



**NORTH & SOUTH CYPRUS
SANTORINI, CRETE, & RHODES
ISLANDS OF SUN & HISTORY**

April 27 - May 12, 2025 988
Led by Local Guides

Can be combined with Malta tour (April 21 - April 27, 2025) **OR** Syria tour (April 18 - April 27, 2025)

Cyprus is an island with a unique archaeological legacy - from its beautiful sanctuaries and monuments to the architectural marvels scattered along its craggy mountains, verdant plains, sweeping beaches, rolling hills and abundant vineyards. This Mediterranean island lies at the crossroads of three continents - where East meets West and a new experience awaits you under the sun of Cyprus.

Crete is an island with an exquisite 700-mile-long coastline dotted with numerous coves, bays, and peninsulas, and a multitude of soft, sandy beaches that line the dazzling blue Mediterranean Sea. As the home of the Minoan civilization, the island is of historic importance in today's world with important archeological finds at Knossos, Phaistos, and Gortys. There are many jewels just waiting to be discovered by the more adventurous explorers. If you have not visited Crete yet, maybe now is the time to come and explore this fascinating Greek island.

Santorini is one of the Cyclades islands in the Aegean Sea. It was devastated by a volcanic eruption in the 16th century BC, forever shaping its rugged landscape. The whitewashed, cubiform houses of its two principal towns, Fira and Oia, cling to cliffs above an underwater caldera (crater). They overlook the sea, small islands to the west, and beaches made up of black, red, and white lava pebbles. Santorini boasts that it is one of the romantic spots in the world.

Rhodes, the largest of Greece's Dodecanese islands, is known for its beach resorts, ancient ruins, and remnants of its occupation by the Knights of St. John during the Crusades. The city of Rhodes has an Old Town featuring the medieval Street of the Knights and the castle like Palace of the Grand Masters. Captured by the Ottomans and then held by the Italians, the palace is now a history museum. Displaying one of the most extensive collection of relics and treasures

Ihab Zaki
Managing Director

Sunday, April 27

Arrival in Larnaca - Nicosia (CYPRUS)



Upon arrival at **Larnaca** airport, meet and transfer to **Cleopatra Hotel or similar** in **Nicosia** for check-in, rest of the day free at leisure, dinner and overnight. **(D)**

Monday, April 28

Nicosia (St. Hilarion & Kyrenia - N.Cyprus)



After breakfast, begin exploring the north part of the island with a visit to the picturesque **Castle of Saint Hilarion**, first fortified by the Byzantines but greatly strengthened by the **Lusignan kings** during the Middle Ages. Continue the drive to **Kyrenia** via **Bellapais Abbey**, a beautiful set of ruins overlooking the Mediterranean and upon arrival at the picturesque **Harbor of Kyrenia**, enjoy lunch then head to explore the town and the seafront castle, which houses the Shipwreck Museum. Return to the *Hotel* in Nicosia for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Tuesday, April 29

Nicosia (North & South)



After breakfast, enjoy a medieval tour of Nicosia, beginning with a visit to the **Cyprus Museum**, where most of the treasures of Cyprus' archaeological past is housed. Visit **Agios Ioannis Church** (St. John's Cathedral) and admire its colorful frescoes then visit the **Byzantine Art Museum** with its stunning collection of Byzantine icons. Walk through the old town to the **Green line**, which divides the Capital to the North of the City (*passport required at checkpoint*). After lunch, head to

visit **Buyuk Han** used by merchants in the past, now an art & craft center. See the **Selimiye mosque**, historically known as St Cathedral of **St Sophia**, former Roman Catholic cathedral. In the afternoon, head to visit Cyprus **American Archaeological Research Institute** to meet the director and listen to the marvelous work this institute did in Cyprus throughout the years, after the visit, Return to the *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Wednesday, April 30

