

HOMES & TRAVEL

OFF THE RAILS

To add the wow factor to your plant box, pop down to your local metal scrap yard or welding company and pick up old railings to place behind it. You could also use an old gate or a metal headboard. Spray with paint and add climbing plants.

Dulux Paint Mixing Kitchen Plus Matt in Spring





HERBAL ESSENCES

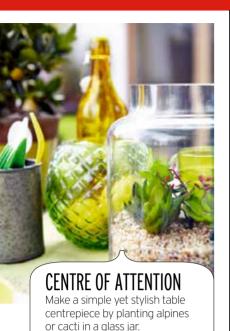
For a DIY herb garden with a difference, attach some jam or Kilner jars to spare pieces of wood you have lying around using Jubilee clips. Treated wooden gravel boards, from £3.98 each, B&Q; Kilner jars, £10.99 for three, Lakeland; Jubilee clips, £11.15 for 10, Screwfix; various herbs, from £1.99 each, **Squires Garden Centres**





KITCHEN CLEAR-OUT

To create interesting plant pots, revive old teapots, metal boxes and colanders with a wash of bright, waterproof paint. Just make sure you drill holes in the bottom for drainage. Green paint: Dulux Paint Mixing Kitchen Plus Matt in Enchanted Eden, yellow paint: Dulux Paint Mixing Kitchen Plus Matt in Spring Breeze, both £24.49 for 2.51, B&Q; colander, £10.99, Lakeland



Zinc pot, £2.99, glass lantern, £7.99, both H&M; plastic cutlery, £10 for set, bottle, £5, both

House by John Lewis; glass planter, £25, Next



CRATE IDEA

No space for a flower bed? Use old wooden pallets - which can be picked up for free from most garden centres or supermarkets - to create a wall display. Alternatively, drill wooden baskets to decking. Picnic rug, £6, Matalan; watering can, £19.99, Squires Garden Centres



SFF

Tucked away in the Mediterranean sea, Malta is just a three-hour flight from the UK. Although it's small less than 200 square miles - the island has lots to offer. It's easy to navigate using local buses, with day tickets costing from just £1 per person. Soak up the local history by visiting the Palazzo Parisio in Naxxar, £10 (Palazzoparisio.com), a privately owned and seriously decadent 18th-century palace.

DO

Malta is surrounded by breathtakingly blue waters, so grab your snorkel mask and charter a private yacht for the day. A swanky boat, complete with skipper and lunch, costs from £50 per person, based on 12 people hopping on board (Maltasailingcharter.com). Cruise the waves around the Maltese shores and snorkel at the beautiful Blue Lagoon.

Getting there

Fly to Malta from all over the UK with Airmalta. com from £74 one way

Stay

Double rooms at the harbour-side five-star Hilton Malta start from £115 per night based on two sharing, including breakfast. Smack bang in the middle of St Julian's, it's handy for partying as well as being the perfect base to chill out, with spacious balconies, four pools and a spa. (Hiltonmaltahotel.com)

Time zone

GMT +1 hour

Currency Euro

For a lush lunch, pop into Luna di Sera at the Palazzo Parisio - its home-made ricotta ravioli, £12, is super-tasty. For dinner, make a beeline for Tarragon Restaurant, a slick hideaway with amazing views of St Paul's Bay (Tarragonmalta.com). Feast on fresh lobster and crab pasta with a balsamic black caviar sauce - a snip at £11. Wash it down with a bottle of Ulysses Chenin Blanc, made on the neighbouring island of Gozo, for £12.50.

DRINK

The town of St Julian's is the place to totter around for a big night out. It mixes a laidback Mediterranean vibe with cosmopolitan chic. If hot barmen and '90s pop tunes are your thing, then head for Hugo's Terrace sharpish. The roof is rolled back to reveal the stars and it's a fab place to people watch as you sip an ice-cold beer for just £2.50 a pop. F