





# WEEKEND IN



## Paphos

**Mary Lussiana is charmed by this Cypriot city's blend of ancient history and contemporary buzz**

**Why go now?** Paphos lies on the western coast of Cyprus, its harbour surrounded by a vibrant mix of modern tourism, Roman mosaics, Greek mythological heritage and Christian churches. It is also a city divided, with two clear parts: Ktima, the old town, where a huge renovation, undertaken in preparation for Paphos's role as a 2017 European capital of culture, is belatedly coming to an end. Beneath it, tumbling down to the Mediterranean, is Kato Paphos, where shops jostle with cafés in the shadow of a medieval fortress.

Paphos has more than risen to its moment in the cultural spotlight, with a host of events between now and the end of the year. These range from Missia, the fado singer, performing in the Ancient Odeon, to the first ever performance staged at Aphroditēs Rock, the legendary birthplace of the goddess of love, which draws on Robert Wilson's *Odessey* and the poems of GP Cavafy (pafos2017.eu/en).

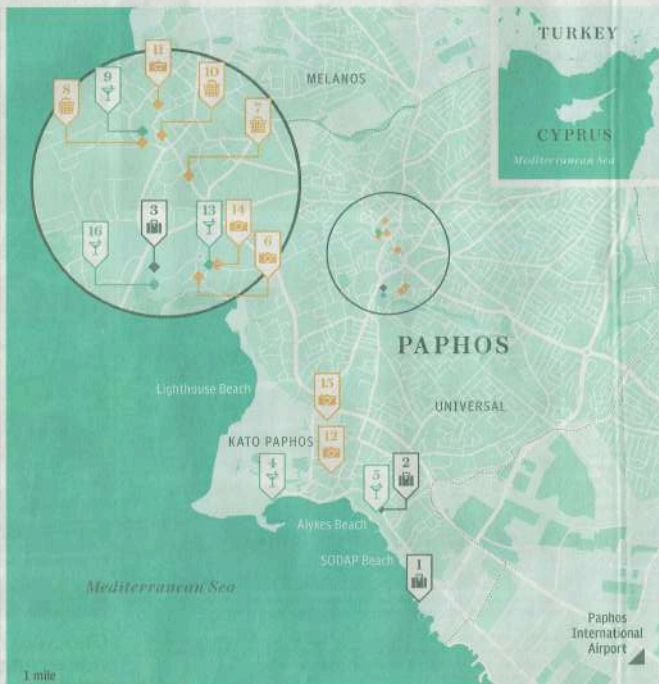
**Getting there** Direct flights to Paphos take around four and a half hours. Carriers include British Airways (0844 383 0787; ba.com), easyJet (easyjet.com), Monarch (0333 003 0100; monarch.co.uk) and Ryanair (0871 344 0000; ryanair.com). Return fares start at

around £256. Paphos airport is approximately five miles (8km) south-west of the town with regular shuttle buses between the two. Taxis cost around €30 (£26) one way.

**Where to stay** **Special treat** The Olympic Lagoon Resort Paphos (1) at Poseidonos Avenue (telegraph.co.uk/t-olympic-paphos) is a good option for families with a kids club, tennis courts, football pitches and close proximity to one of Paphos's few really nice beaches. Doubles from €230 including breakfast.

**Mid-range** Within earshot of the sound of waves and right on the promenade, the white-washed Almyra Hotel (2) at Poseidonos Avenue (telegraph.co.uk/t-almira-paphos) has an excellent spa, three pools and several good restaurants. Double rooms cost from €176 including breakfast. I stayed there as part of a package with Elegant Resorts (01244 897515; elegantresorts.co.uk) which offers a seven-night stay from £1,275 per person half-board, based on two sharing and including flights from London.

**Budget** The Axiotheo Hotel (3) at 2 Ivis Maitoti Street (00357 26 932 866; axiotheohotel.com) commands the best sunset view in town from its clean but no-frills rooms. It is family run and close to some



great restaurants and museums in the old town. Doubles start from €50 including breakfast.

don't miss the grilled cuttlefish with hummus and coriander-lemon sauce (€35 for two).

