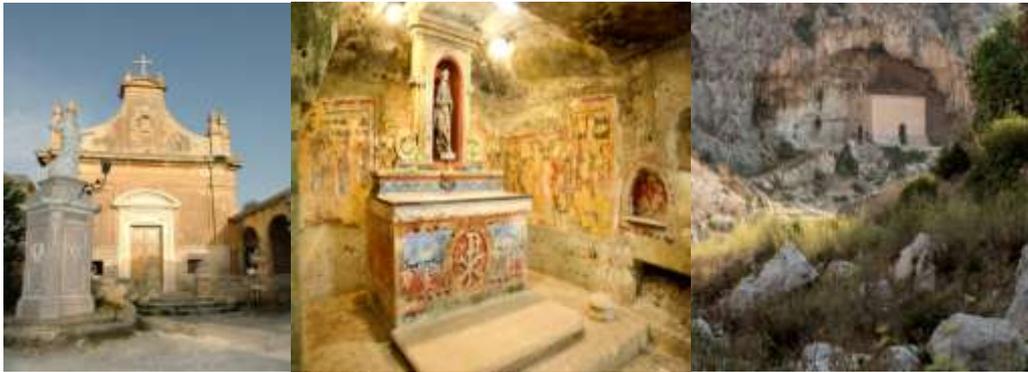


**Pilgrimage Travel Itinerary
Malta and Gozo
'L-Għanja tas-Seba' Niċeċ'
Gorg Zammit**



Tal-Hlas Chapel - Maris Zammit

The Seven Chapels



Proposed pilgrimage itinerary in Malta and Gozo based on the poem

“L-Għanja tas-Seba’ Niċċeċ” by Gorg Zammit

Introduction:

The legendary “L-Għanja tas-Seba’ Niċċeċ” is a long poem relating the legends associated with seven chapels. In order to further promote Pilgrimage Travel the MTA History & Culture Segment has created a heritage trail, spread over four days. The itinerary will help you to discover these seven chapels situated in various localities situated in the north of the island and in Gozo. The trail, besides throwing light on Malta’s folklore, creates an itinerary connecting towns and villages as well as walks in the countryside.

Gorg Zammit’s biography:

Ġorġ Zammit (1908-1990) – Maltese Poet and Writer

Ġorġ Zammit was born in the village of Qormi in 1908. During his youth Ġorġ Zammit felt that his vocation in life was to study for the priesthood. He went to Rome to follow his studies at the Gregorian University. However, he deserted his studies for the priesthood and followed legal studies at the University of Malta where later he graduated as a lawyer.

Ġorġ Zammit was also an accomplished painter and ceramist but what fulfilled him most in life was his love for nature and the countryside from where he got his inspiration for writing poetry. His poetry highlights Maltese life, described with great passion and love. Ġorġ Zammit can be referred to as a patriotic poet because he instilled the love of Malta in the Maltese population.

Għanja tas-Seba Niċeċ

Four-day Itinerary

Day 1 - Hamrun, Qormi, Zebbug

1. **Chapel of Our Lady of Atocia** – Hamrun (1)
2. Church of St Gajetan - Hamrun
3. Wignacourt Acqueduct - Sta Venera
4. Church of St Sebastian - Qormi
5. Church of St George - Qormi
6. **Chapel of Our Lady Tal-Hlas** – Qormi (2)
7. Church of St Philip - Zebbug

Day 2 - Rabat, Mdina

8. **Chapel of St Agatha/Catacombs** - Rabat (3)
9. Church of St Paul/Grotto - Rabat
10. St Paul's Catacombs - Rabat
11. Wignacourt Museum - Rabat
12. .Domus Romana - Rabat
13. St Paul's Cathedral - Mdina
14. The Carmelite Priory - Mdina
15. Palazzo Falson - Mdina

Day 3 - Mosta, Salina Bay, Burmarrad, St Paul's Islands, Mellieha

16. Church of the Assumption – Mosta
17. **Chapel of our lady of Hope** – Mosta (4)
18. **Chapel of St Paul the Hermit** - Mosta (5)
19. Salina Bay Salt pans - Salina Bay
20. Church of San Pawl Milqi - Burmarrad
21. St Paul's Islands
22. Church of St Joseph - Manikata
23. Church of the Nativity of Our Lady - Mellieha
24. Sanctuary of Our Lady - Mellieha

Day 4 – Gozo - Mgarr, Xewkija, Xaghra, Victoria, Gharb

25. Church of Our Lady of Lourdes - Mgarr
26. The Rotunda Church - Xewkija
27. Ggantija Temples - Xaghra
28. Church of the Nativity of Our Lady - Xaghra
29. The Citadel and the Cathedral of the Assumption - Victoria
30. Basilica of St George - Victoria
31. **Basilica of Ta' Pinu** – Gharb (6)
32. **Chapel of St Dimitri** – Gharb (7)

Photos:

Aaron Briffa, Clive Vella, Mario Galea, Caroline Busuttil, Department of Information, Heritage Malta, Association Kappelli Maltin, www.viewingmalta.com

“L-Għanja tas-Seba’ Niċeċ”
The Itinerary

Day 1: Hamrun, Qormi, Zebbug,

Day 2: Rabat, Mdina

Day 3: Mosta, Salina Bay, Burmarrad, St Paul’s Islands, Manikata, Mellieha

Day 4: Gozo - Mgarr, Xewkija, Xaghra, Victoria, Gharb

The Seven Chapels mentioned by Gorg Zammit in his poem “L-Għanja tas-Seba’ Niċeċ” –(RED)
Other sites of interest on the way – (BLUE)

Day 1: Hamrun, Qormi, Zebbug

A. Hamrun:

Direction from Valetta to Hamrun:

By car:

1. Take the main street, St Anne street in Floriana
2. Drive straight on to Blata-I-Bajda
3. Keep straight on to St Joseph High Road
4. Arrive at St Gaetan Church

By bus:

- #42: direction Cirkewwa
- #51: direction Mtarfa
- #52: direction Dingli
- #53: direction Rabat
- #55: direction Lija
- #123: direction Mater Dei

*Bus stop in Hamrun: **Kanun***

- #61: direction Zebbug
- #62: direction Siggiewi
- #63: direction Qormi

*Bus stop in Hamrun: **Rabbat***

1. Chapel of Our Lady of Atocia:

Our Lady of Atocia Chapel, locally known as Tas-Samra, is the oldest chapel in Hamrun. The church titular painting is a copy of the image of Our Lady of Atocia (Antiochia), venerated in Madrid. It was brought to Malta from Spain in 1631. In old documents of various pastoral visits it is mentioned by different names such as *Our Lady of Guadalupe* or *Our Lady of Loreto*. Because of the dark appearance of Our Lady in the Icon, the church was nicknamed 'Tas-Samra' - 'of the dark skinned one'.

During the French blockade in 1799-1800, its roof was used as a watch-tower by the Maltese because of its strategic position on a hill overlooking the Valletta main gate.

At the beginning of the 20th century the church was kept closed, but was opened again for the faithful by Saint George Preca. Nowadays the chapel is open daily.

The legend:

The legend connected to this chapel relates the story of Isabella Spinaci, who was still a child when Malta was besieged by the Turks in 1565. The house where she lived was destroyed during the Turkish attack while Isabella was asleep; however she escaped with no injuries. Later she married Giuseppe Casauri, who had brought from Madrid a copy of the painting of Our Lady of Atocia (which still exists in the church). The legend says that it was St Luke who painted it. Isabella and Giuseppe built a house by the chapel and they decided to live together as a priest and a nun. Giuseppe Casauri died in 1636 and Isabella died in 1646.

