

Larnaka & the East



The Larnaka area is often embedded in the tourist's memory as a blurry landscape seen from the inside of a bus. And perhaps this is why, largely ignored by the package-tourist industry, Larnaka town has preserved a quiet yet scruffy charm and some lovely old crafts. Lazarus, who according to the Bible was raised from the dead by Jesus, came to live in Larnaka and brought Christianity to Cyprus. Prophet Mohammed's aunt fell off her mule here and broke her neck; an important Islamic shrine in her honour was built beside a frosty-looking salt lake close to Larnaka airport. For timeless celebrity value, you have to admit that this is pretty good going.

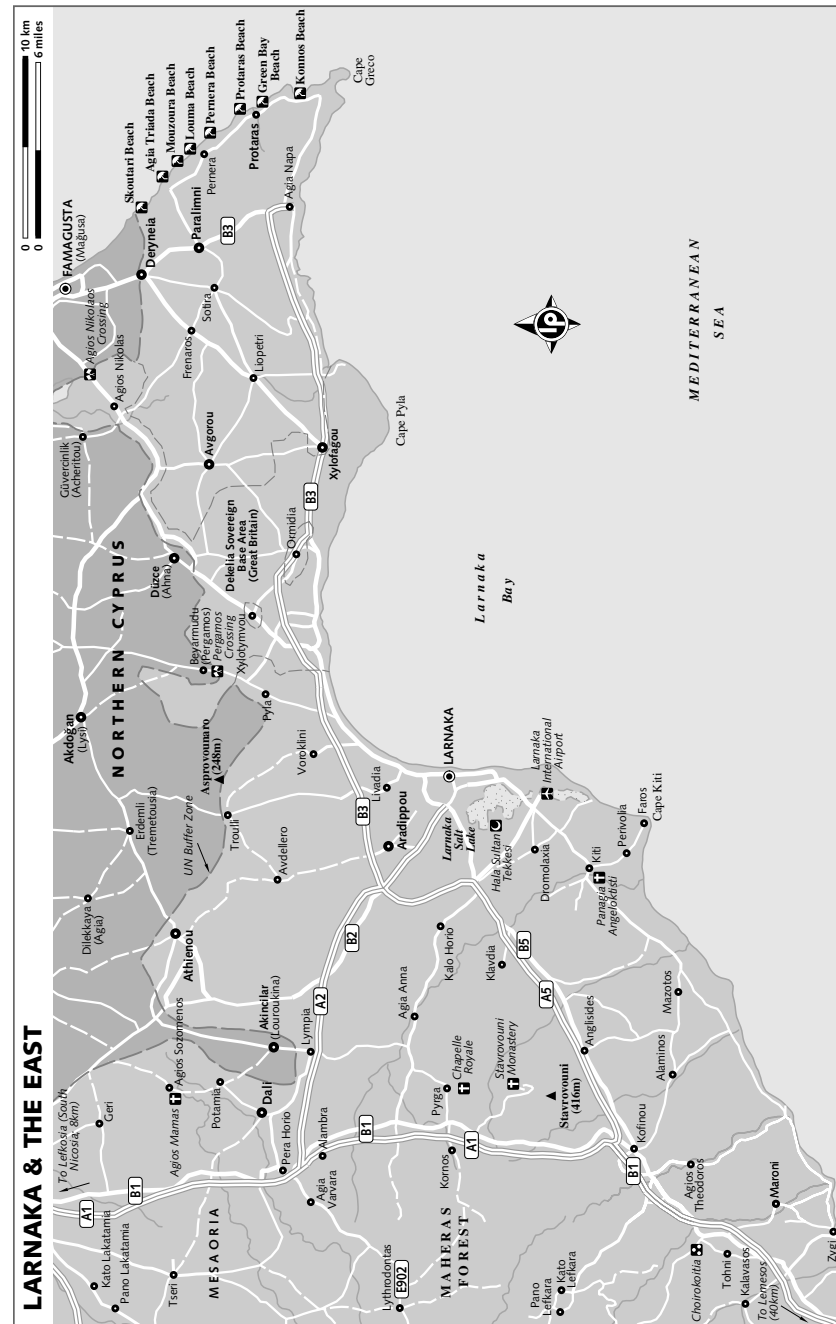
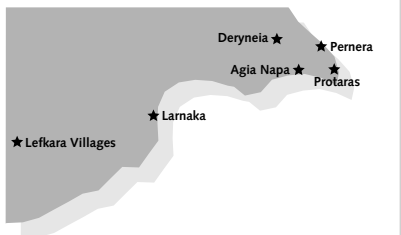
Many architects could learn about unusual buildings from the round stone houses in the Neolithic settlement of Choirokoiitia where Cyprus's earliest inhabitants lived. And perhaps the tourists at Agia Napa could have taught the ancient Romans how to party harder than anyone else, if that were chronologically possible. Outside the perennial party-town, the gorgeous sandy coves of Cape Greco are a peaceful space where it's only you and the sea.

Go inland to the Lefkara villages, north of Choirokoiitia, and you'll be swarmed by old ladies selling Cyprus' best-marketed craft, lace, worked and perfected by the village's female (sometimes arthritic) hands. Small, timeless villages in the Kokkinohoria area in the east of the region resemble the Australian outback rather than the eastern Mediterranean.

And, thanks to now-relaxed border policies, crossing to the North in this area is as easy as it gets. But the so-called 'ghost town' of Varosia (Maraş), abandoned by the fleeing Greek Cypriots in 1974 and never resettled, is a reminder of the island's physical division. In contrast is Pyla, a village in the east where Greek and Turkish Cypriots still live together in harmony – a reminder of how things used to be.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Enjoy the relaxed lifestyle of **Larnaka** (p142) and walk around its picturesque streets
- Visit Deryneia and get a glimpse of the ghost town of **Varosia** (Maraş; p167), abandoned since 1974
- Swim at some wonderful beaches around Agia Napa, like **Nissi Beach** (p163), **Konnos Beach** (p170) and the beaches of **Cape Greco** (p166)
- Bargain hard for a piece of handmade **Lefkara lace** (p152)
- Party nonstop at **Agia Napa** (p161), the Mediterranean's second-most popular spot for nightlife after Ibiza, then get sporty on the water at **Protaras & Pernera** (p169)



LARNAKA ΛΑΡΝΑΚΑ

pop 46,700

Larnaka is a rugged, charming town, with a melancholy and seductive character. The main promenade, lined with tall palm trees, is full of cafés and bars; the old Turkish quarter is a maze of quiet streets, small whitewashed houses and ceramics studios; the streets around the old market area have shops with the oldest crafts in Cyprus. Small niches hide ancient men making gigantic church candles. Peep into the dark, shady antique shops, see the ironmongers and pitta-bread makers at work. Nearby, on the city centre's main street, young Larnaka girls get their outfits from chain stores like Zara or Top Shop. So, as the cliché goes, the old and the new meet in Larnaka. But it might be fairer to say that the new is trickling into this sleepy town, and for the most part, it fits in around the old.

Larnaka is also home to Cyprus' largest community of foreigners. Many Lebanese Christians took refuge here during that country's troubles in the 1980s and never went home. In the past, foreign governments tended to use Larnaka as a base for their consulates in preference to the inland and less easily accessible capital of Lefkosia (North Nicosia). Before 1974, the city was also home to a large Turkish Cypriot population that, following the division of the island by their mainland compatriots, was obliged to flee to the North.

Many visitors to this sunny island fly straight to Larnaka. This is the case now more than ever, with visitors to the North preferring to fly here and cross into the North by taxi.

HISTORY

Larnaka was established as a Middle Bronze Age colony sometime between the 14th and the 11th centuries BC. Then known as Kition, the settlement prospered as a port, thanks to the export of copper and other metals mined in the Troödos Massif and Tamassos to the west. The city flourished well into Hellenistic times despite taking the Persian side in the Greek-Persian wars. Kimon of Athens arrived in 450 BC to subdue Kition, but died prematurely outside the city walls. His statue now graces the

Larnaka promenade. Zenon of Kition, the Stoic philosopher and darling of the Athens intelligentsia, was born in Larnaka in 335 BC. His radical philosophies seem not to have pleased Zenon himself at the end of his life; he died by his own hand at the age of 98.

Lazarus brought Christianity to Larnaka and became one of the first bishops of Cyprus. When he died, he was buried in the vault of the church that now carries his name. Little more is known about Kition until the 14th century, when it took the name of Salina because of the nearby salt lake. Larnaka in Greek means 'funerary chest'; it's likely that the city received this name as a result of ancient tombs discovered during its development in the 16th century.

Under the Ottomans' rule, the city was an important port and home to a number of dignitaries. Many of them were emissaries from foreign countries, and a disquieting number were engaged in amateur archaeology. Much of Larnaka's archaeological wealth was secretly sequestered and spirited away during this time.

During the 88 years of British rule, Larnaka gradually fell behind Famagusta (Mağusa) and Lemesos in importance. It only really received a demographic jolt following the influx of refugees from the North in 1974 and the development of its hitherto backwater airfield as the country's prime international airport.

ORIENTATION

Larnaka is a reasonably compact city, and most major sites and facilities are within walking distance of transport terminals and central hotels.

The city centre is encircled by Leoforos Grigoriou Afxentiou to the north, Leoforos Artemidou to the west, Leoforos Faneromenis to the south and Leoforos Athinon to the east. Leoforos Athinon is a landscaped, paved street lined with palm trees, and is usually called the Finikoudes (Palm Trees) Promenade. Within the rectangle formed by these major avenues is the main business and central tourist district. Immediately south of this area and adjoining the seafront is the former Turkish district, the beginning of which is marked by the Grand Mosque and Larnaka Fort.

