

walk



Tips for the road

- Plan ahead and follow all the signs throughout the route. This is the **Orange Walk** so please follow the orange signs. It is very easy to get distracted by the surrounding scenery while taking your country walk. Short cuts are to be avoided as many fields are privately owned. You will encounter many 'RTO' signs meaning 'Riservato'. The markings indicate private property.
- Maltese is the official language of the Maltese Islands and an official EU language. The Maltese language is spoken only on the Maltese Islands. Road signs in Malta are in Maltese. Some basic translations that will help you throughout the walk: *Triq* - Street, *Vjal* - Avenue, *Sqaa* - Alley, *Ġnien* - Garden, *Fortizza* - Fort and *Bajja* - Beach.
- Please keep in mind that in the Maltese Islands cars drive on the left-hand side.
- In some of the walks you will come across churches and other places of religious devotion. Please keep in mind that these are places of worship and due respect must be given if approaching or entering such places. One should not wander in such places if an official religious function is underway.
- Be Prepared... be sure to wear a comfortable pair of walking shoes and clothing which is appropriate for the time of the year. Allow enough time to complete the walk in broad daylight. Make allowances for time required for resting, taking photographs and observing nature and/or places of interest.
- Bird trapping and hunting are practised in the countryside. There are, however, strict regulations determining areas where such activities are permitted and the time of the year when no such activities are allowed.
- Cliff tops are magnificent areas but they also present potential hazards. Always keep a safe distance from the cliff edges, especially on windy days, or if the ground is covered by loose gravel or is slippery due to rainfall.
- In some valleys and gorges, mobile phone reception may be poor or there may be none at all.

- Respect the fragility of the countryside. Do not climb over rubble walls or throw stones into valleys or over cliffs. Refrain from taking any 'souvenirs' back home with you. Do not disturb animals, plants or their natural habitats. Leave only your footprint behind you and nothing else.
- Be culturally sensitive and respect local customs. Take photographs but respect the privacy of others.
- More information on places of interest such as churches, can be found on the informational panels that are installed along this route.
- This route is rated as Easy**
- Emergency Number: 112**



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MALTAGOESRURAL

Rural Development Programme for Malta 2007 - 2013

Axis 3 - Improving the Quality of Life in Rural Areas
Project part-financed by the European UnionThe European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development:
Co-financing Rate: 75% European Union, 25% Government of Malta

Europe Investing in Rural Areas

walk

Many visitors to the Maltese Islands find themselves paying a visit to Mдина and Rabat sooner or later. Set amongst interesting countryside, this area is ideal for walks. The route suggested here is interesting, as it goes through the medieval heart of Mдина, followed by the outskirts of Rabat, Siggiewi and ends on the Dingli Cliffs. This route can be followed on foot or on bike.

The walk starts near the Domus Romana, one of the most important Roman sites that has survived in Malta, and which is open to the public. As soon as one leaves the Domus, one notices the large open space in front of the archaeological remains, where today there is a car park. This in fact used to be part of the Roman city, and recent excavations have actually identified many remains as dating back to the Classical period. Our walk takes a left turn, going through a tunnel beneath the gardens, where you will find yourself in the recently-renovated ditch of the old medieval city of Mдина. The secondary gate of Mдина is known as Greeks Gate, as originally it led to the area where a Greek community used to live.

The narrow street opposite the entrance passes by St. Nicholas church. The earliest documented reference to a church dedicated to this saint goes back to 1434. The church was well maintained throughout the centuries, until it was rebuilt in the late 17th century. This church is considered as one of the best-planned baroque churches of Mдина. Keep on walking along the street, until you face a wall, with a medieval bi-focal window gracing it. Turn left into Magazine Street, and notice the number of stores that were built in the 18th century. The small church dedicated to St. Peter is nowadays used for artistic exhibitions. Turn right, and a few metres along the street, you will notice a lane on the right, and a beautiful partially-hidden façade of a city palazzo, decorated with medieval architectural features.

Your walk will lead you up to Bastion Square, where during the Medieval times, every evening, there used to be around 50 males on duty defending the walls of the city, in case of a surprise landing by pirates. The walk continues along the bastions so you may enjoy a continuous view of the surrounding countryside and villages.

Take the first turning on the right-hand side. You will notice a small corner niche, dedicated to Our Saviour, a typical corner decoration in Malta. The building on the right-hand side is an interesting medieval building, called Palazzo Falson, which is open to the public. Reaching the main street, on the left is the palazzo, while right opposite there is the convent and the church of the Carmelite order. Recently the church and convent underwent restoration, and nowadays they are open to the public.

