The 38 Essential Barcelona Restaurants

Tapas, Catalan cuisine, and of course, the Adriàs

by Sam Zucker | Jul 24, 2017, 12:31pm EDT

From Barcelona’s towering churches and bustling avenues to the sun-drenched beaches and idyllic plazas, it’s obvious why this city captures visitors’ hearts and refuses to let go. As befitting the city’s Mediterranean lifestyle, you can eat incredibly well here, and often for not very much money. However,
It’s hard to imagine a more disappointing meal if you settle for any old paella-slinging bar along Les Rambles or La Barceloneta.

This map aims to steer visitors towards sure-fire success in the overwhelming world of Barcelona dining. Obvious essentials like pintxos and paella are included (both great but neither authentically Catalan), and be sure to seek out local gems like stinky cheeses, pickled anchovies, artisan vermouth, grilled squid, blood sausages, craft beers, and giant goblets of gin and tonic, followed by 3 a.m. churros and chocolate to soak up the booze.

This list of 38 essential food experiences is just the tip of the iceberg, though it offers a great variety of food (and prices) you can’t find at home.

**July 2017 Update**

As always, some places must leave the list to make room for others. Here are a few of the highlights:

- The Galician classic O Meu Lar has been swapped with Basque beef haven Ipar-Txoko.
- The craft beer trend shows no signs of slowing down in Barcelona, with new bars opening up all the time that specialize in local artisan brews. In order to mix things up and feature something different, long-time favorite La Cerveteca has been replaced by the younger Ølgod.
- As Barcelona diverges from the “Gintonic” craze and further embraces craft cocktails, the intimate gin and mojito den of Rubi, still a great place for an affordable cocktail and lively atmosphere, has been replaced by the popular
and award-winning Paradiso speakeasy.

- Xiringuito Escribà will never cease to be one of the best seaside seafood and paella restaurants in Barcelona, but it’s time to spotlight Martínez, another top-notch option that’s more relaxed and apart from the busy beach area.

- The Fàbrica Moritz brewery and restaurant is a Barcelona institution, but this year it makes way for ramen and dumpling bar Fan-Shoronpo.

Dropped:
O Meu Lar
La Confiteria
Els Pescadors
Can Culleretes
La Cerveteca
Can Paixano
Rubi
Can Ravell
Bar Mut
Llar de Foc
Xiringuito Escribà
Fàbrica Moritz

Prices per person, excluding alcohol

$ - Less than €15 (less than USD 16)
$$_{2}$$ - €16 - €39 (USD 18 to USD 44)
$$_{3}$$ - €40 - €66 (USD 45 to USD 73)
$$_{4}$$ - More than €66 (more than USD 74)
1 El Canalla

The sear and smoke of the wood and coconut shell-fueled Josper oven at El Canalla — an intimate yet informal staple of the Sarrià neighborhood — infuses the Catalan and Northern Spanish dishes with heaps of flavor. The Josper, which is a bit like a broiler married to a barbecue, adds an extra level of complexity to simple dishes like grilled spring artichokes with olive oil and tender charred *pluma Ibérica* pork with shallots and roasted potatoes. In the warmer months, the menu lightens with stellar dishes like burrata cheese topped by tomato marmalade, arugula pesto, honey, and lemon. [$$$]
2 Maitea Taberna

Pintxos are the famous, toothpick-spiked bar snack of the Basque region, and Maitea Taberna is widely considered one of the best Basque pintxo bars in the city for its authentic ambiance, extensive menu of hot and cold pintxos and plates, and fair prices. The cold, self-serve pintxos are great, but don’t miss ordering some hot pintxos off the a la carte menu. The Morcilla de Burgos (black pudding with rice) with apple purée is especially great. (Another less-authentic but very popular and more central alternative is Blai Tonight at Carrer de Blai, 23. In fact that entire street, Blai, is lined with affordable tapas and pintxo bars popular with locals.) [§]
What began in 2006 as a neighborhood bar with a few tables has since blossomed into one of Barcelona’s most beloved Catalan fine dining restaurants. The spot was long known for its surprisingly elegant bar food and dedication to sourcing the best seasonal ingredients possible, but with the expansion of the dining room in 2014, the crew now has the decor and kitchen to bring their cuisine to a whole new level. Owned by two brothers (one a chef, the other a sommelier), the restaurant features a decadent tasting menu with an inventive o toro tuna with sea urchin, caviar, black garlic sauce, and celery ice cream. [$$$$]
Disfrutar

