

LOCATION OF KOUFONISIA

Koufonisia include three main islands:

- Koufonisi or Pano (Upper) Koufonisi
- Kato (Lower) Koufonisi and
- Keros

Geographically, they are located on the southeast side of Naxos and on the west side of Amorgos and belong to the complex of the Lesser East Cyclades. The Upper Koufonisi with a surface area of just 5.7km² has some of the most beautiful beaches in Greece and is justly thought to be a hidden gem of the Aegean Archipelago. It is the smallest of the inhabited islands of the Cyclades. The few hundred locals of the island make their living out of fishing, farming and tourism. At the moment, Koufonisi is one of the most amazing summer destinations of Greece. The Lower Koufonisi is located between the Upper Koufonisi, Keros and Schinoussa. It is even smaller than the Upper Koufonisi, with a surface area of just 4.4km² and has no permanent residents. It has splendid turquoise beaches, which can be visited by hired boats from the upper island. It is an untouched paradise that should not be missed. Uninhabited Keros is a protected archaeological site from which a large number of ancient Cycladic art pieces have been excavated in the 20th century.

History And Recent Times At Koufonisia

Koufonisia have been inhabited at least since the Bronze Age according to archaeological evidence. In Greece the Bronze Age begins with the Cycladic civilization in the South Aegean Islands around 3200BC. Archaeologists speculate that in the distant past, Pano and Kato Koufonisi, Keros and Glaronisi, which form a circle, were a single island, or at least the sea area between them was much smaller. Research in the area Kavos Daskalio on Keros and in Loutra on the southwest side of Pano Koufonisi has revealed that there are **buildings extending into the sea**. Excavation on the Kavos Daskalio site on Keros brought to light a center of religious worship. It has been proposed that it may be the first such center in the world. One of the most significant findings, a pan shaped vessel with an engraved nine- rayed star, is exhibited in the museum of Naxos. In the course of the centuries, Koufonisia, like all the Cycladic islands, went under the rule of the Venetians and the Turks, who, during the 17th century, fought to gain control of the Aegean Sea islands. The Koufonisians often co-operated with the pirates, who used the two islands as safe refuge.

Koufonisia were liberated together with the rest of the Cyclades islands in the Greek War of Independence (1821-1829). **They became part of the newly founded Greek State in 1830**. During World War II Greece was under military occupation by the forces of the Axis. At first, the islands were under Italian command whose headquarters were on Amorgos. The Italian Army had commandeered the islands' farm produce for their needs. The islanders were only allowed to procure enough meat and vegetables to enable them to hold the traditional feast on the day of St George, patron saint of the Koufonisia. **In 1943**, the Italians withdraw from the Axis alliance and the islands come under the cruel command of Nazi Germany. After the end of World War II, many islanders, being destitute, had to move

to the cities to seek employment, while others went to sea. Of some 1000 inhabitants only a few remained on the island since many of them migrated to Athens in order to find a job.

Communication with the neighboring islands and the rest of Greece was difficult. Transport was by fishing boats (caiques) while there was only one ship passing by once every eight days. Very often the inhabitants were cut off, without supplies of food or medicines, and deprived of medical treatment, as there was only one doctor for all four islands of the Lesser Cyclades.

The telephone came to Pano Koufonisi in **1964**. Electricity did not arrive until **1984**. That is when the port was built. Nowadays the population of Pano Koufonisi has increased but it is still smaller than 500 people. There is a frequent, regular boat service. Fishing is the island's main economic activity. Limited farming and livestock-keeping is only sufficient to meet locals' needs. Fishing is so widespread that locals joke that there are more fishing boats than families on the island. The local fishing fleet numbers 35 large boats, plus a number of smaller octopus boats and other fishing craft; per capita, it is **the largest fishing fleet in Greece**.

Sightseeing At Koufonisia

Koufonisia is an experience, an escape from the routine of day to day living. There are many places of interest that someone should visit during his stay on Koufonisia.

Chora

This small fishing village, is the starting point for most tourists to Koufonisia. It is the port of the island and is a prime example of traditional Cycladic architecture. Houses and all other buildings are painted white and blue in order to match with the boundless blue of the Aegean Sea and create a modern but also magic atmosphere.

