

Welcome to Cyprus

Cyprus is far more than a lazy beach-time resort; the island is multilayered, like its history, with a compelling culture, lifestyle and landscape, overseen by warm, hospitable people.

Crossing the Line

Experiencing Cyprus' intrinsically different Greek and Turkish societies is increasingly easy, with seven access points linking the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot sides, including two pedestrian crossings in Nicosia (Lefkosia). There is something evocatively appealing about dipping into two very different cultures so effortlessly. Even if you only have time to visit the respective capitals, Nicosia or North Nicosia (Lefkoşa), be sure to cross the line, then complete your experience by sampling the local cuisine, visiting the museums and shopping for that one-off souvenir to impress the folks back home.

The Great Outdoors

The landscape and overall mild climate mean that outside is where it's at – and where you should be. First, there are the beaches, from the wild and windswept to the family friendly and packed. Every conceivable water sport is also on offer, from scuba diving the watery depths to skimming the surface on a kiteboard or windsurfer. And if you tire of all that blue, just head to the interior where pine-clad mountains, sweeping valleys and densely planted vineyards offer hiking, biking, wine tasting tours and, yes, even winter skiing.

A Sense of the Past

The story of Cyprus' tumultuous past is told through historic sites, Roman ruins, multifaceted museums and dusty urban streets. This sense of living history is highlighted most vividly in Pafos, with extraordinary archaeological sites like the Tombs of the Kings, which sprawls like an ancient theme park next to a pack-in-the-punters tourist resort. Digging into the island's past has unearthed fascinating relics, including neolithic dwellings, Bronze Age and Phoenician tombs, and exquisite Roman mosaics, while, on the streets, keep your eyes peeled for Venetian walls, Byzantine castles and churches, Roman monasteries and Islamic mosques.

A Culinary Feast

Meze is a delicious way to acquaint yourself with the local cuisine, tantalising the taste buds with small dishes ranging from creamy hummus to spicy grilled sausage, and everything in between. Heavily influenced by Turkish, Greek and Middle Eastern cuisine, Cypriot food includes some culinary stars unique to the island, including haloumi (helimi in Turkish), and the kebabs are also in a league of their own. The desserts are irresistible, flavoured with almonds, rose water and pistachios and ranging from creamy rice puddings to gloriously sticky baklava.



Why I Love Cyprus

By Josephine Quintero, Author

I have been visiting Cyprus for decades so the most uplifting experience for me, today, is the hassle-free stroll across the border and, more importantly, what it symbolises regarding the peace process. I love the earthy raw energy on both sides of the capital and the traditional character and culture that can seem watered down in the resorts. Visiting the mountain villages is another highlight, as is stumbling across a simple stone-clad Byzantine church with medieval icons and mesmerising friezes. And don't even get me started on the food...!

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