



Ibiza Yoga, Ibiza, Spain

Get your yoga fix on the Mediterranean's coolest party island

By Caroline Templeton

I first found out about Ibiza Yoga through some friends in London who regularly visit the island. They had been to quite a few retreats and recommended Ibiza Yoga to me as the ideal escape ("not at all like how you'd imagine Ibiza," they told me).

Never having visited the island before and desperately needing to relax and unwind after the chaos of the city, I was intrigued as they spoke of a mythical side to the island not shown in the 'Ibiza Uncovered' TV show that had so far put me off visiting the white isles. But after browsing the website, chat forums and speaking to the centre on the phone I was reassured and headed out by myself for my first taste of this sunny, holiday island.

Ibiza Club Yoga

As I drove my hire car further and further away from the airport and the crowds into the north of the island, I was overwhelmed by the space and tranquillity of the 'real Ibiza', and felt myself instantly relaxing as the warm air breezed through the open window. After only half an hour's drive, I arrived at Villa Roca. There is no reception area but I was greeted warmly by a member of staff and shown into the main house. A few people had already arrived and were chatting amiably to each other on the terrace.

As the yoga sessions didn't start until the Sunday (I arrived on Saturday) I unpacked my suitcase and introduced myself to my new roommate for the next week, Celine. She was also travelling alone and was in her early 40's from the north-east of France. It was her first time in Ibiza and also doing yoga, so she was both nervous and excited.

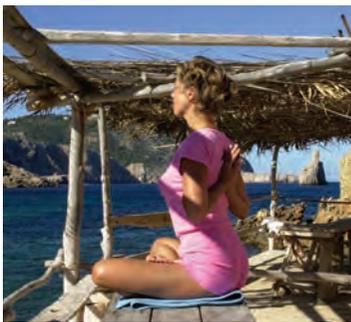
We quickly teamed up with a few other guests and wondered down to the local beach to get the last of the afternoon's rays and a glass of Sangria. Five minute's walk from the centre, Benirras beach is a small, beautiful bay surrounded by rocks with such a wonderful relaxed vibe to it. I instantly understood why they say the locals try and keep it a secret. Luckily, unless you have a car or come by taxi it is one of the harder-to-reach beaches and so remains mostly uncrowded, except for real summer peak times.

There were a few yachts moored up in the bay for the evening and the beach was calm and sociable with small groups of locals and children and their dogs playing in the sand. Happily, I noted that our group was pretty relaxed when it came to social drinking and so we all let our hair down and went to try one of the three restaurants on the beach. I had fresh sea bass in garlic which was just incredible. I spent the next day sunbathing on Benirras, chatting to locals and the friendly staff. The yoga started at 4pm and we had three hours with our instructor Wendy on the roof of Villa Palmas, another Ibiza Yoga house five minutes' walk from Villa Roca which has its own pool and stunning views over the bay. I had been too late to get a room in this house when I booked but I would definitely recommend staying here if you can, as it is, in my opinion, the best of the whole centre.

We did three hours of yoga on the roof deck as the sun set. I had enrolled myself into an intermediate class as I had been doing yoga for five years. I am by no means an expert but Wendy made sure everyone in my class of 10 was doing enough or as little as their experience allowed. We started with an hour or so of warm up and another hour doing rather dynamic but not exhausting Ashtanga, with lots of warrior



poses and downward-facing dogs. Finally, Wendy sat us in a circle and we chanted a few OMs and then lay still for 20 minutes meditating. Afterwards I felt stretched, realigned and deeply peaceful with a distinct lack of rushing thoughts and wandered lazily back to Villa Rocca where a vegetarian curry and salad was waiting for us. After the meal, I crawled into bed with a book and was quickly off to sleep.



The next few days followed the same cycle of yoga at 9am for three hours on the deck where Wendy pushed us further each day. We followed the same format of warm up, Ashtanga and meditation, but each day the yoga was different, with Wendy incorporating new moves and new droplets of knowledge. After yoga, we would float back to our respective villas for the complementary vegetarian lunch on the terrace and then either head off exploring the island in our cars. More often than not I found myself on Benirras with a freshly made fruit juice and my book relaxing as the odd familiar face drifted by.

By day three, I was surprised at how much more flexible and toned my body had already become. My mind was stilled and I felt a great sense of wellbeing and oneness come over me. Having never done a week's intensive course before I was astounded at the results and vowed to make sure I book myself in next time ahead of the bikini season. On Wednesday evening we headed out for dinner and dancing at Bambuddah Grove which was like an indoor Balinese jungle restaurant, with the charming owner John Moon who took special care of our table. The relaxed atmosphere, sushi and cocktails were all excellent. Afterwards, we headed to Aura nightclub down the road for some dancing. Having been recently refurbished it was very smart, with beautiful guests and a stunning garden area. Inside, the dance floor was packed and we all joined in finding it near impossible to resist the music. The next day we had late yoga from 4 until 7, to allow us time to recover from the night before. I went off exploring the other side of the islands and had lunch at a beach bar at Las Salinas beach. Las Salinas are salt flats, which although being the other end of the island, was only 30 minutes by car and the long open stretch of beach was a nice change from our cosy bay.

After our evening yoga session we were served a delicious Moroccan vegetarian supper at the finca and then got an early night to prepare for what would sadly be the last day of yoga. I couldn't believe the week went by so quickly, I came back feeling like a new person with a new body, completely refreshed and revived. The facilities are standard but they are comfortable, the food was delicious, the company entertaining and the yoga, atmosphere and treatment by the staff all incredible. I'd recommend it to anyone.

Ibiza Yoga offers six or seven night courses from April to October. Accommodation, breakfast, one vegetarian meal per day and six three-hour yoga classes costs from 365.62 euros per person. Flights and transfers are not included. Visit: ibizayoga.com