

CYPRUS – JUNE, 2011

A Brief History of Cyprus



According to the ancient Greeks, the island of Cyprus (also known as the island of Aphrodite) is the place where beauty was born. Aphrodite, the goddess of beauty and love, was reputed to have been born in the froth of the waves of the clear blue eastern Mediterranean Sea, at the south of the island.

The history of Cyprus dates back to the earliest recorded times with settlements dating back to the Neolithic age around 7000 BC (found near today's Chirokitia). Although its original name was Kilikia, it later acquired the name of Cyprus from the earliest finds of Copper or Cuprous. Due to its location it has been at the crossroads of history for western civilization. Its earliest inhabitants have been Greeks, Phoenicians and Egyptians, although the Greek civilization predominates to this day. Cyprus has been invaded by every power in Europe and the middle-east, and all have left behind their footprint, in Greek and Roman temples and white marble theaters, Byzantine and Venetian castles, churches, monasteries and mosques. One could even taste it all in its cuisine with a mixture of Greek, French, Italian, Arabic and Turkish influence.

If you are a history buff pick up a stone, take it home and study it, you will find something there. If you like good food, expect to put on weight. If you like beaches of golden sands and a crystal clear blue sea, bring lots of sun oil. If you like pine and cedar forested mountains with cold water streams and the smell of barbecue in the fresh mountain air, bring your trekking shoes, but if you are a romantic bring enough to buy a place.

Cyprus was the place where Ajax made his home after the Trojan war, where the great philosophers Zenon and Solon made it their home, where Paul of Tarsus converted his first Roman Governor Sergius Paulos to Christianity, where Lazarus made it his second and final resting place, where Richard I the lion-heart married his queen Berengaria, where Guy De Lusignan made his kingdom after Saladin the Great chased him from Jerusalem with his Templar knights, where Maria Antoinette got her lace at Lefkara, where Shakespeare saw his Othello, and where Suleiman the magnificent sent his armies to bring him Cyprus wines.

The great Greek composer Mikis Theodorakis described it in his song of Cyprus as a "Leaf of Gold and Green thrown in the sea".

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YnDvx7lpDJo&feature=related>

Arriving in Cyprus



As you are approaching Larnaca airport by air, take a look to the left side of the plane and you will see the highest hill in the area. Perched at the very top of the hill you might make out the monastery of Stavrovouni (Cross-mountain). Story has it that when Saint Helen, the mother of Emperor Constantine, was returning from the Holy Land where she had discovered the cross of Jesus, their ship was in danger

of sinking due to a great storm, when they sighted a light in the distance that guided them to safe harbor. The light source appeared to be coming from the top of this hill but when they travelled there they found nothing. The event was pronounced a miracle and Saint Helen built a monastery and left a piece of the cross there before proceeding back to Constantinople. Although the monastery was built by a woman, women are not allowed in the inner parts of the monastery.

Just as you are about to land at Larnaca Airport, look to the edge of the salt lake



You will see a mosque (or tekke) in memory of Hala Sultan, the wet nurse of the prophet Mohamet and wife of Ubada bin al-Samit. It is the place where she died after falling off her horse when visiting Cyprus.

It is regarded as the fourth holy side of Islam, and many muslims make a pilgrimage to the site every year.



or just simply look at the lake you will find that certain times of the year it is made pink by the visiting flamingos.



The new Larnaca Airport was recently completed and became fully operational in the last few years.

Suggested Itinerary

If you are hiring a car remember the steering is on the right side of the vehicle so you drive on the left side of the road. If you are a confident driver you will get used to it fairly quickly. If you are a Brit, watch-out for all the tourists from Europe and the US, and pay particular attention to the Cypriots who acquire a different identity when getting behind the wheel. The horn is used excessively to denote impatience or a nervous twitch. Ignore it and work on your hand gestures. Pointing the inner side of your palm with fingers fully extended and spread apart is the customary response, accompanied by the single word "malaka," paying particular emphasis on the letter "L".

Cities are well-connected with dual carriageways, but in town most roads are two-way and fit one and a half cars quite comfortably.

