

# Malta Christmas Guided Walking Holiday

**Tour Style:** European Centre Based

**Destination:** Maltese Islands

**Trip code:** MWLXL

1 & 2



## HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

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On this festive holiday discover prehistoric temples, dramatic coastal walks and rural inland paths on this colourful island in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea. Malta is a bustling and cheerful island offering plenty of walking and sightseeing opportunities with trips including a day out to the Island's capital, Valletta. Malta also has dramatic coastal walking and idyllic rural inland paths that are never too far from the sun kissed sea. Situated in the heart of the Mediterranean, Malta has been influenced greatly by its neighbours, historically, culturally and linguistically. Life is usually taken at a more leisurely pace than you may be used to. The warmth of the Maltese people and the fascination of the island's 7,000 years of history enchant many of its visitors to return time and time again. The landscape of Malta is one of low hills with terraced green and brown fields. The coastline, although only 85 miles in total, is extremely varied, with cliffs, harbours, bays, creeks, sandy beaches and rocky coves. The combination of natural beauty, together with the many prehistoric sites found in every corner, make Malta an ideal island for walking and sightseeing. Our holiday programme will combine an exploration of the unspoilt areas of the island with visits to some of the many interesting remains of Malta's ancient heritage, including Neolithic temples, 4th century catacombs, Roman ruins and churches built by the Knights of St John.

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

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- A full programme of guided walks with 2 options every walking day plus 1 full sightseeing day
- All transport to and from the walks
- The services of experienced HF Holidays' leaders
- 'With flight' holidays include return flights from the UK and hotel transfers
- 7 night's accommodation in en-suite rooms
- Half Board - continental breakfast and evening meal

## HOLIDAYS HIGHLIGHTS

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- Gentle walking at a leisurely pace through dramatic coastal scenery
- Rich history including Neolithic temples and churches built by the Knights of St John, historic Valletta and Mdina
- Year round sunshine - ideal for a winter getaway

## TRIP SUITABILITY

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This is a level 1 and level 2 graded Activity, Easier walks: 5 to 7 miles (8 to 11km) on stony island and coastal paths. Up to 700 feet (210m) of ascent in a day. Harder walks: 7 to 9 miles (11 to 14½km) on stony island and coastal paths. Up to 1,400 feet (420m) of ascent in a day.



## ITINERARY

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### Day 1: Arrival Day

Welcome to Hotel Solana. Unpack and settle in.

## Day 2: Dingli Cliffs To Blue Grotto Or Mdina

Today's visit is to the Dingli Cliffs, the highest point on Malta. We walk through Buskett Gardens (once the hunting ground of the Grand Masters) towards the Dingli Cliffs. Close to the cliffs we see the remains of Ghar ilKbir cave dwellings and a series of distinctive prehistoric cart ruts. This visit will be enhanced by a local guide who was brought up in the area. The afternoon is spent sightseeing with the option of:

(a) visiting 4th century catacombs, the museum of Roman Antiquities and soaking up the atmosphere in the Silent City of Mdina or

(b) visiting the temple complex of Hagar Qim, which can be seen before descending to Wied iz-Zurrieq where there is the option of a boat trip to the Blue Grotto in good weather.

### Option 1 - Caves, Cliffs & Catacombs

**Distance:** 5 miles (8km)

**Total ascent:** 300 feet (90m)

**In summary:** Today we walk through Maltese history. Starting in the old hunting grounds of Buskett Gardens we'll walk towards the coast and the Ghar-il-Kbir cave dwellings. We'll reach Rabat for lunch, with time to explore the 4th Century catacombs, St Pauls church and the Museum of Roman Antiquities. We'll finish our day in the 'Silent City' of Mdina.

