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Catalonia charm.

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SPAIN | 7DAYS / 6NIGHTS

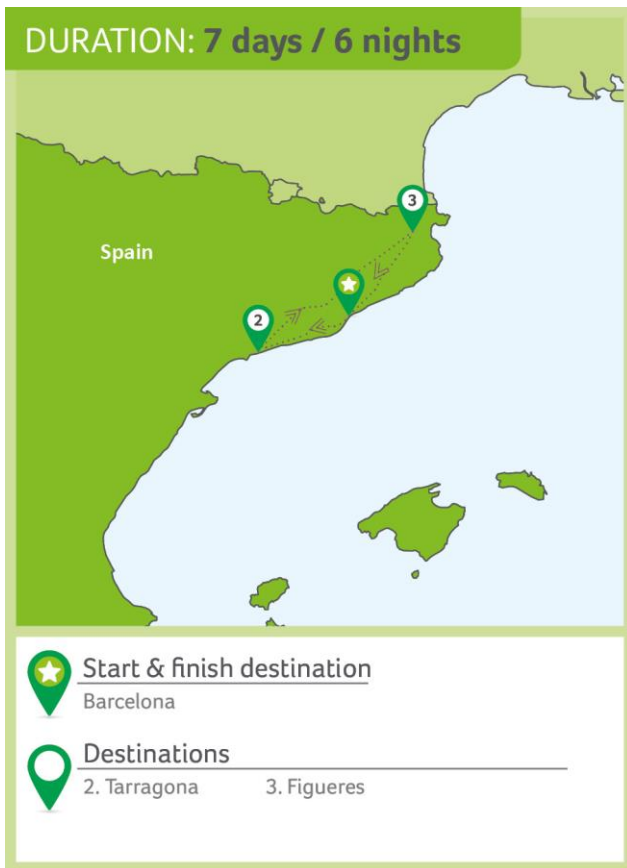
Route: Round-trip from and to Barcelona

Type of tour: Culture

TOUR OVERVIEW

Explore the proud region of Catalonia during this magical seven-day round-trip starting and ending in Barcelona. Discover ancient Roman ruins, picturesque mountain villages, timeless medieval towns and historic cities. Journey through verdant valleys and spectacular landscapes, and experience the raw beauty of the Catalan countryside. Immerse yourself in the surreal world of extrovert artist Salvador Dali and the imaginative architecture of modernist master Antoni Gaudi. This tour introduces you to all the attractions that have made Catalonia such a fascinating destination.

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS



Sant Sadurn d'Anoia: Enjoy a guided tour of a cava winery and cellars followed by a sparkling wine tasting

Poblet: Explore the magnificent 12th-century walled monastery of the Cistercian order of monks

Tarragona: Discover the classical heritage of one of the ancient Roman capitals of Hispania

Garrotxa: Stroll through the craggy village of Castellfollit de la Roca and beautiful Besalu during the journey through this scenic highland area

Figueres: The spirit of surrealist artist Salvador Dali lives on in his hometown as a visit to the entertaining theatre-museum dedicated to him will reveal

Barcelona: Visit iconic Gaudi creations such as Park Güell and the Sagrada Familia basilica, and stroll along the busy Ramblas

DON'T MISS

Pa amb tomàquet: This typical toast and tomato treat has a dash of olive oil and salt and has become a country favourite

Art and architecture: Look up and admire the region's inspirational constructions – from Roman ruins to Catalan modernism, Catalonia boasts the best of both worlds

Market days: Visit the bright and colourful Boqueria market off the Ramblas in Barcelona for a tasty and at times unusual treat

DAY BY DAY

DAY 1 | ARRIVAL IN BARCELONA

Group meet-and-greet service at Barcelona El Prat Airport and transfer to your hotel in the capital of the autonomous community of Catalonia.

- Overnight in Barcelona hotel on a bed-and-breakfast basis.

