



Malta Travel Guide

Description

default watermark



“Malta is a sod of a place”

David niven

Table of Contents

[Top Seven Destinations In Malta](#)

[Stats/Fun Facts](#)

[Malta Map](#)

[Good to Know Before You Go/Essential Info](#)

[Our Go-To Resources](#)

[Photo Gallery](#)

default watermark

default watermark



Top Seven Destinations In Malta

- **Valletta** This is the tiny walled capital city of Malta. Beautiful Valletta is a UNESCO World Heritage site. The city is .5 square miles, but it feels like so much more. Every street leads to the sea. This is old Malta, with its 16th & 17th-century townhouses alongside renovated buildings and a bustling nightlife. There are galleries, incredible restaurants, packed cafes, high-end shopping, and art spaces. Enter through the Renza Pianos city gate and begin your journey into this remarkable city. The architecture alone is striking. St John's Co-Cathedral is stunning. The city took us, so we returned for a second visit.
- **Hal Saflieni Hypogeum** is an underground prehistoric burial site unearthed in 1902 during construction in the area. It is a complex of interconnecting rock-cut chambers set on three distinct levels. The complex was used over centuries, with the earliest remains dating back to around 4000 BC and the more recent remains dating to the Early Bronze Age (ca 1500 BC). It is a unique and mysterious experience that gives you a glimpse into this ancient world. You need to get tickets months in advance.
- **Mdina** And neighboring Rabat. Mdina is one of Europe's finest examples of an ancient walled city and is extraordinary in its mix of medieval and baroque architecture. This city is as if you are stepping back in time. They sit atop a hill in the center of Malta with breathtaking views. The walled city seems untouched and incredibly preserved. Mdina has the name "the silent city", as it has few residents and no cars. At night, when the visitors go home, the lamp-lit alleys and streets are magical. Rabat is the up-and-coming culinary center of Malta and has a bustling nightlife.
- **Gozo** Is one of the Mediterranean's most serene, striking, and unique islands. It almost deserves its own page. Requires a ferry to get to, which has kept it quiet and less crowded. Its rugged landscape begs exploration, and its dramatic rocky inlets will leave you wanting more time. Il-Kastelli Citadel in Victoria is a 15th-century fortification with the gorgeous Cathedral of the Assumption and museums showcasing archeology, natural history, and folklore.
- **Blue Lagoon** Is one of Malta's top jewels, and anyone who visits the Islands should explore this wonder. It's been called a paradise on earth, with the clearest waters many will ever see and one of the most beautiful beaches in the world. It is on the uninhabited island of Comino, and it can only be reached by boat. It sits between mainland Malta and Gozo. Swimming is popular, and it can get busy in the summer, but even then, it is a sight to behold.
- **Three cities** Claim to be the cradle of Maltese history, as Vittoriosa, Senglea, and Cospicua have provided a home and fortress to almost every person who settled on the Islands. They are intriguing and not really on the map for tourists. As the first home to the Knights of St. John, the Three Cities' palaces, churches, forts, and bastions are far older than Valletta's. It is where you can get a window into the real world and the daily life of Maltese people. We love the three cities, and they are where you will find the heart of Malta.
- **Hagar Qim and Mnajdra Temples** The temple of Hagar Qim stands on a hilltop overlooking the sea and the islet of Filfa. At the bottom of the hill, only a short distance away, one finds the remarkable temples of Mnajdra. Both sites are in the UNESCO World Heritage List. First excavated in 1839, dating suggests a date between 3800 – 2200 BC, a period known as the ?gantija phase in Maltese prehistory. Malta's Seven Megalithic Temples are older than Stonehenge.

Did you know?