This restaurant is climbing steadily to the top of Barcelona's fine dining pyramid. The chef-owners, veterans of the El Bulli kitchen, opened Disfrutar in Barcelona in 2014 and currently hold one Michelin star. The modern Mediterranean cuisine and elegant service make for an unmissable experience. [$$$$]
5 Morro Fi

Barcelona’s obsession with vermouth is proof that trends move in circles. What was first popular around 1900 has reemerged in the past decade as the city’s most popular aperitivo once more. Bittersweet and served on ice with a garnish of olive and orange, vermut negre will pleasantly surprise you, and Morro Fi is the perfect place to give it a try. The petite vermouth bar serves small bites like cured and pickled anchovies, hard cheeses, marinated mussels, and thick-cut, house-made potato chips (best when doused in red “aperitivo sauce”). [$]
C. Consell de Cent
171, Barcelona, Catalonia

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6 Fan-Shoronpo Japonesa Ramen

A sure cure for the potato-and-cheese overload of Barcelona’s local cuisine is a visit to Fan-Shoronpo, one of the best ramen bars in the city. It’s also one of the only places here to enjoy a proper soup dumpling: Made by hand, these tender steamed pouches of gingery pork and gelatinous broth are a perfect jolt to the taste buds after too many nights of fried squid, croquettes, and olives. [$]
Having gained fame at his brother Ferran Adrià’s elBulli restaurant, Albert Adrià now boasts his own empire of fine dining establishments along the revitalized Avinguda del Paral·lel. Tickets is the crown jewel. With a menu of classic tapas remixed with modern, often molecular techniques, the theme of Tickets is Barcelona’s golden era of theater, glamour, and cabaret. Every day at midnight, online booking opens for the date exactly two months in the future. You can also call Tuesday to Friday 4 to 6 p.m. or Saturday 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 4 to 6 p.m. to get a same-day table if there have been cancellations. [$$$]
8 Ipar-Txoko

At this often overlooked Basque restaurant in the heart of Gràcia, the owner rattles off a seemingly endless list of specials from memory at your table, including Northern classic like *bacalao a la Vizcaína* (salt cod in a red pepper sauce) and *alubias de Tolosa* (stewed black beans). However, any visit to this antique-filled dining room would be incomplete without a massive *chuletón de vaca*: a dry-aged T-bone steak, grilled and served rare on a sizzling hot volcanic stone slab to maintain warmth and cook the meat further, as desired. [$]
9 Bar Ramón

A busy, neighborhood bar with a kitsch 1950s rock and roll theme, Bar Ramón has been a local go-to since 1939. Famous for signature dishes like seared foie gras with beef filet on toast, as well as classic tapas like croquettes and gambas al ajillo (garlic shrimp), Bar Ramón is a place where you can eat very well on the cheap. Reservations are recommended, but can only be made by phone or in person. [$$$]
10 Els Sortidors del Parlament

Found on the restaurant-rich street of Carrer del Parlament, this classic-meets-modern bodega (a term that defines a place that is a wine shop that also sells food and wine for on-site enjoyment) stands out in the Sant Antoni neighborhood. Enjoy a glass of wine from the shop’s old barrels, from which the business also sells wine “a granel” (by the liter), vermouth, and various craft beers; snack on tapas and Catalan dishes; or just browse the
gourmet shop. There is a little something wonderful here for everyone. [$]\)

![Image](Els Sortidors del Parlament/Facebook)

**C. Parlament**
53, Barcelona, Catalonia
+34 934 41 16 02

[VISIT WEBSITE] [DIRECTIONS]

**11 Horchatería Sirvent**

A Mediterranean drink that dates back to the Middle Ages, horchata de chufa has been served at Horchatería Sirvent since 1920. A chilled, slightly thick blend of leche de chufa (tiger nut milk), water, and sugar, horchata is a refreshing, traditional summer beverage, and Sirvent is the place to sample it. With an ambiance that could best be
compared to a 1950s American soda shop with retro Catalan fittings, the original Horchateria Sirvent (not to be confused with the newer, less kitschy Sirvent around the corner) is a blast from the past. [§]

C. Parlament
56, Barcelona, Catalonia
(+34) 934-412720

**12 Quimet & Quimet**

This tiny, antique bar from 1914 is off the beaten path yet also usually packed. It’s famous for its *montaditos*: two-bite tapas on round, crispy bread. Most are made from *conservas* (canned seafood),
cheese, cured meats, or fish. The large selection of local wines, vermouth, and house-made beer pairs especially nicely with the stinky Torta del Casar cheese with candied chestnut, the velvety salt cod with olive tapenade and tomato, and the creamy foie gras with volcanic salt.

