

# Cyprus in seven days

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*With its turquoise coastline, ancient ruins and sun-baked villages scented with jasmine, Cyprus is a Mediterranean gem. Here's how to spend seven days exploring the island's history, cuisine and beaches.*



Clockwise from top left: Tombs of the Kings in Paphos; Cyprus Akamas Peninsula National Park; the Larnaca seafront; walking trail in the Troodos National Forest Park



**Clockwise from above:** Larnaca Medieval Castle; Lefkara; Troodos Mountains

### Day 1: Larnaca

Touch down in Larnaca, the island's welcoming gateway, and reward yourself with a relaxed afternoon of exploration as your introduction to Cyprus. Wander along Finikoudes Promenade, named for the Phoenix date palms that line its length. Larnaca Marina sits at one end, where fishing boats bob beside sleek yachts, and steps away is Saint Lazarus Church, a striking limestone structure that dates back to the 9th century and serves as a reminder of Cyprus's Orthodox roots.

Continuing along the Promenade, the Blue Flag beach is defined by orderly rows of sunbeds, fine beige sands and shallow seawaters, safe for swimming. Boat trips are available from the adjacent pier and various beach sports facilities and activities are on offer here. The strip is also lined with a plethora of dining options, many with year-round open-air seating. Pull up a chair, order some grilled halloumi, the island's signature cheese, and take a moment to enjoy the Mediterranean climate.

Larnaca Medieval Castle, built to act as a fort, anchors the southern end of the Promenade and contains a small museum, but the highlight is accessing the rooftop for the views. As evening falls, toast your first sunset with a local Commandaria wine – a sweet, amber nectar said to be the world's oldest named wine – before dining on fresh seafood.

### Day 2: Lefkara and the Kakopetria

Leave the coast behind for the cooler air of the Troodos Mountains. En route, stop in Lefkara, a postcard-perfect village known for its intricate lacework and silver filigree. Legend has it that Leonardo da Vinci visited in 1481 and took a piece of Lefkara lace back to Italy for the altar of Milan's Duomo, but historians are not convinced. Regardless, wandering the cobbled lanes lined with bougainvillea-draped houses is a worthwhile endeavour.

Continue winding into the foothills to reach Kakopetria. The old quarter of this charming village, with its narrow, stone-paved alleys and traditional houses, has been



declared a protected cultural heritage site. Here you can explore the winding streets, or pay a visit to the church of Agios Nikolaos tis Stegis a few miles outside of the village. This is considered one of the most interesting Byzantine churches on the island, due to its frescoes, which date from the 11th to the 17th century.

Dine in one of the traditional tavernas in the village. Try mountain cuisine such as *kleftiko*, slow-cooked lamb baked in a clay oven, served with roasted potatoes and mountain herbs, or *afelia*, a slow-cooked pork dish infused with red wine and coriander.

### Day 3: Troodos National Forest Park and Omodos

Dedicate a full day to the Troodos National Forest Park, where nature trails of various distances wind through the pine forests. Popular walks include the Artemis Trail, a 4.5-mile moderately challenging circular path around Mount Olympus; the Atalante Trail, a longer, relatively flat 8.5-mile path carved into the mountainside, offering scenic views and passing through valleys; the much shorter Kalidonia Trail, leading to a stunning waterfall; and the Persephone Trail, for its unique flora and fauna.

After an active morning, stop at a family-run winery in Omodos, one of the prettiest wine-growing villages on the island. Sip local Maratheftiko reds and Xynisteri whites while learning about Cyprus's ancient winemaking traditions. The Monastery of the Holy Cross, the oldest monastery in Cyprus, sits within Omodos Square, which is also the heart of the village. This is the perfect spot for some people-watching as locals gather in the restaurants and cafés that spill onto the cobblestones.







Clockwise from top left: Paphos Castle; Cape Greco

#### Day 4: Paphos

Descend from the mountains toward Paphos, where mythology meets the sea. This UNESCO World Heritage city is said to be the birthplace of Aphrodite, the goddess of love. Begin at the crumbling ruins within Paphos Archaeological Park. Don't miss the mosaics in the Houses of Dionysus and Theseus, which depict gods, heroes and wine-soaked feasts in exquisite detail. Also make your way to the Tombs of the Kings, an atmospheric necropolis carved into solid rock that dates back to the Hellenistic and Roman periods.

After some history-rich exploration, if you have transport, make your way to the Petra tou Romiou viewpoint. This is the legendary rock formation where Aphrodite rose from the waves. Locals say swimming here brings eternal beauty so it may be worth a dip. If you'd prefer something more local, the Paphos coastal path runs between the lighthouse and Alykes Beach. Along the way, you can discover works of art from Cypriot artists dotted along the coast. The path also passes Paphos Castle, a protective fort with a long history.

