



# Pitsilia

A Self-Drive Tour to Create Your Own Adventure



## Discover the Real Cyprus



CSTI is affiliated to

the  
travel foundation

caring for places we love to visit



Published by the Cyprus Sustainable Tourism Initiative



**Publisher**

Cyprus Sustainable Tourism Initiative  
PO Box 58538,  
3735 Limassol, Cyprus  
Email: cyprussustainabletourism@cytanet.com.cy  
Tel: 357 99440983

**Writing**

Zoe Anastasiou

**Editing**

Salome Loukas

**Photo contributions**

Panagiotis Papadopoulos/Troodos Network  
Zoe Anastasiou  
Salome Loukas

**Design and Layout**

Salome Loukas

**Printed at**

Cyprint Plc.  
Industrial Area, Agios Athanasios  
P.O.Box 58300  
CY-3732 Limassol, Cyprus  
Tel. + 357 25720035  
<http://www.cyprint.com.cy>

All information in this booklet was correct at the time of going to press.  
The publishers would be grateful for any amendments and comments.

Book Price € 4

## Acknowledgments

The Cyprus Sustainable Tourism Initiative gratefully acknowledges the sponsorship and support of The Cyprus Tourism Organization and The Travel Foundation (UK).

**Cover Picture:**

*Agros Rose Festival, Rymvos Group*  
Courtesy of Agros Community Council.



## Cyprus Sustainable Tourism Initiative

Tourism has changed dramatically over the years, and today's holiday-makers are more discerning; you want much more than sunshine and sand. You want to try a new sport, a new leisure activity or visit a little known village. You really want your holiday to be memorable.

The Cyprus Sustainable Tourism Initiative (CSTI) has been formed by people in the tourism industry to meet these challenges because Cyprus has something special to offer all individuals - you just need to know what's available! Members of the CSTI include First Choice, Sunvil, Thomas Cook and Thomson, village communities, village producers, crafts people and various environmental organisations. CSTI is affiliated to the Travel Foundation.

One of the ways CSTI meets these changing needs is through the production of a series of Village Routes. This is the fifth of a series of six routes. The routes encourage holidaymakers to discover the 'real' Cyprus. This will help boost the economy and regenerate people's lives in the villages. Some of them have lost out due to tourism in coastal areas. The CSTI village routes are specially designed to help you discover a very different Cyprus - one where time and tradition are linked to passing seasons, where crafts people follow the traditions of their grandparents and the Cyprus that was once Aphrodite's playground!

Through this work, CSTI promotes conservation, the protection of the environment and the sensible use of natural resources so that the Cyprus of today can be enjoyed by the holidaymakers of tomorrow. Going on these routes, not only will you have valuable memories to take away with you, but you will also put a little something back into rural Cyprus. Your visit here will have a positive impact on local communities. Thank you for enjoying the 'real' Cyprus.



## Kalosorisate - A Village Welcome

Situated in the heart of the island, Pitsilia spreads between the districts of Nicosia, Limassol and Larnaka. It is surrounded by the Troodos National Forest on the west, Adelfoi forest to the north and the Machairas forest to the east. Some of the highest mountain peaks on the island such as that of Adelfoi 1613m and Papoutsia 1554m are found in Pitsilia. Also in Pitsilia are some of the highest villages including Chardria - the second highest village on the island after Prodromos. Rock formations in the area like hatzburgite, gabro, werlite, diabasiz and pillow lava form interesting shapes and colours, and from the area's deep valleys originate many of the island's big rivers such as Atsas, Serrachis, Kourris and Vasilikos. The 47 villages of Pitsilia make some of the best commandaria, and the area's pork meat products are found all over the island. Some believe that the name Pitsilia originates from the ancient Greek word 'pitys' which means pine tree, therefore Pitsilia means an area full of pine trees. Others, however, believe that the name originates from the byzantine word 'pitillin' a type of embroidered scarf worn by women on the island until recently.

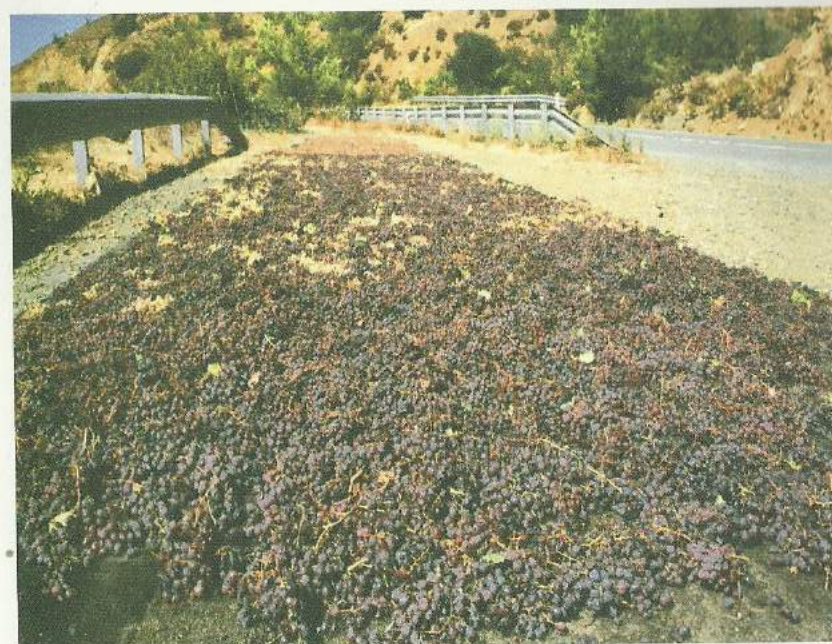
This booklet has the information you need to experience the real Cyprus: what to do, see, where to eat and where to buy local crafts and products. Roads are smooth and well signposted to ensure an easy drive and a truly memorable visit. You don't have to stop at every village and site; you can go right around in a day; you can do part of the route in one day and part on another; or you can break your journey as you wish. If interested in partaking in village festivals and special events, the Cyprus Tourism Organization, or your travel representative can help you with dates.

**Information About the Route:** From Agia Fyla (or Phyla) round about in Limassol go north towards Palodeia and Kalo Chorio from where you will start your route. To reach Kalo Chorio (23 km) drive through Palodeia, Paramytha and the village of Gerasa; the drive will take you through the narrower part of the Garilis valley with the impressive steep slopes.

Estimated length and driving time includes distance/time between villages only. **Approximate length of Main Route** (round trip, starting in Limassol): 155 km. **Approximate driving time:** 160 minutes. **Approximate length of side trips:** Gerasa - Panagia Amyrou: 10 km(round trip). **Approximate driving time:** 10 minutes. Kalo Chorio - Louvaras: (round trip) 14 km. **Approximate driving time:** 15 minutes. Palaichori - Profitis Elias, Sykopetra, Arakapas, Agios Kostantinos, Agios Pavlos: 36 km. **Approximate driving time:** 45 minutes

**Petrol Stations on the Route:** Kyperounta

## Commandaria-the Unique Dessert Wine of Cyprus



The Knights of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem came to Cyprus when King Richard the Lionheart sold the island to the Lusignan Kings. The Knights - they had 46 villages across the island under their command - produced and exported to Europe a unique dessert wine which they named Commandaria after their Headquarters (Grand Commanderie). In a competition with other wines organized by the King of France Philippe Augustus, Commandaria was crowned as the "Apostle of Wines" and became synonymous with nobility, aristocracy and culture. Today Commandaria is exported to many parts of the world and the European Union, the United States of America and Canada recognize Commandaria as official label of origin of Cyprus. To make Commandaria, the grapes have to be very mature, so the harvest starts after mid-September. The grapes are laid on the ground on plastic sheets for 10-15 days. In this way the water evaporates and the sugar is concentrated. After this, the grapes are gathered and transferred to the wineries where they are pressed by specialized machinery to extract the sweet juice. The juice is kept in wine vats to ferment and become the traditional Commandaria.





