Maqluba (Siggiewi - Qrendi) walk

Our walk starts in the Siggiewi main square. Siggiewi is an interesting village in its own right, and one that offers a good starting point for many countryside walks. The main square of the village is wide and it provides one of interesting points to visit.

At one corner, facing down hill, there is the main parish church, dedicated to St.Nicholas of Bari. At the central part of the square there is a stone statue of the same saint. On each side of the square one can see two small churches. Facing the parish church, on the right hand side, there is the church dedicated to Our Lady. At the extreme end of the square there is another church dedicated to St. John the Baptist.

Our walk starts near the church dedicated to St. John the Baptist. Keeping to the left hand side we start walking towards the other end of the village. You might encounter other ramblers walking in the opposite direction. They are following the Ginger Walk Green which starts in the Bukkett woodlands and ends in Siggiewi. If you have not yet followed this way, we make you to try it out. Walking along Triq il-Lewla, one starts to notice that this area of Siggiewi still retains characteristics of the old medieval setting, with narrow lanes and winding streets. This street flows onto Triq il-Krikija and, on the left hand side one notices a low wall, with ruins of a farm and ruin of a parish of Siggiewi which has been restored recently. Keep on walking along this street, and take the left hand turning into Triq il-Imladra. Keep to the left hand side of the road. Until you reach the roundabout, then take the third turning on the right hand side. This is slightly busier road and you should pay attention to the traffic.

Keeping to the right hand side of the road, take the second turning on the right.

This part of the country lane takes you through fields with rubble walls and leads to a small hamlet. Follow the road. This is an attractive area and shortly you find a beautiful Maltese church dedicated to the Assumption of Our Lady. Once a much larger village, today this picturesque hamlet is a snapshot of times gone by, with farms working their fields and villagers tending to their free. Spend some time to rest in the shade and admire how isolated some years back.

The stretch of road in front of the church leads to an intersection, dominated by a stone statue of Our Lady. Take the country lane facing you, turn left and then right following signs. You are now walking in the open countryside. Fields are well tended and you will probably see one or more farmers in their fields. At the end of this country road you have the option to take a small detour. Take the right road to the right, after a couple of metres, will be the church of Our Lady of Providence. There is a great devotion among Siggiewians towards Our Lady of Providence. The area, a traditional way-country chapel, was restored recently. Of some interest are the parts of the church, with unique carvings as well as the false statue on the top, showing that the church was in use more than once by lightning strikes. Recommend to continue walking along the road.

Refuse your dogs and continue walking by following the road on your left. Follow the country road to the end before reaching a turning dominated by another small country church, namely that of St. Nicholas. In the area there is a medieval hamlet called Hal Miliki, with the church connected to the spiritual needs of the community living there.

Take the path to the left of the church after a few metres turn left and continue walking till you reach the next hamlet, then turn right. This country road will take you around the fields of the area, leading you to the outskirts of the village of Qrendi. Soon you will see the small church dedicated to Our Lady of Graces. Further down the Triq you will reach an open space, dominated by a chapel dedicated to St. Matthew. Situated on top of the Maqluba Valley the name means upland and thus the name of the area, the chapel is a typical way-country and the second one we visit during this walk.

The area was recently restored in order to make more prominent the chapel.

In reality there are two chapels here. The older chapel (on the left) is on the edge of the mountain. It is probably one of the oldest chapels still standing in Malta and was probably built during the 16th century. Records show that it was already standing in 1517. The other chapel, much bigger and which is used nowadays, was built between 1642 and 1648.

The Maqluba Valley was to become a breakaway site. This is how it is typically and if you take a short stroll along it, you can see many Cardini and Sandanic Gum trees (one needs to pay attention here). The path can be slippery and uneven steps lead to the edge of this natural depression. Ideally one should not venture down (on their own). The Sandanic Gum Tree in Malta (Sagar tall Chaqta) is the national tree and in Malta there are only four places where this tree grows naturally, which are - Imgiebah, Birkirkara, Siggiewi and here at Hal-Maqluba.

Legend had it that the shrine was created after God got angry with the people living here because of their lifestyle. God warned the people through a good woman living close by, but the people did not heed these warnings. God then decided that they should loose their home and some except the good woman. Angels were then dispatched to disperse the harvest into the sea thus forming the nearby island of Filfla. The truth is that the shrine was created on 23rd November 1945, during a severe winter storm, possibly accompanied by an earthquake. It is a natural depression formed by the collapse of the underlying limestone strata.

This doline is now a shrub, called wakbandi. Here is possible to rest. Enjoy the peace of the area in the shade of the cardes trees. Once rested, return to the open space in front of the church. Cross the street, and then turn on the right. You are now in Triq San Antonio. After about 250 metres, there is a right hand turn into Triq San Antonio, which leads you to a small church, dedicated to the Assumption of Our Lady. Continue walking until you reach the Gjulant church, dedicated to the Assumption of Our Lady.

You have now reached the end of this walk, which if taken you around two villages and their rich countryside. Spend some time in Qrendi taking to the locals and maybe have a coffee in one of the two magnificent band clubs. Once rested, you can catch a bus back home.

Qrendi is the eastern part of the three villages of our walk, the Mal-Milkett rocks (Malita), which will take you up to three beautiful features, that of Qrendi, Malibba and Zurrena. We invite you to stay for some day and experience the life of these three villages, which are so close to each other, yet so unique.

**Bus Route No 62** operates the following route:
Valletta - Sliema - Hamilton - Swieqi - Qrendi - Maqluba - Siggiewi
**Bus Route No 71 and 72** operates the following routes:
Valletta - Fontana - Hal Farina - Hal Farina - Qrendi - Siggiewi

Length of walk approx 6kms