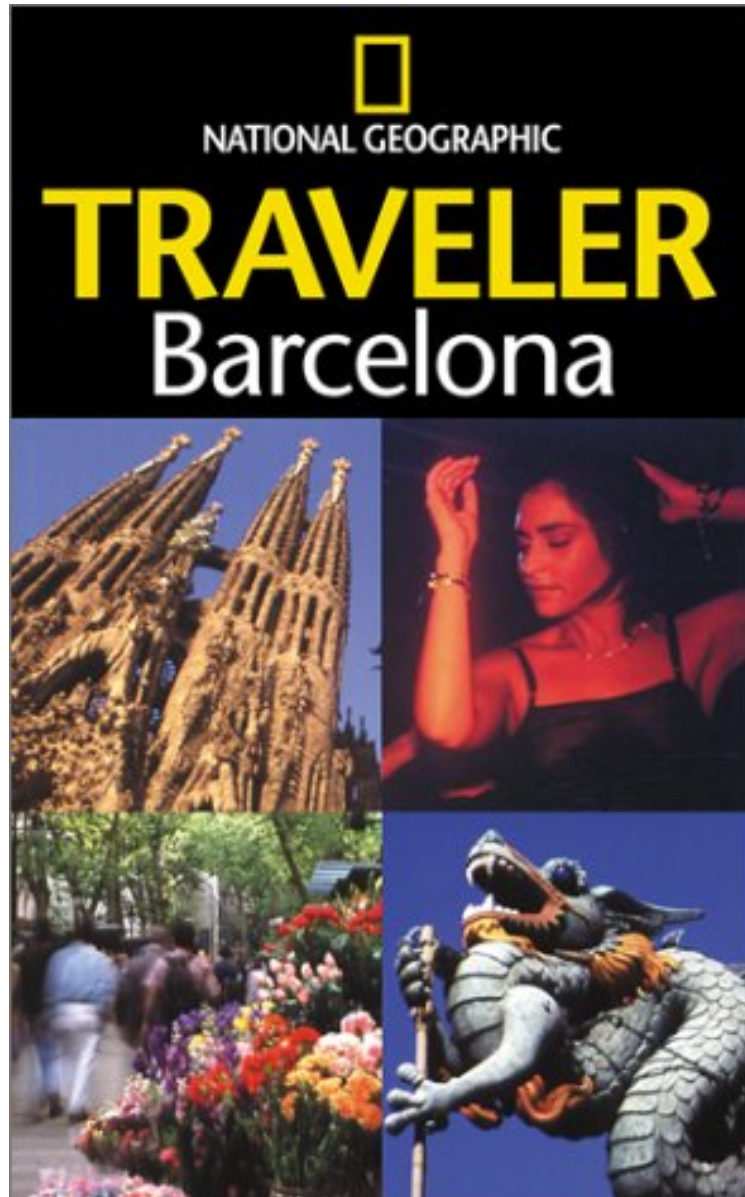


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## National Geographic Traveler: Barcelona

*National Geographic Society, Damien Simonis*  
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**National Geographic Society, Damien Simonis : National Geographic Traveler: Barcelona** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised National Geographic Traveler: Barcelona:

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Great resource for the traveler to this great city By C. Collins The National Geographic Traveler: Barcelona is an excellent resource and is so readable that a traveler to Barcelona should consider reading it prior to travel as well as taking it for a guide. The book is a little heavy to carry around in your

