

# *Country Walks*

*for the best in guided walking holidays, weekends away and Nordic walking*

## **Cyprus - Aphrodite's Island: Easy 'A' Grade 15 - 22 April 2010**

### *Easy 'A' Grade Walking*

- Two-centre holiday combining the best of unspoilt coastal and mountain landscapes
- Full programme of guided walks and excursions with two leaders throughout
- Unspoilt picturesque villages, harbours, monasteries and Byzantine churches
- 10,000 years of historical and cultural interest
- Exotic Mediterranean flora and fauna and meadows carpeted with colourful flowers
- Warm, sunny days
- Coach transport throughout

*Eight days on Aphrodite's Island, where an expansive sea melts into azure skies. Our walks take you through beautiful landscapes of extraordinary contrasts, from spectacular mountain tops to secluded valleys, from archaeological sites to traditional villages with an unspoilt coastline never far away.*

**Climate:** Splendidly Mediterranean with almost constant sunshine throughout the year. Cyprus is at its best for walking in the spring when the countryside is a blaze of floral colour, the sun is not too hot and Mount Olympus should be snow-free for walking.

**Grading of Walks:** The walks in our programme are designed to be relaxed and easy, well within the capacity of any normally healthy person of any age. Maximum mileage (on one day) is 6 miles; on other days between 3 and 5. Some walks are flexible and include options to shorten the longer walks. Routes are almost entirely on level, fairly smooth surfaces with few if any gradients and walking boots are therefore not necessary.

### **Hotels:**

**The Natura Beach, Polis** is in a superb location overlooking the sea yet only a 15-minute walk from the centre of Polis, a small town of ancient origins and much character with stone buildings, ornate doorways and a pedestrian centre of colourful shops, tavernas and restaurants. It is situated on the north-western coast of Cyprus in a beautiful region of hills, valleys, harbours and rocky shores, less than one hour's drive from Paphos.

Natura Beach is family-run and friendly and the food is homely with organic orange juice, honey, herbs and other produce taken straight from the hotel's gardens, orchards and olive groves. Cheese comes from the goatherd and eggs from the free-range hens often to be seen roaming the extensive lawns, that lead down to the sea. Rooms are twin-bedded, simply furnished, en-suite with bath and shower and a balcony or terrace from which to admire coastal or mountain views. Hotel facilities include an outdoor swimming pool, a tennis court, small fitness room, sauna and mountain bike hire.

**The Rodon Hotel, Agros** is peacefully situated 15 minutes walk from the village of Agros situated on the slopes of the Troodos mountains at 1100 metres above sea level in the Valley of the Roses. The area is noted for the wild scented roses that grow in abundance and from which the famous Agros rosewater is distilled. Agros has a small selection of shops, tavernas and restaurants and is situated 45 minutes from Nicosia and 90 minutes from Paphos.

The Rodon Hotel was built by the local people to preserve the traditional character of their village and to encourage visitors to enjoy this quiet and unspoiled mountain area. Rooms are twin-bedded, en-suite with bath and shower and a private covered balcony. All rooms have hairdryer, mini-bar, fridge and air conditioning. Hotel facilities include an outdoor swimming pool, fitness room, saunas and massages, tennis courts, cafes, bars and a coffee shop

**Holiday Price:** £627 per person for 2 people sharing a twin room; £724 for single occupancy of a twin room. Add £22 per person for sea-facing room at the Natura Beach, depending upon availability.

**Price Includes:**

- Coach transfers to and from Paphos Airport
- Daily coach transport to and from the walks
- 3 guided walks as detailed in the Itinerary
- 3 excursions involving some walking as detailed in the Itinerary
- Hotel accommodation as described above
- Buffet breakfasts, 3-course dinners, 1 picnic lunch
- All tips
- Services of 2 leaders throughout
- Lecture by Dr Georgiades on the Flora and Fauna of Cyprus
- Unique experiences that money can't buy

**Price Excludes:**

- Flights (see below)
- Insurance
- Lunches (allow approximately 12-15 euros per day)
- Drinks (although some tavernas include wine)
- Optional boat trip and entrance fees (allow approx 20 euros)
- Drinks (although some tavernas include wine)
- Items of a personal nature

**Regardless of fluctuations in the exchange rate, the price of the holiday will not change.**

**Flights:** EasyJet offer the most reasonable fares and departure times as follows:

**EasyJet** (<<http://www.easyJet.com/EN/Book/index.asp>>)

Thur 15 Apr dep London Gatwick 0715, arr. Paphos 1345 - £77.99(Flight No 8805) Flight time 4 hr 30 min, direct flight

Thur 22 Apr dep Paphos 1430, arr. London Gatwick 1715 - £61.99(Flight No 8806) Flight time 4 hr 45 min, direct flight

*Please note that flight times may change before April 2010 and the above fares are those published early October 2009. Fares normally increase over time. Once we have confirmed the holiday, we recommend therefore that you book your flights at the earliest opportunity. The above fares include all taxes but exclude checked bags at £16 return. You can book online on EasyJet's website (see above), or, if you prefer, for an additional fee, you can book the same flights by phone with Expedia by calling 0871 2229483. We are happy to talk you through online booking of airline tickets if you are unfamiliar with the process: call us on 020 72336563.*

## Itinerary

### *Thursday*

Depart Paphos airport by coach for a 45-minute drive to Polis, arriving at our hotel mid-afternoon in time for an informal Welcome Meeting and Briefing followed by an early dinner.

