



PRESS PACK
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INDEX

INTRODUCTION	4
CATALONIA, A QUALITY DESTINATION	8
TOURIST ATTRACTIONS	11
TOURIST ACCOMMODATION	14
TOURIST BRANDS	17
Costa Brava	18
Costa Barcelona	20
Barcelona	22
Costa Daurada	24
Terres de l'Ebre	26
Pirineus	28
Terres de Lleida	30
Val d'Aran	32
Paisatges Barcelona	34
TOURIST EXPERIENCES	36
Activities in Natural and Rural Areas	38
Accessible Catalonia	41
Sports	44
Wine Tourism	46
Gastronomy	48
Great Cultural Icons and Great Routes	50
Hiking and Cycling	52
Medical & Health Tourism	54
Premium	55
Business Tourism	56
Family Holidays	58
WHAT'S NEW 2017	60
USEFUL ADDRESSES	74

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

Territory. Catalonia offers a great scenic variety:

- 580 kilometres of Mediterranean coastline cover Costa Brava, Costa Barcelona, Barcelona, Costa Daurada and Terres de l'Ebre.
- 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.
- Both the capital of Catalonia, Barcelona, and the three province seats, Girona, Tarragona and Lleida, feature a great variety of sights. In the rest of Catalonia, numerous towns with a distinct character boast some noteworthy heritage: handsome old quarters, buildings from Romanesque to Art Nouveau and a wide range of museums are worth a visit.

4

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 is a prime tourist destination offering 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 top tourist areas, with approximately 30 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.

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, traditional products as well as fashion and accessories shops.

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 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 and Figueres, Paris can be reached within 6.15 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.

Airports. Catalonia has five commercial airports:

- **Barcelona.** Over 39 million passengers used Catalonia's main airport in 2016, an ongoing increase year after year since the T-1 terminal started operating. Its maximum capacity is 55 million passengers a year. 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. Also, the L9 underground line has been extended to the airport, its fast link to the city being a considerable progress for passengers.
- **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 almost 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. Catalonia has 52 ports and yacht clubs, which add to the big seaports in Barcelona and Tarragona.

- **Barcelona.** The largest cruising port in Europe, Barcelona welcomed more than 2.5 million cruise passengers in 2016. 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. 32 cruise ships with around 35,000 passengers berthed at Palamós in 2016, allowing visits to the main attractions on Costa Brava. The creation of a customs posts allows now docking of ships from outside the Schengen area.
- **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. There are currently ten cruising companies sailing to Roses, with ships up to 150 metres long.
- **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 10,000 passengers. The port has an exclusive cruise berth for two ships at the East dock, plus Port Tarraco marina for smaller cruise boats. Tarragona aims at positioning itself as a home port as this will boost the economy and the whole territory.

- **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 Gaudí's Colònia Güell Crypt; Dalí's art in Figueres and the city of Girona; some of the most renowned wineries to see how cava (sparkling wine) is produced and taste acknowledged wines; enjoying a shopping day in La Roca Village or a trip to the maritime town of Badalona.

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.

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 in the Family-friendly Beach Holidays, Family-friendly Adventure Holidays and Family-friendly Attractions labels, aimed at offering attractive proposals catering for those travelling with children either to coastal villages and seaside resorts with large beaches or to inland and mountain villages. In this respect, ski and mountain resorts have been recently certified. Another proposal is the Accessible Tourism programme, in which Catalonia is pioneering. Being aware that tourism needs to be made available to everybody, Catalonia has identified more than 600 facilities at 27 destinations providing adapted offers and services to people with different disabilities.

The **Gastronomic Hotel** certificate has 47 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** scheme rating rural tourism houses (currently 542 businesses rated from 1 to 5 wheat ears based on their services, activities, premises and decoration) and the **key** rating system for **tourist apartments and housing units for tourist use**, the criteria of which are under joint review with the industry to allow better distinction.

CATALUNYA, A BIOSPHERE DESTINATION

Catalonia has been holding since November 2015 the *BIOSPHERE RESPONSIBLE TOURISM* certification by the Institute of Responsible Tourism, a World Tourism Organisation member associated to the Global Sustainable Tourism Council.

Catalonia is **the world's first territory beyond specific cities or destinations** to obtain this all-inclusive certification that ensures visitors a sustainable experience while protecting the culture, improving the local economy and reducing the environmental footprint. This label is an **international recognition** to the work done by both public and private players in the Catalan tourist industry to foster a **sustainable tourism scheme**.

The BIOSPHERE certification not only sets **quality** and **environmental** standards but also includes sustainability requirements such as **social responsibility, conservation of cultural heritage, satisfying tourist** expectations and **improving life quality** of the local population.

CATALONIA IN EUROPEAN PROJECTS AND NETWORKS

Through the Directorate General of Tourism and the Catalan Tourist Board, Catalonia participates, and in some cases leads, different **European Union projects** with a big relevance in protecting nature, cross-border routes and gastronomic and social tourism, among others.

Projects in 2017

- **Accent Gastronomy** promotes the offer in accessible gastronomic tourist experiences. Its aim is providing SMEs, entrepreneurs and professionals from the tourist industry with tools and abilities to create and develop accessible gastronomic tourist products.
- **APP TOUR YOU** aims at implementing new training schemes in accessible tourism for professionals and entrepreneurs, especially from small and medium-sized companies in the tourist industry.
- **HikingEurope** is a project led by the Catalan Tourist Board with the goal of fostering a transnational network of rural tourist routes made of different hiking trails across Europe, which shall allow discovering the natural and cultural heritage of the territories involved.
- **WILDSEA Europe** encompasses marine areas and coastal destinations. It is aimed at linking European coastal destinations with a great marine biodiversity along a transnational sustainable route, thus providing sea wildlife experiences through open-air activities and water sports.

European networks

The Catalan Tourist Board takes part in some European networks fostering business co-operation and cross-regional coordination in order to create a more social and sustainable tourism. One of them is **ENAT**, a European network created to make tourism accessible. It is an international non-profit association addressed at companies and organisations that wish to be pioneering in the research, promotion and practice of accessible tourism.

Catalonia also chairs **NECSTouR**, an organisation aimed at fostering cooperation among European regions to consolidate sustainable tourism and lobby before European tourism authorities. It is currently composed of thirty European regions and 35 associate members, including companies, institutions, universities and associations from the European tourist industry. Catalonia's goals during its three-year presidency include subjects such as reducing seasonality, sharing economy and integral renewal of destinations.

TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE IN CATALONIA

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

- **Palau de la Música Catalana and Hospital de la Santa Creu i Sant Pau.** Barcelona. Art Nouveau. Built by Lluís Domènech i Montaner in the early 20th century.
- **Poblet Monastery.** Poblet (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 Quiric de Durro
 - Santa Maria de Cardet
 - Assumpció de Còll
- **The work of Antoni Gaudí:**
 - Park Güell. Barcelona. First garden city experience.
 - Palau Güell. Barcelona.
 - La Pedrera (Casa Milà). Barcelona.
 - Casa Batlló. Barcelona.
 - Cripta de la Colonia Güell. Santa Coloma de Cervelló (Barcelona).

Unique structure built in stone and brick.

- Casa Vicens. Barcelona.
- Sagrada Família Crypt. Barcelona. Built between 1884 and 1889, Gaudí's oldest religious work.
- Nativity Façade at the Sagrada Família. Barcelona.
- **La Patum.** The 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 the UNESCO as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2010.
- **Summer Solstice Fire Festival in the Pyrenees.** Declared Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, this 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, as well as the portal of Ripoll monastery, a biblical depiction carved in stone in the 12th century. These applications join those for Catalan rumba and Catalan cuisine as intangible heritage, the latter 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. A proof of this is the 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 the 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, the facilities provided in the coastal municipalities and the numerous marinas and water sports businesses, the best quality proof comes from the millions of tourists returning to Catalonia every year.

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, has 14,000 hectares covered by the park as such, 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 **Montserrat Natural Park** and **Terres de l'Ebre**, both declared a **Biosphere Reserve by the 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**, encompassing more than 40 hotels with up to fifteen rooms, usually located in heritage buildings and providing a very comfortable atmosphere. Noteworthy are also **Gastronomic Hotels** and **Cases Fonda de Catalunya**, a traditional accommodation and food option including eleven businesses firmly rooted in their local community.

14

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, as is the case of certain quarters in the old town and the Eixample, with historical buildings being refurbished into landmark hotels.

Catalonia has currently **almost 2900 accommodation units** with **approximately 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.

CAMPSITES

Catalonia has a network of roughly **350 campsites**, 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 campsites 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. All tourist apartments and housing units in Catalonia need to feature the **identification number** of the **Catalan Tourist Register**, which proves that they are **legal**.

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 **2300 businesses** providing **over 18,000 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.

