

# History

Mallorca's position in the western Mediterranean has made it a key piece in the machinations of the powerful on occasion, but it has rarely been at the heart of great European affairs. Still, the island has known its share of invasion, war, prosperity and hunger. Together with mainland Spain (with which it has shared its history since the Middle Ages) it is one of the few parts of Europe to have experienced a long and prosperous period of Muslim rule. Mass tourism since the 1960s has yanked the island from centuries of provincial doldrums and propelled it to newfound wealth and somewhat forced cosmopolitanism.

## THE TALAYOTIC PERIOD

The Balearic Islands were separated from the Spanish continent eight million years ago. They were inhabited by a variety of animal life that carried on in splendid isolation until around 9000 to 10,000 years ago, until the first groups of Epipaleolithic people set out from the Spanish coast in rudimentary vessels and bumped into Mallorca.

The earliest signs of human presence on the island date to around 7200 BC. In the following 6000 years the population, made up of disparate groups or tribes, largely lived in caves or other natural shelters as hunter-gatherers. About 2000 BC they started building megalithic funerary monuments, such as Son Bauló (p149), but the island was certainly not at the epicentre of advanced ancient civilisation. In Egypt they were creating the pyramids at this time.

Things were shaken up with the arrival of warrior tribes in Mallorca and Menorca around 1200 BC, probably from Asia Minor, which overwhelmed the local populace. They are known today as the Talayotic people, because of the buildings and villages they left behind. The *talayots* (watchtowers) are their call sign to posterity. The circular (and sometimes square-based or ship's hull-shaped) stone edifices are testimony to an organised and hierarchical society. The most common were the circular *talayots*, which could reach a height of 6m and had two floors. Their purpose is a matter of conjecture. Were they symbolic of the power of local chieftains, or burial places for them? Were they used for storage or defence? Were they religious sites? There were at least 200 *talayotic* villages across the island, the most important in the south and southeast. Simple ceramics, along with artefacts in bronze (swords, axes, necklaces), have been found on these sites.

The ancients knew Mallorca and Menorca as the Gymnesias Islands, from a word meaning 'naked' (it appears that at least some of the islanders got about with a minimum of covering). Talayotic society seems to have been

For a comprehensive history of the ancient, pre-Roman world in Mallorca, Spanish readers should look no further than *Guia Arqueologica de Mallorca*, by Javier Arambau, Carlos Garrido and Vicenç Sastre.

## TIMELINE

7200 BC

Archaeologists believe the first human settlements in Mallorca date from around 7200 BC, based on carbon-dated findings in the southwest of the island in the Cova de Canet, a cave near Esporles.

c 2200 BC

After some eight million years of blissfully untroubled existence, the *Myotragus balearicus*, a rather ugly endemic species of dwarf antelope, becomes extinct, presumably as the result of unfettered hunting by a growing human population.

c 1200 BC

Warrior tribes invade Mallorca, Menorca, Corsica and Sardinia. Those in Mallorca and Menorca are known today as the Talayotic people because of the stone towers they built.

divided into a ruling elite, a broad subsistence farming underclass and slaves. It is not known if they had a written language.

Contact with the outside world came through Greek and Phoenician traders. The Carthaginians attempted to establish a foothold in Mallorca but failed. They did, however, enrol Mallorquins as mercenaries. Balearic men were gifted with slingshots (which it is said they learned to use with deadly accuracy as children). These Mallorquin and Menorcan slingshot warriors (*foners* in Catalan) called themselves Balears (possibly derived from an ancient Greek word meaning 'to throw'), and so their island homes also came to be known as the Balearics. These men weren't averse to payment (in kind, because the use of money was banned in their society) and developed a reputation as slings for hire. In Carthaginian armies, they would launch salvos of 4cm to 6cm oval-shaped projectiles on the enemy before the infantry went in. They also carried daggers or short swords for hand-to-hand combat but wore virtually no protection. They were present in the Carthaginian victory over the Greeks in Sicily in the 5th century BC and again in the Punic Wars against Rome.

With the Romans established in Spain and Carthage soundly defeated at the end of the Second Punic War, Mallorca's chiefs sent peace emissaries to Rome. In an act of uncommon ruthlessness, the Romans completely destroyed Carthage in 146 BC in the Third (and last) Punic War. Undisputed masters of the western Mediterranean, the Romans might well have ignored Mallorca and Menorca, had the two islands not acquired an irritating reputation as bases for piracy against imperial merchant ships. Rome could not permit this.

## ROMANS, VANDALS & BYZANTINES

When the Roman Consul Quintus Cecilius Metelus approached the shores of Mallorca in 123 BC, possibly around Platja des Trenc in the south, he did not come unprepared. Knowing that the island warriors were capable of slinging heavy stones at his ships' waterline and sinking them, he had come up with a novel idea. Using heavy skins and leather, he effectively invented the first armoured vessels. Stunned by their incapacity to inflict serious damage, the Mallorquin warriors fled inland before the advance of Metelus' men. Within two years the island had been pacified.

Metelus had 3000 settlers brought over from mainland Iberia and founded two military camps in the usual Roman style (with the intersecting main streets of the *decumanus* and *cardus maximus*). Known as Palmeria or Palma and Pol-lentia, they soon developed into Mallorca's main towns. Pol-lentia, neatly situated between the two northeast bays of Pollença and Alcúdia, was the senior of the two.

At the same time as Pol-lentia was embellished with fine buildings, temples, a theatre and more (Pol-lentia has Mallorca's most extensive Roman remains, see p142), some Roman citizens opted for the rural life and built grand

### DISCOVERING ANCIENT MALLORCA

It is remarkable how many ancient, pre-Roman sites are scattered about Mallorca, many quite abandoned. A handful are fenced in and enjoy a minimum of protection, many are barely identifiable, overgrown, on private property and hard to reach, but some of these major sites can be freely visited:

- Ses Païsses (p167)
- Capocorb Vell (p183)
- Son Servera (p174)
- S'Hospitalet Vell (p178)
- Els Antigors (p188)
- Son Fornés (p161)
- the Necròpolis de Son Real (p149)
- Es Figueral Son Real (p149)
- the Talayot de Son Serra (p150)
- the Coves de L'Alzineret (p138)

country villas. Nothing much of them remains today but it is tempting to see them as the precursor to the Arab *alqueries* and Mallorcan *possessions*.

The indigenous population slowly adopted the Roman language and customs but continued to live in its own villages. Plinius the Elder reported that Mallorcan wine was as good as in Italy, and the island's wheat and snails were also appreciated.

The tranquillity of the islands was disturbed during the civil strife in Republican Rome in the 3rd century AD. The fighting in Italy spread to the rest of Rome's territories, as did an economic crisis that might have sparked revolts that seem to have severely hurt Pol-lentia.

Archaeological evidence, such as the remains of the 5th-century early Christian basilica at Son Peretó (p163), shows that Christianity had arrived in the island by the 4th century AD. By then storm clouds were gathering, and in the 5th century they broke as barbarian tribes launched assaults on the Roman Empire. The Balearic Islands felt the scourge of the Vandals (an East Germanic tribe that plundered their way into Roman territory) in 426. Forty years later, having crashed across Spain to establish their base in North Africa, they returned to take the islands.

The Vandals got their comeuppance when Byzantine Emperor Justinian decided to try to rebuild the Roman Empire. His tireless general, Belisarius, vanquished the Vandals in North Africa in 533 and the following year took the Balearic Islands. The Byzantine Empire was basically the rump of Rome, with its capital in Constantinople (modern Istanbul). It could not pull off Justinian's ambitious dream. After his death in 565, Byzantine control over territories in the western Mediterranean quickly waned. By the time the Muslims had emerged from Arabia and swept across North Africa in the first years of the 8th century, the Balearic Islands were an independent Christian enclave. With the exception of several bloody raids by the Muslims and Normans, the islands managed to remain a haven of relative peace and independence. Change, however, was at hand.

*A Mediterranean Emporium*, by David Abulafia, is a marvellous read and about the only good history of Mallorca in English.

c 500 BC

Phoenician traders install themselves around the coast, extending their influence over the island's inhabitants (especially in the use of ceramics and changes in social structure). Balearic warriors serve as mercenaries in Carthaginian armies.

123 BC

On the pretext of needing to end Balearic piracy, the Roman general Quintus Cecilius Metelus, later dubbed Balearicus, storms ashore and in a short time takes control of Mallorca and Menorca.

AD 426

Raids on Mallorca by the Vandals, central European barbarian tribes that had raped and pillaged their way across Europe to Spain and North Africa, lead to the destruction and abandonment of the Roman city of Pol-lentia.

534

The Byzantine general Belisarius takes control of the Balearic Islands in the name of Emperor Justinian, who until his death in 565 attempted to re-establish the Roman Empire across the Mediterranean.

707

Muslim Arabs in North Africa raid Mallorca for the first time. Four years later they would begin the conquest of the Spanish mainland.

869

Norman raiders sack most of Mallorca's population centres. This occurs just 21 years after an Arab raid from Muslim Spain had been carried out, which Mallorca's leaders had agreed to in return for being left in peace.

## THE ISLAMIC CENTURIES

An Arab noble from Al-Andalus (Muslim Spain), Isam al-Jaulani, was forced by bad weather to take shelter in the port of Palma in 902. During his stay he became convinced that the town could and should be taken, along with Mallorca and the rest of the Balearic Islands, and incorporated into the Caliphate of Córdoba. On his return to Cordoba the Caliph Abdallah entrusted him with the task and Al-Jaulani returned with a landing party in 902 or 903.

The port town fell easily but Al-Jaulani, who was made Wāli (Governor) of what the Arabs dubbed the Eastern Islands of Al-Andalus, remained engaged in guerrilla-style warfare against pockets of Christian resistance on the islands for eight years of his 10-year rule. By the time he died in 913, the islands had been pacified and he had begun work to expand and improve the archipelago's only city, now called Medina Mayurka (City of Mallorca).

The Muslims divided the island into 12 districts and in the ensuing century Mallorca thrived. They brought advanced irrigation methods and the *alquerias*, the farms they established, flourished. Medina Mayurka became one of Europe's most cosmopolitan cities. By the end of the 12th century, the city had a population of 35,000, putting it on a par with Barcelona and London. The *al-qasr*, or castle-palace (Palau de l'Almudaina), was built over a Roman fort and the grand mosque was built where the Cathedral now stands. With the raising of walls around the new Rabad al-Jadid quarter (roughly Es Puig de Sant Pere), the city reached the extents it would maintain until the late 19th century. It was a typical medieval Muslim city, a medina like Marrakech or Fez. Few of those narrow streets that made up its labyrinth, now called *estrets* (narrows), remain.

Medina Mayurka enjoyed close relations with the rest of the Muslim world in the western Mediterranean. Anecdotal evidence of this comes in the person of Ibn al-Labbana, an 11th-century poet born in Dénia, on the Valencian coast, who wound up in Mallorca. Here he mingled with philosophers, mathematicians and other thinkers at the governor's court. By 1075 the Emirs (princes) of the Eastern Islands were independent of mainland jurisdiction.

Al-Jaulani's successors dedicated considerable energy to piracy, which by the opening of the 12th century was the islands' principal source of revenue. As the Spaniards would say, this was *pan para hoy y hambre para mañana* (bread today and hunger tomorrow), for such activities were bound to arouse the wrath of Christian merchant powers. In 1114, 500 vessels carrying a reported 65,000 Pisan and Catalan troops landed on Mallorca and launched a bloody campaign. In April the following year they entered Medina Mayurka. Exhausted after 10 months' fighting, they left Mallorca laden with booty, prisoners and freed Christian slaves when news came that a Muslim relief fleet was on the way from North Africa.

Catalan readers could do worse than read Joan Mas Quetglas' *Historia de la Ciutat de Palma*, which is a balanced introduction to the history of the city (and the island).

*La Dominación Islámica en las Islas Baleares*, written by Alvaro Campaner y Fuertes, remains the single most measured study of three centuries of Arab rule in the Balearic Islands and (for Spanish readers) is a worthwhile acquisition.

In 1116 a new era dawned in Mallorca, as the Almoravids (a Berber tribe from Morocco) from mainland Spain took control. The Balearics reached new heights in prosperity, particularly under the Wāli Ishaq, who ruled from 1152 to 1185. But trouble was not far off. The Moroccan warrior Almohad tribe landed in Spain and swept all before them. A tussle for the islands was inevitable and in 1203 the Almohads achieved full control.

No doubt all this internecine strife between Muslim factions had not gone unnoticed in Christian Spain, where the Reconquista (the reconquest of Muslim-held territory by the Christian kingdoms) had taken on new impetus after the rout of Almohad armies in the Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212. By 1250 the Christians would take Valencia, Extremadura, Córdoba and Seville, and the last Muslims would be expelled from Portugal. In such a context it is hardly surprising that a plan should be hatched to take the Balearic Islands too, especially as Mallorca continued to be a major source of piracy that seriously hindered Christian sea trade.

## JAUME I EL CONQUERIDOR

On 5 September 1229, 155 vessels bearing 1500 knights on horseback and 15,000 infantry weighed anchor in the Catalan ports of Barcelona, Tarragona and Salou and set sail for Mallorca. Jaume I (1208–76), the energetic 21-year-old king of Aragón and Catalonia, vowed to take the Balearic Islands and end Muslim piracy there. Jaume I (later dubbed The Conqueror) landed at Santa Ponça and, after two swift skirmishes, marched on Medina Mayurka, to which he laid siege. Finally, on 31 December, Christian troops breached the defences and poured into the city, pillaging mercilessly. In the following months, Jaume I pursued enemy troops across the island but resistance was feeble. The rest of the Balearics fell later: Ibiza in 1235 and Menorca in 1287, in a nasty campaign under Alfons III.

With the conquest of Mallorca complete, Jaume I proceeded to divide it up among his lieutenants and allies. The Arab *alquerias* (farmsteads), *rafals* (hamlets) and villages were handed over to their new *senyors* (masters). Many changed name but a good number retained their Arab nomenclature. Places beginning with Bini (Sons of) are Arab hangovers. Many took on the names of their new lord, preceded by the possessive particle *son* or *sa* (loosely translated as 'that which is of...'). Jaume I codified this division of the spoils in his *Llibre del Repartiment*.

Among Jaume's early priorities was a rapid programme of church-building, Christianisation of the local populace and the sending of settlers from Catalonia (mostly from around the city of Girona). For the first century after the conquest, Ciutat (the city) held the bulk of the island's population. The Part Forana ('Part Outside' Ciutat) was divided into 14 districts but all power in Mallorca was concentrated in Ciutat. Beneath the king, day-to-day government was carried out by six *jurats*, or 'magistrates'. In 1382 (some sources say in 1447) a new system of island government was introduced, called Sac

For an introduction to Jewish history in Mallorca, check out [www.memoriajueva.org](http://www.memoriajueva.org) and [www.memoriadelcarrer.com](http://www.memoriadelcarrer.com).

903

A Muslim army takes control of Mallorca in the name of the Caliph of Córdoba in Spain. Local Christian warriors would resist another eight years in redoubts across the island (particularly the Alaró castle).