LARNAKA

0 1 km
0 0.5 miles

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Alto Internet Cafe.....	3	C3
Artemis Laundrette.....	4	C3
CTO.....	5	C3
Hellenic Bank.....	6	C3
Larnaka Hospital.....	7	B2
National Bank of Greece.....	8	C3
Police Station.....	9	C2
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TOURIST CENTRE (5km), Golden Bay (7km), Kapetanissa Fish Restaurant (7km), Dekelia (17km), Agia Napa (44km), Paralimni (47km), Protaras (54km)

TO LEFKARA (32km): Lefkosia (South Nicosia: 44km), Lemesos (66km)

TO KAMARIS RESTAURANT (2km), K-COMPLEX (2km)

TO LARNAKA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (7km)

TO TOURIST CENTRE (5km), Golden Bay (7km), Kapetanissa Fish Restaurant (7km), Dekelia (17km), Agia Napa (44km), Paralimni (47km), Protaras (54km)

Larnaka Bay

Makenzy (McKenzie) Beach 2.5km

LARNAKA & THE EAST

INFORMATION

Bookshops

Academic & General (☎ /fax 2462 8401; Ermou 41)

The best place to go for English-language books, stationery and maps.

Tofarides Bookshop (☎ 2465 4912; Zinonos Kitieos

45-47) Located in the city centre, this is another excellent choice with a wide selection of English-language publications.

Emergency

Police station (☎ 2480 4040; cnr Leoforos Grigoriou

Afxentiou & Leoforos Arhiepiskopou Makariou III) Easy to find near the yacht marina.

Internet Access

There are a fair number of Internet cafés in town. Try the following:

Alto Internet Café (☎ 2465 9625; Leoforos Grigoriou

Afxentiou; per hr CY£4; ☎ 10am-2am) Close to the centre.

Laundry

A full-service wash costs about CY£4, while a self-service wash and dry will cost around CY£2. You can get your clothes washed and pressed at the following:

Artemis Laundrette (Armenikis Ekkliisias 12)

White House Self-Service Laundry (Shop 5, Helen Ct, Stasinou)

Medical Services

Larnaka Hospital (☎ 2463 0322; Leoforos Grigoriou Afxentiou) Larnaka's main public hospital is northwest of the city centre.

Night pharmacy assistance (☎ 1414)

Money

There is an ATM and exchange facility at Larnaka airport that is open for all flights; however, it's in the departures area. Within the precinct of the city centre, there are plenty of banks for changing money, and some of them are open afternoons. There are ATMs at the following:

Hellenic Bank (☎ 2450 3000; Zinonos Kitieos)

Situated 200m north of the National Bank of Greece, on the opposite side of the road.

National Bank of Greece (☎ 2465 4743; Zinonos Kitieos)

Post

Post office (Plateia Vasileos Pavlou) Close to the CTO office; poste restante mail is held here. There is also a smaller branch close to the church of Agios Lazaros.

Toilets

You'll find signposted public toilets 100m east of the CTO office at the northern end of the city centre.

Tourist Information

Cyprus Tourism Organisation (CTO) airport (☎ 2464 3576; ☎ 8.15am-11pm); Larnaka (☎ 2465 4322; Plateia Vasileos Pavlou; ☎ 8.15am-2.30pm & 3-6.15pm Mon, Tue, Thu & Fri, 8.15am-1.30pm Sat) The city-centre office is two short blocks west of the Sun Hall hotel.

Travel Agencies

Salamis Tours (☎ 2465 6464; fax 2465 0698; Leoforos Grigoriou Afxentiou 7) The Larnaka branch of this travel agency is in central Larnaka. As well as buying cruise tickets to Israel or Egypt, you can take advantage of a wide range of other travel-related services.

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

Church of Agios Lazaros & Byzantine Museum

This wonderful church (☎ 2465 2498; Agiou Lazarou; admission free; ☎ 8am-12.30pm & 3.30-6.30pm Apr-Aug, 8am-12.30pm & 2.30-5.30pm Sep-Mar), at the southern end of Larnaka, owes its existence to a rather interesting story. Tradition has it that Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. Immediately after this, Lazarus was expelled from Jerusalem by the Jews and came to Larnaka, where he was ordained as a bishop by St Barnabas. He reportedly remained a bishop for 30 years. After he died (for the second time) he was buried where the current church stands. His relics did not stay entombed for very long after their discovery in 890, as they were transported to Constantinople and subsequently removed to Marseille in 1204.

The church structure itself is a mix of Latin and Orthodox influences, the most obvious example being the prominent bell tower that is visible from some distance. The church, ransomed from the Ottomans in 1589, was used by Catholic and Orthodox worshippers for some 200 years. This is affirmed by inscriptions in Latin, French and Greek that can be seen in the portico.

The **Tomb of Lazarus**, without Lazarus in it, is under the altar, accessible by stairs to the right. In fact, it comprises just one of several sarcophagi in the catacomb, suggesting that the area was used as a general burial place.

The **Byzantine Museum** (☎ 2465 2498; admission CY£0.50; ☎ 8.30am-1pm & 3-5.30pm Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri & Sun, 8.30am-1pm Wed & Sat) is in the church's

courtyard. From 1964 to '74, the museum's original ecclesiastical collection, containing priceless relics and artefacts, was moved and stored in Larnaka Fort, which had come under Turkish administration following the insurgences of the early '60s. In 1974 the administration of the fort reverted once more to the Greeks, but the priceless treasures had apparently disappeared. All that is left of the original collection is the catalogue, and the missing items are still being sought. The present collection was assembled in their place, and it's still a fairly extensive and impressive display of Byzantine ecclesiastical artefacts, icons and church utensils. Many exhibits have been donated by Russian clerics.

Pierides Archaeological Foundation Museum

Dimitris Pierides started his conservation efforts in 1839, as an attempt to salvage artefacts from notorious tomb raiders. Most famous among them was Luigi Palma di Cesnola, Larnaka's first US consul, who spirited away a large number of artefacts, which are now in New York's Metropolitan Museum. The collection was then expanded by Pierides' descendants, resulting in this well-coordinated, bright museum (☎ 2465 2495; Zinonos Kitieos 4; admission CY£1; ☎ 9am-1pm Mon-Sat, 11am-1pm Sun), which is housed in Pierides' old residence, an elegant mansion.

The Pierides Archaeological Foundation Museum, which competes vigorously with the state-operated Archaeological Museum (right) and features artefacts and finds from all over Cyprus, which have detailed explanations in English. There are six rooms in the museum, each arranged chronologically, and the exhibition includes a comprehensive history of Cyprus. The first room, on your left as you enter the building, houses exhibits from the Neolithic period. Here you'll find the famous figure of the **howling man** sitting on a stool, dating back to 5500-5000 BC. The purpose of this statue, found in Souskiou in western Cyprus, is rather ambiguous, although it is evident that water could be poured into his head, which would then come out of his schlong. There is no evidence to suggest whether it was used for religious or secular function.

Room 4 is devoted to a fascinating collection of **Roman glassware**; room 5 is given

over to a display of **Cypriot folk art**, with weaving and embroidery, woodcarvings and traditional costumes. The Mycenaean and Achaean periods, the Iron Age, the Roman occupation, through to the later Byzantine, Crusader, Lusignan, Venetian and Ottoman periods are also very well documented.

Archaeological Museum

Larnaka's second significant museum (☎ 2463 0169; Kalogreon; admission CY£0.75; ☎ 9am-2.30pm Mon-Fri, 3-5pm Thu Sep-Jun), this purpose-built place has thorough explanations of the items on display. There is a wide collection of pottery from Ancient Kition and a reconstructed **Neolithic tomb** from Choirokoitia, as well terracotta votive figures, Roman glassware and even folk art. Spread out over five rooms, the collection is worth a browse, although not so much if you have already visited the Cyprus Museum (p63) in Lefkosia.

Larnaka Fort & Medieval Museum

The prominent fort (☎ 2463 0576; Leoforos Athinon; admission CY£0.75; ☎ fort & museum 9am-7pm Mon-Fri) stands at the water's edge separating Finikoudes, Larnaka's promenade, and the old Turkish quarter. Originally a Lusignan-era castle, the present structure is a result of remodelling by the Ottomans from around 1605. It has nice views of the coastal part of town. There is little to see in the castle itself, but the upper floor contains a small Medieval Museum with various displays from Hala Sultan Tekkesi (p150) and Ancient Kition. The open area inside the fort is occasionally used for concerts and other cultural events.

Ancient Kition

Much of present-day Larnaka is built over the original site of **Ancient Kition** (admission CY£0.75; ☎ 9am-2.30pm Mon-Fri), so no further digging can be done without damaging the city (some work was done by Swedish excavators in the 1920s when the new city didn't extend as far as it does now). It is reported that the British carted off the 'rubble' from the site to fill malarial marshes, and thus regressed this already rather sparse site. What is left of the ancient city is a small site known as **Area II**, a rather nondescript and essentially uninteresting place about 1km northwest of the centre of Larnaka. A raised walkway takes you over what is left

of the remains of Ancient Kition, where excavations sporadically continue. Labels or explanations are sparse, so unless you are an archaeologist, the layout may not mean much to you.

Ancient Kition is around 1km northwest of the Archaeological Museum.

Natural History Museum

A small but interesting collection of exhibits (☎ 2465 2569; Leoforos Grigoriou Afxentiou; admission CY€0.20; ☎ 10am-1pm & 4-6pm Tue-Sun Jun-Sep, 10am-1pm & 3-5pm Tue-Sun Oct-May) is dedicated primarily to the fauna, flora, geology, insect and marine life of Cyprus. Displayed in a series of eight rooms, the museum is very popular with school groups and is an excellent introduction to the natural history of the island.

This is a wonderful place for children, as there is a little playground, and caged pelicans, flamingos, peacocks and macaws outside the museum, surrounded by a lush garden (part of the Municipal Gardens).

The museum is a little out of the way, off Leoforos Grigoriou Afxentiou at the western edge of town.

Grand Mosque

Standing alone on the periphery of both the former Greek and Turkish quarters of Larnaka is the **Grand Mosque** (Büyük Camii; Agias Phanomenis). Somewhat underused since 1974, the mosque is nonetheless the spiritual home to Larnaka's Muslim community. Built in the 16th century and once called the Latin Holy Cross Church, the current building is the result of 19th-century restoration. The mosque reluctantly accepts visitors, though not during prayer times, and you may also be able to climb the **minaret** for a small fee. The views are quite impressive.

