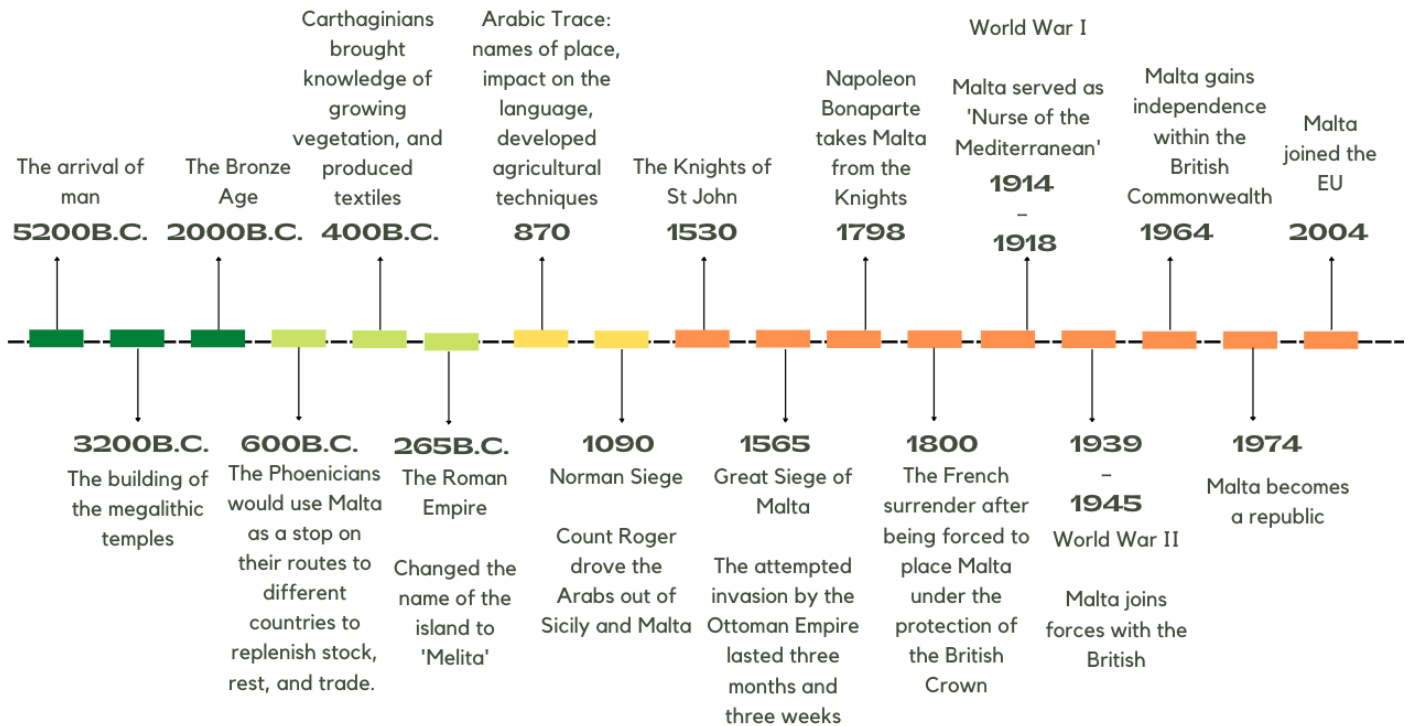




# Cultural Identity

## Chapter 1: The story of Malta

### History



### Religion

Around 90% of the population are Roman Catholics, but only half of the population are practicing Catholics. Throughout the years, there has also been an increase of other religions in small but active communities, such as Islam.

The Maltese were pagans until the year 60AD when St Paul the Apostle was shipwrecked off the coast of St Paul's Island during a violent storm. St Paul was on his way to Rome to be tried as a political rebel, and all 274 people on board the ship managed to swim safely to land. As everyone was sitting around the fire, a snake bit St Paul, but nothing happened to him. This was seen as a sign from God that the man sitting in front of them was indeed special. St Paul also cured St Publius' father of dysentery. St Publius is the patron saint of Malta, and thus, making Malta the first Christian nation in the West.