Poeta Cabanyes
25, Barcelona, Catalonia
(+34) 934-423142

13 LomoAlto

In this pork-centric region, beef doesn’t usually play a starring role on menus, which makes Lomo Alto even more special. This meat destination is really
without compare when it comes to dry-aging, with a massive Leonese ox hanging above its reception area that’s well into its 500-day aging journey. Each cut of meat is meticulously catalogued and labeled with the age and breed, and the steaks are cooked with precision over charcoal flames on custom-made Josper grills. For a special occasion, spring for a 150-day-aged Rubia Gallega T-bone steak, carved tableside. [$$$$]
With some 30 gleaming taps pouring pint after pint of local and international craft beer, Ølgod is the perfect option for scouting artisan brews in Barcelona. The most popular beer styles for Catalan breweries are California-style pale ales and IPAs, and there are always many to choose from here, alongside an ever-rotating stock of beers from Denmark, Belgium, the U.S., the U.K., and other parts of Spain. Try one of their many “beer cocktails” for something different, and dig into the well-matched menu of vegetarian tapas and bar snacks. [$]
15 Mercat de Sant Josep, aka La Boqueria

Barcelona Mercat de Sant Josep (known as La Boqueria) is arguably one of the world’s most famous fresh markets. Among the vendors’ stalls you can find numerous lunch counters, but El Quim de la Boqueria and Bar Pinotxo are considered the best. At either bar, stake out a stool whose occupant appears to be wrapping up their meal and wait patiently behind them. Everything available is great, so go with seasonal recommendations — do expect higher prices than you’d find outside the market, though. These dishes are superb, and you’ll pay a premium for the unique experience of dining at these busy lunch counters with ingredients sourced just steps away. [$]
Restaurante Martínez

There are plenty of places to try paella in Barcelona, but Martínez is the move: Perched on the side of Montjuïc with a panoramic view of the city and port, Martínez is far removed from the hubbub of the beach district. Famous rice dishes like the señorito paella — garnished with peeled and shelled seafood, which keeps fingers clean — and the decadent lobster rice, as well as classic tapas and an inviting oyster bar, should justify the journey.

[$$$]
17 Bar Cañete

Cozy up to the bar surrounding the open kitchen at this classic restaurant and local favorite. Its extensive offering of both Catalan and Spanish cuisine ranges from the traditional tapa Tortilla de Camarones of Cádiz (a fried shrimp fritter) to sautéed veal sweetbreads with artichoke hearts. Note that there are two entrances: one for Bar Cañete is on the right, and another for the pricier Cañete Mantel (“tablecloth”) is on the left. Stick with Bar Cañete for the best experience. [$$]
18 Zona d’Ombra

A softly lit wine bar and bottle shop in the old medieval Jewish quarter of Barcelona, Zona d’Ombra boasts an impressive selection of local wines by the glass and a basic menu of cured meats, cheeses, and other snacks. For around the price of one glass, you can choose a flight of three wines (small pours) and sample the surprising variety of Catalan whites, rosés, and reds. Less of a restaurant and more of a quiet place for the enjoyment of unique wines, Zona d’Ombra is a great pre-dinner stop, and on Sunday afternoons it often hosts live acoustic music. [§]
Nømad Coffee Lab & Shop

Nømad Coffee’s founder, Jordi Mestre, has been instrumental in ushering in the new era of specialty coffee in the city. Nømad is a coffee roaster and coffee shop, and its original location on the picturesque Passatge Sert is aptly dubbed the “coffee lab.” Visit on weekday mornings for an expertly-pulled, fresh-roasted espresso. The company’s second location in Poble Nou is larger and houses the roasting outfit, in addition to a cafe with more seating than the downtown location. And at the Roaster’s Home you can partake in coffee “cuppings” (tastings) every Friday at 4 p.m. [§]
20 Conesa Entrepans

This busy sandwich shop in Plaça Sant Jaume, across from the City Hall, has been serving locals and politicians since 1951. Many sandwiches contain some variety of botifarra (sausages), and the bread is pressed similarly to an Italian panini. Of all the many “Frankfurts” (sausage-centric sandwich bars) in Barcelona, Conesa is the most famous, serving a simple but consistent product on demand for those looking for an easy hunger fix in the city center. The service is fast and the quality of the ingredients is top, and, in keeping with the times, gluten-free bread is now available. [$]
Bar Brutal

