

Las Islas Baleares, un destino de cruceros consolidado

The Balearics: A Consolidated Port of Call for Cruises



Crucero frente a la catedral en el porto de Palma de Mallorca
Cruise ship crossing the Cathedral in the Port of Palma de Mallorca

A Major Tourist Destination and a Strategic Geographical Location

The Balearic Isles (Spain) are composed of four main islands: Mallorca, Minorca, Ibiza and Formentera, covering a surface area of around 5,000 Km², with approximately 1,400 Km of coastline. Over one million people live permanently on the islands, but in the summer months the population is around twice that figure. The Balearic Isles are at the centre of the Western Mediterranean, between the Iberian Peninsula, France, Italy and North Africa. The nearest mainland ports are Barcelona and Valencia, with which there are regular sea links.

Palma de Mallorca has a major European airport, which was used by 22.8 million passengers in 2008.

The Autoridad Portuaria de Baleares (APB) (Balearic Port Authority) is responsible for managing the five ports of interest on the islands: the ports of Palma and Alcudia on Mallorca, Mahon on Minorca, Ibiza on the island of the same name and La Savina, on Formentera. More than 95% of the goods and produce that are consumed reach the islands via those 5 ports. In 2008, there was a turnover of 13.2 million tonnes of goods passing through the Balearic Ports. 5.3 million passengers used the APB-managed ports, of whom 1.3 were cruise-ship tourists.

Palma de Mallorca, a Major Cruise Port

The Port of Palma is the largest of the five ports of general interest on the Balearic Isles. In 2008 it was used by more than 1.9 million passengers, of whom 1,130,000 were cruise-ship tourists, alighting and departing from 496 vessels. The Port of Mahon received the second largest number of cruise ships, 118 making it their port of call, bring 103,000 passengers, followed by the main port on the island of Ibiza, which was visited by 79,000 passengers from 94 vessels.

Since 2007, the number of cruise passengers alighting at the Port of Palma de Mallorca, which is the both a home port and a port of call, has exceeded 1 million per year. Last year, it was the port of call for 260 ships carrying a total of 472,000 passengers, and in the same year it was the home port for 7 vessels, which made 236 stops and transported 659,000 passengers. The cruise ships that were based at Palma in 2008 belong to the companies Aida Cruises, Island Cruises, Thompson and P&O, all of which are aimed at the European market and make use of the services of a major airport, located a few minutes' away from the port and with good connections to most German and British airports. In 2008, the following vessels visited the Port of Palma for the very first time: *Balmoral* (Fred Olsen), *Grand Celebration* (Iberocruceros), *Norwegian Jade* (NCL), *Ventura* (P&O), *Carnival Splendor* and *Carnival Freedom*. The busiest day of all was 10th October 2008, when no less than 7 cruise ships were all berthed at the same time.

According to the surveys conducted by the Regional Government of the Balearic Islands, the average expenditure per cruise-ship passenger per day in 2008

Un gran destino turístico y una estratégica situación geográfica

El archipiélago balear (España) está formado por cuatro islas principales: Mallorca, Menorca, Eivissa y Formentera, y cuenta con una extensión cercana a los 5.000 km² y 1.400 km de costa. Su población residente supera el millón de habitantes, aunque en la época estival soporta una presión demográfica de prácticamente el doble.

Las Islas Baleares se encuentran en el centro del Mediterráneo occidental, entre la Península Ibérica, Francia, Italia y el norte de África. Los puertos más cercanos y con los que tiene una relación marítima regular son los de Barcelona y Valencia.

Palma de Mallorca dispone de un gran aeropuerto de ámbito europeo, que ha movido 22, 8 millones de pasajeros en 2008.

La Autoridad Portuaria de Baleares (APB) gestiona los cinco puertos de interés general existentes en las islas: los puertos de Palma y Alcudia en Mallorca, el de Mahón en la isla de Menorca, el de Ibiza en la isla del mismo nombre y el de La Savina, en la de Formentera. Todos ellos son las puertas de entrada de más del 95% de las mercancías que se consumen en el territorio. En 2008 se registraron 13,2 millones de toneladas en los puertos baleares. Transitaron por los puertos de la APB 5,3 millones de pasajeros, de los cuales 1,3 millones fueron pasajeros de cruceros turísticos.

