

Barça Beat

Stylish Barcelona livens the pace after dark. BY KRISTY ALPERT



Ensconced by the sea and dripping with the full flavor of Catalonia, the Spanish city of Barcelona is a vibrant mecca where gastronomy, architecture, culture and nightlife seamlessly blend. The city comprises 10 districts, all connected by a series of mazelike quarters with streets freckled by colorful façades and UNESCO-recognized Gaudí architecture.

During the day in this cosmopolitan Catalanian capital, a pulsating pace of life rises from the food stalls in the busy La Boqueria Market and works its way out to the fashionable shopping streets near Passeig de Gràcia. But at night, that pace becomes a rhythm as the city comes alive with the sultry sounds of house music pouring from rooftop bars and the thumping beats of electronic tunes charging the air with energy.

Barcelona is a big city and, although it's possible to wander by foot, the metro system offers easy access to major neighborhoods, and taxis are readily available anywhere you go.

But to get to the heart of Barcelona's nightlife, you have to start at its stomach. Dinner is part of the event for a night out in Barcelona, where a progressive series of tapas (small plates) shared by the table directs the flow from one restaurant starting at around 9:30 p.m. For the ultimate Barcelona tapas experience, start with sunset cocktails and tapas at the swanky rooftop terrace of The Serras Hotel overlooking the newly renovated Port Vell marina before entering the Gothic Quarter for another round of tapas or drinks at Le Bouchon by Giuseppe. The club scene doesn't pick up until at least 2 a.m. (most bars close at 3 a.m. and clubs close at 5 a.m. or 6 a.m.), so if you have extra time on your hands, head to the trendy streets of El Born and join the fashionable crowd of Barcelonians sipping on handcrafted gin and tonics at any of the gin bars in this area.

Gin has become a craze in the city, even at the once sangria-soaked shores of Barceloneta Beach, where you can find some of the hottest dance clubs in the city. Most of the cosmopolitan crowd can be found on the dance floor at Opium (open until 5 a.m. Sunday–Thursday and 6 a.m. Friday and Saturday), pulsating to beats by internationally known DJs, or lounging around the VIP sections of the LGBT-friendly UNDER Club.

SIP AND SUP: *Le Bouchon by Giuseppe (left), and sandwich (right)*

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Barcelona Turisme

barcelonaturisme.com

La Boqueria Market

boqueria.info

Le Bouchon by Giuseppe

mercerbarcelona.com

Opium Barcelona

opiumbercelona.com

Passeig de Gràcia Barcelona

barcelonapaseodegracia.com

The Serras Hotel

hoteltheserrasbarcelona.com

UNDER Club

underclub.es