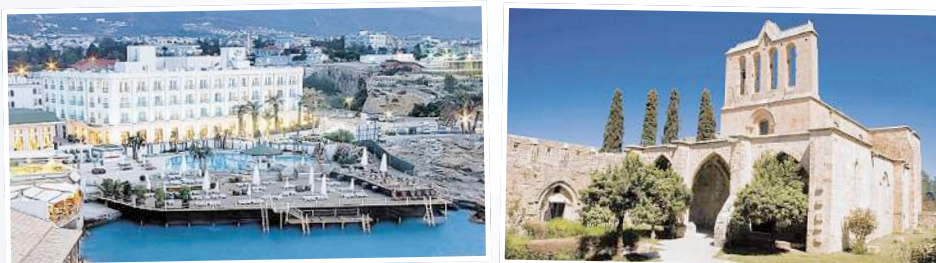
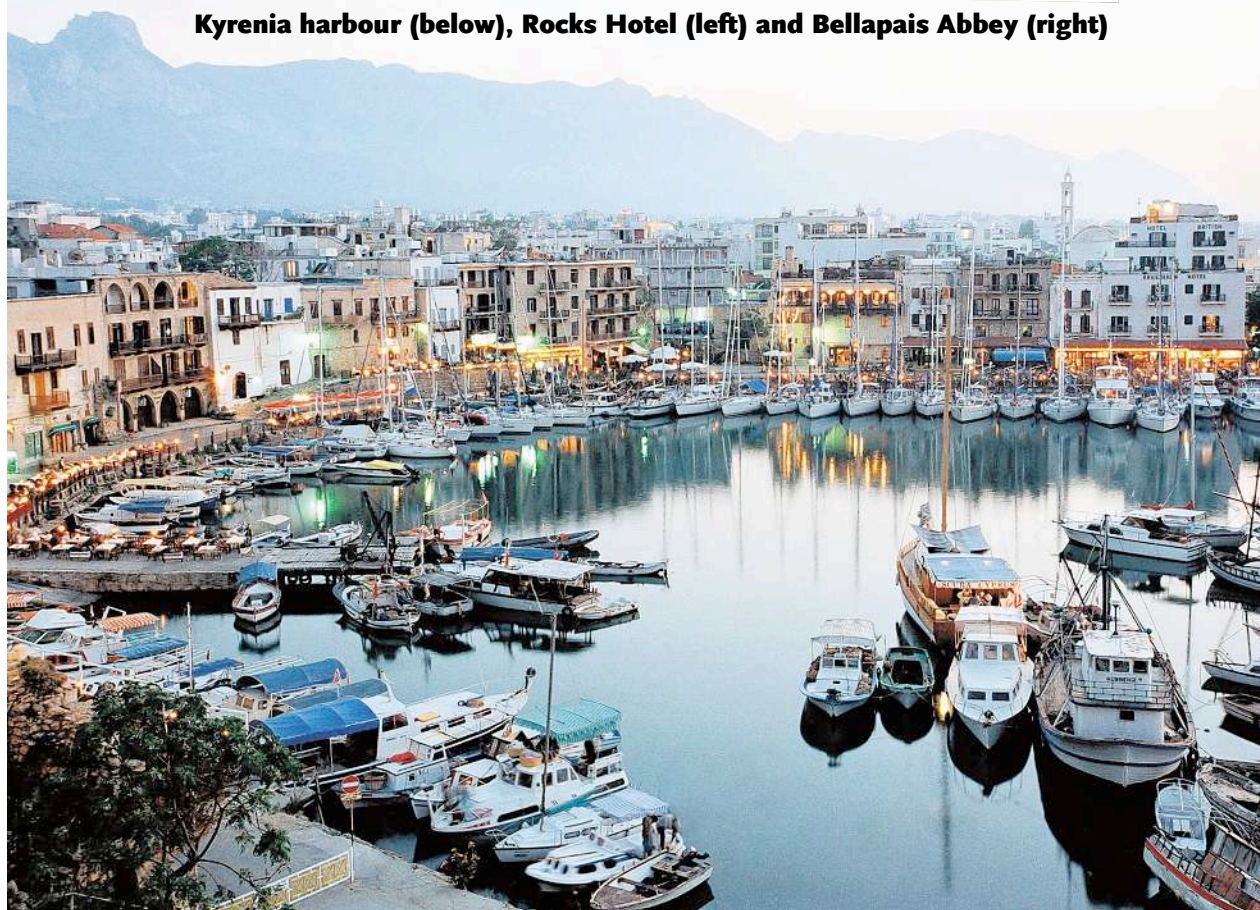


