

# Overseas Adventure Travel<sup>®</sup>

THE LEADER IN PERSONALIZED SMALL GROUP ADVENTURES SINCE 1978

Your O.A.T. Adventure Travel Planning Guide<sup>®</sup>



New! Mediterranean Navigation: Malta, Sicily,  
Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco & Coastal Spain

2025

# Overseas Adventure Travel®

347 Congress Street, Boston, MA 02210

Dear Traveler,

I am thrilled that you are considering exploring the world with O.A.T. There are so many wonderful destinations to discover, and the itinerary described inside is a perfect way to fulfill a travel dream.

When you join us, you will enjoy the thrill of off-the-beaten-path discovery coupled with the convenience of unpacking just once. Aboard our privately owned small ship, you will visit lesser-known ports that larger vessels cannot access—and enjoy intimate interactions with local people in your small group of no more than 25 travelers. You will get to know community leaders and try your hand at local trades during your *A Day in the Life* experience, share traditional fare and lively conversation during a Home-Hosted Visit, discuss the Controversial Topics impacting everyday life, and visit sites supported by Grand Circle Foundation.

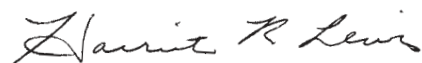
But your personal connections are not limited to your time on land—while onboard, you will enjoy the warm hospitality provided by our friendly, English-speaking crew, as well as the camaraderie of your fellow American travelers. Whether you travel with a partner, sister, friend, or independently, you will feel welcomed and included throughout your journey. And if you do choose to travel solo, you will enjoy an unmatched value, with our FREE or low-cost Single Supplements—just one of the reasons we continue to be the leader in solo travel.

To ensure you experience the true culture and feel supported every step of the way, we provide the services of a local Trip Experience Leader from the beginning of your adventure to the end. Along with introducing you to the history and culture of their homeland, these friendly experts will gladly help you out with any special requests to make your trip even more special. You can also rely on the seasoned team at our regional office, who are ready to help 24/7 in case any unexpected circumstances arise.

Plus, you can put your own personal stamp on your trip, like the, like the **87% of our travelers who personalize their experience**. Perhaps you will choose to see more of your destination by adding an optional trip extension to your itinerary. You can also arrive a few days early to explore independently and get acclimated, customize your air itinerary, and more.

I hope you find this Travel Planning Guide helpful. If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to contact one of our Travel Counselors at **1-800-955-1925**.

Warm regards,



Harriet R. Lewis  
Chair  
Overseas Adventure Travel

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Malaga, Spain

## **New!** Mediterranean Navigation: Malta, Sicily, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco & Coastal Spain

### Small Ship Adventure

**Malta:** Valletta | **Sicily:** Mazara del Vallo | **Tunisia:** Tunis | **Algeria:** Algiers, Oran | **Morocco:** Tangier | **Gibraltar** | **Spain:** Málaga, Valencia, Barcelona

Small groups of no more than 25 travelers, guaranteed

**18 days starting from \$10,595**

including international airfare

Single Supplement: \$1,995

For departure dates & prices, visit [www.oattravel.com/vts2025pricing](http://www.oattravel.com/vts2025pricing)

Cruise along the culturally-rich, Mediterranean coastlines of Malta, Sicily, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and Spain aboard our privately owned **98-passenger M/V Corinthian**. Begin by exploring the multicultural capital of Valletta, and end by traversing the colorful streets of Barcelona. Along the way, you'll meet local families in Mazara del Vallo ... discover the *kasbah* of Algiers ... enjoy a taste of North African tradition in Tangier ... and uncover the colonial history of Gibraltar.

### IT'S INCLUDED

- 16 nights accommodation, including 1 night in Valletta and 15 nights aboard our privately owned 98-passenger M/V *Corinthian* or 89-passenger M/V *Clio*
- International airfare, airport transfers, government taxes, fees, and airline fuel surcharges, unless you choose to make your own air arrangements
- 47 meals: 16 breakfasts, 15 lunches, 16 dinners, including 1 Home-Hosted Lunch—plus all onboard house beer, wine, and soft drinks
- 10 guided tours and cultural experiences
- Services of a local Trip Experience Leader
- Gratuities for local guides and motorcoach drivers
- All port charges
- Baggage handling for 1 piece of luggage per person, including tips
- 5% Frequent Traveler Credit toward your next trip

*Prices are accurate as of the date of this publishing and are subject to change.*

**Mediterranean Navigation: Malta, Sicily, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco & Coastal Spain**



## ITINERARY SUMMARY

DAYS	DESTINATION
1	Fly to Valletta, Malta
2-4	Valletta
5	Mazara del Vallo, Italy
6	Tunis, Tunisia
7	At sea
8	Algiers, Algeria
9	Oran, Algeria
10	At sea
11	Tangier, Morocco
12	Gibraltar
13	Málaga, Spain
14	At sea
15-16	Valencia, Spain
17	Barcelona
18	Return to U.S.

## WHAT TO EXPECT

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ Moderate

**Pacing:** 17 days, with 15 nights aboard the 98-passenger M/V *Corinthian* or 89-passenger M/V *Clio*

**Physical Requirements:** Walk 2 miles unassisted and participate in 2 hours of physical activities each day with agility and balance required for possible rough seas

**Flight time:** Travel time will be 8-19 hours and will most likely have one connection

View all physical requirements at [www.oattravel.com/vts](http://www.oattravel.com/vts)

## MALTA, SICILY, TUNISIA, ALGERIA, MOROCCO & SPAIN: THE O.A.T. DIFFERENCE

**Unbeatable Value:** Travel at the lowest price and per diems in the industry.

**People-to-People Experiences:** Meet with a local in Valletta, Malta to discuss political corruption in Malta, and learn how Muslims are acclimating to life in Catholic Mazara del Vallo, Sicily. You'll also visit a bustling, traditional *souk* (market) in Tangier, Morocco and mingle with local shoppers and vendors.

**O.A.T. Exclusives:** In one comprehensive journey, cruise to the European and African continents to discover seven distinctive countries. Plus, join local women for tea in Mazara del Vallo, Sicily.

## PERSONALIZE YOUR ADVENTURE

### OPTIONAL EXTENSIONS

**The Maltese Archipelago**  
PRE-TRIP: 5 nights from **\$1,495**

**Barcelona, Spain**  
POST-TRIP: 3 nights from **\$1,295**

### ARRIVE EARLY

We recommend that you relax after a long flight or explore more in depth before your trip. Prices shown include accommodations and private airport transfer.

- Arrive early in **Valletta** before your Malta pre-trip extension or before your main adventure from **\$250** per room, per night

# Mediterranean Navigation: Malta, Sicily, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco & Coastal Spain

## YOUR DETAILED ITINERARY

### BEGIN YOUR ADVENTURE WITH AN OPTIONAL PRE-TRIP EXTENSION

#### 5 nights in *The Maltese Archipelago*

**Day 1** Depart U.S.

**Day 2** Arrive Valletta, Malta

**Day 3** Valletta • Honey farm

**Day 4** Valletta • Visit Rabat • Mdina

**Day 5** Valletta • Optional Gozo Island tour

**Day 6** Valletta • Visit Hagar Qim • The Three Cities

**Day 7** Valletta • Begin main trip

#### **Day 1** Depart U.S.

Fly from the U.S. to Valletta, Malta.

#### **Day 2** Arrive in Valletta, Malta

- Destination: Valletta
- Included Meals: Dinner
- Accommodations: Grand Hotel Excelsior or similar

**Morning/Afternoon:** Arrive in Valletta, Malta, throughout the day—refer to your personal itinerary for specific arrival times. You'll be greeted at the airport by an O.A.T. representative who will assist you with your transfer to your hotel. There, you'll meet your Trip Experience Leader and fellow travelers—including those who are arriving from the conclusion of their *The Maltese Archipelago* pre-trip extension and those who arrived early in Valletta before their adventure.

**Lunch:** On your own. Your Trip Experience Leader can recommend some local dining options.

**Afternoon:** Enjoy some free time to relax or begin exploring on your own.

**Dinner:** At the hotel.

**Evening:** You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish.

#### **Day 3** Valletta • Embark ship

- Destination: Valletta
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Corinthian* or M/V *Clio*

**Breakfast:** At the hotel's dining room, with local cuisine.

**Morning:** We'll check out of our hotel this morning, and then transfer to your ship, the 98-passenger M/V *Corinthian*, which will be your home for the duration of your cruise. The *Corinthian* is staffed by a friendly,

English-speaking crew who will welcome you aboard and show you to your room. Each of the ship's outside-facing cabins features a queen-sized bed convertible into twin beds, flat-screen TV, air-conditioning, and its own private bath.

**Lunch:** Onboard our ship, featuring a selection of options.

**Afternoon:** Free to settle in to your accommodations or go out and explore independently.

**Dinner:** Onboard in the ship's dining room. Dinners onboard include a three-course meal with a choice of meat, fish, and vegetarian options available. As with all the dinners during your cruise, the atmosphere is relaxed, the dress code is smart casual, and you are free to sit at whichever table you please.

**Evening:** You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish.

#### **Day 4 Explore Valletta • Conversation about late journalist Daphne Caruana**

- Destination: Valletta
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Corinthian* or M/V *Clio*

**Breakfast:** Onboard in the ship's dining room.

**Morning:** Explore Valletta, Malta's walled capital city and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. You'll visit the serene Barrakka Gardens, as well as gain insights into the city's mysterious founders: the Sovereign Military Order of Malta. The world's oldest surviving chivalric order, these Knights of Malta founded the city more than 500 years ago and continue to serve the community today. Malta's cultural identity is entwined with that of the Knights: The order originated during the Crusades and, over time, found its way to Malta, where it defended the island from attacks by the Ottoman Empire.

Without the protection of the Knights, Malta's history—and in fact, Europe's history—would be very different than it is today.

The rest of the morning is free to explore on your own.

**Lunch:** Onboard in the ship's dining room. Or, perhaps you'll choose to stay in Valletta to have lunch on your own.

**Afternoon:** We'll gather in the ship's lounge for a discussion about anti-corruption activism in Malta—more specifically, the life of Daphne Caruana Galizia, a former investigative journalist, columnist, blogger, and anti-corruption activist. To facilitate our discussion, we'll be joined by an individual who was very close with Daphne, but for their protection, we are not at liberty to disclose their name.

Our conversation will cover a broad range of topics, from the insatiable need for financial power and a culture of impunity to the dangers of investigative journalism. But at the heart of our conversation, we will reflect on a brilliant and brave woman who—against all odds—spoke truth to power and strove to dismantle a political structure bankrupt of ethics. Her story is a reminder of the lengths journalists often must go to unveil the truth and the sacrifices they make to do so.

Over her 30-year career, Daphne's work successfully exposed widespread government corruption, nepotism, patronage, and money laundering, as well as organized crime linked to online gambling, Malta's citizenship-by-investment scheme, and payments from the government of Azerbaijan. Her bombshell reporting largely involved the lawlessness of Maltese politicians and other powerful figures. In the face of repeated intimidation, threats, and libel suits, Daphne's commitment to uncovering the truth was

unflinching, and as a result of her persistence, she was arrested on multiple occasions by local police authorities. Despite the many forces working against her, she continued publishing her investigative findings and opinion pieces via her blog, *Running Commentary*, which she established in 2008. She was also a regular columnist with *The Sunday Times of Malta* and *The Malta Independent*. Much of her reporting did not hesitate to reveal or criticize the allegedly illicit actions of various high-profile individuals, resulting in a series of legal battles.

In 2016 and 2017, her reporting reached new levels of controversy when she published sensitive information linking a number of Maltese politicians to the Panama Papers scandal. The Panama Papers refer to 11.5 million leaked documents containing financial and attorney-client information for nearly 300,000 offshore organizations. These documents show that a number of the corporate entities were used as vehicles for committing fraud, tax evasion, and eluding international sanctions. The high-ranking principals exposed in the scandal include former national leaders such as President Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan of the United Arab Emirates, Petro Poroshenko of Ukraine, King Salman of Saudi Arabia, the Prime Minister of Iceland, Sigmundur Davíð Gunnlaugsson—as well as the Maltese government minister, Konrad Mizzi, and Prime Minister's chief of staff, Keith Schembri, both of whom were first reported by Daphne. In light of her groundbreaking reporting on Mizzi and Schembri, she was named by *Politico* as one of “28 people who are shaping, shaking and stirring Europe,” describing her as a “one-woman WikiLeaks.”

Sadly, just a couple years after the scandal broke, Daphne was killed by a car bomb in front of her home in Bidnija. At the time of her death, she was fighting 48 libel suits. The title of her last blog entry read, “That crook Schembri

was in court today, pleading that he is not a crook.” Millions of people around the world mourned Daphne's death—including Pope Francis, who penned a letter of condolence, as well as WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, who offered to pay a sum in the amount of tens of thousands of dollars for information leading to the conviction of those responsible. Although three men have since been arrested, the case remains open.

The remainder of the afternoon is on your own. The first of a series of nightly Port Talks will be held shortly before dinner.

**Dinner:** Enjoy a Captain's Welcome Dinner tonight. This sit-down meal often features specialty dishes or a ceremonial cocktail.

**Evening:** You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish. Perhaps you'll enjoy a nightcap at the bar or relax in the lounge.

## Day 5 Explore Mazara del Vallo, Sicily

- Destination: Mazara del Vallo
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Corinthian* or M/V *Clio*

**Breakfast:** Onboard in the ship's dining room.

**Morning:** We'll explore the UNESCO-protected city of Mazara, where our Trip Experience Leader will take us on a walking tour of the city's historic *Kasbah* quarter. Here, some 3,000 Tunisians and other Maghreb Arabs live and work. During our explorations, we'll learn about the challenges and opportunities encountered while intermingling Sicilian and Arab cultures, and the co-existence of Muslim and Christian faiths.

Later, we'll stop to visit the Museum of the Dancing Satyr, home to a mysterious Greek bronze statue with a noteworthy past. In 1998,



local fishermen brought the treasure to land, after it had spent 2,000 years resting on the seabed off Sicily's southwestern coast.

**Lunch:** Onboard in the ship's dining room.

**Afternoon:** After lunch, we'll split up into smaller groups and meet with women in a local community space, where we'll sit down for tea and get to know our hosts.

The remainder of the afternoon is free for your own discoveries. Later, enjoy our nightly Port Talk.

**Dinner:** Onboard in the ship's dining room.

**Evening:** Free for your own discoveries.

## Day 6 Explore Tunis, Tunisia

- Destination: Tunis
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Corinthian* or M/V *Clio*

**Activity Note:** The visit to the North Africa American Cemetery and Memorial may be an emotional experience for some travelers.

**Breakfast:** Onboard in the ship's dining room.

**Morning:** We'll begin the day by paying our respects to the American soldiers who liberated Tunisia during World War II with a visit to the North Africa American Cemetery and Memorial. This 27-acre memorial is the final resting place of 2,841 American military dead and also honors 3,700 soldiers whose remains were never found.

Next, we'll drive to Sidi Bou Said village, where we'll enjoy a discovery walk of this stunning seaside town. As we wind our way through the hilly maze of impossibly narrow streets, we'll admire the whitewashed buildings and sky-blue doors for which the village is known.

**Lunch:** Onboard in the ship's dining room.

**Afternoon:** After lunch, we'll drive to the historic, UNESCO-protected medina of Tunis, where we'll witness the many palaces, mosques, and fountains situated here. We'll also meet some of the vendors who sell their handicrafts at various *souks* (markets), and learn about local traditions like the chachia, a flexible hat worn by men that originated in Tunisia and Libya. The chachia is typically made from wool that has been crushed with hot water and soap, then dyed, and shaped. We're sure to see some men donning this typical headpiece as we walk through the medina.

**Dinner:** Onboard in the ship's dining room.

**Evening:** You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations.

## Day 7 Day at sea

- Destination: At sea
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Corinthian* or M/V *Clio*

**Today's Activities:** We'll spend the day at sea as we cruise from Tunis to Algiers, Algeria.

**Today's Meals:** All meals will be served in the ship's dining room. Your crew and Trip Experience Leader will inform you of precise start times, and there will be daily memos posted around the ship to inform you and your fellow travelers of meal times.

## Day 8 Explore Algiers, Algeria

- Destination: Algiers
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Corinthian* or M/V *Clio*

**Breakfast:** Onboard in the ship's dining room.

**Morning:** We'll anchor in Algiers, Algeria, today and disembark for a guided visit of *La Kasbah*, the traditional quarter of the Algerian capital. Declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site

in 1992, this particular citadel was built upon a hilltop covered in tenth-century ruins. As we explore the steep, narrow streets, we'll pass by 17th-century mosques and towering Ottoman palaces—relics of an opulent and bygone era.

**Lunch:** At a local restaurant.

**Afternoon:** We'll drive to the Martyrs' Memorial, a statue commemorating the Algerian War. Erected in 1982 on the 20th anniversary of the country's independence, it features the shape of three standing palm leaves, which shelter the "Eternal Flame" underneath it.

Enjoy a Port Talk shortly before dinner.

**Dinner:** Onboard in the ship's dining room.

**Evening:** Free for your own discoveries.

## Day 9 Explore Oran

- Destination: Oran
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Corinthian* or M/V *Clio*

**Breakfast:** Onboard in the ship's dining room.

**Morning:** Today we'll explore Oran, the second-largest port city of Algeria. We'll begin by driving to Santa Cruz Fort, where we'll witness the prominent, whitewashed Chapel of Santa Cruz—said to be a replica of the *Notre-Dame de la Garde* in Marseille. Located at a height of about 1,300 feet, we'll enjoy sweeping views down below of the city and coastline.

Later this morning, we'll continue on to the Cathedral of Sacré-Coeur, a former Catholic church located along the elegant boulevard of Hammou-boutelis. Built between 1903 and 1913, the cathedral eventually became a public library in 1996.

**Lunch:** Onboard in the ship's dining room.

**Afternoon:** We'll have time to continue exploring Oran before returning to the ship, where we'll later enjoy our nightly Port Talk.

**Dinner:** Onboard in the ship's dining room.

**Evening:** Free for your own discoveries.

## Day 10 Day at sea

- Destination: At sea
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Corinthian* or M/V *Clio*

**Breakfast:** Onboard in the ship's dining room.

**Morning:** We'll spend the day at sea as we cruise from Oran to Tangier, Morocco.

**Lunch:** Onboard in the ship's dining room.

**Afternoon:** Enjoy the ship's amenities.

**Dinner:** Onboard in the ship's dining room.

**Evening:** Free to take advantage of the ship's amenities.

## Day 11 Explore Tangier, Morocco

- Destination: Tangier
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Corinthian* or M/V *Clio*

**Breakfast:** Onboard in the ship's dining room.

**Morning:** Welcome to Morocco! Begin this morning with a brief visit to Cap Spartel, where the Mediterranean Sea meets the Atlantic Ocean. Here, we'll enjoy gorgeous seaside views, as well as an opportunity to explore a whitewashed lighthouse. Next, we'll head to the Caves of Hercules, an archaeological cave complex boasting two openings: one on land and one by sea. It is believed that the Phoenicians created the sea opening, and there are even ancient markings on the cave walls to support this theory.

We'll then depart for the heart of Tangier: the Old Medina. Discover the vitality of this old walled-city and find inspiration just as beat poets, writers, and artist have during the middle of the last century. We'll also visit the Kasbah Museum, housed in the former sultan's palace of Dar El Makhzen and featuring a collection of antiques and artifacts chronicling the history of the Tangier area. Finally, we'll stroll through bustling Grand Socco central square, where you'll visit the traditional *souk* (market). As you mingle with locals among the various stalls containing aromatic spices, colorful produce, and exotic butchery, you may choose to pick up a handicraft or two to remind you of this multi-sensory experience. Occasionally, vendors may try to barter with you on prices. This is a common cultural practice throughout the country as well as continent. Feel free to check with your Trip Experience Leader on shopping tips, should you want any.

**Lunch:** Onboard in the ship's dining room.

**Afternoon:** The remainder of the day is free for your own discoveries. You might like to visit the American Legation, a building that represents the relationship between Morocco and America. Established in 1821, it was the first foreign public property to be acquired by the U.S. Your Trip Experience Leader can arrange for your visit if you'd like (keep in mind that the American Legation is closed on weekends and bank holidays).

Return to the ship, and enjoy the nightly Port Talk.

**Dinner:** Onboard in the ship's dining room.

**Evening:** Free to take advantage of the ship's amenities.

## **Day 12 Tangier • A Day in the Life of a Moroccan village • Home-Hosted Lunch**

- Destination: Tangier
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Corinthian* or M/V *Clio*

**Breakfast:** Onboard in the ship's dining room.

**Morning:** Today, we'll spend **A Day in the Life** of a rural community just outside of Tangier. Upon arrival, we'll meet with our host family, who will show us around their farm and introduce us to their way of life.

We'll then help our hosts with various chores around the property. Perhaps we'll tend to their garden, feed the animals, or assist with tasks in the kitchen. This is a unique opportunity to immerse ourselves in the day-to-day operations of a Moroccan farm.

**Lunch:** We'll join our host family at the dinner table for a **Home-Hosted Lunch**, featuring regionally-inspired dishes.

**Afternoon:** Enjoy free time to explore before the ship sails. Our Port Talk is held shortly before dinner.

**Dinner:** Onboard in the ship's dining room.

**Evening:** You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish.

## **Day 13 Explore Gibraltar**

- Destination: Gibraltar
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Corinthian* or M/V *Clio*

**Breakfast:** Onboard in the ship's dining room.

**Morning:** Today, the ship anchors in Gibraltar, located at the southern tip of the Iberian Peninsula. This British territory spans an area of 2.6 square miles and boasts a population

of just over 30,000 people. The city sits at the foot of an almost 1,400-foot high promontory, creating a distinctive surrounding landscape.

We'll depart for a panoramic tour, stopping first at Europa Point, the southernmost part of the city. This outlook provides unparalleled views of the area, and when the weather is clear, you can actually see North Africa across the Strait of Gibraltar. Then, you'll continue on to discover a site connected to World War II: a network of underground military tunnels excavated in rock by the British. A local guide will grant you access to these tunnels and explain their significance during the war. The network essentially acted as an underground city, housing a bakery as well as tunnels large enough to transport motor vehicles.

Later, we'll make our way to Casemates Square in downtown Gibraltar. Lined with countless pubs, shops, and restaurants, this is the primary square of the city and a common meeting place among locals. Enjoy a short walking tour provided by your Trip Experience Leader to familiarize yourself with the area before heading back to the ship for lunch.

**Lunch:** Onboard in the ship's dining room.

**Afternoon:** Enjoy free time to explore before the ship sails. Our Port Talk is held shortly before dinner.

**Dinner:** Onboard in the ship's dining room.

**Evening:** You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish.

### **Day 14 Explore Málaga, Spain**

- Destination: Málaga
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Corinthian* or M/V *Clio*

**Breakfast:** Onboard the ship.

**Morning:** Your ship docks in Malaga. Located in the country's Andalusia territory, just beyond the Costa del Sol, Malaga has all the charms of a Mediterranean port coupled with historic elegance and a burgeoning art and cultural scene that now rivals Madrid.

