

CULTURAL MALLORCA

ARABIC LEGACY

Like most Mediterranean islands, the Balearics have had their share of different settlers in their 9,000-year history, acting as a trading post for Greeks, Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Romans, Vandals, Byzantines and North African Moors over the centuries. Mallorca fell under various Arabic and Berber rule from 707 AD. Initially, in return for payment to the Caliphate, the island was allowed to continue with its socio- economic and political structures, as well as its religious beliefs.

Two hundred years later, it became fully subsumed under the control of the Moorish Omeya dynasty, during which time 'Medina Mayurka' (now Palma de Mallorca) became an important cultural focal point of the Muslim world. Arabic rule came to an end in 1229, with the arrival of King Jaume I, when it was annexed by the Kingdom of Aragon and became part of the Catalan empire.

Today, Mallorca's most famous son, undoubtedly, is tennis star, Rafael Nadal, but the island's most important historical figure is Ramon Llull (1232–1316), after whom many roads, monuments and public spaces are named. Llull, a Catholic philosopher and theologian, was the son of Catalan parents who had settled in Mallorca under Jaume I. In an effort to supplant the Moors, families and traders were encouraged to move across from Catalunya, in exchange for land and privileges.



Born in Palma, Llull became a scholar of Arabic language and, in wanting to develop a method for understanding and testing theological theory, designed the world's first rudimentary mechanism for machine learning. 'Ars Magna' was a logical system to test theories and beliefs and was conceived as an instrument to be used in interfaith dialogue.

Llull persuaded King Jaume II to found a monastery in Miramar, Mallorca, whose main objective would be to teach Arabic to missionaries and promote religious conversion of non-Christians through his logical methodology.

He travelled extensively to promote an educational programme, encouraging the foundation of Hebrew, Arabic and Chaldean language schools and preaching of the Catholic faith in synagogues and mosques. His travels would take him from Europe's capitals to Tunisia, Libya, Armenia, Sicily and Cyprus, in a personal crusade to convert infidels, before passing away in Palma at the grand age of 84. His crypt is in the basilica of Sant Francesc in the city.

FESTIVALS

Historic battles between Christians and Moors are re-enacted and celebrated in festivals up and down the island each year and while Catholicism is by far the largest religion these days, Mallorca's Arabic legacy remains.

In the valley of Sóller, place names in a cluster of villages betray their Arab heritage, such as Biniatzar, Teix, Alaró, Felanitx and Binissalem. Valldemossa takes its name from the valley of Musa, itself named after a wealthy local Berber, Sayid Mousa.



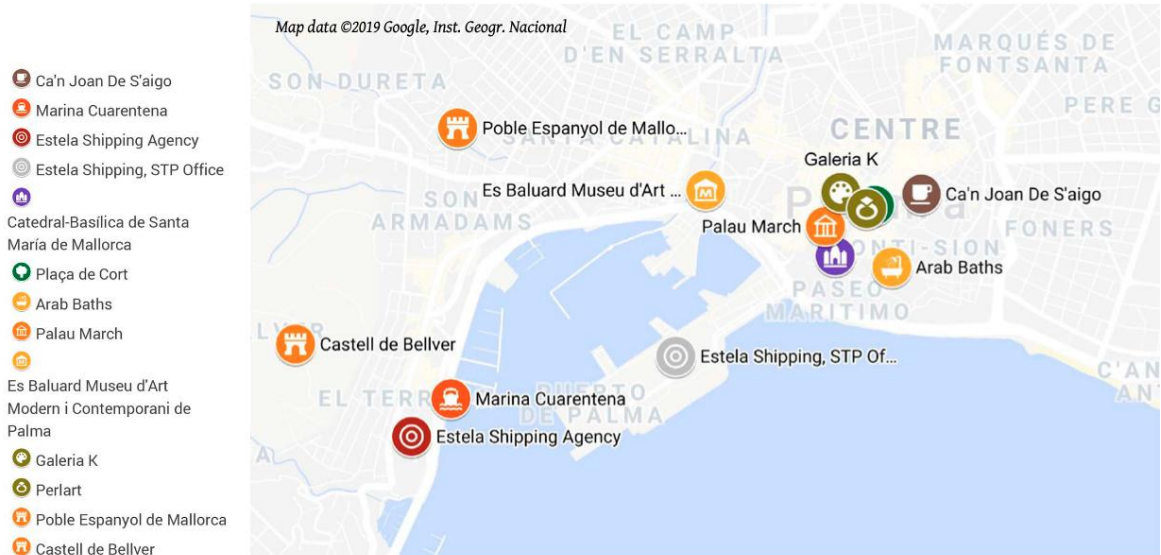
Architecturally, there are still clues in the towns, villages and the mountains, where Moorish terraces and irrigation systems laid the foundations that continue to benefit cultivation today. Most of Mallorca's 750,000 olive trees are more than five hundred years old, while many still bearing fruit now may have first done so in Arabic times. The most complete surviving building is the thermal bath in Palma's Arabian quarter, in the old town.



The Moors were great gardeners too, planting with symbolic flowers, but their signature was the extensive use of water features, designed for their calming effect and to deflect decorative sunlight. A few remnants of Moorish gardens remain in Mallorca, though nothing quite as grand or preserved as the Alhambra, in Granada.

