[Template:About](/wiki/Template:About" \o "Template:About) [Template:Use American English](/wiki/Template:Use_American_English) [Template:Use dmy dates](/wiki/Template:Use_dmy_dates) [Template:Infobox settlement](/wiki/Template:Infobox_settlement)

**Barcelona** ([Template:IPAc-en](/wiki/Template:IPAc-en), [Template:IPA-ca](/wiki/Template:IPA-ca), [Template:IPA-es](/wiki/Template:IPA-es)) is the capital city of the [autonomous community](/wiki/Autonomous_communities_of_Spain) of [Catalonia](/wiki/Catalonia) in the [Kingdom of Spain](/wiki/Spain), as well as the country's [second most populous municipality](/wiki/List_of_municipalities_of_Spain), with a population of 1.6 million within city limits.[[1]](#cite_note-1) Its [urban area](/wiki/Urban_area) extends beyond the administrative city limits with a population of around 4.7 million people,[[2]](#cite_note-2) being the [seventh-most populous urban area](/wiki/Largest_urban_areas_of_the_European_Union) in the [European Union](/wiki/European_Union) after [Paris](/wiki/Paris), [London](/wiki/London), [Madrid](/wiki/Madrid), the [Ruhr area](/wiki/Ruhr), [Berlin](/wiki/Berlin), and [Milan](/wiki/Milan).[[3]](#cite_note-3) It is the largest metropolis on the [Mediterranean Sea](/wiki/Mediterranean_Sea), located on the coast between the mouths of the rivers [Llobregat](/wiki/Llobregat) and [Besòs](/wiki/Besòs_(river)), and bounded to the west by the [Serra de Collserola](/wiki/Serra_de_Collserola) mountain range, the tallest peak of which is [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) high.

Founded as a Roman city, in the Middle Ages Barcelona became the capital of the [County of Barcelona](/wiki/County_of_Barcelona). After merging with the [Kingdom of Aragon](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Aragon), Barcelona continued to be an important city in the [Crown of Aragon](/wiki/Crown_of_Aragon) as an economic and administrative center of this Crown and the capital of the [Principality of Catalonia](/wiki/Principality_of_Catalonia). Besieged several times during its history, Barcelona has a rich cultural heritage and is today an important cultural center and a major tourist destination. Particularly renowned are the architectural works of [Antoni Gaudí](/wiki/Antoni_Gaudí) and [Lluís Domènech i Montaner](/wiki/Lluís_Domènech_i_Montaner), which have been designated UNESCO [World Heritage Sites](/wiki/World_Heritage_Site). The headquarters of the [Union for the Mediterranean](/wiki/Union_for_the_Mediterranean) is located in Barcelona. The city is known for hosting the [1992 Summer Olympics](/wiki/1992_Summer_Olympics) as well as world-class [conferences and expositions](/wiki/Barcelona#Trade_fair_and_exhibitions) and also many [international sport tournaments](/wiki/Sport_in_Barcelona#International_tournaments).

Barcelona is one of the world's leading tourist, economic, trade fair and cultural centers, and its influence in commerce, education, entertainment, media, fashion, science, and the arts all contribute to its status as one of the [world's major global cities](/wiki/Global_city).[[4]](#cite_note-4)[[5]](#cite_note-5) It is a major cultural and economic center in [southwestern Europe](/wiki/Iberian_Peninsula), 24th in the world (before [Zürich](/wiki/Zürich), after [Frankfurt](/wiki/Frankfurt))[[6]](#cite_note-6) and a financial center. In 2008 it was the [fourth most economically powerful city by GDP](/wiki/List_of_cities_by_GDP#Top_10_cities_in_the_European_Union) in the European Union and 35th in the world with GDP amounting to €177 billion.[[7]](#cite_note-7) In 2012 Barcelona had a GDP of $170 billion; it is leading Spain in both [employment rate](/wiki/Employment_rate) and GDP per capita change.[[8]](#cite_note-8) In 2009 the city was ranked Europe's third and one of the world's most successful as a city brand.[[9]](#cite_note-9) In the same year the city was ranked Europe's fourth best city for business and fastest improving European city, with growth improved by 17% per year,[[10]](#cite_note-10) but it has since been in a full recession with declines in both employment and GDP per capita, with some recent signs of the beginning of an economic recovery.[[11]](#cite_note-11) Since 2011 Barcelona is a leading [smart city](/wiki/Smart_city) in Europe.[[12]](#cite_note-12) Barcelona is a [transport hub](/wiki/Transport_hub) with the [Port of Barcelona](/wiki/Port_of_Barcelona) being one of Europe's principal seaports and busiest European passenger port,<ref name=StatServ2014>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> an international airport, [Barcelona–El Prat Airport](/wiki/Barcelona–El_Prat_Airport), which handles above 40 million passengers per year,[[13]](#cite_note-13) an [extensive motorway network](/wiki/Barcelona#Roads_and_highways) and a [high-speed rail](/wiki/High-speed_rail) line with a link to France and the rest of Europe.[[14]](#cite_note-14)