Malta Stats

- Population: 514,564 (2019) Population grew 100,000 people since 2011.
- Capital City: Valletta
- Currency: Euros (EUR)
- Government type: Unitary parliamentary constitutional republic. The two major parties are the Labor and the Nationalist parties.
- President: George Vella Prime Minister: Robert Abela
- Ethnic groups: Maltese (descendants of ancient Carthaginians and Phoenicians with strong elements of Italian and other Mediterranean stock)
- Languages: Maltese (official) 90.1%, English (official) 6%, multilingual 3%, other 0.9%
- Religions: Roman Catholic (official) more than 90%
- Department Risk Level: 1
- Terrorist groups: Army of Islam; Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham – Sinai Province; Mujahidin Shura Council in the Environs of Jerusalem; al-Qa'ida (2019)
- Malta's motto: Strength and Consistency.
- Malta is only 121 square miles and 17 miles across, making it the tenth smallest country in the world.
- There are 168 miles of shoreline, including Malta, Gozo, and Comino.
- Population density is over 2000 people per mile, the world's 4th most densely populated sovereign nation.
- The average annual tourist draw is 1.6 million.
- Malta became part of the European Union in May 2004.
- They celebrate 14 legal holidays a year.
- Malta has only one University, the University of Malta. The American University is establishing itself in the three cities.
- Malta has been inhabited since the early Neolithic period around 5900 BC.
- GDP is 15 billion nominal—23 billion PP.P 87% service sector.
- Malta has a highly industrialized service-based economy. Its major industries are tourism, electronics, shipbuilding, construction, food and beverages, and pharmaceuticals.
- Exports include machinery, mechanical appliances, mineral fuels, oil products, and pharmaceuticals.
- Imports are mineral fuels, oil products, electrical machinery, aircraft, and parts.
- Malta is only 60 miles from Sicily.
- It is only 300 miles from the coast of North Africa.
- Malta gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1964. It became a British colony in 1813.
- Education is compulsory between the ages of 5 and 16 years.
- Malta has three Unesco World Heritage Sites.
- Most Maltese people speak three languages. Maltese, Italian, and English. English is an official language.

- Life expectancy in Malta is 82.75
- The literacy rate is 94.50%

Fun Facts

- They have over 365 churches on the small island.
- The Maltese LOVE their cars. There are almost 400,000 cars for 514,000 residents.
- During the rule of the Knights of St. John (also known as the Knights of Malta), Malta's population increased significantly, from around 25,000 in 1535 to over 54,000 in 1632. One primary reason was an improvement of health, welfare, and immigration from Western Europe.
- Hollywood likes Malta. Scenes from Gladiator, World War Z, Games of Thrones, Sons of the Sea, and Troy, to name some shows and movies filmed there.
- The name Malta is probably from the Greek word Melite (honey-sweet).
- Bees are endemic to Malta, and honey is abundant.
- Malta is the only country in the E.U. that still allows hunting in the Spring for birds.
- Malta's Seven Megalithic Temples are older than Stonehenge. They are some of the oldest free-standing structures in the world.
- Glass blowing and lace are some of the most well-known crafts on the island, dating back centuries.
- Likely 17,000 years ago, Malta was physically connected to Italy.
- Malta was the most bombed place on earth during World War II. The relentless raids occurred between 1940-1942 by the Germans and the Italians. Even hospitals were bombarded to break the will of the people. Some of their most sacred churches and historical sites were destroyed.
- The Mosta Dome was spared during the bombing even though a 500 kg German bomb dropped through the ceiling as people awaited mass. It did not detonate. It is the third-largest unsupported church dome in Europe.
- Malta was awarded the George Cross by King George VI of the United Kingdom for the country's bravery in the Second World War.
- There have been many hands that Malta has passed through. Greeks, Phoenicians, Romans, Arabs (two centuries), Normans, Aragonese, French, and the British. All have left their marks culturally, especially in the cuisine.
- The opening of the Suez Canal brought prosperity to Malta as ships stopped to refuel in Malta.
- Napoleon captured Malta on the way to Egypt.
- The second-largest population of Maltese is in Australia, numbering around 200,000. There was a mass migration due to the devastation of WWII. Australia being a British Colony, made for easy migration.
- There are no forests in Malta.
- Malta Has Some of the Best Diving in the World.
- The official languages are English and Maltese, but all signage is in English.

Learn why Malta is an [ideal destination for ex-pats to retire](#)

Malta Map

Check out our [Unveiling the Secrets of Malta: History, Beauty, and Resilience](#) blog post to help plan your next trip.

