Dear Guest

Let Rhodes became part of your universe!
Come discover the cultural treasures and natural attractions of Rhodes, attend and participate in memorable festivals as well as local events and enjoy a unique experience!
Rhodes is an endless dialogue between the real and the fantastic, unbelievably rich in history and myths, a true godsend cherished by the mortals, a delightful mosaic of colours basking in the dazzling sun.
A trip to Rhodes is a travel into the light!

Stathis Kousournas
Mayor of Rhodes
President of Rhodes Tourism Promotion Organization
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### Information

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![Cover: Marble head of the God Helios. 2nd century b.c, Archaeological Museum of Rhodes](image)
An ancient myth has it that at the time the gods sat down to share the world, it was Helios, the Sun God who, mesmerized, saw an island so beautiful emerging from the depths of the sea, that he immediately asked Zeus if that could be his share. This island was Rhodes, a dolphin-form piece of land floating in the transparent waters of the south-eastern Aegean Sea, where the West meets East. Crowned with golden beaches, verdant hills and valleys, bathed in the sunlight of its ancient patron-god, it is a place blessed by nature, a corner of Heaven shaped on a human scale.

Inhabited since prehistoric times, the island quickly evolved into an important economic and cultural centre of the ancient Greek world. Its wealth, natural beauty and strategic location offered the Rhodians prosperity, but also attracted the mighty of each era, avidly vying to make it theirs. The Romans, the Knights of the Order of Saint John and the Ottoman Turks as well as the Italians, all have left strong traces of their presence, but did not alter the Grecity of the island that joined mother Greece in the aftermath of the Second World War.

Mild winters and breezy summers, typical features of the Mediterranean climate, make of Rhodes an ideal place to dwell in.

The island benefits from the highest number of sunny days in Europe, basking against the clearest blue skies imaginable – a characteristic having eventually inspired one of the names under which Rhodes was originally known: Aethria [cloudless, bright skies in Ancient Greek]…and so it is that the “Bride of the Sun”, combining excellent climatic conditions and top quality accommodation infrastructure for every budget, is an ideal holiday destination throughout the year.

In winter, green after the first rains, the island of Rhodes indolently settles for a period of rest for its people and its discerning visitors. It dons its holiday best and welcomes Christmas, New Year, and the Epiphany with many religious and other events deeply rooted in the Greek tradition. Through festivities and feasts, the winter, later wrapped in its Carnival costume, gradually wears out in a resplendent spring, a true explosion of colors, scents and flavors awakening the senses as nature, warming up, gracefully in its rejuvenation, spreads its fragrant flowers of all shades and nuances throughout the island. Before you know it, its Easter time and everything eagerly prepares to welcome the Divine Passion and Resurrection. An excellent time for the perennially hospitable locals to prepare to play host to their guests and visitors, anyone wishing to be initiated to the Slates of the Divine Passion and the exuberance of Easter; through unique customs and events, everything experienced with a strong Greek flavor even harmoniously combining with the universal!

At Easter already the Goddess of Spring is flirting with Summer, which essentially spreads its golden wings in June and holds strong until early October no matter how hard Autumn tries to cast a rainy shadow. Summer in Rhodes rimes with an unbelievably wide array of top-quality cultural events, featuring Greek and foreign artists of international reputation, addressed to all visitors interesting to further diversify their stay. Still, for many Autumn is the sweetest time of the year. The feverish pace of life, typical of an international holiday destination like Rhodes, subsides as temperatures become more benign and sea breezes settle down to melodious murmurs of an unperturbed azure.

All year round, Rhodes the nymph, splendid and welcoming, with excellent tourist infrastructure, welcomes millions of visitors from around the world flowing in to relax, have a taste of the salty seas, feel the warm embrace of the Sun, visit its archaeological and World Heritage monuments, participate in cultural events, meet hospitable people and explore the local culture. This edition will help you become better acquainted with our island.

