

## TRIP OVERVIEW

This short swimming escape in Malta boasts perfect turquoise seas, great underwater visibility and imposing sheer cliffs, allowing you to discover the best swimming the south of the Mediterranean has to offer. With the chance to explore the many coves of the islands and swim a substantial part of the Gozitan coastline, come and discover one of the most southern points of Europe with us.

The Maltese archipelago features three main inhabited islands; Malta, Gozo and Comino, with Gozo being where we will spend the majority of our trip, though we will swim alongside each of the islands. A quiet but beautiful island, you'll find a laid back approach to life on Gozo, and the ideal setting for a SwimTrek trip. Our base for the trip is the Duke Boutique Hotel where you can relax in comfort in the island's capital Victoria (aka Rabat) which sits in the middle of the island. It features an impressive medieval citadel and the Gozo Cathedral which boasts ornate, baroque painted ceilings.

This trip sees us visiting great swimming spots across the archipelago, taking on the iconic Gozo - Malta swim and getting up close to a number of the island's notable sites.

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## WHO IS THIS TRIP FOR?

This swimming short escape is ideal for those who are looking to combine some early season swimming with a chance to relax and enjoy a charming city after a days swim. Swimmers should have a basic understanding of open water swimming and be capable of completing the average daily swim distance of 6km prior to the start of the trip.

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## LOCATION SUMMARIES

### Gozo

With its own distinctive style and pace, the island offers great walking routes, superb coastal scenery and fabulous cliff swimming. As the trip is primarily based in Gozo, it is here that you will do the majority of your bay and coastal swimming.

### Victoria

Victoria (aka Rabat) is not just the geographic heart of Gozo, it is also the centre of everyday activity. Bars, restaurants and opera theatres dominate the centre while the Citadel rises majestically above. Victoria also boasts the Villa Rundle Public Gardens, a sweet green escape in the middle of the city.

### Comino

Home of the picturesque Blue Lagoon, Comino is a small island between Gozo and Malta. It's shallow reef causes a beautiful gradient of different blue water hues, with the lightest aquamarines making the boats appear as if they are floating in the air.



## North-West Malta

More rugged than the rest of Malta, the rocky north-west of the island is a delight to explore both on foot and by swimming.

## TRIP SCHEDULE

<b>Start Point</b>	The Duke Boutique Hotel, Victoria, Gozo <a href="http://www.thedukehotelgozo.com">www.thedukehotelgozo.com</a>
<b>Start Time</b>	16:00 on Day 1
<b>Finish Point</b>	The Duke Boutique Hotel, Victoria, Gozo
<b>Finish Time</b>	14:00 on Day 4

## Daily Itineraries

Please note that the below daily itineraries are an example of the swims that may take place during the course of your trip, however, actual swim locations and distances will vary according to local weather and sea conditions. Your SwimTrek guides and local boat pilot will determine the most suitable swim locations each day and will communicate the plan with all guests as soon as possible.

### Day 1

We meet at the open air terrace at the Duke Boutique Hotel in Victoria for a pre trip briefing, where you will meet your guides and fellow swimmers. You'll enjoy stunning views over Gozo's north coast from here and the sight of the citadel illuminated as night falls. After the safety briefing, there's time to enjoy a group dinner together before we start our swims the following morning.

### Day 2

On our first morning, We head down to Mgarr harbour to meet our support boat and local skipper. From here, we head west to Xlendi Bay and start swimming from the dramatic cliffs of Gebel Ben Gorg along Gozo's western coast. We finish at Dwejra Bay, which is afforded protection from the outside sea by the imposing Fungus Rock. We stop off in this idyllic bay and have lunch on the boat.

The afternoon is given over to a shorter coastal swim which takes us past the ruins site of the now collapsed Azure Window and then onto the site of the enchanting Inland Sea. It's an ideal way to prepare for the next few days as we'll encounter both open seas and more sheltered waters.

### Day 3

This is the day of the iconic crossing from Gozo to Malta, a journey of 5km. During the crossing we will start underneath the cliffs of Qala before striking out towards Comino's East coast. Upon reaching the island we then swim in its shallows and pass the imposing Elephant Rock. The last leg is from Comino to Malta where we finish near the White Tower, a former watchtower built in the 17th Century.

We then have a well deserved break on the boat as we cruise back to Cominom where we'll stop for a hearty lunch in the beautiful Santa Maria bay. After a short walk to Comino Tower, which offers a stunning view of the morning's crossing, we swim into the crystal clear waters of the awe inspiring Blue Lagoon. A wonderful way to finish off a great day of swimming.



