



GEOTOURS  
GUIDES

# Geotourism In Malta



I.S.D.I. GROUP



Erasmus+

# Geosites in Malta

## SIGNIFICANT ELEMENTS OF THE COUNTRY'S LANDSCAPE

Located in the heart of the Mediterranean Sea, the Maltese Islands are a European country with a rich cultural heritage and a variety of natural features of international importance.

The small geographic extent of the island is inversely proportional to the abundance of very important sites and artefacts, and it also includes a large number of sites of geoscientific interest, showing considerable geological diversity.



# MALTA – Geotours

Malta has several geoh heritage sites in all the three island of the country.

The Maltese geomorphological landscape comprise a marine sedimentary succession, mostly composed of limestones limestones and marls deposited in a period between Upper Oligocene and Miocene.



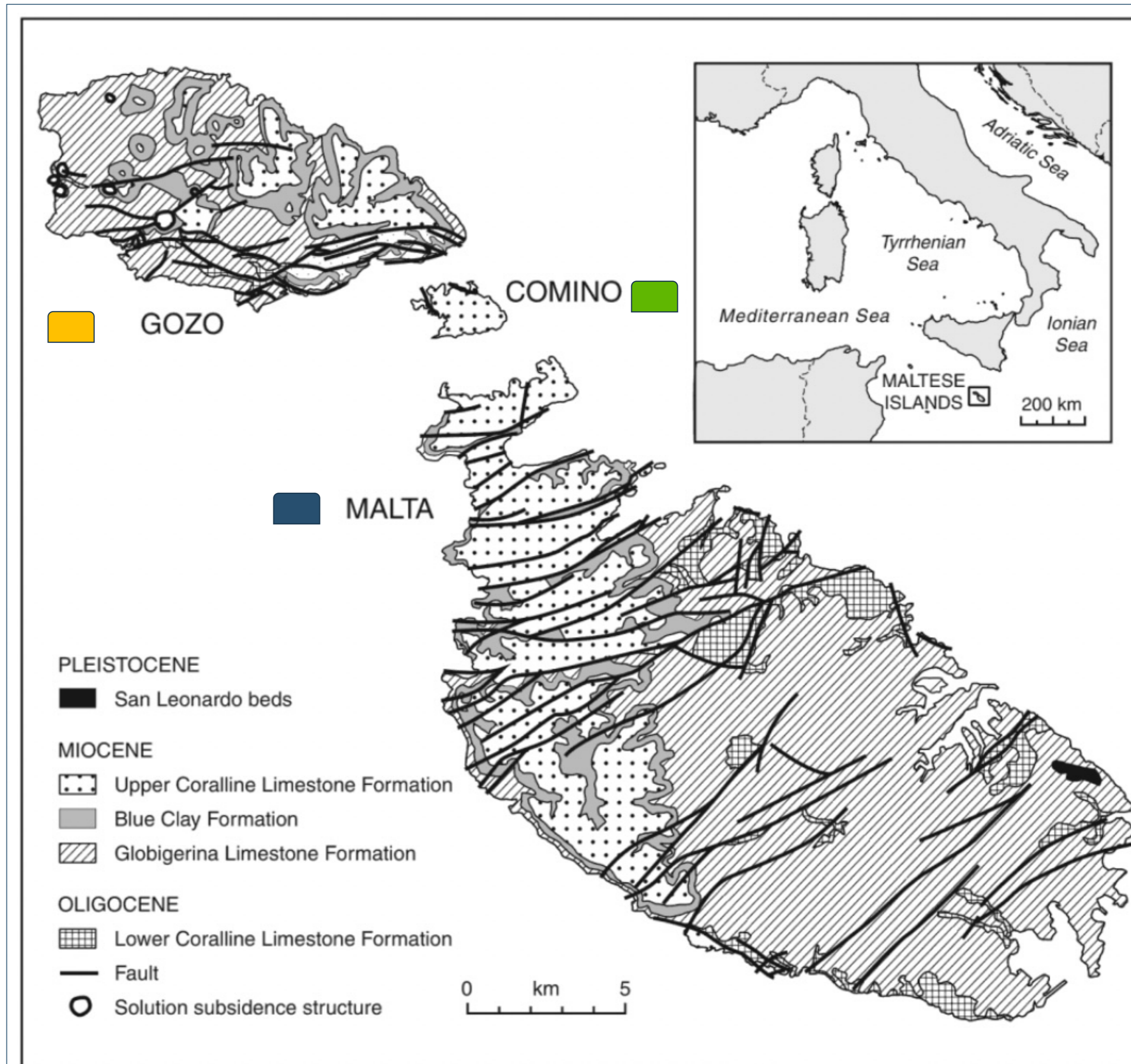
**Main Island - Malta**



**Gozo**



**Comino**



Source: Kevin Crawford.