Good to know before you go

- Tipping in Malta is quite common. In restaurants, the tips are usually 5-10%, but make sure it isn't already part of your bill. It was not offered to be included if using a credit card; it is best to leave cash for tips. Spas and tour guides usually tip 10%. Bars do not expect tips unless you have direct table service. Housekeeping at hotels usually gets 2 euros per night. You do not need to tip taxis, but many rounds up to the nearest euro. Credit cards are welcome almost everywhere, but have cash for smaller places and markets.
- Overall, clothing is conservative and simple. Most people wear smart casual. When entering any church or place of worship, clothing should be discrete and respectful. Even on beaches, people are modest, and nudity is not acceptable. Dressing provocatively is not appropriate in Malta. Casual dressers often wear jeans and comfortable shoes. Hats should be removed in homes and churches.
- Driving in Malta is on the left side of the road and can be challenging, especially with the many narrow streets of Malta. Roundabouts and road signs are similar to most of Europe but are all in English. There are a ton of speed cameras, and they do enforce speed limits. Wearing a seatbelt is compulsory. Using your mobile phone while driving is strictly against the law. Driving can be challenging, and motorcycles and mopeds seem to have no rules or fear.
- Valletta has a new modern parking system with automatic number plate recognition that allows CCTV systems to record the number of cars that come through the city. It is designed to aid the taxation of vehicles based on the time they park in the city. Valletta has three kinds of parking lots, differentiated by color. White parking lots are for public use, and you can park there for 24 hours. Blue parking lots are for general use from 8 am to 6 pm, and green parking lots are for residents only.
- The parking spaces visitors can park in are indicated by color, and we found it easy to determine where to park. White spaces are for public use, free, and open 24 hours a day. Blue spots are only from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. unless otherwise noted. Overall, we found parking easy to find and rarely paid for it.
- If you were to ask what would be two words you would use to describe Malta, we would say Rocks and Balconies. This is a massive island of sedimentary rock, and everywhere there is

rock. There are rock walls within rock walls within more rock walls. Nothing, though, was in those rock walls most often. They have so much rock they make walls everywhere. Then, there are those famous Maltese balconies that are intriguing and striking. You never tire of them as they are so fantastic.

- Malta is a place of contradictions. There are run-down areas in desperate need of revitalization. Roads are in terrible shape. Abandoned buildings next to restored buildings. This country was decimated after WW2. They continue to recover from the devastation and the significant loss of their population who left the island. Look beyond that. There are beautiful roads under construction, towering cranes everywhere, high-rise buildings, large hotels, and modern bustling districts like Portsmouth. It is improving, and if you look, you will find lots of hope and regrowth. The population is increasing quickly, and young professionals are settling in Malta. Most impressive is that they are working hard to preserve the past while improving for the future.
- There is quite a young feel to Malta. It is drawing young professionals from all over Europe. It encourages those who are digital nomads to settle there with incentives. As we were in the Three Cities, Valetta, Rabat, and Portsmouth, we observed many young professionals gathering, especially for the bustling nightlife.
- Restaurants are busy, and there are many to choose from, and they stay open late. We were turned away from many restaurants as they were booked for the night, and this was during Covid. Malta is an up-and-coming destination to visit.
- The Maltese tend to use less personal space, sitting or standing close to one another. They are also touchy and affectionate. Hugging, kissing, and back-slapping in public are common.
- The Maltese use a variety of gestures in conversation. Quickly lifting your right-hand thumb, index, and middle fingers means how are you?
- Malta is well-known for its hot climate, safety, and hospitality.
- The Maltese have a good sense of humor and enjoy conversing. They love to help and are generous with their time.
- Swearing can be offensive to your Maltese counterpart.
- When you finish your meal, place the fork and knife parallel to the plate.
- Malta has been at the crossroads between Europe and Northern Africa for centuries. This is reflected in the Maltese people, culture, and lifestyle. Arabic cultures (mainly those from Northern Africa) have imprinted on Maltese culture.
- Malta is a hierarchical society that is determined through education and economic status. This plays a significant role in social interactions, as what is considered proper behavior depends on your status, degree of familiarity, age, and social connections.
- People are expected to be modest and avoid boasting about their wealth or putting themselves above others.
- Malta was a patriarchal society. Women have gained more prominence throughout society. Men are generally expected to be the principal providers for their families, while women are expected to care for the household and children.
- When many Maltese people talk, they tend to be rather loud. They would rather shout than be a step closer to each other. Don't mistake loud voices for an argument.
- Greetings in Malta with someone you don't know is a handshake. Address the person by their title and last name. First names are only used if invited to do so. Maltese who are familiar will pat backs, arms, and shoulders. Eye contact is common and often during conversation.
- Maltese do tend to get rather clannish. They are passionate people, and when discussing politics, religion, or sports, they hold tight to their loyalties and fight back hard to hold their ground.