1075

Mallorca becomes an independent *taifa* (small kingdom) in the wake of the civil conflicts that shattered the Caliphate of Córdoba into a series of *taifas* across Spain.

1114–1115

A Catalan–Pisan crusading force lands in Mallorca to put an end to the piracy that is damaging their Mediterranean trade. They take Medina Mayurka (Palma) in 1115 and free 30,000 Christian slaves before leaving the island.

1148

Mallorca signs a trade agreement with the Italian cities of Genoa and Pisa, opening up Mallorcan markets to the Italians and reducing the threat of further Christian assaults on the island.

1203

The Almohads in peninsular Spain defeat the Almoravid regime in Medina Mayurka and take control of the island.

September 1229

Under Jaume I, king of the Crown of Aragón, Catalan troops land at Santa Ponça in Mallorca, defeat the Muslims and camp before the walls of Medina Mayurka.

### THE JEWS IN MALLORCA

The first Jews appear to have arrived in Mallorca in AD 70, the same year the Romans largely destroyed Jerusalem and its temple. Under Muslim rule, a small Jewish minority thrived in Medina Mayurka (the name the Moors gave to Mallorca). The Christian conquest in 1229 would eventually bring great and mostly unpleasant change.

In Mallorca, as elsewhere in Spain, the Jewish community enjoyed nominal protection from the king and noble classes. Although barred from most professions and public office, they were esteemed for their learning and business sense. Jewish doctors, astronomers, bankers and traders, generally fluent in Catalan and/or Spanish, Latin, Hebrew and Arabic, often played key roles. It was a Jew from Zaragoza who carried on Jaume I's ultimately fruitless truce talks with the Muslim rulers of Mallorca during the 1229 siege of the capital.

By the end of the century, there were perhaps 2000 to 3000 Jews in Ciutat (Palma). They were evicted from the area around the Palau de l'Almudaina and moved to the Call (Catalan equivalent of a ghetto) in the eastern part of Sa Calatrava, in the streets around Carrer de Monti-Sion. They were locked in at night and obliged to wear a red and yellow circular patch during the day. In 1315 their synagogue was converted into the Església de Monti-Sion (p77) and they would not have another until 1373. In 1391, rioting farmers and workers crashed through the Call in Palma (and the smaller one in Inca) and killed some 300 Jews, whom they considered unduly rich usurers. Not a few had blamed them for the several bouts of plague that had ravaged the island, accusing them of poisoning well water. Any excuse would do to vent anger. Royal protection seemed to do the Jews little good and the assassins got off.

In spite of all this the community held on. It was at this time, one of general prosperity for the trading city, that Jewish cartographers, led by the Cresques family, achieved the height of fame for

i Sort (Bag and Luck). Simply put, the names of six candidates to be named *jurats* for the following 12 months were pulled out of four bags. This system would remain more or less intact until 1715.

The Christian Catalan settlers basically imposed their religion, tongue and customs on the island and the bulk of the Muslim population was reduced to slavery. Those that did not flee or accept this destiny had only one real choice: to renounce Islam. The Jewish population would also have a roller coaster time of it (above).

In the Part Forana the farmsteads came to be known as *possessions* and were the focal point of the agricultural economy upon which the island would largely come to depend. The *possessions* were run by *amos* faithful to their (frequently absentee) noble overlords and were often well-off farmers themselves. They employed *missatges* (permanent farm labour) and *jornalers* (day wage labourers), both of whom generally lived on the edge of misery. Small farm holders frequently failed to make ends meet, ceded their holdings to the more important *possessions* and became *jornalers*.

On Jaume I's death in 1276, his territories were divided between his two sons. This was, perhaps, an unwise decision. The eldest, Pere II, became

their extraordinary maps, which were used by adventurers from all over Europe. Abraham Cresques (c 1325–87) and his son Jafuda (c 1350–10) created one of the best-known such maps in 1375 (now in the national library in Paris, after Pere IV of Aragón made a gift of it to Charles V in 1380).

In 1435 the bulk of the island's Jews were forced to convert to Christianity and their synagogues were converted into churches. At the beginning of the 16th century they were forced to move from the Call Major to the Call Menor, centred on Carrer de Colom. Along parallel Carrer de l'Argenteria (Silversmiths' St) you can still see the family names of converted Jewish families who for centuries have worked in the gold and silver trade here. They were now Christians but were under suspicion of secretly practising Jewish rites. The arrival of the Inquisition in Mallorca in 1488 heightened the search for such 'crypto-Jews'. The Inquisition celebrated the last auto-da-fé (trial by fire) of such so-called *judaizantes* in 1691, burning three citizens at the stake (coincidentally, the property of such 'heretics' was confiscated). The Inquisition in Mallorca was dismantled in 1820. Throughout this period it remained virtually impossible for *conversos* (the converted) and their descendants to exercise any of the professions from which their forbears had been barred as Jews.

Known as *xuetes* (from *xua*, a derogatory term referring to pork meat that the converted Jews supposedly continued not to eat), they were as shunned by the rest of the Christian populace as they had been before. 'Mixed marriages' between 'old Christians' and converts were exceptional (and even today are frowned upon by some). Officially some 15 family lines (although in reality there were many more) of *xuetes* were targeted, their Christian family names immediately recognisable. They soldiered on as best they could but only in the 19th century did they finally breathe easier. A veritable flurry of 19th-century writers and poets came from *xueta* families. Today the descendants of these families (who even in the mid-20th century were shunned by many other Mallorquins) are estimated to number between 15,000 and 20,000.

master of Catalonia, Aragón and Valencia, while Jaume II became king of an independent Mallorca and master of Roussillon and Montpelier (the latter two in France). Pere, however, considered himself the rightful heir to the united territories. In 1285 Pere's son Alfons II took Mallorca (before becoming king in 1291). In 1295 Jaume the Just, Alfons' brother and successor, handed the island back to his uncle, who ruled until his death in 1311.

Jaume II was succeeded by his younger son Sanç (r 1311–24) and Jaume III, who was ousted by Pere III in 1343 and forced into exile in Perpignan. He tried to recover the island six years later but was defeated and killed at the Battle of Lluçmajor. The independent kingdom of Mallorca was now tied into the Crown of Aragón, although it retained a high degree of autonomy.

The fortunes of Mallorca, and in particular Palma, closely followed those of Barcelona, the Catalan headquarters of the Crown of Aragón and merchant trading hub. In the middle of the 15th century, both cities (despite setbacks such as outbreaks of the plague) were among the most prosperous in the Mediterranean. Palma had some 35 consulates and trade representatives

To learn more about the island's grand country mansions, or *possessions*, for centuries the foundation of the island's rural economy, see [www.possessionsdemallorca.com](http://www.possessionsdemallorca.com).

Plunge into the life and times of the Middle Ages in Mallorca at [www.mallorcamedieval.com](http://www.mallorcamedieval.com).

December 1229

Jaume I enters the city, which his troops proceed to sack. They leave it in such a state that a bout of plague the following Easter kills a good number of the inhabitants and invading soldiers.

1343

Pere III of the Crown of Aragón invades Mallorca and takes the crown from Jaume III. Jaume III would try to take it back six years later but would die in the Battle of Lluçmajor.

1391

Hundreds of Jews die in a pogrom as farmer-workers and labourers sack the Call (Jewish quarter) of Palma. Months later all those involved would be released without sentence for fear of causing greater unrest.

1488

The Inquisition, which had operated from the mainland, is formally established in Mallorca. In the following decades hundreds would die, burned at the stake as heretics.

1521

Armed workers and farm labourers rise up in what is the beginning of the Germania revolt against the nobles. In October 1522, Carlos V sends troops to Alcúdia to quell the revolt.

1706

The Austrian pretender to the Spanish throne in the War of the Spanish Succession (1702–15) takes control of Mallorca. Nine years later the tables are turned and Mallorca is defeated by Felipe V.

### THE EVANGELISING SHAKESPEARE OF CATALAN

Born in Ciutat (ie Palma) de Mallorca, the mystic, theologian and all-round Renaissance man before his time, Ramon Llull (1232–1316), started off on a worldly trajectory. After entering Jaume I's court as a page, Ramon was elevated to major-domo of Jaume II, the future king of Mallorca. Ramon lived it up, writing love ditties and enjoying (apparently) a wild sex life.

Then, in 1267, he saw five visions of Christ crucified and everything changed. His next years were consumed with profound theological, moral and linguistic training (in Arabic and Hebrew). He founded a monastery (with Jaume II's backing) at Miramar (p117) for the teaching of theology and Eastern languages to future evangelists. His burning desire was the conversion of Jews and Muslims and he began to travel throughout Europe, the Near East and North Africa to preach. At the same time he wrote countless tracts in Catalan and Arabic and is considered the father of Catalan as a literary language. In 1295 he joined the Franciscans and in 1307 risked the ire of Muslims by preaching outside North African mosques. Some say he was lynched in Tunisia by an angry mob while others affirm he died while en route to his native Mallorca in 1316. He is buried in the Basilica de Sant Francesc in Palma (p76). His beatification was confirmed by Pope John Paul II and the long, uncertain process of canonisation began in 2007.

sprinkled around the Med. The city's trade community had a merchant fleet of 400 vessels and the medieval Bourse, Sa Llotja, was an animated focal point of business.

Not all was rosy. The plague hit repeatedly (1348, 1375, 1384, 1388, 1396, 1400, 1439, 1475, 1483, 1503), decimating the population. In the Part Forana farm labourers lived on the edge of starvation and crops failed to such an extent in 1374 that people were dropping dead in the streets. Frequent localised revolts, such as that of 1391 (the same year that furious workers sacked the Call in Ciutat, see the boxed text, p28), were stamped out mercilessly by the army. A much greater shock to the ruling classes was the 1521 Germania revolt, an urban working-class uprising provoked largely by crushing taxes extracted from the lower classes. They forced the viceroy (by now Mallorca was part of a united Spain under Emperor Carlos V) to flee. In October 1522 Carlos V sent in the army, which only re-established control the following March.

By then Mallorca's commercial star had declined and the coast was constant prey to the attacks of North African pirates. The building of *talayots* around the island (many still stand) is eloquent testimony to the problem. Some of Mallorca's most colourful traditional festivals, such as Moros i Cristians in Pollença (p137) and Es Firó in Sóller (p121) date to these times. As Spain's fortunes also declined from the 17th century, Mallorca slid into provincial obscurity. Backing the Habsburgs in the War of the Spanish Succession (1703–15) didn't endear Mallorca to the finally victorious Bourbon monarch, Felipe V, who in 1716 abolished all the island's privileges and autonomy.

A humble (and by all accounts rather sober) Franciscan missionary from Petra, Fra Juniper Serra (1713–84), oversaw the founding of a mission in the Americas in 1776 that would become the city of San Francisco.

### MALLORCA IN THE CIVIL WAR

The fortunes of Mallorca through the 18th and 19th centuries followed those of the rest of Spain. The biggest events in the first decades of the 20th century were the destruction of most of Palma's city walls and its rapid urban expansion. National politics could not fail to colour local life and the 1931 nationwide elections brought unprecedented results. The Republicans and Socialists together won an absolute majority in Palma, in line with the results in Madrid. The Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas (Spanish Confederation of the Autonomous Right) won the national elections in 1933 and all the left-wing mayors in Mallorca were sacked by early 1934. They were back again in a euphoric mood after the dramatic elections of 1936 again gave a landslide victory to the left.

For many generals this was the last straw. Their ringleader, General Francisco Franco, launched an uprising against the central Republican government in July 1936. It began in North Africa, and Franco's allies quickly led similar revolts across Spain. Government loyalists and left-wing militias defeated many of these uprisings (including in the three main cities, Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia).

In Mallorca the insurrection found little resistance. On 19 July rebel soldiers and right-wing Falange militants burst into Cort (the town hall) and arrested the left-wing mayor, Emili Darder (he and other politicians would be executed in February 1937). They quickly occupied strategic points across

The North African (Barbary) pirates who were such a scourge to the Balearic Islands also operated beyond the Mediterranean. In June 1631 a squadron of these pirates landed at Baltimore, in Ireland.

### A RIGHT ROYAL DILETTANTE

As the first battles of the Italian campaign raged in 1915, Archduke Ludwig Salvator sat frustrated in Brandeis Castle in Bohemia, writing furiously but impeded by the fighting from returning to his beloved Balearic Islands. He died in October that year of blood poisoning after an operation on his leg.

Ludwig had been born in 1847 in Florence, the fourth son of Grand Duke Leopold II. He was soon travelling, studying and visiting cities all over Europe. From the outset he wrote of what he saw. His first books were published one year after his first visit to the Balearic Islands in 1867. He returned to Mallorca in 1871 and the following year bought Miramar (p117). He decided to make Mallorca his main base – a lifestyle choice that many northern Europeans would seek to imitate over a century later.

Salvator was an insatiable traveller, what the Spaniards would call a *culo inquieto* (anxious arse). In his private steam-driven yacht Nixe (and its successors) and other forms of transport, he visited places as far apart as Cyprus and Tasmania. Hardly a year passed in which he didn't publish a book on his travels and studies, possibly the best known of which are his weighty tomes on *Die Balearen* (The Balearics). His love remained Mallorca (where royals and other VIPs visited him regularly) and, in 1877, local deputies awarded him the title of Adopted Son of the Balearic Islands. Four years later he was made an honorary member of the Royal Geographic Society in London.

1773

1809

1822

1837

1851

1902

King Carlos III orders that the Jews of Palma be allowed to live in whatever part of the city they wish and that all forms of discrimination and mistreatment of the Jewish population be punished.

Thousands of French troops captured in battle in mainland Spain are sent for internment to the Illa de Cabrera, where they live in appalling conditions. The survivors would not be released until 1814.

More than 5000 people die in a bout of yellow fever in Palma, just two years after an outbreak of bubonic plague had devastated the area around Artà.

A passenger steamer between Barcelona and Palma goes into service, creating a regular link between the mainland and Mallorca. Among its first passengers were George Sand and Frédéric Chopin, in 1838.

A moderate earthquake damages the Cathedral in Palma and causes panic but no casualties. The main façade, badly cracked, would later be done in the style we see today.

The greater part of Palma's old city walls (their position is roughly followed by the line of the Avingudes today) are demolished to allow urban expansion.

Palma with barely a shot fired. More resistance came from towns in the Part Forana, but was soon bloodily squashed.

By mid-August battalions of Italian troops and warplanes sent by Franco's ally, the dictator Benito Mussolini, were pouring into Mallorca. The island became the main base for Italian air operations and it was from here that raids were carried out against Barcelona with increasing intensity as the Civil War wore on. Sporadic Republican air raids on Palma that continued well into 1937 were far less effective. In Palma the Rambla was renamed *Vía Roma* (curiously, few notice that the northern extension of the Rambla is *still* called *Vía Roma*).

