

Heritage Trail 2009-2010

‘Olive Oil through the Ages’

Saturday 17th October 2009



Olive oil, like wine, has been around forever. For people of the Mediterranean, it has had medicinal, even magical powers through the ages. The olive tree is also considered a symbol of peace and glory.

Olives were first cultivated in the eastern part of the Mediterranean around 5000 BC. Cultivation spread to Turkey, Greece, and Egypt before it reached southern Italy, Africa, and southern France. Italy was producing olive oil by the first century AD.

Olive oil was used in medicines and different ointments. It was also used for nourishment and as an overall healing agent.

Today, Italy, Spain, and Greece produce olive oil; California, with its Mediterranean climate, is fast becoming a leading producer. Like wine, many different varieties of olive oil have their own unique characteristics taken from the land and weather conditions.

The olive oil sector is slowly increasing its popularity with Maltese farmers. In 2004, Malta produced 10 tonnes of olive oil, while production for 2005 was 22 tonnes.

The trail starts from San Pawl Miqi, where olive oil was produced in large quantities during the Roman rule over the Maltese islands. The archaeological site, which is still undergoing excavations and research, contains the entire process for producing olive oil.



San Pawl Milqi



Wardija

The tour continues with a visit to the olive pressing farm at Wardija, where one can witness the process of olive growing and pressing. Sammy Cremona, a well known

expert on olive growing, will be our guide; a typical Maltese lunch with produce grown on the farm will be served.

Programme:

Departure and meeting point at 9.00 in front of the Phoenicia Hotel.

Return at 13.00

Transport to sites, entrance tickets and lunch included in the price.

Tickets at €15 obtainable from Heritage Malta Head Office, Merchants Street, Valletta.

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