If you are taking a taxi, show particular understanding to the drivers as they operate under constant stress. A great number of hotels in Larnaca operate shuttles, and there are buses or communal taxis (cheaper) to Ayia Napa, Protaras, Nicosia and Limassol.

You should not have any trouble with the language as most Cypriots speak English when they want to.



Depending on the timing of your visit you will either want to head to the capital city of Nicosia for the reception on **Friday June 24th**, or you can begin with the suggested itinerary below.

- Start off by heading to the beautiful beaches of **Ayia Napa** and **Protaras**. The drive is approximately 45 kilometers (28 miles) from Larnaca.



Nissi Beach

- Visit the tranquil and mesmerizing sea caves of Cape Greco.
- Enjoy the crystal clear water and soft white sand at Nissi Beach, Konnos Beach, or Protaras beach.
- Protaras has some great snorkeling (and other water sports).

- Enjoy some nightlife at one of the many bars and nightclubs in Ayia Napa



Nightlife in Ayia Napa

If you haven't made your way to the capital city of **Nicosia** yet, then stop there next. The travelling distance from Ayia Napa is approximately 75km (47 miles).

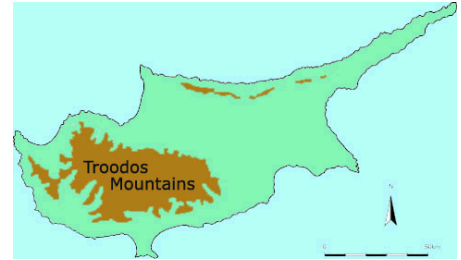


- o Visit the well preserved Famagusta gate and the Venetian walls surrounding the old city. The area surrounding the gate has great trendy places to eat and drink.
- o Wander the streets of the old city and take a stroll down the pretty but touristy Laiki Yitonia for some gifts to take back home.
- o Go to the Ledra Street crossing to see the last divided capital city in Europe. Pedestrians can cross over

by foot into the Northern Turkish side of the island.

- o Visit the Cyprus Museum to see the best collection of Cyprus' ancient artifacts and the smaller Leventis municipal museum (free entrance) to see traditional dress and more archaeological finds. The Cyprus jewelry museum (free entrance) has a beautiful collection of ornaments and ancient tools.
- o Do some shopping at the trendy chain stores on Leoforos Archiepiskopou Makariou III.
- o At the end of the day enjoy a relaxing Turkish bath and a treatment at the Omeriye Hammam (www.hamambaths.com).
- o A suggested itinerary for a walking tour through Nicosia to visit these sites is offered at <http://www.planetware.com/do-it-yourself-tour/nicosia-city-walking-tour-cy-nicosia.htm>.

- Next, take a drive through the rustic **Troodos mountains** and visit many small villages along the way. The distance from Nicosia is approximately 69 km (43 miles)



- Begin by heading to the Maheras monastery and make a visit to the pretty old villages of Fikardou and Lythrodontas.
- Enjoy a slow but scenic drive through the windy Troodos mountains.
- Get a taste of the rural village life by visiting the villages of **Kakopetria, Pedoulas, and Treis Elies**, and the wine-producing village of Omodos.
- Visit the Kykko Monastery where the Icon of the Virgin Mary painted by Saint Luke may be seen.
- There's lots of hiking around the mountains. There are four marked trails: Artemis trail below Mount Olympus, Atalanti trail with a clear spring, Caledonia trail, and Persephone trail with amazing scenery.
- Byzantine churches: There are dozens of these vividly decorated churches throughout the mountains.
- Head down to **Limassol** for some antiquities and nightlife. It is approx. 40 km (25 miles) from Troodos.



- For those with diving experience, this is a good place to make a dive trip as there are several wrecks in the area (<http://www.dive-in.com.cy/>).
- Enjoy a good meal in one of the Old City's restaurants.
- Visit the Medieval Castle/ Museum and gardens.
- For some quality handmade souvenirs at the right price visit the Cyprus Handicrafts center.
- Enjoy some nightlife at one of Limassol's many bars and nightclubs.
- For those interested in visiting other countries surrounding Cyprus, you can hop on a cruise from Limassol to Israel, Egypt, and Lebanon (2- and 3-day cruises starting from 350 Euros; see <http://www.cruiseCyprus.com/>, <http://www.cyprus-tourism.net/>).