The front is a shop and wine bar called Can Cisa, and in the back you'll find this full-service, wine-centric restaurant from twin Venetian chefs Max and Stefano Colombo. The menu combines Italian and Catalan cuisine, with an array of salty, sweet, rich, and acidic small plates, ranging from grilled octopus with pickles and beet puree to smoked sardines with apple relish; these aren’t your average tapas. All of the wine is natural; many bottles are also biodynamic and organic. The well-trained waiters can guide any diner — from a wine novice to seasoned connoisseur — to a new and enlightening pairing for her or his meal. [$$]
22 Bar La Plata

This small corner bar just one block from the old port of Barcelona has been serving the same four dishes since 1945. Though the salted anchovies, fried sausage, and tomato salad are all delicious, the floured and fried boquerones (anchovies) are the true star. Now run by the grandson of the original founder, Bar La Plata sells over 40 kg of these little fish per week. The place is nearly always busy and has few tables, so do as the crowds do and eat standing up at the bar or even in the street if no seats are available. [§]
23 Vila Viniteca's La Teca

Founded in 1932, Vila Viniteca is the definitive spot for wine shopping in Barcelona. Across the street sits La Teca, a companion gourmet shop featuring a cheese cave of more than 350 artisan varieties, a wall of Spanish jamón, rows of conservas (canned seafood), a wine and cheese bar, and a cellar from the 15th century that hosts group wine tastings upon request. Sit and order a cheese plate and glass of wine in the bar area, or buy some snacks to go and head to the Parc de la Ciutadella, just a ten minute walk away. [$$]

Carrer dels Agullers
9, 08003 Barcelona, Spain
24 Bodega La Puntual

A welcome sight in the busy area around the Passeig del Born, Bodega La Puntual does what many restaurants here can’t — offer excellent food and service in a touristy area while maintaining its local charm and providing plenty of seating. For a pre-dinner bite, pull up a stool to the wine-barrel tables near the entrance and enjoy some cava and oysters. Head to the back dining room for a full meal of tapas and seasonal Catalan dishes like sauteed wild mushrooms, flour-dusted fried squid, grilled sausages, and traditional tortillas (potato omelets) prepared as they should be: made to order. [$$]
25 El Xampanyet

Dating back to the 1920s and brimming with character, from the tiled walls and vintage wine bottle collection to the boisterous crowds and taciturn barmen, El Xampanyet is well known with both locals and tourists as an excellent place for an authentic aperitivo. It’s ideal for a glass of cava, some house-cured salted anchovies, an assortment of conservas, and a sample of whatever hot dishes are on the day’s menu. You must squeeze in the door and prepare for standing room only. [$]
26 Restaurant Estimar

Prepare yourself for some of the best seafood in the city, but be ready to pay for it. The menu features a number of sharing dishes, such as the exquisite razor clams stewed in citrus and the fried baby squid in ink-tinted aioli, but the main attraction is the cornucopia of fresh seafood laid on ice in the dining room for all to see. This is your chance to try rare luxury items like *angulas* (baby eels) and *percebes* (gooseneck barnacles), as well as whole roasted fish, steamed clams, and grilled prawns of the most pristine quality. [$@$@$]
27 Pastisseria Bubó Born

A cake shop from famous pastry chef Carles Mampel, Bubó looks more like a jewelry store than a place to enjoy confectionary masterpieces. The glass display cases, full of pristine mini-cakes, macarons, and more, beckon you to indulge in a sugary nightcap. Both Cava and coffee are also available. The Pastisserie is much better than the Bubó Bar next door (where you can also order dessert). [$]
28 Restaurant Montiel

A humble and inviting space down a narrow medieval alley in the heart of La Ribera, Montiel has evolved over the past decade into an elegant fine dining restaurant that caters to most diet restrictions. The entire eight-course tasting menu is dairy- and gluten-free by default, though you’d hardly notice as the meal moves from chilled almond soup with garlic, apple foam, and mandarin juice to tender baby squid stewed with vibrant green peas, crispy pork jowl, and mint. There is also a completely vegetarian tasting-menu option.

