

TRAVEL

FANTASTIC FORMENTERA YOGA



Formentera is one of those picture postcard places; white sands and magical turquoise sea. It's dreamy and you can see why it attracts those seeking peace, tranquillity and time in nature. As a UNESCO Heritage site, there are no tall rise buildings on the island which makes for pleasant scenery.

It's got an eventful history, signs of settlement date back over 4000 years with the oldest Megalithic grave site from around the Bronze Age. Over in Ca Na Costa you can still see this spectacular example of this sort of tomb site.

The Greeks names Ibiza and Formentera the 'Pitiuses' ('pine tree islands') and it's easy to smell why, the island has an abundance of pine and that scent is what welcomes you to most places on the island. It's a pretty arid land and the main crop these days is wheat. It was the Moors who brought their irrigation and agricultural systems onto the island that are still used today. Rumour has it that no chemical fertilisers have ever been used on crops there.

Formentera Yoga is located on the south of the island at a beach club hotel, amazing location, right on the beach and views you can get lost in. The hotel is up market and very design-led. Clean lines can sometimes take away character but the way this hotel is done satisfies those with a thirst for something a bit more 50s glamour. With wooden decking for eating and luxurious day beds to lounge in, you'll find a spot to relax in the grounds no problem, with or without company. Despite being a small hotel, you can always find a place to while away your day in peace.

The yoga takes place in a rather dark looking marquee, however, as soon as you get onto the platform and look out at sea, you have the vista of nature in front of you, a delightful place to practise, despite first impressions. Looking out over the gardens to the sea is very rewarding as you settle in for your posture practice.

Jax leads the sessions, she is Shiva and Shakti, her frame is petite yet strong, her voice guides and oscillates according to passive or active instructions. The course of yoga was a fantastic blend of posture instruction, breath and meditation. Her cueing is easy to follow. Whilst the style is called Dynamic yoga and you could be fooled into thinking it was fast, this yoga is slow, precise and powerful. My body was in heaven in these sessions. The invitation right at the beginning was to stop doing and to start feeling, an instruction I'm fond of too. On day two, my legs were certainly feeling it.





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There were two sessions a day, a sensitive morning practice encouraging the body to recalibrate. We enjoyed wave like movements to wake it up, a break down of the Sun Salutations, an emphasis on somatics so you could dive into sensation and listen to the body. The evenings were a mix of yin and more Dynamic. Both sessions lasted between 90-120 minutes and sometimes you felt like you'd only been there for a moment. That's skilful teaching.

The trip I went on was 5 days long and if truth be told, at the beginning, I wasn't sure it was going to be long enough to have a satisfactory effect. The course was designed to reveal trauma and stress in the physical and emotional body so you can release and invite in softness. However, I was pleasantly surprised and glad to say I felt the sessions were deep and profound enough that trauma was indeed released in my body, safely. Her skill at managing the different abilities and conditions really was impressive.

The group was a wonderful mix of nationalities and ages, conversations at the filling brunch and dinner were always interesting. From DJ's to a retired property developer, from mums to other yoga teachers, this really was a diverse group with many a great story to tell. My only regret was that I didn't get to speak to some people more as it was quite a large group.



Talking of food, the hotel provided a varied breakfast full of savoury and sweet options to satisfy every taste bud. Jax had recommended we stay away from stimulants to really enjoy the detoxifying effects of the practices we were doing. Lets just say that on one or two occasions, I might have had to try the chocolate torte or crème caramel alongside my other, rather virtuous, breakfast selections.

For those looking for a short break close to the UK, this would be high on my list of recommendations, the location is idyllic, and the teacher has layers of teaching practice to be able to handle any ability or condition.

Formentera Yoga offers the perfect getaway to relax, let go of the technology and soak up the peace and harmony of the surrounding. I will definitely go back.

**For more information on their retreats,
visit formenterayoga.com**

**Rejuvenate and glow in the sunshine with the last
few places for Aug 18th 2017**

KIRSTY NORTON

KIRSTY WAS BORN TO TRAVEL, GROWING UP IN SOUTH AMERICA AND BANGLADESH, TRAVEL IS IN HER BLOOD. YOGA HELPS HER TO MOVE AND FLOW THROUGH LIFE EXPERIENCING DIFFERENT CULTURES AND PEOPLE TO BRING VIBRANCY AND FRESHNESS TO HER TEACHINGS. SHE TEACHES FOR MOVEMENT FOR MODERN LIFE, AN ONLINE YOGA SITE AND WRITES FREQUENTLY FOR ELEPHANT JOURNAL, TEACH. YOGA AND HAS A HEALTH BLOG SERIES ON HEALTHIS-TA. KIRSTYNORTONYOGA.CO.UK

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