Location: Triq Atocia, Hamrun

Masses: From Monday to Friday: 6:45 am in Maltese; Saturday: 6:45 am + 6:00 pm ;

Sunday and Feast days: 6:45 am; 8:00am; 10:15am

Tel: 2123 8593



2. Church of St Gaetan:

Originally at Hamrun there were two old churches, the “Tas-Samra” church and the “Ta’ Nuzzu” church. The Hamrun population increased and a new church had to be built. The new parish church was dedicated to St Gaetan of Thiene, the namesake of the bishop of the time, Mgr Gaetano Pace Forno. The church was consecrated in 1881.

The Hamrun parish church dedicated to St Gaetan is the architectural masterpiece of Prof. Giorgio Schinas. Externally the church façade is dominated by a classical Palladian-style temple front which is flanked on each side by imposing bell-towers.

The titular painting is the work of Pietro Gagliardi in Rome. The statue of Saint Gaetan is the work of eminent Maltese sculptor Charles Darmanin and was completed in 1885. The interior of the dome was decorated by the eminent Maltese artist Emvin Cremona. Hamrun has several other churches and chapels of architectural and historic interest.

Location: Triq II - Kbir San Guzepp, Hamrun

Masses: Sundays and Feast Days 06.00, 07.30, 09.00, 11.00 am and 06.00 pm ; Saturday Evenings 06.30 pm and 07.45 pm ; Weekdays 07.00, 09.00 am; 12.00 (except for July – Sept); 6.30 pm

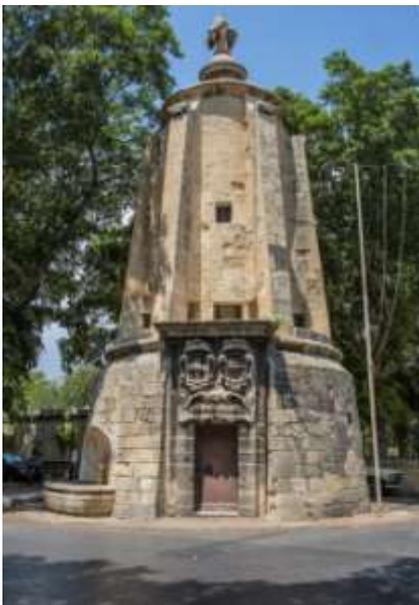
Tel: 2123 8593



3. The Wignacourt Aqueduct:

The Wignacourt Aqueduct is an impressive stretch of arches which used to run from Rabat to Valletta. They are a living memorial to Grand Master, Alof de Wignacourt, who conceived the project and whose name it bears. Valletta, with a growing population, had a serious water shortage problem when Wignacourt was elected in 1601. The aqueduct, built between 1610 and 1615, brought water from 16 km away. Due to the difficult ground conditions, the Italian engineer Bontadino Bontadini of Bologna constructed stone arches to carry water from Balzan to Hamrun (1), then on to the city in underground channels. There were great celebrations when the fountain in the centre of Valletta was inaugurated (2). The original fountain was first inaugurated in Palace Square in 1615 to celebrate the moment when water first arrived from Rabat to Valletta via the aqueducts (3). It was later moved in front of the law courts and eventually shifted to Argotti Gardens, Floriana, during British rule.

1



B. Qormi:

Direction from Hamrun to Qormi:

By car:

1. Drive straight on through St Joseph High Road in Hamrun
2. Santa Venera roundabout (aqueduct)
3. Turn left into Cannon Road
4. Take a left turning to Valley Road into St Sebastian Street. Arrive at St Sebastian Church
5. From St Sebastian Church to Victoria Street
6. Take Pinto Street, straight on
7. Turn right into Dun Mario Street.

By bus:

#61: direction Zebbug

#63: direction Qormi

*Bus stop in Qormi: **Bastja***

4. Church of St Sebastian:

In 1880 a small church dedicated to St Sebastian was built not far from a statue of the saint which had been erected as an act of thanksgiving after the 1813 plague. The present church dedicated to St Sebastian was built because of the increasing population. The plan of the Church was designed by Arthur Zammit. On 29th May 1982, Archbishop Joseph Mercieca blessed this Church which was subsequently consecrated on 20th January 1986.

Location: Triq San Bartolemew, Qormi

Masses: Weekdays: 5.45, 6.30, 7.45, 8.30 am; 6.00 pm winter; 6.30 pm summer ; Saturday Evenings: 5.15, 6.30, 7.45 pm ; Sundays and Feast Days: 5.45, 7.00, 8.15, 9.30, 11.00am, 6.00 pm

Tel: 2148 6350



5. Church of St George:

In 1436 there were already 10 parish churches in Malta. Qormi was one of these Parishes. The church dedicated to St George stands on the site of the former Annunciation church which existed until 1585. When the Annunciation church was demolished, the stones were used and incorporated in the new structure. The internal architecture respects the baroque style latin cross.

The dome was added in 1684.

Location: Triq San Gorg, Qormi

Masses: Weekdays: 6.00, 6.45, 7.45 am; 4.30 pm, 6.00 pm; (Summer only the 6.30pm mass) ;
Saturday Evenings: 4.30 and 6.00 pm (Winter); 5.00pm (Summer) ; Sundays and Feast Days: 6.00,
7.00, 8.00, 9.00, 10.30 am; 5.00 pm

Tel: 2144 8275



6. Chapel of Our Lady of Tal-Hlas:

The chapel dating from 1495 commonly referred to as Tal-Hlas is situated in a scenic valley that separates the villages of Zebbug and Qormi. Traditionally as the name implies, the chapel was a place of Marian devotion and a popular pilgrimage site where pregnant women prayed for a safe delivery.

The design of the chapel bears all the traditional elements that distinguish the ecclesiastical buildings of Lorenzo Gafà. The relatively spartan appearance of the façade with its twin Tuscan pilasters at each end, the plain and continuous entablature and the main entrance surmounted by a segmental pediment are typical of Gafa's churches. The raised centrepiece that is connected to terminal stone finials serves as a screen façade to visually conceal the barrel-vaulted roof. The pair of arched porticoes that flank the raised parvis create a harmonious and well-proportioned architectural ensemble that is in keeping with the idyllic rural surroundings. The chapel was restored after the 1693 earthquake.

Location: Triq il-Hlas, Qormi

Masses: The third Sunday of the month at 4:30pm in Maltese

Visits: Only upon request

Tel : James Camilleri: 9942 2274



C. Zebbug:

Direction from Qormi to Zebbug:

By car:

1. Exit to Mdina Road
2. Continue onto Triq L-Imdina, Go through the first roundabout
3. At the roundabout, take the 2nd exit
4. At the roundabout, take the 1st exit
5. Turn left onto triq Il-Kbira, arrive to St Philip's Church

By bus:

