

# Imdina

- Imdina is the Old City of Malta.

It is also known as the Silent City. This was built during Roman times, on the hill close to Rabat Malta. This city was built on a hill in order to:

1. the watchman of the city would be able

to observe what was happening around them and to see whether the enemy was



approaching. From the bastions you can see half of the island.

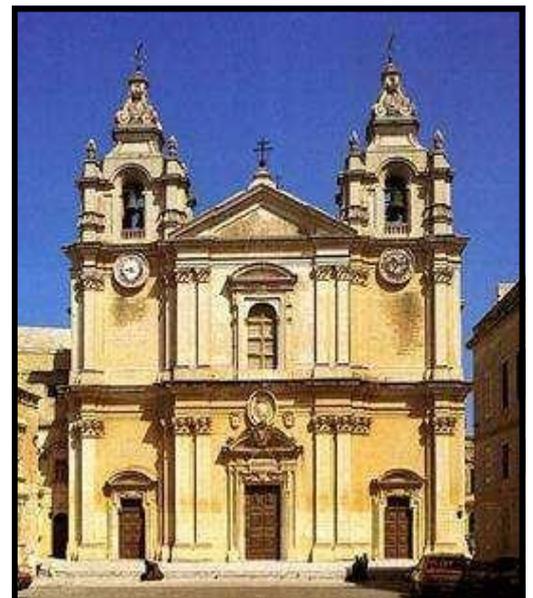
2. The enemy would find it very difficult to get to the city.

- During the time of the Romans Imdina was 3 times larger than it is today darbiet. Imdina was

surrounded by four kilometers of bastions and a moat.

The most important people of society used to live in it. They had beautiful houses and palaces decorated with columns and statues. One of these is the Roman Villa, which is found in Rabat (Malta), just outside Imdina. This is still there today.

- Many insist that Publiju, the Roman governor at the time of Saint Paul, had his palace in Imdina, in the place where today we find the Cathedral of Imdina.



- After the Romans the Arabs came and these were Muslims. Their first priority was to strengthen the defence of the island. Therefore the Arabs shrunk the city by a third of what it had been by building the bastions further in.
- During the time of the Arabs the Cathedral was left to fall to ruin as they were not Christians
- After the Arabs the Normans came led by Count Roger who once again fixed the Cathedral.
- After the Normans we had many more rulers amongst which the Spanish who built most beautiful palaces and churches and which we can see today. After the defeat of Monroy, King Alfonsu V (5) of Spain called Imdina 'Citta Notabile della mia corona' which means the most noble jewel in my crown. This was a great honour for Imdina. This document still exists in the Museum of the Cathedral of Imdina itself. This is why Imdina is also known as Citta' Notabile.



- In 1530 in Malta the Knights of Saint John arrived. The Knights had many galleys and armaments of war. They did not wish to live in Imdina because Imdina was too far from the sea and their galleys. That is why they chose to go and live in Birgu. During this time Imdina started to lose its importance.



# Places of interest in Imdina

- To enter Imdina you have to pass on the bridge under which there is a ditch. In the past this ditch used to be full of water.
- From the bridge we can see the high bastions which surround the city.
- We also see the main door decorated with the arms of Grand Master Manoel de Vilhena.



- On the inside of the door there is an engraving of the figure of Saint Paul, Saint Publius and Saint Agatha - the patron saints of Malta and of Imdina.

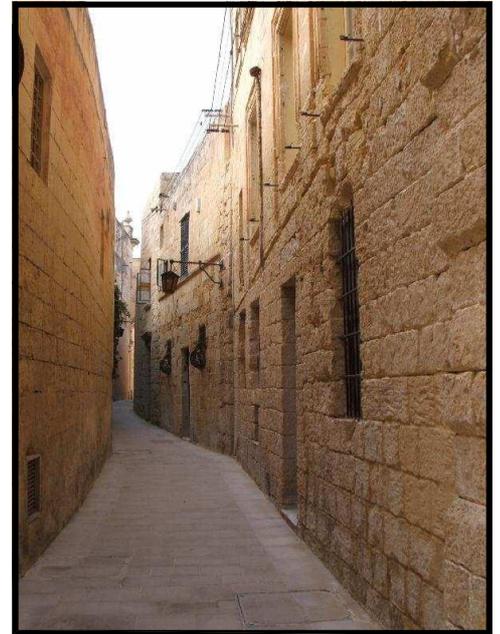
- On the right there is the Vilhena Palace. This was built by the Grandmaster Manoel de Vilhena a while after the earthquake of 1693. This palace served as a hospital for many years however nowadays it is serving as a Natural History Museum. In this museum we find animals, insects, birds, rocks of Malta and fossils.

- Right next to this we find the 'Mdina Dungeons' which used to serve as a prison during the 15<sup>th</sup> century.





\* From here we walk to the main street - Villegaignon Street, which is the widest street in Imdina.



