

GOZO

A GUIDE TO THE ISLAND



A compilation by Guido Nettelstroth

Contents

Some notes.....	4
Location and Facts	5
History of Gozo.....	7
Short Summary	7
Back in Time – Different Ages	8
Bronze age	8
Phoenicians and Carthaginians	8
Romans	9
Byzantine.....	10
Arabs	10
European influence	10
Knights of San John	12
French	14
British.....	14
Coat of Arms	17
How to get to Gozo	18
Culture And Traditions in Gozo	19
Towns on Gozo	22
Comino.....	23
Comino Barracks.....	23
Saint Mary's Tower (Maltese: Torri ta' Santa Marija)	23
Fontana	24
Għajnsielem	24
Fort Chambray	25
Mgarr Port	26
Parish Church.....	26
Ix- Xatt l-Aħmar	27
Għarb	28
Cardona Tower.....	28
Ta' Pinu	28
Għasri.....	30
Wied il-Għasri	30
Wied il-Mielah	31
Kerċem.....	32
Nadur	32
Qala.....	33
San Lawrenz	33
Dwejra	34
The Azure Window	35
Sannat.....	37

Victoria	37
Il' Cittadella	38
Xagħra.....	41
Ġgantija temples	42
Ramla Bay and Calypso Cave	44
San Blas Bay	45
Xewkija.....	45
Xlendi	46
Żebbuġ	47
Marsalforn	47
Xwejni Bay.....	48

Some notes

The following paper was, in large parts, compiled from the sources named below. Many paragraphs are a combination of the various original wording and have, in some cases, been edited to appear “seamless” and give a better reading experience.

The author claims no copyright to any part of this work in any form and will remove any content from this paper in case the original author asks to do so.

<https://www.barcelo.com/guia-turismo/en/malta/malta/things-to-do/island-of-gozo/>

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Gozo>

<https://culture-malta.org/the-majmuna-tombstone/>

<https://dwejra.weebly.com/history--archeology.html>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/>

<https://www.ghajnsielem.com/places/chambray.html>

<https://gozoalbum.gov.mt/>

<https://indismalta.com/zones/xewkija-industrial-estate/>

<https://mainlymuseums.com/post/692/citadel-of-gozo/>

<https://maltamigration.com/about/malta.html>

<https://www.tapinu.org/>

<https://thebucketlistcompany.co.uk/the-history-of-gozo/>

<https://theboathousegozo.com/gozo-history>

<https://timesofmalta.com/article/history-the-july-1551-turkish-attack-gozo.1043915>

<https://visitgozo.com/>

For some of the lengthier articles, an AI based tool (<https://galaxy.ai/ai-text-summarizer>) has been used. The relevant passages are marked with [Astart] and [Aend] to distinguish between them as man authored content.

Picture sources are indicated below the embedded picture as a listing at the end of the paper would not allow for easy reference.

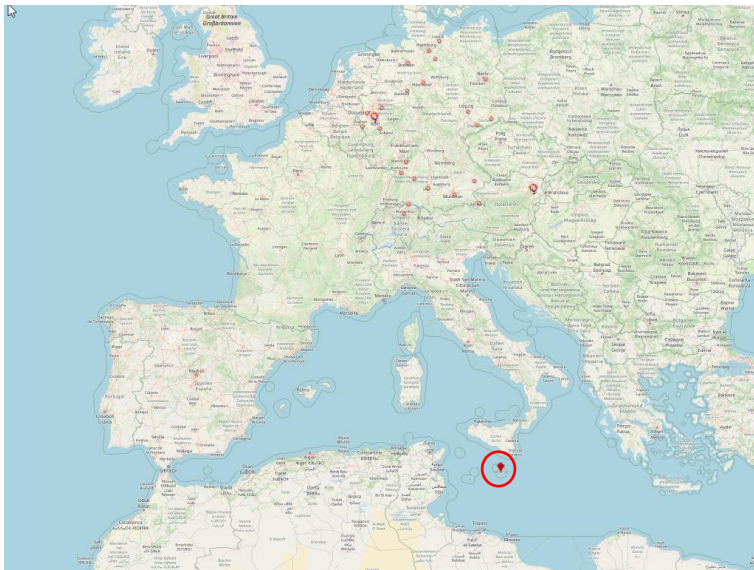
Should you feel that there is anything that should be mentioned here, please feel free to reach out to me via my personal eMail (guido.nettelnstroth@outlook.de) with as many details as possible so I can include it in a appropriate way.

Many thanks to my dear friends Mark C. Bates and Andreas Krüger for taking the time to read through all of this and check, correct and amend where needed. As I'm not (well, not yet) staying on Gozo all year round, their local knowledge helped a lot in getting this right.

Location and Facts

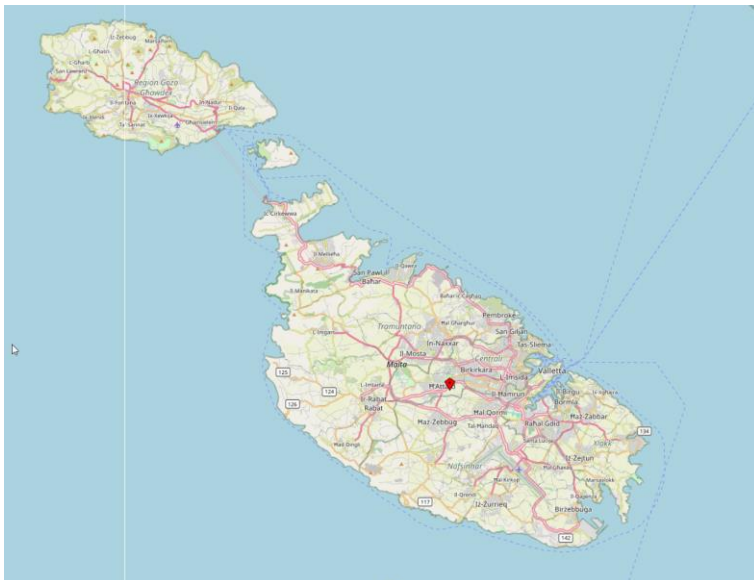
The Mediterranean has a plethora of magnificent locations with thousands of years of history imbued in them. From the Phoenicians to ancient Greeks and Romans to Venetians, Genoese, Ottomans there is a remarkable variety of historical landmarks throughout the Mediterranean.

One of them is the Maltese archipelago, a fascinating cauldron of different cultures, civilizations and histories. While geographically a small nation with only 316 km² compared to Sicily which has 25.711 km², Malta has a thriving cultural and historical scene with cities such as the capital Valetta and then Mdina, Sliema and Marsaxlokk.



[Picture 1: <https://openstreetmap.de/karte/>]

Malta is chiefly composed of limestone with no hills higher than 300 meters and no rivers. On the South-West side it is guarded by high cliffs whilst on the North-East side the shore is indented with sheltered harbors. These proved to be very attractive to the sailors and navigators that sailed the Mediterranean.



[Picture 2: <https://openstreetmap.de/karte/>]

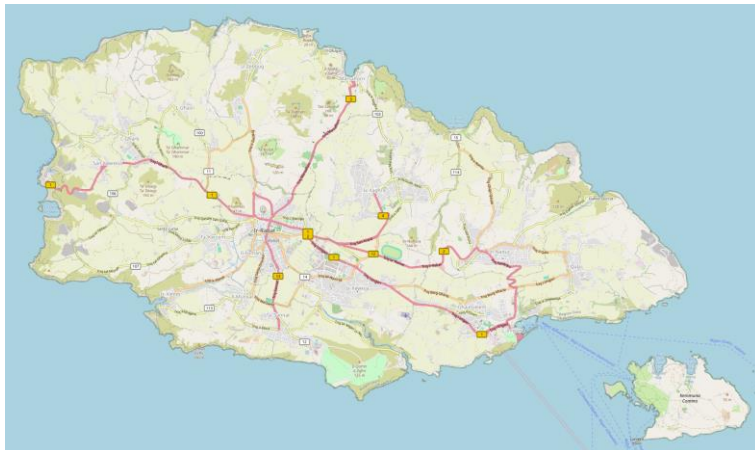
Gozo is located Northwest past the magnificent cliffs and waters of Comino, to many, it is a lesser-known destination in Malta, but it is the second-largest island in the archipelago. Lying to the north of the island of Malta in the middle of the Mediterranean, it is located between the Italian island of Sicily and the northern African coastline, 5,25 km northwest of the nearest point of Malta. It is 16 km and 7 km wide and has an area of 67 square km.

It is also known as the “Island of the Three Hills,” but in fact, the island has numerous conical knolls, which resemble extinct volcanoes. Gozo is not only hillier but also greener than the island of Malta. It is one of the 21 islands that form Malta’s archipelago. Of these, only Malta, Gozo and Comino are inhabited, others are far too small to allow dwelling there.

It's an island filled with rich history, 7,000 years of it, in fact. It's said to have been the home to the mythological Calypso from Homer's Odyssey.

Its principal town, Victoria, also called Rabat, stands near the middle of the island on one of a cluster of steep hills in an intensively cultivated area. The megalithic temple Ggantija, to the east of Victoria, is noteworthy.

Considered to be more fertile than Malta, Gozo depends heavily on agriculture, producing fruit, vegetables, grapes, and dairy products. Fishing is also important, and there is a cottage lace industry, but tourism is fast becoming the most important economic activity.



[Picture 3: <https://openstreetmap.de/karte/>]

The island is linked with Malta by ferries ("Fast Ferry" service for passengers only and a ferry connection for cars and passengers). A helicopter service is basically non-existent (mainly for ambulance services) but there are plans for an airfield in the vicinity of Xewkija to allow a link between the airport at Luqa and Gozo.

A rural island, many people refer to Gozo as "what Malta used to be like". A rich history encompassing Romans, Arabs, Phoenicians, Sicilians, French, and British influence.

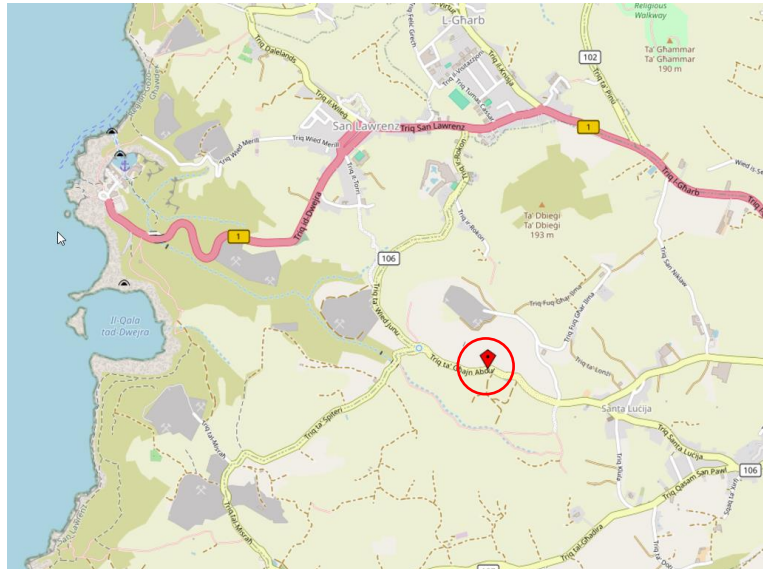
Gozo is a short, approximately 20-minute, ferry journey from the north coast of the island of Malta. Those who visit this smaller island can expect to find peace and quiet; spectacular coastal landscapes; idyllic diving spots where they can explore caves and discover sunken ships; quaint fishing villages with houses and churches made of stone; and historical remains.

History of Gozo

Small in size, rich in history, the small island goes back a long way in time up to today and has many interesting sites to visit and see.

Short Summary

Dating back to 5,000 BC, there's history on every inch of Gozo. The first settlers crossed on a boat from Sicily and likely lived in caves on the northwest coast of the island (Neolithic 5000 - 4100 Bc) on the outskirts of San Lawrenz village probably on Ghajn Abdul Plateau close to Il-Mixta. Today you can see a large cave separated by a natural column, with a man-made wall. Historians believe is where the first settlers lived.



[Picture 4: <https://openstreetmap.de/karte/>]



[Picture 5: <https://dwejra.weebly.com/history--archeology.html>]

These people settled on the island and sheltered in the many caves which exist there. The earliest inhabited cave is called 'Ghar-Dalam', the "Cave of Darkness", where remains of these people and their artefacts give us an insight into their way of life. They cultivated the land, growing wheat and barley and practised animal husbandry.

The pottery sherds that were discovered in that area are older than other ceramics found in other parts of the Maltese Islands, which could mean that Gozo was discovered earlier than Malta.

Around 3500 BC they started to build large buildings the like of which were not to be found anywhere else. They kept in touch with their cousins in Sicily obtaining from them obsidian and flint with which they could make tools to help them work the stones. These buildings, of which there are fifteen, are spread across the island. They are the oldest existing megalithic structures known to man - places like Hagar Qim, Mnajdra, Tarxien, etc. antedate the pyramids and Stonehenge by some 1000 years. This Neolithic period lasted about 1800 years, when, for no explicable reason, it ended abruptly. Nobody knows what happened, but famine, over population and disease could have been possible causes.

Following was the phase of the Temple Period (4100 -2500 BC) which represents an important turning point in the cultural evolution of prehistoric man.