Nicosia - Kakopetria



Enjoy breakfast, then begin the drive to **Troodos Mountains** and the UNESCO world heritage protected churches where some of the most important monuments of the history of Byzantine painting have survived. First stop is at **Panagia Asinou** (Virgin Mary of Asinou) 12th Century UNESCO heritage church near the village of Nikitari. Continue to Kakopetria for a walking tour of the village with its water mill & restored houses. Visit the **Church of Agios Nikolaos tis Stegis**, (St. Nicholas of the Roof), which was added to the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1985. This Byzantine monastery is the only surviving 11th century catholicon (monastery church) in Cyprus, completely painted with murals, and considered one of the most interesting on the Island. After lunch, the journey continues through the pine forest of the **Troodos Mountain to Pedoulas**, a mountainous village known for its many cherry trees and the historic church of Archangel Michael with its gable-roofed building and UNESCO listed church dated

1474. End the day at **Kalopanayiotis** village with its Venetian bridge, spa waters and traditional houses. Visit **St John Lampadist**, UNESCO heritage Byzantine church with well-preserved frescos, icons, and wood carved doors. Transfer to *Panayiotis Casale Hotel or similar* for check-in, dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Thursday, May 01 Kakopetria - Paphos



After breakfast, begin the drive to Omodos village via Platres mountain resort famous for its poets and novelists and visited by Royalty in the bygone days and upon arrival begin a walking tour of this interesting wine-producing village; see the medieval wine press and the many products produced from the vine.

Continue the drive to the Crusader **castle of Kolossi**, a fine example of military architecture and where the Knights of St John in the 13th Century ruled. The castle stands by the vineyards where the Knights made their famous sweet, port-like wine known as Commandaria, one of the World's oldest named wines which is still in production today. Then continue to visit **Kourion**, an important ancient city kingdom and most impressive archaeological site on the Island. Perched on a hillside with amazing views of the Mediterranean, excavations have unearthed many significant finds. Explore the magnificent **Greco-Roman theatre**, originally built in the 2nd Century BC, the roman house of **Eustolios** with extensive baths, courtyards, and halls. See the colourful, Christian-influenced 5th century mosaic floor, cross shaped ornaments & fish, and well-preserved 2nd century stadium. Today the theatre is occasionally used for musical and theatrical performances.

Continue along the coastal scenic route to Paphos, stopping to marvel at the panoramic view of Petra tou Romiou, (**Aphrodite's Rock**), where the legendary Aphrodite - goddess of love is said to have been born from the sea. Nice spot for photo with impressive landscape. Stop at **Yeroskipou village** with its 9th century Byzantine Basilica of **St Paraskevi**. The name Yeroskipou derives from the classical Greek "Hieros Kipos" meaning "Sacred Garden". The village is renowned for its "Cyprus delights" sweets, sample the traditional sweets called "Loukoumia" made locally at the village. Transfer to *Anemi Hotel & Suites*, for check-in, dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Friday, May 02 Paphos



Begin the day exploring the **Nea Paphos Archaeological Park**, and see many important sites - from prehistoric

times to the Middle Ages, including the **four Roman villas** dating back to the 2nd century A.D. and their excellent preserved mosaic floors, the **House of Dionysos**, destroyed in the 4th century AD by earthquakes, and contains some impressive mosaics of the ancient Greek god of wine, the **House of Orpheus**, which contains a mosaic representing three mythological scenes - Orpheus and his Lyre, Hercules and the Lion of Nemea, and the Amazon, the **House of Aion**, which contains a mosaic floor that is considered to be one of the finest works of Roman art of its kind, the **House of Theseus**, which was the residence of the governor and contains a beautiful mosaic of Theseus and the Minotaur. Visit the **tombs of the kings**, a world heritage site with impressive underground tombs of the Hellenistic period 4th century BC.

Visit the newly renovated and expanded **Paphos District Archaeological Museum**, which reopened in 2021. The museum displays artefacts that were unearthed in the Paphos region, dating from the Aceramic Neolithic period to 1700 AD. Continue to the hills above Paphos to visit the Byzantine **Monastery of Ayios Neophytos**, where we view the cave that **St Neophytos** excavated in a peaceful corner of this beautiful, dramatic landscape in the 12th century. The **hermit's cave**, called the 'Enkleistra', decorated with some of the finest examples of Byzantine wall paintings, dating from the 12th to the 15th centuries. Visit the **harbor area** then return to the *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Saturday, May 03 Paphos - Larnaca



Begin the day with a drive to visit the unique Aceramic Neolithic site of **Khirokitia** (7000 BC) which comprises the ruins of tightly packed circular houses sited dramatically on the slopes of a hill. Here we encounter archaeological evidence of the beginnings of agriculture in this region and visit reconstructed houses for a glimpse of how Neolithic people lived.

