

# Isla de Formentera

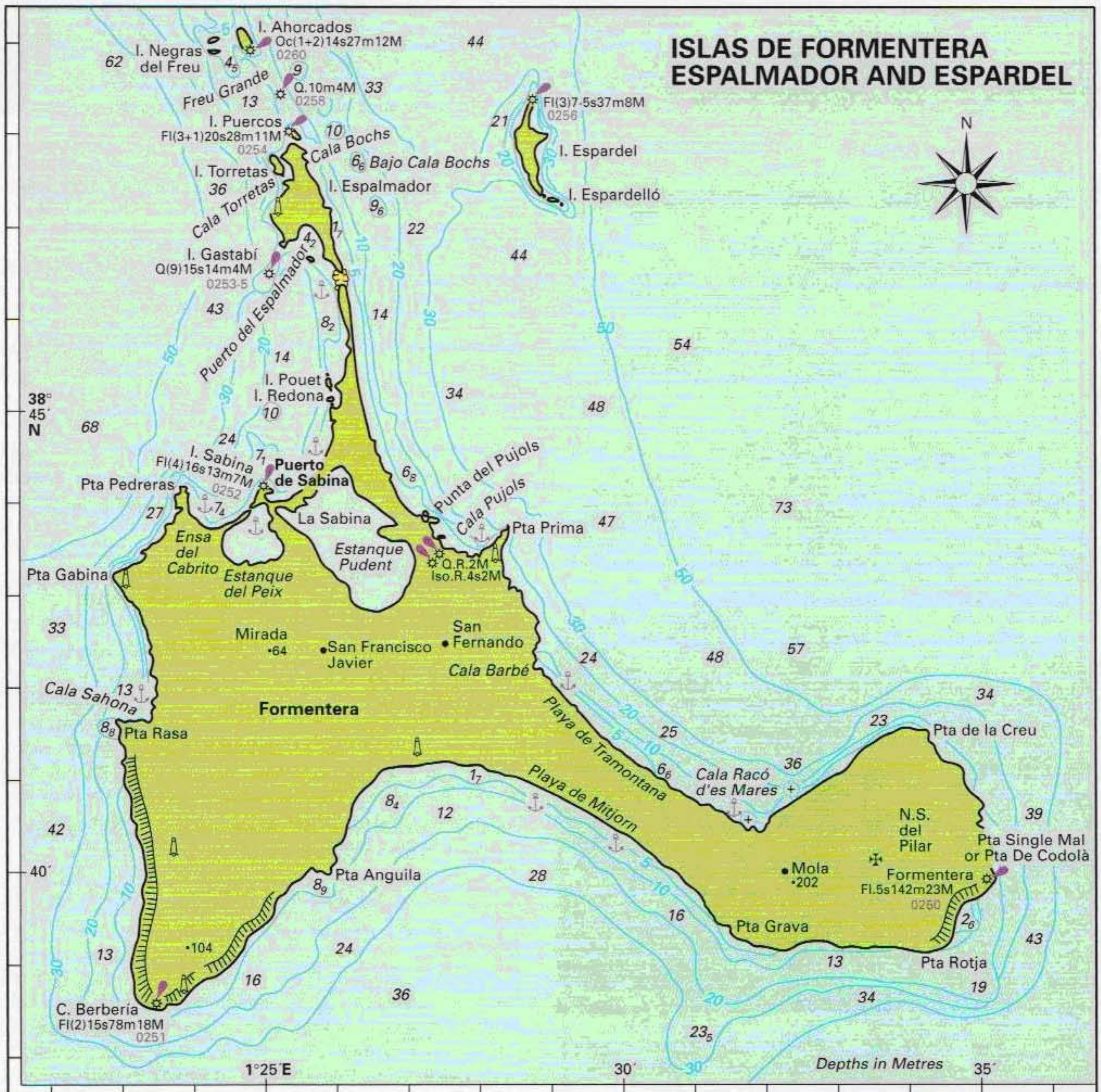
## General description

The comparatively undeveloped islands of Formentera and Espalmador lie 2 miles south of Punta Portas on the south coast of Isla de Ibiza.

Espalmador, by far the smaller of the two and virtually deserted, is 1½ miles long and ¾ mile wide and rises to a height of 24m on its west side where there is a conspicuous tower (9.6m). It is joined to Formentera by a long sandy spit broken by a shallow

rocky passage, the Freu Poco, which separates the two islands.

