

The best MARCO POLO Insider Tips

Our top 15 Insider Tips



INSIDER TIP ➤ Sundays in

Santa Maria del Camí

Stroll through the *organic market* on Sunday morning before enjoying one of the luscious desserts at *Celler Sa Sini* → p. 97

INSIDER TIP ➤ Epicurean merienda

A sumptuous *pa-amb-oli* plate in a new oil mill might just be a snack for the locals, but it makes a good lunch for visitors → p. 81

INSIDER TIP ➤ Encounter of the third kind

Travel 3,700 years back in time in 20 minutes on a beach walk from Can Picafort to *Son Real*, *City of the Dead* → p. 41

INSIDER TIP ➤ Relax!

Why not spend a whole day from 8am to 8pm in the high-class Oasis Spa area of the Son Calú Hotel for 20 euros – non-residents are equally welcome. “Cleopatra’s Bath”, however, has to be paid for → p. 101

INSIDER TIP ➤ Fresh off the hook

Be spoilt for choice at the counters of the grill restaurants *Mares* and *Casa Fernando* in Ciutat Jardí, Palma’s leafy suburb → p. 94

INSIDER TIP ➤ The other side of Palma

Discover all the sights of Palma from the top of a bright red double-decker bus, with explanations in English and 16 places to hop on or off → p. 92

INSIDER TIP ➤ Magic mountain

Depending on the season and the position of the sun, the *Cavall Bernat* mountain range in Cala Sant Vicenç appears in different colours. On February and March afternoons, the shadow on the mountain face takes on the shape of a rider on horseback: an inspiration for countless painters and photographers → p. 50

INSIDER TIP ➤ Cheeeeeese!

Six island cheeses to try at the *For-matgeria* → p. 90

INSIDER TIP ➤ Salt flowers and organic ice cream

On the way to the beach of es Trenc, you can buy not only the most recent flavoured salt creations straight from the Salines de Llevant, but also a picnic hamper with healthy treats for a day at the beach, and pick up an organic ice cream on the way back → p. 73

INSIDER TIP ➤ Snow white and cobalt blue

Accompanied by the aroma of rosemary and the chatter of cicadas, a 20-minute walk leads from the remote settlement of Cala s’Amunia to the hidden-away natural beach and deep-blue waters of *Sa Comuna*: no hotel, not even a beach shack, and usually not a soul about (photo above) → p. 70

INSIDER TIP ➤ Shark alert!

See 8,000 ocean dwellers under one roof in the *Palma Aquarium* (photo below) → p. 129

INSIDER TIP ➤ Spoilt for choice: restaurants

The *Carrer Fàbrica* in Palma lies off the beaten track, with hardly a tourist finding their way here, but the locals love it. Around here and in the side streets is a great place for an evening pub crawl – but not before 9pm, otherwise you’ll only have your own company → p. 87

INSIDER TIP ➤ The island’s larder

Fish and seafood tapas in the *Bar d’es Peix* in Palma’s Mercat de l’Olivar → p. 87

INSIDER TIP ➤ Off the tracks

Creative Mallorcan gallerists offer art, tapas, cooking courses and dance lessons in an old railway station in Sineu → p. 80

INSIDER TIP ➤ Ancient shell, chic inside

A medieval monastery has been turned into the modern luxury hotel *Son Brull* → p. 50



BEST OF...

GREAT PLACES FOR FREE

Discover new places and save money

● Art & prayer

If you want avoid paying admission to see the *La Seu Cathedral* in Palma, attend a mass instead. Make sure to arrive ahead of time and grab a seat up front on the right. From this vantage point, you can enjoy Gaudí's swinging chandeliers and Barceló's ceramic masterpieces for the whole service → p. 96

● A youth hostel that costs little to nothing

Palma's new *youth hostel* offers more than just affordable accommodation. During the summer, you can work here in exchange for free room and board plus a chance to learn Spanish without paying a single cent → p. 96

● Experience a World Heritage site

The information centre of the Unesco protected heritage site in the Tramuntana mountains is housed in the freshly renovated *Raixà* estate near Bunyola. Admission is free → p. 93

