

## Malta Aims For Arts, History And Culture Tourists

Malta achieved her best ever year for tourism last year, and is now considering new markets to broaden her appeal.

With a history dating back thousands of year tourism bosses have decided that a mix of history and culture is a market the island can tap in 2008, and will be marketing it to the UK and other European countries.

Speaking recently Malta's tourism Minister noted that visitor numbers had risen each month since November 2006 - this was due though to the low cost airlines starting to fly to Malta, more than anything the government had done or the tourism board to promote holidays in Malta.

Commenting on the need to diversify the range of holidays Malta is able to offer potential visitors, he said:

'Today we cannot rely any more on the formula of sun, sea and sand. We are diversifying our product into new tourism segments, namely cultural tourism, English language learning, conferences and incentives, sports, and Gozo as a destination on its own. Together these segments make up about 40 per cent of all tourists coming to Malta. This means that we are on the right track of diversification.'

At the moment over a hundred thousand people visit for holidays in Malta each year specifically for the island's history and culture, but there is no specific target set to hit in the coming years.

Commenting on Malta's pitch for the culture and heritage market, a local travel guide says 'From what we can see there isn't a figure the tourism bosses have in mind - and that's hardly surprising given their dismal record in the past when it come to attracting holidaymakers to Malta.'

The optimism from Malta is in sharp contrast to just a couple of years ago when some major holiday companies were considering dropping Malta as a vacation option altogether.

With a downward spiral in visitor numbers for holidays in Malta in successive years, the Maltese government finally relented to pressure from the Malta holidays industry and allowed low cost carriers to fly to the island for the first time in November 2006.

Competition was keen between the airlines to take up the lucrative UK to Malta route, and Dublin based Ryanair was chosen over rivals easyJet to take up the route, and the island has benefitted this year with a sharp increase in tourists, reversing six years of decline.

Since then the island's tourist authorities have finally waken up to the fact that competition in the skies could bring more benefits to the country than protecting her national airline, and new routes have opened between Malta with Germany, Spain and Scandanavia.

New official figures show that last year's all important summer holidays season has been the best in six years for Malta, reversing the decline in fortunes for the Mediterranean holidays island.

The good news for the [holidays in Malta](#) industry is that despite the increase in the number of tourists arriving on the island via low cost flights, the occupancy levels of hotels has increased from basic to five star, showing that Malta can appeal to all, which is why perhaps culture and history are seen as sectors of the travel market that could bring even more visitors to the island, but time will tell if government led directions can really be beneficial for the holidays in Malta industry.

### About the Author

For holiday information about the sunshine island of Malta including a seven day weather forecast and the [Malta weather](#) today visit [yourmalta.com](#)

Malta is close to Italy with two centre Malta and Milan holidays fashionable, and the guide also has the [Milan weather](#)

Source: <http://www.spivo.com>