

7-Night Gozo Guided Walking Holiday

Tour Style: European Centre Based

Destination: Maltese Islands

Trip code: GZLCL

1 & 2



HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

Enjoy a mixture of spectacular landscapes with walks on dramatic coastal paths. Explore the island's secluded coves and rocky headlands and discover the intriguing Inland Sea. Ramble around the capital Victoria, and the ancient temples of Ggantja. This guided walking holiday is set to thrill history buffs and culture vultures with gentler strolls among stunning scenery. Situated in the heart of the Mediterranean, only 200 miles from the North African coast, the Maltese Islands have been influenced greatly by their neighbours, historically, culturally and linguistically. Although Gozo is similar in many ways to its larger neighbour, it has a distinct independence and the Gozitan way of life is considerably more laid back than in bustling Malta. Gozo lies 20 minutes away from Malta by ferry, is about one third of its size, and has a character quite distinct from its neighbouring island. It is more rural, with an extensive farming community and the countryside is greener and more scenic. Controls over building developments have enabled Gozo to keep its rural charm. Flat-topped hills and intensively cultivated fields characterise the landscape whilst the coast has rugged cliffs, steep valleys and beautiful inlets. Baroque churches and old stone farmhouses dot the countryside. The island also comes complete with historical sites, forts and amazing panoramas, as well as one of the archipelago's best-preserved prehistoric temples, Ggantija. The strong religious beliefs of the Maltese people are evident in the numerous churches and other religious attractions.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- A full programme of guided walks with 2 options every walking day
- All transport to and from the walks
- The services of experienced HF Holidays' leader
- 'With flight' holidays include return flights from the UK and hotel transfers
- 7 nights accommodation in en-suite rooms
- Half Board - continental breakfast and evening meal

HOLIDAYS HIGHLIGHTS

- Enjoy stunning coastal views from all corners of the island, as well as Gozo's attractive green interior
- Sail with an expert guide to the tiny island of Comino and enjoy a walk to the stunning Blue Lagoon
- Visit the citadel in Victoria with its commanding views to all corners of the island, immersed in Medieval influence
- Makes a great combination with Malta for a fascinating fortnight on the Maltese Islands
- Discover the ancient temples of Ggantija, which predate the Pyramids of Giza, and Calypso's Cave, where Ulysses was held captive

TRIP SUITABILITY

This is a level 1 and level 2 graded Activity, Easier walks: 4 to 7 miles (6½ to 11km) on stony island and coastal paths. Up to 800 feet (240m) of ascent in a day. Harder walks: 8 to 10 miles (13 to 16km) on stony island and coastal paths. Up to 1,400 feet (420m) of ascent in a day.



ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrival Day

Welcome to Grand Hotel. Unpack and settle in.

Day 2: Xlendi, Victoria And The Southern Coast

Today we explore the coastal area along the south coast of Gozo. Here you'll find precipitous cliffs and deep-cut fjords, rocky headlands and little urbanisation. From Xlendi we enjoy a common route inland to the Gozo capital Victoria, where there should be time for sightseeing. Despite its austere façade the cathedral boasts an elaborate interior including a tromp l'oeil dome painted by Antonio Manuele, commissioned because of the lack of funds to build a real dome.

Option 1 - Xlendi & Victoria

Distance: 5 miles (8km)

Total ascent: 500 feet (150m)

In summary: We start our walk with a short walk to the coast path, then head north taking in dramatic views of the cliffs. We then make for the delightful resort of Xlendi before turning inland to the island's capital, Victoria.

Highlight: Don't miss Victoria's cathedral. It's an imposing building with an elaborate and unique interior.

Option 2 - The Southern Coast To Xlendi

Distance: 10 miles (15km)

Total ascent: 1,000 feet (300m)

In summary: We walk from our hotel and cross scenic countryside towards the inlet of Mgarr-ix-Xini. We then walk along the coastal path through one of Gozo's most remote areas taking in spectacular cliff-top views. On reaching Xlendi, we then follow in the other party's footsteps to Victoria.

