



R E A L I B I Z A

The White Isle, once the party capital of the world, is slowing down to dance to a different beat. Clarissa Hyman visits a new generation of food lovers and finds plenty to rave about

PHOTOGRAPHY BY NASSIMA ROTHACKER



Clockwise from top left: the grounds of Atzeró Natural Luxury Hotel; an Ibiza palm; a prawn starter at Es Ventall; Cala d'Hort beach; a Zero Gradi cone; one of Anne Sijmonsbergen's rustic casitas; exploring by yacht; elegant croquettes with garlic mayonnaise at Es Ventall; tranquil Cala Conta





Clockwise from top left: the café at Atzaró; wild fennel; soaking up the rays at Cala Saladeta; a sun-dappled walkway at Can Riero; marinated local olives at Re.art

The tranquil grounds and pool at Atzaró Natural Luxury Hotel & Spa

At sunset, a veneer of honeyed light coats the land, cliffs and sea of Ibiza like golden syrup. And by the mysterious islet of Es Vedrà, a rocky pyramid that has inspired myths for decades, it is at its most intense. The glow is spine-tingling; the enchantment of the dream-catcher island seems almost tangible, the scent of wild thyme and jasmine drifts in the air, and for a brief few moments you literally become one of the beautiful people.

There's something happening here. Call it a farm-to-fork, farm-to-plate or farm-to-fork-and-plate movement, it has largely been driven by an energetic and lively young generation of *Ibicensos*, bona fide Ibizans of Catalan roots, many of whom have given up professional careers to return home. The result is some of the best food and cooking to be found anywhere in the Mediterranean. The dishes may be traditional, such as seafood *arroz a banda*, or modern, like amberjack tatami with quinoa, seaweed and teriyaki sauce at Es Ventall, but they share a recognition that native meat, local fish, heritage varieties, oil, salt, cheese and organic —————>>



Travel information

Ibiza is one of the Balearic islands, and sits in the Mediterranean Sea. Currency is the euro (EUR). Time is 1 hour ahead of GMT. In August, the average high temperature is 29C; in September it's 27C.

GETTING THERE

British Airways flies to Ibiza from London Heathrow, Gatwick, City and Stansted. Flights take around 2.5 hours. britishairways.com
Ryanair offers flights to Ibiza from London Stansted, East Midlands, Liverpool, Manchester and Edinburgh. ryanair.com

RESOURCES

Ibiza Travel is the official tourist board, with a website packed with useful information to help you plan your trip. ibiza.travel

FURTHER READING

Eivissa: The Ibiza Cookbook by Anne Sijmonsbergen (HarperCollins, £20) is a joyous celebration of rural Ibiza's larder.
My Ibiza & Formentera by Hjordis Fogelberg (£22) provides a beautifully illustrated insider's account of the islands' culture.





Clockwise from top left: Es Ventall chocolates; an Eivissa café; street art brightens up an apartment building; a waitress holds a plate of confit leek stuffed with red prawns at Food Studio; a close-up. Opposite page, clockwise from top left: street views of Eivissa; Queriendo-Té's Felix; views from Eivissa's old port; an Atzaró boutique; details at Los Enamorados; the hotel shop's interior; Los Enamorados co-owner Rozemarijn de Witte

'Organic may be the buzzword of the moment here but for many it never went away. In past years, there was no spare money for chemicals; you ate what you could find or grow, however meagre'

Where to stay

Atzaró Natural Luxury Hotel & Spa Blissfully luxurious in an understated way, the hotel is poised in a glorious setting with its own organic garden and stunning T-shaped pool. Based around an old finca, it takes the concept of *agroturismo* to a new level. Eat either in the Verandah or Orange Tree restaurants, the beach bistro, or Aubergine (see Where to eat). Doubles from £484. *Carretera Sant Joan, Sant Llorenç de Balàfia, 00 34 971 33 88 38, atzaro.com*

Can Riero Guesthouse Cook, author and organic farmer Anne Sijmonsbergen is far too discreet to identify the household names who have stayed in her two tranquil casitas. Unlike many rental owners, Anne and her team are helpful and hands-on, and the casitas are furnished in rustic style, sharing a lovely pool. Casitas from £3,555 for one week (sleeps nine). *Sant Llorenç de Balàfia, 00 34 971 18 77 51, organicannieibiza.com/can-riero-guesthouse*

