

CYPRUS

65 long and short walks • 7 car tours



GPS

This is a sample from the
PDF edition of
Landscapes of
CYPRUS

a countryside guide

Ninth edition



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*revised and updated by
Mark George and Jane Mead*

This shorter sampler includes some of the introductory text, the introductions to each of the main sections (Picnicking, Car Touring and Walking) with an example of each. There is a total of 136 pages, plus a pull-out island map, in the full book.



SUNFLOWER BOOKS



Getting about

A **hired car** is undoubtedly the most practical way of exploring Cyprus. Numerous companies offer a wide range of vehicles, from runabouts to prestige models. Small 4WD soft-tops are very popular, and their modest extra cost is worth considering if you plan trips into the mountains or remote regions — such is the rough condition of many minor road surfaces. I have included some 4WD route suggestions in this book.

Coach tours operate from the main tourist centres, and offer a painless introduction to road conditions and a comfortable view of island scenery.

Intercity buses are an inexpensive way of moving from one place to another, perhaps for tackling a walk out of a different centre from your hotel base.

Taxis operate in profusion in the towns, more sparsely in villages, and all are identified by a prefix ‘T’ to the registration number. Rates are fixed by the authorities, and urban taxis are obliged to operate a meter on all journeys. Fares are not high, but on longer journeys it is wise to agree a price in advance. In town you will likely ride in a new Mercedes, but in a village it will probably be something older and more interesting!

Service taxis are a useful way of getting from town to town if you’re not in a hurry. They ply between major centres approximately every half-hour and will pick you up at your hotel and take you anywhere central at your destination, picking up and dropping off other passengers en route. They are useful on walks which end on a service taxi route: just ask a bar or café owner to request a taxi stop on its next run. Rates are very cheap for the service offered. You will share your trip with other passengers (possibly in a minibus), but this is the only inconvenience.

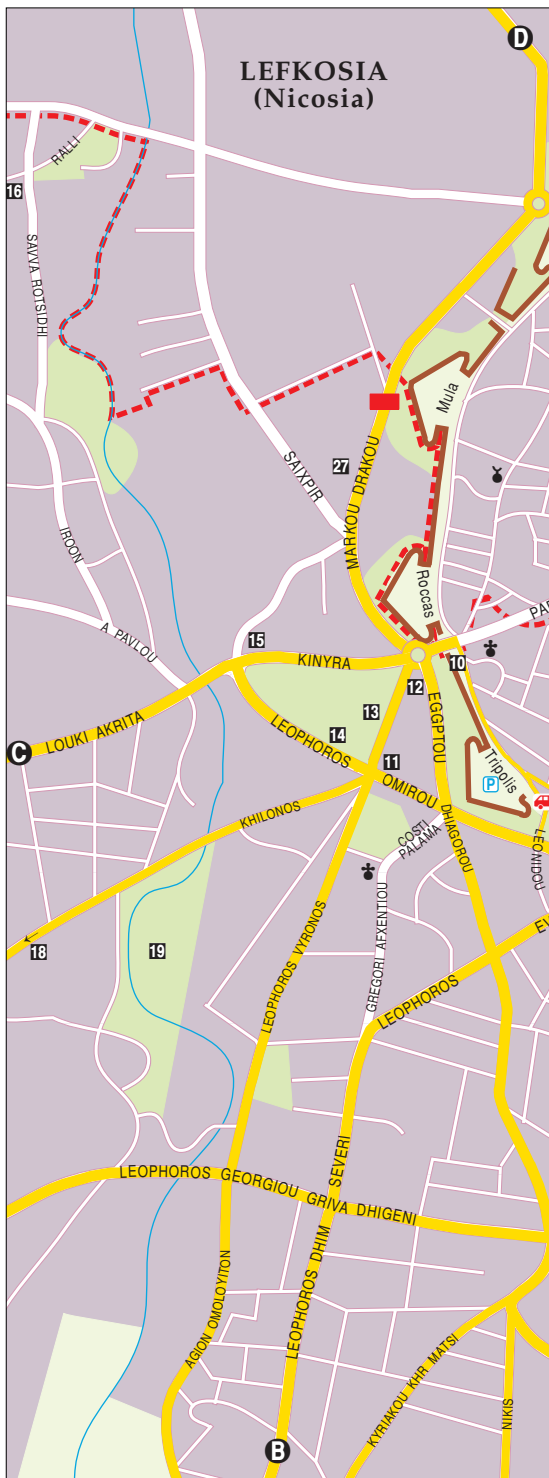
Local buses are usually not very helpful for the walker; essentially they bring village folk to town in early morning and take them home later in the day.

