

The best MARCO POLO Insider Tips

Our top 15 Insider Tips



INSIDER TIP Regional cuisine

Everything on the “One Kilometer Platter” at the organic restaurant *The Cliffs* was either raised or cultivated within a 1 km radius → p. 74

INSIDER TIP Luxury in a palazzo

Truly exclusive addresses don’t advertise much. You are just lucky if you find them. This applies to the *Xara Palace*, a gem among luxury hotels where the atmosphere of bygone days lives on (photo right) → p. 72

INSIDER TIP In the digital age

At the cafe & restaurant *Iplace* in Marsaxlokk, 80 iPads are available for use with the free WiFi. The menu and some games are also installed on them → p. 62

INSIDER TIP Romantic boat tour

For a special occasion, why not hire a traditional *dghajsa*? The skippers will take you round every nook of the Grand Harbour or along the coast → p. 125

INSIDER TIP Gozo from above

In *Xewkija*, you can walk around the cupola of the village church at a height of 50 m (164 ft) and enjoy the bird’s eye view of the entire island plus Victoria → p. 92

INSIDER TIP Healthy and delicious

Regional culinary and cosmetic products from Gozo are sold in the lovingly-maintained small shop *Organika* in Victoria by a lovely French couple → p. 93

INSIDER TIP Be a temple dancer

In the restaurant close to *Hagar Qim Temple* you can eat well at mid-day and dance on Saturday nights → p. 62

INSIDER TIP Meal with a sea view

The beach of Ghar Lapsi is small and stony, but to make up for that it has one of the finest and best-located restaurants on the island: *Blue Creek* → p. 74

INSIDER TIP How the other half lived

Casa Rocca Piccola, a 16th-century palace in Valletta, conveys a lively impression of how the Maltese nobility lived → p. 36

INSIDER TIP Where climbers like to fall

Over 1300 routes in 30 climbing areas are marked on Malta, including some where *climbers* can dive straight into the water from the rock face – it takes your breath away just to watch (photo left) → p. 113

INSIDER TIP Restaurant bunker

The *il-Barri* restaurant in Mgarr on Malta doesn’t reveal from the outside what lies within: generous portions of excellent Maltese food and a 225 m long (738 ft) bunker → p. 83

INSIDER TIP Sounds delicious

At *La Valette* and *The King’s Own* in Valletta, enjoy a simple meal – with luck to the sound of rehearsals → p. 103

INSIDER TIP City and sea

Stay on the sea at the elegant *Excelsior Grand*, featuring an indoor and outdoor pool, just a ten minute’s walk from Valetta. If you return late at night, you can still stop for a drink at the hotel’s Harbour View Bar because it never closes → p. 51

INSIDER TIP Nature walks

Explore the natural world of Malta on guided tours through the countryside in small groups. Choose from among 6 different options or book your own private botanical exploration tour → p. 114

INSIDER TIP Down in the quarry

Where does the stone from which almost everything on Malta was built come from and how was it quarried and worked? Find the answers with the slide show at *The Limestone Heritage* and a tour through this abandoned quarry near Siggiewi → p. 75



BEST OF...

GREAT PLACES FOR FREE

Discover new places and save money

FOR FREE

● *Superb harbour view*

Although the *Upper Barracca Gardens* (photo below) are the loveliest in Valletta, you don't have to pay to get in. Walk through the relaxing park and enjoy the bird's-eye view of all the shipping and other traffic in the Grand Harbour → p. 45

● *Fragile works of art*

How do the glasses, vases, figures and free-formed sculptures made of glass that have become standard souvenirs on Malta come to life? Watch over the shoulders of the craftsmen as they create these hand-blown works of art at *Mdina Glass* and *Valletta Glassblowers* → p. 71

● *Dancing fountains*

Sometimes you have to pay for the privilege of watching dancing fountains, but at Malta's *Smart City*, they are part of the free entertainment for restaurant guests and those walking by. You can also enjoy free musical performances at the Grand Steps Auditorium → p. 18

