

INSIDER GUIDE TO CYPRUS

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By thinking a little about your holiday destination before you travel, and taking some simple steps when you are there, you can gain so much more from your holiday. You will also be making a positive contribution to the people and the places you visit.



Cyprus is the third largest island in the Mediterranean, with a population of just under 1,000,000. Blessed with over 300 days of sunshine per year, it is a great destination for both winter and summer visitors.

A BIT OF HISTORY

Situated at the crossroads of the eastern Mediterranean basin, Cyprus has a rich and varied history. Many civilisations have come here over the centuries, including the Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Lusignans, Genoese, Venetians, Ottomans and British, each leaving a part of their heritage.

CULTURAL HERITAGE

Cypriots have managed to both incorporate influences that came to the island, whilst retaining their individuality. The beautiful Eastern pots, for example, became Cypriot pottery, while the Gothic arch became an element in local popular architecture. One of the most spectacular sites is at Kourion; a Greco-Roman theatre that has been completely restored and is used today for open air musical and theatrical performances.

DISCOVER THE REAL CYPRUS

Cyprus has over 400 miles of stunning coastline, but its beyond-the-beach offering is also well worth discovering. As well as the excellent hidden gems to be discovered in coastal towns and villages, such as tavernas serving local produce or workshops rejuvenating traditional crafts, the island has a rugged and mountainous interior that offers breathtaking scenery and many outdoor activities.

One way to discover the real Cyprus is by hiring a car. Cypriots drive on the same side of the road as in the UK, so it's as simple as picking up a vehicle and heading off to adventure! Find out more about the Village Routes booklets on the right hand side. Getting out of your hotel and away from the main sites means you are helping communities in rural areas earn a living from tourism.

GET OUT AND ABOUT

Keen to use more environmentally friendly forms of transport? Exploring Cyprus by walking, cycling or using public transport is another easy option and one that will bring a new and different type experience to your holiday.

Ayia Napa, Larnaca, Limassol and Paphos all have seafront promenades where you can stroll, stop at little cafes, take in the stunning sea views and admire the endemic flora. For more serious walkers there are many different trails including the European long distance path E4.

It's easy and cheap to get around resorts by bus and to get to other towns and cities on the island. Local buses in all the resorts are frequent and cheap and intercity buses are as little as 5 Euros return. You can visit the website www.cyprusbybus.com and plan your bus journey all over Cyprus.

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Cyprus is especially popular with cyclists for its varied terrain, excellent roads and lovely, sunny weather. Many hotels now have bikes for hire that are suitable for use in the resort towns, which often have good cycle lanes. For more serious cycling there are bike hire shops renting out mountain bikes so you can really get off the beaten track and explore. The Akamas peninsula has many off road tracks which can be easily reached from Paphos, and Cape Greko is equally as accessible from Ayia Napa or Protaras.

ENJOY THE LOCAL FOOD

Discover the real taste of Cyprus by trying some of the local delicacies. Cypriot cuisine is based on fresh, seasonal produce, using local herbs, such as oregano and rosemary, and local olive oil. 'Meze' is a must to try, which consists of an array

EXPLORE WITH 'VILLAGE ROUTES'

Six self drive tour booklets are available to help you explore the island. They offer a great opportunity to see a different side to the island, as well as the chance to meet with locals and find out about their way of life along the way! Ask your rep about the Village Routes booklets, or buy online from www.csti-cyprus.org.

ROUTE 1 Limassol and the surrounding area

Visit the wine producing villages of rural Cyprus.

ROUTE 2 Orini and Larnaca

Visit the mountainous villages of Orini and the traditional lace making village of Lefkara.

ROUTE 3 Farmagusta

Step back in time on this route, known as the 'red earth and windmill route', thanks to the areas vibrant soil and landscape dotted with windmills.

ROUTE 4 Troodos Mountains

In the green heart of Cyprus you'll be spoilt for choice with views to of south and central Cyprus.

