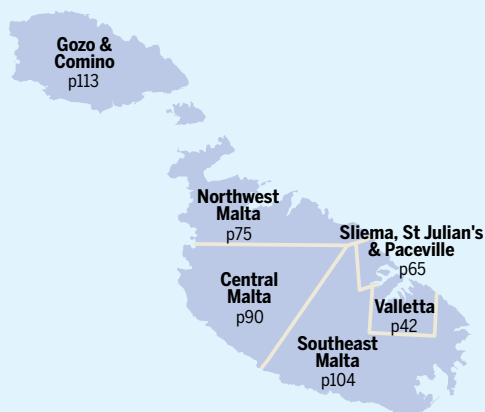


On the Road





Valletta

POP 6445

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Best Places to Eat

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Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Casa Ellul (p137)
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- ➔ Palazzo San Pawl (p136)

Why Go?

Valletta is Malta's lilliputian capital, built by the Knights of St John on a peninsula that's only 1km by 600m. Its founder decreed that it should be 'a city built by gentlemen for gentlemen', and it retains its 16th-century elegance. It may be small, but it's packed full of sights; when Unesco named Valletta a World Heritage Site, it described it as 'one of the most concentrated historic areas in the world'.

The Renzo Piano-designed City Gate, Parliament Building and Opera House have changed the cityscape and galvanised it into life. These sights, along with Valletta's status as European Capital of Culture for 2018, have seen the city reborn, with new museums, restored golden-stone fortresses, and new hotels, bars and restaurants in converted 16th-century mansions. Valletta's outskirts are even worth a visit: take the beautiful ferry trip to the Three Cities or visit the astounding prehistoric Hal Saflieni Hypogeum.

When to Go

- ➔ April, May, June, September and October are the balmy months, with lower prices, sunshine and fewer crowds.
- ➔ The Malta Firework Festival is at the end of April, and in June there is the Film Festival and Ghanafest, which celebrates traditional music.
- ➔ Summer is hot and lively, with the Malta Arts and Jazz festivals in July.
- ➔ Look out also for the Notte Bianca in October, when Valletta stays up particularly late.