



MALTA



EUROPEAN DESTINATIONS OF EXCELLENCE



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Launched in 2006, the European Destinations of Excellence (EDEN) is a European Commission initiative which aims to promote sustainable tourism, enhance the visibility of emerging tourist destinations and create awareness of Europe's tourism diversity and quality. Based on national competitions that take place every other year, the award is developed around an annual theme chosen by the European Commission in conjunction with the national tourism bodies. To date, the themes have included Best Emerging Rural Destination, Local Intangible Heritage, Protected Areas, Aquatic Tourism, Regeneration of Physical Sites, Local Gastronomy and Tangible Cultural Offer.

Photography by Rene Rossignaud - rossignaud.com



European Destinations of Excellence - Promotion
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Parish Church of Our Lady of Loreto

GĦAJNSIELEM

Għajnsielem is a village situated close to Mġarr Harbour in Gozo. The name of the village is a composite of Spring (Għajn) and Peace (Sliem). Our Lady of Lourdes Chapel dominates the promontory overlooking the harbour. From the 18th century Fort Chambray one can discover views of Gozo's southern cliffs, Xatt l-Aħmar Bay and those of the Northern Comino Channel.

SENGLEA (ISLA)

Senglea is one of the historic 'Three Cities' which lie across the Grand Harbour from Valletta. Fortifications built by the Order of St John encircle the city, including the Sheer Bastion where a device to mount masts on wooden ships originally stood atop the ramparts and The Spur which contains a watch-tower, adorned with carved eyes and ears to remind the sentries to be watchful! The waterfront has been renovated as a yacht marina which has attracted a great deal of interest from locals and visitors alike.



Senglea Marina and the Sheer Bastion



The Blue Grotto arch and caves

QRENDI

A true gem, Qrendi, in the southern region of Malta, hosts top attractions, including UNESCO world heritage historic sites Hagar Qim and Mnajdra Temples, various observation decks and towers, as well as the geological formations of Maqluba. Qrendi is also a superb attraction for scuba divers, mainly due to the exceptional sites of Wied Iż-Żurrieq and Blue Grotto.

ŽURRIEQ

Located in the southeastern part of the island, the village of Żurrieq is enriched with historical influences starting from Bronze and Punic times all the way to the British Empire era. Nowadays, Żurrieq is the home of more than ten thousand inhabitants and attracts some two hundred thousand tourists per year.



Chapel of the Annunciation, Hal Millieri



Xemxija Heritage Trail

ST PAUL'S BAY

With a history spanning more than 6000 years, St Paul's Bay hosts a number of ancient sites including seven prehistoric tombs, two Neolithic temples at Bugibba and Xemxija, ancient cart-ruts at the Wardija Ridge at Busewdien and Punic tombs topped by additional Bronze Age settlements as well as troglodytic dwellings at Xemxija. St Paul's Bay was the nearest safe harbour for the Roman fleet and historical remains include a Roman road leading to a Roman Apiary, Roman anchors and the Roman Baths at Xemxija. St Paul's Bay is also known for the Shipwreck of St Paul, an event which led to the establishment of the first Christian community in Malta.



Santa Luċija Square

SANTA LUĊIJA — GOZO

Santa Luċija, in the district of Kerċem is redolent with history and culture. It has won the award for its intangible heritage so it's even more important here than in most places to connect with a local guide who can introduce visitors to past and present life in the hamlet.



Ramla L-Hamra

XAGĦRA

Picturesque Xagħra has a particularly rich historical heritage and therefore plenty to offer the visitor. Built on a lengthy stretch of high ground northeast of the capital, it is encircled by the beautiful bays of Ramla, Ghajn Barrani and Marsalforn, while the valleys of Ramla, Ta' I-Għejjun and Marsalforn caress this lovely village.



Dingli Cliffs

DINGLI

Situated in the western part of Malta, around 250 meters above sea level and close to Rabat and Mdina, Dingli is renowned for its imposing cliffs serving as a natural fortification guarding this part of the archipelago. Dingli has rich biodiversity which is showcased by its valley areas, all geological layers of Malta's sedimentary rock and wooden areas.



Mixta Cave

NADUR

The Gozitan people's pride in their villages is clearly illustrated in Gozo's second-largest settlement of Nadur, where the 18th century Basilica of St Peter and St Paul stands proudly on the restored piazza. It is one of the finest examples of Maltese Baroque architecture and decoration on the island. The village is renowned for its Carnival and Feast with parties and celebrations lasting several days.

MELLIEĦA

Mellieħa is situated in the north-western tip of Malta and boasts sites of cultural, religious and natural history to complement its fine sandy beaches. The village of Mellieħa is perched on a hill commanding distant views of Comino and Gozo and the straits between them. The historic church and Marian shrines are venerated and visited by numerous visitors year-round. The World War II Shelters, reaching a length of 500 metres are the largest on the island.



Sanctuary of Our Lady



Għarb Panorama

GĦARB

Għarb is a traditional village with a distinctly rural character. The people are also renowned craftsmen and the village is home to blacksmiths, locksmiths, cotton weavers and lace makers, carpenters and masters in cane-work. Local shepherds produce the best Gozo cheese on the island.



Fort St Angelo

VITTORIOSA (BIRGU)

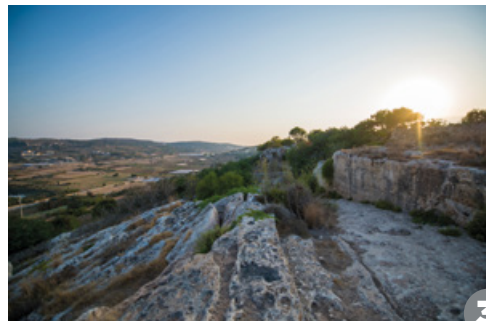
Birgu, also known as Città Vittoriosa, is an old and fortified city on the south side of the Grand Harbour. The Knights of St John settled in Birgu when they arrived in Malta in 1530 and made it the capital city of Malta. They set about fortifying it and building Fort St Angelo to protect the city from Ottoman attacks. Despite the heavy bombing that it endured during World War II, Birgu still boasts a wealth of cultural heritage and places of interest.



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1. Xaghra
2. Mellieħa
3. St Paul's Bay
4. Senglea (isla)
5. Vittoriosa (Birgu)
6. Żurrieq
7. Qrendi
8. Dingli
9. Ghajnsielem
10. Santa Luċija - Gozo
11. Għarb
12. Nadur



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