



Barcelona is ready to party...

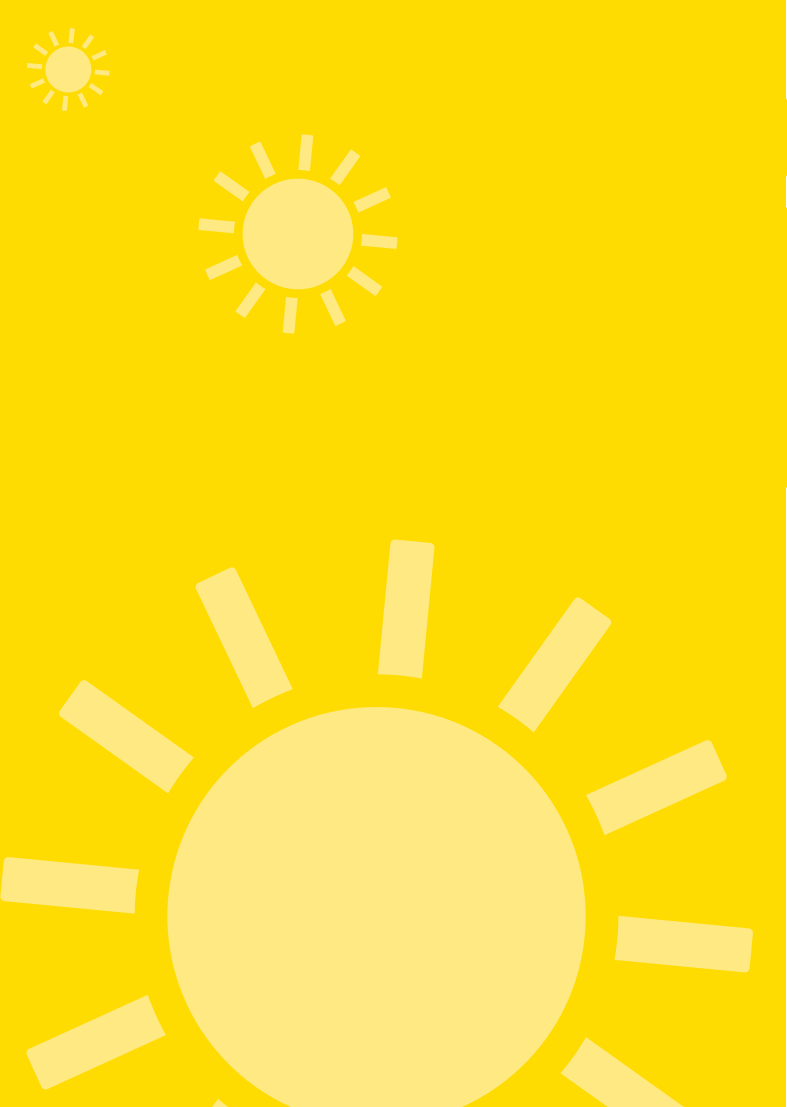
Welcome!

From 19 to 28 September



Ajuntament de Barcelona

www.bcn.cat/merce



Every year, Barcelona says goodbye to the summer with its Grand Festival. This year, the celebrations will last for more than a week: from Friday 19 to Sunday 28 September. During these days there are more than 600 events planned, combining musical tradition, street shows, dance, theatre, cinema, circus, cultural diversity and sports. In short, ten days of culture and celebrations for everyone. Here we present some of the most popular activities in this extensive programme.

It all began in the 17th century when...

The story goes that a plague of locusts attacked Barcelona. The city prayed to the Virgin of La Mercè to intervene and save it. And so when the plague was eradicated the people of Barcelona attributed it to the intervention of the Virgin who, from that moment on, was declared the patron saint of the city.

Tradition

Toc d'Inici (The First Note)

Friday 19 at 7.45pm
Plaça de Sant Jaume

The giants and mythical figures of medieval Barcelona come out onto the streets to celebrate the arrival of the festival. In the Plaça de Sant Jaume they show us their dances. They are accompanied by the Camí Ral Ministrrels early music group, which only performs once a year, at this event.

