

Cyprus Κυπρος, Kibris

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Kourion** Near Lemesos, this is a top spot for history buffs keen on Cyprus' ruins (p274); another is Salamis in Northern Cyprus (p274)
- **Troodos Mountains** The Byzantine churches and monasteries of the Troodos are illuminated by glorious frescoes (p275)
- **Best journey** Driving past ruined basilicas and untouched beaches to the tip of the Karpas Peninsula (p277)
- **Off-the-beaten track** Share gorgeous Altinkum Beach (p277) with nobody but the turtles

FAST FACTS

- **Area** 9250 sq km (about 30 Maltas).
- **ATMs** Widespread
- **Budget** CY£20-40/TL50-90 per day
- **Capital** Republic of Cyprus: Lefkosia; North Cyprus: Lefkoşa
- **Country Codes** Republic of Cyprus: ☎ 357; North Cyprus: ☎ 90 392
- **Famous For** beaches, mezes, mosaics and monasteries
- **Head of State** Republic of Cyprus: Tassos Papadopoulos; North Cyprus: Mehmet Ali Talat
- **Languages** Greek; Turkish
- **Money** Republic of Cyprus: Cyprus Pound (CY£); North Cyprus: Turkish Lira (TL); A\$1=CY£0.34/TL1.14, CA\$1=CY£0.41/TL1.39; €1=CY£0.57/TL1.91; Yen100=CY£0.40/TL1.34; NZ\$1=CY£0.28/TL0.93; UK£1=CY£0.84/TL2.81; US\$1=CY£0.45/TL1.49



- **Phrases** Republic: *yasas* (hello), *signomi* (excuse me), *poso kani?* (how much?); Northern Cyprus: *merhaba* (hello), *affedersiniz* (excuse me), *ne kadar?* (how much?)
- **Population** 780,130 (plus 120,000 Turkish settlers in North Cyprus)
- **Time** GMT/UTC + 2
- **Visas** None required for most nationalities

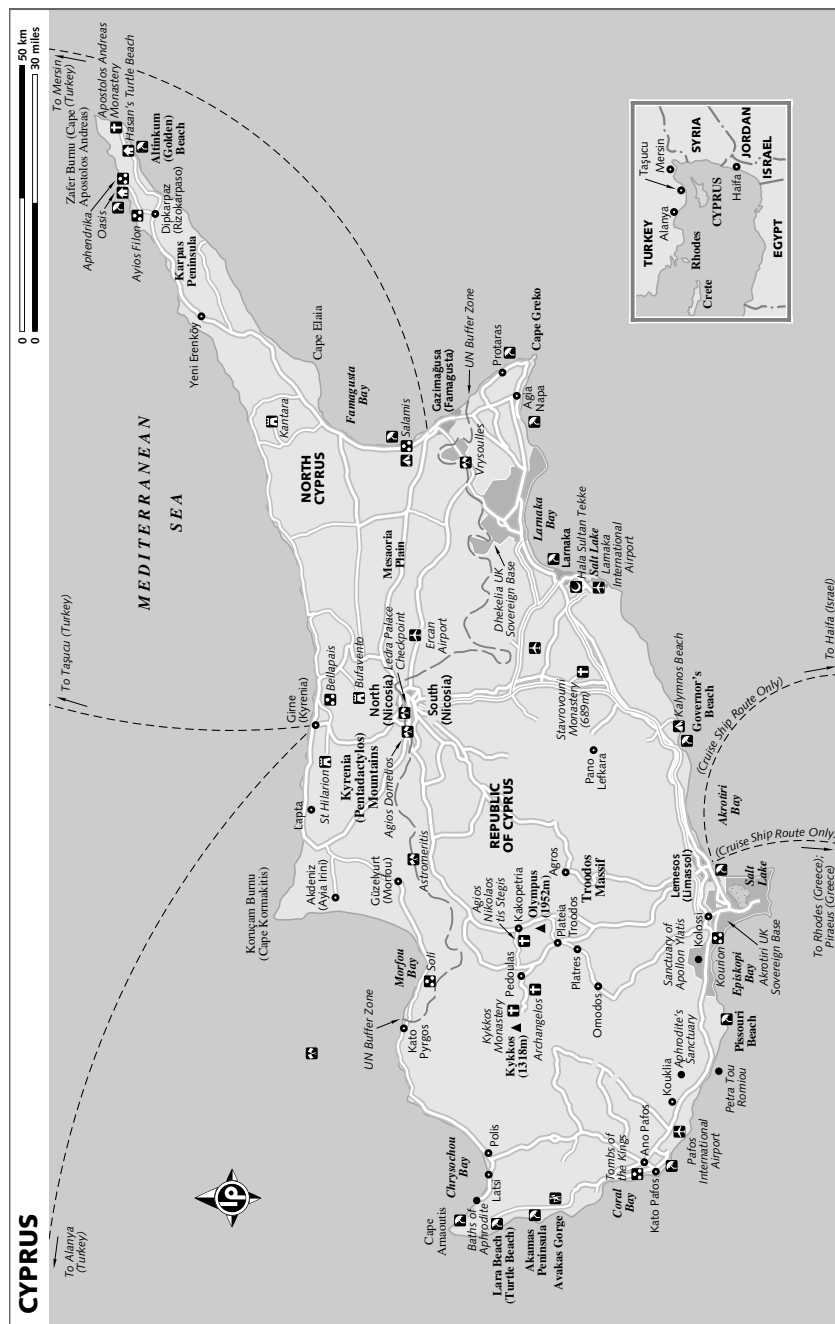
TRAVEL HINTS

Eat where the locals eat – the best *tavernas* are simple, rustic and crowded with Cypriots.

