# British holidaymakers find a warm welcome in Malta amid tourism tensions



With tensions rising in some southern European nations regarding tourism, British holidaymakers are being cautioned about potential disruptions during the summer months. Recent anti-tourism protests have garnered attention in hotspot destinations like Spain, Italy, and Greece, where visible acts of rebellion against tourist presence have included the vandalism of hire cars in Tenerife and graffiti declaring "Tourists go home" in Athens.

In stark contrast to this wave of discontent, the Mediterranean island of Malta is actively welcoming British tourists. Located just 17 miles long and nine miles wide, Malta offers an inviting alternative for those feeling unwelcome in other European locales, with local sentiment being decidedly more hospitable. "The more, the better for us!" expressed Marisa Farrugia, a Maltese local managing the bustling Red Lion Pub in St Paul's Bay, an area that reflects the deep-rooted British cultural influence. The pub features memorabilia showcasing English football teams and serves pints priced as low as £2.75.

Malta’s embrace of British culture is apparent throughout its landscape—public areas such as Valletta prominently display British-themed pubs and establishments, including Diana's Pub and the Queen Victoria Pub. The statue of Queen Victoria in Republic Square further illustrates the island's historical ties with the UK. Ferries and tour boats operate daily, transporting visitors from the ports of Sliema to Malta’s picturesque isles of Gozo and Comino.

During the Easter holiday, the Red Lion was filled with a diverse crowd that included not only tourists but also local residents and a sizeable British expat community. Ms Farrugia remarked, "I think tourists feel more welcomed in Malta, the locals are more friendly here," highlighting a sentiment shared by many in Malta’s service and hospitality sectors who rely heavily on tourism for their livelihood. In fact, last year, Malta saw record tourism numbers with 3.56 million visitors, a figure exceeding the island's own population of about 563,000.

Richie Allsop, an expat from Huddersfield who has lived in Malta for nearly a decade, echoed the warmth of local interactions, stating that Maltese residents were eager for tourism growth. He compared his experience in Malta favourably against less welcoming sentiments reported elsewhere in Europe, asserting, "They want more tourism. They want more."

Despite the enthusiasm for tourism, some locals have expressed concerns regarding housing pressures and overcrowding stemming from the tourist influx. Speaking to MailOnline, journalists and local businesses have acknowledged the growing pains associated with increased visitors while also recognising the essential role tourism plays in the local economy. Julian Bonnici, who runs an investigative journalism platform, remarked on the complex relationship between tourism and local grievances, stating, “It’s a bit of a Catch 22.”

Yet, the prevailing attitude among many Maltese seems to be one of acquiescence, with a notable absence of the civil disobedience seen in countries like Spain. Malta's strong reliance on tourism has led to a collective understanding of its importance, as articulated by expat Angela Petrovic who has witnessed the island's dependence following the pandemic's disruptions: "They noticed that the island needs people and the island depends on tourism."

As the summer season approaches, the atmosphere in Malta remains celebratory, with locals and tourists mingling in bustling streets lined with outdoor cafés and bars. British holidaymakers visiting recently have illustrated their contentment with remarks such as, "We’ve loved it in Malta, we’ve said it’s our favourite place we’ve been in Europe."

In totality, while some European destinations grapple with the implications of overtourism, Malta continues to champion its hospitality towards visitors, further establishing itself as a favourable summer destination for British tourists.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

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* <https://www.euronews.com/travel/2023/08/02/tenerife-tourist-cars-vandalised-in-anti-tourism-attacks> - Reports on the vandalism targeting tourist cars in Tenerife, illustrating anti-tourism sentiments in some European destinations.