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The Costa Brava: the essence of the Mediterranean



Costa Brava
Pirineu de Girona



The Costa Brava: the essence of the Mediterranean

The province of Girona, located in the northeast corner of the Iberian Peninsula and home to the Costa Brava and Pirineu de Girona Tourism brands, boasts over two thousand years of history, its own culture and a Mediterranean essence that have shaped both the character of the region and its people.

This historic tourist brand includes five of the eight districts of the province of Girona: Alt Empordà, Baix Empordà, Girona, Pla l'Estany and La Selva.

The **Costa Brava** has all the ingredients of a perfect tourist destination and is intensely experienced by all those visitors seeking a friendly travel destination which welcomes tourism.

For many, the Costa Brava is characterised by wide beaches and small coves surrounded by vegetation and rocky cliffs which hug the coast from **Portbou** to **Blanes**, generously displaying a collection of natural heritage and cultural and culinary gems which beg to be experienced by all five senses.

Over two hundred kilometres of coastline, unbeatable weather, mild temperatures, excellent winds and richly diverse marine areas, like Cap de Creus and the Medes Islands, ensure that the Costa Brava has superb conditions for water sports, including diving, various types of windsurfing, sailing, boating and kayaking.

Small charming coastal towns like **Cadaqués**, **Begur**, **Calella de Palafrugell**, **Palamós**, and **Tossa de Mar**, the tourism and leisure towns of **Roses**, **Platja d'Aro**, **Lloret de Mar** and **Blanes**, y los numerosos pueblos medievales cuentan con una multitud de servicios y propuestas para que el turista pueda gozar de unas memorables vacaciones en cualquier época del año disfrutando al máximo de esta amplia oferta.

and numerous well-preserved medieval towns provide a range of services and options to ensure that tourists have a memorable stay on the Costa Brava at any time of the year.

The fishing town of **Cadaqués**, in the heart of Cap de Creus, deserves special mention. With its white walls and narrow cobbled streets adorned with flowers, the town is a perfect example of Mediterranean architecture. Home to many artists, a bohemian atmosphere permeates the town; Cadaqués is closely linked to Salvador Dalí, who had a home and workshop, now a museum, in Portlligat. The town has many art galleries and intimate restaurants offering seasonal seafood-based cuisine.

“ In 1908, journalist Ferran Agulló published an article in *La Veu de Catalunya* (The Voice of Catalonia) entitled “On the Costa Brava”, thus becoming the first to coin the term. It is said that the name came to him as he was contemplating the coast’s rocky coves from the overlook at the Church of Sant Elm in Sant Feliu.

“ 2017, Year of the Bicycle and Sustainability in the Costa Brava and Girona Pyrenees” in collaboration with the Catalan Tourist Agency and the United Nations, which declared 2017 as the “International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development.

“ The Costa Brava is home to 245 beaches and coves.

“ The Blue Flag, awarded by the FEE (Foundation for Environmental Education), currently flies at 30 beaches and 9 marinas on the Costa Brava.

The medieval villages of **Pals**, **Peratallada**, **Peralada**, **Madremanya** and **Monells** are known for their extremely well-preserved medieval buildings, with eye-catching architectural and sculptural elements found in windows, arches, wells and houses. Artisans and traditional crafts are also important attractions that characterise these villages.

Girona, the region's capital, is a medium-sized city located halfway between the coast and the Pyrenees, one of the cities with the highest quality of life in Spain. Well-connected with an airport and AVE station, Girona is easily reached by plane, car or train and is a popular city break destination year-round thanks to its range of cultural, architectural and commercial attractions. The city has carefully conserved its heritage, with an old town or *barri vell* that is home to numerous can't-miss sights. Girona is well worth visiting in May during the city's Girona, temps de flors flower festival and in autumn for the Temporada Alta performing arts festival and the annual festivities honouring the city's patron saint.

The major holiday and family tourism destinations on the Girona coast (according to the Catalan Tourism Board): **Roses**, **Sant Pere Pescador**, **Torroella de Montgrí-L'Estartit**, **Calonge-Sant Antoni**, **Castell-Platja d'Aro**, **Sant Feliu de Guíxols**, **Lloret de Mar** and **Blanes**.