ROAMING CYPRUS

In the south, ruins in Pafos, museums in Lefkosia and monasteries in the Troodos. In the north, Girne and the Karpas Peninsula.

Cyprus is an island with a split personality. Divided into Greek and Turkish enclaves since 1974, Cyprus is famous as a summer destination for British sun-seekers, who devote more time to the beaches and bars than history and culture. But look past the sun umbrellas and banana-boat rides and you'll find another Cyprus: the legendary birthplace of Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love, alive with ancient ruins, monasteries and historic mosques.



The last few years have seen a sea change in Cypriot politics. The island is edging ever closer to reunification and travellers can now cross between the two sides just by showing their passports at the border. For the first time in a generation, visitors to the Greek Republic of Cyprus are able to explore the beaches and Frankish and Crusader ruins of Turkish North Cyprus, while travellers to the north can visit incredible Byzantine and Græco-Roman treasures in the south.

HISTORY

Blessed with natural resources but cursed with a strategic location, Cyprus has been a pawn in the games of empires since ancient times. Greek culture in Cyprus dates back to 2500 BC, but the island was taken over by the Romans and then the Byzantines, who built churches and monasteries across the island.

Next came the Crusaders, who constructed numerous castles; the Franks, who erected Gothic cathedrals; and the Venetians, who built huge walls around Lefkosia and Famagusta. This didn't stop the Ottomans invading in 1571 and dominating Cyprus for the next 300 years.

In 1878 Turkey sold Cyprus to Britain but the majority Greek Cypriot population demanded *enosis* – independence from foreign rule and union with Greece. In response, Britain appointed a Turkish Cypriot police force to subdue the Greeks, triggering decades of intercommunal violence. Britain finally granted independence to Cyprus in August 1960.

On 15 July 1974, Greek forces launched a coup against the Cypriot government and Turkey invaded the northern third of the island, driving 180,000 Greek Cypriots from their homes and killing thousands more. The UN later interceded and partitioned the island into Turkish and Greek states.

Over the following decades, all traces of Greek culture were removed from the north. The area was flooded with settlers from mainland Turkey and hundreds of churches, monasteries and archaeological sites were plundered.

Despite a series of UN resolutions, Cyprus remains a divided island. In 2004 both sides were presented with a UN-sponsored referendum on reunification, but the agreement was heavily skewed in favour of Turkey – perhaps unsurprisingly it was accepted by 65% of Turkish Cypriots and rejected by 75% of Greek Cypriots.

As a result, the southern Republic of Cyprus entered the EU alone in May 2004. Since then

border restrictions have eased, but reunification remains controversial. Many Greek Cypriots fear their struggle will be swept under the carpet in the EU's enthusiasm to sign Turkey as a new member state.

THE CULTURE

Since partition, most Greek Cypriots live in the south. In the north, the Turkish Cypriot population is heavily outnumbered by Anatolian settlers from the Turkish mainland.

More than 99% of the Northern Cyprus population is Sunni Muslim, while the south is 94% Greek Orthodox, with Roman Catholic, Maronite and Muslim minorities.

ARTS

The definitive art of Cyprus is the production of icons and frescoes; you can see examples dating back to the 12th century in churches and monasteries across Cyprus. Ruins from Roman, Byzantine and Frankish times are scattered around the island.

ENVIRONMENT

Cyprus is divided by the Kyrenia (Pentadactylos) Mountains in Northern Cyprus and the Troodos Massif in the centre of the Republic. A less tangible divide is the Green Line – the UN-patrolled buffer zone that divides the Republic of Cyprus from the north. Beach resorts on both sides of the island are vanishing under a sea of newly constructed expat villas, putting a huge strain on natural resources.

READING UP

To understand the glory of undivided Cyprus, read Colin Thubron's *Journey into Cyprus* or Lawrence Durrell's *Bitter Lemons*, set around Bellapais. Brendan O'Malley and Ian Craig's *The Cyprus Conspiracy* explores American collusion in the partition of Cyprus, while reconciliation is explored in *Echoes from the Dead Zone*, by Yiannis Papadakis.

TRANSPORT

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Most travellers arrive by air, but there are also ferries to the north from Turkey.

Air

The Republic's international airports are at Larnaka and Pafos. There are regular scheduled and charter flights from Europe and the Middle East with **Cyprus Airways** (CY; ☎ 2266 3054; www.cypusairways.com) and other carriers.

Flights to Ercan airport in North Cyprus start in Turkey. **Turkish Airlines** (code TK; ☎ 227 1061; www.turkishairlines.com) and **Cyprus Turkish Airlines** (code YK; ☎ 227 3820; www.kthy.net) are the main carriers.

Discount airlines flying to Cyprus: **Aegean Airlines** (www.aegeanair.com) **Atlasjet** (www.atlasjet.com) **Eurocypria** (www.eurocypria.com)

One cheap option is to join a discount package tour – in the peak season, this is often cheaper than buying a scheduled flight.

