

# EXPLORE!

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## Malta and Gozo Discovery + Classical Sicily

MALTA - TRIP CODE MLAS

DISCOVERY

### Why book this trip?

Explore some of the most impressive and best preserved ancient sites in the Mediterranean on the diverse islands of Malta, Gozo and Sicily. See the stunning temples, experience the relaxed island lifestyle and sample delicious food and wine along the way.

- **Megalithic Temples** - Discover the UNESCO-Listed Ggantija, Hagar Qim and Mnajdra Temples
- **Valley of the Temples** - See Sicily's most famous Classical remains and the remarkable Doric architecture
- **Erice** - Experience this walled medieval hilltop town with its maze of narrow winding cobbled streets and quaint shops



**INCLUDED MEALS**  
Breakfast: 14  
Lunch: 1



**TRIP STAFF**  
Explore Tour  
Leader  
Driver(s)  
Local Guide(s)



**TRANSPORT**  
Bus  
Boat  
Ferry



**ACCOMMODATION**  
14 nights  
comfortable hotel



**TRIP PACE:**  
Moderate



**GROUP SIZE:**  
12 - 18

## Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

### DAY 1 - Join trip at Malta International Airport and take the ferry to Gozo

Our trip begins at Malta International Airport (MLA) at 4.30pm. If you would like to join the main complimentary airport transfer today, the latest your flight can arrive is 4pm. We will then drive together as a group for about an hour to Cirkewwa to catch the ferry across to the island of Gozo, which takes about 25 minutes'. It then just a short 15 minutes' drive to our hotel, where we will arrive in the evening. You will then have the opportunity to go out for dinner with our Leader who will conduct the welcome meeting in the restaurant.

If your flight arrives earlier in the day, there will be an earlier transfer from the airport departing at midday. If you would like to join this airport transfer, the latest your flight can arrive is 11.30am. Explore will add you onto whichever of these two transfers is closest after your flight arrival time. If you are arriving early but would prefer to join the later transfer at 4.30pm then please inform us of this at the time of booking.

Gozo is fertile and picturesque and has retained much of its traditional character. Only 15 kilometres in length and seven kilometres wide, all parts of the island are easily accessible, and for its size the variety of scenery is incredible.



**ACCOMMODATION:**  
Hotel Calypso (or similar)

**Grade: Comfortable Hotel**





SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

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## DAY 2 - Walking tour of Victoria and the Ggantija temples at Xaghra

We start our exploration in Xlendi, on the south coast, for a short photo stop and walk along the promenade before heading to the island's capital, Victoria; a tiny city named after Queen Victoria in 1887 but locally known as Rabat. After climbing up to the imposing Citadel we'll have a fantastic view of the whole island. We'll explore the old prison where the Knights of Saint John would send their rowdier members to cool off within. The graffitied walls give a fascinating insight into the lives of those who were incarcerated here. Descending to the graceful central square, It Tokk, we have time to wander the cobweb of narrow streets and take some time for lunch. Heading to the town of Xaghra, we reach Ggantija, a megalithic temple complex dating back to 3600 BC and thus named as it was believed only giants could have moved the stones. Some of the colossal stones are over 5 meters long and weigh over 20 tons and the temple still reaches a height of over 7 metres. Predating the Pyramids, this UNESCO World Heritage Site is believed to be the world's oldest free-standing structure. We continue to Calypso's Cave, alleged to be the cave referred to by Homer in The Odyssey. In the afternoon we'll get the chance to stretch our legs on a walk from the area of Calypso's Cave to Ramla Bay where we can enjoy a refreshing dip at the beautiful red sandy beach, if the weather permits, before heading back to the hotel.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel Calypso (or similar)



**Grade: Comfortable Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### DAY 3 - Visit Dwejra and take a scenic walk to Xwejni Bay; ferry to Malta

