

Ultimate 2 Days in Tarragona, Spain Itinerary & Travel Guide

WHY DO THE 2 IDIOTS RECOMMEND BARCELONA?

After visiting one of our favorite cities, [Barcelona](#), with extended family – and two more children – we hit the road to explore Southern Spain’s coastline, discovering the allure of the coastal city of Tarragona.

Upon first impressions, we were, well, not impressed. It seemed like a small, little town with not much but boy were we wrong. Not only did we see some incredible sights, we ended up having some of our best meals in this incredibly charming ancient Roman city. All you need is two days to see it, although we easily could have spent more time here.

WHERE TO STAY

Unlike Barcelona, where we recommend avoiding the main thoroughfare of Las Ramblas for accommodations, in Tarragona we felt the heart of town was the best place to stay. Rambla Nova is a great launching point for seeing the town, so find a place within a few blocks of the area. As we had four adults and three kids on our visit, we elected to [stay in an Airbnb](#) that had an elevator, washer and dryer, and lots of toys, within an easy walk to the train station.

CREATING AN IDEAL ITINERARY

Tarragona has all of the quaint Spanish charm of bigger cities along the Mediterranean. It’s a beach town with lots of history dating back to the Romans. Regardless of whether you follow our itinerary or not, you should note Tarragona is hilly. Be sure you wear very comfortable shoes, have a good stroller, and are ready to push hard to get your stroller up the steep hills.

Days	Itinerary	Cost
1	Start at Cathedral de Tarragona Walk to Mediterranean Balcony via Rambla Nova Visit Circa Roma	€8.30 total per adult for Cathedral and Circa Roma

	Have dinner on Rambla Nova	
2	Start day at Amphitheatre Visit Pont del Diable (Les Ferreres Aqueduct) Go to Playa del Milagro in the afternoon Have dinner by the water promenade	€3.30 total per adult for Amphitheatre, Pont del Diable is free

Day 1: Discover Tarragona

We were shocked to discover Roman ruins all over Tarragona (and all of Southern Spain). Here, people are living in Tarragona and beneath them are these ruins that date back centuries! It was a great retreat from Barcelona, and only required a couple of days.

- An hour by car from Barcelona to the east, Tarragona is a Spanish port city that dates back to Roman times, as far back as 2400 BC. Ruins from the Roman Empire can be found across the city, but for your introduction to the city, start with a combination of Roman and Spanish history.
- Your first stop should be the Cathedral de Tarragona, one of the most ancient cathedrals built in the 1100s. This church was built on the former site of a Roman temple. Although construction began in the 1100s, the plague prevented its completion in the 1300. Today, it is a museum with religious art and medieval pieces. It has an amazing door and tunnels and water taps around the cathedral and was really beautiful and so historic -- with Moorish architecture. We recommend a couple of hours to visit the cathedral, although, sadly, it was closed when we visited and we didn't get to go inside.
- After the tour visit to the church, we decided to "get lost" and just explore the narrow streets of the city. We made our way to the Mediterranean Balcony via Rambla Nova. Like Barcelona's Las Ramblas, Rambla Nova was the economic center of the city then and now. You'll find shops and restaurants in pedestrian-friendly streets as you walk to Part Alta, the Old District. You could spend a couple of hours here, sopping and definitely, make a point to have lunch here. For us, we -- shockingly -- had lunch in an Italian restaurant, and it was -- even more shockingly -- better than some of the Italian food we had in Italy! (See our recommendation below.) Of our top 10 places we ate in our world trip, two are in Tarragona!
- When you reach the Mediterranean Sea, you hit the Balcony of the Mediterranean which overlooks the sea with iron railings creating a "balcony," established in the 1800s. You can see the vast expanse of the Mediterranean Sea and the beaches, and also get a glimpse of more Roman ruins. It's great place for kids; all three kids were running around the balcony and making wishes in a fountain. You'll spend a half hour to 45 minutes here.
- From the Sea, head to the Circa Roma, when means Roman circus. This open-air park used to be a gathering place for Romans and chariot races. You'll feel like you have walked into ancient Rome. Now, you can check out the ruins while giving your toddler a place to run and play. The kids loved this because there are some caves and tunnels and the kids felt it was

adventurous. The kids loved running around -- but be careful, these are protected and the surface can be uneven in places. The area is stroller-friendly. There are also fascinating ancient tablets from the Roman period, and you could easily spend several hours here, but we were here for an hour.

