

ten things to do

- [1]** Climb through Gaudí's unfinished Sagrada Família church (see p. 99), but leave time for his other main creations: Park Güell (see p. 112), La Pedrera (Casa Milà; see p. 107), Casa Batlló (see p. 104), and Palau Güell (see p. 30).
- [2]** Marvel at Hotel Espanya (see p. 37), Lluís Domènech i Montaner's *Modernista* masterpiece. From the Ramon Casas mermaid mural to sculptor Eusebio Arnau's marble mantelpiece in the breakfast room, every detail is a work of art.
- [3]** Discover a serene corner of Barcelona at the 14th-century Monestir de Pedralbes convent (see p. 111), with its orange tree-filled cloister and painted murals by medieval Catalan artist Ferrer Bassa.
- [4]** Explore the Boqueria market (pictured right, and see p. 28) halfway down the Rambla, an exciting uproar of colours and aromas all assembled to produce one of the city's main events: Mediterranean cuisine.
- [5]** Impress your family and friends with beautiful hand-made gifts from the host of craft shops at Poble Espanyol complex (see p. 136) at Montjuïc park.



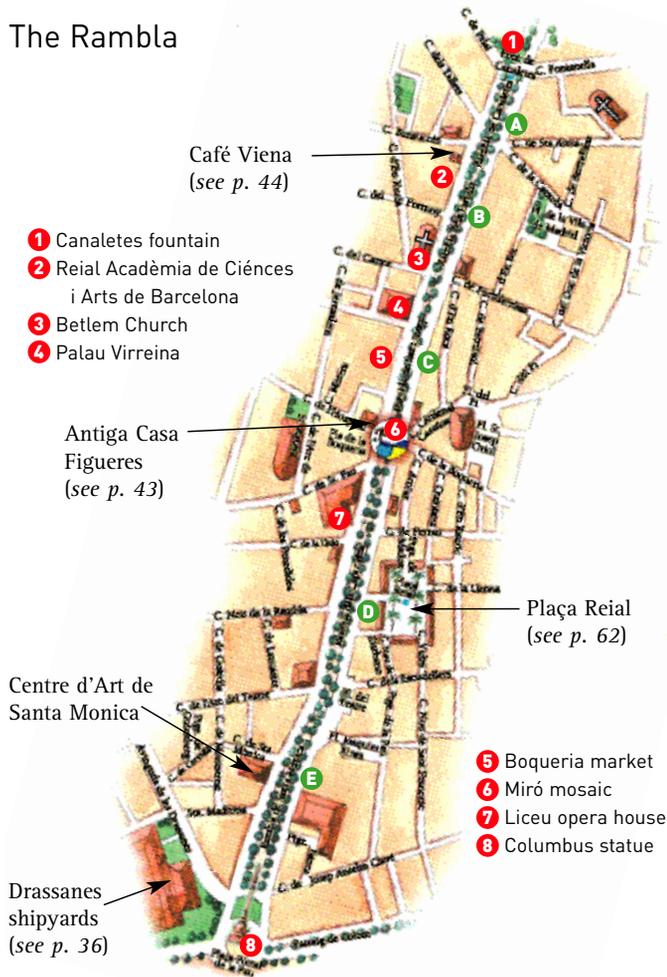
- [6]** Stroll along the beach from the Port Olímpic (see p. 86) and Frank Gehry's shimmering goldfish, past the Barceloneta beaches, beyond the fish auction in the port on Moll dels Pescadors, and out to the *Rompeolas* (breakwater) stretching out into the Mediterranean.
- [7]** Before you wander down the Rambla (see p. 25), drink from the Font de les Canaletes (pictured left) to ensure a return visit to Barcelona.

[8] Walk through Carrer d'en Carabassa (map p. 49, G2). One of the Gothic quarter's most picturesque alleys where little bridges cross over the street, *sgraffito* designs decorate the walls, and the giant figure of Our Lady of Mercy looms atop her basilica at the end of the street.

[9] Unpack your lab coat and research the finer points of molecular gastronomy at some of the most scientific of restaurants in Europe: Alkimia; Cincs Sentits; and Manairó (see p. 116).

[10] Stop off at the Fossar de les Moreres (Graveyard of the Mulberry Trees), next to Santa Maria del Mar church (see p. 78), a low obelisk commemorating the defenders of Barcelona who fell in the siege that ended the War of the Spanish Succession on 11th September 1714, Catalonia's National Day.

