

European  
Destinations of  
Excellence

# Accessible Tourism

Polis Chrysochous



EUROPEAN UNION





Polis which in Greek means “town” is one of the most beautiful and romantic areas in Cyprus. It is said that it is located close to where the goddess of love and beauty, Aphrodite met her beloved Adonis.

Polis Chrysochous area has been beautifully blessed by nature and combines the beauty of mountain, sea and plain. The sea is clean and visitors can enjoy the cool summer nights. It is a suitable shelter for people with special interests who enjoy activities when on holiday. Polis is a perfect refuge for mental and physical relaxation and recreation. Those wishing to escape the stress and routine of daily life will find an ideal place of calm and rest, in an environment of unparalleled beauty. Life in Polis still rolls along at a quiet pace without too much crowd or noise. Polis Chrysochous is the favorite spot of demanding visitors in search of a quality holiday in a friendly, sociable environment.

The only way to find out is to come and see for your self!



# About the EDEN Project

EDEN is the acronym for European Destinations of Excellence, a project promoting sustainable tourism development model-destinations across the European Union and is co-funded by the European Commission. The project is based on national competitions that take place every year and result in the selection of a tourist "destination of excellence" for each participating country.

EDEN destinations are extraordinary, comparatively "undiscovered", non-frequently visited places, diverse in their tourism potential and products, but nonetheless linked by their concern for sustainability. They are a showcase for local environment, culture and social fabric preservation and enhancement.

The theme for 2013, Accessible Tourism aims to reward those destinations which have developed a tourism offer based on an overall approach to accessibility for all tourists regardless of their physical limitations, disabilities or age.

Following a national competition launched by the Cyprus Tourism Organisation, the Municipality of Polis Chrysochous was selected as a Destination of Excellence in "Accessible Tourism".

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# Cyprus

The Republic of Cyprus is the third largest island in the Mediterranean, situated at the crossroads of the continents of Europe, Asia and Africa. It is an EU member state with a long history and rich culture. The island's strategic geographic position has since antiquity played an important part in its turbulent history. Inhabited since prehistoric times, it has been conquered and dominated by many different cultures and civilisations. Phoenicians, Assyrians, Persians, Egyptians, Romans, Franks, Venetians, Ottomans, British, have all left behind visible traces of their passage. On this island once walked Christ's apostles.

The Mycenaean Greeks introduced their civilisation 3,500 years ago and permanently installed the island's Hellenic roots. In antiquity, rich copper deposits put Cyprus on the world map. It is widely acclaimed that cuprum, the Latin word for copper is derived from the word Cyprus.

The island is an open air museum where one can visit prehistoric settlements, classical Greek temples, Roman theatres and villas, early Christian basilicas, Byzantine era churches and monasteries, crusader castles, Gothic cathedrals, Venetian fortifications, Moslem mosques and



British colonial architecture style buildings. Cyprus enjoys a typically Mediterranean climate, with long hot summers and mild sunshine-drenched winters with little rainfall. Troodos Mountain range occupies most of the southwestern part of the island. The coastal areas of Lemesos (Limassol), Pafos, Larnaka, Agia Napa and Paralimni have been developed into popular tourist holiday resorts. Lefkosia (Nicosia), the capital, is located inland. In the hinterland villages of Cyprus one may still witness old ways of life, customs and traditions. "Philoxenia", the Greek word for friendliness toward

strangers, characterizes the people of the region. Authenticity, warmth and genuine curiosity create a feeling of welcome towards the visitor.

Communication is facilitated by the fact that throughout the island the English language is widely spoken.





came to Cyprus. The Mycenaean's, or Achaeans, were the creators of the Mycenaean civilization in Greece, and they settled in Cyprus between 1400 B. C. and 1100 B.C. The harsh battle for Cyprus between the successors of Alexander the Great, Antigonos and Ptolemy led Marion to destruction. Ptolemy, who finally prevailed, laid waste the city whose King had taken the side of Antigonos, and transferred its inhabitants to Paphos. Later, another member of the Ptolemy dynasty, Philadelphus, founded a new city on the ruins of Marion, and gave it the name of his wife, Arsinoe. The city, under its new name, prospered during the Hellenistic and Roman Ages. In early Christian times it was also an episcopate. For some years after that, there was no mention of the city until the late Middle Ages when reference was made to Chrysochous and later, Polis Chrysochous.

## Polis Chrysochous

Polis is the administrative center of the area which includes 23 Communities. It is built on the northeast of Cyprus, near Akamas Peninsula with its renowned Baths of Aphrodite and is located north west of the Paphos region, only at a 30 minute distance from the town of Paphos, 45 minutes from Paphos airport and less than 2 hours away from the Larnaca airport. Polis Chrysochous is the ideal holiday location for those who appreciate authenticity and seek rest and tranquility in a pleasant and friendly environment, which blends mountains, sea and valleys with a wonderful healthy climate, a mild winter,

a particularly warm, clear sea and sandy beaches. It is considered as the location par excellence not only for nature lovers but also for those keen on active holidays, such as hiking, cycling, horse riding and golf. The Tsada Golf Course is just 25 minutes away from Polis.

