

KOUFONISSIA ISLANDS

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NAXOS

Pano Koufonissi

Kato Koufonissi

KEROS

- Main roads
- Minor roads
- Proposed Walks
- Windmill
- Archaeological site
- Castle/Tower
- Mountain top
- Town/Village
- Monastery/Church
- Port/Anchorage
- Akr. Cape
- Old mines
- Beach
- Cave
- Lighthouse
- Airport

CHAT ROOM

"Koufonissia"

- Fresh fish is in itself a good reason to go to Koufonissia.
- It's so beautiful, you can find your own beach with crystal clear waters, and all you can think about is food...
- I'm thinking of everything! The crowds, and the noise and the fuss...so I vote for Koufonissia.
- We should also visit Keros, it's right next to Koufonissia.
- Look! At night Keros looks like a woman lying on the sea!!!

Get recommendations

The spirits in Koufonissia are always up. You will feel this in every greeting, in every feast, in every moment.

It is beautiful, from the view, to the sea, to the underwater images. At lunch time, you'll discover even more good reasons that make Koufonissia a unique destination.

How to get there

Koufonissia is connected all year round by local itineraries with Naxos, Amorgos and the other islands of the small Cyclades, and by ferries with Piraeus. Fast boat connections are added in the summer months.

KOUFONISSIA



The cluster of Koufonissia includes the islands of Pano and Kato Koufonissi which belong to the Small Eastern Cyclades. They are separated by a 200m-wide channel.

The hectic and noisy outside world cannot reach this small spot in the Aegean that has become a favourite destination for Greek and foreign visitors, offering them an ideal chance to enjoy beaches with golden sand and clear blue waters, small natural pools, sea caves, authentic island festivals and, of course, an abundance of fish and seafood.

One interpretation is that the name of Koufonissia originates from the Greek words koufos limin which means hollow port, due to the presence of a bay between the two islands and Glaronissi. A second interpretation is that the characterization of hollow originates from the numerous caves seen at the beaches, as the waves weather and make the islands hollow.

Pano Koufonissi (or just Koufonissi) which covers an area of just 3.5km² and has approximately 300 permanent residents, is the smallest, but also the most densely populated island of the Cyclades. Kato Koufonissi covers an area of 4.3km² and is practically uninhabited.

Koufonissia have been inhabited since the prehistoric period, and was a centre of the Early Cycladic civilisation, as evidenced by the archaeological finds in Epano Mili, the most important being a frying pan-shaped vessel with an engraved nine-point star, currently exhibited at the Museum of Naxos.

In Pano Koufonissi, next to the port, is the only settlement of the island, Chora. It is a typical fishing village featuring charming alleys, white-

washed houses, and the characteristic white windmill left of the quay. The centre of the settlement is dominated by the church of the patron saint, Agios Georgios.

In Chora, there are numerous lodging options, restaurants and taverns serving local seafood. For boat owners, there is a petrol station, as well as a shipyard for repairs in the same area as the marina, while at a distance of 1.5km from the port, at the Charakopou, there are rooms to let and a campsite.

If you happen to be in Koufonissi on a night with a full moon, you will see something unique: the neighbouring island of Keros looks like the figure of a woman lying on the waters of the Aegean!

You can take your own craft or a caique from the island to visit Kato Koufonissi, a place of intact beauty, with sandy beaches ideal for relaxation and isolation. The only buildings you will see here are the chapel of Panagia, built on the quay on the site of ancient ruins, and the few fishermen's houses.

Feasts and flavours

The people of Koufonissi are famous for their high spirits. Just a small excuse is needed to set up a huge feast. On 23 April, on the celebration of Agios Georgios, the hosting celebrator walks around the island holding the icon of the saint, while all the boats of the island accompany him on his tour, sailing along the coastline, and at night the feast culminates. The last Saturday of June is the celebration of fishermen, where delicious seafood tidbits and wine are served; on 20 July, the celebration of Profitis Ilias, the respective hosts treat people and dance to the sounds of violin and lyre. On 15 August, all residents sail to Kato Koufonissi for the celebration of the Virgin. The service is

followed by a feast with fish, lamb and goat. After the end of the feast, the boats race back to the island, and treats follow accompanied by violins.

