THE MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER

Journal for Maltese Living Abroad

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IN-NANNA U L-QAGHAQ TAL-GHASEL
HONEY RINGS



Malta and Maltese society have undergone major demographic, economic, and cultural shifts over recent decades—marked by rapid population growth, higher education and income levels, urban development, and evolving social norms.

Key Changes in Malta and Maltese Society

- **Population & Migration:** Malta's population has grown by more than 100,000 over a decade, with roughly one in four residents now foreign-born and tourism adding tens of thousands of daily visitors. Some localities have seen foreign residents outnumber locals, prompting strain on infrastructure and services.

- **Workforce & Economy:** Rising education levels and new industries have moved many younger Maltese into professional, administrative, and technical roles, while an aging population and fewer young entrants have created labor gaps in lower-wage, customer-facing, or physically demanding sectors. Household disposable income has grown, though poverty and affordability pressures remain in certain areas.

- **Urban & Coastal Landscapes:** Historic harbors and coastal fortifications that once centered on naval and industrial trade now sit alongside modern developments, marinas, cruise terminals, and dense urban skylines. As highlighted in Malta Then vs Malta Now, older landmarks often remain intact while their surrounding neighborhoods look markedly different.

- **Culture, Religion & Social Norms:** Over the past half-century—accelerated by EU integration and milestones such as the 2011 divorce referendum—Maltese society has become more secular and diverse. While Roman Catholicism remains culturally significant and nominally dominant, regular religious practice is lower among younger generations, and family and gender norms have shifted away from traditional legal and social constraints.

  Locals and observers often weigh economic gains and modernization against concerns over traffic, overdevelopment, housing and tourism pressures, and perceived changes to traditional identity. Users on Reddit agree that rapid economic growth, construction, and inward migration have reshaped daily life, while raising concerns about traffic, environmental strain, and cultural erosion. For deeper data and analysis on these shifts, see the Times of Malta coverage of regional trends and Where are the Maltese? on workforce changes. AI generated



Ukraine awards EU Parliament President Metsola with Golden Medal of the Verkhovna Rada

This is the first time in the history of Ukraine's Parliament that this highest distinction has been awarded

European Parliament President Roberta Metsola has been awarded the Golden Medal of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine named after Anna of Kyiv.

The Golden Medal was given by the Speaker of the Ukrainian Parliament Ruslan Stefanchuk, during a ceremony at the European Parliament in Brussels.

This is the first time in the history of Ukraine's Parliament, the Verkhovna Rada, that this highest distinction has been awarded. From now on, the medal will be presented annually to individuals who have demonstrated exceptional commitment to Ukraine.

Presenting the award, Speaker Stefanchuk described President Metsola as a great and sincere friend of Ukraine, praising her leadership in ensuring that the European Parliament remains one of the strongest and most consistent voices supporting the Ukrainian people.

"This is more than just an award; it's a symbol of all the Ukrainian people's gratitude to a person who, during the most difficult time for our country, has stood and continues to stand by our side, not only with words, but also through concrete actions", Speaker Stefanchuk stated.

He recalled how on 1st April 2022, just weeks after Russia launched its full-scale invasion, President Metsola became the first President of an EU institution to visit Kyiv, at a time when the Ukrainian capital was under direct threat.

He thanked President Metsola for her continued support for Ukraine and its path towards European Union membership.

"Thank you for your courage. Thank you for standing firm on your principles. Thank you for your friendship. And for not simply speaking about European values, but defending them together with Ukraine", Speaker Stefanchuk concluded.

Upon receiving the award, President Metsola said that the recognition was a testament to Europe's steadfast and unwavering support for the Ukrainian people in their fight for freedom.

"We have not and we will not let you down. We will be there as we negotiate a just and lasting peace, and we will make sure that we do it from a position of strength", President Metsola said, reaffirming the European Parliament's commitment to ensuring that Ukraine takes its place in the European family.

The director of the Malta Opus Daniel Cuschieri presenting a copy of the publication to Pope Leo XIV at the Vatican. Photo: Daniel Cuschieri



Malta's story reaches the Vatican as Opus book is presented to Pope Leo XIV

Collector's edition chronicling Malta's history and culture is first to be dedicated to an entire country

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The story of Malta has now found its place within the Vatican library after a copy of the Malta Opus was presented to the Pope earlier this week.

The Malta Opus is a large format collector's edition publication featuring exclusive interviews, photos and archival material that brings together the "definitive and enduring collection of the essence of Malta".

The book is the first in luxury publisher Opus's collection to commemorate an entire country. It was the brainchild of Daniel Cuschieri who managed to convince the publishing house's CEO Karl Fowler to depart from its usual subjects on sports and celebrities and dedicate an entire publication to one country.

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Prof. Victor Grech was tasked with writing and editing the mammoth publication which traces the story of Malta from prehistory to the modern age touching on every aspect of the archipelago including culture, cuisine, the festa, St Paul, Catholicism, the churches, Valletta, the Three Cities, and the sea, among a plethora of topics.

"The book defines Malta and what it means to be Maltese," Grech said in a recent interview.

"I was honoured to be asked to create an Opus about my own country and I look forward to creating more stories about my lovely country."

Work on the project started in September 2024. It features exclusive interviews with the President of Malta, the Prime Minister, European Parliament President Roberta Metsola, international opera star Joseph Calleja, among others.

It touches on anything Maltese including the Maltese dog, Maltese bread and the Maltese clock and highlights threatened traditions such as the patterned cement tiles and the *sikkina ta' l-Għarb* which is only made by one man in Gozo these days.

