

Far from the madding CROWDS

Thought Ibiza was all about late nights and crazy clubbing? Think again, says Emma Van Hinsbergh

Think of Ibiza and what springs to mind? A hedonists' paradise, packed with loved-up party-goers every summer? While this might be true on some parts of the island, it is just a tiny fraction of what this enchanting place is about, and away from the celebrity DJs and champagne-soaked super-yachts, you'll find a gentle land where time stands still.

From ancient valleys dotted with almond trees, to pine-scented hills and remote rocky bays, the 'other' Ibiza offers a peaceful retreat from the rest of the world. Here the only clubs you'll find are sacred dance circles and you're more likely to sway to the sound of Tibetan healing gongs rather than frenzied dance beats.

At the heart of this rural idyll, you'll find the original agroturismo Atzaro, a restored finca set in scented orange groves in the pretty Morna valley. A haven of serenity and calm, the family-run hotel has recently

undergone a redesign to focus on its unique Ibiza heritage. The concept is 'natural luxury' and the look is chic and simple. You won't find any *TOWIE*-style bling here; at Atzaro it's all about understated glamour with a dash of boho cool.

Comfort and quality is the order of the day and the décor is a discreet blend of traditional plaster walls, local Sabina wood beams, olive wood ceilings and dry stone exteriors. Mediterranean terracotta floors and cool marble bathrooms are teamed with bespoke handmade furniture created by local artisans for a natural, organic feel. Dotted around the main finca and throughout the tropical gardens, the bedrooms are sheer bliss, with teak four-poster beds that you'll want to stay hunkered down in forever. Some even have their own private pools and terraces or open fireplaces to keep you cosy during the winter months.





THE CHILL OUT ZONE

Set in the hotel's beautiful grounds, the holistic spa takes relaxation to another level. Drawing on Eastern and Western traditions, treatments include hot stone and Thai massage, reflexology and ayurvedic facials. Spend your days lazing on huge day beds, wallowing in the 43-metre long swimming pool made from exquisite unpolished green marble or sweating it out in the cool little sauna pod overlooking the organic vegetable gardens. When you're feeling lively, the yoga pavilion has daily classes including meditation, Pilates and hatha and vinyasa flow. For nature lovers, an eight acre organic ornamental vegetable garden opens this summer, complete with a digital detox area and open air cinema screenings.

If you can drag yourself away from all this luxury (and it will be tough) don't miss out on a day exploring the hidden hills and remote valleys of the island – at just 28 miles long and 16 miles wide, Ibiza is a doddle to get around. Grab a bike from the hotel or join a group with Walking Ibiza (walkingibiza.com) which offers gentle mindfulness walks to various beauty spots including the coastline overlooking the mystical island of Es Vedra, reputed to be the birthplace of the goddess Tanit.

Alternatively, explore the pretty agricultural heartland – meander through groves of olive, almond and carob (traditionally used to feed farm animals), sweet-smelling oranges and meadows filled with wildflowers. The fertile red soil is perfect for growing produce and many restaurants, such as the hugely popular Aubergine near San Miguel, grow their own. Set in an old finca in exquisite gardens, it has a 'farm to table' philosophy, serving healthy and wholesome dishes made with their own organic fruits, herbs and vegetables.

HEALTH KICKS

The island has loads to offer on the holistic health front, too. Celebrated for its magnetic energy, Ibiza attracts some of the world's leading healers and spiritual coaches who flock to the island to turn on, and tune in to its feel-good vibrations. Check out Ibiza Spotlight (ibiza-spotlight.com) for a list of mind-body-spirit events or plan your visit in October or April for the bi-annual Ibiza Spirit Festival (ibiza-spirit.com) which includes creative dance, tantra, meditations, yoga, inspirational talks and healing ceremonies.

If yoga's your thing, you'll find classes run by some of the world's hottest yoga teachers throughout the year. Ibiza Retreats (ibizaretreats.com) offers week-long yoga and transformational fasting retreats, while over on the neighbouring island of Formentera (just a quick boat ride away) Formentera Yoga (formenterayoga.com) offers five-star rejuvenating holidays. Spearheaded by the awesome Jax Lysycia, the week-long retreats at the exclusive Gecko Club offer daily yoga and meditation classes, healthy food and treatments including Japanese Kobido facials and rolfing sessions.

Of course, you might just want to recharge your batteries by loafing around on the beach and you won't be short changed – Ibiza has a whopping 80 beaches to choose from ranging from rocky coves and secret inlets to long, sandy bays bordered by shady pine trees. Try the stunning Cala Bassa on the west coast or Cala Nova in the east, where Atzaro's super-chic beach club overlooks a golden bay lapped by azure waters that gives the Caribbean a run for its money. For sunset, head to Benirras on a Sunday when musicians from all over the island gather for tribal drumming sessions as the sun goes down on yet another day in this enchanting alternative paradise. Whatever you're looking for in a break, this 'other' side of Ibiza is most definitely the right side for you.

Atzaro from €171 per room per night, including breakfast and offers both walking and cycling packages in the spring when the island is at its finest. For details, call 0034 971 338 838 or visit atzaro.com