- In Spain, dinner doesn't start until 8 p.m. Unlike Barcelona, where bars and restaurants are open at all hours, Tarragona is sleepier. American-friendly restaurants will be open before 8, but many traditional Spanish restaurants won't open for dinner until 8 p.m. This could be a good time for a break at your hotel, with snacks for your child. Expect a later dinner when dining out in Tarragona. Have dinner in the Rambla Nova area, which we cannot recommend [La Tagliatella](#) enough -- the intimate Italian restaurant was one of the best restaurants we enjoyed throughout our nine months of travel! (We're getting hungry remembering it!)

Day 2: Explore Ancient Roman Ruins

- On your second day, it's time to delve deeper into Tarragona's Roman past by visiting the Amphitheatre. It's not the Roman Coliseum, but it's still massively impressive. Built in the Augustin period, gladiator games were once held in this theater that could hold nearly 60,000 people.
- Your next stop on your ancient tour is to visit the medieval Pont del Diable, or the Sant Bartomeu Bridge. Built in the 1200s, the Roman bridge was the only bridge in the area until the 14th century and part of the Roman aqueduct that was built to supply water to the area of Tarragona and Catalonia. It's an impressive bridge is part of UNESCO's World Heritage Site -- you won't believe how this structure dates back more than 2,000 years! You'll find this about 10 to 15 minutes outside the city, and, admittedly, it's not easy to get to. You'll need a car or taxi (about 12 Euros each way) to get there. Should you take a taxi, have them wait for you to take you back. You can walk on the bridge, as well, although it is a tad difficult with kids.
- For your afternoon, spend a relaxing afternoon at the beach at the Playa del Milagro. The beach is more than 1600 feet of wide, open expanse. Before you go, hit up a local market for food and pack a picnic. It's was the perfect day for our family: the kids could play in the sand and the water and we relaxed as parents on Spain's beautiful coastline.
- After your beach day, refresh at your hotel or Airbnb and then head back to the Sea for dinner at one of the many fantastic seafood restaurants serving up fresh catch from the Sea you just spent your afternoon swimming in. We really loved [El Posit del Serrallo](#), a beautiful and modernistic seafood restaurant, another of our top 10 worldwide restaurants (Natasha ranked this as the best meal she had her entire trip).

KID-FRIENDLY TIPS

- Be prepared to walk a lot, up extremely steep hills. You'll need a [good stroller](#) – it is your best friend! We drove to Tarragona and learned that parking is very difficult to find. It's much easier to take the train to the city and walk around.
- Neighborhood parks are on every corner -- make the most of them. We used to try to have lunch or dinners in restaurants by a playground so we could drink and eat while the kids could play within our watch and reach.
- If you have time, visit the beaches in Tarragona; they are fantastic! Again, our favorite is Playa del Milagro.
- Pont del Diable is a 15-20 minute walk from the parking lot. Be ready to potentially carry your child, as the walk isn't very stroller-friendly.
- Ensure you adjust kids schedule for Spanish times, which means sleeping late and waking up later. Dinnertime starts after 8 p.m. Enjoy the siesta time for late afternoon naps and have long lunches and dinners like the locals do.

OTHER TIPS

- Be sure to try Sangria and tapas. Sangria is a punch made with wine and fresh fruit that originated in Spain, available in both red and white wine. We loved both! Our favorite tapas were albondigas (Spanish meatballs), patatas bravas (spicy potatoes), Gambas al ajillo (Spanish garlic shrimp) and Gazpacho (Spanish cold soup).
- For seafood, try El Posit del Serrallo; it's just magnificent. For incredible Italian food in Spain, try La Tagliatella; also incredible.