

PJC does Malta 2020.

Introduction.

First of all, we need to stress that this is not a formal PJC organised event, so you are ultimately responsible for travel and hotel bookings, and your own travel insurance.

However, club members having been attending the Malta Marathon and Half Marathon for a number of years now, and once again there will be quite a few Joggers in Malta 2020.

Therefore, this guide is intended to help you with information about the race, travel to and staying in Malta, and also to highlight what we can do to help you make the event and your stay in Malta as much fun as possible!

Event Details.

Date – Sunday 1st March 2020.

There are 2 races – a full and a half marathon – entry costs are £31 plus bus transfer of £4.

There is also a walkathon over the half marathon route.

Please ensure you include Portsmouth Joggers as your club, as this enables us to collect your numbers and kit bags in advance.

All start at the same point in Mdina (there is a shuttle bus from Sliema to the start – recommended!). The full marathon starts over an hour before the half, so runners finish both races around the same time.

Both races finish in Sliema.

Event page is [here](#) – note entries don't open until 1st October, and close on 15th January 2020.

Assuming the same as last few years, you get a medal and technical t-shirt.

Also, race photos are very reasonable, and if you sign up (for free), your facebook profile will be automatically updated with a photo and time at half way and the finish – so your friends will know how you are getting on before you do!

Note – entry costs go up after 31st December, and booking before this date is recommended, due to the popularity of this event.

Unless you have own transport or want a taxi, book the shuttle bus to the start, as there isn't a public transport alternative that early on a Sunday.

The route is slightly undulating, but overall downhill, and plenty of Joggers have set PBs over the years. The half is more popular (generally and with PJC), and "spectators" are welcome of course.

This is a hugely popular event, attracting many runners from the UK and the rest of Europe, even China, but small enough to retain that personal touch. Due to PJC's support of this event over the last 10 years or so, we have good contacts with the organisers.

Note – you can normally switch (usually from full to half) after entry, and right up to the last couple of weeks.

Portsmouth Joggers Club – unofficial.

Please do note the need for you to book your own race entry, hotels and flights. There is information further on to help you with this, and also options to transfer from the airport to the hotels.

But.....

As mentioned above, PJC have supported this race for a number of years, and several of us who have done this before will happily help you in various ways:

- PJC Malta hoodies (at cost – any size catered for).
- Base camp in Sliema, near the finish, as a focal point for everyone during the whole long weekend/week.
- Pre race number collection for all PJC members.
- Pre race meet up on Saturday in Sliema – you can collect your number, join everyone for a meal, drinks (obviously no alcohol for the runners!!), discuss tactics!
- Post race party in Sliema – beer/prosecco when you finish (you need to pay for this!, but we will get it from the local shops). G&Ts may be added to this menu!
- If enough interest – Saturday morning 5K in Sliema, as Malta doesn't have a parkrun!
- Dedicated facebook page to help organise flights and hotels etc, as well as meeting up for excursions and meals while in Malta.

How long should I stay?

This is up to you – there is lots to do, so while many do a long weekend (Friday to Monday), equally a considerable number arrive a few days earlier, and a stay until Tuesday is also quite common (see 2019 report!).

Obviously, this will be dictated a bit by hotel and flight costs, and how much you want to party after the races on the Sunday!

Places to Stay.

The race is focused on Sliema, with the finish there, and the bus shuttles to the start from Sliema.

Be aware that due to the early race starts (to beat the heat), there is no public transport that early to Mdina, though there are shuttle buses from Sliema to the start for both races. If you choose to stay away from Sliema, you will need to factor this in (taxi would be the option in that case).

Central locations we have stayed at before:

The Waterfront Hotel - more expensive, but still good value.

Pebble Boutique Apartments – self catering, clean and good facilities.

Sliema Marina Hotel – good hotel at decent price.

Flights.**EasyJet.**

Flights from Gatwick: Out at 07.30, and Return at 12.25 daily.

Additional flights on Tuesdays and Saturdays at 14.40 out, and 19.35 return.

Air Malta.

