

LEFKOSIA

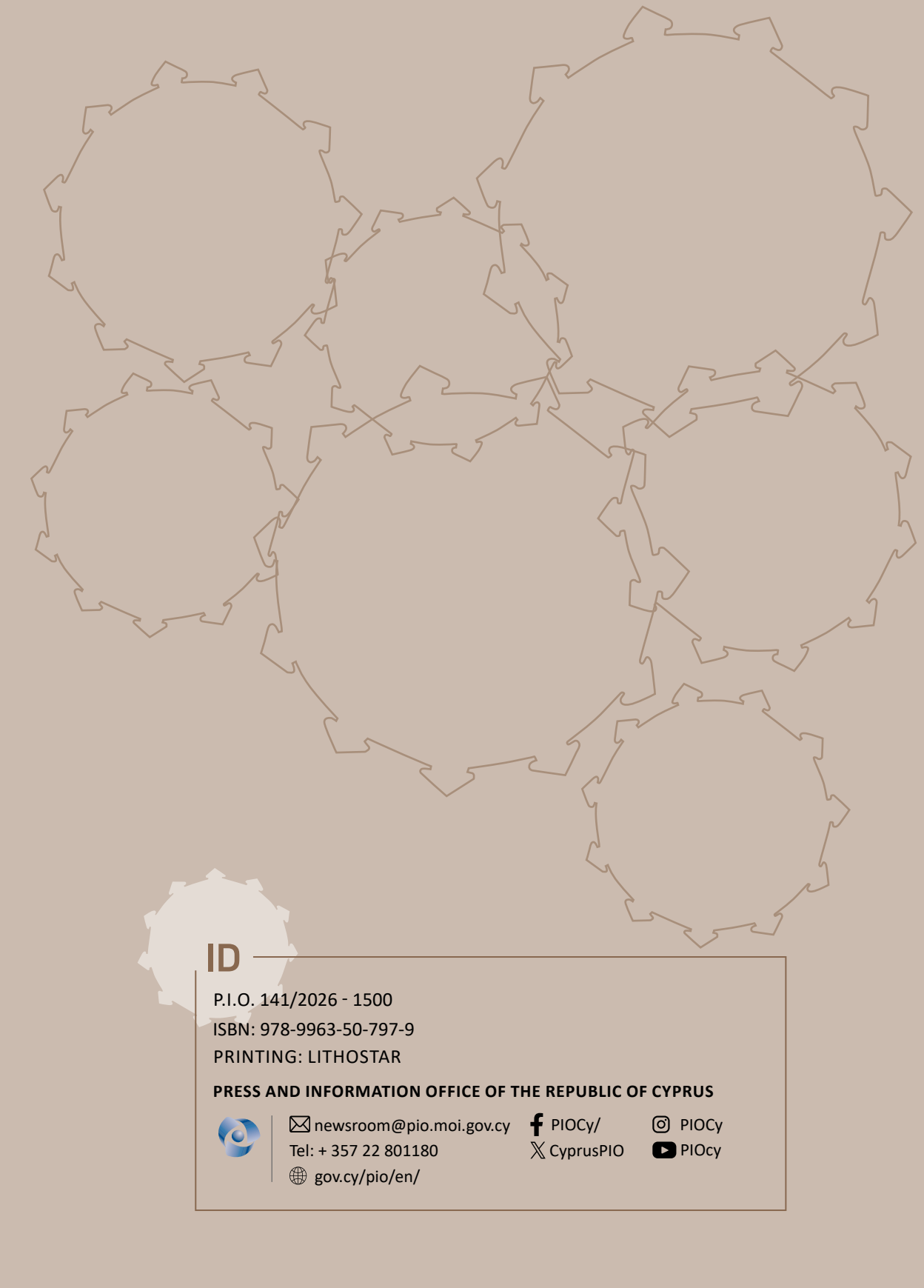
THE CITY GUIDE

**WHERE EVERY STREET
TELLS A STORY!**

THE WALLED CITY • THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES • MUSEUMS & ART



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The Venetian Walls

The design of the edition was inspired by the impressive Mediaeval Walls which encircle Lefkosa's inner city. Built in 1567, at the time of the Venetian rule in Cyprus, by engineer Giulio Savorgnan, these star-shaped Walls feature eleven heart-shaped bastions – Caraffa, Podocataro, Constanza, D'Avila, Tripoli, Roccas, Mula, Quirini, Barbaro, Loredan and Flatro – and three grand gates. Originally surrounded by a moat, the Walls are the city's most important 16th-century monument, defining the mediaeval Cypriot capital, Lefkosa. Moreover, their construction reflects the hard work of the people of Cyprus, and in particular the inhabitants of Lefkosa, whose hard labour brought this remarkable monument to life.





WELCOME NOTE

It is a true pleasure to present this guide as an invitation to discover Lefkosia, the capital of Cyprus, a city that embodies both the rich heritage and the modern spirit of our country.

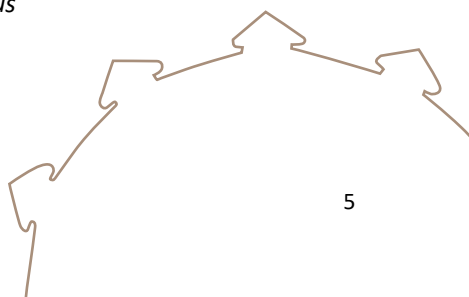
From its ancient roots and the unique charm of the Within the Walls City, with its museums, art galleries, churches, and historical monuments, to the city's vibrant energy as the island's commercial and cultural centre, there is so much to discover.

We invite you to explore Lefkosia's unique identity as a living bridge between the past and the present, the East and the West.

We hope that this guide will help you discover the lure of our city – its people, its captivating blend of cultures, and its enduring spirit – and to deepen your appreciation of Cyprus' role as a meeting point of civilisations, and as a proud member of the European family.

Ms Alikí Stylianou

*Director of the Press and Information Office
of the Republic of Cyprus*





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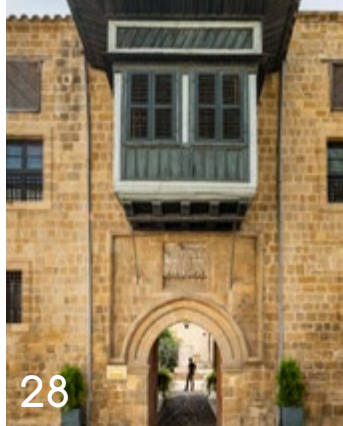
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Trikoupi Street

DISCOVERING LEFKOSIA

The capital and largest city of the island, Lefkosa is the political, financial, and cultural heart of Cyprus.

The Municipality of Lefkosa

The Municipality of Lefkosa was established in July 1878, at the beginning of British rule in Cyprus. Until 1882, its administrative area included only Lefkosa within the Walls. Today, Lefkosa is the metropolitan municipality and the administrative capital of the Lefkosa District. It comprises of the municipalities of Lefkosa, Agios Dometios, Aglantzia, and Egkomi.

Lefkosa in Numbers (2021 Population Census)

Municipality of Lefkosa:

56,848 residents
(22.2% of urban Lefkosa)

Lefkosa Now

Lefkosa is home to the main public service offices, governmental bodies, and key organisations. The Presidential Palace is also located here.

Its historic core is encircled by the 16th century Venetian Walls with eleven bastions and three gates.

Outside the Walls, Lefkosa has developed into a modern city with universities, embassies, shopping districts and business centres.

It is a major educational hub, home to the University of Cyprus and several private universities.

Major EU-funded regeneration projects are reshaping the city's urban landscape.

Lefkosia's History in 5 points

It was first settled around 2500 BC and was known as Ledra, one of the 12 ancient Cypriot kingdoms.

In the 11th century, it became the island's capital and an important administrative and military centre.

It flourished under the Lusignans (1192–1489) and was fortified with the Venetian Walls in the 16th century.

Conquered by the Ottomans in 1570, it was later transformed under British colonial rule (1878–1960).

Since the Turkish invasion of 1974, Lefkosia has been Europe's last divided capital. The physical division is known as The Green Line or buffer zone and is maintained by the United Nations peacekeeping force.

Lefkosia in Numbers (2021 Population Census)

Lefkosia district:

351,600 residents
(38% of the total population)

Lefkosia Skyline

Navigating the city

The best way to explore the city centre, around Makarios Avenue and within the Venetian Walls, is on foot. To reach other parts of Lefkosia, visitors can take taxis or buses using the organised public transport system, which starts from Plateia Solomou (Square).

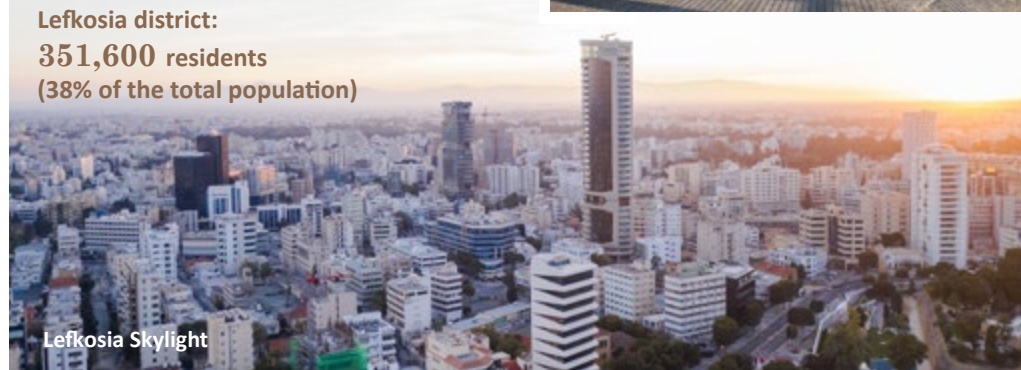
For timetables and routes:

publictransport.com.cy

Tel: 1416



Lefkosia Municipality Town Hall



A glossary of useful Greek words:

Καλημέρα (Kaliméra)	Good morning
Καλησπέρα (Kalisféra)	Good evening
Καληνύχτα (Kalinýchta)	Good night
Γεια σας (Geia sas)	Hello / Goodbye (formal or polite)
Ευχαριστώ (Efcharistó)	Thank you

Παρακαλώ (Parakaló)	Please / You're welcome
Ναι (Nai)	Yes
Όχι (Óchi)	No
Συγγνώμη (Signómi)	Excuse me / I'm sorry



WALKS IN **HISTORY**

LEFKOSIA WITHIN THE WALLS

The Venetian Walls of Lefkosia are a mosaic of the capital's history, architecture, and civilisations!





The Story

The first traces of Lefkosia's existence date back to 2500 BC. Its earliest recorded mention appears on a clay prism from 672 BC, where it was named "Lidr." It was later renamed "Lidra" and became one of the 12 Cypriot kingdoms founded by the Greek Achaeans after the Trojan War. In late antiquity, the city was known as "Leukothéon," or "City of the White Gods," a name that evolved into Lefkosia, while the Latinised "Nicosia" appeared under the Lusignans. Situated between the Troodos and Pentadaktylos mountains and developing around the Pedieos River, its inland position offered security from coastal invaders. During the period of Byzantine rule, Lefkosia was declared the island's capital, becoming an important administrative and military centre. Under the Lusignans, Lefkosia flourished with the construction of palaces and churches. The Venetians later constructed the star-shaped walls. The Ottomans captured the city in 1570 and their rule left behind mosques and baths, reshaping the city's identity. During the period of British rule in 1878, the city expanded beyond the Venetian Walls. Following independence in 1960, Lefkosia became the capital of the Republic of Cyprus. In 1974, Turkey invaded Cyprus and occupied 37% of the island's territory. Lefkosia became Europe's last divided capital, split by the Green Line; a physical division known also as the buffer zone.

Architecture

The architecture of the buildings in Lefkosia within the Walls narrates the capital's long



Venetian Walls



history. Within the Mediaeval Venetian Walls, there are ancient ruins and Gothic churches from the Lusignan era that were later converted into mosques. Examples include the Cross of Misirikkos in Plateia Faneromenis (Square). There are also buildings with coats of arms engraved in sandstone and houses featuring arches and wooden balconies. Neoclassical mansions from the 19th century stand alongside British colonial public buildings, with the date of construction elaborately carved into the iron door decoration. This mosaic of architecture, interwoven with Lefkosia's history, has long been home to artists and craftsmen. Beautifully restored houses now attract residents returning to the city within the Walls.

EU Funding

Following the Turkish invasion of 1974, Lefkosia within the Walls struggled to survive. Cyprus' accession to the European Union in 2004 provided the island, its capital, as well as the walled city with the opportunity to benefit from funding for development projects, including infrastructure and urban regeneration. European funding helped regenerate and revitalise Lefkosia within the Walls. Examples include the Regeneration & Revitalisation of the Lefkosia Inner City, the Inner Perimeter Redevelopment – Phase A (including Konstantinou Palaiologou Street along the Walls) and Creative Nicosia, which supports creative industries.

