

## **Karpathos**

War and conquest define Karpathos' history. Karpathians fought with Sparta in the Peloponnesian War in 431 BC and lost their independence to Rhodes in 400 BC. In 42 BC the island fell to Rome. In the following centuries, Karpathos was ruled in turn by the Arabs, the Genovese pirate Moresco, the Venetians, and the Ottoman Empire. Ottoman rule ended when the Italians conquered the island during World War I. Karpathos even found itself ruled by the Germans for a couple of years before the end of World War II. The Italians named the island "Scarpanto."

Despite such a scattered past, the last half-century has been pivotal in characterizing the island. A war-ravaged economy sent many a Karpathian to the U.S. eastern seaboard cities. Karpathos today has a significant Greek-American constituency who have returned to their beloved island and invested heavily. As a result, Pigadia and other towns successfully infuse modern elements into a traditional setting. In the mountains north, a world unto itself, residents preserve tradition almost religiously.

## **Karpathos Today**

Karpathos has changed significantly since 1980, when only a few hotels were on the island. At that time, the capital, Pigadia, was a shadow of what it is today. In Pigadia, do not expect to find much in terms of how Karpathos used to be. Almost everything you'll see there is new. Pigadia is a modern town, with internet cafes, restaurants, and hotels practically everywhere. Other villages have not been affected to the same degree as the changes in Pigadia, but you'll always see indications that tourism is very important to the island's economy.

The 1980s ushered in the construction of many new hotels and other buildings, and the 1990s brought in many foreigners (non-Karpathians) to the island. Pigadia is now a very much a melting pot, with people of many national origins calling Karpathos their new home (and many of them appear to have done so illegally). Although these people help the local economy, their arrival has not helped with the preservation of Karpathian traditions and customs. However, most of the blame for Karpathos' shortcomings goes to many younger Karpathians, who have decided that an easy lifestyle is worth more than honoring their ancestors by keeping their spirit alive (though this is happening all over the world).

As much as things have changed, Karpathians as a whole have done an incredible job of retaining and celebrating their heritage, when compared to practically any other place in Greece. Karpathians, both in Karpathos and abroad, must be commended for the effort they have made to preserve their centuries-old traditions. In many of Karpathos' villages, particularly those in the north, it is very easy to imagine a time when technology did not exist, and people lived simpler (but tougher) lives. Many still do!

A suggestion to those interested in visiting Karpathos: Do not make hotel reservations. Come, and you will find the hotel of your choice. There's no reason to be cooped up in an undesirable (and potentially expensive) hotel for any length of time. There are quite a few places which will suit your needs. In addition, local residents (many of whom speak English) will help you and guide you, free of charge, to find the place of your choice. If walking around Pigadia searching for accommodations while also carrying around your luggage sounds troublesome to you, try leaving your luggage at a local restaurant (after eating there, of course) until you find something reasonable. I think that most restaurants would be amenable to helping you in this way, provided they are not very busy dealing with many customers.



Karpathos located at the half distance between Rhodes and Crete. It is with 330 square kilometres the second largest island of the Dodecanese islands and has about 5,400 inhabitants .Karpathos is a mountainous island stretched to north south direction. Its highest mountain is Kali Limni 1,215 meters high. The capital town and main port of the island is Karpathos called by the locals Pigadia , Karpathos town located at the same place with the ancient town Potideo.Karpathos was already settled in the antiquity. The Dorians created on Karpathos four cities Potideion, Arkaseia, Vrykous and Nisyros, a reason that the island was called Tetrapolis.Later coming Karpathos became a close allied of Athens Greece. Karpathos is ideal for Windsurfing because of its winds. The Meltemi wind is strengthened by the local topography and lets the eyes of each Windsurfer shine.The climate of Karpathos is typically Mediterranean. Its peculiarity is represented from the meltemi winds that they blow impetuous during the summer and hitting the western coast. The climate of Karpathos still introduces moreover an elevated humidity rate and the sparsity of rainy precipitations of winter. The small isle of Saria NW of Karpathos, once forming part of its major sister and now separated from it through a narrow, 200 m straight. Visitors come across a piece of rather mountainous land measuring a total 19 square kilometres in surface, the highest spot being at an altitude of 630 m from sea level.

This is where stood in ancient times town of Nissyros, quoted by Stravon, vestiges of which can still be seen immersed in the waters of the Tristomo straights, between Karpathos and Saria. Inscriptions further suggest the existence of a shrine to Porthmios Appolo.

Other antique remains on the island are reminders of such settlements as Argos - in the north - and Palatia - to the south - where excavations have unearthed quite a number of interesting findings. At Palatia there extends a beautiful, tree-shaded beach. Access to this islet is obtained by boat from the town of Karpathos. NW from Karpathos, there lies the islet of Astakida. Karpathos has ferry connections with Rhodes and Chalki from Rhodes the visitor

can travel to other islands of the Dodecanese like Symi, Nisyros, Kos, Kalymnos, Patmos Leros. The easiest way is to fly from Athens to Karpathos. During the summer season there are more ferry connections with other islands of the Dodecanese and the Cyclades like twice a week from Piraeus with Lane ferries to Milos, Santorini, Crete and Rhodes