The greatest undertaking of the pre-Phoenician Gozitans are undoubtedly the temples of Ggantija (3600 - 3000 BC). They are located in Xaghra, and are considered the oldest free-standing structure in the world.



[Picture 6: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Ggantija_Temple_on_Gozo.jpg]

The temples take their name from the Maltese term “Ggant” which means “giant”, due to the size and height of these megaliths, with impressive cornerstones and a huge back wall of the southern temple.

After the disappearance of the temple people, the islands were repopulated by a totally different race.

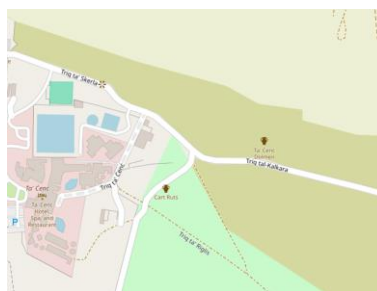
Back in Time – Different Ages

For those in search of more details, on the following pages the various ages of history are shown, one should note, they are not entirely of Gozo alone as the history of the island is very much interwoven with the history of the “big sister” Malta.

Bronze age

From 2500-700 BC, the bronze age was an important part of history and the evolution of society. New inhabitants on the island were warriors that used copper and bronze tools and weapons.

The most fascinating remains can be found on the Ta’ Cenc plateau, there are three dolmens, where you can see a horizontal slab of the irregular shape of limestone, supported on three sides by stone blocks.



[Picture 7: <https://openstreetmap.de/karte/>]



[Picture 8: <https://www.megalithic.co.uk/article.php?sid=59657>]

Phoenicians and Carthaginians

Around 1200 BC Phoenicia started to expand her empire. The Phoenicians were traders and great mariners who sailed their ships along the shores of the Mediterranean. They sailed to England where they traded tin. It is said that they circumnavigated the continent of Africa. They settled on the North coast of Africa and established a city called Carthage. They also settled on the West coast of Sicily and in Malta. Indeed, the name 'Malta' is said to be derived

from the Phoenician word 'Maleth', meaning refuge. Their stay in Malta was to last for 320 years. Conceivably the roots of the Maltese language derive from this Phoenician period. The Phoenicians also introduced glass making and weaving and built temples where they could worship their gods.

At this time the Phoenicians established a colony. Malta and Gozo attracted by local ports. Around 500 BC, the Phoenicians of Carthage took control of the island and the Carthaginians kept the islands under their power until 218 BC. On the outskirts of the village of Santa Lucija, there are remains of a Punic rock sanctuary in Ras il-Wardiya, right on the southwestern tip of Gozo.



[Picture 9: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Ras_il-wardija_Punic_Temple.jpg]

Meanwhile, the city of Carthage grew in size and strength and eventually carved out an empire which covered the North African coast to the west of Carthage, and included Spain, Sardinia, Western Sicily and Malta. The Carthaginians got into difficulties with the Greeks in Eastern Sicily and with the arrival of Rome on the political scene during the 3rd century BC it was inevitable that the two nations would wage war for mastery of the area. Three wars, known as the Punic Wars, were fought from 264 to 146 BC ending with the fall of Carthage, and with Rome becoming supreme in the Central and Western Mediterranean.

Romans

Between 218 - AD 535, the Romans took over the island, Malta became part of the Roman Empire during the 2nd Punic War (218 BC) and remained part of the empire till the Vandals raided the islands in AD 395. One event of great importance to the Maltese took place in AD 58, when St. Paul, who was on his way to Rome as a prisoner, was shipwrecked on the Island. He stayed for three months during which time he introduced Christianity to the people. The Maltese take great pride in saying that they were one of the first nations to accept Christianity as their faith - but that is another story.



[Picture 10: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Għar_Għerduf_catacombs]

The Għar Għerduf catacombs at Ta' Kerċem, also known as Għar Gerduf, are the only surviving early Christian catacombs or paleochristian hypogea in Gozo, Malta.[1] Għar Għerduf is a unique Roman burial site in Gozo. The site in Victoria, which is now occupied by the Cittadella is believed to have been the acropolis of the Punic-Roman city of Gaulos or Glauconis Civitas.

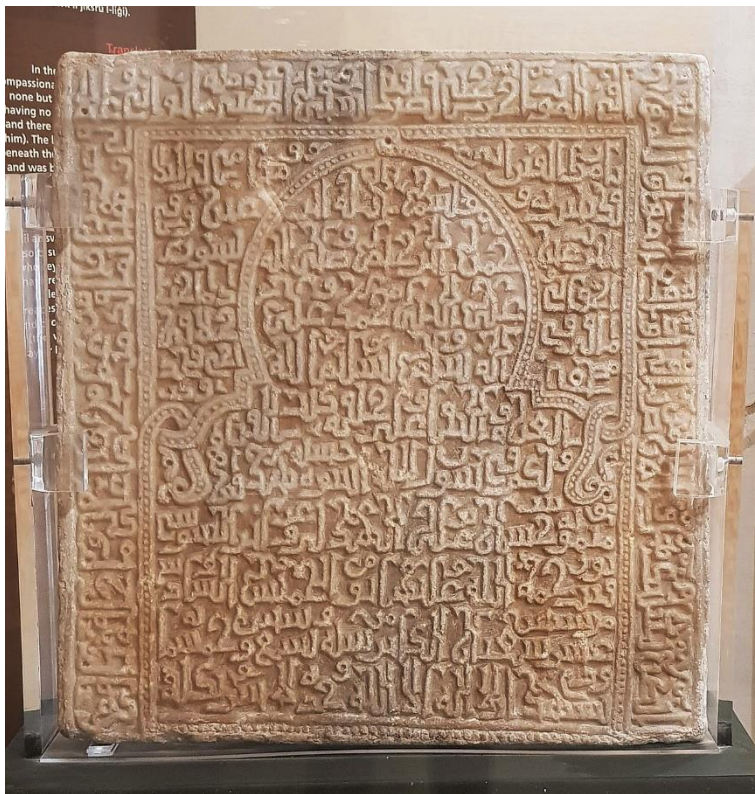
Byzantine

In spite of the little knowledge that is known of the Byzantine period in Gozo, around AD 535, the islands passed under the dominion of the Eastern Roman Empire from 535 – 870. No records exist as to what happened during that time. Rome fell the Vandals in AD 455 and it is quite likely that towards the end of the 4th century, Malta too became part of the Ostrogothic Kingdom centred in Rome. In AD 535, Malta was conquered by General Belissarius the Byzantine to form part of the Eastern Roman or Byzantine Empire, till the arrival of the Arabs.

Arabs

The Alabaster Arabs settled in 870 till 1127 and the Punic dialect that originated with the Phoenicians was greatly affected in its structure. Evidence of this era still remains on the island today in the names of places and surnames of Gozo's population and places. A clear example is a name given to the island of Gozo - Ghawdex, as it is also known today.

They invaded and captured Palermo in AD 832 and in 870 they invaded Malta. Once again Malta came in contact with a new and vigorous Semitic people.



[Picture 11: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Maym%C5%ABnah_Stone_Gozo_Museum_of_Archaeology_Victoria_Gozo_001.jpg]

Unfortunately, very little documentation relating to the two centuries of Arab rule in Malta survives today.

The “Majmuna Tombstone”, in Maltese: *il-Ġebbla ta’ Majmuna* or *il-Ħaġra ta’ Majmuna*, is the tombstone of a girl called Majmuna, who died on 21 March 1174.

Malta's most important Arab-period archaeological find, this tombstone is believed to have been discovered on the island of Gozo. It is now exhibited in the Gozo Museum of Archaeology at the Cittadella.

Indeed, Arab influence in Malta lasted much longer, since the Normans, who invaded in 1090 and took over the island from the Arabs, were indeed enlightened people and they tolerated the presence of the Arabs in the island. In fact, Count Roger never garrisoned the islands. Arab influence remained more or less unrestricted till about 1224, when the Muslims were finally expelled. The chief legacy of the Arab occupation in Malta must be the Maltese language itself, which has many elements of Arabic.

European influence

After the Arabs were expelled (although they remained as teachers paying tribute), the Normans under Count Roger Norman took control of Gozo from 1127 until 1530.

Legends about the coming of Count Roger and the Normans to Malta are numerous, but most probably unfounded. Count Roger is said to have given Malta her flag based on the Hauteville colours. He is reputed to have re-Christianised the Maltese, established churches, re-appointed a bishop and even expelled the Arabs. All of this is doubtful. However, the Normans' presence opened the door for the re-Europeanisation of the Maltese people. The so-called Norman Period lasted till 1194 and though the Normans left many treasures and architecture in Sicily, hardly any relics of this period exist in Malta.



[Picture 12: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coat_of_arms_of_the_Hauteville_family]

Following the death of King Roger II in 1154, a series of political struggles ensued. William the Good died childless in 1189 and a dispute arose over his successor. The rightful heir was the daughter of Roger, Constance, who was married to Henry VI, son of the German Emperor, Frederick Barbarossa. However, the Pope had other ideas. Fearing the penetration of the Germans in Sicily and Southern Italy, the church threw its support with Tancred. He was crowned king in 1190. However, he did not last long because Henry VI, through a series of intrigues within Tancred's court, acquired Sicily in 1194. Thus Malta became part of the German Kingdom under Frederick II - the Hohenstaufen rule. The Arabs were finally expelled from Sicily and Malta after an uprising in 1224.

Following the death of Frederick II in 1250, the Hohenstaufen dynasty declined very rapidly. Many of Frederick's enemies, including the church, were keen to rid Sicily and Southern Italy of the Germans. Sixteen years of plots and counterplots eventually brought a new master to Malta. In 1266, Pope Clement finally achieved his objective and proclaimed Charles of Anjou as King of Sicily.

Although the period of Angevin rule over Malta was short-lived (1266-1283), it is from this point onward that Malta shifted into the European scheme of government and administration. Because of high taxation, moves were made in Sicily to restore the island to Aragon, the rightful heirs to the crown of Sicily. Things came to a head in 1282 with the Sicilian uprising against the French, known as the Sicilian Vespers, which led to a bloody massacre of the French. The Aragonese took immediate advantage and installed Peter of Aragon as ruler of Sicily and Malta.

The Aragonese period in Malta was to last for 130 years. During that time the Maltese people suffered the indignity of having their island handed from one noble to another as a fief for various services rendered to the king. These individuals increased taxation which led to local unrest amongst the people. Malta remained at the mercy of these powerful Sicilian magnates, like the Alagonas and the Moncadas. It was not till 1397 that the local council for Malta and Gozo, the Università, made a strong petition to the crown for the islands to be restored to direct rule by the King.

In 1412, Ferdinand de Antequera was elected King of Aragon, Castille and Sicily, the first Castillian to ever occupy the throne. In 1421, King Alfonso granted the Maltese islands and all the revenue from them to Don Antonio Cardona in exchange for a loan of 30,000 gold florins. He then transferred his right over Malta and Gozo to Don Gonsalvo Monroy. The Maltese

disagreed with this arrangement. After five years they finally rebelled. In 1426 they pillaged Monroy's house in Mdina and laid siege to his castle at Birgu. The Maltese bought back the island for 30,000 florins. They also insisted on radical reforms including one that said that the islands were never to be ceded again by the crown. Alfonso agreed to these reforms and finally ratified them in a Royal Charter in 1428.

In 1479, Ferdinand II married Isabella of Castille. Their daughter Joanna married Philip Archduke of Austria. In 1518, the Habsburg dynasty was consolidated when their son Charles V, became the Holy Roman Emperor.

Knights of San John

Through the intercession of Pope Clement VIII, he granted Malta, Gozo and Tripoli to the homeless Order of St. John, so from 1530 until 1798, the islands passed under the rule of the Knights of St John of Jerusalem, a knightly religious order, which although started in 1099 was not made official until 1113.

The Order of St. John came to Malta after the loss of Rhodes in 1522. They had been in Rhodes since 1309. Before that they were in the Holy Land where the Order was established in 1099 by Blessed Gerard to look after the pilgrims and the crusaders. The main enemy now was Turkey. The Ottomans were the dread of the Christian powers bordering the Mediterranean and the Balkans. Malta was becoming of supreme strategic importance for the control of the Mediterranean against the alarming growth of Muslim power. In 1547 the Turks made an unexpected attack on Malta and Gozo, taking many prisoners. The attack that followed in 1551 was more serious, the island suffered its worst siege ever in that year.



Picture 12: <https://timesofmalta.com/article/history-the-july-1551-turkish-attack-gozo.10439150>

The medieval walls, without flanks and embankments to resist the bombardment of gunpowder, were not a great impediment and the fortifications succumbed quickly.



A tombstone in the local cathedral recalls that horror in the commemoration of Bernardo Dupuo, who had to kill his own wife and daughters to save them from slavery and concubinage, two fates worse than death, and who finally died fighting the Turkish pirates. The entire population was taken to slavery.