Spend the evening at Paphos Harbour, dining at a waterfront taverna as fishing boats sway in the breeze. Try *stifado*, a hearty beef stew with onions and red wine, and watch the sun dip below the horizon, setting the medieval fort aglow.

#### Day 5: Coral Bay and the Akamas Peninsula

It's time to trade ruins for relaxation. Drive north to Coral Bay, a crescent of golden sand fringed by calm, clear water. Rent a lounge, take a dip and indulge in the art of doing nothing.

In the afternoon, head to the Akamas Peninsula National Park. Whether you join a jeep safari or hike through the Avakas Gorge, you'll be rewarded with rugged cliffs, wildflowers and dramatic coastal views. Don't miss the Baths of Aphrodite, a natural grotto where, according to legend, the goddess met her lover Adonis. Stay overnight near Latchi, a sleepy fishing village known for its seafood tavernas and laid-back charm.

#### Day 6: Nicosia

From the coast, make your way inland to Nicosia (Lefkosia), the world's last divided capital. The city's Green Line still separates the Greek Cypriot south from the Turkish Cypriot north, offering a fascinating glimpse into Cyprus's complex contemporary history.

Spend the morning exploring the Old Town, enclosed by Venetian walls. Visit Shacolas Tower for far-reaching views from the observatory – the building itself is nothing to write home about but from here, you should be able to see the immense North Cypriot flag atop Mount Pentadaktylos – it's so large that it is reputedly visible from space.

Cross the Ledra Street checkpoint with your passport to explore both sides of the city, each exhibiting its own distinct culture and flavour. The contrast is fascinating. Highlights in the north include Selimiye Mosque, a converted cathedral, and Buyuk Han, also known as the Great Inn. Buyuk Han was built in 1572 as a caravansarai where travellers and traders could rest. It is now home to restaurants and craft shops.

As night falls, dine in the buzzing Laiki Geitonia quarter, where contemporary bars and traditional tavernas rub shoulders along the narrow lanes. Sample *souvlaki*, sip local Zivania, and watch Nicosia come alive with music and laughter.

#### Day 7: Ayia Napa and Cape Greco

For your final day, return east toward Ayia Napa, a resort town that offers far more than nightlife. Visit the Ayia Napa Monastery, a peaceful oasis in the heart of town, before heading to Nissi Beach, where shallow turquoise water makes for perfect swimming and paddle boarding.

In the afternoon, venture to Cape Greco National Forest Park, a headland of sea caves and limestone cliffs. Follow coastal trails or rent a kayak to explore the hidden coves. The view from the Sea Caves Lookout Point at sunset is nothing short of spectacular – a fitting finale for your island visit.

End your trip with a farewell dinner by the sea in Ayia Napa. Order mezze one last time and savour your sun-drenched week of discovery in Cyprus. ■

*If you're looking for a sea change in Cyprus, here are some superb lifestyle properties across the island.*



#### ◀ *Famagusta, Cyprus*

This impressive three-bedroom, five-bathroom detached villa in the heart of Ayia Napa offers the perfect balance of space, style and convenience. Spanning 254 square metres, the home features spacious interiors, fitted wardrobes and large verandas that open to panoramic sea views. Ideal for family living or as an investment opportunity, the property sits on a generous plot with a private swimming pool and landscaped garden. Its prime location provides easy access to the highway and nearby amenities, while maintaining a sense of tranquillity. This is a rare opportunity to enjoy refined coastal living in one of Cyprus's most sought-after destinations.

**Fine & Country Cyprus**

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**Guide price 2,950,000€**

#### ▶ *Limassol, Cyprus*

Experience refined coastal living in this exquisite 16th–17th-floor duplex penthouse in Limassol. Fully furnished and finished to the highest standards, the five-bedroom, six-bathroom residence showcases panoramic Mediterranean views and smart home automation throughout. Elegant interiors feature granite countertops and luxurious detailing. Residents enjoy exclusive access to world-class amenities, including concierge services, indoor and outdoor pools, a spa, gym and tennis court. Set within a secure, gated seafront development in one of Limassol's most prestigious areas, this remarkable home offers exceptional comfort and strong rental potential, embodying the ultimate in flexible modern living.

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**Guide price 14,100,000€ + VAT**



#### ◀ *Paphos, Cyprus*

Nestled in the sought-after Sea Caves area, this contemporary four-bedroom, four-bathroom bungalow offers a seamless combination of modern comfort and coastal charm. Due for completion in 2026, the 124-square-metre home features spacious interiors with fitted wardrobes and en suite bathrooms throughout. Outside, a private swimming pool, landscaped garden and generous veranda create an inviting space to relax or entertain. With underfloor heating, central air conditioning and a versatile basement ideal for a gym or cinema, every detail has been considered for comfortable living. Surrounded by natural beauty yet close to amenities, this is a true haven by the sea.

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**Guide price 1,390,000€ + VAT**