

A vibrant scene featuring a white horse as the central focus. The horse is adorned with a decorative halter and is being petted by a woman in a black dress. The background is filled with numerous colorful streamers hanging from above, creating a festive atmosphere. The Berlitz logo is prominently displayed in the center.

Berlitz

MENORCA

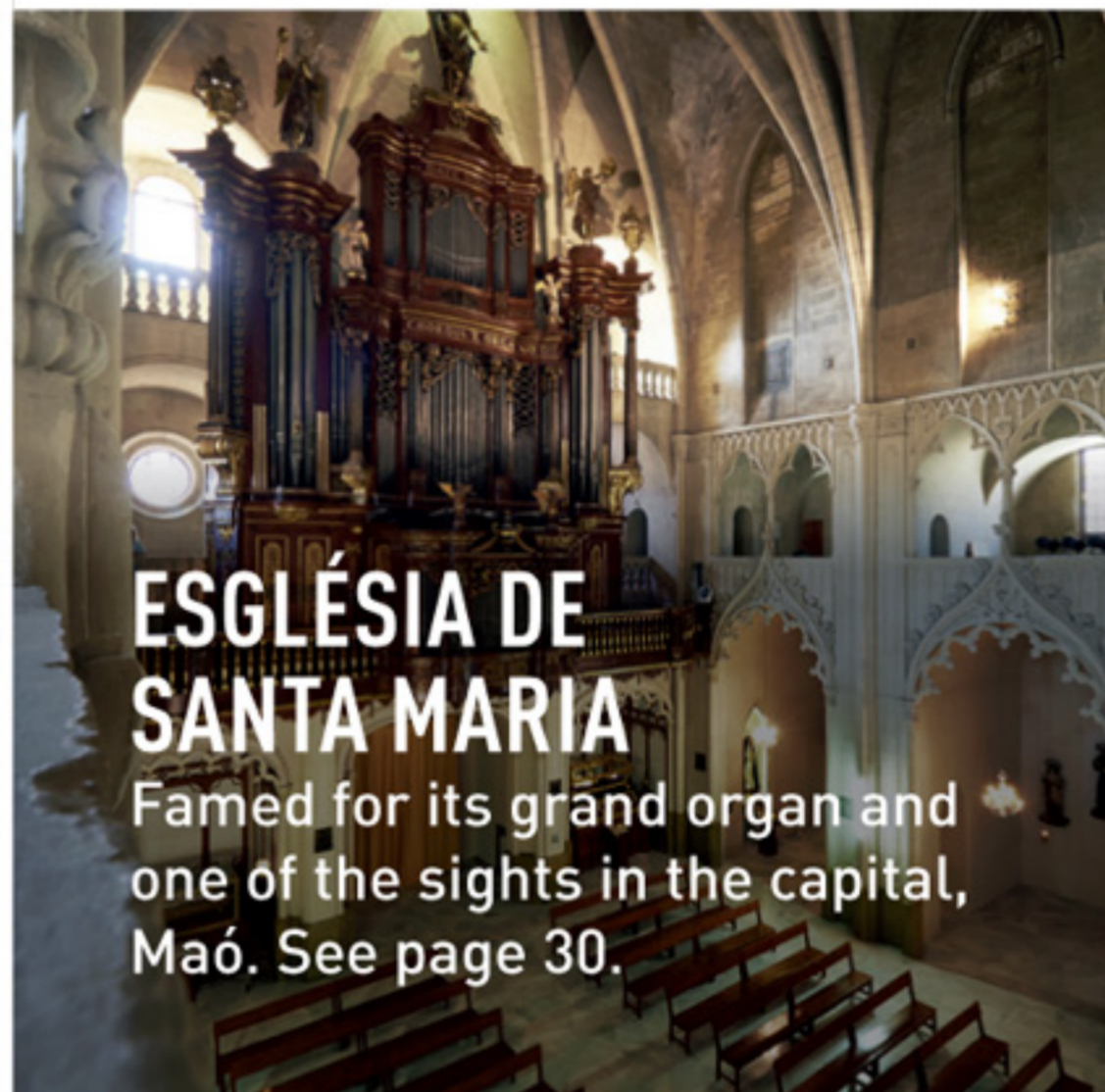
POCKET GUIDE

TOP 10 ATTRACTIONS



BINIBECA VELL

A 'fishermen's village' designed for tourists. See page 80.



ESGLÉSIA DE SANTA MARIA

Famed for its grand organ and one of the sights in the capital, Maó. See page 30.



PLAÇA D'ES BORN

This square in Ciutadella is surrounded by some splendid mansions. See page 59.



