SPRING 2025 CEA CAPA

# Barcelona

Study Abroad Travel Guide My Insights

Reccomendations

Food/activities





### **MY EXPERIENCE**



My semester in Barcelona was, without question, the best four months of my life. I truly could not have asked for a better experience. I studied abroad through CEA CAPA Barcelona (a World Partner Program) in the spring of 2025.

I chose Barcelona as my study abroad destination because I've always had a passion for Spanish culture and language. As a Spanish minor, I knew I wanted to be in a Spanish-speaking city, and Barcelona offered the perfect mix of art, music, nightlife, and cultural experiences that no other city in the world could match.

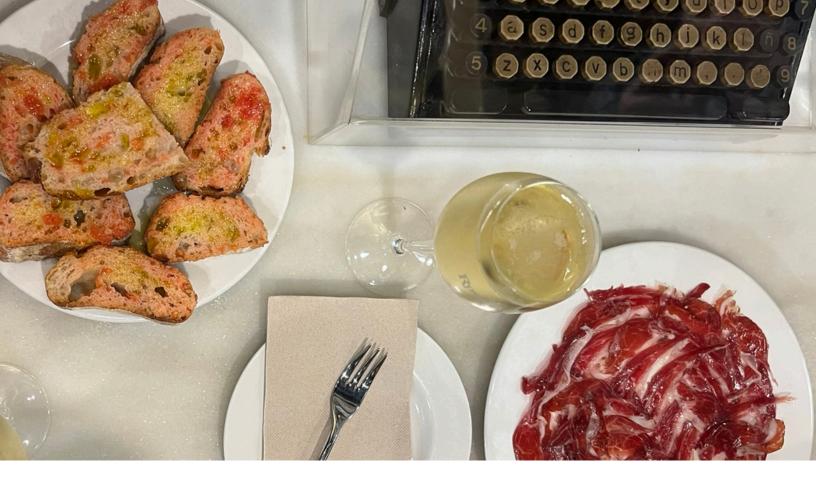
Traveling has always been a passion of mine. I have family in Brazil whom I visit yearly, and I've spent time exploring the world with my dad in places like Costa Rica, Canada, and throughout the US. However, prior to studying abroad, I had never had the opportunity to visit Europe, so I was incredibly excited to reach a new continent.

During my semester, I had the privilege of traveling to 14 other European cities, but I have to say that the time I spent in my host city of Barcelona was unmatched compared to the other places I visited.

I was also lucky to participate in CEA CAPA's content creator program, through which I was able to develop my professional portfolio and gain valuable experience in my field of communications.

Thank you, Barcelona, for the best four months of my life. I will never forget you.

Maria Keenan



## **FOOD**

## In Barcelona

The food in Barcelona was one of my favorite parts of the city. As a broke college student, I tried to save money by cooking most of my meals in my perfect apartment, but my friends and I still made sure to eat out whenever we had the chance or change to spare.

One of my favorite memories was our first dinner together as roommates. After a long day of sightseeing, we went to a tapas restaurant that turned out to be phenomenal. A bit intimidated at first, we stuck to tourist-friendly dishes like sliders, patatas bravas, and steak bites. At the end of the semester, we went back to that same restaurant for our final dinner and confidently ordered traditional tapas that we had fallen in love with throughout the semester.

One of the courses I took at CEA was Food and Culture of Barcelona, where we explored the history and traditions behind Spanish and Catalan cuisine. As part of the class, we even took a hands-on tapas-making workshop, learning how to prepare some of Spain's most iconic dishes.

BARRIGA LLENA, CORAZÓN CONTENTA

# **BRUNCH**

Barcelona's food scene isn't just about tapas. Breakfast, after all, is the most important meal of the day. Here are some of my favorite spots to start your day:

- Surf House A go-to for good brunch by the water, perfect for a sunny weekend morning.
- Gringa American-style comfort food with a Barcelona twist.
- Brunch and the City A Sex and the City-themed brunch spot with the cutest decor.
- Corgi Café Was extremely comforting when I was homesick and missing my dog. Adorable and friendly corgis run around the restaurant.
- 19 Bagels Tons of bagel options; not quite New York-level, but still hits the spot.
- Granja M. Viader A historic, family-owned café known as the birthplace of the famous Cacaolat chocolate milk. Authentic and local.
- La Pallaresa Another classic family-owned spot with a rich history and the best traditional treats. Went here on a class field trip.

