

SPAIN

# Barcelona to the Costa Brava

A Guided Walking Adventure





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## Travel Style

This small-group Guided Walking Adventure offers an authentic travel experience, one that takes you away from the crowds and deep in to the fabric of local life. On it, you'll enjoy 24/7 expert guides, premium accommodations, delicious meals, effortless transportation, and local wine or beer with dinner. Rest assured that every trip detail has been anticipated so you're free to enjoy an adventure that exceeds your expectations.

And, with our **optional Flight + Tour Combo** and **Barcelona Pre-tour extension** to complement this destination, we take care of all the travel to simplify the journey. Refer to the attached itinerary for more details.



## Overview

Enjoy the spectacular mountain views, charming seaside villages, unique culture, and ancient history of Catalonia—a region often considered its own country within the boundaries of Spain. Here, in the company of exceptional local guides, you can explore the dormant cinder cones of ancient volcanoes, now lushly carpeted with oak trees. Stroll the gothic streets of Girona, discovering its rich history and massive Romanesque cathedral. In landscapes of wildflower dotted fields, stone hilltop towns, and seaside cliffs, delight in walks that reveal the region's hidden charms. Savor the local terroir during a private wine tasting at a family-run vineyard and the exceptional flavors of Catalan cuisine during meals at highly regarded restaurants. Through it all, you stay in gracious, authentic accommodations that keep you close to all the highlights while still offering a luxurious oasis of calm.



# Daily Itinerary

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## DAY 1

Montserrat; 2-4 miles, easy to moderate; transfer to Garrotxa Volcanic Natural Park

After a brief welcome gathering at your hotel, you bid farewell to Barcelona as you head inland to nearby Montserrat, an imposing mountain in the pre-coastal Catalan range. Famous for its almost organic-seeming rock formations and Benedictine abbey, this mountain is often considered the “heart” of Catalonia by locals (the Caribbean island of the same name was christened by homesick Catalan sailors).

Upon arrival, a 10-minute ride on the Sant Joan funicular brings you near the summit, where spectacular views await. To the east, you can see Barcelona and the Mediterranean on clear days, to the north the distant saw teeth of the Pyrenees, and below you on the mountainside, the Santa Maria de Montserrat monastery. In this setting, enjoy a 1½-hour walk along a well-maintained (though occasionally rocky) path up to the topmost peak, Sant Jeroni. From here, you may either continue down to the monastery on foot (a relatively steep trail with a significant number of steps) or, for an easier option, via the funicular.

Upon arrival at the monastery, you’ll be treated to a performance by its acclaimed boys’ choir, which sings daily at 1:00 p.m. Santa Maria de Montserrat

is also famous for its “Black Madonna”—a statue of a dark-skinned Virgin Mary that some believe was carved in Jerusalem during the early days of the church (though most art historians date it later). Today, Mare de Déu de Montserrat is the patron saint of Catalonia.



After visiting the monastery, you enjoy a feast of traditional Catalan cuisine at a nearby restaurant with sweeping views of the valley below. Starters may include *pa amb tomaquet* (crusty country bread with tomato and garlic), *jamón ibérico* (Spanish cured ham), cod balls, *chorizitos* (small chorizo sausages), and calamari. Main courses may include lamb cutlets, entrecote or cod in honey, roasted chicken with rosemary, or *fideos* (a paella-style seafood dish made with noodles).

Satisfied from lunch, you relax on a 1½-hour minibus transfer to Garrotxa Volcanic Natural Park—an inland region of rolling hills, gorges, and lush forest in the foothills of the Pyrenees and your home for the next two nights. After checking in at your accommodations, gather with fellow guests on the patio for an aperitif and *asado* barbecue.

### **Finca El Ventós, Sant Feliu de Pallerols**

A recently renovated traditional farmhouse on a mountaintop, El Ventós enjoys panoramic views which, on a clear day, extend all the way to the sea. Spacious guest rooms blend modern and rustic, with terracotta tile floors, white walls, large windows, and antiques. In addition to the main fireside lounge—with exposed beams and cozy seating looking out onto a large terrace—there are hammocks, a “cyber corner”, a reading room, and an outdoor swimming pool set on almost 1,000 acres of grounds with gardens and trails. The excellent on-site restaurant features the property’s own or very local products.

