

Ganni Beaver tours

Malta and Gozo

discovering
customs

and

traditions



Part 1

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Republic of Malta

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Repubblika ta' Malta Republic of Malta



Flag



Coat of Arms

National Anthem

L-Innu Malti



Location of Malta in Europe

(Dark green circle)

Capital

Valletta

Largest cities

Birkirkara

Official language(s)

Maltese, English

People of Malta are called

Maltese

Area

Total

316 km²

Population

Estimate

500,000

Currency

Euro (€)

Before 2008: Maltese Lira (LM)

Drive on the

Left Hand Side

Calling code

+356



Iz-Zafzafa The Friction Drum

It is a percussion instrument. Also called *Rubbaba*. Consists of a hollow tube with distended animal skin over the top of the tube. A round stick is inserted into the centre of the skin and rubbed up and down. Played a lot during Carnival.

Il-Qarn jew Zummara The Horn or Reedpipe

The chanter [*is-saqqafa*] is crafted out of cane which is very abundant in the Maltese countryside, especially in valleys. The horn [*il-qarn*] is made out of a bull's horn.



It-Tanbur The Tambourine



It is a hand frame drum that can vary in sizes with a loop of small cymbals or jingles around it.



Il-Fifra jew Flejguta

The Fipple Flute

The Maltese Fipple flute is an end-blown cane flute and has 6 finger holes along the length of the cane. In the old days it started as a whistle until it evolved into a flute with its own melodies and tunes.



lż-Zaqq

The Maltese Bagpipe

The Maltese Bagpipe is called the 'zaqq' which in Maltese means 'belly' or 'stomach'. This instrument was played in all types of events both lively ones [local feasts, carnival and celebrations] as well as to warn fellow countrymen of the arrival of any invaders.

Il-Kitarra

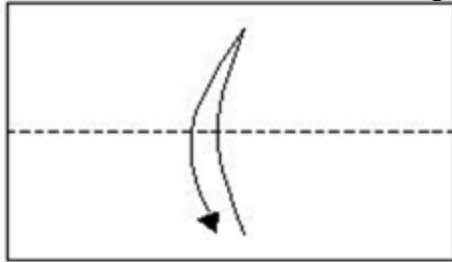
The Maltese Guitar



Guitars provide the accompaniment to *Ghana* [pronounced. aa-na], the Maltese Folksong. The particular guitar shown in the picture is called a *terzin* and has a very particular shape.

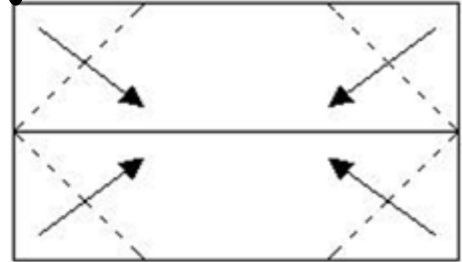
Maltese Origami Popper

1.



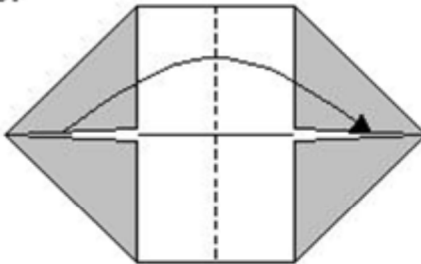
Fold paper in half, then unfold

2.



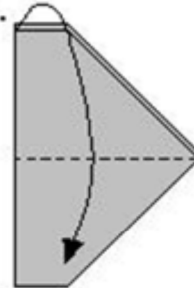
Fold corners in to center line

3.



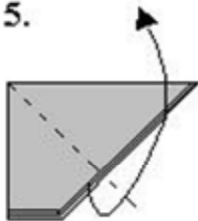
Fold in half from left to right

4.



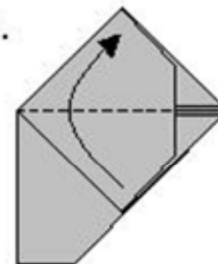
Fold in half from top to bottom

5.



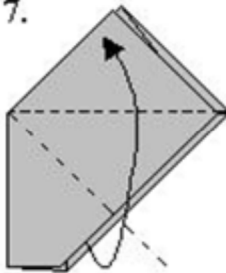
Slide your fingers inside top flap, open, and flatten

6.



