Cyprus

One of the largest Islands in the Mediterranean, Cyprus really is an Island of contrast. From the cool pine covered Troodos Mountains, to the stretches of sun drenched beaches. There are many Churches, Monasteries, Castles, Temples and Ancient sites to visit whilst in Cyprus. Whether you wish to explore, or just relax on a beach, Cyprus has something for everyone.

Beaches To Visit

Paphos: The best sandy beaches are to be found at Coral Bay and Corallia, approximately a fifteen-minute journey from Paphos town. Lara beach, a secluded beach accessible only by jeep is home of the famous Green Turtles.

Limassol: You will find beaches stretching the length of Limassol Coastline. The most popular beaches to visit in the area are Curium Beach to the west (take care as there are some strong undercurrents here), Lady’s Mile to the south, usually frequented mainly by locals, Governors Beach approximately 15 minutes journey outside Limassol and Dassoudi beach situated in the Tourist area.

Ayia Napa: There are numerous golden sandy beaches to visit in this area. Nissi beach with its shallow waters is very popular with families. Also to be found in the area are Sandy Bay and Golden Sands.

Protaras: There are several beautiful sandy beaches to be found in this area with Fig Tree Bay, Konnos Bay and Flamingo Beach all offering crystal clear waters and golden sands.

Larnaca: Mackenzie is a popular beach comprising of sand or pebbles and is situated just outside Larnaca. Most hotels are within walking distance of the beach. Kiti beach is to be found south of the Airport and is very popular with the tourists.

Pissouri: This is a lovely sandy beach in the shape of a large bay. The nearby hotel and Tavernas are open to the public. This is a very peaceful location and it is not hard to find a quiet spot on this beach - although it has been known to have the odd “naturalist” bather.

Sights To See

Trodos Mountains: A memorable day out in the very Heart of Cyprus, the Trodos mountain range. Passing through traditional villages, you can visit the Kykko Monastery - the richest and most famous Monastery in Cyprus, which displays its vast wealth of gold and silver and priceless Icons. Whenever visiting Holy Places, the rules state that visitors must be properly dressed - which means shoulders and knees must be covered.

Paphos: Once the capital of Cyprus, Paphos town is surrounded by a wealth of Archaeological sites, including “The House of Dionysus”, which houses some of the best preserved Mosaics in Europe, and the Tombs of the Kings. There are many more wonderful things to see in and around Paphos and you can buy some of the local delicacies from the little village of Yeroskipou, which include “Loukoumi” (Cyprus Delight), sugared almonds and lovely decorative pottery. Of course if you are visiting Paphos, no trip is complete without visiting Aphrodite’s Rock.

Nicosia: The Capital of Cyprus, Nicosia remains the last divided Capital in the world and this very interesting and Historic City really should be visited. Nicosia is home to the famous Archaeological Museum with its collection from the Neolithic period of 7800BC. Alternatively you may wish to go on a shopping spree - Nicosia has the best shops in Cyprus.

Churches

Cyprus is predominantly Greek Orthodox, although Anglican services do take place. A few services are held in English. When visiting churches in Cyprus, knees and shoulders should be covered. There are many old and famous churches and monasteries to visit.

Food and Drink

You really should not leave Cyprus without trying out some of the Local Cuisine, especially the Meze, which ranges from 15-30 small dishes of specialities. The following is just a brief glance at some of the most popular local dishes to be found on the menus:

TALATOURI A dip made of yoghurt, cucumber, garlic and mint.

TARAMOSALATA Fish roe dip.

TAHINI A dip of ground sesame seeds, garlic, olive oil and lemon.

HOUMOUS Chick pea and sesame oil dip.

LOUNTZA Smoked pork.

HALLOUMI Salty cheese made of sheep’s milk, served grilled.

FETTA Goats cheese usually served with Greek salad.

XIFIAS Swordfish, served as a steak or kebab.

BARBOUNI Red Mullet.

KALAMARI Squid, deep-fried.

SOUVLA Large pieces of meat cooked on a skewer over charcoal

SOUVLAKI Pork or lamb kebab

SHEFTALIA A type of sausage

AFELIA Pork cooked with wine and coriander

STIFADO Beef stew cooked with red wine, herbs, spices and onions

KLEFTIKO Lamb cooked the traditional way in the clay oven

TAVAS Lamb casserole cooked with vegetables

KOUPEPIA Vine leaves stuffed with rice, meat and herbs.

Whilst in Cyprus you must try a Brandy Sour - the original Cypriot drink which is a speciality throughout the Island. A long drink, very refreshing and extremely pleasant. Be careful, they are potent!

Coat the rim of a tall glass with sugar.

Add plenty of ice and a good measure of Brandy

Sprinkle with Angostura’s Bitters

Pour on equal measures of lemon squash

Top up with Soda Water

Getting Around

Buses are a cheap form of transportation, although they can get pretty crowded. Bus stops are blue in colour and usually display a timetable.

Mopeds are not recommended to tourists. Many roads in Cyprus are unsuitable for mopeds and can be quite dangerous. However, if you do decide to her a moped take full insurance cover and crash helmets from the moped hire company.

Car Hire is an excellent way to see the Island. Car Hire companies in Cyprus are in great supply and are usually found on every main street. Most Hotels in Cyprus can provide car hire too, and it is worth your while to shop around to find the best deal.