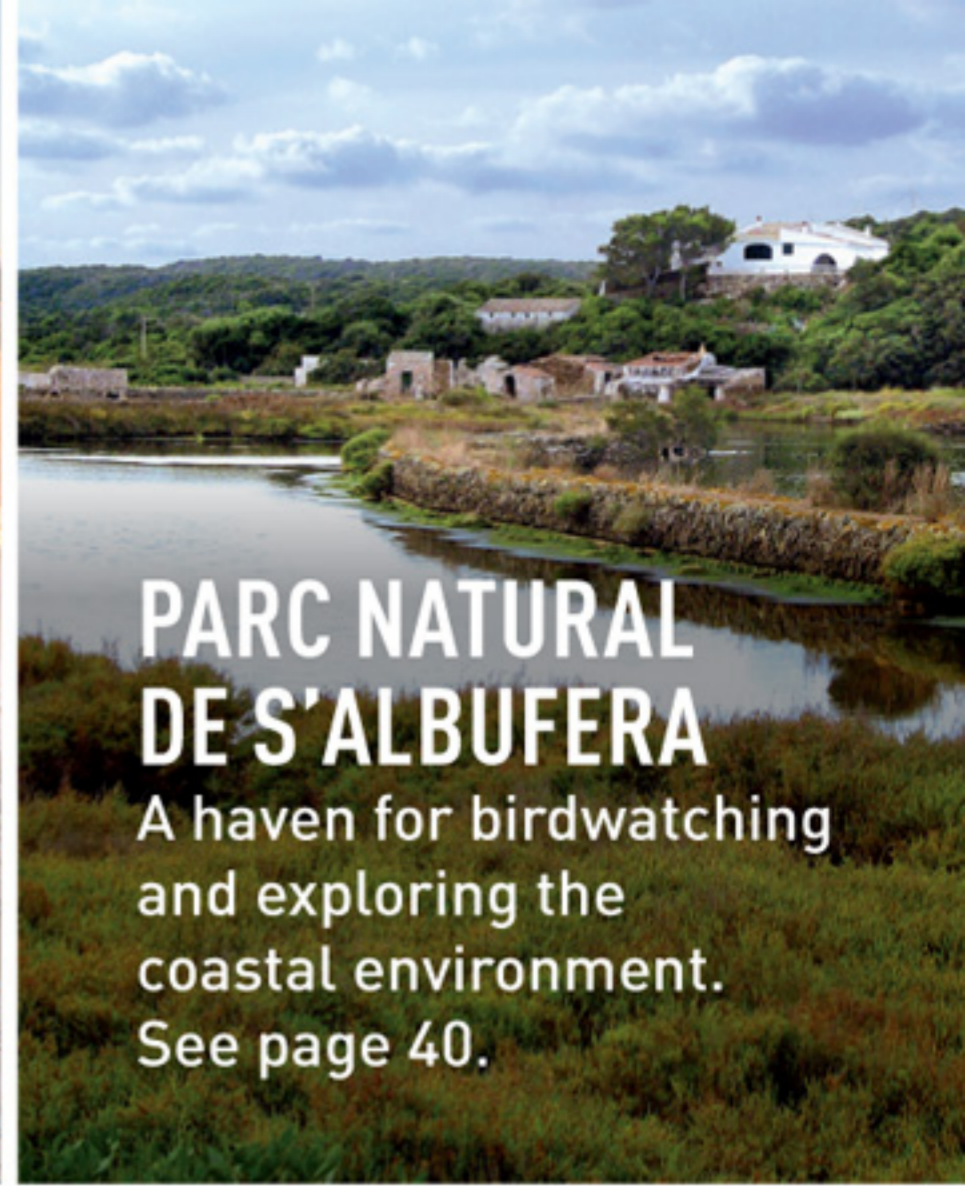
CALA SANTA GALDANA

A lovely cove, popular with families and watersports enthusiasts. See page 72.



CIUTADELLA

The golden walls of the town rise above the harbour. See page 57.



PARC NATURAL DE S'ALBUFERA

A haven for birdwatching and exploring the coastal environment. See page 40.



FORNELLS

A pretty harbour and some tempting fish restaurants. See page 45.



NAVETA D'ES TUDONS

Believed to be the oldest roofed building in Europe. See page 56.



ES MERCADAL

A delightful inland town that specialises in island food – *cuina menorquina*. See page 51.



CALA EN TURQUETA

One of the many lovely little coves in the south of the island. See page 71.

A PERFECT DAY



9.00am

Breakfast

Enjoy a typically Menorcan breakfast of fresh orange juice, good coffee and sugar-dusted *ensaimadas* in Es Llonguet (Carrer del Rosari 12), near the harbour.



11.30am

Exploring the harbour

You may want to buy some Menorcan sandals (*abarcas*) in one of the shops on Carrer Ses Moreres before making your way down the broad steps of the Costa de Ses Voltes, stopping to admire the view of the harbour as you go.