16

Catalan Confederation of Rural Tourism - Concatur
www.concatur.cat

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

*The Directorate General of Tourism at the Catalan Department of Enterprise and Knowledge edits **The Official Guide to Tourism Establishments** on line for each different sort of tourist accommodation (hotels, campsites, 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, namely public marine routes for sports, leisure and learning. 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.

18

The Girona province features fourteen restaurants with a total **18 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.

Adventurous and **active visitors** will find a fine way of discovering the stunning landscape of Costa Brava by getting in contact with nature through **hiking, road cycling, mountain biking, water sports, skydiving** (at Skydive Empuriabrava, one of the world's three best skydiving centres), **horse riding, climbing** or **golf**, among others.

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

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

The offer in **cultural tourism** attracts millions of visitors. Iberians, Greeks and Romans discovered the wealth of this area centuries ago, as proves the **Empúries** site. Romanesque art has left true architectural gems like Sant Pere de Rodes monastery 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** with the Dalí Museum-Theatre in Figueres, the Salvador Dalí Museum-House in Portlligat and the Gala Dalí Castle in Púbol 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**.

Another good way of discovering the area is walking along the watch paths, which currently have a specific tourist route, Camí de Ronda®, sharing some stretches with GR-92. This wide network has been recovered as hiking trails along the Girona coast, boasting awesome views of the Mediterranean. There is further the Itinerànnia network, with 2500 km of signposted trails.

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 large 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 Gaudí'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.barcelonaesmuchomas.org





BARCELONA

Barcelona is the **capital of Catalonia** and one of Europe's main **urban tourist destinations**. It is an **open, welcoming, diverse** and **sustainable** city. Cosmopolitan and authentic, it is a place where history and modernity live together in perfect harmony. A courageous city, it has been the cradle of pioneering movements for social, cultural and political change.

The city is committed to sustainability and environmental protection. It was the first in the world to obtain the **Biosphere certification** for responsible tourism from the UNESCO that acknowledges Barcelona as a sustainable destination.

22

It is an **innovative** city with a long industrial tradition, **pioneering** in design, creativity, use of technologies and smart management of services for its citizens.

Between the old seaside quarters and the hills expands the **Eixample** in all its beauty. This urban planning model is unique in Europe, having been created in 1860 by Ildefons Cerdà, one of the founders of modern urban planning. The Eixample boasts Europe's biggest and most impressive **gems of Art Nouveau architecture**.

Picasso, Joan Miró and **Antoni Tàpies** are the painters who best reflect that utmost Catalan duality of “seny i rauxa” (common sense and passion). Beyond museums (from Romanesque in the **Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya** to modern art in the **MACBA** and **CCCB**) and the big Art Nouveau landmarks such as the Sant Pau site (santpaubarcelona.org), Casa de les Punxes (casadelespunxes.com) and Casa Vicens (casavicens.org), Barcelona is a **city of theatres**, with an increasing number of **small venues** and **art galleries** coming up.

Tradition is conveyed by the five “**colles castelleres**” (human tower teams) from Sants, Gràcia, Poble Sec, Poble Nou and Sagrada Família, which make a fine example of multicultural and cross-generational integration.

Modernity comes from countless **music festivals**, such as worldwide known Sónar and Primavera Sound, alongside **popular festivities** like La Mercè or those in Gràcia and Sants quarters.

Barcelona is one of the world's most attractive cities for **shopping**, not only thanks to its wide commercial offer (around 35,000 shops all over the city, from historical businesses to state-of-the-art design shops, featuring fashion and countless other products), but also based on its Mediterranean profile, inviting to stroll and soak up street life. **Barcelona Shopping City** features a large variety of shops and products that are part of its identity, with an urban setting encouraging strolls while enjoying the different historical areas and attractive sights (barcelonashoppingline.com).

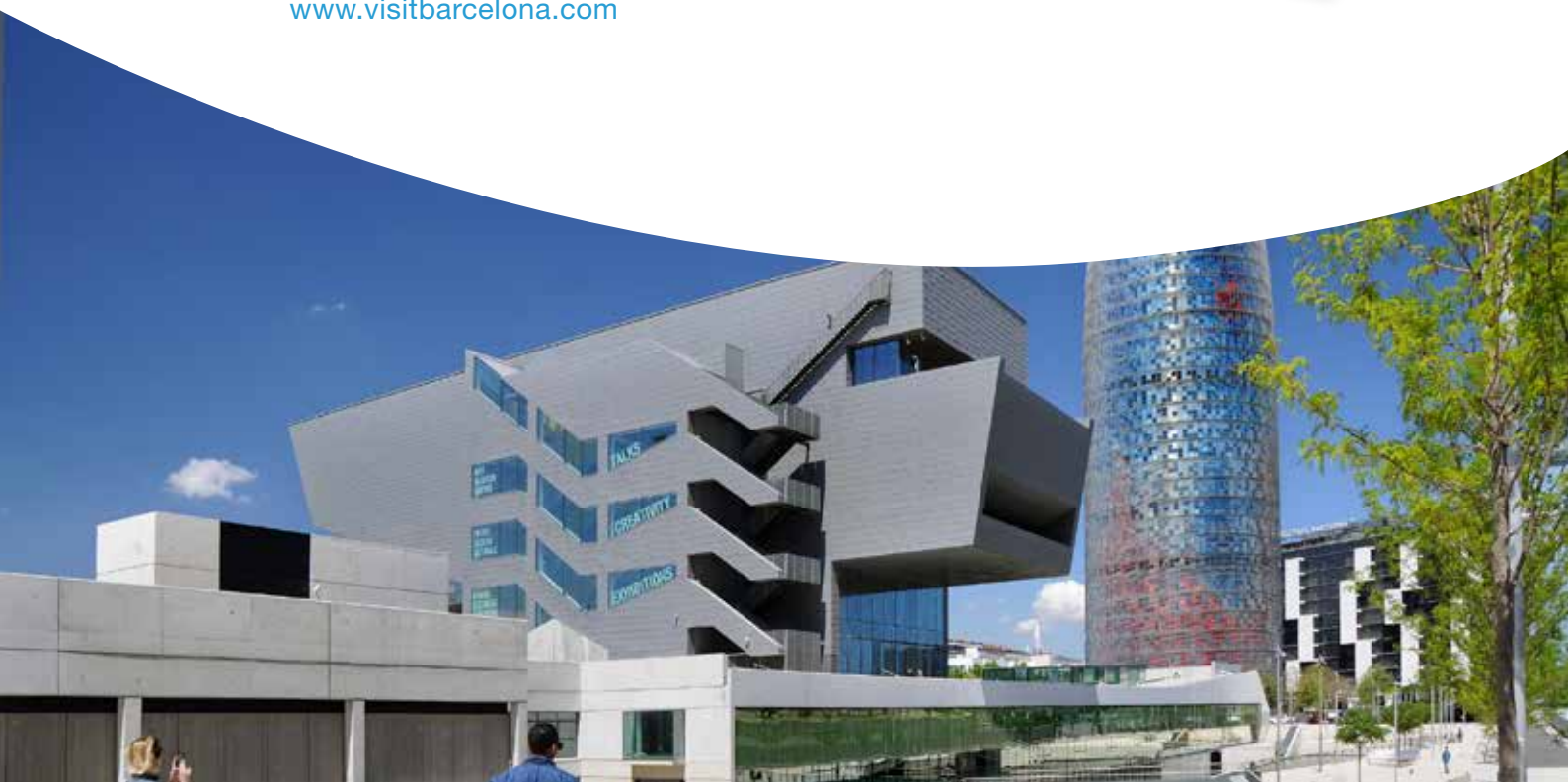
Barcelona has also an international reputation in hosting **congresses and conventions**. Professional tourism is consolidated with major events such as the Mobile World Congress or IBTM World as well as a large number of relevant congresses in the areas of medicine and technology.

The main services managed by Turisme de Barcelona include the **Barcelona Bus Turístic** (the best way to know the city along three routes, with stops at all sights), the **Barcelona Card** (a city ticket including public transport, free museums and over 85 discounts), the **Columbus Lookout** (now featuring an area devoted to wine tourism and wine tasting), the **Barcelona Walking Tours** (four guided walking tours: Gothic Quarter, Picasso, Art Nouveau and Gourmet) and the **Articket** (a pass to visit the city's six main museums), besides a wide range of visits and services in connection with Barcelona and promotion of territorial decentralisation through the main natural, cultural and wine sights located a few kilometres away from the city.

23

Turisme de Barcelona runs a network of 23 tourist information offices where both visitors and locals can obtain advice in 12 languages. It also features a wide online service offer that allows any visitor to organise their own trip through the website tickets.visitbarcelona.com

www.visitbarcelona.com





COSTA DAURADA

Eighty kilometres of fine, golden sandy beaches create the Costa Daurada coastline, which is made up of the Baix Penedès, Tarragonès, Baix Camp, Alt Camp, Conca de Barberà and Priorat countries. **PortAventura World** and **Ferrari Land** are two of the great star features for family leisure activities in this area that preserves its unique cultural heritage.