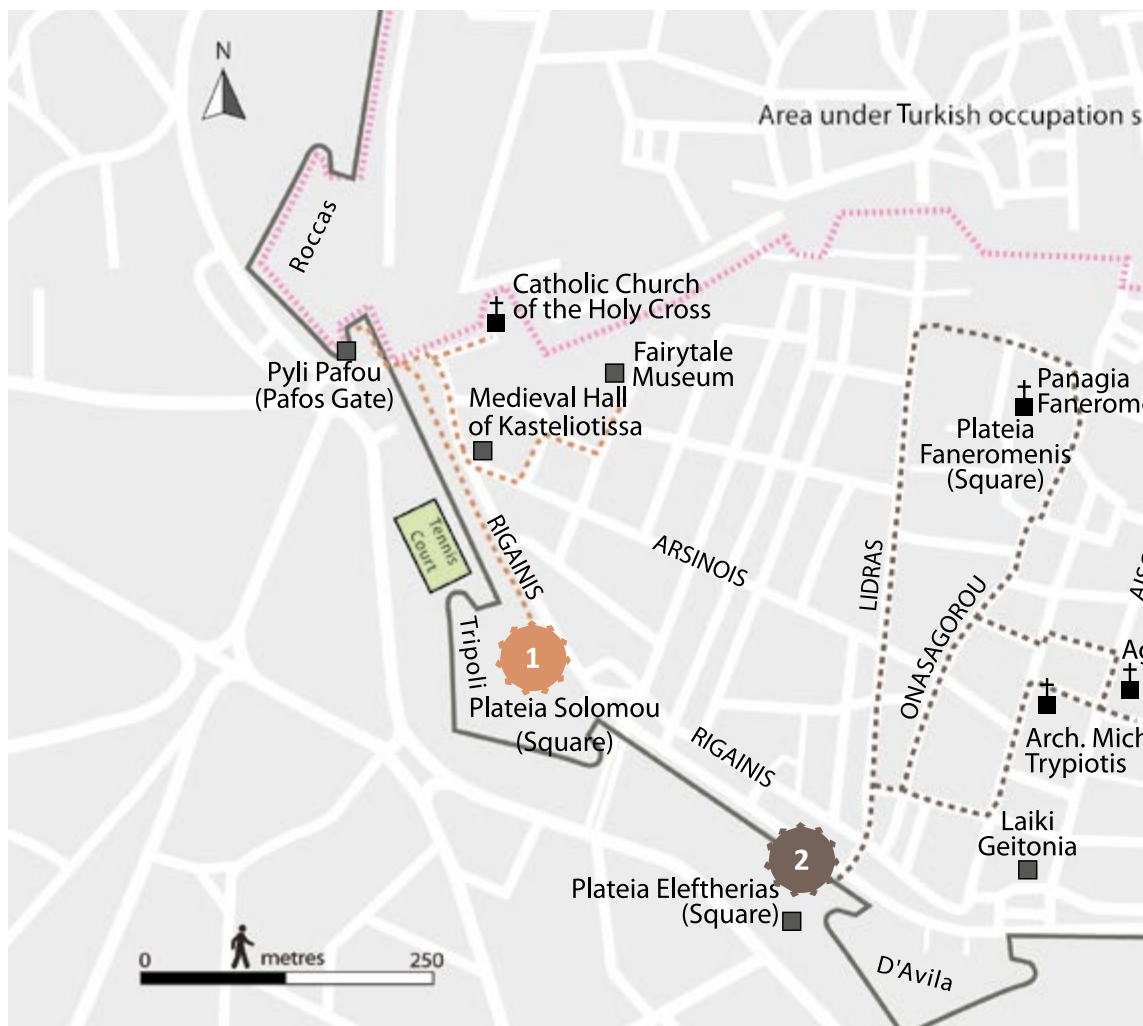
WALKS IN HISTORY

The areas: The best way to explore Lefkosia within the Walls is on foot.

Route 1: Starting from Plateia Solomou (Square), head to Pyli Pafou (Pafos Gate) and visit the Holy Cross Catholic Church, the Kastelliotissa Hall, and the Fairytale Museum before walking along the Green Line.

Route 2: From Plateia Eleftherias (Square), walk towards the pedestrian streets of Lidras and Onasagorou. Turn right into Laiki Geitonia and walk through the nearby streets to visit the small churches and light a candle inside, or continue down Onasagorou to Plateia Faneromenis (Square).

Photos: Stefanos Kouratzis

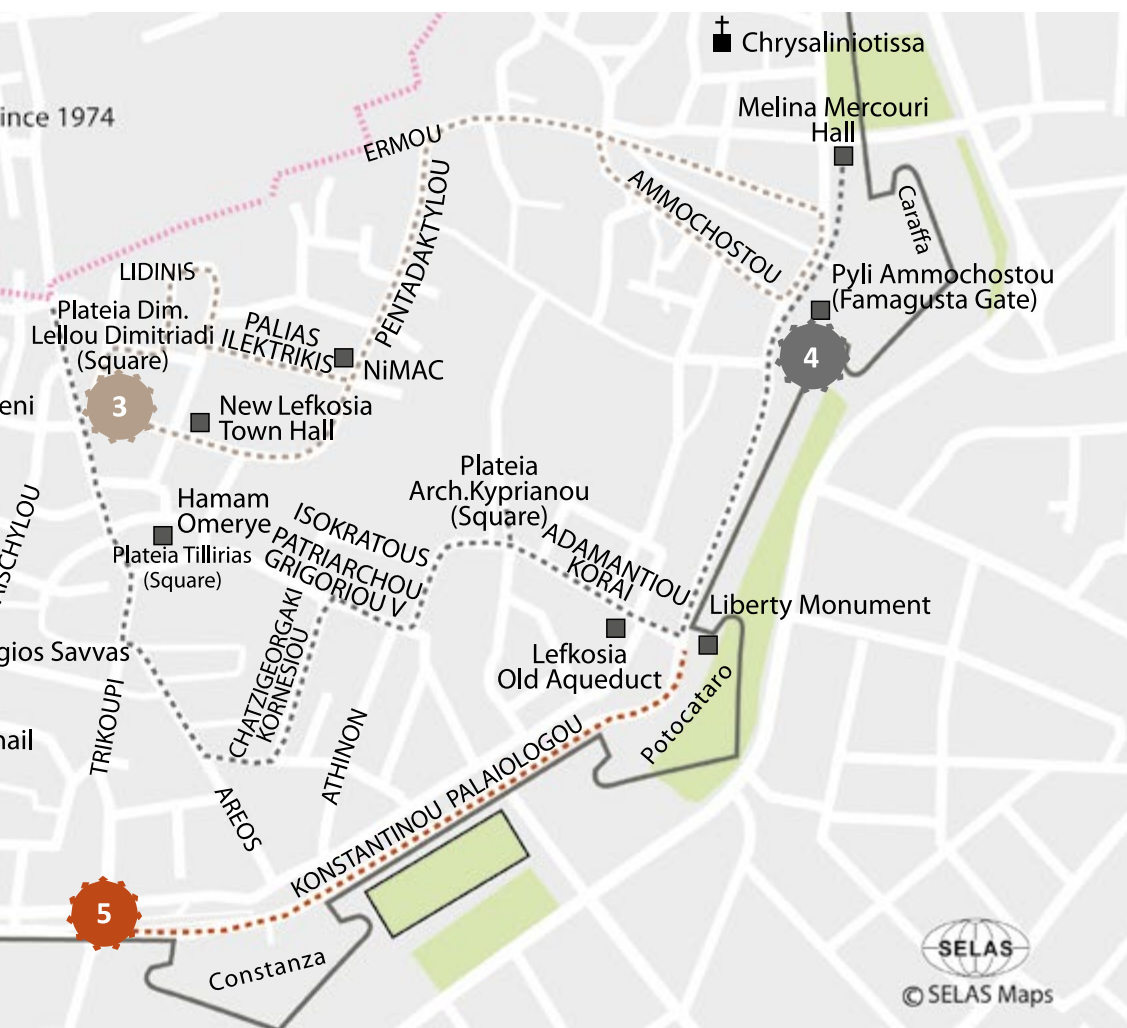


Route 3: Starting from Plateia Dimarchou Lellou Dimitriadi (Square), walk along Lidinis Street, head to the New Town Hall, take Palias Ilektrikis Street, and visit the Nicosia (Lefkosia) Municipal Arts Centre (NiMAC). Then turn onto Pentadaktylou Street and head to Ermou Street. Visit the neighbourhood of Chrysaliniotissa and finish at Pyli Ammochostou (Famagusta Gate).

Route 4: Starting from Pyli Ammochostou (Famagusta Gate), visit the Melina Mercouri Hall. Then turn left and walk towards the Old

Aqueduct. Head down to Adamantiou Korai Street to Plateia Arch. Kyprianou (Square). Then take Isokratous Street, turn onto Patriarchou Grigoriou Street, and then again onto Chatzigeorgaki Kornesiou Street. Finally, turn right onto Plateia Tillirias (Square) and finish at Trikoupi Street.

Route 5: From Konstantinou Palaiologou Street, walk straight ahead, passing the Constanza Bastion, and walk along the Walls until you reach the Liberty Monument.

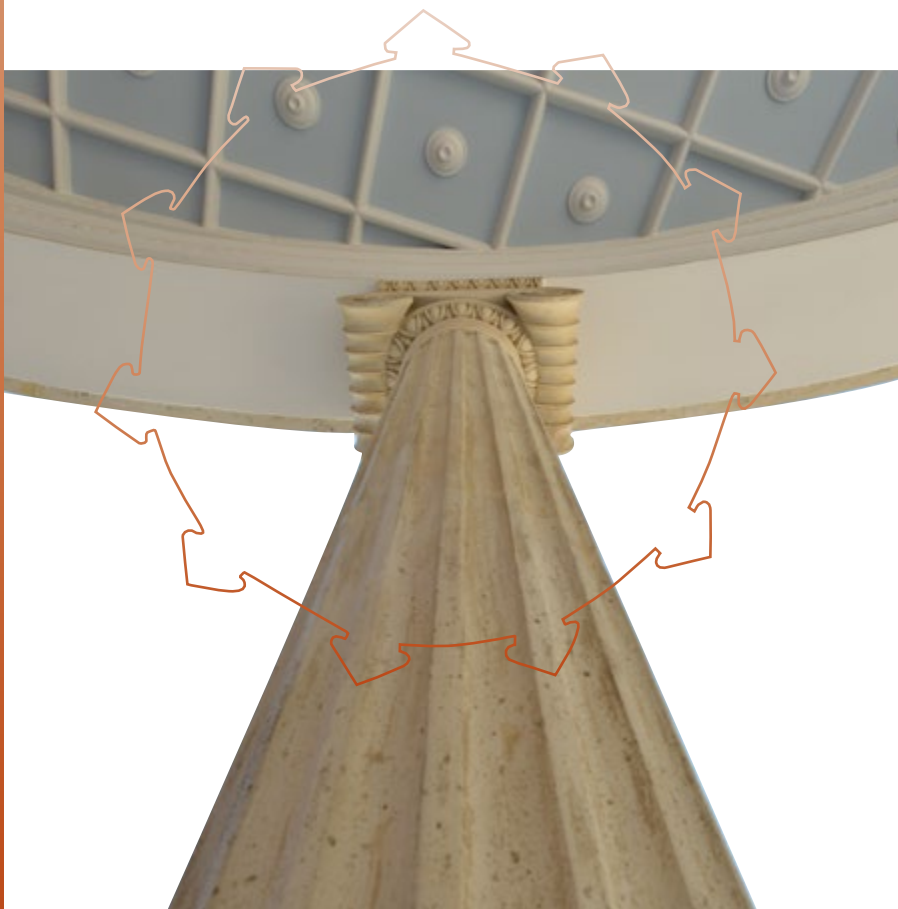




TIMELESS **VENUES**

VENUES OF HISTORY

Discover three truly special venues within
the Lefkosia Venetian Walls.





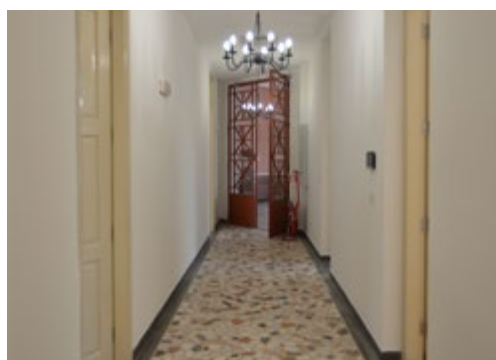
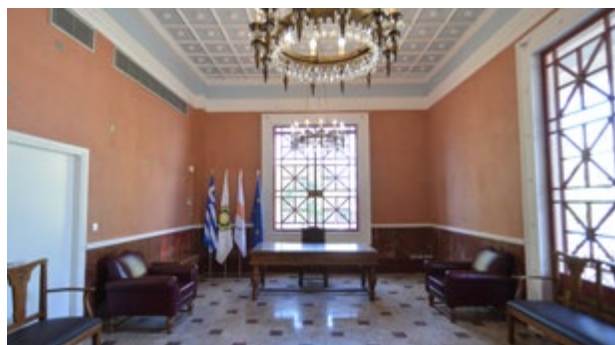
Old Town Hall

Nestled within the Lefkosia old town, these historic venues are a part of the capital that proudly preserves its heritage while embracing a vibrant present and an exciting future. Thanks to European Union funded projects, completed and ongoing, Lefkosia's old town is undergoing significant revitalisation. Each of the three venues, built in different eras, tells a unique chapter from the city's turbulent yet fascinating past.

Old Town Hall

Overlooking Plateia Eleftherias (Square), Lefkosia's Old Town Hall stands on the D'Avila Bastion. This iconic neoclassical building, with its striking marble Ionic columns and surrounding gardens, was constructed in 1930. Originally, it functioned as an entertainment venue known as Luna Park, before later housing the offices of the football club APOEL. In 1944, it was repurposed as the municipality relocated its operations to the building.

A major renovation in 1951 transformed its architectural style from colonial to neoclassical, giving it the distinguished appearance it retains today. The following year, in 1952, the mayor's office officially moved in, marking its new chapter as the permanent seat of Lefkosia's municipal administration and was formally



named the Town Hall of Lefkosia. In 2018, the municipality relocated its operations to the new Town Hall and, ever since, the Old Town Hall has taken on a new role as a venue hosting events.

***K. Palaologou Street, Plateia Eleftherias (Square)
Tel: +357 22 797000 (Lefkosia Municipality)***

TIMELESS VENUES



Mediaeval Hall of Kasteliotissa

Located right opposite Pafos Gate, Kasteliotissa Hall dates back to the Mediaeval period, probably around the 14th century. The first mention of this name was made by Stephane Lusignan, referring to one of the churches that existed in Lefkosia in his time, the church of Santa Clara, which was called Kasteliotissa.

