

BALEARIC ISLANDS

Six Senses Ibiza review: the party island's relaxing new hotel

Soothing sea views, swish interiors and a three-storey spa make this the perfect retox detox retreat



A sea view room at Six Senses Ibiza
SIX SENSES

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Generally holidays in Ibiza are a bit like the Sixties — if you can remember them you weren't really there. That party-hard reputation has just suffered a serious setback, however, with the arrival on the island of Six Senses Ibiza. The resort is one of the

Mediterranean's hottest openings this summer and — shock horror — the focus is on health rather than hedonism.

To be fair, the hotel does its bit to bridge the retox-detox divide. The view is instantly addictive. The 116-room resort is set in 20 peaceful acres of the island's wild northern tip, a world away — about a £65 cab ride — from the south's rave scene. From almost everywhere — though most memorably from the vast rooftop yoga deck — I get eyefuls of Cala Xarraca's swirl of coastline. It is all enticing aquamarine sparkles and pink-flecked honeycomb cliffs, with a weave of pine forest that all but camouflages the hillsides' smattering of white haciendas. It is a blissfully decompressing sight. No wonder Nostradamus declared that Ibiza would be the Earth's last refuge.

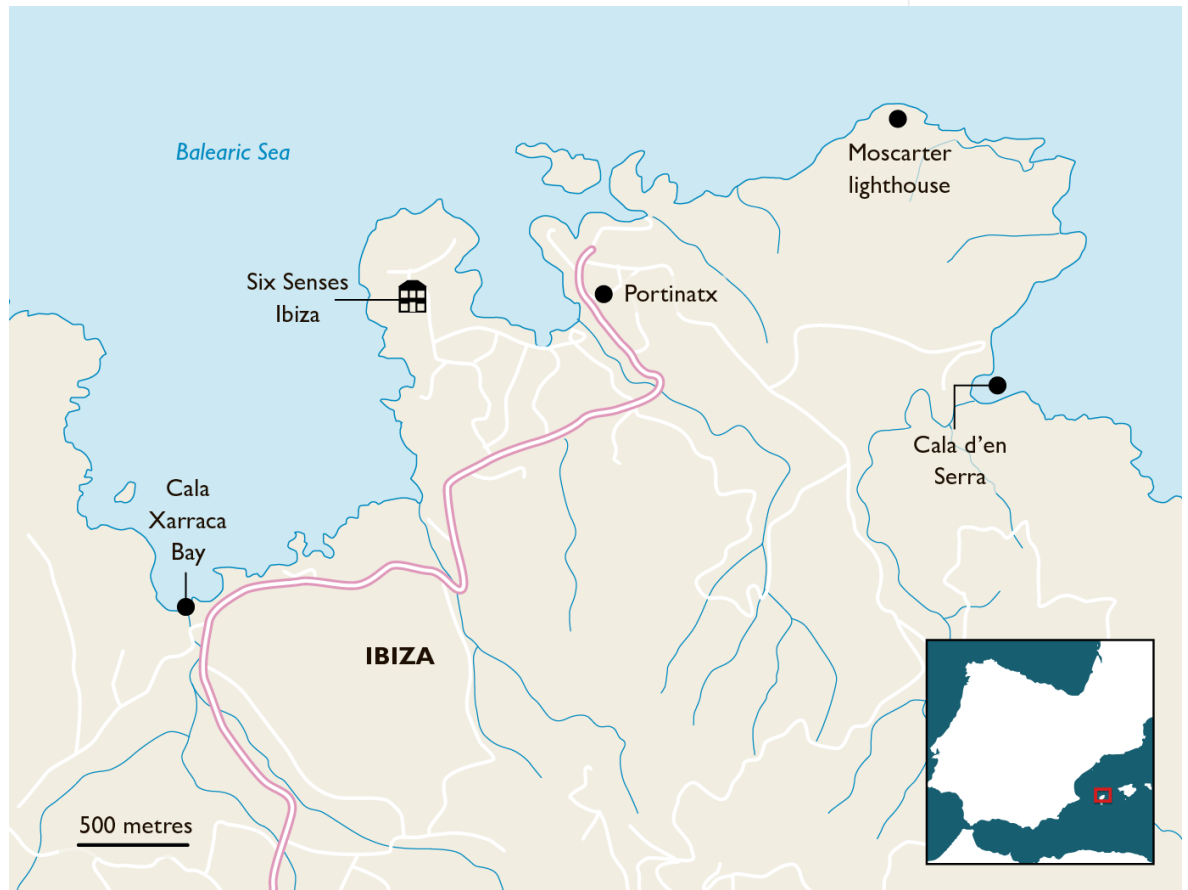


The resort's infinity pool
SIX SENSES

The resort has been developed by the A-list architect Jonathan Leitersdorf, who is as well connected as he is talented — his former Manhattan penthouse was the venue for Jerry Seinfeld's wedding and a Chelsea Clinton birthday bash. This is his first hotel project, and it has taken seven years and a rumoured £70 million to build. As we sit in the ethereal three-storey spa, Leitersdorf eloquently bats off questions about the final bill, arguing that you don't ask how much the canvas cost when you buy a Picasso. The analogy gives an inkling that his ambition for the resort extends beyond mere bricks and mortar.

You can stick with pampering treatments, bobbing between the thermal suite's on-trend infra-red sauna, steam room and caldarium bath, and the excellent complimentary fitness and yoga classes, but Leitersdorf hopes you'll book a healthy-ageing consultation with Dr Tamsin Lewis, a doctor, member of the Royal College of Psychiatrists and former GB elite triathlete. She's also effortlessly glamorous and friendly, and can advise on

the best biohacks for your physiology, from harnessing subzero temperatures with cryotherapy to reduce inflammation, to using binaural beats to boost your brain power.



