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## Etihad Airways to buy stake in Air Malta

### Luqa

- The stories have been making the rounds for a long while, the ones about Air Malta being sold off.
- ▶ The government of Malta, which owns 99.9% of KM, is considering selling a chunk, a small chunk, of the national carrier to Abu Dhabi's Etihad Airways.
- ▶ Sources close to the government have confirmed that EY "may buy a minority share in Air Malta".
- ▶ Other sources go further and say it's already "a done deal", and the government is "waiting for the right moment to announce it".
- ▶ Talk of selling a piece of KM is nothing new. Late last year Air China was tipped as the flavour of choice then, last spring, Hainan Airlines, China's biggest private carrier, was named as a buyer after tourism minister Edward Zammit Lewis and KM chairman Maria Micallef travelled to Beijing for talks on "issues of collaboration".
- ▶ On his return, Zammit Lewis would neither deny nor confirm rumours. "Negotiations are at a delicate and sensitive stage, so I'm not in a position to release any information", he was reported saying.
- ▶ Developments since appear to indicate a shift of interest from the Far East to the Middle East.
- ▶ Zammit Lewis, meanwhile, has always been ada-

mant in stressing that the Maltese government would retain the controlling interest in KM.

- ▶ Of the five shareholders of Air Malta, the government owns 130,979,873 shares whilst the combined total of the remaining stakeholders is 20,520 shares.
- ▶ More recently, meantime, Air Malta CEO Philip Micallef told *The Malta Independent* that the airline's management team was not involved in any of the sales talks with other carriers. "It is the government that is taking the lead in these talks.
- ▶ "Let me make it clear what management's role is", Micallef explained to *The Malta Independent*. "Management is not involved in these strategic partnership talks. It is the shareholder. They are the owners of Air Malta..."



For sale: will Etihad buy a share of the Maltese cross?

- ▶ "They have set up a data room, and the role of management is to provide information to this data room about the airline.
- ▶ "Our accounts, our cost structure, our various collective agreements, the salaries. Every piece of information that the people in government dealing with or discussing with a strategic partner request, we provide.
- ▶ "That is our role. We don't even know to which airline this information is going to. It is the owners who decide.
- ▶ "Questions come to us, but it is not we who are taking the decisions when it comes to these talks. We provide all the information, be it about routes or code sharing. I do not think it is a management decision, honestly", Micallef concluded.
- ▶ A few weeks ago *Malta Today* reported that Air Malta was asked to provide information on its workforce, its wage bill and other financial data to Etihad, "which prides itself in rescuing struggling airlines".
- ▶ According to *Malta Today*, "Air Malta's administration has been inundated by requests from Etihad for information about the company's financial situation and its contractual obligations".
- ▶ Etihad Airways was established by amiri (royal)

Continued on column 1, page 2

### Air Malta shareholders

Shareholder	Shares	% Share
BOV Investments	2,250	0.0017
Cassar & Cooper (Holdings)	1,350	0.0010
Government of Malta	130,979,873	99.9843
Mapfre Middlesea	11,250	0.0086
MSV Life	5,670	0.0043
<b>Totals</b>	<b>131,000,393</b>	<b>100.0000</b>

source MFSA

## A taste for buying

*Continued from page 1*  
 decree in July 2003 and started operations in November of that year. And apart from becoming one of the fastest growing airlines in the history of commercial aviation it has acquired a taste for buying into other carriers.

- ▶ In August 2010 it bought a 24.18% equity stake in Virgin Australia Holdings. Virgin Australia flies to destinations in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific islands.
- ▶ The following year, on 19 December, Etihad Airways announced its purchase of a 29% stake in Air Berlin, (Germany's second largest airline after Lufthansa).
- ▶ A month later it bought a 40% stake in Air Seychelles, on 25 January 2012.
- ▶ On 1 August 2013 it bought 49% of JAT Airways from the Serbian government; the airline was re-branded Air Serbia.
- ▶ And on 17 November the Abu Dhabi-based carrier announced that it had bought a 33% stake in Switzerland's Darwin Airline. Rebranded Etihad Regional with the subtitle 'operated by Darwin Airline'.
- ▶ Three days after this acquisition, on 20 November, Etihad concluded the purchase of a 24% minority equity stake in Jet Airways of Mumbai, India.
- ▶ However, the purchase that stunned the aviation world was the 49% of ailing Alitalia on 8 August last year.
- ▶ Meanwhile, in summer Etihad sold its 4.99% holding in Aer Lingus to International Airlines Group, owners of British Airways, Iberia and Vueling.
- ▶ Locally, Air Malta has been code sharing with Etihad since 2010. In July last year they expanded their agreement to provide passengers with better connectivity between Europe, the Gulf and Australia.
- ▶ Expect an announcement soon, definitely before the end of Air Malta's financial year - 31 March.
- ▶ Moreover, a sale such as this takes time especially when you have to factor in Brussels's input.

## Border controls extended till year's end

### Valletta

- Malta will retain border controls until the end of the year.
- ▶ The government suspended the Schengen agreement — that allows the free movement of people within the EU without any border checks — just before hosting the Valletta Summit on Migration in early November.
- ▶ The 30-day suspension was due to end on 29 November, the day after the conclusion of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting — also held in Malta.
- ▶ However on 24 November, and days after the terrorist attacks in Paris, the government announced an extension of border controls “as a precautionary measure”.
- ▶ The imposition of controls

## TUI Cruises schedules Malta until 2017

### Floriana

- TUI Cruises will be home porting its *Mein Schiff 2* here next summer, and operate a series of cruises to the eastern Mediterranean.
- ▶ Its season will start on 8 May with a seven-night cruise to the Adriatic. With a lead-in, all-inclusive price of €1,159pp for an inside cabin, the voyage takes in new destination Katakolon — the cruise gateway to ancient Olympia, birthplace of the Olympic Games — Corfu, Kotor and Dubrovnik. This route will be operated fortnightly until 9 October.
- ▶ Alternatively, there's a fortnightly Greece and Turkey cruise from 15 May to 16 October that visits Piraeus, Mykonos, Bodrum and, for good measure, Catania.
- ▶ At the end of the season the *Mein Schiff 2* — which, like all vessels in TUI's fleet are registered in Valletta — will be dry-docked in Malta for maintenance.
- ▶ In 2015, meanwhile, the bigger *Mein Schiff 3* operated 27 cruises from the Grand Harbour, carrying some 3,000 Maltese passengers.
- ▶ The [Orange Travel Group](#), local representatives of TUI Cruises, expect better sales next year from the local market, according to

- elsewhere in Europe aided Italian police arrest five Syrians — two at Bergamo airport and three in Treviso — trying to travel to Malta on false passports. The Bergamo pair were found to have ISIS-related images on their phones.
- ▶ Although considered a low risk country, where “there are no specific or general threats on Malta...the threat is all around the world and we are not taking risks”, a government spokesman said.
- ▶ The government invoked a clause of the [Schengen accord](#) that allows signatories to impose border controls for 30 days at a time, with an option to extend if threats persist.
- ▶ The last time Malta suspended the Schengen agreement was during Pope Benedict's visit in 2010.