On 9 August 1936 a Catalan–Valencian force (apparently without approval from central command) retook Ibiza from Franco and then landed at Porto Cristo on the 16th. So taken aback were they by the lack of resistance that they failed to press home the advantage of surprise. A Nationalist counter-attack begun on 3 September, backed by Italian planes, pushed the hapless (and ill-equipped) invaders back into the sea. Soon thereafter the Republicans also abandoned Ibiza and Formentera. Of the Balearic Islands, only Menorca remained loyal to the Republic throughout the war.

With Franco's victory in 1939, life in Mallorca followed that of the mainland. Use of Catalan in public announcements, signs, education and so on was banned. Rationing was introduced in 1940 and stayed in place until 1952. Of the nine mayors the city had from 1936 to 1976, four were military men and the others conservative.

## BOOM TIMES

In 1950 the first charter flight landed on a small airstrip on Mallorca. No-one could have perceived the implications. By 1955 central Palma had a dozen hotels and others stretched along the waterfront towards Cala Major.

The 1960s and 1970s brought an extraordinary urban revolution as mass tourism took off. The barely controlled high-rise expansion around the bay in both directions, and later behind other beaches around the coast, was the result of a deliberate policy by Franco's central government to encourage tourism in coastal areas. Many of the more awful hotels built in this period have since been closed or recycled as apartment or office blocks.

The islanders now enjoy – by some estimates – the highest standard of living in Spain, but 80% of their economy is based on tourism. This has led to thoughtless construction on the islands and frequent anxiety attacks whenever a season doesn't meet expectations. The term *balearización* has been coined to illustrate this short-termism and wanton destruction of the area's prime resource – its beautiful coastlines.

How to retain tourist income while minimising the environmental impact is a growing concern in Mallorca, but it would seem a good percentage of the population is more preoccupied with making a fast euro from the building business.

Construction remains *the* hot potato subject in Mallorcan politics. Restrictions in the Serra de Tramuntana make it (theoretically) difficult to build in the mountains and limits on hotel construction make it nearly impossible to create more massive high-rise hotels. But urban and coastal sprawl, legal or otherwise, continues to eat up territory. As investigations into the trafficking of rural land that theoretically cannot be built on continue, it has emerged that hundreds of licences to build on such land have been handed out for years.

The Andratx construction scandal speaks volumes about what really goes on. The scale of corruption in this case was such that the right-wing Partido Popular (PP) mayor was arrested in November 2006. And yet the PP was the most voted party in three quarters of the municipalities in the May 2007 election. In the regional elections held at the same time PP leader, Jaume Matas, fell short of an absolute majority by one seat. He found himself on the outer as the remaining six parties joined forces to create a coalition under the Socialists of Francesc Antich. Antich's key ally is the conservative autonomy-oriented *Unió Mallorca* (led by the wily Maria Antònia Munar, elected president of the Balearic Islands parliament), formerly aligned with the PP. What made Munar switch sides? 'To put a brake on the destruction of the Balearic Islands', she said.

On 16–18 March 1938, Italian air force bombers based in Mallorca launched 17 raids on Barcelona, killing about 1300 people. Apparently Mussolini ordered the raids, without the knowledge of the Spanish Nationalist high command.

One of the most profound accounts ever written of the Spanish Civil War is Hugh Thomas' *The Spanish Civil War*.

### February 1903

The opening of the Gran Hotel, a superb Modernista building, in Palma signifies the first signs of a new business in Mallorca – tourism.

### April 1912

The train line linking Palma with Sóller opens. Until now poor roads across the mountains had made it easier for the people of Sóller to travel north by sea to France than south by land to Palma.

### June 1922

The first postal service flight takes place between Barcelona and Palma. The service would use flying boats parked in hangars at Es Jonquet in Palma.

### 19 July 1936

The army and right-wing militias take control of Mallorca for General Franco as he launches his military uprising against the Republican government in Madrid.

### 1983

The autonomy statute for the Balearic Islands region (together with those of other Spanish regions) is approved eight years after the death of Franco.

### May 2007

Mallorcan Socialist Francesc Antich ends right-wing Partido Popular rule after regional elections by forming a coalition government with promises to put a brake on construction projects.

# The Culture

## REGIONAL IDENTITY

Mallorquins, like the inhabitants of the other Balearic Islands, have a naturally strong sense of home and identity. Few think of themselves as 'Balears'. The islands form a convenient administrative unit but each has its own *consell* (government). Historically, they have never thought of themselves as a unit.

A degree of Mallorquin identity is expressed through their language, *mallorquí*, a dialect of *atalà* that has evolved since the conquest in 1229 (p27). Though their tongue (which people continued to use at home) was edged out of the public realm under Franco, it has largely returned with little fuss.

However, since the return of democracy in 1978 a curious situation has emerged. In a backlash to centuries of perceived repression by 'the Spaniards', Catalan nationalists in Barcelona (the capital of the northeast Spanish region of Catalonia) have mounted a vigorous campaign to reclaim, protect and promote Catalan identity through the Catalan language. Some mainland nationalists hold dear the idea of *Els Països Catalans* (The Catalan Lands), which create a supposedly unified Catalan-speaking world encompassing Catalonia, Valencia, parts of Aragón, the Balearic Islands, 'Catalunya Nord' and parts of Sardinia, all conquered at some stage by the Catalan king of the mainland Crown of Aragon, Jaume I (see p27) and his successors. Needless to say, the idea gets far from unequivocal support from these areas. It continues to be a complex and contentious issue.

The insistence by some Catalan nationalists that 'standard Catalan' be the sole vehicle of communication in this largely fictitious entity has many Mallorquins' backs up. Indeed some find this apparently imperious attitude from Barcelona more irksome than any perceived centralism from Madrid. The anecdote goes that when Mallorquins visit people in Barcelona, the latter inquire: *¿Com va això en nostres illes?* (How are things in our islands?); *Tot bé en NOSTRES illes, gràcies* (Everything's fine in our islands, thank you) comes the indignant reply.

A distorted view of Catalan nationalism has sparked much unfair, unthinking graffiti in other parts of Spain. But Catalans might be more hurt still to see the following spray-painted invective in Mallorca: *¡No sirem mai Catalans! ¡Putxa Catalunya!* (We will never be Catalans! Fuck Catalonia!).

However, overall Mallorquins are somewhat reserved and comfortably self-assured, safe in the knowledge that they live in one of the most beautiful parts of Europe – all those millions of tourists can't be wrong!

## DOS & DON'TS

Mallorquins tend to be more economical with 'please' and 'thank you' than Anglo-Saxons. This is linguistic custom and doesn't imply lack of appreciation – politeness expresses itself in different ways. Many Mallorquins will instinctively mutter a *buenos dias* (good day) or *adiós* (goodbye) when entering or leaving a café or shop and would be perplexed by the way many northern Europeans slink in and out. People walking past your table in a restaurant may well wish you *bueno provecho* or *qué aproveches* (bon appetit), something most northern Europeans wouldn't dream of doing.

When two women, or a man and woman, meet, even if it's for the first time, they greet each other with a light kiss on each cheek; peck right then left.

For all you ever wanted to know on Balearic Island statistics, search through [www.caib.es/ibae/ibae.htm](http://www.caib.es/ibae/ibae.htm).

## LIFESTYLE

The *mañana mañana* approach to life so cheerfully chortled over in Peter Kerr's books on life in Mallorca (see p18) persists today, up to a point. Long lunches remain a part of the daily ritual, although the post-prandial nap known as the siesta is left to the privileged few. Indeed, according to some studies, Spaniards spend more time at work than most other Europeans do.

Most locals attribute growing stress and a faster rhythm of working life to Spain's convergence with the rest of Europe. Mallorquins have wholeheartedly embraced the consumer society and many seem to think nothing of diving deep into debt to satisfy their needs and wishes (mortgages, car loans and more).

That said, Mallorquins have not lost their live-for-the-present *joie de vivre*. Time at the beach (not all day like the roasting northern Europeans), hearty meals (especially on weekends and in boisterous groups), good wine and nights out until dawn are part and parcel of Mallorcan life. And, for all the stress of modern life, the islanders always seem to have time for a coffee, an *aperitivo* and a chat.

## ECONOMY

In the early 20th century, Joan March (1880–1962) became rich by buying up big landholders' property, breaking it up and reselling parcels to small farmers who had set aside a little cash. In doing so he helped forge a broad, conservative, property-owning electorate. To this day, Mallorquins tend to lean right.

Although not rich by northern European standards, in the centuries preceding the Civil War Mallorca was self-sufficient and generated enough produce for export, thus allowing for the accumulation of capital. Long gone are the days when Mallorca depended on agriculture for its wellbeing. Sure, oranges (from Sóller), wine, potatoes, carob beans, almonds, olives (a huge variety!), pork products and grain continue to be produced, but they are now largely consumed locally and contribute only a tiny amount to the economy.

These days Mallorca, like the rest of the Balearic Islands, depends on tourism for its livelihood. The figures are eloquent: some 72% of the islands' GDP comes from services and another 10% from construction – according to one 2007 study the Balearic Islands have covered more territory in cement and asphalt than any other region since 1996, laying 10,000,000 sq metres of asphalt and building 171,900 flats and houses. Given that the latter is largely tied to tourism, about 80% of Mallorca's economy is commonly attributed to tourism. Just 1% of GDP comes from agriculture and 5% from industry (such as shoes, leather and cultured pearls, among other items).

The popularity of Mallorca and the other islands (especially Ibiza) have made the Balearic Islands one of Spain's wealthiest regions, behind Madrid, Catalonia, Navarra and the Basque Country, but ahead of the remaining 12 autonomous regions.

## POPULATION

The population of Mallorca has more than doubled since 1960. Almost half of the 790,760 people officially resident on the island live in the capital, Palma de Mallorca. Much of the rest of the population is concentrated along the coast and in a few interior centres such as Manacor and Inca. Most have fled the land as agriculture has increasingly taken a back seat to services industries.

In 1959, Charlie Chaplin stayed at the Hotel Formentor. The story goes that a reporter waited six hours to do a one-minute interview with a not-very-funny Chaplin. In response to the question 'Could I ask you two questions', Chaplin replied, 'Oui, what's the other one?'

The bulk of Mallorca's potato production around Sa Pobla and Muro, in the island's east, is destined for UK dinner tables.

## COMING HOME

Antonio Bauzá was born in Petra (where his grandfather was mayor) in 1975, but left the island at 18 to go to university in Pamplona. In 2006 (some 12 years later) he returned home having lived in Madrid, Milan and London. He works in media relations and lives in Palma with his Italian-born wife, Alessandra.

**Do Mallorquins always come home?** I think Mallorquins move less than other people, and those Mallorquins who do, always think about coming back. They long for the island. I, too, went away with the idea that I would come back. Maybe it's the island mentality.

**Did you find the island much changed?** Before it was more like a country town where everyone knew each other. Now it is culturally much more open and mixed. But there are two worlds: Palma and the coast, and the interior of the island. When I go back to Petra, I feel things move more slowly.

**Have the changes been good or bad?** Both. I miss certain things about Palma. It might seem silly but Palma has lost some of its provincial air, when people went about all dressed up for Mass or to go for a walk along (Avinguda) Jaume III. They knew and greeted each other. Now the city has become more impersonal. I often walk along Jaume III now and I don't recognise anyone! The upside? Palma has become much more international. Look at the bars and restaurants! Before finding a foreign restaurant was rare. Indian, Thai restaurants didn't exist. And the bars are much more cosmopolitan.

**Has the Mallorquins' quality of life improved?** In money terms, no. The average Mallorquin's buying power has fallen. The crowding on the beaches and elsewhere is another disadvantage. OK, everyone wants to milk the tourism cow. Which is fine but, as a Mallorquin, it bothers me. I remember as a kid going to Platja des Trenc or Cala Ratjada and the beaches were empty! Overall, though, quality of life is great. Having lived away for so long I appreciate what may appear trivial: the sunshine, having the sea so close...

**Would you move away from the island again?** Well, I know my wife would love to return to Italy. I'd miss many of the advantages of living here but if I had to go, I'd go. *Em sabria greu* (I'd be sorry), but I'd have no real problem.

## MULTICULTURALISM

Of the total population of Mallorca, 129,400 (about 17%) are foreign-born. The official resident German population numbers 22,000, well ahead of the Brits at 12,300 and Moroccans at 12,500. Some 41,000 Latin Americans, primarily from Argentina, Colombia and Ecuador, also live here. In addition to this, about 185,000 residents originally come from mainland Spain. In other words, little more than half the island's population was born in Mallorca.

While Mallorquins seem to have little overt problem with immigration, they can sometimes be heard to grumble that many mainland Spaniards do little to pick up Catalan (or its Mallorcan dialect). And not a few non-Spanish-speaking foreigners seem to have trouble even with Spanish. There are flip sides: German residents in particular are active in all the Mallorcan political parties, and around 40 German candidates stood in the island's municipal elections in 2007, though none were elected.

The bulk of the African and Latin American populations concentrate in peripheral areas of Palma, although smaller communities thrive in most towns, providing cheap labour. Much of this migration is recent and, while it is too early to speak of integration, friction between the various communities is low.

## RELIGION

About 80% of the population attests to being Catholic. The Catholic Church has long played a preponderant role in Mallorcan and Spanish society, but the demise of Franco in 1975 brought something of a backlash and today

not much more than 20% of the population regularly attend Mass. Small Protestant and Muslim minorities are made up almost exclusively of foreign-born residents.

## ARTS Literature

In one sense Mallorcan literature began with the island's medieval conqueror, Jaume I (1208–76), who recorded his daring deeds in *El Llibre dels Fets* (The Book of Deeds). He wrote in Catalan, a language that the Palma-born poet and visionary evangeliser Ramon Llull (1232–1316) would elevate to a powerful literary tool. A controversial figure, who many feel should be declared a saint, Llull has long been canonised as the father of the literary Catalan tongue.

Few Mallorquins grapple with Llull's medieval texts but most know at least one poem by Miquel Costa i Llobera (1854–1922), a theologian and poet who, along with other like-minded writers, sought to promote literature written in *mallorquí*. His *El Pi de Fomentor* (The Formentor Pinetree, 1907), which eulogises Mallorcan landscapes through a pine on the Formentor peninsula, is *the* Mallorcan poem.

It is difficult to know whether to classify the writings of Archduke Ludwig Salvator (Lluís Salvador to the locals) as those of a local or foreign traveller. Many Mallorquins consider him one of their own and his tomes on the Balearic Islands, *Die Balearen*, are a source of pride to islanders. Regional president, Francesc Antich, said *Die Balearen* 'is one of the fundamental works of our culture'. For more on the Archduke, see p31.

One of the island's greatest poets was the reclusive Miquel Bauça (1940–2005). His *Una Bella Història* (1962–85) is a major anthology.

Llorenç Villalonga (1897–1980), born into an elite Palma family and trained in medicine, was one of Mallorca's top 20th-century novelists. Many of his works, including his most successful novel, *Bearn* (1952), portray the decay of the island's landed nobility.

Baltasar Porcel (b 1937, Andratx) is the doyen of contemporary Mallorcan literature. *L'Emperador o l'Ull del Vent* (The Emperor or the Eye of the Wind, 2001) is a dramatic tale about the imprisonment of thousands of Napoleon's soldiers on Illa Cabrera.

