Kos Island
GREECE

Kosinfo.gr
Your tourist travel guide
Welcome to Kos island

How to get here

- Daily connection by boat from Piraeus Port in Athens
- Daily connection by air with Olympic Airlines and Aegean Airlines from Athens
- Connection with all major airports in Europe from April to October
Kos, the island of Hippocrates, the garden of the Aegean, is the third largest island in the area (295 sq. km) within the Dodecanese islands complex. It is located between the islands of Kalymnos and Nisyros.

The island has only one mountain range. It's exceedingly green with exceptional mild climate, which, in combination with the sunshine during most of the months of the year, have turned the Kos into an international cosmopolitan tourist destination.

On Kos, one can enjoy a great combination of old and new. Tradition, thousands of years of history, natural beauty, historical monuments, organized beaches, modern shops and perfect hotel facilities coexist in harmony for the past couple of decades, providing the best impressions to our visitors.

A great advantage of Kos is its ideal location within the northern part of the Dodecanese that provides easy access to the neighbouring islands (Kalymnos, Leros, Patmos, Nisyros, Samos, Symi and even Rhodes) and daily access to the opposite coastline of Asia Minor, the ancient Halicarnassus (Bodrum).

All the above set the island of Kos one of the most charming tourist destinations for travelers from nearly all over the world.
City of Kos: Highlights

Panoramic view

Castle of Neratzia

Finikon (Palms) street

“The Abduction of Europe”

Old Town
City of Kos: Highlights

- Panoramic view
- Mini train
- Kos Marina
- Eleftherias square
- Old town by night
- Asklepeion: the representation of the Hippocratic oath
1. **Castle of Neratzia**: It was built during the beginning of the 15th century A.D. by the Knights of St. John, using material from ancient sites. It is an exceptional sample of defensive architecture of that period. It was controlling the sea passage between ancient Halicarnassus and Kos together with the opposite coast located Knights castle of St. Peter. For its strategic location, the Ottomans tried to conquer it many times and finally they did at 1522.

2. **Hospitaller house of Count Francesco Sans**: Built in 1514 by the Count of Kos, Francesco Sans and it is the only secular building of the Knights period on Kos.

3. **Plane tree of Hippocrates**: The age-old plane tree that under its shade Hippocrates was teaching his students, according to the tradition.

4. **Mosque of Gazi Hasan Pasha or Loggia**: It was built by Gazi Hasan Pasha at 1786. For its stone work it has been used ancient material from the nearby ancient Greek sanctuaries of the harbour neighborhood while the cistern of its fountain comes from an ancient Roman sarcophagus.

5. **Neighborhood of the Harbour-Ancient Agora**: One of the biggest archaeological sites with ruins that are dated from the Hellenistic era up to the medieval period.

6. **Altar of Dionysus**: Dorian style ancient Greek temple and Hellenistic altar dedicated to the ancient Greek god Dionysus.

7. **Casa Romana (Roman House)**: A big restored roman mansion of the 3rd century B.C. built on top of a previous one dated back on the Hellenistic period, decorated with mosaic floors and frescoes. It’s a characteristic sample of the wealth of Kos island during the Roman period.

8. **Roman Odeon**: Music event and contests area in honour of Asklepeios during the Roman period.
9. Western Archaeological Site: Within the excavated area has been found the central street that led to the country fields (Decumanus Maximus) and the street that led to the harbour (Cardo). One of the most important buildings is the roman house with the mosaic of the “Abduction of Europe”, the Thermae, the Arcade (Stoa) of the Gymnasium (Xyston), the Nymphaeum, the building with the mosaic of “Prince Paris judgment” and finally two early Christian basilica churches.

10. Old Town: Quarter of the old town that was preserved during the catastrophic earthquake of 1933. Today along its narrow streets there are shops, cafés and restaurants.

11. Church of St. Paraskevi: The coiling of the locals led to the construction of this church, against the Italian attempt of interfering within the spiritual issues. It was built between 1931-32. It was designed by the famous architect Orsini in Byzantine style. It is a representative sample of a Greek church.

12. “Panellenion” Complex: Designed in 1933 and constructed in 1935. It was the offices of the Italian fascist political party next to the cinema-theater. Its location in the centre of the town and its characteristic architecture (fascist and international style) were intensifying its purpose that was conversion through the media.

13. Municipal Market: It was designed in 1933 and it was built in 1935 according to the colonial Italian buildings of northern Africa. Arabesque style on its details. Up to nowadays, it is used as a green and fruit market.


15. Archaeological Museum: Visit the statue exhibition of the Hellenistic and Roman period and the mosaic floor that depicts the arrival of semi-god Asklepios on the island, welcomed by Hippocrates.
Around City of Kos: Lambi, Psalidi, Therma

Lambi: Located on the north-west side of the town of Kos, about 4 kilometres away, lies Lambi and the modern name is “Nea Alikarnassos”. It's a developed tourist area with many hotels. As this area is so flat, it is ideal for cycling along the seashore until the resort of Tigaki (and even further). It is also the favorite destination for those who prefer roller skating.

