

# DESTINATION GOZO

Gozo Tourism Association Newsletter  
March - April 2026



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# GTA's Participation in International Tourism Fairs



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The Gozo Tourism Association once again participated in **ITB Berlin**, held in March 2026, reaffirming its longstanding commitment to maintaining a strong presence at one of the world's most influential travel trade fairs. Bringing together thousands of exhibitors, buyers, and media representatives from across the globe, ITB Berlin continues to provide an essential platform for strengthening Gozo's international positioning within an increasingly competitive tourism landscape.

Gozo was represented at the centrally located Malta stand, organised by the Malta Tourism Authority in collaboration with the Ministry for Gozo and Planning's Directorate for Tourism and Economic Development. The stand effectively showcased the diversity of the Maltese Islands, with Gozo presented as a complementary yet distinctive destination, offering visitors a unique blend of authenticity, cultural depth, natural beauty, and tranquillity.



# GTA's Participation in International Tourism Fairs

Throughout the fair, the GTA representative was present at the Gozo desk, engaging with a wide range of travel professionals, media representatives, and potential partners. A comprehensive selection of promotional material was made available, including key publications such as “Die Insel der Mythen und Wunder” and **InGozo: The Directory of Gozitan Tourism Services**, both of which continue to play an important role in providing detailed insights into Gozo’s tourism offering, particularly for German-speaking and international audiences.

The fair attracted a strong volume of trade visitors and media interest, especially during peak periods, reflecting sustained demand for authentic, experience-driven destinations. The GTA representative met with various tour operators and industry stakeholders, exploring new opportunities for collaboration while further consolidating existing relationships within key markets.

Overall, participation in ITB Berlin remains a cornerstone of Gozo’s international promotional strategy, supporting continued visibility, strengthening market presence, and reinforcing the island’s positioning within both established and emerging tourism segments.



In April 2026, Malta and Gozo participated for the first time in **The Ideal Home Show** in London, representing a strategic step towards expanding outreach beyond traditional travel trade channels and engaging directly with a wider consumer audience within the UK market.

# GTA's Participation in International Tourism Fairs

The Gozo Tourism Association was also represented on the Visit Malta stand, contributing to the overall promotion of the Maltese Islands as a diverse and appealing destination. Within this context, Gozo was prominently featured as a distinct yet complementary destination, with emphasis placed on its unique identity characterised by scenic landscapes, rich cultural heritage, and a slower, more relaxed pace of life.

The stand attracted a high volume of visitors from a broad spectrum of age groups, many of whom were actively seeking inspiration and ideas for their next holiday. The presence of the Maltese Islands was very well received overall, with visitors showing particular interest in Gozo's authenticity, natural environment, and opportunities for both relaxation and experiential travel.

This setting provided a valuable opportunity for direct engagement with potential travellers, allowing for meaningful interaction and the promotion of Gozo in a more lifestyle-oriented context. Such exposure is especially relevant in strengthening the island's appeal within the UK market, not only as a travel destination but also as a place associated with quality of life and distinctive Mediterranean experiences.

This first-time participation proved to be highly beneficial, complementing existing trade-focused initiatives while contributing to a more diversified and balanced promotional approach for Gozo and the Maltese Islands as a whole.



# Hyperbaric Unit Inauguration

Gozo's tourism product has been further strengthened with the inauguration of a new Gozo Hyperbaric Unit at Gozo General Hospital. The six-person facility will improve emergency response for diving incidents, positioning Gozo more competitively for overseas diving enthusiasts, and broaden access to hyperbaric oxygen therapy for Gozo General hospital patients.

The unit was financed from the eco-contribution fund and delivered through collaboration between the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Tourism, the Ministry for Health and Active Ageing, the Ministry for Gozo and Planning, and with the support of the Malta Tourism Authority.

The Gozo Tourism Association welcomes this installation and expresses its satisfaction that its lobbying for ring-fencing eco-contributions collected in Gozo has directly contributed to this facility. GTA is confident that this unit enhances visitor safety and strengthens Gozo's reputation as a well-equipped diving destination.

Present at the inauguration, on 12th March 2026, were Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Tourism Dr. Ian Borg, Minister for Health and Active Ageing Jo Etienne Abela, and Minister for Gozo and Planning Clint Camilleri, together with MTA Chairman Dr. Charles Mangion, MTA CEO Carlo Micallef, CEO of the Gozo General Hospital Ms. Carmen Ogilvie-Galea, GTA Chairman Paul Scicluna, GTA Secretary Mark Busutil, GTA CEO Joe Muscat and GTA Treasurer Konrad Scicluna as well as officials from PDSA.