**Lunch:** Onboard the ship.

**Afternoon:** Enjoy free time to explore before returning to the ship for our nightly Port Talk.

**Dinner:** Onboard the ship.

**Evening:** The evening is free to relax as you wish. Perhaps you'll relax on the Sun Deck or fondly remember the day's discoveries in your cabin.

### **Day 15 Day at sea**

- Destination: At sea
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Corinthian* or M/V *Clio*

**Today's Activities:** We'll spend the day at sea as we cruise from Málaga to Valencia.

**Today's Meals:** All meals will be served in the ship's dining room. Your crew and Trip Experience Leader will inform you of precise start times, and there will be daily memos posted around the ship to inform you and your fellow travelers of meal times.

### **Day 16 Explore Valencia • Paella demonstration**

- Destination: Valencia
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Corinthian* or M/V *Clio*

**Breakfast:** Onboard in the ship's dining room.

**Morning:** Your panoramic tour begins in Valencia's historic center, one of the largest in Spain. We'll also visit one of the city's most impressive ultra-modern institutions: the

City of Arts and Sciences. In 1996, renowned Valencian architect Santiago Calatrava designed this massive cultural complex, which was built in the dry bed of the Turia River (now converted into a set of garden walkways). The most striking feature is the opera house, which rises like a leviathan out of a massive reflecting pool. You'll make a brief stop here, giving you time to take in this remarkable structure. Also during your tour, you'll have a chance to sample *horchata*, a traditional drink made from tigernuts.

Later, we'll enjoy a cooking demonstration that reveals the secret to creating *paella*, a Valencian specialty. This saffron-flavored, versatile rice dish may contain chicken, pork, artichokes or peppers. Traditionally, it's cooked over an open fire and made using bomba rice, a short-grain variety.

**Lunch:** Following our culinary lesson, we'll sit down and enjoy the *paella* we watched being created.

**Afternoon:** Enjoy free time to explore before the ship sails. Our Port Talk will be held just before dinner.

**Dinner:** Onboard in the ship's dining room.

**Evening:** Free to relax on the ship.

## Day 17 Explore Barcelona

- Destination: Barcelona
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Corinthian* or M/V *Clio*

**Breakfast:** Onboard in the ship's dining room.

**Morning:** Today your ship anchors in Barcelona, the capital of Spain's autonomous Catalonia region and the second-largest city in the country. As a vital center of trade since the Middle Ages, Barcelona has long been at the crossroad of ideas, which has helped cement

its status not only as a great European city, but also as an important hub of scientific, cultural, and artistic innovations.

This morning you'll experience a few of Barcelona's highlights during a panoramic tour. First, you'll stop at Montjuïc, a hill overlooking the harbor, for a scenic view of the cityscape and natural surroundings. Then, you'll drive through the city's main avenue, *Passeig de Gràcia*. This is one of the most important shopping and business areas in the city. Next, we'll walk to Recinte Modernista de Sant Pau to view one of the most prominent works of the Catalan *modernisme* architect Lluís Domènech i Montaner. Then just a short stroll away is *La Sagrada Família*, a Catholic church considered to be among Antoni Gaudi's greatest architectural designs. We'll view his masterpiece from the outside.

**Lunch:** At a local restaurant.

**Afternoon:** This afternoon is free for your own discoveries—ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations. Alternatively, your Trip Experience Leader is glad to lead a discovery walk this evening, should you like to join.

Later, we'll enjoy our Farewell Port Talk.

**Dinner:** Join your fellow travelers in the ship's dining room for a Farewell Dinner. You can all reminisce about the memories you made that will last a lifetime.

**Evening:** The rest of the evening is free. Enjoy your final evening on your ship.

## Day 18 Disembark ship • Return to U.S. • Or begin post-trip extension

- Included Meals: Breakfast

**Breakfast:** Onboard in the ship's dining room.

**Morning:** Disembark and transfer to the airport for your flight home, or begin your *Barcelona, Spain* post-trip extension.

## END YOUR ADVENTURE WITH AN OPTIONAL POST-TRIP EXTENSION

### **3 nights in *Barcelona, Spain***

**Day 1** Explore Barcelona

**Day 2** Barcelona • Visit Figueres

**Day 3** Barcelona • Explore El Born

**Day 4** Barcelona • Return to U.S.

## PRE-TRIP

### The Maltese Archipelago

#### INCLUDED IN YOUR PRICE

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- » Accommodations: 5 nights in Malta at the Victoria Hotel or similar
- » 8 meals—5 breakfasts, 2 lunches, and 1 dinner
- » 7 small group activities
- » Services of a local O.A.T. Trip Experience Leader
- » Gratuities for local guides, drivers, and luggage porters
- » All transfers

#### PRE-TRIP EXTENSION ITINERARY

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*Due to their strategic position, the Maltese Islands have been occupied, conquered, and defended by a multitude of peoples—producing a proud history that encompasses 7,000 years. You’ll be welcomed by a warm, friendly people and bask in their sun-kissed Mediterranean climate as you share the rich heritage of their country.*

##### Day 1 Depart U.S.

Depart the U.S. today on your flight to Malta.

##### Day 2 Arrive Valletta, Malta

- Destination: Valletta
- Accommodations: Grand Hotel Excelsior or similar

**Morning/Afternoon:** Arrive in Valletta, Malta, today, where you’ll meet your Trip Experience Leader. Transfer to your hotel and enjoy an orientation walk to acquaint yourself with the neighborhood surrounding your hotel.

**Dinner/Evening:** The evening is yours to relax or explore independently, with dinner on your own. Ask your Trip Experience Leader for restaurant recommendations.

##### Day 3 Valletta • Honey farm

- Destination: Valletta
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Grand Hotel Excelsior or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We’ll depart by mini-bus this morning for a nearby honey farm, where we’ll learn about the production of this golden delicacy. During our time on the farm, we’ll tour the grounds, learn about rearing bees, as well as have an opportunity to try some products for ourselves. This is a great time to ask any questions you may have about this unique production process.

**Lunch:** On your own in Valletta—ask your Trip Experience Leader for local restaurant recommendations.

**Afternoon:** Free for your own discoveries—ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations.

**Dinner:** Gather with your fellow travelers at a local restaurant for our Welcome Dinner, featuring authentic regional fare.

**Evening:** You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations.

#### **Day 4 Valletta • Visit Rabat • Mdina**

- Destination: Valletta
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Grand Hotel Excelsior or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Begin your tour in the Wignacourt Collegiate Museum in Rabat which, in addition to exhibiting fine art and artifacts, also includes numerous underground features such as St. Paul’s Grotto, Punic, Roman, and Early Christian catacombs, and a complex of World War II-era air raid shelters. You’ll also stop to see the artistry, craftsmanship and skill of a gilder. This is someone who lays gold accents into different objects, in this instance, ornate Maltese clocks.

Proceed next to Mdina, the former capital of Malta. This medieval city is surrounded by thick, imposing walls, and the limited access allowed to traffic gives Mdina its nickname—the “Silent City.” Stroll along the peaceful winding streets, admire palaces now serving as private homes, and see Mdina’s Baroque cathedral anchoring a large square.

**Lunch:** We’ll enjoy lunch at a local farm, where we’ll have the opportunity to sample freshly-made Maltese specialties.

**Afternoon:** Free for your own discoveries—ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations.

**Dinner/Evening:** Continue making independent discoveries this evening, with dinner on your own. Ask your Trip Experience Leader for restaurant recommendations.

#### **Day 5 Valletta • Optional Gozo Island tour**

- Destination: Valletta
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Grand Hotel Excelsior or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Your day is free to do as you please in Valletta. Or, join us on an optional full-day excursion to the island of Gozo. After breakfast, transfer to the pier for your ferry ride to Gozo, a small fishing and farming island with cultivated hills, rugged cliffs, and beautiful beaches.

On arrival, you’ll visit a local bakery for a taste of *hobz*, traditional fresh-baked Maltese sourdough bread. Then, tour the Ggantija Neolithic Temples. This group of two very important temples, set side-by-side on the Xaghra Plateau, date to about 4,000 BC, making them older than Egypt’s pyramids.

**Lunch:** Today’s optional tour includes lunch in a local restaurant. Otherwise, lunch is on your own today.

**Afternoon:** Your optional tour continues this afternoon as you discover Gozo’s modern-day culture with a visit to a *bocce* club. Here, you’ll have the opportunity to chat with some local players and learn more about the game’s popularity in Malta. Then, enjoy a boat ride along the shore of beautiful Dwejra Bay, which boasts some of the most spectacular coastal scenery in Gozo.



Late this afternoon, board a ferry to return to Malta. The rest of the day is yours to do as you please. Your Trip Experience Leader will be happy to recommend free time activities.

**Dinner/Evening:** Continue making independent discoveries this evening, with dinner on your own. Ask your Trip Experience Leader for restaurant recommendations.

### **Day 6 Valletta • Visit Hagar Qim • The Three Cities**

- Destination: Valletta
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Grand Hotel Excelsior or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Set out for a tour of one of Malta's best-known prehistoric temples, Hagar Qim, which means "free-standing boulders." This megalithic temple complex was constructed more than 5,200 years ago. The large stone complex contains rooms formerly devoted to animal sacrifices, burnt offerings, and ritual oracles, making it one of the oldest religious sites on Earth.

Next, explore the area Napoleon dubbed "The Three Cities," settled as early as the time of the Phoenicians. A trio of historic fortified towns—Cospicua, Senglea, and Vittoriosa—ring the Grand Harbor.

Vittoriosa, also known as Birgu, was settled by the Knights of St. John in 1530 when King Charles V of Spain granted them the territory of Malta. After resisting an Ottoman siege in 1565, in which a force of 700 knights overcame 40,000 Turkish soldiers, the knights ushered in Malta's Golden Age. Cospicua, the largest of the three, is a double-fortified harbor city known for its majestic bastions, built by the Knights of Malta. Today the city is also dominated by its old dockyard, one of the features that endured

the terrible bombing campaigns of World War II. And Senglea, set atop a narrow promontory extending into the Grand Harbor with an area of just over half a square mile, is Malta's smallest locality but also its most densely populated.

**Lunch:** At a local restaurant.

**Afternoon:** Free for your own discoveries before returning to Valletta—ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations.

**Dinner:** On your own—ask your Trip Experience Leader for local restaurant recommendations.

**Evening:** You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations.

### **Day 7 Valletta • Begin main trip**

- Included Meals: Breakfast

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Meet your fellow travelers who will be arriving throughout the day and begin your main *Mediterranean Navigation: Malta, Sicily, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco & Coastal Spain* adventure.

## OPTIONAL TOUR

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### Gozo Island

(Day 5 \$170 per person)

Join us on an optional full-day excursion. After breakfast, transfer to the pier for your ferry ride to Gozo, a small fishing and farming island with green, flat-topped cultivated hills, rugged cliffs, and beautiful inlets and beaches. Gozo, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is known as “The Isle of Calypso” because of its Calypso Cave, which is supposedly where the legendary Ulysses took refuge during his ten years’ journey home at the end of the Trojan Wars.

Here, you’ll tour the Ggantija Neolithic Temples. This group of two very important temples, set side-by-side on the Xaghra Plateau, date to about 4000 B.C., making them older than Egypt’s pyramids. Nearby, you’ll see the 17th-century Xaghra Windmill.

After lunch—included in your optional tour price—enjoy a boat ride in beautiful Dwejra Bay, which boasts some of the most spectacular coastal scenery in Gozo.

**Please note:** *The boat ride is weather-dependent and may be canceled under adverse conditions.*

## POST-TRIP

### Barcelona, Spain

#### INCLUDED IN YOUR PRICE

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- » Accommodations for 3 nights
- » 4 meals: 3 breakfasts and 1 dinner
- » 4 guided tours with personal headsets: Park Guell · Figueres · Music Palace · El Born
- » Services of our local Trip Experience Leader
- » Gratuities for local guides and motorcoach drivers
- » All transfers

#### POST-TRIP EXTENSION ITINERARY

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*Journey to a land where medieval charms mingle with avant-garde grandeur, traditional culture meets modern sensibilities, and everyday life exists within a work of art. This is Barcelona, the gateway to Spain's lively Catalonia region and a treasure trove of architectural and historic gems. Explore the city's narrow streets and grand boulevards, discover Antoni Gaudi's unmistakable influence, and immerse yourself in the unconventional spirit that makes Barcelona so unforgettable.*

##### Day 1 Explore Barcelona

- Destination: Barcelona
- Accommodations: Hotel Barcelona Apolo or similar

**Morning:** Set off on a walking tour of Barcelona's highlights, including the famed Park Guell. In 1900, Count Eusebi Guell commissioned modernist architect Antoni Gaudi to design a luxury housing community featuring organic designs that would blend seamlessly with the surrounding landscape. The idea was abandoned 14 years later—but not before Gaudi had completed two Hansel-and-Gretel gatehouses and a series of fantastical roads, walks, and steps that appear to have been plucked from a fairytale. Opened to the public in 1922, the area is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Then, return to your centrally located hotel. Depending on where we stay, your accommodations will feature an on-site

restaurant, and a lounge bar. Your room includes air-conditioning, satellite TV, Internet access, and private bath with hair dryer.

**Lunch:** On your own. Your Trip Experience Leader is happy to provide suggestions.

**Afternoon:** The afternoon is free to spend as you'd like. Check with your Trip Experience Leader for free time activities. Perhaps you'd like to wander *Las Ramblas*, the spacious boulevard that runs through the heart of the city from Plaça de Catalunya to Port Vell. This is a great spot for people watching—you may even catch some talented street performers, including magicians.

**Dinner:** On your own. Barcelona boasts a diverse and world-renowned food culture. Your Trip Experience Leader will be a wealth of knowledge in finding authentic eateries.

**Evening:** Free to make independent discoveries this evening. Nighttime is when Barcelona truly comes alive, as the typical Spaniard doesn't eat dinner until around 10pm. Perhaps you want to venture out for a stroll to witness a typical evening's activities.

## Day 2 Barcelona • Visit Figueres

- Destination: Barcelona
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Hotel Barcelona Apolo or similar

**Breakfast:** Served buffet-style at the hotel, featuring local and international options.

**Morning:** Get to know another of Spain's greatest visionaries today: Salvador Dali. We'll travel north to Dali's hometown of Figueres, where you'll embark on a walking tour (be sure to keep an eye out for tributes to the city's surrealist son). Then, visit the Dali Theater and Museum—instantly recognizable by its bright pink façade, geodesic dome, and row of giant eggs lining its roof. Inside, you'll find the world's largest collection of Dali's paintings and sculptures, as well as works from Dali's private art collection. The artist himself is even buried inside.

**Lunch:** On your own. For a local delicacy, you may want to try a Spanish omelet. Unlike American omelets, this meal is available round-the-clock. It's typically filled with onion and chunks of potato and often served with aioli.

**Afternoon:** The afternoon is free to continue exploring Figueres. Consult with your Trip Experience Leader for ideas. Later, we'll drive back to Barcelona.

**Dinner:** On your own. Ask your Trip Experience Leader for restaurant recommendations.

**Evening:** Free to make independent discoveries this evening. For beach lovers, you may want to take a stroll along Barceloneta Beach, a popular and lively stretch of coastline.

## Day 3 Barcelona • Explore El Born

- Destination: Barcelona
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Hotel Barcelona Apolo or similar

**Breakfast:** Served buffet-style at the hotel, featuring local and international options.

**Morning:** Rise early this morning to witness another example of Barcelona's distinctive modernist style, the *Palau de la Musica Catalana* (Music Palace). Here, you will enjoy a one hour tour of this ornate concert hall, completed in 1908 for a Catalan choral society; today, more than half a million people a year attend musical performances at this historical venue.

Then, enjoy a walking tour of El Born—a neighborhood with all the charms of Barcelona's more heavily-traveled districts, but with an atmosphere that is decidedly more local and laidback. Characterized by its medieval streets, quaint cafes, and boutiques, this district is equally as trendy as it is rich with history.

**Lunch:** On your own. While in Barcelona, we recommend taking advantage of the coastal location and finding fresh seafood. Your Trip Experience Leader can provide suggestions, should you be interested.

**Afternoon:** Enjoy a free afternoon. Perhaps you'd like to continue exploring El Born or venture to a new neighborhood, which your Trip Experience Leader can help you with.

**Dinner:** On your own.

**Evening:** You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations.

#### **Day 4 Barcelona • Return to U.S.**

- Included Meals: Breakfast

**Breakfast:** Served buffet-style at the hotel, featuring local and international options.

**Morning:** Depending on your individual flight itinerary, transfer to the airport today for your return flight home.

## YOUR M/V CORINTHIAN SMALL SHIP

### Explore aboard our privately owned, 98-passenger small ship

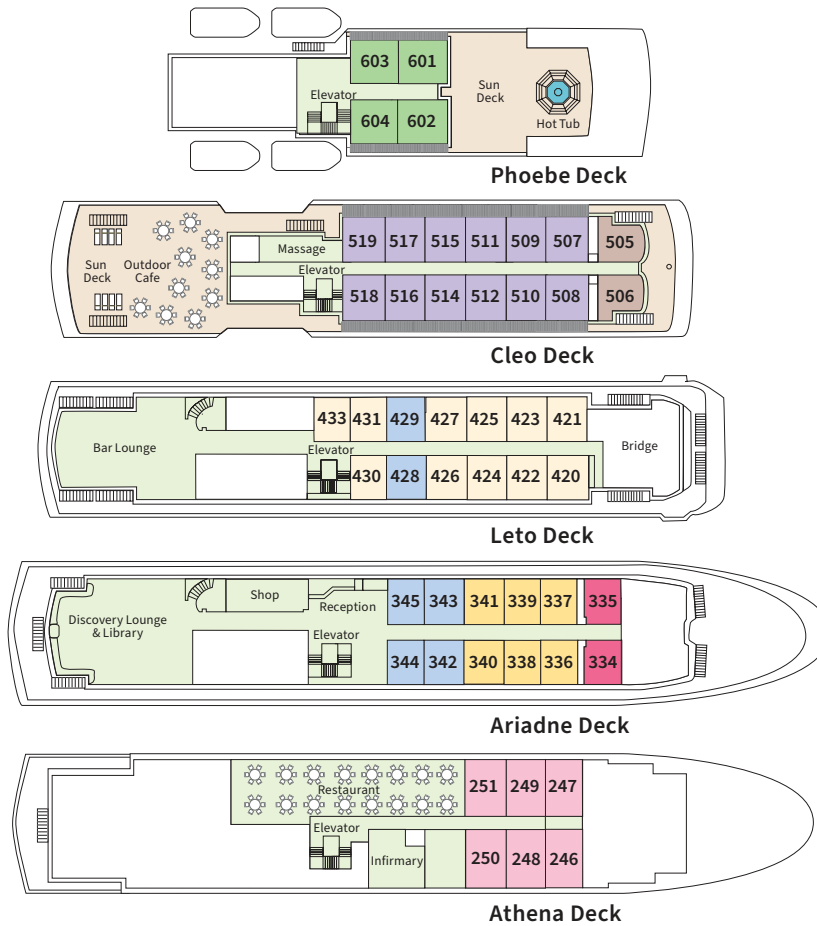
Discover the coastal wonders of the world aboard the M/V *Corinthian*. This ocean cruising vessel—which 95% of travelers rated excellent—was acquired in 2014 and refurbished in 2015 with your tastes in mind. The ship holds four groups of 20–25 travelers (with an average of 22), each with its own local Trip Experience Leader, and charts courses throughout Europe—including the British Isles, Spain, Portugal, and France—and Antarctica.



## SHIPBOARD FEATURES

- **Restaurant with single, open seating:** Savor regionally inspired dishes or American favorites during all buffets and table-service meals.
- **Two lounges:** Relax with old friends and new, and participate in onboard discussions and lectures.
- **Complimentary beverages:** Enjoy house beer and house wine—as well as soft drinks—at any time of day while onboard.
- **Complimentary wireless Internet access:** Connect online in cabins and common areas. *Please note: Connectivity may be limited at certain points throughout your cruise.*
- **Outdoor common areas:** Relish coastal views from your seat in the outdoor café, Sun Deck, or hot tub.
- **English-speaking crew:** Enjoy dedicated attention from our international staff throughout your voyage. Plus, all shipboard announcements are made in English for your convenience.
- **Zodiac crafts:** These onboard crafts are available to take you to shore in the most remote ports.
- **Elevator service:** An elevator serves all five passenger decks.

## M/V CORINTHIAN



CABIN CATEGORIES	
PHS	Penthouse cabin with private balcony – 305 sq. ft.
VS	Cabin with private balcony – 255-270 sq. ft.
AA	Cabin with forward windows – 250 sq. ft.
A	Cabin with window – 215-225 sq. ft.
B	Cabin with window – 215 sq. ft.
C	Cabin with window – 215-250 sq. ft.
D	Cabin with porthole – 250 sq. ft.
E	Cabin with window (partially obstructed) – 225 sq. ft.
F	Cabin with window (partially obstructed) – 215 sq. ft.
G	Cabin with porthole – 250 sq. ft.

**Registry:** Malta

**Length:** 290 ft.

**Beam:** 50 ft.

**Draft:** 12 ft.

**Cabin Size:** 215 sq ft. minimum

**Number of Cabins:** 50

**Passenger Capacity:** 98

**Entered Service:** 1990

**Refurbished in:** 2015

**International crew:** 55-65

**Passenger Decks:** 5

**Group Size:** 25 travelers, maximum, with 1 Trip Experience Leader

**Elevator service to all passenger decks**

*This ship complies with the latest international and U.S. Coast Guard safety regulations and is outfitted with the most current navigational and communications technology. It has retractable fin stabilizers to help reduce discomfort during rough seas.*

## CABIN FEATURES

- Each of the ship's 49 cabins is at least 215 sq. ft.
- All outside-facing with portholes, a window (some with partially obstructed views), or a balcony
- Queen-size bed (convertible to two twins)
- Complimentary wireless Internet access, sitting area, closet, flat-screen TV, DVD/CD player, telephone, mini-refrigerator, safe
- Private bath with shower, hair dryer, and toiletries



*Cabin on the Ariadne deck*

# TRAVEL DOCUMENTS & ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

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## Your Passport

- Must be in good condition
- Must be valid for at least 6 months after your scheduled return to the U.S.
- Must have the required number of blank pages (details below)
- The blank pages must be labeled “Visas” at the top. Pages labeled “Amendments and Endorsements” are not acceptable

## Need to Renew Your Passport?

Contact the National Passport Information Center (NPIC) at **1-877-487-2778**, or visit the U.S. Department of State’s official website at **www.travel.state.gov** for information on obtaining a new passport or renewing your existing passport. The U.S. Department of State allows for passport renewal by mail or, for applicable citizens, renewal online. We advise you review the process and requirements for online passport renewal on the official website.

You may also contact our recommended visa service company, PVS International, at **1-800-556-9990** for help with your passport.

## Recommended Blank Pages

Please confirm that your passport has enough blank pages for this adventure.

- **Main trip only:** You will need 5 blank passport pages.
- **Pre-trip extension to Malta:** No additional pages are needed.
- **Post-trip extension to Spain:** No additional pages are needed.

