

Kassos

Kassos island is a quiet and welcoming island of the Dodecanese with very little tourism. The few tourists that do visit the island of Kassos seek total tranquility and the freedom to investigate the island on their own. Kassos is a mountainous island with many old churches, caves, and beautiful, natural scenery, all waiting to be discovered by adventure lovers. It has a small population of about 1500 inhabitants (mainly sailors) who live in the small community of Fry.

On Kassos you will swim around the port of Fry, and on the beaches of Emborios and Kofteri. If you come at the right time to Kassos island, make sure to attend the local marriages and feasts that still reflect the island's heritage and folklore.



Kassos, the most southern of the Dodecanese, is only 27 nautical miles northeast of Crete. Its first inhabitants are thought to have been the Phoenicians. Homer mentions it in his catalogue of the Greek cities that took part in the Trojan War. Kassos is a mountainous island with a steep, rocky coastline and few beaches. In the 18th century, Kassos established its own merchant fleet and grew rich from trade. It played an active role in the Greek War of Independence of 1821, earning the revenge of the Turko-Egyptian armada which set fire to the island in May 1824 and subsequently slaughtered its inhabitants. Only a few survived. The capital of the island is Fri, built on picturesque Bouka Bay. Its old stone houses - many of them constructed by sea captains - extend on both sides down to the sea. To the east and very near Fri is Emborios, the island's other coastal village. It boasts a beautiful church dedicated to the Nativity of the Virgin. Other villages include Agia Marina, set on a hill just one kilometre southwest of Fri, and Arvanitohori, southeast of Agia Marina, nestled in the island's only valley. Two kilometres from Agia Marina there is a cave called Sellai, 30 metres deep and 8 metres wide, with impressive stalactites. Swimmers will find pleasant beaches at Fri, Emborios, Ammouda and on the nearby islet of Armathia.

Kassos is first mentioned in Homer's Iliad where the Greeks go off to fight in Troy. The island has also been called Amphe, Achne and Astravi. The name Kassos comes, according to legend, from the island's first inhabitant, who was a Cretan prince. This indicates that the Minoans were amongst the first to settle on the island. In the 8th century BC it was conquered by Rhodes, and 300 years later it became member of the Athenian League when war against the Persians united almost all of Greece. During the Middle Ages Kassos belonged to the Venetians, but it was really a pirate nest. When the Turks ruled the island in the 18th century, it was reputed as a flourishing island with a strong commercial fleet. Ironically for the Turks, this helped greatly in the war of Independence that started in 1821, since the island contributed to the Greek side with a fleet of over 80 ships.

Sadly, this didn't help the island, since almost everyone died during the war: either as fighters, or when the Turks slaughtered the inhabitants. The Turkish rule here didn't end until 1921, when the Italians took over. Kassos was finally freed in 1948. By then, the island was totally impover-ished, and it is not until lately that the island has started to come alive.



Kassos BEACHES

On the North part of Kassos you will swim on the beaches of Emborios, Kofteri, Ammoua, Katarti and Aniperatos. On the South you will find the beaches of Helatros, Avlaki and Chochlacia (reached only by boat). On the neighboring island of Armathia you will find some of the nicest beaches of the Mediterranean Sea - Marmara and Karavostasi (15 minutes by boat from Fry).

Kassos island useful information

Area code: +30 22450

Harbourmaster: 41288

Police: 41222

Municipality: 41277

First Aid: 41333

Olympic Airways: 41555

Airport: 41444

Kassos Sailing/Yachting information

Moor your boat in the port of Kassos.

Be aware that there are no refuelling stations available on the island.

Transportation on Kassos island

By bus, taxi or rented motorcycles/cars. There is also a boat that can take you to the little island Armathia.

Kassos SITES/MUSEUMS

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

Fri is the capital of the island and is very picturesque with its stone houses. There is a church worth visiting here called Aghios Spyridonas. Emborios is another pretty village, with a church dedicated to the Virgin Mary. In Ellinokamara there are caves where archaeologists have found traces of Neolithic settlements. Sellai is a stalactite cave you can visit. In Poli, the old capital, there are some remains of the Venetian Kastro, and a beautiful church, Ag Triada.

Kassos Festivals/Feasts

St. Marina July 17th

Transfiguration of Christ August 6th

Assumption of Virgin Mary August 15th

St. Fanourios August 27th