

EUROPE · HISTORY · ARCHITECTURE · DIVING · ISLANDS · BEACHES

 Malta

Malta squeezes 7,000 years of history into an archipelago smaller than the Isle of Wight: megalithic temples older than the pyramids, the honey-stoned fortress capital of the Knights of St John, and Caravaggio's largest painting. Clear water for diving and swimming, reliable sunshine and English spoken everywhere make it an easy short break from the UK.

 Before you go, read the UK government's travel advice for Malta and entry requirements (visas, passport validity). Last updated by FCDO 11 August 2026.

 CAPITAL Valletta	 CURRENCY Euro (EUR) £1 ≈ €1.19	 LANGUAGE Maltese, English Italian	 BEST TIME Apr–Jun, Sep–Oct
 DAILY BUDGET £60–£250 ££ Moderate	 PLUGS Type G 230V · UK plugs fit	 FLIGHT FROM LONDON 3h 10m direct ~£70–£300 return	 TIME ZONE UTC+1 standard time

Malta's three inhabited islands sit between Sicily and North Africa, and their history shows it: Phoenicians, Romans, Arabs, Normans, the Knights of St John and the British all left their mark. Most visitors base themselves in Valletta, Sliema or St Julian's and make day trips by bus or ferry to Mdina, the Three Cities across the Grand Harbour, the southern temples and Marsaxlokk's fishing harbour. Gozo, about 25 minutes by ferry from Ċirkewwa, is greener and slower and deserves at least a night; Comino, between the two, is a boat trip for swimming.

Malta is compact but congested, and getting from one end to the other can take longer than the map suggests. Prices are moderate by western European standards, with pastizzi and ftira keeping lunch cheap. July and August are hot and crowded; spring and autumn are warm enough for swimming without the queues. Sandy beaches are few — swimming is mostly off rocks and lidos, which divers love for the clarity. Visitors are often surprised by the summer festas, when each parish celebrates its saint with brass bands, fireworks and statues carried through decorated streets.

Top 5 highlights

- 1** ARCHITECTURE

Valletta and St John's Co-Cathedral

The Knights laid out Valletta on a grid after the Great Siege of 1565. Behind the plain facade of St John's Co-Cathedral lies a gilded baroque interior, a floor of inlaid marble tombstones and Caravaggio's Beheading of Saint John the Baptist.
- 2** HISTORY

Mdina

Malta's walled former capital, the 'Silent City', crowns a ridge in the centre of the island. Wander its lanes at dusk after the tour groups leave, then visit the Roman villa and St Paul's Catacombs in neighbouring Rabat.

3

HISTORY

Haġar Qim and Mnajdra

Two megalithic temple complexes on the cliffs of the south coast, begun around 3600 BC and older than Stonehenge. At Mnajdra, the rising sun lines up with the main doorway at the spring and autumn equinoxes.

4

HISTORY

Gozo's Ċittadella

The hilltop citadel in Victoria looks out over Gozo's terraced fields and flat-topped hills. Combine it with the Ġgantija temples in Xagħra, the salt pans near Marsalforn and the sea cliffs at Dwejra.

5

BEACH

Blue Lagoon, Comino

A shallow channel of startlingly clear turquoise water between Comino and the islet of Cominotto. In summer it is packed by late morning, so take the first boat or stay into the evening when the day-trippers leave.

Biggest cities

LARGEST CITY

St Paul's Bay

≈ 40,000 people

The fastest-growing locality, taking in the resort strip of Buġibba and Qawra; convenient for the northern beaches and boats to Comino, but short on character.

2ND LARGEST CITY

Birkirkara

≈ 30,000 people

Malta's largest traditional town, a residential inland area whose baroque Basilica of St Helen anchors one of the island's grandest summer festas.

3RD LARGEST CITY

Mosta

≈ 26,000 people

Worth a stop for the Rotunda, one of Europe's largest unsupported domes, which a German bomb pierced in 1942 without exploding during a crowded service.

Malta has no large cities: the main island is largely one continuous built-up area, and these are its most populous localities (2024 estimates). Valletta, the capital, has around 5,000 residents.

When to go to Malta

Best time: **Apr–Jun, Sep–Oct.**

Jan

Feb

Mar

Apr

May

Jun

Jul

Aug

Sep

Oct

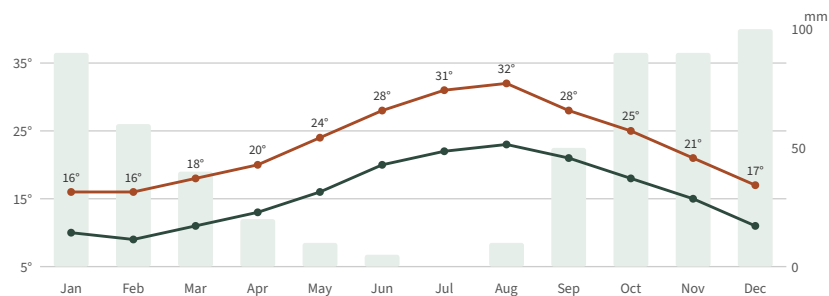
Nov

Dec

■ Best ■ Good ■ Mixed ■ Poor

Average climate in Valletta

— High °C — Low °C ■ Rain (mm)



Festivals & events

Feb–Mar	Malta Carnival In the days before Lent, Valletta and Floriana fill with satirical floats and costumed dancers, while Nadur on Gozo stages a darker, unofficial 'spontaneous' carnival.
Apr–May	Malta International Fireworks Festival Late April displays light up the Grand Harbour, with pyrotechnic teams from Malta and abroad; watch from Valletta's Upper Barrakka Gardens or the Three Cities.
Jun–Sep	Village festas Every summer weekend some parish honours its patron saint with decorated streets, brass bands, processions and competitive fireworks; check local listings for each weekend's festa.

