

This walk was developed by the Ministry for Gozo as part of the EcoGozo project

The GOZO Coastal Walk





	Beach		Museum		Hotel
	Cave or Other Geological Features		Fortification		Food / Drink
			Church / Chapel		Bus Terminus
			Megalith / Temple		Toilets
			Lighthouse		Panoramic Views



The Gozo Coastal Walk



	📍 Distance	🚶 Approx. Walk Duration	🏃 Approx. Run Duration	🚲 Approx. Cycle Duration	⚡ Major Inclines	⚠️ Difficulty	🚻 Public Toilets	☕ Cafeterias
SECTION 1: MĠARR - XLENDI	12 Km	5-6 hours	2 hours	1 hour	2	MODERATE	✓	✓
SECTION 2: XLENDI - SAN LAWRENZ	11 Km	4-5 hours	1.5 hours	3/4 hours	1	MODERATE	✓	✓
SECTION 3: SAN LAWRENZ - MARSALFORN	11 Km	4-5 hours	2 hours	1 hour	0	EASY	✓	✓
SECTION 4: MARSALFORN - MĠARR	16 Km	6-7 hours	3 hours	1.5 hours	4	HARD	✓	✓

Mġarr to Xlendi

- Spectacular sea views
- Fort Chambray and coastal watchtowers
- Picturesque sea inlets
- Ta' Ċenċ area

This walk begins on the uphill minor road by the left side of the the police station, opposite the ferry terminal in Mġarr. Take the uphill path, and a short distance later follow the narrow earthen path to the left. The path runs parallel to the coast and is dominated by the impressive Fort Chambray constructed in 1760 in a failed attempt to create another fortified city in Gozo. Walking along the curving path you can notice large boulders, varied vegetation, typical rubble walls and wonderful sea views. After about 400 metres and an uphill climb, you arrive at a lookout point on the top of a clay slope where you can enjoy panoramic views of the island of Comino ①. The track downhill and along the coast is easy to follow and leads you past ancient salt pans to the small inlet of ix-Xatt l-Aħmar. As you pass the small parking lot used by divers, look out for the fougasse, an ingenious stone mortar hewn in rock employed by the Knights of Malta as a weapon against approaching enemy vessels, using gunpowder and pebbles as projectiles. The clear waters in this area provide a number of interesting dive sites, including an artificial one created through the scuttling of an old Gozo ferry boat.

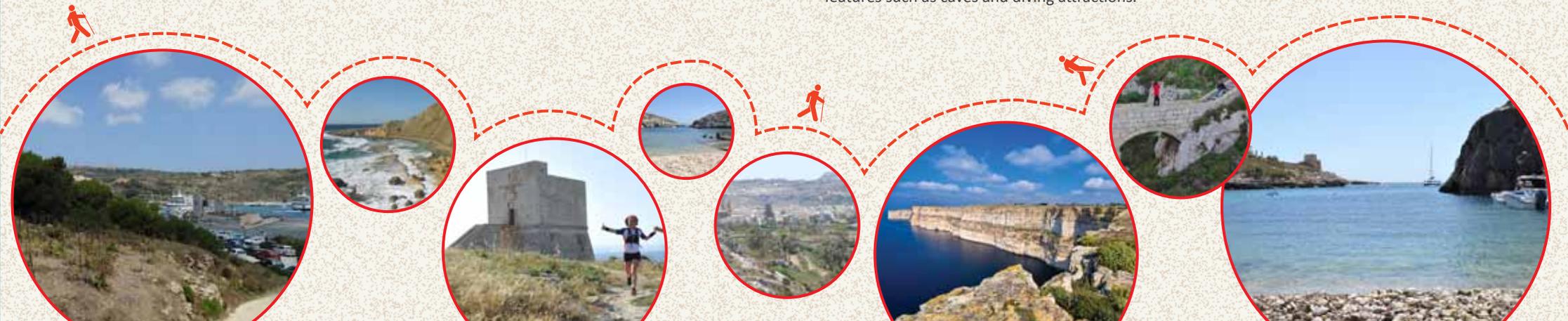
Following the coastline, you soon reach a 17th century coastal watchtower ②. Turning inland, walk along the beautiful sea inlet of Mġarr ix-Xini, traditionally associated with the sacking of Gozo by pirates in 1551. After about 400 metres, once you reach a villa, take the path and steps to the left down onto the beach ③. Here you can swim or relax under the shade of tamarisk trees. Take a look at the deep