Highlight: Mgarr-ix-Xini is the perfect location for a picturesque coffee stop.

Day 3: Ta Pinu And Sculpted Cliffs

The Church of Pilgrimage at Ta Pinu starts the day, after which we visit the interesting Folklore Museum in Gharb. From here the north coast offers some spectacular cliff scenery. Heading eastwards there are some beautiful 'wind sculptures' to admire as well as quaint fishermen's storerooms, formed in the softer rock of the higher cliffs, on our way to Marsalforn or Victoria

Option 1 - Ta Pinu, Sculpted Cliffs & Marsalforn

Distance: 6 miles (9½km)

Total ascent: 400 feet (120m)

In summary: Our day begins at the sanctuary church of Ta Pinu with time to explore. We'll then head to the coast via the village of Gharb and its folk museum. On reaching the coast we'll see the beautiful inlet of Ghar il Qamh, fascinating salt pans and weather-sculpted cliffs. We finish at Marsalforn with refreshments.

Highlight: Don't miss the fishermen's sheds cut into the cliff face.

Option 2 - Marsalforn Via Hekka Point

Distance: 8 miles (13km)

Total ascent: 800 feet (240m)

In summary: We too start with a visit to Ta Pinu, but then begin walking uphill to Ta Ghammer with its stations of the cross. We then head for Hekka Point via the village of Gharb. We'll then follow the other party to Marsalforn via the salt pans and cliffs.

Highlight: The village of Gharb has a spectacular basilica built between the 17th and 18th centuries.

Day 4: Ramla Bay Via Ggantija Temples

We'll walk to the Rotunda Church at Xewkija then ascend to the village of Xaghra, where there will be the opportunity to visit the village and Ggantija Temples, reputed to be the oldest freestanding structures in the world, which have been standing on this plateau for over 5,000 years. A guide will accompany us through the temple complex to give us an insight into the island. Both walks then visit Calypso Cave where Ulysses was held captive by the enchanting Calypso for seven years. We then visit Ramla Bay, the longest sandy beach on Gozo, before our return to Mgarr.

Option 1 - Mgarr To Calypso's Cave

Distance: 7 miles (11km)

Total ascent: 400 feet (120m)

In summary: Walking from our hotel we head inland to the village of Xewkija with its Rotunda church. From here we head to the Ggantija Temples before visiting the viewpoint at Calypso's Cave.

Highlight: The 5,000 year old Ggantija Temples will be brought to life by a local interest guide.

Option 2 - Ggantija Temples & Calypso's Cave

Distance: 8 miles (13km)

Total ascent: 800m (240m)

In summary: We start from our hotel and walk along the coast to Mgarr-ix-Xini. We then take a steep ascent inland into a dry valley and on to the village of Xewkija, before following the other party's route on to the viewpoint at Calypso's Cave.

Highlight: Calypso's Cave is the mythical location where Calypso kept an enchanted Odysseus for seven years.

Day 5: Free Day

Each week there is a free day when no guided walks are offered. This is an ideal opportunity to relax around the hotel, walk independently or visit local places of interest. Some options for your free day may include:

Visit an **agricultural estate** to hear how traditional farming is carried out. Food and wine tasting is included in the tour.

Catch one of the many ferries and buses to spend the day sightseeing in **Valletta**, Malta's capital.

Local information website: For information on Gozo please visit www.gozo.gov.mt

Day 6: Xlendi Bay And Fungus Rock

A combination of man's burrowing and gigantic sea erosion has shaped the landscape of today's walks. On the Harder Walk, we'll descend by cliff paths to Xlendi before a spectacular ascent of the cliffs to the west leads to Dwerja Point. Both walks visit Dwerja Point where once stood the dramatic sea-arch known as the Azure Window. Sadly, due to a combination of sea erosion and high winds, the Azure Window collapsed in March 2017. If time and weather permit, a boat trip can be taken from the Inland Sea through a tunnel in the rock out to view the nearby cliffs and Fungus Rock. Both walks continue on into Victoria, the island's capital, for well-earned refreshments

Option 1 - Fungus Rock & The Inland Sea

Distance: 6 miles (9½km)

Total ascent: 500 feet (150m)

In summary: The day starts with a gradual descent to see Fungus Rock - prominently guarding the entrance to Dwerja Bay and onto Dwerja Point where we can see the site of the collapsed Azure Window sea arch. We then circle the Inland Sea before heading for some sightseeing in Victoria.