## Visas Required

**We’ll be sending you a detailed Visa Packet with instructions, application forms, and fees about 100 days prior to your departure.** In the meantime, we’re providing the information below as a guideline on what to expect. This info is for U.S. citizens only. All visas and fees are subject to change.

- **Europe (Spain, Italy, Malta):** Starting in 2025, U.S. citizens will be required to fill out an online European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS) visa-waiver to enter countries in the European Union. There is no confirmed start date for the ETIAS at the time of printing. The ETIAS will be valid for 3 years.
- **Morocco and Tunisia:** No visas required.
- **Algeria: Visa required.** This visa must be obtained in advance.



## **Traveling Without a U.S. Passport?**

If you are not a U.S. citizen, or if your passport is from any country other than the U.S., it is your responsibility to check with your local consulate, embassy, or a visa services company about visa requirements. We recommend the services of PVS International, a national visa service located in Washington D.C.; they can be reached at **1-800-556-9990** or **[www.pvsinternational.org](http://www.pvsinternational.org)**.

## **Traveling With a Minor?**

Some governments may require certain documentation for minors to enter and depart the country or to obtain a visa (if applicable). For further detail on the required documentation, please contact your local embassy or consulate.

## **Emergency Photocopies of Key Documents**

We recommend you carry color photocopies of key documents including the photo page of your passport plus any applicable visas, air itinerary, credit cards (front and back), and an alternative form of ID. Add emergency phone numbers like your credit card company and the number for your travel protection plan. Store copies separate from the originals.

If you plan to email this information to yourself, please keep in mind that email is not always secure; consider using password protection or encryption. Also email is not always available worldwide. As an alternative, you could load these documents onto a flash drive instead, which can do double-duty as a place to backup photos during your trip.

## **Overseas Taxes & Fees**

This tour may have taxes and fees that cannot be included in your airline ticket price because you are required to pay them in person onsite. All taxes are subject to change without notice and can be paid in cash (either U.S. or local currency). If applicable, you will receive a list of these fees with your Final Documents.

## RIGORS, VACCINES & GENERAL HEALTH

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### Is This Adventure Right for You?

**Please review the information below prior to departing on this adventure.** We reserve the right for our Trip Experience Leaders to modify participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home, if their condition would adversely affect the health, safety, or enjoyment of themselves or of other travelers.

#### GROUP SIZE

- This adventure has a maximum group size of 25 travelers with a local Trip Experience Leader exclusive to O.A.T.

#### PACING

- 17 days, with 15 nights aboard the 98-passenger *M/V Corinthian* or 89-passenger *M/V Clio*

#### PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

- Walk 2 miles unassisted and participate in 2 hours of physical activities each day
- Agility and balance are required for possible rough seas
- Travelers using mobility aids or with medical conditions that might require immediate attention or evacuation will not be able to board the *M/V Corinthian*
- We reserve the right for Trip Experience Leaders to restrict participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home, if their limitations impact the group's experience

#### TERRAIN & TRANSPORTATION

- Uneven surfaces, including unpaved paths, steep hills, stairs, and cobblestone
- Gangway incline can be steep when docked at a pier
- Travel by 98-passenger small ship and 33- to 45-passenger coach
- You must be cleared by a country's local port authorities before disembarking
- Weather conditions and tides may require adjustments to your itinerary

#### CLIMATE

- Daytime temperatures range from 53-76°F during cruising season

### Steps to Take Before Your Trip

Before you leave on this adventure, we recommend the following:

- Check with the CDC for their recommendations for the countries you'll be visiting. You can contact them online at [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel) or by phone at 1-800-232-4636.

- Have a medical checkup with your doctor at least 6 weeks before your trip.
- Pick up any necessary medications, both prescription and over-the-counter.
- Have a dental and/or eye checkup. (Recommended, but less urgent)

## No Vaccines Required

### Recommended Vaccines

At the time of writing there were no required vaccines for this trip. The CDC recommends that all travelers be up to date on their routine vaccinations and on basic travel vaccines like Hepatitis A and Typhoid, but these are suggestions only. However, this could change in future so we encourage you to check with the CDC yourself before meeting with your doctor.

### Traveling with Medications

- **Pack medications in your carry-on bag** to avoid loss and to have them handy.
- **Keep medicines in their original, labeled containers** for a quicker security screen at the airport and a better experience if you get stopped by customs while overseas.
- **Bring copies of your prescriptions**, written using the generic drug name rather than a brand name to be prepared for any unforeseen loss of your medications.

We recommend checking with the State Department for medication restrictions by country: **travel.state.gov** (Go to “Find International Travel Information”, select “Country Information”, then enter the country into the search bar; if you don’t see any medications specifically mentioned under the “Health” section, then you can presume major U.S. brands should be OK).

## Staying Healthy on Your Trip

### Jet Lag Tips

- Start your trip well-rested.
- Begin a gradual transition to your new time zone before you leave or switch to your destination time zone when you get on the plane.
- Attempt to sleep and eat according to the new schedule.
- Avoid heavy eating and drinking caffeine or alcoholic beverages right before—and during—your flight.
- Drink plenty of water and/or fruit juice while flying
- Stretch your legs, neck, and back periodically while seated on the plane.
- After arrival, avoid the temptation to nap.
- Don’t push yourself to see a lot on your first day.

- Try to stay awake your first day until after dinner.

## **Allergies**

If you have any serious allergies or dietary restrictions, we advise you to notify us at least 30 days prior to your departure. Please call our Travel Counselors at **1-800-221-0814**, and we will communicate them to our regional office. Every effort will be made to accommodate you.

## **Water**

- Tap water is safe to drink while onboard the ship and while in Malta, Sicily, and Spain; however, it may be processed differently than your tap water at home, so you might not like the taste or it may feel “heavy” in your stomach.
- Tap water is not safe to drink in Tunisia, Algeria, or Morocco. Bottled water is widely available for sale. Another option is for you to bring a reusable water bottle and fill up onboard the ship.

# MONEY MATTERS: LOCAL CURRENCY & TIPPING GUIDELINES

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## Top Three Tips

- **Carry a mix of different types of payments**, such as local currency, an ATM card, and a credit card.
- **Traveler's checks are not recommended.** They can be difficult to exchange and the commission fee for cashing them is quite high. It's more practical to view them as a last resort in the event of a special situation.
- **In general, you will not be able to pay with U.S. dollars on this trip;** you will need local currency instead.

## Local Currency

For current exchange rates, please refer to an online converter tool like [www.xe.com/currencyconverter](http://www.xe.com/currencyconverter), your bank, or the financial section of your newspaper.

**Euro Countries:** European Euro (€)

**Tunisia:** Tunisian Dinar (TND)

**Algeria:** Algerian Dinar (DZD)

**Morocco:** Moroccan Dirham (DH)

## How to Exchange Money

If you want to exchange money before your trip, you can usually do so through your bank or at an exchange office. Your departure airport in the U.S., a travel agent, or an AAA office are also possible outlets. Or you can wait and change money on the trip instead—but it might be helpful to arrive with some local currency in case you run into a bank holiday or an “out of order” ATM.

On your trip, the easiest way is to withdraw funds from a local ATM. The ATM will give you local money and your bank at home will convert that into U.S. dollars.

You can also exchange cash at some hotels, large post offices, and money exchange offices. To exchange cash, you'll usually need your passport and bills in good condition (not worn, torn, or dirty). New bills (post 2004) are best.

## ATMs

When using the ATM, keep in mind that it may only accept cards from local banks, and may not allow cash advances on credit cards; you might need to try more than one ATM or more than one card.

Many banks charge a fee of \$1-\$10 each time you use a foreign ATM. Others may charge you a percentage of the amount you withdraw. We recommend that you check with your bank before you depart.

Lastly, don't forget to memorize the actual digits of your card's PIN number (many keypads at foreign ATMs do not include letters on their keys—they only display numbers.)

In most countries, ATMs are widely available in major cities. If you are in a rural location, it will likely be harder to find an ATM.

**Tunisia:** ATMs are typically available in larger cities and towns, but may not be available in more rural areas.

**Algeria:** ATMs are typically available in larger cities and towns, but may not be available in more rural areas. Some ATMs may not be able to interface with US banks.

### Credit & Debit Cards

While traveling, most countries and major cities will accept credit cards. Even if you don't plan on using a credit card during your trip, we still suggest that you bring one or two as a backup, especially if you are planning a large purchase (artwork, jewelry). We also suggest that you bring more than one brand of card (i.e. Visa, MasterCard, American Express) if possible, because not every shop will take every card. For example, although Discover and American Express cards are accepted in some countries outside the U.S., they are not widely adopted, so other brands will work at a much larger range of stores, restaurants, etc.

If you are visiting a country that does not commonly accept credit cards, they will be listed below.

**Malta:** Credit and debit cards are widely accepted in Malta, though some smaller shops may still require cash.

**Tunisia:** Credit cards are accepted in some stores and restaurants, particularly in larger cities. We suggest that you bring alternative options (such as cash) for establishments that do not accept credit cards.

**Algeria:** Credit cards are accepted in some stores and restaurants, particularly in larger cities, but we strongly recommend that you bring alternative options (such as cash) for establishments that do not accept credit cards.

**Morocco:** Credit cards are accepted at many locations in tourist cities and for major purchases, but may incur a surcharge (usually about 5%). Most locations, especially smaller "Mom & Pop" shops or restaurants, are cash only.

**Spain:** Visa and MasterCard credit cards are fairly common in Spain, but may not be accepted for small purchases or in the markets. American Express is not commonly accepted.

## Chip Cards

Many countries have adopted credit cards that have an embedded computer chip. These cards are inserted into the reader instead of swiped. The card owner then authorizes the purchase using a PIN instead of signing.

Though this technology is common in the U.S., occasionally there are machines in other countries that can't read U.S. cards or the machine can read the card, but asks for a PIN. This doesn't happen often, and is nothing to worry about. You can usually resolve the situation by asking the cashier to let you sign. (If you don't speak the language, just mime signing on your hand.) If you are not able to sign for a purchase, such as at an automated ticket booth, you can use another form of payment, such as a debit card that has a PIN.

## Notify Card Providers of Upcoming Travel

Many credit card companies and banks have fraud alert departments that will freeze your card if they see suspicious charges—such as charges or withdrawals from another country. To avoid an accidental security block, it is a good idea to notify your credit card company and/or bank you will be using your cards abroad. You can do this by calling their customer service number a week or two before your departure. Some banks or credit card companies will also let you do this online.

You should also double-check what phone number you could call if you have a problem with a card while you are abroad. Don't assume you can use the 1-800 number printed on the back of your card—most 1 800 numbers don't work outside of the U.S.!

## On Board Ship: Two Separate Bills Will be Issued

- **Shipboard account:** This bill is for any on board purchases (drinks, souvenirs, etc.). You can pay this bill by cash or credit/debit card only. For cash, we accept U.S. dollars or Euros (on itineraries in Europe). For credit/debit cards, we accept MasterCard and Visa. Other forms of payment, such as checks, Discover, or American Express are not accepted.
- **Optional tour account:** This bill is for any optional tours taken during the trip and is calculated in U.S. dollars. You can pay for this bill by credit/debit card only; other forms of payments such as cash and checks are not accepted. For more information on optional tours—including which cards we accept for payment—see the “Preparing for Your Trip” chapter.

**Please note:** Payments made by credit card may take up to three months to process. We ask that you use a credit card that will not expire until three months after your trip ends. Because our headquarters are in Boston, the charges may appear to be from Boston or might be labeled as “OPT Boston” (depending on your credit card company).

## Exchange Services

Due to international banking laws, we are not able to exchange money onboard the ship. If you need to obtain local currency, please see the “How to Exchange Money” section for helpful tips and information.

## Tipping Guidelines

Of course, whether you tip, and how much, is always at your own discretion. But for those of you who have asked for tipping suggestions, we offer these guidelines:

- **O.A.T. Trip Experience Leader:** It is customary to express a personal “thank you” to your Trip Experience Leader at the end of your trip. As a guideline, many travelers give \$10–\$14 USD (or equivalent in local currency) per person for each day their Trip Experience Leader is with them. *Please note that these tips can only be in cash. If you are taking any of the optional extensions, your Trip Experience Leader during the extension(s) may not be the same as the one on your main trip.*
- **Shipboard Crew:** We recommend a flat tip of \$16–\$18 U.S. per traveler, per day. You’ll give this tip once—at the end of your cruise—and it will be pooled among the entire crew. **Policy Update:** *Due to international banking laws, we are no longer able to process crew tips on a credit card; crew tips can only be in the form of cash.*
- **Housekeeping Staff at Hotels:** We recommend \$1–\$2 per traveler, per day. (This is for hotels only; on the ship Housekeeping are part of crew, so you don’t need to tip them separately.)
- **Included in Your Trip Price:** Gratuities are included for local guides and motorcoach drivers on your main trip, extensions, and all optional tours.

## Time at Leisure

When you are exploring on your own, it’s useful to know when to tip and how much, because local customs often differ from the U.S. Here are a few helpful guidelines for the most common services a traveler might use:

- **Taxis:** The practice of tipping taxi drivers in Spain varies from city to city in some cities it is expect and in others it is discretionary. In most countries, tipping is not customary, but many locals will round up the fare and let the driver keep the change. But a 10% tip for helping you with heavy luggage is appreciated. Your Trip Experience Leader can advise you what the practice is in each area that you visit.
- **Restaurants, cafes, and bars:** Restaurants do not normally include service charges on bills and it is customary to leave a 5%-10% tip (10% in a better restaurant, less in a humbler establishment). The waiters in a hotel cocktail lounge can expect a tip of about 60 euro cents. In cafés and bars, leave small tips for barmen and waiters; a few small change coins—less than one euro—is sufficient.
- **Public Restrooms:** Most public restrooms have attendants that take care of cleaning and supplies. It is customary to leave a small tip for them—usually half a euro or the equivalent—so hold on to your coins! Some restrooms are pay-toilets; you pay the staff at the entrance to the restroom or drop the appropriate coin into the slot on the stall door. Many restaurants, cafes, and shops offer only pay-toilets or reserve their restrooms for patrons only.



## AIR, OPTIONAL TOURS & STAYING IN TOUCH

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### Land Only Travelers & Personalized Air

#### Quick Definitions

- **Land Only:** You will be booking your own international flights. Airport transfers are not included.
- **Air-Inclusive:** You booked international air with us. Airport transfers are included as long as you didn't customize your trip's dates (see next bullet).
- **Arrive Early or Stopover (select adventures only):** If you chose one of these Personalization options and purchased air through O.A.T, accommodations and airport transfers are included. However, if you chose one of our Personalization options, but did not purchase air through O.A.T., accommodations are included, but airport transfers are not. If you chose one of our Personalization options, and purchase air through O.A.T. but not the accommodations, the airport transfers are not included. We have included transfer options below.
- **Personalization on Your Own:** If you have not purchased air through O.A.T. and decided to arrive early, stay longer, or stop in a connecting city on your own, you are responsible for airport transfers and accommodations. For your convenience, a preliminary list of your included hotels is available on your My Planner at [www.oattravel.com/myplanner](http://www.oattravel.com/myplanner) under "My Reservations" to help you with selecting a hotel for your additional time.

### Air Inclusive Travelers

If you have purchased international air with us, there are some points that may be helpful for you to know.

- **U.S. Departure:** If you are among a group of ten or more travelers who depart the U.S. from your international gateway city, it is our goal to have an O.A.T. Representative assist you at the U.S. airport with the check-in of your flight. Unless there are extenuating circumstances beyond our control, the Representative will be at the check-in counter three hours before your departure time. If you are flying domestically before your international flight, the representative will be stationed at the check-in counter for your departing international flight, not at the domestic arrival gate.
- **U.S. Return:** If you are among a group of ten or more travelers who return to the same U.S. gateway city, an O.A.T. Representative will meet you as you exit Customs and help you find taxis, buses, hotel accommodations, or connecting flights. Again, it is our goal to have our Representative waiting to assist your group. In rare instances, unforeseen circumstances may prevent this service.

- **Flying with a Travel Companion:** If you're traveling with a companion from a different household, and both of you are beginning and ending your trip at the same airport on the same dates, let us know you'd like to travel together and we'll make every effort to arrange this (please note, however, that this is not always possible). If you request any changes to your flights, please be sure that both you and your companion tell us that you still want to fly together.
- **Selecting Your Seats:** If your airline allows pre-assigned seats, you will be able to select and view them directly from the airline's website after booking. Some airlines will not allow seat confirmation until your reservation is ticketed 45-30 days prior to departure, and/or they may charge a nominal fee. You may locate your itinerary on an airline's website utilizing the Record Locator Number found on the Air Itinerary in your My Planner.

### **Airport Transfers Can Be Purchased**

For eligible flights, airport transfers may be purchased separately as an optional add-on, subject to availability. To be eligible, your flight(s) must meet the following requirements:

- You must fly into or fly home from the same airport as O.A.T. travelers who purchased included airfare.
- Your flight(s) must arrive/depart on the same day that the group arrives or departs.
- If you are arriving early, you must have arranged the hotels through our Arrive Early personalization option

Airport transfers can be purchased up to 45 days prior to your departure; they are not available for purchase onsite. To learn more, or purchase airport transfers, please call our Travel Counselors at **1-800-221-0814**.

If you don't meet the requirements above, you'll need to make your own transfer arrangements. We suggest the Rome to Rio website as a handy resource: [www.rome2rio.com](http://www.rome2rio.com)

### **Optional Tours**

Optional tours are additional add-on tours that allow you to personalize your adventure by tailoring it to your tastes and needs. And if you decide not to join an optional tour? Then you'll have free time to relax or explore on your own—it's about options, not obligations.

### **What You Need to Know**

- All optional tours are subject to change and availability.
- Optional tours that are reserved with your Trip Experience Leader can be paid for using credit/debit cards only. We accept MasterCard, Visa, and Discover credit cards; we can also take MasterCard or Visa debit cards as long as the card allows you to sign for purchases. (You won't be able to enter a PIN.)

- To ensure that you are charged in U.S. dollars, your payment will be processed by our U.S. headquarters in Boston. This process can take up to three months, so we ask that you only use a card that will still be valid three months after your trip is over. The charge may appear on your credit card statement as being from Boston, MA or may be labeled as “OPT Boston”.
- Your Trip Experience Leader will give you details on the optional tours while you’re on the trip. But if you’d like to look over descriptions of them earlier, you can do so at any time by referring to your Day-to-Day Itinerary (available online by signing into My Planner at [www.oattravel.com/myplanner](http://www.oattravel.com/myplanner)).

## **Communicating with Home from Abroad**

### **Cell Phones**

If you want to use your cell phone on the trip, check with your phone provider to see if your phone and service will work outside of the U.S. It may turn out to be cheaper to rent an international phone or buy a SIM card onsite. If you want to use a local SIM, just make certain your phone is “unlocked”, meaning it can accept a local SIM card. If your cell is “unlocked” then you will be able to purchase a local SIM for it and then buy minutes with “Pay as You Go” cards, so that you have a local contact number for your friends and family.

### **Calling Apps**

Another option is to use a smartphone app like Skype, FaceTime, or WhatsApp. These services are usually less expensive than making a traditional call, but you’ll need a Wi-Fi connection and the calls may count towards your phone plan’s data allowance. Many smartphones—and some tablets or laptops—come with one of these apps pre-installed or you can download them for free from the appropriate apps store.

### **Calling Cards & 1-800 Numbers**

When calling the U.S. from a foreign country, a prepaid calling card can be useful because it circumvents unexpected charges from the hotel. Calling cards purchased locally are typically the best (less expensive, more likely to work with the local phones, etc.). One reminder: Do not call U.S. 1-800 numbers outside the continental United States. This can result in costly long distance fees, since 1-800 numbers do not work outside the country.

## How to Call Overseas

When calling overseas from the U.S., dial 011 for international exchange, then the country code (indicated by a plus sign: +), and then the number. Note that foreign phone numbers may not have the same number of digits as U.S. numbers; even within a country the number of digits can vary depending on the city and if the phone is a land line or cell phone.

**Malta:** +356

**Algeria:** +213

**Sicily:** +39

**Morocco:** +212

**Tunisia:** +216

**Spain:** +34

## PACKING: WHAT TO BRING & LUGGAGE LIMITS

### Luggage Limits

MAIN TRIP LIMITS	
<b>Pieces per person</b>	One checked bag and one carry-on bag per person.
<b>Weight restrictions</b>	Varies by airline. The current standard is 50 lbs for checked bags and 15 lbs for carry-on bags.
<b>Size Restrictions</b>	Varies by airline. Measured in linear inches (length+width+depth). Generally, 62 linear inches is the checked bag limit; carry-on limit is 45 linear inches.
<b>Luggage Type</b>	A sturdy, fabric-sided suitcase with built-in wheels and lockable zippers is recommended.

TRIP EXTENSION(S) LIMITS
Same as the main trip.

REMARKS/SUGGESTIONS
<p><b>One suitcase and one carry-on bag per person:</b> Due to the space limitations on bus transfers, you'll be restricted to one suitcase and one carry-on bag per person. This is to ensure that we have room for everyone's luggage. We ask that you abide by this limit to avoid inconveniencing your fellow travelers and prevent additional airlines luggage fees (which are your responsibility). Most airlines now charge to check more than one suitcase per person.</p> <p><b>Luggage rules:</b> Luggage rules and limits are set by governmental and airline policy. Enforcement of the rules may include spot checks or may be inconsistent. However one thing is the same across the board: If you are found to have oversized or overweight luggage, you will be subject to additional fees, to be assessed by—and paid to—the airline in question.</p>

#### Don't Forget:

- **These luggage limits may change.** If the airline(s) notify us of any changes, we will include an update in your Final Documents booklet.

- It's a good idea to reconfirm baggage restrictions and fees directly with the airline a week or so prior to departure. For your convenience, we maintain a list of the toll-free numbers for the most common airlines on our website in the FAQ section.
- **Baggage fees are not included in your trip price;** they are payable directly to the airlines.

## Checked Luggage

Consider a duffel bag or soft-sided suitcase. Look for one with heavy nylon fabric, wrap-around handles, built-in wheels, and a heavy duty lockable zipper. Due to space limitations on our motorcoaches, you are allowed one piece of checked luggage per person. Portage at airports and hotels is provided for **one** bag per person. All bags should have luggage tags.

## Carry-on Bag

You are allowed one carry-on bag per person. We suggest a tote or small backpack that can be used as both a carry-on bag for your flight and to carry your daily necessities—water bottle, camera, etc—during your daily activities.

## Locks

For flights that originate in the U.S., you can either use a TSA-approved lock or leave your luggage unlocked. Outside of the U.S. we strongly recommend locking your luggage as a theft-prevention measure.

## Clothing Suggestions: Functional Tips

- **Travel light.** A good rule of thumb is to gather together everything you want to bring; then take half of that. Eliminate all but the essentials and start packing a few days before you leave. That way, you'll have time to think—not fret—about what you might be forgetting. We recommend you pick pack color-coordinated separates that can be mixed to create different outfits.
- **Plan to dress in layers on shore excursions.** Be prepared for a variety of weather conditions: warm days with sun, chilly temperatures with showers, and evenings that could dip into the 40s or 50s, depending on your travel season.
- **Good walking shoes are essential:** For your comfort, you'll need supportive walking shoes that offer good traction. Water-resistant shoes can be handy in case of a heavy downpour.
- **Rain gear:** Regardless of your month of travel, rainfall is certainly a possibility. We suggest you bring a folding umbrella and waterproof shell. Water-resistant walking shoes are advantageous in case heavy downpours pass through.