Salou, Cambrils and **Vila-seca La Pineda Beach** which, along with **El Vendrell**, the **Prades Mountains** and **Calafell**, carry the **Family Tourism** seal, are the main tourist destinations on the Costa Daurada with a diversity of proposals for fun, rest, gastronomy and natural heritage, which attract thousands of tourists year after year. Moreover, **Cambrils** offers the visitor a very rich gastronomic proposal with two restaurants that have a Michelin star.

Torredembarra has a nature reserve that is extraordinarily unique: the **Muntanyans**, shared with **Creixell** and **Roda de Berà**.

In the south of the Costa Daurada, **Mont-roig del Camp - Miami Platja** is a gem for **MTB lovers** with 140 kilometres of routes and 12 kilometres of coast along four beaches and nine coves.

The Costa Daurada is an ideal destination for family fun and one of its main attractions is **PortAventura World**, with its two parks: PortAventura Park and PortAventura Caribe Aquatic Park, to which Ferrari Land is now added, the only park in Europe dedicated to the *cavallino rampante*. This season, moreover, the Cirque du Soleil will offer *t*, a show that narrates the story of Icarus who appears in a fantasy world.

Another outstanding pole of attraction is **Roman Tarraco**, with its incredible circus, amphitheatre, walls, provincial forum, aqueduct and Centcelles, which are some of the monuments catalogued as World Heritage by the UNESCO.

Poblet Monastery, which is the largest Cistercian monastic ensemble in Europe, is also a World Heritage site. This monastery, in the Conca de Barberà country and the Royal Pantheon of the old Crown of Aragon, has been rebuilt and conserves all of the original elements from the Middle Ages, which are currently cared for by the community of Cistercian monks.

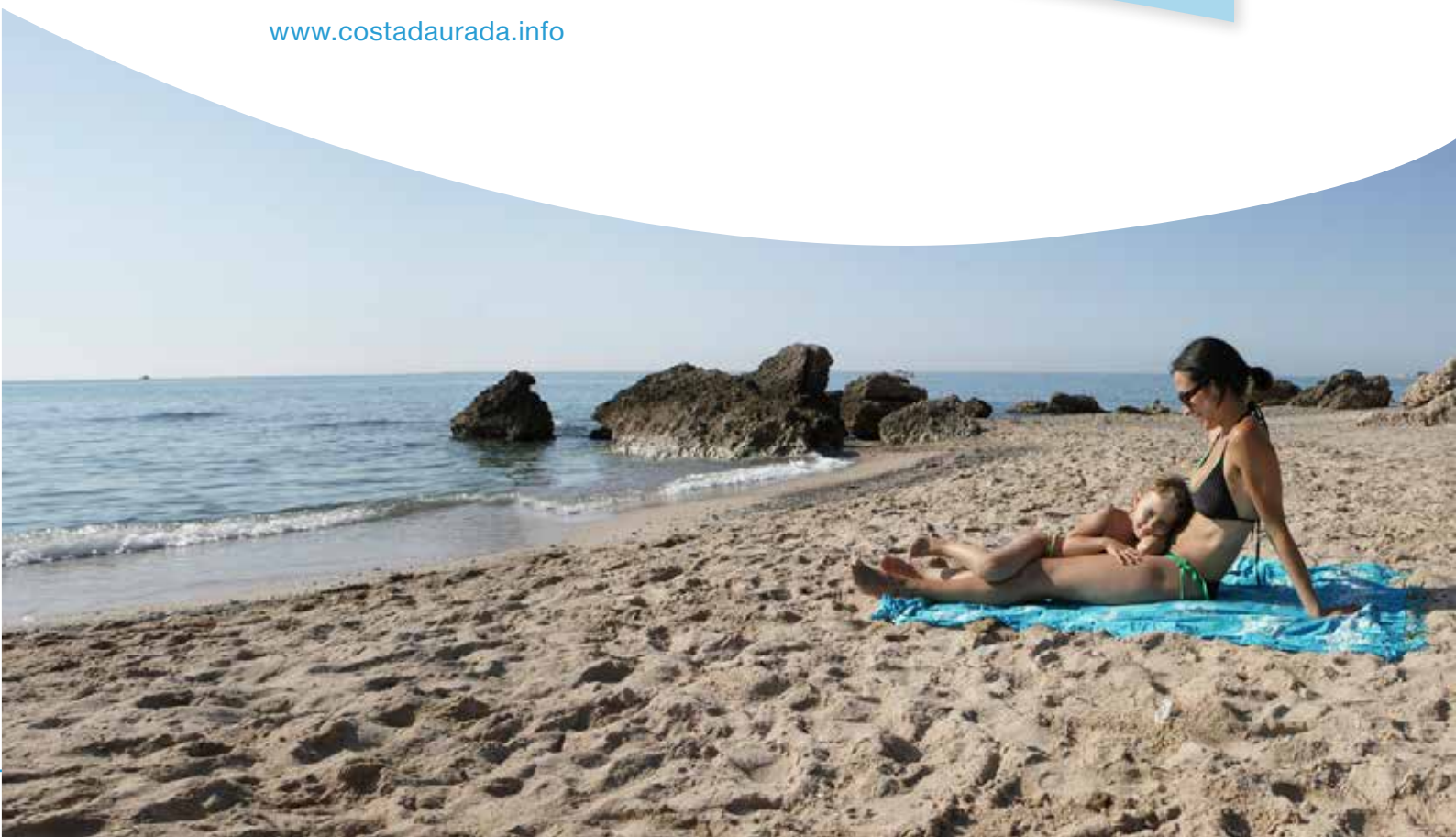
The **Montserrat Mountain Range**, in the Priorat country, is the symbol of the nature park that has been awarded the **European Charter for Sustainable Tourism**. The range defines the Priorat Denomination of Origin Quality area, made up of 1,930 hectares of vineyards, with a predominance of the Grenache red and Carignan varieties that produce some of the world's most appreciated wines. To these we should add the wines and cavas from DO Tarragona, Montsant, Penedès, Conca de Barberà and Cava.

The rich architectonic heritage in Reus, built between the late 19th and early 20th century, provides a route that includes 26 properties, some carried out by Lluís Domènech i Montaner. Moreover, the Gaudí Centre can be found in Reus, a centre for the interpretation of Art Nouveau.

Reus, El Vendrell, Mont-roig del Camp - Miami Platja and **Horta de Sant Joan** have grouped together under the **Landscape of the Geniuses** brand, a tourism proposal that, among other things, brings unique buildings together, like the Pau Casals Museum in El Vendrell, the farmhouse where Miró spent some summers in Mont-roig, the Picasso Centre in Horta or the Gaudí Centre in Reus.

*The **castells** (human towers), which began in Valls in the early 19th century, are one of the country's greatest cultural expressions. Many major festivals along the Costa Daurada organise outstanding human tower building exhibitions: from Valls through to Tarragona, l'Arboç, El Catllar, El Vendrell or Reus, without forgetting the Human Tower Building Competition that is held in the Tarraco Arena Plaza in Tarragona every even year.*

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 centre and Uldecona 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. It has also been recognised as one of the world's Top 100 Sustainable Destinations.

www.terresdelebre.travel





PIRINEUS

The Pirineus brand includes the **tourist offer of eleven counties**: Alt Empordà, Alta Ribagorça, Alt Urgell, Berguedà, Cerdanya, Garrotxa, Pallars Jussà, Pallars Sobirà, Ripollès, Solsonès and Val d'Aran, 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, while road cyclers can follow different stages of the Tour of Catalonia as well as the Tour de France stage that went from Vielha to La Seu d'Urgell in 2016.

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. In fact, seven of Catalonia's 16 ski resorts have been certified as **Family-friendly Attractions** by the Catalan Tourist Board: Espot, Boí Taüll, Masella, Vall de Núria, Vallter 2000, Port Ainé and La Molina.

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 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; **Cadí-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.

Two traditional festivals have been declared **Masterpieces of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity** in 2005 and 2015, respectively: **La Patum in Berga**, a spectacular celebration dating back to the second half of the 14th century, and **the Pyrenees Falles**.

The **accommodation offer** concentrates on mountain 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 www.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 in 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 set of **cave art** in the Mediterranean area of the Iberian Peninsula was declared **World Heritage** in 1998. It encompasses a total 757 sites, 16 of which are located in the Lleida area, with **Roca dels Moros** and **El Cogul caves** in Garrigues being the best known.

The Lleida area boasts a **wide sports** and **leisure** offer. Many initiatives have also taken place to deseasonalise the tourist industry, such as the **Montsec Universe Observation Centre**, the **Lake Train** along a scenic route from Lleida to La Pobla de Segur, basically aimed at family tourism, or new exhibition areas and routes conveying the area's natural, cultural and heritage wealth.

