

Tourism & the Environment

According to NSO, these past four years tourism has grown in a rapid way. “Lots of tourists are visiting Malta because of the weather, the culture, water sports like scuba diving, to visit their families and for work, and that can be an advantage to the economy and a disadvantage to the environment. Because of this we need more awareness on how to save the environment because there are lots of activities which destroy it”, Tourism is increasing “because in Malta there is more work, stability and good industry”, also “because today advertisements and promotion increased” and “because of globalisation” some people said in a survey I conducted to 50 persons.

Main Indicators of Inbound Tourism to Malta				
	2015	2016	2017	Change 2017/2016
Total inbound visitors ¹	1,799,213	1,988,447	2,314,596	16.4%
Inbound tourists	1,783,366	1,965,928	2,273,837	15.7%
Tourist guest nights	14,151,599	14,961,366	16,509,141	10.3%
Average length of stay	7.9	7.6	7.3	-0.3 of a night
Tourist expenditure (€'000s)	1,639,067	1,708,952	1,946,894	13.9%

Source: NSO (Inbound Tourism)

¹incl. overnight cruise passengers

Facts and Figures 2017
Malta Tourism Authority

There are many ways in which the environment can be damaged, such as land degradation, oil spills, sewage, solid waste, physical impacts, littering and pollution.

Malta is becoming more densely populated due to the increase in tourism. Because of this rapid increase, land development has increased as well which is destroying the rural areas (land degradation) that Malta has left.

Places like St Paul's Bay, St Julians and Sliema have grown at a very rapid rate these past years because of hotels and blocks of flats to accommodate incoming tourists. In these crowded places, noise pollution occurs, also when new hotels and flats are being built due to the loud noises the machines do.¹

Construction of hotels, recreation and other facilities often leads to increased sewage pollution but this is not that much of a problem thanks to government plants, Malta owns sewage treatment plants which recycle the contaminated water and change it to clean water before being dumped in the sea.²

Waste disposal is a serious problem in areas with high concentrations of tourist activities and appealing natural attractions. It can be a major problem to the natural environment, seas, scenic areas, and roadsides. In Malta we have an engineered landfill called 'Għallis'. This can degrade the physical appearance of the water and shoreline, cause the death of marine animals and cause visual pollution.³

Physical impacts of tourism development also damage the environment, for example, recreation facilities can lead to beach, sand and soil erosion and extensive paving which can lead to land degradation, destruction of habitats and disruption of land-sea connections. Anchoring,



https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/environment/nature/70597/great_barrier_reef_pronounced_as_almost_dead_by_scientists

¹ <http://nonsolomalta.blogspot.com/2007/05/impact-and-benefits-of-tourism-on.html>

² <http://om.ciheam.org/om/pdf/a57/04001977.pdf>

³ <http://om.ciheam.org/om/pdf/a57/04001977.pdf>

snorkelling, sport fishing and scuba diving, yachting, and cruising are again, physical impacts which can cause direct degradation of marine ecosystems such as coral reefs.⁴

Due to increasing tourists, more transportation is used and the emissions cause air pollution. Air pollution can lead to severe diseases like cancer. “The increasing use of private cars is one of the current and future threats listed in the State of the Environment report”.⁵

How can we solve some of these problems?

Malta is taking measures to try to protect the environment, for example straws are trying to be banned, more bins at beaches especially plastic ones and a national scheme was made so that hotels can be eco-friendly and minimize the impact on the environment.⁶

“Some measures that we take as an ECO-Friendly hotel are that we do frequent recycling, ban plastic, we have a refill station to reduce the water consumption and we save electricity with better air-conditioning and in areas in the hotel that are not used very often we turn the air-condition off” said one of the managers of the ‘ db San Antonio Hotel & Spa ’.

“Hotels are still one of the accommodation options which is widely preferred by tourists, so having ECO-Friendly hotels makes a big difference towards taking better care of the environment”; “These ECO-Friendly hotels help people understand more how important the

⁴ <http://om.ciheam.org/om/pdf/a57/04001977.pdf>

⁵ https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/environment/environment/91240/all_current_environmental_problems_relate_to_population_increase_in_malta#.XlltPuSslPb

⁶ <https://www.visitmalta.com/file.aspx?f=1818>

environment is and they are good for our future generations” said two people in the survey. People in the same survey, also said that it is a good idea that we have these 15 ECO-Friendly hotels because they take care of the environment that we live in and they save us from natural disasters.

“Apart from raising awareness by ECO-Friendly hotels, we have to raise awareness by cleaning beaches, creating sustainable transportation, for example, instead of using cars that work with petrol or diesel, we use cars that work with gas because gas does less harm to the environment, or else use electric cars” said another person in a survey.



<https://www.dbhotelsresorts.com/dbsanantonio/hotel/visual-gallery/photo-gallery>