Correfoc (The Fire Run)

Saturday 20 at 8.30pm

From the Avinguda de Cambó (Santa Caterina Market) to the end of Via Laietana

This is one of the most spectacular events of the Catalan festive tradition. Fire and music add to lifelike scenes of hell with dragons and devils. Every summer festival in Catalonia has a fire run, and the capital has one of the biggest with dozens of groups of devils from all over the city and the surrounding area.

Warning!

The Fire Run can be dangerous and every person must take responsibility for themselves. If you want to dance with the devils, you must wear clothing that covers you to avoid the sparks. A cap or hat, cotton clothes and even goggles or special glasses are recommended. Children watching the Fire Run for the first time may become alarmed. Please ensure that they are not in the front lines. In case of accident, there are ambulances at the end of Via Laietana.

Correfoc de diables petits (Little Devils Fire Run)

Saturday 20 at 6.30pm

Starts at the bottom of Via Laietana (c. de Manresa) and goes up to the Avinguda de Cambó (Santa Caterina Market)

When you are here with small children it is a good idea not to take them to the main Fire Run and come to this one instead, which takes place a few hours before. It is a very similar parade, but the fireworks are not as big and the event centres around the children.

Morning of the Grand Festival: Wednesday 24

On the morning of Wednesday 24, a walk through the old quarter will bring you a host of surprises: groups of popular culture from all over the city invade the streets to celebrate the most festive day of the year. Ideal for seeing many of the elements of traditional Catalan culture in a single morning.

8am Early Morning Pipers: popular music groups parade around to wake everyone up. From the Plaça de la Mercè to the Plaça de Sant Jaume.

10am Blunderbuss Bearers: the old bandoleers fire shots in honour of La Mercè. From the Avinguda de la Catedral to the Plaça de Sant Jaume.

11am Morning of Giants: display of giants' dances and processions. From the Plaça de Sant Jaume to the Manning courtyard.

12.15pm Authorities Parade: authorities and historical figures walk to the institutional centre of Barcelona.

Castellers: human castles in the Plaça Sant Jaume

During the Mercè Festival there are two opportunities to see exhibitions by *castellers*. Since the season begins at the end of the spring and the groups spend the whole of the summer building castles all over Catalonia, the displays at La Mercè tend to be spectacular.

Sunday 21 at 12pm: with the participation of the **Castellers de Barcelona, Minyons de Terrassa and Castellers de Vilafranca**

Wednesday 24 at 12.30pm: meetings of *castellers* groups from the city (**Castellers of Barcelona, Sants, Vila de Gràcia, Sagrada Família and Poble-sec**)

Sardanas

The Catalan dance *par excellence*: the sardana is a serene, popular and very sociable dance that originated in the north of Catalonia. The dances at Mercè 2008 will take place as follows:

Friday 19 at 7pm Avinguda de la Catedral

Saturday 20 at 6pm Plaça de Sant Jaume

Sunday 21 at 11am Sardana groups competition.

Avinguda de la Catedral

Sunday 21 at 1pm Avinguda de la Catedral

Tuesday 23 at 6pm Plaça de Sant Jaume

Wednesday 24 at 7pm Plaça de la Mercè

The Mercè Parade

Wednesday 24 at 6pm

A popular procession with giants and symbolic figures. Begins in the Plaça de la Universitat and goes to the Avinguda de la Catedral.

Homage to King Jaume I

Saturday 20 at 12pm Plaça de Sant Jaume

Sunday 21 at 12pm Moll de Barcelona (World Trade Center)

800 years ago Jaume I was born – the Catalan-Aragonese sovereign who succeeded in unifying Aragon, Catalonia, Valencia, Majorca, some other Mediterranean lands and part of what is now the south of France. To pay homage to the most important king in the medieval history of Catalonia, groups of traditional culture from all the lands that formed part of the vast kingdom will meet in Barcelona. This is a unique opportunity to see exhibitions of folklore from the whole of the western Mediterranean.

Exhibitions of popular culture

The beasts, giants and other figures taking part in La Mercè are exhibited whenever they are not parading...

