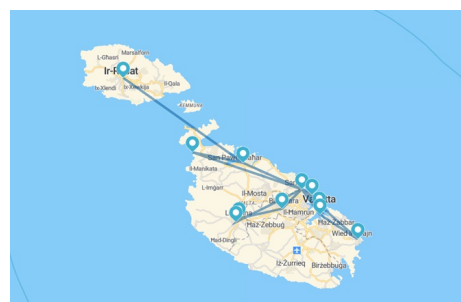


Malta, 8 Days · Tailor-made by car

Route through the Knights of Malta's Islands I

The fascinating "Knights of Malta I" tour will let you unearth all the secrets of the ancient European republic of Malta. From behind the wheel, you'll discover more than 7,000 years of history that have left an indelible mark on amazing temples such as Ġgantija on Gozo, considered one of the oldest free-standing megalithic constructions in the world (3700 BC), even older than the pyramids of Egypt. You're in a land of history and legends here. Cited in the Odyssey as the home of Calypso, Malta is believed to be the lost city of Atlantis that Plato described in his studies. The Maltese archipelago will seduce even the most experienced traveller with its excellent year-round climate, its beautiful laid-back beaches, its amazing cornucopia of cultures, its fun and youthful atmosphere, and its beautiful cities dotted with historical episodes, centuries-old architecture and charming features, such as the walled city of Mdina. To follow in the footsteps of Knights of the Order of Malta, authentic heroes for the European powers of the time, you'll go to the capital, La Valletta, and The Three Cities, enclaves built "by gentlemen for gentlemen". Even today, after the passing of centuries, you can admire the grandiose fortifications and walled cities that they erected. And for World Heritage Site hunters, Malta boasts several: the city of La Valletta, the Hal Saflieni Hypogeum and the Megalithic Temples of Ġgantija, Hagar Qim, Tarxien, Mnajdra and Ta'hagrat & Skorba. Malta is also the good life, delicious cuisine and lots of fun. Throughout the year, it plays host to fascinating events related to the world of arts, culture, sports and entertainment. And in summer, the island abounds with water sports, fireworks and festivities held in honour of the patron saints of the towns and villages of Gozo and Malta. Discover a nation of deep Christian roots where the first bishopric was created by St. Paul in 60 AD, who was shipwrecked off the island on his final trip to Rome. Sign up to this fascinating self-drive tour and discover the authentic Maltese way of life at your own pace, as well as its idyllic nature, its huge range of outdoor activities and its incredible marine environment that has made the islands of Malta, Gozo and Comino an underwater paradise.



NATURE

FAMILIES

Departure date: Departures from May 2026 till May 2027

From: Cork, Shannon, Dublin

Travel details

DAY 1 · CITY OF ORIGIN - SAINT JULIAN'S

Flight departure from the city of origin to Malta and rental car pick-up.

And here your adventure on Maltese soil begins! Today is at your leisure to start exploring this beautiful Mediterranean island whose seabed is packed with archaeological sites that suggest that Malta might have been the famous lost city of Atlantis. We'll make a few suggestions for you to plan your day depending on the time your flight arrives. Saint Julian's, which was originally a small fishing port, is today, along with Sliema (located about 10 minutes' drive away), an outstanding residential and tourist resort that welcomes the traveller with excellent infrastructures, a great selection of hotels (both towns boast some of the most modern and highest-rated hotels on the island), highly-renowned restaurants, trendy clubs, elegant casinos, beautiful beaches for water sports, and a lively atmosphere 24 hours a day.

And in the late afternoon, head back to Saint Julian's or the bustling Paceville! Both locations are famous for their lively nightlife. And if you're looking for a romantic dinner with a view, head to Spinola Bay. Savour delicious Maltese cuisine by candlelight while admiring the beautiful bay dotted with "luzzus", quaint local fishing boats. Somewhere different for dinner? Try dining at the former Fortizza Tower, now a pizzeria, or inside The Black Pearl, a replica of an eighteenth-century galleon that was once used by the film industry and has now become a restaurant. Wherever you go, you'll be surprised by the character and the nuances of a local cuisine impregnated with the flavours of the various cultures that have visited the island in its 6,000 years of history. Don't be surprised if you discover influences from Italian, Arabic, English, Turkish, Greek and North African cuisines, among others.

Overnight stay in Saint Julian's.