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 633.46 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 156 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**, such as walking, mountain biking or horse riding, white-water sports in the Garonne river, climbing over via ferratas, archery, adventure parks in the trees, etc.

With its **unique landscape**, a **wide range of ecosystems** and featuring the **Biosphere certificate**, 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 relax-**

ing. Apart from the **spa services** provided by several hotels, Val d'Aran has two thermal baths with health mineral waters: **Termes Baronia de Les** and **Banhs de Tredòs** 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.

Val d'Aran is consolidating as a cycling and mountain biking tourist destination, after hosting the start to the 9th Tour de France stage, the most seen on European TV stations with a peak 20.5 million audience. Also, the "PDF (Pedals de Foc) Non Stop" has been once again the venue of the Mountain Biking Ultramarathon Spanish Championships.

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-standing **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 **Guilleries** and **Collsacabra** around the **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 arcaded 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 Pruitt**, placed amidst an utmost attractive ancestral environment, are also 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'Escudelletà i d'en Ricardo vat collection.

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

www.barcelonaesmoltmes.cat



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**:

- Stays on the Catalan coast
- Routes and breakaways
- Stays inland and in the mountains
- Trips to cultivate specific interests (gastronomy, oil tourism, wine tourism, sports tourism, golf)
- Other segments (accessible, responsible, sustainable, senior, LGBT)

36

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

- Activities in Natural and Rural Areas
- Accessible Catalonia
- Sports
- Wine Tourism
- Gastronomy
- Great Cultural Icons and Great Routes
- Hiking and Cycling
- Medical & Health Tourism
- Nautical
- Snow
- Premium
- Business Tourism
- Family Holidays

Brand, 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 brands created so far are **Active & Adventure, Barcelona Medical Destination, Premium Catalonia, Catalunya Convention Bureau, Wine Tourism, Gastronomic Experiences** and **Golf** in Catalonia.

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. The existing labels are **Cycling in Catalonia, Sports Tourism, Hiking in Catalonia, Gastronomic Hotels, Family-friendly Beach Holidays, Family-friendly Adventure Holidays** and **Family-friendly Attractions**.

Products with a higher recognition endorsed by **third parties** (Flower Towns of Catalonia, slow food, specialist publications, etc.) and **rankings** made by users, specialised media and bloggers will also be promoted.

Through its commercialisation platform on experience.catalunya.com, 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 the 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.

38

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**.

Nautical

Catalonia is a fine destination for **nautical tourism**, 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 for both adults and children, such as snorkelling, kitesurfing, flyboard, standup paddle boarding, fly fish, sailing, rowing, jet skiing, kayaking, sailing a catamaran or other available boats and fishing.

39

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

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

This is proven by its **27 identified accessible proposals and destinations**, which show that accessible tourism has actually come true in Catalonia. These **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 visitors' needs: accommodation, restaurants, museums, side activities, beaches, etc. The areas and proposals identified are:

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

According to its promotion plan, the Catalan Tourist Board has a specific website, **www.turismeperatohom.com/en**, providing information on the offer in accessible tourism in Catalonia not only in the selected 27 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.

Some examples of best practices in this area are 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 the action taken by many **museums and monuments in Catalonia** to improve accessibility for 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 accessible 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 2016 held in London, the promoters of the "Responsible Tourism Day" initiative gave the **WRTD (World Responsible Tourism Day) award** to the Catalan Tourist Board (CTB) for a fifth 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 Institute of Responsible Tourism, 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)** as well as to chair 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.



SPORTS

Catalonia has a **great sporting tradition**, with internationally renowned **top facilities** such as the Olympic Ring, where the Barcelona 1992 Olympic Games took place, the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya in Montmeló or the Camp Nou, home to FC Barcelona. It also boasts a **perfect climate** for outdoor sports throughout the year, as well as a **geographic situation** allowing for doing any sort of sports from the sea to the high mountains.

Catalonia also stands out for its **ability in organising great international sports events**, which makes it a preferred destination not only for top athletes but also amateurs in any discipline. Sports tourism has become one of Catalonia's biggest assets thanks to its top facilities and the great offer it provides for sports camps in both individual and team sports.

The mild Mediterranean climate and a natural environment combining 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 all year round. Looking back to a long-standing, century-long **golf tradition**, Catalonia's offer is widespread and varied, featuring **37 golf, 5 par 3 and over 40 pitch & putt courses**. Created in some cases 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, providing a great side offer generally related to health and wellness, gastronomy, culture and leisure.

44

Sports Tourism Label

This **specialisation label** awarded by the Catalan Tourist Board recognises destinations and specialised businesses 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, amateurs and attendants of internationally renowned sports events, and top-level athletes.

Apart from the certified **municipalities**, the label also encompasses **sports facilities**, specialised travel agencies, specialised accommodation and other specific service providers.

The Sports Tourism label includes the following sports: track & field, football, parachuting, tennis, team sports, rowing, kayaking, sailing, scuba diving, swimming, road cycling, running and triathlon.

The number of Catalan towns featuring the label has constantly grown since its creation in 2003. Catalonia has currently **16 certified municipalities**:

- **Amposta** (flatwater rowing and kayaking) www.amposta.cat
- **Banyoles** (flatwater rowing and kayaking) www.banyoles.cat
- **Blanes** (football, team sports, sailing, running, cycling) www.visitblanes.net
- **Calella** (swimming, running, cycling, triathlon) www.calellabarcelona.com
- **Cambrils** (football, sailing, cycling) www.cambrils-turisme.com
- **Castelldefels** (flatwater rowing and kayaking) www.castelldefels.org
- **Castelló d'Empúries-Empuriabrava** (parachuting) www.castelloempuriabrava.com
- **Girona** (cycling, swimming, running, tennis) www.girona.cat/turisme
- **L'Ametlla de Mar** (sailing, scuba diving) www.visitametllademar.com
- **La Seu d'Urgell** (whitewater kayaking) www.laseu.cat
- **L'Hospitalet de Llobregat** (track & field, football, team sports, swimming) www.l-h.cat
- **Lloret de Mar** (track & field, football, team sports, cycling, swimming) www.lloretdemar.org
- **Salou** (football, sailing) www.visitsalou.eu
- **Santa Susanna** (football, team sports, sailing, cycling) www.santasusanna.org
- **Sort** (whitewater kayaking) www.sortturisme.com
- **Val d'Aran** (cycling) www.visitvaldaran.com

The municipalities of **Mataró** and **Sant Cugat** are in the **process** of becoming certified.

*The publication **Catalonia is Sports** edited by the Catalan Tourist Board lists the municipalities, facilities, services and accommodation in Catalonia certified with the Sports Tourism label.*





WINE TOURISM

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

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

46

Much more than just twelve denominations of origin

Twelve denominations of origin certify the quality of Catalan wines. 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 bio-dynamic 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), Vallmora Wine Tourist and Archaeological Centre, Fassina CIC-Cava Interpretive Centre (Sant Sadurní d'Anoia) and Vinseum (Vilafranca del Penedès).

Wine tourism in Catalonia can also be combined with some of the **more than 180 wine gastronomic events** 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 horse-back or even by helicopter or sailing boat. A wine therapy session is a great way of closing a day in style. There are forty **travel agents** in Catalonia specialising in organising complete high-end wine tourist experiences.

Many **wine tourist** experiences in Catalonia are designed to be enjoyed in family, in couples or with friends and are also prepared to welcome handicapped people and persons with reduced mobility.

The Catalan Tourist Board has created the Wine Tourism brand to develop, foster and consolidate a specific offer in high-value experiences and activities aimed at knowing and enjoying the Catalan wine heritage and culture.





GASTRONOMY

Discovering a country's gastronomy, strolling along market stalls, buying, 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. The 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.

48

Catalonia is playing an **international leading role** in gastronomy, as its recognition as European Region of Gastronomy 2016 shows. Ferran Adrià, Carme Ruscalleda, Joan Roca, Carles Gaig and Sergi Arola, among others, have become ambassadors of our culture. Catalonia features **65 stars** in the 2017 **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
- Girona Territori d'Estrelles

In Costa Daurada:

- El Gust és Nostre
- 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 Gastronomia de l'Ametlla de Mar
- L'Essència de l'Arròs d'Amposta

In Costa Barcelona:

- Club de Tast del Gremi d'Hostaleria de Sitges
- Corbera Sabors
- Col·lectiu Cubat
- Cuina Vallès
- Cuina VO
- Vilafranca Ve de Gust

In Terres de Lleida:

- Noguera Cuina

In Paisatges Barcelona:

- Osona Cuina
- Els Fogons del Bages
- Cardona Sabors

In Barcelona:

- Barceloneta Cuina

Catalonia cultivates and produces a large basket of **quality products**. Some of them have different origin and food quality labels such as the denominations of origin and protected geographic indications. **Organic products** take a relevant position in the Catalan agrofood offer and are audited and certified by the Catalan Organic Agricultural 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, staying at a Gastronomic Hotel, 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 CULTURAL ICONS AND GREAT ROUTES

Culture is Catalonia's **hallmark**, a land 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 destination for cultural tourism. As a result of this historical and cultural legacy, UNESCO has **declared** a total **eleven World Heritage sites**, of which **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.