A Day in Palma de Mallorca

Watch Estela's virtual itinerary online here (2'40"): <https://youtu.be/YiQzIC6j8Oo>



If you are spending just one day in Palma, a great way to explore the city is to stroll around the old town. Staying within town, the entire centre is easily covered on foot. Opposite STP, walk up one of Palma's main boulevards, with the cathedral to your right, bringing you to the heart of the city, along **Passeig del Born**. Shops, cafés, galleries and ateliers are dotted all along the narrow, winding, cobbled lanes that come off either side.



A traditional way to start is to take breakfast at the original **C'an Joan de S'Aigua** in Calle Sans. Founded in 1700, it is one of the city's classic bakeries and coffee houses, famous locally for its *ensaimadas* and *cuartos*. If stopping by later in the day, this characterful establishment also makes its own artisanal ice cream.

The Mallorca Files: **Joan's Bar**





Filming takes place in a tapas bar named **Moltabarra**, in the Sa Gerreria neighbourhood.



Palma Cathedral, or 'La Seu', as she is referred to locally, is an imposing architectural feature of the City and is the second-largest Gothic cathedral in Spain (after Seville). Construction began in the 13th century, taking 400 years to complete, and it features 'The Gothic Eye', one of the world's largest rose windows with 1,236 pieces of stained glass. Its columns are ringed with wrought-iron candelabra designed by Gaudi. Be sure to walk around to the

southern end, facing the sea, to admire the Portal del Mirador, a 15th-century door by Guillem Sagrera featuring scenes from the Last Supper.

The cathedral is open to visitors from 10:00h-18:15h.

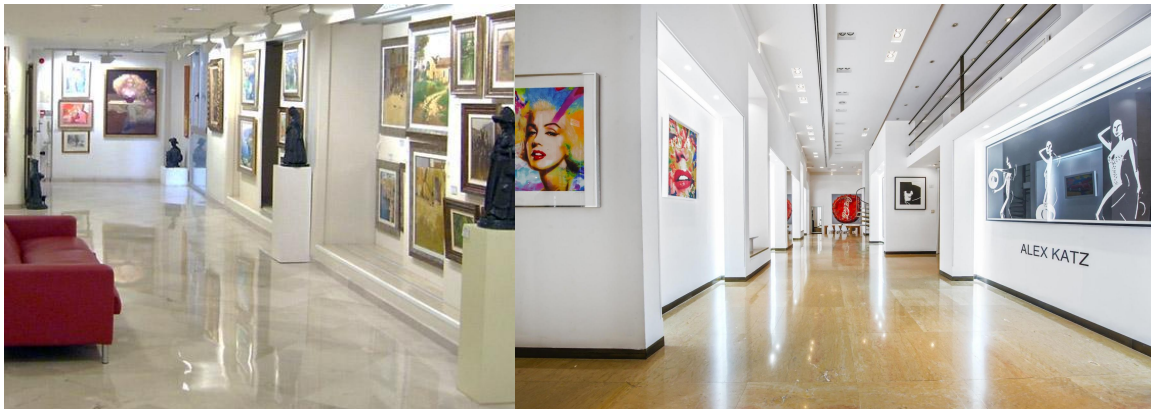
For church lovers, Palma has many beautiful examples to enjoy, but like much of southern Spain, having a history littered with Moorish occupation and a large Jewish contingent, these different cultures all put their stamp on the city. Today, the official language of the Balearics is Catalan, while older locals and villagers speak their own dialect, Mallorquin.





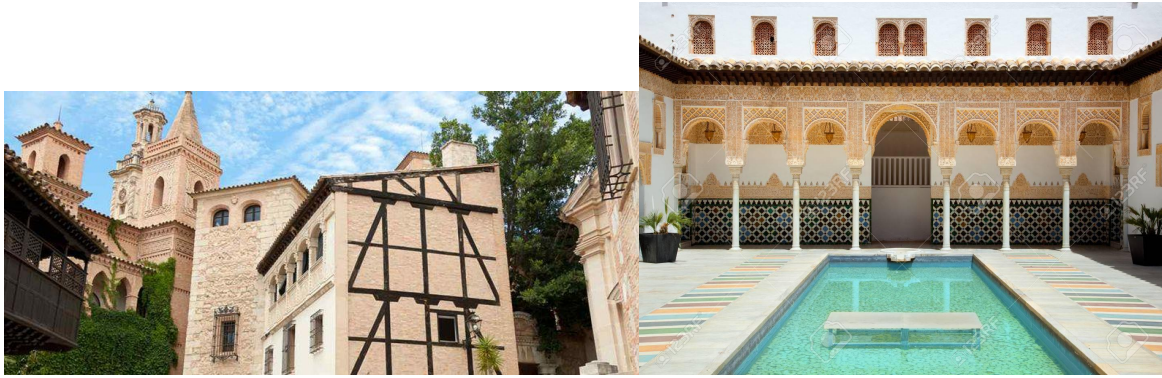
Other highlights around the city are **Plaza Cort**, featuring the most-photographed of all of Mallorca's millions of olive trees, the **ancient baths in the Arab quarter**, the Jewish quarter, and many classic **Mallorcan patios**, tucked away in the backstreets. A major part of any Palma itinerary involves wandering about on foot and getting lost, just a little.