The publication tapped into archives from various sources including the Times of Malta. The project was the result of collaboration between government entities, the Malta Council for the Arts, National Celebrations Festivals, and MCAST, along with contributions from experts like architect James Bonnici Camilleri and Daniel Zahra.

The Malta Opus is the largest book ever created to celebrate a country. The marquee edition weighs a whopping 38kgs and comes in a variety of finishes including one which is covered in 10,000 Swarovski crystals featuring a sterling silver Maltese cross while another is bound in real leather. The first edition was auctioned by Christies in aid of three charities.

The one presented to Pope Leo XIV earlier this week was a slightly more manageable smaller format.
A 50-page version is freely accessible in electronic format.
During their visit to the Vatican, Grech and Cuschieri met members of the Papal household to discuss a number of collaborations and were invited to the general audience held in St Peter's Square.
The book, in its presentation case, was presented to the Pope at the end of the general audience.
Cuschieri said that presenting the book to the Pope was a moment of "immense pride".
"I believe whoever gets to experience this body of work, just like our collectors, will appreciate the story and work that has gone into such an Opus," he said.
"It is not an everyday opportunity that one gets to meet the Pope and be able to see one of our Opus editions find a home within the Vatican library".
About Opus Malta



OPUS HOUSE STORIES FROM MALTA AND THE WORLD.

Opus was founded on a simple belief: that the world's greatest stories deserve to be told in a form as considered as the subject itself. Opus Malta is an extension of Opus's base in the United Kingdom — the same house, the same editorial standards, the same binderies and the same tailor-made process, now with a home in the Mediterranean.

From Malta we publish both international and Maltese stories: definitive editions on the people, nations and moments that have shaped the world, alongside the history, art and achievement of the islands we call home.

Opus — United Kingdom **Where the Opus began.**

Led by Chief Executive Officer Karl Fowler, Opus in the United Kingdom has built an international reputation for definitive, museum-quality editions across sport, entertainment, culture and heritage — from Formula 1, Inter and FC Bayern to Pelé, Maradona and The Official Platinum Jubilee Pageant Opus.

Opus Malta **The House's Mediterranean base.**

Opus Malta is the Maltese sister company of Opus UK, founded to bring the same craftsmanship and editorial rigour to new subjects. Its publications are guided by Professor Victor Grech, Director and Editor, whose scholarship anchors every title in rigorous research and authentic storytelling.







ALTESE COMMUNITY COUNCIL OF NSW COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS 2026-2027

The Maltese Community Council of NSW (MCC) held its Annual General Meeting at the Alfred Fenech Maltese Resource Centre, in Parramatta West. The following office bearers were re-elected unopposed to serve for the 2026–2027 term:

Photos above from left to right - President: Miriam Friggieri Vice President: Antoine Mangion Secretary: Sandra Grech Treasurer: Michael Zammit Assistant Treasurer: Neville Zammit PRO: Sandra Grech The MCC is a non-profit organisation which provides social, cultural, recreational and welfare support to the Maltese community in NSW. The committee members, delegates and life members consist of a mixture of first and 2nd generation Maltese, ranging in age between 40 and 90 years. They all work together with one common interest to bring the Maltese community together. Established in 1967, the MCC is an umbrella organisation for affiliated Maltese associations. The MCC is composed of delegates from each of the affiliated associations, and life members, that meet monthly to discuss issues affecting the Maltese Community as a whole. The MCC aims to preserve and promote Maltese identity, culture, heritage, and language for all Maltese, by birth and descent, in NSW.

The Maltese Community Council of NSW is recognised by the Government of Malta as the prime advocate body for the Maltese community in NSW. The MCC:

- Provides Maltese language and cultural classes via the Maltese Language School of NSW
- Provides two one-hour weekly radio programs on Sunday between 10am and 12pm on 2GLF 89.3FM
- Facilitates social meetings and information sessions for senior groups in various locations
- Provides the services of a community worker to assist in casework and group activities
- Lobbies Maltese and Australian governments and other bodies on matters of interest to the Maltese community.
- Organises cultural, community and commemorative events

Would like to congratulate the Executive Team 2026-27and wish the MCC and its members all the best for the year ahead.

Email: contact@mccnsw.org.au or 0419 476 924 Website: https://mccnsw.org.au

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V**A Maltese Word Is an Invitation, Not an Entrance Exam**

Douglas Vandergraph Original guest essay

A family language can cross an ocean and still fail to travel the few feet between a grandparent and a grandchild. The older person speaks a word carrying a street, a childhood, a family joke and half a lifetime of feeling. The younger one understands the affection but searches for an answer in English. Nobody has done anything wrong. Yet if embarrassment settles over the exchange, the next conversation may become quieter, and another small piece of heritage may be left waiting.

For Maltese families in Australia, this is not an abstract problem. Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade reports that the 2021 census recorded more than 234,000 Australians claiming Maltese ancestry, including over 35,000 residents born in Malta. It describes Australia as home to the largest Maltese diaspora. Those figures tell us something about scale, but very little about what it feels like to belong to a family whose oldest stories may be told in a language a young person has only begun to learn.

The National Council for the Maltese Language calls Maltese a source of identity, continuity and belonging. It also recognises the value of English in connecting people beyond the islands. This is a useful correction to an unkind choice that sometimes appears in conversations about cultural preservation: either a descendant speaks Maltese fluently or the inheritance has been lost. Family identity is more durable—and more demanding—than that test. It can survive translation, questions and unfamiliar accents, provided people are allowed to keep participating.

