



CYPRUS

11.000 YEARS OF
HISTORY

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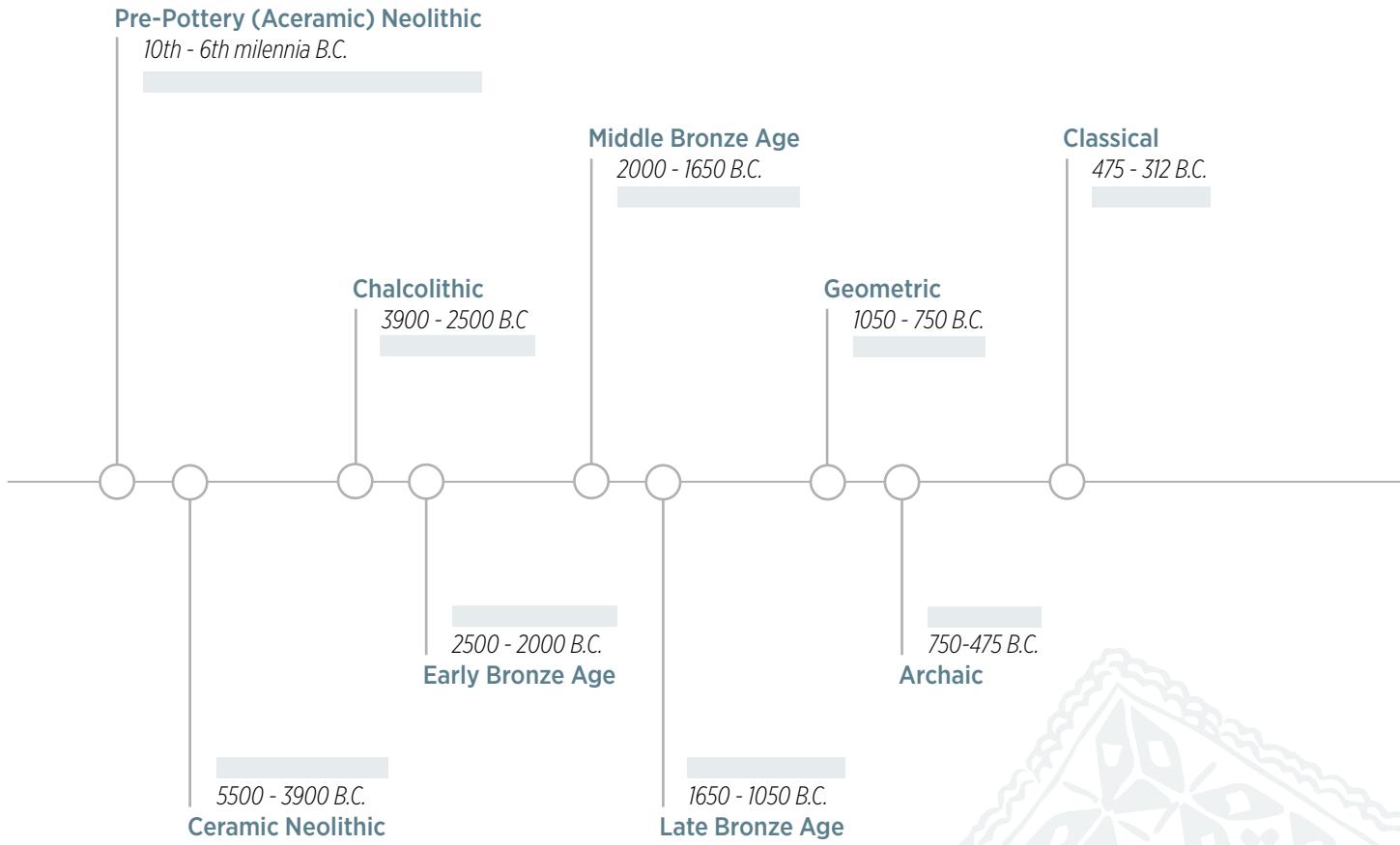


