

Total inbound visitors for January 2021 were estimated at 13,806, a decrease of 90.8 per cent when compared to the corresponding month in 2020.

Inbound Tourism: January 2021

During the month under review, a total of 11,536 inbound tourists visited Malta for holiday purposes, followed by 1,553 tourists for business purposes. Most inbound tourists were aged between 25 and 44 years (50.9 per cent), followed by those within the 45-64 age bracket (22.3 per cent) (Table 1). The main markets were France and Italy, with a joint share of 47.3 per cent of total inbound tourists (Table 5).

Total nights spent went down by 79.8 per cent when compared to January 2020, totalling to 190,853 nights. The largest share of guest nights (58.3 per cent) was spent in non-rented accommodation establishments (Table 3). A general increase in the average length of stay was recorded (Table 1), especially among tourists staying in non-rented and other rented accommodation.

Total tourist expenditure was estimated at €11.7 million, a decrease of 87.6 per cent over the corresponding month in 2020 (Table 4) ■

Statistics in this News Release should be interpreted in the context of the COVID-19 situation.

During the COVID-19 situation, the following tourism-related sequence of events took place in 2020:

28-Feb	Passengers flying in from Italy, China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Japan, Iran and South Korea, from 26 February onwards were requested to stay in quarantine for 14 days upon arrival.
8-Mar	Flights from/to Milan were suspended.
10-Mar	Flights from/to Italy were suspended.
10-Mar	Last cruise liner call.
11-Mar	Flights from/to France, Switzerland, Germany, Spain, were suspended.
11-Mar	Passengers flying in from France, Switzerland, Germany, Spain, were requested to stay in quarantine for 14 days upon arrival.
13-Mar	All passengers flying in from all destinations were requested to stay in quarantine for 14 days upon arrival.
18-Mar	Last Virtu' Ferries service for passengers between Malta and Sicily was operated.
21-Mar	All flights from/to all destinations were suspended.
1-Jul	Re-opening of Malta International Airport. The first group of destinations that reopened for travel comprised: Germany, Austria, Italy, France, Spain, Poland, Cyprus, Switzerland, Iceland, Slovakia, Norway, Denmark, Hungary, Finland, Ireland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Luxembourg, Czech Republic, Greece and Croatia.
15-Jul	Restrictions on all other flight destinations were lifted.
21-Aug	First cruise liner call since March 2020.

Sources: Malta Tourism Authority, Virtu' Ferries, Transport Malta and Valletta Cruise Port

Table 1. Profile of inbound tourists by month of departure

Characteristics	January			Change	Percentage change
	2019	2020	2021	2021/2020	
Total inbound visitors	127,723	150,131	13,806	-136,325	-90.8
Overnight cruise passengers	-	893	-	-	-
Inbound tourists	127,723	149,238	13,806	-135,432	-90.7
Mode of travel					
Air	125,158	145,766	12,123	-133,643	-91.7
Sea	2,565	3,472	1,684	-1,788	-51.5
Sex					
Males	66,835	79,624	8,465	-71,159	-89.4
Females	60,888	69,614	5,341	-64,273	-92.3
Age group					
0-24	20,250	23,213	2,919	-20,294	-87.4
25-44	52,788	60,470	7,022	-53,448	-88.4
45-64	40,301	50,905	3,072	-47,834	-94.0
65 or more	14,385	14,649	793 ^u	-	-
Markets¹					
EU	106,934	123,621	11,253	-112,369	-90.9
<i>of which: Euro area</i>	65,230	73,360	10,187	-63,173	-86.1
Non-EU	20,788	25,617	2,553	-23,063	-90.0
Purpose of visit					
Holiday	114,551	131,865	11,536	-120,329	-91.3
Business and professional	9,461	13,841	1,553	-12,288	-88.8
Other (including educational, religious and health tourism)	3,711	3,532	717 ^u	-	-
Organisation of stay					
Package	37,442	38,596	1,375 ^u	-	-
Non-package	90,281	110,642	12,431	-98,211	-88.8
Frequency					
First-time tourists	89,482	105,359	7,389	-97,969	-93.0
Repeat tourists	38,241	43,879	6,417	-37,463	-85.4
once a year or less	25,635	29,925	3,120	-26,805	-89.6
more than once a year	12,606	13,954	3,296	-10,658	-76.4
Duration of visit					
1-3 nights	36,940	46,977	2,113	-44,864	-95.5
4-6 nights	40,221	47,614	2,386	-45,228	-95.0
7 nights or more	50,562	54,648	9,308	-45,340	-83.0
Average length of stay (nights)	7.1	6.3	13.8	7.5	-

^u Under represented - between 20 and 49 sample observations.

