

If it ain't orange, it ain't

**Budget
Bikes**



Welcome to the BudgetBikes DIY Tour of Barcelona!

You are at the start of an exciting tour through Barcelona's long history and memorable sites. At the end of this tour, you will have travelled through the majority of the central city, and will have discovered many of Barcelona's unique buildings, customs and secrets.

Once you have collected your bike from one of our shops, head to Plaça Sant Jaume to begin your tour. The entire tour should take around 4 hours, including a few short stops. Don't worry if you need to extend your rental period to cover more ground - you can use your bike for as long as you like, and pay the difference when you return.

The map

The Roman part of the city is shaded in grey on your map. The Romans arrived in 218 and later turned the city – which they called Barcino - into a military fortification. From this point on - until 1854 – building only took place within the city walls; their previous location is indicated as a pink dotted line on your map. Outside of these walls lies the Eixample neighbourhood, as well as Raval, Poble Nou, and the many other residential neighbourhoods of the city. Eixample was designed in 1850 as an extension to the central part of Barcelona, following similar city expansions such as those in Paris and New York.

Follow the orange path

This DIY tour offers concise, light information and anecdotes about a number of not-to-be-missed spots indicated on the map. The items on the map correspond to the items mentioned in this text. The coloured crosses indicate many more '*monuments, beautiful spots, nice stops for a drink, good lunch places or typical restaurants*'. Check out the box in the lower left corner.

BudgetBikes - Rental & Tours

(+34) 933 041 885

www.budgetbike.eu

- **Shop Universitat**, Carrer Balmes 14
- **Shop Catalunya**, Carrer Estruc 38
- **Shop Paral·lel**, Carrer Nou de la Rambla 106
- **Shop Jaume**, Plaça de la LLana 3

Open every day from **10.00 – 20.00**, or in winter from 10.00 – 18.00.

Enjoy!

1. Plaça Sant Jaume – political centre

Plaça Sant Jaume is the political heart of Barcelona. On one side of the square (on your left when standing with your back towards the Ramblas) lies the 'Palau de la Generalitat' where the Catalan government is located; on the other side there's the 'Ajuntament', Barcelona's city council. As about half of the Catalan population lives in Barcelona, and here the majority of Catalan business is generated, the government and city council are often tied up in a power struggle.

On your way towards Plaça del Rei, you'll pass a typical Spanish 70's bar where time seems to have stood still – bar Brusi. Look around carefully and take in the ambience, as these kind of places are quickly becoming extinct. On the next corner you find bar 'Bon Mercat', where you can pick up a home-roasted coffee and some amazing croissants.

2. Plaça del Rei – medieval peak

The Middle Ages were heydays in Spain, reflected in the majestic buildings built by those in power. The 'King's Square' is enclosed by the interconnected buildings of the royal palace (10th – 16th century), the royal chapel and a watchtower (1555). Inside the Museu d'Història de Barcelona (MUHBA) you can see the excavations that uncovered the Roman remains underneath the palace. You'll also get a great view of the complex of medieval buildings from Via Laietana.

3. Catedral de Santa Eulalia – cloister garden

Following along the back wall of the cathedral towards the main entrance, you'll pass by the side entrance, which opens up into a patio. The cathedral was named after Saint Eulalia, one of the city's patron saints, who was tortured and murdered for her beliefs at the tender age of 13, during the Roman persecution of Christians in 304 AD. In her memory, the cathedral keeps 13 domestic geese in the cloister garden – one for each year of her short life.

4. Plaça Sant Felip Neri – a beautiful and dramatic square

This place might be a little hard to find, but it is one of the city's most talked-about squares. Its peaceful appearance stands in stark contrast to what has happened here in the past. During the three-year Spanish civil war a bomb exploded on the cemetery next to the church in 1938, causing a fire that killed 42 people. Most of them were children who had taken shelter in the church. On the walls surrounding the square, that was built when reconstructing the area in the fifty's, you can see the marks left by the bomb.

5. Plaça Sant Just – sunny square with a nice terrace

Adjacent to this somewhat hidden square lies the beautiful 18th century Palau Moxó. This is one of the few palaces in the city that survived the plundering of the civil war. The palace still belongs to the Moxó family and is preserved in its original state. Visits can be arranged upon reservation (More info at www.palaumoxo.com).

6. Plaça Traginers – Roman city wall

Here you can clearly see the remnants of a Roman defence tower from the 4th century, on top of which lie the ruins of younger buildings. This is a good place for an evening drink on one of the terraces, and there are lots of nice restaurants in the neighbourhood to explore afterwards.



