

THE ISLAND OF
GOZO

C O U N T R Y S I D E W A L K S

Dahlet Qorrot Walk



Introduction

This circular walk starts and ends in Nadur. It takes you from Nadur to Dahlet Qorrot bay, skirting Mistra Rocks – a boulder shore. Dahlet Qorrot is a typical bay with some boathouses hewn out of the rock:an ideal spot for swimming and fishing.

Along the route you will pass by a number of cultivated fields at Ta'Grejgel valley. Here,both modern and traditional farming methods are put to use to reap the succulent joys yielded by Mother Earth.

Proceeding onwards, the walk leads the hiker to the outskirts of Qala village where breathtaking views of the sister islands can be enjoyed.All along you can closely observe the characteristic garigue habitat. On the way back to Nadur via Qala, you can admire an 18th century windmill and a very old pigeon loft. Nadur is a typical Gozitan village,with houses nestled around the dominating Baroque or Romanesque place of worship.

A route map found in the centre pages of this booklet, together with several directional signs located along this route, will help you to follow the walk more easily. It is advisable to stick to the set route so that you can appreciate more fully the Gozitan landscape, rural way of life and other curiosities.

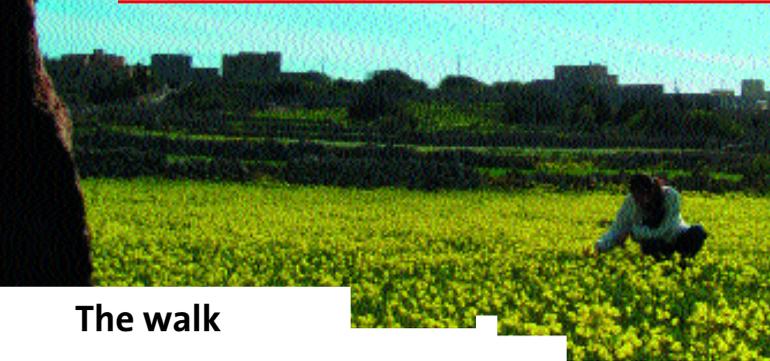
Distance:9 kms

Time: 3 hours

Water windmills



Enjoying nature



The Swallowtail butterfly

The walk

This route starts from the village square of Nadur. The town name originates from the Arabic 'nadar', meaning a watch-out point, derived from the strategic position that this village occupies on the island. Indeed, a large part of Gozo, Malta and Comino can be seen from the various vantage points that this village affords. This is one of the most picturesque villages of Gozo,

with a population of around 4000. Nadur is situated on a plateau, which is 512 feet, or around 170 metres high above sea level.

Activity in the village square is carried out under the shadow of the parish church, dedicated to the apostles Peter and Paul. The church is certainly worth a visit.

The village's main square also

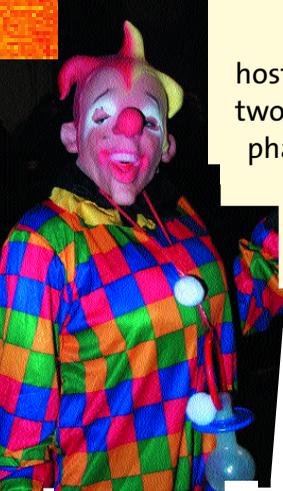
Nadur Parish Church

The building of this church, designed by the Maltese architect Giuseppe Bonnici, started on the 7th December 1760. In 1904 the aisle, dome and facade, designed by Prof. F.S. Sciortino, were added to the existing structure. The church is open daily from 5.00am to 10.00am and from 4.15pm to 7.15pm.

The most striking features of the church are the main altarpiece and the pulpit, both sculpted out of onyx. Maltese-born Lazzaro Pisani painted the ceiling while the famous Roman Pio Cellini did the architectural decorations. All 33 stained glass windows were brought over from France in 1951. The statue of St. Peter and St. Paul was carved in wood in Marseilles in 1885.