According to Lusignan, this church was built on the site of a castle that was demolished by the Knight Templars during the siege of Lefkosia in 1192. Although no definitive information regarding the hall's original function has come to light, its architectural style, in combination with excavation findings, it seems that it was once an integral part of a large and impressive building complex, possibly the Lusignan palace. This palace was demolished by the Venetians, along with the Frankish Walls and numerous monasteries and churches, to make way for the new city fortifications, whose construction began in 1567.

Over the centuries, the hall served various purposes: during the Venetian and Ottoman periods, it was used as an armoury, while in 1847, the French historian Louis de Mas Latrie recorded that the hall formed part of artillery barracks, which was converted into a flour mill. From 1901 to 1936, Kasteliotissa Hall was used as a petroleum storage facility.

In 1936, it was brought under the control of the Department of Antiquities of Cyprus, which declared it an Ancient Monument of the First Schedule. In 1960, it was turned into a Mediaeval Museum. From 1987–1988, the Department of Antiquities of the Republic of



Cyprus carried the restoration of the monument with the aim of converting it into a Cultural Centre. Since its inauguration on 5 December 1995, the Mediaeval Hall of Kasteliotissa has served as a venue for cultural events.

Agiou Marona Street, Pyli Pafou (Pafos Gate)
Tel: +357 22 865889



Lefkosia Municipality Multifunctional Foundation (KEEAED)

KEEAED is a non-profit foundation that offers personalised employment and entrepreneurship counselling, aiming to support the development and empowerment of Lefkosia's local community. Its work focuses particularly on the city's most vulnerable groups, ensuring equal opportunities for all.

Services are available both in person and online, and include workshops, training seminars, skills development sessions, networking activities as well as meetings with specialised advisors.

The foundation is housed in a beautifully restored two-storey urban mansion dating back to the 19th century, brought back to life with EU funding. The mansion was built by Nicolas Tsamandas, as a gift to his daughter, Maria. Dr Aristodemos Finiefs, Maria's husband, had his surgery facilities in the mansion. Dr Finiefs was one of the first highly qualified Cypriot doctors during the late Ottoman period.

In subsequent years, the mansion was rented out. During the EOKA liberation struggle for independence from British rule (1955–59), fighters used the building as a fort. Consequently, the building sustained serious damage from bullets and its original wooden doors were removed.

Following the Turkish invasion of 1974, Rima Maria Outram, Maria's granddaughter, generously loaned the property to the Republic of Cyprus and the Municipality of



KEEAED



Lefkosia, on the condition that it be used for non-profit purposes. With financial support from the EU, the Government carried out extensive restoration works, transforming the mansion into a beautiful building that is now dedicated to supporting and enriching the lives of Lefkosia's citizens.

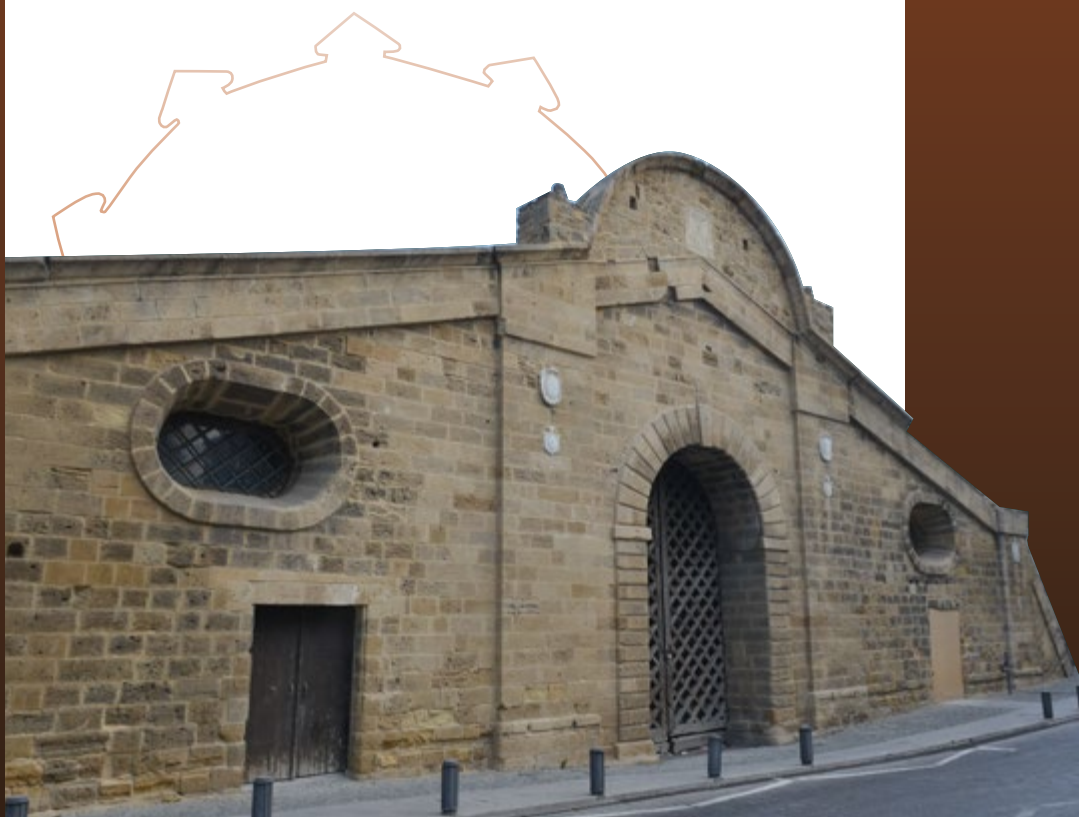
***Junction of Trikoupi & Dionysou Streets
Tel: +357 22 797850***



WALLED LEFKOSIA **MONUMENTS**

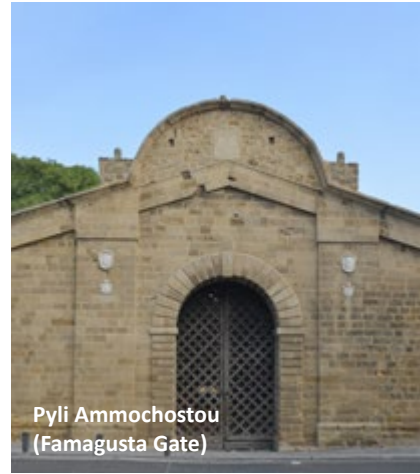
A GLIMPSE OF HISTORY

Within Lefkosia's Venetian Walls stand monuments that tell stories of conquest, culture, and resilience that shaped the city's identity over the centuries.





Mediaeval Venetian Walls



Pyli Ammochostou
(Famagusta Gate)

Mediaeval Venetian Walls

These impressive Walls surround the old town of Lefkosia. In the 14th century, during the Lusignan period, the city was protected by large mediaeval forts. The forts were later demolished by the Venetians and, in 1567, engineer Giulio Savorgnan was appointed to design the new Walls. They included eleven heart-shaped bastions, each named after prominent Venetian families including Caraffa, Constanza, and D'Avila as well as three gates (Porta Giuliana, Porta San Domenico, and Porta del Proveditore) adjacent to the bastions. The Walls were surrounded by an 80-metre-wide moat, filled with water diverted from the Pedieos River, that is now used as gardens, parks, sports fields, sculpture displays, and car parks. When the city was under the Ottomans, the Walls were repaired, and in the late 19th century, during British rule, the moat adjoining the D'Avila Bastion was repurposed and became the Lefkosia Municipal Gardens.

Pyli Ammochostou (Famagusta Gate)

Pyli Ammochostou (Famagusta Gate) is the most prominent of the three main gates in the Venetian Walls and was built in 1567 by



Mediaeval Venetian Walls

engineer Giulio Savorgnan in the Venetian Renaissance military style. It was originally called Porta Giuliana, after the engineer, but was later renamed, as it led to the port city of Ammochostos (Famagusta). Apart from an impressive façade, its vaulted passage features an 11-metre dome, with a circular oculus, similar to that of Rome's Pantheon, and a wide pathway with rooms on each side. In 1980–81, the Municipality



WALLED LEFKOSIA MONUMENTS

of Lefkosia carried out restoration works and transformed it into one of the most important cultural centres. This led to the Gate earning an Europa Nostra International Prize for conservation in 1984.

Famagusta Gate Cultural Centre

Pyli Ammochostou (Famagusta Gate) remains one of Lefkosia's key landmarks and an important cultural centre. Since its restoration in 1981, it has welcomed exhibitions, concerts, lectures, theatre productions, and a variety of events. A recent renovation has provided Pyli Ammochostou (Famagusta Gate) a contemporary facelift, highlighting its beauty, whilst improving accessibility.

Athinon Avenue / Tel: +357 22 797660

The Lefkosia Old Aqueduct

A few metres away from the Pancyprian Gymnasium lies the Lefkosia Old Aqueduct, the oldest in Cyprus. It was built in the

18th century by the Ottoman governor Silahtar Mustafa Aga, as part of Lefkosia's original water supply system, in order to divert mountain water to palaces and wealthy homes within the city. The aqueduct started from the Keryneia Gate in the north of the city within the Walls and ended at Pyli Ammochostou (Famagusta Gate) in the east. During demolition works, 11 arches, part of the aqueduct, were revealed and are visible today.

Junction of Nikiforou Foka Street & Adamantiou Korai Street

Melina Mercouri Hall

Located next to the Pyli Ammochostou (Famagusta Gate), the Melina Mercouri Hall is an important municipal venue used for an array of cultural activities, including seminars, small concerts, exhibitions, and performances. When its renovation was completed in 1995, the Hall was named after



The Lefkosia Old Aqueduct

the then Minister of Tourism of the Hellenic Republic, Melina Mercouri, in the context of the European Cultural Month.

Athinon Avenue / Tel: +357 22 797682

The Archbishop's Palace

The New Archbishop's Palace stands in an important historic square near the Pyli Ammochostou (Famagusta Gate), right next to the Old Archbishop's Palace. The Old Archbishop's Palace, built in the 18th century, featured stone staircases, arches, offices, reception rooms, gardens, and stables. The Great Synod Hall hosted church hierarchs and leaders, while the Small Synod was used for judicial matters and hospitality. It now hosts the Folk Art Museum and the Agonos Museum (Museum of the 1955–1959 EOKA National Liberation Struggle). The New Archbishop's Palace was built in 1960 by Archbishop Makarios III in a neo-Byzantine style. Other than being the residence of the Archbishop, it also houses the Byzantine Museum, the Art Gallery, and the Library of the Archbishopric.

Plateia Arch. Kyprianou (Square)

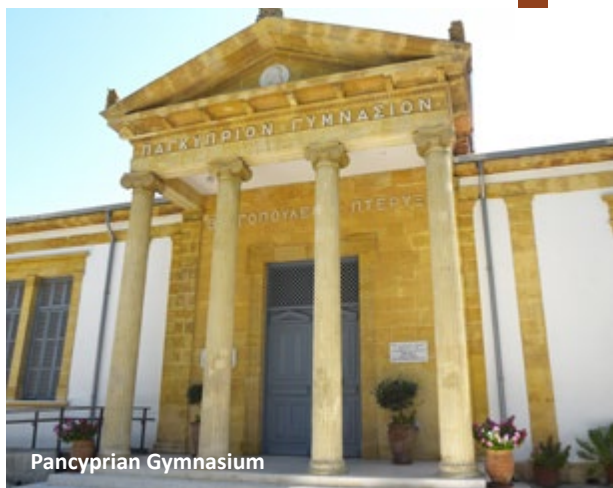
Tel: +357 22 554600 (New Archbishop's Palace)

Pancyprian Gymnasium

Opposite the Archbishop's Palace stands the Pancyprian Gymnasium, the island's oldest secondary education school. Founded in 1812 by Archbishop Kyprianos, during the Ottoman rule, it was initially named the "Greek School". In 1893, it expanded and incorporated a lyceum and was renamed "Pancyprian Gymnasium". The original structure was destroyed by fire in 1920, but was rebuilt in neoclassical style. Throughout its history, the Pancyprian Gymnasium has played a defining role, with students participating in the Greek War of Independence, the Balkan Wars, and the EOKA Liberation Struggle in 1955–1959. On the premises, apart from the classrooms, the Severios Library (est. 1949) is also



Melina Mercouri Hall



Pancyprian Gymnasium



The Archbishop's Palace

WALLED LEFKOSIA MONUMENTS

housed, holding 60,000 rare works and, in a 12-room building next to it, the Pancyprian Gymnasium Museums are located.

Plateia Arch. Kyprianou (Square)

Tel: +357 22 466711

The Liberty Monument

Across Lefkosia's Old Aqueduct stands the Liberty Monument, an imposing landmark with a diverse history. Situated on the Podocattaro Bastion, it was erected in 1973 to honour the EOKA fighters who resisted British colonial rule during 1955–59. Designed by renowned sculptor Ioannis Notaras with architectural input from Pefkios Georgiades, the monument features 17 bronze figures arranged on three levels against a white marble backdrop. At its top, the Goddess of Liberty raises her hand in faith and hope. Though originally planned for inauguration in 1974, the Turkish invasion delayed its unveiling until March 2025, 51 years later.

Nikiforos Fokas Street

Hamam Omerye

The impressive Hamam Omerye was built as a gift to Lefkosia by Lala Mustafa Pasha in 1570–71, shortly after the Ottoman conquest, and named in honour of Caliph Omar. Traditionally, women and children under ten used the hammam in the morning, while men attended from the afternoon onwards. The building has a classic Ottoman bathhouse design: a vaulted reception hall with an octagonal cistern that leads through tepid rooms to the hot, domed chamber. Restored beautifully in 2002–2004 under the Lefkosia Master Plan, it received the Europa Nostra award in 2005. Nowadays, Hamam Omerye continues to offer traditional bathhouse rituals.

