

Pauwels Travel Bureau Ltd.
95 Dalhousie Street, Brantford, Ont. N3T 2J1
Tel. 519-753-2695 / 519-756-4900 - Fax 519-753-6376
tours@pauwelstravel.com – www.pauwelstravel.com



"KNIGHTS TO MALTA"

13 days, Thursday, February 22, to Tuesday, March 6, 2018

*Tour cost from Toronto, based on double occupancy: \$4,395 - Single room supplement: \$875
(Prices from other cities available upon request)*

PROPOSED ITINERARY:

Day 1 - Thursday, February 22:

Late afternoon departure for Frankfurt with Air Canada. Dinner and a light breakfast will be served on board.

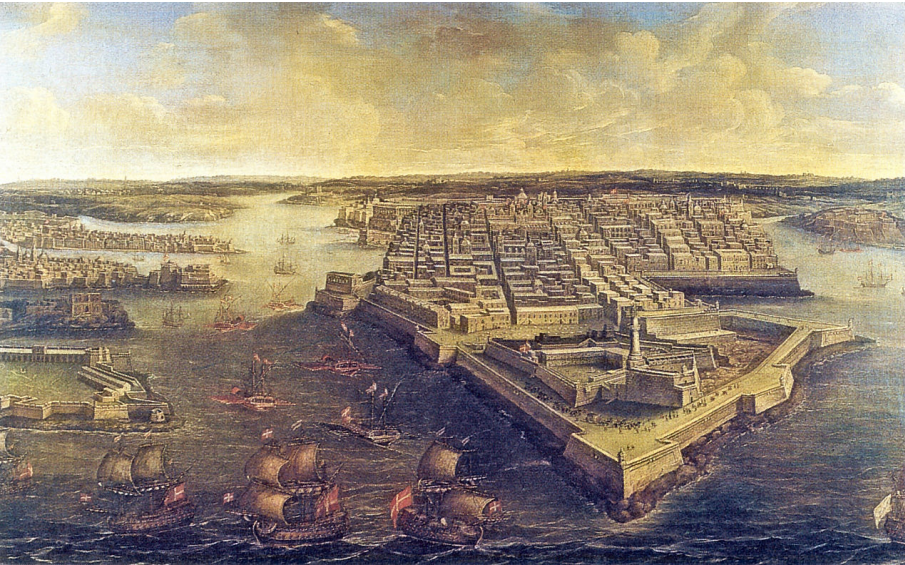
Day 2 - Friday, February 23:

Early morning arrival in Rome, and connecting flight to Valletta, Malta, arriving in late morning. Transfer to the centrally-located 5-star/deluxe Grand Hotel Excelsior (<http://www.excelsior.com.mt>), check-in, and free time to settle in. In late afternoon, we head for the “Malta Experience,” an audio-visual introduction to the history of the island and the Order of St. John. Welcome dinner in the restaurant of our hotel. (D)

Day 3 - Saturday, February 24:

After breakfast, walking tour of the fortified historical centre of Malta’s capital, Valletta, classified in its entirety as a UNESCO World Heritage Site (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/131>); Valletta will also be Europe’s “cultural capital” in 2018 (www.gov.mt/en/about%20malta/valletta/pages/european-capital-of-culture-in-2018.aspx). The old town is inextricably linked to the history of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, originally an order of “fighting monks,” similar to the Knights Templar, established in the context of the Crusades. Built after the 1565 Great Siege of Malta, and named after Grand Master Jean Parisot de la Valette, Among the highlights of our visit will be St. John's Cathedral with its stunning baroque interior, decorated with paintings by artists such as Caravaggio and Flemish tapestries, and a crypt with tombs of grand masters, including La Valette; Republic Street, the main shopping street; the imposing walls and gates ramparts built by the Knights in the late 16th century, featured on UNESCO’s tentative list of world heritage sites (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/982>); the 17th-century Manoel Theatre, a miniature version of Milan’s La Scala; the National Library on Republic Square, where the archives of the Knights of St. John are kept; and (B, D)

the 'Holy Infirmary,' with a capacity of over 600 beds a state-of-the-art hospital at the time of its establishment by the Order in 1574. The afternoon is free to shop and/or explore Valletta on your own. Dinner in a typical restaurant.