The Rambla



The Ramblas dissected

Often cited in the plural as 'Las Ramblas', this teeming thoroughfare is unofficially divided into five sections defined by the medieval gates of the city walls:

A Rambla de les Canaletes: Named for the canals that once brought water from the source of the Llobregat river in the Pyrenees to the Canaletes fountain (see previous page)

B Rambla dels Estudis: Referring to the university classrooms located here until they were punitively banished by Felipe V because of anti-Castilian activity in the early 18th century. This part of the Rambla is now more commonly called Rambla dels Ocells (birds) for its bird market

C Rambla de les Flors: Perhaps the most romantic section of the Rambla, named for the flower sellers who have traded here since the 13th century, and where the *Modernista* artist Ramon Casas first glimpsed his favourite muse (and future wife) selling flowers in the late 1800s. This section is also known as Rambla de Sant Josep for the Carmelite convent which was 'excloistered' in 1836 and subsequently demolished, making space for the first stalls of the Boqueria market (see p. 28)

D Rambla dels Caputxins: The name of this section of the Rambla is taken from the Capuchin monastery that stood here until the late 18th century

E Rambla de Santa Mònica: Opposite the medieval shipyards Drassanes Reials (see p. 36), this was the first section of the Rambla to become popular as an aristocratic promenade, in the 18th century. It was named after the Santa Mònica convent (1618), the oldest structure still remaining on the Rambla, and now a bookshop and modern art gallery

pavement outside confirms, are a thousand tricks and baubles ranging from carnival costumes and masks to plastic fruits and veg, ersatz insects, nail-through-hand jokes, sneezing powders and just about everything you could possibly need to live up life around home.

H Formatgeria La Seu, *Carrer Dagueria 16*, Tel: 934 126 548, open Tues–Sat 10–2 & 5–8; Sat 10–3.30 & 5–8, Metro: *Jaume I*. The Gothic quarter's best cheese-tasting shop, on the site of an ancient buttery with the 19th-century churn sitting idle in the back room, is the realm and reign of Scotswoman Katherine McLaughlin. Carefully selected artisan-produced cheeses from cow, goat and sheep's milk from all over Spain as well as superb olive oils can be tasted or taken home in Katherine's artistic wrapping paper fashioned from local newspapers. For on-premises tasting, don't miss a chance to use the cheese boards with slots for holding wine glasses.

I Ganiveteria Roca, *Plaça del Pi 3*, Tel: 933 021 241, open Mon–Sat 10–1.30 & 4.30–8, Metro: *Catalunya, Liceu*. In medieval times, Barcelona was famous for the quality of its sword manufacturers, and this knife and utensil shop is the direct heir to this tradition. Scalpels, switchblades, daggers, pocket-knives, razors, scissors, hatchets, axes, swords, nail clippers, tweezers and penknives are all on display (pictured right). Facing the enormous stained glass rose window of

the Santa Maria del Pi church (see p. 62), the shop has been on the cutting edge of things for nearly 100 years. Don't miss the city's earliest *sgraffito* designs on the façade overhead.

B Heritage, *Banyes Nous 14*, Tel: 933 178 515, open Mon–Sat 9.30–1.30 & 4–7.30, Metro: *Liceu*. One of the most gorgeous antique storefronts in the Gothic quarter provides the perfect introduction to a quirky miscellany of retro-styles and vintage clothing. Balenciaga, Yves Saint Laurent and the Pertegaz labels are among the famous clothing designers whose creations adorn this elegant haberdashery.

J La Manual Alpagatera, *Carrer Avinyó 7*, Tel: 933 010 172, open Mon–Fri 9.30–1.30 & 4.30–8; Sat 10–8, Metro: *Catalunya, Liceu*. Run by a sweet team of *avias* (grandmothers) this long-famous boutique has artisans putting together sandals in the back of the showroom where you can watch them work. La Manual has sold handmade rope-sole sandals to everyone up to and including the Pope. Espadrilles such as the model used for dancing the *sardana* (a regional dance with ancient origins where participants dance in circles) are available here, along with custom made creations you can design yourself and have shipped home.

K Molsa—Nou i Vell, *Plaça Sant Josep Oriol 1*, Tel: 933 023 103, open Mon–Sat 10–1.30 & 4.30–7, Metro: *Liceu*. Next to the Santa Maria del

Pi church (see p. 62), this longtime ceramics favourite is easy to overlook amidst all the other action going on in and around this lively part of the city. With, as the name suggests, both old and new pieces on sale, you might find anything from a unique antique tile to a new line of plates, bowls, cups or cooking vessels stacked in this colourful and well-located ceramics shop.