5 Niki's Sweets. Agros



## Content

Cyprus Sustainable Tourism Initiative		2
Kalosorisate - A Village Welcome		3
Information about the route		3
Commandaria-the Unique Dessert Wine of Cyprus		4
<b>Main Route</b>		
Kalo Chorio		7-8
Zoopigi		9
Kato Mylos		10
Potamitissa		10
Pelendri		11-12
Dymes		13
Kyperounta		13-14
Chandria		15
Lagoudera		15-16
Polystypos		17
Livadia		17
Alithinou		17
Platanistasa		17-18
Alona		19-20
Fterikoudi		20
Askas		21-22
Palaichori		23-24
Agros		25-27
Agios Ioannis		28
Agios Theodoros		28
<b>Side Routes</b>		
Panagia Amyrou Monastery	SR 1	29
Louvaras	SR 2	29-30
Profitis Elias	SR 3	31
Sykopetra		31
Arakapas		32
Agios Costantinos		33
Agios Pavlos		33
Travel Foundation		34
Insider Guide to Cyprus		34-37
Questionnaire		38-39
Route Map		41



## Kalo Chorio



'Kalo Chorio' in Greek means Good village. The village is sheltered between the forest to the west and vineyards to the south, east and north. Its main product is grapes for the production of the famous commandaria of Kalo Chorio. Only 'xinisteri' grapes are used for its production which give this sweet wine a subtle aroma and a blonde (light)

colour. A few years ago, at the Leipzig exhibition of Mediterranean Wines the commandaria of Kalo Chorio received first price. Of particular interest is the old village with its steep narrow roads.

### What to see What to buy What to do Where to eat

**Commandaria Factory:** when the old factory was renovated recently, every care was taken to keep the factory's old traditional character. At the same spot where the old cisters of the old factory were, today is housed the Coop office of the Wine Producers of Kalo Chorio. The factory's cava is equipped with oak tree barrels where Commandaria is placed to age. You can taste and buy some Commandaria and watch a short film about the history of the production of this sweet wine at Kalo Chorio. For a tour of the factory ask at the office of SPE Orinis (Coop bank on the main village street). They are responsible for opening the factory to visitors. Their office is open from 8:00 to 13:00 Tuesday to Thursday and 8:00 to 13:00 and 16:00 to 19:00 Mondays and Fridays.

**Donkey Shed Craft Workshop:** at Diane's workshop you will find paintings; silk paintings; paintings on glass; patchwork and mosaics. Visit Diane in her workshop where she works and teaches these crafts. The workshop is on 1 Christofi Lazari Street, under the bridge to the right (picture on page 8). Diane also offers a Pamper Day (Monday only), which includes the making of a simple mosaic, a healthy lunch and use of her hot tub which is situated in an attractive courtyard. You can contact Diane on 25543047, or 99643047

From Kalo Chorio continue towards Zoopigi, or if you wish take a side trip to Louvaras which is located 7 km south of Kalo Chorio (see page 29 for details). Distance to Zoopigi 4 km. Time: 6 minutes.

Next Stop

7



Kalo Chorio

8



## Zoopigi



The name of the village means 'life-giving spring'. At 885m above sea level, the village provides panoramic views to the south and west of the Pitsilia area. As in most of the villages of Pitsilia, the villagers of Zoopigi produce their own wine, soutziouko and palouzé - traditional delicacies made of the juice of grapes. Zoopigi hosts the Museum of the History of Commandaria which promotes the centuries - old Commandaria making tradition on the island. The museum opened in April, 2009 and displays old and new presses, wine cisterns and other equipment and tools used for the production of Commandaria. There is a cafeteria on the premises.

Open all year round.

(\* No information about the museum's hours of operation was available at the time of the writing of this guide).



Museum of Commandaria History.

**Next Stop** From Zoopigi you will be going to Kato Mylos. Distance: 6 km. Time: 7 minutes.

9

## Kato Mylos



Originally there were two water mills in the area, pano (upper) and kato (lower) mylos. In later years the small village of Kato Mylos was founded at the site of one of the mills. French writer De Mas Latrie who wrote about Cyprus says that the village belonged to the Lusignan Kings, but he may confuse this village with the village of Kato Mylos near Lefka, which is marked on the maps of the Lusignan period. The main church is dedicated to Christ the Saviour. From Kato Mylos you will be heading to Potamitisa. Distance: 6 km Time: 7 minutes.

## Potamitisa

The village is built in a narrow valley on both sides of a river which is a branch of Kourris. It is believed that the village was built by refugees from the nearby village of 'Rogia' which was destroyed by Karaman Turks. Tradition has it that originally the inhabitants started to build their church on the left side of the river, but each morning found what they built the day before in ruins; during a meeting called by the anxious inhabitants to resolve the problem, the works' headmaster swirled his trowel in the air and let it go; the trowel landed on the right side of the river. The inhabitants took that as a sign from Virgin Mary and built the Monastery of Panagia Potamitissa (Virgin Mary of the River) on the dictated site. The new church which is dedicated to Panagia Potamitissa, has a large impressive dome.

Your next stop is Pelendri. Distance: 4 km Time: 5 minutes

**Next Stop**

10



## Pelendri

Some believe that the name of the village comes from the plant 'Felendrio' which grew in the area and others say that the name means 'Polidendri' - an area with many trees. Medieval chronicler Georgios Voustronios mentions that in the 14th century there were two fiefdoms in the area with the name 'Pelentria' which belonged to Ritcio de Marino and which were confiscated later by Queen Aikaterini Cornaro. During the wars between the Byzantines and Ottomans Turks, the village grew when people from 14 nearby villages abandoned their villages and moved to Pelendri for safety. Pelendri, which marks the western end of the Pitsilia valley, is one of the main villages of the valley and is developing very fast. Until the 1970s, many of the villagers were employed in the nearby Asbestos mine of Amiantos; after losing their jobs in 1982 - when the mine shut down - the people of Pelendri either found jobs in Limassol, or stayed in the village and established small businesses.

### What to see - What to buy - What to do - Where to eat



**Holy Cross Church (Timios Stavros):** one of the most visited and best preserved churches on the island and a World Heritage Site of UNESCO, the Holy Cross Church still has its original wall paintings which date from the 11th century. Follow the street which starts across the Citizen's Service Centre on the main village road. It is open Monday to Sunday from 10:00 to 15:00 and 17:00 to 19:00 all year round. Mrs. Anastasia will open the church for you; she lives in the last house on the right, before the church.

**Panagia Katholiki:** the church has wall paintings of Italo-Byzantine style and houses a collection of double-sided processional icons of various periods, from vanished churches in the area. A special icon here is that of Pelendri Panagia, one of the sacred rain-bringing icons of Cyprus. From the main village road, turn left at the sign to Trimiklini and keep driving until you reach the church. It is open Monday to Sunday, winter and summer from 10:00 to 15:00 and then 17:00 to 19:00. Mrs. Panagiota Kyriakou lives in the house at the back of the church and opens the door to visitors.

**Tsakas Winery:** open daily from 9:00 to 17:00. Closed on Sundays and public holidays. Located west of the village.

#### Next Stop

From Pelendri drive back to Potamitisa and from there go north to Dymes. Distance: 7 km. Time: 8 minutes.

11



Holy Cross Church.



Panagia Katholiki Church. 12



## Dymes

This village of steep narrow streets and stone-built houses is situated 1000 meters above sea level. The church of the village is dedicated to Ioannis Prodromos (Saint John the Baptist). The people of Dymes - 164 in total - claim to produce the best apples of Cyprus. The village was named after the Greek City of Dymi, home of Kypheas, one of the Achaean Greek settlers who arrived in Cyprus around 1200BC. After Dymes drive to Kyperounta, Distance: 5 km. Time: 6 minutes.

## Kyperounta

The name of the village is derived from the the name of the plant 'kypiros', or vicia that grew in the area. Kyperounta is a thriving community which developed rapidly in the last 10 years. The upper road is filled with modern buildings. On the right hand side of the road (at the exit of the village on the way to Kato Amiantos) is the old Sanatorium which was turned into a regional hospital that now serves the valley of Pitsilia. On this same road you can admire the terraced farming with fruit trees and vines. The old village is down the valley where you can see the old traditional houses and the 18th century church of Agia Marina, located in the village square.



13 Timios Stavros.



### What to see What to buy What to do Where to eat

#### Museum of Traditional Agricultural Life and Nature History:

the museum houses a rich collection of exhibits, objects that have to do with everyday rural life : tools and farming equipment as well as pottery and furniture. One of the rooms houses a rich collection of embalmed animals, birds and reptiles that died a natural death. The museum is located on the main road of the old village, 100 meters before the Community Board Office; they are responsible for opening the museum to visitors. Monday to Friday between 8:00 to 14:00.

**Timios Stavros:** The chapel is decorated with early 15th century wall paintings. It operates also as an ecclesiastical museum of icons (some from the 13th century) and other religious objects. It is located near the Community Board Office which is responsible for opening the chapel to visitors. The Community Board Office is open from 8:00 to 14:00, Monday to Friday.

**Vasilikon Winery:** On the upper road on the way to Chandria. Open all year round from 9:00 to 16:00, Monday to Friday. Closed during grape picking season (August - September).

Your next stop is Chandria which is 5 km away. It will take you 6 minutes to get there.

