An expert guide to the perfect weekend in Palma de Mallorca

How to spend 48 hours in Palma, from the atmospheric old town to its vibrant food and shopping scene

Anna Nicholas
Destination Expert

Anna Nicholas is a longstanding Telegraph contributor and has been the Majorca destination and hotel expert for a decade.
See more

Published 20 May 2026 2:00pm BST

Related Topics
Europe, Mallorca, Spain, Palma De Mallorca

Gift this article free

Add us as preferred source

A weekend in Palma offers a delicious melting pot of cultures and historic influences. Credit: Getty Images

With a dramatic and turbulent history harking back to the Bronze Age, Palma has had its fair share of invasions – from the Romans and Vandals to the Moors and Christians. So it's hardly surprising that this perfectly formed city has such a welcoming and grown-up attitude to international visitors.

With the glistening Mediterranean sea at its feet, this effortlessly accessible capital offers a melting pot of cultures and historic influences. Whether in the cobbled streets of the atmospheric old town, or in the heart of the grand plaças, impressive monuments, museums, galleries and churches of Gothic splendour are abundant. Edgy districts happily rub shoulders with more traditional and exclusive neighbourhoods, while a vibrant food and shopping scene weaves its magic across the city. With so much to do in so little time, head for a seafront café, breathe in the balmy air, relax and enjoy that first sip of ruby red Mallorcan rosé wine.

In this guide:

- How to spend your weekend
- When to go
- Where to stay

How to spend your weekend

Day one: morning

Start the day at the Gothic landmark La Seu cathedral, which looms above the city walls, and admire the shimmering Parc de Mar Lake below. Don't miss the quirky, contemporary re-design of St Peter's Chapel by artist Miguel Barceló, as well as the upper terraces and belltower, before heading to neighbouring Almudaina Palace. I never tire of exploring this Gothic masterpiece, but on a sticky day, I take respite in the King's Orchard, a smaller version of Granada's Generalife water garden.

Advertisement

Next stroll up the leafy Borne, once a river in the 17th century, before popping by Casal Solleric visual arts centre to admire its authentic courtyard. I like to browse the temporary exhibitions here, especially as it's free to visit.

On Plaça de Weyler foust your eyes on The Gran Hotel, a Modernist masterpiece created by acclaimed Catalan architect, Lluis Domènech i Montaner, in 1903. Refurbished by La Caixa Forum, it is now a vibrant arts and cultural centre.

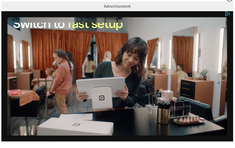
For lunch head to Fera restaurant for a glass of wine and choice of exceptional Mediterranean-Asian tasting menus by renowned chef, Simon Petutschnig. For more suggestions of where to eat in Palma, see our guide.

Start at historic big hitters like La Seu cathedral and Almudaina Palace. Credit: Bizkaia vision/Cavan Images

Afternoon

Walk off lunch along Jaime III, home of the famed El Corte Inglés department store and various chic boutiques. Cross over to trendy Sant Nicolas, a labyrinth of stylish shops, before continuing to Plaça Santa Eulália in the Calatrava historic quarter, with its medieval cobbled streets, exquisite patios, bijoux palaces and Renaissance architecture.

Advertisement



Take time out at Ca'n Joan de S'Aigo, just a two-minute stroll away. This is Palma's oldest and most cherished café, the perfect spot, by my book, for a hot chocolate and snail-shaped ensaimada pastry or homemade almond ice-cream. On your departure, pass the magnificent Plaça Sant Francesc, church and cloisters (pop in if the fancy takes you), and cut through the lean streets to quaint Santa Clara Convent, where you'll need to ring a bell to buy the sisters' delicious lemon biscuits.

Although Ca'n Joan de S'Aigo has opened two further Palma outlets, nothing can beat the ambience of the original

Late

Aim for Santa Catalina, a five-minute taxi journey from the centre, or if like me, you prefer to walk, cut through La Lonja old town towards Santa Catalina, just 15 minutes away on foot. If you're on a budget, stop at Café Sa Lonja for good-value tapas. Otherwise, head on and enjoy dinner at svelte and urban Vandal, where an Argentinian chef and sommelier duo conjure up a world menu of bold and inventive dishes, expertly matched with local and international wines.