Francesc Triay Llopis





Palma de Mallorca, un gran puerto de cruceros

El puerto de Palma es el mayor de los cinco puertos de interés general de Baleares. En 2008 registró más de 1,9 millones de pasajeros, de los cuales 1.130.000 fueron cruceristas, con 496 escalas. El puerto de Mahón es el segundo puerto en cuanto al turismo de cruceros con 103.000 pasajeros y 118 escalas, seguido del puerto de Eivissa con 79.000 pasajeros y 94 escalas.

El puerto de Palma de Mallorca, que es puerto de base y puerto de escala, viene superando el millón anual de pasajeros de crucero desde 2007. Como puerto de escala ha recibido el pasado año 260 buques, con un total de 472.000 pasajeros. En 2008 ha sido puerto base de 7 buques, que realizaron 236 escalas y movieron 659.000 pasajeros. Los cruceros con base en Palma en 2008 pertenecen a las compañías Aida Cruises, Island Cruises, Thompson y P&O, y están todos ellos orientados al mercado europeo y se apoyan en un gran aeropuerto, situado a pocos minutos del puerto y con conexiones con la mayor parte de los aeropuertos alemanes y británicos.

Visitaron por primera vez el puerto de Palma durante 2008, los buques *Balmoral* (Fred Olsen), *Grand Celebration* (Iberocruceros), *Norwegian Jade* (NCL), *Ventura* (P&O), *Carnival Splendor* y *Carnival Freedom*. La coincidencia máxima se dio el día 10 de octubre de 2008 con siete cruceros simultáneamente.

Según las encuestas llevadas a cabo por el gobierno regional de las Islas Baleares, el gasto medio en tierra del turista de crucero por persona y día en 2008 fue de 60€, por lo que se estiman unos ingresos totales para la economía local de 90 millones de euros.

was 60 €, so at a reasonable estimate, it can be calculated that the local economy receives a total of 90 million Euros from this source.

Ongoing Adaptation of the Infrastructure to the New Cruise Ships

There is an ongoing trend towards the fleet of ocean liners getting bigger and having a greater capacity. The average capacity of the fleet in 1990 was less than 1,500 passengers, yet by 2008, the capacity had risen to 2,500 passengers. As from 1996, the fleet of ships was joined by vessels of more than 100,000 GT and a capacity of 2,500 passengers, whereas by 2006 the largest ships weighed more than 160,000 GT and could cater for 3,600 passengers, these being members of the RCI Freedom Series (*Freedom of the Seas*, *Liberty of the Seas* and *Independence of the Seas*), 339 m long. The first ship in the RCI Genesis series, *Oasis of the Seas*, is due to be launched in 2009; this amounts to a major step forward in the upward trend in mega-cruise ships, with a tonnage of 220,000 GT, 360 m long, 5,400 passengers and a crew of 2,700.

This general trend is proof of the fact that it is feasible to construct increasingly larger high-safety ships that are almost ecologically friendly, equipped with all modern conveniences, comforts and attractions and well accepted by the cruise-ship subsector. The problem with the steady growth of liners revolves around the port facilities and the cruise destinations.

Over the last four years, the Port of Palma has been

able to successfully cater for 259 vessels whose tonnage exceeded 100.000 GT, the *Costa Fortuna*, the *Costa Mágica* and the *Costa Concordia*, all being regular visitors, and it has also been able to accommodate occasional visits from the *Carnival Liberty*, the *Carnival Freedom*, the *Carnival Splendor*, the *Voyager of the Seas*, the *Navigator of the Seas* and the *Ventura*.

Enlargements are being made to the Port and the infrastructure is being improved, so that it can cope with 5 cruise ships moored simultaneously, when they all have a tonnage of more than 100.000 GT and are over 300 m long. New moorings are being prepared and the existing ones are being improved, not only in length and draught, but also where strengthening their structures is concerned, the new ones being equipped with stronger mooring systems. A new fleet of tugs has also been ordered, and these will have a greater towing capacity. The embarkation and landing facilities are also being enlarged and improved, and better zones are to be provided for controlling and handling luggage.

