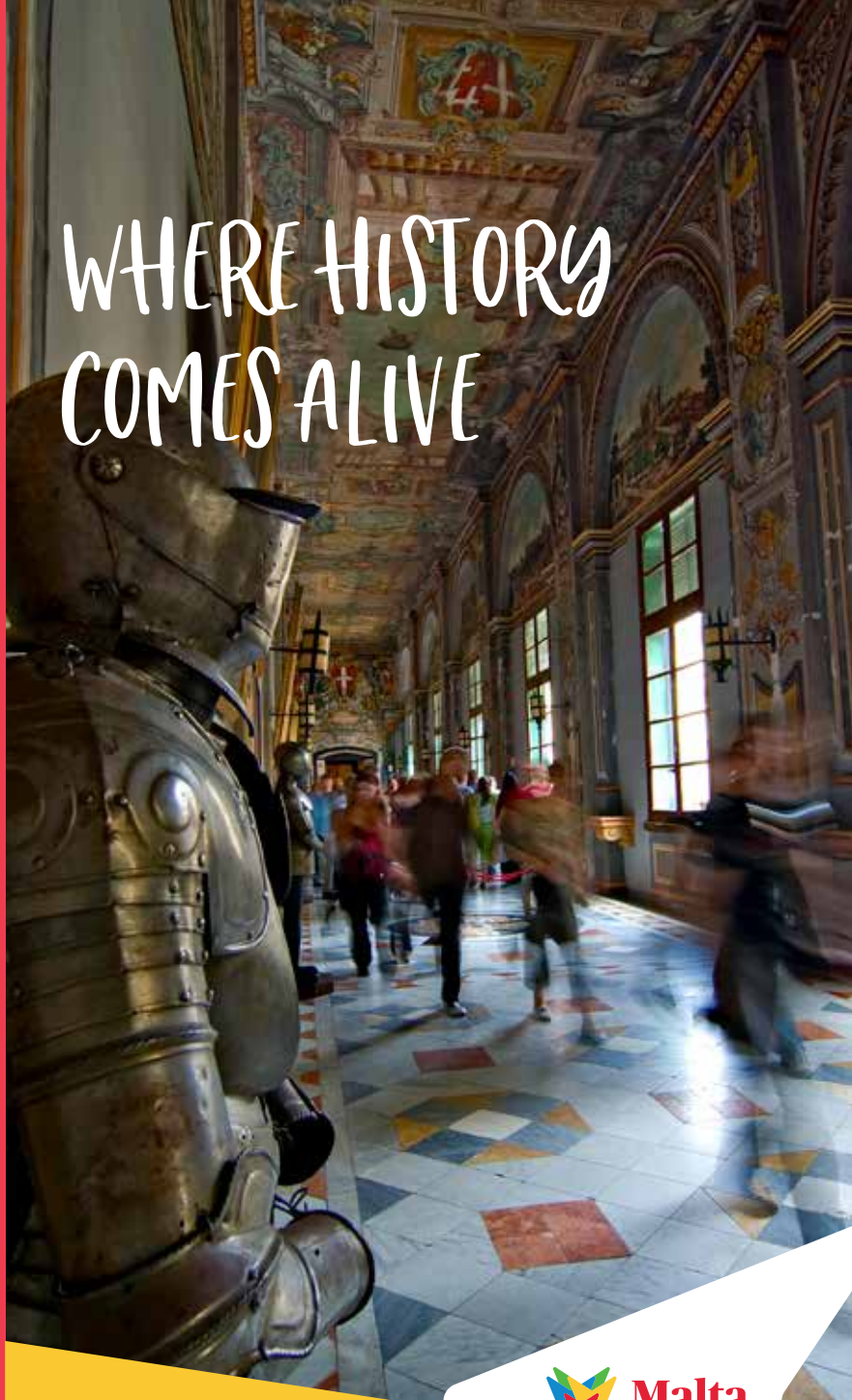





WHERE HISTORY  
COMES ALIVE

MALTA & GOZO



**Malta**  
Gozo & Comino



THE GRAND HARBOUR,  
MALTA



THE CITADEL  
VICTORIA, GOZO



MANOEL THEATRE  
VALLETTA, MALTA

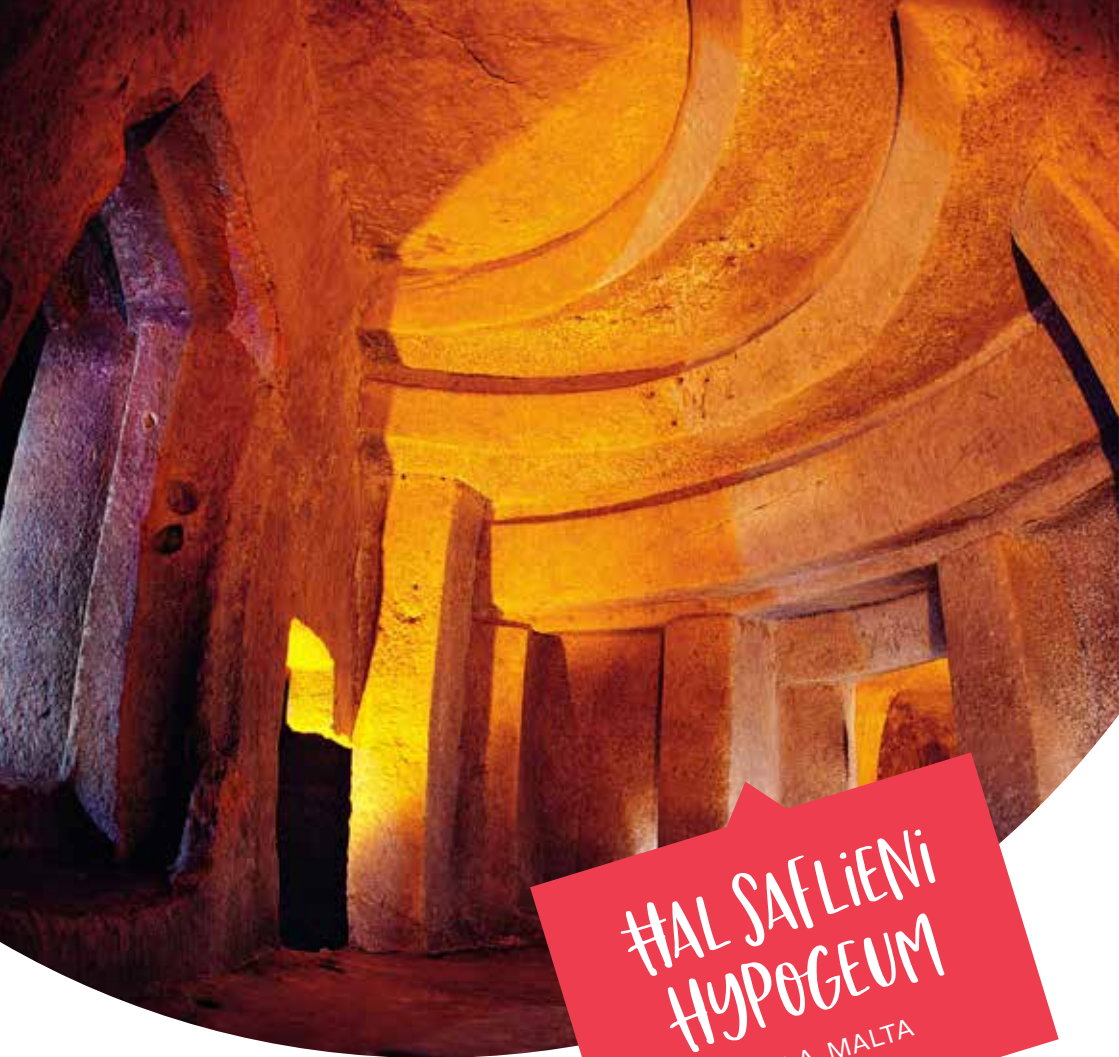
THE RICHNESS OF MALTA AND GOZO'S CULTURE  
DERIVES FROM 7,000 YEARS OF CIVILISATION.  
THE ISLANDS LIVE AND BREATHE HISTORY.

Discover the oldest free-standing structures on earth and marvel at grand architecture from the golden age of the Knights of St John. Wonder at a Caravaggio masterpiece in Valletta's magnificent cathedral, visit the Manoel theatre, the oldest fully functional theatre in Europe and explore Gozo's medieval Citadel.



PAST AND PRESENT ARE INTERTWINED IN MALTA.

Watch a contemporary dance show under the stars at Valletta's open-air opera house or enjoy an exhibition of modern art at the historic St James Cavalier. And, for an authentic Maltese experience, immerse yourself in the celebrations at village feasts throughout the summer.



HAL SAFLIENI  
HYPOGEUM  
PAOLA, MALTA

# ANCIENT TEMPLES

DECORATIVE DESIGNS  
TARXIEN TEMPLES, MALTA



## TOP ARCHAEOLOGICAL ATTRACTIONS IN MALTA



ĠGANTIJA  
TEMPLES  
XAGħRA, GOZO

1. Hypogeum, Paola .....
2. The National Museum of Archaeology, Valletta .....
3. Ġgantija Temples, Gozo .....
4. Haġar Qim and Mnajdra Temples, Qrendi .....
5. Domus Romana, Rabat, Malta .....