hands but fits nicely into a backpack. The book is full of colorful photographs and drawing and is extremely user friendly when trying to find your way around Barcelona. The book contains area maps where you can orient yourself to particular neighborhoods and the sites. Also suggested walking tours are included with well detailed maps. There are also larger excursion maps should the traveler wish to leave the city for such wonderful sites as Montserrat with its cliff hidden Monastery and mountain hiking trails. There is a brief history of Barcelona and Catalunya. I suggest reading it so that you understand why the high school Spanish you learned is not quite appropriate here in Barcelona, an area that considers itself culturally and linguistically separate from the rest of Spain. There is a tension between Madrid and Barcelona and understanding the history helps the traveler enjoy and appreciate Barcelona even more. The parks located on Montjuic, overlooking the city, can be accessed by bus or climbed for those in good shape. Nestled in the park is the wonderful Miro Museum, comprehensive and interesting. The museum is primarily devoted to the vast works of Joan Miro but other artists are displayed, especially if the work is compared to Miro's styles. Parc Guell, designed by Gaudi, in all its colorful whimsical fantasy is captured. The amazing mosaic tile work on benches, bridges, columns, buildings throughout the park make it very visually stunning and unique. Don't miss Gaudi's Casa Batllo, the most odd house imaginable. The roof tiles are like fish scales, the balconies are shark jaws, the walls are covered with coral and starfish patterns. It is as if a giant fish had been turned into a multistory home. You have to walk across the street to appreciate the structure. The giant structure, La Pedrera is at least 8 times larger than Casa Batllo and evokes caves and moon landscapes. There is no way to describe La Sagrada Familia by Gaudi. It seems like a Disney world structure gone amok. The Gothic architectural details burst into fruit and vegetable clusters, with cold gray limestone contrasting against loud bright pastels. The city life of La Rambla, the main artery of Barcelona, is a site of constant entertainment. From early morning to late at night the streets are active. The residents of Barcelona eat dinner so late that even at midnight the sidewalk cafes are full of merriment. Trees line the street so you will be protected from sun-burn as you stroll up and down this main street of the city. The Gothic Neighborhood, the oldest part of the city, is well described with a detailed map. In this neighborhood is the ancient Cathedral with its wonderful lush interior tropical garden. Stop and rest in the garden which is like a miniature Brazilian forest, misty, cool, and dense with color. This courtyard is very different from the nearby wide, dry, hot Placa Reial with its Gaudi designed lampposts. Within the Gothic neighborhood is a suggested walk that is highly recommended since it takes the walker to numerous Roman artifacts and structures on which Barcelona was constructed. Next to the Gothic area is La Ribera, a wonderful area, full of ancient buildings and shops, as well as the Museu Picasso, containing a fantastic collection of Picasso's work. Nearby is the Parc de la Ciutadella, a wonderful place to stroll and relax before visiting the Museum in the grounds of the park to see the city's collection of art from a range of eras and styles. North of the Gothic area is Passeig de Gracia, a more business like atmosphere similar to Paris. Here is located the Antoni Tapies foundation with a collection of Tapies' work as well as a small temporary exhibition of contemporary artists. A visit to the church of Santa Maria del Mar reveals the beauty of a Gothic austere brickwork church that impresses with the power of the brick and stone alone. Within the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, located high above the city, an amazing collection of early Christian images can be found. The flat Byzantine style is powerful and entertaining. There are great seafood restaurants on the waterfront as well as nightclubs and strip joints with male and female strippers working the bars in an area called the Rambla de Mar and the Maremagnum. From the waterfront you can climb a tower and get into the cable car, Teleferic Aeri, and cross the entire city and end up in the high parks above the city. Near the waterfront is Port Vell with its gigantic iron column topped by Christopher Columbus looking toward the West. The book ends with suggested excursions, the primary one of which is a short train ride North of the city to Montserrat. Here you must go by cable car to reach the little mountain town of Montserrat. Within the church is the mysterious Black Virgin. Also available are wonderful hiking trails in the mountain overlooking the vast plain toward Barcelona and the Mediterranean Sea. The guide book is highly recommended for its great suggestions on walks, maps, sites and background information.

This guide to Barcelona highlights places of interest, walks and drives in areas surrounding the city, a More Places to Visit section detailing places off the beaten track, a directory of hotels, restaurants, shops and entertainment listings, opening times and useful telephone numbers. It also includes cut-away illustrations of important buildings and descriptions of major cultural, architectural and historical sites.