**Highlight:** Our local guide is full of knowledge about the history of the island.

### Option 2 - Cliffs & Temples By The Sea

**Distance:** 8 miles (13km)

**Total ascent:** 800 feet (240m)

**In summary:** The first part of our day follows the same route as the other party as far as Ghar-il-Kbir. At the coast we'll descend to the undercliff, passing two wayside chapels. We'll reach Ghar Lapsi for lunch, and a swim, before heading into more rugged terrain to the large temple complex of Hagar Qim, finishing our walk at Wied ir Zurrieq.

**Highlight:** Our local guide is full of knowledge about the history of the island.

## Day 3: Marsaxlokk Bay To Marsascala

These walks link two traditional Maltese fishing villages on the South Eastern corner of the island.

### Option 1 - Marsaxlokk To Marsascala

**Distance:** 6 miles (9½km)

**Total ascent:** 400 feet (120m)

**In summary:** Beginning in the pretty fishing village of Marsaxlokk, we cross the Delimara peninsula, we can observe wind and wave rock sculptures. We then head north, after lunch, finishing our walk in Marsascala.

**Highlight:** The two historic villages of Marsaxlokk and Marsascala.

## Option 2 - Pretty Bay To Marsascala

**Distance:** 9 miles (14½km)

**Total ascent:** 400 feet (120)

**In summary:** Starting in the aptly named Pretty Bay, our route follows the coastline to Marsaxlokk. We will then follow the route of the easier group to Marsascala.

**Highlight:** Pretty Bay is well worth the visit.

## Day 4: 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:

**Gozo:** For guests holidaying on Malta only, a day trip to Gozo is popular. Using a hired coach it is possible to see many of the popular sights on the island including the Rotunda Church at Xewkija, the sea arch and Inland Sea at Dwejra Bay and the delightful fishing village of Xlendi. The day is rounded off by a visit to Victoria, the island's capital, in order to walk around the ramparts of the citadel and visit the cathedral.

**Valletta:** Although we visited Valletta on day 3, it is impossible to explore this World Heritage City in one day. On a return visit options available are the National Museum of Archaeology, where a fascinating collection of artefacts from Malta's prehistoric sites are housed; the War Museum, which tells the story of the siege of Malta during the Second World War; Manoel Theatre (a beautiful old theatre), and an inhabited 16th century patrician town house.

**Mdina & Rabat:** Mdina is an important UNESCO Heritage Site. It is the oldest city on the island and derives its name from the Arabic word 'medina' meaning walled city. Mdina is lamp-lit by night and often referred to as the 'silent city'. The cathedral and cathedral museum are fascinating places with their rich cultural and religious treasures. The impressive palaces are still home to some of Malta's aristocratic families.

Rabat is home to the famous catacombs of St Paul and St Agatha and the impressive St Paul's Church, which stands above a grotto where St Paul is said to have taken refuge after his shipwreck on Malta.

## Day 5: Northern Peninsula

Both walks head east from Mellieha and return to the hotel on an old Roman road.

## Day 6: Valletta Sightseeing

The World Heritage City of Valletta merits a great deal of exploration and this sightseeing day will introduce you to the key sights. Our tour starts with a walking tour around the city with a blue badge guide, stopping at Upper Barrakka Gardens with panoramic views over the Grand Harbour and the Three Cities, and concluding with a visit to St John's Co-Cathedral. There is then free time for you to explore Valletta before an optional, awe-inspiring harbour cruise.

## Day 7: Ancient City To Sandy Bays

From the ancient city of Mdina – the original capital of Malta – we descend into the fertile Qleighta Valley and a series of manmade reservoirs called the Chadwick Lakes. There is time to view the wayside chapel and the honeycomb of ancient tombs beneath the Victorian Line fortifications along the escarpment ridge. After the Bingemma Gap we make our way mainly by coastal paths to Golden Bay where there will be time for a swim.