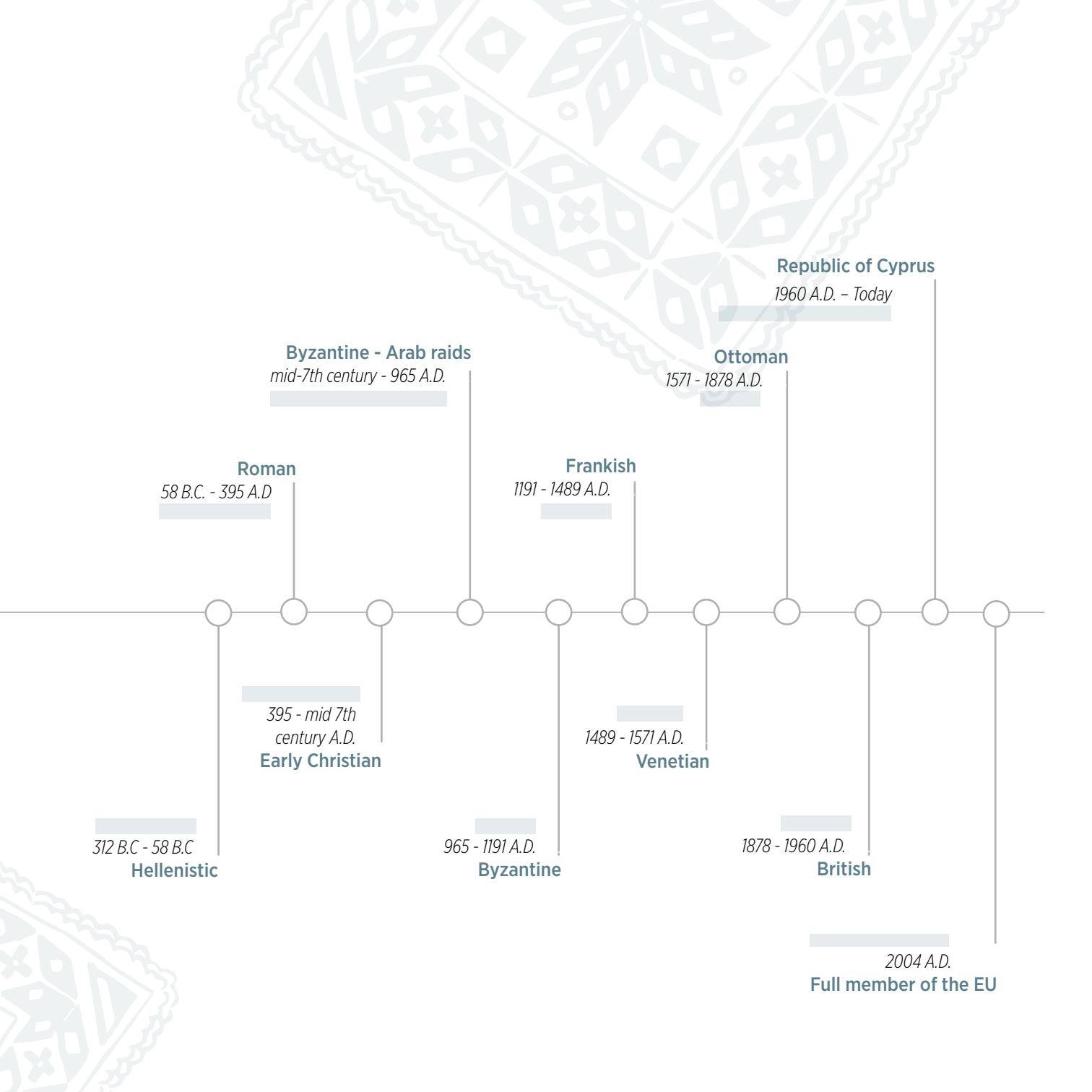
Cyprus, is an island nestled in the eastern Mediterranean Sea with a rich history and civilisation that dates back 11.000 thousand years. The island has been inhabited since prehistoric times and has been influenced by various ancient civilisations, including the Greek, Roman, Byzantine, and Ottoman empires. With a unique blend of cultures, Cyprus has a diverse heritage that is reflected in its architecture, cuisine, and traditions.

