

Exploring Christian Cyprus
6 days – 5 nights
Limassol, Omodos, Paphos, Salamis, Famagusta, Larnaca, Kyrenia, Nicosia
History, Architecture, Culture, Relaxation

Community discord, far from being a recent expression in the troubles following the independence of Cyprus, has its roots in the long historical term, marked by a succession of dominations more or less well accepted by the island population. The Ottoman regime, with the status of the millets, created a partitioned society within which the Orthodox Christian community managed to organize its life and acquire a certain power depending on the period. This context is not necessarily conducive to discord, and sometimes allows communities to come together to defend themselves against the bad administration of the sultan's envoys, but they nevertheless live apart. The British administration will maintain this compartmentalization by maintaining the rules and institutions inherited from the Ottoman period and by reinforcing the separation between the communities as the Orthodox community becomes more radical. Explore the treasures of this heritage during your tour.

Day 1: Athens, Larnaca, Limassol

Arrival at Larnaca airport and meet and assist by our staff at the airport. Transfer by a modern coach to a hotel in Limassol. Arrive at the hotel. Complimentary welcome drink will be offered by the hotel. Check in during the welcome drink. [D]

Day 2: Limassol (Omodos)

Excursion to the old city of Limassol, the surroundings and the vineyard area. The Group will have the opportunity to walk through the old city up to the market. They will also walk by the medieval Fort, built in the 14th century on the site of an earlier Byzantine Castle. It was here that, according to tradition, Richard the Lionheart married Berengaria of Navarre and crowned her Queen of England in 1191. We continue our trip driving through the Phassouri citrus plantations up to the Colossi Castle. We will visit the castle that is a fine example of military architecture, originally constructed in the 13th century and subsequently rebuilt in its present form in the 15th century. In 1291CE it served as the Grand Commandery of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem. In the 14th century it came for a few years under the domain of the Knights Templar. Closed to Colossi is the archaeological park of Curium. Curium was an important ancient city-kingdom founded by the Greeks in the 14th century BCE. We will visit the Greco Roman Theatre and the House of Eustolios. The House of Eustolios originally was a private Roman villa that became a public recreation center during the early Christian period. It consists of a complex of baths and a number of rooms with beautiful 5th century AD mosaic floors. Finally, we will visit the ruins of the Cathedral of Curium, an early Christian basilica dated back to the 5th century. Attached to the north face of the basilica is the baptistery. After the visit, we will continue driving to the vineyard area of Limassol. We will arrive to one of the most beautiful and traditional villages of the island, the village of Omodos. We will have our lunch break at the Kafenion (coffee shop) of the village, where traditional dishes are served. After lunch, we will visit the Monastery of the Holy Cross at the village square and the medieval wine press. We will enjoy a wine tasting in one of the villagers' wine cellar before we leave for Limassol. Dinner at the hotel. [B/L/D]

Day 3: Limassol (Paphos)

Paphos is on the western coast of the island and is one of the most important archaeological regions of the island. The whole town is included in the official UNESCO list of cultural and natural treasures of the world heritage. Paphos is also important because of the religious history. St. Paul visited the town in the year 45AD accompanied by St. Barnabas. He was captured by the Romans and was flogged before the Roman Governor of Paphos Sergius Paulus who was later converted to Christianity. We leave the hotel after breakfast and we arrive to "Petra tou Romiou", the place, where according to the Greek mythology Aphrodite, the Goddess of beauty and love was born. After a short break, we will continue our drive to the village of Yeroskipou. In this village, we will visit the Byzantine Church Ayia Paraskevi, dating back to the 9th century. It is a basilica surmounted by five domes forming a cross and has beautiful mural paintings dating from the 9th to the 15th century. Free time will follow at the

village square, where the group can visit the places, where the traditional sweet “Lokoumia” is produced or have a traditional Cyprus coffee at the village’s Kafenion. Our journey continues after this break to Kato Paphos, where we will visit the Chrysopolitissa Church, built in the 13th century over the ruins of the largest Early Byzantine basilica on the island. Within the compound we will see the St. Paul’s Pillar, where St. Paul was flogged. Before lunch break we will visit the Tombs of the Kings. Spread over a vast area these impressive underground tombs date back to the 4th century BCE. They are carved out of solid rock with some being decorated with Doric Pillars. After lunch, we will visit the archaeological park, where the House of Dionysos, the House of Aion and the House of Thyseus are. The mosaic floors of these noblemen’s villas dating back to the 3rd to the 5th century AD is considered among the finest in Eastern Mediterranean. Free time will be given at the fishing harbor and drive back to the hotel. Dinner at the hotel. [B/L/D]

Day 4: Limassol (Salamis, Famagusta, Larnaca)