10.00am

Market in the Claustre del Carme

Visit the morning market in the Claustre del Carme, where glistening fresh fruit and vegetables are piled up beside stalls selling jewellery, household items and some delicious speciality foods.

1pm

Concert

Go to the Església de Santa Maria in the Plaça de Sa Constitució for the organ concert that takes place daily except Sunday (June–Oct).

IN MAÓ



3.30pm

A boat trip

Take a trip around the harbour in a glass-bottomed boat. A recorded commentary will point out the Illa del Llazaret, which used to be a quarantine centre, the dramatic bulk of the Fortaleza de la Mola and Golden Farm, wrongly but romantically associated with Lord Nelson and Lady Emma Hamilton.

2.30pm

Lunch

You will be spoiled for choice when choosing where to go for lunch, but elegant La Minerva (Moll de Levant 87, tel: 971 351 995), although expensive, offers an excellent-value tasting menu, and the opportunity to eat outside on a floating jetty – bliss.

5.00pm

Es Castell and Cales Fonts

Once back on dry land, walk to the far end of the harbour and up a small hill, where you can catch a bus to nearby Es Castell. You can explore this pleasant and still very British-influenced little town and then, as the sun goes down, have an evening drink or two by the waterside in pretty little Cales Fonts.

10.30pm

Dinner

Head to the friendly Nou Siroco restaurant (it's best to book, tel: 971 367 965) back at the harbour for a late dinner – the paella is good – or to sample a wide selection of tapas for which the restaurant is well known.

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INTRODUCTION

Menorca is an appealing little island. It has neither the dramatic visual appeal of Mallorca's vertiginous coastline nor the brashness of Ibiza's nightlife, but it offers considerable diversity in a very small area – from the rugged, wind-swept stretches of the undeveloped north coast, to the stunningly beautiful bays in the south; plus the pleasures of two handsome, historic cities. All this is what keeps visitors coming back year after year, and the reason that estate agents are flourishing, selling second-home properties to English enthusiasts. In 1993, the island was declared a Unesco Biosphere Reserve – a distinction of which Menorcans are extremely proud. It means that the whole island is under some form of protection, although only S'Albufera d'es Grau is a designated Parc Natural.

Unesco reserve

A Biosphere Reserve is defined by Unesco as 'a place of important natural and cultural heritage where economic development is compatible with nature conservation'. One of the objectives of the reserve is to control the negative impacts of tourism, which means that no uncontrolled development can take place, although responsible tourism is welcomed.