#61: direction Zebbug

*Bus stop in Zebbug: **Agira***

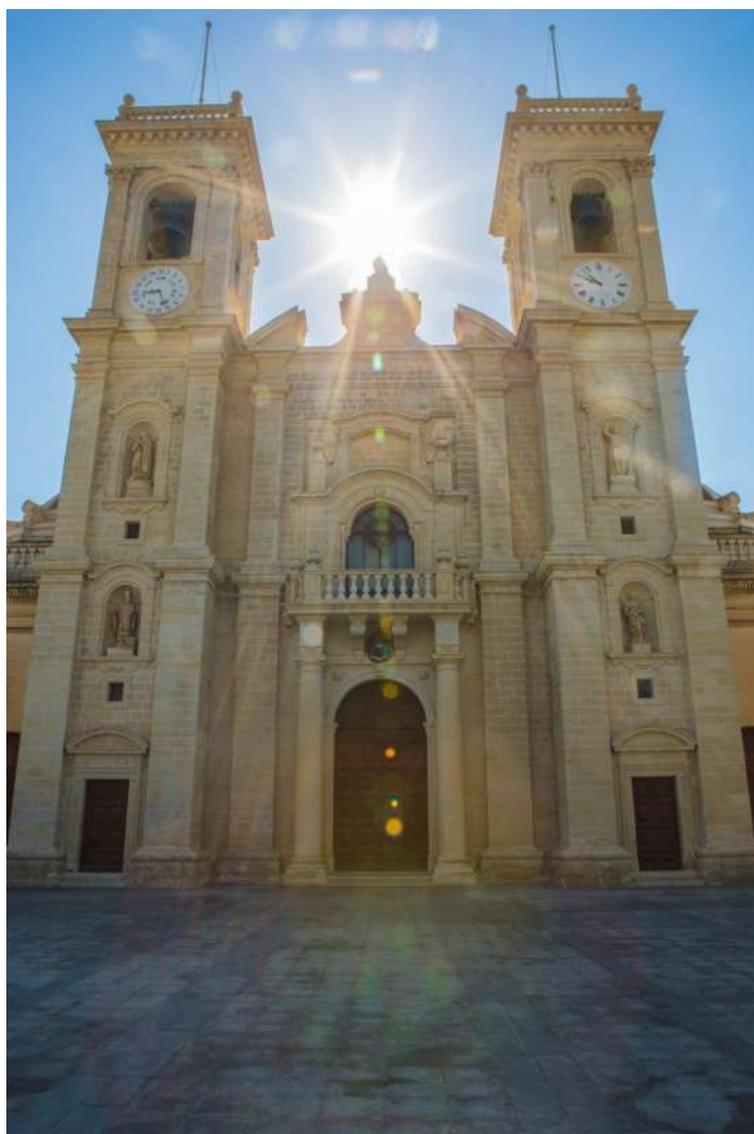
7. **Church of St Philip:**

Zebbug, Malta has been a parish since 1436, but the first church of Zebbug was built earlier with the money donated by the Sicilian Filippo in 1380 and finished in 1412. The present church was built between 1599 and 1632 and enlarged by Tommaso Dingli in 1660. The side aisles were added in 1913.

Location: Misrah San Filippu, Zebbug

Masses: From Monday to Saturday: 6:00 am, 7:00am, 7:45am, 8:45am, 7:00pm ; On Sunday and Feast Days: 6:00am,7:00am,8:00am, 9:30am, 11:00am, 5:30pm, 7:00pm

Tel: 2146 0800



Day 2: Rabat, Mdina

D. Rabat:

Direction from Valletta to Mdina/Rabat:

By car:

1. Drive on the main road through Hamrun, St Venera and Attard
2. Straight on arriving at Saqqajja square
3. Continue to Mdina main gate
4. Entrance to Rabat from near the Domus Romana (outside Mdina)

By bus:

Bus stop in Mdina: Saqqajja

From Valletta:

- | | |
|-------|------------------|
| # 51: | direction Mtarfa |
| # 52: | direction Dingli |
| # 53: | direction Rabat |

8. Chapel of St Agatha and Catacombs:

The church dedicated to St Agatha was built in 1504. In 1670 the church was replaced by a larger one on the same site. It seems that in 1504 the church was partially pulled down and the part retained was incorporated in the 1670 building.

In 1894 the main altar was restored and the marble statue of St Agatha was elevated on a high pedestal above the altar. In 1912-13 other work was done to embellish the church amongst which the bell tower on the right hand side of the façade and two lateral rooms which served as a sacristy.

In 1957-61, besides restoring the entire side walls of the aisle, two small side chapels were added, one dedicated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the other one dedicated to St Paul the Apostle.

The catacombs have a low ceiling with narrow corridors with all the different tomb types in evidence. Several graves still contain skeletons, and two tombs are decorated with frescos. Deep in the complex, the corridors open out into a room – a wealthier tomb chamber or chapel – with carved pillars. It originally had an *agape* table but this was removed when the Church apparently abolished their use.

History of St Agatha and the crypt:

St Agatha is the oldest church in Rabat. St Agatha, the patron saint of Catania, took refuge in Malta when the Roman Emperor, Trajanus Decius, was at the time persecuting the Christians dating back to the 3rd and the 4th centuries A.D. The catacombs are situated beyond the former walls of the old city of Mdina and these catacombs were used by the Christians in Malta for burial purposes.

The crypt at Rabat, where St Agatha spent so much time, is today hewn into the solid rock. It is said that at the time of St Agatha's stay, the crypt was a small natural cave. During the 4th or 5th century AD it was enlarged and an underground basilica created, which was venerated by the Maltese. Several passageways show biblical symbols from early Christianity, but the main chamber shows frescoes dating from the Middle Ages. Some of them are dedicated to St Agatha. Today a church is located above the crypt, which was named after St Agatha.

Legend:

According to tradition, St Agatha used to pray in the cave where the chapel now stands. St Agatha came to Malta from Catania during the persecution of Christians by the Emperor Decius (AD 250). The legend: St Agatha had promised her mother to marry Kurinazju, the prefect of Catania as soon as she would finish working on a veil which she was crocheting. When in Malta she used to crochet during the day and undo the work during the night.

Location: St Agatha Street, Rabat

Masses: From Monday to Saturday: 6:30am+7:15 am ; Sunday and Feast Days: 7:00am

Visits: There is a complex which includes the museum, the crypts and the catacombs.

Opening hours: Monday - Sunday: 9.00-17.00 Last admission: 16.30 ; Closed: 24, 25 & 31 December, 1 January, Good Friday

Prices: Adults (18 - 59 years): €5 ; Students (12 - 17 years), Senior Citizens (60 years and over): €3.50 ; Children (6 -11 years): €2.50 ; Infants (1 -5 years): Free

Tel: 2145 4503

Website: www.stagathamalta.com



9. Church of St Paul and Grotto:

The church is built over the ditch of the former Roman city of Melita which also included a large part of Rabat as well as over the Grotto where according to tradition St Paul was kept prisoner during his three months stay in Malta in 60 A.D. In 1336 Bishop Hilarius refers to the church as “ecclesia Sancti Pauli de crypta,” and also mentions the cemetery and the Roman ditch. The present church was built with funds provided by the noble woman Guzmaná Navarra on plans prepared by F. Bonamico. The church was completed by Lorenzo Gafà in 1683.

Location: Triq Santa Rita, Rabat

Masses: Weekdays: 6.00, 7.45, 8.30 am; 6.00 pm ; Saturday Evenings: 4.30 pm, 6.00 pm ; Sundays and Feast Days: 6.00, 7.30, 9.00, 10.30, 12.00 pm and 6.00 pm

Tel: 2145 1405



St Paul's Catacombs:

The Catacombs of St Paul derive their name from their proximity to St Paul's Church and Grotto. They are a fascinating labyrinth of 3rd-century AD subterranean tombs and the earliest archaeological evidence of Christianity in Malta. St Paul's catacombs have a total surface area of 2.200 sqm. A total of 1.000 bodies could be buried in the different type of tombs which were hewn out of solid rock. Not the entire site is accessible, but a large area is open to the public to provide a fascinating look at several different types of tombs: *Loculi* and *baldacchino* tombs predominate. But there are other types of tombs: Loculi in the walls to grand, canopied sarcophagi.

