

# Balearic Islands



Each of these four islands (Islas Baleares, Illes Balears in Catalan), floating serenely in the glittering Mediterranean, could be said to have a theme. Mallorca is the senior island, combining a little of everything, from spectacular mountain scenery and hiking through to the standard sea 'n' sun seaside tourism. Ibiza is synonymous with clubbing, the island that gave Europe the rave. Menorca is a haven of tranquillity – splendid isolated beaches and coves, and prehistoric monuments standing as taciturn reminders of how small we are in the grand scheme of things. And tiny Formentera, a chill-out island, where some people lose themselves for the entire summer, needing little more to keep them happy than white beaches and sunset parties.

Each year a massive multinational force invades the islands in search of a piece of this multifaceted paradise. The total population of the isles does not amount to a million, but many times that number are involved in a round-the-clock airlift and disembarkation of sun- and fun-seekers from Easter to October.

Surprisingly, the islands have managed to maintain much of their intrinsic beauty. Beyond the high-rise resort hotels, bars and more popular beaches are Gothic cathedrals, Stone Age ruins, fishing villages, spectacular walks, secluded coves, endless olive and almond groves and citrus orchards. And a growing range of elegant, rural retreats and A-list eateries are attracting a range of visitors beyond the party package crowd.

## HIGHLIGHTS

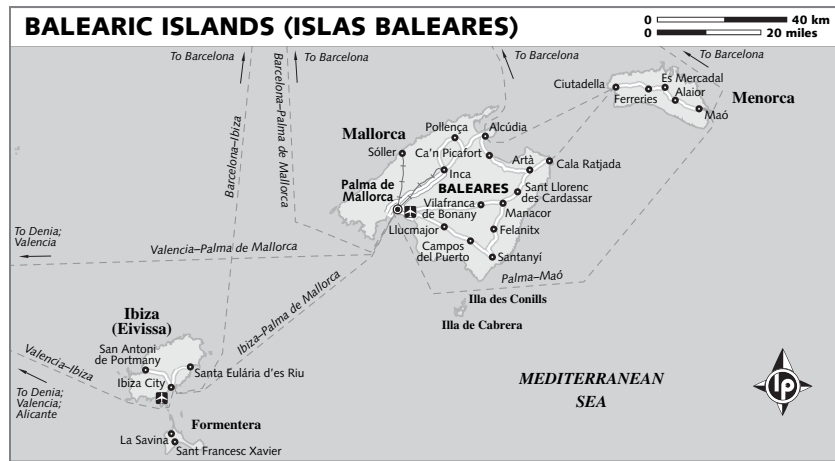
- Admire the building genius at Palma de Mallorca's enormous Gothic **cathedral** (p632)
- Take a hike in Mallorca's **Serra de Tramuntana** (p638)
- Join the party that sets the Mediterranean on fire in **Ibiza's amazing clubs** (p651)
- Chill out at Formentera's sunset parties at the Blue Bar on **Platja de Migjorn** (p660)
- Enjoy scented strolls in villages like **Fornalutx** (p641) in Mallorca's northwest
- Gasp at the turquoise hues of the sea around the **Cap de Formentor** promontory (p642)
- Peer into prehistory at **Naveta des Tudons** (p669) and Menorca's other ancient monuments
- Slip into Menorca's limpid waters at **Cala Macarelleta** and **Cala en Turqueta** (p671)
- Prance with the prancing horses at the **Festa de Sant Joan** (p668) in pretty Ciutadella
- Say three Hail Marys before winding along the spectacular 12km route to **Sa Calobra** (p641)



■ AREA: 4992 SQ KM

■ AVE SUMMER TEMP: HIGH 28°C,  
LOW 20°C

■ POP: 983,130



## History

Archaeologists believe the first human settlements in the Balearic Islands date from around 5000 BC and the islands were later regular ports of call for Phoenician traders. The Carthaginians followed and founded Ibiza City in 654 BC, making it one of the Mediterranean's major trading ports. Next came the Romans, who, in turn, were overwhelmed by the Visigoths.

Three centuries of Muslim domination ended with the Christian Reconquista, led by Jaume I of Catalonia and Aragón, who took Palma de Mallorca in 1229 and sponsored the invasion of Ibiza in 1235. Menorca was the last to fall: Alfonso III took it in 1287 in a nasty Vietnam-style campaign, completing the islands' incorporation into the Catalan world.

After their initial boom as trading centres and Catalan colonies, the islands had fallen on hard times by the 15th century. Isolation from the mainland, famines and frequent raids by pirates contributed to their decline. During the 16th century Menorca's two major towns were virtually destroyed by Turkish forces and Ibiza City's fortified walls were built. After a succession of bloody raids, Formentera was abandoned.

After backing the Habsburgs in the Spanish War of Succession, Mallorca and Ibiza were occupied by the victorious Bourbon monarchy in 1715. Menorca was granted to the British along with Gibraltar in 1713 under the Treaty of Utrecht. British rule lasted until 1802, with the exception of the Seven Years War (1756–

63), during which the French moved in, and a brief Spanish reconquest after that. In the Spanish Civil War, Menorca was the last of the islands to succumb to Franco's forces.

Tourism since the 1950s has brought considerable wealth. 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 (and continuing) construction on the islands (the term *balearización* has been coined to illustrate this short-termism and wanton destruction of the area's prime resource – its beautiful coastlines) and leads to Balearics-wide anxiety attacks whenever a season doesn't meet expectations.

The islands' foreign admirers seem to have their preferences. If the Germans have set their sights on Mallorca, Formentera becomes Little Italy in July and August. The Brits are numerous in Mallorca, but have a special affection for Menorca. Ibiza's clubs, on the other hand, attract an international brigade of hedonists.

Place names and addresses in this chapter are in Catalan, the main language spoken (with regional variations). The major exceptions are Ibiza and Ibiza City – both are called Eivissa in Catalan but we use the better-known Spanish rendition.

## Getting There & Around

### AIR

If your main goal in Spain is to visit the Balearic Islands, it makes *no* sense to fly via the mainland. If already in Spain, scheduled flights from major cities on the mainland are

operated by Iberia, Air Europa, Spanair and Vueling (see the Transport chapter, p859).

Inter-island flights are expensive (given a flying time of less than 30 minutes), with a trip from Palma de Mallorca to Maó or Ibiza easily costing up to €100. There are no direct flights from Ibiza to Maó.

In summer, masses of charter and regular flights converge on Palma de Mallorca and Ibiza. From the UK, EasyJet can get you there for as little as UK£30 one way (plus taxes), depending on how far in advance you book, while German budget airlines, such as Air-Berlin and LTU, shuttle in thousands of passengers from cities all over Germany daily. Typical return fares hover around €150, but can easily hit €300 in July and August.

### BOAT

The main ferry company, **Acciona Trasmediterránea** (☎ 902 45 46 45; [www.trasmediterranea.es](http://www.trasmediterranea.es)), has offices in and runs services between Barcelona and Valencia on the mainland, and Ibiza City, Maó and Palma de Mallorca. Tickets can be purchased from any travel agency or online. Timetables and fares vary constantly.

Up to three kinds of service are available: standard ferries (few left in service), super ferries (larger, faster boats) and high-speed (*alta velocidad*) services. The latter will either be a catamaran (which can do up to 47 knots) or the Fast Ferry (38 knots). All services transport vehicles.

In the peak summer period scheduled services include: Barcelona–Palma (up to two catamarans and one super ferry per day, 3¼ hours, seven or eight hours respectively); Barcelona–Maó (catamaran or super ferry, one daily, 4½ hours and nine hours respectively); Barcelona–Ibiza City (a catamaran or super ferry daily, four hours 50 minutes and nine hours respectively); Valencia–Palma (fast ferry, one daily; standard ferry, six days a week, four hours and 7¼ hours respectively); Valencia–Ibiza City (fast ferry, one daily, three hours); Palma–Ibiza City (fast ferry, one daily, 2½ hours); and Palma–Maó (standard ferry, one weekly, 5½ hours). Frequency drops throughout the rest of the year. In 2006 there was talk of a summer-only Ibiza–Alicante run (3½ hours) too.

Standard summer fares from the mainland (Barcelona, Valencia or Alicante) to any of the islands cost around €46.50 one way for a

'Butaca Turista' (seat) on standard and super ferries. On the fast ferries and catamarans the standard fare is €75.

Inter-island services (Palma–Ibiza City and Palma–Maó) both cost from €35.50 one way.

**Baleària** (☎ 902 160180; [www.balearia.com](http://www.balearia.com)) runs services to the Balearics from Barcelona and Denia. It operates a daily fast ferry (four hours) and conventional overnight ferry (seven hours) from Barcelona to Palma in summer. Another fast service runs to Alcudia (5¼ hours), in northeast Mallorca, via Ciutadella (3¼ hours) in Menorca. It also operates a daily slow service from Barcelona to Maó (nine hours) and a similar service to Sant Antoni in Ibiza (8½ hours). All these services operate from mid-May to September. In the off-season frequency tails off.

From Denia (connecting bus from Valencia), two daily ferries (one a fast ferry) head to Palma de Mallorca (five to 8¼ hours) via Ibiza City (two to four hours from Denia). In the peak July–August period it puts on an extra fast ferry, as well as an extra run to Sant Antoni and another to Ibiza City via Formentera. One fast ferry (two hours) and one conventional boat (four hours) link Palma to Ibiza.

From the mainland you pay €65/92 one way on the standard/fast ferry. The fares between Palma de Mallorca and Ibiza are €46/62.80 respectively.

**Iscomar** (☎ 902 119128; [www.iscomarferrys.com](http://www.iscomarferrys.com)) has services from Barcelona to Palma (€32, €93.90 per small car; 7½ hours, daily in summer). There are sometimes services to Ibiza and Maó too. From Valencia there is a run to Palma (€27.50, €93.90 per small car; nine hours, six days a week in summer) and once a week to Maó. From Denia up to two ferries a day run to Ibiza (€32.20, €93.90 per small

## YOUR PLACE IN THE SUN

Renting apartments, studios and bungalows has long been a popular way to stay on the islands. Rural accommodation, often in stylishly transformed tranquil country retreats (almost always with pool), has become especially popular in the past few years. A few sites to get you started include: [www.topfincas.com](http://www.topfincas.com), [www.balearics.com/fincas](http://www.balearics.com/fincas), [www.rusticrent.com](http://www.rusticrent.com), [www.toprural.com](http://www.toprural.com), [www.secretplaces.com](http://www.secretplaces.com), [www.homedays.com](http://www.homedays.com) and [www.guiascasasrurales.com](http://www.guiascasasrurales.com).

### BUSIER THAN BEN HUR

The Balearics in high summer (from late June to about halfway into September) can be incredibly busy. Palma de Mallorca alone turns around some 40 inbound and outbound flights a day. It is no coincidence that local bus and taxi drivers occasionally choose to strike around this time. Most of the millions of visitors have pre-booked package accommodation and the strain on local infrastructure can make it tricky for the independent traveller wanting the freedom to choose at the last minute. It is wise to book at least the first couple of nights around this time to avoid getting off to an uncomfortable start. In July and August, some hotels push the boat out on prices. This chapter reflects such high-season maxima, which means that in some places you can expect to pay considerably less in quieter times.

car; 4½ hours). One to two daily ferries shuttle between Ciutadella on Menorca and Port d'Alcúdia on Mallorca (€39 per person and €60 per small car one way).

**Cape Balear** (☎ 902 10 04 44; www.capebalear.es) operates two fast ferries daily to Ciutadella (Menorca) from Cala Ratjada (Mallorca) in summer for €64 one way (bizarrely, €50 return if you do a day return trip!). The crossing takes 55 minutes.

For details of ferries between Ibiza and Formentera, see p660.

## MALLORCA

In 1950 the first charter flight landed on a small airstrip on Mallorca, the largest of the Balearic Islands (3640 sq km). The number of annual visitors today hovers around 10 million – most in search of the three S's: Sun, Sand and Sea, and swamping the local island populace of some 781,600 people (nearly half of whom live in the capital, Palma de Mallorca).

However, there's much more to Mallorca than the beach. Palma de Mallorca (or simply Palma) is the main centre and a charming stop. The northwest coast, dominated by the Serra de Tramuntana mountain range, is a beautiful region of olive groves, pine forests and ochre villages, with a spectacularly rugged coastline.

Most of Mallorca's best beaches are on the north and east coasts and, although many have been swallowed up by tourist developments, you can still find the occasional exception. There is also a scattering of fine beaches along parts of the south coast.

Check out websites like www.illesbalears.es, www.balears.com, www.abcmallorca.com and www.newsmallorca.com. For hotels, check www.mallorcahotelguide.com. See also p645.

### Orientation

The capital, Palma de Mallorca, is on the south side of the island, on a bay famous for its brilliant sunsets.

Locals refer to what lies beyond the capital as the *part forana*, the 'part outside'. A series of rocky coves and harbours punctuate the short southwest coastline. Offshore from the island's westernmost point is the large, uninhabited Illa de Sa Dragonera.

The spectacular Serra de Tramuntana mountain range runs parallel with the northwest coast and Puig Major (1445m) is its highest point. The northeast coast is largely made up of two bays, the Badia de Pollença and the larger Badia d'Alcúdia.

The east coast is an almost continuous string of sandy bays and open beaches, which explains the densely packed tourist developments. Most of the south coast is lined with rocky cliffs interrupted by beaches and coves, and the interior is largely made up of the fertile plain known as Es Pla.

### Getting Around

#### BUS

Most of the island is accessible by bus from Palma. All buses depart from (or near) the **bus station** (Carrer d'Eusebi Estada). For information contact **Transport de les Illes Balears** (TIB; ☎ 971 17 77 77; http://tib.caib.es).

One-way fares from Palma include Cala Ratjada (€9.05), Ca'n Picafort (€4.40), Port de Pollença (€5.10) and Port d'Andratx (€3.55).

#### BOAT

Palma and the major resorts and beaches around the island are connected by boat tours and water-taxi services. Some of these are detailed in the *Excursions En Barca* brochure, available at tourist offices. **Cruceros Iberia** (☎ 971 71 71 90; ☹ Tue, Thu & Fri mid-May–mid-Oct) organises

day trips to Sant Elm, leaving at 9.30am and returning at 5pm, for €52.50 per person including lunch and hotel transfers.

### CAR & MOTORCYCLE

About 30 vehicle-hire agencies operate in Palma. The big league has representatives at the airport and along Passeig Marítim, along with several cheaper companies.

One of the best deals is **Hasso** (☎ 902 20 30 12; www.hasso-rentacar.com). **Pepacar** (☎ 807 414243; www.pepacar.com) has several rental outlets, including the airport (look for the Centauro counter).

### TAXI

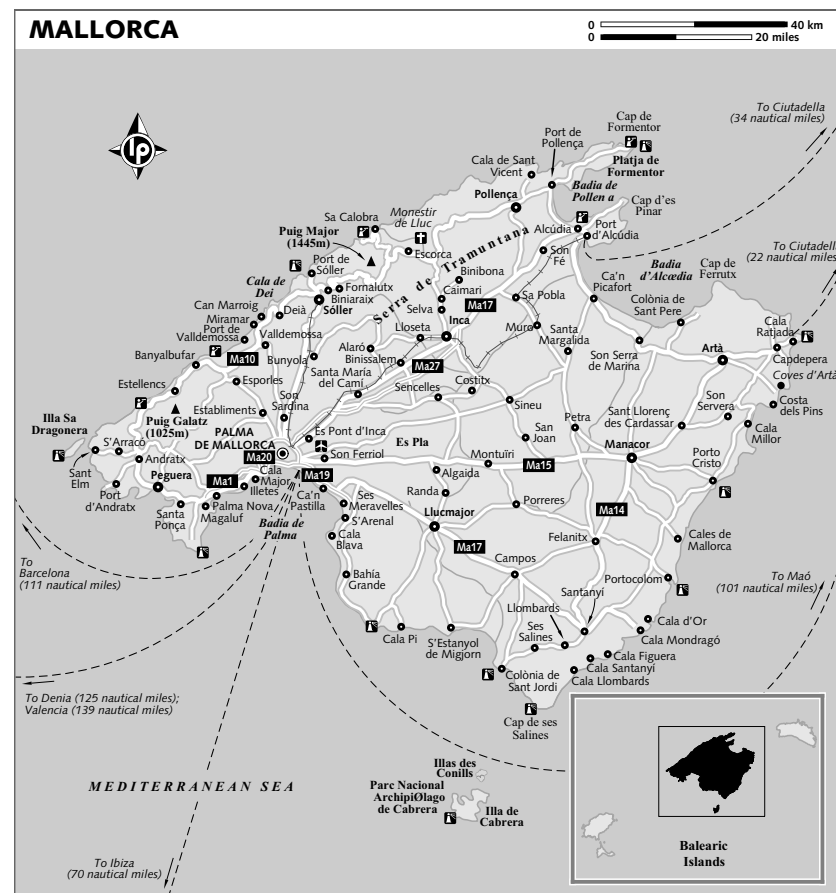
You can get around the island by taxi, but it's costly. Prices are posted at central points in

many towns. You're looking at €70 from the airport to Cala Ratjada.

### TRAIN

Two train lines run from Plaça d'Espanya in Palma de Mallorca. The **Palma–Sóller railway** (☎ 971 75 20 51, 902 36 47 11; www.trendesoller.com; one way/return €9/14) was built in 1912 to replace the local stagecoach, and its trip to the north coast is now one of the island's most popular excursions. Trains leave five or six times daily.

The other **train line** (☎ 971 17 77 77) runs inland to Sa Pobla (€2.65; 55 minutes) via the town of Inca (€1.80; 35 minutes). A secondary line links Inca with Manacor (€1.90; 40 minutes).



## PALMA DE MALLORCA

pop 375,770

Palma de Mallorca is the islands' only true city. Central Palma's old quarter is an attractive blend of tree-lined boulevards and cobbled laneways, Gothic churches and baroque palaces, designer bars and slick boutiques. It's a stylish city that buzzes by day and sizzles by night.

The bad news is that you'll have to take a bus to get to the beaches, where you'll discover the sprawl of high-rise tourist development.

### Orientation

Central Palma stretches from the harbour to Plaça d'Espanya, home to the train stations and 200m from the bus station. The airport bus stops here, too. It has a tourist office, and frequent buses run to the central Plaça de la Reina (a 20-minute walk).

### Information

Numerous countries maintain consular agencies here, a few of which have been marked on the Central Palma de Mallorca map (see also p847).

### INTERNET ACCESS

**Xspace** (☎ 971 72 92 10; Carrer de Sant Gaietà 4d; per hr €2; ☎ 11am-11pm Mon-Sat, noon-11pm Sun & holidays)

### INTERNET RESOURCES

**www.conselldemallorca.net** Official general website for Mallorca.

**www.illesbalears.es** Main general tourism website for the Balearic Islands.

**www.visit-palma.com** Asociación de Hoteles de Palma de Mallorca website, with hotel and general information for Palma de Mallorca.

### MEDICAL SERVICES

**Hospital Son Dureta** (☎ 971 17 50 00; Carrer de Andrea Doria 55)

### POST

**Post office** (Carrer de la Constitució 6; ☎ 8.30am-10pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-10pm Sat, noon-10pm Sun & holidays).

### TOURIST INFORMATION

**Consell de Mallorca tourist office** (☎ 971 71 22 16; www.infomallorca.net; Plaça de la Reina 2; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9am-2pm Sat) covers the whole island.

