



MALTA FACTSHEET

Country facts & figures

Official Name: Republic of Malta

Nationality: Maltese

Capital: Valletta

Location: Southern Europe

European Union: Member since 2004

Currency: Euro

Population: 416,110 (2011)

Area: 316 sq km

Time: 1+ GMT

Languages: English (official) & Maltese (official)

Legal System: Common & Civil Law

GDP per Capita (€): 21,000 (2011)

Economic Sectors: Tourism, High value added Manufacturing, Pharmaceuticals, ICT, Financial Services, Education and Training, Aviation, Maritime.

Principal Religion: Roman Catholic. Other religious denominations are also represented with places of worship.

History

Malta has a rich history spanning 7,000 years. Malta has often played a crucial role in the making of history due to its strategic location in the centre of the Mediterranean Sea. The Phoenicians, the Carthaginians, the Romans, the Byzantines, the Arabs and the Spanish all ruled the islands for varying lengths of time. The country's archaeological sites and Neolithic temples are amongst the oldest free standing constructions in the world. Furthermore, the main great influences in Malta have been predominantly the following:

- ❖ the Arabic period proved the basis of the Maltese language;
- ❖ the period of the Knights of St John shaped the islands culturally, socially, commercially and artistically;
- ❖ the British period introduced British justice, a unified modern code of laws.

Geography

Located in the Mediterranean Sea, just south of Sicily, the Maltese archipelago mainly consists of three islands: Malta, Gozo and Comino. Total population is around 400,000 people.

The largest island of the group is Malta, from which the archipelago takes its name. Valletta, the capital and awarded the prestigious title of European Capital of Culture 2018, is the cultural, administrative and commercial centre of the archipelago. Malta is well served with harbours, chief of which is the Valletta Grand Harbour. Malta's international airport is situated five kilometers from the capital.

The second largest island, Gozo is topographically quite different from Malta. Quaintly attractive for its less industrialised way of life, Gozo can be reached from Malta by ferry-boat from Cirkewwa and Pieta, near Valletta, and by helicopter from the airport.

The distance between Malta and the nearest point in Sicily is 93km. The distance from the nearest point on the North African mainland (Tunisia) is 288km. Gibraltar is 1,826km to the west and Alexandria is 1,510km to the east.

Language

Maltese, the national language is of Semitic origin written in Latin script that over the centuries has incorporated many words derived from English, Italian and French. For official purposes, both Maltese and English are recognised and given equal status and use in Government. Likewise, most business correspondence is normally in English. Other languages, particularly Italian and French, are also spoken by the population.

Climate

Malta's climate is strongly influenced by the sea and is typical of the Mediterranean, with mild, rainy winters, February being the coldest month and hot dry summers, August being rather hot. Malta enjoys 300 days of sunshine per year, with a daily average of 6 hours sunshine in mid-winter to more than 12 hours in summer.

Lifestyle

Everything in Malta is close and easily accessible. Living in Malta is a unique experience, especially for those used to hectic city environments and long travels between work and home. The island's small size and wealth of entertainment options means that in Malta, it is possible to have everything in one day, being a day at work, a good work out, and relaxation near the beach.

Malta offers so many archaeological sites, cultural monuments, and other historical treasures. For those who enjoy the night life, Malta offers many bars, restaurants, cafes, discotheques and Casinos. Many sportive activities can be enjoyed throughout the year including tennis, golf, sailing, and windsurfing, horse riding and diving. Malta boasts a packed calendar of cultural events throughout the year including art exhibitions, classical performances, plays and concerts. During the summer months, a visit to a Maltese 'festa' is a must, with every Maltese village or town celebrating its parish patron saint involving village decorations and fireworks.

Malta's Mediterranean cuisine is as healthy as it is tasty. Domestic menus are often set by the food currently in season, particularly aubergines, tomatoes, peppers, courgettes, onions, together with freshly caught fish. Typical year-round dishes include rabbit and bragioli (beef olives), served with the renowned local bread baked in a traditional wood-burning stone oven. However, one finds numerous restaurants in Malta providing a varied menu including French, Chinese and Asian cuisine.

Residents can enjoy an exceptional standard of living. The very low criminal rate of the country allows Malta to be a safe country to live in and an ideal place to base families. As a business destination Malta has much to offer, and as a home, there can be few places more idyllic.

