



Formentera's investment in sustainable tourism, the protection of 70% of its natural spaces and an unequalled environmental richness have made the island of Formentera one of the most attractive tourist destinations in Europe. However, not limited to its status as home to some of the Iberian Peninsula's most beautiful beaches, the island offers a full catalogue of ideas for active tourism, combining modern infrastructure with a respect for the environment and family-friendly settings.

These features will be in the spotlight as part of a presentation given throughout the week in a host of cities across Spain, which started yesterday in Madrid and will continue today in Alicante before wrapping up tomorrow and Thursday in Valencia and Barcelona, respectively. Alejandra Ferrer, Formentera's councilor of Tourism, and Carlos Bernús, head of the Patronat de Turisme (Board of Tourism) will preside over presentations the length of the circuit, in addition to being joined by representatives of some of the island's chief tourism-oriented businesses: Baleària, Trasmapi, Trasmediterranea, Hotel Es Marès and Es Freus wholesale travel agency.

A turquoise blue sea, banks of white sand and the deep green of posidònia prairies form the colour palette that receives Formentera's visitors. It is precisely this plant – posidònia oceànica, declared World Heritage Site by Unesco in 1999 – that is responsible for the purity and clarity of Formentera's waters. The posidònia plant is what has given us the spectacular coastline containing Ses Illetes beach, recently named the number one beach in Spain, number two in Europe and number six in the world by TripAdvisor users.

Alongside the top-ranking beaches are oceans teeming with marine life, and, as explained by Alejandra Ferrer, Formentera's waters are “unbeatable for the practise of all sorts of nautical sports, from scuba diving to sea kayaking and windsurfing, kite-surfing and sailing in between.” Hidden caves along the coast can be discovered as part of a kayak trip around the island, and scuba divers can marvel in Formentera's range of underwater flora and fauna. The island's unique shape, temperature and particular wind currents all dramatically increase the possibilities of aquatic activities in which to partake.

Out of the water, forests of native juniper trees, rural scenery, sand dunes with autochthonous flora, salt flats and drydocks, stunning cliffsides and seemingly endless beaches all work

together to give Formentera an extra edge as a setting for outdoor activities. This is even more so the case in spring and autumn, when explosions of colour leave not even the most seasoned traveler indifferent. To take in all this nature, there is an extensive network of green trails forming a combined length of 56 kilometres; twelve routes perfect for hiking, Nordic walking, biking or even horseback riding. A new, totally free audioguide system is also available for those visitors looking to expand their local knowledge. The purity of Formentera's beaches, perfectly-preserved, exists alongside a host of exclusive services and infrastructure, offering a mix capable of satisfying any visitor. From the well-known beaches of Ses Illetes and Llevant to Migjorn, and stopping over in the captivating gems of Es Caló des Mort and Cala Saona, Formentera's coastline is home to any number of spots perfect for enjoying sun and water.

Over the course of the presentation, councilor Ferrer also refers to another of the riches of Formentera: the particular lifestyle of its inhabitants, their local customs, "this slow life and slow food, so popular today, is our traditional way of life." Among these customs and traditions figure ball pagès and cant pagès, as well as a gastronomy at once simple and savoury, elaborated with local products like fish (or the local star item, peix sec), liquid salt, honey, fresh cheese, bescuit dry bread, wine and traditional and new-age creations of desserts and confectionery.

Moreover, the island serves as a stage for important national and international events in sports and fitness competitions. Formentera was home to a total of 53 events in 2014 alone, among which were the VI Half Marathon, Formentera to Run, the Underwater Photography Week and the Formentera Film Festival. It was also host to gastronomic events, traditional popular holidays, regattas and off-road biking circuits.

The Formentera Island Council wishes to show its appreciation for the support of some of the island's major tourism-oriented businesses, many of whom will be participating in the week's presentations. These businesses support Formentera's promotional efforts before the principal Peninsula-based target markets: Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia and Alicante. Starting in May, a new Alicante-Formentera route will be established, giving Formentera direct maritime connections to Alicante. Sponsoring companies include Trasmapi, Trasmediterranea, Baleària, Mediterranea Pitiüsa, Hotel Es Marès and the Es Freus travel agency.