



36 HOURS

Barcelona

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 334

By Lisa Abend Photographs by Samuel Aranda Nov. 9, 2022

Lisa Abend has lived in Spain, and is the author of "The Sorcerer's Apprentices: A Season in the Kitchen of Ferran Adrià's elBulli."

In the 30 years since the Olympics turned Barcelona into a tourist magnet, the pull of the city's architecture and food culture has only grown stronger. So much so, that the Catalan capital has become a key battleground in Europe's fight against overtourism. Not all initiatives to lessen the crowds have triumphed: A moratorium on hotel construction survived only a couple of years. But in other areas, the balance has shifted in favor of locals: tighter restrictions regulate Airbnb rentals and the size of groups allowed to visit the Boqueria market. Bike lanes now crisscross the city, and the restored Sant Antoni market is again bustling with fishmongers and butchers. Most strikingly, Barcelona's "superblock" initiative has turned chunks of the city into car-free, pedestrian playgrounds.

Recommendations

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Museums and design	+
Restaurants and nightlife	+
Shopping	+
Where to stay	-

- **Casa Sagnier** is a 51-room luxury hotel in a building designed by the Catalan architect Enric Sagnier. The rooms combine Catalan and Nordic design, and many overlook the Rambla de Catalunya (doubles start at 200 euros, or about \$201).
- **Hotel Chic & Basic Born** has all-white airy rooms with inventive lighting housed in an old palace. The location — across from the Ciutadella park on a lively corner of the Born — can't be beat (doubles start at around 100 euros).
- **Hotel One Shot Aragó 257** is the first Barcelona location for a Spanish chain that specializes in comfortable, well-designed rooms that feel posher than their prices. Its location near the Passeig de Gràcia is excellent (doubles start at 75 euros).
- Try the lively Gràcia neighborhood for **short-term rentals**, which is removed enough from the tourist center but still convenient. To check that an apartment is legally registered, go to the Barcelona City Council's website.