The Polis area has a remarkable history dating back 3000 years. In ancient times, Polis was known as Marion, and was probably founded by Akamas or a certain Marieus. Marion was one of the city - Kingdoms founded by the Mycenaean's when they





Since Polis was built on the ruins of the ancient city of Marion-Arsinoe, many ancient monuments have been found in several places. A visit to the Archaeological Museum presents all the archaeological findings from Ancient Marion - Arsinoe. Those interested in the Byzantine history of the country can visit the Church of Agios Andronikos, near the traditional square of Polis, with its 16th Century murals. When Cyprus was under Ottoman occupation the Church was used as a Mosque from 1571, and was not returned to Christian use until 1974. Another noteworthy church is that of Agia Kyriaki - a traditional 18th Century single nave Church. Polis has many other superb examples of traditional architecture. As visitors walk around the town they cannot fail to be impressed by the old traditional buildings, both in the style of the Classical Revival and with beautiful wooden balconies. The center of Polis with its restored stone buildings is now a pedestrian area. The paved square with its cafes, bars and restaurants is now a gathering place full of life from morning until night throughout the year.

As far as accommodation is concerned, the area of Polis provides all kinds of hotel accommodation in all categories from luxurious hotels, holiday villages, apartments, and hotels offering facilities for thematic activities and local character, villas with private swimming pools to simple family accommodation units. Similarly, it offers all the facilities required for a pleasant vacation: a tourist office, banks, a hospital, pharmacies, shops, restaurants, taverns, bars, cafes and a picturesque pedestrian's area in the traditional heart of Polis, a local meeting point throughout the year from early hours till late at night. Furthermore, the region boasts an excellent archaeological museum, Byzantine churches and traditional houses.

Polis Chrysochous is becoming the new destination offering quality and special interest tourism in Cyprus.





# Accessible Tourism

For many disabled travelers it can be difficult to find a suitable accessible beach holiday. However, the Municipality of Polis Chrysochous has been developed on an overall approach to accessibility for all tourists regardless of their physical limitations, disabilities or age.

A number of facilities are available to the visitors with special access needs of Polis(e.g. ramps on the sidewalks) and can enjoy their visit to the local attractions round the Municipality. It is worth noting that recently the Municipality, in collaboration and with the support of the Cyprus Tourism Organization, has placed an innovative system for access to the sea for the disabled people. This system was installed by the University of Patras (Greece), on the Municipal beach and everyone can use it for free. This electric –electronic system for access to the sea is something unique for Cyprus.

Furthermore, there is a wheelchair accessible accommodation offering all the comforts and amenities to disabled visitors. It has been designed and adapted to meet the needs of the disabled travelers. The visitors should not be worried about their transfer to a place since there is a mini bus and a private taxi to do that. This hotel accommodation unit has been awarded several times for the quality of its services.



Last but not least, there are accessible seaside sidewalks to and from the organised Municipal beaches that link the beaches with the camping site. The Municipality has installed a special infrastructure for recharging the wheelchairs of the disabled visitors. Also, all the public sanitary facilities, including those located on the beach and in the parks include hygiene facilities for the disabled.

An important factor that makes the Municipality of Polis Chrysochous friendlier and more attractive destination is the fact that travelers with special access needs can enjoy their holiday and also participate in marine sports activities.



# Natural Environment

The whole Polis Chrysochous has a unique natural environment which combines the beauty of the mountain, the sea and the valley. The seas are clean and warm with extensive sandy beaches. The Municipal beach as well as the camping site beach are among the cleanest beaches in Cyprus nominated with the European award “Blue Flag”.

Also, the Municipality is close to the Akamas National Park, which is a unique area with a remarkable variety of fauna, flora, geological features, with beautiful landscapes and beaches. Visitors can enjoy the nature trails, the botanical garden and the Baths of Aphrodite. Several areas at the coastal front and inland have been classified as “NATURA 2000” sites while a large part of the seafront has been included in the “NATURA 2000 Polis-Gialia”. Moreover, it is expected to operate an Environmental Information Center for the turtles under the framework of the development planned in the Limnes area.

This diversity of the landscapes and flora species along with the relatively undisturbed state of the natural scenery make Polis area a real delight for hikers and naturalists.





## Activities & Leisure

Polis Chrysochous is the perfect place to relax and enjoy your stay!

