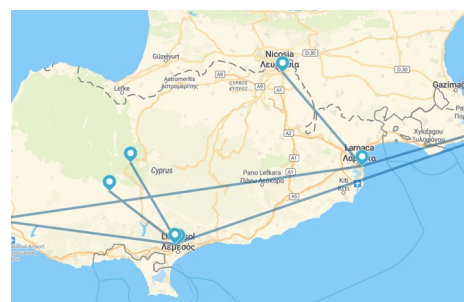




Cyprus, 9 Days · Tailor-made by car

Route around the Island of Aphrodite, the goddess who rose from the sea

Greek mythology says that Cronus, after castrating his own father Uranus, threw his genitals into the sea where they formed a new being among the foam, Aphrodite. Once the figure of the goddess of beauty and love had been created, she was brought to the surface in a huge seashell, an image immortalised by the Renaissance painter Botticelli's masterpiece, *The Birth of Venus* (the Roman equivalent of Aphrodite). The place where the goddess appeared from the waters is found on a tiny romantic beach on the southwestern coast of Cyprus, the third largest island in the Mediterranean. It's home to a spectacular sea stack that is the cradle of this popular legend, the famous Petra tou Romiou. This is why Cyprus bears the nickname of the Island of Aphrodite, yet there are many more archaeological remains in the country that make reference to the goddess. And, of course, the country truly reflects its title as the birthplace of Aphrodite, with attractions including the lush forests of the Troodos Mountain and a stunning coastline peppered with heavenly beaches. We'd like to suggest a road trip laden with history and archaeology on which you'll discover not only Petra tou Romiou, but also the legacy of Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Crusaders, Ottomans and the British. But Cyprus is much more than its long and frenetic past. It's also a modern and vibrant sun-and-sand destination blessed with crystal-clear waters, picture-postcard beaches, entertainment for all ages and a lively nightlife, focused around the party resort of Ayia Napa. Travel to Cyprus and discover why it is one of the Mediterranean's top destinations.



NATURE

Departure date: Departures from June 2026 till June 2027

From: Cork, Shannon, Dublin

Travel details

DAY 1 · CITY OF ORIGIN - LARNACA

Flight departure from the city of origin to Larnaca. Arrival and rental car pick-up at the airport.

Welcome to Larnaca, the third-largest city in the Mediterranean paradise known as Cyprus. This is the birthplace of the famous philosopher Zeno and residence of Saint Lazarus after the miracle of his resurrection. Perched on the southeast coast of the island, Larnaca is a cosmopolitan city with a forward-thinking and European atmosphere, yet not exempt from outstanding archaeological and artistic treasures. An ever-vibrant city that captivates visitors with its melting pot of cultures, traditions, scents and flavours from around the world, all inherited from its historical significance as a trading port. And it's also home to the ruins of the ancient Greek city-kingdom of Kition, which are open to visitors all year round. Most restaurants are clustered along Finikoudes Beach, on an extremely popular strip known as Palm Tree Promenade. To the south of the promenade is the Medieval Castle and, just a stone's throw away, the stunning Grand Mosque. Savouring the delicious local cuisine is one of the true pleasures of any trip to Cyprus. A traditional Cypriot meal begins with mezze, a selection of starters that includes salads, taramasalata, hummus and tahini. Main courses typically feature cheese and cucumber salad, aubergine stewed with tomato and garlic, moutzentra (lentils with rice and onions), pastitsio (local version of lasagna) or the delicious spanakopita (spinach, feta cheese and egg pie). Meat dishes include stifado (beef stew with onions and black and green olives), or oftó (roast or grilled lamb with aromatic herbs and potatoes), washed down with a slightly tart and refreshing red wine. And to finish, typical desserts are bourekia (goat cheese parcels flavoured with cinnamon and orange blossom), galaktoboureko (filo pastry pie filled with cream) and kadaif (almond and honey nest bathed in syrup). After dinner, you can soak up the vibrant Larnaca nightlife either along the Palm Tree Promenade, which is lined with a whole host of live music venues, or in the Mackenzie district, home to many dance bars and clubs that stay open well into the early hours.

Overnight stay in Larnaca.