### *Friday*

**Polis, Laatchi & Fontana Amoroza.** (6 miles: easy, no gradients) Walking straight from our hotel past olive, lemon and orange groves to the centre of ancient Polis. After coffee at our favourite taverna, we head for the sea to join a paved coastal path taking us past eucalyptus and acacia trees to the picturesque fishing harbour of Laatchi. A taverna lunch, then an exciting optional boat trip along the dramatic coastline to Fontana Amoroza, the best approach to this wild uninhabited part of the peninsular, a world away from the crowded coastal areas so often associated with Southern Cyprus. We conclude with a visit to the Baths of Aphrodite (where according to legend, the goddess frolicked with her lover, Adonis). Finally, relax with a drink on the terrace overlooking the crystal clear waters of an azure sea before the coach takes us back to our hotel. We dine out this evening at Archontariki, the best restaurant in Polis. *(It is possible to shorten the length of this walk to 3 miles by returning by boat to Laatchi or the boat ride can be omitted).*

### *Saturday*

**Paphos** (approx 3 miles: easy, no gradients) By coach via the scenic route to the monumental Tombs of the Kings, carved out of the rock in the third century BC. A one-hour visit followed by coffee at the luxurious Elysium Hotel. Refreshed we continue on foot to explore the Archaeological Park, another World Heritage Site, admiring on the way crocuses and a mass of wild flowers. Then there's the Odeion and the Agora and the celebrated mosaics dating from the second century AD but amazingly full of vibrancy today. We enjoy a selection of traditional 'mezedes' together at one of the best Tavernas in town before visiting the medieval fort and harbour at Kato Paphos. We have allowed some free time for you to further explore the Archaeological Park or harbour or simply enjoy an icecream before meeting our coach for the return to Polis. Dinner at the hotel.

### *Sunday*

**Smigies, Neo Chorio & Flowers of the Akamas** (5 miles: easy walking, some gentle gradients) An enchanting day exploring hidden corners of the Akamas Peninsular, now a riotous blossoming of poppies, anemones, cyclamen, iris, gladioli, tulips and crown daisies. Our host, Dr Georgiades, is the leading authority on the orchids of Cyprus and during our stay he will entertain and enlighten us with an illustrated talk on the flora and fauna of this beautiful island. Today's route will take us gently up to enjoy spectacular views over the southern coast and the Akamas Forest. After a picnic lunch amongst the flowers, we cross a grassy plateau dotted with cypress and carob trees, visiting the tiny 16th century church of Agios Minas, before reaching journey's end at the traditional village of Neo Chorio. Here, a long refreshing drink before our coach returns us to our hotel. We spend our last evening in Polis with a fun evening at Moustakallis, a popular local taverna. *(It is possible to shorten the length of this walk to 3 miles by omitting the walk around Smigies)*

*Monday*

**Troodos and Kykkos Monastery** (*Less walking today, apart from exploring the monastery*)

An early start by coach for a spectacular journey through thickly forested slopes with fine views to the spectacular Troodos, a mountain wonderland of lofty peaks and shady valleys. Today is packed with variety and scenic landscapes: we visit the Byzantine Museum and EOKA monument at Lysos, stopping for a coffee before winding up to Stavros for an encounter with the famous Moufflon, the endemic wild sheep of Cyprus. The next stop is Kykkos, the most celebrated of all the monasteries in Cyprus, overlooked by Throni, the mountain-top tomb of Archbishop Makarios. After lunch we visit the Byzantine Church of the Archangel Michael, a World Heritage Site, before proceeding through breathtaking scenery to journey's end, the Rodon Hotel at Agros in the Valley of the Roses. This evening we dine at the hotel.

*Tuesday*

**Mount Olympus, Troodos Village and Foini** (*5 miles: easy mountain path, no gradients,*)

Our coach takes us up to the start of the Artemis Trail, the highest nature trail in Cyprus just below the summit of Mount Olympus at 6,000 feet. Although the highest point in Cyprus, still snow-covered until late March, the walk is easy and almost entirely flat, suitable for anyone and everyone. The views over the surrounding countryside and across the plains of Morfou in the Turkish Zone are spectacular. As we circle the upper reaches of the mountain through ancient Black Pine forest, we encounter trees over 500 years old while above us, with luck, we may spot Griffon Vultures and Eagles. After an authentic taverna lunch at Foini, we explore this traditional village nestling in the heart of the Troodos, seeking out the local museum and its 85-year-old owner and perhaps visiting the 'Greek Delight' factory! Returning to Agros, there is time to explore the village where this evening we will be dining at a nearby taverna.

*Wednesday*

**Nicosia, Kyrenia and the North** (*2 or 3 miles: very easy walking combined with sightseeing*)

Our coach drops us in Nicosia where we explore both the Greek and Turkish Quarters, crossing the 'green line' at the Ledra Palace checkpoint. We visit the fine Venetian Walls, view the Archbishop's Palace and Ammochostos Gate, Buyuk Han, now an impressive arts centre situated in a former 16th century inn, enjoying the sights of this fascinating city. Then to Kyrenia, about 30 minutes from Nicosia, for lunch overlooking the water before exploring Kyrenia itself, and its harbour picturesquely situated and surrounded by mediaeval buildings. Finally, we will visit 13th century Bellapais, jewel of Northern Cyprus, with its stunning views of the Kyrenia Hills and the coast. Although a ruin, Bellapais retains fine Gothic detailing, a beautiful cloister with tall dark cypress trees and a splendid vaulted hall unequalled in all Cyprus. We return to dine at our hotel.

*Thursday*

A final leisurely breakfast together before our coach transfer to Paphos Airport for our flight to Gatwick. We break the 90-minute journey with coffee and a walk around the cobbled streets of the picturesque village of Omodos.

***Please do not book flights until advised by us to do so.***