DAY 2 | BARCELONA – SANT SADURNI D'ANOIA – POBLET – REUS – TARRAGONA (180km – 2.5 hr)

Enjoy breakfast at the hotel before heading inland. Visit a **cava winery** and learn about Spain's tasty version of bubbly. Next, head for the Cistercian **Santa Maria de Poblet Monastery**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This 12th century complex is completely surrounded by defensive walls and to stroll around it is like travelling back in time to the Middle Ages.

Romanesque, Gothic and baroque architectural styles can be appreciated throughout the monastery, which also served as the pantheon of kings of the once mighty Crown of Aragon.

Next stop is Reus, which boasts a surprising number of Modernist buildings. Visit the **Gaudí Centre** and learn about the architect's exuberant designs. Then visit the **Vermouth Museum**, including a tasting of this fashionable drink. Transfer next to Tarragona, which was one of the Roman capitals of Spain, known as Tarraco in its day. Nowadays, the city's impressive Roman ruins have earned it UNESCO World Heritage Site status and remind us of the town's grand past.

- **Overnight in Tarragona hotel on a bed-and-breakfast basis.**

DAY 3 | TARRAGONA

Start the day with breakfast at the hotel, then set off for a day trip that takes us to the **River Ebro delta** and enjoy a pleasant boat trip, a Modernist wine cellar known as the Cathedral because of its size at **El Pinell de Brai**, and the village and Templar castle of **Miravet**, where the last remaining engineless ferry crosses the river Ebro. This unique ferry is made of two traditional vessels joined by a wooden platform and transports cars, animals and people from one side of the river to the other using the river current and the skill of the boatman controlling the rudder and supporting cables. The village also has several pottery workshops and the artisans can be found making pieces by hand on the potter's wheel with shapes and glazes introduced from the Islamic world. On the way back to Tarragona, drive through the rolling hills of the wine growing area of Priorat.

- **Overnight in Tarragona hotel on a bed-and-breakfast basis.**

DAY 4 | TARRAGONA – CARDONA – FIGUERES (300km – 4h)

Enjoy a nice breakfast and get ready to explore Tarragona with a city tour. Visit the **ruins of the old city walls**, which date from the third century, and other significant Roman monuments such as the **Forum**, the circus and the amphitheatre, residing on the shores of the Mediterranean. See the Cathedral-Basilica of Saint Mary, a magnificent fusion of Romanesque and Gothic styles and admire the graceful elegance of the Plaça de la Font, the location of the city hall.

Leave Tarragona behind and head for **Cardona**, where a visit to the Salt Mountain mine is included. Next, head for the region of Garrotxa and the **village of Olot**, which surprisingly boasts an area of extinct volcanic activity. After Olot, pass by the village of **Castellfollit de la Roca**, perched on a vertiginous thousand-metre-long crag with a 50m drop below. On one side of the village, the homes look down on the River Fluvia, a scene of breathtaking beauty.

A short drive eastward along the river takes us to the equally mesmerising town of **Besalu**, which was traditionally reached via one of the most romantic medieval bridges in Europe. The eight-arch bridge crosses the river at an angle, with a fortified tower complete with portcullis in the middle. Enjoy free time to explore the old town, with its winding cobblestone streets, pretty plazas and historic churches and palaces. Continue to Figueres for check-in at the hotel.

- **Overnight in Figueres hotel on a half-board basis.**

DAY 5 | FIGUERES – BARCELONA

Explore Figueres after breakfast at the hotel, en route to the wondrous and thought-provoking **Dali Theatre-Museum**. The master of surrealism was born more than a century ago in this small city near the French border, and his genius has forever changed the town. The Theatre-Museum boasts an eclectic collection, ranging from paintings to installation pieces such as the Mae West Room and the Rainy Taxi, as well as works by other greats such as El Greco and Ernst Fuchs. A 40-minute drive to the south is the hamlet of **Pubol**, where the **Gala Dali Castle** is located. This 14th-century palace was the final studio of the artist and he spent years renovating it, constructing another whimsical creation with surreal elements such as the fountain with the multiple busts of composer Richard Wagner and doors that aren't really doors. See the richly decorated reception rooms and bedrooms as well as the dozens of works throughout the house before continuing to **Girona**. Enjoy a walking tour of the well-preserved old town on arrival, strolling across the picturesque bridges of the River Onyar with their views of the **hanging houses**, and along the hilly cobbled streets of El Call, the former Jewish quarter. Behold the beautiful baroque façade of the cathedral, which sits atop a hill reached by a staircase, and the Gothic St Feliu church. Enjoy a different perspective of the centre from the ramparts of the city walls, which surround the old town. Continue to Barcelona for check-in at the hotel.

