In the Foot Steps of the Knights

Valletta, a city built by gentlemen for gentlemen
The Knights of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem were formed long before their reign on the Maltese Islands. The Order of St. John was originally established in 1085 as a community of monks responsible for looking after the sick at the Hospital of St. John in Jerusalem. They later became a military order, defending crusader territory in the Holy Lands and safeguarding the perilous routes taken by medieval pilgrims. The Knights were drawn exclusively from noble families and the Order acquired vast wealth from those it recruited. The Knights came to Malta in 1530, having been ejected from their earlier home on Rhodes by the Turks in 1522. Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor, gave them the choice of Malta or Tripoli as a new base and with out hesitation they opted for the Maltese Islands. The Knights stayed for 268 years, transforming what they called 'merely a rock of soft sandstone' into a flourishing island with mighty defences and a capital city coveted by the great powers of Europe. Valletta, considered the Capital of Europe of the era, the foundation stone was laid by the Grandmaster La Valette in the year 1566.

Grand Master Jean Parisot de Valette was answerable only to the Pope. Knights were chosen from the aristocratic families of France, Italy, Spain, England and Portugal. On acceptance into the Order they were sworn to celibacy, poverty and obedience.
**Valletta, Malta’s capital and a UNESCO World Heritage Site**, is nothing short of an open-air museum. It is a living experience of Baroque architecture, a monument donated by the Knights of St John nearly five centuries ago.

Valletta owes its existence to the Knights of St John, who planned the city as a refuge to care for injured soldiers and pilgrims during the Crusades in the 16th century. Until the arrival of the Knights, Mount Sceberras, on which Valletta stands, lying between two natural harbours, was an arid tongue of land. No building stood on its bare rocks except for a small watch tower, called St Elmo, to be found at its extreme end. Grand Master La Valette, the gallant hero of the Great Siege of 1565, soon realised that if the Order was to maintain its hold on Malta, it had to provide adequate defences. Therefore, he drew up a plan for a new fortified city on the Sceberras peninsula.

Pope Pius V and Philip II of Spain showed interest in the project. They both promised financial aid and the Pope lent the Knights the services of Francesco Laparelli, a military engineer, who drew up the necessary plans for the new city and its defences. Work started in earnest in March 1566 - first on the bastions and, soon after, on the more important buildings.
The Grand Hotel Excelsior, Malta, is a newly reconstructed deluxe 5 star resort situated within the sixteenth century fortifications of Malta’s capital city, Valletta. The hotel embodies quality and style and commands the island’s premier waterfront location offering breathtaking sea views of Marsamxett Harbour and Manoel Island. As a member of Preferred Hotels & Resorts, the hotel delivers and exceeds expectations on a level of 5-star service excellence. All 439 deluxe rooms and suites enjoy a harmonious blend of classic and contemporary design mixed with modern 5-star convenience including WiFi and multi-channel flat screen TV. Spread over ten levels, three of which are executive floors, most of the rooms and suites experience stunning harbour views. Superb facilities include a private 30-berth marina, large outdoor and indoor swimming pools, health & beauty centre and 7 food and beverage outlets. The hotel also offers versatile conference & banqueting facilities, 13 flexible venues of over 4000m² a number of which have natural daylight, an ideal environment for business meetings, conferences and other events.
Welcome to the Maltese Islands. On arrival day the group will be greeted by the Excelsior external logistical support team. The Excelsior Hotel provides a one-stop-shop approach including the possibility of organising all external logistical support for all Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Events (MICE) that would take place at the Grand Hotel Excelsior.

With an in house fleet of vehicles we can organise individual pick-up arrivals and also group arrivals by luxury coaches. The group will proceed to the first location, The Valletta Waterfront. With its nineteen historical 250-year-old warehouses, built by Grand Master Pinto at the height of the baroque period in Malta, stretching along the water’s edge and the historical Quay Wall where the Knights of St John and European merchants used to unload their ware, the Forni Stores, dating back to 1626 and constructed by Grand Master de Vilhena. The transfer takes approximately 10/15mins to the Valletta Waterfront were we will be boarding the Turkish Gullet for a Grand Harbour Tour. Guest will be offered a welcome drink and canape on-board the gullet. A detailed commentary will unfold the history of Valletta and the Three Cities connected with the two Great Sieges of 1565 and 1942, as well as all the other places of interest including the historical forts, battlements and creeks which can only be admired from the sea. Minutes after departure we will surprise our guests with an unusual welcome, gun firing from the saluting battery. The Saluting Battery is located on one of the best vantage points overlooking the Grand Harbour. Its origins are as old as those of the City itself, having been built as part of it, in 1566, by the Order of St. John on the design of the military engineer Francesco Laparelli. During that conflict, the full length of the Valletta promontory was easily overrun by the Ottomans who built several powerful siege batteries to keep the Knights of St. John and the Maltese holed-up within Fort St. Angelo and the walled towns of Vittoriosa and Senglea. It is also perhaps the oldest saluting battery still in operation anywhere in the world. The tour will take our guests direct to the Grand Excelsior Hotel’s jetty and on to the Yacht Club for check-in.
During the evening we will be gathering our guests to the Bastion terrace for a welcome stand up dinner. This 16th century Bastions with a Capacity of Reception 900 Banquet, 420 with a total surface of 1055 sq. will be dressed up with fire torches and specialised food will be served from Knights wooden stalls. Some items that can served are whole Tuna fish, Suckling pig and more traditional Knights foods to discover taste and share.