Figures from the Seguici Popular de Barcelona (Barcelona Popular Procession)

13 to 24 September from 10am to 9pm

Palau de la Virreina (La Rambla, 99)

Exhibition of Barcelona Giants

14 to 23 September from 10am to 8pm

Manning courtyard of the Casa de Caritat

Exhibition of dragons and fire beasts

14 to 23 September from 10am to 8pm

Barcelona City Hall (vestibule)

Firework Displays

11th International Firework Display of Barcelona

On Barceloneta beach. Visible from the Moll de la Fusta

Friday 19 at 10.30pm / France Arts & Feux (France)

Saturday 20 at 10.30pm / Pirotecnia San José (Extremadura)

Sunday 21 at 10.30pm / Pirotecnia Tiscornia (Uruguay)

Musical Fireworks

Wednesday 24 at 10pm

Avinguda de la Reina Maria Cristina

A spectacle of water, music, light and fireworks that takes place every year to close the Mercè Festival.

Music

Barcelona Musical Action (BAM)

21 to 24 September

The Barcelona Musical Action Festival (BAM) is a reference point in the city. It is now 16 years old and boasts quality and independence of criteria. Some of the names this year are: Nneka, Primal Scream, La Kinky Beat, cirKus, Kumar, The Long Winters and Richie Hawtin. There are more than 30 other groups and solo artists, so it is a good idea to consult the full programme of concerts.

More Music

(BAM) is one of Barcelona's most awaited festivals every year, but there is more music on offer on the fringe of the festival. At the Forum there will be many successful Spanish singers and groups such as La Unión, La Guardia, Melendi, Iguana Tango, Lucas Masciano and Chenoa. African rhythm, flamenco and fusion at the Avinguda de la Catedral, popular orchestras at the Plaça de Sant Jaume and jazz at the Ciutadella Park.



Street Shows: Party Places

The city centre is full of activity on every day of the festival, but there are lots of other shows programmed in other places in the city.

Cultural Crucible in the Ciutadella Park

Friday 19 to Sunday 21 from 11am

Street theatre shows from companies from all over the world take place in the Ciutadella Park with two challenges for the future: international dialogue and respect for the planet.

Montjuïc castle: Circus castle

Saturday 20 and Sunday 21 from 11am to 21.30pm

The old fort of Montjuïc, full of towers, courtyards and bridges, is an attraction in itself with its views over the city. During the Mercè it takes on the flavour of an international circus for all audiences. Clowns, jugglers, balancing acts...and lots of entertainment and games for all the family!

La Mercè, looking out to sea

Friday 19 to Sunday 28

Barcelona's Mediterranean location forms part of its essence. The city's harbours are the scenes for concerts, gastronomy displays and folklore. Also programmed are large format exhibitions about water and the sea.

Dance and alternative entertainment

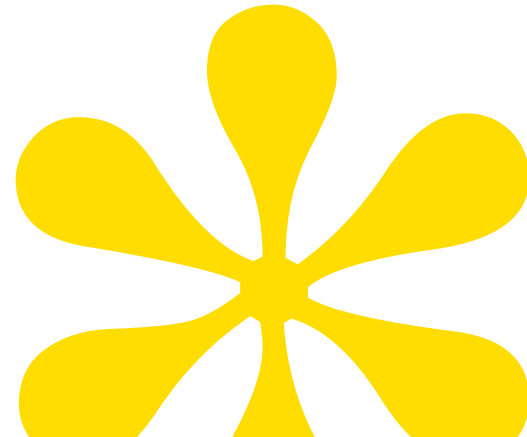
Friday 19 to Sunday 21 from 11am

For the more curious visitor it might be interesting to visit the old Fabra & Coats factory (in the neighbourhood of Sant Andreu). There you can see some of the most contemporary and cutting edge proposals on the European scene in the different areas of creativity, dance and theatre. The other attraction is the place itself, a 19th century factory that has been converted to house all kinds of cultural exhibitions.

Projections: "Mirages"

Friday 19 to Tuesday 23

One activity that you cannot miss: every evening the façade of the City Hall will show "Mirages" – a large scale montage that turns dialogue into poetry. The façade of the City Hall becomes a huge screen on which are projected audiovisual sensations set to music.



