

Malta Welcomes The Lion

By far the most popular destination for Europeans who take overseas holidays is Spain - but a Spanish airline has surprised many by opening a new route to holiday competitor Malta - which is riding the crest of a tourism wave after some years in the doldrums.

Vueling, a Spanish low cost airline, started flying to Malta three times a week from early April, with the route of Spain's capital Madrid to Malta's Luqa Airport.

The Spanish airline was set up just four years ago and already has 24 aircraft in her fleet, and before the announcement of the new Malta service flies to nearly sixty different destinations, and passenger traffic grew an impressive 75 per cent year on year to November 2007, when it carried nearly half a million passengers in that month alone.

Current destinations for the airline include internal Spanish flights to Alicante, serving the Costa Blanca region, and Malaga for the Costa del Sol - both ideal to escape from the city for a golfing or sailing break, or just to spend some time on the beach. With low prices a weekend break is affordable and easy for those working and living in the Spanish capital.

Less surprising in the routes the airline flies to are Nice in the South of France, Milan in Italy, which allows easy access to the Swiss Alps - and Venice, ideal for a romantic couple of days away.

Choosing Malta as a destination for Spanish tourists is a clear example of how Malta is successfully diversifying from her main holiday trade from the UK, which has formed the vast majority of her tourists in recent decades. Allowing low cost airlines to fly to the island's Luqa Airport has boosted the Malta holidays and hotel trade tremendously in the last two years.

New official figures show that last year's all important summer season was the best in six years for [holidays to Malta](#), reversing the decline in fortunes for the Mediterranean island.

The good news for Malta 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 across the accommodation range from basic to 5 star, showing that Malta can appeal to all.

Further good news for Malta came from the figures for hotels and holidays with the news that while the number of arrivals from her traditional UK market rose by eleven per cent, the number of people from Germany visiting Malta increased by a third in 2007, adding strength to the holidays industry that has been reliant on tourism from one country in the past, and even Spanish tourists now visiting the island.

Both Germany and the UK have seen new low cost flight operators successfully applying to fly to Malta, and the increase in tourism can largely be put down to them, but with Spanish and Scandinavian airlines taking an interest Malta could see a real cosmopolitan mix arrive for a holiday this year, further diversifying the mix of European tourists the island welcomes for their holidays.

About the Author

Direct flights from Madrid to Malta makes sense for students in Spain who want to attend a language school to [learn English](#) and as well as accommodation details Malta flight and travel guide yourmalta.com has details of [Malta flight](#) companies.

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