Los Enamorados Dreamy and ultra-romantic, there is no better place to chill than this small, idiosyncratic hotel full of quirky art and vintage items. Super-cool and eccentric with delicious, contemporary meals served overlooking one of the most entrancing coves in Ibiza. (Closed during winter.) Doubles from £248. *Calle de Portinatx 103, Portinatx, 00 34 971 33 75 49, losenamoradosibiza.com*

Can Guillem This rural agroturismo, set in a 200-year-old finca, boasts six bedrooms, a monochrome palette and a pool area. Located 5km outside Ibiza Town, it offers both tranquillity and hip design touches, like huge prints of the Arizona desert. Doubles from £155. *Camí de can Savi, 00 34 971 316 204, canguillem.net*

fruit and vegetables, even saffron, are among the island's treasures. It is, indeed, a special kind of magic.

The Ibicenco love of home is deep. They might concede an affiliation with the other Balearic Islands, with Catalonia and finally Spain, but Ibiza comes first. The family remains their anchor, and the widely spoken Ibizan-Catalan dialect keeps the world at still more distance. The islanders have always thought local in a way that has enabled them to survive centuries of invaders. Phoenicians, Moors, Castilians, Catalonians and more have landed here, enticed by the white gold, the sea salt once traded throughout the Mediterranean.

Over the last century new tribes have arrived, leaving vibrant footprints in the sand, but the Ibicenco character is laissez-faire, a 'do what you want, but don't bother me' approach to life that has enabled them to surf the swirling waves of bohemian intellectuals, artists, ravers, supermodels, pop stars and sun-seekers.

There are many Ibizas found under the molten sun and blood-red moon. Even overdeveloped coastal enclaves are framed by verdant hills and forest, citrus groves and secret coves, and rural villages that comprise no more than a fortified church, graveyard and bar – a million and twenty miles from the nonstop party vibe of Sunset Strip. And the sea. Always the sea. Stripes of indigo, sapphire and turquoise kept breathtakingly clear by the filtration action of Posidonia seagrass meadows, protected but still endangered by boats and shipping. A paradigm of commercial and conservation tensions.

Organic may be the buzzword of the moment here but for many it never went away. In past years, there was no spare money for chemicals; you ate what you could find or grow, however meagre. There are still old people who won't eat animal fodder carob, yet the ravishing cosmopolitan boutique hotel Los Enamorados serves the chicest dessert of carob and ruby chocolate mousse: ancient island foodstuff and super-trendy global ingredient. A very Ibizan mix.

The upcoming generations are unstuffy, open-minded and convivial: they care about ethics, health and the environment as much as market opportunities. At his organic farm Ca'n Pere Mussona in the east of the island, Ronnie Anderson is one of the few 'incomers' who bridges the local and expat worlds. He rears heritage Ibizan hens and small, intensely flavoured native sheep, but his special love is the long-lashed, floppy-eared black pig. 'At one time they were used as currency, but now there are only about 40 left, and it's an uphill struggle because although they have great personalities, they become infertile quickly and are terrible mothers. But they do produce the —————>>







Opposite page, clockwise from top left: apricots at Can Riero; one of the Can Musón team; the fruit market; octopus plate at Re.art; sage growing at Can Musón; Anne Sijmonsbergen's homemade tostadas; Sijmonsbergen; the snacks are made with peas, broad beans and ricotta; Sant Agustí des Vedrà village. This page, clockwise from top right: one of Ibiza's famed sunsets; an idyllic cove; artichokes at Can Musón; asparagus at Re.art; a Can Riero casita; Cala Saladeta

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most delicious meat and *sobrassada* [pork paste]. He's now planning to open a butterfly conservatory.

Set in unspoilt countryside, Atzaró is expanding its own immaculate organic kitchen garden that will double as a pleasure garden, a cookery school and picnic setting. This discreetly sophisticated hotel and spa has native roots and has grown exquisitely and lovingly from a centuries-old family finca. It contrasts positively with the voracious global chains that circle the island like hungry sharks, promising to destroy what attracted them here in the first place.

Atzaró, for example, uses local Ses Cabretes goats' cheese, not just as a marketing tool but to underpin a philosophy that supports artisan producers while adding a cosmopolitan twist. Two young mothers, Fina Prats and Pilar Gonzalez, gave up careers in environmental and veterinary science respectively to raise goats and reintroduce a cheese based on a traditional recipe using wild cardoon rennet. Atzaró serves it marinated in Ibizan oil, home-grown orange peel and star anise: it marries the best of 'then' and 'now'.