Sea

Passenger services to the Republic's main port at Lemesos are currently suspended – contact **Salamis Shipping** (☎ 2589 9999) and **Louis Cruise Lines** (☎ 7777 8555) for the latest information.

Ferries connect North Cyprus to mainland Turkey. **KT Denizcilik** (Cyprus Turkish Shipping; ☎ 366 5786) sails three times a week between Gazimağusa and Mersin (TL65 one way, 12 hours). **Fergün** (☎ 815 4993) and **Akçünler** (☎ 815 6002) have daily passenger ferries between Girne and Taşucu (TL60 to TL71 per person, two to five hours). In summer there's also a twice-weekly ferry to Alanya (TL75, five hours).

CROSSING THE LINE

Border restrictions were relaxed in 2005, allowing tourists to cross from south to north (or vice versa) and stay for up to three months.

However, you must leave Cyprus from the same side you arrived on. To avoid ruffling Greek feathers, the entry stamp for Turkey goes on a separate piece of paper, not your passport. The main crossing points are the Ledra Palace Hotel in Lefkosia, Agios Dometios/Kermia (west of Lefkosia), Vrysoulles (near Agia Napa) and Astrometiris/Zohdia (near Güzeyurt). Temporary car insurance is available at the border but hire cars can only be taken from south to north, not the other way round. The situation is volatile so check locally before attempting to cross.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

- Ambulance, fire or police (Republic of Cyprus) ☎ 112 or ☎ 199
- Ambulance (North Cyprus) ☎ 112
- Police (North Cyprus) ☎ 155

GETTING AROUND

Inexpensive buses link the major cities, except on Sunday. Shared service taxis cover similar routes for similar prices.

Cheap car and motorbike rental is available in most towns. Most national driving licences are valid in the Republic, but only British and international licences are accepted in North Cyprus. The boxed text (below) has information on crossing the border.

THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

Covering the southern 63% of the island, the Greek Republic of Cyprus has the lion's share of the beaches and historical treasures. Development is rampant at the main beach resorts, but inland are quiet stone villages that have hardly changed in centuries.

LEFKOSIA (SOUTH NICOSIA)

ΛΕΦΚΩΣΙΑ

pop 205,630

Tourists by and large bypass the sleepy capital of the Republic, which is a shame as the streets inside the Venetian city walls are lined with galleries, art centres and historic Orthodox churches. The UN-patrolled Green Line cuts right through the centre of Lefkosia – the northern side of the city is even quieter.

Access to Lefkosia is by road as its airport no longer functions.

The city centre is Plateia Eleftherias by the city walls, Lidras St is the main shopping street and most tourist attractions are tucked away on the alleys leading down to the Green Line.

Information

Plateia Eleftherias has banks, the main post office and numerous payphones.

Cyprus Tourist Organisation (CTO; ☎ 2267 4264; cytour@cto.org.cy; Aristokyprou; ☎ 8.30am–4pm Mon–Fri, to 2pm Sat) In the alleys of Laiki Yeitonia.

Lefkosia General Hospital (☎ 2280 1400; Nechrou)

Main post office (D'Avila Bastion, Konstantinou Palaiologou; ☎ 7.30am–1.30pm & 3–6pm Mon–Fri, 8.30–10.30am Sat, closed Wed afternoon)

PS Printways (☎ 2266 1628; Rigainis 63B; per hr CY£1; ☎ 8am–midnight). Internet access near Plateia Solomou.

Sights

Near the old Pafos Gate, the **Cyprus Museum** (☎ 2286 5864; Mouseiou 1; admission CY£1.50; ☎ 9am–5pm Mon–Sat, 10am–1pm Sun) houses an incredible collection of pots, statues and tomb offerings, but come early to beat the guided tours.

Just off Lidras St, the intriguing **Leventis Municipal Museum** (☎ 2266 1475; Ippokratous 17; admission free; 10am–4.30pm Tue–Sun) traces the history of Lefkosia, while the **Ledra Museum & Observatory** (☎ 2267 9369; Lidras St; admission CY£0.50; ☎ 9.30am–8pm) offers stupendous views across the city.

On Plateia Tillirias are the recently restored **Omeriye Mosque** and the swish and indulgent **Hammam Omeriye** (Turkish Baths; ☎ 2246 0570; sauna from CY£10; ☎ 11am–5pm Mon, 9am–9pm Tue–Sun, women only Wed, Fri & Sun).

In the Archbishop's Palace compound on Plateia Archiepiskopou Kyprianou are **St John's Cathedral** (admission free; ☎ 9am–1pm Mon–Sat & 2–4pm Mon–Fri), the folksy **Ethnographic Museum** (☎ 2243 2578; admission CY£1; ☎ 9am–2pm Mon–Fri) and the **Byzantine Museum** (☎ 2243 0008; admission CY£1; ☎ 9am–4.30pm Mon–Fri, to 1pm Sat) with ancient icons and frescoes rescued after 1974.

Lefkosia has many more **art galleries, churches and museums** – contact the tourist office or follow the brown signs.

