Press Pack 2016
Table of contents

Introduction 4

Catalonia, a Quality Destination 8

Tourist Attractions 10

Tourist Accommodation 13

Tourist Brands 16
  Costa Brava 17
  Costa Barcelona 19
  Barcelona 21
  Costa Daurada 23
  Terres de l'Ebre 25
  Pirineus 27
  Terres de Lleida 29
  Val d'Aran 31
  Paisatges Barcelona 33

Tourist experiences 35
  Activities in Natural and Rural Areas 37
  Accessible Catalonia 40
  Towns and Villages with Character 43
  Sports 45
  Wine Tourism 48
  Gastronomia 50
  Great Icons and Great Routes 52
  100% Hiking and Cycling 54
  Business Tourism 56
  Family Holidays 58

What’s new 2016 60

Useful Addresses 81
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.
- 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 Vilafranca 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, with over 31 million tourists a year, more than half from abroad. 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, protected coastal areas and a wide range of water sports. The hinterland between the Pyrenees and the sea boasts numerous attractions, such as countless Romanesque churches and monasteries, Montseny, Montserrat and Sant Llorenç del Munt i l’Obac natural parks, plus pedestrianised old towns featuring heritage sites and traditional products.
Airports. Catalonia has five commercial airports.

- Barcelona. Over 35 million passengers used Catalonia’s main airport in 2015, an ongoing increase year after 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, plus the new railway link between the T-1 terminal and the city centre.

- 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 roughly 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 developed the premises into a public infrastructure that has now handled its first regular flights. The airport was reopened in June 2010 following adaptation works on the premises and the runway. It is designed 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 2015. 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. 38 cruise ships with around 38,000 passengers berthed at Palamós in 2015, allowing visits to the main attractions on Costa Brava.

- **Roses.** Having joined the cruise port network recently, Roses is making progress as a destination on northern Costa Brava. 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. Featuring fine facilities and an attractive hinterland, the first cruise ships have called with a total 7000 passengers. 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 welcomes the Star Flyer in summer, a luxury four-masted sailing ship that berths six 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 Gaudi’s Colonia 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](http://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 45 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.
Together with the tourist industry, the Catalan Tourist Board is developing new products resulting in specialisation brands and certificates: distinctive high-end proposals aimed at satisfying visitors’ needs. An example is the specialisation of the Family Holidays brand, offering attractive proposals catering for those travelling with children to coastal or inland villages, the mountains or seaside resorts with large beaches. Another proposal are Gastronomic Hotels: comfortable, top-quality accommodation where a familiar atmosphere and good cuisine are a must. In its turn, Road Cycling Tourism has been designed for road cyclers who wish to explore Catalonia on a saddle.
Tourist Attractions

UNESCO World Heritage in Catalonia

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

- **Hospital de la Santa Creu i Sant Pau.** Barcelona. Art Nouveau. Built by Lluís Domènech i Montaner in 1902.
- **Poblet Monastery.** Vimbodi (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 140 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 Quirc de Durro
  - Santa Maria de Cardet
  - Assumpció de Coll
- The work of Antoni Gaudí:

- 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 Familia Crypt. Barcelona. Built between 1884 and 1889, Gaudi’s oldest religious work.
- Nativity Façade at the Sagrada Familia. 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.

- The Falles in the Pyrenees. Recently declared Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, this summer and winter solstice fire festival brings together cultural and natural heritage and has a cross-border geographic scope, as it comprises 63 villages from France, Catalonia, Aragon and Andorra.

Thanks to Catalonia’s both tangible and intangible heritage, applications are filed every year to have places or concepts included as World Heritage. This is the case of Turó de la Seu Vella in Lleida, an architectural site dating from the 13th-14th centuries that has become the city’s landmark. This application joins the one for Catalan cuisine, based on 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.
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. All this is proven by an increasing number of beaches and marinas flying the Blue Flag. Moreover, the portal of the Meteorological Service of Catalonia started a new feature in 2015 providing the weather and sea forecast for beaches and water sports.

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

More than 30% of the Catalan territory enjoys some degree of special protection. Apart from one national park, there are 14 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, celebrated its 60th anniversary in 2015. 14,000 hectares are covered by the national park itself, plus a further 26,000 of peripheral area. The main gates to the park are at Espot (Pallars Sobirà) and Vall de Boí (Alta Ribagorça), with further access through Vall Fosca (Pallars Jussà) by cable car and Val d’Aran. Noteworthy are also natural areas such as **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 hostelries (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 hostelries 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 Cases Fonda de Catalunya, a traditional accommodation and food option including eleven 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 of around 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. Many of these camp sites have added an excellently equipped bungalow offer to their plots, thus appealing to a wider audience beyond traditional camping.

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.

Confederación Catalana de Turismo Rural - Concatur
www.concatur.cat

Confederación del Turismo Rural y el Agroturismo de Cataluña - Turalcat
www.turalcat.com

---

The Directorate General of Tourism at the Catalan Ministry of Business and Knowledge edits an e-guide, available on http://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, leaving a tangible footprint. Visitors must not miss the Dalí Triangle composed of the Dali Museum-Theatre in Figueres, the Salvador Dalí Museum-House in Portlligat and the Gala Dalí Castle in Púbol. Ferran Adrià, an icon of avantguardist 21st century Catalan cuisine, is established at Costa Brava with 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 features thirteen restaurants with a total 17 Michelin stars, spearheaded by El Celler de Can Roca in Girona by the Roca brothers, currently one the world’s best restaurants 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.

Costa Brava boasts a big natural diversity. There are five 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, 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 at the starting point of St James’ Way through Catalonia. 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.

www.costabrava.org
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 concentrates countless services and 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 commercial 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 relevant medieval monastic sites (9th century). In Vallès Oriental, the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya racetrack gathers hosts the Formula 1 and Motorcycling Grand Prix, besides offering a large variety in activities for all audiences. Terrassa boasts Seu Egara, a unique heritage site in Europe, the Museum of Science and Technology of Catalonia and Masia Freixa, built in the early 20th century, plus 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 as well as Montserrat with its unique, peculiar rounded shapes, El Garraf, Sant Llorenç del Munt i l’Obac and Montseny inland.

