

HAL SAFI



History:

The village of Safi, or Hal Safi, situated in the south of Malta, is the home to 2066 inhabitants (NSO Census 2011). The origin of the village's name is uncertain. Probably, it derived its name from the fresh, pure (*safi*) air that surrounds it. Another theory is that during a nationwide epidemic, none of the residents of Hal Safi were contaminated. The village's motto '*sine macula*' and its coat of arms both emphasize the origin of its name.

Thousands of years ago, the area which now hosts the village of Hal Safi, was inhabited by Neolithic people; these were followed by the Phoenicians and the Romans. The birth of Safi village goes back to about seven hundred years. Farmers and peasants used to meet at a crossroad leading to some three or four neighbouring villages, and stop for a chat on their way back home from work. It is commonly assumed that a niche was soon erected there, and as people started to settle in the vicinity, a new village began to take shape.

There is documented evidence which shows that Safi village already existed in 1417, a time when around 80 people resided there.

It was then still part of the parish of Bir Miftuh and later became part of the parish of Kirkop. After several attempts by the Safi community, in 1598 Bishop Gargallo finally declared Hal Safi an independent parish. At that time, 210 people lived in the village. When Safi Parish was formed, it was dedicated to the Apostle St. Paul, with a special emphasis being put on his conversion. The largest church in the village, dedicated to St. Paul, was chosen to serve as a Parish Church.

The origins of Hal Safi go back to a rich farming heritage, where the people depended mainly on agriculture and the breeding of goats and sheep for a living. Nowadays, farming is mostly a hobby and a part-time pursuit.

Every year, the Halsafin celebrate the feast of St. Paul. Up until 1959, the feast was held on January 25th, but in 1960, in order to avoid inclement weather, the feast was transferred to the last Sunday in August. Celebrations include religious services, band marches, fireworks, decorations, lights, and the procession with the statue of St. Paul.

Attractions:

1. ★ **Ħajt Ruman** 

This Roman wall once probably formed part of a rural Roman farm or villa.

Address: Triq iż-Żurrieq, Ħal Safi

2. ★ **Ġnien Sir Alexander Ball** 

This used to be one of Sir Alexander Ball's favourite gardens, during the period when the British came to Malta after the French left the island.

Address: Turn left at the end of Triq San Ġorġ, Ħal Safi and walk for 250 m

Contact person: Ħal Safi Local Council

Opening hours: Monday – Friday: 9 am – 3 pm or by appointment

3. ★ **Villino Vella** 

The construction of Villino Vella was finished in 1926. It boasts a pleasant blend of Doric and Ionic styles, and it is surrounded by a large well-kept garden. It was damaged by bombs during the war. Nowadays, it serves as a convent to Dominican Nuns.

Address: Misraħ il-Knisja (Church Square), next to the Parish Church, Ħal Safi

4. ★ **Parish Church** 

Safi Parish Church, dedicated to the Conversion of St. Paul, was built on the initiative of Parish Priest Ġużeppi Caruana. Construction work started in 1727 and was completed in 1744. This Doric style church comprises 8 altars, a dome and a steeple. The church was consecrated on the 10th of October 1784 by Bishop V. Labini.

Address: Misraħ il-Knisja (Church Square), Ħal Safi

Contact person: Safi Parish Priest

Telephone: +356 21649223

Opening hours: Monday – Saturday: 7.30 am – 8.30 am and 6 pm – 7 pm

Sunday: 6 am – 11 am or by appointment

5.  **The Palace** 

This Palace, next to the Parish Church, was built during the times of the Knights of St. John. Today, it is used as a political club.

Address: Misraħ il-Knisja (Church Square), next to the Parish Church, Ғal Safi

Opening hours: Sunday: 9 am – 12 pm or by appointment

6.  **Gollcher Palace** 

Gollcher Palace is so named because several years ago it belonged to the Gollcher family. This palace was built during the times of the Knights of St. John. Today, part of the building is being used as a Police Station.

Address: Triq San Pawl, Ғal Safi

7.  **St. Mary's Church** 

This church was built between 1761 and 1764, replacing the original one which already existed prior to the Great Siege of 1565. An adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is held there daily.

Address: Across the road from Safi Parish House, Ғal Safi

Contact person: Safi Parish Priest

Telephone: +356 21649223

Opening hours: Monday – Friday: 8 am – 12 pm and 3 pm – 6 pm or by appointment

8.  **Dejma Cross** 

This stone cross was erected in the 17th Century, probably to mark the village boundary. There was a time when the Dejma soldiers (*local militia*) used to gather there and from the same spot important edicts were read out to the people of Ғal Safi.