If you're interested in historical and cultural marvels of the past, in Cyprus there are many fascinating places to explore.



HISTORIC CALENDAR







UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITES

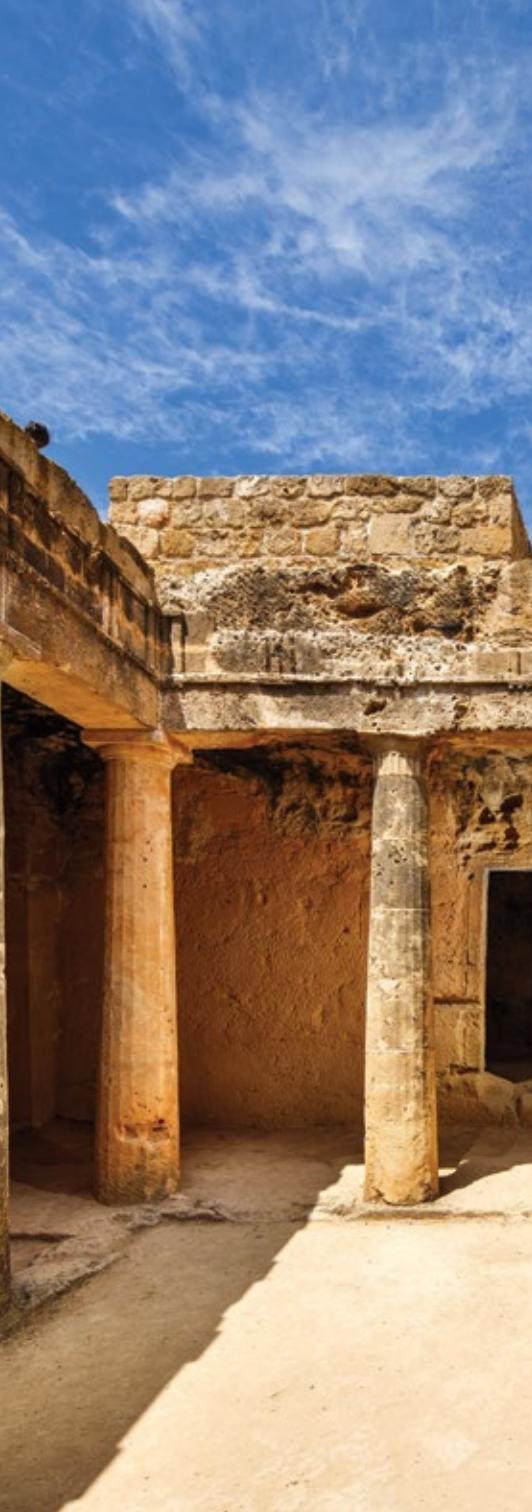
Choirokoitia Neolithic Settlement (AG), Larnaka

The site is one of the world's most well-preserved prehistoric settlements. Marvel at the circular dwellings made of mudbrick and stone, imagining the daily lives of the early settlers who called this ancient village home. This UNESCO World Heritage site offers an unparalleled glimpse into the dawn of human civilisation.

Visit the five reconstructed cylindrical shaped dwellings that provide a vivid representation of their use in the past.

Pafos Archaeological Park (AG), Pafos

Kato Pafos is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site as it is built almost on top of the ancient city that dates back to the Hellenistic period and encompasses the Pafos Archaeological Park. This open-air museum transports you through millennia, offering a captivating panorama of the city's ancient splendor from the 4th century BC to the Middle Ages, while most remains date to the Roman period. The Park covers an area of 105.396 hectares and includes monuments such as the Pafos Mosaics, the Agora, the Odeon, the Basilica of Chrysopolitissa and the Castle of 'Saranda Kolones'.



