

What is the thing you miss most about Malta when you're away?

Actor Chris Dingli on his local favourites, and what he'd change about the island he calls home.



Apart from family and friends, I miss Maltese bread. Nothing I have tasted overseas comes close. Fresh, warm Maltese bread with butter. Delicious!

What is your favourite...

Local dish: Octopus and calamari. I love fresh seafood.

Beach or swimming spot: I'm not a huge fan of going to the beach (I've only been to the beach once this summer!) It's usually too crowded for my taste, so anywhere quiet where you can have a quick swim.

Nightlife spot: I like Valletta at night. There are some really nice bars and restaurants. Plus, the streets are lovely to walk around by night.

Activity to do in Malta: Head to Mgarr for some *spaghetti fenek* (spaghetti with rabbit). I don't normally eat meat, but a good *fenkata* (rabbit meal) is hard to resist!

Family tradition: We haven't done this in a while, but on Boxing Day we used to go for a picnic. We'd spend the day out and eat Christmas Day leftovers.

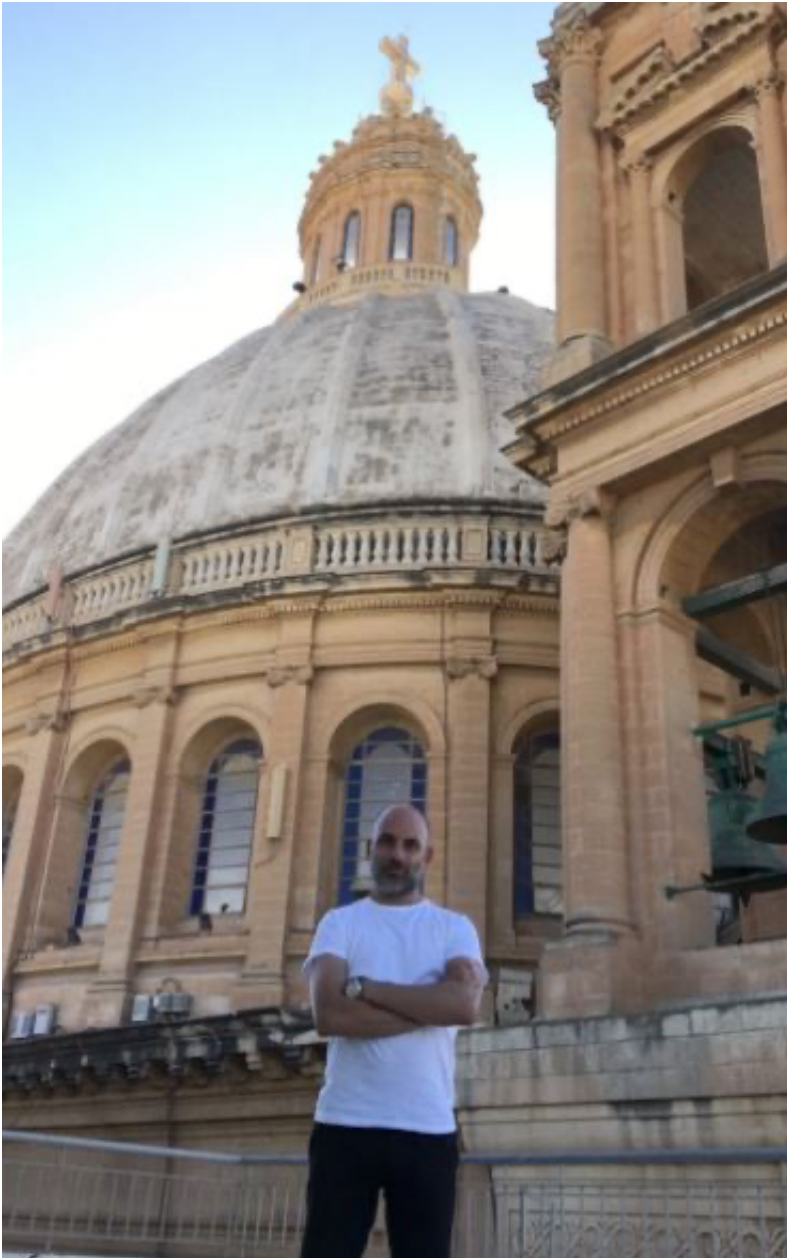
Maltese word: There are so many! Setting aside the obvious rude ones, I really like the descriptive ones. *Tidlik* (slippery spread), for example, perfectly encapsulates its own meaning. Just say it out loud. It's so onomatopoeic.

Landmark: As an actor, the Manoel Theatre holds a very special place in my heart.

Festa food: Oh wow, it's hard to choose. I like to start off with a hotdog (with baked beans), then move on to some doughnuts, and finish off with an ice cream (one of the soft ones from the machine, in a cup, with sprinkles).

Local smell: Salt water and fish at Marsaxlokk.

View: Hard to beat the view from the Upper Barrakka Gardens.



Is there anything you would change about Malta or the Maltese?

It would be lovely if people drove more carefully and were more respectful of the environment. Those are two separate issues, I just made them sound like one. What I mean is, I'd love it if people were more respectful of the rules whilst driving. It would actually make the roads safer and there would be less traffic jams. In terms of the environment, the building frenzy that has gripped our island for the last few years is unhealthy, greedy and, ultimately, unsustainable.

What do you like on your *hobza*?

Everything! Well, I once asked the guy behind the counter to give me all the *imbarazz* (extra stuff) and he got very offended! I particularly like *gbejna* (cheeselet) and wouldn't complain if there was a pickled egg in there too. I'm not keen on raw onions though, and tend to remove as many as I can.

What is the one tip you'd give to a visitor?

Malta's probably not quite what you imagined it to be. That's ok. Just discover it for what it is.

Either or...

Irkotta or pizelli? *Pizelli*. Always. For ever.

Malta or Gozo? Malta for work, Gozo to relax.

Cisk or Kinnie? Tough choice. I'm going to go with Cisk.