## Style Hints

- **Pack casual clothes:** Comfortable, informal apparel is acceptable at each of your destinations. At dinner, you will not need to wear “dressy” clothing; men do not need jackets or ties and women do not need fancy dresses. You may want one or two “smart casual” outfits for the Welcome Reception or Farewell Dinner, but it’s completely up to you.
- **Dress modestly:** Some religious sites, like mosques, strongly prefer that visitors of both genders dress modestly. In this context, “modestly dressed” usually means covered from shoulders to below the knees—no shorts, no sleeveless shirts, no low or revealing necklines, and women may be required to wear skirts below the knee.
- **Women don’t need to cover their hair in Muslim-majority countries**, except *perhaps* in a mosque, where it is considered a sign of respect. Each mosque has different rules, so if one requires it, your Trip Experience Leader will warn you beforehand. Mosques that require headscarves will have extras to lend or rent, so you don’t need to bring one with you.

## Suggested Packing Lists

We have included suggestions from Trip Experience Leaders and former travelers to help you pack. These packing lists are only jumping-off points—they offer recommendations based on experience, but not requirements. We recommend using [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com) and consulting the “Climate” chapter of this handbook.

**And don’t forget a reusable water bottle**—you’ll need it to take advantage of any refills we offer as we are working to eliminate single-use plastic bottles on all of our trips.

## Essential Items

- Daily essentials: toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, hairbrush or comb, shaving items, deodorant, shampoo/conditioner, shower cap, body soap, etc.
- Spare eyeglasses/contact lenses and your prescription
- Sunglasses with a neck strap
- Compact umbrella
- Wide-brim sun hat or visor
- Pocket-size tissues
- Photocopies of passport, air ticket, credit cards
- Rubber or waterproof shoes

## Recommended Clothing

- Shirts: A mixture of short and long-sleeved shirts to layer
- Trousers, jeans, or skirts
- Comfortable walking shoes and/or water resistant shoes
- Light rain jacket/windbreaker with hood
- Sleepwear
- Socks and undergarments
- A jacket or sweater, depending on the time of year

## Medicines

- Your own prescription medicines
- Vitamins
- Cold remedies: Sudafed/Dristan
- Pain relievers: Ibuprofen/naproxen/aspirin
- Laxatives: Senokot/Ex-Lax
- Stomach upset: Pepto-Bismol/Mylanta
- Anti-diarrheal: Imodium
- Band-Aids, Moleskin foot pads
- Antibiotics: Neosporin/Bacitracin

## Electricity Abroad

When traveling overseas, the voltage is usually different and the plugs might not be the same shape.

### Voltage

Electricity at hotels in Malta, Sicily, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and Spain is 220–230 volts. In the U.S. it is 110 volts. Most of the things a traveler will want to plug in—battery chargers, smartphones, tablets or computers—can run off both 110 and 220–230. But you should check the item or the owner’s guide first to confirm this before you plug it in. Plugging a 110V U.S.



appliance into 220/240V 50/60Hz service will ruin the motor. If you have something that needs 110 volts—like a shaver or a hairdryer—you can bring a transformer to change the current. (But transformers tend to burn out, so it might be better to leave whatever it is at home.)

Aboard the ship, cabins are equipped with both 110-volt and 220-volt outlets.

## Plugs

Aboard ship, the plugs are standard American plugs.

In hotels, the shape of plugs will vary from country to country, and sometimes even within a country depending on when that building was built. To plug something from the U.S. into a local socket you'll need an adapter that fits between the plug and the socket. Because you'll need multiple adapters on this trip, it may be easier to purchase an all-in-one, universal adapter/converter combo. Versatile and lightweight, these can usually be found at your local electronics goods or hardware stores. Sometimes you can buy them at large retailers too, like Target or Walmart. If you forget to bring an adapter, you might also find them for sale at the airport when you arrive at your destination.

Different plug shapes are named by letters of the alphabet. Standard U.S. plugs are Type A and Type B. Here is the list of plugs for the countries on this trip:

**Malta:** G

**Sicily:** C or F

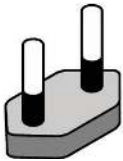
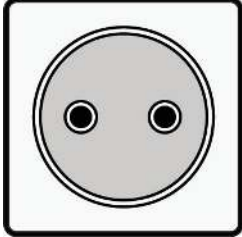
**Tunisia:** C and E

**Algeria:** C and F

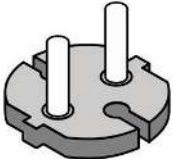
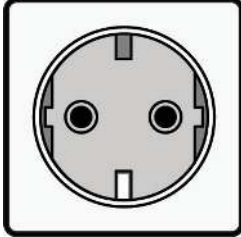
**Morocco:** C or E

Spain: C and/or F

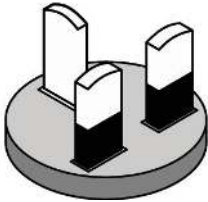
Type C



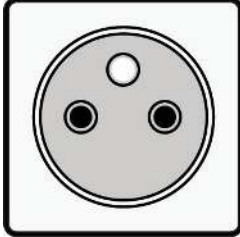
Type F



Type G



Type E



## CLIMATE & AVERAGE TEMPERATURES

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**Malta:** Situated midway between Sicily and North Africa, the Maltese islands have a distinctly Mediterranean climate, similar to that found in southern Italy or southern Greece. The warmth of summer lingers well into the fall, and the mild winter days have sufficient rain to produce grassy patches across the rocky landscape. Wild flowers, too, abound in autumn, winter, and spring—with more than 600 varieties carpeting the valleys, ravines, and ridges of the island with a blaze of color. Malta has a very sunny climate with an average of seven to eight hours of sunshine a day in midwinter and over twelve hours a day in summer. Erratic showers are common in the late fall and winter.

Malta can be windy. Most gusts come from the northwest (this wind is known as the majjistral in winter, when it blows strongest), but the northeasterly grigal and northerly tramuntana can stir up an occasional storm from late summer onwards. Better known is the sirocco or xlokk, the hot southeasterly wind that blows off the Sahara that sometimes roughens up the sea along the southern shores.

**Tunisia:** Tunisia consists of two climatic belts, with Mediterranean influences in the north and Saharan in the south. Temperatures are moderate along the coast, with an average annual reading of 64°. In the Mediterranean north the summer season (from May through September) is hot and dry; the winter, (from October to April) is mild and characterized by frequent rains. In the Sahara and the south, the summer can get very hot and the winter surprisingly cold. Temperatures at Tunis range from an average minimum of 43° and maximum of 57° in January, to an average minimum of 70° and maximum of 91° in August. Precipitation in the northern region reaches a high of 59 inches annually, while rainfall in the extreme south averages less than 8 inches a year.

**Algeria:** Northern Algeria is in the temperate zone, and has a mild climate similar to other Mediterranean countries. Along the coast, temperatures average between 75° and 79° in the summer, and between 50° and 54° in the winter. Farther inland, the summers are a few degrees warmer, and the winters are about 10 degrees cooler, with frost and occasional snow. In the Sahara region, there are extreme highs and lows, with daily variations of more than 80°, very little rainfall, and frequent intense winds.

**Valencia, Spain:** As a city on the east coast of Spain, Valencia enjoys a pleasant Mediterranean climate. Winters are mild and summers are hot and dry. Rainfall is most common in autumn and spring, with winter having a little bit less. Snow is rare in the city, with winter temperatures averaging in the 50s even during the coldest months. While summer can come with a refreshing coastal breeze, especially at night, the days are hot and humid under the sweltering sun.

**Barcelona, Spain:** Barcelona has mild, humid winters and warm, dry summers. Located on the east coast of the Iberian Peninsula Atlantic winds often arrive in Barcelona with low humidity, producing little rain. Barcelona winters tend to be mild. The coldest months are December, January and February; average daily winter temperatures range from 50 to 63 °F. The summer season lasts about six months, from May to October. July and August are the hottest months, with average temperatures around 82 °F during the day. May, June, September and October the average daily temperature is around 74 °F.

## Climate Averages & Online Forecast

The following charts reflect the **average** climate as opposed to exact weather conditions. This means they serve only as general indicators of what can reasonably be expected. An extreme heat wave or cold snap could fall outside these ranges. As your departure approaches, we encourage you to use [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com) for a more accurate forecast of the locations you visit.

## Average Daily High/Low Temperatures (°F), Humidity & Monthly Rainfall

MONTH	VALLETTA, MALTA			TUNIS, TUNISIA		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Average # of Days with Rainfall	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)
<b>JAN</b>	60 to 49	80	17	60 to 46	86 to 68	2.4
<b>FEB</b>	59 to 49	80	13	61 to 46	87 to 65	2.1
<b>MAR</b>	61 to 51	80	11	64 to 48	87 to 63	1.8
<b>APR</b>	68 to 54	75	10	68 to 51	84 to 59	1.5
<b>MAY</b>	75 to 59	75	6	76 to 57	82 to 55	0.9
<b>JUN</b>	83 to 66	70	3	84 to 64	76 to 48	0.4
<b>JUL</b>	88 to 71	65	1	90 to 69	75 to 45	0.1
<b>AUG</b>	88 to 72	70	3	90 to 71	79 to 49	0.3
<b>SEP</b>	83 to 69	75	8	85 to 67	85 to 56	1.3
<b>OCT</b>	76 to 64	80	11	78 to 61	87 to 62	2.2
<b>NOV</b>	69 to 57	80	15	68 to 53	86 to 67	2.1
<b>DEC</b>	62 to 52	80	19	62 to 48	86 to 68	2.5

MONTH	ALGIERS, ALGERIA			TANGIER, MOROCCO		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)
<b>JAN</b>	62 to 42	86 to 64	4.6	61 to 47	87 to 70	4.1
<b>FEB</b>	62 to 44	87 to 65	3.0	62 to 49	87 to 70	3.9
<b>MAR</b>	67 to 46	88 to 63	2.2	64 to 50	86 to 68	2.8
<b>APR</b>	70 to 49	87 to 62	2.6	66 to 52	87 to 67	2.4
<b>MAY</b>	76 to 55	88 to 62	1.4	70 to 56	87 to 65	1.5
<b>JUN</b>	83 to 61	85 to 56	0.6	76 to 61	86 to 62	0.6
<b>JUL</b>	89 to 67	83 to 53	0.1	83 to 66	84 to 57	0.1
<b>AUG</b>	90 to 68	84 to 54	0.2	83 to 67	85 to 59	0.1
<b>SEP</b>	86 to 64	85 to 57	1.1	81 to 66	85 to 60	0.6
<b>OCT</b>	79 to 58	84 to 60	3.3	73 to 60	85 to 64	2.6
<b>NOV</b>	70 to 50	85 to 63	3.7	67 to 54	87 to 68	5.3
<b>DEC</b>	64 to 45	85 to 66	4.6	63 to 50	86 to 70	5.1

MONTH	VALENCIA, SPAIN			BARCELONA, SPAIN		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (avg)	Average # Days of Rainfall	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Average # of Days with Rainfall
<b>JAN</b>	62 to 45	--	4	56 to 40	82 to 65	8
<b>FEB</b>	63 to 46	--	4	58 to 42	82 to 63	8
<b>MAR</b>	67 to 50	--	4	61 to 44	84 to 64	9
<b>APR</b>	69 to 53	--	5	64 to 47	84 to 66	10
<b>MAY</b>	74 to 58	--	4	69 to 54	86 to 70	10
<b>JUN</b>	81 to 66	--	3	76 to 60	85 to 68	9
<b>JUL</b>	86 to 71	--	1	82 to 66	82 to 66	6
<b>AUG</b>	87 to 72	--	2	82 to 67	84 to 66	8
<b>SEP</b>	82 to 66	--	5	78 to 62	86 to 66	8
<b>OCT</b>	76 to 59	--	5	71 to 55	85 to 66	10
<b>NOV</b>	68 to 51	--	4	63 to 47	84 to 66	9
<b>DEC</b>	63 to 47	--	5	58 to 42	81 to 64	8

# ABOARD YOUR SHIP: CABIN FEATURES, DINING & SERVICES ON BOARD

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## M/V Corinthian & M/V Clio

### Cabin Amenities

Your cabin amenities include a private bathroom with shower, hairdryer, TV, in room heating, internal telephones and a mini-refrigerator. Each cabin is appointed with a sitting area, plus the decks and dining rooms are spacious and attractively decorated, providing welcoming locations for relaxing with your traveling companions.

### Cabin Assignments

You will receive confirmation of your deck and/or cabin category upfront in writing; it will be on your invoice and online in My Planner at [www.oattravel.com/myplanner](http://www.oattravel.com/myplanner). However, your cabin number may not be assigned until you arrive onboard the ship. (This is normal procedure for many small ships.) If there's no cabin number on your invoice or online, you can presume it will be assigned later and communicated to you when you board.

### Dining

All meals are taken in the onboard restaurant, which acts as the ship's dining room. Meals will be a mix of regional specialties and familiar American standards, and will feature a variety of entrée options including vegetarian. Complimentary beer, wine and soft drinks are served with lunch and dinner. A selection of fine wines is also available for purchase, starting at approximately \$20-30 per bottle (prices vary according to vintage). Travelers may also bring a bottle of their own favorite wine to dinner to enjoy at their table. Should you care to avail yourself of this service, there will be a corkage fee of approximately \$10 per bottle, charged to your cabin account.

If you require a special diet, please request this in advance, you may do so by contacting one of our Travel Counselors. Dining times will vary according to the scheduled daily activities. In keeping with regional custom, dinner may be served at a later hour (around 7:00 pm) than Americans may be accustomed to.

### Electricity

Cabins are equipped with 110-volt outlets that are designed to fit American plugs. In your bathroom you will find a dual 110/220-volt outlet, for use with electric shavers. While your bathroom does come equipped with a hairdryer, please do not use any other appliances that heat up, such as hair irons or curlers—they tend to short out.

### Getting Ashore

Getting from ship to shore during an ocean-going voyage is not the same experience as on a river cruise—it requires more balance and agility, plus there are more formalities.

- **Balance and agility are needed:** You'll either walk down a gangway—which can be steep, wet, and slippery—or be shuttled to land in a small boat (a process known as “tendering”). We'll use the gangway most of the time, but tenders will be used when the ship cannot dock closely enough for the gangway to reach the shore. Tenders can differ in size, and some of them maybe open with no covering. From time to time we will use the ship's own fleet of Zodiacs—which are small but sturdy open-air boats holding 8-10 people each—as tenders. To get into one of the Zodiacs, you'll need to go down a steep staircase, and then crew members will assist you as you step from the *M/V Corinthian* or *M/V Clio* into the Zodiac.
- **Clothing note:** Since tenders in general (and the Zodiacs in particular) are small open-air boats, they are more susceptible to being splashed by water. You might want to bring a rain jacket or waterproof cover (like a poncho) to protect your clothing while transferring from ship to shore.
- **Expect formalities on arrival in port:** When the *M/V Corinthian* or *M/V Clio* arrives in a new port, she'll need to be cleared by the local port authorities before you can leave the ship. In some cases, the wait will be as short as 30 minutes, but other times it may take up to 2 hours. Your crew will do all they can to make the wait as short as possible and to minimize the inconvenience to you. (For example, you will be asked to leave your passport with the front desk when you first embark on the ship. That way, it is on hand if the port authorities ask to see it.) However, the procedure can be complex and may take a while to complete. Typically the authorities work directly with the crew, but they do retain the right to speak with you as well.

## Headsets

On European cruises, complimentary headsets (often called “whisper receivers”) will be provided on most included and optional tours, so that you can hear better over ambient noise. If you use a hearing aid or have a strong preference for a particular type of headphones, we highly encourage you to bring your own headphones/ear buds with you. The plug size is usually the same as that used by smartphones, computer jacks, etc. Headsets will also be available during the pre- and post-trip extensions in Europe, but not on the transfer day to/from the main trip. On cruises to the Middle East, South America, or Antarctica whispers may not be available or may only be available in certain locations—your Trip Experience Leader will let you know onsite.

## Internet Access and Email

Limited wireless Internet service (WiFi) is available for free onboard. If you want to use it, you'll need to bring your own device—a laptop, tablet, smartphone, etc.—because the ship does not rent or loan these devices. Instructions on how to connect will be available at Reception. Please keep in mind that our WiFi access onboard is subject to the challenges of travel: ship location, signal availability, and usage volume onboard will affect connectivity and speed. You should expect that there will be times when the Internet is either slow or not available, and that these disruptions can be brief or longer lasting.

## **Laundry Services**

There is laundry service available on board, but no dry cleaning. Prices are per piece of clothing and will be provided to you on board.

## **Medical Services**

There is always a doctor onboard, as well as all of the basic First Aid supplies. All physician's fees will be payable directly to the doctor. All specific medicines are the responsibility of each traveler.

## **Recreational Facilities**

Our ship features a library, a lounge with a bar, a dining room, and a sun deck. The bar is open from approximately 11 am to 11 pm, and features both complimentary drinks (soft drinks, house beer, house wine, and non-alcoholic cocktails/beer) and drinks for purchase (spirits, alcoholic cocktails, bottled beers, and a selection of wines).

## **Bicycles**

We're pleased to offer complimentary bicycle rentals onboard your ship for use during free time, including all of the necessary safety gear, such as a helmet, brightly-colored safety vest, and a lock. Because there is a limited supply of bicycles available, they will be offered on a first-come first-served basis. For more information or if you are interested in using one of the bicycles, please speak to the Front Desk staff or Hotel Manager onboard your ship.

## **Shipboard Payments**

Payment for shipboard expenses can be made by cash or credit/debit card only. For cash, we accept U.S. dollars or Euros (on itineraries in Europe). For credit/debit cards, we accept MasterCard and Visa. Other forms of payment, such as checks, Discover, or American Express are not accepted.

## **Ship-to-Shore Communications**

The ship has satellite telephone connections which allows you to call anywhere in accordance with the current local tariffs. You can purchase phone cards at the reception desk for \$10, which will give you 15-30 minutes' worth call time to the U.S. (depending on which state you are calling).

## **Smoking Policy**

Smoking is prohibited on board, with the exception of a designated outdoor deck area reserved for smokers.

## **Wheelchairs**

The ship is not built to accommodate wheelchairs.



## Lost & Found

Any lost or forgotten items found on board the ship will be held for 90 days from disembarkation. After 90 days, all unclaimed items will be discarded or donated.

## Ship Specifications

### *M/V Corinthian*

- **History:** Built in 1990; purchased in 2014
- **Size:** 290x50 ft
- **Capacity:** 98 passengers, 56 crew members
- **Layout:** 49 cabins, 5 decks; Elevator-yes

### *M/V Clio*

- **History:** Built in 1998; purchased in 2015
- **Size:** 328x46 ft
- **Capacity:** 89 passengers, 60 crew members
- **Layout:** 45 cabins, 5 decks; Elevator-yes

## ABOUT YOUR DESTINATIONS: CULTURE, ETIQUETTE & MORE

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### O.A.T. Trip Experience Leaders: A World of Difference

During your adventure, you'll be accompanied by one of our local, Trip Experience Leaders. All are fluent in English and possess the skills, certification, and experience necessary to ensure an enriching adventure. As locals of the regions you'll explore with them, our Trip Experience Leaders provide the kind of firsthand knowledge and insight that make local history, culture, and wildlife come alive. Coupled with their unbridled enthusiasm, caring personalities, and ability to bring diverse groups of travelers together, our Trip Experience Leaders ensure that your experience with O.A.T. is one you'll remember for a lifetime.

### Cultures of the Mediterranean

Your adventure visits several Mediterranean nations whose traditional cultures and modern lifestyles share some common geographic, climactic, and historic threads. Even so, each place has its own character.

**Malta** is a land of fascinating contradictions. The people tend not to see their nation as European, but as a bridge between Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East. That makes sense given the archipelago's geographic location at the crossroads of these entities. But even though Malta has historically been ruled and influenced by other cultures, the Maltese perceive themselves as culturally if not ethnically homogenous. They celebrate their home's Megalithic roots, and speak a language whose foundation is North African. But their national identity is deeply aligned with the culture that arose after Christian conversion. Four hundred years of control by a Christian religious military order, the Knights of St. John, helped to reinforce that.

Malta is small and densely populated, so the people are used to living communally. They are gregarious, sociable, welcoming, and very expressive—often rendering strong opinions in a very voluble way, especially about politics and sports. There is a closely related, age-old concept here called *pika*, which is a (mostly) friendly rivalry that spurs friends, families, and entire towns to outdo one another. Sometimes that competitive spirit has turned vitriolic. But as a visitor, you may reap the benefits of *pika* in the form of over-the-top Baroque architecture, exuberant village *festas*, showstopping fireworks, and elaborate feasts.

In **Spain**, each region has a unique identity, and in some cases it's distinct from the mainstream culture, most notably in Catalonia, where your cruise calls at Barcelona. Catalonia is an autonomous community with its own language and traditions. But beyond regionalism, most Spaniards share a deep love of country, a sense of personal honor, and pride in good manners. That pride is sometimes mistaken by outsiders as haughtiness. But once you get acquainted with a Spaniard, you'll usually find that they are informal, candid, and unafraid to show emotion.

Spain has some of the longest working hours in Europe—from 9am to 8pm. But there's also a two- to three-hour break in the afternoon, the *siesta*. Once, the *siesta* was a practical way for workers to avoid the midday heat and recharge with a nap—though nowadays, many people work too far from home to commute back for a snooze. Many shops close during the *siesta* but remain

open late at night. Spain in general is a late-night culture. Most people do not eat dinner until 9pm at the earliest, and it's not unusual to see entire families, children included, socializing in the cafes until midnight or later.

**Tunisia** is a country layered with thousands of years' worth of history and culture. Dotted with the ruins of ancient civilizations—from the ancient city of Carthage to Al-Zaytuna Mosque—Tunisia has long been a prize for ambitious empires: the Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Ottoman Turks, Italians, and more recently the French. The Arab conquest of the 7th century CE introduced Islam and a more advanced culture. Further invasions by Arab tribesman, the Almoravids, and Almohads transformed the region even further, introducing new cities, sparkling mosques, and near-total Arabization. Tunisia has been predominantly Arabic-speaking and Muslim since then, even though dynasties have come and gone.

This Arab-Muslim country has a rich mixture of native and foreign influences that make up their national identity. Tunisia was deeply imbued with French culture during the 75 years of the protectorate—ending in 1956. Tunisians consider themselves to be more liberal and tolerant than their neighbors given equality laws instituted in the Tunisian constitution by the country's first president Habib Bourguiba. Women have the right to work, ask for divorce, run their own business, and have access to birth control and abortion. Additionally, women are free to choose to wear a headscarf. In fact, most urban women dress in Western clothes and do not veil themselves. Outside of urban areas, local life is much more traditional.

