

Paphos Medieval Castle



This castle was originally built to protect the harbour and was a Byzantine fort. During the 13th century the castle was rebuilt by the Lusignans. In 1570 however, the castle was once again destroyed by the Venetians who at that time were unable to protect the fort from the ongoing attacks by the Ottomans. The Ottomans succeeded in gaining access to Paphos and during the Ottoman rule the castle was once again restored, expanded, and strengthened to what it is today.

The castle itself is a stunning stone walled castle built on the harbour. There is an arched battle way bridge that connects the castle to the harbour itself. There are very few windows in this castle but the view from the top platform is magnificent. Paphos Castle is listed in the UNESCO list of world heritage sites and is fully protected.

In 1935, Paphos castle was declared an ancient monument and to this day it is considered to be one of the many hallmarks of the Paphos region. The square just in front of Paphos castle is used for many cultural events throughout the year. Most of these events take place annually and in September you can see the Aphrodite Festival. The Paphos Aphrodite Festival organizers invite a well known opera troupe to come and perform every year. This stunning event takes place in the square in front of Paphos Castle and the castle itself is used for scenery in the opera. Some of the famous operas that have been performed include Verdi's *La Traviata* and Bizet's *Carmen*.

Time of opening: 8am to 5pm (winter) - 6pm (summer)

Tombs of the Kings



The Tombs of the Kings are an early necropolis in Paphos dating from 300 BC. The burial niches were looted of all artefacts long ago, but a powerful sense of stillness and mystery remains. The name of the site is misleading - there's no evidence of any royalty buried here. Rather, the site was the final resting place of about 100 Ptolemaic aristocrats who lived and died in Paphos beginning in the 4th century BC. Early antiquarians dubbed the site the "Tombs of the Kings" due to the impressiveness of the tombs, and the name remained. The catacombs were later used by early Christians, and one of the tombs was turned into a chapel. In the Middle Ages, some tombs were used as makeshift dwellings or as workplaces - pottery was made in tomb 3. The site was systematically looted of artefacts long before excavations began in 1977. Investigations continue today under the Cyprus Department of Antiquities. The tombs are impressive, carved out of solid rock, some featuring Doric pillars and frescoed walls. The design is heavily indebted to Macedonian prototypes, passed on from Alexander's armies to the Ptolemies. Eight complexes have been singled out and numbered for visitors, with 3, 4, and 8 being the most elaborate. Originally the tombs were covered with stucco and the walls were decorated with frescoes. Beyond the colonnades, passages lead to rooms with niches (*loculi*) for individual corpses. Bodies were buried with costly grave goods, including jewellery and cosmetic boxes.

Time of opening: 8am to 5pm (winter) - 6pm (summer)

Mosaics of Paphos



The Paphos Mosaics are one of the nicest historic sites on the island of Cyprus. Considered to be the finest mosaic in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Paphos Mosaics are located beside the harbour. The first house was discovered accidentally by a farmer in 1962.

These striking mosaics are a must see and many of them depict scenes of the Greek Mythology. They date from the 2nd century through to the 5th century and many are still in remarkable condition. These mosaics would have originally been the floors of Roman noblemen's villas and many of these sites are still being excavated today. The major ones are the House of Dionysus, the House of Orpheus, the House of Aion, and the Villa of Theseus.

In the House of Dionysus, there are 14 rooms in total that are covered with these fabulous mosaics and this is roughly around 556 square meters of space. Here you will find mosaics showing the God of wine, Dionysus giving Ikarios the King of Athens the secret of viticulture. The mosaics themselves were made from small cubes of marble and stone which were called tesserae and glass paste was used to broaden the range of colour that was available in those days. The Paphos Mosaics are in fact part of a larger archaeological site that also includes a theatre and a castle and it is wise to take at least half a day to explore this area fully. Some of the mosaics are also in sheltered areas which gives some relief from the summer sun.