Before the actual Knights welcome stand up dinner festa, our guests will enjoy a re-enactment that portrays an authentic event that took place regularly inside Malta’s major fortifications of the Order of St. John. The re-enactment portrays the inspection of the fort and its garrison by the Grand Bailiff of the Order of the Knights of St. John in charge of military affairs. During the re-enactment, of the fort’s garris. Re-enactors in all - are kitted-out in their uniforms to perform their military drill to demonstrate to the Grand Bailiff its state of readiness.

Guests will enjoy some traditional food and drink while learning more about the history and culture of the Maltese Islands.
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Day 2 Valletta i-pad treasure hunt

The second day will take us discover the famous UNESCO world heritage site Valetta City. The guests will be briefed by our teambuilding coordinators at the Hotel. The Valletta iPad challenge merges technology with our local rich history. The versatility of iPads makes this event a very user friendly and easy to accomplish challenge. Use the interactive map with (geolocation) to get to hotspot locations, answer all the questions and perform all the required tasks [some being knight related] – while tracking your opponents !!

Teams have the possibility of chatting with their opponents while sending iBombs to each other (iBombs will freeze your opponents screen for a few seconds, disabling them).

The group should be split into teams of approximately 6-8 persons per team. Each team will be handed an iPad with our own app for the event. We will be tracking all the movements of any particular team form our base location. Teams will have to take creative photos and videos with the same iPad to fulfil the event’s aims of being creative and accurate.

The whole event can take around 2 to 2.5 hours and the final destination can be any location. Although teams will have live ranking on each iPad we will switch it off 15 minutes form the end to keep the suspense as well as for the fun of announcing the winner.

Guest will proceed to the to the waterfront for Lunch.
In the evening guest will be taken to the MCC for a Knights Extravaganza Banquet. The 16th century building now the Mediterranean Conference Centre has long been one of Valletta’s most remarkable landmarks. Located towards the tip of Valletta peninsula, the MCC stands for distinction with magnificent views across the Grand Harbour.

The Mediterranean Conference Centre is a rare example in the region of a heritage building functioning to the exacting demands of the 21st century. The Centre’s long experience and reputation as a unique quality venue is confirmed by it’s membership of the prestigious Historic Conference Centres of Europe (HCCE). The Mediterranean Conference Centre is one of Europe’s largest conference centres within a historical setting.

A talented cast of dancers and entertainers dressed in rich costumes and shining armour together with our magnificent horses, will entertain, excite and amuse you during two hours of non-stop action, song and dance. Witness a colourful fusion of traditional music, folk dancing, fire dancers, knights on horseback, live battles and much more highlighting Maltese culture, traditions and folk. End the night with a spectacular fire shows show over the Grand Harbour.
On this day we will take our guests to the Three Cities. The Three Cities offer an intriguing insight into Malta and its history. Left largely unvisited, these cities are a slice of authentic life as well as a glimpse into Malta’s maritime fortunes.

The Three Cities can rightly claim to be the cradle of Maltese history, as Vittoriosa, Senglea and Cospicua have provided a home and fortress to almost every people who settled on the Islands. Their harbour inlets have been in use since Phoenician times, the docks always providing a living for local people, but also leaving them vulnerable when Malta’s rulers were at war. As the first home to the Knights of St. John, the Three Cities’ palaces, churches, forts and bastions are far older than Valletta’s.

We will be meet at the Hotel Jetty and board the traditional boats Dghajsa. A dghajsa is a traditional water taxi from Malta. The design of the Dghajsa, like that of another Maltese boat, the luzzu, possibly dates back to Phoenician times, although it was modified over time, especially during British rule in Malta. The trip will take approx. 45 minutes and will take us to Birgu waterfront where we will be joined by our team building team and proceed to Fort St. Elmo Set in the medieval city of Birgu, teams are given the task to go around the streets of this Birgu to experience its historical treasures, whilst completing challenges to win gold coins and be the first to find the hidden treasure. Caravaggio, the Noble Lady and the Knight Guarding the Palace are amongst the characters teams will meet from whom they will get further information that can lead them one step closer to the treasure.
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Day 3 Gala Dinner at Casino Maltese

Casino Maltese, originally used as a treasury of the Knights of St John, today the exclusive Casino Maltese retains most of its original 16th Century features.

On entrance there is a large hall leading to a majestic staircase which branches off into two and leads onto a spacious landing and different halls. The Presidents’ Hall is large and decorated with paintings of past presidents. The Ballroom and the Dining room are beautifully decorated with parquet flooring and crystal chandeliers. The Princess Room is smaller and was so named after the visit to the club of Queen Elizabeth II when she was still a princess. During the rule of the Order of St. John the premises had been used as the ‘Casa Del Commun Tesoro’ (literally the House of the National Treasurer), but only accounts, contracts and records of the treasury were kept there. This institution was presided over by the Grand Commander who was helped in his task by 2 procurators of the Treasury, the Procurator of the Grand Master, the conventual conservator and the Secretary.

A three piece soft band will entertain our guest throughout the night during this memorable fine dining experience.

Till today a truly outstanding venue with a history of noble visitors in the heart of the capital City Valletta just minutes away from The Grand Excelsior Hotel. Nothing else should be added to this evening based in the footsteps of the Knights of Jerusalem.
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Day 4 Breakfast & departure day

We do hope you found our programme of interest and will be looking forward to joining you
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