Location: St Agatha Street, Rabat

Visit: Opening hours: Monday to Sunday: 9.00-17.00 ; Price: Adult: €5 ; Youth (12-17), Senior Citizens (+60), ISIC Card Holders, EURO<26 Card Holders, ISE Card Holders, ICOM Card Holders, University of Malta and MCAST Students: €3.50 ; Children (6 -11 years): €2.50 ; Infants (1 -5 years): Free

Tel: 2145 4562



10. Wignacourt Museum:

The Palace is a baroque residence of the Chaplains of the Knights of Malta which was inaugurated by Grand Master Aloff de Wignacourt (1601-1622). The building, fully completed in 1749, is on three levels: the underground level consists of a labyrinth of Punic, Roman and Christian Hypogea with interesting architectural features as well as a complex of World War II shelters with two main corridors and fifty rooms.

The picture gallery: Grand Masters and Saints in the robes of the Order stare down from the wall, and in the side rooms are several paintings by Mattia Preti, including a touchingly *Madonna of the Sorrows* and a *Penitent St Peter*.

Location: Parish Square, College Street, Rabat

Visit: Opening hours: Monday to Sunday: 09:30hrs to 17:00hrs ; Price: Adult: €5; Seniors (+61): €3.5 ; Students (+12): €3.5 ; Children (7-11): €2.5 ; Infants (>6): Free

Tel: 2749 4905

Website: www.wignacourtmuseum.com



11. Domus Romana:

The remains of this extensive, rich Roman town house and its mosaic pavements were discovered in 1881 during the planting of trees on the Knights of St John's glaciis just outside Mdina. A few years later a number of rooms were constructed above the remains to host what was then called the Museum of Roman Antiquities now renamed Domus Romana.

The collection on display at the Domus Romana is meant to project the visitor into glimpses of the life of the site during the times. In line with the archaeological principles whereas the most modern of the levels are found first, the visitor is first directed towards a section on the Muslim cemetery that was installed over the ruins of what was once a rich Roman town house. The visitor is then directed around various sections of the display that give a glimpse of the life in the Roman Domus, spanning from everyday chores like cooking and weaving, to body care and entertainment. Visitors are also given a glimpse into the beauty of the decorative scheme of the villa through its three mosaics that are in situ and through the various architectural elements that once adorned the peristyle.

Location: Wesgha tal-Muzew, Rabat

Visit: Opening hours: Monday to Sunday: 9.00-17.00 (Last admission: 16.30) ; Prices: Adults (18 - 59 years): €6.00; Youth (12 - 17 years), Senior Citizens (60 years and over), ISIC Card Holders, EURO<26 Card Holders, ISE Card Holders, ICOM Card Holders, University of Malta and MCAST Students: €4.50; Children (6 -11 years): €3.00; Infants (1 -5 years): Free

Tel: 2145 4125



E. Mdina:

Mdina is a medieval walled town, but its history goes back far earlier. This was Malta's first capital, its main town from at least Roman times, when it was called Melite, until the arrival of the Order of St John in 1530. The Knights needed to be closer to the harbours and so based themselves in Birgu (Vittoriosa) in the Grand Harbour. The Maltese aristocracy, however, remained in Mdina and it continued to be an important centre.

This is an extraordinary place. Strategically perched on the edge of a plateau 150m above a surrounding countryside. The approach to Mdina by car provides you with striking sites. The city sits on its impenetrable rock. Within its fortified walls, there are very few shops and offices; it is mainly *palazzi* (grand old house) and religious buildings set in a labyrinth of narrow streets that dominate the city. There are almost no vehicles by day and just a few in the early evening as some of Mdina's 400 residents (the only people allowed to drive here) come home from work. Mdina is also called the Silent City.



12. St Paul's Cathedral:

According to tradition, the first Cathedral of Malta was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, Mother of God but, having fallen into ruin during the Muslim period, it was rebuilt following the Norman conquest and dedicated to St Paul, Malta's patron saint. The old church was modified and enlarged several times.

The building we see today was designed by the architect Lorenzo Gafa. It was built between 1697 and 1702 to replace the ruined Norman cathedral destroyed by the 1693 earthquake which destroyed Noto in Sicily and badly damaged Mdina. Despite this, several artifacts and edifices survived including the paintings by the Calabrian artist Mattia Preti depicting the conversion of Saint Paul, a 15th-century Tuscan painting of the Madonna and Child, and frescoes in the apse which illustrate St Paul's shipwreck.

Location: Pjazza San Pawl, Mdina

Masses: Weekdays: 9.00 a.m.; 6.00 p.m ; Saturdays: 9.00am, 6.00pm ; Sundays and Feast Days: 9.30, 11.00 a.m., 6.00p.m.



13. Carmelite Priory:

Set in a 17th century Baroque building the Carmelite Priory has undergone important and significant restoration, to finally open its doors to the viewing public. This hidden gem, offers the public an opportunity to explore the way and life of the cloistered Carmelite friars in the 17th century. Among a number of rooms to explore, the quarters include a beautifully frescoed refectory. A courtyard breathes light onto the Maltese stonework of the surrounding cloisters, which connect the priory to the church. The Carmelite Church and Priory boast of impressive paintings, sculpture and architecture.

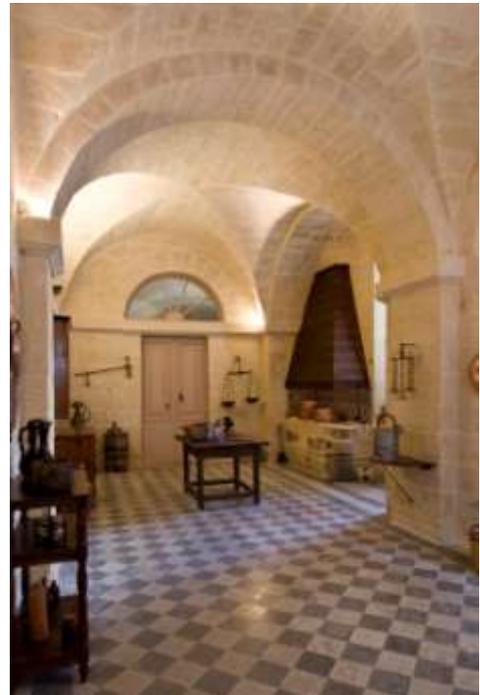
Location: Villegaignon Street, Mdina

Visit: allowed upon request and pre-booking.

Opening hours: Tuesday to Sunday from 10.00 am-16.00 pm

Tel: 2702 0404

Website: www.carmelitepriorymuseum.com



14. Palazzo Falson:

Palazzo Falson is the former home of Capt Olof Frederick Gollcher OBE (1889-1962), the son of a prosperous shipping merchant of Swedish descent. Gollcher was an artist, scholar and philanthropist, but also a discerning collector of *objets d'art* and historical objects.

Palazzo Falson is a typical two-storey medieval palace fashioned on Sicilian examples of its period, and is one of the imposing Palazzi built by the Sicilian, Spanish and local nobility in Mdina. The Palazzo consists of a series of rooms wrapped around an internal courtyard, and an overlying piano-nobile which contained the original living quarters. Nowadays, Palazzo Falson is a private museum which houses an eclectic content which comes from 45 collections of its last private owner, soldier, shipping magnate and philanthropist Captain Olof Gollcher.

