

# Il-Gudja



## History

The small village of Gudja is the remaining part of the much larger medieval parish of Bir Miftfuh. This old parish was one of the ten parishes which divided the Maltese Island into distinct parishes together with Mdina and Castel St. Angelo. Between 1529 and 1634, the then small villages of Safi, Kirkop, Mqabba, Tarxien and Luqa separated from Bir Miftfuh leaving the village of Gudja with remaining territory from Hal Farrug to Birzebbuga under the jurisdiction of the old parish with a population of around 300 persons. Many years later, in 1913 the separation of the village of Birzebugga took place. During the 1940s the British Forces occupied the tiny village of Hal Farrug and its surrounding territory to build an airfield and military quarters.

The local council consists of five members. In 2010, the population of Gudja was 2892. Most of the houses are typical terraced houses. Two housing estates Tal-Mithna and Ta' Xlejli were developed between the mid-1970s and 1980s. Some original houses bearing amazing stone balconies survived. The streets of the central part of the village are named after oriental saints, which prove the antiquity of this village while other streets names in the periphery are named after personalities and objects related to the area. There are two public gardens in Gudja, which include a playing field at each site. On the northern side of the village, there is a football ground and just across the road on the south, there is the main terminal of the Malta International Airport.

On the August 15<sup>th</sup>, the feast of the Assumption of Our Lady is celebrated in Gudja. Before and during the feast, Gudja is decorated with colourful lights, statures, festoons and other items to make the place vibrant and colourful. Festivities include functions in the Church as well as a procession around Mosta with the titular statue, followed by brass bands and crowds of devotees.

## Attractions in Gudja

### **1. Parish Church**

In the 1650s the inhabitants of the village made an official request to the bishops to build a new parish church because the old parish church of Bir Miftfuh was situated outside the inhabited area. The building designed by the Maltese architect Tumas Dingli in 1653 was ready by 1666, and kept the same titular of the old parish the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In 1858, another bell-tower designed by the British architect William Baker was constructed attached to the right hand side transept.

Address: Triq Il-Kbira

Telephone: +356 21696039

Email: [parrocca.gudja@maltadiocese.org](mailto:parrocca.gudja@maltadiocese.org)

Opening hours: Hours of Daily Mass:

Weekday: 6.30am, 6.45am, 7.55am, 8.35am, 6.30pm (from 1<sup>st</sup> October)  
and 7.00pm (up to 30<sup>th</sup> September)

Saturday Evenings 6.30pm

Sundays and Feast Days: 6.30am, 8.00am, 9.15am, 10.30am, 5.30pm

Also available to visit by appointment, contact local council

### **2. Chapel of St. Catherine**

Situated in the central street of the village, this chapel built in 1631 replaced an older one built in 1562 on a site provided by bishop Cubelles on 30<sup>th</sup> May 1562 together with other benefits to render its upkeep. It is an interesting example of 17<sup>th</sup> Century rural ecclesiastic architecture consisting of a rectangular building with a slightly pitched roof allowing the rainwater runoff through characteristic projecting waterspouts.

Address: Triq Raymond Caruana

Contact Person: Gudja Local Council

Telephone: +356 21672020

Opening hours: By appointment, contact local council

### **3. Dorell Palace and Xlejli Tower**

Ignatius Francesco Moscati Falsoni Navarra Count of Bahrija built this house for his family in 1720. After the Count of Bahrija left Gudja, Pietro Paolo Dorell Falzon bought the premises at Gudja to endow his daughter Bettina who married to Marquis Diego Muscati in 1760. Bettina applied the artistic knowledge she acquired in Naples to decorate his residence at Gudja.

Opening hours: Privately owned, but can be seen from outside

#### **4. War shelters and Military Pillboxes**

During World War II, many shelters were dug in Malta and Gozo most of them in the cities surrounding the Grand Harbour and in the villages situated near airfields. Since Gudja lies between the harbours and the airfields, several shelters were dug with the nearest entrance being no further than hundred meters away from every house.

Address: Triq Raymond Caruana

Contact Person: Gudja Local Council

Telephone: +356 21672020

Opening hours: By appointment, contact local council up to one hour before visit.

#### **5. Lieutenant's Garden**

This garden is on the outskirts of the residential area and stands on the road to the old parish church. It is the best kept of the gardens formed during the administration of the Maltese Island by Sir Alexander John Ball. This garden and the small building inside served as the office of the mayor of Gudja until the reform of the Island administration.