valley heading inland. This secluded gorge hosts a wide diversity of flora and fauna. Admire the plants growing on the cliff sides and look out for the blue rock thrush, the national bird of Malta.

Take the steep uphill road from the beach which leads towards the village of Xewkija, about 1.5 km away. Rambling along this road you may admire the wonderful gorge with its lush greenery and impressive caves. To your left, on a plateau at an upper level, is the Ta' Ċenċ area, important because of its diversity of plants and the birdlife on its nearby cliffs. Take the first road to the left, and then right, to get to the village square of Sannat with its parish church ④. There you will find cafés, free Wi-Fi and a public convenience adjacent to the Police Station nearby.

Leave the square by taking the road to the right of the church, walk uphill and follow the signs through the village to Ta' Seguna cliffs ⑤. After admiring the spectacular views from the cliffs, follow the track to the west between the cliff edge and small fields. The track can be followed safely back from the cliff at most points, except at a location near a disused quarry where it passes between two rubble walls, as it comes somewhat close to the edge. If you prefer to avoid this very short section, you may divert inland from the track to the outskirts of the village of Munxar before joining the cliff walk again.

Continuing along the coastal track you pass around a promontory ⑥ where you take one of the minor paths along the cliffs towards Xlendi Tower. The view towards the cliffs and the tower is magnificent. With the tower ⑦ behind you follow a small path on your left down into il-Kantra valley and across a small stone bridge to arrive at the picturesque fishing village of Xlendi. This is a popular tourist location because of its lovely beach, its range of hotels and fine restaurants and many other interesting features such as caves and diving attractions.



Xlendi to San Lawrenz

- Azure Window and Inland Sea
- Dwerja Bay and Fungus Rock
- Tranquil countryside, traditional villages
- Punic-Roman Temple

From Xlendi, take the uphill road which leads inland towards Victoria. After about 1 km (at a point opposite a traffic island and a bus stop) take the minor uphill road to the left (8). This steep and twisting road takes you to the outskirts of the village of Kerċem, passing the valley of Wied il-Lunzjata and its lush greenery. At the top of the climb, take a left and follow this road as it curves inland back into Kerċem. Occasionally take a look back to admire the magnificent views of Xlendi. Taking the first turn on the left on reaching some houses and then left again, you reach the small town of Santa Luċija.

Coming to a Y-junction stay to your left and continue on this wide country road for about 2 km, to arrive at Ta' Sarraflu fresh water pool (9). This rare permanent freshwater pool hosts a number of locally uncommon species.

To reach Wardija Point, take the concrete track bounded by rubble walls across the road from the pool. This path heads towards the cliffs and offers magnificent views towards Xlendi. After about 400 metres you take a narrow path on your left which leads down to a cliff path at a lower level. This very pleasant route along the cliffs takes you to Wardija Point (10). Here you can visit the Punic sanctuary or Nymphaeum, said to have been dedicated to the Goddess Tanit which was carved into the yellow limestone about 2,500 years ago.