After dinner, take a stroll through this buzzing enclave with its village feel, lively bars, stores and cafés, and enjoy a welcome cocktail or hierbes local liqueur at Sky Bar at Hotel Hostal Cuba. Here you can enjoy mesmerising views over the Bay of Palma on the balmy rooftop terrace, while enjoying a relaxing and welcoming ambience.

Palma's neighbourhoods have a villagey feel that contrasts the bustle of the centre. Credit: Nathanael Noir / Alamy

Day two: morning

The city's bustling Olivar market is a wonder to behold and I always enjoy browsing the halls of seafood, fruit and vegetables and observing locals bargaining with stallholders.

From here, stroll up to the majestic Plaça Mayor, surprisingly, the seat of the Spanish inquisition for 300 years and the Plaça de Cort, with its 600-year-old olive tree and medieval town hall. Stop here for a coffee or fresh orange juice, perhaps at Café Cappuccino before weaving through the pedestrian cut-throughs to El Borne.

Cross over to Calle Sant Feliu and head for Es Baluard museum to view its eclectic collection of neoclassical, abstract and Modernist art. I like to have a coffee or snack lunch in the al-fresco café on the terrace to enjoy its spectacular views over the city walls to Palma bay. For more recommendations of things to do in the city, see our guide.

Expert guides to Palma

How to spend the weekend in Palma

The best hotels in Palma

The best things to do in Palma

The best bars in Palma

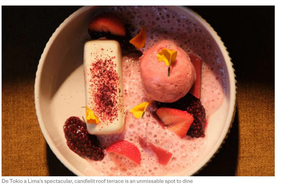
Advertisement

See a blend of architecture as you explore Palma's streets. Credit: Javier Ghosn/Getty Images

Afternoon

Jump in a taxi to Bellver Castle, which sits aloft a peaceful wooded hill overlooking the Bay of Palma. Dating from the 14th century, it is the only circular castle in Spain and one of only a few in Europe. Allow for an hour's visit, as there is a courtyard, museum and historic kitchen worth seeing, and then hop in a taxi and set off for the Joan Miró Foundation in Cala Major, just a five-minute drive away.

Here you'll find a vast display of the prolific artist's works, including paintings, sculptures and ceramics. My favourite spaces are the artist's re-imagined studio and home, which give an authentic feel to the estate.



De Tokio a Lima's spectacular, candlelit roof terrace is an unmissable spot to dine

Late

Dine at De Tokio a Lima on the spectacular, candlelit roof terrace of Boutique Hotel Can Alomar. Offering a scrumptious fusion of Peruvian, Japanese and Mediterranean gastronomy, this stylish eatery sets a mellow and relaxing tone, and staff members extend a warm welcome to customers. There is a good selection of wines and tapas sharing plates on offer so there's no need to break the bank. The location is particularly special with sweeping views of El Borne and the giant plane trees flanking it, as well as the city's lights.

After dinner, I sometimes continue along the same street to enduring local favourite, Café Atlantico, for chilled music and innovative cocktails. Try the Smoky Storm, a heady blend of rum, cinnamon and chocolate. For more suggestions of where to drink in the city, see our bar guide.

Insider tips

BEAT THE CROWDS

A good way to avoid the crowds is to arrive at a historic sight such as Bellver Castle during the lunchtime and siesta period, normally sometime between 1pm and 4pm. The advantage is that you face fewer queues and crowds and have more breathing space to admire the exhibits on show.

Alamy

GETTI

Avoid
and p
Palma
a cont
buses,
appro

← Previous 1 of 5 Next →

Return to index

When to go

Palma is temperate most of the year, even in the colder months when the temperature can drop in other parts of the island. As an all-year-round destination, most of the hotels stay open, unlike those in the beach resorts. Off-season, particularly from January to April, and mid October to December, there are hotel bargains to be had.

Special city fiestas include the Three Kings parade on January 5, Easter processions, Sant Juan fire fiesta in June and Nit de l'Art (night of art) in September.

