



PALMA DE MALLORCA

SPAIN

Mallorca is the largest of the Spanish Balearic Islands in the Mediterranean and is located just off the east coast of Spain. The island is approximately 50 miles wide and 60 miles long and boasts over 250 miles of coastline, marked by a series of small caves and beautiful beaches. Palma de Mallorca is the capital city of the Balearic Islands and nearly two thirds of the total population live in Palma. This number is greatly increased in the spring and summer by tourists and cruise ship passengers as the island is a favorite European resort.

The city lies on the bay and those lucky enough to arrive by water will enjoy an impressive first view with the white circular battlements of Bellver Castle sitting on a raised hill, over-looking the bay and the famed gothic cathedral standing out against the horizon with the ancient Almudaina Palace beneath.

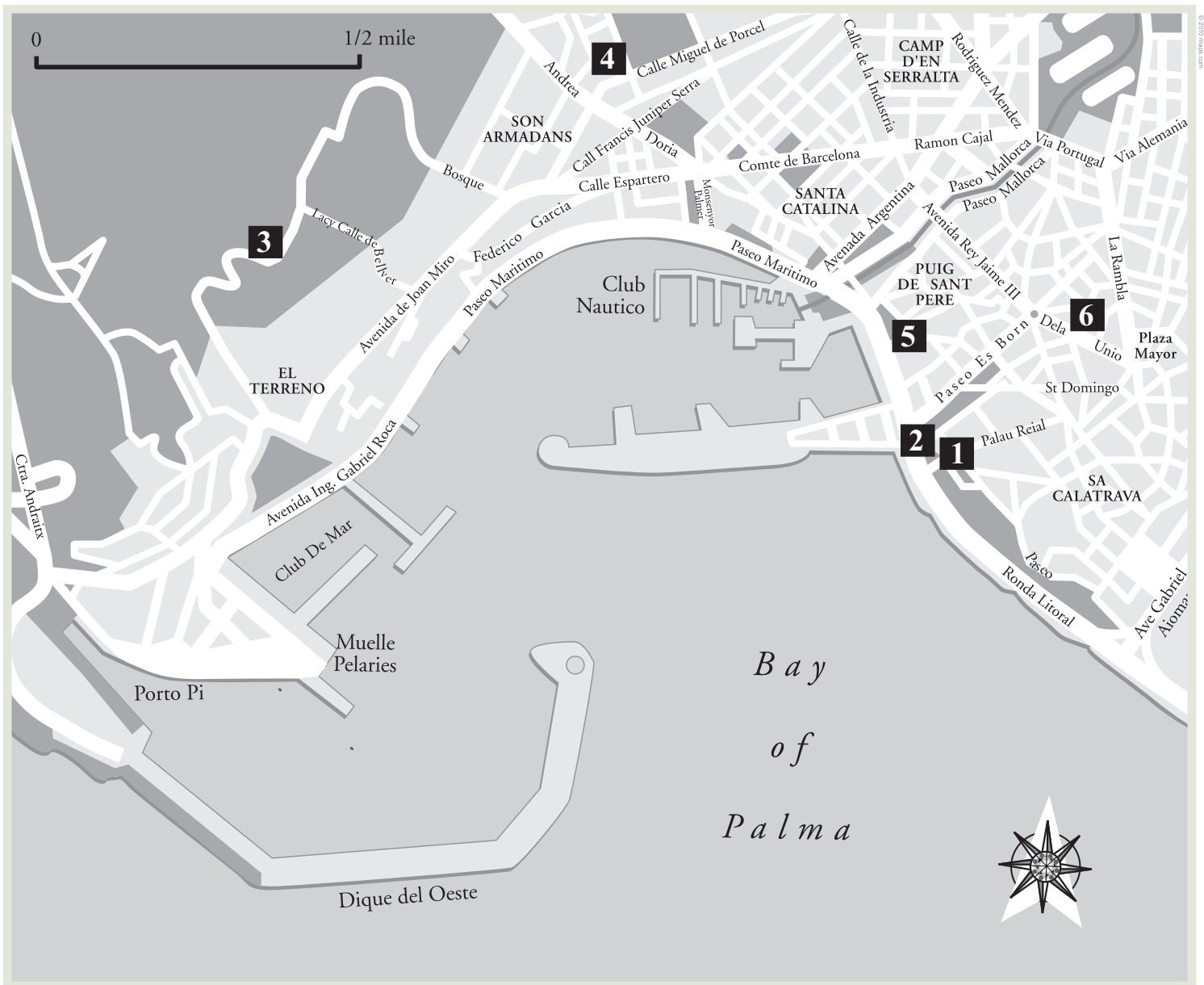
The old quarter of the city is full of palatial medieval structures dating from the 17th century. One of the most interesting areas to visit for both history and architecture is the Pottella Quarter situated directly behind the cathedral. Modern Palma also offers everything you are likely to want, from big city shopping to sightseeing and amusements. The island has been the home of some famous people including; George Sand and Frederick Chopin, Archduke Luis Salvador of Austria and more recently, Michael Douglas.



HISTORY

The origins of the Balearic Island civilization lie in prehistoric times. Mysterious, massive stone monuments dating as far back as the 13th century B.C. can still be found on some parts of the island. These stones are believed to have had some military or religious function during the period of the Talaiot culture. Romans conquered the islands in 123 B.C., naming Palma, "Palmera" for the many palm trees present. The Roman influence waned in the 4th century A.D. after Mallorca had become the granary of the empire. Arabic culture came next and has left its mark on the life of the islands. In 1229 the forces of King Jaime I of Aragon regained the islands and Mallorca was then declared an independent christian kingdom.