Highly-specialised Tourist Companies

The new mega-cruise ships are also a major challenge for the tourist destinations, because they require a wide range of excursions to be on offer, and these tours have to be staggered to ensure that the old quarters of the towns and cities, their sights and monuments and the natural beauty of the environments do not become saturated by too many tourists visiting them at the same time. The Balearic tourist companies, which have specialised since the 1960s in catering for large numbers of tourists paying simultaneous visits, have not only fully adapted to cruise tourism by constantly renewing their offers to tourists, but have also applied their activities to other Spanish ports.

An Incipient Winter Cruise Offer

An ongoing increase in cruise tourism in the Mediterranean, coupled with the relatively mild winter temperatures, has enabled the operators to experiment with winter cruises, which are of great interest to port cities, especially those that rely heavily on summer tourism. Along these lines, Aida Cruises has decided to base its cruise ship *AIDAcara* in Palma. The vessel weighs 38,500 GT, has a capacity for 1,200 passengers and sets sail every week throughout the winter of 2008-2009.

A Demanding Public Opinion

The cruises in and around the Balearic Isles, the top destination for mass tourism for six months of the year, are very well rated by most of the inhabitants, who see them as a tourist product that does not encroach on their territory, and find that the average expenditure per day of each cruise tourist is greater than the amount spent outside their accommodation by the hotel tourists who come to the Balearics seeking sun and beaches. They also give a positive rating to the periods spent on land by the very numerous cruise-ship crew members, bearing in mind the fact that there are an average of between 3 and 4 crew members for every 10 passengers. It is also generally accepted that every cruise visitor is a potential hotel tourist in the future, i.e. that using the town or city as a port of call for a few hours serves to encourage cruise tourists to spend their holidays there if the marketing is good. However, this does not mean that all the locals are in favour of cruises. Sometimes this is because of a lack of information, but there are others whose views are more radical.

For example, the measures that have to be taken to protect the vessels and port facilities, which are strictly applied to cruise ships, and which are one of the major assets of each port: baggage control, metal detection, protected zones and security cameras staffed permanently from the control centre, are rejected by those who have traditionally enjoyed the quays, wharfs and promenades on the breakwaters for walking and getting a view of the city, the harbour and the sea. Such people now feel that they are being deprived of these panoramas.

Crucero y barca de pesca en el porto de Palma

Crucero en el porto de Ibiza

Cruise ship and fishing boat in the Port of Palma

Cruise ship in the Port of Ibiza



Una continua adaptación de las infraestructuras a los nuevos cruceros

La evolución de la flota oceánica de cruceros es continua hacia buques de mayor capacidad. Si la capacidad media de la flota en 1990 era inferior a 1.500 pasajeros, en 2008 ya alcanza los 2.500 pasajeros. A partir de 1996 se incorporan a la flota buques de más de 100.000 GT y de 2.500 pasajeros, hasta llegar en 2006 a los 160.000 GT y 3.600 pasajeros de la serie *Freedom* de RCI (*Freedom of the Seas*, *Liberty of the Seas*, *Independence of the Seas*), de 339 m de eslora. En 2009 se espera la entrada en servicio del primer buque de la serie RCI Génesis, *Oasis of the Seas*, que supone un gran salto en la línea ascendente de los mega-cruceros, con un arqueo de 220.000 GT, eslora de 360 m, 5.400 pasajeros y 2.700 tripulantes. Este proceso demuestra que se pueden construir buques cada vez mayores, de alta seguridad, poco contaminantes, dotados de todas las comodidades y atractivos, y con gran aceptación en el mercado turístico. El problema del crecimiento continuado de los buques, está en las instalaciones portuarias y en los destinos turísticos.

El puerto de Palma, ha acogido satisfactoriamente en los últimos cuatro años 259 buques de arqueo superior a 100.000 GT, siendo habituales el *Costa Fortuna*, el *Costa Mágica* y el *Costa Concordia*, y con visitas esporádicas el *Carnival Liberty*, el *Carnival Freedom*, el *Carnival Splendor*, *Voyager of the Seas*, *Naviga-tor of the Seas* y *Ventura*.