[Picture 13: <https://timesofmalta.com/article/history-the-july-1551-turkish-attack-gozo.1043915>]

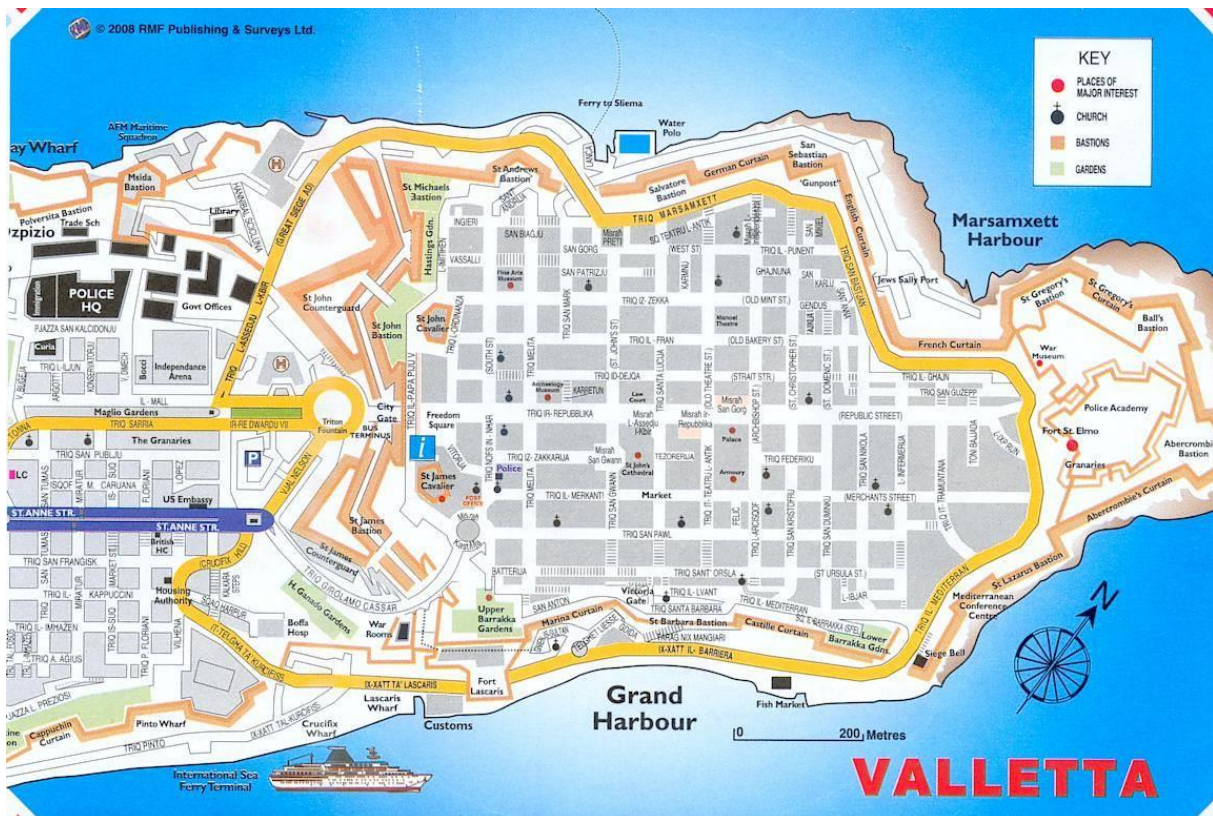
The Order was convinced that they must prepare the defenses of the island for a bigger invasion. Soon afterwards, in 1565, a great Turkish armada appeared off the coast of Malta, starting what is now called The Great Siege of Malta, which was to last for four long months. When it was finally raised on the 7th September of the same year, many knights and Maltese had lost their lives, as did many Turks.

After the siege a new city was built, called Valletta in honor of the Grand Master who led the Order through the siege. This was to be a modern, fortified city, and eventually a city of culture and commerce. The city grew and so did the wealth of the Order. The threat of Turkish invasion was ever present. In 1572 the Turkish fleet was defeated by the Christian powers, including the Order, led by Don Juan of Austria at the battle of Lepanto.



[Picture 14: <https://www.visitmalta.com/en/attraction/fort-st-elmo/>]

In the years that followed, Valletta became an impregnable fortress, housing imposing palaces and churches. It also became a flourishing center for trade and learning. Successive Grandmasters initiated grand projects, such as the building of many fortifications, aqueducts and a university, where the teaching of anatomy and surgery took place.



[Picture 15: <https://www.orangesmile.com/guide-touristique/valletta/cartes.htm>]

As time went by, however, the Order began to decline. The haughtiness and despotism of some of the Grandmasters upset the Maltese, leading to the famous Rebellion of the Priests, led by Mannarino in 1775 during the magistracy of Ximenes de Texada. After the death of Grandmaster de Rohan (1797) the Order elected Ferdinand von Hompesch as its leader. The situation in Europe at the time was explosive. The French revolution had changed the face of Europe and through the influence of Napoleon Bonaparte, 'The Directory' gave him permission to invade Egypt and take Malta in the process. In 1798 he invaded Malta and expelled the Order. Thus ended 268 years of rule by the Order of St. John.

French

1798-1800 – Napoleon Bonaparte (yes, *that one*) ruled the French and ousted the Knights from Malta. Their rule in Gozo was incredibly short-lived, with the inhabitants rising against the French, and they enjoyed a period of autonomy until 1800.

British

The British occupied the island and for the next fifteen years the fate of Malta was undecided. The Maltese did not want the knights back and Britain was quite undecided as to whether it wanted to stay in Malta, but equally Britain did not want either the French or the Russians, who had their eyes on Malta for quite a while, to occupy the islands. The Maltese finally made up their mind and asked the British to stay. In the treaty of Paris, the occupation of Malta by the British was finally recognized. This was legalized in 1815 at the Congress of Vienna. The Maltese got used to British rule but it was not long before the Maltese appealed to the British for equal participation in the running of their island. Mitrovich and Sceberras made extraordinary efforts for this cause, as a result of which a Council of Government was set up in 1835, a small beginning along the road to representative government.

Despite slow progress in the field of constitutional reform, Malta moved ahead, particularly in defense and imperial strategy. Malta benefited from increased defense spending by Britain. The dockyards were enlarged with five new dry docks being completed by 1871. Malta prospered.



[Pictures 16, 17: <https://timesofmalta.com/article/in-pictures-early-visual-memories-dockyards.1098494>]

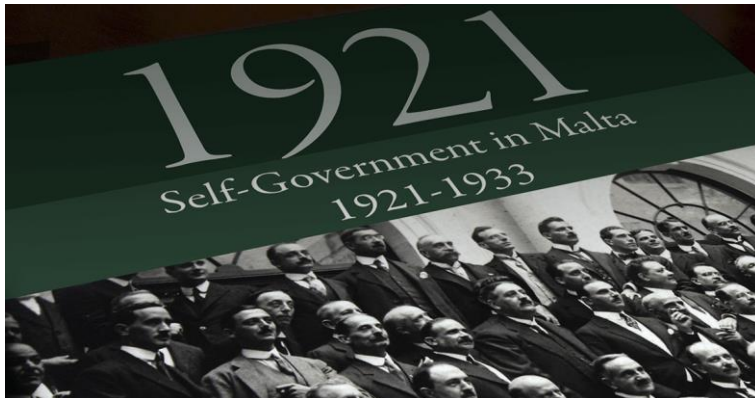
The Crimean War (1854-56) again brought considerable military activity to the island and Malta's importance as a supply station and as a naval base was unquestionable. When steam replaced sails, and after the opening of the Suez canal, Malta thrived. She was now on the highway between Europe and the East. With every ship calling, the grand harbor became a beehive of activity from which everybody benefited.

As usual the island's prosperity was quickly reflected in a dramatic rise in the population. This would continue well into the 20th century. From 114,000 in 1842, the population rose to 124,000 by 1851. Twenty years later it would reach 140,000 and it would more than double by the advent of World War II. With each increase, the problem of congestion, especially in the urban areas of Valletta and the Three Cities, would become serious. Attempts were made to encourage the people to move to the newer suburbs and the older towns and villages. Despite the prosperity, employment for the ever increasing work force would not always be available. Emigration schemes were introduced which initially were not successful. However, towards the end of the century, with the trade boom on the decline and Malta's fortune ebbing, the Maltese started to emigrate, mainly to North Africa.

The political situation in Malta before World War I was increasingly overshadowed by the economic gloom that engulfed the island. The position deteriorated over a long time due to competition from other well-equipped ports in the Mediterranean. Government revenue from the slower activities in Malta's ports was falling steeply. It became clear that Malta's dependence on Britain's military spending was a severe handicap. Whenever there was a cut in defense spending, the people suffered.

The winds of change in Europe and the gathering clouds of war also weighed heavily over Malta, and when World War I broke out, the people rallied to the allied cause. The naval dockyards again came into their own - but at the close of the war Malta had to once more face reality. There were to be severe cutbacks in defense spending. Much hardship and distress followed. Men were discharged from the army and naval establishments, unemployment soared and inflation ate its way into the miserable pay packets. There were strikes and protests. On the 7th June 1919 a huge and angry crowd gathered in Valletta for one of the meetings of the assembly. The pent-up frustration of the people suddenly exploded into a riot.

The mob got out of control and caused much damage. Troops were called in and they opened fire. Five men were killed.



[Picture 18: <https://timesofmalta.com/article/book-review-maltese-self-governance-through-a-historical-lens.952987>]

In 1921 Malta achieved responsible government. Under a new constitution she was to have a legislative assembly composed of 32 elected members and an upper house of 16 members. All internal domestic affairs were to be in the hands of the Maltese with Britain retaining responsibility for foreign affairs and defense.

Germany started the Second World War in September 1939. Malta was soon in the thick of it, once again coveted for its great strategic position in the Mediterranean. She was bombed very heavily by the Italian and German air forces and after two and a half years of never-ending air raids, the bravery, heroism and sacrifice of its people were recognized when King George VI awarded the Maltese people the George Cross Medal which can be seen in the upper left corner of today's Maltese flag.



[Picture 19: [http://fotw.fivestarflags.com/images/m/mt\)gc.gif](http://fotw.fivestarflags.com/images/m/mt)gc.gif)]

After the war Britain started the process of decolonization. Malta too was part of that process, but her path to independence was slow and often uncertain. Self-government was restored in 1947, but the decision of the British Government to dismiss workers from the dockyards caused massive unemployment. Consequently, there began a great exodus of Malta's people to the United States, Canada and Australia, where work was available.

By 1964 a call for independence was made by the major political parties and after discussions with the British Government, an independence agreement, tied to a ten year defense and financial accord with the United Kingdom was finally approved. On 21 September 1964, Malta became a sovereign and independent nation within the Commonwealth.

Ten years later, Parliament enacted important changes to the constitution and on the 13th December 1974, Malta was declared a Republic within the Commonwealth and appointed Sir Anthony Mamo as the first Maltese President of the Republic of Malta. Five years later, the



Malta Independence Act 1964

1964 CHAPTER 86

An Act to make provision for, and in connection with, the attainment by Malta of fully responsible status within the Commonwealth
[31st July 1964]

[Picture 20: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1964/86>]

last of the British troops on the island left Malta and on 31 March 1979 the Union Jack was finally lowered.

Malta had at last reached the goal for which its people had striven for many centuries - the ability to make decisions on their own for their own good and the good of their own people, without any interference from outside powers. Malta is represented at the United Nations, takes an active part in European affairs and has finally taken its rightful place amongst the nations of the world.

Gozo has had semi-autonomous governments throughout its history, but the island is now governed in the same manner as all Maltese islands.

Coat of Arms



[Picture 21: <https://gozoalbum.gov.mt/images/shields.jpg>]

The first emblem featuring a coat of arms with the motto "Fertilis Ab Undis Caput Effero," meaning "I rise from the waves, fertile and strong." This motto highlights Gozo's rich agricultural land and its ability to thrive despite its isolation and smaller size compared to Malta. It reflects the island's historical role as a fertile and productive part of Malta. It depicts three prominent peaks emerging from the sea, which symbolizes Gozo's rugged, hilly landscape emerging from the Mediterranean and is topped by a star in the sky. The star can be interpreted as a guiding symbol, representing hope, protection, or divine guidance. It may also symbolize Gozo's aspirations or importance within the Maltese archipelago.

The emblem in the middle is another version of Gozo's coat of arms in a shield format, topped with a golden crown. The elements that can be noticed are the three hills which is a recurring symbol in Gozitan heraldry, representing the island's hilly terrain. The three hills are a notable feature of Gozo's geography. The second element is the waves. The blue wavy lines beneath the hills symbolize the Mediterranean Sea surrounding the island. This emphasizes Gozo's status as an island, highlighting its connection to the sea. Finally, we can see the crown adorned with red and blue gems and this signifies Gozo's historical significance and

importance. Crowns in heraldry often represent sovereignty, power, or leadership, hinting at Gozo's regional pride within the Maltese archipelago.

The last emblem represents the Gozitan flag. We can see very similar features when comparing this to the second emblem. This version of the coat of arms emphasizes Gozo's fortified nature, its strategic location, and the island's rugged landscape rising from the sea. The crown underscores Gozo's historical importance, particularly in defending against various invaders over the centuries.