**Municipal tourist office** (☎ 902 102365; www.palma demallorca.es) main office (Casal Soleric, Passeig des Born 27); ☎ 9am-8pm); branch office (Parc de les Estacions; ☎ 9am-8pm)

### Sights

Central Palma is especially known for the elegant courtyards, or *patis*, of its many noble houses and mansions. Most are in private hands or used as offices, but a peek into a *patis* is often possible. Ask for a booklet pinpointing the most interesting at the tourist office.

### CATEDRAL

Palma's enormous **catedral** (La Seu; ☎ 971 72 31 30; www.bisbatdemallorca.com; Carrer del Palau Reial 9; adult/student/under 10yr €4/3/free; ☎ 10am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2.30pm Sat Jun-Sep, 10am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2.30pm Sat May & Oct, 10am-2.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2.30pm Sat Nov-Mar) is often likened to a huge ship moored at the city's edge. Construction work on what had been the site of the main mosque started in 1230 but wasn't completed until 1600. This awesome structure is predominantly Gothic, apart from the main façade (replaced after an earthquake in 1851) and parts of the interior (renovated in Modernista style by Antoni Gaudí at the beginning of the 20th century).

Entry is via a small, three-room **museum**, which holds a rich collection of religious artwork and precious gold and silver effects, including two amazing candelabra.

The *catedral's* interior is stunning in its sense of spaciousness, with a series of narrow columns supporting the soaring ceiling and framing three levels of elaborate stained-glass windows. The front altar's centrepiece, a rather odd twisting wrought-iron sculpture suspended from the ceiling and periodically lit with fairy lights, has been widely acclaimed, mainly because it was Gaudí's handiwork. The island's top contemporary artist, Miquel Barceló, is working on ceramic decoration of the Capella del Santíssim i Sant Pere.

### PALAU DE L'ALMUDAINA

In front of the catedral stands the **Palau de l'Almudaina** (☎ 971 21 41 34; Carrer del Palau Reial s/n; adult/student €3.20/2.30; ☎ 10am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat Apr-Sep, 10am-2pm & 4-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat Oct-Mar), a Muslim castle converted into a residence for the Mallorcan monarchs at the end of the 13th century. It is still occasionally used for official functions when King Juan Carlos is in town, but at other times you can join the hordes and wander through an endless series of cavernous and austere stone-walled rooms and inspect a collection of portraits of Spanish monarchs, Flemish tapestries and period furniture.

## CENTRAL PALMA DE MALLORCA



**ES BALUARD**

The spectacular **Es Baluard** (Museu d'Art Modern i Contemporani; ☎ 971 90 82 00; www.esbaluard.org; Porta de Santa Catalina 10; adult/student & senior €6/4.50, temporary exhibitions €4/3; ☎ 10am-10pm Tue-Sun mid-Jun-Sep, 10am-8pm Tue-Sun Oct-mid-Jun) takes the grand Renaissance-era seaward fortifications as its setting. A 21st-century concrete complex has been built into the walls, and is a playful game of light, surfaces and perspective – the perfect framework for this major exhibition of contemporary artists from Spain and beyond. On show are items from many of the great names, from local boy Miquel Barceló through to Kandinsky. Ceramics by Picasso, notes and sketches by Miró and sculptures by the late Basque master Jorge Oteiza await discovery. The views from the ramparts are splendid, and the restaurant is one of the city's best.

**MUSEU D'ART ESPANYOL CONTEMPORANI (PALAU MARCH)**

For more modern art try this **mansion** (☎ 971 71 35 15; www.march.es/arte/palma; Carrer de Sant Miquel 11; admission free; ☎ 10am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, 10.30am-2pm Sat) near the *catedral*. Once one of several residences of the phenomenally wealthy March family, this private palace boasts an outdoor terrace display of modern sculpture and, inside, a selection of some 70 works by a who's who of mostly Spanish 20th-century and contemporary artists, from Eduardo Arroyo to Fernando Zóbel. Also on show is an 18th-century Neapolitan *belén* (nativity scene) of overwhelming richness and detail; upstairs you can admire the ceiling and wall murals by Josep Maria Sert (better known for his murals in the Catedral de Sant Pere in Vic, Catalonia, p381).

**MUSEU DE MALLORCA**

Housed in a converted 15th-century palace, this **museum** (☎ 971 71 75 40; Carrer de la Portella 5; ☎ 10am-7pm Tue-Sat, 10am-2pm Sun) holds an impressive collection of archaeological artefacts, religious art, antiques and ceramics. Upstairs is a great portrait gallery of local identities and painters. Much of the museum is temporarily off-limits due to ongoing renovation, but admission is free during the work.

**CAN MARQUÈS**

This typical Palma **mansion** (☎ 971 71 11 75; www.casasconhistoria.net; Carrer de Zanglada 2a; adult/student & senior €6/5; ☎ 10am-3pm Mon-Fri) is one of few such

places in Palma open to visitors. Dating to the 14th century, it gives a fascinating insight into how the well-to-do of bygone centuries lived (and in some cases still do) in old Palma.

**CASA-MUSEU JOAQUIM TORRENTS LLADÓ**

This fine old **house** (☎ 971 72 98 35; Carrer de la Portella 9; adult/student & senior €3/1.80; ☎ 11am-7pm Tue-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat mid-Jun-mid-Sep, 10am-6pm Tue-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat mid-Sep-mid-Jun), with a timber gallery overlooking a courtyard, is yet another mansion on show. It once belonged to the Catalan artist of the same name (1946-93) and has been largely preserved as it was, giving a unique glimpse into this kind of old-town mansion and a look at the painter's works. Temporary exhibits complete the picture.

**BANYS ÀRABS**

The **Arab baths** (☎ 971 72 15 49; Carrer de Serra 7; adult/child €1.50/free; ☎ 9am-7.30pm Apr-Nov, 9am-6pm Dec-Mar) are the only extant monument to the Muslim domination of the island. All that remains are two small underground chambers, one of which has a domed ceiling supported by a dozen columns. Interestingly, each of the columns is topped by a different capital: the Muslims were great recyclers and the capitals came from demolished Roman buildings.

**MUSEU DE MUÑECAS**

While around the cathedral you might want to pop into this shop-cum-museum dedicated to old dolls, known in Catalan as the **Museu de Nines Antiques** (☎ 971 72 98 50; Carrer del Palau Reial 27; adult/child/under 6yr €3.50/2.50/free; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun). If you like them enough, you can even buy one.

**LA LLOTJA**

The gorgeous Gothic **La Llotja** (☎ 971 71 17 05; Plaça de la Llotja s/n), opposite the waterfront, was built as a merchants' stock exchange and is used for temporary exhibitions.

**CHURCHES**

Two of Palma's oldest churches are the soaring Gothic **Església de Santa Eulàlia** (☎ 971 71 46 25; Plaça de Santa Eulàlia 2; ☎ 8am-1pm & 5-8pm) and the nearby **Basílica de Sant Francesc** (☎ 971 71 26 95; Plaça de Sant Francesc 7; admission €1; ☎ 9.30am-12.30pm & 3.30-6pm Mon-Sat, 9.30am-12.30pm Sun & holidays). The latter was begun in 1281 in Gothic style and its baroque façade was completed in 1700. You enter by the cloister. Inside is the tomb of, and monument

to, the 13th-century scholar Ramon Llull, while at the front of the church is a statue of Junipero Serra, the Franciscan missionary who founded many missions in California.

**FUNDACIÓ PILAR I JOAN MIRÓ**

Joan Miró's **art foundation** (☎ 971 70 14 20; http://miro.palmademallorca.es; Carrer de Joan de Saridakis 29; adult/student & senior/under 17yr €5/2.80/free; ☎ 10am-7pm Tue-Sat, 10am-3pm Sun & holidays mid-May-mid-Sep, 10am-6pm Tue-Sat, 10am-3pm Sun & holidays mid-Sep-mid-May) in Cala Major (about 4km southwest of the city centre) is housed in the artist's Palma studios and contains a permanent collection of the works stored here at the time of his death. In all, more than 100 paintings, a small collection of sculpture and hundreds of drawings make up the collection. Take bus 3 or 6 from the city centre.

**OTHER ATTRACTIONS**

In the west of the city, **Poble Espanyol** (☎ 971 73 70 75; Carrer del Poble Espanyol 39; adult/student & senior €5/3; ☎ 9am-7pm Apr-Sep, 9am-6pm Oct-Mar) is a copy of the village of the same name in Barcelona. It contains replicas of famous monuments and other buildings representative of a variety of Spanish architectural styles, not to mention souvenir shops galore, although these are closed on Saturday afternoon, Sunday and on holidays. Further south, the circular **Castell de Bellver** (☎ 971 73 06 57; adult/senior & student €2/1; ☎ 8am-8.30pm Mon-Sat Apr-Sep, 8am-7.15pm Mon-Sat Oct-Mar, 10am-5pm Sun & holidays year-round) is an unusual 14th-century castle (with a unique round tower) set atop a pleasant park. Parts of the castle are shut on Sunday. It is the stage for a summer **classical music festival** in July.

**Sleeping**

Central Palma is by far the best area to stay. Avoid the string of glossy (and not-so-glossy) tourist hotels around the waterfront east and west of the city centre – they're a long way from anything (except each other). Check out www.mallorcahotelguide.com for hotels in Palma and around the island.

**BUDGET**

**Hostal Pons** (☎ 971 72 26 58; Carrer del Vi 8; s/d €20/40) This *hostal* seems unchanged since the 1880s. The downstairs chambers are cluttered with antiques and artworks, and the quaint bedrooms all have timber bedsteads and rickety tiled floors.

**Hostal Brondo** (☎ 971 71 90 43; www.hostalbrondo.net; Carrer de Can Brondo 1; s/d €35/60) Climb the courtyard stairs to arrive in a homy little sitting room overlooking the narrow lane. High-ceilinged rooms (No 3 with a glassed-in gallery) furnished in varying styles (from Mallorcan to vaguely Moroccan) are atmospheric.

**Hostal Terminus** (☎ 971 75 00 14; www.terminushostal.com; Plaça d'Espanya 5; s/d to €43.95/54.95) This place has been hosting guests since it opened as Hotel Terminus in 1913. Fan-cooled rooms are spacious and retain a fusty feel, but are very clean. Some with shared toilet cost a little less.

**MIDRANGE**

**Hotel Born** (☎ 971 71 29 42; www.hotelborn.com; Carrer de Sant Jaume 3; s €53.50, d €78-99.50) A superb place in the heart of the city, this hotel is in an 18th-century palace. The rooms combine elegance and history, with all the mod-cons. The best rooms have an engaging view on to the courtyard.

**Hotel Palau Sa Font** (☎ 971 71 22 77; www.palausafont.com; Carrer dels Apuntadors 38; s/d from €103.80/157.30; ☎ ☎) Behind the mighty timber doors lies a series of 19 elegant rooms and suites, all varying in size and layout but sharing a simple, light décor. Art plays a big decorative role, with original modern works on room doors and scattered about this boutique charmer.

**Hotel San Lorenzo** (☎ 971 72 82 00; www.hotelsanlorenzo.com; Carrer de Sant Llorenç 14; s/d from €117.70/139; ☎ ☎) Tucked away inside the old quarter, this hotel is in a beautifully restored 17th-century building, and has a marvellous Mallorcan courtyard, its own bar, dining room and rooftop terrace with swimming pool. There are just six rooms.

**Hotel Dalt Murada** (☎ 971 42 53 00; www.daltmurada.com; Carrer de la Almudaina 6; d from €149.80, ste €252.50) Gathered around a medieval courtyard, this carefully restored old townhouse is a gorgeous

**AUTHOR'S CHOICE**

**Hotel Portixol** (☎ 971 27 18 00; www.portixol.com; Carrer de la Sirena 27; s/d from €123/208.65; ☎ ☎) Boasting one of the trendiest seafood restaurants around, Portixol is also one of the hippest hotels in town. It's a fine exercise in cool, streamlined minimalism. The best rooms have sea views, and a drink on the terrace bar is a pleasant way to begin the evening.

if tiny option, with just a handful of doubles and suites. The penthouse suite has a Jacuzzi and views of the cathedral.

**Hotel Ca Sa Padrina** (☎ 971 42 53 00; www.hotelcasapadrina.com; Carrer de les Tereses 2; d €107-128.40) The owners of Hotel Dalt Murada have six more modest rooms (with Jacuzzi and some with terrace) here.

#### TOP END

**Hotel Palacio Ca Sa Galesa** (☎ 971 71 54 00; www.palaciocasagalesa.com; Carrer de Miramar 8; s/d to €253.60/322.10; ♿ ♻️ 📺 📶 📶 📶) Welcome to the classiest act in town. This enchanting 16th-century mansion has five doubles and two singles arranged around a cool patio garden. A genteel air wafts through the elegant rooms, with antiques, artwork and silk bed throws. Head up to the roof and take some sun with cocktail in hand.

#### Eating

A mess of eateries and bars cater to Palma's visitors in the maze of streets between Plaça de la Reina and the port. Take a look around the *barrio* (district) of Santa Catalina, west of Passeig de Mallorca, especially around the east end of Carrer de la Fàbrica. Also pleasant is the seaside Es Molinar area around Es Portixol, where you'll find cheerful seafood eateries and laid-back bars.

**Forn des Teatre** (☎ 971 71 52 54; Plaça de Weyler 9; ☰ 8am-8pm Mon-Sat) This pastry shop has the best *ensaimada* (a light, spiral pastry emblematic of the island) in town.

**Ca'n Joan de S'Aigo** (☎ 971 71 07 59; Carrer de Can Sañc 10; hot chocolate €1.40; ☰ 8am-9pm Wed-Mon) For a hot chocolate in what can only be described as an antique-filled milk bar dating from 1700, you must pop by here and observe the ladies with their fans and the children with their ice cream.

**Bon Lloc** (☎ 971 71 86 17; Carrer de Sant Felii 7; menú €12; ☰ lunch Mon-Sat) With its mighty timber ceiling, fans and discreet lighting, this is a soothing setting for a good, healthy four-course *menú del día* that might include a *crema fría de zanahoria* (cold carrot cream soup) and follow with *pastel de patata* (potato pie).

**Restaurant Celler Sa Premsa** (☎ 971 72 35 29; Plaça del Bisbe Berenguer de Palou 8; meals €20-25; ☰ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat Sep-Jun, Mon-Fri Jul-Aug) A visit to this local institution is almost obligatory. It's a cavernous tavern filled with huge old wine barrels, and has walls plastered with faded

bullfighting posters. The food is hearty and the atmosphere jolly.

**Ca'n Carlos** (☎ 971 71 38 69; Carrer de l'Aigua 5; meals €35-40; ☰ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat) Step down into this basement restaurant for finely prepared fish, meat and rice dishes (the latter abundant and creamily delicious at €12 a head). You might opt for a fat calamari stuffed with monkfish and mushrooms. Ochre-washed walls lend warmth to this split-level charmer.

**La Bodeguilla** (☎ 971 71 82 74; Carrer de Sant Jaume 1-3; meals €35-45; ☰ 1-11.30pm Mon-Sat) This gourmet eatery does lightly creative interpretations of dishes from across Spain (such as *cochinillo*, suckling pig, from Segovia, and *lechazo*, young lamb, baked Córdoba-style in rosemary) and a tasting menu of tapas for €21 a head. Wash down with fine wines from its extensive list.

**Aramis Bellini** (☎ 971 72 52 32; Carrer de Sant Felii 7; meals €35-45; ☰ lunch & dinner Mon-Fri, dinner Sat Sep-Jul) Tucked away off the street, this is a carefully orchestrated gourmet hideaway, with dark-timber floors and art on the walls. They do such juicy meat classics as *entrecot Café de Paris* (in a thick gravy). The midday *menú del día* is good value at €13.

**Koldo Royo** (☎ 971 73 24 35; Avinguda de Gabriel Roca 3; meals €60-70; ☰ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat) Considered one of the great eating experiences of the island, this Basque gastrodome offers a limited menu in its downstairs bistro, KR (meals around €25), and the full linen treatment upstairs. Why not try *alcachofas al aroma de jamón de Jabugo con huevitos de codorniz* (artichokes prepared in aroma of Jabugo ham with partridge eggs)? If it seems too pricey, there's always Burger King next door.

**Mercat de l'Olivar** (Plaça del Olivar; ☰ 7am-2pm Mon-Sat) For doing-it-yourself, this is a good, central produce market.

#### AUTHOR'S CHOICE

**Abaco** (☎ 971 71 59 47; Carrer de Sant Joan 1; cocktails €15; ☰ 8pm-12.30am Tue-Thu, 8pm-3am Fri & Sat) Behind a set of ancient timber doors is the bar of your wildest dreams. Inside, a Mallorcan patio and candlelit courtyard are crammed with elaborate floral arrangements, cascading towers of fresh fruit and bizarre artworks. Take a look upstairs at the mix of rooms too. Bow-tied waiters will fulfil your wishes, while classical music soothes your ears.

#### Drinking & Entertainment

The old quarter is the city's most vibrant nightlife zone. Particularly along the narrow streets that lie between Plaça de la Reina and Plaça de la Drassana, you'll find an enormous selection of bars and pubs, ranging from rather flashy tourist haunts to much more stylish *bodegas* (wine cellars). Look around the Santa Catalina and Es Molinar districts too. In the latter, several chilled bars line Carrer del Vicari Joaquim Fuster. There is one big caveat on all this. Most bars shut by 1am Sunday to Thursday (3am Friday and Saturday).

**Jazz Voyeur Club** (www.jazzvoyeur.com; Carrer dels Apuntadors 5; admission €4) Enter into the liveliest local music scene in the heart of the old quarter. The smallish, black, upstairs bar fills quickly for live jazz and soul most nights.

**Bodeguita del Medio** (Carrer de Vallseca 18) For a taste of Cuba, head in here for a *mojito* (rum, lemon, mint and ice, one of Hemingway's faves) or three.

About 2km west of the old quarter along and behind Passeig Marítim (aka Avinguda de Gabriel Roca) is a concentration of taverns, girly bars and clubs. A classic among the latter is **Garito Club** (☎ 971 73 69 12; Dàrsena de Can Barberà; admission generally free; ☰ 7pm-4.30am). DJs and live performers doing anything from jazz rock to disco classics and electro beats heat up the scene from around 10pm. Another classic club is **Tito's** (Passeig Marítim; ☰ midnight-6am Fri & Sat). **Tunnel** (Avinguda de Joan Miró 38; ☰ 10.30pm-4am Fri & Sat) has an emphasis on rock and appeals to an early 20s set.

S'Arenal and Magaluf (Map p631), the amorphous seaside tourist haunts to the east and west of Palma respectively, are full of bars and discos filled to bursting with the lobster-hued package-tourist crowd.

One marvellous exception is the über-laid-back, sunset chill lounge, **Puro Beach** (☎ 971 74 47 44; www.purobeach.com; ☰ 11am-2am), an all white bar with a tapering outdoor promontory area that is perfect for sunset cocktails, DJ sessions and fusion food escapes. Blend in with the monochrome décor and wear white, thus emphasising your designer tan. It is just a two-minute walk east of Cala Estancia (itself just east of Ca'n Pastilla).

#### Getting There & Away

Sant Joan airport is about 10km east of Palma. For trains and buses to other parts of the island, see Getting Around (p630).

#### Getting Around

##### TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

Bus 1 runs every 15 minutes between Sant Joan airport and Plaça d'Espanya in central Palma (€1.85, 15 minutes) and on to the ferry terminal. Alternatively, a taxi will charge you around €15 for the trip.

##### BUS

There are some 23 local bus services around Palma and its bay suburbs with EMT (☎ 971 21 4444). Single-trip tickets cost €1.10, or you can buy a 10-trip card for €8. For the beaches at S'Arenal, take bus 15 from Plaça de la Reina or Plaça d'Espanya.