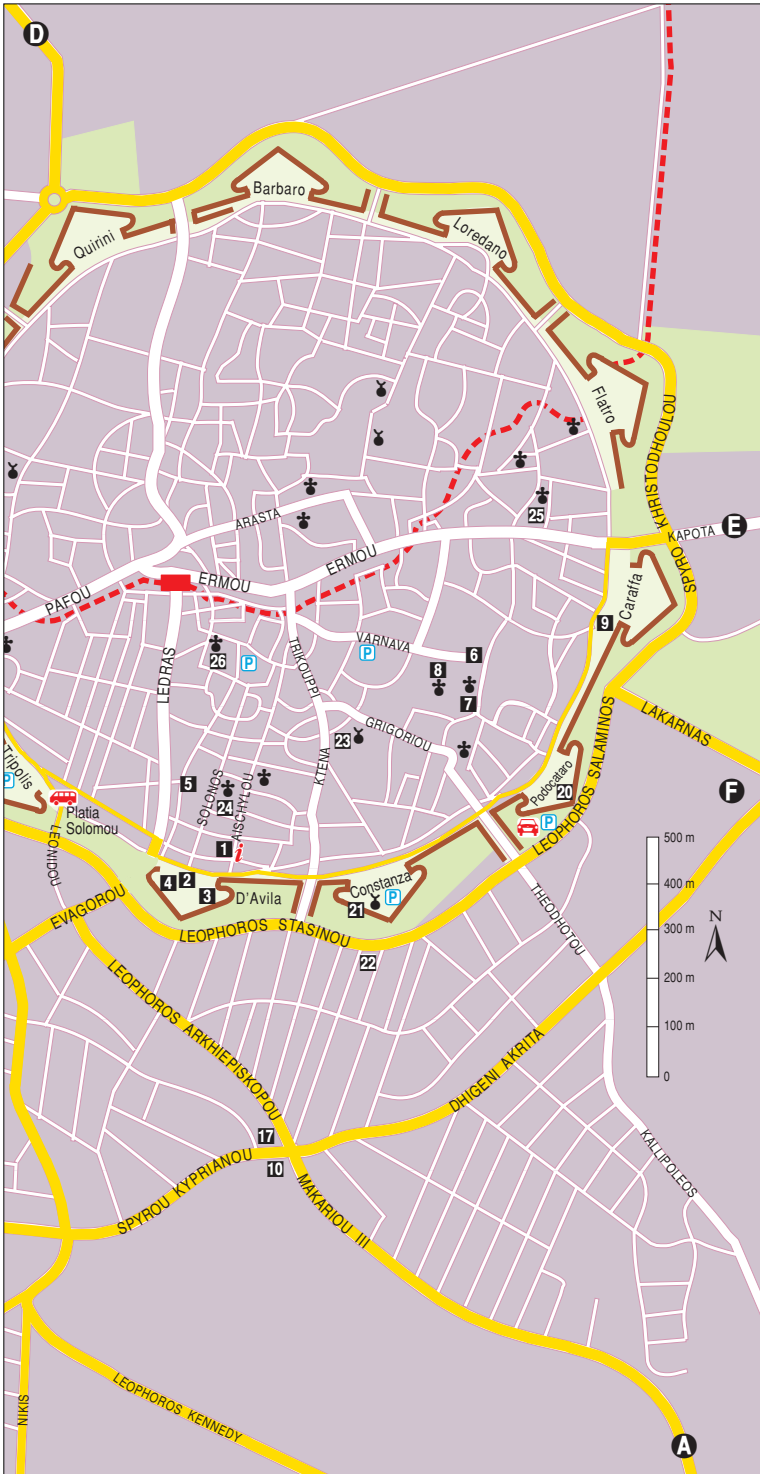
Service taxi and bus timetables are given on pages 127-134, but *do collect an up-to-date timetable* from the nearest tourist office as soon as you arrive on Cyprus or, better still, log on to www.cyprusbybus.com before you go, where you can search all local and intercity bus routes, bus stops and timetables by area, with interactive maps.

8 Landscapes of Cyprus

LEFKOSIA (Nicosia)

- 1 Information
- 2 Post Office
- 3 Municipal Library
- 4 Town Hall
- 5 Municipal Museum (of History)
- 6 Museum of the National Struggle
- 7 St John's Cathedral
- 8 Archbishop's Palace and Makarios Cultural Centre
- 9 Municipal Cultural Centre
- 10 Police Station
- 11 Cyprus Archaeological Museum
- 12 Telephones
- 13 Municipal Theatre
- 14 House of Representatives
- 15 Hospital
- 16 British High Commission
- 17 Cyprus Airways
- 18 US Embassy
- 19 Presidential Palace
- 20 Liberty Monument
- 21 Bayraktar Mosque
- 22 Museum of Contemporary Art
- 23 Omeriye Mosque
- 24 Trypioti Church
- 25 Chrysaliniotissa Church/Crafts Centre
- 26 Faneromeni Church
- 27 Ledra Palace
-  Travel & Express (Cyprus Interurban Taxi Co — Service Taxis)
-  Bus 'Station' (Solomos Square)
-  Crossing Points for North Cyprus







Picnicking

Picnicking is great fun on Cyprus, not least for Cypriots themselves, who will happily tuck into an outdoor feast, especially at weekends or on festival days. This enthusiasm does not extend to walking for pleasure, however, so you are most likely to come across groups of local families enjoying an outing at an official site which is easily accessible by car.