## Day 4

This half day includes a fantastic swim under the imposing Ta Cenc cliffs which rise over 470ft above the sea. You'll enjoy superb water quality and will be able to see the fish play in the underwater alcoves of the cliffs. The swim ends in the tranquil bay of Mgarr ix-Xini, the historic home to the ships and galleys of the Knights of Malta. We'll enjoy one last lunch together before our short escape draws to a close.

## TRIP INFORMATION

### Equipment Checklist

In addition to your daily non-swimming clothes, we also recommend that you bring the following items:

✓	ITEM	✓	ITEM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Swimming Costume (x 2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Towel
<input type="checkbox"/>	Swimming Goggles (x 2)*	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sweater / Fleece
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sun Hat and Sunglasses	<input type="checkbox"/>	Waterproof Jacket
<input type="checkbox"/>	Waterproof Sun Cream	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trainers / Sandals
<input type="checkbox"/>	Small Daypack	<input type="checkbox"/>	Aqua Shoes / Sandals

\*Try to bring one clear lens and one tinted lens for different light conditions.

Please note that SwimTrek will supply swim hats and provide water and electrolyte drinks in shared water bottles on your safety boat. If you prefer to use your own drink bottle, please feel free to bring one along. If you would like to use a wetsuit, rash vest or fins during your swims, please ensure that you bring these with you.

### Swimming Distances

Swim	Distance	Swim	Distance
Xlendi - Dwejra Bay	4½km	Dwejra Bay - Inland Sea	1½km
Gozo - Malta	5km	Santa Maria Bay - Blue Lagoon	2½km
Ta Cenc - Mgarr ix-Xini	3½km		

### Walking Distances

Walking is not a major part of the trip and we will generally walk on sealed paths to and from the bays and beaches that we start and finish our swims on. There is also a short walk on Comino. Appropriate footwear should be worn for these walks.



## Temperatures

Month	Water Temperature*	Air Temperature*
June	21-24°C / 70-75°F	21-25°C / 70-77°F

\* Please note that these temperatures are indicative and should be used as a guide only.

## Group Size and Boat Support

This trip has a maximum group size of 15. The group will be split into a maximum of three groups, based on speed, with each group being accompanied by their own safety vessel/escort.

Boat support on this trip includes one main boat and two support boats to be piloted by your SwimTrek guides and a local boat pilot. Please note that this boat support is subject to change without notice and cannot be guaranteed.

## Swimming Conditions

Swimming in the sea is a fantastic experience, however you should be aware that certain marine life such as jellyfish and sea urchins could be present during the swims. In all cases we will work on reducing your contact with these creatures, however if you suffer from anaphylaxis, please consult the office prior to booking.

## Weather Caveat

For safety reasons, we rely on decent weather conditions when carrying out our swims. As a consequence, open water swimming holidays require a certain degree of on-trip flexibility which can result in changes to the planned itinerary. These changes often add a touch of uniqueness to your trip and will be communicated to you by your SwimTrek guides as quickly as possible.

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## GETTING THERE

The easiest way to reach the start of your trip is to fly into Malta International Airport (MLA) and take a private transfer to the hotel via a ferry from Malta's northernmost point of Ċirkewwa to Mgarr, Gozo's main harbour.

While we have outlined various travel options below, they are subject to change and should be used as a guide only. Whichever route you choose to take, we recommend confirming your flights and other travel arrangements as early as possible in order to avoid price rises and availability issues.

## Flights to Malta International Airport

To search for available flights into Malta International Airport, please visit [www.skyscanner.net](http://www.skyscanner.net).



## Private Transfer from Malta International Airport To Hotel

After you arrive into the airport, you will find a chauffeur waiting for you with a name on a sign in the arrivals hall. They will drive you to the ferry port in Malta where you will board the ferry to Gozo as a foot passenger. Once in Gozo, another taxi chauffeur will be waiting for you for your transfer to the hotel. To book your split private transfer, please email your flight arrival details to [info@xlendi.com](mailto:info@xlendi.com) as soon as possible.

NUMBER OF GUESTS	TRANSFER PRICE
1-3 Guests	€49 to be split between all passengers (one way)
4-8 Guests	€65 to be split between all passengers (one way)
9-17 Guests	€114 to be split between all passengers (one way)

Please note that the cost of the ferry ticket is not included.

It is also possible to be picked up from an alternative location to the airport. Please email [info@xlendi.com](mailto:info@xlendi.com) directly to arrange an alternative pickup location. If you encounter any problems with your arrival, you can contact Xlendi Tours on their 24-hour emergency phone line (+356 99422810).