Close to the cathedral, visit the '**Palau March**' **Museum** (10:00-17:00h weekdays, 10:00-14:00h Saturdays), the opulent former home of Juan March Ordinas, an entrepreneur and financier once reputed to be the world's richest man. Lovers of modern art should head to **Es Baluard** museum of modern and contemporary art (10:00h-20:00h) housed in a former military fortress. Its permanent collection includes works by Cézanne, Gauguin, Picasso, Miro, Picabia, Magritte, Giacometti, Motherwell, Tàpies, as well as more recent artists such as Horn, Plessi, Polke, Kiefer, Schnabel, Barceló, and Scully. The museum also has an active programme of shows, exhibitions and film, catering for a wide audience.



Palma has many art galleries and studios large and small, with a vibrant contemporary arts scene, ranging from German modern at **Galeria K** (C / Can Veri 10) to the Balearics-centric **Gabriel Vanrell** (C/ Tous 1). Pearls may be an appropriate gift to buy for friends or family back home, as Mallorca is famous for its pearl industry.

Away from the centre...



For visitors unfamiliar with all that Spanish architecture has to offer, a long walk (30 minutes) or taxi (10 mins) to **Pueblo Español** on the outskirts of central Palma are worth it. Designed as a showcase project, this small 'village' features reproductions of famous buildings from Cordoba, Toledo and Madrid, along with houses typical of Spain's diverse regions. Particularly worthwhile is its reproduction salon, baths and patio from the Alhambra Palace, in Granada.



A 15-minute drive from the centre is **Bellver Castle**, visible on the hill to the west of Palma. Bellver ('lovely view' in Catalan) is a 14th-century Gothic style circular castle with a unique round tower. Aside from the castle itself, one of the best reasons to visit is the spectacular views over the woods to Palma and the entire bay area.

COASTAL MALLORCA

Of the 46 'Blue Flags' awarded to the Balearics' beaches, Mallorca has 31, while the 90km-long mountain range, Serra de Tramontana, is designated a UNESCO World Heritage site.



Owing to its central location on the ancient Mediterranean trading route, the island of Mallorca has seen its share of conquerors, invaders and settlers over the centuries, evidence of which can be found around the island.

Away from its beautiful coastline, the island's towns and villages all tell a story through their ancient architecture, with historical events and battles commemorated with many fiestas and events throughout the year.

More recently, the painter and sculptor Joan Miró lived and worked here, Frederic Chopin wintered here, while many stars of stage, screen, sport and music call it home.

Mallorca's most famous son today is Rafael Nadal, the world's former Number One tennis champion and keen poker player, who hails from Manacor, where his eponymous tennis academy is located.

BAY OF PALMA

Spending only a few days cruising Mallorca's coastline means picking where to drop anchor for the day, with many attractive coastal spots to choose from. But, remember, regardless of where you choose to come ashore, any part of the island is less than an hour away by car. Aside from water sports, fishing or diving, guests might choose to go shopping in Palma, sightseeing in Soller and Valldemossa, or playing golf at Alcanada.



Returning from Ibiza, we moor up at **Puerto Portals**, in the heart of Palma Bay and only 16km from the airport. From here, Palma's centre and beaches are only a taxi-hop, bike ride, or even a run away, while Portals' own restaurants, cafes and boutiques are a great spot to linger, people-watch and soak up the glitzy atmosphere. Portals stood in for Monaco during recent filming of the 2018 remake of 'Dirty Rotten Scoundrels', starring Anne Hathaway and Rebel Wilson.

PORT D'ANDRATX, SANT ELM, SA DRAGONERA

Setting off westward from Puerto Portals we cruise around Mallorca's southern tip towards Port d'Andratx for our next mooring.



Nearby is the picturesque fishing village of **Sant Elm**, a popular spot for hikers to walk up to 'Sa Trapa', a ruined Trappist monastery with stunning views of the coastline and surrounding areas, as well as **Sa Dragonera**. The six-kilometre long rock gets its name from its dragon-like shape and is home to over 350 different plant species. Many plants uncommon to the rest of the island include wild cabbage, corn chamomile, horse-shoe vetch and European fan palm.

The islet is a strategic point during bird migration and many colonies of sea birds and birds of prey can be found here. Gulls, shearwaters and osprey are among the species frequently found patrolling its shores. In addition to birds, a small sub-species of lizard native to Sa

Dragonera is characteristic, in fact the name of the island comes from the large number of these lizards you come across while strolling around the island.

BEST SPOTS & CAVES FROM ANDRATX TO SÓLLER

39°63'N 2°41'E ***Cala de Ses Ortigues***

39°56'N 2°35'E ***Cala d'en Tio***

39°59'N 2°35'E ***Cala d'en Basset***

39°64'N 2°43'E ***Els Farallons***

39°62'N 2°48'E ***Es Tamarell***

39°69'N 2°50'E ***Ets Amoradors***

39°70'N 2°54'E ***Punta de s'Àguila***

39°70'N 2°55'E ***Cala Gata***

39°62'N 2°48'E ***Es Tamarell***

39°71'N 2°58'E ***Port de Valldemossa***

39°73'N 2°60'E ***Pedra Blanca***





PORT DE SÓLLER, SÓLLER, DEIÀ, VALLEMOSSA, FORNALUTX, SA CALOBRA

Continuing up along Mallorca's west coast, we head for **Port de Sóller**, mooring at Marina Tramontana. Port de Sóller is a stunning natural bowl and is therefore a tourism hotspot during the high season. A pretty fishing village with a stretch of sandy beach, with many seafront shops, bars and restaurants make for a lovely spot to relax.

