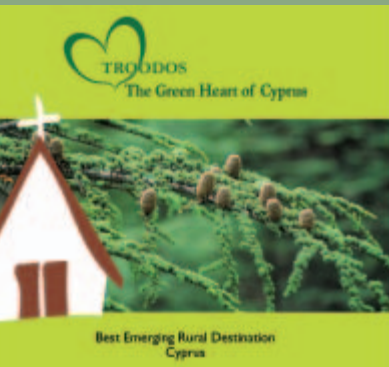


Cyprus: Troodos



Troodos has five distinct regions, grouped around Mount Olympus, the highest mountain in Cyprus (1,952 meters):

- The Lemesos Mountain Resort region situated around the central higher elevations of the Troodos range, featuring pine covered village communities.
- The Pitsilia region (North and South) to the east of Mount Olympus, home to picturesque valleys covered with vineyards, almond, hazelnut, walnut and other fruit trees. A good time to visit is in the spring, when the entire Valley is in full blossom.
- The Solea Valley to the north, situated along the main Lefkosia-Troodos road, a charming area of tranquil villages set in beautiful natural surroundings.
- The Marathasa Valley located on the northwestern slopes of the Troodos range. A fertile cherry producing area of small village communities and crystal water springs.
- The Krassochoria and "Koumandaria" region, located on the southern slopes of the Troodos range. A region known for its wine production. In recent years a number of small enterprises specializing in the production of local wine have emerged, establishing wine varieties of international standard.

Troodos provides a wide range of hotels, traditional houses and agrotourism establishments for accommodation. There is a choice of nearly 2000 beds in various types of licensed establishments, from basic village accommodation to 4 star hotels. The area offers an abundance of things to do and see: walking or cycling through forest nature trails, attending local village festivals, experiencing the local traditional cuisine and discovering the cultural treasures of UNESCO World Heritage sites are among the main pursuits. Birdwatchers, botanists, geologists, rambblers, bikers, photographers or nature lovers seeking a relaxing break away from the cosmopolitan coastal resorts will all be delighted!

Troodos National Forest Park covers an area of 9,337 hectares around the Olympus Mountain. The highest point is Chionistra (1,952 m) and the lowest is the Moni forest (700m). The area is of great natural beauty and suitable for activities such as hiking, winter skiing, biking, nature study and picnics. Park animal life is rich and protected. Of particular interest are the griffon vulture, the raven, the Bonelli's eagle, the treecreeper, and the Cyprus pied wheatear.

The region's geology includes a well-preserved ophiolite complex, created from oceanic crust some 90 million years ago. Elements of this complex can be viewed walking along one of the many park nature trails.

Machairas National Forest Park in the Pitsilia region contains over 600 plant species, including 27 indigenous to Cyprus. The dominant forest trees are the calabrian pine (*Pinus brutia*) and the golden oak (*Quercus alnifolia*). Fauna includes foxes, hares, hedgehogs, snakes, lizards and rare endemic species of butterfly. Park birdlife includes the Bonelli's eagle, the Cyprus warbler, the Cyprus wheatear, the coal tit, the scops owl, the jay, the chukar and wood pigeon. The two most important Cypriot rivers, Pediaios and Yialias, spring from the Park.

Five nature protection areas reserves are found within the Troodos region, all included in the European network of areas 'NATURA 2000'.

Cultivated vineyards cover a large percentage of Cyprus' hilly and mountainous land, from sea level up to 1,500 metres. Most vineyards are located in the southern Troodos area predominantly on the slopes of the Krassochoria and "Koumandaria" region.



The region's vineyards are the source of a sweet, robust dessert wine known as Koumandaria. Originally produced by the 'Grand Commanderie' of the Knights of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem during the 14th century, it is considered to be the oldest named wine in the world.

Troodos is also the spiritual centre of Cyprus. It is where old painted churches, superb examples of Byzantine art, are located. Ten such churches, with their remarkable pitched wooden roofs, icons and frescoes have been designated as UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Troodos is also host to some of the most divine monasteries such as Kykkos, Trooditissa and Machairas.

Tradition and heritage form an important part of daily life in the area. It is home to many small museums and centres dedicated to traditional skills, environment, iconography and rural life. Local festivals commemorating the patron saint of a village are an integral part of life in the region. Other events cover a wide variety of themes such as folk art and craft festivals, bread, preserved sweets, meat and other local produce exhibitions and wine tasting events.

In addition to events focusing on local tradition and heritage, Troodos hosts a wide range of special leisure activities catering to all ages and tastes. These range from 'classic motorcar' rallies to active day events where the whole family can try their skills at such activities such as archery, horse riding or mountain biking.

Additional information on Troodos region can be found at www.visitcyprus.com and www.rural-cyprus.com.

