



USITAT – UNESCO World Heritage Sites

Valletta

Valletta has served as the capital city of Malta for over four centuries, making it an attractive destination for both tourists and businesses. This historic city boasts an array of attractions, including museums, historic buildings, restaurants, and franchise establishments, making it a prominent European destination.

In the realm of international recognition, Valletta holds a distinguished place on the UNESCO World Heritage List. This recognition was bestowed upon Valletta in 1980 under the criteria (i) and (iv). Criterion (i) acknowledges Valletta as a masterpiece of human creative genius, evident in its meticulous construction and fortification for security. Its buildings, characterized by architectural genius and a late Renaissance theme, reflect a historical heritage that continues to captivate observers. Criterion (iv) recognizes Valletta for its pivotal role in advancing human values through architectural, technological, and monumental arts developments, culminating in the establishment of the city itself. Valletta's evolution from the time of the Knights of St. John in the 16th century to the British colonial era in the 19th century and its flourishing through the 20th century to the present day exemplify its enduring cultural significance.

In 2018, Valletta held the prestigious title of European Capital of Culture. During that year, the city hosted a series of activities and events, showcasing its rich cultural heritage and creative vitality.

Situated in the South-Eastern Region of Malta, Valletta endured significant bombardment during World War II, from 1940 to 1944, along with other southern towns and cities, including Floriana, Cospicua, Vittoriosa, Senglea, and Paola. Despite these challenges, Valletta has emerged as a centre of culture, history, and art, underscoring its resilience.

Looking back to its origins in the 1560s, Valletta's creation followed the Great Siege of 1565, spearheaded by the Knight Jean Parisot De Vallette. This ambitious project gave rise to a refined city for gentlemen, built by the Knights of St. John. It was a fortress designed to safeguard Christianity, a religion deeply cherished by the Maltese and the Knights, while also serving as a cultural hub. The city, constructed in the Baroque style, continues to exude its architectural brilliance nearly 500 years later. Notably, the city was ahead of its time, encompassing provisions for water supply, sanitation, and efficient air circulation, highlighting its contemporary urban planning.

Legal safeguards are in place to protect Valletta's heritage and environment. The Environment and Planning Development Act regulates planning and development, emphasizing the importance of striking



a balance between development and environmental preservation. The Environment Protection Act complements this endeavor, ensuring the safeguarding of the environment.

Additionally, the Cultural Heritage Act plays a pivotal role in preserving Valletta's cultural legacy, further emphasizing the importance of protecting what lies within this magnificent city.

Accessibility to Valletta is facilitated by an array of transportation options, including buses, taxis, ferries from Sliema and Cospicua, and the option to explore the city on foot.

Valletta's attractions extend beyond its UNESCO-recognized heritage. The Upper Barrakka Gardens, City Gate, Church of Our Lady of Victories, Merchant's Street, and St. Elmo's Breakwater Bridge are some of the key landmarks. Visitors can also explore numerous historical buildings, the Cathedral of St. John, and various museums.

For visitors planning an extended stay, Valletta offers a range of accommodation options, including traditional hotels, boutique establishments, and Airbnb rentals, catering to diverse preferences and budgets.

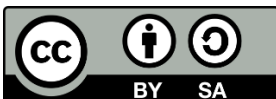
Valletta's nightlife, while not characterized by loud clubs and parties, offers a tranquil evening filled with fine dining, soft jazz music, and leisurely drinks. As such, Valletta is a destination of choice for travelers and a favorite place for locals to enjoy weekends or relaxed weekday evenings. Reservations at dining establishments are advisable to ensure a pleasant experience.

Megalithic Temples

The Megalithic Temples in Malta and Gozo, collectively designated as UNESCO World Heritage sites, encompass a group of six extraordinary temples: Ġgantija Temples, Ғaġar Qim, Mnajdra, Ta' Ғaġrat Temples, Skorba Temples and Tarxien Temples. UNESCO recognition for this architectural wonder commenced with Ġgantija Temples in 1980, lauded for its unique architectural ingenuity, intricate design, and exceptional craftsmanship. Subsequently, in 1992, the five additional temples were added to the esteemed UNESCO list.

Geographically, these temples are scattered across the islands of Malta and Gozo:

Ġgantija Temples, constructed between 3600 B.C. and 3200 B.C., are nestled in the northeastern region of Gozo. Impressively, despite their antiquity, they have endured the test of time and remain in remarkably



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well-preserved condition, primarily constructed from two distinct limestone varieties: Globigerina and Coralline Limestone.