##### TAXI

There are a few numbers to call for a taxi (☎ 971 72 80 81, 971 75 54 40, 971 40 14 14).

#### SOUTHWEST COAST

A freeway skirts around the Badia de Palma towards Mallorca's southwest coast. Along the way you'll pass the resorts of Cala Major, Illetes and Palma Nova, basically a continuation of Palma's urban sprawl. From the inland town of Andratx, two turn-offs lead down to the coast: one goes to Port d'Andratx and the other to Sant Elm.

#### Port d'Andratx

##### pop 1060

Port d'Andratx is a glamorous town set on low hills surrounding a narrow bay. The main road around the waterfront is lined with upmarket seafood restaurants. Several dive schools are based here.

#### SLEEPING & EATING

**Hostal-Residencia Catalina Vera** (☎ 971 67 19 18; Carrer de Isaac Peral 63; s/d €42/68) A couple of hundred metres back from the harbour, this is a lovely guesthouse retreat with rooms set around a tranquil garden courtyard. The best doubles have balconies.

#### MALLORCA'S TOP FIVE BEACHES

- Platja de Formentor (p642)
- Cala Llombards (p644)
- Cala de Sant Vicent (p642)
- Cala de Deià (p640)
- Es Trenc (p644)

**Restaurante La Gallega** (☎ 971 67 13 38; Carrer de Isaac Peral 52; meals €25-30) A couple of blocks inland from the waterfront, this is a popular local seafood restaurant overlooked by most foreigners, who prefer the pricier waterfront alternatives.

### Sant Elm

pop 80

The seaside township of Sant Elm is popular for day trips from Palma. The last part of the drive (7km) across from Andratx is a spectacular climb through attractive hills. If you'd rather walk this section, take a regular bus to Andratx (20 a day, 30 minutes).

Sant Elm's sandy beach is pleasant, but can get crowded. Just offshore is a small rocky islet – within swimming distance for the fit. Further north is a small dock from where you can join a **glass-bottomed boat tour** or take the hourly boat (€10) to the imposing and uninhabited **Illa Sa Dragonera**, which is criss-crossed with good walking trails. You can also take the boat between Sant Elm and Port d'Andratx (€8). For details, call ☎ 971 75 70 65 or 639-617545.

## NORTHWEST COAST & SERRA DE TRAMUNTANA

Dominated by the rugged Serra de Tramuntana range, Mallorca's northwest coast and its hinterland make up 'the other Mallorca'. No sandy beach resorts here. The coastline is rocky and largely inaccessible, the villages are mostly built of local stone (as opposed to concrete), and the mountainous interior is much loved by walkers for its beautiful landscapes of pine forests, olive groves and spring wildflowers.

The main road through the mountains (the Ma10) starts at Andratx and runs roughly parallel to the coast to Pollença. It's a stunning scenic drive and a popular cycling route, especially during spring, when the muted mountain backdrop of browns, greys and greens is splashed with the bright colours of yellow wattles and blood-red poppies. Plenty of *miradores* (lookout points) recommend themselves as stops to punctuate the trip. The journey can be a slow-going traffic nightmare in summer.

### Estellencs

pop 340

Estellencs is a pretty village of stone buildings scattered around the rolling hills below the **Puig Galatzó** (1025m) peak. It's a popular base

for walkers and cyclists. A rugged walk of about 1km leads down to the local 'beach', a rocky cove with crystal-clear water.

At the western entrance to the town, the higgledy-piggledy, stone **Petit Hotel Sa Plana** (☎ 971 61 86 66; www.saplana.com; Carrer de Eusebi Pascual; d €98; ☎ ♿ ♿ ♿) dominates a rise that catches the evening sun. Rooms are all quite different and tastefully decorated with period furnishings. It has just five rooms. Other options and a few eateries present themselves in the village.

### Banyalbufar

pop 460

Eight kilometres northeast, Banyalbufar is similarly positioned high above the coast. Surrounded by steep, stone-walled farming terraces carved into the hillside, the town is home to a cluster of bars and cafés, and three upmarket hotels.

### SLEEPING & EATING

**Hotel Baronia** (☎ 971 61 81 46; www.hbaronia.com; Carrer de Baronia 16; s/d €50/63; ♿ ♿ ♿) Here is a maze of a building with an olde-worlde feel, it's built in the ruins of a Muslim-era fort (part of the central tower remains). Baronia has modern rooms, some with excellent sea views, and a great cliffside swimming pool. For a little more you get half-board and a guaranteed room with a view.

**Pegasón y el Pajarito Enmascarado** (☎ 971 14 87 13; Carrer del Pont 2; meals €20-25; ♿) lunch & dinner Mon-Wed, Fri & Sat, dinner Sun) Hidden from the main street (and its series of eateries), this cosy cavernous spot offers simple pizzas, pasta and mains like *magret de pato agridulce y espárragos* (sweet-and-sour duck slices with asparagus) at little candlelit tables, some of them outside.

### Valldemossa

pop 1910

Valldemossa is an attractive blend of tree-lined streets, old stone houses and impressive new villas. It owes most of its fame to the fact that the ailing composer Frédéric Chopin and his lover George Sand spent their 'winter of discontent' here in 1838-39.

They stayed in the **Cartuja de Valldemossa** (☎ 971 61 21 06; admission €7.50; ♿) 9.30am-6.30pm Mon-Sat, 10am-1pm Sun), a grand monastery that was turned into rental accommodation after its monks were expelled in 1835. Their stay wasn't an entirely happy experience and Sand later wrote *Un Hiver à Mallorca* (Winter

in Mallorca), which, if nothing else, made her perennially unpopular with Mallorcans (although you will still find copies of it at souvenir stands).

Four buses arrive in droves to visit the monastery, a beautiful building with lovely gardens and fine views. In the couple's former quarters are Chopin's piano (which, due to shipping delays, arrived only three weeks before their departure), his death mask and several original manuscripts. Entry includes piano recitals (eight times daily in summer) and entry to the adjacent 14th-century **Palau del Rei Sanxo** (King Sancho's Palace) and local museum.

**Costa Nord** (☎ 971 61 24 25; www.costanord.com; Avinguda de Palma 6; adult/child €7.75/4.75; ♿) 9am-5pm Oct-Apr, 10am-6pm May-Sep) was dreamed up by part-time Mallorca resident and Hollywood celebrity Michael Douglas. His (what should we call it?) show is made up of two parts. The first is a three-screen 'documentary' on the history of this part of the island. Next you are ushered into a mock-up of the master's quarters of the good ship *Nixe*. The vessel belonged to Archduke Luis Salvador (or Ludwig to his family), son of the 19th-century Habsburg ruler of Tuscany, Leopoldo II. Luis spent much of his life bobbing around on the Mediterranean in *Nixe* and writing treatises on an astounding range of subjects, including Mallorca, which he came to live on and love. Indeed, he liked it so much that he proceeded to buy as much of it as he could.

From here a tortuous 7km drive leads down to **Port de Valldemossa**, where a dozen or so buildings (including two bar-restaurants) huddle around a rocky cove.

### SLEEPING & EATING

**Hostal Ca'n Mاريو** (☎ 971 61 21 22; Carrer de Uetam 8; s/d €32/50) These simple but spotless little digs are nice, central and cheap. It overlooks a leafy street, and rooms with balconies at the front have splendid views across a valley.

A sprinkling of cheerful restaurants decorates the streets. None are of any culinary significance.

### Miramar & Can Marroig

Five kilometres north of Valldemossa on the road to Deià is **Miramar** (☎ 971 61 60 73; admission €; ♿) 9.30am-7pm Tue-Sun May-Oct, 10.30am-6pm Tue-Sun Nov-Mar), one of Habsburg Archduke Luis Salvador's former residences. The Archduke built this home on the site of a 13th-century

### SLEEPING IN STYLE

In recent years Mallorcans have switched their attention from mass tourism to attracting a more discerning traveller. Nowhere is this more evident than in the mushrooming of midrange and high-end boutique hotels, often lovingly created out of restored mansions and country farmhouses. Several are listed in this chapter but there were around 100 at last count, some of them magnets for the rich and famous. Among those you might like to try:

- Finca Ets Abellons, Binibona (p641)
- Hotel Dalt Murada, Palma de Mallorca (p635)
- Hotel Palacio Ca Sa Galesa, Palma de Mallorca (p636)
- La Residencia, Deià (p640)
- Son Brull, Pollença (p642)
- Es Passarell, Felanitx (p645)

monastery, of which only a small part of the cloister remains. Walk out the back and enjoy the cliff-top views.

Two kilometres further on is one of the archduke's other main residences (Douglas bought yet another!), **Can Marroig** (☎ 971 63 91 58; admission €3; ♿) 9.30am-7.30pm Mon-Sat Apr-Sep, 9.30am-2pm & 3-5.30pm Mon-Sat Oct-Mar). It is a delightful, rambling mansion, jammed with furniture and period items, including many of the archduke's books. The views are the stuff of dreams. Wander down to the **Foradada**, the strange hole-in-the-rock formation by the water. It's about a 3km walk. You can swim, but beware the men o' war jellyfish.

### Deià

pop 708

Deià is perhaps the most famous village on Mallorca. Its setting is idyllic, with a cluster of stone buildings covering beneath steep hillsides terraced with vegetable gardens, vines and fruit orchards.

Such beauty has always been a drawcard, and Deià was once a second home to an international colony of writers, actors, musicians and the like. The most famous member was the English poet Robert Graves, who died here in 1985 and is buried in the town's hillside cemetery. Check out **Deià Mallorca** (www.deia.info).

**SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES**

The Ma10 passes through the town centre, where it becomes the main street and is lined with bars and shops, expensive restaurants and ritzy boutiques. Several pricey **artists' workshops** and **galleries** flog locally produced work. The steep cobbled lanes lead to the parish church and attached **museum**.

On the coast, **Cala de Deià** has some popular swimming spots and a couple of bar-restaurants. The steep walking track from town takes about half an hour; you can drive down, but in the high season this might take almost as long. Some fine walks criss-cross the area, such as the gentle **Deià Coastal Path** to the pleasant hamlet of Lluc Alcari (three hours return).

**SLEEPING**

**Fonda Villa Verde** (☎ 971 63 90 37; Carrer de Ramon Llull 19; s/d €46/62) This charming little *pensión* in the heart of the hilly village offers homely rooms and splendid views from the sunny terrace. A handful of doubles with their own terrace and superlative views cost €80.

**La Residencia** (☎ 971 63 90 11; www.hotellaresidencia.com; Son Moragues; s/d from €310.30/497.55; ☎ ☑ ☒ ☓ ☐) 'The Res' to its habitués, this is the place to stay if you want to rub shoulders with the rich and famous. A short stroll from the village centre, this former 16th-century manor house is a luxurious resort hotel set in 12 hectares of manicured lawns and gardens.

**EATING**

The diverse collection of eateries along the main street includes a couple of affordable pizzerias and several expensive restaurants that claim to specialise in local cuisine.

**Ca'n Quet** (☎ 971 63 91 96; Carretera Valldemossa-Deià; meals €40-45; ☎ lunch & dinner Tue-Sun) In this

hushed, ivy-draped locale 1km out of Deià on the road to Valldemossa, you have a choice of good seafood and meat dishes. There is a set menu for €38.

**Sóller**

pop 9160

Sóller's train station is the terminus for the Palma-Sóller railway, one of Mallorca's most popular and spectacular excursions (see Getting Around, p631).

The town sprawls across a flat valley beneath soaring and jagged outcrops of the Serra de Tramuntana. It's a pleasant place, with attractive old buildings, lush gardens and open plazas, and is a preferred base for walkers.

The main square, Plaça de la Constitució, is 100m downhill from the train station. It's surrounded by bars and restaurants, and is home to the *ajuntament* (town hall). Also here is the large 16th-century **Església Parroquial de San Bartolomé**, with a beautiful Gothic interior and a Modernista façade.

Most visitors take a ride on one of Sóller's open-sided old trams, which shuttle 2km down to **Port de Sóller** on the coast (€3). They depart from the train station every 30 minutes between 7am and 9pm.

**SLEEPING & EATING**

**Hotel El Guà** (☎ 971 63 02 27; Carrer del Castañer 2; s/d €51/78) Handily located beside the train station, this is a good place to meet fellow walkers. Its bright rooms feature timber trims and modern bathrooms.

**Espléndido Hotel** (☎ 971 63 18 50; www.esplendidohotel.com; Es Traves 5; s/d €70/120; ☎ ☑ ☒) Run by the snappy Hotel Portixol (p635) folks in Mallorca, this marvellous old 1954 carcass has been transformed into cutting-edge waterfront luxury digs in Port de Sóller. The hotel's best rooms have terraces that open up straight to the sea. Others overlook a leafy garden.

**Ca's Carreter** (☎ 971 63 51 33; Carrer del Cetre 9; meals €20-25; ☎ lunch & dinner Tue-Sat, lunch Sun) Set in a leafy, corner cart workshop (founded in 1914), downhill and west of the tram line, this is a cool and welcoming spot for modest local cooking, with fresh local fish, a couple of meat options and such specials as *calabacines rellenos de espinacas y pescado* (spinach and fish stuffed courgettes).

You'll find that the Port de Sóller waterfront is lined with eateries.

**Biniaraix & Fornalutx**

From Sóller it's a pleasant 2km drive, pedal or stroll through narrow laneways up to the hamlet of Biniaraix. From there, another narrow and scenic route continues north to Fornalutx, through terraced groves crowded with orange and lemon trees.

Fornalutx is a pretty village of distinctive stone houses with green shutters, colourful flower boxes and well-kept gardens. Many are owned by expats but it's a far cry from the (comparative) bustle of Sóller. These are the kind of places people dream about and lured the ilk of Peter Kerr to live on the island – his trials and tribulations settling in to Mallorca have proven a nice little earner in the form of his travel humour tomes *Snowball Oranges*, *Mañana Mañana* and *Viva Mallorca!*

A delightfully converted former convent just off the main street, **Fornalutx Petit Hotel** (☎ 971 63 19 97; Carrer de l'Alba 22; s/d €75.75/135.95; ☎ ☑ ☒ ☓ ☐) is a friendly, tranquil place to stay. Rooms glow with the warmth of terracotta floors and stonework. Room décor is mostly sober white but soothing. Have a snooze in the garden hammock.

**Sa Calobra**

The 12km road from route Ma10 across and down to the small port of Sa Calobra is a spectacular scenic drive. The serpentine road has been carved through the weird mountainous rock formations, skirting narrow ridges before twisting down to the coast in an eternal series of hairpin bends.

If you come in summer you won't be alone. NATO would be proud to organise such an operation. Divisions of buses and fleets of pleasure boats disgorge battalion after battalion of tireless tourists. It makes D-Day look like play lunch, and all that's missing are the choppers playing *Ride of the Valkyrie*. Sa Calobra must be wonderful on a quiet, bright midwinter morning... sigh.

From the northern end of the road a short trail leads around the coast to a river gorge, the **Torrent de Pareis**, and a small cove with some fabulous (but usually crowded) swimming spots.

One bus a day (Monday to Saturday) comes from Ca'n Picafort (9am) via Pollença and the Monestir de Lluc. It returns at 3pm. The whole trip takes 2½ hours, with a one-hour stop at the Monestir de Lluc. From Pollença you pay €4.55.

**Monestir de Lluc**

Back in the 7th century, a local shepherd claimed to have seen an image of the Virgin Mary in the sky. Later, a similar image appeared on a rock. 'It's a miracle', everyone cried and a chapel was built near the site to commemorate it.

A monastery was established here after Jaume I conquered Mallorca in 1229. Since then thousands of pilgrims have come every year to pay homage to the 14th-century **statue of the Virgin of Lluc**, known as *La Moreneta* because of her dark complexion.

The present **monastery** (☎ 971 87 15 25; admission free; ☎ 8.30am-8pm), a huge austere complex, dates from the 18th century. Off the central courtyard is the entrance to the **Basílica de la Mare de Déu**, which contains the statue. There is also a **museum** (admission €2; ☎ 10am-1.30pm & 2.30-5.30pm) with archaeological bits and bobs and a modest art collection.

**SLEEPING & EATING**

**Santuari de Lluc** (☎ 971 87 15 25; s/d from €13.50/23.50) The monastery's accommodation section has 97 rooms (of all sizes and some with kitchen access), and is popular with school groups, walkers and pilgrims. The downstairs rooms are dark and best avoided. Several restaurants and cafeterias cater to your tummy's demands.

**Finca Ets Abellons** (☎ 971 87 50 69; www.abellons.com; Binibona; s/d €82.40/117.70; ☎ ☑ ☒ ☓ ☐) Just 1km outside the tiny hamlet of Binibona, south of the monastery, is this charming, restored stone farmhouse in the foothills of the Serra de Tramuntana. Rooms have classic brown ceramic floors, timber ceilings and graceful furnishings.

The once near-abandoned Binibona village has been singled out for attention, with several other classy rural retreats located in and around it.

**GETTING THERE & AWAY**

Up to three buses a day run from Ca'n Picafort to Monestir de Lluc via Pollença (€5.10, 1¼ hours).

**Pollença**

pop 11,330

Next stop on the Mallorcan pilgrimage is this attractive inland town. The devout and hardy come here to climb up **Calvari** (Calvary), 365 stone steps leading from the town up to a hilltop chapel and small shrine; the rest of us

**AUTHOR'S CHOICE**

**Hotel Costa d'Or** (☎ 971 63 90 25; s/d €96/148; ☎ ☑ ☒) This secluded spot is on the coast 3km north of Deià, in the captivating hamlet of Lluc Alcari. Beautiful rooms have high ceilings, tiled floors and windows opening onto gardens. It has a restaurant and sun terrace with fine views over the water. If you want sea views, book early (€121 to €220). A 15-minute walk through a pine forest takes you down to a little pebbly beach with crystal-clear water.



**AUTHOR'S CHOICE**

**Son Brull** (☎ 971 53 53 53; www.sonbrull.com; s/d from €265.40/312.45; ☹ ☹ ☹ ☹) Housed in a former convent a couple of kilometres south of Pollença on the road to Sa Pobla and disposed around a beautiful old cloister, this is one of the most tastefully presented country hotels on the island. Spacious, light rooms combine the rustic beauty with ultramodern touches, including a Bang & Olufsen TV and sound system in every room.

drive up the back road. Either way, the views from the top are worth it. Otherwise, the central Plaça Major is a good place to relax, with several cafés and restaurants.

**SLEEPING & EATING**

**Santuari del Puig de Maria** (☎ 971 18 41 32; d €20) Built during the 14th and 15th centuries, this former monastery is now a somewhat chaotic retreat. Neither the food nor the accommodation are anything to write home about, but the setting and views are spectacular. Call ahead for bookings. It's a couple of kilometres south of Pollença on the road to Palma.

**Restaurant Clivia** (☎ 971 53 36 35; Avinguda Pollentia; meals €45-50; ☹ lunch & dinner Tue & Thu-Sun, dinner Mon & Wed) Set in what was once a private house, this spot offers fine food (especially the fish) prepared and presented with panache. The service is attentive and the ambience tranquil. Try the house speciality, *llobarro de palangre al vi blanc* (wild sea bass steamed in white wine).

**GETTING THERE & AWAY**

Pollença is on the Ca'n Picafort-Sóller bus route.

**Cala de Sant Vicent**

pop 270

A series of four jewel-like *cales* (coves), this is a tranquil resort in a magnificent setting. Yes, the inevitable English breakfast and German bratwurst problem is in evidence, but it's minimal compared with the big beaches further southeast. And the water is so limpid you feel you could see to the centre of the world.