Sustainability also motivates the Ibiza Preservation Foundation, which campaigns for profitable local products, fresh water and conservation of the iconic almond groves; the Association of Ibizan Beekeepers strives to protect the ancestral way of beekeeping; the 'Oli d'E' extra virgin olive oil certification and a fish labelling scheme both try to control the market and keep standards high, although the harsh reality is there is not enough legally caught local fish to go round. Even the famous sweet red prawns may be inferior imports.

Playing with the culinary toolbox of seasonal and wild food are a dynamic brigade of young chefs. Their emphasis is simplicity, colour, freshness and fun. Talented David Reartes in his eponymous modern restaurant Re.art, set in one of the smart shopping streets of Eivissa (aka Ibiza Town), commits to the extent of having the restaurant's logo, a knife, tattooed on his arm: —————>

Food glossary

Aïoli Ubiquitous creamy garlic sauce.

Arroz de matanza A soupy pork paella

Botifarró Black pudding

Bullit de peix and arroz a banda A two-course dish of fish, potatoes and saffron stew followed by rice cooked in fish broth

Coca Various topped flatbread

Fideuà Similar to paella but uses small macaroni instead of rice

Flaó Cheese flan flavoured with mint and aniseed

Greixonera Sweet cinnamon bread pudding

Hierbas Ibicencas Liqueur made with anise and dried wild herbs

Magdalenas de almendras Almond cakes

Orelletes Lemon fritters

Samfaina Catalan ratatouille made with roasted peppers

Sobrassada Soft, spicy pork paste

Sofrit pagès Spicy meat fry-up

Tostada Toasted bread and oil, often with tomato, ham or cheese





Clockwise from top left: Ca'n Pere Mussona greens; the farm's purple cabbage; Eivissa architecture; a native plant in an ornamental hanger; a table setting at Can Riero; a local gathering; the wine is poured; wild fennel; lavender at Can Musón. Opposite page, clockwise from top left: sunset views at Cala d'Hort; baby squid with sobrassada at Es Ventall; the restaurant's interior; their 'Floral Essence' dessert; a narrow old town street; a local farmer with a basket of strawberries

'The Brots siblings run a chiringuito where they serve seafood caught by local fishermen. Such is their desire to preserve the beauty of the place and escape financial predators, they refuse to advertise their location. "It's not all about the money," they say with principled honesty. "It's our beach, our home. And we love it"'

not just any knife but the traditional one used in the annual *matanza* (pig slaughter). Once ubiquitous, only one maker is left on Ibiza. In his fascination with island history, Reartes has devised a version of Roman fermented fish sauce (garum), reclaiming old ideas and adding global ones, but his cooking is anything but folkloric. 'I work hard to keep standards high and honest,' he says. 'Too many restaurants advertise meat from black pigs, for example, but it's quite impossible given the few there are left in existence.'

Ex-Noma chef Boris Buono, working in a tiny space in the tortuous Gypsy-quarter streets of old Eivissa, freely admits that if he were not cooking, he'd be a farmer. He spends much of his time sourcing heritage grains and foraging aromatic herbs and plants, throwing in the occasional exotic such as Peruvian tiger's milk in a style he describes as 'glocal' or 'think global, eat local'. As he explains, 'A decade ago, chefs would decide on a dish, then find

the ingredients. Now, we find the produce, then create the dish around them. That's the magic of this place.'

It's an approach José Miguel Bonet would agree with. He and his family are the absolute definition of farm-to-table. One of the top young chefs in Spain, he uses superb organic salad vegetables and fruit from his family farm, which is irrigated by an ancient springwater channel system shared by 42 families in an idyllic valley filled with wild flowers and birdsong. It is the quality of the water, he insists, that is responsible for the intense taste. At the nearby elegant but unstarchy Es Ventall restaurant, started by his father, Miguel Bonet, he cooks wonderfully memorable dishes on a wood-fired stove. Even more extraordinary is the location, in the heart of the beer-and-burgers party town of Sant Antoni. You'd never know.

He offers impeccable versions of Ibizan classics, such as arroz a banda, but this does not mean a lack of vision. More recent



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revelations include new takes on deboned pigs' trotters with sea cucumbers and smoked aubergine, and sautéed calamari with sobrassada and honey. Traditional Ibizan food for the 21st century.

