



# An Expat's Guide

Moving to Barcelona for tech



# Pleased to meet you!

We're Orange Quarter, leaders in Tech and Product recruitment. We (and our candidates) hail from all corners of the world and chose to settle in mainland Europe, with our other headquarters based in Amsterdam and Berlin. Over the years, we've learnt a few things about packing our lives up and moving to a new country. We've made mistakes, discovered useful tips, found work and began building our new communities. So if you're considering a job opportunity in Barcelona or you've been planning a move to the city for a while, you've come to the right place.

Our comprehensive guide is split up into three sections – Working, The Practicalities and Community & Lifestyle. We cover all the important things, from choosing the right recruiter to setting up your bank accounts and finding the best bar for your favourite tippie. Scroll through or download the digital pdf to read later but beware, this guide has convincing powers; you may find yourself booking that plane ticket and moving to Barcelona pronto.

## 6 reasons we love living and working in Barcelona

### Booming Startup environment

It's South Europe's most dynamic startup Ecosystem

### It's one of Europe's sunniest cities

Boasting with 9 different Mediterranean beaches

### It's reasonably priced

And locals enjoy a high standard of living

### Lively food and music scene

Did someone say tapas?

### Catalan Football

Barcelona has the biggest football stadium in Europe

### Benefits for highly skilled workers

A fixed tax rate of 24%

# Working

Before choosing to move to Barcelona, you'll want to know what it means for your career. Barcelona has attracted a lot of attention for a number of not-so-humble reasons, and they all mean great things for people working across tech, marketing and design.

Thanks to the spirit of innovation that has characterised the city long before technology came into the picture, Barcelona has become the place where things happen. You can breathe in the city's startup culture at the nearly daily Meetups, or in one of the city's more than 60 coworking spaces. This is set to grow even more as Tech giants transition their HQs to the city in the wake of Brexit.

Below we go into detail about setting yourself up for success during your pre-arrival job hunt and explore the reasons our candidates love living and working in Barcelona.

If you have already found a job and want to start planning your move – skip to '[The Practicalities](#)' section of this guide.

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## Finding Work

The tech scene is thriving in Barcelona — which is excellent news when it comes to job searching. Although it's much more than a recruitment platform, LinkedIn is a great place to start your job search because millions of companies use it — and recruiters regularly use the platform to connect with candidates.

So if you've only historically used LinkedIn and a digital CV, it's time to dust off its features and put it to work.

Remember, it's always a good idea to land a job before making the move to Spain. If your job role isn't sought after, i.e. on the Spanish occupation shortage list, which is updated quarterly, it can be a little more difficult getting a job in the first place — but not impossible.

To appeal to recruiters, though, you'll want to tidy up a few bits on your end.

### Setting yourself up for success

- Update your LinkedIn profile and resume — optimise it to help recruiters find you for the jobs you're interested in.
- Update your headline — it's prime real estate, and don't forget to use job-related keywords throughout your profile, especially for LinkedIn's 'interests' section of your profile. E.g. AWS, GCP, Frontend developer, javascript, angular, react etc.
- In 2022, 50.7% of the working population had a LinkedIn account. So what? This means there are all kinds of people you could be connecting with at companies you want to work at in Barcelona or who have similar job roles to you. Make time and build those connections and grow your professional network.
- Let recruiters know that you're open to work. You can change your LinkedIn profile to include a small green banner that wraps around your profile picture that says "open to work". To do this, select your profile picture and add a frame.
- Utilise the 'job alert' feature in your profile settings. You can set alerts based on job-related keywords. And regularly check the job listings filtering by 'Barcelona' so you don't miss any fantastic opportunities. We've just done a quick search for software developer job opportunities in Barcelona and it threw over 600 jobs up. This is definitely a feature you need to make use of.
- Find a specialist recruiter based in Barcelona. Choose a recruiter that speaks your language and has a solid understanding of the area of work you are in. Working with a recruiter based in Barcelona, will guarantee they have a strong understanding of the companies that would be interested in your skills and that they would be able to offer you advice on all details relating to Visa's, Tax and relocation.

## Choosing the right recruiter

You want a recruiter who's going to be straightforward, direct and honest with you. This person is going to be the one pitching you to different companies, so they need a thorough understanding of your skillset and your expectations. How do you find this person, though? By taking your time to find the perfect fit.

