Ten Years of Prestigious Blue Flag Awards

UNESCO acknowledges the Blue Flag for Sustainable Development

Twelve Blue Flag Beaches on the Maltese Islands for 2018

Beach Crew and Beach Upkeep personnel

MTA operations at Ghajn Tuffieha ‘Tat-Tarag’

Aiming for the first single-use-plastic-free beach in Europe

Official numbering on lifeguard towers

New showers on beaches

New changing rooms at Ghadira Bay

Free WIFI on beaches

Upgraded public conveniences

Beach Assets and Code of conduct

QR Code System for Bathing Water Quality Results

Extended walk ways and Accessibility

Additional hoist chair at Ghadira ‘Tas-Sellum’

Additional sand wheelchairs for Gozo
The international Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) (operating from Denmark) awards beaches that follow the Blue Flag’s stringent criteria. A beach can only fly the Blue Flag if it complies to 100% of all its 32 criteria.

www.Blueflag.org

Malta was awarded the first Blue Flag at St. George’s Bay - St. Julians in 2009 and has managed to increase the Blue Flag awards every year, ever since. In 2018, Malta was awarded nine Blue Flags and an additional three for Gozo’s beaches. 48 countries around the world worked hard to achieve the Blue Flag status in 2017.

As from this year the UNESCO acknowledges the Blue Flag for Sustainable Development

“We educate to protect.
To protect not just our environment but the people who live in it, The communities who depend on it, the businesses who profit from it and the ecosystems which rely on it!” - S Bachet Granados
The Malta Tourism Authority (MTA) manages a number of these beaches to sustainable, international standards. The MTA also assists other beach managers to achieve the best results in beach management. All managed beaches are equipped with lifeguards, first aid equipment, safety flags, beach supervision, information boards, waste separation facilities, daily cleaning, sand sifting, public conveniences and above all, a beach-user code of conduct. The latter serves as a guideline as to what is expected from every beach user so as to avoid misunderstandings and for the beach to remain environmentally sustainable. Environmental, educational activities together with information campaigns are organised on every beach. The beach crew monitors the beaches continuously, eight hours a day, seven days a week between June and September.

The Maltese Islands, surrounded by the Mediterranean Sea, offer a number of pocket beaches with crystal blue water. Few are sandy beaches while others portray a variety of rock formations, ideal for people who prefer to sunbathe on smoother surfaces. Some pebble beaches are also popular with locals and foreigners.

Managed beaches on the Maltese Islands

The logos show beaches that are being managed to Blue Flag standards but never applied for awards.

The Foundation for Tourism Zone Development (FTZD), is assigned with embellishment projects and upkeep of the tourism zone areas of Malta, executed by officials from the Product Development Directorate of the MTA.

MTA’s managed beaches are: Ghadira Bay – Mellieha, Golden Bay – Mellieha, Ghajn Tuffieha – Mgarr, Qawra Point and Bugibba Perched Beach at St. Paul’s Bay, Fond Ghadir – Sliema, St. George’s Bay – St. Julians, Pretty Bay – Birzebbuqa, Ta’ Fajtata Marsascala and Blue Lagoon and Santa Maria Bay on Comino. As from this year, the MTA will be fully responsible for Ghajn Tuffieha Bay operations during summer.

The beach crew are wearing new, white uniforms with the new MTA logo as seen in the picture below. A fresh crew will be educating and assisting people on how to recycle on the beach. This crew has a light blue uniform with the words Beach Upkeep.
During summer, from the 15 June till the 15 September, beach staff and lifeguards are present on the beaches daily from 10.00am till 6.00pm. These official days may be extended on certain beaches, depending on the prevailing weather. (Should extreme weather conditions or flooding occur, beach staff may be absent as a safety precaution)

Other beaches assisted technically and financially by the MTA include: Gozo’s Marsalforn Bay, Hondoq ir-Rummien Bay, Ir-Ramla l-Hamra Bay and Xlendi Bay, all managed by the Ministry for Gozo. The MTA also installed accessibility facilities at Armier Bay and Little Armier Bay - Mellieha, Gnejna Bay-Mgarr, Bahar ic-Caghaq –Naxxar, Exiles – Sliema, Marsaxlokk Bay and Zonqor rocky beach at Marsascala.
The MTA has taken over beach management operations at Ghajn Tuffieha known as ‘Tat-Tarag’ or as formerly referred to, Riviera. Tat-Tarag will offer new challenges for beach management not only with its physical formation and accessibility but also with its status of a protected, Natura 2000 site where operations and the code of conduct will be carefully monitored.

AIMING FOR THE FIRST PLASTIC-FREE BEACH IN EUROPE

The first project that the MTA will be working upon at Tat-Tarag is to make this unique beach the first single-use-plastic-free beach in Europe! Discussions are underway with the operator and other stakeholders to explore possibilities and options for its success. The general public will be involved and will be encouraged to assist in the campaign.

SAFETY FLAGS

The safety flags on the beaches are according to the International Lifeguard Federation (ILF) and the colour code is identical worldwide. They are put up to inform the beach user on the conditions of the sea water. The colour of the safety flag raised daily on the beach is determined by the lifeguards according to the conditions prevailing at the time. It is worth noting that when the lifeguards need to put up the double red flag and close the beach, the lifeguard is NOT duty bound to enter the sea but may do so on his own free will. If the sea currents are dangerous for the public, they are dangerous for the lifeguard as well.

