The best places to eat, sleep and play in Cyprus this fall and winter

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While legend has it that Cyprus was the birthplace of the goddess Aphrodite, its history hasn't exactly been filled with love. From its beginning, the Mediterranean island has been prone to invasions, beginning with the tussles between the Mycenaeans, Egyptians, Assyrians and Persians, to name a few. The nation belonged to the Byzantine Empire, the Ottoman Empire and the Knights Templar, until it finally became a British colony in 1925. When the country gained its independence in 1960, struggles between the Turks and the Greeks split the nation. The U.N. now patrols the dividing “green line.” Travel between the northern Turkish Cyprus and the southern Greek is possible. While the history has been turbulent, it does provide a cultural mélange for tourists. You'll find Crusader castles, Roman mosaics, the tomb of Mohammed’s aunt and many monasteries (including one that is said to hold a piece of the true cross).

The island’s geography—plentiful coastline with a mountainous center—insures plenty of year-round activity. Winters are wet, but mild, and the spring comes as early as February.
Top VIEWS

CYPRUS BEST VIEWS

The Kyrenia Mountains, a landscape dotted with churches, mosques and a panoramic view of Nicosia, can be spotted from the Ledra Museum Observatory.

Ledra Museum Observatory, Ledra Street, Shakolas Building, Nicosia, 02 369369

“A visit to the Tombs of the Kings is a must if you are in Paphos. The tombs are situated on a cliff above the sea, with stunning views, and the site covers about a square mile.”—TripAdvisor Member, London, England

Tombs of the Kings, Kato Paphos, Paphos, 26 306295

St. Hilarion Castle blends in so well with the cliff it’s perched on that it’s hard to spot until you’ve arrived. However, it’s worth discovery, as the views from the top are spectacular. If the clouds are cooperating, you’ll be able to see the Taurus Mountains in Turkey.

St. Hilarion Kalesi, Girne (Kyrenia)

Where to PLAY

TOP 10 Attractions

1. Kato Paphos Archaeological Park, Kato Paphos, Paphos, 06 240217
2. Ayios Neophytos Monastery, 6 miles North of Paphos
3. Kourion (Curium), near Episkopi, Limassol
4. Omoldos Village, Limassol, 25 422453
5. Nissi Beach, Ayia Napa
6. Ayia Napa Monastery, Ayia Napa
7. Finikoudes Beach, Larnaca Promenade, Larnaca
8. Choirokoitia, Larnaca
9. Leventis Municipal Museum of Nicosia, 17 Ippocratous St., Nicosia, 22 661475
10. Kyrenia Harbour, Kyrenia

FAMILIES

“We went on George’s Fun Bus and really, really enjoyed it. George is great with all the kids—my son thought he was brilliant. The sea caves, the baths of Adonis and the karaoke were my favorite.”—TripAdvisor Member

George’s Fun Bus, Kato Pafos, Paphos, 99 465196

Try to sneak in a mythology lesson as your kids thrill on the snake tubes of the Quest of Hercules, splash about Poseidon’s Wave Pool and slide on Sun Chariots down Apollo’s Plunge at the WaterWorld Waterpark.

WaterWorld Waterpark, 18 Ayia Thekla Road, Ayia Napa, 23 724444

Storm the Kolossi Castle, a 13th-century fortress that belonged to the Knights of St. John. Enter on the drawbridge, explore the empty chambers and try to imagine life as a Crusader.

Kolossi Castle, nine miles west of Limassol

ROMANCE

The 10 painted churches of Troodos, which include small rural churches and large sophisticated monasteries, make the UNESCO World Heritage list for the rich mural decorations from both the Byzantine and post-Byzantine periods.

Painted churches, Troodos region, districts of Nicosia and Limassol

Find “romance in Cyprus’ mountains” at Lambouri Winery. “What a gorgeous place! We had a winery tour and a free wine tasting. People were very friendly. The winery even had a picture exhibition. The atmosphere was so romantic—mountains, sunshine and, yes, free and excellent wine.”—TripAdvisor Member

Lambouri Winery, 4825 Platres, Limassol, 70 009463

Explore the hidden rooms, tunnels and secret gardens of St. Hilarion Castle. The fairy-tale appearance and local legends only enhance your experience.