Formentera is 10 miles long and 8 miles wide at its extremes, but being an elongated S-shape covers an area of only 37 square miles. It comprises two high features – La Mola (192m) an island-like area to the east, and the peninsula running out to Cabo Berberia (107m) to southwest. These two higher regions are attached by a long, low neck of land.



There is a large, low-lying plain in the northern part of the island, the greater part of it occupied by lagoons and salt pans, and salt has long been a major export. Around the two high features the coast is of rocky cliffs, but in the north and northeast it is flat and sandy. Much of the island is cultivated and there are pine forests around La Mola.

There is a permanent population of around 5,000 (according to some sources favoured with the longest life expectancy in Spain), most of whom are involved in some aspect of the tourist industry. Nudism has long been accepted on the beaches of Formentera, and many of the yacht crews, sail-boarders and water-skiers are also unclothed.

### History

The history of Formentera and Espalmador parallels that of Ibiza. The oldest evidence of human occupation is the 2000 BC megalithic tomb at Cana Costa on the eastern shore of the Estanque Pudent. In Roman times they formed part of the *Pityusae* (Pine Islands), Espalmador known as *Ophioussa* and Formentera as *Fruventum* or *Fruventaria* (a reference to the large amount of wheat it supplied), since corrupted into Formentera.

During the hundreds of years following the downfall of Rome the island became depopulated as it was frequently raided by barbarians, Moors, Saracens and even Scandinavians on their way home after taking part in one of the Crusades! It was not until 1697 that the island was repopulated, but even so was still subject to raids by pirates. The local inhabitants even turned to piracy themselves on occasion, and in 1806 captured the British 12-gun brig *Felicity* and sailed her into Ibiza.

### Places of interest

San Francisco Javier is an attractive small town with a fortified church which once mounted guns on its tower – a tower from which fine views can now be enjoyed. The ravine running down to Cala Sahona on the west coast and the area around La Mola in the east are worth visiting if time permits, with the caves of d'en Xeroni also of interest.

### Fiestas

In addition to the national holidays and *fiestas* listed in the introduction the following dates are celebrated in Formentera: 30 May – San Fernando (San Fernando); 24 June – San Juan (La Mola); 16 July – Our Lady of Carmen (La Sabina and Es Pujols); 25 July – St Jaime, patron saint of Formentera; 5 August – Our Lady of the Snows, patron saint of the Pitiusas Islands; 12 October – Our Lady of El Pilar (El Pilar); 3 December – San Francisco Javier (San Francisco).

## Factual information

### Magnetic variation

Formentera – 1°42'W (decreasing 6'E annually) (1997)

### Approach and coastal passage charts

Admiralty 1701, 1702, 2834  
Spanish 7A, 478, 479, 479A  
French 5505, 7114

### Approach lights

- 0256 **Isla Espardel, north point**  
38°48'·4N 1°28'·7E Fl(3)7·5s37m8M  
White truncated conical tower 16m
- 0250 **Formentera (Punta Single Mal or Punta de Codolà)** 38°39'·8N 1°35'·1E Fl.5s142m23M  
White tower on white building 22m  
150°-vis-050°
- 0251 **Cabo Berbería** 38°38'·5N 1°23'·5E  
Fl(2)15s78m18M White round tower 19m  
234°-vis-171°
- 0252 **Isla Sabina** 38°44'·2N 1°25'E  
Fl(4)16s13m7M  
White truncated conical tower 11m
- 0253·5 **Isla Gastabi** 38°46'·5N 1°25'·1E  
Q(9)15s14m4M  
West cardinal tower,  $\blacktriangledown$  topmark 8m

## Puerto de Sabina (Port de sa Savina)

38°44'·1N 01°25'·2E

### Charts Approach

Admiralty 2834  
Spanish 7A, 478, 479, 479A  
French 7114

### Lights

#### Approach

- 0252 **Isla Sabina** 38°44'·2N 1°25'E  
Fl(4)16s13m7M  
White truncated conical tower 11m

#### Entrance

- 0253 **North breakwater** 38°44'·2N 1°25'·2E  
Fl(3)G.9s13m3M Green column on white  
base displaying green  $\blacktriangle$  6m
- 0253·2 **East breakwater** 38°44'·1N 1°25'·2E  
Fl.R.3s5m7M Red tower 4m  
*Note* Situated on the new east mole  
NOT on the old south (inner) mole

### Port Communications

VHF – Marina de Formentera Ch 9.  
 $\text{☎}$ /Fax – Port Authority  $\text{☎}$  971 322130; Marina de Formentera  $\text{☎}$  971 322346, 322693, Fax 971 322222.

