià, Kike Sarasola, Álex Cruz and representatives of companies such as PortAventura, Value Retail, Starwood Hotels and Cirque du Soleil, among others.

The Student Tourism Congress is organised by bcnmoments and supported by “La Caixa” Social Work, CETT-University of Barcelona and HTSI-Ramon Llull University.

www.studenttourismcongress.com

Barcelona

Art Nouveau in Barcelona

Barcelona can be considered Europe's Art Nouveau capital. This style, which had a considerable influence on European architecture and design from the mid-19th and well into the 20th century, left a strong footprint in Catalonia. The old Hospital de Sant Pau, Torre Bellesguard, Casa Vicens, Casa Lleó i Morera, Casa Amatller and Palau Güell are some of the best-known Art Nouveau buildings in Barcelona.

The Sant Pau Art Nouveau site offers a visit through the history of one of the finest examples of Catalan Art Nouveau architecture. This impressive array of buildings was a functioning hospital until recently and is now planned to become a cultural centre. Built by Domènech i Montaner, the site features a main building with the façade looking towards Sagrada Família and twelve pavilions linked with each other by means of underground passageways. The site, including some of its buildings, is currently open to visitors, offering guided tours in Catalan, Spanish, English and French

www.visitsantpau.com

Torre Bellesguard at the foot of the Tibidabo is perhaps one of Gaudí's best-kept hidden gems. Opened to the public only recently, it is an innovative example of the combined power of architecture and music concerts.

www.bellesguardgaudi.com

Casa Vicens in Carolines street in the quarter of Gràcia will open to the public after having its interior refurbished, thus joining the Art Nouveau route through Barcelona.

www.casavicens.es

When entrepreneur and chocolate maker Antoni Amatller ordered his new family home to architect Josep Puig i Cadafalch in the late 19th century, nobody could imagine the impact the building would have on Barcelona's cityscape a century after. Casa Amatller is currently one of the city's most representative buildings, although it can hardly be visited from inside. Thanks to major refurbishment carried out to become a museum, Casa Amatller is now open to limited groups, while the original decorations are restored.

www.barcelonaturisme.com/Casa-Amatller

Having opened to visitors fairly recently, **Palau Güell** nearby La Rambla is now celebrating the 30th anniversary of its listing as a UNESCO World Heritage site. This celebration will be underpinned with numerous lectures, panel discussions and cultural events that will provide an additional attraction to this gem built by Antoni Gaudí in his early career.

www.palauguell.cat

Disseny Hub Barcelona

Barcelona gathers its **design museums** under one same roof. Located on Plaça de les Glòries—its surrounding buildings paving the way to make it a new hotspot in the city—and designed by Oriol Bohigas and David Mackay, Disseny Hub Barcelona has made true one of the city's dreams: bringing its whole design heritage into one single modern building. The Museum of Decorative Arts, the Pottery Museum, the Textile and Clothing Museum and the Museum of Graphic Arts are gathered on 25,000 square metres, exhibiting over 70,000 pieces dating from the 4th century BC to the present. They include furniture, pottery, jewellery, glassware, appliances, posters and much more. This new museum intends to be the main creativity and design hub in Barcelona, with different organisations having moved there.

www.museudeldisseny.cat

Renovation of the MNAC

In a major renovation effort, the **National Art Museum of Catalonia (MNAC)** devotes now a whole floor to Art Nouveau, including artists unknown to a large public. Hence Pere Daura and Antoni Fabrés can be found next to more famous authors such as Casas, Jujol and Gaudí. A total 4000 square metres are devoted to display 1350 works of 260 different artists, including furniture, sculpture, decorative pieces, paintings and stained glass.

www.museunacional.cat

Museum of Cultures of the World

This new museum located in Nadal and Marquès de Llió palaces in Montcada street in the Gothic Quarter, close to the Picasso Museum, will display some of the so far unknown pieces from the Barcelona Museum of Ethnology, originating from Asia, Africa, America and Oceania. A total 30,000 objects will be exhibited, as will the collection from the Folch Foundation donated by the Barcelona City Council.