### **DAY 2**

El Ventós circuit: 5.5 or 8.5 miles, easy to moderate, 985-ft. elevation gain and loss

Today’s walk provides an ideal introduction to the region surrounding your hotel. Created in 1985, Garrotxa Volcanic Natural Park is—as its name implies—home to 30 dormant conical volcanoes that last erupted only 11,000 years ago. This unique geology (there is no other region like it in Europe) has

resulted in rich soils of ochre and black lava, which contrast beautifully with the region's beech forests and verdant meadows. The park hosts over a thousand plant species, as well as animals ranging from wild boar to foxes, rabbits, weasels, and hedgehogs.

In this beautiful setting, you trace a path entirely within the hotel's estate, which leads up through the forest to a lookout that provides stunning views of the entire region, including upcoming highlights from your itinerary—tomorrow's walk in the next valley and the distant Cape of Creus jutting into the Mediterranean just below the French border.

In a scenic field, you sit down for a picnic lunch from your hotel's kitchen. After, continue on for another hour walk along a wooded trail and paved road to return to your accommodations. Take time to relax before savoring a delicious, seasonal dinner in the hotel's elegant restaurant.

Please note: guests may shorten today's walk by transferring back to the hotel via jeep after lunch.

## **Finca El Ventós, Sant Feliu de Pallerols**

### **DAY 3**

San Miguel to Santa Pau: 5-6 miles, easy to moderate, 950-ft. elevation gain and 1,310-ft. elevation loss; Transfer to Girona

Today's activities begin with a 20-minute transfer to the trailhead, from where you begin a walk that skirts below high volcanic cliffs and traverses fields dotted with small stone farmhouses (or *mas*). Soon, the landscape gives way to the thick beech forest of Jordá. After about an hour of walking, you emerge near a small café, where you may pause for a morning coffee before an optional detour to the Santa Margarida Volcano. Here, you'll find a unique Romanesque hermitage in the grassy crater at its center.

Pressing on, the path continues through lush vegetation to arrive in Santa Pau, a small medieval village with a beautiful 13th-century *placa major* (or main square) surrounded by arcaded stone buildings. Here, you'll enjoy a well-deserved lunch of local specialties, perhaps including the town's protected heirloom crop: *fesols*, an indigenous bean cultivated in the volcanic soil. While in town, you'll have a chance to admire some of its buildings "of Cultural Interest," including a Romanesque church, a castle, and many others (over 80 percent of the town has been preserved).

Afterwards, a transfer via minibus of approximately an hour brings you to Girona—one of Catalonia’s major cities, with a remarkable historical center, well-preserved gothic churches, and intriguing traces of its rich Jewish heritage.

Dinner tonight is at the trendy Blanc, an elegant restaurant located just across the street from your hotel. You enjoy a modern take on Mediterranean-fusion cuisine, with possible dishes including pumpkin soup with mascarpone and basil, crispy fried artichokes, and red tuna tataki with tomato preserve, paired with fine local wines.

### **Nord 1901 Hotel, Girona**

This four-star boutique hotel perfectly located in Girona’s historical center provides easy walking access to all of the city’s sites. Located on a quiet cobblestone street in the Old Town, this fully renovated building offers spacious and comfortable guest rooms with contemporary furnishings and neutral tones.

### **DAY 4**

Girona walking tour: 2-3 miles, easy; Free afternoon for independent exploration or optional walk along Girona’s city walls and outskirts: 1-2 miles, easy to moderate

Begin your day with a poolside breakfast on the terrace of your hotel (weather permitting), before venturing out onto the cobblestone streets with a local guide for an introduction to the highlights of Girona’s old town. Explore a unique Romanesque and Gothic cathedral built on the foundation of a Roman forum, with portions dating back to the 6th century. A Jewish museum and neighborhood bear testament to Spain’s once-thriving Jewish culture, before the expulsion of 1492. Narrow streets wind down to the Onyar River, which separates the old and new cities and fronts vibrantly painted “hanging houses” in the Catalan modernist style.

Your tour concludes in the local market, where you meet up with a representative from Girona Cook School who walks with you through the stalls, pointing out specialties and sharing highlights of the culture, before continuing to their kitchen for a tapas cooking demonstration and lunch.