Flights from Gatwick: Out at 11.55, and Return at 08.40 daily.

British Airways.

Flights from Gatwick. Out Thursday or Friday at 8.50/8.00, and Return Monday 19.00.

BA and Booking.com also have flight/hotel packages to try out – some use this quite successfully price wise!

Airport Transfer.

Taxi is around €20 for a 20 minute ride to Sliema. I suggest organising a taxi share with other PJC people on your flight (or use the power of facebook to organise in advance!).

Alternatively, jump on a bus – X2 takes you to Sliema (fare is €3 as it's an express service). Bus terminal is right outside the airport.

Travel Insurance.

You should arrange your own travel insurance – there are plenty of companies offering this, and the price comparison sites can give you a head start (think meerkats!).

Note – many policies exclude running related injuries, so if you are competing, you may want to check that it is included.

Sightseeing and Weather.

Weather can vary! Last year we had glorious sunshine, t-shirt weather, plus a violent storm in the middle! It is south of Italy in the med, so even in early March, it will be warm – average temperature is 15-16°C.

Sliema itself has a reasonable range of shops, hotels, bars and restaurants, as well as the active harbour.

Island sightseeing: you can book the organised bus tours, which start and finish in Sliema esplanade. Mixed reviews, some think they are great, but the downside is being stuck in one of the stopping towns where there isn't much to do!

There is a red (north of the island) and blue (south of the island) tour – cost is around 15 euros per person, or 20-25 euros for both if booked at the same time.

There is also an around the island bus tour as well – similarly priced.

Alternatively, there are slightly more expensive boat tours – some go around the island, others tour the Harbours.

Catch the ferry over to Valetta is worthwhile, it is a historic town, with a range of shops, bars and cafes, some small but fascinating churches and cathedral. It is a fortified town, and there are many reminders of this in Valetta (and other places on the island). You can even see (and use) British red telephone boxes! The timetabled ferry is 3 euros return from Sliema.

A boat trip to Gozo is also worthwhile – it's a smaller island just to the north of Malta, and much less commercialised – very relaxing! Similar to the rest of Malta, the historic buildings remind you of its military past.

St Julian is a short bus ride from Sliema – you can stay there, but you will need a taxi to get you to Sliema/Mdina for the race start (or a walk of 2 miles for the bus pick up in Sliema) on race morning. It is a lively resort, with the expected range of shops, bars, hotels and restaurants.

Mdina is where the races start from. Historic town, used to be the capital until 1530, and another fortified town. The bus shuttle gets to Mdina about an hour before the races start, so you will be able to have a short excursion to wet your appetite. Nearby Rabat, with its famous St Paul's church, and myriad of catacombs (if you like that sort of thing!) is also worth a visit.

An alternative to organised bus tours is to take the public transport – Malta has an excellent bus service, costs are €1.50 a journey (or €3 on the express buses). A much more flexible way of sightseeing, and cheaper too.

Shopping – Sliema and St Julian have some well known stores (M&S!), but Valetta, Rabat and Victoria are better for the smaller and more unusual shops. Markets tend to close by midday, so an early start is best.

Facebook Events Page.

If you are going, ask to join the facebook group we have set up for this tour – link is [here](#).

If you have further questions, speak to Steve Wooldridge or Davina Glading on club nights or e-mail stevenwooldridge62@yahoo.co.uk.

FAQs.

Currency – Euros. There are plenty of cashpoints etc., and places to change currency. Most places readily accept cards as well, though you

Language – there are 2 official languages, English and Maltese (or Malti), which is an ancient Arabic based language. Fortunately, most locals speak English!

Electricity – uses the English 3 pin 13 amp supply (240v) – so all your plugs will work here.

Time Zone – 1 hour ahead of the UK.

Travel Documents – passport of course, and with Brexit looming, this should have at least 6 months left before expiring.

Souvenirs – Mdina glass, handmade lace, and handmade sweaters and rugs are all locally produced and good value (quote from Berlitz guide)!

The local beer is Cisk (pronounced Chisk), and also Hopleaf, though this is untried!