Beach Newsletter 2018 - Beach Unit MTA
LIFEGUARDS, CLINICS AND LIFE SAVING EQUIPMENT

For rapid communication between authorities in particular paramedics, ambulances and hospitals, all lifeguard clinics on Malta’s beaches are being officially numbered as follows:

1. Ghajn Tuffieha tat-Tarag;
2. Golden Bay;
3. Ghadira Bay Three near Mellieha Bay Hotel;
4. Ghadira Bay two, centre, opposite Police Station;
5. Ghadira Bay One near San Remo Lido;
6. Bugibba Perched Beach;
7. Qawra Point;
8. Fond Ghadir Sliema;
9. St. George’s Bay;
10. Ta’ Fajtata Marsascala;
11. Pretty Bay Birzebbuga.

Lifeguard services are being implemented by the Malta Red Cross on all MTA beaches during dates and hours of beach operations.

LIFEGUARDS ARE NOT EXPECTED TO ASSIST SWIMMERS WHEN THE SEA IS DANGEROUS AND OUT OF BOUNDS, INDICATED BY DOUBLE RED FLAGS.
NEW SHOWERS ON BEACHES

Nine sets of new showers with a total of 27 units have been installed at Ghadira Bay, St George’s Bay, Golden Bay, Fond Ghadir, Ta’ Fajtata Marsascala and Pretty Bay Birzebbuga. The use of the showers is free of charge for the general public who is expected to use them with care. No soap is allowed on beaches and people are encouraged to use water wisely.

NEW CHANGING ROOMS AT GHADIRA BAY

The Ministry for Tourism installed new changing rooms at Ghadira Bay and free WIFI on many beaches.

FREE WIFI ON BEACHES
The Malta Tourism Authority has invested in upgrading the public conveniences of various Locations. Photos show the toilets at Ghadira Bay.

**BEACH CODE OF CONDUCT**

The beach Code of Conduct and Safety Flags are the official guidance to beach users on what is expected of them for the best experience for one’s own safety, respect towards other users and the beach. Every beach has its own Code of Conduct depending on the By-Laws of the Local Councils concerned, specific requirements of the particular beach by Environmental Authorities or national and European Directives. The Code icons are clearly marked on every beach information panel and notice boards and the beach supervisors will see that they are adhered to.

**WATER QUALITY QR CODE SYSTEM**

Water Quality reports can now be accessed directly from the Laboratory through the new QR Code system placed on the boards.
The MTA invested in several beach assets to enhance the experience of the beach users. Ladders, bridges, signs, notice boards, lifeguard towers, waste separation bins and carpet walkways were posted on all beaches managed by MTA.

Information signs include a map of the beach, ecological information and the biodiversity living in the area, explanation of the safety flags as well as the Code of Conduct of the beach explained earlier.
Accessiblity

Additional Hoist Chair at Ghadira ‘Tas-Sellum’

The MTA keeps increasing its efforts for accessibility on its beaches. 195 metres of synthetic mats and 200 metres of wooden pathways have been added last summer bringing the installations to a total of 626 metres of mobile walkways. A further 200 metres will be introduced on beaches this year. Additionally, concrete ramps have been resurfaced and upgraded. 2017 also saw the increase of a hoist chair at Ta’ Fajtata Marsascala to complement those at Qawra Point and Exiles at Sliema.

More Sand Wheelchairs for Gozo

Sand Wheelchairs are now available on Gozo’s sandy beaches. Wheelchairs and Chair Hoists are available free of charge, daily, between 10.00am and 5.00pm. These promote more accessibility accompanied by the walkways!
On-going campaigns on beaches include the Waste Separation awareness and Butts Off the Sand which are running parallel with the Litter-Free Beaches Campaign. An effort to reduce plastic waste from the beach is also being included in many environmental and educational activities. Disposing of waste sensibly on beaches is imperative. Spot the Jellyfish and Alien Fish is another initiative that beach goers will be encouraged to participate in. This initiative is being managed by the University of Malta and assisted by the MTA. Beat the Burn is a campaign organised by the Malta Medical Students Association (MMSA) making people aware of the dangers produced by UV rays on the exposed skin.
The Malta Medical Students Association will continue its effort to educate the general public about the danger of ultraviolet rays on the skin which may ultimately lead to the risk of Skin cancer.

**Spot the Jellyfish/Alien Fish campaigns made easier with smart phone apps**

Spot the Jellyfish and Spot the Alien Fish smart phone apps were launched through an ongoing collaboration between Alan Deidun from the Department of Geosciences at the University of Malta, who coordinates the two campaigns, and students from Mcast who developed the apps.

**BEAT THE BURN**

The Malta Medical Students Association will continue its effort to educate the general public about the danger of ultraviolet rays on the skin which may ultimately lead to the risk of Skin cancer.

**BLUE FLAG ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

Environmental education is an important criterion to achieve the Blue Flag Awards. Fun activities are organised on every beach during summer. The images hereunder are a few of the latest activities held. They focus on various environmental aspects and encourage participants to be creative. Activities included biodiversity awareness, walks, photographic exhibition, visits to museums and visitor centres, cleanups, snorkelling, clay classes, beach games and much more.
Photos show Coastal trekking at Majjistral Park and Marsascala, coastal formations and naturally formed salt, marine creatures for children, and clay classes creating fish with persons with special needs. Turtles released this July can be seen on the back page.
MTA’s Beach Unit wishes all readers a safe and enjoyable summer on the beach

CONTACT

Malta Tourism Authority, Building SCM01, Level 3, Smart City Malta Ricasoli, SCM 1001, Kalkara Malta. Tel. 22915000 info@visitmalta.com


www.Blueflag.org
Nature Trust Malta, Wied Ghollieqa, Tal-Qroqq, Msida. Tel. 21315050