The afternoon and evening are yours for independent exploration. You may choose to spend the time browsing shops, returning to historical sites of interest, or lingering in one of Girona's many cafés. Alternately, you may join one of your guides for a late afternoon walk along the city's ancient defensive walls, enjoying panoramic views of the city and surrounding countryside before

continuing on to the restaurant of your choice (with recommendations from your guides) for dinner.

### **Nord 1901 Hotel, Girona**

## **DAY 5**

The Empordà Plains: Peratallada to Begur via Pals: 2-6 miles, easy to moderate; transfer to Cadaqués

Today you make your way into the legendary Costa Brava, with stops at picturesque hilltop towns along the way. Begin your exploration near the walled town of Peratallada, named for a deep moat sculpted into the bedrock that surrounds the town (*pedra tallada* means “carved stone”). After taking time to stroll through its rutted stone streets and pause in its arcaded central square, you continue on into the beautiful countryside surrounding. Rambling along dirt paths through wheat fields dotted with poppies, you pass vineyards and olive and fruit trees on your way to Pals, a remarkable gothic town crowned with an 11th-century bell tower. Here, you'll explore cobbled streets vaulted by stone arches and enjoy sweeping views of the surrounding countryside. Take time to marvel at some of Pals's ancient history as well: portions of its Church of Saint Pere date back to the sixth century.

After briefly exploring Pals, you continue on through more pastoral farmland to Begur, located on a hill beside the Mediterranean. (Either or both stretches of today's walk, from Peratallada to Pals or from Pals to Begur, may be skipped via a minibus transfer). In Begur, enjoy a well-deserved lunch at a popular café and explore the town—known for its *casas de indianos*, mansions built by locals who emigrated to Cuba during the 1700s and came back after having made fortunes in the New World.



Late afternoon, transfer via minibus to the Espelt winery, an award-winning family-run bodega, where you delight in a private tasting surrounded by their grape arbors. Afterward, you continue on to Cadaqués, your home for the next two nights. Cap your day with a dock-fresh seafood dinner at a local restaurant, enjoying dishes like mussels in spicy sauce, grilled dorado, *gambas al ajillo* (shrimp in garlic sauce), and tuna carpaccio.

### **Hotel Playa Sol, Cadaqués**

With an ideal seaside location and renovated facility, the Hotel Playa Sol is a barefoot-chic escape in one of the Costa Brava's most dreamy towns. Guests may enjoy sea-view rooms with contemporary furniture and balconies, relax in the outdoor pool, or wander its garden of olive trees before grabbing a drink from its terrace bar. Amenities include room service, free Wi-Fi, and available outdoor tennis courts.

## **DAY 6**

Cap de Creus walk; 5 miles, easy to moderate, 650-ft. elevation loss

Your day begins with a minibus transfer to the Cap de Creus natural area. Upon arrival, you disembark beside the lighthouse at the cape's tip for a beautiful walk beside the sea. With a landscape of low Mediterranean vegetation, coastal cliffs, and hidden coves, you soak up aquamarine water views while passing ancient stone walls and olive groves. The route passes into Port Lligat on your way to Salvador Dalí's home museum, where you stop for a simple but delicious lunch before visiting the one-of-a-kind exhibition.

Dalí's roots on the Costa Brava run deep: he was born just inland in Figueres and vacationed in Cadaqués yearly with his family. In fact, it was here that the artist began learning to paint. It's no wonder, then, that he returned to the region to build his home after World War II. In his Port Lligat house, Dalí lived and worked up until his wife's death in 1982. Today, you can see some of his installations, his studio, and the private residence where he lived.

This afternoon is yours to enjoy at your leisure, perhaps exploring Cadaqués, relaxing on the beach, or swimming in the hotel pool. For your farewell dinner this evening, you head to an exceptional restaurant in the historical center of the town. Here you enjoy a feast of dishes that combine modern innovations (molecular gastronomy was perfected on Cap de Creus) and hearty Catalan favorites elevated in surprising ways. Together with your fellow travelers, you toast the week's adventures one last time before heading back to the hotel.

## Hotel Playa Sol, Cadaqués

### DAY 7

Visit to archaeological site of Empúries; Departure from Barcelona

After breakfast, you bid farewell to Cadaqués and transfer to the Greco-Roman ruins of Empúries, a seaside port and one of the most monumental feats of ancient engineering on the Iberian Peninsula. Here, you'll learn about the construction of its massive breakwater, walled Roman precinct, and ancient paleo-Christian basilica while touring the site. Afterward, continue on via minibus to Barcelona, where you may transfer to the train station or airport for onward travels or continue your explorations of this vibrant city on your own.

