

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Malta

**CAPITAL:** Valletta

**SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT:** Unitary Multiparty Republic

**AREA:** 320 Sq Km (124 Sq Mi)

**ESTIMATED 2000 POPULATION:** 378,900

---



**LOCATION & GEOGRAPHY:** Malta is an archipelago of five islands located in the central Mediterranean Sea. It

consists of the islands of Malta, Gozo, Comino, Cominotto

Filfa and St. Paul. The islands are generally low lying with no mountains or rivers and the coastlines of Malta and Gozo are well indented with numerous bays and rocky coves. Major Cities (pop. est.); Birkirkara 21,800, Qormi 19,900, Hamrun 13,700, Sliema 13,500, Valletta 9,100 (1994). Land Use; pastures and agricultural-cultivated 41%, other 59% (1993).

---

**CLIMATE:** Malta has a typical Mediterranean climate characterized by a dry summer season and a mild rainy winter season with occasional fog from November to March. Average annual precipitation is 559 mm (22 inches) and occurs almost entirely between October and April. Average temperature ranges in Valletta are from 10 to 14 degrees Celsius (50 to 57 degrees Fahrenheit) in January to 23 to 29 degrees Celsius (73 to 84 degrees Fahrenheit) in August.

---

**PEOPLE:** The Maltese are descendants of ancient Carthaginians and Phoenicians with an admixture of Arab and Italian. The ethnic aliens are largely retired British nationals.

---

**DEMOGRAPHIC/VITAL STATISTICS:** Density; 1,130 persons per sq km (2,926 persons per sq mi) (1991). Urban-Rural; 85.3% urban, 14.7% rural (1985). Sex Distribution; 49.3% male, 50.7% female (1990). Life Expectancy at Birth; 73.8 years male, 78.0 years female (1989). Age Breakdown; 24% under 15, 22% 15 to 29, 24% 30 to 44, 15% 45 to 59, 11% 60 to 74, 4% 75 and over (1990). Birth Rate; 15.2 per 1,000 (1990). Death Rate; 7.7 per 1,000 (1990). Increase Rate; 7.5 per 1,000 (1990). Infant Mortality Rate; 11.3 per 1,000 live births (1990).

---

**RELIGIONS:** The official religion is Roman Catholicism with 97% of the population Roman Catholic, while 1.2% are Anglican.

---

**LANGUAGES:** The official languages are Maltese and English. Maltese is a Semitic language with some Roman language assimilations and Italian is also widely spoken.

---

**EDUCATION:** Economically active population having attained: no formal schooling 10.8%, primary 60.4%, lower secondary 3.4%, upper secondary 17.6%, higher 7.8% (1967). Literacy; literate population aged 15 or over 250,419 or 96.0% (1985).

---

**MODERN HISTORY - WWII TO 1993:** In 1942 King George VI of England awarded the George Cross to Malta in recognition of the courage and endurance of the Maltese people during World War II. In 1947 Malta was granted partial self government. In 1953 the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) established its Mediterranean military headquarters on Malta. In 1956 a referendum for the complete integration with Britain was approved, however, by 1958 an independence movement began to grow. In 1962 a constitution was approved so that the British colony could become a state with full internal self government, although the new legislative assembly favored full independence. On Sept. 21, 1964 Malta became an independent constitutional monarchy. In 1974 the constitution was amended and Malta became a republic within the Commonwealth. In 1979 an agreement between Great Britain and Malta, that permitted British use of military facilities based on Malta, expired. In Mar. 1979 Britain and NATO finalized the withdrawal of their military forces and Malta declared its neutrality and nonalignment. In Apr. 1989 Vincent Tabone was elected President. In Dec. 1984 Dom Mintoff retired as Prime Minister, a position he had held since 1956 and was replaced by Carmelo Mifsud Bonnici. In May 1987 Edward Fenech Adami was elected Prime Minister and in July 1990 Malta applied for full EU membership. In May 1990 Pope John Paul II visited Malta which was the first ever pastoral visit by a pontiff. In Jan. 1991 Malta's Foreign Minister, Guido de Marco, visited Palestinian refugee camps in Israeli-occupied territories and Jordan while a state visits by the President of Italy in Sept. 1991 resulted in their commitment to support in Malta's complete integration into the EU. In Oct. 1991 ten leading religious representatives met in Malta to discuss how religion could promote peace through the new world order. Also in 1991 the Social Development Fund of the Council of Europe approved a ML 13 million loan for the hospital and housing programs while a cooperation agreement was signed with Italy to fight organized crime and drug trafficking. In Feb. 1992 the country's modern international airport was opened. On Feb. 22, 1992 general elections resulted in the National Party led by Prime Minister Adami being returned to power. In May 1992 Queen Elizabeth II visited Malta to commemorate those who had lost their lives in WWII with the opening of the Siege Bell Monument. Also in 1992 the government continued with its policy of liberalization with import barriers being reduced in line with the country's aspiration to gain membership with the EU. In Jan. 1993 Shell Oil and a Saudi firm NIMIR were granted approval to conduct exploration for oil to the south of Malta. In June 1993 the Commission of the EU announced that Malta had all the qualifications for EU membership, although they would have to implement certain economic reforms and legislative measures in order to gain entry. In July 1993 an agreement was signed with the San Raffaele Scientific Institute to establish another hospital to compliment

the country' one other hospital, St. Lukes while the Council of Europe made another ML 12 million available to guarantee the project. Also in 1993 Italy entered in its fourth agreement with Malta to provide economic, financial and technical aid to the country.

---

**CURRENCY:** The official currency is the Lira (ML) divided into 100 Cents, which is in turn divided into 1,000 Mills.

---

**ECONOMY:** Gross National Product; USD \$2,606,000,000 (1992). Public Debt; USD \$921,700,000 (1994). Imports; ML 830,920,000 (1993). Exports; ML 518,326,000 (1993). Tourism Receipts; USD \$653,000,000 (1993). Balance of Trade; ML -226,900,000 (1994). Economically Active Population; 139,868 or 38.2% of total population (1993). Unemployed; 4.2% (1993).

---

**MAIN TRADING PARTNERS:** Its main trading partners are Germany, Italy, the UK and the USA.

**MAIN PRIMARY PRODUCTS:** Fruit, Limestone, Pigs, Poultry, Salt, Tobacco, Vegetables, Wheat.

**MAJOR INDUSTRIES:** Agriculture, Beverages, Clothing, Electronic Equipment, Foodstuffs, Footwear, Leather, Rubber and Plastic, Shipbuilding and Repairs, Textiles, Tourism, Tobacco Products.

**MAIN EXPORTS:** Clothing, Footwear, Furniture, Machinery, Ships Instruments, Textiles, Tobacco.

---

**TRANSPORT:** Railroads; nil. Roads; length 1,405 km (873 mi) (1988). Vehicles; cars 107,005 (1989), trucks and buses 19,653 (1989). Merchant Marine; vessels 524 (1990), deadweight tonnage 7,756,479 (1990). Air Transport; passenger-km 732,000,000 (454,844,000 passenger-mi) (1989), cargo ton-km 6,192,000 (4,241,000 short ton-mi) (1989).

---

**COMMUNICATIONS:** Daily Newspapers; total of 3 with a total circulation of 68,000 (1992). Radio; receivers 90,000 (1994). Television; receivers 146,107 (1993). Telephones; units 157,500 (1993).

---

**MILITARY:** 1,850 (1995) total active duty personnel with 100% army while military expenditure accounts for 0.9% (1992) of the Gross National Product (GNP).