

Mercè

2012

Barcelona

SEPTEMBER
21-24
#Mercè12

Ajuntament de
Barcelona



Barcelona, la casa que vull

MERCÈ
2012

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There is no better time to delve into the soul of Barcelona than La Mercè, when the whole city seems to take to the streets to revel in an authentic Mediterranean celebration, characterised by fire and light, circus acts and dance, music and street entertainment. Even the mild September weather seems to complement the festivities, providing Catalan talent with a showcase for creating innovative performances without losing sight of a longstanding tradition that is constantly reinventing itself. For the festival duration, gunpowder, music and performing arts get together so that Barcelona residents and their guests, in this case the city of Montreal, experience the liveliest occasion of the year.

A COMPENDIUM OF CATALAN TRADITION

The festival is rooted in the Virgin of La Mercè, named patron saint after the city placed itself in her hands to combat a plague of locusts in the 17th century. The festival as we know it today really took off in the late 19th and early 20th centuries when, under the impetus of the Catalan politician Francesc Cambó, it became a compendium of traditions from all over Catalonia. With the restoration of democracy, following the Spanish Civil War and the Franco regime, La Mercè became a truly popular celebration thanks to the participation of the city's many institutions and associations promoting traditional culture.



— TRADITION

The Opening Ceremony (Toc d'Inici)

Friday 21 / 7.45 pm
Plaça de Sant Jaume

The city's *gegants* (giants), along with the Eagle, the Viper, the Ox, the Mule and the rest of Barcelona's festival imagery, are veritable icons of tradition. Seeing them perform their dances (some even accompanied by fireworks) at the beginning of the festival is a must. Note the music played by an ensemble of forty musicians, the Ministrils del Camí Real, which performs only once a year. It is the perfect opportunity to hear traditional Catalan instruments such as the *tarota*, the *flabiol* and the *tabal*. Don't leave before seeing the city's devils and falcons perform choreographies that are new this year.

Festa Major Morning

Though tradition permeates the festival, the most intense traditional festivities take place on the feast of the patron saint and, particularly, on a morning when the Gothic Quarter becomes the perfect setting for festival-goers to immerse themselves in Catalan popular culture.

Morning of Gegants

Monday 24 / 11 am
Plaça de Sant Jaume

Following an overnight stay in the City Hall, Barcelona's giants face a morning of hard work: not only do they perform their dances for the many spectators that gather in Plaça de Sant Jaume, but they parade the streets alongside the *capgrossos* (dwarf-like figures with giant heads) from the Gothic Quarter and El Raval. Kids are mesmerised by them so they are not to be missed... with or without the little ones!

Sardanes and Castells

The *sardana*, Catalonia's folk dance, and *castells*, or human towers, are two well-known ingredients of Catalan popular tradition, yet you cannot miss the opportunity to witness these beautiful and thrilling spectacles performed live.

Castells Day with Guest Colles

Sunday 23 / 12 noon
Plaça de Sant Jaume

As we said earlier, La Mercè took shape in the early 20th century as a compendium of traditions from all over Catalonia. The tradition of building *castells* originated in the southern part of Catalonia. However, Barcelona also boasts a rich *casteller* tradition today, which it proves by inviting some of the best *colles*, or groups, from all over Catalonia to share in this festive performance, on this occasion the Minyons de Terrassa and the Castellers de Vilafranca. Quite the spectacle is guaranteed.

Castells Day

Monday 24 / 12.30 pm
Plaça de Sant Jaume

When the city's giants and the Eagle have performed their dances, Barcelona's *colles castelleres* will demonstrate their skills and compete to build the most spectacular human towers. This year, within the framework of the Arianna Mediterranean network of culture and heritage, performances will be given by the Castellers de Barcelona as well as *colles* from Sant's, Vila de Gràcia, Sagrada Família, Poble Sec and the Colla Jove de Barcelona.

Sardanes

Sunday 23 / 6 pm
Plaça de Sant Jaume

The Coblà Ciutat de Girona, a prestigious musical ensemble that formed in 1975, will accompany the *sardanes* performed by the Agrupació Cultural Folklorica de Barcelona, which plays a leading role in Barcelona's *sardana* movement.