*Mein Schiff: 'fills fast'*

- group commercial director Michael Abele.
- ▶ However, as these cruises are also sold in Germany and elsewhere on the continent, Abele recommends that the “Maltese should book early, because this ship fills fast”.
- ▶ For the 2017 season, the new *Mein Schiff 6* — that will come into service next year — will be operating a six-night, western Mediterranean shake down cruise from Malta in April followed by a seven-nighter to Greece and Turkey. And in October *Mein Schiff 1* will cruise for 10 nights in the east and west Mediterranean, with a lead-in tag of €1,078pp.
- ▶ *Mein Schiff 2*, meantime, will be repeating its 2016 programme in 2017.

## Emirates launches Cyprus promo fare

### Luqa

■ Emirates is offering an all-inclusive, coach, round trip fare from Malta to Larnaca of €139pp that includes “a generous baggage allowance of 30kg in economy class”.

► The promo is on sale until New Year’s Eve and valid for travel until 31 March 2016, with a €40 supplement if flying between 15 and 31 December. There’s also a weekend surcharge of €20 for departures on Fridays and Saturdays.

► [Emirates](#) has daily frequencies from Malta to its home base of Dubai via Larnaca. EK uses a 278 seat capacity Airbus 330-200 for this route.

► EK108 leaves Malta at 14:55 and arrives in Larnaca at 18:15 (local time).

## Lonfat moves to Salini Resort

### Salina

■ Swiss hotelier Philippe Lonfat (51) has left the Golden Tulip Vivaldi Hotel, where he was general manager, to join the four star Salini Resort - the former Coastline Hotel.

► Lonfat will join the Salini on 7 December as resort and business development director

► Franklin Pulis (63), meantime, erstwhile GM of the Hotel Milano Due, has taken over the reins at the 193-room Golden Tulip.

## KM planning to carry 0.5mn passengers this winter

### Luqa

■ Air Malta has added 15 flights to London Gatwick this winter. The additional capacity will cover the peak periods in December and January.

► And from 4 March 2016 it will add two more weekly frequencies, on Tuesdays and Fridays, bringing the total to nine flights a week.

► Commenting on this development Ursula Silling, Air Malta’s chief commercial officer said, “we are delighted to launch more flights to London. This initiative will now offer even more choice to our cus-

## KM’s Gatwick flight schedule

MLA-LGW			LGW-MLA			Period	Day						
Flight	Depart	Arrive	Flight	Depart	Arrive		Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
KM116	08:40	10:55	KM117	11:55	16:00	-26/3	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
KM118	17:00	19:05	KM119	20:10	00:15	18/12-1/1					Fr		
KM118	15:40	17:55	KM119	19:05	23:10	22/12-5/1		Tu					
KM118	15:40	17:55	KM119	19:05	23:10	8/3-22/3		Tu					
KM118	17:00	19:05	KM119	20:10	00:15	4/3-11/3						Fr	
KM118	16:25	18:40	KM119	19:30	23:35	18/3						Fr	
KM118	16:55	19:10	KM119	20:00	00:05	25/3						Fr	

tomers to travel between London and Malta. Together with our double daily flights to Heathrow, we have now the best offer and connections into the city covering both the south and northwest London.

► “Our latest offers have attracted significant interest with thousands of new bookings especially on our London routes. These additional flights will supplement the airline’s twice daily flights to London Heathrow. The UK is our main market and we intend to continue working hard to support and develop further this market.”

► The airline, meanwhile, introduced its winter schedule last month with more than 210 weekly flights — these include its code share partners’ networks.

► “We are currently carrying more than 30,000 tourists every week”, says Silling. “This winter we are planning to bring over half a million passengers.

► “With our new product range, enhanced services to major European gateways, day trip opportunities to and from London and Catania, conveniently timed flight schedules and improved cooperation with our code share partners to offer the best onward connections, we are confident of success”, adds Silling.

► This winter Air Malta will start operating direct non-stop, flights to both Amsterdam and Brussels. Following increased demand as a result of the introduction of the code share agreement with KLM (*see ITT #1*), the airline can now offer direct services instead of combined rotations between Malta, Amsterdam and Brussels. The code share with KLM is also offering more opportunity

for connections with North America.

► This winter KM will be operating “direct average scheduled weekly flights” to and from: Algiers (2), Amsterdam (4), Athens (2), Berlin (3), Brussels (7), Catania (9), Düsseldorf (5), Frankfurt (6), Hamburg (2), London Gatwick (9) and London Heathrow (14), Manchester (4), Milan Linate (5), Moscow Domodedovo (2), Munich (7), Paris CDG (6) and Paris Orly (4), Rome (7), Vienna (4) and Zurich (7).

► As part of the product changes introduced recently, the airline has overhauled its baggage allowance policies.

► Passengers may now carry one bag weighing a maximum of 10kgs as hand luggage and one piece of 20kgs as hold baggage. Business class passengers are given an allowance of two pieces of hand luggage for a total weight of 15kgs and up to two pieces of hold baggage allowance (maximum 64kgs).



*Biz class: more bags and legroom*



**Ramia Bay Resort** (Mellieha) ★★★★★

#4 of 12 hotels in Mellieha

1,453 reviews

16 travellers mentioned "all inclusive" and "all inclusive package" when describing this hotel.

"Fabulous hotel, wonderful food,"

"We stayed on an All Inclusive basis at the Ramia Bay Hotel from 10th Feb until the 17th Feb. The hotel is situated at the north of Malta in the resort of Malta which is a very quiet..."

"What Recession...this hotel saved us a fortune !!!"

"friendly.. fun !! We can't wait to go back. Great hotel - highly recommended and definitely got for the All inclusive package !!!!..."

Professional photos | Traveller photos (1483) | Map

*Wakey wakey: getting it right and saving people a fortune*

## Research shows all-inclusive saves money

### Ilford

■ On average an all inclusive holiday costs 40% more than a non-inclusive holiday does. However, once the cost of meals and drinks is factored in the all-inclusive holiday works out far cheaper overall. This means that families who book all-inclusive deals are normally financially better off.

► The fact that most all-inclusive deals also include entertainment makes these deals even better value for money. Families end up spending a lot on extras like kid's club or taking the children on day trips to keep them occupied.

