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## The Best Things to Do in Palma de Mallorca in One Day

### Take a Bike Tour of the City

Palma is a very bike-friendly city with dedicated bike lanes and paths. We booked a biking tour of the city through our [cruise line](#), but several different off-shore tour providers are available.

This [Old Town Guided Bike Tour](#) looks similar to the tour we went on, or this [Fat Tire E-bike Tour](#) would be a lot of fun!

Exploring the city by bike is a great way to see the main sites and cover a lot of ground in a short amount of time.

Palma de Mallorca is a particularly fun city to explore by bike as you weave through the narrow maze of cobblestone alleys and side streets.

### Explore the Waterfront Promenade

The Bay of Palma de Mallorca boasts one of the largest marinas in Europe with more than 9,000 berths. You'll find everything from small fishing boats, to commercial barges, and multi-million dollar yachts.

Palma is a popular destination for sailing and hosts the annual King's Cup Regatta, the Superyacht Cup, the Classic Yachts Spanish Cup, and other events.

The Paseo Maritimo is a paved pedestrian and bike path that contours along the waterfront. It is lined with palm trees and passes by stretches of sandy beaches.

The path begins on the southern end of the city at Porto Pi and continues for about 11 miles to Marina Moll Vell.

If you don't have time to bike the entire route, I would recommend biking or walking about 2 miles along the main marina by Old Town Palma until you reach the viewpoint for the Cathedral of Santa Maria.

Along the way, you can stop for a drink or a bite to eat at one of the many waterfront cafes and restaurants. A few recommendations include L'Artista, Mar de Nudos, Sa Cranca, Chiliss No 3, Assaona, and Ola del Mar.

## Tour the Royal Palace of La Almudaina

The [Royal Palace of La Almudaina](#) was originally built as a Muslim citadel during the Arab rule. It was later converted into a royal residence by King James II of Mallorca in the 14th century.

The palace has served as the official royal residence for the Spanish Monarchy ever since, and still welcomes the royal family when they visit Mallorca today.

The palace is open for [self-guided tours](#) where visitors can marvel at the palatial rooms, the royal staircase, the Gothic Hall, the royal chambers, and the palace gardens.

If you don't have time to tour the palace, be sure to at least admire the exterior and stop by the royal gardens.

Here, you will find a bronze statue called Es Foner. Es Foner translates to "The Slinger" as the statue depicts an early Talayot warrior. The Talayots were the first known inhabitants of Mallorca around 1500 BC. They were known for their incredible slingshot skills which they used to successfully protect their island from attacks.

## Explore the Streets of Old Town

Palma's old town, also known as the historic quarter or Casco Antiguois, is a labyrinth of narrow streets, historic buildings, and charming squares. It is truly a gem in the city.

It is a captivating district steeped in history with a medieval layout and architectural influences from the Romans, Moors, Catalans, and Spanish.

The old town dates back to Roman times when the city was known as Palmaria. It then flourished under Moorish rule as a casbah, or walled city, and later became a prominent Christian center during the Reconquista.

The best way to explore the old town is by wandering aimlessly around the streets, visiting local shops, and discovering hidden gems. However, there are a few historic sites in old town that you don't want to miss.

The Best Places to Visit in Old Town Palma:

### Cathedral of Santa Maria

This iconic Gothic cathedral dominates the skyline of Palma's old town. It was built on the site of a former mosque and features stunning architecture, including the famous rose window.

### March Palace Museum

The prominent March family is known as one of the wealthiest families in Spain. They opened the first March Bank, or Banca March, in Palma in 1926 and it is still one of the largest banks in Spain today. The [March Palace](#) was built in 1945 as the family's home and today it serves as a museum.

### Royal Palace of La Almudaina

As mentioned earlier, this palace was originally an Islamic fort before being converted into a royal residence. It offers a glimpse into Mallorca's royal history and architectural evolution.

### Parc de la Mar

This scenic park is adjacent to the cathedral and overlooks the Mediterranean Sea. It's the perfect spot for an afternoon picnic.

### Plaza Mayor

This central square is a hub of activity, surrounded by cafes, shops, and historical buildings. It's a great place to soak in the atmosphere and people-watch.

### La Llotja de Palma

La Llotja de Palma is a Gothic hall built in 1426 as a maritime exchange center for merchants, traders, and sailors. It's a beautiful historic building that is free to visit and often hosts cultural events and exhibitions.

### Basilica de Sant Francesc

This 13th-century church showcases Gothic and Baroque elements, with a serene cloister and beautiful interior.

### Museu de Mallorca

Located in a former monastery, this museum houses a diverse collection of art, artifacts, and historical exhibits related to Mallorca's heritage.