<http://museuculturesmon.bcn.cat>

Barcelona, city of festivals

Adding to its large artistic and cultural heritage, festivals of all kinds are held in the capital of Catalonia. From **more than fifty festivals** taking place throughout the year, the following stand out:

Barcelona International Auteur Film Festival.

www.cinemadautor.cat

BCN Sports Film.

www.bcnsportsfilm.org

SÓNAR. International Festival of Advanced Music and Multimedia Art.

www.sonar.es

Festival Grec de Barcelona.

www.bcn.cat/grec

Festival In-Edit.

www.in-edit.org

Costa Daurada and Terres de l'Ebre

25th anniversary of the Cistercian route

2015 will see the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Cistercian Route. On slightly more than a hundred kilometres that can be covered either walking or by mountain bike, the route links three relevant Cistercian monasteries in five stages across **Alt Camp, Conca de Barberà and Urgell** counties.

The **monasteries** of **Santes Creus, Santa Maria de Poblet and Vallbona de les Monges** have a common history reflected in the trail signposted as GR-175. The latter two are still inhabited by monastic communities and Poblet is additionally listed as **UNESCO World Heritage**.

Along the route, visitors will discover an area with plenty of culture, heritage, nature, wine and sparkling wine, festivals, traditions and handcrafts.

www.larutadelcister.info

2017 Mediterranean Games

Tarragona is preparing to host the next Mediterranean Games to be held in 2017. The games shall be simple yet exemplary, with initiatives based on new organisation patterns. Over 4000 athletes from 24 different nations are expected. The competition will last ten days.

www.tarragona.cat/tarragona-2017

Salou lighthouse lookout

The recently opened Salou lighthouse lookout not only allows great views but has also brought about the creation of a 300 metre-long **footpath** along the local landscape characterised by cliffs. There are also several information panels on the seabirds that can be watched from the lookout.

www.visitsalou.eu

Roman villa in Barenys

The villa is composed of the remains of a **Roman site** belonging to a building where pottery was made in the late 1st century BC. In that time, the Romans settled in Tarraco built numerous villas to exploit local resources. The Barenys archaeological site was used for manufacturing building materials and amphorae, which were filled with wine from Tarraco for export. The Salou tourist office arranges guided tours in several languages, providing a glimpse into the relevance of the site..

www.visitsalou.eu

Cultural route through the historic centre of Vila-seca

A stroll through the historic centre of Vila-seca leads past the **main heritage sites** of the town, plus the areas created in La Pineda, such as the Watermark and Pine Grove sculpture groups, the Pinar de Perruquet park and the Sèquia Major (Main Ditch), as well as cultural sites outside Vila-seca, such as Torre d'en Dolça, the Rescat pylon and Mare de Déu de la Pineda sanctuary.

The route starts in the Raval de la Mar quarter, featuring 12th century Beguda cross, leading then through the street maze of the old town, where historic sites mingle with traditional shops. Eleven totems identify heritage sites by their name and building year and have an attached QR code to download their history in six languages.

www.lapinedaplatja.info

Vermouth Museum in Reus

There is a long-standing relation between **Reus** and this traditional drink. Local Joan Tàpias has been collecting objects related with vermouth (e.g. posters, barrels, bottles, merchandising objects) for three decades, before opening a museum where all this material is displayed.

Featuring a restaurant and terrace, the museum also offers tasting of **thirty sorts of aperitifs** from all over the **world**. There are three specific rooms devoted to the local vermouth brands: **Yzaguirre, Miró and Iris**.

<https://es-es.facebook.com/museudelvermut>

Pratdip Legendari festival

In late October and early November 2015, Pratdip will hold the second Pratdip Legendari **festival** related to the mythological character **Dip**.