7. Columbus' statue - up you go!

This 60m pillar with Columbus' statue atop was erected for Barcelona's Universal Exposition of 1888. Columbus presented his 1492 discovery of America in Barcelona upon his return a year later, as the Spanish King and Queen who had financed the voyage were staying in the city at the time.

Where the statue is pointing towards, is subject to discussion. Maybe to India, the country Columbus was looking for? Clearly not to America - but pointing towards the Ramblas (direction USA) might have caused confusion. Or is he simply pointing to sea?

For a small fee, you can take the lift to the top of the statue and enjoy the spectacular view.

8. Feel the wind in your hair - Option 1: Montjuïc

If you would like to see the city from a distance, then you can opt to climb the Montjuïc hill. This area is known for its Olympic diving swimming pool with spectacular views, and for the ominous fortress on top, which overlooks the sea. The best way to access the top is from Plaça Espanya, passing between replica Venetian towers and the neo-classical trade fair buildings. This whole area was created for Barcelona's second Universal Exposition, in 1929. With the steps up towards the fountains and the Museu Nacional d'Arte de Catalunya (MNAC – National Museum of Catalan Art) on your left, cycle past the Mies van der Rohe pavillion and Poble Espanyol. Follow the signs for 'Castell'. You might have to walk the last few hundred metres as it gets steep up here!

Behind the castle there's a bar in the forest, el Mirador de Migdia, with a fine view over the industrial harbour. A stop at the Miró museum, halfway up the mountain, is also very worthwhile.

Don't feel like climbing mountains? Cycle up the Ramblas instead.

9. La Rambla – see and be seen

The Ramblas is one of the city's main streets. 'Rámbla' is an Arabic word for dry riverbed – and there was once a river running down this spot, just outside the old city walls, that was urbanized in 1776. We think of the Ramblas as one road, but it is actually a connection of many different 'rambla', hence its pluralisation.

The Ramblas is well-known for the many living statues, street artists, portrait painters, tourists and – unfortunately - its many pickpockets.

On Nou de la Rambla you will find one of Gaudí's less known masterpieces: the Palau Güell.

Further up, the Boqueria is a produce market, well-visited by tourists and locals alike, with some of the best fruit, veg, meat and fish in the city.

10. Plaça Reial

The charming Plaça Reial is located just off the Ramblas. This square replaced an old monastery in 1835 and is the only plaza in Barcelona that is completely surrounded by a pillared gallery. It was dedicated to King Ferdinand VII, which explains the name - 'Reial' is Catalan for 'Royal'. Here you can find restaurants, tapas bars, lounge bars and clubs. A popular restaurant is Les Quinze Nits, which is also a cookery school.

Two remarkable streetlights are the early work of Antoni Gaudí.

11. Palau de la Música Catalana – colour!

The Palau de la Música Catalana is a concert hall designed by Domenech i Muntaner, one of the founders of Catalan Modernism – the local version of Art Nouveau. There are concerts here every day of the week. It's worth buying a ticket if only to see the amazing space from the inside: this is a concert hall where there's as much to see as to listen. If you prefer a sneak peak, the tapas bar in the foyer is always open and has free admission.

12. Eixample – the expansion

In the early 19th century Barcelona grew fast due to urbanisation and industrialisation, but building was only allowed within the city walls. With 187.000 inhabitants in what is now the old city centre, Barcelona was an extremely dense city. It wasn't until 1854 that Madrid allowed Barcelona to break down the city walls for a very necessary expansion. The engineer Ildefons Cerdà designed a contemporary grid plan, comparable to the Manhattan grid, designed to create a more viable living environment. More space for light, ventilation, green space, traffic and sewerage would fight off epidemics and hopefully increase the then current life expectancy of 36 years. The 'Eixample' ('extension' in Catalan) is divided in Eixample Esquerra (left of Passeig de Gràcia) and the Eixample Dreta (right).

13. Casa Batlló - on your left!

Gaudí has undoubtedly made his mark on Barcelona. Casa Batlló, Casa Milà and the Sagrada Família are Gaudí's best-known works.

The Casa Batlló theme is Saint George and the Dragon; a beloved subject in this region as 'Sant Jordi' is Catalonia's patron saint. On Sant Jordi's day – April 23rd – books and roses are sold on every corner for lovers to exchange as gifts.

