



Troödos Massif

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Best Places to Eat

- » Linos-Mesastrato Tavern (p77)
- » Skylight Restaurant, Bar & Pool (p70)
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- » Village Tavern (p70)
- » Psilo Dendro Restaurant (p70)

Best Places to Stay

- » Semiramis (p202)
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- » Elyssia (p203)

Why Go?

Home to Mt Olympus (1952m), the island's highest peak, this forested mountain range overlooks the valleys of Lemesos, Larnaka and the greater Mesaoria plain. In 1992, over 90 sq km of the forest was made a national park, safeguarding wildlife, ecology and geology. The region's diverse landscape makes it ideal for camping, picnicking, hiking, cycling and birdwatching. Spring is perfect for enjoying the numerous nature trails and wineries, while summer is well spent in the cool shade of black pines amid the fresh mountain air. In winter skiers and snowboarders populate the ski resorts of the northern slopes.

If its vast array of natural offerings aren't enough, Troödos also has a variety of charming villages with cobbled streets, terraced slopes and folk architecture. The region's peaks and valleys also hide some of the island's most important medieval frescoed churches, along with unexpected mansions, monasteries and museums.

When to Go

From January to April you can ski and board the slopes by day and enjoy a hot tavern meal by night.

April to September is ideal for wine tasting; explore some of the many fine wineries hidden among the sprawling vineyards and steep, breezy valleys.

Ramble over 65km of diverse nature and hiking trails in 13 locations in early summer (May and June).

Beat the July and August heat by camping 1000m above sea level at verdant sites in the ranges.

Troödos

POP 24

Located near the summit of Mt Olympus (known as Chionistra in Greek), Troödos village is the focal point for all hiking, cycling and snow-related activities in the region. At over 1900m above sea level, it's far cooler than the plains below and offers superb views of the surrounding valleys.

The village itself is minimal, centred on a simple square (*plateia*) known as Central Troödos (Kentriko Troödos in Greek). The square has a playground with some benches and a handful of souvenir shops selling everything from wind chimes to *soujoukko*, a traditional sweet made from almonds and sun-dried grape juice.

Opposite the park is the Troödos Hotel, with a couple of neighbouring restaurants and cafes. (Nightlife here is practically non-existent, as most travellers are generally exhausted from the day's activities and head to bed early.) A further 200m downhill to the west is Troödos Visitor Centre (see p69). The skiing facilities (open in winter) are just to the north near the Jubilee Hotel.

From the square the road north heads towards the Solea Valley and Lefkosia. To the west is the road to Prodomos and the Marathasa Valley. The third approach (and most common) is from the south, which takes in Platres (sometimes Pano Platres on maps), and the *krasohoria* (wine villages) of the Kommandaria region.

Central Troödos is best reached from Lemesos (via the B8) or Lefkosia (via the B9). It can also be accessed from Pitsylia, in the east, and from Pafos in the west, via good but slow winding roads. On Sunday evening traffic can be very heavy on all the roads off the mountain, as weekend visitors head home to Lefkosia and the coast.

History

The Troödos ocean crust, created over 90 million years ago, was the first part of the island to emerge from the sea around 15 million years ago. Rocks such as serpentinite, dunite, wehlite, pyroxenite, plagiogranite, gabbro, diabase and volcanic rock can be found at high altitudes in the region.

According to Strabo, the Greek geographer (born c 63 BC), Mt Olympus was the site of a temple to the goddess Aphrodite during the Hellenistic period. It was said to be not only unapproachable for women but completely invisible to them.

ROAD DISTANCES (KM)

Kakopetria	25			
Pedoulas	18	15		
Agros	25	50	46	
Omodos & the Krasohoria	8	35	29	31

Plano Platres Kakopetria Pedoulas Agros

In AD 1571, Venetian generals built a fort on the mountain to keep invading Ottomans at bay, according to Cypriot nobles who visited the surrounding monasteries and summer recreation areas.

In the late 1800s Troödos became the summer residence of the island's British governors, who came to avoid the scorching sunshine, and the area was considered the summer seat of government during British rule. At different points in its history it has provided a refuge for religious communities, freedom fighters and outlaws, as well as the wealthy of the Levant.

Nowadays, nature lovers, natural-history buffs and activity-seekers flock here for the camping, hiking trails and skiing during the winter months.

👁 Sights & Activities

Hiking

Troödos has 13 nature trails, varying in length from 1.6km for novices to 14km for the more experienced. Together they provide an excellent insight into the diversity of the region. Most trees and plants on the trails are marked with their Latin and Greek names, and there are frequent wooden benches positioned beneath trees to allow you to take breaks and admire the views.

Booklets outlining the flora, fauna and geology of each trail are available from the Troödos Visitor Centre (p69).

Artemis Trail (Chionistra Circular Trail)

HIKING

Ideal for a first hike, this trail goes around the summit of Mt Olympus in a roughly circular loop, beginning and ending in the little car park off the Mt Olympus summit road. The track runs alternately through shaded and open areas with spectacular views to the south. It takes in vegetation like St John's wort, Troödos sage, alyssum

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