Basilica of SS. Peter and Paul





Carnival days

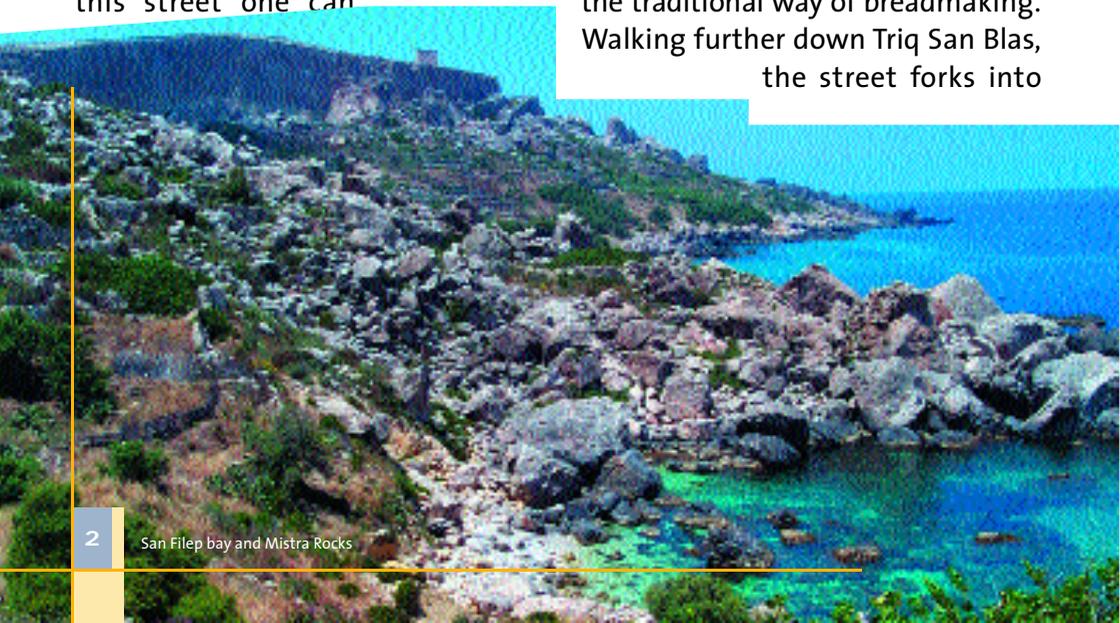
hosts a police station, two banks and a pharmacy. It is the venue for many activities during the year but enjoys its busiest days on the 27th, 28th and the 29th of June when l-Imnarja, the traditional village feast is

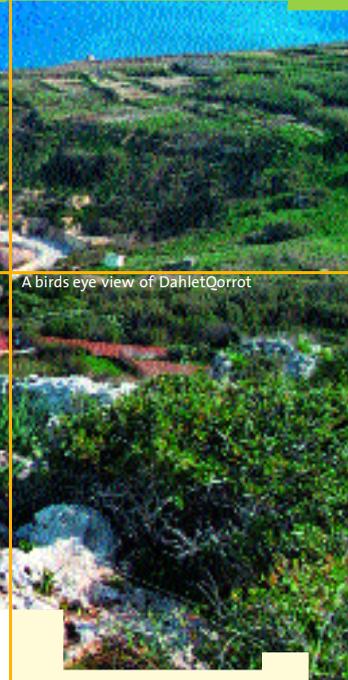
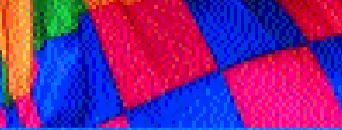
celebrated.

The walk proceeds through Triq Dicembru Tlettax, the street to the left embracing the basilica on one side. This normally busy street is the centre of many activities throughout the year, such as the merry days of Carnival, which take place during February, and other religious processions. Further along this street one can

also find two clubs - the Nadur Youngsters' Football club and the Imnarja Band Club.

Triq Dicembru Tlettax leads to Triq Cimcem, a side street which leads on Triq San Gwann. Once you walk down the remaining few metres of Triq San Gwann you will get to one of Nadur's main roads – Triq it-Tigrija or Racecourse Street. At the intersectional point you will see a niche proudly displaying a reproduction of a painting of Our Lady of Ta' Pinu . To proceed, you are advised to cross over to the other side of Triq it-Tigrija. Walking only a few metres westwards you will meet a sidestreet displaying a one-way sign. Once you turn into this side junction you will be led towards Triq San Blas, lined with 20th century residential houses. One of these 'houses' is a bakery that still employs the traditional way of breadmaking. Walking further down Triq San Blas, the street forks into





A birds eye view of Dahlet Qorrot

two. To proceed to Dahlet Qorrot bay, you should opt for the fork on the right.

At this point, the scenery changes from an urban type to one characterised by terraced fields and carob trees that offer a welcome shade on hot sun-drenched days.

The downhill turn offers spectacular views. If you look to the left, you will observe the high plateau known as Qortin tal-Lacca. These imposing cliffs are made out of one of the harder sedimentary rocks of the Maltese Islands: the upper coralline limestone. Other rock types include the equally hard lower coralline limestone, as well as the softer clay, green sand and globigerina limestone. The Qortin tal-Lacca also hosts dense amounts of herbs such as the Mediterranean thyme and low shrubs. In winter, a



Enjoying the sea



The Maltese Pyramidal orchid

watercourse develops to the left of this road and flows down to Ta' Grejgel Valley.

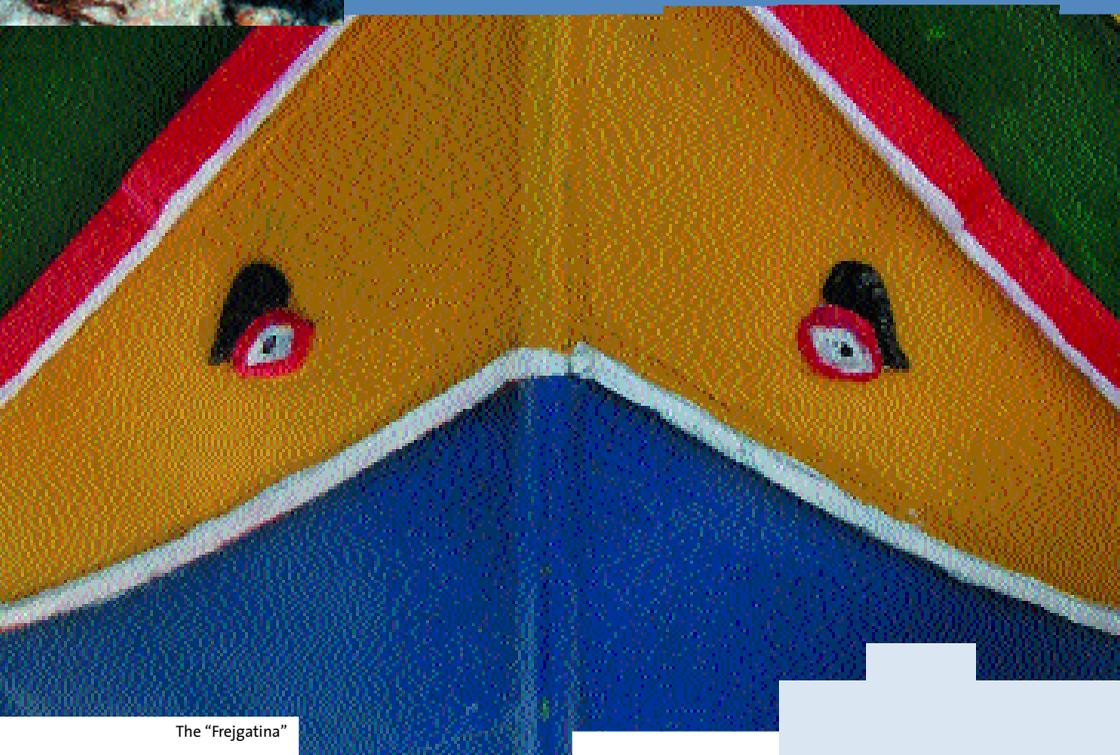
Proceeding downhill, you will arrive at a point where the hidden charms of Mistra rocks, San Filep and Dahlet Qorrot are disclosed. Mistra rocks is a typical boulder screen whereas San Filep and Dahlet Qorrot are small inlets mostly enjoyed for swimming and fishing by the locals.

A lane on your left branches off the main road to Dahlet Qorrot. This leads to a footpath that overlooks Mistra Rocks - a mass of rocks of all shapes and sizes.

The cliff that rests above Mistra Rocks is also formed from upper coralline limestone. This stone layer lies on soft layers of green sand and clay. Weathering causes erosion to these soft and unprotected layers. A stage



A typical boulder at Mistra rocks



The "Frejgatina"

is then eventually reached where there is no physical support for the heavy upper coralline limestone; boulders thus collapse towards the sea, forming the typical boulder screen.

Being virtually inaccessible except for the most daring of hikers, these boulders are sites where rare endemic flora and fauna of the Maltese islands can be located. The Maltese spurge and the Maltese pyramidal orchid can be found here. The rare branched horsetail is also quite abundant near the fresh watercourse that flows

A lizard basking in the sun



The Prickly pear in flower

through these boulders. In this habitat, soil is limited to confined spaces between the boulders. These boulders provide a welcome shelter from violent winds to the flora and fauna that flourish here. Nevertheless some plants have managed to adapt to living in other unsheltered areas.

The boulders also offer shelter for many different species of birds. The Maltese national bird, the Blue Rock Thrush, is one of the bird species that nest in the cliffs and on the high boulders.

Leaving Mistra Rocks behind, the

'Ta Sopu' watchtower

The 'Universita' di Gozo' funded the building of this tower in 1667 but it was unarmed until 1670 when Grandmaster Nicholas Cottner visited Gozo and stressed the need to equip this tower with the necessary ammunition. It was fully functional a year later.

On the 10th June 1798 the French Revolutionary troops led by Napoleon Bonaparte invaded the island of Gozo. The French landed within gunshot distance of Torri Dahlet Qorrot, also written as La Torre di Dahlet Korrot, or Torre Nuova (now renamed 'Torri ta' Sopu) and the tower, which was still armed, opened fire on them in a desperate attempt to stop the unwelcomed guests from disembarking. General Reynier, who commanded the Gozo invasion, gave an account of this to his Commander-in-chief. The following is an extract from this report.

