

North Cyprus – Castles, Abbeys and Ancient Sites

Tour Code NC

26 September – 3 October 2017

A relaxing tour based at a family run bungalow complex close to Kyrenia with daily excursions around the island to marvel at the range and wealth of architectural and scenic beauty. Controlled throughout history by the various superpowers of the time, we visit Greek and Roman antiquity, Byzantine churches, medieval abbeys and monasteries and Crusader Castles set dramatically into the hills. We explore the less developed region along the Karpas peninsula; the most beautiful stretch of the island's dramatic coast while Kyrenia itself has a picturesque tranquil harbour ideal for lazy afternoons and evening strolls.

Views from St Hilarion Castle, near Kyrenia
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Day 1 Fly to Turkish Cyprus or Cyprus

Departure from various UK airports to Ercan airport in North Cyprus (via Turkey) or to Larnaca in (South) Cyprus. Transfer to a small family run bungalow complex set in a peaceful location in Ozankoy village set in the foothills of the Kyrenia Mountains.

Day 2 In Kyrenia. Visit St Hilarion Castle and Bellapais Abbey

We drive into the mountains to the 13th century castle of St Hilarion, the most complete of the region's Crusader castles and with dramatic views to Kyrenia and across the coastal plain. We drive down to Kyrenia and its picturesque harbour for a break for lunch before visiting the shipwreck museum set in the commanding Venetian castle nearby. In the late afternoon we drive to Bellapais Abbey, a magnificent Gothic building in the village where Lawrence Durrell wrote "Bitter Lemons". Welcome dinner at a local restaurant (B,D)

Day 3 Visit Nicosia

Today we drive inland to Lefkosa (Nicosia) with its fascinating collection of Crusader Gothic and Turkish Ottoman monuments set within the old Venetian fortifications. The finest is the former St Sophia Cathedral, now Selimiye Camii mosque, with its superbly carved porch and sculptured windows. We also include visits to the beautifully restored Buyuk Khan or Great Inn, built in 1572 and the largest on the island, and the Dervish Pasha Mansion that now houses an interesting museum. A home cooked traditional dinner is prepared for us this evening (B,D)

Day 4 Visit Soli and Vouni

We head west to the citrus groves and market gardens of Guzelyurt to visit the icons in the Church of St Mamas before continuing to see the remains of the 5th century BC palace at Vouni, wonderfully located with views of the sea and Troodos Mountains to the south. Nearby are the ruins of Soli, a Greco-Roman city, famous for its 5th century mosaic floored basilica. Dinner at a local restaurant (B,D)

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Day 5 Visit Famagusta and Salamis

We visit the interesting and varied architectural wonders found within the old Venetian walled city of Famagusta, notably the Othello's Tower and the former St Nicholas Cathedral, now Mustapha Pasha mosque, before continuing to the impressive and extensive remains of the ancient Greek site of Salamis. The day concludes with a visit to St Barnabas Monastery with its impressive collection of icons. Dinner at a local restaurant (B,D)

Day 6 Visit Kantara Castle and Karpas peninsula

An early morning start for Kantara Castle, located at the beginning of the Karpas and with stunning views to the sea and along the peninsula. We continue along the 'pan-handle' to Dipkarpaz and the site of a 5th century ruined basilica at Ayios Philon,. We have lunch overlooking the rocky bay with its sunken Roman harbour before continuing to Apostolos Andreas Monastery on the very eastern tip of the peninsula (B,L)

Day 7 At leisure in Kyrenia

We have a day to enjoy at our own leisure, perhaps take a dolmus into Kyrenia and take a stroll and have a relaxing lunch in the harbour, swim at the pool or walk to nearby Bellapais village and in the surrounding foothills. A farewell dinner has been arranged in Bellapais this evening (B,D)

Day 8 Fly to UK

Morning transfer to either Ercan or Larnaca airport for our return flight to the UK (B)

Cost £1495.00 per person in a twin room (excludes international flights)

No single supplement charge



Price includes –

- ▶ Escorted by *Patrick Syder FRGS*
- ▶ Accompanied throughout by specialist Turkish Cypriot guide
- ▶ All transportation - private a/c minibus
- ▶ Full sightseeing programme including entrance fees
- ▶ 3* small family run bungalow complex exclusive to the group. Each bungalow has basic facilities with en-suite shower and WC. Swimming pool
- ▶ Half board meal basis including restaurant and local home-cooked meals
- ▶ Group size strictly from 6 to 14 passengers

Not included – travel insurance, lunches, drinks, gratuities, international flights