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THE ISLAND, TOWNS AND VILLAGES

Menorca is divided into eight municipalities. Of these, only Maó and Ciutadella have more than 10,000 inhabitants. Although the island is small, its towns and villages have markedly different characteristics that all add to its attractions. Here they are.

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COVES & BEACHES

THE WHITE AND BLUE ISLAND

Menorca's extraordinarily beautiful, high-quality coves and beaches are one of its main attractions. The island's commitment to sustainability, which has earned it Biosphere Reserve status, has helped preserve a coastline which offers a wealth of amazing contrasts and a rich biodiversity.

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COVES
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TALAYOTIC MENORCA

WORLD HERITAGE

Menorca has a great many outstanding prehistoric landmarks, in a surprisingly good state of repair and this has led the island to bid for Talayotic culture to be awarded UNESCO World Heritage status. Do you want to know how people lived on this small Mediterranean island 4,000 years ago? Well we'll tell you about it here.

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THEMATIC ROUTES

MUSEUMS, FORTS AND LIGHTHOUSES

Countless sites and landmarks bear witness to Menorca's rich history and culture. If you want to gain a greater insight into its past and present, you can't miss out on a visit to the island's main museums, castles and other fortresses, as well as the other buildings that lend its coastline a special unique charm: the lighthouses.

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THE LIGHTHOUSES ON MENORCA

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ACTIVE TOURISM

**CAMÍ DE CAVALLS | HICKING | SIGHTSEEING
BY BIKE | WATER SPORTS | ...**

Menorca has a great deal of potential for sports that bring you into contact with nature. Its main selling point is, unquestionably, the sea, where you can enjoy all kinds of water sports. But it isn't the only one. Further inland, the island offers a wealth of natural features and an extensive network of paths that criss-cross the landscape which are perfect for hikers and cyclists. → P. 261 | P. 318

GASTRONOMY AND CUISINE

Menorcan gastronomy draws on a repertoire of simple recipes using humble ingredients, which offer a wealth of flavours and dishes resulting from the use of locally sourced produce and austerity dictated by difficult times. The underlying influences of other cultures can also be seen in a cuisine that is making great strides in terms of fostering new concepts and nurturing new talents.

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CAMÍ DE CAVALLS | HICKING

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MEDITERRANEAN PARADISE

Menorca covers a surface area of almost 700 km², making it the second largest of the Balearic Islands. Although it bears many similarities to Mallorca and the Pitiusas Islands, it also offers countless contrasts that underscore its uniqueness, not just in the Balearic Sea but throughout the Mediterranean Basin. The excellent state of conservation of Menorca's landscape and biodiversity, which earned the island Biosphere Reserve status in 1993, coexists with a rich historic and cultural heritage whose jewel in the crown is a series of late-prehistoric sites. Unlike other tourist destinations, the smallest of the Balearic islands has avoided the impact of urban development and, with few exceptions, most of its land mass survives intact.

Large areas of fields, fertile ravines and woodland combine with unspoilt coves and beaches to create the image of one of the few remaining Mediterranean paradises. An island that has evolved on its own terms, unlike the others in its group, because it opened up to tourism at a later date and, above all, because of the close relationship between its people and the land.

Situation: north-eastern Balearic Islands
Surface area: 701.80 km²
Population: 95,000 inhabitants approx.

COUNTRY AND SEA

Two seemingly contrasting islands coexist on a small land mass that is barely 50 km long from east to west and 20 km from north to south: rural Menorca and coastal Menorca. The former safeguards ancestral traditions and customs; the latter is more open because it has come into contact with tourism and outside influences.

These deep-seated differences haven't prevented the countryside and sea from growing closer every day. The reason for this is the influence of the tourism industry which plays a central role in spite of the fact that, for many years, Menorca was the Balearic Island with the most diverse economy due to the importance of agriculture and livestock farming, the food and agriculture industry, the footwear and leather goods in-



Caló Blanc. The water quality along the Menorcan coast is excellent.

MENORCA BIOSPHERE RESERVE

THE SUSTAINABLE ISLAND

Menorca has a rich and varied landscape in spite of its small land mass of barely 700 km². This makes it a unique place in the middle of the Western Mediterranean. This is due to the great contrast between its geological features and, in turn, the effects of the climate, the sea and human activity. The island of Menorca doesn't only have a unique landscape; it also has a wealth of natural features that are representative of most of the Mediterranean ecosystems and, as a result, of the flora and fauna associated with them. However, it must be borne in mind that some species have evolved differently due to the isolated conditions inherent to an island territory.

