

Travel

The Observer and Eccentric Newspapers

Thursday, April 24, 1988 O&E



(F-7C, WTD, R-5B) ★★98

Majorca: medley of mountains, sea, people

This is a second of two-part travel series on Majorca.

MAJORCA, Spain — Last week we started at the Restaurante Penelope in Palma, Majorca, and ended up eating fresh shrimp on a terrace cafe in Andorra, overlooking the Mediterranean.

This week we'll start by drinking espresso in the coastal village of Soller and having a late lunch on the north coast of the island.

Maybe next week we should talk about dining on the road.

For those of you who didn't travel with me last week, Majorca (we're giving it the English spelling) is the largest of the five Balearic islands in the Mediterranean Sea off the coast of Spain.

The other four are Ibiza, Formentera, Menorca and Cabrera. They combine to make the Spanish province of Balears.

Palma, on the south coast of Majorca, is the capital city of Balears. The island population is 500,000 and half of those live in Palma. The names of the island is spelled Mallorca by Spanish-speaking people, Majorca by English-speaking people, but either way it is pronounced "ma-yor-ka."

Now that we've got that out of the way, let's get on the road leading west and north through the mountains and along the scenic coastline.

Many famous people have taken these roads before us. George Sand and Frederic Chopin lived in the ancient village of Valldemossa. Visitors can still tour the house where they lived. Poet Robert Graves lived a few miles north in Deià until he died there a few months ago.

The road to Deià and Soller winds through the mountains, switching back up the slopes of olive trees, with brief glimpses back downhill to panoramic views of the sea.

When we reach the marked viewpoint at the top we can see down past a serpentine road to Soller and the west coast.

Small red and yellow cars, and an occasional truck, climb the snaking highway. If the trucks are even moderately large they must stop and back up to make the 180 degree switchback turns.

A small tram runs regularly from the town of Soller, built a few miles inland, to Puerto Soller on the coast. That is how they built these settlements centuries ago, the port on the sea and the town far enough inland to protect it from invaders.

In the port, we sit in a sidewalk cafe, sipping an espresso grande and savoring a cake from a nearby bakery, while the fishermen sew their nets on the dock like a photograph waiting to happen.

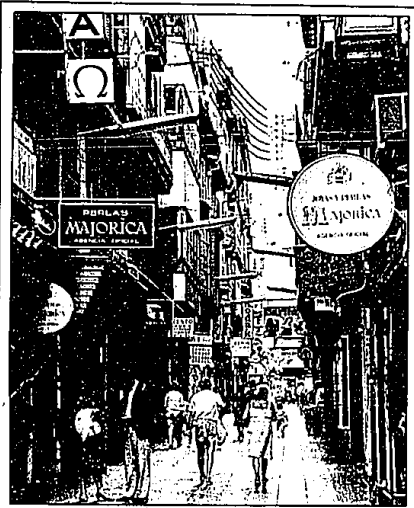
The high-masted sailboats make their own shapes at the end of the long docks, and the red roofs of small hotels curve around the bay.

It is mid-morning and the local women go by carrying their baskets of groceries from the bake shop, the butcher and the greengrocer. A German woman from the next table tells me, about the apartment she has rented uphill, with a glorious view of the sea.

European tourists, so plentiful here, stay two or three weeks at seaside villages like Soller. They stay in a small hotel beside the sea, or in an apartment high on a hill above the sea, and spend days in various leisurely ways: having coffee in a sidewalk cafe, hiking the hills, touring the island by car, stretched out in the sun.

Americans are considered strange travelers because we are usually seen racing from one place to another on a tour bus or in a car, trying to see the whole island in three or four days.

It was raining by the time we climbed uphill again on our way



Photo/Iris Jones

The streets of Palma, Majorca, bustle daily with residents and tourists, many from England and Germany. The town itself has 250,000 inhabitants and the total is added to by visitors.

north. Parked on the side of a treed mountain, with pine trees tumbling sharply down rocky slopes, we can still hear the chime of bells ringing up from the village below.

These mountains are not high, they're not the Alps, but they have sheer rock cliffs on every side so the view is often straight downhill into steep valleys, all of them striped with handbuilt stone walls to keep the soil from slipping downhill.