Folk Museum

The museum was created in 2011 at the initiative of the new municipality of Koufonisia. You will find it next to the church of St George, by the old water fountain. The museum focuses on the traditional and cultural heritage of Koufonisia and many locals were involved in its creation. The small collection consists of items, tools and a great photo archive from the old days.

Windmills

The main occupation of the islanders used to be the production of basic commodities for their families. One of these was wheat. For grinding this into flour there were two windmills, which to this day stand proudly and adorn Koufonisi. The first towers above the harbor, and appears to welcome visitors. The second windmill is located near the shipyard, in the Loutro area. It was built around 1830. ***It has been designated a Modern Monument of the Preindustrial Era.***

Churches

Both islands of Koufonisia complex have a few beautiful churches where you can find peace and admire their rare icons. In the densely populated islet of Pano Koufonisi you will find the Church of Saint Georgios, the saint protector of the island. Every year, a famous feast is held during Easter and according to the tradition, one local passes around the icon to the entire island where streets are filled with rose leaves. Close to the port of Koufonisia lies the church of Saint Nikolaos and at the highest point

of the island stands the church of Prophet Elijah. In the neighboring island of Kato Koufonisi, above the harbor dominates the church of Panagia. On August 15th celebrations are held in every part of Greece, as well in Koufonisia, where locals and visitors arrive in hundreds to attend the church service and enjoy the solemn atmosphere.

Karnayo (Dockyard)

This is where repair and maintenance of sea vessels is done. There used to be two dockyards on the island, but only one of them remains in operation as the other one closed after its owner retired. The one still in operation is located in the Loutro area. It is the only one in Lesser Cyclades. The work there remains almost exactly the same as it was in the past.

Keros

One of the most important centers of **Cycladic culture** (3000-2000 B.C.). Excavations on the western end yielded priceless findings, including 100 marble figurines. Keros in some ancient texts such as Homer and the Orphica is identified with Asteria, the island that some **myths claim** was the birthplace of **Apollo** and **Artemis**. Some scholars claim that the unique Cycladic figurines were inspired by the isle's shape, which resembles that of a reclining female form. Keros is spectacular at sunset as light and shadows dance over the land's relief. When the moon is full, it falls on the island's profile in such a way that viewed from Koufonisia, Keros looks **like a female form floating on the sea**.

Pisina

A natural swimming pool awaits you in the eastern part of the island. Walking along the cliff path towards the east, past Platia Pounda beach and before you get to Pori beach, about halfway, you will find a large rock pool, big enough for several people to swim in. It is perfect for diving, too. According to Greek Mythology, it might be one of the amusements that Neptune once provided for the entertainment of the Nereides, his sea wives.

To Mati Tou Diavoulou Cave (Devil's Eye)

If you are standing on Pori beach, facing the sea, the cave is on the right hand end of the cove. On the right hand side of the entrance there is a hole through which the sea comes up and floods the cave floor to be sucked back down again. That is Devil's Eye. The power of the sea, the deep sigh of the ever rising and falling water, the lovely view from the cave make for a riveting sight.

Beaches At Koufonisia

Koufonisia has only recently been discovered by tourists so the Island remains virtually unspoiled. All beaches are surrounded by beautiful and natural landscapes. Dreamlike golden beaches with crystalline emerald and turquoise waters circled by sand dunes or sculpted rocky outcrops with their unique golden colors and many hidden coves are waiting you to discover them. The mountains of Naxos and Amorgos protect them from the strong northern summer winds called the Meltemi. All the beaches of the Koufonisia have been formed almost as though they are attempting to seduce you into staying forever!

Ammos Beach

The main beach of the village, whose quaint beauty is enhanced by the view of the colorful fishing boats moored in the harbor. Located in a walking distance from Chora, Ammos is a long beach with soft sand and exotic waters.

Finikas or Charokopou Beach

The main road of Koufonisi starts east of the port and ends up at Finikas or Charokopou beach. Almost 1,1 kilometers east of Chora. Very small but sandy and extremely beautiful, this magnificent beach is sheltered from northerly winds. The majority of visitors to the island know the beach as Finikas after the restaurant. Its real name, however, is Harokopou, as is the name of the area around it. To get there, apart from the option of a pleasant walk by the sea, you may also choose to take the excursion boat, which provides a regular hourly service.