Malta has been building practical bridges. A May 2025 government initiative arranged for more than 850 Maltese books to reach communities in countries including Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom. The announcement acknowledged the value of books that can also help people who do not know Maltese encounter the islands' history and culture. Then, in March 2026, the Directorate for Consular Services and Maltese Living Abroad publicised learning opportunities, including Maltese-language classes offered through the Maltese Community Council of Victoria.

Books and lessons matter. So do the institutions that keep a language visible. But a book on a shelf cannot by itself settle whether a hesitant reader feels welcome. A course can teach vocabulary without deciding how the family will respond to an imperfect sentence at Sunday lunch. The missing bridge is often not a new app or another campaign. It is the ordinary permission to begin badly and return next week.

An older family member might share the Maltese name of a favourite food and explain what made that dish important, without turning the conversation into a pronunciation contest. A younger relative might answer in English and ask to be taught one phrase, rather than pretending to understand a whole story. A community group might read a short passage first in Maltese and then in English, allowing the two languages to help rather than defeat one another. This is a small practice, but small practices are how a welcome becomes repeatable.

Christian families have a special reason to treat this as an act of neighbourly love. Jesus' story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10 asks who was willing to become a neighbour to somebody in need. The Samaritan did not require the injured traveller to demonstrate that he belonged before helping him. He responded to the person before him, and his care included provision for what would happen after he left. A grandchild learning a heritage language does not face that traveller's danger. The connection is not one of equal suffering. It is about the habit of putting a person's dignity ahead of the proof we demand from them.

The same Gospel challenges the impatience of those who already know the words. If faith makes us eager to preserve the language in which generations prayed, it should also make us patient with somebody finding a first prayer in that language. A church hall or cultural club should not become a

place where fluency divides the authentic Maltese from the merely interested. Heritage is not a prize handed only to those who pass a test. It is also a responsibility borne by the people who can teach.

That responsibility has limits. Younger people are not obliged to turn every family gathering into a lesson, nor should an elderly relative be made to perform memories on demand. Some people have painful histories of migration and loss; some no longer wish to speak much. An invitation must allow someone to say no. Respect for culture includes respect for the human beings whose histories comprise it. A good conversation makes room for memory without extracting it.

A practical idea for Maltese associations abroad would be a monthly two-language story table, small enough to run without a budget. Each gathering could invite one volunteer to bring a short family object, recipe card, postcard or photograph whose history they are comfortable explaining. People could read or speak for five minutes, give a plain-English account of unfamiliar words, and leave time for questions without correction or ridicule. No one would have to disclose personal details, claim a grandparent's story as public property, or speak perfectly to take part.

The next step matters more than the event itself. Participants could be asked whether they would like a copy of the words used, a link to an existing class, or a partner to practise with. Those who prefer to listen could remain listeners. Those who want to contribute later would know how. The table should be an opening rather than a once-a-year display of everything that risks disappearing.

The Council for Maltese Living Abroad has recognised the importance of language and culture to overseas communities. The institutions are doing work that families cannot do alone. Still, public policy cannot substitute for what happens in a living room, a parish gathering, a community centre or a phone call between continents. There, preservation depends upon tone: whether somebody says, in effect, 'Try again with me,' or 'You should already know this.' Both responses carry a lesson, but only one makes another conversation likely.

There is no need to be sentimental about the past. Not every memory was easy, and not every descendant will choose to become fluent in Maltese. The aim is neither to punish an English-speaking child nor to ask an older relative to surrender a cherished first language. It is to protect the possibility of a relationship in which both are heard. That is a richer inheritance than the number of correct words a person can say at a gathering.

A language carried across the sea deserves more than applause from a distance. It deserves to be spoken, explained, listened to and sometimes forgiven its awkward first attempts. The next time a child answers in English after hearing a Maltese word, the moment need not close with disappointment. Someone can answer with kindness, teach one phrase and leave the door open. The word then becomes what it was meant to be: not an entrance exam, but an invitation to belong.

Sources

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Kunsill Nazzjonali tal-Ilsien Malti, National Council for the Maltese Language: https://kunsilltalmalti.gov.mt/national-council-for-the-maltese-language/

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Luke 10:25–37, Jesus’ parable of the Good Samaritan

A 50-page version is freely accessible in electronic format.