## **ITINERARY CHANGES**

Please bear in mind that this is a typical itinerary, and the actual activities, sites, and accommodations may vary due to season, special events, weather, or transportation schedules. We reserve the right to alter the itinerary, since tour arrangements are made up to a year in advance and unforeseen circumstances may arise that mandate change. Itinerary changes are made to improve the tour and your experience.

## **SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL**

Country Walkers is a leader in active travel with responsible tourism an integral part of our core values. Our tours reflect our dedication to best travel practices—and to the preservation of indigenous cultures and the environment. Country Walkers has made a donation on behalf of every traveler to the CW Travelers Fund, which supports designated projects in the communities and habitats in which we travel. We invite you to learn more about our efforts and initiatives for giving back.

# Tour Itinerary Overview

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## TOUR MEETING POINT AND TIME

### Hotel Midmost Barcelona (lobby), Barcelona, Spain, 9:00 a.m.

Carrer Pelai, 14  
Barcelona, Spain  
Tel 011 34 935 051 100

## NIGHTS 1 & 2

### Finca El Ventós

Sant Feliu de Pallerols, Spain  
Tel 011 34 972 107 962  
Email [hotel@elventos.com](mailto:hotel@elventos.com)  
[fincaelventos.com](http://fincaelventos.com)  
Wireless Internet, hair dryers, and laundry service available.

## NIGHT 3 & 4

### Nord 1901 Hotel

Carrer Nord, 7-9  
Girona, Spain  
Tel 011 34 972 411 522  
Email [info@nord1901.com](mailto:info@nord1901.com)  
[nord1901.com](http://nord1901.com)  
Wireless Internet, hair dryers, and laundry service available.

## NIGHTS 5 & 6

### Hotel Playa Sol

Riba es Planc, 3  
Cadaqués, Spain  
Tel 011 34 972 258 100  
Email [playasol@playasol.com](mailto:playasol@playasol.com)  
[playasol.com](http://playasol.com)  
Wireless Internet, hair dryers, and laundry service available.

## TOUR DEPARTURE POINT AND TIME

### Hotel Midmost Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain, by 2:00 p.m.

## TRAVEL DELAY AND EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

**If you are delayed while traveling, or experience any unforeseen situation en route to your tour, assistance is only a few, easy steps away:**

As a Country Walkers guest, you benefit from 24-hour, toll free access to One Call Emergency Hotline and Travel Assistance. Call the numbers below from anywhere in the world to get immediate assistance (regarding everything from lost luggage, to missed connections, to health concerns or notifying your guides or our local partners of a delayed arrival).

To contact One Call, please use one of the following methods:

**By Email:** [mail@oncallinternational.com](mailto:mail@oncallinternational.com)

**By Text:** 603.945.0103

**By Phone:**

**If calling from within the USA:** 800.555.9095

**If calling from outside the USA:** 800.555.9095 or 603.894.4710

When calling from outside the USA, you will need to dial the access code for the country you are calling from (a complete list of access codes, provided by AT&T, can be found on the Country Walkers website under Travel Planning and Travel Resources: AT&T International Access Codes. If you receive an automated response, when prompted, you can then enter either of the numbers above; One Call accepts collect calls 24/7.

In the unlikely event you are unable to connect by phone with One Call, or the region you are calling from does not have an access code, you should speak with a live international operator and ask them to place a collect call to **800.555.9095 or 603.894.4710**.

Should there be any problems placing a collect call (as is occasionally the case depending on the country), dial, email, or text One Call directly and ask them to return your call immediately to minimize any out of pocket costs.

## TRAVEL INSURANCE

We offer guests the opportunity to purchase a Travel Protection Plan. Please contact us for details.

# Tour Facts at a Glance

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## **TOUR LENGTH**

7 days, 6 nights

## **DEPARTURE DATES AND PRICE**

Please refer to our website for the most current list of departure dates, scheduled group tour and private tour prices.

## **TOUR MEETING POINT AND TIME**

Hotel Midmost Barcelona (lobby), Barcelona, Spain, 9:00 a.m.

## **TOUR DEPARTURE POINT AND TIME**

Hotel Midmost Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain, 2:00 p.m.

