



## Barcelona for the LGBTQIA+ Traveler



*Barcelona, Spain*

A mirthful jumble of colorful culture, whimsical architecture, diverse cuisine and sizzling nightlife, Barcelona has endeared herself to visitors with a personality unique from any other European city. Throw in the year-round temperate weather, and the city is a constant gay-popular playground.

Influenced by Italian, French, Greek, Moorish and many other cultures, Barcelona is the capital of Spain's autonomous Catalonia region. It takes justifiable pride in its Catalan heritage, and the Catalan language is spoken as regularly as Spanish.

Known to be the most cosmopolitan and progressive of Spain's cities, Barcelona is no stranger to diversity and has long embraced an attitude of tolerance and egalitarianism, especially toward its gay residents. While gay haunts can be found in most of the city's neighborhoods, the L'Eixample district plays host to much of the LGBT scene.

Affectionately nicknamed "Gayxample," this barrio is also the hub of Barcelona's queer nightlife, with everything from dance clubs to leather parties to laid-back watering holes or even classical music bars. By day, a walk along this neighborhood's Passeo de Gracia affords views of many of the buildings that have earned Barcelona a reputation as a showcase of Modernist architecture, like Gaudi's Casa Ballo.

Just north of L'Eixample is the Gracia district, known for its neighborhood Festa Major, which takes place annually around August 15. Although each of Barcelona's different districts has its own celebration, the gay-flavored Festa Major de Gracia is perhaps the biggest and should not be missed. Other gay travel highlights are Barcelona's sparkling beaches and a day trip to Sitges, a very gay seaside resort town just 30 minutes away by train. Carnival in Sitges is the area's top gay event of the year - - the town comes alive with costumes, camp, and carnal delights.

### Travel Tips

- **Adjust your body's clock.** Most Barcelonans eat their main meal around 1:30 or 2:00 p.m., and then lighter fare around 10 p.m. And of course if you go out don't plan on going to sleep until early the next morning!
- **Flash your card.** Purchase a Barcelona Card that offers unlimited travel on public transportation and discounts at many museums and attractions. The card is available at Turisme de Barcelona offices in Placa de Catalunya and Placa Sant Jaume, as well as the Sants train station and the El Prat airport.
- **Hail like a local.** If a taxi's green rooftop light is on, it's available. You can hail it in the street, but if you're within 200 yards of a taxi stand, the driver will ask you to get in line.