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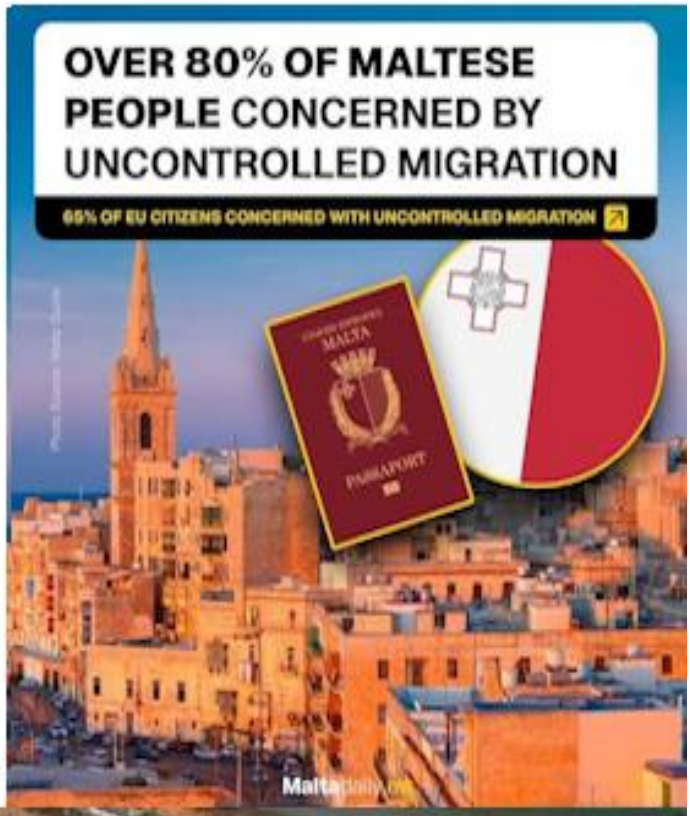
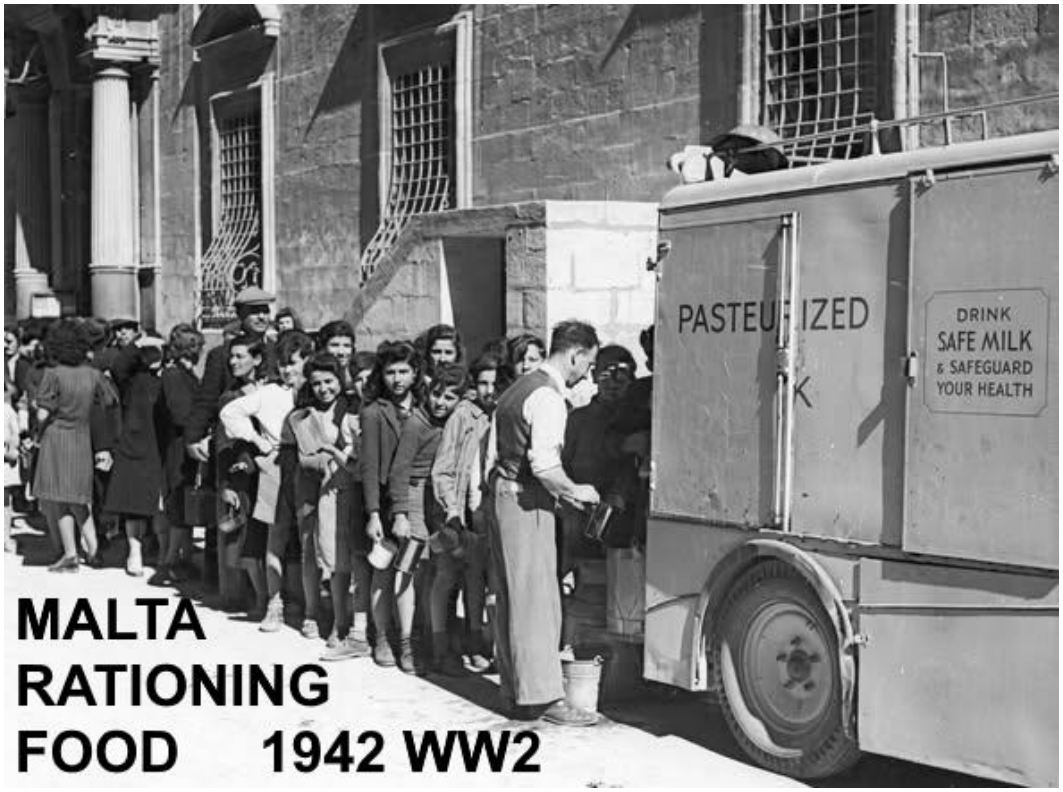




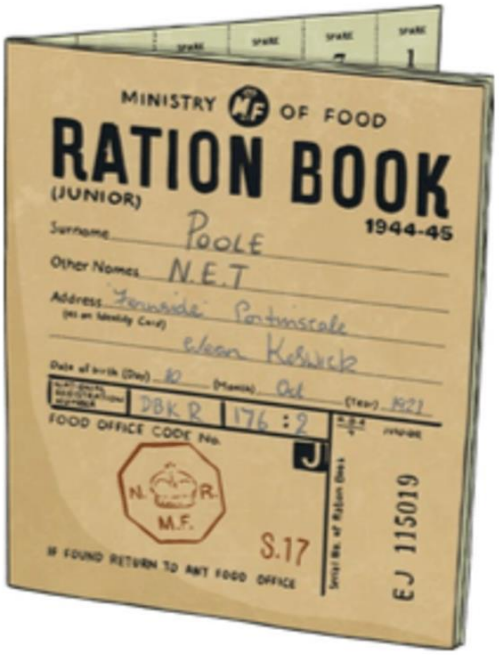


MALTA ON SIEGE RATIONS: BELOW SURVIVAL LEVEL 1942

Lieutenant Governor Sir Edward Jackson announced severe new ration cuts for the Maltese population today. He warned residents that these restrictions bring "a far greater hardship... than any you have had to bear hitherto." The government stated that these emergency measures are vital to stretch existing food stores. Supplies must last until an undisclosed "Target Date," when new relief convoys are expected to reach the island. Under the new rules, food rations that were previously distributed weekly will now be issued only once every two weeks. A family of five will receive the following total monthly allowance:

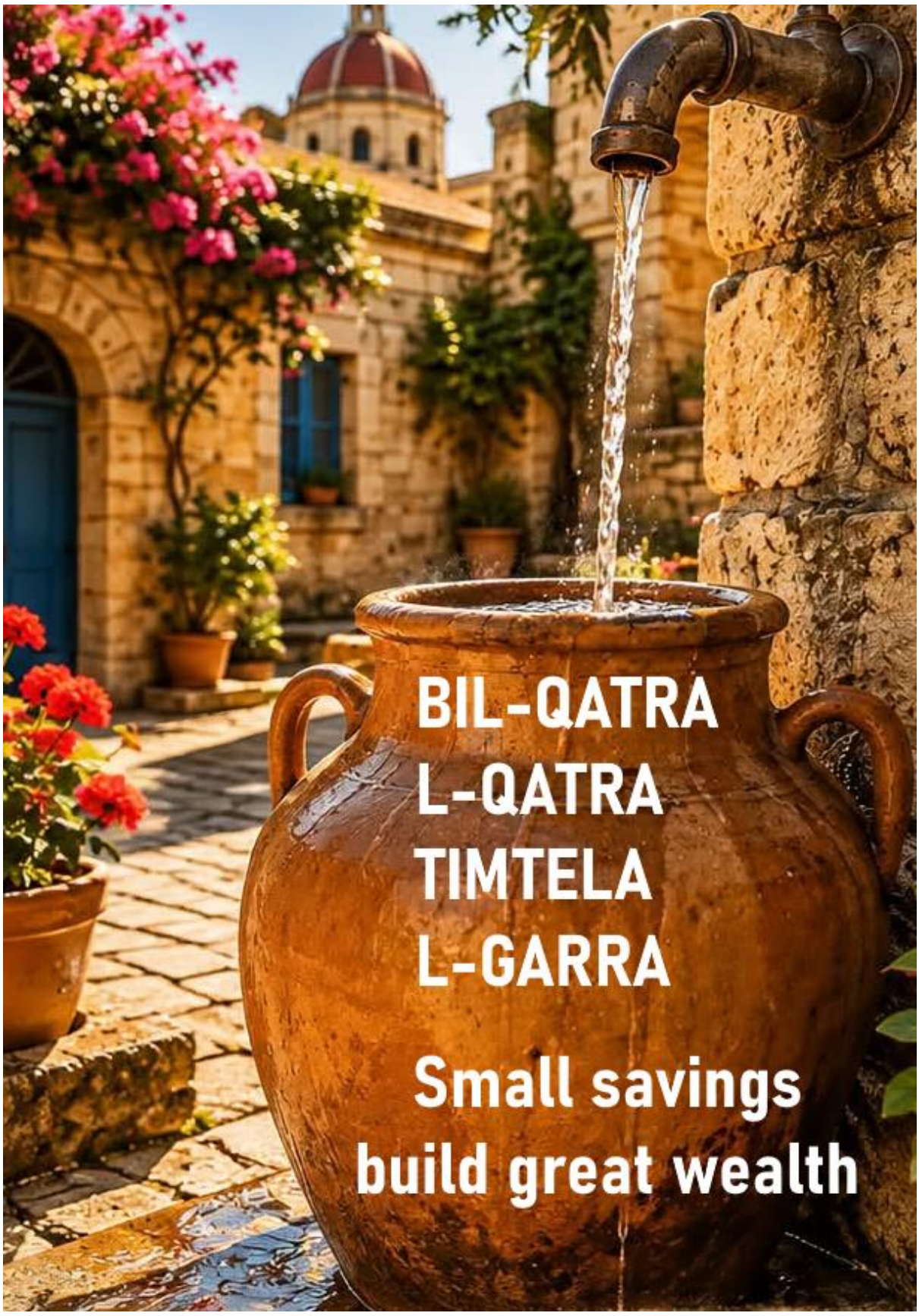


- **Sugar:** 2,000 grams
- **Cooking oil:** 1,300 millilitres
- **Fats:** 800 grams
- **Cheese:** 400 grams
- **Coffee:** 400 grams
- **Tea:** 200 grams
- **Corned beef:** 4 tins
- **Fish:** 4 tins
- **Soap:** 3 bars
- **Matches:** 4 boxes



These drastic reductions lower the average daily intake to just 1,500 calories per person. Even the Ministry of Food in London acknowledges that this amount falls below the level needed to sustain basic health.




BIL-QATRA
L-QATRA
TIMTELA
L-GARRA
Small savings
build great wealth




Missjunarju ta' veru li qatt ma rifes f'art tal-missjoni

Minn Father
Norbert Bonavia
Mssp

Sa mis-sena 1889, meta kien għadu jistudja Ruma biex isir saċerdot, il-Qaddej ta' Alla Ġużeppi
De Piro kien diġà beda joħlom li jwaqqaf Soċjetà ta' saċerdoti li jmorru l-missjoni.
Meta sar saċerdot u ġie lura Malta, mill-ewwel beda jitkellem dwar dan il-ħsieb tiegħu ma' sħabu u jfittex saċerdoti li kienu jaqblu miegħu. Għalkemm fil-bidu deher li kien hemm xi xaqq ta' dawl, wara ftit kollox spiċċa fix-xejn.
Imma wara ħafna taħbit, fit-30 ta' Ġunju 1910, Ġużeppi De Piro laqa' l-ewwel żewġ membri tas-Soċjetà tiegħu: wieħed biex isir saċerdot u l-ieħor biex jibqa' fratell katekist. Ġużeppi Caruana, minn Bormla, il-fratell katekist, kellu jkun l-ewwel membru li jmur fil-missjoni fl-Abissinja.
Il-Qaddej ta' Alla kellu qalbu u moħħu fuq il-ħidma missjunarja. Hu beda jippubblika almanakk: San Pawl: Almanakk tal-Istitut tal-Missjoni, u permezz tiegħu beda jqanqal xewqa u mħabba għall-missjoni f'kull min kien jaqrah. Beda anke jorganizza bażar biex mill-qligħ li jħalli, ikun jista' jgħin lil Fra Ġużepp fil-missjoni tiegħu.
Il-Fundatur tas-Soċjetà Missjunarja ta' San Pawl xtaq li jmur hu stess fil-missjoni ħdejn l-ewwel missjunarju tiegħu, iżda l-Mulej sejjaħlu għalih fl-età ta' 56 sena.
L-ideal missjunarju tal-Qaddej ta' Alla Ġużeppi De Piro, Fundatur tas-Soċjetà Missjunarja ta' San Pawl, għadu ħaj fil-membri tas-Soċjetà tiegħu u wkoll f'diversi lajċi li magħhom jaqsmu dan l-ideal missjunarju. Illum il-membri tas-Soċjetà Missjunarja ta' San Pawl qed ixandru l-Aħbar it-Tajba f'Malta u Għawdex, l-Italja, l-Awstralja, il-Perù, il-Pakistan, il-Filippini u f'Kuba. Hemm ukoll numru sabiħ ta' membri żgħażagħ ġejjin mill-Vjetnam.
Nitolbukom tkomplu titolbu għalina biex il-missjoni mibdija minn Alla permezz tal-Fundatur qaddis tagħna titkompla permezz tal-ħidma tagħna.