## **ACTIVITY LEVEL**

This tour is one of our Guided Walking Adventures. It is rated easy to moderate, with an average of 3 to 7 miles per day, with options on many days. There are few ascents and descents, with climbing time on the ascents ranging from about 15 to 30 minutes. The terrain varies from paved and cobblestone streets (during organized city tours and other easy village exploration) to uneven, single-track trails with loose stones or gravel, rocks, and roots. Some trails are exposed to the sun.

## **INCLUSIONS**

- » Two expert, local guides (for groups of 8 or more), with you 24/7
- » All meals except one lunch and one dinner; local wine or beer included with dinners
- » All accommodations while on tour
- » Transportation from the meeting point to the departure point
- » Entrance fees and special events as noted in the itinerary
- » Destination information (weather, visa requirements, etc.) and other travel assistance available 24/7 provided by One Call International
- » The unbeatable and cumulative experience of the Country Walkers staff

## **LET THE JOURNEY BEGIN**

Prior to your adventure you will be asked to sign a Passenger Participation Agreement and you will receive:

- » Luggage tags
- » List of travel companions and guide biographies

## **GRATUITIES**

Gratuities for all hotels, meals, and services that are included in your tour price will be paid by Country Walkers. Should you wish to tip your Country Walkers guide(s), the standard in the industry ranges from \$10 to \$15 per person, per guide, per day (or \$20 to \$30 per couple, per guide, per day), and can be paid in USD or local currency.

# Traveling To and From Your Tour

If you are interested in reserving the **optional Flight + Tour Combo**, please refer to the attached itinerary for more details.

## TOUR MEETING POINT AND TIME

**Hotel Midmost Barcelona (lobby), Barcelona, Spain, 9:00 a.m.**

Your guide(s) will be wearing a Country Walkers shirt. Please be dressed for city walking.

## MOST CONVENIENT ARRIVAL AIRPORT

Barcelona-El Prat Airport (BCN)

[aeropuertobarcelona-elprat.com/ing/](http://aeropuertobarcelona-elprat.com/ing/)

## GETTING TO THE MEETING POINT

A taxi from the airport to the Hotel Midmost Barcelona costs approximately 35 euros. Travel time is approximately 30 minutes (depending upon time of day).

You may also arrange a private transfer directly through the Hotel Midmost Barcelona. Please contact the hotel directly for assistance.

## PRE-TOUR ACCOMMODATIONS

If you are not reserving our optional Flight + Tour Combo, you may wish to stay at the Hotel Midmost Barcelona in Barcelona, the meeting-point hotel, for the night prior to the tour. To make a reservation, please contact the hotel directly.

### Hotel Midmost Barcelona

Carrer Pelai, 14

Barcelona, Spain

Tel 011 34 935 051 100

Email [info@hotelmidmost.com](mailto:info@hotelmidmost.com)

[hotelmidmost.com](http://hotelmidmost.com)

Room rates vary according to season and room type.

## DELAYS AND LATE ARRIVALS

If you are delayed or miss the scheduled group meeting for any reason, we kindly request that you contact our emergency assistance provider, One Call International. This service is available 24 hours/day, 7 days/week to assist you



with any type of travel delay. Please refer to the Emergency Contact details on your Tour Itinerary Overview page for One Call International contact details.

### **TOUR DEPARTURE POINT AND TIME**

**Hotel Midmost Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain, 2:00 p.m.**

### **MOST CONVENIENT DEPARTURE AIRPORT**

Barcelona-El Prat Airport (BCN) is the most convenient airport for your departure (and may require a connection if traveling to the U.S.). A taxi from the Hotel Midmost Barcelona to Barcelona Airport takes approximately 40 minutes (depending upon traffic) and costs approximately 35 euros.

**[aeropuertobarcelona-elprat.com/ing/](http://aeropuertobarcelona-elprat.com/ing/)**

Depending on your destination, it may not be possible to depart Spain on the last day of the tour. Please check airline schedules carefully. If you plan to schedule return flights immediately following the tour's conclusion, please call your airline directly for specific check-in requirements.

# Information & Policies

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## **GUARANTEED DEPARTURES**

Country Walkers guarantees the departure of every tour\*—no exceptions and no disappointments! From the moment you make your deposit, you can start preparing for your adventure. We take care of all the details to ensure a seamless, small-group experience (with an average of 6 or 7 guests per guide). For best availability, reserve your trip today!