The Wetland of Psalidi is there to be explored and is an ideal place for relaxation in nature. Rare bird species find shelter in the rich flora of the area, whilst the beautiful beaches of Psalidi are just the right place for those who prefer serenity.

Therma: 8 km after Psalidi, you will find the hot springs of Kos, rich in sulfur and beneficial for health and well-being. Therma is isolated in between rocks and sea, a hidden beauty from the rest of the world.
About 3,5km SW of Kos town lies Asklepeion. Since the ancient times it was the most famous monument of Kos island. It is here that Hippocrates and the medical school that he founded developed scientific medicine.

The sanctuary had an international reputation especially after 242 B.C. That is when its immunity was recognized for periods of wars or conflicts. It seems that the traditional way of healing was preserved until the Hellenistic period. That was the miraculous appearance of the god (Asklepeios) in the patients’ dreams who was suggesting the therapy while the patients were asleep in a certain area of the sanctuary. Later, there were professional doctors that cured the patients with scientific methods.

The site is divided in three stages: On the first one are the portico, ruins of thermae, arcades and vespasians. On the second one lies the most ancient temple of Asklepeios (3rd century B.C.), the altar of Asklepeios or the cypress Appolo (4th century B.C.) and ruins of an Apollo temple (2nd century A.D.) with seven restored pillars. Finally, on the third one, lies the big temple of Asklepeios (2nd century B.C.) and ruins of an Hellenistic period arcade.
Marmari and Tigaki are the first seaside villages that one meets on the way out of Kos town. The sandy beaches and the crystal clear seawaters are magnificent.

Zia, Lagoudi, Asfendiou, Asomatos and Pyli are the mountain picturesque villages. You will find local traditional tastes, local wine and ouzo at the village taverns, where they can be combined with the view of a magic sunset. You will find peace and quiet in Asomatos.

Kardamena lies about 30klm away from Kos town and only 5klm from the island’s "Hippocrates" international airport. The ruins of the ancient city Alasarna were found during the excavations. The temple of Apollo, early Christian basilica churches and ruins of an ancient amphitheater are some of the most important findings. Let’s not forget though, about the sandy beaches - they are remarkable. Kardamena is connected daily by boat with the opposite located volcanic island of Nissyros. The local ouzo festival is also something that shouldn’t be missed.
Antimachia is located in the center of the island some 25 km from the town. This village that has preserved its name for over 30 centuries, has plenty to be proud of, such as the castle of Antimachia, the old traditional windmill and the traditional house - a museum that shows the visitor how the locals lived on the island 100 years ago. The honey festival at the end of the summer is also a very good occasion for trying the local delicacies!

Only 3 km NW of Antimachia lies Mastichari. Peace and serenity dominate this seaside little village where some of the most beautiful beaches of the island are located. Its little harbour is always full of fishermen that bring on daily basis fresh seafood to the local tavernas while the annual wine festival is organized in Mastichari. You may take the little ferry from there to the neighbouring island of Kalymnos as it is only minutes away.
Kefalos is on the west part of the island, 42 klm from Kos town. This old village is overlooking the bay of Kamari while only a few meters from the sea shore lies the islet of St. Nicholas (Kastri).

Some of the area sights are the early Christian basilica of St. Steven, the old monastery of St John the Baptist, the ruins of the island’s first capital called Astypalea (birthplace of Hippocrates) and the White Rock cave where the first evidence of human inhabitation of the island were found. The greek traditional fishing stays still alive, especially during the annual fish festival (trata) of Kefalos.
Kos was visited by St. Paul (Acts of the apostles chapter 21) at 57 A.D. and Christianity was spread very fast all over the island.

Ever since the life and the history of the Koans are strongly bonded with the Orthodox Christian Faith. This is obvious from the many churches in the town, the villages as well as in isolated areas, in the forests and mountains. Faith has always been a connecting bond of the Greeks and kept them united during periods of foreign domination.

During your stay on Kos, it’s worth visiting some of the churches and admire the murals (frescoes) and icons - a rare form of art that survives even today through local icon painters and workshops.
Kos is proud of its Marina, whose facilities and services have turned the island into one of the main sailing and cruising crossroads of the Mediterranean Sea.

It is located one mile S.E. from Kos old harbor (entrance 36° 53'N 27° 18'E) and offers today 250 berths with mooring lines, water supply, electricity supply, 220 & 380 from 16 to 125 Amps, telephone connection, satellite TV. Kos Marina premises are patrolled 24 hours by guards. Cameras covers the whole area. All piers are equipped with fire stations with fire extinguishers, alarm system, fire hoses with both fresh and seawater circuit. The piers are equipped with emergency stations, lifelines, emergency telephones and rescue ladders.
The island effectively satisfies the organization and support of conference tourism. Its fully equipped hotels and conference complexes with up to date audiovisual equipment, have established Kos as a leading power in conferences for both the Balkans and the Mediterranean. The island gathers every year the elite, upgrading the institution of conferences in general.