Look for recruiters who work with tech-focused companies and have experience recruiting for jobs similar to your role — you want an industry specialist.

Ask for recruiter recommendations from LinkedIn and community connections. Make sure you collect a selection of potentials before deciding on one recruiter. Relocating to another city (and perhaps a completely new country) means you need a recruiter you can trust and communicate openly with.

When you've found a few you're happy to talk to, ask them lots of questions. They'll want to ask you a ton of questions, but it's a two-way street. You need to be happy working alongside them, too.

Swing by the recommendations and reviews. Good reviews speak for themselves. If they've delivered a consistently exceptional job placement service in your industry, it's a pretty good indication that they can help you, too.

See what our candidates say about us on [Google Reviews](#)

Or better yet, [contact us!](#)

## Barcelona Salaries

Just like many countries, in Spain, salary is largely determined by skills and experience in the industry you're applying for. According to PayScale, as a software engineer, you can expect a base salary of up to €55,000 for a medior role.

Remember, these figures are just here to serve as a loose guide. As we're all aware, there will be companies willing to shell out for the best of the best... as well as those paying under industry averages.

When first meeting with your recruiter, they will gauge your salary expectations and during offer stages will negotiate on your behalf to achieve the best financial outcome.

## Permits needed

If you're an EU/EEA citizen or Swiss National...

You don't need a visa to live and work in Spain if you're an EU citizen due to freedom of movement — member States of the European Union have the right to move freely within the European Union. As an EU or EEA member or a Swiss national, you can live and work in any other EU country for up to three months without even notifying governmental bodies, but you will need a valid passport.

Presumably, you're planning on staying more than four months, in which case, you need to register with the local municipality within five days of arriving at your destination. You'll also need to apply for a Foreigner's Identity Number (NIE).

### **If you're coming from outside the EU...**

Let's say you're not an EU citizen; maybe you're from the UK. In this case, you'll need to secure a job before you move over to Spain. You'll most likely need this job offer before you can move forward with your visa application.

To live and work in Spain, you will need to apply for a resident permit and get yourself a Foreigner's Identity Number (NIE). You need an NIE number to do any legal activities, i.e. opening a bank account, buying/renting property etc.

It's a good idea to contact your country's embassy in Spain to check what you need to do.

### **A highly qualified work permit and EU Blue Card**

Suppose you're able to get a job that's a qualified or technical position or a position as a manager, and you meet their minimum salary requirements. In that case, you could qualify for a highly qualified work permit for non-EU citizens.

Another thing you might have heard of is an EU Blue Card. This is different from a highly qualified work permit. It's the European equivalent of a US Green Card. It helps you pave your way to permanent residency, but not everyone qualifies.

The official EU Blue Card site states to qualify, you need to be:

- Non-EU citizenship
- Educated or professionally experienced
- An employment contract or binding employment offer

### **Spousal & family visas**

If you're an EU or EEA citizen or a Swiss national, you can hop over and join your family member in Spain without a visa. However, you still will be required to register yourself as a foreigner with the local municipality within five days of arriving, and you also need to obtain a Foreigner's Identity Number (NIE).

If you're not an EU, EEA citizen or Swiss National, but your partner is, you can join them in Spain (you may still need a Spanish visa) and apply for an EU family member residence card.

## To apply for a Spanish Working visa, you'll need:

- A valid passport from another country
- Clean Criminal Record Checks issued within the last three months of the countries you have lived in over the last three years. Criminal record checks that get done outside the EU require an apostille stamp to verify document legitimacy.
- Two recent passport photos
- A copy of your job contract or invitation letter from your new employer
- Updated professional CV which will be translated to Spanish
- Updated and Apostilled Unabridged Marriage certificate issued within a six month period if married.
- University degrees and qualifications which will be required to be translated into Spanish

### Annual leave and siestas

One thing you're probably wondering is how many days off a year can I expect? Annual leave days vary from employer to employer, but the minimum number of employee holidays is 22 business days (or 30 calendar days). You can take it altogether or broken up.

Spain is known for its daily siesta, but not all companies participate. If you're working for a local Spanish company, you might have to take time away from the office for 2-3 hours in the middle of the day. This can be a welcome break in your workday, or you might feel it unnecessarily lengthens your workday. This is something you can ask your employer about.



