

THE ANCIENT CITY OF POLLENTIA IN MALLORCA'S HISTORY

Nobody is certain where they came from or how they got there, but the first settlers on Mallorca were cave dwellers who used pottery and tools made from animal horns.

Next came the Talayotic period around 1000 BC and you can still see the cone-shaped Talayots towers at Capocorp Vell in the south of the island.

Cala San Vicente also has examples of prehistoric caves. (The inhabitants of these were remarkably advanced in cooking methods as we saw empty McDonalds cartons and Coke can relics inside them when we visited!).

Phoenician and Greek traders came next and it's possible that the name Balearic comes from ballein, the Greek for sling throwing. These sling-throwers helped the



Carthaginians fight the Romans in the 2nd Punic War, but by 123 BC the Romans had control of Mallorca.

Roads and towns were built and Christianity introduced to the island. The Roman city of Pollentia in Alcudia provided excellent shelter for shipping and was built in about 123 B.C.

Pollentia was supposedly founded along with Palma by Caecilius Metellus Balearicus following a campaign against Mediterranean pirates operating from the Balearic Islands of Mallorca and Menorca.



The archaeological evidence, on the other hand, indicates that the organisation of a structured Roman community at Pollentia and perhaps at Palma as well occurred later than that, and was not completed until the time of Augustus.

It seems likely that Metellus Balearicus merely removed 3,000 Italian settlers from the mainland of Spain and located them at Palma and Pollentia on the island.

They lived, 1500 at each site, either along with native inhabitants or in a military camp attached to the native community. Their primary mission was to keep the peace on the island.

At the beginning of the 10th century

the island was annexed to the Emirate of Córdoba, starting 300 years of Moorish rule, the influence of which is widely seen today.

During this time there were serious squabbles between the Muslims and Christians, but even so trade prospered from its strategic position between Africa and Islamic Spain, and agriculture improved.

This prosperity tempted King Jaime I of Aragón and Catalunya, who, annoyed with the Emir of Mallorca for stealing some of his ships, decided to teach him and the Island a lesson in 1229.

Successful, he created an independent Kingdom of Mallorca, unfortunately destroying many Moorish buildings in the process. On the plus side, he governed progressively, giving rights to the island's Jews, waiving taxation and stimulating trade. He also built Palma cathedral.

On his death he left his realm to his two sons: Pedro inherited Catalunya, Aragón and Valencia; Jaime II received Montpellier, Roussillon and the Balearics. The Balearics continued to prosper, and in 1349 a jealous Pedro IV of Aragón landed in Mallorca and claimed it for himself.

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Mallorca was quickly neglected and was not allowed to trade with the newly discovered Americas, and the economy went into decline.

The 16th century saw civil unrest, Jewish executions ordered by the Inquisition and threats from the Ottoman Turks. The 17th century wasn't much better with trade stagnating and the Black Death plague killed thousands of people.

By the 18th century Mallorca's official language Catalan had been replaced by Castilian Spanish. Even so waves of Catalan refugees fled to the island during the Napoleonic wars.

Famine, drought and epidemics made 19th-century life hard on the island, however. Communications with mainland Spain, a new railway and agricultural advancements helped and Catalan culture experienced a revival. Nonetheless many islanders left Mallorca for America.

The start of mass tourism in the 1950s was a turning point for the Island and thousands of people have brought prosperity, with the islanders now enjoy the highest standard of living in Spain.

But this has come at a price as cheap and nasty resort developments have spoiled much of the coast, and more than a fifth of all property on the island is in foreign hands.

In 1983 the Balearic Islands became one of Spain's autonomous regions, with Palma de Mallorca its capital.

The question today is, how to continue this prosperity without losing the island's natural beauty to concrete?

"I'm so unlucky that if I was to fall into a barrel of nipples I'd come out sucking my thumb"...Freddie Starr.

Two Mexicans are stuck in the desert, wandering aimlessly and close to death. They are close to just lying down and waiting for the inevitable, when all of a sudden...

"Hey Pepe, do you smell what I smell. Ees bacon, I is sure of eet."

"Si, Luis, eet smells like bacon to meee".

So, with renewed strength, they struggle off up the next sand dune, and there, in the distance, is a tree, just loaded with bacon.

There's raw bacon, dripping with moisture, there's fried bacon, back bacon, double smoked bacon...every kind of cured pig meat you can imagine!!

"Pepe, Pepe, we ees saved. Eees a bacon tree".

"Luis, are sure ees not a meerage? We ees in the desert, don't forget".

"Pepe, when deed you ever hear of a meerage that smeeell of bacon...ees no meerage, ees a bacon tree".

And with that...Luis races towards the tree. He gets to within 5 metres, Pepe following closely behind, when all of a sudden, a machine gun opens up, and Luis is cut down in his tracks. It is clear he is mortally wounded but, true friend that he is, he manages to warn Pepe with his dying breath.

"Pepe...go back man, you was right, ees not a bacon tree"

"Luis, Luis mi amigo...what ees eet?"

"Pepe...ees not a bacon tree...."

Ees.....Ees.....Ees.....Ees.....a Ham Bush!"

A fresh-faced lad on the eve of his wedding night asks his mother, "Mom, why are wedding dresses white?"

The mother looks at her son and replies, "Son, this shows the town that your bride is pure."

The son thanks his mom, and then seeks his father opinion, "Dad, why are wedding dresses white?"

The father looks at his son in surprise and says, "Son, all household appliances come in white."

One evening, while her husband is away on a business trip, the wife is at home having sex with her lover.

The headlights of a car pulling into the driveway startle her, and she looks out the window to see her husband getting out of a Taxi.

"Oh my god, it's my husband, he's home early!" She shrieks.

"What are we going do?" the lover asks nervously.

"Quick, follow me! Forget the clothes, there's no time!" She yells.

They both run out of the room completely naked, down the back stairs and into the kitchen.

Frantically, the naked woman begins tearing through the cabinets, pulls out a big metal tin full of flour and shoves it into the naked man's arms.

"Here, sprinkle this all over yourself, then stand in the corner and don't move a muscle!"

The man shrugs his shoulders. Not having time to argue, he does as he's told.

A few moments later, the husband comes in and greets his nude wife in the kitchen. The two begin a heavy lovemaking session, during which the husband says, "What's with the statue?" pointing to the naked, flour covered man.

"Oh, uhh, I saw one just like it at the Smith's house down the street, and I thought one would look really good here," she responds nervously.

The husband thinks nothing more of it, and the two move into the living room where they continue their lovemaking.

A few hours later, when he is sure his wife is asleep, the husband gets up, and goes into the kitchen.

He opens the fridge, makes a sandwich, pours a glass of milk, then picks up both, walks up to the statue and says, "Here, eat this, I stood in the Smith house for two days, and not a single SOB even offered me a lousy glass of water."