LARNAKA FOR CHILDREN

A little bit overpriced, the **Tourist Submarine** (☎ 2462 2138; www.sadkosub.com; Larnaka Marina; adult/child CY€35/25; ☎ Tue, Thu, Sat May-Jun, plus Wed & Fri Aug) is great fun nevertheless. You and your kids go to the bottom of the Mediterranean to see the shipwreck of the Zenobia – one of the world's top-ten wreck dives. The trips are around one hour long, and start at 9am on the hour every hour, until 12.30pm; the last trip starts at 1.30pm.

TOURS

The **CTO** (☎ 2465 4322; Plateia Vasileos Pavlou; ☎ 8.15am-2.30pm & 3-6.15pm Mon, Tue, Thu & Fri, 8.15am-1.30pm Sat) runs a couple of free, chaperoned walks from its office. This is a painless way to get an introduction to the layout and attractions of Larnaka. 'Larnaka – Its Past & Present' starts at 10am every Wednesday from the CTO; call the CTO office for more information. 'Skala – Its Craftsmen' leaves at 10am every Friday from **Larnaka Fort** (☎ 2463 0576; Leoforos Athinon); call the fort for further information.

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Most major coastal towns hold an annual **Kataklysmos Festival** in June each year, usually about 50 days after Orthodox Easter, but the festival holds special significance for Larnaka. Kataklysmos means 'deluge' in Greek, and is ostensibly a feast to celebrate the salvation of Noah from the Flood, but is often an excuse for people to throw water at one another and generally have fun. In Larnaka, Finikoudes is given over to a nightly bazaar of stall holders selling snacks and trinkets, interspersed with various concerts. During the day there are water-based activities such as windsurfing and kayak races, as well as swimming competitions.

SLEEPING

Larnaka offers a reasonable range of accommodation, spread out quite evenly across its downtown area, as well as in the hotel stretch northeast of the town centre. A popular sleeping option is a self-contained apartment, which is excellent value if there are at least two of you.

Budget & Midrange

There is only one budget option in Larnaka, as the accommodation scene is pitched firmly at the midrange (family) apartment group and the top-end resort-hotel scene. The best midrange options are self-contained hotel apartments where you can cook for yourself, but usually a minimum stay of two days is required. Advance bookings are always a good idea.

Petrou Apartments (☎ 2465 0600; www.petrou.com.cy; Armenikis Ekklesias 1; 2-person apt CY€30; 📍 ☎) A bright and modern building in the centre, close to the beach and with handy car parking at the rear. The apartments are simple

and pleasantly furnished, with phones and TVs; the bathrooms are squeaky clean; and the kitchens have two hotplates for cooking, plus lots of pots and pans. A vending machine by the lift spouts chocolate bars for late-night sugar-fixes.

Les Palmiers Sunotel (☎ 2462 7200; fax 2462 7204; Leoforos Athinon 12; s/d CY€21.50/38) The small, shabby reception is like the rooms, decorated in browns and creams, and the price is a little over-ambitious. A blinding neon light buzzes above your head in the bathroom and the paint on the ceiling hangs in strips. The lamps are bare bulbs, but there is a safe, TV and phone. A good option if nothing else is available. Discounts of 20% may be available in the low season.

Onisillos Hotel (☎ 2465 1100; www.onisillos.com.cy; Onisillou 17; s/d CY€25/34; 📍 ☎) A retro palace, with fake-leather sofas and old Pac-Man game tables, about 500m west of the fort in a very quiet part of town. The rooms are clean and neat, but equally old-fashioned. There is a roof terrace, gym and games room. The rooms come with bathroom, air-con and phone.

HI Hostel (☎ 2462 1188; Nikolaou Rossou 27; dm/family r CY€3/5) The only budget place in Larnaka is hidden in an old hammam – a beautiful building, if a little decrepit. The mixed or single-sex dorms are luminous and pleasant, and there is a little shared kitchen, plus communal showers and toilets. HI cards are not required and there is no discount for holders. East of Agios Lazaros church.

Two other apartment complexes worth checking out are the following:

Augusta Tourist Apartments (☎ 2465 1802; Leoforos Athinon 102; 2-person apt CY€22) Homy apartments here have two balconies with sea views, double bedrooms and neat, small kitchens. Air-con is an extra CY€2.50. It's located right on Leoforos Athinon (Finikoudes).

Livadhiotis Hotel Apartments (☎ 2462 6222; livadhiotishotapts@cytanet.com.cy; Nikolaou Rossou 50; 2-person studio CY€22) Similar to the Augusta but operating more like a hotel, this place has self-contained studios with kitchenette, phone and TV.

Top End

Golden Bay (☎ 2464 5444; www.lordos.com.cy/the/goldenbay; d CY€140; 📍 ☎) Larnaka's only five-star giant, on the long and hotel-laden road to Dekelia. The Golden Bay has all the amazing things you would expect from a top-end establishment: loungy halls, elegant corridors,

spacious, bright and comfortable rooms. There's a large pool, a gym, a beauty salon and a stylish restaurant.

Sun Hall (☎ 2465 3341; fax 2465 2717; Leoforos Athinon 6; r CY€62.50-82) A less flashy place, in central Larnaka, which has good rooms with balconies that look over the main promenade. It has earned some high praise from travellers. This four-star hotel offers a 25% off-season discount.

EATING

Larnaka has a diverse and interesting food scene, starting from basic kebab houses to plush fish restaurants. Most places recommended here are in the city itself, with one or two exceptions. They usually open in the evenings only (after 7pm), unless indicated otherwise.

Varoshiotis Seafood Restaurant (☎ 2465 5865; Piyale Pasha 7; fish dishes CY€7-10; ☎ noon-midnight) Presentation and taste go hand in hand at this chic place on the city's waterfront. Prince's prawns are laid out like orange slices on a bed of wild and white rice, a swirl of soy sauce surrounds a radish and, with a glass of chilled white wine, your palate is headed for a great night out. And that's just the starter.

1900 Art Cafe (☎ 2462 3730; Stasinou 6; mains CY€4; ☎ 9am-2pm & 6pm-midnight Wed-Mon) A Montmartre restaurant-café in the middle of Larnaka: strange but true. A wonderfully atmospheric place on two floors, with art-exhibition posters and paintings covering the walls. If you like reading on the toilet, this place is definitely for you, as there are books on all sorts of subjects. The Art Café opens for breakfast, morning coffee and early lunch, and the doors of the old house are opened again for dinner, when vegetarian and meat dishes are served.

Militizis Restaurant (☎ 2465 5867; Piyale Pasha 42; mains CY€4-6; ☎ lunch & dinner) This place is really popular with both tourists and locals for Cypriot food. Traditional oven-cooked dishes are good here, such as the delicious *kleftiko* (oven-baked lamb) and *tava* (lamb and beef casserole).

Black Turtle (☎ 2465 0661; Mehmet Ali 11; meze CY€6.50-8; ☎ dinner) A great quirky little meze taverna featuring live music on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays, when only *mezedes* are served and guests go wild and dance a lot. Don't be put off by the turtle shells on the wall; the owner is really a turtle-lover.

Kameres Restaurant (☎ 2436 4400; Hrysoupolios 24a; mains CY€5-6; ☎ dinner) Few tourists come this far out of town but it's worth the effort, as the quality of the food is excellent. The restaurant faces the impressive Kameres aqueduct, which is romantically floodlit at night. Try *karaolia* (land snails) or *kouloumbra* (kohlrabi cabbage) for a taste of something special. There is live music on Friday and Saturday. Take a cab to get there, and direct your driver towards the nearby K-Cineplex cinema complex (opposite).

Kapetanissa Fish Restaurant (☎ 2464 4254; mains CY€3-6; ☎ dinner) Great, simple food, freshly cooked. This modest place, famous for its tasty fish and unique one-person fish meze, is on the Dekelia road, close to the Palm Beach Hotel.

Tudor Inn (☎ 2462 5608; Lala Mustapha Pasha 28a; steaks CY€11; ☎ lunch & dinner) Missing England? An English country pub, with climbing ivy and all. A Guinness sign beckons knowingly. You can get a steak here for a mighty CY€11, or a vegetarian plate for CY€5.50. The only drawback is that it's closed during August.

Prasino Amaxoudi (☎ 2462 2939; Agias Faneromenis; mains CY€2-3; ☎ noon-10pm) If you like a no-frills good kebab, this is the top place in Larnaka. It looks like kiosk, with a bottle of lemon juice on a plastic tablecloth, and a fridge with drinks where you help yourself. The supertasty grilled haloumi (helimi) in hot pitta has salad erupting from the middle. The tender chicken kebabs are equally scrumptious. It's just by the Grand Mosque in the old Turkish quarter.

Monte Carlo (☎ 2465 3815; Piyale Pasha 28; meat/fish mezedes CY€6.50-8; ☎ lunch & dinner) Situated right on the water's edge, Monte Carlo is a great place to dine in peace and watch the sea. Set menus are a good choice at CY€5.80.

Croissanterie Délifresh (Leoforos Athinon; breakfast from CY€1.70; ☎ 9am-11pm) Although most places along the promenade are very similar (and easily confused), this place is good for the choice of sandwiches and cakes on offer.

DRINKING

Larnaka's drinking scene is plentiful. Finikoudes is lined with bars and cafés from top to bottom. The streets surrounding it hide another few cafés, *kafeneia* (coffee shops) and bars; most are open all day until late.

Times Café Music Bar (☎ 2462 5966; Leoforos Athinon 73) A relaxed, stylish bar with sofas, great

for lounging about on a hot summer's night. It's next to Encounters nightclub, with live jazz on Sundays and rock on Wednesdays.

Bailey (☎ 2462 1000; Leoforos Athinon 36) An Irish pub seems inevitable nowadays, wherever you go. And the Bailey's inevitability is increased by its size and popularity. It's decorated so well (or so Irish) that you may forget what country you're in after a few bevies. There's plenty to wet your whiskers: draught beer, ale, Guinness, booze and more booze.

