

# THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY: ACCESS STATEMENT

## PRE-ARRIVAL INFORMATION

General information on the National Museum of Natural History, up-to-date opening and closing hours, a virtual tour, and admission fees are available on <https://heritagemalta.mt/explore/national-museum-of-natural-history/>. Brochures are also available from Heritage Malta Ticketing Offices and VisitMalta Tourist Information Centres.

The National Museum of Natural History is Autism Friendly with special provisions in place for such visitors on Tuesdays between 13.00 and 16.00. A sensory map and social story for visitors on the Autism Spectrum and visitors with Sensory Processing Disorder is available for download from <https://heritagemalta.mt/explore/national-museum-of-natural-history/>.

People with mobility impairments are advised that only the ground floor level is wheelchair accessible. Service dogs are welcome, pets are not permitted anywhere in the National Museum of Natural History.

## VISITING THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

### Transport and Parking

The museum is located at St. Publius Square in Mdina and can be found immediately to your right upon entering Mdina through Mdina Main Gate. The nearest bus stop 'Mdina' is 120 meters away. <https://www.publictransport.com.mt/en/routes-timetables> can be used to plan your journey. A taxi stand is also available a few meters away from the bus stop. Cars can make use of the free public car park situated just outside Mdina Main Gate. Other public car parks are situated in the Mdina Ditch and opposite Howard Gardens nearby. Cars are not allowed inside Mdina unless they have a special designated permit issued by the Mdina Local Council. The North Route of the Hop-on Hop-off buses stops near Mdina Main Gate.

## MAIN ENTRANCE, RECEPTION, GIFTSHOP AND TICKETING AREA

### The History of the Building

Housed in a stellar location in an 18th-century palace within the fortified city of Mdina, the National Museum of Natural History has a long history to tell. The palace was constructed in the Parisian Baroque style by Grand Master Antonio Manoel de Vilhena in 1724 and served as a temporary hospital during the 1837 cholera outbreak, as a sanitorium for British troops in 1860 and a hospital for tuberculosis patients till January 1956.

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June 1973 the National Museum of Natural History was officially inaugurated and opened for public viewing. It is entrusted with the acquisition, collection, display and conservation

of natural history specimens, with special emphasis on local Flora and Fauna.

### Main Entrance

Entrance to the museum's front courtyard is through a wheelchair accessible wooden gate (250cm wide) that is always kept open during visiting hours. Upon entering the front courtyard a glass door to the right (172cm wide) leads to the site's ticketing area. Visitors walk through a timeline of the human occupation of the Maltese Islands and arrive at the main reception area.

### Reception Area, Ticketing & Gift Shop

The reception area is well-lit by means of natural lighting, recessed lighting, and wall mounted spotlights. Part of the reception desk is at wheelchair height and the reception area has no barriers for mobility impaired persons.

The reception desk is continuously manned by Heritage Malta staff during operating hours. Our personnel speak multiple languages and have been trained in customer care and first aid. Visitors can purchase entrance tickets from the reception desk, both cash and credit card payments are accepted. A complimentary museum brochure is given with every ticket purchased. Free Wi-Fi is also available in this area (and throughout the museum).

### Gift Shop

The gift shop forms part of the reception area. Items are displayed on shelves at different levels with their price clearly marked. Items that can be purchased from the giftshop include books, jewellery, and site-specific souvenirs. Visitors can also purchase the museum's guidebook for deeper understanding on the National Museum of Natural History and its history.

Whilst this area is wheelchair accessible, visitors should ask staff for assistance if they would like to view shop items situated on high shelves.

## THE DISPLAY AREAS

Access to the rest of the museum is through a glass door that is 180cm wide, which leads to the front courtyard. Parts of the floor of the front courtyard are slightly uneven, mobility impaired people can ask staff for assistance.

The ground floor of the National Museum of Natural History is wheelchair accessible; stairs lead to the other floors within the museum. The exhibition halls are situated in two areas. The North Wing, opposite the reception area, has three floors (52 steps, 15cm high) of exhibits presented in separate halls. The building's main doorway and staircase (22 steps, each 15cm high) lead to an exhibition hall on the first floor of the central museum area. All the halls and corridors within the building are tiled. Interpretation is delivered by means of information panels, audiovisual material, and interactive content. Specimens, models, and the scientific tools used in the study of Natural History complement the interpretation. For more in-depth knowledge on the museum and its halls a guided tour against payment can be booked upon request. The museum is illuminated by means of fluorescent lighting and in-built display cabinet lighting.

## RESTROOMS AND OTHER FACILITIES

### Restrooms

A restroom is located on the ground floor of the complex. The two unisex toilet cubicles within it are 175cm deep and 100cm wide. A unisex wheelchair accessible cubicle is also found in this restroom. The wheelchair accessible toilet is 347cm long and 203cm wide. In it one finds a wall mounted nappy changer that conforms to the requirements of EN12221-1:2008.

The restroom is well lit by means of sensor-operated fluorescent lighting. A secondary toilet facility is located at the lower level, next to the internal courtyard of the palace.

### Children's Room

A children's room is present on the second floor of the North Wing. This room has seating for all ages and can be used by groups for various activities by prior agreement with the museum's curatorial team.

### Seating

Visitors can make use of the seating provided within the museum. There are benches in the front courtyard of the museum, another seating area is located on the first floor of the North Wing, together with three additional seating areas on the second floor of the same wing.

### Lecture hall

A readily accessible, wheelchair-friendly lecture hall situated on the ground floor of the North Wing hosts temporary exhibitions and is used for lectures given by the museum's curatorial staff and guest lecturers. These exhibitions and lectures are advertised on Heritage Malta's website (<https://heritagemalta.mt/>).

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Our staff will happily answer queries about Rabat and Mdina and areas of interest nearby. Questions with regards to curatorial aspects will be forwarded to the curators of the site.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

**Address:** National Museum of Natural History, St. Publius Square, Mdina, MDN1011.

**Telephone number:** Front Desk: +356 21455951. Curatorial Office: +35621459709.

**Email:** [info@heritagemalta.org](mailto:info@heritagemalta.org)

**Website:** [www.heritagemalta.org](http://www.heritagemalta.org)

## OPENING HOURS

The National Museum of Natural History is open in January and February on Tuesdays, and from Thursdays to Sundays between 09:00 and 17:00. From March to December the National Museum of Natural History is open from Tuesdays to Sundays between 09:00 and 17:00. The site is not open on the 24th, 25th & 31st of December, 1st of January, and on Good Friday.

If you have any problem or suggestion regarding the accessibility of this portal, please write to us to enable us to respond in a helpful manner. Do let us know the nature of the problem along with your contact information.

## FUTURE PLANS

The halls of the National Museum of Natural History cover a range of topics including Rocks and Minerals, Maltese Geology, Small Islands, Fossils, Birds, Reptiles, Mammals, Shells, and others. The opening of additional halls and the refurbishment of existing ones is in the pipeline.