It is also a great place from which to explore some of Mallorca's most picturesque villages, with an old wooden train trundling up to the hilltop town of nearby **Sóller** at regular intervals.

The town is famous for its olive industry, but also for lemons and oranges. On a hot day, a locally-made fruit sorbet is a refreshing must.

A stone's throw from Sóller lies **Fornalutx**, often voted one of the prettiest villages in the whole of Spain. It's a small, photogenic village whose attraction is its narrow cobbled streets, pretty houses with red roofs, with flower pots abound and beautiful mountain views.

By car, a drive from Sóller to **Deià** and on to Valldemossa provides views of the most stunning bit of coastline anywhere, while a stop in each town is worthwhile. Deià is known for its literary and musical connections, with many writers and artists drawn here since early in the 20th century. The poet and novelist, Robert Graves settled here and his house is now a museum, while several Spanish-language writers and poets came here for inspiration from

the mainland and South America.



In the 1980s Deià became associated with Sir Richard Branson, whose Virgin Group

once operated the 'La Residencia' hotel in the town. The exclusive resort has in the past been host to famous names such as Mick Jagger, Princess Diana and Harrison Ford.

More recently, it has been nearby Cala Deià, on the coast, that has been drawing many visitors, after the screening of a TV adaptation of a John Le Carré thriller, 'The Night Manager'. Largely set in Mallorca, some major scenes were filmed at the



ramshackle restaurant, Ca's Patró March, perched precariously just on the water's edge. The eatery is not quite the fancy venue portrayed in the hit drama, but its unique setting with beautiful cove views, and accessibility directly by tender, makes a visit worthwhile.



Another achingly beautiful village in the Tramuntana mountains is **Valldemossa**, the place where Frederic Chopin once spent an unhappy winter with George Sand, due to the inclement weather. The town's most famous homeowner is movie star Michael Douglas, though his clifftop estate has been up for sale for some years, with a \$50 million price tag.



The quiet and picturesque town has its share of small shops, eateries and art galleries, so is a pleasant spot to while away an hour or two. Hikers can choose from a number of trails that originate here. A drive from Sóller in the other direction, north towards **Sa Calobra**, is 38km of motoring or cycling

nirvana. This famous stretch of hair pinned tarmac has featured in many motoring TV shows and photoshoots. Taking one's eye off the road to admire the stunning views is probably inadvisable...



THINGS TO SEE

ROYAL CARTHUSIAN MONASTERY MUSEUM

The Real Cartuja (Royal Carthusian Monastery) was originally a royal residence, until Carthusian monks occupied the building from 1399 until 1835. It

has white-arched corridors leading to 'cells' containing museums on various themes. Visit the old pharmacy - you can almost smell the herbs - then look into the library, where the monks would meet for half an hour a week, their only human contact. There is a fine modern art museum, with works by Picasso, Miro and Juli Ramis, and of course there is Chopin's cell.

THE ARCHDUKE WAY – WALK

The archduke walkway above Valldemossa and Deià is without a doubt one of the most stunning walks on the island. The walkway follows the summit ridge with spectacular views down to the sea. It is a challenging hike with over 500m of ascent. However, the steep climb out of Valldemossa is well worth it for the views along the north western coast.

THE HOUSE OF ROBERT GRAVE MUSEUM

Poet and author Robert Graves (1895-1985) lived in Deià, Mallorca, from 1929 until his death. His house has been refurbished and adapted for visitors.

Port de Pollença, Cap Formentor

Tearing ourselves away from Sóller, we move further north, towards arguably the most beautiful piece of coastline Mallorca has to offer. Larger yachts frequently anchor off-shore, though mooring in nearby Port d'Alcudia's commercial port can be arranged.



Passing **Cala San Vicente**, a charming small resort featuring three beaches and a great spot for cliff diving, we head for the unspoilt cove of **Cala Bóquer**. Accessible only by boat or on foot (it's a beautiful 4km walk from Port de Pollença), this cove is some 300 meters inland with a pebbly beach, popular with snorkelers and divers. Overhead,

keen twitchers might spot vultures and falcons rarely seen in Europe.

BEST SPOTS

Incredible clear water on this side of the island. Coves and cliffs. A perfect place for diving. ***We can organise your diving instructor on board.***

39°84'N 2°77'E **Cala Tuent**
39°85'N 2°80'E **Sa Calobra**
39°91'N 2°96'E **Caló de Xalóc**
39°93'N 3°04'E **Punta Galera**
39°92'N 3°05'E **Punta La Torre**
39°93'N 3°10'E **Cala Bóquer**



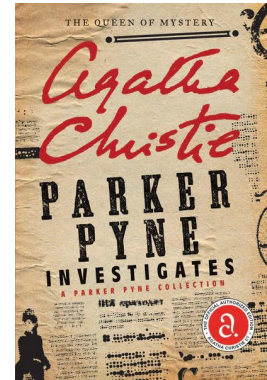
From Cala Bóquer we progress towards **Cap Formentor**, a peninsula jutting out from the north-eastern corner of Mallorca, featuring 400-metre high cliffs densely covered in pine trees. At the very tip is the lighthouse, 'Faro Formentor', one of the island's most famous landmarks, while its most inaccessible sandy (public) beach lies in front of the exclusive Hotel Formentor, currently undergoing a major transformation to re-open as a Four Seasons resort in 2023.

