

ON TOP OF THE WORLD

The farming community of Gharghur is found perched on a steep peninsula having stunning views all round. The village and the surrounding countryside are perfect for a half-day tour and some great photos! ▶

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Surrounded by agricultural land on all sides, the quiet and serene locality of Gharghur is full of character and home to a small community. The village is flanked by two valleys, *Wied id-Dis* and *Wied Anglu* (“wied” is Maltese for valley) which are considered to be of particular ecological importance. The abundance of green areas all around Gharghur give this village a particular rural setting which is more commonly associated with Malta’s sister island of Gozo.

On your way to Gharghur, passing through Madliena, you will see the Victorian military installation of Fort Madliena on top of the ridge to your left. This fort is usually open on Saturday afternoons. You will also see part of the line of defences known as the Victoria Lines which were built in the late nineteenth century. This low defence wall winds over hills and through villages, roughly running in parallel with the Great Fault which crosses the Island from East to West. It starts at the foot of Madliena and ends at Bingemma.

The same road will lead you to a bridge which lies across the valley known as *Wied id-Dis*. Cross it and start your approach to the village of Gharghur. After a few minutes walk along *Triq il-Gnien* (“triq” meaning road or street) you will see, on your left, what is referred to as the Lieutenant’s House, built in 1803. An inscription on the main door, in Italian, bears the names of King George III and Malta’s first British Governor, Sir Alexander Ball.

By now you will have reached higher ground with views of verdant countryside and the shoreline of White Rocks Bay. You will also be appreciating why Gharghur is a favourite for Sunday walks amongst the Maltese. Further up the road, you will come to the chapel dedicated to the Assumption of Our Lady, built in 1560 and known as ‘*Taz-Zel-lieqa*’, presumably because of the slippery slope the faithful had to negotiate



GHARGHUR IS A FAVOURITE FOR SUNDAY WALKS AMONGST THE MALTESE

to reach the chapel in the old days.

From the chapel go straight ahead and keeping to your right, make your way to the road called *Triq Ghaxqet il-Ghajn* (Maltese for ‘the Eye’s Delight Road’). Gharghur is situated on some of Malta’s highest ground, and thus offers stunning views of the northern part of the island and the coast, particularly

from the belvedere at the tip of the promontory which locals refer to as “The Top of the World”. You will find this spot at the end of the *Ghaxqet il-Ghajn* road. The large antenna you will see on your left, while making your way to this vantage point, is Malta’s Broadcasting Transmission Station, located on the site of a World War II signal station. ▶



A WALK THROUGH THE TINY BUT CHARMING VILLAGE CORE IS A MUST



GETTING HERE...

By Bus: To go straight to Gharghur, take Bus Number 55 which leaves from the Valletta Terminus every 20 minutes and stops in the Village Square. If you want to go *via* Madliena, you can take Bus Number 470 or 70 from the Valletta Terminus.

By Car: Taking the Coast Road, follow the signs to Madliena, and hence to Gharghur.

From the ‘Top of the World’, you can proceed on foot along a path on a circular panoramic route which will take you to the centre of the village. Alternatively, you can walk or drive back along *Triq Ghaxqet il-Ghajn* and start your tour of the village core from the hill which lies at the beginning of the road.

A walk through the tiny but charming village core is a must. Look out for the Arab connection in a house located in *Triq il-Gdida*, as well as a bakery in *Sqaq Warda* with its Arabic-styled façade. A number of old balconies, wall niches, and a converted windmill in *Triq il-Mithna*, will undoubtedly draw your attention.

While in Gharghur, don’t miss out on a visit to its parish church located in the village square and dedicated to St. Bartholomew, which dates back to the first half of the 17th Century. Though relatively small, this church reflects the strong sense of pride and devotion of the villagers who, over the centuries, contributed to its construction and embellishment. The statue of the patron saint was brought over from Italy in the late eighteenth century. When wandering through the village core, the church dome can be used as a point of reference, to keep your bearings.

The village itself also boasts other chapels, including one dedicated to St. John the Baptist in *Triq San Gwann*, said to date from around 1223, and another dedicated to St. Nicholas, in *Triq San Nikola*.

You can stop for a snack at the St. Bartholomew band club or one of the other bars in or around the village square.

On your way out of Gharghur onto Naxxar *via* Triq San Gwann, do stop to have a look at the Semaphore Signalling Tower on the right hand side of the road. This was constructed by the British in the mid-1800s. Right past it you will find another windmill converted into a residence. **SL**