Life in Barcelona

Barcelona is the capital of Catalonia and has more than 1.5 million inhabitants. Catalonia is an Autonomous Community of Spain located in the north east of the Iberian Peninsula that is considered to be a "historical nation". Barcelona is a modern, cosmopolitan and very dynamic city. Its metropolitan area is the sixth largest in the European Union in terms of population, with more than five million inhabitants. It is a comfortable city, made to measure by people for people.

Life takes place against a backdrop of architectural gems ranging from gothic to art nouveau and from Gaudi’s masterpieces to daring and original urbanism.

Sports enthusiasts can practise all kinds of outdoor (and indoor) activities throughout the year thanks to the pleasant climate. For spectators, the city is home to Barcelona Football Club – the world's most successful soccer team in recent years – and is the location of Spain's premier Formula 1 motor racing circuit. It also boasts a number of world-class golf clubs and, as a result of hosting the 1992 Olympic Games, wide-ranging athletics facilities.

Students, researchers and business people worldwide are lured by Barcelona's numerous attractions, warm weather and unbeatable location by the sea. The short distances and the excellent transport network make outings a luxury within the reach of all its citizens. Barcelona's history as a port has bequeathed it an open, welcoming culture, reflected in the fact that nearly 20% of its inhabitants are foreigners.

Accommodation

The BSC-CNS cooperates with the Barcelona University Center - RESA to help recent arrivals to find
accommodation. This is a highly recommended service as it has a great deal of experience in locating rooms, apartments and flats for visitors.

**BCU (RESA)**  
Torrent de l’Olla, 219  
08012 - Barcelona  
[www.resahousing.com](http://www.resahousing.com) / [www.bcu.cat](http://www.bcu.cat)

Another option is student residences. They offer economical accommodation for short and longer stays. The nearest student residence is:

**Residencia Torre Girona**  
Passeig dels Til·lers, 19  
08034 Barcelona  
Tel.: 0034 93 390 43 00  
Fax: 0034 93 205 69 10  
E-mail: torregirona[at]resa[dot]es  
[www.resa.es/Residencias/Torre-Girona](http://www.resa.es/Residencias/Torre-Girona)

## Residence permits and other registration processes

One of the most important points to bear in mind when living and working in Barcelona is to obtain entry permits (visa) and residence and/or work permits both for yourself and for the family members who are with you.

The type of permit to apply for depends on a variety of factors including nationality, length of stay and type of activity.

### Summary of Paperwork Needed

**Before moving to Barcelona:**

- Check if you need a temporary residence permit, visa or work/residence permit.  
- If you need a visa, you must obtain a document inviting you and stating the reason for your visit.  
- Prepare your personal documentation for entering Spain: medical certificates, translations of your degree certificates, etc.  
- Find accommodation.  
- If you are going to drive in Barcelona, check that your driving licence is valid.

**When you arrive in Barcelona:**

- Apply for a foreigner’s identity number (Spanish initials: NIE).  
- Apply for a Social Security registration number.  
- Open a bank account.  
- Apply for a health card ([CATSALUT](http://catsalut.ca)).  
- Obtain a European Health Card if you are going to travel to the European Union.  
- Sign up with a communications company for telephone and Internet services.
If appropriate, submit your income tax returns (Spanish initials, IRPF or IRNR).

For more information please see the Barcelona Activa's Guide of Barcelona slideshow.