Dwejra is perhaps Gozo's most spectacular natural landmark. Here, geology, time and sea have worked together to produce some of the most remarkable scenery on the island. We'll see Fungus Rock, notable as the habitat of a rare fungus which was highly prized by the Knights of Saint John for its medicinal properties. You will then have the option to take a boat ride along the coast from the Inland Sea (weather permitting) - a shallow inland lagoon linked to the sea via a 30-metre tunnel. From Dwejra we continue to the Ta Pinu Basilica, renowned for the miraculous cures reported by its supplicants. We drive past neat, well-tended fields with their dry-stone walls and enjoy glorious views on our way to Zebbug; perched on a hilltop above the patchwork of green fields below. As with all these fortified hilltop villages, the far reaching views across the island and beyond are spectacular on a clear day. From Zebbug, we'll take a walk to nearby Xwejni Bay. The coastal scenery along the way is varied - at times we pass limestone outcrops eroded by the wind and sea into unusual shapes, where traditional salt pans dominate the view. This section of the coast is one of the most remote and rugged on the island but our walk is relatively steep downhill. There may be a chance to swim (weather permitting) before we visit to the seaside resort of Malfarsorn, our chosen location for lunch. We head back to Mgarr, via Nadur for a brief photo stop of Comino and the Blue Lagoon, to catch the ferry to Malta where we transfer to our hotel in Sliema near the capital. The capital stretches east from Valletta along scenic bays with busy marinas. A seafront promenade skirts around the coast of this busy town and is great for people watching. Our hotel is in Sliema where many restaurants and bars can be found.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Plaza Hotel (or similar)



**Grade: Comfortable Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### DAY 4 - Tour of Valletta Old City and visit Saint John's Co-Cathedral

This morning we plan to drive from the hotel for a walking tour around the impressive and heavily fortified Old City. Originally built by the Knights of the Order of Saint John in the 16th Century, Valletta, UNESCO World Heritage Site, is built on the steep slopes of the Sceberras Peninsula and surrounded by two huge natural harbours which have helped to make it such an important strategic port at the crossroads of the Mediterranean. Fort Saint Elmo guards the entrance to the harbours. Walking down

Triq ir Republika - the main thoroughfare in the centre of the city, we visit the elaborately decorated Saint John's Co-Cathedral and the grandiose Grandmaster's Palace with its fine collection of artworks. During the Great Siege of Malta in 1565, over 400 knights perished and as a sign of remembrance, the floor of St John's Co-Cathedral is covered in skeleton tombstones. We'll also admire the classic views across the Grand Harbour from the Upper Barrakka Gardens. Your afternoon is free for your own personal exploration.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Plaza Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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## DAY 5 - Walking tour of the Three Cities and Grand Harbour cruise

This morning we head to the historic Three Cities of Senglea, Vittoriosa and Cospicua, considered to be 'the cradle of Maltese history' as settlers and rulers from the Phoenicians to the British all made use of the defences here. The Knights of the Order of Saint John settled in Vittoriosa in 1530 and used the city as their headquarters. The Three Cities have retained much of their romantic medieval charm and we'll see the Inquisitor's Palace in Vittoriosa and admire the views from the Gardjola Gardens - a look-out post to guard the harbour entrance - in Senglea. Driving on to Marsaxlokk, we will take some free time for lunch and exploration. This charming town is Malta's largest fishing port with its colourful boats and excellent fish restaurants. After lunch we will transfer to Sliema for a harbour cruise because the best way to explore the creeks and dockyards is by boat. Only by travelling across the water does one appreciate the sheer magnitude of the ramparts and forts that protect the city.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Plaza Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel





SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### **DAY 6 - Explore Hagar Qim Temples and enjoy a local food and wine tasting**

