



Take Me To Europe Tours Podcast Ep. #3: Tips on Visiting Cyprus

Introduction

Stephen Parker: Welcome to the *Take Me to Europe* podcast with your host, cultural anthropologist Monique Skidmore.

Essential Travel Documents for Cyprus

Monique Skidmore: Visiting Cyprus is going to be much easier and more relaxing for you once you're certain that you've got all the basic documents, adapters, emergency numbers, and telecoms sorted. Cyprus is a little bit different from other EU countries because it's divided in two by a border, so we're going to cover all the practical things you need to know before visiting Cyprus, beginning with passports and tackling money, time zones, taxis, and tipping.

Passport and Visa Requirements

All travelers to Cyprus must have a valid passport. If you're entering the south (the Republic of Cyprus), ensure your passport's expiration date is at least three months beyond your intended departure. It's recommended to have two blank pages in your passport in case stamps are needed.

Visa requirements depend on your nationality. Citizens of the European Union, including Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland, do not need a visa to enter Cyprus and can use their national ID card. However, visitors from non-EU countries must check visa requirements. Some countries, such as the US, have visa exemption agreements with Cyprus, allowing entry without a visa for a specific period, while others may require visas.

There are different types of visas available for Cyprus, such as work, business, student, and tourist visas.

Cyprus and the Schengen Zone

Cyprus is an EU country but is not yet a member of the Schengen area, though this is expected to change soon. Currently, a Schengen visa is not valid for entry to Cyprus.

For the most up-to-date information on ETIAS (the EU Travel and Information Authorization System) and Cyprus's Schengen Zone application, visit the official ETIAS website ([ETIAS.com](https://etias.com)). Non-EU or non-Schengen citizens will require an ETIAS once it comes into force in 2025.

In addition to a valid passport and the correct visa, border control may require additional documents such as a return ticket, proof of accommodation, and travel insurance.

Traveling to Northern Cyprus (TRNC)

The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) is a self-declared state recognized only by Turkey. Travel rules differ from those in the Republic of Cyprus.

To enter Northern Cyprus, you must have a passport valid for at least six months beyond your departure date. Instead of stamping your passport, TRNC authorities issue a separate entry



permit. You may also be asked for proof of accommodation and return tickets, though this is rarely enforced.

Travelers arriving in the TRNC via ports or airports controlled by Turkish Cypriots (e.g., from Istanbul to Ercan International Airport) may face issues crossing into the Republic of Cyprus. The Republic of Cyprus does not recognize entry stamps from the TRNC, meaning you may be denied entry.

Crossing the UN Buffer Zone

While travel between the Republic of Cyprus and Northern Cyprus has become more flexible, there is always a risk when crossing the UN buffer zone. If you're entering the Republic of Cyprus from the north, there's no guarantee you will be allowed through.

For those visiting North Cyprus from the Republic of Cyprus, crossing is much easier. You simply show your passport and obtain an entry permit from Turkish Cypriot authorities at the border. Thousands of travelers make this crossing daily.

The buffer zone is strictly controlled and patrolled by the United Nations Peacekeeping Force. It is not accessible to travelers outside designated crossings.

Currency in Cyprus

The official currency of the Republic of Cyprus is the euro (€), making transactions easy for travelers from other eurozone countries. Currency exchange offices, banks, and ATMs are widely available.

Although card payments are widely accepted, some rural areas and small businesses prefer cash, so it's wise to carry some euros.

Currency in Northern Cyprus

The Turkish lira (₺) is the official currency in the TRNC, though euros are often accepted in tourist areas. However, it's recommended to use Turkish lira, especially for taxi fares in the north.

Staying Connected in Cyprus

To stay connected, purchase a local SIM card from providers like CYTA, MTN, or Primetel. Primetel offers eSIM options and even ships SIM cards to international travelers before arrival.

Ensure your SIM includes calls, texts, and data, as some plans are data-only. You can buy SIM cards at kiosks, airports, and phone stores with a valid ID.

EU citizens can use their local tariff plans without extra roaming charges. If you want a secure connection, consider using a VPN, particularly in Northern Cyprus, where signal coverage can be inconsistent.



Transportation in Cyprus

Buses

The intercity bus network is an affordable and convenient way to travel between major cities and towns in Cyprus. Buses are modern, air-conditioned, and comfortable.

Taxis

Taxis are available at major tourist locations and airports. They can be booked via taxi apps like CABCY, Bolt, Alpha Taxi, and iTaxi. Taxis generally have a base fare of around €4, with an additional €1 per kilometer. There is an extra charge for luggage (€1.20) and a surcharge on public holidays (€1.96).

Car Rentals

Renting a car is a popular way to explore Cyprus at your own pace. Major international and local car rental agencies operate throughout the country. A valid driver's license is required, and an international driving permit is recommended.

Crossing the Border with a Rental Car

Most rental companies do not allow their cars to be driven across the Green Line into Northern Cyprus. Instead, travelers often leave their rental car in Nicosia and pick up a separate rental vehicle in North Nicosia.

Dining in Cyprus

For an authentic Cypriot dining experience, order **mezze**, a selection of small dishes including halloumi, souvlaki, baked pasta, seafood, and various vegetable and meat dishes.

Restaurants and taverns can be busy on weekends and public holidays, so reservations are recommended.

Tipping Etiquette in Cyprus

Tipping is not mandatory but is appreciated. Rounding up the bill or leaving a small tip is customary at restaurants, cafés, bars, and taxis. For instance, if your bill is €3.50, rounding up to €4 is a polite gesture.

Tipping is also appreciated (but not expected) for services like hairdressing, spa treatments, and guided tours.

Electrical Plugs and Voltage

Cyprus uses **Type G** electrical outlets (the same as the UK). These plugs have three rectangular pins in a triangular pattern.

The standard voltage is **230V**, with a frequency of **50Hz**. Travelers from countries with different plug types will need an adapter or converter.



Time Zone

Cyprus follows **Eastern European Time (EET)** from late October to late March and **Eastern European Summer Time (EEST)** from late March to late October. Cyprus is two or three hours ahead of Coordinated Universal Time (UTC+2 or UTC+3).

There is no time difference between Cyprus, Greece, or Turkey, but Cyprus is one hour ahead of Italy.

Safety in Cyprus

Cyprus is one of the safest tourist destinations in Europe, with a low crime rate and a welcoming atmosphere. While general safety precautions apply, there are no major security concerns.

Comprehensive travel insurance is recommended to cover medical emergencies and travel disruptions. Stay informed about any travel advisories.

Conclusion

Traveling to Cyprus is an enjoyable and memorable experience.

Stephen Parker: Thanks for listening to this episode of *Take Me to Europe* podcast. Visit our website takemetoeuropetours.com and subscribe to our newsletter to discover Europe's hidden gems. Don't forget to subscribe to our podcast!