DAY 2 · SAINT JULIAN'S - VALLETTA - SLIEMA - SAINT JULIAN'S

After enjoying the attractions of Saint Julian's, set off for the capital La Valetta, declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. It's a stunning fortified and walled city built by the Knights of St. John in 1566 and dotted with historical and artistic heritage, majestic fortresses, beautiful churches and a multitude of stately buildings. The city which elegantly presides over the Grand Harbour, an enclave that for centuries has been strategic for controlling major trade routes, is home to the powers of the Maltese state. European Capital of Culture in 2018, in its charming old town you'll find 320 listed monuments, including treasures such as Saint John's Co-Cathedral and Museum, the Fine Arts and Archaeological museums, the Grandmaster's Palace, and Fort Saint Elmo... The Order of the Knights ruled the islands for 268 years, leaving behind a unique cultural heritage, with this city as the prime example. "La Valletta is a city built by gentlemen for gentlemen", once said the English romantic novelist Sir Walter Scott (19th century). So, take advantage of your trip to follow in the footsteps of these gentlemen in this historic city. Explore one of Europe's smallest capitals at your own pace, a city famous for never being toppled. It's a good idea to wear comfortable shoes today, as the city is full of steps due to uneven terrain. Take advantage of the visit to discover the indoor and outdoor markets that are dotted around the centre, an excellent opportunity to discover the authentic Maltese lifestyle. (Note: There are open-air markets every day on Merchants Street, and on Sundays a large market is set up at St. James' Ditch, right at the city gates).

On the way back to Saint Julian's, if you have time, pop over to Sliema - Malta's largest and most modern city - for some shopping, a refreshing dip in its natural pools, a stroll through Independence Garden, or a mini-cruise across Grand Harbour (trip not included). Despite being a tourist resort and modern city, Sliema preserves an old quarter peppered with typical Maltese houses around Stella Maris Church. If you're looking for entertainment, head straight to the 5-kilometre Tower Road promenade. Stretching as far as St Julian's and Paceville, it's packed with shops and restaurants and is the place-to-be for tourists and locals on lively summer nights.

Overnight stay in Saint Julian's.

● DAY 3 · SAINT JULIAN'S - BIRKIRKARA - MDINA - RABAT - QORMI - SAINT JULIAN'S

We suggest exploring the central part of the island today. En route to Mdina, a medieval city and former capital of Malta, stop over in Birkirkara to admire its well-preserved historic quarter and must-sees such as St Helen's Basilica and the gardens of the Old Railway Station. Once in the ancient and aristocratic Mdina, you'll unearth a fascinating historical and cultural legacy. Known as the City of Silence, it's one of the most impressive in Malta and a location for the famous Game of Thrones series. Residence of the country's noble families, the city is a living museum brimming with stunning palaces such as Villena, Santa Sophia and Falzon, and temples and churches such as St. Paul's Cathedral, whose tower and spectacular dome elegantly dominate the skyline. (Note: Under the temple is a cave where - according to Christian tradition - St. Paul took refuge after having been shipwrecked off Malta). Continue to enjoy this charming Mediterranean city by strolling through its labyrinthine streets and savouring the local cuisine at quaint restaurants dotted around picture-postcard squares. Mdina is a city designed to be leisurely explored on foot, breathing in the scent wafting from the many inner courtyard gardens. What's more, this is one of the best examples of a medieval walled city in Europe. From the museum and bastion of the Città Nobile, you can appreciate the privileged location of the citadel and admire the surrounding farmland. We recommend viewing works by artists such as Goya, Durer, Ferretti, Rembrandt and Van Dyck at the Cathedral Museum and watching the 40-minute audiovisual "Mdina Experience", an educational and fun journey through the city's 3,000 years of history. Then, back on the road for the short drive to Rabat. The must-sees here are the Roman villa and the catacombs of St. Paul and St. Agatha, a subterranean maze of passageways that reminds travellers of the presence of Christianity in the archipelago (between the 1st and 4th centuries) and the difficult years of persecution and of underground celebrations and burials by the light of oil lamps. On your visit to Rabat, don't miss the impressive art gallery at the Wignacourt Museum, with works by renowned Maltese and European artists. On your way back to Saint Julian's, stop off at Qormi if you have time.

Overnight stay in Saint Julian's.