Next Stop



## Chandria

The village is built at the south side of the Madari Mountain at an altitude of 1,275m, and is the second highest village in Cyprus after Prodromos. The name of the village derives from the Greek word 'handra' meaning bead, and it indicates a gravelly (bead like) terrain. There is a great interest in the geology near Chandria, and the area is frequently visited by geology students. During the Venetian period the region was the feud of Cardinal Marcus Kornaro, nephew of Queen Aikaterini Kornaro. The local hero of the village is Stylianos Lenas, who died in a battle against the British colonial rulers during Cyprus' 1955-1959 National Liberation Struggle. Chandria's inhabitants work in small orchards in the surrounding valleys, tending walnut, apple, pear, peach and other fruit-bearing trees and cultivate vines and almond trees on the slopes of the mountain. Stop at one of the restaurants on the main road for some loukmales - traditional local sweets - which you can enjoy with a Cypriot coffee. After Chandria drive to Lagoudera. Distance: 8 km Time: 10 minutes



Tears of Virgin Mary.

## Lagoudera



Lagoudera's name indicates an area where grow many cyclamens which in the Cypriot dialect the locals call 'lagoudkia' (little rabbits) because the shape of the plant's petals remind the ears of the rabbit. One of the smallest villages in the area, Lagoudera is home to the church of Panagia tou Araka, one of the most visited churches in Cyprus.

Cyclamen is the national plant of Cyprus.



Panagia tou Araka.

### What to see What to buy What to do Where to eat



**Panagia tou Araka or Arakos:** a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Panagia tou Araka was part of an old monastery which is not used as such any more. The church is a single-aisle vaulted building with a dome covered by a second protective roof of a steep - pitched type. Here is found the most complete series of paintings of Byzantine art of the Comnenian period that are attributed by archaeologist to Theodoros Apseudis. The founder of the church, Leon the son of 1192AD Authentes, is commemorated in an inscription above the north door. In the south arched recess one may see Virgin Mary Arakiotissa, the patron of the Church, who is depicted as an ordinary mother and on the dome above Christ Pantocrator looking down with serenity. Summer hours, Monday to Saturday 9:00 to 18:00; Winter hours Monday to Saturday 9:00 to 17:00. Sundays 10:30 to 18:00. To the south of the church you will see the 800 years old oak tree.

Your next stop is Polystipos which is 6 km away. It will take you 7 minutes to get there.

Next Stop



## Polystypos

The village was once known for its many vineyards, but few survive to this day. Despite this, the community continues to organize a palouzé and soutsoukos festival each year at the end of October. The main village church is dedicated to St. Andreas and is located 100m outside the village on the way to Livadia village. Distance: 1km.

### What to see - What to buy - What to do - Where to eat

- **Tishia tis Madaris Nature Trail:** circular - 3km. The starting point is accessible by car from the Chandria-Polystypos road going towards Madari. The trail goes along impressive precipices and offers a view of the Mesaoria Plain and Morfou Bay.

## Livadia

Originally a place of pastures to raise goats and sheep, Livadia seems to be untouched by time; its old traditional houses remain as they were decades ago. The main Church of the village is dedicated to Agia Paraskevi. From Livadia you will be going to Alithinou. Distance: 1 km

## Alithinou

The steep slopes on which the village is built do not favour farming. For this reason, the village did not attract many inhabitants and is one of the smallest in the Pitsilia area. It is believed that the village was named after its first settler 'Alithinos'. Next you will be going to Platanistasa. Distance: 2 km. Time: 2 minutes

## Platanistasa

Platanistasa takes its name from the many Plane Trees (Platanoi) that grow in the area. The village is surrounded by hazelnut trees, and its streets are decorated with hanging vines which provide shade for the hot summer months.



Stavros tou Agiasmati.

### What to see - What to buy - What to do - Where to eat



■ **Stavros tou Agiasmati:** the founders of the monastery may have been refugees from Agiasmati near Constantinople (Istanbul) who came to Cyprus after the city fell to the hands of the Ottomans in 1453. A World Heritage Site of UNESCO, the church is of a simple type of steep-pitched roof which extends to an outer enclosure giving the impression of a church within a church. It retains the finest and most complete cycle of wallpaintings of the second half of 15th century, including the earliest illustration of the discovery of the Holy Cross known in Cyprus. It is located 8km outside the village, and it is open only by request. Ask for Mr. Vasilis, the church caretaker, at the Kafeneio, or the office of the Community Board in the village square. You will have to give him a lift to the church and then bring him back to the village.

Next you are going to Alona. Distance 3 km. Time: 4 minutes

Next Stop



## Alona

Alona is built in a deep valley formed between Papoutsia and Madari mountains, and its name in Greek means 'threshing-floor'. At an altitude of 1200m, the village offers panoramic views of the island's central plain of Mesaoria and the Pentadaktylos Mountains. If you are interested in folk architecture, a walk in the old village will reveal beautiful examples of traditional houses with wood carved doors and small balconies extending over the narrow streets. Alona's main church is dedicated to Ayios Georgios which is situated in the lowest part of the village amid cherry and hazelnut trees. The chapel of panagia Kardakiotissa (3 km west of the village) was founded in the 15th century and is said to have healing powers; the chapel was entirely rebuilt after a big fire in 1987. Alona is the birthplace of Telemachos Kanthos, one of the most important representatives of the first generation of Cypriot painters. From Alona head to Fterikoudi which is 5 km away. It will take you 6 minutes to get there.



19 Alona.



Alona.

### What to see What to buy What to do Where to eat

**Petrou Vanezi Nature Trail:** the starting point is near the coffee shop in the centre of the village. The trail is circular and is 1.500 meters in length. It goes through thick apple, cherry, almond and hazelnut tree plantations and ends near the river.

## Fterikoudi

The village is named after the plant 'fterikin' that grows in abundance in the area. It is believed that the village was built to replace the village of Kalamithasa which was destroyed by the Ottoman Turks after the locals sided with the Venetians in a battle against the Ottomans. It is also said that Saint Avacum, one of the Alamani Saints, lived in the area. The village still has many of its traditional houses. If you wish to take a break from driving there are a couple of coffee shops in the village square.

Your next destination is Askas. Distance: 7 km. Time: 8 minutes **Next Stop**



## Askas

It is most probable that the 'Asta' settlement found marked in the Venetian maps is Askas. The village took its name from its first settler, Manolis Askas, who was a skin-bag maker. This unique small village with its narrow cobblestone winding roads is built at 1000 meters above sea level at the foot of Mount Papoutsas. Its adjacent to one another houses are traditionally built with local materials and their roofs have locally kneaded and baked tiles. In the region around the village are cultivated mainly vines, vegetables, hazelnut, walnut, olive, and almond trees as well as a variety of fruit-trees.

### What to see What to buy What to do Where to eat

■ **Agios Ioannis Prodromos (St. John the Baptist):** built in the 16th century, the church was restored in 1763. It still has some of its original wall paintings. To get there follow the sign from the main village road. Open by request. Ask at the grocery shop on the main village road.

