

Menorca ~ Island Walks for Birds, Flowers and Prehistoric Taulas

www.kudutravel.com/tours/menorca-walking-holiday

2 – 9 May 2020

‘Poc a poc’, slowly, slowly, say Menorquins, describing the way of life on the quietest of the Balearic islands. Menorca’s wonderfully green landscape is a patchwork of dry stone-wall enclosed fields, open heaths, stands of umbrella pines, deep limestone gorges and deserted sandy coves. The lack of development has led to UNESCO declaring the whole island a Biosphere Reserve. As a result, flowers, including many orchids and endemics, are everywhere in spring, migrant birds pass through in large numbers and the resident birds include blue rock thrush, red kites, Egyptian vultures and Booted eagles.

We stay for a week in a delightful, first class hotel: a Manor house dating back to the 14th century, set in a private 100 hectare estate, with a swimming pool and an outstanding restaurant. Daily walks take us to a variety of coastal and inland habitats. We visit forts, cathedrals and museums in the architecturally pleasing towns of Ciutadella and Mahon; taste wines on a local estate and sample the famous Menorca gin and encounter the island’s remarkable heritage of prehistoric stone monuments: ‘taulas’ and ‘talayots’.

HIGHLIGHTS of the tour include:

- Find orchids, fields full of wildflowers, resident Booted eagles and red kites, plus colourful migrants such as golden orioles and bee-eaters.
- Explore the Georgian architecture of Mahon, 18C Martello towers and the intact historic core of Ciutadella with its Moorish and Catalan influences.
- Walk on ancient mule trails, sandy lanes leading through Mediterranean pines to quiet coves, limestone clifftop tracks with stunning sea views and footpaths through aromatic maquis.
- Stay for a week in a delightful 14C Manor house hotel, set in an extensive private estate, with a marvellous restaurant.
- Discover the island’s heritage of atmospheric stone monuments, dating back thousands of years and set in ancient olive groves.

Guests’ comments on this trip:

‘One of the best holidays ever - lovely hotel, wonderful food, good weather, great company.’

‘An idyllic island sojourn, dream-like in its loveliness. Spiritually restoring.’

*‘The best yet! (But what else would you expect with such a **team**?) The quality of the food completely surprised us, Victor’s food was amazing.’*

‘As usual with Kudu Travel everything has been thought out and arranged. Nothing is too much trouble. One can completely relax and enjoy the holiday.’

Itinerary

DAY 1

D included

After meeting at Mahon airport mid-afternoon, we have a half hour transfer by road to the south east coast. We walk a restored stretch of the Cami de Cavalls, an old mule trail which encircles

the island, passing an 18th century Spanish watchtower en route to our hotel. Following paths through the pines and Mediterranean *garrigue* on the estate, we see our first Sardinian warblers, hoopoes, wild gladioli and pyramidal orchids and listen to the nightingales singing. A glass of *pomada* (Menorcan gin, ice and lemon juice) precedes a candle-lit dinner in the vaulted stables of the Manor.

DAY 2

B, L, D included

In nearby Maó (Mahon in Catalan), we see the Georgian mansions built by the British and visit the fine Baroque church of St. Francesc. We have lunch in a fishing village by the sea and search for rare Audouin's gulls before an afternoon's walk round the lake at S'Albufera es Grau, Menorca's main nature reserve. Paths through cistus, spiny broom, lentisc and juniper lead up to vantage points from where we watch for ospreys, marsh harriers, ducks and Booted eagles. In the pinewoods, we look for migrant warblers and golden orioles.

DAY 3

B, L, D included

We head northwest after breakfast, first seeing the atmospheric prehistoric site of Torre Lafauda, then one of the island's most famous monuments, the Naveta des Tudons, a cyclopean burial mound like an upturned ship. We follow an old track between stone walls, looking out for larks and pipits in the fields on either side. A sandy track through umbrella pines brings us to an area frequented by bee-eaters and tawny pipits and down to a lovely turquoise cove where we may swim. After a picnic, we walk through some spectacular geological formations to view a series of disused salt pans in a private reserve. Black-winged stilts, shelducks, ringed plovers, little stints and sandpiper species are evident, and ospreys fish the open water areas. We visit a local winery for a tasting of Menorcan wines before returning to our hotel.

DAY 4

B, L, D included

The water meadows and marshes of Tirant are our destination this morning, hoping for cattle egrets, purple gallinule, Great reed and Fan-tailed warblers, purple herons and red-rumped swallows. We walk through the sand dunes behind the beach at Cal Tirant, looking out for tortoises and Kentish plovers. We drive west through a beautiful stretch of unspoilt countryside to picnic and see a British 18th century Martello tower on our way to the Cap de Cavalleria, the most northerly point of the island. On our way back to our hotel, we pause at the Xoriguer gin distillery. Gin was introduced by the British navy in the 18th century, when Maó's deep water harbour was the key to control of the Mediterranean.