¹ Refer to methodological notes 8 and 9.

Note: Totals may not add up due to rounding.

Table 2. Inbound tourists by month of departure and type of accommodation

Type of accommodation	January			Change	Percentage change
	2019	2020	2021	2021/2020	
Rented accommodation	107,307	127,304	8,063	-119,242	-93.7
Collective	82,610	98,130	5,569	-92,561	-94.3
Other rented	24,698	29,175	2,493	-26,681	-91.5
Non-rented accommodation	20,416	21,934	5,743	-16,190	-73.8
Total tourists	127,723	149,238	13,806	-135,432	-90.7

Note: Totals may not add up due to rounding.

Table 3. Total nights spent by inbound tourists by month of departure and type of accommodation

Type of accommodation	January			Change	Percentage change
	2019	2020	2021	2021/2020	
Rented accommodation	674,832	726,516	79,554	-646,961	-89.0
Collective	449,312	498,748	39,513	-459,235	-92.1
Other rented	225,520	227,768	40,042	-187,726	-82.4
Non-rented accommodation	237,607	217,817	111,299	-106,519	-48.9
Total nights	912,439	944,333	190,853	-753,480	-79.8

Note: Totals may not add up due to rounding.

Table 4. Total expenditure by inbound tourists by month of departure and expenditure category

€ 000

Expenditure category	January			Change	Percentage change
	2019	2020	2021	2021/2020	
Package	20,615	19,014	874^u	-	-
Non-package	28,421	37,831	4,668	-33,163	-87.7
Air/sea fares	14,445	20,638	2,544	-18,093	-87.7
Accommodation	13,976	17,193	2,123	-15,070	-87.6
Other expenditure	35,651	37,327	6,163	-31,164	-83.5
Total expenditure	84,687	94,172	11,705	-82,467	-87.6

^u Under represented - between 20 and 49 sample observations.

Notes:

1. Expenditure estimates are rounded to the nearest thousand Euro.
2. Totals may not add up due to rounding.

Table 5. Inbound tourists, nights spent and total expenditure by month of departure and country of residence

Country of residence ¹	January			Change	Percentage change
	2019	2020	2021	2021/2020	
Tourists					
EU	106,934	123,621	11,253	-112,369	-90.9
<i>of which:</i>					
France	7,793	9,393	3,292	-6,101	-65.0
Germany	11,462	11,005	1,215 ^u	-	-
Italy	21,894	23,873	3,233	-20,640	-86.5
Poland	6,165	7,962	:	-	-
Spain	6,319	7,466	:	-	-
United Kingdom	26,076	30,684	n/a	n/a	n/a
Non-EU	20,788	25,617	2,553	-23,063	-90.0
<i>of which:</i>					
United Kingdom	n/a	n/a	1,048 ^u	n/a	n/a
Total	127,723	149,238	13,806	-135,432	-90.7
Nights					
EU	693,717	739,299	144,865	-594,434	-80.4
<i>of which:</i>					
France	43,938	51,779	28,784	-22,995	-44.4
Germany	76,500	79,719	16,802 ^u	-	-
Italy	134,500	135,427	54,844	-80,583	-59.5
Poland	34,507	44,541	:	-	-
Spain	29,203	41,911	:	-	-
United Kingdom	189,026	202,414	n/a	n/a	n/a
Non-EU	218,722	205,034	45,988	-159,046	-77.6
<i>of which:</i>					
United Kingdom	n/a	n/a	27,671 ^u	n/a	n/a
Total	912,439	944,333	190,853	-753,480	-79.8
Expenditure (€000)					
EU	61,770	70,655	9,049	-61,606	-87.2
<i>of which:</i>					
France	4,975	5,857	2,639	-3,218	-54.9
Germany	7,391	7,818	1,190 ^u	-	-
Italy	9,844	11,542	2,095	-9,447	-81.8
Poland	3,046	4,195	:	-	-
Spain	2,550	3,430	:	-	-
United Kingdom	16,266	18,614	n/a	n/a	n/a
Non-EU	22,917	23,517	2,656	-20,861	-88.7
<i>of which:</i>					
United Kingdom	n/a	n/a	963 ^u	n/a	n/a
Total	84,687	94,172	11,705	-82,467	-87.6

: Unreliable - less than 20 sample observations.