At the other end of the scale, but sharing his integrity, is Toni 'Aigües Blanques', who took over the tiny eponymous beach bar in the rocky north east of the island his father opened in 1978. He still keeps it simple: you come here to eat *bocadillos* (sandwiches), drink mojitos and gaze at the sea. 'There's been so much change,' he says. 'I prefer to stay here in the north where it's more peaceful. I don't like the new wave of mega-rich tourism or going to flashy places where you can spend €2,000 [£1,750] on dinner.'

Ibiza is still a place of contrasts: club-scene decadence alongside Catholicism; the melancholic moods of the salt flats edged by wild samphire beside massive DJ hoardings. But change is afoot: there are restrictions on the superclubs and beach bars, and party

people are coming in smaller numbers. It's a new kind of tourism, for those who seek a quieter but high-quality experience. There's still space in which to breathe the pine-scented air, and that might be the biggest luxury of all.

The Brots siblings run a secluded family *chiringuito* beach bar where they serve seafood caught by local fishermen. Such is their desire to preserve the beauty of the place and escape financial predators, they refuse to advertise their location. It's not all about the money, they say with principled honesty. 'We came back after university because it's our beach, our home. And we love it.'

No, we are not going to tell you where to find it. It's one of the secrets of Ibiza that you have to discover for yourself. □

Clarissa Hyman and Nassima Rothacker travelled to Ibiza courtesy of Ibiza Tourist Board. ibiza.travel





Clockwise from top left: Charles Vexenat of Bar 1805; the Brots siblings' 'secret' chiringuito; fermented ginger beer at Ca'n Pere Mussona; Re.art interiors; the restaurant's famed squid, strawberries, seaweed and salmon roe; eponymous chef David Reartes

'Top young chef José Miguel Bonet explains, "A decade ago, chefs would decide on a dish, then find the ingredients. Now, we find the products, then create the dish around them. That's the magic of this place"'

Where to eat

Prices are per person for three courses with half a bottle of wine, unless otherwise stated

Aigües Blanques Chiringuito Tiny beachside shack serving satisfying baguettes. Try the *choripán* (Argentinian-style steak with chimichurri) with a mojito. Second-generation owner Toni also runs the excellent, modern-rustic El Caliu restaurant in Santa Eulària del Río. From £8 (cash only). *Aigües Blanques, Pont de s'Argentera, restaurantgrillescaliu.com*

Aubergine Garden setting around a dreamy old finca where you might spy the chef popping out to pick a few lemons. Fresh organic food with excellent dips and salads. Part of the lovely Atzaró family. From £45. *Carretera de San Miguel, 00 34 971 09 00 55, aubergineibiza.com*

Babylon Beach Impeccably managed, stylish but family-friendly restaurant with beach bar vibes. Original driftwood decor and locally sourced dishes such as piri piri chicken kebab. From £30. *Punta Es Farallo, Es Callu, 00 34 971 33 21 81, babylonbeachbar.com*

Bar 1805 World-class cocktails by champion mixologist Charles Vexenat including the legendary absinthe-based Green Beast. Equally famous for the *moules-frites*. From £13. *Carrer Santa Lucia 7, Sa Penya, Eivissa, 00 34 651 62 59 72, bar1805ibiza.com*

Bottega Il Buco The quality of the island produce has attracted Bottega Il Buco, an outpost of a New York chain. Portuguese chef Diego Borges delivers a selection of focaccia, charcuterie and tapas. Miso-cured mackerel is the signature. From £40. *Carrer Vendà de Parada 12, Santa Gertrudis de Fruitera, 00 34 971 19 76 76, ilbuco.com*

Can Berri Vell Romantic location and candlelight dining in a charming 17th-century house in a pretty village. Dishes might include ravioli stuffed with blood sausage and wild mushroom sauce. From £65. *Plaça Mayor 2, Sant Agustí des Vedrà, 00 34 971 34 43 21, canberrivell.es*

Can Musón Created by local legend María Marí Colomar, come to tour the organic farm, buy fresh produce and enjoy a vegan breakfast or tapas. Kids will love the farm animals. From £27. *Es Coloms 98, Santa Eulària des Riu, 00 34 971 33 93 46, ibizacanmuson.com*

Ca'n Pere Mussona Newly opened café on a model organic farm serving all home-grown produce including heritage varieties. Look out for the excellent pickled carrots with wild fennel and fermented wild asparagus. From £25. *Sant Carles, 00 34 679 44 58 52*