# Practicalities

Moving to a new location is a big deal, and it's not a decision you've taken lightly. But once you've made that decision (congratulations, by the way!) it's time to start thinking about getting yourself, and your life moved over. You want to make this transition as smooth as possible, so keep reading to learn more.



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## Language

If you weren't already aware, Barcelona has two official languages — Catalan and Spanish. Although many of the Barcelonian speak English and French, it's good practice to start learning basic Spanish or Catalan phrasing. You want to show that you're trying hard to integrate and respect their language and their culture. There will also be some forms to fill out when you land, so you'll be helping yourself massively.

## Weather

Spain, in general, is known for its sunny weather, and the weather in Barcelona, specifically, is no different. On average, the city sees only 55 days of rain each year. And considering there are 365 days in a year, 15% rain isn't too shabby. So with hot summers, relatively mild winters and a gorgeous Mediterranean outlook, it isn't surprising that 12 million people visited Barcelona in 2019.

You can keep on top of the weather in Barcelona with the local's favourite weather app [meteo.cat](#).

## Moving

Moving can be the most stressful part of any relocation, but you can reduce this stress immensely with a little research and a bit of planning. So, what are your options?

## International removals company

You can hire these companies to do everything for you, which can be cost-effective if you're moving large items such as beds and sofas. It gets pretty expensive, though, if you're only shipping small items.

## Shipping container or air freight

Using containers to send removal goods is a popular option when relocating. You can send your items via air but, as you can imagine, it's cheaper if you opt for sea freight, because a cargo ship can take more items than a plane.

According to MoveHub, for a one-bedroom flat shipping from the UK to Spain, you can expect to pay between £2,668 – £2,948 for air shipment and between £1,400 – £1,548 using a shipping container. Although it's just a guide, you can see the difference in pricing.

Something to be aware of: some removal companies might need you to organise transportation to and from ports. So this is a question you're going to want to ask them.

## Drive your items yourself

Spain is a big country, and unless you're relocating from Portugal, you're probably going to have to drive through France (also huge). So you'd have to saddle up for a pretty long road trip. But if you're only moving a small number of items, it could certainly be worth it. It's easier to throw all your stuff in your car and drive.

Don't forget. To ship your items to Spain, you'll need a complete inventory of all the goods in **Spanish**.

### **The final option is just to buy items when you're there**

Sounds expensive, but it doesn't have to cost the earth. You can use second-hand selling apps like Facebook Marketplace or Vibbo and save costs on exporting all your large goods.

### **Finding a rental**

Barcelona has a much lower cost of living when compared to other cities. For example, the average rent price for a one-bedroom apartment in Barcelona is €1200, whereas in London, for the same kind of apartment, you can expect to pay €1,995. On average, rent prices in Barcelona are 56.59% lower than in London.

You can keep prices down by renting a room in a shared house or apartment. Which might mean you can afford to live in a nicer area in Barcelona.

When apartment hunting, one thing to consider is that the minimum term for a lease agreement is **usually 12 months** long, so make sure you factor that into your search.

You need to pick an area you'd be happy to live in for at least a year, so do your research.

Tips when searching for a place to live:

- Choose a neighbourhood based on the lifestyle you want to live
- Start your search early; you don't want to rush this decision
- Don't do it alone; get friends or family involved
- Enjoy the process

### **Some property rental and buying sites to check out:**

- [Fotocasa](#) — search for Barcelona in general and click on the dots on the map to view pop-up property details.
- [Idealista](#) — search by area easily with this app. Click on the area you want to explore further e.g. Les Corts, the map will then zoom in further for you to select properties to view per road, or you can just view all properties available in the Les Corts area.
- [Pisos.com](#) — easy to navigate, simply click through to narrow down areas you want to explore.

## Where to live in the city?

Some popular areas to consider when house hunting include Les Corts, Nou Barris, Poble Nou and El Clot. Read a bit about each below.



### **a. Gràcia**

Elegant Gràcia is known for its 19th-century boulevards and pedestrian lanes lined with indie boutiques, galleries, and arthouse cinemas. Cool Catalan bistros and wine bars surround the landmark clock tower at Plaça de la Vila de Gràcia

### **b. El Poble Nou**

If you're a fan of the beach, Poble Nou could be the area for you. Apparently popular with millennials for its lower rent prices and its hipster vibe. Grab a coffee or a craft beer on pretty much every corner.