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 in Costa Barcelona stand out Gaudi’s Art Nouveau works in Baix Llobregat, featuring prominently the Colònia Güell Crypt, 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.

www.barcelonaesmoltmes.cat
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 la Santa Creu i 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](http://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.
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.

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. 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. Birdwatching can be done in Terres de l’Ebre anytime during the year.

Terres de l’Ebre has a rich and varied tourist offer, with nature, 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 cen-
tre 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.*

www.terresdelebre.travel
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, Vall Ferrera 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, while Baqueira Beret in Val d’Aran is a countrywide benchmark resort. 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; Cadi-Moixeró Natural Park with Pedraforca as its landmark; and recently created Capçaleres del Ter i del Freser Natural Park. 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 with the only Romanesque cathedral in the Catalan Pyrenees, 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. In Sant Climent de Taüll, a spectacular mapping reproduces the decoration of the apse and the church in all its colourfulness. La Patum festival in Berga, a spectacular celebration cuyos orígenes hay que buscarlos en la segunda mitad del siglo xiv, was declared a Masterpiece of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2005. Likewise, the Falles in the Pyrenees obtained this declaration in late 2015.

The accommodation offer 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 La Llotja Congress Centre place the Lleida area, its capital and by extension the Pyrenees as destinations with large potentialities regarding tourism and conventions.
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), together with the Camí Ignasià (Ignatian Way) one of the latest big tourist initiatives covering 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.

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 Baronía de Les and Banhs de Tredòs 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.*

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, Moianès 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 Guillerías 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 Montesquiu 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 Central 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 arced Plaça Major or Plaça del Mercadal, famous for its weekly market. 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. Another appealing option is the shopping route along high-end outlets. An interesting side trip leads to Capellades to visit the Paper Mill Museum and see how paper was made in former times. The county hosts the biggest international balloon meeting in the country, the European Balloon Festival in Igualada. 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 and its dry stone vineyard huts featuring the extraordinary Tines de l’Escudelleta i d’en Ricardo vat collection.
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 Great Routes
- 100% Hiking and Cycling
- Business 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 Destinations (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.

*Through its bookexperience.catalunya.com commercialisation platform, the Catalan Tourist Board offers the best tourist experiences provided throughout the country. This sales channel is compatible with tablets and mobile devices and is available in eight languages: Catalan, Spanish, English, French, German, Italian, Russian and Portuguese.*
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, Esport 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. Besides, resorts such as La Molina, Baqueira Beret and Tavascan also offer adapted activities and circuits.

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.*
Accessible Catalonia

Catalonia has positioned itself as one of Europe’s most accessible tourist destinations. 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.

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
- Delta de l’Ebre
- Garraf-Sitges
- Costa Daurada
- Penedès-Accessible Wine Tourism
- Dali 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.turismeperaithom.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

Catalonia offers 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 in this area 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. 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. Tavascan ski resort in Pallars Sobirà has also adapted some routes with cross-country ski slopes and snow racket paths for persons with some sort of intellectual impairment, training guides to accompany them.

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 increasingly more travel agents specialising in this sort of products.

Within this area, the Catalan Tourist Board has obtained numerous acknowledgements and awards ever since it started the Accessible Tourism – Tourism for Everybody project, featuring prominently the Intermedia-Globe Silver Award from the World Media Festival in Hamburg for the “T’espero” tourist promotion campaign in sign language and with subtitles, the Solidary Award of the Spanish National Blind Organisation (ONCE) in the Public Administration category and the first European CHARTS 2014 award for promoting cultural and sustainable tourism.
Within the World Travel Market 2015 held in London, the promotors of the “Responsible Tourism Day” initiative gave the **WRTD (World Responsible Tourism Day) award** to the Catalan Tourist Board (CTB) for a fourth consecutive year as a recognition of Catalonia’s work in implementing and promoting accessible tourism.

Accessible Tourism – Tourism for Everybody has been one of the main aspects earning Catalonia the first **Biosphere Label** certification as a fully responsible tourist destination, which is awarded by the Responsible Tourism Institute, a body related to the UNESCO and a partner to the World Tourism Organization and the Global Sustainable Tourism Council.

The commitment and effort to implement a true tourism for everybody has led the CTB to join the European Network for Accessible Tourism (ENAT) and the International Social Tourism Organisation (ISTO) and chair of the Network of European Regions for a Sustainable and Competitive Tourism (NECSTouR) for the 2016-2018 period. 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.

*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 the quality of life.*
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.

Catalonia 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.
Thermal Towns

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 Garriga, 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

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.

Catalonia has a great sporting tradition. Centenary clubs such as FC Barcelona, RCD Espanyol and Palamós CF as well as Reus in roller hockey, Atlètic Barceloneta in water polo and many more are part of Catalan history and culture. This tradition has brought forward many champions in disciplines such as roller and field hockey, basketball, tennis, handball, sailing and many more, with prominent names like Pau Gasol, Marc Márquez, Kilian Jornet and Mireia Belmonte, just to mention a few.

Sports Tourism Destination (DTD)

This specialisation label awarded by the Catalan Tourist Board recognises destinations characterised by offering top-range resources and services aimed at sports-loving visitors. The CTB has developed this label 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 **16 municipalities certified** as an STD in different categories are:

**Destinations ensuring top-level sports practice:**

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

- Val d’Aran (high mountain) [www.visitvaldaran.com](http://www.visitvaldaran.com)

**Water sports (sailing and scuba diving)**

- L’Ametlla de Mar [www.ametilamar.cat](http://www.ametilamar.cat)

**Football, rowing and kayaking (flatwater or whitewater)**

- Banyoles-Pla de l’Estany (flatwater rowing) [www.turismeiesport.cat](http://www.turismeiesport.cat)
- La Seu d’Urgell (whitewater kayaking) [www.turismeseu.com](http://www.turismeseu.com) and [www.parcolimpic.cat](http://www.parcolimpic.cat)
- Sort (whitewater kayaking) [www.sortturisme.com](http://www.sortturisme.com)
- Castelldefels (flatwater rowing and kayaking) [www.castelldefels.org/esports](http://www.castelldefels.org/esports) and [www.castelldefelsturisme.com](http://www.castelldefelsturisme.com)
- Amposta (flatwater rowing) [www.turismeamposta.cat](http://www.turismeamposta.cat)
- Salou (football) [www.visitsalou.cat](http://www.visitsalou.cat)

