



Cyprus
in your heart



Cyprus - Your Diving Destination



Cyprus, your diving destination...

where Aphrodite rose from the sea

Cyprus has a lot to offer: an average of 310 days of sunshine per year, water temperatures of 15°C in winter and up to 26°C during the summer months. It's not surprising that the island is attracting divers all the year round from almost every country on the globe to enjoy the waters which once delivered Aphrodite to us. When divers think of Cyprus, the first thing that springs to mind is the sunken wreck of the Zenobia, which constitutes one of the three largest wrecks in the Mediterranean, with a length of some 172 metres and its erstwhile cargo of 104 trucks. The hull of the Swedish ferry, which sank in 1980, lies at a depth of between 16 and 42 metres and ranks amongst the top 10 diveable wrecks worldwide.

But even picky divers need not worry about a lack of spectacle on Cyprus: long tunnels and canyons, mystical caves, ancient amphora along the Roman harbours, majestic arches, steep rock faces descending deep down to the ocean floor and a rich underwater flora and fauna, unique for the Mediterranean due to the proximity of the Red Sea.

Paradise for wreck divers

Agia Napa and the neighbouring area of Protaras are located in the southeast of the island and boast long sandy beaches as well as rocky cliffs riddled with caves.

The temptations of the underwater world are manifold. The Zenobia definitely makes top of the list in this respect, a massive wreck lying close to the shore in the bay of Larnaka, only about 15 (boat) minutes from the cosy marina. Non-divers need not do without the rich maritime life which the Zenobia is home to.

For fans of wreck diving, we have some more interesting recommendations: There's HMS Cricket, a British gunboat that sank in 1947 to a depth of 32 metres, the Fraggie, a barge still carrying its cargo of stones at 16 metres depth - right beside a rather photogenic sunken helicopter - and the fishing boat Alexandria with a length of 35 metres. Countless caves weave through picturesque little bays, like the ones at Cape Gkreko featuring expansive tunnels flooded with light.

Climate Chart Cyprus

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
∅ average temperature	14°	15°	16°	18°	22°	26°	29°	29°	27°	24°	20°	16°
∅ water temperature	15°	15°	15°	16°	18°	21°	24°	26°	25°	23°	21°	17°
sunrise ∅	07:11	06:48	06:11	06:28	05:55	05:44	05:56	06:20	06:44	07:08	06:38	07:05
sunset ∅∅	17:12	17:44	18:10	19:36	20:01	20:21	20:20	19:53	19:10	18:27	16:55	16:49
∅ hrs of sun / day	6	6	7	9	10	12	13	11	9	8	6	5
∅ rainfall [mm]	89	61	41	23	7	3	0	7	40	90	80	112
∅ days of rain	14	11	9	6	3	1	0	1	4	10	11	14
∅ humidity [%]	72	71	71	71	69	66	65	69	70	71	73	73



Libyan freighter Vera K and the amphora caves, a system of underwater caverns, the ceilings of which are peppered with encrusted amphora. The shore dives also offer a range of possibilities, for example Manidjin Isle, its picturesque bay recalls the Caribbean. Steep cliffs, more caves and a landscape of archways won't keep you out of the water for long.

A place for turtles

The Akamas peninsula in the north-west of Cyprus not only features practically untouched beaches. These are excellent locations for divers to do a bit of turtle-spotting. With a little luck you'll encounter dozens of turtles during a single dive. Unlike the south-eastern part, this area is very tranquil and retains most of its natural condition, which is why typical tourist infrastructure like discotheques and fast food restaurants are far and few between. But, luckily for our purposes, there are well-equipped diving bases, which - after a brief tutorial - rent out small motorboats for trips to remote bays or an individually planned and executed diving adventure.