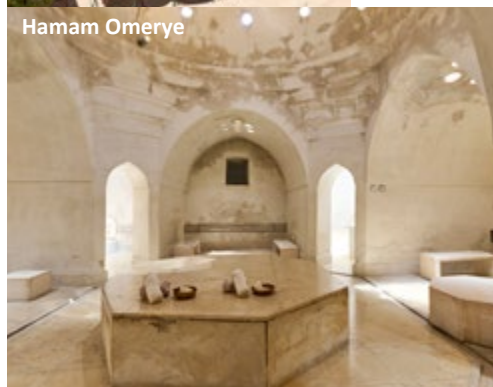
8 Plateia Tillirias (Square) / Tel: +357 22 460006
web: www.hamamomerye.com



The Liberty Monument



Hamam Omerye



Laiki Geitonia

Nestled inside the Walls of Lefkosia, just east of Plateia Eleftherias (Square), Laiki Geitonia (meaning “Traditional Neighbourhood”) was built to resemble a typical neighbourhood of the 1900s. This traditional urban architecture consists of materials like wood, sandstone, and mudbrick, and features wooden balconies, cobbled-front courtyards, a main square, and tiled arcades. Originally confined to Aristokyprou and Praxandrou Streets, it soon extended to other neighbouring streets. Amenities in Laiki Geitonia include cafés and restaurants, cultural venues, workshops, as well as shops selling traditional crafts and delicacies. Laiki Geitonia was inaugurated on 21 December 1983 and awarded the FIJET Pomme d’Or in 1988.



Pafos Gate

Pafos Gate, built by Giulio Savorgnan in 1567–1568 and originally called Porta San Domenico, served as Lefkosia’s western entrance and was later renamed, as it led to the city of Pafos. The gate is architecturally simple: a simple opening in the thick wall, topped with a barrel-vaulted roof. Despite its modest design, it boasts a rich history. Under Ottoman rule, it functioned as a military post,

while under British rule, its upper structure became the Cyprus Police Headquarters. Recent excavations revealed the original cobbled roadway and remnants of the Arab Ahmet aqueduct, reaffirming Pafos Gate’s place as one of Lefkosia’s most cherished landmarks.

Pafos Avenue / Tel: + 357 22 797000



SACRED HERITAGE

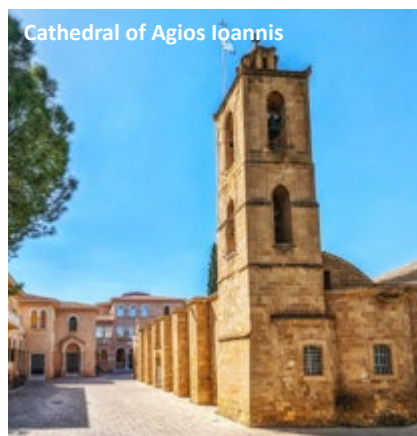
THE HISTORIC CHURCHES WITHIN THE WALLS OF LEFKOSIA

Lefkosia's history survives on its Orthodox churches, rich in faith and culture. Explore them on foot and discover the city's spiritual and architectural treasures.





Church of Panagia Chrysaliniotissa



Cathedral of Agios Ioannis

Cathedral of Agios Ioannis

Located next to the Archbishop's Palace and opposite the historic Pancyprian Gymnasium, this important cathedral was built by Archbishop Nikiforos in 1662, with a narthex added by Archbishop Chrysanthos in 1779. The church is single-aisled, barrel-vaulted, standing on the ruins of the mediaeval Benedictine Monastery of Agios Ioannis tou Pipi. It is worth mentioning that it is the only church from the Ottoman period to be fully decorated with impressive interior frescoes, dating from the 18th and 19th centuries. Its 18th century wooden iconostasis is considered one of the finest in Cyprus.

Plateia Arch. Kyprianou (Square) / Tel: +357 22 554600
Opening hours: Mon–Fri 08:00–12:00, 14:00–16:00, Sat 08:00–12:00 (and during liturgies)

Church of Agios Antonios (Dependency of the Holy Monastery of Apostolos Barnabas)

This beautiful church was built in the 18th century, during the Ottoman period. Located near the House of Dragoman Hadjigeorgakis Kornesios, it preserves the style of the churches of that period: single-aisled with a tiled roof. When entering the church, one cannot but notice the beautiful, carved

wooden iconostasis and the elaborately sculpted stone bell tower.

Agiou Antoniou Street / Tel: +357 22 432838
Opening hours: Mon–Sat 07:00–11:00, Call for afternoon hours

Church of Panagia Chrysaliniotissa

This church, located in the parish named after it and near the Pyli Ammochostou (Famagusta Gate), is considered the most important ecclesiastical monument in Lefkosia. It is the only remaining church within the Walls of Lefkosia that dates back to the Middle Byzantine period. Built by Helena Palaiologina, the Greek-born wife of King John II of Cyprus, it was originally erected as a cross-in-square domed structure. Over the centuries, this L-shaped church has undergone a series of architectural additions which have altered, but not erased, its original identity. Many of its most valued Byzantine icons are preserved and exhibited at the Byzantine Museum in Lefkosia.

Chrysaliniotissas Street / Tel: +357 22 430857
Opening hours: 08:30–12:30, 15:00–18:00, closed Wed and Sun



SACRED HERITAGE

Church of Agios Kassianos

This small church, located close to the Church of Panagia Chrysaliniotissa, was built in 1854 on the site of an older church, according to an inscription on its walls. It has a two-aisled structure, and its most treasured relic is the clerical hat, or “skoufos” in Greek, of Agios Kassianos, which is believed to be miraculous. The Church is well known for the Orthodox Easter services and the Epitafios procession.

Agiou Kassianou Street / Tel: +357 22 774947
Call for opening hours



Church of Agios Kassianos

of bishops and priests executed by the Ottomans in 1821.

**Onasagorou Street / Tel: +357 22 673296,
+357 22 660761 / Open Daily: 06:30–18:30
(November to March), 06:30–20:00 (April to October)**

Church of Agios Eleftherios

Hidden on Onasagorou Street, this small church is among the seven dependencies of the Machairas Monastery. Ethnomartyr Archbishop Kyprianos built it in 1804 on land donated by a devout woman, Maria, whose tomb remains in the courtyard. Constructed without Ottoman permission under the pretense of a monastery store, it surprises unsuspecting passers-by with its discreet entrance, leading to an interior adorned with icons, beautiful frescoes, and a date inscription of 1806 above its wooden door.

**Onasagorou Street / Tel: + 357 22 664737,
+357 22 363824, +357 22 680722 / Opening
hours: Mon–Sat 09:00–12:00, 16:30–18:00,
Sun morning during Liturgy**

Church of Agios Savvas

Built in 1851, it is one of Lefkosia’s most distinctive churches, likely standing on the site of an earlier church that once belonged to the Patriarchate of Jerusalem. The Church of Agios Savvas used to have lodgings that sheltered the homeless, which were later repurposed as the Agios Savvas Urban School. It houses a silver chalice dating from



Church of Panagia Faneromeni

Church of Panagia Faneromeni (Our Lady of Revelation)

An important landmark, the Church of Panagia Faneromeni was once the largest Orthodox church within Lefkosia’s Venetian Walls. Built in 1872 on the site of a former convent, where nuns practiced silk weaving, it twice resisted attempts by the Ottomans to convert it into a mosque. This three-aisled basilica, crowned with a lantern-type dome, preserves a few frescoes from around 1930 and an exquisitely carved wooden iconostasis dating back to the 18th-19th centuries. To its east, a marble mausoleum holds the remains

1501, with two handles, each shaped like a serpent, as well as the miraculous icons of Agios Georgios Exorinos and Agios Fanourios.

Junction of Aischylou and Agiou Savva Streets
Tel: +357 22 755120 / Open Daily 08:00–12:00, 17:00–18:00 (April to September) 08:00–12:00, 16:00–17:30 (October to March, closed on Wed and Sun afternoon)

Church of Archangelos Michail Tripiotis

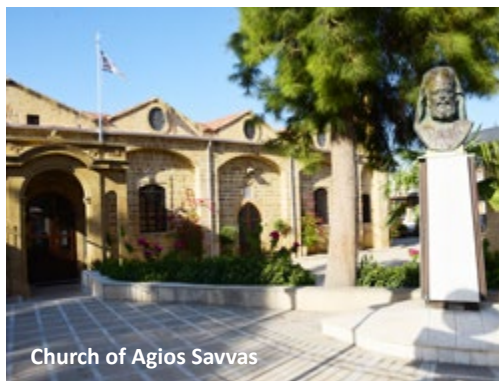
Among Lefkosia's most beautiful churches, named after the parish of Tripiotis, once one of the city's most densely populated areas. The then Archbishop of Cyprus, Germanos, laid the foundation stone in May 1695 and the church was completed within the same year. This three-aisled domed basilica is regarded as the most important church built during the Ottoman period. Among its important icons and 19th-century iconostasis lies the oldest icon in the church, that of the Virgin Mary holding the Christ Child, flanked by Ioakim and Anna, strongly influenced by 15th-century Italian art.

Junction of Archangelou Michail and Solonos Street
Tel: +357 22 663601 / Opening hours: 07:00–12:00, open during vespers in the afternoon

Catholic Church of the Holy Cross

Located near Pafos Gate, this church dates back to 1900 and serves the local and international Roman Catholic community. It was inaugurated in 1902, replacing an older church built in 1642. Its construction was financially supported by the Spanish Royal Family and Franciscan monks. The Spanish influence is evident in the wooden statues as well as the ceiling which is decorated with royal coats of arms. The church has a simple and elegant façade, a circular dome ceiling and ten chapels. The sanctuary was renovated in 1998, adding stained glass and wooden statues of the Virgin Mary and Saint Joseph.

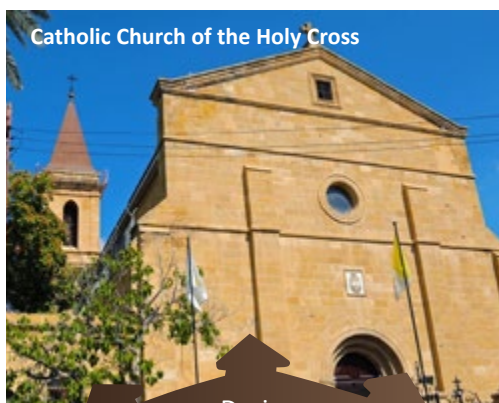
Pafos Gate / Tel: +357 22 662132 / Open daily.
For mass times: web: www.cypruscatholicchurch.org



Church of Agios Savvas



Church of Archangelos Michail Tripiotis



Catholic Church of the Holy Cross

During the procession of the Epitaphs on Good Friday, the Churches of Panagia Faneromeni, Archangelos Michail Tripiotis, and Agios Savvas meet at Plateia Eleftherias (Square).



WALLED LEFKOSIA **MUSEUMS**

A WALK THROUGH HISTORY

The museums within Lefkosa's Venetian Walls reveal centuries of history, artistry, and imagination.





Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation



Archaeological Museum of the George and Nefeli Giabra Pierides Collection

Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation

The Foundation, established in 1984, is housed in the Bank's former administrative building, dating back to 1936. It presents the Cypriot civilisation in the fields of archaeology, history, art, literature, and the environment through permanent and temporary exhibitions, lectures, publications, and international collaborations. It houses four permanent collections: the Contemporary Art Collection, the Cyprus Map Collection, the Manuscripts and Rare Books Collection, the Engraving, Old Photographs and Watercolours Collection. The Foundation also curates the Museum of the History of Cypriot Coinage and the Archaeological Museum of the George and Nefeli Giabra Pierides Collection.

86–90 Faneromenis Street / Tel: +357 22 128157
web: www.boccf.org / Opening hours: Mon–Sun 10:00–19:00

The Leventis Municipal Museum of Lefkosia

Step inside this neo-classical building and discover the history of Lefkosia. Established in partnership between the A. G. Leventis Foundation and the Municipality of Lefkosia, this award-winning museum has been



The Leventis Municipal Museum of Lefkosia

welcoming visitors since 1989. Through its extensive collections of more than 10,000 exhibits, including maps, documents, paintings, etchings and costumes, the museum presents the history of the capital across seven major periods: Chalcolithic, Byzantine, Frankish, Venetian, Ottoman, British, and modern. There are also temporary exhibitions, workshops, lectures, etc.

15–17 Ippokratous Street, Laiki Geitonia
Tel: +357 22 661475 / web: www.leventismuseum.org.cy
Opening hours: Tue–Sun 10:00–16:30



WALLED LEFKOSIA MUSEUMS



Nicosia (Lefkosia) Municipal Arts Centre (NiMAC)

Housed in the city's original power station from the early 20th century, NiMAC (est.1994) is Cyprus' oldest and largest contemporary art centre. Established in partnership with the Lefkosia Municipality and the Pierides Foundation, its restoration was awarded the Europa Nostra Award. Since its opening, NiMAC has organised and presented important exhibitions, many in collaboration with international art institutions, such as Miro of Majorca, Picasso the Engraver, Cyprus in Venice, etc. The centre also runs workshops for children and adults, conferences, cinema festivals, etc. Its facilities include the Demetrios Z. Pierides History of Art Library with over 30,000 books, the Cyprus Visual Arts Archive in collaboration with the Cyprus Chamber of Fine Arts, a shop and a bar-restaurant.