Spain's most expensive homes can be found here with jaw-dropping views and perfectly secluded. Port de Pollença (also 'Puerto Pollensa'), is a well-established low-rise resort with sandy beaches wrapped around a horseshoe bay and a seafront mostly unchanged in decades.



It is one of Mallorca's quieter resorts, popular with families and travellers whose idea of evening entertainment is a stroll along the picturesque Pine Walk, a 3-kilometre cobbled promenade stretching along half of the bay. The seafront offers an array of dining and drinking options, as well as many shops and boutiques to browse.

Port de Pollença was the spark for Agatha Christie's short story, *'Problem in Pollensa Bay'*, when the author first stayed here in March 1932. Hotel Formentor had been deemed too extortionate for her tastes, settling instead upon the fine Illa d'Or Hotel on Pine Walk (which remains open today), inspiring her to introduce the character 'Mr Parker Pyne'. Today, off-season visitors are more likely to encounter the Team Sky professional cycling squad, in training on nearby climbs ahead of the Tour season.



The Mallorca Files, restaurant and steps (series 2 episode 3)

This episode takes us to a Michelin-starred restaurant where one of the diners dies dramatically. Filming took place at the **Gran Hotel Son Net** in the town of Puigpunyent (set in the Serra Tramuntana mountain range to the west of the island).



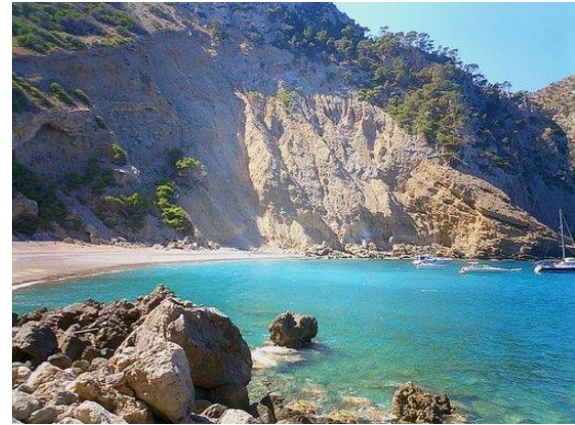
Away from the restaurant, one of the most dramatic scenes in the episode was shot in Pollença – using the famous **365 Calvari Steps** for an exhausting chase scene. Flanked by cypress trees, the steps lead up to a small church.

EAST COAST

Setting off down Mallorca's eastern coast, there are countless calas and beaches where visitors might choose to drop anchor. Heading for Porto Cristo for our next overnight stay, guests may enjoy a beach day at **Muro Beach**, where 'Royal Beach' is a popular lounge and bar, with its outdoor sofas and chilled music, though Muro can get busy during the high season.



Alternatively, calas particularly great for a swim are **Es Caló**, or the sandy coves at **Coll Baix, Cala Torta, Cala Mesquida**. The Cala Ratjada lighthouse offers impressive views, with Menorca visible in the distance while there are mooring options here at the Cala Ratjada Marina.





Inland, **Alcúdia's** walled old town is worth a visit, where the old gates still stand and where cobbled narrow streets are home to shops, bars and boutiques, while on Sundays it holds one of the island's biggest markets. Along with the typical Mediterranean marketware, there is lots of Mallorca produce on offer, while chatty locals add to the colour.



Another spot worth a visit is **Artà**, a 13th century town set on a hill, with steep narrow roads within medieval fortress walls leading to the pilgrimage church of Sant Salvador at the top of the town.



Its terrace offers panoramic views of the coast and hills with almond orchards and olive groves. On the coast lies Canyamel, from where the **Caves of Artà** are worth a 45-minute stop. The most impressive underground complex on the island, these caverns hid some 2,000 Arabs and their cattle during the Christian conquest. Like an underground cathedral, its tallest stalagmite stands 22m and continues to grow at a rate of 2cm per hundred years. cuevasdearta.com/en/



The longest beach on the east coast is Cala Millor, a well-developed resort, stretching from Cala Bona at the top towards the 200-hectare nature reserve of Punta de n'Amer at the southern end.

Stopping at Porto Cristo, one of the main attractions is the Cuevas del Drach (Dragon Caves), another impressive limestone cave complex featuring Lake Martel, one of the world's largest subterranean lakes. One-hour guided tours end with a ten-minute violin concert, with a string ensemble playing from a rowing boat cuevasdeldrach.com/en/



Setting off towards the southern tip of Mallorca, the east coast's choice of beauty spots doesn't let up, with many, many more calas tempting visitors into their crystalline waters. This stretch of coast is also quieter than the resorts north of Porto Cristo.



The Mallorca Files has also explored the island's least-known rural corners. The crew took over the streets of **Felanitx** in November 2018 for episode eight, 'Death in the Morning', as this southeastern town became the fictional village of Cazador, where the couple ends up trying to find out who murdered a British anti-bullfighting activist. Felanitx is a charming inland village surrounded by vineyards belonging to the island's second wine-producing area, Pla i Llevant, and hills dominated by ancient castles and towers. Not far from the southern coastline and the resorts of **Porto Colom** and **Cala d'Or**, it's a great place to visit to experience the real Mallorca.



