Gay Malta Cultural Tour

2020 October 10 to 17

A Gay Travel Malta Cultural Tour

Physical Challenge:

Malta’s beautiful islands have long prompted territory wars, and some of its temples were built long before Stonehenge or Giza’s pyramids. When visiting now, Malta will remain an unforgettable experience. With some of the most sparkling waters in the world, Malta’s man-made monuments are a complement to these islands’ natural beauty.
$5698

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- **Kayak** the beautiful Maltese coastline with its beautiful blue seas, clear skies, and many sea caves.
- **Explore** Malta's baroque capital, Valetta- recognized as the European Capital of Culture in 2018.
- **Cruise** in a private boat ride through the Blue Grotto
- **Visit** the Manoel Theater, one of the oldest working theaters in Europe.
- **Relax** every day over incredible cuisine and wine at some of Malta’s most famous eateries.
- **Tour** the Hagar Qim and Mnajdra Temples, sites that are 5500 years old and theorized to have been built for the worship of a fertility deity.
- **Join** the fun as we ride our quad bikes around the beautiful island of Gozo.
- **Sail** for a whole day on a racer-cruiser performance boat with an incredible combination of comfort and quickness.

Some of the location shootings for Game of Thrones took place here, as Malta's capital city is always referred to as a baroque masterpiece. The area’s natural features and its man-made attractions have bolstered travel over the past 20 years in the Maltese Islands, and on this tour, you will enjoy the region’s natural splendors, beautiful lodgings, and incredible cuisine as you peruse Malta’s rich Roman, Arabic and European cultural histories. Even our lodgings pamper us with the best combination of historic details and modern amenities.
Day 1: Arrive in Malta

Today everyone arrives in Malta and a private transfer will be provided from the airport to the first hotel. Therefore, this evening we will enjoy a welcome dinner to celebrate our arrival.

Day 2: Caverns and Temples
After a tasty breakfast this morning, we will start out with a lovely walk in the country, just 20 minutes away from the island’s busy, central-east portion. This is a moment to properly introduce yourself to Malta, to breathe in the serene views of geography, sky, and air. It’s a mellow hike, but we recommend that you are able to walk on paths, over rocks, and on a slight incline.

Next, our transportation arrives to help us time-travel back some 5500 years as we visit the Hagar Qim and Mnajdra Temple sites. In 1839, excavation started on these religious sites and scholars then and since theorize that they were built to worship a type of fertility deity (something we don’t hear about too much these days), but these two temples in Malta are dated to 1000 years preceding the pyramids at Giza and Stonehenge.

Later today, we will also enjoy a boat ride through the famous Blue Grotto. This is a series of sea caverns that showcase the area’s beautiful waters and the interplay of dark and light. It’s a refreshing excursion!

We will wrap up the evening with a visit to Hypogeum. Discovered in 1902, this remarkable 5000+ old temple only allows 10 visitors per hour. So look forward to having space while you explore this ancient temple.

**Day 3: Exploring Valetta - the Capital City**
After our breakfast, we get to explore the famous Baroque capital recognized in 2018 as the European Capital of Culture. Everywhere we look today behind these city gates, there will be historic architecture and culture juxtaposed with contemporary life.

Then, overlooking the Grand Harbor is The Upper Barrakka Gardens. As you stand on the terrace, breathe in deeply as you take in the panoramic view of the Mediterranean’s only natural harbor, framed in behind by the Three Cities.

Later we will visit The Manoel Theater, one of Europe’s oldest working venues. This Baroque gem of a theater has stunning acoustics plus a packed calendar featuring regional and world performances, in both English and Maltese.

Next, we’ll enjoy a fantastic, short 45-minute film about the comprehensive history of the Maltese Islands and then make our way to the Hospital of the Knights of St. John, an architectural marvel bound up in a legacy; That of a dedicated, brotherhood of men who devoted themselves to helping wounded and ill pilgrims.

Today’s lunch is delicious plus interactive. We’ll dine at ‘Nenu the Baker,’ argued to be the best venue in Valetta in which to try a variety of traditional Maltese dishes. In this bakery, that has evolved over time into one of the world’s most iconic restaurants, be sure to try some ftira, a famous pizza-like item, done Maltese style.

The afternoon will be spent at Valletta’s National Library, one of the most venerable treasures of the Maltese Islands. This famous library has collections spanning back centuries to the medieval ages. A National Library Librarian joins us for this leg of our tour today and will describe some of the great treasures in these collections as we explore the building.

The day will wrap up with an Upper Barrakka elevators ride down to the old Customs House where a Dghajsa (a traditional Maltese boat) awaits to give us a private cruise of the Grand Harbor. Megalithic peoples once sailed these waters. So did the Phoenicians, the Romans, Ottomans, British, Napoleon and now you! You’re part of Maltese history as well!

**Day 4: Falconry Experience**
Today’s excursion will be a private Falconry Experience from a local who’s life has revolved around birds since a young age. He has 11 birds of prey in his care, including various falcons, owls and hawks. Among these are a Maltese Falcon and Barn Owls. Five of them are trained to fly and return to him!

Lunch today will be a fantastic fish lunch in the village of Marsaxlokk, Malta’s chief fishing village plus a prime spot to watch the brightly painted fishing boats. We’ll be launching at one of Marsaxlokk’s finest restaurants. The rest of your day will be free for enjoying at your leisure.