St. Hilarion Kalesi, Girne (Kyrenia)

“…mountains, sunshine and free and excellent wine.”

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**Where to PLAY**

**BUDGET**

In addition to the monastery of **Ayios Neophytos Monastery**, “there are also the extraordinary caves with frescoes, where the saint is said to have lived 45 years in one cave and the last five years of his life in another, higher up the rock face.”—TripAdvisor Member, Northamptonshire, England

**Ayios Neophytos Monastery, 5.5 miles north of Paphos**

“The **Archaeological Park** has a number of houses containing mosaics, which really are quite stunning. There was also the small ruins of a castle, an Odeon, the city walls (good lookout with views) and a small tourist information center. You can enter for free, with donations optional.”—TripAdvisor Member, Wales

**Kato Paphos Archaeological Park, Paphos**

**ADVENTURE**

“The great thing about **snowboarding** or **skiing** in Cyprus is, of course, the climate! Where else in the world can you be swimming in the Mediterranean in the morning and taking on a Black Slope in the afternoon!”—TripAdvisor Member, Larnaca, Cyprus

**Snowboarding and skiing, Nicosia, 99 555229**

“We would have to say the **Troodos Mountains** were our highlight. You will know what we mean if you take the journey. Breathtaking!”—TripAdvisor Member, Sutton, Coldfield, England

**Troodos Mountains, Troodos**

**EDUCATIONAL/HISTORICAL**

“**Kourion (Curium)** is a huge archaeological site, situated high above the beautiful blue sea. You will see some stunning mosaics and remains of houses. The highlight, undoubtedly, is the restored, imposing amphitheater, which is still in use today.”—TripAdvisor Member, London, England

**Kourion (Curium), Episkopi, 11.5 miles west of Limassol**

“The **Roman mosaics** of Paphos are actually part of a larger archaeological site that includes a theater and a ruined castle. You need a good few hours to make the most of the site. The mosaics themselves are stunning. It would be a crime to be in Paphos and not see the mosaics.”—TripAdvisor Member, London, England

**Roman Mosaics, Paphos, 26 306217**

“To better understand the archaeological sites you’ll see on Cyprus, stop at the **Cyprus Museum**. The galleries display a wealth of statues from the Greco-Roman period, including Alexander the Great, Aphrodite and Caligula.

**Cyprus Museum, 1 Mouseiou St., Nicosia, 22 865864**

**RELAXATION**

“If you are planning a trip to the Troodos, **Omodos** is a must-see. It has authentic Cypriot culture, from the elderly ladies sitting outside lace-making to the many wine shops/tasting & presses centered around.”—TripAdvisor Member, London, U.K.

**Omodos Village, 42 km from Limassol, 25 422453**

“I visited **Kykkos** and really found it ornate and colorful. But, this does not take away from the sanctity of the place. The whole ambiance is one of peace and quiet. I still have yet to see anything of equal grandeur.”—TripAdvisor Member, New Delhi, India

**Kykkos Monastery (Panagia tou Kykkou), 7.5 miles west of Pedoulas Village, Troodos**

“No kings are actually entombed at the **Tombs of the Kings** “but the grandeur and scale of the tombs earned them their title. It was actually a large burial site for nobles and dignitaries. You will see an elaborate necropolis cut out of the living rock. It is a truly fascinating place.”—TripAdvisor Member, London, England

**Tombs of the Kings, Kato Paphos, Paphos, 26 306295**
The Sage has plenty of delectable selections like filets and seafood for grown-ups, but kids will enjoy children's menu items such as the Humpty Dumpty (pieces of fried chicken) and the Peter Pan Spaghetti Show. Sage Restaurant and Wine Bar, 8 Kriou Nerou, Ayia Napa, 23 819276

“My 13-year-old son is a very picky eater but nothing was a problem at Moustakallis Tavern. The lamb kleftiko just melts in your mouth. There are always a few locals eating here—probably the best recommendation any restaurant can have.”—TripAdvisor Member

Moustakallis Tavern, 8830 Polis Chrysochous, Paphos, 26 322707

“My family and I visited The Windmill Restaurant twice during our holiday as we enjoyed it so much. The food was excellent—traditional, homemade and there was lots of it!”—TripAdvisor Member, Newcastle, England

The Windmill Restaurant, 19 Paphias Aphrodites St., Paphos, 26 933518

“The decor is opulent and striking.”

