

Cultural Events in Malta organised by Local Councils

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The Living Heritage (TLH)

Types of Festivals (1)

- 1) Traditional i.e. Religious and Calendrical
- 2) Invented Festivals

“Traditions” which appear or claim to be old are often quite recent in origin and sometimes invented.

Eric Hobsbawm “The Invention of Tradition”



Festivals in Malta (1)

- Up to 1992 there were only religious and calendrical festivals
- With the advent of Local Councils a number of invented festivals were initiated



Festivals in Malta (2)

- Food Festivals: Żejt iż-Żejtun, Festa Frawli, Malta International
- Food Festival in Zabbar and Qormi Wine Festival
- Traditional culture festivals: Senglea Maritime International Festival, Malta Summer Carnival
- Historical Festivals: BirguFest and The Medieval Mdina Festival
- Military: Military Mtarfa
- Religious: St. Paul's Shipwreck, Festa Santa Marija



Statistics (1)

Year 2012

- 489 cultural events were organised by local councils across Malta and Gozo
- Organisers involved in cultural events for the general public reached 1,448
- Participants in all cultural events stood at 11,802 (with arts festivals and religious events once again having the largest share of participants)



Source: NSO

Food Festivals



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Olive festival in Žejtun 'Žejt iz-Žejtun'



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- Started in 2004
- Żejtun celebrates its olive oil festival, Żejt iż-Żejtun, annually at the end of September or beginning of October.
- The festival celebrates the opening of the olive harvest, the pressing of olives and their preservation.
- Folk singers and dancers take part in this festival which sees a number of farmers carrying the oil harvest for pressing.
- Maltese bread (ftajjar) with freshly-pressed olive oil is being distributed to visitors to taste during the two-day festival.





Strawberry Festival

Festa Frawli



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- First organised in 2000
- The picturesque parish square in the agricultural village of Imgarr hosts 'Festa Frawli', the annual Strawberry Fair
- A constant supply of freshly picked strawberries are on sale throughout the day, ferried regularly to the square by the farmers themselves
- A wide variety of desserts, snacks and beverages are available in an open air kitchen, all made from fresh Imgarr strawberries





Military Mtarfa



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- Mtarfa has a very strong military history and was home to a military hospital, cemetery and soldiers' quarters, due to its strategic location close to the Ta' Qali airstrip in WW

II

- The festival, attended by hundreds of people, featured attacks by Roman soldiers in their trademark box formation, pitched battles by Napoleon's soldiers and British troops, and World War II urban warfare between German, English and American forces.
- Military memorabilia enthusiasts could also admire vintage guns and military transport



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Traditional culture festivals



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Senglea Maritime International Festival



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- The Maritime Senglea Festival has been held in Senglea since 2009, with each edition becoming more elaborate and always attracting a larger audience
- The major theme this year is a focus on the celebration of authentic, traditional culture, bringing people together to honour the diversity of cultural expression and traditions
 - Artists will work on site along the Waterfront, with a variety of genres, including watercolor, acrylic and oil paintings, pencil drawings, ceramic and stone sculptures, hand-made soaps and body products, handmade Fabergé eggs, photography, traditional crafts and folklore





Malta Summer Carnival



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- The Malta Summer Carnival returned in 2013 on Bugibba's main square and includes:
 - ✓ a grand spectacle of floats - prepared specifically for this carnival
 - ✓ decorated grotesque masks
 - ✓ performances by dance companies
 - ✓ crafts exhibitions
 - ✓ and the traditional gostra (where competitors climb a greased pole over the sea in an attempt to grab the flag stuck to the end of it)





Historical Festivals



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The Medieval Mdina Festival



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- The Mdina Medieval Festival includes a number of activities
- The participants perform all day long in various corners and squares of Mdina, (including also battles, skirmishes, re-enactments of various scenes from the medieval period, like the town crier, a medieval slave market, sword fighting, archery, medieval tavern, magic shows, live music and spontaneous re-enactments)
- The Festival also includes with a number of stands, including food stands, improvised artists, crafts and medieval artifacts





The BirguFest



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PHOTOGRAPHY

- This event takes place in Birgu (also known as Vittoriosa), which is one of Malta's oldest and most historic cities
 - Birgufest aims to promote and generate interest in the historical heritage of Vittoriosa, the first home of the Knights of St. John in Malta, whilst providing entertainment which suits all tastes and ages
 - The aim is to highlight Birgu's historic and architectural beauty by candlelight in a romantic manner.
- Historic re-enactments, traditional music, choirs, local and foreign bands, discounted museum entrances and open churches, contribute to one of the most memorable events in the cultural Maltese calendar.





Impact of festivals in Malta

- Positive

- Increase in visitors to localities
- Increase in awareness on local culture
- Increase in business in localities
- Increase in awareness about craft



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- Negative

- Physical impacts (congestion)
- Lack of creativity – some festivals look the same
- Local character may not be always evident