A short drive brings us to Hagar Qim and Mnajdra; another incredible Megalithic temple complex and UNESCO World Heritage Site. For three millennia, from around 3600 - 3200 BC, the Maltese archipelago was home to a unique, temple-building civilisation. The discovery of many fat lady statuettes in the vicinity of Hagar Qim has shown it to have been built to worship the Venus of Malta, the sleeping goddess of fertility. Mnajdra is probably the most atmospheric of all of Malta's temples, occupying an isolated position overlooking the rocky coastline. We walk between the two temple groups along a short well laid path before continuing a short distance along a rough country path to the Tal Hamrija costal 17th century tower to enjoy breathtaking scenery as the cliffs rise out of the blue Mediterranean Sea. We return to our bus where we drive down to the Blue Grotto where we have the option of taking a boat trip (weather permitting) to see a series of natural caverns which glow with brilliant corals and sea sponges. We'll then spend the afternoon sampling a range of local food specialities. We'll learn how sun dried tomatoes and the local wine is produced and then get to sample these along with a selection of other vegetables farmed in the region as well as Maltese bread and olive oil.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Plaza Hotel (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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## DAY 7 - Visit to Mdina, San Anton Botanical Gardens and the Mosta Dome

This morning we'll take a short transfer to Malta's Medieval old capital, Mdina, for a tour on foot around this beautifully preserved city. Its warren of winding, narrow alleys (mostly too narrow for cars) and fortified walls contain a number of impressive buildings such as the Palazzo Falzon and cathedral dedicated to the Conversion of Saint Paul. We'll also take time to see Domus Romana (a townhouse usually belonging to Roman dignitaries) and Saint Paul's eerie catacombs (underground). After our visit to Mdina, we'll drive to Mosta Dome and San Anton Botanical Gardens; the private residence of the President of Malta.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Plaza Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST & LUNCH

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## DAY 8 - Fly from Malta to Sicily; evening arrival in Syracuse

Depending on the time of our flight you normally have the majority of today free in Malta to explore or relax as you choose. In the evening we will drive to the airport for the flight to Catania in Sicily. Our flight arrives at approximately 10.30pm (flight times are subject to change) and on arrival we will drive to Syracuse, which takes about an hour. It's therefore best to have an early dinner in Malta before boarding our flight. We will either meet those members of the group just travelling on the Sicily part of this trip tonight or tomorrow morning.

During the Greek Classical period, Syracuse was the largest city in the ancient world - even bigger than Athens. Now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, it is also notable as being the birthplace of antiquity's greatest mathematician, Archimedes.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Jolly Aretusa Palace Hotel (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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## DAY 9 - Discover Syracuse's historic Neapolis and Ortygia Island

We start today by driving the short distance to the city's Neapolis Archaeological Park, where a local guide will show us its famous Greek theatre hewn out of the hillside and the fine Roman amphitheatre where gladiators once fought.

We then drive over to Ortygia Island, where we have free time to have lunch and explore. This small island is the historical centre of the city and home to many landmarks such as the Fonte of Aretusa, Temple of Apollo ruins, Maniace Castle, and the narrow streets of the Jewish Quarter with its old baths found under the Residenza Alla Giudecca Hotel. Alternatively you could take a short boat trip along the rocky cave-strewn coastline. Ortygia Island is also a great place to go to a local cafe or restaurant and sit and watch the world go by. Its limestone buildings and pretty harbour front make it an ideal place to sip coffee and enjoy a cake. Perhaps try cannolo, a traditional Sicilian dessert, a crisp shell filled with sweet ricotta and chocolate chips topped with candied fruits. If you prefer a savoury snack then arancini is a rice ball stuffed with a range of fillings such as beef ragu and gooey cheese - it's simply delicious.

Leaving Syracuse this afternoon we drive for a couple of hours inland to Piazza Amerina, a charming market town set amid rolling countryside, which will be our base for the night. This isn't a town on the tourist trail and tonight you have the opportunity to dine in one of the delightful family run restaurants. As you stroll along through the peaceful streets and picturesque squares you can see the local men gathering to discuss the events of the day and to put the world to rights, like they will have done for generations.