### Placa Cort

This city square is a lively gathering spot surrounded by cafes and shops. The historic Ajuntament, or town hall, is located at the square and dates back to the mid-17th century.

You'll also find a beloved 600-year-old olive tree in the center of the square known as Oliver de Cort.

#### Arab Baths

These 10th-century baths are a rare example of Moorish architecture in Palma and offer insight into the city's Islamic past. The baths are open to [tour](#), or you could book a [Hammam Bath session](#) at a nearby facility to experience a traditional Arab bath.

#### Mercat de l'Olivar

This bustling market is a great place to purchase fresh produce, organic seafood, and local goods.

### Tour the Cathedral of Santa Marie

The majestic Cathedral of Santa Maria, also known as La Seu meaning 'headquarters' or 'seat of the bishop', is Palma's most iconic landmark.

It is the only Gothic building in the world built by the sea and is one of the largest Gothic buildings in Europe. It features pointed arches, ribbed vaults, towering columns, flying buttresses, intricate stone carvings, a prominent bell tower, and three naves.

Construction of the cathedral began in 1229 after King James I of Aragon conquered Mallorca from the Moors. The cathedral was built on the site of a former mosque, signaling the transition from Islamic to Christian rule.

It took 372 years to complete the cathedral as it underwent several expansions and renovations, including the addition of the iconic rose window and the completion of the main nave in 1601.

Famed architect Antoni Gaudi, who designed Sagrada Familia in Barcelona, even contributed his talent during a restoration project in the early 1900s with the installation of the "crown of thorns" over the main altar.

One of the most stunning features of the cathedral is its enormous rose window, measuring about 39 feet in diameter. The intricate design is made up of 1,236 pieces of stained glass!

If you would like to tour the cathedral, it is recommended to purchase tickets in advance. The cathedral offers several different [tour options](#), but I would highly recommend booking a ticket that includes access to the cathedral terraces.

This will allow you roof access where you can get an up-close look at the flying buttresses, the rose window, and the bell tower. You'll also have a breathtaking view of the city and the Mediterranean Sea.

## Eat at a Sidewalk Cafe in Old Town

Palma is renowned for its culinary scene, offering a wide range of cafes and restaurants serving delicious Spanish and Mediterranean cuisine.

Old town is dotted with charming outdoor cafes where you can enjoy lunch while taking in the sites and sounds of the city.

We stopped at Forn des Teatre, a historic bakery dating back to the 19th century. Their specialty is the classic Mallorcan rolled pastry called ensaimada.

A few other recommended cafes in old town Palma include Bar Cafe Coto, Mise en Place, and Maura Cafe & Bar.

## Stop by the Convent de Santa Clara

The Convent de Santa Clara, also known as the Monastery of Santa Clara, was founded in the 13th century as a Franciscan convent. The nuns in the convent followed the Franciscan rule of poverty and simplicity.

The community of cloistered nuns dedicated their lives to prayer, meditation, and service. The monastery was a closed convent, meaning that the nuns spent their entire lives inside the convent and couldn't be seen by anyone from the outside.

Centuries ago, the monastery opened a small bakery on the side of the church to help bring in money for the church.

In order for the nuns to conduct business without being seen, they created a turnstile where the baked goods and money could be exchanged by rotating the turnstile through a covered window.

The bakery and turnstile are still in use today and all of the baked goods are made from scratch daily by the nuns.

Unfortunately, the bakery wasn't open when we visited, but I heard they have the best cookies in town!

You can also step inside the small dimly lit church to admire the medieval architecture and antique 18th-century pulpit.

The convent is located in the historic Jewish quarter of Palma. This area has a dark history dating back to the early 1400s when the Jews in Mallorca were forced to convert to catholicism or be punished and put to death.

I would encourage you to take a [walking tour](#) of the Jewish Quarter to learn more about the history. You could also do an inexpensive [audio guide](#).

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## Tour Bellver Castle

Bellver Castle, which translates to "beautiful view", is a historic fortress located on a hilltop overlooking Palma de Mallorca. The castle is open for tours where guests can learn about the fascinating history at the museum, admire the intricate architecture, and soak in the best view in the city!

This Catalan Gothic castle was built in 1311 and is the only circular castle in Spain, and one of the only circular castles in all of Europe. The castle served various purposes over the centuries, including a royal residence, military stronghold, and prison.

The castle's medieval architecture reflects both defensive and residential elements, with walls, battlements, and arrow slits for defense, as well as living quarters, halls, and courtyards for royal residents and guests.

The castle is located on the outskirts of the city, so I would recommend taking a [hop-on-hop-off bus tour](#) for an inexpensive way to get around the city and see the main sites such as the Bellver Castle.