



# ISLAND PARADISE

Whether you want to enjoy the luxury of a five-star spa, sail the turquoise seas or experience village life, you can do all this and more on the idyllic and beautiful island of Cyprus

Now that's what you call a sea view (above); there's vineyards aplenty in Cyprus (left), which means plenty of fine wines; modern city life includes hip, stylish restaurants, often set among stunning scenery (below)

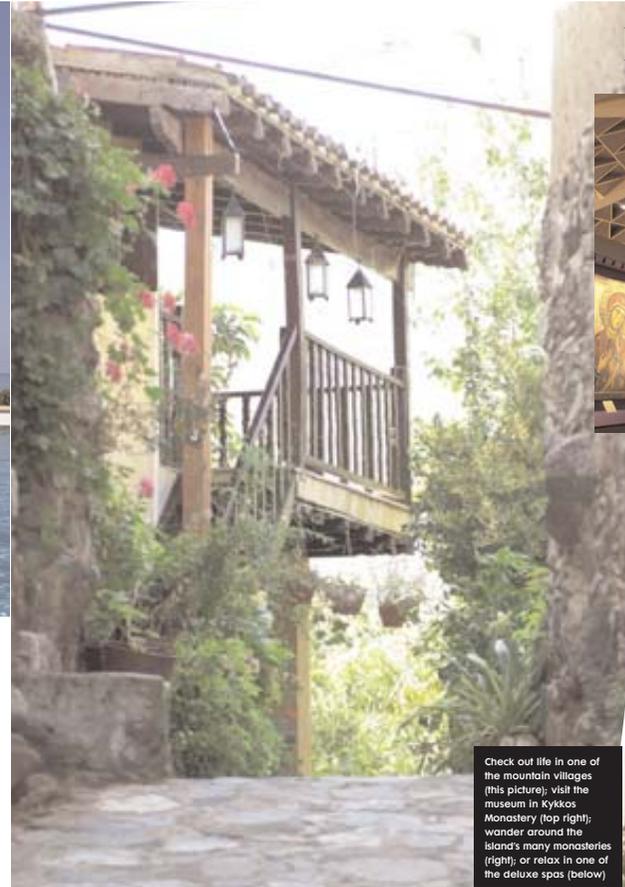


There are many islands in the Mediterranean, but one of the most beautiful is Cyprus. Picture a warm, sunny island, blue sea, silvery beaches and stylish resorts and that's Cyprus. But there's a whole lot more, too. It's also a delightful island soaked in history and culture.

Part of the charm of Cyprus lies in Greek mythology. It is said that back in the mists of time, Aphrodite, the goddess of love and beauty, rose from the Cypriot sea. Nowadays, you can do like Aphrodite and enjoy an Aphrodite bath at one of the island's many luxurious spa resorts. Bliss.

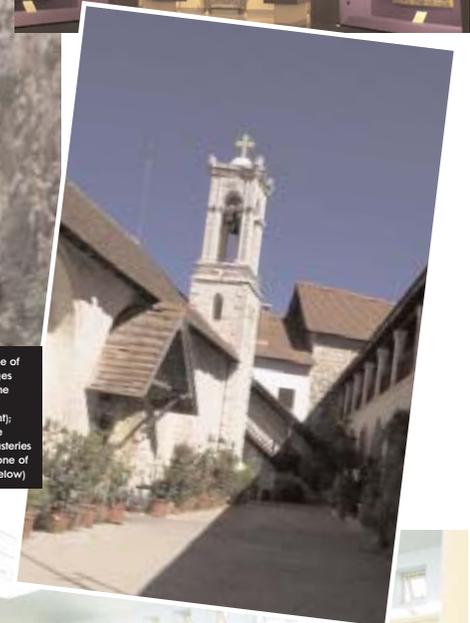
In Nicosia, the island's capital, enjoy the charming restaurants and bars in the old town. Soak in the local ambience with a stroll along the ancient alleyways surrounded by crumbling 16th-century Venetian walls, and check out the city's galleries featuring works by local artists. For traditional cuisine, head to a taverna for meze, live Greek music and dancing.