Carme Riera (b 1948, Palma) has churned out an impressive series of novels, short stories, scripts and more. Her latest novel, *L'Estiu de l'Anglès* (The English Summer, 2006), tells of a frustrated Barcelona estate agent's decision to spend a month learning English in a middle-of-nowhere UK town.

Guillem Frontera (b 1945, Ariany) has produced some engaging crime novels, particularly the 1980 *La Ruta dels Cangurs* (The Kangaroo Route), in which the murder of the detective's ex-girlfriend muddies his Mallorca holiday plans.

Tomeu Matamalas (b 1952, Manacor) is a musician, painter and writer who has produced several novels. *Bel Canto* encloses two stories: one recounts the love of pianist Andreu for Alicia, while the other tells the story of the priest Mossèn Antoni Mascaró and, through him, the music scene in Mallorca in the late 19th century.

## DON'T GRUMBLE, GIVE A WHISTLE

Some historians claim the funny white, green and red clay figurine-whistles known as *siurells* were introduced to Mallorca by the Phoenicians and may have represented ancient deities. Classic figures include bulls, horse-riders and dog-headed men. You'll occasionally see them in museums but they are mostly found nowadays in shops as mass-produced souvenirs.

An asteroid discovered by Mallorcan astronomers in 1997 was named 9900 Ramon Llull after the island's great medieval philosopher, writer and evangelist.

German readers can find anything and everything they ever wanted to know about Archduke Ludwig Salvator at [www.ludwig-salvator.com](http://www.ludwig-salvator.com).

One of the most beautiful descriptions written of the island was the Catalan painter Santiago Rusiñol's *Mallorca, L'Illa de la Calma* (Mallorca, the Island of Calm, 1922), in which he takes a critical look at the rough rural life of many Mallorquins.

The Campos-born Benedictine missionary, Romualdo Sala (1821–95), who worked in Australia's western desert from 1852, founded the New Norcia mission in Western Australia, which can still be visited today.

Those curious to find out more about authors writing in Catalan, in Mallorca and elsewhere in the Catalan-speaking world, should check out [www.escriptors.cat](http://www.escriptors.cat).

The German writer Albert Vigoleis Thelen (1903–89) spent the five years from 1931 to 1936 in Palma. His time on the island inspired his greatest, largely autobiographical, novel, *Die Insel des Zweiten Gesichts* (The Island of the Second Vision, 1953).

## Music

Mallorca, like any other part of Spain, has a rich heritage in folk songs and ballads sung in *mallorquí*. At many traditional *festes* in Mallorcan towns you'll hear the sounds of the *xeremiers*, a duo of ambling musicians, one of whom plays the *xeremia* (similar to the bagpipes) and the other a *flabiol* (a high-pitched pipe). Younger bands sometimes give these Mallorcan songs a bit of a rough-edged rock sound.

Los Valldemossa, who sang Mallorcan folk songs with a jazz feel in Palma's clubs, had some success overseas – they wound up playing the London circuit and, in 1969, won the Eurovision Song Contest. They stopped playing in 2001 but their CDs still abound.

The island's best-known singer-songwriter is Palma's Maria del Mar Bonet i Verdaguer (b 1947). She moved to Barcelona at the age of 20 to join the Nova Cançó Catalana movement, which promoted singers and bands working in Catalan. Bonet became an international success and is known for her interpretations of Mediterranean folk music, French *chanson* (Jacques Brel and company) and experiments with jazz and Brazilian music.

An altogether different performer is Concha Buika. Of Guinean origins, she was born in Palma in 1972 and rose through the Palma club circuit with her very personal brand of music, ranging from hip-hop to flamenco to soul. Her second CD, *Mi Niña Lola*, came out in 2007.

Argentine-born starlet Chenoa got her break when she stunned all in the TV talent show *Operación Triunfo*. Since 2002 she has churned out four albums and has become one of the most popular voices in Spanish-Latin pop.

For those who thought Ibiza was the exclusive Mediterranean home of club sounds, Daniel Vulic (DJ and German radio director in Mallorca) brought out *Cool Vibes Vol 1*, a compilation of strictly Mallorcan chillout and club music in 2007.

## Architecture

### FROM TALAYOTS TO MOSQUES

Remains of the *talayots* (enigmatic structures) of the Balearic peoples in Mallorca abound. See the History chapter for more information on these people (p23).

The Romans may have been mighty builders but comparatively little evidence of their prowess remains. Their principal city was Pol-lentia, whose scant remains you can still admire (p142).

Likewise, few reminders of the three centuries of Muslim rule have survived. After the Christian conquest in 1229, mosques and other buildings were gradually replaced. Traces of Palma's city walls, public baths and a handful of other details are all that remain.

### ROMANESQUE

The return to Christian rule in 1229 came too late for the implementation of a Romanesque style (characterised by the use of semicircles in doorways, windows and apses) predominant in northern Catalonia. Enthusiasts will see one sample in the Palau de l'Almudaina (p73) – better still, if you can get inside, is the chapel of the Temple.

Fans of the latest Mallorcan singing sensation, Chenoa, can find out all they need to know about her at [www.chenoafanclub.com](http://www.chenoafanclub.com).

The Pisans who, with the Catalans, invaded and sacked Mallorca in 1114–15, took two porphyry pillars from Palma's Great Mosque and made a gift of them to Florence. They now flank the bronze doors of the Baptistery in Florence.

## SAVE OUR CENTRE!

Sitting behind a desk covered in paperwork, stationery, a computer and telephones on the ground floor of 14th-century Ca'n Weyler, Javier Terrasa exudes a mix of enthusiasm and world-weariness. He is one of a coterie of committed citizens who runs **Associació per a la Revitalització dels Centres Històrics** (ARCA; Association for the Revitalisation of Historical Centres; [www.arcapatrimoni.net](http://www.arcapatrimoni.net)). Upstairs are two extraordinary Gothic ogive arches, a splash of Palma's rich medieval heritage.

**What is ARCA?** An apolitical organisation of citizens (financed largely by membership subscriptions) who love their artistic heritage. ARCA was set up in 1987 when Palma's old historic centre was largely ignored and abandoned. This area (just west of Passeig d'es Born) was not a pleasant place, with petty crime, drugs... Some of the old city's main streets and squares were OK but much of the rest was rundown. Until a short time ago, this barrió (Puig de Sant Pere) was in bad shape.

**And now?** Things have changed, money has been put into restoration and people are living here again. Indeed to such an extent that the old city is becoming an area where only the wealthy can afford to live! Of course, not all the work done has respected the heritage of buildings as much as we'd have liked.

**Is such work in any way supervised?** There is commission for the historic centre, and any work requires a permit. Of course where people don't even apply for the permit...

**ARCA came into being to promote the revitalisation of the old centre and heritage protection. Was anyone else interested?** In the late 1980s we had a Socialist town hall (under Mayor Ramon Aguiló), which had the idea of completely rebuilding the 18th-century barrió of Sa Gerreria from scratch. That was one of our biggest campaigns (with other groups).

**Was it a success?** We managed to save a few buildings. Another big campaign was to save Sa Riera (Palma's river), which the same mayor wanted to cover up and turn into a pedestrian zone. That battle we won.

**In some countries, the realisation that ancient monuments attract the tourist dollar has helped direct finance to such monuments' maintenance. Has tourism in Mallorca had a similar impact?** Countries like Greece live largely from their history. Let's face it, the bulk of tourists who come to Mallorca for a week aren't going to spend time in Palma – one day maybe.

**Mallorca is covered in ancient monuments, especially talayots, but most seem abandoned.** Many are heritage listed but those that have been set up to be visited can be counted on one hand. The fact that many are left sitting on farmland is probably their best form of protection. Heritage buildings are in no danger as long as nothing is at stake financially. As soon as economic interests become involved, trouble starts. The construction boom has damaged a lot.

**Are attitudes changing?** In the last elections (2007) we had 50,000 people demonstrating against the continued destruction on the island – a record.

## GOTHIC

The Catalan slant on the Gothic style, with its broad, low-slung, vaulting church entrances and sober adornment, inevitably predominated in Catalan-conquered Mallorca. The single greatest Gothic monuments are Palma's Cathedral (p68) and Sa Llotja (p82).

Guillem Sagrera (c1380–1456), a Catalan architect and sculptor who had previously worked in Perpignan (today in France), moved to Mallorca in 1420 to take over the direction of work on the Cathedral. He is considered the greatest architect and sculptor of the period in Mallorca. He designed one of the Cathedral's chapels and the Gothic chapter house, and, more importantly, he raised Sa Llotja.

As in other parts of Spain, Muslim influences were evident in some aspects of building through the Gothic period. In Mallorca this *mudéjar* style is not immediately evident in external façades, but a handful of beautiful *artesonados* (coffered wood ceilings) remain. Those in Palma's Palau de l'Almudaina (p73) are outstanding. The beautiful *artesonado* in the manor house at the

Jardins d'Alfàbia (p129) appears to be a Muslim relic, one of the few remaining architectural-artistic testaments to Muslim times.

### RENAISSANCE & BAROQUE

Renaissance building had a rational impulse founded on the architecture of classical antiquity, but it seems to have largely passed Mallorca by. Some exceptions confirm the rule, such as the (later remodelled) main entrance to Palma's cathedral, the Consolat del Mar building and the mostly Renaissance-era sea walls. A handful of Palma's noble houses betray Renaissance influences (especially along Carrer del Sol, where for a moment you might think yourself transported to Medici Florence) as does the basilica (p132) in the Monestir de Lluc. Although decorated in baroque fashion, it is basically late Renaissance, and was designed by sculptor and architect Jaume Blanquer (c1578–1636).

The more curvaceous and, many would say, less attractive successor to the Renaissance was a moderate, island-wide baroque that rarely reached the florid extremes that one encounters elsewhere in Europe. It is most often manifest in the large churches that dominate inland towns and the *patis* (courtyards) that grace old Palma's mansions (see p80). In the case of the churches, existing Gothic structures received a serious reworking, evident in such elements as barrel vaulting, circular windows, bloated and curvaceous pillars and columns. Church exteriors are in the main sober (with the occasional gaudy façade). An exception can be found in the *retablos* (*retauls* in Catalan), the grand sculptural altarpieces behind the altar in most churches. Often gilt and swirling with ornament, this was where baroque sculptors could let their imaginations loose.

### MODERNISME

Towards the end of the 19th century, the Catalan version of Art Nouveau architecture was all the rage in Barcelona. Symbolised by Antoni Gaudí, who worked on the renovation of Palma's Catedral (p68) and was the man behind Barcelona's unfinished La Sagrada Família, the eclectic style soon had its adepts, both local and Catalan, in Mallorca. They sought inspiration in nature and the past (especially Gothic and mudéjar influences), and developed a new freedom and individual creativity.

Another great Catalan Modernista architect was Lluís Domènech i Montaner (1850–1923), who left his mark on the magnificent former Grand Hotel (p79).

The undulating façade of **Can Casasayas** (Map pp70-1; Plaça del Mercat 13 & 14), built for the wealthy Casasayas family known for their historic Frasquet sweets shop (p88), is a typical feature of Modernisme. One half of the building was residential and the other today houses offices. In the original design they were to be joined by a bridge.

Gaspar Bennàssar (1869–1933) was one of the most influential architects in modern Palma, his native city. He played with various styles during his long career, including Modernisme. An outstanding example of this is the **Almacenes El Àguila** (Map pp70-1; Plaça del Marqués de Palmer 1), built in 1908. Each of the three floors is different and the generous use of wrought iron in the main façade is a herald of the style. Next door the use of *trencadís* (ceramic shards) in the **Can Forteza Rey** (Map pp70-1; Carrer de les Monges 2) façade is classic Gaudiesque. **Can Corbella** (Map pp70-1; Plaça de la Cort 6), on the other hand, oozes a neo-mudéjar look.

The seat of the Balearic Islands Parliament is located in the Círculo Mallorquín, a high society club on Carrer del Conquistador that local Modernista architect Miquel Madorell i Rius (1869–1936) renovated in 1913.

### TO THE 21ST CENTURY

Little worthy of praise has been built in or outside Palma since Modernisme fell out of favour. Modern construction on a grand scale has added countless soulless hotel and apartment blocks to both the city and swathes of the coast.

Major projects in Palma include the regeneration of the Sa Gerreria district with new, mid-rise apartments. Plans for a new waterfront Palau de Congressos (convention centre) behind Platja de Can Pere Antoni have been stalled by the regional coalition government.

### Painting & Sculpture

#### FROM THE STONE AGE TO MUSLIM MALLORCA

Little evidence has come down to us of the artistic ambitions of the Talayotic people who preceded the Roman conquest of the island. Decoration of ceramics was minimal and the single greatest indication of creative activity are bronze figurines found in various sites dating to about the 4th century BC. A fine collection is on show in Palma's Museu de Mallorca (p75).

Of the Roman period, fragments of mosaics, ceramics and some sculpture have survived, the bulk on show in Alcúdia's Museu Monogràfic de Pol·lèntia (p143) and Palma's Museu de Mallorca. In the latter, you can also see fragments of Byzantine mosaics and traces of Muslim artwork, mostly calligraphy in wood and stone, along with pretty ceramics.

#### THE CHRISTIAN REVIVAL

Subsumed after the 1229 conquest into the Catalan world of the Crown of Aragón, Mallorca lay at a strategic point on sea routes in a Catalan lake. This fostered the movement of artists and not a few were attracted from the mainland, particularly Valencia, to Mallorca.

The revival earliest works, transmitted by Catalan artists, were influenced by the Gothic art of the Sienese school in Italy. Later International Gothic began to filter through, notably under the influence of the Valencian artist Francesc Comes, who was at work in Mallorca from 1390 to 1415.

Important artists around the mid-15th century were Rafel Mòger (c 1424–70) and Frenchman Pere Niçard, who worked in Mallorca from 1468 to 1470. They created one of the era's most important works, *Sant Jordi*, now housed in Palma's Museu Diocesà (p74). The outstanding sculptor of this time was Guillem Sagrera (see p39), who did much of the detail work on Sa Llotja.

Pere Terrens (active c 1479–1528) returned from a study stint in Valencia with the technique of oil painting – the death knell for egg-based pigments. His was a transitional style between late Gothic and the Renaissance. In a similar category was Córdoba-born Mateu López (d 1581), who trained in the prestigious Valencia workshops of father and son Vicent Macip and Joan de Joanes (aka Joan Vicent Macip, 1523–79), both signal artists. In 1544 López landed in Mallorca where he and his son became senior painters.

Gaspar Oms (c 1540–1614) was Mallorca's most outstanding late-Renaissance painter. The Oms clan, from Valencia, dominated the Mallorcan art scene throughout the 17th and 18th centuries.

Miquel Bestard (1592–1633) created major baroque canvases for churches, such as the Convento de Santa Clara (p77) and the Església de Monte-Sion, in Palma. Guillem Mesquida Munar (1675–1747) concentrated on religious motifs and scenes from classical mythology.