## Contents

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## Names[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

The name *Barcelona* comes from the ancient Iberian *Barkeno*, attested in an ancient coin inscription found on the right side of the coin in [Iberian script](/wiki/Iberian_scripts) as [34px|Barkeno in Levantine Iberian script](/wiki/File:Barkeno.png),[[15]](#cite_note-15) in [Ancient Greek](/wiki/Ancient_Greek) sources as [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang), *Barkinṓn;*[*[16]*](#cite_note-16)[*[17]*](#cite_note-17) *and in* [*Latin*](/wiki/Latin) *as* Barcino*,*[*[18]*](#cite_note-18)Barcilonum[*[19]*](#cite_note-19) *and* Barcenona*.*[*[20]*](#cite_note-20)[*[21]*](#cite_note-21)[*[22]*](#cite_note-22) Some older sources suggest that the city may have been named after the Carthaginian general [Hamilcar Barca](/wiki/Hamilcar_Barca), who was supposed to have founded the city in the 3rd century BC,[[23]](#cite_note-23) but there is no evidence that Barcelona was ever a Carthaginian settlement, or that its name in antiquity, *Barcino*, had any connection with the [Barcid](/wiki/Barcid) family of Hamilcar.[[24]](#cite_note-24)During [the Middle Ages](/wiki/Middle_Ages), the city was variously known as *Barchinona*, *Barçalona*, *Barchelonaa*, and *Barchenona*.

Internationally, Barcelona's name is usually abbreviated as 'Barsa' or 'Barça'. Locally, this name refers only to [FC Barcelona](/wiki/FC_Barcelona), the football club. Locals refer to the city instead as 'Barna'.

Another common abbreviation is 'BCN', which is also the [IATA airport code](/wiki/IATA_airport_code) of the [Barcelona-El Prat Airport](/wiki/Barcelona-El_Prat_Airport).

The city is also referred to as the *Ciutat Comtal* in Catalan, and *Ciudad Condal* in Spanish, owing to its past as the seat of the [Count of Barcelona](/wiki/Count_of_Barcelona).

## History[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumbnail|A marble plaque in the Museu d'Història de la Ciutat de Barcelona, dated from around 110–130 AD and dedicated to the Roman colony of Barcino](/wiki/File:Barcino_marble_barcelona.jpg)

