



THE GARDENS OF CATALONIA, 7-14 APRIL 2021 North Carolina Master Gardeners

This seven-day tour will explore the botanical and private gardens of Catalonia, one of the most beautiful regions of Spain, fringed by the Mediterranean and the Pyrenees mountains. Here we will see a variety of influences shaping the region's horticulture. Given the history of Catalonia - within Spain but often at odds with it - one will not be surprised to discover that the formal gardens of Catalonia tend more to French and Italian conventions and tastes, reflecting the region's "European" identity and aspirations, in contrast to the traditional Castilian Spanish ways.

We will uncover many aspects of this fascinating contrast in cultures with an excellent selection of public and private gardens on the Costa Brava, north of Barcelona, where highlights include the stunning Mediterranean coastal setting of the gardens of Marimurtra (photo) and Santa Clotilde, as well as in the city of Barcelona itself, where the concept of "urbanization" was born in the second half of the nineteenth century with parks and gardens being incorporated and planned into the new areas of the city. Additionally, we will delve into the food and wine of the region, through a hands-on Catalan cookery class with a market visit in the old Gothic Quarter of Barcelona and a day in the delightful Penedès wine growing area, famous for its sparkling cava wines.

Daily Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival Barcelona (WEDNESDAY, April 7, 2020)

WELCOME RECEPTION

Upon arrival at the Barcelona airport, make your own way to your luxury accommodation for this week - the elegant villa "Masia Notari", set in grounds just outside the Catalan town of Vilanova i la Geltrú. We have a private booking of the villa the entire week thanks to our friends at HomeComfort Travel. Relax until you meet up with your fellow travelers for an afternoon/evening cocktail reception with heavy hors d'oeuvres.

Please note, check-in time is 4 pm at the villa with the welcome reception beginning around 6:45 pm. For those arriving early, luggage storage is available throughout Barcelona so you can explore the city before check-in.

Day 2: Excursion to gardens on the Costa Brava (THURSDAY, April 8)

B L D

The Costa Brava – "wild coast" – is quintessential Mediterranean scenery: steep, craggy cliffs, studded with pine trees, rising from an azure sea. Commanding superb views along this coast are several landscaped gardens, two of which we visit today, Marimurtra and Santa Clotilde. Marimurtra botanical garden boasts more than 4,000 species, dedicated primarily to Mediterranean and sub-tropical flora. It has wonderful collections of cacti and other plants from arid regions of southern Africa and Central America, as well as plants endemic to Catalonia. Santa Clotilde is a fine specimen of the spirit that animated the *Noucentista* movement in Catalonia - an early twentieth-century movement for intellectual and aesthetic renewal. The gardens were designed in the manner of the Italian Renaissance, following the designs of Jean-Claude Forestier, one of the legendary greats of European landscape gardening. On our return journey, we stop in Barcelona, to enjoy an evening soaking up its lively atmosphere and dining in one of its excellent restaurants (dinner included).

Day 3: Full day in Barcelona, with Cooking Class (FRIDAY, April 9)

B L D

Barcelona is endowed with some of the finest architecture in Europe and today's guided visits focus on its two great centers, the old medieval city founded by the Romans, the "*Ciutat Vella*" in Catalan, and the extension to that city, the "*Eixample*", planned and executed in the late c.19 and c.20. In the latter, we find the unfinished masterpiece of Antoni Gaudí, the greatest architect of that period, the soaring basilica of La Sagrada Familia, as well as his housing project-cum-park, the playful and idiosyncratic Park Guell. In the morning, our Tour Manager will take us on a stroll in the Gothic quarter, passing by the church of seafarers, Santa Maria del Mar, and the imposing Gothic cathedral of La Seu. In between the two, a culinary break: a tour of one of the city's extraordinarily colorful covered markets to buy ingredients which you will then be shown how to use in a cooking class, which is a relaxed and fun way to enjoy a delicious lunch (included) of Catalan dishes, accompanied by local wine. We will move in the city by means of the excellent Metro system, and there will be a little free time to shop and sightsee between the various activities.

Dinner this evening at the villa.