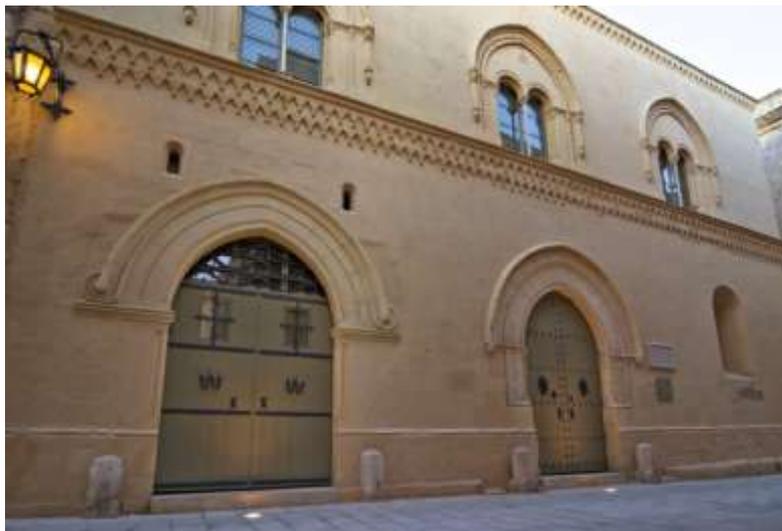
Location: Villegaignon Street, Mdina

Visit: Opening hours: Tuesday to Sunday from 10.00 to 17.00hrs (last visit 16.00hrs)

Price: Adult: €10; Students & ISIC card holders: €5; Senior citizen: € 5; Children (6 – 12): free (no audio guide); Infants (0 – 5) no entry permitted.

Tel: 2145 4512

Website: www.palazzofalson.com



Day 3: Mosta, Salina Bay, Burmarrad, St Paul's Islands, Mellieha:

F. Mosta:

Direction from Valletta to Mosta:

By car:

1. Take the main street, St Anne street in Floriana
2. Drive straight on to Blata-I-Bajda
3. Keep straight on to St Joseph High Road
4. At the Santa Venera roundabout, turn on the right to Birkirkara
5. Continue on Triq Naxxar Road then Vjal L-Indipendenza
6. Turn on the right into Triq Il-Kbira
7. Arrive in the centre of Mosta

By bus:

41,42: direction Cirkewwa
44: direction Ghajn Tuffieha
Bus stop in Mosta: Rotunda 3

15. Church of the Assumption:

The gigantic dome of Mosta's parish Church (St Marija Assunta - Assumption of the Virgin Mary), is said to be the 4th-largest church dome in Europe (Some say 3rd largest!). Built from 1833 to 1871 on the site of a previous church, it was designed by Giorgio Grognet de Vasse, whose plans were closely based on the Pantheon in Rome. On the 9th April 1942, during an afternoon air-raid, a 200kg Luftwaffe bomb pierced the dome and fell among a congregation of more than 300 people awaiting early evening mass. It did not explode. A replica of the bomb is now on display in the sacristy, where the gift shop is situated. The people of Mosta regard this event as a miracle.

Location: Triq il-Kbira, Mosta

Masses: Weekdays: 6.00, 6.30, 7.00, 7.45, 8.30 a.m.; 6.30 p.m. ; Saturday Evening 5.00p.m.- 6.30 p.m. ; Sundays and Feast Days: 6.00, 7.00, 8.00, 9.00. 10.00, 11.00 a.m.; 5.30 p.m.

Tel: 2143 3826



16. Chapel of Our Lady of Hope:

The chapel of Our Lady of Hope is situated on the side of Wied il-Ghasel and its building traces its origin to a famous legend in Maltese folklore. This story relates of a young Mosta girl who was one day in the fields of Burmarrad (a rural area outside Mosta) when Muslim corsairs hunted her and she ran for her life to the safety of her native village. She took refuge in a cave in Wied il-Ghasel. The entrance was hidden by a cobweb which concealed this hiding place as a spider spun its web after the girl entered. The legend goes on that the corsairs overlooked the cave as they could not envisage anyone entering the cave without tearing the cobweb, and so they left. The maiden came out, and convinced of divine intervention in her escape, decided to build a chapel on top of this cave.

It was rebuilt in 1760 in the Renaissance style with an octagonal shape on the inside. The titular painting was executed by Rocco Buhagiar at the turn of the 19th century. In 1913 the cave was cleaned and the church renovated, and marble cladding was applied ten years later.

The description of the valley in Gorg Zammit's poem is nature at its best and describes trees which grow in Malta's fertile soil: "The deeper into the valley the more beautiful the scenery: The slanting carob trees, the sound of a light breeze with the echoes of church bells in the distance, the waving in the winds of peach and almond trees, and the clouds flowing in the skies like foam on a huge wave".

Location: Triq ta' l-Isperanza, Mosta

Masses: Sunday and Feast Days: 8:30am

Visits: Sunday morning before mass; Group visit only on request

Tel: 2143 3826 or Fr. Albert 7908 0506



17. Church of St Paul the Hermit:

The chapel of St Paul the Hermit is situated in a natural cave in the side of Wied il Ghasel (Honey Valley), this chapel was erected in 1656.

The legend:

In this cave a hermit lived a pious life. The villagers of Mosta turned a deaf ear to his preaching. He had advised them to change their way of life. Instead the villagers stoned him and he had to escape. When he arrived at Marfa, opposite Gozo and Comino, with the villagers still in his pursuit, he placed a mantle over the sea and walked over the sea. The villagers remained astounded. They took his stick which they placed in the cave at Wied il-Ghasel and every year flowers used to stemmed from the stick.

Location: Wied il-Ghasel, Mosta
No mass and no visits



G. Salina Bay:

Direction from Mosta to Salina Bay

By car:

1. Continue on Triq Il-Kbira
2. Turn left into Triq Il-Qalbiena Mostin
3. Turn right toward Triq Il-Fortzza Tal-Mosta
4. Turn left toward Triq Is-Salina

By bus:

Connexion to Pembroke:

205: direction Pembroke

222: direction Cirkewwa

Bus stop in Salina: Salini 2

18. Salina Bay Saltpans

Salt has been produced for centuries. The Knights of Malta cut the saltpans like large trays, in the inner section of the bay. Three different types of pans were used to produce salt: those for sea water, the warm salting pans and the collecting salt-pans. After the pans were cleaned, the first set of basins was filled with sea water, which was allowed to warm up for some days before it was passed on to the warming salt-pans and afterwards to the collecting pans. Gutters and sluice gates were used to make this movement possible - at one point there was the introduction of wooden pumps to aid the flow of water from one basin to another.

Today the saltpans are being restored with the aid of an EU funded project. Following approval, the huts were demolished and rebuilt using modern techniques. They will still, however, be clad in wooden panels, in a style respecting the original appearance of the building. One of the huts will serve as a visitors' centre related to salt and the other two will be used for the production of upmarket salt.



H. Burmarrad:

Direction from Salina Bay to Burmarrad:

By car:

1. Continue on Kennedy Drive
2. At the roundabout, take the 1st and turn on Triq Burmarrad
3. Turn on the left and continue on Triq San Pawl Milqi, arrive at the church

19. Church of San Pawl Milqi:

San Pawl Milqi is the site of a Roman villa at Burmarrad which according to tradition is where St Paul was given hospitality following his shipwreck in Malta in AD 60. The chapel still standing within this site dates back to 1616. Archaeological excavations carried out in the 1960s uncovered a large agricultural area dating from the 2nd to 3rd centuries B.C. The site excavated by the Italian Archaeology Mission is supervised by Heritage Malta.