Such a site might suit your requirements — or you may prefer to seek out somewhere much more secluded along the route of a walk. Much of the island is open countryside, but it is a matter of common sense and courtesy not to picnic within any obvious fencing or boundary.

Official sites: The Cyprus Tourism Organisation and Forestry Department have established about 40 sites. Many of them are concentrated in the Troodos mountain region, but there are excellent sites dotted all around the island. The best sites offer car parking, toilet facilities, drinking water, tables and benches, barbecue facilities and play areas for children. At some of the smaller sites in less visited areas, facilities might be minimal. Official sites are indicated in the car touring notes and on the fold-out touring map by the symbol (Ⓐ). Remember that in winter and early spring many will be inaccessible, since they lie along rough mountain roads. A leaflet describing all these sites and a few official camp sites (the only places where camping is allowed) is available from tourist information centres on the island.

Alternative suggestions: If you prefer a picnic ‘away from it all’, or if you find official sites crowded (likely at weekends and in high summer), you could picnic along the route of one of the walks in this book.

All the information you need to get to one of these ‘private’ picnics is given on the following pages, *where picnic numbers correspond to walk numbers*, so that you can quickly find the general location by looking at the pull-out touring map (on which the area of each walk is shown in green within a white circle). I include transport details (🚌: how to get there by bus; 🅓: where to park if you come by car or taxi), how long a walk you’ll have *each way*,



Lara Beach (Picnic 14)

and views or setting. Beside the picnic title you'll find a map reference: the exact location of the picnic spot is shown on this *walking* map by the symbol **P**. Finally, to help you choose the right setting, many of the picnic spots are illustrated.

Please remember that these 'alternative' picnic places are generally off the beaten track: you will need to wear sensible shoes and almost certainly a sunhat (the symbol ○ at the right of a picnic title indicates a *picnic place in full sun*).

If travelling to your picnic by service taxi or bus, please be sure to collect an up-to-date transport timetable with operators' telephone numbers from a tourist information office or download one in advance of your visit.

If travelling to your picnic by hired car, watch out for animals and children on country roads and drive especially carefully through narrow village streets. Do park well off the road — without damaging plants; *never* block a road or track.

All picnickers should read the country code on page 19 and go quietly in the countryside.

1 MOUNT OLYMPOS (map pages 56-56, Troodos photos on pages 1, 51 and 61)

by car: 45min on foot

by bus: 45min on foot

🚗: park as for Walk 1 on page 50.

🚌: to/from Troodos; recheck times, and make sure there is a suitable return! From Troodos, follow Walk 1 along the Atalante Trail for the first 3km, to an open area where there are numerous picnicking possibilities in pleasant surroundings and with extensive views. On the Artemis Trail (the Alternative walk) there are also plenty of benches with stunning views where picnics can be enjoyed.





Touring

Driving on the roads of Cyprus (keep to the left) can be a great pleasure, but it does at times call for the ability to resist impatience. It can also be tiring in the hot sun. So do not aim for long distances. Better to really *enjoy* a shorter run than simply clock up kilometres. Punctuate days out in the car with short walks and relaxing picnics.

My touring notes are brief: they include little history or information that can be gleaned from standard guides or leaflets available free at all tourist centres and pavilions. Instead, I concentrate on the logistics of touring: road conditions, viewpoints, distances, and good places to rest. Most of all, I emphasise possibilities for **walking** and **picnicking** (the symbol **P**, printed in green on the relevant walking map, alerts you to a picnic spot; see pages 14–18). While some of the walk suggestions may not be suitable for a long car tour, you may discover a landscape you would like to explore at leisure another day.

The tours (which include 4WD suggestions — hiring a jeep is highly recommended) radiate from the three main tourist centres: Pafos, Lemesos and Larnaka. Bearing in mind that

VISITING NORTH CYPRUS

Pedestrians, cyclists and motor vehicles have been free to cross the ‘green line’ since 2003. It is a simple procedure, similar to any normal passport control. But bear in mind that the Republic of Cyprus authorities will count any time you spend in the north of the island towards your 90-day visa-free total. Another point to consider is whether the Turkish have any different Covid rules in place: check this by keying in foreign travel advice for Cyprus at www.gov.uk.

While it’s *possible* to take a hire car to the north, most hire companies specifically preclude this or will not insure you. But it’s very straightforward to take public transport to Lefkosia, cross the border on foot and hire a car on the other side.

At present there six active crossing checkpoints, shown on the touring map and the plan of Lefkosia with a red rectangle.

In and to the west of Lefkosia (Nicosia; Lefkoşa in Turkish)

Agios Dhometrios (Metahan in Turkish): Located west of the centre, this is the busiest crossing point — used by vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists, and goods hauliers.

Ledra Palace: Closer to the centre and used by cyclists and pedestrians — no motor traffic except diplomatic vehicles.