#### MODERN MALLORCA

The 19th century brought a wave of landscape artists to Mallorca. Many came from mainland Spain, particularly Catalonia, but the island produced

In 1956 film star and party animal Errol Flynn (1909-59) sailed his schooner, *Zaca*, to Palma with his third wife, Patricia Wymore. Here they lived, partied and tried to forget problems of debt and court summonses in the USA, usually by drowning them in booze. Eventually they left and Flynn died shortly after. Italian art collector Roberto Memmo bought and refitted Flynn's boat in the 1990s.

Anais Nin set an erotic short story, *Mallorca*, in Deià. It appeared in the volume *Delta of Venus* and deals with a local girl who gets into an erotic tangle with a pair of foreigners and pays a high price. Nin stayed in Deià for a year in 1941.

its own painters too. More than half a dozen notables were born and raised in Palma. Joan O'Neill Rosiñol (1828–1907) is considered the founder of the island's landscape movement. He and his younger contemporaries Ricard Anckermann Riera (1842–1907) and Antoni Ribas Oliver (1845–1911), both from Palma, were among the first to cast their artistic eyes over the island and infuse it with romantic lyricism. The latter two concentrated particularly on coastal scenes.

From 1890 a flood of Modernista artists from Catalonia 'discovered' Mallorca and brought new influences to the island. Some of them, such as Santiago Rusiñol (1861–1931), had spent time in Paris, which was then the hotbed of the art world. Locals enthusiastically joined in the Modernista movement. Palma-born Antoni Gelabert Massot (1877–1932) became a key figure, depicting his home city in paintings such as *Murada i Catedral a Entrada de Fosc* (1902–4). Other artists caught up in this wave were Joan Fuster Bonnin (1870–1943) and Llorenç Cerdà i Bispal (1862–1955), born in Pollença.

Meanwhile Llorenç Rosselló (1867–1902) was shaping up to be the island's most prominent sculptor until his early death. A handful of Rosselló's bronzes as well as a selection of works by many of the painters mentioned here can be seen in Es Baluard (p80).

By the 1910s and 1920s symbolism began to creep into local artists' vocabulary. Two important names in Mallorca painting from this period are Joan Antoni Fuster Valiente (1892–1964) and Ramón Nadal (1913–99), both from Palma.

Pollença-born Dionis Bennàssar (1904–67) can best be considered an interesting provincial artist. His works range from local views of his home town through to still lifes and nudes. You can see a good selection of these at his former home in Pollença (p135).

## CONTEMPORARY

Towering above everyone else in modern Mallorca is local hero and art icon, Miquel Barceló (b 1957, Felanitx). His profile has been especially sharp in his island home after the unveiling in 2007 of one of his more controversial masterpieces, a ceramic depiction of the miracle of the loaves and fishes housed in Palma's Cathedral. The artist, who lives in Paris and Mali and has a studio in Naples, was a rising star by the age of 25. Although he is best known as a painter, Barceló has worked with ceramics since the late 1990s. However, the commission for the Cathedral was on a hitherto unimagined scale for the artist.

Less well known but nonetheless prolific is Palma-born Ferran García Sevilla (b 1949), whose canvases are frequently full of primal colour and strong shapes and images. Since the early 1980s he has exhibited in galleries throughout Europe. Joan Costa (b 1961, Palma) is one of the island's key contemporary sculptors, who also indulges in occasional brushwork.

One cannot leave out 20th-century Catalan icon, Joan Miró (1893–1983). His mother came from Söller and he lived the last 27 years of his life in Cala Major, just outside Palma. Working there in a huge studio, he maintained a prolific turn-out of canvases, ceramics, statuary, textiles and more, faithful to his particular motifs of women, birds and the cosmos. You can visit his Palma house now turned museum (p102).

## Cinema

The first cinema projections by the Lumière brothers were held in Palma in early 1897, a little over a year after their premier in Paris. These moving images caught on and soon after permanent movie theatres were springing up

In 1936, inspired by a stay in the then little-known town of Pollença, Agatha Christie wrote short-crime thriller *Problem at Pollensa Bay*, which would later be the title for a volume of eight short-crime mysteries.

Photographer Andrew Maclear's *Söller. Bajo la Montaña* is a beautiful book of black-and-white photos of Söller.

around the island. One of the earliest local film companies, Mallorca Film, made short documentaries and a couple of fictional works.

The first foreign-made film shot in Mallorca was *El Secreto del Anillo* (The Secret of the Ring), made in 1913 under Italian direction with French and Spanish personnel. The Civil War (1936–39) and the early Franco years all but saw an end to film production in Mallorca. Then, from the 1950s and 1960s, the island was rediscovered as a set for foreign films, most now justifiably forgotten.

Mallorca has produced a handful of film directors. Antoni Aloy had some success with the US–Spanish co-production *Presence of Mind* (*El Celo*, 2000), starring Sadie Frost, Harvey Keitel and Lauren Bacall, in which a private tutor comes to an island to take on the education of two orphaned children and finds herself dealing with some unpleasant characters of past and present. Aloy is working on his second feature film, *Panteras*, a black comedy about the escape of five ladies from their senior citizens' home.

Rafel Cortés Oliver released his first feature movie, *Yo (I)*, in 2007. It tells of a German who comes to work in Estellens and feels himself accused of a wrongdoing. His attempts to prove his innocence (which no-one actually doubts) only serve to complicate matters.

## SPORT Football

Mallorca's football side, *Reial Club Deportivo Mallorca* (RCD; [www.rcdmallorca.es](http://www.rcdmallorca.es)), known simply as Real Mallorca, has been taking to the field since 1916. It has been a middling side in the Spanish national Liga, where it has spent more time in the second division than the first. When in the top division, Real Mallorca has managed to come third twice (the last time in 2000–01) and it won the Copa del Rei (King's Cup) in 2003.

## Cycling

Mallorquins are keen cyclists. On weekends you can see tribes of them in full kit zipping around back roads all over the island. In 2007 Palma hosted the World Track Cycling Championship at Palma Arena velodrome.

Among Mallorca's greatest cyclists was six-times track champion, Guillem Timoner i Obrador (b 1926, Felanitx). He triumphed in 'stayer' competitions, in which the cyclist rides behind a motorcycle. Porreres boy Joan Llaneras (b 1969) is an Olympic track champion who took gold in Sydney in 2000 and silver in Athens in 2004.

## Tennis

Rafel (Rafael in Spanish, 'Rafa' for short) Nadal (b 1986, Manacor) needs little introduction to anyone who even skims the sports pages. Three-time champion on the clay courts of Roland-Garros in France and number two seed behind the (mostly) unbeatable Roger Federer, he is Spain's greatest ever tennis phenomenon, overshadowing another fine Mallorcan player, Palma's Carles Moyà (b 1976).

## Bullfighting

Although it does not have the following it enjoys in parts of mainland Spain, *la lidia* takes place in Palma, Inca, Muro, Alcúdia and Felanitx. Only during the 1950s, as international tourism began to take off, did interest in the fights begin to grow in Mallorca. Since the 1980s, interest (local and foreign) has ebbed considerably. The season kicks off on Sant Joan (the feast day of St John, 24 June) in Muro and continues until the end of August, with several events held in Palma (see p97).

In 1949 the US-French-Spanish co-production *Captain Black Jack*, starring George Sanders, was filmed on location in Mallorca and caused quite a stir among the local populace. Film critics were less enthralled by this story of an American smuggler in the Mediterranean.

As an unknown 20-year-old Joan Collins starred in Noel Langley's romp, *Our Girl Friday*, filmed at Peguera in 1953.

Want to write fan mail to Rafel Nadal, or just keep up with his prodigious progress? Check out his official site at [www.rafaelnadal.com](http://www.rafaelnadal.com).

For more information on Mallorca's *castellers*, check out [www.mallorcaweb.net/castellers](http://www.mallorcaweb.net/castellers).

### Castellers

A recent import from Catalonia (since 1996), this tradition dates back to the 19th century and reached its golden age in the 1880s. The idea is to 'build' human layers of a 'castle' and then undo it without everyone tumbling in a heap. The first level is a wide and solid scrum known as the *pinya*. The most popular teams can get a thousand people chiming in! Above this you build your castle. About the best any team has recorded is a *quatre de nou* or *tres de nou*: a four-by-nine or three-by-nine castle. That means nine storeys of people, three or four in the core levels tapering to two then one person at the top.

# Food & Drink

Traditional Mallorcan cuisine is much better suited to the harsh countryside living of centuries past than to the summery, bare-it-all-in-a-bikini Mallorca many visitors experience today. Rich, thick soups and stews, savoury pork dishes and flavour-packed sausages remain the backbone of the Mallorquins' diet.

Dependent on the land and the surrounding sea, Mallorcan cuisine at its best is a delicious reflection of the island's climate, seasons, terrain and history. In centuries past, a stream of invaders and conquerors crossed the island; while many were the cause of hard times, they also brought new fruits and vegetables, spices and recipes, leaving a culinary legacy that lingers today. Arabian influences include apricots, pine nuts, capers, honey, almonds and spices; the British inspired Menorca's *maó* cheese; and Catalans encouraged pork farming and winemaking.

Mallorcan cuisine has gotten more daring in recent years. Young chefs, as part of a trend seen throughout the Mediterranean, are bringing a revival to Balearic food. The combination of local ingredients, age-old recipes and international flair is the basis of oftentimes surprisingly original dishes by Mallorcan-based Michelin-starred chefs like British Marc Fosh (Read's Hotel), Basque Koldo Royo (Koldo Royo) and German Gerhard Schwaiger (Tristan).

## THE MALLORCAN KITCHEN

Traditional Mallorcan cuisine is above all resourceful, making use of the ingredients found on the island, especially pork, fish, and local vegetables and herbs. To learn more about Mallorcan cuisine, consider taking a cooking class (p61), or simply wander around the wonderful fresh markets that set up weekly in towns across the island.

### Specialities

No meal in Mallorca begins without a dish of olives and a hunk of *pa amb oli* (bread with oil), made with traditional *pa moreno* (rye bread). It's sometimes topped with chopped tomatoes. Menorca's cheddar-like *maó* is the Balearics' best-known cheese, but Piris, a square, aged cow cheese made in Campos, is similar in style. Although seafood paella is ubiquitous, Mallorca's most traditional rice dish is *arros brut* (dirty rice), a soupy dish made with pork, rabbit and vegetables.

Pork is found in some measure in countless sausages, stews, soups and even some vegetable dishes and desserts. The centuries of hunger Mallorquins endured taught them to appreciate every part of the pig; even today, they use everything but the squeal. Other favourite meat dishes include *frit Mallorquí*, a fried mix of tasty lamb parts; it too was born out of a desperate need for protein. Grilled rabbit or lamb is widely enjoyed as well.

The beautifully bound hardcover book *The Taste of a Place: Mallorca*, by Vicky Bennison, is a cookbook, history book and culinary guidebook in one.

The fabulous coffee-table book *Majorca Culture and Life*, published by Konemann, has many engaging, thoughtful essays on Mallorcan cuisine past and present.

In the Middle Ages, peasants made bread with carob seeds because they couldn't buy wheat and drought conditions made growing it difficult.

### TOP FIVE RESTAURANTS

- Celler Ca'n Ripoll (p157)
- Refectori (p90)
- Restaurant Clivia (p138)
- Port Petit (p193)
- Béns d'Avall (p122)

**CHEF LLUC PUJOL CAPÓ**

After a delicious (and filling) meal at his cosy, family restaurant Ca'n Carlos (p90), in the heart of Palma, chef Lluç Pujol Capó sat down for a chat about his favourite Mallorcan dishes. Pujol Capó is known for his modern takes on traditional island cuisine.

**What are the 'can't miss' dishes in Mallorca?** That's hard, because there are so many. *Suquet de peix* is a fish stew. It's spectacular. Another dish, which we serve here, is *xai Mallorquí*, lamb made with an orange, honey and vinegar crust. And the *frit Mallorquí*, which people love until they find out what it is: a stir-fry of lamb lungs, heart and liver.

**How is Mallorcan cuisine changing?** It's becoming more modern, taking traditional regional recipes and putting new spins on them. As in other Mediterranean regions, it's the young chefs who, right out of cooking school, are experimenting with using local ingredients to create international dishes.

**Can you give us one of your favourite recipes?** One is wrapped grouper with cabbage, pork belly and *sobrassada* purée.

**Ingredients**

50g of chopped pork belly	1 cabbage leaf
grouper spine and head for broth	raisins
water, salt and pepper	pine nuts
sherry	slice of <i>botifarrón</i> or other blood sausage
onion	1 potato
tomato	<i>sobrassada</i>
150g of grouper fillet	1 walnut
chopped garlic and parsley	olive oil

**Instructions**

Boil the pork belly in a broth flavoured with grouper spine, sherry, onion and tomato at a low temperature for three hours, then grill it with its juices. Meanwhile, rub the grouper with garlic and parsley, and place in the centre of a poached cabbage leaf. Add raisins, pine nuts and *botifarrón*, and wrap, securing with string. Add a little broth and bake for 12 minutes at 150°C. Boil the potato until it's soft, then blend with *sobrassada*, walnut, olive oil and salt. To serve, spoon the pork belly on a plate, topped with the wrapped grouper and accompanied by the purée. Drizzle with a bit of broth.

Dried Mallorcan sausages are iconic. Traditionally made by families as a way to keep meat year-round, *sobrassada* (tangy pork sausage flavoured with paprika), *botifarra* (flavourful pork sausage) and *botifarrón* (a larger version of *botifarra*) are some of the best island sausages.

It's true that much of the fish eaten on Mallorca is flown in from elsewhere, but many species still fill the waters near the island. *Atún* (tuna), *besugo* (sea bream), and *rape* (monkfish) are some of the most common fish caught here. Especially appreciated is *cap roig*, an ugly red fish found around the Illa de Cabrera. Fresh seafood is best served grilled with just a bit of salt and lemon. Another delicious way to eat it is '*a la sal*', or baked in a salt crust. A *marisquada* is a heaping tray of steamed shellfish – plan to share.

Mallorca isn't known for its desserts (fruit and ice cream are the most common), but exceptions include *gató Mallorquí* (a dense almond cake) and *quarts* (cake topped with meringue and sometimes also chocolate). The Mallorcan pastry par excellence is the beloved *ensaimada*, a soft round bun made with a spiral of sweet dough and topped with powdered sugar. Sometimes, *ensaimades* are filled with cream or a sugary paste called *pasta de angel*.

Learn all you ever needed to know about *sobrassada* at [www.sobrassada.demallorca.org](http://www.sobrassada.demallorca.org).

**DRINKS**

Mallorcan *vino* (wine) has earned a reputation for quality in past years and is served at nearly all island restaurants. Spanish *cervezas* (beers) like Estrella Damm, San Miguel and Cruzcampo are served in most bars alongside a few imports. The most common way to order a beer is to ask for a *caña*, or small draught beer.

Spirits include all the major international brands as well as local specialties. *Herbes*, a herbal liquor made with up to two dozen different plants including mint, rosemary, lavender and anise is served in both *seco* (dry) and *dulce* (sweet) versions. Also popular is Palo (literally 'stick'), a herbal liquor that tastes akin to a dark brandy.