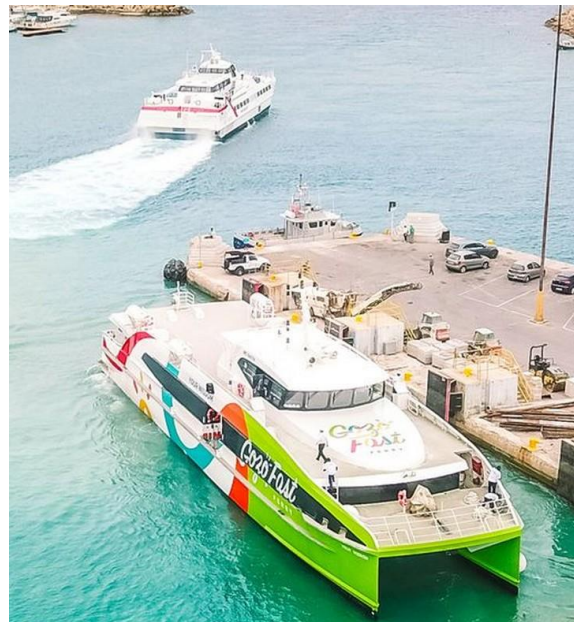
How to get to Gozo

There are two ferries which can take you to Gozo. You either take a ferry from Cirkewwa Port on the island of Malta (this needs to be done if you travel by car) or use the "Fast Ferry" which departs in Valletta.

All ferries depart at regular intervals (approx. 30 minutes, longer intervals at night) throughout the day, the total journey time from Cirkewwa Port to Mgarr Port is 25 minutes and roughly 45 minutes from Valletta.



[Picture 21: <https://www.gozochannel.com>]



[Picture 22: https://gozo.news/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Fast_ferries_Mgarr_Gozo.jpg]

All of these ferries moor in Mgarr Port, the price for an adult return ticket is €5,60 although if you're travelling with a vehicle the price is about €12 €.

One note of interest: you don't pay when travelling from Malta to Gozo when using the ferries at Cirkewwa. Just queue up and enjoy the ride, payment is due on the way back. The fast ferry requires you to pay at the port of departure.

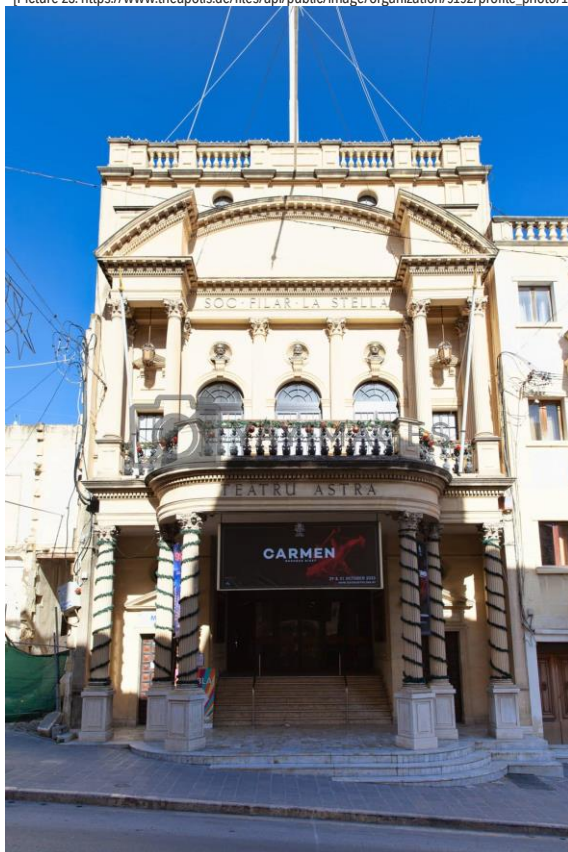
Culture And Traditions in Gozo

Gozo is known for its traditions and rich history, and one of the most famous is the Nadur carnival.

Feasts are important traditions held in honor of the patron saint of each village. They include religious ceremonies, fireworks, horse racing, and live music. This is the perfect time for Gozitans to meet, with many dressing in colorful and exotic carnival costumes during festivals. There are two opera houses in Gozo, created and run by rival band clubs that date back to 1863, and they never miss an opportunity to try to outdo the other.



[Picture 23: https://www.theapolis.de/files/api/public/image/organization/9192/profile_photo/1]



[Picture 24: <https://yayimages.com/29276738/astra-theater-victoria-gozo-malta.html>]



[Picture 25: <https://www.operabase.com/teatru-tal-opra-aurora-09968/en>]



[Picture 26: <https://teatruaurora.com/news/light-a-candle-for-peace/>]



[Picture 27: <https://timesofmalta.com/article/Gozo-s-two-opera-houses-subject-of-documentary.626338>]

The local folklore reaches its climax during the festivals, although there are quite a lot of folkloric celebrations throughout the year.

The carnival, which is usually in February, is celebrated five days before Ash Wednesday. It began to be celebrated before about 1530, during the Aragonese domination and has continued to grow and expand. During these five days through the streets of the city, there

are parades of colorful artistic floats, grotesque masks and dance companies of all ages. In the villages of Nadur and Xewkija, a spontaneous carnival is organized after sunset, where hundreds of people walk along the main street dressed in incredible costumes and masks.



[Picture 28: <https://www.g7events.com/gallery/karnival-nadur-2023/>]

The week of Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday, known as Holy Week, is full of religious and folkloric shows. The most important event takes place on Good Friday, during which there is a procession through the streets of the town where various representations of various moments of the passion and death of Christ take place. Several hooded men swore to walk in the procession, dragging heavy iron chains tied to their ankles or carrying a heavy cross. In addition, some children and young people are dressed in period costumes.



[Picture 29: <https://holidaysongozo.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/easter-in-gozo-11-768x432.jpg>]



[Picture 30: <https://www.maltatina.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/7s.jpg>]

The most impressive thing is the Roman legion, which highlights its armor, spears and shields that are announced with trumpets and percussions. The city band accompanies the procession. In several villages, there is a procession with the statue of the risen Christ on Easter morning, and when they arrive at the town square, the bearers stop for a moment and then return to the Risen Christ inside the church running.

Mnarja (the illuminated one) was celebrated on June 29 and is the festival dedicated to Saint Peter and Saint Paul. On the eve of Mnarja, the Gozitanos used to go to Il-Buskett, in Nadur, to eat rabbit fried in garlic and celebrate it with wine while playing the guitarist around the bonfires to entertain the crowd. Nowadays, only the traditional horse and donkey races held in Nadur are maintained. In addition, there is an agricultural exhibition of a great variety of local products and livestock, which is celebrated on the Sunday before June 29. Mnarja was such an important celebration in the past, that in wedding contracts it was written that the groom had to take his girlfriend to the party during the first year of marriage.

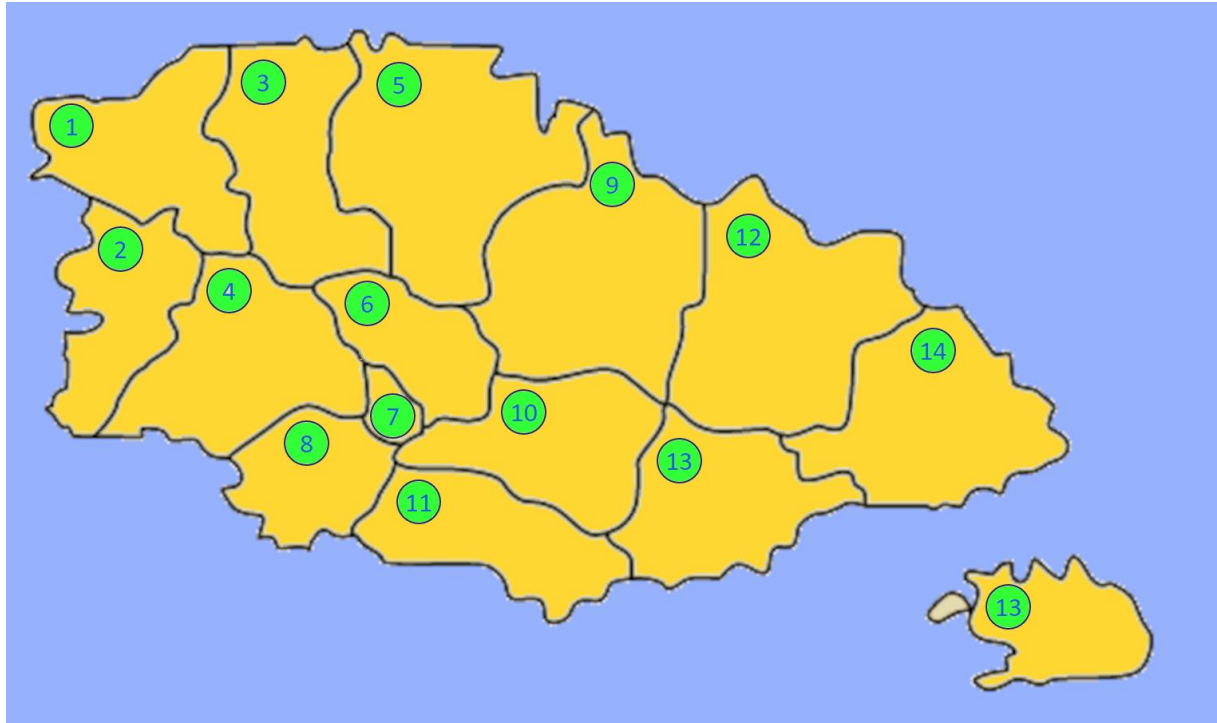


[Picture 31: <https://api.visitmaltaplus.com/api/v2/images/4094>]

In mid-August, on the 14th and 15th a large-scale Agricultural and Industrial Exhibition is held at il-Mall, the public gardens of Victoria. Inspired by the Great Exhibition of London of 1851 and celebrated since 1855, it is one of the most important events for the farmers of Gozo, since they can exhibit the best products of their farms and fields, although fewer people depend on agriculture, the program It is still very popular. It's a day to show off the giant pumpkins, the clearest honey, the fattest cow or even the most colorful plumage of the peacock. On the morning of August 15, the President of Malta presents the prizes to the best exhibitors.

Towns on Gozo

Gozo as such is regarded as a region or district itself, on the island there is a total of 14 local councils. The area for which a local council is responsible is named as the (main) city of that part of Gozo.



[Picture 32: by Guido Nettelstroth, no copyright]

- | | |
|----|--------------------------------|
| 1 | L-Għarb |
| 2 | San Lawrenz |
| 3 | L-Għasri |
| 4 | Ta' Kerċem |
| 5 | Iż-Żebbuġ |
| 6 | Ir-Rabat (Victoria) |
| 7 | Il-Fontana |
| 8 | Il-Munxar |
| 9 | Ix-Xagħra |
| 10 | Ix-Xewkija |
| 11 | Ta' Sannat |
| 12 | In-Nadur |
| 13 | Għajnsielem (including Comino) |
| 14 | Il-Qala |

The numbering of the districts, let's call them in that way, are not aligned with the order of the next pages concerning the information about them.

For easier reference, the number from the map above have been included in the text. As there is so much one could write and report for each and every town, city or part of the island as such, only the most relevant and important information has been included.

Comino

Not a town, but the little island between Malta and Gozo it is considered to be a Gozitan town. Comino is a small, sparsely populated island in the Maltese archipelago, situated between the islands of Malta and Gozo.



[Picture 33: <https://tile.openstreetmap.de/15/17688/12866.png>]



[Picture 34: <https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Q191098>]

Renowned for its crystal-clear waters, Comino is most famous for the Blue Lagoon, a stunning natural pool that attracts visitors for swimming, snorkeling, and boat trips. The island is largely undeveloped, with no cars and only a few buildings, including a small hotel and the historic St. Mary's Tower, which dates back to the 17th century.

Comino Barracks

Comino Barracks were constructed by the Order of St. John to house a garrison of soldiers on Comino adjacent to St. Mary Tower.



[Picture 35: <https://www.aquarium.com.mt/blog/the-island-of-comino/>]

The barracks were extended by the British in the late nineteenth century and used as an isolation hospital to treat those suffering from cholera and the plague.

Saint Mary's Tower (Maltese: Torri ta' Santa Marija)

It's also known as the Comino Tower (Maltese: Torri ta' Kemmuna), is a large bastioned watchtower on the island of Comino in Malta. It was built in 1618, the fifth of six Wignacourt towers. The tower was used by the Armed Forces of Malta until 2002, and it is now in the hands of Din l-Art Ħelwa.



[Picture 36: <https://dinlarthelwa.org/heritage-sites/managed-heritage-sites/santa-marija-tower-comino/>]

Saint Mary's Tower was built in 1618 to defend the island of Comino since ships travelling between Malta and Gozo were often attacked by Barbary corsairs based on the cliffs and creeks of Comino. It also served as a communications link between the island of Gozo and mainland Malta in case of an attack on Gozo.

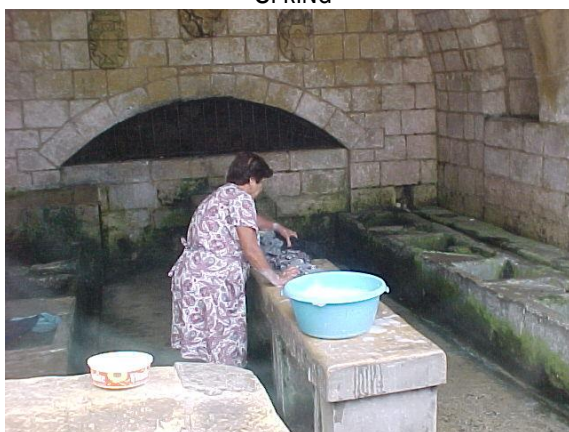
The tower is a prominent landmark of Comino, and can be clearly seen from both Malta and Gozo, as well as from the ferry between the islands

Fontana

7

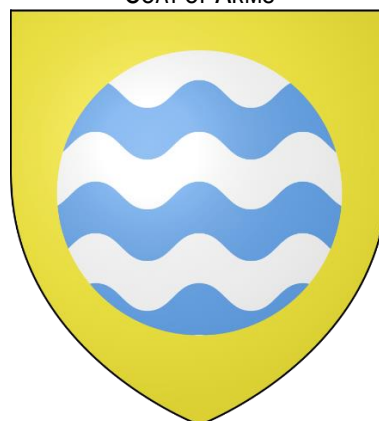
Named after its numerous springs, Fontana is a small village near Victoria. It originated from the suburb of Victoria on the Rabat-Xlendi road. It took its local name, "It-Triq tal-Għajn" (lit. the way to the spring), from a spring at the bottom of the road leading to Xlendi, known locally as "l-Għajn il-Kbira", (the big spring). Fontana is the Italian word for a spring.