# Main Island - Malta



## Blue Grotto (Il-Hnejja)

The largest of a series of cavernous caves that are accessible by boat



## Dingli Cliff

Spectacular cliff, 253 m above the sea level



## Il Bajja ta' Cirkewwa

Spectacular embayment



## Hagar Qim

Megalithic Temple Complex



## Il-Majjistral Nature and History Park

Unique combination of extraordinary historical-architectonic and natural heritage sites.



## Il-Qammieh

Spectacular natural terrace

# Blue Grotto (Il-Hnejja)

Sea Caverns



The **Blue Grotto**, named Il-Hnejja in Maltese meaning 'The Arch', was given its English name by a British soldier who thought it was similar enough to Grotta Azzuzza in Capri. The cavern has a circumference of 40 meters, extends back to a depth of 26 meters and has a wide arch that reaches a height of 42 meters.

The site has six caves of which the Blue Grotto is the largest. The color of the water is blue cobalt as a result of the reflection of the sky off the white sandy bottom.

## Location



Close to "Wied iz-Zurrieq, south of the town of Zurriego  
- The caves are visited with the traditional Maltese boat "Dghajjes"

# Hagar Qim

Megalithic Temple Complex



The »Hagar Qim« is one of the 5 Megalithic temples inscribed in 1992 as World Heritage Sites «as unique architectural masterpiece. It was built using globigerina limestone because it was enough soft to be carved by the available tools around 3700 BC – 3200 BC.

The Hagar Qim complex consists of a main temple surrounded by three other megalithic buildings. The main temple was built between 3600 and 3200 BC. built; however, the northern site is much older. The outer doors serve as internal passages, connecting the six large rooms. The right apse is arched to prevent the vertical stone slabs from collapsing inward. Made of huge upright blocks, the outer walls protrude inward and are extremely strong. This entryway and first courtyard follow the Maltese megalithic pattern, but the design was modified considerably as construction progressed. The northwest apse has been replaced by four separate enclosures.

## Location



Close to the town of Zurrieq – either by private car/taxi or buses 71,72,73 and 74 from Valletta

# Dingli Cliff

Highest cliff in Malta



The **Dingli Cliffs** are located just outside the picturesque village of Dingli on the west coast of Malta. They offer panoramic views of the coast and are 253 meters above sea level. The cliff is the highest point in the Maltese archipelago and is known by the locals as the place where the sea and the sky meet. It offers magnificent views of the Mediterranean sea, small terraces and the small uninhabited island of Filfla.

## Location



Close to the town of Dingli, wise to reach the location with rented vehicle.

# Il-Majjistral Nature and History Park

National Park

Majjistral Natural and Historical Park, Malta's first national park, is located in the northwestern part of the island of Malta, covering a section of coastline from Anchor Bay (Il-Prajjet) to Golden Bay (Il-Bajja tal-Mixquqa) about 6 kilometers long and inland towards ix-Xagħra l-Ħamra. The park includes natural and cultural elements, including rural and military heritage elements, unique flora habitats, natural caves and prominent coastal cliffs.

The coastal area hosts many important habitats that constitute an area of ecological importance and is now part of the Natura 2000 list of internationally important sites. These features include carriage tracks, long dry stone walls, farmhouses, small beehives, classical period burials, natural caves and numerous cantilevered stone houses. The park is named after the Northwest Territory or Wind (Maltese: Majjistral).

## Location



The park is located close to the village of Triq Ghajn Tuffieha. It can be reached either by private car or by public transportation. The bus stop name is 'Ferh' (5 minute walk to the Park) and/or 'Ghajn Tuffieha' – the final bus stop (10 minute walk to the Park).

The bus numbers are:

Bus 44 from Valletta via Mosta

Bus 101 from Cirkewwa

Bus 225 from Sliema

Bus 223 from Bugibba





# Il Bajja tac.Cirkewwa (Paradise Bay)

Spectacular embayment



The **Il Bajja tac. Cirkewwa** is a unique site with lateral spreading and rock topple in Upper Coralline Limestone, this embayment represents a highly-sought-after bay on the island with a pocket sandy beach. This site is also more known as Paradise bay due to the clear sea waters that fringe the white sandy beach.

## Location



It is located in the North - Western area of the island. It can be reached also with public transportation with the following bus lines: 41, 101 and 221

# Rdum il-Qammieh terrace

Spectacular terrace



Rdum il-Qammieħ is a cliff and is located in Il-Mellieħa, Malta. The estimate terrain elevation above seal level is 100 metres. It is extended as 1 km terrace in Lower Globigerina Limestone Fm. along the coast of Rdum il-Qammieħ, featuring with typical examples of karst terrain. Chemical weathering is the main process shaping the surface of the platform and forming small solution pools, also known as honeycomb structures. High scientific value and high aesthetic value are assigned to this unique terrace in northern Malta, which is spectacularly flat and yellow-colored. In addition, it conserves a substantial number of fossils.