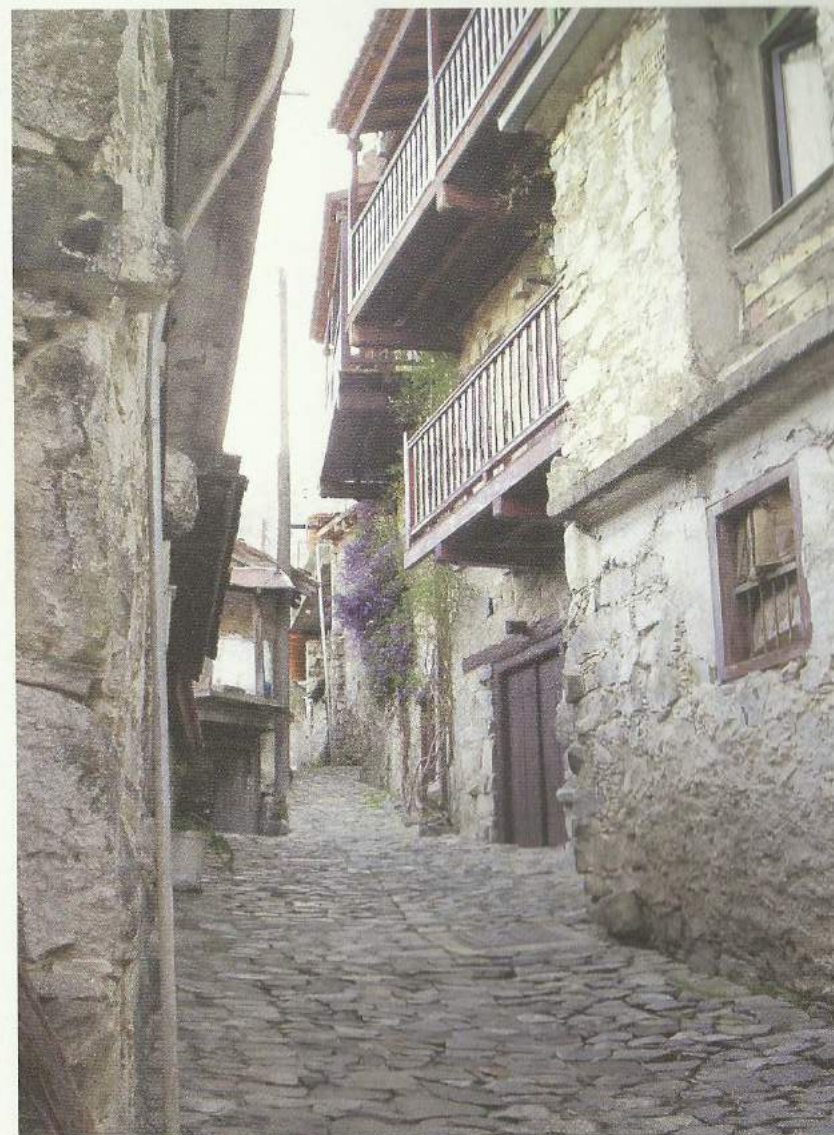
■ **Agia Christina:** it is known also as the Country Church of Agia Paraskevi. It was built in 1518 and was extended in 19th century. The church is located about 3 km west of the village. The church is open.

■ **Panagiota's Weaving Workshop:** located on the main village road (close to the grocery shop). Specific opening hours not available, but she is usually there.

■ **Pano Ampelia Nature Trail:** circular, 1.5 km. This nature trail has been used by the locals providing access to their fields and gardens. Following a difficult terrain through a variety of traditional local crops dominated by hazelnut trees. Objects of interest on the trail are marked. It starts at the east side of the village (close to Pernia Restaurant).

■ **Cyprus Tourism Organization Park:** take a rest next to the creek and enjoy the calm before continuing your walk through the cobblestone streets of the old village. The park is located close to the church of Agios Ioannis Prodromos.

■ **Pernia Restaurant:** serves grill dishes. On Sundays it serves traditional Cypriot dishes - pastistio, koupepia (stuffed vine leaves) and souvla. October to April 14:00 to 22:00. May to October 10:00 to midnight.



Askas.

Palaichori, your next stop is 1 minute away.

Next Stop



## Palaichori

One of the most mountainous villages of Cyprus and the largest of the Pitsilia area, Palaichori - which in Greek means the old village - is built amphitheatrically between high hills at an altitude of 900 meters. The river Serrachis, which springs from the mountains of Papoutsa, runs through and separates the village. Vineyards of the wine producing variety, chestnut, walnut, olive, almond and fruit-bearing trees are cultivated in the area. Wine and Zivania are produced and like in the rest of the region, the inhabitants are involved in the production of pork meat products such as pastourma, loukanika, lountza, and bacon.



23 Metamorphosis tou Sotiros.

### What to see

### What to buy

### What to do

### Where to eat



**Church of Metamorphosis tou Soteros** (Transfiguration of the Saviour): a UNESCO site, the church is located on the slopes that dominate the village. Each year, on the 6th of August, when the name day of the church is honoured, celebrations take place in the church grounds. To see the church, ask for Mrs Dora at the Museum of Byzantine

Heritage. Opening hours Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 10:00 to 13:00 Winter and Summer.

**Museum of Byzantine Heritage:** the museum is housed in a restored house and is found in the centre of the village across the Church of Panagia Chrisopantanassa. In the museum are displayed some remarkable religious objects covering the periods from the French occupation (1192 - 1489) up to the 20th Century. Open Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 10:00 to 13:00 Winter and Summer. Ask for Mrs Dora

**Residence of Polykarpos Giorgatzes:** this is the family home of Polykarpos Giorgatzes, the EOKA (Greek Cypriot Organization of Fighters, formed in 1955, during the national liberation struggle against the British colonial rulers) fighter who later became Minister in the first Government of the Republic, of Archbishop Makarios III. The building has been restored and on display are objects about the life, work, and activities of Polykarpos Giorgatzes. Located across the church of Panagia Chrisopantanassa. Ask for Mrs Dora.

**Hideout of Gregoris Afxentiou:** the hideout of Afxentiou, another EOKA fighter, is turned into an EOKA Struggle Museum. It is located on the side street to the left of the church of Panagia Chrisopantanassa. Ask for Mrs Dora.

**Statue of the Cypriot Mother:** the statue is located before the Church of Metamorfosis tou Soritos (the site is signposted), on a hill overlooking the village. It was erected in 1961, in honour of all Cypriot mothers who lost their children in the National Liberation Struggle of 1955.

■ **Central Square:** Sit under the plane trees and enjoy a meal in the square which is an attraction itself. There are 3 coffee shops to choose from.

To stay on the main route, head to Agros. Distance 10 km. Time: 11 minutes. For a side trip to Profitis Elias-Agios Pavlos (see page 31 for details).

Next Stop

24



## Agros

In 2009, Agros was named the 'Best Tourism and Intangible Heritage Destination' in Cyprus under the EU's European Destinations of Excellence project because of its Rose Festival. This scenic village is built amphitheatrically among high mountains at an altitude of 1100 meters. It is the head village of the Pitsilia Valley and has developed very quickly due to the progressiveness and hard work of its people. Agros was named after the Monastery of Megalos Agros, which was built at the site where the Church of Panagia of Agros is found today. According to tradition, during the Byzantine period of Iconoclasm in 817AD, 40 monks from Kizikos of Asia Minor abandoned the Monastery of Megalos Agros and arrived in Cyprus having as their only protection the icon of Virgin Mary, one of the icons painted by Saint Luke. After the big plague epidemic in 1692, which wiped out 2/3 of the island's population, many people came to work for and live around the old monastery. When they asked to buy land from the monastery, the Abbot refused their request. This resulted in an uprising (1894) during which the old monastery was reduced to ashes.



25 Agros.

## What to see What to buy What to do Where to eat

**Panagia Eleousa (Blessing Virgin) :** the icons of the church were painted in 1930/40 by Solon Frangoulides who dedicated 2 years of his life on this project. Located on the main village road. Open by request. Ask at the Community Board office between the hours of 8:00 to 14:00. It is located on the main road next to Pantheon Restaurant and the Coop Bank (second floor). They will call the Priest who has the key for the church.

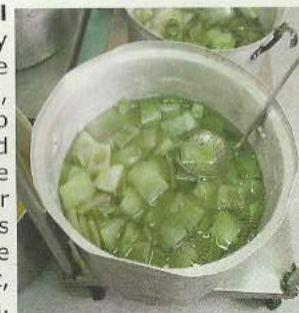
**Byzantine Museum:** the small museum with the wooden roof was built as a reminder of the Megalo Monastery and hosts the old icons which survived the fire of 1894 when the Monastery tou Megalou Agrou was reduced to ashes by the inhabitants. The museum is located by the main church. Same arrangement as above.

**Solon Frangoulides Museum:** Solon Frangoulides is one of the most important representatives of the first generation of Cypriot painters and a pioneer of icon paintings. The museum houses some of his important sketches, paintings, icons and other personal objects used by Frangoulides. Located on the side road below the Byzantine Museum. Same arrangement as above.

**Church of St. John the Baptist:** this is the longest church on the island. It was built at the end of 19th century and has a wooden high - pitched roof with local terracotta tiles. Same arrangement as above. To find it drive turn left the Apeitios School on the main village road towards the Sporting Centre.

### Niki's Home Made Traditional Sweets:

for 20 years, the company follows traditional recipes to produce pure traditional spoon sweets, marmalades, rose sweets, soutziouko and other products which are found across the island as well as around the world. Some of the products are sugar free and many are organic. Visit Niki's Workshop and sample and buy some traditional sweets made of fresh fruit, flowers and vegetables of the area. Open Monday to Friday. Summer hours: 7 to 19:30. Winter hours: 7:00 to 17:30. Sometimes open on weekends. To find it drive turn left at the Apeitios School on the main village road towards the Sports Centre.





**What to see** **What to buy** **What to do** **Where to eat**



**Rose Products-Pottery and Spirits Factory:** the Tsolakis family cultivates roses and has produced rose products since the beginning of the 20th century. Here you will find rose liqueur and brandy, rose sweets, the BIO-EKO Venus Rose Cosmetics, rose water and rose candles. For hygiene reasons, the products are bottled in porcelain pottery which is also made at the factory. You will be given a guided tour of the factory and watch on live camera how the products are made. Opening hours 8:00 to 20:00 winter and summer.