19 Palias Ilektrikis Street / Tel: +357 22 797400
web: www.nimac.org.cy / Open only during exhibitions: Wed-Sat 10:00-20:00, Sun 10:00-18:00, Mon & Tue closed



The Postal Museum

The Postal Museum (est. 1981) presents the island's postal history from the Venetian period to the present day. Housed in a restored mansion, its exhibits include rare philatelic material from the 18th century onwards, such as stamps from the British colonial era featuring Queen Victoria, the 1928 Cypriot series, first-day covers, air letters, postmarks and postal equipment.

3B Agiou Savva Street / Tel: +357 22 304711
web: www.cypruspost.post/en/museum
Opening hours: Mon-Fri 09:00-15:00, Sat 09:00-13:00

Ethnological Museum – House of Hadjigeorgakis Kornosios

The House of Hadjigeorgakis Kornosios, built in 1793, is the most important example of urban architecture from the Ottoman period. It was the residence of Kornosios, a highly educated Greek Cypriot who served as a dragoman, the official interpreter for the Sultan's Council and the Orthodox Christian community. Today, the House functions as the Ethnological Museum. At its centre is a courtyard with a fountain, a hamam and rooms. On the upper floor, visitors can see family heirlooms, bedrooms

and the reception room, which is decorated with impressive wood carvings.

In 1988, the House received the Europa Nostra Award.

20 Patriarchou Grigoriou Street

Tel: +357 22 305316 / Opening hours: Tue–Fri 08:30–15:30, Sat 09:30–16:30

Centre of Visual Arts and Research (CVAR)

An old inn, later functioning as a flour mill, was transformed in 2014 into CVAR, a cultural and research space dedicated to Cyprus and its neighbours. Home to the Costas and Rita Severis collections, it includes more than 1,000 works of art by artists travelling to Cyprus during the 18th–20th centuries, antique Cypriot and European costumes, embroideries and textiles as well as a library and research centre with over 20,000 volumes. CVAR also hosts workshops and seminars as well as other activities.

285 Ermou Street / Tel: +357 22 300994

web: cvar.severis.org / Opening hours: Tue–Sun 09:30–17:00 (From 15 October to 15 May), Mon–Sat 09:30–17:00 (From 15 May to 15 October)

Hambis Municipal Printmaking Museum

Hambis Tsangaris Municipal Printmaking Museum Nicosia (est. 2014) is a collaboration between the Municipality of Lefkosia and the Hambis Printmaking School-Museum in the district of Lemesos, founded by the celebrated Cypriot printmaker Hambis Tsangaris. The museum displays over 3,000 original works, covering every printmaking technique by local and international artists from the 16th century onwards. Its archive includes rare books, maps, tools, plates, photographs and documents.

Hambis Tsangaris received the European Heritage Award / Europa Nostra Award in 2023.

55–59 Ammochostou Street / Tel: +357 22 496930

web: hambismuseum.cy / Opening hours: Wed–Sat 10:00–13:00 (until 13:30 from May to July), 15:00–17:00 (until 17:00 from May to July), closed in August



House of Hadjigeorgakis Kornosios



CVAR



Hambis Municipal
Printmaking Museum

WALLED LEFKOSIA MUSEUMS

The Pancyprian Gymnasium Museums

The Pancyprian Gymnasium Museums, housed in a 12-room building, present the history of Cyprus and of the school. The collections include the Museum of the Pancyprian Gymnasium's history, archaeological and coin collections, old maps and weapons, a Natural History Museum and an art gallery featuring works by renowned painters who once taught or studied at the school. The collections are completed by the full-length sculpture of the "Blessing Christ," a unique example of Gothic Art.

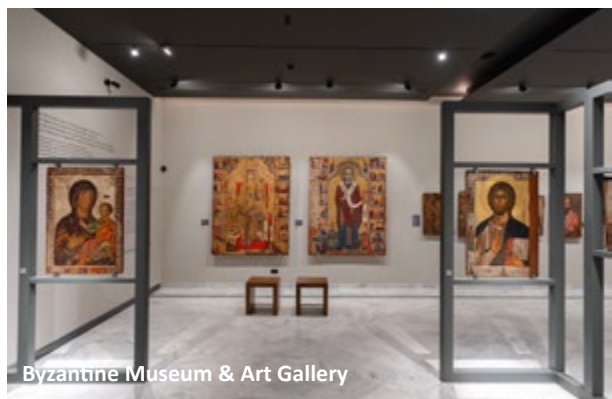
Agiou Ioannou & Thiseos Streets / Tel: +357 22 466014
web: lyk-pagkyprion-lef.schools.ac.cy
Opening hours: Mon, Tue, Thu, and Fri 09:30–14:45, Wed 09:30–16:00, Sat 09:30–12:30

Archbishop Makarios III Foundation Cultural Centre: Byzantine Museum & Art Gallery

Next to the Archbishop's Palace, the Archbishop Makarios III Cultural Foundation houses both the Byzantine Museum and the Art Gallery. The Byzantine Museum hosts the richest Byzantine Art collection in Cyprus, with approximately 230 icons from the 9th to the 19th centuries, alongside examples of Cypriot Byzantine minor art, including sacred relics, vessels and vestments. Among its most notable exhibits are the famous mosaics from the Church of Panagia Kanakarias in the village of Lythragkomi, dating back to the 6th century, which were repatriated after being stolen from the occupied part of the island. The Art Gallery is home to a distinguished European Art Collection, acquired in 1963 by Archbishop Makarios III. It displays work from the 15th to the 19th century, featuring landscapes to portraits, Western Art, Greece



The Pancyprian Gymnasium Museums



Byzantine Museum & Art Gallery

with emphasis on works inspired by the Greek revolution of 1821 and landscapes, as well as 20th century Cypriot Art. Moreover, the gallery hosts exhibitions and educational programmes.

Plateia Arch. Kyprianou (Square) / Tel: +357 22 430008
web: www.makariosfoundation.org.cy
Opening hours: Tue–Sat 09:30–17:00

Folk Art Museum

Located on the ground floor of the Old Archbishop's Palace, the Gothic-style building dates back to the 15th century. The museum (est. 1937) boasts more than 5,000 items showcasing Cypriot folk art from the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Exhibits include embroidery, lace, costumes, pottery, metalwork, basketry, folk paintings, leatherwork and woodcarving. Important artworks are the 19th-century door of Agios Mamas Church, referenced in Nobel laureate George Seferis' poem "Little Things of Cyprus" and the paintings "The Wedding" by M. Kashialos, "Karpasitissa" by I. Kissonergis, and "Lapithos" by A. Stylianou.

Plateia Arch. Kyprianou (Square)

Tel: +357 22 432578 / web: www.cypriotstudies.org

Opening hours: Mon 10:00–14:00, Tue–Fri 9:00–16:00, Sat 09:00–13:00

Fairytale Museum

Located in a preserved mansion near Pafos Gate, Fairytale Museum, established in 2017, celebrates the cultural heritage of fairy tales, myths, legends and traditions from Cyprus and around the world. It is an interactive space where children and adults explore the art of storytelling through creative exhibits, such as hidden pathways, miniature figurines, and many more. The Museum also hosts book presentations and workshops.

32–34 Granikou Street / Tel: +357 22 376522

web: www.fairytalemuseum.org.cy / Opening hours: Sat 10:00–14:00

State Gallery of Contemporary Art (SPEL)

Designed by the modernist architect Stavros Economou, the building is located opposite Pyli Ammochostou (Famagusta Gate) and housed the Lefkosia Co-operative Credit Company (SPEL) from 1965. It was later acquired and redesigned to become the gallery's second venue, which opened in 2019. Today, SPEL presents exhibitions and events focusing on modern and contemporary art, architecture and design.

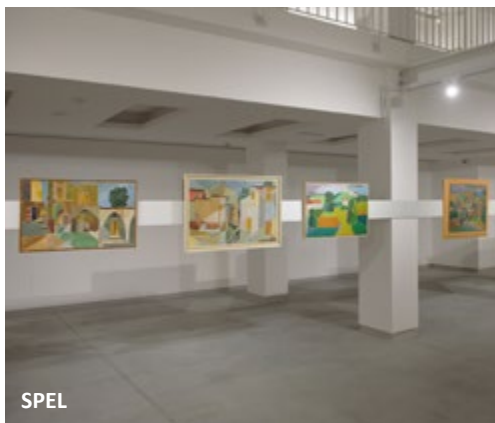
73 Ammochostou Street / Tel: +357 22 479600
Call for opening hours



Folk Art Museum



Fairytale Museum



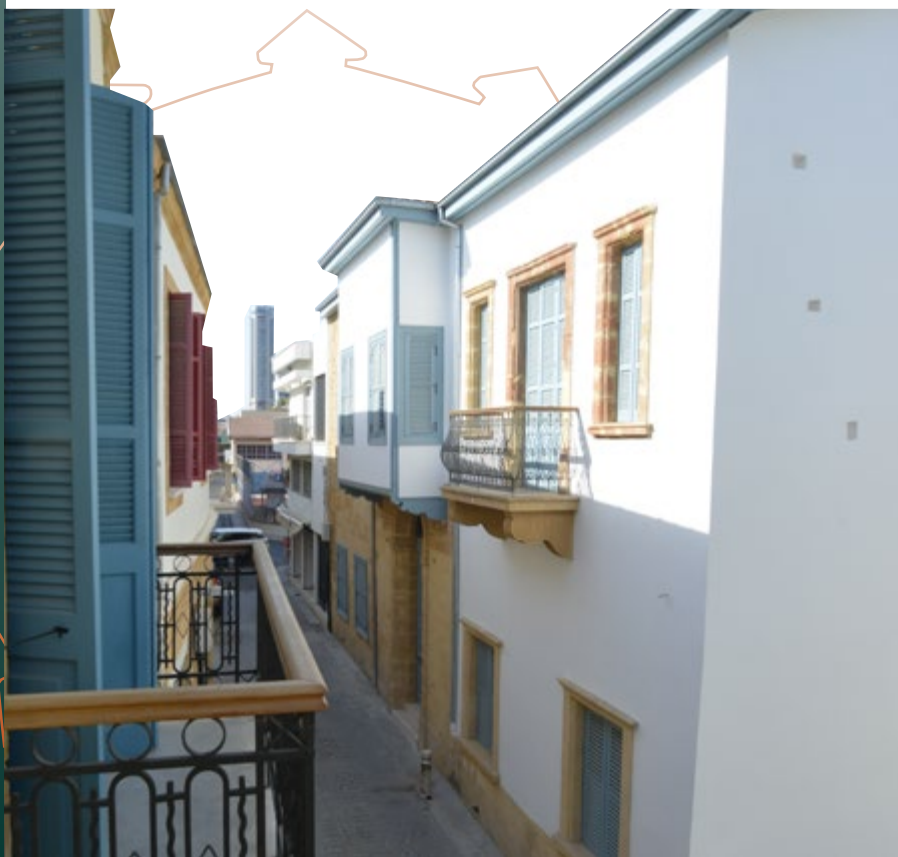
SPEL



CULTURE **WALKS**

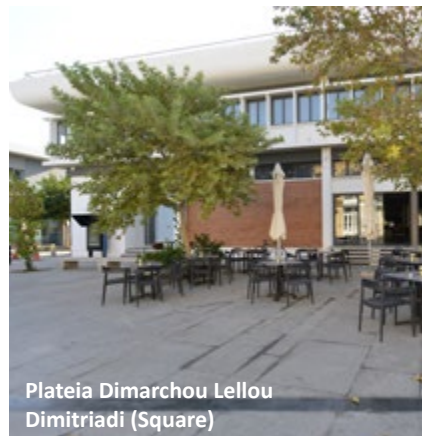
ART IN THE CITY

Lefkosia within the Walls has long served as a muse for artists,
with its historic streets and hidden corners sparking creativity.





Street art in Old Lefkosia



Plateia Dimarchou Lellou
Dimitriadi (Square)

Following the Turkish invasion and occupation in 1974, Lefkosia within the Walls was largely abandoned. In recent years, however, it has experienced a vibrant revival, emerging as a hub of creativity as artists have opened their workshops and studios. An additional initiative was represented by a recent project, Creative Nicosia, which was funded by the European Union, providing grants and funds to creators within the walled city. Today, artists' studios stand beside carpentry workshops, glassmakers, blacksmiths, and copper repair shops. Craftspeople and artists coexist, each shaping their own craft and form of art.



Lidinis Street

Around Plateia Dimarchou Lellou Dimitriadi (Square)

An art walk around the city within the Walls can start at Plateia Dimarchou Lellou Dimitriadi (Square). The building that now houses the CYENS Centre of Excellence is surrounded by shops owned by craftsmen, such as **Panikos Pilis**, who has been selling plumbing supplies and various tools here since 1960. Next to him, there used to be a workshop that repaired printing machines for 47 years.

Right behind, a narrow path leads to Lidinis Street, which was once lined with artisans' workshops. Today, these spaces have been restored and await young creators

and professionals to transform them into workplaces. It is also worth mentioning that, in 2024, a walking photographic exhibition organised by the Press and Information Office, celebrating 20 years of Cyprus' membership of the European Union, took place on Lidinis Street.

Heading along Tempon Street and NiMAC, the road leads to Pentadaktylou Street. Craftsmen have been based here for years, many of whom were forced to relocate their





shops from the part of Lefkosia that is now occupied following the Turkish invasion of 1974. Bars and cafés alongside them bring new energy to the neighbourhood, breathing fresh life into the old city.

Along Ermou Street

Pentadaktylou Street intersects with Ermou Street, much of which lies within the Buffer Zone. Once Lefkosia's busiest commercial street, the non-occupied part has since been revitalised. This street, which leads to the beautiful Pyli Ammochostou (Famagusta Gate), is one of the city's most enchanting areas. Artists and creators have long established their studios here. They welcome visitors and keep their doors open so that people can see them working on their creations in their workshops on a daily basis.