Intercultural Dialogue

Nights of Ramadan

Friday 26 to Sunday 28

Passeig Lluís Companys (Arc de Triomf)

While Barcelona celebrates its Festival, the Muslim community is celebrating Ramadan. Concerts by African and Pakistani artists are organised over three thematic nights. Apart from this, gastronomic exhibitions, workshops and exhibitions have also been organised at interesting meeting points.

Quito: guest city at Mercè 2008

The capital of Ecuador is the guest city at Mercè 2008. The whole city, especially the Moll de Barcelona and the Ciutadella Park, will be the venue for activities that give a taste of this Andean country, from cinema and theatre to concerts.

Museums open days

Wednesday 24

Most museums and some of Barcelona's most famous buildings also take part in the Festival by opening their doors to the public for free. On the 24 September you can visit the following:

CaixaForum
CCCB
La Virreina. Centre de la Imatge
Joan Miró Foundation
Botanic Gardens
La Capella
Museum of Ceramics
Museum of the History of Catalonia
Museum of the History of Barcelona
Natural History Museum
Frederic Marès Museum
Maritime Museum of Barcelona
Olympic and Sports Museum
Picasso Museum
Archaeological Museum of Catalonia
National Art Museum of Catalonia
Pilot Schooner *Santa Eulàlia*
Spanish Village (Poble Espanyol)



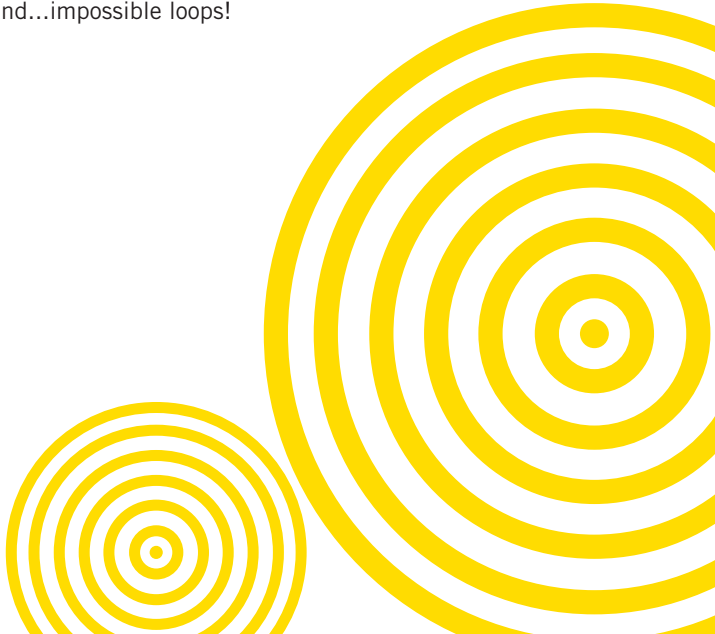
And the following weekend...

Festa al Cel (Festival of the Sky)

Sunday 28 9am to 2pm

Forum Park

During the whole weekend, the sky and space will take centre stage with a great number of activities. We especially recommend the Forum Park on the 28th. There will be workshops, family activities, children's entertainment and, especially, the impressive Air Show, with all kinds of aircraft and...impossible loops!



Sponsored by



This is just a selection of the events at the Barcelona Festival.




MORE INFORMATION

www.bcn.cat/merce

www.bcn.cat/canalcultura

By phone

 **010 Barcelona Informació:** from Monday to Saturday from 8am to 10pm (€ 0,45, for call establishment; € 0,06 minute charged in seconds)
Special hours during Mercè 2008: 19 to 24 September from 8am to 1am

 For info call 93 486 00 98

By mobile phone

Send the following SMS to 7010: "altamerce" (to receive alerts on changes to the programme), "barcelona.mobi" (to access all municipal information about the city on your terminal.)

Cost of message activation: € 0.15 (reception of SMS alerts: free; navigation cost: according to tariffs fixed by your operator).

At informations centres

- Palau de la Virreina Information Office (Rambla, 99) from 10am to 10pm
- Tourist Information Offices at the Plaça de Sant Jaume and Plaça de Catalunya



Barcelona
Diàleg
Intercultural