The Pafos Mosaics (AG)

Marvelous mosaic floors were discovered at the ruins of four lavishly decorated roman villas. The mosaic floors date from the 2nd to the 5th century AD and are considered among the finest in the Eastern Mediterranean. They depict scenes from Greek mythology and are considered masterpieces of mosaic art. The villas are named after some of the scenes depicted in their respective mosaic floors:

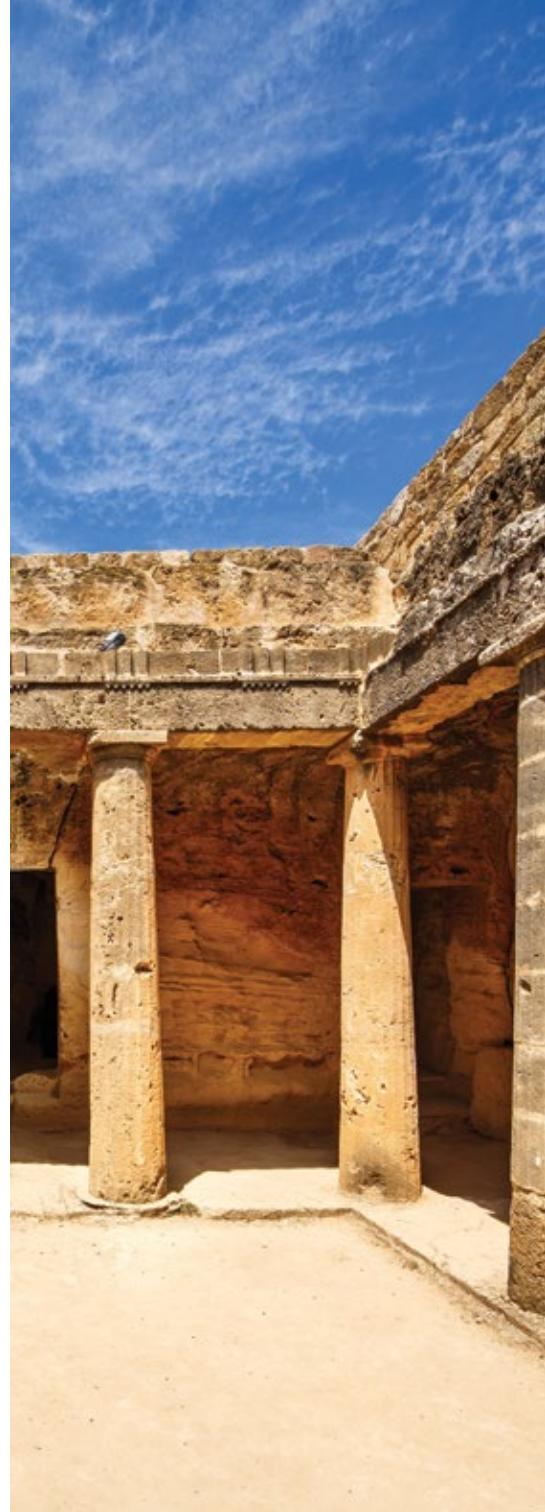
- In the House of Dionysos many of the mosaics depict scenes related to the worship of the god Dionysos.
- In the House of Theseus one can admire a large mosaic in the form of a medallion featuring the mythical duel between Theseus and the Minotaur in the Labyrinth of Crete.
- In the House of Aion (Century) one of the marvelous mosaics depicts the first Beauty Contest between Cassiopeia and the Nereids.
- In the House of Orpheus, the most significant and larger mosaic depicts Orpheus among the beasts.

Tombs of the Kings (AG), Pafos

A complex of monumental underground tombs that are carved out of solid rock and date back to the Hellenistic and Roman periods. Rather than kings, it is actually high-ranking officials and aristocracy that were buried here, but the size and splendor of the tombs gave this site its grand name.