# NORTHERN EXPOSURE

## Alex Moores in the Turkish half of Cyprus



Kyrenia harbour (below), Rocks Hotel (left) and Bellapais Abbey (right)



usual kebabs and an excellent opportunity to sample the fresh catch of the day.

There's much building work going on, mainly holiday homes, and often eco-based with solar panels.

Beaches provide nesting grounds for loggerhead and green turtles. Algadi Beach, also known as Turtle Beach, on the Karpas Peninsula, is accessed by somewhat of a trek. But once there it puts beaches in the Caribbean to shame.

Golf is increasingly popular in North Cyprus and there are both black sands courses, such as CMC Golf, and more familiar green grass courses to choose from, such as the Korineum Golf & Country Club, an 18-hole championship golf course opened in 2007. One of the great wonders of

the world was the ancient Temple of Artemis at Ephesus. What now stands in its place is the five-star Kaya Artemis Resort Hotel. The front of the 2,500 bed building, on the north east coast, is a reproduction of the temple at Ephesus, complete with columns and statues.

If you find yourself heading to Nicosia, a visit to the Buyuk Han (Great Inn) is a must. Built by the Ottomans, it's in the traditional market centre in the city walls. Originally built to accommodate travellers, the British used it as Nicosia Central Prison during colonial times. Nowadays, it's more of an arts centre, where you can visit shops or cafés.

If you like a haggle, head down to the bazaar for anything from clothing to food. I bought a couple of beautifully engraved silver dishes. According to the shopkeeper, if water is drunk from the dish you will go to

paradise when you die. Well, they look quite pretty on the dining table anyway.

There are so many great places to eat in North Cyprus, but you must visit the harbour on the water are ring fenced by a tempting selection of restaurants, and the ambience is quite magical at night.

St Hilarion Castle in Kyrenia is spectacular. Named after a saint, the castle looks as if it is carved into the side of the mountain. Legend has it the saint managed to resist the cries of the demons that stalked the mountain in the 7th century AD – he was in fact stone deaf. The demons later left him in peace. Walt Disney reportedly based Snow White's castle on it.

There's a saying in Northern Cyprus that "no one ever visits just once" – that's what I felt as I headed home: I must go back, and soon.

**L**ANDING in North Cyprus at night gives a glimpse into an often hidden part of the island – a flag made up of lights and set into the

side of the Besparmak Mountains that overlook the divided capital of Nicosia

Our flight to Ercan Airport had to set down briefly on Turkish soil before landing in North Cyprus, though that may soon be a thing of the past. There are also direct UK flights to Larnarca, on the southern side, and you can drive north.

The island is still divided between Greece and Turkish rule following a dispute – or invasion, depending on your standpoint – in the 1970s.

I stayed at the Rocks Hotel and Casino in Kyrenia, which in addition to its swimming pools has a private beach, plus a spa for extra pampering. It's a glamorous establishment, where you may just need to have a vodka martini at the bar before heading to its casino to try your hand on the blackjack table or roulette wheel.

Northern Cyprus is steeped in culture and history due to the nations, tribes and societies that have dealt with the island since its beginnings – and the cuisine is no exception to these influences. Mezes – from the Turkish for hors d'oeuvres – often start arriving soon after you are seated. If you are not careful you may find yourself loosening your waistband prematurely because of the continual stream of mouth-watering dishes brought to the table.

