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KYTHIRA

itinerary



Kythira island

The island of Kythira dangles 12km off the tip of the Peloponnese's Lakonian peninsula, between the Aegean and Ionian Seas. It's so quiet even the cats are yawning. Often veiled in sea mists like sudden shrouds across its rugged terrain, Kythira is for much of the year really a ghost land, an unspoilt wilderness of lush valleys, canyons and cliffs falling abruptly into the vivid blue sea. Despite its proximity to the Peloponnese, it is considered a part of the Ionian Island group, and while the stands of cypress trees help remind you, there is something truly time-trapped about this isolated isle, as if it simply forgot to join the 21st century. The island's population is spread among more than 40 rural villages, which with their sugar-cube design style have a distinctly Cycladic feel, punctuated by neoclassical manors and old-style kateneia.



Chora (Kythira)

Hilltop Hora (or Kythira), the island's capital, is smartly attired in Cycladic white-and-blue trim, and perches on a long, slender ridge that stretches north from an impressive 13th-century Venetian kastro overlooking the sea. Most of the action is based around the town square, while the shops that line the road to the kastro are particularly tasteful, ranging from fine antiques to bespoke jewellery.



Kapsali

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Set 2km south of Hora, photogenic Kapsali sits by two peaceful bays with a necklace of tavernas and accommodation strung around it. The protected harbour served as Hora's port in Venetian times, and the ochre beach has sheltered swimming. Kapsali's curving bays look dazzling when viewed from Hora's kastro. Increasingly there are some chic cafes opening up here.

The rocky island offshore is known as Itra ('cooking pot') because when clouds gather above it locals say it looks like a steaming cooking pot.



Around Kythira

Kythira offers many things for you to explore like hills, cliffs, hidden beaches, stands of cypress and olive groves. There are also the monasteries of Agia Moni, Agia Eleasis and Moni Myrtidion.

In Kato Livadi, there is an excellent collection of artwork in the Museum of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Art on Kythira. Also in Kato Livadi you can visit the iconic Katouni Bridge, the largest stone bridge in Greece, which was built by the British in the 19th century, when Kythira was part of the British Protectorate. In the island's northeast, you can visit the spectacularly situated ruins of the Byzantine capital of Paliohora.

Continue northeast through Paleopoli, with its wide, pebbled beach; and to the pretty fishing village, Avlemonas – sugar-white and huddled around an emerald cove. Archaeologists spent years searching for evidence of a temple near Avlemonas, known as Aphrodite's birthplace. Top beaches include nearby Kaladi Beach, with its grey-brown stones, the Fyri Ammos and the Kombonada.



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