

## CULTURE

Experience at first hand one of the oldest civilisations of the Mediterranean, one that goes back 10,000 years.

Conquered by foreign powers throughout its long history, the island is like a large open air museum where you can see evidence of its past. Ancient Greeks, Romans, Egyptians, Phoenicians, Venetians, Ottomans and British all left their mark, making the island a mosaic of different cultures and periods.

Famous for its copper in antiquity, Cyprus ('Kypros' in Greek) may even have given the metal its Latin name, cuprum. The cult of Aphrodite, the ancient Greek mythological goddess of love and beauty, flourished here and people came from miles around to take part in celebrations in her name.

The island was the first country the apostles Paul and Barnabas visited in their mission to spread Christianity and the first to come under Christian administration.

### Kourion

One of the most magnificent archaeological sites on the island is the ancient kingdom of Kourion. The spectacular Greco-Roman Theatre, overlooking the blue Mediterranean Sea was built in the 2nd century BC and enlarged in the 2nd century AD, now fully restored; it is used for musical and theatrical performances. The House of Eustolios consists of many rooms with fascinating 5th century AD mosaic floors and a complex of baths. The Early Christian basilica, dated to the 5th century, is thought to have been the Cathedral of Kourion, also to be seen is the Roman era stadium dated back to the 2nd century AD.

### Amathus

Amathus is one of the biggest ancient kingdoms on the island. According to legend, Ariadne, the beautiful daughter of Minos, fled Crete with Theseus and went to Amathus where he abandoned her, while she was pregnant, to fight the Minotaur. There is historical evidence here from at least 3000 years ago. One of the excavator's most significant finds was a temple built high on the cliff, where they worshiped Aphrodite, the Goddess of Beauty and Love. It's a beautiful place to visit, built on the coastal cliffs with an amazing view of the sea, visitors get to explore the area and see the beautiful archaeological treasures.

### Kolossi

The Castle of Kolossi was initially built in 1210 and rebuilt in its present form in the middle of the 15th century. The castle first belonged to King Hugh I who gave it to the Knights of St. John in exchange for their support in his fight against the Muslims. The knights controlled sixty villages on the island and being such good farmers and having a great business sense, all villages were strengthened. Kolossi became one of the Knights' most valuable overseas possessions when they produced the famous Commandaria wine, which was sought after all over Europe and brought the

knights fame and fortune. According to tradition, the Kolossi Castle is where Richard the Lion-heart and Queen Berengaria spent their honeymoon.

### **Lemesos Medieval Castle**

Lemesos (Limassol) Fort is situated in the heart of the old town, just above the old harbour. According to the legend, this is where Richard the Lionheart married Berengaria of Navarre and crowned her Queen of England in 1191. The fortified walls are of considerable archaeological interest and thought to be fragments of a much larger castle.

### **Carob Museum**

The Carob Mill in Lemesos (Limassol) was originally built in the early 1900s when carobs were one of the main exports of Cyprus. They were used in the manufacture of such products as film, medicine, sweets and chocolates. Most of the machinery used in processing the carobs is intact and exhibited in a building that has been renovated so as to combine the authentic atmosphere of the past with the sophisticated high tech look of the present.

### **Lemesos Walking Tour City Route**

Lemesos Walking Tour City Route is organised every Monday at 10:00hrs and covers the most important features – the sea front area known as Molos or embankment. Traditionally a meeting point for the locals, this area was turned into an open-air Sculpture Park exhibiting works of art by Cypriot, Greek and international artists. The tour also takes the visitors by the old port, the Lemesos Castle now a museum on the Byzantine and Medieval history of Cyprus and through the surrounding area home to interesting stone-built warehouses, many of which have become restaurants and exhibition halls. Moreover the walk guides through the Great Mosque or Kepir Mosque, the Cathedral of Agia Napa, the Municipal Market and the traditional shopping centre of Agiou Andreou Street - now a pedestrian area where one can enjoy shopping safely.