

# Understand Mallorca

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Corruption scandals, image issues and economic woes aside, the future looks bright for Mallorca and tourism is on the up.

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Rugged natural ramparts, quietly beautiful cliff-encircled coves and birdlife in abundance – we introduce you to Mallorca's natural wonders.

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# Mallorca Today

Things are looking up for Mallorca. The island has weathered the storm of the financial crisis better than many other parts of Spain and even the corruption scandals of late have not managed to dent its increasingly buoyant mood. Around 22.7 million passengers touch down in Palma each year, winter tourism continues to rise, new hotels (Mallorca Rocks for one) are popping up all the time and the island's gorgeous coast never goes out of fashion with yachting celebs.

## Best on Film

**Woman of Straw** (1963) Stars Sean Connery with Artà as the backdrop.

**The Magus** (1968) Features Anthony Quinn, Michael Caine and Candice Bergen with Mallorca standing in for a Greek island.

**A Winter in Mallorca** (1969) Relives Chopin and George Sand's ill-fated stay on the island.

**Presence of Mind** (*El Celo*, 2000) Stars Sadie Frost, Harvey Keitel and Lauren Bacall; a private tutor comes to the island to educate two orphaned children.

## Best in Print

**Mañana Mañana** (Peter Kerr) The pick of the books about trying to live like a Mallorquin.

**Bread and Oil: Majorcan Culture's Last Stand** (Tomás Graves) Food-dominated book centred on traditional Mallorca's greatest passions.

**British Travellers in Mallorca in the Nineteenth Century** (eds Brian J Dendle and Shelby Thacker) An intriguing anthology of Mallorcan travellers' tales.

**A Bull on the Beach** (Anna Nicholas) One of several lively yarns by the same author about the life of an expat in rural Mallorca.

## Economic Storms & Forest Fires

Though Spain may still be in the slackening grip of recession, silver linings show that business has been excellent in Mallorca and is expected to continue this way. Unemployment has been steadily dropping recently and the economic outlook is slowly improving. That's not to say the crisis hasn't hit the island hard: Radio One Mallorca recently revealed that 85% of over-45s have lost their jobs since the recession started, the property bubble has burst and house prices are tumbling – all of which is, according to the *Majorca Daily Bulletin*, giving locals sleepless nights and mounting stress levels.

While Mallorca has been battling economic storms, forest fires over recent summers have put considerable pressure on the environment and emergency services. Once again in 2013, they swept through Peguera and through the Tramuntana north of Andratx, reducing some 1800 hectares of forest to cinders. A Balearic Nature Institute reforestation program is now underway.

## Corruption Scandals & Brits Abroad

Mallorca has had a rocky ride in the press recently. The antics of Jaume Matas, the former president of the Balearics, and former Spanish environment minister, have been splashed across front pages. He was sentenced to nine months in prison for fraud and influence peddling in 2013. Even more high profile is the so-called 'Palma Arena' case, in which Iñaki Urdangarín, duke of Palma and the Spanish king's son-in-law, allegedly exploited his status to embezzle millions of euros in public money through fraudulent deals. Urdangarín's Icarus-like fall from grace has been compounded by a recent leak of his bawdy emails to