Sanctuary of Aphrodite in Kouklia (AG), Pafos

Palaipafos is located near Kouklia village, 14km east of Pafos and was one of the most celebrated pilgrimage centers of the classical Greek world and an important city-kingdom. Here lie the ruins of the famous sanctuary of Aphrodite that date back to the 12th century BC. The sanctuary continued to be a place of worship until the 3rd or 4th century AD. The site is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site and includes a dedicated museum housed in a nearby Lusignan manor





UNESCO Painted Churches (AG), Troodos Mountains

Several Byzantine churches in the Troodos Mountain region are listed as World Heritage Sites. These churches offer a glimpse into the rich history and cultural heritage of Cyprus and they are known for their well-preserved frescoes and architectural significance. They date from the 11th to the 17th centuries and showcase the Byzantine iconographic tradition. Admire scenes of biblical narratives, saints, and angels, beautifully rendered on the church walls. Some of the most notable ones include the Church of Panagia Tou Araka, Church of Panagia Phorbiotissa, and the Church of Agios Nikolaos tis Stegis.

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IMPORTANT SITES

Kourion Archaeological Site (AG), Lemesos (Limassol)

Kourion is an ancient settlement that was destroyed by earthquake in the 4th century AD. The site consists of private houses with mosaic floors, peristyle courtyards, and exquisite architectural details, a well preserve Greco-Roman theater and an agora. As you explore the archaeological site stop and take in by the breathtaking cliffside views overlooking the sparkling waters of the Mediterranean.

Kolossi Medieval Castle (AG), Lemesos (Limassol)

Kolossi Castle, strategically positioned amidst lush vineyards, was of great military importance during the medieval period. Originally built by the Crusaders in the 13th century, the castle later became the seat of the Knights of the Order of St. John, showcasing its pivotal role in the island's history. Step into the halls of Kolossi Castle, where the echoes of chivalry and nobility resound. The knights who occupied the castle played a crucial role in producing and promoting the Commandaria wine, the oldest 'appellation d' origine' wine in the world. Commandaria's rich, sweet, velvety taste comes from the indigenous grape varieties of Mavro and Xynisteri grown in the 14 Commandaria villages. The grapes are left to ripen on the vine, intensifying their sugars and flavors. It spends a minimum of two years in oak barrels to age.



Sanctuary of Apollon Hylates, Lemesos (Limassol)

The Sanctuary is located about 3km west of the Kourion Archaeological Site and 20 km west of the Lemesos centre. Apollon Hylates, God of the Woodland, was the protector of Kourion and it is believed that he was worshipped at this site from the 8th century BC to the 4th century AD. His sanctuary was an important religious centre and underwent many extensions and alterations during different periods.

Limassol Castle, Medieval Museum, Lemesos (Limassol)

Step into history at Lemesos (Limassol) Castle, the legendary wedding spot of Richard the Lionheart and Berengaria of Navarre, a medieval fortress with a legacy dating back to the Crusades. Explore the atmospheric chambers, home to the Cyprus Medieval Museum, where artefacts and exhibits narrate tales of knights, kings, and the city's tumultuous past. The castle's rooftop offers panoramic views of the city and the sea.

Archaeological Museum of the Larnaka District

The Archaeological Museum of the Larnaka District houses a large collection of archaeological finds from the whole district of Larnaka, including the ancient city-kingdom of Kition, and the island's most important Neolithic settlements of Choirokitia and Tenta - Kalavasos. Exhibits include artefacts from the Neolithic period, the Copper Era and the Archaic, Classical, Hellenistic and Roman periods. Faience (tin-glazed pottery), ivory and alabaster pieces, are testimony to Cyprus' commercial and international ties with great civilizations of the antiquity.





Kition Archaeological Site, Larnaka

The architectural ruins of the ancient city-kingdom of Kition date back to the 13th century BC and provide the first clear evidence that the Mycenaean Achaeans arrived here at that time. Excavations have revealed that they fortified the city with cyclopean walls made of giant blocks of limestone. Later, in the 9th century BC, the Phoenicians settled in the area and built the temple of Astarte, Goddess of Fertility, related with the worship of the Goddess Aphrodite. Nearby, lay the foundations of the ancient port of Kition, an important commercial centre of ancient Cyprus. The drawings of ships etched into the walls of the buildings are particularly interesting.