^u Under represented - between 20 and 49 sample observations.

¹ Refer to methodological notes 8 and 9.

Notes:

1. n/a: not applicable.
2. Expenditure estimates are rounded to the nearest thousand Euro.
3. Totals may not add up due to rounding.

Table 6. Profile of overnight cruise passengers by month of departure

Characteristics	January		
	2019	2020	2021
Total overnight cruise passengers	-	893	-
Sex			
Males	-	426	-
Females	-	467	-
Age group			
0-19	-	1	-
20-39	-	19	-
40-59	-	31	-
60-79	-	446	-
80 or more	-	396	-
Markets¹			
EU	-	888	-
<i>of which</i> : Euro area	-	11	-
Non-EU	-	5	-

¹ Refer to methodological notes 8 and 9.

Methodological Notes

- 1 This release focuses on Inbound Tourism, which comprises of activities of non-resident visitors travelling to Malta (i.e. outside their usual environment) and staying for not more than 12 consecutive months for leisure, business or other (corresponding) purposes.
- 2 Inbound tourism data are collected from an ongoing frontier national survey known as Tourstat. Tourist air departures are collected through a continuous survey carried out at the departure lounge of the Malta International Airport. A two-stage sampling design is used to collect data on air passengers. In the first stage, alternate days and nights are selected. In the second stage, within each shift, a sample of air passengers is selected systematically. Every crossing air passenger is counted and respondents are selected using a pre-defined interval of 1:20, with the exception of July, October, November, December 2020 and January 2021 where the pre-defined interval was 1:10.
- 3 Tourstat measures the number of tourist trips carried out during a particular reference month. These differ from the number of tourists in that the same person can make more than one trip during the same period.
- 4 Tourist sea departures are collected through a regular survey, conducted during three separate months every year at the Valletta Cruise Port. A quota sample is used to conduct sea passenger departures in which survey interviewers are guided to select people according to fixed quotas. Survey data is supplemented by administrative data provided by ferry operators.
- 5 Absolute and percentage changes between one survey estimate and another based on less than 1,500 tourists should be treated with caution and are represented in this news release by means of the dash symbol (-).
- 6 In view of the COVID-19 situation, the Tourstat survey was suspended between 12 March and 30 June 2020. Statistical methods were applied to cover the period from 13 March to 20 March 2020, when scheduled passenger flights were still in operation.
- 7 Malta International Airport reopened on 1 July 2020. The first group of destinations that reopened for travel comprised: Germany, Austria, Italy, France, Spain, Poland, Cyprus, Switzerland, Iceland, Slovakia, Norway, Denmark, Hungary, Finland, Ireland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Luxembourg, Czech Republic, Greece and Croatia. Restrictions on all other flight destinations were lifted on 15 July 2020.
- 8 Owing to the UK's exit from the European Union (with effect from 1st February 2020), UK data is statistically classified as Non-EU from February 2020 in the tables relating to the specific month (Tables 1 - 6). Requests for further clarification may be directed to the Tourism and Education Statistics Unit.
- 9 Due to the UK's re-classification following exit from the European Union on 1st February 2020, comparability between monthly and cumulative tables and also between comparative periods should be treated with caution.
- 10 The monthly passenger departures data published by the Malta International Airport cannot be equated to the number of inbound tourists, because the former is inclusive of departing Maltese and transit passengers.
- 11 Data on cruise passengers who spent at least one night berthed on board their cruise ship in Malta ('Overnight Cruise Passengers') is compiled on the basis of administrative records supplied by Transport Malta.
- 12 Arrivals and nights spent in time-share accommodation are being categorised in 'Non-rented Accommodation' instead of 'Collective Accommodation' as per Eurostat recommendation. In this regard, there may be minor differences in these statistics and statistics published in tourism supply due to the fact that hotels report time-share accommodation under 'Collective Accommodation'.
- 13 Prior to comparing and interpreting differences between demand-side (based on Tourstat) and supply-side (based on Accomstat) tourism statistics, users are strongly advised to consult concept 15.4 of the NSO's metadata file (<https://metadata.nso.gov.mt/reports.aspx?id=37#>).
- 14 Data included in this release are based on sample data and are therefore subject to sampling error. Sampling error is measured by a quantity known as the margin of error, which in turn, expresses the variability between the true population parameters and their corresponding sample estimates. In the table below, the margin of error is used to construct a set of 95 per cent confidence intervals for the main indicators, which gives an indication of where the true population parameters lie.

