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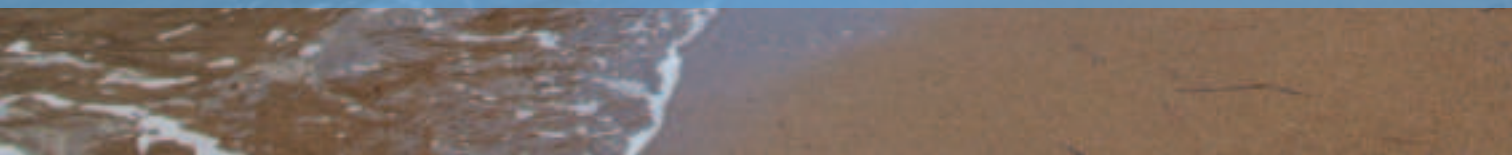
# Cyprus

AMMOCHOSTOS
LEFKOSIA
LARNAKA
PAFOS
LEMESOS

# Welcome to Cyprus

Cyprus is the third largest island in the Mediterranean Sea, with a surface area of 9,251 square kilometers (3,572 square miles). Cyprus is an independent sovereign republic with a presidential system of government and is a full member of the EU.



### *Lefkosia (Nicosia)*

Lefkosia (Nicosia) is the capital, the administrative and business center of the island, a vibrant, energetic, modern European city. The old city is enclosed in beautifully preserved Venetian walls, which are considered a masterpiece of medieval fortification architecture, and is the core of the modern-day capital that expands beyond the walls. **One of the main landmarks is Eleftheria Square, which functions as a bridge between the old and the modern part of the city. It was designed by the world-renowned Zaha Hadid Architects.**

### *Lemesos (Limassol)*

Lemesos (Limassol) is the island's biggest port and expands between two important archaeological sites: the ancient city-kingdom of Amathus to the east, and the ancient city-kingdom of Kourion to the west. Lemesos (Limassol) is famous for its Carnival celebrations and the charming mountainous villages in the region that are known as the "winemaking villages". During the past few years, the Lemesos (Limassol) skyline has seen many additions of modern skyscrapers that render a cosmopolitan flair to the city.

### *Larnaka (Larnaca)*

East meets west in the ancient coastal town of Larnaka (Larnaca) with its seafront promenade 'Foinikoudes', flanked by towering palm trees. Many ancient civilizations thrived here over the centuries and left their mark on the city's architecture and culture. Both Christianity and Islam have important religious sites in Larnaka: The Church of Saint Lazarus and the Mosque of Hala Sultan.

### *Pafos (Paphos)*

The Pafos (Paphos) town and general region has an air of romance and an ancient past. The town comprises of two distinct parts: Kato Pafos (lower city) and Pano Pafos (upper city). Kato Pafos is built almost on top of the ancient city that dates back to the Hellenistic period and the entire area is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

**Located near Pafos, Petra tou Romiou Beach (AG) is the legendary birthplace of Aphrodite, the Olympian Goddess of Love. It is here that according to legend the goddess emerged from the sea.**

### *Ammochostos (Famagusta)*

Sparkling, crystal waters and powdery, golden sands are the defining features of the region of Ammochostos (Famagusta), with its scenic landscape further dotted by quaint windmills, and its mineral-rich earth growing some of the island's tastiest fresh produce. Comprised of the main holiday resorts of Agia Napa and Paralimni-Protaras, the once-tiny villages have seen their popularity and boundaries expand into bustling holiday resorts.

AG - Audio Guides available at www.visitcyprus.com

# BEACHES

Cyprus is known for its stunning beaches and crystal-clear, warm waters, and with over 300 days of sunshine a year you can enjoy beach life all year around. From the lively shores of Agia Napa to the quiet coves of Pafos, the beaches of Cyprus are quite varied, however each has its own unique charm.

Municipal beaches offer amenities such as showers, sun beds and umbrellas (for a fee), eateries and a wide range of exciting water sports. More than 75 Cyprus beaches have been awarded the **Blue Flag label**, have the best water quality in the EU and are named **“Cleanest Bathing Waters in Europe”** year after year. Due to the excellent underwater visibility, they are ideal for diving and snorkeling. All the beaches in Cyprus are public and free of charge.

***These are just a few of the many beautiful beaches you can explore and enjoy in Cyprus:***

***Nissi Beach, Agia Napa*** – is arguably Cyprus's most famous beach, situated in a pretty little bay with a small island in the middle, which is accessible on foot at low tide.

***Konnos Beach, Agia Napa*** – is a small picturesque beach with fine golden sands, an ideal swimming spot for children and adults alike, while the Cape Gkreco National Park is a little over a mile away.