The main courses often consist of shish kebab, lamb chops, grilled chicken, seftali kebab (Turkish sausage), and fresh fish. A favourite dessert is turunc macunu (bitter oranges in syrup) using macun, a national favourite of Cyprus.

Halloumi is North Cyprus' largest export and it's used in a tasty fried pastry, hellimli borek, served with honey.

On the drinks front, try raki, made from a range of fruits – usually grapes, figs and plums.

The perfect way to finish your meal is with a cup of Turk kahvesi (Turkish coffee). Once a delicacy of the Ottoman upper classes, Turkish coffee is often served with a glass of water.

The cost of dining out in Prices in North Cyprus are reasonable – around of £20 for three courses for two, including soft drinks. There's a wide choice. Bellapaise Kybele Restaurant serves up tasty mezes and kebabs, plus spectacular views of Girne. Afterwards, take a walk under the orange trees and around Bellapaise Abbey, a popular area for weddings. The Petek Restaurant in Kaleici, Famagusta, is

excellent for lunch or just a coffee, served in beautifully ornate silver cup holders complete with silver lids. Bogaz is famed for its famous fish restaurants, which offer a change from the

### TRAVEL INFORMATION

● **Luxury Holidays In Turkey** ([luxuryholidaysinturkey.com](http://luxuryholidaysinturkey.com), 0208 343 0085) seven night half-board at Kyrenia Rocks Hotel (00 90 392 6500400, [rockshotel.com](http://rockshotel.com)) from £1,010

● **Return flights with Cyprus Turkish Airlines** (0216 444 5849, [kthy.net](http://kthy.net)) ex-Manchester from £197

### late deals

#### SCOTTISH BORDERS

Unique Cottages (01835 822 277) 7 nights' self-catering in two-bedroom cottage near small town of Chesters for £345 from May 8, 15 & 22

#### GLAMORGAN

Vale Hotel Golf & Spa Resort (01443 667 800) Sunday spa break through May from £99, incl B&B, two spa treatments, three-course dinner

#### NEW YORK/VEGAS

Travelmood (0800 840 7802) two nights in New York and five in Las Vegas from Sept 14 from £599, saving £111, both room-only

#### TENERIFE

Lowcostholidays.com (08444 77 00 78) offers seven nights' all-incl at 4-star hotel in Las Caletillas from £277, ex-Liverpool May 13

#### DOM REPUBLIC

On the Beach (0871 911 0202) seven nights' all-inclusive at 5-star hotel in Punta Cana from £477, ex-Manchester May 12

#### THAILAND

Travelmood (0800 840 7802) 10 nights at 4-star plus Evason Phuket and Six Senses Spa in Phuket from Sept 5 from £699, ex-Heathrow

#### TURKEY WATERSPORTS

Neilson Active (0845 070 3460) 7 nights' at four-star Beachplus Club Teos from £325, saving £330, ex-Birmingham May 8

#### AUSTRIA LAKES & MOUNTAINS

Neilson (0845 070 3466) 4 nights' half-board at four-star hotel in Mayrhofen from £268, ex-Manchester May 19

#### SYDNEY

Flight Centre (0844 800 8628) China Airlines return ex-London from £609 until June 28

### MAY HALF-TERM

#### CORNWALL

Cornish Cottages (01326 240 333) 7 nights' self-catering from May 29 in cottage sleeping four on top of Mullion cliffs for £350

#### CAMPING IN LANGUEDOC

Eurocamp (0844 406 0552) 7 nights' self-catering in two-bedroom mobile home sleeping max seven from May 29 for £328, accom only

#### IRELAND

Irish Ferries Holidays (08717 300 400) 7 nights' self-catering from May 29 for family of five in detached four-star houses near Ardame's sandy beach in County Wexford, for £431, incl ferry from Pembroke to Rosslare for car, two adults and up to three under-16s