DAY 2 · LARNACA

The best way to kick-start the day is with a typical Cypriot breakfast featuring bread, cheese, olives and ham, accompanied by a sweetened tea. Or you could have a Greek-style coffee, but be warned that it's really strong and unfiltered. Once you're ready, continue exploring this wonderful city that will be your base camp for the entire road trip.

Larnaca cherishes a remarkable architectural heritage that reflects its long-lived pilgrimage throughout the centuries. You could start with the archaeological ruins of the ancient city-kingdom of Kition, where evidence has been found that the Mycenaean Greeks landed on the island in the thirteenth century BC and the Phoenicians in the ninth century BC. The most outstanding architectural remains of the site are the Temple of Aphrodite-Astarte, built by the same Phoenicians that built Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem, both in the ninth century BC. Eighteenth-dynasty Egyptian temples have also been unearthed, which are even older than their Greek counterparts. The Medieval Castle of Larnaca is another major attraction in the city. Its origins date back to the fourteenth century, although it was redesigned in the seventeenth century by the Ottomans, as the characteristic style of the northern façade shows. You can admire a spectacular view of the city from the top of the walls and learn about fifteen centuries of the island's history at the Medieval Museum within the main building of the castle. Right by the Medieval Castle is the Grand Mosque (Buyuk Camii), which dominates the traditional Turkish district of Skala. Built on the site of a church dedicated to the Holy Cross, it's believed to be the first Ottoman mosque in Cyprus, as attested by a document from 1747. Other attractions in Larnaca include the Church of Saint Lazarus (Agios Lazaros) and the Tomb of Lazarus, who was resurrected by Christ and left for Cyprus, later being appointed the Bishop of Kition. This is also where you'll find the Byzantine Museum. If you fancy stopping for a drink, head to the Plateia Evropis (Europe Square) to find a whole host of bars and restaurants. And it's also home to some cultural treasures: the bust of General Kimon; the statue of Zeno; the beautiful Seagulls in Flight sculpture by Greek artist Theodoros Papagiannis; the Municipal Art Gallery; the Museum of Palaeontology and the Historical Archives.

Continue your tour to the magnificent Bekir Pasha Aqueduct or Kamares Aqueduct (arches in Greek), built in 1746 and which remained in operation until the 1930s, and the famous Hala Sultan Tekke Mosque, which is particularly stunning at sunset.

Overnight stay in Larnaca.

● DAY 3 · LARNACA - NICOSIA - LARNACA

Today we head north to Nicosia, which is about 50 kilometres from Larnaca.

The time has come to discover the capital and largest city of the Republic of Cyprus: Nicosia (Lefkosia, in Greek). It's a vibrant, modern and fast-growing European city with one of the highest standards of living in the world. But it's also the last remaining city in the world divided into two by a border, where the southern part is Cyprus and the northern part is the capital of the self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Located on the River Pedieos and capital of the island for more than a millennium, the historical legacy in Nicosia inherited from conquerors such as the Crusaders, the Venetians, the Turks and the British make it a truly unique destination. Enclosed behind its medieval walls, built by the Republic of Venice, the old quarter boasts the main historical and cultural attractions of the capital. These include Famagusta Gate, or Porta Giuliana, the most ornate entrance of the Venetian wall; Faneromeni Church, the largest in Nicosia and home to the relics of the bishops and priests executed during the Ottoman conquest; the Church of Archangelos Michael Trypiotis, a prime example of Franco-Byzantine architecture with a richly decorated interior; Agios Ioannis Cathedral, with its important murals of biblical scenes; and, last but certainly not least, Laiki Geitonia, a traffic-free area that simply oozes old town charm, with almost all the buildings having been restored and any new ones maintaining a classic line. You'll also find a wealth of family-run taverns that serve some outstanding dishes. Give them a try!

Nicosia also boasts some great museums, such as the Cyprus Museum, which exhibits Cypriot antiquities from the Neolithic to the Byzantine periods; the Byzantine Museum and Art Galleries, specialising in the conquest and subsequent domination of the island by the powerful Byzantine Empire, whose imperishable traces are still reflected in numerous social, cultural and artistic aspects of Cyprus; and the Cyprus Folk Art Museum, which showcases Cypriot art in the form of wood engravings, tapestries, embroidery, pottery, national costumes and handmade textiles.