In contrast to the old town, which is steeped in tradition, modern Nicosia offers a more contemporary atmosphere – and plenty of shops for a spot of retail therapy. Nicosia's version of Bond Street is Stasikratous Street, where you'll find lots of designer boutiques.



Check out life in one of the mountain villages (this picture); visit the museum in Kykkos Monastery (top right); wander around the island's many monasteries (right); or relax in one of the deluxe spas (below)

ELLE PROMOTION



One of the many surprises in Cyprus is that it is one of the few places in the world where you can sunbathe in the morning and finish your day on the ski slopes. So if you fancy a spot of skiing, head to the Troodos Mountains. The mountains are home to a number of little villages, so as well as snow sports you can enjoy some Cypriot hospitality and locally designed crafts such as silverware, embroidered fabrics and pottery.

Greek legend has it that Dionysus, the god of wine, once graced the magic land of Cyprus, which may explain the island's many vineyards. Take a vineyard tour through the villages in the Troodos Mountains, lasting from a half a day to a week, and sample the local wines along your way. In the villages, you can also enjoy the many feasts of fresh fish and local specialties. If village life appeals, check into one of the quaint village homes that have been turned into tiny, idyllic hotels, or alternatively rent your own private villa in these magical mountain regions.

For sun, sea and sand, you'll discover some of the island's loveliest beaches in Ayia Napa/Protaras. Soft white sand, turquoise waters and an abundance of four- and five-star resorts awaits you here. There are also enchanting sea caves and medieval monasteries to discover and explore along this beautiful stretch of the island.

Limassol, on the southern coast, offers a more cosmopolitan taste of Cyprus. It's a bustling city full of restaurants, shopping and nightlife. Or, for a more laid-back experience, head to Larnaka for its mild winter climate and pretty palm-tree promenade. ➤





One of the many five-star resorts along the Cypriot coastline (above); local activities include sailing around the island (left)



Spa bliss (this picture); the island's archaeological finds include the ruins at Kourion (below); enjoy the easy pace of village life (bottom)



Modern Cyprus offers contemporary new designs in its restaurants, spas and hotels (left); visit one of the amazing UNESCO sites in Cyprus (above)



## Cyprus offers old-world treasures, 300 days of sunshine and lots of surprises

Sailing has always been part of the great Cypriot spirit, so take to the seas on a sailboat and glide along to Kourion. Here, you'll find some of the most interesting archaeological ruins on the island, including a Greco-Roman amphitheatre (originally built in the 2nd century BC-2nd Century AD). Paphos is another cultural treasure. Take a stroll along its colourful harbour and discover some of the finest, and best preserved, mosaics in the eastern Mediterranean, dating from the 3rd-5th century AD. And, if you continue on to the Akamas peninsula, you'll reach a protected nature site. Stop here for some exquisite lagoons, diving, hiking and wildlife.

Cyprus also offers some of the best examples of Orthodox churches and monasteries scattered throughout its countryside. For a mystic experience, visit the Kykkos Monastery (founded in the 11th century) where you will encounter the icon dedicated to the Virgin Mary. It's said to be one of the greatest miracles of modern-day church because her serene face supposedly sheds tears regularly. The monastery also contains a museum of rare church treasures that will take you back through the centuries of early Christian, Byzantine and post-Byzantine times.

Cyprus is home to some of the best accommodation worldwide, so whether you rent a private Mediterranean-style villa in the mountains or by the sea, or stay in a luxurious resort, what the island has to offer is definitely chic. What's more, all of the hip new touches, the special old-world treasures and ecological wonders of Cyprus are all accessible in a mere one-hour drive from tip to tip, and with 300 days of sunshine, you get a whole lot of wonderful surprises for such a small and beautiful island. ■