Wine is an integral part of Mallorca. Many of its central plains are covered in ancient vineyards where local grape varieties grow, boasting exotic names like 'Manto Negro', 'Callet' or 'Prensal'. [Oliver Moragues](#) vineyard, an eco-friendly winery in Algaida, turned into 'Bodegas Negra' for The Mallorca Files while the duo looked into the killing of a dog. Oliver Moragues offer tours of the estate and wine tastings.



First up comes **Cala Varques**, a 1km beach in a quiet, secluded bay featuring a small cave and swim-through arch. Popular with locals, it's an unspoilt bay where the only food or refreshments available will be from beach vendors.



Moving along towards Portocolom, we pass Cala Murada, a sheltered blue-flag beach. **Portocolom** is a small resort with a deep natural port, and began life as a fishing village. The town is notorious regionally for its annual 'Fira Gastronómica d'Es Pop', a food festival held at the end of June, with some 40 stalls offering delicious squid specialties. For sandy beach lovers, the nearby **Cala Marçal** is the main daytime attraction.



Further south, there are a series of quieter calas and pebbly or sandy beaches, in an area popular with boat-based scuba divers. Being not easily accessible from inland, they tend to be quieter, as it takes some determination to get there.

Notable are **Cala Estreta**, **Cala Mitjana** and **Cala Ferrera**, before we reach the more developed Cala d'Or.



Cala d'Or is an attractive resort comprising a number of lovely coves and beaches, with numerous resort hotels and a lively marina with lots of boutiques, cafés and restaurants, though it can get crowded in the high season.



For a quieter stop, consider **Porto Petro**, another small fishing village that has swelled into a small resort set around a large natural harbour and marina.





Next up is the must-see **Parc Natural de Mondrago**, one of our favourite parts of Mallorca. Backed by a large natural park of thick pine forests are three white sandy beaches, connected by a wily footpath, offset against beautiful turquoise waters.



Further along is the pretty inlet and natural harbour of Cala Figuera and a perfect spot for lunch, with a number of good restaurants directly overlooking the creek below. Still an active fishing village without many hotels, Figuera is very much about atmosphere over sun-seeking.



Cala Llombards is the next possible stop (we did say that there is a lot of choice), with a sandy beach featuring a small beach café ('chiringuito') and clear waters to wade into. **Cap des Moró** is the next cove to tempt visitors. Like the other calas in this region, they are a trek for land-based visitors to get to, but their outstanding beauty makes it worth it, so they can get busy, particularly at weekends. The advantage for yacht-dwellers is that they can simply skip to the next bay...



Next up is **Cala s'Almunia**, which resembles a swimming pool tucked behind a cliff. Other spots along the coast may tempt you, though our last recommendation for outstanding, secluded beauty is **Cala Màrmols** ('Marble Cove'). Its beach is only 40 meters wide, but a 5.5km walk from the nearest car parking ensures that this small haven is mostly shared with other boat-based visitors.

Cabrera, Es Trenc





Moving around Mallorca's southern tip at Cap de Ses Salines, **Cabrera National Park** comes into view. 'Parque Nacional del Archipiélago de Cabrera', to give it its full name, is a cluster of 19 islands, with Cabrera ('Goat Island', even though there are no goats present) being its largest. It became a prison camp during the Napoleonic Wars and a military base in 1916.

Now a protected national park, it is a haven for plant- and wildlife, including turtles and whales and two hundred species of fish, as well as bird colonies. With underwater caves and coral and crystal clear waters, Cabrera is popular for scuba divers.

Tip: Private yachts require permission to anchor off Cabrera and must ensure not to touch in any way the protected posedonia seagrass. Contact us to arrange your visit, allowing at least three weeks' notice during the high season, or you may miss out.



The nearest on-shore resort to Cabrera is **Colonia de Sant Jordi**, a working fishing port and marina, with a number of fine, sandy beaches. It is a popular resort for water sports, with low-rise hotels and some good restaurants. The town's claims to fame are its salt beds that produce the island's 'fleur de sel', to be found in shops all over Mallorca, and the 'BEST' swimming training camp, where many of Europe's top swimmers have graced its 50m pool.



Just to the south of town lies what is widely regarded as Mallorca's finest beach, **Platja Es Carbó**, which comes with royal approval, as a spot favoured by the holidaying Spanish royal family.

A close second must be the neighbouring '**Es Trenc**', which at 3km long is the island's longest and widest sandy beach, stretching north all the way to Sa Rapita. The dunes of the national park directly behind the seafront provide shelter from any wind, making it popular for all-day beach dwellers, including a large nudist area.

GASTRONOMY

BEST GASTRONOMIC EXPERIENCES

Balearic cuisine is of course Mediterranean, but with a local accent, inspired by produce and traditions developed over centuries by various resident cultures. A strong fishing and farming heritage going back to Arabic times ensures great variety, while standards in the catering industry are high. Alumni of Mallorca's university catering college, UIB, have gone on to head up some of Europe's finest restaurants and the pool of homegrown culinary talent is strong.

SOBRASADA



Mallorcan produce with Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) includes 'sobrasada', a bulbous-shaped, terracotta-coloured rustic sausage you will see hanging in shops and restaurants all over the island. Made with minced pork and piquant seasoning, it is cured slowly and remains soft and spreadable, with a spicy aftertaste. Either on its own or as a cooking ingredient, you will find it on most restaurant menus in some shape or form.

