

Title:

Malta: The Mediterranean's best kept secret

Word Count:

798

Summary:

Malta is an island nation in the Mediterranean which offers travellers a unique experience by offering excellent accommodation options, beautiful beaches and an incredibly high concentration of historical and culturally significant sites.

Keywords:

malta, maltese, gozo, mediterranean, europe, island, european union, holiday, travel, destinations, sun, summer, culture, heritage, history

Article Body:

The Mediterranean island of Malta is one of the major tourist destinations for many West-European countries and is gaining popularity outside of Europe as well.

About Malta

Malta is a small island state, with a population of around 400,000. The country's official languages are Maltese and also English, which is a language most Maltese speak as a result of a period of British rule that ended in 1964. The Maltese are known as friendly (but temperamental) people and are renowned for their hospitality. The vast majority of the Maltese are Catholic and the Church plays an important role in Maltese culture.

Being one of the latest additions to the European Union, Malta is quickly developing into a top tourist resort and is competing with other South-European destinations for a larger share of tourists who seek out a holiday in the Mediterranean. Tourism is one of the main pillars of the Maltese economy and the island nation depends heavily on this sector. While investments are made to promote Malta in the rest of Europe, no single advertising slogan can bring across the benefit Malta offers over other Mediterranean destinations.

Accommodation: Plenty of choice

So what benefits are we talking about here? For starters, the various types of accommodation offered in Malta are suitable for different budgets and holiday

experiences. There's an abundance of 3- and 4-star hotels that are ideal for family holidays, being of good quality at very reasonable package prices. For travellers who prefer to enjoy luxury there are several high-class hotels available in Malta, with global appeal, such as Malta's Hilton hotel and the Radisson hotels in St. Julian's and Golden Bay. Lastly, for adventure travellers there are plenty of lodgings available that are ideal for overnight stays and excellent for budget travel.

Accommodation tips: For family holidays, consider Karanne Aparthotel in St. Paul's Bay - very decent hotel at reasonable package prices, also offering self-catering hotel rooms. For the more high-quality accommodation, the Radisson Golden Sands Hotel at Golden Bay is highly recommended. It's one of the latest additions to Malta's high quality hotels and overlooks one of the most idyllic bays the island has to offer.

#### Malta's beaches

Malta offers plenty of sandy beaches, which are clean, family-friendly, easy to reach and each offer a unique ambiance. Forget long stretches of flat beach and dunes and enjoy the amazing views that most beaches in Malta offer. Most bays are surrounded by hillsides, sometimes even towering cliffs and the splendour of it all is just marvellous and a beautiful sight while floating around in the summer sun.

Beach tips: Ghadira (pronounce: Adeera) is the largest sandy beach in Malta and is situated in the Northern part of the island, nearby the town of Mellieha. This beach is shallow and makes it an ideal beach outing for the family. The best tip is probably to ask the locals about the more secluded beaches. These might be a little bit more difficult to reach, but are less popular amongst fellow tourists and therefore much quieter. Ask for directions and you will be rewarded with a chance to view some of the more exotic beaches around.

#### A unique destination

Finally, one benefit that is unique to Malta is the fact that nowhere in the world there is such a high concentration of historical and culturally significant places of interest. Fascinating sites can be found lying literally minutes away from each other, and they all offer unique experiences and impressions of days gone by. Malta is soaked in history and shows many traces of the various cultures that were introduced to the Maltese by the various rulers that Malta has seen over the ages.

Sight-seeing tips: To start off with, a visit to the capital city of Valletta

will offer you plenty of sight-seeing fun. As you enter through the city gates, Republic Street stretches out in front of you and its side-streets are pathways to several historical sites and buildings. Look for: The Malta Experience, the Upper Barrakka and Fort St. Elmo. Another must-see is Mdina, the former capital city, which is surrounded by bastions and which has a unique ambiance that is hard to forget. Stepping into Mdina is almost like going back into time and recent renovations have given the village back its splendour and offers an experience not to be missed, and not just for those who are particularly interested in cultural trips. Finally, the site of the Neolithic temples at Hagar Qim is another interesting place to visit. The Hagar Qim temples are the oldest free-standing structures in the world and you'll get a unique view of how the early inhabitants of Malta lived, what their culture was like and how religion was an important part of their life.