Time of opening: 8am to 5pm (winter) - 6pm (summer)

Paphos Odeon



The Paphos Odeon was built in the 2nd century and is made entirely out of well hewn limestone blocks. The Odeon consists of approximately 1,200 seats for spectators. Close to the Paphos Odeon you will find the remains of the Roman Agora which was in fact an ancient marketplace. This stands in front of the Odeon and only the foundations and part of its columns are visible today. In its time it would have been a large court. You will also find the remains of the ancient city walls and the ruins of a building that was in its time dedicated to Asklipeios who was the ancient god of medicine.

Paphos Odeon was uncovered by the Cypriot Department of Antiquities during 1973 and 1974 and today it is not only a tourist attraction, it is also used for musical and theatrical performances. The theatre in the Odeon has been partly restored after its excavation. It is a semicircle that contains 12 rows of seats. Each year at the Paphos Odeon the choir festival takes place. Choirs from all over Cyprus and some overseas contenders come to this amazing setting to perform. This annual event takes place every June. The Rhythms of Light festival is also held in the Paphos Odeon and this is held every Wednesday during the summer months. This ancient Odeon is brought to life once more stunning dance performances are carried out on stage. Three times per day these amazing dancers will light up the Odeon with their exciting dance display and this is something not to be missed.

Time of opening: 8am to 5pm (winter) - 6pm (summer)

Saranta Kolones



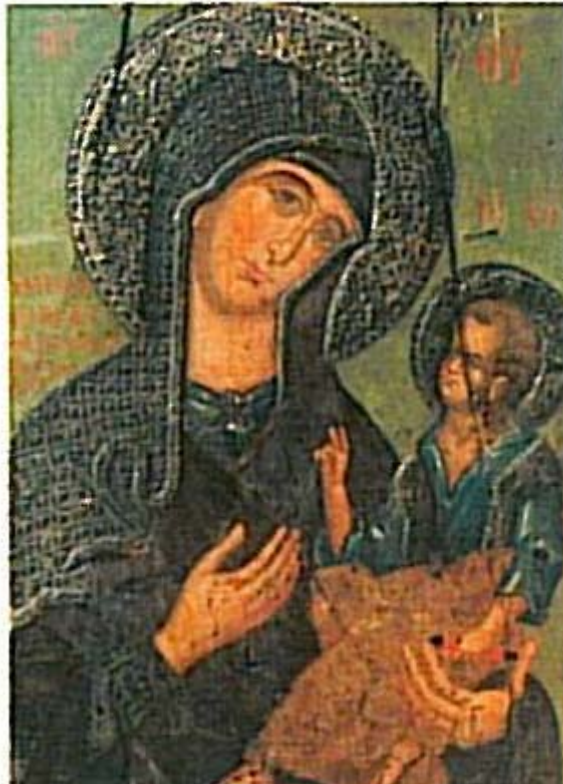
Saranta Kolones is the ruin of an ancient castle located just north of Paphos harbour. When translated Saranta Kolones actually means “castle of the 40 columns” which is quite fitting considering that the castle itself was originally built using 40 ancient granite pillars. These pillars were probably taken from Agora and were used in the structure of the castle.

It is thought that the castle itself was built at the end of the 7th century and would have been used to protect the harbour and Paphos city from Arab invasions although many reports also state that the Lusignans built this castle at the beginning of the 13th century. It is most likely that both accounts are true and the original castle was remodelled by the Lusignans.

The entire castle building would have been surrounded by a large wall. There would also have been a moat and the wall surrounding the castle was strengthening by eight towers. The entrance would have been located on the east tower and been accessible through a large wooden bridge, above the moat. The castle consisted of a square courtyard which measured 35m² with four towers placed at its corners. The courtyard was surrounded by huge piers that carried vaulted arches supporting the 2nd floor. The castle would have been quite magnificent in its time but unfortunately it was destroyed by an earthquake in 1223. What you see today are the ruins of Saranta Kolones and some of the magnificent arches and columns that were used in its construction. Parents should take extra care with children.