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## Values

Since the Maltese are very family-oriented, many children tend to stay in the family home, until they get married. Parents generally also help their offspring purchase their first car or future home.

## Habits

Malta has 365 churches, one for every day of the year, and each church is dedicated to a patron saint. This means that in each village, there can be more than one church, and therefore, more than one feast. The village feast encourages the people in the community to come together to celebrate the religious fete. The village core is decorated around two weeks before the feast, whilst the band clubs start preparing for the special day a year in advance. The feasts are celebrated between May and September because of the weather, and therefore, during the weekend, there is more than one locality celebrating their patron saint.

## Attitude

Malta is a very family-oriented island, and the locals spend a lot of their free time with their families. This can be easily seen during the summer months, during which young and old alike go to the beach together for a BBQ.

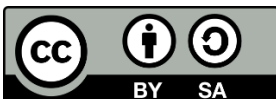
Daily life in Malta is very laid back, however, conversations amongst the locals can be very spirited, especially when politics is being discussed. The Mediterranean temperament can be seen when discussing sports, politics, and local feasts. Choosing sides creates a sense of belonging, however, one must learn how to control their temperament.

## Language

The official languages of Malta are Maltese and English. Maltese is the only language of Semitic origin written in the Latin script, with an addition of special characters to accommodate the Semitic sounds. It is also the only official Semitic language of the European Union. Over the centuries, it has incorporated many words derived from English, Italian and French. Italian is also widely spoken.

The roots of the Maltese language derive from the Phoenicians, who arrived in Malta in 750BC. The Arabs were in Malta from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, and this can be seen in a number of words still being used today- such as the numbers and place names. Upon analysing historical documents, it was concluded that apart from being influenced by the Maghreb countries, the language was also influenced by Sicilian during the Arab occupation.

In the early 1900s, Italian was the more favoured tongue, especially by the cultured classes and the Maltese aristocracy. On the other hand, the Maltese language was spoken primarily by the commoners. The first recorded text is the ballad 'Il-Kantilena' by Pietru Caxaro, written in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century. This literary text is a prime example of Old Maltese, since it contains a number of Arabic morphemes, yet it is still written in Latin script.



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## Chapter 2: leisure activities

### Modern Sports:

Football is one of the most popular sports in Malta. Many young children start playing football with the Youth Nurseries of their hometown, such as Pembroke Athleta F.C. Youth Nursery, Birkirkara Youth Nursery, and Floriana Youth Nursery. There are 6 group categories as the children practice the sport according to their ages. These groups include Under 7, Under 9, Under 11, Under 13, Under 15, and Under 17. Most national matches are held at the Ta' Qali National Stadium.

Rugby is also popular in Malta. After the revival of the sport in 1982, the national team joined the International Rugby Board in 2000. Shortly after, the team was represented in the Rugby World Cup preliminaries for the first time. In the years that followed, a number of other teams were formed such as the Malta Rugby League, the Cisk Lager League Championships and Women's Rugby Team.

Another sport which is gaining momentum is shooting. This sport, which was normally practiced by older men has seen an influx of new members in the past few years. This resulted in the government investing in the Ta' Kandja National Shooting range in 2018. It is a long process to legally own a gun in Malta, and one of the requirements includes joining a certified club, such as FACTS, AMACS, and AACTS. These clubs ensure that shooters have the mental capabilities of safely handling and dismantling a firearm in the presence of other individuals. Whilst the population of the shooting community is increasing, it is a rather tightknit community, in which members openly share their experiences and tips.