L Oro Líquido, *Carrer de la Palla 8*, Tel: 933 022 980, open Mon–Sat 10–1.30 & 4.30–8, Metro: *Liceu*. A produce star specialising, as the shop's name suggests, in what the Spanish consider pure liquid gold: olive oils and products derived from

olives from Spain's two dozen olive oil producing regions. Olive oil shaving cream, olive oil lip balm, olive oil soap, olive oil candles along with extra virgin olive oils served up in bottles and canisters that look as if they could contain single malt Scotch whisky, suggest the reverence and respect this treasured Mediterranean staple inspires.

E Papirum, *Baixada de la Llibreteria 2*, Tel: 933 105 242, open Mon–Fri 10–8.30; Sat 5–8.30, Metro: *Jaume I, Liceu*. Hand-printed wrapping paper, marbled blank books, greeting cards, notebooks, pens and pencils of all shapes and sizes:

One of the sharp displays at knife and utensil shop Ganiveteria Roca



Manzana de la Discordia

Metro: Passeig de Gràcia **Map:** p. 96, D3

Highlights: Main salon of Casa Batlló; sculpted façades of Casa Amatller and Casa Lleó Morera

Manzana means both ‘city block’ and ‘apple’ in Castilian Spanish. The nickname, coined by a 19th-century *Vanguardia Española* journalist, on what must have been a slow day, puns the jealousies aroused by a Barcelona architectural face-off and the classical myth of the Apple of Discord (the prize Paris was charged to bestow upon his favourite goddess, Aphrodite). This ‘city block of discord’ is where the three greatest figures of Barcelona *Modernisme*—Antoni Gaudí, Josep Puig i Cadafalch and Lluís Domènech i Montaner—went head-to-head and hand-to-hand with three very different, and very important, buildings: Casa Batlló, Casa Amatller and Casa Lleó Morera.

Casa Batlló (open daily 9–8, entrance charge, Tel: 934 880 139, www.casabatllo.es, Metro: Passeig de Gràcia). Exotic and other-worldly, with its rainbow colouring, mascarón balconies and stippled façade which catches the sunlight like sequins, Casa Batlló is Gaudí at his most original. As with much of Gaudí’s work, there is something faintly sinister about it as well. Gaudí said that he aimed to create a ‘vision of paradise’, though milk and honey seem to have been replaced with something more hallucinogenic. The entire construct is imbued with nationalist symbolism.

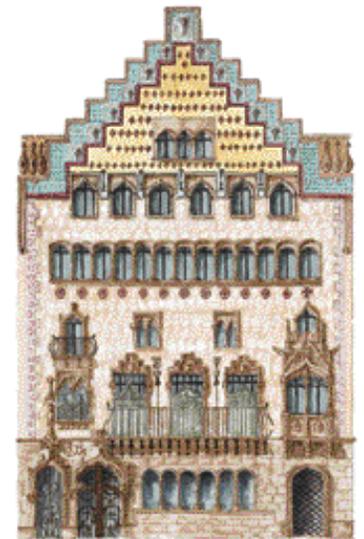


The undulating roof represents a humpbacked dragon. The turret is St George’s lance piercing the monster’s side. The ghoulish death’s head balconies are supported by the bones of the dragon’s victims.

Casa Batlló was a remodelling of an existing building, but Gaudí completely altered the house from inside out. The wavy, sub-aquatic interiors were inspired by Jules Verne’s *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*, the highlight of which is the swirling roof and aquamarine stained glass in the **main salon**, and the whale-bone structuring of the attic rooms. Another fantastical feature is the intimate inglenook fireplace designed for two in the chimney room. The furniture Gaudí designed for this house is displayed at the Casa-Museu in Park Güell (see p. 112).

Casa Amatller (closed to the public, Tel: 934 880 139, Metro Passeig de Gràcia). This was the first building of the Manzana de la Discordia to be completed (1900) and was, like Casa Batlló, a remodelling job.