Time of opening: 8am to 5pm (winter) - 6pm (summer)

Byzantine Museum



For those who enjoy history and ancient artefacts you will be pleased to know that there are four amazing museums to see in Paphos. Each one of these amazing museums is packed full of great treasures for you to see and enjoy. All four of these museums feature ecclesiastical treasures including icons, frescoes, manuscripts, woodcarvings, gold and silver covered gospels, and ecclesiastical embroideries.

The Byzantine Museum in Paphos houses some of the oldest icons found to date in Cyprus and many of these artefacts can be traced as far back as 7th and 8th century. You will find a large collection of objects that date from the Byzantine period and icons from the 12th through to the 18th century. This will allow you to see exactly what people during the Byzantine period wore, had in their homes, and the way they lived. The museum also contains an art gallery that exhibits a collection of oil paintings along with maps and lithographs which are well worth seeing.

The Byzantine Museum is located in Pano Paphos next to the Ethnographical Museum.

Time of opening: 9am to 5pm (winter) - 6pm (summer)

Ethnographical Museum



The Ethnographical Museum in Paphos was the former Folk Art Museum up until 1971 but is now home to a collection of art from the 19th and 20th centuries. This is a private Ethnographic Museum which belongs to Mr. George Eliades and is said to be one of the richest museums in all of Cyprus. Mr. Eliades has a deep interest in history, archaeology, folk art, and literature, and has been collecting his treasure for over half a century.

This private collection of items housed in the Ethnographical Museum in Paphos is dedicated to life on the island of Cyprus from Neolithic time's right through to the present day. There is a comprehensive rural life section which features antiques, trays, basketry, irons, and sieves. Representing Cypriot folk art you will find wood carvings, jewellery, tapestries, woven goods, pottery, embroidery, and national costumes. One of the rooms in the Ethnographical Museum is also laid out as a bedchamber with traditional Lefkara lace and clothing. In another of the rooms you will admire a collection of 19th century pottery. Upstairs, the Museum displays a large selection of jewellery, pottery, coins, and fossils. Outside, in a sunken garden you will find an original wood fired oven which was used to bake the bread for the village before electric ovens were invented. This wood oven is situated next to a genuine 3rd century tomb.

The Ethnographical Museum is located very near to the hotel and only Paphos next to the Byzantine Museum.

Time of opening: 9am to 5pm (winter) - 6pm (summer)

Panayia Theoskepasti Church



The word Theoskepasti means veiled by God and this modern church is devoted to the Virgin Mary.

According to ancient myths, it is believed that God with his divine powers sent forth a veil of fog to protect the original church that stood on these grounds to protect the people of Paphos against the raid that were being forged by the Arabs. Legend says that the fog that covered these grounds made it invisible and the Arabs that approached were unable to see it. This made it impossible for the church to be destroyed.

The church that now occupies these grounds was built in 1923 and it lies on a large rock that overlooks the whole of Kato Paphos area.

Panayia Theoskepasti church is filled with excellent icons and splendid wood carved iconostasis. There is also a magnificent silver covered icon of the Virgin Mary which many hundreds of people come to pray to. It is said that this icon of the Virgin Mary is one of the seventy that were hand painted by the Evangelist Luce. The location is peaceful and tranquil and a great escape from the bustling streets of Paphos town. Religion is very prominent in Paphos and this can be seen in the large number of churches and monasteries that you can visit. Some of these churches and monasteries including the Panayia Theoskepasti Church are open daily to visitors.

Panayia Theoskepasti Church is located in the heart of Kato Paphos.

Ayia Solomoni Church



Ayia Solomoni church was originally a Christian catacomb that was home to some 12th century frescoes.

At the entrance on a rock above the Ayia Solomoni Church, you will find what is believed to be a sacred tree. This centuries old terebinth tree has a legend of its own and it is believed that those who hang personal offerings on its branches will be cured of any illnesses or ailments they may have. These personal offerings are usually handkerchiefs and even today many locals and visitors do so in the hope of a cure.