Continue to visit **Panayia Angeloktisti church** ("built by the Angels"), constructed in the 11th century over the ruins of an Early Christian Basilica. The apse of the original basilica has survived along with one of the finest pieces of Byzantine art on the island, a rare 6th-century golden mosaic depicting the Virgin Mary and Child between the archangels Michael and Gabriel. Stop for a brief visit to **Hala Sultan Tekke**, located on the Larnaca Salt Lake, which is an important migratory route for many birds including pink flamingos.

Continue to **Larnaca**, for a short orientation walk along Larnaca's seafront to view the well-preserved architecture from the British colonial period and the **church of St. Lazarus**. Lazarus of Bethany whom Jesus Christ resurrected four days after his death came by boat to Cyprus and landed in Kition, where he met the Apostles Paul and Barnabas who ordained him bishop of Kition and lived on the Island for another thirty years. Also view **Larnaca Fort**, which stands at the water's edge and separates the Phinikoudes ("Palm Trees") Promenade from the old Turkish Cypriot quarter. Transfer to *Sun Hall Hotel* for check-in, dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Sunday, May 04

Larnaca - Rhodes (GREECE)



After breakfast, transfer to the airport for our morning flight to **Rhodes**, the largest of the Dodecanese Islands, a group of islands located in the southeastern Aegean Sea off the coast of Turkey. Upon arrival, meet and begin the tour starting with a drive through the New Town, passing by Mandraki Port, the Town Hall, and Evangelisms Church to Monte Smith Hill, where there are magnificent views of the Aegean Sea and the city. Continue driving past the ancient **Rhodes Acropolis**, dedicated to Zeus Polieus, Athena Polias and Pythian Apollo. Four columns of this Acropolis have been reconstructed. Then, drive past the 2nd century Stadium and Theatre - both of which have been restored. Enjoy a walk through the **Medieval City**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site that will take us back to the middle Ages.

Visit the Gothic Style **Grand Master's Palace**, the most imposing building in medieval Rhodes. Stroll down the **"Street of the Knights"** which, despite its restoration, has remained untouched for 500 years. This was home to the Knights Hospitaller, and each section was divided into different nationalities including England, France, Germany, Italy, Aragon, Auvergne, and Provence with each being responsible for a section of the fortification. The inns of the various "tongues" stand in a row, with impressive arched doorways, their emblems carved above them. Continue with a one-hour scenic drive along the **East Coast** of the Island and stop at the village of **Archangelos**, and enjoy a visit to a **pottery factory**, for a demonstration of handmade pottery being created by a potter's wheel. Visit **Lindos**, the most attractive village on Rhodes, known as the "Jewel of the Island". Visit the 5th century BC **Acropolis** and its great **stoa**, the ancient **theatre**, and the few remains of the **Temple of Dionysus**, making your way to the picturesque medieval village, built amphitheatrically around the foot of the steep rock that leads to the acropolis. Admire the traditionally built

white stone houses, with their decorated pebble stone floors. Your final visit for the day will be to the 15th century medieval **church** dedicated to the Virgin Mary, with its octagonal dome, unusual belfry, carved iconostasis, and 17th century wall paintings (*guiding inside the church is not allowed*). Transfer to *Blue Sky Hotel City Beach* or similar for check-in and overnight. **(B)**

Monday, May 05

Rhodes



After breakfast, head to **Kremasti Village** and visit the beautiful **Kremasti Church** dedicated to Virgin Mary. This is one of the largest churches on the island and within the church you can find impressive murals and wood carvings. Continue the drive to the picturesque small port at **Kamiros Skala** and find many fish taverns. Drive to the **Venetian Castle of Kritinia**, which dates back to the 16th century. The castle stands on a steep rock and dominates the entire area. Further to the south, you'll come to the small, amphitheatrically built mountain village of **Kritinia**, offering fantastic views of the Aegean Sea. Also, visit the traditional mountain village of **Embona**, perched on the flanks of the Atavyros Mountain. It has beautiful houses, built in local style. Visit the local wine factory, where you will have a chance to taste some of the best wines and other spirits produced on the island. After an excellent BBQ lunch (on own), drive to **Profitis Ilias**, named after the monastery, that stands on the hill. From this spot, the views of the surrounding wooded mountainsides are superb. A few miles down the road take us to **Fountoukli**, where we will visit the small 16th century **Church of St. Nicholas** with its four apses. Stop to visit the Seven Springs, one of the most beautiful spots on the island, then return to the *Hotel* for overnight. **(B)**