Haġar Qim, positioned in southern Malta, dates back over 5000 years. This temple complex is renowned for its distinctive external doorways and an internally paved central passageway, adorned with stone slabs.

Mnajdra, also located in southern Malta, is composed of three buildings, masterfully crafted from both Globigerina and Coralline Limestone. This megalithic temple has been recognized for its precise alignment with solstices and incorporates smaller chambers within its walls.

Ta' Haġrat Temples, contemporaneously built with Ġgantija Temples (between 3600 B.C. and 3200 B.C.), predominantly comprises coralline limestone. This archaeological site consists of a larger temple and a smaller temple nestled within a semicircular forecourt. To enter the main temple, visitors must ascend two stone steps, and a corridor constructed with massive stone blocks awaits them.

Tarxien Temples, situated in the southern part of Malta, hails from the Bronze Age and is comprised of four megalithic structures. Of particular note, the South structure features prehistoric art, including sculptures and depictions of animals such as goats, bulls, pigs, and rams. The Eastern building, reflecting traditional megalithic architectural features, showcases a central corridor and a semi-circular chamber. To preserve these temples, they have been covered with protective arched roofing.

Skorba, located in proximity to Żebbiegħ, was excavated relatively recently, in the 1960s, by archaeologist David Trump. This temple site offers valuable insights into the daily lives of ancient inhabitants and contains two megalithic buildings. Here, remnants from the Red Skorba phase, pottery fragments, animal bones, and remnants of female figurines have been discovered.

The preservation and safeguarding of these historical treasures are underpinned by legislative frameworks, notably the Cultural Heritage Act of 2002 and the Environment and Development Planning Act of 2010, as well as their subsequent amendments.

Visiting these temples is facilitated through various modes of transportation, including private cars, taxis, public buses, Hop On-Hop Off Buses, and ferry services to Gozo, providing access to the Ġgantija Temples. Travelers using public buses are advised to verify the relevant bus numbers through the Tallinja App or Google Maps.



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It's essential to recognize that not all megalithic temples in Malta and Gozo are accessible to visitors. However, the ones listed by UNESCO are open for exploration. Visitors should be aware that these sites do not feature on-site cafés or restaurants, necessitating independent arrangements for dining.

Given the dispersed locations of these temples across the islands, travellers should thoughtfully select their accommodations based on their planned itinerary. A diversity of lodging options can be found in various regions, catering to diverse traveller preferences and requirements.

Ħal-Saflieni Hypogeum

The Ħal-Saflieni Hypogeum, like Valletta and the Megalithic Temples, achieved UNESCO recognition in 1980, meeting Criterion (iii). This criterion underscores the Hypogeum's unique and invaluable status as a mirror to the past and a treasure of high heritage significance. Of exceptional note is the fact that the Hypogeum stands alone in Europe as a subterranean 'labyrinth,' meticulously constructed between 4,000 B.C. and 2,500 B.C. Its architectural excellence and remarkably well-preserved state further underscore its essential role in unraveling the past. This ancient monument also serves as a testament to a long-vanished civilization.

Positioned atop a hill in Paola, a southern town in Malta, the Ħal-Saflieni Hypogeum was serendipitously discovered in 1902 by workers excavating cisterns for a housing development. This unexpected breakthrough unveiled a treasure trove of historical artifacts, including pottery, human remains, personal adornments, miniature carved animals, and larger figurines. The Hypogeum itself is a complex subterranean structure, featuring interconnected halls, chambers, and passages, all meticulously carved from globigerina limestone.

The Hypogeum encompasses three levels: the upper level, the middle level, and the lower level. The upper level consists of a spacious hollow with a central passage and burial chambers flanking both sides. Remarkably, one of these chambers retains its original burial deposits, a testament to the preservation of history over millennia. In the middle level, megalithic structures are also evident. The deepest chamber on the lower-level features four sides and is situated 10.6 meters below road level.

Legislation governing the preservation and protection of the Hypogeum aligns with the same legal framework as Valletta and the Megalithic Temples. The Cultural Heritage Act of 2002 emphasizes the conservation of cultural heritage, while the Environment and Development Planning Act regulates building developments and the safeguarding of the environment during these processes.

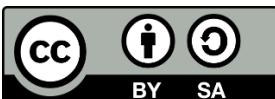


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To visit the Hypogeum, transportation options include taxis or private cars. Alternatively, public buses are available for those seeking a more convenient means of access. For those living in proximity, walking to the site is also a viable option.



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