#### Other Favorites:

Picnic Restaurant  $\cdot$  El Árbol  $\cdot$  Lato Café (amazing omelets)  $\cdot$  Hammock (great iced coffee)  $\cdot$  Alsur Café (try the choco pancakes!)  $\cdot$  Zenith  $\cdot$  La Malcriada  $\cdot$  Flex Bowls  $\cdot$  Citizen Café  $\cdot$  La Papa  $\cdot$  Sandwich Club Barcelona

#### DICEN QUE EL DESAYUNO ES LA COMIDA MÁS IMPORTANTE DEL DÍA









#### If you're looking for quick, delicious meals to grab in between adventures, these were my go-to options:

- Bo de B An absolute must! Order a sandwich or bowl (get all the sauces) and don't skip the patatas bravas.
   There's always a line, and it's cash only, but worth it.
- Honest Greens Healthy and quick with great salads, people absolutely rave about this one.
- Foodcourt in El Corte Inglés A hidden gem inside the department store: a full food court with salads, crepes, coffee, a bakery, and even a cheese and wine bar.
- Burritos Barcelona's version of Chipotle. Very fast, filling, and reliable. Close to the CEA center.
- Aloha Poké Fresh poke bowls near the CEA center, perfect for a quick lunch.
- Savta Great sandwiches.
- El Nacional An indoor food court with multiple restaurants and cuisines.
- Flax & Kale Trendy and vegan-friendly with delicious smoothies and healthy options.
- Lady Dumpling Great dumplings, quick and easy.
  There are a bunch of locations.
- Malvón Empanadas My favorite empanada chain; try the cochinita (pulled pork), it's my favorite.
- TKO Tacos \$1 tacos. Typically has a line though.
- Maash Smash burgers that are really good, but a bit pricey.
- Macchina Pasta Bar Build-your-own pasta bowls.

#### **Other Favorites:**

Tierra Burrito · Mercat de la Concepció (local market with cheese, fruits & meats) · La Boqueria (famous market for snacks & souvenirs) · Santo Porcello (amazing Italian sandwiches) · Rooq (chicken sandwiches & nuggets) · Las Fritas (loaded fries near Barceloneta) · Maoz Falafel · 100 Montaditos · Konig · The Quick Greet · Tacos Tacos · La Tasqueta de Blai · Chuvios · Oi Ma Paninis

## QUICK/TOGO BITES

You can't experience Barcelona without diving into tapas and trying paella. There's a big range from traditional spots to more touristy/fusion options, but all are great. Here are my favs:

- Vinitus A mix of traditional Spanish dishes and options for pickier eaters. My personal favorite. You need to order the Burnt Sant Teresa — hands down the best thing I ate abroad. I still dream about that dessert.
- Casa Lolea Known for its house-made sangria and wine, which you can also buy by the bottle.
- Bar Alegría A local tapas bar that was on the corner of our apartment. Always packed, super traditional menu, and an incredible tortilla.
- El Xampanyet The most authentic spot I visited. It is very popular and always crowded. They do not take reservations, so expect a wait, but definitely worth it.
- Bar Lobo Has a variety of tapas. My favs were I loved the rigatoni with burrata, truffle ravioli, chicken, calamari, tomato bread, and tuna tataki.
- Carballeira A fancier paella restaurant near Barceloneta that was amazing and fancy.

#### Other Tapas Recommendations:

Labalabusta (Israeli-style tapas, insane) · Sensi Tapas (great sangria) · Ciudad Condal (classic spot near CEA/Las Ramblas) · Mosquito Tapas (hole-in-the-wall dim sum tapas) · Cerveseria Catalana (authentic and popular — get the bread pudding!) · Cal Pep · Firebug Tapas · Bar Cañete · Bodega La Palma · Elsa y Fred (adorable vibe) · Petit Tapas · La Flauta · Bar del Pla · Tantarantana · La Tasqueta de Blai · Los Tortillez · Gasterea · Bar Celta Pulperia · Garage Bar · Gats · Tapas 2254 · Bandarra Taperia · Bilbao Berria · Santa Caterina Cuines · La Cova Fumada · El Vaso de Oro · Can Paixano

