



TRAVEL THE UNKNOWN

TAKE THE ROAD LESS TRAVELLED

MALTA EXPLORER

6 days

What's not included

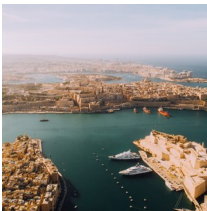
- Meals not mentioned in itinerary
- Drinks
- Visa fees
- Tipping
- Camera / video camera fees
- Personal items (laundry, telephone, etc.)
- Medical expenses
- Any services not mentioned in itinerary

All accommodation subject to availability. Final accommodation choices will be confirmed after booking.

Your Itinerary Explained

Date	Place visited	Meals
	<p>The first part of the text in each day is the itinerary schedule and will explain what you will normally see/do during this day of your itinerary.</p> <p>---</p> <p><i>The part of the day's text in italics (and comes after the three dashes "---") is background information on the places or sites on that day of your itinerary. It is not part of your itinerary and may mention places that will not be visited on your itinerary. If you have any questions please ask us. Travel times where noted are only meant as a guideline.</i></p>	<p>B: Breakfast</p> <p>L: Lunch</p> <p>D: Dinner</p>

Tour Itinerary

Day 1	Arrival - Three Cities & Fregatina Cruise	Meals
	<p>On arrival, proceed to the arrivals hall and follow the signs to the Tour/Travel Operators waiting area. A Travel the Unknown representative will be waiting for you.</p> <p>Drive through the historic Cospicua before arriving at Vittoriosa where your guide will take you on a walking tour of the nearby area including the vedette viewpoint overlooking the Grand Harbour. Embark on a fregatina cruise of the harbour for a different perspective of the area.</p> <p>Overnight in Sliema.</p> <p>---</p> <p><i>The Three Cities region is located across the Grand Harbour from Valletta. Each city is comprised of its own individual fortification built throughout the medieval era to protect against Ottoman attacks. Vittoriosa (Birgu) was first settled by the Phoenicians and was the eventual capital city of Malta after the Knights of Saint John arrived in the 1530's. Vittoriosa's Castle of St Angelo was constructed in preparation of further Ottoman attacks. Cospicua and Senglea were established in later years in similar fashion. The three cities are connected to Valletta via a ferry.</i></p> <p><i>Situated on a headland, Sliema faces southward towards Valletta across the harbour. The name means 'peace' in Maltese; many say the word derives from a prayer said by sailors as they passed the entrance to the harbour. During the Great Siege of 1565, Turkish troops camped in the area before it was captured and developed further by the Knights of St John. In the 1900's the area became popular for holiday-makers and several victorian-style buildings and churches were built along with a promenade for leisurely walking.</i></p> <p>Overnight in AX The Victoria Hotel, Sliema</p>	N/A



Valletta

Today, experience the beauty of Valletta: the capital of Malta. Admire the breathtaking views from the Upper Barracca Gardens and explore the history of the Knights of Malta with your guide. Visit St. John's Co-Cathedral, home to the only signed artwork by the artist Caravaggio. The rest of the afternoon is at leisure.

B

Overnight in Sliema.

*Perched on a peninsular in Malta's Grand Harbour, **Valletta** is one of Europe's most beautiful cities. Valletta was founded by the Knights of St John, who escaped to Malta following the Crusades. After the Ottoman siege in 1522, the Knights realized that if they were to retain their hold on Malta, adequate defenses must be constructed. Pope Pius IV's foremost engineer, Francesco Laparelli, was tasked with building a city that was equal parts formidable fortress and Baroque masterpiece. Laparelli constructed Valletta on a grid system, designed to be defensible in the event of attack. Laparelli, his assistants and other Knights of St John all had their impact on Valletta's architecture; hence its eclectic mix of Italian, African, Spanish and even Arabic influences. Centuries on, the city became a strategic outpost for the Allies during WWII. Scars of bombings can still be found at many sites around Valletta, including the Royal Opera House.*

*Commissioned in 1572 by the Grandmaster Jean de la Cassière, **St John's Co-Cathedral** is an imposing Maltese landmark. The cathedral's design was overseen by Gerolamo Cassar, a resident of Malta and assistant to Valletta's chief architect, Francesco Laparelli. Its interior is adorned in scenes of St John the Baptist's life, with the carvings done in-situ rather than being created separately and then later attached to the walls. The tombs of some 400 Knights of St John, including several Grandmasters can be found beneath the cathedral. Many consider its crown jewel to be Caravaggio's masterpiece; the 'Beheading of St John the Baptist', painted as an elaborate altarpiece. The painting is the only signed work by Caravaggio in known existence.*

Overnight in AX The Victoria Hotel, Sliema

Day 3

Hagar Qim - Mnajdra - Marsaxlokk

Meals



Mnajdra

This morning, explore the mysterious Hagar Qim & Mnajdra temples. After, visit the Zurrieq valley where you can take an optional boat trip to the stunning Blue Grotto (weather permitting). This afternoon we will drive through the farmland to the idyllic fishing village of Marsaxlokk.