DAY 5

B, L, D included

We drive to the furthest west of the island to visit the delightful town of Ciutadella, the island capital under the Romans, the Moors and the Catalans. We see the 17th century Castell de Sant Nicolau, which guards the harbour entrance, visit the 18th century Olivar Palace, then walk through the fish and vegetable market on our way to a fish lunch in a well-known restaurant on the harbour. We visit a fascinating series of gardens – mediaeval, botanical, indigenous plants and an old orchard – within a former sandstone quarry, before proceeding to the headland at Punta Nati to seek blue rock thrush, thekla larks and stone curlews and watch for Cory's and Balearic shearwaters offshore.

DAY 6

B, L, D included

This morning we set off early to walk into the wooded Gorge d'Algendar, looking for Booted eagles, Egyptian vultures and red kites soaring on thermals above the imposing limestone cliffs,

and hearing nightingales singing in the thickets along the stream. We follow a coastal path westward to the pretty cove at Cala Macarella, seeking orchids (mirror, bee and tongue), rock-roses and spurges. The typical Mediterranean scrub of myrtle, tree heath and arbutus is favoured by woodchat shrikes, Dartford warblers and hoopoes. Alpine and Pallid swifts nest on the cliffs. After a picnic and maybe a swim, we have a further one hour walk before a scenic drive back to the hotel.

DAY 7

B, L, D included

We investigate the extensive Talayotic settlement of Torre d'en Galmés before a morning's walk by the sea. Sandwiched between the beach and the dunes, the reedbeds of Son Bou on the south coast have breeding Moustached and Cetti's warblers, purple and squacco herons, northern wheatears and whinchats with Audouin's gulls loafing on the beach. We encounter many asphodels, gladioli and orchids as we walk along the coastal track by one of the dry limestone gorges (*barrancs*) which run down to the sea. After a seafood lunch, we relax on or swim from the beautiful sandy beach.

DAY 8

B, L included

Our visit to Menorca concludes with a leisurely walk, surrounded by wildflowers, leading to a small fishing village on the coast. We return to the airport for early afternoon flights home.

Activity Level

Relaxed

Walking every day, usually several short forays, some (optional) longer walks (3.5 hours). Lightweight boots with good ankle support are a good idea, particularly as many paths on the limestone and the coast are quite rough and stony.

Temperatures

Early May temperatures on Menorca range between 12°C and 23°C during the day, though the direct sun can feel warmer, with cooler evenings.

Accommodation

- 7 nights in a delightful, first class hotel, a Manor house dating back to the 14C, set in a private 100-hectare estate leading down to the sea, with a swimming pool and an outstanding restaurant

Trip Price, per person sharing

£2,303.25 until 1st August 2019

£2,427.75 until 1st February 2020

<https://www.kudutravel.com/faq#discounts>

£2,365.50 until 1st November 2019

£2,490 after 1st February 2020

£280 double for single supplement

£400 deposit per person

Please note that the double for single use room supplement is imposed by the hotel (which does not have any single rooms) and not by Kudu Travel. If you are willing to share but no other suitable guest books on the trip, we regret that the supplement will be payable.

Price Includes

- Accommodation for Days 1 through 8, on a twin shared basis
- Meals (with wine at lunches and dinners) as listed in the daily notation

- Land transportation in a private vehicle as described except during free periods
- Entrance and sightseeing fees except during free periods
- Wine tasting as described
- Gratuities for hotel and restaurant staff (appreciation for Kudu guides is at your discretion)

Price does not Include

- Flights to and from Menorca
- Trip cancellation, medical or other insurance
- Immunisations, prescriptions or other medical requirements
- Passport, visa and health documentation
- Personal expenses (laundry, alcohol besides wine with group meals, free time activities, etc.)
- Transport and transfer of excess baggage
- Spanish departure tax, if any

VALUE FOR MONEY - SO MUCH IS INCLUDED

On Kudu trips, you will only need money for postcards, presents to take home, the odd G & T or an irresistible ice cream. Festival and opera tickets, museum and gallery entrances, National Park fees, all meals (with a very few exceptions specified in individual itineraries), wine with lunch and dinner, access to specialist books carried by the guides, gratuities for porters and hotel and restaurant staff, boat rides, train trips, internal flights, wine tastings, 4WDs with drivers, the services of skilled local guides and trackers etc. are ALL INCLUDED in the cost of your holiday.

We are confident that, like previous very satisfied guests, you will discover that our tours give you excellent value for money.

Visa and Health Requirements

Visitors from the EU and USA currently require a valid passport, but not a visa, for entry to Spain. If you are a national of any other country, please check visa regulations with your nearest Embassy of Spain.

At present, there are no specific and compulsory health requirements for entry to Spain. Residents of countries in the EU can only claim free (emergency) medical treatment in Spain by presenting their European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). You may also wish to check the advice given to travellers by the Department of Health (<https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/healthcare-when-travelling-abroad/>) and the FCO (<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>).

Insurance

It is essential and a condition of booking, that you protect yourself with a suitable travel insurance policy as soon as you book a trip. We can arrange comprehensive cover for UK residents. For further details, please see our website or ask our office.

Size of Party

This trip will run with a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 14 guests.