

Hagar Qim

On land | Malta | 3600-3200 BCE | Grades 3-5

Name _____

Date _____

Hagar Qim was built more than 5,000 years ago, and one of its stones weighs about 20 tonnes.

Read the story

Between about 3600 and 3200 BCE, farmers on Malta built temples from huge blocks of limestone. Hagar Qim is one of the most impressive. Its outer wall includes one of the largest stones used in any Maltese temple, about 7 meters long.

Inside, rooms shaped like rounded lobes connect through stone doorways. Builders carved holes, ledges and altars into the stone. Some walls were decorated with tiny drilled dots.

The temple seems to be lined up with the sun. On the summer solstice, morning sunlight shines through a hole in one doorway and lights up a stone slab inside.

How it ended

Around 2500 BCE, the temple-building culture of Malta disappeared. Scientists think drought, overused land or disease may have played a part. The temples were left alone and slowly filled with soil.

Key words

- megalith: a very large stone used to build a monument
- solstice: the day with the longest or shortest daylight of the year
- Neolithic: the late Stone Age, when people started farming

Wow facts

- Some of Malta's temples are older than Stonehenge and the Great Pyramid.
- On the summer solstice, sunlight beams through a hole and lights up a stone inside.
- Small rounded human figures found here may represent ideas of plenty and life.

Talk about it

1. How do you think people moved giant stones without machines?

2. Why might early farmers care about the position of the sun?

Try this

Draw a map of Hagar Qim as it looked at its busiest. Label three things people did there.

Quick quiz

Circle the best answer.

1. **How old is Hagar Qim?**
 - A. About 500 years
 - B. About 2,000 years
 - C. More than 5,000 years
 - D. About 100 years
2. **What happens on the summer solstice?**
 - A. Sunlight lights a stone inside
 - B. The temple floods
 - C. Snow falls
 - D. The doors close
3. **Why is the temple covered by a tent today?**
 - A. To protect it from weather
 - B. For a party
 - C. To hide it
 - D. To keep birds in

Go further

Open ruinscape.live/hagar-qim/ for photos, the Then and Now picture where there is one, and links to museum collections and research. On the globe, Lyra Kael can fly the class there and answer questions.

Answer key (for teachers)

1. C. It was built around 3600 to 3200 BCE.
2. A. Morning sun shines through a hole onto a stone slab.
3. A. The tent shields the soft limestone from rain and sun.