



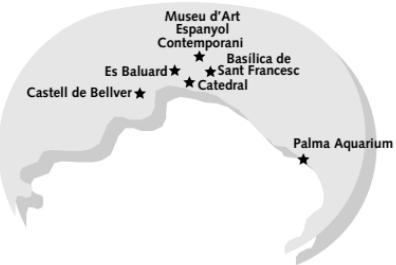
Palma & the Badia de Palma

Set on a magnificent broad bay, Palma de Mallorca is a city of light that can happily compete with any European regional capital. Its old heart oozes centuries of history in its twisting lanes, powerful churches, traditional pastry shops and baroque mansions. For those who think of Mediterranean islands as being all about sand and sea, the cultural charge and sophistication of this city can come as a surprise. The wedding of culture, history and seaside recreation is perhaps best symbolised in the position of its Gothic cathedral, one of Europe's finest, overlooking the sparkling Mediterranean and a short walk to the nearest beach.

The city lies at the midpoint of a sweeping bay, the Badia de Palma. To the west, a series of idyllic, aqua-hued beaches and inlets have managed to retain their beauty despite the tourist development. People of all walks of life crowd into the resorts to swing, chill and, in some cases, wreak nocturnal havoc in the heart of the Magaluf party zone. Other beaches spread east from central Palma, with more Euro-partying happening at Platja de Palma and S'Arenal. Then, suddenly, all the ruckus ends at the quiet, residential eastern tip of the bay, with several hidden inlets to swim in.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Admire the fantasy of Barceló within the magnificent Gothic **Catedral** (p68)
- Shudder at the sharks in the brand-new **Palma Aquarium** (p101)
- Wander into the exquisite Gothic cloister of the **Basilica de Sant Francesc** (p76)
- Take in the contemporary art inside the one-time city walls at **Es Baluard** (p80)
- Get lost in Old Palma's labyrinth and search out the courtyards of **baroque mansions** (p80)
- Get a quick lesson in modern Spanish art at the **Museu d'Art Espanyol Contemporani** (p78)
- Wander around the towers and enjoy the view from **Castell de Bellver** (p83)



PALMA DE MALLORCA

pop 375,770

Palma de Mallorca is Mallorca's only true city. The old quarter is an attractive blend of tree-lined boulevards and cobbled laneways, Gothic churches and baroque palaces, designer bars and slick boutiques.

HISTORY

Known to the Romans as Palmeria or Palma, to the Muslims as Medina Mayurka (City of Mallorca) and to their Christian successors as Ciutat de Mallorca or Ciudad Capital (City Capital), to most Mallorquins the city continues simply to be Ciutat. Officially the name Palma de Mallorca began to impose itself in the early 18th century.

By the 12th century the Muslim city was one of the most flourishing capitals in Europe. After the Christian conquest in 1229, it again entered a period of prosperity as a trade centre in the 14th century. By the 16th century, along with the rest of the island, it was sinking into a protracted period of torpor. The great seaward

OUR TOP PICKS

- **Hotel** Hotel Palacio Ca Sa Galesa (p86)
- **Restaurant** Refectori (p90)
- **Bar** Hostal Corona (p94)
- **Market** Mercat de l'Olivar (p89)
- **Festival** Corpus Christi (p85)

walls that you see today were largely built in the 16th and 17th centuries, when the city's seasonal torrent, the Riera, was diverted from its natural course along Passeig d'es Born to its present location west of the city walls.

The old city centre then went into decline. Even today, parts of the former fishing district of Es Puig de Sant Pere and the tight web of lanes in the Sa Gerreria area in the eastern half of the old city (between Carrer del Sindicat and Carrer del Temple) retain an air of neglect. Large slabs of the latter have been torn down since the mid-1990s to make way for new blocks of flats. The bulk of the sea walls were demolished at the beginning of the 20th century to allow rapid expansion of the city. But the heart of the city

PALMA & THE BADIA DE PALMA

0 5 km
0 2 miles