SPRING



[Picture 37: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fontana,_Gozo]

COAT OF ARMS



[Picture 38: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fontana,_Gozo]

On the lower part of Fontana, on the right-hand side of the road to Xlendi, one cannot help but notice the evergreen Lunzjata Valley going up to the village of Ta' Kerċem. Local farmers are busy around the year in this fertile part of Gozo. It's known for its traditional washing places, beautiful valleys, and the Ta' Karolina cave.

To this day, it is said that the village of Fontana still leads the pyrotechnics side of Gozo by setting up grand fireworks shows including them with vast variety of spectacular fireworks.

Għajnsielem

13

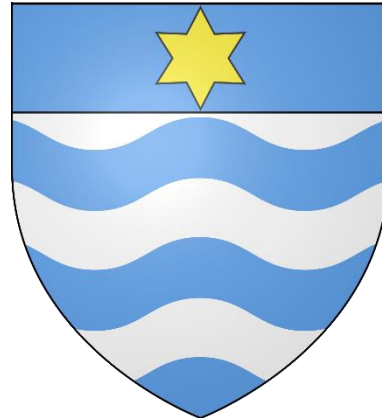
Known for its peaceful ambiance and scenic beauty, offering stunning views of the Mgarr Harbour. Notable landmarks include the Lourdes Chapel, perched on a hill overlooking the harbor, and the impressive Ghajnsielem Parish Church, a focal point of the village. Ghajnsielem is also home to Fort Chambray, a historic fortress with a rich history.

LIFE PAST AND PRESENT



[Picture 39: <https://www.wanderwithwonder.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Village-Life-Past-n-Present-Gozitan-artist-Manuel-Farrugia-%C2%A9Mary-Charlebois-min.jpg.webp>]

COAT OF ARMS



[Picture 40: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G%C4%A7ajnsielem>]

Fort Chambray

[Alstart] Fort Chambray, located in Ghajnsielem, Malta, is a historic fortress built in the 18th century under the direction of the Knights of St. John. Originally envisioned as a new city to enhance the safety and commerce of the Gozo-Malta channel, the fort has undergone various transformations and faced numerous challenges throughout its history, particularly in the 20th century. Despite aspirations for development, many projects have failed or been abandoned, leading to ongoing concerns regarding the preservation of its historical significance.

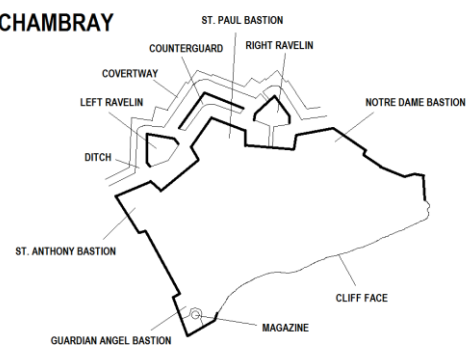
VIEW FROM HARBOR



[Picture 44: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fort_Chambray]

LAYOUT

FORT CHAMBRAY



[Picture 45: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fort_Chambray]

Fort Chambray was built on Ras it-Tafal between Mgarr and Xatt l-Ahmar, funded by François Chambray during Grand Master Pinto's reign. The Knights of St. John envisioned a new city named Citta Vilhena to improve safety and commerce, but the project stalled due to funding issues.

The fort defended against Bonaparte's forces in 1798 but saw little action thereafter, largely due to a decrease in maritime threats. Post-1798, Fort Chambray was abandoned for years until British regiments occupied it during the Crimean War and the First World War.

Two chapels were established during British rule—one for Catholics and another for Anglicans—indicating the fort's role as a community hub.

Three cemeteries were associated with the fort, including a Protestant ground and two others for Roman Catholics and Protestants. The fort housed a small hospital by 1830, later

transitioning to a mental health facility. After World War I, the fort was converted into a mental institution, which continued until 1979.

Various plans for tourism development were proposed but ultimately failed due to financial mismanagement and legal complications.

The development project initiated in the 1990s by Fort Chambray Development Limited failed due to financial mismanagement, leading to enforcement notices from the Planning Authority. In 2004, ownership was transferred to Dr. Michael Caruana, who committed to completing the development without transferring it to third parties, marking a new direction for the fort.

Fort Chambray stands as a testament to Malta's complex history, transitioning from a military stronghold to a site of failed development projects. Despite its historical significance and potential for tourism, the fort faces ongoing challenges regarding preservation and appropriate development. Future efforts must balance economic growth with the protection of its architectural and historical integrity to ensure Fort Chambray is restored to its former glory. [Alend]

Mgarr Port

All ferries arriving from the island of Malta moor at Mgarr Port, making it the busiest port in all of Gozo.



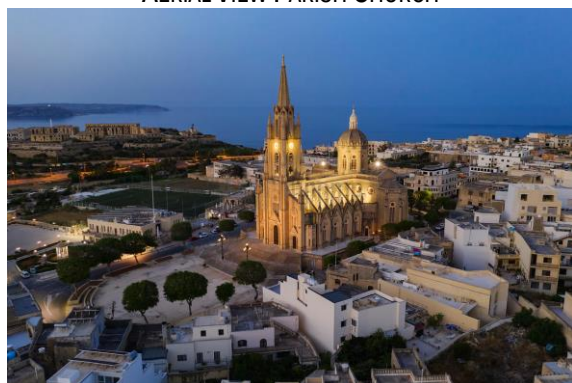
[Picture 46: Guido Nettelstroth]

The municipality of Mgarr is not particularly remarkable. However, it is worth mentioning that it has an impressive neo-Gothic church built in 1888 that is dedicated to the Virgin of Lourdes. Passengers are treated to gorgeous views along the route, including a clear view of the church's façade and various houses built in the island's characteristic style.

Parish Church

The Old Parish Church of Ghajnsielem stands on Independence Square, in the heart of the old part of the village. The first stone was laid in 1810 and the building completed by 1820. As the population of the village grew the church had to be extended and works to enlarge it started in 1867. The church you see today was finished in 1877.

AERIAL VIEW PARISH CHURCH



[Picture 47: <https://www.pixelchrome.com/-/galleries/drone-aerials/-/medias/d022b3a1-d3d1-4621-864f-2bdd2b11ce96-aerial-view-of-ghajnsielem-parish-church-at-dawn>]

PAINTING



[Picture 48: <https://www.ghajnsielem.com/pictures/activities/2013/restoration%20paintings/titular%20ghajnsielem.jpg>]

The church boasts a titular painting of our Lady of Loreto by the famous local artist Michele Bussutil and four masterpieces by the celebrated painter Guiseppe Cali.

In 1866 the titular statue of our Lady of Loreto was brought to Ghajnsielem from Marseilles in France, after being commissioned by the villagers in thanks for their escape from the plague which ravaged Malta in 1865.

Ix- Xatt l-Aħmar

On the Rabat-Mgarr road, parallel to the towering bell-tower of the parish church, a secondary road on the left leads down to a secluded bay known as ix-Xatt l-Aħmar, literally, the Red Bay. Red because of the reddish brown colour of the soil of the terraced fields falling towards the bay. Although secluded, ix-Xatt l-Aħmar lies within the sights of the Guardiola (guard post) of Fort Chambray and is accessible through a narrow road winding from the village of Ghajnsielem.

The building in the middle of the bay is a former Marine Police station built in 1886. It had fallen in disuse by 1923, when rooms of the station were rented to individuals.

TO THE ENTRIES



[Picture 49: http://www.mediadimare.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Xatt-LAħmar_Wracks-wrecks_Einstieg_Entry_MediaDiMare4816.jpg]

DIVE SITES



[Picture 50: http://www.mediadimare.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Wracks-wrecks_Tauchkarte-diving-map_Xlendi-Cominoland-Karwela_MediaDiMare4817.jpg]

The bay has several beautiful swimming spots off the rocks. It is also a good diving spot with the several gentle slopes to accommodate an easy entry and exit into and from the water. It is especially popular when the north and north east wind render most other spots unsuitable. A diving attraction was added on 12th November 1999 when the former Gozo-Malta ferry MV

Xlendi was scuttled off the bay. Though the Xlendi has not settled in an optimum position, as it rests on a side, it has most of the fittings intact. It is today sitting upside down in 28m visibility. Inexperienced divers, however, should not try to explore the wreck as it is hazardous for anyone to enter the engine room where machinery and fittings dangle dangerously in every corner.

Two more vessels – the MV Karwela and the MV Cominoland were sunk on Saturday 12th August 2006. These wrecks have already attracted an exciting number of fish and other marine creatures for the visitors delights in and photograph.

Għarb

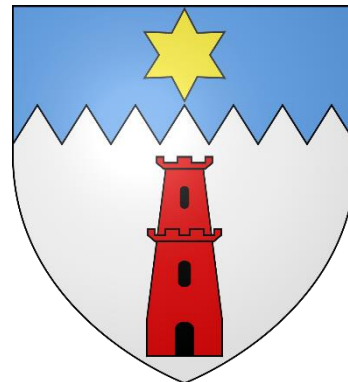
This traditional village is known for its charming stone houses, narrow streets, and the iconic Ta' Pinu Basilica.

Landscape



[Picture 51: Guido Nettelstroth]

Coat of Arms



[Picture 52: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G%C4%A7arb>]

Għarb is a tranquil place that offers a glimpse into Gozo's rural life, with beautiful countryside walks and folklore traditions still alive.

Cardona Tower

Cardona Tower on Gharb Road. It is a fortified structure dating back to the 17th century. Built in 1650 by the Knights of St. John under the rule of Grand Master Jean de Lascaris-Castellar, it was primarily used as a coastal watchtower to defend against potential invasions.

The tower is named after Martin Cardona, a notable figure associated with its construction.

Ta' Pinu

[Alstart] The Shrine of Our Lady of Ta' Pinu, located in Gozo, Malta, has a rich history marked by miraculous events and significant papal visits. Initially recorded in the 16th century, the shrine has evolved into a prominent pilgrimage site following reported divine encounters, particularly in the 19th century. Its architectural development and recognition by the Catholic Church underscore its importance in the local and broader Christian community.

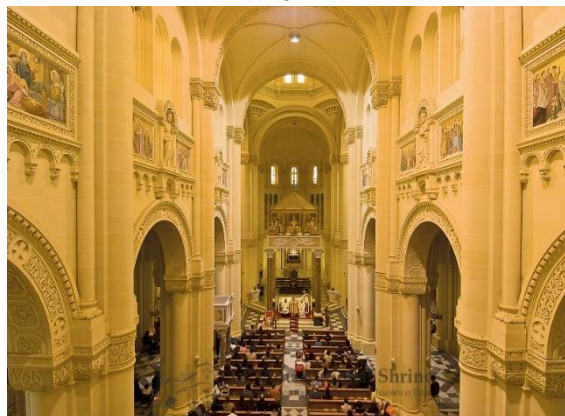
The Shrine of Our Lady of Ta' Pinu's history is rooted in the 16th century when Bishop Domenico Cubelles documented its existence. The chapel was in disrepair, leading Msgr. Pietro Duzina to order its demolition in 1575. However, a worker's injury during the demolition was interpreted as a divine sign, resulting in its preservation.

TA' PINU FROM COUNTRYSID



[Picture 53: Guido Nettelstroth]

INSIDE



[Picture 54: <https://www.tapinu.org/>]

The shrine's fame surged in 1883 when Karmela Grima heard a voice from the Virgin Mary, which prompted her to pray. Following this encounter, Grima experienced a miraculous recovery from illness, leading to a surge in pilgrimages. Bishop Pietru Pace confirmed the divine nature of these events, solidifying the shrine's importance. In response to the growing devotion, a new church was constructed in a Romanesque style, completed in 1932. The church was elevated to the status of a Minor Basilica by Pope Pius XI in 1935, highlighting its significance within the Catholic Church. The miraculous image of Our Lady was crowned by Cardinal Alessio Lepicier in the same year.

The shrine was initially named after the Gentile family, who owned it, and later renamed "Ta' Pinu" in honor of Pinu Gauci, who funded its restoration.

The miraculous voice that Karmela Grima heard emphasized the importance of prayer, leading to a tradition of devotion that continues today.

The shrine has been visited by several popes, which has enhanced its prestige. Pope John Paul II visited in 1990, celebrating Mass and adorning the Virgin Mary's image with five golden stars. Pope Benedict XVI presented a Golden Rose in 2010, recognizing the devotion of the Maltese people. Pope Francis also visited in 2022, leaving another Golden Rose and leading a prayer meeting attended by local church representatives.

