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There are those who maintain that there is no such thing at all as the Balearic Isles. Nestling in the western Mediterranean, halfway between the Iberian Peninsula, the south of France and the north of Africa, the Balearic archipelago is made up of a string of islands which, while obviously forming a clear geographical entity, are marked by as many points of disparity as similarity. One of the reasons for these differences is doubtless due to the historical imprint that has been left engraved on each island: Ibiza, impregnated by a lasting Carthaginian and Moorish influence; Mallorca, heir to a pronounced Roman presence; and Menorca which to this day bears the traces of long years of English occupation.

The islands’ respective topographies are at once alike and different, as are the kinds of tourism they receive. The Mallorcan summer season is, in general, a more sophisticated and less tranquil affair than that of Menorca, while in Ibiza the accent is definitely on nightlife. Although such simplistic clichés are often rather casual with the truth, the above definitions contain an undeniable basis of hard fact.
The archipelago has become a tourist industry giant and the leading holiday destination in the western Mediterranean. The islands boast an excellent combination of elegant summer resorts, coves and beaches, to say nothing of the many fascinating places hidden away in the interior.

The Balearics are made up of three major islands: Mallorca, Menorca, Ibiza (Eivissa) plus Formentera, as well as numerous islets, the most notable of which is, without a shadow of a doubt, Cabrera, officially declared a Sea & Land National Park. Together, the islands cover a surface area of a little over 5,000 square kilometres and have 1,239 kilometres of coastline.

The Balearics, also formally known as Illes Balears, is an Autonomous Region with its own governing Authority. There are 17 such Autonomous Regions in Spain. The island institutions are the Balearic...
Regional Authority, the Balearic Parliament and the three island Councils, namely, those of Mallorca, Menorca and Ibiza & Formentera.

The larger islands are interconnected by plane and ferry, and a busy schedule of direct flights links each of their airports with principal destinations around Europe. Only Mallorca has a rail service, yet each island operates a comprehensive bus and coach network that puts all points within reach of public transport. However, most visitors to the archipelago favour car rental as their chosen form of transport.

The Balearic Isles have a permanent population of over 700,000, almost half of whom live in the capital, Palma. The city is situated 132 miles from Barcelona and 140 from Valencia, with daily plane- and ferry-services covering the crossing to and from the mainland. Ibiza and Menorca

Menorca. Cala Font harbour
have approximately 80,000 and 65,000 inhabitants respectively.

Although the islands enjoy a mild, classically Mediterranean climate, this is characterised by typically insular features, such as the high humidity. It is this factor that accounts for the marked differences in the seasonal temperature range. Temperatures vary from an average of around 19.5°C in spring, to 27°C in summer, 20.5°C in autumn and 15°C in winter. The annual average temperature for the group as a whole is in the region of 17°C, with negligible inter-island differences. Over the course of the calendar year, the Balearics enjoy something like 300 days of sunshine, a circumstance which makes them an especially attractive tourist destination for the inhabitants of Northern Europe, unaccustomed as they are to such conditions.

Fresh water was traditionally drawn to the surface by means of windmills, which stand silhouetted against the skyline, forming a characteristic island backdrop to irrigated farmland areas, particularly on Mallorca. This placid landscape, dotted here and there with windmills (now fallen idle), can still be seen in the Pla de Sant Jordi, Campos, Muro and sa Pobla districts.

The most developed industries in the Balearics and those having the greatest impact abroad are undoubtedly those engaged in the production of...
footwear, costume jewellery, furniture and cultured pearls, the latter two being chiefly concentrated in the Manacor district.

However, the revolution that has most profoundly affected the islands’ economic and social structures in the entire course of their history has come from the post-50s tourist boom. The vanguard of the current wave of tourists appeared in the 19th century, when eminent travellers, such as Georges Sand, Chopin and the Archduke Ludwig Salvator of Austria first visited Mallorca and, through their literary works, contributed to making the beauty of the island known to the outside world. Numerous European artists and writers were subsequently drawn to the islands and were struck by their evocative and varied scenery. Scores of travel books and a considerable number of paintings have not only immortalised the period but have come down to us as a testimony of that time.

Thanks to the clement climate, scenic beauty and special quality of light, the Balearic Isles were chosen by numerous writers, painters and artists of all kinds as the place where they could develop their art.

Conejera Island
form in an atmosphere of peace and quiet. In the title he gave to one of his works, Santiago Rusiñol referred to Mallorca as, La isla de la calma (Isle of Calm). It was in the fifties and, more particularly, in the sixties when the tourist boom really took off.

Apart from the standard hotel-type accommodation on offer, a complementary range of top-quality lodging has been developed -in the form of marinas, golf courses, country cottages and the like- which holds out the possibility of relaxing well away from the main tourist centres.

Despite the many buildings erected in recent decades to cater for the steady influx of tourists who arrive all year round, the Balearics preserve a rich store of traditional architecture, a legacy of their folk heritage. Mallorca, Menorca and Ibiza provide examples of an architecture which, though rooted in tradition, stems from diverse origins. Mallorca, altogether more seigneurial, presents dwellings whose layouts are reminiscent of the villas of classical Rome. Alongside these, the gleaming, whitewashed cubes of Ibiza recall the passage of the Carthaginians who, in their wake, left exotic-looking houses redolent with the feel and atmosphere of the towns and villages of North Africa. Menorca, for its part, conserves the indelible, unmistakeable stamp of British colonial rule (1713–1782).

