

Art and luxury during Costa Brava's low season

Crisp Catalanian air kisses you on the cheek with a promise of breathtaking scenery, lazy afternoons, and fine dining. Gulls are strangely silent as the sound of leaves rustling in the ever-present breeze of the Cap de Creus peninsula dominates the soundscape. The winter sun winks sleepily through the distant fog over Portlligat Bay, gently reminding you to set coffee brewing for you and your mate.



Where will you go today? Perhaps a stroll through the wind-sculpted, slate gray hills. Bring your camera to capture the demure sprigs of flowers punctuating the landscape. Enjoying a cappuccino at the restaurant next to the lighthouse provides stunning views and further photographic opportunities as you rest and prepare for your return hike.

Maybe the rush of cycling through the challenging twists and turns of the roads of Costa Brava is more your speed. They are a year-round favorite of professional cyclists worldwide. Lance Armstrong himself owned a house for several years in nearby Girona for precisely this reasons.



If a less ambitious outing is the order of the day, winetasting at one of the local cellars may appeal. Spanish wines, stealthily added to more famous French blends for generations, have been coming into their own in recent decades. From full-bodied reds to delicate, fruity whites, from playful rosés to Cava - the up and coming trendy cousin of Champagne - Spanish wines run the full gamut of flavors and complexity.

If eccentric decor and surreal art strike a chord, do not miss the opportunity to visit Portlligat, home of the famous painter, Salvador Dalí and his wife, Gala. Recognizable from afar by the distinctive egg sculptures adorning the roofline, the former residence of the master artist is a study in practicality and whimsy. Now a museum, the house began as three fishing huts, purchased by the artist over the years and gradually transformed into an abode as surreal as his paintings.



Numerous hotels and self-catering options are available in Cadaqués during all seasons. Seafood restaurants, bakeries, and cafes await. For a true exercise in luxury, consider renting a property like [Sa Vista](#), a modern Spanish Villa overlooking Portlligat. The sleekly minimalist style of the surrounding hillsides perfectly complements the decor. Dalí's house can be seen from the deck and several of the guest rooms, while the master bedroom commands a panoramic view of the water.

During the summer months, the bay is filled with boats of every size, seaborne travelers taking advantage of the clear waters, remote location, and spectacular landscapes. The cooler months attract fewer visitors, allowing for a quieter, more personalized experience, not to mention low-season discounts on accommodation. The food and wine, however, taste just as fabulous at any time of year. Indeed, the uniquely Catalan gastronomic event, [la calçotada](#), takes place only in the winter and is not to be missed.



Rather than sunbathing and splashing in the sea, the cooler months lends themselves to introspection and intimate gatherings. The stark beauty of the area brings out the poetry everyone carries hidden away inside. A destination recommended for families, writers, solitude-seekers, and lovers, Costa Brava has it all.

For more information, visit the Costa Brava tourism website:

<http://en.costabrava.org/main/home.aspx>

Disclosure: lodging, meals, and tour fees were provided courtesy of Charming Villas Catalonia and the Costa Brava Girona Tourism Board.