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With crystal, deep blue waters and beaches with white soft sand, Kos is definitely a place blessed by God. Feeling the touch of sun and smelling the sea can really make your day. No wonder Koans smile all the time…

Do you want to relax or really feel the adrenaline going? In either case, Kos will make it happen! Sail boats, jet-skis, paddleboats and surfboards parade in front of your eyes. If you really like the sea, try snorkeling or scuba diving and if you believe your life is not “extreme” enough, don’t miss the opportunity of bungee jumping or parasailing. Get to live the experience of water sports, of becoming one with the sea.

The beaches on Kos have been awarded with the clean water Blue Flag.

Land or sea? It’s up to you. For those who like to feel the ground under their feet, try cycling or jogging through the beautiful countryside of the island of Kos, try tennis, hiking, climbing or any of the various options.
Don’t miss the local festivals, related to the traditions and the customs of Kos.

The **Hippocratea Festival**, during July and August, include a wide range of cultural events such as theatrical plays, music concerts, folklore and painting exhibitions, traditional dances and the representation of the Hippocratic oath in the Asklepeion. Plenty of music, dance and art unions arrive to Kos from other regions of the country and from abroad.

During the spring, on **St. Georges day** (April 23th) in the village of Pyli, the locals organize horse races while at the rest of the island’s areas with churches named after the same Saint, there are also celebrations known as “**panigiri**”. As the Greeks celebrate their Saint’s name day, there are festivals organized by the celebrating churches such as 29th June in Antimachia (**St. Peter and Paul**), 15th August in Antimachia, Kefalos (**Virgin Mary's day**) Kardamena 8th September.

The “**Trata**” Fish Festival in Kefalos, the **Honey Festival** in Antimachia, the **Wine Festival** in Mastichari are some events that you shouldn’t miss during the summer.

Beyond all of these though, Kos is an island full of life. Once the sun goes down, the party begins and doesn’t seem to end. Start by dining and continue with a drink in a nightclub or a cocktail bar by the beach. Parties last forever and when the whole island becomes one happy company, small things such as anxiety or stress, just don’t seem to have any effect. For those still hanging on to their romanticism, a beach party under the moonlight will bring out the best of them, while a sunrise after a night next to the beach will make them remember these days for ever…
The wine cheese (cheese of “possa” for the locals) is an ancient recipe that Koans preserve and produce up to today. It is a perfect accompaniment for wine or ouzo as well as for fruits - such as watermelon, that was the typical farmer’s lunch on the island.

The sweet tomato jam is another traditional taste that is made of the local variety of tomato.

Of all the local products of Kos, honey is the most outstanding. It has a fresh aroma and delicious taste.

Olive oil is produced yearly from the rich olive groves of the island and you will have the opportunity to sample it on your salad.

Local wine was also known for its exceptional quality since the ancient years. Hippocrates has referred on the medical antioxidant properties of wine and mentioned a local variety of wine that was mixed with seawater for it had a very strong sweet taste.

Such wine is still found in the mountain villages of the island and there are also 3 wineries that produce a wide wine range of local and international varieties.
Nissyros is one of the smallest islands of the Dodecanese and it is only 1 hour away from Kardamena and 1.5 hours from Kos town harbor. Despite the size of the island, there are many archaeological monuments and natural beauty. The first thing that impresses the visitor, filling him with admiration and awe is the imposing volcano, a phenomenon of incomparable natural beauty. According to the mythology, Poseidon - whilst helping Zeus during the battle against the Titans - chased the terrifying giant Polyvotis until Kos island where he chopped with his trident a huge piece of the island, under which he buried Polyvotis. It is said that the volcano is the mouth of Polyvotis which is to be found in the center of Nissyros island. The 600 year old monastery of Virgin Mary “Spiliani” is something not to be missed. For centuries now it has been one of the most important pilgrimages of the Dodecanese with the silver plated icon of Virgin Mary that gathers thousands of people from the nearby islands and locals that live now in foreign countries, every 15th August.

Kalymnos is the fourth biggest island of the Dodecanese. Its landscape is mountainous but there are two valleys in between. Kalymnos is popular as the island of the sponge divers and a great part of the people are involved in sponge diving for centuries now. “Pothia”, the capital, dates back to about 1800 when the first inhabitants of “Horio” settled here. It is built like an amphitheater and the vividly painted houses cascade to the harbour with its “kaiki” (fishing boats).

Patmos or Patnos is the “Jerusalem of the Aegean” according to an inscription of the 5th century A.D. It is here that St. John the Apostle and Theologian was exiled and during his stay there he received the visions of the Revelation. Later, emperor Alexios Komnenos donated the island of Patmos to Monk Christodoulos who established the monastery in honor of Apostle John. That is how the most important “sight” of the island was founded, the Holy Monastery of Patmos. The island is mountainous with a rocky landscape and many coves. On top of the main hill rises the imposing monastery which is surrounded by white washed houses, little churches, captain’s houses with winding roads and small squares providing stunning views over the Aegean sea. The boats that reach Patmos anchor in the Skala harbour. Halfway up the main road, which goes to the upper village of Hora, lies the Cave of the Revelation which is the most sacred spot of the island. It is there that St. John the Evangelist saw Almighty God during His revealed visions and wrote the Revelation, the last book of the New Testament.