At a corner of the highway, where the black dog sits in front of the little wooden snack stand to moosh from cars that stop, the famous tortured winds downhill like a coiled snake.

We have two planned destinations ahead of us: the popular coastal village of Puerto de Pollensa and the Hotel Formentor on the peninsula beyond.

Planglows of British and German tourists fly into Mallorca every week to fill the hotels in places like Soller and Puerto de Pollensa.

When we stop to chat with a family fishing from the dock area of Puerto de Pollensa, their northern English accent is so thick we can just barely understand it.

The Hotel Formentor, half an hour drive away along the scenic peninsula, has an entirely different ambience; this is where upscale travelers go for a quiet vacation in a sprawling old inn beside the sea.

Wherever you stay on this north coast, you will never be able to photograph all the rugged coastline scenes or try all the tiny cafes in the town.

We usually avoid tourist restaurants in favor of these enchanting European restaurants where the lo-

cal eat, so we explore down the whitewashed streets until we find Restaurante El Pozo.

In a country courtyard, with green trees and flowers set against a whitewashed wall, I have Sopa Majorquina, a dry bread and vegetable soup eaten with a fork, and the wonderful cheese of Mahon, capital city of the sister island of Menorca.

The wine of Majorca is too brown and rough for me, but the local beer is good and the white wine from the mainland is perfect for this island setting.

If you ask about the paintings on the restaurant wall, you will learn that they are painted by local artist Miguel Ferrar, who is also the head waiter here at El Pozo.

By dinner time we are back in Palma, capital city of the island, ready to try a typical country restaurant for dinner.

Whenever we get lost in Palma, which is every time we take our rental car out on the map, but the street signs are marked on the map but not on the street, so sooner or later we would find ourselves too far west down the coast, swing uphill behind the Tower of Belveder and end up in Genova.

We would be looking for a broad avenue marked on the map, but the street signs are marked on the map but not on the street, so sooner or later we would find ourselves too far west down the coast, swing uphill behind the Tower of Belveder and end up in Genova.

When we want to find Genova, of course, we can't find it at all. The young doorman at the Hotel Son Vida has carefully drawn a route on the map so that we can find our way past the military camp and left downhill into the village to Ca'n Pedro.

This small restaurant is exactly what we asked for: a Spanish eating place where ordinary local people gather and nothing is distorted for tourists.

If you have ever been in a "local" European restaurant where the food and atmosphere is stylized for the tourist bus, you know what I mean: you don't get either American or European food, just local food ruined to meet what is imagined to be a North American taste.

What we are looking for is Ca'n Pedro — the Majorcan way of saying Casa Pedro, or the house of Pedro — recommended to us as one

Majorca is the largest of the five Balearic islands in the Mediterranean Sea off the coast of Spain.

of the two typical kinds of Mallorcan restaurants.

The first is the popular fish restaurant found along the waterfront, a treasury of fresh fish and sea views. The second is the busy, noisy, but fun and very Spanish type place, like Ca'n Pedro.

Parking the car is always the first consideration — in fact we agreed that if we can't find Ca'n Pedro we will go downhill to the sea, take the first available parking place and eat in the closest restaurant to be found.

Not necessary. We park uphill and walk through the dark Tuesday night streets; the village is quiet and asleep but we feel absolutely safe and comfortable on these streets alone. When we open the door to

Ca'n Pedro the light and noise amazes us.

We hear plates being banged against bare wooden tables, voices raised to the hams hung high from the beamed ceiling, the whirring sound of the espresso machine.

The local families and couples and leeches are there, with baby carriages tucked into corners and voices rising to all the interesting things hang around the room.

The serving bar that divides the room in two is hung with baskets, gourds, ceramic plates, but the most interesting sights are the people, mostly Spanish, but also German and English and other voices.

Two young men eat bread with oil, tomatoes and ham, plus a plate of snails and another with pork on a stick. I eat once again the wonderful dry Sopa Majorca and paella of rice and shellfish served in the bowl in which it was cooked.

For information, contact National Tourist Office of Spain, 645 N. Michigan Ave., No. 915 E. Chicago, Ill. 60611.

