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Palafrugell, Catalonia

An approached analysis

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Introduction to Tourism

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1 Activity framework

1.1 Site description

Palafrugell is a city in the county of Baix Empordà, province of Girona, Catalonia. This municipality is one of the most common tourist destinations and the second largest residence of the province of Girona. Data from the population of the municipality (Idescat) in 2019 show that Palafrugell has a population of 22,974 inhabitants and that during the summer season it triples and reaches over 60,000 people. Palafrugell is a town where Santa Margarida and Ermedàs, a rural town, the city of Llofriu, are added to the coastal cores of Calella, Llafranc, Tamariu and Aigua Xelida. This town which traditionally live off the cork industry, today lives mainly from tourism, is strategically located between the sea and the mountains.



Figure 1. Autonomous map of Spain and Catalonia country map.

1.2 Historical context

By the end of the 19th century, the inhabitants of Palafrugell adopted the European practice of bathing in the sea. The popular classes often went to Calella on Sundays and the wealthy families built their second residencies of El Canadell or La Barandilla to spend the summers there. Before the Civil War, there were already three hotels in Calella, which proves that there was a fixed clientele of summer visitors, although they were basically coming from the rest of Catalonia. The town of Palafrugell also

received tourism from the rest of Spain, as well as from outside the borders, such as Russian tourists who built their houses in the town, which still exist today. After the post-war period, tourism and all derived sectors replaced cork as the main economic engine.



Figure 2. On the left general view of Llafranc, on the right general view of Tamariu, at the beginning of the 20th century.

In 1933, the first tourism assembly was held in the sanctuary of San Sebastián (Llafranc), with the presence of authorities from the Second Republic, with the intention of planning the growing demand and limiting the disproportionate growth in the maritime area.

In 1932, the entity Promotion of Municipal Tourism was created and three years later, as a result of the agreements reached in the San Sebastián assembly, the Association of Municipalities and Costa Brava Board of Trustees was created. Institutions that the Civil War and the subsequent Franco dictatorship eliminated.

In the mid-1950s, there was a boom in tourism in the municipality, and the seafront, previously occupied by fishermen, began to be transformed into second residencies. Foreign tourism reappeared during this decade and developed considerably during the 1960s.

During the sixties, some of the most important infrastructures for tourism were created, the Calella motorway (1967), which gave access to the municipalities of

Calella and Llafranc, and the Llafranc marina (1963). In addition, new educational centers and other facilities and activities linked to sports and culture were being created in the municipality, such as the Josep Pla stadium or the Casa de Cultura, House of Culture in English, among others.

During the sixties, the urbanizations that extended towards the peripheries began to be built. Despite the pronounced growth that the municipalities suffered, the height of the new buildings was limited, so that the coastal municipalities have been able to maintain the charm of a maritime town.

The municipality of Palafrugell is currently a major tourist attraction mainly for its beaches, along with a range of activities and events to compliment.



Figure 3. View of Port Bo beach, 60s of the twentieth century.

2 Study of demand

2.1 Type of tourism they receive

The following data has been collected in a study carried out using questionnaires to tourists and visitors to the municipality of Palafrugell between the months of April and September 2014 by Dra. Raquel Camprubí, Dra. Saida Palo, Dr. Lluís Coromina, Dr. Daniel Blasco for the Palafrugell Institute for Economic Promotion.

The tourism that receives the most Palafrugell, in terms of gender, is dominated by a female audience with 58.7%, out of 41.3% of men. The main volume of nationalities it receives is the tourist from Spain itself, which accounts for 52%, followed by the French tourist with 17.8%. In addition, Palafrugell receives tourists from England, with 8.8%, the Netherlands, with 7.6% and Germany with 6.8%. In a smaller number the municipality also Belgian, Italian and Russian tourists. Inside the national tourism we can see that the main public is Catalan, followed by Madrid, Basque Country, Valencia and Aragon.