Mallorca. Bellver Castle and the City of Palma
Mallorca, Menorca, Ibiza and Formentera

Each of the Balearic Isles has features that distinguish it from its neighbours and more than sufficient individual appeal to justify a visit. Mallorca, the largest, is home to Palma, Balearic capital and seat of the Regional Authority. Palma is a modern, cosmopolitan city, with its image as Spain’s summer capital reinforced and enhanced by the official presence, over the vacation period, of the Spanish Royal Family, as well as other leading figures in politics, culture and the performing arts.

Of all the islands, Mallorca is the one that offers most possibilities to the tourist. It enjoys a wide variety of scenery. In the Tramuntana Range, rising to its maximum height of close on 5,000 ft. in the shape of Puig Major, mountain scenery can be enjoyed at its purest. Situated in this, the steepest part of the island, are towns as picturesque as Valldemossa, Sóller and Deià. In addition to its rugged landscape, Mallorca’s northern corniche, carved and sculpted by a mountain range that parallels the coast for over one hundred kilometres, is the site of attractive coves and beach resorts, such as Cala de Deià, Port de Sóller, Cala Tuent and sa Calobra.

The hinterland, eminently agrarian, has little in common with the typically tourist image of the island and serves as a constant reminder of the reason for Mallorca’s being dubbed the “Isle of Calm”. As a result of having received far less tourist influence, this area is not only more given to conserving the old ways but is outstanding for the richness of its scenery and architecture. The south of Mallorca is more arid, and is home to some of the most beautiful of the island’s beaches, that of ses Covetes and es Trenc, as well as the beaches of Mondragó, Cala Figuera and Cala Santanyí.

Mallorca. Can Picafort
On the eastern coast of the island, apart from those calas (creeks or coves), such as Cala Mesquida, Cala Agulla or Cala Torta, that are still relatively unexploited, one can visit a series of impressive caves: Artà, in Canyamel; Drac, with its large subterranean lake; and Hams, in Portocristo.

Another of Mallorca’s main tourist areas lies along the sweeping bays of Alcúdia and Pollença that fringe the north-eastern shores of the island. One of the most important towns in this part is Pollença itself, popularised by artists and show-business celebrities. The town harbour, a favourite haunt among a more “select” set, is one of the most cosmopolitan meeting points on the island. Both the Cala de San Vicenç and the Formentor peninsula are “musts”.

A further tourist Mecca on this same north-east coast is Alcúdia, with the special attraction of its old town wall, the Roman city of Pollentia and well-preserved amphitheatre. The wide crescent of Alcúdia Bay is lined with a continuous stretch of beach, Can Picafort, Son Serra de Marina and the Colònia de Sant Pere being the bay’s most important holiday resorts. The area is also site of the s’Albufera Nature Reserve, one of five in the Balearics, namely: Mondragó, in Santanyí; sa Dragonera, in Andratx;
s’Albufera des Grau, on Menorca; and ses Salines on Ibiza and Formentera.

In terms of surface area, **Menorca** is the second biggest of the Balearic Isles. Despite its proximity to Mallorca, it possesses many distinctive and unique traits. It lies to the north-east of the group. Unlike Mallorca, it is devoid of any true highland area. Its one and only point of any height is Mount Toro which, situated in the centre of the island, rises to a mere 357 m. (just over 1,100 ft.).

By and large, the island’s north coast is a sharply indented line of cliffs, with pebbled beaches and reddish sands. The more regular south coast is made up of the so-called barrancos or ravines: these are wetlands which constitute microclimatic zones with well-defined fauna and flora, totally different from anything found on the rest of the island.

Throughout the length and breadth of the island, two schools of architecture are in evidence. On the one hand, there is the typically Mediterranean, whitewashed type of building, and on the other, buildings designed in the purest of English styles, a direct consequence of the different periods of British occupation.

Menorca possesses an invaluable archaeological heritage which has made it into
what is tantamount to an open-air museum. The three main types of prehistoric monuments are mausoleums (navetas), altar-like taules (or taulas), and dwellings and/or look-out posts (talaiots or talayots). The taules are the island’s landmark constructions, the significance of which archaeologists have thus far been unable to agree upon.

Mahón (Maó), the island’s capital, is located at the end of an extraordinary three-mile-long roadstead, regarded as one of the best natural harbours on the Mediterranean.

Ibiza, which together with Formentera forms the small Pitiúsal archipelago, is the Balearic Isle lying closest to the Spanish mainland. The city of Ibiza, the capital, is also popularly known by the name, Vila. It is perched atop a promontory that dominates the entire port. Rising above the Upper Town are the twin outlines of the Cathedral and Castle. Down below in the Lower Town are the sa Penya and sa Marina Quarters, bustling with the boutiques, restaurants and shops of all kinds that have made this the city’s nerve centre.

Towards the end of the sixties, Ibiza became famous thanks to the hippie movement, which endowed it with the status of a
counterculture paradise. Enduring legacies of this movement are the island’s ebullient festive side and the so-called “Ad Lib” fashion, a source of revenue and of an image projected to the world at large.

Dotting Ibiza’s shoreline are the beaches of Talamanca, Figueretes, platja d’en Bossa and platja des Cavallet, though the most famous beach on the whole island is, without a shadow of a doubt, the wide stretch of ses Salines, famed for being the first nudist beach in Spain.

The Santa Eulària des Riu area is another of the island’s holiday centres. The humped form of the Puig de Missa presides over the town, a town located on the one river (the Balcar) in the entire Balearics group.

Sant Antoni de Portmany is second only to the city of Ibiza as the most popular and lively place on the island. In sharp contrast, the north coast, known as els Amunts, is practically virgin and has scarcely any towns or villages. This coast is rugged and sheer, and offers few points of access.