**HABITS & CUSTOMS**

Stopping to sit down and slowly savour a meal is one of the best things about eating in Mallorca. Lunch, the biggest meal of the day, deserves a break of at least an hour (maybe much longer) even on a busy work day. On Sundays, the midday family meal may last until the late afternoon. Social dinners are equally drawn out, with each step from appetisers to post-dinner drinks being relished to the fullest. If you're extended the honour of being invited to dine in someone's home, bring a small gift of wine or chocolates and prepare yourself for a feast. A Mallorquin host will go all-out to entertain guests.

For the most part, table manners in Mallorca mirror those elsewhere in Europe. In restaurants wait staff are notoriously curt; don't take it personally. Whether they are polite or not, a 10% tip is considered generous.

**CELEBRATIONS**

Mallorquins don't need much of an excuse to throw together a celebratory meal, although the extensive Catholic calendar certainly does give them plenty to celebrate. Each holiday or major saint day has its own special recipes and pastries.

The *matanza*, or pig slaughter, was traditionally one of the biggest celebrations of late winter; it still is in a few rural communities. The whole family gets together to kill and prepare the sausages and meats they'll eat in the coming months. While it's a messy business, the day ends with a huge feast.

**SOBRASSADA**

Mallorca's best-known sausage, the addictively tangy *sobrassada*, is an island icon. 'These days, *sobrassada* is made in factories and sold in shops, but not long ago it was a family affair,' explains Bartomeu Frau i Oliver, owner of Embotits Aguilo in Sóller. The factory, more than one hundred years old, produces 1500kg of La Luna-brand *sobrassada* each week. The *sobrassada*-making process at Embotits Aguilo hasn't changed much since the days when it was made in family kitchens following the *matanza* (pig slaughter). Chopped pork is ground with red pepper and sea salt. The mixture sits overnight and is then poured into natural pork casings and hung in a humid, temperature-controlled room to age for about two months. Depending on the conditions and the producer's approach, it may be darker or lighter, softer or harder. *Llonganissa*, for example, is a young soft sausage sold in long, thin links. 'One isn't better than the other,' Frau i Oliver says. 'They're just different.'

'*Sobrassada* is everywhere in Mallorca – we use it in soups, with bread, in rice dishes and stews, with honey, with figs, with eggs, on pizza...it's a very adaptable condiment, and just about any island dish can be served with it. My personal favourite is sliced thin and grilled over hot coals in winter. Delicious!'

Learn all you'll ever need to know about *ensaimada* at [www.ensaimada.demallorca.com](http://www.ensaimada.demallorca.com).

At [www.illesbalearsqualitat.es](http://www.illesbalearsqualitat.es) you'll find a wealth of information about agrotourism routes, wine regions and other speciality island products.

Sign up for a day trip through Mallorca's wine country at [www.majorcawinetour.com](http://www.majorcawinetour.com).

## EATING OUT

No Mallorcan town, big or small, is without its fair share of cafés and restaurants. Café culture is very much a part of life here, and any excuse is a good one to meet for coffee, go for drinks after work or get a group of friends together for dinner.

It's often hard to distinguish between a café, a bar and a restaurant. Any may serve food and a single establishment might morph from a low-key morning café to a lunchtime bistro to a lively bar after dark. Also, bars come in several forms. *Cervecerías* are more or less the Spanish equivalent of a pub, while anything actually called 'pub' is likely to serve stout and show lots of football. *Taberna* are generally rustic and may serve tapas or meals as well. In any of the above you might be charged more if you get a table or sit outside.

Restaurants have a similar gamut of styles. Anything with *ca'n* or *ca's* in its name (words that, like the French *chez*, designate someone's home or property) serves traditional fare in a family-style atmosphere, while anything dubbed a *celler* evokes the image of a country wine-cellar-turned-restaurant, although some of these traditional eateries were never actual cellars. A *marisquería* will specialise in seafood and shellfish and is likely to be pricey.

## When & What to Eat

Mallorquins eat late, no matter what the meal. As in the rest of Spain, travellers will have to reset their stomach clocks if they want to catch even a glimpse of the locals.

Most people start the day with a simple coffee at home, but it's also common to head out to *esmorzar* ('breakfast' in Catalan) mid-morning. This is the ideal time to try the sugary *ensaimada* and wash it down with a *café con leche* (coffee with milk) or a *zumo de naranja natural* (freshly squeezed orange juice). You could also get a pastry or a small ham or cheese sandwich, known as 'sandwich mixto'. In touristy areas expect to see restaurants advertising 'full English breakfast', where you can find eggs and sausage. Many hotels and guesthouses take a more German approach, serving muesli and yogurt, toast with sliced cheese, and fruit.

Lunch, the most important meal of the day, is served from 1pm to 4pm. The best value is the *menú del día*, a fixed-price lunch menu that offers several options each for *primeros platos* (starters), *segundos platos* (entrées) and *postres* (desserts), bread and a drink for €10 to €20. Even when not ordering a *menú*, Mallorquins generally order two courses and a dessert when they go out for lunch. And it's not a bit frowned upon to drink wine or beer with a meal.

Even Mallorquins' stomachs start growling by 7pm or so. This is a great time to stop for tapas. An import from the mainland, tapas aren't as widespread here as in other Spanish cities, but many bars and cafés will have a small selection of snacky things to choose from. Olives, potato chips or a dish of almonds are the ideal accompaniment to a *caña*.

## CAFÉ CULTURE

*Café*, or coffee, is served at breakfast, lunch and dinner and whenever you need a pick-me-up. *Café con leche* (espresso with milk), served in a big mug, is probably the closest thing to a cappuccino you'll find, and is generally considered a morning drink. Later in the day, Mallorquins order either a *café solo* (espresso served alone), a *cortado* (espresso served with a splash of milk) or a *carajillo* (espresso served with brandy).

The annual *matanza*, or slaughtering of the pig, was a major event on Mallorca's social calendar and is still carried out amid feasting and partying in rural areas today.

Although the text is in Spanish, *Restaurantes de Mallorca*, by Lucia Alemany, has a stellar list of the island's best eateries.

Starting with the assumption that to know Mallorcan cuisine you must first know the land it comes from, Sunflower Guides' *Mallorca Walk & Eat* combines nature walks with restaurant and culinary tips.

## MALLORCAN WINE

Mallorca has been making wine since Roman times but only in recent years has it earned a reputation for quality. Just over 30 cellars, with 2500 hectares between them, make up the island's moderate production, most of which is enjoyed in Mallorca's restaurants and hotels. The wineries are huddled in the island's two DOs (Denominaciones de Origen), Binissalem (p154) and an area in the centre of the island that includes towns like Manacor, Felantix and Lluçmajor (p162), where growing conditions are ideal. International varieties like Cabernet Sauvignon are planted alongside native varieties, like Manto Negro, Fogoneu and Callet. Local white varieties include Prensall Blanc and Girò Blanc, which are blended with Catalan grapes like Parellada, Macabeo and Moscatell or with international varieties like Chardonnay.

The best wines are the spicy, balanced reds, which tend to be full-bodied, expressive brews that nearly always include Manto Negro in their blend. White and rosé wines have yet to achieve the quality mark of Mallorcan reds and so far represent only a quarter of production.

The best winery here is Anima Negra, which makes modern, distinctive reds. Also look out for Bodegues Ribes, Bodegues Macià Batle, Finca Son Bordils and the organic winery Jaume de Puntró.

The dinner hour begins at 9pm, though many places open by 7pm or 8pm to accommodate tourists. Nearly all close their kitchens by midnight. A meal begins with *pa moreno* and perhaps a *pica pica*, when many small appetisers are put out for everyone to share. Next comes the *primer plato*, which may be a salad, pasta, grilled vegetable plate or something more creative. The entrée is either fish (often served *a la plancha*, pan grilled) or some kind of meat – pork, lamb, steak or rabbit. Desserts are most often a simple *helado* (ice cream), flan or fruit.

## VEGETARIANS & VEGANS

While veggie lovers may come to loathe the sight of so much pork and sausage, don't despair – wonderful produce is also served year-round. Mallorca's poor soil and steady sun lead to small, compact fruits and vegetables. The island is especially proud of its fava broad beans, peppers, aubergines, artichokes, cauliflowers and green asparagus, which grows wild across the islands. Figs, apricots and oranges (especially around Sóller) are abundant.

Unfortunately for herbivores, many traditional veggie dishes are prepared with salted pork, bacon, meat broth or lard. For example, the bean stew *fava pelada pagesa* is cooked with bacon, and *ensaimades* are made with lard. The thick *sopas Mallorquines*, hearty vegetable stews, may or may not include pork fat.

Safe bets for vegetarians include *tortillas*, thick omelettes made with potatoes or veggies, and *tumbet*, the typical sautéed vegetable dish. Many restaurants offer a grilled vegetable plate and fresh salads like *trampó*, a cold dish made with tomato, onion, special pale green Mallorcan peppers and olives. The Spanish *gaspacho* (cold tomato soup) is popular too. A cheese sandwich is a reliable fill-in if you just want a simple snack.

Vegetarian-friendly restaurants in this guide are denoted with the symbol ✓. Organic food is sold at some local fresh markets (see individual town sections for opening times), at health food stores and at farm shops like Finca Son Barrina (☎ 971 504540; www.mallorcaorganics.com; Carretera Inca-Llubi Km6; 11 9am-8pm Fri & Sat).

## EATING WITH KIDS

Mallorca is a kid-friendly place and its restaurants are no exception. You can expect to get lots of smiles if you have cute kids with you but few restaurants go out of their way to accommodate them. Kids' menus, booster seats and

To try Mallorcan food at home, check out the long list of recipes at [www.spain-recipes.com/balearic-recipes](http://www.spain-recipes.com/balearic-recipes).

*Ensaimada* pastries are made with strong flour, water, sugar, eggs, mother dough and pork lard; vegans beware.

**PICKY EATERS**

Nature has been kind to Mallorca and the locals take full advantage of it. In early autumn they head to the hills in search of tasty *esclata-sang*, a mushroom of the milk-fungus family that's called *rovellon* in Catalonia. In summer it's time to pick the slender green asparagus that grows in rocky, shrub-filled areas. Any time is a good time to restock on herbs like rosemary and thyme, which are abundant throughout the Mediterranean. You can also pick *fonoll mari* (samphire), a leafy coastal herb that's marinated and used in salads.

highchairs are the exception, not the norm. This is why you'll see most parents either bobbing their babies on their laps or simply keeping them in the stroller. Letting a kid wander around a restaurant – as long as they're not breaking wine bottles or bothering anyone – is usually OK too.

Many restaurants are happy to adjust their standard dishes to children's tastes. Simple grilled meats, French fries, spaghetti and *tortillas* are all common kids' plates. If you've brought baby food with you, just ask for it to be warmed up in the kitchen; most places will have no problem with this.

Mayonnaise was invented on nearby Menorca, when egg yolks, olive oil, lemon juice and salt were combined for the first time, in the 18th century.

**EAT YOUR WORDS**

While many restaurants that cater to tourists will automatically place an international menu in front of you, smaller places may only have menus in Mallorquin Catalan.

**Catalan****I'd like ...**

*Voldria ...* vool-dree-a ...

**a table for two**

*una taula per a dues persones*

oo-na ta-oo-la per a doo-az per-so-nes

**the menu in English**

*la carta en Anglès*

la kar-ta en an-gles

**a drink**

*una beguda*

oo-na be-go-da

**a glass of water**

*un vas d'aigua*

oon vas de a-ee-gwa

**a glass of wine**

*una copa de vi*

oo-na ko-pa de vee

**a glass of beer**

*una copa de cervesa*

oo-na ko-pa de sur-ve-sa

**the bill**

*el compte*

al koomp-ta

**the non-smoking section**

*la zona per a no fumadors*

la zo-na per a no foo-ma-dors

**I'm ...**

*Jo soc ...* jo sok ...

**a vegetarian**

*vegetarià*

ve-je-ta-ree-a

**diabetic**

*diabètic*

dee-a-be-tee-k

**I'm allergic (to ...)**

*Tinc al·lèrgia (a ...)*

teenk a-ler-jee-a (a ...)

**I only eat kosher food.**

*Només menjo kosher.*

noo-mess men-joo kosher

**What is the speciality of the house?**

*Quina és l'especialitat de la casa?*

kee-na es les-pe-sya-lee-tat de la ka-sa?

**Does this dish have meat?**

*Aquet plat té carn?*

a-kei'plat te karn?

**Spanish****I'd like ...**

*Quisiera ...* kee-sye-ra ...

**a table for two**

*una mesa para dos personas*

oo-na me-sa pa-ra dos per-so-nas

**the menu in English**

*la carta en Inglés*

la kar-ta en een-gles

**a drink**

*una bebida*

oo-na be-bee-da

**a glass of water**

*un vaso de agua*

oon va-zo de a-gwa

**a glass of wine**

*una copa de vino*

oo-na ko-pa de vee-no

**a glass of beer**

*una copa de cerveza*

oo-na ko-pa de sair-ve-sa

**the bill**

*la cuenta*

la kwen-ta

**the non-smoking section**

*la zona de no fumadores*

la zo-na de no fu-ma-do-res

**I'm ...**

*Soy ...* soy ...

**a vegetarian**

*vegetariano/a*

ve-khe-ta-rya-no/a (m/f)

**diabetic**

*diabético/a*

dee-a-be-tee-ko/a (m/f)

**I'm allergic (to ...)**

*Tengo alergia (a ...)*

ten-go a-ler-jee-a (a ...)