- **Overnight in Barcelona hotel on a bed-and-breakfast basis.**



DAY 6 | BARCELONA

Enjoy breakfast at the hotel before spending the morning exploring Barcelona's historic **Gothic Quarter**. Stroll through narrow cobblestone streets and alleys, which open up to picturesque plazas with café terraces and secluded churches. Admire Santa Eulalia Cathedral and the churches of Santa Maria del Mar and Santa Maria del Pi, three outstanding examples of Catalan Gothic architecture, and behold the medieval majesty of the former royal palace at the Plaça del Rei. Later visit **Park Güell** in the northwestern suburbs of the city, and see what Gaudi's vision of an ideal 'garden city' was. The park remains unfinished but enough was built to captivate the imagination, with myriad mosaics made from irregular and broken pieces of tiles. Enjoy the views over Barcelona and the Mediterranean before continuing to the still unfinished **Sagrada Familia** basilica, with designs which stretched the realms of the imagination and have made it the iconic symbol of this grand city. The basilica has three fascinating façades, one of which – the surreal Nativity façade – was more or less completed before Gaudi died, and only recently was the roof of the nave finished. Back in the centre of town, enjoy leisure time to wander around the Ramblas.

- **Overnight in Barcelona hotel on a bed-and-breakfast basis.**

DAY 7 | DEPART BARCELONA

Transfer to the airport in Barcelona for your departure flight.

- **Breakfast included.**

END OF SERVICES

INCLUDED

TOUR GUIDE:

- Operated with a professional English-speaking guide whilst on tour from Day 2 to Day 5 and additional local guides for airport transfers and for city tours where compulsory by law

ACCOMMODATION:

- One nights' bed-and-breakfast accommodation in a three-star Barcelona hotel, two nights' bed-and-breakfast accommodation in a four-star Tarragona hotel; one nights' half-board accommodation in three-star Figueres hotel; two nights' bed and breakfast accommodation in three-star Barcelona hotel

MEALS:

- Six open buffet breakfasts and one dinner

TRANSPORT:

- Transportation in an air conditioned, non-smoking coach

ENTRANCE FEES AND ACTIVITIES:

- All monuments and visits as indicated: cava winery visit and tasting in Sant Sadurni d'Anoia; Poblet monastery; Gaudi Centre and Vermouth Museum in Reus; Ebro River boat trip; wine cooperative in El Pinell de Brai; city walls and Roman Forum in Tarragona; Salt Mine in Cardona; Dali Theatre-Museum in Figueres; Gala Dali Castle in Pubol; Girona city tour; city tour in Barcelona

SURE2CARE

- All hotels, transfers and activities used in this itinerary have been checked against our internal health and safety system, Sure2care.

NOT INCLUDED

- Items of a personal nature such as alcoholic drinks, laundry, and drinks and meals not stated explicitly in the programme
- Any others expenses which are not mentioned in the included section
- Local taxes payable at the hotel and entry visas to Spain (if applicable)
- International flights and all types of insurance

RECOMMENDATIONS

Comfortable and light clothing is the most suitable for travelling in Spain, though a warm jumper and jacket are advisable in the cooler months. Visitors should not wear sleeveless shirts, shorts, short skirts or skimpy clothing when visiting religious or official buildings. Sun protection, sun glasses, a hat and mosquito repellent can be very useful during your stay