



MALTA: A JOURNEY THROUGH THE AGES

Peel back the layers of Malta's 7,000 years of history and discover a greater density of historic sights per square kilometre than any other country.

Tailor-Made Journeys, Suggested Itineraries



Europe, Malta



5 days from AU\$8,160 pp



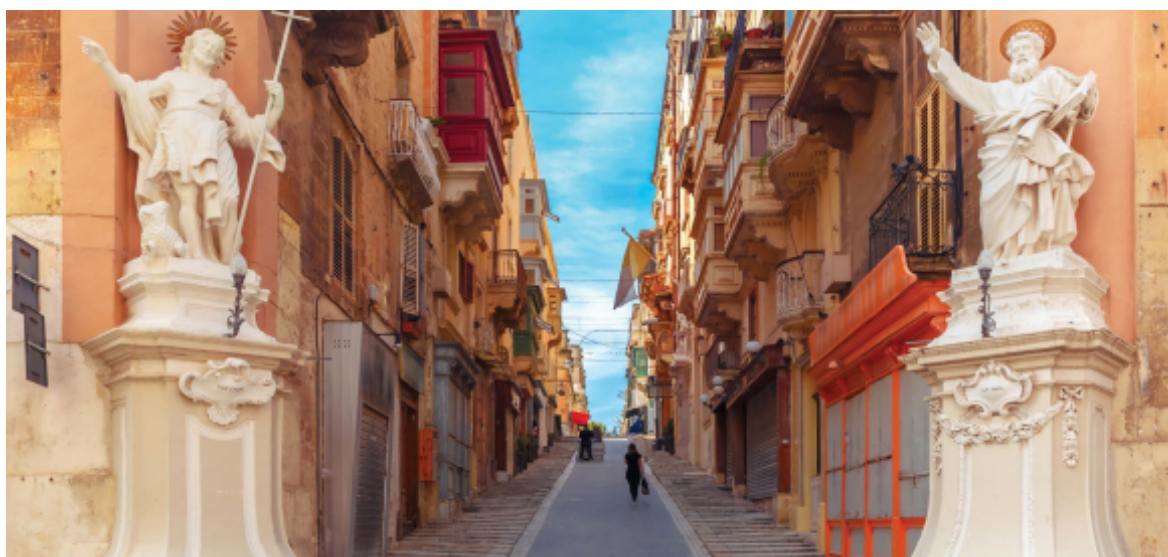
Private

Journey Overview

Peel back the layers of Malta's 7,000 years of history and discover a greater density of historic sights per square kilometre than any other country. Though diminutive in size, this Mediterranean nation is jam-packed with temples, forts, palaces and churches that collectively tell the story of the island's intriguing inhabitants and its history. Explore the capital, Valletta, one of the few cities in the world with UNESCO World Heritage status for its legacy of lavish architecture from the Megalithic Period to the Knights of St. John and beyond. Then venture by yacht to the other islands of the Maltese archipelago.

Journey Highlights

- Admire the exquisite mosaic floor, richly decorated chapels and expressive paintings of Valletta's St John's Co-Cathedral
- Travel by traditional water taxi to the commanding Fort St Angelo, located on a peninsula overlooking the picturesque Grand Harbour
- Discover the architectural accomplishments of Neolithic civilisation in the subterranean crypt of Ħal Saflieni
- Ponder the origins of the megalithic temples of Malta, standing beneath the monoliths of Hagar Qim and Mnajdra
- Swim and snorkel in the turquoise waters that surround the northern islands of Comino and Gozo



Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive Valletta, Malta

Arrive in the Maltese capital of Valletta, where you are met by your A&K Guardian Angel. Transfer by private vehicle to your luxurious boutique hotel which sits atop St Barbara Bastion and overlooks the magnificent Grand Harbour.