Fanos Beach

Fanos is a long beach with a sandy shore and transparent waters. It is unorganized and provides a nice environment to relax. It is located 1,5 kilometers east of Chora and close to Finikas. Fanos beach is quite popular, so it is usually crowded and also offers a beach bar and some watersports facilities.

Platia Pounda or Italida Beach (Italian Lady)

This is one of the most crowded beaches on the island and perhaps one of the most beautiful around Cyclades. It is also called Italida from a resident in the area with Italian origin. Platia Pounda is located about 1800m away from the village. This is a completely unspoiled beach that can be reached only on foot. There is no beach bar or restaurant on the area, so you must bring your own supplies.

Pori Beach

Pori Beach is considered by many as the most beautiful one on the island. It is located 2.5 Kilometers east of the village, at the lip of a large cove. This moon shaped beach with fine sand, is well protected from the north winds (Meltemia) that usually blow during August, and has shallow, crystal clear blue waters. There is also a restaurant at the area to cater all your needs. Near Pori beach you will find the **sea caves of Xylobatis, To Mati Tou Diavolou and Gala beach**, all interesting spots, we'll worth a visit.

Activities At Koufonisia Island

Swimming – Trekking - Cycling at Pano Koufonisi

If you really need some rest and recreation, there are some truly beautiful remote beaches with pristine, crystal clear waters where you can enjoy the sun and indulge in the blissful quiet. On Pano Koufonisi the highest point is 113m. It is immediately obvious that walking is not a particularly demanding activity. Accompanied by the beauty and tranquility of the scenery, you can easily walk all over the Island in three hours. Last but not least, there are no car or motorbike rentals on the islands of Koufonisia, but there are two agencies that rent bicycles.

Recreational Sailing

The Koufonisia are ideal for those who decide to charter a private boat. Be it a speedboat or a sailing vessel it will enable you to get to know and enjoy the Koufonisia and the surrounding uninhabited islets. Furthermore, there are daily fishing boats (caiques) that start from the port and explores several beaches and ends up at Pori. There is also an opportunity to visit **the neighboring islands of Kato**

Koufonisi, Iraklia and Schinoussa. If you want to experience a different evening, you can go by boat to Kato Koufonissi and have dinner on the island's **only taverna**.

Yoga Sessions

Book a yoga class to perfect the basics or expand your practice. Relieve stress, improve your overall well-being and relaxation while on holidays on one of the most idyllic places around the Cyclades area.

Food And Drink At Koufonisi

Coffee Corners

Astrolouloudo: Coffee and Pastries

Bakery of Giorgoula: Coffee and Pastries

Kalamia: Breakfast and Pastries

Kyma: Loukoumades(traditional homemade Greek donuts with Honey)

Petrino: Waffles and Ice Cream

Gastronomic Delights

Atairiastoi: Ouzo and Meze

Aneplora: Greek Traditional Cuisine

Captain Nikolas: Seafood

Finikas: Greek Traditional Recipes

Hondros Kavos: Seafood

Kalofego: Greek Traditional Cuisine

Lefteris: Greek and International Cuisine

Remezzo: Greek Cuisine

Palio Tilefonio: Souvlaki

Strofi: Souvlaki

Cocktails at Koufonisi

Astrolouloudo: Raki and more..

En Plo: Cocktails and Drinks

Kalofego: Cocktails and Drinks

Nikitas: Cocktails and drinks

Lefteris: Cocktails and Drinks

Scolio: Cocktails and Drinks

Sorocco: Cocktails and Drinks

Useful Telephone Numbers At Koufonisia

Police: +30 22850 71375

Doctor's office: +30 22850 71370

Pharmacy: +30 22850 74454 +30 694 7929292

Medical center: +30 22850 23333

Ticket office: +30 22850 71438

Port office on Naxos: +30 22850 22300

Petrol station: +30 22850 71457 +30 697 7982701

Port authorities of Piraeus: +30 210 4226000, +30 210 4147800

Travel agency: +30 22850 71671