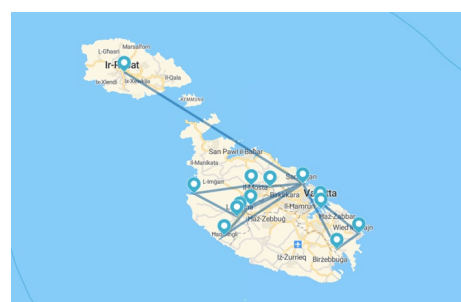




Malta, 7 Days · Tailor-made by car

Route through the Knights of Malta's Islands II

Welcome to a fascinating land shaped by history, legends and the fabled work of the noble Knights of Malta! Head off to one of Europe's tiniest states, lapped by crystal-clear waters with infinite shades of blue and turquoise. At your own pace, explore this unique and laid-back destination, whose cultural and artistic legacy, pristine beaches and genuine Mediterranean landscapes are among the very best in Europe. Malta is well-known for its ancient culture, its incredible underwater universe full of archaeological sites hinting that it may be the lost city of Atlantis, and its rich legacy of traditions left by the heroic Knights of the Hospital of Saint John. Today, its waters have turned the islands of Malta, Gozo and Comino into one of the most sought-after Mediterranean destinations for scuba diving and water sports. Right in the heart of the Mediterranean, between Europe and the African Maghreb, the trail of civilisations that have set foot on these lands have given rise to a unique cultural melting pot and cities that are true open-air museums, such as the capitals of Malta and Gozo and the beautiful city of Mdina. Seat of the first ever bishopric founded by St. Paul in the year 60 AD, Malta boasts several World Heritage Sites, such as the city of La Valletta, the Hal Saflieni Hypogeum and the Megalithic Temples of Ggantija, Hagar Qim, Tarxien, Mnajdra and Ta'hagrat & Skorba. More reasons to travel to Malta? Its delicious cuisine, its unmistakable Mediterranean charm, its vast range of leisure and entertainment options, its cheerful and youthful atmosphere, its welcoming people... And between days out, you can savour the mouthwatering Maltese cuisine and taste local wines. And when you think you've experienced it all, take a seat on a waterfront terrace and marvel at outstanding sunsets and some of the most exceptional landscapes in the world. The "Knights of Malta II" tour is an unforgettable trip to the heart of the Mediterranean, specially designed for lovers of good weather, great food, amazing culture, stunning scenery and jaw-dropping beaches. An ideal destination for romantic getaways, trips with friends and family holidays.



NATURE

FAMILIES

Departure date: Departures from May 2026 till May 2027

From: Dublin, Shannon, Cork

Travel details

DAY 1 · CITY OF ORIGIN - VALLETTA AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

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. The first highlight is La Valletta, 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). Overnight stay in Valletta.

Overnight stay at the selected hotel.

DAY 2 · VALLETTA AND THE SURROUNDING AREA - THE THREE CITIES (SENGLA - VITTORIOSA - COSPICUA) - VALLETTA AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

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 at the selected hotel.

● **DAY 3 · VALLETTA AND THE SURROUNDING AREA - TARXIEN TEMPLES - MARSASKALA - MARSAXLOKK - GHAR DALAM CAVES - PLAYMOBIL FUNPARK - SAINT JULIAN'S AND THE SURROUNDING AREA**

Bid farewell to the capital of the Maltese archipelago and time to hit the road. The first stop will be the magnificent Tarxien Temples. Declared a World Heritage Site, these ancient megalithic temples (dating from around 2800 BC) are the most complex of all temples in Malta. In total, there are four megalithic structures famous for the amazing detail of their sculptures, including sculpted domestic animals, altars, murals decorated with spiral drawings and other designs. It's interesting to observe a chamber inside the thick wall between the South and Central Temples, famous for its relief of two bulls and a sow. Tarxien is also of great interest because it gives an insight into how temples were built: the stone rollers outside the South Temple were probably used to transport the megaliths. Cremation remains have also been found in the centre of the South Temple, indicating that this place was reused as a crematorium in the Bronze Age. (Note: On arrival, ask for a leaflet in your language, as there are no descriptions around the site. Check the timetable in advance. Visits end at around 5.00 pm. Admission not included). Continue 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. About 15 minutes' drive away is Marsaxlokk, where you'll experience the most authentic Malta. This is Malta's second largest natural harbour. It's famous for being the point of disembarkation of the conquerors, and (much later) for playing host to the famous Bush-Gorbachev summit in 1989. The town is also well-known for first building the emblematic "luzzu" boats. Make sure you visit the underground cave of Ghar Dalam (Dark Cave), home of the Neolithic inhabitants of the island 6,000 years ago. Also found here were fossils from 250 million years ago of animals such as dwarf elephants, bears, birds, hippos... Some of these remains can be seen in the small but interesting town museum. Depending on time, but especially if you're travelling with children, we suggest extending your trip to the PLAYMOBIL® FunPark. Did you know that Malta is home to the second largest PLAYMOBIL® factory in the world? The factory is also a small museum that will fascinate kids, as they'll discover a whole community of giant Playmobil figures. (Note: Booking your visit in advance is recommended. Admission not included). The last stop today will be Saint Julian's, which was originally a small fishing port, and 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.

Overnight stay at the selected hotel.