Continue along the coastal path enjoying spectacular views of Dwejra Bay, Fungus Rock and the Azure Window. Take care in following the narrow path curving along the coastline. As you approach the small islet known as Fungus Rock you can notice the Dwejra Tower (11). At the time of the Knights this islet was the only known source of a plant known as the *Cynomorium Coccineum*, a very rare parasitic plant much prized by the Knights for its presumed medicinal powers. The tower was built in 1651 during the reign of Grand Master Anton de Paule with the purpose to guard the coastline of

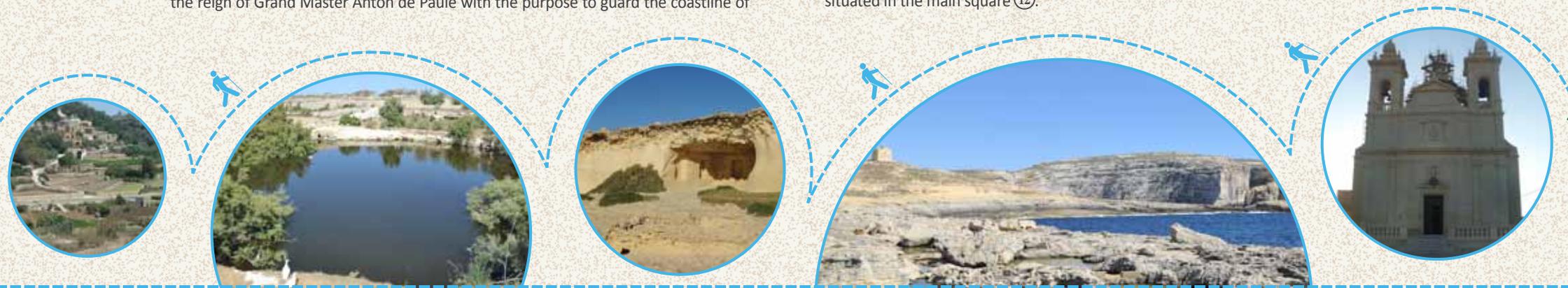
Dwejra from invaders and at a later stage, after 1744, it also served as a guard to the Fungus rock and its prized medicinal plant.

The coastal path curves down through a small valley and then up towards the tower, which is worth a visit. The tower is open for the public when the flag is raised. You would have noticed the semicircular shape of the bay, formerly a cave, the roof of which collapsed. The Dwejra area has several of these features called dolines, the largest of which is the one forming the Inland Sea.

You ramble on along the coast past the tower to reach an often busy car park with cafés and public toilets. Be sure to wander out onto the flat limestone shelves near the sea to examine the many exposed fossils there. This is the best place for views of the impressive rock structure known as the Azure Window, featuring as a backdrop of several films, and the Blue Hole, a favourite diving spot.

A visit to the Inland Sea, a salt water pool which was formed many millennia ago by the collapse of a very large cave, is also recommended. It is connected to the sea by a narrow 70 m long tunnel running through the sheer cliff. Here you can enjoy a safe and pleasant swim and an enjoyable boat trip through the tunnel and out to the open sea towards the Azure Window. Well worth it!

Continue the walk by going up the rock-cut path behind the chapel of St Anne, near the car park. To your left you may notice a pair of the enigmatic cart ruts running towards the Azure Window. You head uphill among delightful wild plants, the most distinctive being the Maltese Everlasting (*Helichrysum melitense*) with its light grey-green leaves and yellow flowers, which is restricted to the western cliffs of the island of Gozo and Fungus Rock Nature Reserve. The path goes between the cliffs of the Inland Sea and the sea, a route that will provide you with astounding views. As you look back from the road you can appreciate why the exceptional geology in this area renders it a potential World Heritage Site. The road takes you past some quarries before curving uphill towards the traditional village of San Lawrenz and its attractive parish church, situated in the main square (12).



San Lawrenz to Marsalforn

- Impressive salt pan complex and coastal promenade
- Tranquil rural valleys
- Ta' Ġordan Lighthouse
- Historic chapels and basilicas

You start this section of the coastal walk by following the road on the left side of the church of St. Lawrence, heading northeast towards the nearby village of Ġharb. After about 800 metres, at a Y-junction, take the road to the right which leads downhill towards the Chapel of il-Madonna Taż-Żejt, the subject of a local legend ⁽¹³⁾ and at the next junction take the road to the left. The road goes uphill to the north passing some lovely restored farmhouses and alongside small, well-tended fields. At the next Y-junction ⁽¹⁴⁾ take the country road to the left. To your right, you can see the impressive Ta' Ġordan Lighthouse perched on a hill.