How much does Malta cost?

SHOESTRING £60 per person / day ≈ €71.42 hostels, street food, buses	MID-RANGE £125 per person / day ≈ €149 3-star hotels, restaurants, some taxis	COMFORTABLE £250 per person / day ≈ €298 4-star+, guided trips, private transfers
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Estimates per person per day, excluding flights. Prices vary by season and city.

Food to try

Stuffat tal-fenek Rabbit slow-cooked in red wine with garlic, tomatoes and bay, the centrepiece of a fenkata, a communal rabbit feast; the sauce often dresses spaghetti first.	Pastizzi Flaky diamond-shaped pastries filled with ricotta or mushy peas, sold hot from hole-in-the-wall pastizzerias for small change.	Hobż biż-żejt Thick slices of crusty Maltese bread rubbed with tomato paste and olive oil, topped with tuna, capers, olives and onion.
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Getting around

Malta Public Transport buses cover almost everywhere from Valletta's terminus, and a tallinja Explore card cuts fares for visitors. Ferries cross from Valletta to Sliema and the Three Cities, and the Gozo Channel ferry runs from Ċirkewwa to Mgarr around the clock, with fast ferries from Valletta too. Bolt and eCabs work well. Driving is on the left, but traffic and parking are trying; a car is most useful on Gozo.

Practical information

PLUGS & VOLTAGE  G 230V — UK plugs fit	EMERGENCY NUMBERS Telephone: 112 (ambulance, fire, police) Source: FCDO “Getting help”
DIALLING CODE +356	TIME ZONE UTC+1 (standard time)

TAP WATER

Generally safe to drink

DRIVING

On the left

TIPPING

Service is not always included: leave 5–10% in restaurants for good service and round up taxi fares.

ETIQUETTE

Cover shoulders and knees in churches, which are still very much places of worship. Malta is strongly Catholic, so avoid beachwear in town centres and keep noise down near services.

MAIN AIRPORTS

Malta International Airport (MLA), Luqa

Visas & entry for Malta

Shown for a British passport.

No visa needed

You can travel without a visa to the Schengen area, which includes Malta, for up to 90 days in any 180-day period. This applies if you travel: as a tourist; to visit family or friends; to attend business meetings, cultural or sports events; for short-term studies or training.

The requirements for working in Malta are different.

From the UK government's FCDO entry requirements for British passport holders — read the full page for passport validity, permits and exceptions.

Health & vaccinations



See a travel health nurse, GP or travel clinic **6–8 weeks before you go**. Make sure routine UK vaccinations (such as MMR and diphtheria-tetanus-polio) are up to date.

RECOMMENDED FOR MOST TRAVELLERS

Tetanus

SOMETIMES ADVISED — DEPENDS ON YOUR TRIP, ACTIVITIES AND HEALTH

Bat Lyssavirus

YELLOW FEVER CERTIFICATE

A yellow fever certificate is only required if you arrive from (or transit through) a country with yellow fever risk — not if you fly direct from the UK.

MALARIA

No malaria risk

Source: TravelHealthPro (National Travel Health Network and Centre), checked 21 October 2026. This is a summary, not medical advice.

Public holidays in Malta

The next 12 months. Banks, offices and some sights may close, and transport and hotels get busy around these dates.

Tue 8 Dec 2026

Feast of the Immaculate Conception

Sun 13 Dec 2026	Republic Day
Fri 25 Dec 2026	Christmas Day
Fri 1 Jan 2027	New Year's Day
Wed 10 Feb 2027	Feast of Saint Paul's Shipwreck
Fri 19 Mar 2027	Feast of Saint Joseph
Fri 26 Mar 2027	Good Friday
Wed 31 Mar 2027	Freedom Day
Sat 1 May 2027	Worker's Day
Mon 7 Jun 2027	Sette Giugno
Tue 29 Jun 2027	Feast of Saint Peter and Saint Paul
Sun 15 Aug 2027	Feast of the Assumption
Wed 8 Sep 2027	Feast of Our Lady of Victories
Tue 21 Sep 2027	Independence Day

National holidays only. Dates based on lunar calendars can move by a day or two depending on official announcements.

Useful phrases in Maltese

ENGLISH	MALTESE	SAY IT
Hello	Bongu	<i>BON-joo</i>
Thank you	Grazzi	<i>GRAHT-see</i>
Please	Jekk jogħġbok	<i>yek YOJ-bok</i>
Excuse me	Skuzani	<i>skoo-ZAH-nee</i>
How much is this?	Kemm jiswa dan?	<i>kem YIS-wa dan?</i>

Know before you go

Book the Ғal Saflieni Hypogeum online weeks or even months ahead — daily visitor numbers are tightly capped to protect the underground chambers.

On the Gozo Channel ferry you pay only on the return leg from Gozo, so there is no need to look for a ticket office at Ċirkewwa when heading out.

Buses can be crowded and slow in summer; harbour ferries are often quicker between Valletta, Sliema and the Three Cities, and far more scenic.

Visa, health and safety rules change. Before you book or travel, check the FCDO travel advice (gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice) and TravelHealthPro (travelhealthpro.org.uk). Costs are estimates. © 2026 Pick My Trip.