NICOSIA
the city of sincerity where all colors live freely
Starting from the ancient times throughout history, Nicosia was a city that has been ruled by feudal lords, dukes, kings, lords, nobles, barons, knights, governors...

With our expression, “Lefkoşa” and with the Greek Cypriots’ saying “Lefkosia”, this is the city that was built in a flat area. In its historical texture, the city bears the traces of many civilizations, cultures and religions. Its oldest known name is “Lidra”... In Nicosia there are traces belonging to the Bronze, Roman periods.

Starting from the Byzantine period, the city of Nicosia, served as the “capital” almost to all of the states which ruled in Cyprus.

In the city, historical buildings belonging to the periods of the Lusignan Kingdom (192-1489), the Venetians (1489-1570), as well as 370 years of Ottoman rule (1571-1878) and the British colonial administration (1878-1960) especially draw attention.

In Nicosia, which was originally a Christian city until the 16th century, Islamic architecture began to be visible after it was conquered by the Ottomans.

In 1920’s, Armenians from Anatolia were mostly settled in the Arabahmet neighborhood.

The Armenian Church (Notre Dame de Tyre) that is located here, and that was left idle since 1963, was restored in recent years and has added value to the cultural heritage of the city.

During the Lusignan Kingdom over a period of nearly 300 years, Nicosia was governed by a Medieval Feudal City concept and remained as the administrative capital of the island. During this period Lusignans built walls around the city.
The first walls were built by King Henry the First with two towers in 1211 and a third tower was built by Peter I. The city was completely taken within the walls by Henry II.

Nicosia Walls, one of the most perfect examples of military architecture, are 5 kilometres long, and consist of 11 bastions that are all in equal distance to each other with 3 monumental gates.

During the period of Lusignans, the city could be examined in two parts as within the walls and outside. The walls in Nicosia that are still in existence today, adding great beauty to the city, were built by the Venetians. Nicosia became a circular city through its walls with 11 bastions. There were three gates to enter the walled city of Nicosia: Kyrenia Gate, Paphos Gate and Famagusta Gate... Also, the Municipal Market where the citizens meet all their needs like vegetables, fruits, meat etc. and the inns that were used for parking buses from villages in the past are the other attractive structures.

The Walled City is a cultural treasure with its historical structures. Nowadays it is possible to see the marks of several civilizations in many buildings which preserve their entities... The most attractive structures in the walled city are the Great Inn and the Selimiye Mosque.

The British colonial administration placed barbed wire between the Turkish and Greek Cypriot neighbourhoods when the ethnic conflict began between the two communities in 1956. Thus, the Greek Cypriot tradesmen on the Turkish Cypriot side escaped to the southern part of the city and the remaining Turkish Cypriots to the north. In 1958, the city’s ethnic conflicts reached its peak. Hundreds of people were killed in the streets. In 1958, British authorities divided the city into two groups of Turkish and Greek Cypriot sides with barbed wires. The created border was called the “Mason-Dixon Line” inspired by the USA. In 1963, the city was divided exactly into two by the “Green Line”.

Today, the city of Nicosia still maintains its divided character. Between the two borders there is an area under UN control called “Buffer Zone”. However, it is possible to cross between the Greek Cypriot side and the Turkish Cypriot side through three checkpoints. From these points, human, vehicle and product transitions can be done. The Ledra Palace checkpoint opened on 23rd April, 2003 as the first checkpoint between the Turkish and Greek Cypriot sides. Following that, the Metehan/Ag. Dhometios checkpoint opened on May 10, 2003 and the Lokmacı/Ledras checkpoint opened on April 3, 2008.
International Awards

Aga Khan Architecture Awards
EU Prize for Cultural Heritage Europa Nostra Awards

International Memberships

EUROPA NOSTRA
European Federation for Cultural Heritage

EUROCITIES
Network of Major European Cities

EUROMED
Euromed Cities Network

OICC
Organization of Islamic Capitals and Cities

UCLG
United Cities and Local Governments

LIKE
European Cities and Regions for Culture

ICLEI
Local Governments for Sustainability

GDCO
Global Design Cities Organization

UCLG MEWA
United Cities and Local Governments Middle East and West Asia

TDBB
Union of Turkish World Municipalities

MAYORS FOR PEACE
Mayors for Peace

EMCA
European Mosquito Control Association

FCT
Forum For Cities in Transition
Sister Cities

Greater Municipality of Ankara | The Capital of Turkey
Municipality of Karbinci | Macedonia
Greater Municipality of Bursa | Turkey
Municipality of Comrat | The Capital of Gagauzia
Greater Municipality of Tokat | Turkey
Municipality of Aracinovo | Macedonia
Greater Municipality of Gaziantep | Turkey
Greater Municipality of İzmir | Turkey
Greater Municipality of Eskişehir | Turkey
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Milestones

1976
For the first time, with the democratic voting process, the election of the Mayor of the NTM

1978
The signing and implementation of the Nicosia Sewerage Project

1979
Nicosia Master Plan

1980
The establishment of the Nicosia Municipal Theatre

1984
First public transport service

1991
Establishment of the Municipal Orchestra

2003
The Cyprus Theatre Festival begins

2007
Aga Khan Award for Architecture

2011
Europa Nostra Award

2015
Comprehensive free services started to be given for citizens in special need. (Transportation Services, Dance School, Market Shopping Days)

