

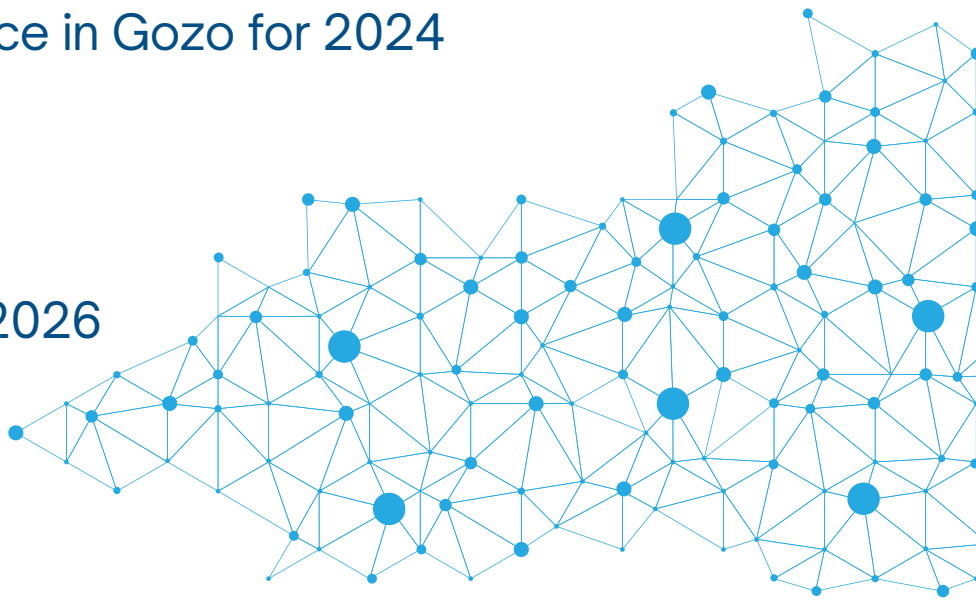
DESTINATION GOZO

Gozo Tourism Association Newsletter
July - August 2025



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Overview Tourism Performance in Gozo for 2024

In 2024, Gozo recorded another increase in foreign tourist arrivals, while domestic tourism saw a slight decline. According to NSO statistics, 20,918 more foreign tourists overnighted in Gozitan accommodation—an increase of 13.25% over the previous year. Day visitors from abroad also rose by 295,743, a 19% increase compared to 2023.

Most inbound tourists (56.5%) came from EU member states, with the United Kingdom remaining the single strongest market at 31.3%. Most visitors (60%) were aged between 25 and 44. non-package trips accounted for 83% of inbound tourism, and 44% of foreign tourists stayed in self-catering accommodation, 30% in hotels, and 26% in non-rented properties.

Expenditure by inbound tourists using Gozo as their sole destination was estimated at €88.6 million in 2024, up 7.8% from the previous year. Average spend per foreign visitor was €997, slightly down from €1,011 in 2023.

Domestic tourist numbers in 2024 amounted to 401,746—a decrease of 4,262 persons (1%) from 2023. Of these, 56.6% stayed in rented accommodation, while 43.4% stayed in non-rented properties, reflecting a rising trend in mainland residents purchasing holiday homes on Gozo. Domestic tourism expenditure was estimated at €66.5 million, down €1.2 million (2%) from 2023, translating to an average spend of €165.54 per domestic visitor (down €1.44 per capita).

Expenditure per Capita

Gozo - Single Centre	2022	2023	2024
Inbound Tourists	64,687	81,335	88,916
Total Expenditure (€000)	62,437	82,264	88,652
Expenditure per Capita (€)	965	1,011	997
Malta to Gozo	2022	2023	2024
Domestic Tourists	331,455	406,018	401,766
Total Expenditure (€000)	57,776	67,798	66,509
Expenditure per Capita (€)	174.3	167.1	165.5

More Connectivity

The Gozo Tourism Association has always advocated further connectivity to Gozo as this is fundamental for the sustainability of tourism. That is why the Gozo Tourism Association in early July this year welcomed the government announcement of yet another sea link between Gozo and mainland Malta.

