



# Days out in Menorca

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*The pictures do not belong to the author.*

# Introduction

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What to do? Well, I don't want to give you a week-long itinerary, but I'll give you a few suggestions of day trips. Note: all day costs will be based on a family of four (two adults + two kids) and include food, transport, and **the water bottles you must buy if you leave your hotel!** In Menorca, note also that, you cannot go into any at least semi-residential area and not hear Shakira music!

**THE WEATHER** in Menorca is nothing to shout about – unless you're shouting to be heard over a "spontaneous" tropical storm. These come over in the spring/summer and scare the horses, but are still big blobs of warm rain. However nice it is to get some relief from the humidity (you don't know how much so until you've been forced to lie, fully dressed, in a fountain in some sacred ancient Chinese temple to cool down a bit because *you decided to visit China in July, you moron*) your lovely tiled terraze will become a slippery death trap. Don't sit outside. Otherwise, it's sunny and dear Lord, have a lot of drinks/ice-cream and live in baggy white clothes. Their houses are whitewashed for a reason!

**THE CURRENCY** of Menorca is euros (€) and cents (¢), which is weaker than the £Stirling and \$USD. Spain's economy itself isn't in the best shape right now, so tourist items can get quite expensive at the trinket shops at tourist spots. However, the general stores with the yellow and green mushroom as a logo are standard price, as cheap as it'll get (and, though the same chain, some are slightly cheaper than others), and do sell postcards and gift items.

**GETTING AROUND** Menorca is easy: car hire includes all insurance and is, at its cheapest, about 45€ for one day; to get it down to this price you may want to ask in Spanish or Menorquinés, the island's own dialect of Catalan. For multiple days, the cost will reduce per day. There are also buses (and by buses I mean *air-conditioned coaches*) [regularly from everywhere to](#)

everywhere else (depending on where you're staying you may have to get more than one. In these cases your best bet is to get one to Es Mercadel and wait for one out someplace else) that are also very cheap. There will undoubtedly be an *autobus* stop somewhere between your hotel and the beach, but if you can't find it (or can't make sense of the timetable on it) then ask at your hotel's reception (concierges aren't guaranteed). They will tell you where/hand you a map of the island with bus routes on.

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# Day 1

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Places: Mahon

Cost: around 75€



Okay, let's presume you're in Mahon for 11am – even if you're staying across the island, this is an easy target; [this highly reliable source](#) says that it has “a distance from north to south of 47 km and from east to west of 17 km” (because it's tilted, though, the 47km is across the island) and [this one](#) confirms that it's “35 miles long”.

Now, some of the best things here are touristy, because otherwise it's just a residential city with only little corner shops. I advise heading out to the port first thing – it's beautiful. When the British owned this island, they built Mahon and made it capital (instead of Ciudadella) so it has very British architecture. Then there was a war over the island. The camí a cavalls (bridleway) around the perimeter of the island is dotted with shelters and

cannon posts, and there are a few greatly fortified islands within the port of Mahon. If you want to learn more about the history, there is [a museum in El Castell](#) (a few minutes down the port line). **Tip: if you're visiting the museum, round up some more tourists outside wanting to visit.** At least 20 of you and you can each get in for only 2€!

What is really fun, if you're interested in the history or not, is a boat trip to la Mola. This place has got to be important because *it's on the flag!* It's the main defensive fort of the Balearic Islands, protecting the possessions from places like Italy and Greece which wanted to monopolise the Mediterranean. You take a yellow catamaran or a glass-bottomed boat to the island of la Mola, and that great big Fortaleza is the fort of Isabel II. If the time is right you could also take one of these to the Base Naval (guess what that is in English...) to see the Fiesta del Carmen in July – but that one's only for adults. The website for these boat trips is [here](#). The only way to get to these islands is by boat, and if you want to go on one of these trips – beautiful scenery, great experience, reasonable price – then **book through the website, there's a 20% discount!** If you're under 2 years, you also travel for free! As their website says, as well, *“Customers who have travelled on board the Yellow Catamarans will be entitled to significant discounts for other interesting visits in Minorca (for example, the “Fortaleza de La Mola”). Ask us for more details on board our boats!”*

To get into the fortress itself costs 5,50€ with this discount (for adults), under 12's get in free. If you don't have the discount, then, again, round up a bunch of others because a group of 25+ only pays 6,40€ each.

