

CIA WORLD FACTBOOK - Malta

[Background:](#)

Great Britain formally acquired possession of Malta in 1814. The island staunchly supported the UK through both world wars and remained in the Commonwealth when it became independent in 1964. A decade later Malta became a republic. Since about the mid-1980s, the island has transformed itself into a freight transshipment point, a financial center, and a tourist destination. Malta became an EU member in May 2004 and began using the euro as currency in 2008.

Geography ::Malta

[Location:](#)

Southern Europe, islands in the Mediterranean Sea, south of Sicily (Italy)

[Geographic coordinates:](#)

35 50 N, 14 35 E

[Map references:](#)

[Europe](#)

[Area:](#)

total: 316 sq km
country comparison to the world: [207](#)
land: 316 sq km
water: 0 sq km

[Area - comparative:](#)

slightly less than twice the size of Washington, DC

[Land boundaries:](#)

0 km

[Coastline:](#)

196.8 km (excludes 56.01 km for the island of Gozo)

[Maritime claims:](#)

territorial sea: 12 nm
contiguous zone: 24 nm
continental shelf: 200 m depth or to the depth of exploitation
exclusive fishing zone: 25 nm

[Climate:](#)

[Current Weather](#)

Mediterranean; mild, rainy winters; hot, dry summers

[Terrain:](#)

mostly low, rocky, flat to dissected plains; many coastal cliffs

Elevation extremes:

lowest point: Mediterranean Sea 0 m
highest point: Ta'Dmejrek 253 m (near Dingli)

Natural resources:

limestone, salt, arable land

Land use:

arable land: 31.25%
permanent crops: 3.13%
other: 65.62% (2005)

Irrigated land:

20 sq km (2003)

Total renewable water resources:

0.07 cu km (2005)

Freshwater withdrawal (domestic/industrial/agricultural):

total: 0.02 cu km/yr (74%/1%/25%)
per capita: 50 cu m/yr (2000)

Natural hazards:

NA

Environment - current issues:

limited natural fresh water resources; increasing reliance on desalination

Environment - international agreements:

party to: Air Pollution, Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Endangered Species, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Marine Dumping, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, Wetlands
signed, but not ratified: none of the selected agreements

Geography - note:

the country comprises an archipelago, with only the three largest islands (Malta, Ghawdex or Gozo, and Kemmuna or Comino) being inhabited; numerous bays provide good harbors; Malta and Tunisia are discussing the commercial exploitation of the continental shelf between their countries, particularly for oil exploration

People ::Malta

Population:

405,165 (July 2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: [173](#)

[Age structure:](#)

0-14 years: 16.1% (male 33,526/female 31,780)
15-64 years: 69.4% (male 142,491/female 138,769)
65 years and over: 14.5% (male 25,406/female 33,193) (2010 est.)

[Median age:](#)

total: 39.7 years
male: 38.5 years
female: 41.1 years (2010 est.)

[Population growth rate:](#)

0.4% (2010 est.)
country comparison to the world: [163](#)

[Birth rate:](#)

10.36 births/1,000 population (2010 est.)
country comparison to the world: [189](#)

[Death rate:](#)

8.38 deaths/1,000 population (July 2010 est.)
country comparison to the world: [98](#)

[Net migration rate:](#)

2.02 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2010 est.)
country comparison to the world: [42](#)

[Urbanization:](#)

urban population: 94% of total population (2008)
rate of urbanization: 0.6% annual rate of change (2005-10 est.)

[Sex ratio:](#)

at birth: 1.058 male(s)/female
under 15 years: 1.05 male(s)/female
15-64 years: 1.03 male(s)/female
65 years and over: 0.77 male(s)/female
total population: 0.99 male(s)/female (2010 est.)

[Infant mortality rate:](#)

total: 3.75 deaths/1,000 live births
country comparison to the world: [213](#)
male: 4.2 deaths/1,000 live births
female: 3.27 deaths/1,000 live births (2010 est.)

[Life expectancy at birth:](#)

total population: 79.44 years
country comparison to the world: [29](#)

male: 77.21 years
female: 81.8 years (2010 est.)