### Bocce

Bocce is a traditional Maltese ball game that was popular in the past years. Today, there are still a number of bocce clubs around the island but it is mainly elderly people who practice this sport. The game involves 8 large balls similar to the ones used for bowling, and one smaller ball which is placed at a distance. The goal of the game is to hit the smaller ball. The game can be played by teams and the different coloured balls distinguish the teams.

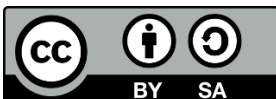
### Outdoor activities:

The below activities are the most popular among the Maltese youths and tourists:

1. Renting quad bikes and exploring Gozo, our sister island
2. Doing a Jeep tour of Gozo
3. Day trips to Comino, the smallest island in the archipelago
4. Parasailing and windsurfing
5. Diving with an instructor or dive-master
6. Purchasing a Heritage and Attractions pass
7. Chartering a boat and doing a round-Malta trip. If you charter a sailing boat, it will take around 8 hours
8. Camping
9. Star-gazing
10. Hiking

### Events:

During the summer months, a number of outdoor events are organised. These include the Malta Wine Festival, the Farsons Beer Festival and the Malta International Music Festival. Every July, we also have the



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Isle of MTV, with guests including Lady Gaga, Jason Derulo, Enrique Inglesias, Marshmello, Snoop Dogg, and other big names in the music industry. This concert is held at the Floriana granaries, and is free.

Throughout the years, a number of great singers have come to Malta for concerts. These singers include Andrea Bocelli, Zucchero, Celine Dion, and Lewis Capaldi.

## Chapter 3: arts and crafts

### Museums

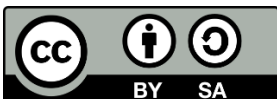
The most popular museums in Malta and Gozo include:

1. Grandmaster's Palace
2. Fort St Elmo
3. Lascaris War Rooms
4. Ghar Dalam cave and museum
5. Tunnara Museum
6. Fort Rinella
7. Inquisitor's Palace
8. Wignacourt Museum
9. Hypogeum
10. Esplora Science Centre

### Theatre

The Military Order of St John established Valletta as the hub for culture and entertainment. The Order brought with it a period of stability, and since the theatre was reserved solely for the nobility in the years preceding their rule, during the 17th and 18th centuries there was a boom in demand for operas, pageants, theatrical and dramatic productions put on by amateurs. Many of these shows were held at the Knight's Auberges around Valletta.

Teatru Manoel (The Manoel Theatre) was commissioned by the Grand Master Antonio Manoel de Vilhena in 1731, and is known for being an architectural gem. The inscription 'ad honestam populi oblectationem' emphasises the idea that this theatre was constructed for the general public to have 'honest entertainment', whilst also keeping the young Knights out of mischief. The first performance held in the theatre was Scipione Maffei's *Merope*, in 1732, and the Knights were the actors.



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There are a number of other theatres. These include:

Theatre	Locality
City Theatre	Valletta
St James Cavalier Centre for Creativity	Valletta
Malta Conference Centre	Valletta
Old University Building	Valletta
University of Malta	Tal-Qroqq
Astra Theatre	Victoria, Gozo
Aurora Opera House	Victoria, Gozo

Some famous Maltese artists:

Name	Genre	Noted for:	Year
Ġensu Apap	Sculptor	Triton Fountain in Floriana	1909 - 2003
Willie Apap	Painter	'La Benedizione'	1918 - 1970
<u>Giuseppe Cali</u>	Painter	'Death of Dragut'	1846 - 1930
Joseph Calleja	Operatic tenor	In 2015, Calleja was elected to the board of directors of the European Academy of Music Theatre	1978 -
Antoine Camilleri	Artist	Made a lasting impact on the development of Maltese modern and contemporary art	1922 – 2005
Gabriel Carual	Ceramist	'Neolithic Doorway' (1975)	1929 – 2018
Frank Portelli	Artist	Mural artist and fine art painter. One of his murals was acquired by Heritage Malta for the country's national art collection, posthumously	1922 - 2004

