

Turisme de Barcelona promotes culture

Turisme de Barcelona travels to the USA and Mexico with a cultural delegation

- **The consortium promoter heads a promotional act in North America to promote cultural and high-quality tourism**
- **The consortium wants Barcelona to become a leader in the field of culture, entertainment, music and the arts**

Barcelona, 27 March 2017 – The **Turisme de Barcelona** consortium is currently heading a promotional mission in the USA and Mexico with a view to promoting cultural and sensitive tourism in relation to popular culture and identity. There are 16 companies escorting the **Turisme de Barcelona** delegation, which is focusing on this strategic market for Barcelona.

Those responsible for promoting **Turisme de Barcelona** will meet representatives of tour operators and organisations interested in cultural tourism in Houston, Miami and Mexico City.

Through this action on the American continent, Barcelona will specifically promote all those attractions related to culture and the heritage of Barcelona and its surrounding areas, such as the **Monastery of Montserrat**, as well as some new, more recent

consortium member organisations, such as the **Casa Vicens**, which will be opening in the autumn. Two major institutions are among the cultural organisations involved in the promotional action in the USA and Mexico: the **Miró Foundation** and the **National Museum of Art of Catalonia (MNAC)**, both of which are members of the consortium, whose membership is constantly increasing.

Turisme de Barcelona's objective is to strategically promote cultural and heritage attractions whilst increasing the territorial scale of the destination. In this regard, companies and operators, such as that responsible for the Monastery of Montserrat, are travelling to promote *Barcelona és molt més* [There's much more to Barcelona], the programme established together with the Provincial Council of Barcelona two years ago to decentralise tourism.

Tourists account for approximately 80% of visitors to museums

According to recent data from the Cultural Heritage Observatory of Catalonia, tourists make up almost **80% of visitors** to museums (and over 90% to the Picasso Museum). Of the total number of museum visitors, less than half paid the full entry price (36% visited free of charge), data that should be taken into account in the context of tourist presence, since tourists are not given any kind of discount.

The US market

The USA is the world's third most populated country after China and India. The US tourist, according to the US Department for Trade, has an average age of 46 and a medium to high income. From a socio-demographic point of view, there are two age ranges of note in relation to tourist conduct: *millennials* (young people between the ages of 18 and 34) and *baby boomers* and *seniors* (born in the fifties and sixties), who have greater spending capacity.

US tourists see Spain primarily as a cultural destination, since 89% of those who travelled there in 2015 took part in some kind of cultural activity. The second most important activity is shopping (82.9%). US tourism is shown by the same data to be of high quality and, according to the WTO, has one of the highest volumes of expenditure, second only to China. The favourable economic situation, good functioning of the labour market and improvement in flight connections are key when it comes to focusing on this market.

Tourism-wise, US tourists are interested in culture and entertainment, but they particularly appreciate gastronomy and wine tourism, as demonstrated by the statistics, both in terms of reasons for travelling and spending distribution data.

Furthermore, it should be noted that this country is sensitive to safety issues, and the geopolitical stability of the Mediterranean region is a positive factor.

Mexico

According to the Mexican State Tourism Department, 59% of Mexican households travelled in 2013. The most popular activities are art and culture (54.8%), visits to cultural spaces (54%) and gastronomy. In terms of factors influencing the decision to visit a particular tourist destination, Mexican tourists consider that Barcelona has cultural and historical places of interest, quality and diversity of food and drink and good infrastructure.

Singular houses and art galleries

This promotional trip is taking place in addition to other actions fostered by **Turisme de Barcelona** to promote culture. Thus, throughout the year, the consortium has been promoting the programme entitled *Singular Houses*, a route that takes in historical houses through which tourists can learn about the history of Barcelona and its protagonists.

The Palauet Casades, Biblioteca Arús, Palau Baró de Quadras, Casa Rocamora, Torres Bellesguard, Casa de les Punxes and Hotel España are just some of the buildings included in the programme and which can be visited from the outside as well as inside in order to find out about the daily lives of their inhabitants and the city in general.

Also, in the framework of the strategy to make the city a global leader in the field of culture and art, **Turisme de Barcelona** has published a new map with which it is promoting a new cultural route including 52 art galleries in Barcelona and Catalonia. In printed and interactive versions, this guide offers visitors different itineraries so that they can follow a cultural route through the city. Produced in collaboration with the Catalan Association of Art Galleries, the leaflet is available at **Turisme de Barcelona** information points, as well as in hotels, at national and international exhibitions, tour operator establishments and other organisations in the tourism sector.

Indeed, architecture and culture are the elements most valued by visitors to the city. According to data from the 2015 Turisme de Barcelona report, visitors gave architecture a score of 9.1 out of 10 and art a score of 8.8.

In this context, a guide entitled *Visit Barcelona #Don't let plans go*, was published this year. It is a compilation of 56 ideas and ways of enjoying Barcelona and other nearby areas throughout the year, and the majority of them have a cultural component. **Saint George's Day**, Barcelona Primavera Sound, the Grec, Sónar and the International Jazz Festival are perhaps the most well-known recommendations, although there are others that are being supported and promoted.

Although Turisme de Barcelona has been promoting culture, art and entertainment for some time as one of the major attractions of the city, the consortium promoter has now strengthened this strategy, selecting high-quality festivals that enhance the international position of the Catalan capital in these fields. Proof of this is the publication of *Visit Barcelona #Don't let plans go*, which has been translated into four languages (Catalan, Spanish, English and French) and is aimed at four markets considered strategic by the consortium promoter: the USA, UK, France and Spain.

Barcelona Obertura

In this context, in 2017 Turisme de Barcelona incorporated the new project entitled *Barcelona Obertura Classic & Lyric* to promote classical and lyrical music with the programmes of the Liceu, Auditori, Palau de la Música Catalana and Ibercamera on an international level and organise high-quality musical tourist packages for music lovers, especially European cultural tourists.