Fish-Reserve

The port town of Lemesos, an hour from Pafos and two from Agia Napa, welcomes its visitors with a continuous stretch of sandy beaches. Several interesting boat dives can be explored a couple of minutes to the west. Fairly early on, you will encounter the 60-metre-long wreck of the freighter Farsas II (no longer accessible), sunk deep into the soft sand. This is followed by the fish-reserve and many other dives along the rocky Akrotiri peninsula, like The Tombs, which recall prehistoric burial sites - in fact they may be just that.

Natural coast lines

Pafos is located 45 minutes to the southwest of Latchi - a place that offers both large and small bathing beaches as well as untouched, rocky coastal stretches and a wide range of tourist attractions, including the World Heritage Site „Tombs of the Kings“. Several interesting boat dives off the little town's shore beckon the diver, including the

Aphrodite must have had a good reason to choose this spot for her ascension from the sea. Whatever those were, the fact remains that today, Cyprus supplies such a wide range of cultural, leisure and sports activities, well-kept infrastructure and truly special dives that it can be visited for a diving holiday or indeed as both a relaxation and action holiday destination. Cyprus has lots to offer when it comes to diving and is constantly improving its offers. Cyprus - the place to dive, all the year round!





Diving bases in Cyprus

There are numerous diving bases all over Cyprus offering high quality services to divers. You can find them all in the Cyprus Dive Centre Association's website below:



Imprint

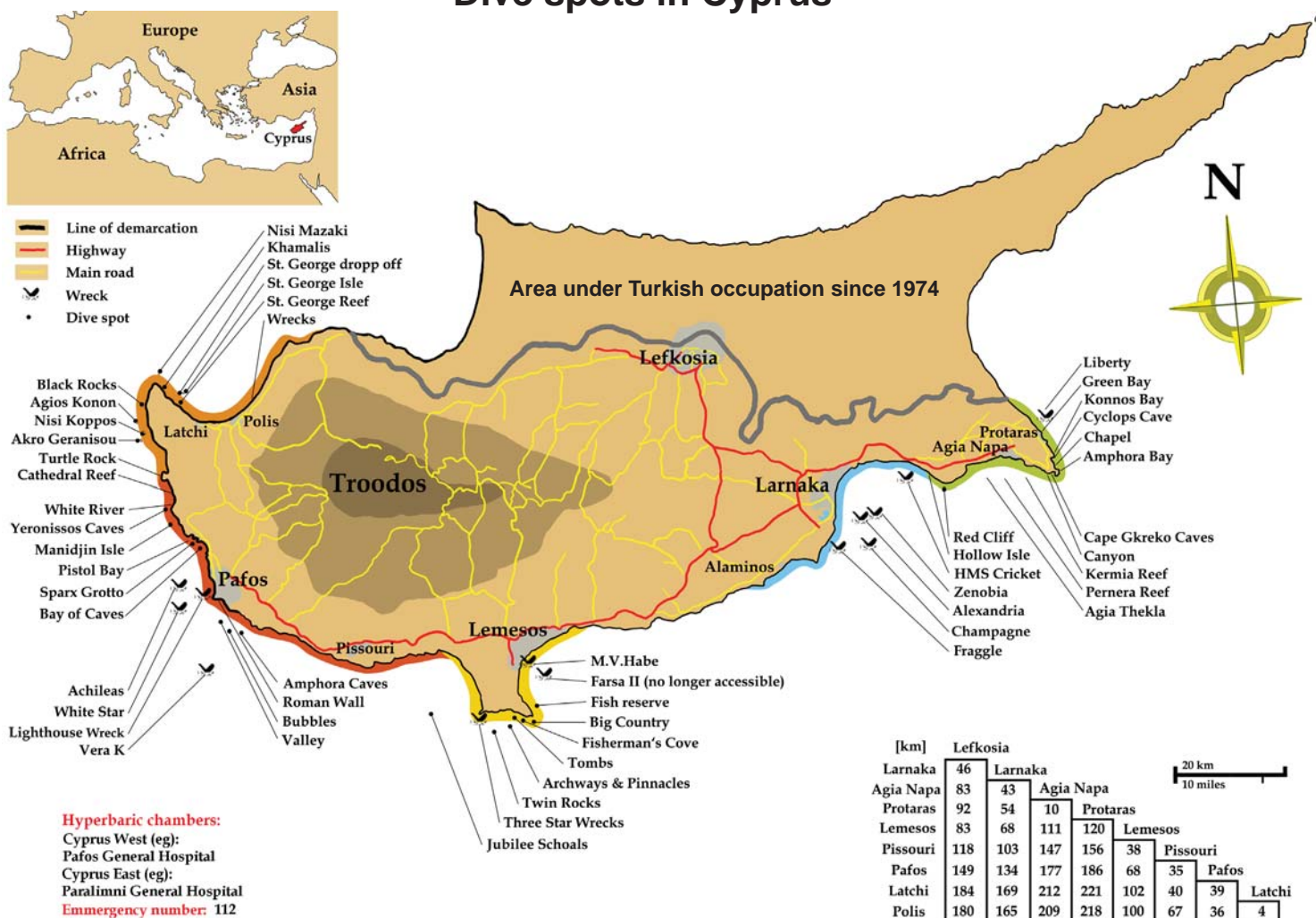
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This short diving guide does not lay any claims on comprehensiveness. All information has been carefully researched and checked, however, we cannot be held responsible for any errors regarding validity of content. Special thanks to the Cyprus Diver's Association for their valued support.