The Pierides Foundation Archaeological Museum, Larnaka

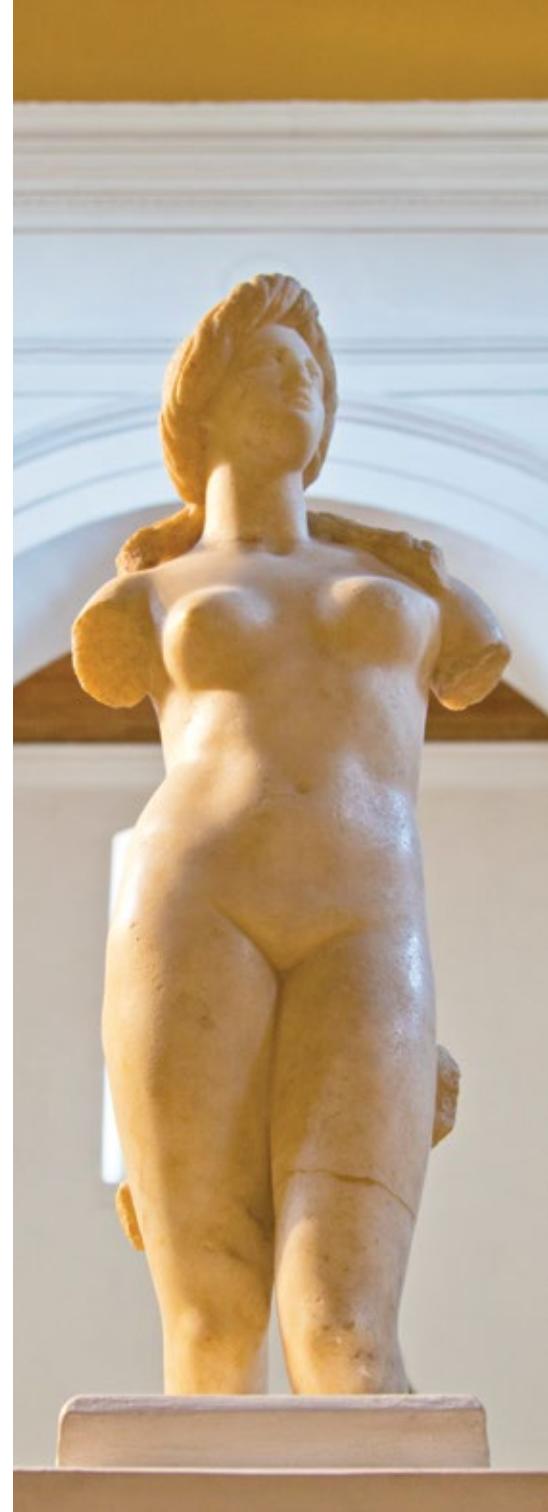
The Pierides Museum is the island's oldest private museum and is housed in the ancestral Pierides family home, an elegant colonial-style building. The museum's collection includes some of the most representative items of the island's civilisation. Prized items in the collection are the red polished ware from the Early Bronze Age, the Roman glassware, and the medieval ceramic dishes.

Cyprus Museum (AG), Lefkosa (Nicosia)

The Cyprus Museum, the main archaeological museum of Cyprus, showcases the island's rich archaeological heritage and cultural history. The museum provides a unique opportunity to visitors to explore the development of Cyprus' civilisation, from the Neolithic Age up to the Early Byzantine period (7th century AD). The collections consist of pottery, jewelry, sculptures, coins, copper objects, and other artefacts, exhibited in chronological order throughout the museum's galleries.