### **Religion and Religious Observance**

In **Malta**, 93.9% of the people identify themselves as Catholic, which the Constitution has established as the state religion (while also guaranteeing freedom of religion.) While fewer than 40% of Maltese attend mass on a weekly basis, people still turn to the church for major life events such as weddings, baptisms, and funerals; and nearly everyone participates the festive saints' day celebrations that take place in every town. There are about 365 churches across the islands, one for every day of the year.

In **Spain**, though 68.5% of Spaniards identify as Catholic, only 14% attend mass on a weekly basis. But religious traditions are still embedded in Spanish culture. There's a church in every neighborhood, and each region or city has a patron saint who is celebrated with processions and *fiestas*. Even those who are not observant may attend mass on holidays, have religious weddings, or baptize their children. The second largest religious group are Muslims, who comprise 4% of the population. Many are first- or second-generation immigrants from North Africa, and they're more likely to be active worshippers than their Catholic counterparts.

In **Morocco**, 99% of the people follow Islam with the vast majority being Sunni Muslims. There is a small Christian population (mainly Catholic, resident foreigners.) The Jewish presence in Morocco dates back more than 2,500 years, and while today there are fewer than 4,000 Jews here (mainly in Casablanca), prior to 1948 (when many emigrated to Israel) there were between 250,000 and 350,000. The Jews of Morocco suffered periodic persecution but mainly thrived, and are widely admired for their many contributions to Moroccan culture.

Religious practice is quite evident in daily life. Muslims pray five times daily, and when the call to prayer (called the *ezan*) is sung or broadcast from minaret towers, everything stops. Friday is the Muslim Sabbath, so some businesses will close or have limited hours. During the month-long holiday of Ramadan, we may need to adjust our itinerary due to holiday closures. To participate, Muslims fast from dawn to dusk; but as the sun sets, everyone rushes home for *iftar*—the breaking of the fast. Suddenly the evening comes alive with music, eating, and shopping. The festivities often continue into the night. Visitors are not required to fast, but out of respect you shouldn't eat, drink, or smoke openly. (It's OK to eat indoors, but not outside.) Your Trip Experience Leader can advise you where to eat. Ramadan follows a lunar calendar, so its dates change from year to year.

### Visiting Places of Worship

In all the countries visited on this trip, most places of worship have a dress code, even if it is only loosely enforced. Nonetheless, it is considered polite to be modestly dressed when visiting any religious building, be it a church, mosque, synagogue, or monastery. Modestly dressed usually means covered from shoulders to below the knees—no shorts, no sleeveless shirts, and no low or revealing necklines. At Greek Orthodox monasteries, women are asked to wear a long skirt instead of trousers or slacks. We suggest that you throw a light sweater or cover-up into your daypack. A pashmina-type shawl is ideal for this.

### Hotel Courtesy in Spain

Like in many other European nations, manners are more formal in Spain than the U.S. Hotel staff will likely address you as “señor” or “señora” and may be caught off guard if you ask a question without greeting them with a quick “hello” or “good day” first. Local staff (and other visiting Europeans) will generally make an effort to be quiet in hallways and common rooms, which are normally used for reading, relaxing, or quiet conversation. For this reason, eating and drinking in any common rooms other than the bar or restaurant is frowned on. If you have any laundry to dry, please keep it inside your room (and not on the balcony).

### Getting Around in Spain

**Taxi:** Taxis are widely available in the area.

**Bus:** Generally less expensive than both taxi and train travel, bus travel in Spain has increased in recent years.

**Trains:** Spain has an extensive railway network linking all major towns and cities, and rail travel in Spain is generally comfortable, reliable and often cheaper than many other European countries. Trains are modern and many are high-speed.

## Taking Photographs

The etiquette of photographing people in most countries is about the same as it would be on the streets of your hometown. You need permission to take a close-up, but not for a crowd scene. Be especially polite if you want to photograph children or older women. If you want to shoot a great portrait, show interest in your subject and try to have a bit of social interaction first. Then use sign language to inquire if a picture is OK.

Please do not take photographs of military personnel, military compounds, or other official institutions/personnel (such as police). This may result in the confiscation of your camera.

In museums or at archaeological sites, there may be restrictions on using your flash. Please obey any signs or directions by staff; the no-flash rule protects the fragile artifacts and artwork from damage by repeated exposure to light. Occasionally, there may also be a small fee levied by the museum or site for the privilege of taking photos.

## Safety & Security

As you travel, exercise the same caution and awareness that you would in a large American city. Don't be overly nervous or suspicious, but keep your eyes open. If you are venturing out after dark, go with one or two other people.

Carry a one-day supply of cash, and your passport, in a travel pouch. Don't leave valuables unattended in your hotel room. Most hotels will offer use of a hotel safe at the front desk or an electronic in-room safe (for which you can set your own personal number). Please utilize this.

Pickpockets may create a sudden distraction. In any sort of puzzling street situation, try to keep one hand on your wallet or money belt. If an encounter with a local turns out to be long and complicated and involves money or your valuables, be very careful.

## Maltese Cuisine

Malta's mixed cultural heritage (with the influences of the Levant, North Africa, Greece, Italy, Britain, Turkey, and France), plus a steady influx of visitors from around the world, means that you will never lack for dining options here. But when it comes to traditional Maltese fare, here are some classics.

- **Stuffatt tal-fenek:** The national dish of Malta. It is a rabbit stew cooked with red wine, tomatoes, olive oil, onions, and bay leaves.
- **Torta tal-lampuka:** A Mediterranean fish pie with tomatoes, cauliflower, onions, garlic and parsley.
- **Bragioli:** The Maltese version of Italian braciola, thin, rolled beef steaks filled with ground meat, bacon, bread crumbs, and herbs.
- **Soppa tal-armla:** Widow's soup—made with fresh vegetables and garnished with **gbejna**, a sheep's milk cheese.
- **Kapunata:** A stew similar to ratatouille with eggplant, zucchini, capers, and peppers.

- **Pastizzi:** A diamond-shaped pastry filled with ricotta cheese and perhaps a choice of peas, spinach, tuna, rabbit, or (around Easter) spinach and anchovy.
- **Imqaret:** A rectangular-shaped sweet made with pastry and date filing.

## Sicilian Cuisine

The cuisine of Sicily is markedly different than on the Italian mainland—just like Sicilians themselves. One reason is geography. Sicily is blessed with abundant sunshine, fertile volcanic soil, and mild Mediterranean winters that allow for year-round agriculture. The freshness and quality of the ingredients make even the simplest Sicilian dishes pop with intense flavor. Another reason is the culinary legacy of the invaders who came to Sicily. The Greeks brought capers, grapes, pomegranates, figs, olives and hazelnuts. The Romans cleared forests to plant wheat, and we all know what Sicilians do with wheat: they make what is arguably the best pasta and bread in Italy. Later, French and Spanish chefs introduced New World items like tomatoes, turkey and potatoes. Popular dishes include:

- **Caponata:** A stew of fried eggplant, celery, onion and tomatoes flavored with capers, raisins and pine nuts.
- **Maccu:** A creamy soup based on fava beans and fennel.
- **Farsumagru:** Beef roulades stuffed with sausage, eggs, bacon and cheese, is Sicily's premier meat dish, contributed by the chefs of the Bourbon court.
- **Sfincione:** Pizza with caciocavallo cheese, onions and bread crumbs
- **Pani câ meusa:** A soft sesame roll filled with cheese and fried cow's lung and spleen.
- **Pasta con le sarde:** Bucatini pasta with sardines, fennel, pine nuts, raisins and saffron.
- **Involtini di pesce spada:** Swordfish rolled with capers, basil and olives, then breaded and fried.
- **Cannoli:** Tubes of fried dough filled with creamy ricotta, pistachios, chocolate and more.

## Tunisian Cuisine

Tunisian cuisine is within the Northern African tradition: *couscous* and *marqa* stews forming the backbone of most meals. Local cuisine is distinguished by the fiery *harissa* chili sauce, and the heavy use of the locally abundant tiny olives. Lamb forms the basis of most meat dishes, as does fish—particularly along the coast where local seafood is plentiful. Popular dishes include:

- **Chakchouka:** Assorted veggies (usually peppers and chickpeas, sometimes onions) are pan fried in a tomato sauce and served with a poached egg on top.
- **Tajine:** Unlike the Moroccan-style *tajine*, the Tunisian variety is a dish of beaten eggs, grated cheese, meat and various vegetable fillings—like a quiche, but without the crust.

- **Tunisian Salad:** A mixture of diced cucumber, peppers, tomatoes, and onions seasoned with olive oil. Sometimes this comes with a protein too, like tuna or hard boiled eggs.
- **Merguez:** Small sausages made with lamb, beef, or a mixture of both. Redolent of cumin, harissa, sumac, fennel, and garlic they smell divine and have a spicy heat.
- **Guenaouia:** A slow-cooked lamb or beef stew with okra, chillies, and spices.
- **Possion Complete:** A whole fish, grilled or fried to perfection and served with potato chips and a spicy pepper-based sauce.
- **Bread:** In Tunisia, it's not a meal if you don't have bread—French-style baguettes are served with *everything*.
- **Makroudh:** They may look like Fig Newtons, but they taste so much better. These small cakes are made with semolina flour wrapped around a filling of dates or almonds flavored with cinnamon and orange peel.

## Algerian Cuisine

Algerian cuisine is a diverse blend of Arab, Berber, Turkish, Spanish, Roman, and French cultures. If you like spicy food, you will find much to appreciate. Common ingredients include lamb, chicken, fish, grains, vegetables, and dried fruits. The most popular drink in Algeria is tea served with fresh mint. As in many Muslim countries, alcohol is not widely sold or consumed by the locals. Dishes to try include:

- **Couscous:** Tiny steamed balls of semolina flour, often served with stew on top
- **Jwaz:** A dish of braised vegetables in a spiced tomato sauce with potatoes and chickpeas
- **Mechoui:** A dish consisting of roasted whole sheep or lamb, seasoned and marinated overnight, then roasted on a spit to give it a crispy outside, and stuffed inside with onions, garlic, coriander, and tomatoes
- **Bagita:** A type of homemade bread, essentially Algeria's version of a French baguette
- **Dolma:** A dish of grape leaves or cabbage leaves stuffed with meat or seafood, often with a lemon sauce

## Moroccan Cuisine

Moroccan cooking blends Berber, Arabic, African, Spanish, and French traditions to create a culinary canon that is at once complex and delicate. Sweet and sour dishes were introduced by the Arabs, who borrowed them from Persia. Many breads were introduced by sub-Saharan African cultures. And there is a strong tradition of preserving and pickling fruits and vegetables, a contribution of Morocco's Jewish communities. Some dishes you might find while exploring Morocco include:

- **B'ssara:** A rich soup of dried broad beans swirled with olive oil, sprinkled with cumin, and enjoyed with warm bread.

- **Briouats:** A vegetarian option, *briouats* are crunchy, triangular pockets of *warqa* (phyllo dough) filled with meat, cheese, or vegetables. (There are also sweet varieties.)
- **Bstilla:** A sweet dinner consisting of a flaky casserole of phyllo pastry layered with pigeon or chicken; and flavored with almonds scented with orange flower water, saffron, and cinnamon and dusted with confectioners' sugar.
- **Kefta:** A dish of spiced beef or lamb meatballs simmered with tomatoes and poached eggs.
- **Chermoula:** A popular street food, *chermoula* is a sauce stuffed into grilled sardines and vegetables. The sauce contains a mix of spices, olive oil, fresh coriander, and lemon juice.
- **Babbouche:** A soup of snails in the shell swimming in a garlicky broth.
- **Kaab el ghazal:** Or Gazelle's ankles, a dessert of thin, sugary crescents filled with almonds and orange blossom water.
- **Roze bil heleeb:** A dessert of creamy rice custard topped with shredded coconut and almonds or pistachios, flavored with cinnamon and orange blossom.

## Spanish Cuisine

The 21st century's culinary firmament is lit by a galaxy of superstar chefs from Spain. Among them are the legendary Ferran Adrià (whose former restaurant, El Bulli, launched the "molecular gastronomy" trend), Carme Ruscalleda (the only female chef to be awarded five Michelin stars), octogenarian Juan Mari Arzak (the father of the "New Basque" cuisine), and Jose Andrés, (credited with bringing small plate dining to America). Even if you do not dine in one of their restaurants, they have influenced Spanish chefs in even the humblest establishments, where you might find traditional classics like these:

- **Gambas al ajillo:** Shrimp cooked with Garlic and Chilies
- **Gazpacho:** A chilled soup that hails from Andalusia
- **Jamón Iberico:** A Spanish ham that is dry-cured and hung on the rafters of local bars and restaurants
- **Txangurro:** A baked spider crab stuffed with onions, tomatoes, leeks, brandy, and parsley, topped with breadcrumbs.
- **Pastel Vasco:** A slice of vanilla custard cream with a crunchy crust.



# Barcelona in Brief

## City Layout and Details

Barcelona has a style all its own, unmatched anywhere in the world. It seems to re-invent itself daily even as it preserves and maintains the best of its history. If you have time limitations, you'll still be able to take in the prime historic sights by focusing on the ciutat vella, the old town. You can reach the many major sights from the central Plaça de Catalunya in under a half hour at a leisurely walk. For anything further out, the Metro is convenient, fast, and inexpensive.

The old town is split roughly in two by the tree-lined and very pedestrian friendly Ramblas. To the east you'll find the labyrinthine Barri Gòtic (Gothic Quarter), with the Sant Pere and La Ribera neighborhoods even further out. Going west takes you into El Raval, a district that offers a trendy and bohemian atmosphere. At the foot of the Ramblas you'll find the waterfront, with a newly polished harbor area. East from there you'll find the fishing and restaurant quarter of Barceloneta, city beaches, and the cafés and restaurants of the Port Olímpic. Moving past the old town you'll find L'Eixample (Catalan for "extension"), built when the population grew past the city walls. It is, in contrast with the cramped and historic lanes of the ciutat vella, a wide-open area of fine avenues and 19th-century modernista (Art Nouveau) buildings. It is also the location of the city's most iconic building, the Gaudi's Sagrada Família.

You'll find a cultural vibrancy here that's rare anywhere: from the glorious modernista architecture, and the work of Antoni Gaudí in particular, to the artistic legacy of Catalan artist Joan Miró and the showcase Pablo Picasso museum (one of the city's most popular.) When you're done taking in the sights, join the locals for a market visit, a stroll down the Ramblas, a lazy harborside lunch, lively festival nights, or a visit to the beach.

## Entertainment & Recreational Activities

From art openings and concerts to tapas bars, music bars, and clubbing, Barcelona is a great night-time city, and the array of after-dark diversions is huge. You don't have to leave the city center to find more than enough entertainment, but if you do, you'll find the outer districts just as lively. Trendy bars and clubs operate in every major district, and if one closes down, another seems to open the next night. Nightlife here is, however, a late adventure: evenings don't get seriously underway until after 10, bars stay open until 3am, and many clubs don't close until 6am.

From relaxing an evening away in local tascas (taverns), grazing on an array of appetizers at a tapas bar, or a slowly emptying a bottle of wine at a café, you can enjoy an easy and inexpensive way to spend an evening people-watching. If the weather is good (which it frequently is) the city's outdoor squares fill with tables and chairs. Drinking outside is so popular, and sometimes so noisy, that you might find restricted hours in some places.

There's more to the city than history and nightlife. Barcelona has numerous green belts and a busy waterfront, rebuilt with walkways, marinas, beaches, and top seafood eating spots. Outside the city, golf, horse riding, tennis, and swimming are available and within easy reach.

## Local Transportation

In central Barcelona comfortable shoes are your best travel buy: it's an eminently walkable city, particularly the old town. For areas further afield:

**Metro:** Barcelona's underground public transport system is very efficient, and it goes pretty much any place in the city you might want to visit. You'll find five color-coded/numbered lines radiating from the center of the city. Stations are identified by a red diamond-shaped sign with the letter M in the center, maps are widely available, and tickets can be bought ahead of time, or in the station as you travel. Tickets come in a range of flavors – from a simple single ticket to multi-trip and multi-day passes and can be bought from station offices or from touch-screen vending machines (with instructions in English.) The metro runs from 5am to midnight Sunday through Thursday, until 2am on Friday, and is open all night on Saturday. Visit TMB's website ([www.tmb.net](http://www.tmb.net)) for more information on the city's transport system (in English.)

**Trams & Buses:** Subject to Barcelona's famed traffic snarls, tramvías (trams) work the main streets through the city alongside city buses. Routes are clearly marked at each stop, as are timetables.

**Taxis:** Yellow-and-black taxis are plentiful and reasonably priced. You can hail one in the street if its green light is on. Taxis have meters, and two stage pricing – cheaper during the day, more expensive after 8pm at night. You'll find a list of prices and surcharges is displayed (by law) on the back passenger window.

## Malta in Brief

### City Layout and Details

Situated between St Julian's and Valletta, Sliema is part of Malta's main coastal resort area. It's a residential area, having developed from beginnings as a small fishing port into a summer resort for wealthy residents of Valletta. You'll find their villas and town houses on the quiet inner streets, creating a quiet charm. More recently, it has become a major commercial and residential area with several of Malta's burgeoning hotel developments.

Sliema (with St. Julian's) is a center for the island's shopping, dining, and café life. Tower Road, the seaside promenade that runs north to St. Julian's offers shops, restaurants, Internet cafes, and day cruise boats – as well as plenty of seats and lovely views over the open sea. The coastline is studded with two towers: a 17th century watch tower and a British built neo-gothic tower from the 1880s.

Both St. Julian's (you can walk there via the promenade) and Valletta (by bus) are easily explored from Sliema.

### Entertainment & Recreational Activities

**Golf:** There is a par-68 course at the Royal Malta Golf Club, spread across 5,567 yards of ground.

**Tennis, squash, mini-golf, billiards, and swimming** in a freshwater pool are offered at the extensive Marsa Sports Club complex. Visitors may obtain weekly or daily memberships.

**Tenpin bowling:** Available at the computerized Eden Super Bowl in St George's Bay.

**Trotting:** Trotting is Malta's most popular spectator sport and regularly attracts crowds of up to 4,000. Often the races are held on Sunday afternoons at Marsa Race Track. The circuit has been there since 1869. Immediately outside the arena, some of the 700 trotters registered with the Malta Racing Club are stabled. Races are usually held from October through March.

## Local Transportation

**Taxis:** Traveling by taxi is not cheap, and fares increase sharply after midnight. Taxis are white (usually Mercedes) with distinctive red number plates. The taxis have no meters but operate on fixed prices; therefore, we suggest you agree on the fare in advance. Taxis are readily available in the main resort areas, but note that they do not cruise the streets in the hope of picking up a fare. They are available at taxi stands and on request at hotels.

**Buses:** Malta's new bus lines have standardized, modernized travel on the island – while making the charming old yellow buses a thing of the past. The buses operate more frequently, with more routes and stops than before and is inexpensive. A 24 hour pass costs about \$3.25 and a full week pass about \$15. Buses run along the seafront on either side of Sliema. Routes radiate from the Sliema and Valletta bus terminals to nearly every town, village, and sandy beach on the island.

**Karrozzin:** The Maltese horse-drawn victoria—the Karrozzin—was introduced in 1856 and is still in use in the larger towns. It is advisable to negotiate the cost before the ride starts. Horse cabs can be found in Sliema on the Promenade.

## Shopping: What to Buy, Customs, Shipping & More

There may be scheduled visits to local shops during your adventure. There is no requirement to make a purchase during these stops, and any purchase made is a direct transaction with the shop in question, subject to the vendor's terms of purchase. O.A.T. is not responsible for purchases you make on your trip or for the shipment of your purchases.

### Returns

If you discover an issue with an item, you should contact the vendor directly and expect that any resolution will take longer than it would in the U.S. We recommend that you keep a copy of all your receipts, invoices, or contracts, along with the shop's contact information. Keep in mind, local practice may vary from U.S. standards, so don't assume that you have a certain number of days after the purchase to speak up or that you are guaranteed a refund.

### Crafts & Souvenirs

#### Malta

Maltese shops range from small, family-run businesses and quaint boutiques to large shopping complexes and chain stores. In nearby Valletta, Republic Street is a major shopping thoroughfare, and Valletta's Sunday market, held below St James Bastion, is one of Malta's top attractions.

Among the best Maltese buys are Mdina decorative glass, which has earned a reputation for good workmanship and attractive colors, finely worked filigree jewelry, and delicate lace, which has been the traditional craft for generations of the women of Gozo, who work in their own homes.

## Sicily

Among the most popular Sicilian crafts and gift items are ceramics, wine and food. You can find wonderful items in the street markets and groceries of Palermo, Catania, Syracuse and Taormina—capers, pistachios, olive oil, Marsala wine, Etna honey, and candied fruits and marzipan in a myriad of shapes and colors. Other popular souvenirs include brightly colored Caltagirone pottery, handmade jewelry and decorative items made from lava stone, old-fashioned lace, or hand-painted miniature Sicilian carts and puppets. Sicily is not a high-fashion destination like Italy, though you will find some designer shops in Palermo and Taormina. A more iconic clothing item would be the traditional flat *coppola*, a hat similar to what we call a newsboy cap that is simple—but very stylish.

**Value Added Tax:** In Italy, a Value Added Tax is levied on most articles, services, and meals, and ranges from 4% to 22%. Depending on how much you spend on certain goods in specially marked Tax Free Shopping stores, you may be eligible for a partial refund of this tax. Ask the shopkeeper, salesperson, or our local staff for details. Be sure to save all receipts and the special Global Tax Refund forms for Customs, as receipts alone are not enough.

## Tunisia

Many travelers are surprised by the variety of goods for which Tunisia is known. Copper ware is formed into trays and engraved and olive wood is sculpted into carvings. You'll find leather wallets and handbags, clothing that varies from the colorful to the simple, intricate ceramics, cherubic dolls in local dress, decorative embroidery, and finely polished silverware and jewelry. But the most valuable commodity you'll find here are Tunisian carpets, either woven (non-pile) or knotted (pile). The National Handicrafts Office oversees the quality of Tunisia's carpets, so imitations are rare.

If you plan a major purchase, we strongly recommend that you research the prices and quality available at home before your trip. Just one visit to an import shop or gold dealer will put you way ahead when you go shopping. This is the only way to know if you are getting a good price. You must use your best judgment when deciding whether an item is worth the price being asked.

## Bargaining

Tunisians enjoy negotiating over prices, and they expect it of their customers. When looking at large items, you'll often be invited to sit down and drink a cup of tea with the merchants. If this is your first experience at bargaining, don't worry—you'll quickly find your own style. Your opening offer should be well under the asking price. The only rule is that, if you make an offer, you should be prepared to buy at that price. And remember, whatever price you pay is okay, as long as the item is worth that price to you.

## Algeria

Algeria is famous for its handicrafts, such as leatherware, copper, brassware, rugs, jewelry and dresses. Berber carpets and pottery are also of note. They are also famous for their local dresses, which you can often try on in the market and walk around in before deciding whether to buy. Like in Tunisia, bargaining is expected, and is an integral part of the cultural experience of shopping.