Turn left and start walking towards the main square of the city. Along the walk, you will pass by another large corner niche (set up as a vow during a plague epidemic), the small church dedicated to St. Roque, and on the right-hand side, the impressive medieval Palazzo Santa Sofia. The present church of St. Roque was erected in the 18th century, part of the rehabilitation of the medieval city that was taken care of during the magistracy of Grand Master Antonio Manoel de Vilhena. Palazzo Santa Sofia is an imposing building, with medieval and early 20th-century features. It is believed that the original Palazzo was built in 1233 as a one-storey building. In 1939, the upper floor was erected, and pseudo-medieval windows were added.

The main square of Mдина is impressive, as it is dominated by the late 17th-century baroque Cathedral, the work of the local architect Lorenzo Gafà. The present Cathedral was built instead of the ruined medieval building that was severely damaged during the earthquake of 1693. Around the square, one can see a number of interesting features: starting from the left-hand side, there is the 18th-century Palazzo Gourgion, then an early 20th-century building in a neo-Gothic style; on the other side of the Cathedral a small square dominated by the Bishop's palace and the old Seminar (today housing the Cathedral Museum), and facing the square the side building of the Banca Giuratale.

Villegaignon Street is the main axis of Mдина and once more one can see a number of interesting buildings. The façade of the Banca Giuratale is to be noted. This was where the local governing council used to meet. Today, it houses part of the archives of Malta. Facing it there is another unpretentious building which also houses an important archive, that of the Maltese Inquisition. Palazzo Bonici dominates the next section of the street, with the convent and church of cloistered community of St. Peter coming next. In this area there used to be a medieval hospital, although later on a nunnery was built there, catering mostly for daughters of the nobility. Facing the last mentioned building is the large Palazzo Inguanez. Tucked in a small corner, you will find the small church dedicated to St. Agatha. An earlier church used to be located in the area, but the present one was erected after the earthquake of 1693, and it is believed that it was built to the designs of the Maltese architect Lorenzo Gafà.

This will lead you to the small square which lies behind the main entrance of Mдина. You can notice the massive tower, known as the Tower of the Standard, the Vilhena Palace, nowadays used as the National Museum of Natural History, and the decorated main entrance. The Tower of the Standard was built in the beginning of the 18th century, and it has two coat-of-arms on its façade, that of the city of Mдина, and the arms of Grand Master Vilhena, during whose magistracy the tower was erected. Another building built by the same Grand Master is the Vilhena Palace, a beautiful 18th-century baroque city palace. The decorations of the back wall of the main entrance relate part of the history



of the same city – the three patron saints (St. Paul in the middle, flanked by St. Publius and St. Agatha), the titled Inguanez family, as well as a commemoration of the 1429 siege.

On exiting through the main gate of Mдина, turn right into the gardens. On the right, you can see the ditch of the city. Take the left passage to the end of the garden, and cross over to the pavement. Keep on walking down the street while facing the Augustinian-run church dedicated to St. Mark.

Proceed to the left of the church, and cross over to the other side of the street. Continue walking down the steep hill on the left, and when safe, cross to the right-hand side of the main road. Take the path and continue walking downhill. As soon as you start walking along this path, you will notice the open countryside. The street is not that busy, although there is still some traffic on it. You will need to pay attention to the traffic but otherwise this should be a pleasant walk.

While walking along the path, you will pass by a 17th-century building, known as 'it-Tribuna', which resembles an elevated platform. This was the place from where the judges and other distinguished guests used to watch the horse races held during the religious and agricultural feast of Imnarja, held on the 29th of June. This is still used for the same reason, as the races form part of the traditional activities associated with this old folklore event.

This road leads towards the village of Siggiewi. The countryside is fertile in this area, and you will notice that the majority of the fields are being cultivated. Along this road, you will notice a small church dedicated to St. Blaise, built on elevated rocky outcrop, and a narrow road that goes uphill towards the outskirts of Rabat. Further on, you will reach a roundabout, at which point you should take the right-hand turning. The next part of the walk is all uphill.

The views of the valley and the surrounding countryside are impressive. The valley is very fertile, due to the presence of a number of natural springs. When you reach half way up the hill, you can notice a decorated archway on the left-hand side of the road. This was the entrance to the property of the Inquisitor whilst the Inquisition was in Malta, and the coat-of-arms indicate that it was erected in 1728 during the time of Mons. Antonio Ruffo.

Here you might encounter other ramblers following the Ġirgenti walk (Green) which takes the ramblers around the Siggiewi countryside and finishes in the picturesque square of Siggiewi. We suggest you carry out this walk on another occasion.

Across the valley, you can notice the well-located summer residence of the Inquisitor, today restored and used as the summer residence of the Prime Minister of Malta. This is the Ġirgenti Palace, taking its name from that of the locality. Across the valley and dominating the hill, you can notice Laferla Cross, erected at the beginning of the 20th century to mark, in a religious way, the start of the new century.

The walk continues uphill. On reaching the entrance to the quarry, turn left and then take the first right. This stretch of the road leads to the top of the Dingli Cliffs area, with breathtaking views of the surrounding cliffs, countryside and the Mediterranean Sea. The Dingli Cliffs are a Natura 2000 site, one of the 34 sites in Malta protected under this programme. At the top of the hill, on the left-hand side there are the remains of a bronze-age village, known as il-Wardija ta' San Ġorġ.

Walking along the cliffs you might once again encounter other ramblers, but this time walking in the opposite direction. They would be following the Fawwara Walk (Red), a very beautiful and engaging walk which starts from Dingli Cliffs and ends in the fishing village of Wied iż-Żurrieq.

Continue walking, passing by cart ruts and the small church of St. Mary Magdalene. The earliest documented evidence of a church built in the vicinity of Dingli Cliffs dates back to the 15th century. By the middle of the 16th century, the name of the surrounding area became synonymous with the name of this church dedicated to St. Mary Magdalene. The present structure of the church dates back to the 17th century. Soon you will reach the Cliffs interpretation centre.

Take some time to admire the cliffs, the surrounding countryside and the clear blue seas. In the distance, you should be able to see the island of Filfla.

Filfla is situated about three kilometres off the south shores of Malta and is the most southerly point of the Maltese Archipelago. Filfoletta, a small rocky islet some 100 metres southwest of Filfla, is the southernmost point of Malta. The name Filfla is believed to come from filfil, the Arabic for a peppercorn. The islet is about 400 metres in length and about 250 metres wide.

You have now reached the end of this walk; you may wish to rest a bit, take a coffee or a light meal before heading back home.

Bus route No 53 operate the following route:

Valletta - Floriana - Hamrun - Santa Venera - Fleur de Lys - Birkirkara - Attard - Ta' Qali - Rabat

Bus route No 51 operate the following route:

Valletta - Floriana - Hamrun - Santa Venera - Fleur de Lys - Birkirkara - Attard - Ta' Qali - Rabat - Mtarfa

Bus route No 52 operate the following route:

Valletta - Floriana - Hamrun - Santa Venera - Fleur de Lys - Birkirkara - Attard - Ta' Qali - Rabat - Dingli

Length of walk approx 9.63km

* It is the responsibility of individuals to approach outdoor activities with caution. Walking and any other countryside activity can be strenuous or dangerous and individuals should ensure that they are fit enough before embarking upon it. The MTA will not be held responsible for any loss of personal items and injuries of individuals following this walk.

The bus route number can change. Check the Arriva website (arriva.com.mt) before starting this walk.

Mdina (Rabat - Dingli)

walk



WALK AREA

BICYCLE

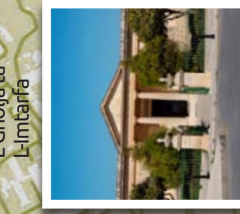
INFORMATION

RESTAURANT

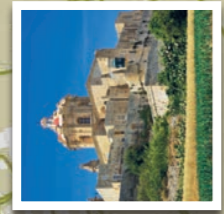
CHURCH

HERITAGE SITE

BUS STOP



Roman Villa



Mdina



Mdina Cathedral



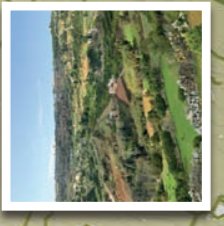
St. Mark Church



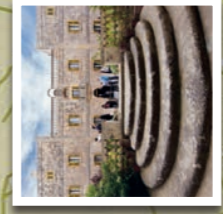
San Blas Church



St. Mary Magdalene Church



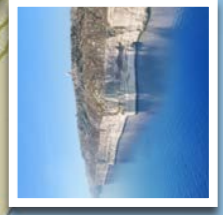
Girgenti Valley



Girgenti Palace



Laferla Cross



Dingli Cliffs

0 250 500 1,000 Meters

6.0 Km

Filfla

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