



*Mgiebah Bay - hard to get to but this secret bay is fantastic!*

meeny miny mow – flights to Egypt were cancelled so we chose Malta instead. It was a take it or leave it offer, flights there and back plus hotel but minus transfer. We thought we would take a go and see what happens.

Accustomed to both English and Maltese as Malta's official language, I expected a lay-back holiday with clear communication between us and the native Maltese. Expect the unexpected no.1: Directly on arrival, I saw many signs written in English and Maltese, as well as many more only in Maltese. Just to be sure that we were getting on to the right bus and how much it would cost, we asked the bus driver and I admit that even though English is my mother tongue and I have been in contact with diverse dialects, from South Africa over to Great Britain, the United States east, west and in the middle, Canada and also India, I had great difficulties understanding what the driver was kindly explaining to us in Maltese English! 'Kindly'. That is another interesting part

considering the use of the English language on the island, Malta. Expect the unexpected no. 2: Finally arriving at our booked hotel which we definitely recommend, Paradise Bay, we saw many signs stating requests such as, 'Kindly use the shower before using the pool' or 'We ask you to kindly dress appropriately for dinner.' A few days later we took a sightseeing trip on the neighbouring island of Gozo and went to see the Ggantija Temples and the Ta' Kola Windmill before enjoying ourselves and snorkelling at Ramla Bay (the Maltese name Ir-Ramla il-Hamra very truly means 'the red sandy beach') and Dwejra, the area of the Azure Window. At several of these stops, yet again we saw many notices using the word 'kindly', for example, 'Kindly do not touch the items on display' and 'Kindly remove all waste when leaving the beach'. If you think about it, you might have the feeling that the word 'please' might be a scorned word for the noticeably religious Maltese. I promise to google that one as soon as I can!

## Malta – Expect the Unexpected

Whenever travelling, it is always best to know where you are going to in advance. However, it can become slightly complicated when your planned flight is cancelled and you have to make a quick change of plans, keeping in mind the reasons why you had chosen your previous destination.

For the first two weeks in September – eeny



*The old railway station Museum in Mdina*



*Looking out of our hotel room during a surprise thunderstorm*



*Hagar Qim - a prehistoric temple site*





*Mnajdra coast*



*A cute little kitten living at our hotel*

In other words, do not expect the Maltese English to completely comply to the rules you learned – not only the choice of words, but also in consideration of grammar constructions and spelling! Unfortunately, I had expected it to be difficult to find free wi-fi access on the little island, which is why I left my mobile and netbook in the hotel. Expect the unexpected no. 3: The Maltese seem to be more open towards global internet surfing than I have experienced in Germany. Apart from on the beaches and in the open plains where there is no real need for electricity, you can get free access in pretty much every town – even in those that look quite empty during the day but come to life at night!

The title chosen for this article and the thus irritating experience might also confuse a bit, but not everybody's expectations are the same. Expect the unexpected no.4, is a combination of surprising events both on land and at sea. As already mentioned, we went snorkelling since it was one

of the main reasons why we had originally intended to fly to Egypt, and we had read a short indication that it is also possible in the Mediterranean on Malta. If that sounds fishy – there are by all means more fish than I had ever expected in the Mediterranean Ocean! Beautiful! By all means more than expected!

Initially intending to take photos of the diverse fish species and colourful coral reefs in the Red Sea, we were surprised that, on the one hand, there are also many different fish species with bright colours in the Mediterranean around Malta, but on the other hand, the fascinating colours of the coral reef were missing – even though it was quite bright and colourful thanks for the fish! That was another “expect the unexpected” including our disappointment when we found out that our camera did not fit into the underwater camera case, although it stated our camera type on the packaging!

How many cases of unexpected events did we experience on Malta? The ones shared with you here are just a few.

Malta is a beautiful island with many things to discover and we are definitely planning to go back – hopefully with less unexpectedness. We hope that our selection of photos will encourage you to go to Malta and see it for yourself.

– Olivia Folgosa, written on the way back to Germany, Brussels Airport, 10 September 2013



*Playmobil Fun Park in Birzebbuga*