Choose from a wide variety of Greek-style pizzas, Italian pasta dishes and salads at PizzaExpress.

PizzaExpress, Pafinia Sea View Court, 53-53 Poseidon Ave., Paphos, 26 923034

Niazi’s “was very busy and popular with the locals (which is always a good sign). We had their famous mÈze meal, which included kebabs that were cooked by the chef, in the middle of the restaurant.”—TripAdvisor Member, High Wycombe, England

Niazi’s Restaurant and Bar, Kordonboyu Caddesi, Kyrenia, 392 8152160

Want more information on Cyprus? TripAdvisor.com offers free weekly e-mail updates filled with new deals, reviews and articles for Cyprus or any other destination you choose.

In northern Cyprus, “public transport is not quite as accessible as in southern Cyprus. I would recommend car hire. Driving is on the left and very safe.”—TripAdvisor Member, Lincolnshire, England

“Taxis are an option for travel in Paphos. Travelers are warned that the taxi rates in the area are not standardized, meaning that companies and drivers can charge what they wish.”—TripAdvisor Member

FAMILIES

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ROMANCE

“The local Polis to Paphos Amoroza bus “runs every hour along mountain roads through some of the most spectacular scenery in the area. The bus takes 45 minutes to reach its destination of Paphos town center.”—TripAdvisor Member, Newcastle, Australia

“Everything was perfect” at La Maison Fleurie. “Classic interior, attentive yet subtle service and elegantly presented, excellent food.”—TripAdvisor Member, Moscow, Russia

La Maison Fleurie, 18 Christaki Kranou St., Limassol, 25 320680

“Karlina caters for everyone, especially families. The food is home-cooked and always very fresh and very good value. Try the apple cake. It’s delicious!”—TripAdvisor Member

Karlina, 78 Tombs of the Kings Road, Paphos, 26 952130

BUDGET

“Taxis are an option for travel in Paphos. Travelers are warned that the taxi rates in the area are not standardized, meaning that companies and drivers can charge what they wish.”—TripAdvisor Member
WHERE to eat

HEALTH-CONSCIOUS

The Japanese restaurant Hokkaido “is well worth a visit; the food is amazing!”—TripAdvisor Member, Edinburgh, Scotland

| Hokkaido | 35 Ayias Mavris St., Ayia Napa, 03 721505 |

“If you want a traditional Cypriot restaurant, go to 7 St. Georges Taverna. Their greeting is ‘tell us when you want the food to stop.’ They serve m’Ze organic food accompanied with organic wine. It’s all delicious, down to the chocolate pudding and all at brilliant value! A must do.”—TripAdvisor Member, London, England

| 7 St. Georges Taverna | Yeroskepos, Paphos, 375 06 963176 |

Established in 1979, Mandra Tavern was one of the first restaurants in Kato Paphos. The menu offers a mouth-watering selection of fresh seafood, from king prawns and grilled swordfish to delicious salmon and sea bass.

| Mandra Tavern | 6 Dionysiou St., Kato Paphos, Paphos, 26 934129 |

HIDDEN GEMS

“Mother’s Restaurant is probably the best restaurant in Cyprus, no exaggeration. The food is delicious, the surroundings are beautiful and the atmosphere and hospitality are top class. In one word—superb.”—TripAdvisor Member, Swansea, U.K.

