



National Museum of Archaeology

The National Museum of Archaeology is housed in one of the most stylish Baroque buildings still distinguishable in Valletta, more precisely at the Auberge de Provence, in Republic Street. This building, originally built for the Provençal Knights of the Order of St. John, dates back to 1571.

The Grand Salon on the upper floor is a unique hall with rich murals and a coffered wooden ceiling. This hall was used by the Knights as a refectory and banquet hall.

The ground floor of this Museum hosts artefacts from Malta's unique Neolithic period, which spans from the Ghar Dalam phase (ca. 5200 BC) to the Tarxien phase (ca. 2500 BC). Of

particular distinction amongst these displayed artefacts are the 'Sleeping Lady' and the 'Venus of Malta'. The display includes numerous ceramic vessels, stone and bone artefacts used as implements, human and animal figurines, as well as personal decorative items. A number of monumental architectural altars excavated from the Tarxien Temples illustrate the art of the ancient prehistoric craftsmen.

After the extensive refurbishing of 1998, the museum's presentation was upgraded. In the near future the museum will also open the galleries on the upper floor, which will exhibit archaeological artefacts from the Bronze Age, Phoenician, Punic and Roman periods.



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The National Museum of Archaeology

A BRIEF GUIDE

The National Museum of Archaeology Republic Street, Valletta

The National Museum of Archaeology is open daily between 09.00 and 19.00 hrs. Last admission is at 18.30.
Closed on Good Friday, 24, 25, 31 December and 1 January.

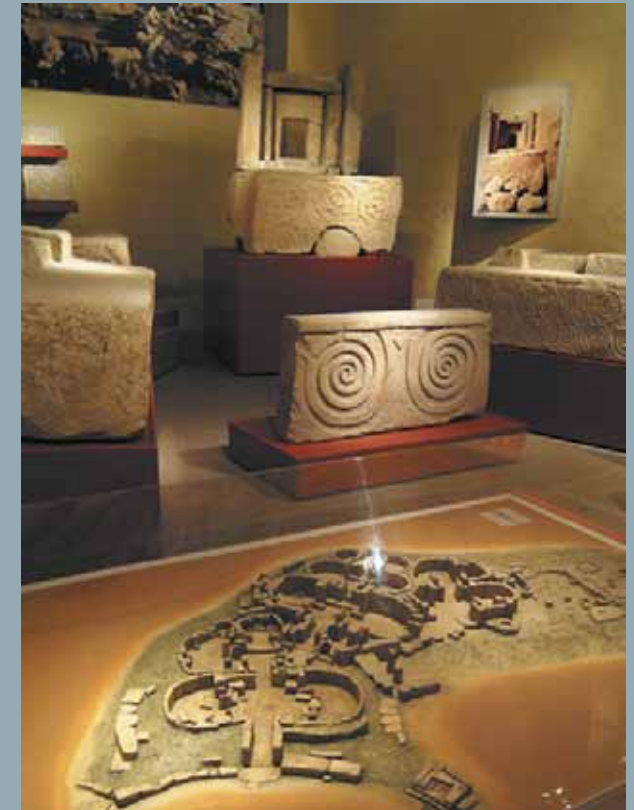
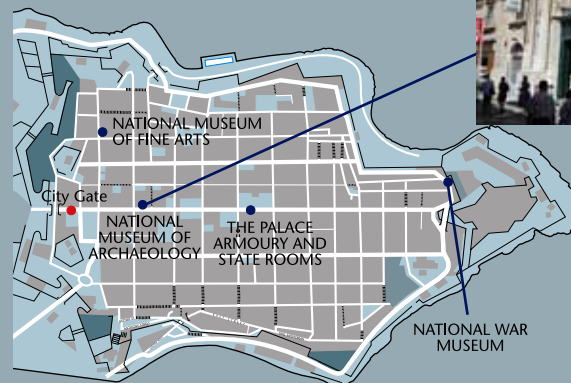
How to get there:

By self-drive car: Drive towards Valletta. The Museum is situated on the main street (Republic Street) some 200 m from the main gate.
By Public Transport: Any bus to Valletta Terminus. 5 minutes walk from the terminus.

Other Heritage Malta Museums and Sites:

- The Palace State Rooms, Valletta
- National Museum of Fine Arts, Valletta
- National War Museum, Valletta
- Malta Maritime Museum, Vittoriosa
- Hal Saflieni Hypogeum, Paola
- Tarxien Temples, Tarxien
- Ħaġar Qim and Mnajdra Temples, Qrendi
- The Roman Domus, Rabat, Malta
- Museum of Archaeology, Citadel Gozo
- Ġgantija Temples, Xagħra Gozo
- Ta' Ħagrat Temples, Mġarr*
- Skorba Temples, Mġarr*

* Open on Tuesdays only.



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The Museum

After turning right from the reception desk, the Early Neolithic period room sets the scene from the first settlement until the appearance of the temples. Of particular importance are the Red Skorba figurines, predecessors of the statuary of the temple period and the reconstruction of a rock-cut tomb.

A passageway exhibits photographs of the Hal Saflieni Hypogeum and the Xaghra Stone Circle.

In the next room one finds artefacts related to temple architecture and representations of animals.

The adjacent room houses the remarkable human figures, which vary in size. Worthy of particular note are the 'Venus' from Haġar Qim, and other statues from various sites.

The Temple period room exhibits a range of pottery, together with tools of flint and obsidian, beads, and other personal ornaments, which once again illustrate the remarkable skills of the Maltese prehistoric potters and artists.

The masterpiece, 'The Sleeping Lady', is found in the adjacent room. The main hall is devoted to temple carvings, particularly the altar blocks from Tarxien, which have been brought indoors to protect them from the elements. Through them one may admire the great artistic skill and sophistication of the temple builders.

While the temples can be appreciated directly through a visit to the sites themselves, it is only by touring the National Museum of Archaeology that the personal possessions and the ritual objects come to life, thus bringing visitors closer to the men and women who actually used them.