[Total fertility rate:](#)

1.52 children born/woman (2010 est.)
country comparison to the world: [186](#)

[HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate:](#)

0.1% (2007 est.)
country comparison to the world: [116](#)

[HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS:](#)

fewer than 500 (2007 est.)
country comparison to the world: [151](#)

[HIV/AIDS - deaths:](#)

fewer than 100 (2003 est.)
country comparison to the world: [137](#)

[Nationality:](#)

noun: Maltese (singular and plural)
adjective: Maltese

[Ethnic groups:](#)

Maltese (descendants of ancient Carthaginians and Phoenicians with strong elements of Italian and other Mediterranean stock)

[Religions:](#)

Roman Catholic 98%

[Languages:](#)

Maltese (official) 90.2%, English (official) 6%, multilingual 3%, other 0.8% (2005 census)

[Literacy:](#)

definition: age 10 and over can read and write
total population: 92.8%
male: 91.7%
female: 93.9% (2005 Census)

[School life expectancy \(primary to tertiary education\):](#)

total: 15 years
male: 15 years
female: 15 years (2005)

[Education expenditures:](#)

5.1% of GDP (2004)
country comparison to the world: [64](#)

Government ::Malta

Country name:

conventional long form: Republic of Malta

conventional short form: Malta

local long form: Repubblika ta' Malta

local short form: Malta

Government type:

republic

Capital:

name: Valletta

geographic coordinates: 35 53 N, 14 30 E

time difference: UTC+1 (6 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time)

daylight saving time: +1hr, begins last Sunday in March; ends last Sunday in October

Administrative divisions:

none (administered directly from Valletta); note - local councils carry out administrative orders and have some responsibility for local road and other public maintenance

Independence:

21 September 1964 (from the UK)

National holiday:

Independence Day, 21 September (1964); Republic Day, 13 December (1974)

Constitution:

1964; amended many times

Legal system:

based on English common law and Roman civil law; accepts compulsory ICJ jurisdiction with reservations

Suffrage:

18 years of age; universal

Executive branch:

chief of state: President George ABELA (since 4 April 2009)

head of government: Prime Minister Lawrence GONZI (since 23 March 2004)

cabinet: Cabinet appointed by the president on the advice of the prime minister
(For more information visit the [World Leaders website](#))

elections: president elected by a resolution of the House of Representatives for a five-year term (eligible for a second term); election last held on 12 January 2009 (next to be held by April 2014); following legislative elections, the leader of the majority party or leader of a majority coalition usually appointed prime minister by the president for a five-year term; the

deputy prime minister appointed by the president on the advice of the prime minister
election results: George ABELA elected president by the House of Representatives

Legislative branch:

unicameral House of Representatives (normally 65 seats; members are elected by popular vote on the basis of proportional representation to serve five-year terms; note - the Parliament elected in 2008 is composed of 69 seats; when the political party winning the plurality of votes does not win a majority of seats, the constitution provides that a sufficient number of seats will be added to Parliament to ensure that the party that won the elections has a majority in Parliament)

elections: last held on 8 March 2008 (next to be held by March 2013)

election results: percent of vote by party - PN 49.3%, PL 48.8%, other 1.9%; seats by party - PN 35, PL 34

Judicial branch:

Constitutional Court; Court of First Instance; Court of Appeal

note: magistrates and judges for the courts are appointed by the president on the advice of the prime minister

Political parties and leaders:

Alternativa Demokratika/Alliance for Social Justice or AD [Michael BRIGUGLIO]; Azzjoni Nazzjonali or AN [Josi MUSCAT]; Malta Labor Party or PL [Joseph MUSCAT]; Nationalist Party or PN [Lawrence GONZI]

Political pressure groups and leaders:

Alleanza Liberal-Demokratika Maltra or ALDM (for divorce, abortion, gay marriage, the rights existent in other EU member states); Alleanza Nazzionali Repubblikana or ANR (for traditional values, anti-immigration); Alternattiva Demokratika (pro-environment); Azzjoni Nazzjonali or AN (freedom to participate in democratic government); Flimkien Ghal-Ambjent Ahjar (pro-environment); Ghazda tal-Konsumaturi (consumer rights)
other: environmentalists

International organization participation:

Australia Group, C, CE, EAPC, EBRD, EIB, EMU, EU, FAO, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICCT, ICRM, IFAD, IFC, IFRCS, ILO, IMF, IMO, IMSO, Interpol, IOC, IOM, IPU, ISO, ITSO, ITU, ITUC, MIGA, NSG, OPCW, OSCE, PCA, PFP, Schengen Convention, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNWTO, UPU, WCO, WFTU, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO

Diplomatic representation in the US:

chief of mission: Ambassador Mark MICELI-FARRUGIA
chancery: 2017 Connecticut Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20008
telephone: [1] (202) 462-3611 through 3612
FAX: [1] (202) 387-5470
consulate(s): New York

Diplomatic representation from the US:

chief of mission: Ambassador Douglas W. KMIEC
embassy: 3rd Floor, Development House, Saint Anne Street, Floriana, FRN 9010

mailing address: P. O. Box 535, Valletta, VLT1000
telephone: [356] 2561 4000
FAX: [356] 2124 3229

[Flag description:](#) 

two equal vertical bands of white (hoist side) and red; in the upper hoist-side corner is a representation of the George Cross, edged in red; according to legend, the colors are taken from the red and white checkered banner of Count Roger of Sicily who removed a bi-colored corner and granted it to Malta in 1091; an uncontested explanation is that the colors are those of the Knights of Saint John who ruled Malta from 1530 to 1798; in 1942, King George VI of the United Kingdom awarded the George Cross to the islanders for their exceptional bravery and gallantry in World War II; since independence in 1964, the George Cross bordered in red has appeared directly on the white field

Economy ::Malta 

[Economy - overview:](#) 

Malta produces only about 20% of its food needs, has limited fresh water supplies, and has few domestic energy sources. Malta's geographic position between the EU and Africa makes it a target for illegal immigration, which has strained Malta's political and economic resources. Malta adopted the euro on 1 January 2008. Malta's financial services industry has grown in recent years and in 2008-09 it escaped significant damage from the international financial crisis, largely because the sector is centered on the indigenous real estate market and is not highly leveraged. Locally, the restricted damage from the financial crisis has been attributed to the stability of the Maltese banking system and to its prudent risk-management practices. The global economic downturn and high electricity and water prices have hurt Malta's real economy, which is dependent on foreign trade, manufacturing - especially electronics and pharmaceuticals - and tourism. Following a few years of modest growth, Malta's economy contracted by 2.2% in 2009, and the government of Malta took steps to provide direct grants to struggling local businesses.

[GDP \(purchasing power parity\):](#) 

\$9.833 billion (2009 est.)
country comparison to the world: [149](#)
\$10.01 billion (2008 est.)
\$9.811 billion (2007 est.)
note: data are in 2009 US dollars

[GDP \(official exchange rate\):](#) 

\$7.955 billion (2009 est.)

[GDP - real growth rate:](#) 

-1.8% (2009 est.)
country comparison to the world: [146](#)
2% (2008 est.)
3.8% (2007 est.)

[GDP - per capita \(PPP\):](#) 

\$24,300 (2009 est.)
country comparison to the world: [54](#)
\$24,800 (2008 est.)
\$24,400 (2007 est.)
note: data are in 2009 US dollars

[GDP - composition by sector:](#)

agriculture: 1.7%
industry: 17.4%
services: 80.9% (2007 est.)

[Labor force:](#)

175,000 (2008 est.)
country comparison to the world: [175](#)

[Labor force - by occupation:](#)

agriculture: 1.6%
industry: 22.8%
services: 75.6% (2009 est.)

[Unemployment rate:](#)

7% (2009 est.)
country comparison to the world: [65](#)
6.3% (2008)

[Population below poverty line:](#)

NA%

[Household income or consumption by percentage share:](#)

lowest 10%: NA%
highest 10%: NA%

[Distribution of family income - Gini index:](#)

26 (2007)
country comparison to the world: [128](#)

[Investment \(gross fixed\):](#)

13.4% of GDP (2009 est.)
country comparison to the world: [142](#)

[Budget:](#)

revenues: \$3.31 billion
expenditures: \$3.74 billion (2009 est.)

[Public debt:](#)

69.4% of GDP (2009 est.)
country comparison to the world: [20](#)
63.6% of GDP (2008 est.)

[Inflation rate \(consumer prices\):](#) 

1.8% (2009)

country comparison to the world: [65](#)

4.8% (2008 est.)