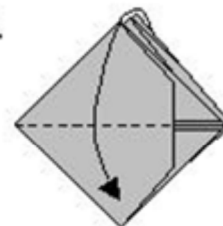
Fold bottom half of square up

7.



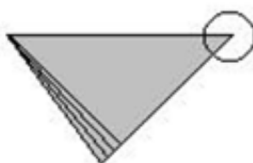
Repeat step 5 with bottom flap

8.



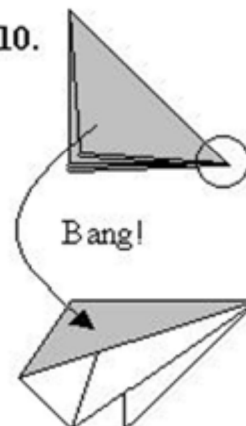
Fold three top triangles down

9.



Hold corner (at the circle) then cock and snap your wrist - the inner flaps will fly open with a loud bang! Step 10

10.



11-Kukkanja

A carnival attraction was added in 1721 called 11-Kukkanja (the cockaigne) which proved to be extremely popular. The Kukkanja was held in the city main square.

This is how it was described by one of the locals: "Long beams were fixed against the guard house opposite the palace, and between each beam, rope-ladders were fastened the whole being covered over with branches of trees in leaf, to which were tied live animals, baskets full of eggs, hams, sausages and all kinds of provisions.

The wooden edifice was crowned with a globe, made up of hoops and covered with linen cloth, on which stood the figure of Fame holding a flag with the Grand Master's coat of arms.



Crowds of people assembled in the spacious square and at a given signal started the attack on the Kukkanja. The provisions became the property of those who, having seized them, were able to carry them safely through the crowds.

11 – Luzzu

The *Luzzu* is another boat, also uniquely Maltese, but bigger than the *Dghajsa*. It is painted in the traditional colours of red, blue and yellow. The *Luzzu* is a sturdy and reliable sea craft and can be put to sea in almost every kind of weather. Primarily the *Luzzu* is a fishing boat but it has other uses namely ferrying locals and tourists across the Grand Harbour and the impressive bastions and fortifications that surrounds Valletta and the Three Cities.



Many *Luzzus* have the eye of Osiris painted or carved on the bow, a symbol brought to Malta by the Phoenicians. This seems to suggest that craft of this type must have been common in the harbour since the time of the Phoenicians and Carthaginians.

Luzzus today run on outboard motors.



Stand-Up Luzzu

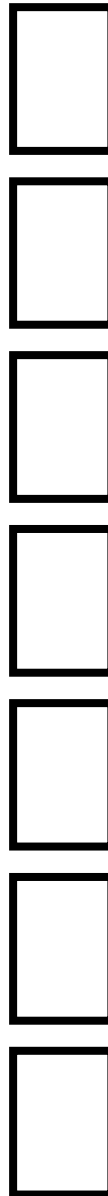
Try your hand at creating your very own stand-up Luzzu.

What you will need:

- Print out of Luzzu on Cardboard
- Colours
- Scissors (Round Tip)

How to do it:

- Cut out the Luzzu.
- Colour it in.
- Cut the dotted lines.
- Cut out a small square and colour it blue (*the sea*)
- Slide the blue square through the base of the Luzzu as shown in the picture below



Il-Karozzin

Among those things which distinguish the Maltese from other nations we find the *Karozzin* (horse-drawn carriage). The *Karozzin* was introduced into Malta around 1856.



Queen Victoria was the reigning monarch at that time and these horse drawn vehicles were first known as 'Victoria'. For many years were the main means of transport until the arrival of cars, trams and buses in the beginning of this century.

Il-Karozzin - Greenfields

It-turisti ghaddejin f'karozzin kollha mbissmin
mit-triqat, pjazzes Maltin, jitpaxxew b'dehriet sbejhin.
Il-kuccier ferhan se jtir bit-taghbija barranin
waqt li l-qanpiena jdoqq xxxx noti helwin

Chorus: Ceklem ceklem karozzin
Minn got-toroq imserrpin
Uri l-hajja taghna l-Maltin
Ceklem ceklem karozzin
Minn got-toroq imserrpin
Uri l-hajja taghna l-Maltin

U ghad-daqq tal-karozzin u s-sinjali tal-kuccier
wisa' jaghmlu n-nies fit-triq, wicchom b'ferh jilma bid-deher.
Dan hu l-wirt taghna l-Maltin u bih ahna mkabbrin
Waqt li l-qanpiena jdoqq noti helwin.