Sleeping & Eating

HI Hostel (☎ 9943 8360; Tefkrou 5; dm CY£5) About 1.5km from the city walls, this brightly painted hostel has a guest kitchen, fan-cooled dorms and resident cats. Bus 12 passes nearby.

SPLURGE

The excellent **Zanettos Taverna** (☎ 2276 5501; Trikoupis 65; meze CY£7.50; ☎ from 7pm) only serves one meal, but it does it brilliantly. The house meze is a veritable feast of *souvlakia*, *seftalias*, *haloumi*, *keftedes* (meatballs) and other Cypriot specialties.

Delphi Hotel (☎ 2266 5211; Kostaki Pantelidi 24; s/d CY£17/22; ☎) Close to Plateia Solomou bus stand, the Delphi has inviting, angular rooms that are better than you'd expect for the money.

For tasty local dishes such as *seftalias* (pork and herb rissoles) for less than CY£5, head to **Christakis** (☎ 2266 8537; Plateia Solomou; ☎ closed Sun), **Ta Deilina** (☎ 2275 8287; Thermopylon; ☎ evenings only, closed Sun) or **Mattheos** (☎ 2275 5846; Lefkonos; ☎ lunch Mon–Sat).

Drinking

Nightlife in Lefkosia is varied and accessible. The **streetside cafés** on Lidras St are the main places to see and be seen. **Zoo** (☎ 2245 8811; nr Afroditi & Stasinou) has been the best club in town for years.

Entertainment

The tourist office has information on theatre performances and cinemas. Art-house films are shown at the bohemian **Weaving Mill** (☎ 2276 2275; Lefkonos 67–71).

Getting There & Away

Buses leave from several stands around the old city wall, except on Sunday.

From Plateia Solomou, **Intercity** (Green Bus; ☎ 2464 3492) runs regularly to Larnaka (CY£3.50, one hour); **Alepa** (☎ 2266 4636) and **LLL Bus** (☎ 2266 5814) operates services to Lemesos (CY£3, one hour). Alepa also has a daily bus from Tripolis Bastion to Pafos (CY£5.50, 2½ hours).

Solis (☎ 9943 1363) and **Lysos** (☎ 9941 4777) have minibuses from Tripolis Bastion to Polis (CY£8, 3½ hours), while **Eman** (☎ 2372 1321) goes from Constanza Bastion to Agia Napa (CY£3, 1½ hours).

For the Troodos, **Clarios** (☎ 2275 3234; Constanza Bastion) has a morning bus to Kakopetria (CY£2.50, one hour) and Plateia Troodos (CY£3.50, 1½ hours), and several daily services to Pedoulas (CY£2.50, 1½ hours). **Kambos** (☎ 9962 3604) runs from Tripolis Bastion to Kykkos Monastery (CY£3, two hours).

Behind Podocataro Bastion, **Travel & Express** (☎ 7777 7474; Salaminos) has frequent service-taxi to Larnaka (CY€4, one hour) and Lemesos (CY€5.50, one hour).

For car hire, try **Petsas** (☎ 7777 1515; Kostaki Pantelidi 24; per day from CY€20).

LARNAKA ΛΑΡΝΑΚΑ

pop 71,740

Calmer and friendlier than the other coastal resorts, Larnaka is the final resting place of Agios Lazaros (Lazarus) who famously rose from the dead in the Bible. There's a busy waterfront strip with a modest beach and a quieter old town and Turkish quarter.

Back from the seafloor are the **CTO** (☎ 2465 4322; Plateia Vasileos Pavlou; ☎ 8.15am-2.30pm & 3-6.15pm Mon-Fri, to 1pm Sat, closed Wed afternoon), the post office and several banks. For internet access, try **Livadhiotis Hotel** (☎ 2462 6222; Nikolaou Rossou 50; per hr CY€2) opposite the HI Hostel.

Sights

In the old town, **Agios Lazaros church** (Agiou Lazarou; ☎ 8am-12.30pm & 3.30-6.30pm) contains fabulous icons and the tomb of Lazaros. Near the tourist office, **Pierides Museum** (☎ 2481 4555; Zinonos Kitios 4; admission CY€1; ☎ 9am-4pm Mon-Thu, to 1pm Fri & Sat) displays an amazing collection of folk art amassed by the kleptomaniac Pierides family. Larnaka also has a **castle**, a **museum** and several **mosques**, the tourist office has details.

East of Larnaka are the package-tour resorts of **Agia Napa** and **Protaras**. Both have good nightlife but little charm. Agia Napa has a nautical museum, water park and aquarium, and the best of the holiday apartments and clubs. Buses connect Larnaka to both resorts.

Sleeping & Eating

HI hostel (☎ 2462 8811; Nikolaou Rossou 27; dm/family r CY€5/10) Upstairs by the Bekir Pasa mosque, the hostel is old and creaky but OK for the money. Family rooms sleep four.

Harry's Inn (☎ 2465 4453; harrysin@cytanet.com.cy; Thermopylon 2; s/d CY€10/16) A wholesome place set back from the waterfront near the Pierides Museum and with the feel of a family home.

For a cheap bite, there are **pavement restaurants** along the waterfront and inexpensive **kebab houses** near Agios Lazaros church.