For some days, Pratdip will become a stronghold of terror and mystery, as legend has it that this vampire-like animal sucked the blood out of the cattle and terrorised villagers. The programme is completed with a phantasy and esoteric handcraft market, a literary contest with terror and mystery short stories, children's workshops, street performances, gastronomic products related to this subject and a terror and mystery show in the castle.

www.pratdipturisme.com

Artisan fishing “a la paupa”

Fishing “a la paupa” is a sort of **artisan fishing** that had fallen into disuse but has now been recovered as a tourist product. In Badia dels Alfacs nearby Sant Carles de la Ràpita, true professionals teach how to catch fish only with the eyes and hands.

Costa Brava and Girona Pyrenees

Vies Braves

Vies Braves (“Wild Ways”) are a public **maritime network** along the Costa Brava for sports, leisure and learning. They are a new tourist product within the catalogue of differentiated quality products provided to visitors. Swimming in open waters and snorkelling is also promoted as a part of this scheme.

The project started in 2014 in seven coastal municipalities plus Banyoles, located inland, with a total 13 kilometres of signposted ways parallel to the watch paths. It is a way of enjoying and discovering the coastline from the sea in a different, safe manner..

<http://www.viesbraves.com/en/home/>

New map of Costa Brava beaches

The map of Costa Brava beaches is a foldout leaflet providing information on **67 beaches and coves** along 220 kilometres, together with a location plan. Every beach in the folder includes a picture and descriptive pictograms with practical user information such as name and town, length and width, access, services (toilet, showers, restaurants), sports facilities, disabled services and environmental certificates such as blue flag and Via Brava labels, among others. **30,000 copies** in **8 languages** have been edited with the cooperation of the **23 coastal municipalities** in the Girona province.

<http://www.es.costabrava.org/>

Banyoles, European Town of Sport

Banyoles, with the **lake** as its main feature, hosts all kinds of sports events, many of them related with rowing and canoeing. It was the ideal venue for these disciplines in the 1992 Olympics. Alongside competitions, many teams from all over the world have been coming for training camps ever since.

During 2015, Banyoles will hold the title of European Town of Sport. The Pla de l’Estany county seat will host big **international sports events**, training seminars together with the Sports Chair at the University of Girona and sports activities for both families and sports enthusiasts..

www.banyoles.cat/Turisme

Costa Barcelona and Paisatges Barcelona

Formula 1 and Moto GP at the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya

The Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya racetrack will once again host the motorcycling and Formula 1 world championships. The fifth race of the Formula 1 World Championship will take place from **8 to 10 May**, while the Moto GP Grand Prix will be held from **12 to 14 June**, the seventh race in the Motorcycling World Championship.

www.circuitcat.com

2015 Spanish Golf Open

The Spanish Open will be held at the **Real Club de Golf El Prat in Terrassa (Barcelona)** from **15 to 18 May**. Being part of the PGA European Tour, it is the most important professional golf tournament in the country.

Around the city, there are ten golf courses of international standard, laid out by renowned professionals and including all sorts of facilities (e.g. practice green, equipment rental, buggies, lessons, shop, club house). There are courses overlooking the sea as well as in the hills, with attached charming accommodation and traditional yet innovative cuisine.

www.barcelonaesmoltmes.cat

Wine Tourism Barcelona

There are **five denominations of origin (DO)** in Barcelona province: Penedès, Alella, Pla de Bages, Catalunya and Cava, which also offer **tourist experiences**. They are all introducing a varied wine tourism programme, featuring visits to caves, tasting, routes through vineyards as well as music and theatre in wine cellars.

www.barcelonaesmoltmes.cat/es/enoturisme

Nautical resorts, sports and leisure

For active tourism on the seaside, there is a large offer provided by the nautical resorts of **Vilanova i la Geltrú and Santa Susanna**: sailing, windsurfing, snorkelling, scuba diving, water skiing, ski bus, parasailing, canoeing, kitesurfing, kayaking, etc., besides accommodation and side activities.

www.barcelonaesmoltmes.cat/es/costabarcelona/

City break close to Barcelona

Towns nearby **Barcelona, like Manresa, Igualada, Terrassa, Sabadell, Granollers, Vic, Mataró, Vilafranca del Penedès and Sitges**, are very suitable for **city breaks** as they feature a wealthy cultural and artistic heritage (prehistorical, medieval, Art Nouveau, etc.) and a **wide range of events**, with festivals, dance season, music, theatre, traditional festivals and castellers (human towers).