► As an example, when UK-based A1 Travel compared the cost of two holiday options for Mallorca and Rhodes they determined that a family of four who booked an all-inclusive deal would save €1,700. Both of the holidays were two-week breaks and they were both for the summer months.

► One of the biggest expenses for British holidaymakers is drink. With some European hotels charging €7 for a beer and around €5 for soft drinks, the bar tab soon mounts up for a family.

► The high cost of hotel drinks often drives holidaymakers to go to the beach instead where the cost of drinks is slightly lower, but most people do not end up saving as much as they hope. They end up paying for transport and extras like beach toys and entertainment for the kids. At an all-inclusive hotel entertainment is laid on and the pool is often much nicer and possi-

bly safer than the beach.

► The statistics show that customers are waking up to the fact all-inclusive deals offer value for money. Over the last 12 months operators have seen demand for all-inclusive bookings rise, and Malta is no exception, as more properties are adopting the all-inclusive model.

► People appreciate not coming home to a large credit card bill and the fact that paying up front for a holiday saves them a lot of money in the end.

## Corinthia appoints new GMs

### Prague

■ Frenchman Eric Pere has been appointed general manager of the Corinthia Hotel in Prague.

► Formerly GM of Corinthia hotels in Tripoli and St Petersburg, Pere takes over from Jonathan Pace, who has been made general manager of the St Petersburg property.

## Global travel and tourism generates €7tn in 2015

### London

■ The global travel and tourism sector is forecast to grow by 3.5% in 2015, representing strong growth despite numerous challenges that have already taken place this year.

► According to the World Travel & Tourism Council's (WTTC) annual autumn update to its economic impact research, this is slightly lower than the forecast at the beginning of the year, mostly due to weaker domestic spending.

► Already this year, the sector has seen many regional incidents that have impacted the tourism

economies throughout the world. These include the diseases of MERS (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome) in South Korea and Ebola in West Africa; natural disasters, such as the earthquake in Nepal and typhoons in the Philippines; terrorism attacks in Tunisia, Egypt, Lebanon, France and Mali; political turmoil and continued unrest in Ukraine and Syria.

► David Scowsill, president and CEO of the WTTC, says: "Travel and tourism is a tremendously resilient sector. Despite a number of terrible regional incidents throughout the year, the sector will still grow 1% faster than global GDP in 2015".

► WTTC estimates that the sector's total contribution to the world economy in 2015 will be €7.4 trillion and it will support 284 million jobs across the globe, which underlines its enormous significance to the economy of the world. Visitor exports, which is money spent by foreign travellers, are forecast to grow by 2.9% in 2015, in line with the continuous growth of international travel.

► South Asia is still expected to be the fastest growing travel and tourism region with 7.7% growth, which is heavily stimulated by the growth in India. Latin America is expected to be the slowest growing region, with a low-level growth of 1.7%. This is predominantly caused by the slowdown of the Brazilian economy, which is estimated to decline by 2.1% this year.

► Over the next 10 years, travel and tourism is anticipated to contribute €10.7 trillion in GDP to the world economy and will support 355 million jobs worldwide. This equates to 1 in 10 jobs on the planet.

## MTA promotes film tourism

### St Julian's

■ Tourism minister Edward Zammit Lewis told delegates at a film tourism seminar at the end of November that "today's traveller has become an avid explorer, seeking new experiences and constantly looking for new destinations".

*Continued on column 1, page 5*

## High profile

Continued from page 4



Zammit Lewis: high profile visitors

▶ And in recent years “we have witnessed the rapidly growing phenomenon of ‘screen’ or ‘film tourism’, whereby tourists are attracted by destinations which are featured in films or TV series”, he added.

▶ Recently, Malta has been making its mark on the film world through some major blockbusters (and some turkeys) shot here — the latest being *By the Sea* by high profile duo Angelina Jolie and hubby Brad Pitt — as well as the filming of episodes from popular TV series and documentaries.

▶ Moreover, this industry will contribute some €100 million to the economy this year, compared to last year’s €29 million and the €5 million in 2013.

▶ The Malta Tourism Authority — who along with the Malta Film Commission organised the seminar — has been promoting film tourism as one of its target segments in a cross-section of markets, according to Zammit Lewis.

## Cargo continues to flat-line

Geneva

■ IATA released data for global air freight markets showing that air cargo volumes measured by freight tonne kilometres rose just 0.5% in October compared to a year ago.

▶ Year-over-year expansion fell back from September’s faster growth rate, and total cargo volumes in October stand 1.1% lower than the peak of the uptrend at the end of 2014.

▶ European carriers have driven recent improvements in air cargo growth, but they ran out of steam in October with a rise of just 0.2%. Other regions also underlined the weak October trend.

▶ The most significant decline in cargo activity was experienced by North American carriers, who reported a 2.4% fall in volumes. Latin America (-8.1%) and Africa (-1.1%) are smaller markets and also declined. Asia-Pacific was up, little more than Europe with a rise of 0.3%. Growth in the Middle East, although a robust 8.3%, was some 4.3 percentage points down on the average performance for the year to date.

▶ “The outlook for air cargo continues to be very difficult. While there was some optimism from third quarter growth it has all but disappeared as the industry basically flat-lined.

▶ “Cargo capacity has grown largely in lock-step with the continued robust demand for passenger travel. As a result, freight load factors have sunk to the 44% range — a level not seen since 2009.

▶ “Early signs of improvement in export orders may bode well for trade and air cargo, but this is unlikely to prevent air cargo finishing 2015 on a low note”, says Tony Tyler, IATA’s director general and CEO.

## Seek the seekenders, says Hilton

London

■ Research by Hampton by Hilton, Hilton’s brand of mid-priced hotels, has revealed a trend among Brits to forgo the big, annual holiday in favour of regular short breaks, to seek value for money and to covet travel experiences over material possessions.

▶ These so-called ‘seekenders’ have discovered the exemplar way to holiday, according to leading health expert Dr Dawn Harper and psychotherapist, Robert Stewart.

▶ The survey of 3,000 adults across the UK revealed that travel ranks top (63%) in the list of treats people will spend their money on, ahead of gadgets (26%), designer clothes

(11%), handbags and jewellery (20%), dining out (16%) and days out with the family (41%).

▶ The research showed that taking several short trips and being clever with costs (42%) rather than one blow-out getaway a year (17%) is the most common way of taking holidays, with ‘staycations’ (19%) proving as popular as foreign escapes (20%).

▶ When questioned about how they feel on return from a holiday, the data demonstrated that travellers feel just as “refreshed and rearing to go” following a short-break (32%) as they do after an extended getaway (33%).

▶ Speaking exclusively about the findings, Dawn Harper said, “we are leading increasingly hectic lives and a getaway allows people to physically and mentally recharge.

