# Homelessness crisis deepens in Palma as shanty towns triple amid tourist surge



The Balearic Islands, particularly Majorca, continue to be a top destination for millions of tourists, with 18.7 million visitors recorded last year alone. Among them, British holidaymakers comprise a significant portion of the tourism market, with over 2.3 million choosing Palma, the island's capital, for its enticing mix of beautiful beaches and historic charm. However, beneath this vibrant facade lies a troubling reality: homelessness is becoming increasingly visible, raising urgent concerns among city officials and residents alike.

Recent estimates indicate that approximately 1,100 individuals are experiencing homelessness in Palma, a figure that has led some city councillors to undertake a new census, positioning the official count at about 600 individuals living in makeshift shanty settlements. Palma’s mayor, Jaime Martínez, emphasised the need for accurate data to effectively tackle the crisis, stating, "Only with objective data can we address this problem and be effective in responding." The growing number of shanties, particularly under bridges and in public spaces, has tripled in recent years, highlighting a significant rise in those seeking refuge amid the island’s escalating housing crisis.

The plight of the homeless is becoming particularly pronounced in popular areas like Playa de Palma, where local residents have reported increased drug use and concerning public safety issues. A notable incident involved a group of homeless individuals occupying an abandoned beachfront building, raising alarms about the implications for public health and safety. In response, local authorities have pledged a €21.5 million investment to modernise the area and improve security. This initiative includes plans to utilise drones for monitoring anti-social behaviour, revealing the lengths to which officials are willing to go to balance the needs of the tourist economy with community welfare.

The topic of homelessness in Majorca reflects broader socio-economic tensions on the island, exacerbated by the rising cost of living and the tourist influx, which have forced many locals into precarious housing situations. As rental prices escalate, homes are increasingly being converted into tourist apartments, leading to a stark decrease in affordable housing options. Reports suggest that this situation could worsen as the tourist season approaches, with many individuals resorting to sleeping in places like the Palma Airport terminal and abandoned hotels.

While local councils such as that of Inca have downplayed the situation, describing the makeshift shelters as "squats," testimonies from police sources confirm the existence of these settlements across the island. The perception of a housing crisis in Majorca is also underscored by recent protests, where thousands expressed their frustrations towards mass tourism, indicating a growing resentment among residents who feel displaced by the influx of visitors. Demonstrators have targeted British and German tourists, highlighting the increasing strain that tourism places on local communities.

As the Balearic Islands grapple with the dual challenge of maintaining their appeal as a tourist destination while addressing the deepening homelessness crisis, the future remains uncertain. Continued dialogue between authorities and the community is essential if Majorca is to reconcile the needs of its residents with the demands of a thriving tourism industry. The tensions surrounding these issues are emblematic of a larger debate on how to manage tourism sustainably without compromising the wellbeing of local populations.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/2066860/balearic-islands-majorca-palma-shanty-towns), [[4]](https://www.majorcadailybulletin.com/news/local/2025/01/04/130213/mallorca-homeless-shanties-not-just-palma.html)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/2066860/balearic-islands-majorca-palma-shanty-towns), [[2]](https://www.majorcadailybulletin.com/news/local/2025/03/08/131681/playa-palma-mallorca-residents-denounce-drugs-and-homelessness.html), [[3]](https://www.majorcadailybulletin.com/news/local/2025/02/18/131277/palma-homelessness-crisis-are-like-this-now-imagine-what-like-few-years.html)
* Paragraph 3 – [[6]](https://www.theolivepress.es/spain-news/2025/02/13/homeless-crisis-hits-mallorcas-hotspots-and-will-only-get-worse-as-spains-tourist-season-approaches/), [[7]](https://www.travelandtourworld.com/news/article/spain-faces-escalating-housing-crisis-as-squatters-take-over-abandoned-building-near-majorcas-famous-beaches-stirring-concern-among-locals-and-tourists/)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/2066860/balearic-islands-majorca-palma-shanty-towns> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.majorcadailybulletin.com/news/local/2025/03/08/131681/playa-palma-mallorca-residents-denounce-drugs-and-homelessness.html> - Residents of Playa de Palma, a popular tourist area in Mallorca, have raised concerns about increasing issues related to drug use and homelessness. A group of homeless individuals has occupied a beachfront building, leading to public health and safety concerns. The local government has announced a €21.5 million investment to modernise the area and enhance security, including the use of drones to tackle anti-social behaviour and enforce local ordinances. The situation has prompted discussions about balancing tourism with the well-being of local communities.
3. <https://www.majorcadailybulletin.com/news/local/2025/02/18/131277/palma-homelessness-crisis-are-like-this-now-imagine-what-like-few-years.html> - Palma, the capital of Mallorca, is facing a significant homelessness crisis, with an estimated 1,100 homeless individuals in the city. The number of shanty settlements has increased threefold in recent years, with 37 such settlements now identified. Many residents are employed but struggle to afford housing due to rising costs. The situation is exacerbated by the pandemic and the high demand for housing from tourists, leading to concerns about the future if current trends continue.
4. <https://www.majorcadailybulletin.com/news/local/2025/01/04/130213/mallorca-homeless-shanties-not-just-palma.html> - Homelessness in Mallorca is not confined to Palma; other towns like Inca have also seen the emergence of shanty settlements. Inca Town Hall has denied the existence of these settlements, referring to them as squats, but police sources confirm their presence. The settlements consist of tents and makeshift shelters, highlighting the widespread nature of the housing crisis across the island.
5. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2024/07/22/anti-tourism-protest-majorca-balearics-spain-british-german/> - Thousands of protesters in Palma de Mallorca demonstrated against mass tourism, with signs targeting British and German visitors. The protests highlight growing tensions between locals and tourists, with concerns that the influx of visitors is driving up housing costs and displacing residents. The demonstrations reflect broader debates about the impact of tourism on local communities in popular destinations.
6. <https://www.theolivepress.es/spain-news/2025/02/13/homeless-crisis-hits-mallorcas-hotspots-and-will-only-get-worse-as-spains-tourist-season-approaches/> - Mallorca's housing crisis is leading to an increase in homelessness, with individuals seeking shelter in makeshift homes around the island, including Palma Airport terminal and abandoned hotels in tourist areas. The situation is expected to worsen as the tourist season approaches, with homes being converted into tourist apartments, further straining the already limited housing supply. High rental prices and scarce affordable housing are pushing many locals into precarious living conditions.
7. <https://www.travelandtourworld.com/news/article/spain-faces-escalating-housing-crisis-as-squatters-take-over-abandoned-building-near-majorcas-famous-beaches-stirring-concern-among-locals-and-tourists/> - In Mallorca, squatters have occupied an abandoned beachfront building near popular beaches, raising concerns among locals and tourists. The building, once a seafood plant, has been illegally connected to electricity and is being used as a makeshift home. Residents are worried about the impact on tourism and the area's reputation, with reports of thefts and anti-social behaviour. The situation underscores the escalating housing crisis and its effects on the local community.