



Northern Mallorca

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Best Places to Stay

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Why Go?

Northern Mallorca is the island's heart and soul, bundling coastal drama, cultured towns with spirited fiestas, a twin-set of white-sand bays and an exciting portfolio of adventure sports into one enticing package.

The Serra de Tramuntana is at its most fabulous where the range culminates on Cap de Formentor, flicking out into the Med like a dragon's tail. The road that wraps around its clifftops elicits gasps of wonder from drivers and cyclists. Across the water, the pine-forested peninsula of Cap des Pinar is hiking heaven. Elsewhere, kitesurfers, cliff-jumpers, scuba divers, cavers and paragliders harness its unique coastscapes and steady breezes.

Resorts here have a low-key, kid-friendly vibe. Inland, towns have retained an authentic Mallorcan air: from medieval-walled Alcúdia to Pollença, with its cafe-rimmed plazas, pilgrim trails and live-to-party summer festivals.

When to Go

Some of the beach resorts barely have a pulse until May or after October (Cala Sant Vicenç, for instance), and the best beach weather is from June to August. Pollença is one big fiesta in August. Yet, our favourite time to visit is spring and autumn – migrating birds flock to the Parc Natural de S'Albufera, the roads are quieter (especially out along Cap de Formentor), Pollença's Good Friday celebration is captivating, and Alcúdia hosts a terrific market in early October. Cooler weather is better for hitting the walking trails, too.

POLLENÇA & AROUND

Pollença

POP 16,190 / ELEV 41M

On a late summer afternoon, when its stone houses glow in the fading light, cicadas strike up their tentative drone and the burble of chatter floats from cafe terraces lining the Plaça Major, Pollença is like the Mallorca you always hoped you would discover. Pollença's postcard looks and vaguely bohemian air have drawn artists, writers and luminaries from Winston Churchill to Agatha Christie over the years. Saunter through its backstreets lined with galleries and boutiques or pull up a ringside chair on the square at sundown to watch the world go by and you too will be smitten.

Sights & Activities

★ Calvari

PILGRIMAGE SITE

(Carrer del Calvari) They don't call it Calvari (Calvary) for nothing. Some pilgrims do it on their knees, but plain walking up the 365 cypress-lined steps from the town centre to the 18th-century hilltop chapel, the **Oratori del Calvari**, is penance enough. This may not be a stairway to heaven, but there are soul-stirring views to savour back over the town's mosaic of terracotta rooftops and church spires to the Tramuntana beyond.

Església de la Mare de

Déu dels Àngels

CHURCH

(Plaça Major; ☉11am-1pm & 3-5pm Jun-Aug, shorter hours rest of year) A church was first raised on this site in Gothic style shortly after the conquest in 1229, but was given a complete makeover in the 18th century, so what you see today is mostly baroque. The unusually simple rough-sandstone facade is a lovely backdrop to the square. Lit by a rose window, the interior has an unusual barrel-vaulted ceiling and extravagant ceiling frescoes.

Museu de Pollença

MUSEUM

(Carrer de Guillem Cifre de Colonya; adult/child €1.50/free; ☉10am-1pm & 5.30-8.30pm Tue-Sat Jun-Sep, shorter hours rest of year) This museum's star attraction is the 17th-century baroque cloister of the Convent de Sant Domingo, in which the museum is housed, and a bright Buddhist Kalachakra mandala donated by the Dalai Lama to the town in 1990. Other exhibits include archaeological finds from the surrounding area and some Gothic altarpieces.

Museu Martí Vicenç

MUSEUM

(www.martivicens.org; Carrer del Calvari 10; ☉10.30am-2pm & 5-8pm Mon & Wed-Sat, 10.30am-2pm Sun) **FREE** A short way up the Calvari steps is the Museu Martí Vicenç. The weaver and artist Martí Vicenç Alemany (1926-95) bought this property, once part of a giant Franciscan monastery that also included the nearby former **Església de Monti-Sion**, in the 1950s. His works, mostly canvases and textiles, are strewn around several rooms.

Casa-Museu Dionís Bennàssar

MUSEUM

(www.museudionisbennassar.com; Carrer de Roca 14; adult/child €2/free; ☉10am-2pm Tue-Sun mid-Mar-Oct) Casa-Museu Dionís Bennàssar, the home of local artist Dionís Bennàssar (1904-67), hosts a permanent collection of his works. Downstairs are early etchings, watercolours and oils, depicting mostly local scenes. Works on the other floors range from a series on fish that is strangely reminiscent of Miquel Barceló's efforts in Palma's cathedral, to a series of nudes and portraits of dancing girls.

Món d'Aventura

ADVENTURE SPORTS

(☎971 53 52 48; www.mondaventura.com; Plaça Vella 8; canyoning €40-50; ☉10am-2pm & 5-9pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat & Sun) Canyoning, caving, kayaking, climbing, coaststeering, hiking - you name the pulse-racing sport, Món d'Aventura has it covered. This is one of the most reputable adventure sports operators on the north coast.

★ Festivals & Events

Davallament

RELIGIOUS

(☉Mar or Apr) At this haunting yet entrancing re-enactment of the Passion Play, on Good Friday the body of Christ is solemnly paraded down the 365 steps of Calvari by torchlight. It is one of the island's most moving Easter celebrations.

Festival de Pollença

CULTURAL

(www.festivalpollenca.com; ☉late Jul-Aug) Orchestras, exhibitions and film screenings come to the atmospheric Sant Domingo cloister for this summer arts festival.

Festes de la Patrona

HISTORICAL

(☉late Jul-early Aug) Dress up as a swashbuckling pirate or all in white and throw yourself into the crowd to celebrate the big and boisterous Festes de la Patrona, with mock battles between the Moros i Cristians (Moors and Christians; see p116) to mark the siege and attack by Saracen pirates in 1550.