### General

Puerto de Sabina is the only harbour on Isla de Formentera and is in constant use by ferries, commercial shipping and fishing craft. Even so it has maintained its relaxed, attractive atmosphere

and is not yet overrun with tourists. The harbour is easy to approach and enter and well sheltered once inside, though the breakwaters offer little protection from the wind itself. The construction of the new Marina de Formentera, and particularly the new eastern basin known as Formentera Mar, has created considerably more space for yachts. Local facilities are reasonably good and there are more shops in the town of San Francisco Javier some two miles away.

### Approach

*From east* If approaching from the direction of Mallorca either round Formentera on the south side, which is steep-to and offers no problems, or take the Freu Grande between Ibiza and Espalmador (see page 30), then proceed as below.

*From west* If approaching from the Spanish mainland follow the approach notes for the passages between Islas de Ibiza and Espalmador (see page 28), then proceed as below.

*From northwest or north* There are no hazards in the approach to Puerto de Sabina over an arc between Punta Pedereras (unlit) to the west and Isla Gastabi (lit) to the north. The white buildings behind the harbour show up well, as does the white tower of Isla Sabina lighthouse. Note that this lighthouse is situated near the end of a projecting rocky spur with shallow water to either side.

Puerto de Sabina from the northeast, with the expanse of Estanque Peix behind. The photograph was taken in May 1996 when the new Formentera Mar (eastern) basin was barely finished and still almost empty. The white tower housing the marina offices can be seen near the root of the central quay.

### Anchorage in the approach

In southerly winds anchor in the bay between Isla Sabina and Punta Pedreras (Ensenada del Cabrero) in 3–5m over sand, rock and weed, open from northwest through north to northeast. In northerly winds Puerto del Espalmador would be much more sheltered – see page 57. Much of Cala Sabina to the east is occupied by the new marina.

### Entrance

Entrance to the main harbour is generally straightforward, though it can become dangerous in strong northerly or northwesterly winds due to shoaling depths. Normally the greatest hazard is posed by the many ferries which enter and leave at speed. Both Marina de Formentera in the southwest corner of the basin and Formentera Mar to the east are reached through relatively narrow inner entrances.