Cyprus is the third largest island in the Mediterranean — some 222 kilometres (138 miles) from east to west — do not plan to tour the *entire* island without an overnight stop or two!

The pull-out touring map is designed to be held out opposite the touring notes and contains all the information you will need outside the towns (town plans with exit routes keyed to the touring map are on pages 8 to 13).

Make sure your **car is in good condition**: keep a regular check on tyres, brakes, water, oil and lights. Always carry warm clothing (especially in the mountains, even in summer) in case of delays or breakdowns. Allow plenty of time for **stops**: my times include only short breaks at viewpoints labelled (📷) in the touring notes. **Distances** quoted are *cumulative* kilometres from the starting point. A key to the **symbols** in the notes is on the touring map.

Some hints: All **motorways** (speed limit 100kph) are toll-free. Some **mountain roads** may be closed in winter. The **blood alcohol limit** is 50mg/100ml, lower than in the UK. **Telephones** (in green kiosks) are located in towns and most villages, near post offices, but most bars and cafes will allow you to make a local call if necessary. **WCs** are available in larger centres; others are found in bars and cafes.

All motorists should read the country code on page 19 and respect the environment.

Ledra Street: Right in the centre of old Nicosia; for pedestrians only.

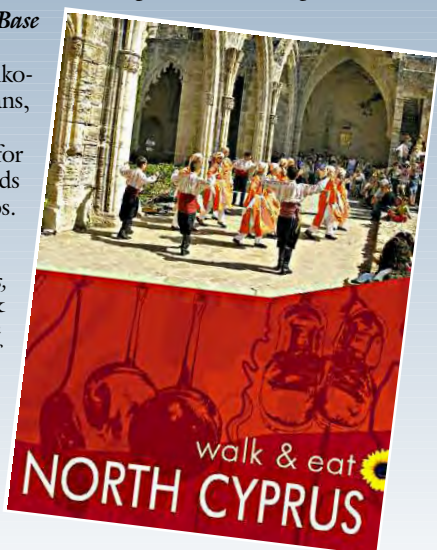
Zohdia (Güzelyurt in Turkish): Well to the west of Lefkosia, south of Morphou; a crossing point for vehicles, pedestrians, and goods.

British Eastern Sovereign Base Area (two crossing points)

Black Knight: At Agios Niko-laos, for vehicles, pedestrians, and goods.

Pergamos: This checkpoint for vehicles, pedestrians and goods is north of Pyla and Pergamos.


There's a superb selection of walks, restaurants and recipes in Walk & Eat North Cyprus (2010) by Brian and Eileen Anderson. It's out of print and only available from the Sunflower website as a pdf. While some of the restaurants may be closed, the walks should be viable and the recipes still brilliant!








Car tour 1: WESTERN WAYS





**Pafos • Coral Bay • Pegia • Kathikas • Drousseia • Prodhromi
• Lakki • Baths of Aphrodite • (4WD options) • Polis • Skoulli
• Stroumbi • Pafos**

112km/70mi; about 3h30min driving; leave Pafos on the road to the Tomb of the Kings (Exit D)




On route:  at Smigies (4WD Route A); Picnics (see pages 14-18) 12, 13, 20, 22, (23); also 14 (4WD routes); Walks (11), 12, 13, 15, 19-22, (23); also 14, 16 (4WD routes)

A leisurely full-day tour on good roads which are narrow and twisting in places. If you've hired a jeep for the first time, either of the suggestions on page 24 offers a good introduction to the joys of rough-track driving! Both 4WD routes make shorter circuits than the full car tour — about 80km in each case.

Leave Pafos on the road to the Tomb of the Kings (E701; Exit D), at the junction between Pafos and Kato Pafos. At 10km pass a signposted turning to the right — a 2km-long road to the Mavrokolymbos Dam (P13); it's on the route of Walk 13 from Kissonerga. At 11km reach **Coral Bay**★ () , the popular beach and resort area shown on page 78, where Walk 13 ends. If you need petrol, head about 1km or so towards Agios Georgios, where you will find a station () on the right — otherwise ...

From Coral Bay, head inland on the E709 to **Pegia** (15km ) , a large, cheerful, non-touristy village set on a hillside. As you climb beyond it, the views () over the coast become at first appealing and then magnificent as you head for **Kathikas** (24km; P12), which means 'perched on a hill'. Walk 12 sets off from the Laona Project Visitors' Centre behind the church here, and if you find it open, there is usually some interesting literature on display. The Laona Project is a laudable attempt to breathe economic life back into some of the old villages of western Cyprus, while retaining their cultural and social identity. Its ultimate aim is that the entire Akamas Peninsula, including its traditional villages, receives the protected status of a national park.

If you drive through Kathikas and cross the main E711 road, you could detour a few kilometres to Pano and Kato Akourdhalia, two adjoining, small Laona villages noted for springtime almond blossom, a herb garden, folk museum, excellent taverna/guest-house, and the 12th-century church of Agia Paraskevi.