- Most Maltese speak excellent English. This was our experience.
- The Maltese are deeply religious people, mostly Roman Catholics. It is believed that Catholicism was brought to Malta by St. Paul when he shipwrecked on the island in A.D. 60.
- In the tradition of Tbaqqir, olive leaves or small olive branches are burned around the house to expel any evil that might enter.
- Malta's signature soft drink is Kinnie. It is made from orange bitters and wormwood extracts. It is pretty refreshing and yummy.
- Rabbit stew is the country's signature dish.
- A meal often includes pasta, meat, vegetables, and dessert or fruit. A bowl of soup called Minestra begins some meals. Stuffed poultry and baked pasta dishes are common. Lampuki pie is a seasonal pastry-covered fish casserole containing spinach, cauliflower, chestnuts, and sultanas. If Lampuki pie isn't your thing, consider trying the fish stew called Alijotta. It's a sort of fish and tomato bouillabaisse that gets its flavor from a mix of herbs, garlic, citrus, and the fish bones added to make the robust broth. Seafood, in general, is huge in Malta, and a popular dish is stuffed octopus, squid, and cuttlefish with tomato sauce—a roulade of beef known as Bragoliis that comes with gravy. The cuisine is seasonal.
- Cheese often appears in a wide range of Maltese dishes; it's mild ricotta made from sheep's milk. But for something more flavorful, look for Gbejniet, a savory goat's milk cheese. It's sold in fresh, cured, or dried forms and may be seasoned with pepper or other herbs.
- Malta has incredible bakery products; hot pastizzi are among the favorite finger foods. Pastizzi is Malta's national snack, a flaky pastry with ingredients such as peas, ricotta, anchovies, corned beef, and apples. The thin dough is stretched and rolled with layers of fat in between, which is used to achieve the typical flaky texture of the finished product. We adored the ricotta-filled ones. Another more filling variety and slightly less fattening, Qassatat are small pies filled with ricotta, peas, or a combination of other fillings. For the sweet end, seek out Imqaret pastry with a date filling; Imqaret is deep-fried and is typically infused with aniseed liqueur and citrus notes.
- As in most European countries, soccer (football) is the most popular sport in Malta.
- Public restrooms and roadside facilities are rare and far in between. Many places you expect bathrooms, such as gas stations, do not have them.
- The Maltese love their dogs; you will see many walking dogs in dense cities. Often, very big dogs like Pit Bulls, German shepherds, and other large breeds. There is a lot of dog poop everywhere; it seems no one cleans up after their pups. Be careful where you step, everywhere!
- Smoking cigarettes is a prevalent habit in Malta. It seemed everyone smoked.
- It is a very safe country with very low crime.

Malta Essential Info

U.S. Consular Emergency

The 24-hour number from a U.S. Phone is 1-888-407-4747

Outside of U.S. 011-202-501-4444

U.S. Embassy Attard

Ta'Qali National Park Street
Attard ATD 4000
Malta
Telephone: +(356) 2561-4000
Email: ConsularMalta@state.gov

Emergency Numbers

GENERAL 112
Ambulance 196
Police +356 2122 1111

Country Code

+356

Time Zone

UTC+1 (Summer UTC+2)

Driving

Left side

Adaptors

British type plug
Type G

Malta Tourism Office

[Official Tourism Office](#)

Gozo Tourism Office

[Official Gozo Tourism Office](#)

default watermark

When to go to Malta

Malta's climate is the typical Mediterranean, with mild, rainy winters and hot, sunny summers. Malta is an archipelago located in the center of the Mediterranean Sea. It consists of three main islands, Malta (Malta), Gozo (Ghawdex), and Comino (Kemmuna), as well as some tiny uninhabited islands.

Rainfall in Malta is not abundant and amounts to 23.5 inches per year. The rains follow the typical Mediterranean pattern, so they occur from October to March, while they are scarce in the other months; in summer, it seldom rains.

In the capital, Valletta, the average temperature ranges from 54.51 °F°C (12.5°C) in February to 81°F (27 °C) in August. Here are the average temperatures (from 1981 to 2010).

- Summer 66-89 °F (19-32 °C)
- Spring 54-83 °F (12-29 °C)
- Fall 58-83 °F (12-28 °C)
- Winter 50-68 °F (10-20 °C)

Our Favorite Malta Resources

This resource section contains some Amazon affiliate links. If you use these links to buy something, we may earn a small commission at no additional cost to you. Thank you!