Chorus: Ceklem ceklem karozzin....

11-Quuccija

The ceremony of the QUCCIA (choosing) is an old custom concerning a child's first birthday.

A basket is filled with a number of objects representing various trades or profession - Rosary beads, an ink-well, a book.... and the first object the tiny hand of the child chooses foretells the little child's future.

It is believed that such a practice is found in remote villages in Greece and Sicily.



L-Ghonnella

A traditional women's costume which has disappeared completely from the Islands of Malta and Gozo is the *Ghonnella*.

Nobody knows the origin of this stiffened head dress. Some say it derives from the eastern veil, or from Spanish mantilla. Others maintain that it was first introduced in 1222 as a sign of mourning by the women of Celano (Italy) who were expelled to Malta following the massacre of their men folk.

Yet another theory is that its origin is evolved from necessity for women to veil their head when entering a church; the poorer country girls, lacking cloaks or lace shawls, placed a spare skirt over their head.

The *Ghonnella* is made of cotton or silk and is always black except around villages of Żabbar and Żejtun where it is sometimes blue.



Lizards of Filfla

Filfla is a tiny islet off the coast of Malta. It was used for target practice by the British Mediterranean Fleet.

There was a persistent rumour that there lived a unique two-tailed lizards on this islet. Lizards shed their tail when trying to dodge a predator.

It was later explained that some of the tails did not come off completely and when a new one was generated it fused with the old part and hey presto we got two-tailed lizards.