**Kafkalias Delicatessen:** visit this family business and sample and buy traditional smoked lountza, ham, tsamarella, hiromeri and sausages - a lot of which is marinated in local village wine.

■ **Agros village Tavern:** this small tavern offers a traditional village atmosphere. Serves Cypriot mezé and grill dishes. Open May to October 9:00 to 23:00 and October to April 12:00 to 23:00. Located on the main village road.

**Pantheon Restaurant and Coffee House:** Open all year round Monday to Sunday from 8:00 to 4:00 in the morning. Serves traditional mezé, pulses dishes, and - on weekends - pastitsio, stuffed courgette flowers and grill dishes. Located on the main village road, next to the coop bank.

**Linari:** serves appetizers, traditional Cypriot mezé, and grill dishes. It has a patio and is located on the main village road, across the coop bank. Open all year round, Sunday to Monday from 8:00 to 14:30 and 16:00 to midnight.

**Pezema:** serves grill dishes on weekdays and traditional Cypriot dishes on weekends. Open all year round, Monday to Friday from 10:00 to 16:00 and 18:00 to 22:00. Saturday and Sunday hours 10:00 to 22:00. You will find it on the upper road on the way to the Rodon Hotel.

**Next Stop** Your next stop is Agios Ioannins. Distance 5 km. Time: 5 minutes

**Agios Ioannis**

Agios Ioannis is dedicated to St. John Lambadistis, a local saint who lived in the valley of Marathasa. Since 1726 though, the main church of the village is dedicated to Archangel Michael. The people of Agios Ioannis produce traditional pork meat products such as ham, sausages, lountza, hiromeri and tsamarella. A small park in the heart of the village provides space for a short rest, or a picnic. It will take you 5 minutes to get to Agios Theodoros, your next destination which is 4 km away.

**Agios Theodoros**

Agios Theodoros is built on seven hills and lies on the west slopes of the Papoutsa peak. It offers spectacular views to the west, towards Agios Ioannis, Kato Mylos, Agros, Amiantos, the Madari peak and Mount Olympos. The discovery of a second century AD tomb (the findings were transferred to the Museum in Nicosia) in the area indicates that the village was settled since the Roman period. A few decades ago many Cypriots spent their summer holidays at Agios Theodoros. The village became home to one of the most famous Cypriot painters, Adamantios Diamantis, who lived in the village for many years. Vineyards, almond, cherry, pear and peach trees, strawberries and all kinds of vegetables grow in terrace plots surrounding the village and in the valley below.

**What to see** **What to buy** **What to do** **Where to eat**

■ **Panagia Kivotos:** built in the 16th century and renovated in the 19th century, the church still has its original beautiful wooden iconostasis (a stand for icon) which is decorated with elaborate carvings and icons. Fragments of the original wall paintings are still visible on the back wall of the church. Open by request. See the president of the Community Board. His house is next to the coffee shop by the telephone booth.

**Water Fountain:** the dried up fountain which provided water to the village lies at the lower part of the village - the street below the church of Panagia Kivotos will take you there. The fountain was built in the 1930s, with money that was sent by Agios Theodoros' expatriates who lived in Egypt.

From Agios Theodoros head back to Zoopigi 7 km away and from there back to Limassol.

**Next Stop**



## Panagia Amyrou Monastery

### Side Trip 1

The Monastery is located 5km east of the Village of Apsiou, a rather modern village today and a mining and quarry center until the early 1950s. To get there, just after Gerasa turn right towards Apsiou and from there go towards Mathikoloni. The slightly uphill road to the monastery will bring you to a valley with a scenic view to the east of the island. It is said that the Panagia Amyrou Monastery was founded in the 16th century by a wealthy family from Smyrna. Another more popular legend has it that a wealthy Syrian Emir was taking his blind daughter abroad for therapy; while sailing close to the coast of Amathus, the girl saw for the first time a bright light; she followed the light to the spot where she found a holy well, the water of which cured her blindness. At the same spot was found also the icon of Panagia Vrefokratousa (the Virgin holding baby Jesus) which dates to the period of iconoclasm and which is kept today in the monastery. Out of gratitude, the Emir built the monastery which was named after his title (Amyrou- a variation of Emir). From Panagia Amyrou you have to drive back to Apsiou and from there north to Kalo Chorio.

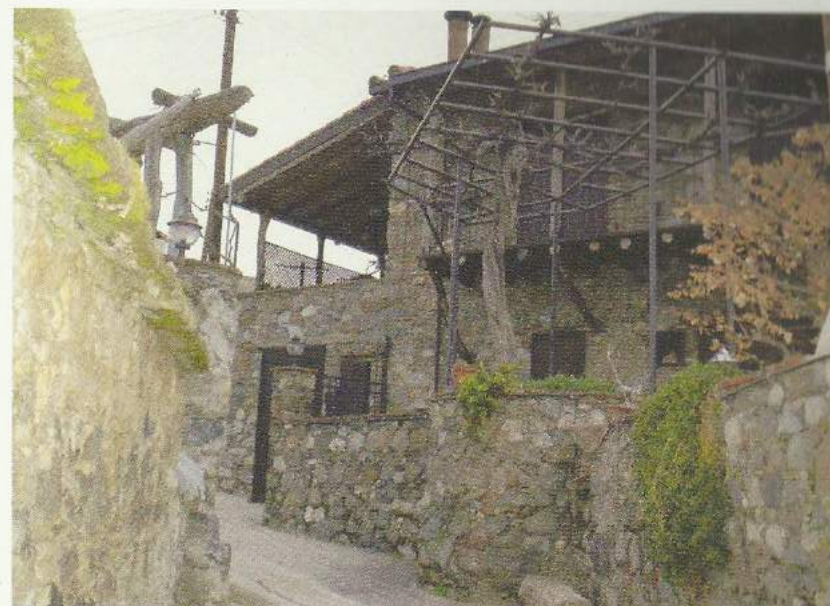
## Louvaras

### Side Trip 2

In medieval Italian, Louvaras meant the place of banking. According to local report, the village was a financial centre in Venetian times, and was marked on old maps as 'Legora'. Louvaras was also under the big commandery of the order of St. John. Some of the old traditional houses are found near the small Church of Agios Mamas, protector of shepherds, but also the Byzantine Akrites (boarder guards) defenders of the island from Arab raids.

#### What to see What to buy What to do Where to eat

■ **Agios Mamas:** an inscription over its west door informs that the church was built in 1454. The inscription also informs that the paintings of the church were donated in 1495, by the village's councillors John Kronidis and George Pelekanos, and that the church was decorated by Philip Goul (he also painted Stavros tou Agiasmati near Platanistasa). To find the church, turn right at the end of the main village road. Mrs Penelope who lives in the house above the church opens the door to visitors.



#### What to see What to buy What to do Where to eat

- **Theophilo Zivania Workshop:** if you would like to sample and buy some zivania (local spirit made from the skins of grapes by using distillation) visit Theophilo Workshop on a Friday morning between 9:00 to noon. Ring the bell of the house. Located on the main village road, before you reach the turn to the Kakomalis Forest Station.
- **Kakomalis Picnic Site:** the site is located 3km to the south of the village; look for the Kakomalis Forest Station sign and follow the road to the station. Here you can relax, have a picnic, or take a walk up to the Forestry Department's Observatory. The view is spectacular.
- **Kakomalis Restaurant:** you will find it on the way to Kakomalis Forest Station. In the winter is open only on Sundays from 11:00 to 14:00. In the Summer is open Friday to Sunday from 11:00 to 21:00. Light food and Cypriot dishes.

To continue your journey, from Louvaras go back to Kalo Chorio and drive north to Zoopygi. If you chose to take this side trip in the afternoon drive back to Kalo Chorio and from there head south towards Limassol.



## Profitis Elias

## Side Trip 3

Profitis Elias is part of the village of Sykopetra to the south, and it is new a settlement founded by a couple who fled Palaichori about a hundred years ago. According to the local story, the husband killed a policeman who demanded to sleep with his bride, and fled to Nicosia; being a very fast runner, he reached Nicosia in such a short time after the killing, that people - including the judge - did not believe that he was responsible for the murder. As a result he was acquitted and returned to the area where he settled with his bride. Visit Profitis Elias Church from where you can enjoy panoramic views of the surrounding area, or stop at Aetofolia (Eagles Nest) restaurant; it provides a spectacular view to the south of the island as far as the Akrotiri Peninsula. Open all year round, Monday to Sunday. Summer hours 8:00 to 20:00. After Profitis Elias you will visit Sykopetra. Distance: 3 km. Time: 7 minutes

## Sykopetra



Olive Press.