A little further along on the right you reach the Chapel of San Dimitri ⁽¹⁵⁾ with its wonderful rural setting, and which is the focus of several local legends. At the crossroads next to the chapel you take the path to the north and after a few metres, at the next T-junction, turn left along a yellow limestone path to reach the wild northern coast about 500 metres away. The path to the right along this fantastic, wind-sculpted coastline leads you to the scenic valley of Wied il-Mielah ⁽¹⁶⁾. Go across the small bridge at the mouth of the gorge to reach the eastern side to view the impressive rock window.

The coastal path continues to the east, where you can admire dramatic cliffs and several large caves. After about 800 metres the road curves inland to approach a tranquil valley which has at its outlet the dramatic Wied I-Ghasri Gorge. To get to the coast on the far side of the gorge you have to follow the main track through a small crossroads ⁽¹⁷⁾, then after a few metres, just as the track starts heading inland, you follow a narrow downhill earthen path that goes straight ahead for a few metres towards the valley edge, and

then turns right. After about 100 metres along the valley edge, you should be able to step on the large rocks to pass over this usually dry stream bed. The path now turns left towards the coast. Take some time to admire the Wied I-Ghasri Gorge and the pebble beach at the bottom, which can be reached through rock-hewn stairs. It is a spectacular valley mouth, especially in rough weather.

You may resume the walk by heading north towards the coast to reach an impressive stretch of ancient saltpans. This extensive complex of man-made basins, tanks and channels were cut by hand in the flat limestone shelves and some are still used for the production of sea salt. Although some were abandoned in recent years, salt harvesting is still an active tradition, and you may be able to see some harvesting in summer. This fascinating showcase of Gozitan tradition runs for about 1.5 kilometres until it reaches Xwejni Bay.

As you reach this northern bay, you cannot fail to notice the strange yellow mound at the tip of a peninsula. This is composed of compacted sand and gravel washed into a cave over a period of millennia. The limestone walls of the cave were later eroded by rain and wind, while the compacted and harder material inside was left behind. This peninsula separating Xwejni Bay from neighbouring Qbajjar Bay is the site of a military battery built in 1716 by engineers Jacques de Camus D'Arginy and Bernard de Fontet to avoid landings of enemy craft in the area. This battery is the last vestige of an intricate chain of fortifications built early in the 18th Century around Marsalforn Bay ⁽¹⁸⁾ and Ramla given the easy access they provided to potential invaders.

Follow the path along the coast, leaving Qbajjar Bay and keep to the left on the coastal promenade. Walk along the park turning up the car park getting all-round views of the seaside town of Marsalforn and its beautiful bay ⁽¹⁹⁾. Marsalforn has many cafés and hotels, public toilets, free Wi-Fi and a frequent bus service to Victoria and Mġarr Harbour.



Marsalforn to Mgarr

- Beautiful sandy beaches
- Stunning sea views and landscapes
- Calypso Cave
- Tranquil rural valleys

The route from Marsalforn towards Xagħra follows the steep uphill road to the east of Marsalforn Bay. Take a breather after the climb and admire the landscape spanning from the Citadel in Victoria to the bay at Marsalforn, then after about 800 metres, a minor country road on your left leads towards the legendary Calypso Cave (20), which is signposted. You pass through tranquil countryside and pretty houses to reach this popular feature (21), which according to legend was the cave-home to the nymph Calypso referred to by Homer in *The Odyssey*, the epic Greek poem of the 9th century BC. The cave itself is not particularly interesting but the views from the platform above it and from its opening onto the sea are stunning. Ramla Bay with its attractive red sand, dominates this view. If you look into the sea about 50 metres offshore you can see the remains of an underwater wall constructed by the Knights to protect the bay from invading vessels.

Leaving the viewing area you take the path from the car park down towards the beach with its attractive reddish sand, cafés and public toilets. This is a very popular summer destination for families and swimmers and is appealing for example for picnics in winter too. At the back of the beach you can notice the sand dunes, this is the best remaining example of this type of special habitat in Gozo and Malta.