The province of Girona, home to geniuses like Salvador Dalí and Ferran Adrià, captivates visitors with its first-class artistic and culinary creations. Some of the most influential figures of the twentieth century –Marc Chagall, Truman Capote, Orson Wells– found what they needed to feed their creativity in this region and were the first to leave a tangible mark. Salvador Dalí, preeminent surrealist artist, found an unending source of inspiration in the rugged landscape of the Costa Brava, particularly Cape Creus and its Paraje de Tudela.

Cultural tourism in the Costa Brava and Girona Pyrenees attracts millions of visitors with its rich and intense historical and artistic heritage. Iberians, Greeks and Romans discovered the wealth of this land centuries ago and their legacy is incalculable, as are the architectural treasures –such as the Sant Pere de Rodes Benedictine monastery– left by the Romanesque period. Castles and forts, along with medieval villages, the Jewish legacy, and outstanding works of modernism and surrealism characterise these regions and their people. These, along with crafts, industrial heritage, 24 museums covering a wide range of topics, contemporary art, music festivals and traditional and popular festivals declared of national interest, make the Costa Brava and Girona Pyrenees a one-of-a-kind destination.

“ The Costa Brava's Camins de Ronda (coastal paths) submits its bid to become a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

“ Costa Brava Girona Festivals is the digital platform that brings together an entire range of festivals –theatre, music, art, cinema, circus, humour, magic, comedy– in the province of Girona
www.costabravagironafestivals.com

“ The second edition of SOM CULTURA, the province of Girona's cultural experiences festival, will be celebrated in November.
somcultura.costabrava.org

Visitors can't miss the **Dalí Triangle**, which includes the Theatre-Museum in Figueres, home to numerous works by the artist as well as surreal buildings and a permanent jewellery exhibition, the Salvador Dalí House-Museum in Portlligat, near Cadaqués, and the Gala Dalí Castle in Púbol. With 1,389,019 visitors in 2015, it ranks as the province's most visited museum complex and the third most visited in Catalonia.

Girona's **exquisite gastronomy** makes sitting down at the table and tasting dishes prepared with fresh local ingredients a true pleasure: chicken with prawns, rice with rabbit and clams, stuffed squid, and beef with sea cucumbers are just a few examples.

The destination's outstanding cuisine is based on excellent local products, centuries-old recipes rooted in the past but updated for the present, and the expertise of the chefs and restaurants serving cuisine that ranges from traditional Catalan to market-fresh to gourmet. The diversity, richness and quality of the region's products is nothing short of remarkable. A number of seals and labels like Girona Excel·lent certify products like L'Escala and Roses anchovies, Pals black rice and Empordà olive oil, differentiating these products from those from other regions.

Pride in local products can be seen at festivals and food fairs, which are often associated with themed culinary events guaranteed to delight food lovers and fine-dining enthusiasts.

Ferran Adrià, the Catalan icon of twenty-first century avant-garde cuisine famous for heading the kitchen of what was the world's best restaurant, El Bulli, located in the town of Roses, has his roots in the folklore and tradition of food prepared from ingredients from the region's mountains and sea. Adrià still has ties to the Costa Brava through his deep involvement in the **El Bulli Foundation** project, future incubator for creativity and culinary research open to the world via the internet, which is scheduled for launch in 2018.

The province of Girona is well-known for its 14 restaurants and 18 **Michelin stars** between them, including El Cellar de Can Roca in Girona (created by the Roca brothers, the restaurant was named the second best restaurant in the world in 2014 by the prestigious *Restaurant Magazine*), Paco Perez's restaurant Miramar de Llançà, and Fina Puigdevall's Les Cols in Olot.

The Costa Brava has always been home to excellent cuisine, which has been matched by equally fine wines for quite some time now. While the region boasts a centuries-old winemaking tradition, Costa Brava wineries have experienced thrilling growth over the past few decades, turning a wine tourism tour along the Costa Brava and the Empordà DO Wine Route into a journey to discover the world of Empordà wine and the surrounding region.

“ Girona is the Spanish province with the greatest number of Michelin stars per inhabitant.