Sampling variability of inbound tourism figures

	Estimate	Margin of error	95% confidence interval
Inbound tourists	13,806	1,060	13,806 ± 1,060
Total nights	190,853	26,960	190,853 ± 26,960
Total expenditure (€ 000)	11,705	1,006	11,705 ± 1,006

15 Definitions:

- **Usual environment:** The geographical area, though not necessarily a contiguous one, within which an individual conducts his regular life routines and shall be determined on the basis of the following criteria: the crossing of administrative borders or the distance from the place of usual residence, the duration of visit, the frequency of visit, the purpose of visit.
- **Resident:** a person is considered to be a resident of Malta/Gozo if:
 - a. S/he has lived for most of the past 12 months in Malta/Gozo;
 - b. S/he has lived in Malta/Gozo for less than 12 months but intends to return within a year to settle here.
- **Traveller:** A person who moves between different geographic locations, for any purpose and any duration.
- **Visitor:** The three fundamental criteria used to distinguish visitors from travellers are:
 - a. **The trip should be to a place other than that of the usual environment**, which would exclude short-distance local transport and commuting, i.e. more or less regular trips between the place of work/study and the place of residence;
 - b. **The stay in the place visited should not last more than twelve consecutive months**, beyond which the visitor would become a resident of that place (from the statistical standpoint);
 - c. **The main purpose of the visit should be other than the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited**, which would exclude migratory movements for work purposes.
- **Tourist:** A visitor who stays at least one night in a rented and non-rented accommodation in the place/country visited.
- **Inbound tourism:** Comprises the activities of non-resident visitors travelling to Malta (i.e. outside their usual environment) and staying for not more than 12 consecutive months for personal, business or other purposes.

- **Total nights spent:** Nights which a guest actually spends or is registered to spend in a rented accommodation establishment or in a non-rented accommodation.
- **Average length of stay:** The number of nights spent divided by the number of trips during a specified reference period.
- **Rented accommodation:** Consists of the following two sub-categories:
 - a. **Collective accommodation:** comprises hotels, guesthouses, hostels, tourist villages, holiday complex, Bed & Breakfast and campsites.
 - b. **Other rented accommodation:** comprises holiday furnished premises (farmhouses, flats and villas), host families, marinas, paid-convents, rented yachts and student dormitories.
- **Non-rented accommodation:** Comprises own private residence (owned dwellings, owned caravans and yachts), staying with friends or relatives (even if charged - includes also friends' private apartments) and other private accommodation (oil rig, free-convents or timeshare, etc.).
- **Total expenditure:** Refers to the amount that is going to be paid for the acquisition of consumption goods and services, as well as valuables during tourism trips. It includes expenditures by visitors themselves, as well as expenses that are paid for or reimbursed by others. The total expenditure is broken down by the following expenditure items:
 - a. **Package expenditure:** refers to the whole amount of money spent on transport, accommodation and other services such as rental of a car, activities or outings during the trip.
 - b. **Non-Package expenditure:** is the amount of money spent on transport and accommodation reported separately.
 - c. **Other expenditure:** is the amount spent on shopping, souvenirs, tickets for concerts or sports events, entrance to museums or zoos and day excursions during a tourism trip. It also includes durables and valuable goods, that is, the amount spent on cars, computers, paintings, jewellery and works of art.

15 More information relating to this news release may be accessed at:

Sources and methods: https://nso.gov.mt/en/nso/Sources_and_Methods/Unit_C3/Tourism_Statistics/Pages/TOURSTAT-Survey.aspx

Statistical concepts: <https://metadata.nso.gov.mt/concepts.aspx>

Metadata: <https://metadata.nso.gov.mt/reports.aspx?id=37>

Statistical database: <https://statdb.nso.gov.mt/start>

16 References to this news release are to be cited appropriately.

17 A detailed news release calendar is available on:

https://nso.gov.mt/en/News_Releases/Release_Calendar/Pages/News-Release-Calendar.aspx