Casa Batlló's roof depicts the dragon with its scaly tiles, while the tower represents the handle of the lance that pierces the beast. The Modernist house is filled with wavy walls and organic forms. It has a distinct use of materials and colours and is full of surprises.

14. Casa Mila – precursor of 'modern' building

Casa Mila is an apartment building. Gaudí designed a flowing façade again, but in this case inspired by the sea. The fencing on the balconies represents seaweed. The building is known as 'La Pedrera' (quarry), which was initially meant as a criticism to its form but is now just its common name.

The interior does not contain as much colour as the patio, but the spaces are beautiful. From an architectural point of view, the building is very innovative for its social structure; the lift, hall and roof terrace are designed for the inhabitants to meet. In summer, concerts are held on the roof terrace.

15. Feel the wind in your hair - Option 2: Park Güell

Nature and architecture find each other in this unique park. Gaudí designed it as one of the early commissions for his patron, Eusebi Güell, a wealthy textile industrialist. In this project, Gaudí shows us his all-round genius: as an architect, artist, craftsman and landscape architect. At the centre of the park, a mosaic terrace elevated on pillars provides an amazing view over Barcelona. The last climb to the park is a bit steep, so you might have to walk the last 5-10 minutes – but the park is definitely worth the climb!

Don't feel like going for a steep climb? Then follow the Travessera de Gràcia to visit the Hospital Sant Pau... after a stop in Gracia for a quick bite.



16. Gràcia - time for lunch?

Gràcia was once an independent village, reached from Barcelona by taking the 'Passeig de Gràcia' through open fields. In 1897 it became part of the city. This district is characterized by its maze of small streets, which connect one lovely plaza to another. Have a look around and go for a proper Spanish lunch. Choose a bar with a daily menu, *'el menu del dia'*. For about €11 you will generally be served 3 simple but tasty dishes accompanied by (cold) wine. Lunch is served between 2 and 4 PM.

Here's a quick rundown on a few of Gracia's plazas:

Plaça de la Villa de Gràcia: a family square with terraces and a bell tower.

Plaça del Sol: tapas, nightlife & anti-globalists.

Plaça de la Virreina: terraces & church.

Plaça John Lenon: terrace & playground.

Plaça de la Revolució: terraces & playground & amazing Italian ice cream!

17. Hospital Sant Pau - the world's biggest art-nouveau complex

Domènech i Montaner designed this hospital in 1901, parting from the principle that more light and air would do people good while in hospital and speed up recovery. He was a leading Modernist architect.

Some ten pavilions, connected underground, lie in a spacious tree-lined area. The hospital was in use until 2009, but is now under renovation. There is a daily tour of the inside of the building (More info at www.santpaubarcelona.org).

Looking through the main entrance from the courtyard you'll get a lovely framed view of La Sagrada Família.

18. La Sagrada Família – a many faced building

In 1882, Josep Bocabella, a bookseller and president of the Association of Saint Joseph Devotees, made his dream come true by starting construction on the Sagrada Família church. Work began with the neo-gothic crypt, led by architect Francisco de Paula del Villar. Bocabella and Paula del Villar did not get on well, and the role of lead architect was passed to a young Antoni Gaudí. Except for the ground plan, he completely changed the initial design. Gaudí was very innovative in his use of materials, his calculation models and his aesthetic design, which was strongly inspired by nature.

The basilica's 'back side' – The Nativity Façade – is built in the gothic style. Only this side was built during Gaudí's lifetime; the rest has been built since his death in 1926, based on on reconstructed versions of the plans that were burned in a fire as well as on modern adaptations.

The basilica has been under construction for more than 130 years... And we are still counting. The pace of building has depended on the inflow of money, as well as on progress in techniques. The process has accelerated since the arrival of computer-based modelling in the 1980s. Finally, things are starting to speed up! When the project is finally finished, there will be 18 towers: 12 for the apostles, 4 for the evangelists, one for Mary and a 170 meter high tower for Jesus.

The houses in front of the main entrance will one day have to be destroyed in order to make room for Gaudí's original vision of open spaces around the basilica, mirroring those that already exist on other sides of the church.



19. Plaça de Toros La Monumental – out of service since 2011

From its opening in 1914 to 2011, bullfights were held here every Sunday during summer. Although the 'sport' is popular in the rest of Spain, the Catalans do not share this passion. During its last years as a working bullfighting arena, the stadium was half empty and fights were held mainly for tourists. In July 2010, the Catalan parliament voted for the abolition of bullfighting in Catalonia after the matter was raised by a civilian initiative. The same had already happened in 1991 on the Canary Islands.

