

Cyprus: Eco-tourism in the land of Aphrodite

By: [Lee Daley](#) © 2013



Few places on Earth can hold a candle to Cyprus when it comes to mythic lore. It was here that the goddess of love, beauty and sexuality emerged from the sea in a surge of foam. Nature lovers traveling to the rugged Akamas Peninsula on the old road from Lemesos to Pafos are blessed with the sight of Aphrodite's Rock rising out of the indigo waters of the Mediterranean, just off shore from the beach that curls around

Romanticists flock to the rock, especially in late afternoon to watch the spectacular sunset. The hardy and hopeful frolic in the waters, often in the buff. As the sun sinks into the sea, some attempt to circumnavigate the rock a requisite twenty times in the belief that this feat will enable them to emerge from the foam reinvigorated into their more youthful selves. On shore, a bush growing out of a low bluff is festooned with white ribbons. Couples who visit the site tie bows upon its branches as a symbol of their love. It is said that those who come with an open heart may discover a symbol of eternal love, a heart-shaped rock, tossed upon the beach by the tempestuous waves. Or perhaps left there by Aphrodite herself.

Aphrodite's natural beauty has been bestowed upon the island's landscape as well. Following the route past Aphrodite's Rock and continuing on upwards into the Akamas Heights en route to Polis, the western road climbs onto higher vistas where rural villages punctuate the green hills, flocks of sheep graze in the valleys, orchids grow wild and Cyprus warblers fly overhead.

It was here in the misty verdant foothills that we came upon a lone shepherd, a young man with a walking staff and a pack of protective dogs. Serenely elegant in his natural environment, I wondered if Aphrodite might not somehow reappear out of the mist to draw him into her embrace. After all, she is a goddess.



More on Cypress mythology, history, food and wine to come.

Plan your trip to Cyprus now. Prices have never been better. Spring's wildflowers are in bloom, the wines are luscious and the locals are welcoming.

Cyprus Tourist Office, 13 East 40th Street, New York, New York. Tel: 212-683-5280. Visit: www.visitcyprus.com.

Lufthansa Airlines flies non-stop from San Francisco to Frankfurt where flights connect to Larnaka International Airport, Cyprus. www.lufthansa.com.

Recommended Reading:

Lonely Planet's comprehensive guidebook "Cyprus" contains 51 maps, children's content including the island's top family-friendly activities and unique cultural insights. Visit www.lonelyplanet.com/cyprus.