These bustling towns are prepared to welcome visitors, with shopping areas and malls, outlets and traditional shops, all offering any sort of products from the best brands. Traditional and creative cuisine with renowned chefs and restaurants—some of them featuring Michelin stars—together with a wide, varied accommodation offer, ranging from little charming hotels to five-star resorts, also make them a nice destination for a unique weekend breakaway.

www.barcelonaesmoltmes.cat

Much more about Barcelona's flavours

The Barcelona area gives visitors the chance of knowing its culture and traditions through a vast array of **gastronomic experiences**. Great chefs skilfully blending traditional products and methods with innovative preparation and presentation techniques are gathered in regional cuisine associations to please their guests with the best produce from the land and the sea. Additionally, a wide offer in gastronomic events highlights the virtues of seasonal products, from gatherings and routes to traditional fairs and markets, not to forget experiences at specific locations or activities with and visits to local producers to know first-hand the best-kept secrets of traditional products.

www.barcelonaesmoltmes.cat

Maresme, watchtowers and castles

Maresme features a route along the watchtowers and castles built mainly in the 16th and 17th centuries all over the county. Most of the fifty towers erected are still standing, many of them having been restored. The route can now be downloaded from a guide available at the local Maresme tourist offices and Palau Robert in Barcelona. This shall allow visitors to complete a day or weekend route including a stay anywhere in Maresme.

www.costadebarcelonamaresme.cat

Sustainable tourism

Garraf Park set the first steps in early January to join the European Sustainable Tourism Charter, an initiative of the Europarc Federation aiming at developing sustainable tourism in Europe's protected natural areas. **Montseny** and **Sant Llorenç del Munt i l'Obac** natural parks already joined this project in 2014.

<http://parcs.diba.cat/>

Terres de Lleida, Lleida Pyrenees and Val d'Aran

60th anniversary of Aigüestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici National Park

The Pallars Sobirà County Council presents special activities and events to celebrate this jubilee. Together with the guide association, the park will organise several activities to discover nature, including winter tours with snowshoes and monographic tours on natural, cultural and immaterial heritage.

www.lleidatur.com

Two new facilities at the universe observation centre

The **Ull del Montsec** (Montsec Eye) is being technologically upgraded with a whole new projection system to become a **3D planetarium**. This will allow visitors to enjoy a fully immersive experience with the aid of special glasses. Films and live sessions will use this new technology to enable travelling through space in an unparalleled way. This will be the second planetary in Spain using the 3D system in its sessions.

Also, a new dome hall in the **Telescope Park** will start working in summer 2015. It is a 10 metre-wide dome allowing joint telescope observations for groups of up to 70 people. The telescope, the largest at the observation centre, is equipped with the latest astronomic observation technologies.

www.parcastronomic.cat

Paleontological sites

The Tremp basin in **Pallars Jussà** county is of great geological and paleontological importance. Two of its sites—Nerets in the Sant Corneli range and Suterranya in Vilamitjana—have been declared a **Cultural Site of National Interest** for their remarkable array of fossils from dinosaurs, archosaurs, chelonians and other invertebrates that allow to reconstruct the ecosystem and understand the transition from early to late Maastrichtian (the latest Cretaceous period). The area is of utmost relevance thanks to the state of conservation and the diversity of the remains found.