| Mother’s Restaurant | Leoforos Apostolou Pavlou, Paphos, 26 963474 |

“Karatello is perfect. It is set aside the imposing Limassol Fort and you essentially dine where medieval knights once roamed. The food is great, both in quality and quantity. This is a very good mezze by any standard and all dishes came at the right temperature.”—TripAdvisor Member, London, U.K.

| Karatello | Vasilissis Street, Limassol, 25 820474 |

“Karatello is perfect. It is set aside the imposing Limassol Fort and you essentially dine where medieval knights once roamed. The food is great, both in quality and quantity. This is a very good mezze by any standard and all dishes came at the right temperature.”—TripAdvisor Member, London, U.K.

| Karatello | Vasilissis Street, Limassol, 25 820474 |

“Karate is perfect. It is set aside the imposing Limassol Fort and you essentially dine where medieval knights once roamed. The food is great, both in quality and quantity. This is a very good mezze by any standard and all dishes came at the right temperature.”—TripAdvisor Member, London, U.K.

| Karatello | Vasilissis Street, Limassol, 25 820474 |

SPECIAL EVENTS

Cheer on the ponies as they hit the dirt for prizes totalling over 50,000 Euros at the Cyprus Derby Cup. (November)

| Cyprus Derby Cup | Nicosia Race Club, 10-12 Grigori Afxentiou St., 22 782727, http://www.nicosiaraceclub.com.cy |

Running enthusiasts have their choice of two beautiful half marathon courses this November: the Cyprus Half Marathon follows a breathtaking course along the coast of Paphos, with an accompanying 5K fun run for the less experienced. The Amathunta Half Marathon begins and ends at the lovely Agios Tychonas seafront and also includes shorter distance events. Both runs feature post-race parties with beer and wine, energizing refreshments and music. (November 21 & 28)


Celebrating Epiphany, one of the highest holidays in the Greek Orthodox Church, with traditional blessings, a Mass, ceremonial baptism, feasting and celebrations. (January 6)

| Epiphany | Various venues throughout Cyprus |

Stuff your belly with meats, cheeses and all sorts of treats while you enjoy parades, fancy balls and festivities for adults and children alike during Carnival. (February)

| Carnival | Various venues, 25 745919 |

If you have recovered from the half marathons of autumn, lace up your shoes again to join thousands of runners from the far reaches of the world taking part in the Cyprus Marathon. The 26-mile course takes a breathtaking seafront route from Aphrodite’s birthplace to Paphos Mediaeval Fort Square, where finishers can enjoy traditional Cypriot music and dancing. (March 13)

| Cyprus Marathon | Starts at Petra tou Romiou and finishes at Paphos Mediaeval Fort Square, http://www.cyprusmarathon.com |

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Where to STAY

FAMILIES

“I would recommend the Alexander The Great Hotel to any family with children. The activities were fantastic and so much better than previous hotels. We will definitely go back!”—TripAdvisor Member, Manchester, England

Alexander The Great Beach Hotel, Posidonas Ave., Paphos, 26 965100

“...fantastic and so much better than previous hotels.”

The Anassa Hotel is “a five-star hotel, where no one minds if your children throw their breakfast on the floor; where there is a special kids’ evening meal sitting; where there is a wonderful, clean, fun kids’ club and lovely babysitters, AS WELL AS the standard of rooms, food, atmosphere and service that you would normally expect from a five-star property.”—TripAdvisor Member, London, England

Anassa Hotel, Baths of Aphrodite Road, Polis, 26 888000

The St. Raphael Resort has a lot to offer kids: “a play group, two parks, two pools and a waterslide.”—TripAdvisor Member, Leeds, England

St. Raphael Resort, Amathus Avenue, Limassol, 25 636100

ROMANCE

“Every moment spent at the splendid Amathus Beach Hotel leaves unforgettable memories.”—TripAdvisor Member, Bucharest, Romania

Amathus Beach Hotel Limassol, Amathus Avenue, Limassol, 25 832000

“A truly perfect holiday!”