But this tour bears left at the main road for a few minutes, then turns left at a signpost through **Pano** and **Kato Arodhes** (29km) and **Inia** (31km). In this last village, a turning right towards 'Polis' leads to the larger village of **Drousseia** (33km  P22; Walks 15 and 22b), with splendid views round

*Farmer at Akoursos
(Alternative walk 12
from Kathikas)*

the compass on a clear day. From Drousseia head east to the E711, or cross straight over the road, following a signpost to Kritou Terra — where there is a very pretty walk to a waterfall and picnic site (see Walk 22a on page 101; photos on page 102).

Continuing north on the E711, you come to the coast road (E713) at **Prodhromi**. Turn left here to reach the fishing port and resort area of **Lakki** (47km ✂; photo on page 4). Not far past the harbour, a fairly new

development of luxurious blue and white houses, each one different and beautifully landscaped, catches the eye. Some 7km further on is the CTO restaurant at the **Baths of Aphrodite**★ (✂✂P20), where Walks 19, 20 and both versions of Alternative walk 21 converge.

Returning on the same road, those with 4WD vehicles may choose one of the options described on the next page, via Neo Chorio, but if you are in a normal hire car you should come back through Lakki (61km) and Prodhromi to **Polis** (65km 🏠✂P11), an appealing town of ancient origin, and once centre of a thriving copper mining industry. From here follow the signposted main road (B7) back towards Pafos, with optional short stops and detours.

Drive through **Skoulli** (75km), and about 8km further on a right turn offers a detour to Miliou (🏠P23), a tiny Laona village noted for traditional weaving, and the start- and end-point for Walk 23. A few kilometres further on, a similar right turn (on an exceedingly narrow and winding road) leads to the totally abandoned village of Kato Theletra, where the threat of landslips led to mass evacuation some decades ago. It's an atmospheric place to explore (as can be seen in the photos on page 105), but keep to the streets — the crumbling buildings



4WD OPTIONS

See the reverse of the touring map: normal hire cars could follow this stretch of the 4WD tour as well — going even as far as the Smigies picnic site, but will need to return the same way. I also recommend logging on to the paphoslife.com website, where you will learn much about the landscape and its villages.

After visiting the Baths of Aphrodite, head back towards Lakki, but make a right turn and drive 3km to the village of **Neo Chorio**, where there is a new reptile exhibition. You may not be fond of these creatures, but it's useful to know what they look like! Drive carefully through the narrow, winding streets, past the church on your right, and emerge at the far side of the village. Beyond some water tanks on the left, the road reverts to track and forks...

Route A is signposted to **Smigies** — a concrete road leading in about 3km to the church of Agios Minas, from where it continues as a track to the well-equipped Smigies picnic site shown on page 17 (P21), where nature trails start and finish (see Walk 21).

Drive past the picnic site (on your right) and head for the T-junction on the skyline. Turn left, then, after about 150m, turn right in the direction of Koudounas (signposted). Keep going for just under 3km to another junction, where you again turn right towards Koudounas. This rough track (and it *is* rough!) winds westward toward the coast road which you reach some 6km beyond the T-junction at Smigies. The views are wonderful.

Turn left and drive about 7km to **Lara Beach** (P14; Walk 14; photo on pages 14-15). The track is rutted, but gives access to a number of secluded beaches where you could skinny-dip with impunity, or picnic to your heart's content. From Lara, continue on the unmade road past the signposted Viklari taverna on your left and the turn-off to the Avagas Gorge (Walk 16; photo on pages 80-81). After 6km you come into **Agios Georgios**, now on an asphalted road.

From Agios Georgios, where there is a small harbour, rock tombs and a church of 6th century origin, you have a simple drive of about 20km to **Pafos**, via Coral Bay and Kissonerga.

Route B follows Route A to the fork beyond **Neo Chorio**. Here turn left past a goat enclosure and drive for 5km to the once-Turkish village of **Androlikou**, which was abandoned during the Turkish occupation of the island in 1974 ... after which the village was home to a single Cypriot family, a few sheep, a few pigs, a few noisy dogs ... and around 1000 goats. There are signs that people are coming back — perhaps some of whom work at the largest quarry on the island, dug below the village in recent years to the horror of environmentalists.

Now head for 'Pittokopos' — on asphalt. Just over 1km along, where the asphalt bends left, you could go straight ahead on an unsigned track to another abandoned Turkish village — **Fasli**. If you keep to the asphalt road, you soon come to a villa development in the middle of nowhere, **Pittokopos**. At a shelter/viewpoint with picnic table about 500m further on, turn sharp right for 1km, then turn left for wonderful views over the coast. This appallingly rutted track takes you to the coast road, just above **Lara Beach**. Your return to **Pafos** is as Route A.



Above: spring on the Agiasma Nature Trail at Kathikas (Walk and Picnic 12); right, from top to bottom: disused spring at Kato Arodhes; poppies and daisies; giant fennel (Ferula communis)



could be unsafe. Old Theletra is the mid-point of Walk 23 — a superb hike.