Ta' Ghammar Hill, opposite the church, features 14 white Carrara marble statues representing the Stations of the Cross. Sculpted by Alfred Camilleri Cauchi, these statues were installed in the early 1980s and serve as a significant pilgrimage site, inviting reflection and devotion.

VIA CRUCIS



[Picture 55: <https://sciencefieldworkgozo.weebly.com/practical-information1.html>]

TA' GHAMMAR HILL - TOP



[Picture 56: <https://sciencefieldworkgozo.weebly.com/practical-information1.html>]

The papal visits have included significant gifts, such as the Golden Roses, symbolizing the connection between the papacy and Marian devotion.

The Shrine of Our Lady of Ta' Pinu stands as a testament to faith and divine intervention in history. Its origins, marked by miraculous events, have transformed it into a vital pilgrimage site. The architectural beauty and the recognition by popes further enhance its significance, making it a cornerstone of spiritual life in Malta and a symbol of Marian devotion globally. [Alend]

Għasri

The smallest village in Gozo, Għasri is a serene and picturesque locality known for its peaceful atmosphere. The village is close to the Wied il-Għasri valley, a narrow creek that is a hidden gem for swimming and snorkelling enthusiasts.

Giordan Lighthouse on Ġurdan hill



[Picture 57: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G%C4%A7asri>]

Coat of Arms



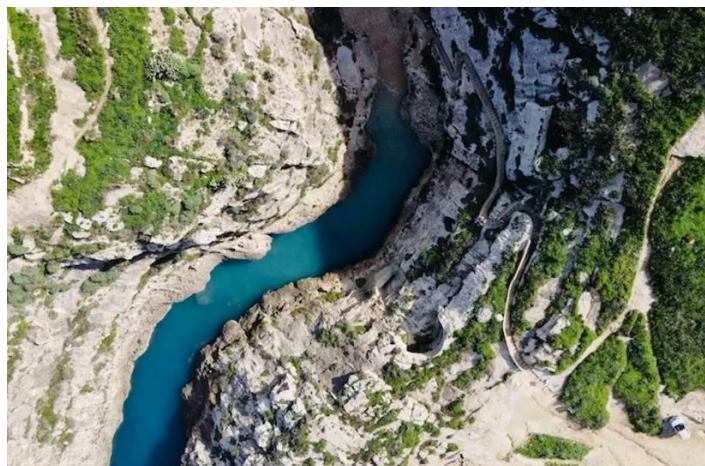
[Picture 58: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G%C4%A7asri>]

Wied il-Għasri

Wied l-Għasri, the Għasri Valley, is a marvellous place for a country walk or bike ride, especially in winter and spring. L-Għasri Valley is a deep gorge-like valley with very high cliffs carved into the Lower Coralline Limestone and the overlying Għoberigerina Limestone.

Prickly pears and capers grow on and around the dry stone walls in and around the valley. During late spring the area becomes a carpet of red poppies.

The valley begins at Ta' Dbiegi Hill before winding down through the village of l-Għasri, and on between iż-Żebbuġ and Ta' Ġurdan Hill to meet the sea between impressive cliffs.



[Picture 59: <https://travel2malta.com/an-easy-gozo-coastal-walk-xwejni-bay-to-wied-il-ghasri/>]

Since the valley follows a winding path that leads to the open sea, you can enjoy a dip in the Mediterranean at the end of the valley where a small and secluded pebbly bay lies.

Although it seems inaccessible, a series of steps have been cut into one side of the cliff face, taking you to the tiny pebbly beach. On your way down the stairs, you'll get a full view of the natural beauty that surrounds you so make sure you keep a camera handy.

Wied I-Għasri is very popular with divers who like to explore the surrounding underwater caves. The very narrow and secluded bay is also a haven for those who seek a quiet bathing area.

The area is great for a swim on a fine day but is especially spectacular on windy days when you can enjoy the rage of the sea splashing against the cliffs from a safe distance.

Wied il-Mielah

Where the valley meets the sea is an interesting cave with a shaft dug right up to the top of the steep cliffs above. This used to contain a rig of ropes and buckets to bring up sea water to fill the neighboring salt pans.

Previously a lesser-known alternative to the famous Azure Window, the Wied il-Mielah Window gained prominence after the Azure Window collapsed during a storm in 2017. This natural arch is found at the end of the Wied il-Mielah Valley and is easily accessible by road. The arch's limestone structure is still in excellent condition, making it a unique natural window.

Seeing the Wied il-Mielah Window in person is an awe-inspiring experience. Formed by the Mediterranean sea and storms cutting through the cliff, the window appears as a massive rock formation suspended over crystal-clear waters, creating a magical sight. Visitors can explore the area on foot or get a closer view by sea.

WIED IL-MIELAH ARCH



[Picture 60: <https://www.weseektravel.com/azure-window-wied-il-mielah/>]

UNDERWATER



[Picture 61: Guido Nettelstroth]

The window itself is a significant tourist attraction, but it is far from the only point of interest in the area. The surrounding valley is perfect for exploration, especially during the spring and autumn

months when the landscape bursts into life. The valley and areas around the window are dotted with vibrant natural flowers, providing a stunning Mediterranean backdrop for photos. Additionally, opposite the window, a small passage offers a view of another cliff window from a distance.

Kerċem

A village characterized by its agricultural surroundings, Kerċem is close to the scenic Lunzjata Valley. It's a peaceful, rural locality that provides a glimpse into traditional Gozitan life, with beautiful landscapes ideal for hiking and exploring nature.

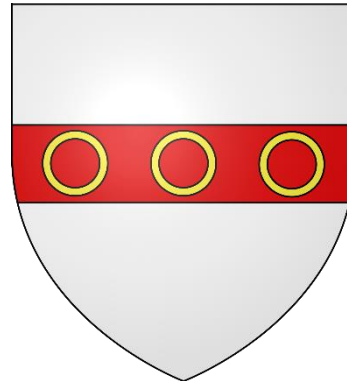
L-GHADIRA TA' SAN RAFLU



[Picture 62:

https://www.maltawetlands.org/gallery/images/thumbnails/category1/66/tn_GOZ024_1.jpg]

COAT OF ARMS



[Picture 63: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ker%C4%8Bem>]

Archaeological discoveries show that the sizeable area of Ta' Kerċem was inhabited as early as the Għar Dalam phase (5000–4500 BC). The Roman Baths and an early Christian cemetery at Għar Gerduf, referred to by Gozitan historian Giovanni Pietro Francesco Agius de Soldanis as Roman Catacombs, are also significant discoveries. However, to date, these historic sites are not accessible to the public.

Nadur

Perched on a hill, Nadur offers stunning views of the surrounding countryside and coastline. This town is famous for its vibrant traditional festivals, including the unique Nadur Carnival. It's also close to some of Gozo's best beaches, such as Ramla Bay and San Blas.

TA' KENUNA TOWER



[Picture 64: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ta%27_Kenuna_Tower]

COAT OF ARMS



[Picture 65: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nadur>]

Ta' Kenuna Tower (Maltese: Torri ta' Kenuna) is a semaphore tower on the cliffs near Nadur on the island of Gozo, Malta. It was built by the British in 1848, as one of three semaphore towers in Malta. The tower was restored in 2005, and now houses a beacon to warn ships of their proximity to land, as well as a number of communication antennas.

Today, one can ask permission from the tower's watchman to go on top of the covered roof of the tower for a panoramic view of Gozo, Comino and Malta. The surrounding gardens contain a number of endemic plants.

Qala

Qala offers stunning views of the nearby islands of Comino and Malta. The village is known for its charming Parish Church of St. Joseph, its traditional architecture, and the serene Hondoq Bay, a popular spot for swimming and snorkeling.

Hondoq Bay



[Picture 66: <https://www.maltadvice.com/en/beaches-in-malta/>]

COAT OF ARMS



[Picture 67: <https://www.heraldry-wiki.com/wiki/Qala>]

Qala is first referred to in a fifteenth-century portolan in the Vatican Library. Its name refers to the qala ('port') of Hondoq ir-Rummien. It is the easternmost village of Gozo. The development of the present settlement began in the second half of the seventeenth century. Qala is located at the easternmost point of Gozo, and is the village furthest from the capital Victoria and closest to the rest of the Maltese archipelago. Its name is both Arabic and Maltese for sheltered haven or bay, and its coat of arms is a Gozo boat sailing on rough seas

San Lawrenz

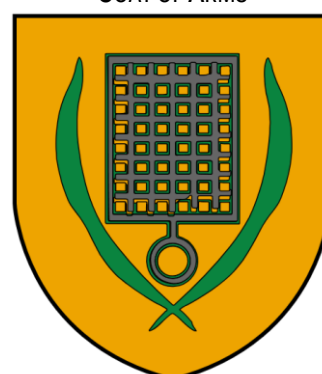
This charming village is best known for its proximity to the stunning Dwejra Bay, home to the famous Azure Window before it collapsed in 2017.

PARISH CHURCH AT NIGHT



[Picture 68: Guido Nettelstroth]

COAT OF ARMS



[Picture 69: <https://www.lca.org.mt/mylocality/san-lawrenz/>]

San Lawrenz is a quaint locality with traditional stone houses and a strong cultural heritage. Until San Lawrenz was declared a parish in 1893, it formed part of the neighbourhood of Għarb. However, as time went by the people of San Lawrenz started to form a separate community and as a result they wanted their own church. The foundation stone for this new church was laid and consecrated by the Bishop Peter Pace on 21 November 1886. The relic of Saint Lawrence was placed under this stone. Every villager participated in the building of the church.

Dwejra

Dwejra, with its dramatic coastal formations and sea spilling over the rocks, is a magical attraction. Here you can swim in the spectacular deep sea of the bay, in the calm shallows of the inland sea or in the foamy waters around the Blue Hole – one of Gozo's top dive-sites. For many years, Dwejra was home to the beautiful natural arch known as the Azure Window, which has now become a dive site after its collapse in 2017.

Walking around the coast in Dwejra, one cannot help but notice the composition of the rocks in the area that at times look like a mosaic made up of thousands of marine fossils. The zone also features salt pans. The coastal area is very interesting to explore but care is to be taken in rough weather and it is not advisable to venture close to the edge of the shore.

The Inland Sea area which has been formed by a circular depression in the land, has created this unique lagoon, which has a quayside on one side and a pebbly beach on the other. The Inland Sea is connected to the main sea via a 100-metre tunnel that is used by smaller kind of boats. Traditionally, the Inland Sea at Dwejra was a fishermen's cove and the small fishermen's huts are still standing, but today fishermen gladly take out tourists for boat trips.

INLAND SEA



[Picture 70: <https://www.weseektravel.com/inland-sea-gozo/>]

BLUE HOLE



[Picture 71: <https://dynamic-media-cdn.tripadvisor.com/media/photo-o/24/f9/73/14/caption.jpg?w=900&h=500&s=1>]

No place in Gozo comes without a church or a chapel. Dwejra is no exception. Built in 1963, the Chapel dedicated to St. Anne has a kind of Hispanic architectural feel in terms of its exterior and it's visited by devotees who come to pay homage to St. Anne.

Another point to visit is the 1652 Tower. Acting as a sentinel against the pirates and marauders, and guarding the Fungus Rock, the tower has also played a part in the Second World War when it acted as a guard for the western side of Gozo. The tower was built during the reign of Grand Master Lascaris and is usually open when you see the flag flying on its rooftop.

DWEJRA TOWER



[Picture 72: Guido Nettelstroth]

ST. ANNE CHAPEL



[Picture 73: <https://dynamic-media-cdn.tripadvisor.com/media/photo-o/14/b3/91/8c/the-chapel.jpg?w=900&h=500&s=1>]

Beyond the Tower, lies Dwejra Bay, another circular depression in the rocks or sinkhole that has created a deep but spellbinding swimming spot.



[Picture 74: Guido Nettelstroth]

Often an anchor point for those touring the island on boat or yacht, this area is not highly accessible. In the area you're bound to notice a small cave hewn out of rock. This was the shelter for the watchman who was on-duty guarding the Fungus Rock. In the vicinity of this cave, you can find a flight of steps that have been cut out of rock. This will bring down to the old slipway in the bay.

Fungus Rock or the General's Rock stands out prominently as a little islet. The rock has its own interesting story, about a precious medicinal plant growing here and because of which, it was heavily guarded. The Knights of St. John even levelled out its sides to ensure that climbing the rock was virtually an impossible task. Great punishment awaited those who were caught scaling the rock. Back in time, a kind of primitive cable-car enabled access to the rock.

Crocodile Rock & The Blue Hole – Barely visible on windy days is Crocodile Rock, a pillar of rock that from land resembles the head and snout of a crocodile. The area is a favourite diving spot. The Blue Hole is an internationally acclaimed diving spot, that needs little introduction. This vertical chimney, which Jacques Cousteau himself once earmarked as one of his top 10 diving spots in the world is a must for every serious diver.

[The Azure Window](#)

This structure, which was the venue of Daenerys Targaryen and Khal Drogo's wedding in the HBO series *Game of Thrones*, unfortunately collapsed in 2017. The Azure Window was a 28 meter high limestone arch which, due to its beautiful natural form, was one of Malta's most iconic landmarks.



