



# YOUR SHORT BREAK DESTINATION

MALTA & GOZO



**Malta**  
Gozo & Comino

# A SHORT GETAWAY



Gnejna Bay,  
Malta

## MALTA DELIVERS AS A REMARKABLE DESTINATION FOR A SHORT GETAWAY EVERY TIME.

Whether you come on your own, as a couple, with your family or in a group you'll soon discover that a long weekend provides pleasurable and **memorable experiences** aplenty. How you choose to spend your time is up to you, but one thing is certain - you will not run out of options.

The advantage of Malta as a holiday location is that it is easy to get to and easy to get around. There is so much that can be packed into just a **short stay**.

You can immerse yourself in the glory of Malta's history or get active and enjoy the outdoors in a country where the sun shines **300 days a year**.

Culture vultures and foodies are well catered for and, if doing very little is your thing, this is just the place for chilling and soaking up **island lifestyle**. Fancy a restorative spa hotel or your own lido sunlounge? Well, it is waiting for you.

Here's a well-kept secret: If you want your own hideaway, far from the stress of city-life, get to Malta's sister island, Gozo. It is surprisingly easy to reach, meaning it is possible to lose yourself in an oasis of tranquillity even when you have only a few days to spare.



Valletta, Malta

## HERITAGE AT EVERY TURN

The first thing that hits you is the islands' impressive heritage. The Knights of St John, coming from the wealthiest families across Europe, ran Malta for the best part of three centuries and their legacy lives on in the superb churches, palaces and fortifications. The whole of the capital, **Valletta**, is one big UNESCO World Heritage City.

The periods before and after the Knights' rule are equally interesting. Malta has prehistoric temples that are older than Stonehenge and the Pyramids, and for more than a hundred and fifty years, the country was a British colony. The latter left its mark on Malta with English being one of the two official languages and driving on the left side of the road. It's fun to come across red phone boxes and letterboxes carrying the insignia of the British monarch.

The heroism of the Maltese people in the Second World War was recognised with the granting of the prestigious British George Cross. This is displayed on Malta's flag to this day.

As a proud independent nation today, modern Malta also boasts contemporary architecture. The renowned architect Renzo Piano redesigned the **City Gate** entrance to the capital, **Valletta**, brought the opera house back to life as an open-air auditorium and gave the city a striking new **Parliament building**. All of these, and a large open piazza with the **Tritons' Fountain**, are within a five-minute walk of each other.



Victoria,  
Gozo



## A CATHEDRAL WITH A CARAVAGGIO

If you have only one hour for sightseeing in Valletta, the place you must head to is **St John's Co-Cathedral**. Dating back to 1577, this temple offers rich baroque art, frescos, ornate marble floors, carved stone walls and breathtaking vaulted ceilings decorated by the Italian artist, Mattia Preti. The most notable work on display, however, is undoubtedly Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio's **'The Beheading of St John the Baptist'** (1608). An absolute masterpiece, it is the largest work of art by Caravaggio and the only one to bear his signature.



Caravaggio's masterpiece in St John's Co-Cathedral Oratory



## VISITING VALLETTA

TRITONS' FOUNTAIN  
VALLETTA, MALTA

**Valletta** is stunning at every turn. As you explore its grid-pattern streets, you never know what will greet you around the next corner – perhaps a stylish boutique, a shop front from a world gone by, a talented street musician or an inviting café.

Other attractions to enjoy in **Valletta**: **The Grand Master's Palace** boasts sumptuous state rooms and an impressive armoury.

**Fort St Elmo**, the frontline during the Great Siege of Malta of 1565, hosts the **National War Museum**.

The **Museum of Archaeology** is housed in the **Auberge de Provence**, one of the most elaborately decorated baroque buildings in the city.

**Casa Rocca Piccola** offers a glimpse of a domestic noble household of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

**Is-Suq tal-Belt, the Valletta Food Market** – recently restored to its former glory and a wonderful place to rest to enjoy a snack.

## ON THE MOVE

It's a pleasure to discover Valletta on foot or to hop on the city's Fun Train for a guided tour. There are also electric buggies offering private taxi rides. A panoramic lift brings you to the heart of the city from the waterfront below the fortifications, in no time.

## ART ATTACK



📍  
MUŻA,  
Valletta, Malta

fresh creative space with exhibitions and an open kitchen for food-making programmes.

Dotted around the city are a handful of **private art galleries**, with a curated choice of works by local and international artists.



📍  
Valletta Design  
Cluster, Malta



**Valletta** has amazing museums with permanent collections and temporary exhibitions to enjoy.

**MUŻA** showcases Maltese and foreign artists at the **Auberge d'Italie** and is complimented by **MICAS, the Malta International Contemporary Art Space**.

**St James Cavalier**, built into **Valletta's bastions**, celebrates creative arts within an imposing historic building with striking modern embellishments.