GEOGRAPHY

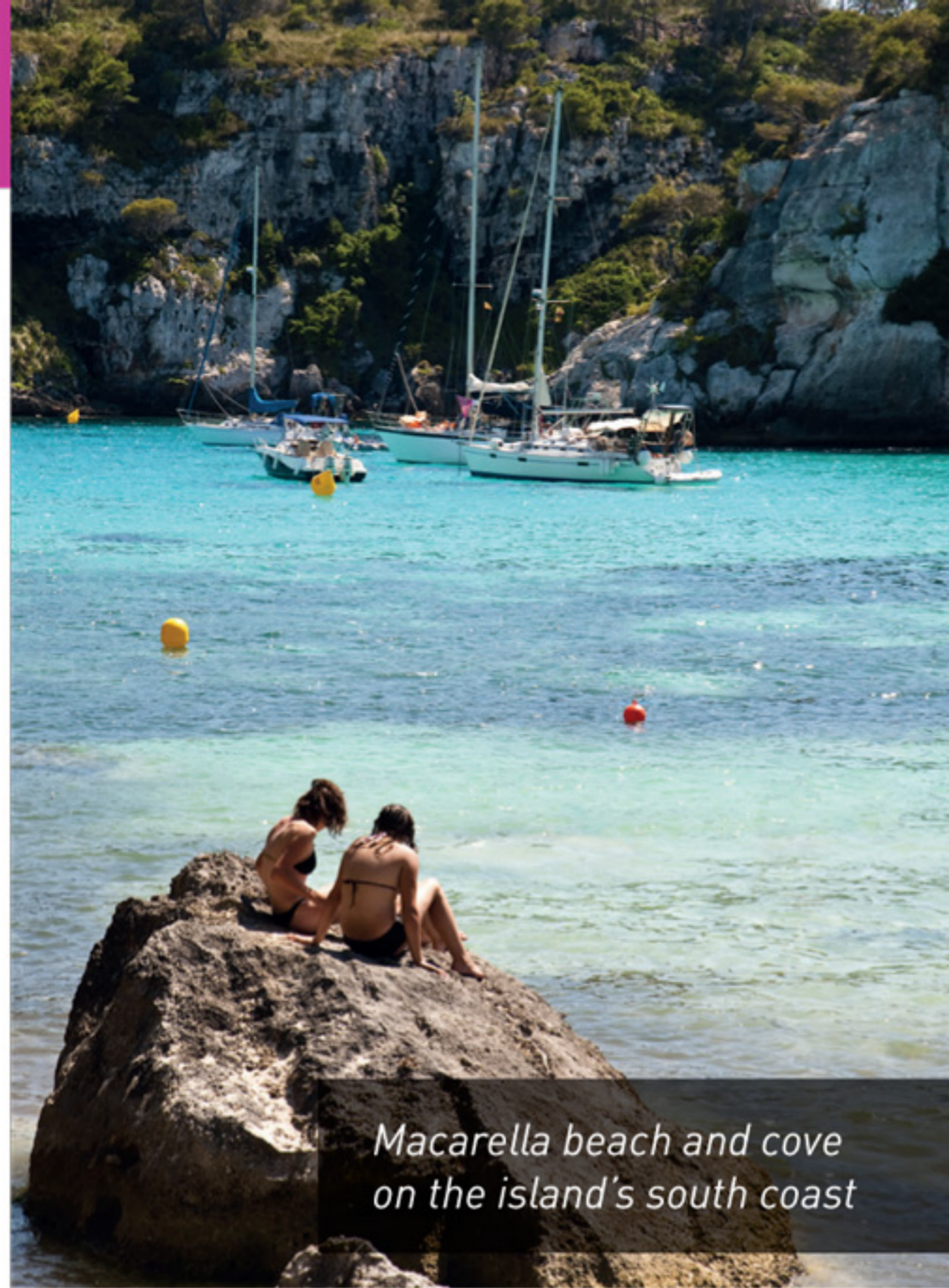
Menorca lies just 225km (140 miles) southeast of Barcelona – from where there are regular ferry and air services. It is the second largest of the Balearic group – after Mallorca – but it is still tiny, only 47km (30 miles) from east to west, and some 20km (12 miles) from north to south at its widest point. Roughly 215km (135 miles) of coastline encircle the island, but

there is no road to take you all the way around it – you often have to return to the central axis. The island is fairly flat, and the highest point, Monte Toro, crowned by a sanctuary, reaches only 358m (1,170ft).

LANDSCAPE AND VEGETATION

The main road that spans the island, linking the two cities, also roughly divides two distinct geological zones. The northern section is sandstone, with bare rocks and reddish earth; small fields are enclosed by dry-stone walls (*parets seques*), among which ancient olive trees, myrtle and juniper bushes are rooted, but there is little sign of cultivation. Farming here has always been arduous, and many people abandoned it when tourism offered an alternative. Much of the land in the north of the island is covered by dense scrub known as *maquis*, with heather and rosemary present as well.

The southern part of the island is characterised by limestone karst, cut through by lush ravines running down to the sea. The centre is a fertile region of low, gently undulating hills, dotted with neat farmsteads, surrounded by meadows, groves of Aleppo pine, carob trees and stands of holm oak. Few crops, except olives, are produced in any viable quantity, but the dairy industry, introduced by the British, still flourishes, and herds of black-and-white cows, which can be seen grazing the fields,



*Macarella beach and cove
on the island's south coast*



provide milk from which to make the local cheese, Queso de Mahón, still made in the traditional way (see page 103).

If you visit Menorca in late summer or autumn, you may be struck by the lack of vegetation. But come in spring and you will find large parts of the island covered in wild flowers, including foxgloves, violets and daisies, the spiky-bloomed asphodel and several varieties of wild orchids. Apparently inhospitable areas turn bright yellow with broom, and pink-and-white rock roses bloom well into summer. The evergreen mastic tree, from which a rubbery resin, used in making varnish, is extracted, has a reddish bloom.

BIRDLIFE

Menorca is a convenient stopping off point for thousands of migrant birds in spring and autumn, and it also has a diverse resident population. In the marshland areas of the Parc Natural S'Albufera d'es Grau herons and cattle egrets are commonly seen, along with other waders, while booted eagles wheel overhead, and kites and buzzards have their nests along the rocky coast nearby. The Barranc d'Algendar is the place to hear nightingales and see skies filled with alpine swifts; colourful bee-eaters can often be spotted around the coastal dunes.

CLIMATE

Summer temperatures in Menorca average 24°C (76°F) but highs of over 30°C (86°F) are not unusual. Water temperature in mid-summer never drops below 20°C (68°F). Winter months of November to February are the wettest, and the time when the Tramuntana wind blows most fiercely, especially on the north coast. May and September/October are months of pleasantly warm temperatures and fewer visitors.