You leave Ramla Bay by taking the road at the back next to the cafés, heading inland. The giant reeds along the road are used by farmers to form windbreaks around fields and shades from the hot sun. After about 400 metres take the steep uphill road to your left (22) which leads towards the town of Nadur. At the top of the hill you reach a cemetery where you take the country road to the left. At the first crossroads turn right and follow the road as it curves around the fields, providing splendid views of the fertile San Blas Valley. The track goes straight down into the valley (23) among luxuriant citrus orchards, then climbs uphill to arrive at a viewing point with benches in the outskirts of Nadur. From the road behind the benches, you reach a crossroad (24). To reach the bay of Daħlet Qorrot, go through the crossroad and take the downhill road on the left. Ramble along for about 200 metres, and after passing some small farm buildings, take the narrow concrete path downwards to the right leading towards a lovely garrigue plateau.

Keep to this rocky path as it weaves downhill along the rim of the cultivated valley with its many fruit trees. To your right you can admire a variety of garrigue plants and some caves in the limestone cliffs. As you approach the coast, you get views of San Blas Tower, also known as Ta' Sopa Tower, built during the reign of Grandmaster Nicholas Cottoner in 1667 as part of the coastal defence network around Gozo and Malta.

The track snakes around large boulders and luxuriant vegetation beneath magnificent cliffs to bring you to a road leading down to Daħlet Qorrot (25). This small bay is used by fishermen who have carved storage rooms in the limestone cliffs. A set of steps rising up along the yellow limestone cliff on the opposite end of the bay will get you to a coastal limestone shelf. Follow the narrow earthen path along the wild coast, until at a

point about 300 metres where you take a path heading directly inland and uphill. After a short distance the path joins a wider concrete track, with wonderful views of cliffs to the left and the valley to the right. When you come to the first T-junction, take a left uphill, towards the outskirts of the village of Qala (26).

At the village take the first left and after about 1 km you reach a T-junction (27). The road to the right leads you to the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception and its cemetery (28). Have a close look at the old walls of this chapel and look out for historic graffiti, among which various sailing vessels. Alternatively at this point you can take a left for a roundabout tour towards the Qala Battery and the lovely wild coast. It is a challenging diversion but it is definitely well worth the effort. This optional route goes downhill towards some quarries on the coastline and at the bottom of the hill (29), just before the quarries, you take the rocky track to the right, which leads to the coast and the Qala Battery (30), built by the Knights to defend the narrow Gozo-Comino Channel from pirates. The narrow meandering footpath back uphill towards Qala is located just to the left of the main entrance to the battery and is at times difficult to find. It leads inland and up clay slopes. Once it reaches the top of the hill, the track follows a rubble wall to the west, over garrigue, where it passes next to a set of cart ruts and finally reaches the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception.

Follow the road which curves steeply down past another ancient chapel, to reach Hondoq Bay with its beautiful sea views, a kiosk and public toilets. From the beach (31) take the path along the coast to the west to reach Mgarr, about two km away. On this last section you can enjoy wonderful views of small coves and small islands, and the island of Comino and its famous Blue Lagoon.



The Gozo Coastal Walk

This walk showcases many of the island's beautiful assets which include stunning landscapes, a beautiful natural environment and a range of rich archaeological and cultural treasures. The circular walk takes you around the island by a route that is as near to the coast as is practical and safe. The walk is a combination of limestone and earthen

paths, rural tracks, minor roads and coastal promenade and can be taken by any reasonably fit person over a number of days. A pair of walking shoes is generally adequate, except in very wet weather. Public buses can be used to reach and return from many points along the route, while cafés and toilets are never far away. If you have a problem

ask a local – Gozitans are very friendly and almost all speak English. The pleasant Mediterranean climate and its excellent food help in rendering Gozo a wonderful destination for walking and holidays. Information on accommodation and holidaying in Gozo can be obtained from www.visitgozo.com and www.islandofgozo.org.