## Location



It is possible to reach the location with public transportation, with bus lines 41,42 and 221



# GOZO

## **It-Tieqa tad-Dwejra – Azure window - Dwejra Heritage Park**



The most iconic Maltese natural arch, regrettably collapsed in 2017 due to stormy weather



## **Iieqa ta' Wied il-Mielah Window**

Natural arch north-Western Coast of Gozo



## **Il-Qbajjar**

Small bay



## **Dwejra – Inland sea**

Saltwater lagoon



## **Ghar Qawqla**

Limestone formation



## **Reqqa Point**

pointed headland .

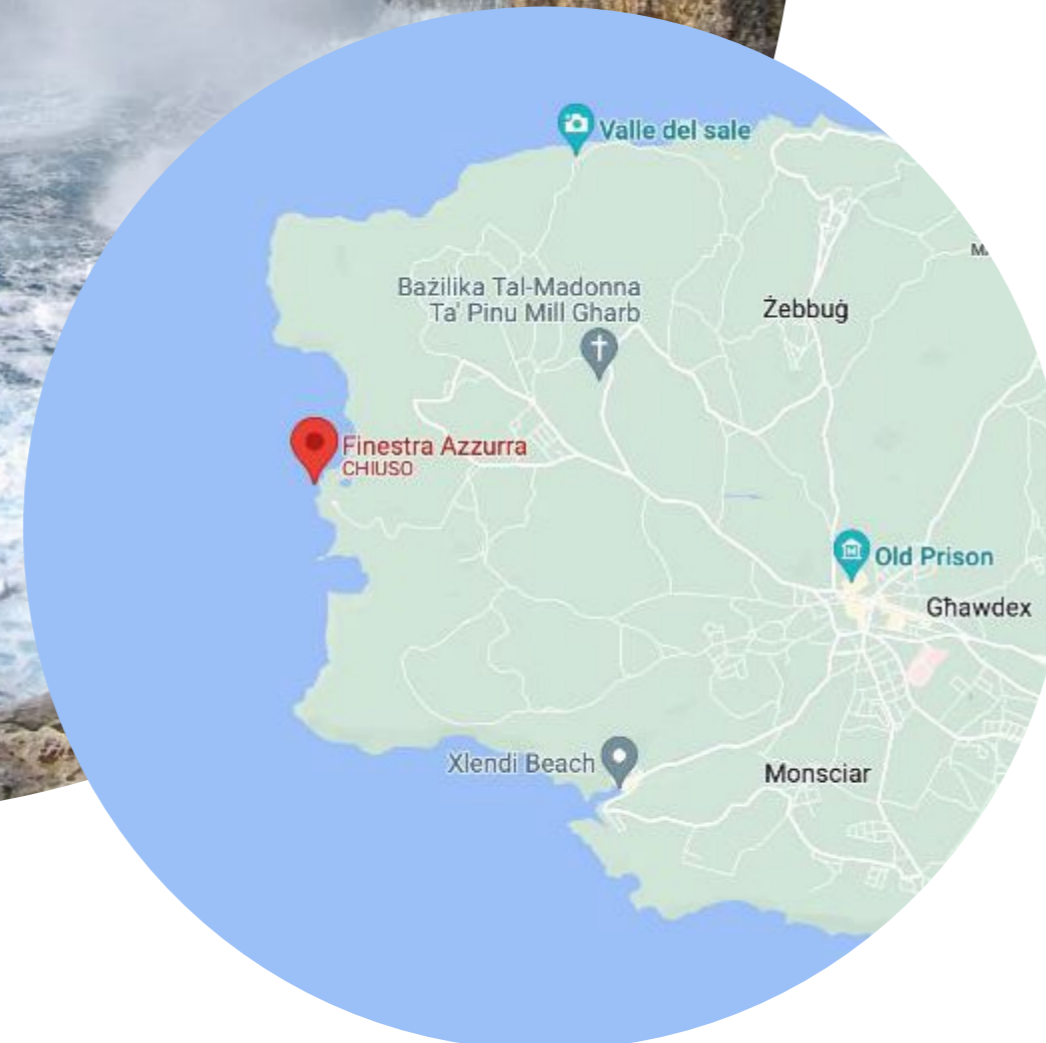
# It-Tieqa tad-Dwejra – Azure window - Dwejra Heritage Park

## Natural Arch



The **Azure Window** is a 28-meter-high natural arch located on the island of Gozo off the coast of Malta. Limestone cliffs in Dwejra Bay near the Inland Sea and Mushroom Rocks were one of the island's main tourist attractions until they collapsed in stormy weather in March 2017. Consisting of a column rising from the sea and connected to the cliff by horizontal slabs, the rock formation was probably formed by the collapse of a sea cave in the 19th century.

