

Best for
WALKING

Chris Morley loves GOZO



Gozo's magic has seeped into my bones. This gentle place gave me a simple freedom: the pleasure of

following a path and letting history, landscape and island life unfold.

As I stepped off the ferry at Mġarr harbour after a 20-minute crossing from Malta, the island felt weirdly familiar. It was a British colony until 1964; cars hug the left and red postboxes sit alongside place names rooted in Sicilian Arabic. As an avid walker, I'd had Gozo on my wish list for some time. But I didn't realise quite how remarkable it would be.

One path in particular sticks in my mind: the hike to the cliffs at Ta'Ċenċ. In the backstreets of my starting point, Ġhajnsielem, traditional architecture leant into Mediterranean and Moorish influences. Religious niches and statues of saints peppered house fronts and street corners. At the edge of town, I cut through snaking terraces and farm plots sloping to the sea. It was utterly peaceful, bar the screech of a cockerel and the bells of grazing goats, and the land sung with new growth – yellow

sorrel, clouds of giant fennel and the vermillion blooms of prickly pear.

Gozo's history revealed itself along the trail: centuries-old salt pans scooped from tide-lashed rocks and a lonely watchtower built by the Knights of Malta in the 17th century. A steep track looped down to Mġarr ix-Xini, a bay where 16th-century Turkish raiders captured almost the entire population. That day, there was just me and a couple of fishermen to appreciate its beauty.

The route zigzagged through a valley bound by drystone walls and fields of wheat. As I crested a limestone plateau, sheer alabaster cliffs, like crusts of icing, rippled into the distance. Peregrine falcons and shearwaters swoop and nest among these precipices. I gingerly peered over the edge to see the walls disappear into the ultramarine depths.

TRY IT YOURSELF Airlines including EasyJet ([easyjet.com](https://www.easyjet.com)) and Ryanair ([ryanair.com](https://www.ryanair.com)) fly to Malta; from there, Gozo Channel ([gozochannel.com](https://www.gozochannel.com)) operates a ferry. A seven-night Gozo's Coastal Trails journey with Inntravel costs from £816 per person, including B&B accommodation but excluding flights; [inntravel.co.uk](https://www.inntravel.co.uk) >>

Hike in Gozo's beguiling landscape, including the Ta'Ċenċ cliffs (above), and stroll around the town of Mġarr (below and bottom)