The church was carved underground out of limestone rock and was originally used as a catacomb. Archaeologists who have investigated this site have stated that some of the original graves found at Ayia Solomoni church actually date back to the Hellenistic period.

When you visit Ayia Solomoni Church there are approximately twenty steps that you will need to climb down to actually see the church and here you will also find the remains of the old frescoes from the 12th century and some holy water. If you are travelling to Paphos during Christmas, you will definitely want to visit Ayia Solomoni Church. Every year, hundreds of visitors come to the caves near Ayia Solomoni church to watch the Christmas nativity scene that is re-enacted from the 21st to the 24th December. The nativity features Mary, Joseph, the three Kings, a donkey, and the Christ child and is a great way to bring alive the traditions of Christmas.

Ayia Solomoni Church is located between the Mosaics & Kato Paphos.

Ayia Kyriaki Church



Ayia Kyriaki church is also known as “Chrysopolitissa” and is a Catholic and Anglican church.

The Panayia Chrysopolitissa Church was built during the 13th century on the site where the ruins of one of the largest and earliest Byzantine basilicas stood. This was the largest basilica on the island of Cyprus.

On your visit to the Panayia Chrysopolitissa Church you will find St. Paul's Pillar. Located inside the compound tradition has it that Saint Paul was in fact flogged here. It was only after this that the Roman Governor Sergius Paulus was converted to Christianity. The Church was originally built having seven aisles but this was later reduced to five aisles. The floors of the original basilica were covered in colourful mosaics and many of them have been preserved and can be seen today.

Excavations are ongoing on this ancient site and new treasures are being uncovered. As with all the ancient churches and tourist sites in Paphos mosaics are prominent and these beautiful handcrafted relics help to show us exactly how people in these times lived.

Ayia Kyriaki Church is located in Kato Paphos.

Ayia Paraskevi Church



Ayia Paraskevi Church is one of the most interesting and beautiful Byzantine church in Cyprus. It is a basilica with three declivities and five domes that belongs to the 9th century A.D.

It is also the oldest basilica with five domes that has been saved in Cyprus and one of the most significant churches of the Island. It is almost conserved integral to its original shape.

The Church might have been built up on the foundations of an ancient Greek pagan temple or an old Christian church. On its walls are present wall-paintings of various epochs. Some of them are dated from the 9th century. In the church's shrine, there are few very remarkable icons which belong to the 15th century.

Ayia Paraskevi Church is located in Geroskipou town.

Sanctuary of Aphrodite – Palea Paphos (1)



In the ancient Greek world, Palea Paphos was one of the most important pilgrimage centres due to its famous Sanctuary of Aphrodite, the goddess of love and fertility. Today, virtually all that remains is the holy ground itself. The cult of Aphrodite was officially established on Cyprus in 1500 BC, with the building of a hilltop temple on this site.

The Temple of Aphrodite stood on a knoll about 2km inland, overlooking the sea. The town of Palea Paphos soon sprang up around the temple.

According to ancient tradition, the hero Kinyras was the first king and consort of the goddess Aphrodite after she emerged from the sea at nearby Petra tou Romiou. The couple had a beautiful daughter named Myrrha, who was turned into a fragrant bush by her jealous mother. Then Adonis, born of its wood, became Aphrodite's lover. This ancestral myth was actually grounded in reality, as the members of Kinyrid dynasty were marrying their own daughters upon the death of their wives. Royal descent was matrilineal.

Ritual prostitution seems to have been a significant part of the cult of Aphrodite at Palea Paphos. It was said that every young maiden went once in her lifetime to the sanctuary to make love with a stranger. The man chose his maiden, threw some money at her feet and pronounced the formula, "I invoke the goddess upon you." Beautiful maidens were able to fulfil their duty quickly, while the ugly had to wait sometimes as long as four years to get it over with. During spring festivals for Aphrodite and Adonis, separate processions of garlanded men and women walked along the Sacred Way from Nea Paphos to the shrine of Aphrodite at Palea Paphos, where there were games and contests of music and poetry. This tradition survives (except for the prostitution) in the modern spring flower festival, *Anthistiria*, which is especially popular in Ktima Pafos.