Tonight will be your first opportunity to sample Sicilian cuisine and wine. According to Greek legend the god Dionysus brought wine to Sicily, whereas it's more likely that wine has been produced here since ancient times due to the island being blessed with plenty of sunshine and reliably moderate rainfall, along with fertile volcanic soils. Nowadays there is a huge variety of both delicious red and white wines to choose from. You might like to try a typically Sicilian dish such as pasta with sardines and wild fennel, aubergine stew or boiled pork in salsa verde and saffron.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel Villa Romana (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel





SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### **DAY 10 - See the mosaics at Villa Romana del Casale and the Valley of the Temples**

Today we will visit two of Sicily's most important historic sites. We will start at the Villa Romana del Casale, which is just a short hop from our hotel and this should mean that we get to look around before the crowds arrive. A local guide will show us the ruins of this magnificent country mansion that contains some incredibly well-preserved and beautiful Roman mosaics, such as the famed bikini girls, fishing cupids and hunting scenes featuring exotic wildlife like tigers, rhinos and elephants. The mosaics are UNESCO-Listed and spread over a remarkable 3,500 square metres.

We drive on to Agrigento, which was once one of the most prosperous cities in Sicily. The ancient acropolis, now the modern city, overlooks a southern ridge, misleadingly named the Valley of the Temples. Visiting these temples with a local guide, we will walk around the ruins of the largest Doric temple ever constructed - the Temple of Zeus. Standing next to this monumental structure you are only as tall as the first few entry steps and so you tend to feel very small starrng up at the gigantic pillars above you. We will also explore the perfectly-proportioned Doric columns of the Temple of Concord, as well as the oldest temple in the complex, honouring Hercules.

Later this afternoon, we will drive for a couple of hours north along the spectacular coastline to tonight's hotel in Marsala. Our hotel this evening is about 25 minutes walk from the centre of town. We will go into the centre to the Porta Garibaldi from where our Explore Leader will take us on a short walk through the old town and there is the option to have a wine tasting to try the well-known Marsala dessert wine, which originates from here. After time for dinner we'll return to our hotel.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel President (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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## DAY 11 - Explore Erice and the Greek ruins of Segesta en route to Palermo

This morning we drive up the twisty mountain roads to one of Sicily's best kept secrets, the delightful medieval hilltop walled town of Erice. Here we'll have the morning free to soak up the atmosphere and get lost among the maze of cobbled narrow streets. At 750 metres above sea level, we hope to have impressive views over the valley and sea below (cloud permitting). The town is home to a number of churches that you may choose to visit and perhaps you'd like to go into the courtyard of the Norman fortress, Castello di Venere or the nearby Garden of Balio, which offers excellent views. It is also worth noting that Erice is home to Sicily's most famous cake shop - Maria Grammatic.

Early afternoon will see us travelling on to Segesta - one of the best-preserved ancient sites. Once home to the Elymians, who it's believed descended from the Trojans. The two most famous monuments found here are the Doric temple and the amphitheatre that sit on the slopes of Mount Barbaro in a stunning natural setting - no modern day structures mar our appreciation of the site. Along the old entrance roads to the city is the Sanctuary of Contrada Mango and the Agora - the central meeting place of the city. Near to the amphitheatre you can see the more recent remains dating from around 1442 of a castle, mosque and church. If you visit in springtime then on a walk around the site you can spot colourful wildflowers and giant fennel. The site is large and hilly, so there is a complimentary bus service that operates in the archaeological site, which we can make use of.

On leaving magnificent Segesta, we drive for around an hour along the north coast to our hotel in Sicily's capital, Palermo where we have the evening free.



### ACCOMMODATION:

Ibis Styles Palermo Cristal (or similar)



**Grade: Comfortable Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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## DAY 12 - Visit to the Palatine Chapel and Monreale Cathedral; free time in Palermo

This morning we will get to experience some of Sicily's Norman history. In Palermo we will visit the Palatine Chapel with a local guide. This is the royal chapel of the Norman kings of Sicily and is packed with spectacular Byzantine mosaics.

Driving into the hills just a short distance out of the capital, we will go with our guide to visit the majestic Norman Cathedral of Monreale. Founded in 1174 by William the Good, the cathedral is also famous for its extensive mosaics, as well as its beautiful cloisters showing both Romanesque and Islamic influences.