Tuesday, May 06

Rhodes - Heraklion (CRETE)



After breakfast, enjoy a free morning at leisure, then in the afternoon, transfer to the port to board the ferry to **Heraklion**, the largest city and administrative capital of **Crete**. Upon arrival, meet and transfer to *Astoria Capsis Hotel* or similar for check-in and overnight. **(B)**

Wednesday, May 07

Heraklion



Begin the day with a visit to the village of **Peza**, home of the winemaking industry, watch a video to learn more about the production of Cretan olive oil and olive oil soap, and sample some of the local products. Head to visit **Archanes**, a small village lovingly restored to its original beauty. This village is one of the most picturesque in Crete and has been voted by the EU as "Best Restored

Village". Archanes is nestled at the base of Yiouchta Mountain, said to be the burial site of Zeus. You can relax, experience famous Cretan hospitality, and enjoy some Greek specialties at the village Taverna. Continue the drive to the excavation site at **Knossos** (Walking tour – 1.5 hrs.) , once the ceremonial and political center of the Minoan civilization between 1700 and 1400 BC. Neolithic findings here date back to around 7,000 B.C. Also visit the **Palace of Knossos**, situated on the top of a hill offering stunning views below. In Greek mythology, King Minos had Daedalus construct a very large maze at the palace to imprison his son, the Minotaur. Return to the *Hotel* for overnight. **(B)**

Thursday, May 08

Heraklion



Begin the drive to the historical and picturesque town of **Rethymnon**, though it is the 3rd largest town on Crete, this old Venetian town has maintained its traditional old-world charm. Wander through the narrow streets and endless shops; visit the 16th century **Venetian Fortress**, which will take us back to another place in time. Continue the drive west to the scenic town of **Chania**, with its Venetian harbor, narrow lanes, and old buildings from the Venetian and Turkish periods. The town has many beautiful Neo-classical buildings and a unique covered market in the shape of a cross. Also, visit the **Archaeological Museum of Chania** located in the former Venetian Monastery of St. Francis. Its collections include Roman and Minoan artifacts excavated around the city including coins, sculptures, mosaics, and inscribed clay tablets. Drive to the historical **Monastery of Arkadi**, situated along a spectacular scenic spot at the edge of a gorge. The monastery represents a symbol of freedom for the Cretans after a battle between the Turks and the Greeks that took place in 1866, practically leading to the liberation of Crete. Your last stop for the day will be at the beautiful village of **Fodele**, the birthplace of the famous painter El Greco. This village is surrounded by lush green vegetation such as citrus trees and is known as a center of traditional textiles and handicrafts. There will be some free time for coffee or shopping. Return to the *Hotel* in Crete for overnight. **(B)**

Friday, May 09

Heraklion - Santorini



After breakfast, transfer to the port to board the ferry to **Santorini**. Upon arrival, meet and transfer to *El Gerco Hotel or similar* for check-in and overnight. **(B)**

Saturday, May 10

Santorini



Begin the day with a stop at the highest spot of the island **prophets Elias Mountain**, visit the chapel dedicated to **Ag. Nektarios** and learn about the layout of the churches and the influence in architect and economy, then head to the **Archeological site of the prehistoric city of Akrotiri** for a visit and see the unique ruins of Akrotiri with more than 400 years of history. Visit "**Venetsanos winery**", the oldest winery in Santorini, and see the traditional tools and machinery before enjoying a wine tasting facing the extraordinary view of caldera and the volcanic islands and step on an ancient vineyard. Venetsanos Winery "Santorini 2018" got first prize, as the best Greek wine at Thessaloniki international expedition of wine in 2019. Enjoy some free time swimming and/or have lunch at the famous black beach **Perivolos** or **Perisa** (on own). End the day with a stop at **Oia Village**, one of the most beautiful villages in all of Santorini with spectacular views. Enjoy a walk through its narrows streets, past its lovely houses, blue-domed churches, and delightful cafes. Return to the *Hotel* for overnight. **(B)**