***Fig Tree Bay, Protaras*** - has fine golden sands and crystal-clear waters. It takes its name from a solitary fig tree that has been growing here since the 17th century.

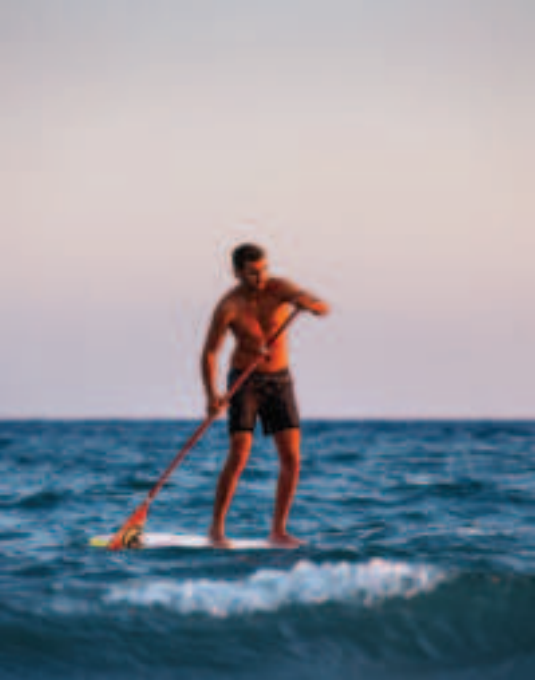
***McKenzie Beach, Larnaka*** - has shallow, safe waters and is the center of Larnaka's trendiest nightlife, as well as a popular beach.

***Lady's Mile, Lemesos (Limassol)*** - is the longest beach in Cyprus with crystal-clear, shallow waters and dark volcanic sands.

***Pissouri Bay, Pissouri*** – this beach has a relaxed atmosphere and is situated in beautiful surroundings on the island's south coast.

***Coral Bay, Pafos*** - has soft white sands and shallow waters. The coast to either side of Coral Bay is characterized by rocky headlands and beautiful sea caves.

***Latchi Beach, Polis Chrysochous*** – is a beach with fine sands and clean turquoise waters. This quiet and attractive beach is located in Chrysochous Bay, west of Latchi Port.



### *Watersports*

Cyprus's clear blue waters and extensive coastline make it a popular destination for water sports enthusiasts. Watersports centers operate on or near most municipal beaches and offer sessions or rent equipment for popular watersports activities, such as Water Skiing, Jet Skiing, Parasailing, Windsurfing, Kiteboarding, Kayaking and Paddleboarding.

### *Diving*

Cyprus offers year-round excellent diving conditions. The average temperature is 24°C and the waters are warm at about 16-27°C, with excellent visibility and lack of strong underwater currents. It is a dream diving destination both for novice and experienced divers. Dive and enjoy the friendly underwater fauna, a diverse range of marine life and absence of dangerous species. There are many possibilities for shore, boat, shipwreck, and reef dives.

Diving in Cyprus is synonymous with the world-class MS Zenobia wreck, ranked among the top 10 wreck sites in the world. Aside from the thriving marine life that commands the wreck, her rich cargo of cars, military and telecommunication equipment, present an eerie sight.

**The MUSAN, an aquatic underwater sculpture museum, consisting of 93 installations created by the world-renowned artist Jason De Caires Taylor has been recently added to the underwater spectacles.**

# GASTRONOMY & WINE

Cyprus offers a rich and diverse culinary experience with influences from Greek and Middle Eastern cuisines. The fertile soil yields an abundance of fresh, locally grown produce, grown under the warm sun that gives it a sweet and fragrant taste.

## Hearty Food

**Taste the difference in every bite as you savor succulent tomatoes, rich, earthy, and buttery flavored potatoes, and the finest olives and fruits. Here are some must-try dishes and foods to experience the flavors of Cyprus:**

***Meze:*** Meze is a selection of small dishes served as appetizers or tapas. It typically includes a variety of dips, salads, grilled meats, and seafood. Meze is a great way to sample a range of flavors and dishes in one meal.

***Kleftiko:*** This slow-cooked lamb dish is marinated with garlic, lemon juice, and herbs before being cooked in a clay oven. The result is tender, fall-off-the-bone meat that is bursting with flavor.

***Pitta Souvlaki:*** This popular grilled meat dish is typically made with skewers of marinated pork, chicken, or lamb. It is often served with pita bread, and a side salad.

***Halloumi Cheese:*** This unique cheese is a staple in Cypriot cuisine and is often grilled or fried before serving. It has a salty and slightly tangy flavor and a firm texture that makes it perfect for grilling.