Okay, back on land, you need to ask where the International Centre is (down the plaza from the boat dock) because across from it, built into the rock face, are the quaintest little shops that sell the most darling things and are so beautiful inside — the owners make use of the in-built features of, well, being in-built of a giant rock, the designs and lighting so interesting and making

these shops worth a visit just for that! One of them will, inevitably, sell something that catches your eye. Now, some of them offer really good prices and some are ridiculously extortionate, so if a price seems high to you try and barter it down.

By this point, you'll be waiting on tea time (your evening meal), and in Spain they dine late, so restaurants may not be open until about 8pm. If you took the bus and know that the last one leaves before then, you'll have to eat at your hotel. Otherwise, take a walk around the back streets of Mahon (well, main streets, but they're narrow and cobbled), especially by the old hospital, until food time. Personally, I like to get the bocadillas (subway-sandwiches) from basically any vendor in Mahon, but if a sit-down meal is what you're after then you have a few options that I have hand-picked for you. \*cracks knuckles\*

- Okay, for **Italian**, try the little *Casanova*. As said, it's little, so needs reservations. The number is +34 971 35 41 69, call from a payphone in Menorca (10¢ a call, mostly). It does genuine stone baked pizzas and gluten free food, too. There is one chef and he *is* Italian.
- For the typical **Iberian meals with wine** try *Sa Bodega*. No reservation needed, it's on Plaza Constitucion at N° 6 (the number is 971 353910 anyway). Ask for the chef's recommendations. It's also a little on the small side (hey, you didn't read all this way and still think it was "Top 10 Tourist Spots", did you?) so get there early-ish unless you want to be reduced to eating tapas at the bar.
- For **dead cheap/French cuisine** visit [Mademoiselle Plume](#). All their info is on that Facebook page. Oh, even if it is in the range of 2 adults for 10€, it is quite romantic. Maybe, if you've got kids weighing you down, you could venture back for a date night out, kids at the disco your hotel likely comes with.
- If you are really in the mood for some **traditional Spanish tapas** test *Ars Café*. But do it early. Recently, it's become a club later at night. All the details are at the top of [their website](#). Including flyers to get into the club nights free, if you want to leave the kids at the disco again (or are without them).

Reviews for all of these suggestions can be found at [TripAdvisor.com](#). I checked (and found the phone numbers of those without websites there).

**Interesting Fact.** Mahon is where Mayonnaise was invented!

# Day 2

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**Places:** Santo Tomás, San Jaime, Son Bou

**Cost:** around 50€



This is a trip around a *less-touristy-than-Cala'n Forcat-and-Cala Galdana* sea side area on the South coast of the island. This plan starts your day in Santo Tomás at about 7am, when you want to be setting off on a nice walk. You can go at about 10am, though, if you won't have anyone slowing your pace. When you reach S. Tomás you will see a beach. Go for a bit of a swim. Yes, the water's cold. **Don't dry off.** Wear your swimming kit, some shorts, trainers, pull a(n unbuttoned) shirt over your shoulders to prevent burning and take a rucksack with you. You're going for a sea-side ramble filled with plenty of perfect photo opportunities! Head East along the beach, towards the stone jetty, and you will notice you can walk up towards the rock face preventing you from seeing San Jaime and Son Bou. Walk up here and keep going up the steps, then onto the flat pink rock. Then just keep on going through the wooden gates, the path by the fields, then to the beach at Son Bou. The path forks and you may get confused whether to go left or right. *Go right.* Even though this is a nudist beach, the other path will leave you feeling even more lost and is for locals or the especially savvy only and as I can't really describe all it's

intricacies to you, you're probably neither. There aren't all that many people frequent this nudist beach, and many aren't nude. In fact, it's pretty much the same as any other beach on the island (that picture above? that's the beach).