www.pallarsjussa.net

“Persecuted and Saved”, Jewish escape routes

The “Persecuted and Saved” project identifies **four routes** along which Jews fled from Nazi Holocaust through the Lleida Pyrenees during World War II to escape deportation and death. The routes have a total 151 kilometres through **Alta Ribagorça, Pallars Sobirà, Alt Urgell, Cerdanya and Val d’Aran** counties. Signposts lead visitors through different paths, areas and towns that bore witness to one of Europe’s darkest chapters in history. The routes are: Pirineus Val d’Aran-Alta Ribagorça (from Eth Pònt de Rei to El Pont de Suert), Pirineus el Pallars Sobirà (from Guiló pass to Sort), Pirineus Alt Urgell (from Pimés pass to La Seu d’Urgell) and Pirineus la Cerdanya (from Perafita pass to Martinet). Signposting consists of banners, panels, plates and totems including QR codes linking to the new website, where contents are published in Catalan, Aranese, Spanish, English, French and Hebrew.

www.perseguitsisalvats.cat

Mayoral Arts Centre

The old, interesting toy museum in Verdú (Urgell) has become an **arts** and **gastronomy** centre. It revolves around **Joan Miró’s work** and is completed with creations by Picasso, Dalí, Chillida, Tàpies, Barceló, Plensa and Calder, including graphic works, pottery and sculpture. To top this, **chefs** Albert and Jordi Marimon have created seven tapas inspired in the work of these artists, so visitors feel a pleasure in the eyes and the palate. After completing the tour, guests will be served the main dish and the dessert in the dining room.

www.miroataula.cat

Raimat caves, a hundred years of wine

Raimat winemakers, belonging to Costers del Segre Denomination of Origin and the **Lleida Wine Route**, have turned a hundred years. The centennial is celebrated with different events, such as the Centenary Photographic Museum Hall and the production of Raimat 100 aged wine.

www.raimat.com

Baqueira Beret anniversary

The ski resort is celebrating its **50th anniversary** with different events during the whole season. After investing 10.5 million euros, the resort offers its customers 21 new routes, an increase from 120 to 146 kilometres of slopes plus 7 kilometres off-piste in an unparalleled freeride experience, thus totalling 153 kilometres in the 2014-15 season. The ski resort has

opened three new lifts providing additional comfort in crossing between Baqueira and Beret: the Jesús Serra quad detachable chairlift and the Saumet and Stadium ski lifts.

Moreover, the accommodation offer has been enlarged with **Hotel Val de Neu**, located by the slopes in the new Val de Ruda area in Baqueira. Apart from its 120 rooms, it is especially the additional services that provide luxury and warmth at this high-end mountain hotel.

www.baqueira.es

www.hotelbaqueiravaldeneu.com

Casa Sintet iron museal space

Iron was at the origin of **Vall Ferrera** and shaped its history over almost two thousand years. Metalworking used to be its economic mainstay up to the late 19th century. The Casimiro family from Casa Sintet in Alins were the owners of the last working forge in the valley, which closed in 1880.

With the aim of explaining the metalworking history in Vall Ferrera, the Casa Sintet Iron Museal Space has been opened this year. The whole process is explained on a **guided tour** including more than 300 exhibited objects, from the family's origins and the whole economy revolving around iron to agricultural work done for more than 150 years.

www.facebook.com/casasintet

Experiències Pirineus, family ecotourism

Eight companies from Alt Urgell and Cerdanya counties have created the **Experiències Pirineus** tourist brand to promote the area and market jointly **family ecotourism** and **quality tourism**. They offer not only accommodation but also active tourism, specific routes and nature experiences

www.experienciespirineus.com

New hiking route: the Aneto tour

The **Aneto Tour** is a hiking trail around the Aneto massif. Leading through five valleys and across six mountain passes in Val d'Aran, France, Aragon and Catalonia, the route covers 115 kilometres in six stages, with an accumulated altitude of 11,332 metres. Under the Walking without Baggage brand, the accommodation is in hotels and rural homes and every stage is covered by a luggage carrying service.