**Hostal los Pinos** (☎ 971 53 12 10; www.hostal-lospinos.com; s/d €45/79; ☹ ☹) is set on a leafy hillside back off the road between Cala Molins and Cala Carbo. The best of the simple rooms have

partial sea views and are technically suites, with separate sleeping and lounge areas and balconies to hang up your beach towel.

Up to four buses run to Cala de Sant Vicent (€1.10, 15 minutes) from Pollença and likewise from Port de Pollença.

**Port de Pollença**

pop 5930

On the north shore of the Badia de Pollença, this resort is popular with British families soothed by fish 'n' chips and pints of ale. Sailboards and yachts can be hired on the beaches. South of town, the bay's shoreline becomes quite rocky and the beaches are less attractive.

**Cap de Formentor**

A splendid drive (cyclists be warned: it's steep, narrow and often busy) leads from Port de Pollença out along this rocky promontory.

Midway along the promontory is **Hotel Formentor** (☎ 971 89 91 01; www.hotelformentor.net; s/d from €288.90/460; ☹ ☹ ☹), a jewel of pre-WWII days when hotels of any type were in a strict minority on the island. These ritzy digs have played host to the likes of Grace Kelly and Winston Churchill since 1926.

Near the hotel and backed by shady pine stands, the slim sandy beaches of **Platja de Formentor** (parking €4) are pretty. At your disposal are a couple of exclusive beach bars, a golf course and a nearby horse-riding ranch.

From here it's another spectacular 11km out to the lighthouse on the cape that marks Mallorca's northernmost tip.

**BADIA D'ALCÚDIA**

The long beaches of this huge bay dominate Mallorca's northeast coast, its broad sweeps of sand stretching from Port d'Alcúdia to Ca'n Picafort.

**Alcúdia**

pop 15,900

Wedged between the Badia de Pollença and Badia d'Alcúdia, busy Alcúdia was once a Roman settlement. Remnants of the Roman theatre can be seen and the old town is still partly protected by medieval walls. Head for the ruins of the Roman town of **Pollèntia** and its **museum** (☎ 971 54 70 04; www.pollentia.net; Carrer de Sant Jaume 30; admission €2; ☹ ☹ 10am-3pm Tue-Fri, 10.30am-1pm Sat & Sun Jul-Oct, 10am-4pm Tue-Fri, 10.30am-1pm Sat & Sun Nov-Jun), just outside one of the town's squat medieval gates.

**Port d'Alcúdia**

pop 1820

A large harbour dominates the town centre and imparts a slightly chic maritime flavour, with boat trips leaving daily to various points, especially Platja de Formentor (anything up to €26 depending on time spent out, the route, and whether or not you take the lunch option). Boats also leave here for Ciutadella on the island of Menorca (see Getting There & Around, p629).

Friendly managers run the tidy little **Hostal Vista Alegre** (☎ 971 54 73 47; Passeig Marítim 22; s/d €20/35; ☹ ☹). The singles are pokey and have no air-con, while the doubles have either sea views (and breeze) or air-con. The doubles have their own bathroom. There are zillions of other places to stay in and around Port d'Alcúdia.

**Ca'n Picafort**

A smaller version of Port d'Alcúdia, Ca'n Picafort is a package-tour frontier town, and somewhat raw and soulless, but the beaches are pretty good.

**EAST COAST**

Most of the fine beaches along Mallorca's east coast have succumbed to the ravages of mass tourism. The northern half of this stretch of coastline is home to a series of concrete jungles that rivals the worst excesses of the Costa del Sol on the mainland. Further south the coastline is corrugated with a series of smaller coves and ports, saving it from the same fate.

**Artà**

pop 6650

The quiet, ochre inland town of Artà is dominated by a 14th-century hilltop fortress and **Església de San Salvador**, from where you have wonderful views across the town, countryside and even out to sea. A simple restaurant-bar opens for lunch up here.

On the coast 10km southeast are the **Coves d'Artà** (☎ 971 84 12 93; www.cuevasdearta.com; adult/under 13yr €9/4.50; ☹ ☹ 10am-6pm May-Oct, 10am-5pm Nov-Apr), rivalling Porto Cristo's Coves del Drac (right). Tours of the caves leave every 30 minutes.

A wonderful old mansion in the centre of town away from the seaside fish 'n' chips scene, **Hotel Casal d'Artà** (☎ 971 82 91 63; www.casaldarta.com; Carrer de Rafael Blanes 19; s/d €42/78; ☹ ☹) is a place with real character. It doesn't serve breakfast, though.

**Cala Ratjada**

pop 6000

Germans seem particularly enamoured with Cala Ratjada, a heavily developed and busy resort. The main streets are wall-to-wall souvenir shops, and the pretty beaches are carpeted with sizzling flesh. A few kilometres inland, **Capdepera** is marked by the walls of the 13th-century **castle** (☎ 971 81 87 46; admission €2; ☹ ☹ 9am-8pm Apr-Oct, 10am-5pm Nov-Mar) above the town.

This is package-tourist territory and it can be hard to find a place to sleep in July and August. For details of daily fast ferries to Ciutadella (Menorca), see Getting There & Around (p629).

There are up to four buses a day from Palma de Mallorca via Artà to Cala Ratjada. Other buses connect Cala Ratjada with Manacor and Porto Cristo.

**Porto Cristo**

pop 6020

During the day, this place teems with day-trippers visiting the nearby underground caves. Porto Cristo won't help your claustrophobia, but by late afternoon when the hordes have disappeared it can be quite nice. The town cradles a small sandy beach and boat harbour.

The **Coves del Drac** (Dragon's Caves; ☎ 971 82 07 53; adult/under 8yr €9.50/free; ☹ ☹ 10am-5pm Apr-Oct, 10.45am-3.30pm Nov-Mar) are on the southern outskirts of town. One-hour tours are held hourly, the 'highlight' being the classical music played by boat-bound musicians floating across a large subterranean lake. Barely 200m away, you can also visit the **Acuario** (☎ 971 82 09 71; adult/under 9yr €5/2.50; ☹ ☹ 10.30am-6pm Apr-Oct, 11am-3pm Nov-Mar), with a reasonably interesting collection of fishes in tanks over two floors.

In between the aquarium and the caves is the cheerful, roadside **Hotel Sol i Vida** (☎ 971 82 10 74; Avinguda de Joan Servera 11; s/d from €26/43; ☹ ☹), with a pool, bar-restaurant and tennis court.

**Portocolom**

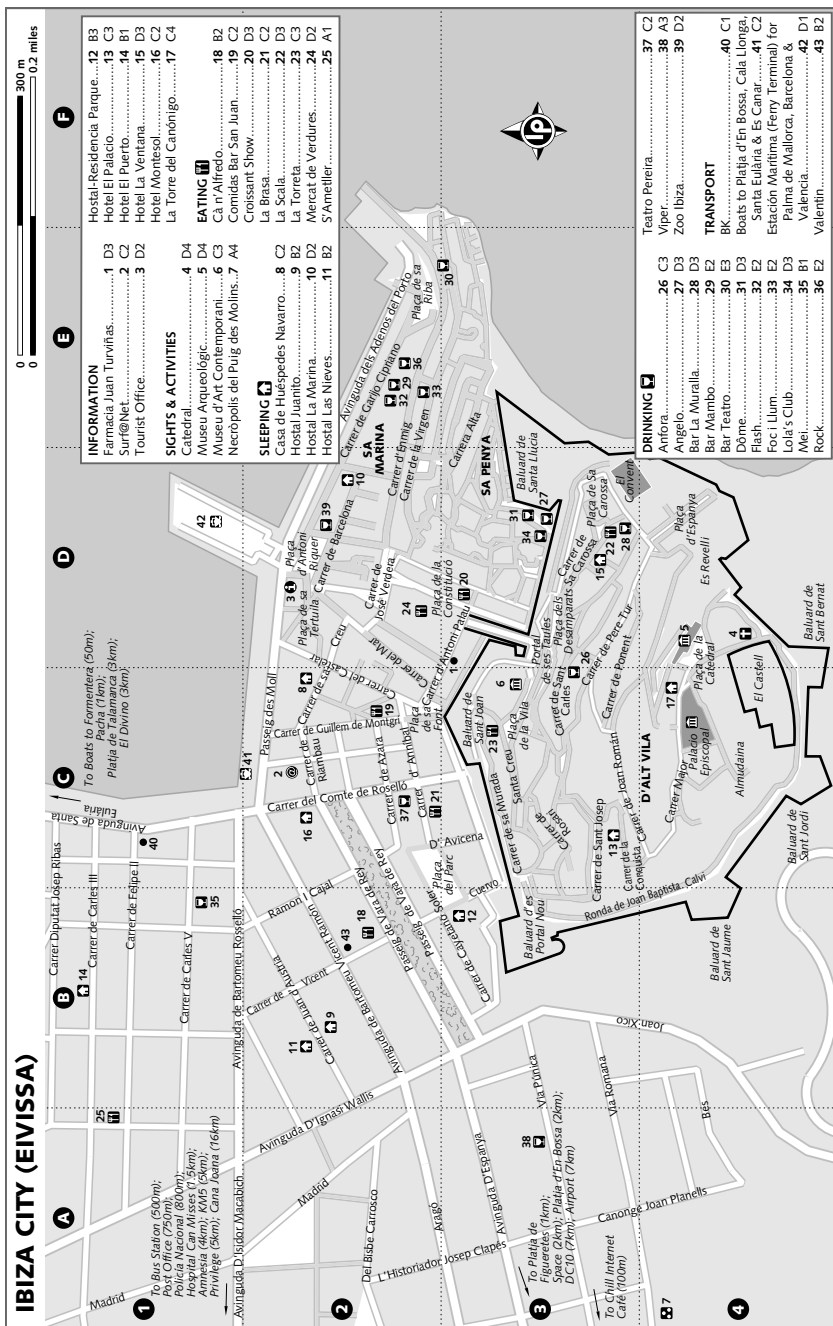
pop 1080

A tranquil village set on a generous harbour, Portocolom has managed to resist the tourist onslaught with a degree of dignity. Various restaurants dot the long bay, and within a couple of kilometres are some fine beaches, such as the immaculate little cove of **Cala Marçal**.

Right on the waterfront, **Hostal Porto Colom** (☎ 971 82 53 23; www.hostalportocolom.com; Carrer de







Inside spreads **Plaça de la Vila**, with its up-market restaurants, galleries and shops. Up behind the plaza you can walk along the top of the walls and enjoy exhilarating views.

Nearby, the **Museu d'Art Contemporani** (☎ 971 30 27 23; Ronda de Narcís Puget s/n; adult/student & senior €1.20/free; ☎ 10am-1.30pm & 5-8pm Tue-Fri, 10am-1.30pm Sat & Sun Apr-Sep, 10am-1.30pm Tue-Sun Oct-Mar) is in an 18th-century powder store and armoury that hosts contemporary art exhibitions.

A steep and well-worn route leads from **Plaça de la Vila** along narrow streets to the **catedral**, which overlooks all. It elegantly combines several styles: the original 14th-century structure is Catalan Gothic but the sacristy was added in 1592 and a major baroque renovation took place in the 18th century.

Adjoining the cathedral, the **Museu Arqueològic** (☎ 971 30 17 71; Plaça de la Catedral 3; adult/student/child & senior €2.40/1.30/free; ☎ 9am-3pm Tue-Sat, 10am-2pm Sun Oct-Mar, 10am-2pm & 6-8pm Tue-Sat, 10am-2pm Sun Apr-Sep) has a collection of ancient relics, mainly from the Phoenician, Carthaginian and Roman periods.

The **Necropolis del Puig des Molins** (Via Romana 31; admission free; ☎ 10am-2pm & 6-8pm Tue-Sat, 10am-2pm Sun mid-Mar-mid-Oct; 9am-3pm Tue-Sat, 10am-2pm Sun mid-Oct-mid-Mar) is an ancient burial ground dating from Phoenician times (as long ago as the 7th century BC), on an olive-tree dotted *puig* (hill). Follow the path around and peer into the north-south oriented burial caverns cut deep into the hill. You can descend into one interlocking series of these *hypogea* (burial caverns).

## BEACHES

The closest beach to Ibiza City is **Platja de Figueretes**, about 20 minutes' walk southwest of Sa Penya. In the next bay around to the northeast of Sa Penya is **Platja de Talamanca**. These beaches are all right for a quick dip, although if you have the time, head for **Ses Salines** (p656).

## Sleeping

Start your hotel search in Ibiza online at [www.ibzahotelsguide.com](http://www.ibzahotelsguide.com). The high season is generally mid-June to mid-September, although some places make August ultrahigh. Prices outside this period can fall by a third or more, but even so lodgings here come at a steep price.

## BUDGET

**Casa de Huéspedes Navarro** (☎ 971 31 07 71; Carrer de sa Creu 20; s/d €28/55) Right in the thick of things, this simple place has 10 rooms at the top of

a long flight of stairs. The front rooms have harbour views, the interior rooms are quite dark (but cool in summer) and there's a sunny rooftop terrace.

**Hostal Las Nieves** (☎ 971 19 03 19; Carrer de Juan de Austria 18; s/d €30/40) One of several simple *hostales* in the El Pratet area, this place offers fairly Spartan rooms but with the advantage, in some cases, of balconies overlooking the animated street. It also runs Hostal Juanito, across the road at No 19 and sans balconies.

## MIDRANGE

**Hostal La Marina** (☎ 971 31 01 72; [www.hostal-lamarina.com](http://www.hostal-lamarina.com); Carrer de Barcelona 7; s €62, d €77-150; ☎) Looking onto the waterfront and Carrer de Barcelona, this mid-19th-century building has all sorts of brightly coloured rooms. A handful of singles look onto the street, but you can choose from simple doubles to great attics with terraces and panoramic port and/or town views. It has a couple of other simpler lodging options in the same street.

**Hostal-Residencia Parque** (☎ 971 30 13 58; Carrer de Vicent Cuervo 3; s with shared bathroom €50, d with private bathroom €100) The best doubles here overlook pleasant Plaça del Parc from above the eponymous café. Doubles are comfortable but singles are predictably pokey.

**Hotel Montesol** (☎ 971 31 01 61; [www.hotelmontesol.com](http://www.hotelmontesol.com); Passeig de Vara de Rey 2; s/d to €60/106; ☎) The doubles in this amiable, well-placed and grand-looking hotel are also comfortable, if uninspiring, and come with views of the harbour or the old town. The singles are small and nothing special. Most rooms are subject to street noise.

**Hotel El Puerto** (☎ 971 31 38 12; [www.ibizaelpuerto.com](http://www.ibizaelpuerto.com); Carrer de Carles III 24; s/d €99.95/173.35; ☎) This place offers more than 90 rooms and a series of apartments (up to €230.25 for four people) just outside the old town and handy for the Formentera ferry. The pool is a big plus.

## AUTHOR'S CHOICE

**Hotel La Ventana** (☎ 971 39 08 57; [www.laventanaibiza.com](http://www.laventanaibiza.com); Carrer de Sa Carossa 13; d from €176; ☎ P) Just wander into this charming 15th-century mansion in the old town, set on a little tree-shaded square. Some rooms come with stylish four-poster beds and mosquito nets, and the rooftop terrace, gardens and restaurant are added reasons to choose this spot.

## TOP END

**La Torre del Canónigo** (☎ 971 30 38 84; www.elcanonigo.com; Carrer Major 8; apt €210-480; ☹ Apr-Dec; 📺 📺) This 14th-century tower houses 10 gorgeous 'apartments' (doubles and suites), all of different size and character. Four-poster beds, lots of timber and classic comfort are the hallmarks of this unique location. Prices almost halve in the low season.

**Hotel El Palacio** (☎ 971 30 14 78; www.elpalacio.com; Carrer de la Conquesta 2; r from €310-428; ☹ Easter-Oct; 📺 📺) The 'Hotel of the Movie Stars' is something of a private movie museum, with a collection of signed photos, original posters and film awards. Seven rooms each pay homage to a different Hollywood star (from Bogart to Monroe).

## Eating

**Croissant Show** (☎ 971 31 76 65; Plaça de la Constitució s/n; ☹ 6am-11pm) Opposite the food market, this is where *everyone* goes for an impressive range of pastries and other breakfast, post-partying goodies. It is quite a scene all on its own.

**Comidas Bar San Juan** (☎ 971 31 16 03; Carrer de Guillem de Montgri 8; meals €15-20; ☹ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat) A family-run operation with two small dining rooms, this simple eatery offers outstanding value, with fish dishes for around €10 and many small mains for €6 or less.

**S'Ametller** (☎ 971 31 17 80; Carrer de Pere Francès 12; meals €20-30; ☹ lunch Mon-Thu, lunch & dinner Fri & Sat) 'The Almond Tree', resting uneasily next door to a cheap Chinese eatery, offers local cooking with fresh market produce. On offer are a couple of tasting menus, at €32 and €39.50.

**La Brasa** (☎ 971 30 12 02; Carrer de Pere Sala 3; meals €35-40) Clouds of bougainvillea tumble about the entrance and courtyard of La Brasa. Sit down to well-prepared food in the leafy garden.

## AUTHOR'S CHOICE

**Ca' n'Alfredo** (☎ 971 31 12 74; Passeig de Vara de Rey 16; meals €30; ☹ lunch & dinner Tue-Sat, lunch Sun) Locals have been flocking to Alfredo's place since 1934 for a good square meal. And they still do. Don't let appearances deceive. This is no new-wave Thai-fusion experience, but a great place for the freshest of seafood and other local cuisine that's so good it's essential to book to get a seat here in the evening.

**La Scala** (☎ 971 30 03 83; Plaça de sa Carrossa 6; meals €35-40; dinner Wed-Mon) This candlelit place serves international cuisine with a central European bent, and a highlight is the meat dishes. There's a pretty open-air terrace and the clientele is predominantly, but not exclusively, gay.

**La Torreta** (☎ 971 30 04 11; Plaça de la Vila 10; meals €35; dinner Easter-Oct) Opt for al fresco dining on local fish and other Mediterranean dishes or head inside – groups should try for the big table set on a separate lower level and surrounded by the inside of the massive city walls. The seafood *canelones de marisco* are melt-in-the-mouth.

**Canà Joana** (☎ 971 80 01 58; Km10; meals €50; ☹ lunch & dinner Tue-Sat, lunch Sun Feb-May, dinner Mon-Sat Jun-Oct) Two kilometres shy of Sant Josep on the road north out of Ibiza City, a sign points you 500m to the right into a country garden restaurant with elegant local and Med cooking.

**Mercat de Verdurs** (Plaça de la Constitució; ☹ 7am-7pm Mon-Sat) Buy fresh fruit and vegies from this open-air market, opposite the entrance to D'Alt Vila.

## Drinking &amp; Entertainment

Sa Penya is the nightlife centre. Dozens of bars keep the port area jumping from around sunset until the early hours. After they wind down, you can continue at one of the island's world-famous discos.

## BARS

**Dôme** (Via de Alfonso XII 5) Deep inside Sa Penya, this is a largely, but not exclusively, gay haven. Above all, it is glam.

**Lola's Club** (Via de Alfonso XII 10) Anyone who remembers Ibiza in the '80s will have fond memories of Lola's Club, one of the first on the island. It's a hip miniclub (with a gay leaning).

**Teatro Pereira** (☎ 971 19 14 68; Carrer del Comte de Rosselló 3) Away from the waterfront hub-bub, this is a lively bar, packed most nights with a more eclectic crowd than the standard preclubbing bunch. It often has live music sessions. Out back is the much abandoned 1893 theatre. For years there has been talk of restoring it. As island heritage it can't be torn down, but owners and council have yet to find a formula for renovation.