ROUTE 5 Pitsillia

Home to some of the highest mountain peaks and villages in Cyprus! Classic local grape varieties continue to have a dominant presence amongst the vineyards of Pitsilia, with occasional encounters of the Maratheftiko, a rare variety which the old wine growers cultivated in-between the Mavro in order to enrich the colour and smell of their wines.

ROUTE 6 Akamas National Park

This is one of the most unspoilt regions in Cyprus, and home to Lara beach, a turtle nesting site.

Choose which route you'd like to discover or combine routes to see more of Cyprus! For further ideas on itineraries, visit www.visitcyprus.com.





of up to 20 dishes including Halloumi, a Cypriot cheese made from goats' milk, various dips including Tahini, a sesame seed dip, and grilled meats such as Souvla, skewered lamb, slowly barbecued. 'Meze' is a traditional feature of religious feast days, birthdays, weddings and name days. Feasting usually means endless eating, singing and joking, accompanied by wine and zivania, a strong spirit similar to vodka. You will need to pace yourself and don't get caught out by eating too much early on – those dishes just keep coming and coming...

The Cyprus Tourism Organisation publishes a monthly events schedule which is widely available from tourist offices, hotels and attractions.

AND WINE...

There is a wide choice of delicious Cypriot wines from over 40 boutique wineries, using indigenous grapes such as Mavro and Xynisteri, combined with international varieties such as Cabernet Sauvignon and Grenache. After dinner enjoy a glass of chilled Commandaria- a traditional sweet wine made in the Troodos mountains in Cyprus.

LOCAL FOLKLORE

There is nothing Cypriots like better than telling stories passed down through generations – like the time Richard the Lion heart travelled through Cyprus and someone offered him a particular variety of grape. Supposedly King Richard exclaimed that they were 'very good'

but these words were misinterpreted as 'verga' which the grapes are now known as to this day. Pull up a chair in any local bar and tavern and you will find the friendly locals will have plenty of similar tales to tell.

WHAT'S ON WHEN

The Cyprus Tourism Organisation publishes a monthly events schedule which is widely available from tourist offices, hotels and attractions. Here you can find out about local events, festivals, exhibitions, guided walks and educational programmes during your stay.

DISCOVER CYPRUS' HISTORIC CHURCHES

Cyprus is home to no less than ten UNESCO-listed churches, some located in the most spectacular and unspoilt areas of the island. As well as picturesque locations and ancient architecture, Cyprus' churches often contain rare and astonishing fresco decoration. (The official religion of Cyprus is Greek Orthodox. You are welcome to join services and visit churches, but please dress appropriately when doing so, always covering your knees and shoulders).

BECOME THE NEXT GRAYSON PERRY

Rural crafts, from lace-making to pottery, still thrive in Cyprus. Seek out traditional workshops such as the Lemba Pottery, just outside the coastal town of Paphos which offers the chance to see pieces being made as well as a shop selling traditional wares. Other uniquely-Cypriot craft highlights can include a trip to Agros, famous for its roses, where rose-based products from candles to liquors are produced.



LEARN THE LOCAL LINGO!

Making an effort to say a few words in Greek will really impress the locals. It's great to be able to say please ('parakalo') and thank you ('efharisto') in the local language, rather than relying on the locals to speak English.

You might find the following phrases helpful:

Good morning

ka-lee-me-ra / Καλημέρα!

Good afternoon

ka-lee-spe-ra / Καλησπέρα!

Good night

ka-lee-neekh-ta / Καληνύχτα!

Goodbye

khe-re-te / Χαίρετε!

Yes

ne / Ναι

No

okh-ee / Όχι

Please

pa-ra-ka-lo / Παρακαλώ

Yes please

ne pa-ra-ka-lo / Ναι παρακαλώ

Thank you

ef-kha-rees-to / Ευχαριστώ

No thank you

okh-ee ef-kha-rees-to / Όχι ευχαριστώ

Excuse me

me seen-kho-ree-te / ε συγχωρείτε

Sorry

lee-ra-me / Λυπάμαι

Where is...

rou ee-ne / Πού είναι...