Highlight: There's opportunity to take a boat ride through the caves into the open sea.

Option 2 - Xlendi Cliffs & Dwerja Bay

Distance: 10 miles (16km)

Total ascent: 1,200 feet (360m)

In summary: Our walk starts at the village of Sannat and follows a dramatic coast path to the resort of Xlendi. After a spectacular ascent to the cliff tops we'll walk on to Wardija Point and then follow the route of the other party all the way to Victoria.

Highlight: Take a look inside the 17th Century Dwerja Tower - one of only four surviving coastal watchtowers on Gozo.

Day 7: Rocky Strand To Secluded Coves

Today's walks offer extensive views over the straits to Comino and Malta. Our groups traverse a delightful flat rock shore and then enjoy charming coves, verdant gardens and wonderful wild flowers. The harder walk descends to the secluded San Blas Bay for the opportunity of a midday swim. The easier group stays high and lunches in local gardens. Continuing, both groups make their way through the outskirts of Nadur, arriving at one of the most stunning viewpoints on Gozo.

Option 1 - Qala, Strands And Nadur

Distance: 7 miles (11km)

Total ascent: 800 feet (240m)

In summary: We start our day at Qala for great views of the strait to Comino and Malta. We then walk through

open countryside to the small harbour of Dahlet Qorrot, before taking lunch at the lovely San Blas gardens. We finish our walk by walking a fertile valley to Nadur, and back to our hotel.

Highlight: We'll look out for beautiful wildflowers and verdant gardens on our way to San Blas.

Option 2 - Strait, Strands And Coves

Distance: 10 miles (16km)

Total ascent: 1,400 feet (420m)

In summary: We walk in the remote north-east corner of the island, walking the coastline for fantastic views of Comino and Malta. We'll visit San Blas Bay, before picking up the route back to the hotel via Nadur.

Highlight: San Blas Bay is a wonderfully secluded spot, reached by a relatively steep descent. The bay is perfect for a rest stop and a mid-walk swim.

Day 8: Departure Day

We hope to see you again soon.

ACCOMMODATION

Grand Hotel - Gozo

The charming 4-star Grand Hotel with its comfortable accommodation, and friendly efficient service, occupies a commanding location overlooking Mgarr harbour and has views across the straits to Comino and Malta. Winner of three HF Hotel Awards in 2018 based on outstanding guest feedback. The hotel features indoor and outdoor swimming pools, a well equipped bar and two restaurants.

Accommodation Info

Rooms

The hotel has 93 en-suite bedrooms, many of which have a balcony with either sea views over Mgarr Harbour or the open countryside.

All bedrooms have:

- En-suite bathroom with bath with shower
- Air conditioning
- TV
- Telephone
- Mini-bar
- Hairdryer
- Free Wi-Fi

Facilities

The hotel has a range of facilities to enjoy after a day's walking, including a:

- Lounge bar

- Games room
- Mini cinema
- Outdoor swimming pool
- Sauna
- Jacuzzi
- Gymnasium
- NEW indoor pool

Food & Drink

Our holidays at the Grand Hotel are on a Half Board basis and include breakfast and evening meal.

Breakfast

There is an extensive selection of hot and cold options for breakfast from a self-select buffet.

Lunch (Payable Locally)

You can buy picnic lunches from the hotel (order the evening before). Alternatively you can buy ingredients from the supermarket in the village or eat in a café during the walks; your leaders will advise you of all the options.