The Azure Window was formed through marine erosion of the cliff faces in the Dwejra Heritage Park area, part of the EU's Natura 2000 network, a local and international protected area and the largest contiguous terrestrial and marine protected area in Malta. Its uniqueness lies in its complex features of geological, geomorphic, ecological, archaeological, historical and aesthetic interest.



## Location



Close to the site of Dwejra, which is located on the Western coast of the island of Gozo.

# Dwejra – Inland sea

Saltwater lagoon



**Dwejra** is a saltwater lagoon on the island of Gozo, connected to the Mediterranean Sea through an opening formed by a narrow natural arch. It may have formed where a geological fault in the limestone created a sea cave and then the roof collapsed. On one side is a gently sloping rocky beach with several fishermen's huts on it. Boats are often pulled onto rocky beaches.

The bottom of the lagoon is also mainly composed of pebbles and rocks and is fairly flat. While heading out to sea through the tunnel, the ground descends in a series of shelves with an external depth of up to 35 metres. Jacques Cousteau says the Inland Sea is one of his top ten dives. On calm days, fishing boats called Luzzijiet in Maltese can pass through the tunnel. A number of boats are used to take tourists through the arch and on to the nearby cliffs

## Location



The Inland Sea is at Dwejra on Gozo's west coast next to the equally famous Blue Hole, a 20 minute drive from our dive shop in Xlendi. Access to the Inland Sea is from the shore

# Iieqa ta' Wied il-Mielah Window

Natural arch



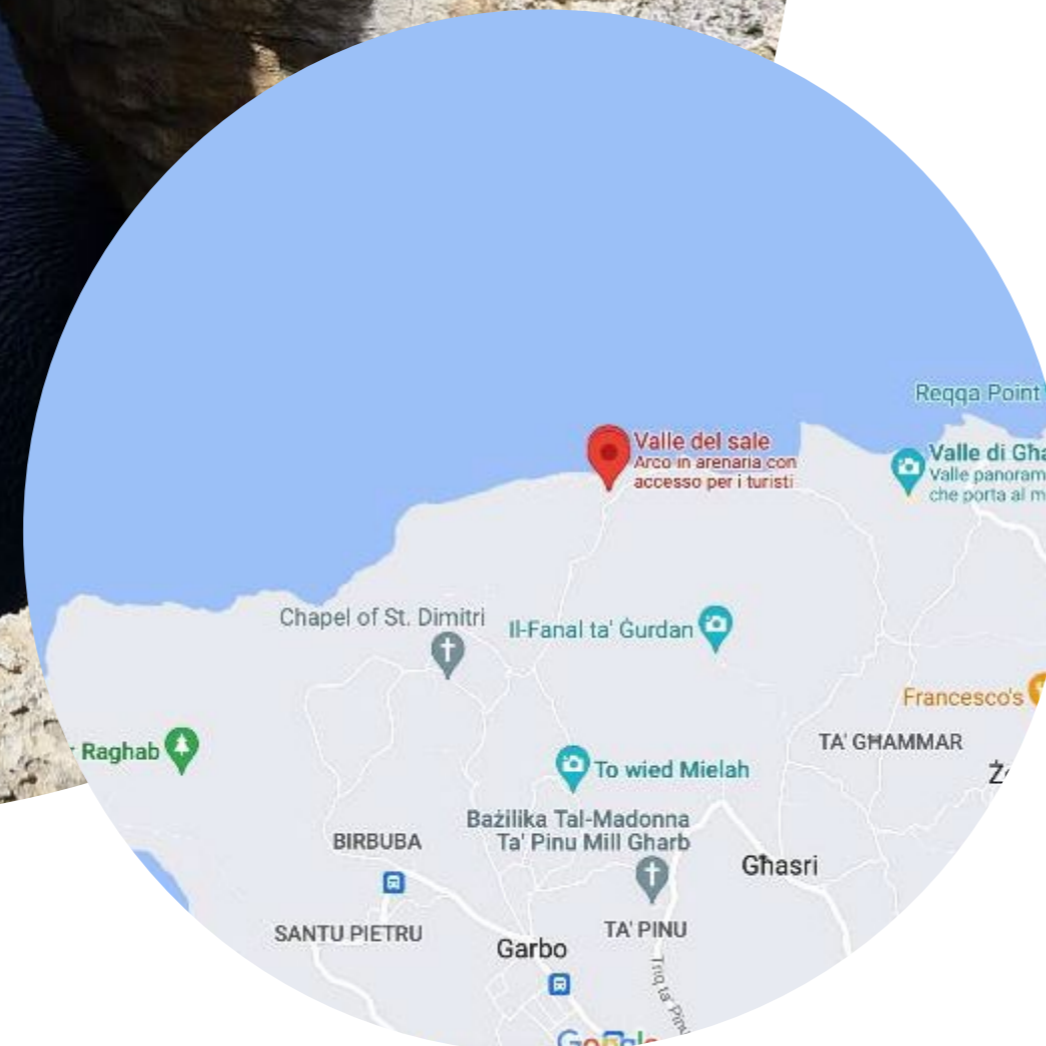
The Iieqa ta' Wied-il-Mielah Window is a natural limestone arch located on the northwest coast of the island of Gozo, Malta. The north coast of Gozo up to Xwejni Bay is characterized by plateaus with steep cliffs jutting into the sea, where there are many caves. Artificial salt pans are used on the plateau to extract salt from seawater through evaporation.