Travel Books/Guides



as part of a two-week trip that included Sicily and the Amalfi Coast. Due to their proximity, they are a perfect combination and offer very diverse experiences. This was our first trip to these locations. The resources and tools below helped build that excitement and made for a beautiful journey.

default watermark

Lonely Planet's Malta & Gozo (Country Guide) by Lonely Planet

There were few options for Malta, and we were not expecting to fall in love with this book. It is a passport to the most relevant, up-to-date advice that Malta offers and what hidden discoveries await you. It is small, like the country, but packed with information. Explore the alleyways and wonders of Valetta and the Three Cities. Discover the rich history of Mdina and play in the Blue Lagoon. Take the ferry out to Gozo. Let this beautifully illustrated guide be your travel partner. Great photography and lots of details to aid in planning. [Discover this fantastic travel guide here.](#)



Pocket Rough Guide Malta and Gozo by Rough Guides

This great travel companion is full of expert advice, independent reviews on what to see and do, and detailed itineraries for exploring this fascinating country. Whether you're looking for world-renowned swimming holes, serene hilltop villages, ancient temples, or captivating cities, everything you need to know is well laid out. [Find this guide here.](#)

Our favorite websites

1. [Official tourism site](#)
2. **U.S. Department of State: Bureau of Consular Affairs Malta Country Info**

We cannot encourage you enough to visit this website as you plan and prepare for your trip. The U.S. Federal Government addresses the safety, security, travel risk, entry, exit, visa documents mandates, emergency U.S. and Embassy contacts, health, local laws, special circumstances, threats, traveler vulnerabilities, government warnings, and transportation in Malta. This is your best and most reliable resource for all this important info. Check back often before you go, as things can change quickly. Being prepared is essential in all travel, but especially internationally.

[Malta International Travel Information \(state.gov\)](#)

3. **The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Travelers Health Resource**

This CDC travel resource provides essential health info for your specific destination. Using their tool, you can determine which vaccines, medications, and health advice recommendations are needed for Malta.

[CDC's Travelers Health Page for Malta](#)

Our favorite maps



Malta & Gozo Marco Polo Holiday Map

Easy-to-read maps with practical road and travel information. These maps are meant for the adventure traveler and are very durable. They are compact in size, with detailed highlights and weather information. Significant sites and landmarks are well-marked. The maps are waterproof and tear-resistant, so they hold up well. They are great for planning your route before your trip. Though we default to Google Maps, this came in handy when service was poor or during construction detours.

[Find this essential map here.](#)

Our favorite apps

Google Maps Trip and Holiday Organizer. Enter any address, landmark, or city in the app, and it will instantly display all your travel options and booking info, along with accommodation providers and things to do. We love it when using public transportation, it is spot on! Find it on your local app store.

Duolingo-Language Lesson Audio lessons that help improve your listening and speaking skills. Find it on your local App Store.

Rick Steves Audio Europe This App includes a vast library of Rick Steves audio content. It also provides cultural and travel information, including self-guided tours of top attractions and historic walks. It is a must-have. Find it on your local App Store.

Google Translate: We often use this to practice the proper pronunciation of Maltese words. That said, most Maltese speak excellent English as it is their official language. In encounters with older residents, though, their English was rough. As we always encourage, learning the basics of greeting and thanking people in the local language is essential. Google Translate was an easy app to use. If needed, you can enter text in English, which will speak back in Maltese to aid in communicating with locals.

Do you have a favorite Malta travel resource? Share your favorites in the comments section at the bottom of this page or

[Email us](#)

Check out our blogs post on Malta



Unveiling the Secrets of Malta: History, Beauty, and Resilience



[Mdina Malta: The Silent City Visitor Guide](#)



[5 Best Countries to Retire in Europe](#)



[5 Reasons To Choose Malta For Your Retirement](#)

