

Alex Bourke and Marco Silenzio of Vegetarian Guides review the Catalan capital's 50 vegetarian eateries.

BARCELONA

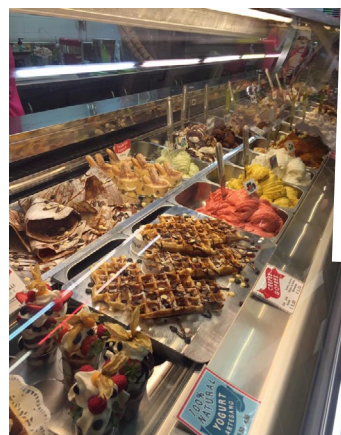
Barcelona is one of Europe's best cities for a vegetarian weekend break. Tapas restaurants are on every street - try traditional veggie soups such as gazpacho and *salmorejo*, *pimientos de padrón* deep fried peppers, and *setas* mushrooms grilled with garlic, oil and white wine. Antoni Gaudí's extraordinary, colourful Modernist buildings are everywhere, such as the La Sagrada Familia church, and the city is bursting with art museums including the Picasso, Miró, Catalan, and Contemporary. You can relax on sandy beaches, have coffee in the Gothic quarter, take a guided bike tour, and dance till dawn.

Veggie Garden in the Raval old city, and a new bigger branch near Plaça de Catalunya, are fabulous vegan restaurants serving three courses with bread and wine for just €8.50, plus à la carte and a juice bar. Nepali chefs create authentic Indian, Spanish and European cuisine like salads, baba ganoush, gazpacho, *fideuà* Catalan paella with thin short noodles instead of rice, steamed Chinese ravioli, thali, seitan, lasagne, quiche and 'meat' balls. Desserts include

chocolate cream, apple crumble and apple cake.

Biocenter and **L'Hortet** are organic vegetarian restaurants in the same street near Plaça de Catalunya and Las Ramblas. Both are amazing value at €10 for a four-course buffet lunch, or €15 table service evenings and weekends. Fill up with soup, an unlimited salad bar, a dish of the day and a dessert. At Biocenter, for instance, you can have seitan kebabs with sweet and sour sauce, Thai-style tofu, or cashew raw lasagne, and tempt your sweet tooth with apple pie or banana and coconut cake.

At **CatBar**, near the cathedral, tap and bottled local craft beers are all vegan, as is the food. Daily specials are gluten-free, such as Tex-Mex Tuesday, Wokki Wednesday, or Faux-Fish



Friday with deep-fried battered tofu in seaweed. Bean, hemp and Mexican burgers come with patatas bravas, chips or green salad (€8.50). Finish with chocolate cake or raw cheesecake with fruits of the forest. There's a piano where anyone can take a turn, and live guitar Thursday to Saturday from 11.30pm.

Also recommended...

- **Bar Celoneta Sangria Bar** is a sun-worshipper's dream: a bar and vegan restaurant just off Barceloneta beach, with tapas, raw, burgers, and meaty tempeh and seitan options to delight the non-veggies.
- **Dolce Pizza** does a large thin-crust Four Seasons pizza (€8) with almond vegan cheese, and vegan desserts like tiramisu.
- **Gelaati di Marco**, in the Barri Gòtic, specialises in dairy-free gelato like rice dark chocolate, coconut, avocado, cinnamon, liquorice or coffee.



- **BlueProject** art café, next to Parc de la Ciutadella, is the place for gourmet raw versions of pizza, pasta and cakes.
- **Feria Vegana** is a monthly vegan food fair where you can meet and eat with Marco Silenzio, and find clothes, bags, cosmetics and talks in Spanish.

NEED TO KNOW

Veggie Garden

Facebook: Veggie Garden

Biocenter

www.restaurantbiocenter.es/en

L'Hortet

www.hortet-restaurant.com

CatBar

Facebook: Cat Bar CAT

Bar Celoneta

Facebook: Bar Celoneta Sangria Bar

Dolce Pizza

www.dolcepizzaylosveganos.com

Gelaati di Marco

www.gelaati.com

Café BlueProject

www.blueprojectfoundation.org/en/el-cafe-en

Feria Vegana

Facebook: Feria Vegana

ABOUT ALEX

Alex Bourke is the publisher of Vegetarian Guides to London, the British Isles and Paris. Visit his website at www.vegetarian.travel for book extracts, links to veggie travel websites for many countries, and a calendar of vegan festivals.