www.tourdelaneto.com www.camins.es

New tourist website and app

Val d'Aran has created a new tourist website with an updated layout, numerous pictures and adapted to mobile devices. Featuring state-of-the-art technology, it is much more accessible and intuitive. The multi-language app contents work as a tourist guide and include accommodation as well as maps, localisations and interesting routes.

www.visitvaldaran.com

Useful addresses

Tourist bodies

CATALAN TOURIST BOARD

Tel. 93 484 99 00

www.catalunya.com

Costa Brava Girona Tourism Board

Tel. 972 208 401

www.costabrava.cat

Tarragona Provincial Council Tourism Board

Costa Daurada

Tel. 977 230 312

www.costadaurada.info

Terres de l'Ebre

Tel. 977 444 447

www.terresdelebre.org

Tourism Barcelona

Tel. 93 368 97 00

www.barcelonaturisme.cat

Barcelona Provincial Council Tourism Delegation

Tel. 93 402 29 66

www.diba.cat/turisme

Lleida Provincial Council Tourism Board

Tel. 973 245 408

www.lleidatur.com

Torisme Val d'Aran

Tel. 973 640 688

www.visitvaldaran.com

Tourist Promotion Centres outside Catalonia

Benelux

Tel. (+32) 26 406 151

info.act.bnl@gencat.cat

France

Tel. (+33) 1 40 46 98 92

media.act.fr@gencat.cat

Italy

Tel. (+39) 02 873 935 73

info.act.it@gencat.cat

Central Europe

Tel. (+49) 69 7422 4873

info.act.de@gencat.cat

Nordic Countries

Tel. (+358) 407 17 72 95

info.act.nordic@gencat.cat

UK & Ireland

Tel. (+44) 207 583 88 55

info.act.uk@gencat.cat

Eastern Europe

Tel. (+7) 495 567 18 71

info.act.ru@gencat.cat

USA

Tel. (+1) 212 78 23 332

info.act.usa@gencat.cat

Southeast Asia

Tel. (+65) 62204022

info.act.sea@gencat.cat

South America

Tel. (+55) 11 30530477

info.act.latam@gencat.cat

China

Tel. (+8610) 848 682 84

promotion.act.cn@gencat.cat

Tourist Information Point

Blanquerna Cultural Centre Madrid

Tel. (+34) 915 241 000

turisme.blanquerna@gencat.cat

Other relevant tourist web sites

Catalonia

www.catalunya.com

Catalan Tourist Board

www.act.cat

Activities in natural and rural areas

Pirineus

www.visitpirineus.com

Catalan Ski Resort and Mountain Activity Association – ACEM

www.catneu.net

Catalan Confederation of Rural Tourism – Concatur

www.ecoturismecatalunya.com

Rural Tourism and Agro-Tourism Confederation of Catalonia – Turalcat

www.turalcat.com

Accessible Catalonia

Accessible Catalonia

www.turismeperatohom.com/es

Camí de Sant Jaume

www.camidesantjaumeperatohom.cat

Towns and villages with character

Spa Association

www.balneario.org

Thermal Towns of Catalonia

www.catalunyatermal.com

AVE Experience

www.avexperience.es

Sports

Marinas

www.acpet.es/

Wine tourism

INCAVI – Catalan Vineyard and Wine Institute

www.incavi.cat

Priorat Wine Route

www.turismepriorat.org / www.prioratenoturisme.com

Lleida-Costers del Segre Wine Route (Wine Route of Spain)

www.rutadelvidelleida.com

DO Empordà Wine Route (Wine Route of Spain)

www.rutadelvidoemporda.org

Penedès Wine Tourism (Wine Route of Spain)

www.enoturismepenedes.cat

DO Alella Wine Tourism

www.doalella.cat

Business tourism

Catalunya Convention Bureau

www.catalunya.com/mice



Partners:

