

The Grand Master's Palace

The Grand Master's Palace is one of the most iconic buildings in Valletta and a main visitor attraction in Malta. Newly restored and proudly dominating St George's Square in the heart of the capital, the Grand Master's Palace invites you to wander along its 450-year history as a centre of power and the symbol of a nation.

The first building to be constructed by the Knights of St John in the new capital city and enlarged over the years, the Palace is a state within an edifice. During the British period, it served as the Governor's Palace and was the seat of Malta's first constitutional parliament in 1921. Presently, the Palace is the seat of the Office of the President of Malta.

Now granting access to over eighty-five percent of the building's footprint, the overhauled Grand Master's Palace showcases the rediscovered Uccelliera, the Piano Nobile corridors, and the meticulously restored State Rooms, including the Grand Master's Study/Sitting Room, the Throne Room, the Pages' Room, the Bedroom, the Chapel, and the Ambassadors' Room.

The Grand Master's Palace is one of the most visited sites in Heritage Malta's portfolio, welcoming around 300,000 visitors each year. It is open daily for the public to enjoy.

PRE-ARRIVAL INFORMATION

Those who plan to visit the Grand Master's Palace may easily access information about this masterpiece on Heritage Malta's website. Details include opening hours, highlights of the site, instructions on how to reach the Palace, and admission fees. Information leaflets are also available in museums and in several tourist information offices around Valletta.

Heritage Malta's museums and sites target different audiences of varying age groups. This is reflected in the Palace's admission fees, which cater for adults, seniors, students, children, and persons with disabilities, amongst others. Service dogs are also most welcome.

Visiting the Grand Master's Palace

Transport and Parking

The Palace's main entrance is in St George's Square, second door on the right in the middle of Republic Street. One can reach it on foot, a few minutes' walk from City Gate and the Parliament building at the entrance of Valletta, where the main bus terminus is located. The following link provides information about the routes operated by Malta Public Transport from all the towns and villages to Valletta: <https://www.publictransport.com.mt/>

Other sources of transportation within Valletta include Electric City Cabs, taxis, Hop On Hop Off buses, and Fun Trains. Should one decide to use a private car, there are various parking areas just outside Valletta, such as the MCP Car Park located next to the bus terminus.

Additionally, Transport Malta offers a Park and Ride service from Floriana – an easy, quick and low-cost solution with over 750 parking spaces and a regular shuttle service directly to Valletta.



Main Entrance, Reception and Ticketing Area

As previously indicated, the main entrance for Palace visitors is located in St George's Square, second main door on the right. Upon entering, one finds the scanner and X-ray machine (Fig. 1 & 2).

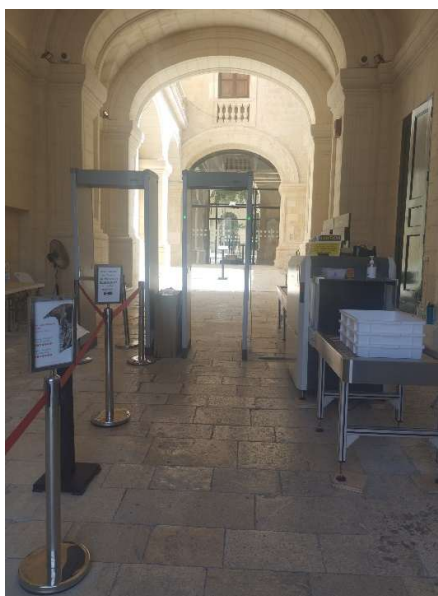


Fig. 1



Fig. 2

Security personnel assist visitors in placing all their belongings in a tray to be scanned as a normal procedure. It is important that, prior to scanning, guests advise personnel regarding hip or knee replacements which can comprise metal, pacemakers, and pregnancy. Bags are not allowed inside the Palace but visitors may avail themselves of lockers for the safekeeping of their belongings. Exceptions are only considered for medical and maternity bags.

Near the reception area, visitors find a souvenir shop (Fig.3 & 4) on the left and a ticket kiosk on the right. The gift shop offers a wide selection of merchandise targeting various age groups. Most items are related to the Palace itself, but one may also purchase general Heritage Malta merchandise such as postcards, books, small souvenirs, stationery items, puzzles, books and shirts. All signage and prices are clearly visible.

Near the ticket kiosk (Fig. 5) on the right-hand side of the main reception area, there is a help desk for queries about different ticket options. The sales policy at the Grand Master's Palace only allows card payments. No cash payments are



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

permitted. Once tickets are issued, visitors must proceed to scan them at the turnstiles (Fig. 6) for admission to the Visitors' Centre. Heritage Malta staff and

security personnel assist in any queries at the ticket kiosk and lead the way forward.

The Visitors' Centre consists of five halls with interpretation panels, projections and audio-visual shows that demonstrate the evolution of the Palace across the centuries and the main functions of this fascinating building during different periods in history.



Fig. 5



Fig. 6

Access to the State Rooms, Armoury, restrooms and other facilities

The exit of the Visitors' Centre leads directly outdoors, to the magnificent Prince Alfred Courtyard. This area is supplied with clear signage indicating the visitors' route (Fig. 8 & 9). Fully accessible restrooms, including nappy changing facilities, are located in this courtyard (Fig. 10 & 11).

From the courtyard, one may access two elevators (Fig. 12) – one leading to the Piano Nobile (which is on the third floor where the State Rooms are located) and another one taking visitors directly to the Palace Armoury. Heritage Malta staff or security personnel are available to assist in using these elevators.



Fig. 8



Fig. 9



Fig. 10



Fig. 11



Fig. 12

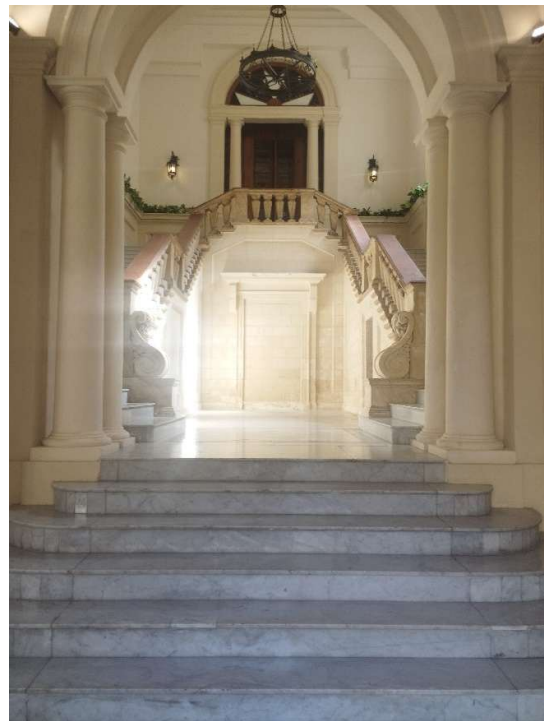


Fig. 13

A beautiful staircase takes visitors from the Prince Alfred Courtyard to the impressive Armoury (Fig. 13). The latter boasts a vast array of weapons from local and foreign armies that were used during the Knights' period. Various suits of armour pertaining to knights and Grand Masters further enhance this splendid space.

All artefacts are labelled, and interpretation is further aided through audio-visual monitors. The sound is set to moderate volume so as not to disturb other visitors and people with special needs. The Armoury Hall is situated in its original location, which is the same area occupied by the Maltese Parliament for several years. Visitors may rest on benches both in this space and along the Piano Nobile corridors.

Upon exiting the Armoury, one finds the Piano Nobile with all the Palace State Rooms. Serving different purposes throughout the Knights' period and the British Era, these rooms are currently used by H.E. the President of Malta for greeting distinguished guests.

Just outside the Armoury, there is another set of restrooms on the left-hand side. More restrooms are located along the staircase leading down to the Nettuno Courtyard. From this courtyard, one may proceed back to the Prince Alfred Courtyard, then on to the souvenir shop before exiting the Palace.



Fig. 14

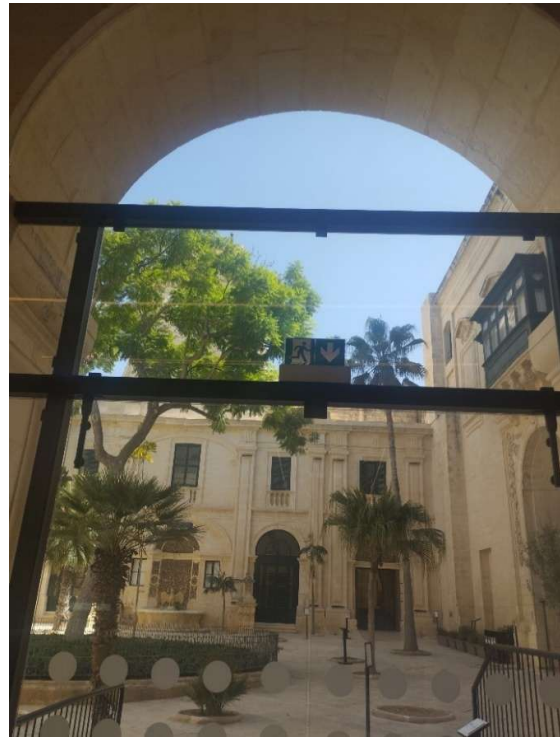


Fig. 15

This site is fully equipped with all safety precautions and is covered by a certified risk assessment report. This includes fire extinguishers in every part of the Palace accessible to visitors, adequate and clear signage along the entire route, emergency exits at every assembly point, (Fig. 14 & 15) fire alarms, as well as an X-ray machine and scanners at the entrance. The premises are accessible to people with special needs. The temperature inside the Palace is stabilised automatically to create the appropriate ambience for the artefacts on display and for visitors. In addition to Heritage Malta staff, the Grand Master's Palace is manned with security personnel who assist visitors as needed.