Sunday, May 11

Santorini - Athens



Transfer to the airport in the morning for our flight to **Athens**. Upon arrival, meet and begin the city tour. drive to the **Acropolis**, where we will meet the tour guide. The architectural Masterpieces of the Golden Age of Athens: The **Parthenon** dedicated to the goddess Athena, the **Erectheion** and the **Temple of Athena Nike**. Visit the **Panathenaic Stadium**, where the first Olympic games of modern times were held in 1896. Pass by the **Temple of Olympian Zeus**, **Hadrian's Arch**, the **Parliament**, and the **memorial** of the Unknown Soldier, **Constitution Square** (Syntagma), the **Academy**, the **University**, the **National Library**. Transfer to the *Hotel* for check-in and overnight. **(B)**

Monday, May 12

Athens - USA



Transfer to the airport for your flight back to the US. **(B)**

"We reserve the right to change the order of activities/visits or sites due to unexpected events such as flight cancellations or changes of schedule, or any other reasons beyond our control. We will do our best to ensure that any necessary changes when/if needed to meet the needs of our clients".

Tour Cost (Land Only)

Per person sharing in double occupancy

Cyprus: \$3,795.00

Single Supplement: \$695.00

Price based on minimum of 6 participants and maximum of 12 participants

Rhodes, Crete, Santorini, & Athens:

\$4,995.00

Single Supplement: \$795.00

Price based on minimum of 4 participants

Trip Grade: I Lodging Level: ****



Tour Includes:

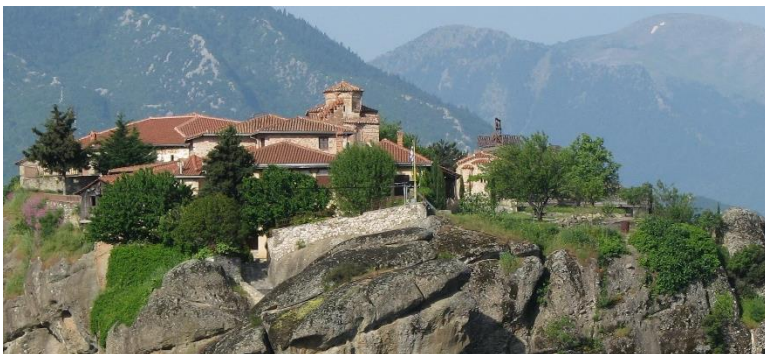
- Airport / Hotel / Airport transfers with assistance.
- Accommodation in first class (4*) hotels or similar and best available in smaller towns.
- Meals as per the itinerary (B: Breakfast, L: Lunch and D: Dinner).
- Transportation using A/C car or minibus.
- Larnaca-Rhodes and Santorini-Athens flights.
- Rhodes to Heraklion & Heraklion to Santorini Ferry.
- English speaking professional guides.
- Entrance fees to all sites mentioned as per the itinerary.
- Bottled water on touring days on the bus.
- Accommodation tax in Crete.
- A Seminar by Cyprus American Archaeological Research Institute (CAARI) during your visit.
- Gratuities to guides, drivers, porters, and restaurant staff (provided the minimum number of the participants is reached).

Trip Grade:

I Easy - Reasonably paced sightseeing, easy walking, and leisurely days. No physical changes.

Lodging Level:

★★★★ Luxury - Regular style, usually large hotels, typical western standard with ample venues and full amenities (4 or 5 stars).



Tour does not include:

- International airfare USA - Larnaca / Athens-USA.
- Visa (Currently Gratis for US citizens).
- Any drinks with or without meals and meals not mentioned.
- Any fluctuations in exchange rate of the Euro.
- Items of a personal nature (camera fees at sites, laundry, emails, /excess luggage, etc.).
- Transfers if not arriving/departing on scheduled flights/tour dates.
- Dayroom or overnights necessitated by changes in airline schedules.
- Trip surcharge to operate below required minimum participants.
- Travel protection insurance (RECOMMENDED).