The origin of the earliest settlement at the site of present-day Barcelona is unclear. The ruins of an early settlement have been excavated in the El Raval neighborhood, including different tombs and dwellings dating to earlier than 5000 BC.[[25]](#cite_note-25)[[26]](#cite_note-26) The founding of Barcelona is the subject of two different legends. The first attributes the founding of the city to the mythological [Hercules](/wiki/Hercules). The second legend attributes the foundation of the city directly to the historical [Carthaginian](/wiki/Carthage) general, [Hamilcar Barca](/wiki/Hamilcar_Barca), father of [Hannibal](/wiki/Hannibal), who supposedly named the city *Barcino* after his family in the 3rd century BC,[[27]](#cite_note-27) but there is no historical or linguistic evidence that this is true.[[24]](#cite_note-24) In about 15 BC, the [Romans](/wiki/Roman_Empire) redrew the town as a [*castrum*](/wiki/Castra) (Roman military camp) centered on the "*Mons Taber*", a little hill near the contemporary city hall ([Plaça de Sant Jaume](/wiki/Plaça_de_Sant_Jaume)). Under the Romans, it was a colony with the surname of *Faventia*,[[28]](#cite_note-28) or, in full, *Colonia Faventia Julia Augusta Pia Barcino*[[29]](#cite_note-29) or *Colonia Julia Augusta Faventia Paterna Barcino*. [Pomponius Mela](/wiki/Pomponius_Mela)[[30]](#cite_note-30) mentions it among the small towns of the district, probably as it was eclipsed by its neighbour [*Tarraco*](/wiki/Tarragona) (modern [Tarragona](/wiki/Tarragona)), but it may be gathered from later writers that it gradually grew in wealth and consequence, favoured as it was with a beautiful situation and an excellent harbour.[[31]](#cite_note-31) It enjoyed immunity from imperial burdens.[[32]](#cite_note-32) The city minted its own coins; some from the era of [Galba](/wiki/Galba) survive. [thumb|left|upright|Basilica of La Mercè (*Mare de Déu de la Mercè*)](/wiki/File:Basílica_de_la_Mercè_es_del_carrer_d'en_Carabassa.jpg) Important Roman vestiges are displayed in [Plaça del Rei](/wiki/Plaça_del_Rei) underground, as a part of the [Barcelona City History Museum](/wiki/Barcelona_City_History_Museum) MUHBA; the typically Roman grid plan is still visible today in the layout of the historical center, the [*Barri Gòtic*](/wiki/El_Gòtic) (Gothic Quarter). Some remaining fragments of the Roman walls have been incorporated into the cathedral.[[33]](#cite_note-33) The cathedral, also known as the Basilica *La Seu*, is said to have been founded in 343. The city was conquered by the [Visigoths](/wiki/Visigoths) in the early 5th century, becoming for a few years the capital of all [Hispania](/wiki/Hispania). After being conquered by the [Arabs](/wiki/Arabs) in the early 8th century, it was conquered in 801 by [Charlemagne's](/wiki/Charlemagne) son [Louis](/wiki/Louis_the_Pious), who made Barcelona the seat of the Carolingian "[Hispanic March](/wiki/Marca_Hispanica)" (*Marca Hispanica*), a [buffer zone](/wiki/Buffer_zone) ruled by the [Count of Barcelona](/wiki/Counts_of_Barcelona).

The Counts of Barcelona became increasingly independent and expanded their territory to include all of [Catalonia](/wiki/Catalonia), although on 6 July 985, Barcelona was [sacked](/wiki/Looting) by the army of [Almanzor](/wiki/Almanzor).[[34]](#cite_note-34) The sack was so traumatic that most of Barcelona's population was either killed or enslaved.[[35]](#cite_note-35) In 1137, [Aragon](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Aragon) and the [County of Barcelona](/wiki/Counts_of_Barcelona) merged in [dynastic union](/wiki/Dynastic_union)[[36]](#cite_note-36)[[37]](#cite_note-37) by the marriage of [Ramon Berenguer IV](/wiki/Ramon_Berenguer_IV,_Count_of_Barcelona) and [Petronilla of Aragon](/wiki/Petronila_of_Aragon), their titles finally borne by only one person when their son [Alfonso II of Aragon](/wiki/Alfonso_II_of_Aragon) ascended to the throne in 1162. His territories were later to be known as the [Crown of Aragon](/wiki/Crown_of_Aragon), which conquered many overseas possessions and ruled the western [Mediterranean Sea](/wiki/Mediterranean_Sea) with outlying territories [in Naples](/wiki/Naples) and Sicily and as far as [Athens](/wiki/Duchy_of_Athens) in the 13th century. The forging of a dynastic link between the Crowns of Aragon and [Castile](/wiki/Crown_of_Castile) marked the beginning of Barcelona's decline. The Bank of Barcelona, probably the oldest public bank in Europe, was established by the city [magistrates](/wiki/Magistrate) in 1401. It originated from necessities of the state, as did the [Bank of Venice](/wiki/Medici_Bank#Rise) (1402) and the [Bank of Genoa](/wiki/Bank_of_Saint_George) (1407).[[38]](#cite_note-38) [thumb|Barcelona in 1563](/wiki/File:Wyngaerde_Barcelona_1563.jpg)