**Multi-sports destinations:**

- Lloret de Mar (track & field, football, teams and swimming) [www.lloretdemar.org](http://www.lloretdemar.org)
- Blanes (football, teams, sailing and running) [www.visitblanes.net](http://www.visitblanes.net)
- Girona (track & field, cycling, swimming, running and tennis) [www.girona.cat/turisme](http://www.girona.cat/turisme)
- Santa Susanna (football, teams, sailing and cycling) [www.stasusanna-online.com](http://www.stasusanna-online.com)
- Calella (football, track & field, swimming and running) [www.calellabarcelona.com](http://www.calellabarcelona.com)
- Cambrils (football, track & field, sailing and cycling) [www.cambrils.cat/turisme](http://www.cambrils.cat/turisme)
- L’Hospitalet de Llobregat (track & field, football, teams and swimming) [www.l-h.net/](http://www.l-h.net/)

**European reference centres:**

- Castelló d’Empúries-Empuriabrava (parachuting) [www.castelloempuriabrava.com](http://www.castelloempuriabrava.com)
Water Sports

Catalonia is a fine destination for water sports, which can be done mainly at the sea, but also in rivers, lakes and reservoirs. There are a total 42 marinas within the Catalan network comprising 50 harbours, all equipped with suitable facilities for sailors, plus 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 and 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 marinas and nautical resorts provide a great variety in activities such as snorkelling, kitesurfing, flyboard, standup paddle boarding, fly fish, sailing, rowing, jet skiing, kayaking, sailing a catamaran or other available boats and fishing.

Golf

The mild Mediterranean climate and a natural environment that combines the beauty of the mountains with beaches make Catalonia a perfect place for golf lovers and one of Europe’s main golf destinations, where this sport can be done with friends and family.

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. Some having been created by renowned architects, they are all 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).
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 seaside 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 with organic and biodynamic production, 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.

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.
Gastronomía

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 2016 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
- Girona Territori d’Estrelles
- Cuina Tradicional Tossenca

**In Costa Barcelona:**
- Club de Tast del Gremi d’Hostaleria de Sitges
- Corbera Sabors
- Col·lectiu Cubat
- Cuina Vallès
- Cuina VO
- Menja’t Vilanova
- Vilafranca Ve de Gust

**In Barcelona:**
- Barceloneta Cuina

**In Costa Daurada:**
- Cuines del Vendrell
- El Gust és Nostre (Calafell)
- Tarragona Gastronòmica
- Terra i Taula

**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 Gastronomía de l’Ametlla de Mar
- L’Essència de l’Arròs d’Amposta

**In Terres de Lleida:**
- Noguera Cuina

**In Paisatges Barcelona:**
- Osona Cuina
- Fogons Gastronòmics del Bages
- Cardona Sabors
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 **63 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.

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 this year in Girona 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.

*Catalonia’s gastronomic offer provides a great wealth of options to live the Catalan cuisine in multiple ways, either before or after an excellent meal. Strolling between market stalls, enjoying a day out with professional fishermen, cooking typical dishes, visiting artisan cheesemakers, sausage makers or oil mills, having an insight into wine cellars as well as visiting specialised museums and exhibition and research centres are among the proposals awaiting anybody who wishes to enjoy enogastronomic tourism in Catalonia.*
Great Icons and Great Routes

**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 **eleven World Heritage sites**, three masterpieces of **Intangible Cultural Heritage** and 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 Cister (Cistercian Route) or the various routes associated to cultural, industrial and religious heritage, including the Ignatian Way, which celebrates its jubilee year till July 2016.

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 Santa Florentina Music Festival, the habanera singing in Calella de Palafregull and the International Music Festival in Cantonigròs. In this respect, great cellist **Pau Casals** is also noteworthy. His birth-
place **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.*
100% Hiking and Cycling

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 Cadi-Moixeró Natural Park; and Estels del Sud (Southern Stars) is a trek through Els Ports Natural Park.

**Other interesting routes** are Camí de Sant Jaume (St. James’ Way), the pilgrimage way between Sant Pere de Rodes and Alcarràs, accessible and featuring downloadable information on all its stages; the Ignatian Way through half Catalonia; 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; Picasso Way in the Pyrenees; 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, the Pedals de Foc route to discover the surroundings of Aigüestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici National Park 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 Spain set up seventeen years ago. The Transcatalunyana 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.

Catalonia also boasts a wide road and sealed rural path network for road cycling, as well as fine weather, varied landscape and services catering for cyclists.

The CTB has created the Road Cycling Tourism label to disseminate the opportunities provided in Catalonia to enjoy this product. It is an initiative involving currently seven municipalities: Blanes, Lloret de Mar, Girona, 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 addressed at this specific sort of tourism by catering for all related needs. The CTB has edited two maps with some of the routes provided by these municipalities, one featuring those along Costa Brava and Costa Barcelona and another with the routes in Costa Daurada, available in PDF format at www.act.cat.
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

The Catalunya Convention Bureau (CCB) is a brand of the Catalan Tourist Board aimed at positioning Catalonia as a fully-fledged business tourism destination. After five years of functioning, the CCB has decided to reformulate its relations with institutions and companies working in bringing meetings to Catalonia. The goal of this new model of relations is to implement new working patterns between the existing Convention Bureaux, thus providing more marketing services and support actions to companies while optimising resources and bundling efforts to make Catalonia a more competitive destination.

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.

Main services for organisers:

- Exhaustive knowledge of Catalonia
- Free, unbiased, professional advice
- Contact and intermediation with companies
- Support to nominations to capture congresses.
- Familiarisation trips and actions to communicate the offer and specific programmes.
The CCB has a website, www.catalunya.com/mice/ccb featuring the whole offer in Catalonia related to the brand. The different catalogues edited to promote Catalonia as a complete destination for events, congresses and incentives are published there:

- **Catalonia Congresses and Events** featuring nine destinations with capacity to host congresses as they provide modern facilities and a big organisational expertise in this area. These are Barcelona, Sitges, Castelldefels, Girona, Lloret de Mar, Tarragona, Reus, PortAventura and Lleida.

