

Barcelona Creative Tourism

While a visit from friends and family is always a treat, planning exciting trips to suit everyone's interest can often become tough. Barcelona Turisme Creatiu unites visitors, natives, tourist attractions and the city's most prominent venues for tailor-made excursions to indulge your creative side. And if you're a travelling artist wanting to set up a show, they'll provide as much – or as little - help you need!

The programme was set up in 2006 by FUSIC, a private foundation who for thirty years have been giving people in and out of Catalonia the opportunity to actively participate in the rich, cultural life of this autonomous region. With this extensive experience, it's no wonder the recent initiative is now making its mark, including receiving rave-reviews at the UNESCO organised International Conference on Creative Tourism last October in Santa Fe. It was also noted for its originality and usefulness in aiding tourists in their quest for new experiences.

Barcelona Turisme Creatiu works on two levels; the first supports people wanting to run an artistic and creative activity in the city, be it youth orchestras, amateur swing dancers, aspiring photographers, art craftsmen and all that's in between. It's directed to those who appreciate Barcelona as an ideal, up-and-coming place to express diverse creative talents, but are clueless as to the artistic resources of the city needed to produce a quality project. In this sense, these creative tourists can contact organisers outlining the exciting activity they're planning to bring here.



Artist at work

Once the motions have been put in place, the programme does everything it can to meet the specific needs of each creative tourist, meaning that each project is personally customised. This can simply be from providing information to different sources, contacts or services that range from event design to technical production, communications to press



Performance in Santa Maria del Mar

releases. Or, it could be that they get partially or fully involved in the execution of a project, from searching for the perfect rehearsal and show venue or handling the technical productions and press campaigns. Once they've done all the research, which normally takes about a week, you'll be presented with a plan. All you have to do is pick the option out of the results that best suits you, so all your free time is spent on enjoying the city and not rushing around trying to plan every detail! For example, Sebastian is a Siberian sacerdotal who came to Barcelona to show his paintings, and sought help to find the perfect venue to complement his traditional works: "I have no idea how they managed to find a cosy gallery with balks that reminded me of Siberian house villages. My work feels totally at home here!"

One of the most important factors in this programme is the fact you can communicate in whichever language you prefer, be it Catalan, Spanish, English or French. The entire project was created in bringing Barcelona closer to its foreign visitors, so breaking through language barriers is one of the most crucial elements. The bridge between tourists and residents is further strengthened by the fact that natives often contact the company offering parts of their house, be it a terrace or kitchen to host a cultural act – now I'd say there's nothing more intimate than that!

The other part of the initiative is directed to members of the public, with any artistic passion just waiting to be fulfilled, so if dad has a knack for world guitar music and mum is a whiz with ceramics, you're sure to find something for them whilst they're in Barcelona. All you need to do is log on to the website and browse the many different courses and activities on offer, or alternatively get in contact, explain what you're looking for and let the programme organisers do the rest of the legwork! Not only will you get to try your hand at something you've always wanted, you'll be going along seeing new parts of the city and meeting other visitors and natives who all share your passion. Susana from the Bahamas, who took a ceramic course, says "doing an activity of this kind in a foreign country gives you the privilege of getting to know the inhabitants. The Catalan I met at the workshop helped me discover the city's secrets!" Now surely that beats the traditional tourism of sitting on a bus with headphones stuck in your ears the whole day!

Two people who have certainly been impressed with the programme are Sarah from Saudi Arabia, who enrolled in a Catalan tradition painting course who says, "The opportunity to share activities with



Life class(sorry, no model!)

Open air concert

local artists is very enriching. For first time I'll bring back more than a "souvenir"...I'll have my own creations!" Jimmy, a Swedish student who enrolled in an artistic glass workshop discovered more about Catalan modernist art through directly experiencing it. This surely shows that whatever your heart desires, you're most certain to find somehow to live it in a diverse range of cultural activities.

More info www.barcelonacreativa.info

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