

Skopelos

Skópelos: luxuriant vegetation with a Hollywood flair

Eye-catching landscapes; azure waters on golden coasts; traditional Pelion architecture; rugged natural monuments and a pure island atmosphere are all essential elements of the image of this, the greenest **island** in Greece, more than half of whose territory is covered with **virgin pine forest**. The island enjoyed international acclaim when Hollywood producers chose it to shoot the famous movie "**Mamma Mia**", establishing the island as a holiday destination for tourists from all over the world.



Skópelos belongs to the North **Sporades** group of islands and has three main ports: Skópelos, Agnóntas and Glóssa.

Hóra, on the northern coast, is the capital of the island. Its ancient name was Peparithos, after the son of the god Dionysos and Ariadne, who was the first inhabitant of the island.

Hóra nestles comfortably on a hill and sprawls around a castle. The **medieval castle** with its sweeping views of the Aegean, the stone houses with picture-perfect courtyards, narrow paved streets and a number of Byzantine churches, the town encapsulates the essence of a typical Greek island settlement. Take a trip through the rich history of the island with a visit to the **Folklore Museum**, housed in a renovated mansion built in the previous century, where you can enjoy a rich collection of folklore-related exhibits (open Mon-Sat, 10:00-14:00 & 19:00-22:00; entrance: €3).

More settlements for you to discover:

The island's other settlements are Glóssa, Palió Klíma and Néo Klíma/ Élios.

- **Glóssa**, the second biggest settlement on the island, is 25km north of Hóra. "The tall village" according to Papadiamantis is distinctive for its traditional, noble character and the ruins of ancient towers and buildings that have been discovered around the area.
- **Palió Klíma** is a picturesque village close to Glóssa that suffered great damage during the earthquake of 1965.
- **Néo Klíma** or Élios, situated 18 km far from Hóra, below the forest of Vathias at an altitude of 688 m, is quite a new settlement which was built in 1981. It is very close to the beautiful beach of Hovolos. Note that all the villages on the island have excellent facilities for tourism, with hotels, rooms to let, restaurants and bars to satisfy all your needs during your holidays.

While you are on the island, don't forget to visit the sights mentioned below:

- Impressive **Byzantine monasteries**, like Evangelistría and Timiou Prodrómou, built in idyllic locations. The old Monastery of Evangelistría, east of Hóra, was renovated in 1712 and is famous for its fortress-like precinct and its breathtaking view of the Port and Hóra.
- According to the legend, 800 years ago a dragon was killing the inhabitants and destroying the island. Ayios Riyínos, the patron saint of the island, chased it. At one point during the

chase a cleft opened up in the mountainside. The dragon fell into the abyss and died. This cliff was named "Drakonstósxisma", meaning Dragon cleft. At this point, the land does indeed sink, creating a deep cleft. In fact it is a steep gorge surrounded by the sea, below a church built almost on the edge of a cliff. The steep rocks, the pines trees "hanging" over the rocks and the turquoise waters create a picture of unrivalled beauty. Follow the signs on your way from Stáfylos to Amárantos to find it (follow the dirt track, go left and at the first junction go left again).

- The pirates' graves at Sendoúkia (ancient graves carved into the rock).
- The Episcopo, a Venetian building that was supposed to become the seat of the Bishop of Skópelos but remained unfinished due to the invasion of the pirate Barbarossa in 1538.
- **Ai Yiannis at Kastri**, a picture-perfect chapel built on the top of a steep rock. Climb up the steps carved into the rock and enjoy a stunning view of the archipelago! The chapel became famous worldwide when the **wedding scene from the film "Mamma Mia"** was shot there; ever since the chapel has been a popular choice for young couples planning to getting married.



Summer in Greece is synonymous with **swimming** and **sunbathing** on golden **beaches** something Skópelos has no shortage of: wonderful sun-drenched beaches stretching uninterrupted along the island's pine covered coastline:

- **Miliá** (25 km south western of Hóra), a beach covered with shiny white pebbles and surrounded by a pine forest, is considered to be one of the best on the island.
- The pebble beach of **Pánormos**, 15 km west of Hóra and Stáfylos, another pebble beach, which has facilities for visitors, only 4km away from Hóra, are some of the island's best known beaches. The route to Stafylos through dense pine forests is pure magic...Whichever beach you may opt for, the crystal clear waters and the green surroundings will take your breath away!

Don't leave Skópelos without tasting the traditional Skópelos cheese pie, a mouth watering delicacy made of crispy pastry in a spiral shape and local goat cheese. If you have time, spend a day visiting the nearby island of **Skiáthos**, a popular destination for young people, or **Alónissos**, a beautiful island where the seal Monachus Monachus is common! These islands are easy to reach since there are frequent connections to Skópelos by ferry or speed boat.

Getting there:

- By ferry or high speed boat from the port of Volos or Ayios Konstantinos
- By ferry from the port of Thessaloniki (only during summertime)

Useful phone numbers

- Municipality: + 30 24240-22.205
- Skopelos Development Agency: +30 24240-23.220
- Municipal Company for Culture-Sports: + 30 24240-23.523

- Police: +30 24240-22.235
- Medical centre: +30 24240-22.222
- Port Police: +30 24240-22.180
- Folklore Museum: +30 24240-23.494

Useful links

- www.skopelosgov.gr
- www.skopelosweb.gr/greek/hotels
- www.magnesia-tourism.gr