List of Michelin star awarded Restaurants 2017

- El Cellar de Can Roca ***
- Miramar **
- Les Cols **
- Els Brancs *
- Les Magnòlies *
- Bo.tic *
- Ca l'Arpa *
- Ca l'Enric *
- Casamar *
- Els Tinars *
- La Cuina de Can Simon *
- Fonda Xesc *
- Massana *
- Emporium *

“ The fourth edition of VÍVID, the Costa Brava and Girona Pyrenees' wine tourism experiences festival, will be celebrated in April vivid.costabrava.org

Covering an area of 2,000 hectares, the Empordà wine region includes 330 growers and 50 wineries, 26 of which can be visited for the opportunity to experience the province's wine, terroir, north wind and winemakers first-hand. Few places on earth are home to grape varieties with such authentic and distinguishing tastes as the Empordà, a region that produces wines that are best discovered and tasted through wine tourism activities.

Protected natural areas, open to visitors, are the most visible and well-known spaces in Girona's network of living nature, a network that runs from the mountains to the sea, from the forested wetlands to the Mediterranean coast.

The region boasts **four natural parks**. Montseny was the first to be declared a biosphere reserve by UNESCO and has been awarded the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism. The Aiguamolls del Empordà Natural Park and the more recent Montgrí, Medes Islands and Baix Ter Natural Parks preserve marine and bird life, especially migratory breeds. Likewise, the Albera Natural Site of National Interest is an outstanding example of the transition between the Pyrenees and the Mediterranean landscapes.

Three natural jewels are tucked away in the Pyrenees: the Garrotxa Volcanic Zone and Moixeró Natural Parks and, since September 2015, the Headwaters of the Ter and Freser Rivers Natural Park. Sustainable Tourism has been developed in these protected areas to recover native fauna and flora.

These protected spaces are exceptional attractions which offer a wide range of services as well as the opportunity to participate in an ample selection of guided and unguided activities. The programme includes an entire range of activities related to natural spaces and parks in the Costa Brava and Girona Pyrenees, from water activities, cycling, hiking, and sports in general to experiencing nature first-hand

A good way to discover the spectacular scenery of the Costa Brava for **more adventurous and active visitors** is by getting back to nature with activities such as hiking, road or mountain biking, sailing, skydiving –at Skydive Empuriabrava, one of the world's three biggest and best skydiving centres– horseback riding, rock climbing, golf, etc.

Another good way to get to know the area is by hiking along the extensive network of former **coastal paths** –now a specific tourist route called the Camí de Ronda®– converted into footpaths along the Girona coast which provide breath-taking views of the Mediterranean and coincide in places

“ The EUROPARC Federation has certified three of Girona's natural parks -the Garrotxa Volcanic Zone, Montseny, and the Montgrí, Medes Islands and Baix Ter- the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism (CETS) through 2020.

“ Three botanical gardens and one dating to the Renaissance period are an oasis of nature and breath-taking views of the Mediterranean.

“ The third edition of ENNATURA'T, the Costa Brava and Girona Pyrenees' festival of active tourism and outdoor activities, will be celebrated in May
natura.costabrava.org/

“ Top Sports Tourism Destinations according to the Catalan Tourism Board: Banyoles-Pla de l'Estany, Girona, Castelló d'Empúries-Empuriabrava, Lloret de Mar and Blanes.

“ The first edition of the Sea Otter Europe Costa Brava Girona Bike Show, an international biking sector trade fair and festival, will be celebrated from 2 to 4 June in the city of Girona.

with the GR-92 hiking trail. Hikers can explore the interior on the 2,500 km of marked trails of the **Itinerànnia trail network**. Biking through the **Vies Verdes**, a greenway linking the Pyrenees and the coast with 125 km of signposted routes, is another great way to get in touch with nature and to get to know the local population, as is the **circular Pirinexus route**, which features 350 km of marked bicycle touring paths that join the districts of Girona with southern France.

A ground-breaking tourism product, the first of its kind in the world, was created in 2014: **Vies Braves** or sea swimming lanes. This is a public network of marine itineraries for swimming and snorkelling. These routes, which run parallel to the footpaths that skirt the coast, are marked with buoys that provide a safe way of enjoying and exploring the coast.