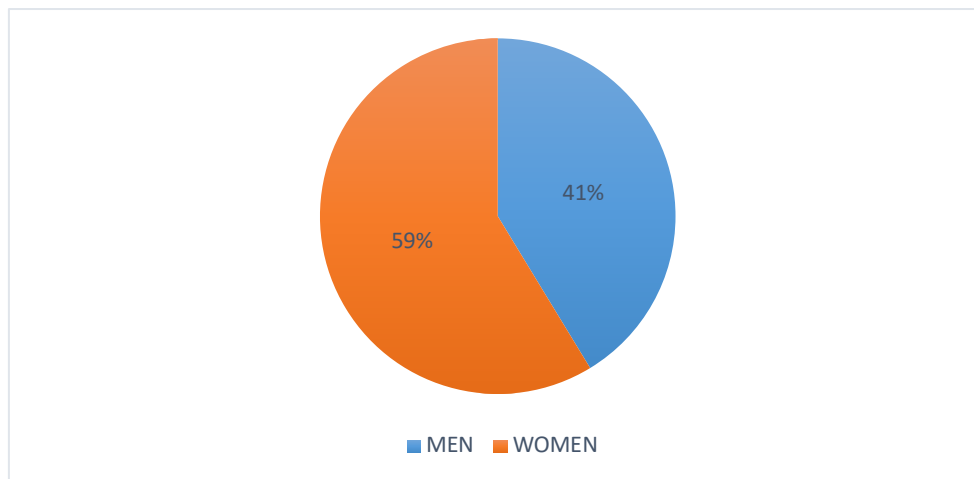


Figure 4. Graphic. Receiving tourism by gender

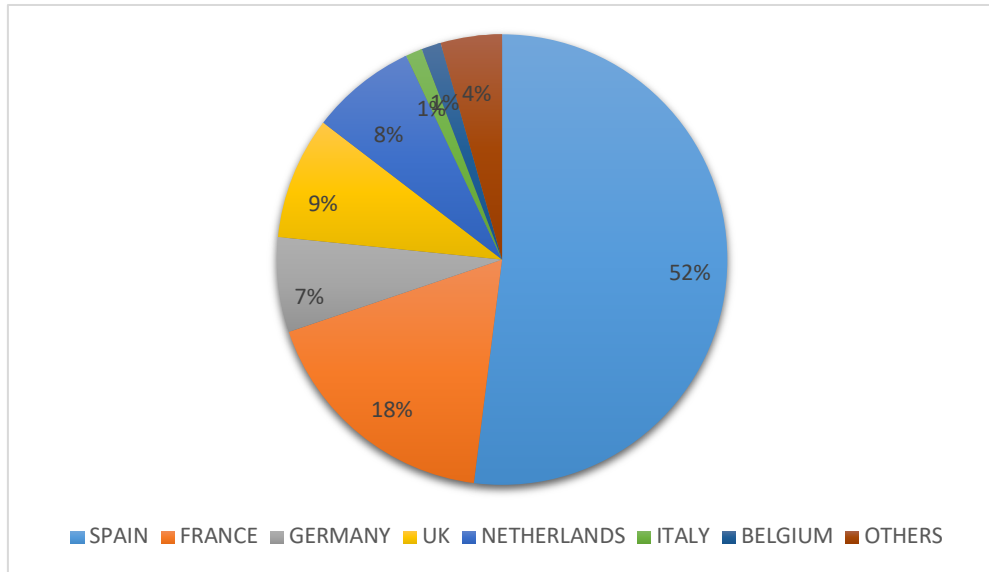


Figure 5. Graphic. Receiving tourism by nationality

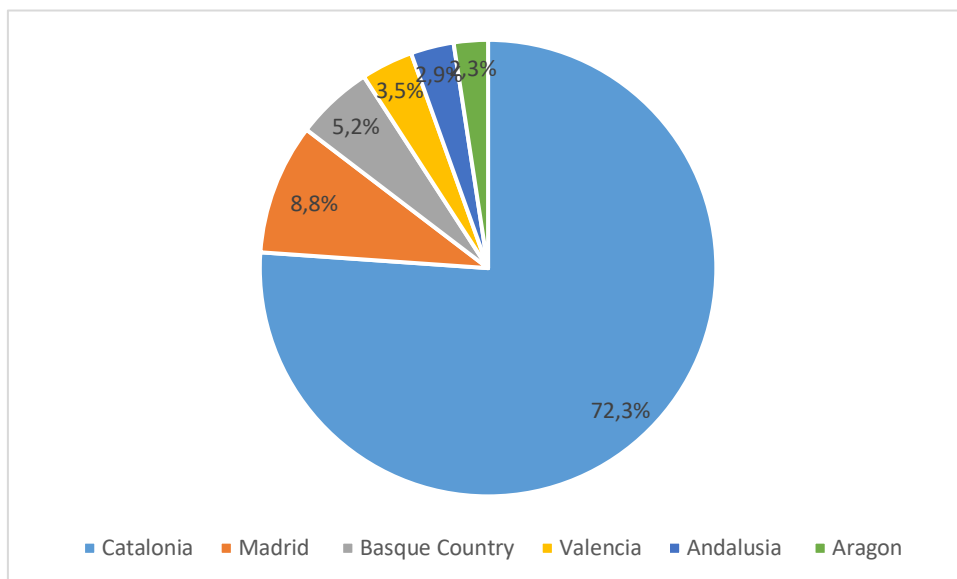
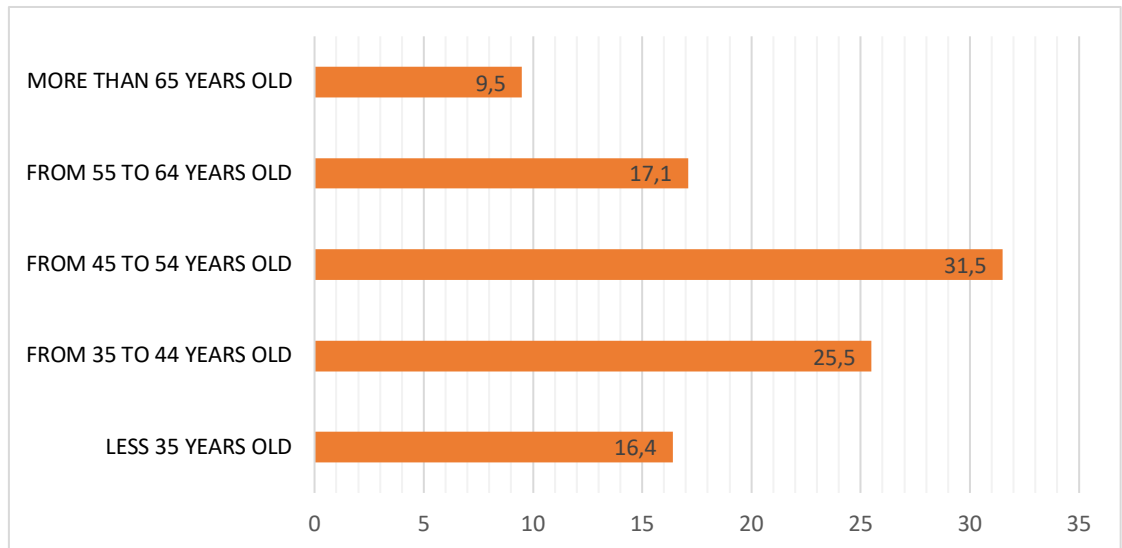


Figure 6. Graphic. Receiving national tourism by autonomous community

If we analyse tourism by age, we see that the main tourist group in the municipality is the one that is between 45 to 54 years with 31.5%, followed by the group of 35 to 44 years with 25.5% and the group of 55 to 64 years with 17.1%. The age groups that visit the municipality less are those under 35 with 16.4% and those over 65 with 9.5%.



Within the study of the Palafrugell Institute for Economic Promotion (IPEP, 2014) we also find data on the working situation of tourists. For the most part, we see that tourists who visit Palafrugell are employed accounting for 80% approximately, only 2.1% of visitors are unemployed. The data is completed with the group of retirees who are 14.1% and students 4.6%.

2.2 Average stay and average expenditure

Due to the fact that the tourism department of the Baix Empordà County Council has not been able to provide with tourism data in the city of Palafrugell, due to the fact that the reports are currently being drafted but we get data at the county level. The average cost in the Baix Empordà region is 86.7 euros and the average stay is 3.4 nights.

2.3 Motivations

According to studies carried out by the Palafrugell Institute for Economic Promotion (2014), the main motivations for tourists to visit the town are to rest and relax, a destination of sun and beach. Followed by gastronomy, culture and historical heritage. In the last places we find that there's also a motivation to visit family and / or friends, as well as to practice golf and other waters ports.