### **c. Born**

Despite humble beginnings as a settlement built on top of a medieval area, El Born has grown into being one of the most fashionable places in the city. The popular 'Passeig del Born' was once the center of life in the neighborhood, home to market traders as well as street entertainers and day workers.

### **d. Sarrià**

With its narrow streets and summer houses, Sarrià still retains its small-town air full of squares, hidden corners and shops. It is one of the neighbourhoods with the most green spaces in the city, full of Modernista buildings.

#### **e. El Raval**

Vibrant area with Bohemian bars, hip design shops and street art fill the surrounding streets.

#### **f. La Barceloneta**

Locals head to this seaside neighborhood to surf and sunbathe on Sant Sebastià Beach, and to dine out at al fresco seafood restaurants and traditional tapas bars. Posh yachts fill glitzy marinas like the Port Olímpic complex, which is connected to the beach by a long, palm-lined promenade. Definitely worth the pretty pennies you'd be spending.

#### **g. La Vila Olímpica**

A port-side leisure area on the site of the 1992 Olympic village, with upscale seafood restaurants and casual snack bars on Nova Icària Beach.

#### **h. Gothic Quarter**

This charming neighbourhood has narrow medieval streets filled with trendy bars, clubs and Catalan restaurants. The Museu d'Història de Barcelona shows remains of the Roman city. It doesn't get more Catalan than this!

#### **i. Eixample**

The Eixample District is one of the most comfortable areas to stay in Barcelona. Mainly because there's always a restaurant, shop, supermarket or bar at walking distance. L'Eixample is well known for its iconic square Plaça de Catalunya, while vendors sell their antiques under a mirrored roof at Mercat Els Encants flea market.

#### **j. El Poble-Sec**

A compact district with shady squares and elegant 19th-century architecture. Carrer de Blai is known for its creative tapas bars and lively drinking dens.

#### **k. Diagonal Mar**

Seaside district is home to popular beach Platja Llevant, marked by kitesurfing spots and upscale, open-air gastrobars.

#### **l. Nou Barris**

Situated in the north of the city, Nou Barris is a cheaper place to stay in Barcelona. If you live here you're roughly a 25-minute train journey into central Barcelona. But because you're living further out, you're very close to the stunning Serra de Collserola Natural Park.

#### **m. Les Corts**

Known as one of the safer areas of Barcelona, Les Corts is predominantly a business and residential district. Although it does still have a small selection of restaurants on your doorstep for you to choose from, there are also a few supermarkets in this area, too.

#### **n. El Clot**

If you're looking for a more traditionally Spanish area to live in, you could consider El Clot. This district is peaceful, less touristy than other areas (even though it's only a stone's throw away from La Sagrada Família). It's a relatively small neighbourhood and is home to many small local businesses.



## Buying property

If you'd rather get stuck straight in and buy instead of rent, you can expect to pay around €4,791 per square metre for a city centre apartment and approximately €2,978 per square metre for an apartment outside the city centre. And be prepared to pay higher commission rates to estate agents in Spain, with agents charging 5% on average.

Buying can be a great investment, but if you're only just making the move to Barcelona, it might be wise to rent a place first; who knows — the Barcelonian lifestyle might not be for you.

Note: COVID has injected uncertainty into the Spanish property market, so you might be best holding off and renting first.

But, if you do want to buy, here are some property sites to check out:

- [ThinkSPAIN](#)
- [Vivados](#)
- [Idealista](#)

## Getting around

Like any city, it's pretty easy to find your way around Barcelona with the help of the metro (train), tram and bus. All public transport runs late into the evening. If you're familiar with the Uber taxi service, you're in luck — it recently just returned to Barcelona after a two-year absence. Local taxi drivers also make use of the Uber app, so when a yellow and black Catalan taxi arrives, rest assured, it's your Uber. Most taxi drivers have a card reader, so getting in the nearest taxi and paying with your card is also a possibility. Another more commonly used travel app in Barcelona is Cabify. It is a great addition to Cabify is Cabify kids. This is a great addition for families travelling around the city. Your ride will turn up with a child/baby seat on board.

