



MindStormPhoto Cyprus 2016

Burt and Evelyn Johnson

MindStormPhoto Cyprus 2016

Table Of Contents

Cyprus 1 – Keep to the left!	2
Cyprus 2 – Kyrenia	5
Cyprus 3 – Salamis and Famagusta	8
Cyprus 4 – Art, Donkeys, and Ruins	12
Cyprus 5 – Troödos Mountains	19
Cyprus 6 – Evelyn’s Birthday	24
Cyprus 7 – Final Sunsets	31

Cyprus 1 – Keep to the left!

Cyprus 1 – Keep to the left!



We are now in Cyprus. The first shock was that these people drive on the left side of the road. We have rented a car to travel around the island, and I keep having to tell myself to "Keep to the left" -- particularly when I approach a car on "my" side of the road!

Cyprus 1 – Keep to the left!

After a couple days of driving the island -- and driving myself crazy -- we stopped for a night at the Salamis Bay Conti resort. Think Club Med and you have a pretty good idea of what this is like. Unlimited desserts. Unlimited beer and wine (though mixed drinks cost extra). So give a little extra credit for me being able to write this after a day here...



Cyprus 1 – Keep to the left!

We spent yesterday in Kyrenia, a cute little port town on the North coast of Cyprus. There is a small castle here, but the real treasure is the port and the food. We had some of the best seafood here since we have come to Turkey (and far better than anything in Cuenca, Ecuador!).

, May 11, 2016

[Food, Travel](#) · [Cyprus](#)

Cyprus 2 – Kyrenia

Cyprus 2 – Kyrenia



Cyprus 2 – Kyrenia

We spent the last couple days around [Kyrenia](#), on the North coast, in the Turkish-occupied section of Cyprus. This is a small, picturesque town with some excellent restaurants, surrounding a small scenic harbor and ancient castle.



Cyprus 2 – Kyrenia

Kyrenia castle, a 16th-century castle built by the Venetians, overlooks the harbor (upper two images), with a small shipwreck museum that contains a remnants of the **oldest recovered shipwreck** (upper middle two images).

A short distance away is Kantara Castle, a fortress located on the Kyrenia Mountain range (lower two images).



Cyprus 3 – Salamis and Famagusta

Cyprus 3 – Salamis and Famagusta



Cyprus 3 – Salamis and Famagusta

We got up early this morning to photograph [Ancient Salamis](#), a 3,000 year old ruins on the East coast of Cyprus, in the Turkish-occupied portion of the island. The site does not officially open until 9AM, but we arrived at 8AM and were allowed in. Being that early, we were the only visitors, giving us access to all parts of the ruins without other tourists in our viewfinders.

This area was excavated from 1952 until 1974, when Turkey invaded Cyprus. At that point, all restoration work stopped, as the international embargo prevented international groups from continuing their work. Unfortunately, all further excavation and maintenance apparently stopped at that time too. There were bushes and trees growing in the rocks in various places, and the entire site is quickly deteriorating. Visitors are even allowed to walk onto the delicate tile work.

Cyprus 3 – Salamis and Famagusta



Cyprus 3 – Salamis and Famagusta

Our next stop was to the historic city center of **Famagusta**, surrounded by walled fortifications, which was a real delight for us. It is a city dating back to 274BC, when a major earthquake leveled Salamis, and some of the stones from Salamis were used to build Famagusta. It is also known as "*the city of 365 churches*" owing to the legend that it had one church for every day of the year, at its peak. Today, many of the churches still stand, including the elaborate Gothic Cathedral of St Nicholas (center image), which was converted in 1573 to a mosque. It is the only Gothic mosque we have seen in our travels thus far.



Cyprus 4 – Art, Donkeys, and Ruins

Cyprus 4 – Art, Donkeys, and Ruins



Cyprus 4 – Art, Donkeys, and Ruins

We have now transitioned from the Turkish-occupied North [Cyprus](#) to the "Republic of Cyprus," often referred to as "the Greek side." I'll let you read the linked Wikipedia article if you want to know why. Our first shock was that all the signs were suddenly unreadable, in a non-Roman alphabet script -- though usually followed by plain English translations (upper left with our Cyprus host and I walking under a "[pelican crossing](#)" warning sign).

Murals are not as common in Cyprus as they are in Latin America ([Ecuador](#) and [Colombia](#) murals were shown earlier), though there was one street in Nicosia that had some interesting street art (top row plus center). Later on our travels around [Limassol](#), we came across a small wine museum (bottom row), and did free "testing"(their term for "tasting") of some local wines.

