

EXPLORE!

BEST SELLER

On Foot in Northern Cyprus
8 days

- Trip code LNC



On Foot in Northern Cyprus

Explore one of the most unspoilt regions of the Mediterranean on this walking trip through North Cyprus' beautiful Besparmak Mountains. Follow quiet, flower-rich mountain trails, leading to imposing Crusader castles, with stunning cobalt-sea backdrops. In Kyrenia, explore the picturesque harbour-front and narrow cobbled backstreets. Every evening we return to our hotel on the outskirts of historic Bellapais to relax by the pool, or enjoy delicious, locally-grown food in nearby restaurants.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Kyrenia** - Visit this picturesque harbour town. Wander around its backstreets and enjoy fresh North Cyprus cuisine at one of the waterfront restaurants
- ★ **Bellapais** - Explore the famous twelfth century Crusader abbey and enjoy our week's accommodation close to this pretty village setting, once home to Lawrence Durrell
- ★ **Crusader castles** - Visit Hilarion Castle. Trek along quiet mountain paths to the imposing Buffavento and Kantara Castles
- ★ **Stunning scenery** - Walk through lush countryside and quaint villages, with views of an impressive coastline
- ★ **Local food** - Enjoy the fresh Mediterranean flavours of mezes and other local dishes

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

WALKING GRADE:

Easy To Moderate

This grade is ideal if you want to enjoy both easy and moderate level walks on the same tour. You'll be walking mainly on good paths and at low altitude, with occasional more demanding ascents or descents.

GROUP SIZE:

10 - 16

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Join tour in Kyrenia

Upon arrival, we will settle in to our hotel on the outskirts of Bellapais village - our base for the next week. Close to Kyrenia and with panoramic views of the town, this friendly hotel offers comfortable rooms, and a swimming pool in which to enjoy a refreshing dip at the end of each day's walking. Depending on your arrival time, you may choose to explore Bellapais village or head into Kyrenia to sample some excellent North Cyprus food and explore the town's beautiful and eclectic mix of Venetian facades, mosques and minarets. Kyrenia is particularly famous for its 'picture postcard' vista of its striking Crusader castle and old harbour set against the dramatic backdrop of the Besparmak Mountains.



Accommodation: Bellapais Monestary Village (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Walk through Besparmak Mountains to Bellapais village

After a morning briefing, a short drive takes us to the start of our first walk in the Besparmak Mountains. Translated as "The Five Fingered Mountain" because of its distinctive jagged peaks, legend has it that the mountain was formed when the Byzantine hero, Dhiyenis Akritas, leapt across the sea from Anatolia, leaving his handprint forever etched into the landscape as he landed. From the Arapkoy area, we will walk through the mountains back to our base in Bellapais, taking a picnic lunch en route in the forest. Made famous by Lawrence Durrell in his 1950s award-winning autobiography, Bitter Lemons, much of the Bellapais village still retains the easy charm of those Durrell days. The village's main attraction is Bellapais Abbey. Now an imposing ruin with spectacular views of Kyrenia and the Mediterranean Sea, it was founded by Augustinian canons fleeing Palestine in 1200. The abbey flourished until it was looted and vandalised during the 14th century Genoese invasion. It went on to earn a reputation for scandal and corruption, eventually shutting down in the 16th century. After visiting the abbey and the famous Tree of Idleness, under which Durrell would often drink coffee, we continue our walk back to. Later this afternoon, we will drive into Kyrenia for an optional visit to Kyrenia Castle and the Shipwreck Museum, which houses the remains of a 4th century BC merchant ship, and a look around this pretty harbour town. Today's 14km walk will be expected to take around 4.5hrs with 300m of ascent and 350m of descent.



Accommodation: Bellapais Monestary Village (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast and Lunch

DAY 3 - Discover Kantara Castle; walk to Kaplica Beach

Heading east, we drive along the coast to Kantara Castle, through a beautiful rural landscape of green fields, olive groves and small villages. En route, we will stop off at Cyprus' largest cavern, Incirli Cave, to see its impressive collection of stalactites and stalagmites along its 100 metre passage. Kantara Castle has seen its fair share of conflict over the centuries. Indeed, Richard the Lionheart won a famous victory here when he defeated the self-proclaimed king of the island, Isaac Komnenos, after the latter's ill-judged slight against Richard's fiancée. After visiting the castle, we have lunch and then enjoy a walk around the varied landscape of the stunning Karpaz Peninsula upon which the castle stands. Before driving back to the hotel, we will have the opportunity to swim and relax on the beautiful Kaplica beach. Today's 7.5km walk is expected to take around 2.5hrs with 50m ascent and 450m descent.



Accommodation: Bellapais Monestary Village (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast and Lunch

DAY 4 - Visit Saint Hilarion Castle; walk to the hillside village of Lapta

This morning we visit Saint Hilarion castle, a stunning historic fort. We then drive to the western edge of the Besparmak Mountain range that also offers spectacular views over the Mediterranean Sea. Starting in the village of Kozan, we will walk among wild flowers and orchids to the ruins of the Sinai Monastery. Although very little is known about this building's history, archaeologists are in agreement about its Byzantine importance. We continue walking on a forest track to Lapta Village, taking a picnic lunch en route, before returning to our hotel. Today's 10km walk is expected to take around 4hrs with 150m ascent and 450m descent.



