

# Cyprus – The Autumn Flowers of Aphrodite's Isle

## Naturetrek Tour Itinerary

---

### Outline itinerary

<b>Day 1</b>	<u>Fly Paphos.</u>
<b>Day 2/3</b>	<u>Wildlife excursions from Paphos.</u>
<b>Day 4/7</b>	<u>Wildlife excursions from Latchi.</u>
<b>Day 8</b>	<u>Fly London.</u>

### Departs

November.

### Focus

Primarily plants, although birds, other wildlife & ancient history will also be enjoyed.

### Grading

Easy day walks only. Grade A.

### Dates and Prices

Visit [www.naturetrek.co.uk](http://www.naturetrek.co.uk) (tour code CYP06) or see the current Naturetrek brochure.

### Highlights:

- A 2-centre wildlife holiday focusing on Cyprus' autumn flowers
- Direct flights into Paphos
- Search for *Narcissus tazetta*, *Cyclamen cyprium* & *Odontites cypria*
- Migrant & wintering birds including Finsch's Wheatear
- Visit the archeological site on Paphos Headland
- Explore the beautiful Akamas Peninsula
- Visit the foothills of the Troodos Mountains
- Led by expert naturalist guides.



Images from top: *Narcissus tazetta*, *Cyclamen cyprium* & Paphos Roman Amphitheatre, Images by Yiannis Christophides & under license from Shutterstock.



Naturetrek

Mingledown Barn

Wolf's Lane

Chawton

Alton

Hampshire

GU34 3HJ

UK

T: +44 (0)1962 733051

E: [info@naturetrek.co.uk](mailto:info@naturetrek.co.uk)

W: [www.naturetrek.co.uk](http://www.naturetrek.co.uk)



## Introduction

Cyprus has become an increasingly popular spring destination for Naturetrek in recent years, at a season when the island is awash with wild flowers and also an important stepping stone for numerous tired migrant birds tracking their way north. The rest of the Cypriot year is then largely ignored by the naturalist, which is a great shame, for after the hot dry summer has passed the island comes alive once more during the latter half of the year. Soon after the first of the autumn rains have fallen, a colourful variety of flowering bulbs – which have laid dormant in the soil for months – burst into life. Flowers such as Sea Daffodil and Sea Squill, along with many sought-after endemics, including *Cyclamen cyprium* and *Odontites cypria*, add a welcome splash of colour to Cyprus's rugged hills and rocky coastline and are the focus of this exciting 2-centre holiday.

In summary, the holiday begins with a 3-night stay in the town of Paphos on Cyprus's western tip. From here we will explore the nearby 'Tomb of the Kings', not only one of the finest archaeological sites on the island, but a wonderful area for autumn flowers including *Muscari parviflorum* and *Narcissus serotinus*. We will also visit the Asprokremmos Reservoir, a regular wintering site for the endemic Cyprus Warbler and rare Finsch's Wheatear. Moving north, we will spend our final four nights near the village of Latchi on the edge of the beautiful Akamas Peninsula. As well as exploring the rocky coastline and Mediterranean maquis of the Akamas Peninsula, we will also head into the foothills of the Troodos Mountains in search of *Cyclamen cyprium* and *Quercus alnifolia*, both endemic, as well as the local race of the Coal Tit. A visit to 'Aphrodite's Isle' would not be complete without time sampling the local tavernas, where we will be sure to enjoy some of the region's culinary highlights too before returning to Paphos for our direct flight home

## Itinerary

**N.B. Please note that the itinerary below offers our planned programme of excursions. However, adverse weather and other local considerations can necessitate some re-ordering of the programme during the course of the tour, though this will always be done to maximise the best use of the time and weather conditions available.**

### Day 1

### Fly Paphos & overnight

We leave from London's Gatwick Airport on an early morning flight to the town of Paphos, located on Cyprus's western extremity. We are due into Paphos Airport early in the afternoon from where we will transfer to a comfortable hotel in the town and then head out for a few hours to look for our first flowers and birds.

### Day 2 - 3

### Wildlife excursions from Paphos

We now have two full days to explore the wildlife and historical highlights around Paphos. The town was founded by the Trojan hero Agapinor and became the capital of Cyprus during the Roman period. The nearby archaeological site has been included in the UNESCO list of cultural and national treasures and the whole surrounding area is dotted with important roman remains. The Tomb of the Kings and nearby floor mosaics in the House of Dionysius are two of the archaeological highlights here, whilst an interesting selection of coastal flowering plants to look out for may include *Taraxacum aphrogenes*, *Muscari parviflorum* and *Narcissus serotinus*. The Paphos Headland on which the Roman remains sit is also a great area to look for Spiny-footed Lizard and a variety

of migrant birds such as Tawny Pipit, Red-backed Shrike and Wryneck or, for the fortunate, perhaps even a wintering Greater Sand Plover.

We will also head further afield from Paphos to explore the Asprokremnos Reservoir, a great area for birds and flowers throughout the year. The reservoir is a regular wintering site for Finsch's Wheatear, a sought-after species that only breeds from eastern Turkey into central Asia, but winters in small numbers in Cyprus. There should also be a colourful variety of autumn-flowering plants such as *Crocus vernis*. After two full days in the field, we will return to Paphos for dinner in a local taverna.