A huge eucalyptus welcomes you to **Stroumbi** (95km ✂); there used to be some enchanting reliefs along the roadside here; I hope they will be replaced. Some 6km further south, a right turn would take you to the monastery of Agios Neophytos, shown on page 75 (✙📖; Walk 11) — an optional detour of 8km return. From **Mesoyi** (105km), it's a short drive back to the centre of **Pafos** (112km), after a day spent exploring a varied and unhurried region of the island.



Walking

In this Ninth edition of the first-ever walkers' guide to Cyprus, I describe routes covering about 400 kilometres (250 miles) of the best rambling on the island. The walks are designed to show you as painlessly as possible the wide variety of Cyprus landscape and to take you through a few communities not often troubled by the tourist trade. In these villages, you will find the island at its most heartwarming. The welcome will be genuine and hospitality generous to those who rest awhile.

Do consider combining some walks. We've indicated where routes overlap on the walking and touring maps. But *never try to get from one walk to another on uncharted terrain!* Only link up walks by following paths described in these notes or by using roads or tracks; don't try to cross rough country (which might be dangerous) or private land (where you might not have the right of way).

There are walks in this book for everyone.

Beginners: Start on the walks graded ● or ●, and check all the short and alternative walks — *and the picnics!*

Experienced walkers: All the walks in the book should be within your stride, even the occasional scrambling.

Bus users and motorists: Wherever possible, we have tried to cater for you. The long linear routes usually have shorter circuits for motorists as an alternative.

All walkers: Please follow the routes as described in the notes, and if you are at any stage uncertain of the way forward, go back to the last 'sure' point and think again. Do **not** try to continue a walk where bulldozers or natural damage such as a landslide — even on a well-maintained nature trail — has made the way impassable or dangerous.

G rading, waymarking, maps, GPS

Each walk's **grade** is shown in the Contents, but see the walk itself for full details. Here is a brief overview:

- very easy — more or less level (perhaps with a short climb to a viewpoint); good surfaces underfoot; easily followed
- easy-moderate — ascents/descents of no more than about 300-500m/1000-1800ft; good surfaces underfoot; easily followed
- moderate-strenuous — ascents/descents may be over 500m/1800ft; variable surfaces underfoot
- difficult — only suitable for very experienced hillwalkers

Greek for walkers

In the major tourist areas you hardly need to know any Greek at all, but once you are out in the countryside, a few words of the language will be helpful, and people will be grateful for your attempts to communicate.

Here's one way to ask directions in Greek and understand the answers you get! First memorise the few 'key' questions given below. Then, always follow up your key question with a second question demanding a yes ('ne') or no ('ochi') answer. Greeks invariably raise their heads to say 'no', which looks to us like the beginning of a 'yes'!

Following are the two most likely situations in which you may have to use some Greek. The dots (...) show where you will fill in the name of your destination. I'd recommend that you purchase an inexpensive phrase book: many give easily understood pronunciation hints, as well as a selection of phrases.

■ ASKING THE WAY

Key questions

English

Good day, greetings

Hello, hi (informal)

Please — where is

the road that goes to ...?

the footpath that goes to ...?

the bus stop?

Many thanks.

Approximate Greek pronunciation

Hair-i-tay

Yas-sas (plural); **Yia**-soo (singular)

Sas pa-ra-ka-loh — **pou ee**-nay

o **thro**-mo stoh ...?

ee mono-**pati** stoh ...?

ee **sta**-ssis?

Eff-hah-ree-stoh po-li.

Secondary question leading to a yes/no answer

Is it

here?/there?/straight ahead?/

behind?/to the right?/

to the left?/above?/below?

Ee-nay

e-**tho**?/eh-**kee**?/kat-eff-**thia**?/

pee-so?/thex-**ya**?/

aris-teh-**rah**?/eh-**pano**?/kah-to?

■ ASKING A TAXI DRIVER TO TAKE YOU/COLLECT YOU

Please —

would you take us to ...?

Come and pick us up

from ... (place) at ... (time)*

Sas pa-ra-ka-loh —

Tha **pah**-reh mas stoh ... ?

El-la na mas -reh-teh

apo ... stees ... *

*Point on your watch to the time you wish to be collected

Organisation of the walks
















Each ramble in this book was chosen for its accessibility from one or more of the main tourist centres on Cyprus. Walks 1-8 are ideal for anyone staying in the **Troodos/Platres** area. Walks 9-10 are accessible too, but are set in mountainous country, remote from any major centres, and a considerable journey is necessary to reach them, wherever you are based. From **Pafos**, Walks 11-13 are nearest, but if you have a car consider too Walks 9 and 10, 17 and 18, and *all* walks west of

the Polis road (B7). From **Polis and Lakki**, Walks 15 and 19-23 are close at hand, but Walks 9 and 10 and all routes north of Pafos are easily reached by car. **Lemesos** is the recommended base for Walks 24-26, but Walks 1-8 and 17 and 18 are within reasonable driving distance. Walks 27 (Stavrovouni Monastery) and 28 are best approached from **Larnaka**, but Walk 27 is worth some kind of excursion from *wherever* you are staying! Walks 29 and 30 in the **Agia Napa** region are also accessible from Larnaka.