#### Other Paella Recommendations:

Arroseria Xàtiva · Kuletos · Can Punyetes · Mussol · Ca L'Estevet · Boro Bar · Batea · Can Majó · Pez Vela · Escribà Xiringuito · Barceloneta · Barraca · Botafumeiro · Els Pescadors

# TAPAS AND PAELLA









Dinner in Barcelona offers a large variety of cuisines from around the world, and by far was some of the best food I have ever had. These are my recommendations:

- Monster Sushi Some of the freshest and best sushi ever.
  The salmon and tuna tataki and soba noodles are musttries. Perfect for casual dining or takeout. I think we came here once a week.
- Parking Pizza Casual Italian with standout burrata, focaccia, Greek salad, and pizza.
- Boca Grande My favorite restaurant in Barcelona.
  Amazing food, cool cocktail bar, pricey thanks, mom and dad!
- Mas Que Sushi All-you-can-eat sushi with a robot delivery system. More casual than Monster, but more budget-friendly and still great food.
- Carabela Café Sit down Mexican food by the Barceloneta. Great drinks and vibe.
- Cantinho Brasileiro A Brazilian spot that reminded me of the food my mom makes!
- Florida 119 A few blocks from our apartment with excellent tapas and roasted chicken.

#### **Other Recommendations**

Robata Sushi · Sartoria Panateri · Parco Sushi · Nakashita · Bao Bao · Parking Pita · Restaurante Bella's · La Bella Napoli · Cecconis · Feroz · Salvaje · Harrys · Mont Bar (Michelin star) · Isabella's Restaurante · The Green Spot · Babula · Mana 75 · Gatsby · Bendito Pecado · NAP · Yue Lai · Bun Bo Barcelona · Azul Frida · Luigi Ristorante · Surya · Takumi Ramen · Lamun · Warka · La Pachuca · Pasta Madre · Hummus BCN · AH-UN · Carmina · Pizzaria Eden