Before the inauguration, the aforementioned ministers and officials visited ix-Xatt l-Aħmar dive site and met local divers to discuss the hyperbaric unit, wreck conservation, and other diving-product matters.



# From high visibility to high value

## Editorial

According to the National Statistics Office (NSO), 2.3 million tourists, representing 57% of all visitors to the Maltese islands in 2025, visited Gozo. This strong visibility highlights the island's enduring appeal.

However, understanding Gozo's tourism reality requires a closer look at visitor patterns. Of these visitors, 2.1 million experienced Gozo as a day trip, while just under 200,000 chose to stay overnight in local accommodation.

This dynamic presents both a strength and an opportunity. High day trip volumes demonstrate Gozo's magnetic pull, while the comparatively modest number of overnight stays signals significant untapped potential for deeper engagement, higher value creation, and more balanced year-round activity.

The increase in day visitors, further supported by the introduction of the fast ferry service, has made Gozo more accessible than ever. This accessibility is a major asset, though it also concentrates activity during peak hours and around key hubs such as Mgarr, Victoria, and popular coastal and cultural sites.

Meanwhile, overnight tourism, which typically brings higher spending, greater cultural immersion, and a lighter environmental footprint, remains poised for growth.



# From high visibility to high value

## Editorial

Gozo's tourism model is therefore characterised by a positive paradox. Exceptional visitor numbers paired with an opportunity to enhance value capture. Day visitors contribute to vibrancy and visibility, while overnight guests offer the depth of engagement that aligns with Gozo's identity as a tranquil, authentic, slow-paced island. Based on the MTA Guest Profile for Gozo, evidence indicates that a proportion of day trippers are likely to return in the future for a longer holiday on the island. Consequently, the foreign day visitor segment represents a strategic opportunity to convert same-day visits into extended overnight stays, thereby enhancing Gozo's tourism performance and long-term visitor retention.

The shared challenge and opportunity for all tourism stakeholders is to rebalance this model in a way that strengthens economic resilience, preserves Gozo's unique character and enhances quality of life. Achieving this requires a coordinated strategy that manages visitor flows, improves mobility, elevates the overnight experience, safeguards cultural and natural assets, and embeds data driven decision making into governance.

A shift from volume to value is essential for long-term sustainability. Overnight guests provide more stable, year-round demand and naturally complement Gozo's positioning as a destination for nature, culture, wellness, and slow travel. The goal is to evolve visitor perception so that Gozo is seen not only as a place to visit, but as a place to stay, unwind, and experience deeply.

A more sustainable approach would include offering an evening trip option to Gozo, enabling a smoother distribution of visitor arrivals throughout the day. This would help maintain high levels of accessibility, while alleviating pressure during peak daytime periods.

Measures such as timed boarding, dynamic pricing, and coordinated ferry schedules could help distribute arrivals more evenly. Sensitive natural and cultural sites would benefit from carrying capacity management, while a visitor dispersal strategy could guide travellers toward lesser-known attractions, spreading benefits more widely.

Improving connectivity within Gozo is equally important. Integrated ferry-public transport-open-top bus ticketing would simplify movement, reduce reliance on private vehicles, and enhance the visitor experience.

# From high visibility to high value

## Editorial

To unlock higher value tourism, Gozo must continue strengthening its appeal as a multi-day destination. Positioning the island around diving, wellness, nature, gastronomy, and cultural immersion would differentiate it within the Maltese tourism offering. The rich year-round events calendar already in place, nature-based activities and coordinated Malta-Gozo holiday packages can further reduce seasonality and encourage longer stays.

Protecting Gozo's cultural and environmental identity remains central to its long-term success. Strong development controls, support for agriculture and crafts, and investment in heritage conservation will reinforce the authenticity that visitors increasingly seek.

A transition toward data-driven governance will further enhance better management. Real-time monitoring of visitor flows, mobility patterns, and site congestion can guide smarter planning. An annual data assessment could track progress, while predictive analytics could support decisions on ferry capacity, transport routes, and event scheduling.

If implemented cohesively, these measures would enhance visitor satisfaction, increase overnight stays, reduce congestion, and safeguard Gozo's distinctive character. The result would be a more sustainable, resilient tourism model aligned with the island's long-term vision and the wellbeing of its residents.

Gozo possesses all the natural and cultural assets needed to move beyond an often-marketed day-trip stop and emerge as a distinctive, immersive, multi-day island experience, one that strengthens its identity, while unlocking new opportunities for sustainable growth.