Accommodation: Bellapais Monestary Village (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast and Lunch

DAY 5 - Optional excursion to the historic city of Famagusta

Today has been left free for you to use as you wish. You may choose to visit Famagusta - once one of the richest cities and most important trading ports in the world. The so-called 'City of 365 Churches' has been ravaged by severe wars and earthquakes throughout history, but still contains beautiful examples of medieval and gothic architecture. William Shakespeare is purported to have used it as the setting for Othello and the Venetian Citadel, overlooking the harbour, is popularly known as Othello's Tower. Just five miles to the north of Famagusta is the ancient site of Salamis, which is also well-worth a visit. With its significant collection of Mycenaean, Roman and Byzantine artefacts, it is the most important ancient city on the island. Alternatively, you may prefer to use your day to relax, spending time on one of the local beaches.



Accommodation: Bellapais Monestary Village (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 6 - Hike amongst the ancient sites of the western coast

Today we head out to the West Coast, through one of the most fertile agricultural regions in Cyprus, with huge polythene hot-houses growing an abundance of fruit and vegetables. From the village of Kalkanli, our walk takes in pretty countryside and interesting archaeological sites, such as the Iron Age Tumba tou Skuru. Its excavation in the 1970s uncovered just a fraction of the site and many mysteries about its use and the people buried there remain unsolved. Unfortunately, the political situation has prevented much-needed further excavation. We have a picnic lunch en route, before descending to the coast. Our walk finishes by the sea. Today's 15km walk is expected to take around 4.5hrs with 200m descent.



Accommodation: Bellapais Monestary Village (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast and Lunch

DAY 7 - Visit Buffavento Castle; descend to Bellapais monastery

Transferring by bus this morning, we head for the highest of the Kyrenia strongholds, the ruined fortress of Buffavento. The name means 'buffeted by the wind' and a walk up to the top of the highest tower helps us to understand why. On a clear day, our efforts are rewarded with a spectacular view of half the island, with the Troodos Mountains, Famagusta and Nicosia stretching out beneath us. From here we take our picnic lunch and follow our walking route via the tiny Church of Panayia Plataniotissa, housed inside the hollow of a huge plane tree. Before our bus picks us up from the Alevkaya Herbarium, we will have a chance to look around. Founded by a British botanist in the 1980s, it is home to over 1,250 flora specimens of Northern Cyprus. Today's 13km walk is expected to take around 4hrs with a 70m ascent and 170m descent.



Accommodation: Bellapais Monestary Village (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast and Lunch

DAY 8 - Tour ends in Kyrenia

Our tour ends after breakfast this morning.



Meals Provided: Breakfast

Walking and Trekking information

DAILY DISTANCES

Day 2	14km
Day 3	7.5km
Day 4	10km
Day 5	
Day 6	15km
Day 7	13km

Walking grade

Easy to moderate

Trek details

We walk on 5 days with a daily average of 4 hours, mainly on established paths. This trek has been graded as easy to moderate.

Max walking altitude (m)

820



Why book this trip

Get off the beaten track and explore the real North Cyprus.

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 7
Lunch: 5



Transport

Bus



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader
Driver(s)



Accommodation

7 nights standard hotel

Trip information

Country information

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

Famagusta & Salamis - optional day trip. 3-6 people £50, 7-11 people £45 and 12-16 people £35

Clothing

Clothing should be lightweight. However a warm layer is also advisable for walking in the mountains, particularly at the beginning and end of the season. A jumper or fleece is also advisable for the evenings during these times as temperatures can drop sharply. A raincoat is advisable for early spring as there may be sporadic rain showers.

Footwear

Bring well broken in walking boots or shoes with ankle support, plus sandals or trainers for relaxing.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

You may bring one main piece of baggage and a daypack. Remember you may be expected to carry your own luggage at the airport and hotel so don't overload yourself.

Equipment

We recommend that the equipment you bring includes a personal water bottle, trekking poles, insect repellent, suncream, lip salve, sunhat, sunglasses and a day sack. You may also wish to bring binoculars.

Tipping

Explore leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Explore Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Local crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. In order to make things easier for you, the Explore Leader may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the trip.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus

Accommodation notes

Booking a Single Room

All of our group tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. Please refer to the tour notes where the single room option availability is detailed on a night by night basis for this tour, and the price for the available nights is detailed on the dates & prices tab by departure date. For Self-Guided trips the Single Room supplement offers the option of a single room each and is charged per person. The Single Room supplement also applies to the third person in a party of three that will be accommodated in a single room.

Bellapais Monastery Village Hotel is located in the foothills of the Besparmak Mountains, within walking distance of Bellapais village and the abbey. It is in an area of outstanding natural beauty around three kilometres from Kyrenia, with views down to the coast.

With two outdoor swimming pools and a roof terrace there is a lot of space to relax outside and enjoy these sea views. From here it is also easy to discover nearby Bellapais, or take the courtesy bus into Kyrenia to explore the harbour, castle and narrow backstreets. The hotel facilities include the two outdoor swimming pools with pool loungers, a pool bar and an indoor pool. There are two restaurants: one a roof restaurant with a roof terrace bar. Breakfast is included. Lunch snacks are available at the pool bar, while a la carte menus are available for dinner in the restaurants. Other hotel facilities include a sauna, a steam bath and massage treatments. All the standard rooms have air -conditioning, satellite television, direct dial telephone, minibar, safe box, and an en suite bathroom with shower and hairdryer. A kettle and cups are also provided. All the rooms have a balcony or terrace. The Bellapais Monastery Village Hotel provides an ideal base for walking in the area. During this trip you'll have the opportunity to partake in a number of day walks that showcase the mountains, beaches and history that the region is famed for, as well as having time at leisure for you to relax at the hotel or explore Kyrenia.

Essential information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Essential Information

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa Information

Northern Cyprus: Visas are not required by UK, EU nationals, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our [Essential Information](#) and [Booking Conditions](#).

Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance

policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Maximum altitude (m)

820