Art Café 1900 (☎ 2465 3027; Stasinou 6; mains from CY€4; ☎ from 6pm, closed Tue) This classy place serves fine wines and even finer Cypriot food in a dining room full of old movie posters.

Getting There & Away

Buses stop on the waterfront, opposite the old Four Lanterns Hotel. **Eman** (☎ 2372 1321) and **Intercity** (☎ 2462 3492) run daily to Agia Napa (CY€2, one hour), except on Sunday. Intercity also has buses to Lefkosia (CY€3.50, one hour) and Lemesos (CY€3, one hour). **Travel & Express** (☎ 7777 7474; Papakyriakou) operates frequent service-taxi to Lemesos (CY€5, one hour) and Lefkosia (CY€4, one hour).

For the airport, take a taxi (CY€5, 20 minutes) or local bus 22 or 24 (CY€0.50, 30 minutes, not Sunday) from Ermou. Car hire companies have desks at the terminal.

LEMESOS (LIMASOL) ΛΕΜΕΣΟΣ

pop 160,730

Part beach resort, part economic hub, Lemesos is the second largest town in Cyprus. Richard the Lionheart married Berengaria of Navarre here in 1191. Most package tourists skip the historic old centre for the bland beach resorts running west along the coast.

The **CTO** (☎ 2536 2756; cnr Spyros Araouzou & Dimitriou Nikolaidi; ☎ 8.15am-2.30pm & 3-6.15pm Mon-Fri, to 1.30pm Sat, closed Wed afternoon) is on the waterfront. There are banks all over town and a **post office** on Archiepiskopou Yprianos. **Travelers Tales** (☎ 2587 8340; Agiou Andreou 4; per hr CY€2) offers the only internet access in the old town.

Sights

The main attraction in Lemesos is the solid-looking **Lemesos Castle Medieval Museum** (☎ 2530 5419; Eirinis; admission CY€1; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Sat, 10am-1pm Sun), with Crusader gravestones and Byzantine sgraffito pottery. Lemesos also has a **mosque**, **hammam** and **museum** – the tourist office has details.

About 19km towards Pafos, **Kourion** (Curium; admission CY€1; ☎ 8am-5.45pm) has the finest Greco-Roman ruins in the south, overlooking a rugged strip of coast. The nearby **Sanctuary of Apollon Ylatis** (admission CY€0.75) and **Kolossi Castle** (admission CY€0.75) are open similar hours.

Sleeping & Eating

Luxor Guest House (☎ 2536 2265; Agiou Andreou 101; s/d CY€10/14) Rooms at this old-fashioned guest-house have lumpy beds and shared bathrooms, but the welcome is friendly.

Rizitiko (☎ 6534 8769; Izami 4; mains £3-7) The homestyle food is excellent at this intimate *taverna* near the mosque, though the family who run it are often rushed off their feet.

Draught Microbrewery (☎ 2582 0470; Vasilissis) Facing the castle, this boisterous nightspot serves an impressive range of lagers, ales and wheat beers.

There's a cluster of excellent open-air **kebab restaurants** near the municipal market on Sarpolou, and more bars and clubs on the tourist strip along the seafloor.

Getting There & Away

Long-distance buses run from the market on Andrea Themistokleous, except on Sunday. **Alepa** (☎ 9962 5027) and **LLL Bus** (☎ 2266 5814) have several daily buses to Lefkosia (CY€3, one hour). On weekdays, **Troodos Mountain Bus** (☎ 2555 2220) has a morning bus to Platres (CY€3, two hours) and Plateia Troodos (CY€3, 2½ hours). **Intercity** (☎ 2264 3492) runs from the old port roundabout to Larnaka (CY€3, one hour), while **Alepa** (☎ 9962 5027) runs to Pafos (CY€3, 1½ hours) from the seafloor.

Travel & Express (☎ 7777 7474; Thessalonikis) has service taxis to Pafos (CY€5, 1½ hours), Lefkosia (CY€5.50, 1½ hours) and Larnaka (CY€5, one hour).

There are numerous car-rental offices on the tourist strip.

TROODOS MASSIF ΤΡΟΟΔΟΣ

Wild and rugged, the Troodos Massif is a haven for walkers and nature buffs. Dotted amongst the black pines are waterfalls, wine-making villages and World Heritage-listed monasteries.

The village of Platres has banks, a post office and a **CTO** (☎ 2542 1316; ☎ 8.30am-4pm Mon-Fri) office. Just south of Plateia Troodos is the **Troodos Visitor Centre** (☎ 2542 0144; admission CY€0.50; ☎ 10am-3pm) with a museum, video show and nature leaflets.

Sights & Activities

Nearby Pedoulas has the teeny stone **Church of Archangelos** (admission by donation, key at neighbouring house), with hellfire-and-brimstone frescoes from 1474. Near Kakopetria, **Agios Nikolaos tis Stegis** (admission by donation; ☎ 9am-4pm Tue-Sat,

11am-4pm Sun) has 12th-century paintings of stern-looking saints.

Other interesting detours include the wine-making village of **Omodos** and the historic monastery of **Kykkos**, with its intriguing religious **museum** (☎ 2294 2736; CY€1.50; ☎ 10am-4pm).

The mountains are crisscrossed by **walking trails** – walkers can pick up trail brochures from the Troodos Visitor Centre.