**Formentera**, viewed by some as the last bastion of earthly paradise on the Mediterranean, is solely accessible by ferry from Ibiza. It is a tiny island with an area of less than eighty square kilometres, separated from Ibiza by a distance of just 11 miles. Apart from the two rocky promontories of La Mola and Cap de Barbaria, it is practically flat and has just one town, that of Sant Francesc de Formentera. Owing to its small size and fine sands, Formentera is a magnet for tourists seeking escape and tranquillity. Fortunately, it has grown in harmony with the surroundings and its own resources, and has succeeded in maintaining a balance between modernity and tradition.
Getting around

Most tourists visiting the Balearic Isles arrive by plane. Each of the three major islands, Mallorca, Menorca and Ibiza, is served by an international airport, linked by direct flights to Europe’s main capital cities. Palma Airport, Son Sant Joan (☏ 971 78 90 99), is not only the biggest locally but one of the chief tourist airports in Europe. It lies eight kilometres from the city centre. There is a bus (No. 17) to the airport every 20 minutes from the Paseo Mallorca.

Should travellers decide to go to Mallorca by ship, the Trasmediterránea ferry line runs a scheduled passenger service (☏ 902 45 46 45). From Palma, ferries run regularly to Mahón, Ibiza, Valencia and Barcelona. There are only two railway lines in the Balearics, both on Mallorca. One is privately owned and links Palma with Port de Sóller (☏ 971 75 20 51). It is a quaint electric train which relies mainly on tourists visiting Sóller. The second is the Inca railway, the last of a once extensive network of trains that connected many of Mallorca’s towns.

Coaches and rental cars are the most usual means of transport for tourists visiting the islands. Tariffs are very economical and there is a wide range on offer.

The Balearics are covered by comprehensive network of roads. Three toll-free highways lead from Palma, to Palmanova, Cala Blava and Inca respectively.
MALLORCA

Itinerary 1: Palma, Andratx, Estellencs, Banyalbufar, Esporles, Palma

This route follows the Palma-Andratx highway (PM-1) as far as Andratx, where one takes the C-710 to Banyalbufar, and thence on to Esporles and back to Palma via the PM-10 and PM-12. The excursion involves a roundtrip of approximately 70 kilometres.

For hundreds of years the name of Andratx was associated with fierce resistance to Mediterranean pirate raids and a steady stream of migration to the West Indies. The most interesting aspects of the town are the alleys and lanes in the es Pantaleu Quarter, the Gothic-style church with its single aisle and the commanding view from the cemetery.

Estellencs, with its steep streets, is perched on a cliffside to the west of the crags of Puig Galatzó. It

Andratx
overlooks a picturesque cove. **Banyalbufar** (from the original Arabic, Ban-al-bahar) is situated on a terraced hillside, amidst irrigated fields and orchards. The town has several defensive towers, the most notable being the Talaia (watchtower) de ses Ànimes, known as the Mirador (belvedere) de ses Ànimes, from which the entire northwestern coast of the island can be seen. Nearby are a number of pebbled coves and inlets. **Esporles.** In the vicinity of the town, a visit can be paid to the Granja d’Esporles, a mansion-cum-ethnographic museum open to the public (971 61 00 32). Though originally a Cistercian monastery, the Granja later became a stately home, which nowadays displays an interesting collection of farm implements, utensils and artifacts connected with rural life on Mallorca.

**Itinerary 2: Palma, Valldemossa, Deià, Sóller, Palma**

The Valldemossa-Sóller route is one of the most popular among tourists to Mallorca. Leaving Palma in the direction
Moragues, Son Gual, sa Coma and Son Mas. A narrow winding road takes one to the Trinitat Hermitage and Port de Valldemossa. By turning off the access road to the Port, one reaches Caló de s’Estaca, an old fishing village. **Sóller** sits encircled by mountains, in a valley basin planted with fruit trees, orange orchards and olive groves. Close by, the Puig Major massif, the highest point on the island, raises its head. The town boasts a number of palatial 18th- and 19th-century mansions.

Flanked by its graceful belfry rebuilt in the 18th century, the reconstructed façade of the parish church is emblazoned with the seal of the school of the architect, Antoni Gaudí. A delightful, old-fashioned tram ride takes one down to the natural anchorage of Port de Sóller, the town’s outlet to the sea.

Deià
Itinerary 3: Palma, Inca, Pollença, Alcúdia, Palma

From Palma to Inca, the route to take is the PM-27 highway. The road into Alcúdia, the C-713, is the continuation of this same highway.

Inca is the main town in the Raiguer district. Bordered by the Tramuntana Range and the Pla district, it embraces towns and villages scattered over the island’s central plain. The “Dijous” market, the most important in the area, is held on Thursdays, while the second Thursday in November heralds in the “Dijous Bo”, a country fair that brings together people from all over the island. The footwear produced hereabouts has brought the town international renown. Visitors are urged to taste a local favourite, the savoury oval-shaped biscuits (a distant relative of the traditional ship’s biscuit) known as galletes d’Inca. Though Gothic originally, the Church of Santa María la Major (St. Mary Major) was transformed into a Baroque edifice in the 18th century. The cloister of Sant Francesc is Baroque and the Sant Domingo monastery has a Baroque portal. The Puig de Santa Magdalena, four kilometres outside Inca, is an old chapel built atop the 1,000-foot outcrop of the Puig d’Inca

Pollença, situated at the foot of the Tramuntana Range, is dominated by two hills, the

Pollença. Cala Figuera
Puig de Pollença and the Calvari (literally, calvary). It is the birthplace of the poet, Miguel Costa i Llobera. A stroll through the town’s streets brings to light several stone fountains, a charming parish church, the Roser Vell Oratory and the Baroque Monastery of Santo Domingo (St. Dominic’s), with its impressive cloister, 16th-century retable and 18th-century Valencian organ. On the town’s outskirts is a well-preserved Roman bridge. A curious sight is the Calvari hill, which one ascends via a long, cypress-bordered stairway of 365 steps. Only five kilometres from Pollença is the tranquil resort of Port de Pollença, with its small beach and select tourism. 