Our Malta Photo Gallery

default watermark



default watermark







default watermark



default watermark











default watermark





default watermark



default watermark







default watermark

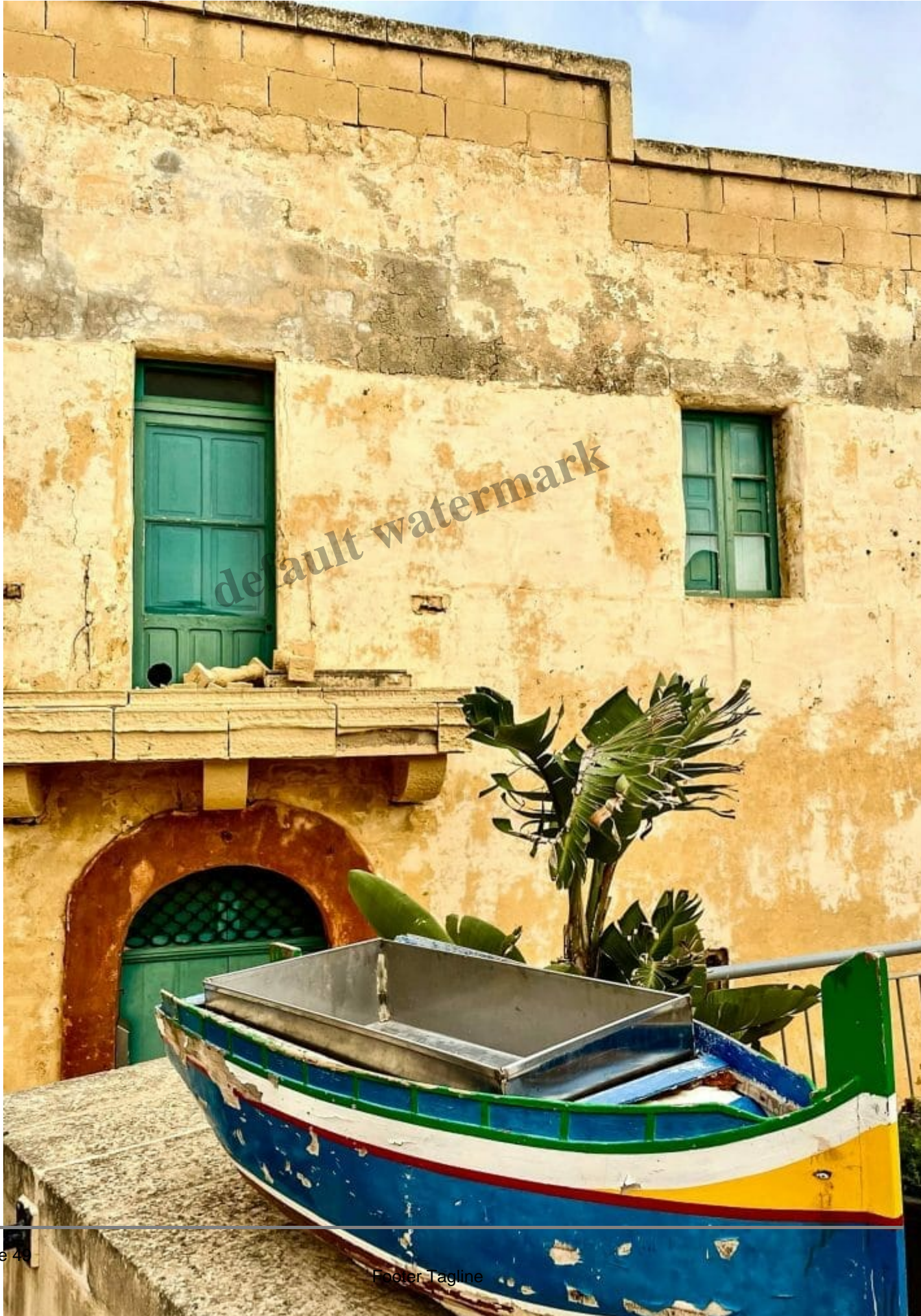




default watermark



default watermark



default watermark













default watermark





default watermark



default watermark



default watermark







default watermark









default watermark



default watermark





default watermark



default watermark



default watermark



default watermark

















default watermark



default watermark

default watermark





default watermark











default watermark



default watermark



default watermark







default watermark







default watermark







default watermark















default watermark



default watermark



D. O. M.
SISTE VIATOR ET UJGE
QUI LATET HIC EXANIMIS
ETERNUM PATERE ORBI DEBERAT
FR. D. CAROLUS CARAFAS ARAGONIUS
QUEM DUM VIVERET, AMAVIT MELITA. AMORE EXINIO
FLEVIT PARI GEMITU, DUM EGIT ANIMAM.
EJUS SANGUINIS SPLENDOREM SI IGNORAS.
LOCORUM NEAPOLI PRINCIPES QUI SINT INQUIRE.
HEROUM SOBOLES, MAGNI PARENS MAGISTRI,
PARENTUM MERITA ALIXIT HONORIBUS VIRTUTIBUS ETERNAVIT.
PHILIPPI V. IN AULA LEGATUS, DUX IN BELLO, IN CURIA PRÆSES
III. HIEROSOL. RELIGIONEM INTER PRIMATES PRIMUS