In the spa the citrusy After Party Detox scrub and massage (£170), designed for fragile clubbers, hits the spot nicely for this traveller tired after a horribly early flight. And I have a music-based facial, courtesy of a tuning fork pitched to the healing 528Hz frequency that creates a glow you'd need three hours on the dancefloor to achieve (£135). And, of course, I get high. Don't worry — it's a legal, harmless and, best of all, free out-of-body experience, more on which later.

The spa is also about to launch cutting-edge DNA testing. Leitersdorf tells me that ageing is only 25 per cent about inherited genes and 75 per cent influenced by lifestyle factors.

Make canny minor changes and you can hold back time. Given that he looks at least ten years younger than his 57 years, and has enough energy to run a global empire and eight miles a day, I wish I could afford the resort's annual wellness membership — it will cost about £10,500 for two stays and year-round virtual support. For those of us without that sort of seriously healthy bank balance, one-day wellness packages start at £300.

Six Senses Ibiza cares about the planet's wellbeing too. It is the first hotel in the Balearics to achieve BREEAM certification, the prestigious benchmark for environmentally friendly construction. Caramel-coloured accommodation blocks that were inspired by the design of traditional Spanish villages, radiate from a central plaza, which is shaded by eight gnarly old olive trees. Rooms have living roofs and a pleasing beach-shack vibe thanks to pine and bamboo balconies. Leitersdorf contends that luxury is no longer guaranteed seclusion but rather optional sociability. Park yourself at the front of your balcony and you are connected to guests in the plaza and around the pool. Remain at the rear — the balconies are deep — and you can't be seen. I love the idea of dialling privacy up or down, although in practice my corner suite means that anyone using the outdoor staircase has free tickets to the Susan d'Arcy floor show wherever I position myself. It's a minor niggle, easily solved by additional screening.



Cala Xarraca bay
ALAMY

Interiors are slick and understated and come in neutral shades, with midcentury furniture, textured fabrics, tan leather cushions and bathrooms with dinosaur-egg baths and La DoubleJ designer robes. Full marks for making corridors interesting by lining them with classy Magnum black-and-white photography. Outside there are generous alfresco spaces,

enveloped by swishy borders stocked with more than 32,000 native plants.