Ca's Pagès A traditional barbecue restaurant run by sisters Carmen and Lucia. No credit cards or reservations and always packed, but worth the wait for terrific grilled meat and *arroz de matanza*. From £35. *Carretera San Carlos km10, Santa Eulària, 00 34 971 31 90 29, caspages.es*

El Chiringuito Enjoy the bubbly atmosphere, beach setting and stylish dining that offers excellent sharing dishes such as sea bass in salt. From £20. *Playa Es Cavallet, 00 34 971 39 53 55, elchiringuitoibiza.com*

Es Ventall Inventive cuisine that stays true to its roots with ingredients sourced from the family farm and most of the staff family members. During the summer months you can eat alfresco under a huge fig tree. From £48. *Carrer de Cervantes 22, Sant Antoni de Portmany, 00 34 699 84 68 54, restauranteesventall.com*

Food Studio (Taller de Tapas) Hidden in a backstreet maze, find vibrant modern cooking from Danish chef Boris Buono. Each dish is paired with an excellent wine. Reservations essential. From £60. *Carrer Alt 2, Sa Penya, Ibiza Town, 00 34 628 85 46 54, ibzfoodstudio.com*

Queriendo-Té Run by the incomparable Felix, like a character from an Almodovar film, this tiny, objet-filled teashop is a veritable temple to top teas from around the world. Tea and cake from £10. *Carrer Antonio Guasch Juan 2, Eivissa, 00 34 971 30 71 02, queriendote.es*

Re.art Catalan chef David Reartes has made Ibiza his home and Ibizan food his cause with expertly executed dishes made with locally sourced ingredients such as an open omelette with prawns, sugared pine nuts and mint. His new country restaurant opens later this year. From £54. *Carrer Castilla 9, Eivissa, 00 34 871 03 65 75, reart.es*

Restaurant Brots A brand new venture from the Brots siblings. Expect superb fish. The menu is yet to be revealed, but keep an eye on their Facebook page for details. *S'Arenal Petit 34, 00 34 971 32 06 09*



Opposite page, clockwise from top left: chef José Miguel Bonet of Es Ventall; the restaurant's dining room; preserved lemons in the kitchen; sommelier Rosa Hamersma of Vino & Co; liqueurs at Bar 1805; the sun sinks over Eivissa's cobbled streets; Vespas are popular for getting around town; an Es Ventall prawn croquette; wine at Vino & Co





Clockwise from top left: Miguel Bonet on the land where he grows produce for Es Ventall; courgette flowers destined for the menu; Ca'n Pere Mussona organic farm; owner Ronnie Anderson; Miguel Bonet and his dog check how the vegetables are doing; orange trees are a common sight across the white island



Clockwise from bottom left: Fina Prats, who gave up a career in environmental science to raise Ses Cabretes goats for the production of cheese; the *porc negre*, or black pig, is an iconic native breed, seen here at Ca'n Pere Mussona farm; a cheese board featuring local varieties at David Rearte's Re.art



Don't miss

Fàbrica de Licores Aniseta This Eivissa shop, located across the road from the ferry to Formentera, is the best place to sample and buy some of the island's digestif *hierbas*. Staff are happy to educate visitors about how it is made and its medicinal properties. The family-run brand sold here is bottled inland at Hierbas Ibicencas Aniseta, and is regarded as one of the best in Ibiza. A wonderful souvenir to take home. Serve chilled over ice. *Avinguda de Santa Eulària des Riu 19, Eivissa, 00 34 971 31 87 69*

Forada Ecological Food Market A world away from the 'Hippy Market' in Es Cana, this food-lover's paradise is located next to Buscastell's art café Can Tixedó. Browse the stalls to taste and buy local wines, liqueurs, cakes, honey, jams, marmalades, bread and pastries. There's also a selection of artwork by local artists. Open every Saturday throughout the year. *Buscastell, San Rafael*

Vino & Co Wine shop and bar run by young entrepreneur Rosa Hamersma, member of a Dutch wine family. She specialises in natural, organic and biodynamic bins from small producers, and also has one of the biggest saké collections in Spain. *Carretera d'Eivissa a Sant Josep 60, 00 34 971 30 53 24, vinoyco.com*

Zero Gradi Great gelateria using seasonal fruit. The Italian owners go on a global ice cream pilgrimage in the off-season. *Carrer Venda de Parada, Santa Gertrudis de Fruitera, 00 34 971 93 25 57*