Sanctuary of Aphrodite – Palea Paphos (2)



The Sanctuary of Aphrodite continued to flourish in the Roman era. Several Roman emperors honoured the shrine. He consulted the oracle of Aphrodite, and was told that he had a great future. The sanctuary was rebuilt by the Romans after the earthquake of 76/77 AD, in a design that preserved the oriental layout of the original.

The cult of Aphrodite survived at Palea Paphos until the 4th century AD, when Emperor Theodosius outlawed paganism. It is not known when the cult of Aphrodite was suppressed or if the local population resisted the edict. The site fell into ruin.

The sanctuary of Aphrodite was first excavated in 1887 by the Cyprus Exploration Fund, with some of the finds going to the British Museum. It was explored by the British Kouklia Expedition in 1950-55 and has been dug by a Swiss-German expedition since 1996. Excavations continue on the site of the sanctuary, the city and the necropolis of Palea Paphos.

The ancient Sanctuary of Aphrodite consisted of rustic, relatively impermanent buildings, like most temples in the pre-Hellenic Middle East. This, in addition to the damage done to the site over the centuries, means that little has survived of the temple except the low foundations on the north.

Location: Kouklia

Distance: 15 km from Paphos, 15 min driving distance

Time of Opening : 9am to 4pm

Ayios Neophytos Monastery



Located just 20 minutes from Paphos, Ayios Neophytos Monastery delves you back into the ancient world to discover what life may have been.

Ayios Neophytos Monastery is said to have been founded by a Cypriot hermit and writer called Neophytos in the year 1159. Neophytos carved a home for him self out of the mountain rock and it is here that you will find some of the finest frescoes from the Byzantine period dating from the 12th to the 15th century.

Neophytos was known in his time as the leading critic of the Byzantine tax collectors and the great Richard the Lion Hearted. Today however, he is known for the amazing series of grottoes that he carved out of the mountain rock and the religious frescoes that can be found within them. Some of these frescoes were actually painted by Neophytos himself. Neophytos is said to have lived for 45 years in one of the caves. His last five years were spent in a cave further up the rock face. The Monastery is situated below the grottoes and is home to only a handful of monks. The Monastery also contains a collection of icons and the remains of some 16th century frescoes. Every January the monastery hosts a two day fair where you can buy Cypriot crafts, foods, and monastic goods. There is also live music too.

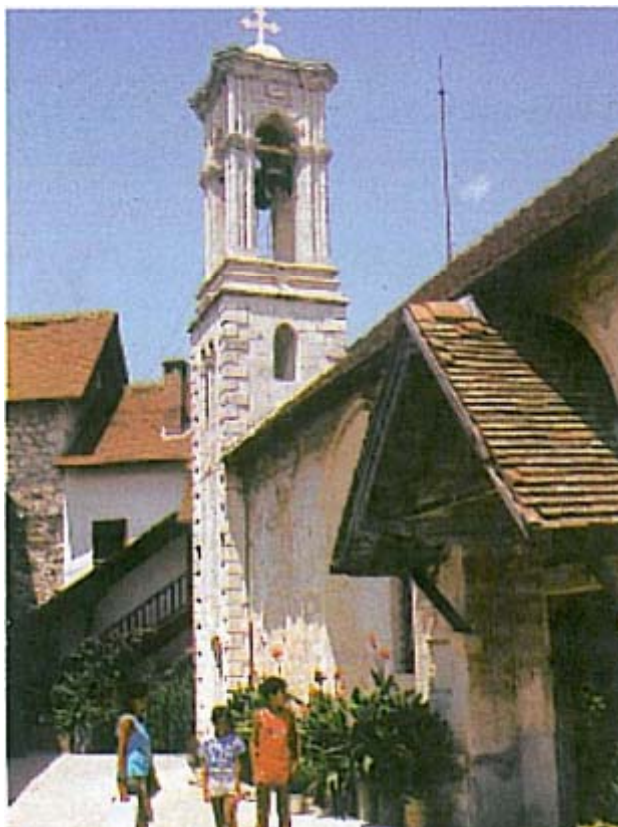
Located within the quietness of the hills behind Paphos, the first thing you will notice on arrival to Ayios Neophytos Monastery is the spectacular views. The site of Ayios Neophytos Monastery is 1694 feet high and the views over Paphos from here are amazing. It is the perfect location for those looking for peace and quiet and maybe some solitude and time to reflect on life.