Sardanes and Coblà Concert

Monday 24 / 7 pm (dance) and 9 pm (concert)
Plaça de la Mercè

The Agrupació Cultural Folklorica de Barcelona and the Coblà Marinada will perform *sardanes* in front of the Basilica of La Mercè. Afterwards, the Coblà Sant Jordi – Ciutat de Barcelona will give a concert of traditional Catalan music.

La Mercè Cavalcade

Monday 24 / From 6 pm to 8.30 pm
C. de Pelai (with Gravina), La Rambla, C. de Ferran, Pl. de Sant Jaume,
C. de Jaume I, Via Laietana and Pl. de Ramon Berenguer el Gran

The city's giants, stars of the parade that features the city's festival imagery and street artists, stage one of the festival's most colourful moments. This year a tribute is paid to the tremendous variety of animals in Catalan festival imagery, which includes forest, mythological and fire-breathing creatures, among others. As this year marks the centenary of La Pedrera, the cavalcade will present many *Modernista* (Catalan Art Nouveau) elements.

Popular Culture

Those who wish to catch the dragons, giants, fire-breathing beasts and other mythical festive characters up close can see them at rest and on display for the public in some of La Mercè's most traditional exhibitions.

Barcelona Parade

Palau de la Virreina (La Rambla, 99)
From 15 to 24 September, 10 am to 8 pm

Exhibition of the Gegants of Barcelona

Pati Manning, Casa de Caritat
(Montalegre, 7)
From 16 to 22 September, 10 am to 8 pm

Exhibition of Dragons and Fire-breathing Beasts

Vestibule, Barcelona City Hall
(Plaça de Sant Jaume)
From 15 to 22 September, 10 am to 8 pm

Hell's Gate and the *Correfoc*

Sunday 23 / 8.30 pm

Via Laietana, from Plaça de Antoni Maura
to Plaça de Antonio López

The *correfoc* (literally, “fire run”) was an invention that dates back to the restoration of democracy; nevertheless, it brings together the traditional ingredients of Catalan culture and the absolute essence of Mediterranean festivities. This procession kicks off when fire-spitting beasts and devils pour out from the Gates of Hell, bathing the streets in fire. It is up to each individual spectator to decide on the distance kept between them and the devils and beasts but they must always err on the side of caution, considering their limitations if they need to start running and bearing in mind that burns can be endured.

Fun Without Danger

Anyone who has not experienced a *correfoc* has missed out on one of Barcelona's most exhilarating traditions. Such a spectacle will be etched on the memories of its spectators. Nevertheless, they must follow some basic rules of conduct and bear in mind that the *correfoc* is just as impressive when watched from a prudent distance. Those not familiar with the event should not to be too daring. In any case, those taking part should dress appropriately: wear long-sleeved clothing made of cotton (never synthetic materials), a hat and neckerchief, comfortable footwear and avoid shorts and high-heeled shoes. And, above all, never pour water over the beasts and devils, as wet gunpowder is unpredictable and highly dangerous.

FIREWORKS

Fireworks Display

Barceloneta beach (Gas jetty)
Saturday 22 and Sunday 23 / 10 pm

Fire, light and a striking array of colours celebrate the feast of the patron of Barcelona from the sky. Two prestigious fireworks companies, from Quebec and the Canary Islands respectively, will present this year's spectacle of fire and gunpowder.

Saturday 22: GFA Pyro (Quebec)

Sunday 23: Pirotécnica el Carmen (Canary Islands)

Musical Fireworks Display (Piromusical)

Avinguda de la Reina Maria Cristina
Monday 24 / 10 pm

Every year, crowds of city folk gather on the long avenue running between Plaça d'Espanya and the Montjuïc fountains to bring La Mercè festival to a close. And it is no wonder, because the fireworks display synchronised with music is a magnificent spectacle. This year's Piromusical will pay tribute to a magical moment in the history of Barcelona: the Games of '92 when a transformed and transfixed city projected its image to the entire world.



MUSIC

BAM Festival

Friday 21, Saturday 22 and Sunday 23
Various venues

Catalonia fervently upholds its traditions yet is also endowed with a special talent for the latest creations, for example on the music scene. For this reason, the BAM festival, which celebrates its 20th edition this year and distributed between the Parc del Fòrum and the city centre, has become a showcase for local talent. Promising young indie artists from Catalonia including Lidia Damunt, Maria Rodés, Isaac Ulam and L'Hereu Escampa are in the line-up alongside figures on the national, European and American indie scene such as Vetusta Morla, The Kooks, Howlin Rain, Black Dice, Fliptrix and THEESatisfaction, to name but a few. Hip and happening Barcelona.