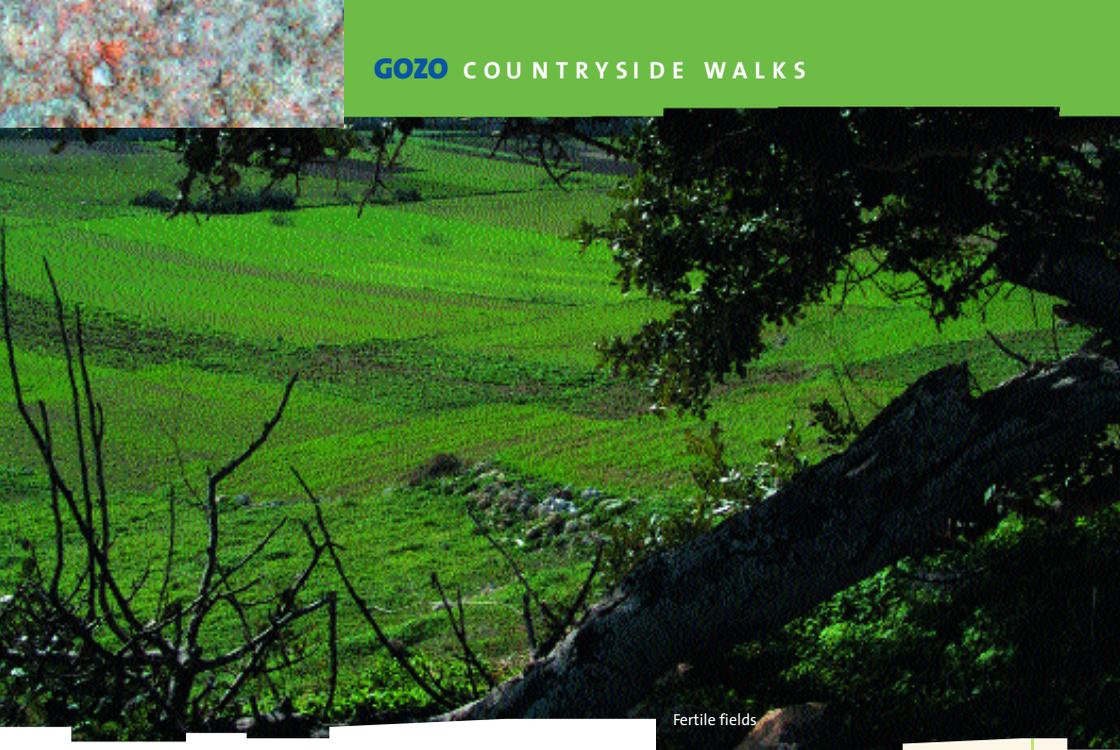
"A point for landing was selected between the new tower and the battery of Ramla called Irdum il-Kbir. The whole morning of the 10th June had been occupied in preliminary arrangement. Calms and contrary breezes had still further delayed operations; but by 1pm the shore was approached by the 3rd Company of Grenadiers and the 95th Demi-Brigade. The heights meanwhile had become crowned with the enemy, who received the French with showers of bullets; Sergeant-Major Bertrand of the Grenadiers in the Generals' boat, being killed.

The batteries of Ramla and New Tower then opened fire. The boats of Alceste conveyed General Reynier and Fugieri, captains Geoffrey and Sabatier, and the 3rd Company of the Grenadiers who were the first to land. After a rapid ascent of the heights not withstanding

the heavy fire, the enemy at last decamped. And the Battery of Ramla was taken. The bombards Etoile and Pluvier, by their successful fire against the enemy's batteries were of great assistance ..." (Source: GRENFELL – Malta, 1798, pg 19).