In Barcelona, there is also a public bicycle scheme. You can choose from any of their 6000 mechanical bikes and 300 electronic bikes to get around the city. The scheme is called Bicing and has over 400 stations across the city. Simply sign up and download the smou app to get started.

## **Healthcare**

Healthcare is free in Spain as they have a national health service. All doctors and hospital appointments are free for registered Spanish residents. Please be aware you'll still have to pay for medicine and prescriptions. To be eligible for healthcare system registration, you must either be employed in Spain, be paying into the public health insurance scheme or have lived in Spain for more than five years.

To register for access to Spain's public healthcare system, you must first register with Spanish social security to obtain a social security number. You only have to register once, and your Spanish employer usually completes this. But be sure to check with them to confirm.

If you're in Spain and you need emergency care, you can call 112 from any telephone to access fire, police or ambulance services.

## **Bank account**

If you already have an account with a high street bank in another country, you need to open a brand new account in Spain. You'll be pleased to know you can open a bank account in Spain before you actually move there.

To do this, you'll need to obtain an NIE certificate by filling in the EX-15.

Once you've got your certificate, you can take it to the bank to open a new bank account. Take it along with:

- your passport
- your NIE number
- your address where they can send your paperwork

Getting connected — setting up your phone, internet & utilities

Getting your new place organised can be overwhelming — there seems to be so much to do; where can you start?

## **Mobile phone**

You'll be relieved to hear; it's straightforward when it comes to setting up your mobile phone — in fact, depending on where you're coming from, you might even be able to use your current mobile immediately.

In Spain, and like many other European countries (like the UK), they use the GSM mobile network — so they have reliable 4G connectivity, with 5G availability increasing across the country. Thanks to an EU agreement, if you're arriving from another EU country, you can enjoy free roaming when in Spain. This no longer applies to the UK.

But, if you're planning on staying in Spain for a while, you might want to consider purchasing a Spanish SIM card. Likewise, if you're from some parts of America, Canada or Japan, they make use of a different network called CDMA, and your phone won't work in Spain.

Some popular Spanish mobile providers to check out:

- Vodafone
- Orange
- Movistar
- MásMóvil

Note: It's worth checking to see whether your new employer provides you with a mobile phone to save you having to buy your own SIM.

## Internet & TV

If you're buying a property in Spain, setting up the TV and internet will be down to you to organise. If the property you're living in already has a phone line, and it works, all you need to do is find a provider. If your property doesn't have a working phone line, you'll need to contact the landline network Movistar. This is something you might want to prioritise if it's important to you, as setting up a new line can take weeks.

If you're renting, you'll be pleased to know that it's easier for you to get connected because your place might already include Internet and TV bills all rolled into your rent; just ask your landlord.

If you need to sign up with a new internet and phone provider, you'll most probably need this information:

- 1.Passport
- 2.Proof of address
- 3.Your NIE number
- 4.Bank account details (to set up payments)
- 5.Your mobile number

Just like with many countries, you can access Spanish TV through their digital terrestrial platform. But, many residents purchase additional TV packages such as Netflix, Disney+ and Amazon Prime, to name a few.

## Utilities

You can choose your gas and electricity provider, but you can't select your water provider. Everyone has the same water provider in the local area. But when it comes to choosing your gas and electricity, you've got a bit more control (depending on how many providers there are to choose from). So make sure you compare rates before settling.

Most properties will already have access to the electricity network, but if your property doesn't, you need to get in touch with the network provider to set it up. If you know the property you're buying doesn't have access, you need to quickly get in touch with the provider, as it can take a while to set up.

If you're renting a property, again, it's a little easier. You might already be paying for gas and electricity through your landlord, which makes relocation even easier. Check with your landlord. If it's not included, you can either decide to stay with the current provider for ease or switch for a better price.

# Community & Lifestyle

Where you'll live, what energy company you sign up with and how to set up your mobile phone is all important stuff when relocating. But what about the social aspect? If you're anxious about fitting into a new city, meeting like-minded people and generally loving life out in Barcelona, don't worry. We're sharing some of the most interesting meetups and events you can get involved in.



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drink and dine](#) →





### Meetup's, groups and clubs

When arriving in a new city (let alone a new country), it's important to find your bearings and what better way to do that than to immerse yourself in local meetups and groups.

