

# CLIMATE & COLOR

**S**unshine for more than 320 days a year makes the varied landscapes rich in lush vegetation.

Around 100 miles long and 40 miles across at its widest point, Northern Cyprus encompasses mountains, plains and beaches. The Kyrenia range, with its magnificent jagged limestone peaks and forests of conifer, cedar and pine, forms a startling backdrop to most of the northern coastline. To the east, the mountain range loses height as it extends along the narrow peninsula known as Karpas, The Panhandle. This is where the best beaches are to be found, with empty white sand stretching for miles.

The mountains give way to the south to the fertile Mesaoria plains, with extensive fields of cereals. To the west lie the citrus groves, producing the the main export crop, while back towards the sea, the coastal plain is cloaked in groves of olive, almond and carob, and the villages are a triumph of bougainvillea, hibiscus and oleander.

## ANCIENT TOWNS

Girne (Kyrenia) is the main resort town on the northern coast, followed by Gazimagusa (Famagusta) on the eastern coast. Girne dates to at least the 10th century B.C. and was one of the original nine kingdoms of Cyprus. Its Byzantine castle and lively harbour draw tourists from all over. The fortified town of Gazimagusa is said to have been a stepping stone between the Near East and Europe, developing during the Lusignan reign, when the diverse races of the Near East brought their cultures and wealth to settle in what was then the chief business town of the Mediterranean.

The capital, Lefkosa (Nicosia) is bounded by 4.5 kilometers of Venetian ramparts. Inside the city walls are beautiful examples of Gothic and Ottoman architecture. It is divided into Turkish and Greek sectors.

*Jasmine Hotel*



**Joint tourism agreement – Tahsin Ertugruloğlu**



**Looking for new routes – Ilker Tuncay, Cyprus Turkish Airlines**

## KIBRIS TÜRK HAVA YOLLARI CYPRUS TURKISH AIRLINES

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Cyprus Turkish Airlines (KTHY) was established in 1974. In 1981, its first international flight operated from Lefkosa (Nicosia) to London (U.K.) via Turkey.

Today, KTHY is one of the largest companies on the island, employing more than 700 local people. It flies from Lefkosa to six centers in Turkey – Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, Antalya, Adana and Dalaman. From Turkey, it operates flights to London (Heathrow and Stansted), Manchester, Glasgow, Belfast, Milan, Dusseldorf, Stuttgart, Hannover, Hamburg and Cologne.

The inaugural flight to Glasgow took place on 1 April, 2002, and underlines the airline's determination to add new routes. "Though the air transportation sector has been experiencing a depression all over the world, we are working hard to introduce new flight destinations," says Chairman of the Board of Directors, Mr Ilker Tuncay. "Our mission is to act as the flag carrier for the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, to support and expand the tourist industry of Northern Cyprus and to perform our operations in a professional and profitable way."

"We very much hope the international restrictions which prevent us having direct flights to and from international destinations are lifted soon. The obligation to land in Turkey before being able to fly to our international destinations inevitably increases our costs which has a direct effect on ticket prices."