[Central bank discount rate:](#) 

1% (31 December 2009)

country comparison to the world: [96](#)

5% (31 December 2008)

note: this is the European Central Bank's rate on the marginal lending facility, which offers overnight credit to banks in the euro area

[Commercial bank prime lending rate:](#) 

5.89% (31 December 2008)

country comparison to the world: [136](#)

6.24% (31 December 2007)

[Stock of money:](#) 

\$4.639 billion (31 January 2008)

country comparison to the world: [70](#)

\$4.603 billion (31 December 2007)

note: this figure represents the US dollar value of Maltese liri in circulation prior to Malta joining the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU); see entry for the European Union for money supply in the euro area; the European Central Bank (ECB) controls monetary policy for the 16 members of the EMU; individual members of the EMU do not control the quantity of money and quasi money circulating within their own borders

[Stock of quasi money:](#) 

\$8.771 billion (31 January 2008 est.)

country comparison to the world: [68](#)

\$7.645 billion (31 December 2007)

[Stock of domestic credit:](#) 

\$13.41 billion (31 December 2009)

country comparison to the world: [74](#)

\$12.31 billion (31 December 2008 est.)

[Market value of publicly traded shares:](#) 

\$NA (31 December 2009)

country comparison to the world: [86](#)

\$3.572 billion (31 December 2008)

\$5.633 billion (31 December 2007)

[Agriculture - products:](#) 

potatoes, cauliflower, grapes, wheat, barley, tomatoes, citrus, cut flowers, green peppers; pork, milk, poultry, eggs

[Industries:](#)

tourism, electronics, ship building and repair, construction, food and beverages, pharmaceuticals, footwear, clothing, tobacco, aviation services, financial services, information technology services



[Industrial production growth rate:](#)

NA%



[Electricity - production:](#)

2.146 billion kWh (2007 est.)
country comparison to the world: [131](#)



[Electricity - consumption:](#)

1.832 billion kWh (2007 est.)
country comparison to the world: [136](#)



[Electricity - exports:](#)

0 kWh (2009 est.)



[Electricity - imports:](#)

0 kWh (2009 est.)



[Oil - production:](#)

0 bbl/day (2009 est.)
country comparison to the world: [163](#)



[Oil - consumption:](#)

19,000 bbl/day (2009 est.)
country comparison to the world: [128](#)



[Oil - exports:](#)

0 bbl/day (2009 est.)
country comparison to the world: [194](#)



[Oil - imports:](#)

17,910 bbl/day (2007 est.)
country comparison to the world: [116](#)



[Oil - proved reserves:](#)

0 bbl (1 January 2009 est.)
country comparison to the world: [137](#)



[Natural gas - production:](#)

0 cu m (2009 est.)
country comparison to the world: [146](#)



[Natural gas - consumption:](#)



0 cu m (2009 est.)
country comparison to the world: [139](#)

[Natural gas - exports:](#)

0 cu m (2009 est.)
country comparison to the world: [154](#)

[Natural gas - imports:](#)

0 cu m (2009 est.)
country comparison to the world: [95](#)

[Natural gas - proved reserves:](#)

0 cu m (1 January 2009 est.)
country comparison to the world: [113](#)

[Current account balance:](#)

-\$570 million (2009 est.)
country comparison to the world: [117](#)
-\$52.5 million (2008)

[Exports:](#)

\$2.678 billion (2009 est.)
country comparison to the world: [124](#)
\$3.102 billion (2008 est.)

[Exports - commodities:](#)

electrical machinery, mechanical appliances, fish and crustaceans, pharmaceutical products, printed material

[Exports - partners:](#)

Singapore 12.45%, Germany 12.11%, France 12.1%, US 10.07%, Hong Kong 6.93%, UK 6.07%, Libya 5.38% (2009)

[Imports:](#)

\$3.973 billion (2009 est.)
country comparison to the world: [124](#)
\$4.827 billion (2008 est.)

[Imports - commodities:](#)

mineral fuels and oils, electrical machinery, non-electrical machinery, aircraft and other transport equipment, plastic and other semi-manufactured goods; food, drink, tobacco

[Imports - partners:](#)

Italy 24.29%, UK 11.8%, Germany 9.28%, France 7.99%, China 4.56%, Singapore 4.11%, Switzerland 4.05% (2009)

[Reserves of foreign exchange and gold:](#)

\$538.7 million (31 December 2009 est.)
country comparison to the world: [141](#)
\$373.4 million (31 December 2008 est.)