Here the hinterland rises gently, with the lighthouses of Għarb and Giordan. The area around the Arch has been extensively refurbished in recent years as part of a scheme called EcoGozo, which has provided better access through the construction of a new road, as well as wider stairs leading directly to the site next to the Arch.

## Location



It is located at the end of the valley Wied il-Mielah north of the village of Għarb.



# Ghar Qawqla

Limestone formation



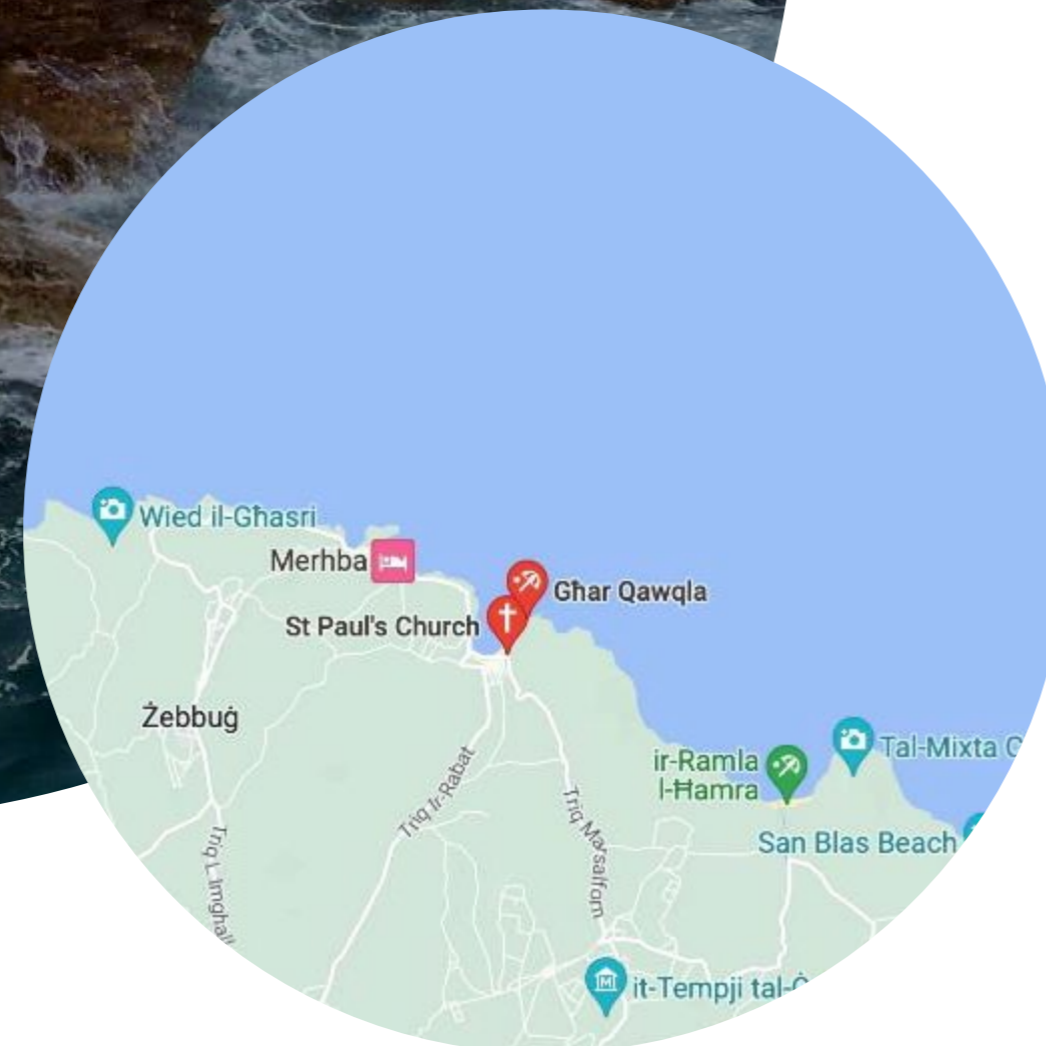
**Ghar Qawqla** is a limestone formation: it used to be a natural arch connected to the mainland, but the span collapsed in the 20th century.