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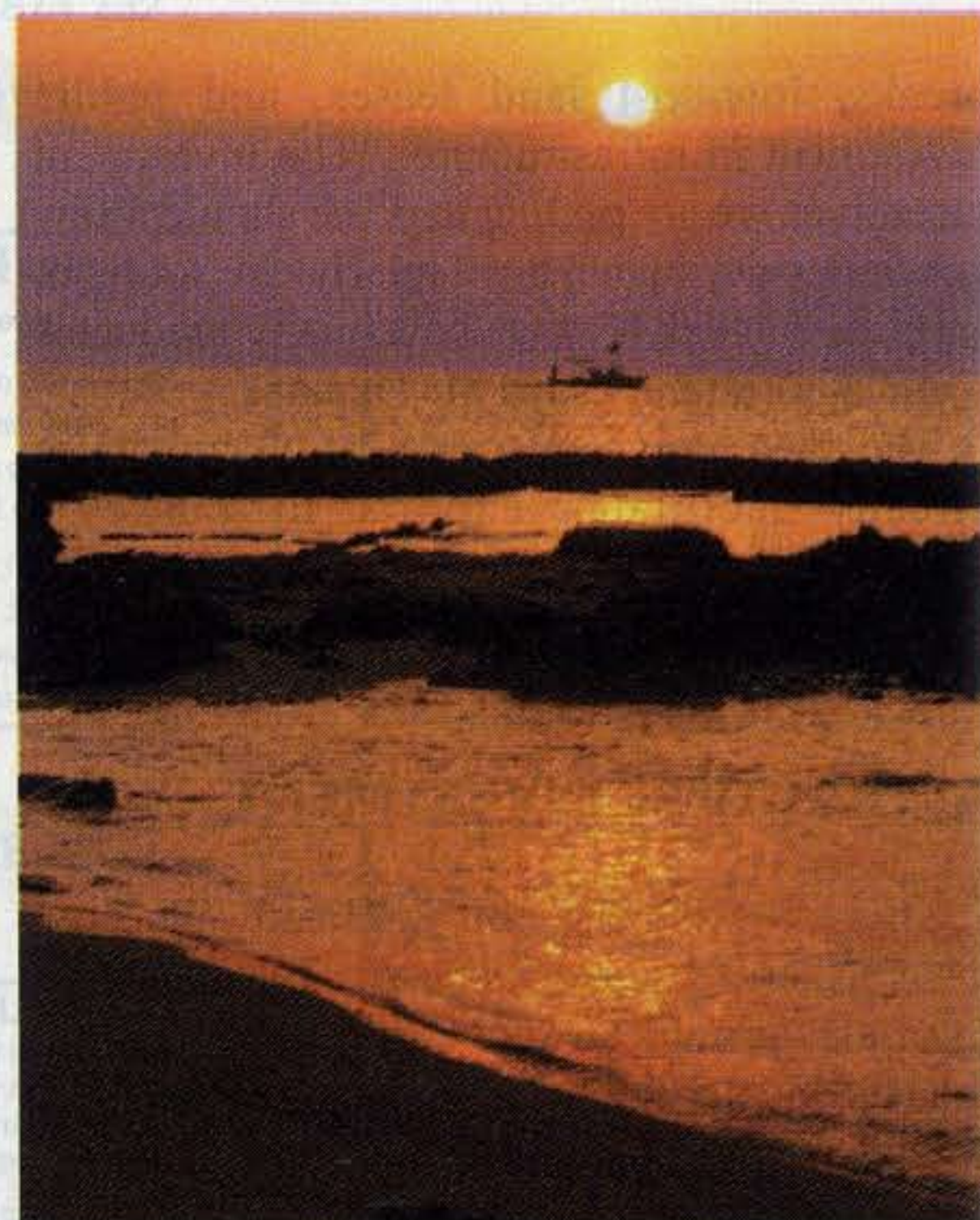
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*Beautiful beaches beckon at any time of day*

Tourism development is a high priority for the administration. Tahsin Ertugruloglu is responsible for foreign affairs and he recently signed an agreement with Turkey for the establishment of a joint tourism sector between Turkey and Northern Cyprus, bringing in tour operators, travel agencies and similar private enterprises, and creating joint marketing and promotion.

Meanwhile, the First International Congress on Tourism will take place in November in Gazimagusa, with tourism professionals, experts and researchers invited from around the world to discuss tourism and hospitality development at local, regional, national and international levels.

### **PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT**

However, the emphasis remains firmly on protecting the environment which makes Northern Cyprus so attractive – so-called “soft” tourism. “We prefer to focus on ‘niches’ tourism, respecting places, people and nature,” says Serdar Denktas, who is responsible for tourism and the environment.

Nearly 225,000 tourists visited Northern Cyprus in the year to July 2002, and for the January to July 2002 period arrivals were 10% up on the year before. Significantly, the rise in foreign visitors was higher at

20.4% compared to a 7% increase in Turkish tourists. The vast majority are European, from the U.K., Germany, Italy, France and Scandinavia.

Accommodation ranges from campsites and traditional Turkish Cypriot houses to hotels offering one star to five star luxury.

The deluxe Colony Hotel in the heart of Girne has recently opened for business, a colonial-style \$12 million project which took four years to construct. It has all the expected five star facilities – restaurant, brasserie, bar, shops, casino, gardens, and so on – and an impressive roof terrace laid out like a grand Roman forum. Meanwhile, the rooftop swimming pool is 20 meters above the sea, with magnificent mountain views.

The sea itself is the attraction for many visitors, for swimming, snorkelling, sailing and skiing. For wildlife watchers on land, this part of the island also attracts millions of migratory birds each year, including ibis, flamingo and hoopoes. There are numerous protected areas, including Alagadi beach, one of the last in the Mediterranean where two species of protected sea turtles, *Caretta Caretta* and the Green Turtle (*Chelonia Mydas*) go in their hundreds to lay their eggs in July and August.

January to early May is the best time to go for wild flowers, when the countryside is a blaze of colour with crown anemones and pink

rock roses, purple iris and yellow crowfoot, and over 30 species of wild orchids. Hiking through the mountains is a thrill for all the senses. It's no surprise that legend has it that Julius Caesar gave this island to Cleopatra as a token of his love.