Alcúdia lies at the base of the peninsula separating the Bays of Pollença and Alcúdia. Local highlights include the nearby ruins of Pollentia, the small amphitheatre, and the remains of the town wall with its three gates. The parish church houses the Chapel of the Santísimo Sacramento (Holy Sacrament), with two interesting retables, one Gothic, the other Baroque. Near Alcúdia is Port d’Alcúdia, with its albufera marshland area, the island’s main stretch of wetlands and an officially designated Nature Reserve (971 89 22 50).
Itinerary 4: Palma, Algaida, Sineu, Manacor, Cala Rajada, Palma

The Palma-Cala Rajada road (C-715) traverses the whole island and opens out an excellent range of possibilities for the tourist. In Algaida, make sure to take the branch road to Sineu (PM-313), particularly if it is a Wednesday, the day on which the town’s picturesque weekly market is held.

Algaida is a stone’s throw from the Puig de Randa, the tiny village of Randa and the oratory of Nuestra Señora de Gracia (Our Lady of Grace), dating from the 15th century. At the top of the Puig, from which the view is simply breathtaking, stands the Cura Monastery (Santuario Monasterio de Cura), where Ramón Llull, the 14th-century philosopher, theologian, mystic and father figure of Catalan culture, wrote some of his works.

Sineu is undoubtedly the most interesting town in the central part of the island. It was in Sineu that King James (Jaume) II ordered a Royal Palace built, a palace of which very little now remains. The town is the site of the majestic Church of Santa María, with the Lion of St. Mark presiding over the stairway. Sineu is a town of great elegance,
notable for its seigneurial houses, famous Wednesday livestock market and cellers (wine-cellar-type bistros) offering tasty regional cooking. **Manacor** is one of the island’s industrial centres, with the emphasis on furniture, cultured pearls and objects carved from olive wood. Local buildings of note are the Gothic parish church, parts of which were reconstructed in the same style in the 19th century, and the town hall, housed in an old 17th-century monastery with a stunning cloister. **Artà.** The considerable number of archaeological sites, of which the settlement of ses Païses is the outstanding example, bears eloquent testimony to Artà’s rich past. The Artà Museum is definitely worth seeing (📞 971 82 95 95). Another sight to be recommended in the town, situated in the Llevant district 63 kilometres from Palma, is its medieval walled fortress, known as the Almudaina, complete with crenellated ramparts. Inside awaits St. Saviour’s Church (Santuario de Sant Salvador) and, in the old town at the foot of the walled hilltop, are the archaeological museum, the cloister of the 17th-century Sant Francesc monastery and the parish church, built in 1563. Points of interest along the coast include the Colònia de Sant Pere and the beaches of Cala Torta, sa Canova, es Matzocs and es Caló. The local fiestas held in honour of St. Anthony (Sant Antoni) on 17th January are famous, and feature bonfires, cavalcades and processions. **Cala Rajada** was one of Mallorca’s pioneer tourist resorts. Despite the sweeping changes seen in recent years, this town of seafarers and fisherman has lost none of its old-world charm. This part of the coast marks the point where Mallorca is the shortest distance from the neighbouring island of Menorca. It is well worth calling ahead in order to arrange a tour of the March family mansion (📞 971 56 30 33).
MENORCA

Itinerary 1: Mahón, Binibèquer, Cala en Porter, Alaior, es Mercadal, Monte Toro, Fornells, Mahón

In and around Mahón, one should take time out to visit the impressive natural harbour, as well as the Binibèquer and Cala en Porter residential developments. Inland, Alaior, es Mercadal (C-721) and of course Mt. Toro, are all worth the trip. The point to make for in the north is the portside town of Fornells (C-723).

Binibèquer Vell is the best-known tourist resort on the Sant Lluís coast. It was designed along the lines of a small fishing village. Nearby are the beaches of Binisafúa, Binidali, Biniparratx and Cala Torret.

Cala en Porter is one of the most popular beaches along Menorca’s southern coast and is the site of a major resort and residential area. From the sea, one can spy Cova den Xoroi, high up in the cliffs and now converted into a discotheque, the cave that -legend has it- was once the haven and hideout of a shipwrecked buccaneer.

Alaior was founded in 1304
by James II. Points to see here are the parish Church of Santa Eulàlia (17th century) and the former cloister of the Church of San Diego (17th century), with the quadrangle known as es Pati de sa Lluna (Courtyard of the Moon). Of equal interest is Casa Salort, a noble mansion on the calle Mayor (calle, street). Alaior lies 12 kilometres from Mahón and its dairy industry is the source of most of the brands of cheeses sold under the Mahón seal of origin. Aside from the numerous villas, outstanding sights in the locality include the Hermitage of Sant Llorenç de Binixems, the prehistoric settlement of Torre d’en Gaumés, the Megalithic burial site of Roques Llises and the Palaeochristian Basilica of Son Bou.
Rising from **es Mercadal** are the slopes of Mt. Toro (just over 1,100 ft.), the highest elevation on Menorca. The town is situated at the island’s geographic centre, midway between Mahón and Ciutadella. It is renowned for its food and for producing the well-known “albarques”, the shoe typical of Menorca.