Handmade stories

At number 272E, there's "Souzana Petri Crafts". **Petri** is a Cypriot ceramicist and metalworker who specialises in preserving and reviving the ancient history and traditions of Cyprus. Across the street, "Vagabond Handcrafted", based on a

handmade doll workshop, also showcases the work of artisans from Greece and Cyprus.

The art of clay and ceramics is thriving in this part of town, and just as our Cypriot ancestors once did, the artists here bring this craft into the present. Further down the road, where Ektoros Street becomes an extension of Ermou Street, at numbers 24–26, **Djovanna (Vania) Serghiou Souroulla**, works with clay in her studio. "In the old days, the raw materials used to come from the now occupied Lapithos," she says, working on her potter's wheel, creating mugs, candle holders, vases, and other beautiful objects. A few steps away, at number 47, **Elia Neophytou** at Studio Kuza mainly uses clay to create ceramics, from sculptural vases to functional objects.

On Glass and Metal

At the end of Ermou Street, before it branches into Ektoros and Ammochostou Streets, **Sotiris Sevastides** has been creating interesting artworks in his "Metamorfosis Art" workshop for thirteen years. His works have been sold and "travelled" worldwide. He creates them by taking once-useless objects, such as bicycle saddles, screws, or hammer heads, and reshaping them into imaginative metal sculptures. As he says, "I don't recycle, I transform" – a nod to the workshop's name, Metamorfosis, the Greek word for transformation.

Just a few steps away, once you enter **Stavros Kofteros'** workshop, glass takes centre stage! A once aircraft mechanic is reviving the craft of glassmaking in his studio on Ammochostou Street, creating glassworks – "transparent sculptures", as he calls them. These pieces are the result of years of research and experimentation. As he mentions, glassmaking has a long history on the island

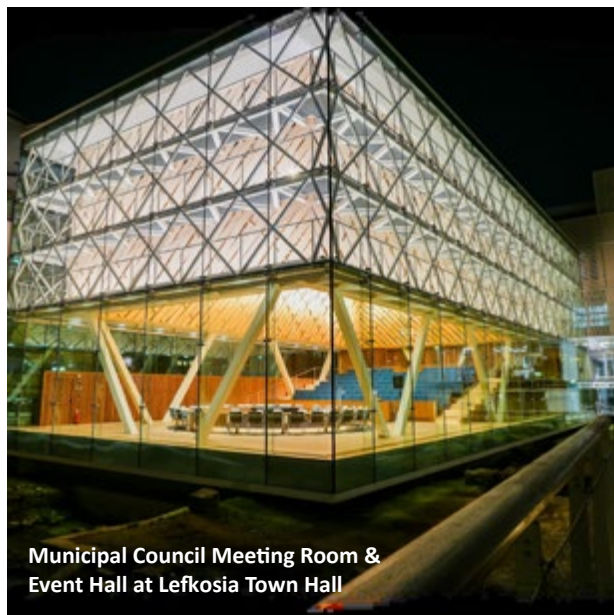
dating back to the 14th century BC. In fact, Cyprus was one of the countries where this form of art was born.

Ask him, and he will tell you the story about how ancient Roman glassware unearthed in Cyprus in the mid-19th century by Luigi Palma de Cesnola inspired the renowned jeweller Louis Comfort Tiffany to create a type of glass he named “Chypriote Glass” at the beginning of the 20th century. Nearby, the art of jewellery is showcased by the talented designer-jeweller and micro-sculptor **Maria Kotsoni**, who draws inspiration from Cyprus, archaeology, philosophy, travel, and the modern world.

Galleries etc.

Art galleries, such as “Is Not Gallery” and “Garage Art Space”, “The Center of Visual Arts and Research” (CVAR), as well as event spaces, are also based here. This draws more and more people to the old city on days when exhibitions and events are taking place. The Hambis Tsangaris Printmaking Museum and the State Gallery of Contemporary Art – SPEL on Ammochostou Street reinforce the area’s artistic character.

As you wander around Pyli Ammochostou (Famagusta Gate), you will soon realise that creativity is not confined to the main streets, but can be found in the alleys and hidden corners. After all, Lefkosa’s Walls invite you to wander around, as a place of inspiration and creativity for countless centuries!





The Green Line

LEFKOSIA: A DIVIDED EUROPEAN CITY

Since the Turkish invasion of 1974, Lefkosia remains divided,
a city still marked by war and its enduring scars.

The Turkish invasion of 1974

On 15 July 1974, life on the island of Cyprus changed forever. A coup staged by the Athens' junta against the elected government of President Makarios served Turkey as a pretext to invade Cyprus on 20th July, violating International Law and the Charter of the United Nations (UN). The invasion was carried out in two phases, and ever since Turkey illegally occupies over 37% of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus.

As a result, according to the Cyprus Statistical Service (CYSTAT), about 200,000 Greek Cypriots were displaced and became refugees in their own homeland. In addition, many soldiers and civilians were killed, thousands of Greek Cypriots

were arrested and held in concentration camps in Cyprus by Turkish soldiers and paramilitaries, and more than 2,000 prisoners of war were illegally transferred and held in prisons in Turkey. Some of them are still missing to this day.

Moreover, the rich cultural heritage of the occupied part of the island has suffered considerable damage. Many monuments and churches were vandalised, and precious icons and relics were destroyed, lost or illegally sold, some of which were later recovered after lengthy legal battles. By the end of 1975, most Turkish Cypriots living in areas controlled by the Government of the Republic of Cyprus had also moved to the territory occupied by the Turkish army, following Turkey's coercive policy.

The Green Line

Since 1974, Cyprus remains divided, with the UN-controlled buffer zone, also known as the Green Line, separating the areas controlled by the Government of the Republic of Cyprus and the Turkish-occupied areas of the island. This makes Cyprus the only European Union member state still divided due to foreign military occupation. The Green Line stretches for 186 kilometres across the island, but nowhere is its impact more striking than in Lefkosia.

As one walks through the neighbourhoods of Lefkosia within the Walls, encounters barrels, sandbags, soldiers at guard posts, and, just beyond the barbed wire, a city in ruins, with bombed-out houses and shops.

A sight which serves as a constant reminder that our island remains under military occupation. A striking contrast is the warmth and hospitality of the people living just a few metres away from the Green Line. They share stories of the 1974 invasion, which unfolded a few metres away from their doorsteps.



The Lady of the Green Line

In the Agios Kassianos area, near Pyli Ammochostou (Famagusta Gate), on Axiotheas Street, lived a symbol of bravery: Katina Papadopoulou, known as “Kyra tis Prasinis Grammis” (The Lady of the Green Line), a name given to her by the renowned Greek writer Freddy Germanos. According to her daughter, Filitsa, Katina refused to abandon her home when the Turkish invasion of 1974 took place, even as her neighbourhood – and the entire island – was in the midst of chaos and destruction. She stood tall and proud, like a motherly figure, offering moral support to the soldiers defending the area, tending to the wounded, and providing them with food, despite having little to spare. Her house was used by the National Guard, as it had a telephone, and, being in an advantageous position, was of strategic importance. Katina Papadopoulou passed away peacefully on 29 December 1990, at the age of 74.



The Cyprus Museum

ART & HISTORY IN THE CITY CENTRE

Museums and galleries breathe life into the island's history through remarkable works of art and rare archaeological treasures, outside Lefkosia's Inner Walls.

The Cyprus Museum

The island's oldest and largest archaeological museum was constructed between 1908 and 1924. Spread across its 14 rooms are collections ranging from the Neolithic to the early Byzantine period, offering visitors a journey through more than nine millennia of history. Artefacts include pottery, jewellery, tools, vessels, sculptures, inscriptions, sarcophagi, statues, and figurines. Among these are the impressive terracotta figurines from the Agia Eirini Sanctuary. The museum also carries out research, conservation, and educational activities.

1 Mikis Theodorakis Avenue / Tel: + 357 22 865854
Opening hours: Tue–Fri 08:00–18:00 (until 20:00 on every 1st Wed of the month), Sat 09:00–17:00, Sun 10:00–13:00, Public Holidays 10:00–13:00

The (new) Cyprus Archaeological Museum

Opposite the Cyprus Museum, a new museum is being constructed. Spanning 40,000 square metres, it will tell the story of the island's inhabitants through their tangible and intangible cultural heritage, as documented by the collections of the Department of Antiquities of the Republic of Cyprus. The museum will house over 7,000 antiquities, enhanced by graphic compositions, photographs, illustrations, texts and captions, as well as over 65 interactive multimedia applications, projections and films. It will also host temporary exhibitions and educational programmes, and will feature conservation workshops, facilities for the Department of Antiquities, a library, an amphitheatre and a large outdoor space extending from the Parliament building to the Pedieos River.

A. G. Leventis Gallery

The A. G. Leventis Gallery showcases European art in Cyprus. Its extensive collections span from the Renaissance to the 20th century and feature Old Masters, Impressionists, Dutch still lifes, Rococo pastorals, Venetian scenes, Pointillist and Fauve works, as well as treasures of Greek and Cypriot art. A rare collection of gold coins provides a fascinating insight into world history and the conception of the gallery's founder, Anastasios G. Leventis, is evident throughout. The gallery also hosts exhibitions, talks, and educational activities.

5 A. G. Leventi Street / Tel: +357 22 668838
web: www.leventisgallery.org / Opening hours:
Thu–Sun 10:00–17:00, Wed 10:00–20:00

State Gallery of Contemporary Art – Majestic

Housed in a building dating back to 1926, which was originally a residence and later a clinic and the Majestic Hotel, the gallery has hosted a permanent exhibition of the State Collection since 1990. Spanning from the late 19th to early 21st century, the collection comprises of around 4000 works. The gallery also maintains artist archives and an art library, and it offers lectures, events and educational programmes.

Stasinou Avenue & 1 Kritis Street
Tel: +357 22 458228 / Opening hours: Mon–Fri
10:00–16:45, Sat 10:00–12:45

Ledroi Museum

When construction of the new House of Representatives began on Agios Georgios Hill in the heart of Lefkosia, several objects were unearthed, including a bronze idol. This discovery led to systematic excavations in 1996, which revealed an extensive settlement dating back to the Late Chalcolithic Era (2800–2500 BC). These important findings enriched our understanding of Lefkosia's history and provided evidence it is the oldest city in Cyprus. The discoveries are exhibited in Ledroi Museum, housed in the Hill's sole

surviving British Rule-era building. It features educational facilities and two museum halls displaying the most significant findings of the excavation.

Andrea Demetriou Street, 1066 Lefkosia
Tel.: + 357 22 865888 / web: www.ledroimuseum.com
Opening Hours: Mon–Fri 08:30–16:00



The (new) Cyprus Archaeological Museum



A. G. Leventis Gallery



Ledroi Museum



Plateia Eleftherias (Square)

PARKS & SQUARES

Lefkosia's parks are cherished by locals, while the squares of the old city of Lefkosia within the Walls offer the perfect spot for a cup of coffee.

THE PARKS

Pedieos Linear Park

Created in 1999, this linear path runs alongside Cyprus' longest river. Spanning over 14 kilometres, the park features both walking and cycling paths, which pass through the Presidential Palace Park and end near Pafos Gate. Bridges and beautifully illuminated paths lined with eucalyptus, pine, and palm trees can be found along the way. The park is undergoing a transformation, with the expansion financed by the EU and implemented by the UNDP extending beyond the UN Buffer Zone into the occupied part of Lefkosia.

Athalassa National Forest Park

This green oasis, located in southeastern Lefkosia, covers an area of 840 hectares. Rich in natural vegetation, it is home to over 500 species of flora and fauna, primarily birds, including more than 170 species of waterbirds. Its 20 km of trails are popular for walking, cycling, and dog-walking. The Athalassa Environmental Education and Information Centre is worth visiting, while the Forest Botanical Garden serves as a living collection of plants, bringing together a wide variety of local and exotic Cypriot species in a compact space.

Athalassa Environmental Education and Information Centre: Tel: +357 22 462906, +357 22 462943 / **Opening hours:** Mon–Fri 08:00–14:30. **Forest Botanical Garden** **Opening hours:** Mon–Fri, 07:30–15:30

Metochi Kykkou Park

This small park lies within the grounds of the Metochi Kykkou, known as Agios Prokopios Church. Originally an olive grove, it was later transformed into a green oasis with pathways, olive and citrus fruit groves and flowers.

Park of the Old GSP Area

The city's latest addition is the transformation of a historic stadium site into a modern space that redefines greenery in public spaces. This major EU-funded project features a square, restaurants, galleries, a bookshop, a multi-purpose hall, cafés, an open-air amphitheatre and underground parking. All rooftop areas have been landscaped to create a green oasis.

THE SQUARES

Plateia Faneromenis (Square)

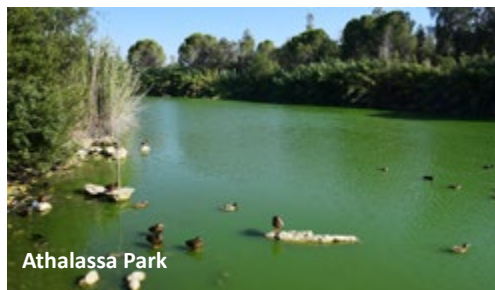
Life in the historic square in front of the Church of Panagia Faneromeni awakens early. In the mornings, the older generation can be found sipping Cyprus coffee in the cafés, while at lunchtime, people flock to beloved eateries. As evening falls, the square's cafés and bars hum with energy. This vibrant hub is surrounded by shops, galleries, and important landmarks, including the Faneromeni School (1857), the Faneromeni Library, and the Marble Mausoleum (1930).

Plateia Eleftherias (Square)

The central square of Lefkosia serves as a symbolic bridge between the historic city within the Walls and its modern surroundings. The square was redesigned by the world-renowned Zaha Hadid Architects and the project was implemented by the Municipality of Lefkosia and the Cyprus Government, co-financed by the EU. The square, whose name means "Freedom", has become a vibrant hub for cultural events and everyday life, with its transformed moat envisioned as a park featuring landscaped gardens, water elements, shops, street furniture as well as a small open-air amphitheatre.