Address: Triq Bir Miftuh

Opening Hours: Private owner

#### **6. Our Lady of Loreto Chapel**

On the southern outskirts of Gudja there is the chapel dedicated to Our Lady of Loreto built in 1676 on the same site of a smaller medieval one originally located here in the midst of a lost hamlet Casal Qadi.

Address: Triq ta Loretu

Contact Person: Gudja Local Council

Telephone: +356 21672020

Opening hours: By appointment, contact local council

#### **7. Old Parish Church (Santa Marija Ta' Bir Miftfuh)**

The medieval church once the parish church of Bir Miftfuh is still standing and its gothic architecture is one of the few remaining structure of its type having pointed arches and a garland of acanthus leaves decorates one of the doorways and the circular window above the main door. Originally, the church was longer by two other arches and five adjoining side chapels. Two arches and two side chapels were removed in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century to enlarge the church in the shape of a cross, which enlargement was demolished in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century to be used as building material for the new parish church in Gudja.

Address: Triq Santa Marija

Contact Person: Din l-Art Helwa, National Trust of Malta

Telephone: +356 21225952

Opening hours: 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the Month: 9.30am – 12.00pm or by special arrangement (contact Din l-Art Helwa).

## **8. Chapel of the annunciation of the Virgin Mary**

This chapel built in 1754 stands on the site of an early medieval one, which was the principal chapel of the then hamlet of Gudja. Most of the bishops' visit reports give interesting details about the original chapel such as that it was endowed with several benefices, it had a flagstone floor and whitewashed walls. Mass was said twice a week, feast of the titular Saint celebrated annually with some meals distributed to the poor on the feast day.

Address: Triq Santa Marija

Contact Person: Gudja Local Council

Telephone: +356 21672020

Opening hours: By appointment, contact local council

## Places of Refreshment

### **La Stella Band Club**

Address: 22, Triq Il-Kbira

Telephone: +356 21696474

Opening hours: 9.00am – 12.00pm and 4.00pm – 11.00pm

### **Mary of the Assumption Band Club (L-Ghaqda Muzikali Marija Assunta)**

Address: Triq Raymond Caruana

Telephone: +356 21696092

Opening hours: 6.00am – 11.00pm

## Local Information

### **Gudja Local Council**

Triq Raymond Caruana, Gudja

Telephone: +356 21672020

Email: [gudja.lc@gov.mt](mailto:gudja.lc@gov.mt)

Opening Hours: Winter: 8.00am – 4.00pm

Summer: 8.00am – 1.30pm

### **Gudja Public Library**

Address: St. Benedict College Gudja Primary, St. Mark Street

Telephone: +356 21823250

Email: [Gudja.library@gov.mt](mailto:Gudja.library@gov.mt)

Opening hours: Summer: Mon – Tues: 8.30am – 12.30pm

Wed – Thurs: 4.00pm – 6.30pm

Winter: Mon – Tues: 8.30am – 12.30pm

Wed: 4.00pm -6.30pm

Thurs: 4.00pm – 7.30pm

### **Tourist Information Point, Malta International Airport**

Welcomers' Hall at Arrivals, Malta International Airport

Telephone: +356 23696073, +356 23696074

Email: [info@visitmalta.com](mailto:info@visitmalta.com)

Opening hours: Mon – Sun: 10.00am – 9.00pm (last admission 8.45pm)

Closed on Christmas Day, New Year's Day, Good Friday and Easter Sunday

## Events

October: Our Lady of Consolation Feast, Our Lady of the Rosary Feast

## Accessibility

### **Arriva bus**

From Valletta to Gudja: Bus X5, X7

Bus Stop: Ciru

Customer care: +356 2122 2000

Email: [enquiries@arriva.com.mt](mailto:enquiries@arriva.com.mt)

Website: [www.arriva.com.mt](http://www.arriva.com.mt)



# Legend



Bus Stop



Church/Chapel



Places of Refreshment

**LC**

Local Council

**WC**

Public Convenience

## Attractions:

1. Parish Church
2. Chapel of St. Catherine
3. Dorell Palace and Xlejli Tower
4. War shelters and Military Pillboxes
5. Lieutenant's Garden
6. Our Lady of Loreto Chapel
7. Old Parish Church
8. Chapel of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary

## Places of Refreshment

- La Stella Band Club
- Mary of the Assumption Band Club