**KM5** (☎ 971 39 63 49; www.km5-lounge.com; Carretera de San Jos 5-6; ☹ 8pm-4am May-Sep) The bar named after its highway location is where you go to

glam it up. Head out of town towards Sant Josep and dance in the gardens as you gear up for the clubs.

**Viper** (☎ 971 30 45 69; Via Púnica 12; ☹ 8pm-4am Mon-Sat) This is a classy cocktail bar where you can opt for French cuisine too.

Carrer de Barcelona, a pedestrian-only street that runs parallel with the harbour, is lined with high-energy bars. Most have tall tables and stools out on the street, and all pump out loud music. Most places employ slick and persuasive touts to 'invite' passers-by to join them for a drink, sometimes with the lure of discounted passes to the clubs. A popular one is **Zoo Ibiza** (www.zoobiza.com; Plaça d'Antoni Riquer).

These bars open nightly from early evening until 3am to 4am, roughly May to September. Outside that it's hit-and-miss and depends largely on how much (if any) business there is.

Less in your face are the bars further east along Carrer de Garijo Cipriano, including **Bar Mambo** (☎ 971 31 21 60; Carrer de Garijo Cipriano 10), **Flash** (Carrer de Garijo Cipriano 9) and **Rock** (Carrer de Garijo Cipriano 13).

Two other, somewhat quieter, areas to look for are Plaça des Parc and the El Pratet set of parallel streets around Carrer de Felip II. **Mei** (☎ 699 007067; Carrer de Carles V 11; ☹ Thu-Sat) is one of the coolest.

## CLUBS

In summer (late May to the end of September) the island is a continuous party from sunset to sunrise and back again. The island's entrepreneurs have built an amazing collection of clubs – huge, throbbing temples to which thousands of disciples flock nightly to pay homage to the gods of hedonism.

The major clubs operate nightly from around 1am to 7am (June to September). Each has something different to offer. Theme nights, fancy-dress parties and foam parties (where you are half-drowned in the stuff while you dance) are regular features. Some places go a step or two further, with go-go girls (and boys), striptease acts and even live sex as a climax (ahem) to the evening (or morning).

Entertainment Ibiza style doesn't come cheaply: most places charge around €50 to €60 admission (and then sting you for drinks). If you hang out around the right bars in Sa Penya, you might score a flier that entitles you to discounted admission handed out by sometimes scantily clad club promoters and touts – if they think you've got the look.

The big names are listed below.

**Pacha** (www.pacha.com; ☹ nightly Jun-Sep, Fri & Sat Oct-May) In business on the northern side of Ibiza City's port since 1973 (nowadays with branches from New York to Moscow) and containing 15 bars (!).

**Privilege** (☎ 971 19 81 60) Five kilometres out of Ibiza City on the road to Sant Rafel, this club claims to be the world's largest (with a mere 20 bars and a pool inside, and capacity for up to 10,000 gyrating clubbers).

**Amnesia** (☎ 971 19 80 41; www.amnesia.es) Four kilometres out on the road to Sant Rafel with a sound system that seems to give your body a sound massage.

**Es Paradis** (☎ 971 34 66 00; www.esparadis.com; Carrer de Salvador Espriu 2, Sant Antoni) This club boasts an equally amazing sound system, fountains and outdoor feel (there's no roof, but then in summer it doesn't rain anyway).

**Eden** (☎ 971 80 32 40; www.edenibiza.com) Es Paradis' direct competition across the road has room for about 5000.

**El Divino** (☎ 971 31 83 38; www.eldivino-ibiza.com) This club is across the water from the Ibiza town centre (it organises boats and will refund taxis for groups of three or more).

**DC10** (☎ 971 19 80 86; www.circolocoibiza.com; Carretera de las Salinas, Km7) Out towards the airport and beaches.

**Space** (☎ 971 39 67 93; www.space-ibiza.es) One of the biggest of them all, south of Ibiza City in Platja d'en Bossa and a specialist in all-day dancing (22 hours a day, with as many as 40 DJs and up to 12,000 clubbers throughout the day and night!). Regular daytime boats make the trip between Platja d'En Bossa and Ibiza City (€6 return) from May to mid-October.

Different DJ teams make the rounds of the big clubs. One of the best known in Ibiza, **Manumission** (www.manumission.com), is known for its sexy acts and has a popular morning slot at least one day a week at Space.

A good website that keeps track of all the party dates is **Ibiza Spotlight** (www.ibiza-spotlight.com). Another website with info is www.disco.tecasdeibiza.com.

During summer (June to September), Ibiza's **Discobus** (☎ 971 31 34 47) operates nightly from midnight until 6am, doing circuits between the major discos, bars and hotels in Ibiza City, Platja d'en Bossa, Sant Rafel, Santa Eulària d'es Riu (and an extension to Es Canar) and Sant Antoni.

## GAY BARS & CLUBS

The gay scene is based towards the eastern end of Sa Penya, particularly along the far end of Carrer de la Virgen. Many of the big clubs have special gay nights. Keep a look out for what's going on, as the scene changes a lot from year to year. For more on the latest in gay Ibiza check out [www.ibigay.net](http://www.ibigay.net).

**Bar Teatro** ([www.barteatro.com](http://www.barteatro.com); Carrer de la Virgen 83) This place has sea views from inside.

**Angelo** (Carrer de Santa Lucía 21) In the shadow of the old city walls, this is a busy gay bar with several levels.

**Bar La Muralla** (☎ 971 30 18 82; Carrer de Sa Carossa 3; ☎ 11pm-4am) A gay sex club with dark room, labyrinth and sling cage.

**l'abry i Llum** (☎ 971 19 33 16; Carrer de la Virgen 55) This venue has a terrace, videos and a steamy darkroom.

**Anfora** (Carrer de Sant Carles 7; ☎ 10pm-4am) Seemingly dug out of walls of rock, this is a favourite gay dance haunt high up D'Alt Vila. Heteros are welcome to hang about too. From 1.30am you pay €12 admission (includes first drink).

## Getting There & Away

Ibiza's airport (Aeroport d'Eivissa) is 7km southwest of the capital and receives direct flights from various mainland Spanish cities as well as London and a host of European centres.

Boats for Formentera leave from a separate terminal 300m north of the centre. For information on other inter-island ferries, see Getting There & Around (p629).

**Cruceros Santa Eulalia** (☎ 971 33 22 52) runs boats to Cala Llonga, Santa Eulària d'es Riu and Es Canar up to four times daily (€13 return) from May to mid-October.

Buses to other parts of the island depart from a series of stops along Avinguda d'Isidoro Macabich (the western continuation of Avinguda de Bartomeu Rosselló). Tickets can be bought from the bus station booths on the same street or on the buses.

For information on car hire, see p646.

## Getting Around

Buses between the airport and the central port area operate hourly between 7.30am and 11.35pm (€1.30, 15 minutes). From April to October they are half-hourly (6.50am to 11.50pm). A taxi from the airport costs around €12 to €14. You can call a **taxi** (☎ 971 39 83 40, 971 30 66 02).

## EAST COAST

A busy highway (C733) speeds you north out of Ibiza City towards Santa Eulària d'es Riu on the east coast. Alternatively, you could take the slower but more scenic coastal road via Cala Llonga – take the turn-off to Jesús a couple of kilometres northwest of Ibiza City. This route winds through low hills and olive groves, with detours along the way to several beaches, including the pleasant **Sol d'en Serra**.

**Cala Llonga** is set on an attractive bay with high rocky cliffs sheltering a lovely sandy beach, but the town itself has many high-rise hotels.

## Santa Eulària d'es Riu

pop 6400

Ibiza's third-largest town, Santa Eulària d'es Riu is a bustling and agreeable place with reasonable beaches, a large harbour and plenty of 20th-century tourist-resort architecture.

## ORIENTATION & INFORMATION

The main highway, known as Carrer de Sant Jaume as it passes through town, is a hectic traffic artery lined with souvenir shops.

The **tourist office** (☎ 971 33 07 28; Carrer de Marià Riquer Wallis 4; ☎ 9.30am-1.30pm & 5-7.30pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-1pm Sat) is just off the highway.

## SLEEPING

Modern hotels and apartments crowd the Santa Eulària beachfront, but you will find a cluster of affordable *hostales* a couple of blocks inland.

**Hostal-Residencia Sa Rota** (☎ 971 33 00 22; Carrer de Sant Vicent 59; s/d €40/60) A good-value *hostal*, this place features bright generous rooms (the doubles in particular) with modern bath or shower. The downstairs café has a nice outdoor extension with a pergola

**Ca's Català** (☎ 971 33 10 06; [www.cascatala.com](http://www.cascatala.com); Carrer del Sol s/n; s; €48.15, d €74.90-112.35; ☎ ) A British-run place with 12 rooms (with ceiling fans and all nonsmoking), this place is a find. It has the feel of a private villa, with colourful flowerpots, rooms overlooking a garden courtyard and a swimming pool (with bar).

## EATING

Most of the restaurants and cafés along the beachfront are tacky and overpriced. Four blocks back, there are plenty of decent eateries along Carrer de Sant Vicent.

**Restaurante es Rickshaw** (☎ 971 33 01 23; Carrer de Sant Vicent 49; meals €35-40) If the series of generally cheap and cheerful Spanish restaurants on this strip doesn't grab you, pop into this groovy, self-styled 'fusion lounge', where you can start with a Tom Ka soup (€5) and follow with Thai curry and fresh squid.

**El Naranja** (☎ 971 33 03 24; Carrer de Sant Josep 31; meals €35; ☎ dinner Tue-Sun) Enjoy well-prepared seafood meals in a shady garden at 'The Orange', a tranquil gourmet escape. Carpaccios of various kinds of meat are a house specialty.

## ENTERTAINMENT

**Guaraná** ([www.guaranaibiza.com](http://www.guaranaibiza.com); Passeig Marítim; ☎ 1am-6am Jun-Sep) Right by the town's marina, this is a cool club away from the Ibiza-Sant Rafel-Sant Antoni circuit, with occasionally mellow tones, as well as live jazz and blues on some nights. Sunday in particular is a good live music night.

## GETTING THERE & AWAY

Regular buses (every 30 to 60 minutes) connect Santa Eulària's **bus stop** (Carrer de sa Església) with Ibiza City, Sant Antoni and the northern beaches.

## Santa Eulària d'es Riu to S'Aigua Blanca

Northwest of Santa Eulària d'es Riu is the resort town of **Es Canar**, which is heavily developed and probably best avoided, although a couple of camping grounds are located nearby.

Further north on the main road is the sleepy village of **Sant Carles de Peralta**. Just outside the village, at Km12 on the road to Santa Eulària, is the **Las Dalias** (☎ 8pm-1.30am Mon Jun-Sep) night market.

Side roads lead off to the pleasant **Cala Llenya** and the serene **Cala Mastella** beaches. Boats run to the former from Santa Eulària five times daily (€8 return) from June to September. At the latter you could walk around the rocks from the left (northern) end of the pretty beach to reach **Es Bigote** (meals €20; ☎ 2pm lunch May-Sep). Offering fish caught that morning cooked up with herbs and vegetables in a huge vat, this eatery is known far and wide. You need to turn up here in person the day before to book a spot. If you miss out, **Sa Seni** (paella €40), 100m behind Cala Mastella, will serve up a fresh paella for two. Hours are arbitrary and service can be slow, but the product is worth waiting for.

The road to Cala Mastella continues on a couple of kilometres up to **Cala de Boix**, the only true black-sand beach in the Balearic Islands. Alternatively, there is another turn-off to Cala de Boix about 1km after Sant Carles.

Back on the main road, the next turn-off leads to the resort area of **Es Figueras**. A little further on a handwritten sign marks the turn-off to the lovely beaches of **S'Aigua Blanca**. Being a bit out of the way and little developed, these beaches are popular with Ibiza's 'young and restless' crowd, most of whom tend to forget to put on their swimsuits. A couple of shacks act as seaside daytime bars.

## SLEEPING & EATING

**Camping Cala Nova** (☎ 971 33 17 74; [www.campingcalanova.com](http://www.campingcalanova.com); sites per 2 people, tent & car €24.20) Just back from the Cala Nova beach and about 1km north of Es Canar, this is the best of the camping grounds here. There is a play area for the kids and tennis courts for the grown-ups.

**Hostal Cala Boix** (☎ 971 33 52 24; [www.hostalcalaboix.com](http://www.hostalcalaboix.com); r per person with breakfast €30; ☎ ) Set uphill and back from the beach, this solitary place could not be further from Ibiza madness. All rooms have bathrooms and some have sea views. It has a restaurant, and there is another one across the road. By the beach you'll find a little daytime bar. Half board is a good deal at €41 each.

**Can Curreu** (☎ 971 33 52 80; [www.cancurreu.com](http://www.cancurreu.com); Carretera de Sant Carles Km12; d from €256.80; ☎ ) This Ibizan farmstead lies 1.5km south of Sant Carles, just off the main road from Santa Eulària. Rooms are tastefully decorated and furnished, and the suites are a luxury home in the country, with such extras as CD player, Jacuzzi and fireplace (for the winter). The restaurant is excellent, and you can use a modest gym and go horse riding.

**Bar Anita** (☎ 971 33 50 90; Sant Carles de Peralta; meals €25) A timeless tavern opposite the village church, this restaurant and bar has been attracting all sorts from around the island for decades. They come for pizza, pasta or slabs of *entrecote con salsa de pimienta* (entrecote in a pepper sauce; €14.50), or simply to drink and chat.

## Cala Sant Vicent

The package-tour resort of Cala Sant Vicent is built around the shores of a protected bay on the northeast coast, a long stretch of sandy beach backed by a string of modern midrise

hotels. Sitting out to sea is Illa sa Tagomago, an uninhabited island. Cala Sant Vicent is a pleasant place for a swim.

## NORTH COAST & INTERIOR

This northern part of Ibiza contains some of the island's most attractive landscapes. If you need a break from the beaches, the area's coastal hills and inland mountains are popular with bushwalkers and cyclists.

### Cala Sant Vicent to Portinatx

The main road (PM811) heads west from Cala Sant Vicent, passing by the unremarkable village of **Sant Vicent de Sa Cala** before hitting the main north-south highway. From here you can head south to Ibiza City or north to Portinatx.

### Portinatx

Portinatx is the north coast's major tourist resort, with phalanxes of hotels around its three adjoining beaches – S'Arenal Petit, S'Arenal Gran and Platja Es Port. The beaches themselves are beautiful but can get crowded.

### Cala Xarraca

This beach, just west of Portinatx, is set in a picturesque, partly protected bay with a rocky shoreline and a dark-sand beach. Development is limited to a solitary bar-restaurant and a couple of private houses.

### Sant Miquel de Balansat & Port de Sant Miquel

One of the largest inland towns, Sant Miquel is overlooked by a boxlike 14th-century church that is worth the climb. Inside, the restored early 17th-century frescoes in the Capella de Benirràs are worth a look if you get lucky and the church is open. In the pretty patio, demonstrations of traditional island dances are held at 6pm on Thursdays. Several kilometres north, the fine beaches of Port de Sant Miquel are dominated by the huge **Hotel Club San Miguel**.

A turn-off to the right just before you enter town, coming from the south, takes you around a headland to the entrance to the **Cova de Can Marçà** (☎ 971 33 47 76; adult/child €6/4; ☎ 10.30am-7.30pm), a collection of underground caverns spectacularly lit by coloured lights. Tours in various languages take around 30 to 40 minutes.

Beyond the caves, an unsealed road continues 4km around the coast to the unspoiled

bay of **Cala Benirràs**. A sealed road to Cala Benirràs leads off the Sant Joan-Sant Miquel road, midway between the towns. High, forested cliffs and a couple of bar-restaurants back the beach. On Sunday at sunset you may well encounter groups of hippies with bongos banging out a greeting to the sunset, something they have been doing for decades.

The splendid country mansion of **Can Planells** (☎ 971 33 49 24; www.canplanells.com; Carrer de Venda Rubió 2; d €173.35-288.90; ☎ ☎ P), just 1.5km outside Sant Miquel on the road to Sant Mateu d'Aubarca, oozes a relaxed rural luxury in its handful of tastefully arranged doubles and suites. The best suites have private terraces, and the place is set amid delightful gardens and fruit-tree groves.

The UK-based **Ibiza Yoga** (☎ UK 020-7419 0999; Ibiza 971 33 33 18; www.ibizayoga.com; ☎ ☎) occupies three villas and a series of apartments a few hundred metres back from the beach at Cala Benirràs and offers week-long, all-inclusive yoga retreats. Villa Palmas is the nicer of the villas, with a range of rooms in cool country fashion. Prices in that villa range from UK£600 to UK£800 a week per person, which includes six yoga classes for beginners and above.

About 3km west of Port de Sant Miquel is Ibiza's famous cliff-top hotel **Hacienda Na Xamena** (☎ 971 33 45 00; www.hotelhacienda-ibiza.com; d from €406; ☎ ☎ P). If you want to rub shoulders with the rich and famous, this is the place to stay. Approaching it, the place seems a discreetly low slung country estate, but it actually has six levels built into the steep cliff facing out to sea. Rooms are furnished in old-fashioned style and the views are... words fail us.

### Sant Llorenç de Balàfia

This quiet hamlet is dominated by a white Ibizan fortress church dating to the 18th century, when attacks by Moorish pirates were the scourge of the island. If it's open, climb to the roof for wonderful views. One kilometre northeast on a dirt track is the tiny, onetime fortified, hamlet of Balàfia, with two towers, a feast of flowers and lots of *privado* signs around the half-dozen houses.

Head 500m on to the C733 road and you reach the shady open-air restaurant of **Cana Pepeta** (☎ 971 32 50 23; Km15.4; meals €20-25; ☎ Wed-Mon), where the *frito de pulpo* (a baked dish of octopus, potatoes, paprika and herbs) is unique and delicious.

### Santa Gertrudis de Fruitera

If you blinked at the wrong time you could easily miss tiny Santa Gertrudis, south of Sant Miquel. Clustered around the central Plaça de l'Església you'll find an unusual collection of **art-and-craft galleries** and antique and bric-a-brac shops, plus several good bars, among which the perennial favourite is **Bar Costa** (11 Plaça de l'Església), with art on the walls and somewhat erratic opening times. A cut above for foodies is **La Plaza** (☎ 971 19 70 75; Plaça de l'Església; meals €40; ☎ dinner), which serves elegant French and Mediterranean dishes. About 3km south-east of Santa Gertrudis, on the C733, is one of the island's cool, Asian-style restaurant-cum-bar-cum-lounge scenes, **Bambuddha Grove** (☎ 971 19 75 10; www.bambuddha.com; Km8.5; meals €35; ☎ 8pm-4am). The ambience is great, but the food average and service slow.

### Sant Rafel

pop 1780

Midway between Ibiza City and Sant Antoni de Portmany, Sant Rafel is internationally known as the nearest geographical point to two of Ibiza's biggest and best discos, Privilege (p651) and Amnesia (p651). By day, the town is known as a craft centre and has a pretty good collection of ceramics workshops, sculpture galleries, shops and markets.