MADC's Peter Pan flies into Teatru Manoel this Christmas

Friday, 13 November 2026, 08:37Last update: about 5 days ago

The panto performs at the national theatre between 22 December and 5 January – and is one of two pantos MADC is staging in different venues this festive season.

Christmas in Malta means panto - and this year the trip to Teatru Manoel goes by way of Neverland. MADC's *Peter Pan* opens in Valletta on 22 December and runs until 5 January, with 20 matinee and evening performances to choose from.

Written by Chiara Hyzler and directed by Stephen Oliver, the show follows Wendy and her brothers as they fly to Neverland with Peter Pan. There, they team up with a larger-than-life Dame to take on Captain Hook and his hopeless crew of pirates.

In keeping with panto tradition, the script is packed with songs from across the decades and plenty of panto silliness for younger audiences, while the yearly dose of political satire is aimed squarely at the grown-ups.

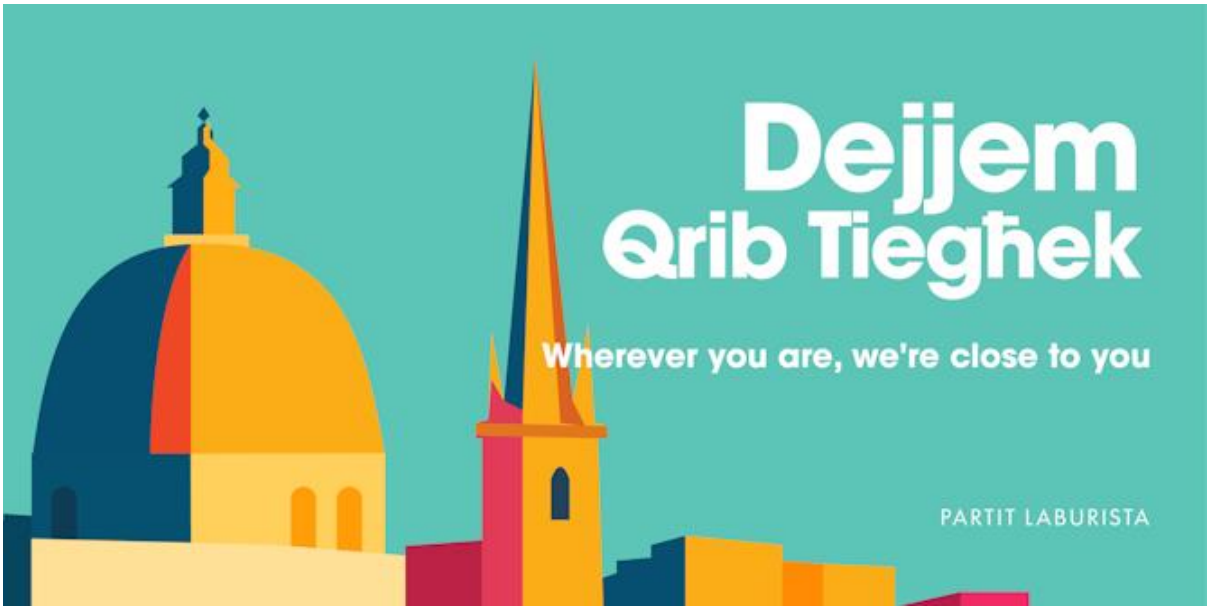
Jean Pierre Busuttil returns as the Dame, with Francesco Nicodeme as Captain Hook and David Ellul as Peter Pan. They are joined in the brilliant cast by Melissa Mercieca, Carla Fenech, Karl Bartolo and Sam Casha, while the production introduces Jack Camilleri, Robert Marshall Adams and Luca Troia. A talented supporting ensemble completes the company.

Meanwhile, MADC's creative team once again creates the panto magic on stage. Kris Spiteri directs the music, with choreography by Francesco Nicodeme, costumes designed by Nicole Cuschieri, sets by Fraser Lappin and singing led by Maria Eleonora Zammit.

For many families, an afternoon or evening at the panto is as much a part of Christmas as the tree. As Malta's longest-running theatre company, MADC has a long history of staging spectacular festive pantomimes - and this year, the company is giving families twice the choice. For the first time ever, the performance run of *Peter Pan* at Teatru Manoel will run in parallel with MADC's annual pantomime at Teatru Salesjan, *Hercules*.

"Panto is the one show of the year that brings the whole family to the theatre together, and for many children it is their first visit to one," says director Stephen Oliver. "*Peter Pan* has pirates, a Dame and a story every generation knows, so it gives us everything we need for a proper Christmas outing - book early, bring the grandparents and come ready to boo the pirates!"