Sleeping & Eating

Platres is the most popular place to stay.

Village Restaurant (☎ 2542 1741; Makariou; half-board per person CY€10) Just west of the main road through Platres, this friendly and popular place offers tasty Cypriot meals (CY€3 to CY€7) and a few simple rooms at the back.

Petit Palais (☎ 2542 2723; www.petitpalaishotel.com; Faneromenis; s/d CY€17/28) Done up like a Swiss chalet, Petit Palais has neat, compact rooms, some overlooking the forest.

Getting There & Away

A rental car is the best way to get around. On weekdays, **Troodos Mountain Bus** (☎ 2555 2220) has a daily bus from Plateia Troodos to Lemesos (CY€3, 1¾ hours), via Platres (CY€1, 20 minutes). See p273 for buses from Lefkosia.

PAFOS ΠΑΦΟΣ

pop 47,200

The former capital of Cyprus, Pafos is packed with historical relics...and tourists. If you find the beach strip at Kato Pafos too developed, head up to quieter Ano Pafos on the hillside.

A private taxi to/from the airport, 8km southeast of town, costs CY€15.

The main **CTO** (☎ 2693 2841; Gladstonos 3; ☎ 8.15am-2.30pm & 3-6.15pm Mon-Fri, to 1.30pm Sat, closed Wed afternoon) is just down from Ano Pafos' main square. There are banks and post offices in both Ano and Kato Pafos. **Maroushia Internet** (☎ 2694 7240; Plateia Kennedy 6; per hr CY€2; ☎ 9am-11pm Mon-Sat, 3pm-10pm Sun) is the best Net café.

Sights

It's worth braving the crowds at **Pafos Archaeological Site** (☎ 2694 0217; admission CY€1.50; ☎ 8am-5pm) with its astounding Roman mosaics, many featuring the inebriated exploits of Dionysus.

For a quieter historical experience, the atmospheric **Tombs of the Kings** (☎ 2694 0295; admission CY€0.75; ☎ 7.30am-8pm) were hewn by hand in the 3rd century BC. Pafos also has a **castle**, a **Roman basilica** and several **museums**.

GETTING INTO TOWN

The Republic's main airport is 5km south of town. To get into town take a taxi (CY€5, 20 minutes) or local bus 22 or 24 (CY€0.50, 30 minutes, not Sunday) to Ermou. Car-hire companies have desks at the terminal.

Sleeping & Eating

Trianon Hotel (☎ 2693 2193; Archiepiskopou Makariou III 99; s/d CY€6/12) Right on the main shopping street, Trianon is family-run and friendly, but you pass through the kitchen and lounge to reach the shared bathroom.

Kiniras Hotel (☎ 2624 1604; www.kiniras.cy.net; Archiepiskopou Makariou III 91; s/d with bathroom CY€41/66; 🍷 📺) For something more romantic, try this boutique hotel, with an elegant courtyard full of stuary and potted plants.

Nikos Tyrimos Fish Tavern (☎ 2694 2846; Agapinoros 71; fish dishes CY€5-10) Inland from the tourist strip, Tyrimos serves fabulous fish, cooked the way locals like it.

The old harbour in Kato Pafos is a continuous strip of touristy **waterfront tavernas**.

Getting There & Away

Buses leave from the Karavella bus stand near the market, except Sunday. **Alepa** (☎ 2693 1755) has a morning bus to Lefkosia (CY€5.50, 2½ hours) via Lemesos (CY€3, 1½ hours) and frequent local buses to Kato Pafos (CY€0.70, 15 minutes). **Nea Amoroza Co** (☎ 2693 6822) runs hourly buses to Polis (CY€2.30, 45 minutes).

Alternatively, **Travel & Express** (☎ 7777 7474; Evagora Pallikaridi) has frequent service-taxis to Lemesos (CY€5.50, 40 minutes).

Dozens of hire places in Kato Pafos rent bikes, mopeds and cars.

POLIS ΠΟΛΙΣ

Built over the ruins of ancient Marion, Polis is the Mediterranean the way it used to be – orange groves above a pretty beach and small *tavernas* around the village square. There's a **CTO** (☎ 2632 2468; Vasileos Stasioikou 2; 🕒 9am-1.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-2pm Sat) and **museum** (☎ 2632 2955; Makariou III; admission CY€0.75; 🕒 8am-2pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat).

You can hike to remote, empty beaches in the nearby **Akamas Peninsula**. Turtles nest on remote **Lara Beach** from June to August. Top walks include the **Avakas Gorge** on the south coast and the nature trails around the **Baths of Aphrodite** on the north coast.

Polis square is packed with pavement cafés and **Bougainvillea Hotel Apartments** (☎ 2681 2250; Verginas 13; apt from CY€25; 🍷 📺) has appealing self-catering apartments set around a pool. The Polis **camping ground** (☎ 2681 5080; per tent CY€2 plus per person CY€1.50) is behind the beach.

Solis (☎ 9943 1363) and **Lysos** (☎ 9941 4777) minibuses to Lefkosia (CY€8, 3½ hours) leave from near the tourist office around 5am (not

Sunday). **Nea Amoroza** (☎ 2632 1114; Kyproleontos) has hourly buses to Pafos (CY€2.30, 45 minutes) and weekday buses to the Baths of Aphrodite (CY€1, 20 minutes).