● DAY 4 · SAINT JULIAN'S - TAL QADI TEMPLE - SAINT PAUL'S BAY

After lapping up the atmosphere of Saint Julian's, head along the beautiful stretch of coastline to the stunning Saint Paul's Bay, one of Malta's most famous seaside resorts and which boasts sweeping views of the seascape and St. Paul's Island. Overnight stay, entertainment and culinary options here are aplenty and ever so tempting. En route, you can choose between beaches and spectacular coves where you can cool off and worship the sun. Close to Saint Paul's Bay are the towns of Qawra, Bugibba and the megalithic temple of Tal-Qadi. Today, make sure you try a Cisk, Malta's national beer, the famous "minestrone" soup, and typical dishes such as "pastizzi" (savoury pastries), "bigilla" (Maltese hummus), green peppers stuffed with anchovies, or the delicious stuffed beef fillets known as "bragioli".

Overnight stay in Saint Paul's Bay.

● DAY 5 · SAINT PAUL'S BAY - PORT OF CIRKEWWA - GOZO - SAINT PAUL'S BAY

We suggest leisurely exploring the neighbouring island of Gozo today. All ferries to Gozo set sail from the port of Cirkewwa, about 20 minutes' drive from Saint Paul's Bay. The crossings, which leave every 45 minutes or so, take about 25 minutes and you can also take your car on board. In fact, your rental car will be the perfect ally today to let you cross the entire island. A landscape dotted with cute bays and rugged coastlines is awaiting you. Visitors to this island are struck by the greenery of its countryside, its serenity and the stark contrast with the larger island of Malta. (Note: Check the ferry schedules. Crossing not included. We recommend setting out first thing in the morning to avoid the queues and to explore the island at a leisurely pace). On your visit to Gozo, you'll discover the megalithic temples of Ggantija, the oldest buildings of this type that exist in the world, and said to be older than the pyramids of Egypt; the historic Citadel in Victoria; the Xlendi cove, ideal for swimming and scuba diving; the remains of the national icon known as the Azure Window, an impressive natural limestone arch that collapsed after a violent storm; the famous Inland Sea tunnel and the Blue Hole, sought-after dive sites with spectacular seabeds, all located in Dwejra; the National Shrine of the Blessed Virgin of Ta'Pinu, a place of great devotion in Malta; the charming village of Marsalforn (Zebbug), the liveliest resort town in Gozo with waterfront terraces and a colourful harbour; and the coast of Ramla Bay, one of Gozo's best-known beaches that will surprise you with its typical red sand... As you can see, there are plenty of things to do and see. And if you like Greek mythology, don't miss the Calypso Cave, where locals say that Ulysses made a stop during his long voyage to Ithaca. What's more, its coordinates match those of Ogygia, an island mentioned in Homer's "Odyssey". As well as exploring its most emblematic sights, make sure you pick up some of the local handicrafts, especially lace, bobbins and glassware. Any culinary recommendations? Try the typical cake with pumpkin and rice flavoured with herbs, the delicious rabbit dishes, the typical gbejniet (uncured goat cheese seasoned with black pepper), and - it goes without saying - some of the island's fish specialities. (Note: To return to the island of Malta, head to the port of Mgarr. Don't forget to immortalise the beautiful views of the sister island from the harbour. Also, from the port of Cirkewwa there are boats over to Blue Lagoon, on the island of Comino. In this case, though, you can't take your car on board).

Overnight stay in Saint Paul's Bay.

● DAY 6 · SAINT PAUL'S BAY - ANCHOR BAY / POPEYE VILLAGE - SAINT JULIAN'S

After enjoying a delicious breakfast, today you can visit the picturesque Popeye Village (aka "Sweethaven Village"). Discover this fun open-air theme park and museum dedicated to Popeye, the mythical character created by Walt Disney in 1929. During the visit, you'll be able to see the set used for the "Popeye" film in 1980. You'll be amazed to see that a whole village was built for filming. It has been preserved ever since then and can be visited every day of the week, with fun shows staged including characters from the famous cartoon series. Located in Anchor Bay, it's one of the island's top attractions. Make sure you have a look around Anchor Bay, which is also one of the best dive sites on the island. Another option is to enjoy the beaches and the great atmosphere in this part of the island.

Overnight stay in Saint Julian's.