Evening Meal

The Grand Hotel has a buffet dinner, comprising a choice of soup, antipasti/salad dishes, plus hot pasta. Main courses always include a choice of meat or fish, plus hot vegetables. The sweet course is usually fresh fruit/fruit salad or gateau. There will be a vegetarian option if requested; we recommend that you discuss any special dietary requirements with the restaurant manager or chef.

Drinks

The hotel has a well-stocked bar serving beer, wine and spirits.

Your Evenings

The friendly atmosphere of our holidays continues into the evening.

Enjoy a glass of wine or local beer before hearing about the next day's walks.

On most evenings there will be some kind of entertainment: watch a film in the hotel's own cinema: relax in the hotel with a drink and chat with your fellow guests.

Your leader will inform you of what options are available.

TRAVEL DETAILS

THE HASSLE-FREE OPTION

Book your holiday 'with flight' and choose between Heathrow and Manchester flights to Malta airport. For flight times and prices please see the Dates & Prices tab.

If you choose this option we automatically include return transfers between the airport and the hotel. The coach transfer takes approx 2 hours to the Grand Hotel, including the scenic ferry crossing between Malta and Gozo.

THE FLEXIBLE TRAVEL OPTION

Alternatively, tailor your journey to suit you by booking your holiday 'without flight' allowing you the freedom to book your own flights from your local airport.

If you choose this option, transfers are not included in the price. However, below are some suggestions to help you reach your destination:

- We can book you a seat on the **HF Holidays' transfer coach** from Malta airport. This is timed to meet the HF Holidays' flights* (provisional flight times can be found on the dates and prices tab or you can call us on 020 8732 1220 for more information). Cost per single journey is £25
- Why not let us book you a **private taxi transfer**; price on request

Transfers must be pre-booked. Please call 020 8732 1220 for more details

* Please note that HF Holidays is not responsible for your onward travel if you fail to meet the transfer coach

USEFUL HOLIDAY INFORMATION

What To Bring

Essential Equipment

To enjoy walking/hiking comfortably and safely, footwear, clothing and equipment needs to be suitable for the conditions. Safety and comfort are our priorities, so our advice is to come prepared for all eventualities.

- Footwear with a good grip on the sole (e.g. Vibram sole) is the key to avoiding accidents.
- Walking/hiking boots providing ankle support and good grip are recommended (ideally worn in), and specialist walking socks to avoid blisters.
- Several layers of clothing, which can be added or removed, are better than a single layer (include spares).
- Fabrics (lightweight and fast drying) designed for the outdoors are recommended.
- Waterproof jacket and waterproof over trousers.
- Warm hat and gloves.
- Denim jeans and capes are not suitable on any walks.
- Rucksack with a waterproof liner.
- Thermos flask for hot drink.
- Water bottle (at least 2 litre).
- Spare high-energy food such as a chocolate bar.
- Small torch.
- First aid kit – your leader's first aid kit doesn't contain any medication or blister kits (such as Compeed).
- Sun hat and sunglasses
- Sun cream.

Optional Equipment

- Walking poles are useful, particularly for descents.
- Insect repellent.
- Camera.
- Gaiters.

Useful Information

The local languages are Maltese and English.

Is considered safe to drink, but if you prefer, bottled mineral water can be purchased from the hotel or local supermarkets.

If the international number you wish to call starts with a 0, you must drop the starting digit when dialling the number.

To dial a UK number 0044

To dial a Maltese number 00356

Local Currency

The local currency for Gozo is the Euro.

Electricity

Same 3-pin plug as in the UK.

ATM Availability

There are several ATM machines in Mgarr where you can obtain money.

HOW TO BOOK

When you're ready to book, you can choose to **book online** or book **over the phone**. Our website offers secure online booking for our holidays, is available 24/7, and offers more in-depth information about all our holidays. If you prefer to call us, our experienced and knowledgeable team are available to answer any specific questions you have and can offer guidance as to which holiday is best suited to your needs.

