

Welcome to Lefkousia



Lefkousia (Nicosia) is the capital of Cyprus and one of the oldest cities in the Eastern Mediterranean. It is located in the heart of the island in the plain of Mesaoria, between the Pentadaktilos mountain range to the north and the Troodos range to the south. It is the biggest city on the island with a metropolitan population of 350,000 and it comprises of two distinct parts the Old City that lays within the 16th century Venetian walls and the Modern City that expands beyond the walls. Today, the city is a sophisticated and cosmopolitan place, rich in history and culture, combining its historic past with the amenities of a modern city.

Arriving by plane

Lefkousia is easily accessible by shuttle bus or private taxi from both Larnaka and Pafos International Airports. For more information on the shuttle buses from and to the airports, please visit: <https://kapnosairportshuttle.com/>

Lefkousia - most interesting historical facts

The history of the city dates back to the Bronze Age. In antiquity and in early Christian times it was known as Ledra. It has been the capital of Cyprus since the Late Byzantine period (11th century). Lefkousia came successively under the control of the Byzantines (330-1191), the Lusignan kings (1192-1489), the Venetians (1489-1571), the Ottomans (1571-1878), and the British (1878-1960), and thus reflects the history of the island and there are evidences to both Eastern and Western influences on the city's personality. During the 20th century the city boundaries were extended beyond the existing circular Venetian walls, and the old city within them was increasingly given over to shops and workshops. When Cyprus gained its Independence from the British, Lefkousia officially became capital of the Republic of Cyprus.

A coup d'état in 1974 against the lawful Cypriot government provided a pretext for Turkey to invade the island and promote her expansionist plans. Since 1974, the people of Cyprus are experiencing the tragedy of a divided country, with the Green Line cutting in two the heart of the capital city Lefkousia. In our times it remains the last divided city of Europe, sliced in two by the 'Green Line' disrupting its cohesion and continuity.

Useful Information

Transportation:

Buses:

The central bus station is located at Solomou Square directly next to Eleftherias Square and close to the Old Town, the city's historic center.

Intercity Buses connect Nicosia with other city centers and central bus station in Solomou Square is the terminal. For the bus schedule visit: www.intercitybuses.com

Urban buses leaving from the central bus station connect the city center to the suburbs and the outskirts of Nicosia. For the bus schedule visit: <https://www.publictransport.com.cy/routes/page/routes-and-linetables>

Rural Buses connect the city center with numerous destinations in the Nicosia countryside and Troodos mountains. Early morning rides (until 9:15 am) depart from Kolokasi square. Later rides depart from the bus station at Makarios Stadium. Bus Nr. 1 connects the central bus station in Solomou Square with the bus station at Makarios Stadium. For the bus schedule visit: <https://www.publictransport.com.cy/routes/page/routes-and-linetables>

The tickets for both Urban and Rural Buses cost €2.00 and can be purchased on board from the driver.

Useful Telephone Numbers:

Cyprus Public Transport	1416	First Aid	22887171
Cyprus Public Transport (from abroad)	+35722221416	Hospitals	1400
Nicosia Hospital	2260300	Airports / Flight Information	77778833
Police Station	22802380	Pharmacies (all night / all day)	90901412
Fire Station	112/199	Lefkousia Tourist Information Office	22674264

Climate and Weather:

Lefkousia enjoys an intense Mediterranean climate with a long, dry summer and a mild winter. Many sunny days characterize the weather all year round, even during winter when some rainy days might come. The mean temperatures vary according to the season with the lowest of 5.3 degrees and the highest of 16 degrees in February and with the lowest of 22.3 degrees and the highest of 37.3 degrees in July. The duration of the daylight throughout the year ranges from 9.8 hours in December to 14.5 hours in June, allowing people to enjoy life outdoors in parks and commercial zones.

Private taxis:

Taxi service is available on a 24-hour basis at a taxi rank at Konstantinou Palaiologou ave, just a few minutes' walk from Eleftherias square. Taxis are obliged to have taximeters and charge commences from the minute the passengers board the taxi.

Choose your experience and follow the numbers on the map to make the most out of your visit at Lefkousia! Audio Guides available



Explore the City

Old City- within the Venetian Walls

Much of the charm and beauty of Nicosia is to be found in the old city with its labyrinthine alleyways and elegant courtyard houses. Here you can find many interesting museums and art galleries, Byzantine churches and a number of medieval and neo-classical buildings while the narrow streets retain the romantic atmosphere of the past.

The Venetian Walls

The Venetian Walls of Lefkousia are a masterpiece of medieval fortification architecture. Built by Venetian architect Giulio Savorgnano, the Walls have a perimeter of 4.5 km, with eleven heart-shaped bastions bearing the names of rich Venetian families who donated the money for their construction.