ENSAÏMADA

Another PGI delicacy is the 'ensaïmada' pastry, sometimes crudely referred to as the 'snake cake'. It is a light and airy, spiral-shaped sweet bun, dating back to the 17th century.



Historically eaten plain or filled with scraped pumpkin fruit, nowadays they often come sugar-dusted and with a choice of jam, cream or chocolate filling.

OLIVE OIL



Unsurprisingly, given the three quarters of a million olive trees that bedeck the island's interior, Mallorca is a major producer of olives, olive oil and derivatives such as olive leaf green tea, olive wood tableware, and cosmetic products.

Mallorca's soil is largely of calcium and clay composition, giving its olives a unique aroma and taste profile, while year-round high humidity sustains the vegetation and delivers consistent crops.

Four varieties of olive are regulated by 'Oli de Mallorca', the local industry body that governs almost 1,000 producers on the island. 'Mallorquina' olives bring smoothness, sweetness and mature almond flavour to the oil; the 'Arbequina' variety has a green fruit characteristic, the 'Empeltre' olive brings smoothness, delicacy and almond flavour, and 'Picual' has a sour and spicy tang.

TIP: To learn all about Mallorca's olive oil industry, tours and tasting sessions are a great day out, giving visitors an opportunity to see for themselves the intricacies of making this all-important gastronomic ingredient. Contact us to arrange your transfer and we will whisk you off for an unforgettable day out in Mallorca's stunning countryside.

OTHER PRODUCE, TOURS AND TASTINGS

Other private tours and tasting experiences in Mallorca include jams, marmalades and jelly producers, wine and tapas tastings either at a vineyard or on board, and paella making masterclasses.



Mallorcan almonds are another delicacy for which the island is renowned. A great deal of wine production was wiped out by a phylloxera insect plague in 1891, up until which wine had been a major export. In its place, many farmers planted almond trees, producing a sweeter variety than most. Due to an average of 300 days of sunshine per year, coupled with ever-present humidity, the fruit has a high water content. Locally-produced almond oil makes a particularly delicate dressing.

WINE

The Romans were the first wine growers in the Balearic islands, creating wines on a par with Italy's finest, harvested from vines brought over from the old country. One might have thought the practice of winemaking to be outlawed during Arabic times, but the Moor viceroy, Ben Abet, is reported to have given a bunch of (sour?) grapes to King Jaume I when the Catholics re-conquered Mallorca in 1229.

Jaume granted licences for vineyards to be extended in the towns and villages surrounding Mallorca's second city, Inca, which remains the epicentre



of the island's resurgent wine industry. Up until the fatal infestation in the late 19th century, heavy demand for Balearic wine came from France in particular, where production had been hit by an earlier phylloxera outbreak. At its peak, Mallorcan exporters shipped 50 million litres to France, before the vines here were wiped out too.

Today's Mallorcan wines are produced from a wide range of predominantly red grape varieties; mostly Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Callet. Chardonnay and Muscat are the two most common single-grape white wines.

There are many tours and tastings to choose from, so let us help tailor your day to your preferred taste. Another great outing is a guided visit through some of Mallorca's picturesque orchards and fields, learning about and sampling some of the excellent produce grown here. The tour includes an alfresco lunch with a five-course seasonal tasting menu.

Mallorca Wine Tour



The VIP 'Finca Experience' visits a number of hand-picked traditional Mallorquin fincas, which have been producing wines for centuries.

Itinerary



This tour first calls at the oldest winery in Mallorca (1711), where you will stroll through the beautiful cellars and view the fermentation tanks. You will be able to taste some wines, accompanied with typical Mallorquin tapas.

After a ride through the wine fields, you will arrive at a typical finca in a stunning location. Here, you will walk through the vines and see how the plants produce their fruit and see how they are turned to wine in this small and unique wine cellar.





You will be invited to try a number of locally-produced wines with either more tapas or a three-course set menu, consisting of locally-reared lamb or fish direct from the market.

Single Winery Visit

There are some 70 wineries in Mallorca, many of which open for tours, tastings and experiences. Typically, a visit will include a tour of the vineyards, cellars and wine-making facilities, lasting up to two hours. Choose from one of the larger operations, such as Macia Batle or Jose L. Ferrer, or smaller houses like Finica



Binigual, Bodega Ribas, or Miquel Oliver. Visits can be tailored to your preference, of course!



All tours include wine-tasting, naturally, and can be accompanied with tapas, rustic lunch or a gastronomic dinner. Some also offer musical entertainment, as an optional extra. Several bodegas make olive oil too and offer oil-tastings and other local produce.

MICROBREWERIES & DISTILLERIES

For days when the sun is elusive, there are a number of microbreweries and distilleries to visit, where you can learn about artisan beer and spirits making processes, and sample the goods, of



course.

The Distillery's vodka is given a unique twist by the addition of 'Flor de Sal d'Es Trenc', the fine, white salt flower that occurs naturally in the Balearic sunshine in salt beds in the south of the island. Having dried out in the hot sun, 'salineros' rake the finest white foamy crystals off the top of the crusty sea salt, creating a premium product that is sold all over the island and exported to more than 30 countries.

