

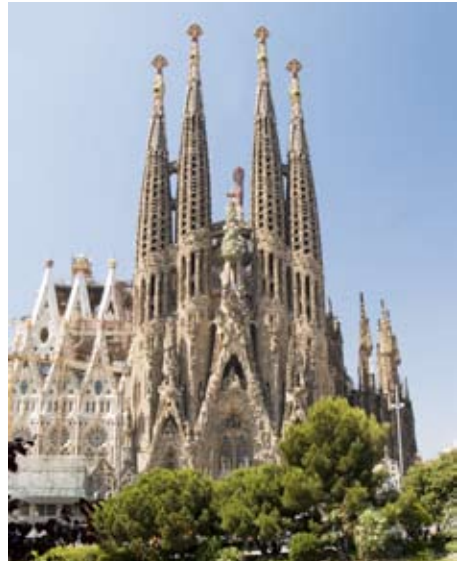
Barcelona, the second largest city in Spain is located on the north eastern coast next to the Mediterranean which means the climate is warm but changeable. The best times to visit are spring and early summer when there aren't too many tourists. Autumn sees some rainfall but as there is so much to see and do in the city that's under cover, this season shouldn't be dismissed.

One of Barcelona's most famous and distinguished landmarks is Gaudí's cathedral, La Sagrada Família, with its towering spires, elaborate carvings and amazing sculptures. Antoni Gaudí was one of the world's most important architects with a vision that has often been described as eccentric. Sadly, he died in 1926 before this, his most extravagant and largest work, was finished. Work on the building is still progressing and isn't expected to be finished for some years yet.

As well as a lot of incredible architecture, Barcelona has a vast number of attractions to satisfy the whole family. Las Ramblas is a tree-lined pedestrian avenue packed with live entertainment and stalls selling everything from jewellery to vegetables, and is worth a ramble along its 2 km length.

If you like museums then Barcelona is the place to visit. There seems to be a museum for absolutely everything under the sun. The work of another world-famous artist hailing from the city, Picasso, is displayed in Barcelona's most visited museum – the Museu Picasso. Surreal collections abound; here you can find museums of shoes, perfume, the history of medicine, and even one dedicated to funerals. Barcelona's other famous export, football, also has its own history preserved in the Museum of the Soccer Club of Barcelona.

There is also plenty of green space where you can relax and enjoy some beautiful scenery. Once again Gaudí appears, as the Park Güell was designed by him as a private estate and



became a public park in 1922. An even older park, the Labyrinth Park, built in 1791 is a riot of stairways, statues and pavilions. For an unusual moving sculpture take a look at the Magic Fountain which provides a constant wonder with the changing shapes of the water.

Night life can be hectic, yet you will always find somewhere that suits you whether that is live music clubs, discos, dance halls or amazing restaurants serving fantastic food.

The backdrop to Barcelona is a range of wooded hills, two of which, at least, are worth a visit. Montjuïc is home to a number of art galleries, parks, a 17th-century fortress and the main group of sites built for the 1992 Olympic Games. The highest hill, Tibidabo, can be reached by the only tram that still runs in Barcelona. At the top of the hill is a spectacular amusement park.

Just a short flight from the UK, Barcelona is truly a feast for the eyes and a wonderfully exciting city to visit. Don't forget your camera!