



Menorca

With its hidden coves, golden beaches, historic culture and first-rate restaurants, Menorca has all you need for a laid-back sun and sea break

The crescent-shaped island is the second largest of the Balearic chain and boasts almost as many beaches as the rest of archipelago put together.

Most of the popular resorts are scattered along the sheltered south and west coasts.

On the windswept north side of the island, the beaches are more secluded and the landscape more dramatic. A British heritage of grand houses and fortresses can be found around Mahón, Menorca's capital, while the city of Ciudadela retains much of its Spanish baroque character.

The island's interior is littered with the remains of Bronze Age monuments and villages that are well worth exploring.

GETTING THERE

Direct flights by airlines to Menorca are served by many UK international airports. Flight times are around three hours.

Airlines include

Easyjet www.easyjet.com

Monarch www.monarch.com

Thomsonfly www.thomsonfly.com

XL Airways www.xlairways.com

THINGS TO SEE AND DO

The well-maintained and quiet roads make driving in the Menorcan countryside trouble-free – the only problems we encountered were the one-way system and parking in Ciudadela. For cheap car-hire deals try a price comparison website such as www.travelsupermarket.com. Menorca's topography is flat or gently undulating

making this an ideal terrain for cycling. Many of the larger resorts have bike-hire outlets (around €15 a day). For further transport details go to www.visitmenorca.com.

Reaching the smaller, undeveloped coves can mean crossing private land and landowners usually charge €6 per car.

THINGS TO SEE AND DO

Ciudadela | Museu Municipal

Bastió de sa Font, Plaça de sa Font s/n 07760, Tel 971 380297

Housed in part of the old city fortification, this small museum has a well organised collection of Menorcan Bronze Age relics.

Admission €2.20

Ciudadela | Museu Diocesà de Menorca

C/ Seminari, 9, Tel 971 481297

An eclectic mix of Menorcan treasures, ancient and modern, is arranged chronologically around the cloister of the former enchanting baroque convent.

Admission €3

Mahón | Museu de Menorca

Avinguda Doctor Guàrdia s/n 07701

Tel 971 350955

Peel back the layers of Menorcan history and make sense of the prehistoric or talayotic sites littered around the island.

Admission €2.40 Free: Saturdays

6pm-8.30pm, Sun 10am-2pm



Outside Mahón - Es Castel | Fort Marlborough, Cala de Sant Esteve Tel 902 929 015

Take a spooky and informative tour of this 18th-century fort built into a hill by the Duke of Marlborough to protect Mahón harbour.

Admission €3

Talayotic sites

These prehistoric sites are mostly dotted around the southern side of the island. Some, such as the Naveta des Tudons, cost a few Euro (admission to the naveta site costs €2), while others, such as Torre Trencada and Torre Llafuda, are free.

GOOD PLACES TO STAY

Hotels along the coast vary in quality and are pricey, while a few miles inland they can be more luxurious and better value. Prices are for the cheapest room (B&B) unless otherwise stated. The dialling code for Spain from the UK is 0034.

Cala De Santa Galdana | Hotel & villas d'aljandar

Tel 971 154500

www.hotelcalagaldana.com

Close to the beach, cafes and shops this modern hotel has a large palm-fringed pool facing the road. Inside, the tastefully furnished bar and restaurant extend to a wide canopied poolside terrace. Bedrooms are decorated in uniform yellows and blues. Front facing rooms on the upper floors have sea views. Disabled access: lifts. £90

LEFT The upturned boat-shaped Naveta des Tudons, a T-shaped Talayotic stone column

For the full magazine report on Menorca,
see p48 of the May 2008 issue of Which? Holiday

Cala De Santa Galdana | **Flora Mar** (aparthotel)

Tel 971 154512, www.comitashotels.com

The pool at Flora Mar is high on a cliff edge terrace that has a bird's eye view of the cove far below. Clean and functional studios and apartments are positioned around what feels like miles of open-sided lofty passageways with two neat courtyard gardens at their base. A large restaurant serves reasonable meals. Disabled access: not suitable for wheelchairs. **£55 Breakfast not included**

Ciudadela | **Hesperia Patricia**

Tel 902 397398, www.hesperia.com

If modern and minimalist decor is your thing, Patricia won't disappoint. Close to the highly ornate baroque centre, there is a refreshing lack of clutter in rooms adorned with modern practical furniture. Bedrooms are comfortable and smart, and all come with a bath. There is a small pool in a courtyard terrace. **£96** Disabled access: lift