For further information on Cyprus, please visit www.visitcyprus.com.

Dive spots in Cyprus



Agia Napa and Protaras



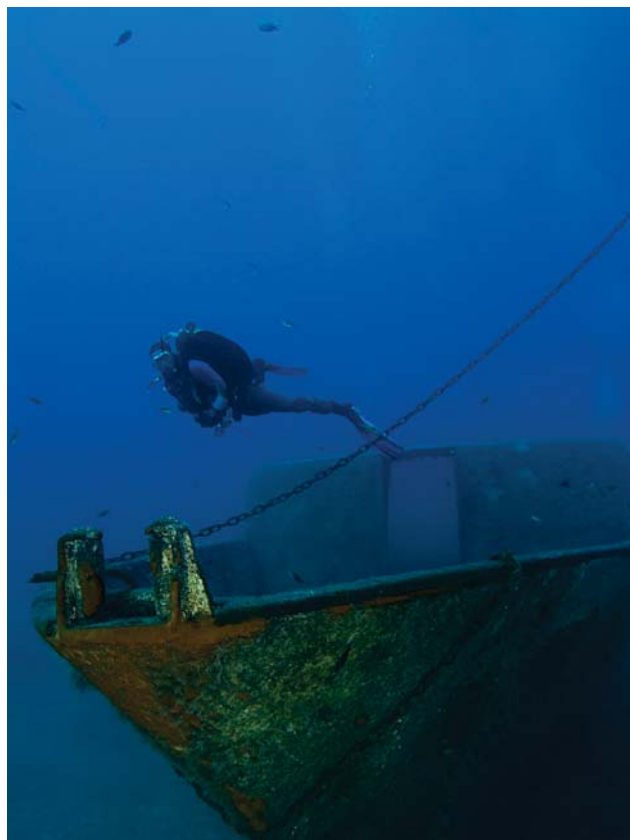
The Chapel A small, picturesque chapel at Cape Gkreko marks the entry point to this popular spot for swimmers, snorkellers and divers alike. Steps lead down the steep cliff face to the crystal-clear water. Below the surface, a rocky coast line with beautiful overhangs and ledges await the divers. The ocean floor consists mainly of sand, littered with small rocks and encrusted shattered amphora.