50

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

There is further an endless offer in cosmopolitan **Barcelona** and other cities such as **Tarragona, Girona** and **Lleida** (all of which are connected by high-speed train), 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 Palafrugell and the International Music Festival in Cantonigròs. In this respect, great cellist **Pau Casals** is also noteworthy. His birthplace **El Vendrell** (Costa Daurada) features the Vil·la Casals museum house and the Pau Casals Auditorium with a fine music programme.



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

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

51

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 World Heritage site Poblet. 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.



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

52

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), accessible 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 **Transcatalunya mountain bike route** covering more than 1200 kilometres allows exploring the land by stages, linking the Catalan mountain biking centres. Mountain biking centres in Catalonia are freely accessible areas with a minimum 100 kilometres of signposted ways starting from a visitor centre with tourist information and cycling services. The 18 mountain biking centres composing the network offer a total **302 routes** with over **6400 kilometres of signposted ways** and different degrees of difficulty.

Catalonia also boasts a wide network of roads and sealed rural paths for road cycling, as well as fine weather, varied landscape and services catering for cyclists. Being a more demanding discipline, the Catalan Tourist Board is working on road cycling through its Sports Tourism label. This initiative involves currently six municipalities: Lloret de Mar, Girona, Santa Susanna, Calella, Cambrils and Val d'Aran. The CTB has edited a map with some of the routes provided by these municipalities, which is available at www.catalunya.com.

Catalonia is prepared for welcoming cycling tourists, providing facilities and services in many municipalities as well as cycling routes, bike rental companies and accommodation addressed at this tourist segment, able to cater for all its specific needs: safe storage rooms, washing facilities, repair tools, etc.



MEDICAL & HEALTH TOURISM

Barcelona and Catalonia provide **top-quality medical care** that attracts numerous foreign visitors, completed by a prime tourist offer with great services and facilities. Thanks to the high level of medical research and hospital care, thousands of patients come each year to Catalan clinics and hospitals from abroad, attracted by the **excellent facilities** and **specialists** in the different branches of medicine and healthcare to follow some treatment or undergo surgery.

Ophthalmology, obstetrics and foetal medicine, gynaecology and reproductive medicine, cosmetic and restorative surgery, oncology and haematology, neurorehabilitation, traumatology and orthopaedics, cardiology and transplantations are among the most demanded areas.

The World Health Organisation and independent experts acknowledge the Catalan health system as one of the world's best. Medical tourism is precisely a main factor in **retaining medical talent** in Catalonia and **keeping** this **excellent level** of **Catalan healthcare**.

The offer in **sports medicine** is also noticeable, as is the great number of visitors coming to Catalonia to enjoy the **treatments** provided by its twenty **spas** with **medicinal mineral waters** declared of public utility. **Catalonia's thermal tradition** dates back to Roman times, yet spas have adapted their facilities to the new accommodation trends, offering quality standards comparable to modern hotels. 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. Their great wealth in mineral waters can be enjoyed in baths, completed by a tourist offer that includes cultural heritage, nature, leisure, gastronomy, festivals and traditions.

On top of that comes a good offer of **wellness, thermal leisure** and **thalassotherapy centres**.

Barcelona Medical Destination is the promotion brand for medical tourism created by the Catalan Tourist Board and Turisme de Barcelona. It is partnered by Barcelona Centre Mèdic and Barcelona Medical Agency associations and gathers relevant healthcare centres with the aim of positioning Catalonia, and more specifically Barcelona, as an international top medical tourist destination.

PREMIUM

Catalonia is a **unique, singular destination** with an exclusive offer for the most demanding public, a place to enjoy exclusive experiences, either while doing business or in leisure, playing golf at a prime location, relaxing at one of its numerous healthcare and wellness centres or savouring Catalan cuisine and wines.

Catalonia is a small yet **extraordinarily diverse territory**. Its flavours have been inherited from a millenary history, but are also founded on the avant-garde of arts and cuisine. Roman and medieval remains come together with unparalleled architecture by the great masters from Gaudí to Norman Foster, while centennial shops and craft workshops share the same neighbourhoods with boutiques featuring the latest trends and luxury hotels.

This is a land rich in **wines** and **fresh produce** from the **sea**, the **orchard** and the **mountains**. Together with a long-standing culinary tradition, this has placed the **Catalan cuisine among the most reputed in the world**. Numerous chefs in Catalonia feature **Michelin stars**, their restaurants being scattered across the whole territory. Besides haute cuisine, Catalans have been able to preserve their **most traditional recipes** carrying us back to the origins of this fascinating Mediterranean culture.

The city of **Barcelona** is the gate to the whole universe of feelings conveyed by this fascinating territory. It is just a short way from the capital to the Pyrenees, the medieval villages in Lleida or the beaches—wide in Costa Daurada and Terres de l'Ebre, secluded between cliffs in Costa Brava. All this is completed by a **climate** that allows enjoying the snow in winter and the sun and the sea during many months of the year, especially in summer. Add to this a **well-preserved legacy declared World Heritage**: Art Nouveau architecture, Roman Tarraco, Poblet monastery and the Romanesque churches in Vall de Boí, together with the Immaterial Heritage of La Patum, the Castellers and the Pyrenees Falles.

Catalonia boasts a **wide range of top-level facilities, hotels and restaurants**. On top of that, there are also **experts** ready to take care of any detail to allow you enjoy some exquisite experiences you will never forget. Catalonia has always a **select proposal** to offer, suiting everybody, no matter their age, lifestyle or origin.

The Catalan Tourist Board has created the Premium Catalonia brand aimed at companies and organisations within the luxury segment providing premium offers to excite visitors to Catalonia who are looking for some true, exclusive and customised experience.

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.

56

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 and 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-meet-



ing 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 170 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 is the **Ambassadors Programme**, with currently more than 140 members 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 family-friendly destinations.

The Catalan Tourist Board features three **specialisation labels** 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, available cots and pushchairs, socket protectors, etc.

There are currently **23 family-friendly destinations** in Catalonia, of which 19 feature the Family-friendly beach holidays label and 4 the Family-friendly adventure holidays label:

Family-friendly beach holidays

In **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
- **Sant Pere Pescador** / www.visitsantpere.com



In **Costa Barcelona**:

- **Calella** / www.calellabarcelona.com
- **Malgrat de Mar** / www.turismemalgrat.com
- **Pineda de Mar** / www.pinedademarturisme.cat
- **Santa Susanna** / www.stasusanna-barcelona.es
- **Castelldefels** / www.castelldefelsturisme.com
- **Vilanova i la Geltrú** / www.vilanovaturisme.cat

In **Costa Daurada**:

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

Family-friendly adventure holidays

- **Berga** / www.turismeberga.cat
- **Muntanyes de Prades** / www.muntanyescostadaurada.cat
- **Valls d'Àneu** / www.vallsdaneu.org
- **Vall de Boí** / www.vallboi.cat

In addition to these 23 certified destinations, there are further seven **in the process** of certification or enlargement: Vall de Camprodon, Vall de Núria-Vall de Ribes, Sort-Rialp-Port Ainé, Alp-La Molina-Masella, Els Ports, Vall d'en Bas-Les Preses and the enlargement of Muntanyes de Prades.

Finally, the Catalan Tourist Board awards the **Family-friendly Attractions** label to those specific tourist facilities (water parks, ski resorts, nautical resorts, amusement parks, etc.) that wish to become certified in family tourism and are located outside destinations that already feature one of the two aforementioned labels. There are currently ten facilities certified as Family-friendly Attractions.

The certified family-friendly offer is provided by 700 partner businesses having made an effort to adapt and improve their service, thus providing optimum quality 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 2017

2017, THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM FOR DEVELOPMENT

With the declaration of 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development by the WTO, the United Nations and the European Commission, the CTB will include sustainability as an overall value into its own tourist model, focusing especially on areas such as ecotourism, nature tourism and accessible tourism, among others.

The Catalan Tourist Board (CTB) is pushing for a responsible tourist model aimed at environmentally sustainable, socially inclusive and universally accessible tourism. To this end, the CTB includes the concept of “sustainable competitiveness” into its tourist model and the different actions it takes to present Catalonia as a sustainable tourist destination. In this respect, the Biosphere certification shall be pointed out, being awarded by the Institute of Responsible Tourism, a WTO member organisation associated to the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) and the UNESCO. Apart from Catalonia as a comprehensive tourist destination, Barcelona, Val d’Aran and Sitges also feature this certification.