## Morocco

Morocco offers many fine craft items at good prices. Traditional souvenirs include gold and silver jewelry, wood carvings, cotton goods, tapestries, carpets, leather goods, pottery, copperware, brassware, basketry, fine inlaid woodwork, and spices.

**Bargaining:** Some shops have fixed prices. In the open-air markets prices are usually flexible and negotiating is normal. The only rule is that if you make an offer, you should be prepared to buy at that price. Bring a mix of small bills so that you can pay in exact change. Moroccans enjoy negotiating over prices, and they expect it of their customers.

*Many shops in Morocco are closed on Fridays. If they are open, they may close from mid-day prayer until early afternoon.*

## Spain

Leather goods, from supple suede gloves and elegant calf handbags to wineskins that require careful curing (botas), are excellent purchases. Other good buys are shoes, from classical calf pumps to provincial cloth espadrilles; porcelain by Lladro and pottery by regional craftsmen; and wool rugs made by tapestry makers or simple cotton-rag throws.

**Siesta:** Throughout Spain, most stores and offices close between 1:30 pm and 5 pm. Then they reopen until 7:30 pm (many close even later). Restaurants generally remain open during siesta. In the larger cities you may find that big department stores will stay open from 10am – 10pm.

**Value Added Tax:** Known in Spain as the IVA, Value Added Tax is levied on most articles, services, and meals. The IVA ranges from 7% to 21% (luxury items, cars). Depending on how much you spend on certain goods, you may be eligible for a partial refund of this tax. Ask the shopkeeper or salesperson about the VAT at time of purchase. Be sure to save all receipts and forms for Customs.

## U.S. Customs Regulations & Shipping Charges

For all things related to U.S. Customs, the ultimate authority is the U.S. Bureau of Customs & Border Protection. Their website, [www.cbp.gov](http://www.cbp.gov) has the answers to the most frequently asked questions. Or you can call them at **1-877-227-5511**.

The top three points to know are:

- At time of writing, your personal duty-free allowance is \$800 for items brought with you. Items totaling more than \$800 are subject to duty fees.

- **Items shipped home are always subject to duty when received in the U.S.** Even when the shop has offered to include shipping and duties in the price, this typically means shipping to the nearest customs facility and payment of the export duties—not door-to-door shipping or payment of the import duties. All additional duties or shipping charges would be your responsibility. Unless an item is small enough to send by parcel service (like FedEx), chances are you will need to arrange shipping or pick-up once the item is in the U.S. and will need to pay customs duties.
- It is illegal to import products made from endangered animal species. U.S. Customs & Border Protection will seize these items, as well as most furs, coral, tortoise shell, reptile skins, feathers, plants, and items made from animal skins.

### **Tunisia Customs:**

The import of foreign currency is free. If the amount of foreign currency is equal to or greater than the equivalent of **25,000 Tunisian dinars** you are required to declare it to Customs at the entrance. If you are a non-resident and intend to re-export a balance of foreign currencies equal to or greater than the equivalent of **5,000 Tunisian dinars**, you are required to declare it to Customs. The currency declaration must be made on the “Foreign Currency Import Declaration” form before leaving the zone under Customs.

# DEMOGRAPHICS & HISTORY

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## Malta

### Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 121 square miles
- **Capital:** Valletta
- **Languages:** Maltese and English are the official languages.
- **Location:** Malta is an archipelago surrounded by the Mediterranean Sea.
- **Geography:** Located about 60 miles south of the Italian island of Sicily across the Malta Channel, Malta's three largest islands—Malta, Gozo, and Comino—are the only ones inhabited. Numerous bays along the indented coastline of the islands make excellent harbors. The islands' landscape consists of low hills with terraced fields. The highest point in Malta is Ta' Dmejrek, at 253 m (830 ft). Although there are some small rivers at times of high rainfall, there are no permanent rivers or lakes on Malta.
- **Population:** 502,653 (estimate)
- **Religion:** Roman Catholic 98%, Other 2%
- **Time Zone:** Malta is on Central European Time, six hours ahead of U.S. EST. When it is 6am in Washington D.C., it is noon in Valetta.

### National Holidays: Malta

In addition to the holidays listed below, Malta celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Easter. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit [www.timeanddate.com/holidays](http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays).

01/01 New Year's Day

02/10 Feast of St. Paul's Shipwreck

03/31 Freedom Day

05/01 Labor Day / May Day

06/07 Sette Giugno

08/15 Assumption Day

09/21 Independence Day

12/08 Feast of the Immaculate Conception

12/13 Republic Day

12/25 Christmas Day

### Malta: A Brief History

Maltese history dates back more than 8,000 years to Neolithic times. Around 5200 B.C., farmers arrived from Sicily. During the Megalithic era they built great temples from 3600 B.C. to 2500 B.C., many of which still stand. During the Bronze Age, another group arrived from Sicily and their villages, temples, and other structures differed greatly from those of the original settlers.

In the 8th century B.C., Phoenicians occupied Malta. Mdina is thought to be one of their main urban centers based on the discovery of Phoenician tombs there. During the 6th century B.C., Malta was annexed by the Carthaginian Empire, becoming an important trading post between Italy and North Africa. It fell to Rome in 255 B.C. Malta thrived under Rome. A close relationship was formed with Sicily, Latin became the official language, and Roman religion was introduced.

The island continued to prosper until the 6th century A.D., when it was incorporated into the Byzantine Empire. The Byzantines fortified Malta's defenses due to Muslim conquests in the region. But by 870 A.D., Muslims from North Africa invaded and after a weeks-long siege, they killed all the inhabitants of the Byzantine city of Melite. The Muslims who settled here during the mid-11th century rebuilt much of the city. Under Arab rule, new irrigation techniques were introduced, locals were allowed to practice non-Muslim faiths (by paying a tax), the gastronomy expanded, and Arabic words entered the lexicon. The Arabic influence left a lasting impact.

In the late 11th century, Normans drove the Arabs from Malta and ruled the island as part of the Kingdom of Sicily. During this period, many people from southern Italy and Sicily migrated to Malta. After being bought and sold multiple times, Malta was joined with Spain. As the Ottoman Empire continued its expansion in the early 16th century, the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V (of Spain) feared a Turkish takeover of Europe. As a bulwark against this, he gave Malta to the Knights of St. John. During their 400-year reign, the Knights made Italian the official language and developed the island by building palaces, churches, and fortifications. They repelled the Turks in the epic Siege of Malta in 1565, despite being severely outnumbered. Following the Great Siege, the Knights founded Valletta, which remains the capital of Malta to this day.

With the Ottoman threat removed, the Knights grew powerful and rich, using their military skill to expand into surrounding areas, often using outright piracy. The Knights controlled Malta until 1798, when Napoleon kicked them out. But the French were quickly defeated by Britain, who invited the Knights back in 1802. In 1814, Malta became a British colony.

In 1921, the British granted Malta legislative control over local affairs, but held control over foreign and military issues. In the early days of World War II, Britain underestimated the strategic importance of Malta and left it undefended until June 11, 1940, when Italian bombers attacked Grand Harbour. With only three biplanes, Malta mounted a heroic defense. Soon, the island became "Fortress Malta," a major haven for Allied aircraft and submarines. The Maltese people showed great courage and earned Malta the George Cross of Britain for heroism.

Malta finally gained independence in 1964 and in 1974, Malta became a republic. Malta was under the power of the Nationalist Party from 1962 to 1971, at which time the Labour Party took control of the government. The government has gone back and forth between the two parties and in 2004, Malta was accepted into the European Union. Malta's economy expanded rapidly when Malta became part of the Eurozone in 2008.

Labour's Joseph Muscat became Prime Minister in 2012, but his government was rocked by scandals including money laundering and a citizenship-for-investment scheme. It was reported by journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia. After her 2017 assassination, members of Muscat's government were arrested and Muscat resigned. A January 2020 special election elected Robert Abela Prime Minister.



# Sicily

## Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 9,927 square miles
- **Capital:** Palermo
- **Languages:** Most people in Sicily speak both Italian (the official language) and Sicilian, a distinct historical Romance language.
- **Ethnicity:** Mostly Italian, with smaller groups of Romanians, Tunisians, and Moroccans
- **Location:** Italy is bordered by France, Slovenia, Austria, Switzerland and the Ligurian, Tyrrhenian, Ionian, Adriatic and Mediterranean seas.
- **Geography:** Sicily is the largest island in the Mediterranean Sea, located just off the “toe” of Italy. Sicily enjoys mountains in the north and east, a vast central plateau, and a fertile coastline dotted with sea-level resort towns.
- **Population:** 4,969,147 (estimate)
- **Religions:** Christian 80% (overwhelming Roman Catholic), Atheists and Agnostics 20%, Muslims estimated at less than 2%
- **Time Zone:** Italy is on Central European Time, six hours ahead of U.S. EST. When it is 6am in Washington D.C., it is noon in Rome. Daylight Saving Time begins the last weekend in March and ends the last weekend in October.

## National Holidays: Sicily

In addition to the holidays listed below, Italy celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Easter. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit [www.timeanddate.com/holidays](http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays).

01/01 New Year's Day

01/06 Epiphany

04/25 Liberation Day

05/01 Labor Day

06/02 Republic Day

08/15 Assumption of Mary

11/01 All Saints' Day

12/08 Feast of the Immaculate Conception

12/25 Christmas Day

12/26 St. Stephen's Day

## Sicily: A Brief History

Sicily sits like a giant rock at the toe of Italy's boot, and indeed, it has been kicked around quite a bit during its 8,000-year history. But the Italians were not the first to tread on this storied island.

There is evidence of Paleolithic settlement in the caves of northwest Sicily. But by 5,000 BC, the earliest tribes to live here were immigrants: the Sicani from North Africa, the Siculi from Latium (Italy) and the Elymni from Troy. By 900 BC the Phoenicians arrived, and their Carthaginian heirs founded Palermo. Today, the Phoenician legacy lives on in the enigmatic ruins of Mothya.

Attracted by the island's strategic location, the Greeks arrived in 750 BC and established colonies in Syracuse, Agrigento, Segesta, Selinute and beyond. Hellenic culture thrived, but the island became a battleground as the Carthaginians rose against the Greek interlopers. Beaten but not broken, the Carthaginians remained until the Romans drove them out in 211 BC. Rome made Sicily its first province, but never realized its dream of making it Rome's granary, as the empire was increasingly beset by corruption and war. In 965 AD, the Arabs arrived, bringing advances in agriculture, irrigation, art, architecture and land reform. Palermo was made the capital, boasting more than 100 mosques.

The Arabs' success attracted the Normans, who conquered Sicily in 1071. But the Normans were outnumbered by their vanquished foes, and had to accept and integrate Arab administrative and judicial systems. It was not a hard pill to swallow, for the Norman King Roger I was entranced by the lavishness of Arab culture. He employed many Arabic craftsmen and architects, and promoted a tolerant society where Muslims, Jews and Christians lived in peace. The legacy of the Norman golden age lives on in Palermo's opulent palaces and churches.

In 1194, the kingdom fell to the Hohenstaufens, who ruled until 1266 when the House of Aragon took over. The Crusades swept through the island, sowing the seeds for more conflict. Sicily fell to French, Spanish and Austrian rule in succession before the Spanish Bourbons united the island with Naples in 1734. They redistributed many lands, an act that resulted in many minor legal disputes among ordinary Sicilians. Tired of being governed by generations of absentee rulers, the people turned to influential local "godfathers" who understood *la cosa nostra*, "our thing," and could dispense a quick form of justice. The Sicilian Mafia was born.

Sicily joined a unified Italy in 1861, but the Rome-based government was still disconnected from Sicilian life. By the end of the century, poverty drove thousands of Sicilians to America. Italy joined the Allies in World War I; then in the 1920s, Mussolini and his Fascist Party ushered in one of the darkest periods in Italy's history. Viewing the mafia as a threat to his power, he sent Cesare Mori to fix "the Sicilian problem," largely crippling the Mafia. When Mori's campaign ended in 1929, the Sicilian crime families had been all but broken up. Many Mafioso fled to the U.S. and Canada.

During World War II, with Mussolini allied with Hitler, Sicilians who had emigrated to America worked with Allied intelligence to identify Nazi sympathizers in Sicily. Some of these informants were Mafiosi, and in exchange for their help they struck deals that let them to regain a foothold in Sicily—*See below for details on how and why the Sicilian Mafia played such a significant role in the Allied victory during World War II.*

The murders of state officials continued until 1995, when newly empowered leader Bernardo Provenzano ushered in a relatively peaceful era known as a Pax Mafiosa. He also put an end to the murders of informants and their families. After 43 years on the run, Provenzano was arrested in 2006.

Today, the Mafia still exists in Sicily, with ties to the United States. While they have undeniable influence over politics and certain businesses, they tend to keep a low profile due to scrutiny from law enforcement. While many Sicilians would prefer not to discuss this aspect of their culture with visitors, we have an open conversation during our adventure with a Mafia expert and the son of a former crime boss. (For more on the Sicilian mafia, you'll find a wealth of information on Wikipedia.)

Today, Sicilians are the proud custodians of a vast repository of historic treasures. Though many were left by onetime oppressors, their preservation reflects the endurance of the Sicilian spirit.

## **Events that Shaped the 20th Century**

### **Unlikely Allies—How the Sicilian Mafia Helped the Allies Win World War II**

Italy fought with the Allies during the First World War, so why did they switch sides in World War II? When World War I broke out, Italy took a position of neutrality. In 1915, however, lured by expectations of territorial gains for the winning side (and a secret treaty they had signed), Italy's leaders joined the Allies against the Central Powers. The decision to go to war was highly unpopular with Italians, especially since most of Italy's troops were peasants forced to fight for a cause they didn't even understand. And with some 600,000 killed and almost a million wounded, they paid dearly. To make matters worse, any spoils of victory Italy assumed would be coming its way never materialized. During the peace settlement at Versailles, in fact, the Italian delegation was all but ignored by the "Big Three" (U.S., Britain, and France).

Adding insult to injury, postwar Italy's economy was already in shambles. Now with a war to pay for, it gets much worse. Along with bread riots, strikes, massive inflation, and political instability, there were no jobs for Italy's returning soldiers. This all sets the stage for the rise of Benito Mussolini. Ever the opportunist, the war veteran and former Socialist seizes the moment. In 1919, he gathers a ragtag group of disgruntled ex-soldiers in Milan and starts the Fascist party, promising to restore order, return Italy's sense of national pride, and bring back the glory of the Roman Empire. The party gathers momentum and within three years Mussolini is appointed prime minister. And in 1925, "Il Duce" assumes full dictatorial powers.

### **Build-Up to War—And Shut-Down of Sicilian Mafia**

Most Italians willingly submitted to the Mussolini dictatorship into the 1930s. It seemed a small price to pay for the restored order, increased prosperity, and other successes of Fascist Italy's early years. Efficient new power and steel industries helped Italy weather the Great Depression better than other countries, and a massive public works program provided jobs for thousands of unemployed Italians. In fact, Mussolini became widely admired on the world stage for his success in transforming his divided and demoralized nation. But while northern Italians embraced Fascism, it was a different story in the south—especially Sicily. With their longstanding anti-government and anti-police sentiments, Sicilians had a strong distrust of the new dictatorial regime—or any central government. They felt the Mafia already gave the island the order and stability that had never been provided to them by the state.

Mussolini had already been lukewarm about the Mafia, stemming from a 1924 visit to Sicily when he felt he wasn't shown the proper respect. Now he felt they posed an existential threat to Fascism itself. In Mussolini's mind, the Mafia was the sole barrier to his dream of national unity under a Fascist Italy. While it would have made more sense to introduce true economic and social reform to the island, he decided to suppress the Mafia instead. He sent his tough law enforcer Cesare Mori to Sicily where he was tasked with subduing and humiliating *mafiosi* and their families. Some 11,000 Sicilians (including many with no Mafia ties) were arrested or simply machine-gunned to death in a series of savage purges. Many others fled the island to the U.S. and Canada; among them Carlo Gambino and Joe Bonnano, who made it to New York City and would eventually start their own Mafia families in America.

Mussolini's support began to wane in 1935, with Italy's invasion of the East African nation of Ethiopia. Since Italy had been denied territorial gains after the "betrayal by the Allies" at Versailles (like Germany's "stab in the back," Italians called it a "mutilated victory"), now he would just take it. Mussolini's support took another hit when he provided aid to fascist forces in Spain's civil war. As other European leaders abandoned him, Mussolini drew closer to another rising dictator, Adolf Hitler. And in 1939, Italy and Germany signed the Pact of Steel, an alliance that precipitated Italy's disastrous involvement in World War II. Mussolini thought his power and dreams of "empire building" would be strengthened by an alliance with Nazi Germany. Meanwhile, it was the Mafia in the United States—who still retained their strong ties to Sicily—who were the ones gaining power.

### **The Enemy of My Enemy is My Friend—U.S. Gets in Bed with Lucky Luciano**

At the outbreak of World War II, the U.S. government was aware of the shared hatred between Mussolini and the Mafia. And it didn't take them long to use it to their advantage. While the government would deny it for almost 40 years, a collaboration between the U.S. Office of Naval Intelligence and the Mafia—code-named Operation Underworld—began shortly after the SS *Normandie*, a captured French liner being retrofitted in New York's harbor for U.S. troop deployment, caught fire and capsized in early February 1942. Nazi sabotage was suspected.

Since German U-boats operating off the coast had already sunk more than a hundred U.S. merchant ships, Naval intelligence grew increasingly concerned that enemy spies were working along New York's waterfront. Their initial investigation went nowhere, as the tight-lipped longshoremen of the mob-controlled waterfront simply ignored them. So, the navy contacted Joseph "Socks" Lanza, someone with Mafia ties who ran the Fulton Fish Market. They wanted to know if he could help them ferret out Nazi spies or point out any Mussolini supporters among the mostly Italian-American fishermen and dockworkers.

The mob/navy collaboration started off well, but New York's waterfront covers a wide swath, and Lanza didn't control it all. "Socks" informed the navy there was only one man capable of "snapping the whip in the entire underworld"—the imprisoned "boss of bosses" Charles "Lucky" Luciano. Even after six years behind bars, Sicilian-born Luciano still wielded absolute power on the docks. Using Meyer Lansky as an intermediary, the Navy contacted Luciano and

they struck a deal—Luciano guaranteed the full cooperation of his organization in providing intelligence to the Navy for the duration of the war, and in return, the State of New York would commute Luciano’s sentence.

The public might have recoiled at the Navy’s secret arrangement with the country’s most vicious criminals, but under the Mafia’s watch, not a single act of sabotage, dock strike, or suspicious fire took place in New York for the rest of the war.

### **The Godfather Part II—Lucky Luciano Recalled for Allied Invasion of Sicily**

By January of 1943, the Allies were on the offensive in the Mediterranean. Having defeated the Germans and Italians in North Africa, they were now ready to open a second European front—but where? After much debate, it was decided to invade Mussolini’s Italy—Churchill referred to it as “the soft underbelly of Nazi Europe.” To do this, they would first have to attack Sicily, in an amphibious invasion code-named “Operation Husky.”

Planning is critical for a difficult operation like an amphibious landing, so U.S. Naval Intelligence once again turned to Lucky Luciano. From his jail cell, Luciano used his Sicilian contacts to see that the navy was provided with maps of the island’s harbors, photographs of the coastline, and the names of trusted contacts in the Sicilian Mafia—who wanted nothing more than to see Mussolini crushed. Luciano even asked if he could personally join the fight in Sicily—his request for this potential public relations nightmare was quickly denied.

It is difficult to know what impact—if any—Luciano and his Sicilian connections had on Operation Husky. But it’s interesting to note that after American and British landing craft crashed through the waves to land on beaches of Sicily on the night of July 9, 1943, the two forces split. Montgomery’s British Eighth Army advanced north along Sicily’s eastern coast. They encountered stiff resistance, got bogged down constantly, and lost many lives. Patton’s Seventh Army had a much easier go of it as they cut across the western half of Sicily and took Palermo—and their casualties were just a fraction of those suffered by the British. Many think it wasn’t just a coincidence.

### **The War’s Aftermath—Death of Fascism and Rebirth of Sicilian Mafia**

While Allied operations in Sicily were mopping up, on the Italian mainland Mussolini was placed under arrest. Italy’s new Prime Minister, Marshal Badoglio, immediately switched sides to the Allies, ending Fascism. The war would drag on for two more years, but Hitler’s “Fortress Europe” had been penetrated. Sicily, the first piece of the Axis homeland to fall to Allied forces, all but assured Germany’s defeat in World War II. In terms of the size of the landing area and number of troops put ashore on the first day, Operation Husky was bigger than Operation Overlord, the Allied invasion of Normandy that would overshadow the invasion of Sicily the following year.

The U.S. government, sympathetic to the plight of Sicilians, encouraged the new Italian government to grant the island the autonomy they had long desired, which they did in 1945. As thanks for their help in the liberation of Sicily—and as a bulwark against any future communist

leanings in Sicily—the U.S. army appointed local *mafiosi* mayors throughout the island and provided them with financial and other assistance. The Sicilian Mafia was soon restored to power in the post-Mussolini Italian Republic. They also kept their promise to Lucky Luciano.

After serving 9 1/2 years, Luciano's sentence was commuted on January 4, 1946—with the condition that he be immediately deported back to his native Italy (ironically, the person who got Luciano out of jail, New York Governor and former prosecutor Thomas E. Dewey, was the one who *put* Luciano in jail). He left in style, though. Luciano was in custody aboard the freighter *Laura Keene*, and the night before it sailed to Italy, all of New York's top gangsters came aboard with an Italian feast and champagne to bid him farewell—including Meyer Lansky, Frank Costello, Albert Anastasia, Bugsy Siegel, William Moretti, Tommy Lucchese, Joe Adonis, Stefano Magaddino—and three showgirls from the Copacabana Club.

## Tunisia

### Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 63,170 square miles
- **Capital:** Tunis
- **Languages:** Arabic (official); French and Berber are also spoken.
- **Location:** Tunisia is located in northern Africa, bordered by Algeria to the west, Libya to the southeast, and the Mediterranean Sea to the north and northeast.
- **Geography:** The Tunisian coast is rather jagged and irregular, which makes for many fine bays, coves, and harbors. It's most notable ports are Bizerte, Qabis, Safaqis, and Susah. The Atlas Mountains run through the north, though the Tunisian peaks are mostly below 4,000 feet tall. To the south, the Chott Djerid, a massive salt lake, acts as an eerie prelude to the Sahara Desert, which stretches to the Algerian and Libyan borders.
- **Population:** 11,516,189 (Estimate)
- **Religions:** Muslim 99%, Other 1%
- **Time zone:** Tunisia is on Central European Time, six hours ahead of U.S. EST. When it is 5am in Washington D.C., it is 10am in Tunis. Tunisia does not observe Daylight Savings, therefore Tunisia is only 5 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time when Daylight Savings is in effect.

## National Holidays: Tunisia

In addition to the holidays listed below, Tunisia celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit [www.timeanddate.com/holidays](http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays).