NORTH CYPRUS

Growing numbers of tourists are exploring the refreshingly undeveloped Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). Historic ruins abound and beaches are breathtaking, but the legacy of 1974 casts a long shadow in the form of looted churches and neglected national treasures.

LEFKOŞA (NORTH NICOSIA)

pop 39,180

Life moves at a snail's pace in the northern half of the capital and the dusty streets are lined with ancient mosques and Frankish ruins. With the relaxing of border restrictions, many people day-trip across from the Republic but there are few facilities – just a few hotels and kebab shops.

A private taxi to/from Ercan airport costs TL30 (40 minutes).

Sights

The well-preserved Kyrenia Gate contains the main **tourist office** (☎ 227 2994; 🕒 9am-4pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat & Sun) and there are several banks on Girne Caddesi, the main street. The **post office** (🕒 8am-12.30pm & 1.30-5pm Mon-Fri) is on Sarayönü Sokak and **Orbit Internet Café** (☎ 229 1787; Girne Caddesi; per hr TL2.50; 🕒 24hr) has fast connections.

Just inside the walls, the **Mevlevi Museum** (☎ 227 1283; Girne Caddesi; admission TL4.50; 🕒 9am-1pm & 2-4.45pm Mon-Fri) tells the story of a local sect of whirling Sufi dervishes (Muslim mystics).

The historic Selimiye quarter is dominated by the grand **Selimiye Mosque** (San Sophia Mosque, Agios Nikolaos Cathedral; Selimiye Sokak), built as a

TURNING TURTLE

You are more likely to see turtle flipper marks than human footprints on wild Altinkum Beach. A handful of simple cafés rent out wooden cabins – best is **Hasan's Turtle Beach** (☎ 533-864 1063; cabins per person TL25). The tiny cabins have chintzy pictures on the walls, beers are cold and the kitchen serves tasty kebabs.

CITY WITH A PLAN

Many ancient monuments in north and south Lefkosia are being restored by the UN – pick up a copy of the *Nicosia Trail* brochure from the tourist office or visit the **Nicosia Masterplan headquarters** (☎ 2266 8864; 🕒 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat & Sun) by the Ledra Palace Hotel, at the crossing point.

cathedral between 1209 and 1326. Nearby is the **Büyük Hammam** (İrfan Bey Sokak; ☎ 228 4462; steam-bath treatments TL10-30; 🕒 7am-10.30pm), the most authentic steam bath in the country.

Sleeping & Eating

Seslikaya Otel (☎ 227 4193; Cumhuriyet Sokak; s/d TL30/35) Dust hardly dares to settle at this bright and clean *pansiyon* near the main square. Rooms have fans, cartoon bedspreads and tiny TVs.

Saray Hotel (☎ 228 3115; fax 228 4808; Atatürk Meydanı; s/d with air-con TL90/150; 📺 🕒) It's worth upgrading to this tasteful hotel right in the centre for city views, tiny balconies and luscious deep pile carpets.

Girne Caddesi has several reputable *salonu* (snack restaurants) serving beers, kebabs and haloumi pitta for TL4 or less – try **Amasyali** (☎ 228 3294; Girne Caddesi 186; 🕒 closed Sun) or **Umutilar Restaurant** (☎ 227 3236; Girne Caddesi 51; 🕒 24hr).

Getting There & Around

The bus station is north of the centre on Gazeteci Kemal Aşık Caddesi. Buses leave regularly for Girne (TL2.50, 30 minutes) and Güzelyurt (TL3.50, 45 minutes). **Yımat** (☎ 227 1617) minibuses to Gazimağusa (TL4, one hour) leave half-hourly from Kaymaklı Yolu Sokak.

Kombos (☎ 227 2929) service-taxis to Girne (TL3, 30 minutes) run from Mevlevi Tekke Sokak inside the walls.

For car hire, try **Sun Rent-a-Car** (☎ 227 2303; www.sunrentacar.com; Abdi İpekçi Ave 10; per day from UK£20).

GİRNE (KYRENIA)

pop 14,200

This is the Mediterranean like it used to be – a picturesque stone harbour, ending abruptly at a looming Byzantine castle. The old part of Girne is delightful, but the surrounding countryside is vanishing under a sea of holiday homes. The **tourist office** (☎ 815 2145; 🕒 9am-5pm) is at the west end of the harbour.

Dominating the seafront, **Kyrenia Castle & Shipwreck Museum** (Girne Kalesi; ☎ 815 2142; admission TL9; 🕒 9am-4pm) has spooky dungeons and a 5000-year-old shipwreck. The tourist office has details of other **museums** in town.

Draped along the highest, rockiest ridge above Kyrenia, **St Hilarion Castle** (admission TL6; 🕒 9am-6pm) offers stupendous views over the coast. Nearby are Byzantine cathedral ruins at **Bellapais** (admission TL6; 🕒 9am-6pm).

Sleeping & Eating

Bingöl Guest House (☎ 815 2749; Efeler Sokak; r from TL25) Below the main roundabout, this workers' hotel is grungy but cheap – the tiny rooms have fans and bathrooms. Few women stay here.

