



# Larnaka & the East

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## Why Go?

With a lower profile than her bustling neighbours, Larnaka has a tranquil character that mimics the gentle pace of old Cyprus. However, a refurbished seafront and an extravagant new marina in the works have Larnaka gaining ground as a legitimate coastal city. Its central location also makes it an ideal base while touring the island.

Authentic taverns, traditional handicrafts and shallow beaches blend seamlessly with ancient city-kingdoms, historic churches, flamingos, salt lakes, and aqueducts that stretch into the distance.

The wider district hosts agrotourism and remarkable Neolithic sites. Coastal roads wind around to the celebrated resort town of Agia Napa, with white sandy beaches and hundreds of clubs and bars. Further along the coast are echoing sea caves, natural rock formations and tombs dating to the Hellenistic period. Round the cape you'll find even more stunning beaches at Protaras bay, ideal for family getaways.

## Best Places to Eat

- » Voreas (p110)
- » Zephyros (p110)
- » Militzis (p110)
- » Karousos Beach (p120)
- » La Cultura Del Gusto (p124)

## Best Places to Stay

- » E-Hotel (p206)
- » Alkisti City (p207)
- » Eleonora (p207)
- » Aeneas (p208)
- » Brilliant (p208)

## When to Go

Migratory birds like waterfowl, flamingos and wild ducks find respite in the salt-lake habitat from February to April.

From May to September you can lounge on the beach all day and cool down with watermelon and haloumi at night.

Agia Napa's music scene reaches its peak from June to August, with beach parties and all-night clubbing.

# LARNAKA

POP 46,700

Larnaka lives through its connection to the sea. As such, the main promenade on the seafront, known universally as the Finikoudes ('little palm trees', which line its beach) is the main hub. The town has fared better than others in its quest to keep family-owned businesses and restaurants over big business. It's truly a working town; the people know each other and care about community.

This atmosphere has kept the tradition of arts and crafts alive especially in the old Turkish quarter. The rest of Larnaka faces the common conundrum of blending past and present. Traditional houses are interspersed with replica developments springing up for the next wave of Europeans chasing a better work-life balance.

## History

Larnaka, originally known as Kition, was established during the Mycenaean expansion in the 14th century BC. An influential Greek city kingdom of the late Bronze Age, Kition prospered as a trading port through the export of copper. Withstanding rule by the Phoenicians and then the Persians, the city flourished into the Hellenistic period, even adopting the Phoenician fertility goddess Astarte, who was perhaps a precursor to Cypriot patron goddess Aphrodite.

During the Greek-Persian wars, Athenian general Kimon attempted to liberate the city from Persian rule in 450 BC. He died during the siege, urging his captains to conceal his fate from both enemies and allies. The episode is famously told as '*Kai Nekros enika*' (Even in death he is victorious!). His bust now stands on the Finikoudes as a tribute.

Under Ottoman rule between the 16th and early 19th centuries, Larnaka attracted merchants, dignitaries and foreign consuls. Many of these participated in amateur archaeology, prevalent at the time and spirited away much of Larnaka's artefacts. The city's importance slowly decreased during Britain's 88-year rule as trade moved through the port at Lemesos.

In 1974 the Turkish invasion of Northern Cyprus forced thousands of Greek Cypriots south, dramatically increasing Larnaka's population. Today Larnaka has Armenian, Lebanese, Pontian Greek and Palestinian settlers living alongside Cypriots and Europeans with mixed backgrounds of their own. Tourism is now the town's primary industry.

## ROAD DISTANCES (KM)

Agia Napa	61			
Protaras	70	9		
Makenzy	29	32	41	
Pernera	73	12	3	44
	Lefkara	Agia Napa	Protaras	Makenzy

## Sights & Activities

### FREE Agios Lazaros

CHURCH

(Agiou Lazarou; ☀8am-12.30pm & 3.30-6.30pm Apr-Aug, 8am-12.30pm & 2.30-5.30pm Sep-Mar) This 9th-century church is dedicated to Lazarus of Bethany, whom Jesus is said to have resurrected four days after his death. Shortly afterwards, Lazarus was forced to flee Bethany. His boat landed in Kition, where he was ordained as a bishop and canonised by Apostles Barnabas and Paul. He remained a bishop for a further 30 years and when he died for the second time was buried in a hidden tomb.

In 890 the tomb was discovered, bearing the inscription 'Lazarus friend of Christ'. Byzantine Emperor Leo VI had Lazarus' remains sent to Constantinople and built the current church over the vault to appease the Christians. The remains were moved again, to Marseille, in 1204.

The church itself is an astounding example of Byzantine architecture and was further restored in the 17th century. It exhibits Latinate and Orthodox influences, most prominently in the bell tower, which was replaced after being destroyed by the Ottomans. The church was ransomed back to the Christians in 1589 and inscriptions in Latin, French and Greek can be seen in its portico. Unique Catholic woodcarvings and skilled gold-plated Orthodox icons grace its interior.

### Tomb of Lazarus

TOMB

The tomb is under the church apse. It is accessible by descending stone stairs to the right and contains only a few of the several sarcophagi found in the catacomb.

In 1972 human remains were found under the altar. Some believe that the remains are those of St Lazarus, possibly hidden here by priests in anticipation of any theft.

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