● DAY 7 · SAINT JULIAN'S - THE THREE CITIES (VITTORIOSA, COSPICUA, SENGLEA) - MARSASKALA - SAINT JULIAN'S

Today, you'll discover the famous Three Cities of Malta. The historical area containing the cities of Vittoriosa, Cospicua and Senglea, older than the capital La Valletta, is also known as La Cottonera. All the invaders of the island have passed through here, so you'll get a fascinating insight into Maltese history, culture and lifestyle. First stop is Vittoriosa, aka Birgu, which is about 25 minutes' drive away from Saint Julian's. It faces La Valletta across the Grand Harbour, and its name is due to its heroic role during the major Turkish siege of 1565. It was once the capital of the island and also the first residence of the Knights of the Order of Malta. Don't miss Forti Rikazoli, setting for films such as "Gladiator" and "Troy". And you'll also see the heaviest cannon in the world, all 100 tons of it! Onward to Cospicua, aka Bormla, just a few minutes away. Take a dghajsa, a typical Maltese gondola, to discover the robust and almost impregnable fortifications that the Knights of Malta built. Another must-see is the Collegiate Church of the Immaculate Conception, one of the most important temples in the entire archipelago and built in honour of the patroness of this city and Malta as a whole. Inside, you'll see an exhibition of paintings of Mother Mary and the Christ Child by the artist Polidoro da Lanciano. And as the icing on the cake, head over to Senglea, a 'European Destination of Excellence' known as Little Venice because of its houses straddling the waterfront. You can explore it on foot, as it's the smallest city in Malta. Finish the day today by admiring the views in Masaskala, a pleasant seaside town where you can take a stroll around its picturesque harbour sprinkled with colourful luzzu boats, whose bows bear the mythical Egyptian eye of Osiris to stave off bad luck. A traditional market is held here on Sunday mornings. And don't leave Masaskala without trying lampuki, a Mediterranean fish caught between August and December.

Overnight stay in Saint Julian's.

● DAY 8 · SAINT JULIAN'S - CITY OF ORIGIN

Arrival at the airport with enough time to drop off your rental car and flight back to the city of origin.

Arrival. End of the trip and our services.

Your trip includes

Your trip includes

- ✓ Return flight.
- ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Saint Pauls Bay, Bugibba.
- ✓ Rent-a-car.
- ✓ Stay in selected hotel in St Julian's.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in St Julian's.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in Saint Pauls Bay, Bugibba.

Your trip doesn't include

- ✗ Entrance fees in Malta.
- ✗ Possible toll charges.
- ✗ Insolvency protection.
- ✗ Admission tickets to parks.

Destinations Visited

St Julian's



Valletta



Sliema



Birkirkara



Mdina



Rabat



Saint Pauls Bay, Bugibba



Victoria



Anchor Bay



Senglea



Marsascala



Important remarks

- Triple rooms in Europe are generally rooms with twin beds or a double, in which a folding bed is installed to accommodate the third person. Due to the inconvenience this causes, we advise against using this option as far as possible.
- Check-in time at the hotel on the day of arrival depends on each establishment, but in no case will it be before 3:00 p.m., unless otherwise indicated.
- The proposed excursions and tours for each day are purely suggestions, as you can tailor the trip to suit your times, tastes and needs.
- A credit card is considered a guarantee, so sometimes you will need one for check-in at hotels.
- Hotels usually have cots available. Otherwise, babies will have to share a bed with an adult.
- To pick up your rental car, you'll need a credit (not debit) card in the name of the person who made the booking, who must also be the named driver of the vehicle.
- Consult the necessary documentation to enter the destinations visited and for transit in the countries where air stopovers are made.

- Suggested round-trip ferry rides are optional and not included in the final price. If you intend to take the car on a ferry, please let the rental company know at the time of pick-up to receive authorisation. Depending on the conditions agreed to in the rental contract and the company you choose, you might be charged a fee payable at the destination.

- Select your hotel in St. Julians and/or St. Paul's Bay depending on the atmosphere you prefer for your holiday. St. Julians is the most modern part of Malta, a vibrant nightlife hub with a whole host of restaurants and bars. About twenty minutes further north is St. Paul's Bay/Bugibba, a more laid-back area that is usually frequented by families and people in search of peace and quiet. In high season, there's a lively atmosphere, but in low season it might feel a bit more isolated. To choose which resort you want to stay in, set the place you don't want to 0 and then indicate the entire stay in the place you want.