**Fornells.** Lying just eight and a half kilometres off, this small fishing harbour falls within the es Mercadal municipal area. The village originally grew up in the shadow of the 17th-century Castle of San Antonio, and the single factor responsible for its greatest growth has been tourism. Not to be missed here are the restaurants serving the typical caldereta de langosta (caldereta de llagosta - lobster stew made with peppers, onion, tomato, garlic and herb liqueur).

**Itinerary 2:** **Ciutadella, Ferreries, Cala Galdana**

**Ciutadella,** Menorca’s former capital, is an ideal “base camp” for a number of side trips. The C-721 leads to

*Ciutadella*
Ferreries and, from here, one then takes the PM-714 to Cala Galdana, the chief tourist resort in the area.

**Ferreries**, at roughly 462 ft. above sea level, is the highest town on Menorca. Grouped around the Church of Sant Bartomeu (1870) are the town’s oldest buildings. Aside from Cala Galdana, the municipal boundaries encompass the beaches of Cala Calderer, Cala Moragues and Cala del Pilar. On the Santa Agueda hillside lie the ruins of the Moorish Castle of Sent Agayz, and the remains of an old Roman road. **Cala Galdana** is Ferreries’ tourist resort par excellence, though part of the development actually extends into the Ciutadella municipal area. Curving along the river mouth at the point where it opens out from the Algendar barranco, this is one of the most popular beaches on Menorca. Cala Mitjana and Cala Trabalúger are also in the vicinity.
**IBIZA AND FORMENTERA**

**Itinerary 1: Ibiza, Santa Eulària, Portinatx, Corona, Sant Antoni, Salines**

The entire isle of Ibiza can be toured by taking a route that leaves the city of Ibiza and circles back, after visiting the most important towns, Santa Eulària and Sant Antoni de Portmany, plus Portinatx beach, the Corona country district and the area of saltpans and saltmarshes.

**Santa Eulària des Riu.** After Sant Josep de sa Talaia, Santa Eulària des Riu lays claim to the largest municipal area on Ibiza. Until a few years ago the Santa Eulària river ran for a distance of 11 kilometres. Local sights include the Roman bridge and ruined necropolis. One should climb the Puig de Missa on foot, right to the summit where the starkly white 16th-century fortress-church stands.
Portinatx, formerly a small fishing village, has become one of Ibiza’s tourist landmarks. The coast along this particular stretch of shoreline is sheer, making approach difficult. Nearby, Cala Xarraca is outstanding. The best panoramic view of Portinatx and the adjacent coast can be enjoyed from the Port de Portinatx Tower. The Pla de Corona is not only one of the island’s most fertile regions but is also one of the remaining strongholds of rural Ibiza, with relatively few buildings and a population that is mainly composed of smallholders. The village of Santa Agnès de Corona (Ibiza villages are in truth more a collection of houses grouped under the umbrella of the local parish church) is representative of a number of rural parishes scattered about the island.

Sant Antoni de Portmany is Ibiza’s second largest town in terms of population and the chief leisure and entertainment centre on the island. It embraces the parishes of Santa Agnès de Corona, Sant Mateu d’Albarca and Sant Rafel de Forca. To the Moors it was Portumany and to the Romans, Portus Magnus. Located on a bay of the same name, it is an important terminal for ferries plying between Ibiza, Formentera and Denia (on mainland Spain). Its 14th-century parish church warrants special mention. The beaches on the west of the island are extremely popular: Cala d’Hort, Cala Tarida, Cala Llantia, Cala Llosar, Cala Codolar, Cala Roja, Cala Comte, Cala Bassa, Cala Salada and Cala Gració.
Ses Salines lies in the environs of the airport. This area is an important nesting and stopover site for migratory seabirds, water fowl and waders. The salt pans and marshland are separated from the sea to the south, east and west by a system of beaches of local chalkstone and sand.

Itinerary 2: La Savina, Sant Francesc de Formentera, es Pujols, La Mola.

The Isle of Formentera is perfect for touring by bicycle. The distances and the climate not only make this possible but positively encourage it.

Formentera is the smallest of the Balearic Isles (82 sq. km.). Sant Francesc de Formentera is the only town on the island and acts as the focal point and hub for the four areas of settlement: Pilar de la Mola, es Pujols, Sant Ferran de ses Roques and la Savina. Situated near Estany Pudent, halfway between la Savina, the island’s sole port facility, and Sant Ferran, practically all official services are concentrated here.
In the olden days, the Church of Sant Francesc was used as a fort to fend off marauding corsairs. **Es Pujols** is the main tourist resort on the island, home to the majority of hotels and nightspots. The **Pilar de la Mola** is the highest point on Formentera, the ancient Frumentaria of the Romans. Before reaching the Pilar, a panoramic view of the entire island opens up, with the beach of Migjorn on one side and es Pujols, on the other.
City visits

(Palma, Mahón, Ciutadella and Ibiza)

Palma

The Balearic capital is set along a bay 20 kilometres across and 25 kilometres long. Half of Mallorca’s population lives in Palma, a name already given to this city by the Romans as long ago as 120 B.C., when they founded it on a hilltop dominating the bay. All that remains of the Roman Palma are some remnants of the walls in the Almudaina. In the 10th century, the Moors placed a curtain wall around Medina Mayurka, the city that the Catalan troops of James I the Conqueror were to take in 1229. The new victors translated the place name and called the city, Ciutat de Mallorques. They main Moorish buildings were razed to the ground and the Gothic Cathedral erected. Then, in 1715, under the terms of the Nueva Planta Decree, the Catalan place name was formally banned and, in its stead, the Roman “Palma” restored.

