

# About Menorca / Minorcans

**M**inorca is the second largest of the Spanish Balearic Islands, an archipelago of five islands in the western Mediterranean lying 50 to 190 miles off the coast of Spain. Together they form a province of Spain. Minorca is about 30 miles long from northwest to southeast and 10 miles wide, with a total area of about 270 square miles.

The coastline of Minorca is indented with many bays and rocky headlands, particularly in the less fertile north, which is surrounded by tiny islets. The southern coast, more sheltered from the north winds, has a relatively pleasant climate. The primary town is Mahón, located on the southeastern coast. It has one of the largest harbors in the Mediterranean, and the cultivated land around it is marked by windmills. Ciudadela, once the island's Moorish capital, is located on the western tip of Minorca. Ciudadela has a Gothic cathedral and several interesting 17<sup>th</sup> century palaces.

There is some agriculture on the southern plateau.

Cattle, sheep, and goats are raised, and fishing contributes to the economy. Shoes, cheese, textiles, soap, and wine are manufactured.

Prehistoric ancestors left a megalith of monuments including cave artifacts, tools from the Bronze Age, and stone tablets that are still being studied by archaeologists today. The rich history is diverse and full of constant change.

Like other Mediterranean islands, Minorca was once occupied in turn by Phoenicians, Romans, Carthaginians, Vandals, and Moors. Though it became part of Spain in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, it was plundered for centuries by the corsairs. Britain seized the island in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, lost and regained it several times, then with the 1802 Treaty of Amiens returned it to Spain. Minorca remained on the Loyalist side through most of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939).

## Did You Know? ? ?

### Isle of Menorca / Minorca

- ◇ You can spell M\_NORCA with an "T" or an "E" (pronounced: mi-nor-ka). In Menarche it is usually spelled with an "E" and here in the United States it is usually spelled with an "T" ...so take your pick.
- ◇ MENORCA is a beautiful lovely isle, devoid of any pollution. The air is pure and clean with breezes most of the time. The average summer temperature is 75° and the winter averages approximately 50 degrees.
- ◇ All through history, this isle with its magnificent deep natural port (Mahón), has been a prize of all sea faring nations to control. Control of Menorca allowed unlimited access to the trade routes in that part of the Mediterranean.
- ◇ The island of Menorca has no rivers. Wells were dug in the rock and cisterns were built to collect rainwater.
- ◇ In Menorca, St. Agatha was revered by the

natives for cures attributed to her intercession in all diseases of women's breasts.

- ◇ There were approximately 27,000 inhabitants on Menorca at the time of the departure for Florida. Today there are considerably more than this, particularly with the semi-permanent British vacationers.

### Menorcans / Minorcans

- ◇ The slingshot was invented by the Minorcans, who were famous as *stone-slingers* in Julius Caesar's armies.
- ◇ The Menorcans are primarily of CATALAN descent. Catalonia is a province in the N. E. Section of Spain. Barcelona is the largest city and Castilian is the language of the cities.
- ◇ Menorcans were good HUNTERS and superb FISHERMEN.
- ◇ The Minorcans were and are great dancers.
- ◇ They ate mostly vegetables (with spices) and fish, but very little meat.
- ◇ They favor garlic and onions.

- ◇ They usually drank water...and very little wine.
- ◇ They paid their taxes without grumbling.
- ◇ After marriage, there was no question about who was the head of the family...THE FATHER WAS!  
*How about that?*
- ◇ Minorcans were considered to be brave and courageous in battle, and were drafted by conquerors to use their slingshots.
- ◇ Minorca women were particularly strong —  
*probably from cleaning up after their husbands and children.*
- ◇ Families lived in domestic quietness.
- ◇ It was fashionable for Minorcan women to be plump!
- ◇ Both men and women wore white leather shoes...*but probably not in the stables.*
- ◇ Minorcans produced good crops of ORANGES.
- ◇ Women were serenaded by their lovers like typical Spaniards of their time. They were often rewarded with a special Minorcan cheesecake ...and sometimes when mama wasn't looking , maybe a kiss.
- ◇ The famous BENET brothers, Stephen and William, were descendants of Minorcans who came over in 1768. One of their ancestors married Antonia Vila's sister.
- ◇ ADMIRAL FARRAGUT's father settled in Tennessee from Menorca in 1783. He was famous for his alleged cry, "DAM THE TORPEDOES, FULL SPEED AHEAD."
- ◇ Bishops PELLICER and MANUCY were Minorcan first cousins, and related to the ROGEROS. They were assigned to Texas in the post civil war era. Both were Chaplains in the Confederate Army.
- ◇ Many Minorcans were taught by the SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH and are forever grateful to BISHOP VEROT, the first Bishop of St. Augustine, for bringing the Sisters over from France to teach in St. Augustine, and eventually throughout the state of FLORIDA.

**New Smyrna / St. Augustine**

- ◇ There were 600 Minorcans left from the original colony which fled to St. Augustine in 1777. Accurate records are not available as to the number of births during this period. However, the number of deaths was staggering when compared to the original number of immigrants...66.3 %.
- On January 4, 1772, there were one hundred and

seventy families left in Turnbull's colony, consisting of 500 communicants, 60 of the age of confession and 40 innocents who had not yet attained the age of seven. There were 70 more males than females.

On January 16, 1836, there was a petition written to the Bishop of Havana, Cuba, asking for assistance in repairing their small church in St. Augustine. In the letter, the Minorcans expressed fears of an Indian uprising and they feared for their own safety. This petition was signed by FRANCISCO PELLICER and RAMON ROGERO.

**Menorcans passage to New Smryna**

The Ships which brought over our ancestors were:

Ship Name	Number of Passengers
<i>Charming Betsy</i>	232
<i>Henry and Carolina</i>	142
<i>Elizabeth</i>	190
<i>Friendship</i>	198
<i>New Fortune</i>	226
<i>American Soldier</i>	145
<i>Hope</i>	150
<i>Betsy</i>	120
<b>Total Passengers</b>	<b>1,403</b>

**Number Deaths in the Turnbull Colony of New Smryna 1768 - 1777:**

Number of Deaths recorded before their rebellion:

Year	Men and Women	Children	Total
1768	300	150	450
1769	155	22	177
1770	34	6	40
1771	10	6	16
1772	8	3	11
1773	11	13	24
1774	5	19	24
1775	30	21	51
1776	45	8	53
1777	72	12	84
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>930 deaths</b>

\* These numbers include Minorcans, Italians and Greeks