01/01 New Year's Day

01/14 Revolution and Youth Day

03/20 Independence Day

04/09 Martyrs' Day

05/01 Labour Day

07/25 Republic Day

10/15 Evacuation Day

## Tunisia: A Brief History

Tunisia's history is long and complex, which makes it one of the most fascinating countries in the world to visit. Over three millennia, it has been coveted, conquered, and re-conquered by tribes and countries seeking its fertile northern lands, a rare commodity in the Sahara region. Others sought its valuable position as a strategic power center. With Sicily so close to its north, the maritime passage and trade between the two countries and into the eastern Mediterranean could be controlled.

Phoenicians from today's Lebanon were the first on record to settle on the coast—3,000 years ago in the tenth century, B.C. Four hundred years later, their city of Carthage grew into a major metropolis, second in size only to Alexandria, Egypt, and dominated the western Mediterranean. As Rome looked to expand their empire, Carthage became an obstacle. And over a period of 120 years (264 to 146 B.C.), the three Punic Wars, during which Hannibal's army made its now famous Alps crossing on elephants, revealed Rome as the victor. Carthage was relegated as a granary for the empire.

In the fifth century, the East Germanic Vandal tribe took over Tunisia from the west. Byzantine rule followed in the sixth century, and Arab in the seventh. During Arab rule, many Berbers were converted to Islam. Those who resisted conversion grew into a frequent source of rebellion against subsequent dynasties. Other takeovers followed: the Aghlabids and Zurids in the ninth and tenth centuries; Fatmid caliphs in the tenth and eleventh centuries, who went on to found the city of Cairo; and Sicilian Normans and Moroccan Almohad caliphs in the twelfth century. This was followed by a long rule (1230–1574) by the Berber Hafsids, during which Tunisia prospered. As the Hafsids' power weakened, Spain exerted control over some of Tunisia's coastal cities, until the Ottoman Turks claimed the region for Islam in 1574. The Turkish beys, or governors, declared independence for Tunisia. This was around the time that pirates roamed the north African coast, pillaging unfortunate ships and earning these waters the name of "Barbary Coast," a reference that some attribute to the barbarism of their actions and others to Berber tribes. Turkish rule lasted until 1957.

But Turkish Tunisia was not financially stable, and the bey turned to France for support. By the mid 1800s, the French had cause for concern as debts increased with no sign of repayment. They wrested control of the African nation's finances, with support from the British and Italians, in 1869. France eventually called Tunisia their own with the treaties of Bardo and Mersa in the 1880s,

which put France in charge under a protectorate arrangement with a French general. Tunisian nationalists emerged and in 1920 the Destour, or Constitutional, party was formed with an eye toward liberation from France. Meanwhile, Habib Bourguiba formed the Neo-Destour party, a more extreme group that claimed to be more in touch with the desires of the majority.

France fell to the Germans in June 1940, and Tunisia fell under Vichy rule. Tunisians couldn't know that their country would become a stage for the most dramatic conflict of the North Africa campaign against the Nazis. This was the site of the Allies' first major operation in the war.

Post-war nationalist fervor grew, with Bourguiba driving for independence at the helm. But the still-ruling French resisted major reforms and talks of independence fizzled. In 1952, Bourguiba was imprisoned, leading to a wave of unrest. But three years later, Tunisia was granted complete self-government, followed by full independence in 1956. Habib Bourguiba was made Prime Minister. The newly placed assembly deposed the bey, Sidi Lamine, and a republic was declared in 1957. Bourguiba focus was on modernization and economic growth for his largely agricultural country.

In 1987, General Zine El Abidine Ben Ali became president. Ben Ali's regime repaired Libyan relations and opened trade with Algeria, Mauritania, and Morocco. Socially, Ben Ali at first took a liberal stance, but reneged after Islamic activists dominated the 1989 elections—and in fact he took strong measures against their rise. In the 1994 elections, Ben Ali forbade the Islamic party Al Nahda from taking part, even arresting some of its dissidents. The result was 100% support by all legal opposition parties—and 100% of the vote.

Over the next decade, Ben Ali continued to maintain his position as president. And while his economic reforms strengthened Tunisia's economy, the ever-increasing discontent over high unemployment, police and political corruption, and a lack of freedom of speech outweighed the economic gains. In December 2010 a widespread series of protests and strikes inspired by these issues and other political concerns forced Ben Ali to resign and his party (the RCD) to dissolve.

With Ben Ali's departure to Saudi Arabia, a state of emergency was declared and a caretaker government put into place to give the country enough time to organize elections. But as many of the ministers had strong ties to the now-defunct RCD, there continued to be a reshuffling in top positions. Eventually Beji Caid Essebsi took over as Prime Minister and announced that elections to a Constitutional Assembly would be held on June 24, 2011; Mohamed Moncef Marzouki was sworn in as the 5th President of Tunisia in December 2011.

In January 2021, Kais Saied, the 8th President of Tunisia, was faced with national protests against police brutality, the economy, and the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. In response, Saied dismissed the Prime Minister, Hichem Mechichi, and dissolved the Parliament. Saied's actions were protested by human rights organizations as a self-coup. Amidst the backlash, Saied announced he would rule by decree and instated Najla Bouden as Prime Minister, the first woman to have such a position in the Arab world.

Saied implemented a constitutional referendum vote in July 2022, after having suspended the Supreme Judicial Council. Saied won the referendum with a majority 90% of voters voting for Saied (of a 30.5% turnout).



# Algeria

## Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 919,600 square miles
- **Capital:** Algiers
- **Languages:** Arabic, Amazigh (both official); French and Berber are also spoken.
- **Location:** Algeria is located in northern Africa, bordered by Morocco to the west, Tunisia to the northeast, Libya to the east, Mauritania and Mali to the southwest, and Niger to the southeast.
- **Geography:** Algeria once had many forests, which were greatly reduced by forest fires and by agricultural use, especially during the colonial period. More recently, the government undertook a reforestation program, which created a “green barrier” from Morocco to the Tunisian frontier, to prevent further encroachment of the Sahara.
- **Population:** 43,851,044 (Estimate)
- **Religions:** Muslim 99%, Other 1%
- **Time zone:** Algeria is on Central European Time, six hours ahead of U.S. EST. When it is 5am in Washington D.C., it is 11am in Algiers. Algeria does not observe Daylight Savings, therefore Algeria is only 5 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time when Daylight Savings is in effect.

## National Holidays: Algeria

In addition to the holidays listed below, Tunisia celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit [www.timeanddate.com/holidays](http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays).

01/01 New Year's Day  
01/12 Yennayer (Berber New Year)  
05/01 Labour Day  
07/05 Independence Day  
11/01 Anniversary of the Revolution

## Algeria: A Brief History

Algeria is a predominantly Muslim country, and a key part of the Arab Maghreb world of Northwest Africa, but it also has a significant Berber population. These influences, along with those of the Ottomans and French who separately ruled over the country, coalesced into a uniquely Algerian culture. From the 8th century through the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Algeria was ruled by a series of Arab-Amazigh dynasties. Following this era, it became part of the Ottoman Empire. Algeria enjoyed a brief period of independence between the decline of the Ottoman Empire and when it was conquered by France in 1830.

During French rule, the Muslim population in the rural areas was separated economically from the European community. In 1865, Napoleon III allowed Algerians to apply for full French citizenship. Since this would have meant renouncing their ability to be governed by sharia law in their personal lives, few Muslims took advantage of this opportunity. However, there was much evolution during this period in terms of health, infrastructure, and the overall economy, along with the formation of new social classes. During this time, there was also exposure to new ideas about political liberty and equality, which would help lead to the independence movement.

Around World War I, several groups formed which opposed French rule, including the National Liberation Front and the National Algerian Movement. This led to the War of Independence (1954-1962), which ended with most Europeans leaving the country. In the years since independence, Algeria has strived to reassert its Arab and Islamic culture, although there remains a strong French influence on its language and culture. More recently, the development of natural resources such as oil and natural gas has increased the country's wealth and improved the standard of living. Today, Algeria has one of the largest economies in Africa.

## Morocco

### Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 172,414 square miles
- **Capital:** Rabat
- **Languages:** Arabic and Berber are the official languages; French and Spanish are also spoken.
- **Location:** Morocco is bordered by Algeria in the east, Mauritania in the south, the Atlantic Ocean in the west, and Spain in the north.
- **Geography:** Morocco's landscape varies from coastal lands near the Atlantic Ocean to mountainous regions to the Sahara Desert.
- **Population:** 37,984,655 (Estimate)
- **Religions:** Muslim 99%, Other 1%
- **Time zone:** Morocco is on Central European Time, six hours ahead of U.S. EST. When it is 5am in Washington D.C., it is 11am in Rabat. Morocco does not observe Daylight Savings, therefore Morocco is only 5 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time when Daylight Savings is in effect.

## National Holidays: Morocco

In addition to the holidays listed below, Morocco celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit [www.timeanddate.com/holidays](http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays).

01/01 New Year's Day

01/11 Anniversary of the Independence Manifesto

05/01 Labour Day/May Day

07/30 Feast of the Throne

08/14 Anniversary of the Recovery Oued Ed-Dahab

08/20 Anniversary of the Revolution of the King and the People

08/21 Youth Day

11/06 Anniversary of the Green March

11/18 Independence Day

## Morocco: A Brief History

Morocco is unique for having been occupied by one group of people for all of its recorded history—people who have rarely been subjugated by outside forces. The Berbers or Imazighen (men of the land) have endured for millennia. They are not a homogenous group, but comprise various tribes who share some ethnic lineage. Nor were all Berbers nomads despite the stereotype. Most Berbers were farmers, but connected to fellow Berber traders and horsemen who developed semi-permanent encampments as they forged trade routes.

The Berbers often frustrated Roman attempts to govern them, though their rebellion was not always violent but often based on shrewd alliances and gamesmanship. Most Berbers continued to practice their traditional, animist religions. They also borrowed from other African and Egyptian religions, and as the millennium turned, many Berbers were Christian or Jewish.

In the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD, the Ummayyad Arabs conquered the Middle East in less than a decade, but needed 70 years to subdue Morocco's Berbers. They brought the Arab language, architecture, civil codes, and mostly, the new religion of Islam. Its ideals resonated with traditional Berber values and its adoption was widespread, rapid, and willing. But the Arabs were never able to unify the region politically. Though they enlisted Berber vassals to lead their conquest of Iberia, the sprawling caliphate proved difficult to manage, paving the way for Arab-Berber dynasties such as the Almoravids, Almohads, and Nasrids, who presided over Moorish Iberia, called al-Andalus. These dynasties have ruled Morocco continuously from the 8<sup>th</sup> century to the present.

When the Moors were expelled from al-Andalus in 1492, Muslim and Jewish refugees brought their cultures back to Morocco, enriching the Imperial Cities of Fez, Marrakesh, Rabat, and Meknes. Rulers rose and fell for 140 years and in the 1630s, the Alaouite family overthrew the Saadis, establishing a line that rules to this day. In the late 1800s, Morocco's strategic location and natural resources attracted France, which took control by 1912. Spain hung onto a small protectorate on the coast, Tangier was made an international zone, and Rabat became the capital. When Berbers rebelled in 1926, it took 25,000 Spanish-French troops to subdue them.

During WWII, Morocco was ruled by Vichy France, which was a Nazi puppet. But independent-minded Casablanca provided crucial support for the Allied North African campaign. *After the war in 1944*, Morocco demanded freedom, and France was eventually pressured to grant it. Mohammed V returned from exile in 1955; Morocco won its independence in 1956; Mohammed V crowned himself king in 1957; and handed power to his son, Hassan II, in 1961. Hassan II earned the people's affection in 1975 when he led the Green March into the Western Sahara to force Spain to hand over the province. More than 350,000 volunteers marched that day, but the dispute between Morocco and the western separatist Polisario Front still simmers.

Mohammed VI took the throne in 1999, and advanced many liberal policies including women's rights. In 2002, he married Salma Bennani, a computer science engineer, and many believed it symbolized the acceptance of modern roles. In 2004, the government imposed changes to family law geared toward lifting the gender inequality and protecting children. During the Arab Spring of 2011, Mohammed VI reacted with a deftness that eluded other leaders, announcing constitutional reforms, ceding more power to parliament, and making Berber an official state language. But Mohammed VI has increasingly been criticized for repressing freedom of speech, and the nation still struggles with poverty, unemployment, and corruption in the justice system.

## **Events that Shaped the 20th Century:**

### **Morocco's Battle Against Colonialism**

Situated at the entrance of the Mediterranean, with the Atlantic to the west and the Strait of Gibraltar to the north, Morocco has historically been a strategic location to control.

France had always shown an interest in fully conquering Morocco for centuries, interested in the land for its access to the Atlantic and Mediterranean, as well as its border with French-controlled Algeria. While France had slowly been taking over Morocco from the Algerian border and had their increasing military influence recognized by most world powers following the signing of the Treaty of Algeciras, France wanted more. And, on March 19, 1907, the assassination of Émile Mauchamp, a French doctor, in Marrakesh by an anti-French occupation mob, was just the reason they needed.

After snapping up more towns along the Algerian border, including Bechar and Oujda, France began their assault in earnest. The Moroccan people, incensed by the encroachment of the French and the disregard for their own sovereignty, responded by killing nine European laborers. Surprising the French, the Moroccans then managed to take back Casablanca. On August 5th, 1907, France retaliated and bombed Casablanca, destroying the city and killing thousands of Moroccans. France pushed into the region of Chaouia, a campaign that lasted 7 years, ending in France's control over the region. France also encroached from the east, using their Algerian border to facilitate their invasion.

The tribes of Morocco, instead of banding together against France, split their allegiance, with the sultan of Morocco, Abd al-Aziz bin Hassan, doing little to oppose France. The people of Fez however, called for war and instead supported the sultan's older brother, Abd al-Hafid. This devolved into a brief civil war, with Sultan al-Aziz gathering an army before marching to

Marrakesh to confront his older brother's forces. The Sultan's army was ambushed in the Battle of Marrakesh, and Sultan al-Aziz was forced to flee back behind French lines in Casablanca, where he later announced his abdication.

Sultan al-Hafid took power and nothing changed. The French were still encroaching on Moroccan sovereignty, with their campaign in the region of Chaouia. By 1911, a rebellion broke out against Sultan al-Hafid and he was besieged at his palace in Fez, forcing him to call upon the French to protect him. The French forces used this opportunity to take Fez.

Following the rebellion, Sultan al-Hafid, under duress, signed the Treaty of Fez, recognizing French control of certain areas of Morocco and giving the French Resident-General absolute power over both internal and external affairs. In the aftermath of the failed rebellion in Fez, France had managed to maneuver themselves into the position of power they had wanted from the start.

The Moroccan people reacted violently in a series of riots that became known later as the Bloody Days of Fez. During the riots, many Moroccan soldiers, under French commanders, joined the riots, attacking their commanders before moving to the European and Jewish quarters of Fez. Believing the Jewish populace to be helping the rioters, the French commander ordered the Jewish quarter be shelled. According to the Moroccan historian, Mohammed Kenbib, 66 Europeans, 42 Moroccan Jews and some 600 Moroccan Muslims were killed over the course of the two days of rioting.

After signing the treaty and retreating to Rabat, Sultan al-Hafid abdicated in favor of his youngest brother, Yusef.

The French Colonial Administrator, Hubert Lyautey, worked to maintain Morocco's independent culture, focusing instead on colonial education and urbanization, rather than the traditional assimilation route taken by France in Algeria and Tunisia. He worked closely with the Sultan, allowing the sovereign to retain cultural, practical, and religious power in Morocco.

When World War I and World War II swept through Europe, France recruited from the Moroccan infantry, with thousands of Moroccans making up the Moroccan Brigade, fighting for the French with little to no recognition.

Following World War II, Sultan Mohammed V, who succeeded his father, Sultan Yusef, in 1927, called for Moroccan Independence. Becoming the face of Morocco's independence movement, Sultan Mohammed V aligned himself with a series of nationalist movements and call for Morocco to join the Arab League. Demonstrating in front of huge crowds, he appealed for independence in several momentous speeches, including the Tangier Speech.

On August 20th, 1953, Sultan Mohammed V was forced out of Morocco by French authorities, exiled to Corsica, and later Madagascar, with his immediate family. In his place, France installed Mohammed Ben Aarafa, Sultan Mohammed V's first cousin once removed. The "French Sultan" was not recognized by the Moroccan people, and, in response, the nationalist movement bombed the central market in Casablanca on Christmas Eve 1953.

Supported by Libya, the National Liberation Front in Algeria, and Egypt, the nationalist movement managed to put pressure on the French and forced them to renegotiate Sultan Mohammed V's exile in 1955. Upon the Sultan's return, he managed to negotiate Morocco's independence and French Morocco became the Kingdom of Morocco with Mohammed V established as King on August 14th, 1957.

## Spain

### Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** The mainland occupies approximately 195,364.5 square miles. Off Spain's east coast in the Mediterranean are the Balearic Islands (1,936 square miles), the largest of which is Majorca. Sixty miles west of Africa are the Canary Islands (2,808 square miles).
- **Capital:** Madrid
- **Languages:** Spanish, Basque, Catalan, and Galician. In resort areas, many people also speak English, French, and German.
- **Geography:** Spain's topography consists of a broad central plateau that slopes to the south and east, crossed by a series of mountain ranges and river valleys. It is a land of both towering peaks and endless beaches, as well as fertile landscapes and high, dry plains. Principal rivers are the Ebro in the northeast, the Tajo in the central region, and the Guadalquivir in the south.
- **Population:** 47,325,360 (estimate)
- **Religions:** Roman Catholic 67.8%, atheist 9.1%, other 2.2%, non-believer 18.4%, unspecified 2.5%
- **Time Zone:** Spain is six hours ahead of U.S. Eastern Time.

## National Holidays: Spain

In addition to the holidays listed below, Spain celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Easter. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit [www.timeanddate.com/holidays](http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays).

01/01 New Year's Day

01/06 Epiphany

05/01 Labor Day

08/15 Assumption of Mary

10/12 Hispanic Day

11/01 All Saints Day

12/06 Constitution Day

12/08 Immaculate Conception

12/25 Christmas

## Spain: A Brief History

Spain has been continuously inhabited for 1.2 million years, but the bulk of our knowledge about Spain's earliest people begins around 1100 BC, when Phoenicians established trading colonies along the southern coast. These attracted the Greeks; and around the same time, Celts descended in the north, establishing hill villages known as *castros*, many of which still stand in Galicia and northern Portugal.

The Romans arrived in Spain around 206 BC, but had to defeat the Carthaginians for it. Afterwards, the Romans still had a fight on their hands: The Iberian tribes resisted for 200 years. Today, in places like Mérida, Córdoba, Segovia, and Tarragona, you can see remnants of Roman roads, bridges, aqueducts, temples, and amphitheaters. Towards the end of their dominion, the Romans also brought Christianity. But Pax Romana crumbled as Visigoths and Franks swept over the Pyrenees.

The civilized heights of Rome were not equaled until the Moors arrived from North Africa around 711 AD. The enlightened Islamic civilization they established was called Al-Andalus, and it lasted for nearly 800 years. Islamic cities such as Córdoba, Seville, and Granada flourished. Throughout Al-Andalus, Christians, and Jews lived under some restrictions, but were free to worship, work, own property, and trade. When the rest of Europe was struggling through the Dark Ages, the city of Córdoba became a beacon of enlightenment with a celebrated university, palaces, gardens, observatories, libraries, street lamps, and running water. Mathematics, astronomy, literature, music, and architecture flourished.

Córdoba's star began to dim in the 11th century as the caliphate broke into dozens of small kingdoms. Infighting opened a crack for northern Christians to pry open, and the Christian Reconquest pushed south. The last stronghold of the Moors, Granada, fell to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella in 1491. They instituted a 300-year campaign of terror, the Spanish Inquisition, which sought to root out heretics through the confiscation of property, imprisonment, torture, and execution. It required Muslims and Jews to convert to Christianity or leave Spain, thereby ending a source of valuable cultural contributions.

But Spain's fortunes continued to rise. In 1492, Christopher Columbus opened up the New World to Spain's imperial ambitions. Spain amassed tremendous wealth and a vast empire through Columbus' conquest of the Caribbean, as well as the conquest of Mexico by Cortes (1519-21) and Peru by Pizarro (1532-33). In 1588, Philip II sent his Armada to invade England, but its defeat cost Spain its supremacy. After centuries of dwindling losses, Spain's overseas empire ended with Cuban independence in 1898.

Spain remained neutral during World War I, but was unable to avoid the upheavals that arose in its aftermath. Civil war erupted in 1936, pitting right-wing Nationalists under Francisco Franco against socialist, communist, and centrist Republicans. Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy supported Franco with planes, weapons, and 92,000 troops, making Spain a testing ground for WWII. Franco declared the war over in 1939, but there was no peace. In the ensuing years, his regime killed 100,000 intellectuals, teachers, and dissenters. After World War II (which Spain sat out), a UN-sponsored boycott plunged the nation into "years of hunger." They didn't wane until the 1950s, when U.S. aid and tourism infused the economy. When Franco died in 1975, Juan Carlos I took the throne and Spain transitioned to democracy.

When the 2008 global economic crisis plunged Spain's economy, the conservative government enacted harsh austerity measures. Youth unemployment reached 60%, and by 2017 over 87,000 workers left Spain, creating a brain drain. Recently, the government rolled out a "Return Plan" to lure them back. Also in 2017, a referendum in Catalonia backed separation from Spain. Madrid imposed direct rule, though polls show that 68% of Spaniards prefer dialogue with Catalonia.



## RESOURCES

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### Suggested Reading

#### Malta

***Return to Malta*** by Anne Fiorentino Pflug (2018, Travel Memoir) The author, a native Maltese, visits several locations that prompt personal memories, as well as the fresh impressions of foreign friends who are discovering her home for the first time.

***The Knights Hospitaller: A Military History of the Knights of St John*** by John Car (2017, History) Traces the roots of this powerful and prestigious order from its humble origins as innkeepers and health caregivers for pilgrims to the Holy Land; to its consolidation as one of the wealthiest Christian military orders; to its present disintegration into numerous chivalric and charitable groups.

***Empires of the Sea: The Siege of Malta, the Battle of Lepanto, and the Contest for the Center of the World*** by Roger Crowley (2008, History) In this New York Times bestseller, the author explores important moments in the decades-long battle between Christendom and Islam in Malta and the surrounding areas of Europe. Crowley, a respected narrative historian, delivers a gripping account of the brutal struggle for supremacy in the Mediterranean that reads more like a page-turning thriller.

***The Religion*** by Tim Willocks (2007, Historical Fiction) This sprawling epic based on the Siege of Malta in 1565 vividly brings to life the clash between Islam and Christianity with Suleiman the Magnificent pitted against the Knights of Saint John the Baptist in their Christian stronghold on the island of Malta. Packed with graphic violence, intrigue, and romance, the book holds its own in the pantheon of great historical fiction.

***Death in Malta*** by Rosanne Dingli (2005, Mystery) This story follows a novelist as he flees to Malta to avoid his crumbling marriage and seek inspiration for his next novel. He finds it when he discovers that a child has gone missing from his new village.