Rhodes: 4 Seasons
Rhodes as a V.I.P Destination

Long though it has been since the time Ceasar in Ancient Rome resented his sons’ preferring a languid stay in the family’s luxurious villa in Rhodes to participation in the Empire’s political affairs, this island has never ceased to feature high amongst the world’s VIP’s favorite destinations! Locals and adepts of Rhodes can afford to put on a resigned face – delighted though they always are! – in talking about the latest arrival of yachts at the medieval port of Mandraki, gossiping about the eponymous visitors treading the Rhodian soil, metal mouthedly sipping a drink in hand at some bar or luxurious restaurant on the island should take no surprise in catching a glimpse of a famous actor or actress – yes, the very same hero that days ago you were enchanted by, at the cinema! – enjoying the thrill of the Rhodian evening or a well-known politician fleeing, if only for a while, the turmoil of his government affairs for a lovely holiday, combining excellent sightseeing, an acquaintance with the incredibly rich historical past of this island and the unique razzle-dazzle of Rhodian living. Plausible rumors have it that the amorous ambience of Rhodian evenings was the background for the development of the tumultuous liaison of Jackie Kennedy and Aristotle Onassis. Do not be surprised, therefore, if a proud restaurateur, your hotelier or just the other grocer around the street proudly points at pictures of such glories of the past as Anthony Quinn, Roger Moore, Julia Andrews, Gregory Peck and Ava Gardner or of stars of present day like Tom Hanks or the head of the Pink Floyd, the whole pruned next to shots of parliament deputies, ministers, presidents of states and scientists of international aura, all of them having one thing in common, a standard preference for Rhodes as their destination. Not surprisingly, Rhodes is an ultra-modern infrastructure in terms of facilities and means allowing for the hosting of even the most challenging conferences, a multitude of luxurious hotels to combine a lavish sojourn with high-level meetings and events are but some of the features making of this island the ideal option. World magnates, persons of stamina and clout, crowned heads, men and women of the thespian arts, illustrious scientists regularly flock to Rhodes as a unique combination of opportunities allowing them to remain present in the flow of events and continue to foster their legend without sacrificing some cherished moments of privacy, the chance to fuse – if only for a while – into the anonymous crowd of all those men and women sharing in the admiration inspired by this charming island of the Dodecanese!
The city of Rhodes was founded in 408 BC upon an initiative of the inhabitants of the more ancient cities of Ialysos, Lindos and Kamiros to build a powerful new city to become the capital of their island. Designed according to the Hippodameian urban planning system, the city quickly earned universal admiration, as one of the most beautiful cities of its time. It quickly evolved into an important economic and cultural hub, under the Roman and later Byzantine rule however, the City of Rhodes lost some of its ancient glory. In 1309 it was taken over by the Knights of the Order of St. John, who once settling down, endowed the city with strong fortifications, a unique defense structure enclosing a thriving multinational medieval agglomeration. In 1522, the island of Rhodes fell into the hands of the Ottoman Turks and the Greek population, forced to abandon the City, was compelled to settle outside the walls, creating new quarters, known as “Marasia”. In 1912, the city of Rhodes, like the entire Dodecanese, came under the Italian rule. The new rulers changed the architecture of the city through imposing buildings, broad streets, and squares, before ceding their place to mother Greece that, in 1948, welcomed the Island as part of its national territory.

The modern city of Rhodes is inhabited by a permanent population of eighty thousand inhabitants. Combining its dynamic present with its rich historical past, it forms the economic and cultural center of the south-eastern Aegean. The rare beauty of its natural environment, with its clean beachfronts, parks and recreation areas, dazzling sunlight, warm hospitality, its excellent tourist infrastructure, the many entertainment options offered by the local night-life, sports, cultural events, day trip possibilities to neighboring islands and throughout the island of Rhodes, the charm of its turbulent history, witnessed through visits to its monuments and museums, are but some of the features rendering Rhodes one of the most popular resorts in the Mediterranean. Rhodes is a premier cruise destination in Europe and holds the fifth position globally.

The Modern Town

The Colossus of Rhodes is one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. It was smitten by the great earthquake from Lindos, Dharia, and was dedicated to the Sun God, believed to have helped the Rhodians defeat Demetrius Poliorcetes. Comprised of the materials of an earthquake, the Colossus was estimated to have stood about 400 feet. The site of the tower is now occupied by a lighthouse, a ruinous temple of Athena, among other structures. The site now serves as a parking lot.