Travellers arriving by sea get a superb vista of all the “musts”: Bellver Castle, sa Llotja (old commercial exchange), the Almudaina (the old Citadel) and the Cathedral. The whole route should be done on foot. Hardly any distance at all separates the

Palma. Cathedral and Almudaina (fortress/residence)
The Cathedral (971 72 31 30) stands on the site of the former Moorish mosque. Gothic in style, work on its construction began during the reign of James II, with the building being finally consecrated in 1601. In addition to the church itself, there is a fine Baroque cloister and an interesting Cathedral Museum, displaying excellent Gothic paintings and sculptures.

Opposite the Cathedral, just across the Plaza de l’Almoina, is the Almudaina (971 71 43 68). Nowadays the H.Q. for the Balearics Military High Command, it began life as an alcázar (fortress/residence) of the Moorish Walis’ Caliphate (11th-13th centuries) before being converted into a palace by James II (14th century).

The Mallorcan Museum (971 71 75 40), housed in the what was formerly the Desbrull mansion, and the 10th-century Moorish Baths (Banys Arabs) - the best preserved remains from Mallorca’s Moorish period- form part of the Cathedral Quarter. The courtyards (patios) of Palma’s old seigneurial mansions are in a class of their own.

Sa Llotja (971 71 17 05), a veritable masterpiece of Mallorcan civic Gothic, served as the seat of the governing body of the Merchants’ Guild, as well as the site of the old commercial exchange. These days it occasionally acts as a hall for temporary exhibitions. Adjoining the sa Llotja, is the Maritime Consulate (Consolat de Mar), which nowadays houses the Balearics Regional
Authority. The Maritime Consulate (17th century) was originally a Merchant Shipping Tribunal which settled commercial and trade-related disputes. The façade is notable for its superb Renaissance arches.

The City Hall (Ayuntamiento) (☎ 971 72 77 44) is a fine example of Mallorcan Baroque and one of the city’s landmark buildings. Popularly known as the Cort, it was built on the site of what had been a hospital. The present structure dates from the 16th and 17th centuries and is spectacular for its façade. Inside, visitors are limited to those parts of the building that are officially open to the public.

The Church of St. Eulalia, in the square at the rear of the City Hall, was the first Christian church built in Palma and is a good instance of Catalanian Gothic. Sant Francesc, Santa Clara, El Socorro, Sant Miquel and Monti–Sion (on the site of an old synagogue) are further churches of note in the Old Quarter.

Highlights in the newer parts of the city include the modernist buildings on the Plaza Weyler, particularly the Gran Hotel, now restored and refurbished as the head office of the La Caixa Foundation (a Catalanian savings bank).
and, in its time, the first hotel ever built in Palma. It’s an easy walk from the City Hall, via the Plaza Mayor (Main Square).

Bellver Castle was constructed in the 13th century at the time of James II and, though never used as a defensive stronghold, served as a prison in different periods. It is the only building which is not within easy walking distance of the city centre. From October to March it is open to the public from 8 a.m to 6 p.m., and from April to September from 8 a.m to 10 p.m. The Castle overlooks the El Terreno Quarter and the Bay of Palma. (☎ 971 73 06 57).

Mahón

The origins of the capital of Menorca are somewhat cloudy but tradition attributes the foundation of the first settlement to the Carthaginian general, Magón, brother of Hannibal.

Mahón lies at the innermost end of one of the world’s largest natural harbours. With its three-mile long channel and a width that ranges from 780 to 2,600 feet, it is one of the key strategic points on the Mediterranean. As with Mallorca, the Mahón city tour should be conducted on foot: all points lie close to one another and can be seen during the course of a leisurely stroll.
A sight not to be missed is the Church of Santa María, with its splendid organ. This is Mahón’s largest church and its sturdy bell tower is a distinctive silhouette on the city’s skyline. Inside, one of its outstanding features is the 19th-century organ, which has been roundly praised for the power and quality of its sound.

The noble edifice of the City Hall (Ayuntamiento) (971 36 98 00) lies adjacent to the church. It is also known by the name, Sa Sala, and on its façade still conserves the clock brought to Menorca at the behest of Kane, the then British Governor.

During office hours, visitors are allowed into certain parts of the building; be sure to try and see the Great Hall that is reserved for plenary sessions, its walls hung with portraits of Mahón’s most illustrious sons.

The Carrer Nou pedestrian precinct, to which one gets from the City Hall, is one of the city’s busiest sections. Of special tourist interest here are the shops selling traditional Menorcan produce and wares, such as cheese, gin, costume jewellery and footwear.

Great part of Mahón’s daily life revolves around the Colón, Bastió, Sant Francesc, Reial, Miranda and Conquesta squares (plazas), with their elegant bourgeois mansions and historic buildings.

In the port area be sure to visit the distilleries that make Menorcan gin, using the very same methods followed under British rule. Also in this area are

Mahón. Stately mansion in Plaza del Príncipe

Mahón. San Roque Gate
some of the island’s best restaurants, plus a score of nightspots, open-air cafés and bars where one can have a drink at any time of the day or night.

Ciutadella

Ciutadella had always been the capital of Menorca until the British, who held sway over the island during the major part of the 18th century, moved the capital to Mahón. The city lies 45 kilometres from Mahón and is still the official seat of the Menorcan bishopric. It is well worth visiting the Old Quarter, with its medieval streets and noble palaces. As with the other Balearic cities, Ciutadella has to be seen on foot. The best advice is to lose oneself in the maze of narrow lanes and alleys criss-crossing the Old Quarter. Among the chief sights to be seen are:
The **Olives Mansion**, with its severe Neoclassical façade, is located right opposite the main door of the cathedral. On display inside are some interesting frescoes bearing animal motifs and a Roman statuette unearthed at the Pujol Antic archaeological site on the island.