- **Catalonia Conventions, Incentives and Events** bringing together the complete offer in Catalonia regarding meeting facilities and proposals for post-meeting or incentive-related activities: urban, Mediterranean coast, Pyrenees and inland landscapes.

- **Meeting Planner Guide** containing all the necessary information to organise any kind of meeting in Catalonia. This publication includes the offer of over 140 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.

One of the most recent CCB programmes that is yielding good results is the **Ambassadors Programme**, with currently more than 110 ambassadors throughout Catalonia. The programme intends to provide support to Catalan professionals from different branches able to attract congresses and events and thus create new business and knowledge opportunities for the country.
Family Holidays

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

Family Holiday Destination (FHD)

The Catalan Tourist Board features 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 pushchairs, socket protectors, etc.

There are currently 22 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**:

- Calella / www.calellabarcelona.com
- Malgrat de Mar / www.turismemalgrat.com
- Pineda de Mar / www.pinedademat.cat
- Santa Susanna / www.stasusanna-online.com
- Castelldefels / www.castelldefelsturisme.com
- Vilanova i la Geltrú / www.vilanova.cat

On **Costa Daurada**:

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

**Inland:**

- Berga / www.turismeberga.cat
- Muntanyes de Prades / www.prades.cat
- Valls d’Àneu / www.vallsdaneu.org
- Vall de Boí / http://www.vallboi.cat/ca

In addition to the current 22 FHD certified destinations, there are **further seven in the process of certification**: Sant Pere Pescador on the coast as well as Vall de Camprodon, Vall de Núria-Vall de Ribes, Sort-Rialp-Port Ainé, Alp-La Molina-Masella, Vall d’en Bas-Les Preses and enlarged Muntanyes de Prades inland.

*The certified family offer is provided by about 700 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.*
What’s new 2016

2016, the Year of Gastronomy and Wine Tourism

Together with the Minho region in Portugal, Catalonia has been recognised as European Region of Gastronomy 2016. Both are the first in Europe to obtain this distinction. The recognition of Catalan cuisine has been a reason to declare 2016 as the Year of Gastronomy and Wine Tourism in Catalonia, which shall give new momentum to these two areas intimately related to tourism. Based on the cuisine-produce-territory triangle, this theme year aims at positioning gastronomy as a key item for Catalonia’s uniqueness and one of the main aspects that define it as a tourist destination.

www.catalunya.com

International Wine Tourism Conference 2016

Barcelona will host the International Wine Tourism Conference 2016 (IWINETC 2016) on 5 and 6 April, one of the world’s most important wine tourism congresses held along the year. This event confirms Catalonia as a prime wine tourism destination, known not only for the quality of its wines and sparkling wines but also for its varied tourist offer in this segment.

http://www.iwinetc.com/

Catalonia chairs NECSTouR

At the NECSTouR General Assembly held in Brussels, Catalonia has been elected to chair this organisation for the 2015-2018 period. Flanders will hold the vice-presidency, Tuscany the secretariat general and the Swedish region of Västra Götaland the treasury. This election is an excellent opportunity to portray the country and its best experiences as a sustainable tourist destination. This has been in fact the main reason for its election, Catalonia being a consolidated destination with a well-defined policy in its Strategic Tourism Plan and its Tourist Marketing Plan.

The Network of European Regions for a Sustainable and Competitive Tourism, NECS-TouR, was founded in 2009 by Catalonia, Tuscany and Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur. It works to deepen cooperation between European regions in consolidating sustainable tourism and having a direct influence in European tourist policies. To this end, coordi-
nated work is carried out through different task forces, dealing with areas such as accessibility, climate change, indicators for sustainable tourism and maritime and coastal tourism, among others. The network is currently composed of thirty European member regions plus 35 associate members, including companies, institutions, universities and associations from the European tourist industry.

http://www.necstour.eu/

The *Falles* in the Pyrenees, UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage

Several villages in the Pyrenees celebrate the summer and in some cases also the winter solstice with fire. On St John’s Eve or Christmas Eve, lit torches are carried down from the mountains, or alternatively large logs are burnt on in the village square. Together with the purifying fire, these celebrations are held with folk dance and music, and local food products are served.

This tradition has been conveyed over generations, its permanence through time having led to the declaration of the Summer Solstice Fire Festival in the Pyrenees as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. This distinction embraces 63 villages: 17 in Catalonia, 9 in Aragon, 3 in Andorra and 34 in France.

www.catalunya.com

2015/2016 ski season

The ski season provides fine expectations in Catalonia for its 10 alpine and 6 Nordic ski resorts. They all have invested in improving their facilities and making winter sports a better experience.

Joint ski passes, circuits for persons with reduced mobility through adapted seats and a new product line with a specific offer for senior citizens are among the offer recently introduced by the different resorts.

Catalonia’s 16 ski resorts are a main driver of economic development in the Catalan Pyrenees and a cornerstone to foster inland and mountain tourism. With the aim of supporting the offer provided by ski resorts, the CTB has launched a promotion campaign that adapts the “Catalonia is your home” slogan to the winter offer and a skiing audience. The ads feature football player Xavi Hernández and Olympic medallist swimmer Gemma Mengual.
Apart from this promotion campaign, the CTB also markets offers and experiences related with snow through its internet sales channel on [http://bookexperience.cat lunya.com](http://bookexperience.catlunya.com).


**Catalonia obtains the Biosphere certification**

Catalonia has become the world’s first full destination obtaining the Biosphere Responsible Tourism certification, a label connected to the UNESCO Global Sustainable Tourism Council. Catalonia thus reinforces its commitment to a responsible, environmentally sustainable, socially inclusive and universally accessible tourism model that keeps a balance between residents and visitors.

The Biosphere certification is a label acknowledging responsibility of tourist destinations, awarded by the Institute of Responsible Tourism, a member of the World Tourism Organisation.

[https://www.biospheretourism.com/es](https://www.biospheretourism.com/es)

**New features in business tourism**

The CTB fosters the Ambassadors programme through the Catalunya Convention Bureau (CCB), by which reputed professionals from different areas attract meetings, congresses and events to Catalonia. A total 110 personalities from different domains, such as medicine, science and economics, have accepted this task aimed at contributing to positioning Catalonia as an excellent destination to hold any sort of events. The I Annual Meeting of Ambassadors of Catalonia is planned for this year.