MUSHROOMS & TRUFFLES

At the very tail end of the Mediterranean season, each October, begins the foraging for and celebration of Mallorcan mushrooms and truffles, with guided tours and cooking demonstrations on offer. As the exact location of these fungal treasures is always a closely guarded secret, hunts take place on private countryside estates, though whether signed NDAs and blindfolds are required, we aren't sure. What we do know is that the finest home produce can always be found in daily markets around the island, or at Mercat de l'Olivar, Mercat de Santa Catalina and Mercat de Pere Garau, daily in Palma.

OTHER GASTRONOMIC SPECIALITIES

Other local gastronomic specialities include honey and cheeses, while another PGI product is 'Hierbas de Mallorca', a green liqueur made with ethyl alcohol, sugar and aniseed, with up to thirty botanicals added, depending on the maker's personal taste. We couldn't recommend it, but most rustic hostelrys will proffer a glass as a digestif after a meal. If it tastes like medicine, it could be because its origins lie with 16th century pharmacists, who first made it as a derivative from the alcoholic distillates monks concocted, to ward off illnesses.

HANDICRAFTS

Creativity in Mallorca isn't confined to food and drink. All over the island there are textile weavers, ceramics workshops, glass blowers, jewellers, leathersmiths and designers of clothing and accessories. Mallorca is one of the last surviving makers of 'ikat' woven fabric, which can be found in soft furnishings in restaurants, shops and hotels, while the 'tela de llengües' ('cloth of tongues') pattern appears on all manner of products. Botanicals grown here are also used to make handmade, artisan products, such as soaps, candles, skincare lotions and essential oils.

Many artisan workshops and studios offer guided visits, demonstrations and tutorials, such as fragrance mixology, pottery classes and sandal-making. There are endless possibilities for experiences in Mallorca to make your visit truly memorable.

SPORTS & ACTIVITIES

Hunting

Introduced to Mallorca around 2000 BC by the Phoenicians, as a source of food, the Balearic Boc roams in the northern and western parts of the Tramuntana mountains. A sub-species of wild goat, males weigh up to 60 kg at a shoulder-height of 70 cm. Hunting is open all year round, making for an excellent day in unique scenery on a physically challenging stalk, returning with a highly sought-after trophy.



From September onwards is the partridge and duck shooting season, with terrain, climate and vegetation making it an ideal location for driven and walked-up shooting. Shoots of up to ten guns average bags of 500 partridges per day, over 5 drives. Duck shooting on estate ponds offers some very nice shoots at fast and high birds.

Tennis

Mallorca's most famous son today is Rafael Nadal, the world's former Number One tennis champion and keen poker player, who hails from Manacor, where his eponymous tennis academy is located.

Nadal still calls Manacor 'home' and founded the first Rafa Nadal Academy here, primarily aimed at coaching talented youngsters, but also offers tennis sessions for adults, should you be looking to sharpen up your game (<https://rafanadalacademy.com/en/>). The centre has world class tennis and fitness facilities, running a wide range of coaching programmes and summer camps.



Golf



Mallorca has numerous award-winning gold courses, designed by the world's best. Among the finest is Alcanada Golf Club, in the north of the island near Alcúdia. A challenging course designed by Robert Trent James Jr, Alcanada enjoys stunning views and

provides a challenge at each hole. Son Vida, just 15 minutes from Palma, has a number of top class courses, including Arabella Golf's three championship courses.

Cycling

Excellent roads, respectful drivers and a combination of alpine and flat terrain make Mallorca a Mecca for road cyclists. Most of Europe's professional cycling teams train here in the spring, while some 240,000 keen amateurs were expected to visit in 2019. For competitive types, there are a number of annual amateur races, while there are cycling centres around the island that stock the latest composite bikes for hire.



Hiking



Mallorca is a paradise for walkers of all abilities and fitness levels, with many sign-posted routes offering trails from picturesque bridle paths to more challenging terrain. In the Tramuntana mountains, the area around Sóller is popular for hiking, with a number of circular routes that take in villages such as Fornalutx and Biniraiix. Others lead down to the coast, where you can reward your efforts with a refreshing swim and, should you not fancy the

climb back up, you can of course arrange for the tender to collect you! Even in high season,

you will find plenty of places of peaceful solitude, disturbed only by the occasional goat, donkey or mountain biker.

Hot Air Balloon Trips

For a more leisurely way to explore the Mallorcan countryside, consider a hot air balloon glide across the northeastern side of the island, taking off from Cala Millor, an hour's drive from Palma. Suitable for groups of up to eight people.



Cliff Jumping (guided)



Suitable for first-timers and seasoned adrenaline junkies, guides will take you to rugged cliffs, where you change into wetsuits and learn jumping technique starting from 3 metres, working up to greater heights as confidence grows.

Scuba Diving

Mallorca's coastline offers a great variety of scuba diving, from easy shore dives open to all ages and experience to technical dives for advanced or expert divers, to depths of up to 70 metres.

In addition to interesting caves and swim-throughs, sea-life varieties typically found at sites around the island include nudibranch, moray, barracuda,



wrasse, scorpionfish, rabbitfish, bream, damselfish, lobster, grouper, conger, coral, tuna, meagre, scorpionfish, cuttlefish, octopus, gurnard, squid, triggerfish, sea slugs, urchins, starfish, anemones, tompot, blennie, flatfish, mullet, scissortail and sepia.