

Testimonial:

I have been a keen 'amateur' photographer since I was a child. I love taking photos of people and places we visit, so when my husband decided we needed a short break from the winter weather and booked a trip to Malta, I made sure I packed my camera, battery charger, lens cleaner and plenty of sun cream. Malta didn't disappoint, the sun shone, the sky was blue and the sea ever changing tones of turquoise, aquamarine and sapphire.

Luckily I had thought to look up photography tours on the net before leaving home and had found 'uphotomalta', a small company run by its enthusiastic director Mr Duncan Zammit. Duncan runs a comfortable and spacious people carrier for a party of up to five people. His aim is to take you to views of Malta not visited by the tour or public buses, so you have plenty of opportunities to photograph the ever changing scenes of Malta and Gozo. At present he does a morning and an afternoon half day tour of Malta, visiting the east and north of the island in the morning and the south and west in the afternoon and evening to catch the glorious sunset. Each half day tour includes a coffee break where you can enjoy one of the island's specialities, a pastitsie, which is a delicious flaky pastry pasty containing either a vegetable filling or the local mild and creamy goat's cheese. The day long tour to visit the smaller island of Gozo is wonderful. Driving to the north of Malta you board the spacious and very modern ferry for the short journey, which gives you just enough time to grab a coffee and go out on deck to photo the famous blue lagoon. While Malta is a tapestry of creams, and beiges through to terra cotta colours almost shouting at you against the iridescent blue sky and the equally rich sea, Gozo in contrast is green and lush, with fields set out in terraces to use every corner of its fertile soil. Gozo provides the islands with the fruit and vegetables, not to mention the wild herbs, which together with the locally caught fish, are offered in the many hotels and restaurants on both islands. The trip to Gozo includes a delicious lunch of local produce and any dietary requirements can be catered for if prior notice is given.

As the party is so small Duncan can fit the tours round his guests interests, be they photographs of the spectacular cliffs such as the azure window, the local fishing boats called luzzus ploughing their way through the waves or at rest in harbour, the three hundred and sixty five churches and chapels or the magnificent forts at the entrance to Valletta's harbour which have played such an important role in Malta's history.

Although the concept of 'uphotomalta' is usually designed round the needs of photographers, for anyone wishing to get a flavour of Malta and the Maltese way of life but who has limited time, I know Duncan will be pleased to drive you to all the best places including the wonderful walled city of Mdina, which was once the island's capital.

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(Retired photographer and travel writer for Good Motoring Magazine)