El puerto está desarrollando ampliaciones y mejoras de su infraestructura para poder acoger simultáneamente 5 cruceros de más de 100.000 GT y más de 300 m de eslora.

Para ello se están preparando nuevos atraques, y mejorando los existentes, no sólo en longitud y calado, sino también reforzando sus estructuras, dotándolos de sistemas de amarre más potentes, con un servicio de remolcadores con mayor capacidad de tiro, sistemas de embarque y desembarque de mayor capacidad y fluidez y mayores espacios para el control del embarque y para control y manejo de los equipajes.

Unas empresas turísticas muy especializadas

Para los destinos turísticos los nuevos mega-cruceros constituyen, asimismo, un gran desafío, ya que requieren una amplia oferta de excursiones, y un escalonamiento de las mismas para evitar la sobrecarga sobre los centros históricos de las ciudades, sus monumentos artísticos y las bellezas naturales del entorno, debido a un número excesivo de visitantes simultáneos. Las empresas turísticas baleares, especializadas desde los años '60 del siglo pasado en atender a grupos numerosos y simultáneos de visitantes, no sólo se han adaptado plenamente al turismo de cruceros, con una continua innovación en cuanto a oferta de recursos turísticos, sino que además han extendido su actividad a otros puertos españoles.

Un incipiente crucerismo de invierno

El incremento continuado del turismo de cruceros en el Mediterráneo, junto a las temperaturas relativamente suaves de su invierno, está permitiendo experimentar con cruceros de invierno, que son de gran interés para las ciudades portuarias, especialmente las dependientes de un turismo estacional estival. En esta línea Aida Cruises ha establecido en Palma la base del crucero *AIDAcara*, de 38.500 GT, y 1.200 pasajeros de capacidad, con salidas semanales durante todo el invierno 2008-2009.

Una opinión pública exigente

En la Islas Baleares, destino líder en turismo de masas durante seis meses al año, los cruceros turísticos son valorados muy favorablemente por una gran mayoría de la población, que ve en ellos un producto turístico que no consume territorio y con un gasto medio en tierra por crucerista superior al gasto medio diario fuera del hotel de un turista vacacional de sol y playa. También valora la estancia en tierra de las tripulaciones, un colectivo muy numeroso, que oscila entre 3 y 4 tripulantes por cada 10 pasajeros. También es de general aceptación la idea de que el visitante de crucero es un futuro turista de hotel, que la escala de unas horas es un estímulo y una oportunidad de marketing del destino para futuros

The excursions offered and accepted on board, which are one of the three pillars of the economy of a cruise company, are often criticised by the tradesmen in the city centre, who would rather the cruise passengers moved freely through their streets. They are unaware of the fact that a port of call without a sufficiently high percentage of excursions sold amounts to a failure, with little possibility of being able to be kept up in a future itinerary of programmes. Furthermore, during a normal port of call, tourists can find plenty of time to go on an organised excursion as well as to do their own sightseeing.

Waste is also a source of concern, so the detractors must also be made aware of how the new cruise ships are equipped to cope with environmental factors in a state-of-the-art way by separating rubbish and/or recycling it, so that no waste is discharged into the sea. The most hostile criticism levelled at cruises is that they are the cause of the unsustainable growth of port infrastructures, which in itself further encourages unwanted hotel or residential growth. It is clear that ports and harbours have to adapt to the new ships, as they have done throughout history, and this is all the more important on an island community. However, natural ports such as Mahon, which have no reasonable possibility of growing outwardly, can be the ports of call for the smaller cruise ships, those that are less than 200 m long. Such vessels are still being constructed, and these are aimed at the upmarket tourists in the sector with greater purchasing power.



viajes vacacionales. Pero ello no significa que los cruceros no tengan detractores. Unos por insuficiente información, otros por planteamientos ambientales radicales.