Plateia Dimarchou Lellou Dimitriadi (Square)

This square, named after former mayor Lellos Dimitriadis, is one of Lefkosia's newest public spaces. It was designed to breathe new life into the heart of the city within the Walls. Located near the new municipality building, it is surrounded by sandstone buildings, workshops, bars, and restaurants. At its centre stands a modernist building dating from 1965 and designed by Stavros Economou, which once housed the Old Municipal Market. Today, its carefully restored interior houses the CYENS Centre of Excellence, which specialises in interactive media, smart systems and emerging technologies.



Athalassa Park



Plateia Faneromenis (Square)



Park of Old GSP Area



A TASTE OF CYPRUS

The island's gastronomy is a mosaic of flavours due to its geographical location and the people who lived here.

A journey in time

Situated at the crossroads of Europe, Asia and Africa, the island's cuisine reflects a diverse heritage shaped by conquerors and settlers. Olives, grapes and wheat were introduced by ancient Greeks and during the Roman and Byzantine periods, spices and cooking techniques were also imported. Lusignans and Venetians left their influence from the French and Italian cuisines, found in dishes like "ravioles" (ravioli traditionally stuffed with halloumi) and the use of pasta in dishes like "makaronia touournou" (traditional baked pasta). However, the Ottoman Empire was the most influential as culinary traditions such as kebab ("souvlaki"), meze (a selection of small dishes) and the use of yoghurt and legumes became a vital element of Cypriot gastronomy.

From the heart of Cyprus

One must not leave Cyprus before tasting:

SAVOURY DISHES

Souvla & souvlaki: Souvla consists of large chunks of meat (chicken, pork or lamb), cooked on a skewer over a charcoal grill called "foukou". Souvlaki is smaller pieces of meat, served in Cypriot pitta bread with salad.

Sheftalia: A meatball made from spiced minced pork or lamb wrapped in caul fat and grilled.

Ofto kleftiko: Slow cooked lamb or goat, baked for many hours in a sealed clay oven until it becomes very tender.

Koupepia: Vine leaves stuffed with minced meat, rice and herbs.

Makaronia touournou: Oven baked pasta, with layers of macaroni, minced meat and creamy béchamel sauce.



Halloumi

Ravioles: A Cypriot version of the Italian ravioli, stuffed with halloumi and dried mint.

Afelia: Pork chunks, fried and cooked with red wine and coriander seeds.

Meze: A selection of small dishes including dips, salads, olives, fried greens with eggs, koupepia, makaronia touournou, halloumi, lountza, sausages, pilaf (cracked wheat with tomato sauce) and grilled meats.

SWEET DISHES

Loukoumades: Small, fried dough balls, drizzled with honey or syrup, sprinkled with cinnamon.

Glyka tou koutaliou: Known as spoon sweets. Whole fruits or peels preserved in syrup and served on a spoon.

Mahallepi: Made with corn flour, served with rose syrup or rosewater and/or rose ice cream.

Bourekia: Fried or baked pastries, savoury (with grated halloumi, minced meat, cheese) or sweet (cream, anari cheese).

The PDO products

There are several products unique to Cyprus that are a must and two of them have a PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) certification:

Halloumi: Cyprus' most famous cheese. PDO halloumi is made from fresh sheep or goat



Kapamas

milk, or a mix with a lesser percentage of cow milk. It is either soft and fresh or mature, with dried Cypriot mint for a subtle herbal note. Halloumi is cooked on the grill, fried, or as is, and enjoyed in salads, sandwiches (ideally in pitta bread) and in various dishes.

Kolokasi Sotiras/Kolokasi-Poules Sotiras:

Kolokasi is a uniquely flavoured taro root and poulles is its smaller version. It has been cultivated in Cyprus for over 800 years and it mainly grows in the town of Sotira, in Ammochostos. It can be cooked in tomato sauce ("yahni"), as a casserole dish with vegetables and tomato sauce ("kapamas"), in red wine and coriander, or fried like chips.

A souvenir!

Take back home a taste of Cyprus.

Charcuterie: Cold cuts such as loukanika (sausages), lountza (pork loin) and chiomeri (pork leg) cured with red wine and spices.

Cheeses: Halloumi, the creamy, lightly salted anari and the slightly salty and lemony halitzi.

Soutzioukos: Sausage-shaped sweet, made of grape must, filled with almonds or walnuts.

Loukoumia: Cyprus Delights, soft, chewy and flavoured sweets, dusted in powdered sugar.

INTERVIEWS

THE SOUL OF CYPRIOT CUISINE

Television chef, author, and researcher of Cypriot gastronomy **Ms Chryso Lefou** shares the secrets of the Cypriot cuisine!



Q: What makes Cypriot gastronomy unique?

A: Its authenticity. It is a cuisine born out of the need for survival. Cypriot food is not complicated, but it is rich in flavour and deeply connected to rural life, the seasons, and celebrations.

Q: What influences it?

A: The island is at the crossroads of three continents. Our cuisine is a blend of Greek tradition, Eastern flavours and Mediterranean freshness.

Q: What are the ingredients that make Cypriot dishes delicious?

A: Mint, coriander, cinnamon, fresh milk, olive oil and love!

Q: Are there specific cooking methods?

A: Slow cooking in wood-fired ovens, on the “foukou” (charcoal grill), or the hearth. Clay pots, which preserve heat, also add a distinctive, earthy flavour.

Q: Which five dishes are cooked in almost every household?

A: Ofto kleftiko, koupepia, makaronia touournou, souvlaki, sheftalies and meatballs. They are made with staple ingredients found in every pantry.

Q: Which products are unique to Cyprus?

A: Halloumi, anari, halitzi, wine sausage, zivania, makaronia tis smilas/makaronia tou sklinitziou, kolokasi, potatoes, rosewater, olive oil and olives. All tied to Cyprus’ history.

Photos: From the book *46 Moments from My Life – The Gastronomy of Cyprus from Generation to Generation* by Chryso Lefou

Q: As a journalist, researcher, and cooking show presenter, how many Cypriot villages have you visited to explore their cuisine?

A: I have been to almost every corner of the island; from Pafos’ villages to the coast of Karpasia. Each area has its own cuisine, shaped by local produce and the community’s economic conditions. Over the years, I have recorded many forgotten recipes, aiming to pass them on to future generations.

Q: What fascinates you about Cypriot cuisine?

A: That it is not just about recipes. It is about history, culture and identity. That is why I systematically record, preserve and promote it.



Kolokasi



Loukoumades

THE ART OF TRADITIONAL BREADMAKING

An architect, a contemporary art follower and a gastronomy enthusiast, **Mr Valis Loizides** has in recent years turned his focus to another form of art – the traditional Cypriot breadmaking!



Q: What makes Cypriot bread unique?

A: The use of local hard wheat, a result of our dry climate and the retention of all parts of the wheat grain during milling (including semolina). Also, its simplicity; made only with flour, water and salt. Apart from the basic bread, we also have the enriched breads.

Q: Koulouria are festive enriched breads. Which are the main types?

A: Koulouria are made with natural sourdough in elongated or round shapes, enriched with aromatic spices, such as mahleb, mastic, cinnamon, nutmeg, aniseed, ginger, cumin and coated with various seeds. The main types are the arkatena (made with chickpea starter), galatena (with milk), karpasitika (with anari) and lefkaritika (with semolina). They are also made as paximadi (hard bread).

Q: Bread dough also forms the basis of Cypriot traditional pies. Which are the most popular?

A: With 170 days of fasting each year, Cypriots have created pies suitable for fasting periods. These include eliopita (olive pie), kolokotes (with red pumpkin), tahinopita (with tahini) and hortopita (with green herbs). Equally popular are halloumi pie, tsipopita (with milk cream), epsimopita (with grape molasses) and flaounes baked during Easter (Orthodox Pascha).

Q: How do Cypriots enjoy bread?

A: Bread accompanies dishes such as soups, grains, vegetables, appetizers and foods

cooked in sauce. Cypriots also enjoy it fresh or as paximadi (rehydrated) with olive oil and salt, quince paste, dried figs, raisins, honey, nuts, or homemade jam.

Q: How would you suggest someone visiting Cyprus for the first time enjoy traditional Cypriot bread?

A: A simple meal of freshly baked bread with halloumi cheese or anari, olives, smoked lountza or cured ham, tomatoes or fresh fruit, accompanied by Cypriot wine will be memorable!





CYPRUS, THE LAND OF OLIVE OIL

Since antiquity, Cypriot olive oil has played a starring role, proving its uniqueness!

Cypriots have always produced and included this superfood in their diet. Strabo, a Greek Geographer (1st century BC), mentions in “Geographica” Cyprus’ self-sufficiency in olive oil, referring to the island as “evelaios”, meaning rich in fine oil.

A century-long story

Cyprus’ connection with olives stretches back millennia. Archaeological excavations have uncovered olive pits from the Neolithic era and remnants of olive presses from the Late Bronze Age. Olive cultivation is traced as far back as 4800 BC and, along with carobs, olive oil ranked among Cyprus’ most important exports.

Cypriot olive groves & varieties

The island’s dry climate has enabled the widespread cultivation of olives. Olive

cultivation is a deeply traditional practice, with trees found in fields, gardens and even on pavements, from the coastal plains up to 900 metres. Three Cypriot varieties are officially registered with the International Olive Oil Council: “Kato Drys,” “Korakou” and “Ladoelia.” “Ladoelia” is the island’s primary variety and the only Cypriot one included in the World Olive Varieties Catalogue.

The gold of Cyprus

Interwoven with rural life, olive cultivation and oil production were never just about making a living or earning money. Olive oil is a cornerstone of Cypriot cuisine, used in countless ways and an important element in religious traditions, from baptisms to weddings. This cements its status as the true “gold” of the Cypriot land.

INTERVIEW

THE GOLDEN SECRET OF CYPRUS

The expert in olive oil tasting, Diploma holder from the Universidad de Jaén, Andalucía, Spain, **Mr Marinós Marinou**, reveals the secrets of Cypriot olive oil.



Q: Given its long history of olive cultivation and oil production, where does Cyprus stand today?

A: A growing number of young producers are developing their agricultural practices in terms of both production and quality by adopting innovative methods. In fact, Cyprus hosted the Terraolivo International Olive Oil Competition in 2024, highlighting the growing international recognition of Cypriot olive oil.

Q: What makes Cypriot olive oil unique?

A: It has always been considered of excellent quality. Furthermore, the Cypriot Ladoelia variety is one of the most aromatic in the world, giving the oil a distinctive aroma. When processed and pressed correctly, it produces an exceptional flavour profile. Other varieties also thrive on the island.

Q: How does it differ from other olive oils?

A: There are over 1,100 registered varieties worldwide, each with their own distinctive aromas and flavours. I believe that Cypriot varieties stand out thanks to their unique aromas and flavours.

Q: What role does olive oil play in Cypriot gastronomy?

A: It plays a starring role in our cuisine, forming the basis of many dishes and cooking methods. It is also deeply tied to Cypriot culture. It is widely used for cooking and frying and when combined with spices and herbs, it can be used to enhance salads, vegetables as well as other dishes. A simple

yet unique pleasure is dipping fresh bread into a bowl of olive oil.

Q: Has its use increased in global gastronomy?

A: Olive oil has become a symbol of quality cooking around the world. Extra virgin oils vary in aromas, colour, intensity, texture and taste, offering chefs endless creative possibilities.

Q: Why is extra virgin olive oil considered a superfood?

A: It has numerous health benefits. It is rich in vitamin E and contains up to 83% monounsaturated fats, as well as powerful antioxidants that help prevent disease and slow down the ageing process. Beyond cooking, consuming a daily teaspoon (20 ml) of extra virgin olive oil with a high polyphenol content can boost the body's defences.





CYPRUS IN A GLASS

Wine consultant, educator, and writer ***Ms Maria Th. Massoura DipWSET*** unveils the beauty of Cypriot wines and vineyards.

History

Winemaking in Cyprus has one of the longest histories in the world, dating back 6,000 years. Clay jars with wine deposits, dating to around 3500 BC, were discovered as proof of this. During the Hellenistic and Roman periods, wine was a part of the island's culture, as evidenced by the mosaics in the House of Dionysus in Pafos, which depict wine related themes. This tradition continued for many years. During Byzantine, Lusignan and Venetian rule, Cyprus supplied Europe with fine wines. When King Richard the Lionheart of England arrived in Cyprus in the 12th century, he praised Commandaria, Cyprus' dessert wine. However, after the Ottoman conquest in 1571, wine was produced mainly for household use, since

the consumption of wine was forbidden for Muslims. Fortunately, production resumed during the British rule, after the end of WWII and the island's independence in 1960. Fortified wines similar to sherry were also made. During the 1980s, large wineries mass-produced and exported wines, especially to Iron Curtain countries. There was also increased planting of vineyards. In the 1990s, many old vineyards, particularly those at lower altitudes, were uprooted and imported varieties were planted, but the quality of wines did not improve. However, during the 1980s, the Cypriot oenologist Akis Zambartas and his team began a three-year research in the vineyards and discovered thirteen forgotten grape varieties. The famous ampelographer Pierre Galet, professor at the



The Centenarian Vineyard "Margelina"

Wine School of Montpellier, confirmed that these varieties were indigenous to Cyprus. Over the last 15 years or so, the Cyprus wine scene has undergone a renaissance. Young winemakers, oenologists and viticulturists who studied abroad came back and created smaller wineries. They began to cultivate these indigenous grape varieties, to study the uniqueness of the terroir and to experiment. Nowadays, there are more than 50 wineries in Cyprus and the island's wines are gaining recognition and awards both locally and internationally.