MADC's Peter Pan *pantomime performs at Teatru Manoel, Valletta, from 22 December 2026 to 5 January 2027, with matinee and evening performances available. This production is suitable for audiences aged three and over, and is supported by Dee Spas Wellness, Elia Caterers, Brown's and La Maison Française. Booking is open at madc.com.mt or teatrumanoel.mt.*



PL TO CONNECT WITH MALTESE DIASPORA – DEJJEM QRIB TIEGĦEK

'DEJJEM QRIB TIEGĦEK' FAR FROM MALTA. ALWAYS CLOSE TO HOME.

Wherever life has taken you, Malta and Gozo will always be part of your story. Dejjem Qrib Tiegħek is a PL Connect initiative bringing Maltese people around the world closer to home, and closer to one another.

Registering is the first step in building that connection. It allows Partit Laburista to keep in touch with you directly, share updates and understand what matters to Maltese communities overseas.

Through this initiative, we will:

Deliver the digital edition of KullĦadd (newspaper) to your inbox every week, helping you follow life and developments back home.

Share regular news updates from Malta and Gozo, keeping you connected with our islands.

Introduce you to the myPL app, planned for launch in the near future, offering another convenient way to stay informed and involved.

Help organise community events around the world at your request, bringing Maltese people together to meet, share memories and make new connections.

Offer a way to seek help reconnecting with relatives and friends in Malta and Gozo, sharing requests with permission and respecting everyone's privacy.

This is also your space to tell us what you would like to see, suggest an activity in your community or share a story that deserves to travel across generations.

Complete the registration form below and help us build a Maltese community without borders.

https://partitlaburista.qomon.org/online-form/8fe24f96-malta-miegek

Choose how you would like us to stay in touch, and become part of a connection that keeps growing. Wherever you call home. Edward Montebello
Head of Communications – Partit Laburista

ROPEAN WEEK FOR WASTE REDUCTION

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Happy Parenting Malta

DO WE REALLY NEED TO BUY?

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Happy Parenting - Malta (For Happier Children)'s EWWR 2026 initiative is "Do We Really Need It? – The Material Sufficiency Challenge".

We invite individuals and families to consider not simply how to dispose of unwanted items, but how to prevent unnecessary purchasing and consumption in the first place.

Before purchasing something, have we considered whether we truly need it? whether we already own an alternative, or whether borrowing, repairing a similar item would serve us just as well?

The public will be invited to complete one accessible action each EWWR day, such as identifying unused possessions, avoiding an unnecessary purchase, repairing an item, borrowing rather than buying, reducing food waste or reconsidering clothing purchases.

We shall be circulating the "Before You Buy" guide. It will provide a simple, practical tool that families can continue using after the campaign ends. Participation includes different ages and household budgets.

The initiative will be communicated through campaign materials and daily challenges shared online, with printable versions only when absolutely needed. Our audience will be the general public. However we shall give special attention to our members, parents going through separation and need to establish another home.

Some of these parents are already going through financial and other difficulties. Very often they try to please their children even if they have to limit themselves from essential things. Such parents need to be aware on how to make sensible balanced choices.

The value of this campaign lies in helping people reflect, make different choices and share what they learn.

Happy Parenting's work is grounded in the wellbeing of families and communities. This initiative extends that concern to the responsible use of shared resources: reducing waste can also relieve avoidable household expenditure and encourage thoughtful, supportive habits.

We look forward to contribute a practical, inclusive activity that makes the meaning of Material Sufficiency clear and relevant to everyday life.

SUBVERSIVE AGENCY ON THE MARGINS OF THE HOSPITALLER STATE:

THE CASE OF PAULICA DEMICOLI



In the twilight decades of Hospitaller rule over Malta, the Grand Harbour towns existed as vibrant, densely populated hubs shaped by maritime commerce, naval bureaucracy, and rigid social hierarchies. Eighteenth-century historiography long rendered lower-class Maltese women largely invisible, relegating them to domestic shadows or presenting them through the narrow lens of patriarchal records. Yet archival proceedings preserved in the records of the Magna Curia Castellania reveal a counter-narrative of agency, calculated risk, and illicit enterprise, embodied vividly by a woman named Paulica Demicoli.

In 1744, in the maritime settlement of Bormla (Cospicua), Paulica executed an elaborate confidence scheme that breached both household boundaries and communal trust. Targeting the residence of Thomas Mifsud—a local householder of comfortable means—she chose psychological manipulation over forced entry. Recognising that female dependents and youths frequently oversaw domestic quarters while male heads of household attended to trades or harbour duties, Paulica exploited the vulnerability of Mifsud's young daughter, Maria.

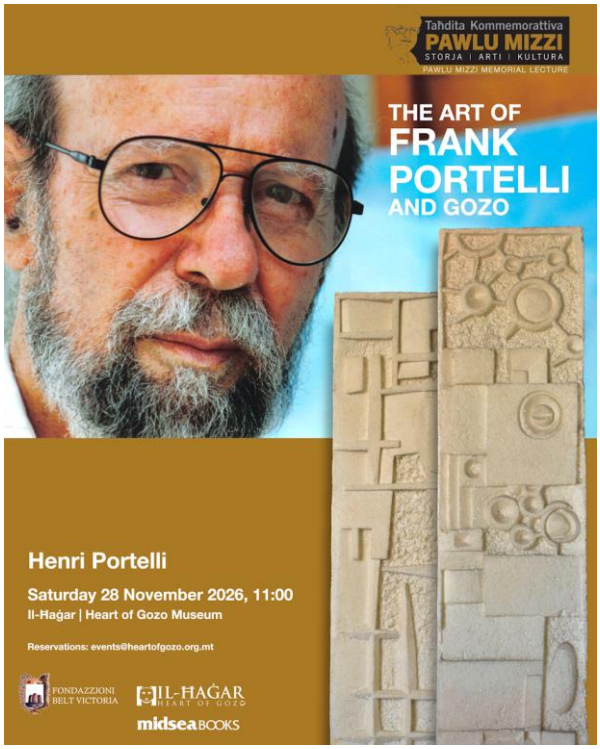
Approaching the house in Thomas's absence, Paulica spun a persuasive fabric of promises and matrimonial advantage. Playing directly upon early modern anxieties