Day 4: Excursion to Cap Roig gardens and Tossa de Mar (SATURDAY, April 10)

B L D

Today we venture further north, into the province of Baix Empordà, and to another signature garden clinging to steep cliffs above the Mediterranean, created by the Russian colonel Nikolai Voevodsky and the English aristocrat Dorothy Webster at Cap Roig from 1927. The name translates as “the red cape”, on account of the iron-rich red soil, and in such fertile grounds, the couple worked tirelessly to create their dream, a place where nature and tranquility reign supreme and where almost 1000 botanical species from all over the world flourish. The grounds contain, as well as the plants, some fascinating pieces of sculpture by Spanish and international artists and they also play host to a prestigious annual Music Festival. After a tour of these wonderful gardens, we will drive by mountain roads inland and then descend once more to the Costa Brava shoreline and the picturesque resort town of Tossa de Mar. After lunch (included) in a restaurant by the medieval castle walls we will walk with a local expert around its historic quarter, with its artists’ houses and superb views up and down the coast, learning among other things of its history as a trading port and its brush with the Hollywood glitterati in the 1950’s. This evening we dine in downtown Barcelona (included), where Catalan cuisine mixes the best of Spanish and French and adds its own touches.

Day 5: Full day in Barcelona – city gardens (SUNDAY, April 11)

B L D

The city is once more the protagonist today as we look at how gardens and green spaces were creatively incorporated into the planned expansion of Barcelona that took place in the second half of the nineteenth century. We will visit the famous Park Güell, designed by Gaudí for his patron Count Eusebi Güell as a residential estate for the Count’s more affluent employees. It failed as such, the Count’s lofty ideals being checked by financial realities, and was purchased by the city and opened as a municipal park in 1926. As city parks go it is one of the most extravagant and striking ones we’ll ever see, with Gaudí’s trademark synthesis of art, architecture, and nature on show in numerous buildings, plazas, pavilions, and monumental features. From one of Barcelona’s most famous landmarks, we then head to one of its lesser-known attractions, the Parc del Laberint d’Horta. Originally designed in the late 1700s for the Desvalls estate, this is one of the oldest garden-museums in Barcelona. It consists of a classical garden from the 18th century, a romantic garden from the 19th century and the iconic garden labyrinth which gave it its name. Lunch (included) is the prize for those who find their way out from the maze! – after which we head to one of the oldest parts of the city, the hill of Montjuic, a vast mosaic of parks and other features, natural and man-made. Here we will visit the Historical Botanical Garden and the Jardins de Laribal. The former’s main attraction is the species from colder climates which thrive in two hollows in the hillside, the result of excavation of quarries, in a unique microclimate. The latter is the first public rose garden to be created in Barcelona. Tranquil and shady, the park is made up of a series of terraces linked by narrow paths and stairways and the combination of shady trees, fountains and water are reminiscent of the gardens of the Alhambra Palace in Granada. We round off the day with dinner (included) in the city before returning to the villa.

Day 6: Excursion to Penedès wine region (MONDAY, April 12)

B L D

Catalonia's wines are some of the best in Spain and today we visit two of its most celebrated "D.O" areas ("*denominación de origen*"): Penedès, home of many independent and innovative producers, and Cava, famous for the sparkling white wine made with the Xarello grape. We begin today's excursion in the small but prestigious winery of Albet i Noya. The story of the winery's growth is a fascinating one: from tenant farmers over five generations they seized an opportunity that was to transform their fortunes. In 1978 a Danish company was searching the Penedès for an organic winegrower. Back then nobody had ever heard of organic wines. But curiosity won them over and they threw themselves into the adventure, turning the business into an independent, wholly organic producer, which is now recognized for its modern facilities, cutting-edge but respectful technology, and passion for the many projects they are involved in. After a guided tour of the cellars, hearing more of this story, we will taste three wines from their range of white, red and sparkling wines.

We then travel across the gently undulating terroirs of Penedès and enjoy lunch (included) in a rural restaurant with views across the countryside before we arrive at the small town of Sant Sadurní d'Anoia. Here we will uncover another delicacy, as we discover the "Chocolate Space" of the 6th generation family business, Simón Coll. The tour relates many fascinating details about cocoa, and the process of its production and the museum is a veritable haven for chocolate-lovers! Finally, we turn to the cava wines that are the hallmark of this region. In the immediate vicinity of Sant Sadurní d'Anoia – a town of a mere 13,000 inhabitants – one finds wineries which account for almost 90% of the cava bottled in Spain. We will visit one of the largest of these, those of the Codorniu label. At its grandiose headquarters designed by a contemporary of Gaudí, the modernist architect Josep Puig i Cadafalch, we will learn all about the production of cava in what is today the oldest surviving family company in Spain and indeed one of the oldest in the world, with more than 450 years of history to the date. The tour takes us down into the underground "caves" by means of a small train and concludes with a tasting of two cavas from Codorniu's premium range.

Dinner this evening at the villa.