▶ “We react to stress with an adrenalin surge, which was useful in caveman days where stress came in the form of a mammoth on the horizon, but today’s stresses come from work, home and modern life hassles.

▶ “Taking the foot off the pedal and getting away from it all can make a big difference. Sometimes it can be easier to fit in a mini-break into busy schedules, and this can be just as beneficial as a longer holiday”.

## MIA to lose €1.3mn over winter incentives

Luqa

■ Malta International Airport expects to lose around €1.3mn this winter.

▶ The company has reintroduced its winter landing fees incentive, conceived in 2011, “which means that the landing fees of all scheduled airlines during the winter months will be refunded in full”.

▶ The scheme runs from November to March, and is expected to cost MIA some €1.3mn in lost revenue.

▶ But it’s not all gloom, the company made €1.86mn on the sale of its shares in Valletta Cruise Port (see *ITT issue #1, page 2*)

▶ it also expects better financial

Continued on column 1, page 6

## Better financial performance

*Continued from page 5*  
 results from its normal operations this year than the projections made at the beginning of 2015, and from those of last year.



Jeddah: tourist destination to be

## Jeddah Tower to top 1km

### Jeddah

■ Jeddah Tower will be the centre-piece of Kingdom City, a huge new urban development in the north of Jeddah.

▶ The tower will be more than a kilometre high, overtaking Dubai's Burj Khalifa's 828m, and will be the tallest building in the world when it opens in 2018.

▶ Covering an area of more than 500,000sqm, the soaring 200 storey Jeddah Tower will be a mixed-use building featuring a 200 room Four Seasons hotel, Four Seasons serviced apartments, office space, luxury condominiums and an

observatory — on the 157<sup>th</sup> floor — that will be higher than the world's current highest observation deck.

▶ A project of this scale requires cutting edge technology. For example, it will feature a high-performance exterior wall system that will minimise energy consumption by reducing thermal loads. In addition, each of the tower's three sides will feature a series of notches that create pockets of shadow that shield areas of the building from the sun and provide outdoor terraces with stunning views of Jeddah and the Red Sea.

▶ The great height of the tower requires one of the world's most sophisticated lift systems. The Jeddah Tower complex will contain 59

elevators, including 54 single-deck and five double-deck elevators, along with 12 escalators. Lifts serving the observatory will travel at a rate of 10 meters per second in both directions.

▶ The overall construction cost of the tower is €1.2bn and the overall estimated cost of the entire Kingdom City project is anticipated to be €18.8bn.

▶ The Saudi Bin Laden Group won the tender to build the project.

▶ "We are confident that upon completion, Jeddah Tower will become one of the world's great tourist destinations as well as one of the most attractive places to live and work in the region", claims its owner, Prince Al-Waleed bin Talal.

## Net works

### BYOD as budget airlines adopt WiFi

#### Basingstoke

■ A new study from Juniper Research has found that the adoption of in-flight WiFi by budget airlines will provide a boost to the connected in-flight entertainment (IFE) market, driving the number of connected aircraft to more than 10,400 by 2020. This will represent over a threefold increase from an estimated 3,200 this year.

▶ The new research, *In-Flight Entertainment & WiFi Connectivity: Market Prospects 2015-2020*, found that the decreasing costs of standalone in-flight WiFi hardware, which will soon be offered as line-fit equipment by major aircraft manufacturers, will for the first time, make connected in-flight entertainment attractive to low-cost airlines flying short-haul routes.

▶ The research also noted that rather than using traditional embedded seatback screens, many budget airlines are adopting the BYOD (bring your own device) approach. Here, passengers are allowed to use their own devices on-board the aircraft to stream airline owned content, thereby reducing IFE hardware costs and weight.

▶ However, this BYOD trend raises important safety and security issues as the airlines have little control

over these devices. "Airlines must ensure that they address all types of risks, including that of a rogue passenger hacking into an aircraft's avionic systems or servers, with potentially disastrous consequences", notes research author Gareth Owen.

▶ Meanwhile, the research observes that service providers are positioning themselves as end-to-end providers able to offer a full suite of connectivity, content and hardware offerings to their airline customers. Many of these, including key providers such as Gogo, Panasonic Avionics, Global Eagle Entertainment, Thales and SITA OnAir also face business challenges, particularly with respect to developing viable connectivity business models, and consolidation is likely as the market develops.

▶ Another important driver behind this growth is the increasing availability of air-to-ground (ATG) and satellite networks across the world. The research found that new advanced ATG networks, such as Inmarsat's European Aviation Network, will result in lower cost connectivity and higher capacity over high traffic density regions such as Europe. At the same time, new high throughput satellites will result in reduced satellite segment costs and increased capacity on a more global basis.



## Data bank

### Comments on tables

- All raw data in *Data bank*, and elsewhere in *Island Travel Trader*, are sourced from the Central Bank of Malta (CBM), the International Air Transport Association (IATA), the Malta Financial Services Authority (MFSA), the Malta Hotels and Restaurants Association (MHRA), Malta International Airport (MIA), the Malta Stock Exchange (MSE), the Malta Tourism Authority (MTA), the Ministry for Finance and the National Statistics Office (NSO) - unless otherwise credited.
- NSO data may differ for some months due to rounding, see *Tourist profile by gender*.
- All statistics are based on tourist arrivals; that is, they exclude cruise passengers that overnight in Malta, see *Aggregate tourist arrivals*.