La Monumental is a Modernist building with strong Moorish and Byzantine influences. It is now mainly used for musical events and circus spectacles.

20. Arc de Triomf – big arch for cultural triumph

This brick triumphal arch was not – as is the historical custom with this type of arches – constructed to celebrate a military victory. In fact, Spain had just lost almost all of its colonies when it was built. It actually served as the main entrance to Barcelona's Universal Exposition of 1888, held in the Parc de la Ciutadella. The streetlights lined up alongside the boulevard are a nice example of Modernism (the local version of Art Nouveau), as they combine modern technique (rolled steel), craftsmanship (cut stone) and a strong inspiration from nature.

21. Parc de la Ciutadella - good spot for a picnic

After the succession war, when Castilian Spain annexed Catalonia, the ruling Castilian's built a citadel on this site in 1718 for 'Madrid' to watch over and restrain rebellious Barcelona. The citadel was torn down in 1869 as it was no longer a military necessity, and made room for a park.

The enormous fountain by Fontserè was designed to impress the visitors of the Universal Exposition. (The same expo for which they built the Arc de Triomf, held in 1888.) The horseman with carriage on top was modelled on the Brandenburger Tor in Berlin. The rock formation was inspired by the Trevi fountain in Rome. The hydraulic part of the fountain and the grotto underneath the cascade were designed by a young Gaudí.

In summer time, the park is bustling with people until late at night, with street artists and capoeira fighters practicing in the grass, and flamenco dancers and musicians taking over the music chapel in front of the fountain.

22. Feel the wind in your hair - Option 3: Forum – beach and modern architecture

The Poble Nou district ('new village') was a neighbourhood with more warehouses and industrial workshops than private residences – until recently. Between 1992 and 2004 many office flats and luxury apartment buildings were built in this area, after Avenida Diagonal was extended down to the beach, connecting this part of the city to the centre more easily.

At the end of Diagonal lies The Forum. This is a trade centre where many of the city's largest events are held, including the Primavera Sound Festival, which attracts musicians, DJs, and partygoers from around the globe.

The avant-garde architect house Herzog & De Meuron designed one of the most eye-catching buildings at the Forum, which houses Barcelona's Natural Science museum (Museu Blau).

South of the Forum, a bicycle path leads towards La Barceloneta.



23. Beaches – big artificial success

Until the Olympic Games of '92, Barcelona was an inward looking city – both in terms of its recent political history under Franco rule, and the fact that the sea was used as a place to dump the city's rubbish. It wasn't until the run-up to the Olympics that port buildings and slums were demolished, yacht harbours were built, and kilometres of artificial beaches were raised. All of a sudden, Barcelona was a city at the beach. Quite a hit!

All beaches south of the Port Olímpic are sandy beaches, generally well kept, and full of beach bars or 'chiringuito's' in the summer time.

24. La Barceloneta – la bomba!

La Barceloneta is a natural spit of land where fishermen of old dragged their boats onshore, and lived in humble dwellings. New housing was created for the military and craftsmen in this part of town in 1745. This was the first large-scale housing development in Barcelona, and repeated the same house design across the area. The streets are very narrow – many apartments are only 30m² in total!

Ground-floor residents extend their living rooms into the street in front of their door, and when peeking through an open door, you are bound to see a tv on top of a fridge with a sofa squeezed in front. Everyone hangs their washing out of the windows to dry – sometimes at eye-level.

Take a good look around, and don't forget to try out the local deep fried specialty 'la bomba', if you dare... You will find this spicy deep fried potato ball with meat inside in one of the barrio's many typical bars.

25. Born – Trendy in 1400 and again in 2000

This area was filled with city palaces in the Middle Ages - the Picasso Museum is housed in just one example of such a palace.

The Gothic church Santa Maria del Mar was built between 1329-1383, at the height of Catalonia's maritime and mercantile power. It is an enchanting cathedral, especially at night. If you like to get lost, try the labyrinth-like alleys surrounding the church.

In more recent times, the Born was an unsafe part of town until the 1990s. It has now become a trendy hangout after an artistic revolution in the area, littered with local fashion designers' and artists' studios, alongside many bars and restaurants.

End - Give us your feedback

Do you have any suggestions for this itinerary? Write them down at the bottom and hand them in at the BudgetBikes shop when returning your bike, or send us a mail to info@budgetbikes.eu. With your help, we can extend the DIY-tour. Thanks in advance!