Rosselli AX Privilege

Day 2: Valletta

Malta's capital may be the European Union's smallest, but it has the highest density of historic sites per square kilometre. Join your guide on a walking tour today, to unravel this thriving city's fascinating past. Be awed by the St John's Co-Cathedral – whose unassuming façade houses an exquisite mosaic floor containing over 300 inlaid marble tombs and incredible works of art including two fabulous paintings by the controversial Caravaggio, temperamental prodigy of the Baroque art movement, who spent time in Valletta early in the 17th century.

Time permitting, other important sites await: the Museum of Archaeology; Casa Rocca Piccola, the 16th century Palace of a Maltese noble family; the National Museum of Fine Arts with its extensive and complex collection dating back to the early Renaissance; the fascinating Lascaris War Rooms, a network of underground tunnels where the allied defence of Malta was conducted during WWII, or the Grandmaster's Palace – present seat of Malta's President – which contains an extensive collection of impressive weapons in its armoury. It is also home to the only known complete set of French Gobelin's tapestries entitled *Les Teintures des Indes*, depicting exotic animals and people from faraway lands.

This afternoon is all yours to explore on your own. We highly recommend a half day guided tour of Mdina, the 4,000 year old honey-coloured walled city rich in history used as the setting for King's Landing in HBO's epic *Game of Thrones*. See how Maltese nobility lived in Palazzo Falson, whose owners collected common household objects and other items of unique historical interest in addition to books and art. Also on this optional foray is the Wignacourt Museum in nearby Rabat, which contains ancient catacombs, as well as the venerated St Paul's Church and Grotto.

Rosselli AX Privilege | Meals: B

Day 3: Valletta

Take to the water today aboard a *dghajsa tal-pass* (traditional boat) for your visit to the area known as the Three Cities (Birgu, Senglea and Cospicua). Follow in the footsteps of the Knights of Malta - who fortified Birgu against Ottoman attack in the 16th century - all the way to imposing Fort St Angelo. Immerse yourself in the informative displays that tell the backstory of this strategically located citadel, before enjoying time at leisure to admire the superyachts moored in the marina in the shadow of the fort.

Later, visit the Inquisitor's Palace - seat of the Maltese Inquisition from the 16th to the 18th century - whose labyrinthine interiors are carefully reconstructed to reflect how the building's inhabitants lived over the centuries. Briefly stop in at the Gardjola Gardens at Senglea to admire the watchtower - carved with eyes and ears to symbolise watchfulness - and take in panoramic views over Grand Harbour.

In the afternoon, head to the Hypogeum of Ħal Saflieni, an underground necropolis dating back to the Neolithic period. This UNESCO World Heritage Site was accidentally discovered by construction workers in 1902 and is at least three levels deep. Rock-hewn chambers of note in this remarkable subterranean sanctuary include the central 'Holy of Holies', thought to be oriented towards the winter solstice, and the Oracle Room, believed to have been used to amplify sounds made inside it.

Cap off the day by exploring two sites that form part of the mysterious structures known collectively as the megalithic temples of Malta. The Hagar Qim complex is one of the oldest known religious sites on Earth - constructed sometime around 3500 BC - and perches on a stark, rocky ridge overlooking the Mediterranean Sea. Nearby Mnajdra has a rough cloverleaf shape and is particularly special for its orientation. On both the equinoxes, sunbeams flood the building's main axis, while sunlight on both solstices illuminate the megaliths that line the temple's central passage.

You are then driven back to your hotel in time for dinner.

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Day 4: Gozo Cruise

Board a beautiful 50-foot yacht today for a private voyage to the northern islands of Comino and Gozo. Your skipper will pull into idyllic bays with aquamarine waters, where you can swim, snorkel and soak up the sun. Lunch on deck provides a taste of Maltese cuisine, which bears culinary influences from mainland Europe, northern Africa and Britain.

Should you wish to disembark in Gozo, we suggest independent exploration of the Ggantija Temples, older than Stonehenge and the pyramids of Egypt. Locals associated these enormous stone structures with a race of giants. To this day, it is not known how islanders moved these megaliths as construction pre-dated the introduction of the wheel and metal tools.

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Day 5: Depart Valletta

Meet your driver for your transfer to the airport.

Meals: B

Map



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