Por ejemplo, las medidas de protección de buques e instalaciones portuarias, que se aplican estrictamente a los cruceros turísticos, y que constituyen uno de los activos importantes de cada puerto: control de equipajes, detección de metales, recintos protegidos, cámaras de seguridad atendidas permanentemente desde el centro de control, generan algunas respuestas de rechazo por parte de quienes han disfrutado tradicionalmente de los muelles y los espaldones de los diques como zonas de paseo con vistas a la ciudad, al puerto y al mar, y ahora se ven privados de ellos.

Las excursiones adquiridas a bordo, que constituyen uno de los tres pilares de la economía de una compañía de cruceros, son, a menudo, criticadas por los comerciantes del centro de la ciudad, que desearían que todos los cruceristas se movieran por sus calles individualmente, sin conocer que una escala de crucero sin un porcentaje suficiente de excursiones vendidas es una escala fallida, con escasas posibilidades de mantenerse en una próxima programación de itinerarios. Aparte de que una escala normal, permite compaginar un tiempo para una excursión organizada y un tiempo para el callejeo individual.

Los residuos son también objeto de preocupación, por lo que debería darse a conocer el funcionamiento ambiental avanzado de los nuevos cruceros y las medidas de separación y de reciclaje de todos los demás, así como garantizar que no se producen descargas al mar.

La crítica más radical es la que considera que los cruceros son la causa de un crecimiento insostenible de las infraestructuras de los puertos, que a su vez abren nuevas posibilidades a un crecimiento hotelero o residencial indeseable. Está claro que los puertos se han de adaptar a los nuevos buques, como han hecho a lo largo de toda la historia, y que ello es especialmente importante en una comunidad insular. En cualquier caso, puertos naturales como el de Mahón, sin posibilidades razonables de ampliación exterior, pueden tener su lugar en los itinerarios de cruceros de menos de 200 m de eslora, que siguen siendo muchos, y que se siguen construyendo, especialmente destinados al sector de mayor nivel económico del mercado.

Nuove opere per il traffico crocieristico a Venezia

New works
for Cruise Traffic in Venice

The general consolidation of the "Mediterranean" as a destination, in a field whose basin of reference has always been the Caribbean or Central America, has determined an increase in the offer of cruise ship excursions in historic cities, of which there are so many in the Mediterranean that few other geographical areas can compete. The attraction exercised by these cultural destinations has broken the seasonal barrier of cruise scheduling, with units that cruise through the Mediterranean even in the wintertime.

In recent years Venice, a favorite Mediterranean destination, has experienced an exponential increase in passenger traffic through the maritime station (+240% in the decade 1998/2008) where the cruise-ship component grew the most, covering 71% of the total in 2008 in relation to the ro-pax or the high speed ships, confirming its position as the third home port in the Mediterranean and the thirteenth in the world with 1.2 million cruise ship passengers, and handling 1415 ships in 2008.

In recent years the ports of the Mediterranean and Venice have realized that they must adapt to the changes in scenario, in response to forecasts that predict a growth in demand, and find new spaces to designate for the cruise ship industry. Having decided to move commercial traffic to Porto Marghera, and the cruise ships to the Marittima area in the Nineties, Venice must now consolidate what has become a tourist gateway to the city, the Stazione Crociere di Marittima, and to evaluate the hypothesis of building adequate new spaces, necessary to host the new cruise ships that are growing larger and larger (up to 335 meters long).

The spaces for the passenger industry are an asset that the Port Authority of Venice has considered central to its strategy for many years in a perspective that is not focused on commercial issues alone, but on the urban function that has been or might potentially be attributed to partially abandoned port areas such as Santa Marta and San Basilio, which are available today to the city and the university.

The contribution of the Port Authority has made it possible to realize and to initiate a series of new projects to respond both to the increase in demand by the cruise ship industry, and the social, cultural and urban need to revitalize diversified urban and public functions in heretofore unused areas; operations that require a strong interpenetration between the passenger port and the historic urban fabric.