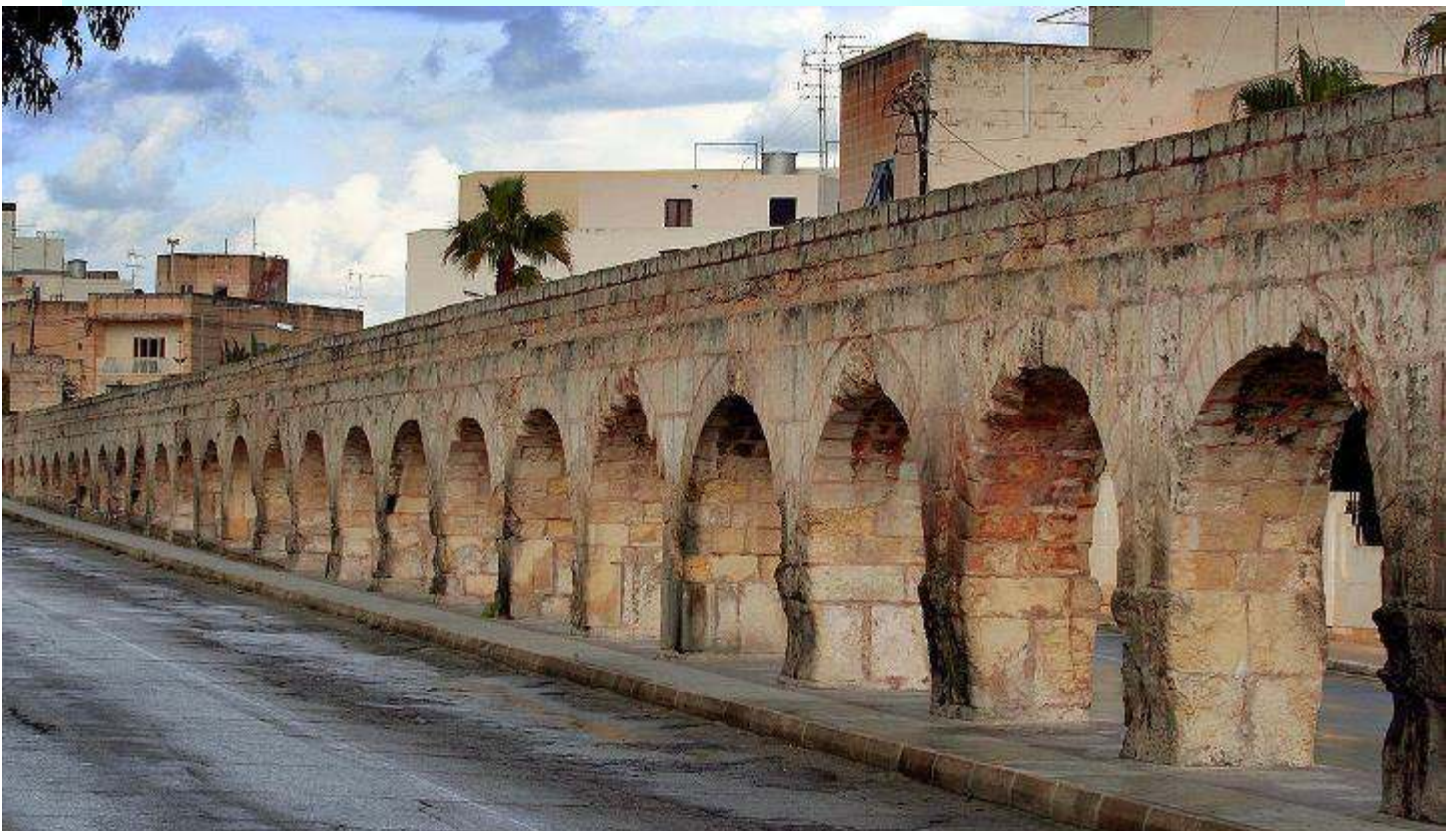
Water from Rabat

The Arabs separated Mdina from Rabat turning the former into a fortified camp.

The geological formation of the land thereabouts made the area Malta's main water producer.

The Arabs, well used to arid climates, built artificial channels to bring water to the fields below Saqqajja.

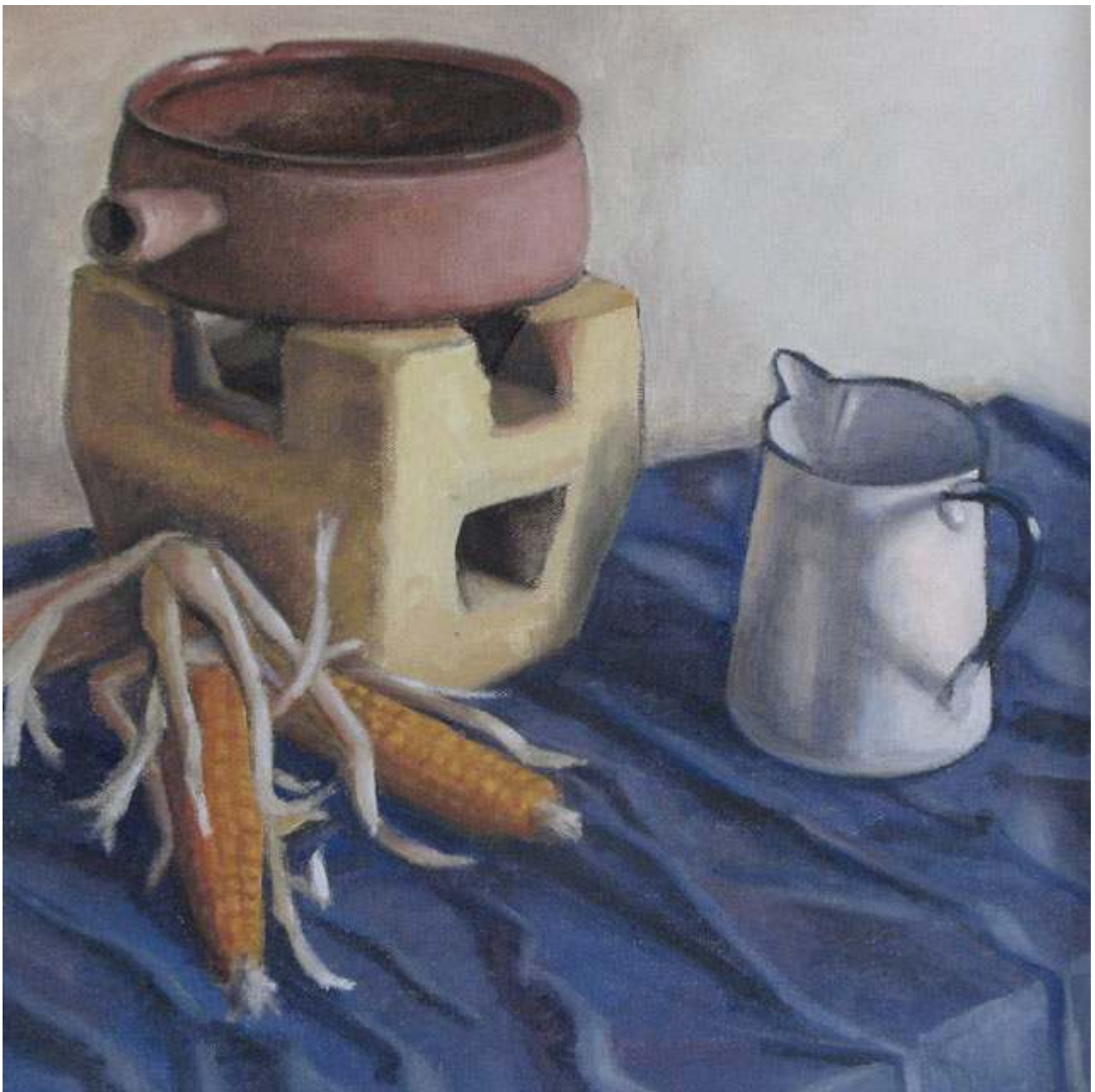
Grand Master Wignacourt started his aqueduct there in 1610 to take water to Valletta. Grand Master, De Rohan built the fountain on the hill leading to Saqqajja.

