

# Understand Cyprus

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A new president, a relaunch of talks between Greek and Turkish communities, and a banking crisis that rocked the world.

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From the development of ancient city kingdoms to modern times, the island has been a much sought-after possession.

## **THE CYPRIOT WAY OF LIFE ..... 231**

The national identity, though complicated by history ancient and recent, binds the people in their everyday lives.

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Mountains, plains, sand and sea: Cyprus' unique flora, fauna, geography and geology is laid out before you.

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# Cyprus Today

In the Republic of Cyprus, a new centre-right president has been elected and a banking crisis has attracted worldwide attention, leading to stringent austerity measures that have been met with overall calm by these resilient people. Peace talks are on course again and the discovery of oil and natural gas reserves are a real cause for optimism on both sides of the Green Line.

## Best in Print

**Bitter Lemons of Cyprus** (Lawrence Durrell) Memoir set in the 1950s.

**A Traveller's History of Cyprus** (Tim Boatswain) A concise history.

**Journey into Cyprus** (Colin Thubron) Chronicles a 600-mile walk through Cyprus in 1972.

## Best Online

**Talk Cyprus** ([www.cyprus-forum.com](http://www.cyprus-forum.com)) Where Cypriots discuss politics.

**Cyprus Tourism Organisation** ([www.visitcyprus.com](http://www.visitcyprus.com)) CTO's official website packed full of useful information.

**Cypriot Food** ([www.flavoursofcyprus.com](http://www.flavoursofcyprus.com)) Classic and modern recipes for authentic cuisine.

**Cyprus Business Directory** ([www.cyprusbestcompanies.com](http://www.cyprusbestcompanies.com)) An up-to-date and far-reaching business directory.

## Etiquette

**Driving** Cypriots love to talk on mobile phones and not use indicators while driving. Make eye contact at intersections before you pull out.

**Tact** Use it when discussing politics, division and the Green Line.

**Eating out** If you're invited out for a meal, the bill is paid by the host and not split. Offer to contribute, knowing you'll most likely be scoffed at.

## Peace Talks Gain Momentum

Since its division in 1974, talks to reunite Cyprus have taken place sporadically with little success. Many had hoped Cyprus' EU membership would increase the chances of reunification but, sadly, it seemed to have only muddied the waters, with the larger EU nations weighing in on the debate. Peace talks were revived in 2008, however, when the Republic's president Demetris Christofias promised to work with the then Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat, generating over 100 meetings. Their attempts at camaraderie, aimed at creating a 'climate of peace', began to worry officials on the Turkish mainland. The situation was quickly blunted when the pro-Turkish Dervis Eroglu came to power in 2010.

For the following few years there was the usual rhetoric regarding talks with UN mediators. However, in February 2014 it seemed a corner was turned when, for the first time in 55 years, talks took place in Athens and Ankara simultaneously by negotiators Kudret Özersay for the Turkish Cypriots and Andreas Mavroyiannis for the Greek Cypriots. Then, in the same month (and after close to a two-year hiatus), Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders issued a joint declaration outlining a peace plan to bring an end to the crisis. At the time of writing, these peace talks were in their second phase with the Turkish Cypriot side predicting that a settlement could be reached within months, while the Greek Cypriots were more cautious, professing that there remained a considerable distance between the two sides.

Ties have also been strengthened with the US with a visit to both the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities in May 2014 by Vice President Joe Biden who vouched US support in providing assistance to resolving the island's 40-year old stalemate.