Aquafront (☎ 2462 5904; Piyale Pasha 54; ☎ 6pm-late) A large veranda with iron chairs and velvety sofas, surrounded by flowers. It's a quieter drinking spot for cocktails than those on the promenade, and it serves food too. The sea is right in front of you, and things don't get much better than a nice drink in the evening breeze. Cocktails are around CY€3, and there's a barbecue night every Wednesday (during the summer, that is).

Brewery (☎ 7777 2444; Leoforos Athinon 77) Not another Irish pub, don't worry. This place is like a temple to beer, with specialist samples, and beer pumps brought to your table so you can pull your own pint. Everybody loves it.

ENTERTAINMENT

If you want all-night decadence, get out of Larnaka. More specifically, go to Agia Napa (p165). Here, it's still all-night, but they go easy on the decadence. Tourists make their own fun in the long strip 8km northeast of the city, while locals and city-oriented travellers hang out along the promenade and the little streets inland from the sea.

Nightclubs

There are several good clubs in the city and, of course, regular beach parties are held at various points along the long Larnaka Bay during summer. Watch out for leaflets advertising when and where.

Encounters (☎ 9963 8986; Leoforos Athinon 76) This is the best place in town for a dance-till-you-drop night out. Once known as Memphis, Encounters has now multiplied and is two places in one: Topaz, on the 1st floor with banging progressive house; and Club Deep, on the second floor, with mainstream, chart, R & B, hip-hop, you name it. The dance floor is on fire when guest DJs from Cyprus and abroad are in town.

X.U. (☎ 9943 7222; Filiou Tsigaridi 2-4) What does X.U. stand for? No idea, but a bit of mystery is

always a good thing. Not that this place needs it; it's hip and popular enough as it is. A massive aquarium has techno-loving fish blowing bubbles over the central bar, surrounded by sofas and gentle lighting. DJs from London come and let their tunes loose on a house, hip-hop and R & B dancing crowd.

Corridor (☎ 9967 6134; Karaoli & Dimitriou 8) This spot is pitched at a local Greek clientele, with Greek pop music and dancers, plus some UK dance tunes thrown in for good measure. It's usually closed in high summer.

Venue (☎ 9961 7262; Thermopylon 8) Usually caters for special events or parties, and features house, Greek and Euro pop with an overlay of UK dance.

Cinemas

The smaller cinemas have mostly been overshadowed by the cine-giant, K-Cineplex, which is so packed with activities that you may never return home. All foreign-language films are subtitled into Greek. Admission normally costs around CY€3 to CY€4 per person.

K-Cineplex (☎ box office 2481 9022, cinema 2436 2167; www.kcineplex.com; Peloponissou 1; ☎ box office 8.30am-5.30pm Mon-Fri) Featuring six screens, stereo surround sound, supercomfortable reclining seats and Hollywood blockbusters. There's a bowling alley, Irish pub and a restaurant within the complex. It's a five- to 10-minute taxi ride to the west of the city centre near the Kameres aqueduct.

SHOPPING

Michael S Michael Antiques (☎ 2465 2358; Mihail Paridi 14) This place is a real treat. It's like delving into the town's history through the dusty antiques, old glassware, jewellery and ornaments. The cool, cavernous shop is owned and run by Michalis (Mr Michael), who will give you the lowdown on each item's past. Check out the charming glass paintings by a local artist, which include portraits and depict the circle of life, and lost love. A hurricane lamp (CY€3 to CY€4) makes an excellent souvenir.

Larnaka is good for one thing in particular: pottery. Good quality ceramics are produced in small workshops, most of which are based around Ak Deniz in the old Turkish quarter. Take your time and explore the various styles and prices before you choose. The potters will always give a small gift when you

buy a few things. Check out **Stavrou Stavrakis** (☎ 2462 4491; Ak Deniz 8) with ancient motifs on plates and pots, as well as **Symeou Efthymios** (☎ 2465 0338; Ak Deniz 18) with similar crafts, but with the potter's own touch. **Emira Pottery** (☎ 2462 3952; Mehmet Ali 13) is popular and well signposted, but has less of a workshop and more of a shop feel.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Air
Larnaka international airport is 7km from the city centre. Most flights to Cyprus arrive and depart from here. There are a couple of offices for **Cyprus Airways** (www.cypriairways.com; airport ☎ 2464 3313; city centre ☎ 2462 6666; Leoforos Arhiepiskopou Makariou III 21; flight information ☎ 2464 3000).

Boat

Larnaka has an excellent private **marina** (☎ 2465 3110; larnaka.marina@cytanet.com.cy) offering a wide range of berthing facilities for up to 450 yachts. These include telephone, fax and telex services, repair facilities, laundry, showers, lockers, post boxes and a mini-market and provisions store. The marina is an official port of entry into Cyprus.

Bus

Buses to and from Deryneia and Paralimni arrive at and depart from the bus stop opposite the police station.

The stop for **Inter City** (☎ 2464 3492; www.intercitybuses.com) buses to Lefkosia (CY€2.50, one hour, six buses daily, four on Saturday, none on Sunday), Lemesos (CY€1.70, one hour, four buses daily, three on Saturday, none on Sunday), Agia Napa and Protaras (CY€2, five buses daily, none on Sunday), and **Eman Buses** (☎ 2372 1321) to Agia Napa (CY€2.50, 45 minutes, nine buses Monday to Saturday, four buses on Sunday) is almost opposite Croissanterie Délifresh on Finikoudes.

Buses for Lefkara (CY€0.95, one bus daily Monday to Saturday), Kiti (CY€0.50, 12 buses Monday to Saturday), Perivolia and Faros (CY€0.50, three to six buses daily Monday to Saturday) all leave from Plateia Agiou Lazarou, near Agios Lazaros church.

Taxis & Service Taxis

Travel & Express (☎ 2466 1010; cnr Papakyriakou & Marsellou) runs service taxis to major destinations. A trip to Lemesos will cost you CY€4 (one hour), to Lefkosia CY€3.50 (one hour)

and to Agia Napa CY£3.50 (45 minutes). There's a second office at Kimonos 2.

A couple of smaller outfits still operate. **Acropolis** (☎ 2465 5555; Leoforos Arhiepiskopou Makariou III) is located opposite the police station, and **A Makris** (☎ 2465 2929) is on the north side of the Sun Hall hotel. Rates are CY£2.60 to Lefkosia and CY£3.10 to Lemesos.

Regular taxis will take you wherever you want. It will cost around CY£5 to get to the airport, CY£12 to Lefkosia, CY£16 to Lemesos and CY£30 to Troödos.

GETTING AROUND To/From the Airport

Buses 22 and 24 from Ermou and Plateia Palion Finikoundon go to the airport (CY£0.50, 30 minutes). The first bus is at 6.20am and the last one is at 7pm in summer (5.30pm in winter). A private taxi costs around CY£5.

Bicycle

Bicycles can be hired at **Anemayia** (☎ 2465 8333, 2464 5619, 9962 4726; per day CY£4-6), which has its office on the Larnaka–Dekelia road. Call for free delivery, which is promised within 10 minutes.

Bus

Inter City buses run every 30 minutes from the north side of the Sun Hall hotel to the tourist-hotel area on the road to Agia Napa (CY£2 one way, CY£3.50 return).

Car & Motorcycle

Thames Car Rentals (☎ 2465 6333) is next door to A Makris. There are also several car-rental booths at the airport. You can hire motorcycles or mopeds from **Anemayia** (☎ 2465 8333, 2464 5619, 9962 4726; 3hr hire CY£5) on the Larnaka–Dekelia road; ring for free delivery.

AROUND LARNAKA

The sights in the west of the Larnaka region can also easily be visited as day trips from Lemesos or even Lefkosia. Limited public transport does not make it easy to get around, so once again you'll have to rely on your own wheels or inventiveness.

Getting Around

Other than buses 6 and 7, which take you from Larnaka to both the Hala Sultan Tekkesi

and Kiti, transport options for the other sights are thin on the ground. Taking a bus to Lefkara requires an overnight stay there. Your own transport is really your only choice. Even hitching (always a touch-and-go option) is tricky; much of the travelling involves getting on and off at different motorway exits. See p242 for details.

BEACHES

Larnaka's beaches are generally unattractive, especially when compared to those towards Agia Napa and the east. The sand is grey and often hard-packed, but this doesn't stop hundreds of people lounging on deck chairs and swimming in the (shallow) waters. The best beach is **Makenzy (McKenzie) Beach**, 2.5km south of Larnaka. The beach and water along the Finikoudes promenade is quite clean, and the water is shallow and falls away gently, making it ideal for children. There is also the CTO municipal beach on the Dekelia road, favoured by the locals, and backed by dozens of taverns and restaurants.

To the southwest, the minor resorts of **Cape Kiti** and **Perivolia** offer pebbly, narrow and exposed beaches. **Zygi**, a village further west from Cape Kiti, has some of the area's best fish taverns. One particularly yummy option is **Santa Elena** (☎ 2433 2203; fish meze CY£10), on a cobbled street next to the village church. The fish meze is six different types of fresh fish and a big salad; the desserts are all homemade. Sometimes, the ladies may get a bouquet from the owner's rose farm.

HALA SULTAN TEKKE SI

Possibly one of the first things you will see on your way from the airport, this most important of Islamic pilgrimage sites in Cyprus looks like an oasis next to the snowy mirage of the adjacent dry salt lake. Surrounded by date palms, cypress and olive trees, this **mosque** (admission free, donation expected; ☎ 9am–7.30pm May–Sep, 9am–5pm Oct–Apr) was founded in 674 when Umm Haram, the reputed aunt of Prophet Mohammed, fell from a mule, broke her neck and died. She was buried on the site of the current *tekke* (Muslim shrine), and her tomb and subsequent mosque have become important places of worship for Muslims. Hala Sultan means 'Great Mother' in Turkish and refers to Umm Haram.

A rather bored-looking curator gives visitors a quick tour and historical spiel, and

takes them over to the tomb and sarcophagus of Hala Sultan herself. The interior is maintained as a working mosque with a layer of prayer mats covering the floor, so remove your shoes before entering.

