

NEGOTIATING IDENTITIES

EXPRESSION AND REPRESENTATION IN THE
CHRISTIAN - JEWISH - MUSLIM MEDITERRANEAN

HOME PROGRAM FACULTY & ORGANIZERS PARTICIPANTS FACILITIES FAQ



23 things to know before you go to Barcelona!

Language

The two official languages in Barcelona are Spanish (Castilian) and Catalan; most people speak both. Travelers' tales of Catalans reacting aggressively to foreigners who speak Spanish are with few exceptions "urban myth." Previously French was the foreign language of choice, but this is no longer the case. English is more common than before, but in many circumstances you will encounter people who do not speak any English. Although the language of instruction of the Institute is English, you will find yourself in many situations (outside of program time, at libraries and archives) where you may need interact with people who speak no English. You should be prepared for such contingencies, and although we can assist in special circumstances, it will be participants' responsibility to manage their communication needs on a daily basis.

Travel and Arrival

A number of airlines serve Barcelona, but there are few direct routes from North America. To compare prices and routes, try an online consolidator such as [Orbitz](#), but check with the airline itself before buying to see if they offer a better price. Flying from North America you will arrive at the Barcelona airport; coming from Europe on a discount airline you may arrive at [Girona](#). The most convenient way to get from the Barcelona airport to the Residencia is by taxi (approximately €35), there are also local bus and train services to the city center. From Girona, take the airport bus (1 hr; approx. €10) to Barcelona's *Estació del Nord* and take a taxi from there (approx.: €6-8).

Moving around Barcelona

The official map of Barcelona is [online](#); you can find information about public transport [here](#). The residences, Institute and most libraries and archives are within easy walking distance of each other.

Communication

The residences have full internet access in each room. To call the US from Barcelona dial 001 before the area code (dial 01134 from the US to Spain). Convenience stores and telephone kiosks sell pre-paid phone cards; this is the most economical way to call (typically €0.03/min). Your US cell phone may not work in Barcelona and/or you may have to pay expensive roving fees. We encourage participants to consider a pre-paid mobile phone, which can be purchased from a number of [local providers](#) for as little as €20 (plus call time). You will not want to call the US on a Spanish cell phone, but it will be very handy in case of emergency and for meeting up with fellow participants. If you will be making overseas calls, we suggest using a service such as [Skype](#), or a call-back service, such as [Jajah](#), both of which charge \$0.05 or less per minute for calls to landlines in the US.

Safety, Lost/Stolen Items

As with most European cities, Barcelona is far safer than the great majority of US cities; there is almost no violent crime. It is, however, a major tourist destination and minor property crimes (purse-snatching and pick-pocketing) are not uncommon. Good sense should be exercised and simple precautions taken. For example, women should wear bags and purses across the shoulder, and handbags and knapsacks should not be left on chairs or on the ground beside you if you are sitting at an outdoor bar or café. It is recommended that you check that your laptop, camera and other personal items are covered by your home or travel insurance. You should also keep regular backups of your digital data, which is likely to be unrecoverable in the event of an equipment theft. If you suffer a loss, obtain a police report immediately from the Policia Nacional (c/ Nou de la Rambla, 76-78) in order to be able to obtain reimbursement from your insurance company.

Banking and Money

It is generally not necessary to use travelers checks in Barcelona. Check with your bank to make sure your debit card will function in Spain, and advise your credit card company that you will be abroad, but beware extra service charges which you may be subject to. For current exchange rates, check [here](#).

Medical Insurance

Check with your insurance company to verify your coverage. You may need extra coverage, or to obtain travel insurance from a third-party provider (such as [Travelers](#)).

Packing for your Trip

The [summer](#) in Barcelona is very warm and tends to be humid; the Mediterranean will be warm enough to swim in, and the beach is well-cared for and safe. Spaniards dress more formally than Americans, particularly in academic and business settings; you should pack an outfit suitable for our opening and closing receptions (e.g.: jacket and tie for men). Be sure to double-check carry-on and checked baggage limits with your carrier -- this year many carriers have reduced the number of allowable bags (from 2 to 1) and the maximum weight (to 50lbs). Carry on rules may vary by carrier and by airport.

The Spanish Day

The Barcelona schedule may take some adjusting to. Breakfast is usually light: coffee and a pastry. Normal business hours begin at 9 or 10am, with a snack break taken at 11am or noon. Lunch, the main meal, is typically taken 2-4pm. There is no custom of a *siesta*. Work hours resume at 4 or 5pm and run until between 7 and 9pm (depending on the type of establishment). A light dinner is eaten at 9 or 10pm. People go for drinks from 11pm-3am. Many restaurants now open earlier for lunch and dinner, catering to a public made up overwhelmingly of tourists. Many restaurants close on Mondays, and stores and businesses often keep shorter hours on Saturdays. Banks may only be open in the morning (until 2pm). Few businesses open on Sunday, apart from tourist-oriented stores and corner shops.

Extracurricular

Barcelona is the funnest city in Europe (if not the world). There is a proliferation of bars, restaurants, clubs and stores of every kind. It has one-of-a-kind monuments and museums, and a continuous series of festivals. The *Grec* cultural festival brings world-class dance, theatre and music to the city throughout the month of July -- tickets should be bought in advance. Many cinemas feature original language (VO) films. Get to know the city ahead of time by consulting the [official tourism site](#) and buying a good guidebook; Brian Catlos recommends either the [Rough Guides](#) series or his own [Art/Shop/Eat Barcelona](#). Once in Barcelona, complete entertainment listings and a restaurant guide can be found in the [Guia del Ocio](#) (published Thursdays, €1.25); it has a section of highlights in English.

Important: Generally, US citizens who wish to stay in Spain for tourist or business purposes for up to 90 days do not need a visa. They should travel with a round trip air ticket and a passport valid for a minimum of six months. To confirm this, and for visa information for foreign visitors to Spain, [click here](#).

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