● *Class acts at no charge*

The highlights of the annual *Victoria International Arts Festival* on Gozo between mid-June and mid-July are the 30 concerts put on by international talents, most of whom play classical music. The best part of all: the concerts don't cost a thing → p. 93

● *Tricks of the parking trade*

If the attendants at the craftsmen's village *Ta' Qali* had their way, everyone would have to tip them to park at the entrance. But, you don't need to spend any money because there are plenty of free parking spaces in front of the individual shops → p. 75

● *In the coconut grove*

Among partygoers, Paceville has become one of the nightlife hotspots in the central Mediterranean area – and yet you don't have to pay a cover charge even at the big clubs such as *Havana* → p. 50

●●● Dots in guidebook refer to "Best of..." tips

ONLY ON MALTA

Unique experiences

● *Maltese wine tasting*

At the *Delicata* wine cellar, the wines mature in oak barrels in vaults dating from the 17th century. Make a booking in order to visit the cellars and taste the wines → p. 18

● *Discover Malta's painters*

Painters once had the role that photographers have today. They not only portrayed the Grand Masters of the Knights of St John, they also captured on their canvases Maltese landscapes of the 18th and 19th centuries, on show at the *Museum of Fine Arts* in Valletta → p. 41

● *Dine like a lord*

The *Tà Frenc* luxury restaurant on the island of Gozo has all the atmosphere of an old Gozitan nobleman's estate. Almost all ingredients used here come from the island, and even the herbs come from a little garden in front of the restaurant → p. 93

● *A one-horse power ride*

When you take a horse-drawn carriage at the *Great Siege Square* in Valletta (photo), you can feel like the nobles of old as it goes clip-clop through the old knights' city – an experience that's best at dusk as the lights come on → p. 116

● *Delicate silver jewellery*

Silver items are among the few craft products that have a tradition on Malta. The place to find them in Valletta is the *Silversmith's Shop* → p. 48

● *Politics behind closed doors?*

Not on Malta. Each *kazin* of the local party offices has a bar where you'll soon be able to strike up a conversation with locals, such as the bar opposite St Paul's Church in Rabat. But before you start sounding off about politics, find out which party's bar you have come to → p. 75

● *A midday salute*

Don't be alarmed when you hear the cannons of the *Saluting Battery* boom at midday in Valletta. The Maltese are fond of old military traditions and keep them alive by means of re-enactments, some of which even take place daily → p. 43



ONLY ON

DISCOVERY TOURS

1

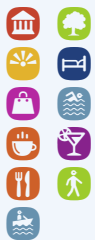
MALTA AT A GLANCE



START: ① Sliema Ferry
END: ① Sliema Ferry

Distance:
🚗 135 km/84 miles

2 days
Driving time
(without stops)
5 hours



COSTS: admission fees 20 euros; with the Heritage Malta Multisite Pass (50 euros) → p. 36, you will only pay an additional 5 euros
WHAT TO PACK: sun protection, swim gear on Day 2

IMPORTANT TIPS: the route is laid out like a bow so that you can spend the night in your own hotel.
Valletta, the Three Cities and Mdina/Rabat are not part of this route because you are better off exploring them separately by public bus.

Malta is full of all kinds of different sites worth seeing. This route takes you to cultural highlights located outside the major towns. It gives you a taste of rural

Every corner of the earth has its own special charm. If you want to explore all the many different facets of this region, head off the beaten track or get tips for the best stops, breathtaking views, hand-picked restaurants or the best local activities, then these customised discovery tours are just the right thing. Choose the best route for the day and follow in the footsteps of the MARCO POLO authors – well-prepared to navigate your way to all the many highlights that await you along the tour.

Malta allows time for short walks as you steer towards the most beautiful pre-historic temples, churches with gigantic impressive cupolas and grottos along the cliffs and sandy beaches. Explore colourful fishing harbours and dine at rather unusual restaurants. You'll even have time for a boat trip.

This round-trip route begins at the ① **Sliema Ferry dock on the coastal road between St Julian's and Valletta**, which is where most of the holiday hotels are located. First, you will drive along a number of bays. As the road strays from the coast shortly before Valletta and begins to climb slight-

DAY 1

① Sliema Ferry