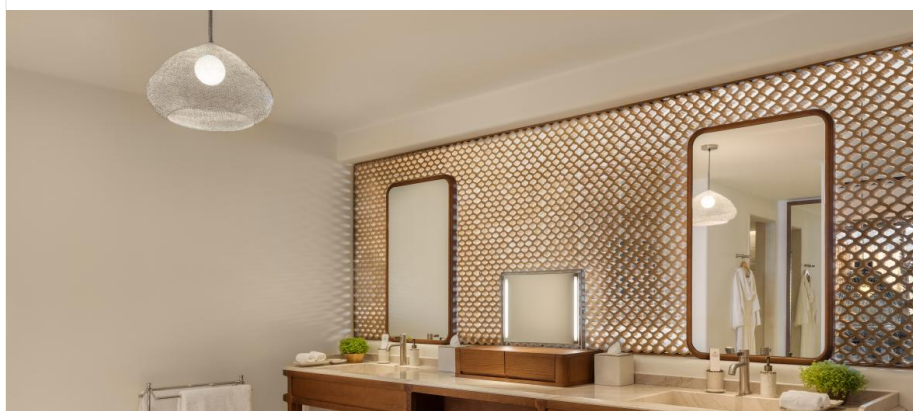
Food is organic and seasonal, with many ingredients from the resort's own farm. There are turmeric shots at breakfast, but also bacon and eggs. At lunch I have flavour-packed beetroot carpaccio with grated horseradish in the buzzy Farmers' Market restaurant, dominated by a full-size tomato-red Porsche tractor, but I can also order pizza.

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I look forward to dinner in the plaza at HaSalon Ibiza. It is overseen by Eyal Shani, the Israeli celebrity chef who made cauliflower cool. Given that and Israel's reputation for vegan cuisine, I expect inventive veggie options, but am surprised to find only meat and fish main courses (I'm told dishes are still being developed). The following evening's super-fresh sushi, at a pop-up from New York's celebrated BondSt restaurant, makes amends.

Sustainability is more imaginatively expressed in an unlikely place: the resort boutique. Tiffanie Darke, a former editor of *The Sunday Times Style*, and the former *Telegraph* fashion editor Daniela Agnelli have curated a fascinating sashay through right-on fashion brands such as CDLP, whose swimwear is made from waste plastic. It's going down a storm with the resort's clientele, and Agnelli — a vision in white linen — tells me that the shop has taken more than £2,500 in sales that morning. I love its soon-to-open Cinderella Room initiative that will allow guests to rent dresses by labels such as Valentino, though the male-orientated wardrobe is limited to Alexander McQueen tuxedos.





A bathroom at the resort
SIX SENSES

“They look great with Speedos,” Agnelli murmurs. I think she’s joking, but the truth is that the cosmopolitan mix of Brits, Americans and Europeans draped around the spectacular 50m pool all look like they’d be comfortable on a catwalk, so perhaps they do undress for dinner.

Extra stardust is provided by a state-of-the-art recording studio directly beneath the pool. It has been designed by engineers who have worked with the likes of Pink Floyd and Lenny Kravitz, and is part of the Beach Caves complex that has been built into the rock face. This area is also home to the six best suites, a bar, indoor and outdoor dining areas, and a live music venue. The hope is that bands will hole up here to write albums and possibly perform. During my stay a flamenco guitarist serenades us as the stars twinkle overhead.

I stick to simple pleasures: a coastal walk with Toby Clarke, an affable Brit from Walking Ibiza. We pass the Moscarter lighthouse and scabble along cliff paths studded with lavender and sprinkled with shards of crystal. We nibble on tangy samphire, dip down to deserted coves where sea anemones shelter under rocks, and look across to the soft-focus outline of Mallorca’s Tramuntana mountain range. We hike for more than two hours and see precisely two other people.