“The Napa Mermaid is perfect for couples seeking a relaxing holiday. We stayed in an amazing grand suite—two en suite bedrooms, a lounge, kitchen and a Jacuzzi on the balcony! The breakfasts were incredible, everything you could want to eat: pastries, fruit, yogurt, muffins, etc. A truly perfect holiday!”—TripAdvisor Member

Napa Mermaid Hotel & Suites, 45 Kryou Nerou, Ayia Napa, 23 721606

“I can thoroughly recommend the Aquamare for couples looking for a relaxing time away. The hotel facilities were excellent, and the staff were very professional, hard-working and friendly without being in your face the whole time. An oasis of calm after a hectic day exploring Paphos and the surrounding area.”—TripAdvisor Member, Devon, U.K.

Aquamare Hotel, Poseidonos Avenue, Paphos, 26 966000

BUDGET

The Queens Bay Hotel was a “great value for money. We booked it last minute at a great price, so we didn’t expect luxury. Once we arrived at the main hotel entrance, we were pleasantly surprised! The reception is beautiful, and we were greeted by very friendly smiling faces.”—TripAdvisor Member, Wales

Queens Bay Hotel, Coral Bay Road, Paphos, 26 946600

Kefalos Beach Tourist Village is “utter bliss. The hotel and rooms are very nice and cleaned daily. Never any problem getting sun loungers at pool. The hotel is only a 10-minute walk from lots of bars and restaurants.”—TripAdvisor Member, Aberdeen, Scotland

Kefalos Beach Tourist Village, located halfway between the Lighthouse and the Tombs of the Kings, Kato Paphos, 26 934000

“All of the Apollonia Apartments are very spacious and have every amenity you could think of. They are kept spotlessly clean. And the pool area, which has enough sunbeds for all guests, is a dream. Best apartments in Paphos!”—TripAdvisor Member, Liverpool, U.K.

Apollonia Holiday Apartments, 20 Ikarou St., Paphos, 26 221787

LUXURY

At the Elysium Hotel, “we stayed in a Cypriot loft room, which was very luxurious (definitely worth the extra). The maids changed the towels twice a day, the bed linen every day and filled up both bathrooms with Molton Brown products twice a day.”—TripAdvisor Member, Essex, England

Elysium Hotel, Queen Venetikis Street, Paphos, 26 844444

Four Seasons Hotel is “perfection. The little extras that we received made this hotel stand out. This and the service will keep us going back: handmade chocolates, newspapers, all delivered to the room. The nightly turn-down service even included rose petals scattered on the pillows!”—TripAdvisor Member, Lincolnshire, England

Four Seasons Hotel, Limassol, 25 858000

“...utter bliss.”

“The Londa Hotel is wonderful. Those accustomed to very high standards will not be disappointed. The rooms are stylish, elegant and beautifully decorated. Get a seaview room to wake up to the beautiful sounds of the waves in the morning.”—TripAdvisor Member, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Londa Hotel, 72 George A St., Limassol, 25 865555

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**Where to STAY**

**HIDDEN GEMS**

"Walking in through the reception and out to the pool area, the **Louis King Jason** actually does look like an oasis. The bar furniture is stunning, with sweeping canopies, comfy cushions to rest from the sun or lounge on in the evening. The rooms were lovely and spacious, and the hotel is immaculately kept. I just can’t recommend it enough!"—TripAdvisor Member, London, England

**Louis King Jason**, Pentadaktylou Street, Kato Paphos, Paphos, 26 947750

**The Ship Inn** "is an elegant property, with an excellent ambiance and facilities. The rooms are quite spacious with balconies overlooking either the pleasant garden/pool area or towards the impressive range of hills to the south. There is a superb indoor pool plus gym facilities."—TripAdvisor Member, Chester, England

**The Ship Inn**, Girne-Karaoglanoglu Road, Kyrenia, 392 8156701

"If you want something different from the generic package hotels, try **Anthony’s Garden House**. The rooms are comfortable, if fairly basic, but the highlight of the guesthouse is the lovely gardens."—TripAdvisor Member, Dublin, Ireland

**Anthony’s Garden House**, 23 Makarios St., Episkopi, Limassol, 05 232748

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