The 2nd Business Tourism Forum of Catalonia will take place in Barcelona in 2016. This professional meeting will gather the whole Catalan business tourism industry to discuss the current situation of this tourist segment and possible strategies to foster its development. Attendants to the convention will have the chance of sharing knowledge, detecting needs and discovering opportunities. It is a good time to create synergies and learn about trends to consolidate and grow business tourism in Catalonia involving all stakeholders. The first edition held two years ago was attended by almost 600 people.

The regional convention bureaux also introduce new offers year after year. 2016 will see, among others, a new convention centre for 400 visitors in the SB BCN Events hotel in Castelldefels (Baix Llobregat); a new unique meeting facility in the city centre of
Tarragona, Casa Joan Miret (AG Planning Group); and the Girona City Convention Bureau is working in providing tourist packages for international groups taking advantage of the shooting of *Game of Thrones* in Girona, which has increased the interest for the medieval city.

http://www.catalunya.com/mice/ccb

**New Family Holiday Destinations and Sports Tourism Destinations**

Within the tourist specialisation of destinations pursued by the CTB, El Vendrell, Vilanova i la Geltrú, Vall de Boí and Castelldefels have been recently certified as Family Holiday Destinations (FHD) and Girona and L’Ametlla de Mar as Sports Tourism Destinations (STD).

Six further FHDs are planned to be certified this year: Sant Pere Pescador, Sort-Rialp-Port Ainé, Alp-La Molina-Masella, Vall de Núria-Vall de Ribes, Vall de Camprodon and Vall d’en Bas-Les Preses.

www.catalunya.com
Costa Brava

50th Habanera Singing

The Costa Brava will host the 50th Habanera Singing in Calella de Palafrugell in summer 2016, an unprecedented event in Catalonia.

The first singing, held on 2 September 1967, came up in the beach bars on Platja d’en Calau, as homage to seamen and to recover a tradition from the past. Fifty years have now passed, and the 3000 attendants to the second edition have multiplied to become 30,000 plus coming presently to Calella de Palafrugell every first Saturday in July.

This summer will not only see improvements in the Habanera Singing as such, but the Palafrugell Town Council as its current organiser also plans to surprise the audience with many new musical, editorial, artistic and participatory features. Furthermore, several exhibitions will be held, the most important in the courtyard of Palau Robert in Barcelona from June to September.

http://visitpalafrugell.cat/es/

The golf course in Pals turns 50

Created in 1966, it was the first on the Costa Brava, at the beginning of a sport that has with time made this tourist brand one of Spain’s most important golf destinations. Located in the Arenals de Mar estate on dunes covered by a vast pine grove planted seventy years ago, Golf Platja de Pals was laid out in the early 1960s, although it took six years to be opened. It is considered one of Spain’s best golf courses, owing to its careful planning and construction, and has hosted numerous international competitions.

http://golfplatjade pals.com
The Hotel School of Girona celebrates its 50th anniversary

Founded in 1965, this highly important training institution for both the restaurant business and tourism has turned fifty. The 1950s saw the rise of the tourist, hotel and gastronomy business in Catalonia, which developed as the demand from visitors grew, becoming structured and consolidated year after year with the increasing interest of both local and foreign tourists and visitors. For good reason, Girona, Empordà and the Costa Brava have positioned themselves as some of the most relevant tourist brands in Catalonia.

www.ehtg.cat

30th anniversary of the Castell de Peralada Festival

2016 will see the 30th anniversary of the festival held in the gardens of Peralada Castle. Renowned artists have performed on its stage over these years: opera singers, classical music soloists and groups, jazz players, performers of contemporary music…

The programme for the 2016 edition features the Béjart Ballet Lausanne, Tom Jones, Joan Manuel Serrat, Luz Casal, Maria Pagés’ company and performances of El Amor Brujo, Otello and Carmen.

http://festivalperalada.com
Costa Barcelona

Museum of Tourism

Calella, a pioneering tourist destination, has just opened the Museum of Tourism of Catalonia, located in the former Llobet-Guri spinning mill and providing an overview over the world of tourism related to both Calella and the whole of Catalonia.

The museum is divided into four areas: first, a film introduces visitors into the size and global effects of tourism; the second area is related to the origin of tourism, focusing on great travellers; the third room is devoted to tourism in Calella; and finally, a fourth multi-use room hosts temporary exhibitions and documentation. All this is completed with a myriad of objects, posters and photographs related with the world of tourism.

www.museudelturisme.cat

Tourist establishments provide tourist information

The Barcelona Provincial Council is fostering a tourist information point project with the aim of providing the different counties with a higher number of information points—either public institutions or private tourist facilities/services—to complete the service for tourists and visitors and provide the tools to inform, guide and orient them throughout their stay.

The project was introduced in Alt Penedès and Anoia in 2013, registering over 30 establishments. These counties have been recently joined by Berguedà and Osona (with more than 50 registered businesses), to be followed soon by Vallès Oriental and Vallès Occidental.

These tourist labels intend to improve the information standard provided throughout the country and create a public-private tourist information network. Registration as an information point is also a formal acknowledgement of the information and advisory task already carried out by many tourist establishments and services. The programme is implemented through five training schemes, including training and knowledge of the land as well as a catalogue with tourist services and products of each county.

www.barcelonaesmoltmes.cat/es
Vies Braves in Costa Barcelona

The Costa Barcelona brand is joining the Vies Braves project with different maritime routes along its coast. Similar to the watch paths following the terrestrial part of the coast, the Vies Braves are maritime routes covered by swimming. The first having been implemented are roughly one kilometre long and stretch from Cala Ginesta to Garraf beach, from Els Ponts to Aiguadolç beaches, from Garbi beach to Cala Grossa in Calella and from cape Grills to Home Mort beach. Another route has been created through La Baells reservoir in Berguedà.

www.barcelonaestmolmes.cat/es/web/territori/vies-braves
Barcelona

Barrier-free Gothic Quarter

Turisme de Barcelona has created Easy Walking Tour Gòtic, a guided architectural barrier-free tour through the Gothic Quarter lasting 90 minutes, allowing persons with reduced mobility to discover the old city centre. This adapted route is the first product aimed at disabled persons under the Barcelona Sustainable Tourism programme by Turisme de Barcelona. Easy Walking Tour organises a walk on the first and third Friday of each month. Turisme de Barcelona is already working in developing further regular accessible routes and different versions for blind and visually impaired persons and sign language users.