surrounding female settlement and social advancement, she assured the girl that cooperating with her would facilitate a favourable marriage. To cement the pact, Paulica handed Maria a transactional deposit—an upfront scudo, accompanied by the pledge of further reward. Persuaded by this mix of financial incentive and social reassurance, the young woman carried valuable portable property across the threshold into Paulica's custody: household textiles, fine garments, and four ceremonial walking canes, items that served as recognisable markers of middle-tier status in eighteenth-century Malta.

The scheme unravelled upon Thomas Mifsud's return. Discovering his home stripped of prized possessions, he dismissed his daughter's rationale and brought the matter before the civil magistrates. Recorded in the court registers as Dictum Thomas Mifsud contra Paulam Demicoli, the petition sought both full restitution and punitive legal censure.

In the records of the Castellania, women accused of property crimes often framed their actions around dire destitution or moral fragility to elicit leniency from male magistrates. By contrast, the execution of Paulica's deception reflected careful observation and foresight. Rather than resorting to violence or opportunism, she leveraged social currency, mobility within neighbourhood networks, and domestic psychology. Through these surviving judicial fragments, Paulica Demicoli emerges not simply as a petty transgressor, but as an adept operator navigating the strictures and economic margins of Hospitaller Malta.

The 5th Pawlu Mizzi Memorial Lecture



The Art of Frank Portelli (1922-2004) and Gozo

On **Saturday 28 November 2026, at 11am**, Il-Ħaġar Museum will host the 5th Pawlu Mizzi Memorial Lecture. This year's lecture will explore the life and artistic vision of one of Malta's foremost pioneers of modern art and design, Frank Portelli (1922-2004), with particular focus on his creative connection with Gozo. The lecture will be delivered by Portelli's own son, Henri Portelli, who will share personal and historical insights into his father's innovative approach to painting, sculpture, and architectural relief.

The speaker, Henri Portelli, enjoyed a distinguished career in architecture spanning over four decades. After completing his secondary education, he gained three years of

early practical experience working at his father's design practice, Studioportelli, before enrolling in the architecture course at the University of Malta in 1971. He later continued his architectural studies in Canterbury, England, where he completed his course and obtained his UK architectural warrant in 1982. Upon returning to Malta that same year, Portelli resumed his work with Studioportelli and subsequently broadened his professional experience internationally, undertaking architectural projects in Saudi Arabia and Libya between 1984 and 1989. In 1990, he joined Bank of Valletta as its resident architect, a position he held for more than two decades, until 2012, before retiring fully in 2013.

Pawlu Mizzi (1929-2019)

A Maltese patriot, Gozitan scholar, trailblazer in the modern interpretation of Gozo's history, and pioneer in the publication of Maltese books, Pawlu Mizzi was born in Victoria on the 28th of October 1929. Mizzi's long career spanned roles from teacher to scriptwriter and presenter of TV programmes on Gozo, eventually becoming managing director of *Il-Ħajja*. He also founded and served as general editor of *Heritage*, an encyclopaedia of Maltese heritage, culture, and civilisation. However, Mizzi is perhaps best remembered for founding, in 1970, Klabb Kotba Maltin, the home of Maltese books, and later Midsea Books Ltd. Mizzi was awarded the Medal for Service to the Republic in 1992. He passed away on the 5th of August 2019.

The 5th Pawlu Mizzi Memorial Lecture is being held in collaboration with Midsea Books Ltd, and as always, admission is free. To register your interest, please send an email to events@heartofgozo.org.mt.



📺 On the 29 September 1962, Malta's first local television service went on air.

Imagine the excitement of gathering around a little black-and-white screen to watch programmes made for Malta. For some families, the television became the place where everyone met in the evening - and neighbours might come over for a look too.

Do you remember the first TV in your home? What did you love watching?


On This Day in Malta
24 NOVEMBER 1968
Far from Malta, but Still Maltese
On this day in 1968, a survey of the Maltese community in Portsmouth, England, revealed how many Maltese had built new lives overseas.
More than 500 Maltese were living in Portsmouth.
Many came from Cospicua, Senglea, Paola and Sliema.
More than two-thirds had married English spouses.
The majority were settled and did not intend to return to Malta permanently.
There was a need for Maltese priests to help preserve their spiritual and cultural connection.
MALTA
Malta, my island home


On This Day in Malta
21 NOVEMBER 1942
Malta's Victory Kitchens
VICTORY KITCHEN
On this day in 1942, an announcement was made about changes to Malta's Victory Kitchens.
From 23 January 1943, residents would have more choice about how they received their food: either entirely through individual rations, or partly through rations and partly through the communal kitchens.
The Victory Kitchens had been an essential lifeline during the siege, providing hot meals when food was desperately scarce.
The changes reflected the gradual improvement in Malta's supply situation, and the communal feeding department finally closed in September 1943.
Malta, my island home