ON THE ROAD

YOUR COMPLETE DESTINATION GUIDE
In-depth reviews, detailed listings
and insider tips

SUGGESTED READING

Gozo & Comino
Northwest Malta
Central Malta
Sliema, St Julian’s & Paceville
Southeast Malta
Valletta

YOUR COMPLETE DESTINATION GUIDE
In-depth reviews, detailed listings
and insider tips

SURVIVAL GUIDE

VITAL PRACTICAL INFORMATION TO
HELP YOU HAVE A SMOOTH TRIP

Directory A–Z ................. 168
Transport ....................... 175
Language ........................ 181
Index ............................. 186
Map Legend ........................ 191

THIS EDITION WRITTEN AND RESEARCHED BY
Abigail Blasi
Dwejra
Stunning coastline carved by wind, sea and time (p119)

Victoria
Cultural and gastronomic delights abound (p110)

San Blas Bay
Secluded cove for swimming and snorkelling (p125)

Blue Lagoon
Oft-crowded yet undeniably lovely swimming spot (p126)

Northern Beaches
Malta's most alluring seaside holiday destination (p72)

Dingli Cliffs
Windswept walks and clifftop views (p94)
Top Experiences

Mdina
The jewel in Malta's architectural crown (p85)

Sliema, St Julian's & Paceville
Eat, shop, drink and play (p61)

Valletta
Tiny capital replete with historical gems (p38)

Vittoriosa
Quirky wine bars and atmospheric alleys (p52)

Hal Saflieni Hypogeum
Mysterious underground necropolis (p57)

Ħaġar Qim & Mnajdra Temples
Ancient megalithic marvels (p105)

Marsaxlokk
Sample fresh seafood in a charming fishing village (p99)
itineraries

Whether you’ve got six days or 60, these itineraries provide a starting point for the trip of a lifetime. Want more inspiration? Head online to lonelyplanet.com/thorntree to chat with other travellers.

One week
Malta’s Magic

Malta’s diminutive dimensions mean that you can cover a lot of ground while taking it easy. Having your own car is an asset; otherwise, base yourself in Valletta, Sliema, Mdina or St Julian’s for the easiest bus connections.

Begin by taking in Valletta – explore the narrow streets and walk around the fortifications. Feast your eyes on the views from the Upper Barrakka Gardens. On the second day explore the charms of Vittoriosa and Senglea, ideally taking a water taxi to make the dramatic harbour crossing from Valletta. On day three visit the Tarxien Temples and Hypogeum, close to Valletta in the suburb of Paola, en route south for a seafood lunch at Marsaxlokk. On day four spend the morning at the Blue Grotto and the temples of Hagar Qim and Mnajdra, and the afternoon in exquisite Mdina and Rabat. Day five would be best spent relaxing on a beach in the northwest, recharging your batteries for some physical activity on day six – a clifftop walk or maybe a scuba-diving taster. End on a high with a day trip to Comino’s spectacular Blue Lagoon.
Five days to one week
Gozitan Delights

The island of Gozo (14km by 7km) is much smaller than Malta, but you still need time to do it justice. Because of its modest size, you could base yourself anywhere to follow this itinerary, particularly if you have your own set of wheels (recommended). To get the most out of your stay, rent a rambling, idyllic Gozitan farmhouse.

Ideally your trip should start with a day exploring Victoria, wandering around majestic Il-Kastell and the laneways of Il-Borgo. Spend day two walking, swimming and snorkelling at Dwejra after paying your respects at the grand Basilica of Ta’Pinu. Begin day three with a visit to the temples and other attractions of Xagħra, then spend the afternoon reclining on Ramla Bay, where red sands meet blue water. Day four could be set aside for walking around Ta’Ċenc, and for seeking out a lesser-known spot for swimming and snorkelling (nearby Mgarr ix-Xini is lovely, and a great place for a leisurely lunch). Spend day five visiting Comino, discovering the tiny island on foot and swimming in crystal-clear water. There’s five days covered – but why not allocate a week and spend a few days relaxing poolside?

Two to three weeks
Malta & Gozo

If you have more time to play with, you can explore the best of Malta and Gozo.

Start your odyssey by taking in Valletta. On day two, visit the Tarxien Temples and the Hypogeum, going on to wander around the narrow, unspoilt streets of Vittoriosa. Try to visit the colourful harbour town of Marsaxlokk on a Sunday, when the fish market is in full swing. On day four you can explore the many sights of Mdina and Rabat. Your next must-sees on Malta are the amazing temples of Haġar Qim and Mnajdra, before you chill out on a charming beach like Golden Bay.

