

ACCESS STATEMENT: SALUTING BATTERY

Introduction:

The Saluting Battery is one of Malta's most vibrant visitor attractions where history is brought to life daily! Located high along Valletta's eastern historic ramparts it enjoys unrivalled views of the Grand Harbour and surrounding fortified towns. It is possibly the oldest saluting battery still in operation anywhere in the world. For almost 500 years, its guns protected the harbour against naval assault. Its prominent position also ensured it became the island's principal saluting platform firing gun salutes on state occasions, the marking of anniversaries and religious feasts and to greet visiting dignitaries and vessels. From the 1820's a gun was also fired at mid-day to allow Ship Masters to calibrate their chronographs on board which were used up until the early part of the 20th century to find the longitude at sea.

Following a lull of almost half-a century, this battery is back in use following an extensive restoration process by Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna - the Malta Heritage Trust - in conjunction with the Malta Tourism Authority. Its guns now sound daily at Noon (The Time Gun) and again at 4pm (The Sun Set Gun) and to fire ceremonial salutes and mark important anniversaries in the history of the island.

The Saluting Battery also houses a collection of Historic Cannon and a collection of artillery related artefacts. Visitors to the Battery can also view the restored Gun Powder Magazine and the restored Side Arms Store.

The Saluting Battery is situated below the Upper Barracca Gardens a short walk from the Bus Terminus in Valletta. Follow the directional signs leading to the Saluting Battery starting from the main entrance into Valletta, which will take you along South Street then Castille Place passing Auberge de Castille and then onto the Upper Barracca Gardens. The battery can be entered from both the Gardens and Battery Street adjacent to it. The Main Entrance of the Battery and Reception Area can be reached via two flights of stairs each of 19 steps leading down from the Gardens.

Wheelchair/Disabled access to the Battery is via the level gated entrance that can be reached from Battery Street. Visitors with disabilities or their Carers wishing to use this entrance should contact the Staff at the Battery prior to or on arrival using the contact telephone number 00356 21225277 so entry arrangements via this alternative entrance can be organised. Please note that the road access via Battery Street is via a steeply sloping roadway which may present difficulties for Wheelchair Visitors.

Cold drinks can be purchased from the reception desk; but currently there is no provision for hot drinks, food or snacks which are not available at the site. There are however a number of cafés and restaurants near to the Battery for those visitors seeking catering facilities.

The Saluting Battery is open from Monday to Saturday between 10.00 till 16.30hrs.

There is a retail display area within the front reception area which sells a variety of souvenirs, books and items with a focus on military history and its impact on Malta.

Staff Members are on hand should visitors require any assistance.

We look forward to welcoming you to the Saluting Battery. If you have any queries or require any assistance, please phone (00356) 21225277 or email info@wirtartna.org

Pre-arrival:

Current Prices: Adults: €3 Children Under 16 Years: €1

Heritage Pass for all eight FWA attractions (valid for one week):

€50 for Adult €95 for Family of 2 Adults and 3 Children under 16 years.

Prices can also be checked from the following sources:

Via the website <http://www.salutingbattery.com> In the brochure (which can be downloaded from the website) and which is available from our Re-Enactors who distribute leaflets in Valetta on a daily basis. From the Reception Area situated at the entrance to the Museum.

For further details on how to reach us please refer to the map in the visitor information section of the website. This information is also contained in the site brochure.

Should you require refrigeration of Medication please speak to a member of the staff who will try and assist wherever possible.

The premises do not provide or have any wheelchairs or mobility scooters to rent and visitors are requested to make their own arrangements in respect to these facilities.

Guide and assistance dogs will be allowed to accompany their owner and water can be provided on request. Otherwise, no pets are allowed inside the facility.

Please Note: Visitors with guide or assistance dogs must be aware that the firing of the Saluting Guns may frighten and upset Dogs of a nervous disposition.

Due to the presence of Gunpowder - Smoking is not permitted anywhere within the Battery Area or inside the public toilets. Visitors may smoke in the Upper Barracca Gardens and will be re-admitted upon showing their entrance ticket to staff.