The windmills of Rhodes, through a magnificent sunrise.

The lighthouse of St. Nicholas was commissioned by Grand Master Zacosta. Once the sleepless guard of the port, it now welcomes friends from around the world.

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The aquarium is in the northernmost tip of the city, is the most important marine research centre in Greece. In its underground aquarium the visitor can see many of the species living in the Greek seas. Visitors can also enjoy the sun and the blue sea at the cosmopolitan beach at the northern tip of the city, only close to the centre.

The impressive three-storey Nestorideion Melathron (Museum of Modern Art) in Ekato Hourmadies (hundred date-palms), donated by Paola Nestoridou, hosts more than 1,000 representative works by famous Greek artists of the 20th and 21st century. A modern multifunctional cultural space operates next to it.

The modern city of Rhodes consists of the historical downtown – which is also its administrative, cultural and commercial center – and the suburban quarters. Many of the city’s historical buildings, often housing the local and regional authorities and agencies, also play host to numerous cultural events throughout the year. The city offers visitors a rich market with innumerous opportunities for the purchase of both local products and designer brands by Greek and international firms, echoing the latest trends in fashion, at attractive prices.

There are many ways to explore and discover the innumerous attractions of the city of Rhodes.
The earlier Byzantine city was extended and the walls fortified by the Knights of Saint John in the 14th and 15th centuries, creating the medieval city of Rhodes we see today. Eleven gates lead to the interior which, in turn, divided into two sectors: the “Collachium”, where the Knights lived and where the most important Knights’ houses are still to be found, and the “Burgh”. The main city, Rhodes soon rose to become the capital city of an independent state, minting its own currency and developing standalone financial activities. Researchers of this particular period are unanimous on the realization that thanks to reciprocal compromises and a flexible attitude, Hellenes, Crusaders and their descendants from as many as eight different areas in Europe managed to dwell in this city in perfect harmony for more than 200 years. Rather than religious, linguistic or national fusion, what this cohabitation yielded was genuine cultural and social progress.

The “Old Town”, as the locals referred to it, is currently one of the best preserved fortified medieval towns in 15th century Europe. Its inclusion in the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Network. Wandering through the maze of its cobblestone paved streets, reveling at the sight of the majestic knightly residences and public buildings, admiring the genius loci behind the masterfully built fortifications, the moat, the bastions and barbicans, the byzantine Christian shrines and the mosques, the squares, the house gardens and courtyards, the visitor enters a time capsule, gently sliding back in times gone by and into a settlement that remains very much alive, bustling with activity, ready to surprise you, yours to discover…

The Palace of the Grand Master – admittedly the most imposing of all edifices in the Old Town – used to host the Headquarters of the Master of the Knightly Order of St. John whilst also serving the purpose of a fortified stronghold. Built in the 14th century on the remains of a byzantine fort, the two-storey complex has been arranged around a separate inner courtyard. A considerable part of the Palace was destroyed during the Ottoman years and ruined until the 30s, when architects from Italy were commissioned to restore it to its actual splendor.
The City Art Gallery contains works by the most important Greek painters. It is housed in a building dating from the time of the Knights, at the entrance to the Medieval Town.

The Archaeological Museum of Rhodes is housed in the building of the Hospital of the Knights. Amongst the many interesting exhibits: the statue of Aphrodite.

The church of the Panagia (Virgin Mary) of the Burgh, a late gothic structure of the 14th century. Bombarded in the Second World War, only the sanctuary’s three apses remain standing today.

Hippocrates Square at the end of Socrates Street, the main shopping thoroughfare of the Old Town. Around the square are many bars, restaurants and nightclubs.

The Old Clock Tower, an impressive watch-pot, was commissioned in the late 19th Century by Zikos Pasha. The reward for those willing to take the climb to the top is the magnificent view over the Old Town.

