

Buskett, picnics and country walks – the way we spend our Sunday afternoons



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MALTA'S only large woodland area Buskett, originally planted by the Knights Hospitallers as a hunting ground, has emerged as the favourite location for Sunday outings, a MaltaToday survey shows.

On the other hand the Majjistral park at Xaghra l-Hamra, which offers guided walks to rambles every Sunday morning, is only considered a favourite by 2% of respondents. The park, which has since been cleared of construction waste, and equipped with 10 information boards and even advertised the walks with some 8,000 brochures, still has no management plan to regulate activities in the park.

Chadwick lakes, situated in the valley between Mtarfa and Rabat, is the second favourite countryside location. Built in the 1890s on the suggestion of British engineer Osbert Chadwick, the murky ponds still attract thousands of Maltese visitors.

Elsewhere, the manmade Ta' Qali national park and Kennedy Grove are respectively considered as the favourite location by 4.7% of respondents – an indication that many Maltese still prefer a sanitised environment to off-the-beaten-track spots.

One such site is Ta' Cenc, in Sannat, Gozo, considered to be a favourite spot for 30% of Gozitans interviewed in the survey.

One in every four respondents prefer coastal walks in urban seaside towns – namely Bugibba, Sliema, Marsaskala, Marsaxlokk and Birzebbugia – which together attract 24% of respondents.

When asked how they actually spend their Sunday afternoons, the largest number (31%) opted for countryside walks or picnics. Only 3.5% said they spend their Sundays practicing sports, while another 2% watch football or other sports. In fact, more people are likely to visit a hotel or restaurant than to practice sport.

Flea markets also attract a large number of visitors with more people preferring the Marsaxlokk market to that in Valletta.

Respondents with a tertiary education are more likely to spend their Sundays in the countryside than those with a lower degree of education. The latter are also more likely to take walks in seaside towns like Bugibba.

On the other hand those with a secondary or primary level of education are more likely to stay at home, visit relatives, buy from flea markets or play bingo.

Favourite locations for Sunday

	%
Buskett	24.3
Bugibba	8.7
Sliema	7.6
Chadwick lakes	7.2
Ta' Qali	4.7
Kennedy Grove	4.7
Marsaxlokk market	3.5
Rabat/Mdina	3.5
Valletta Market	2.5
Marsaskala	2.5
Ta' Cenc	2.5
Selmun	2.1
Mgarr	2.1
Majjistral Park	2.1
Delimara	2.1
Birzebbugia	1.3
Bahrija	1.3
Hondoq ir-Rummien	1.3
Dwejra	1.3
San Anton	1.3
Mizieb	1.3
Zurrieq	1.3
Others	10.8

How the Maltese spend their Sunday afternoons

	%
Picnics, country walks	30.9
At home	15.6
At relatives	14.2
Walk by the sea	8.5
At work	6.3
Flea markets	6
At a restaurant/hotel	5
Bingo/gaming shop	3.5
Sports	3.5
Parish/party/sports clubs	2.7
Watching football/horses	2
Cinema	2
Bars	2
Car drive	2
At friends	2

Totals do not add to 100 as some respondents gave more than one reply

By education (%)

	Tertiary	Secondary	Primary
Picnic/walk in the countryside	39.7	32.2	16.9
At home	6.3	17.4	31.2
At relatives	7.9	20.6	15.6
Walk in seaside towns	4.8	13.5	5.2
At work	7.9	7.1	5.2
Markets	3	6	10
At a restaurant/hotel	6.3	4.5	3.9
Bingo hall	0	2	5.2
Sports Activities	3	3	1
Parish/party/sports Clubs	0	4	3
Watching football/horse racing	1	3	2
Bars	2	2	1
Car drive	0	3	1
At friends	3.2	1	0