## Direct Private Transfer from Malta International Airport To Hotel

The chauffeur that picks you up from the airport will board the ferry to Gozo with you and will drive you directly to the hotel. This will save you boarding the ferry on foot and handling your luggage. To book your direct private transfer, please email your flight arrival details to [info@xlendi.com](mailto:info@xlendi.com) as soon as possible.

NUMBER OF GUESTS	TRANSFER PRICE
1-3 Guests	€88 to be split between all passengers (one way)
4-8 Guests	€110 to be split between all passengers (one way)
9-17 Guests	€175 to be split between all passengers (one way)

Please note that the cost of the ferry ticket is not included.

It is also possible to be picked up from an alternative location to the airport. Please email [info@xlendi.com](mailto:info@xlendi.com) directly to arrange an alternative pickup location.

## Bus from Malta International Airport to Ċirkewwa Ferry Port

There are a number of routes to Ċirkewwa from various towns and villages across Malta. There is a direct bus line (X1) from Malta International Airport to Ċirkewwa Port, departing every 40 minutes. For more details, visit [www.publictransport.com.mt](http://www.publictransport.com.mt).

## **Ferry from Ċirkewwa Ferry Port to Mgarr Ferry Terminal (Gozo)**

There are regular ferry services that run from Ċirkewwa Ferry Port to Mgarr Ferry Terminal daily. A standard foot passenger fare is €4.65 and are only sold at the Mgarr Gozo terminal on a return basis. Customers boarding the ferries at Ċirkewwa in Malta do not have to be in possession of a valid paid ticket and can purchase their return ticket before making their return journey from Gozo. For more details, please visit [www.gozochannel.com/en/home](http://www.gozochannel.com/en/home).

## **Bus from Mgarr Ferry Terminal (Gozo) to Hotel**

The 301 bus between Mgarr (ferry terminal) and Rabat (Victoria) operates every 30 minutes. Passengers can travel using the same bus cards and tickets used in Malta. The cost per trip varies from €1.50 to €2. Tickets can be bought either online, from the booth machines or once you hop on the bus. Buses operate daily between 05.30hrs and 23.00hrs. Further information can be found at [www.publictransport.com.mt](http://www.publictransport.com.mt). From the main bus terminal in Victoria, walk down Main Gate street onto Republic Street. Walk for 350m down to the Duke shopping complex and take the lift to the reception on the 4th floor.

## **PRACTICAL INFORMATION**

### **Accommodation**

The Duke Boutique Hotel is situated in the heart of Victoria and enjoys excellent views all around the island. The owners, Jason & Sharon Galea are long standing friends of SwimTrek and having hosted our trips to Gozo since 2010, they have an excellent understanding of your needs during this trip. Guests can choose from 5 distinctly designed room types and suites in this 4-star boutique hotel, many commanding magnificent views of the Citadel or the Villa Rundle Gardens. Room choices include standard and garden view rooms, or alternatively, there is the option to upgrade to a jacuzzi terrace room, junior suite or presidential suite, which are available upon request.

If you would like to extend your stay in Gozo and need to book additional nights' accommodation before or after your trip, please contact Jason & Sharon directly via: [info@thedukehotelgozo.com](mailto:info@thedukehotelgozo.com).

### **Meals**

Three breakfasts are included during your trip, as well as lunch on Days 2, 3 & 4. Other meals are at your own expense. This gives you a fantastic opportunity to explore and experience the local cafes and restaurants of your choice in Victoria over the course of your trip. In Gozo, the average price of a meal in a local restaurant is approximately €15-25.

### **Extra Expenses**

You should bring extra money with you to cover such items as lunches, dinners, drinks, entertainment, souvenirs, etc. The local currency in Malta is the Euro (€). You can exchange currency at the hotel or withdraw money at ATMs that can be found on Republic Street, where the Duke Boutique Hotel is based. Please note a tourist tax will need to be paid on location, currently €0.50 per person per night.

## **Passports and Visas**

Malta is part of the European Union. Non-residents of Malta require a full passport to enter the country, which should be valid for six months beyond the expected length of stay. Citizens of all E.U. member states, the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand do not require a visa to enter Malta. Please note that visa regulations are subject to change and we advise you check visa requirements prior to travel.

## **Health Information and Recommended Vaccinations**

For comprehensive health information for people travelling to Malta, including all recommended and required vaccinations, please visit [www.travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries](http://www.travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries). Please note that this information is subject to change and you should re-check this site regularly prior to your trip.

## **Travel Plugs & Electricity**

For a useful source of information on the different electrical outlets, electrical plugs, and electric sockets, please visit [worldstandards.eu](http://worldstandards.eu).