Returning to Sicily's capital, the afternoon is free to enjoy Palermo. The city stands at the foot of Monte Pellegrino, with the fertile valley of Concha d'Oro behind. It was one of the richest cities in Europe from

the 9th to the 12th centuries AD when Islamic culture, Byzantine magnificence and medieval Europe were merging into a fascinating civilisation. Today, the city maintains a sense of cultural diversity and is famous for its art, music and food.

You might like to visit Palermo's cathedral with its ornate facade, the grand Teatro Massimo opera house, the natural beauty of the Botanical Gardens or the extensive catacombs under the city, to name just a few of the attractions on offer.

If you fancy a snack whilst exploring then you could try panelle, which is a popular street food. It's a fritter made from chickpeas eaten in a roll like a hot sandwich. If you fancy something sweet then cassata is Sicily's most famous cake, which is normally covered in marzipan and green icing over a moist fruity sponge layered with ricotta.



**ACCOMMODATION:**

Ibis Styles Palermo Cristal (or similar)



**Grade: Comfortable Hotel**



**SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE**



**MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST**

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### **DAY 13 - Drive along the coast with a stop in Cefalu en route to Giardini Naxos**

Leaving Palermo this morning we drive along the spectacular northern coastline to the picturesque fishing village of Cefalu. Here we stop to explore the town and have the opportunity to go for a swim. You might like to visit the Norman Cathedral, with its stupendous mosaic of Christ Pantocrator. Alternatively if you're feeling active then you can walk up the steps passed the Temple of Diana ruins to the Castle on the Rock (the ascent is 278 metres) and from here the sea views are incredible, and make the climb to get there worthwhile.

From Cefalu we'll continue our drive along the coast and make a brief stop in Messina, where you have the chance to visit to the Messina Museum or the cathedral. After stretching our legs we'll drive on to the small coastal town of Giardini Naxos, which will be our base for the next two nights. This sweet little fishing town sits in the shadow of Mount Etna and is the spot of the oldest Greek settlement in Sicily back in 735 BC. It's a great spot for relaxing beside the sea and tucking into fresh fish and gelato. Sicily has some of the creamiest and most tasty gelato in Italy, so it's definitely worth sampling.



**ACCOMMODATION:**

Hotel la Riva (or similar)



## Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### **DAY 14 - Chance to travel to Mount Etna; afternoon in Taormina**

This morning, you have the opportunity to join a tour to explore the lunar landscape, craters and lava fields of Mount Etna - one of the most active volcanoes in Europe. You drive from our hotel to the cable car base at Rifugio Sapienza, which is on the south side of Etna and 1,900 metres above sea level. Here there are several cafes and gift shops and you can also see the old Silvestri Craters. From here you can board the cable car up to 2,500 metres where there's another cafe and gift shop and you can have a walk around on the mountainside. From here you have the option of boarding a four-wheel drive coach up to 2,900 metres to take a short walk (around 45 minutes) with a mountain guide to view the craters formed in the 2002/3 eruptions and the fumaroles at around 3,000 metres, which is as close to the summit as we're currently permitted to go. You then return down the mountain the same way.

Alternatively, you might prefer to enjoy a more sedate morning enjoying the coastal location of Giardini Naxos. Here there is an archaeological zone that doesn't feature a huge number of ruins but it does offer a very pleasant walk through the citrus groves. There is also a small museum here with some interesting findings from different historical periods.

This afternoon, we will all meet back up and travel the short distance to Taormina, Sicily's most famous resort. Once a favourite haven for the likes of D. H Lawrence and Oscar Wilde, Taormina is still today a popular tourist destination. After a walk around this chic and beautiful town, with its pretty medieval churches and charming streets, it's easy to understand why. With a local guide we'll visit the Greek Theatre. The snow-capped Mount Etna acts as a spectacular backdrop to the remarkably preserved columned stage and it's easy to see why this is possibly the most famous view in all of Sicily and it makes for a superb photograph. We'll also visit the Roman Odeon before having the rest of the afternoon free to explore before returning to Giardini Naxos in the early evening.