The **Valletta Design Cluster**, which is situated in an old abattoir, is a



## GRAND VIEWS

The visitor is spoilt for outstanding views in **Valletta**. The city is built on a peninsula with the unmissable panorama of the **Grand Harbour** on one side and **Marsamxett Harbour** on the other. The **Upper Barrakka Gardens** and **Hastings Gardens** provide the best vantage points for spectacular views and selfie opportunities.



GRAND HARBOUR  
PANORAMA  
VALLETTA, MALTA



One can observe various kinds of boats going about their business. There is a hive of activity on the water with ferries and yachts ploughing back and forth. At one end of the scale are majestic cruise liners stopping by on a tour of the Med. At the other end one can admire small colourful rowing boats called dghajsa. Nowadays they're fitted with an onboard engine. They are a fun way to get across the Harbour to the **Three Cities (Birgu, Bormla and L-Isla)**, an area even older than Valletta.

# THE BEST OF THE THREE CITIES



Street in  
Birgu, Malta

**The Three Cities** are full of old-world charm. It is a pleasure to wander around their streets and explore some fine attractions, or to drive yourself around in a small electric car, similar to a golf buggy, equipped with a pre-programmed GPS, showing you where to go, and what to look out for.

**Fort St Angelo** was the first fort to be built in the Grand Harbour, predating the arrival of the Knights of Malta. It has been beautifully restored and offers tremendous **Valletta** skyline and harbour views.

**The Inquisitor's Palace** was the seat and home of the Inquisitors for 200 years. You can admire its grand stairway, its original cells and torture chamber.

**The Malta Maritime Museum** covers everything from pirates in the Mediterranean to the Maltese role in the First and Second World Wars.

**INQUISITOR'S PALACE**  
BIRGU, MALTA



**VIEW FROM  
GARDJOLA GARDENS**  
L-ISLA, MALTA

**The Malta at War Museum**, housed in **Couvre Porte Gate** - the original walled entrance into **Birgu** - offers a taste of the Siege of Malta from 1940 to 1943.

The **Birgu Waterfront** runs along a marina providing picturesque mooring for luxury yachts. Its promenade, lined with period palaces, is popular for its great choice of restaurants offering al fresco dining. The promenade extends to the recently revamped **Dock No.1** in **Bormla**, with modern art installations and restored grand palaces along the way.

An excellent place to relax and enjoy the views are the **Gardjola Gardens** in **L-Isola**. They come with their own vedette - a small hexagonal turret with rectangular windows on each side and a dome-roof.



Fort St Angelo, Birgu, Malta



MDINA, MALTA

## BEYOND GRAND HARBOUR

Mdina, in the centre of the island, is known as the **'Silent City'**. Within its walls, you will discover medieval and baroque architecture. The beauty of the city enchants every visitor, and it is especially atmospheric after dusk. Getting lost in its narrow, winding streets isn't a concern; it just gives you more time to absorb the wonderful

character and history. Admire the façade of the 17th century **St Paul's Cathedral** and surrounding buildings which form the city's main square. Visit Palazzo Falson, now a house museum, for its extraordinary eclectic collection, or take a break from exploring to relax in the Fontanella Tea Garden, famed for its expansive views and delicious cakes.



Close by is the town of Rabat, where **St Paul's Grotto** is situated. This venerated site is where the apostle St Paul, who introduced Christianity to the Island, lived when he was shipwrecked here in **60 AD**. The catacombs are a cool place to visit on a hot day.

Also nearby is the **Ta' Qali crafts village**, a place to watch artisans at work. The craftspeople manufacture delightful glassware, using traditional glass-blowing techniques, and design and create beautiful fine lace and jewellery.



## STEP BACK IN TIME



### TOP TIP

It's a good idea to plan ahead – not just to know about concerts, theatre performances and exhibitions taking place during your stay, but also to get access to places such as the Hypogeum. To preserve its integrity, visitor numbers are strictly limited, and pre-booking is essential to avoid disappointment.

For an extraordinary experience head to the Hypogeum, a 5,000-year-old temple and burial site, five kilometres from Valletta. It is a wondrous labyrinth of underground chambers for you to discover.



## EASY LIKE SUNDAY MORNING

Marsaxlokk, just a half an hour drive away from Valletta, is a picturesque fishing village with a relaxed atmosphere. It is where the fishermen bring in their early morning catches and has an open-air market, especially popular on Sundays. Restaurants here serve the finest fish. Whether you decide to walk the promenade or simply soak up the sea views, you'll be captivated by Marsaxlokk's charm.



## WHERE TO STAY

When it comes to accommodation, there's a big choice to suit all budgets. This ranges from luxury hotels with pools and spas and beautiful boutique properties housed in restored historic buildings, to self-catering apartments, villas and farmhouses. The hotels in **Valletta** and the coastal resorts of **Sliema** and **St Julian's** are close to all the action, while one finds amazing properties brimming with local character in the **Three Cities of Birgu, Bormla** and **L-Isla**.

