

MALTA

The Island of the Knights

Where is Malta located?



Capital:

The capital of Malta is Valletta. It's a small but historic city, founded in 1566 by the Knights of St. John and named after Jean Parisot de la Valette. Valletta is known for its architecture, impressive fortifications, and monuments, and it is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Language:

In Malta, two official languages are spoken: Maltese, which is the national language of the country, and English, which is widely used in education, administration, and daily life. Other widely spoken languages include Italian, French, Spanish, and German.



Population:

According to the European Union, the population of Malta in 2024 is 563,443 inhabitants.

Currency:

Malta became a member of the European Union on May 1st, 2004. Later, in 2008, Malta adopted the Euro, replacing the Maltese Lira.

History:

Malta was first inhabited approximately 6,000 years before the birth of Christ. Its prehistoric monuments are among the most important in Europe. It experienced significant development when the Phoenicians settled there. It was later occupied by the Romans, the Vandals, and the Aghlabid Arabs.

It was later conquered by the Emirate of Sicily and then by the Normans, before being granted to the Knights of St. John. The Knights found a new homeland there and adorned it with beautiful and impressive buildings, such as those seen in Mdina, the old capital, and in the new one, Valletta.

The rule of the Knights lasted until 1798, when the island was captured by Napoleon. However, their cultural and architectural heritage is still evident in Malta today, which is why it retains the name: “Island of the Knights”.



Cultural traditions:

1. **Maltese lace:** famous handmade lace, especially from the island of Gozo.
2. **Ghana:** these are traditional folk songs, usually sung improvisedly and telling stories of everyday life.
3. **Easter and Holy Week:** the litanies, the theatrical representations of the Passion and the traditional which are basic elements of the celebration.

Famous personalities:

- **Roberta Metsola:** She is a distinguished politician who was elected President of the European Parliament in 2022, becoming the first Maltese and the youngest woman to hold this position.
- **Edward de Bono:** Famous for his theory of "lateral thinking", influencing psychology and creative thinking.

Famous monuments and sites:

- **Co-Cathedral of St. John:**

It is located in Valletta and dates back to the 16th century. The interior of the temple is one of the leading examples of Baroque architecture in Europe.

- **Marslokk:**

A picturesque fishing village known for its colorful fish market and colorful boats, known as "luzzu".

- **Mdina**

Known as the "Silent City", Mdina is the old capital of Malta. It is a medieval city with narrow streets and impressive architecture.

Traditional food and drinks:

1. Pastizzi

Small, crispy pies stuffed with ricotta or peas. It is one of the most popular snacks in Malta.

2. Rabbit Stew

Malta's national dish! Rabbit is slowly cooked in red wine, tomato, garlic and aromatic herbs.

3. Maltese Wine

Malta produces excellent wines, mainly from local varieties such as Gellewza and Girgentina.

Interesting festivals or events:

1. Malta International Arts Festival

The traditional Maltese carnival with colorful parades, costumes and festivities, mainly in Valletta and other cities.

2. Nottle Blanca

An impressive all-night celebration of culture and the arts in Valletta, where government buildings, palaces, historic buildings and museums open at night, hosting art exhibitions, music, dance and theatrical performances

3. Malta Fireworks Festival

A festival that offers spectacular fireworks displays, attracting visitors from all over the world.

Interesting things about Malta:

- **Small but densely populated:** Malta is one of the smallest countries in the world, but it has one of the highest population per square kilometer in Europe.
- **Movies and series:** Many famous derivatives were filmed here, such as Game of Thrones and Gladiator.

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