## WEST COAST

### Sant Antoni de Portmany

pop 18,370

Sant Antoni (San Antonio in Spanish), widely known as 'San An', is big and about as Spanish as bangers and mash. The locals joke that even football hooligans need holidays, and somehow they seem to end up in San An. It's the

#### AUTHOR'S CHOICE

**EI Ayoun** (☎ 971 19 83 35; Carrer d'Isidor Macabich s/n, Sant Rafel; meals €30-40; ☎ 8pm-4am) When clubbers are ready to take a breather, some like to chill and feed at this relaxed Moroccan restaurant. The Middle Eastern food is just the beginning (kitchen closes around midnight). The huge garden terrace is another big attraction, and a (relatively) subdued party atmosphere builds in the restaurant's Bar Privado towards the end of the evening.

perfect destination if you've come in search of booze-ups, brawls and hangovers.

Most of the town is on the tacky side, but if you head for the small rock-and-sand strip on the north shore, you can join hundreds of others for sunset drinks at a string of a half-dozen cool bars, the best known of which is **Café del Mar** (☎ 971 34 25 16; Carrer de Vara del Rey s/n; ☎ 5pm-4am). Others include **Café Mambo** (☎ 971 34 66 38; Carrer de Vara del Rey 56; ☎ 2pm-4am), which is a kick-off point for a lot of Pacha's (p651) pre-club night shenanigans; and **Savannah Café** (☎ 971 34 80 31; Carrer del General Balanzat 38; ☎ 2pm-4am). The latter plays chill-out music as you munch on Tex Mex and sip sangria. After the sun goes down all of them turn up the rhythmic heat and pound on until 4am, from about June to October. If nothing else, it can be said with confidence that the nightlife here is wild.

The town is also home to the club **Es Paradis** (☎ 971 34 66 00; www.esparadis.com), just out of the town centre on the coast road heading west (also see p651).

Not far north of Sant Antoni are several pleasant and undeveloped beaches, such as **Cala Salada**, a wide bay with sandy shores backed by a pine forest. From here, a rough track continues further north to the beach at **Ses Fontanelles**. Closer to Sant Antoni are the cosy little beaches of **Cala Gració** and **Cala Gracioneta**, separated by a small rocky promontory.

## SLEEPING & EATING

**Hotel Pikes** (☎ 971 34 22 22; www.pikeshotel.com; Camí de sa Vorerera Km12; d from €246; ☎ ☎ P) This is an extraordinary little hotel south of Sant Antoni. It offers a range of doubles and suites (all with varying themes, names like Honeysuckle and Sunset, and some with prices reaching for the stars). The stone country mansion has a gym, leafy garden with bar and a translucent pool. The hotel's bar sessions (finishing as late as 2am) are also renowned.

**Es Rebot de Ca'n Prats** (☎ 971 34 62 52; Carrer de Cervantes 4; meals €15-20; ☎ Wed-Mon) A little worn, but a good spot for decently prepared fish and other local dishes (try the *cazuela de pescado*, fish casserole; €18), this is one of the few authentic Ibiza eateries in Sant Antoni. It's a hike from the waterfront bar action.

## GETTING THERE & AWAY

Sant Antoni is connected with Ibiza City and the rest of the island by regular bus services.

Local buses run every 15 to 30 minutes to Ibiza City and take about 30 to 40 minutes. There are seven or eight buses a day to Cala Bassa and Cala Compte from June to October. They take about 20 minutes, depending on stops and traffic.

Boats run to local beaches, such as Cala Bassa and Cala Compte.

### Cala Bassa to Cala d'Hort

Heading west and south from Sant Antoni, you'll come to the rocky and popular bay of **Cala Bassa**. The next few coves around the coast hide some extremely pretty beaches – **Cala Compte**, with its translucent water, and the popular **Cala Codolers** are among the best. All are accessible by local bus and/or boat from Sant Antoni.

Further south, **Cala Vedella** is a modest resort with a fine beach in the centre of town, backed by a couple of restaurants. A little further south, **Cala d'Hort** has a spectacular setting overlooking two rugged rocky islets, **Es Vedrá** and **Es Vedranell**. The water here is an inviting shade of blue, and the beach a long arc of sand sprinkled with pebbles and rocks. The developers still haven't ruined this place, and there's nothing here apart from two relaxed bar-restaurants.

### SOUTH COAST

#### Ses Salines

pop 4290

Platja de ses Salines and the adjacent Platja d'es Cavallet, at the southernmost tip of the island, are the best and most popular beaches within easy striking distance of Ibiza City. The area takes its name from the saltpans exploited here since Carthaginian times and which were big business until tourism came along.

The local bus from Ibiza City drops you at the western end of Ses Salines beside a small bar. Across the road, on the other side of the sand dunes, a long crescent-shaped bay stretches into the distance, with a broad sandy beach broken by patches of rocks. These beaches are popular with Ibiza's party-hard crowd and four or five open-air beach bars are spread around the bay. Swimsuits become less common the further east you go. Stroll on if the *au naturel* look appeals to you: **Platja d'es Cavallet**, the next bay around to the east, is Ibiza's official nudist beach.

#### SLEEPING & EATING

**Hostal Mar y Sal** (☎ 971 39 65 84; d to €50; ☹ May-Sep) Handy for the beach, this spot has its own bar

and restaurant. It's frequently booked months in advance for July and August.

Sa Trincha, at the eastern end of the beach, has long been considered the coolest bar on this stretch of sand. It serves burgers, *bocadillos* (filled rolls), salads and fruit smoothies. It also does somewhat stronger drinks, and when the DJ gets into gear (from 2pm) things can get kind of wild and crazy.

### GETTING THERE & AWAY

Autobuses Voramar El Gaucho runs eight to 10 buses daily to Ses Salines from Ibiza City (€1.30).

## FORMENTERA

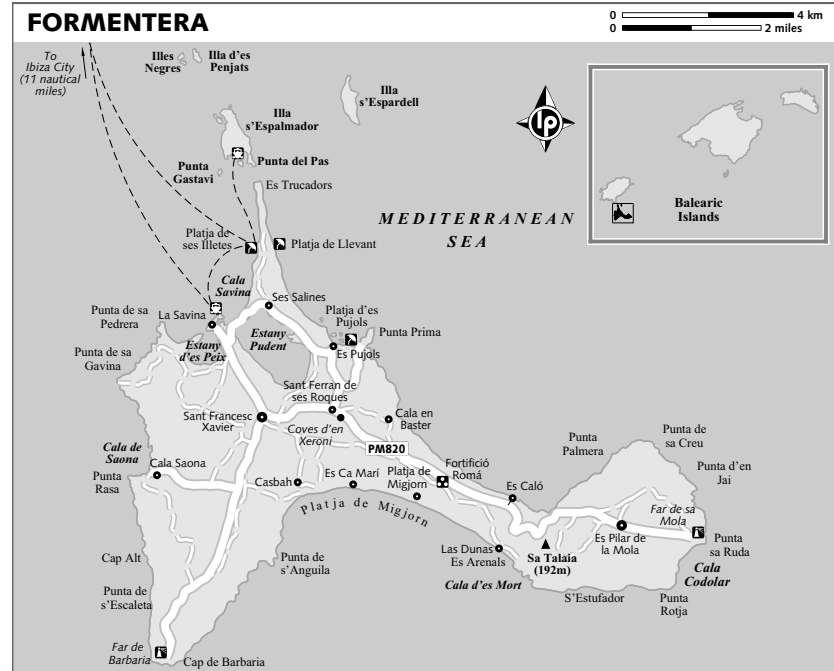
A short boat ride south of Ibiza, Formentera is the smallest and least-developed of the four main Balearic Islands, with a population of 7506. This idyll is laced with sandy beaches and some relaxing short walking and cycling trails. It's a popular day trip from Ibiza and gets crowded in midsummer (especially with the Italian contingent, for whom Formentera is what Bali is to the Australians), but most of the time it is still possible to find yourself a strip of sand out of sight and earshot of other tourists.

Formentera's predominantly flat landscape is rugged and at times bleak. The coast is alternately fringed with jagged cliffs and beaches backed by low dunes. A handful of farmers scrape a living from the land in the centre and east, but elsewhere the island is a patchwork of pine plantations, sun-bleached salt beds, low stonewalls and mostly vacant fields.

### Orientation & Information

Formentera is less than 20km across from east to west. Ferries arrive at La Savina, a harbour town wedged between two large salt lakes, the Estany d'es Peix and Estany Pudent (the aptly named Smelly Lake). Three kilometres south of La Savina is the island's administrative capital, Sant Francesc Xavier, and another 5km southwest is Cap de Barbaria, the southernmost point. Es Pujols, the main tourist resort, is 3km east of La Savina.

The main road (PM820) runs down the middle of the island, passing by the fine beaches of Platja de Migjorn along the south coast and through the fishing village of Es Caló (13km southeast of La Savina) before



climbing to Sa Talaia (192m), the island's highest point. The eastern end of the island is marked by the Far de sa Mola lighthouse.

Formentera's **tourist office** (☎ 971 32 20 57; www.ajuntamentdeformentera.com; ☹ 10am-2pm & 5-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat May-Sep) is in La Savina, hidden behind the row of vehicle-hire agencies that line the port. Opening hours vary seasonally. Another office opens in **Es Pujols** (☹ 4-10pm Mon-Fri, 6-10pm Sat Jun-Sep) in summer. Most of the banks are in Sant Francesc Xavier. There is a clinic, **Centro Médico** (☎ 902 07 90 79), 3km south of La Savina.

### Sights & Activities

Apart from walking, cycling and lying on beaches, activities are limited. Points of interest include a series of crumbling stone **watchtowers** along the coastline, a ruined **Roman fortress** (Fortifició Romá), on the south coast, and 40 minor **archaeological sites** (most signposted off the main roads). Divers could approach **Diving Center Formentera** (☎ 971 32 11 68; www.blue-adventure.com; Carrer d'Almadraba 67-71 La Savina; dive with rental gear €42), one of a handful of island dive centres.

### BEACHES

Among the island's best beaches are **Platja de Llevant** and **Platja de ses Illetes** – beautiful strips of white sand that line the eastern and western sides, respectively, of the narrow promontory stretching north towards Ibiza. A 4km **walking trail** leads from the La Savina–Es Pujols road to the far end of the promontory, from where you could wade across a narrow strait to **Illa s'Espalmador**, a tiny uninhabited islet with beautiful, quiet beaches and mud baths. The promontory itself is largely undeveloped. Be careful when wading out – you can easily be caught by incoming tides. Or better, take the **Barca Bahía boat** (€12 return) that runs three times daily from La Savina ferry port (via Platja de ses Illetes) to the island and returns.

East of Sant Ferran de ses Roques, towards Es Caló, a series of bumpy roads leads to the south coast beaches, known collectively as **Platja de Migjorn**. They are secluded and popular, despite their sometimes rocky and seaweed-strewn shorelines (especially towards the western end). The best are at the eastern end around **Es Arenals**. Most of these beach settlements consist of a handful of houses and



apartments, a couple of bar-restaurants and the odd *hostal*.

Nudism is fairly common on many of the island's beaches. It's not mandatory but no-one bats an eyelid if you shed all your layers.

### SANT FRANCESC XAVIER

pop 1500

Formentera's capital and biggest population centre, Sant Francesc Xavier is an attractive whitewashed village with some good cafés overlooking small, sunny plazas. The town's older buildings include a 14th-century **chapel**, an 18th-century **fortress**, and the **Museu Etnològic** (☎ 971 32 26 70; Carrer de Jaume I 17; admission free; ☞ 10am-2pm & 7-9pm Mon-Sat Jun-Sep, 9am-3pm Mon-Sat Oct-Apr), a modest ethnological museum devoted to the traditional aspects of predominantly rural island life.

### CALA SAONA

On the road south of Sant Francesc Xavier, one-third of the way to Cap de Barbaria, turn west to the delectable cove of Cala Saona. The beach is one of the island's best, with just one big hotel (see opposite), a couple of bar-restaurants overlooking the clear, pale aqua-and-blue-black waters, and a discreet smattering of a half-dozen houses.

### CAP DE BARBARIA

A narrow sealed road heads south out of the capital through stone-walled farmlands to Cap de Barbaria, the island's southernmost point. It's a pleasant ride to the lonely white lighthouse at the road's end, although there ain't much to do once you get there, except gaze out to sea. From the *far* (lighthouse) a track leads east (a 10-minute walk) to the **Torre d'es Cap de Barbaria**, an 18th-century watchtower.

### ES PUJOLS

Once a sleepy fishing village, Es Pujols has been transformed by tourism. Rows of sun-bleached timber boat shelters still line the beachfront, but today modern hotels, apartments and restaurants overshadow them. If the beaches are too crowded for your liking, more secluded options lie within easy striking distance (keep walking northwest towards Platja de Llevant).

### COVES D'EN XERONI

Beside the main road just east of Sant Ferran are the **Coves d'en Xeroni** (☎ 971 32 82 14; adult/under 12yr €4/2.50; ☞ 10am-1.30pm & 2.30-7pm Mon-Sat May-

Oct), an unexceptional series of underground caves with stalactites and all. Treat opening times with a large grain of salt.

### EASTERN END

The fishing settlement of Es Caló is set on a tiny rocky cove ringed by faded timber boat shelters. The coastline is jagged, but immediately west of Es Caló you'll find some good swimming holes and rock pools with small patches of sand.

From Es Caló, the road twists up to the island's highest point. Close to the top, **Restaurante El Mirador** (p660) offers spectacular views along the length of the island, whose eastern extremity is an elevated limestone plateau. Most of the coastline is only accessible by boat, and pine stands and farms mainly take up the interior. A road runs arrow-straight to the island's eastern tip, passing through **Es Pilar de la Mola**, which comes alive for hippy markets on Wednesday and Sunday. At the end of the road stand the **Far de sa Mola** lighthouse, a **monument** to Jules Verne (who used this setting in one of his novels), a bar and spectacular cliffside views.

### Sleeping

Camping is prohibited. Most accommodation caters to package-tour agencies, so is overpriced and/or booked out in midsummer. Single rooms are as rare as hens' teeth in summer, and rental apartments (a better deal for stays of a week or more) are more common than *hostales* and hotels (of which there are just over 50). Check out [www.formenteraho.telsguide.com](http://www.formenteraho.telsguide.com) and [www.formentera.es](http://www.formentera.es).

**Astbury Formentera** (☎ UK 01642-210163; [www.formentera.co.uk](http://www.formentera.co.uk); 31 Baker St, Middlesbrough TS1 2LF) is a UK-based specialist in house and apartment rentals in Formentera.

### SANT FRANCESC XAVIER

Several *hostales* are scattered about this pleasant town and prices are more realistic than at some of the beach locations.

**Casa Rafal** (☎ 971 32 22 05; Carrer d'Isidoro Macabich; d€65; ☞) Just off sleepy Plaça de sa Constitució, this modest two-storey spot is friendly and offers good, clean rooms with bathroom. They have a restaurant downstairs.

### ES PUJOLS

**Hostal Voramar** (☎ 971 32 81 19; [voramar@interbook.net](mailto:voramar@interbook.net); Carrer de Miramar; s/d €107/130.75; ☞ May-Oct; ☞ ☞ ☞) About 100m inland from the beach,

this ochre-fronted hotel has comfortable rooms (renovated in 2003), most with balcony. Have a workout in the small gym.

**Fonda Pinatar** (d€94) Owned by the same people and virtually next door to Voramar, this simple place rents out rooms.

### SANT FERRAN DE SES ROQUES

**Hostal Pepe** (☎ 971 32 80 33; Carrer Major 68; s/d with breakfast €32/52) Located on the pleasant (and on summer nights quite lively) main street near the village's old sandstone church, this place has 45 simple and breezy rooms with bathroom. It's been a classic for decades. Some folks hang out for weeks, others move on fast.

### CALA SAONA

**Hotel Cala Saona** (☎ 971 32 30 30; s/d €115/160; ☞ May-Oct; ☞ ☞ ☞) A white behemoth, this hotel is set back from the beach and offers 116 rooms, pool, tennis courts and restaurant. From the best rooms the view is straight across the beach and out to sea. Prices halve in low season. The beach bar-restaurants are perfect for a sunset sangria.

### PLATJA DE MIGJORN

A spattering of *hostales* and apartments is spread along Formentera's south beach.

**Hostal Ca Mari** (☎ 971 32 81 80; Es Ca Mari; s/d €59/100; ☞ ☞) This is actually three comfortable *hostales* in one: its rooms and apartments all share a central bar, restaurant, pool and grocery shop in the little settlement of the same name.

**Hostal Santi** (☎ 971 32 83 75; Km10.7; s/d €90; ☞ ☞) Smaller but a similar deal, this place offers simple, cool rooms, many with balcony overlooking the sea. Poolside there is a little bar and there is a restaurant on the premises.

### ES CALÓ

**Fonda Rafalet** (☎ 971 32 70 16; s/d €61/85) Overlooking a small rocky harbour, this guesthouse has good rooms (some with sea views), and also incorporates a bar and popular seafood restaurant with portside terrace. A couple of other *hostales* and apartments are also available in this attractive village.

### Eating

Mostly waterfront eateries offer a standard range of seafood and paella-style options. Reckon on an average of €30 to €40 a head or

more for a full meal in the bulk of restaurants, most of which open from May to October only. Gotta make euros while the sun shines!

### SANT FRANCESC XAVIER

**Bar Platé** (☎ 971 32 23 13; Plaça de sa Constitució; meals €20-25; ☞ Mon-Sat) Set beneath a leafy pergola, this is a charming spot for a lazy breakfast or a simple meal. Salads, *bocadillos* and tapas go for €4 to €7.

### ES PUJOLS

**Luzius** (☎ 971 32 84 17; Fonoll Marí 2-6; meals €30-35) The second-to-last of a string of beach-bar restaurants as you head west from the town centre, this is a relaxed and shady option for seafood and largely local cooking with an occasional light French touch, tapas and a range of refreshing fruit juices. Fish dishes come in for €14 to €20, and there's a kids' menu too.

**El Caminito** (☎ 971 32 81 06; Carretera La Savina-Es Pujols; meals €40-50; ☞ dinner Apr-Nov) This Argentine meat grill is one of the best restaurants on the island, serving succulent slabs of meat in all its known forms. A touch of the Pampa in the Med, it is barely 1km outside Es Pujols on the road to La Savina.

### SANT FERRAN DE SES ROQUES

**Can Forn** (☎ 971 32 84 5; Carrer Major 39; meals €30-35; ☞ May-Oct) The best dishes are the *calamar a la bruta* ('dirty calamari', with potato, Mallorcan sausage and squid ink) and *calamar a la payesa* (similar, but with an onion sauce and tomato instead of the ink).

### CALA SAONA

Two restaurants operate in addition to the hotel restaurant. All offer much the same sort of food and prices (expect to pay €15 to €18 a head for paella).

### PLATJA DE SES ILLETES

A 3km, partly dirt road winds north of the La Savina-Es Pujols road, just behind the string of beaches leading to Platja de ses Illetes and providing access to four beachside restaurants and a trio of bars along the way.

**Es Molí de Sal** (☎ 971 18 74 91; meals €35-50; ☞ May-Oct) In a tastefully renovated mill boasting a lovely terrace and magnificent sea views you will discover some of the finest seafood on the island. Try one of the rice dishes or the house speciality, *caldereta de llagosta* (lobster stew).

## SOUTH COAST

**Restaurante Es Cupinà** (☎ 971 32 72 21; Plaça de Migjorn; meals €30-40; ☹ May-Oct) At the eastern extremity of the beach, this is a big name on the island, noted especially for the lobster (unfortunately not always available) and freshly cooked fish of the day.

**Vogamari** (☎ 971 32 90 53; Km9.5; meals €30; ☹ 1-8pm May-Oct) A simple island eatery with a broad veranda set amid a greenery-filled dune, this is great for fresh fish, paella or solid meat dishes at lunch and later.

## ES PILAR DE LA MOLA

Formentera's easternmost town has a handful of bars and restaurants.