White Pearl Hotel (☎ 815 4677; fax 815 6010; Girne Harbour; s/d with air-con TL75/100; 🍷 📺) The best value of the harbour-front hotels, with cracking seas views and a rooftop terrace.

The waterfront has dozens of expensive **tourist restaurants** serving kebabs and seafood, or there are cheaper **kebab houses** just west of Ramadan Cemil Meydanı.

Getting There & Away

Buses and service taxis leave regularly from Ramadan Cemil Meydanı to Gazimağusa (TL5, one hour) and Lefkoşa (TL2.50, 30 minutes). See p272 for ferry services to Turkey. Private taxis charge TL6 to the ferry terminal and TL50 to Ercan airport.

Dozens of rental firms on Ziya Rifki Caddesi rent out mopeds and cars.

AROUND NORTH CYPRUS

In the island's northwest, the ancient walled city of **Gazimağusa** (Famagusta) is dotted with ruined Frankish churches. There's a **tourist office** (☎ 366 2864; Akkule Bastion, İstiklal Caddesi; 🕒 7.30am-4pm Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm Sat & Sun) and several cheap hotels. Buses and service taxis run here from Girne and Lefkoşa. See p272 for ferries to Turkey.

About 9km north of Famagusta are the impressive but overgrown Graeco-Roman ruins of **Salamis** (admission TL6; 🕒 8am-6pm), overlooking a sandy beach with interesting snorkelling – a return taxi from Gazimağusa costs TL25.

A reminder of what Cyprus was like before partition, the remote **Karpas Peninsula** has incredible **beaches**, Byzantine **basilicas**, a handful of unmoleted Greek Orthodox **monasteries** and the romantic Crusader castle of **Kantara** (admission TL4.50; 🕒 9am-5pm). **Altinkum** (Golden Beach) has nesting turtles from June to August.

West of Lefkoşa, Güzelyurt (Morfofu) is a dusty citrus-producing town with an interesting **museum** and **church**. Buses run here regularly from Lefkoşa.

CYPRUS DIRECTORY

ACCOMMODATION

There are cheap hotels or guesthouses in most towns, plus a few camping grounds and two youth hostels (in Lefkosia and Larnaka). Single/double rooms in hotels or guesthouses start at CY£5/10 in the Republic and TL30/50 in the north. Prices increase by 20% to 30% from June to August.

ACTIVITIES

All the seaside resorts offer banana boat rides, scuba dives, boat trips and paragliding. The Akamas and Karpas Peninsulas and the Troodos Massif and Pentadactylos Mountains are fantastic for hiking and mountain biking.

BUSINESS HOURS

Usual opening times in Cyprus:

Banks ☎ 8.30am-12.30pm Mon-Fri, plus Mon afternoon in the Republic

Government offices ☎ 7.30am-2.30pm Mon-Fri & 3-6pm Thu (Mon afternoon in the north)

Restaurants ☎ 11am-2pm & 7-11pm

Shops ☎ close early on Wednesday and Saturday and all day Sunday.

EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

The Republic of Cyprus is represented worldwide while North Cyprus has just a few overseas offices (Turkish embassies handle its affairs elsewhere). For listings of embassies in Cyprus and Cyprus embassies overseas, contact the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the **Republic** (☎ 2240 1000; www.mfa.gov.cy) or **North Cyprus** (☎ 228 3365; www.tmcgov.com).

See right for visa information.

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

As well as national holidays, both sides of Cyprus celebrate numerous festivals, some religious and some laid on specifically for tourists. The tourism websites have dates – see right.

HOLIDAYS

Holidays in the Republic are the same as those in Greece, with the addition of Greek

Cypriot Day (1 April) and Cyprus Independence Day (1 October). North Cyprus observes Muslim holidays and a host of national holidays – the North Cyprus Tourism website has dates – see below for more information.

INTERNET RESOURCES

Useful web resources on Cyprus:

Cyprus Tourism Organisation (www.cyprustourism.org) Covers the Republic.

North Cyprus Home Page (www.cypnet.co.uk/cyradise/index.html) Comprehensive coverage.

North Cyprus Tourism (www.holidayinnorthcyprus.com) Covers North Cyprus.

World of Cyprus (www.kypros.org) News, tourist information, weather and more.

LANGUAGE

Cypriots on both sides of the divide usually speak some English, but settlers in the north tend to speak only Turkish (see p35 for more information).

MONEY

Banks and private exchange offices change cash and cheques. Prices at most hotels and restaurants include a 10% service charge.

POST

For poste restante, stick to the main post offices in Lefkosia and Lefkoşa. Mail to North Cyprus must be addressed to Mersin 10, Turkey, *not* North Cyprus.

TELEPHONE

Roaming-enabled GSM mobile phones can be used all over Cyprus. Payphones take phone-cards, available from shops and kiosks. To call North Cyprus from the Republic, dial ☎ 0139; to call the Republic from North Cyprus, dial ☎ 0123.

Useful numbers:

International access code ☎ 00 Republic;

☎ 00 North Cyprus

International operator ☎ 80000198 Republic;

☎ 115 North Cyprus

VISAS

In both the Republic and North Cyprus, nationals of Australia, New Zealand, USA, Canada and EU countries can stay for up to three months without a visa. When entering the north, get the immigration stamp on a separate piece of paper.

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