- The other roads in Imdina were all narrow and often curving so that:

1. In case of an attack the enemy would get confused by the many narrow roads
2. The arrows would not reach any length
3. The houses would be protected from the sun

- As we enter Villegaignon Street we find the Chapel of Saint Agatha. This saint is important to Imdina because when the Turks in 1551 attacked Imdina there was a strange happening. This saint appeared to a nun in a dream and told her that if they took out her statue on the bastions, the Turks would flee. The Maltese did this and that is exactly what happened. From there the Turks kept on going to Gozo where they took all the people (around 6,000 people) as slaves. They left only the elderly and those who were not healthy and strong.



- Across the chapel of Saint Agatha there is Casa Inguanez - a palace of the 14th century.
- On the right we also find the Convent of the cloistered Benedictine nuns.
- There is also a place where historical documents of our country are kept - National Archives.



- In the middle of Villegaignon street we see the Cathedral square and the Cathedral itself. During the earthquake of 1693 this Cathedral suffered a lot of damage. After the earthquake The square was widened, the Cathedral was fixed and the

beautiful buildings we see today were built.

- The Cathedral is dedicated to the conversion of Saint Paul. This was built on the design of Lorenzo Gafa. During the time of the Romans instead of the Cathedral there was the Palace where Publius used to live. The Cathedral was built in the same place where the Palace of Publius had been. Publius was the leader of the island when Saint Paul arrived in Malta..
- On the cathedral grounds there are many noble people and Monseigneur's of the Cathedral buried there.
- The Mdina Cathedral is the main church of the Archdioceses of Malta in which the Archbishop of Malta Pawlu Cremona commemorates mass.
- At the back of the Cathedral there is the palace of the Archbishop.
- On the left of the Cathedral we find the Museum of the Cathedral where we can See precious objects and the archives of the Cathedral.

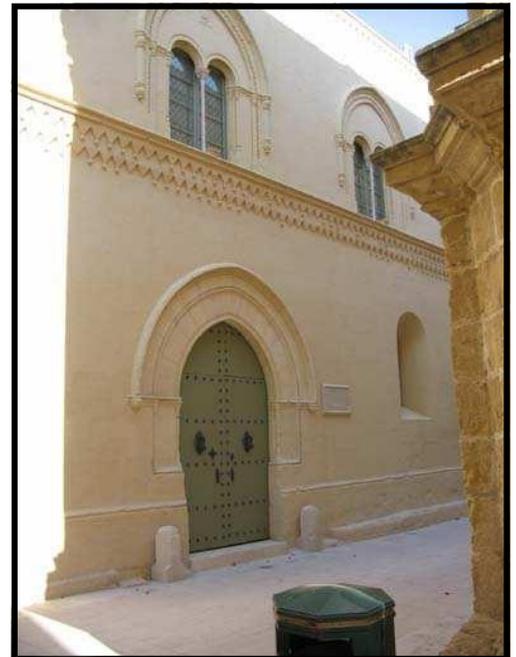
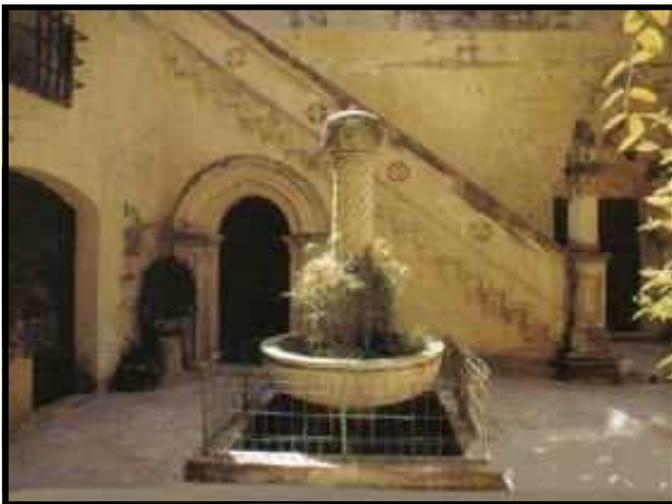




- Back on Villegaignon street we find the chapel of Saint Rokku which today is more well known as the Madonna tad- Dawl. Across the street there is the church and the convent of the Madonna tal-Karmnu. From this church the French (at the time of Dun Mikiel Xerri) wanted to steal many sacred objects and tapestries. The Maltese rebelled against the French.

- When we walk a bit further we find Palazzo Falzon, better known as the Norman House. The first Grandmaster of the knights was welcomed here on his first visit to this city.

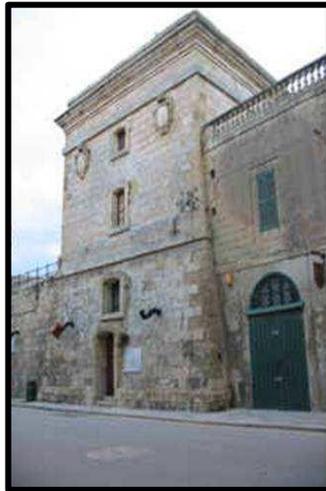
This palace is being restored and changed into a museum for paintings and furniture and silver objects.



- At the end of the street we arrive at a small square which is very popular with the tourists and the Maltese. This is the Bastion Square from where we can see a beautiful view of half of Malta.



- In Imdina we also find the Standard Tower. From this Tower they used to watch over and guard Imdina.



- The Greeks Door - the old door which was used in the 15th century.