www.barcelonaturisme.com

The Columbus Lookout, an information point on wine tourism

Barcelona features the Columbus Lookout Wine Tourism and Wine Information Point, where tourist services related with winemaking and wine and cava culture in the Barcelona area are disseminated, promoted and sold, including 70 different wine references. The Columbus Lookout is a tourist landmark in Barcelona, welcoming more than 130,000 visitors a year. It also hosts a tourist information point currently offering 65,000 service items related with culture and leisure in Barcelona. One goal of this new office is to strengthen the link between Barcelona and the world of wine and cava.

www.barcelonaturisme.com

Cultural diversity in the Museum of Cultures of the World

This recently opened museum is devoted to disseminating the world’s cultural diversity. It is located in two palaces in Carrer Montcada, a pedestrian street in the Born quarter, where the Picasso Museum can be found alongside palaces dating from the 14th to the 17th century. The collection of the museum, featuring over 30,000 objects, comes from private collections and the Barcelona Museum of Ethnology. There will be also temporary exhibitions, guided tours, lectures, courses and workshops for all audiences.

www.museuculturesmon.bcn.cat
Turó de la Rovira, a natural lookout and exhibition centre

At 262 metres above sea level and boasting a 360° view, Turó de la Rovira is an outstanding vantage point and was once a strategic location for the defence of Barcelona during the Spanish Civil War.

Following works performed over the last months, the MUHBA (Museum of History of Barcelona) at Turó de la Rovira features a new exhibition area providing an overview over the history of the city from a bird’s-eye view, Barcelona during war and post-war, the Turó de la Rovira anti-aircraft battery and Canons quarter as well as the city’s shan-tytowns. The Commandment Post of the battery shows the relation between modern technology and the air war in big cities.

www.museuhistoria.bcn.cat
Costa Daurada

Ferrari Land in PortAventura

PortAventura Resort hosts the new Ferrari Land theme park addressed at fans of the Italian brand. Taking an area of 75,000 square metres, it will offer multiple thrilling attractions for the whole family, featuring prominently Europe’s highest and fastest vertical accelerator.

Fans can also stay at the world’s first Ferrari hotel, a five-star establishment decorated in the brand style to provide a unique experience inside and outside the park.

www.portaventura.es/ferrari-land

The exhibition «Titanic. The Reconstruction», in Tarragona

Tarraco Arena Plaza in Tarragona will host the world premiere of the exhibition “Titanic. The Reconstruction” from March to May, including a large model of the historic ship.

The reproduction of the Titanic will display the liner setting off the port of Southampton on 10 April 1912 on a scale of 1/30, being 12 metres long, 4.5 metres wide and 3 metres high. The model features more than 6000 light spots and almost 400 figures, taking crew and passengers together. Through openings in the hull, the starboard of the ship displays its inside and the distribution of the premises, while the port side shows the liner berthed along the quay in a representation of the harbour.

The exhibition will also display the most relevant areas of the Titanic in real size, such as the mail room, the telegraph room, the cargo hold where artworks were stored or the area where cars were carried. Visitors can gaze at the original 1909 Brush, called “the Titanic car” as it was to be loaded onto the ship to be presented in Europe, or look at El sueño del Titanic by Spanish painter Enrique Grande.

http://tap.cat
Guided tour in Montblanc

A three-and-a-half hour guided tour through the hills leads from Rojals to the cave paintings. The walking difficulty is low, which makes it an ideal offer for families.

www.montblancmedieval.cat

Theme routes along the Salou coast

The municipality of Salou will offer guided theme tours to discover its coast. Each proposal will have a specific focus, such as history, culture, fauna or economy, each featuring different points of interest along the coast. This new offer provided by the municipality includes over a hundred sights.

www.visitsalou.eu

New edition of the human tower contest

On 1 and 2 October, Tarraco Arena Plaza in Tarragona will host the 26th biannual castells contest, featuring the best human tower teams. One of its main attractions is the fact of being the only gathering during the castells season at which human towers are rated according to their difficulty. The teams compete to reach the maximum points in the final ranking. Almost 7000 attendants come to watch the most important castells event, which also enjoys a great coverage by media from all over the world. It is a prime gathering and a unique opportunity to experience this gem of Catalan culture declared Intangible Cultural Heritage by the UNESCO.

www.concursdecastells.cat/

3rd edition of Calafell Family Weekend

Calafell will host the third Calafell Family Weekend in spring, with some new features such as cooking activities and workshops for children, new shows and specific activities for babies.

http://turisme.calafell.cat
Terres de l’Ebre

Better information signs in the Delta de l’Ebre Natural Park

The Delta de l’Ebre Natural Park will feature three large information panels on Punta del Fangar (Deltebre). The signs inform on nesting birds, lighthouses and the desert-like landscape. This action shall provide visitors with a better knowledge of this little peninsula that is home to numerous species of plants, reptiles, insects, birds and micromammals that have adapted to the difficulties of the environment. The area hosts large colonies of nesting sea birds, especially terns and some species of seagulls. The most prominent landmark is the lighthouse, a 20-metre-high concrete tower with a 3 metre diameter, built in 1972.

http://parcsnaturals.gencat.cat/es/delta-ebre/

Ebreterra, Centre of Tourist Inspiration

Located in Baix Ebre county, this centre intends to provide a full service in tourist training and promotion, combining personal attention, visitor experience, discovery of the land, exhibitions, specialisation courses and vocational training, apart from advice and orientation for businesses.

www.ebre.com/ebreterra-centre-dinspiracio-turistica

Experiences in Terres de l’Ebre

The portal www.terresdelebre.travel features several experiences for visitors, divided into nature, culture, wine tourism, navigation and fluvial activities as well as gastronomy. All in all, over fifty experiences are offered based on five different products.

www.terresdelebre.travel/experiencies
Lleida

Moturisme Ara Lleida

The Lleida Provincial Council is promoting through its Tourism Board a new tourist product called Moturisme Ara Lleida, aimed at providing added value specifically to tourism related with motorbike travellers. There are currently 40 accommodation businesses and 28 restaurants, cafeterias and museums, among others, providing this specific offer in the Lleida province. After passing a training course and an audit of their business, they offer an array of services specifically designed for catering for the needs of motorcycling tourists and making them feel like home.

