

The Knights of St. John (1530-1798)

- 16th century Having declined economically and culturally, Malta is now little more than a rock with a population of about 20,000.
- 1530 – 1798 Malta is principally influenced by the rule of the Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem. The Knights (and their Maltese auxiliaries) mount a successful resistance against the Turks ("Great Siege" of 1565), thus bringing to a halt the Ottoman advance into the Western Mediterranean.
- 1530 Knights of St. John of Jerusalem take possession.
Emperor Charles V of Aragon or Spain who was the feudal ruler of the islands at that time gave Malta in perpetual sovereignty to the Sovereign Military Order of St. John of Jerusalem (The Knights of Malta) for the annual rent of one falcon to be presented to the Emperor's viceroy in Sicily.
The Knights had been expelled from Rhodes in 1522 by their eternal enemies, the Ottoman Turks and they had been seeking a base from where they could continue their relentless attacks on the Infidels.
The Knights occupy the islands making Birgù (modern Vittoriosa) their Headquarters.
With a military and hospitaller Order established in Malta, the population felt much safer. The Knights started to fortify the area around the Grand Harbour where they had their galleys and built their auberges.
- 1551 July The Ottomans under Turkish corsair Dragut attack Gozo and cart off the entire population of 5000 into slavery in Tarhuna, Libya.
- 1561 Inquisition officially established.
- 1565 The Great Siege. Malta besieged by Turks but the Knights helped by the Maltese resist and win.
The Great Siege of Malta was fought leading to a victory by the islanders. During the 268 years of administration under the Order of St. John the Maltese population continued to increase and it was during this period that the language started to acquire its Romantic influences.
- 1565 July – September The Ottomans lay siege to Malta with 181 ships and 30,000 fighting men against a defence force of 600/700 Knights and 8,000/9,000 men. They are repulsed after a long summer of battles. The event is still commemorated today as Great Siege Day (8th September). Birgu is renamed Vittoriosa.
- 1566 Work commences on the building of the fortifications for the new city, Valletta. Founding of Valletta, the new capital city named after Grand Master La Valette, hero of the Great Siege.
- 1568 Jean Parisot La Valette buried in Valletta.
- 1571 The Maltese capital is formally moved from Birgù to Valletta.
A Christian fleet, assisted by the Knights, inflicts defeat on the Ottomans at Lepanto (Battle of Lepanto).
- 1573 Foundation stone laid for St. John's Co-Cathedral.

- 1592 Founding of Jesuits College, which later becomes the academic University of Malta.
- 1614 A strong Turkish attempt to land on the island is driven off.
- 1615 Wignacourt Aqueduct completed to supply fresh water to Valletta.
- 1675 – 1676 Epidemic outbreak of the bubonic plague; approximately 11,000 people out of a population of 70,000 died.
- 1676 School of Anatomy and Surgery founded at the Sacred Infirmary, the Knight's hospital in Valletta.
Plague causes 8,569 deaths.
- 1693 Earthquake wrecks most of Mdina.
- 18th century The Order becomes demilitarized and corrupted by wealth.
- 1732 Manoel Theater dedicated.
- 1735 Sicilian ports are closed to Maltese ships after Grand Master Vilhena resists Charles VIII's attempt to influence Maltese affairs.
- 1768 Jesuits expelled and property transferred to the Knights by Papal Order.
- 1769 Conversion of Jesuits College to a University.
- 1775 Uprising of the priests brutally repressed.
- 1784 Creation of a legal code by Grand Master De Rohan.
- 1792 Possessions of the Knights of St. John located in France seized by the French revolutionary government.
The French National Assembly confiscates the Order's lands in France.