[Picture 75: https://www.ubm-development.com/magazin/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Malta-bekommt-sein-Herz-zurueck_-1024x576.jpg]

It was located in Dwejira Bay in West Gozo. This ‘window’ first opened up with the collapse of two caves. Over time, erosion caused parts of the arch to plummet into the sea. The foundational pillar of the arch also collapsed following a heavy storm in March 2017, which caused the entire structure to come crashing down.

In 2018, an architect developed the idea, to rebuild “It-Tieqa Żerqa”, more popularly known as the Azure Window, the icon of the Maltese islands.

The plan of “The Heart Of Malta” is a polygonal architectural form with mirrored steel faces, which will blend into the landscape, and have the same size and proportions as the original limestone arch. Within this form, over 5,000 square meters of exhibition space are laid out over five spiral floors, with a dynamic laser show in which each spiral step represents one thousand years of Maltese history.

RENDERING OF STRUCTURE



[Picture 76 : <https://www.architectmagazine.com/project-gallery/the-heart-of-malta-project>]

The proposal has been forwarded to the Government and a survey found 67% of the Maltese citizens to be in agreement with the idea – current status is unknown.

Sannat

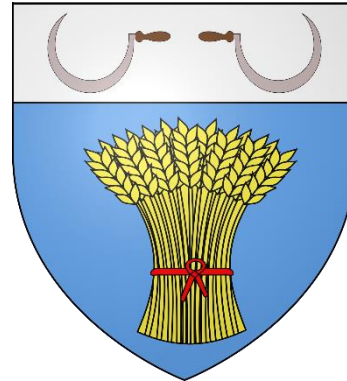
Sannat is a tranquil village, known for its stunning Ta' Ċenc cliffs and rich history. The village features the 18th-century Parish Church of St. Margaret and ancient megalithic sites.

TA' CENC CLIFFS



[Picture 77: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ta%27_%C4%8Aen%C4%8B_Cliffs]

COAT OF ARMS



[Picture 78: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sannat#/media/File:Sannat_coa.svg]

Renowned for its traditional lace-making, Sannat offers a peaceful blend of natural beauty and cultural heritage.

Victoria

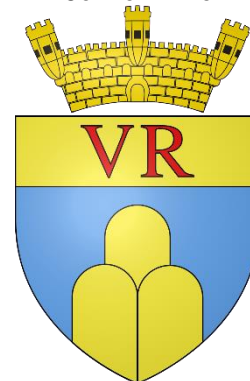
Victoria is the capital of Gozo. It's famed for the Citadel, a historic fortified city with stunning views and important landmarks like the Cathedral of the Assumption. The town combines historic charm with modern life, serving as Gozo's cultural and commercial hub.

VIEW FROM XAGHRA



[Picture 79: <https://www.travelpixelz.com/blog/malta-photo-spots/#gozo>]

COAT OF ARMS



[Picture 80: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victoria,_Malta]

With a population of more than 6,000 inhabitants, Victoria is home to a network of narrow streets through which traditional Maltese horse-drawn carriages pass, and a historic centre with medieval and baroque buildings. One of the main central thoroughfares is Fortunato Mizzi Street.

In the centre of the city you will find Independence Square, which hosts a local market every morning. Once you've finished perusing the many stalls, you can enjoy a refreshing drink or a coffee in one of its many bars with terraces. Close to Independence Square is the baroque Basilica of St. George, which is well worth a visit. Victoria is also home to the Astro and Aurora

theatres, where you can enjoy a selection of stirring opera performances, and the Villa Rundle Gardens which are renowned for their beautiful landscaped scenery and peaceful surroundings.

INDEPENDENCE SQUARE



[Picture 81: <https://livesharetravel.com/44015/gozo/>]

VILLA RUNDLE GARDENS



[Picture 82: <https://dynamic-media-cdn.tripadvisor.com/media/photo-o/28/bd/b8/34/villa-rundle-garden.jpg?w=900&h=500&s=1>]

Victoria's main attraction is its 13th-century citadel, which is built at the highest point in the city. This walled castle, which protected the city's inhabitants from invasion for centuries, dominates a promontory that offers a fantastic view across the entire island. The citadel is also home to the baroque Cathedral of the Assumption, the Archaeological Museum, the Museum of Natural Sciences and the Old Prison.

Il' Cittadella

With its distinctive skyline and imposing military architecture, Cittadella, the ancient fortified city, stands out as Gozo's major landmark, visible from all over the island.



[Picture 83: <https://viewpointgozo.com/victoria-cittadella/>]

The Old Citadel (also called the Citadella or Kastell) rises dramatically above ir-Rabat. Built at a perfect strategic vantage point, it defiantly dominates the skyline exactly as intended by the military architects who built it.

Occupied since prehistoric times, it reflects the marks left by its inhabitants, shaping the majestic complex we see today. The Citadel has been at the centre of activity on the island since possibly Neolithic times, and was certainly fortified during the Bronze Age around 1500 BC.

It was later developed by the Phoenicians and in Roman times, it was a complex Acropolis.

Gozo was a privileged Roman Municipality, independent of Malta and the Citadel was the centre of its administrative as well as its military and religious life, an important temple to the goddess Juno stood where the Cathedral now stands.

The north side of the Citadel dates back to the period of the Aragonese, while the south flank, overlooking Ir-Rabat (Victoria), was re-constructed under the Knights of St. John between 1599 and 1603.

This rebuilding came towards the end of Gozo's darkest period, when for two centuries, marauding Turks and Berber corsairs had harassed and pillaged the Maltese Islands. For this reason, until 1637, the entire population of Gozo was required by law to spend the night within the Citadel for their own safety. The climax of the Turkish raids on Gozo came in 1551. A strong Ottoman naval force, after an unsuccessful attack on Malta, turned its attention to the less well protected Gozo. After a short siege the crumbling medieval walls of the Citadel were overwhelmed and the defenders begged for an honourable capitulation. Tragically for the population, (then numbering around 5000), the surrender terms were far from honourable.

With the exception of just 40 elderly and disabled citizens, the entire population of Gozo was chained and taken into slavery. It took nearly 50 years to re-populate the island and rebuild the Citadel in its present layout.

The Citadel is rich in buildings of architectural, military, and historical value, and its open areas host numerous rare species of flora and fauna. It is an ideal setting for quality events that bring history to life, linking the island's past with its future. Visiting Cittadella allows one to step back in time, experiencing history in an unforgettable way.

Today, only a few families reside within the Citadel walls. In the square, you will find the magnificent baroque Cathedral dedicated to Santa Marija, the Law Courts, and the Bishop's Palace.

Within the Citadel, there are fascinating small museums and a state-of-the-art Visitors' Centre: the Cathedral Museum, the Museum of Archaeology, the Folklore Museum, the Gozo Nature Museum, the Old Prison, the Old Gunpowder Magazine, the Grain Silos, the Battery, and the World War II Shelter.

Along the winding streets you will find the historic Chapel of St. Joseph and a number of holy niches (shrines) and bass reliefs. Look out too for well-preserved Norman-style windows and arches. On the façade of historic houses and church buildings can be seen Coat-of-Arms, and it is worth noting that whilst some of the damage is due to the toll of time, some is the deliberate work of Napoleon's troops who briefly occupied the island at the end of the eighteenth century.

In the 21st century the Citadel underwent two major restoration projects. First one between 2006 and 2008 stabilized and consolidated the fortifications. The second more extensive one took place 2014 and 2016 and also had the benefit of unearthing valuable archaeological material consisting of two sets of circular stones and Bronze Age silos, which became attractions and part of the final redevelopment of the citadel.

STREET



[Picture 84: <https://www.maltauncovered.com/gozo-island/citadel/>]

DOOR



[Picture 85: Guido Nettelstroth]

Naturally the Citadel was built on a hill overlooking the entire Island of Gozo. The Entrance to the Cittadella Visitors' Centre aims to show the fusion between the old original fortifications illustrated by the remains of medieval walls on the lower left and the new redeveloped architecture. There is a myriad of passages, small streets and pathways that let you explore almost the entire exterior of the citadel while giving visitors stunning views of the entire island. The two parts that initially stand out are the fortifications and then the Cathedral of the Assumption. There are numerous bastions (St. Michael, St. Martin, St. John) which are linked together by curtain walls. There is also a clocktower on St. Michael's bastion.

The Cathedral of the Assumption (Full name Cathedral of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into Heaven, Maltese: Katidral ta' Santa Marija Assunta), is one of the most imposing and important historical landmarks of the Citadel, Gozo and Malta. Designed by Maltese architect Lorenzo Gafà with a distinctive Baroque architectural style, it was built between 1697 and 1711, later on being dedicated in 1716. In September 1864 it became the seat of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Gozo and today. The entrance of Cathedral is "guarded" by the statues of two popes with significant importance to Gozo as Pius IX established on 16 September 1864 Gozo and Comino as a separate Diocese directly subjected to the Holy See while Pope Paul II visited Gozo in 1990, an event even today fondly remembered by locals.



[Picture 86: Cathedral of the Assumption]

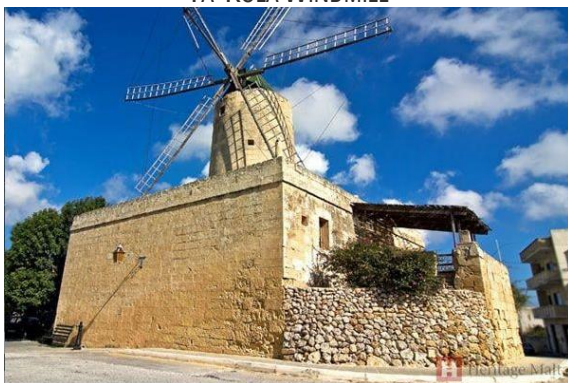
Xagħra

Xagħra is a historic town renowned for the Ġgantija Temples, one of the world's oldest free-standing structures.

If you're planning to visit the Ġgantija temples, you might consider purchasing a combo ticket that allows you to also visit the Ta'kola windmill, which is located very close to these ancient temples on the way into the village of Xewkija. The visit includes a tour of a museum explaining the life of the workers who produced bread.

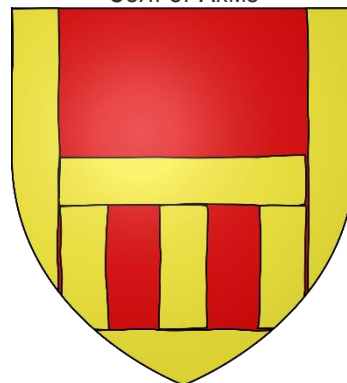
Built in 1710, this eight-sided windmill is the oldest on the island. It remained operational until 1886, when a raging fire destroyed the internal mechanisms that made it work. The windmill was restored in 2021, retaining its original structure and shape

TA' KOLA WINDMILL



[Picture 87: <https://www.myguidemalta.com/sights/ta-kola-windmill>]

COAT OF ARMS



[Picture 88: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xag%C4%A7ra>]

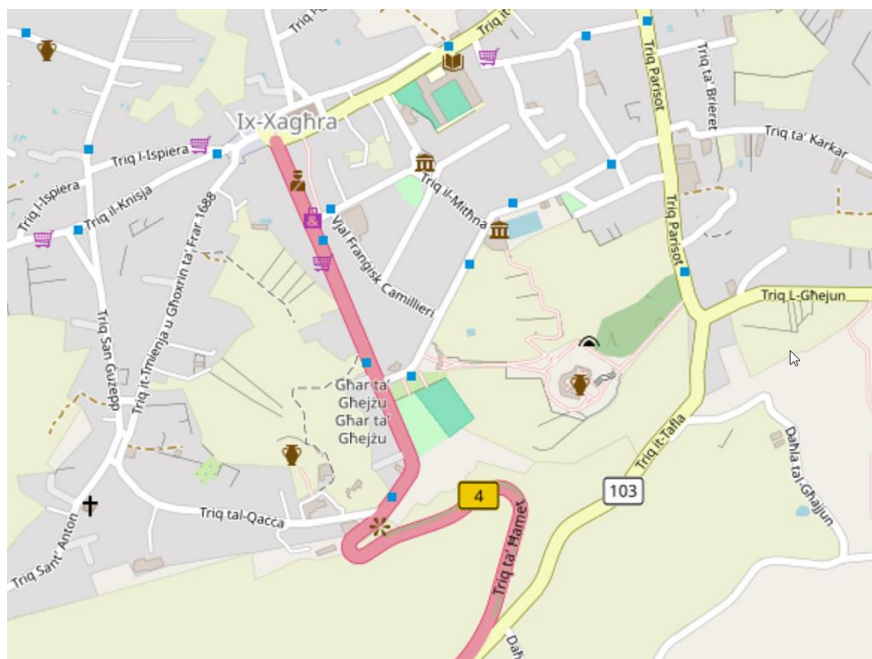
Ġgantija temples

Nestled in the heart of the remarkable Xagħra plateau on the island of Gozo, the Ġgantija Archaeological Park complex stands as a unique prehistoric marvel. This extraordinary site features two structures, constructed between approximately 3600 and 3200 BC.

Remarkably well-preserved despite its ancient origins, Ġgantija showcases the impressive craftsmanship of Neolithic builders. They utilised both the durable Coralline Limestone, prominent throughout the monument, and the softer Globigerina Limestone, which was used for intricate interior details like doorways, altars, and decorative slabs.