The Moturisme Ara Lleida project, pioneering in Spain, sets a warranty scheme by means of a quality label that identifies accommodation businesses and their side offer providing suitable facilities for this target audience.

www.aralleida.cat

La Seu d’Urgell and Sort will host the canoeing world championships in 2019

La Seu d’Urgell and Sort will be the venue of the slalom, sprint and freestyle wildwater world championships in 2019. These events will bring those Pyrenean towns intimately related to water sports back to international headlines, providing great momentum to tourist promotion of these two mountain territories.

The freestyle world championship will be held in Sort in July 2019, while La Seu d’Urgell will host the slalom and racing world championship in September that year.

Both La Seu d’Urgell and Sort have a long tradition in organising international top-level wildwater canoeing events. The former hosted the slalom world championship in 1999 and 2009, while Sort was the venue of the freestyle world championship in 2001 and that of racing and sprint in 2010. Also, the Segre Olympic Park in La Seu d’Urgell will host the slalom world cup on 7-9 August this year.

Europe's first observatory-classroom in the Montsec Astronomic Park

The observatory-classroom allows visitors to observe the stars by projecting pictures from the universe captured by a 50 centimetre-wide telescope on eight screens, while listening to the explanations of the observatory’s specialists and interacting with other attendants. There is only one further such facility in the world, the Mont-Mégantic Observatory in Quebec, Canada.

The aim of the observatory-classroom of the Universe Observation Centre (COU) is to become a unique space for scientific dissemination in Europe, adding to the existing OPEN 3D Planetarium at the Montsec Astronomic Park, which is addressed at visitors feeling passion for science and wishing to deepen into this area.

The new facility has a capacity for 68 people, who will be able to watch pictures from celestial bodies by night shown through a screen system. The astronomic park’s main attraction, the COU, has welcomed 150,000 visitors since its opening six years ago.

www.parcastronomic.cat

10th anniversary of the recovery of Ivars i Vila-sana Lake

Half a century after drying up, this natural lake in Pla d’Urgell county was recovered to become Catalonia’s largest. Twenty islets have been created to encourage biological and scenic diversity, together with several wharfs, 5-metre-high lookouts for animal observation, two parking lots, benches, walkways and two accesses to the lake from the road linking Ivars d’Urgell and Vila-sana. The wetlands are home to a large variety of species, especially birds seeking here a place to nest, rest and find refuge and food on their migratory routes.

More than two-hundred species of sedentary, winter, summer and migratory birds have been spotted so far.

www.plaurgell.org
Ecological water bus to cross Mont-rebei gorge

Canelles reservoir in Noguera county has a water reserve above 80% of its capacity, which allows to enlarge its leisure offer with new routes and trips on an Aqua Bus, a 12-seat boat crossing the reservoir and Mont-rebei gorge.

Montsec Activa, a company organising activities in the area, will be in charge of doing the trips during the whole year except in winter. The Aqua Bus Canelles takes a 50-kilometre-long route lasting 3 hours past Mont-rebei and Fet gorges, the vulture colony in Blancafort, the wall of Finestres, Guard gorge and Malpàs ravine.

www.montsecactiva.com

“Welcome hikers and cycling tourists!” label at tourist accommodation in Lleida

Forty accommodation businesses in the Lleida area have been awarded the “Welcome hikers and cycling tourists!” label certifying that they provide services catering for hikers and cycling tourists. Its main goal is to capture this tourist segment and ensure a pleasant stay. This is a pioneering project in Catalonia.

www.aralleida.cat

Fem Parc, ecotourist proposals in Aigüestortes, Alt Pirineu and Cadí-Moixeró parks

The Catalan Fem Parc collaborative project gathers the varied ecotourist offer provided at Aigüestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici National Park, Alt Pirineu Natural Park and Cadí-Moixeró Natural Park. The initiative came up to encourage social and economic development of protected natural areas and their area of influence, making it compatible with environmental protection and conservation.

www.femparc.cat/propostes-ecoturisme.html
Salí de Cambrils, a new tourist attraction

Salí de Cambrils in Odén (Solsonès) has opened to allow visitors a stroll through the former site where salt was made and enjoy thermal baths from the Ribera Salada well.

The high salt concentration of its waters, very similar to that of the Dead Sea, provides for their detoxifying and mineralising properties beneficial for health—a therapeutic bath alleviates tension and pain in muscles and joints.

http://salidecambrils.cat/

Dinosfera in Coll de Nargó has reopened

Dinosfera, the paleo-environmental interpretive centre in Coll de Nargó in Alt Urgell county, has reopened after some months of work to renew its whole museographic setting. As a new feature, there is a 7-metre-long reproduction of a titanosaur.

Visitors also have the opportunity of learning how present-day reptiles reproduce as well as the differences to and similarities with the way dinosaurs did. Furthermore, information is provided on paleontological discoveries as well as the local sites where dinosaurs have been found and the way they are excavated and studied, together with explanations on how the world was towards the end of the Cretaceous 65 million years ago, the last dinosaurs that inhabited the Earth and the cause of their extinction.

www.dinosfera.com
The Lleida Plain creates new tourist packages with experiences

The Lleida Plain offers twenty new tourist packages created and structured following a microconsulting meeting held under the auspices of the Tourism Board of the Lleida Provincial Council in collaboration with the CTB and the county councils of Garrigues, Noguera, Pla d’Urgell, Segarra, Segrià and Urgell.

The packages focus on 12 different specific areas: astronomy, St. James’ Way, castles, celebrities, city break, culture, wine and oil tourism, gastronomy, history, nature, charming villages and rural life. This offer encompasses 94 service providers from 6 counties and 51 municipalities, including restaurants, accommodation, cultural facilities, manufacturing companies, activity businesses, monuments, natural areas and public institutions.

The tourist packages are commercialised through the CTB and other platforms.

http://bookexperience.catalunya.com
Val d’Aran

Val d’Aran pushes for sports events

Following the positive reactions to Val d’Aran as a finish location of the Tour de France on 13 July 2006, the area will host the start of the stage to Andorra at the 2016 edition.