If you want to venture into the occupied part of Nicosia, there's a checkpoint exclusively for pedestrians and cyclists located in Ledra Palas (Ledra Palace), and another for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles located in Agios Dometios, also known as Metehan. (Note: See the 'Important Notes' section). The northern part of Nicosia, controlled by the self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, also houses an important monumental legacy clustered mainly within its old walled city.

Right in the centre is Atatürk Square, also known as Sarayönü Square and dominated by the Venetian Column, or Dikiltas (the Obelisk). Sarayönü Square leads onto Kyrenias Avenue, lined with restaurants and shops, which then connects with the Kyrenia Gate and Inonu Square. Don't miss the Büyük Han caravanserai, one of the finest buildings on the island, and the Selimiye Mosque, historically known as Cathedral of Saint Sophia and now the main religious centre in Northern Cyprus.

Return and overnight stay in Larnaca.

● DAY 4 · LARNACA - KOURION - PAPHOS - PETRA TOU ROMIOU - PAPHOS

This is the key day on this fantastic road trip as you'll get to see the magical place where legend has it that Aphrodite herself was born! Why don't you start thinking about the wish you'll ask the Goddess of Love? To get there, leave Larnaca behind you and drive the eighty-five kilometres eastbound to Kourion, also known as Curium.

Kourion is like a huge time machine that will immediately whisk you back to bygone times, such as the Greece of the second century BC or the Byzantine era. We recommend getting a guide to learn all about the spectacular ruins of this incomparable historical treasure (admission not included), although you can also explore on your own if you wish. Make sure you see the House of Achilles, the House of the Fountain and the House of the Gladiators, all adorned with stunning mosaics, the Nymphaeum and the Necropolis, among many other attractions. You'll also be wowed by the impressive Greco-Roman theatre from the second century BC and renovated between the second and third centuries AD, with a capacity for 3,500 spectators. It's still used now for outdoor musical and theatrical shows.

Then head along the coast on the A6 westbound and after about fifty-five kilometres you'll get to Paphos, located on the western coast of Cyprus.

Along with Palaepaphos in Kouklia, the stunning Paphos was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1980. The reason was none other than the "exceptional architectural and historic value" of the remains of palaces, fortresses, villas, theatres and tombs found on both sites. In Paphos you'll get to admire unforgettable treasures such as St. Paul's Pillar, where tradition has it that shortly before the Roman Governor Sergius Paulus converted to Christianity, he commanded Saint Paul to be tied to this column and beaten; and the Chrysopolitissa Church, which dates back to the thirteenth century and was erected on the ruins of an ancient Byzantine basilica. And there's no end of attractions in Paphos, as it's also home to the Sanctuary of Aphrodite, whose oldest remains date back to the Mycenaean period (twelfth century BC) and were visited by Emperor Tito in the year 69 AD; a necropolis from the eleventh century BC; the Tombs of the Kings and the Sanctuary of Apollo Hylates, which are both from the fourth century BC; and the spectacular Greek theatre with capacity for about 8,000 people and built at the end of the third century BC, to name just a few monuments.

Then it's time to head towards the northwest of Paphos along the road that hugs the coastline. After one hundred and ten kilometres or so, you'll get to the most famous rock in Cyprus.

This amazing road trip wouldn't be complete without seeing the must-visit Petra tou Romiou, where Aphrodite, the goddess of love and beauty, rose from the waters. It's basically a tiny romantic beach where a large rock emerges from the sea, the origin of this popular legend. Take your swimwear and a towel, as it's said that if you swim around the rock, the goddess Aphrodite will grant you eternal beauty. Whether or not this is true (you'll have to check it out once there), this is a true highlight of the trip and deserves many a photo. Once piece of advice: try not to drive too fast, as the road to Petra tou Romiou isn't well signposted and you can easily miss it. However, once there you can park without a problem and walk down to the beach.

Once you're ready, head back to Paphos on the same road as you took to Petra tou Romiou.