I hope the book is set out so you can plan your walks easily. You might begin by considering the fold-out map inside the back cover. Here you can see at a glance the overall terrain, the road network, and the location of all the walks. Flipping through the book, you will also find at least one photograph for each walk. Having selected a potential excursion from the map and the photographs, look over the planning information at the beginning of the walk. Here you'll find distance/hours, grade, equipment, and how to get there and return (by public and private transport). Wherever feasible, I have also suggested a short version of the walk, for those lacking in time and/or ability.

When you are on the walk, you will find that the text begins with a brief introduction and then quickly turns to a detailed description of the route itself. The **large-scale maps** (all 1:50,000) have been annotated to show key landmarks and waypoints. Times are given for reaching certain points on the walk. Giving times is always tricky, because they depend on so many factors, but the times I give are rather slower than my own walking time. **Note that they do not include any stops!** *Allow ample time for stops — you may need to even double these point-to-point times!*

Below is a summary of the symbols used on the maps:

	motorway		spring, tank, etc		specified building
	trunk/other main road		church.chapel		transmitter mast
	secondary/minor road		shrine or cross		cave.windmill
	loose-surface road		cemetery		quarry, mine.mill
	jeep track		picnic tables		watchtower.stadium
	path, trail		best views		fire-watch tower
	main walk		bus stop.parking		forestry house
	alternative walk		walk start/waypoint		ancient site
	other CTO trail		CTO signpost		picnic suggestion (see pages 14-18)
	E4 long-distance trail		military warning sign		map continuation
	height (50 m intervals)		castle, fort		

Walk 17: KHAPOTAMI GORGE

Distance: 10.3km/6.4mi; 2h35min

Grade: ● moderate, basically a descent of 200m/650ft... but it can be extremely hot in the gorge in high summer. *In early spring the walk may be impassable if there has been heavy rain and the river is running high.*

Equipment: walking boots or stout shoes, sunhat, *plenty of water*, picnic

Transport: 🚍 (Timetable E10) or 🚕 taxi/friends from Pafos to Pano Arkhimandrita; alight at the bus stop at the top of the village. *To return:* 🚕 pre-arranged taxi from Alekhtora, or take the village taxi to the main road at Pissouri and telephone a service taxi bound for Pafos or Lemesos.

Circular walk for motorists: Khapotami Gorge from Kato Arkhimandrita (9.3km/5.8mi; 2h30min; ● moderate; *the gorge may be impassable in winter/spring* and, after gentle undulations, the ascent of 150m/500ft at the end of the walk, in full sun, should be avoided in summer). 🚗 car to Pano Arkhimandrita as above. After viewing the SHRINE (1), drive back west to the VILLAGE WATER TANK and turn left for 'KATO ARKHMANDRITA 2KM', to drive down the narrow, rough road to **Kato Arkhimandrita** and park by the CHURCH (34° 44.177'N, 32° 40.801'E). Pick up the main walk at (2) and follow it to (6). Turn left here and walk up a gravel road towards an ELECTRICITY PYLON. Take it easy on this long climb in full sun. After passing to the right of the pylon, be sure to keep to the main track: at (a) veer right (northeast) uphill at a Y-fork and follow the track as it bends left (northwards), ignoring a fork to the right; 130m/yds further on, at (b), again keep right. There is nothing to distinguish the brow of the hill (c) — a mere bump in the track and a sense of briefly levelling off before you head downhill, back to the CHURCH at **Kato Arkhimandrita** (2; 2h30min).

Pano Arkhimandrita is situated among vineyards perched on hillsides, and the effect of the scenery when you first arrive is quite breathtaking. There is more to come.

Clearly signed by the village BUS STOP (●) is a concrete road to 'THE CAVE OF 318 FATHERS'. Follow this and then go down some steps to the recently restored hermitage of **Agii Pateres** (1), a tiny SHRINE nestling in a rock crevice. Herein is preserved a quantity of human bones. It is said they are of 318 saints who arrived on the coast at Pissouri in days of yore after fleeing persecution in Syria, only to meet an untimely death at the hands of local heathens. Your welcome in Arkhimandrita will be warmer, especially in either of the two coffee shops where locals will happily talk about their tiny community.

Visit the SHRINE shown on page 89 (respecting the 'don't touch' appeal), and admire the well-preserved frescoes, then **begin the walk** by scrambling down the slope alongside the telegraph pole to the dirt track just below. Follow this to the right as it hugs the side of the hill, ending just below the village CHURCH on a concrete road (10min). Turn right here and then almost immediately left on the F612, heading downhill. After 400m/yds, by the VILLAGE WATER TANK, turn left on a road signed to 'KATO ARKHMANDRITA' (15min).

