

Local Laws And Customs

Cyprus has a strictly enforced zero tolerance policy towards drugs. If you are caught in possession of any type of narcotic you will receive either a prison sentence or a hefty fine.

Do not make fraudulent claims on your insurance policy, the police investigate such claims and if proven you will receive either a prison sentence or a heavy fine.

Avoid taking photographs near potentially sensitive areas such as military establishments in order to avoid any misunderstandings.

Safety And Security - Local Travel

It is possible to travel to the north of Cyprus from the south by crossing at several checkpoints, including the Ledra Palace and Ledra Street checkpoints in central Nicosia.

Cyprus immigration authorities have confirmed that EU passport holders with a "TRNC" stamp in their passport will not experience difficulties when entering the Republic of Cyprus. You may take a hired car through the checkpoints, except at Ledra Palace and Ledra Street, which are for pedestrians only. Many cars hired in the south are not insured for use in the north. Check this with the insurance company - you will not be allowed through a crossing without the correct insurance documents. There are controls on the quantities and types of goods that can be purchased in the north and brought into the south, including from the bicommunal village of Pyla located in the buffer zone. Goods, including cigarettes, may be confiscated at the checkpoint and heavy fines imposed. The Republic of Cyprus currently imposes a limit of 40 cigarettes per person on crossing the 'Green Line' from northern Cyprus.

Anyone in possession of documents relating to the purchase of property in northern Cyprus when crossing the Green Line could face criminal proceedings under the 2006 criminal code amendment. Please see the property section below for more information.

British and other foreign nationals who have entered Cyprus through the north are considered by the Government of the Republic of Cyprus to have entered Cyprus through an illegal port of entry. The Government of the Republic of Cyprus reserves the right to fine EU (including British) citizens for illegal entry if they cross into the south. In practice, their current policy is not to do so.



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Country Description

Since 1974, Cyprus, a Mediterranean island nation, has been divided de facto into a government-controlled area comprising the southern two-thirds of the island, and a northern third (the self-declared "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus"), administered by Turkish Cypriots. The United States does not recognize the "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus," nor does any country other than Turkey. Facilities for tourism in Cyprus are highly developed. Cyprus joined the European Union in 2004.

Threats To Safety And Security

Do not, under any circumstances, attempt to enter the U.N. buffer zone at any place other than a designated crossing point. This area is mined and militarized. Never photograph military installations or anything that could be perceived as being of security interest (especially in the areas not under the effective control of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus). Pay particular attention to areas marked with "no photography" signs. Police on both sides strictly enforce these restrictions.

Petrol stations in Cyprus are modern and common in the towns. Most have attendants to fill your tank for you, although you will find a few that are self service.

Many major stations also have shops where you can buy auto accessories and food.

Mountain driving uses more fuel than you might think. So if you are planning such a trip, be sure you have enough fuel to get you there and back. If you make a wrong turn, although the distance may not look far on the map, it can take you some time to find your way back to civilization.

Most petrol stations are closed on Tuesday and Sunday. This is not usually a problem though, as many have machines that accept bank notes, major credit and debit cards and therefore operate 24 hours. The cash machines have instructions in Greek and English.

Hire cars often operate the system of handing the vehicle over to you with an empty fuel tank, so you return it empty. This can lead to problems at the end of your rental if you are not careful. This practice is slowly changing to the system of receiving and returning the vehicle with a full tank.

Petrol is unleaded and 95 and 98 octane fuel is available. So check what octane your vehicle requires. There are other more expensive fuels, but you are unlikely to need them. Diesel fuel sold for motor vehicles is the cleaner Euro Diesel.

The Highway.

The Highway is a dual carriageway road similar to Motorway standard and is toll free. It links all of the main towns of the island Paphos, Limassol, Nicosia, Larnaca and beyond.

The full extent of the highway is often not shown on many of the older maps. I would advise you to obtain a free up to date map from the local CTO office.

Main Roads.

The main roads of Cyprus are usually of a good standard and many have been recently resurfaced. Most of the work is now complete. There are plans to continue the upgrading of the road system over the next few years.

Minor Roads.

It is not unusual for a made up road to come to a sudden end and for it to continue as a dirt track. It may sometimes appear that you are in someone's garden or yard. While of course you might be, don't be too alarmed. If you have made a mistake and gone off the road into someone's property, they will very rarely take offence. It is more likely that the road will return to being a "proper" road after a while.

Roadworks.

The signing can be haphazard and can direct you into danger. The workmen themselves sometimes lack road sense and put themselves in danger. In most countries in the EU the signing and operation of road works are governed by strict rules. Failure to comply with, for example, the correct number and positioning of cones, advanced warning signs etc. by the site operator can lead to closing the site down and to fines.

Cyprus does not yet generally employ European standards at roadworks although it is improving.

The workers on site have only recently started to wear reflective jackets and it is still not universal.

Treat roadworks with caution - Slow down or stop if necessary until you are sure that your planned route through the road works is safe. Do not just follow other drivers through until you are entirely happy.