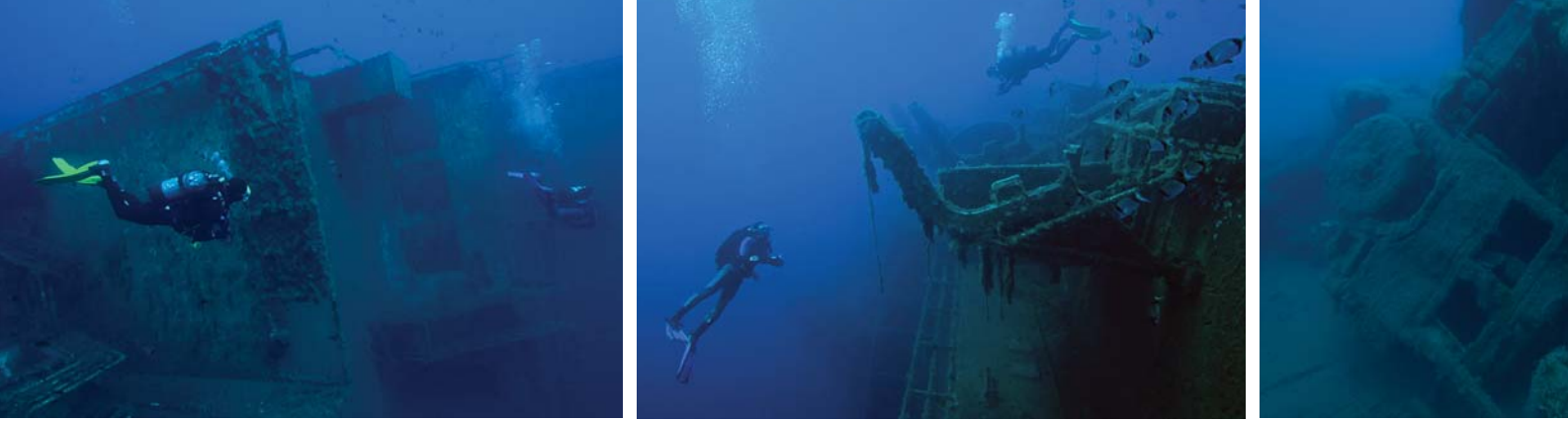


Cape Gkreko A beautiful rocky coastal area is located on the south-eastern tip of Cyprus that has enthralled divers for a long time. Even the entry point of this land dive is a bit of a spectacle; the clear water sparkles in hues of turquoise through the natural stone archway. The diving path leads across shallow meadows of seaweed and sandy planes onto an expansive rocky area, where a large crevice in the rocks beckons. Long tunnels zig zag through the rock formation, taking the diver through curtains of shimmering light that filter in through many small openings. Curious prawns keep the divers company on this magical trip.

Further diving tips Most diving sites in the area around Agia Napa and Protaras are easy to reach, largely sheltered from wind and weather and also suitable for beginners. A rather imposing underwater landscape awaits at the **Canyon**. Several small ravines are nestled together, offering stunning views of the azure deep. Large groupers, wary moray eels and cleverly disguised octopuses populate **Kermia Reef** in a depth of between 25 and 42 metres. **Cyclops Cave** is a magnificent half-submerged grotto, and being a shallow dive, frequently attracts snorkellers.

The biggest highlight in Protaras is without a doubt the **Liberty** wreck, lying at a depth of between 25 and 30 metres. The fishing vessel, with a hull measuring some 40 metres in length, was purposely sunk to create an artificial reef as part of a programme to foster maritime life in the ocean surrounding Cyprus. In 2014 further reefs were created, one being the **Nemesis III**, a 40-metre-long cargo ship, right beside the Liberty. This offers divers a unique chance to get a “preview” of their next dive while exploring one of the reefs - made possible by the excellent visibility in these waters.