Cyprus 4 – Art, Donkeys, and Ruins



Donkeys are a big thing in Cyprus. [Wild in the North](#), and domesticated in the South. Cody (a friend from Cuenca now working in South Cyprus) joined us for a drive onto the Karpaz Peninsula. She warned us that wild donkeys would walk down the center of the road, then turn sideways to block any oncoming car, waiting for a car window to roll down, so they could stick their nose in for food. Sure enough, exactly as she had described, a donkey did just that (upper images).

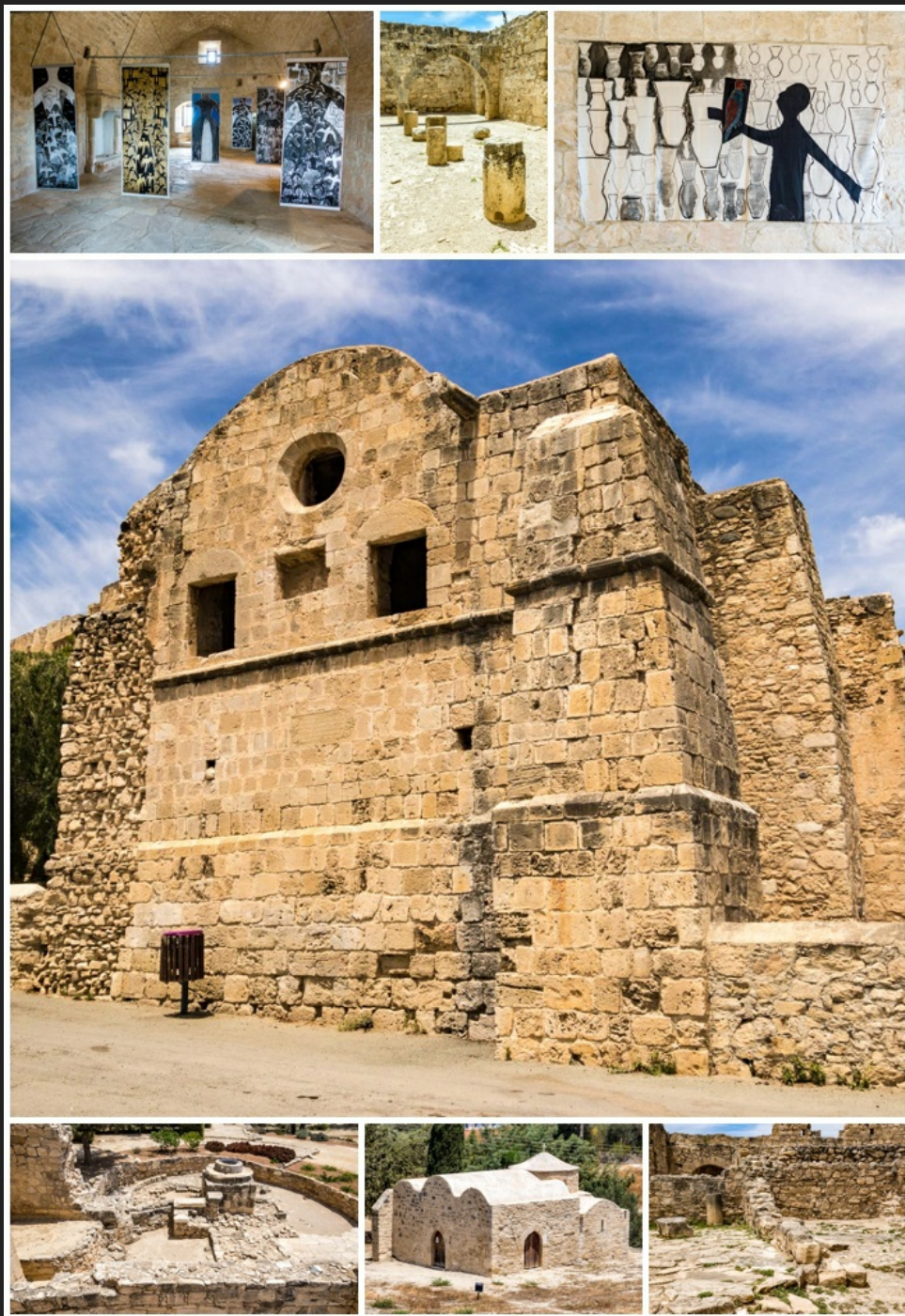
Cyprus 4 – Art, Donkeys, and Ruins

In the South, donkeys are still domesticated, so we made our way to the [Golden Donkey Farm](#), to see "more than 200 donkeys" and taste some of the products made from donkey milk. The way was well signed, with a full sized golden donkey statue at every major turn (top middle right), until we arrived. They had a couple of small museums with wax figures in poses of typical historic daily life (lower middle row), and plenty of curious donkeys (lower row). The farm was rather a disappointment though, and not really worth the drive...