A walk around the medieval walls, starting from the Grand Master’s Palace, is a unique experience.
The temple of Aphrodite, from the 3rd century BC. The ruins were discovered in the heart of the city, between Mandraki and Akandia harbours.

The Hellenistic maritime fortifications, as revealed by the excavations underway in the Medieval Pier of windmills at the main port of Rhodes.

The first traces of life in Rhodes are lost in the time of legends. Amongst its first dwellers are thought to be an indigenous tribe, the Heliades - descendants of Helios, the island’s patron and the Telchines, a strange race that were thought to look like demons. The latter were known seafarers and skilled craftsmen. They taught the ancient Rhodians the art of working with metals and stone.

Excavations revealed that, in the 16th century BC, the Minoans were the first to colonize the island followed in the 15th century BC by the Mycenaeans. The first Dorian city-states appear in the 8th century BC: Ialysos, Lindos and Kamiros which, together with Kos and the Achaean cities of Crete and Halicarnassus, formed the Doric Hexapolis, the first political, economic and cultural Union in the then known world. The wealth and prosperity of the island were mainly due to trade, as the island is conveniently situated on the crossroads of the ancient trade route that linked many Greek cities, continued to Sicily, returned to the Cyclades, and with Rhodes as the main hub, followed down to Cyprus and Phoenicia. Another important trade route opened for the Rhodians during the Ptolemaic period, starting from Aegina, passing through Rhodes, the Nile Delta and ending in Cyprus. All three cities shared minted their own currency at an early stage - yet another feature of their economic prosperity.

A milestone in the history of Rhodes was the decision of the three cities, in 609 BC, to build a powerful new city at the northernmost tip of the island, destined to rule in power and urban charm for many centuries. Like all the other Greeks, the Rhodians fought against the Persians although much later they did not resist the empire of the Macedonians of Alexander the Great on their island. Due to its strategic position, Rhodes was conquered by the Romans in the 2nd century BC. From this time on and especially since the 1st century BC, Rhodes became an important cultural centre, its aura reverberating throughout the Mediterranean.

Saint Stephen’s Hill, locally as Monte Smith marks the site of the acropolis of ancient Rhodes. The green and beautifully laid out archaeological park contains the Hellenistic stadium, built in the 2nd century BC, where the athletic events of the Alioi Games took place. These were a part of the major festival of the island, held in honour of the sun-god Helios.

Next to the stadium is the small Roman Theatre. Just as in ancient times, events are still staged here today. On the summit of the acropolis stands the temple of Pythion Apollo, the patron deity of the city. From here the panoramic view of the city, port and its surroundings is breathtaking.

2400 Years of History

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The temple of Pythion Apollo, facing the 3rd century BC. The ruins were discovered in the heart of the city, between the Aral and Aralda harbours.
Ialysos

Ialysos, also known as Tissale, the birthplace of many Olympic medallists, features magical sunsets and an incredible tourist infrastructure, a cradle of civilization, a place of worship, sports and entertainment, was one of the three famous ancient cities of Rhodes. The first people having settled here were the Kares (a pre-Hellenic race), followed by the Phoenicians. This was the birthplace of Diagoras, the greatest Olympic champion of antiquity as well as of Timokreon, the celebrated poet. The area of the verdant hill Filerimos hosts the ruins of Ancient Ialysos - amongst them, what remains of the ancient Greek temple of Athena Polias. During the Byzantine Era, the hill was used as a natural fortress. A monastery dedicated to the Virgin Mary was built here in the 13th century. During the rule of the Knights, the monastery passed into the hands of Catholic monks who expanded its facilities and lent the area great prestige. Today’s visitors may see the ruins of the ancient acropolis and monastery, in their restored version of the interwar period, upon an initiative of the Italian government at the time the island was under Italian Rule. The visitor’s steps follow the path of the Passion, with stations along the cypress-clad trail to bring to mind the Passion of Christ during his ascent to the Calvary. The photo at the bottom shows the Icon of Our Lady of Filerimos, the original of which is currently in Montenegro.