## Day 4

## Transfer Latchi

Next, we transfer to the small coastal town of Latchi, located at the foot of the beautiful Akamas Peninsula. En route we will stop at the Pegeia Forest, one of the best preserved lowland juniper and pine forest on the island and home to *Colchicum pusillum*, *Spiranthes spiralis*, and *Euphorbia dimorphocaulon*. The forest is also home to the endemic Cypriot race of Coal Tit (*Parus ater Cypriotes*), one that may well be elevated to a full species in time! Later we will stop at the small village of Kritou Terra where we will search the terraces above the village for *Ranunculus bullatus*, the Autumn Buttercup, *Scilla autumnalis* and *Muscari parviflorum*. Our 4 nights in Latchi will be based in the comfortable Aphrodite Beach Hotel.

## Day 5 - 7

## Wildlife excursions from Latchi

We will spend much of our time here exploring the beautiful Akamas Peninsula. This is an area of outstanding natural beauty and has largely escaped the development that has blighted other regions of coastal Cyprus. According to legend, Akamas took its name from the Greek mythological hero of the same name, the son of Theseus, who came to Cyprus after the Trojan War and founded Akamantis. The area lies at the easternmost point of three major European floral zones and is therefore extremely botanically rich, including 35 endemic species together with a wide variety of other flora and fauna.

The Akamas Peninsula is edged by dramatic limestone cliffs and clothed in maquis vegetation and a patchwork rocky fields and olive groves. During our time based in Latchi we will explore the region both on foot (directly from our hotel) and by minibus. *Arisarum vulgare*, *Scilla autumnalis*, *Narcissus tazetta* and *Spiranthes spiralis* all grow nearby, whilst Starred Agamas and Troodos Lizards sun themselves on the carob trees. Birds to look out for include Spanish Sparrow, Sardinian Warbler and the vocal, but elusive, Black Francolin. Our hotel sits a short drive from the 'Baths of Aphrodite', an attractive natural pool where the goddess of love was fabled to bath. Here we will walk along the cliffs and explore the botanic gardens in search of an interesting variety of plants including the endemic *Bosea cypria*, plus *Juniperus foetidissima*, *Pistacia terebinthus*, *Pistacia lentiscus* and *Arbutus andrachne*, the eastern Strawberry Tree.

On one day we will head inland for a change of scenery and habitat as we explore the foothills of the Troodos Mountains. Here we can learn about the region's special geology and go in search of two more endemic plants, *Cyclamen cyprium* and *Quercus alnifolia*. We will also explore the Smygies Forest where plants typical of this habitat (which is underlain by ancient serpentine rocks) including the endemics *Ahyssum akamasicum* and *Centaurea veneris*. The attractive *Spiranthes spiralis* should also be in flower among the Pine Trees. After each day's excursion we will return to the Aphrodite Beach Hotel for a summary of the day's many highlights and dinner.

## Day 8

## Fly London

We should have time this morning to take one final short walk near our hotel before returning to Paphos to check-in for our early afternoon Easyjet flight to London Gatwick, arriving back into the UK around 1700 hours.

---

## Tour grading

Grade A - We will use our own minibus to travel around the island, and reach the areas in which we will be walking. Essentially this is a holiday of leisurely walks over mostly easy, undulating, terrain with plenty of stops, although some of the footpaths can be uneven and rocky in places. No luggage needs to be carried apart from field equipment such as binoculars, field guides etc. and a bottle of drink.

## Weather

Cyprus usually enjoys a mild and sunny climate in late November with an average daytime high of 20 degrees C. Early mornings and evenings will be cooler, as it will be in the mountains should our itinerary take us up into the hills. In the autumn and spring cold and wet spells can affect the island from time to time, however, and so it will be wise to include some warm clothes for such eventualities. Without the autumn rains of course there would be no autumn flowers!

## Food & accommodation

This is a two-centre holiday and all meals are included in the cost from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 8. For the first 3 nights of the tour we will be staying in a comfortable Axiothea Hotel in the coastal town of Paphos whilst we explore the nearby wildlife and archaeological sites, with dinners taken in a nearby taverna. We will then travel to Latchi, for our final 4 nights where we will be based in the Aphrodite Beach Hotel just to the west of Polis and near the Baths of Aphrodite on the north coast of the Akamas Peninsula. Rooms in both hotels have private facilities.

## Your safety & security

Risks to your safety and security are an unavoidable aspect of all travel and the best current advice on such risks is provided for you by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. In order to assess and protect against any risks in your chosen destination, it is essential that you refer to the Foreign Office website – [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/cyprus](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/cyprus) or telephone 0870 6060290 prior to travel.

## How to book your place

In order to book a place on this holiday, you will need to read the Naturetrek terms and conditions in the back of our brochure or on our website, and then book either online at [www.naturetrek.co.uk](http://www.naturetrek.co.uk), by calling us on 01962 733051, or by completing and returning the booking form in the brochure together with a deposit of 20% of the holiday cost. If you do not have a copy of this brochure, please call us on 01962 733051.

## Receive our e-newsletter

Join the Naturetrek e-mailing list and be the first to hear about new tours, additional departures and new dates, tour reports and special offers. Visit [www.naturetrek.co.uk](http://www.naturetrek.co.uk) to sign up.

---