

The British Period (1800-1964)

- 1800 The Maltese revolt against the French and sought British assistance. Fresh from the victory of the Battle of the Nile against Napoleon's forces, Nelson placed Capt. Alexander Ball in charge of blockading the 4,000 strong French garrison in Valletta. Reinforced by Portuguese marines and later by 1,500 British troops, the French were starved into surrender. Proposals to restore the Knights under Neapolitan or Russian protection was opposed by the Maltese who preferred British protection.
After being occupied by Napoleon in 1798 Malta turns to Britain for protection. The French capitulate and the British occupy the island.
After only a few months of French administration, the Maltese rebelled and managed to block the enemy in Valletta. The Maltese asked the help of the British to rid them of the French and the islands were kept under Britain's protection, later becoming part of the British Empire after the Treaty of Paris. Being not only a colony but a military base Malta couldn't avoid taking part in the Second World War. For their bravery the Maltese were awarded the George Cross by King George VI. The influence of the British on the Maltese way of life right up to Independence in 1964 is evident in many aspects.
- 1802 The Napoleonic Wars resume because of Malta.
The Treaty of Amiens stipulates that Malta should be returned to the Knights, but a powerful group of Maltese declares allegiance to Britain.
- 1813 The Bathurst Constitution.
Sir Thomas Maitland is appointed as the first British Governor of Malta. Extensive constitutional and administrative reforms are made.
Bubonic plague; nearly 4,500 of the 96,400 residents died.
- 1814 Malta declared free of the plague.
The Treaty of Paris formally recognizes Malta as a British Crown Colony.
- 1815 Congress of Vienna affirms Treaty of Paris.
- 1828 Vatican Church-State proclamation. Right of Sanctuary revoked.
- 1831 (Church) See of Malta made independent of See of Palermo.
- 1833 Construction begins on Mosta dome.
- 1835 First Council of Government under British rule.
The first constitution of Malta is established giving the Maltese representation in the affairs of the islands. New constitutions were introduced in 1849, 1887 and 1903.
- 1839 Abolition of Press censorship. Laying of cornerstone for St. Paul's Anglican Cathedral.
- 1846 Carnival riots.
- 1848 The British Admiralty's first dry dock opens on Malta.
- 1849 Council of Government with elected members under British rule.
- 1853 – 1856 During the Crimean War, Malta acts as a supply station for British forces.

- 1869 The opening of the Suez Canal makes Malta an important port on the British route to India.
- 1870 Referendum on Ecclesiastics serving on Council of Government.
- 1881 Anglo-Egyptian Bank founded in Malta.
- 1882 Creation of Executive Council under British rule.
- 1883 Malta Railway begins operation.
- 1885 First postage stamps issued.
- 1886 Surgeon Major David Bruce discovers microbe causing Malta Fever.
- 1887 Council of Government with "dual control" under British rule.
- 1888 Construction begins on Royal Opera House.
Simmons-Rampolla agreement (Vatican-British).
- 1903 Return to the 1849 form of Council of Government under British rule.
- 1904 Tram service begins.
- 1905 Dr. Themistocles Zammit discovers source of Malta Fever.
- 1912 Dun Karm writes his first poem in Maltese.
- 1914 – 1918 World War I; Malta is not directly involved in the fighting but becomes known as the "Nurse of the Mediterranean", providing 25,000 beds for the wounded.
- 1919 *Sette Giugno* riots sparked by cost of living. National Assembly convened. Self-government granted under British rule. The Malta Union of Teachers (MUT) is the first Maltese trade union.
- Since 1920 Self-government with own parliament; during Second World War, Malta is blockaded and bombed by the axis powers but does not yield although the toll is heavy.
- 1921 First Parliament opens. Joseph Howard named Prime Minister. A new constitution gave the Maltese full self-government in 'matters of local concern'. The constitution did not work and was suspended in 1930, restored in 1932 and suspended again in 1933.
- 1923 The Maltese National Anthem, "Innu Malti" played first time in public. Dr. Francesco Buhagiar becomes Prime Minister.
- 1924 Sir Ugo P. Mifsud becomes Prime Minister.
- 1927 The Malta Labour Party comes to power for the first time together with Strickland's party. Sir Gerald Strickland becomes Prime Minister.
- 1930 Constitution suspended because of a political-religious dispute between Strickland and the Church.
- 1931 Malta Railway closes.