The unique landscape and natural resources, together with their excellent state of conservation in a heavily populated area, earned it the distinction of Biosphere Reserve in 1993.





▲ ▼ The characteristic patchwork landscape on Menorca in spring



NATURAL WEALTH

Menorca has a rich and varied biodiversity representative of many of its surrounding ecosystems, although it does have its own distinctive flora and fauna that make it unique in the Mediterranean Basin.

The fact that most of the island's natural systems are in such rude health is proof of this. This is the case, for instance, with the ravines which have great ecological value – the ones at Algendar (p. 122/270), Binigaus (p. 117/272) and Cala en Porter (p. 208) are among the most important – and the caves which provide unique habitats for several bat species. It also has important wetlands and coastal lagoons, including Albufera des Grau (p. 25), Prat de Lluriac and Son Bou, streams, temporary ponds and even salt flats.

Other natural systems worthy of special attention are dunes and the sea bed, which are more likely to be affected by human activity, and the cliffs, coves, beaches and islets, such as the Illa de l'Aire (p. 89) and the Illa d'en Colom (p. 156).

THE FLORA

Menorca's geographical location, in a transitional zone between Southern Europe and North Africa, is a decisive factor in its high plant biodiversity. The flora at higher levels consists of more than 1,300 predominantly Mediterranean species, 7% of which are endemic or, in other words, only found on the island and the Balearics.

The climax communities, which are best adapted to Menorca's environmental conditions, are ilexes (*Quercus ilex*) and wild olive trees (*Olea europea* var. *Sylvestris*), although a decline in their numbers has meant they have been replaced in some locations by other species, such as the white pine (*Pinus halepensis*).



Balearic bee orchid (*Ophrys balearica*)



Prickly pear (*Opuntia ficus-indica*)



Daisies (*Bellis perennis*)

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CALA PREGONDA

One of the jewels of the Menorcan coast and, arguably, the Mediterranean. This coastal enclave has a special magic of its own. This is largely due to the whimsical interplay of colours created by the clays and other reddish materials as they interact with the orange hues of the volcanic rocks and turquoise blue of the sea which is seldom found in the north of the island. The beach is sheltered from the tramontana by the breakwaters opposite which are also a great place for watching birds and marine life.



Cala Pregonda
40.0569, 4.0414
Platja de s'Alairó
40.0547, 4.0437
Calesmorts
40.0527, 4.0488
Cala Barril
40.0625, 4.0287
Cala en Calderer
40.0558, 4.0160



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S'ALAIRO

This cove with its deep ochre-coloured sands is, in fact, an extension of Cala Pregonda which it bears many similarities to. There are lovely peaceful bathing areas at the far-right end, away from the crowds.

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CALESMORTS

Calesmorts is a beach of coarse sand and shingle seldom used by bathers. You'll find it on the way from Binimel·là to Pregonda.



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CALA BARRIL

If you continue along the bridle path, the Camí de Cavalls, from Cala Pregonda, you'll come to Cala Barril, a small, secluded cove of coarse sand and boulders which two streams flow into. You can see the Bledes Islands opposite.



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CALA EN CALDERER

You can reach Cala en Calderer on foot from Cala Barril. It is a small cove with coarse sand which is embedded into a steep stretch of the northern coastline. Cala Moragues follows on from here.



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CALA EN PORTER

The mouth of the Cala en Porter ravine has lush vegetation. The steep cliffs make this sea inlet into a coastal site of great beauty. It is similar to other coves and beaches in the south of the island, and has abundant plants at the back, calcareous walls with fairly steep sides and a bank of fine, light-coloured sand which extends to the seabed, resulting in the turquoise colour that is so typically Menorcan. The beach stands at the foot of the village resort of the same name.



Cala en Porter
39.8700, 4.1322

COVA D'EN XOROI

The tall cliffs to the east of Cala en Porter preserve an ancient legend deep inside. It concerns Xoroi, a man who came to Menorca by sea, maybe following a shipwreck, and lived in this grotto for many years with a young peasant girl and their children. The grotto now houses Menorca's most famous discotheque, the Cova d'en Xoroi, which is one of the most-visited places on the island. Its main attraction: the spectacular views of the Mediterranean.





▲ Naveta des Tudons ▼ Cala Morell



A UNIQUE LANDMARK

In October 1960, the Ministry of Education awarded a grant of 29,999 pesetas for the restoration of the Naveta des Tudons. The project was headed by the archaeologists Lluís Pericot and Maria Lluïsa Serra. The naveta became one of the first tourist landmarks on Menorca. There are others on the island but this is considered "The Naveta", because it was the first to be discovered, the largest and most monumental in scale, and in such a good state of repair.