You might choose to visit the Villa Comunale Gardens which offer a peaceful escape from Taormina's bustling main street. Here you can walk amidst magnolia, hibiscus and bougainvillea trees. If you'd like to enjoy a drink and a snack then we'd recommend taking a stroll down one of Taormina's side streets where you'll find a variety of less-busy bars and restaurants than in the very centre of town.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel la Riva (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### **DAY 15 - Trip ends in Giardini Naxos, Sicily**

The trip ends after breakfast at our hotel in Giardini Naxos.

There are no activities planned today, so you are free to depart from Giardini Naxos at any time. If your flight is departing later in the day luggage storage facilities are available at our hotel. If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you need to depart from Catania Fontanarossa Airport (CTA), which is about one hours' drive.



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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## **Trip information**

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### **Climate and country information**

#### **Malta**

##### **Climate**

April/May and October/November are pleasantly warm. June/September are the hottest months.

<b>Time difference to GMT</b>	<b>Plugs</b>	<b>Religion</b>	<b>Language</b>
+1	3 Pin Flat	Roman Catholic	Maltese and English

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### **Budgeting and packing**

#### **Optional activities**

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

A selection of optional activities are listed below to help you budget for your holiday. Whilst the trip

price you pay before you travel includes a great selection of highlights, we have also built in free time to allow you the flexibility to choose from a carefully selected range of additional excursions or to take time to relax, the choice is yours. At certain destinations along the way there may be several options to choose from and it may not be possible to fit all the activities in; your Explore Leader will be able to give advice on which are the most suitable for you.

## **Clothing**

Throughout most of the year it's best to dress for hot conditions, although light rainwear and a warm fleece/jacket for nights when temperatures can drop is recommended. If you're travelling in March, October or November then the weather can be cooler and rain more frequent, so it's best to pack layers and rainwear just in case.

Anyone intending to visit Mount Etna should bring warm clothing as snow is a common occurrence (even in June). Wind and waterproof garments are therefore suggested for those wishing to visit the volcano.

Women should avoid bare arms and shoulders in churches, so it's best to carry a scarf or shawl.

## **Footwear**

It's best to pack comfortable walking shoes for exploring and sandals for relaxing and going to the beach to swim.

You will want warmer shoes and socks if you're going to go up Mount Etna.

## **Luggage**

20kg

### **Luggage: On tour**

One main piece of baggage and daypack. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself.

## **Equipment**

Sicily is located off the southern coast of Italy and Malta is between Sicily and the North African coast, and therefore the weather on both islands tends to be sunny, so a sunhat and sunscreen are essential. You should also bring a two litre water bottle, torch in case of emergencies, and insect repellent. You may also wish to bring a swimming costume and towel in order to make the most of swimming opportunities off the coastline. At any time of year it can be snowy on top of Mount Etna and considerably colder, so if you plan to travel up the volcano we'd recommend bringing gloves and a woolly hat.

## **Tipping**

### **Explore leader**

Tipping isn't compulsory, and we work hard to ensure that our leaders all receive a fair wage. You may however, want to recognise a leader that has done a great job or really added to your trip by giving them a tip. We're often asked about the recommended amount. It is a tricky one, and down to personal preference, but we would recommend £15 to £20 per person per week as a guideline.

## Local crew

Although voluntary, tipping is a recognised part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. Accordingly, you should allow approximately £40 of local currency for tipping. In order to make things easier for you, the Explore Leader may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the trip.

## Malta

### Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Dinner price	Beer price	Water price
£24.00 - 28.00	£2.00 - 4.00	£1.00 - 2.00

### Foreign Exchange

#### Local currency

Euro.

#### Recommended Currency For Exchange

Since there is relatively little opportunity to change money on this trip, it is advisable to arrive with a supply of Euros to avoid inconvenience.

#### Where To Exchange

Money can be exchanged in the hotels in Gozo and Malta, Catania Airport, Agrigento, Palermo and Taormina in Sicily.

#### ATM Availability

ATM's are widely available in Gozo, Malta and Sicily

#### Credit Card Acceptance

Large shops and restaurants.