1. Eleftherias' Square

Eleftheria Square has been re-constructed as a bridge over the moat linking the old with the modern city. The study and design of the project was undertaken by the world-renowned office of Zaha Hadid. The landscaping including planting of trees and bushes, the installation of attractive water features and modern lighting contribute to the upgrading of both the functionality and the aesthetic quality of this public area. At the edge of the square you can see the D'Avila bastion and atop of it a neo-classical building that used to house the City Hall.



2. Liberty Monument and Aqueduct

The Liberty Monument is located on the Podocataro Bastion. It was built in 1973 to commemorate Cyprus Independence and honor the anti-colonial struggle against the British Rule. Atop, the statue representing liberty watches over two heroic fighters pulling chains to open a prison gate. Just across there is a preserve section of the Aqueduct that supplied the city of Lefkousia with drinking water in Antiquity.



3. Famagusta Gate

Continuing you come to the Caraffa bastion where Famagusta Gate, the largest and most impressive gate of the Venetian Walls, is located. The Gate opened onto the road that led

to Famagusta (Ammochostos) the Cyprus main port at the time. It was originally known as 'Porta Giuliana' in honour of Giulio Savorgnano, the engineer of the Walls. Famagusta Gate has been restored and operates as the Nicosia Municipal Cultural Center.



4. State Gallery of Contemporary Art - SPEL

Just opposite Famagusta Gate, a renovated 1965 former co-op building houses the State Gallery of Contemporary Art - SPEL. The State Gallery, operating under the Deputy Ministry of Culture, presents a yearly programme of exhibitions and other events dedicated to contemporary art, architecture and design.



5. Hambis Municipal Printmaking Museum

On Ammochostou Street just across Famagusta Gate is also the Hambis Municipal Printmaking Museum which is housed in what used to be a traditional bakery. The museum showcases the work of Cypriot artist Hambis Tsagaris and familiarizes visitors with the art of printmaking.



6. Ermou street

Head in the direction of Ermou, a historic street which in its heyday, was the most commercial of Nicosia's streets with vendors, bazaars and shops of all kinds. Today the street is halved in two parts, the larger confined in the 'green' zone. However, the accessible half has been recently transformed into a charming area with the arrival of high-end shops, hipster bars, traditional cafés, art galleries and progressive fashion.

7. Centre of Visual Art and Research

The Centre of Visual Art and Research on Ermou Street houses a collection of more than 1000 artworks of foreign artists who have visited Cyprus during the 18th - 20th centuries.

as well as a collection of costumes presenting the evolution of the local Cypriot dress.



8. Panagia Chrysaliniotissa Church

Almost parallel to Ermou Street, on Archiepiskopou Filotheou Street is the Panagia Chrysaliniotissa Church (Our Lady of the Golden Flax). This church is believed to be the oldest Byzantine church in Lefkousia and thought to have been first built in 1450 by Queen Helena Palaeologina. The church is renowned for its rich collection of old and rare icons.

9. Archbishopric palace/ Byzantine Museum

From Ermou enter Pentadaktylou Street, then turn left on Theseos Street and then turn right on Agiou Ioannou Street to reach the Archbishopric Square. In the center of this square is the Archbishopric Palace, which is the official sit and residence of the Archbishop of Cyprus and was built in 1959-60. Adjacent to it is the Makarios III Foundation which houses the Byzantine Museum that contains the richest and most representative collection of Byzantine art in Cyprus.



10. Agios Ioannis Old Cathedral

In front of the museum is the Agios Ioannis (Saint John's) Cathedral. The church is built on the site of the 14th century chapel of the Benedictine Abbey of Agios Ioannis the Evangelist of Bibi, which was rebuilt from its foundations by Archbishop Nikiforos in 1662. Contrary to its modest exterior, the interior of the church is beautifully decorated with 18th century wall paintings depicting scenes from the Bible and the discovery of the tomb of Apostel Barnabas near Salamis.



11. Ethnographic Museum

The building next to the church houses the Ethnographic Museum of Cyprus which showcases a large collection of 19th and early 20th century Cypriot folk art exhibits. It includes wood-carved objects, tapestry, embroidery, pottery, Cypriot folk costumes and hand-woven textiles made on a loom.

12. Pancyprian Gymnasium

Just across the street from the Ethnographic Museum are the premises of the Pancyprian

Gymnasium, the oldest school still in operation in Cyprus, established in 1753 by Archbishop Kyprianos when Cyprus was still under Ottoman rule.



13. Apostle Barnabas Cathedral

On the west of the Archbishopric palace is the new Cathedral dedicated to the founder of the Church of Cyprus Apostle Barnabas. It was inaugurated in 2021.