Local bus 6 drops you off at the approach road to the site; from there it's a 1km walk. Catch the bus from the bus stop on Plateia Agiou Lazarou, near Agios Lazaros church.

LARNAKA SALT LAKE

Shimmering like an ice-skating rink in the height of the summer heat, and housing flamingos and migratory birds in autumn, is Larnaka's salt lake. The lake fills with winter rains and slowly dries up as summer approaches, leaving a thin film of salt. There was salt mining here in the Middle Ages, but pollution from aircraft exhaust in modern times has rendered the salt commercially useless. Signs warn would-be adventure-drivers in 4WDs to keep off, and walkers are not encouraged as the sticky salt-encrusted mud can easily ensnare vehicles and walkers. The lake is right next to Hala Sultan Tekkesi; take the same bus 6 to get here.

KITI KOITH pop 3140

In Kiti village, 7km southwest of Larnaka, you will find the domed, cruciform 11th-century church of **Panagia Angeloktisti** (admission free, donations welcome; ☎ 9.30am–noon & 2–4pm Mon–Sat summer). Literally meaning 'built by angels', the church's highlight is the wonderful 6th-century **mosaic of the Virgin Mary**, standing on a jewelled pedestal with a doll-like baby Jesus in her arms, surrounded by the archangels Gabriel and Michael. This church is a reincarnation of an earlier structure from the 5th century (of which only the apse remains), now incorporated into the current building. The mosaics, which have survived from the original apse, were only discovered in 1952.

The church is a place of worship, so time your visit to avoid a service (unless you choose to participate, which you're free to do). On Sunday, it's open for regular services. Buses 6 and 7 from Larnaka run hourly to and from Kiti.

CHAPELLE ROYALE

This unassuming little church is just off the Lefkosia–Lemesos motorway (A1), close to the village of Pyrga. **Chapelle Royale** (Royal

Chapel; admission CY£0.75; ☎ dawn–dusk) is a small Lusignan shrine dedicated to Agia Ekaterini (St Catherine). Established by the Latin king Janus in 1421 (the last of Cyprus' crusader kings), it has interesting French-influenced **wall frescoes**, not all of which are in good condition. There's a funny, rather incomprehensible guide, who points out the paintings of *The Last Supper*, *The Raising of Lazarus*, *The Washing of Christ's Feet* and *The Ascension*. Note that the inscriptions are in French, not Greek, as this was the official language of Lusignan Cyprus.

The church is best combined with a visit to Stavrovouni Monastery (below) and Lefkara (p152).

Closer to Larnaka, on the Larnaka–Pyrga road, is the pretty village of **Agia Anna**, worth visiting for its pure charm. It has a village tavern and some beautiful stone houses.

STAVROVOUNI MONASTERY MONH ΣΤΑΥΡΟΒΟΥΝΙΟΥ

Impressive **Stavrovouni Monastery** (☎ 8am–noon & 3–6pm Apr–Aug, 8am–noon & 2–5pm Sep–Mar), high up in the hills (668m), is the oldest monastery in Cyprus. Legend tells that in AD 327 St Helena, mother of Emperor Constantine the Great, brought a fragment of the Holy Cross here on her way back from Jerusalem. She then erected the cross and founded the monastery (the name means 'cross mountain'). A small piece of St Helena's cross is now preserved in a silver one inside the church.

It's ironic that, since the monastery was founded by a woman, women are not allowed inside. If you're female, save yourself the effort, unless you go for the superb views over the Mesaoria and the Troödos Massif (worth the windy trip uphill).

Colin Thubron documented his stay in the monastery during his trek around Cyprus in 1972 in *Journey into Cyprus*; he described it as a 'lodestar for pilgrims in the wake of the Crusades'. Stavrovouni is a working religious community consisting of a few young monks who live to follow their ascetic principles. If you visit (and are male), arrive during visiting hours only. Leave your camera behind as photos are not allowed. If you are a genuine or professed pilgrim you may even be invited to stay.

The monastery is located above the Lefkosia–Lemesos motorway (A1), around 11km from Larnaka.

CHOIROKOITIA

Archaeology buffs and early-history lovers should visit the fascinating Neolithic site of **Choirkoitia** (☎ 2432 2710; admission CY€0.75; ☞ 9am-7.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat & Sun May-Sep, 9am-5pm daily Oct-Apr), 32km southwest of Larnaka. It's best combined with a day trip to either Lemesos (p82) or Lefkara (below). Dating from around 6800 BC, this Unesco World Heritage site is one of the earliest permanent human settlements in Cyprus. The Choirkoitians lived in round stone huts and practised a relatively sophisticated lifestyle for the time. It's thought they came from Anatolia or the coast of present-day Lebanon. The original settlement was built on an easily defensible hillside, with a large perimeter wall. Inside the wall, around 60 houses have been found, identified by the remains of their circular walls. Reconstructions of the houses have been built at the foot of the hill; they look a bit out of place, but it's worth seeing them as it's difficult to imagine the buildings from their scant remains.

Visitors view the various sections of the site via steps and a series of walkways that overlook the key points of the settlement. Signs give a clear description of the main features of each area, and the walkway finishes at the top of the hill, where the best remains are to be found.

There is ample parking and a snack bar with refreshments. The site is just off the main Larnaka-Lemesos highway.

LEFKARA ΛΕΥΚΑΡΑ

pop 1040

The island's best-known export (except for haloumi cheese, of course) is exquisite lace, which mostly comes from the pretty mountain villages of **Pano Lefkara** and **Kato Lefkara**. The story goes that the women of medieval Lefkara took up lace-making to boost family incomes while the men were away working at sea or on the plains. Enterprising stay-at-home husbands made silverware. Leonardo da Vinci is said to have taken some lace back to Italy; travellers and lace-lovers the world over have been doing the same ever since.

However, this lovely village has capitalised on its lacy fame in a major way, becoming a tourist trap with a vengeance. As you enter on foot, 'STOP AND WATCH' signs blare at you from all corners, as do the lace-makers, busily producing a hand-

made original as they try to ply you with one from their shop. The exquisite lace is of high quality, but expensive, so bargain hard if you want a particular piece, or try the nearby villages. Bear in mind that the lace displayed outside the shops is not the good, handmade stuff. You'll only find this inside the shop, away from the sun and dust. A hotelier from Lefkara told us of a shop owner outside the village who encourages people into his shop by telling them that the village has 'closed' or 'moved' or that there is no other shop in Lefkara. So, be warned (and ignore him).

Despite all this, Lefkara is beautiful. Its windy streets are full of character and smell of summer flowers. There are two decent places to stay and eat, and interesting sights. There's a Hellenic Bank ATM in the village.

The wonderful Lefkara **Museum of Traditional Embroidery & Silver-Smithing** (☎ 2434 2326; admission CY€0.75; ☞ 9.30am-4pm Mon-Thu, 10am-4pm Fri & Sat) is in the former house of one of Lefkara's richest families. Set out on two floors, it displays a typical village living room (on the ground floor), with cooking utensils, a workshop and a dining area, and in the corner of the room is what can only be interpreted as a 'poor man's stereo': a bird cage, where a canary once sang. The 1st floor is a grandiose hall and living space, which must be closer to how the original house was furnished. Note the old family photos framed in silk lace.

The village's second museum is the very strange **Fatsa Wax Museum** (☎ 2462 1048; Georgiou Papandreou; admission adult/under 12 CY€5/2.50; ☞ 9am-5pm Nov-Apr, 9am-7pm May-Oct). This extortionately priced museum is hilariously touted as 'Cyprus' answer to Madame Tussauds' (which is how the admission price is justified). Amusing wax figures illustrate a Greek Cypriot propagandist's view of the island's history, with bad sound effects and all.

The best place to stay is the newly re-opened **Lefkarama Village Hotel** (☎ 2434 2154; www.lefkarama.com; CY€25). It was traditionally used as an inn, which is evident from its structure: a courtyard in the centre, where a weary traveller can rest and eat; and the rooms above, on the 1st floor. The rooms, decorated in cooling blues, have wrought-iron beds and good new bathrooms. The downstairs restaurant has traditional and international food.

(Continued on page 161)

(Continued from page 152)

But if you really want to eat well, and assuming you've arrived by car, go to **Platanos** (☎ 2434 2160; Kato Drys; mains CY€3-5) in the village of Kato Drys, about 10 minutes' drive from Lefkara. Excellent food is served in a sprawling, cool garden, shaded by a plane tree. Ravish a starter of new potatoes and capers, or dip into tahini and tzatziki. Sample the meatballs with herbs and spices as a main, or an aubergine and courgette bake. For dessert, try the traditional preserved apple and watermelon, with a turbo-strong Cypriot coffee.

Get to Lefkara by a fast road from the Lefkosia-Lemesos motorway (A1), or by a winding and picturesque road from Choirkoitia via Vavla. There's only one daily bus (CY€0.95, Monday to Saturday) between Lefkara and Larnaka. It leaves Lefkara at 7am and returns from Larnaka at 1pm.

AGIA NAPA ΑΓΙΑ ΝΑΠΑ

pop 2680

Ask Cypriots about Agia Napa and they'll all tell you the same thing: 'Before 1974, this was a tiny fishing village, with two houses, a monastery and some fishermen. Look at it now!' Look at it now, indeed. The village started its new life as a tourist resort after the 1974 division, when Famagusta's Varosia (Maraş) beach strip and resort were locked behind barbed wire and oil barrels. Now infamous as the debauched tourist's heaven, Agia Napa shoulders the mantle of Cyprus' top sun-and-fun tourist resort. An entire little town has been made for (package) tourists, and a lot of it is, frankly, horrific. There are bars that look like dodgy sandcastles, and the Flintstones' cave bar that greets you with (if you cringe easily, look away now) a 'Yabba Napa Doo!'. There are pubs with names like the, ahem, 'Organ Grinder'. Tourists wander about in bikinis, sleep their hangovers off on the beach, and go at it again at night. But such is life in Agia Napa, and there are plenty who love it and large it.

If you arrive in high season (mid-July to mid-August), it will be hard to find accommodation. While hoteliers are more used to package-tour visitors, most places will cater for individuals if a room is available.