## GOOD TIMES



Notte Bianca, Valletta

The place for lively bars, clubs and partying into the night is **Paceville**, in the **St Julian's** area, but really there's a wide choice and style of restaurants and bars across the islands.

In **Valletta**, take a wander down **Strait Street**, at one time the raucous centre of nightlife for sailors. Its bawdy reputation is history now; these days fashionable restaurants, themed bars, and live entertainment are its vibe.

Also in **Valletta**, enjoy a classical concert in the **Manoel Theatre**, dating from 1731. Even before the curtain rises, you'll be charmed by its tiers of boxes constructed entirely of wood and decorated with gold leaf.



VALLETTA WATERFRONT  
VALLETTA, MALTA

Stroll into villages to join in the celebrations at traditional summertime festas, where the party atmosphere can last all week long, the fireworks never seem to stop, and you are welcome to join in the fun.

Other events throughout the year include **Baroque** and **Jazz festivals**, **Carnival**, the **Pride Parade** and colourful regattas in the **Grand Harbour**. Music festivals to cater for all tastes will take you from rooftop pool parties to exclusive cave raves and global acts perform at the free annual Isle of **MTV concert**.

## FOOD & DRINK

GIVE YOURSELF  
A CULINARY TREAT



The choice of eateries stretches from vendors selling street food to family run establishments to **Michelin-starred restaurants**.

Café culture is important. A most popular spot for this is the ornate **Caffé Cordina** in **Valletta**. Situated in an old palazzo, this establishment also has tables in a shaded square just off the main pedestrian thoroughfare, **Republic Street**; perfect for people watching and soaking up the atmosphere.

When it comes to drink, in addition to imported brands, **Malta** produces its own wines, **Cisk lager** and a refreshing soft drink called **Kinnie**. All are hugely popular with locals and visitors alike.



Your first bite should be **pastizzi**, small savoury pastry snacks. There's a choice of ricotta or mushy peas and they're sold everywhere.



# FOLLOW THE STARS



ANCHOR BAY  
FILM LOCATION  
FOR 'POPEYE'

Malta isn't just a living museum; it's a living film set too. Visit the places where Game of Thrones was shot and follow the movie trail in the footsteps of Angelina Jolie, Brad Pitt, Tom Hanks and Michael Fassbender. Discover the locations of Jurassic World: Dominion, Assassin's Creed and World War Z, and classics such as Midnight Express, Gladiator and Steven Spielberg's Munich. **Popeye village**, the original film set for the 1980 musical starring Robin Williams, is today an attraction for all the family.

## GETTING AROUND

Everything is within easy reach in **Malta** and **Gozo**. A hop-on, hop-off tourist bus enables you to spend as much time as you like at the attractions which appeal the most.

A shorter harbour cruise is a fine way to spend a leisurely few hours on the Med. To do your own thing, car hire is plentiful and public buses are modern, air-conditioned, accessible and inexpensive.

There are fast ferries between **Sliema** and **Valletta** and between **Valletta** and the **Three Cities**, with a free shuttle bus across the capital to link the two services. Transport sharing schemes operate across **Malta**, with the opportunity to pick up an electric car, motorbike or cycle.

Going to **Gozo** has never been easier. It's a 25-minute ride from **Ċirkewwa**, Malta's northernmost tip on a roll-on roll-off ferryboat service which allows vehicle transport, or a 45-minute fast ferry service from **Valletta**.

## ESCAPE TO GOZO

A short hop by ferry from **Malta** and you are in **Gozo**. The sister island is a breath of fresh air. It has a slower pace of life. You can enjoy watching the world go by from village cafés, take long walks in the countryside and be at one with nature. Spas will help rejuvenate you, and the charm of the locals will put a smile on your face.



Mġarr Harbour,  
Gozo



You can follow in the footsteps of prehistoric man at the **Ġgantija Temples** and marvel at a beautiful medieval **Citadel** and impressive churches. The family-run restaurants will make you feel especially welcome.

When you think about it, getting to **Gozo** by plane and a short ferry hop can be quicker than a drive within many European countries where destinations are often hours apart. It's a terrific hidden escape, even for a weekend.

## MANY HAPPY RETURNS

If you don't manage to pack it all in one visit, don't worry, just cherish your short break and cultivate a yearning to return. The welcome mat will be out whenever you are ready.



There is a third island on offer! Resting between **Malta** and **Gozo** is a summer weekend escape – the paradise island of **Comino**. It has no residents and only one hotel but a boat trip to the beautiful **Blue Lagoon** is quite something. Have a swim or just soak up the rays. Divers love this place too.