**Day 5: Dingli Cliffs and Mdina**

Today’s views include the Dingli Cliffs, which at 253 meters above sea level, are the highest point in the Maltese Islands. Therefore, our views here will be over terraced fields below plus the open sea and the mostly bare, uninhabited islet called the island of Filfla. Shortly after this view from on high, our ground transportation will take us to nearby Clapham Junction to examine the mysterious cart ruts left in Malta’s ancient limestone. This assortment of deep ruts, tracks, grooves, and channels leaves scholars scratching their heads.

The old Roman City of Melita was divided in two when the Arabs ruled for 200 years. So the Citadel became known as Mdina and the rest of the area was called Rabat. Mdina fits Europe’s best archetype of an ancient walled city. As we walk through, you’ll marvel at its combination of medieval and baroque architecture. Rabat has also been a major player in Malta’s past and is a prime source of its cultural heritage. Here we’ll see St. Paul’s Church and Grotto as well as the St. Paul’s Catacombs.

When we break for lunch today we’ll enjoy a farm prepared meal with straight-to-table ingredients. Here, in one of Malta’s most rural areas, we’ll find ourselves in a lovely oasis enjoying a delicious assortment of local food and wine.
We’ll hear some artisan skills today when we meet Francesco, a musician who restores works at the Heritage Malta. He also creates traditional Maltese instruments. You’ll marvel at the bagpipe made from a whole goat and enjoy hearing fun stories and histories about these instruments.

Next, we will jump on a boat that takes us on a 25-minute crossing, from North Malta to the island of Gozo, the second-largest island in the archipelago. If you’ve read Homer’s Odyssey, you’ll know that Gozo has a long association with Ogygia, the island home of the nymph, Calypso.

Our dinner tonight at our hotel in Gozo treats us to more fresh, local fare as we toast our day’s adventures.

**Day 6: Gozo Island - By Land and Sea**

There is really no better way to experience the island of Gozo than on a Quad Bike. So enjoy a ride along less-traveled roads to discover unbelievable beauty and tranquility. We will enjoy a deliciously prepared picnic lunch at one of our stops.

Then, kayaking later today will give us the freedom to discover the unique beauty of the Maltese coastline and clear blue seas. The island is littered with caves that we can freely explore.

We will enjoy a tasty dinner at the water’s edge this evening. Xlendi Bay provides the perfect backdrop to an evening dining experience. So enjoy a stroll along the bay and take it all in.
Day 7: Sailing the Mediterranean

This is our private sailboat day. After breakfast, we’ll board Allegra, a 47.7 Beneteau racer/cruiser performance boat. She has all the luxuries of a modern cruiser coupled with a hull design and sail configuration of a competitive racer. She’s comfortable, fun and fast. We’ll have lunch on the sailboat and in the evening we’ll have our farewell dinner.

Day 8: Depart Malta

Today we depart from our hotel to the airport. We trust you had an amazing time in the Maltese Islands and will leave with a lifetime of fond memories and new friends.

Stay longer and join our Puglia Villa Culinary Experience in Italy

Savor the bounty of the rich traditions of Italy’s Adriatic coastal region of Puglia. By day explore mountain towns, seaside villages, Swabian castles, and cave homes that pre-date the Renaissance. Then each evening relax in our authentic 14th-century villa over a dinner featuring produce, meat, and fish from the region, and olive oil and wine from the villa’s own fields.

Click here for details.
Price includes:  Airport Transfers; 7 nights accommodations; 7 breakfasts, 5 lunches, and 4 dinners; Expert guiding and private transportation service included on touring days; Entrance to attractions and experiences indicated on the itinerary; Services of knowledgeable local guides; Services of a HE Travel tour host (with a minimum number of participants); HE Travel provides complimentary Medical & Evacuation Insurance for every US Resident on our group tours who does not have other coverage.

Not included:  Airfare to and from Malta; Attractions and meals not described in the itinerary; Personal items including alcoholic beverages, snacks, laundry, and telephone calls; Gratuities for guides and HE host.

Optional Tour Choices:

$1600 Single Supplement (for solo travelers who wish to enjoy a private bedroom and bathroom)

“Malta is much more than the cruise ship stop of Valletta. With over 6,000 years of history, there is much to explore in-depth.” – Mike S. San Francisco, CA

What if I am traveling alone?

Most of our trips draw more single travelers than couples. When couples do join us, it’s usually because they’re looking forward to interacting with a gay group; if they wanted a holiday by themselves, they wouldn’t have signed up to travel with us. Furthermore, the activities included with our trips serve as natural ice-breakers. Within a day, you’ll be traveling with friends. You don’t need to pay the single supplement if you’re traveling alone. We’ll be happy to match you with a roommate. Pay the single supplement only if you want a bedroom to yourself. For selected trips, including cruises, we will charge half the single supplement if you request a roommate but we can’t match you with someone.

Where does the tour start and end?

This tour starts and ends in Malta. Please plan to fly out anytime after 11 am on the last day.

What is the Activity Level of This Tour?

The main physical activities involve kayaking quad bike riding and walking on guided tours.

What will the hotels be like?
While in Malta, we will stay at a 5-star luxury hotel. This Valletta icon is a fine example of the city’s revered architectural traditions. While in Goza, we will stay on the edge of picturesque Xlendi Valley in an 18 room Boutique Hotel.

**Additional Questions**

For answers to your additional questions, please email info@hetravel.com or call 305-294-8174.