The new multi-storey garage planned in the former locomotive yard north of the cruise station, the Stazione Crociere di Marittima, will be one example. It will be a garage with 1400 parking spaces to be used prevalently by passengers arriving and departing from Venice, but will also house an auditorium, a hotel and a swimming pool that will allow the maritime station to offer a wide range of services. An architectural work conceived to reconstruct the distance between Venice and the mainland, with parks to host large installations and sculptures from the Art Biennale and other events

Il generale consolidamento della destinazione “Mediterraneo” in un settore che ha sempre visto come bacino di riferimento i Caraibi e il Centro America ha fatto sì che l’offerta di visite tramite crociere a città storiche, di cui il Mediterraneo è ricco, e difficilmente superabile da altre aree geografiche, aumentasse. L’attrattiva delle mete culturali permette infatti la destagionalizzazione del programma crociere con unità che transitano nel Mediterraneo anche in inverno.

Venezia, destinazione privilegiata nel Mediterraneo, ha visto negli ultimi anni un aumento esponenziale del traffico passeggeri presso la stazione marittima (+240% nel decennio 1998/2008) in cui la componente crocieristica ha subito un incremento maggiore arrivando a coprire il 71% del totale nel 2008 rispetto alle navi ro-pax e a quelle su navi veloci, riconfermandosi come il terzo *home port* nel Mediterraneo e tredicesimo nel mondo con 1.2 milioni di crocieristi ed una movimentazione di 1415 navi nel 2008.

Per i porti del Mediterraneo e per Venezia è emersa pertanto in questi anni la necessità di adeguarsi al cambiamento di scenario, dovendo rispondere alle prospettive di sviluppo della domanda e di recuperare spazi da adibire al settore crocieristico. Dopo che a Venezia, negli anni novanta, si è scelto di spostare il traffico commerciale a Porto Marghera, e le crociere nelle aree di Marittima, ci si trova ora tra la necessità di consolidare quella che è diventata per i turisti una porta di accesso alla città, la Stazione Crociere di Marittima, e il bisogno di valutare l’ipotesi di nuovi e idonei spazi, necessari per l’arrivo di nuove navi crociere sempre più grandi (fino 335 metri di lunghezza).

Un asset, quello degli spazi per il settore passeggeri su cui l’Autorità Portuale di Venezia sta giocando la sua partita da diversi anni, in un’ottica che non guarda solo all’aspetto commerciale, ma anche alla funzione urbana che potevano e possono avere aree portuali parzialmente dismesse come le aree di Santa Marta e San Basilio, oggi a disposizione della città e dell’università.

Grazie al contributo dell’Autorità Portuale sono stati realizzati e si stanno avviando una serie di nuovi progetti per rispondere sia all’aumento della domanda nel settore crocieristico sia all’esigenza urbanistica sociale e culturale di recupero di funzioni urbane, pubbliche e diversificate, in aree finora inutilizzate; operazione che richiede una forte compenetrazione fra il porto passeggeri e il tessuto urbano storico. Il nuovo garage multipiano previsto nell’area dell’ex deposito locomotive, a nord della Stazione Crociere di Marittima, ne sarà un esempio. Non solo un garage con 1400 posti auto destinati per lo più ai passeggeri in partenza e arrivo da Venezia, ma un auditorium, un albergo, una piscina che permetterà alla stazione marittima di dare un’ampia offerta di servizi. Un’opera architettonica pensata appositamente per ricostruire quella distanza fra Venezia e la terraferma, con parchi dove inserire grandi installazioni e sculture della Biennale Arte e non solo, e dove ospitare grandi concerti. L’opera, che verrà realizzata entro il 2011 e sarà gestita in concessione da APV investimenti, utilizzerà soluzioni impiantistiche innovative, in modo da garantire il massimo risparmio energetico (cemento foto catalitico, pannelli fotovoltaici, produzione acqua calda tramite pannelli solari, etc.). Il garage sarà strettamente connesso al People Mover, la funicolare che collegherà l’area parcheggio del Tronchetto a Piazzale Roma.

Paolo Costa

Rendering Stazione Crociere banchina Isonzo

Nave da crociera attraccata al pontile della compagnia Adriatica (foto d’archivio)

Rendering of the Cruise Terminal at banchina Isonzo

Cruise ship moored at Adriatica’s dock (historical photo)