History lovers will also find a kaleidoscope of architectural and cultural sites, with ancient cities, fortified castles, monasteries and traditional dwellings, from the Roman, Lusignan, Byzantine and Ottoman periods.

Getting around is easy, with car hire available at most hotels. The international airport is at Ercan, and is served by four airlines, including Cyprus Turkish Airlines (KTHY) which flies to major cities in the U.K., Italy and Germany. Ferries operate to the southern coast of Turkey 45 miles to the north and between the two main posts, Gazimagusa and Girne.

### **ATTRACTING INVESTMENT**

It is not just visitors that Northern Cyprus wishes to attract. Increasing numbers of Europeans are retiring to live in restored traditional houses in the small villages and towns, lured by the long hot summers and mild winters, the tranquility and security.

The administration is also appealing to business investors, with incentives such as tax

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**THE COLONY**

A PARK HERITAGE HOTEL  
GIRNE, NORTHERN CYPRUS

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breaks, low-cost land leases, and public investment in infrastructure. "The investment incentives we are putting in place should allow rapid development, particularly in tourism, services such as IT – we have many graduates – and agriculture," says Mr Denktas.

The free port and zone of Gazimagusa already facilitates exports to Turkey's 65 million consumers. The free industrial zones also offer custom and fiscal benefits for production.

### ATTRACTING INVESTMENT

Many Turkish firms have already invested in Northern Cyprus. Rumeli Telecom, for example, provides landlines and established the GSM network through its subsidiary Telsim. By contrast, the Turkish Bank Group started out in Lefkosa in 1901, and from there has expanded to the U.K. and Turkey.

"Northern Cyprus can become a financial center," says General Manager, C. Yenal Musannif. "We have a highly educated new generation that can be part of this economy." There is already some development in this area, with offshore banking, but this has great potential for growth.

So too, does offshore gambling, which is growing in popularity.

Everyone you talk to reinforces the need for investment to strengthen the economy. "The Investment Guarantee Agreement between Turkey and Northern Cyprus means there are no risks to investing here," says head of the administration, Dervis Eroglu. "Tourism, higher education, export industries, food, animal breeding, health, a technopark, IT and sea transportation are all encouraged."

Labor is readily available, and the workforce well educated – literacy among the population of 213,000 is 93.5%. There are five universities, soon to be six, welcoming students from 68 countries, including Eastern Europe, the U.S. and China. With tourism, higher education is a major revenue earner and is projected to boost GDP growth to 5% and increase revenues to \$250 million in 2002.



*Turkish Bank Group head offices [www.turkishbank.com](http://www.turkishbank.com)*

Nearly 26,000 students studied at the universities in the 2000-20001 academic year. Over half went to the Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU), which prides itself on offering a "global" education, in English, across all subjects. ■

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## The Path of Excellence

EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN UNIVERSITY  
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Since its establishment in 1979, Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU) has grown into the largest and most prestigious university on the island of Cyprus, setting new standards for higher education in the region. EMU offers undergraduate programs in the full range of subjects: engineering, architecture, business, arts and sciences, the social sciences and humanities, law, medicine, education, communication and media studies, tourism and IT. There is also a wide variety of master's and doctoral programs. With a student population of 14,000 from 68 different countries, EMU is the university of choice for international students.

"Our graduates can take up employment anywhere in the world. They come here because our programs are taught at the highest international standard, in English, and recognized internationally," says Rector Prof. Dr. Özay Oral. "At EMU they find a friendly atmosphere in a safe and pollution-free environment. The cost of education is also very competitive, at around \$8,000 a year, including tuition fees and living expenses."

Ideally situated between Europe, Asia and the Middle East, EMU is committed to the free exchange of ideas and to a dialogue between cultures, in a spirit of mutual tolerance and friendship.

The modern campus, with state-of-the-art laboratories and computer and library facilities, is spread over 2,200 acres just three kilometers from the historic Gazimagusa (Famagusta) city center. Accommodation for 3,350 is provided on campus, and new students receive priority allocation. EMU has its own new sports complex, library, health center and student activities center. A wide range of sporting, social and cultural activities and some 50 student clubs and associations make life on campus exciting and fulfilling.

EMU has 40 representative offices around the world, and collaborates with many other international universities, exchanging students and faculty members and arranging joint conferences. Its 1,000-strong, highly qualified faculty from some 35 countries provide a unique international perspective and an ideal intellectual environment for learning.

In Professor Oral's words, "EMU educates students to be self-confident, enlightened, innovative, creative, sensitive to social and environmental problems, and ready to work and compete on an equal footing with young people from all over the world. Our mission is to educate the minds that will shape the future."



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