The Acropolis of Lindos rises imposingly on a 116-meter cliff, surmounted by powerful walls, like a guardian overlooking the sea. At its top stand the ruins of the temple of Athena Lindia of the 4th century B.C., the Propylaea, the great Hellenistic Stoa and the Byzantine church of St. John. During the rule of the Knights, its castle was strengthened, while the city’s market prospered until the 18th century. Inside the ruins of the ancient city-state of Lindos, one may admire the panorama of the village from afar, but the view is equally captivating from the sea, reserved to those visiting Lindos on a day cruise setting out from Mandraki harbour of Rhodes. The traditional village, with its whitewashed houses, the mansions of the shipmasters, its Byzantine churches and cobblestone streets, lies at the foot of the Acropolis. Following the path through the village or hiring a donkey from the square, one may ascend all the way up to the ancient citadel - Lindos. Visitors may enjoy the blue sea at the beach of Lindos, which also features facilities for water sports or at the bay of Apostle Paul. Finally, its numerous stores, restaurants and clubs cater to the needs of even the most discerning visitors.

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Lindos

Lindos, one of the seven sages of antiquity. Cleobulus of Lindos, one of the seven sages of antiquity. Cleobulus was a wise man, an eloquent speaker and a poet. He was a champion of moderation, which he expressed in his famous saying, "Moderation is best." He was a wise man, an eloquent speaker and a poet. He was a champion of moderation, which he expressed in his famous saying, "Moderation is best."
Above the bay of Haraki – today a small resort – the view is dominated by the ruins of the impregnable medieval castle of Faraklos, at the foot of which the remains of an ancient mill of a sugar production factory, which operated until the era of the Knights’ Rule, was discovered.

Near the village of Monolithos, the namesake castle is perched at the top of a huge steep rock, rising within short distance from the coast, offering stunning views. It was built by the Knights of the Order of St. John in the 14th century to control the sea passage and protect the residents from pirate raids. The sunset here is enchanting. The road from the castle leads to beautiful secluded beaches.

The castle of Kritinia – also known as Kastellos – is a mixture of Byzantine and Medieval styles, its fortifications enclosing the ruins of the Christian church of St. Paul. During the Venetian rule, it was used as a Dockyard.

The castle of Asclepeion was built by the Grand Master Pierre d’Aubusson in 1479 at the site of the ancient beacon tower. The castle was used by the Knights and earlier by the Byzantines to protect the residents of the nearby villages, featuring rectangular bastions and two strong towers.

Kamiros was one of the three great ancient cities of Rhodes that reached its heyday in the 6th and 5th Century BC, thanks to its developed agricultural economy. The ruins of the city and neighbouring necropolises were uncovered in 1859 in what had over the centuries become a wooded area. Its grand buildings, bath houses, temples, private residences and the Acropolis with the lovely hill above are all remnants of ancient Kamiros. In the aftermath of the foundation of the City of Rhodes in 408 BC, Kamiros started to decline, although it remained inhabited until the end of the 1st Century AD. Kamiros was one of the great poets of ancient Greece, and Alexander the Great visited the island to meet him.

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Architecture and Folk Culture

Over the centuries, the Medieval city of Rhodes or Old Town, a UNESCO World Heritage Monument - in itself a gem and the subject of architectural studies - has accumulated many monuments from the period of Byzantium and the Knights to the Ottoman and Italian rule. The movements of Italian architecture stretching along the port, in Mandraki, are particularly interesting. Prominent features include the Hotel RODON, currently housing the Casino, the Governor’s Building, the New Market, the National Theatre, the Church of Annunciation, etc. These buildings are typical examples of colonial architecture, which combines Venetian and Gothic elements with motifs from folk art. Many villages outside the island’s capital maintain traditional elements in their architecture but also in their dialect, clothing manners, customs and music, all of them features that have remained unchanged over the centuries. Lindos also hosts the famous sea masters’ homes, locally known as captains’ mansions. Archangitzo, Koskinou and Fanes fasolades visitors with their picturesque houses, painted in a unique style and decorated with embroidered artifacts, pottery and other ornaments made brightly in the past and old created today by the craftsmen of Rhodes. Along the motorway leading to Ialysos, even up to the airport in Paradisi, we find impressive neoclassical mansions and opulent residences of the early 20th century. Throughout the island of Rhodes, forts and castles designed to protect the inhabitants from enemy attacks raise on sites considered strategic since antiquity.
The Rhodians, ordinary people, almost untouched by the rapid development of tourism on their island, respect local traditions. In practically all of the island’s villages, from Kalavas to Pissini and from Limbou to Alikianou and Fournis, one is bound to witness the great love Rhodians nurture for their land: it is in their welcoming manner, their local dialect, their customs and demeanor as well as in the architecture of their homes. The typical Rhodian decoration of the houses, the wooden divans and the inner arches, the vivid colors on the exterior walls, pebbles in the courtyards and all sorts of potted plants in the gardens, reveal a unique folk sensitivity.