The **Vivó**, along with the Salort Mansion, overlooking the Born, has a Neoclassical façade painted red with traditional Menorcan motifs. It is one of the city’s hallmarks.

The **Salort Mansion**, near the Cathedral, is the only house open to the public, though access is restricted. It is open during the morning over the summer months. The entire building is a museum that is worth exploring.

The **Palace of the Count of Saura**, also near the Cathedral, is graced by one of the most beautiful façades in Ciutadella. Although visits are not allowed, from the street one can hazard a pretty accurate guess at the interior beauty of this building, last refurbished in the 17th century.

From the **look-out point**, situated behind the City Hall, one is treated to a magnificent view of the harbour area.
Ciutadella Harbour is no more than a deep creek that penetrates into the very heart of the city. It is nevertheless of sufficient depth to accommodate deep-draught vessels.

The Born, with an obelisk at its centre, was formerly the plaza de armas (i.e., main ceremonial square and gathering place in times of upheaval) and is now the venue for a number of public events during the year, the most memorable of which are the fiestas and daring equestrian displays held to mark St. John’s Day (San Juan).

The Cathedral is regarded as the most monumental church on the island. Historians tell us that the Menorcan cathedral was constructed on the site of a mosque bigger in size than that of Medina Minurka, and that the only extant remains are to be found in the belfry, the erstwhile minaret. The church, Catalanian Gothic in style, possesses a single spacious aisle and six side-chapels.

One of Ciutadella’s most typical sights is the calle Josep Maria Quadrado, with its arcades, known locally as Ses Voltes. It is this feature that lends the common touch to Ciutadella’s noble architecture, which tends to abound in convents, monasteries, churches and palatial mansions.

St. Clare’s Convent (Santa Clara) stands in the centre of a charming quarter of cobblestone alleyways, and today hardly retains anything of the original building, which was sacked by the Ottoman Turks in the 16th century.
The cloister of the **Church of Socors** is another of the city's highlights. By going up the calle Castell Rupit and keeping to the Seminary wall, one comes out at the point where the building stands on the calle Santissim. Originally an Augustinian monastery, the cloister -one of Ciutadella's truly unique gems- was built using money raised by the friars from the sale of noble titles which they had procured from Philip IV.

As regards fiestas and festivities, Ciutadella reigns supreme. Menorca’s most classic fiesta is the city’s annual celebration held on 23rd and 24th June to mark St. John’s Day. In a 600-year-old tradition, medievally clad riders and their mounts pick their way through the thronged streets, going right in amongst the crowd, the pirouetting steeds being urged up onto their hind legs (the Jaleo). In the immediate locality of Ciutadella, one can visit the beaches of Cala Santandria and Son Saura, as well as the famous Megalithic mausoleum of Naveta des Tudons, just five kilometres outside the city limits.
Ibiza

The capital of the Pitiuses Islands (Ibiza and Formentera) preserves many vestiges of its past. By the 6th century B.C., it was already a very important Phoenician-Punic colony for its time. From Carthage’s point of view, the city was a strategic base from which it could dominate the Mediterranean.

The necropolis of Puig des Molins is a clear example of this pinnacle in the city’s early history. As its name (i.e., “Puig”) indicates, the site is situated on one of the city’s high points and the mills (i.e., “molins”) refer to flour mills that existed in the area during the last century. Close on 4,000 tombs dating from the Punic and Roman periods have been found on the site of the necropolis.

Ibiza’s historical Old Quarter and main sights are centred in the Upper Town (Dalt Vila), declared a World Heritage City by the UNESCO, where one can visit the Archaeological Museum (☎ 971 30 17 71), with its extensive collection of Punic and Phoenician exhibits. The usual way into the Upper Town.
is through the so-called Portal de ses Taules, one of the gates of the walled Renaissance citadel which once served as a fortress. Located inside the walls are most of Ibiza’s interesting buildings and the tour ought therefore to be done on foot.

The outstanding feature of the **Episcopal Palace**, which stands on the Cathedral Square, is its splendid door. On payment of a small entrance fee, the Cathedral may be visited during the following times: summer, 10 a.m.- 7 p.m.; winter 10 a.m.- 4 p.m. In harmony with the remainder of the island, the Cathedral is sober in style. Visitors should see the adjoining Cathedral Museum,
where the prize piece is the monstrance (custodia), a work of art wrought in precious metals.

The Castle or Almudaina marks the city's highest point. From the sea it rivals the Cathedral in prominence, with its stout defensive walls and original old keep, probably Moorish in origin. The whole was gradually built over the period from the 6th to the 18th centuries.

The City Hall (Ayuntamiento) (☎ 971 39 75 00) is housed in the Predicadores Monastery, a building affected by the disentailment and sale of church property. Restored and adapted to new needs, it too is worth seeing.

In addition to the stately mansions, the Church of St. Dominic (Sant Domingo), the seminary and narrow lanes leading into the Old Quarter are all “musts”.

From the Dalt Vila, one gets a superb view of the port below, with the old and very typical sa Penya Quarter in the foreground, the perfect place for a relaxed exploratory stroll.