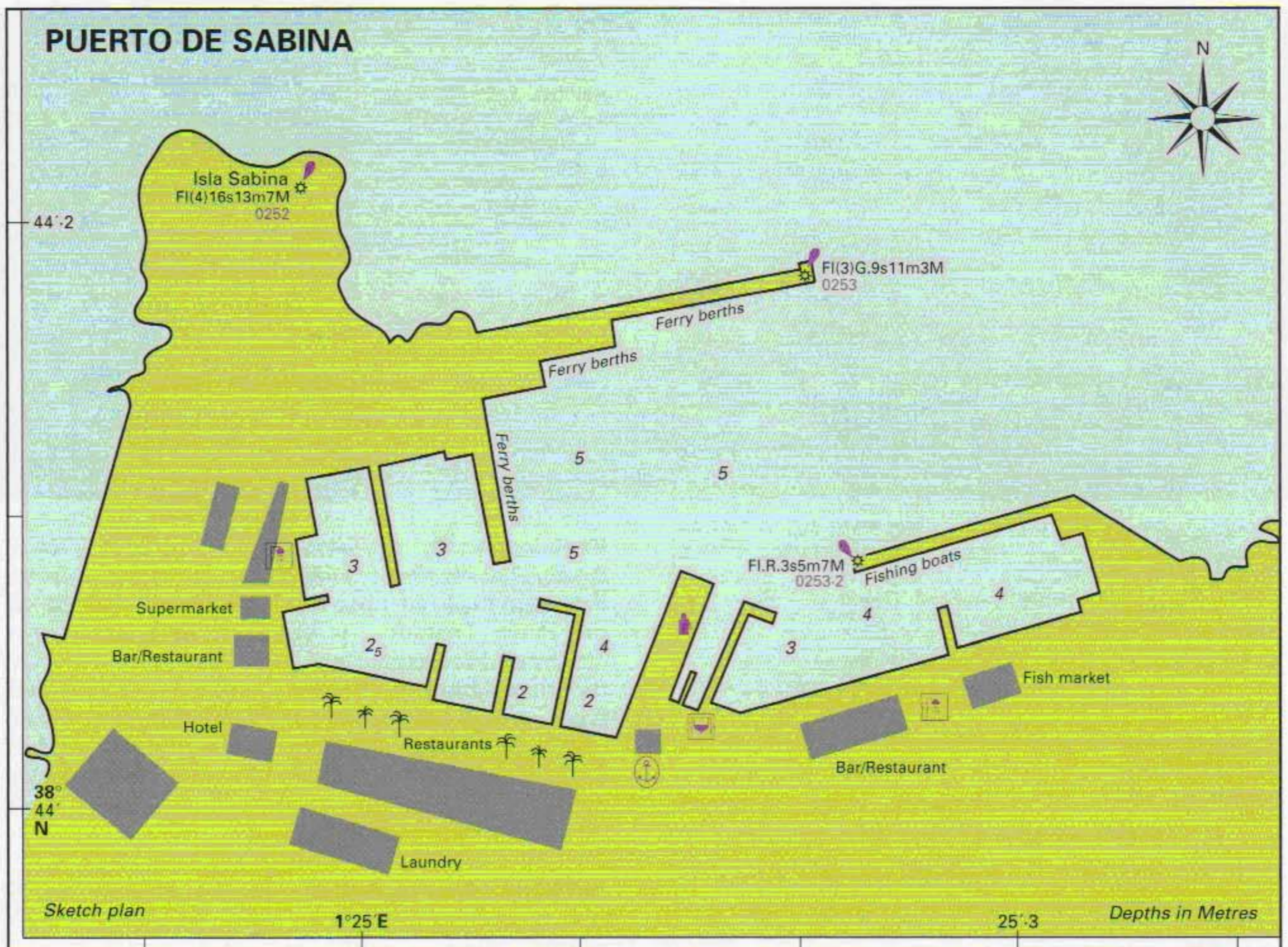
### Berthing

The two basins provide just over 200 yacht berths between them, for yachts up to 22m. There is no reception berth as such. Preferably contact the marina office on approach. Otherwise it may be necessary to occupy any convenient vacant berth until allocated a spot by marina staff.

### Charges (see page 6)

*Marina de Formentera and Formentera Mar* High season daily rate – Band A; low season daily rate – Band D. Water and electricity extra.





### Facilities

**Boatyards** Small yard centred around the travel-lift and slipway. Enquire at the nearby marina office.

**Travel-lift** 35-tonne travel-lift near the marina office.

**Slipway** Near the marina office.

**Engineers** Enquire at the marina office.

**Chandlery** To the west of the main harbour.

**Water** Metered taps on pontoons and quays.

**Showers** Blocks serving both marina basins – a small charge is made.

**Electricity** 220v AC points on pontoons and quays, charged by the day.

**Fuel** Diesel pump on the central môle (see plan).

**Ice** From the supermarket.

**Yacht club** The Club Náutico Formentera, formerly located opposite the marina office tower, was no longer in evidence in 1996.

**Banks** None closer than San Francisco Javier, but several 'hole in the wall' credit card machines on the parade of shops and restaurants overlooking the harbour.

**Shops/provisioning** Two supermarkets near the harbour, plus more in San Francisco Javier a couple of miles inland.

**Fish market** Near the east basin.

**Hotels/restaurants/café, etc.** Several pleasant cafés and restaurants overlooking the harbour, with lots more throughout the rest of the island.

**Laundry** South of the harbour near the Estanque Peix.

**Hospital/medical services** Small hospital in San Francisco Javier.

### Communications

**Car hire/taxis** Car hire from an office to the west of the main harbour. Bicycle hire is also popular and widely available.

**Buses** Bus service to San Francisco Javier.

**Ferries** Very frequent ferries (including hydrofoils) to Ibiza.

### ⚓ Cala Sabina 38°44'2N 1°25'4E

A wide *cala* close east of Puerto de Sabina, now partly taken up by the extended harbour development. Anchor in 3–5m over sand off a sand and rock beach, open to west–northwest–north. There is a restaurant in the ruined windmill at the northern end of the beach.

### ⚓ Islas Redona and Pouet (Ponet)

38°45'2N 1°25'9E

Two small islands which, together with three even smaller islets, give some shelter to a shallow (2–3m) anchorage in a sandy bay otherwise open west–northwest–north. There is a restaurant in the old windmill to the south, near a landing pontoon for local tourist ferries.