● Modern art within old walls

The picture-perfect courtyard of the 18th-century *Casal Solleric* with its stately double staircase is home to an exhibition featuring contemporary art and a library → p. 86

● Protected lagoon life

In the *S'Albufera* nature park visitors can experience near-intact wetlands, strictly protected since 1988. Watch birds and other animals from the raised observation hides (photo) → p. 46

● A detour to Sóller

The car tunnel to *Sóller* is expensive, but thankfully there is a (somewhat longer) free alternative route from Palma that is also prettier. The route Santa Maria–Valldemossa–Deià–Sóller has much to offer landscape-wise, but take the route over the reservoir Gorg Blau, Selva and Inca on the way back → p. 51



●●● Dots in guidebook refer to "Best of..." tips

ONLY ON MALLORCA

Unique experiences

● Red earth and white blossom

Millions of magnificent pink-and-white blossoms on Mallorca's characteristic red soil: experience a unique natural spectacle during the almond blossom season from late January to early March, near Valldemossa for instance → p. 103

● Bread with things

This is the literal translation of the Mallorcans' typical sandwich, which is an extension of *pa amb oli*. Integral parts of this delicacy, apart from *remallet* tomato puree, are air-dried ham or/and island cheese, marinated sea fennel, olives and capers: very good at the *Hostal d'Algaida* → p. 75



● That bit closer to God...

Every village has its *ermita*, *monasteri* or *santuari*, mostly atop the summit of a mountain, some of them converted into lodgings with picnic spots. In the remote village of *Orient* visitors can try to connect with the spirituality of solitude in the former monastery *L'Hermitage*, today a country hotel with a fine restaurant → p. 45

● Sweet temptation

Not even on the neighbouring islands will you find an *ensaimada*, the coiled yeasty bun made with lard and sprinkled with icing sugar, as tasty and tender as on Mallorca. For proof, head for the *Ca na Juanita* bakery in Alaró, which has been going for over 100 years (photo) → p. 45

● Cold pressed

The label *Oli de Mallorca* can only be used for the olive oils native to the island. Mallorcan oils have been exported with great success for centuries, but local fine foods shops, supermarkets and oil refineries stock all kinds of creations harvested from nearby olive groves → p. 51

● Our homes are our castles...

Ochre in colour, rustic and rough are the quarry stones that were used to build Mallorca's country houses. Hundreds of *possesíós*, as large fortification-like manor houses in the countryside and fine residences in Palma are called, have survived the centuries; their architectural style lives on in thousands of fincas dotted all over the island. At the hotel *Born* in Palma, you can enjoy the ambience of a city palais from the 16th century → p. 92

ONLY ON



DISCOVERY TOURS

1

MALLORCA AT A GLANCE



START: ① Palma de Mallorca
END: ① Palma de Mallorca

6 days
Driving time
(without stops)
7½ hours

Distance:
400 km/249 miles



COSTS: accommodation for 5 nights (double room w/ breakfast) 600 euros; boat ride to ④ Sa Dragonera 12 euros; admission to the ⑥ Valldemossa Charterhouse 8 euros, bike rental 10 euros per day

WHAT TO PACK: swim gear, diving mask, water shoes, hiking boots, sun protection, trail maps

IMPORTANT TIPS: You can only visit the island of ④ Sa Dragonera from April to October.

Every corner of the earth has its own special charm. If you want to explore all the many different facets of this region, head off the beaten track or get tips for the best stops, breathtaking views, hand-picked restaurants or the best local activities, then these customised discovery tours are just the right thing. Choose the best route for the day and follow in the footsteps of the MARCO POLO authors – well-prepared to navigate your way to all the many highlights that await you along the tour.

From protected nature reserves with hardly any people to the Ballermann crowds, the rocky coast and the interior plateaus, this round-trip tour will introduce you to all the different faces of the island.

Regardless of whether arriving by ship or aeroplane, almost everyone's first stop is the lively capital city of ① Palma de Mallorca → p. 82. But, this time around, save the capital itself for later and just pick up a rental car so that you can get to know the island as a whole first. Take the Ma1 to ② Port d'Andratx → p. 98. Stroll

DAY 1

① Palma de Mallorca

31 km/19 mi

② Port d'Andratx