The commitment and effort in actually having tourism for all was formalised by signing the “Barcelona Declaration” in October 2013, which has led the CTB to become a member of the European Network for Accessible Tourism (ENAT) and the International Social Tourism Organisation (ISTO) and to chair the Network of European Regions for a Sustainable and Competitive Tourism (NECSTouR) for the 2016-2018 period.

www.catalunya.com

<http://estucasa.catalunya.com/activitats/natureza-para-todos-los-gustos/>

TWO MORE CATALAN NATURAL PARKS JOIN THE EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

The natural parks of Montsant (Tarragona) and Montgrí, les Illes Medes i el Baix Ter (Girona) have joined the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism (ECST). The EUROPARC Federation has validated both parks and has also renewed the certificate for Zona Volcànica de la Garrotxa Natural Park, Spain's first in obtaining it.

In the case of Montsant Natural Park, the ECST not only has awarded the certification for the protected area as such, but for the whole of Priorat county.

Three more Catalan natural parks, Delta de l'Ebre, Sant Llorenç del Munt i l'Obac and Montseny, already have this European certificate. The EUROPARC distinction certifies that tourism in these areas is developed in a sustainable way according to the Charter goals.

<http://parcsnaturals.gencat.cat>

FERRARI LAND, A THEME PARK ABOUT THE PRANCING HORSE ON COSTA DAURADA

This theme park provides family leisure with a notable spirit of adventure for motor sports and Ferrari supporters on 70,000 m². One of its main attractions will be the vertical accelerator reaching 180 km/h in five seconds, a true challenge for Formula 1 lovers. This new attraction beats two European records, being the continent's highest (112 m) and fastest (180 km/h) roller coaster.

With Ferrari Land, PortAventura World becomes a world-class holiday destination, offering three theme parks in one single resort.

www.portaventuraworld.com/ferrari-land

CATALONIA, A FAMILY-FRIENDLY DESTINATION

The Catalan Tourist Board (CTB) has recently certified five new ski and mountain resorts as Family-Friendly Attractions: Masella, Vall de Núria, Vallter 2000, Port Ainé and La Molina (the four latter owned by FGC railway company). These certifications join Espot and Boí Taüll, validated in 2013 and 2015 within the family-friendly adventure holiday destinations Valls d'Àneu and Vall de Boí, respectively.

The CTB certifies those destinations, businesses and facilities within the family tourist product line that provide resources and services adapted to families with children. Catalonia has currently 23 certified destinations, 19 on the coast and four inland. Other destinations are in the process of certification or enlargement: Vall de Camprodon, Alp-La Molina-Masella, Sort-Rialp-Port Ainé, Vall de Núria-Vall de Ribes, Els Ports, Vall d'en Bas-Les Preses and Muntanyes de Prades (enlargement).

www.catalunya.com

<http://estucasa.catalunya.com/activitats/mucho-mas-que-sol-y-playa/>

SKIING SEASON IN CATALONIA

There are 16 ski resorts in the Catalan Pyrenees, 10 alpine and 6 Nordic. Besides encouraging skiing, they are one of the main economic drivers of the Pyrenean counties. Being aware of this, the relevant public authorities are devoting together with private business big efforts to foster tourism in the inland and mountain counties, diversifying the offer and promoting the ski resorts as venues offering year-round activities.

Over a hundred sports competitions are held in the Catalan ski resorts during the season. The main are: the 38th Marxa Beret on 5 February and the SKIMO ski mountaineering World Cup Final on 8-9 April, both in Baqueira Beret; the El Dorado Freeride Junior Tour-FJT finals in Boí Taüll on 11-12 March; the Catalan Championship and Spanish Cup in Espot on 10-12 March; and La Molina will host the Snowboard IPC World Cup on 15-22 January, the 2nd phase of the Spanish Cup on 24-26 February, the Snowboard SBX World Cup on 4-5 March and the Spanish Championship and Cup on 7-9 March.

Virtually all resorts have invested in improving services and facilities to create ideal conditions for an outstanding winter season in Catalonia.

www.visitpirineus.com

<http://estucasa.catalunya.com/estucasa-nieve/>

62

SIX MORE MICHELIN STARS FOR CATALONIA

The Catalan cuisine continues evolving as it gains wide international reputation. Six Michelin stars have been added to the wide range of restaurants awarded by the famous “Red Guide” this year. Lasarte in Barcelona has earned its third star, joining El Celler de Can Roca and Sant Pau in the top category.

Five new restaurants have entered the list with one star. They are Ca l’Arpa in Banyoles (Girona), Céleri and Xerta, both in Barcelona, La Boscana in Bellvís (Lleida) and L’Antic Molí in Uldecona (Tarragona).

54 restaurants all over Catalonia currently hold some distinction by the Michelin guide, with as many as 65 stars in total.

www.catalunya.com

<http://estucasa.catalunya.com/activitats/ven-a-cenar-a-casa/>

BARCELONA HOSTS THE PARABERE FORUM GASTRONOMIC CONGRESS

The Parabere Forum is a gastronomic congress created to become an international platform giving a higher visibility to women in the gastronomic business. The meeting will be held in La Llotja in Barcelona on 5-6 March 2017.

The forum's distinctiveness lies in tackling the main issues related to gastronomy from the perspective of the expertise and knowledge of women from all generations and backgrounds.

<http://parabereforum.com>

MEET 2017: MEETING FOR BUSINESS TOURISM PROFESSIONALS

The Catalan Tourist Board will hold in 2017 the second edition of MEET Catalunya (June) through the Catalunya Convention Bureau.

MEET Catalunya is a business meeting at which European tour operators specialising in business tourism and incentive trips meet Catalan tourist companies to become familiar with their offer and sell it in their countries of origin. At the first edition, more than 1700 interviews took place, aimed at creating business between Catalan providers and invited tour operators.

<http://www.catalunya.com/catalunya-convention-bureau-ccb>

CATALONIA'S MUSEUMS ON YOUR HAND

With the Visitmuseum app, you will have all the information on Catalonia's museums on your mobile device. This useful tool to complete on-site visits provides visual and text content to enjoy each museum's main pieces in detail. The app is available in Catalan, Spanish, English and French.

<http://visitmuseum.gencat.cat/es/>

VISITING THE CULTURAL AND ARTISTIC HERITAGE OF CATALONIA SACRA

Discoveries through guided tours and great monuments make over forty proposals and routes to know the legacy of Christianity in Catalonia. Museums, shrines, cathedrals, churches and masterpieces complete a heritage resulting from 2000 years of relationship between Christianity, culture, identity and spirituality in Catalonia.

<http://www.cataloniasacra.cat/>

TOURIST EXPERIENCES TO DISCOVER THE WORLD OF THE IBERIANS

The Museum of Archaeology of Catalonia has new tourist and cultural proposals for visitors around the Iberian Route to convey the great heritage of the Iberian sites in Catalonia and provide enlightening visits of fine quality.

Under the title “Break Away to the Iberian Route”, 17 cultural and tourist experiences have been created, aimed at popularising the archaeological heritage in a ludic way. The activities offered and compiled in a guide edited in four languages combine archaeology with other areas such as literature, cuisine and nature.

<http://patrimoni.gencat.cat>

www.mac.cat/Rutes/Ruta-dels-Ibers

COSTA BRAVA

THE SEA OTTER BIKE SHOW IN GIRONA

64

The Sea Otter Europe Costa Brava-Girona Bike Show will be held on 2-4 June. After 25 years at its original venue in Laguna Seca, California, the Sea Otter Classic will be hosted in Europe for the first time. It is considered one of the world's greatest and completest cycling and outdoor sports events. The Costa Brava and Girona thus emerge as a benchmarking cycling sports destination in Southern Europe, placing Catalonia in the top flight of world cycling.

www.ciclisme.cat

GAME OF THRONES IN GIRONA

After the shooting of the popular series in the city, a tourist route has been created along the settings. The programmed visits lead mainly through the old city centre.

www.girona.cat

ULLASTRET, OR HOW THE IBERIANS USED TO LIVE

A 3D recreation programme allows walking through the streets of what used to be one of the most important sites of Iberian culture in Catalonia. Located in Baix Empordà county, the ancient town perched on a hill was once surrounded by water. The archaeological remains discovered in recent years have allowed recreating how the village, its customs and means of transport were.

www.mac.cat/esl/Sedes/Ullastret

PALAMÓS, A CRUISE DESTINATION

The port of Palamós, Catalonia's second cruise destination, has enlarged its terminal to welcome tourists from outside the Schengen area. This initiative shall give new momentum to cruise tourism, coming here from smaller ships, yet bringing in passengers with higher purchasing power.

www.visitpalamos.cat

www.portsdelageneralitat.org

EMPÚRIES FEATURES NEW SPACES

After a recovery process that led to reopen the stoa and the agora of the Greek town, Empúries has enlarged its offer to include also a new introductory film. This archaeological site of utmost relevance is the only ancient Greek town preserved on the Iberian Peninsula. The stoa is specifically one of the great buildings of the Greek site and was together with the agora the public centre of Empúries in the mid-2nd century BC.

www.mac.cat/esl/Sedes/Empuries

LLORET DE MAR EXPANDS ITS OFFER

Lloret de Mar is still a prime tourist destination flying blue flags at all its beaches year after year. It also keeps making efforts to expand the services and proposals regarding accessibility as well as the whole offer it provides as a certified family and sports tourist destination.