It is speculated that the name Marsalforn may partly be derived from forna, referring to the natural sea caves in the area, of which Ghar Qawqla is one of the most famous. These formations are about 7.9 meters offshore. Today, only one 3-meter-high column remains of the arch.

## Location



Close to Marsalforn on the island of Gozo



# Il-Qbajjar

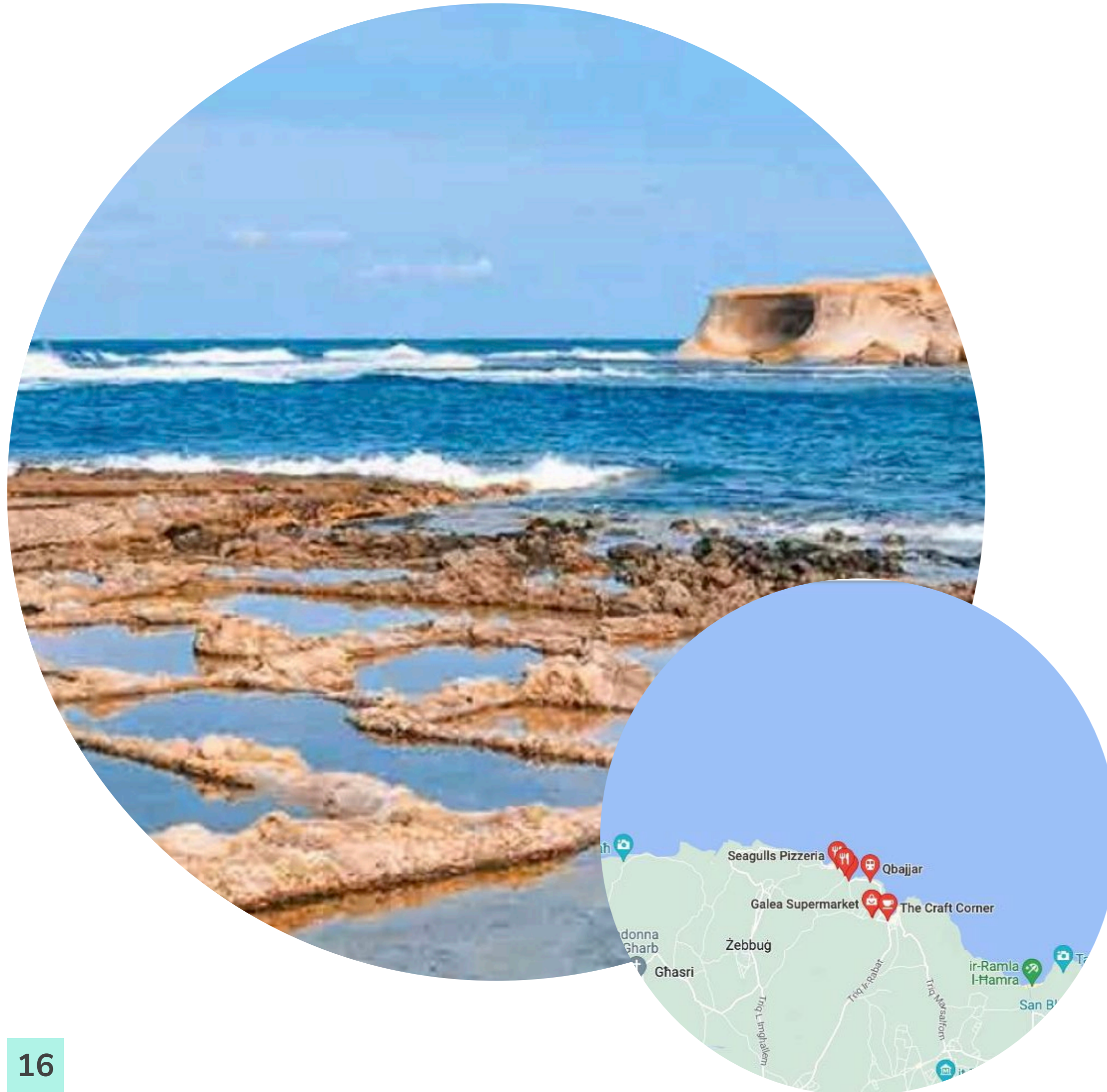
Small Bay

**Il-Qbajjar** is a flat pebble beach flanked by flat rocky outcrops. Historic but beautiful, the beach is near the stunning salt pans that were carved out of the rock many centuries ago to collect sea salt.