# Electoral Manifesto

## GTA Proposals

Gozo stands at a defining moment in its development. As our island continues to evolve, so too must our vision for its future, one that safeguards our identity, strengthens our economy, and enhances the quality of life for all who call Gozo home. This document is built on the belief that progress must be both sustainable and people-centred, ensuring that growth never comes at the expense of our character, our environment, or our community.

The proposals that follow are guided by a commitment to responsible governance, long-term planning, and the empowerment of Gozitans across every sector. They reflect the aspirations of an island that is proud of its heritage yet ambitious in its outlook; an island that values innovation while protecting what makes it unique; an island determined to offer opportunities to its young people, security to its families, and dignity to its workers.

These proposals set out a clear and practical roadmap for a stronger, more resilient, and more prosperous Gozo. It is a call to action, an invitation to shape a future where our island thrives economically, socially, and culturally, while remaining true to the values that define us. Together, we can build a Gozo that is prepared for tomorrow and worthy of the generations to come.

## SUMMARY

### Regional Governance

The time has come for Gozo to move towards a more autonomous and structured regional governance model.

- Gozo's regionality should be officially recognised through its entrenchment in the Constitution of Malta, achieved by establishing the Gozo Regional Governance Council.

# Electoral Manifesto

## GTA Proposals

### Connectivity

Connectivity remains essential to Gozo's social and economic future.

The GTA proposes:

- A fourth ferry identical to the existing fleet
- A dedicated cargo vessel
- Plan for the renewal of the present Gozo Channel fleet
- Extended Fast Ferry schedules
- Expansion of Mġarr Harbour or an alternative port
- A proper terminal at Mġarr
- Improved road infrastructure and contingency landing sites
- Introduction of smaller-capacity public transport vehicles, better suited for the narrow streets of Gozitan village cores complemented by increased service frequency across all routes
- The realisation of the rural airfield
- A permanent link as part of the longer-term nationwide underground rail network



# Electoral Manifesto

## GTA Proposals

### Tourism

Tourism must continue to focus on quality over quantity, prioritising overnight visitors while managing the pressures of day-trippers.

The GTA proposes:

- Official recognition of GTA as Gozo's regional tourism entity
- A Tourism Policy for Gozo
- A Carrying Capacity Assessment Study
- A Gozo Marketing Plan and content strategy
- Investment in niche tourism sectors and recreational facilities
- Upgraded roads, signage, parking, and tourism infrastructure

### Human Resources

Gozo's tourism identity depends on its people.

The GTA advocates for:

- Incentives to attract and retain local workers
- Practical, sector-sensitive discussion on the four-day week
- The transformation of the ITS Gozo Campus into a modern vocational centre specialising in Agri-Tourism, Rural Tourism, and Eco-Tourism
- Place the management of the ITS Gozo Campus under Ministry for Gozo

## CONCLUSION

This manifesto is a roadmap for a more resilient, competitive, and authentic Gozo. Through stronger governance, improved connectivity, sustainable tourism planning, and investment in human capital, Gozo can build a future of prosperity while preserving what makes it unique.

# Statistics Inbound Tourists

## Inbound Tourists to Gozo – March 2026 vs 2025

According to the NSO, Gozo recorded continued growth in inbound tourism during March 2026 when compared to the same month in 2025, with increases registered in both same-day and overnight visitors.

Same-day visitors increased by 5.0%, rising from 136,881 in March 2025 to 143,779 in March 2026, confirming sustained demand for day travel to Gozo and Comino. Overnight visitors also registered an increase of 3.1%, rising from 9,055 in March 2025 to 9,337 in March 2026. This growth reflects the continued strengthening of Gozo’s tourism performance and overnight stay sector.

Gozo/ Comino	March			2025/ 2026
	2024	2025	2026	% change
<b>Day Visitors</b>	111,603	136,881	143,779	<b>5%</b>
<b>Overnight Visitors</b>	7,651	9,055	9,337	<b>3%</b>

Overall, between January and March 2026, Gozo recorded continued growth in inbound tourism compared to the same period in 2025, with increases registered in both same-day and overnight visitors. Same-day visitors increased by 5.1%, rising from 313,631 in 2025 to 329,688 in 2026. Overnight visitors also recorded an increase of 8.0%, rising from 18,996 in 2025 to 20,508 in 2026. This growth highlights Gozo’s continued appeal as a destination for both short visits and longer stays, while confirming the positive trend in the island’s tourism performance.

Gozo/ Comino	January - March			2025/ 2026
	2024	2025	2026	% change
<b>Day Visitors</b>	255,583	313,631	329,688	<b>5%</b>
<b>Overnight Visitors</b>	17,056	18,996	20,508	<b>8%</b>