- On the way over to the beautiful beaches of Paphos, visit the Cyprus wine museum, Ancient Kourion, and the famous Rock of Aphrodite. (71km/44 miles from Troodos)
- Learn about the history of winemaking in Cyprus through a short tour at the Cyprus wine museum.
- Ancient Kourion is one of the most spectacular archaeological sites on the island of Cyprus. It features a fully restored Graeco-Roman Theatre, originally built in the 2nd century BC, now used for musical and theatrical performances during the summers. Learn more at <http://www.limassolmunicipal.com.cy/kourion/en/index.html>. The annual Shakespeare festival is held in June, and you can enjoy the production in this ancient theatre overlooking the Mediterranean sea.
- Next, head over to the Rock of Aphrodite (Petra tou Romiou) for a swim, where myth has it that the goddess Aphrodite emerged from the sea.
- Pafos has some of the most beautiful beaches in Cyprus.
- Visit the Pafos Archaeological Site, which holds the Pafos mosaics and the tombs of the Kings, a series of underground tombs and chambers.
- If you prefer not to take a cruise but are interested in exploring some of Cyprus' neighboring countries you can also take a one day tour and flight to Egypt (for example, see http://www.cyprus-tourism.net/Egypt_by_air.html).
- Next, visit the rugged and sparse **Akamas Peninsula** and **Lara Beach** (41km/25 miles from Paphos).
 - This is a good spot for hiking and you will see many traditional villages.
 - Lara beach is one of the most beautiful beaches of Cyprus and is a turtle hatching zone.



- On the way back to Larnaca airport, visit the Lefkara villages, known for their beautiful lace.
 - If you have some time to kill in Larnaca, take a stroll through the picturesque Turkish quarter.

Ken and I have planned our itinerary according to the days we will be in Cyprus. We invite you to join us as you like. Please email us for more detailed information:

Ken and Eva's flight/itinerary:

London: Arrive 15th June 2011 15:25 (Wednesday)

Wednesday 6/15 3:25pm - Travel to Nicosia to meet up with family - dinner with family

Thursday 6/16/11 Nicosia

Friday 6/17/11 Ayia Napa/ Protaras

Saturday 6/18/11 Ayia Napa/ Protaras

Sunday 6/19/11 Troodos mountains

Monday 6/20/11 Limassol

Tuesday 6/21/11 Paphos

Wednesday 6/22/11 Akamas Peninsula (sleep in Paphos)

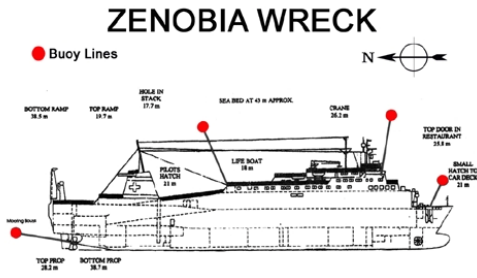
Thursday 6/23/11 Return to Nicosia for final reception preparations (1 ½ drive)

Friday 6/24/11 Reception in Nicosia (8pm)

Saturday 6/25/11 Nicosia

Sunday 6/26/11 Ayia Napa/ Protaras OR Larnaca Dive (~20 miles away)

Divers can drive ~20 minutes to Larnaca to go on one of the world's best wreck dive (60-138ft deep dive) http://www.divesitedirectory.com/dive_site_cyprus_wreck_zenobia.html,
<http://www.divezenobia.com/>