***Bread and Pies:*** Visit a local bakery and taste traditional bread and pies such as elliopittes (olive pies), tiropittes (cheese pies), kolokotes (pumpkin pies), and rusks such as arkateno.

***Ospria (Pulses):*** Ideal for a vegan diet are local dishes such as fassolada (white beans), revithada (chickpeas), louvia (fresh or dry black-eyed beans), moutzendra (lentils) either boiled and served with olive oil and lemon or cooked in tomato sauce.

***Fresh fruit:*** from juicy oranges to sweet watermelons and succulent figs, our seasonal fruits are grown locally to ensure a burst of natural sweetness in every bite.

## Wine

**Based on archaeological discoveries, Cyprus has been producing wine for almost 6000 years. A visit to the wine producing regions of the island is an exciting venture, especially during the grape harvesting season. Visit rolling vineyards and learn about centuries-old winemaking traditions along the Cyprus Wine Routes. Nestled among hills and valleys, regional wineries offer panoramic views that perfectly complement the sensory journey of wine tasting. Taste wines from indigenous grape varieties like Xynisteri and Maratheftiko, as well as global varieties such as Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon and Shiraz.**

***Commandaria*** is a sweet wine and its origins date back to ancient times. In 800BC poet Hesiod describes a dried grape wine as “Cypriot Nama”. In the 11th century Richard the Lionheart favored this wine as “the wine for the kings”. Commandaria is the oldest “appellation d’ origine” wine in the world. Commandaria‘s rich, velvety taste comes from the indigenous grape varieties of Mavro and Xynisteri grown in the 14 Comandaria villages. The grapes are left to ripen on the vine, intensifying their sugars and flavors. It spends a minimum of two years in oak barrels to age.

***Zivania***, the island’s national spirit, has alcohol content ranging between 40-60%, so it is no surprise that it is often referred to as ‘firewater’! Zivanon is the grape pomace (remains such as pulp, peel, stalks and seeds), which is mixed with high-quality dry wines made from the indigenous grapes Mavro (red) and Xynisteri (white), then distilled and mellowed for a long period.

## Itineraries

**Whether you have a week or just a few days in Cyprus, a variety of itineraries are available to enjoy the island's long history, natural beauty, and unique landscapes. The short distances and relatively compact size of the island contribute to an easy and effortless exploration. Depending where you stay (beach resort or rural areas) you can plan your itineraries with ease and make your holidays in Cyprus memorable.**

***DAY 1 – LEFKOSIA (NICOSIA)***
In the morning visit the Cyprus Handicraft Centre, followed by a visit to the Cyprus Archaeological Museum, the Byzantine Museum, art galleries, and St. John's Cathedral. Lunch at Laiki Geitonia, a restored old neighbourhood with cafès, tavernas, souvenir shops, and galleries. In the afternoon visit the Hadjigeorgakis Kornesios Ethnological Museum and the Leventis Municipal Museum of Nicosia.

***DAY 2 – LEMESOS (LIMASSOL)***
In the morning visit Kolossi Castle built in the 13th century, the important city-kingdom of Kourion, and the Sanctuary of Apollo Ylatis. In the afternoon visit the Lemesos Medieval Castle and the ancient site of Amathous.

***DAY 3 – PAFOS***
On the outskirts of Pafos visit 'Petra tou Romiou' - Aphrodite's birthplace. In the town of Pafos visit the Tombs of the Kings and the Pafos Archaeological Park with the mosaics at the House of Aion, Dionysos, and Theseus. Lunch at Pafos Harbour followed by a visit to Pafos Castle and St. Paul's Pillar. The whole of the ancient city of Pafos is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

***DAY 4 – PAFOS***
In the morning visit Agios Neophytos Monastery and Agios Georgios in Pegeia to see the sea caves. Continue to Latsi village to enjoy some fresh fish for lunch at one of the seaside restaurants. In the afternoon visit the Baths of Aphrodite and take one of the nature trails around Akamas Peninsula.

***DAY 5 – LARNAKA***
In the morning visit Saint Lazarus Church, Pierides Museum and the ancient city-kingdom of Kition. Lunch at the Foinikoudes 'Palm Tree' Promenade. In the afternoon visit Choirokoitia Neolithic Settlement - a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and Lefkara village, famous for its lace-making.

***DAY 6 – TROODOS MOUNTAINS***
Visit Kykko Monastery, one of the richest monasteries on the island, and its ecclesiastical museum. Lunch in the village of Pedoulas followed by a visit to one of the 10 UNESCO Byzantine churches, Archangel Michail. In the afternoon visit another important UNESCO Byzantine church, Agios Nikolaos tis Stegis in Kakopetria village, followed by a walk in the old part of the village.