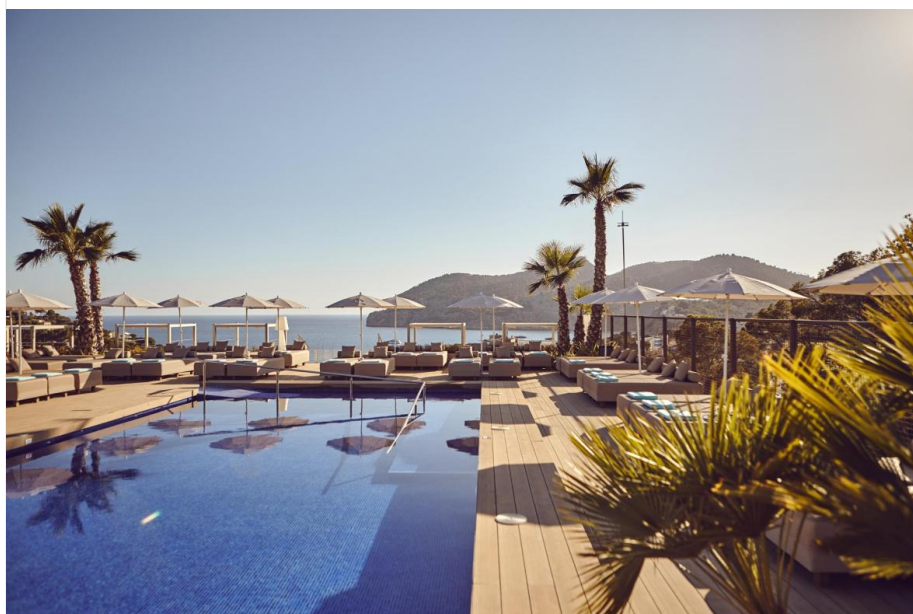


A boat trip around the bay
SIX SENSES

Back at base, I hobble my way across the limestone shoreline to swim off the resort's jetty. Just as I enter the water the setting sun starts to bathe the bay in rose-tinted warmth. Cala Xarraca is known to have the island's best sunsets. It feels so elemental I decide I can live with the resort's lack of a "proper" beach — for sand you have to head to sleepy Portinatx, a 15-minute walk away, where there's a trio of cute little coves and a great beach bar, or borrow a bike to cycle to magical Cala d'en Serra, given extra intrigue by its decaying hulk of a 1960s hotel decorated by talented street artists. Sadly I don't have time to snorkel — a pity because the bay's posidonia seagrass meadows mean that the water is exceptionally clear and home to an impressive range of wildlife. It may have been my best chance to spot a seahorse.

On my last night I join other guests in the wellness studio for Sapphire Leena's breathwork session. She guides us through 60 minutes of continuous circular breathing through our mouths (harder than it sounds). My reward is the kind of electrifying, psychedelic rush that clubbers can only dream of. This is the new way to get high on the White Isle. I approve.

Susan d'Arcy was a guest of Healing Holidays, which has three nights' B&B from £979pp, including flights and transfers (healingholidays.com)



Zafiro Palace Andratx, Mallorca

Three more great places to stay in the Balearics

Zafiro Palace Andratx, Mallorca

Set in the sophisticated family resort of Camp de Mar in the southwest, this 304 all-suite property is beside an 18-hole championship golf course, so perfect for those who prefer to carry clubs rather than dance in them. Rooms vary from those with swim-up pools to ultra-private penthouses with rooftop pools overlooking the coast. Dining options include homemade pizza, sushi and succulent steaks.

Details All-inclusive doubles from £215 (zafirohotels.com)



Concepcio by Nobis, Mallorca

Concepcio by Nobis, Mallorca

The trendy Swedish brand has gravitated south for summer to open a cool bolt hole in a 16th-century heritage mansion in Palma. The design fleshes out the building's Spanish bones with Scandi aesthetics, picking out the lush green Tramuntana mountains for its striking emerald, white and black colour palette. The 31 rooms mix vintage furniture with pieces from B&B Italia and Artek, and have striking handcrafted green and white Huguet tiled floors. On your doorstep are the Old Town's bars and cafés, indie shops and Palma's pride and joy, its 14th-century gothic cathedral.

Details B&B doubles from £189 (concepciobynobis.com)



Hotel Riomar, Ibiza

Hotel Riomar, Ibiza

Next to the white sands of Santa Eulalia beach, Marriott has reinvented the busy east-coast town's oldest hotel as a boutique resort with 116 minimalist rooms. It makes the most of that stellar location with a pool, brasserie and bar terrace that all overlook the bay as well as beach bootcamps and morning yoga by lapping waves. If it gets too hot, there's a secret garden with chill-out tepees.

Details B&B doubles from £143 ([hotelriomar.com](https://www.hotelriomar.com))

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