Return to index

Where to stay

All hotels have been independently reviewed and selected by our expert writers, who are usually hosted on a complimentary basis. We will earn a commission if you book via the links below, but this never affects our rating. Learn more about Telegraph Hotels by visiting our About us page.

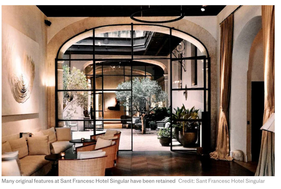
Luxury living

Sant Francesc Hotel Singular is a skilfully renovated, 19th-century mansion and boutique five-star situated in the capital's atmospheric historic quarter. Designed by well-known architect and designer, Maria José Cabré, I find the hotel has a warm, relaxing and pleasant ambience. There are 42 elegant and individually styled rooms; a number have balconies and verandas, and dreamy views over Sant Francesc square and church with its pretty cloisters, or the hotel's gardens.

from **£362** per night

Check availability → Rates provided by **Booking.com**

Read our full review →



Many original features at Sant Francesc Hotel Singular have been retained. Credit: Sant Francesc Hotel Singular

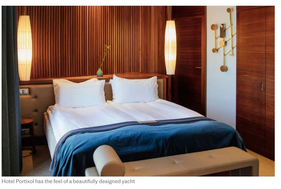
Boutique beauty

With its stylish white façade, deep blue shutters and jaunty, nautical theme, Hotel Portixol has the feel of a beautifully designed yacht. It occupies an exclusive position in the gentrified harbour, directly overlooking the sea, and inside has a relaxed Scandinavian feel. There are 25 comfortable rooms comprising port and sea-view doubles and two large suites, one of which, Atico, occupies the top floor and has its own lift and roof terrace. I often visit the restaurant here for its excellent menú del dia.

from **£348** per night

Check availability → Rates provided by **Booking.com**

Read our full review →



Hotel Portixol has the feel of a beautifully designed yacht

Budget bolthole

The four-star Brondo Architect boutique hotel is a good-value and comfortable urban getaway right in the heart of Palma. It comprises three buildings in the same street and marries 17th-century Mallorcan architecture with modern industrial design (no mean feat). For me, the pièce de résistance is the lovely bright lounge and dining area and tranquil, leafy, wood-decked courtyard. See our complete guide to the best hotels in Palma.

from **£207** per night

Check availability → Rates provided by **Booking.com**

Read our full review →

Hotel finder

Explore 10,000 hotels, reviewed by The Telegraph's experts

Explore | Search

LATEST REVIEWS

1 Place Vendôme
Paris, France
9/10 Expert rating

Six Senses London
London, England
9/10 Expert rating

Read all reviews

RECOMMENDED

Our guide to the best hotels in Palma de Mallorca

Read more →

Return to index

Know before you go

Essential information

- **Tourist board:** 00 34 971 17 39 90; infomallorca.net
- **Emergency fire and ambulance:** 112
- **Emergency police:** 092
- **British Consulate:** Carrer dels Caputxins, 4, Palma. 0034 933 66 62 00; gov.uk

The basics

- **Flight time:** (from UK) Two hours
- **Currency:** Euros €
- **Internationals dialling code:** 00 34
- **Time difference:** GMT + 1

Local laws and etiquette

- Anti-social behaviour, such as drinking in public, and wearing inappropriate attire, such as beachwear, is unacceptable in Palma city and local police can issue heavy on-the-spot fines. Fines may be issued for drunken and aggressive behaviour.
- Although Mallorcans speak Castilian Spanish, they are proud of their own language, Mallorquin, a dialect of Catalan. Road signs and public notices will often be written in the local language.
- An excellent bus network serves Palma and there is also island-wide transport, including metro, train and bus, which run from Plaça Espanya. Taxis charge an initial €2.50 (£2.15) and the cost per km is approximately €1.20 (£1). Bike hire is popular in Palma with many cycle lanes.
- Tipping is at a client's discretion but 10 per cent is considered acceptable.
- Mainly due to the warm weather, Mallorcans tend to dine later so expect a 2pm lunchtime, and in the evening, the majority of locals won't arrive at restaurants before 9pm (and often later).
- Normally Mallorcans – male and female – will shake hands at a first meeting but some might offer women kisses on both cheeks.