

Recommendations while visiting Menorca

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The name of this beautiful island comes from *Minorca* (smaller than the island of Majorca – *menor* means “smaller” in Spanish).

It was declared a Biosphere Reserve on 8 October 1993 by UNESCO.

If you decide to visit Menorca, our 10 recommendations are:

1- Binibeca

A coastal area located in the southeastern part of the island. It belongs to the municipal area of San Luis and is located 8 km away from the capital of Mahón.

A distinction is traditionally made between two areas: *Binibequer Nou* (*Nou* meaning “new”) and *Binibequer Vell* (*Vell* meaning “old”).

Binibequer Nou is the beach area (200 m long and with fine sand) and the *Cala Torret* (a bay that has a small town with shops and restaurants).

Binibequer Vell is the town founded in 1972 emulating the old fishing towns with its white buildings and narrow streets. It is undoubtedly one of the primary points of interest for visitors to the island. Lastly, together with *Binibequer Vell* we find beautiful cliffs called “Las Ollas,” with natural stairs made of stones and rocks which can be used to get to the sea and enjoy the water.

2- Lighthouses in Menorca

One of the representative characteristics of Menorca is its 7 lighthouses:

1. Faro de Punta Nati (Punta Nati Lighthouse) (Ciudadela): 42 metres above sea level and with a range of **16 miles**. Built in 1912 to prevent constant shipwrecks in this area of the island.

2. Faro de Cavalleria (Cavalleria Lighthouse) (Es Mercadal): 94 metres above sea level and with a range of **22 miles**. It was inaugurated in 1857 and has not undergone any significant modifications since then. Just a few metres away from the lighthouse is a museum, and behind that is the small and welcoming Cala Santa Teresa.
3. Faro de Favàritx (Favàritx Lighthouse) (Maó): 47 metres above sea level and with a range of **16 miles**. One of our favorites. The nearby beaches of Presili, Capifort, Morella and Tortuga, with their coarse, dark sand, are some of the most pristine on the island.



4. Faro Punta San Carlos (Punta San Carlos Lighthouse) (Es Castell): 22 metres above sea level and with a range of **12 miles**. This is the oldest lighthouse.
5. Faro Illa de l’Aire (Illa de l’Aire Lighthouse) (Sant Lluís): 53 metres above sea level and with a range of **18 miles**. Located on a small island at the entrance to the Port of Mahón, it can be accessed from Mahón or Sant Lluís.
6. Faro de Cap d’Artrutx (Cap d’Artrutx Lighthouse) (Ciudadela): 45 metres above sea level and with a range of **19 miles**. The Cap de Artrutx Lighthouse crosses with the Capdepera Lighthouse on the island of Majorca, thereby illuminating the channel that separates the two islands.
7. Faro de Sa Farola (Sa Farola Lighthouse) (Ciudadela): 21 metres above sea level and with a

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range of **14 miles**. The last inhabited lighthouse on the island.

Our most recommended lighthouses are the ones at Cavalleria and Favàritx because of the landscapes that surround them.

3- Monte Toro (“Bull Mountain”)

Monte Toro is the highest mountain on Menorca (358 m), located in the municipality of Mercadal.

On a clear day, visitors can make out the entire island and even the northern part of the island of Majorca from the mountain’s peak. Visitors will also find there the Shrine of the Virgin of Monte Toro (patron saint of Menorca), built in 1670 on top of a former Gothic church.

With regard to the mountain’s name, there are two versions. The first says that it gets its name from the fierce bull that guarded the mountain and which angrily got in the way of some monks who were attempting to reach the peak. However, the bull, upon seeing the crosses carried by the monks, became peaceful and guided them to where the image of the Virgin Mary was, from that moment on known as “Our Lady of the Bull.”



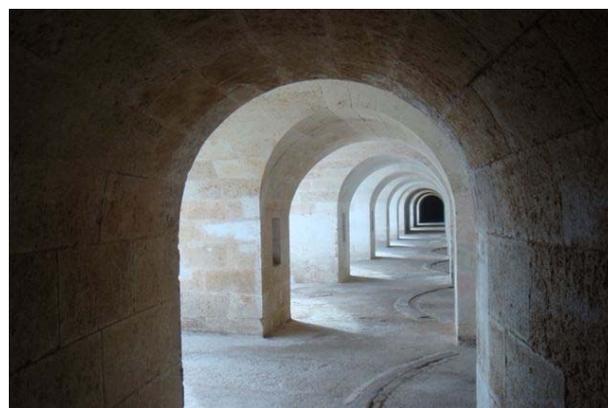
The other version, less romantic but more believable, states that the name comes from “tor,” which in Arabic means height, so “al-tor” would mean “that which is high.”

4- Fortaleza de La Mola (La Mola Fortress)

A military fortress whose construction began on the La Mola peninsula in 1849 using the most advanced defensive strategies of the time period. One of its primary objectives was to defend the port of Mahón against the continuous attacks it had suffered during its history. In 1852 it was inaugurated with the name of Isabel II even though it was still being built. Construction was finished in 1875, although by that time it was already outdated because of the progress in artillery technology that had been made.