Also near the port is the Paseo de Vara de Rey, the very heart of city life. From here one continues down to the harbour. Almost half the island’s entire population live in this one city. The rest of the inhabitants are divided among the four remaining towns.
Leisure and entertainment

Golf
The Mallorcan winter has recovered the former splendour of that distant age when it attracted the first visitors to the island. The Balearics’ many golf courses have made the islands a truly privileged place to play the game. The negligible travel time separating Mallorca from any point in northern Europe has served to dispel any possible doubts golfing enthusiasts might otherwise have had when opting for one of the islands’ 14 available courses.

Horseracing
Yet, if a tourist really wished to immerse him/herself in local colour and atmosphere, there’s no doubt that he/she should make a beeline for any of the racecourses on Mallorca, Menorca or Ibiza where harness or sulky races are held, a type of racing that is extremely well established in the islands. Races are usually run on the weekends. The Balearics enjoy a long tradition of horsemanship and visitors wanting to go riding will find that most of the main tourist areas have innumerable ranchos (stables) with horses for hire.

Sailing
Sailing is, without doubt, the one sport that has truly rocketed in popularity in recent years. Dotted along the Balearic shoreline, there is a plentiful supply of sailing clubs and yacht basins offering a comprehensive range of services, apart from the standard facilities of yacht berth and hire. Furthermore,
marinas and pleasure harbours are, as often as not, a home base for scuba-diving schools, which are in heavy demand.

**Aquataparks**

Aquataparks have become an interesting and very successful attraction, especially among young children. Aqua Park in Magaluf and Aqua City in s’Arenal, are two of the biggest. On the Sant Llorenç des Cardassar coast, sa Coma is home to a car safari park, that is open all year round (971 81 09 09). Animal lovers can also visit Marineland, with its unforgettable show, featuring trained dolphins, seals and parrots (971 67 51 25). It is situated in the Calvià district in Costa d’en Blanes, adjoining the beach.

**Entertainment**

Palma, Mahón and Ibiza, the respective capitals of the trio of main islands, tend to account for the lion’s share of cultural activities. Of the three, Palma offers by far the widest choice. Eleven cinemas, one of which screens films in the original version, plus more than five theatres, ensure a varied bill that is rounded off by a considerable number of art galleries, exhibition rooms and a lively programme of lectures and cultural events.

**Nightlife**

Island nightlife positively hums with possibilities, depending only on individual preferences and tastes. The resort areas suffer no shortage of discotheques and nightspots. The pace is not quite as frenzied in the cities, though clubs and bars can be found open at any time of day or night.

**Menorca. Ciutadella. Marina**

**Ibiza. San Rafael. Sulky racing**
Local cuisine
In any corner of the Balearic Isles one will have no trouble in finding restaurants specialising in international cuisine, yet it is somehow more difficult to come across good restaurants serving up the superb specialities of island cuisine. With its inevitable local peculiarities, Balearic cooking is a reflection of Mediterranean cuisine. In addition to the succulent sobrasada (a spicy red sausage spread made of finely minced raw meat, cured and seasoned with paprika and cayenne pepper), pork is the basic ingredient for many of the principal dishes. Along with the ensaimada (a sweet, magically fluffy, half-bun half-pastry with a flattened coiled turban-like shape, made from flour and saïm or lard), Mahón cheese and mayonnaise (the original salsa mahonesa) are just some of the delicacies of an island cuisine which is also rich in spirits and liqueurs, with pride of place going to palo (a drink resembling vermouth, made from the carob bean), the local gin, a range of sweet and dry herb liqueurs, and, last but not least, the Ibizan frígola.

Among Balearic cuisine’s classic dishes, special mention should be made of the Mallorcan soups (sopas mallorquinas) which, far from being of the consommé type, are a nourishing blend of meat and a variety of vegetables in season, plus thinly cut slices of (brown) bread, onion and tomato. Another very tasty item is tumbet, a ratatouille-like baked vegetable dish, usually cooked in a greixera (casserole) and containing potatoes, fried peppers and aubergines (eggplant), all covered with tomato sauce and seasoned with bay leaf. This can be accompanied by meat or fish. Rice dishes with fish (brut) are also much appreciated. Yet the simplest and perhaps most popular dish is pa amb oli, which consists of several slices of bread generously sprinkled with olive oil and rubbed with tomates de ramillete, these being a smaller, softer and riper variety of tomato, bound together and sold in strings. Once prepared,
this bread can then be used as a base for the widest variety of toppings, though the most usual are cheese, sausage meats and ham, always accompanied by the traditional bitter olives (trencades).

**Fiestas and festivities**

The single most outstanding event in the Balearic festive calendar is the St. John’s Day (St. Joan) Fiesta in Ciutadella. This is the Menorcan fiesta par excellence. The remaining celebrations involving horses and horsemanship might be similar, yet not one attracts as much attention or boasts the character or tradition of the Sant Joan Fiesta, which must rank among the most colourful and eye-catching of all those held in Spain.

Of uncertain origin, the summer feast days celebrated in Menorca star horses and riders in the leading role. Ciutadella’s St. John’s Day celebrations, held on 23rd and 24th June, open the cycle of summertime festivities in Menorca. While the fiesta has undergone many transformations, its wellspring is said to be religious.

It should be remembered however that the fiesta calendar involves all the months of the year. In Mallorca, the St. Anthony bonfire festivities in mid-January are very popular. Over Easter, many religious activities take place in all towns on the islands and, in the days following Holy Week itself, pilgrimage excursions are organised to nearby hermitages and shrines. In summer, practically all towns in the Balearics celebrate their seasonal fiestas. On Christmas Eve, churches on the island of Mallorca respect the ancestral tradition of singing the *Sibil.la* at midnight mass.

*Menorca. Fiestas*
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