



AllWays Traveller

Palma, Mallorca, Spain

[www.allwaystraveller.com](http://www.allwaystraveller.com)

## Mallorca offers so much more than sun, sea and sangria

The Mediterranean island of Mallorca (in Spanish and Catalan) or Mallorca, as it is also known, is Spain's largest island.

It is an island of lush landscapes, mountain ranges, a stunning coastline and sumptuous beaches.

Its capital, Palma, acts as the capital of the Balearic Islands, which also takes Ibiza, Formentera, and Minorca.

The Balearics have been luring budget conscious, sun worshipping tourist since the first package holiday boom of the 1950s.

But while Mallorca may have begun its tourist life attracting 'sun, sea and sangria' seekers, the island has now developed its offering far beyond that.

In addition to the budget end of the market, which remains popular, there are many top notch hotels and villas and, for those seeking something more active, opportunities to enjoy the island's nature and wildlife on foot or by bike.

### Ashley Gibbins

The International Travel Writers Alliance  
[www.itwalliance.com](http://www.itwalliance.com)



[www.majorca-mallorca.co.uk](http://www.majorca-mallorca.co.uk)

## Palma

Finally, Palma is a vibrant, cosmopolitan city break destination in its own right and a fine base for touring the island.



## My first ever foreign holiday

by Ashley Gibbins



My first every foreign holiday was to Mallorca.

That said, it could have been any one of several dozen sun spots strung around the Med.

Like many other package holiday Brits, my aim was to get onto my stretch of beach as quickly as possible and stay there as long as the sun did.

And I can still recall (with some embarrassment) my delight at dieting on English breakfasts and fish and chips washed down with British beer.

Oh the shame of it.

## Determined to make amends

Returning to Mallorca, as an independent and, dare I say, more seasoned traveller, I was determined to make amends.



While I'm not adverse to a spell in the sun with a good book, I also wanted to see what else the island had to offer.

And so I divided my time into a three night city break in Palma with a stay in the small coastal resort of Illetas, some eight km from the city centre.

This gave me the best of both worlds and made me realise what I had been missing all those years ago.

## Palma



### Climate

Mallorca enjoys a Mediterranean climate, with hot, bright summers and mild winters.

### Language

The two official languages of Mallorca are Catalan and Spanish, although islands long-term dependence on tourism means English, French and German are spoken widely.

### Currency

Mallorca, as a Spanish island, is in the Euro zone.

### Cuisine

Mallorcan cuisine is a Mediterranean style with pork, lamb, vegetables, fish cooked in olive oil and homemade stocks often using ground almonds as a thickener for soups, stews and sauces.

Palma itself has a large and varied selection of places to eat with outside seating everywhere, which can be the best option given the climate and the smoking that is still allowed inside.

[www.theothermallorca.com](http://www.theothermallorca.com)  
[www.mallorca-restaurants-121.com](http://www.mallorca-restaurants-121.com)



## Palma de Mallorca



Palma, an unexpected pleasure, is all one could want from a city break destination - with a delightful climate thrown in for good measure.

As a commercial and cultural centre, Palma has a vibrant, bustling, cosmopolitan feel and offer all one could want by way of art galleries and museums, historical civic buildings, parks and gardens, and leisure, entertainment and retail outlets.

And the curving Bay of Palma on its doorstep.

And yet the city also has graceful charm and ambience that makes strolling around particularly enjoyable.

## Always look up

When doing so the trick, as in most cities, is to look above shop front level.

