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## CALA TAMARELLS

**GEOGRAPHICAL AND PHYSICAL DATA:**

**Municipality:** Mahón.

**Other place names:** Sa Torreta cove.

**Associated urban areas:** none.

**Access:** on foot by Camí de Cavalls from the car park in the centre of Es Grau.

**Beach location:** north.

**Surface area of the beach:** 3,420 m<sup>2</sup> in total.

**Length of the beach:** 260 m in total.

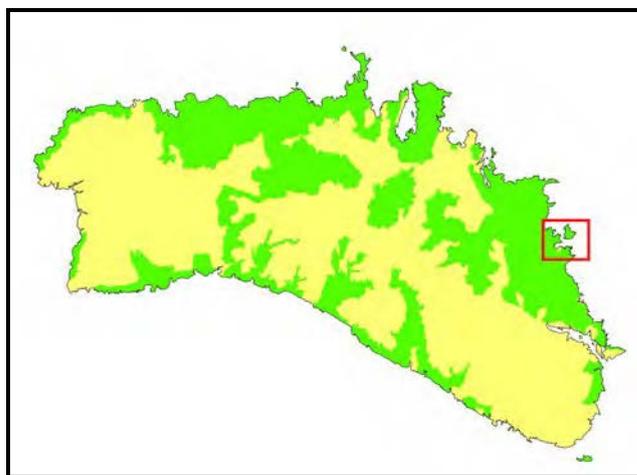
**Average width of the beach:** 15 m.

**Beach's levels of occupation:** low, in high season, but with a considerable amount of boats.

**Geology of the surroundings:** Carboniferous materials and significant fossil dunes associated with the coast. These are orange in colour.

**Composition of the sand:** carbonated grain, greyish in colour, with 60% organic bioclastic.

**Natural protected space:** included in the Natural Park of s'Albufera des Grau, the Natural Area of Special Interest Me-7 y and the Nature Network 2000. The marine part is also Natural Park and Nature Network 2000.

**SERVICES AVAILABLE ON THE BEACH:**

**Beach ranking according to the CIME:** type C beach (natural with no road access).

**Distance to car park area:** 1,800 m from Es Grau.

**Lifeguard services:** no lifeguard services available.

**Other services:** none.

### SURROUNDINGS AND LANDSCAPE:

Located in the Natural Park of s'Albufera des Grau, cala Tamarells is an entrance of the sea situated in front of d'En Colom island, formed by two sub-units (North Tamarells and South Tamarell), separated by the headland at the tip of Tamarells (see adjacent photo). At the same time, each of the sub-units is formed by two beaches (of sediment mixed with pebbles and sand) that are quite sheltered from the direct impact of storms.



The two beaches have dune formations. North Tamarells presents ephemeral formations of little relevance, while South Tamarells presents towering formations in an easterly direction that drain into the sea (see photo on the left). Behind North Tamarells is a small salt marsh coast, with a variety of rush (*Juncus* spp.) and purple glasswort (*Salicornia ramosissima*) (see photo on the right).



### PLANTS AND VEGETATION

The increased diversity of plant species on a beach is not always directly proportional to its extensiveness. Nowadays, increased human presence and systematic cleaning of the beach are the most influencing factors of the vegetation that we can find in first line of a cliff's dune system. This east coast cove of the island is a good example. Its reduced size and practically natural state mean that we can still find vegetation that is not only rich in species, but also has a whole series of communities. In first line of the sea, and especially in the remains of *Sea grass* that usually accumulate, the common pioneering species appear: prickly russian thistle (*Salsola kali*) (see photo on the right), sea rocket (*Cakile maritima*), *Suaeda spicata* and yellow horned poppy (*Glaucium flavum*) (see photo on the left) some of them with great development. Next, where the dune system continues inland, the more permanent species begin to appear: Sea lily (*Pancreactium maritimum*), sea spurge (*Euphorbia paralias*), sea holly (*Eryngium maritimum*) and, at a short distance these give way to more woody vegetation such as everlasting (*Helichrysum stoechas*), finally becoming a sabin with a greater predominance of bushy plants: cypress (*Santolina*

*chamaecyparissus* subsp. *magonica*), rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*), mastic (*Pistacia lentiscus*) and conifer (*Juniperus phoenicea*).



### ANIMALS

Thanks to the floristic wealth of these beaches, this is the ideal place to observe insects and some invertebrates. Within this group, lepidópteros ropalóceros, or butterflies, are frequently seen. There is a great variety of species which specialize in living in dune environments, many of which are present in Menorca.



For example, one can see: the common blue (*Polyommatus icarus*), a small butterfly (wingspan of 3 cm) with a strong sexual formation (males are metallic blue colour and females have brown tones with orange edges to their wings) (see adjacent photo) which can be seen from April until the end of September until the end of October. The painted lady (*Cynthia cardui*) is a relatively large species (wingspan of 5 cm), with orange wings and black and white spots, a migrator which can be seen from April until June and from the beginning of September until the end of October. The cleopatra (*Gonepteryx cleopatra*) also has a large wingspan

(up to 6 cm) and its yellow wings with two orange spots make it unmistakable. It is especially abundant during the months of May and June. Finally, the southern gatekeeper (*Pyronia cecilia*), with its orange wings edged with brown, can be seen from the end of May until the end of August.

### IN THE SEA

On the floor of Tamarells cove, there is a predominant growth of seagrass forming a small barrier reef in the North. A barrier reef is a meadow which has had great vertical growth throughout the years, arriving to the water's surface, where the leaves usually jut out; it has a half moon shape and neptune grass (*Cymodocea nodosa*), another marine plant, (*Cymodocea nodosa*) grows in the centre. Surrounding the barrier reefs one can see an abundance of sea silk (*Pinna nobilis*), the biggest bivalvular in the Mediterranean, that can reach more than one metre in height (see adjacent photo).

The sides of the cove are practically covered by a great variety of communities of *Cystoseira*. This cove is not deep and fish found there are small, but it is certain that the seagrass meadows in this area, the shelter of Illa d'en Colom, are an important place for breeding and restocking of many of them.



## HISTORY AND PECULIARITIES

The creek as a whole is bounded at the north by Colomar tip and the Rambla tower ([see photo](#)), a surveillance and defense fortification built in the year 1800 during the last English domination. In Menorca, there is a network of 15 coastal defense towers that were built at the end of the XVIII century, by both Spanish and English. The purpose of these defense constructions was to avoid the use of moorings offered by the island or the disembarkation of troops that intended to besiege and defeat the Sant Felip castle, a fortress that closed the port of Mahon and that was the final stronghold of Menorcan defenders.

The Rambla or Tamarells tower has a trunk-like shape and its outside walls are extremely deteriorated due to erosion caused by the wind and sea salt. The tower has not been subject to any restorative work, and is maintained in its original state, with exception to the ground floor entrance. The tower has three floors. The original entrance was on the second floor and was accessed via a portable wooden staircase. The first floor consisted of food and gunpowder storage while the second floor was made up of one room with half point, octagonal vaults where the soldiers lived. Finally, the terrace housed the cannons used for attack of enemy vessels. Unfortunately, the tower is in very poor condition, and may even be prone to the danger of landslides. At present, the tower is private property and is part of the lloc de Sa Torreta land.