Ciudadela / Cala Morell | **Biniatram**

Tel 971 383113, www.biniatram.com

Surrounded by countryside and little else, this traditional farmhouse is the place to unwind and let the world outside get on without you. Secluded it might be, but Biniatram is only two miles from Ciudadela and less than a mile from the sea. Should you want a cool dip on the spot though, there is a large inviting pool set within an expansive planted terrace. A converted stable houses the timber-beamed breakfast room and spacious bedrooms are large and tastefully furnished. Disabled access: ground floor rooms. **£75**

Fornells | **Hostal Fornells**

Tel 971 376678, www.hostalfornells.com

A tiny façade just off the main square belies the hotel's large interior. The lobby connects by staircase to the bar and lounge, which in turn extends to a long courtyard garden with a swimming pool. Bedrooms are large and white and have inset balconies. Those on the second floor have views across the rooftops to the sea. Disabled access: lift. **£45**



Mahón | **Del Almirante**

Also known as Collingwood House

Tel 971 362700, www.hoteldelalmirante.com

This sumptuous 18th-century mansion is located a mile from the town centre and sits just above the bay. It is surrounded by shady gardens and a pool, with sun terraces to the rear of the hotel. Bedrooms are furnished simply but with style. Disabled access: not suitable for wheelchairs. **£63**

Mahón | **Mirador des Port**

Tel 971 360016, www.hoteles-catalonia.com

Tucked behind this sizeable edifice is a secluded palm-fringed garden with a pool at its centre. The dining rooms and bar are pleasant and the bedrooms, although scuffed in places, are attractive enough. The best rooms facing the port come with balconies or terraces. Disabled access: lifts. **£78**

San Luis | **Biniarroca** (outside Mahón)

Tel 971 150059, www.biniarroca.com

Loaded with character, Biniarroca's reputation for fine dining and comfort goes before it, this hotel is also the best of the bunch that we visited. Two walled gardens are packed to the brim with flowering shrubs and trees and there is also an elegant pool. Inside rustic meets smart when rough stucco walls are juxtaposed with the formality of the lounge and restaurant. Bedrooms are individually designed. Disabled access: one wheelchair-modified room. **£111**

San Luis | **Son Tretze**

Tel 971 150943, www.amaca.com

This extensive low-slung 18th-century farmhouse is behind the town's windmill, just off the town centre. At the front a small courtyard doubles up as a car park, while behind the house a large garden has a pagoda-style summerhouse next to the pool. The lounges and breakfast room are stylishly decorated and bedrooms with

balconies are luxurious yet homely. Menorcan dishes are served in the restaurant (see good places to eat and drink). Disabled access: ground floor rooms. **£88**

PLACES TO EAT AND DRINK

Ciudadela | **Café Balear**

Port de Ciudadela, Tel 971 380005

The succulent fish and seafood dishes and the lively sociable diners seated alfresco along the harbour front make a dining experience here unforgettable. The menu is in Spanish so bring a dictionary if you're unsure of the language – or just point and hope. Venus clams (almejas de Venus) followed by Angler fish (Rape) costs €36, a bottle of house white (Raimat) costs €15.

Fornells | **Es Cranc Pelut de Menorca**

Calle Escolles 31, Tel 971 376442

Arguably the best restaurant in the village, Es Cranc is off the seafront restaurant zone 300 yards uphill from the village square. The cosy restaurant is simply furnished with chunky wooden tables and chairs on a terracotta tiled floor. The menu offers a variety of seafood dishes, but the house speciality is the lobster stew (Caldereta de langosta €70, for two people).

Mahón | **Sesforquilles**

Rovellada de Dalt 20, Tel 971 352711

This tiny first-floor restaurant is handily above a tapas bar. So after a drink you can nip upstairs to the simple rustic dining room for something more substantial. A three-course meal of Iberian ham, roast Menorcan lamb and apple tart costs €47. Wine from €12.50.

San Luis | **Son Tretze**

Binifadet 20, Tel 971 1509430

The stone-exposed unfussy dining room is pleasant, but eating under the stars in the pretty garden terrace is the place to enjoy a romantic meal. A three-course meal of Carpaccio of cod, a shoulder of lamb and mama's chocolate truffles comes to €40.

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Language Catalan and Spanish, English

is generally spoken in the main resorts

Time difference UK + 1 hour

Dialling code 0034

Money matters £1 = €1.28

When to go All year

GUIDEBOOK AND WEBSITE



■ **Berlitz Holiday Map Menorca**, (ISBN 978-981-246-667-9)

■ **The Rough Guide to Mallorca & Menorca**, £10.99, (ISBN 1-84353-796-6)

■ Spanish tourist office, www.spain.info



Prehistoric sites visited by bicycle