### Tourist arrivals 2015

Country	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Totals	% Share
Austria	1,305		1,962	3,332	4,032	2,653	2,753	3,911	3,646	3,377			26,971	1.68
Belgium	1,167		1,915	3,843	4,255	4,062	4,436	4,483	3,464	3,076			30,701	1.91
France	5,074	4,983	6,908	11,944	18,606	12,983	13,561	20,331	10,412	13,862			118,665	7.39
Germany	7,456	7,120	10,037	14,920	12,222	12,409	10,151	15,892	14,368	18,529			123,104	7.67
Ireland	1,782		1,902	3,189	3,480	4,995	3,479	4,034	3,767	3,595			30,223	1.88
Italy	13,695	13,547	19,492	23,755	25,814	28,712	32,998	51,171	28,984	21,537			259,705	16.17
Libya			474	766	290	962	680	764	440	501			4,877	0.30
Netherlands	1,427		1,665	3,212	6,627	4,522	5,821	7,300	4,472	5,191			40,237	2.51
Nordic region*	2,464	2,918	3,567	9,400	13,738	12,733	18,223	14,153	12,114	17,182			106,492	6.63
Russia			543	982	1,776	2,872	4,077	3,762	1,913	1,988			17,914	1.12
Spain			1,423	4,862	4,124	4,557	6,486	9,391	5,536	3,386			39,765	2.48
Switzerland	1,422		1,774	3,134	3,517	2,689	5,796	3,820	3,746	5,555			31,453	1.96
UK	21,306	24,161	31,950	44,619	49,666	56,456	55,790	65,680	59,997	60,453			470,079	29.27
US	1,203		1,371	1,616	2,109	2,739	2,871	2,507	3,204	4,922			22,543	1.40
Others	15,979	21,787	16,788	22,348	26,948	30,420	39,505	39,286	36,485	33,538			283,084	17.63
<b>Totals</b>	<b>74,280</b>	<b>74,516</b>	<b>101,771</b>	<b>151,922</b>	<b>177,204</b>	<b>183,764</b>	<b>206,627</b>	<b>246,485</b>	<b>192,550</b>	<b>196,692</b>	na	na	<b>1,605,811</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>2014</b>	<b>69,525</b>	<b>65,299</b>	<b>97,800</b>	<b>148,188</b>	<b>166,497</b>	<b>177,446</b>	<b>197,389</b>	<b>235,094</b>	<b>185,438</b>	<b>177,961</b>	<b>102,940</b>	<b>66,232</b>	<b>1,689,809</b>	
<b>Difference</b>	<b>4,755</b>	<b>9,217</b>	<b>3,971</b>	<b>3,734</b>	<b>10,707</b>	<b>6,318</b>	<b>9,238</b>	<b>11,391</b>	<b>7,112</b>	<b>18,731</b>			<b>-83,998</b>	

\* Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden

### Aggregate tourist arrivals 2015

Arrivals	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Totals	% Share
Tourists	74,280	74,516	101,771	151,922	177,204	183,764	206,627	246,485	192,550	196,692			1,605,811	99.15
Cruise pax overnighting	0	0	0	1,642	692	3,852	915	1,799	1,639	3,245			13,784	0.85
<b>Totals</b>	<b>74,280</b>	<b>74,516</b>	<b>101,771</b>	<b>153,564</b>	<b>177,896</b>	<b>187,616</b>	<b>207,542</b>	<b>248,284</b>	<b>194,189</b>	<b>199,937</b>	na	na	<b>1,619,595</b>	<b>100.00</b>

### Mode of travel 2015

Mode	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Totals	% Share
Air	73,326	72,143	98,435	146,422	170,003	176,127	201,895	240,775	186,871	193,063			1,559,060	97.09
Sea*	954	2,373	3,334	5,502	7,200	7,638	4,731	5,710	5,679	3,629			46,750	2.91
<b>Totals</b>	<b>74,280</b>	<b>74,516</b>	<b>101,769</b>	<b>151,924</b>	<b>177,203</b>	<b>183,765</b>	<b>206,626</b>	<b>246,485</b>	<b>192,550</b>	<b>196,692</b>	na	na	<b>1,605,810</b>	<b>100.00</b>

\* Data on arrivals by sea is provisional

## Data bank

### Seasonal arrivals pattern

Season	2014	2015
Winter Arrivals	303,996	148,796
% (Jan, Feb, Nov, Dec)	17.99	9.27
Shoulder Arrivals	767,892	811,353
% (Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Oct)	45.44	50.53
Summer Arrivals	617,920	645,662
% (Jul, Aug, Sep)	36.57	40.21
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,689,808</b> 100.00	<b>1,605,811</b> 100.00

### Arrivals by gender 2015

	Official tourist arrivals	Females	% females	Males	% males	Calculated tourist arrivals
Jan	74,280	32,867	44.25	41,414	55.75	74,281
Feb	74,516	34,778	46.67	39,738	53.33	74,516
Mar	101,769	48,287	47.45	53,482	52.55	101,769
Apr	151,924	71,855	47.30	80,069	52.70	151,924
May	177,203	87,557	49.41	89,646	50.59	177,203
Jun	183,765	90,645	49.33	93,120	50.67	183,765
Jul	206,626	101,856	49.29	104,770	50.71	206,626
Aug	246,485	120,519	48.90	125,966	51.10	246,485
Sep	192,550	94,262	48.95	98,288	51.05	192,550
Oct	196,692	97,300	49.47	99,392	50.53	196,692
Nov	na	na		na		
Dec						
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,605,810</b>	<b>779,926</b>		<b>825,885</b>		<b>1,605,811</b>

### Socio-demographic profile of tourists 2015

By age	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Totals	% Share
0-24	7,527	11,858	16,196	31,057	24,113	28,140	64,443	82,169	32,041	25,208			322,754	20.10
25-44	24,995	22,170	28,218	49,761	57,511	66,738	69,826	94,119	67,175	61,823			542,337	33.77
45-64	27,910	27,030	36,115	47,536	63,737	62,991	57,797	60,407	66,041	74,950			524,515	32.66
65+	13,848	13,457	21,240	23,569	31,842	25,895	14,559	9,790	27,292	34,711			216,204	13.46
<b>Totals</b>	<b>74,280</b>	<b>74,515</b>	<b>101,769</b>	<b>151,924</b>	<b>177,203</b>	<b>183,765</b>	<b>206,626</b>	<b>246,485</b>	<b>192,550</b>	<b>196,692</b>	na	na	<b>1,605,810</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Purpose of visit	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Totals	% Share
Business	8,437	8,282	11,757	11,805	11,160	13,446	9,173	5,682	11,867	16,487			108,096	6.73
Holiday	63,093	57,603	75,736	125,704	153,104	158,198	176,807	220,776	169,108	166,813			1,366,942	85.12
Other	2,751	8,630	14,277	14,416	12,939	12,122	20,647	20,027	11,574	13,393			130,776	8.14
<b>Totals</b>	<b>74,281</b>	<b>74,515</b>	<b>101,770</b>	<b>151,925</b>	<b>177,203</b>	<b>183,766</b>	<b>206,627</b>	<b>246,485</b>	<b>192,549</b>	<b>196,693</b>	na	na	<b>1,605,814</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Type	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Totals	% Share
FIT	41,355	39,553	49,243	85,176	96,266	100,770	121,597	143,393	112,042	108,287			897,682	55.90
Package	32,925	34,963	52,526	66,749	80,937	82,995	85,029	103,092	80,508	88,405			708,129	44.10
<b>Totals</b>	<b>74,280</b>	<b>74,516</b>	<b>101,769</b>	<b>151,925</b>	<b>177,203</b>	<b>183,765</b>	<b>206,626</b>	<b>246,485</b>	<b>192,550</b>	<b>196,692</b>	na	na	<b>1,605,811</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Expenditure	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Totals	% Share
FIT	18,082	14,722	21,056	33,931	41,241	46,874	67,310	83,533	57,931	53,511			438,191	
of which														
Accommodation	7,643	6,843	10,005	15,916	20,909	24,661	33,821	44,676	29,535	26,390			220,399	
Air/sea fares	10,439	7,880	11,051	18,015	20,332	22,212	33,489	38,858	28,396	27,121			217,793	
Package	19,271	17,762	29,054	40,552	52,485	56,810	69,629	88,603	61,388	63,658			499,212	
Other	23,615	20,500	28,006	44,656	55,461	61,538	83,285	104,091	76,599	64,932			562,683	
<b>Totals (€000s)</b>	<b>60,968</b>	<b>52,984</b>	<b>78,116</b>	<b>119,139</b>	<b>149,187</b>	<b>165,222</b>	<b>220,224</b>	<b>276,228</b>	<b>195,918</b>	<b>182,101</b>	na	na	<b>1,500,086</b>	