[$$$$]
29 Espai Sucre

Part of a local pastry school of the same name, Espai Sucre (Sugar Space) is a bit like a dessert laboratory. The dessert-only restaurant offers a five-course progressive tasting menu, beginning with apple vinegar sorbet with calvados, anise, and celery and ending with caramel sponge cake with black olive and coffee ice cream and orange, followed by petit fours and coffee. The eatery offers full wine pairings, and an “all chocolate” tasting is also available. [$$$]
30 Pastisseria Hofmann

A bakery run by the local Hofmann culinary school, this little shop makes some of the best “pure butter” croissants in Barcelona (cheaper, pre-frozen croissants at your neighborhood bar often contain pork lard or shortening). Try one stuffed with mascarpone cheese or raspberry. There are a couple of stools beside the service counter, but the recommended course of action is getting your croissants to go and enjoying them on one of the stone benches lining the Passeig de Barcelona, just a dozen steps away. [$]
31 **ElDiset**

This wine bar at the heart of bohemian neighborhood El Born is perfect for a date night or an evening with friends. A list of some 20 Catalan wines by the glass and a varied offering of torrades (open-faced sandwiches) on deliciously crisp bread make for a perfect chic-yet casual meal. Try the torrada of black sausage, cured cheese, sundried tomatoes, and tangy orange vinaigrette, with a glass of full-bodied red from local region Priorat. Often very busy, ElDiset's energy level begins to rise around 9 p.m. and carries well into the evening. [$$]
32 Paradiso

Dubbed a “speakeasy,” but hardly a secret after its rapid rise to fame as one of Barcelona’s top cocktail bars, Paradiso is hidden away behind the vintage wooden refrigerator doors of the Pastrami Bar, which serves pastrami sandwiches for takeaway and to bar patrons inside. The professional, suspender-strapped bartenders at Paradiso stir up fun and flavorful cocktails full of smoke, tinctures, liquid nitrogen, bitters, flowers, and more, served in everything from a giant seashell and glass smoking pipes to Japanese teapots and bamboo tiki cups. [$]
La Paradeta

Founded in 1994 in the Sants neighborhood of Barcelona, La Paradeta has expanded to five locations in the city. The secret to its success is its simplicity: Order your fresh seafood (displayed on ice) by weight and sit patiently until the kitchen calls your number. The price-to-quality ratio here is excellent, so expect a line out the door, especially at the city center locations. [$]
Churrería J. Argilés

Founded in 1958 by José Argilés, president of the Guild of Artisan Churro Makers, this kiosk is a Barcelona icon and the perfect place to get classic churros with hot chocolate. Open 24 hours on Fridays and Saturdays to cater to the hoards exiting the nearby nightclub, Razzmatazz, this is the perfect place to soak up the booze that fueled your night. (It also sells French fries with ketchup and mayonnaise if fried dough isn’t your thing.) For a less rowdy experience, stop by any afternoon to enjoy your churros in peace. [$]
Carrer de la Marina
107, 08018 Barcelona, Spain
+34 93 232 4307

35 Jai-Ca

This boisterous tapas bar in the center of the Barceloneta neighborhood is a cheap and tasty place for a relaxed weekend lunch of tapas and vermouth. Both locations (on the same block) are usually full at meal times, so wait by the door trying to catch a waiter’s eye to get your name on the waitlist. Navalles a la planxa (grilled razor clams), sípia a la planxa (grilled cuttlefish), and calamars a l’andalusa (fried squid) are tasty starters. [$§]
Originally a shop selling sundries and soaps at the turn of the 20th century, Can Solé was converted into a restaurant in 1903 and has been satisfying lovers of local seafood and rice ever since. Enjoy a classic seafood paella or the Catalan favorite, Arròs Caldós (Brothy Rice), with your choice of shrimp, sea urchin, mussels, lobster, or more. [$$]
37 Baluard Barceloneta

This organic bakery near the beach is always bustling. It champions the slow fermentation process, selling pastries, sandwiches, and artisan bread from a natural yeast “mother,” or starter. The bread is baked fresh throughout the day in wood-fired ovens, but get there early for the best selection. There is no seating here, so you must take your bread and pastries to go. The sandwiches in particular are an easy snack for the nearby Barceloneta beach. [$]
38 Cova Fumada

One of the oldest restaurants in the beachside neighborhood of La Barceloneta, this is the birthplace of the famous “Bomba de la Barceloneta” — a mouthwatering fried mashed potato croquette, stuffed with savory ground beef and topped with aioli and hot sauce, which now appears on menus all over the city. In addition to the Bombas, try the calamars a la planxa (grilled squid) and grilled sardines (in season in summer). If you’re adventurous, add a plate of Cap i Pota, an old-school Catalan stew of tripe, veal trotters, and veal head in tomato. [$]
Despite what your Spanish-English dictionary might say, a chuletón is not a T-bone. It’s usually a rib steak, but it can also be a bone in strip loin. Either way, it never has the tenderloin attached. So it cannot be a T-bone.