ORIENTATION

Like washing hung out to dry, Agia Napa is strung out from east to west along the shoreline. Leoforos Nisioi is the main east-west street; arrivals from Larnaka often enter along here. Running north-south at the eastern end of Nisioi is the other main artery, Leoforos Arhiepiskopou Makariou III. Heading east is Leoforos Kryou Nerou. Agia Napa's main focus is Plateia Seferi, known universally as 'the Square'. Several of the streets leading off the Square are pedestrianised. Buses arrive at the southern end of Leoforos Arhiepiskopou Makariou III, near the harbour. Long-distance service taxis arrive and depart near the Square.

INFORMATION

Agia Napa is exceptionally well equipped with banks, ATMs and exchange offices that are open at all hours of the day. ATMs are provided by the **Hellenic Bank** (Leoforos Arhiepiskopou Makariou III) with another branch just south of the Square. There is also a Bank of Cyprus ATM near the harbour.

The police station is north of the Square at the junction of the Larnaka-Protaras ring road and Dimokratias. There are a few laundries fairly close to the town centre.

After-hours pharmacy information (☎ 192)

Agia Napa Clinic (☎ 2372 3222) Also known as the Olympic Napa. Another option for medical care.

Blue Line Laundry (Yuri Gagarin; ☞ 8am-7pm Mon-Sat) Located 600m southwest of the Square. This is a service laundry where you drop your gear off and pick it up 24 hours later.

CTO (☎ 2372 1796; Leoforos Kryou Nerou 12; ☞ 8.15am-2.30pm & 3-6.30pm Mon, Tue, Thu & Fri, 8.15am-2.30pm Wed & Sat) About 200m southeast of the Square.

Elias Travel (☎ 2372 5070; eliastravel@cytanet.com.cy; Eleftherias) A reputable travel agency next to the Square.

IntenCity (☎ 2372 2233; www.intencity.net; Dionysiou Solomou; per hr CY€2.20; ☞ 10am-2am) The easiest Internet café to find; a large, modern, air-conditioned place with 26 terminals.

Paralimni Hospital (☎ 2382 1211; Paralimni) The nearest hospital is about a 15-minute taxi ride away, in Paralimni.

Post office (D Liperti) About 100m east of the Square.
Public telephones (Leoforos Arhiepiskopou Makariou III) Conveniently positioned next to the long-distance service-taxi stand 100m south of the Square.

Wash & Dry Laundrette (Odyssea Elyti 23; wash & dry CY€1; ☞ 8am-7pm Mon-Sat) Located 500m west of the Square, this is a do-it-yourself place.

swimming. One outfit that operates these kinds of events is **Party Cruise** (☎ 9963 7233) on the harbour; ask for Nikos. Cruises depart at 11.30am and return at 4pm daily. An evening cruise, dubbed the 'sex cruise', runs every Tuesday, Wednesday and Sunday, departing at 10.30pm and returning at 1.30am. Men pay CY€5; women go for free.

Diving

The waters around Agia Napa and Cape Greco up to Famagusta are perfect for diving. The sea is calm, warm and clear, and a few operators are set up to cater for divers. The **Scuba Base** (☎ 2372 2441; www.thescubabase.com; Leoforos Nisiou 17a) is a reputable local company that organises programmes ranging from an introduction to snorkelling to advanced open-water courses. For information on Cyprus' dive spots, see p86.

TOURS

The Agia Napa branch of Pafos-based **Exalt** (☎ 2372 4390; www.cyprus-adventure.com; Belogianni 10) runs a challenging 12-hour sea and land excursion around Agia Napa.

SLEEPING

At least 90% of visitors come to Agia Napa with booked accommodation. If you turn up between mid-July and mid-August without a booking, you may have trouble finding a bed.

Accommodation ranges from unlicensed rooms (normally a rarity in Cyprus) to five-star hotels. Most hotels will welcome independent travellers if there is space. Prices are cheaper in the off-season, but many hotels only operate from March to October.

Napa Plaza (☎ 2372 1540; bluesseasonhotels@cyta.net.com.cy; Leoforos Arhiepiskopou Makariou III 12; r per person CY€30; 🍷 🍴) The former Napia Star has changed hands, names and appearances, with the hotel's reception a virginal white with cool marble floors. The pool is busy, and the restaurant has a popular bar that's open most hours. The rooms are in creamy colours and you get slippers and a cosy bathrobe when you arrive.

Faros (☎ 2372 3838; farosshot@spidernet.com.cy; Leoforos Arhiepiskopou Makariou III; s/d CY€43/62; 🍷 🍴) A rather swanky place very close to the harbour, with sleek, bright rooms and a great pool surrounded by bungalows.

Green Bungalows (☎ 2372 1511; anastasiadesa@cytanet.com.cy; Katalymata 19; 2-person apt CY€31; 🍷 Apr-Oct) A superior B-class apartment hotel. This place offers cosy apartments and breakfast from CY€2.

Anesis (☎ 2372 1104; fax 2372 2204; 1 Oktovriou 7; s/d CY€29/40; 🍷 🍴) Anesis has plans for renovations in 2006, adding satellite TV channels, a sauna, gym and Jacuzzi separate from the swimming pool. The rooms are decent, and will also be renovated. Prices are supposed to stay as they were at the time of research.

Nestor (☎ 2372 2880; nestor@logos.net.cy; 1 Oktovriou 8; s/d CY€29.50/42; 🍷 🍴) This place has large rooms with balconies that overlook the pool, diagonally opposite the Anesis. There are games rooms downstairs.

Leros Hotel (☎ 2372 1126; Leoforos Arhiepiskopou Makariou III 41; s/d CY€17/30; 🍷 🍴) At the bottom of the scale in price and appearance, with a budget look but not a budget price (although it is the cheapest in town). The rooms are a little run-down, but bearable if there is nothing else. There is a small pool and bar.

EATING

Eating in Agia Napa is generally not very good, and is inevitably aimed at the tourist, although you'll never go hungry. The big fast-food chains are all close to each other and there is a place to eat almost every 50m or so. Prices are somewhat higher than elsewhere in Cyprus, but not outrageously so. The following are better than most:

Vassos (☎ 2372 1884; Leoforos Arhiepiskopou Makariou III 51; fish meze CY€8; 🍷 lunch & dinner) This place has been around since 1962, so it has a well-tryed and successful formula: fresh fish and good service. It looks a rather large, impersonal place during the day, but it's right on the harbour and makes for romantic evening dining.

Esperia (☎ 2372 1635; Leoforos Arhiepiskopou Makariou III 49; fish meze CY€8.75; 🍷 lunch & dinner) Closer to the water than Vassos, and boasting slightly more upmarket décor and a marginally better location. Enormous fish and meat dishes sell for similar prices.

Potopoiion to Elliniko (☎ 2372 2760; Theodosi Pieridi 2; minimum charge CY€7.50; 🍷 dinner) A small, evenings-only Greek-style *mezedopolio* (a small restaurant specialising in *mezedes*) with grilled-meat meze, and *zivania* (local firewater), ouzo or wine as accompaniment. There's usually some live music too.

Tsambrá (☎ 2372 2513; Dionysiou Solomou 9; pork dishes CY€6-7; 🍷 lunch & dinner) For a change in style, try the shaded courtyard of this Lebanese-Cypriot restaurant. Good shish kebabs, barbecued lamb, *tabouleh* (bulgur-wheat and parsley salad), and for dessert, *mahalabia* (a light, rice custard, served cold).

Limelight (☎ 2372 1650; Dionysiou Solomou 10; fish platter CY€12.95; 🍷 lunch & dinner) This is an old favourite in town, with charcoal-grilled dishes such as steak, lobster, fish and chicken, as well as succulent suckling lamb and pig. Not a good place for vegetarians.

Napiana (☎ 2372 2891; Leoforos Arhiepiskopou Makariou III 29; 🍷 lunch & dinner) A busy establishment with exceptionally attentive service, close to central Agia Napa. Steaks are the big seller here, with the rich Chateaubriand for two at CY€8.50 per person.

DRINKING

For people-watching, choose the balconies of the pubs on the Square.

Freedom Reggae Bar (☎ 2372 2801; Ari Velouhioti; 🍷 9am-2am) A bar with a difference in that it opens for breakfast, when clubbed-out punters head here for the exceptionally chilled-out atmosphere. Freedom even serves an early Sunday roast.

Bedrock Inn (☎ 2372 2951; Agias Mavris) This grotesque Fred Flintstone and Barney Rubble-style karaoke palace is extremely popular with the tourists.

Alexander's (☎ 2372 1898; Georgiou Seferi 17) If you don't want to get too involved, but want to see it all, this place has an all-encompassing view of the action. It's a definite voyeur's favourite, located at the top of the Square.

O'Rourke's Inn (☎ 2372 3357; Tefkrou Anthia 13) Serves top Gaelic ales, offers live music and organises beach parties.

ENTERTAINMENT

If you've come to Agia Napa, you're probably here to drink and dance and generally be up all night. The town's bars and music venues are full until around 2am, then it's time to hit the clubs. The central area within 200m of the Square is a riotous confusion of noise, karaoke, disco beats and clinking glasses. There are almost 20 bars and 15 clubs to choose from, and the nightlife never stops.

Nightclubs come and go each year, but the following manage to stick around. Most

of these clubs open after 1am; you'll pay between CY€5 and CY€10 for admission.

Alfabet (☎ 2372 5066; Grigoriou Afxentiou 17) Previously the Abyss club, Alfabet has the admiring crowd screaming when Robbie Williams and Tina Turner impersonators burst onto the stage at 3am along with fire-eaters and other circus performances. There's a large dance floor and an outdoor chill-out zone. This is one of the biggest clubs in town and has a mix of house, R&B, old school and garage. Look out for foam parties.

Carwash (☎ 2372 1388; Agias Mavris 24) Two London DJs take the party-goers through a mix of hits from the '70s and '80s from their VW Beetle deck room. Massive queues outside confirm the words of the management that Carwash 'is more like a party than a club'.

