

The Beers of Mallorca



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PREFACE

It's a tough job, but somebody has to do it. Seriously though, you can't go on a research trip to Mallorca* without people thinking you must necessarily be on holiday, such is the nature of the place. Having said that, whilst there has been a lot of work in the preparation of this book, there's been a lot of pleasure too. I've met some wonderful people, passionate about their art and tasted many of their delicious products. So, let's raise a glass to them, the brewers of Mallorca!

**I have used the Spanish spelling here. Strictly speaking, the English is Majorca, but I decided that Mallorca is in more popular use.*



INTRODUCTION

When I first started visiting Mallorca regularly in the late 80s and 90s, there were eight wineries and no breweries. Now there are upwards of fifty vineyards and, at the time of writing, ten breweries. A number have sadly closed over the last year for various reasons, but doubtless new ones will continue to spring up.

As with brewers the world over, some will stick to their favoured recipes, whilst others are continuously experimenting with new beers. Considering the size of the premises and the brewery plant itself in most cases, some are surprisingly prolific.

There is a list of Beer Festivals, which many of the brewers will attend, but some will also have a stall at local markets and fiestas.

Many of the breweries which don't have a bar have a tap room, where you can sample the beers on-site at their best, but do bear in mind that hours can vary or even be seasonal, so it is always best to check before making a long journey.

For all the breweries, there are accompanying notes about the location in case the reader would like to make a full day of their visit, or even base their stay in the area.

The suggested routes are all based from Palma as it is the main hub and location of the Estación Intermodal, from where it is possible to reach pretty much anywhere on the island. Obviously, with a car there is the freedom to move around at will with the aid of a roadmap or satnav, but for public transport, it is often easier to travel into Palma and back out again than attempting a direct journey from one place to another.

The entries are in alphabetical order, so as not to infer any bias.

TOURIST AND TRAVEL INFORMATION

There are directions to the individual breweries in the book, but for getting around Mallorca in general and Palma in particular, there are many guidebooks and websites available. The official tourist information website is at www.infomallorca.net and the main office is at

Plaça de la Reina 2,
07012,
Palma

Tel: 971 17 39 90

Email: oit@conselldemallorca.net

Monday-Friday: 8:30 - 20:00

Saturday: 8:30 - 15:00

Sunday: Closed

There is also one near the station at Plaça d'Espanya and at the airport.

The public transport website at www.tib.org is useful for planning journeys and they are very helpful responding to queries via the contact form.

CRAFT BEERS AND THE BREWING PROCESS

So, what is a craft beer? In the United States they have a definition of a brewery which has an annual production of six million barrels or less, but in Europe, it is largely a subjective term and open to personal interpretation. Unfortunately, in the same way as “artisan”, it has become something of a “buzz” word and there are some products out there whose claim to a craft beer pedigree seem highly questionable.

At any rate, all the current brewers in Mallorca would have no problem qualifying. Even the larger ones produce only around eight barrels a week (around 1,500 litres) and the total combined annual output is approximately 300,000 litres.

Many purists maintain that beer can only be made from four ingredients, water, malted barley, hops and yeast, but there are many Mallorcan brews which contain unusual adjuncts. However, they are completely natural and it would be harsh, if not ridiculous, to dismiss them on that basis as they are not only innovative, but truly delicious.

The term “gypsy brewer” is used occasionally in this book. It refers to someone who does not have their own brewery plant and uses that of an established brewer elsewhere. They may pay to use the equipment or, in most cases, they provide the recipe and the beer is produced on their behalf. As the name suggests, they may travel from one brewery to another.

The brewing process itself is basically quite simple, but care and

dedication are required plus of course, scrupulous attention to cleanliness and hygiene. Malt is barley which has been germinated and then dried and comes in several varieties for different brews. The chosen malts are mixed with hot water in the mash tun where it is sparged – sprayed with hot water from a rotating arm and the resulting mixture (wort) is run off to the copper (or kettle) where it is boiled and the hops are added. It is cooled and transferred to the fermenting vessel, where the yeast is added. Over the next few days, the sugar is converted to alcohol and carbon dioxide is produced. The beer is then racked off into kegs or kept in a settling tank where the secondary fermentation occurs and it matures in flavour and reaches the correct level of carbonation.

Large commercial breweries will pasteurize the beer for preservation purposes and possibly add carbon dioxide or nitrogen, but all the Mallorcan brews are completely natural, relying on secondary fermentation to achieve the desired conditioning.

This is, of course, a concise overview and each brewer will have their own system and recipes based on this fundamental concept. It is indeed quite astonishing how many different beers can be made with a few nuances and tweaks to this basic procedure.

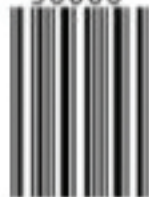


A comprehensive guide to the craft brewers of the island

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