Our office is open: Monday to Friday: 9am – 7pm Saturday & Sunday: 9am – 1pm Bank Holiday Monday: 9am – 1pm

PAYING YOUR DEPOSIT

To secure the holiday of your choice, you will need to pay a deposit: UK & European Holidays: £150 per person and Worldwide Holidays: £250 per person. You can pay your deposit by debit or credit card with no additional card fees charged or make an online BACS payment directly into HF's bank account, please see details under BACS payments. You can also pay your deposit by cheque within seven days of booking. Cheques should be made payable to 'HF Holidays Ltd' with your booking reference / Order ID on the back.

NON-MEMBER FEE

Non-members can join our holidays by paying a Non-Member's fee of £10 per person per holiday. Alternatively, full membership is available from £100 – visit hfholidays.co.uk/membership for details.

BACS PAYMENTS

Please quote your booking reference / Order ID when you make your payment online: Bank Name: Svenska Handelsbanken AB (publ) Account Name: HF Holidays Ltd Account Number: 35923304 Sort Code: 40-51-62 IBAN: GB92HAND40516235923304 Swift / Bic Code: HANDGB22

Once we have received your booking and deposit, we will send a confirmation invoice to the lead name. Please check this carefully. For bookings 'with flights' it is essential that the names on your booking confirmation invoice match those on your passport for bookings overseas. Please advise us immediately of any errors. Any name changes after the balance of your holiday has been paid will be subject to a fee levied by the airline.

MANAGE MY BOOKINGS

Payments can also be made through the Manage My Booking function on our website. Click on the link at the top of our homepage. This is available to all customers who provide an email address at the time of booking.

YOUR FINAL BALANCE

The balance is due 10 weeks before departure. As with paying your deposit, you can pay your final balance by debit or credit card, make an online BACS payment directly into HF's bank account or pay by cheque.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Travel insurance is an important part of any booking and essential for one of our holidays. HF Holidays works with specialist. Insurance Brokers Campbell Irvine Direct. For more information or to obtain a quote call them on 01702 427 236 or visit hfholidays.co.uk/insurance

PEACE OF MIND

ATOL:

The air holidays and flights in this brochure are ATOL-protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 710. In the unlikely event of our insolvency, the CAA will ensure that you are not stranded abroad and will arrange to refund any money you have paid us for advance bookings. For further information visit the ATOL website atol.org.uk

MEMBER OF ABTOT:

HF Holidays is a member of ABTOT (The Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited) which provides financial protection under the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992 for HF Holidays Ltd and in the event of their insolvency, protection is provided for the following: 1. non-flight packages commencing in and returning to the UK; 2. non-flight packages commencing and returning to a country other than the UK; 3. flight inclusive packages that commence outside of the UK and Republic of Ireland, which are sold to customers outside of the UK and Republic of Ireland. 1, 2 and 3 provides for a refund in the event you have not yet travelled. 1 and 3 provides for repatriation. Please note that bookings made outside the UK and Republic of Ireland are only protected by ABTOT when purchased directly with HF Holidays Ltd.

TRIP NOTE VALIDITY

These Trip Notes are valid based on the date printed at the bottom of the page. They will occasionally be updated post booking and pre-departure. We will send you the latest trip notes prior to departure through a link in your pre departure documents or we can send you a copy in the post if preferred.

In booking this trip you should be confident in your ability to participate in all activities described in these Trip Notes. If you have any doubt about your suitability you should call HF Holidays and ask to speak to one of the team about this itinerary.

The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; so please be prepared to be flexible where necessary. At times, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned due to weather conditions, political, physical or other factors. In these circumstances we will make the best possible alternative arrangements to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

PRICE GUARANTEE

We promise that our earliest published prices will always be the best and if we reduce our holiday price after your booking has been confirmed, we will pass this reduction on to you. Our price promise applies if any subsequent offer price is for an identical holiday, duration, location and date and does not cover any optional extras, flights or additional services.

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