Bagley's (☎ 2372 3400; Louka Louka) The old Inferno Club, Bagley's still sports a four-way sound system and DJ Richie P from Shagwells in London. Richie plays the best of the '70s to '90s music. Dress up for the Austin Powers theme night.

Black & White (☎ 2372 3565; Louka Louka 6) The longest-standing venue in town and, according to some hard-core clubbers, the best. It has an eclectic mix of music nights, attracting just about anybody.

Castle Club (☎ 9962 3126; Grigoriou Afxentiou) Housed in a hideous mock castle, this place takes up to 2000 people. And there are still queues outside in summer. It has three separate areas (two dance and one chill-out space); the music is the ever-popular formula of house, R&B, old school and garage.

Club Insomnia (☎ 2372 5554; Leoforos Nisiou 4; 🍷 4am-7am) 'I can't get no sleep' reads the sign outside, like the Faithless hit. This is the place where nightaholics can always seek pre-dawn solace and more drinks. Advertising 'quality chill-out time' and 'happy sunshine music', Club Insomnia is for serious all-nighters.

Grease (☎ 2372 4240; www.3ds.com.cy/grease; Leoforos Arhiepiskopou Makariou III) This place features classic tunes from the '70s to the '90s, plus the soundtrack hits from the movie. Relive teenage bliss and dress up like Sandy and Danny. Rydell High is not out yet.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Service taxi is the best way to get to Agia Napa from Larnaka, for CY€3.50 (45 minutes); try Travel & Express (p149), which will pick you

up and drop you off at the central taxi stand on the Square in Agia Napa. The bus is also good and regular. There are nine direct buses to and from Larnaka (CY£2.50, one hour) in summer, and one daily bus to Lefkosia (CY£2, 1½ hours) at 8am (returning at 3pm). There are more or less hourly (on the hour) buses to Paralimni and Protaras (CY£0.50, 30 minutes). All buses leave from the bus stop between the Square and the harbour.

Private taxis (from the taxi stand close to the Square) vary, with rates from CY£13 to the airport, CY£19 to Lefkosia, and CY£40 to Troödos.

Cyprus Airways (☎ 2372 1265; www.cypusairways.com; Leoforos Arhiepiskopou Makariou III 17) has an office here.

GETTING AROUND

There's no public transport in Agia Napa, so other than catching a taxi, hiring a scooter or a motorbike is your best option. **Easyriders** (☎ 2372 2438; easyriders@easyriders.com.cy; Gianni Ritsou 1) rents wheels from 50cc scooters (CY£10 per day) to Kawasaki or Suzuki 800cc heavies (CY£25 per day). There is a second outlet at Dimokratias 17.

AROUND AGIA NAPA

Even if you decide to avoid Agia Napa completely, there are some beaches around the place that are worth checking out, and the area near Cape Greco is wonderful. You can also peer over the border into the ghost town of Varosia from vantage points on the Attila Line.

Getting Around

No public transport other than the Protaras–Paralimni–Larnaka bus is going to help you much here. The cheapest option is to hire a scooter in either Protaras or Agia Napa. Rates vary, but are usually very reasonable. Make sure you choose a scooter with some power in its engine: it is a fair haul across the Paralimni region. A scooter is the most suitable option for beach-hopping along the Pernera–Protaras coastal strip.

A car is the best way to see the region in comfort. Rates from smaller companies in Protaras or Agia Napa are usually better than those offered by big-name hire-

car companies. A group of four should be able to hire a small open-top 4WD fairly cheaply.

As the whole area is reasonably flat, cycling is an ideal way of getting around the Kokkinohoria. There is a cycle path between Agia Napa and Cape Greco.

CAPE GRECO

The **sea caves**, just a little before the actual land's end that is Cape Greco, are a wonderful sight. If you get to know someone with a boat, make sure you approach the caves by the sea and take a closer look. A constant breeze makes the platform above the caves a perfect place to have a fresh lemonade from the one little lemonade van and enjoy the view. There's no shade here, so bring a hat.

You can't get to the end of the Cape itself, which is a pity. As on Mt Olympus in the Troödos Massif, the Brits have requisitioned the last piece of land to install a radar station that is firmly fenced off from the public.

However, some of the best swimming can be had here if the weather is not too windy. From the shabby car park, walk north towards the little bay and clamber down onto the rocks. A few rock platforms support swimmers who really don't want to be part of the Protaras beach scene. The water is absolutely idyllic here.

A coastal walking and cycling track will take you to the cape from Agia Napa in about 3½ hours, or from Konnos Beach in about one hour. Bicycles should have solid tyres as the track is stony in parts.

Cape Greco is 7km from Agia Napa or 4km from Protaras. A good road, narrow in parts, leads in and out of the area, past a rubbish dump in an ill-chosen location.

PARALIMNI ΠΑΡΑΛΙΜΝΗ

pop 11,100 (including Protaras & Pernera)

Paralimni has reluctantly taken over from Famagusta as the capital of eastern Cyprus. There is nothing in the town itself to have a look at, although you may have to pass through it on your way further east if you are touring the area by scooter.

There is a paved central square with two versions of the church of Agios Georgios (new and old) and a sprinkling of restaurants and shops.

DERYNEIA ΔΕΡΥΝΕΙΑ

pop 1850

People usually come to Deryneia to peer into no-man's-land and stare at the firmly closed 'border' that separates Northern Cyprus from the Republic of Cyprus. During the Turks' second invasion of the North in August 1974, the Turkish army encircled and occupied the deserted holiday resort centre of Varosia. Troops moved towards Deryneia and halted abruptly just below the rise on which the town is located, which now gives it its unparalleled but politically charged view into Northern Cyprus.

There are at least two viewing platforms for looking into the North. **Annita's** (☎ 2382 3003; admission CY£0.50), the top platform, is the better of the two, and is essentially a private apartment block that had the luck or the misfortune not to be occupied by the Turks. From the top-floor platform, you can see the Greek Cypriot barracks, the blue-and-

white UN building and, further still, the cream-coloured Turkish Cypriot post with Turkish and Turkish Cypriot flags flying defiantly. Both flags are now safely protected by barbed wire after two violent and fatal incidents in 1996 (see the boxed text, below).

Graphic videos and wall posters in the little viewing platform cafeteria describe events that shocked and still linger in the collective memory of Greek Cypriots. Binoculars are handed out to visitors as part of the entrance ticket. The stark cityscape to the right and north of Deryneia is **Varosia**; it is, to all intents and purposes, dead and abandoned, and has been left the way it was when occupied in 1974. Only rats and a few Turkish military details now inhabit its overgrown streets. The town is important to the Greeks living in this area, and most will be keen to show you the place themselves.

THE DERYNEIA MARTYRS

On 11 August 1996, a Berlin-to-Cyprus peace ride by motorcyclists from around Europe ended at the Greek Cypriot village of Deryneia, which adjoins the Attila Line dividing Northern Cyprus from the Republic of Cyprus. Among the riders that day was a young Greek Cypriot from Protaras by the name of Tasos Isaak. Newly married, his young wife was pregnant with their first child.

At the protest marking the end of the ride, and in memory of the continuing occupation of the North by Turkish forces, a melee developed, with clashes between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots in the UN buffer zone that separated the two communities. During the running clashes with Turks from the North – many of whom, it is widely believed, belonged to the paramilitary organisation the Grey Wolves from the Turkish mainland – Tasos Isaak was inexplicably cut off from his fellow demonstrators. He was set upon by thugs carrying wooden clubs and iron bars.

Before the astonished eyes of demonstrators and at least one photographer, Isaak was beaten deliberately and viciously to death.

He was unarmed and dressed only in jeans and a shirt. Turkish police stood by and watched. Isaak's lifeless body was later recovered by UN personnel.

Three days later, after Isaak's funeral, a crowd once more gathered at the Deryneia checkpoint to protest against this unprovoked and unwarranted death. Among the protesters this time was Solomos Solomou, a 26-year-old friend of Isaak, who was enraged at the death of his friend. Despite repeated attempts to hold him back, Solomos eluded the UN peacekeepers and slipped across the no-man's-land to one of the flagpoles carrying the Turkish Cypriot flag. Cigarette in mouth, he managed to climb halfway up the flagpole before being struck by five bullets that came from the Turkish Cypriot checkpoint building, and possibly from bushes sheltering armed soldiers. Solomos' bloody slide to death down the flagpole was captured dramatically on video, and is replayed endlessly at viewing points that today overlook the tragic site of the Deryneia murders.

The memories live on vividly in the minds of Greek Cypriots. The graphic photos of Isaak and Solomos, as well as that of an old man caught picking mushrooms in the buffer zone and subsequently shot, are displayed on the Greek side of the Ledra Palace Hotel crossing in Lefkosia. Security is tight at Deryneia now, but tensions run ever high. Life and death here can be as fragile as a Damoclean thread.

DEKELIA SOVEREIGN BASE AREA

Orders for 'Fish and chips!' and 'A cup of tea, please!' can be heard above the rustle of the *Times*, *Daily Mail*, *Telegraph* and *Guardian*, as Brits take their lunch break from the beach in the small canteen at Dekelia. The only way to describe this place is 'Britain in Cyprus', and it's almost a sight in itself, in terms of a cultural oddity on the island.

As part of the hard-won deal between the nascent Republic of Cyprus and the UK in 1960, the British were granted rights to two major Sovereign Base Areas (SBAs), and access to retained sites scattered around the country where satellite ground stations and radio listening stations were located.

The Dekelia SBA is the second of the two major base areas taken over 'in perpetuity' by the canny Brits. (See p96 for details about Akrotiri.)

The area comprises a sizable chunk of eastern Cyprus, running from Larnaka Bay to the current Attila Line border with the North. In reality, the Dekelia SBA cuts off the Paralimni district from the rest of the Republic of Cyprus, since the SBAs are deemed to be foreign territory. In practice, there are no 'border' controls, but formidable grey iron gates on the road at the SBA entrances prove that British territorial integrity could be invoked at any time should circumstances require. The British government has stated that it is prepared to cede back a large chunk of this SBA if Cyprus becomes reunified.