Larnaka and the Zenobia

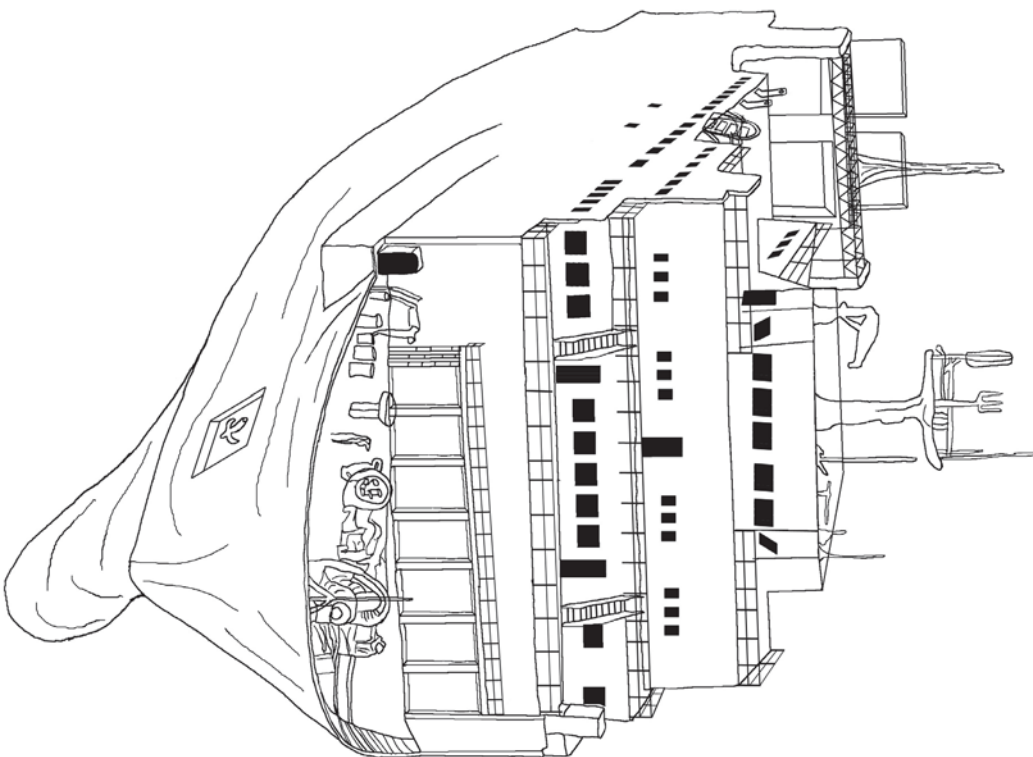
The massive wreck of the Zenobia is located some 15 minutes by boat from Larnaka harbour, lying at a depth of between 16 and 43 metres only. It does not only constitute one of three largest wrecks in the Mediterranean sea, but also easily ranks amongst the top 10 diveable wrecks worldwide.

In June 1980, the Swedish RoRo-ferry began her maiden voyage, with cargo bays full, in Greece enroute to Syria and sank only 2 km from the Cyprus coast (see "History of the Zenobia" below). In the decades that followed, the sea has embraced the wreck and filled this huge wreck with life. Today, an enthralling symbiosis between the artificial and natural has evolved. The two massive propellers on port side, each shovel dwarfing a diver easily, now double as the home of a big moray eel, which pokes its head out of a small opening at the uppermost propeller. And the lorries - the Zenobia's erstwhile cargo - are not merely vehicles that float in suspension in the cargo bays or litter the

ocean floor around the gigantic wreck in an approximate depth of 42m, but have turned into a stomping ground for countless fish. Schools of barracudas and curious brasses or big groupers may be seen at every dive. The vigilant diver may even be able to spot the loggerhead sea turtle within the debris, where it searches for food.