Visitors should be aware that areas of the Battery are monitored by CCTV cameras.

Transport:

By car: - Drive following signage to Valletta – Please note that there is restricted vehicle entrance and parking in and around The Saluting Battery. Visitors are advised to park at the MCP Central Car Park which provides a free shuttle serviced to Castile. Visitors can then walk to the Saluting Battery

following the directional signs. Wheelchair and Disabled visitors can be dropped off either in the area outside of the Upper Barracca Gardens or near the Battery Street Entrance to the Battery, but there are only 2 disabled bays within the immediate vicinity of the Battery so parking can be an issue.

By Bus: Any route bus going to Valletta Bus Terminus and then follow the Directional Signs to the Saluting Battery or Upper Barracca Gardens

Taxi Service: - Any taxi service available in Malta.

Car Parking and Arrival:

Please refer to Transport Section above.

Main Entrance and Ticketing Kiosk:

The main entrance can be reached from the Upper Barracca Gardens via two flights of 19 steps each. Please note that whilst the staircase is wide, there are no handrails.

Prior to the second flight of Steps there is a double iron railing gate with the width of 71cm. The reception Area is accessed via a Glass Door of 87cm Width. There is a second glass door of 87cm width out of the reception area with a set of 5 wooden steps to the left and right of the exit. Consequently, this entrance is not suitable for wheelchair access.

Wheelchair Access:

Wheelchair/Disabled access to the Battery is via the level gated entrance with double gates each of 1.3 Metres with a total width of 2.6 Metres that can be reached from Battery Street. Visitors with disabilities or their Carers wishing to use this entrance should contact the Staff at the Battery prior to or on arrival using the contact telephone number 00356 21225277 so entry arrangements via this alternative entrance can be organised. Please note that the road access via Battery Street is via a steeply sloping roadway which may present difficulties for Wheelchair.

Reception Area:

The ticket desk located in the main reception area issues all entrance Tickets which can be bought either by cash or card transaction.

The reception desk is 96cm high and there is no lowered level counter area to accommodate wheelchair users. The reception area also houses a range of Souvenir, Books, Gifts and Items with a Military theme or themed on the Wirt Artna Sites.

Audio Guides with commentary in Arabic, English, Dutch, German, Maltese, Spanish, Russian, French, Danish, Chinese, Japanese and Italian are provided for free to visitors and are available from the reception desk. Visitors should note that they will be asked to leave some form of identity document to serve as a deposit against the return of the audio guide equipment.

Museum Collection:

There is a collection of Historic Cannon, Artillery Related Artefacts for visitors to view. Visitors can also view the restored Gunpowder Magazine and also the restored Side Arms Store.

Guided Tours:

Guided tours take place in English at approximately 12.10 hours & 16.10 hours.

Toilets:

There are two public toilets located at the main Battery level on the left when passing through the exit doors from Reception to the main Battery Level. The first consists of one single toilet cubicle which accommodates Male and Female requirements with an inward opening door of only 58cm width. The second toilet consists of one single toilet cubicle which accommodates Male, Female and Disabled requirements with handrails etc. for disabled/wheelchair use with a door width of 90cm.

Catering:

Cold drinks are available from the Reception Desk – No other catering is available at present. There are however a number of cafés and restaurants near to the Battery for those visitors seeking more substantial catering facilities.

Opening Times:

Mon to Sat between 10:00 & 16:30hrs.

Closed: Sundays, New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Good Friday, Easter Day, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

Firings: Noon-day Gun at 12.00hrs sharp. A brief commentary precedes the gun firing starting at 11.45hrs. Evening Gun at 16.00hrs. A brief commentary precedes the gun firing starting at 15.45Hrs

Corporate/Private Events:

The Saluting Battery can also be hired for Corporate or Private events – Please contact our head office by sending an email to bookings@wirtartna.org listing your preferred date and specific requirements together with your contact telephone number. A staff member will get in touch as soon as possible.