Make sure you try out one of the many restaurants in the city to savour other Cypriot dishes, such as the famous grilled fish with tzatziki (yoghurt and cucumber dip), moussaka (aubergine bake layered with lamb mince and topped with melted cheese), tava (lamb and onion bake), kleftiko (slow-roasted lamb), or lentil soup. And for dessert the ever-popular rizogalo, which is simply a rice pudding made with local milk.

Overnight stay in Paphos.

● DAY 5 · PAPHOS - LIMASSOL

After breakfast, head eastbound on the A6. After some seventy kilometres, you'll reach the south coast and the second largest city in Cyprus.

Limassol was the place where Richard the Lionheart first set foot on land in Cyprus with the intention of freeing his betrothed Berengaria of Navarre. She had been kidnapped by Isaac Komnenos, the local dictator, and the popular English king ended up conquering the whole island and marrying Berengaria at the Byzantine castle once occupied by Komnenos himself. Since then, Limassol has been closely linked to the English-speaking world, although it retains all the characteristics of its Greco-Orthodox culture. Its attractive beaches are located on the strip to the south of the city where you'll also find a modern sun-and-sand resort. The area of Dasoudi Beach is wonderful, with all the facilities you'll ever need for an idyllic summer day. And the historical heritage of Limassol is equally stunning. On Queen Berengaria Street, you'll find the medieval castle that replaced the previous Byzantine construction in the fourteenth century and which is the city's top landmark. The old town is also home to the Medieval Museum, a journey through the Byzantine, Medieval and Ottoman eras, as well as many bars and restaurants if you fancy a drink or a bite to eat.

Overnight stay in Limassol.

● DAY 6 · LIMASSOL - OMODOS - LIMASSOL

Today you can explore the rural side of the island, so head north towards Omodos, which is located around forty kilometres from Limassol.

This village is nestled in an idyllic setting of pine forests and vineyards. It's a laid-back place where time seems to go by more slowly. The Holy Cross Church and the Timios Stavros Monastery are the pride and joy of Omodos. Located in the heart of the village, the temple cherishes several medieval relics, including a piece of rope with which the Romans bound Christ to the cross and even a sliver of the Holy Cross itself. Around the monastery are several wineries where you can taste the excellent wines produced on the island, as well as shops with all kinds of souvenirs. And what better than some of the handicrafts made by local old women right on the street? Omodos is also an ideal place to try some more of the delicious local cuisine, such as souvlaki stin pita, which are the authentic Cypriot chicken and pork kebabs.

Then head back to Limassol on the same road you came to that interior jewel called Omodos..

Overnight stay in Limassol.

● DAY 7 · LIMASSOL - TROODOS (LAGOUDERA - NIKITARI - KAKOPETRIA) - LIMASSOL

You can continue your exploration of inland Cyprus through the country's largest mountain range, known as the Troodos, which runs practically from one end of the island to the other.

Here you'll find the famous forests of Limassol and the mighty Mount Olympus, which towers 1,952 metres above sea level, making it the highest peak in Cyprus. But Troodos is more than just a stunning landscape, as there are also numerous Byzantine churches and monasteries, most of which were declared part of a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 2001.

Head north until you reach Lagoudera, fifty kilometres away from Limassol, and then continue northbound on F932 in the direction of Nikitari. The churches of these two charismatic villages will astound you, as their interior walls boast some of the oldest frescoes in Cyprus. Then hop back on the F932 towards another colourful village in the Troodos Mountains.

Kakopetria, famous for silkworm breeding and the production and processing of silk, is home to many churches and chapels of great beauty and historical wealth. The most outstanding one by far is Agios Nikolaos Stegis, as it's a UNESCO World Heritage Site. And don't miss the small Archangelos Michael Church, built in 1520 and with a typical sloping mountain roof.

And then take the E801 towards Limassol, which is about fifty kilometres south of Kakopetria.

Overnight stay in Limassol.

● DAY 8 · LIMASSOL - AYIA NAPA - CAPE GRECO NATIONAL PARK - PROTARAS - LARNACA

Today's journey takes us to the eastern tip of Cyprus. From Limassol, we take the motorway that runs parallel to the island's southern coast, passing through the British sovereign base area of Dhekelia. During the journey, which takes approximately an hour and a half, you will pass small coastal villages and enjoy endless views of the Mediterranean until you reach Ayia Napa, famous for its turquoise waters and lively atmosphere.