Ta'Sopu watchtower on the formidable Mistra rocks





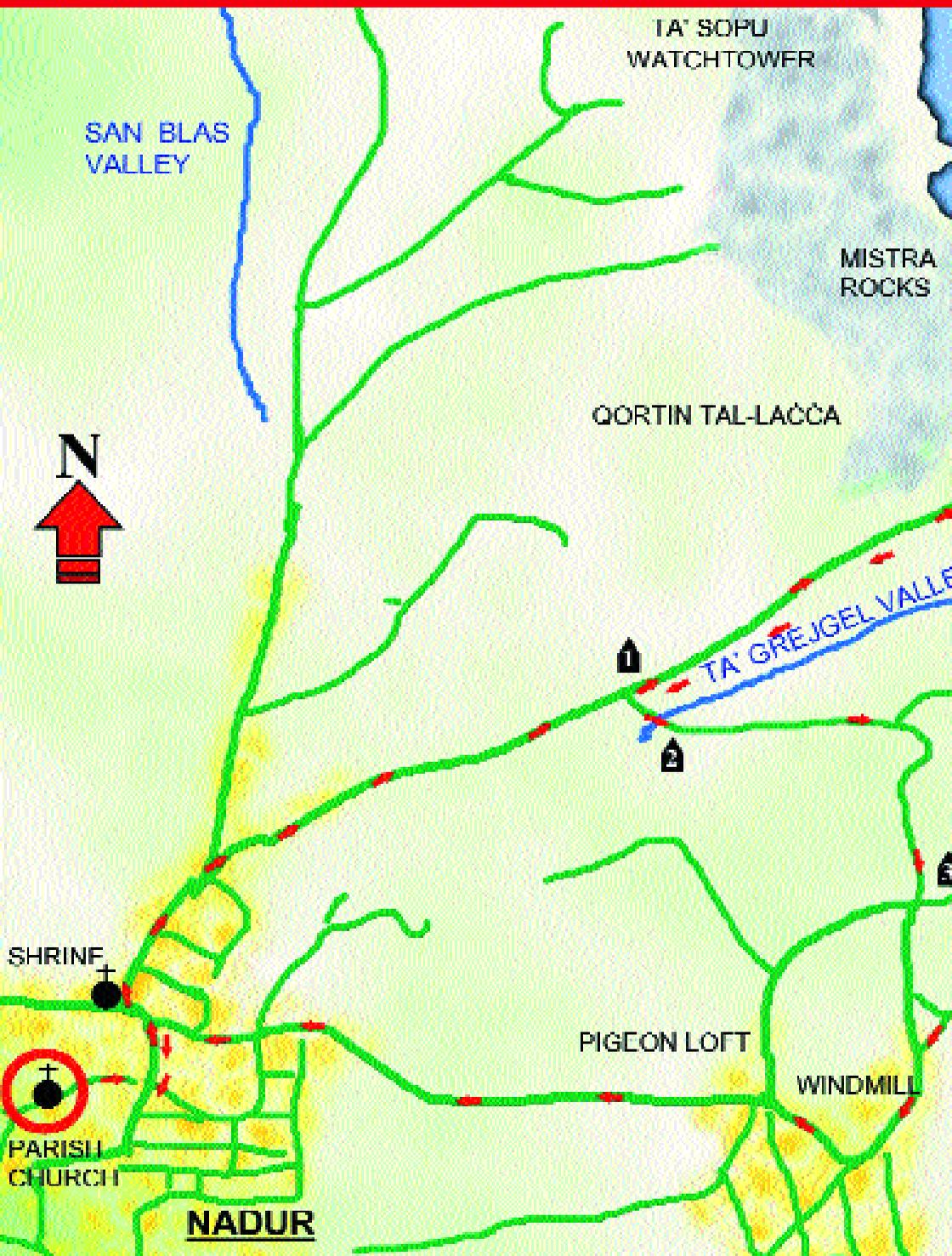
Fertile fields

route continues downhill. Dahlet Qorrot bay is now in full view. On the left side of the road, an uncultivated clay slope rises from the sea, forming an inlet. This is known as San Filep Bay: a shallow bay strewn with boulders.

This is a popular fishing and swimming site enjoyed by locals and tourists alike. This clay slope can still support life although it is restricted to only one particular type of vegetation. The weathered rubble walls and the presence of vine trees indicate that this area was once a terraced slope.

San Filep is rich in flora and fauna. Prickly pear trees, fig trees and African tamarisks grow by the edge of this slope. The Maltese pyramidal orchid, an endemic plant, is among the most colourful flowers which thrive on this site during spring. Fauna is also abundant and different instants of the life cycle of the Gourd ladybird that can be found living on a bush of squirting cucumber may be observed here.

Leaving San Filep behind, you proceed to Dahlet Qorrot bay. Here you can see boathouses hewn in the rock surface. These boat or