Sykopetra is a small village surrounded by citrus groves. Local tradition has it that a princess name Nafsyka was passing through the area on her horse which stumbled and threw her to the ground; her head hit a stone and she died. To remember the event, the locals called the stone Nafsykopetra and the name was later changed to Sykopetra. Nearchos Kleirides (a teacher and writer from Agros who documented the history and traditions of the villages of

Cyprus) on the other hand, believes that the village was named Sykopetra because of the many prickly pears (papoutsosyka in Greek) that grow in the area. You can stop at the small playground near the church of Agios Demetrios in the centre of the village, or walk about two hundred meters further up to the old olive press. Pater Demetres has the key to the olive press if you are interested in seeing it. He is usually at the church. After Sykopetra you are going to Arakapas where you will visit the Church of Panagia Iamatiki (Virgin the Healer). Distance: 5 km. Time: 6 minutes.

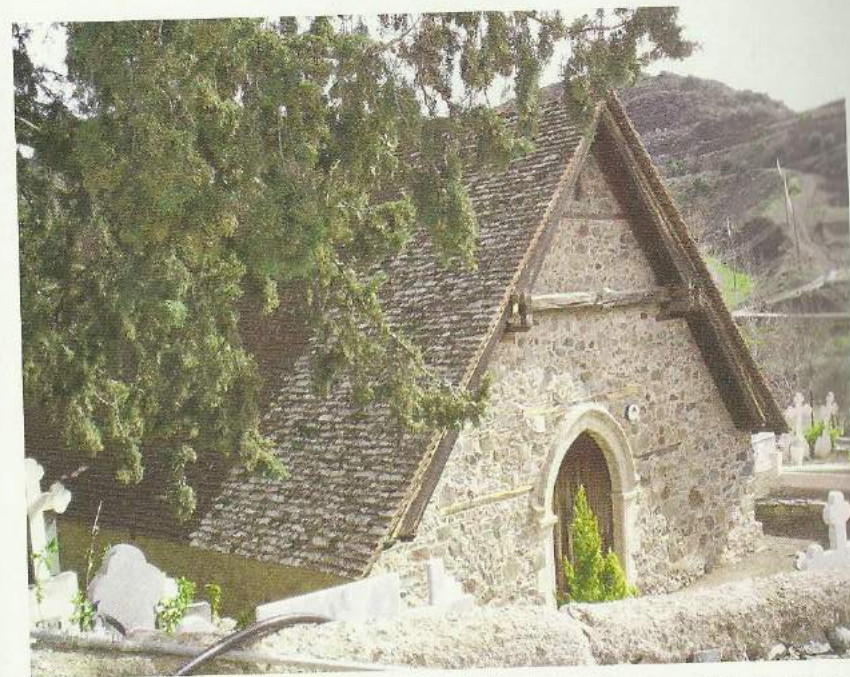
Next Stop

From Sykopetra go south to Arakapas. Distance: 6 km Time: 8 minutes.

31

## Arakapas

The village is named after the first settler Arokopos, or Arokopas which means 'wood cutter', who discovered the blessed water of Virgin Mary in the area and later built on the site the church of Panagia Iamatiki. On the 8th of September, (the date of Virgin Mary's birthday), the church attracts thousands of pilgrims and merchants who come to the festival to sell their products. The village was part of the big commandery of the Knights of the order of St. John of Jerusalem. If you visit the new church, don't miss the unique icon of virgin Mary which is painted on leather. The old church of Panagia Iamatiki is 100 meters from the new one. The phone number of Mrs Androula Aspri, the person who opens the church, is posted on the door of the new church.



Panagia Iamatiki, Arakapas.

From Arakapas turn west towards Agios Costantinos. Distance: 11 km. Time: 13 minutes

Next Stop

32



## Agios Costantinos

Agios Costantinos is the only village in Cyprus bearing the name of St. Constantine, one of the early Byzantine Emperors, who is often depicted in Greek Orthodox art with his mother St. Helena and the Holy cross. Like many of the other villages in the area, Agios Costantinos was among the 47 villages that belonged to the Big Commandery of the knights of the order of St. John of Jerusalem. The villagers still produce the white variety of grapes which they take to the wine co-operative in Kalo Chorio to make Commandaria. The main church of the village - dedicated to Agios Costantinos and Agia Eleni - can be seen above the main square of the village. There is not much to see in the village so continue towards Agios Pavlos. Distance: 2 km. Time: 3 minutes.



## Agios Pavlos

This small village is built on the southern slopes of the Papoutsia peak and has abundant water which gushes out of the rocks at an area called Styrakas which is surrounded by walnut and plane trees. Agios Pavlos (St. Paul) is the only village in Cyprus that bears the name of disciple Paul. According to tradition, when St. Paul and St. Barnabas came to the area near the river, they cured a blind young woman; for this reason the village dedicated its main church to St. Paul and Peter and the village was named Agios Pavlos. It is the result of the merging of older settlements which existed in the area in ancient times, and it grew during the period of the Arab raids on the island when people left the coast for the safety of the mountains. When you visit the village go see 'Petra tou Rkou' in the yard of the church; the stone was found at a location above the village among the ruins of old temples and is believed to have been an Aphrodite Cult Stone. People attributed healing qualities to the stone; sick people put a piece of cloth through the hole of the stone and then hang the cloth on the tree next to the stone. This ritual was believed to stick the evil that made the person sick to the tree, and so the sick person was cured.

**Next Stop** Next go towards Kalo Chorio which is 4 km away. Your route is completed and you can head back to Limassol.



The Travel Foundation is an independent UK charity that aims to help the outbound travel industry manage tourism more sustainably. The Foundation offers a unique resource to the tourism industry, helping to safeguard resources on which business depends and balancing the need for sustainability with profitability.

The Foundation's focus is on protecting and enhancing the environment, improving the well-being of destination communities and enriching the tourism experience, now and in the future.

The development of the Foundation helps enable a real breakthrough for sustainable tourism and is good news for consumers, companies, destination communities and policy makers. In addition, the Foundation projects and activities offer customers the reassurance that their favourite destinations will be protected for generations to come.

Business are better able to meet the needs of their customers, at the same time as protecting the resources on which their future depends.

Destination communities receive greater benefit from tourism, with a boost to their local economy and conservation of the natural environment, local traditions and culture.

Local and national governments have evidence to develop effective tourism policies and support destination communities and environments.



## Insider guide to Cyprus

### The Seasons.

Cyprus is seasonal and breathtakingly so. From late October when the first winter rains fall, there is a sudden greening of the countryside. The winter in Cyprus is brief and cold at night when the wonderful smell of wood smoke fills the air. Spring sees the vines in leaf and a spectacular array of wild flowers and orchids - many indigenous and some very rare. The summer is hot in Cyprus and you need to take plenty of water with you for a day out and use adequate sun protection.

During the winter (mid December - early March) snow falls on the mountains and some days cars are not allowed. Best to check prior to leaving for Troodos by telephoning the Platres Police Station at 25813018. The weather conditions can change very quickly so do take extra clothing, food and drinks with you and check your hire car's tool kit and spare tyre before you set out.

### The Fire hazard.

The Cyprus countryside does get very parched and dry in the summer months.

- Please do not discard cigarettes out of car windows.
- Do not have a barbecue in the countryside other than on proper picnic site and have a bucket of water close at hand.
- Do not discard glass bottles in the countryside as they can reflect the sun easily.
- If you see a fire please always report it by telephoning 1407. Prompt action saves animal lives and property.

### Clothing/ Dress.

Following one of our routes, you can find yourself at an altitude of 1,000 meters (3,300 feet), so if you are going to spend evenings in the hills, or visit during winter months, be sure to take some warm clothing. During the spring and autumn there are often rain showers - and when it rains it really does rain! Pack a lightweight waterproof. When visiting monasteries, please ensure you are appropriately dressed in long trousers and sleeves - women and men with shorts and bare arms are frowned upon in all religious establishments.



[www.csti.org.cy](http://www.csti.org.cy)



UNIVERSITY OF NICOSIA  
ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ ΛΕΥΚΩΣΙΑΣ  
School of Business

## Insider guide to Cyprus cont.

### Safety in the sun

- Never underestimate the strength of the sun and avoid being out in the sun for long periods between 11.00 -15.00 in the summer months.
- Always apply the appropriate sun care preparations.
- Use high factor creams for children and the elderly.
- Always re-apply creams after swimming.
- Remember it is possible to get sun burned on an overcast day.