## Data bank

### Socio-demographic profile of tourists 2015 (continued)

<i>Length of stay (nights)</i>	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Totals	% Share
1-3	15,642	16,491	21,085	29,762	32,611	31,447	19,097	15,045	23,821	28,224			233,225	14.52
4-6	20,849	20,228	29,049	47,103	47,933	44,884	41,023	45,131	41,639	46,199			384,038	23.92
7+	37,789	37,797	51,635	75,059	96,660	107,434	146,506	186,310	127,089	122,270			988,549	61.56
<b>Average LoS</b>	8.10	7.10	7.10	6.70	6.90	7.40	9.00	9.60	8.40	7.60	na	na	7.74	100.00
<i>Visit frequency</i>	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec		
First visit	47,079	48,144	70,194	106,363	127,351	128,722	150,653	183,559	133,816	134,813	na	na		
Repeat visit	27,202	26,372	31,575	45,562	49,852	55,043	55,973	62,926	58,734	61,879	na	na		
of which														
Once a year	16,755	17,883	22,392	30,223	36,895	42,314	43,158	48,651	44,994	45,269				
More than once a year	10,446	8,488	9,183	15,338	12,957	12,729	12,815	14,274	13,740	16,610				

### Malta International Airport traffic 2015

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Totals	
<b>International pax</b>														
Arrivals		104,941	106,882	141,405	201,908	225,271	232,752	282,628	282,289	249,467	226,759			2,054,302
Departures		103,935	102,014	133,929	191,284	216,648	226,546	265,479	302,929	253,429	237,798			2,033,991
<b>Totals</b>		208,876	208,896	275,334	393,192	441,919	459,298	548,107	585,218	502,896	464,557	na	na	na 4,088,293
<b>International aircraft movements</b>														
Arrivals		915	844	1,038	1,527	1,680	1,707	1,942	2,014	1,774	1,679			15,120
Departures		916	843	1,038	1,527	1,681	1,707	1,942	2,009	1,772	1,680			15,115
<b>Totals</b>		1,831	1,687	2,076	3,054	3,361	3,414	3,884	4,023	3,546	3,359	na	na	30,235
<b>Cargo (Tonnes)</b>														
Import		611	660	643	661	642	752	794	666	775	838			7,042
Export		406	394	502	519	494	561	464	401	537	580			4,858
<b>Totals</b>		1,017	1,054	1,145	1,180	1,136	1,313	1,258	1,067	1,312	1,418	na	na	11,90

### Passenger movements for October - Top 10 countries

2015	Country	Total	% Change	2014
1	UK	131,441	0.10	1
2	Italy	76,928	0.10	2
3	Germany	64,670	-0.07	3
4	France	29,153	0.01	4
5	Switzerland	14,755	0.26	5
6	Austria	13,222	0.21	6
7	Netherlands	13,172	0.40	10
8	Turkey	12,949	0.93	13
9	Sweden	12,706	0.29	8
10	Spain	12,493	0.15	7

### Top 10 airports

2015	Airport	Total	% Change	2014
1	London - Gatwick	31,966	0.01	1
2	Frankfurt	29,497	-0.01	2
3	Rome - Fiumicino	18,981	-0.04	3
4	London - Heathrow	17,475	-0.02	4
5	Manchester	16,981	0.09	6
6	Munich - Franz Josef Strauss	13,314	-0.15	5
7	Vienna Schwechat	13,222	0.21	8
8	Istanbul - Ataturk	12,949	0.93	18
9	London - Luton	12,826	0.18	9
10	Zurich	12,023	0.42	13

## Data bank

### Cruise ship traffic 2015

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Totals	% share
<b>Cruise ship calls</b>	9	108	102		219	

#### Pax traffic

Landed pax	71	26,635	34,360		61,066	14.41
Transit pax	20,582	178,589	163,624		362,795	85.59

<b>Totals</b>	20,653	205,224	197,984	na	423,861	100.00
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#### Nationality

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Totals	% share
Australia	189	6,716	6,192		13,097	3.09
Canada	310	3,357	5,002		8,669	2.05
France	2,783	24,447	24,285		51,515	12.15
Germany	3,697	49,746	38,292		91,735	21.64
Italy	5,091	33,526	32,109		70,726	16.69
Japan	187	1,390	684		2,261	0.53
Malta	1	2,119	5,414		7,534	1.78
Spain	743	9,133	9,926		19,802	4.67
UK	1,502	19,488	25,656		46,646	11.01
US	561	13,590	13,927		28,078	6.62
Others	5,589	41,712	36,497		83,798	19.77

<b>Totals</b>	20,653	205,224	197,984	na	423,861	100.00
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#### Pax by gender

Females	10,661	107,794	102,977		221,432	52.24
Males	9,992	97,430	95,007		202,429	47.76

<b>Totals</b>	20,653	205,224	197,984	na	423,861	100.00
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#### Pax by age

0-19	2,838	23,154	28,856		54,848	12.94
20-39	2,722	26,736	31,049		60,507	14.28
40-59	5,742	64,829	69,891		140,462	33.14
60-79	8,639	82,225	62,992		153,856	36.30
80+	712	8,280	5,196		14,188	3.35

<b>Totals</b>	20,653	205,224	197,984	na	423,861	100.00
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Notes: Landed pax arrive in Malta on a cruise ship and leave the island by other means. Transit pax arrive and leave Malta on the same cruise ship.