14. House of Hadjigeorgakis Kornesios Ethnological Museum

Opposite the new Cathedral, on Patriarchou Grigoriou Street the House of Hadjigeorgakis Kornesios, an 18th century manor house that used to be the residence of the homonymous Dragoman, is worth a visit. Dragomans acted as liaisons between the Pasha and the local people during the Ottoman rule. Today the building houses the Cyprus Ethnological Museum.



15. Omeriye Mosque and Hamam

Continuing east on Patriarchou Grigoriou Street you come across Omeriye Mosque, which was originally a 14th century Augustinian monastery dedicated to St. Mary and was converted into a mosque in 1571 by Lala Mustafa Pasha, who believed that the church was built on the spot where the caliph Omer rested when visiting Lefkousia. Just across the street from the mosque is the Omeriye Hamam (Turkish bathhouse), built by Lala Mustafa Pasha, shortly after the Ottoman conquest of Cyprus. The baths were restored to their original glory, earning them the 'Europa Nostra' award in 2005, and are open to the public.



16. New City Hall and Archaeological site

Turning from Patriarchou Grigoriou Street into Peiraios Street you will face the New City Hall. During construction archeological findings were unearthed. The findings rank from the Byzantine to the Ottoman periods and are centered on what is believed to be a crusader palace. The findings were incorporated into the city hall architectural design and can be viewed from walkways above.

17. Nicosia Municipal Arts Centre

Opposite and on the street parallel to the archaeological site is the building of old

power station, a fine example of industrial architecture. It was restored and is now a contemporary art exhibition centre.



18. Faneromeni Church

From the Dimarcheias square which is adjacent to the city hall to the west follow Lefkonos Street to arrive to the Faneromeni School, an impressive building with a beautiful neoclassical façade and imposing Ionian columns. The school was built in 1859. In front of the school building in the middle of the homonymous square is the Faneromeni Church, that was built in 1872.



19. Ledra Street

Just a few meters to the west of Faneromeni Church is the Ledra Road block that cuts into the street. It has been dividing the street since the 1974 Turkish invasion. The road block operates now as a police guarded crossing into the occupied part of the city. In front of the crossing is the 'Resolution' sculpture, that commemorates the violation of human rights in Cyprus.



20. Pedestrian Zone and Shopping

We are now in the pedestrian zone of the old city. Ledra and Onasagorou are the main streets that brunch out into a labyrinth of small alleys. Especially the east area is a typical example of traditional Cypriot architecture and is fondly called Laiki Geitonia, which means Folk's Neighborhood. The pedestrian area is lively, full of shops, boutiques, restaurants and coffee shops and you can have not only a modern shopping experience you would expect from a European city, but also discover unique, locally made items.

21. Enjoying a meal in the old town

The area is full of restaurants, traditional eateries, bars and coffee shops. For lunch, you can choose or a local diner offering traditional dishes. You can have something on the go like souvlaki stin pitta (small pieces of meat grilled on a skewer served with salad in pitta bread) or enjoy a more gourmet dinner at a more upscale restaurant in the area. For a night out the old city town is vibrant and many venues have live music.

22. Leventis Municipal Museum

The Leventis Municipal Museum is located on Ippokratous street, off Onasagorou street. The museum's exhibition presents Lefkousia's 5000 years old history, displaying a wide range of archaeological artefacts, an important collection

of medieval pottery, ancient and modern maps, engravings, furniture, costumes, jewels, photographs, rare publications and paintings.

23. Pafos Gate

At the end of Ledra Street before reaching the Eleftherias Square, turn right on Rigainis Street and continue to the Tripolis Bastion where the Pafos Gate is located. A humble passageway that nevertheless served as one of the main gates in and out of the Venetian Walls.

Modern City

24. Cyprus Museum

Out of the Pafos gate on the roundabout take the second exit to reach the Cyprus Museum, which is the largest archaeological museum of Cyprus. The museum showcases the development of Cyprus' civilization, from the Neolithic Age up to the Early Byzantine period (7th century AD). The collections consist of pottery, jewelry, sculptures, coins, copper objects, and other artefacts, exhibited in chronological order throughout the museum's galleries.



25. Leventis Art Gallery

The Leventis Art Gallery houses more than 800 paintings and works of art, including masterworks of great painters, such as Canaletto, Fragonard, Corot, Boudin, Renoir, Monet, Signac, Chagall, Vryzakis, Volanakis, Moralis, Tsarouchis, Ghikas, Kissonerghis, Diamantis and Kanthos. The specially designed eco-friendly building, with its contemporary aesthetics, hosts also antique furniture and porcelain.



26. Tower 25 (also called The White Walls)

Overlooking Eleftherias square you see an international acclaimed high-rise building designed by the renowned architect Jean Nouvel and is one of Nicosia's landmarks, owing to its original design and location. Standing 62 meters tall is overlooking the whole capital.