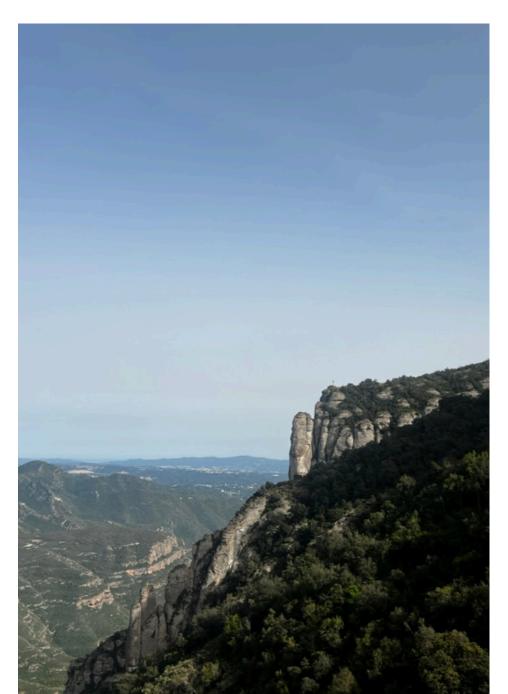
### **DINNER**





# Sightseeing

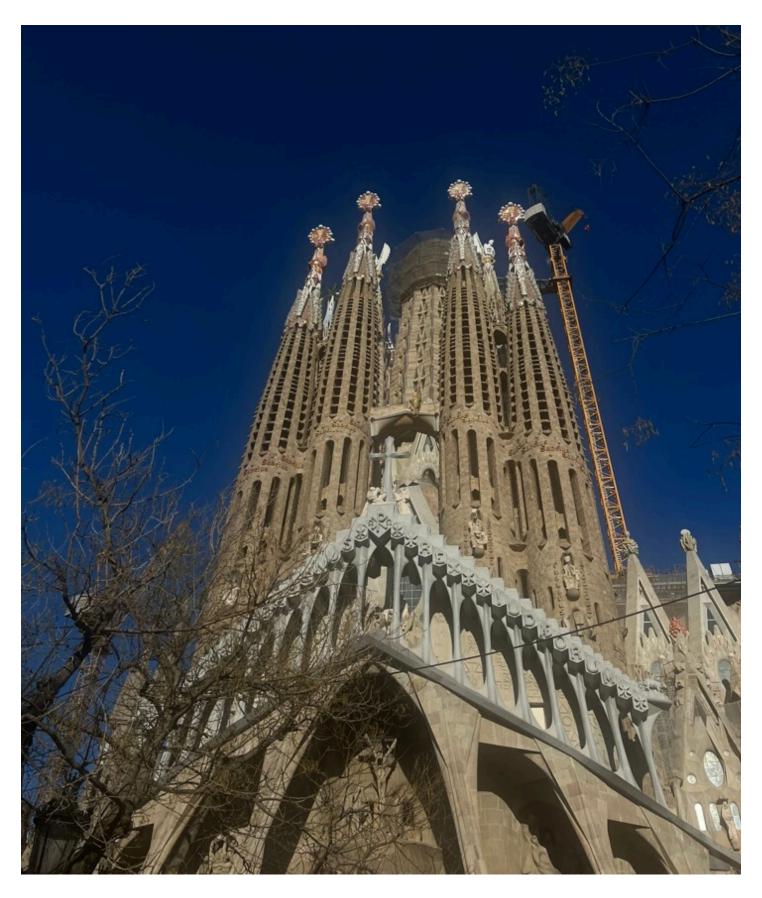
Being bored in Barcelona is impossible. There are so many sights to see and things to do. The exploring is endless and even when visiting the same place more than once, you experience it differently each time.





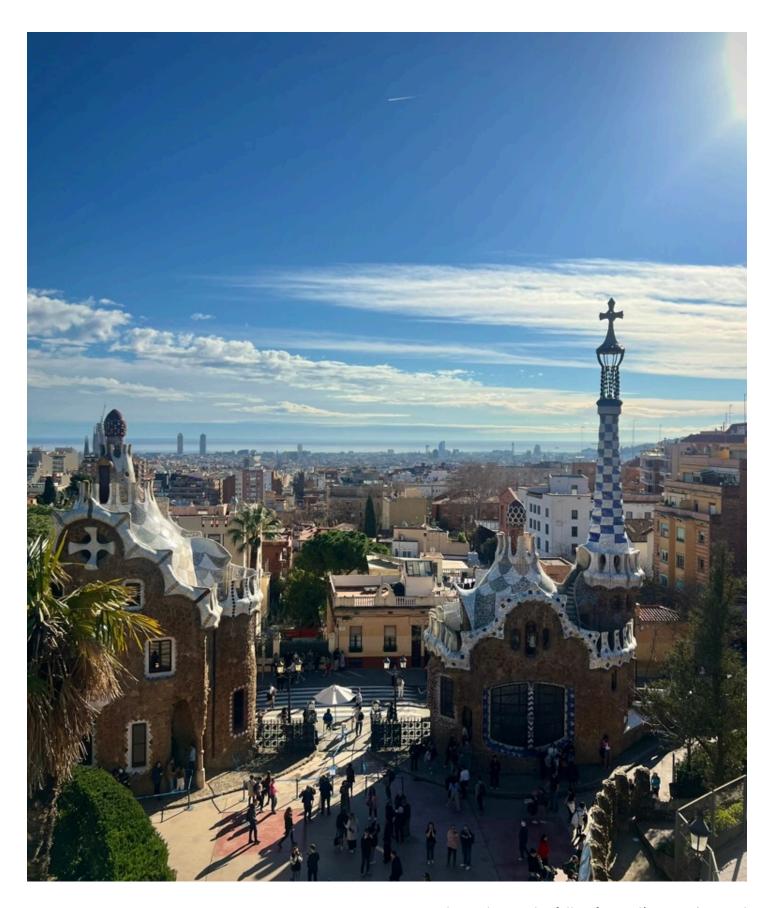
The Sagrada Família

Montserrat



Sagrada Família

One of Barcelona's most iconic sights. The Sagrada is a Roman Catholic Basilica designed by Antoni Gaudí that has been under construction since 1882.