### Photographs

Most Cypriots do not mind having their photograph taken, but please always ask first. Photographs cannot be taken in most museums, monasteries and churches - please check first. Because the sunlight in Cyprus is so bright, a faster film than normal is needed and using flash will ensure that faces are not in shadow.

### Religion

The official religion of Cyprus is Greek Orthodox, but other churches can be found in all towns. Visitors are welcome to join in Greek Orthodox services, but must be properly dressed (no shorts).

### Opening Hours (Siesta)

Siesta time is still observed in most villages and shops are closed between 13:00 - 16:30.

### Petrol Stations

Fill up before you go as there are a few petrol stations en route. These take Electronic Credit Cards or cash and have efficient and easy-to-work self service pumps when the garage is closed. Some villages have diesel pumps.

### Pharmacies

These are in main towns only. Pharmacists are highly qualified and able to assist with many minor problems. The English-language newspapers give details of late-night openings and the weekend rota. This list is displayed in all pharmacy windows. The emergency number for information is 1433.

### Wild flowers

Cyprus is blessed with many endemic and rare wild flowers and herbs. Please do not pick any of them, but leave them for others to enjoy. Do not disturb wildlife.



## Emergencies

### Accidents:

Should you be involved in a road traffic accident, ensure the police are called. Your statements will be taken in English and read to you. Get the name and number of attending police officers. Liabilities are often agreed on the spot. Call your car hire company immediately, they will advise you.

### Health:

In an emergency seek a doctor for advice (the Greek for doctor is 'iyatros'). There are Emergency Departments in Limassol and Paphos General Hospital and EU citizens are treated free of charge on production of Form E111 or EH1C.

### Drive Safely

Visitors from UK are delighted as driving is on the left, with priority from the right at roundabout. The road layout and road signs follow the British system but distances and speeds are given in kilometers not miles. Speeding, careless driving, motorcyclists not wearing helmets and using mobile phones are all offenses that can be fined 'on the spot'.

- In Cyprus driving is on the LEFT side of the road
- Respect the speed limits! Maximum speed is 100 km/h on the motor way and minimum is 65 km/h. In intercity roads the limit is 80 km/h and in urban areas 50 km/h
- Do not drink and drive! The alcohol content limit is 22 micro grams of alcohol in 100 ml of exhaled air or 50 milligrams in 100ml in the blood
- Do not drive and use a mobile phone! Use a hands-free device
- Seatbelts are obligatory
- Have a valid driving license
- For motorcycles and motorbikes use a helmet for you and your passenger. No passenger under 12 years of age
- You must have appropriate insurance
- In case of an accident call 199 or 112

 [www.firstchoice.co.uk](http://www.firstchoice.co.uk)



[www.thomascook.com](http://www.thomascook.com)

 [www.thomson.co.uk](http://www.thomson.co.uk)

 [www.sunvil.co.uk](http://www.sunvil.co.uk)



[www.visitcyprus.com](http://www.visitcyprus.com)

## Your Opinion counts

By sending in this questionnaire you enter a draw to win an air-ticket and hotel accommodation in Cyprus.

We hope you enjoyed the village route whether you did part or all of it. This route is the fifth of a series of six and so we would like to ask your opinion to help us improve this route, but also in the development of the subsequent routes. We hope that you will also drive the other routes, maybe on your next visit to Cyprus.

Name.....Phone.....

Address.....E-mail.....

Where did you find out about the village route?

Tour operator ☐ Car Hire ☐ Hotel Reception ☐ Other  
please  
state.....

Did you drive all or only part of the route?

All ☐ Part ☐

If you only did part of the route, which part  
From.....To.....

How long did you spend driving the route (including stops)?

1-2 hours ☐ 2-3 hours ☐ half day ☐ full day ☐

Where did you eat on the route? (Please name the restaurant/café)

Was the description of the restaurant/café accurate?  
Please specify what information would be amended or included

Was your overall experience of the restaurant?

Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor ☐ Very Poor ☐

Did you purchase any local products/crafts? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, what did you purchase and from where?

What did you enjoy most about the route?

What did you enjoy least about the route?



Please let us know how the village route guide helped you with the following:

Experience the 'real' Cyprus

Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Not Sure ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐

Exploring villages you wouldn't have known about otherwise

Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Not Sure ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐

Sampling regional cooking/restaurant

Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Not Sure ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐

Buying locally produced goods

Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Not Sure ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐

Learning more about Cypriot history/culture

Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Not Sure ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐

Meeting the local people

Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Not Sure ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐

How influential was this route guide in encouraging you to explore rural Cyprus? If this village route guide had not been available would you have visited this area by hire car anyway?

Definitely ☐ Very Likely ☐ Likely ☐ Very Unlikely ☐ Definitely not ☐

#### About you

Is this your first visit to Cyprus? Yes ☐ No ☐

If not how many times have you visited the country before?

How did you book this holiday?

Tour Operator Package ☐ Flight and Accommodation separately ☐

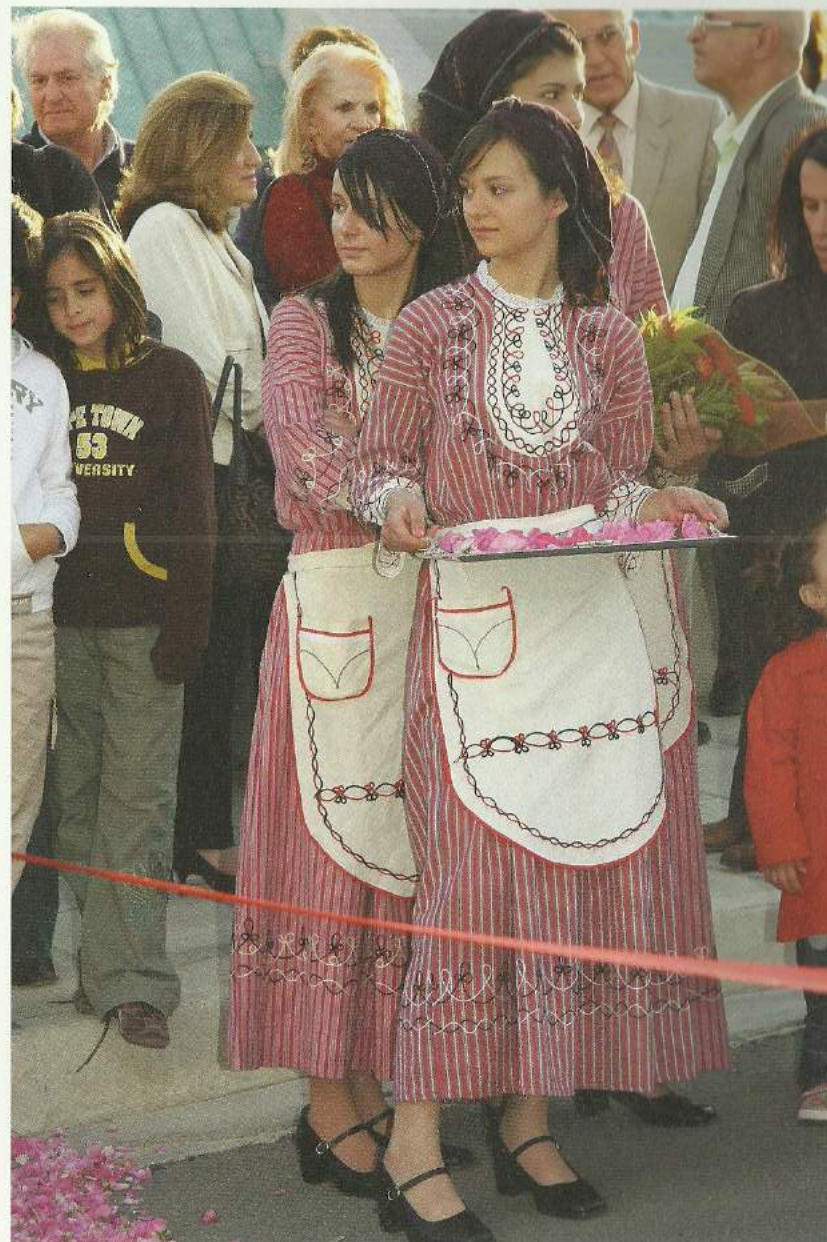
Other ☐

Did you drive this route?

