



# Palma & the Badia de Palma

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## Best Places to Eat

- Simply Fosh (p66)
- Can Cera Gastro Bar (p66)
- Wine Garage (p67)
- Toque (p70)
- Misa Braseria (p66)

## Best Places to Stay

- Can Cera (p168)
- Hotel Tres (p169)
- Palma Suites (p168)
- Boutique Hotel Calatrava (p168)
- Puro Oasis Urbano (p169)

## Why Go?

Petite, sea-splashed, party-loving Palma is one of Europe's most underrated capitals. For a city of its size, its sights play in the premier league with major metropolises. Take its immense Gothic cathedral, moored like the prow of a great ship on the Mediterranean's edge. Or its astounding galleries: fortified Es Baluard with its Mirós and Picassos, and Museu Fundació Juan March with its Dalís and Barcelós are just tip-of-the-iceberg stuff. In the labyrinthine backstreets of Old Palma, medieval palaces jostle for space with patrician mansions that hide some of Spain's most beautiful inner courtyards.

If the sights don't grab you, the soulful sea views, fabulous food and happening bar scene surely will. Need a breather? Within minutes you can be at a hilltop castle, on a vintage train rattling through the mountains or stretched out on a beach, which means Palma is permanently switched on relaxed mode.

## When to Go

Unlike the rest of the island, Palma's energy levels remain fairly constant throughout the year; most sights, hotels and restaurants are open year-round. That said, the city does have an irresistible feel-good atmosphere when the weather's warm, the yacht harbour is filled with masts and one of the numerous sailing regattas brings the beautiful people to town – this applies from April to October. Scarcely a month passes in Palma without a festival of some kind: pre-Lenten carnival parades in February, the crazy pyrotechnics of Nit de Foc in June and December's Christmas market are top diary dates. The beach resorts of the Badia de Palma effectively shut down in winter.

## Palma's Patios

Few experiences in Palma beat simply milling around the backstreets of the city's old quarter, which spreads east of the cathedral. Iron gates conceal the city's *patis* (patios), the grand courtyards where nobles once received guests and horse-drawn coaches clattered to a halt. Patios were the intersection of public and private life, and as such they were showpieces – polished until they gleamed and filled with flowers and plants.

There are around 150 patrician houses with patios in Palma today, though most can only be observed from a distance. They vary in style from Gothic to Renaissance, baroque to Modernista, but most have the same defining features: graceful arches and Ionic columns, sweeping staircases with wrought-iron balustrades, and a well or cistern. Our walking tour (p61) passes some of our favourites. For a closer look, join one of the guided tours run by Mallorca Rutes (p64).

## To Market

Palma's produce markets are a great way to get under the skin of the city as you mosey around the fresh-produce stands. There's all you need to assemble your own picnic, from cheeses and cold meats to fruit and veg. The most engrossing is the central Mercat de l'Olivar (p69), where you'll find everything from plump olives to never-heard-of legumes, melons as big as footballs, strings of *sobrassada* (paprika-flavoured cured pork sausage), hunks of Serrano ham and enough fish to fill a small ocean. Make a morning of it and linger for lunch at the deli stalls for tapas or oyster shucking. Equally busy but with few tourists are the **Mercat de Santa Catalina** (Map p66; Plaça de la Navegació; ☎ 8am-2pm & 5-8pm Mon-Fri, 8am-2pm Sat) and **Mercat de Pere Garau** (Map p52; Plaça de Pere Garau; ☎ 8am-2pm & 5-8pm Mon-Fri, 8am-2pm Sat).

## Top Five Galleries

- **Museu Fundació Juan March** (p55) Contemporary art stars, including Mallorca's own Miquel Barceló.
- **Es Baluard** (p60) Picasso, Miró and fine city views at this gallery atop the Renaissance sea wall.
- **Fundació Pilar i Joan Miró** (p81) Total Miró immersion, with 2500 works on show.
- **Museo Can Morey de Santmartí** (p52) A feast of Dalí in a lavish town mansion.
- **Palau March** (p51) Paintings by Dalí and sculpture by Moore, Rodin and Chillida in an exquisite palace.

## Cathedral Photo Ops

For that must-have cathedral snapshot of Palma's Cathedral, head to Parc de la Mar during the blue hour (twilight) to frame it perfectly and see it spectacularly illuminated.

## Need to Know

- Many of Palma's headline attractions close on Mondays, including the Fundació Pilar i Joan Miró and Es Baluard.
- Sunday closures include the Cathedral, Palau March and Palau de l'Almudaina.

## Advance Planning

- Book accommodation up to several months ahead if you're coming in high season.
- Reserve tables at Palma's fine-dining restaurants up to two weeks ahead.
- Plan your itinerary (taking into account sight closing days) one week in advance.
- Arrange guided walking and city tours several days ahead.

## Resources

- **Ajuntament de Palma** [www.palmademallorca.es](http://www.palmademallorca.es)
- **Consell de Mallorca tourist office** [www.infomallorca.net](http://www.infomallorca.net)
- **Visit Calvia** [www.visitcalvia.com](http://www.visitcalvia.com)
- **EMT Palma public transport** [www.emtpalma.es](http://www.emtpalma.es)