Modern day Rhodian potters work clay in the manner of their ancestors, creating masterpieces of folk art, especially in Afandou and Archangelos. The potters of Archangelos were famous in antiquity and historical sources indicate that clay bricks were transported from here to Constantinople for the construction of the dome of Agia Sophia. Rhodes also hosts a flourishing industry for traditional handmade carpets and shoes.
Although it is an urban centre, the city of Rhodes is surrounded by crystal clear waters and high standard sandy beaches catering to the needs of even the most demanding visitors.

Visitors to Rhodes can choose from amongst different regions for an exciting or relaxing holiday, in calm beaches or others, embraced by the waves of the Aegean. Facilities apt to cater to every demand and with all safety requirements observed are available in both cosmopolitan and remote areas. The public beaches of Rhodes are regularly and as justifiably honored with blue EU flags year after year for their organization and the cleanliness of their waters. Endless beaches shimmering in the sun more than 300 days a year, as for instance in the city of Rhodes, Ialysos, Kallithea and Faliraki, Alimos and Kolympia, the beach of the Paraxia Tsambika, Lindos, Kostani and Gianniou, Platamouni and the unique Prasonisi, are famous for windsurfing and kite surfing, sailing, volleyball and beach football. Furthermore, Rhodes is the ideal location for the organization of all types of modern sport events of international standing. Thanks to the appropriate infrastructure for track sports, tennis, basketball, football and more, in the last few years the island has hosted many major sport events, including the Island Games and the Aegean Tennis Cup.

Magical Beaches, Water Sports: Getting Physical in Rhodes

In Kallithea and Faliraki, the blue of the sea blends with the gold of the sand. Hundreds of tourists visit this vast beach every day to swim and enjoy the bright sun or have fun with water sports.

At Traganou bay, the sea munches into the rocky coast forming caverns.

The island’s unique and exciting nudist beach is located in Faliraki.

The enclosed bays of Kallithea, Ladiko and Anthony Quinn, with their crystal clear waters and rocky shores, are amongst the island’s best.
The large luxury hotels of Ialysos — and mainly those in Ixia — welcome thousands of holiday makers, conference delegates and entrepreneurs, flocking to Rhodes to combine business and pleasure throughout the year.

In the bay of Kolymbia, and in Afandou, modern hotels and vast magnificent coastlines create a unique heaven for families with children.

Beneath the majestic Acropolis of Lindos, visitors to the area can enjoy the crystal clear and shallow waters in a cosmopolitan environment.

Tsambika, in the area of Archangelos, dominated by the steep-rock and the cloister of Virgin Mary, ranks high amongst the island’s most favorite beach fronts.

Crowded or more isolated, pebbly or sandy, each with its own individual ambience and with each one dominating in common crystal clear waters, Rhodes beaches are ideal for relaxation, sunbathing and water sports.

For sweet-water pirates, the Water Park in Faliraki, one of the most impressive of its kind around the world, is an excellent idea for enjoyment... the cool way!
Prasonisi, the southernmost tip of the island. The sea, rising over the double bay, often covers the land, creating images of outstanding beauty. With rooms to rent and seaside tavernas, Prasonisi is a real paradise for windsurfers and kitesurfers; the wind is always blowing on one of its twin beaches. The most world-wide famous location spot for water sports action.