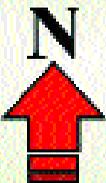


TA' SOPPU
WATCHTOWER

SAN BLAS
VALLEY

MISTRA
ROCKS

QORTIN TAL-LACCA



TA' GREJGEL VALLEY

SHRINE

PARISH
CHURCH

PIGEON LOFT

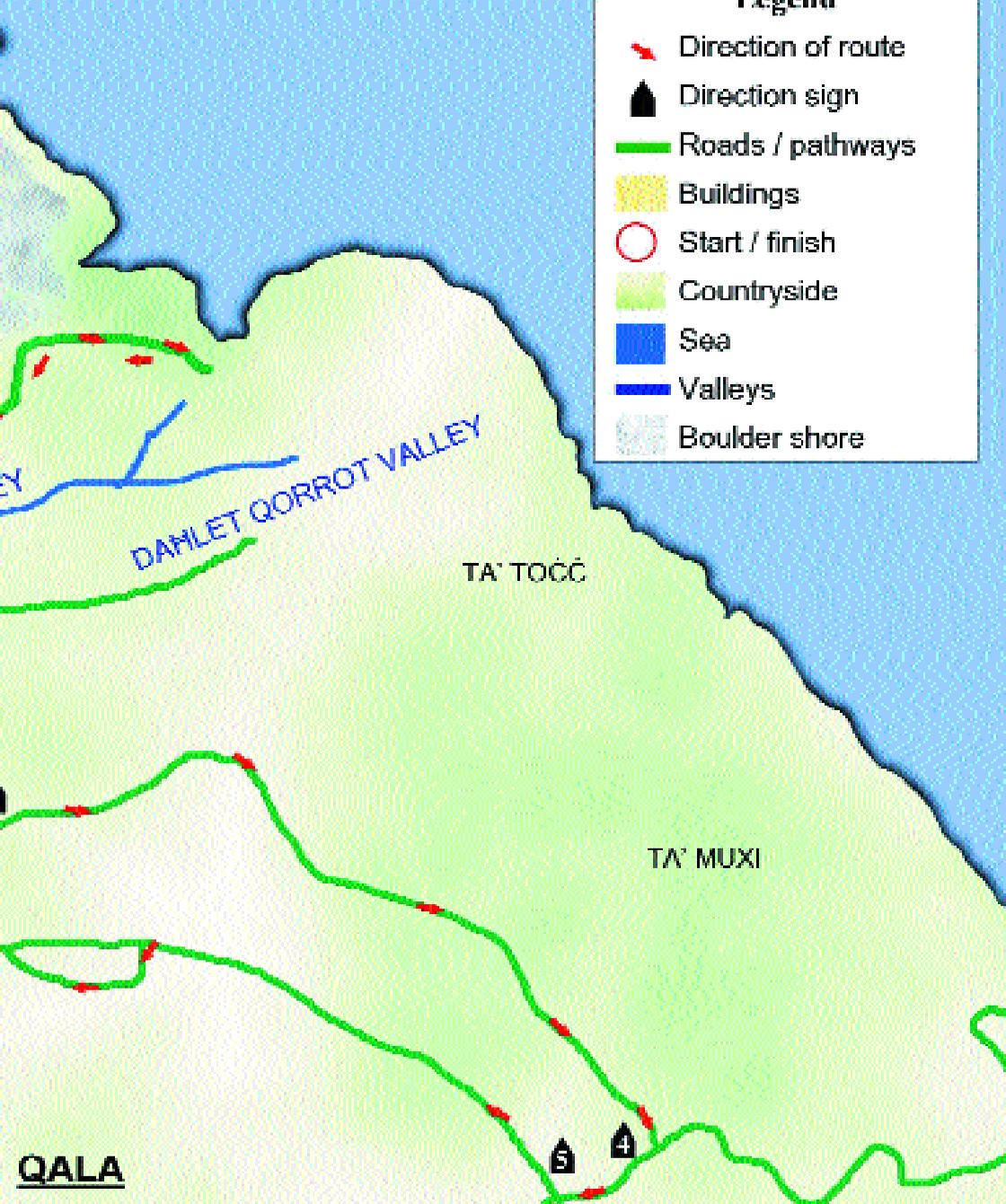
WINDMILL

NADUR

Dahlet Qorrot Walk

Legend

-  Direction of route
-  Direction sign
-  Roads / pathways
-  Buildings
-  Start / finish
-  Countryside
-  Sea
-  Valleys
-  Boulder shore





Prickly pears provide shelter to tomato plants

fishermen's houses still offer shelter to fishing boats during storms. A slipway is used to lower the boats into the sea.

From Dahlet Qorrot one can catch a glimpse of Ta' Soppu watchtower. This watchtower stands nearly 400 feet or 130 metres above sea level, overlooking the formidable Mistra Rocks with San Blas Bay to the west and Dahlet Qorrot Bay and its inlets to the east.

Its strategic location clearly indicates that the tower was



A farmer busily toiling in his field

constructed at that particular point to watch for approaches on Gozo's northeastern coast and the entrance to the Comino channel. It also enabled visual signalling between other towers in Malta and Gozo.

During World War II the tower was used as a wireless telegraph station, which was directly linked with its counterpart in the U.K., to transmit messages to and from other Middle East stations.

From Dahlet Qorrot, the route is directed up the road towards Nadur. When the road levels out you can notice a side street that branches off the main road to your left. This road

Il-Buskett



Mediterranean blue: the crystal-clear waters, a source of life and enjoyment

leads you to the cultivated fields at Ta' Grejgel valley. The fertile area surrounding Ta' Grejgel is a vast stretch of land, which has long since been used for agricultural purposes. Windmills dotting the landscape give ample proof of the regular supply of water. The land is used all year round and crop rotation is practised. Different types of vegetables and animal fodder are grown here.

Traditional agricultural techniques are gradually being replaced by modern ones. Drip irrigation methods are taking over conventional techniques. Some traditional cane windbreakers have been replaced by rows of cypress trees that still offer protection from the wind. An added advantage to this is the fact that the roots of such trees prevent soil from eroding. Prickly pears are also giving way to more modern plastic tents that shelter the maturing tomato plants.



Savouring the surrounding countryside – another way to unwind

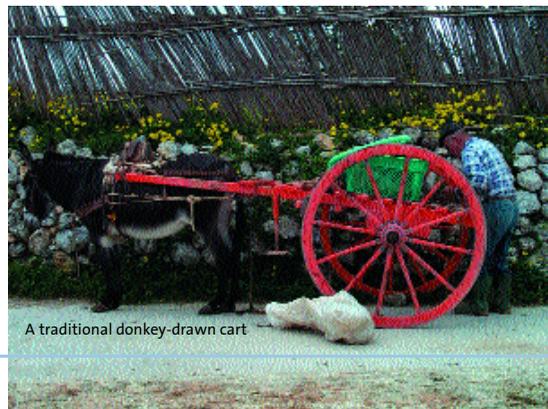


The Mediterranean thyme in flower

In 1695 this area became the private shooting reserve of the Grandmaster Alof de Wignacourt. Multiple and diverse bird species and hares induced the Grandmaster to secure the area. Penalties for those caught poaching included three years rowing on a galley if the culprit was of common standing, a fine of 40 *ewwieqi* if he was of high standing or a period of exile in the case of a minor.

Here you will notice that the route leads you uphill, offering spectacular views.