***DAY 7 – AMMOCHOSTOS AREA***
Visit the Thalassa Municipal Museum and Agia Napa Monastery. Spend your afternoon swimming in the crystal-clear waters of Agia Napa and Paralimni. In the afternoon you can explore one of the hiking trails of Cape Gkreko.

For more itineraries log on to: www.visitcyprus.com/files/ cruises/CYPRUS_ITINERARIES.pdf.

# NATURE

Mapped nature trails crisscross the mountains, the hills, and the heartland plains, where nature lovers can hike, enjoy the fresh air and breathtaking views, admire the endemic flora and fauna, practice mountain climbing, and get acquainted with the geological formation of the island.

**Hiking**

Follow one of the nature trails on a solitary exploration or search for a guided hike to discover more. The Cyprus Forestry Department has developed more than 65 nature trails of various degrees of difficulty to suit every taste. Most of them are in the Troodos Mountains. For those seeking a coastal hiking escape, the Akamas Peninsula unfolds a rugged paradise. Hike along the Aphrodite Trail, where **mythology meets nature**, or explore trails that hug the coastline, providing panoramic views of the deep blue Mediterranean waters. Marvel at the dramatic cliffs and hidden coves that make Cape Gkreko a stunning photo backdrop.

***Troodos Geopark:***

The island is a unique geological destination and is a magnet for professionals, scientists and students, as well as for geology aficionados that want to understand the evolution of the planet's land and oceans. The Troodos Mountain range is an ophiolite, a term used to describe a group of igneous rocks, which make up the oceanic crust. ***Troodos is part of a very ancient section of oceanic crust, which was uplifted to its present position due to the collision of the African and Eurasian Tectonic Plates, and the subduction of the former beneath the latter. Since it is located above the sea, it is the most complete and best-studied ophiolite in the world.*** From dramatic cliffs to ancient rock formations, every step tells a story millions of years in the making. Located in the central part of Cyprus, the Troodos Geopark covers an area of approximately 137,000 hectares (1,370 sq.m.), covering 15% of the island's total area and is listed in the UNESCO Global Geoparks Network. The Geopark includes 110 villages with a total population of approximately 25000 inhabitants.

Heartland of Legends

The Heartland of Legends is a circular route through mountainous and remote areas, covering an inland area of authentic experiences, which bring our visitors closer to the Cypriot nature, traditions, and the Cypriot way of life. It reveals the richness of village life through authentic experiences. It highlights all the beautiful elements of Cypriot slow rural life, like eating together, sharing tales in the village's coffee shop, celebrating local festivals, picking fresh produce and learning about traditional arts and crafts.

Featured experiences encourage visitors' active participation e.g. in halloumi making, picking grapes to make wine, weaving traditional textiles, and many more activities.

For more information on this special route and to book a workshop activity visit the route's website **heartlandoflegends.com**

# 11.000 YEARS OF HISTORY

## 11.000 Years of History

### *Kourion Archaeological Site (AG)*

Kourion is an ancient settlement that was destroyed by earthquake in the 4th century AD. The site consists of private houses with mosaic floors, peristyle courtyards, and exquisite architectural details, a well-preserved Greco-Roman theatre and an agora. As you explore the archaeological site, stop and take in the breathtaking cliffside views overlooking the sparkling waters of the Mediterranean.

### *Kolossi Medieval Castle (AG)*

Kolossi Castle, strategically positioned amidst lush vineyards, was of great military importance during the medieval period. Originally built by the Crusaders in the 13th century, the castle later became the seat of the Knights of the Order of St. John, showcasing its pivotal role in the island‘s history. Step into the halls of Kolossi Castle, where the echoes of chivalry and nobility resound. The knights who occupied the castle played a crucial role in producing the Commandaria wine.

### *Choirokoitia Neolithic Settlement (AG)*

The site is one of the world‘s most well-preserved prehistoric settlements. Marvel at the circular dwellings made of mudbrick and stone, imagining the daily lives of the early settlers who called this ancient village home. This UNESCO World Heritage site offers an unparalleled glimpse into the dawn of human civilization. Visit the five reconstructed cylindrical shaped dwellings that provide a vivid representation of their use in the past.