**I only eat kosher food.**

*Solo como comida kosher.*

so-lo ko-mo co-mee-da ko-sher

**What is the speciality of the house?**

*Cuál es la especialidad de la casa?*

kwal es la es-pe-sya-lee-dad de la ka-sa

**Does this dish have meat?**

*Este plato tiene carne?*

es-te pla-to ti-e-ne kar-ne

**Food Glossary****a la plancha**

a la plancha

pan grilled

**aceite de oliva**

a-the-ye do-lee-va

olive oil

**alioli**

a-lee-oh-lee

garlic mayonnaise

**atún**

a-toon

tuna

**berenjena**

be-ren-khe-na

aubergine

**botifarra**

boo-tee-fa-ra

typical blood sausage

**botifarrón**

boo-tee-fa-ron

large blood sausage

**calamares**

ka-la-ma-res

calamari or squid

**camaïot**

ka-ma-yot

a pâté-like pork sausage with a thick fatty rind

**cap roig**

kap-roach

'red head', a tasty fish from the Illa de Cabrera

**cerdo**

ther-do

pork

**conejo**

co-ne-kho

rabbit

**cordero**

kor-de-ro

lamb

<b>desayunar</b>	de-sa-yoo-nar	breakfast
<b>dorada</b>	do-ra-da	gilthead
<b>ensaimada</b>	an-sai-ma-da	typical Mallorcan pastry
<b>esclata-sang</b>	as-ka-ta-sung	a prized mushroom in the milk-fungus family
<b>favas</b>	fa-bas	broad white beans
<b>frit Mallorquí</b>	freet-ma-yor-kee	sautéed lamb offal
<b>fruta</b>	froo-ta	fruit
<b>gambas</b>	gam-bas	shrimp
<b>granizados</b>	gra-nee-tha-dos	flavoured ice drinks
<b>helado</b>	e-la-do	ice cream
<b>jamon serrano</b>	ha-mon-se-ra-no	cured ham
<b>la cena</b>	la-the-na	dinner
<b>la comida</b>	la-co-mee-da	lunch
<b>langosta</b>	lan-go-sta	crayfish
<b>llonganissa</b>	yon-ga-nee-sa	young, thin <i>sobrassada</i> sausage
<b>lubina</b>	loo-bee-na	sea bass
<b>mejillones</b>	me-khee-yo-nes	mussels or acorn barnacles
<b>mero</b>	me-ro	grouper
<b>merluza</b>	mer-loo-tha	hake
<b>pa amb oli</b>	pa-amb-o-lee	bread with oil
<b>paella</b>	pa-ye-ya	rice and seafood dish
<b>pan moreno</b>	pan-moo-re-no	dense rye bread
<b>pargo</b>	par-go	sea bream
<b>pasta de angel</b>	pas-ta de an-jel	angel paste, a sweet filling used in <i>ensaimada</i>
<b>pimientos</b>	pee-mee-yen-tos	peppers
<b>Piris</b>	pee-rees	cheddar-like cheese made in Campos
<b>pulpo</b>	pool-po	octopus
<b>quarts</b>	kwarts	cake topped with meringue and sometimes chocolate
<b>queso</b>	ke-so	cheese
<b>raor</b>	ra-or	a rare local fish caught in late summer
<b>rape</b>	ra-pe	monkfish
<b>rovellon</b>	ro-ve-yon	a local mushroom
<b>sepia</b>	se-pya	squid
<b>setas</b>	se-tas	mushrooms
<b>sobrassada</b>	so-bra-sa-da	tangy sausage
<b>sopas Mallorquinas</b>	so-pas ma-yor-kee-nas	thick Mallorcan stew-like soups
<b>suquet de peix</b>	soo-ke-t de peysh	fish stew
<b>tortilla de patatas</b>	tor-tee-ya de pa-ta-tas	potato omelette
<b>tumbet</b>	tum-bet	layers of fried vegetables topped with tomato sauce
<b>trampó</b>	tram-po	summer salad made with tomatoes and peppers
<b>zum de naranja</b>	thoo-mo de na-ran-kha	orange juice

# Environment

Mallorca is an incredibly diverse island where limestone cliffs, spectacular caves and sandy coves meet blooming fields of wild flowers, eerie olive groves and damp forests to form one of the Mediterranean's most storied landscapes.

## THE LAND

The largest island of the Balearic archipelago, Mallorca extends over 3626 sq km in the western Mediterranean, just 175km off the coast of Spain. Technically the Balearics are an extension of mainland Spain's Sistema Penibético (Beltic mountain range), which dips up to 1.5km below the Mediterranean and peeks up again to form the islands of Mallorca, Menorca, Ibiza and Formentera. The stretch of water between the archipelago and the mainland is called the Balearic Sea.

Mallorca is shaped like a rough trapezoid, with the jagged Serra de Tramuntana forming an imposing barrier on its western flank, and the broken hills of the Serra de Llevant adding scenic variety in the east. A series of plunging cliffs interspersed with calm bays marks the south, while capes like the Cap de Formentor and the long shell-shaped bays at Pollença and Alcúdia dominate the north. In the centre of the island extends the vast fertile plain known as Es Pla.

The island's defining geographic feature is the Serra de Tramuntana, whose forested hillsides and bald peaks stretch for 90km and are home to Mallorca's highest summit, Puig Major (main peak 1445m). On the other side of the island, the Serra de Llevant maxes out at just 509m at the Santuari de Sant Salvador.

Mallorca, particularly along its eastern and southern coasts, is drilled with caves created by erosion, waves or water drainage. There are so many that spelunking enthusiasts are still discovering them. The caves range from tiny well-like dug-outs to vast kilometres-long tunnels replete with lakes, rivers and astounding shapes sculptured by nature's hand. For more information see p61. The best-known caves are the Coves del Drac and Coves d'es Hams, both outside Porto Cristo (p177).

## WILDLIFE

### Animals

Small birds, lizards, turtles, frogs and bats make up the bulk of the native populations. Mammals include feral cats (a serious threat to bird populations), ferrets, rabbits, hedgehogs and the occasional mountain goat (although most have owners). While there are only a handful of hard-to-find snakes, reptiles aren't absent on Mallorca: lizards are among its most popular creatures, especially on the Illa de Sa Dragonera, where they have the run of the island.

Invertebrates shouldn't be overlooked: interesting spiders, more than 300 moth species and 30 kinds of butterflies fill the island. In the evening cicadas and grasshoppers make their presence known.

The Mediterranean is rich with life as well. Sperm whales, pilot whales and finback whales feed not far offshore. Also swimming here are bottlenose dolphins, white-sided dolphins and other species. Scuba divers often spot barracuda, octopus, moray eels, grouper, cardinal fish, damsel fish, starfish, sea urchins, sponges and corals.

The *Complete Guide: Beaches Mallorca + Cabrera*, by Miguel Ángel Álvarez Alperí, takes an in-depth look at more than 300 island beaches and their surroundings.

Thousands of caves, large and small, tunnel underneath the surface of Mallorca. Many are still waiting to be discovered.

Among the most complete guides available to Mallorca's caves are the *Cuadernos de Espeleología I and II* (Speology Notebooks I & II), by José Bermejo.

## BIRDS

Mallorca's balance of wetlands, craggy cliffs and grassy plains has attracted a thriving, varied bird population that's made the island a bird-watching hot spot (see p59 for more information), especially during the migration periods in spring and autumn. The richest habitat is the Parc Natural de S'Albufera (p148), home to a full two-thirds of the species that live permanently or winter on Mallorca. Other great bird habitats are the Embassament de Cúber (p125), the Vall de Bocquer near Port Pollença (p139), the sea cliffs of Formentor (p141) and the Illa de Sa Dragonera (p110). Commonly sighted birds include black vultures, Eleonora's falcons, Audouin's gulls, purple herons, serins, warblers, bee-eaters, ospreys, scops owls and hoopoes.

With more than 200 species it's all but impossible to predict what you'll see. The birds can be divided into three categories: sedentary (those that live on the island year-round), seasonal (those that migrate south after hatching chicks or to escape the cold winters in northern Europe) and migratory (those that use Mallorca as a brief resting point before continuing their journey).

Wetlands species include small birds like red-knobbed coots and warblers as well as long-legged wading birds like flamingos, black-winged stilts, herons and egrets. You can also spot rare ducks like the white-headed duck or marble duck.

The peaks of the Serra de Tramuntana are circled by huge birds of prey, including vultures, falcons and eagles. The trails around Puig Roig are a good place to spot vultures, whose wingspan can reach 3m.

Along the coast gulls are seen in abundance, especially the common Audouin's gull that nests in seaside cliffs. Others nesting here include shearwaters, storm petrels and the Mediterranean shag.

Inland, look out for songbirds like larks, nightingales and chats.

A series of interesting articles about Mallorca's natural spaces can be found at [www.mallorcaweb.com/reports/natural-areas](http://www.mallorcaweb.com/reports/natural-areas).

More than 200 bird species can be found on Mallorca.

If you plan to go birding, invest in a guide like *Finding Birds in Mallorca*, by Dave Gosney.

## MALLORCA'S PARKS

The creation of protected wildlife areas has helped stabilise Mallorca's wildlife and make it accessible to visitors. Now a full 40% of the island falls under some form of official environmental protection status.

park	features	activities	page
Parc Nacional Maritim-Terrestre de l'Arxipèlag de Cabrera	an archipelago of 19 islands and islets; home to 130 bird species and incredibly diverse marine life	hiking in the scrubby hills around the Castel de Cabrera, scuba diving, lolling on wondrously uncrowded beaches	p186
Parc Natural de S'Albufera	a vital wetland sheltering 400 plants and 230 species of birds, many of them on the migration path from Europe to Africa	bird-watching (coots and sedge warblers), cycling along the quiet paths that slice through the marsh	p191
Parc Natural de Mondragó	rolling dunes, juniper groves, vibrant wetlands and unspoilt beaches within easy reach of the big east coast resorts	strolling through forests and near wetlands, picnicking on a gorgeous beach	p148
Parc Natural de la Península de Llevant	flora and fauna	walking, bird-watching	p169
Parc Natural de Sa Dragonera	two small islets and the 4km-long Dragonera island, with its harrowing cliffs, pristine coves and countless caves; endangered gull population	snorkelling, scuba diving	p110

## LLUÍS GRADAILLE TORTELLA

As director of Jardí Botanic de Sóller (Sóller's Botanic Garden, p121), Lluís Gradaille Tortella works daily with the Balearics' wonderfully varied flora.

**What are Mallorca's most iconic plants?** There are many, like *Paeonia cambessedesii*, a beautiful pink peony endemic to Mallorca and locally called *dits de sang* (fingers of blood). You could also see a lot of *Naufraga balearica*, a damp-loving endemic plant with delicate white flowers.

**What can you tell us about Mallorca's medicinal plants?** Mallorca, like most Mediterranean lands, has a strong tradition of using medicinal plants. More than 100 are still used today and are said to calm nerves, ease headaches or even to help avoid the presence of demons.

**What is Mallorca's most pressing environmental problem?** There are many, but invasive species – non-native plants that can take root anywhere and don't allow other species to survive – are threatening our endemic flora. They are destroying our natural ecosystems.

**What can people do to help?** Use autochthonous plants in your garden. These also have the benefit of needing less water and being easier to care for.

## ENDANGERED SPECIES

Threatened species of Mediterranean birds, tortoises and toads are growing in number thanks to the conservation and controlled breeding efforts of Mallorca's parks and natural areas. Endangered species here include the spur-thighed tortoise and Hermann's tortoise, the only two tortoises found in Spain, and bird species like the red kite.

The programmes are showing results; the endemic Mallorcan midwife toad's status was recently changed to 'vulnerable' from 'critically endangered'. But there's not such good news about the Balearic shearwater, a water bird that has suffered greatly because of feral cats. It recently moved from 'near threatened' to 'critically endangered'.

## Plants

From the delicate pink and white blooms of almond trees and the red berries of evergreens, to the vast fields of springtime wild flowers and exotic blooms of cliff-dwelling plants, Mallorca's landscape is defined by its enticing flora. The Balearic Islands claim more than 100 endemic species and provide a fertile home to countless more.

On the peaks of the Serra de Tramuntana, Mallorca's determined mountain flora survives harsh sun and wind. Thriving species tend to be ground huggers or cliff species like *Scabiosa cretica* (full plants with exotic-looking lilac blooms), which burrow into rock fissures to keep their roots well drained and cool.

On Mallorca's rocky hillsides and flat plains, where oak forests once grew before being burned or destroyed to create farmland, drought-resistant scrubland flora now thrives. Expect to see evergreen shrubs like wild olives and dwarf fan palms, as well as herbs like rosemary, thyme and lavender. Other plants include heather, broom, prickly pear (which can be made into jam) and 60 species of orchids.

Where evergreen oak forests have managed to survive you'll find holly oaks, kermes oaks and holm oaks growing alongside smaller, less noticeable species like violets, heather and butcher's broom. Most interesting to botanists are endangered endemic species like the shiny-leaved box (*Buxus balearica*) and the needled yew (*Taxus baccata*), a perennial tree that can grow for hundreds of years. A specimen in Esporles is thought to be more than two thousand years old.

Humidity-seeking ferns (more than 40 species of them) have found marvellous habitats near Mallorca's caves, gorges and streams. Look out for the

A full English-language directory of Balearic plants is online at <http://herbarivirtual.uib.es>.

At least 100 of Mallorca's plants are endemic, that is, they occur naturally only on the island.

chaste tree (an appreciated medicinal plant), oleander and tangled patches of blackberries. Endemic plants include the lovely *Paeonia cambessedesii*, a pink peony that lives in the shade of some Serra de Tramuntana gullies, and *Naufraga balearica*, a clover-like plant that lives on shady Tramuntana slopes. In other damp areas, clusters of poplars, elms and ash trees, all introduced species, form small forests.

On the shore, plants have had to adapt to constant sea spray, salt deposits and strong winds. One of Mallorca's most beloved coastal species is samphire (*fonoll mari*), a leafy coastal herb that was given to sailors as a source of scurvy-preventing vitamin C. These days it's marinated and used in salads. Other common species are the spiny cushion-like *Launaea cervicornis*, and *Senecio rodriguezii*, whose purple, daisy-like flowers earned it the nickname of *margalideta de la mar* (little daisy of the sea).

In the wetlands, marshes and dunes of Mallorca, a variety of coastal freshwater flora prosper. Duckweed is one of the most common plants here, though it is often kept company by bulrush, yellow flag iris, sedge and mint. These sand-dwelling species often have white or pale-green leaves and an extensive root system that helps keep them anchored in the shifting sands.

## ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Not surprisingly, overdevelopment is the main environmental issue facing Mallorca. The uninhibited construction that began in the 1960s and '70s has influenced everything from birds' nesting habits to plant habitats, rainwater runoff and water shortages. Although the government is more environmentally aware than in decades past, there are still conflicts, such as a proposed shopping and leisure centre that would destroy the Ses Fontanelles wetland near S'Arenal, or the urban corruption scandal involving a town hall-approved housing project that would have destroyed part of a protected forest in Andratx (when the scandal was uncovered in 2006 it led to a wave of arrests).

The high-rise hotels of mega resorts like Magaluf, S'Arenal and Cala d'Or may be the most glaring examples of overdevelopment, but just as damaging is the proliferation of chalets and sprawling village-like resort complexes that are quickly eating up land. Per square metre, these residential tourism homes use more water and more electricity than traditional hotels, and as their numbers grow they are encroaching more and more into the natural habitats of island wildlife. At its core the problem is simple and has no obvious solution: there is simply more demand than supply when it comes to Mallorcan land.

One of the most pressing concerns for environmentalists, and an indirect result of the construction boom, is the prevalence of invasive plant species. Many destructive species were first introduced in local gardens but have found such a good home in Mallorca that they're crowding out endemic species. A good example is *Carpobrotus edulis*, called 'sour fig' in England and locally dubbed *patata frita* (french fry) or *dent de león* (lion's tooth) because of its long, slender leaves. A robust low-lying plant, it chokes native species wherever it goes.

Even more noticeable is the water shortage, produced by the combination of low rainfall, outdated water collection and treatment facilities, and a demand that completely overwhelms the resources available.

New highways and motorways are another source of tensions, with many environmental groups fighting the construction of major roadways, which destroy habitats, redirect water routes and increase traffic.

Influential environmental groups include **Amics de la Terra** (Friends of the Earth; [www.amicsdelaterra.org](http://www.amicsdelaterra.org) in Spanish), **Grup Balear d'Ornitologia i Defensa de la Naturalesa** (Balearic Group of Ornithology & Defence of Nature; [www.gobmallorca.com](http://www.gobmallorca.com)), and the **Fundació Pel Desenvolupament Sostenible de les Illes Balears** (Foundation for the Sustainable Development of the Balearic Islands; [www.targetaverda.com](http://www.targetaverda.com)), promoters of the **Targeta Verda** (p17).