The announced upcoming new fast ferry service between Gozo-Bugibba-Sliema will most definitely continue to enhance the inter-islands connectivity. This new service will be linking two prime touristic areas in Malta and through which the touristic sector in Gozo stands to benefit.

Apart from alleviating traffic from our roads network this sea link could be yet another opportunity for a quicker and more convenient mode of commuting for the thousands of day visitors to Gozo from the Bugibba-Sliema areas.

Finally, the Gozo Tourism Association notes that this new fast ferry service will be adding more pressure on the Mgarr Harbour. Therefore, once again the Gozo Tourism Association is recommending that the issue of the Mgarr harbour enlargement cannot be postponed further but should be a top priority for the Government.



SIGMA in Gozo

The Gozo Tourism Association welcomed the announcement of the strategic agreement between the Ministry for Gozo and Planning, InvestGozo and SiGMA, in the lead-up to SiGMA Euro-Med 2025 summit, scheduled for the beginning of September 2025 in Malta.

This is a unique opportunity to position Gozo within the digital economy narrative, aligned with Malta Vision 2050's based on sustainability, technological innovation, and regional balance, as well as in sync with the strategy of the Gozo Regional Development Authority to augment Gozo's international profile.

It is also a prospect to entice investment in Gozo from the gaming and technological sectors thus enabling the much-needed diversification in the Gozitan economy, which is presently reliant on the tourism and construction sectors.

On the other hand the networking retreat in Gozo by SiGMA in collaboration with the Ministry of Gozo and Invest Gozo, between 28th to 30th August, will bring over to Gozo for a few days a different profile of guest perfectly fitting with quality tourism. The participants in this retreat will also have the chance to experience the authenticity of Gozo through its luxury accommodation, tastes of its gastronomy, natural beauty and charming Gozitan hospitality.

All this is in line with the various national and regional strategies, policies and vision documents that are directing Gozo towards quality tourism and sustainable investment and innovation.



Budget Proposals 2026

Tourism for Gozo is undoubtedly one of its main economic pillars. The achievements of this sector are rooted in the island's uniqueness. Gozo has always been positioned, marketed, and promoted as a different destination, centered on its singular characteristics, natural and rural landscapes, and chequered history.

The Malta Tourism Strategy 2021–2030 rightly states that the island should continue building on Gozo’s distinctiveness, focusing on its unique selling propositions, and embracing climate-friendly tourism principles. Similarly, the Gozo Regional Development Authority’s Strategy for 2021–2030 identifies sustainable tourism—based on niche and quality offerings—as one of its priority areas.

However, more must be done to ensure that tourism in Gozo advances in line with these policies. The local tourism sector repeatedly expresses concern about the direction in which the destination is being marketed. The Gozo Tourism Association remains adamant that Gozo should be offered as a uniquely distinct experience.



Proposed Budget 2026 Measures

Connectivity

- Retain, improve, and sustain the fast ferry service to attract niche tourists to Gozo.
- Upgrade the fast ferry terminal on the Mġarr quay to provide adequate waiting facilities for commuters, especially with the new proposed Sliema-Buġibba-Mġarr service.
- Commission a new electrically propelled wheelchair-accessible ferry to replace the M/S Nikolaus and maintain a four-vessel rotation.
- Initiate the development of the rural airfield to establish a fixed wing airlink between Gozo and Malta.
- Conduct studies and impact assessments for the enlargement of Mġarr harbour.
- Invest in infrastructure to upgrade the Ċirkewwa South quay, offering additional berthing and marshalling space in line with the North quay's standards.
- Enhance berthing and passenger facilities for cruise ships, including first-aid paramedics for emergencies.
- Identify an alternative port to absorb part of the marine traffic currently operating from Mġarr harbour.
- Improve and equip landing sites for cruise tenders at Xlendi, Marsalforn, Ix-Xatt l-Aħmar, and Hondoq ir-Rummien to serve as contingencies when Mġarr harbour access is restricted.
- Commission studies on alternative land access routes to Mġarr harbour, which is presently served by a single road.
- Implement digital ticketing across ferries, buses, niche tours, museums, and other cultural attractions.