Mercè Music

Friday 21, Saturday 22 and Sunday 23
Various venues

For dancing, travelling the world without leaving home or finding your roots, La Mercè has music for everything and for everyone. Whoever fancies a dance should make their way to Plaça de Sant Jaume, where everything from pop songs by Miqui Puig to rumba by Los Amaya will be playing. Plaça de Catalunya will feature folk music hailing from Catalonia (La Carrau) and Quebec (Le Vent du Nord) or music produced here but with African roots (AfriCants), as well as the tunes of two legendary singer-songwriters: Oriol Tramvia and Pau Riba. World music will be played on Avinguda de la Catedral, including Gochag Askarov and the Mugham Ensemble from Azerbaijan as well as Emel Mathlouthi from Tunisia, considered the voice of the Jasmine Revolution. Rock, pop and electronic music will predominate the Parc del Fòrum, where artists such as Maika Makovski, Very Pomelo and Che Sudaka, among others, can be heard.



MAC: LA MERCÈ STREET ARTS FESTIVALS

Street shows, dance and circus acts - Street shows, dance and circus acts - these are just some of the many proposals put forward by Mercè Arts de Carrer (MAC), a major festival that is part of the Barcelona *fiesta major* which, every year, presents the latest creations by artists and groups from different countries and particularly on the Catalan art scene. This year more than fifty national and international companies dedicated to circus acts, street theatre, dance and other disciplines will take part. The MAC Festival affords these companies a superb showcase for their latest proposals and offers shows to the public that have been carefully selected for their high calibre.

Though the MAC programme includes a broad spectrum of shows, their common denominator is a contemporary vision, informal nature and a freshness that is never at odds with the most refined technique. Those that follow are just a handful of the scheduled shows in the MAC festival though there are many more. For the festival's full programme, see the Mercè 2012 website: www.bcn.cat/merce

Projections onto the Façade of the City Hall

From 21 to 24 September
Plaça de Sant Jaume

For many years now, these shows have transformed the façade of the city hall on evenings of the city's *fiesta major*. This time round, the city hall has been turned into an apartment building which strives to celebrate the festival in style and has organised a magical journey entitled "Barcelona, la casa de tots" (Barcelona, everybody's home). It will take us from the famous Boqueria market to Tibidabo and the legendary Sónar festival in between. A brilliant spectacle of light and technology.

The Park of Dance and Street Theatre

Ciutadella Park
From 22 to 24 September

It is one of the city's most popular parks yet not everyone is familiar with its history, so it will be recounted here through music and dance. "Ciutadella, a history" is only one of the many proposals of this site, which leads a double life: by day and by night. During the day, more family-oriented activities take place but there are also activities geared towards those that enjoy watching street and dance performances... or dancing. In addition to a stage where whoever wishes can dance in front of a giant screen ("La Mercè canta i balla" – La Mercè sings and dances), here you can learn the dance steps of the latest urban cultures in "El ritme del carrer" (The rhythm of the street), as you will see when you check out the website www.elritmedelcarrer.cat



The Park of Light and Technologies

Ciutadella Park
From 21 to 23 September

At sunset, the park will be flooded with light installations and installations inspired by the latest cutting-edge technology, as well as shows where light takes centre stage. The line-up includes multimedia artists such as Marcel·lí Antúnez and his *Metamembrana* and the French company Bilbobasso, which shall tell a tale of seduction brought spectacularly to life in *Polar*, a show performed on sand featuring tango music, fire and juggling. The choreographer Sol Picó and her piece *Spanish Omelette* and the British jugglers Gandini Juggling and their *Glow* routine are just some of the many evening proposals on offer in Ciutadella Park.

The Circus at Montjuïc Castle

Montjuïc Castle
From 22 to 24 September

Circus acts in Catalonia are witnessing a burgeoning creative scene. To see it for yourself, make your way to Montjuïc castle where the cannons fire raucous laughter and attack visitors with good cheer during the *fiesta major*. Shows produced in Barcelona such as *Maravillas*, *16è Circ d'Hivern*, among many other proposals, shall be presented here as will the latest show by a prestigious circus from Montreal.