#### Sicily

***The Florios of Sicily*** by Stefania Auci (2020, Historical Fiction) This sweeping epic is based on an entrepreneurial dynasty that dominated Sicily for more than a century. In 1799, after a devastating earthquake forces them to flee Catania, the Florios arrive in Palermo with nothing, and then grow their small spice shop into an international shipping juggernaut. Auci casts a shrewd eye on the lives of the Florio women, who unapologetically demand their place alongside their husbands, fathers, sons and lovers despite the rigid constrictions of class and gender.

***Sicily: A Short History, from the Greeks to Cosa Nostra*** by Julius Norwich (2016, History) A well written introduction to the history of Sicily by a knowledgeable expert who has been studying it since 1961. Norwich says that “The Strait of Messina is only a couple of miles across and the island is politically part of Italy; yet somehow one feels that one has entered a different world,” and then explains why this is so.

***Sicily: A Literary Guide for Travellers*** by Andrew and Suzanne Edwards (2014, History) Part guidebook, part history, and wholly enjoyable, this literary journey begins in Palermo and works its way counter-clockwise around Sicily, village by village. The authors trace the Sicilian paths of famous writers from Pindar to Puzo, sharing passages from their work, practical tips, and anecdotes about illustrious visitors like Oscar Wilde, Cary Grant, Winston Churchill, Truman Capote, Marlene Dietrich and more kings and queens than you can shake a scepter at.

***On Persephone’s Island: A Sicilian Journal*** by Mary Taylor Simeti (1995, Memoir) An American expert on Sicilian medieval and culinary history describes her life as an expatriate who splits her time between Palermo and managing her family’s working farm in the Sicilian countryside. The book is filled with insights into Sicilian food, cooking, and customs; the corrosive influence of the Mafia; and the titular Greek goddess whose dual existence parallels Simeti’s own life, and that of Sicily itself.

***Sicilian Carousel*** by Lawrence Durrell (1977, Travel Writing) The esteemed author departs from his usual style of writing (and traveling) in this tale about his bus tour around Sicily with a mixed bag of companions. Along the way he shares his growing understanding of Sicilian (and Mediterranean) culture, hilarious anecdotes, previously unpublished poems, and a selection of evocative engravings. Sicily comes alive with wit and affection.

## Tunisia

***Tunisian Mosaics, Treasures from Roman Africa*** by Aicha Ben Abed (2006, Art) Aicha Ben Abed introduces the history of Roman Africa and the rise of Mediterranean mosaics, the art of private citizens rather than the imperial Roman court. Lots of glorious illustrations, plus updates on current methods of preservation.

***A History of Modern Tunisia*** by Kenneth Perkins (2004, History) A more in-depth look at Tunisian history than the Traveller’s History listed above. Perkins explores the history of Tunisia from the mid-19th century to the present, with an examination of French colonial rule from 1881 to 1956, when the Tunisians achieved independence, and the subsequent process of state-building.

***Behind Closed Doors: Women’s Oral Narratives in Tunis*** by Monia Hejaiej (1996, Fiction) This book presents 47 tales told by three Beldi women—members of a historic society—in Tunis. The Arabic language and customs of Islam are firmly rooted in this community. Tale-telling is important to all Beldi women, and these three women tell stories which echo their life experience and have deep meanings for them. Their tales reflect accepted moral codes, and yet many depict attitudes, relationships, and practices that contradict established norms. These contradictory visions offer a kaleidoscopic view of the position of women in the rich life of a historic North African city.

**Hannibal and Scipio** by Ross Leckie (1995, Historical Fiction) The first two books of the Punic War Trilogy by a classicist who draws on historical sources and presents the stories as personal memoirs, first of Hannibal and then of his rival Scipio Africanus. A third book entitled *Carthage* was also released in 2010.

**The Pillar of Salt** by Albert Memmi (1955, History) This semi-autobiographical novel follows a young boy growing up in French-colonized Tunisia. In order to gain access to the privileges of French society, he must assimilate and reject many aspects of his identity—his religion, culture, and family. On the brink of World War II, he confronts anti-Semitism in Tunis and the Nazi occupation of Tunisia.

## Algeria

**A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954-1962** by Alistair Home (2006, History). A historical breakdown of the Algerian War for liberation from France.

**Children of the New World** by Assia Djebar, translated by Marjolijn De Jager (2005, Historical Fiction). Based off of Djebar's experiences with the Algerian resistance during French colonial rule, *Children of the New World* depicts the struggles of women in Algeria as they join the fight for independence, outlining the reasons for violent insurrection and the tragic ramifications.

**The Lovers of Algeria** by Anouar Benmalek, translated by Joanna Kilmartin (2004, Fiction). Nine-year-old Jallal, a homeless boy in Algeria, is found and taken in by Anna, an elderly Swiss woman, who wants Jallal to work as a translator for her. As they travel through the mountains of Algeria, Anna, having suffered numerous tragedies after living through the Algerian War of Independence, simply wants to find her lost love, an Arab man named Nasreddine, and pray at the graves of her murdered children before she passes.

**Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade** by Assia Djebar, translated by Dorothy S. Blair (1996, Historical Fiction). Follow the life of a young girl through the history of Algeria, starting with the French conquest in 1830, to the War of Liberation in the 1950s.

## Morocco

**In the Country of Others** by Leïla Slimani (2020, Historical Fiction). Set in French-colonized Morocco following World War II, Mathilde settles into life in Morocco with her husband, Amine. Mathilde, a proud Frenchwoman, struggles with the unfamiliar sociality expectations as her husband, a soldier turned farmer, faces opposition as a Moroccan man married to a French woman. This award-winning novel views an interracial love story through the lenses of Morocco's fight for independence from French colonialism.

**The Last Storytellers** by Richard Hamilton (2011, Anthology) Wander through Marrakech's legendary Jmaa el Fna square, and among the snake charmers, musicians, jugglers and hawkers, you may occasionally notice a storyteller holding court. As the tradition of publicly recounting folktales or fables slowly dies, Hamilton has here collected the best of these engaging stories.

***Horses of God*** by Mahi Binebine (2010, Literary Fiction). On May 16th, 2003, Casablanca suffered the deadliest attack in Morocco's history with fourteen suicide bombers killing forty-three people and over a hundred people were injured in the attacks. *Horses of God* views the attacks, perpetuated by young adults from the shantytowns of Sidi Moumen, from one of the suicide bombers looking back on his life after death. Starting from childhood, Binebine raises four young boys through poverty and violence to a desperate bid for purpose in religious extremism.

***The Caliph's House, A Year in Casablanca*** by Tahir Shah (2006, Memoir). An entertaining account of the transformation of a ruined palace in Casablanca. Shah is a marvelous storyteller, interweaving Moroccan customs, history, black humor, and portraits of neighbors into one work.

***Dreams of Trespass, Tales of a Harem Girlhood*** by Fatima Mernissi (1994, Memoir). This memoir captures the true story of Mernissi's life growing up in a Fez harem during World War II. The harem was not an exotic seraglio of concubines but rather a part of the house where all the women of a family are secluded.) A coming of age story with vivid and often hilarious detail.

## Spain

***A Million Steps*** by Kurt Koontz (2013, Travel Narrative) Follow the author as he walks the Camino de Santiago—a pilgrimage route in Spain that stretches more than 400 miles—a journey that is both physical and spiritual.

***Sister Queens: The Noble, Tragic Lives of Katherine of Aragon and Juana, Queen of Castile*** by Julia Fox (2011, biography). The daughters of Ferdinand and Isabella each lost positions of power—one to the whims of England's Henry VIII, and the other to madness.

***The Shadow of the Wind*** by Carlos Ruiz Zafon (2005, Fiction) A mix of mystery, romance, and hauntings abound in this international bestseller, set in 1950s Barcelona.

***The Last Jew*** by Noah Gordon (2000, Historical Fiction) A sweeping tale of survival during the Spanish Inquisition.

***Traveler's Tales: Spain*** edited by Lucy McCauley (1995, Anthology) Incisive, lyrical musings on all aspects of Spain, written by luminaries such as Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Calvin Trillin, and Barbara Kingsolver.

## Suggested Films & Videos

### Malta

***Simshar*** (2013, Drama) based on true events, this story follows parallel plot lines about a Maltese family on a boating vacation, and would-be North African migrants caught in the political crossfire between Italy and Malta as to who will take them in. Both parties become stranded at sea, with heartbreaking results. An Oscar nominee for Best Foreign Film.

***The Battle for Malta*** (2013, Documentary) This highly acclaimed 60-minute documentary presented by British historian James Holland for BBC Two depicts the horrors Malta faced during WWII when more bombs were dropped on the tiny island than all of Britain during the Blitz. Available on YouTube

***The Malta Story*** (1953, War/Romance). Pretty decent British war flick detailing the story of Malta coming under siege during the Second World War when both Allied and Axis forces realize how vital the island is to their supply lines—with RAF reconnaissance pilot (played by Alec Guinness) playing a crucial role in defending it from the advancing enemy forces.

***The Maltese Falcon*** (1941, Mystery). We know that this great Humphrey Bogart mystery drama was entirely shot in America and doesn't have much to do with Malta, but it never gets old. Watch it again and consider its whole premise—a hunt for the jewel-encrusted Golden Falcon given to Charles V of Spain by the Knight Templars of Malta as a tribute for the islands.

## Sicily

***The Mafia Kills Only in the Summer*** (2013, Comedy/Drama). Aspiring journalist, Arturo Giammarresi, grows up in Palermo during the rise of the Antimafia movement in the 1970s to the 1990s. Arturo watches life around him change as the long-hidden mafia falls into the public eye while also vying for the attention of his long-time crush, Flora.

***Cinema Paradiso*** (1989, Drama/Comedy) The Oscar-winning Best Foreign Film of 1989. A famous director flashes back to his childhood in Sicily upon the death of his mentor, a projectionist at the local cinema who inspired his love of film and gave him the courage to leave home to follow his dream. The film was shot in several Sicilian locales, including Cefalù and the hometown of director Giuseppe Tornatore, Bagheria. A sentimental and funny coming of age story that beautifully evokes the charm of Sicilian village life. Italian with English subtitles.

***L'Avventura*** (1976, Drama) If you want to take a cinematic road trip through Sicily, this moody classic (directed by Michelangelo Antonioni) will transport you to Palermo, Messina, Syracuse, the Aeolian Islands, Mount Etna and beyond. Along the way, you'll be engrossed in the mystery of Anna, a young woman who disappears during a Mediterranean yacht cruise. Her wealthy lover and her best friend set out to solve the mystery and begin their own liaison—which is not exactly a romance, but an attempt to dispel the ennui of their lives. Italian with English subtitles.

***The Godfather Trilogy*** (1972, 1974, 1990) All three parts of Francis Ford Coppola's masterwork had substantial scenes set in Sicily, where key events in the fictional Corleone family's life unfold—including the saga's grandly operatic climax filmed on the steps of Palermo's Teatro Massimo. The actual village of Corleone was too modern to evoke the 1940s feel Coppola was after, so Forza d'Agro, just outside Taormina, was used as a stand-in. Other scenes were filmed in Taormina, Messina, and Fiumefreddo in Catania.

***The Leopard*** (Il Gattopardo) (1963, Drama) Based on the bestselling novel of the same name by Giuseppe di Lampedusa, this early Luchino Visconti film is a poignant and powerful meditation on change, loyalty and love set in 1860 Sicily. Burt Lancaster stars as the aging Sicilian prince

Salina, who struggles to preserve his family's dignity and wellbeing as Garibaldi's republican troops press to unify Italy and change Sicilian life forever. The all-star cast includes Alain Delon, Terence Hill, and a stunning Claudia Cardinale in her debut role. Italian with English subtitles.

## Tunisia

**Gladiator** (2000, Action) Although this historical drama of a Roman general forced to become a gladiator to survive is largely centered around Rome, the scenes set in Roman North Africa could easily be in Classical-era Tunisia.

**Star Wars** (1977–2019, Science Fiction) This popular science fiction saga entered the cinematic stage in 1977 to tell the story of a rebel alliance fighting against the tyranny of an evil empire. Four movies in the saga (Episodes I–IV) feature scenes filmed in Tunisia, including that of the desert planet Tatooine. *Episode IV: A New Hope* introduces the hero of the original trilogy on his home planet with stunning views of the sandy vistas.

**Desert Fox: The Story of Rommel** (1951, Drama) Desert Fox portrays the life of German Field Marshal Erwin Rommel at the end of WWII. It tracks Rommel's career beginning with a failed campaign in North Africa and ending with his eventual decision to join in a conspiracy against Hitler.

## Algeria

**Chronicle of the Years of Fire** (1975, Historical Drama) This film spans the period from the beginnings of World War II to the start of the Algerian Revolution, and explores the effect of colonialism on everyday people, through the eyes of a farmer. It won the Palme d'Or at the 1975 Cannes Film Festival.

**The Battle of Algiers** (1966, War) Nominated for three Oscars, this Italian–Algerian joint venture uses documentary-style techniques to recreate events from the Algerian War of 1954–1962, focusing on events between 1954 and 1957 when rebels waged guerilla warfare against the French government in the city of Algiers.

## Morocco

**Changing Times** (2004, Comedy/Drama) A French engineer (Gérard Depardieu) contrives a job in Tangier in order to reconnect with a lost lover of thirty years (Catherine Deneuve.) Various other characters and subplots cast an interesting light on modern urban Moroccan life.

**Le Grand Voyage** (2004, Drama). Driving his dad to Mecca for the Islamic pilgrimage is not what Reda, a French–Moroccan teenager, had planned. But plans change in this emotional road trip that explores the generational and cultural divide experienced by the many Moroccan immigrants. In French and Arabic with subtitles.

**Ali Zaoua: Prince of the Streets** (2000, Crime Drama). Four homeless young boys in Casablanca dream of a better life. When their leader is killed by a rival gang, the three remaining boys are determined to give him a proper funeral, but are faced with the rival gang and their own uncertainties as they try to gather the resources needed.

**Hideous Kinky** (1999, Drama) Kate Winslet plays a free-spirited, single British mother who decamps with her daughters to Morocco to find herself. Optimistic despite financial and personal setbacks, she remains dangerously oblivious to the needs of her children. A thoughtful look at Morocco's 1970s hippie mystique, and its reality.

**The Sheltering Sky** (1990, Adventure/Drama) An unhappy American couple ventures deep into the North African desert in the hopes of rekindling their relationship. The farther they go, the more the chasm between them widens. Directed by Bernardo Bertolucci, starring Debra Winger and John Malkovich, and featuring Paul Bowles, who wrote the book.

## Spain

**Pain and Glory** (2019, Drama) Antonio Banderas earned a Best Actor nomination for his portrayal of a legendary director flashing back through his past, and facing a present filled with loss, memory, physical ailments, and imagination. This thinly-veiled autobiographical sketch from director Pedro Almodovar is a rueful reflection on creativity, wrapped up with warmth, humor, and vivid glimpses of life in late 20th-century Spain.

**Ocho Apellidos Vascos** (released in the U.S. as *Spanish Affair*, 2014, Comedy) Two of Spain's most disparate cultures collide as a jilted bride from the Basque Country goes to Seville, where a skillful Andalusian ladies man is frustrated by his inability to woo her. A fun and warm-hearted look at the differences between northern and southern Spain.

**The Way** (2010, Drama) A grieving father (Martin Sheen) honors his lost son's desire to finish the journey of a lifetime by competing the historical pilgrimage on the Camino de Santiago. Along the way, he meets other trekkers with their own stories to tell.

**Pan's Labyrinth** (2006, Fantasy) From director Guillermo del Toro. Following Spain's bloody civil war, young Ofelia enters a world of unimaginable cruelty when she moves in with her new stepfather, a brutal military officer. Armed only with her imagination, Ofelia discovers a labyrinth and a faun who offers her a path to saving herself and her mother. The lines between fantasy and reality begin to blur, and before Ofelia can turn back, she's at the center of a ferocious battle between good and evil.

**All About My Mother** (1999, Comedy) When her 17-year-old son is tragically killed in a car accident, Manuela sets out to reconnect with her son's father and ends up forging new connections with an outrageous transvestite, a pregnant nun, and her son's favorite actress. This 1999 Oscar winner for Best Foreign Language Film is another from director Pedro Almodovar, whose other acclaimed works include *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown* and *Volver*.

## Useful Websites

### **Overseas Adventure Travel**

[www.oattravel.com](http://www.oattravel.com)

### **Overseas Adventure Travel Frequently Asked Questions**

[www.oattravel.com/faq](http://www.oattravel.com/faq)

### **International Health Information/CDC (Centers for Disease Control)**

[www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel)

### **Electricity & Plugs**

[www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/plugs-and-sockets](http://www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/plugs-and-sockets)

### **Foreign Exchange Rates**

[www.xe.com/currencyconverter](http://www.xe.com/currencyconverter)  
[www.oanda.com/converter/classic](http://www.oanda.com/converter/classic)

### **ATM Locators**

[www.mastercard.com/atm](http://www.mastercard.com/atm)  
[www.visa.com/atmlocator](http://www.visa.com/atmlocator)

### **World Weather**

[www.intellicast.com](http://www.intellicast.com)  
[www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com)  
[www.wunderground.com](http://www.wunderground.com)

### **Basic Travel Phrases (80 languages)**

[www.travlang.com/languages](http://www.travlang.com/languages)

### **Packing Tips**

[www.travelite.org](http://www.travelite.org)

### **U.S. Customs & Border Protection**

[www.cbp.gov/travel](http://www.cbp.gov/travel)

### **Transportation Security Administration (TSA)**

[www.tsa.gov](http://www.tsa.gov)

### **National Passport Information Center**

[www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov)

### **Holidays Worldwide**

[www.timeanddate.com/holidays](http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays)

### **History & Culture**

[en.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org)



## Useful Apps

### **Flight Stats**

Track departures, arrivals, and flight status

### **LoungeBuddy**

Get access to premium airport lounges around the world

### **Timeshifter**

Personalized tips for avoiding jetlag, based on neuroscience and your own data

### **GoogleMaps**

Maps and directions anywhere in the world

### **Triposo**

City guides, walking maps, and more – and it works offline

### **Rome2rio**

Where to go, what to see, and what to do in more than 160 countries

### **Flush or Sit or Squat**

Find a clean toilet anywhere

### **Uber**

Ride sharing around the world

### **Visa Plus and Mastercard Cirrus**

#### **ATM locations**

Shows the location of the nearest ATM in your network

### **TunnelBear**

Provides a secure VPN (virtual private network) that will encrypt your browsing data when you use a public WiFi network

### **What's App, Skype, or Signal**

WiFi calling anywhere in the world

### **Duolingo, FLuentU, or Babbel**

Learn dozens of foreign languages

### **Google Translate**

Fast and simple translations

### **XE**

Currency conversions

### **SizeGuide**

Clothing and shoe sizes in all countries

### **Best Units Converter**

Converts currency, mileage, weights, and many other units of measurement

### **Tourlina**

For women only, it connects you with other female travelers

### **Happy Cow**

Locate vegan and vegetarian eateries in 195 countries

### **Eatwith**

Dine with locals all over the world

### **Meetup**

Connects you with locals who share your interests

### **Skyview**

Identifies constellations and heavenly bodies

### **Travello**

Find travel friends on the road

### **ALIX for One**

Created by and for women, it identifies solo-friendly dining spots in major international cities

### **TripWhistle**

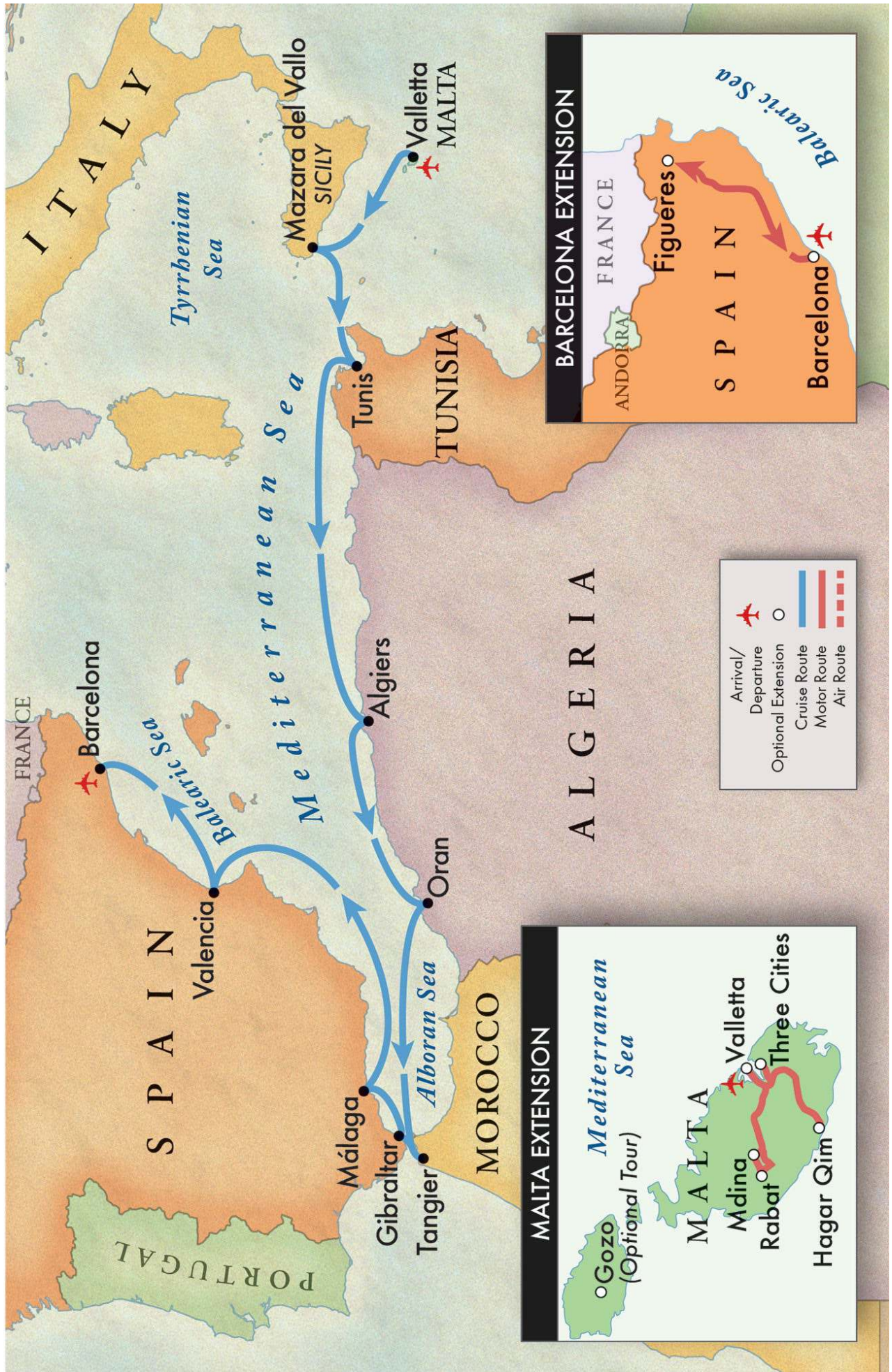
Maps your location and provides emergency numbers for police, medics, and more

### **GeoSure**

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### **Chirpey**

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from Foster City, CA



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23-time traveler from Oakland, CA



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