**Restaurante El Mirador** (☎ 971 32 70 37; Carretera de la Mola Km14.3; meals €25-30; ☹ May-Oct) The best feature of this fairly average seafood restaurant is the staggering views west across the length of the island, with the Med glittering along its north and south shores.

**Pequeña Isla** (☎ 971 32 70 68; Avinguda del Pilar 111; meals €30; ☹ Tue-Sun) Easily the best restaurant in town, with a shady roadside terrace, the 'Little Island' dishes up hearty meat dishes, fresh grilled fish and paella.

## Entertainment

### ES PUJOLS

In summer Es Pujols gets lively (above all with a relaxed Italian crowd), offering an intense tangle of intertwined bars along or just off Carrer d'Espardell (just back from the waterfront) that stay open until 3am or 4am. An old favourite is the red and rocking Indiana, one of the first to get going in the 1990s. They each have their quirks but the end effect is like being in one huge semi-open-air saloon with themed spaces. On Carrer de sa Roca Plana, a couple of bars worth looking out for are **Bananas&co** (Carrer de sa Roca Plana) and **Bar Coyote** (Carrer de sa Roca Plana), both with terraces. Just after them is **Pachanka** (Carrer de sa Roca Plana), where everyone ends up for the clubbing atmosphere until 6am.

## SANT FERRAN DE SES ROQUES

**Fonda Pepe** (☎ 971 32 80 33; Carrer Major 55; ☹ May-Oct) Welcome to the island classic, a knock-about bar connected with the *hostal* (across the street) of the same name. They have been serving *pomades* (gin and lemon) for decades. It attracts a lively crowd of locals and foreigners of all ages and persuasions, who fill the bar and street with their animated banter.

## PLATJA DE SES ILLETES

One of the island beachside rituals is sipping on sangria while observing the sunset.

**Bigsurllife** (☹ 10.30am-sunset May-Oct) This bar attracts a good-natured beautiful Italian crowd, and serves nachos all day and Italian dishes at lunchtime. It's such a hit with the *dolce vita* mob that they have brought out their own chill-out CD. The daily event is drinks on the beach for sunset. About 20m before the turn-off for Platja de ses Illetes from the La Savina-Es Pujols road, a parking area is signposted to the left. Another 30m brings you to the beach and bar.

**Tiburón** (☎ 659 638945; ☹ 10am-sunset May-Oct) About 200m further up the beach, this is an equally fun beach tavern that tends to attract more locals for fish, salads, sangria and, of course, sunsets.

## PLATJA DE MIGJORN

**Blue Bar** (☎ 971 18 70 11; www.bluebarformentera.com; Km8; ☹ noon-4am Apr-Oct) This is a Formentera classic, which offers good seafood, paella and spadefuls of *buen rollito* (good vibes). It is the south's chill-out bar par excellence, and everything is blue – the seats, the sunshades, the tables, lounges, loos, walls. So head down for sunset, grab a cocktail and relax. The restaurant closes at midnight.

**Blanco** (www.blancoformentera.com; ☹ Apr-Oct) Barely 100m before Blue Bar, this place is for a more active lot, who dance the evening away to camp hits from the Village People.

**10.7 Vista y Sol** (☎ 971 32 84 85; www.vistaysol.com; ☹ Apr-Oct) This could be an urban trend den from Milan, only sitting by the sea. The food (separate menus for lunch and dinner) is resolutely Italian, with an international wine list. DJ sounds, black and white décor and a relaxed vibe make it perfect for a meal (€40 to €50) or simply sipping.

## Getting There & Away

**Baleària** (☎ 902 160180; www.balearia.com) runs up to 11 daily fast ferries (€18.50/34 one way/return, 25 minutes) and a couple of conventional boats (€12/20 one way/return, one hour) between Ibiza City and Formentera. Fares for vehicles cost €65 for a small car one way, €29 for motorcycles under 250cc and €9.20 for a bicycle. On the fast ferries in particular, there are sometimes special offers. The first ferry leaves Ibiza City at 7am and the last one returns from Formentera at 10pm (Sunday 7.30pm).

**Mediterranea-Pitiusa SL** (☎ 971 32 24 43; www.medpitiusa.net) runs up to nine fast ferries daily between Ibiza and Formentera (€16 to €18.50 each way, 25 to 35 minutes).

## Getting Around

**Autocares Paya** (☎ 971 32 31 81) runs a regular bus service connecting the main towns, but scooter and bicycle are the preferred options.

Vehicle-hire agencies are all over the island, including a string of places opposite the harbour in La Savina. Local agencies include **Moto Rent Mitjorn** (☎ 971 32 32 01), **Moto Rent La Savina** (☎ 971 32 22 75) and **Formotor** (☎ 971 32 70 48). Daily rates are around €6 to €7 for a bike, €8 to €10 for a mountain bike, €20 to €25 for a motor scooter and up to €55 for a motorcycle. A car is superfluous on this tiny island, but they are available for rent, as are quads (at around €100 a day).

You can also call a **taxi** (☎ 971 32 20 16, 971 32 80 16, 971 32 20 02).

# MENORCA

Menorca (population 82,900) is the least overrun and most tranquil of the Balearics. In 1993 Unesco declared it a Biosphere Reserve, aiming to preserve environmental areas, such as the Parc Natural S'Albufera d'es Grau wetlands and the island's unique archaeological sites.

The untouched beaches, coves and ravines around its 216km coastline allow the more adventurous the occasional sense of discovery! This must be one of the few places in the Mediterranean where it is possible to have a beautiful beach largely to yourself in summer. Some say the island owes much to Franco for not being overrun with tourist development. While neighbouring Mallorca went over to the Nationalists almost at the outset of the civil war, Menorca resisted. Franco later 'rewarded' Mallorca with a construction free-for-all and penalised Menorca by blocking development!

### MENORCA'S TOP FIVE BEACHES

- Cala Macarelleta (p671)
- Cala en Turqueta (p671)
- Cala Pregonda (p670)
- Cala Presilli (p670)
- Cala Morell (p671)

The second-largest and northernmost of the Balearics, Menorca also has a wetter climate and is usually a few degrees cooler than the other islands. Particularly in the low season, the 'windy island' is relentlessly buffeted by *tramuntana* winds from the north.

Check out the tourist information website [www.e-menorca.org](http://www.e-menorca.org) and the island's official accommodation website, [www.visitmenorca.com](http://www.visitmenorca.com).

## Orientation

The capital, Maó (Castilian: Mahón), is at the eastern end of the island. Ferries from the mainland and Palma de Mallorca arrive at Maó's busy port, and Menorca's airport is 7km southwest of the city. The main road (ME1) runs along the middle of the island to Ciutadella, Menorca's second town, with secondary roads leading north and south to the resorts and beaches.

The northern half of Menorca is an undulating area of green rolling hills, with a rugged and rocky coastline. The southern half of the island is flatter and drier, with a smoother coastline and sandy beaches between high cliffs.

## Getting Around

### TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

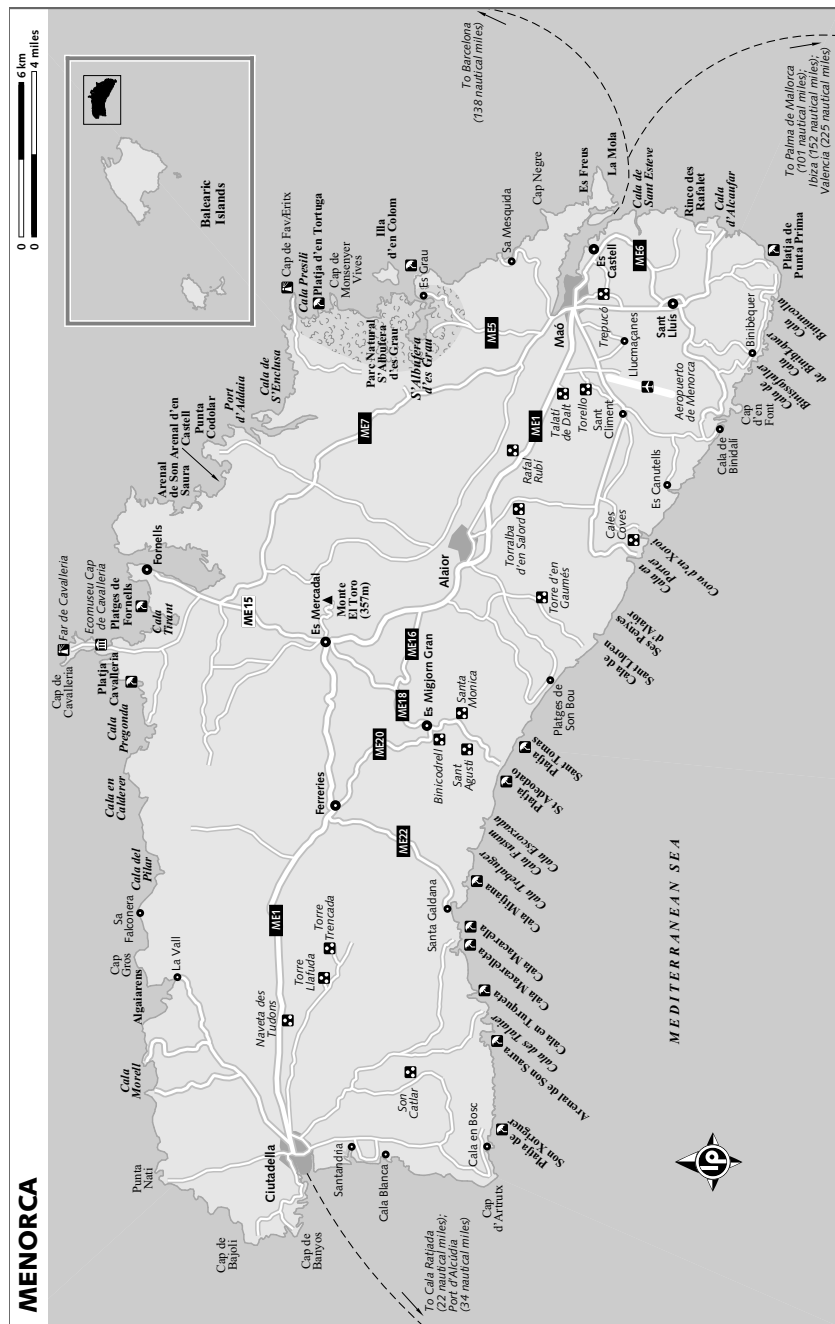
Menorca's airport is served by buses to Maó (€1.50, 15 minutes) every half-hour from around 6am to 10pm and then hourly to midnight. The bus stops at the bus station, the Estació Marítima and a couple of other intermediate points.

### BUS

Do not expect to move around the island fast on the buses. You can get to quite a few destinations from Maó, but, with a few exceptions, services are infrequent and sluggish. You can get a reloadable card with 10 or 40 trips on it. There are various zones, but to cover the whole island you pay €23.40 for a 10-trip card.

### CAR & MOTORCYCLE

In Maó, try **Autos Valls** (☎ 971 35 42 44; Plaça d'Espanya 13) or **Autosmenorsur** (☎ 971 36 56 66; Moll de llevant 35). All the biggies have representatives at the airport. Daily hire can cost €35 to €45 for something like a Seat Marbella, Opel Corsa or VW Polo.



## MAÓ

pop 27,670

The British have invaded Menorca four times (if you count the modest campaign that began with the first charter flight from London in 1953). As a result Maó, the capital, is an unusual blend of Anglo and Spanish characteristics.

The British made it the capital in 1713, and the influence of their almost 100-year presence (the island reverted to Spanish rule in 1802) is still evident in the town's architecture, traditions and culture. Even today the majority of Maó's visitors come from Britain.

Maó's harbour is its most impressive feature and was the drawcard for the Brits. The deep, well-protected waters handle everything from small fishing boats to tankers. The town is built atop the cliffs that line the harbour's southern shore. Although some older buildings still remain, the majority of the architecture is in the restrained 18th-century Georgian style (note the sash windows!).

### Information

**Hospital Verge del Toro** (☎ 971 15 77 00; Carrer de Barcelona s/n)

**Policia Nacional** (Carrer de la Concepció 1)

**Post office** (Carrer del Bon Aire 11-13; ☎ 8.30am-8.30pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-2pm Sat)

**Tourist office** airport (☎ 971 157115; ☎ 8am-10pm); bus station (☎ 971 36 37 90; ☎ 9am-1pm Mon-Fri); Moll de Llevant (Moll de Llevant 2; ☎ 8am-8.30pm Mon-Fri, 8am-1pm Sat) The office at the airport is the main office.

### Sights & Activities

#### OLD QUARTER

Maó's main plaza is the large Plaça de s'Espianada. A **craft and clothing market** is held here every Saturday.

The narrow streets to the east comprise the oldest part of Maó. The **Arc de Sant Roc**, a 16th-century archway at the top end of Carrer de Sant Roc, is the only remaining relic of the medieval walls that once surrounded the old city.

The **Església de Santa Maria la Major** (Plaça de la Constitució), further east, was completed in 1287, but rebuilt during the 18th century. It houses a massive organ built in Barcelona and shipped across in 1810. At the northern end of this plaza is the **ajuntament** (town hall).

#### PLAÇA D'ESPANYA

Just off Plaça d'Espanya is the **Mercat Claustre del Carme**, where former church cloisters have been imaginatively converted into a market and

shopping centre. Upstairs enjoy temporary art exhibitions and the modest **Museu Hernández Sanz Hernández Mora** (☎ 971 35 05 97; admission free; ☎ 10am-1pm Mon-Sat), devoted to Menorcan themes and dominated by artworks, maps and decorative items going as far back as the 18th century.

### MUSEU DE MENORCA

This former 15th-century Franciscan **monastery** (☎ 971 35 09 55; Plaça de Sant Francesc; adult/child & senior €2.40/free, Sat afternoon & Sun free; ☎ 10am-2pm & 6-8.30pm Tue-Sat, 10am-2pm Sun & holidays) has had a chequered history. From the time the Franciscans were obliged to abandon the premises in 1835 after Mendizábal's expropriations, the buildings embarked on a colourful career path – ranging from nautical school and public library to high school and children's home.

The permanent museum collection covers the earliest history of the island, the Roman and Byzantine eras and Muslim Menorca, and includes paintings and other material from more recent times, too.

### XORIGUER GIN DISTILLERY

On the waterfront, head to the **distillery** (☎ 971 36 21 97; Moll de Ponent 93; ☎ 8am-7pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat), where you can try the local gin, another British legacy. At the front is a liquor outlet and souvenir shop where visitors can help themselves to free samples. Menorcan gin is distinctively aromatic and very tasty. You can also try various strange liqueurs and tonics.

### BEACHES

The closest decent beaches to the capital are **Es Grau** to the north and **Platja de Punta Prima** to the south. Both are connected to Maó by local bus. There are around eight buses a day to Punta Prima.

### HARBOUR CRUISES

Numerous operators offer glass-bottomed boat cruises around the harbour next to the ferry terminal. These can be a pleasant way to kill an hour or two and generally cost around €8.50/4.50 per adult/child for an hour. Or make a day of it on a catamaran with **Excursions Blue Mediterranean** (☎ 971 36 44 82; adult/under 12yr with lunch €90/45).

### Sleeping

**Posada Orsi** (☎ 971 36 47 51; Carrer de la Infanta 19; s/d with washbasin €25/45, d with shower €55; ☎) Pastel colours are all the go here, and you may pick up

**MAÓ**

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**MAP INFORMATION:**

- To Golden Farm (6km); Es Grau (10km); Fortalesa de la Mola (12km); Fornells (30km)
- To Ciutatella (66km)
- To Airport (7km); South Coast
- To Platja de Punta Prima (8km)
- To Collingwood House (Hotel del Almirante, 1.5km); Sa Sinya (3km); Es Castell (5km); Fort Marlborough (5km)

the scent of incense. Rooms are equally bright (with lots of pink, hot orange and sky blue), mosquito nets (handy) and a no-smoking policy (and no hot water after midnight).

**Hostal-Residencia La Isla** (☎ 971 36 64 92; Carrer de Santa Catalina 4; s/d €30/52) This large, family-run *hostal* is excellent value, with spacious rooms (all with their own bathroom). Décor is uninspiring but the folks are friendly and run a bustling café-bar downstairs.

**Hotel Mirador des Port** (☎ 971 36 00 16; www.hoteles-catalonia.es; Carrer de Dalt Vilanova 1; s/d €121/164.80; 🚗 🚰) The disadvantage of this modern and slightly ageing hotel is that it's out of the town centre, but it makes up for it with comfortable rooms and terrific vistas of the port and back across to the old town. The pool and

garden are complemented by a fitness area with Jacuzzis.

**Hotel Port Mahón** (☎ 971 36 26 00; www.sethotels.com; Avinguda del Port de Maó; s/d from €100/170, d with port views €196; 🚗 🚰) This fine hotel has 72 marble-clad rooms, a pool and pleasant gardens. It also has luxurious suites. Try to get a room fronted by a balcony with a grand view over the port. Décor varies between the rooms.

### Eating

Maó's harbour is lined with restaurants and bars; most offer alfresco dining. Also worth investigating are the many waterfront eateries in Cales Fonts, just 3km away in Es Castell.

**American Bar** (☎ 971 36 18 22; Plaça Reial 8; mains €8-10) Pull up a seat outside on the terrace

in front of this rambling café to linger over breakfast (€9 for toasted ham and cheese, OJ and coffee) and a newspaper.

**El Muelle** (Moll de Llevant 33; meals €15; 🍷 lunch Mon-Fri, lunch & dinner Sat) The place may not look like anything special, but you get well-prepared fish dishes and tapas with none of the pointless frills and spills of more upmarket spots further around the waterfront. It's generally patronised by locals, who also like the *bocadillos*.

**Ses Forquilles** (☎ 971 35 27 11; Carrer de Rovellada de Dalt 20; meals €30-35; 🍷 lunch & dinner Thu-Sat, lunch Mon-Wed) This self-proclaimed 'gastronomic space' offers tasty dishes ranging from *magret de pato y peras al vino* (duck and pears in white wine) to a steaming chunk of *chuletón de buey* (1kg of 'big beef chop' for two at €40).

**Restaurant La Minerva** (☎ 971 35 19 95; Moll de Llevant 87; meals €40-45) Dine out on seafood on this boat moored to the waterfront. It may all look a bit cheesy (it is), but this doesn't stop the kitchen from pouring out good fish and seafood – cooked lightly, just as it should be. You might be up for a *suprema de merluza con almejas en salsa verde* (supreme of hake with mussels in a green sauce). Kids, and their parents, will love the set specials for them (€6 to €8.50).

**Restaurant Jàgaro** (☎ 971 36 23 90; Moll de Llevant 334; meals €40-45; 🍷 lunch & dinner Mon-Sat, lunch Sun) The last in the long line of eateries on the harbour is a timeless place (and service has seen better days) but the goodies still leave mouths watering. Start with *cigalas a la plancha* (grilled crayfish, €19) and follow with a *zarzuela de pescado y marisco* (fish and seafood hotpot, €26). If that's all too much, they have some fine paella and similar rice dishes for around €11 to €13.

### Drinking & Entertainment

Nightlife in Maó is low key in comparison to Mallorca or Ibiza. Most of the action is on the waterfront.