Proposed Budget 2026 Measures

Touristic Offer

- Ringfence the ECO contribution collected from Gozitan accommodation establishments to be invested in product upgrading like kitting up areas for the diving community, Climbing and abseiling areas, kitesurf zones, signage, and trail upgrades.
- Invest in a six plus person hyperbaric oxygen therapy chamber at the Gozo General Hospital
- Ensure and enforce the right of access to the diving sector for the shoreline on the North and Northwest of Gozo.
- Establish a marine park to attract more divers to Gozo and provide technical and financial support within a management structure for the area.
- Allocate funds to start implementing the actions for the Gozitan diving sector as listed in the Diving Strategy for the Maltese Islands.
- The VAT applicable for admission to shows, theatres, fairs, amusement parks, concerts, museums, cinemas, exhibitions and similar cultural events and facilities should be reduced from 18% to 7%.
- Introduce specific initiatives for the preservation and promotion of Gozo's cultural and heritage sites, which could include partnerships with international heritage organisations.
- Fast track the amendments to the Tourism Act 1999 to reflect the current trends in tourism establishments.
- Introduce a tailor-made grant scheme to Gozo based operators to develop, upgrade, and modernise artisan workshops, culinary demos, e-bike heritage routes and Agri-Tourism.
- The competent Authorities are urged to amend the summer construction break time directive. GTA propose that excavation and demolition works only, be prohibited within a 50-meter radius of any Malta Tourism Authority (MTA) licensed premises. This directive should extend across the entirety of Gozo, rather than being confined to selected few streets.

Proposed Budget 2026 Measures

Environment

- Develop new regional plans and policies specifically designed for Gozo to preserve it as an island of villages within a modern world.
- A Gozo-specific planning authority, or at minimum, stronger regional autonomy within existing frameworks to enforce Gozo-appropriate environmental and development policies.
- Retain the existing incentives on sale and purchase of properties in UCA where the purchaser signs a guarantee to restore the property without subdivision.
- Extend the incentives in all vernacular and post-war properties including UCA where buyers undertake to preserve the integrity of the property, respecting and not exceeding the surrounding traditional village heights.
- Introduce a fiscal incentive scheme to encourage the restoration and conversion of existing traditional properties and bring them back to life as residential homes, boutique hotels.
- Establish a marine reserve around the Gozitan coast and ensure its enforcement, applying the model of the Cirkewwa marine reserve.



Proposed Budget 2026 Measures



Promoting the Destination

- Create a joint marketing and incentive fund to attract 10-12 new cruise ship calls per year in Gozo specialising in winter breaks and longer stays to market and sell Gozo during the low months.
- Expand participation in dedicated sectoral tourism fairs to promote destination Gozo for Sports tourism, weddings, and gastronomy.
- Offer financial and technical support to Gozitan accommodation establishments to achieve a recognised sustainability label to reinforce Gozo as an eco-destination.
- Assist and incentivise touristic establishments to set up their respective user-friendly websites, which are multilingual, including online payments and directing booking patterns towards mobile and tablet booking devices, whilst optimising the use of social media influencers and virtual reality tours.
- Create, offer, support, and entice new niches like adventure, activity, sports, walking, digital nomads, and well-being.