< *Panoramic view of Valletta in 1801*
(free of copyright c/o Wikimedia
Commons)

Day 4 - Sunday, February 25:
(B)

This morning we visit the Grand Master's Palace. This building is now home to Malta's President and Parliament, but the staterooms and the impressive collection of armour and weapons are open to the public. Then we tour some of Valletta's outlying sites, such as the Valletta Waterfront, the Grand Harbour, Barrakka Gardens,

and Fort St. Elmo, built at the tip of the peninsula in 1551, where Malta's National War Museum conjures up memories of the Great Siege of 1565 as well as World War II by means of exhibits such as the George Cross given to the island by King George VI and some of the airplanes used to defend the city (<http://heritagemalta.org/museums-sites/national-war-museum>).

The afternoon is free for activities such as visits to art galleries and museums such as:

*The National Museum of Fine Arts, located in the former residence of French and British governors of the island, featuring paintings and artefacts associated with the Order of St. John (<http://heritagemalta.org/museums-sites/national-museum-of-fine-arts>);

*The Malta Maritime Museum (<http://heritagemalta.org/museums-sites/malta-maritime-museum>);

*The Malta at War Museum (<http://www.maltaatwarmuseum.com>);

*The Malta Aviation Museum (<https://www.maltaaviationmuseum.com>);

*The Malta National Museum of Archaeology (<http://heritagemalta.org/museums-sites/national-museum-of-archaeology>).

No group dinner this evening.

Day 5 - Monday, February 26:

(B)

Today we explore two more UNESCO World Heritage Sites, both associated with the island's prehistory. First, the megalithic temples of Tarxien and similar sites, monumental prehistoric buildings constructed during the 4th and 3rd millennium BC; these impressive free-standing monuments are similar to Stonehenge and are just about as old as the pyramids of Egypt! ((<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/132>) Second, the Hal Saflieni Hypogeum, a subterranean combination of burial place and sanctuary, dating back to somewhere between 4000 and 2500 BC (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/130/documents>). No group dinner.

Day 6 - Tuesday, February 27:

(B, L)

Full-day excursion to Malta's second island, Gozo. (There is a third one, tiny Comino.) Our focus will be on Victoria (a.k.a. Rabat), the small fortified capital, situated on a hill dominating the surrounding countryside and the coast, already inhabited in the Bronze Age and an important settlement in Phoenician and Roman times; Victoria is featured on UNESCO's tentative list (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/981>). Lunch included!



Cliffs of Gozo (photo by Myriam Thyès, free of copyright c/o Wikimedia Commons)

Day 7 - Wednesday, February 28:

(B, D)

Morning excursion to Malta's picturesque "Old City," located high on a ridge in the island's interior, known to the Romans as Melita and later divided into two parts, Mdina and Rabat; this was the island's capital before the Order arrived and decided to settle on the coast. Mdina/Rabat boasts ancient city walls and gates, fine residences of aristocratic families, as well as churches and catacombs, associated with the arrival here in 60AD of St. Paul, who reportedly converted the Roman governor to Christianity. Return to Valletta via the coastal resorts of Sliema and St. Julian's. Afternoon free in Valletta. Final dinner in Malta in the hotel.

Day 8 - Thursday, March 1:

(B, D)

After breakfast, we make our way to transfer to Catania, Sicily, either by ferry or via a short flight. Arrival in Catania and immediate transfer to the magnificent historical city of Syracuse, situated on the shores of the Ionian Sea, where we will stay in the five-star/deluxe Grand Hotel Ortigia, situated in the historical centre, a tiny island called Ortygia by the ancient Greeks, who founded the city and turned it into their metropolis on this island, the biggest in the entire Mediterranean Sea (<http://www.grandhotelortigia.it/index.asp>). Dinner in the rooftop restaurant of our hotel.

UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITES VISITED ON THIS TOUR

(including sites on the tentative list):

Historic city of Valletta - Megalithic Temples of Malta - Hal Saflieni Hypogeum – Historic city of Syracuse -
Mount Etna – Historic centre of Rome

Day 9 - Friday, March 2:

(B)

Morning sightseeing tour of Syracuse, a UNESCO World Heritage Site (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1200>). We start with the wonderful Archaeological Zone with the Greek theatre, the Roman amphitheatre, and the garden known as the Latomia of Paradise, featuring the "Ear of Dionysios," a cave with amazing acoustic properties. Afterwards we explore Ortygia, the original Greek settlement, with as highlights the ruins of the Temple of Apollo, the romantic Fountain of Arethusa (featuring papyrus reeds) and the Cathedral, a former temple dedicated to the goddess Athena. UNESCO World Heritage Site (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1200>) Afternoon visit to the excellent local Archaeological Museum, followed by free time to shop or explore the city on your own. No group dinner this evening.



