

THINGS TO DO IN VALLETTA

**Malta CRF
Conference**

**20
23**





THE TRITONS' FOUNTAIN

CLICK ON THE LOCATION ICON FOR DIRECTIONS



Just outside the main gates of the Maltese capital Valletta, three massive bronze mermen, reminiscent of Triton the mythological son of the god of the sea Poseidon, hold a vast platter above their heads to form the renowned Tritons' Fountain, Malta's most prominent Modernist landmark designed by distinguished sculptor Vincent Apap and completed in 1959. It was recently renovated in 2018 by local artist and restorer Kenneth Cauchi to mark Valletta as European Capital of Culture and is today a 24-hour hotspot for both locals and visitors alike.

VALLETTA CITY GATE



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After enjoying Tritons' Fountain, it is best to approach Valletta through the stunning Valletta City Gate. Being the fifth entrance to be constructed for Malta's Capital, it forms part of the new approach to Valletta as designed by the acclaimed international architect Renzo Piano. This most latest renovation was finished between 2011 and 2014.



HIDDEN GARDENS HASTINGS GARDEN

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FOR DIRECTIONS**



Located between St. John's Bastion and St. Michael's Bastion, this is one of the more missed sights in Valletta. As you enter the city, take the first set of stairs on the left. From this vantage point, you can see the Maltese coastal cities of Floriana, Msida, and Sliema. It looks out over Marsamxett Harbour and Manoel Island. It is named in honour of General Lord Francis Edward Rawdon-Hastings, 1st Marquess of Hastings, who served as the second Governor of Malta between 1824 and 1826. He died at sea off Naples and was laid to rest in this garden.

NEW PARLIAMENT BUILDING



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The new Parliament, located on Republic Street, is the next stop. It was completed by architect Renzo Piano and inaugurated to the public in 2015.



PJAZZA TEATRU RJAL

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The classic columns of the once magnificent Royal Opera House are all that remain today. Know also as the Royal Theatre, it was originally designed in 1861 by Edward Middleton Barry, the eminent architect of London's Covent Garden Theatre, and acclaimed as being one of Valletta's most aesthetic and imposing structures, until it was practically destroyed during World War II. It has today been reinvented as Pjazza Teatru Rjal, an open-air theatre which provides the most ideal setting for Summer concerts and productions.

CHURCH OF OUR LADY OF VICTORY



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The church of Our Lady of Victory is found immediately to the right of Pjazza Teatru Rjal. This church, dedicated in thanksgiving to the Nativity of the Holy Virgin, was built by the Order of the Knights of St John in 1566 to commemorate the victory over the Ottoman Empire in the Great Siege of 1565, just one year earlier. It includes the city's foundation stone and was in fact the first building and church to be erected in the new city. Jean Parisot de Valette, the 49th Grandmaster of the Order and hero and commander of the Great Siege, funded the building of this church and was laid to rest inside its crypt in 1568. His remains were later transferred to the crypt of the Order's Conventual Church of St John, today the Co-Cathedral.

Opening Hours:

Monday - Friday 08.45 - 16.00 HOLY MASS 08.45

Saturday 10.00 - 16.00 HOLY MASS 19.00

Sunday 10.00 -13.00



AUBERGE DE CASTILLE

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Proudly overlooking the recently redesigned plaza bearing its name at Valletta's highest point, is the Auberge de Castille. It's on the way to Upper Barrakka Gardens, past the Church of Our Lady of Victory. Originally built in the austere Mannerist style in 1573, it was completely rebuilt in the high Spanish Baroque style of the 1740s, during the magistracy of flamboyant Prince and Grand Master Manuel Pinto da Fonseca to house the Knights from the langue of Castile, León and Portugal. Auberge de Castille has been since 1972 the Office of the Prime Minister of Malta.

UPPER BARRAKKA GARDENS AND SALUTING BATTERY



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The Upper Barrakka Gardens, built in two tiers and containing the saluting battery on the lower tier, are found just off Castille Place and offer the best panorama over the Grand Harbour. Take in the view of Senglea (Isla) and Cospicua (Bormla) keeping watch over the shimmering Mediterranean and the fortified peninsula of Birgu (Vittoriosa), former home of the Knights of St John. As tour boats pass slowly below the majestic Saints Peter and Paul Bastion built in the 1560s, you may also spot the traditional Maltese water taxi boat, the Dgħajsa, crossing from one side of the Grand Harbour to the other. Beautiful terraced arches built by the Italian Knight Fra Flaminio Balbiani and numerous memorials to notable figures from history, including Sir Winston Churchill, dot the upper tier. Be sure to take a few minutes to unwind and cool off on a bench in front of the fountain.