A couple of minutes down this road, at a crossroads with



a telegraph pole, turn left and continue downhill, with the **Arkhimandrita Valley** on your left. When you reach the village of **Kato Arkhimandrita** (📍; 40min) you'll see that it's mostly abandoned to the goats, but a couple of the houses — and the church — have been restored. The inhabitants asked





to leave and move to the upper village in the 1960s, because of their isolation (no good road, no school) and water supply problems.

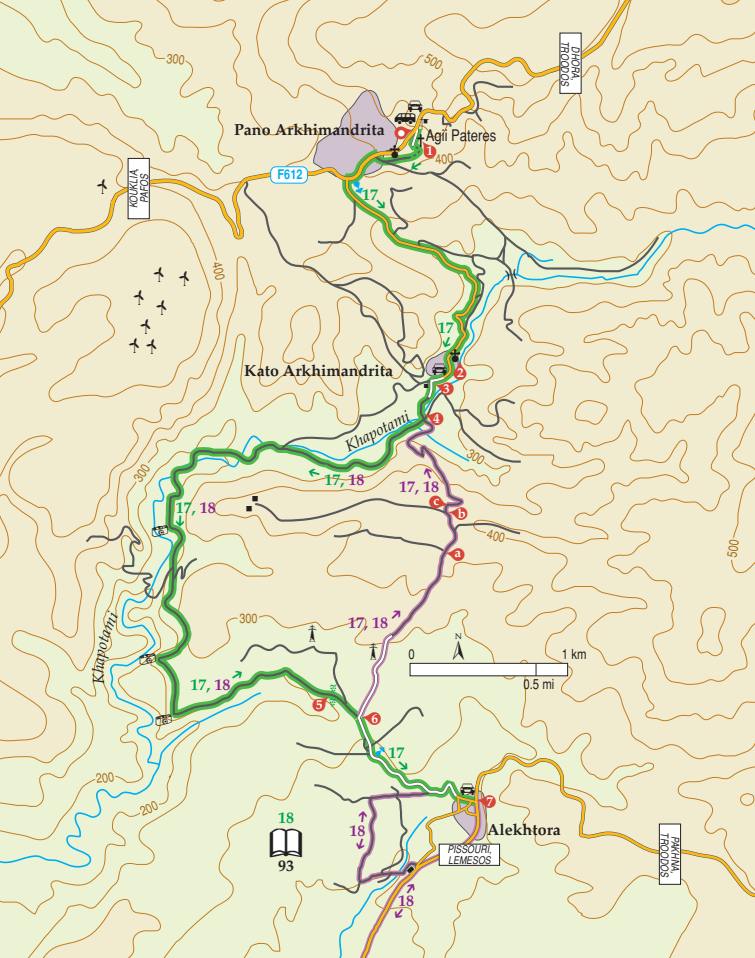


Above, from left to right: the priest at Pano Arkhimandrita when I first wrote this book and a wall painting inside his church; church in the ruined village of Kato Arkhimandrita and the shrine at the start of the walk. Left: Arkhimandrita's green valley



Walk through the village. Fork left in front of a RESTORED HOUSE (3) at the next Y-fork, and cross over the (usually dry) river bed at a FORD (4; 49min). At the crossroads on the far side of the river bed, take the track to the right. As you head down into the river bed, the wind turbines on the hill to the right almost disappear from view.

Follow the track along the valley floor as you head into the spectacular **Khapotami Gorge**. Towering cliffs, birds of prey wheeling overhead, an infinite variety of trees and plants, lizards scampering at your feet ... the holiday beaches seem a long way from this kind of Cyprus. Follow the 'track' — sometimes just the boulders of the river bed (*and totally impassable when the river is running high in*



winter or spring) — as it runs all the way through the walkable part of the gorge. After about **1h30min**, the track emerges into an open area on the valley floor, and from this point you will begin to climb steadily. You will get ever more impressive views down into the impassable part of the gorge as you climb.

Eventually, the track levels out and contours round two sharp left-hand bends: the Khapotami Gorge is on your right after the first 90° bend and the gorge of an unnamed tributary follows the second bend to the left. The way is mostly contouring but rises gently to pass through a **VINEYARD (5)**, followed by an **OLIVE GROVE**.

The track then passes between pine trees and immediately comes to a junction (**6**; **2h20min**) where you go straight ahead. (*But for the Circular walk, turn left here on the gravel road.*) Now it's just somewhat over 1km to the main road at **Alekhtora (7**; **2h35min**), where your taxi should be waiting.



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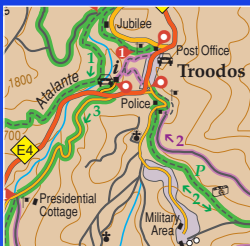
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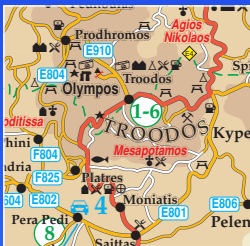
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