- 1932 Constitution restored under British rule. Sir Ugo P. Mifsud becomes Prime Minister.
- 1933 Constitution withdrawn as Fascist Italy increases its influence on Malta. Malta reverts to the Crown Colony status it held in 1813.
- 1934 Malti and English become dual official languages. The first official grammar for the Maltese Language published.
- 1935 Rediffusion Radio launched, with the aim of countering Fascist propaganda from Italy.
- 1936 Constitution revised to provide for nomination of members to Executive Council under British rule.
- 1939 Constitution revised to provide for an elected Council of Government under British rule. Germany invades Poland and WWII starts.
- 1939 – 1945 World War II.
- 1940 The Second World War catches Malta unprepared as Italy enters the war. In June, three Gladiator fighters on their own take on the Italian air force for three whole weeks.
- 1940 June 11th The first Italian bombs are dropped in Malta
- 1941 Daring Italian e-boat attack on Grand Harbour fails. British aircraft carrier HMS Illustrious damaged, bombed, repaired and departs. The Germans join the Italians in bombing Malta.
- 1942 Operation Pedestal Convoy arrives in Grand Harbour and saves Malta from starvation and surrender.
Rommel's advances in North Africa leaves Malta isolated with the nearest Allied bases in Gibraltar and Alexandria each 2,000 miles away.
The Second Great Siege. Over 6,000 tonnes of bombs are dropped on Malta in April alone. On 15 April the George Cross is awarded to the Maltese people for their bravery during the air raids. The George Cross is incorporated into the National Flag.
Montgomery's successes in Alamein (Egypt) eventually relieved the pressure on Malta and by the end of the year the invasion of Sicily was being planned at Fort St. Angelo in Vittoriosa (Birgu) and the Phoenicia Hotel in Floriana.
In August and September, the German and Italian air forces suffer heavy losses over Malta and in October they concede defeat.
The UK government announces a grant of GBP 30 million for the reconstruction of the island.
Poliomyelitis outbreak with 483 cases; 397 Maltese children under the age of five with a fatality rate of 3.7%, 57 British service personnel over age 20 with a high morbidity and high mortality rate (19.3%), only 4 Maltese adults and no Maltese soldiers effected; obviously the virus was indigenous to the island since most adults seemed to have immunity.
- 1943 US President Franklin D. Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and King George VI visit Malta. Invasion of Sicily from Malta. Italy surrenders on the 8th of September and the Italian Fleet comes to Malta.
The General Workers Union, Malta's largest trade union, set-up.

- 1943 September Following secret military talks in Sicily, a political armistice between the Allies and Italy is signed aboard the battleship H.M.S. Nelson in Grand Harbour. U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt visits the island and presents Malta with a Presidential Citation for bravery.
- 1945 Churchill and Roosevelt meet in Malta prior to the Yalta Conference with Stalin.
- 1946 National Assembly results in 1947 constitution under British rule.
- 1947 Self-government restored under British rule. Dr. Paul Boffa becomes Prime Minister with a landslide victory for the Malta Labour Party.
- 1947 September Internal self-government is restored.
- 1949 A young ambitious politician, Dom Mintoff, brings a split in the MLP.
- 1950 Dr. Enrico Mizzi becomes Prime Minister from September to December when he dies. Dr. Giorgio Borg Olivier becomes Prime minister in December.
- 1955 Dom Mintoff becomes Prime Minister. Roundtable Conference held to discuss Malta's future with Britain.
- 1956 Referendum on Integration with Britain.
- 1958 Dom Mintoff resigns as Prime Minister and a national strike called by the General Workers Union on the 18th of April ends in clashed between workers, police and British soldiers. Dr. Giorgio Borg Olivier declines forming alternative government. Colonial governor takes direct administration under British rule.
- 1959 Interim Constitution provides for an Executive Council under British rule. The constitution is again suspended following long negotiations on Malta's integration with Britain fail due to, among other points, the problems of Social Security contributions and the religious differences.
- 1961 Blood Commission provides for a new constitution allowing for a measure of self-government and recognizing the "State" of Malta. Another political-religious struggle erupts between the Church led by Archbishop Gonzi and Mintoff's MLP.
- 1962 Dr. Giorgio Borg Olivier becomes Prime Minister. The State of Malta formally comes into being with Dr. Borg Olivier as its first Prime Minister.