### *Pafos Archaeological Park*

Kato Pafos is built almost on top of the ancient city that dates back to the Hellenistic period. The entire area is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and encompasses the Pafos Archaeological Park, which includes among other monuments:

### *Pafos Mosaics (AG)*
Marvelous mosaic floors were discovered at the ruins of four lavishly decorated Roman villas. The mosaic floors date from the 2nd to the 5th century AD and are considered among the finest in the Eastern Mediterranean. They depict scenes from Greek mythology and are considered masterpieces of mosaic art.

### *Tombs of the Kings (AG)*
A complex of monumental underground tombs that are carved out of solid rock and date back to the Hellenistic and Roman periods. Rather than kings, it is actually high-ranking officials and aristocracy that were buried here, but the size and splendor of the tombs gave this site its grand name.

### *Sanctuary of Aphrodite in Kouklia (AG)*
Palaipafos is located near Kouklia village, 14km east of Pafos, and was one of the most celebrated pilgrimage centers of the classical Greek world and an important city-kingdom. Here lie the ruins of the famous sanctuary of Aphrodite that date back to the 12th century BC. The sanctuary continued to be a place of worship until the 3rd or 4th century AD. The site is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site and includes a dedicated museum housed in a nearby Lusignan manor.

### *Cultural Routes*
The best way to explore Cyprus is by car. An excellent road network connects the cities, making travelling around the island pleasurable, safe, and easy. Cyprus offers a variety of cultural routes that can cater for every taste. Each region offers a distinctive experience. Discover the contrast of ancient city kingdoms and modern cities, or the rich history of ancient monuments and traditional mountain villages that border the lively seafront towns. For more information on cultural routes please visit **www.visitcyprus.com/index.php/en/discovercyprus/culture/cultural-routes.**

AG – Audio Guides available at www.visitcyprus.com

# UNESCO PAINTED CHURCHES

AG - Audio Guide available at www.visitcyprus.com

The UNESCO World Heritage Centre has designated several Byzantine churches in the Troodos Mountain region as World Heritage Sites. These churches offer a glimpse into the rich history and cultural heritage of Cyprus, and they are known for their well-preserved frescoes and architectural significance. They date from the 11th to the 17th centuries and showcase the Byzantine iconographic tradition. Admire scenes of biblical narratives, saints, and angels, beautifully rendered on the church walls. Some of the most notable ones include the Church of Panagia Tou Araka, the Church of Panagia Phorbiotissa, and the Church of St. Nicolas tis Stegis.

### *Accessible Cyprus*

Cyprus has introduced both the use of the European Disability Card and the European Blue Badge for parking. The European Disability Card ensures various benefits for persons with disabilities in the areas of culture, tourism, entertainment, sports and transportation. Both Larnaka and Pafos International Airports are accessible for travelers with disabilities or reduced mobility. There are many beaches on the island that are partially or fully wheelchair accessible. Many tourist attractions offer partial or full accessibility and facilities for disabled persons, including wheelchair accessibility, disabled bathrooms along with discounted or free entrance for wheelchair users and their personal assistant with the European Disability Card. For more information on facilities that are available to visitors with disabilities and special access please check accessible-cyprus.com

## Useful information

### *Official ports of entry*

Cyprus has several official ports of entry, including airports and seaports, through which travelers can legally enter the country. The primary ports of entry are Larnaka (LCA) and Pafos (PFO) International Airports (hermesairports.com). Limassol Port handles most of the island‘s cargo and passenger traffic, including cruise ships (www.dpworld.com/limassol); Larnaca Port also handles both cargo and passenger traffic, though it is smaller than Limassol Port.

Pafos Port and Latchi Port serve both as fishing boat shelters, and as anchorages for vessels that offer mini cruises along the Pafos coastline. They are also used for passenger traffic, particularly for smaller cruise ships and private yachts. www.cpa.gov.cy

Limassol Marina and Ayia Napa Marina primarily serve private yachts and pleasure boats, but also accommodate some passenger traffic.

### *Languages*

Greek is the main language, but English is widely spoken.

### *Climate & Weather*

Cyprus has a Mediterranean climate characterised by hot, dry summers and mild winters. Cyprus enjoys about 300 days of sunshine per year, making it one of the sunniest places in Europe. June to September average temperatures range from 30°C to 40°C (86°F to 104°F) during the day, especially in inland areas. Coastal areas are slightly cooler. October to November daytime temperatures range from 20°C to 30°C (68°F to 86°F). Nights start to cool down, particularly in November. December to February coastal areas have mild winter temperatures, ranging from 10°C to 18°C (50°F to 64°F) during the day. Inland and mountainous areas can be cooler, with temperatures sometimes dropping below 0°C at night. March to May temperatures gradually increase from 15°C to 25°C (59°F to 77°F) during the day.

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