Syracuse's Greek Theatre (photo free of copyright c/o Wikimedia Commons)

Day 10 - Saturday, March 3:

(B, L or D)

Full-day excursion to Catania and Taormina. We first motor to Catania, the island's biggest city after Palermo, for a walking tour of the historical centre and the amazing fish market. Continue along the rugged coastline, associated with Homer's story of Ulysses, to the idyllic resort of Taormina, spectacularly situated on a rocky plateau, featuring wonderful views of Mount Etna and the sea as far as the coast of Calabria, the tip of the Italian "boot"! Taormina is featured on UNESCO's tentative list of world heritage sites (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/1164>). Our walking tour will include a visit to the amazing Greco-Roman Theatre. Return to Syracuse in late afternoon. Today, lunch OR dinner will be included.



< Mount Etna as seen from the Greco-Roman Theatre in Taormina on a painting by Thomas Cole (c/o Wikimedia Commons)

Day 11 - Sunday, March 4:

(B, D)

This morning we explore the slopes of Mount Etna, the huge, still active volcano whose massive, 3,000-meter high cone dominates the entire island, featuring desolate lunar landscapes of molten lava and homes abandoned during past eruptions, but also prosperous villages living in the shadow of Europe's biggest, and still very active, volcano. Mt Etna is yet another

UNESCO World Heritage Site (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1427>). We return to Syracuse after a visit to Agira Canadian War Cemetery, with the tombs of almost 500 Canadians who give their lives for the liberation of the island in the summer of 1943 (<http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/overseas/second-world-war/italy/agira>). Return to Syracuse in late afternoon. This evening, "arrivederci"-dinner in a typical restaurant.

Day 12 - Monday, March 5:

(B)

After breakfast, transfer to Catania Airport and short flight to Rome, arriving at Fiumicino Airport around noon. Transfer by private coach to the historical centre of the "Eternal City," and panoramic tour during which we will view many famous attractions, such as the Colosseum, the Forum, Trevi Fountain, the Spanish Steps,

Piazza Navona, the Pantheon, and of course the Vatican with St. Peter's Basilica. At the end of the tour we check into the 4-star Hotel Holiday Inn EUR Parco dei Medici, located in a residential district on the western outskirts of the site, close to Fiumicino Airport (www.holidayinn.com/rome-parcoi). No group dinner this evening, but the hotel has a fine restaurant, and restaurants in the city centre may be reached by taxi.

Day 13- Tuesday, March 6:

(B)

After breakfast, short transfer to Fiumicino Airport by hotel shuttle service, and non-stop return flight to Toronto with Air Canada, departing at 11AM and arriving at 3PM.

(PLEASE NOTE THAT A LATER RETURN FROM ROME IS POSSIBLE, BUT ONLY IF REQUESTED WELL IN ADVANCE, AND WILL INVOLVE AN INDIVIDUAL AND THEREFORE HIGHER AIRFARE.)

Tour cost from Toronto, based on double occupancy: \$4,395 - Single room supplement: \$875

Included in the tour price are:

- Return flight with Air Canada and partner carriers, including all airport taxes, security fees and fuel surcharges;
- Accommodation in 5-star hotels in Malta and Sicily and a 4-star hotel in Rome, based on double occupancy – the single room supplement is \$875;
- Breakfast and a total of *seven* dinners (or sometimes full lunch);
- All transfers, sightseeing, and excursions as described in the itinerary;

Not included are:

- All items of a personal nature;
- Wine, beer, mineral water and similar beverages with dinners;
- Gratuities to local guides and drivers, totaling maximum 30 Euros or about \$45;
- Travel insurance, available on request.



Galley of the Order of the Knights of St. John (photo by Myriam Thyges c/o Wikimedia Commons)

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Ont. Reg. #1034992

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

RESERVATIONS AND DEPOSITS:

Reservations should be made as early as possible to ensure the departure of your choice. A deposit of \$750.00 is required at the time of registration. Your reservation is confirmed upon receipt of your deposit and application form. No reservations will be accepted without a signed application form.