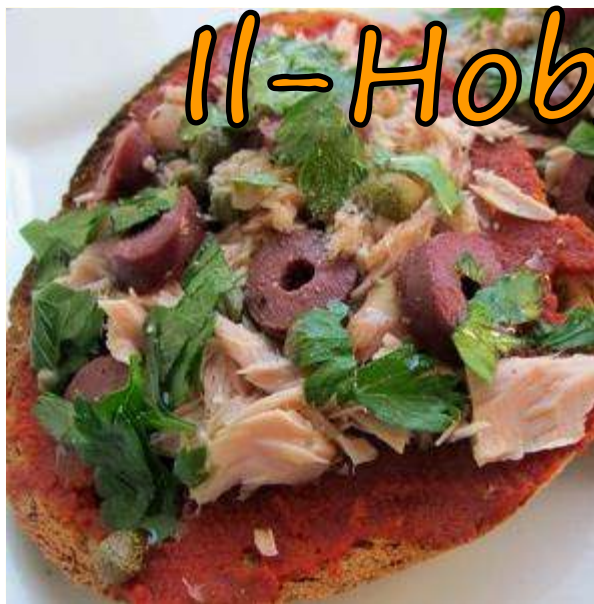


What is a 'Kenur'?

Due to the lack of fire-wood ovens in centuries past, a slow cooking method was used to prepare most Maltese dishes.

Food was placed in earthenware pots over a little stone hearth called "*kenur*" which needed constant tending and fanning. Subsequently, slow simmering became something of the hallmark of many Maltese dishes and despite the introduction of gas and electric cookers, slow cooking is still the housewife's favourite.





11-Hobz Biz-Zejt

The name "Hobz Biz-Zejt" literally means simply "bread with oil" but there is much more to it than that. Thick slices of bread are spread with the tomato paste and topped with capers, olives, garlic, salt, pepper and a drizzle of olive oil.

Sometimes tuna or anchovies are added.

What you will need:

- Ftira or Sliced Maltese Bread
- Kunserva (Tomato Paste)
- Capers
- Sliced Olives
- Salt and Pepper
- Olive Oil
- Optional: Chopped raw onions, Tuna and Anchovies
- Apron
- Plate
- Bread knife (to be used by a leader)
- Covering for the table



How to do it:

- Cover your work top.
- Wear an apron.
- Sprinkle olive oil over two pieces of bread.
- Rub the bread pieces together to spread the oil evenly.
- Spread the tomato paste over the bread evenly.
- And repeat the rubbing procedure.

- Add salt and pepper.
- Add the capers and sliced olives.
- Add the optional items.



The Art of Lace



Malta lace is a traditional craft famous for centuries. It is beautiful to look at and apparently permanent.

It is hand made by women on both islands, particularly in Gozo, where visitors can watch women sitting at their doorsteps nimbly plying the flying bobbins to turn out a traditional or more modern pattern. One can choose from table cloths or tea-towels which look fabulous at any occasion from casual to formal.

Lace making in Malta and neighbouring Gozo trace their origins back to the 16th century. Needle lace was made there as in was in Venice.

This continued until the 19th century when the depression that descended upon the islands nearly led to its extinction. One of the most recognizable traits of Maltese and Gozo lace is the creamy, honey coloured, Spanish silk from which most of it is made. Black silk was also used until the 20th century when it declined in favour so is harder to find today.

