

## Tinos

Enchanting yet still unknown to the majority of tourists, this Cycladic Island mostly attracts Greek pilgrims travelling there twice a year, on March 25 and August 15, to visit the church of Panagia Megalochari (the Blessed Virgin Mary). From all over the country, people come here to fulfill their vows and to seek comfort. Tinos is the most important Orthodox centre of worship in Greece but, in the same time, an important Catholic centre too; this so rare in Greece mix of religious traditions gives to the island a particular character.

But a pilgrimage is not the only reason for getting to know the amazing island of Tinos, with the beautiful beaches and the 40 traditional villages, or, according to the philosopher Kastoriadis, the **"hand-made Tinos"**. This island is the homeland of renowned great artists of marble carving such as Gyzis, Lytras, Chalepas, Filippotis and Sochos, who have been the last famous names to have held the baton of the island's marble-carving tradition. According to the legend, the famous sculptor of the ancient times, Fidiás, had taught the secrets of his art to the locals. Their admirable craft is displayed in chapels, fountains, arches and pigeon lofts. In the village of Pýrgos the Marble Art Museum is worth a visit as much as the Gallery of Tinian Artists right next to the church of Virgin Mary.



Tinos is a very interesting place to visit. One can enjoy its unspoiled architecture, its picturesque villages, its beautiful beaches and its traditional culture and way of living that has been going on through the years.

The pan-hellenic festivities in honour of Virgin Mary on August 15 are accompanied by other festivals like those in Tsikniás and Exómbourgo and the gastronomic feasts involving artichoke and raki in Falatádos as well as the festival of honey in Kámpos. Tinos is the ideal place for nature lovers, architecture, art and tradition, and the perfect answer to the relative expectations.



## **The scenic villages of Tinos**

### **Pyrgos, the village of the marble artists**

Lying away from the seashore and where a Venetian castle used to stand (the word "pyrgos" in Greek means "castle") **Pýrgos** is one of the largest villages of the island and, definitely, the centre of the marble art of Tinos.

The fountain dedicated to the Greek Revolution of 1821, the marble work on the churches, the houses and the two museums make obvious that sculpture enjoys a long tradition in Pyrgos. Since 1955 the Art School for Marble Sculpture has supported this long tradition.

### **Agapi**

The picturesque settlement lies in the shape of an amphitheatre on the edge of a valley that adjoins the plain of Komi. One of Tino's most abundant brooks winds its way through the valley, which is dotted with well-preserved dovecotes. The arcades and the houses with the pretty lintels above their doors and windows play their part into making Agapi one of the most traditional villages of the island.

### **Arnados**

Tino's highest village is on the south flank of the Kechrovouni Mountain, close to the Church museum where you can see old icons, books and other religious items. A breathtaking panorama is the backdrop to classical Tinos-style cooking with meat prepared with locally grown ingredients. Don't leave the area before visiting the monastery of Kechrovouni (10th century) a big edifice looking like a fortified village. There you can see the cell of nun Pelagia, and a museum where several remarkable icons from the 18th and 19th centuries, as well as other important heirlooms, are kept.

### **Volax**

It is a tiny village, located in the interior of the island, almost hidden in the middle of rounded, giant granite blocks, with houses that are built onto the rocks. It is one of the most interesting villages to explore, as its architecture is unique on the island. Many of its houses are actually built on top of the boulders! Although tiny in size, the village has two tavernas, a gift shop, a folklore museum, a small stone open-air theater and a few remaining basket weavers still making their sturdy artifacts. You can also find local honey, herbs, dried figs and tomatoes, capers and wine. Also interesting to view is the tiny Catholic village church next door to the folklore museum. It is exactly what you would expect a village church to look like! A footpath winds down the valley to Agapi village.



### **Kalloni**

A village adorned with olive groves and gardens filled with artichokes, citrus fruits and vegetables. Stroll over to Agios Zacharias church. From its large veranda decorated with a pebble mosaic, you can admire the view over the village to the beach at Kolimbithra.

### **Komi**

The village marks the beginning of a fertile plain that stretches down to the sea. At each of the two entrances to the village, there is a church with a beautiful square.

### **Steni**

This farmers' village lies at the foot of Tsiknias, the highest mountain on Tinos. In the Agios Antonios church, there is a carved wooden iconostasis as well as icons from the 17th and 18th centuries.



### **Ysternia**

On a steep slope high above Ysternia Bay there is the village called Ysternia, between Kardiani and Pyrgos. Apart from its spectacular views one can also admire plenty of marble adornments on houses, churches and in the pretty town square, as this village is yet another home to marble artists with a long tradition of carving.

### **Falatados**

It is a village whose history stretches back to the 14th Century, and where agriculture and cattle breeding still play a role. Visit the church of Agios Ioannis and admire its marbled

decoration. During summer don't miss contemporary art exhibited at the House of Exhibition. In the picturesque passage next to the Church you can have a coffee and taste delicious homemade desserts. In the tavernas, you can taste delicious meat and offal specialties on a spit or on the grill, as well as a wide range of appetizers.

After visiting the gorgeous hinterland of the island, take off your clothes, put on your swimming suits and trunks and off to the superb **beaches** of Tinos! An when you have enough of swimming, sunbathing, and flirting on the beach, you can embark on **sightseeing**. Lucky you, the island is full of interesting, beautiful, and important sites.

Website: **[www.tinos.gr](http://www.tinos.gr)**