

Mahon - Capital Of Menorca

The second largest of the popular Spanish Balearic islands is Menorca. Mahon is the capital city of Menorca. Today it is a prosperous hub for tourism, but it hasn't always been that way.

Rough Beginnings

Mahon's name has been spelled a variety of ways over the centuries. The name's origin has been traced to about 205 BC and Hannibal's brother, Mago Barca. The spelling Mahon is most often used in English and Spanish writings. The Catalan spelling is Mao, while the old Catalan spelling is Maho.

In 1287 Mahon was captured and taken from the Moors by Alfonso III of Aragon. It was then incorporated into the Kingdom of Majorca, which was a sub-kingdom of the Kingdom of Aragon. Mahon's harbor was, and still is, one of the most strategically important harbors in the Mediterranean Sea.

During the War of the Spanish Succession in 1707, Menorca was captured by the British. The Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 confirmed British ownership of the islands. In the 18th century, under British rule, Mahon was named the capital city of Menorca. Previously, Ciutadella was the capital of the island. The strategic position of the island has always been a military advantage during wartimes.

Under the dictatorship of General Franco from the 1930s to the 1970s, the original Balearic dialects of Menorqui, Mallorqui and Eivissenc were officially suppressed.

After his death and the liberalization of the islands, the Catalan language was able to emerge once again. However the decades of suppression did take its toll on Menorca's dialect, Menorqui. Today, the co-official languages in Mahon are Spanish and Catalan.

Post 20th Century Mahon

Mahon is now under Spanish rule, as are the other Balearic Islands, and the 20th century brought an entirely new outlook for the islands. Peace was restored, General Franco's dictatorship came to an end, and tourism was introduced.

Some of the first tourists were patients from Spain whose doctors recommended sunshine and relaxation to cure the aches and pains of winter chills. Menorca's few hotels began to fill to capacity and expand. New hotels and eventually resorts were built. Mahon was becoming more like the city so many tourists today have fallen in love with.

In the wake of the turmoil, tourists today find themselves struck speechless when faced with some of Mahon's archaeological and architectural heritage.

Today's Mahon, Menorca is a wonderful city full of rich culture and opportunities for tourists to learn from her past. Many museums, galleries and historic sites tell the tales of centuries gone by. They tell of wars fought and won, or lost. They also tell of how Mahon's ports were used to aid in war efforts and to help fortify the city itself.

Mahon boasts one of the deepest natural ports in the world. This has been both a blessing and a curse in Menorca's past.

Today Mahon is the most densely populated municipality on Menorca and its ports are used in a much different way.

And holiday [flights to Menorca](#) arrive at the island's Mahon Airport, just fifteen minutes from the city centre.

In decades past, Menorca's many beaches and coves have seen a lot of battles. Now the beautiful white sand beaches are filled with the sounds of laughter and happy families enjoying a relaxing holiday together.

Residents of Mahon still use the main port as a fishing or leisure port. Cruise ships use the port as a port of call for passengers on tours. Tourists often find themselves in awe as their cruise ship approaches the island of Menorca, and the city of Mahon, before disembarking to see what the holiday island is all about.

About the Author

YourMenorca.net is a guide for Menorca and has a photo gallery including Mahon.

For holidays information about Menorca, including history based [Menorca holidays](#) see yourmenorca.net's travel section.

They also have a section for [Menorca hotels](#)

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