Proposed Budget 2026 Measures

Human Capital

- Introduce a tax credit or grant scheme conditional on 12 months employment in tourism.
- Offer a grant for local students who opt to work during the weekends or their annual holidays in Gozitan tourism establishments.
- Organise courses targeting foreign employees to learn the basics of the Maltese and English Language, as well the history, culture, and basic legal regulations of the Maltese Islands.
- Set up a scheme to assist employers and employees to attend a comprehensive list of training courses, covering a wide range of topics tailor-made for Gozitan touristic needs including the upskilling of staff to address today's demands and technologies.
- To entice foreign staff retention, amend the legislation so that once TCN employees quit their job, they need to reapply from the beginning through their prospective employer to obtain their work permit afresh.
- Introduce National Insurance contribution credits for the winter months to encourage retention of employees during off-peak months.
- Develop the ITS Gozo Campus into a specialised vocational tourism institution that caters not only for Gozitans but also for Maltese and foreign students who opt to follow specific courses.
- Ensure that the Public Sector is no longer in competition with the Private Sector for the recruitment of employees by offering favourable and unmatched working conditions. The touristic private sector is to be encouraged to introduce flexible working hours offering favourable conditions and incentives for career progression within the tourism sector.

Statistics

Tourism in Gozo's Collective Accommodation – January to June 2025 vs 2024

According to the latest available NSO statistics, Gozo's tourism sector continued to perform strongly in the first half of 2025, with collective accommodation figures showing further growth across foreign markets between January and June, when compared to the same period in 2024.

Foreign arrivals registered a significant increase, rising from 22,134 in the first six months of 2024 to 26,830 in 2025 – an additional 4,696 visitors, equivalent to growth of 21.2%. Bed nights also increased, climbing by 8.9% from 77,203 to 84,095, reflecting a sustained rise in demand and longer stays among international guests.

Collective Accommodation	January-June 2024	January-June 2025	Change 2024/ 2025	Change % 2024/ 2025
Foreign Arrivals	22,134	26,830	4,696	21.20%
Bed Nights	77,203	84,095	6,892	8.93%

Meanwhile, domestic tourism also registered strong growth during the first half of 2025. Local arrivals increased by 24.7%, rising from 25,805 in January–June 2024 to 32,168 in the same period of 2025. Bed nights by domestic visitors grew even more, climbing by 29% from 51,895 to 66,953. This points to sustained demand from the local market, with more residents choosing overnight stays in collective accommodation in Gozo during the first six months of the year.

Collective Accommodation	January-June 2024	January-June 2025	Change 2024/ 2025	Change % 2024/ 2025
Domestic Arrivals	25,805	32,168	6,363	24.66%
Bed Nights	51,895	66,953	15,058	29.00%

Overall, total arrivals in collective accommodation in Gozo rose by 23% in the first half of 2025, increasing from 47,939 in January–June 2024 to 58,998– in 2025. Bed nights also grew by 17%, up from 129,098 to 151,048. This reflects steady growth in demand from both international and domestic visitors during the first six months of the year.

Statistics

Inbound Tourists to Gozo - January-June 2025 vs 2024

According to the National Statistics Office, Gozo and Comino recorded mixed results in June 2025 compared to the same month in 2024:

Day Visitors: Numbers rose by 12.6%, from 195,921 in June 2024 to 220,656 in June 2025.

Overnight Visitors: In contrast, overnight stays declined by 11.9%, falling from 21,200 in June 2024 to 18,676 in June 2025.

This indicates that while Gozo and Comino continued to attract more day trippers, overnight tourism eased slightly during the month.

Gozo/ Comino	June			2024/ 2025
	2023	2024	2025	% change
Day Visitors	160,244	195,921	220,656	12.6%
Overnight Visitors	16,271	21,200	18,676	-11.9%

Overall, between January and June 2025, Gozo and Comino recorded continued growth in inbound tourism compared to the same period in 2024. Day visitors rose by 17%, increasing from 783,140 in 2024 to 916,231 in 2025, highlighting the island's strong appeal for single-day trips. Overnight visitors also grew, albeit more modestly, up by 4.2% from 68,950 to 71,856.

Gozo/ Comino	January - June			2024/ 2025
	2023	2024	2025	% change
Day Visitors	629,744	783,140	916,231	17%
Overnight Visitors	57,282	68,950	71,856	4.2%