*\*except in cases of force majeure*

## **GUEST RESPONSIBILITIES**

Each guest has the responsibility to select a trip appropriate to his/her abilities and interests and to prepare for the trip by carefully reading the confirmation materials. To join this trip, you must be in good health and capable of completing activities as described in the day-to-day itinerary. Our in-house experts welcome the opportunity to discuss the tour in more detail. In order to meet your needs, we ask that you please share any relevant physical limitations or health conditions when you make your reservation.

## **SCHEDULED GROUP INDIVIDUAL RESERVATIONS**

Reservations for this tour may be made by calling Country Walkers at 800.464.9255 and providing a \$350 per person deposit. The Balance of your payment (final tour cost) is due 90 days prior to the tour departure date.

## **SCHEDULED GROUP CANCELLATION POLICY**

Cancellations received 91 days or more prior to the tour start date will incur a loss of \$150; cancellations received between 90 and 61 days prior to the tour start date incur a loss of 25 percent of the tour price; there are no refunds within 60 days of the tour start date. Up to 91 days prior to departure, you may transfer your reservation, depending on availability, from one departure to another in the same calendar year at no cost\*. Please notify us in writing.

*\*One transfer per year; afterwards a modest per person transfer fee will apply. Please note that tours with seasonal prices may involve a higher price.*

## PRIVATE ADVENTURE RESERVATION & CANCELLATION POLICIES

If you are booking a Private Adventure, a \$500 nonrefundable group deposit is required to secure hotel reservations and guides. Once these arrangements are confirmed, the deposit will be applied as the provider's deposit for the trip. If we are unable to secure the hotel and/or guides for your requested dates, this deposit will be refunded.

Once your Private Adventure is confirmed, your individual \$350 per person deposit is required within 14 days. The balance of your payment (final tour cost) is due 90 days prior to the tour departure date. Cancellations received 91 days or more prior to the tour start date will incur a loss of \$150 (plus the nonrefundable group deposit of \$500); cancellations received between 90 and 61 days prior to the tour start date incur a loss of 25 percent of the tour price; there are no refunds within 60 days of the tour start date. **Please note that Private Adventure tour pricing is based on a guarantee of a specified number of guests. Should the group decrease in size, we reserve the right to alter the per person price, if necessary.**

# Spain at a Glance

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## ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

**U.S. citizens:** Passports are required and must be valid for at least three months beyond the dates of travel. Visas are not required for stays of up to 90 days. For more information, see [travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov).



## Travel Tip

Have a variety of options to start your trip: ATM card(s), credit card(s), some dollars to exchange, and some euros in small denominations.

## CURRENCY

Spain uses the euro (EUR). For up-to-date exchange rates, see [oanda.com](http://oanda.com).

Many businesses in Europe will no longer accept credit cards without PIN numbers (chip and pin cards). Always contact your bank or your credit-

card company for details on fees and card use when traveling.

## TIME ZONE

Spain is in the Central European Time Zone, Eastern Standard Time plus six hours. For more information on worldwide time zones, see [worldtimezone.com](http://worldtimezone.com).

## PHONE & INTERNET

Spain country code: +34

Cell phone coverage throughout Spain is extensive, but cannot be guaranteed to be accessible on all American mobile carriers or to function at all times while on the trail or in remote areas. For more information regarding international phone use, please refer to [countrywalkers.com/phones](http://countrywalkers.com/phones).



Internet access is generally very good in towns and villages; however, it is not guaranteed at all of the hotels used on the tour. For more details regarding Wi-Fi availability, please refer to the Tour Itinerary Overview.

## LANGUAGE

The official language of Spain is Spanish.

While knowledge of the local language is not necessary, you may want to learn

some fun and useful phrases; see [bbc.co.uk/languages/spanish](http://bbc.co.uk/languages/spanish) or the enclosed Reading Guide for a suggested phrase book.

## ELECTRICITY

Alternating current of 220V and 50Hz is used in Spain. Plugs have two round pins. For a full listing of electrical outlets worldwide, see

[electricaloutlet.org](http://electricaloutlet.org).

