

Welcome to Mallorca

The ever-popular star of the Mediterranean, Mallorca has a big sunny personality thanks to its ravishing beaches, remote mountains and soulful hill towns.

Lyrical Landscapes

For Miró it was the pure Mediterranean light. For hikers and cyclists it is the Serra de Tramuntana's formidable limestone spires and bluffs reigning over the island's west coast. For others it is as fleeting as the almond blossom snowing on meadows in spring, or the interior's vineyards in their autumn mantle of gold. Wherever your journey takes you, Mallorca never fails to seduce. Cars conga along the coast in single file for views so enticing they make resort postcards look like poor imitations. But even in the tourist swarms of mid-August, you can find your own muse – trek to hilltop monasteries, pedal through honey-stone villages and engrave Mallorca's landscapes to memory.

Return to Tradition

Mallorca's culture has taken a back seat to its beaches for decades, but the tides are changing. Up and down the island, locals are embracing their roots and revamping the island's old manor houses, country estates and long-abandoned *fincas* (farm-houses) into refined rural retreats. Spend silent moments among the olive, carob and almond groves and you'll soon fall for the quiet charm of Mallorca's hinterland. Summer is one long party and village *festes* (festivals) offer a genuine slice of island life.

Coastal Living

There are many reasons why Mallorca tops Europe's summer-holiday charts, but one ranks above all others: the island's beautiful coast. Beyond the built-up resorts, coves braid the island like a string of pearls – each one a reminder of why the island's beaches have never lost their appeal. Go west for cliff-sculpted drama and sapphire seas, or head north for hikes to pine-flecked bays and breezes that carry kitesurfers, windsurfers and sailors across turquoise waters. Scope out deserted coves in the east, or dive off bone-white beaches in the south. With a room overlooking the bright-blue sea, sundown beach strolls to the back-beat of cicadas, and seafood at restaurants open to the stars, you'll soon click into the laid-back groove of coastal living.

Mediterranean Flavours

Eating out in Palma has never been more exciting, with chefs – inspired as much by their Mallorquin grandmothers as Mediterranean nouvelle cuisine – adding a pinch of creativity and spice to the city's food scene. Inland restaurants plate up hearty dishes, such as suckling pig spit-roast to perfection, paired with local wines. On the coast, bistros keep flavours clean, bright and simple, serving the catch of the day with big sea views.



Why I Love Mallorca

By Kerry Christiani, Author

No island holds such a special place for me as Mallorca. Time and again it draws me back to hike the Tramuntana's heights and the coastal trails combing Formentor and Cap des Pinar. It was here, in the backstreets of Pollença, that I perfected my Spanish, and here that I met my now-husband one hazy summer in Platja de Muro 14 years ago. Every time I return, I fall in love with the island all over again – be it on a clifftop walk in spring when the rosemary is in bloom or during a monastery stay in the wood-smoke-scented depths of winter.

For more about our author, see page 232