On 6 December, the celebration of Agios Nikolaos, the service is followed by a feast with seafood and seasoned raki (sweet drink with raki, honey and herbs) – a very tasteful start for the feast to follow, while Easter is celebrated with special reverence and traditional customs. The procession of the Epitaph takes place at the port, which is lit up with torches, and after the resurrection of Jesus is celebrated, night becomes day with fireworks.

The local products include fresh fish and seafood, as well as wild goat and xinomyzithra cheese. Patatato (meat cooked with potatoes in tomato sauce) is very popular on holidays and feasts, and so are the traditional pasteli sweets, served on lemontree leaves, and xerotigana (deep fried pastry).

Routes for all

Koufonissi, which together with the surrounding islands has been included in the Natura 2000 network, has an almost flat surface where rare species of flora with numerous endemic plants grow. There are no asphalt roads, but all distances can be walked (3 hours is enough to walk to the other end of the island and back), which makes cars unnecessary and the island ideal for hiking. Alternatively, the same distances can be covered by bikes, available for rent on the island.

Each route will discover enchanting beaches with aquamarine waters alternating with caves formed in the rocks, while sand dunes are abundant next to the seaside path. In Xylopati lies a great sea cave which provides shelter to

rock pigeons. After Platia Pounta with its wonderful green waters, you will see the “pools” – small protected coves and openings on the rocks – where swimming becomes an unforgettable experience.

- 1 Chora – Loutro – Parianos – Limenari – Xylopatis – Pori - Platia Pounta (Italida) – Fanos – Finikas – Charakopou - Gialos** A route around the island, following the coastline. Loutro is a very picturesque place, with the all-white chapel of Agios Nikolaos and the old windmill above the small shipyard, where you can watch shipbuilders work in traditional methods; in Parianos bay, enjoy the view of the fishing fleet of the island.
- 2 Chora - Profitis Ilias - Pano Meria** A route with a great view that follows the inland paths of the island, leading to the chapel of Profitis Ilias, and areas where locals engage in their daily farming and stockfarming activities.

Sea and action

Koufonissia features magnificent waters, which become breathtaking as we approach Keros, an ideal place for lovers of diving. The rocky caves on the north coast of Koufonissi and Kato Koufonissi are ideal for amateur fishermen.

Caiques (small boats) perform daily itineraries from Chora to the more distant beaches of the island, and to nearby islets, at very affordable cost. The islets Prasoura, Glaronissi, Voulgari, Tsouloufi, Lazaros, Megali Plaka, offer amazing beaches with aquamarine waters, listed as highly-valued areas.

Koufonissia is ideal for sea sports such as wind surfing (Pori is a favourite place for surfers to train), while friends of land sports will have at hand facilities like mini soccer fields, basketball and volleyball courts, thus combining their holidays with their favourite sports.

Don't forget about Keros

Closely linked to Koufonissia is Keros, a small uninhabited island without a port, covering an area of 15 km². It is located 1.5 miles southeast of Pano Koufonissi, and has been one of the most important centres of the Cycladic civilisation.

In ancient years, Keros was joined to the neighbouring islet of Daskalio. The main settlement of the island (currently sunken at its largest part) was located on the cove which lies between Keros and Daskalio. In Keros, finds of particular importance were discovered in an Early Cycladic cemetery. These include more than 100 marble figurines, among which the imposing 1.40m tall figurine of the great mother, and the famous figurines-symbols of the Early Cycladic civilization, the Flute Player and the Harp Player, currently exhibited at the Archaeological Museum of Athens. According to many studies, Keros was the sacred island of the Cyclades during the Early Cycladic Period, a place later taken by Delos.

ONLY IN KOUFONISSIA

In comparison with its population, Koufonissi has the largest fishing fleet in Greece! So fresh fish will be abundant at all times.



Let's go to Donoussa...

Only a stone's throw away!!!