

Tours

Kyrenia (Girne) and Nicosia (Lefkosa) Tour

08:30 Departure from the conference center

Professional and experienced licensed guide during the tours.

Transportation by a comfortable AC non smoking Luxurious car / Van with professional driver.

18:00 Returning to the hotel

Price: FREE

During the Tour will visit the Historical Places

Old Kyrenia Castle

St. Hilarion Castle

Bellapais Abbey

Hız Omer Tomb

Lambousa Kingdom

Nicosia (Bedesten)

Belediye Pazarı (Municipal Market)

Büyük Han (Grand Inn)

Walled City

Derviş Paşa Mansion

Kumarcılar Han (Gambler's Inn)

Lusignan House

Museum of Mevlevi Tekke

Selimiye Mosque

Kyrenia Harbour

Note: Only, the museums **entrance fee and lunch** will be paid by the participants.

Historical Places Information

Kyrenia Castle



Kyrenia Castle has been standing since the 7th Century and many believe it was built to protect the town against raids from the Arab lands. Throughout the centuries, Kyrenia Castle has undergone many restorations especially during the Lusignan period. Built during an era of knights and archery the castle was designed with this in mind. During reconstruction in 1489 the castle was remodelled to co-exist with the artillery era. Two towers were also added but in

1570 the castle was once again under siege and taken over by the Ottomans. Like any castle

built for protection, Kyrenia castle is entered via a bridge built over a moat which was until the 1400's filled with water.

Inside Kyrenia castle you will find a Byzantine church and the tomb of the Ottoman Admiral, Sadik Pasha. There are also the towers, dungeons, an arsenal, a cannon parapet, and the shipwreck museum

St. Hilarion Castle



St. Hilarion Castle was built to defend Cyprus from raiding Arabs and was named after Saint Hilarion. In the 10th Century a church and monastery were built in this area but the first mentions of the castle were found in 1191. Although extremely important in its time, St. Hilarion Castle later became a summer retreat for the Lusignan nobility. On visiting St. Hilarion Castle there really is so much to see, from the royal kitchen, to the church and the

Lusignan gate. There is also a courtyard and fantastic views from the Queen's window on the second floor

Bellapais Abbey



The Bellapais Monastery is a remarkable piece of religious architecture located in the Kyrenia region of northern Cyprus, and is a wonderful place to visit if you want to combine sightseeing with some fascinating historical exploration. Located in the majestic Five Finger Mountains in Kyrenia, this monastery is a fine example of Gothic architecture, and is thought to have been started between 1198 and 1205, with more sections being added after 1267 and after 1324.

Hazret Omer Tomb



The Hazret Omer Tomb is a fascinating historical place of interest that enjoys a charming location in Kyrenia, and overlooks the beautiful Cyprus coastline. The Hazreti Omer Mosque and Tomb is small, and within are the remains of Hazreti Omer, a seventh century commander, and his men. They are said to have died whilst defending the area of northern Cyprus against the Arabs. It is also said that the site where the

mosque and tomb is located used to be the site of a Pagan shrine.

With the remains of seven Muslim saints within, the tombs are a fascinating historical attraction for visitors to the area, and the location of the Hazret Omer Tomb, which lies just four kilometers east of Kyrenia, makes it easy to get to. The whitewashed structures stand out quite distinctively amongst their rocky surroundings. The picturesque location of the mosque and tombs means that visitors can enjoy some wonderful views of the coastline and the Mediterranean as well as exploring the tombs themselves.

The tomb was also renovated in the 1950s, and today you will find fascinating tapestries and rugs within the tomb, as well as piles of books. Both the mosque and tomb were constructed by the Ottomans. Anyone that is interested in history and wants to delve further into the roots and origins of the area will find that this is a fascinating historical attraction that is a must for any itinerary. You will find it easy to get to the Hazret Omer Tomb and mosque, as it is all fully signposted from Kyrenia.

Lambousa Kingdom



- **Lambousa**, which translates as ‘the shining one’ was once a prosperous area, and is thought to have been founded in the eighth century BC by Phoenician traders. Parts of the area still remain today but much of it is not easily accessible due to being located within the confines of an army camp. Lambousa, located in Northern Cyprus, can be reached by walking along the Cyprus coast from Mare Monte Beach.

