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## 24 hours in Barcelona

by Omega Love

Up next in Bimble's 24 hour series, a city in sunny Spain which has us clinging onto the last hopes of summer. Join Omega as she takes you from day to night in this most beautiful of cities — a city she has once called home and one which travels with her everywhere she goes. This is 24 hours in Barcelona.

### Morning & afternoon combos — Plaça de Catalunya, Las Ramblas & Barceloneta

Benvinguts a Barcelona — welcome to Barcelona — Catalan style. As the pulsating aorta of Barcelona's heart, Plaça de Catalunya is a must-see, majestic square which serves as the main meeting point, and central transport hub for the city. Complete with imposing sculptures, dazzling fountains and the flutter of a thousand pigeons feeding on the crumbs that fall upon the star-shaped tiled floor — this is an excellent spot to kickstart your Barcelona escapade.



Notorious for the high-traffic tourists, hawking waiters summoning you into overpriced restaurants, flower stalls, local artists and street performers, Las Ramblas is markedly the busiest pedestrian street in Barcelona. Watch your wallet though — pickpockets operate a slick operation in and across the city, but especially here.

As you hit the mid-point of Las Ramblas, trust your gut, sight, and smell as you're enticed into one of the oldest marketplaces in Europe, La Boqueria Market. Inside is a kaleidoscopic array of fruit stalls, butchers, seafood, and Catalan delicacies that will have your senses ablaze.



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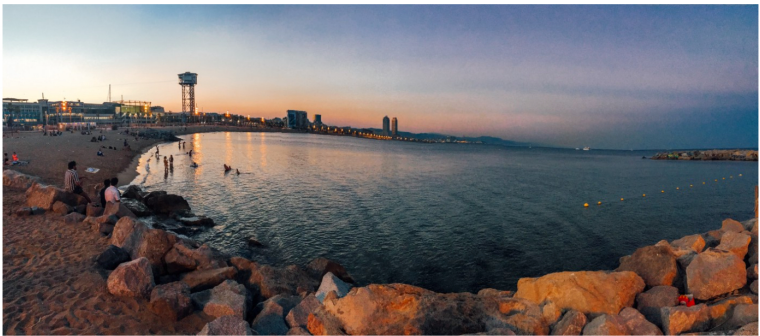
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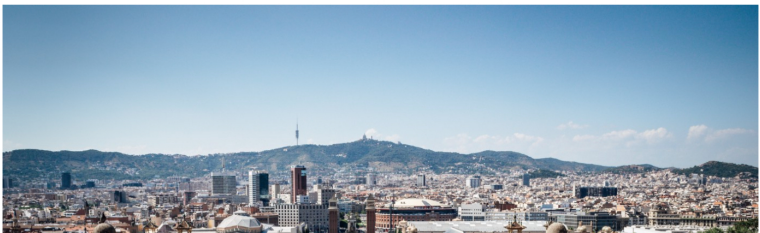
**Barceloneta**, meaning “Little Barcelona” in Catalan, is thought to have inspired Miguel de Cervantes as the setting for the fight between Don Quixote and the Knight of the White Moon. It was here that the knight errant was finally defeated and abandoned his quest. The promenade stretches nearly 5km and is one of the best places to grab a bite at one of Spain’s world-famous tapas bars or bronze up on factor BCN 50. Whether you opt to sit with your feet in the sand or at one of many terraces with a drink in hand, Barceloneta is a year-round pleasure haven. Go for a run, grab a drink at one of the many *chiringuitos*, like Buenas Migas (mentioned later in this article), workout with the body builders on beach apparatus or simply rejuvenate under the Spanish sun.









**Plaça d'Espanya, The Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya & Montjuïc**

You really are getting 3 for the price of 1 with this recommendation. Either park a rented e-scooter on any public road (there are no parking fees across the city) or get off at Plaça d'Espanya metro station and you'll be met with the sight of two towering Venetian columns and the spectacular silhouette of the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya.

As this is a time-sensitive trip, I don't recommend entering instead the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya but instead, walking up the Neo-Baroque complex which looks like it was taken straight out of a Disney movie with a theatrical staircase, lined on each side with perfectly manicured gardens and a waterfall down the middle. Once you finally reach the top of the stairs (there's also a series of escalators on the far side), you'll be urged to snap some epic shots of Barcelona's skyline, inclusive of a bullfighting ring turned shopping centre, lush mountain peaks and exploding fountain.









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Enjoy the leisurely stroll from the museum to the cable car or walk up the hill (25 minutes) to **Montjuïc**. Barcelona's one-of-a-kind geography spans the calm waters of the Mediterranean Sea, boundless coastline, and jagged peaks, creating stunning vantage points, one of which is Montjuïc Mountain. Complete with cactus garden, an elevated cliff edge overlooking the shimmering Mediterranean ocean, and impressive fortress, Montjuïc is an idyllic setting to absorb the city's history and beauty in one shot.



### El Born, Gothic Quarter & Portal de l'Àngel

Characterised by long straight streets, a strict grid pattern crossed by wide avenues, and octagonal city blocks, Barcelona's architecture and aesthetics are second to none. If you're the type of traveller that loves to lose yourself in cobbled streets, sip cappuccinos in medieval squares or shop in affordable style — this itinerary is the one for you.