#### Travellers Cheques

Are not recommended due to the high rate of commission and limited opening times of banks. Changing them can be very time consuming.

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## Transport, Accommodation & Meals

### Transport Information

Bus, Boat, Ferry

### Accommodation notes

In Sliema the hotel we use is in a great location on the main promenade and just across the road from the

nearest public beach. The hotel has two swimming pools, a restaurant, pizzeria, two bars and a cafe. The bedrooms have simple decor and they vary in size and layout. All are equipped with air conditioning, TV, telephone, hairdryer, safe (additional charge payable locally) and have an en suite bathroom. Some rooms also have a balcony and the view from the rooms varies - some are internal facing or have a street or partial or full sea view. Rooms are allocated on a run of house basis. The hotel does have single rooms, which are smaller than the twin rooms and may be allocated to you if you book our Single Room Option.

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## **Essential Information**

### **Government Travel Safety Advice**

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

### **Under 18 immigration guidance**

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

### **Price Guarantee**

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

### **Visa and Passport Information**

Italy and Malta: Visas are not required by UK, E.U Nationals, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office. All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant embassy prior to departure.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may be able to apply through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See [www.travcour.com](http://www.travcour.com) to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

### **Booking conditions**

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and [Booking Conditions](#).



## Transfers

Find out more about [Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions](#) before you book.

### Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

### Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The complimentary transfers will be arranged from the Explore designated airport or train station to your trips joining point, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. Generally the airport or station that Explore have selected will be the one that is closest to the town or city where the trip starts, or the one nearest to the joining point. It will be either an airport or train station but not both.

The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Polar, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

## Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

## Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. Read more about them [here](#).

### Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

### **Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore**

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

### **Ability to swim**

No

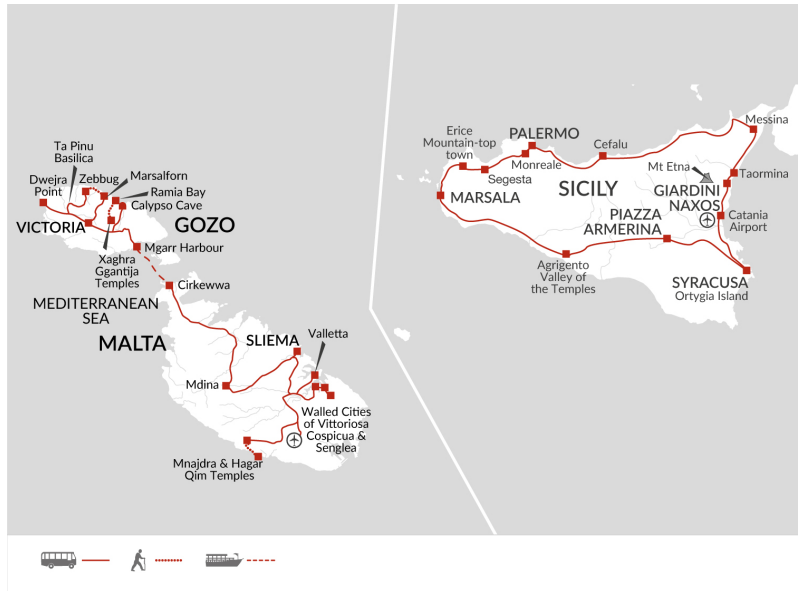
### **Malta**

#### **Vaccinations**

Nothing required. Tetanus recommended. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at Explore Travel Health and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

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### **Additional Information**



## Why book this trip

On this two week trip to Malta, Gozo and Sicily experience the highlights and contrasts between all three of these stunning Mediterranean islands. Visit a variety of sites from different historic eras, often accompanied by a local guide in order to get the most out of each visit. See the coastal and mountain scenery including Mount Etna and have the opportunity to swim in the sea.

## Reviews



**AWARD WINNING  
EXPLORE LEADERS**



**PRICE GUARANTEE  
PROMISE**



**AIRPORT  
TRANSFERS**