Record breaker: 2015 to be a record year for cruise pax

### Where to you'll find Malta stands January to June 2016

Date	Fair/show	Location
<b>Austria</b>		
14-17 January	Ferien-Messe Wien	Vienna
<b>Belgium</b>		
4-8 February	Vakantiesalon	Brussels
<b>Czech Republic</b>		
18-21 February	Holiday World	Prague
7-10 April	For Senior	Prague
5-7 May	Sport Expo	Prague
23-25 May	Wine Prague	Prague
<b>Denmark</b>		
26-28 February	Ferie for Alle	Herning
<b>Finland</b>		
21-24 January	Matka	Helsinki
<b>France</b>		
5-7 February	FestiVitas	Mulhouse
4-6 March	Mahana	Lyon
March*	Meedex	Paris
<b>Germany</b>		
16-24 January	CMT	Stuttgart
10-14 February	f.re.e	Munich
17-21 February	Reisen Hamburg	Hamburg
9-13 March	ITB	Berlin
16-20 March	Urlaub Freizeit Reisen	Friedrichshafen
19-21 April	IMEX	Frankfurt
<b>Hungary</b>		
30-31 January	Weddings Fair and Exhibition	Budapest
3-6 March	Utazás/Travel	Budapest
<b>Ireland</b>		
9-10 January	The Wedding Journal Show†	Dublin
22-24 January	Holiday World Show	Dublin
<b>Italy</b>		
18-20 March	BMT	Naples
<b>South Korea</b>		
9-12 June	Korea World Travel Fair†	Seoul
<b>Netherlands</b>		
12-17 January	Vakantiebeurs	Utrecht
20-21 February	Fiets en Wandelbeurs	Utrecht
<b>Russia</b>		
28 January	Antor MICE Workshop	Moscow
March*	Education and Career	Moscow
23-26 March	MITT	Moscow
1-3 April	Leisure without borders	St Petersburg

## Data bank

### Where to you'll find Malta stands January to June 2016 (continued)

Date	Fair/show	Location
<b>Russia</b>		
15-17 May	MITF	Moscow
<b>Slovakia</b>		
28-31 January	ITF Slovakia Tour	Bratislava
<b>Spain</b>		
20-24 January	FITUR	Madrid
<b>Switzerland</b>		
14-17 January	Ferienmesse	Bern
28-31 January	FESPO	Zurich
<b>UK</b>		
15-17 January	Holiday World Show	Belfast
21-24 January	Destinations	Manchester
4-7 February	Destinations	London
11-14 February	The Telegraph Outdoor Adventure & Travel Show	London
26-28 February	The National Wedding Show	London
4-6 March	The National Wedding Show	Birmingham
14-16 June	The Meetings Show	London
<b>Ukraine</b>		
30 March-1 April	UITT	Kiev
<b>US</b>		
8-10 January	The New York Times Travel Show	New York
14-17 March	Seatrade Cruise Global	Fort Lauderdale

\* Dates to be confirmed † Attendance to be confirmed

### Outbound travel by Malta residents 2015

Country	S1	Q3	Totals	% Share
Austria	3,064	2,035	5,099	1.61
Belgium	5,013	2,819	7,833	2.47
France	7,200	9,381	16,581	5.23
Germany	9,130	7,367	16,497	5.20
Ireland	2,237	1,522	3,759	1.19
Italy	56,099	46,232	102,331	32.27
Libya	517	321	838	0.26
Netherlands	6,299	4,222	10,522	3.32
Nordic region*	3,874	3,672	7,546	2.38
Russia	682	853	1,535	0.48
Spain	6,989	7,581	14,569	4.59
Switzerland	2,389	3,802	6,191	1.95
UK	42,923	21,181	64,104	20.22
US	1,773	1,407	3,180	1.00
Others	26,692	29,831	56,523	17.82
<b>Totals</b>	<b>174,882</b>	<b>142,227</b>	<b>317,109</b>	<b>100.00</b>

### Nights spent at destination by Malta residents 2015

Country	S1	Q3	Totals	% Share
Austria	19,204	16,624	35,828	1.49
Belgium	24,280	15,994	40,274	1.67
France	41,003	63,244	104,246	4.32
Germany	62,064	56,012	118,075	4.90
Ireland	15,154	11,468	26,622	1.10
Italy	284,814	273,580	558,394	23.16
Libya	7,209	5,093	12,302	0.51
Netherlands	36,945	32,805	69,750	2.89
Nordic region*	46,727	37,452	84,179	3.49
Russia	9,496	12,620	22,116	0.92
Spain	48,418	55,143	103,561	4.30
Switzerland	16,725	28,999	45,724	1.90
UK	314,934	178,046	492,980	20.45
US	29,413	23,131	52,544	2.18
Others	334,009	310,256	644,265	26.72
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,290,394</b>	<b>1,120,466</b>	<b>2,410,860</b>	<b>100.00</b>

S1 = Semester 1 (January to June), Q3 = Quarter 3 (July to September)

\* Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden

### Departures and socio-demographic profile of Malta residents 2015

Departures	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Totals	
Malta residents	78,955	95,927	142,228		317,110	
Mode of travel	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Totals	% Share
Air	74,082	89,678	132,907		296,667	93.55
Sea*	4,873	6,249	9,321		20,443	6.45
<b>Totals</b>	<b>78,955</b>	<b>95,927</b>	<b>142,228</b>		<b>317,110</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Gender	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Totals	% Share
Females	33,020	40,254	65,527		138,801	43.77
Males	45,934	55,673	76,701		178,308	56.23
<b>Totals</b>	<b>78,954</b>	<b>95,927</b>	<b>142,228</b>		<b>317,109</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Age	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Totals	% Share
0-24	15,642	16,737	29,858		62,237	19.63
25-44	35,626	44,284	57,282		137,192	43.26
45-64	23,262	26,368	41,623		91,253	28.78
65+	4,424	8,538	13,464		26,426	8.33
<b>Totals</b>	<b>78,954</b>	<b>95,927</b>	<b>142,227</b>		<b>317,108</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Photo credits. P1 - Air Malta. P2 - Terence Mirabelli. P3 - Corel. P4 - TripAdvisor screen shot. P5 - Department of Information. P6 - Kingdom Holdings. P10 - Viewingmalta.com



## Data bank

### Departures and socio-demographic profile of Malta residents 2015 (continued)

Purpose of travel	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Totals	% Share
Business	17,898	18,511	14,688		51,097	16.11
Holiday	36,967	46,851	92,424		176,242	55.58
VFR	18,499	21,873	22,940		63,312	19.97
Other	5,590	8,692	12,176		26,458	8.34
<b>Totals</b>	<b>78,954</b>	<b>95,927</b>	<b>142,228</b>		<b>317,109</b>	<b>100.00</b>

  

Type	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Totals	% Share
FIT	67,725	83,018	97,908		248,651	78.41
Package	11,230	12,909	44,320		68,459	21.59
<b>Totals</b>	<b>78,955</b>	<b>95,927</b>	<b>142,228</b>		<b>317,110</b>	<b>100.00</b>

### Departures and socio-demographic profile of Malta residents 2015

Length of trip (nights)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Totals	% Share
1-3	24,675	29,830	28,459		82,964	26.16
4-6	25,498	31,455	36,362		93,315	29.43
7+	28,782	34,642	77,407		140,831	44.41
<b>Average LoS</b>	<b>7.00</b>	<b>7.70</b>	<b>7.90</b>		<b>7.35</b>	<b>100.00</b>

  

Expenditure	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Totals
Per capita (€)	1,000	933	1,095		
Total (€ - 000s)	71,073	89,502	155,672		316,247

\* Data on departures by sea is provisional



**A little birdie told me...**

■ After the two cathedrals the Church of the Assumption of Our Lady — better known as Mosta Dome or the Rotunda of Mosta — is the most visited church on the island.