The marriage of [Ferdinand II of Aragon](/wiki/Ferdinand_II_of_Aragon) and [Isabella I of Castile](/wiki/Isabella_I_of_Castile) in 1469 united the two royal lines. [Madrid](/wiki/Madrid) became the center of political power whilst the colonization of the Americas reduced the financial importance (at least in relative terms) of Mediterranean trade. Barcelona was a center of [Catalan separatism](/wiki/Catalan_separatism), including the [Catalan Revolt](/wiki/Catalan_Revolt) (1640–52) against [Philip IV of Spain](/wiki/Philip_IV_of_Spain). The [great plague](/wiki/Plague_(disease)) of 1650–1654 halved the city's population.[[39]](#cite_note-39) [thumb|The](/wiki/File:Castell_de_Montjuic_-_Fossat_entrada_-_Barcelona_(Catalonia).jpg) [fortress at Montjuïc](/wiki/Castle_of_Montjuïc), most southerly point from which measurements were made when calculating the [meridional definition](/wiki/Meridional_definition) of the metre In the 18th century, a fortress was built at [Montjuïc](/wiki/Montjuïc) that overlooked the harbour. In 1794, this fortress was used by the French astronomer [Pierre François André Méchain](/wiki/Pierre_Méchain) for observations relating to a survey stretching to [Dunkirk](/wiki/Dunkirk) that provided the official basis of the measurement of a metre.[[40]](#cite_note-40) The definitive metre bar, manufactured from platinum, was presented to the French legislative assembly on 22 June 1799. Much of Barcelona was negatively affected by the [Napoleonic wars](/wiki/Peninsular_War), but the start of industrialization saw the fortunes of the province improve. Urban planner [Ildefons Cerdà](/wiki/Ildefons_Cerdà) designed the large [Eixample](/wiki/Eixample) district in the 1850s when the medieval city walls around Barcelona's old town were torn down.[[2]](#cite_note-2) During the [Spanish Civil War](/wiki/Spanish_Civil_War), the city, and Catalonia in general, were resolutely Republican. Many enterprises and public services were "collectivized" by the [CNT](/wiki/Confederación_Nacional_del_Trabajo) and UGT unions. As the power of the Republican government and the Generalitat diminished, much of the city was under the effective control of [anarchist](/wiki/Anarchist) groups. The anarchists lost control of the city to their own allies, the Communists and official government troops, after the street fighting of the Barcelona May Days. The fall of the city on 26 January 1939, caused a mass exodus of civilians who fled to the French border. The resistance of Barcelona to [Franco's](/wiki/Francisco_Franco) [coup d'état](/wiki/Coup_d'état) was to have lasting effects after the defeat of the Republican government. The autonomous institutions of [Catalonia](/wiki/Catalonia) were abolished,[[41]](#cite_note-41) and the use of the [Catalan language](/wiki/Catalan_language) in public life was suppressed. Barcelona remained the second largest city in Spain, at the heart of a region which was relatively industrialized and prosperous, despite the devastation of the [civil war](/wiki/Spanish_Civil_War). The result was a large-scale [immigration](/wiki/Immigration) from poorer regions of Spain (particularly [Andalusia](/wiki/Andalusia), [Murcia](/wiki/Murcia) and [Galicia](/wiki/Galicia_(Spain))), which in turn led to rapid urbanization. The city gained vitality in 1992 when it hosted the [Summer Olympics](/wiki/1992_Summer_Olympics).[[42]](#cite_note-42)

## Geography[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

[Template:Wide image](/wiki/Template:Wide_image)

### Location[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

[thumb|right|Barcelona from high altitude](/wiki/File:Barcelona_ISS009-E-9987.jpg)

Barcelona is located on the northeast coast of the [Iberian Peninsula](/wiki/Iberian_Peninsula), facing the [Mediterranean Sea](/wiki/Mediterranean_Sea), on a [plain](/wiki/Plain) approximately [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) wide limited by the mountain range of [Collserola](/wiki/Serra_de_Collserola), the [Llobregat](/wiki/Llobregat) river to the southwest and the [Besòs](/wiki/Besòs_(river)) river to the north.[[43]](#cite_note-43) This plain covers an area of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert),[[43]](#cite_note-43) of which [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert)[[44]](#cite_note-44) are occupied by the city itself. It is [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) south of the [Pyrenees](/wiki/Pyrenees) and the [Catalan](/wiki/Catalonia) border with France.