Archaeological sites, predating the Pyramids and Stonehenge, will take your breath away. Malta's temples are UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Arguably, the most impressive is the **Hypogeum**, a labyrinth of underground chambers thought to have been both a temple and a burial site. Make sure you book ahead to see this wonder. Visit the **National Museum of Archaeology** in Valletta. This helps to put everything in context. Then start your own treasure hunt to discover prehistoric tombs, Roman remains and traces of prehistoric man which defy explanation, such as the mysterious cart-ruts (tracks).

A 25-minute ferry journey from Malta's northernmost tip, or a mere 45-minute ride by fast ferry from Valletta takes you back to 3600 BC and a place of mystery. Due to the huge dimensions of the megaliths, locals believed that these temples were the work of giants. See what conclusions you come to as you walk in the footsteps of prehistoric man.

One place you can't overlook is the **Ġgantija Temples**, one of the most important archaeological sites in the world. It can be found on Malta's sister island, Gozo.

Back in Malta, the **Haġar Qim** and **Mnajdra Temples** are well preserved. Set majestically on a wide open plain by the south-west coast, these ancient treasures were used for the worship of a fertility goddess.

THE SLEEPING LADY,  
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF  
ARCHAEOLOGY, VALLETTA



VALLETTA

# A CITY BUILT BY KNIGHTS

FORT ST ANGELO  
FROM VALLETTA  
BIRGU, MALTA



The Knights of St John ruled the Maltese Islands for the best part of three centuries until they surrendered to Napoleon Bonaparte in 1798. They came from the wealthiest families of Europe and their legacy is beyond compare.

Upon their arrival in 1530, the Knights made their home in **Birgu**, a city of incredible character, even today, with its narrow streets and open squares. While there, don't miss the striking **Fort St Angelo**, which rewards the visitor with tremendous views over **Grand Harbour**. A fun way to reach **Birgu** from **Valletta** is on a dghajsa, a brightly coloured traditional Maltese boat, reminiscent of the Venetian gondola.

Following the Great Siege of 1565, when the Knights repelled an invasion by the Ottomans, the French Grand Master Jean de Valette declared a new capital city should be built on a peninsula between two natural harbours. No expense was spared in the construction of **Valletta** and its glory still shines today as a UNESCO World Heritage city. The best vantage points from which to view the surrounding harbours are the **Upper Barrakka Gardens** and **Hastings Gardens**.



GRANDMASTER'S PALACE  
VALLETTA, MALTA



An absolute must-see in **Valletta** is the **Grandmaster's Palace**, which today serves as the office of the President of Malta. The Palace is on **St George's Square**, a good place to rest for a few minutes and engage in people-watching.

TOP TIP!

Watch the firing of the Noon-Day Gun from Upper Barrakka Gardens





Auberge de Castille,  
Valletta, Malta



Jean Parisot de Valette,  
49th Grand Master of the  
Order of Malta.

Of the various **Auberges in Valletta**, each housing Knights from particular territories around Europe, five remain and have been restored to their former glory. The **Auberge de Castille** nowadays serves as the office of the Prime Minister. The big cannons at its entrance no longer serve as a deterrent, certainly not to tourists who love to have their photographs taken in front of this beautiful building.



The Mediterranean  
Conference Centre,  
Valletta, Malta

**The Sacra Infermeria** in Valletta, as befitted the mission of the Knights Hospitallers, was the foremost hospital of Europe in its day. It's now the impressive Mediterranean Conference Centre.



TRITONS' FOUNTAIN &  
CITY GATE ENTRANCE  
VALLETTA, MALTA



# CITY GATE

Just outside the entrance to Valletta is an open piazza dominated by the **Tritons' Fountain**, a modernist landmark. It's a refreshing spot on a hot day and the first sight to greet travellers arriving in Valletta by bus.

In recent years, the **City Gate** entrance to the capital was redesigned by Renzo Piano. The renowned Italian architect

brought the opera house, in ruins since the Second World War, back to life as an open-air auditorium and gave the city a striking new **Parliament building**. A fine example of mixing the new with the old, it has been designed to complement the surrounding historic buildings using the same honey-coloured local stone.