We still don't know how these impressive structures were built, given that some of the stones weigh as much as 50 tonnes. Its name, Ġgantija, derives from the Maltese word Ġgant, because it was once believed that the stones had been laid by giants.

The temples were declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1980.



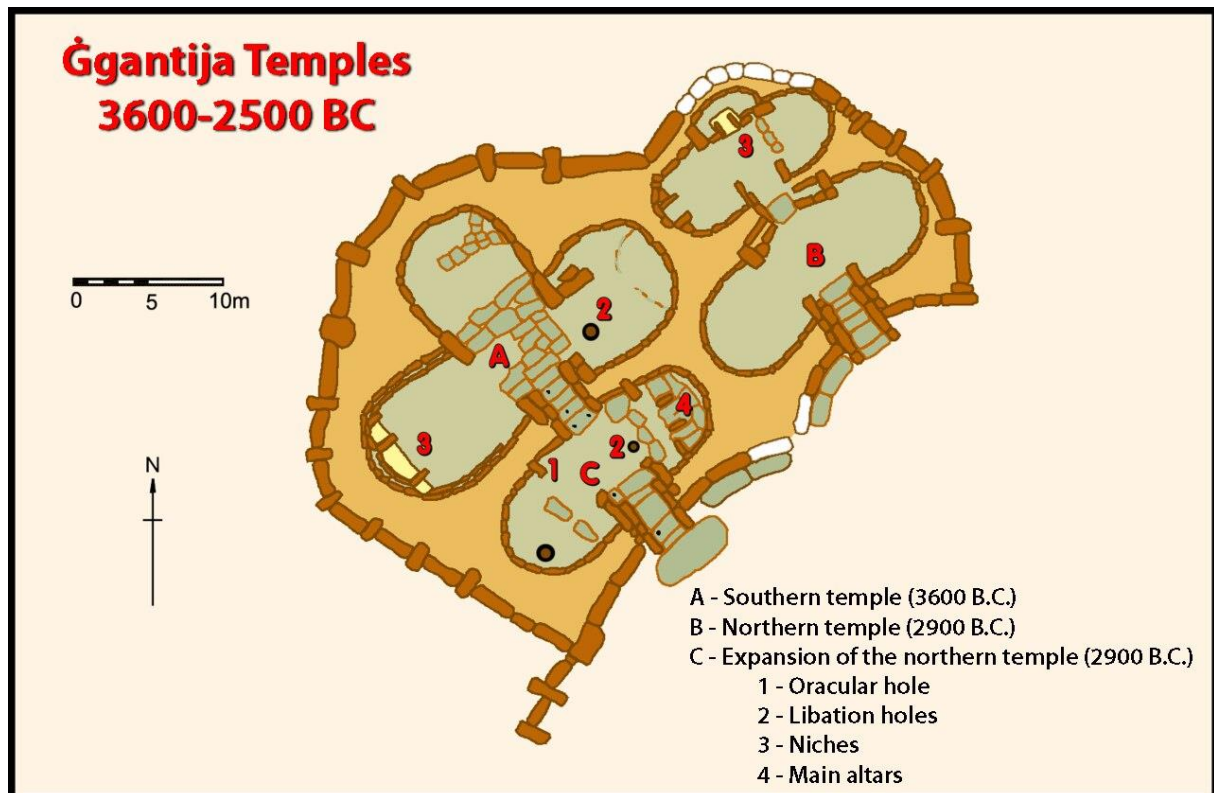
[Picture 89: <https://tile.openstreetmap.de/16/35365/25724.png>]

The complex comprises two structures, each with its own entrance yet sharing a common boundary wall. These structures include multiple apses arranged around a central corridor. Notably, fragments of plaster with red ochre, now exhibited at the Ġgantija Archaeological Park Interpretation Centre, indicate that the interior walls were once plastered and painted. Animal bone remnants found at the site hint at communal rituals and feasting, with stone hearths suggesting the use of fire. Additionally, several libation holes in the floor may have served for liquid offerings. It is believed that ceremonial gatherings took place outside the monument, in a large forecourt intentionally raised by its builders.



[Picture 90: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C4%A0gantija>]

Visitors enter the Ġgantija Archaeological Park through an Interpretation Centre, which offers insights into Neolithic life. The centre also displays a selection of significant artefacts unearthed from various prehistoric sites across Gozo, providing a deeper understanding of this fascinating era.



[Picture 91: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C4%A0gantija>]

The southern temple is the oldest of the two, besides being the largest and best preserved and has a five-apse plan. The left apse in the second pair of apses has three complete niches with caps. Some of the theories maintain that could refer to a triple divinity. In the opposite apse, there are the remains of a circular stone chimney, where you can also see the remains of a small enclosure where religious events were held.

The entrance of the north temple is very similar to that of the first temple; only the threshold is narrower and shorter and it's considerably smaller, but with a more evolved four-apse plan having its rear apse replaced by a shallow niche.

After many theories, the mysterious way in which these enormous stones were extracted, transported and then raised vertically in those primitive times is still unknown. According to an old legend, the work was carried out by a giantess named Sansuna, who lived on a diet of beans and water and carried the megaliths of her head. Around this area there are some stone balls scattered, which probably served as rollers to transport these huge blocks of stone.

Ramla Bay and Calypso Cave

The village of Xaghra in northern Gozo is home to what many consider to be this Maltese island's most beautiful beach. This is Ramla Beach, located in the bay of the same name.

The Maltese word "ir-ramla" translates into English as "red sands", which describes the characteristic hue of its sands, which are gently caressed by the turquoise waters of the Mediterranean. The beautiful beach is also surrounded by a stunning sequence of fields and orchards that stretch for as far as the eye can see. The picturesque scenery makes it a favourite destination for scuba diving and snorkelling enthusiasts.

Ramla Bay is widely considered Gozo's, and arguably Malta's, finest beach. Known locally as "Ramla il-Ħamra" – the Red Sandy Beach – this expansive stretch of red sand offers a stunning and unique coastal experience. Classified as a Natura 2000 protected site, Ramla Bay not only boasts the island's best beach but also features an ecologically important rare sand-dune habitat, which adds to its natural allure.

RAMLA BAY



[Picture 92:

<https://www.malta.com/media/en/attraction/beaches/gozo/ramla-bay/view-of-the-ramla-bay-gozo.jpg>]

CALYPSO CAVE



[Picture 93: https://viewpointgozo.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/1_1518600762.jpg]

From the beach, you can follow a thirty-minute trail that takes you all the way to another of Gozo's most popular destinations: Calypso's Cave. According to local legend, the protagonist of Homer's *The Odyssey*, Ulysses, resided in this cave for seven years on his return to Ithaca. The myth says that he was detained here by the nymph Calypso, who promised him eternal youth. Ulysses eventually managed to escape the cave and made his way back home to be with his family. After he escaped, the nymph Calypso died of grief.

The cave offers some magnificent views across Ramla Bay.

The bay can be accessed from ix-Xaghra, situated on one of the hills overlooking the valley, or from the village of in-Nadur, providing a scenic route to this magnificent beach.

Ramla Bay is not only a summer paradise but also an appealing destination year-round, thanks to Gozo's mild off-season climate. Visitors can enjoy the beach's beauty and tranquillity even during the cooler months, making it a versatile spot for both relaxation and exploration throughout the year.

San Blas Bay

The outstandingly beautiful San Blas Bay lies less than two kilometres from Ramla Beach.

Bay



[Picture 94: <https://dynamic-media-cdn.tripadvisor.com/media/photo-o/0f/9e/2a/e2/dsc-0256-largejpg.jpg?w=900&h=-1&s=1>]

Just like the former, San Blas is also characterised by its reddish sands. However, it is much more difficult to access and can only be reached by foot. It is much quieter than Ramla Bay, so those in search of peace and quiet should consider making the extra effort to get here

Xewkija

Known for its iconic Rotunda of St. John the Baptist, one of the largest domed churches in Europe. Xewkija has roots dating back to the Knights of St. John and is characterized by its narrow, winding streets, traditional Maltese houses, and a peaceful, rural atmosphere.

The name is derived from the Arabic word "Shawk", meaning "thistles" or "thorns". Xewkija is famous for its church, The Rotunda of Xewkija, which is dedicated to St. John the Baptist. It is the Seat of the Knights of the Order of St. John, and was built from Maltese stone by local masons and craftsmen. The church is the largest in Gozo and its dome dominates the village. Its architect was Ġużè Damato. It replaced an older church. The titular statue of Saint John the Baptist was sculpted in wood by Pietro Paolo Azzopardi in 1845.

The Xewkija Industrial Estate is the main industrial zone on the island of Gozo, with an area of around 180,000 sqm. Its tenants currently operate in sectors ranging from ICT, including software development and back-office administration, to the manufacturing of furniture and food and beverages, among others. A childcare center can also be found within the Xewkija Industrial Estate

ROTUNDA AT NIGHT



[Picture 95: <https://api.guidememalta.com/images/loadimage/2a8e7cc6-b2e2-47f5-874f-034cdfdc2bc>]

COAT OF ARMS



[Picture 96: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xewkija>]

Xlendi

Xlendi is known for its small bay surrounded by steep cliffs and offers crystal-clear waters, the bay is ideal for swimming and is popular for snorkeling.

Xlendi is an urban village in the south-west of the island of Gozo. It is surrounded by the villages of Munxar, Fontana and Kerċem. The village is administered by Munxar, but has its own coat of arms and motto (the picture below is currently the best to be found). From March 2010, Xlendi has had its own 5-person "mini council" responsible for the main activities of the area.

HILLS



[Picture 97: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xlendi>]

"COAT OF ARMS"



[Picture 98: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xlendi>]



[Picture 99: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xlendi>]

Xlendi's promenade is lined with restaurants and cafes, making it a popular spot for both locals and tourists. The village combines natural beauty with a relaxed atmosphere, attracting visitors seeking a peaceful seaside escape. The village also marks the starting point of various hiking trails that pass along the coastal mountains and cliff-tops, representing a unique opportunity to appreciate Gozo's unspoiled natural scenery.

Żebbuġ

The highest village in Gozo offers spectacular views of the surrounding countryside and the sea. Żebbuġ is known for its traditional lifestyle as well as its proximity to the popular Marsalforn Bay.

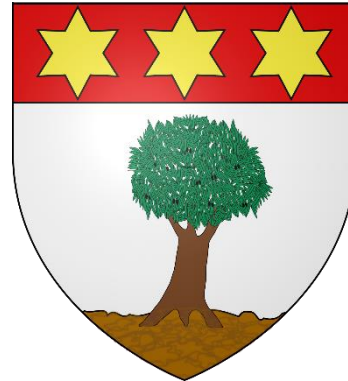
With an area of 7.6 km², Żebbuġ is the largest local council in Gozo by land area. The word Żebbuġ means "wild olive trees", a crop for which the village used to be noted, although nowadays very few olive trees remain on the slopes of Żebbuġ. The village is also well known for its fine lacework[3] and its nearby coastal beauty spots.

CHURCH



[Picture 100: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C5%BBebbu%C4%A1_Gozo]

COAT OF ARMS



[Picture 101: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C5%BBebbu%C4%A1_Gozo]

There is a nice road connecting Żebbuġ to Marsalforn, it's rather steep and winding and exits at Xwejni Bay and the salt pans.



[Picture 102: Marco Thiem]

Marsalforn

Over the years, the municipality of Marsalforn in northern Gozo has evolved from a quaint fishing village on the shores of the Mediterranean to a thriving tourist resort. However, its long-standing fishing tradition means that it is still one of the best places in Malta to eat seafood. If you happen to be in Marsalforn on a Sunday morning, be sure to check out the incredible produce available in its fresh fish market.

On the north coast of Gozo, just past Qbajjar Bay west of Marsalforn, the coastline features a distinctive chequerboard of rock-cut salt pans extending into the sea. These 350-year-old salt pans, which cover approximately 3km along the coast, are integral to a long-standing Gozitan tradition of sea salt production. This method dates back to the Phoenician era, with significant developments during Roman times and continued by local families over generations.

MARSALFORN BAY



[Picture 103: <https://www.maltainfoguide.com/marsalforn-bay-gozo-malta.html>]

XWEJNI BAY



[Picture 104: <https://www.maltainfoguide.com/marsalforn-bay-gozo-malta.html>]

Xwejini Bay

The salt pans, primarily located at Xwejini Bay, operate through a simple yet effective method. Seawater is collected in these shallow limestone reservoirs, and the sun's heat evaporates the water over several days, leaving behind salt crystals. This process is repeated multiple times during the summer months, typically from mid-May to September. The collected salt is then dried and stored in caves carved into the coastal rock.



[Picture 105: <https://www.visitmalta.com/en/attraction/xwejini-salt-pans-gozo/>]

The tradition is kept alive by families such as the Cinis, who have been harvesting salt in this area since the 1860s. Josephine Xuereb and her family, for example, have continued this practice, making it both a local heritage and a tourist attraction. The salt produced is sold in local shops and sometimes directly by the roadside, offering visitors a chance to take home a piece of Gozitan culture.

Visiting the salt pans offers a picturesque and educational experience. While the formations themselves are a year-round attraction, witnessing the actual salt harvesting requires a visit during the summer. Respect for the site is paramount; visitors are advised not to walk directly on the salt pans to avoid damaging them.

VIEW OF MARSALFORN AT SUNSET FROM ŽEBBUĠ



[Picture 106: Marco Thiem]