B

Overnight in Sliema.

*Built between 3600-3200BC, **Hagar Qim** is one of the most ancient religious sites on the planet. Archeologists suggest that the northern 'Old Temple' and Women's chamber (complete with an acoustic oracle hole) was built first. The 'New Temple' section was built next, and then eventually the finishing touches such as paving and monoliths. Important features of the complex include association with fertility rituals, with many possible references to male and female bodies. Interestingly, no burials exist in Hagar Qim or the area surrounding it; though the bones of sacrificial animals have been found.*

*Constructed in approximately 3600BC - 3200BC, **Mnajdra** temple is a clover-shaped complex designed as either an astronomical or calendrical observation site. Despite being built in similar eras, Mnajdra appears to differ in its design and construction from Hagar Qim, its neighbour just 500m away. A highlight of the complex is the calendar stone, with a collection of drilled holes that archeologists have cross-referenced to different lunar periods.*

*The scenic fishing village of **Marsaxlokk** is the largest harbour in Malta. A visit to the waterfront will reveal an assortment of traditional luzzu boats and larger fishing vessels, many having brought in their daily catches. During the week fresh seafood is sold at the market for local restaurants and businesses. On Sundays the public can visit to make purchases and enjoy a hearty lunch while there. A number of British military outposts can also be seen nearby, intended to protect the harbour during WWII.*

Overnight in AX The Victoria Hotel, Sliema

Day 4

Gozo

Meals



Dwejra Bay

After breakfast take the ferry to Malta's 2nd largest island; Gozo. Visit the temples of Ggantija, which give insight to the ancient ancestors of Malta. After, visit the imposing citadel of Victoria. Later, admire the beautiful sea cliffs from Dwejra. There will be free time on Gozo before returning to the hotel. If looking for souvenirs to buy, the island is renowned for its woollen goods and handmade lace.

B

Overnight in Sliema.

The neolithic temple complex of **Ġgantija** is one of the earliest megalithic structures in all of Malta. In fact, its construction predates that of the Egyptian Pyramids and the complex is the second oldest manmade religious structure in the world, after Göbekli Tepe in Turkey. The complex includes 2 temples facing south-east, and a 3rd that appears to have been abandoned mid-construction. A new Interpretation Centre has been built on-site and gives visitors important insight into the inhabitants of the area and how they lived their lives through the temples.

Dwejra Bay is an idyllic cove on the west coast of Gozo. Many recognize it as the previous location of the Azure Window; a giant limestone arch that collapsed into the sea as a result of erosion. Nearby is the Blue Hole, once a cave but now an intriguing dive site after the roof caved in. A little further on is Fungus Rock, home to a special type of plant that the Knights of St John prized for its medicinal properties. So special was the plant that Grandmaster Pinto deemed the rock out of bounds in 1746; trespassing was punishable by 3 years in a galley.

Overnight in AX The Victoria Hotel, Sliema

Day 5

Mosta - Mdina

Meals



Mosta

This morning, drive towards the center of the island and visit Mosta's awe-inspiring rotunda church. After lunch, continue to the fortress city of Mdina. Visit the cathedral and take in stunning views of the island. In the afternoon if time permits, head to the Ta Qali handicrafts village and view the traditional glass works.

B L

Overnight in Sliema.

Located in the heartlands of Malta, **Mosta** is a town full of traditional pastizzerias, sleepy side-streets and its very own miracle. During WWII, Malta was the most-bombed nation on Earth. On 9 April, 1942, two German bombs were dropped on the The Church of the Assumption of Our Lady. One bomb pierced the rotunda and fell on to floor; the other landed on the church's outer facade. By a stroke of luck (or divine intervention), neither bomb exploded and some 250 parishioners inside survived. To commemorate the event, a replica of one of the bombs can be found towards the rear of the church.

Originally named Maleth by Phoenicians and later Melite by the Romans, **Mdina** was the capital of Malta until the Middle Ages. Many visitors today know Mdina as the 'Silent City' as no cars are permitted within the city walls. According to some, when Paul the Apostle was shipwrecked on Malta in around 60AD, he was greeted by the governor of Mdina. At a later point, the city was fortified heavily by either Arabic or Byzantine forces; their influences can still be seen in the city's architecture today among the Norman and Baroque palaces. In 1798, Mdina was captured by French forces during their invasion of Malta; just two years later they surrendered to British forces.

Overnight in AX The Victoria Hotel, Sliema

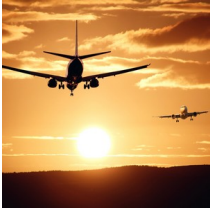
Day 6

Departure

Meals

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for your flight.

B



Alternatively, we can book further extensions if you wish to explore more of Malta, or relax at one of its many beaches and resorts.

Flight