



la mercè 06

Embolicat  
és la Mercè

## LA FIESTA MAYOR DE BARCELONA

### WHAT CAN I SEE DURING LA MERCÈ FESTIVITIES?

La Mercè is the "fiesta mayor" ("festa major" in Catalan) of the city. Every city has one. And Barcelona is big, so our festival could not be small! From September 22<sup>nd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> the city is throbbing more than ever. There's a bunch of activities you can enjoy: *Correfoc* (fire run, or demons parade), *castellers*, concerts (a lot, and most of them free), circus, air festival, traditional parades, exhibitions, photo contest, fireworks... Here is a selection:

### ACTIVITIES

#### THE BEGINNING

**What:** After an official speech there is the first parade of traditional giants, big-headed figures and beasts. All these characters do ceremonial dances for the start of the Festival. Then, at 9:30 PM, some beasts and fire dragons parade. However, the big fire demon festival takes place on Saturday (see below). At the Plaça dels Àngels -where the MACBA and CCCB are located-, you'll also see giants, dancing to the sound of Brazilian *batucada*. If you like percussion, don't miss it.

**When:** Thursday from 07:00 PM

**Where:** Ramblas, Ferran St., and Plaça Sant Jaume, and Plaça dels Àngels



#### CASTELLERS (HUMAN TOWERS)

**What:** Human tower festival. Different teams will take part in the exhibitions/contests on Sunday and Monday. The best one will be on Sunday, and that's when you can see the team you will belong to in Tarragona (if you are going with us on October 1st). See picture on the right.

**When:** Sunday at 12:30 pm. Sunday, at 12:00

**Where:** Saturday at the Pl. de la Mercè. Sunday, at the Plaça Sant Jaume (the Town Hall square).



Castellers human tower

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## CORREFOC (FIRE RUN)

**What:** An enormous adrenalin surge: devils burst into the city and chase everyone around with fiery torches. The greatest fire demon and beast parade in Catalonia, with more than 30 devil groups bursting into the city and chasing everyone around with fiery torches and bangers. Also, around 20 different fire beasts, including big and fantasy dragons, goats, pigs, rats...

**When:** Saturday from 8:30 PM

**Where:** The beginning is at the Santa Caterina Market, where the so-called *Puerta del Infierno* (Hell's door) will be located. You can follow them through Via Laietana and towards the Barceloneta *barrio*.



If you are getting close to the fire, it is important to ensure that your whole body is covered in cotton clothing, so wear long sleeve. You can bring ear plugs as well, but avoid wearing flip-flops: It's safer to have your feet covered.



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## SPECTACULAR FIREWORKS

**What:** Each night a different firework display company will present its show right next to the sea. This year, the guests are companies from China, Andalusia and the Balearic Islands. On the last night, to close La Mercè Festival, there will be a special treat: the closing Music Fireworks show combining water, light and melodies. Highly advisable.

**When:** Thursday, Friday Saturday and Sunday at 10:00PM

**Where:** On the **Barceloneta beach** every evening except on Monday, when the Musical Fireworks (*Piromusical*) will be held around the **Montjuïc fountains** (Espanya metro station). This time, the background music will be jazz. Be there on time!



## TRADITIONAL THEME PARADE

**What:** Parade of giants, fantasy characters, etc. This year, this big traditional, funny parade pays homage to other regions of Spain that were part of one medieval kingdom, the Catalunya and Aragón Crown: Southern France, Valencia, the Balearic Islands, and Aragó. There will be live music all along these streets.

**When:** Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> from 5:30 pm

**Where:** Ronda Sant Pere, Plaça de Catalunya, Rambla, Ferran, Plaça Sant Jaume, Via Laietana, Cathedral.



## FREE CONCERTS

**What:** There will be such a wide variety of music styles that I am sure you'll find what you are looking for. More than 100 concerts, and most of them free! From electronic music to traditional melodies. From mainstream Spanish bands to American indie rock. From African grooves to flamenco with scratches.

**When:** Everyday and every night.

**Where:** Many different spots: The Cathedral square, Plaça del Rei, Plaça Catalunya, the Forum, Rambla del Raval...

**More info:** For information about the BAM independent music festival, check [www.bcn.es/bam/](http://www.bcn.es/bam/) For info about the rest of concerts, just check the <http://merce.bcn.cat/castella/home.shtml> web site.



## OPEN DOOR SPOTS

**What:** During these festivities there is a number of museums that open doors to visitors for free. Here's a list of places and dates:

Centre de Cultura Contemporània (CCCB)

Sept 23, 24, 25

Museu Picasso

Sept 24 (10 am - 8 pm)

Museu Marítim

Sept 24 (10 am - 7pm)

Museu d'Història de Catalunya

Sept 24, 25 (10 am - 2pm)

Museu d'Història de la Ciutat

Sept 24 (10 am - 3 pm)

Jardí Botànic (Montjuïc)

Sept 24 (10am - 8pm)

Fundació Miró (Montjuïc)

Sept 25 (10 - 2:30pm)

Poble Espanyol (Montjuïc)

Sept 24

## HORSES FROM THE BALEARIC ISLANDS

**What:** On the island of Menorca there is an important tradition of horse breeding. In special occasions, horses parade among people. This year, these animals have been invited to Barcelona.

**When:** Monday at 12:00 and at 1:00 pm.

**Where:** Horse parade through La Rambla, Pl. de Catalunya, Portal de l'Àngel, and Av. Catedral; horse show on Av. Catedral at 1:00 pm



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## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

**Transportation:** The metro network will be open 24 hours a day on 22, 23 and 24 September, during the Festa Major. You can also use the streetcar (tram) if you go to the Forum. Metro passes are valid for this transportation network (see [www.trambcn.com](http://www.trambcn.com)).

**Crowds:** The best of La Mercè is people. All the city center (and part of what is not in the center) will be packed. Enjoy it, but be also especially careful. Pickpockets will work extra hours overnight this weekend!



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## OTHER ACTIVITIES

La Mercè-related photo contest, sun energy car rally, photo exhibitions, Wine, cava and food fair, free chocolate snacks, free and popular lunch meals for hundreds of people, book exhibitions, swimming competition, Aeronautical and Space Week on the city beaches (including free balloon riding on Saturday and Sunday, a *gimcana* (with lots of funny games around the city), a fairground at the Fòrum... So many things that you should stop reading this and go to the streets now!

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**More info on La Mercè celebrations:** <http://merce.bcn.cat/castella/home.shtml>, or at the Palau de la Virreina (La Rambla, 99), where you can get for free the complete and detailed program.