

## Lefkara



Lefkara is home to the traditional Cypriot embroidered lace, the well-known "lefkaritiko". It is said that the famous Renaissance artist Leonardo da Vinci visited Cyprus at the end of the 15th century and came to Lefkara, where he bought a large ornate tablecloth, which he gifted to Milan Cathedral. The village is located on the south-eastern slopes of the Troodos mountains at 650m above sea level, some 45km from Lefkosa (Nicosia), 30km from Larnaca Airport and just 12km from the Lefkosa – Limassol motorway. The name Lefkara comes from the colour of the limestone that surrounds the village: "Lefka (Greek for white) + ori (Greek for mountains, hills) = Lefkara".

## Lefkara Lace

Lefkara lace is the finest example of what embroidery and folk art in Cyprus has to offer. It is a valued specimen of embroidered artwork, which reflects the strength and sensitivity of the women of Lefkara.

The competent hands of the embroiderer create perfect artistic designs. Lefkara lace reached its peak as an art in the period 1920-1930 when, according to some experts, it was among the finest handicrafts in the world.



In 2009, it was added to the UNESCO list of intangible heritage items.

## Silversmithing

In addition to Lefkara lace, another craft that has thrived here for decades is silversmithing. Hand-made jewels, spoons, censers and other ecclesiastical implements, candle burners, processional staffs, crosses etc. are made locally, while silver and gold are also used to coat icons and bibles.



## Vernacular Architecture

Lefkara is a large settlement whose main architectural characteristic is the fact that buildings are concentrated in a dense area and are mostly terraced. The houses are built from stone with tiled roofs, balconies and inner courtyards, filled with flowers.



The roads are narrow and often lead to a dead end, with balconies so tightly close that they almost appear to merge one into another. Several of the narrow picturesque alleyways are paved and blend in with the stone walls of the buildings.

## Folk Art Museum

Visitors to the Museum can see exquisite samples of embroidered lace, some of which date back to the 19th century, typical examples of silver craft, traditional costumes and photographs of times gone by. The building in which the museum is housed is in itself a typical example of vernacular architecture in the 19th century.



## Handicraft Centre

The Handicraft Centre serves to cultivate, maintain and promote the Lefkara traditional crafts of lace making and silversmithing. Visitors have the opportunity to watch lace makers creating the exquisite Lefkara lace and silversmiths making filigree work.



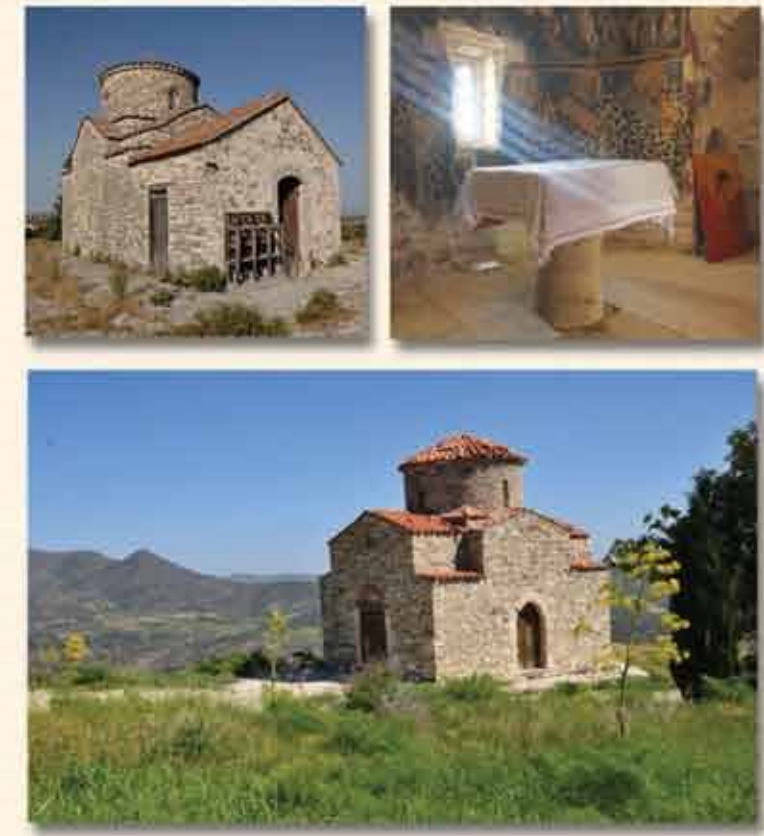
## Church of the Holy Cross

The most significant monument of vernacular architecture in the village is the Church of the Holy Cross, which dates back to the 14th century. It is one of three churches in Cyprus said to hold a fragment of the Holy Cross. The church's wood-carved iconostasis, which was gold-coated in 1761, is highly valuable.



## Chapels around Lefkara

There are many chapels in Lefkara. This is because of the religiousness of the locals, who contributed to the construction of eighteen chapels in many neighbourhoods of the village and the surrounding area, some of which are superb examples of Byzantine architecture.



## Gastronomy

At the village restaurants, visitors can enjoy local dishes, such as the famous Lefkara ktavas and "koupepia" (stuffed vine leaves). The restaurants also serve and sell the Lefkara "loukoumia" and "sykopittes" (fig pies).



The village has a small but pleasant hotel and several dwellings developed for agrotourism. The village has banks, a local hospital, post office, police presence, coffee shops, restaurants, supermarkets and kiosks.