▶ Yet between noon and three pm it's closed. Why?

▶ Loads of tourists come to Mosta to visit the church and see the bomb (the replica that is) that punched its way through the dome.

▶ However, they either have to wander the streets of this fair town taking selfies or shots of door knockers or a having a bite to eat at the various mediocre eateries in the area until the magic hour when the House of God reopens for business.

▶ When *Island Travel Trader* asked the doorman — the bloke who admonishes skimpily dressed women and then hands them a shawl — why the church closes in the middle of the day and for such a long time his reply was: “Eh, we need a break and have to eat. We open the church at six in the morning. It's a long day till lunch”.

▶ Has it not occurred to anyone to

have more doormen? We're sure some retired old geezer wouldn't mind ogling the semi-dressed bints.

■ It's listed as one of the top 10 most expensive menu items in the world...and it's in Valletta.

▶ Margo's authentic Neapolitan pizza is, to quote their site, “smack in the middle of Valletta, on Republic Street, we occupy an authentic palazzo dating back to the days of the knights, an original building from the creation of Valletta.

▶ “Past the Main Guard, the parliament and crossing Archbishop Street, we are a few doors down at 63 Republic Street, the main walking street in Valletta”.



▶ To be boring – Valletta wasn't ‘created’ it was built (by gentlemen) and parliament has moved to the other end of town, but we digress.

▶ The piece de resistance here is a €1,800 (no, it's not an error) pizza with white truffles and gold, only

available from October to May – so you're in luck.

▶ The restaurant needs to be notified a week in advance if you fancy one of these. And the reason for this, get this: “the truffles are flown in on the day from Piemonte via those nice people from UPS.

▶ “The price varies but the minimum price, when the white truffles price is at its lowest is €1,800”, so you can expect to pay

more as well.

▶ Now comes the theology, the menu goes on with this nugget: “This is not just a pizza, this is a sign from God telling us how great She is.

▶ Once you've worked that one out, the menu describes the gold part of this pie: “24 carat gold

leaf is gently placed on the pizza and it is then topped with generous shavings of white truffles, fresh organic water buffalo mozzarella.”

▶ What's more, you can't just phone for a reservation (there's no number); no, you have to complete a form on their site.

## Last word

### Hotel room grievances

by Larry Mogelonsky

■ A hotel's guest room is the core of the hospitality experience and so it deserves your special attention to get everything just right. There are many small things that can turn a guest off, but are often overlooked for one reason or another. Call this my pet peeve list — 15 items to think about, and I'm sure you can think of plenty more.

▶ Poor WiFi signal. I am differentiating this point from the set up and cost. What I am referring to is insufficient bandwidth to operate the basics of the business: loading the internet and downloading basic files (let alone movies or anything of that magnitude).

▶ Pay for WiFi. Give me a break. I'm paying \$550 per night for the room and now you want another \$13.95 for Wifi? What's wrong with this picture? I pay five bucks for a coffee at Starbucks and get all the Wifi I need (which, by the way, is where your consumers are going instead of your restaurant because of this). Also, don't you ever notice that the economy segment hotels seem to have free Wifi while the luxury products do not?

▶ In-room coffee that's in un-openable packets. Unfortunately, we airline travellers no longer carry scissors. So how do we open these space-proof foil packs?

▶ Shampoo amenities not large enough for two users. If my wife is with me, we need to execute our own shampoo-rationing plan. Don't you think that someone could increase the size in anticipation of two designated occupants?

▶ Small water bottles that are not free. Single-serve water bottles

cost just a few cents each, maybe at most 25-35 cents from a wholesaler. Include a few and price your room up by just a buck.

▶ A larger bottle of water with a \$5.95 'warning' neck tag. Come on now. Does that water bottle really dictate that price? Better to have no large water bottles than to feature a price incongruity that might upset guests.

▶ Too many tent cards. I arrive in the room and I'm bombarded with brochures telling me about the great chef, a promotional food offer somewhere in the hotel or the drink specials. Yet, surprisingly, these offers are not available in room service.

▶ Complex lighting controls. Some even require putting the glasses back on to figure out how to use them. Worse is trying to close the lights to get a night's sleep and you can't figure out how to shut off that one hallway light that cannot be accessed from bedside.

▶ TVs that cannot be seen easily from the bed. I have been in rooms where the TV is opposite the bed, but the room is so large that you are out of remote control range. And if the remote control can't see the TV, imagine how you, the viewer, can see it! I have also been in rooms where the TV has to be rotated to be viewed from the bed.

▶ Noisy AC units. In fact, some are so noisy that when the compressor clicks on, it might wake those in the next room. Sorry, but I expect a quiet room, especially in the luxury class. This one may require a heavy upgrade cost, but for guest satisfaction, it is a must.

▶ Drapes that don't fully block sunlight. Often, black out drapes just aren't sized properly, leaving

gaps. Amazing how sunlight dances through badly matched seams.

▶ Quirky alarm clocks. We're talking the ones that do not set easily or those tied into a radio and not a buzzer. I've given up on this one and just use my iPhone.

▶ Lack of accessible outlets for rechargers. This one is especially bad when it comes to bedside rechargers. How do you plug your phone in to recharge it and still have it handy by being within reach of the bed? I realize that most guest rooms were configured and built well before the advent of smartphones, but this might crop up as a pesky problem for your guests.

▶ Soap packaged in plastic shrink-wrap. You know what I'm talking about: the packaging that requires real effort to remove. You need long finger nails and lots of patience (and your glasses on). Test a random batch from your supplier. If you can't open it easily, replace the batch...or get a new vendor!

▶ Bathrooms with poor lighting. This one tops the list as my wife's biggest complaint. It's added in here as she definitely had a few things to say about hotel rooms she will never visit again (along with those that do not have make up mirrors).

▶ Now, here is my recommendation with all these minor points: spend a night in your property and see if anything on this list comes up. Each one might be like the proverbial 'straw that broke the camel's back'. Sooner or later, one of these will be the deciding factor for guest satisfaction, positive online reviews and return visits. Most are easy fixes, so do something about it.

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