Unrivalled visibility

After only few minutes, the diving boat anchors directly above the Zenobia which lies on its portside. This gigantic wreck already lures the diver standing on the diving boat visible and inviting beneath. Due to the vast size of the wreck, at least two dives are necessary to fully appreciate this marvel of the ocean floor. A penetration of the approximately 70 metres long cargo bays or the narrow and winding engine room deep inside of the wreck is only recommendable/possible with the aid of a professional



Zenobia Data

Length max:	172m
Width max:	25m
Depth min:	16m
Depth max:	43m
Depth bow:	33m
Depth bulbous bow:	35m
Entrance A cargo:	21m
Entrance B cafeteria:	26m

Depth Ranges

Propellers	28 - 39m
Cargo area:	21 - 42m
Loading ramp:	20 - 38m
Superstructures:	18 - 40m
Bridge:	25 - 35m
Cafeteria:	18 - 30m



diving guide. All dives start at the central descent line which is fixed to the Zenobia. Due to the excellent visibility, the well-preserved and seemingly endless wreck begins working its magic as soon as you enter the clear waters.

An imposing spectacle

The first dive leads towards the huge bow of the ship, along the railing, past the only remaining lifeboat and the mounting brackets of the missing ones to the easily accessible bridge and the spacious cafeteria. The never ending superstructures of the Zenobia accompany the diver during the whole dive. It is inadvisable to linger for too long, since the massive anchor and imposing bow of the ship still await further on. A special surprise is to be enjoyed in the easy accessible and erstwhile cafeteria: Through countless windows and hatches sunlight streams into the sunken ship, creating a startling riot of shimmering ambient light.

The second dive starts again at the descent line and continues towards the stern and the unrivalled highlight of this dive: Over 100 trucks float in eerie suspension within the huge cargo bay. The two enormous propellers present the breath-taking final stage of this dive, before the return along the 16-metres long railing. Penetration of the wreck is possible at numerous access hatches but requires careful planning and guidance in order to prevent getting lost in the labyrinthine innards of the ship.

The sheer size of this wreck, together with its many highlights and the multi-coloured maritime life combine to mesmerize divers. Thus it is not surprising that the Zenobia has started to attract an ever-growing group of regular visitors. Non-divers need not do without the experience that is the Zenobia. Glass-boats offer scheduled trips and a submersible regularly takes visitors to the wreck - presenting a unique look at this giant of the ocean.



Further diving tips

Alexandria This 35-metre-long wreck lies only 200 metres beside the Zenobia. The more timid ocean dwellers have chosen this spot as their home, which is why the vessel is completely overgrown - eerie in the shadows.

Fraggle The cargo barge sank complete with its load of heavy stone blocks. Today, the blocks have been dispersed and litter the surrounding ocean floor - a welcome retreat for eels, moray eels and a variety of other fish. The dive leads past the wreck, along a large scaffolding structure to a sunken helicopter.

HMS Cricket The wreck of the British gunboat HMS Cricket was involved in combat action during WW1. Today, the vessel lies at a depth of 65 metres, with its keel facing upwards. A perfect hiding place for octopuses, moray eels, eels and groupers.

History of the Zenobia

The Swedish RoRo (roll-on-roll-off) - ferry, measuring 172 metres in length, was built in 1980 to increase traffic on the Greece-Syria Express Line. She began her maiden voyage in Sweden (Malmö), passed Gibraltar on 22 May 1980 and headed for Koper (now Slovenia). After a brief stop in Volos (Greece) the ship got under way, with brimming cargo bays, to Tartous (Syria).

Just off Cyprus, the ship banked. The Zenobia was equipped with a computer-assisted stabilising system, designed to compensate such banking by filling water tanks on the opposite side of the bays. A malfunction of this system caused the water tanks on the wrong side to be filled. In the course of the following days, the ship inclined further and further until it finally sank, on June 7th 1980, only 2 kilometres from the nearby harbour of Larnaka. Today, the vessel lies - entirely intact - portside on a sandy plane in a depth of approximately 42 metres.





Lemesos



Pyramids In the sandy planes of Lemesos several underwater attractions have sprung up during recent years. Large, hollow stone blocks were assembled into pyramids and other structures. The aim in the creation of these artificial reefs was the preservation of local flora and fauna and luckily, nature has quickly accepted this offer - they have become a worthwhile destination for divers. Curious divers are rewarded with a wide variety of snails and other small sea-dwellers.