2016
NTM Solidarity Home and Community Kitchen start to give service

2017
The First Bicycle Sharing System In North Cyprus
## The Area

93 km²

## Population

75,467 (According to the data received from State Planning Organization)

- %46.1 Woman
- %53.9 Man

Below the age of 18 = %20.1
Above the age of 65 = %8

## Time Zone

UTC +2 (EET), Summer (DST) UTC +3 (EEST)

### Main Parks
- 7
  - Playground
- 20
  - Squares
- 13
  - Museums

### Mosques
- 17

### Churches
- 2

### Universities
- 6

### Libraries
- 10

### Cultural Center
- 2

### Exhibition Halls
- 4

### Solidarity Home
- 1

### Community Kitchen
- 1

### Book Shops
- 9
The Municipal Market

**Bandabuliya**

The location of the Municipal Market was formerly occupied by an old market place during the Ottoman period known as the “Meat and Fish Market”. This marketplace was demolished in 1929 and replaced with the current building, which was opened with a ceremony held on October 1st 1932 with the aim of conveying fresh dynamism and wealth to the area. Over time, this marketplace suffered structural deterioration and subsequently was demolished and replaced by the current building, which was built in keeping with the original structure. The opening ceremony of this new building was held in June 2012. This bazaar, also known as the Bandabuliya is operated by the Nicosia Turkish Municipality and unites food, drink, spices, meat, poultry, vegetables and fruits unique to Cyprus in a historical setting.

The First Bicycle Sharing System in North Cyprus: **Velespeed**

Velespeed, the system established in Nicosia is a transportation system that has a positive effect on health by offering a fun, affordable price for short trips around the city. In just 4 steps, you can take your bike and cycle for joy in Nicosia.

**JOIN** - Become a member online, or buy a Pass from any station kiosk or through the mobile app.

**UNLOCK** - Locate a bike at one of the 43 stations around the city.

**RIDE** - Take as many quick trips as you want while your Pass or Membership is active.

**RETURN** - Return the bike to any station.
One of the places to visit in Capital Nicosia, Mehmet Akif Avenue (also known as Dereboyu Street) is the shopping and entertainment center of the city.

Mehmet Akif Avenue is the street of bars, restaurants, cafes, shopping stores and cinema. Dynamism in entertainment places continues until night hours. Mehmet Akif Avenue, which was Shakespeare Avenue when Cyprus was under the domination of Britain, is 1.5 kilometers long.

Many events like festivals, feasts, awareness-raising organizations and activist events taking place in Nicosia are held in Mehmet Akif Avenue. The avenue is also a partial route of the Nicosia Marathon.
The Nicosia Turkish Municipality organizes the Cyprus Theatre Festival annually, and prominent theatrical groups from Turkey as well as the Nicosia Municipal Theatre participate in the festival that takes place in the Atatürk Culture and Congress Centre of the Near East University. Theatre is very popular in Northern Cyprus, and as such, long queues form for the ticket sales of the festival, with the number of theatre-goers increasing every year.

The Yuka Blend Street Festival, organized with the contributions of the Nicosia Turkish Municipality, first contributed to the urban transformation of the Bandabuliya street.

The events of 2016 included live graffiti performances, DJs, various workshops, stands, theater and dance performances with artists from the south and north of the island. In 2017, more than 20,000 people participated in the streets of the Nicosia Walled City and more than 80 artists attended.

In 2018 which was the biggest organization of Yuka Blend Festival, Italy, France, Netherlands, Greece, Luxembourg, Turkey, Germany, Peru, Ecuador, Spain, Poland, Guatemala, Nicaragua showed participation and more than 50 artists joined from Cyprus. Besides the visitors from many countries of the world, more than 40,000 people from the northern and southern parts of the island attended the festival, which colored the streets of Nicosia.
Nicosia is the host of the Audience Special Stage of the European Rally Championship (ERC) and the Middle East Rally Championship (MERC) which is implemented in cooperation with the North Cyprus Touring Automobile Association (KKTOK) and the Cyprus Automobile Association.

Lefkoşa Municipal Theater, which has been operating since 1980, staged a total of 12 games and 294 representations in the last 4 years and reached 41,684 spectators.

The Nicosia Municipal Theater has a Youth-Children’s Team and also hosts a number of plays with the international theater groups within the framework of the Cyprus Theater Festival.
Nicosia Municipal Orchestra

The Nicosia Municipal Orchestra, who is the pride of theatre life in north of the Cyprus and began its activities in 1983 is undoubtedly an important value for Nicosia with its talented and successful musicians and conductors.

There are Chamber Orchestra, Pop / Latin Orchestra, Chamber Music Groups, Folk Music Chorus and Children’s Choir under the roof of Nicosia Municipality Orchestra.

Nicosia Municipal Orchestra (LBO) who organizes concerts not only in Nicosia but also everywhere of the country, are implementing “Music in the Street” concerts both for tourists and Nicosians in the walled city and also is giving educations to the children in the schools.

Art in the Street

In the city of Nicosia, where art and artist are always supported, artists in public spaces exhibit their art-free performances freely and easily.
The Bandabuliya Stage in Nicosia, which is a very vocal and pluralistic city where all the colors and segments find the area of existence, operates as a center of culture and arts, hosting both Nicosia Municipal Theatre plays and works, as well as Nicosia Municipal Orchestra concerts and other art branches in the country. After the plays organized for the children on the stage, the tours organized by the Nicosia Sightseeing Train show the historical and cultural places of the capital.
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