

POSTCARD FROM...

# BARCELONA BLISS

AVENUE SENIOR EDITOR WENDY SY TRAVELS TO THE  
CAPITAL OF SPAIN'S CATALONIA REGION

THE MEDITERRANEAN CITY OF Barcelona is the type of place you may find hard to leave. With art and architecture all around, the energetic city is a cultural hub filled with museums, boutiques and a vibrant food scene. There's certainly no shortage of bread with tomato, olive oil and sea salt, a signature tapa known as *pa amb tomàquet* in Catalan—one of two languages most locals speak (the other is, yes, Spanish). Whether you're fluent or not, there's plenty to talk about here.



## MAJESTIC MOMENT

I stayed at the Majestic Hotel and Spa, located on the popular avenue Passeig de Gràcia. Opened in 1918, the building was bought three years later by Martín Casals Galcerán, great-grandfather of the current owners. Take a walking tour through its halls and you'll find artwork from the family's collection—there are more than 1,000 pieces! The Majestic also offers the largest suite in the city, the Penthouse Royal, and has three eateries headed by Michelin-starred chef Nandu Jubany.



## NEW FRIENDS

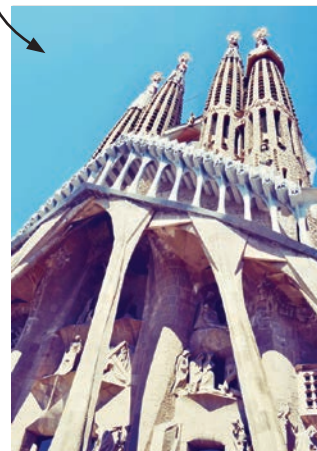
During this trip, I met a few new friends who were also visiting Barcelona for the first time. We explored one of architect Antoni Gaudí's notable creations, Park Güell. With curved walls, spiral chimneys, geometrical shapes and colorful mosaic tile benches, Gaudí stayed true to his unconventional design aesthetic and let his imagination run wild.



BRIAN MELTON

## WORK IN PROGRESS

Gaudí devoted the last 43 years of his life to designing the Christian temple La Sagrada Família, which attracts more than three million visitors a year. Its construction began in 1882 and is still in the making to this day. Aiming for completion by 2026, the site will have 18 towers. Our tour guide, Gonzalo Salaya Ventura, explained every detail before we headed off to the Miró and Picasso museums.



*Must-Try: Stop by Vila Viniteca, one of the most celebrated wine and delicacy shops in Spain. There's also a hidden gem of a restaurant in the cellar.*



## WANDER A WHILE

Take a stroll through the narrow and charming streets of the Gothic Quarter, an old Roman settlement dating as far back as 15 BC. It runs from the seaport to the Barcelona Cathedral east of Las Ramblas, the city's well-known pedestrian promenade. Here, there are a number of vintage boutiques and confectionery shops. The sweets from Be Chocolat by Michel Clement are delicious!



## SNAPSHOT SCENE

We visited Hospital de Sant Pau, a very photogenic Art Nouveau site that was previously a longtime healthcare institution. The series of buildings, many with whimsical façades and stained glass windows, was designed in the early 20th century by Lluís Domènech i Montaner. ♦