# CATHEDRAL CULTURE



St John's Co-Cathedral,  
Valletta, Malta



'The Beheading  
of St John the  
Baptist' by  
Caravaggio,  
in St John's  
Co-Cathedral  
Oratory

The one sight nobody can afford to miss is the magnificent **St John's Co-Cathedral** in Valletta. Dating back to 1577, it offers rich Baroque art, impressive frescos, ornate marble floors, carved stone walls and vaulted ceilings decorated by the Italian 17<sup>th</sup> century artist, Mattia Preti. Most notable is Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio's 'The Beheading of St John the Baptist' (1608), housed within the Co-Cathedral's Oratory. It's the largest painting by Caravaggio and the only one to bear his signature.

# ART EVERYWHERE

DOMUS ROMANA  
RABAT, MALTA



A few minutes walk away is the notable **St Paul's Anglican Pro-Cathedral**, a legacy of the British era. It was commissioned by Queen Adelaide during a visit to Malta in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when she discovered there was no place of Anglican worship on the island.

Malta's Centre for Creativity, **St James Cavalier**, is housed within Valletta's defence walls. From the outside it's an impenetrable fortification but inside, it has a completely different feeling, with timber

and glass blending with the rough-textured walls. Many cultural events are hosted here and there are free art exhibitions.

The striking **Auberge d'Italie**, on the upper end of **Merchants Street**, has a rich chequered history and has served many purposes. Today, it houses **Malta's National Fine Arts Collection** and is the space for Malta's newest museum called **MUŻA**. Absorb yourself in magnificent art dating from the early Renaissance to modern times, and laze in the sun in the open-air café in the Auberge's open courtyard.



*The Radiant* by Ugo Rondinone, MICAS  
Sa Maison Garden, Floriana

Also under development is the **Malta International Contemporary Art Space (MICAS)**, designed to showcase a wide range of the most innovative works being produced internationally. The **Valletta Design Cluster** is an exciting community space in a renovated old abattoir building. It offers a facility for learning and networking to encourage new synergies for creativity and culture.



# MDINA THE SILENT CITY

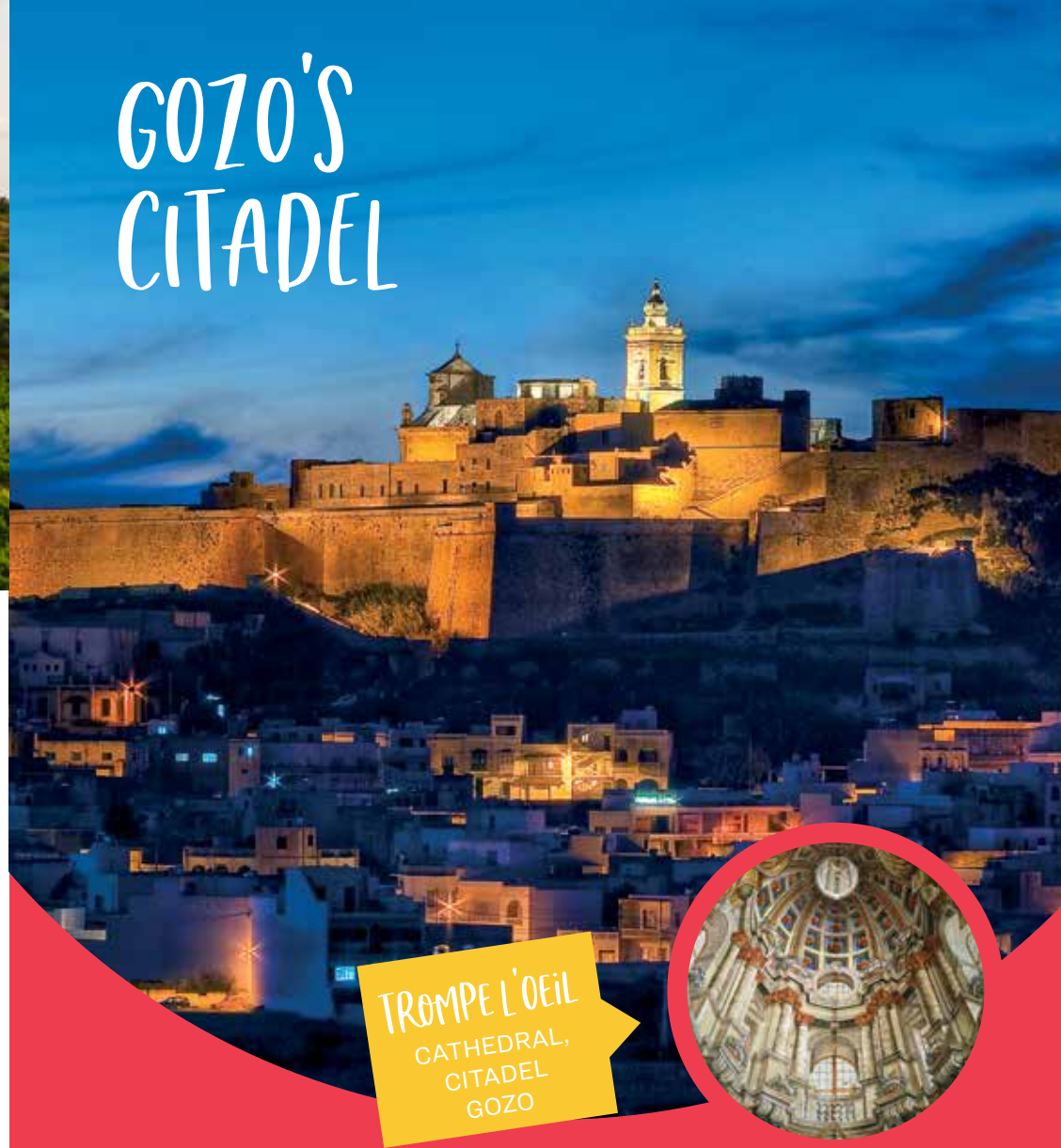
A VERY SPECIAL PLACE TO VISIT IS THE "SILENT CITY" OF MDINA IN THE CENTRE OF THE ISLAND, HOME TO MALTA'S MOST NOBLE FAMILIES SINCE THE 12TH CENTURY.