Famagusta is the city on the eastern coast of the island and it is still since 1974 under Turkish occupation. Next to Famagusta is the archaeological site of Salamis, the Birth Place of St. Barnabas. When St. Paul and St. Barnabas came to Cyprus in 45 AD they landed in the harbor of Salamis and then they cross the whole island passing by Kalopanayiotis in the Troodos Mountains and arriving to Paphos. The city of Famagusta is one of the most beautiful cities on the island. It is surrounded by the Venetian Walls. The city was very important during the Lusignan period on the island. After the Fall of Jerusalem to the Ottomans, Guy de Lusignan the King of Jerusalem came to Cyprus. His residence was in Famagusta, where he gave the order to build 365 churches, one for each day. Nowadays you can see the ruins of few of them and visit St. Nicola’s Cathedral. We arrive to the check point at Strovilia to pass to the northern occupied part of the island. 10 minutes later we will arrive to Famagusta. We will visit the St. Nicola’s Cathedral, the Othello tower and will have free time in the old part of the city. We will drive to Salamis, the Birth Place of St. Barnabas, we will visit the ruins and then we will continue to the St. Barnabas Monastery where we will visit the Tomb of St. Barnabas. Then we will drive to Larnaca for lunch. After lunch, we will visit at the center of Larnaca the St. Lazarus church built in the 9th century over the Tomb of St. Lazarus. According to the tradition and religious history St. Lazarus came to Cyprus after his resurrection and became the first bishop of Kition (ancient Larnaca). We will have free time at the Palm Trees Promenade of the town and we will continue our trip to Famagusta. Return to the hotel late afternoon for dinner. [B/L/D]

Day 5: Limassol (Kyrenia, Nicosia)

This morning we head to Kyrenia (Girne) to explore St. Hilarion fairytale castle perched high in the mountains overlooking the Mediterranean, the castle remains the best-preserved of all the crusader castles. Then, we move to the gorgeous Bellapais Abbey, located in the village of the same name and in a stunning position high in the Kyrenia mountains. The abbey was founded in the late 12th century by the second of the Lusignan kings, Aimery, although it is thought to have been a site of human habitation since Roman times. The abbey's name is derived from the French "Abbey de la Paix", abbey of peace, which became corrupted in Italian to "Bella Paese", meaning "beautiful countryside". We carry on driving to the town center of Kyrenia for a chance to spend time in the harbor town, regarded as the jewel of northern Cyprus. Visit Kyrenia Castle, that stands out on the beautiful harbor. This crusader castle keeps guard over Kyrenia’s harbor. Its setting is not as spectacular as those of the castles in the Kyrenia mountains, but the views from its ramparts are impressive and it is an interesting building. It is also home to the fascinating Kyrenia Shipwreck Museum. The castle was originally Byzantine, but it was expanded significantly during later periods, including construction work by the Lusignans and the Venetians. There is even a small Byzantine chapel buried within the castle walls, although this is thought likely to be a 16th century reconstruction of an earlier chapel. The first historical reference to the castle is from 1191. After Kyrenia, continue to the divided capital city of Nicosia and have lunch at the Sheridan Restaurant in the Great Buyuk Han, the largest caravanserai on the island of Cyprus, built by the Ottoman empire. After lunch, enjoy free time for shopping in the lively lanes and streets, experience both its Greek and Turkish areas, walk into Nicosia's walled old city and visit Büyük Han and Selimiye Mosque, once St. Sophia Cathedral. Return to Limassol for dinner and overnight at the hotel. [B/L/D]

Day 6: Limassol

Full day at your hotel to rest and relax before your flight back home. Enjoy an early dinner so you have time to pack and a few hours' sleep. [B/D]

Day 7: Limassol, Larnaca, USA

Very early in the morning you'll be picked-up and transferred to Larnaca airport to board your connecting flight to the USA.

[D] = Dinner | [B/D] = Breakfast and dinner | [B/L/D] = Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner.



Program Includes:

- Roundtrip airfare New York/Larnaca
- Arrival and departure transfers
- 6 nights' accommodation in Limassol
- Meals:
 - Breakfast daily
 - 4 lunches
 - Dinner daily
- Full-day tours of:
 - Limassol
 - Omodos
 - Paphos and Kato Paphos
 - Salamis, Famagusta, Larnaca
 - Kyrenia and Nicosia
- Professional English-speaking guide
- All entrance fees as per itinerary
- Private Luxury air-conditioned motor-coach:

- WI-FI
- 1 bottle of water per day
- Headset upon request
- Breakfast and Dinner daily
- All local taxes

Tour does not include:

- Airfare fees and taxes
- Airfare difference between New York and another USA gateway
- Travel Insurance
- Expenses of personal nature
- Meals not mentioned in the itinerary
- Tips to guides or drivers
- Meals not mentioned in the itinerary
- Tips to guides or drivers

Hotels in your Tour:

City	Hotel Name	Tripadvisor
Deluxe		
Limassol	The Royal Apollonia	4.5
First Class		
Limassol	Atlantica Oasis Hotel	4.5
Superior Tourist Class		
Limassol	Atlantica Miramare Beach	4.5

MEAL PLAN: Normally we include daily breakfast and dinner for all groups. However, the meal plan may vary depending on the organizer's request

- All hotels will be requested after discussion with the group Organizer

Group Prices:

The price for the group will be quoted based on the number of passengers, season, hotel type and meal plan.

Group organizers always travel for free if the group has 15 or more paying passengers.

Inclusion of tour conductors must be considered at time of request.

- If you wish to use this program for your group please either call us (1-855-55-TOURS or use the

web Group Quote Request.

- In either case our specialists will work with you to refine all the details and they will get you a quote with 2 business days. Quotes may be obtained for the air and land portions of just for the land journey.
- Booking both air and land with us will represent savings for you because of our special Leisure Fares, buying power and longtime relationship with the airlines.
- We will also may have the choice between regular fares and special leisure fares not available to the public.

Tour Code: AJ05LCA22XX

Other Options

- Lunches and dinners can be arranged for groups at top restaurants or any restaurant requested by you.
- We can revise the itinerary to spend more time and provide more depth in those areas that you are interested on.
- Any other changes to the itinerary will be accommodated depending on the facilities available in the area.