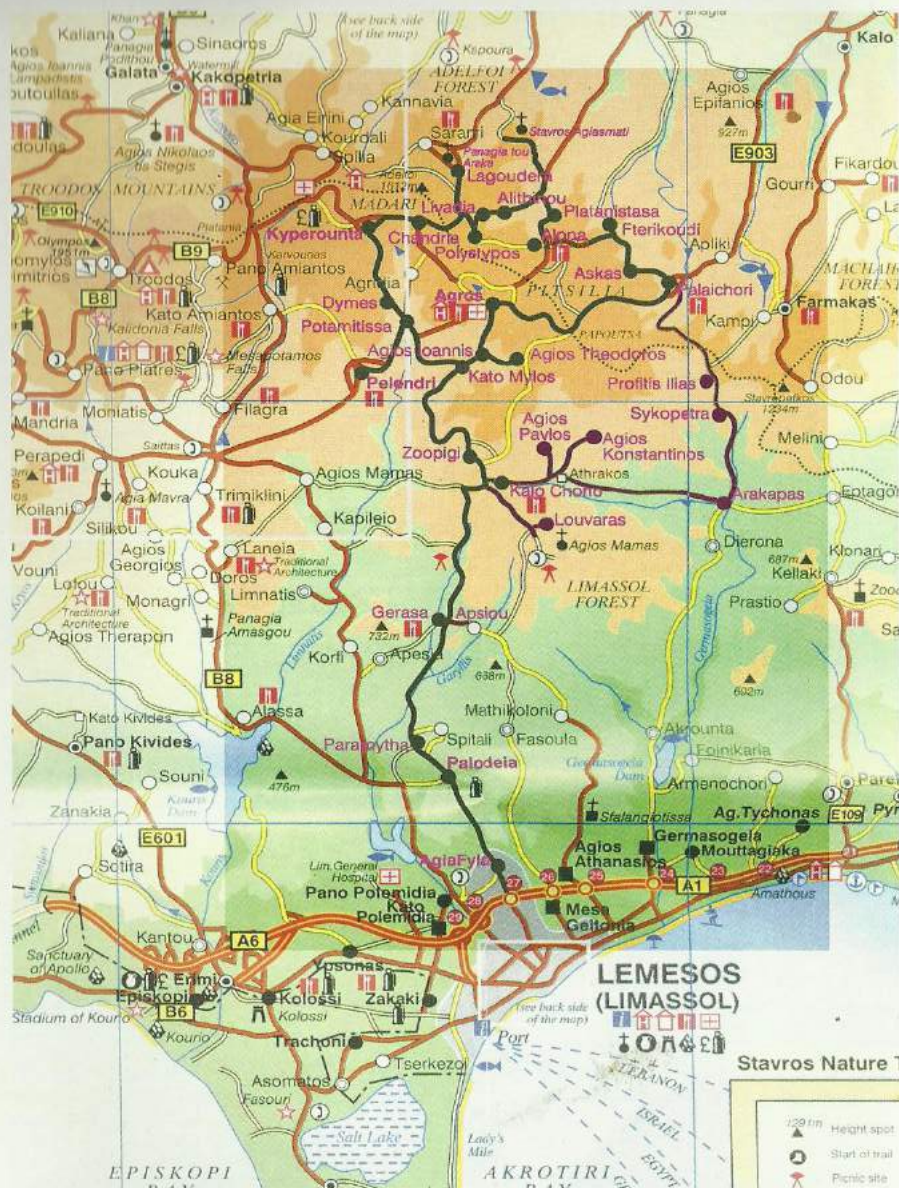
By yourself ☐ With your partner ☐ With friends ☐ With Family ☐

Do you have any additional comments that will help us improve the village route guide?

Please detach and return to your Tour Operator Rep., or mail to  
CSTI, P.O.Box 58538, 3735 Limassol







**Main Route**

**Side Trips**



**RODON**  
MOUNT HOTEL  
AGROS - CYPRUS

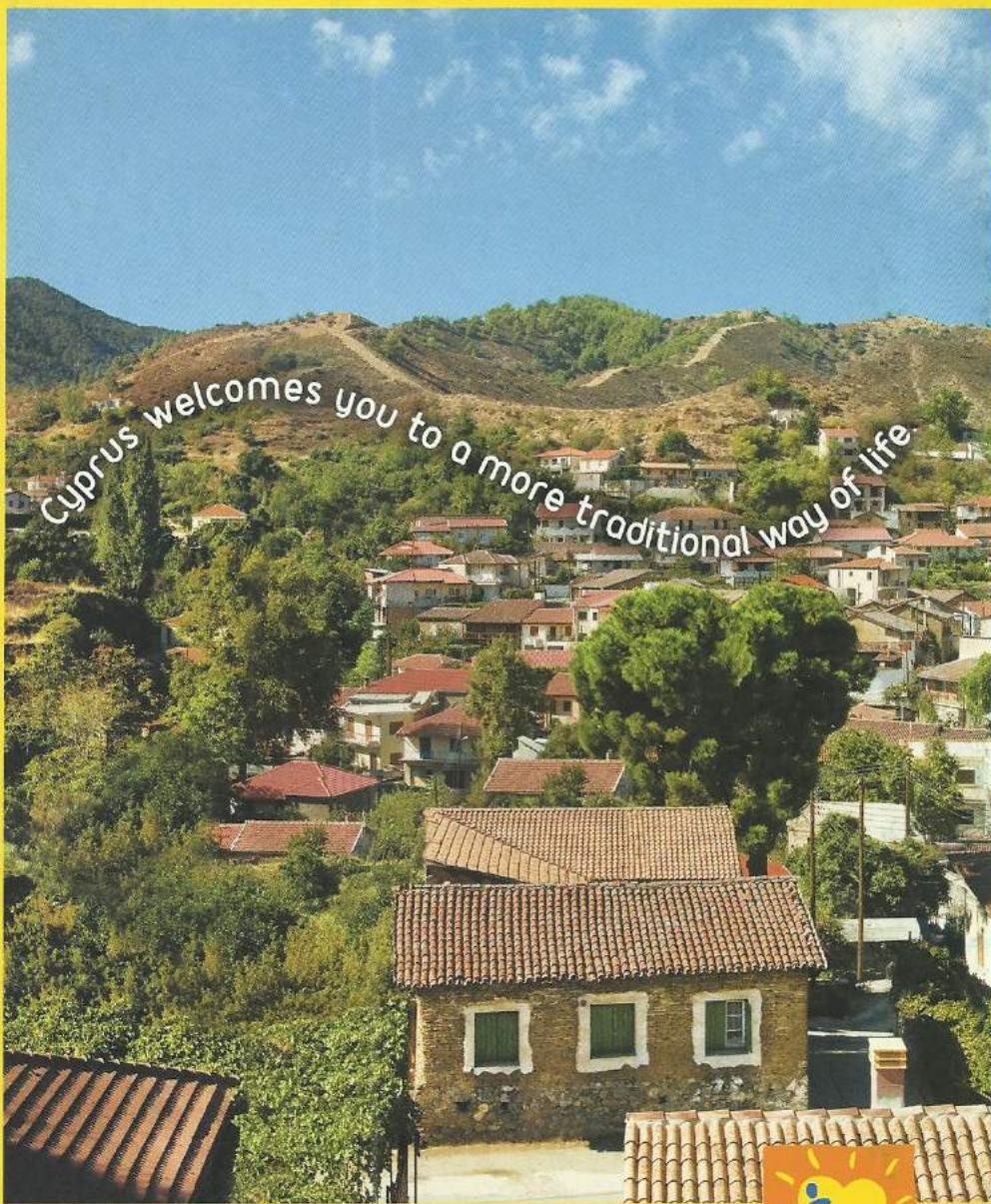


*FEEL HOME AWAY FROM HOME*



1 Rodon Str., 4860 Agros, Cyprus, Tel.: +357 25 521201, Fax: +357 25 521235  
Email: [info@rodonhotel.com](mailto:info@rodonhotel.com), Website: [www.rodonhotel.com](http://www.rodonhotel.com)





Cyprus welcomes you to a more traditional way of life.

'KoplaSTE' is a word you'll hear throughout Cyprus. It means 'welcome, come in and join us'. Welcome to hiking through picturesque villages along the Aphrodite trail and staying at traditional guesthouses in rural villages. Welcome to snow capped mountains and forests full of wild flowers. Welcome to sampling the local cuisine and a glass of wine in a local café. So this year, if you'd like to enjoy life as nature intended, welcome to Cyprus.

Why not go to [www.visitcyprus.com](http://www.visitcyprus.com) right now - you'll be very welcome!

Cyprus Tourism Organisation, P.O. Box 24535, 1390 Nicosia, Cyprus.  
Tel. 00357 22691100. Email: [cytouravisitcyprus.com](mailto:cytouravisitcyprus.com)



**Love Cyprus**

The year-round island