Visitors can choose from a variety of options for discovering the uniqueness of this region from the sea: kayaking routes, sailboat and catamaran trips and scuba diving for exploring this diverse and unique space from an entirely different perspective, another dimension.

The Medes Islands are considered the top scuba diving destination in the western Mediterranean.

And for **golf** lovers, the Costa Brava's eight 18-hole par-3 and nine pitch and putt courses cover unique geography and make the region a virtual paradise for golfers and the ideal destination for practising this sport.

The region also features the PGA Catalonia Resort, Golf de Pals and Empordà Golf Resort, whose five 18-hole courses have been included among Europe's top 50, according to Britain's Top One Hundred Golf Courses professional ranking.

The icing on the cake is PGA Catalunya Resort's Stadium Course, ranked no. 1 in Spain, 5th in Continental Europe and among the world's top 100.

Visitors can leave their day-to-day worries behind and regain a sense of peace at the Costa Brava's **health and wellness centres**, where first-rate spas and facilities and extremely qualified staff – heirs to a long tradition of the region's thermal treatments– provide customised therapy and treatments. Twelve of the region's leading centres joined forces in 2014 to create the unique and exclusive *Gerunda Fuga*, a signature treatment, and Magma, the province's only thermal leisure centre, has fully renovated its facilities and services.

Far from crowded big cities and an hour from Barcelona, the Costa Brava has managed to position itself as the most charming **destination for business, conventions and incentive travel** in the country.

A unique variety of multipurpose and modern conference centres, adaptable to a full range of events and generally located in central areas with ample nearby accommodation and leisure options, makes it possible

“ In early 2017, Vies Braves (Sea Swimming Lanes) obtained Biosphere Responsible Tourism certification, acknowledging the project to be a sustainable sea experience. This certification is awarded by the Responsible Tourism Institute, which maintains a cooperation agreement with UNESCO and is affiliated to the World Tourist Organization.

“ The Costa Brava's Association of Diving Centres boasts 35 diving centres.

to celebrate anything from scientific and business meetings to medical congresses, industry conventions and product presentations in towns like Girona, Lloret de Mar, Roses, Olot, Torroella de Montgrí, Sant Feliu de Guíxols, Palamós y Platja d'Aro.

Since 2016, Girona's specific offer of high-end and exclusive Tourism products, activities and services is covered and promoted internationally under the **Costa Brava and Pirineu de Girona's Unique Premium brand**.

Accommodation options are practically endless on the Costa Brava, from conventional hotels, which feature small and charming family-run hotels, holiday hotels and those located along the coast, to rural tourism, holiday apartments and campsites. The region has beds for 600,000 visitors, ensuring year-round availability.

Not far from the coast are the **Girona Pyrenees**, with snows that usually arrive in December and ski resorts at full capacity in winter. Once the ski season is over, most turn into mountain resorts which cater to the nature lovers who visit the area. Towns with deep historical roots, like **Besalú**, **Ripoll**, **Camprodon** and **Llívia**, give this corner of the eastern Catalan Pyrenees a unique charm.

Undoubtedly, the Costa Brava offers a broad range of possibilities for visitors drawn to the region because of its climate, nature, culture, cuisine, recreational activities and the hospitality of its people. An almost endless variety of tourism products –complete with modern infrastructure and high-quality services– make year-round enjoyment of the destination possible.

www.costabrava.org

Graphic and audiovisual materials by topic are available in different languages at:

<http://issuu.com/costabravapirineugirona>

<http://premsa.costabrava.org/>

Image archive:

<http://fotos.costabrava.org/>

“ The brand currently includes 25 companies from the accommodation, transport and activities sectors as well as agencies specialising in high-end luxury travel, all of which offer exclusive activities, tailor-made services and experiences for visitors looking to explore the territory from a different perspective.

Interesting figures in 2016:

- 5.327.000 tourists
- 21.162.937 overnight stays

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www.costabrava.org
www.pirineugirona.org



Costa Brava
Pirineu de Girona



Diputació de Girona

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