## Location



It is located between Xwejni Bay to the west, and Marsalforn Bay to the east in the island of Gozo.





# Reqqa Point

Pointed headland

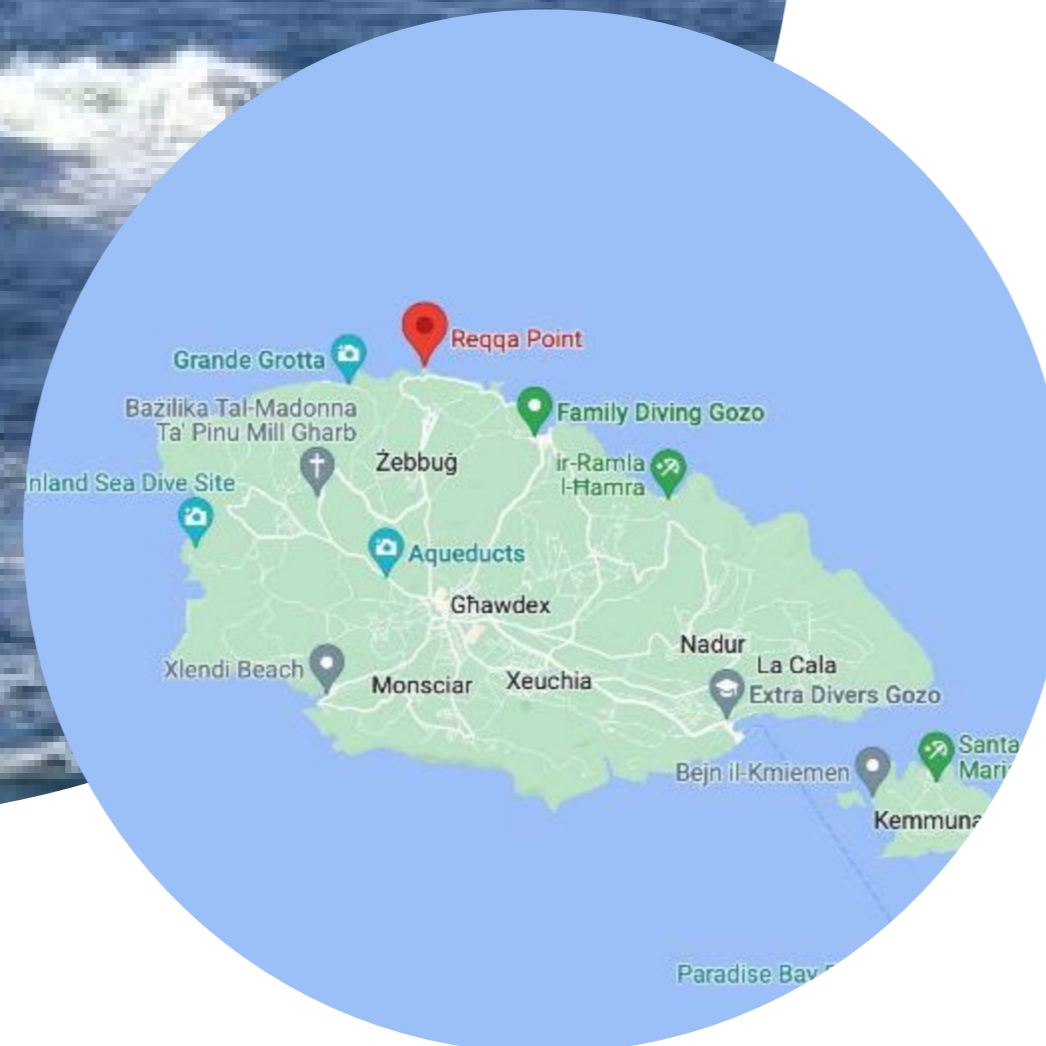


The **Reqqa point** is one of the most attractive diving sites. Surrounded by deep water, the headland's surface is studded with unique fissures and crevices. Large boulders lying against its walls serve as a superb refuge for octopus, groupers and scorpion fish. Just next to these, a submerged chimney drops down through the reef, from 6 to 17 metres.

## Location



Close to "Malsalform and Billinghamurst cave.





# COMINO



## Bejn il Kmiemen - Blue Lagoon

Wanderlust is s



## Lantern Point West

Hard-rock headland



## Santa Marija Caves

10 marine caves

# Bejn il Kmiemen - Blue Lagoon

Bay

**Bejn il-kmiemen - Blue Lagoon** is a small famous bay for its deep blue colour waters and for the rich marine faune which makes the site very attractive for diving.