3 Study of the demand

3.1 Environment

3.1.1 Natural resources

Palafrugell, being a municipality with cores on the coast, has a large number of natural resources such as beaches and capes. The municipality consists of 14 beaches, accessible from the centres or the parapet walk, and two beaches with exclusive access by sea. The most outstanding beaches are the beach of Port Bo, located in Calella and declared a Site of National Cultural Interest in 1995, it is one of the best-known areas of the municipality, together with the Voltes de Calella, arcades built in the 19th century. Also noteworthy is Llafranc's beach, located in the village of the same name, it is the largest beach in the municipality with 347 meters long by 32 wide and, finally, Cala Pedrosa, located at the foot of Cap de Sant Sebastià which is listed as space of geological interest.



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-SA-NC](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

Figure 7. General view of Llafranc beach

In addition, the municipality consists of two heads, Cap Roig, where the botanical gardens of Cap Roig are located and where the music festival named after the place is held, and Cap de Sant Sebastià, where the lighthouse is located. There's also a museum complex formed by the ruins of an Iberian village.

3.1.2 Routes and paths

The town consists of a heritage of routes and paths formed mainly by the parapet walk, an old road that ran along the Costa Brava and was used to control the maritime border and prevent smuggling, currently used as a tourist route. Another route that stands out is the Torres de Guaita, a circular route about 15 km of length, which passes by the different old watchtowers located in the municipality.

3.2 Tourism companies

Table 1. Accommodation offers

Hotels	Hotel places
25	1,337
Campsites	Campsite places
4	1,337
Rural Accommodation	Rural accommodation places
3	33

Table 2. Restaurant business

Number of establishments	98
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The predominant gastronomic offer is the Empordà and Mediterranean with 69 establishments. But it also has Italian, Japanese and tapas cuisine.

Table 3. Transport

Total number of companies	21
Taxis	14
Land transport*	4
Car rental	2
Bycle renta	3

* Transport companies such as AENA, RENFE, the Palafrugell bus station (SARFA) and Girona's bus station.

3.3 Communication and access



The easiest way to access Palafrugell is by car. From Barcelona to Palafrugell is 124 km. The main roads to access it are the AP7 motorway towards Girona / France, or the C-32 towards Blanes, and then the C-65 and C-31 towards the North.



The company Sarfa (Grup Sarbus) connects the municipality of Palafrugell with the neighbouring towns and with the cities of the metropolitan area of Barcelona.



The nearest train station to Palafrugell is in Flaçà, 25 km away from where you can catch trains towards Girona or Barcelona. To get from

the station to downtown you can take buses from the Sarfa company to go directly to Palafrugell.



To access it by air, Girona - Costa Brava Airport is the closest to 49 km from the town, there is also Barcelona - El Prat Airport (BCN) at 135 km.

3.4 Complementary offer

The town of Palafrugell has consolidated a large number of events, fairs and events in order to complement sun and beach tourism, and thus combat seasonality and bring more quality tourism to the municipality. The following data have been extracted from the Palafrugell Institute for Economic Promotion (2014) and the Palafrugell Tourist Office (2019).

La Garoinada

La Garoinada is one of the most well-known and most traditional gastronomic promotions in the Girona region. It was born in 1992 and its main product is sea urchins. This festival is celebrated in the middle of winter during January until March, when the sea is calm and the sea urchins are at its best. The Garoinada menu, which changes each edition, consists of a sea urchin starter, a “Sea and mountain” main course or an alternative dish, and a cream-based dessert. All accompanied by water, wine from the Celler Espelt de l’Empordà and coffees.

Spring Parties (Festes de primavera)

The Spring Festival is possibly one of the most deep-rooted and traditional festivities in Palafrugell. This celebration, which has its origins in the ban on 1963 carnival, has become an event for Palafrugell that involves the entire population through different activities. Possibly the best known is the Costa Brava Carrousel in which floats and processions from all over Catalonia, and the town itself, form a march through the city centre.

Cantada d'havaneres de calella de palafrugell

The Cantada de Calella de Palafrugell is possibly one of the best-known events in Palafrugell. This event, which has its origins in 1966 with a meeting of singers in the Can Batlle tavern, was very successful from the beginning and this forced the organizers to repeat every year the event on the beach of Calau (Calella). From 1969 onwards, the Friends of Calella Association, decided to move it to Plaça del Port Bo, where it is currently held.

Costa brava jazz festival, street jazz and off festival

This festival offers a varied musical offer that bets on the combination of the most traditional jazz with new emerging groups of the Catalan scene.

Flowers and violas (Flors i violes)

This event consists in a circuit of courtyards, both public and private, which are open to the public to become a stage for artistic creations and decorations, concerts and shows. These spaces combine music, fine arts installations with a floral flavour and live performances. Usually, this event is held during May but this year's edition (8th edition) was held in September because of Covid-19.