Fish Reserve The Akrotiri peninsula marks the southernmost point of Cyprus and also the western end of Akrotiri Bay. It is home to the fish-reserve, a shallow and diverse dive very close to the British military base. The clear, tranquil waters offer perfect conditions for a variety of local ocean flora and fauna. Visibility is excellent and regularly exceeds 30 metres, which makes the spotting of groupers and octopuses very easy and what's more, the creatures are so accustomed to visitors they have become almost tame. In the midst of this natural haven lie the remains of military manoeuvres, such as the hull of an abandoned helicopter. An excellent location for snorkellers, scuba- and free divers.

Further diving tips The area around Lemesos is of a sandy constitution and is consequently less habitable than the rocky stretches along the coast. Apart from the pyramids and the (no longer accessible) Farsas II, plans are underway to sink further wrecks and to create conservation areas in order to maximise living space.

The Akrotiri peninsula presents varied possibilities to the diver, for example when they puzzle whether the caves and grottos of **The Tombs** are prehistoric burial sites or merely vagaries of nature. While the **Caverns and Caves** offer a reef with countless grottos, the spectacular **Fisherman's Cove** boasts a long diveable tunnel. The freighter **Three Stars Wreck**, with a weight of 1000 metric tons, beckons divers who prefer to approach by land and experienced divers relish the boat dive at **Jubilee Schoals**. It leads along massive rocks, reminiscent of huge stalagmites, across a plunging cliff face to a large, beautifully overgrown cave at a depth of 33 metres and entrances on three sides.

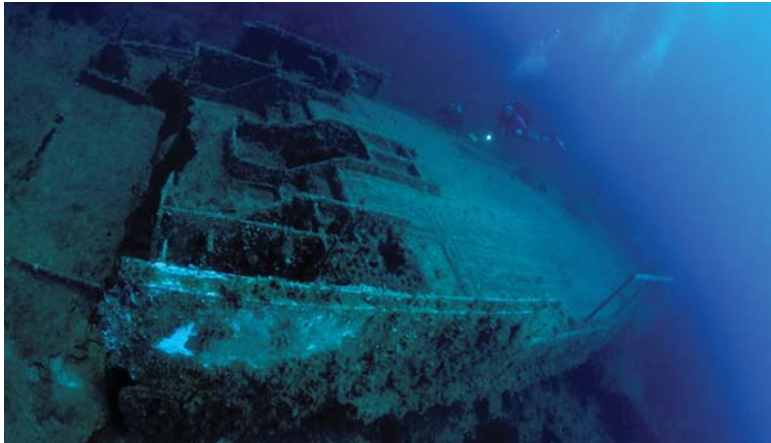
Pafos

Manidjin Isle Between Lara and Pafos and opposite the fishing harbour of St. George, lies Nisi Geronisos, better known to divers as Manidjin Isle. A dive taking you to a depth of between 10 and 15 metres and reachable both by land and boat. Vertical cliff faces, large holes spread out across shallow planes, tunnels and openings, a chimney leading all the way back up to the surface and spacious caverns with several entrances and exits make this dive quite unique. This conservation area is populated with varieties of cuttlefish, shoals of barracudas and breams.

White Star The White Star originated as a Russian fishing boat in the Black Sea and after refurbishment served as an excursion boat on Cyprus. The vessel hit a shelf in February 2007 and sank only a few miles from Pafos. Today, the White Star lies cushioned by seaweed and rocks at a depth of between 14 and 18 metres. A winter storm rent the wreck into two parts, causing the ship's bow to be scattered like a jigsaw puzzle on the ocean floor. The shallow location and excellent visibility combined with the swift descent make this a relaxing dive, which is also suitable for beginners.

Further diving tips The rocky coast off Pafos has lots to offer when it comes to land and boat dives. Experienced divers should have no problem organising their own individual, unguided land dives.