Proceeding straight on, you will arrive closer to the village of Qala. After walking a few metres along this road, you will soon reach a few converted farmhouses which are mostly rented out to upmarket tourists who opt for a self-catering holiday.



A traditional donkey-drawn cart

Here, the deep blue Mediterranean Sea can once again be seen. Here again the rock surface consists of upper coralline limestone with numerous deep fissures and depressions that result in deep soil pockets. The typical habitat here is that of a garigue with occasional carob and olive trees.

Arriving once again at a Y-junction, the uphill road is to be taken. Along this coast, one can find the remains of an old redoubt that was raised by the Knights of St. John in 1732.

Here too, one can find a few old corbelled huts. Triq is-Simar, now in the village of Qala, eventually forks



The mysterious flower of the Friar's Cow!



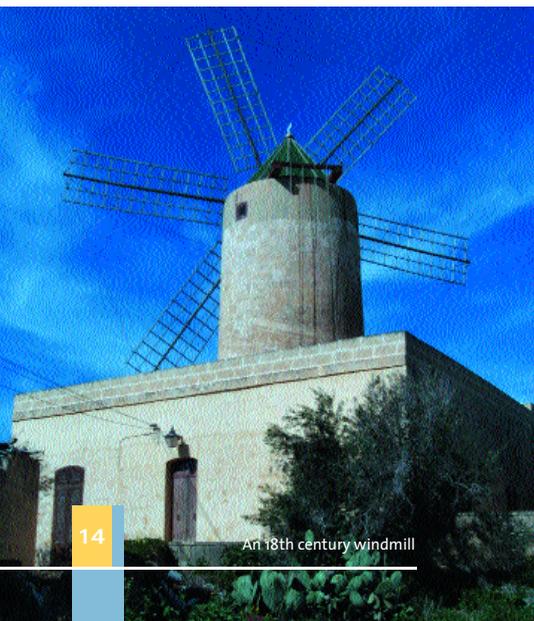
into two. The road on the right should be taken to proceed along the route.

This part of the route offers breathtaking views of Comino with



A pigeon loft

its Blue Lagoon. During the Aragonese period, as well as that of the Order of St. John, Comino was often attacked by corsairs as it was considered to be the best hiding place for the Turks. The Comino

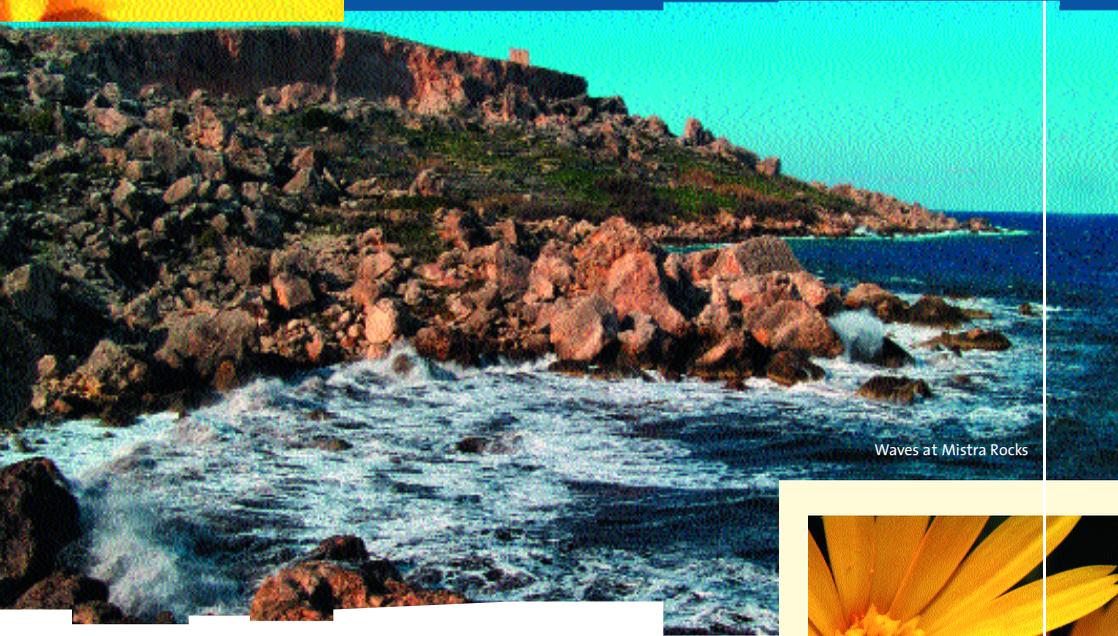


A Girma (corbelled hut)

watchtower, designed by Vittorio Cassar, was built in 1618 under Grandmaster Wignacourt and is presently being restored. Nowadays, only one family resides on the island. In the tourist season, the number of people staying on Comino is considerably higher due to the many Maltese and foreigners who flock to this enchanting island, which also contains a tourist complex.

Proceeding along Triq is-Simar, with unobstructed views of Qala, you will arrive at the outskirts of the village and enter Triq il-Wileg, which again branches off into two forks. Taking the left turning you will proceed to Triq il-Mithna where you can admire a restored eighteenth century windmill that was still being used for the grinding of grain and maize until up to thirty years ago.