In 1849 work began on the Fortress of Isabel II, built on the peninsula of La Mola, in the Port of Mahón (Menorca), with three objectives: to defend the port, build the base of operations for the entire army on the island, and serve as a security stronghold for the army. In 1896 a second phase began, during which modern batteries and cannons with a range of 40 km were installed.

The fort has never been attacked.



5- Cova d’en Xoroi

A natural space located atop a beautiful cliff on the southern coast of the municipality of Alaior.

This place also has a unique legend that says that a man who would later be called Xoroi came to this cave. He was probably a pirate, the only survivor of a shipwreck, and made the cave his shelter. A short time later, a young woman who was about to get married

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disappeared from the country houses nearby. Years went by and nothing was heard of this woman until after a heavy snow, footprints leading to the cave appeared. When the men reached the cave, they found Xoroi, the missing woman and the three children they had had together. Xoroi, realized he was cornered, jumped into the sea together with his oldest child, disappearing forever. The woman and her two other children were taken to Alaior, where they spend the rest of their lives.

Today, it is a pub during the day and a dance club at night. Formed by several terraces and balconies, our recommendation is to visit in the late afternoon to witness a magnificent sunset.



6- Centro Histórico Ciudadela (Ciudadela Historic District)

Ciudadela is the most populated city in Menorca and bisphoric seat of the island. It was the capital of the island until the British occupation of 1714. Visitors will not want to miss walking through its narrow streets, such as *Qui no passa** (“He who does not pass”) or *Ses Voltes* (“arches”) which begin at *Plaça Nova* or *Plaça Espanya* (New Square or Spain Square) and end at the Ciudadela Cathedral. Heading for the Town Hall we find *Plaça del Born* (Borne Square), surrounded by old palaces and a magnificent theatre. From the *Plaça des Born*, visitors can make out the port of the City, which forms part of the historic district and is well worth visiting.

*The name of this street refers to the outbreak of the plague in 1646. Every afternoon a carriage would pick up the bodies of the deceased to avoid further outbreaks. However, the carriage could not fit on this street and thus its name.

7- Puerto de Mahón (Port of Mahón)

This is the second-largest natural port in Europe and for centuries has experienced numerous conquests and reconquests by different European nations. It currently has both industrial and commercial uses. Its seaside promenade lined with restaurants, bars and some shops makes it a very nice setting worthy of walking through or making a stop to eat something.

8.- Beaches and Coves

The more than 50 beaches and inlets in Menorca are its primary claim to fame. Menorca is the Balearic Island that has suffered least from the construction boom thanks to the conservative spirit of its inhabitants, and therefore has best preserved its natural landscapes. Its beaches are true paradises. In this case it is difficult to make a recommendation because it depends on each person’s likes and needs. One of the most popular, because it is different from the ones we can see in other places, is the Playa de Pregonda (Pregonda Beach). To get there, one must walk about 30 minutes from the Playa de Binimel. Also, from Pregonda visitors can swim to a nearby small island which has its own beach.



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9.- Gastronomy

The typical products made on the island are *Mahonés* cheese with denomination of origin, sausages made of pork such as *sobrasada* (a brick red-coloured paste for spreading on bread), *carnixua* or *cuixot*. All of these products can be packaged for transport while travelling.

Salsa mahonesa (Mahonesa sauce): There are several different stories about the origin of *salsa mahonesa*, but most point to the beginning of the sauce being in Mahón, giving it its name.

Some of the **main dishes** in Menorcan cuisine are *oliaigua* (vegetable and bread soup), filled aubergines, lobster *caldereta* (we recommend eating it in one of the restaurants in Fornells), and rice with crab legs.

Sweets: *Bamba* (sponge cake), *pastissets* (pastries in the shape of a flower with five petals), *carquinyols* (small sweets made of dry dough). Although originally from Majorca, sweets called *ensaimadas* and *crepellles* can also be found.

Other: *formatjades* (typical during Holy Week, but can be found in bakeries year-round)



Drinks: The typical drink is *gin amb llimonada*, a mix made with Menorcan gin and lemon juice which is known as *pomada* on the entire island except for in Ciutadella. The Gin Xoriguer distilleries are located in the Port of Mahón and can be visited from Monday to Saturday. There are many places where bottles of this famous liqueur can be purchased.

10.- Shopping

Avarcas: These are **typical leather sandals from Menorca**. They have become popular outside of the Balearic Islands because of the comfort they provide and how easily they can be combined with any type of clothing.



Leather products: There are many leather, footwear, clothing and accessory makers open to the public. The prices are not the cheapest, but the products are artisanal and high-quality.

Costume jewelry: It can be bought in shops and street markets. Our favourite is the market that sets up at the entrance to the Port of Ciutadella every night during the summer.

The primary shopping districts are Ses Voltes in Ciutadella and Moreres and Carrer Nou in Mahón.

+All photographs have been taken by our team from Menorca.