## WEATHER

One of Europe's warmest and sunniest countries, Spain has a predominantly warm Mediterranean climate, with dry summers and pleasant temperature ranges in spring and fall. Spain does have a variety of climates and zones because of its considerable geographical diversity. In Catalonia, the combination of Mediterranean and slightly mountainous climate results in temperatures from the low 60s to mid-80s (and 90s midday in August and September). In southern Spain's Andalucia, spring and fall are dry and sunny, with temperatures ranging from the 60s to the 80s.

For up-to-date forecasts, see [qwikcast.com](http://qwikcast.com). For historical average temperatures and rainfall, see [weatherbase.com](http://weatherbase.com).

## FOOD & DRINK



Thoroughly Mediterranean, the foundation of Spanish cuisine is olive oil, garlic, and local and seasonal produce, meat, and fish. Spanish food varies by region, in the same way that there is great variety in Spain's geography and climate; however, some dishes can be found throughout the country—a range of *tapas* (more on the next page), paella, gazpacho, excellent cured ham, chorizo, meatballs, salads, good bread, fresh fruit, cheeses, and for dessert, flan (vanilla custard). Surrounded as Spain is on three sides by water, seafood dishes are plentiful throughout, including shrimp with garlic, calamari, octopus, porgy, or monkfish, all with regional variations.

Equally steeped in Mediterranean culture, wine has been produced in Spain since the time of the Romans, and the country is third in European wine production after France and Italy. Grown almost throughout Spain (except near Santiago de Compostela), quality red and white wines can be found in all regions, with the

### Travel Tip

- Bringing your own hair dryer or other electrical device? You'll need a travel converter, available at most hardware, travel, or consumer electronic stores.

For laptops or an electronic device with a dual voltage switch, you'll need the adapter plug but not a converter.

majority from the central Castilla-La Mancha region, with Catalonia second. A crisp and bubbly before-dinner drink is the Catalonia's sparkling wine, *cava*, named after the cellars in which it is produced.

### Travel Tip

#### ¿Tapas?

Tapas, or *pinxtos* as they are known in the Basque country, are perhaps Spain's most well-known culinary export, with tapas bars and restaurants popping up worldwide. Part of Spanish life, they can be eaten with a drink as appetizers before a meal, or as a meal in themselves. There is even a verb in the Spanish language—*tapear*—meaning to eat tapas! These small savory dishes can be as simple as a plate of olives, slices of Manchego cheese, or chorizo, to prepared dishes such as grilled eggplant in tomato vinaigrette or slices of *tortilla española* (a dense potato and onion omelet). In Catalonia, a favorite is Pan Catalan or in Catalan, *pa amb tomàquet*, lightly toasted bread with chopped tomatoes and drizzled with olive oil.

#### Here are a few others Spanish favorites

*Patatas bravas*: spicy potatoes with a hot sauce.

*Croquetas*: a range of small fried croquettes that can be stuffed with Serrano ham, salt cod, hard-boiled egg, cheese, or vegetables.

*Champiñones al ajillo*: mushrooms, dripping with olive oil, garlic and dry Spanish sherry.

*Morcilla frita*: bite-size pieces of spicy blood sausage flavored with garlic and oregano.

## LIFE IN SPAIN

### Shopping and banking hours

Shops and stores are generally open Monday to Saturday from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., and from 4:30 to 8:00 p.m.; most department stores and some supermarkets are open all day, every day of the week, from 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.



Banks are open from 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Monday to Saturday (except from June to September when they are closed on Saturday).

### Meal times

Breakfast is served at hotels from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. In restaurants, lunch is served from 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. and dinner is served from 8:30 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.

### Tipping

Tipping in restaurants and bars is included in the total bill, but it is customary to leave an additional 5 to 10 percent of the total. Taxi drivers also receive 5 to 10

percent of the total, or you could round up the total, letting the driver keep the change. For luggage assistance, a small tip of one to three euros is appropriate.

## TRAVEL RESOURCES

### National Spanish tourist board official sites

**spain.info**

### Public holidays



To assist in travel planning, it may be helpful to be aware of Spanish public holidays: [spain.info/en\\_US/informacion-practica/consejos-viaje/consejos-practicos/horarios-festivos/](http://spain.info/en_US/informacion-practica/consejos-viaje/consejos-practicos/horarios-festivos/). Visit the Spanish tourist board's website, navigating to [spain.info/en\\_US/que-quieres/agenda/](http://spain.info/en_US/que-quieres/agenda/) for a list of festivals and events, and an event finder.