During the Roman era, the area became a prosperous port area for the town of Lapta, but after continual Arab raids found itself abandoned by the thirteenth century. When you visit Lambousa you will find a rich history and fascinating structures to explore, which help to provide some insight about the various eras of the area.

You will find Roman era fish tanks here, which are large rectangular pools that have been constructed by cutting into the rock. The remains of the Roman harbour wall can also be viewed by visitors, with two churches beyond that wall that can be seen but not explored, as these are within the confines of the army camp.

Early in the twentieth century a number of silver and gold objects from the Byzantine period were also discovered here, and these have become known collectively as the Lambousa

Treasure. It is thought that the objects date from between 627 and 630, and may have been buried in order to protect them from raids carried out by the Arabs. However, these finds were sent off and split between various museums, including the Medieval Museum in Limassol, the Metropolitan Museum in New York and the British Museum in London.

Nicosia (Bedesten)



Constructed in the 12th century, this Byzantine church (St. Nicholas Church) was later enlarged with Gothic annexes built by the Lusignans. The Venetians also altered the building somewhat before handing it to over the Greek Orthodox Metropolis. Then, during the Ottoman period, this building changed hands again, serving as a depot and a market where mostly textile products were sold. Remarkably, the masonry on its northern entrance resembles the masonry

on the entrance of the St. Sophia Cathedral.

Belediye Pazari (Municipal Market)



The Municipal Market in south Nicosia is located just a few streets east of Phaneromeni Square.

In 1964, when the city was divided by the Green Line, the original market, or Bandabuliya was located in the north, and therefore inaccessible to Greek Cypriots. This unimposing 60s building was built to meet the needs of the local population. The original market can still be seen

over the roof tops of the Green Line, and since the opening of the border in Ledra Street, is no longer inaccessible.

Fruit and vegetables, fresh olives, feta cheese and dried herbs are among the products sold from this market.

Büyük Han (Grand Inn)



Dating back to the 16th century, this Ottoman building situated in Asmalti Street used to serve as a 67-room inn for locals or caravans passing through the town. Following careful restoration, it now houses several galleries and handicraft shops, as well as a café/restaurant where you can enjoy traditional Turkish Cypriot food. Occasionally, it is also the setting for plays, concerts and special receptions.

Walled City



In 1567, the Venetians commissioned the Italian military engineers, Giulio Savorgnano and Francesco Barbaro, to design new fortifications for the city of Nicosia, in order to protect the inhabitants from imminent Ottoman attack.

The new walls replaced the old-style medieval fortifications which engineers deemed inadequate to defend the city. The Venetians demolished several churches and palaces within the city as well as buildings lying outside the new walls, both for the acquisition of building

materials and for a clearer field of vision for the defence of the city.

At the same time, the Pedieos River was diverted outside the city either in order to protect the residents from the flood or in order to flood the moat, which encircled the new walls.

This Venetian fortification complex has a circumference of 3 miles, and contains eleven pentagon-shaped bastions named after eleven families, pillars of the Italian aristocracy of the town, who donated funds towards the construction of the walls and the three gates, Porta San Domenico (Paphos Gate), Porta Guiliana (Famagusta Gate), and Porta del Proveditore (Kyrenia Gate).

Derviş Paşa Mansion



The owner of this two-storey 19th century mansion was Derviş Paşa, the publisher of “Zaman” – the first Turkish newspaper in Cyprus. The mansion is in the historically charming Arap Ahmet district of the city and has two entrances: on the main entrance, the year 1219 of the Muslim Calendar (1807) is visible, whilst the year 1869 is visible on the ornamented ceiling of the main room which is a later addition to the building. The mansion comprises an ‘L’ shape with

a large inner courtyard, and the rooms on the ground floor open to terraced pavilions ringing the inner courtyard. A wooden staircase supported by the water reservoir in the courtyard leads to the upper floor where all the doors open onto a beautiful covered porch. Following the restoration work of 1978-88, the mansion was opened as a ‘museum-house’ or ethnographic-museum and includes a main-room, a bride-room, a dining-room, and a section where many old Cypriot artefacts are exhibited.

