

Lefkosia has been the capital of Cyprus for the past 1,000 years. The city however, dates back to the Bronze Age when it was a renown cultural and commercial centre. With 228,000 inhabitants and seven municipalities, Lefkosia is a city of two aspects; the old, ancient town that is encircled by protective Venetian walls and the modern city, with its contemporary architecture, shopping malls and stores. **Old and New Town** are linked by **Eleftheria (Freedom) Square**, famous for the meetings and events it hosts. Visitors of Lefkosia have much to experience, both in the city and its outskirts, from **historical museums and archaeological points of interest, Byzantine churches and cultural centres** to its **fantastic markets and unique cuisine**. “Magic” is but one way in which to describe the Lefkosia experience.



Archaeological landmarks and sights – City

- **The Lefkosia Walls** were built by the Franks in the 16th century after the Lusignan kings arrived in Cyprus. The Venetians however, realized that the walls did not offer adequate protection from invaders and tore them down, building the walls that remain until present day. The Ottomans repaired the walls and covered them with stones during their occupation of Lefkosia. Until today, they are the most well – preserved construction in the city.
- **The Omerie Baths** were built during the 16th century as a gift to the city of Lefkosia by Lala Moustafa Pasa and were dedicated to Khalif Omer. These have now been restored and are fully operational.
- **The Omerie Mosque** was originally an Augustinian church run by monks and was dedicated to the Holy Mary. It was built in the 14th century and was converted into a mosque by Mustafa Pasa in 1571, as he claimed that the Church was built on the spot where Khalif Omer rested.
- **The Bayraktari Mosque** is located by the Constanza Bastion, where a Turkish soldier laid to rest the remains of Ottomans that fell during the city’s siege in 1571.
- **The Cyprus Handicraft Centre** houses a permanent exhibition of authentic, traditional works of handicraft, alongside more contemporary examples. There are also experimental workshops for embroidering, weaving, woodworks, ceramics, metalwork and costume making.

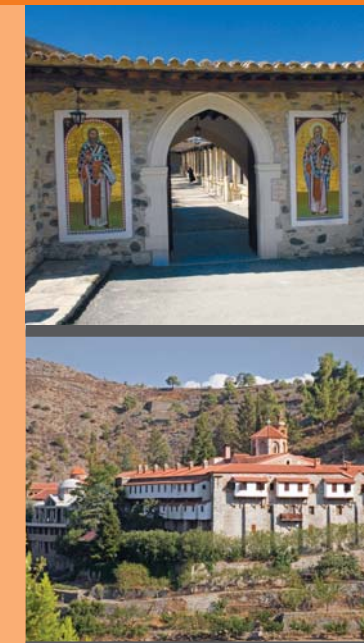


Lefkosia Walks

There are three routes one can follow; Chrysaliniotissa and Kaimakli, Inside the Walls and Outside the Walls. These walks are offered by the Lefkosia Municipality free of charge and are led by tour guides. They begin and end at the Information Office of the Cyprus Tourism Organization (CTO) in Laiki Geitonia, 11 Aristokyprou Street (east of Eleftheria Square), TEL: 22 674 264

Archaeological landmarks and sights - countryside

- **The Royal Tombs of Tamassos** (Politiko Village) can be found in an area that was considered an important kingdom in ancient times and was rich in bronze reserves. Excavations revealed the Royal Tombs, bronze workshops and the sanctuary of Aphrodite – Astartis.
- **The Holy Monastery of St. Heraklidou** (Politiko Village) holds the remains of the saint that it is named after.
- **Holy Mary of Chrysoseptiotissa** (close to Deftera village) is a church built in the form of a catacomb whose design dates back to the earlier built Christianity. The church was built out of a cave, hence the name “Chrysoseptiotissa” (meaning “golden cave”).
- The village of **Phikardou** was abandoned in the 19th century. However, it is considered an important historical landmark, as the local architectural style has been preserved to a high standard with many of the homes being built in the 16th century. Phikardou was awarded the Europa Nostra award in 1987.
- **The Holy Monastery of Machairas** is one of the oldest and most important monasteries in Cyprus. It was established in 1148 by two monks, when they discovered an icon of the Holy Mary in a nearby cave.
- **Ancient Idallion**, an area that flourished between 5th - 8th century B.C, was the setting for the death of Adonis, lover of the goddess Aphrodite, at the hands of Aris, god of war.
- **The Holy Church of St. Varnavas and St. Idallion** (Peristerona Village) is an excellent example of early Byzantine Cypriot architecture. It was built either in the 9th – 10th century.
- **The Holy Monastery of Archangel Michael** is a Byzantine monastery that was founded by Archbishop Nikoforos; his tomb is located in the church’s ante - chapel. The shrine dates back to 1650.



Museums

Lefkosia has many noteworthy museums that highlight the vast and varied richness of Cypriot culture through the centuries. The most important include:

- **The Cyprus Museum** is the largest museum in Cyprus. Here, one may observe the evolution of Cypriot civilization from the Neolithic period until the first Byzantine period (7th century A.D)
 - **The Archbishop Makarios III Cultural Foundation – Byzantine Museum and Art Rooms** is home to the richest collection of Byzantine art in Cyprus with more than 200 icons from 9th - 19th century on display, in addition to some spectacular mosaics from the 6th century. Also on display are Western European pieces, dating back to the Renaissance Period until present day, as well as Greek and Cypriot artists’ work.
 - **Agia Varvara – First Industrial Museum** houses the last remaining workshop from the first Industrial Era, where homes and work areas met under one roof. It displays equipment dating back to 1920, including a flour mill, an olive crusher and a grape crusher.
- Other museums worth visiting include: the **Ethnographic Museum of Cyprus**, the **National Struggle Museum**, the **Hatzigeorgaki Kornessiou Manor Ethnological Museum**, the **Leventio City Museum of Lefkosia**, the **Cyprus Museum of Natural History**, the **Cyprus Police Museum**, the **Cyprus Coin Museum**, the **George and Nefeli Chiapra Pieridi Museum**, the **Classic Motorcycle Museum**, the **Idalion Museum** and many others.

