

## 2i BCN 2019

As in the past several years, our class traveled to Barcelona for our study trip, where we explored the city and the surrounding Catalonia region's artwork, foods, nature and history. We departed Copenhagen for Barcelona Sunday afternoon, 3 March 2019, and returned on Saturday the 9th. Accompanying our class on the trip were English teacher Andrew Miller (AM), Physics and Math teacher Claudia Gritti (CG), Danish teacher and guidance counselor Anne Wilson (AW) and Psychology teacher Mette Morell (MM).



Upon our arrival Sunday evening, we established ourselves in the hostel, quickly finding both the street-fighter arcade machine, the pool table, and the movie corner. Our first activity was finding a restaurant. Some people got paella, chorizo, tortilla or other traditional Spanish foods, but others were scared by the amount of choices and settled for ordering well-known delicacies like kebab and Taco Bell.



After a night of getting used to each other's company and the hostel beds while trying to fall asleep, the class woke up bright and early Monday morning for a walk through Barcelona, exploring in particular the architectural works of Antoni Gaudi. His architecture seemed alive, and if judging by the amount of photos taken, was a highlight of the trip. We didn't see any straight walls anywhere, and the craftsmanship was beyond impressive. Our first stop on the Gaudi adventure was La Pedrera, an unusual, curved apartment building that was the last private residence Gaudi created; although it was met with criticism at the time for its eccentricity, its beauty is undeniable and it has since become one of Barcelona's most beloved and remarkable buildings.



Afterwards, we visited the massive and still unfinished La Sagrada Familia, possibly Gaudi's most famous work. La Sagrada Familia wasn't in itself alive, looking like a petrified forest, but instead gave life to the sun outside, passing through the stained windows and bathing us in the clearest, most beautiful colours I've seen in a long time. We were given earpods to follow a guided tour, but they were mostly useful for filtering out sounds of babies crying.





After a long walk to the outskirts of town, we were able to relax at Gaudi's Parc Guell in the afternoon. The park featured several sculptures by Gaudi and scenic pathways that offered an excellent overlook over the city center.

Tuesday morning we walked through narrow southern European streets, bustling with mopeds and grandmas, we saw impressive, gothic chapels with a courtyard full of geese and palm trees, and with the church spire towering above, and I thought that if I was medieval I'd for sure believe in god if I saw that. Blue sky, impressive building, beautiful palm tree, all in the name of the lord. Daniel threw a coin in a slot to light a candle for a saint, but no lights came on, and he left without a blessing.

That afternoon, the class visited the National Art Museum of Catalonia, showcasing famous artwork from across the region and across the past millennium. Its Romanesque art collection, composed mostly of religious murals and artwork from churches, was known as one of the most complete and extensive in the world; it was just one of several art exhibitions, which together allowed us to visualize the change and continuity of Catalan and Spanish artwork over time.



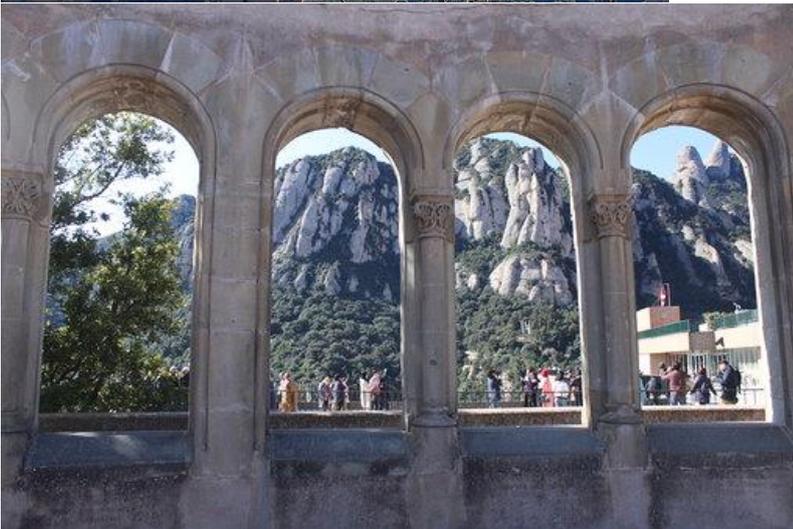
Romans had bathed two thousand years ago, and jumped into the cold water, trying to convince ourselves that we were in the warm south. Some of the guys lost their precious FC Barcelona ball, and retrieved it by talking to it, trying to grab it with sticks, and with other chaotic methods while the rest of the class could laugh.



Thursday was the Breakout Day, where students could choose one of four activities - a lesson in Latin dance that taught every type of dance but Latin, with Mette; a trip to Barcelona's Picasso museum, with Claudia; a tour of important sites in the Spanish Civil War, with Anne; and a visit to a history museum, with Andrew. The visitors to the history museum were able to see countless interesting artifacts representing Catalonia's past and learn about how their unique struggles and history affect Catalan people today. The Picasso museum was Picasso's life work, a mad house

filled to the brim with oddities, illusions, fantastic paintings and mechanical artpieces. One day would've never been enough to see it all.

We spent Friday, the last full day, traveling to Montserrat, a mountain located an hour from Barcelona that's known as one of the holiest and prettiest sites in Catalonia. The long ride up the mountain was stunningly beautiful and spoke of more picturesque sights to come as we continued to ascend.



On the slope of the mountain lies a still-functioning monastery housing the Black Madonna, a sculpture of the Virgin Mary that has been the destination of pilgrims from everywhere. At this point maybe saturated in our needs for appreciation of stained glass and marble vaults, our mission was to walk through the mountains behind it.



Their beauty and peacefulness left no question about why the monks had thought this place particularly holy. The mountaintops were rounded by wind and rain, and the lush green gorges housed thousands of songbirds, eagerly providing a concert to anybody willing to slow down and shut up for a while. Mountain-goats with horns over a meter long looked solemnly at us, and snakes slithered away beneath our feet.



The views were staggering, and it was one of those places that make you realize that the world, and all the life in it, exists merely for its own enjoyment, and that you're just immensely lucky to be here too, hearing the birds sing to themselves, the goats eat for themselves, and the mountains rest for themselves. And when you got tired of such thoughts, you had 50 great friends around you.



Friday night was the annual class dinner at Rossini's, an Italian restaurant on La Rambla, the city's historic and bustling walking street. It was a fitting conclusion to a long and tiring week in Barcelona and a way to sit down and enjoy each other's company for one last evening. While the schedule, as you may have noticed, was in itself bountiful, it also left plenty of room for free time; time to hang out, connect with, and have fun with our fifty former compatriots, now friends. Barcelona was much too big to fit just the planned activities, and it was in large part up to us to maximize our own entertainment. We didn't need any encouragement to see and experience what the city had to offer; we were encouraged enough to get out and about by the city's sights and attractions, the calm, springy weather and the squalid conditions of our hostel. Some people went to museums, some people shopped all week, some people spent their nights at the beach, but everyone had fun and thoroughly enjoyed their stay in Barcelona.

Zack & Hektor

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1VyFdhDasco6us5KXu7II2UL9bGGffiaXIUmxyPYf4PQ/edit>