Location: On the way to Polis

Distance: 15 km from Paphos, 15 min driving distance

Time of opening: 8am to 1pm & 2pm to 5pm (winter) - 6pm (summer)

Chrysoroyiatissa Monastery



Set in beautiful surroundings, the Monastery of Chrysoroyiatissa, is dedicated to the Virgin Mary or the Cypriot “Our Lady of the Golden Pomegranate” and gives an outstanding view of the surrounding flora and fauna.

It was founded in 1152 by monk Ignatios who found a miraculous icon of the Virgin Mary off the shore of Pafos. Legend has it that it was thrown into the sea in Asia Minor during the iconoclastic period and drifted by the waves to Pafos. However the existing building dates back to the 18th century.

Inside the monastery there is a variety of religious icons and treasures on display. One statue that attracts the most attention is that of the Virgin Mary which is made of pure silver. On the 15th of August a celebration is held in honour of the Virgin Mary as it is believed on this day she slept but did not wake up. The word death is not used as the ‘Our Lady of the Golden Pomegranate’ is in deep sleep, but her other senses and organs like her heart and brain are still working.

The monastery’s old winery produces some of the best vintage wines on the island.

Location: On the way to Panayia, before the Cedar Valley

Distance: 55 km from Paphos, 1h driving distance

Time of opening: 8am to 1pm & 2pm to 5pm (winter) - 6pm (summer)

Agios Georgios



Agios Georgios is no more than a tiny fishing harbour located at the southern edge of the Akamas Peninsula, a protected natural park with some of the Cyprus' finest scenery and deserted beaches.

A lovely church and a well-placed tavern are overlooking the bay, simply a wonderful spot to relax.

From the small harbour, you can watch the fishing boats come and go, and enjoy a fresh fish mezze on the large terrace in the front of the Mediterranean sea.

Being on the west facing coast, the sunsets at Agios Georgios are fantastic.

At pretty much every time of the year you can watch the sun going down and enjoy an unforgettable moment.

Location: At the end of the road after Coral bay

Distance: 20km from Paphos, 20 min driving distance

Baths of Aphrodite



The Goddess of Love used to take her bath in a cool pond near Polis. The place is known as "Baths of Aphrodite" and provides a magnificent view of the Bay of Polis.

According to legend, after swimming in the crystal clear waters of the Bay, Aphrodite used to bath in the cool water of a grotto, fed by a trickling stream and shaded by wild figs, surrounded by idyllic landscape with the sweet smelling wild flowers. It is here that she met her beloved Adonis for the first time. Adonis was hunting in the Akamas forest when stopped over the wonderful spring to quench his thirst. He was struck by the sight of the naked goddess bathing in the crystal waters. Aphrodite and Adonis were instantly bewitched by each other's extraordinary beauty.

The myth lived on through Middle Ages. Another legendary spot is "Pyrgos (castle) tis Rigainas" which is linked to the love of Rigaina and Digenis, (the Medieval queen of Cyprus and the Byzantine hero), as well as with Aphrodite. The "castle" which is actually a monastery, now ruins, is in the centre of Akamas in a majestic clearing, with a giant oak tree and the bubbling spring. According to the legend, the goddess of Love used the place as a refuge after her bath.

There is a good beach beneath and several delightful nature trails traverse the surrounding hillsides, offering stunning views of the countryside and the crystal blue waters of the bay.

During spring, the entire area is also carpeted with wild flowers.

Location: After Polis, on the west side

Distance: 45km from Paphos, 50 min driving distance