



# Palma & the Badia de Palma

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## Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Marc Fosh (p71)
- ➔ Can Cera Gastro-Bar (p70)
- ➔ Es Mollet (p74)
- ➔ Toque (p73)
- ➔ Bon Lloc (p72)

## Best Bars

- ➔ Bar Flexas (p75)
- ➔ Ca La Seu (p75)
- ➔ La Vinya de Santa Clara (p75)
- ➔ Idem Café (p76)
- ➔ Atlantico Café (p76)

## Why Go?

Visually magnificent, culturally spoiled, historically fascinating and geographically blessed, Palma should be better known as one of Europe's great destinations. Yes, it's a playground of the elite, but visitors of all means can enjoy its wonders: crooked medieval streets lined with aristocratic mansions; galleries packed with the work of renowned artists; a broad bay bristling with the masts of maritime wealth; restaurants mixing it with the great innovators of modern Spanish food; and endless acres of shopping.

Beyond Palma, Mallorca's capital and greatest asset, the Badia de Palma (Bay of Palma) spreads out in both directions: the flatlands to the east and the wrinkled hills that presage Mallorca's highest mountains to the west. These parts are also culturally uneven: one *cala* (cove) may be the mooring place of the super-wealthy; the next brilliant with neon, lighting the way for the young British and German funseekers that come here in droves.

## When to Go

Unlike the rest of the island, Palma's energy levels remain fairly constant throughout the year – most sights, hotels and restaurants remain 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.

## What's New

- ➔ Mercado Gastronómico San Juan (p69) Opened in 2015, this former slaughterhouse in Palma's northern suburbs has quickly established itself as a beacon of the city's ever-evolving food scene, bringing the best Mallorcan produce together in one place.
- ➔ Skybar at Hotel Hostal Cuba (p76) Yet another stunning vista of photogenic Palma has opened up, with the establishment of this cruisy rooftop hotel-bar.

## Palma's Patios

Few experiences in Palma beat simply milling around the backstreets of the city's Old Town, 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. *Patís* 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 still around 150 patrician houses with *patís* in Palma today, though most can only be observed through locked wrought-iron gates. 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. For a closer look, join one of the guided tours run by Mallorca Rutes (p68).

## Top Five Galleries

- ➔ Museu Fundació Juan March (p62) Contemporary art stars, including Mallorca's own Miquel Barceló.
- ➔ Es Baluard (p66) Picasso, Miró and fine city views at this gallery atop the Renaissance sea wall.
- ➔ Fundació Pilar i Joan Miró (p86) Total Miró immersion, with 2500 works on show.
- ➔ Centre Cultural Contemporani Pelaires (p62) In this fetching 17th-century building is Palma's first dedicated contemporary art gallery, still going strong.
- ➔ Palau March (p53) Paintings by Dalí and sculpture by Moore, Rodin and Chillida in an exquisite palace.

## Need to Know

- ➔ Many of Palma's big attractions close on Monday, including the Fundació Pilar i Joan Miró (p86) and Es Baluard (p66).
- ➔ Sunday closures include the Catedral (p51) and Palau March (p53).

## Getting There & Away

- ➔ Mallorca's international airport, Son Sant Joan, is in Ca'n Pastilla, just 8km from central Palma. From here, a taxi to the centre of town should cost less than €20, less again if you're headed to the eastern Badia de Palma, and €40 or more if you're bound for Magaluf.
- ➔ Bus 1 loops around Palma from the airport to Porto Pi on the western side of the city, while bus 21 heads east to S'Arenal. Both cost a flat €5.

## Resources

- ➔ **Ajuntament de Palma** (www.palmademallorca.es) The website of Palma's civil administration has information on most aspects of city life.
- ➔ **Consell de Mallorca tourist office** (www.infomallorca.net) Easily navigated, up-to-date and terrifically informative.
- ➔ **Visit Calvia** (www.visitcalvia.com) The lowdown on the resorts to the west of Palma, from Magaluf to Portals Nous.
- ➔ **EMT Palma public transport** (www.emtpalma.es) Allows you to see and search all routes and fares on the EMT network.