My name is...

to o-no-ma mou ee-ne /

To όνομα μου είναι...

What is your name?

pos se lene ? / Πώς σε λένε

I am from...

ee-me ap-o teen... / Είμαι από...

I'd like...

tha ee-the-la / Θα ήθελα...

How much is?

po-so stee-khee-ze / Πόσο στοιχίζει;

Please write down the price

se pa-ra-ka-lo gra-pse mou tin ti-mi /

Σε παρακαλώ γράψε μου την τιμή.

Delicious!

no-sti-mo / Νόστιμο!



BEACH LIFE

Cyprus has more Blue Flag beaches per kilometre of coastline than anywhere else in the world and an excellent reputation for clean water quality. Nissi beach in Ayia Napa and Fig Tree bay in Protaras have undertaken initiatives to 'green' their beaches including recycling and endemic planting schemes. Look out for more beaches following their example. The most frequent complaint is cigarette butts in the sand, so smokers, please dispose responsibly!

WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE...

While the island's azure-blue seas are one of the big draws for holidaymakers, the land itself can become very dry during the summer months, and water is a precious commodity.

Cyprus has experienced severe droughts and residents are subject to water rationing in the summer months. You can help to conserve water levels by taking short showers instead of baths and reusing towels.

HELP TO PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

Hotels in Cyprus are increasingly environmentally aware, offering internal recycling options and encouraging visitors to keep waste to a minimum, for example through schemes which reduce use of plastic bottles or through reuse of towels. Cyprus is working towards becoming one of the first destinations in the world where all hotels have statutory minimum standards for measuring and minimising environmental impacts, fair employment conditions and supporting local communities. You can also help to do your bit on the island through even the smallest measures such as:

- Re-using a plastic glass, rather than taking a new one for each drink. You can also help by only using straws when totally necessary.
- Taking a reusable shopping bag with you.
- Removing all unnecessary packaging before you leave home.
- Be sparing with electricity - remember to switch off lights and air conditioning units when you leave your room, and don't leave the TV on standby.
- Re-use your towels and bed linen. By not changing your towels everyday, you'll be helping to save water, electricity and chemicals used for laundry.

THE NATURAL WORLD

Cyprus is an excellent location for bird watching as it lies on one of the major bird migration routes across the Mediterranean and is a major staging post used twice a year as birds move between Africa, Europe and Eurasia. The best places to see them are in and around the coast of the Akamas peninsula. Paphos Fort by the harbour is a classic bird watching spot for amateurs and enthusiasts alike.

Cyprus is blessed with many endemic and rare wild flowers and herbs. Lemons, oranges and figs grow everywhere – look out for them as you stroll around the streets in your resort.

HELP PROTECT TURTLE POPULATIONS

Cyprus is lucky enough to be home to both the loggerhead and green turtle species, who nest on beaches around the coastline. The beaches along the Akamas peninsula are the best places to see them. You can do your part in helping to protect these species by:

1. Not shining bright lights onto beaches at night. This confuses turtles as they mistake the lights for the moon shine when making their escape to the sea.
2. During the day relax on your sunbed close to the sea. Turtles use the soft sand at the back of the beach for nesting, and these nests can be crushed by umbrellas and beds.
3. Many turtles are injured by jet skis and other water sports equipment, so if you plan on having fun in the sea, please drive slowly!

LOCAL GUIDES

Hiring a local guide can really add to the richness of your experience, providing an insider's view and the chance to discover things or places you might not ordinarily have known about. Ask your reps about excursions run with local guides or contact the Cyprus Tourist Guide Association +357 22 765755.

MAKE HOLIDAYS GREENER

Make Holidays Greener is run by the Travel Foundation, an independent charity that works with the travel and tourism industry towards a sustainable future, both for the industry and holiday destinations.

For more information about our work visit www.thetravelfoundation.org.uk



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For further information on how to make holidays greener, please visit www.makeholidaysgreener.org.uk