Location: Triq San Pal Milqi, Burmarrad

No mass

Visit: Visit by appointment ; *Price:* Adults: €4; Seniors and students: €2; Children (>12): free

Tel Heritage Malta: 2295 4000



I. St Paul's Bay:

Direction from St Paul's Bay to Buggiba (view of St Paul's Islands)

By car:

1. Take triq Burmarrad, at the roundabout take the second road and turn on Mosta Road
2. Turn on the right on Isouard Road
3. On the coast road you can stop for a view of the St Paul's islands

This is the ideal location to read chapters 27/28 of the Acts of the Apostles.

"The soldiers made a plan to kill the prisoners, in order to keep them from swimming ashore and escaping. But the army officer wanted to save Paul, so he stopped them from doing this. Instead, he ordered all the men who could swim to jump overboard first and swim ashore; the rest were to follow holding on to the planks or to some broken pieces of the ship. And this was how we all got safely ashore. When we were safely ashore we learned that the island was called Malta. The natives there were very friendly to us. It had started to rain and was cold, so they built a fire and made us welcome." Acts of the Apostles Act.27, 28.

20. St Paul's Islands:

St Luke recounts in Acts 27-28 how Paul's ship was lost at sea for two weeks during winter storms. Eventually, the ship ran aground on the island of Malta and was dashed to pieces by the waves, but all of the passengers survived and made it to shore - St Paul's Islands, two uninhabited, rocky islets at the entrance to St Paul's Bay, where the shipwreck is reputed to have taken place.

Within the town of St Paul's Bay, St Paul's Shipwreck Church is located along the water's edge. The church is also known as St Paul's Bonfire Church and commemorates the traditional site where the shipwreck survivors, including Paul, swam ashore and a bonfire was built for them. The church was constructed in the 14th century, but was rebuilt after a bomb destroyed the original building during World War II.





Gorg Zammit gives a colourful description of the walk from the village of Burmarrad until he reached the point to catch the ferry crossing to the island of Gozo

“With tears in my eyes and song in my heart, I arrived at Burmarrad”

“And I passed by The Chapel of San Pawl Milqghi, and past the village called after the person who Christianised the island (referring to St Paul and St Paul’s Bay)”

“I continued walking and left Xemxija behind me. Basking in the autumn sun, I fell upon Wied Pwales”

“I turned right to Ghajn Znuber and crossed to Ghajn Tuffieha”

“I walked up the hill, along the curved road, under the shadow of the lovely carob tree, and reached the beautiful houses of Mellieha”

“From the Parish Square, I went down the steps to the Sanctuary”.

Direction:

1. Go back and take Triq Parades and then continue on Triq San Pawl
2. Cross the two roundabouts to turn to Pawles Valley
3. Straight on to Ghajn Tuffieha / Golden Bay

J. Manikata

21. Church of St Joseph:

The Old Chapel of St. Joseph was built in 1920, when there were only twelve families living in Manikata. A number of people from this tiny village helped to build this chapel. Locals recall how the soft, honey-coloured stone was brought from Qasam Barrani quarry, while stronger stone, for the arches was brought from quarries in the north of Mosta. But with the growth of Manikata to over five hundred people the chapel of St. Joseph, which seated only 100 people, became too small for the religious needs of the locals.

In 1961, it was decided to build a new and larger church, the rector Fr. Manwel Grima approached architect Edwin England Sant Fournier to prepare a design for the new church. However, shortly afterwards Edwin handed over the job to his son Richard England. The building of the new church of Manikata faced numerous problems. In 1962 the first stone was laid by Archbishop Sir Michael Gonzi, but after the death of Fr. Grima the church remained half built for five years. Finally Manikata's new church was finished and blessed on 29 November 1974 by Archbishop Sir Michael Gonzi, more than ten years after he officially had laid the first stone.

The architect Richard England, who built the church, took his inspiration from the "girna" which one sometimes sees in the middle of a field, a small stone building put up by farmers to store tools.

Location: Mellieha Road, Manikata

Masses: Monday, Thursday, Friday ; Saturday: 06:00 pm ; Tuesday and Wednesday: 07:00am ; Sunday and Feast Days: 07:00am, 11:00am

Tel: 2157 5679



K. Mellieha:

Direction from Ghajn Tuffieha to Mellieha:

1. Go back, turn on the left on Triq Tal-Wilga
2. Straight on then turn on the left on Triq il-Mellieha
3. Cross the roundabout, take Triq Qasam Barrani
4. At the roundabout turn on left and take Triq il-Wied, continue on Triq Gnien Ingraw
5. Turn on right on Triq San Pawl and arrive at the church

22. Church of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary

The Parish Church of Mellieha is dedicated to the Birth of Our Lady, and was built between 1881 and 1898. The belfries and the dome were erected later between 1920 and 1940. The church altars were decorated with paintings by the best Maltese artists, including the renowned Giuseppe Cali and Lazzaro Pisani.

Location: Parish Square, Mellieha

Masses: Weekdays: 6.30, 7.30 a.m.; 6.30 p.m.

Saturday Evenings: 5.00, 6.30 p.m; Sundays and Feast Days: 6.00, 7.00, 8.15, 9.30, 11.00 a.m.; 5.00 p.m.

Tel: 2152 3449



Sanctuary of Our Lady:

The Sanctuary of Our Lady is the oldest Marian shrine in Malta. It is surrounded by legend – including one relating the visit by St Paul after his shipwreck on Malta in AD 60. It is still a place of pilgrimage, with a large collection of ex-voto notes and offerings. This is due primarily to the chapel's rock painting of the Madonna and child attributed by believers to Paul's companion St Luke, although its style dates it to the 13th or 14th century.

Location: Parish Square, Mellieha

Visit: Every day: 08 – 12 and 16 – 18

Tel: 2152 3449



Day 4: Gozo - Mgarr, Xewkija, Xaghra, Victoria, Gharb

Direction:

Take the ferry in Cirkewwa (Gozo Ferry Channel) to cross and arrive at Mgarr, Gozo.
Phone number: 2210 9000

Gorg Zammit also describes his boat trip to Gozo

“In the pink rays of the skies I saw Gozo appearing like a dream”

From Mgarr harbour Gorg Zammit also describes his boat trip along the coast of Gozo: “On a small boat I sailed with a fully-blown sail – in a short while I left the bay of Mgarr behind, and then sailed past the valley of Ghajnsielem, and the heights of Qala and Nadur, and Xaghra and Marsalforn.”

L.

M. **Mgarr:**

23. Church of Our Lady of Lourdes:

The harbour is dominated by a Gothic church that fits Mgarr hill like a royal crown. In 1879, a visitor pointed out that the rocks of the hill were similar to the Grotto of Massabielle in Lourdes, France. A statue of the Virgin Mary of Lourdes sculpted by Antonio Busuttill was placed in a natural cavity beneath the promontory in 1879 This is a place of pilgrimage for people from all over the island, especially in the days coinciding with the ‘visions of Our Lady of Lourdes’ in southern France.

