

**Holiday with a religious connection:
The churches, monasteries, retreats and spiritual places of Northern
Mallorca.**

Part 6: Artà and the village of Ses Païsses



The Calvario – 180 steps lead up to the pilgrimage church of San Salvador.

The final visit of our holiday involved a long yet pleasant drive eastwards, from our villa in Pollenca through Alcudia and Port d'Alcudia, to Artà. Artà once had huge historical importance for the whole of the north east of the island. This is evident today by the castle, still with its imposing wall enclosures, the stunning parish church and the houses in the town with their thick walls and fortified towers.



We parked on the approach road, and walked upwards through the streets of Artà towards San Salvador.

The fact that the town was so heavily protected and defended with walls and towers is due to the regular invasions and pillaging by pirates and raiders up into the 18th century, as vividly described in the local chronicles.



We were greeted at every stage of our climb by friendly cats. The pillars bear scenes from the Stations of the Cross.



At the top of our climb we reached the battlements.

A Moorish castle originally stood on the castle hill. “Almudaina” is the Arabic name for a fortress or castle. There is nothing left of the old Moorish castle nowadays; just a sizeable 1 metre thick parapet and several towers remind us of the times when people had to defend themselves behind the walls.

The Conquest of the island of Majorca on behalf of the Christian kingdoms was carried out by King James I of Aragon between 1229 and 1231. After the last Moors were defeated King James established a fortification at San Salvador.



A walk along the battlements at San Salvador.



From the battlements there is a spectacular panorama of the town and surrounding area.



We then explored the pilgrimage church of St. Salvador. Worship goes as far back as the 13th century and was celebrated by Catalan conquerors in a small shrine - which was later turned into this large pilgrimage church.



The interior of San Salvador, Arta.

We made our way down from the church, and explored the museum.



In the town's museum was a room full of religious statues.



We had a meal of tapas in the town square in Arta.

Our next stop was the 3000 year old settlement at Sais Paisses, a short walk from the town centre.



The portal to a massive stone building at Ses Paisses.



As you stroll around the site you encounter a range of buildings used for different purposes over many centuries.



Another grand edifice at Ses Paisses.

And that was it, the final day of a very enjoyable holiday. There is plenty more to see at all of the places we visited; and of course there is the entire south of the island around Palma.

We booked the villa at Porto Pollenca through Villa Plus, who provided flights with Tui and an Avis hire car. The style of holiday suited us well – we were free agents and could eat out or have meals in the villa as we wished. The car enabled us to explore locally but also go on longer trips, and do so at our own pace.

Magda and Martin Jones

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