You're not supposed to 'tour' the SBA, and taking photographs is a no-no. You can't actually enter the base installations themselves without passes and permits, but you can freely drive around the territory itself. Although the British military play it very low-key and rarely make themselves visible to casual travellers, the installations at Dekelia are still crucial for intelligence-gathering. They continue to play a role in monitoring radio traffic in the Middle East, and keeping a watch on regional military activity with sophisticated over-the-horizon (OTH-B) radar units.

The Attila Line is less rigorously monitored here since there is no closed UN buffer zone. The border-crossing points at Pergamos (Beyarmudu) and Agios Nikolaos are open to casual visitors, but mainly to those in vehicles. See p233 for information about visas.

THE KOKKINOHORIA TA KOKKINOXOPIA

The Kokkinohoria villages are to Cyprus what Idaho is to the USA – they both produce famous potatoes. Kokkinohoria means 'red villages'; they are so called not because of their political allegiances, but for the colour of the rich earth over which these once back-water but now prospering villages are built. The red soil of the Agia Napa hinterland is striking and appears almost suddenly, soon after the village of Ormidia in the Dekelia SBA. Coupled with a rash of wind-powered water pumps that litter the rolling landscape, this part of Cyprus is in many ways geographically akin to the outback of Australia.

Potatoes and *kolokasi* (a root vegetable similar to the Pacific Islands' taro) grow profusely in the mineral-rich soil. Up to three crops of potatoes are cultivated annually here, no doubt contributing significantly to Cypriots' predilection for chips with everything. The main villages are **Xylofagou**, **Avgorou**, **Frenaros**, **Liopetri** and **Sotira**. While they offer little for tourists per se, other than a glimpse of rural Cyprus or the occasional excellent country taverna, they're great to get around on a scooter, and are in total contrast to the coastal resorts to the east and south. Signposting in the Kokkinohoria is pretty poor at times, so ensure you have a decent map to avoid going around in circles.

PYLA ΠΥΛΑ PILE

pop 1370

The rather unlikely village of Pyla is the only place in Cyprus where Greek and Turkish Cypriots still live together in harmony. Admittedly, that harmony is enforced by the presence of a UN peace-keeping contingent and a watchful Turkish military lookout post on the ridge high above the village, but it works. Pyla is in the UN buffer zone but, unlike elsewhere in Cyprus, this area is open to all and sundry. That means Cypriots from both the North and the South.

The main feature of the village, illustrating the continuing peaceful coexistence of Turk and Greek, is the village square, where a red-and-white Turkish Cypriot coffee shop eyes up a blue-and-white Greek Cypriot *kafeneio* on the other side. Overlooking the middle of the square is the 'referee's' chair, positioned prominently outside the UN watchtower and occasionally occupied by an Irish or Argentinean soldier in a blue beret.

Greeks and Turks live in mixed neighbourhoods, and by all accounts mind their own business and get on with their lives. Cross-cultural mixing is low-key and not obvious to casual observers. The Greeks are somewhat peeved that they carry the burden of local taxes and utility costs, while the Turks pay nothing and can access both the North and the South. Photography is not allowed.

If you don't want to backtrack to the Larnaka motorway, take the winding road out of Pyla signposted to Pergamos, entering the SBA about 1km outside the village. From here, you can cut across the SBA to the B3 motorway for Agia Napa.

PROTARAS & PERNERA

ΠΡΟΤΑΡΑΣ & ΠΕΡΝΕΡΑ

pop 11,100 (including Paralimni)

Protaras and Pernera are two separate but ever-closer communities; they're geared almost exclusively to the expat and resort crowd, with sprawling hotels, lawns and swimming pools, and not much to see or do.

The area is a slightly watered-down version of Agia Napa, and more geared to families and couples, with beach resorts that tend to give visitors more breathing space. There seem to be enough restaurants and bars to compensate, though finding one that is beyond simply adequate can take some doing, as most offer unimaginative meals served by uninspired, non-Cypriot waiting staff.

Orientation & Information

The Protaras–Pernera community hinges upon the main street running through the centre of Protaras. Here is the greatest concentration of shops, restaurants, bars and hotels. As this is primarily a tourist and not a residential area, little happens here outside of the tourist season. It is approximately 4km from the northern end of Pernera to the southern end of Protaras.

Sights & Activities

There are some top-class beaches along this strip, if you could only see them for the crowds.

SKOUTARI BEACH

This is an isolated cove surrounded by a cliff. The beach is 50m of hard-packed sand and scruffy rocks, with a sheltered bay, good snorkelling, and a few restaurants nearby.

AGIA TRIADA BEACH

Second along, and used mainly as a boat-launching area, this diminutive beach has shallow water, the sand is a little coarse, and cars tend to be parked along its 200m curving length. Ice-cream sellers are the only source of nourishment.

MOUZOURA BEACH

Blink and you'll miss this next beach. It's small and popular with Cypriot sunbathers, sporting a good but narrow sand strip and some shade under the trees at the southern end. The sand drops away quickly, so it's not suitable for nonswimmers or young children. There are parking facilities, at least one good restaurant and a large hotel for people who choose to base themselves here.

LOUMA BEACH

Further south is the busy beach zone and the northern extension of Protaras, called Pernera. The 400m curving strand of Louma Beach is protected by an artificial bay. The sand is fine, the water is clean and the beach drops away gently, and there is shade under the trees at the northern end.

Water sports are catered for by Baywater Water Sports, which offers banana-tube rides (CY£3), paragliding (CY£14 a flight), water-skiing lessons (CY£15) or 15 minutes on a jet ski (CY£15). Hire sun-loungers and umbrellas for CY£1.25 each.

PERNERA BEACH

Skipping a fairly lengthy section of coast with few swimming options, the next busy beach is this one, which is a smaller version of Louma Beach. It is a curvy 200m long strip of good, soft sand and shallow water, but with little shade. Five restaurants surrounding the beach compete for trade.

The **TABA Diving centre** (☎ 2483 2680) offers single dives for CY£18 or double dives for CY£30.

PROTARAS BEACH

Bypassing a series of open, rocky coves, backed by the lawns of large resort hotels, you arrive at the most popular and frequented of all the beaches on this strip. Protaras Beach is long and sandy, studded with umbrellas and served by a multitude of water sports. The beach is approached by access roads from the main Protaras street inland.

THE AUTHOR'S CHOICE

Sirena Bay Hotel (☎ 2382 3502; r CY£35) Get away from the crowds and follow the mermaids. From the main Protaras–Paralimni road, follow the sign for Sirena Bay and then follow the mermaid sculptures, crafted by the owner Irini's Hemingway-esque father. Run by a family of artists, this place is all peace and relaxation. The living room area is jam-packed with the family's art work, woodcarvings and paintings. The rooms are basic, without air-conditioning, but with fans and mosquito nets on the doors. If you don't fancy staying, then this is a good place to just have a drink or some food in the lovely, flowery garden bar and restaurant. People from all over the area come here to relax and eat. There is a little sandy beach, and a couple of stone-surrounded 'pools' in the sea, for children to swim in. The sea is good, although the sand becomes strangely muddy and sticky around 10m into the water.

The most popular part is **Fig Tree Bay** at the southern end, so-named for the single fig tree that used to stand guard at the back of the beach. Unfortunately, the beach is now so swamped with hotels and restaurants, it's anyone's guess where the original fig tree actually is.

GREEN BAY BEACH

'Come and discover a secret beach' reads the road sign. Having invited so many strangers, the beach is no longer a secret, if it ever was. Although less busy than the surrounding beaches, it's laden with umbrellas and sun-loungers, and is hardly a haven of peace. If you get in early, you can claim a pleasant spot. Not so prominently signposted, Green Bay is the first obvious beach you will come to if approaching Protaras from Agia Napa.

KONNOS BEACH

This is the best beach in the area, with a Caribbean-like sea, white sandy beach and fantastic swimming. You'll find it about 2km south of Green Bay, signposted 1km off the main road to Cape Greco. The beach is home to **Mike's Water Sports** (☎ 9960 5833). Take a parachute ride (CY£15), a ski tow (CY£15) or a beginner's ski lesson (CY£15), or hire a jet ski (CY£1 per minute).

Sleeping

With one exception, all hotel options are clustered along the Protaras–Perna strip. Most are resolutely geared to package-tour visitors, and the choice is enormous, with over 90 places on offer. These range from two- to five-star hotels and A- and B-class hotel apartments. Budget accommodation is thin on the ground, with virtually no backpacker scene to speak of. Bookings are

recommended in high season, and would-be travellers are advised to get hold of the free CTO *Guide to Hotels and Other Tourist Establishments* that gives a full listing.

Cavo Maris (☎ 2383 2043; cavo@cytanet.com.cy; s/d from CY£46/74; 🍷) A behemoth; good for families who like raucous holidays with lots of activities. It has a couple of pools, a beach, restaurants, bars and night-time activities. It is at the southern end of Protaras, near Green Bay Beach. A 30% discount often applies, even in the high season.

Eating

Eating options are as plentiful as the accommodation possibilities. While hotels all tend to be of uniform quality, some restaurants can be downright bad, so choose prudently. Although by no means fantastic, try these options.

Mouzoura Beach Restaurant (☎ 2382 3333; Vryssoudion 79; fish meze CY£10; 🍷 lunch & dinner) This place tries the 'we are locals, therefore we know what's good' approach, displaying traditional woven tablecloths and waiters with Greek-flag T-shirts. There are nice views of the sea and swaying palms. The fish meze is a speciality.

Olympus (☎ 2383 2262; mains CY£4.90-10; 🍷 lunch & dinner) This is another Greek-style taverna with charcoal-cooked meats and dolmades (stuffed vine leaves). It's located at the southern end of Protaras' main street.

Anemos (☎ 2383 1488; Fig Tree Bay, Protaras; mains CY£4-6; 🍷 lunch & dinner) A large Cypriot family-style restaurant with a wide selection of meat and vegetarian options. For CY£4.75, vegetarians can feast on fried vegetables, haloumi cheese, mushrooms and rice. Anemos has a good range of Hryssorogiatissa wines for around CY£6.

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