The beach of Ialysos has been classified as a first-class meeting destination for windsurfing fans, kite surfing and sailing, all the more since the area complies with strict safety standards and the prevalent winds favor the practice of water sports.
The modern 18-hole golf course close to Afandou beach is open all year round and attracts golf enthusiasts as well as visitors who simply want to enjoy their coffee in pleasant surroundings.

Very much present in the field from the onset of this tradition – originally through racing circuits and in the present day mostly through endurance races, cycling is probably the most popular sport on the island. The natural terrain and temperate climate provide ideal conditions for training and racing through coastal and mountain routes. In addition, over the past several years a Triathlon, featuring the participation of great athletes, has been regularly held at Rhodes.

Ancient stadiums, squares and other historical sites of the island have at times been used for the hosting of competitions, such as the Island Games and the world beach volleyball championship.

The Kallipateira sports complex in Karathona houses the ultimate this island may boast in a sports centre, with facilities catering to all track sports.

Rhodes has a modern equestrian centre with complete facilities, both for training and for international competitions, as well as for amateur aficionados of the sport. The recent development of two organized tennis and shooting clubs with modern facilities and equipment, operating as training and competition centres, makes it possible for the wide array of sporting options available on the island.

Basketball is a favorite sport in Rhodes. Rhodian teams traditionally star in the National Championships, while its 5 modern indoor courts are suitable for international competitions, tournaments, and summer courses for young basketball players.

In addition, over the past several years a Triathlon, featuring the participation of great athletes, has been regularly held at Rhodes.
The mild climate of Rhodes, an abundant sunshine so favorable to the development of the fauna and flora, freshwater springs and the sea breeze that enhances an already relentless fertility favor the growth of over a thousand species of trees and plants, the cultivation of an abundance of fruits and vegetables, and form a haven for birds, reptiles and animals of various kinds. The Valley of the Butterflies - a unique habitat of rare natural beauty and unequaled ecological value for the butterflies of the phylum Panaxia Quadripunctaria is an extremely popular destination for thousands of holidaymakers on the island of Rhodes. Also to be visited in the Valley: the Museum of Natural History of the island of Rhodes, located right at the entrance of the site, where visitors have the opportunity to delve into the secrets of this unique ecosystem.

The fresh waters of the island's rivers are the habitat of a unique fish, bearing the name of the scientist who identified it, the Ghizani (Ladigesocypris ghigii). The pygmy horses of the Archangelos region lived many years ago in a semi-wild state in the dense forests surrounding this area. Their height ranges from 0.80 to 1.20 meters. They are black, brown or dark red. Today there are no more than 10 horses of this practically extinct species, living protected in a specially designed area. The slopes of mount Prophet Elias are wholly covered by pines and cypresses, rare species of shrubs and plants such as Paeonia rhodia, and orchids (10 species grow only in Rhodes). In acknowledgement of its great monuments, beauty and uniqueness, the area beginning from Kamiros and including Prophet Elias, Atavyros, Akramytis, Kymisala, Vasilikos, Fournoi and Prasonisi has been granted a special protection status under NATURA 2000 EU program. The same program provides for the protection of the marine aspects of these zones, habitat and reproductive areas for the Caretta - Caretta turtles and Monachus - Monachus seals as well as a site (mostly in Prasonisi) on the route of migratory birds to and from the southern warm climates.

Natural Wealth

The artful water reservoir of ancient Eleousa, the modern dam at Gadouras and lake Nanoi have in themselves shaped unique landscapes, which amongst other things form the habitat of the unique endemic and endangered Ghizani (Ladigesocypris ghigii), a small fish that lives only in the fresh waters of Rhodes. The garden is a virtual home with a great will to survive under often adverse climatic conditions. In recent years, it enjoys the supreme and protection of specialists from the Hydrobiological Station of Rhodes.
The marine wealth of the island offers a unique experience for scuba diving lovers. Clear and warm waters, steep cliffs, hidden caves and shipwrecks create a perfect background for the observation of the marine fauna and flora of the island. There are organized fast learning schools for beginners.

Throughout the island, one comes across a rare species of deer known as Platoni or Dama-Dama, one of Rhodes ancient names of Elafousa.