## Location



Located in front of the inhabited island Cominotto



# Santa Marija Caves

10 marine caves



The **Santa Marija Caves** are a very popular dive site due to its fascinating cave system. In fact, there are 10 caves known to divers as Santa Maria Caves, each with its own unique aesthetic. Some of them offer great swimming pools, others offer large underwater tunnels, while others offer stunning blue views through their entrances.

The caves are quite shallow and some are even half submerged, making them ideal for snorkelers as well. The shallow Santa Maria Cave is teeming with marine life, and you can spot nudibranchs, squid, crabs, crayfish, eels, mullets, shrimp, damselfish and moray eels.

## Location



Located in the north side of the island of Comino

# Lantern Point West

Hard-rock headland

Lantern Point West is a narrow hard-rock headland at the south west tip of Comino. It is one of the most spectacular diving site in Malta.

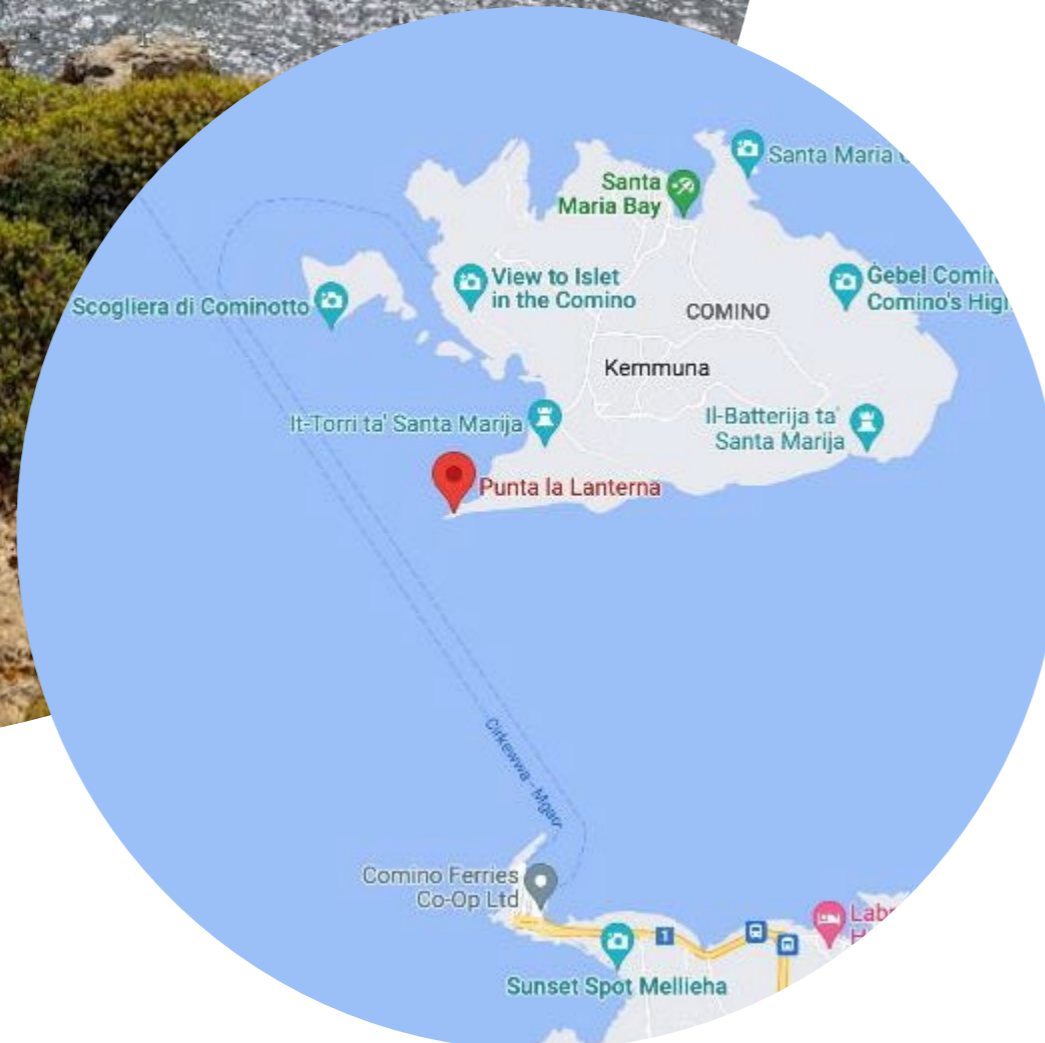


## Location



Situated at the Southwest tip of the island of Comino

Access to Lantern Point West is by boat, a 10 minute boat ride from Mgarr harbour or half an hour from Xlendi Bay.





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