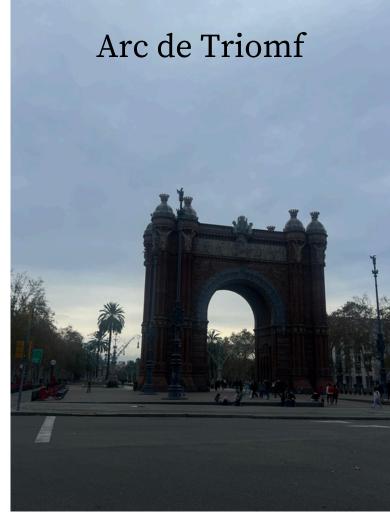
Park Güell

Explore the park full of Gaudís mosaics and imaginative designs and enjoy panoramic views of Barcelona. Fans of The Cheetah Girls 2 will recognize it as one of the films most memorable locations



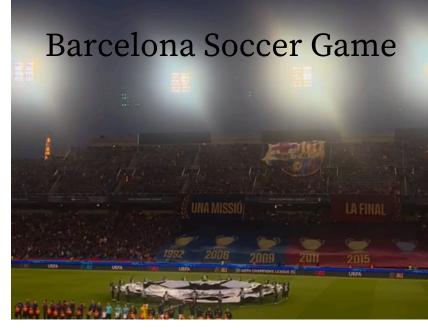






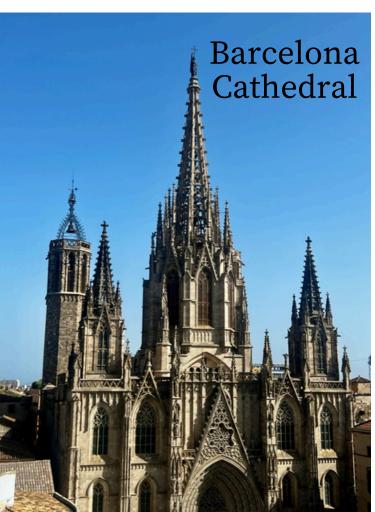














I would be lying if I said the nightlife in Barcelona wasn't a major factor in choosing it as my host destination for my semester abroad. At Syracuse, the nightlife is very minimal, with only three campus bars and a heavy Greek life presence. Throughout my time at Syracuse I had been looking for a nightlife upgrade and change of scenery.

As someone who loves going out and socializing, the opportunity to experience some of the most iconic nightlife in the world was definitely something I was looking forward to.

Balancing late nights out, sometimes staying out until 5 a.m., with attending class, keeping up with coursework, and planning weekend trips made my schedule exhausting, but I wouldn't have wanted it any other way.

## **NIGHTLIFE**

The nightlife in Barcelona is famous around the world, known for its vibrant bars, clubs, and late-night energy that keeps the city alive until sunrise.

#### **BARCELONA CLUBS**

#### Places We Loved

- Opium (Barceloneta, Monday/Weekends) So much fun, amazing music, tons of space to roam. The DJ in the bathroom is iconic, and the energy is just perfect.
- Shoko (Barceloneta, Mondays) Shoko Mondays are legendary. The dancers are my favorite people, and the space, though smaller than Opium, is always packed and incredible.
- Sutton (Wednesdays) Much better than Razzmatazz in my opinion. The lights are mesmerizing, the DJ in the bathroom is a plus. Always a blast here.
- Input (Montjuïc) Cool lights and a more local crowd. Sometimes they host well-known DJs, so following their Instagram is a must for special nights.
- Costa Breve Just around the corner from Sutton. Went here one night after Sutton to keep the party going. All locals, all Spanish people, and we had so much fun.
- Otto Zutz Small, mix of Spanish and pop music, and a great spot to meet up with friends. Conveniently located next to a chupitos bar.

#### **Places Worth Going Once**

• Pacha (Barceloneta) – Famous for a reason. We went once and left early; the GA space is small, but it's worth experiencing at least once.

#### Not My Favorite but Popular

- Razzmatazz (Wednesdays) The dancers are cool, but overall, not my vibe.
- Bling Bling We waited in line for an hour and never actually made it inside.