Day 7: Free day in Barcelona (TUESDAY, April 13)

B L D

Today is at leisure in the city of Barcelona with options ranging between exploring new areas such as the neighborhoods of Gràcia, El Born or Raval, or perhaps doing some shopping around the central Plaça Catalunya or in some of the "centenary" shops to be found in the Barrio Gótico. Our Tour Manager will be on hand to offer advice and directions and to coordinate the meeting times and places for lunch (included) together and then later for the rendezvous with the coach for the late afternoon return to the villa.

Farewell dinner this evening at the villa.

Day 8: Departure or onward travel (WEDNESDAY, April 14)

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After breakfast, make your own way to Barcelona Airport, train station, or another departure point for onward travel.

PRICING

\$3,995 per person based on double occupancy

+ \$490 single supplement

Price includes

- Accommodations at Masia Notari
- Complimentary alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages each day at Masia Notari
- Transportation as specified on a private air-conditioned coach/microbus for all excursions in the Itinerary. Note: on the first excursion to Barcelona (Day 3), travel within the city will be by Metro (tickets at guests' own expense)
- Two US-based Tour Guides
- Local Tour Manager to accompany the group on all tours and excursions from after breakfast on Day 2 to the late afternoon on Day 7
- Personal villa host & chef
- Breakfast each morning at the villa
- Lunch and dinner as specified
- For meals away from the villa:
 - Dinner - three courses with mineral water, other drinks at guests' own expense
 - Lunch - lighter, two-course meals with mineral water, other drinks at guests' own expense
- Catalan Cookery Class (lunch with wine included) with markets visit
- Winery visits (2) and "Chocolate Space" museum visit with expert in-house guide and tastings of the wines/cavas/chocolates
- Local guides for walking tours in Tossa de Mar and Barcelona
- Entrances to the featured historical monuments: Recinte Modernista Sant Pau and La Sagrada Familia
- Entrances to the many and varied gardens featured in the Itinerary, with expert in-house guides*: Marimurtra*, Santa Clotilde, Cap Roig*, Park Guell*, Laberint d'Horta*, Historical Botanical Gardens*, Jardins de Laribal*
- Free time, with Tour Manager, in Gothic Quarter (Day 3) and in Eixample/Gràcia area (Day 7)

Not included:

- International flights
- Airport transfers
- Travel insurance
- Meals other than those specified
- Optional activities and excursions
- Personal purchases
- Gratuity for Tour Manager, in-house and local guides, meals out, and drivers. These are at guests' discretion
- Hotel taxes (varies by city, approximately 3-5 Euros per person per night)
- Any other charges or expenses other than those specified

Hidden Treasures Tours Registration Form
NC MG – Catalonia 2021

Please record name EXACTLY AS IT APPEARS ON YOUR PASSPORT and attach a photocopy to this registration form.

TRAVELER 1

Name _____

Passport # _____ Passport Exp. Date _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (home and/or cell) _____ Email _____

Emergency Contact Name and Phone _____

TRAVELER 2

Name _____

Passport # _____ Passport Exp. Date _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (home and/or cell) _____ Email _____

Emergency Contact Name and Phone _____

ROOM ARRANGEMENTS

- Single Room (*Single supplement fee will apply*)
 Double Room (Roommate: _____)
Single supplement fee will apply if you do not list a roommate and we are unable to match you.

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS***

Please mark your preferred travel arrangements:

____ I will make my own airline reservation/arrangements

____ I would like Hidden Treasures Tours to arrange airline reservations from the following airport and bill me for the airfare. Departure Airport: _____

OPTIONAL BOOKINGS:

Yes, please book additional nights at a hotel in Barcelona prior to the start of the tour (will send options before booking)

____ # of additional nights

Yes, please book additional nights at a hotel in Barcelona at the end of the tour (will send options before booking)

____ # of additional nights

Please contact me to make other custom arrangements

PAYMENT INFORMATION

You will be invoiced a deposit rate of \$1,000 per person when the tour is confirmed viable (minimum number of registrants is met).

Final payment is due 90 days prior to trip departure. A full refund will be given up to 90 days prior to the departure date, minus a \$250 administrative fee. There are no refunds within 90 days of trip departure as all invoices have been paid in full at this time on a non-refundable group rate basis.

*****Hidden Treasures Tours reserves the right to make necessary changes to the itinerary due to unforeseen circumstances. A minimum number of spots are required for the tour to be viable. Please do not book flights until tour is confirmed. This trip is custom designed and very inclusive with no hidden costs. Mail this form and direct inquiries to:**

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