

Divided Sky Discovers Spain - August 2012 It has been a fascinating cruise up the coast of Spain and through the Balearic Islands. We followed the trail of the round Spanish Fire Towers (smoke signal stations) up the Costa Blanca until the wind was right for a delightful overnight passage towards the Balearics. In one lovely coastal anchorage we were "adopted" by a Spanish family on holiday from Madrid.



Mama, her nine children + spouses and 18 grandchildren were all on summer holiday and wanted to learn everything about cruising in a yacht.

The Balearic Islands (Ibiza, Mallorca and Menorca) must be the summer holiday destination for every European. We have never seen such crowded anchorages. In most of the anchorages a 50' yacht was just an average vessel.



Fortunately, many of the boats were only on day trips, so at around 7 pm they departed for the night. We found some lovely anchorages in calas, playas and ensenadas with beach restaurants where ice cream and cold beer could be found. The best cruising day was our sail along the spectacular natural beauty of the north coast of Ibiza, with its dramatic cliffs, archway islands, rock formations and steep sided cala (bay) indentations leading to turquoise water and a crowded sandy beach at the head surrounded by high rise developments.



Our favourite scenic cala was Portinatx - until the

Saturday overnight crowd appeared. Our favourite playa (beach) anchorage was Rapita in Mallorca, where we cruised along the three mile beach until we spotted an inviting beach bar, then dropped the anchor in 10' of turquoise water nearby and rowed the dinghy ashore for lunch of calamari and octopus. At the table next to us was a London-based Sydney family on holiday. Generally we prefer anchoring the yacht rather than going to marinas. In the Balearics, marinas were not an option, with Ibiza Marina, for example, charging 260 Euros (around \$320) per night for our 12m yacht - sorry, it was full anyway. We saw no evidence of the 26% Spanish unemployment rate. As a footnote, in ancient Greek times the inhabitants of the Balearics wore few clothes, and thus were called "gymnetes" (naked men) and the islands called Gymnesia. Little has changed in that regards.