Such events lead to a considerable increase of visitors to Val d’Aran seeking a destination with a specialised cycling offer. There is currently a mountain biking centre with more than 400 kilometres of signposted routes of different difficulty levels.

www.letour.com

The 37th Marxa Beret will take place on 5-7 February. This year, Marxa Beret will be the European ski marathon championship as well for the first time.

Marxa Beret is considered one of the most relevant winter sports events held in Spain. At the same time, it is among Europe’s most important cross-country skiing races, with a record number of racers from all over the continent.

www.marxaberet.com

On 17-19 June, Val d’Aran will be the epicentre of Spanish mountain biking. Pedals de Foc NonStop is a mountain biking race for individual racers along almost 220 kilometres with 6200 metres of positive altitude gain. The start and finish is in Vielha and the route leads across Val d’Aran, Alta Ribagorça, Pallars Jussà and Pallars Sobirà counties in the Lleida Pyrenees.

http://openespanaultramarathon.com/pedals-de-foc-non-stop/
2 Parks hiking route from Aigüestortes to Maladeta

The good acceptance of the Aneto Tour in its first year has encouraged its organisers to have an old dream come true: linking Posets-Maladeta Natural Park and Aigüestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici National Park on foot. The 2 Parks route covers 155 kilometres on 9 stages, starting and finishing in Vielha. It will lead past Vielha, Benasque, Castanesa, Aneto, Boí and Espot along a signposted trail dotted with landmarks such as the Hospice de France, Portillón de Benasque, Aigüestortes, Sant Maurici, Els Encantats and Colomers cirque, among others. Organised by Camins, the route will start on 24 June 2016. This company specialising in hiking, trekking, canyoning and via ferratas will turn 30 this year.

www.camins.net
Paisatges Barcelona

Moianès, a new county

The Paisatges Barcelona brand encompasses now a new county, Moianès. Extending over 262.59 square kilometres, Catalonia’s 42nd county is located on the plateau bearing the same name, between Bages, Osona and Vallès Oriental counties. Its municipalities are Moià—the new county seat—, Castellterçol, Castellcir, Sant Quirze Safaja, Calders, Monistrol de Calders, Santa Maria d’Oló, L’Estany, Granera and Collsuspina.

The main tourist attraction in Moianès is the GR 177 circular hiking route around the county. Its capital Moià boasts Rafael de Casanova’s house, the First Councillor who led the defence of Barcelona during the 1714 siege, and the Toll caves, where human remains from different periods from the Middle Palaeolithic to the Bronze Age have been found. The most noteworthy heritage sites include the monasteries of Santa Maria de l’Estany with a beautiful Romanesque cloister and Sant Feliuet de Terrassola from the same epoch.

www.consorcidelmoianes.cat

UNESCO Global Geopark

With the approval of this label, the Central Catalonia Geopark comes under the umbrella of this new network protected, promoted and distinguished by the UNESCO. The Central Catalonia Geological and Mining Park is an articulating project showcasing the geological and mining sights of the area as well its tourist attractions, placing them under the common denominator of geotourism with an interesting, high-quality offer integrating culture, nature, mining and cuisine.

The UNESCO Global Geoparks tell the 4.6 billion year history of the planet Earth, the geological events that have shaped it and the evolution of humankind. Not only do they provide evidence of past climate change but they also inform local communities of present-day challenges and help them prepare for risks such as earthquakes, tsunamis and volcanic eruptions.

This new label, which adds to those of World Heritage and Biosphere Reserve, formalises a relationship with Geoparks that started back in 2001. The list has increased since then to encompass 120 sites all over the world through the Global Geopark Network. It has become an increasingly important tool to the UNESCO to involve member states and their communities in earth science and geological heritage.

www.geoparc.cat
Useful Addresses

Tourist Bodies

CATALAN TOURIST BOARD
Tel. 934 849 900
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.travel

Tourism Barcelona
Tel. 933 689 700
www.barcelonaturisme.cat

Barcelona Provincial Council Tourism Delegation
Tel. 934 022 966
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
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Red de Oficinas de la ACT en el exterior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Benelux</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel. (+32) 26 406 151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:info.act.bnl@gencat.cat">info.act.bnl@gencat.cat</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>France</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel. (+33) 1 40 46 98 92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:media.act.fr@gencat.cat">media.act.fr@gencat.cat</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Italy</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel. (+39) 02 873 935 73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:info.act.it@gencat.cat">info.act.it@gencat.cat</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Central Europe</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel. (+49) 69 7422 4873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:info.act.de@gencat.cat">info.act.de@gencat.cat</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nordic Countries</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel. (+358) 407 17 72 95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:info.act.nordic@gencat.cat">info.act.nordic@gencat.cat</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UK &amp; Ireland</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel. (+44) 207 583 88 55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:info.act.uk@gencat.cat">info.act.uk@gencat.cat</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eastern Europe</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel. (+7) 495 567 18 71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:info.act.ru@gencat.cat">info.act.ru@gencat.cat</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>USA</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel. (+1) 212 78 23 332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:info.act.usa@gencat.cat">info.act.usa@gencat.cat</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Asia Pacific</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel. (+65) 62204022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:info.act.sea@gencat.cat">info.act.sea@gencat.cat</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>South America</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel. (+55) 11 30530477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:info.act.latam@gencat.cat">info.act.latam@gencat.cat</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>China</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel. (+8610) 848 682 84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:promotion.act.cn@gencat.cat">promotion.act.cn@gencat.cat</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Blanquerna Cultural Centre (Madrid)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel. 915 241 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:turisme.blanquerna@gencat.cat">turisme.blanquerna@gencat.cat</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.concatur.cat

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

Accessible Catalonia

Accessible Catalonia
www.turismeperatothom.com/es

Camí de Sant Jaume
www.camidesantjaumeperatothom.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

Nautical Resorts
www.encatalunya.info

**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

Penedès Wine Tourism (Wine Route of Spain)
www.rutadelvidoemporda.org

Enoturismo Penedès (Wine Route of Spain)
www.enoturismepenedes.cat

DO Alella Wine Tourism
www.doalella.cat

**Business Tourism**

Catalunya Convention Bureau
www.catalunya.com/mice