#### ON THE WATER, OR IN IT

There are several ways to enjoy the island more by getting off dry land. Diving outfits operate in various locations around the coast, including Ciutatella (p668), Fornells (p670) and on beaches in the southeast of the island near Sant Lluís. Windsurfing off Fornells is another option for a good dunking. Don't want to get wet? You could try one of various sailing possibilities. **Antigua Meloussa** (☎ 679 654441; www.menorcaenvelero.com) offers cruises of up to a week (€3900 for up to six people in August, down to €330 per person in the cooler months). It is also possible to charter yachts without a skipper. To get you started, check out the **Menorca Activa** (www.menorcaactiva.com) website, which can also point you in the right direction for land-lubbers' activities like horse-riding.

**Mirador Café** (☎ 971 35 21 07; Plaça d'Espanya 9; 🍷 10am-2am Mon-Sat) In a laneway between the top of Costa de ses Voltes and the Mercat Claustre del Carme, this is a popular music bar with a cave-like interior carved out of the old walls above the harbour.

**Vinateria Parra** (☎ 971 36 36 36; Carrer de San Fernando 3; 🍷 Tue-Sun 8pm-2am) Head downstairs to the cellar for a little self-indulgent wine-sipping and chat over soft music at a random mix of timber and marble tables. Order salad, cheese and meat platters if you wish to adulterate your wine. Or just perch at the marble bar over a beer.

**Akellarre** (☎ 971 36 85 20; Moll de Ponent 41-43; 🍷 8am-5am) Ambient and jazz dance music dominate the wee hours in this place, made welcoming by the warm stone interior. Live music frequently enlivens proceedings earlier in the evening (starting around 11pm, and costing €5 to €10) and there are four or five other bars lined up next door.

**Sa Sinya** (Carrer de Sant Jordi s/n, Es Castell; 🍷 8pm-3am Tue-Sun) At the entrance to Es Castell in an old white house with a pleasant terrace, this is not a bad spot for a drink and a little music. A range of (mostly local) DJs spin anything from '80s hits to hip hop.

### Getting There & Away

You can catch **TMSA** (☎ 971 36 04 75) buses from the bus station just off the southwest end of Plaça de s'Esplanada. Six go to Ciutatella (€4.15, one hour) via Alaior (€1.30), Es Mercadal (€2.10) and Ferreries (€2.75). The company also operates regular services to the south-coast beaches, including Platja de Punta Prima (€1.20). A handful of bus services run to Santa Galdana (€3.40, one hour). Two to five **Autos Fornells** (www.autosfornells.com) services run each day to/from Fornells (€2.55, one hour).



## FANCY FOOTWORK

Neighbouring Mallorca is better known for its shoe-making tradition (especially with the growing international success of the Camper company) but Menorca too has long had its share of cobblers. Today the best loved local product is *avarques*, loose, comfortable slip-on type sandals that cover the front of the foot and strap around the heel. They make great summer shoes and you'll find several makers of them in Ciutadella, although shops sell them all over the island (and indeed all over the Balearics).

The **Museu Municipal** (☎ 971 38 02 97; Bastió de sa Font; adult/senior/under 12yr €1.20/0.60/free; ☎ 10am-2pm Tue-Sat) contains displays recounting the island's story from prehistory to medieval times.

West of the town centre, the southern head of the port entrance is dominated by the stout little **Castell de Sant Nicolau** (☎ 971 38 10 50; Plaça del Almirante Ferragut; admission free; ☎ 11am-1pm & 6-8pm Tue-Sat). The views west to Mallorca and south down the coast are lovely.

About 2km east of the town centre is an original 'monument'. The **Pedrer de s'Hostal** (☎ 971 48 15 78; www.lithica.es; Camí Vell; adult/senior/under 11yr €3/1.50/free; ☎ 9.30am-sunset Mon-Sat, 9.30am-2.30pm Sun & holidays) is an extensive series of stone quarries. The bleached *marés* stone, extracted here and in other quarries around the island, has historically been Menorca's main building material. This quarry was in action until 1994. The bizarre shapes cut into the rock were first hewn by strong men with picks (as long as 200 years ago) and later with machinery. In the latter – which are a series of giant, deep pits – concerts are organised (the acoustics are great). In the older quarry a **botanical garden**, with endemic Menorcan species, grows amid the weird 'sculpture'.

Three dive centres operate in and around Ciutadella. **Diving Centre Ciutadella** (☎ 971 38 60 30; Plaça de Sant Joan 10; per dive €45) is handily located in the town port.

## Festivals & Events

The **Festa de Sant Joan** is held in Ciutadella in the third to last week of June. The high point is 23 June, the eve of the saint's feast day, although the atmosphere in the streets builds over preceding evenings. It is one of Spain's best-known and most traditional festivals,

featuring busy processions, prancing horses (Menorcans pride themselves on their riding skills), performances of traditional music and dancing, and lots of partying.

## Sleeping

**Hostal-Residencia Oasis** (☎ 971 38 21 97; Carrer de Sant Isidre 33; s/d €25/36) Set around a spacious garden courtyard, this quiet place close to the heart of the old quarter has pleasant rooms, some of them done up in the past two years and most with private bathroom.

**Hotel Gèminis** (☎ 971 38 46 44; www.hotelgeminis menorca.com; Carrer de Josepa Rossinyol 4; s/d €55/85; 📶) A friendly, stylish two-star place located on a back street, this graceful, three-storey, rose-white lodging offers comfortable if somewhat neutral rooms just a short walk away from the city centre. The best rooms have a nice balcony to boot.

**Hotel Esmeralda** (☎ 971 38 02 50; www.mac-hotels .com; Passeig de Sant Nicolau 171; r per person €53.80; 📶) Esmeralda is a somewhat rambunctious tourist three-star. The main advantage of this big, curving corner block is that you will be hard pressed to miss out on a room with views over to the Sant Nicolau fort and west out to the sunset and sea.

**Hotel Sant Ignasi** (☎ 971 38 55 75; www.santignasi .com; Carretera de Cala Morell s/n; r per person €117; 📶 📶 📶) This tranquil rural hotel is a fine retreat 3km outside Ciutadella. It boasts a good restaurant and pleasant garden, bar and pool. Prices more than halve over the winter months.

## Eating

Ciutadella's small port is teeming with restaurants and cafés, many of which are set in the old city walls or carved out of the cliffs that line the waterfront.

**Café Balear** (☎ 971 38 00 05; Plaça de Sant Joan 15; meals €25-30; ☎ Sat-Thu Dec-Oct) Sometimes the old timers are the best. Set apart from the town's more frenetic restaurant activity, this remains one of Ciutadella's classic seafood stops. You can eat outside and admire the old quarter towering before you while tucking into local prawns or *navalles* (a strange tubular seafood delicacy).

**Restaurante El Horno** (☎ 971 38 07 67; Carrer de s' Forn 12; meals €25-30; ☎ May-Oct) Descend into the old quarter basement for wholesome Spanish fare, with an even range of fish and meat dishes, including the seasonal *civet de jabalí* (wild boar stew; €15). Fish dishes come in at around €12.

**Ca's Ferrer de sa Font** (☎ 971 48 07 84; Carrer del Port de sa Font 16; meals €35; ☎ lunch & dinner Tue-Sat, lunch Sun) Located in an 18th-century building, this is a romantic place offering a mix of inventive Mediterranean cooking.

## Drinking & Entertainment

The bulk of the town's nightlife is concentrated along the waterfront and in particular around Plaça de San Joan, on either side of which you will encounter phalanxes of bars and clubs.

**Sa Clau** (Carrer de la Marina 199; ☎ 7pm-4am) For a post-prandial cocktail, drop by here on the waterfront at the bottom of Costa d'es Moll.

Set in the old quarter walls, this hip piano bar sometimes features live jazz and blues.

**Jazzbah** (Plaça de San Joan 3; admission €10; ☎ 11pm-5am) This venue is worth watching for its live concerts, happening house nights and chill-out sessions. The latter take place on the terrace.

## Getting There & Away

Boats for Mallorca (Port d'Alcúdia and Cala Ratjada) leave from the northern side of the Port de Ciutadella. For details, see p629.

**TMSA** (Carrer de Barcelona 8) runs buses between Ciutadella and Maó. **Autocares Torres** (☎ 971 38 64 61; Plaça dels Pins) buses serve the coast south of Ciutadella as far as Son Xoriguer.

## MENORCA'S PREHISTORIC MYSTERIES

As long ago as 2000 BC, people were enjoying Menorca's pristine beaches in between stints of hunting and gathering. The interior of the island remains sprinkled with reminders of these remote times. Many of the most significant of these fascinating sites are open to the public (and free).

The monuments are linked to three main periods: the Pre-Talayotic Period (or cave era) from 2000 BC to 1300 BC; the Talayotic Period (or Bronze Age) from 1300 BC to 800 BC; and the Post-Talayotic Period (or Iron Age) from 800 BC to around 100 BC. Similarly, there are three types of structures: *navetas*, *talayots* and *taulas*.

*Navetas*, built from large rocks in the shape of upturned boat hulls, are thought to have been used as either tombs or meeting places – perhaps both.

*Talayots*, large stone mounds found all over the island, were perhaps used as watchtowers for each settlement.

Unique to Menorca, *taulas* are huge stone tablets precisely balanced in the shape of a 'T'. It has been suggested that they could have been used as sacrificial altars but, as with Stonehenge, nobody is sure how these enormous slabs of stone were moved into position or what they signify.

Off the main road 3km west of Maó, the Talayotic settlement of **Talati de Dalt** (adult/student & senior/under 8yr €3/1.50/free; ☎ 10am-sunset) is one of the most interesting sites. It's about five minutes' walk from the car park to the main feature, a well-preserved *taula*.

About 4km further along on the northern side of the road is **Rafal Rubí**, a pair of well-preserved burial *navetas*.

The nearby **Torralba d'en Salord** (☎ 971 37 83 85; adult/student & senior/under 16yr €3/1.50/free; ☎ 10am-8pm Jun-Sep, 10am-1pm & 3-6pm Mon-Sat Oct-May) is another Talayotic settlement whose outstanding feature is an impressive *taula*.

South of Alaior is the large **Torre d'en Gaumès** (adult/student & senior/under 16yr €2.40/1.20/free; ☎ 10am-2pm & 5-8pm Tue-Sun) settlement, which includes three *talayots* on a hilltop and a collection of circular dwellings. It's free to visit every day from October to April, and on Sundays from May to September.

Further south on the coast at **Cales Coves**, some 90 caves dug into the coastal cliffs were apparently used for ritual burials. More recently some of the caves have been homes to hippy colonies, and nearby the large **Cova d'en Xoroi** (☎ 971 37 72 36; www.covadenxoroi.com; admission with drink adult/child €5.80/3.50; ☎ 11.30am-9pm) can be visited as a sight by day or as a club by night. The sunset chill-out scene starts around 8pm and the disco gets into action around midnight to 5am. Foreign DJs make regular summer appearances.

South of Ciutadella (from the *ronda*, or ring road, follow the road for Macarella and after 2.8km veer right), **Son Catlar** (admission free; ☎ 10am-sunset) is the largest Talayotic settlement in the Balearic Islands. Its five *talayots* and the remains of its dwellings cover around 6 hectares. East of Ciutadella (near the Km40 road marker), the **Naveta des Tudons** is a stone burial chamber.

## Getting Around

You can hire mountain bikes from **Velos Joan** (☎ 971 38 15 76; Carrer de Sant Isidre 28) for €7 per day, as well as Vespas and scooters (€57 to €72 for two days, depending on the model).

## NORTH COAST

Menorca's north coast is rugged and rocky, dotted with small and scenic coves. It's less developed than the south and, with your own transport and a bit of footwork, you'll discover some of the Balearics' best off-the-beaten-track beaches.

### Maó to Fornells

North of Maó, head first for **Es Grau**, a plain hamlet on an open bay. The beach is OK and you can kick back at a couple of bar-restaurants.

Inland from Es Grau and separated from the coast by a barrier of high sand dunes is the **Parc Natural S'Albufera d'es Grau**, the largest freshwater lagoon in the Balearic Islands. Home to many species of wetland birds and an important stopover for migrating species, S'Albufera and the surrounding countryside have been designated the 'nucleus zone' of Menorca's Biosphere Reserve, a natural park protected from the threat of development. **Illa d'en Colom**, a couple of hundred metres offshore, is considered part of the park.

The drive up to **Cap de Favàritx**, a narrow rocky cape at the top of the Parc Natural S'Albufera d'es Grau zone, is a treat. The last leg is across a lunar-like landscape of black rock. At the end of the road a **lighthouse** stands watch as the sea pounds relentlessly against the impassive cliffs.

South of the cape stretch some fine sandy bays and beaches, including **Cala Presili** and **Platja d'en Tortuga**, reachable on foot.

### Cap de Cavalleria & Around

Three kilometres shy of Fornells, turn west and follow the signs for 7km to reach a parking area for the stunning little double crescent, golden beach of **Platja Cavalleria** (a five-minute walk from the car park). One kilometre further north is the **Ecomuseu Cap de Cavalleria** (☎ 971 35 99 99; www.ecomuseudecavalleria.com; adult/senior/child €32/free; ☎ 10am-8.30pm Jul-Sep, 10am-7pm Apr-Jun & Oct), with displays and videos on the north coast, its fauna, the lighthouse, ancient inhabitants and Romans. The remains of the latter's settlement, **Sanisena** (today Sanitja), have been

excavated nearby. At the museum you'll receive a detailed area map showing you how to wander to the ruins and round about.

Another 2km drive north brings you to the abrupt cliffs, **far** (lighthouse) and a series of crumbling civil war Republican gun emplacements. A side road from the Cap de Cavalleria road leads about 3km to **Cala Binimella**, an OK beach with a nearby bar-restaurant. You can walk from there to the much prettier **Cala Pregonda**.

### Fornells

pop 450

This picturesque whitewashed village is on a large, shallow bay popular with windsurfers. Fornells has come to be known for its water-front seafood restaurants, most of which serve up the local (and rather pricey) speciality, **caldereta de llagosta** (lobster stew).

### SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

If the sight of those fishing boats bobbing in the bay stirs the seawolf in your soul, embark on a three- to four-hour catamaran trip with **Catamaran Charter** (☎ 626 486426; www.catamarancharter.net; Passeig Marítim; adult/child €60/35). You will also find a windsurfing school and a couple of diving outfits as you head south out of the village. Check out **Diving Center Fornells** (☎ 971 37 64 31; www.divingfornells.com; Passeig Marítim 44b).

At the edge of town stands the squat, round defensive tower, the **Torre de Fornells** (admission €2.40; ☎ 11am-2pm & 5-8pm Tue-Sun Jun-Sep).

A couple of kilometres west at **Platges de Fornells**, the development frenzy has been unleashed on the coastal hills surrounding a small beach. The exclusive villas of the Menorca Country Club resort dominate this ritzy *urbanització* (urban development).

### SLEEPING

**Hostal La Palma** (☎ 971 37 66 34; Plaça S'Algaret 3; s/d to €40/75; ☎ ☎) Out the back of this bar-restaurant are cheerful rooms with bathrooms, balconies and views of the surrounding countryside. Singles aren't available in summer.

**Hostal Fornells** (☎ 971 37 66 76; www.hostalfornells.com; Carrer Major 17; s/d €85.60/117.70; ☎ ☎ ☎) Behind a whitewashed façade on a pedestrian lane just behind the port, this is a slick option, with a bar and restaurant. A variety of spacious rooms have views of the sea, the courtyard pool or the back country. Rooms without views in October cost less than a third of the above prices!

## EATING

The restaurants along the foreshore are all pretty expensive, and if you're here to try **caldereta de llagosta**, you are looking at €60 to €65.

**Es Cranc** (☎ 971 37 64 42; Carrer de Tramuntana 31; meals €35-65; ☎ ☎ Thu-Tue) If you're happy to pay, head for this congenial spot on a street a couple of blocks inland. It has a simple dining room and a strong reputation. You can splash out on **caldereta de llagosta** (€65) or even **paella de llagosta** (€130 for two). Fresh delivery of lobster from a half-dozen local fishing vessels is guaranteed.

**Es Plá** (☎ 971 37 66 55; Passeig Es Pla s/n; meals €30; ☎ ☎ closed mid-Jan-mid-Feb) You can live without lobster but want melt-in-the-mouth seafood? Try this spot, with tables literally at the water's edge. The **lenguado** (sole) is prepared in a rich seafood sauce and vegetables. The **menú del día** (€18) is good value for this town.

### Around Ciutadella

North of Ciutadella, **Cala Morell** is a low-key development of whitewashed villas. Steep steps lead to the small port and beach, backed by a couple of bar-restaurants. More intriguing is the **Cala Morell Necropolis**, prehistoric burial caves hacked into the coastal cliffs along a track leading away from the beach.

Before reaching Cala Morell, a right turn to **Algaiares** leads you to a privately owned **park** (per car €5; ☎ 10am-7pm), with a parking area, a small lake and pristine beaches.

## SOUTH COAST

Menorca's southern flank tends to have the better beaches – and thus the greater concentration of development. The recurring image is of a jagged coastline, occasionally interrupted by a small inlet with a sandy beach and backed by a growing cluster of gleaming white villas. Menorca has largely opted for small-scale developments in the 'Moorish-Mediterranean' style, modelled on the resort of Binibèquer (or Binibeca), near the south-east corner, designed by the architect Antonio Sintes in 1972.

The rugged coastline south of Ciutadella gives way to a couple of smallish beaches at the resorts of **Santandria** and **Cala Blanca**. On the island's southwestern corner looms the large resort of **Cala en Bosc**, a busy boating and diving centre. Not far east are the popular beaches of **Platja de Son Xoriguer**, connected to Ciutadella by frequent buses.

Between Son Xoriguer and Santa Galdana lies some of the least accessible coast in the south. A narrow country road leads south of Ciutadella and then forks twice to (almost) reach the beautiful, unspoiled beaches (from west to east) of **Arenal de Son Saura**, **Cala en Turqueta**, **Es Talaier**, **Cala Macarelleta** and **Cala Macarella**.

For Cala Macarella, for instance, you arrive at a car park and must then walk 15 minutes to the beach (which has a restaurant). You can easily walk or swim around to the still prettier Cala Macarelleta. The walk between Cala Macarella and Cala en Turqueta takes about an hour.

**Day cruises** (☎ 971 38 52 59) to these beaches run from Ciutadella harbour in summer for €18 per person.

Southwest of Ferreries is the resort of **Santa Galdana**, which is just the place if karaoke, English pubs and minigolf are your idea of a good holiday. In fairness, the beach is beautiful and the tack mild. A walking track leads west along the coast to Cala Macarella (30 minutes). To the east of Santa Galdana, **Cala Mitjana** is another enticing strand.

The pleasant **Camping S'Atalaia** (☎ 971 37 42 32; www.campingsatalaia.com; sites per 2 people, tent & car €21.60; ☎ ☎), shaded by pine trees, is two-thirds of the way down the Ferreries-Santa Galdana road.

The resort of **Platges de Son Bou**, south of Alaior, boasts the island's longest beach and most depressing development. Just back from the beach are the remains of an ancient **Christian basilica** that dates, by some reckonings, to the 5th century AD.

Most of the coast south of Maó is more intensively developed. Regular buses sidle down to **Platja de Punta Prima**, which has a nice beach (you can even catch the occasional wave here!). If you pass through **Sant Lluís** (a bright, white town built by the French during their brief occupation of the island in 1756-63), you may want to stop to savour one of several fine eateries. West around the coast is **Binibèquer**, touted as a charming old fishing town. It has been given several coats of whitewash and turned into a tourist beehive, but the curious houses and narrow lanes, not to mention the little boat harbour with its transparent water, are attractive. A few kilometres further west lies **Cala de Binidali**. The village is no big deal and the beach small, but the water is so azure it makes you want to swim out of the inlet and into the open sea.

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