[Debt - external:](#)

\$3.75 billion (2008)
country comparison to the world: [111](#)
\$188.8 million (2005)

[Stock of direct foreign investment - at home:](#)

\$8.24 billion (31 December 2009)
country comparison to the world: [80](#)

[Stock of direct foreign investment - abroad:](#)

\$NA

[Exchange rates:](#)

euros (EUR) per US dollar - 0.7338 (2009), 0.6827 (2008), Maltese liri per US dollar - 0.3106 (2007), 0.37 (2006), 0.34578 (2005), 0.37723 (2003)

Communications ::Malta

[Telephones - main lines in use:](#)

241,100 (2008)
country comparison to the world: [120](#)

[Telephones - mobile cellular:](#)

385,600 (2008)
country comparison to the world: [161](#)

[Telephone system:](#)

general assessment: automatic system featuring submarine cable and microwave radio relay between islands
domestic: combined fixed-line and mobile-cellular subscribership exceeds 150 per 100 persons
international: country code - 356; submarine cable connects to Italy; satellite earth station - 1 Intelsat (Atlantic Ocean) (2008)

[Broadcast media:](#)

1 publicly-owned television station, Television Malta (TVM); several national television stations, two of which are owned by political parties; Italian and British broadcast programs are available; multi-channel cable and satellite TV services are obtainable; publicly-owned radio broadcaster operates 2 stations; roughly 50 commercial radio stations functioning (2008)

[Internet country code:](#)

.mt

[Internet hosts:](#)

25,139 (2009)

country comparison to the world: [94](#)



[Internet users:](#)

198,800 (2008)

country comparison to the world: [137](#)



Transportation ::Malta

[Airports:](#)

1 (2010)

country comparison to the world: [218](#)



[Airports - with paved runways:](#)

total: 1

over 3,047 m: 1 (2010)



[Roadways:](#)

total: 2,227 km

country comparison to the world: [171](#)

paved: 2,014 km

unpaved: 213 km (2005)



[Merchant marine:](#)

total: 1,438

country comparison to the world: [4](#)

by type: bulk carrier 459, cargo 411, carrier 2, chemical tanker 171, container 80, liquefied gas 25, passenger/cargo 15, petroleum tanker 159, refrigerated cargo 32, roll on/roll off 37, specialized tanker 1, vehicle carrier 17

foreign-owned: 1,343 (Austria 1, Azerbaijan 2, Bangladesh 2, Belgium 15, Bulgaria 5, Canada 1, China 12, Croatia 9, Cyprus 31, Denmark 30, Egypt 1, Estonia 11, France 5, Germany 91, Greece 452, Hong Kong 1, Iceland 5, India 2, Iran 79, Israel 18, Italy 50, Japan 8, South Korea 2, Latvia 19, Lebanon 11, Libya 3, Lithuania 1, Norway 93, Pakistan 2, Poland 24, Portugal 3, Romania 8, Russia 58, Slovenia 4, Spain 3, Sweden 2, Switzerland 20, Syria 6, Turkey 176, Ukraine 30, UAE 5, UK 19, US 23)

registered in other countries: 3 (Panama 3) (2008)



[Ports and terminals:](#)

Marsaxlokk (Malta Freeport), Valletta



Military ::Malta

[Military branches:](#)

Armed Forces of Malta (AFM; includes air and maritime elements) (2010)



[Military service age and obligation:](#)

17 years 6 months of age for voluntary military service; no conscription (2008)



[Manpower available for military service:](#)

males age 16-49: 95,899

females age 16-49: 91,412 (2010 est.)



[Manpower fit for military service:](#)

males age 16-49: 79,961

females age 16-49: 76,067 (2010 est.)



[Manpower reaching militarily significant age annually:](#)

male: 2,570

female: 2,410 (2010 est.)



[Military expenditures:](#)

0.7% of GDP (2006 est.)

country comparison to the world: [153](#)



Transnational Issues ::Malta

[Disputes - international:](#)

none



[Illicit drugs:](#)

minor transshipment point for hashish from North Africa to Western Europe



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Source: The online CIA World Factbook is updated bi-weekly. ISSN 1553-8133