For information on environmental issues and how you can get involved, go to [www.gobmallorca.com](http://www.gobmallorca.com).

### RESPONSIBLE TOURISM – WATER CONSERVATION

We all should do our part to conserve H2O, starting with some common-sense strategies, such as limiting shower time, turning off the tap when not using water and requesting that hotel towels not be laundered every day – instead, hang them up to dry and re-use.

# Activities

Mallorca is all about the great outdoors. No doubt it's the mild climate and ever-changing natural beauty that lured you here, so now it's time to get out and enjoy. A favourite walking destination for a generation, Mallorca is now garnering fame as a cycling hot spot. Amateurs and pros alike have discovered that the island's hilly country roads are the perfect places to feel the burn.

On the coast there's sailing, kite surfing, sea kayaking and windsurfing. Marshy areas like the Parc Natural de S'Albufera are wonderful bird-watching areas. Or head inland for more adventurous pursuits like caving or descending canyons. The culturally minded can explore Mallorca's agrotourism routes, where you can see how cheese, wine and other local products are made. Signing up for courses, whether they be day-long cooking classes or more intense language immersions, is the ideal way to get under the island's skin.

Several companies offer day trips or activities, among them the Sóller-based **Tramuntana Tours** (☎ 971 632423; [www.tramuntanatours.com](http://www.tramuntanatours.com); excursions average per person incl transport €25), which offers walking, mountain biking, road cycling and fishing trips all around the island.

## WALKING

From the bald limestone peaks in the west to the fertile plains of the interior and the rocky coastal trails of the east, trekkers have their pick of splendid walks on Mallorca. The Consell de Mallorca has gotten serious about marking and maintaining the island's trails, many of which have been used for centuries. Keen hikers can tackle the *Ruta de Pedra en Sec* (Route of Dry Stone, GR 221, p112), which is a five- to seven-day walk running from Port d'Andratx to Pollença, crossing the Serra de Tramuntana. Signposting is currently under way on the *Ruta Artà-Lluc* (GR 222), which will eventually link the two towns. As in the rest of Spain all GR (long-distance) trails are signposted in red and white. At a few points along the GR 221 there are *refugis de muntanya* (rustic mountain huts) where trekkers can stay the night.

The best hiking maps are the 1:25,000 Tramuntana Central, Tramuntana Norte and Tramuntana Sur maps by Editorial Alpina. If you need more than a good map, call on island guides like **Rich Strutt** (☎ 609 700826; [www.mallorcanwalkingtours.puertopollensa.com](http://www.mallorcanwalkingtours.puertopollensa.com); day hike per person incl transport €25-33), an English-speaking guide who offers tailored day hikes or longer treks for groups of four or more. Also recommended is **Jaume Tort** (☎ 618 215766; [www.mallorca-camins.com](http://www.mallorca-camins.com); day hike per couple incl transport €100); see opposite. Both guides work all over the island.

See individual chapters in this book for details on area walks.

## CYCLING

Nearly half of Mallorca's 1250km of roads have been 'adapted' for cycling, with measures ranging from simple signposts to separate bike lanes (like the excellent lanes along Palma's waterfront). The better roads are just one more draw for cyclists, who descend in droves to sample Mallorca's hilly terrain and peaceful countryside, especially from March to May and late September to November, when the weather is refreshingly cool.

Mountain bikers will find plenty of trails here as well, ranging from flat dirt tracks, to rough 'n' tumble single-track climbs. There is no 'best' area for biking; trails cover the island like a web and, depending on your skills and

If you're looking for short, easy-access walks, check out Sunflower Guides' *Landscapes of Mallorca*.

The website [www.exploradors.com](http://www.exploradors.com) pertains to the Balearic Islands Rambling Association and has helpful information about walking guides and routes.

Lead your own hikes with the detailed and easy-to-follow *Walk! Mallorca North and Mountains* by Charles Davis.

## JAUME TORT, MOUNTAINEERING GUIDE & MAP CREATOR

As a hiking guide, mountain lover, and the creator of a series of Tramuntana trekking maps for the bestselling Spanish company Editorial Alpina, Jaume Tort has walked more of Mallorca than most people.

**The world is filled with walking destinations. Why Mallorca?** In one of the most important tourist destinations of the Mediterranean you can find a rural area as beautiful and unspoiled as the Serra de Tramuntana. Most of the 10 million tourists that visit us each year spend their holiday at the beach, so the mountainous regions and the wild coastal areas are still lonely and virgin.

**Where is your favourite place to hike?** The coastal area of the Santuari de Lluc. Smugglers' trails, deep gorges, cliffs, rugged peaks...and private properties.

**Did you run into problems creating the Alpina trekking maps?** I've never had problems with guard dogs (which are always tied up in Mallorca), but to enter private properties I've had to jump more fences than I can count, and once I got into an argument with the caretakers of a rural estate.

**What advice do you have for those who want to take their tent to Mallorca?** That they leave it at home. In Mallorca there is just one simple campground in Lluc, and open-air camping isn't allowed. The best options are the *refugis de muntanya* (mountain refuges), which have caretakers and are located in pretty areas.

interests, anywhere can be the start of a fabulous ride. Be sure to get a good highway or trekking map before you set out.

Check in local tourist offices for route information and details about bike rental agencies. Prices can vary between €8 for a touring bike and €18 for a mountain bike per day. Kids' bikes and kiddie seats are widely available as well. The **Federació de Ciclisme de les Illes Balears** (Cycling Federation of the Balearic Islands; ☎ 971 757628; [www.webfcib.org](http://www.webfcib.org) in Spanish & Catalan) can provide contact information for local cycling clubs. A growing number of hotels cater specifically to cyclists, with garages and energy-packed menus.

Two suggested cycling routes are on p100 and p146.

## GOLF

There are nearly two dozen golf courses across Mallorca, most of them near Palma or along the coasts. Expect a round of 18 holes to cost €75 and up (nine holes is about two-thirds that price), with cart rental €25 to €40. Prices dip in summer when it's often simply too hot to have fun.

Tourist offices distribute the *Mallorca Golf* brochure, with details and contact information for all island courses. Or contact the **Federació Balear de Golf** (Balearic Golf Federation; ☎ 971 722753; [www.fbgolf.com](http://www.fbgolf.com)) for general golfing info.

## BIRD-WATCHING

As a natural resting point between Europe and Africa, and as one of the few Mediterranean islands with considerable wetlands, Mallorca is a wonderful birding destination. Grab your wildlife guide and head to the Parc Natural de S'Albufera (p148), a marshy bird-watchers' paradise where some 230 species, including moustached warblers and shoveler ducks, vie for your attention. The park provides free binoculars to holders of a *Targeta Verda* (p17).

Other good spots include the Vall de Bocquer near Port de Pollença (p139) and natural parks like the Parc Natural de Mondragó (p191) and the Reserva Natural de S'Albufera in northern Mallorca. The best time for birding is spring and autumn, the peak migration times. The web forum [www.birdforum.net](http://www.birdforum.net) has an extensive listing of Balearic birding sites. See p54 for more information.

The 1:75,000 *Mallorca Cycle Map* by Cycline will help you plan routes across the island.

Some 50,000 cyclists come to ride on Mallorca's roads each year.

### GETTING OUTSIDE...WITH KIDS

After the beach, where can you take the kids? The theme parks and zoos that dot Mallorca are obvious choices. The Puig de Galatxó Parc de Natura in western Mallorca, a park with adventurous activities like rock climbing and zip lining, is a fun option for kids eight and older.

Get out on the water with a cruise on a glass-bottomed boat (p177) or take a day trip to the Illa de Cabrera (p186). Snorkelling around coves like Font de Sa Cala (p171) is a great way to have fun while learning about marine life. Or see sharks and Mediterranean sea creatures up close at the Palma Aquarium (p101).

On dry land rent bikes and make the most of the island's bike paths, like the flat stretch running along Palma's waterfront (p100). Horseback riding is a thrill for older kids, and even toddlers will enjoy the pony rides available at many of the stables. To hike with kids, choose a short- to medium-length trail with lots of diversions; a coastal path is ideal. See p169 and p182 for a couple of specific ideas.

Just off the highways of the Serra de Tramuntana are two dozen or so public recreational areas, parks and rural estates that now have barbecue pits and play areas for kids.

## HORSEBACK RIDING

With its extensive network of rugged trails making their way over the hilly countryside and alongside the Mediterranean, Mallorca is a magnet for equestrians. Many towns and resorts also have stables where you can sign up for a class (€10 to €20) or join a group for an excursion (about €25 per hour) or day trip (around €100). Some stables also offer pony rides for small children. Cala Ratjada (p170), Colònia de Sant Jordi (p185) and Pollença (p134) are all popular riding areas. Get more information from tourist offices or the **Federació Hipica de les Illes Balears** (Equestrian Federation of the Balearic Islands; ☎ 971 154225; www.hipicabalears.com in Spanish; Carrer del Metge Camps, Es Mercadal, Menorca).

## WATER SPORTS

With 550km of coastline, Mallorca makes it easy to enjoy the Mediterranean. In practically every resort you'll find opportunities to get out on the water.

### Sailing & Cruising

Among the 35 marinas that ring Mallorca's coast, many offer yacht charters, sailboat rentals and sailing courses. There are large sailing schools in Palma (p85), Port de Pollença (p139) and other resorts; expect a nine-hour course to cost €100 and up.

If you charter or bring your own yacht, your options for sailing are unlimited. Popular routes include sailing around Palma to the Illa de Cabrera and back, sailing along the rugged Tramuntana coast (p119), or making the loop right around the island. For details on moorings and marinas, try to pick up the free *Harbours & Marinas Guide*, published annually by Tallers de Molí, at tourist offices or marinas. If you anchor your yacht in open water, follow the guidelines published by the **Conselleria de Medi Ambient** (☎ 971 176800; www.caib.es; Avinguda de Gabriel Alomar i Villalonga 33, Palma de Mallorca) to protect the sea floor. Another good source of information is the **Federació Balear de Vela** (Balearic Sailing Federation; ☎ 971 402412; www.federaciobalearvela.org in Spanish; Avinguda de Joan Miró 327, Palma de Mallorca).

The glass-bottomed boats that drift up and down the eastern coast are a fun way to enjoy the water without having the responsibility of a boat. See individual resort sections for details.

### Surfing, Windsurfing & Kite Surfing

While the relatively calm wind and waves of Mallorca don't make the island a natural hot spot for fans of surfing, windsurfing or kite surfing (aka kite

boarding), there are a few places to ride the waves. Port de Pollença (p139), on the Badia d'Alcúdia, is the epicentre for these sports. Most courses include four or more hours of instruction time and cost €75 and up.

### Scuba Diving

The northern and western coasts and the islands of Dragonera and Cabrera are all great places to scuba dive, thanks to their rich marine habitats and clear waters. For scuba shops, gear rental, classes or to sign up for a dive, head to Söller (p119), Santa Ponça, Port de Pollença (p139) or Alcúdia (p142). If you're just looking for an excuse to dive, nearly any resort will be able to provide you with basic gear, even on the east coast where the underwater sights are generally less spectacular. Expect a dive to cost at least €35; equipment rental is extra.

### Sea Kayaking

The craggy coast and generally calm conditions of Mallorca make it well suited to sea kayaking, a sport that is just beginning to gain a loyal following. Guide and rental companies are clustered around Alcúdia and Port de Pollença.

The Port de Pollença-based **Kayak Mallorca** (☎ 696 151340; www.kayakmallorca.com; half-day trip per person incl transport €45; La Gola, Port de Pollença) organises trips for any level all around the island. Get in touch with the **Federación Balear de Piragüismo** (Balearic Federation of Canoeing & Kayaking; ☎ 971 792019; www.fibp.org in Spanish; Carrer Joan Miró 327, Palma de Mallorca) for details on courses for kids and adults, as well as a list of nautical clubs with a kayak presence.

## ADVENTURE SPORTS

If you're looking for something even more thrilling, canyoning might be for you. Trudging down gorges and gullies can be dangerous if you're not well prepared (going with a guide is essential), but it can also be exhilarating. The Monument Nacional Torrent de Pareis in western Mallorca is the island's best canyoning destination.

Mallorca's pocked limestone terrain means caving conditions are fantastic. One of the best is the long Cova des Pas de Vallgornera (p184), although there are countless explorable caves here, with more being discovered and catalogued each year. To be safe, employ the help of a local expert like **Jose Antonio Encinas** (☎ 609 372888; www.inforber.com/mallorcaverde, an interesting site in Spanish), who leads caving trips.

For courses or guides in caving, canyoning or rock-climbing excursions, you could also contact the **British-run Rocksport Mallorca** (☎ 629 948404; www.rocksportmallorca.com), based in Port de Pollença.

For more information on Mallorca's caves see p53.

## COURSES

Signing up for a course is a wonderful way to get more out of your holiday. Language classes are widely available, although many of them are geared toward long-term students. For full details on Spanish courses in Spain, check in with Spain's national language institute, the **Instituto Cervantes** (www.cervantes.es).

To learn more about cooking in Spain, get in touch with **Fosh Food** (p85) in Palma, where two-hour classes costing €45 and up teach gourmet cooking techniques in English and sometimes German.

Yoga classes are available in several spas and rural hotels. They're also offered by private teachers like those at **Yoga Mallorca** (www.yoga-mallorca.com), who, for €28 per hour, will travel to your hotel for a private class.

The website www.mallorcanautic.com has loads of information on sailing Mallorca's coast.

Spain's king, prince and infantas are avid sailors. Each summer they participate in Mallorca's Copa del Rey (King's Cup).

There's a great overview of Mallorcan diving at www.divesitedirectory.co.uk/balearics\_mallorca.

Many of Mallorca's hiking trails were first laid out by tobacco smugglers during the oppressive Franco regime of the mid-20th century.

Plan your agrotourism route with [www.illesbalearsqualitat.es](http://www.illesbalearsqualitat.es), a wonderful source if you're curious about the island's food, wine and rural heritage.

Courses in sailing, windsurfing, kayaking and rock climbing are spottily available on the island; see individual sports sections in this chapter for more details.

### AGROTOURISM

See how cheese is made, visit a ceramics factory or tour a winery. Agrotourism is booming in Mallorca, and the local government has even set up guided tours to dozens of local factories and workshops. The helpful map *Agrorutes del Bon Gust* (Agroroutes of Good Taste), published by the Conselleria d'Agricultura i Pesca (Fish and Agriculture Council), provides the contact details and locations for nearly all visitable factories, giving you enough information to make a self-styled agricultural tour of the island.

If you're interested in wineries make a beeline for Binissalem (p154); for cheese factories, hit Campos (p164); for *sobrassada* production, head to Artà (p167) or Sóller (p119). All factory contact details are online at [www.illesbalearsqualitat.es](http://www.illesbalearsqualitat.es).

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