## TRAVEL IN SPAIN

### Airlines

The Spanish Airports and Aerial Navigation website, [www.aena.es](http://www.aena.es), has information on all airports and domestic flights. The Spanish national airline is Iberia, [iberia.com](http://iberia.com).

### Trains

**Renfe:** [renfe.com](http://renfe.com), the national railway company, has an extensive network, including high-speed routes (AVE) from Madrid.

**Raileurope:** [raileurope.com](http://raileurope.com) or 800.622.8600: a U.S.-based company that provides schedules, reservations, and ticketing for all European train networks (their multi-day/-week/-month passes in one country or combinations of countries may be an economical and convenient choice for European train travel).

### Other local transportation

In addition to rail and airline networks, Spain also has many regional bus lines that can be found at: [movelia.es](http://movelia.es). Most major car rental agencies are available at airports and train stations. Taxis are available at all major airports, train stations, and in smaller towns, and can be reserved in advance (your hotel can usually provide assistance). For more information go to [spain.info](http://spain.info), and click on "Practical information" then "Transport."

# Packing List

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## PACKING TIPS

Pack light! Keep in mind there will be times you may have to carry your own luggage for short distances, especially before and after your Country Walkers tour. Due to space constraints, we require you to limit your luggage to one medium piece (approximately 18x15x29 inches or 8,000 cu. in.) and one small carry-on, per person. We recommend packing any personal necessities, medications, your hotel itinerary/emergency contact information, your hiking boots (or shoes), and some extra clothes in your carry-on luggage in the event that your baggage is delayed. We suggest leaving valuable jewelry at home. A copy of your passport or other important documents should be kept in a separate area of your luggage. Always be alert when carrying a purse, camera, money belt, or backpack in busy cities, airports, and train stations.

## FOOTWEAR

- » Hiking boots or shoes. There are many brands to choose from. Proper fit is crucial, so try on new boots or shoes while wearing socks you plan to use on tour. Be sure to break in new footwear well before your tour begins. By the time you're ready to join your walking tour, you should be able to complete 5 to 9 miles of walking without discomfort. We require lightweight boots or shoes with proper ankle support and good tread to ensure stability on all types of terrain. Waterproof footwear keeps feet dry in heavy rain and water-resistant footwear keeps feet dry in heavy dew. Country Walkers reserves the right to deny participation to any guest not wearing appropriate footwear.
- » Comfortable shoes for evening strolls
- » Synthetic, moisture-wicking socks (cotton socks are not recommended for walking as they will quickly cause blisters)
- » Blister remedy

## CLOTHING

- » Lightweight, wash-and-wear long pants
- » Long-sleeved, wash-and-wear shirt
- » T-shirts and shorts
- » Polar fleece or light wool pullover (it will keep you warm even when wet)



- » Dinner attire: dress is smart casual

## **OUTERWEAR**

- » Waterproof rain gear: jacket, pants, hat, or hood
- » Windbreaker with hood (your rain gear may be suitable)
- » Hat with a broad brim or visor

## **EQUIPMENT**

- » Daypack large enough to carry water, extra clothing, rain gear, lunch, and personal items (camera, etc.)
- » Waterproof cover for pack
- » Water bottle, canteen, or CamelBak-type water reservoir or hydration pack to carry your own water while walking (equivalent of one liter)
- » Sunblock and lip balm
- » Insect repellent
- » Sunglasses
- » Toilet kit for when facilities are not available on the walks. Include zip-lock baggies, tissues, and moist towelettes, which can be disposed of upon return to the hotel
- » Personal first-aid kit, including any medications you ordinarily take (in their original container)

## **OPTIONAL**

- » Telescopic walking sticks (Please note that while telescopic walking sticks are recommended for this tour, they are not provided by Country Walkers. Therefore, please plan on bringing your own should you wish to use them.)
- » Binoculars
- » Bathing suit for optional use of hotel pools or spas
- » Flip-flops or water sandals
- » Camera and charger and/or extra batteries
- » Zip-lock bags (to keep camera and valuables dry)
- » Small notebook and pen
- » Field guides (see enclosed reading list)

- » Folding umbrella
- » Bandanna
- » Washcloth (many European hotels do not provide them)
- » Hand sanitizer and/or moist towelettes