[Tibidabo](/wiki/Tibidabo), [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) high, offers striking views over the city[[45]](#cite_note-45) and is topped by the [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) [Torre de Collserola](/wiki/Torre_de_Collserola), a [telecommunications tower](/wiki/Radio_masts_and_towers) that is visible from most of the city. Barcelona is peppered with small hills, most of them urbanized, that gave their name to the neighbourhoods built upon them, such as [Carmel](/wiki/El_Carmel) ([Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert)), [Putget](/wiki/Putget) ([Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert)) and Rovira ([Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert)). The escarpment of [Montjuïc](/wiki/Montjuïc) ([Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert)), situated to the southeast, overlooks the harbour and is topped by Montjuïc castle, a fortress built in the 17–18th centuries to control the city as a replacement for the Ciutadella. Today, the fortress is a museum and Montjuïc is home to several sporting and cultural venues, as well as Barcelona's biggest park and gardens.

The city borders on the municipalities of [Santa Coloma de Gramenet](/wiki/Santa_Coloma_de_Gramenet) and [Sant Adrià de Besòs](/wiki/Sant_Adrià_de_Besòs) to the north; the [Mediterranean Sea](/wiki/Mediterranean_Sea) to the east; [El Prat de Llobregat](/wiki/El_Prat_de_Llobregat) and [L'Hospitalet de Llobregat](/wiki/L'Hospitalet_de_Llobregat) to the south; and [Sant Feliu de Llobregat](/wiki/Sant_Feliu_de_Llobregat), [Sant Just Desvern](/wiki/Sant_Just_Desvern), [Esplugues de Llobregat](/wiki/Esplugues_de_Llobregat), [Sant Cugat del Vallès](/wiki/Sant_Cugat_del_Vallès), and [Montcada i Reixac](/wiki/Montcada_i_Reixac) to the west. The municipality includes two small sparsely-inhabited [exclaves](/wiki/Exclave) to the north-west.

### Climate[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) According to the [Köppen climate classification](/wiki/Köppen_climate_classification), the city has a [hot-summer Mediterranean climate](/wiki/Hot-summer_Mediterranean_climate) (*Csa*),[[46]](#cite_note-46)[[47]](#cite_note-47) with mild, relatively wet winters and hot, relatively dry summers. However, the relative winter [drought](/wiki/Drought) and the significant summer rainfall are not typical of a Mediterranean climate and would put Barcelona in a transitional zone between the [semi-arid climate](/wiki/Semi-arid_climate) (both *BSk* and *BSh*) to the west and southwest (on the coast, [Tarragona](/wiki/Tarragona) being borderline)[[48]](#cite_note-48) and the [humid subtropical](/wiki/Humid_subtropical_climate) (*Cfa*) in [Serra de Collserola](/wiki/Serra_de_Collserola) to the north, where the [Fabra Observatory](/wiki/Fabra_Observatory) receives just enough summer precipitation near or over [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) to be classified as borderline.

Its average annual temperature is [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) during the day and [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) at night. The average annual temperature of the sea is about [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert). In the coldest month – January, the temperature typically ranges from [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) during the day, [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) at night and the average sea temperature is [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert).[[49]](#cite_note-49) In the warmest month – August, the typical temperature ranges from [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) during the day, about [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) at night and the average sea temperature is [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert).<ref name=weather2travel/> Generally – the summer / "holiday" season lasts about six months, from May to October. Two months – April and November – are transitional; sometimes the temperature exceeds [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert), with an average temperature of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) during the day and [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) at night. December, January and February are the coldest months, with average temperatures around [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) during the day and [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) at night. Large fluctuations in temperature are rare, particularly in the summer months. Because of the proximity to the warm sea, frosts are very infrequent in the city of Barcelona. In fact, only 1 day in the last 30 years was recorded with a temperature under the freezing mark.[[50]](#cite_note-50)