

A photograph of a young child swimming underwater in a pool, wearing goggles and a life preserver, looking towards the camera with a smile.

AQUA MANIA

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The Thomas Cook logo, featuring the name 'Thomas Cook' in white text inside a blue and yellow circular gradient.

Fam trip report

What a way to Gozo!



Roving Readers **Nick McKay**, **Muriel Morgan** and **Lisa Hood** won places on a memorable fam trip to Gozo with *TTG's Fams Reunited*. From fine-dining to abseiling and goat-milking, there wasn't a dull moment...



The Way To Gozo fam trip was sponsored by Malta Tourism Authority, Air Malta and Kempinski Hotel San Lawrenz

ON THE MOVE**Nick McKay Travel Designers:**

Getting to Malta and then on to Gozo couldn't be easier. The flight took less than three hours, and the economy cabin had a generous seat pitch.

Air Malta is one of the few airlines within Europe that offers a full-service meal and complimentary soft drinks.

To reach Gozo, we took a 45-minute transfer to the ferry terminal, then a 25-minute ferry ride across to Gozo, which costs €5.65. There's also the 14-seat Harbour Air seaplane which flies from the ferry terminal to Gozo. The 10-minute flight offers amazing views and costs around €40 each way. Harbour Air has since started flying to Gozo directly from Malta airport.

The island's roads around Victoria (the capital) are busy, but the roads outside the city are easily navigated, fairly quiet and most are well signposted. Rental cars can be dropped off and picked up from your hotel.

One evening, we were collected from the hotel in a vehicle from Classic Cars — what an amazing way to arrive. Recommend it to your clients as something really special.

**THE KEMPINSKI****Lisa Hood Barrhead Travel:**

The gorgeous Kempinski Hotel San Lawrenz has an old-time feel, with lovely yellow stone walls and beautifully tiled walkways.

The hotel grows its own fruit, vegetables and herbs for use in its restaurants.



Kempinski Hotel San Lawrenz

My junior suite was excellent. I had a bedroom, sitting room, outside terrace and lovely amenities in the bathroom.

I'd be confident that any client coming to this hotel would be pampered and looked after. It would be ideal for honeymooners, couples, families and singles.

**Muriel Morgan Travel**

Counsellors: The Kempinski is set in beautiful landscaped gardens in the middle of the countryside.

There isn't a beach within close walking distance, but the hotel provides courtesy transport to local beaches three times daily.

We had breakfast every morning on the outside terrace — a huge choice of hot and cold buffet. It is served from 8-11am, ideal for those who enjoy a holiday lie-in!

Nick: The facilities are excellent: two outdoor adult pools plus a kids' pool, an indoor heated pool, a gym, hot tub, tennis and squash courts, and dive centre. The resort has a weekly activity programme and its kids' club is great. Babysitting can be arranged for around €9 an hour.

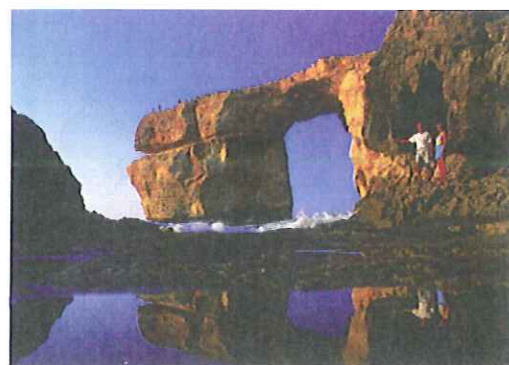
One of the resort's key features is the 18,300sq ft spa and ayurveda treatment centre. The spa offers a wide range of therapies including Blitz showers and marine wraps. I had an ayurvedic back and shoulder massage and left the spa feeling like I was walking on air.

EXCURSIONS

Muriel: There are many places of historical and cultural interest on the island and because of Gozo's size, you can see most of them in a few days.

One must-see is the Ggantija Temples — the oldest free-standing structures in the world. I would advise joining a guided tour for this as having the history explained makes it a lot more interesting.

A climb to the top of the Citadel allows for



Jürgen Seiduna

Jürgen Seiduna

The group in Dwejra; the famous Azure Window (above right); and Muriel Morgan braving her first abseiling experience

some impressive views of Gozo, while Victoria (known locally as Rabat) has the Basilica of St George and a colourful market in the square selling Gozitan specialities.

A visit to Ramla Bay is a must, with its wide sandy beach and warm shallow waters. One of my highlights was our visit to Dwejra and lunch on the cliff, overlooking the Azure Window rock arch. It was the most scenic, tranquil lunch I have ever had!

Lisa: A private boat ride out to the smallest of the three Maltese islands, Comino, was lovely. This island is unspoilt by humanity, as there is only one hotel on it and only four permanent inhabitants.

Comino is one of the best spots to enjoy swimming, snorkelling, diving and all other types of watersports. I'd recommend to a family to rent a boat and come out here for a picnic and to enjoy the water.

ACTIVITIES

Muriel: I chose to try abseiling as I had never done this before. As we stood on the edge of the cliff with the Azure Window as a backdrop, the feeling in my tummy was more like bats than butterflies! But with each step down, my nerves settled and I ended up enjoying it so much that I climbed back up and did it all over again.

Jeep trails are a wonderful way to explore the island, while watersports include

snorkelling, scuba diving and fishing.

Nick: I tried out a two-hour mountain bike ride around the island (bikes can be rented for about €10 per day).

We were met by the guide at our hotel, and set out on an exciting off-road adventure, taking us past amazing scenery to the fantastic coastline, completing the journey with a welcome refreshing drink overlooking a tranquil harbour. Getting off the beaten track in Gozo is certainly a must and well worth the effort.

Lisa: Milking goats was our first activity and it was great fun. As soon as we arrived, the goats came charging down the lane at top speed and almost ran us over! The farmer grabbed one of the goats and showed us how to milk it.

Several of us had a go at milking with no success, until Hardy Jandu of American Express Vacations showed the magic touch and the milk flowed. Later the farmer showed us how he makes the cheese and we got to taste it — a bit like cheddar but with a stronger after-taste.

DINING

Nick: Dining on Gozo is a pure delight. The food is of good quality, fresh and extremely well presented. For great local food recommend Ta'Ricardu, an unpretentious restaurant within the magnificent

Citadel, where there is no menu. Also try some of Ricardu's own local wine. A meal here would be around €20.

For a special meal try the award-winning Ta'Frenc, set in a 17th-century farmhouse. An average meal here will be around €50 for three courses and wine.

Dining at the Kempinski was also exceptional and prices are below what you'd expect for a five-star deluxe resort: €9-12 for a starter, €19-24 for a main course.

Lisa: I would definitely recommend the elegant Ta'Frenc to those travelling to Gozo. It has a huge wine cellar in the basement where they can entertain parties of up to 30 people. There's also a charming terrace where you can have canapes set up, a ban, or music for dancing.

FAM-TASTIC CHANCES

Want to go on a fam trip yourself? Keep your eye on Fams Reunited, as new trips are always being offered:
 ■ ttglive.com/famsreunited
 See more photos from the Gozo trip online:
 ■ ttglive.com/waytogo



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