Cyprus 4 – Art, Donkeys, and Ruins

In Nicosia, we also visited the [Leventis Art Gallery](#), which just opened in 2014. Created entirely from the private collection of A.G. Leventis, it had an impressive collection of more than 800 pieces of Cypriot art, both modern and classic, as well as paintings by European masters.



Cyprus 4 – Art, Donkeys, and Ruins

Our drive south took us to the [Kolossi Castle](#), in the city of Kolossi on the Southern coast of Cyprus. This castle dates back to 1210, and was originally a center of production of sugar, using the local sugarcane. A small, but interesting, castle, it was currently displaying modern art banners (upper row).



Cyprus 4 – Art, Donkeys, and Ruins

Our last stop on this segment was the [Kourion](#) ruins. This site has origins that date back more than 2000 years, yet many of the original tiles are still intact (most images). Starting in 1975, after the Turkish invasion and resulting embargo prevented further international support for the [Salamis excavations](#), those teams moved here and began work on this site. They covered the site with sweeping roof structures to keep out the weather (upper left) and elevated walkways to keep tourists off the ancient floor tiles. Of course, everywhere you go now, there will be someone (or two or more) taking selfies... (lower right)

, May 17, 2016

[Animals, Travel](#) · [Cyprus](#)

Cyprus 5 – Troödos Mountains

Cyprus 5 – Troödos Mountains



Cyprus 5 – Troödos Mountains

As we walked around the streets, I kept thinking "*there should be a photo here, but I am not quite seeing it.*" Fortunately, Evelyn has a better eye for capturing these street scenes.



With old stone buildings lining the narrow cobblestone streets, we felt like we were living in the past.

Cyprus 5 – Troödos Mountains



Evelyn tends to rise earlier than I do, and always likes to start the day with a cup of coffee. When she went to the local coffee shop, she found several village elders there wanting her to join them at their table and to just talk

Cyprus 5 – Troödos Mountains



During the day, we drove through the mountain region, until we came across the [Stavrovouni Monastery of the Holy Cross](#), a 4th century Greek Orthodox monastery in the village of Omodos, which is considered the oldest monastery in the world. A small tour was underway (upper right). The guide sang softly, and her sound carried with a beautiful tone throughout the chapel. We tasted local wineries throughout the area.

Cyprus 5 – Troödos Mountains



Another stop in the Troödos mountain region was to the [Panagia Painted Church](#), declared a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1985. There are a total of ten such world-famous Byzantine churches in the region on the UNESCO list, each with nearly intact coloured frescos and icons. These were easily the most vivid ancient images we found on Cyprus.

Cyprus 6 – Evelyn's Birthday

Cyprus 6 – Evelyn's Birthday



Cyprus 6 – Evelyn's Birthday

Today was Evelyn's birthday, and it turned out to be quite eventful (but remember that we never ask a woman how old she is...). As we were driving from the village of *Vouni* to *Paphos* in Cyprus this morning, we saw some goats in a field, and decided to stop to photograph them. Every time we approached, they would run away, so we were not having much luck.

An elderly man then drove up to Evelyn in his beat-up pickup truck. Evelyn feared that he was going to chase her out of his fields for trespassing, but instead the man said in broken English "*get in and I drive you (to the goats).*" Evelyn was then able to capture the goat images above. After photographing for awhile, the man offered her to come to his home and join them for some Turkish coffee, picking me up along the way.

We then spent the next two hours sitting in the home of *George and Nicoletta Mouzourou* (center image). George went to University of Romania, where he met Nicoletta, and they were married in 1970, with one ceremony in Romania for her family, and a second in Cyprus for his family. The dashing young man in the lower right photo is George shortly after they were married.

They settled in a village in the Karpaz Peninsula, in the northeast part of Cyprus. After graduating from the university, he was assigned there by the government as a veterinarian and she as a doctor. In addition to their professional duties, they raised sheep. When the Turks invaded the island in 1974, the couple was given one month to leave and go to the South, with all other Greek Cypriots. When I asked George where his parents were born, he replied Cyprus. Grandparents? Cyprus. Great-grandparents? Cyprus. Four generations in Cyprus, yet he still identifies himself as a *Greek Cypriot*, as does the Turkish government.

Cyprus 6 – Evelyn's Birthday

When they arrived in the South in 1974, they were refugees. One day they were traveling in the countryside and saw a sick sheep. Being a veterinarian by training, he went to care for the animal. A Greek soldier saw what he did, and told him "*this is your new home*," giving them the house and land that had been vacated by a Turkish Cypriot that had similarly been forced to relocate. That is the house they still live in now, and where we met and talked with them. Nicoletta is still actively working as the village doctor. She learned her English treating tourists who were visiting the island that needed medical help over the last four decades. (English is the lingua franca that is common to most visitors from both Europe and Asia.)