#### **BARCELONA BARS**



#### Where We Went

- Cocovail Bar/pub vibe with good American food, especially wings. Great spot to watch a game before going out.
- Monk A speakeasy that looks like a supermarket from the street.
- Paradiso Fancy cocktails, one of the highest-rated bars in the world. Hard to get in because of long waits, but still worth trying.
- Dow Jones Stock market-themed bar where drink prices change throughout the night. Fun shots and drinks.
- Bobby's Free Stylish speakeasy with a unique vibe.
- George Payne Fun for pre-game spot and good food.
- Mint Bar Cool bar with music, conveniently close to Barceloneta.
- Boca Chica Chic cocktail bar above Boca Grande, with small bites and a rooftop terrace.
- Hotel Colón Rooftop bar across from the cathedral. No reservations needed, and the line moves quickly.

#### **Other Recommendations**

Marina Bay  $\cdot$  Le Cyrano  $\cdot$  Alice's Secret Garden  $\cdot$  Furia  $\cdot$  Eleven Rooftop  $\cdot$  The One Rooftop





# GOOD THINGS To Know

#### **Apps to Download**

- Bolt Spains Uber.
- FreeNow App for taxis.
- Glovo Food delivery service. You can also use Uber Eats or Postmates, though options are limited.
- Xe Currency converter.
- Washrocks Laundry and dry cleaning service. Expensive, not very flexible with pickup/drop-off times, and staff don't always speak English. Useful in emergencies.

#### **Good to Know**

- El Corte Inglés Huge department store. Perfect for buying essentials like sheets, towels, house supplies, and school supplies right when you arrive.
- La Concepción Great supermarket with fresh produce.
- Druni Pharmacy with some American brands.
- Global Blue Tax refund office in Barcelona.
- Emergency numbers: Police 112, Ambulance 061, Fire 080.

#### **Personal Recommendation**

Storage – Central Trasteros (+34 638 65 22 78) is great.
 We needed to store our luggage for about a week after moving out of our apartment, as we were extending our stays in Barcelona. Rentals are about \$50/month, fit six large suitcases with extra room. Splitting with friends makes it even cheaper.







#### More general advice:

Book your trips in advance! If you're on a tight budget, start by planning any major trips tied to specific dates like Dublin for St. Patrick's Day as early as possible. After that, sit down with your roommates and map out your semester together. Doing this saved us a lot of time and money since we were able to find flights for cheaper and stay organized. Flying out of Barcelona is usually affordable, but flexibility is key. Use Skyscanner or Google Flights to compare destinations and find the best deals.

#### Don't be afraid of public transportation!

The metro and bus systems in Barcelona are super efficient, safe, and inexpensive. Just be smart with your belongings and you'll get around the city easily.

#### Compare your accommodation options.

Most of the time, it was cheaper for my friends and I to stay in an Airbnb than in a hostel, so it's worth doing the math and seeing what makes the most sense for you.

#### Remember you're there for school.

Managing your time effectively is so important to balance classes, trips, and exploring the city. I recommend keeping track of all assignments, deadlines, and todo items—like packing or sightseeing—so you can visualize what needs to get done in a day.

#### Be aware of your belongings.

Pickpocketing does happen, but it's not as scary as it sounds. Just be smart, stay alert in crowded areas, and keep your valuables close.

# Final Remarks

Studying abroad is a chance to step out of your comfort zone and experience an entirely new culture and way of life. At first, it can feel intimidating, and home might seem a million miles away, but the best thing you can do is throw yourself into the experience. Meet new people, explore your surroundings, and lean on those around you when you need support.

There were definitely times when I missed home or felt out of place, but I always reminded myself that home would still be there when I came back. Those four months go by so much faster than you think. It might sound cliché, but it's true. The semester flew by. I was constantly on the go, but I wouldn't trade a single moment of it.

My roommates were from schools all over the country, and while it was intimidating at first, I ended up leaving with lifelong friends and a sense of home not just in Barcelona and Syracuse but also in Michigan and Providence.

No matter where you choose to study abroad, make sure to enjoy every single moment and soak in all that your new home has to offer. From exploring new cities and trying unfamiliar foods to forming lifelong friendships and learning about a different culture, every experience will shape you in ways you never expected. Studying abroad is truly life changing if you open yourself up to it, so take it all in, say yes to new adventures, and appreciate every second while you can.









