

TOP **1** Aphrodite Trail

2.30 hrs



On the trail of Cyprus's favourite goddess

Why not begin with one of the finest walks on Cyprus? The forestry department has constructed a nature trail that runs along narrow paths steeped in myth and during the walk you can become acquainted with the varied flora that abounds in the Akamas region. From the 370m high Moutti tis Sotiras there's also a spectacular view of the peninsula lying down below. In April when the meadows are covered in a carpet of yellow chrysanthemum blossom, the Aphrodite Trail is an absolute spring classic!

Starting point: car park at the Baths of Aphrodite, 35m. Drive there with a car or taxi from Polis via Latsi to reach the Baths of Aphrodite. From Polis, in the summer months, there is bus service (line 622) from Monday to Friday (year-round on Saturdays and Sundays) every hour to the Baths of Aphrodite.

Height difference: 400m both in ascent and descent.

Grade: steep ascent on a stony path in places. You need a firm footing on the descent from Moutti tis Sotiras. Little shade.

Refreshments: Baths of Aphrodite restaurant at the starting point which has a terrace with beautiful views.

From the car park at the **Baths of Aphrodite (1)** and starting off next to the kiosk selling souvenirs, pass through the wide entrance gate for the botanical garden (free entrance); bearing right, following a paved trail for 150m, you will reach the legendary Baths of Aphrodite. In the dim and distant past Aphrodite is supposed to have frolicked with Akamas and Adonis in the pool here that is fed by a spring. Today a huge fig tree shades this romantic spot. Follow the sign for the 'Nature Trail' just in front of the pool. Cross over the streambed of the Argaki tou Pyrgou and leave the 'bathing area' again through a small gateway. 30m further on, you meet the dusty coastal roadway to Cape Arnaoutis. Immediately before this point, turn sharp left in an acute angle to climb up a narrow path along the slope.

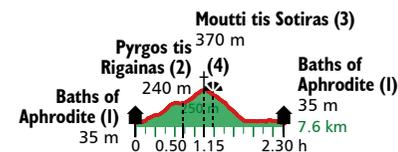
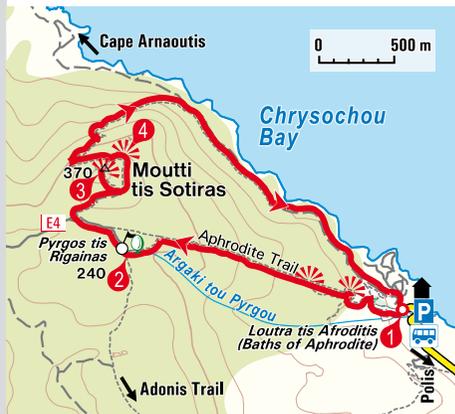
After 2 minutes there's a fork in the path and again you go left. Take a right hand turn and then, from a bench situated below a young pine tree, you will be treated to a wonderful view, sweeping over over the Gulf of

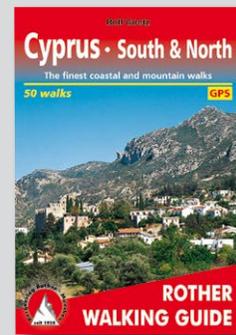


Chrysanthemum blossoms at the Baths of Aphrodite.

Chrysochou and, in spring, of the lush green meadows of the caravan park lying directly below.

The dirt path at first runs through a small, open juniper wood. Reach a fork at the Km1 sign and keep to the right, ascending along the southeast slope of the Moutti tis Sotiras in a long straight stretch. Pass a path, merging from the left, and a quarter of an hour later, yet another bench appears just at the right moment. The major part of the ascent along the sometimes bumpy path is behind us now. A few minutes after passing a small area, protected by a fence, where the endemic Cyprus Jerusalem Sage (*Phlomis cyprica*) grows, do not continue straight on to the flat-topped mountain, but turn left instead (the turn-off is easily missed!) and, 3 minutes later, at a huge Cyprus oak tree (*Quercus infectoria*) reach **Pyrgos tis Rigainas (2)**, 240m. According to legend Aphrodite is said to have taken a rest here after bathing. A monastery was built at this spot in the Middle Ages of which only the remains of a few walls and a small chapel have stood the test of time.





Posing for a photo in front of the fig tree at the Baths of Aphrodite.

Before the ruins of the monastery, at the sign for the 'Aphrodite Nature Trail', ascend along a gravel path. The path heads straight towards Moutti tis Sotiras. At the fork 4 minutes later on keep slightly to the left along the main path uphill. A good 200m further on, leave the dirt road behind by turning right onto a path that winds up along the flank of Sotiras. About 75m after that, the path nudges up to a cart track but keep to the path until, a couple of minutes later, it merges into the cart track. Continue ascending and, not quite 5 minutes later, in a left-hand bend, a path

turns off to the right (our trail later on). At first, pay a visit to the flat-topped mountain by continuing along the cart track. This ends a few paces later at a cul-de-sac.

A small path brings you from there in a few minutes to **Moutti tis Sotiras (3)**, 370m. From the summit plateau you can enjoy an imposing view across the indented north coast of the Akamas peninsula as far as Cape Arnaoutis. Be careful at the edge – from the plateau there's a sheer drop!

Go back to the cul-de-sac and follow the trail that now leads left below it through juniper bushes across the north slope of the mountain. Another marvellous **viewpoint (4)**, with a bench seat, invites you to stop for a quiet rest. The mule path, slightly exposed, zigzags down to the coast and, afterwards, the descent continues a few metres above the dusty coastal roadway, running parallel to it. Ignore a turn-off, so as to keep at first along the path, now sometimes somewhat overgrown, until after 10 minutes, this eventually joins the **coastal path**. Follow this path back to the **Baths of Aphrodite**. Go straight on at the point where you briefly met the coastal path coming from the baths at the start of the walk and, leaving the mobile homes on your left hand side, arrive back at the **car park and the bus stop (1)** at the kiosk.

Panorama from Moutti tis Sotiras of the Akamas peninsula, photo taken at Waypoint 4.