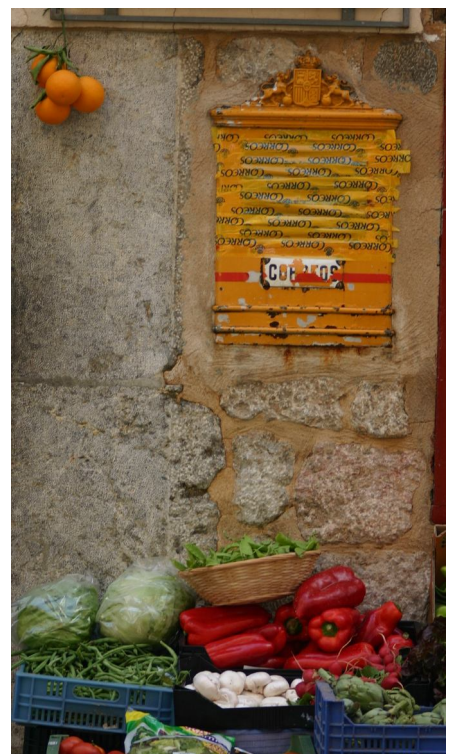


It is then one can truly appreciate the centuries of city living evident in Palma's architectural splendour.

From the architectural point of view, the magnificent Palma Cathedral La Seu has dominated the city vista and the lives of its citizens for over 500 years and remains Palma's premier tourist draw.

Spreading out from the cathedral are the old city walls, constructed in medieval times as protection from invaders and which can be walked to give a fine perspective of the old town contained within.

## Getting to Mallorca



Flights are into the very impressive Son Sant Joan International Airport.

I flew with EasyJet, which operates one of the best low cost services from many European destinations.

As with all low cost airline low cost means no frills and it is well worth taking the extra effort needed to make your flight as hassle free as possible.

Use the advance online checking if you can and spend that little extra on the speedy check in and boarding service.

[www.easyjet.com](http://www.easyjet.com)

## Accommodation



There is a real choice in and around Palma :

Palma de Mallorca Hotel Association :  
[www.visit-palma.com](http://www.visit-palma.com)



## Into the old town



Dropping down into the old town one finds a maze of winding streets and alleyways that provide for a meandering historical tour taking in churches, convents and town mansions in Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque style.

Needless to say, small clusters of cafes, bars or restaurants will appear with the next small square. This is particularly so as one hits the Placa Major – Palma's central square, which always throngs with tourists.

After dark, the emphasis shifts to the El Terreno district, when dozens of bars, restaurants and live music venues come to life until the early hours.

## Two great places to stay

As for accommodation I chose the Hotel Tres, in the very heart of Palma, and the Hotel Bon Sol at Illetas. This enabled me to enjoy two hotels that suited their surroundings perfectly while also offering genuine contrast.

### Hotel Tres



The 4 star boutique Hotel Tres, a member of the Small Luxury Hotels of the World, could not be closer to the very heart of Palma and is no more than a stroll to everywhere of interest.

With its cobbled side street location, the Tres enjoys a sophisticated serenity so suited to a relaxing retreat after a busy day's sightseeing.

The hotel is housed in a converted 16th Century merchant's house to which its Swedish owners have introduced modern sophisticated design and décor that is sensitive to the historic ambiance so evident throughout.

The rooftop deck and pool areas capture every last ray of the sun until late evening, and the hotel's worldwide clientele, makes conversations with fellow guests particularly rewarding.

[www.hoteltres.com](http://www.hoteltres.com)

## Other things to see and do in Palma



### Bellver Castle

The 14<sup>th</sup> Century Bellver Castle is unique amongst Spanish castles with its circular design.

Built as a royal hilltop fortress it has great views across the Bay of Palma.

### Palma Aquarium



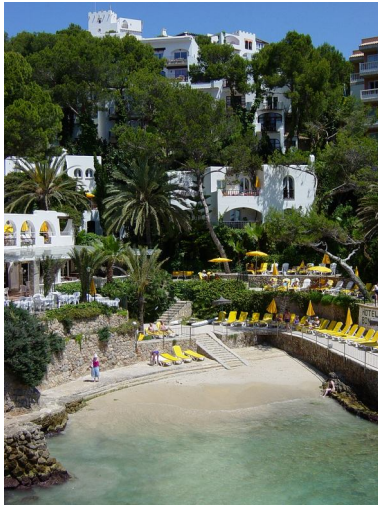
Palma Aquarium, one of the island's newest attractions, is a marine park that highlights life within the Med and the Indian, Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

The 55 aquariums have 8000 specimens from 700 different species in 5 million litres of seawater.