Among the new cultural offers, the most notable is Can Font, the former home of an emigrant family returned from America now owned by the town council and open to visitors. There are also guided tours through the old town centre, programmed Nordic walks and numerous activities geared to family tourism.

www.lloret.cat

COSTA BARCELONA & PAISATGES BARCELONA

SITGES BIOSPHERE DESTINATION

This town in Garraf county, located 30 km south of Barcelona, has become the world's eighth Biosphere Destination certified for sustainable tourism. The certification is based on criteria regarding quality, environmental protection, sustainability, social responsibility, cultural heritage conservation, satisfaction of tourist expectations and improvement of life quality of the local population.

Catalonia became in November 2015 the world's first large comprehensive tourist destination beyond specific cities or destinations in reaching this overarching certification that makes sure that travellers will enjoy a sustainable experience while protecting culture, improving the local economy and reducing the environmental impact.

This recognition by the Institute of Responsible Tourism, an organisation associated to the UNESCO, shall serve to encourage other tourist destinations and products in Catalonia to become certified, thus following the steps of Barcelona and Val d'Aran, which already feature this label, under the auspices of Biosphere Catalonia.

In fact, the Costa Barcelona and Paisatges Barcelona tourist brands are already working in obtaining this certification.

www.sitges.cat

NEW FEATURES IN Penedès WINE TOURISM

Three new circular routes through Alt and Baix Penedès counties have been created under the name of Penedès 360°. Based on their length (between 150 and 270 km), they are designed for being covered in several stages. With these routes, Penedès positions itself as one of the completest wine tourist areas.

www.enoturismepenedes.cat/es

"The Wine Road", a wine tourist route promoted by 13 wineries and 7 municipalities along the Sitges - Vilafranca del Penedès - Sant Martí Sarroca axis, features experimentally four electric vehicles to cover it. With these vehicles (two cars and two vans), its promoters intend to place the route as a landmark in sustainable tourism.

www.lacarreteradelvi.com

Bodegas Torres has in its turn introduced a new wine tourist route. It consists of a visit to the innovative Mas La Plana winery, on a tour that takes visitors through the vineyards of the estate, providing fine views of the Penedès landscape and its features. The visit can be completed with a commented tasting to discover the secrets of its wines. Among the

ecologically sustainable actions implemented, Torres uses a solar electric train in its visits, thus reducing CO2 emissions by 50%.

www.clubtorres.com/es

MOTO GP ON THE CIRCUIT DE BARCELONA-CATALUNYA

Moto GP races will be held on this famous racetrack until 2021, where top-level competitions have been taking place since 1992. The Circuit thus strengthens its position as an international landmark and an economic driver, giving continuity to the motorcycling tradition and the passion for motor sports in Catalonia.

The Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya has been featuring the ISO 14001-2004 certification for environmental management since 2008 and has earned several international awards, such as the 2012 FIM Environment Award from the International Motorcycling Federation (FIM), held by only one racetrack in the world so far, and the Excellence Award from the FIA Institute sustainability programme, thus becoming the first Formula 1 track being given this distinction.

The Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya looks after all aspects related with sustainability and has positioned itself as one of the world's pioneering racetracks regarding environmental commitment in motor sports.

www.circuitcat.com

A TREASURE OF FILM CULTURE IN CARDONA

The European Film Academy has distinguished Sant Vicenç collegiate church in Cardona as a "Treasure of European Film Culture". This heritage building, a Romanesque masterpiece rising above Cardona castle, was the place chosen to shoot "Chimes at Midnight" in 1964, written, starring and directed by Orson Welles. The collegiate church is the eighth European and first Spanish site to obtain this distinction.

www.cardonaturisme.cat/es

BARCELONA

CATALONIA ON THE RAMBLA

A new space for disseminating Catalonia's heritage and gastronomy has opened on the Rambla. Palau Moja - The Catalan Heritage House is organised in 3 different areas adding to and interacting with each other: a main area for promoting and buying heritage products; a gastronomic tasting area based on healthy local produce; and a tourist office specialising in cultural heritage.

www.visitbarcelona.com

OPEN CAMP, A SPORTS THEME PARK

Barcelona's first theme park dedicated to sports has opened. Located in the Montjuïc stadium, where the opening and closing ceremony of the 1992 Olympic Games took place, it invites visitors to have a try at their favourite sport in a virtual way. Track and field, football, motorcycling, basketball and many more are featured, together with their secrets and a competition among friends.

www.opencamp.com

68

150TH ANNIVERSARY OF ART NOUVEAU ARCHITECT PUIG I CADAFALECH

2017 will mark the 150th anniversary of Josep Puig i Cadafalch's birth, with different events held in Barcelona as well as other places in Catalonia. There are nine buildings by this Art Nouveau architect in the city of Barcelona. One of them, known as "Casa de les Punxes" due to its six sharp-pointed towers, has just opened to the public, providing access to different parts of the building, including its spectacular rooftop. This house is located on Diagonal Avenue, close to Passeig de Gràcia, and was built in the early 20th century for the Terrades family.

www.casadelespunxes.com

Still talking about Art Nouveau in Barcelona, Casa Vicens in the Gràcia neighbourhood, the first house designed by Gaudí, will open its doors to the public soon.

www.casavicens.org

ORIGINAL GASTRONOMIC PROPOSALS IN BARCELONA

Òpera Samfaina is a new cultural and gastronomic space in the Liceu opera house, an innovative experience created by Franc Aleu and the Roca brothers offering a whole feast for senses based on animation, arts and gastronomy. In the famous Boqueria market on the

Rambla, El Altar is a new venue to live unique gastronomic experiences. Also on the Rambla, Europe's first NBA café-restaurant has just opened.

www.visitbarcelona.com

COSTA DAURADA & TERRES DE L'EBRE

ESCRIBÀ BAKERY COMES TO PORTAVENTURA WORLD

The renowned confectioner Christian Escribà will join PortAventura with a complete programme full of activities and initiatives around confectionery, with a clear focus on creativity and innovation. The resort thus aims at providing new proposals to the experience of its visitors.

The agreement with Escribà will allow visitors to enjoy confectionery and bakery creations made exclusively for activities, projects and events at PortAventura World. This project will include different proposals such as the Escribà Academy, where a team of chefs will teach confectionery lessons for the whole family.

PortAventura World Parks & Resort is one of Europe's largest holiday and family leisure destinations, having welcomed more than 65 million guests since it opened 20 years ago. The resort includes four 4-star theme hotels and one 5-star hotel, with a total 2100 rooms, plus a convention centre hosting up to 4000 people. Its commercial offer also includes three golf courses (two of them designed by Greg Norman) and a beach club with direct access to the beach. PortAventura World Parks & Resort also has a theme park and a water park, plus a third theme park devoted to Ferrari on an area of 70,000 m2, opening in 2017.

www.portaventuraworld.com

SALOU, AN IDEAL DESTINATION FOR FOOTBALL AND SAILING

The Catalan Tourist Board (CTB) has awarded the Sports Tourism label to the Salou Yacht Club.

The CTB already certified this Costa Daurada town as a sports tourism destination for football in January 2013. With the recognition of the Yacht Club, the municipality takes sailing into its certified sports offer. This allows Salou to take full advantage of its beaches and natural maritime resources for nautical and local activities. The certification included so far the Salou Football Sports Complex and 11 tourist accommodations (10 hotels and 1 camp site). They are now joined by the Yacht Club

The Sports Tourism label awarded by the Catalan Tourist Board aims at positioning Catalo-

nia as an international benchmark. Catalonia has currently 16 destinations certified with this label: Amposta, Banyoles-Pla de l'Estany, Blanes, Calella, Cambrils, Castelldefels, Castelló d'Empúries-Empuriabrava, L'Ametlla de Mar, La Seu d'Urgell, Lloret de Mar, Salou, Santa Susanna, Sort, Val d'Aran, L'Hospitalet de Llobregat and Girona.

<http://www.visitsalou.eu/>

TERRES DE L'EBRE, A PRESERVED TERRITORY

The four counties that make this territory in Southern Catalonia have been recognised by the international association Global Green Destinations as one of the world's Top 100 Sustainable Destinations. 35% of the area of Terres de l'Ebre is protected by Natura 2000. The region was declared a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 2013.