Wreck-diving enthusiasts will be thrilled by the remains of the **Vera K** with her overgrown archways nearby or with the Greek freighter **Achileas** and its propeller, which is covered in a plethora of bronze sponges. Explorers will be lured into the many caves and concealed grottos which are embedded in the jagged underwater landscape of **Pistol Bay**. Lovers of natural beauty will be entranced by the flora and fauna of the **Roman Walls**: Broadnosed pipefish, hermit crabs, octopuses and cuttlefish dart among the ancient remains in fairly shallow waters - incidentally also a great location for a night dive. The unrivalled **Amphora Cave** needs to be mentioned, featuring ceilings and walls peppered with encrusted amphora.



Akamas



St. George Drop-off It's quite a challenge to find more beautiful cliff faces than those at St. George Drop Off. The island of Agios Georgios lies east of the Akamas peninsula and hosts a reserve for birds and maritime life. Huge sponges, shimmeringly overgrown cliffs and secretive octopuses, cuttlefish, hermit crabs and many other creatures makes this dive quite a highlight.

St. George Reef Opposite the island of Agios Georgios, directly beneath the towering cliffs of the Akamas peninsula a shallow diving spot sprawls, littered with colourful overhangs, cavernous archways, rock formations as well as elongated openings and canyons. Nature has all but claimed back the countless pieces of shattered amphora. A diverse playground for any diver.

Nissi Koppos This remote spot around the island of Koppos, west of the Akamas peninsula, is something of an insider's tip, especially since it is best explored in the early hours of the morning, when you might catch a glimpse of the Mediterranean monk seal. The rocky island is surrounded by several tiers of planes, which at intervals are laced with large holes that open into bottle-like basins, while button polyps and sponges have happily taken over the walls of tunnels, overhangs and crevices. The "washing machine" awards a unique experience: divers are sucked into the flush of air-bubbles created by the waves and expelled a few metres further on.

Further diving tips In the extreme north of the Akamas peninsula, which is all but unpopulated, only rugged rocks stand sentinel against the crashing of the waves and offer welcome shelter to all sorts of creatures both on the surface and below. The Mediterranean monk seal inhabits this wonderful stretch of coastline, which can only be reached by boat.

To the east of the peninsula, at [Khamalis](#) or [Nisi Mazaki](#), large expanses covered with hundreds of feather duster worms let the visitor marvel at nature's ingenuity, while charming grottos, expansive caves and breath-taking cliffs stretch along the east coast and around the isles of [Agios Konon](#) and [Akro Geranisou](#). Black Rock surprises the visitor with a plunging canyon, embedded in black lava-like stone.





A place for turtles

Turtles have existed for over 200 million years and consequently rank among the oldest inhabitants of our planet. Two species, the loggerhead sea turtle and the green turtle, inhabit the Mediterranean. Both are endangered species and since 1971, Cyprus has endeavoured to save their natural habitat so they can live peacefully and lay eggs.

Lara Bay South and Lara Bay North are home to two of the most stunning beaches in all of Cyprus, which have always been an important hatchery for sea turtles. The beginning of June at dusk sees the first females struggle onto the beach to deposit their eggs into small holes in the sand. If all goes well, the mini turtles hatch after 50 to 60 days, but despite the tireless dedication of conservationists, only 1 in 1000 babies survives. A dispiriting but vital effort for the future.



Turtle Rock A ragged stretch of coast line, about 1 kilometre long, divides Lara Bay South and Lara Bay North and is a popular meeting place for both the loggerhead sea turtle and the green turtle. This area is easily reached by boat or car from Pafos and Latchi. It's a dream come true for divers, offering everything from small caves, long canyons, colourful archways to interesting rock formations. The flora and fauna are typically rich in this conservation area and with a bit of luck, you might spot a turtle or two.

Almost at the open sea, mythical underwater worlds beckon and apart from the usual shattered pieces of ancient amphora, you might even find an unblemished specimen in the depths.



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