Kumarcilar Han (Gambler’s Inn)



The Kumarcilar Han, also called the Gambler’s Inn, is just 100 yards or so north of the Buyuk Han, in Asmaalti Square. It is presently closed and semi-derelict, waiting renovation.

Much smaller than the Buyuk Han, the Kumarcilar Han is nonetheless typical of an Ottoman inner city commercial inn. It is not known exactly when the inn was built, but it is thought to be around the end of the 17th century. In the middle

ages, merchants used to group themselves together according to their trades. When travelling, merchants from the same town or trade would favour certain hans, which would tend to assume the name of that town or trade. The Gambler’s Inn was originally known as the Violinist’s or Fiddler’s Inn. It’s not known when, or indeed why, the name changed.

The main gate is not original, being a comparatively recent repair. Inside, however, is a second monumental carved gate, which dates to before the Ottoman conquest. This has lead experts to believe that the structure stands on a much earlier building, possibly the ruins of a monastery.

Lusignan House



This mansion dates from the 15th century, and is a well preserved example of Lusignan architecture. Its Gothic arched main entrance and the Lusignan coats of arms above it are magnificent. During the Ottoman period, decorated wooden ceilings were added.

The mansion has a typical inner courtyard of the period. It is two storied, and built from cut stone. Additions during the Ottoman period were made

from lath and plaster.

The upstairs rooms and wooden veranda are reached from the ground floor round-stone pillared veranda by stone stairs.

Museum of Mevlevi Tekke



South of the Kyrenia Gate, you will find the Mevlana Museum, a fine 16th century rectangular building on which rest six domes. It was constructed by a general named Arap Ahmet Paşa following the Ottoman conquest of the island. Arap Ahmet Paşa, together with the commander of the conquering army, Lala Mustafa Paşa, was a member of the Mevlevi order (order of dervishes founded by Mevlana Jalaladdin Rumi, also called “whirling dervishes”).

Ceremonial dances took place inside the building until 1930, which was then used as a Mevlevi Lodge until its last head of the order died in 1954. Inside the building, there are also tombs and a semahane (dervish meeting-house for religious music and whirling where the “dance-floor” is still preserved). Sixteen Mevlevi sheiks are

buried in the six tombs in the building – which is today also used as an ethnographic museum containing Cypriot costumes, cooking utensils and handwritten court records dating back to 1950.

Selimiye Mosque



The Selimiye Mosque is one of the most important mosques in North Cyprus (all the great Muslim festivals being conducted here), as well as being one of the finest examples of Gothic architecture on the island. Formerly the Cathedral of St. Sophia, the current building was constructed in the 13th century, but in 1976, it was discovered to have been built over the ruins of an even earlier building. Many Lusignan nobles and kings are buried under the mosque

and the carved windows are a fine example of the beauty of Gothic art. Fortunately, the building has defied several powerful earthquakes over the centuries due to its very large and strong flying buttresses. Then, during the Ottomans period, minarets were built over the two partial belfries on either side of the entrance and its walls whitewashed to give the strikingly airy and spacious feel inside the building today.

Kyrenia Harbour



Kyrenia Harbour

The unspoilt harbour awakes with time...

Kyrenia, with its picturesque harbour and adjacent castle, is called the "Jewel of Cyprus". It is, quite simply, exquisite! The town was probably founded circa tenth century BC and was one of the original city kingdoms. Its position on the north coast made it the

ideal place to develop a harbour, and being only forty miles from the Turkish mainland it was perfectly situated on the trade route. The Venetian tower, on the western side of the castle by the harbour entrance, is a veritable Aladdin's cave of Turkish and Turkish Cypriot wares. Here you can purchase anything from a beautiful carpet, or kilim, to a simple Nazar (the evil eye), for good luck. A walk through the Kyrenian back streets will reveal parts of the old city walls that at one time encompassed the town. There is one almost complete tower that is a craft centre and souvenir shop. Here homemade Cypriot artifacts and paintings by local artists are on sale, also books and postcards. You will find the Kyrenia Tourist Information Centre on the harbour's bend in the middle of the harbour. There are plenty of brochures, things to do in Kyrenia and North Cyprus maps for you to take away and peruse at your leisure.