SANDERS TRAVEL

Automatic Flight Insurance to \$200,000

- ARUBA from \$499.00
- BAHAMAS from \$419.00
- CANCUN from \$299.00
- FT. LAUDERDALE from \$178.00
- HAWAII from \$559.00
- JAMAICA from \$399.00
- LAS VEGAS from \$189.00
- LOS ANGELES from \$229.00
- ORLANDO from \$149.00
- PHOENIX from \$198.00
- TAMPA from \$149.00
- TORONTO from \$59.00
- SAN DIEGO from \$229.00
- ST. MARTIN from \$629.00
- ST. THOMAS from \$699.00
- WEST PALM BEACH from \$199.00

FARMINGTON HILLS
855-2620
SOUTHFIELD
352-6000

INSTANT TICKETING

CONSULTANTS
THE TRAVEL PROFESSIONALS

IMPORTANT NOTICE!
TRAVEL CASH DIVIDEND PROGRAM

"Earn dollars while you travel with Sanders"

CALL FOR YOUR TRAVEL DIVIDEND BOOK

START EARNING DOLLARS NOW!

- NO GIMMICKS
- NO HIDDEN COSTS
- 1st MEMBERSHIP

Call
855-2620 TODAY!

MIAMI TWICE

2 WEEKS FOR THE PRICE OF 1

TRADITIONAL PASSOVER SEDER CANTOR JACKIE HILLIARD

Florida's Greatest Spa Value Includes:

- 3 nutritionally balanced meals daily
- Massage
- Nutritional
- Weight loss plans
- Sauna & steam
- Swimming pools
- Water exercises
- Free tennis
- Golf (available)
- Facials • Herbal Wraps
- In room cable and HBO
- Day and evening activities including: bingo, dance classes, dinner dancing & shows

Harbor Island
THE RESORT, MIAMI HOTEL

1-800-SPA-SLIM
(1-800-772-7548)

2900 HARBOR ISLAND, MIAMI BEACH FL. 33141

Now you can buy ANY TRIP

advertised AT A DISCOUNT

Whether it's advertised or not...you can save on the cost of any cruise, charter flight, or tour. Save even on most vacations already offered at special reductions.

Now, if you know where, when, and how you want to travel, you don't have to pay for advice and extra service you don't need.

Washington's World of Travel has opened a special new department which enables you to travel at our cost price, with a small service charge.

Through DISCOUNT and WHOLESALE TRAVEL, you can travel at our cost plus a small booking fee, \$50 for up to \$100; \$70 for up to \$1,000; \$150 for up to \$5,000; \$170 for up to \$10,000; \$210 for over \$10,001 or more fee per booking (not per person).

And you still enjoy such travel agency niceties as instant charge by phone with your major credit card when applicable. Fast confirmation, and all necessary travel vouchers.

Of course, if you prefer, you can still count on Discount and Wholesale Travel for the in-depth planning of a full service travel agent at the advertised price.

But if you've already made your travel decision, we'll show you how and why it pays to know where you're going. Fast trip. Call us.

DISCOUNT and WHOLESALE TRAVEL

Buite 112, 1520 N. Woodward
Bloomfield Hills, MI. 48313
Ph. 645-6120

Open Sunday 10 a.m.-6 p.m.
Evenings until 8 p.m.

The Great Escape

\$119* for two

- A deluxe room with free in-room movies
- Indoor pool and whirlpool
- Complimentary Continental breakfast
- Free Movie Theater Tickets
- Stay Friday 5 PM-Sunday 3 PM

*limited number available—you must be 21

Quality Inn of Farmington Hills
I-696 at Orchard Lake and 12 Mile

PLUS

FREE WORKOUTS ON:
Nautilus, hydro-fitness and free weights
Life-cycles, stairmaster treadmills and rowing machines
Aerobics classes
Free use of whirlpools, saunas and steamrooms

Also available at additional cost:
Hacienda
Tanning

ONE-ONE-ONE
AMERICAN CLUB

Farmington Rd
(just north of Maple
West Bloomfield)

PLUS

Dinner for Two
(Excludes Drinks, taxes, and gratuity)

DENNISON'S
Seafood Tavern

"Twelve New Menu Items"

Corner of 12 Mile & Orchard Lake Road

RESERVE NOW! 313-553-0000

KENYA

DELUXE ADVENTURE/PHOTOGRAPHIC SAFARI

JULY 13-26

EMILY'S WORLD TRAVEL

(313) 455-5744