In the heart of the town, the medieval monastery is a surprise, surrounded by streets lined with cafés and shops, while on the coast you will find sandy beaches to suit all tastes. Nissi Beach, with its islet accessible on foot, its festive atmosphere and the possibility of practising water sports such as skiing, windsurfing, canoeing and diving, is one of the most iconic; Pantachou Beach, next to the fishing port, one of the longest in Cyprus and the largest in Ayia Napa, is ideal for enjoying peace and relaxation; and Landa Beach, the most romantic and peaceful, perfect for those seeking unique spots.

Just ten minutes' drive to the southeast lies Cape Greco National Park, a strip of land where cliffs plunge into a deep blue sea. Local legend tells of the sea monster of Ayia Napa, but what really awaits are picture-postcard landscapes: juniper forests, coastal paths, sea caves and the spectacular Bridge of Love (Kamara tou Koraka), a natural arch stretching out over the sea. In the summer months, boat trips depart from the nearby port of Ayia Napa, allowing you to discover the coast from a different perspective and even spot monk seals.

We continue on our route. The E306 coastal road will take you to Protaras, located about fifteen minutes away by car. This quiet seaside enclave contrasts with the liveliness of Ayia Napa and is perfect for stopping for lunch on a terrace by the beach. Here, the famous Fig Tree Bay shines in its own right, considered one of the most beautiful beaches in Cyprus for its crystal-clear waters and the islet that protects the bay from the waves. After enjoying some free time to swim or stroll along the shore, you can set off for Larnaca on a journey that will take about an hour, completing a pleasant day dedicated to enjoying the sea, nature and the Mediterranean essence of the island.

Overnight stay in Larnaca.

● DAY 9 · LARNACA - CITY OF ORIGIN

The activities on the last day of the road trip depend on the departure time of your flight back home.

If you still have a few hours to continue enjoying Larnaca, we recommend a trip to the city's largest and most iconic open space: the Salt Lake. Legend has it that the lake was created by Lazarus after a vineyard owner refused to give him some grapes. The punishment was to turn his vineyard into a saltwater lake. Here you can see flamingos, pelicans, wild ducks and swans during the winter and spring, as it's one of the most important aquatic habitats for migratory birds in Europe.. and it's also a must-visit for humans. The Larnaka District Archaeological Museum, the Pierides Museum and the Municipal Museum of Natural History are other excellent options. And if you haven't had the chance, make sure you try another typical product of Cyprus, halloumi cheese, which is similar to feta but pressed with mint and curdled in its rennet. A real treat!

Arrival at the airport with enough time to drop off your rental car and flight back to the city of origin.

Arrival. End of the trip and our services.

Your trip includes

Your trip includes

- ✓ Return flight.
- ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Larnaca.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in Larnaca.
- ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Paphos.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in Paphos.
- ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Limassol.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in Limassol.
- ✓ Rent-a-car.

Your trip doesn't include

✗ Possible toll charges.

✗ Insolvency protection.

Destinations Visited

Larnaca



Nicosia



Paphos



Limassol



Omodos



Troodos



Limassol



Ayia Napa



Protaras



Important remarks

- Triple rooms in Europe are generally rooms with twin beds or a double, in which a folding bed is installed to accommodate the third person. Due to the inconvenience this causes, we advise against using this option as far as possible.
- Check-in time at the hotel on the day of arrival depends on each establishment, but in no case will it be before 3:00 p.m., unless otherwise indicated.
- The proposed excursions and tours for each day are purely suggestions, as you can tailor the trip to suit your times, tastes and needs.
- A credit card is considered a guarantee, so sometimes you will need one for check-in at hotels.
- Hotels usually have cots available. Otherwise, babies will have to share a bed with an adult.
- To pick up your rental car, you'll need a credit (not debit) card in the name of the person who made the booking, who must also be the named driver of the vehicle.
- Consult the necessary documentation to enter the destinations visited and for transit in the countries where air stopovers are made.