## Option 1 - Mdina To Golden Bay

**Distance:** 6 miles (9½km)

**Total ascent:** 400 feet (120m)

**total descent:** 800 feet (240m)

**In summary:** We spend some time in the morning exploring the ancient city of Mdina, setting off on our walk from its walls. We ascend the Mtarfa Ridge, passing the old British Naval Hospital and into the Qleigha valley. We head for Lippija Tower and then take the coastal path to Golden Bay.

**Highlight:** The historic city of Mdina is worth exploring.

## Option 2 - Mdina And The Two Towers

**Distance:** 8 miles (13km)

**Total ascent:** 900 feet (270m)

**In summary:** We too start from the city walls of Mdina, walking the same route for a short time. We then head inland to the Nadur Tower and on to Bingemma Fort via the Victoria Lines. Regaining the coastline, we'll ascend a steep section of path to the Lippija Tower and then on to Golden Bay.

**Highlight:** Golden bay, a beautiful sandy beach, perfect for a swim at the end of the walk.

## Day 8: Departure Day

We hope to see you again soon.

## ACCOMMODATION

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### Solana Hotel - Malta

The 4-star Solana Hotel is located in Mellieha village, one of Malta's few traditional villages, away from the hustle and bustle of the main resorts and make it an ideal base for exploring Malta. The local shops and amenities are just a few minutes walk away and the hotel offers an indoor and outdoor swimming pool, wellness centre and two restaurants.

### Accommodation Info

### Rooms

The hotel has 183 en-suite rooms and are all of excellent standard. Each room is decorated in a modern-contemporary style and has

- Individually-controlled central heating and air-conditioning
- Satellite TV
- Tea and coffee making
- Mini-bar
- Hairdryer
- Telephone
- Wi-Fi

## Facilities

Solana's rooftop pool offers impeccable views of the sea and Malta's sister islands, with a pleasant outside seating area. There is also an indoor pool (heated October - May).

## Food & Drink

Guided Walking holidays at the Solana Hotel are on a half-board basis and includes breakfast and your evening meal.

Our Self Guided holidays are on a bed & breakfast basis with an option for HB.

## Breakfast

Breakfast is available at the Bellini Restaurant and is a self-service buffet. There is a selection of cereals, fruit juices, breads, pastries and cakes, as well as a hot selection, cold meat and cheese, and fruit.

## Lunch (Payable Locally)

There are several shops and local supermarkets, a short walk away, in Mellieha Village, where you can buy the ingredients to make your picnic lunch. There will be opportunities to eat in a local café during the day and our leaders will advise you of all the options and directions to the nearest shops.s.

## Evening Meal

A buffet style evening meal is served to our guests in the Bellini Restaurant, five times a week. There is a good selection of international dishes as well as fish and local meals, as well as antipasta dishes and salads as starters. Desserts will be followed by tea and coffee. On the other two evenings, we will be dining at the Tosca Restaurant which is a served 3-course meal which pre-selected choices.

The hotel does cater for most dietary requirements but we would advise you to speak to our reservation staff and also ensure that you speak to our hotel staff on arrival to avoid disappointment.

## Drinks

There is a well stocked bar offering a variety of pre-dinner drinks, wines, beers and local spirits including an interesting prickly pear liqueur.

## Your Evenings

The friendly atmosphere of your holiday continues into the evening. Enjoy a glass of wine or local beer before hearing about the next day's activities. On some evenings, there will be some kind of entertainment; an excursion to Mdina to see it by moonlight - the effect is amazing; or just relax in the bar area and speak to your fellow guests about your day.

## TRAVEL DETAILS

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### *THE HASSLE FREE OPTION*

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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

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coach transfer takes approx 45 minutes to the Solana Hotel.

## THE FLEXIBLE TRAVEL OPTION

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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 £17.
- 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

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### 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.

Tap water 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 Malta is the Euro.

## Electricity

220 Volt AC with 3-pin plugs as per UK.

## ATM Availability

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

## HOW TO BOOK

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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](http://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](http://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](http://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

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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

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extras, flights or additional services.

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