NAVIFORM SETTLEMENT OF CALA MORELL

This settlement dating from the naviform era (1600-1050 BC) stands on the Coll de Cala Morell, a rocky promontory that juts out far into the sea. A wall demarcates the remains of 13 naviforms or naveta dwellings which had an elongated-horseshoe floor plan with a fireplace in the middle. The fact that they were built using small stones rather than the cyclopean technique is particularly surprising.

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NAVETA DES TUDONS

Municipality: Ciutadella
How to get there: Me-1 road, 40 km
Parking: Large capacity
Owned by: Private concern
Managed by: Consell Insular de Menorca

The Naveta des Tudons is the most iconic talayotic monument. This is because it is in such an excellent state of repair and is a unique type of tomb. This burial naveta was built using the cyclopean technique, which was typical of prehistoric times on Menorca, and consists of a passageway leading into a lower and upper chamber. The bones of 100 individuals were found inside, together with burial objects and small ceramic vessels containing offerings. The naveta was excavated and restored between 1959 and 1960 under the supervision of Lluís Pericot and Maria Lluïsa Serra.



Naveta des Tudons

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CALA MORELL NECROPOLIS

Municipality: Ciutadella
How to get there: Cala Morell housing development. Road from Ciutadella to Cala Morell
Parking: Designated
Owned by: Ciutadella City Council
Managed by: Consell Insular de Menorca

The Cala Morell housing development is home to one of the greatest archaeological treasures on Menorca. The 17 caves dug out of the rock were used from the Middle Bronze Age until the 2nd century AD, and make up one of the most imposing necropolises from Menorca prehistory. Some of the largest have columns reminiscent of taulas and finely crafted doorways. One of them even has a relief sculpted like a cornice similar to the ones found in Punic necropolises.



Cala Morell



Punta Nati

geology, flora, fauna and cultural heritage (p. 248).

PUNTA NATI LIGHTHOUSE

Municipality: Ciutadella
 Situation: Punta Nati
 Location: Far north-west
www.farsdebalears.org

The shipwreck of the French steamer *General Chanzy* in 1910, in which 156 people died, was the catalyst that prompted the authorities to construct a new lighthouse on the northern coast. The 19-metre-high tower at Punta Nati, was built in just over a year on the north-west tip of Menorca in Ciutadella. As in the case of Favàritx, the light from this lighthouse can be seen for 16 nautical miles.



Sa Farola

SA FAROLA LIGHTHOUSE

Municipality: Ciutadella
 Situation: Northern tip of Ciutadella harbour
 Location: West
www.farsdebalears.org

The Ciutadella lighthouse, known popularly as Sa Farola, began working in 1863. It stands 21 metres above sea level and lights up a 14-nautical-mile stretch. It was the first lighthouse on Menorca to run on electricity. The waves breaking on stormy days made it necessary to build a wall to protect the site.

ARTRUTX LIGHTHOUSE

Municipality: Ciutadella
 Situation: Cap d'Artrutx
 Location: Far south-west
 There is a restaurant in the former lighthouse keepers' quarters.
www.farsdebalears.org

The Artrutx lighthouse is situated on the south-west tip of Menorca.



Cap d'Artrutx

Opened in 1859, it is the second oldest lighthouse on the island after Cavalleria. However, it has undergone subsequent renovations since. The height of the tower was increased by another 17 metres in 1969, making it 34 metres high. This made it necessary to reinforce the structure with external buttresses and gave rise to the current unique appearance of the lighthouse.

ILLA DE L'AIRE LIGHTHOUSE

Municipality: Sant Lluís
 Situation: Illa de l'Aire
 Location: South-east
www.farsdebalears.org

Opened in 1860, the Illa de l'Aire was the tallest lighthouse in the Balearic Islands until the Moscarter de Eivissa (Ibiza) lighthouse came along in 1977. However, at 35.3 metres, it continues to be the tallest tower built of stone. For



Illa de l'Aire

further information about the Illa de l'Aire, go to the section 'Coves and Beaches' (p. 217).

SANT CARLES LIGHTHOUSE

Municipality: Maó
 Situation: Southern tip of Maó harbour
 Location: East
 Because of its location inside the grounds of the castle of Sant Felip (p. 252), access to the lighthouse is restricted.
www.farsdebalears.org

Located at the southern end of the mouth of Maó harbour, the Sant Carles lighthouse has gone through a thorough refit since it opened in the middle of the 19th century. In fact, little is left of the original structure. Demolished in 1917, it was replaced with a 10-metre-high concrete tower.