Sports and nature lovers can enjoy cycling and horse riding along the local nature sceneries admiring the nature in all of its glory. The National Park in Akamas is one of the most attractive places in Cyprus where visitors can admire wildlife and nature. Also, the Botanical Garden in the Baths of Aphrodite has 120 flora species from Akama peninsula.

If you love water sports, you can indulge in deep sea diving as the Akamas coastal area is known for the exceptional depth of its seas. Another option is to hire speed boats, surfboards, sea kayaks, and to swim in the warm waters of the bay. Golfers can play at Tsada Golf Course, only 25 minutes away from Polis.

Moreover, the place is suitable for photography, especially during Spring and Autumn when the scenery is full of beautiful colors. The romantic ones can enjoy the spectacular sunset...





# Tradition, Heritage and Cultural Events

There are many magnificent cultural sites in the Municipality of Polis Chrysochous. Museum enthusiasts can visit the local Museum “Marion-Arsinoe” that exhibits antiquities and monuments found in the ancient cities of Marion-Arsinoe while three (3) more museums are very close to Polis, the Byzantine Museum of Episkopi Arsinoe in Peristerona, the Natural History Museum in Pomos and the Museum of Rural Life at Steni.

Those interested in the Byzantine history can visit the Church of Agios Andronikos with its 16th Century murals. When Cyprus was under Ottoman occupation the Church was used as a Mosque from 1571, and was not returned to Christian use until 1974. Another significant church is that of Agia Kyriaki - a traditional 18th Century single nave Church.

Even for those that just want to walk around the town, there are many other gorgeous examples of traditional architecture... such as the old traditional buildings in the style of the Classical Revival with the beautiful wooden balconies.

For theater enthusiasts the Municipal Cultural Centre, fully equipped, operates as a theater and as a hall for the organization of entertainment, educational and informational events.

Throughout the year and especially during summertime, there are several cultural and other events, such as “Summer Nights”, the “Marion-Arsinoe Cultural Days” which include among others, theatrical performances, concerts and sporting events.

One of the most significant events organized by the Municipality is the World Tourism Day, known as “Traditional Products and Folklore Day”. This event has been organized since 2002 and the aim is to present all the traditional local products to the visitors. Moreover, there are historic and archaeological photography exhibitions, traditional crafts demonstration, traditional food preparation which are offered for free to the visitors. All the visitors can enjoy the live concert with traditional Cypriot music and dancing and why not to participate?

Other interesting events organized in the area are the Sculpture Symposium, the Symposium of Painting, the “Chrysokarpi City” event as well as the organization of conferences on the cultural background of Polis Chrysochous.



# Capturing experiences

The Municipality of Polis Chrysochous is the ideal destination for accessible tourism in Cyprus, as it has all the infrastructure and facilities that offer to the visitors, regardless of their age and physical condition, a chance to have an unforgettable and unique holiday.

Some time ago, a person with disabilities who visited Polis Chrysochous with his family, mentioned that he had the opportunity to enjoy the picturesque landscape, the excellent climate and had a wonderful time. However, most importantly he enjoyed the beautiful sea because of the unique electronic system for access to the sea for the disabled guests as well as the unique coastal landscape due to the accessible coastal path from the camping area to the Municipal Beach.





Last summer, a group of 4 friends, with special access needs, decided to visit Polis and spend their holidays there, after being informed about the beauty of the area and the facilities provided to people with disabilities. They were impressed by the picturesque landscape and its traditional character. They visited remarkable destinations such as the museum, the picturesque harbor of Latchi, fish and traditional taverns, churches, the camping area, the central square with traditional cafes and souvenirs shops. The most memorable experience, though, as they said was the opportunity they had to enjoy the crystal clear waters of the Municipal beach due to the innovative system of access to the sea for the disabled. A characteristic phrase was from a girl of the group, when she entered the water: "Today is the happiest day of my life".





## Top List

1. Attend the cultural events (especially on the World Tourism Day) and become one with the crowd! Enjoy the traditional music, dance with the locals and taste the delicious Cypriot food!
2. Visit the local Museum “Marion-Arsinoe” and learn about the rich history of this place. Polis was one of the ten Kingdoms in Cyprus! Continue your educational walk by visiting the Byzantine Museum of Episkopi Arsinoe, the Natural History Museum and the Museum of Rural Life.
3. Visit the picturesque harbor of Latchi, enjoy the unique beauty of the scenery, taste the excellent seafood meze and then continue your day with a mini cruise from the port of Latchi to the amazing Akamas Peninsula.
4. Swim in the clear blue waters and snorkel in the amazing Blue Lagoon. Especially for people with special access needs, there is an innovative system for sea access at the municipal beach.
5. Chill out having your frappe or your Cypriot coffee at the graphical traditional square of the Municipality of Polis Chrysochous.



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