- [Meetup.com](#) — searching specifically for 'Barcelona' brings up a variety of groups you can become a member of. Groups include Barcelona Activities (they host a weekly drinking meetup) and the Barcelona — Tech & UX Design community (who are currently hosting online events).
- Facebook Groups — You can find a group for pretty much anything on Facebook. And the Facebook Events are worth checking out, too.

Barcelona sports clubs — joining a team sport can help you build new friendships.

### Barcelona tech events

Barcelona is a great place to find some interesting tech events. There are plenty to choose from, here are a few places you can find some.

- [Eventbrite](#) — includes both free and paid-for events exploring a wide range of topics from women entrepreneurship to Live code hacking events. There's something for everyone.
- [Meetup.com](#) — this site has a ton of cool events you can attend in-person or online. From tech startups networking parties to talks about strategy in tech.
- [10times.com](#) — a great site to keep up-to-date with tech conferences and forums.

# Bar, Restaurants and cafes to check out

## Restaurants

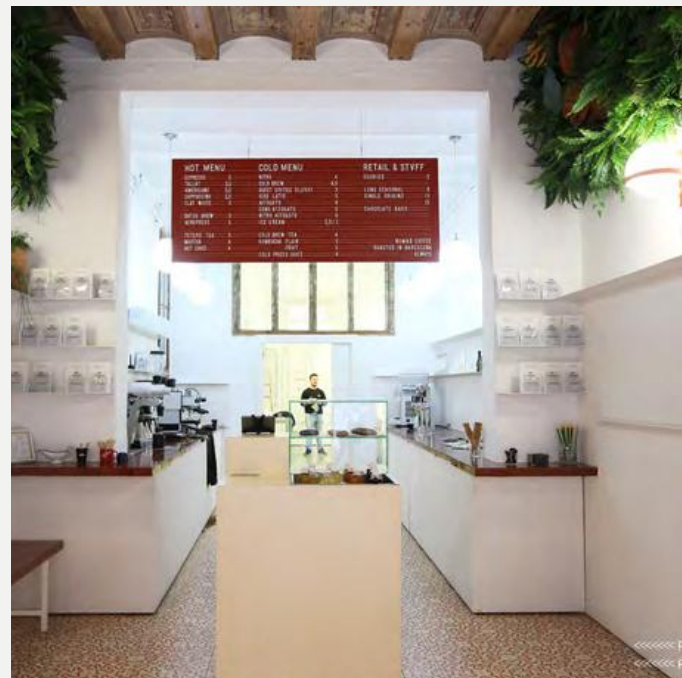
- Pez Vela
- Fismuler
- Sensi Tapas
- Sopa Boba
- Cañete
- Can Fisher
- Feroz
- Mr Robinson
- Etapes
- The Rooftop at Sir Victor

## Bars

- Carabella
- Passeig del Born
- Plaça del Sol
- Número Nueve
- Porteño

## Cafes

- Satan's Coffee Corner
- Nomad Roasters' Home
- Cafés El Magnífico



# Your Relocation Checklist

## Before you leave

- Book an appointment to apply for your NIE with the Spanish consulate in your country or in Spain when you get there.
- Apply for your work and residence permit
- Find a rental property to move into when you arrive
- Locate gas and electricity utilities in your property (some can take a while to set up)
- Check with your employer if they provide you with a mobile phone
- Get all your documentation ready, passport, passport photos, employer contract, visa documentation
- Get your goods shipped to Barcelona

## On arrival

- Inform the local municipality you've arrived in Barcelona
- Buy a Spanish SIM card (if necessary)
- Sign up for a public transport travel card like the T-usual (you can use this on the tram, bus and metro)

## Get social

- Join local Facebook groups and Whatsapp groups to help you find friends and settle in
- Sign up for a language course (either online using platforms like Duolingo or Babbel or find a local class)
- Get familiar with the Barcelona Yellow guide to stay on top of local events so you can immerse yourself in the culture
- Book a sightseeing bus tour with Barcelona Bus Turistic or Barcelona City Tour. This is a great way to get your bearings while been driven around the city.
- Use Airbnb to find exciting experiences to help you discover more about this beautiful city. You can book tapas tours and rooftop tango lessons to kayaking and snorkelling in La Costa Brava.