Okay, you're at la playa. Take your shoes and socks off and walk just along the surf, so when the tide comes in it just sweeps over your feet. Do it. Right at the end of the beach (past the duck swamp, because that exists) is an oasis shack bar. Don't worry, it's not a mirage. You're not hallucinating from lack of fluids (and by now you may be seriously dehydrated, even with that bottle of water). This place sells, very cheaply, the most refreshing fruit juices and some amazing calorific milkshakes. I like the chocolate one with all the trimmings. Sit and have a drink, then do a bit of shopping. **The higher up the streets you get away from the beach, the cheaper the products tend to be.** Because tourists don't usually venture far or something.

Explore Son Bou. There're the traditional bracelet shops, a modern t-shirt shop I love. Oh, there's the hotel with "pingüino" in its name that you can **just walk into and use the bathroom of.** It's *Flintstones*-themed with caveman Zumba that you can probably just join in with, too, if you like.

If you walk through the streets back towards where you came, you may notice a little water park. Yup. [It's a club that you can join, with food included.](#) Only join if you're going to be coming back quite a few times, otherwise you'll just make do with the beach/pool at your hotel because **it's simply not worth it.**

For lunch stop at *Buhda*, it's a beautiful place on the farthest side (away from S. Tomás) of one of the higher streets. You'll find it. I recommend everything! Also further down this street is a nice little helateria (ice-cream shop) which I suggest you try.

Important on this day out is to make sure that you will not be doing the walking parts from 12pm-2pm, the hottest time of the day. Also, before you head out make sure to literally paint yourselves with waterproof sun-cream.

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Okay, head back to the beach and go back to Santo Tomás, but don't leave so quickly! Hire one of the pedalos with a slide for about 10€ and go out on the sea! Now you can go back to your hotel in time for tea.

Alternatively, visit *Es Pins* by the beach on the East side (towards San Jaime and Son Bou). Their pasta's good. However, I prefer *Bar Halley* which, yes, is a bar, but has some amazing food to be eaten at their little café set-up outside as well as WiFi. The open plan of grass by the side is also home to a rope swing, which is a plus. This feature may be, if you're lucky, showcasing some spectacular of the island's famous dancing horses. Or something else. **Check coach stops, phone boxes, and other posts around the island frequently to see flyers of what's on.** Even better for food, if you want to get back to your hotel, is *the most amazing pizza I have ever had*. No joke. The best. Right, walk towards the roundabout at the far end of Santo Tomás away from San Jaime and Son Bou, there is a block of shops with verandas. The shop on the far end (towards the roundabout) of this block has a freezer of pizzas in the back. Select one (or two, to feed everyone) for only a few euros each and the lovely shop keepers cook them perfectly for you right there in the shop and give you a take-out box! The ham and cheese ones are like heaven.

One of the most popular images of Santo Tomás is of this playground.



It is part of a resort in Santo Tomás which you can also just walk into called the *Apartamentos Mestral y Llebeig*. They also gained a little water park and have a wooden play frame in a different garden. So, have fun. But be careful. Here is where I tell you that I managed to fracture my ankle falling off that blue slide there, and the doctor isn't amazing so now my ankle is permanently messed up just a little bit (probably because of the frequency, consistency and thoroughness with which I manage to damage it). The lesson here is: **doctors in Menorca aren't the best.**

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# Day 3

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**Places:** Monte Toro, Es Mercadel

**Cost:** around 20€



On top of Menorca's highest point, right in the middle of the island, is a Cathedral. Technically, the highest point is Jesus' head because they have a statue in the courtyard that is just like [Christ The Redeemer in Brazil](#) (but not as big). The stories of the Chapel's history is written on its walls, so I won't describe it. It's a wonderful place, and I personally believe that like how Muslims try to make the Hajj, Christians should try to take a pilgrimage not only to Lourdes but also here.

There is a little craft shop and café in the courtyard, too, but for lunch I really suggest making your own sandwiches and buying fridge drinks at the café then sitting out and being able to see the whole island. And a bit of Mallorca if it's clear, too.

The last time I visited it, some guys were getting ready to parasail off the mountain and a crowd gathered to watch. [Maybe you could give that a go.](#)

Now, even though the locals walked up Monte Toro (eng: Bull Mountain) before cars and coaches, **don't walk up Monte Toro**. In fact, I advise taking the autobus because the turn-off isn't the easiest to find.