REFUND OF UNUSED ARRANGEMENTS:

Because the rates of Pauwels Travel Bureau Ltd. are based on group participation, no refund can be made for any tour accommodation or tour service or tour feature not taken. If cancellation occurs while the tour is in progress, no refund can be made for the tour portion not taken. We strongly suggest that to allow for any unexpected contingencies, you purchase the all-inclusive insurance.

CANCELLATION POLICY:

Refund of deposit is made in full if cancellation is received in writing by Pauwels Travel Bureau Ltd. more than 90 days prior of the departure date of the tour less a \$500.00 non-refundable administrative fee per person. For cancellation received in writing 90 days prior or less the following cancellation charges apply:

90 days to 46 days before departure: 25% of tour cost
45 to 31 days before departure: 50% of tour cost
Within 30 days prior to departure: 100% of tour cost

RESPONSIBILITY:

Pauwels Travel Bureau Ltd. reserves the right without notice, to withdraw any part or all of the tour. Factors such as airline schedule changes, hotel overbookings, inclement weather, etc. February necessitate changes in the itinerary as outlined. There may also be other circumstances in which changes become necessary or advisable. Any savings realized by these changes will be passed on to the passengers, any resultant expenses shall be borne by the passenger. Pauwels Travel Bureau Ltd. acts only as an agent in securing hotel, transportation and other travel services and in no event shall be held responsible for the failure by any person or company to render any transportation, lodging or other travel service to be provided on the tour. All hotel, transportation and other travel services are provided to tour members subject to all the terms and conditions under which they are offered to the public generally. The acceptance of the initial service to be provided under the tour shall be considered an acceptance by the tour member of those conditions. Pauwels Travel Bureau Ltd. also reserves the right to decline, to accept or retain any person as a member of the tour, in which case equitable refund will be made at the discretion of the tour operators.

AIR TRANSPORTATION:

Transatlantic economy flight by scheduled IATA carrier(s), based on an economy class group fare. All fares are subject to specific rules and regulations, to changes and to government approval. Deviations from the group flights are possible but subject to higher rates. Pauwels Travel will research any request for date or routing changes at the time they are requested. Should any individual rate be less than the group fare plus airline and administrative fees, the lower rate will be offered to the tour participant. Individual airfares are subject to immediate ticketing and the fare plus taxes must be paid at the time the ticket is issued by the participant requesting the change. Should the group airfare be the lowest available rate, an administrative fee of \$50.00 plus any airline charges will apply.

APPLICATION FORM

Please book _____ seat(s) on the "Knights to Malta" of February 22 to March 6 2018.
Enclosed is my/our deposit of _____ (\$750 per person, plus insurance premium if taken.)
Deposit and insurance premium, if taken, are due with registration. You will be invoiced for the balance approximately 45 days prior to departure.

WE REQUIRE A COPY OF YOUR PASSPORT (INFORMATION PAGES ONLY) VALID 3 MONTHS AFTER TOUR DATE TO BE SENT WITH YOUR APPLICATION FORM.

Name as on Passport. Indicate the appropriate title before each name (Mr., Mrs., Miss, Dr., Ms.)

NAME(S): _____

If applicable, give your commonly used first name as you would like it to appear on your name tag: (e.g. "Liz" for "Mary Elizabeth") _____

ADDRESS: _____

Postal Code: _____

PHONE: (Residence) _____ (Business) _____ (Fax/Email) _____

If traveling alone, is a single room required: YES _____ NO _____.

If sharing, what is your bed preference: twin _____ double _____.

SPECIAL REQUESTS: (Dietary, special physical needs, frequent flyer number, etc.) Please list here so we can do our best to assist you. Please be advised that due to airline policies, individual seat selection cannot be guaranteed.

Insurance - Please call the office for premiums then record on application form and add amount to deposit.

I/we would like to purchase (please check and record your rate):

Name: _____ Date of Birth _____

Name: _____ Date of Birth _____

All-inclusive Package _____ Non-medical Package _____ Other _____

Decline Insurance _____. (Please sign here if you decline the insurance).

PAYMENT:

☐☐ Cheque payable to Pauwels Travel ☐☐ Visa ☐☐ Mastercard ☐☐ American Express

Amount Paid: _____

Card Number: _____ Expiry: _____ Security Code: _____

Signature: _____

***I/we agree to the terms and conditions attached to the program, have indicated our insurance choice, indicated any special requests and included payment**.**

Signature(s) _____ **Date:** _____

Please forward this completed form, copy of passport and payment to:

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