DAY 4 · SAINT JULIAN'S AND THE SURROUNDING AREA - BLUE GROTTO - HAGAR QIM TEMPLE - MNAJDRA TEMPLES - DINGLI CLIFFS - RAS IL-QAMMIEH - VILLAGE OF TA'QALI - SAN ANTON PALACE AND GARDENS - SLIEMA - SAINT JULIAN'S AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

After enjoying the attractions of Saint Julian's, it's time to get back on the road. First stop will be the Blue Grotto (Wied iz-Zurrieq, in Maltese), a paradise for diving lovers and one of the most typical postcards of Malta. The Grotto offers access from the beach to a couple of underwater caves and to the Um El Faroud oil tanker, a wreck resting upright on sand at a depth of 35 metres. (Note: The Blue Grotto is only accessible by boat and the visit is subject to sea conditions. The boat trip, lasting just half an hour, provides great views of the landscape, the cliffs, the caves and the coral-lined seabeds. It's best to go first thing in the morning, as there often big queues later in the day. Admission not included). Next stop is the Dingli Cliffs trail, where you'll find archaeological complexes such as Hagar Qim, a World Heritage Site, and an ancient watchtower with views over the uninhabited island of Filfla. Another cultural must-visit today is the Mnajdra Temple, one of the most fascinating in the country and just a five-minute walk from Hagar Qim. The complex consists of three temples. The Lower Temple has a special alignment and at the equinoxes (20 March and 22 September), the sun's rays pass strategically through the ruins. Onward journey to Dingli, the highest town on the island of Malta. From here, you can take a stretch of the 131 road that runs parallel to cliffs of up to 260 metres in height. The views to the Islet of Filfla are outstanding. (Note: There are no signposts in this area). But to enjoy the sunset, there's nowhere better than Ras Il-Qammieh. Once back in Ta'Qali, you can see how the old hangars built during World War II have been transformed into quaint workshops and craft stores where you'll see potters or glass blowers at work. Make sure to pick up a handmade souvenir here! And as a finishing touch, visit the San Anton Palace and Gardens in Attard, an elegant building with heaps of history that is currently the second residence of the President of Malta. (Note: It's not possible to enter the palace. However, you can visit the gardens, the botanical garden and the zoo). If you have time on your way back to Saint Julian's, 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). 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 at the selected hotel.

DAY 5 · SAINT JULIAN'S AND THE SURROUNDING AREA - MDINA - RABAT - FOMM IR-RIH BAY - GOLDEN BAY BEACH - MOSTA - NAXXAR - SAINT JULIAN'S AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

We suggest exploring the central part of the island today. First stop will be the ancient and aristocratic Mdina, where 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. But if you're looking for sun and sand, then read on. Our first recommendation is the pristine beach of Fomm ir-Rih Bay, which is located in Bahrija, near Rabat. (Note: The beach, located on the northwest coast of Malta, is accessible only by foot via a steep path leading to the bay, or by kayak). But if you're looking for atmosphere and facilities, then head to the beaches of Golden Bay and Għajn Tuffieħa. Golden Bay is one of Malta's best-known sandy beaches. Although it's famous, it is actually framed by lush vegetation and is practically virgin. Here you'll have all the facilities you need for a day on the beach: a bar-restaurant; sun loungers and parasols; and a variety of water sports, from water skiing and paragliding to banana boats. Access is easy, so it's great for people with reduced mobility or families with small children. (Note: The beach is usually safe for swimming, but the current is strong when the wind is blowing to the northwest). Meanwhile, Għajn Tuffieħa is a more exposed beach, although you can find pedalos and a small beach bar there. (Note: These beaches were where Turkish galleys landed during the Great Siege of 1565. In World War II, the British used them as a training site). En route back to Saint Julian's, you can stop off in Mostar to admire the impressive dome of the Cathedral, the third largest in Europe, only surpassed by Hagia Sophia in Turkey and St. Peter's in Rome. Inspired by the Pantheon in Rome, it witnessed a miraculous event on 9 April 1942. During a German attack, a bomb struck the dome while a mass was being held with 300 worshippers inside. No one was injured. Today, you can see a replica of the 200-kilo bomb in the sacristy. Meanwhile, if you stop off in Naxxar, you can visit the beautiful gardens of the Palazzo Parisio, known as the Little Versailles. By the way, if you talk to locals they'll assure you that they helped St. Paul after his shipwreck.

Overnight stay at the selected hotel.

● DAY 6 · SAINT JULIAN'S AND THE SURROUNDING AREA - PORT OF CIRKEWWA - GOZO - SAINT JULIAN'S AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

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 at the selected hotel.

● DAY 7 · SAINT JULIAN'S AND THE SURROUNDING AREA - 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 Paceville.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in Paceville.
- ✓ Rent-a-car.

Your trip doesn't include

- ✗ Entrance fees in Malta.
- ✗ Possible toll charges.
- ✗ Insolvency protection.
- ✗ Transfer to Blue Grotto.
- ✗ Admission tickets to Playmobil@-FunPark.

Destinations Visited

Valletta



Senglea



Marsascala



Marsaxlokk



St Julian's



Dingli



Ta' Qali



Mdina



Rabat



Fomm irRiĥ Bay



Mosta



Naxxar



Victoria



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.