THE GUEST CITY

**Montreal: The Great
Creators of North America**

montreal signe

La Mercè Festival invites a special guest city every year, which presents a sample of their talent to Barcelona audiences. This year we are visited by Montreal, the second largest French-speaking city in the world, which is also one of the major centres of creation in North America. During the *fiesta major* we will find out why it has attracted artists from across the globe. For further information: www.ville.montreal.qc.ca

Multimedia Show "Montréal signe l'Ode à la vie"

From 21 to 23 September / 9 pm, 10 pm, 11 pm and midnight
Church of Sagrada Família

As guest city at La Mercè 2012, Montreal is proud to offer Barcelona a multimedia show that pays tribute to the creative genius of Antoni Gaudí, affording special importance to the Sagrada Família, an exquisite masterpiece and veritable icon of the Catalan capital.

Invited by the city of Montreal, the creators of Moment Factory, a company specialised in developing multimedia installations, have put together a show in seven acts. Inspired by Gaudí, for whom "creation continues incessantly through the media of man", this magnificent show will light up the façade of the Nativity of the Holy Family for three nights only with an ode to the creation of the world, an ode to the creation of man, an ode to life!

With the support of the city of Barcelona, Montreal and the Government of Quebec.

Le Vent du Nord

Friday 21 / 9.30 pm
Plaça de Catalunya

One of the world's greatest folk groups comes from Quebec, where it formed ten years ago and from where Nicolas Boulerice, Simon Beaudry, Olivier Demers and Réjean Brune have dazzled the world music scene with a mixture of original compositions and a traditional folk repertoire.

Piknic Electronik Barcelona

Sunday 23 / 1 pm to 10 pm
Joan Brossa Gardens

Electronic music is not confined to nightclubs. This was discovered a number of years ago in Montreal, La Mercè's guest city. Last summer, Barcelona also came to this realisation and welcomed the initiative with open arms. Piknic Electronik combines open spaces with the most advanced music, suitable for people of all ages, including the little ones, since it has a designated area for families.

Cirque Éloize

From 22 to 24 September / 1 pm and 6.15 pm
Montjuïc Castle

Barcelona's circus experts are biting their nails with impatience as they await the performance of this group of artists from Montreal, renowned for producing shows brimming with poetry and combining circus techniques with dance and music, which have captivated audiences the world over. They bring their latest creation to La Mercè, a surprise that promises to be one of the greatest attractions on the Mercè 2012 programme.

FESTIVE MUSEUMS

The city's museums and art centres will celebrate Barcelona's *fiesta major* with an abundance of activities and open days, providing visitors with an insight into unique buildings and magnificent art collections. For information on museums and other centres taking part in the initiative as well as the scheduled activities, please see the festival website:

<http://www.bcn.cat/merce>

Please Note!

This information leaflet outlines just some of the manifold events on the Mercè 2012 programme. Many more activities, which are just as interesting, are listed on the full programme for Barcelona's *fiesta major* or on the Mercè 2012 website:

<http://www.bcn.cat/merce>

FURTHER INFORMATION:

ON THE INTERNET

Visit the following websites:

www.bcn.cat/merce

www.bcn.cat/barcelonacultura

www.facebook.com/barcelonacultura

Twitter

Find tweets about the festival grouped under the hashtag #Mercè12. Please make use of it when writing about La Mercè on your Twitter account.

Downloadable Applications

On the Mercè website, you can download an application to access the Mercè programme using your Apple or Android smartphone. The application is also available in the App Store and Google Play Store.

BY TELEPHONE

010: Barcelona Informació, 24 hours a day (cost of call: €0.46, plus €0.06 per minute, charged by the second, including VAT).

Information adapted for the deaf and hard of hearing: send an SMS to tel. (+34) 93 317 14 16.

AT INFORMATION OFFICES

Tiquet Rambles, Palau de la Virreina (La Rambla, 99), from Monday to Sunday, 10 am to 8.30 pm.

Information and Tourist Information Offices in Plaça de Sant Jaume and Plaça de Catalunya.

**bcn.cat/
merce**

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