Location: Triq Lourdes, Mgarr

Masses: No mass

Tel: 2166 6537



N. Xewkija:

Direction from Ferry (Mgarr) to Xewkija:

By car:

1. Head toward Triq Lourdes
2. Turn left onto Triq l-Imġarr; Go round 3 roundabouts
3. Turn on the left Triq San Bert, Arrive at Rotunda Church

By bus:

#301: direction Rabat

*Bus stop in Xewkija : **Domo***

24. **The Rotunda Church:**

Xewkija is one of the oldest villages of Gozo and took the status of a parish as early as 1678. The parish church, dedicated to St John the Baptist, was erected, and was consecrated in 1755. The old church was dismantled and a new one, the Rotunda, was built on the same site. Parts of the old church were rebuilt as the sacristy of the new church. The monumental church is an enormous circular structure in white local limestone. Because of its form it is called The Rotunda. Eight concrete columns covered with stone support its elegant dome, 75 metres high, with a 28 metre diameter, and a circumference of 85 metres.

Location: Parish Square, Xewkija

Masses: From Monday to Saturday: 5:30am, 6:00am, 6:45am, 9:00am, 5:30pm, 6:45pm ; On Sunday and Feast Days: 5:30am, 6:30am, 7:30am, 8:30am, 9:30am, 11:00am, 4:00pm

Tel of the Parish office: 2155 6793



O. Xaghra:

Direction from Xewkija to Xaghra:

By car:

- Turn on the right Triq L-Indipendenza
- Continue straight on and continue on Triq Ta-Hamet and then on Triq it -Tafla
- Arrive at Ggantija Temples

25. Ggantija Temples

The Ġgantija Temples in Xaghra, Gozo, are one of the most important archaeological sites in the Maltese Islands. Their listing on the UNESCO World Heritage List makes them a site of universal significance. The site consists of a megalithic complex of two temples surrounded by a massive common boundary wall, and raised on a high terrace wall. The origins of Ġgantija date back to between 3600 B.C. and 3200 B.C., with the larger temple being the first to be built. Extensive restoration work was carried out in the early 20th century to ensure the monument's preservation.

The Ggantija temples were possibly the site of an Earth Mother Goddess Fertility Cult, with numerous figurines and statues found on site believed to be connected with that cult. Built with rough, coralline limestone blocks, each temple contains five apses connected by a central corridor leading to the innermost trefoil section.

Location: Temples Street, Xaghra

Visit: Opening hours: Monday to Sunday: 9.00-17.00; Last admission: 16.30

Prices: Adults (18 - 59 years): €5.00 ; Youth (12 - 17 years), Senior Citizens (60 years and over), ISIC Card Holders, EURO<26 Card Holders : €3.50 ; Children (6 -11 years): €2.50 ; Infants (1 -5 years): Free

Tel: 2155 3194



26. Church of the Nativity of Our Lady:

Xaghra has a beautiful parish church dedicated to the Nativity of the Virgin Mary, locally known as Il-Vitorja, the Blessed Virgin Mary of Victories. On 8 September 1565, Mary's birthday, the Knights and the Maltese succeeded to overcome a much larger Turkish army and freed Malta and southern Europe from the Islamic onslaught. The church is covered with marble throughout, but its main attraction is a beautiful statue of the young Virgin Mary, il-Bambina, brought from Marseilles in 1878.

Location: Vittorja Square, Xaghra

Masses: From Monday to Saturday: 5:00am, 5:30am, 6:00am, 7:30am, 8:30am, 4:30pm, 7:00pm ; On Monday and Feast Days: 5:00am, 6:00am, 7:00am, 8:30am, 9:45am, 11:00am, 5:00pm, 7:30pm

Tel: 2155 1042



P. Victoria:

Direction from Xaghra to Victoria:

By car:

1. From Ggantija Temples drive along Triq Xaghra
2. Drive straight on to Triq San Anard
3. Triq San Anard straight to Triq Giorgio Borg Olivier in Victoria
4. From here one walks up to the Citadel

By bus:

#301: direction Rabat

Bus stop in Victoria: **Olivier**

27. Citadel and the Cathedral of the Assumption:

The cathedral is a fine baroque structure in the form of a Latin cross and is built entirely of the local limestone on a plan by the Maltese architect Lorenzo Gafa'. Instead of bell towers, a tall campanile with five bells is attached to the north east side. The interior is very graceful and well-proportioned. A flat ceiling in perspective closes the aperture of the dome. This ingenious trompe l'oeil, raised in place in 1739, is one of the cathedral's major attractions and is so convincing that many visitors have to be persuaded that it is not, indeed, a real dome. The other attraction is the statue of Santa Marija, the Assumption, undertaken in Rome in 1897. The statue of the Madonna was embellished with a diamond necklace, a gold belt and a solid silver plinth donated by Gozitans who had emigrated to America. On 15th August, it is taken shoulder-high in procession around the streets of Victoria.

Location: Cathedral Square, Victoria

Masses: From Monday to Saturday: 7:00am, 7:30am, 8:00am, 9:20am, 6:00pm, 7:15pm ; On Sunday and Feast days: 4:45am, 5:45am, 6:45am, 7:45am, 9:00am, 10:00am, 11:00am, 12:00am, 5:00pm, 6:00pm, 7:15pm

Tel: 2155 6087





28. Basilica of St George:

The parish originated in medieval times (definitely before 1450) and the foundation stone of the present church was laid in 1672, rightly referred to as the marble basilica, as it is entirely covered with marble. The bronze and gold gilded canopy over the high altar is indeed impressive, but the main attraction is a statue of the patron saint, St George, sculpted in wood by Pawlu Azzopardi in 1838. It is the first titular statue acquired by a parish church in Gozo. All paintings in the dome and ceiling are by Giovanni Battista Conti of Rome. Matia Preti's two most renowned paintings in Gozo are to be found here . One is the titular painting depicting *St George Victorious Over the Dragon*, the other is *Our Lady Of Holy Souls* or the *Virgin of Mercy with Souls in Purgatory* which was painted in 1689.

Location: Misrha San Gorg, Victoria

Masses: From Monday to Saturday: 5:15am, 6:00am, 7:00am, 7:30am, 8:15am, 9:00am, 10:00am, 11:00am, 12:00am, 5:00pm, 6:00pm, 7:00pm ; From Sunday and Feast days: every hour from 5:00am to 12:00pm; 5:00pm, 6:00pm, 7:00pm

Tel: 2155 6377



Q. Gharb:

Direction from Victoria to Gharb:

By car:

1. Turn right onto Triq Palma
2. At the roundabout, take the 1st exit onto Triq Vajringa
3. Continue on Triq Dawwara Tomba and then on Triq L-Gharb
4. Turn on the right on Triq Ta'Pinu, arrive to the church

By bus:

312: direction San Lawrence
*Bus stop in Ghar: **Lamuta***

29. **The Basilica of Ta' Pinu:**

The Basilica of Ta' Pinu as described by the poet Gorg Zammit upon arrival at Gharb:

“At the crossroads, I turned right and after a while there emerged, in its whiteness (referring to the Malta globigerina stone) against a clear sky the Chapel of Ta' Pinu.”

“In the distance I heard the bells ringing in praise of the Virgin Mary. It was the period when, at sunset, I chanted with tears in my eyes. On that evening only one thought filled my mind: the serenity and rest”

The sanctuary of Ta' Pinu is Malta's most important pilgrimage site with a remarkable collection of ex-voto offerings, testament to local belief in the intercession of the Madonna Ta' Pinu. Pope John Paul II held Mass on its *parvis* during his visit to Gozo in 1990.