Gozo, a small island with a long and rich history, a unique landscape and a special natural heritage, provides many wonderful opportunities for walking. The Gozo Coastal Walk is a 50 kilometre route which takes you through a rich variety of landscapes and features of great historical and environmental interest, including dramatic cliffs, tranquil valleys, traditional villages, ancient monuments and sandy beaches. It is a wonderful walk, particularly because of the range of features to be encountered over such a small distance.

Some Practical Advice

- Please help preserve the valuable natural environment of Gozo. Carry your litter back with you and do not pick any wild plants, as some species are special, rare or endangered.
- Follow the set route and paths, without shortcuts through cultivated fields or private property.
- Remember to carry water, a hat and sunscreen with you, especially in the hot months.
- Make sure you wear comfortable clothes and good walking shoes. In summer, a pair of shorts is adequate while in winter and spring, trousers and a light jacket are advisable.
- Avoid walking along cliff edges, especially in windy weather.
- Consider going for a swim in one of the pleasant bays or inlets along the route.
- It is recommended to take a mobile phone with you when taking a walk especially if wandering off the beaten track. There is nearly full mobile coverage throughout the island. In an emergency dial 112.
- Avoid long walks between July and mid-September. During hot weather, walks are best done in the early morning or in the evening.
- Plan your walk so that you are back before nightfall, as some tracts of the path may be dangerous in low light.
- Have a look at the weather forecast before you plan your walk. Consult <http://weather.maltairport.com/en/5-day-forecast.htm> for a detailed five-day forecast.
- If travelling by bus to and from the walk check the route and timetable on www.arriva.com.mt or call 21222000.
- Relax and take time to enjoy the wonderful views and learn about the many interesting features you come across along the route. If you get lost, don't worry - you are never far from one of the villages.

Planning the walk

The decision on which sections of the walk to undertake and over how many days, will depend on your own personal preferences and conditions. The map in this brochure together with the accompanying text will help you identify the sections and features.

When to go

The weather and climate of the Maltese islands are typically Mediterranean. The summers are hot, dry and sunny, with very little rain. July and August are the hottest months, with daytime temperatures usually above 30°C. It is recommended to avoid walking in those months, except perhaps for short rambles in the morning or evening. Walking is most enjoyable in the period between mid-September to mid-June. Avoid walking in very windy and wet weather as it can be difficult and at times dangerous.

Getting to Gozo

The islands of Malta and Gozo are connected by a regular ferry service which leaves from Ċirkewwa in Malta. You can get from the airport to Ċirkewwa (about 20 kilometers away) by bus, taxi or rented car. There is a direct bus from the airport to Ċirkewwa approximately every hour. You can also get a direct bus to Ċirkewwa from a number of other locations in Malta, such as Valetta and Sliema.

The ferry service from Ċirkewwa to Gozo which caters for foot passengers and cars is a pleasant trip that takes only 30 minutes. Ferries depart at intervals of about 45 minutes, from early to late, all days of the year. Tickets may be purchased at the ferry terminal and there is no need to book in advance. Full details are available on www.gozochannel.com.

Buses in Gozo

You can take a direct bus from Mgarr Harbour to Victoria terminus every 30 minutes. The island has a good bus service with frequent (at least hourly) buses to all villages and many places of interest from the Victoria Terminus. The bus routes and timetable are available on www.arriva.com.mt.

You can also opt to take a taxi from the ferry harbour to any part of Gozo.

Disclaimer. Before undertaking any part of this walk, it is strongly recommended to ensure that one's physical and medical conditions permit the undertaking of these activities. Particular attention is to be made to the often irregular terrain and to refrain from undertaking these walks in prohibitive weather conditions. All walks are undertaken at one's own risk.

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of information contained in this brochure as at the time of publication, the Ministry for Gozo accepts no liability for any inaccuracies or omissions whatsoever. Moreover, the Ministry for Gozo accepts no liability for accidents or any type of losses while following these walks.