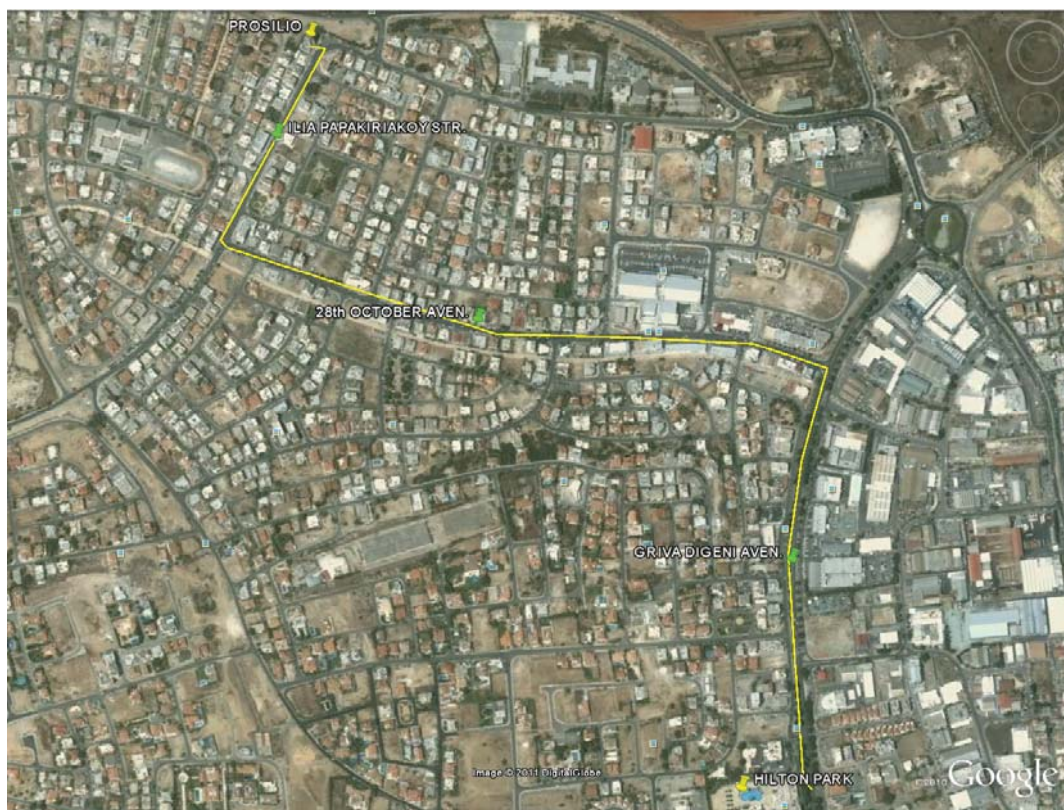


Monday 6/27/11 Ayia Napa/ Protaras

Tuesday 6/28/11 Depart from Nicosia in the AM to Larnaca to fly out

Information on Hotel Accommodations:

For the **Hilton Park Hotel in Nicosia** (Grivas Dhigenis Avenue, P.O.Box 21390, 1507 Nicosia, Cyprus, Tel: +357 22695031 Fax: +35722695209), you can get the group rate of king/double bed or two single beds for euro 120 per day (\$168USD) or single occupancy euro 100 (\$140USD), both including bed and breakfast and VAT. The hotel is a couple of kilometers away from the Prosilio restaurant where the reception will be held (see map below). Please email me to find out the details of securing this accommodation.



My uncle has also set up a discounted rate at Paphos Gardens in Paphos (<http://www.paphosgardens.com/PaphosGardens.aspx>) for hotel room single € 20 per night (\$23USD), including breakfast
 For hotel room Double € 40 per night (\$56USD), including breakfast
 Studio € 40 per night sleeps 2 persons, self catering
 1bedroom €60 (\$84USD) sleeps 3 one on sofa bed, self catering
 2bedroom €80 (\$112USD) sleeps 5 one on sofa, self catering
 If you would like breakfast for the self catering accommodations it will be an additional €7 (\$10USD) per person per day. Please email me to find out the details of securing this accommodation.

If you are interested in car rentals, I recently did a search and it looks like Drive Cyprus, Carhire3000, and Budget had the lowest online rates (from Larnaca airport). If you can rent from Paphos it looks like Elephant rent a car had good rates.

Finally, Ken and I are putting together a playlist for the celebration. We are asking for your help by asking that you please send us a list of FIVE songs that you *promise* to dance to at the reception. We can't wait to see you all there!!!