Byzantine Museum (AG), Lefkosa (Nicosia)

The Byzantine Museum contains the richest collection of Byzantine art in Cyprus, showcasing icons, frescoes, mosaics, ecclesiastical vessels, vestments, books and other minor art objects. Holding a prominent position in the collection are the fragments of the 6th century mosaics from the apse of the church of Panagia Kanakaria at Lythrankomi and the late 15th century wall painting fragments from the church of Christ Antiphonitis at Kalogrea. These, together with icons from various looted churches in the occupied north, were recovered and returned to Cyprus. They bear witness to the destruction of the cultural heritage and the illicit traffic of antiquities in the Turkish occupied part of Cyprus.







Ethnological Museum (AG), Lefkosa (Nicosia)

Opposite the new Cathedral, on Patriarchou Grigoriou Street the House of Hadjigeorgakis Kornesios, an 18th century manor house that used to be the residence of the homonymous Dragoman, is worth a visit. Dragomans acted as liaisons between the Pasha and the local people during the Ottoman rule. Today the building houses the Cyprus Ethnological Museum.

Leventis Municipal Museum , Lefkosa (Nicosia)

The museum's exhibition presents Lefkosa's 5,000 years old history, displaying a wide range of archaeological artefacts, an important collection of medieval pottery, ancient and modern maps, engravings, furniture, costumes, jewels, photographs, rare publications and paintings.

Pafos Archaeological Museum, Pafos

This Museum houses a rich and notable collection of antiquities originating from excavations at various archaeological sites in the Pafos region. The collection is housed across five rooms and includes finds dating from the Neolithic Age up to the 17th century AD. Marvel at the exquisite collection of Cypriot pottery on display, reflecting the island's mastery of clay artistry. Of special interest are a set of surgical instruments and a rare sculpture of the warrior Aphrodite.

'Petra tou Romiou' - Birthplace of Aphrodite (AG), Pafos

'Petra tou Romiou' is an idyllic and breathtaking coastal landmark, easily accessible from the Pafos – Lemesos motorway, 25 km from Pafos. Here according to Greek mythology, Aphrodite emerged from the waves. The Greek name, Petra tou Romiou means the Rock of the Greek man, referring to the Byzantine hero Digenis Akritas, who kept the marauding Saracen Arabs (7th – 10th centuries) at bay with his superhuman strength. According to legend he heaved the huge rock seen today on this beach and tossed it into the sea crushing a Saracen ship, which was trying to dock.

Linked to the Aphrodite Cultural Route.

Thalassa Municipal Museum, Agia Napa

The Thalassa Museum showcases the marine heritage of Cyprus, from prehistoric times to present day, and is a modern, interactive museum, housed in a multi-purpose cultural center. Among the exhibits are a life-size replica of a 4th century Greek trading ship 'Keryneia II', as well as bones and skulls of Cypriot pygmy mammals.

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CULTURAL ROUTES

The Heartland of Legends Route

The Heartland of Legends is a circular route through mountainous and remote areas, covering an inland area of authentic experiences, which bring our visitors closer to the Cypriot nature, tradition and the Cypriot way of life. It reveals the richness of village life through authentic experiences. It is a spotlight on all the beautiful elements of Cypriot slow rural life, like eating together, sharing tales in the village's coffee shop, celebrating local festivals, picking fresh produce and learning about traditional arts and crafts. Featured experiences encourage visitors' active participation e.g. in halloumi making, picking grapes to make wine, weaving traditional textiles and many more activities.

www.heartlandoflegends.com

Aphrodite Cultural Route

Follow in the footsteps of Aphrodite, the Ancient Greek Goddess of Love and Beauty, and protectress of Cyprus, and discover the archaeological sites dedicated to her ancient cult as you wander through layers of history, culture and mythology. Embark upon an enchanting journey through the sites of Palaipafos (Kouklia) in the Pafos (Paphos) region, the ancient city kingdom of Amathus in the Lemesos (Limassol) region, and Kition, in the Larnaka (Larnaca) region. Each is linked to other sites and museums, where artefacts related to the Goddess endure to this day. And upon the way, you will delight in learning all about her birth, mythology and character, as well as the rituals, plants and seashells connected with her cult.

For more information on Cultural Routes please visit

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