George repeated over and over in the two hour conversation that "*We like everyone. Germans, Russians, Americans, Turkish. They are all our friends. It is only the governments that cause trouble. They do not care for the people. They only want our land.*" George told us that the original Turkish Cypriot owner of their current home visits about once a month for a weekend. When that person comes, George and Nicoletta vacate the home, so the original owner can spend time in the home where his father was born and died.

Cyprus 6 – Evelyn's Birthday

I could go on for pages just relating their life story and our conversation, but we need to move on. George is now 77, and fears he will never see "his home" in the North again, where both his father and grandfather were born.



Cyprus 6 – Evelyn's Birthday

Later we roamed Paphos on a Segway tour, visiting some of the ruins, the harbor, the lighthouse, and learning the history of the area. Callum was our guide, and told us many little known factoids, such as real meaning of the thumbs up and thumbs down in the gladiator ring. He claimed that the movies have it backward. In Roman times, a thumb-up gesture meant to "run him through with your sword" while a thumb-down indicated "drop your sword and let him live" -- the opposite of what Hollywood shows. (With later research, I find his account of thumbs-down seems accurate, but the "let him live" gesture may have actually been a fist, with the thumb hidden?)

As we paused in front of Paphos Castle, he told us that at one point, it had been used for storage of salt. We learned that salt was considered more valuable than gold, and that soldiers often received part of their pay in salt (salarium), which became the basis for the term "salary" in current English.

When we asked him where we could best see the sunset, he told us to walk about a kilometer down a path behind the castle to an overlook on the beach.

Cyprus 6 – Evelyn's Birthday



The sky was bland with no clouds, but we decided to head out to the point anyway. Less than an hour before sunset, a few clouds started forming on the horizon, and a little color began to develop. We feared that the only foreground available was a set of three concrete blocks of unknown origin (top right).

Cyprus 6 – Evelyn's Birthday

After the sun set, we walked back towards town. As we passed the small Paphos Castle at the entry to the harbor, there was another photo op of a romantic couple in silhouette (lower left).

As the full moon rose (lower right -- yes, it was shot on that same night), we went to [Gabor](#), a fabulous French restaurant in town, where they treated Evelyn to a special dessert, complete with painted plate (upper left) and song. When we returned to our room, a bottle of French champagne was waiting, compliments of George, the owner of the hotel where we were staying.

Overall, a memorable way to spend "another turn around the sun."



Addendum: Above [photos](#) were sent to us a week later by Callum, the guide from the Segway tour.

Cyprus 7 – Final Sunsets

Cyprus 7 – Final Sunsets



Cyprus 7 – Final Sunsets

Our last two nights exploring Cyprus included two final sunset photography ops. First, we had read about a shipwreck very near shore that looked like it would provide an interesting foreground. We drove up and down the coast north of Paphos, asking people in English where a "shipwreck" was located, and nobody seemed to know. In our drives down small dirt roads to check yet another section of beach, we came across an old rusted tractor sitting in a banana farm field. That was too colorful and interesting to pass up (above)...



Cyprus 7 – Final Sunsets

Finally, we brought up a photo we had seen of the shipwreck on our iPhone, and showed it to a cafe waitress who had just told us there was no "shipwreck". She looked at the picture, and immediately said "*Oh that. Over there.*" and pointed down the beach about a mile. We never figured out if they call it something else or what the communication issue was, but we found the ship easily enough after that.

The **Edro III** ran aground in 2011, and can be seen just a few feet off the shore. The ship is badly rusted (upper left), which adds color and character to the wreck. Just as the sun was setting, two **powered paragliders** came flying over (middle row). As I was watching them, I was wondering where I could rent such a cool way to see the coast...

Cyprus 7 – Final Sunsets



Cyprus 7 – Final Sunsets

Tonight was our last in Cyprus, and we went to a small village inn that had been recommended for dinner. While we were eating, clouds rolled in and rain threatened for a couple minutes before passing by. We finished dinner about half an hour before sunset, and asked the waitress where the best sunset could be seen. She pointed to the sky full of clouds and said *"no sunset tonight."* *"But where would you go if there was a nice sunset,"* we insisted. *"Latsi Harbor"* was her reply. We thanked her and drove off in that direction, not expecting much.

As we approached the harbor, the sun peaked through some clouds on the horizon and color began to form. We rushed to Latsi, grabbed our cameras and tripods, and started running towards the harbor, stopping every few yards to snap another photograph of the rapidly changing sky (upper row).

Once the sun had set, we began to photograph in earnest, with tripods, as the harbor lights came on (lower right). As the *blue hour* arrived and the sky turned that deep blue that only happens shortly after sunset, we grabbed as many more harbor images as we could (middle left and lower left).