The walled city is a haven of medieval and baroque architecture. Characterful narrow streets of grand houses, convents and monasteries lead to the striking **St Paul's Cathedral**, named after the Apostle Paul, who was shipwrecked in Malta in 60AD and introduced Christianity to the Islands. You might get lost in the maze-like streets but that's the fun of it, because you never know what delight awaits around the next corner.

In the evening, the city takes on a magical character, with the moonlit sky lighting up the alleyways, making it the perfect place for a romantic stroll.



MDINA'S  
MAIN GATE  
MDINA, MALTA



# GOZO'S CITADEL

TROMPE L'OEIL  
CATHEDRAL,  
CITADEL  
GOZO



**The Citadel** in Gozo's capital, **Victoria**, is a must for every visitor. The site has been inhabited since prehistoric times, and for centuries the Citadel served as a sanctuary from attack by Barbary corsairs and Saracens. A major reconstruction of the southern walls was undertaken in the early 1600s, transforming it into a gunpowder fortress.

The northern walls were left intact and retain their largely medieval form. In more recent times the main buildings were beautifully restored and a 19th-century reservoir in the ditch was converted into an award-winning Visitors' Centre.

# BRITISH HERITAGE



THE 100-TON GUN  
FORT RINELLA  
KALKARA, MALTA



The British viewed Malta as a strategic asset in the Mediterranean, and Maltese fortunes in the two world wars were entwined with Britain's. The island acted as the "Nurse of the Mediterranean" in WWI, treating wounded soldiers. In WWII, the Siege of Malta from **1940** to **1942** was a dark period as Axis forces bombed and tried to starve the Maltese into submission. **Malta's National War Museum** captures the hardships and heroism of the time. You can travel around the island to explore **air raid shelters** deep underground. Soon after the War, Princess Elizabeth set up home with her husband Prince Philip in **Villa Guardamangia** in Pietà, enjoying a carefree existence before she became Queen.

Her father, King George VI, awarded the Maltese the George Cross for their bravery during the War and it has become part of the national flag. It's not to be confused with the Maltese Cross, most commonly associated with the Knights of Malta and featured to this day on Maltese Euro coins.

The British took possession of the Maltese Islands in **1800**. Their arrival was preceded by a brief period of French rule, during which the liberty of the press and reforms in education were introduced. But within two years the French interlude came to an end.

The British ruled Malta until Independence in **1964**, but their legacy lives on today with the use of English as one of the two official languages and driving on the left side of the road.

# TIMELINE



**5200BC**  
Man arrives on Malta



**3600BC**

Megalithic temples constructed

**700BC**

Phoenicians arrive in Malta



**218BC**

Romans arrive in Malta



**60**

St Paul shipwrecked on Malta

**870**

Arab occupation begins



**1090**

Norman occupation begins



**1530**

Knights Hospitallers of St John arrive

**1565**

Great Siege of Malta by the Ottoman Turks

**1798**

Knights surrender to Napoleon Bonaparte



**1800**

British rule begins

**1964**

Malta gains Independence



**1974**

Malta becomes a Republic

**1979**

The last British forces pull out of Malta



**2004**

Malta joins the European Union