27. Makariou and Stasikratos streets

The area around Makariou Avenue and Stasikratos Street has been transformed into a modern commercial district with a sustainable urban design offering safe access to all. The area is easily accessible from Eleftherias square. Here you can enjoy a blend of upscale stores offering top designer names and an assortment of trendy coffee shops and restaurants.

Legend

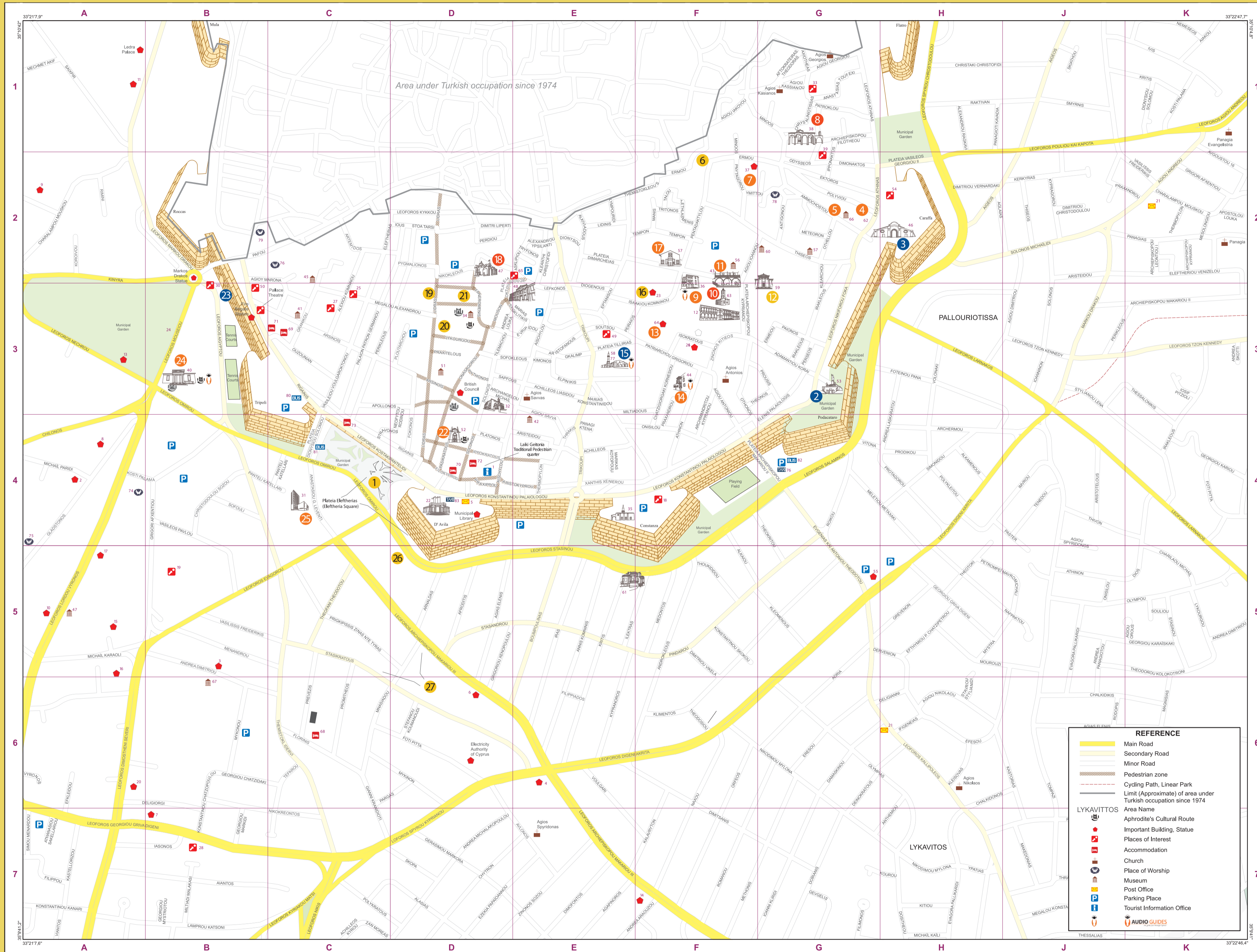
- Church
- Monument
- Museum
- Place of Interest

Main sites to visit

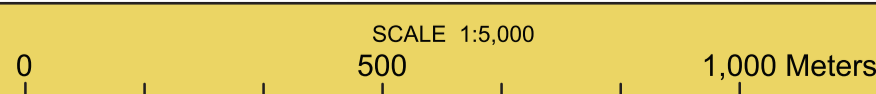
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AUDIO GUIDES
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Notes on pronunciation
ai, as in English a_j
ai, as in English t_j
oi, ei, y, as in English i_j
ou, as in English t_j



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LYKAVITIOS

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