Next slow your pace and take the ferry over to Gozo for some relaxation. Spend your first day on gorgeous San Blas Bay, or on Ramla Bay’s russet sands. The following day explore the attractive small town of Xagħra, visiting the Ġgantija Temples. The next you could explore the hilltop citadel at Victoria. On your ninth day, take a trip to Comino, to swim, snorkel and ramble around the beautifully rocky island. The rest of your time take it easy, walking around the coast, visiting churches, relaxing by a pool, and exploring Gozo’s many delightful coves.
Every listing is recommended by our authors, and their favourite places are listed first

Look out for these icons:
- Top Choice: Our author’s top recommendation
- A green or sustainable option
- Free: No payment required
See the Index for a full list of destinations covered in this book.

**On the Road**

**VALLETTA** ............ 36
AROUND VALLETTA ........ 51
Floriana ................. 51
The Three Cities .......... 51
Hal Saflieni Hypogeum & Tarxien Temples .... 57
Fort Rinella ............. 57

**SLIEMA, ST JULIAN’S & PACEVILLE** ........ 59

**NORTHWEST MALTA** ......... 69
Golden Bay & Ghajn Tuffieha .......... 72
Mgarr & Around ........... 73
 Mellieha .................. 73
Around Mellieha .......... 76
Xemxija .................. 78
Bugibba, Qawra & St Paul’s Bay .......... 78
Bahar ic-Ċaghaq .......... 82

**CENTRAL MALTA** ........... 84
Rabat & Mdina .......... 85
Around Rabat & Mdina ........ 92
Fomm ir-Rih & Around .......... 92
Dingli Cliffs ............... 94
Mosta ..................... 95
Naxxar ................... 95
The Three Villages .......... 96

**SOUTHEAST MALTA** .......... 98
Marsaxlokk ............... 99
Birżebbuġa ............... 102
Marsaskala ............... 103
Żurrieq ..................... 103
Ħaġar Qim & Mnajdra ...... 105
Ghar Lapsi ................ 106

**GOZO & COMINO** .......... 107
GOZO ..................... 110
Victoria (Rabat) .......... 110
SOUTHERN GOZO .......... 114
Mgarr ...................... 114
Mgarr ix-Xini ............ 118
Xewkija .................... 116
Ta’Cenc .................... 116
Xlendi ..................... 116
NORTHERN GOZO .......... 117
Gharb & Around .......... 117
San Lawrenz ............... 118
Dwejra ..................... 119
Marsalforn ................. 120
Xagħra ..................... 122
Nadur ...................... 125
Ramla Bay, San Blas Bay & Dahlet Qorrot .... 125
Qala ....................... 126
COMINO ..................... 126

**ACCOMMODATION** .......... 128
VALLETTA & AROUND ........ 130
Valletta .................... 130
Floriana .................... 131
Vittoriosa .................. 131
SLIEMA, ST JULIAN’S & PACEVILLE .......... 132
Sliema ...................... 132
Paceville ................... 133
St Julian’s .................. 133

**NORTHWEST MALTA** .......... 134
Bugibba, Qawra & St Paul’s Bay .......... 134
Golden Bay ................ 134
Mellieha ................... 134
CENTRAL MALTA .............. 135
Mdina ....................... 135
Rabat ....................... 135
The Three Villages .......... 135
SOUTHEAST MALTA ............ 136
Marsaxlokk ................ 136
Marsaskala ................. 136
GOZO & COMINO .............. 136
Victoria (Rabat) .......... 136
Mgarr ....................... 136
Ta’Cenc ..................... 136
Munxar ..................... 137
Qala ....................... 137
Xlendi ..................... 137
San Lawrenz ............... 138
Marsalforn ................ 138
Xagħra ..................... 138
Comino ..................... 139
OUR STORY
A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that’s all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, Across Asia on the Cheap. Within a week they’d sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born. Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Melbourne, London and Oakland, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony’s belief that ‘a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse’.

OUR WRITER
Abigail Blasi
Originally from London, Abigail has also lived in Hong Kong and Rome, and has been travel writing since 2002. She mainly divides her time between London, Rome and Puglia and, as often as she can, takes her young family on the road with her to assist with research. As well as writing for many newspapers, magazines and websites, Abigail has worked on Lonely Planet guidebooks to numerous Mediterranean destinations, including Italy, Portugal, Tunisia and now Malta. Having been bewitched by this cluster of islands, dotted by historic wonders and surrounded by intensely sparkling sea, she can’t wait to go back.