Cap Roig gardens festival (Festival Jardins de Cap Roig)

It is one of the most important music festivals on the Costa Brava, held at the Cap Roig Botanical Garden in Calella de Palafrugell and with the participation of artists from various international backgrounds.

4 Specific institutions for tourism promotion

PALAFRUGELL TOURIST OFFICE

The Palafrugell Tourist Office is a City Council office dedicated to the tourist promotion of the destination. In addition, the office is responsible for direct care to tourists who need it.

<http://visitpalafrugell.cat/>

PALAFRUGELL TOWN HALL



Palafrugell City Council is the entity in charge of managing the tourism policies that are developed in the municipality. It is also in charge of managing and creating plans for the future of tourism in the area. The City Council manages various tourism promotion organisations, including the Tourist Office and the IPEP.

<http://www.palafrugell.cat/>

BAIX EMPORDÀ COUNTY COUNCIL



The Baix Empordà County Council is the body that at county level creates lines to follow for the total number of municipalities in the county. It is one of the main entities that controls and regulates tourism and is the creative entity of the Baix Empordà Tourism Observatory.

<https://baixemporda.cat/>

COSTA BRAVA-GIRONA TOURISM BOARD



The Costa Brava-Girona Tourism Board is a joint organisation of the Deputation of Girona, founded in 1976. The main objective is the definition and elaboration of strategic lines for the tourist development of the Girona counties. In this sense, its priority is to promote the tourist brands in the emitting markets, and to prioritize them according to their importance for the destination.

<https://es.costabrava.org/>

5 Future perspective

Based on the Palafrugell Institute for Economic Promotion studies (2014) and the contacts made with the Palafrugell tourist office and with the tourism section of the Baix Empordà County Council, we can extract the following future objectives.

Short- and medium-term tourism planning

- Creation of the Baix Empordà Tourism Observatory, in order to have more reliable data on tourism in the region and thus be able to create control and promotion measures.
- Promote the tourist awareness of the municipality so that the citizens of Palafrugell see tourism as a source of income, and thus combat "tourismophobia".
- Create a system of direct communication with the tourist through online channels. The creation of a modern and constantly updated website, as well as the creation of other digital media to reach more audiences.
- Develop tourist products that favour the increasing consumption of the municipality's cultural products, prioritizing experiences in the facilities. Thus, extracting more performance from existing facilities

Long-term tourism planning

- To create strategies that allow to end the great seasonality of the tourism in the municipality.
- Try to break the physical and psychological barriers that exist between the coastal cores (Calella, Llafranc and Tamariu) and the inland cores (Palafrugell and Llofriu). The aim of this measure is to boost tourism and distribute it throughout the municipality, as it currently focuses heavily on coastal towns. In addition, this measure aims to help deseasonalize tourism.

6 Conclusions

This work allows us to understand and discover the town of Palafrugell, together with its beaches and adjoining cores. The work has allowed me to know the tourist history of this area, discovering that already during the Second Spanish Republic organisations were created to control the growth of tourism. In addition, I was able to discover the town's richness both historically and culturally, as well as the town's wonderful natural resources, and the many musical and gastronomic activities that are carried out to promote and attract people to the town.

The work has allowed me to have contact with the different figures of tourism promotion and management both at local and county level, so I have established contact with the Palafrugell Tourist Office, the IPEP (Palafrugell Institute for Economic Promotion) and the Baix Empordà County Council.

In addition, this work has introduced us to the issue of the future trends of tourism and I have been able to analyse the specific measures proposed by the administrations. On one hand, I have been able to see measures focused on seeking quality tourism and combating tourismophobia. I have also seen the town's own problems, as well as the long-term determination to combat the high seasonality suffered by coastal municipalities and the attempt to find measures to ensure that the town has tourism all year round. And finally, I have been able to see the collaboration between administrations to have more control over tourism and to be able to create joint measures, such as the example of the creation of the Tourism Observatory, created by the Baix Empordà County Council and supported by all the municipalities of the Region.

More personally, I consider that it is a work that has helped me to continue developing my research abilities and, also, to continue improving the synthesis of the information. This is an assignment that I consider very interesting to do, as it has allowed me to get to know the municipality I chose, Palafrugell, in the field of tourism.

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