Apart from protecting and preserving nature, Terres de l'Ebre also works in other aspects of sustainability to have tourist development compatible with nature conservation, such as reducing the use of fossil fuels and adopting strategies to lower CO2 emissions.

Global Green Destinations is a global association for responsible tourism that supports destinations, regions and countries in improving their quality, sustainability and market visibility.

<http://www.terresdelebre.travel/>

<http://greendestinations.info>

INTERNATIONAL CINEMA IN TORTOSA

Tortosa will host the first international tourist cinema festival from 31 May to 3 June. The Terres Catalunya International ECO & TOURISM Film Festival will feature three categories: tourist promotion films, documentaries on travel experiences and productions on environmental subjects.

www.tortosa.cat

TERRES DE LLEIDA

MONTSEC STARTS THE STAR BUS TO FOSTER ASTROTOURISM

The Montsec Astronomy Park (PAM) enlarges its tourist activity portfolio. Departing from Barcelona and Sabadell every Friday, the new Star Bus is an initiative to approach astronomy to the largest possible number of visitors. This service can also be booked for groups and includes, among other activities, an astronomic dinner and a visit to the Universe Observation Centre, where visitors can gaze at the sky.

Montsec also works on the MICE segment, offering proposals and activities for companies (training sessions for managers, working group meetings, etc.), all of them based on sky observation.

The 1st International Congress on Astronomy Tourism will be held here in May, gathering international experts who will present different experiences in astrotourism. Also this year, the PAM works in renewing and enlarging the Starlight Reserve certification obtained in 2013, stating the quality of the sky in the area.

www.montsec.cat

TREN DELS LLACS, A TIME TRAVEL

This tourist train called “The Lake Train”, travelling from Lleida to the Pyrenees in summer, features now new panorama carriages allowing better views of the landscape while the train moves past gorges and reservoirs like Camarasa, Terradets and Sant Antoni.

The diesel engines and vintage carriages carry travellers back in time, on a nostalgic trip that is a must for railway and nature lovers.

<http://www.trendelsllacs.cat/es/inicio/>

BACK TO CHILDHOOD

Les Borges Blanques in Les Garrigues county adds a new tourist attraction with the opening of the new Cal Pauet Museum featuring almost 800 pieces that revive school life in the 1950s and 1960s.

The exhibition on “Landscapes of our childhood” is completed with an ongoing projection of old photographs, accompanied by music composed and played on purpose for the museum.

www.museulesborges.com

CONCA DE TREMP-MONTSEC APPLIES FOR BECOMING A UNESCO GEOPARK

Certain areas in Pallars Jussà county, close to its main town of Tremp, feature unique geological properties. This has been the reason for introducing the Pirineus Geological Open Museum project, aimed at becoming Catalonia’s second geopark.

Among the distinctive features of this area, the paleontological heritage stands out. The first records of remains from dinosaurs in Conca de Tremp date back to 1927, and since the 1980s, researchers from the Catalan Institute of Palaeontology and the Museum of Isona i Conca Dellà carry out systematic diggings in the area and cooperate with other similar territories.

A Geopark is a rural area that implements a development model acknowledged by the UNESCO and based on managing an exceptional geological, paleontological and mining heritage. Its main goal is economic and cultural development for the benefit of the local community.

Catalonia already has a Geopark, that of Central Catalonia.

www.projectegeoparctrempmontsec.com

THE PONENT NATURAL AREAS, NATURE TO DISCOVER

The natural areas in the counties of Garrigues, Urgell, Pla d'Urgell and southern Segrià in the Lleida region have come together under this denomination to jointly promote naturally beautiful places quite unknown to the large public. They include Ivars i Vila-sana Lake, Catalonia's biggest.

These counties feature some distinctive natural areas including both drylands and wetlands. They are home to a peculiar avifauna that has found a habitat in this region.

www.espaisnaturalsdeponent.cat

CATALUNYA BIKE RACE

72

After Andalusia and La Rioja, this stage race comes to Catalonia. It will take place in the Lleida area from 29 September to 1 October, ranging from the wide plains in the South to the Pyrenees in the North.

This competition is part of the official Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) calendar and has emerged as one of Europe's most relevant mountain bike stage races.

<http://esmtb.com>

PIRINEUS

ACTIVITIES IN THE GARROTXA VOLCANIC AREA

Zona Volcànica de la Garrotxa Natural Park has introduced a new activity for families to discover scientific singularities about the place. JugaParc is a game of wits offering several guided tours through different park areas, led by an imaginary scientist doing research on and having a deep insight into the volcanoes

<http://parcsnaturals.gencat.cat/es/garrotxa>

NATURE & SPORTS EURO MEET 2017

La Seu d'Urgell will host this European congress on sports and nature from 27 to 30 September. Discussions will take place in the Parador de Turismo, the Centre Empresarial i Tecnològic de l'Alt Pirineu and the Segre Olympic Park. The congress is open to all federations and sports organisations related to adventure sports in nature.

www.laseu.cat

WALKS THROUGH ALT PIRINEU NATURAL PARK

Alt Pirineu Natural Park has started new initiatives to foster tourism, especially for families. They include Explora el Parc and El Pas de l'Óssa projects, the "Get Guided through Alt Pirineu Natural Park" mobile app or Belibasta, an interactive game along a stretch of the Way of the Last Cathar. They all join new hiking trails, self-guided walks, more mountain biking routes and a new adapted path.

<http://parcsnaturals.gencat.cat/es/alt-pirineu>

VERTICAL ADVENTURES IN THE PYRENEES

Pirineus Parc Aventura has opened in La Guingueta d'Àneu, in Valls d'Àneu. The first vertical adventure forest in Pallars county, it is mainly addressed at families, but also groups of friends, schools and company outings. Along the way you will find zip-lines, bridges, tunnels and other features to complete your personal adventure.

Valls d'Àneu features the Family-Friendly Adventure Holidays label awarded by the Catalan Tourist Board.

www.pirineusparcaventura.com

TOURISM FOR ALL IN LLEIDA

Several adapted routes have been developed in the Lleida Pyrenees to allow everybody enjoy tourism. They include a wooden walkway in Sant Joan de l'Erm (Alt Pirineu) for the physically and visually challenged. Further, Baqueira Beret, Boí Taüll and Tavascan ski resorts have specialised teachers and adapted equipment. Numerous hotels and leisure centres also have adapted their facilities for people with different abilities.

<http://turismeperatohom.catalunya.com/ca/>

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

Turisme de 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

TOURIST PROMOTION CENTRES OUTSIDE CATALONIA

Benelux

Tel. (+32) 26 406 151
info.act.bnl@gencat.cat

France

Tel. (+33) 1 40 46 98 92
media.act.fr@gencat.cat

Italy

Tel. (+39) 02 873 935 73
info.act.it@gencat.cat

Central Europe

Tel. (+49) 69 7422 4873
info.act.de@gencat.cat

Nordic Countries

Tel. (+358) 407 17 72 95
info.act.nordic@gencat.cat

UK & Ireland

Tel. (+44) 207 583 88 55
info.act.uk@gencat.cat

Eastern Europe

Tel. (+7) 495 567 18 71
info.act.ru@gencat.cat

USA

Tel. (+1) 212 78 23 332
info.act.usa@gencat.cat

Asia Pacific

Tel. (+65) 62204022
info.act.sea@gencat.cat

South America

Tel. (+55) 11 30530477
info.act.latam@gencat.cat

China

Tel. (+8610) 848 682 84
promotion.act.cn@gencat.cat

Blanquerna Cultural Centre (Madrid)

Tel. 915 241 000
turisme.blanquerna@gencat.cat

OTHER RELEVANT TOURIST WEB SITES

Catalonia

www.catalunya.com

Catalan Tourist Board

www.act.gencat.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.turismeperatohom.com/es

St James Way for all

www.camidesantjaumeperatohom.cat

Sports

Marinas

www.acpet.es

Nautical Resorts

www.encatalunya.info

Costa Brava Golf

ca.costabrava.org/que-fer/golf

Costa Daurada Golf Association

www.costadauradagolf.com/

Wine Tourism

Priorat Wine Route

www.turismepriorat.org / www.prioratenoturisme.com

Lleida-Costers del Segre Wine Route (Wine Route of Spain)
www.rutadelvidelleida.com

DO Empordà Wine Route (Wine Route of Spain)
www.rutadelvidoemporda.org

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

DO Alella Wine Tourism
www.doalella.cat

Gastronomy

Som gastronomia
www.somgastronomia.cat

Great Cultural Icons and Great Routes

AVE Experience
www.avexperience.es

Medical & Health Tourism

Barcelona Medical Destination
www.barcelonamedicaldestination.com/en/

Business Tourism

Catalunya Convention Bureau
www.catalunya.com/mice



Generalitat de Catalunya
Government of Catalonia
Catalan Tourist Board

Partners:

