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BRITAIN LOVES MALTA: AN OFF-SEASON GUIDE



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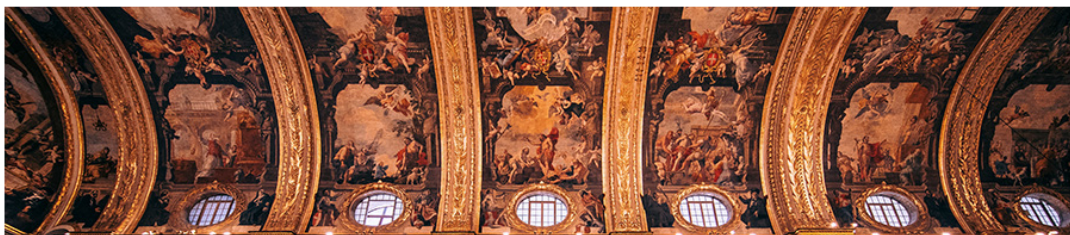
A favourite with British holidaymakers, [Malta](#) is adored for its pitch-perfect weather, with over 300 days of sunshine a year and temperatures that rarely drop below the mid to high teens. Ideal, says travel writer Ross Clarke, for those seeking warmth come winter *without* the long-haul plane ticket – and he tells us more

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1 Adorable, affordable

While [Malta](#) rightly earns its place among the Mediterranean's most enchanting spots for soaking up summer sun, discerning travellers know that the island is *not* to be missed come autumn and winter. Here, when the height-of-summer tourist crowd has packed up its parasols, the culturists, nature-lovers and gastronomes move in to luxuriate in Malta's tranquil pace of life. They're savvy, too; fewer people means better Instagram snaps, more local experiences and often better prices. You'll find such bargains across Malta's burgeoning boutique hotel scene; [Casa Ellul](#) and [Hotel Juliani](#) are just two of the island's chicest stays.





2 Culture à la carte

With more than 7,000 years of history, [Malta's heritage](#) is definitely one to savour and, in this respect, culture vultures are spoilt for choice. Hop on a [Segway tour](#) to zip around the island's capital, Valletta, and catch all the major sights, from the grandeur of the baroque [St John's Co-Cathedral and Museum](#) to the beautiful panoramas around the Grand Harbour. For those wishing to rest weary limbs head to [Malta 5D](#), an immersive 3D cinema complete with moving seats, water spray, air blasts and leg ticklers to make you feel part of the on-screen action documenting the most important moments in the island's history.



3 Learn the ropes

Unsurprisingly, many outdoor pursuits here lead to water, and while the sea might be cooler at this time of year, surfing, windsurfing and [scuba diving](#) opportunities are still plentiful. Back on dry land, head off to neighbouring [Gozo](#) – known for its stunning natural features – and make like the British Army (they started the practice here) by trying your hand at [rock climbing](#). The winter months are peak climbing season, so there's plenty on offer for all levels, abilities and tastes. In fact, Malta has more than 1,300 climbing routes in total.





4 Out and about

If there's one thing Maltese people know, it's how to be a great host. It could be why the culinary and nightlife scenes on the island are second to none. Those seeking a soothing G&T should stop by [Yard 32](#) to sample some of its more than 180 varieties, while oenophiles shouldn't miss [Trabuxu](#) with its array of Maltese and Gozitan wines – plus a delightful small plates menu. For the club scene, Paceville in the north of the island is the go-to with locals and tourists hitting the dance floors. Malta has a fantastic [LGBTQ+ scene](#) (recently topping the Europe Rainbow Index to be named the best European holiday destination for LGBT travellers) and [Michelangelo Club Lounge in Paceville](#) and [The Birdcage Lounge](#) in Rabat are stand-out spots for nightowls.



5 The time, the place

If Malta were a person, everyone would want to be their friend, as their diary would be crammed full of the best events – especially throughout the winter months – from food and drink to music and dance. This year's [Notte Bianca](#) festivities (on 5 October 2019) see arts and culture erupt all over the streets, with music, dance, drama and art sprawling out across the island's pretty piazzas in a multitude of creative forms. [The Three Palaces Festival](#) celebrated in November (1-10) brings together classical, modern and jazz music with a series of concerts and live performances in the glorious setting of Malta's historical baroque palaces. Talking of baroque, don't miss the best in the Baroque music scene at [Valletta's International Baroque Festival](#) every January.

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