There has been a chapel on this site for centuries. In fact, in 1575, the little church here was so old and derelict it was condemned. The story goes, however, that when the workman entrusted to demolish it struck the first blow, his arm broke. This was taken as a divine signal and the chapel was saved. The Sanctuary became popular after one evening in 1883 Karmela Grima heard a female voice calling her from the chapel. Afraid, she nonetheless went in. Here the “voice of our Lady” came again telling her to say three Hail Marys, one for each day the Madonna's body lay in its tomb before her Assumption. The woman did as she was asked, then returned home where she became ill and was unable to return to the chapel for a year. When she recovered, she told a friend what had happened and he said that he too heard voices there and prayed for his sick mother who was cured. Word spread and the chapel rapidly became a centre of pilgrimage and prayers for the sick.

In the 1920s, on land donated by the de Piro family (who own Casa Rocca Piccola in Valletta), a grand Neo-Romanesque church was built – and completed in 1931 – in front of the old chapel, which is still intact behind the present altar. All the pictures are mosaic or stonework, except the one in the old chapel, the “miraculous” early 17th-century painting from which the voice of the Blessed Virgin Mary is said to have come.

The narrow rooms either side of the altar, leading to the old chapel, are full of ex-voto offerings, from early naïve paintings of ships at the sea to crutches, children's clothes and photographs.

Location: Ta' Pinu Road, Gharb

Masses: Sunday: 6:15+8:30+10:00+11:15+17:00 ; Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday: 7:00+8:30+18:30 ; Wednesday: 7:00+8:30+17:30+18:30

Visit: Visitors mustn't wear shorts and women should cover their shoulders

Opening hours: Opening time: From Monday to Saturday: 6:45 – 19:00; Sunday: 6:00 – 12:15 and 13:30 – 19:00 ; Public Holidays: 6:00 – 12:15 and 13:30 – 19:00

Price: Free admission



From Ta' Pinu one arrives to the Chapel of St Dimitru through small off the beaten track paths.

30. Chapel of St Dimitri:

This chapel full of myth and legend is built on a promontory just outside the village of Gharb, close to a cliff called Ras San Mitri (The Cape of St Demetrius). Approached by a country road from Gharb, the chapel stands in a delightful spot and is Gozo's westernmost chapel. An early fifteenth century chapel was rebuilt in 1736 to create the building we see today. The altarpiece above the stone altar shows St Demetrius on horseback with an old woman praying and a young man in chains. This relates to one of several legends about the chapel.

This legend tells how an old woman called Natalizja Cauchi, nicknamed Żgugina, was at home one night with her son Matthew when Barbary corsairs swooped on the island, broke into Żgugina's house, knocked her down and made away with her son. The unfortunate woman ran weeping to St Demetrius' chapel and poured out her heart in passionate prayer, saying: "San Dimitri, bring me back my son, and I'll light your lamp with a measure of oil." St Demetrius heard her supplication. She saw him moving in the painting, whence he rode out in pursuit of the Turkish galley. Soon he was back holding the boy in his arms. He re-entered the picture, but a mark from his horse's hoof remained imprinted on the rock. The grateful Zgugina kept a lamp lit to the saint day and night. The church has been restored and re-opened on the 3rd February 2013.

Gorg Zammit relates that the legend is still alive:

"And it is past midnight; and one night after another, thoughts of the past were buried and forgotten; however the widow's oil lamp never ceased being alight"

Location: Gharb, Gozo

Contact Fr. Joseph Tel. 799 35314 – No mass held in the chapel.

Visit: The chapel can be viewed from behind a gate every day of the week during all hours.

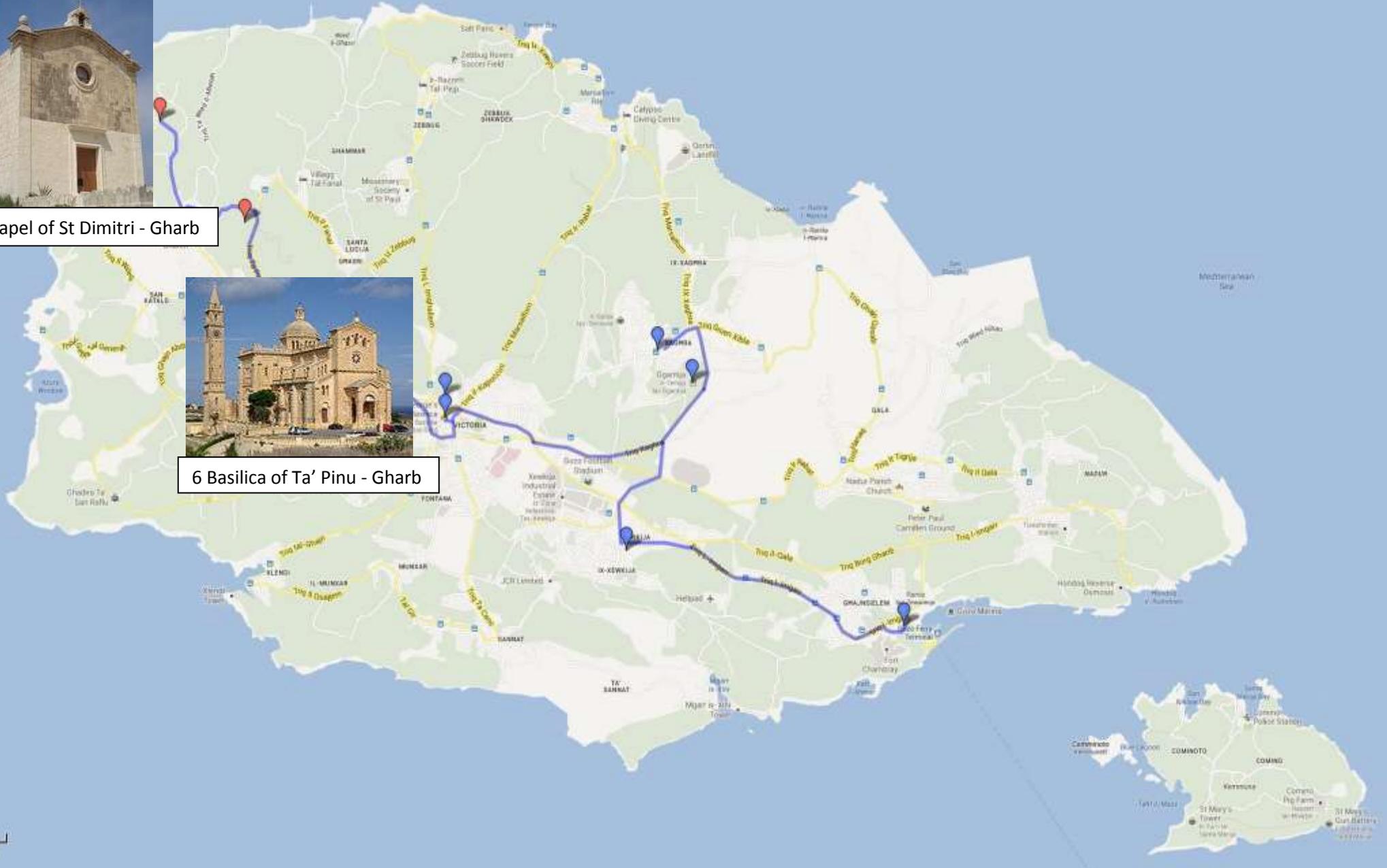




7 Chapel of St Dimitri - Gharb



6 Basilica of Ta' Pinu - Gharb





4 Chapel of Our Lady of Hope - Mosta

5 Chapel of St Paul the Hermit - Mosta

3 Chapel of St Agatha - Rabat

2 Chapel of our Lady tal- Hlas - Qormi

1 Chapel of Lady of Atocia - Hamrun