[www.palmaaquarium.com](http://www.palmaaquarium.com)

## Hotel Bon Sol

The cliff top Bon Sol, which is one of the finest and most unique of Mallorca's hotels, was also one of the island's first.



It began welcoming guests in 1953, when Antonio Xamena a Mallorcan patriot decided to invite guests into his home.

The venture prospered and, in addition to developing a lavish hotel, with private beach area and lush landscape, Senor Xamena stocked the reception and lounge areas and corridors with an extensive collection of antiques and works of art sourced worldwide.

Following in Antonio's footsteps, Martin and Lorraine Xamena, now run the hotel with a passionate dedication to service excellence.

The cuisine is exceptional, there is a luxury spa, three swimming pools and nightly entertainment and guests quickly become friends of the multi-lingual couple.

[www.hotelbonsol.es](http://www.hotelbonsol.es)

## Hotel Dalt Murada and Casa Padrina

You might also want to check out the Hotel Dalt Murada, a 16<sup>th</sup> century manor house offering classic rooms furnished with family antiques or its sister hotel the Casa Padrina.

[www.daltmurada.com](http://www.daltmurada.com) and [www.casapadrina.com](http://www.casapadrina.com)

## A day tip to Soller

For a really pleasant day out from Palma take the narrow gauge, vintage train to Soller, a small town in the Tramuntana mountains.

The one-hour trip leaves Palma from the rail station and winds through a landscape of orange, lemon and almond trees.

Once there visitors will focus the stay in and around the historic Plaça Constitució, the main square which is a buzz with cafés and restaurants.

There's the chance to hop on board the *Orange Express*, electric tram, for a 30 minute trip to the picturesque Port of Soller.

[www.sollernet.com](http://www.sollernet.com)

## The beaches

Although it is situated on the Bay of Palma, the city does not have its own beach.

For those wanting a trip to the beach, the traditional resorts of C'an Pastilla and Cala Mayor are approximately four miles to the east and west of Palma respectively.

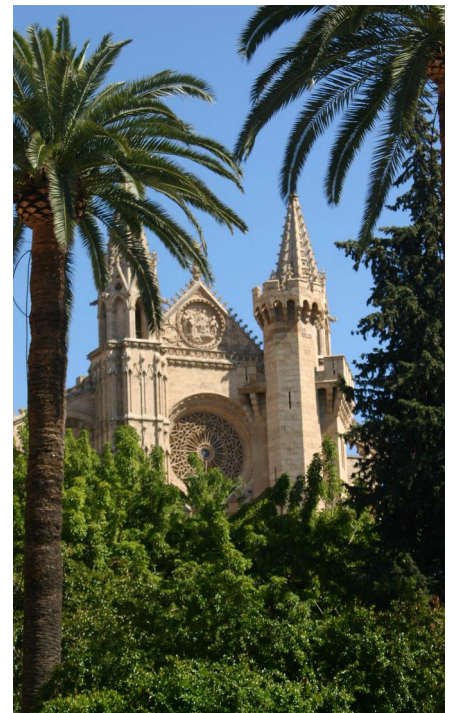
A good way to get to these is on two wheels along the specially designated cycle routes, that run from the city centre.

For a day's excursion the larger beach resorts of Magaluf and Palma Nova are further to the west of Palma with Puerto Pollenca and Alcudia on the north coast.

## Caves of Drach

Mallorca has some spectacular caves at various locations around the island.

The Caves of Drach (Coves del Drach) at Portocristo, with four spectacular chambers and thousands of stalactites, is the most popular.



## More information :

[www.majorca-mallorca.co.uk](http://www.majorca-mallorca.co.uk)  
[www.mallorca.world-guides.com](http://www.mallorca.world-guides.com)



## The International Travel Writers Alliance



### AllWays

[www.allwaystraveller.com](http://www.allwaystraveller.com)

AllWays is the consumer travel service from the International Travel Writers Alliance.

### The International Travel Writers Alliance

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London based, he travels widely in North America and has a particular fondness for the 'Sunshine State'.