Address: Triq San Pawl, in front of St. Mary's Church, Ғal Safi

9.  **Xarolla Catacombs** 

Dating back to approximately the 3rd - 4th Century AD, these catacombs are still not fully excavated, but there are strong indications that they served as catacombs to an early group of Christians who lived in the early centuries of Christian Malta. The catacombs consist of complex tombs and small

catacombs. Some of the tombs have ornamental rock-cut pilasters decorating their entrances. Parts of these catacombs were first discovered in 1926 and 1936 during service trenching works being carried out in the area.

Address: Triq iż-Żurrieq, Ғal Safi

10. Farrier (Blacksmith)

This experienced farrier invites the customers to view the progress of his work. He combines equine hoof care with blacksmith's skills.

Address: Triq Iż-Żurrieq, Ғal Safi

Contact person: Mr. Carmel (Nenu) Bonello

Contact details: +356 79059783/+356 21683854

Opening hours: Monday to Friday: 2.30 pm – 5.30 pm

Saturday: 7.00 am – 12.00 pm

Visits for groups only by appointment

11. Apiary-Honey Bees

The apiary is a place where bees are kept in beehives. The owner has been in the apiculture business for many years and knows all the ins and outs of beekeeping and honey making.

Contact Person: Louis Montebello

Address: 28, Triq San Pawl, Ғal Safi

Telephone: +356 21682058/ 79682058

Opening hours: Monday – Saturday 7 am – 12 pm and 3.30 pm – 5.30 pm

12. Ta' Ġawhar Tower and Tal-Liebru Caves



Ta' Ġawhar Tower, consisting of large ashlar blocks, was erected by the Romans as part of a line of defence. In 300 AD it suffered considerable damage caused by fire. A short distance away from the tower, there are the Tal-Liebru Caves. First discovered in 1884, these caves turned out to be a Phoenician hypogeum, which was later converted into a Christian catacomb.

Address: Ta' Ġawhar area, outer limits of Ғal Safi

13. Shelters



Scattered around the village, there are several shelters, hewn in the rock. They were used during WW2 by the people who went underground to shelter from enemy bombs.

The largest, and most accessible of these, is in Church Square.

Address: Misraħ il-Knisja (Church Square), in front of the Parish Church, Ғal Safi.

Places of refreshment



- **Każin Banda San Pawl**
Address: Misraħ il-Knisja (Church Square), Ғal Safi
Opening hours: Monday – Friday: 5 pm till late
Saturday: 10 am till late
Sunday: 8.30 am till late
Or by appointment-possibility to visit the building from the inside

Local Information:



Ғal Safi Local Council

Address: 40, Council House, School Street, Ғal Safi

Telephone: +356 21689168

Fax: +356 21689796

E-mail: safi.lc@gov.mt

Opening Hours: Winter: Monday – Friday: 8 am – 5 pm

Saturday: 8 am – 11.30 am

Summer: Monday – Friday: 8 am – 1.30 pm

Saturday 8 am – 11.30am

Accessibility:



Arriva Bus

From Valletta to Safi: Bus 71

From Airport to Safi: Bus 117, 118

Bus Stop: Pastorale

Customer care: +356 2122 2000 Email: enquiries@arriva.com.mt

Website: www.arriva.com.mt


Google Maps

Bus routes according to the bus stops

Timing

- Timing for the transportation (check the bus timetable on <http://www.arriva.com.mt>):
35 minutes to get there from Valletta

35 minutes to go back to Valletta

-  Timing for the itinerary of the must-see sites:
45 min
- Timing for the full itinerary:
1h 30 min

SAFI MAP

- ★ 1 Hajt Ruman
- ★ 2 Ġnien Sir Alexander Ball
- ★ 3 Villino Vella
- ★ 4 Safi Parish Church
- ★ 5 The Palace
- ★ 6 Gollcher Palace
- ★ 7 St. Mary's Church
- ★ 8 Dejma Cross
- ★ 9 Xarolla Catacombs
- ◆ 10 Farrer (Blacksmith)
- ◆ 11 Apiary-Honey Bees
- ◆ 12 Ta' Gawhar Tower
- ◆ 13 Shelters
- 📶 Safi LC
- 📶 Wi-Fi
- 🚻 WC