When you've had your fill of the Chapel, go back into Es Mercadel. This was the original market town — designed for trade between both ends of the island — so the markets are a highlight. Also, as it's inland, the snorkel and goggle and swimming pool toy sets are cheaper in the shops here.



# Day 4

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**Places:** The island, Alaior

**Cost:** around 120€



Okay, today is adventure day! The morning is spent at [Lloc de Menorca](#) – one of the most fun zoos ever. I think only Blackpool beats it, and that's only because they have dinosaurs.

Kids (and adults) get to get really close to animals, and there's a lot of shady rainforest. There is place for lunch. For me, it's a toss up between bringing your own and snack bar. I would say bring your own, but you may start nibbling whilst walking around and **lemurs love food**.

To get there, take a taxi (they're reasonable) as if you arrive by Taxi you can get a **20% discount on your entrance ticket by showing the taxi receipt**. Alternatively, if you've been on a yellow catamaran, this may be one of the discounts they offer, so you can take a car (free car park). Don't go by bus to this one.

Spend siesta at your hotel, and then at 5pm you can be picked up to go on a jeep adventure! The excursion I advise is the ["Surf and Turf"](#) for families (try the sunset trip for adults). You get to explore the whole island, and see all the

coves around the coastline. You never know, you may get a chance to jump out the boat and swim across! Also, if you're over 23 you just show them your driving license and they let you have a go! It is 2 hours on sea, 2 hours on land, and includes artisan cheese tasting — which qualifies as your tea, so **you should fill up at the buffet/make a large meal at about 2:30pm for lunch**. The excursion is only on Saturdays, though, so plan ahead.

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# Day 5

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**Places:** Ciudadella

**Cost:** around 100€



Ciudadella, or Ciutadella, used to be the capital of Menorca and has a much more Iberian style. Like Mahon it has a port.

This is really a cultural day, so for this trip I suggest taking a car and using a longer route closer to the coast line, stopping occasionally to check out those battlements and fortifications as well as the [Navetas and taulas](#), the latter of which are like smaller Stonehenges.

Ciudadella itself is very Moorish, including the Arab palace which is now the town hall and hard to miss. Shopping here also gives off the Moorish vibe.

Sticking with the culture, go on a horse-riding excursion in Ciudadella. [Cavalls son Angels](#) provide Menorcan delicacies with their excursions, and I suggest Route 1. There is also the lesser-known [Rutas Ecuestres](#) with good people, pure-bred Menorquin horses, and they're cheaper.

Back in Ciutadella, go shopping at Ses Voltes (the arched shopping plaza) and then take a little walk to the Castell de Sant Nicolau at Placa de l'Almirall Ferragut as the sun goes down. There's an easy to follow path down from the harbour, but not so many tourists know that there's something so beautiful waiting for them at the end of it!

For your tea today I suggest [Cafe Balear](#), it has freshly-caught seafood.



# Day 6

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**Places:** Cala'n Bosch, Cala Morell, Fornels

**Cost:** around 140€



For a combined tour of 4 different snorkeling locations, ask [Bigfoot](#). Okay, this one's short because all the info you need is there!

However, I suggest combining this activity with a walk or a bike ride around more of the camí a cavalls up North near Cala Morell, towards Fornels. You can hire bikes in large European chain stores in Mahon and Ciudadella, but there is a small local shop in Fornells at [Paseo Marítimo N° 69](#). Take a packed lunch for everyone to eat while looking North towards France!

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# Day 7

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**Places:** Cala Macarelleta

**Cost:** around 20€



If you're going to Menorca after 2008, it's likely someone you've spoken to has read the Internet and told you that you have to see Cala Macarella. It's a beautiful beach. Even better is its smaller neighbour, Cala Macarelleta. Thankfully, a lot of tourists have yet to discover it, so it's still pristine and quite empty — it is quite a walk, though!

In fact, you know, here's a [Google Maps direction map](#), starting in Es Mercadal. No roads quite reach, you'll see if you zoom in on the end point, so you have to walk across Cala Macarella. Bring trainers. Take sandwiches. Have a beach day!

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