**Clockwise from top:** a statue of the goddess Aphrodite, whose legendary birthplace is in Paphos; boats near Paphos Castle; begin a meal with a selection of mezze

beaten gold coins resembling those found in the old tombs of the kings. For a more modern twist, seek out Greek designer Antigoni, whose delicate filigree collection is available at Tati (8) at 1 Petraki Miltiadiou Street.

### On arrival

**10am** Head down to the harbour for a cocktail or glass of local Cypriot wine while the sun sets, silhouetting the medieval castle. The Pelican (4) on Poseidonos Avenue (00357 26 962 600) offers the perfect perch from which to capture the moment.

**8pm** Stroll along the promenade until you get to the charming waterfront taverna, Ouzeri (5) on Poseidonos Avenue (00 357 26 888 700) just in front of the Almyra. Choose from the mezze on offer, but

### Day one

**10am** Start in the old town at the excellent, privately owned Ethnographical Museum (6) at 1 Exo Vrissi Street (Mon-Sat 9.30am-5pm; Sun 10am-1pm; admission €3) for an immersion in regional treasures.

**11.30am** Walk up the main shopping avenue of Makarioni III to no.83, where Aphroditē Jewellers (7) (cythroditejewellery.com) has a good range of Cypriot specialities from pomegranate pendants in silver to water-furin,

**Getting around** The excellent 24-hour taxi service Jack & Sons (00357 70 005 800; jackstaxicyprus.com) provides airport transfers that can be charged to your room.

**Water world** Keen water sports fans will find plenty of stands down on the promenade, from where you can go waterskiing or join a scuba diving trip.

**Early bird** Many museums and shops close at 1pm on a Saturday, so plan your visits accordingly, leaving Sunday to roam around the archaeological park.

specialises in young designers, stocking silver bracelets of the Cypriot Idol of Pamos, handmade leather sandals with colourful pom-poms and aromatic soaps.

**3.30pm** Visit The Place Gallery (theplacecyprus.com) – just by the lovely Agia Sophia Mosque (11) which is currently under renovation – where among jars of local honey, Cypriot wines and silk cocoon jewellery, you can see artisans at work on their pottery, weaving and even encaustic (hot wax) art.

**6.30pm** One of the landmarks of the island is St Paul's Pillar Chrysolitissa (12), the rather unremarkable column to which St Paul was tied and lashed for preaching Christianity. Right behind it lies the beautiful 12th-century Agia Kyriaki church surrounded by the remains of an early Christian basilica.

**8pm** Head to the charming Koutourou Restaurant (13) for dinner, housed in an ancient building on pretty Filippou Antoniadis Square. Locals come here for the roasted aubergines with garlic oil or the oven-baked calamari, accompanied by a carafe of local white wine (from €30 for two).

### Day two

**8.30am** Start the day with a good breakfast at Almyra (2) where a host of regional specialities can be tried. These range from soft white *amari* cheese, often drizzled with honey and cardamom, to the "black gold" of the

island) to smoked *lountas*, pork fillet which has been matured in red wine made from the indigenous mavro grape variety.

**10am** Head to the Unesco-listed Kato Paphos Archaeological Park (14), bottle of wine in hand, for there is a lot to see and little shade. Of particular note are the mesmerising mosaics in the House of Dionysus, rich in mythological content, but the other mosaics are equally impressive, dating back to 310-30 BC to 330 AD. Don't miss the Roman forum, either (visitpafos.org.cy/Paphos). Mosaics: open 8.30am-7.30pm in summer; 8.30am-5pm in winter; admission €4.50.

**12 noon** Walk up to the old town, via one of the most interesting European capital of culture events at Fabrica Hill (15), which opened in April and runs until the end of November. This modern art installation by Chiharu Shiota, the Japanese artist, took two weeks to install in the ancient Paphos cave. "A Walk Through the Line" is made entirely of red thread (admission free; permanently open).

**1.30pm** Settle at Muse Restaurant (16) (00357 26 943 855; muse-kitchen-bar.com), which is sufficiently busy to warrant reserving a table first. Try the delicious chicken marinated with yoghurt and sit on the terrace which overlooks the whole of Paphos, old and new, as it creeps down to the sparkling sea.