THE LASCARIS WAR ROOMS

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During the second Siege of Malta in 1940, the British began constructing new tunnels and underground rooms. This complex of underground rooms, located about 150 feet below the streets of Valletta, was completed in 1943 and served as the nerve centre for coordinating allied military activities in the Mediterranean theatre of war. Even after the end of WWII, the complex continued to operate until 1977. After extensive restoration, the spaces are ready for visitors once again.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ARCHAEOLOGY



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Dating back to 1571, and being one of the oldest buildings in Valletta, having been constructed soon after the Great Siege of 1565, the Auberge de Provence in Republic Street today houses the National Museum of Archaeology. Be a time traveller and discover Malta's history going back millennia to Neolithic times, by visiting this national collection of archeological treasures.



ST. JOHN'S CO-CATHEDRAL & MUSEUM

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Continue straight down Republic Street to Great Siege Square and in front of the Law Courts building you'll find the Co-Cathedral's visitors entrance on your right. St. John's Co-Cathedral is widely acclaimed as one of Europe's greatest examples of Baroque decoration, despite its simple facade. Conceived as the Conventual Church of the Order of St. John, it developed into the ornate and highly decorated temple we see today, notably the unique barrel vault carrying the paintings by Mattia Preti, Il Calabrese. Hundreds of Knights from the most noble families of Europe lie to rest under the intricate marble slabs creating the magnificent interziato floor. The Beheading of St. John the Baptist by Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio is the ultimate attraction in Valletta for the lover of art. Widely regarded as Caravaggio's opus magnum, this painting was commissioned as the titular altar piece for the Conventual Church's adjacent Oratory. It is the largest painting ever done by Caravaggio and the only one having his signature, drawn in the blood seeping from the saint's severed neck. Collect an audio guide upon arrival to discover more hidden treasures.

CHURCH OF ST. PAUL'S SHIPWRECK



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The Collegiate Parish Church of St. Paul dates back to the 1570's. Dedicated to St. Paul's shipwreck on Malta as narrated in the Bible's Acts of the Apostles, it commemorates the event annually with great pomp on the 10th of February when the artistic statue of St Paul, carved by renowned Melchiorre Gafà c.1659, is carried processionally through the streets of Valletta.



LOWER BARRAKKA GARDEN

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The Lower Barrakka Garden is the smaller, quieter sibling to the larger Upper Barrakka Gardens. The panorama of the Grand Harbour is just as stunning from this vantage point. It's a wonderful place to relax and to get away from the hustle and bustle of the rest of Valletta.

SIEGE BELL MEMORIAL



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The Siege Bell Memorial, designed by sculptor Michael Sandle and found next to the Lower Barrakka Gardens, was inaugurated in May 1992 to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the awarding of the George Cross to the island of Malta in recognition to the bravery and fortitude shown by the Maltese during the relentless bombing during World War II. It tolls daily at noon in remembrance of the Maltese who died during that second siege of Malta.



THE KNIGHTS HOSPITALLERS

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The Hospitaller origins of the Order of St. John are explored in "The Knights Hospitallers," an exhibition tucked away beneath the Mediterranean Conference Centre. History often portrays them as a group of sword-wielding warriors, however this landmark pays tribute to their service in the Holy Infirmary, the Order's hospital that was then housed in this magnificent building. At 480 feet, the main ward was the largest hall in Europe during the Knights' time. The eerie tunnel system carved beneath out of the solid rock of Valletta is definitely worth exploring.

FORT ST ELMO NATIONAL WAR MUSEUM



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Fort St. Elmo may be found a short distance further along Mediterranean Street, at the very tip of Valletta. This huge display covers the history of Malta from the bronze era to the 1990s, and is housed in a former gunpowder magazine and armoury. You may learn a lot about the islands' history here if you have some time to spare. The George Cross, awarded to Malta for its crucial role in the allied triumph in World War II, is proudly displayed.



CASA ROCCA PICCOLA

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Returning to the city gates, find your way back to the end of Republic Street. A sign for Casa Rocca Piccola can be seen just after you pass St. Dominic Street on the left. From the outside, this building looks like any other, but as you enter inside, you'll find yourself in the palace of a Maltese noble family from the 16th century. The accompanying 45-minute guided tour will lead you through all fifty or more of the elaborately furnished chambers, as well as the secluded bomb shelters and peaceful gardens.

TEATRU MANOEL - MANOEL THEATER



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Dating back to 1732, the Manoel Theatre today is the third oldest working theatre of its kind in Europe. Its construction was ordered by the Grand Master of the Order of the Knights Hospitaller, Fra António Manoel de Vilhena, intended to glorify his own name and to provide entertainment to the populace. Despite numerous renovations over the years, its interiors are almost unchanged from their exquisite 18th century original design. The Malta National Theatre and the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra both call the Manoel Theatre home.



GRANDMASTER'S PALACE AND ARMOURIES

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St. George's Square, home to the Grandmaster's Palace, is only a block away from the Manoel Theatre. The building dates back to the 16th century when it was constructed as a residence for the Grandmaster ruler of Malta. The Palace today serves as the official residence of the President of the Republic of Malta. Heritage Malta maintains exhibition spaces, including the State Rooms and Armoury, that are open to the general public. Both have entrances on Old Theatre Street, on the right. You can also visit the two palace courtyards for free, if you just pop through the main gateway.