Triq il-Qala in its turn, leads to Pjazza Repubblika, a square that is quaintly protected by a raised statue of Saint Joseph, the patron saint of Qala. Triq il-Qala takes you back to Nadur.



Waves at Mistra Rocks

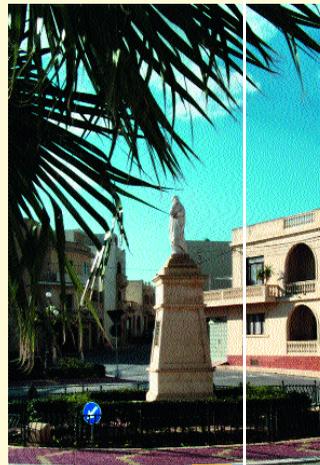
As you walk back to Nadur, you could chance upon an elderly local farmer grazing his herd of sheep and goats.

Keep walking straight back up the road until you reach the niche of Our Lady of Ta' Pinu once again in Triq it-Tigrija. Retracing your steps you will walk back to the Nadur village centre.



The Field Marigold

Statue of St. Joseph





The outskirts of Qala village

Facts about the route

- The route is suitable for hikes, horse rides and pedal bikes.
- Most of the route is accessible to small vehicles.
- If travelling by bus to the route starting point, you should check the local bus timetable to ensure that this fits your own schedule.
- The local weather forecast should be checked before setting off as there is hardly any shelter from adverse weather conditions along the route. A raincoat can come in very handy in rainy conditions.
- As most of the walk is over open countryside, it is advisable to carry a packed lunch. It is possible to buy food at Nadur and Qala.
- A direction sign at Nadur village square indicates the route starting point. This route is colour coded in red. A number of smaller direction signs, made of wood and numerically marked in ascending order, are found along the route to show the right direction, in the absence of clear landmarks.
- Public conveniences are available at Triq it-Tramuntana, Nadur.
- The walk may be broken down into smaller laps. Once Dahlet Qorrot is reached you may either walk back towards Nadur village square or proceed as per full route.
- Some fields are marked with white blotches of paint and the letters RTO indicate that the area is out of bounds for the visitor since it is privately owned.
- Bird trapping and bird shooting are practised in the countryside. There are, however strict regulations determining areas where such activities are permitted and times of year where no such activities are allowed. Note also that bird shooting is prohibited from 1.00pm onwards on Sundays and public holidays throughout the year.

Tips for the road

- Hikers are advised to follow the set route. Short cuts are to be avoided since many fields are privately owned.
- Hikers should not climb over rubble walls to avoid damaging them.
- Hikers should avoid collecting wildlife specimen including flowers or plants.
- Hikers are advised to tread carefully along the trails to avoid trampling on the sparse vegetation.
- The throwing of any stones or other objects into valleys or other freshwater sites is strictly prohibited.
- Walking or cycling close to the cliff edges is to be avoided.
- It is advisable to follow this route in broad daylight, giving due allowances for time allotted to inevitable stops, resting, taking of photographs and observing nature.



Local farmers having a break

Other useful information

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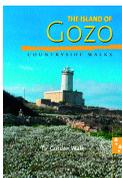
Useful telephone numbers

- *Emergency and rescue:* 112
- *Ambulance:* 196
- *Police Station:* 191
- *Telephone Enquiries:* 1182
- *Ministry for Gozo:* 21 56 14 82
website: <http://www.gozo.gov.mt>
- *Malta Tourism Authority:* 22 91 50 00
website: <http://www.visitmalta.com>
- *Gozo Tourism Association:* 21 56 51 71
- *Nadur local council:* 21 55 80 80
website: <http://www.gozo.com/nadur>
- *Qala local council:* 21 55 25 55
website: <http://www.qala.com.mt>

Dahlet Qorrot Walk

Through this route, one will get a taste of the island's rich history, traditions, nature and folklore. Discover the boathouses hewn in the rock at Dahlet Qorrot Bay, observe agricultural methods at Grejgel valley and enjoy the breathtaking views of the sister islands of Comino and Malta.

Other walks in the series



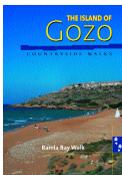
Ta' Gurdan Walk

Passing through: *Gharb - Wied il-Mielah
Ghasri Valley - Ta'Gurdan
Ta' Pinu*



Saltpan Walk

Passing through: *Victoria - Sara Valley
Ghasri - Ghasri Valley
Reqqa Point - Xwejini*



Ramla Bay Walk

Passing through: *Nadur - Wied Bingemma
Ramla Bay - Ta' Hamet*



Lunzjata Valley Walk

Passing through: *Victoria - Lunzjata Valley
Santa Lucija Hamlet
Ghajn Abdul*

Gozo Countryside Walks is a partnership project of the:

**Ministry for Gozo, Ministry of Tourism,
The Malta Tourism Authority and the Gozo Tourism Association**

The project is being launched in 2002, the World Tourism Organisation's International Year of Ecotourism.

Price Lm1.00