default watermark







default watermark



default watermark



default watermark



default watermark



default watermark



default watermark

default watermark



default watermark



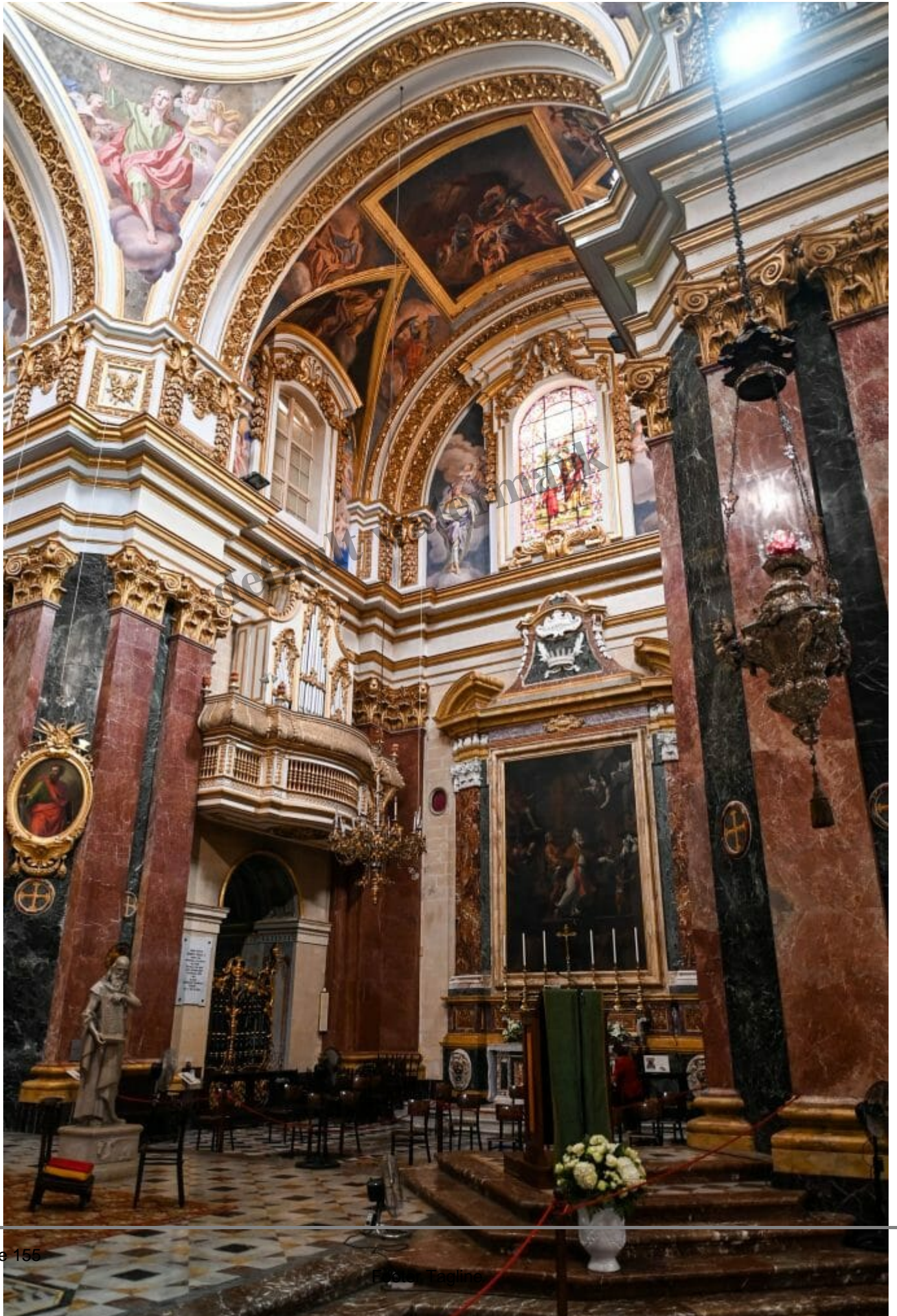


default watermark

default watermark



default watermark





default watermark



default watermark



default watermark

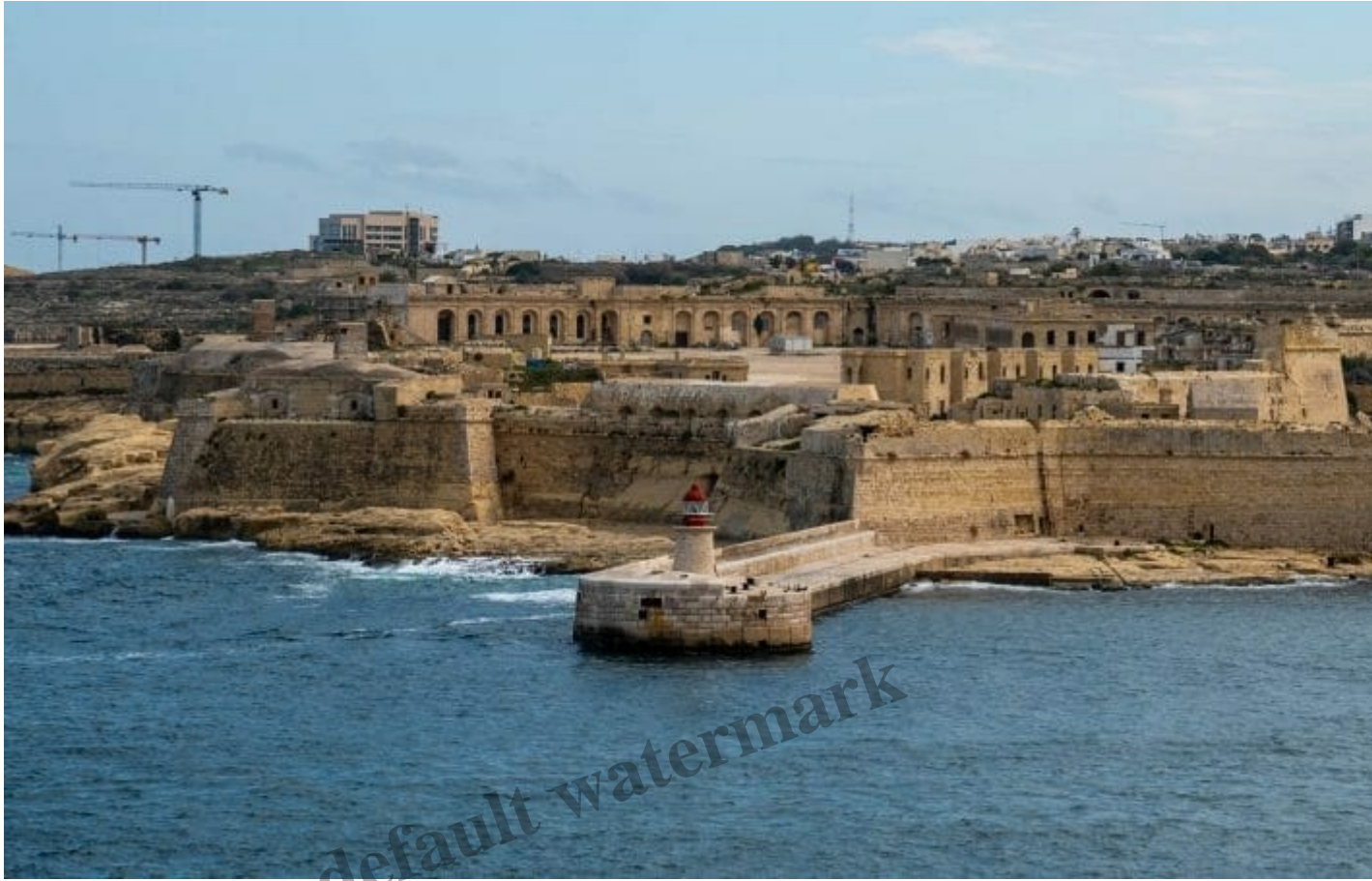












default watermark



default watermark





default watermark



default watermark



default watermark

Check out our most recent blog posts



[Tokyo Unleashed: Delighting in the Fun Side of Japan's Capital](#)



[Cinque Terre: A Journey through Italy's Five Charming Villages](#)



[Exploring Trim Castle: History, Architecture, and Visitor Guide](#)



[Level8 Luggage Review: A New Standard in Travel Gear](#)



[Why Milk is the Perfect Hydration Boost for Plane Travel](#)



Iceland's Surprising Natural Wonders: Beyond the Famous Tourist Attractions



**Imperial Hotel Tokyo: A Fusion of Timeless Elegance,
Unparalleled Luxury and Historic Legacy**



Europe Wine Wonders: The Most Unexpected Places to Sip and Savor



Embracing Morocco's Customs and Traditions: A Guide for Visitors



[Japanese Miso Soup Recipe](#)



[The Perks of Starting a Life in St. Lucia](#)



[Discover the Ideal Season to Explore Iceland](#)

Date Created

November 17, 2021

Author

contactwandererscompass-com