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It's all to play for in El Born Identity — *trendy, atmospheric, medieval, creative*. I recommend perusing this much-loved local barrio, and you're guaranteed to experience all those boho feels and hipster vibes thanks to the great tapas bars, trendy bistros, intimate restaurants and swanky cocktail bars. Home to a thriving creative community, the neighbourhood has a laid-back, artistic feel to it and as far as the barrios go, **El Born** is one of the effortlessly cool kids. Keep an eye out for Born's best bits: **Basílica de Santa Maria del Mar** (14th-century gothic-inspired cathedral), **Palau de la Música** (a modernist music hall that offers sublime but pricey concerts), and the **Picasso Museum** (free on Thursday afternoons and the first Sunday of the month).



Under a 10-minute stroll away, you'll find the historic heart and oldest part of Barcelona.

Welcome to **Barri Gòtic**.

Steeped in history, soaked in charm and scattered with the sound of local singers and romancing couple photoshoots against the Romanesque-stoned walls, no trip to Barcelona would be complete without meandering through the twisted alleyways of the Gothic quarter. Here you'll find a plethora of feasts for the eyes like the gargoyle-speckled Cathedral, iconic **Bishop's Bridge**, and the quaint art market in **Placa del Pi**. As day turns to night, the vibrant **Plaza Reial** is a fine choice for alfresco dining or drinks.

After absorbing the iconic historic streets, head to **Portal de l'Àngel** to feed your fashionista spirit. Expect all the usual European high-street stores and unsurprisingly they operate on (late-ish) Spanish hours.

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Let's grab a drink or a bite to eat?

I honestly believe there are way too many incredible and delectable restaurants, bars and cafes dotted in almost every street of Barcelona for me to write you a list. Whatever your tastebuds desire, whatever your preferences, whatever cuisine you're looking for, I promise you'll find it in Barcelona. But if you're on a 24-hour clock, then these are my ultimate favourites:

**Enrique Tomás** — Quite simply, premium jamon serrano. There are a few of these stores dotted around Barcelona and provide great options for a typical on-the-go bocadillo. Alternatively, nibble on little pieces of serrano in popcorn-inspired pockets as you explore the city.


**Honest Greens** — Insanely healthy food, cool af, contemporary interior design, a great choice for the health-conscious traveller for lunch and/or dinner.

**König Barcelona, Born** –affordable, delectable, modest.


**Buenas Migas, Barceloneta** — The smoothies in this *chiringuito* (beach bar) are excellent.

**KOMO POKE Muntaner, Diagonal** — Fresh, healthy, natural and ridiculously good, these poke bowls are amazing. There are lots of great poke bowl places around Diagonal, so it doesn't have to be this specific one, but this is just my personal fav.




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Rendezvous at Golden Hour

As evening falls over, Barcelona is filled with a special kind of magic: the Catalan capital is one of the most photogenic cities on the planet, a statement that holds especially true when the sun begins to set and the sky is lit up with hues of purple, orange, and yellow. When it comes to that sweet summer spot around 6–8pm, Barcelona offers a myriad of miradors (viewpoints) to snap Insta-worthy sunset shots, so you can't go wrong wherever you are but these are my personal favourites.



Bunkers del Carmel

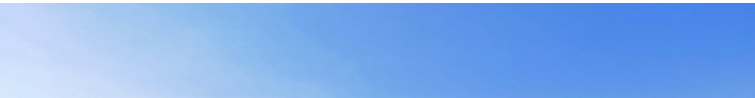
Located at the top of the hill “Turó de la Rovira”, at 262 meters above sea level, the old bunkers are now the perfect lookout over the city of Barcelona, with a jaw-dropping beautiful 360° panoramic view. Previously the site of a civil war aircraft battery, it's a hot, dusty climb up through a scrubby park to the Bunkers, but 100% worth it for a picnic with your lover or a few cervezas with your friends, and a killer sunset.

Tibidabo Mountain

Commanding the title of the highest summit in Barcelona, Tibidabo stands tall over the city at 512 meters. The elevation of this forest-covered peak naturally brings breathtaking aerial views of the city. Whether you choose to hike up to the top or take the cable car, atop Tibidabo awaits an old-fashioned amusement park, telecommunications tower, and looming basilica that's visible from almost everywhere in Barcelona. While this is a great spot (especially if traverse the snaking roads on a scooter) I think the Bunkers offers greater intimacy.

Park Güell

Iconic with its incredible tilework, whimsical gingerbread houses and soaring views of Barcelona, Park Güell is a mountainous marvel. Avoid the heavy crowds by climbing to the top of the hill and enjoy the beautiful evening light falling over Barcelona. Watching the sun bounce off the eclectic mix of Catalan architecture, ranging from gritty gothic cathedrals to the colourful creations of Gaudí himself is a sublime sunset setting.



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### Your 24-hour Barcelona

Barcelona is a city that you can let happen to you, just stroll around and watch as the city reveals its beauty to you piece, by piece. Or Barcelona can be a city that you make your own; strike up conversations with the locals, workout on the beach or dance in the streets, and make this city definitively yours.

But if your question is, should you ever bother spending 24 hours in Barcelona, the answer is a hard and fast *yes*. This city was my home for many years and will most likely return to be my future home city again. They say once you come to Barcelona, you'll return at least once again in life, and with that, I hope you savour every minute of your 24 hours in Barcelona. Take a look at my Bimble if you're interested in experiencing the city through the eyes and taste buds of a local.

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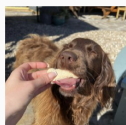
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