Josep Puig i Cadafalch was the architect chosen by Antoni Amatller i Costa, whose money came from the family chocolate business. Puig i Cadafalch’s remodelling is eclectic in spirit, borrowing from the neo-Gothic and Romantic schools, as well as including a Flemish step-gabled roof. The sculptures on the **façade** are by Eusebi Arnau, *Modernisme*’s most celebrated sculptor. Playful animals are shown indulging in Amatller’s own pursuits and hobbies. Two rabbits pour liquid chocolate; a pig turns a clay pot while St George and the dragon are locked in combat on the main entrance. The



Ferran Adrià & Molecular Gastronomy

'Cooking meets science' best describes the essence of molecular gastronomy, a movement which formally came to the table in the early 1990s experimenting with taste, form and cooking methods. Ferran Adrià at his restaurant El Bulli in northern Catalonia and his workshop El Taller in Barcelona entered the culinary spotlight soon after. Originally known as 'the foam guy' for his then radical *espuma de humo* (foam of smoke) creation that captured the aromas of wood smoke in a lighter-than-soufflé montage of air and egg, Adrià went on to give the world rosewater bubbles, Kellogg's Paella (Rice Krispies with sea urchins and a concentrate of prawn heads), and Petrossian caviar tins filled with congealed melon drops. Adrià opened the Pandora's box of culinary creativity and Barcelona's growing fleet of world-famous chefs is basking, to some degree, in his reflected light. Our Recommended ■ restaurants for sampling Barcelona's own molecular gastronomy are (essential to book in advance):

7 €€€ Alkimia, *Indústria 79*, Tel: 932 076 115, open Mon 1.30-4, Tues-Sat 1.30-3.30 & 8.30-11, Metro: *Sagrada Família*.

8 €€€ Cinc Sentits, *Carrer Aribau 58*, Tel: 932 239 490, open Mon 1.30-4, Tues-Sat 1.30-3.30 & 8.30-11, Metro: *Provença*.

9 €€ Manairó, *Carrer de la Diputació 424*, Tel: 932 310 057, open Tues-Sat 1.30-3.30 & 8.30-11, Metro: *Monumental*.



have supplied Barcelona's top restaurants with fine produce from the sea. Genaro and his staff have put together a lively and popular dining space that exudes Boqueria market excitement in the midst of one of the city's busiest shopping venues. **Map on inside cover**

10 €€ Gouthier, *Carrer Mañé i Flaquer 8*, Tel: 932 059 969, open Tues-Sat 1.30-3.30 & 8.30-11.30, Sat & Sun 12-3.30, Metro: *Sarrià*.

Thierry Airaud's attractive, minimalist dining space specialises in oysters, caviars, foies (duck and goose livers) and cavas and Champagnes to go with these exquisite products. Fortunately, the tasting portions allow you to indulge your wildest food fantasies without sustaining massive financial damage. **Map on inside cover**

11 €€ Tapaç 24, *Carrer Diputació 269*, Tel: 934 880 977, open Mon-Sat 8am-midnight, Metro: *Passeig de Gràcia*. Carles Abellan's most recent culinary venture in Barcelona is a thoroughly hip tapas bar (to complement his first big success, Comerç 24 in El Born; see p. 89). The place is usually clogged with at least half a dozen aspiring diners, though if you make it before two o'clock you might find a place at the bar. McFoieburgers (steak topped with duck liver), sizzling iron skillets of *callos* (tripe), and

calçots (long-stemmed spring onions) with *romesco* sauce and a first-rate wine list make this tapas bar one of the city's best.

12 € El Mató de Pedralbes, *Carrer Obispo Catala*, Tel: 932 047 962, open Mon-Fri 1.30-3.30 & 8.30-11.30, Sat 8.30-11.30, Metro: *Tres Torres*. ■

A handy refueling stop after touring the Monestir de Pedralbes (see p. 111) named for the *mató* (cottage cheese) traditionally made by the Clarist nuns across the street, this is one of the most authentically Catalan and best-value menus in town. Look for *sopa de ceba gratinée* (onion soup) or *truite de patata i ceba* (potato and onion omelette).

Map on inside cover

13 € Silvestre, *Carrer de Santaló 101*, Tel: 932 414 031, open Mon-Fri 1.30-3.30 & 8.30-11.30, Sat 8.30-11.30, Metro: *Muntaner*. ■

A series of intimate dining rooms and cozy corners are carefully tended by chef Guillermo Casañé and his wife and maître d' Marta Cabot. Fresh market produce from the nearby Mercat Galvany creates *milhojas de calabacin con tomate confitada* and *queso de cabra* (courgette *millefeuille* with tomato confit and goat cheese) or *colita de rape gratinada con jamón ibérico* and *cremoso de patatas* (gratineed monkfish fillet with *ibérico* ham and creamed potatoes).

Langoustine tails in a green almond *ajoblanco* soup and almond ice cream, served at the molecular gastronomy specialist Cinc Sentits