A Sense of Place

Cypriot vineyards are unique in the world. They are mainly found in the regions of Lemesos where the wine villages known as "Krasochoria Lemesou" are located, around the Troodos mountains. Moreover, vineyards can be also found in the Pafos region, while a few more in the Lefkosia region. Phylloxera disease destroyed many of Europe's vineyards in the late 19th century, but did not affect the island, which is why Cyprus boasts old vines. Quite a few are over 70 years old, some are over 100 years old, and all vines are ungrafted. Cyprus also has the highest vineyards in Europe with some at an elevation of over 1,400 metres. Altitude



benefits viticulture, as Cyprus is one of the hottest and driest wine-producing countries in Europe.

The grape varieties and wines

Seven of these newly rediscovered grape varieties are currently being cultivated alongside Xynisteri and Mavro, which are Cyprus' most widely planted varieties. These grape varieties are used to produce wines of a variety of styles, as local winemakers are experimenting with different methods, including the revival of ageing in clay vessels called "pitharia." There are also vineyards planted with imported grape varieties such as Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Merlot, Grenache, Mourvèdre, Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Semillon, etc.

Xynisteri, the flagship variety of local white grapes, is versatile enough to produce exquisite sparkling, fresh and easy-drinking wines, age-worthy ones, aged in oak, orange wines, wines of various sweetness levels and is also used in the production of Commandaria and Zivania. Promara, the earliest-ripening local grape, is



Harvesting in September

CYPRUS IN A GLASS

used for the creation of dry whites with good ageing potential. Spourtiko, Morokanella, and Vasilissa contribute to fragrant, aromatic white wines of distinctive character.

Concerning the red indigenous grapes, Mavro remains Cyprus' most widely planted variety. Traditionally used in blends, Commandaria and Zivania, it is now vinified into both red and rosé wines. The noble Maratheftiko grape variety is demanding, but the result is rewarding, with an expressive character marked by black fruit and violet aromas and flavours. The wonderful Yiannoudi offers spicy, textured reds and rosés. The rare Ofthalmo is used to make intensely fragrant red wines, while Lefkada, originally from the Greek island of the same name and known as Vertzami, thrives in red and rosé production.

There are seven PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) classifications: Commandaria, Krasochoria Lemesou, Krasochoria Lemesou – Afames, Krasochoria Lemesou – Laona, Pitsilia, Vouni Panayia – Ampelitis, Laona – Akamas. There are also four PGI (Protected Geographical Indication): Lefkosia, Lemesos, Pafos and Larnaka.

One thing is for sure: The future of Cypriot wine is bright, with each glass offering a unique taste of the island's history, culture and enduring spirit.



Sundried Xynisteri and Mavro grapes



Fermentation in oak barrels



A glass of Commandaria

Zivania

Born during Venetian rule, Zivania, a PGI product, carries with it history and heritage. Inspired by the Venetian alchemists, Cypriot vine growers began distilling the remnants of their harvest – grape pomace, or “zivana”. Initially valued as both a drink and a medicine, Zivania soon became a staple of the island's life. Clear and fiery, with aromas of overripe grapes, raisins and spices, it contains 43–52% alcohol and is mostly distilled from Cyprus' traditional grape varieties such as Mavro and Xynisteri. Nowadays, Zivania aged in oak barrels is also produced. It is served with nuts, cold cuts and Cyprus meze.



Oaked Xynisteri with mature cheese



Maratheftiko with local delicacies

COMMANDARIA

“The King of wines and the Wine of Kings” declared King Richard when he first tasted Commandaria. He loved it so much that it was the wine served at his wedding with Queen Berengaria at Lemesos Castle in 1191.

Commandaria is the oldest continuously produced wine style in the world. As it is a PDO wine, its production is subject to specific regulations. Commandaria must be made from Mavro and Xynisteri grapes or from Xynisteri exclusively, and the vineyards must be located in one of the 14 wine-producing villages in the Lemesos region. The grapes are picked when overripe and then dried in the sun on mats on the ground or on racks above ground for about 15 days in the Commandaria villages. When these raisins are vinified, the wine can be fortified with alcohol or not and then the wine matures in oak barrels for at least 2 years. In practice, many wineries age the wine for longer to add complexity.

Commandaria boasts wonderful aromas and flavours of dried fruit, caramel and sweet spices, as well as a luscious mouthfeel.

Food and wine pairing

As the saying goes, “What grows together, goes together”. When it comes to Cypriot wines made from the island’s own grape varieties, the perfect pairing is with local flavours. For example, a fresh, vibrant **Xynisteri** makes an excellent pairing with halloumi, Cyprus’ renowned PDO cheese, whereas an oaked or aged **Xynisteri** complements heartier dishes, such as “koupepia”. On the other hand, a fragrant **Morokanella** wine pairs with the subtle fresh anari cheese. Wines made from **Promara** grapes offer a richer flavour profile, making them a great pairing with seafood, pasta in white sauce, or the local “ravioles”, as well as chicken in a herb sauce.

Turning to red wines, Cyprus boasts a long tradition of pairing its fuller-bodied reds with cold cuts and wine-cured sausages. These wines, particularly those made from **Maratheftiko** and **Yiannoudi** grapes, pair beautifully with slow-cooked meats such as oftó kleftiko, sheftalia and lamb souvla. Medium-bodied **Mavro** wines are ideally suited to pork-based dishes such as afelia and souvlaki, as well as minced meat and the diverse array of flavours found in Cypriot meze. Finally, the iconic dessert wine **Commandaria** is best enjoyed with dark chocolate, nuts, raisins and the local brittle, as well as with aged white and hard cheeses.



HANDMADE IN CYPRUS

Cyprus holds a rich tradition of craftsmanship, that has shaped daily life, artistic expression and the island's cultural identity.

Cypriot crafts, including ceramics, woodwork, basketry, embroidery, weaving and carpentry, date back to antiquity and serve as cultural ambassadors, showcasing the skills that Cypriots have passed down through the generations.

Embroidery

Embroidery plays a significant role in traditional Cypriot art, with each region specialising in its own unique techniques. Evidence of fabric decoration dates back to prehistoric times, with the earliest examples being found in the Eastern Mediterranean. During the mediaeval period, Cyprus was renowned for its high quality luxury silk textiles interwoven with gold-thread, known as *or de Chypre* (gold of Cyprus). One of the finest examples of Cypriot embroidery is the "Lefkaritiko lace", which originated in

the village of Lefkara. Considering the result of Venetian reticella-type lace techniques merging with local Cypriot embroidery traditions such as "asproploumia", a hybrid art form is created combining cutwork, satin stitch and needlepoint edging with intricate geometric designs. Lefkara lace was inscribed in 2009 on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity and is still produced today.

Weaving

During the Bronze Age, textile production, including purple dye, was a sophisticated and economically vital industry in Cyprus. Throughout the mediaeval period, particularly during the Frankish rule, fine wool and silk fabrics from Cyprus were exported to Europe. Fabrics were woven

on looms that remained largely unchanged until the previous century. Among the most important weavings of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Cyprus are the “Fythkiotiko” patterns from the village of Fyti in Pafos. The main characteristic of the Fythkiotiko loom embroidery is the relief-coloured designs in various geometric patterns, created by passing the threads either by hand or with the shuttle.

Ceramics / Pottery

Pottery in Cyprus first appeared during the Neolithic period and production continues to this day in villages such as Kornos, Foini and Agios Dimitrios. Cyprus was an important commercial centre, connecting East and West. Ceramic production flourished in antiquity, especially from the Bronze Age onwards, when “pithoi”, large storage vessels and pointed based amphoras of a high level of artistry, were made for storing and transporting wine and oil. During the mediaeval period under Byzantine and Frankish rule, pottery production also thrived. The main ceramic production centres were in the Pafos region (13th–14th centuries), the Engomi area of Ammochostos (late 13th–14th centuries), and the Lapithos region (14th–16th centuries). Brightly coloured and lustrously glazed wares with decorations often featuring Byzantine and Frankish motifs were produced.

Carpentry / Woodwork

Since antiquity, Cyprus has been renowned for its vast forests. Wood served as a vital raw material for shipbuilding, agricultural and household tools and furniture, construction and as fuel. Carpentry developed into two main categories: ecclesiastical, which flourished from the 16th century with the creation of tall wood-carved iconostases and rural woodcarving traditions.

Wood carved household items such as “souvantzes” (shelves) and chests were an integral part of homes until the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Particularly notable are those from the villages of Lapithos, Karpasia and Lysi, with their distinctive local styles.



Basketry / Wickerwork

This enduring craft has remained largely unchanged over time and is deeply rooted in the agricultural and pastoral life in the countryside. Traditionally, baskets were made for everyday practical use. Even today, artisans weave various types, using selected strains of wheat and palm leaves. The villages of Livadia (Larnaka region), Mesogi (Pafos region) and Akrotiri (Lemesos region) are especially renowned for this craft.



Mosaics

The mosaics of Hellenistic and Roman Cyprus are concentrated in the city of Pafos, the island’s capital for much of this period, as well as Kourion and Salamis. While Hellenistic examples exist, the most spectacular and extensive mosaics date to the Roman period (2nd–5th centuries AD) and adorned the villas of wealthy residents. The remarkable Pafos mosaics are now a UNESCO World Heritage site and are considered to be among the finest in the eastern Mediterranean.

Leatherwork

Up until recently, tanning was one of the main crafts preserved until the end of the 20th century in Pedoulas, Gialia, Psimolofou and Aradippou. The most widespread type of leather was “vourka”, the shepherd’s backpack and the tall men’s boots, both of which were made from goatskin.

INTERVIEW

KEEPING CYPRUS' CRAFT HERITAGE ALIVE

The Head of Cyprus Handicraft Service, **Ms Maria Anaxagora**, presents its renewed direction, highlighting both current initiatives and future vision!



Q. When was the Cyprus Handicraft Service (CHS) established and what is its role?

A: The CHS was established in 1975, prioritising the documentation, safeguarding, and preservation of the diverse traditional branches and techniques of Cypriot handicrafts. Its main goal has always been to develop competitiveness, improve entrepreneurship and promote the economic development of each sector. Preserving cultural heritage is crucial, as is education, which ensures that knowledge and traditions are passed on to future generations.

Q. What is your focus today, and how does CHS remain up to date in addressing contemporary creation?

A: The rich traditions of embroidery, weaving, ceramics, metalwork and basketry, among others, constitute a dynamic legacy of creativity, innovation and adaptation. While maintaining the characteristics of the Cypriot cultural identity, creators seek to be competitive both locally and internationally by combining traditional and modern elements, as well as local and international influences.

Q. How are traditional techniques expressed today?

A: Traditional techniques were an integral part of daily life in the

past, particularly for women. Today, they constitute art forms with aesthetic and cultural value. Contemporary artists utilise these practices, reinterpreting and integrating them into new creative directions.



Q. What steps are you taking to ensure that Cypriot craftsmanship is passed down through the generations?

A: Local handicraft techniques, which are recorded on the list of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Cyprus and by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), are in danger of becoming extinct. The Service has undertaken initiatives in the form of educational programmes to pass on the traditional expertise of experienced craftspeople to young people. Similarly, we collaborate with the University of Cyprus to develop educational programmes aiming to provide vocational training for young people. We also promote research and innovation by participating in European programmes. Our mission is to build a business ecosystem around each handicraft sector, in order to develop small and medium-sized enterprises, generate local employment opportunities and strengthen social cohesion.

Q. How do you promote Cypriot craftsmanship on an international scale?

A: Through dynamic collaboration with international organisations and bodies such as the European Craft Alliance, the





Michelangelo Foundation and Ateliers d'Art de France. We also participate in European programmes and host artists, as well as take part in international handicraft exhibitions, such as the International Biennale Révélations in Paris.

Q. What is the purpose of the workshops at the Cyprus Handicrafts Service?

A: The most important pillar of the Service is the transmission of the craft practices of Cyprus' intangible cultural heritage. We offer educational programmes and activities to students of all levels, introducing them to craft techniques and cultivating skills.

We also emphasise on educating individuals who wish to pursue a career in craftsmanship, which makes a significant contribution to the economy and trade.

I would like to thank the artisans of the Service, as well as those who collaborate with us and continuously offer their knowledge to younger generations through educational programmes.



You can purchase authentic Cypriot handicrafts from the Cyprus Handicraft Service shops and selected museums.



Info: web: www.cyprushandicraft.gov.cy

f [cyprus_handicraft_service](https://www.facebook.com/cyprus_handicraft_service)

📷 [CyprusHandicraftService](https://www.instagram.com/CyprusHandicraftService)

186 Athalassas Avenue, 2025, Lefkosia

Tel: +357 22 305024 / Opening hours:

Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri 8:30–17:30, Wed: 08:30–15:00,

Sat: 09:00–13:00



Watch these stories
come alive:



THE MYTHS & TALES OF CYPRUS

Take the myths and tales of the island with you.

Learn the myth of the mighty Digenis, a legendary hero so powerful that he could hurl massive rocks over great distances. One such rock is Petra tou Romiou (Aphrodite's Rock), which is located on the coast of Pafos.

Visit Larnaka and the Salt Lake, and hear the Stories of Salt – tales of Umm Haram and the vineyards that once grew there producing sweet grapes.

Taste the wine of the Knights, Commandaria, and stroll through the vineyards of Cyprus' historic wine regions.

Hear the tales of the Kalikantzaroi, the mischievous goblins

whose adventures live on in books, traditions and the very streets of our villages.

Visit the village of Doros to discover the story of Sierolotta and the mysterious monk with wings!

Wander through the wild beauty of the Akamas National Park, search for the place where Two Rivers meet and discover where the goddess of love, Aphrodite, once bathed.

Explore the Caves of Wonders in Agia Napa, Sotira and Cape Greco.

And whisper the song of a beautiful Cypriot maiden called Arodafnousa.





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