During the 14th and 15th centuries, Mallorca enjoyed commercial prosperity as part of the rich Spanish Empire. The 19th century brought benefits with the industrial Revolution, and the increase in commercial traffic incorporated Mallorca into a modern economy. Nowadays, in addition to the bustling tourist trade and port activity, farming is the chief occupation and the island grows vast amounts of almonds, olives, figs, citrus fruits and grapes for the production of local wines. Although some of the once deserted beaches have become the site of plush residential complexes, Mallorca still has many quiet corners waiting to be discovered.



PALMA PLACES OF INTEREST

1 Cathedral, located on the Mirador, is a massive 13th century gothic structure. Known locally as La Seo, it is well worth a visit to view the beautiful stained glass windows and the world's largest rose window. Inside the cathedral is a fascinating museum displaying artifacts from the cathedral's history. Entrance to the cathedral is through the museum.

2 Palacio Almudaina sits opposite the cathedral, on the site of an old roman citadel and is a former arabic fortress, once used as a residence for the moorish kings. It was later rebuilt and used as the residence of the first kings of Mallorca. Still used by the spanish royal family for civil functions, it has a wing open to the public containing historic exhibits.

3 Bellver Castle lies 1 1/2 miles from Palma and is a fine example of medieval military architecture. Situated in picturesque Parque Bellver, it contains a museum with many interesting objects on display. The view from the battlements is magnificent and well worth a visit.

4 Pueblo Español, approximately 1 mile from the city center, is a noted tourist attraction with examples of spanish architecture from different areas and time periods. There is also a modern festival hall and auditorium as well as various craft shops and restaurants.

5 La Lonja, a 15th century structure built to house a Merchant's Exchange, is considered one of Spain's finest secular gothic buildings and is now a museum of balearic art.

6 Fundacion de Caixa, located in the old Gran Hotel at Plaza Weyler, is a newly opened museum run by a private foundation.

Beyond Palma

Manacor, in the heartland of the island, is the capital city for man made pearl factories. Several have viewing rooms to see the making of the famous pearls as well as sales rooms.

Caves of Drach (Caves of the Dragon) are on the far side of Mallorca, approximately 43 miles from Palma, and contain marvelous stalactite and stalagmite formations, and a large underground lake from which a sound and light show is staged.

Valldemosa, located approximately 12 miles north of Palma, is a small tranquil village with a gothic church, a carthusian monastery and a museum which features the place where Frederick Chopin lived during the winter of 1838-39.

SHORE EXCURSIONS

To make the most of your visit to Palma and surrounding areas we suggest you take one of the organized Shore Excursions. For Information concerning tour content and pricing, consult azamarclubcruises.com or contact the onboard Shore Excursion Desk. When going ashore, guests are advised to take with them only the items they need and to secure any valuables.

LOCAL CUSTOMS

Bargaining: Shop prices are fixed and bargaining is usually only acceptable at flea markets.

Tipping: A service charge is generally included in restaurant bills, however, taxi drivers will usually expect a little extra.

LOCAL CUISINE AND DRINK SPECIALTIES

Seafood is featured in many of the local specialties; try Espinigada, a pie topped with eel and spinach. Sausages are also popular, particularly Sobrasada which is bright red and made from pork and red peppers. Sopa Mallorquina is a selection of fried vegetables in a meat stock, served over thin slices of bread. Tumbet is a variation of Ratatouille; aubergines, peppers, tomatoes and potatoes fried in olive oil.

There are a number of good Mallorcan red wines available as well as three locally produced herb-based liqueurs. Hierbas Seca and Hierbas Dulce are aniseed flavored and Palo is made from crushed carob seeds. Bottled water is recommended.

SHOPPING FACILITIES

The main shops are located on Paseo Es Born, Avenida Rey Jaime III and at Plaza Mayor. Paseo Es Born forms the hub of the City, like a huge Plaza this wide, tree-lined street provides the ideal setting in which to relax at a side-walk cafe and watch the world go by. Avenida Rey Jaime III joining the top of Paseo Es Born, offers a more exclusive selection of shops.

Mallorca is known for leather products, particularly shoes, artificial pearls and hand-crafted glassware.

Some stores may accept U.S. Dollars, most accept major credit cards. There is reputedly a 10% discount offered to tourists, it is advisable to check with the merchant.

Value Added Tax (VAT), is added to most purchases. Visitors who spend over a certain amount may be entitled to re-claim some or all of the tax paid, however, regulations and conditions governing the refund of VAT are subject to change and RCCL cannot guarantee the cooperation of local authorities.

LOCAL CURRENCY

The unit of currency in this port of call is the euro. There are 8 euro coins denominated in 2 and 1 euros, along with 50, 20, 10, 5, 2, and 1 cent pieces. Every euro coin carries a common European face. On the obverse, each Member State decorates the coins with their own motifs. No matter which motif is on the coins they can be used anywhere inside the Member States. There are 7 euro notes. In different colors and sizes, they are denominated in 500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10, and 5 euros. The notes are uniform throughout the euro area; unlike coins, they have no national side. All euro notes are legal tender in all countries of the euro area.

There are plenty of Exchange Bureaus and Banks located throughout the City. The Spanish word for Exchange is 'Cambio'.

POST OFFICE AND TELEPHONE FACILITIES

The main Post Office is located on Calle Constitucio off Paseo Es Born.

