

## YACHT CHARTER TOURISM IN THE BALEARIC ISLANDS: A CONSUMER PROFILE

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### Abstract

This paper analyzes the consumer profile of yacht charter tourism in the Balearic Islands, one of the most popular yachting tourism destinations in the Mediterranean. Empirical evidence from a sample of yacht charter tourists gives information on tourist behaviour and socio-demographic characteristics, main motivations, travel planning and characteristics, charter experience satisfaction and tourist's destination loyalty. Basically, charter consumer profile is a British, German or Spanish male, between 35 and 55 years of age, with University studies, holding executive or intermediate positions and with a notable navigation experience. Main motivations for choosing the Balearics as yacht charter destination are coastal attractiveness, meteorology

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and ease to reach base ports. The main source of information for charter travellers is the Internet, with a high proportion of tourists finally contracting the selected services through this medium. The average stay is 11,8 days, much higher than that of a traditional tourist; 7,4 days correspond to charter practice and the rest of days tourists stay in the Islands, mainly in hotels. Sailing monohull is the most frequent type of boat demanded, and motor boats and catamaran are less frequent. Among sailing boats, the most demanded length is above 12 metres whereas for motor boats is inferior to 12 metres. Germans, Italians and Spaniards usually travel with friends while British with their family. The number of charterers is on average 6 people. Charter tourists' satisfaction with services offered, charter firms and boat rented is very positive. Tourists' satisfaction with the Balearics as charter destination is positive, especially in relation with environmental state and quality. Loyalty of yacht charter tourists to the Balearics is high, as they have previously chartered in the Archipelago around three times.