

Chalki



The beautiful little island of Chalki (Halki) lies just a few miles off the coast of Rhodes . There is no mass tourism and much of the traditional way of life of an island fishing village continues. There is no hurry - no taxis, no disco, no watersports and very little traffic. The setting is delightful; pretty houses scattered around a picturesque harbourside, fishing boats at anchor, and a backdrop of rugged mountains. There are almost no cars or motorbikes on Halki - just one taxi but certainly no hire cars. This makes it the perfect place for anyone who loves peace and quiet and total rest and just wants to escape from a busy life.

Chalki village, called Emborios, lies around an almost completely enclosed bay - a beautiful, natural harbour of crystal clear, opalescent turquoise water, reflecting the muted pastel shades of the elegant neo-classical buildings that line the waters edge, all the way round to the bell tower of the beautiful Byzantine church. Behind, more houses, arranged in tiers on the sunbaked hillside rising to a line of windmills that follow the ridge, silhouetted against the deepest blue sky. In the distance, a fairytale ruined Crusader castle, perched on a far hill, guards the remains of the old town, now deserted.

The harbourside is barely 400 meters long, and boasts a few kafenion serving coffees and drinks from dawn till dark-plus several tavernas serving fresh fish. While visiting Chalki (halki), take long walks and discover some of the more than 360 country chapels, the remnants of a medieval castle, and Horio, the island's ancient capital, which lies at the foot of the castle. Also worhtwhile are a visit to the monasteries of Stavros, Taxiarchis Michail of Panormitis as well as to the Panaghia Megalochari, an ancient church with frescoes of inestimable value.

CHALKI IN HISTORY:

Chalki possibly got its name from the copper (in Greek chalkos) workshops that were there in ancient times. The Titans were according to Greek mythology the first inhabitants of all the surrounding islands. The Pelasgians lived here for a long time, leaving several constructions behind, before they were succeeded by the Carians, the Dorians and later the Phoenicians. Aretanassa, the illustrious queen of Halki lived here once, before being exiled in Karpathos where she committed suicide after her husband's death. Remains of three temples of the god Apollo are preserved at the location of Pefkia, today's Nimborio (along the coastline). The god was worshipped here with exceptional honours. During the flourishing period of the Athenian state, Chalki regularly paid the alliance taxes. In the 7th century it is conquered by the Arabs, until 825 when it is liberated. Venetians and Genovians arrived on the island in 1204 and repaired the ancient acropolis, building at the same time a fortress on the island of Alimia. In 1523 Chalki was conquered by the Turks. It takes part in the 1821 revolution, it is conquered by the Italians in 1912 and finally is annexed to Greece along with the rest of the Dodecanese.



Some of the most important sites of Chalki worth visiting are the following:

1. Ancient crusader castle
2. Church of St. Nicholas
3. Monastery of Stavros
4. Old Monastery of Taxiarchis Michail Panormitis
5. Small chapel of Ai Giannis
6. The islets of Alimia and Kremasti
7. Pefkia with Apollo's temple