Equus caballus is a rare breed of horse protected by the members of the PHAETHON club in Archangelos of Rhodes, in an area that is open to the public.

Sea lilies, a gift of the prolific Rhodian land in summer.

Orchid (Ophrys spruneri) For many botanists and those studying the orchids of the Mediterranean, the island of Rhodes is the place to be, since here one may quite easily come across over fifty rare species of orchid.

Throughout the island, there are 18 marked footpaths leading nature lovers to the highlands of the island and reserve unique experiences. Alternative tourism is a rapidly developing trend worldwide. Rhodes offers a multitude of possibilities: trekking, mountain biking, scuba diving and horseback riding – the list is endless. Here we present some of the organized activities that offer unique experiences for nature lovers.
According to tradition, Christianity was popularized in Rhodes by the Apostle Paul, who arrived and first preached the new cult in Lindos. In the years that followed, the Christian religion was established and spread, resulting in the founding of numerous churches throughout the island. For centuries, both its parish churches and its many chapels have hosted various religious celebrations. Various cultural events are organized on the celebration day of each Saint, attracting crowds of visitors. The biggest fairs of the island are those of Virgin Tsambika, the Assumption in Kremasti and the Virgin in Skiadi. Crowds of worshippers and visitors also flock to the fair of Agios Syllas (Soulas according to the locals), in a pine forest near the village Soroni. Horse races and a large trade fair complement the celebration of the Saint. In the centre of Paradisi village there is the small church of Agia Marina. It dates back to an undetermined era but bears more recent frescoes and icons, its official festive day is July 17, like Agia Marina in Apolakkia. July 27 is the date of one of the most picturesque fairs of the island, that of Agios Pantaleimon, on the mountain village of Sunes. The Transfiguration of Christ is celebrated on the 6th of August, in the small chapel near the village of Fanes. The monasteries of Virgin Pantanassa in Soroni, the Archangel Michael in Thari, Virgin Ippes in Larissa, Virgin Paramythia in Amandou, Virgin in Skiadi, Virgin Faneromena in Isia, Virgin Agios Nektarios in Archipoli, Agios Fanourios in the Archipel are peaceful places of prayer.

Rhodes, a crossroad of cultures since ancient times, encapsulates in its historical path the presence of various religious groups. Various impressive mosques for the Muslim community, and the Synagogue, the most important religious building of the Jewish community survive in the city of Rhodes, along with two Roman catholic churches in the City of Rhodes, namely St. Francis, in the namesake district of the city and Santa Maria’s, in the new town. An impressive cube rises on top of the Filerimos hill. The Chalkeion and the Acropolis are some of the two airport strips below, against a wonderful island setting. – and for the visitors from this spot, they can enjoy the sunsets. The monastery of Archangel Michael in Thari is located within very short distance from the village of Lambi. The old, ancient kolkhoz and the Clare church are inspired by the church of the Archangel, with its stunning mural in white and gold. The monastery is one of the most popular religious tourism destinations in Rhodes.

Asclepeion hosts the Byzantine church of the Assumption, which has the only known frescoes in the islands known to date. The Byzantine church of the Archangel Michael in Thari. The chancel and the religious and folk art museum are worth a visit.

Agios Fanourios is celebrated with great reverence and solemnity in the Medieval city of Rhodes. The monastery of Archangel Michael in Thari is located within very short distance from the village of Lambi. The old, ancient kolkhoz and the Clare church are inspired by the church of the Archangel, with its stunning mural in white and gold. The monastery is one of the most popular religious tourism destinations in Rhodes.

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The roots of Greek gastronomy date back to remote antiquity. Since then, its basic ingredients have been olive oil, olives, honey, game, herbs, greens, legumes, cereals, nuts, but most of all fish and seafood. Important elements of Greek cuisine are cheese, such as feta and myzithra from sheep’s and goat’s milk, hand-kneaded bread, vegetables, fruits and fruits preserves. These are complemented by foods of animal origin, such as chickens, eggs and red meat. Thyme, pine and the spring flowers honey, is used in the preparation of many local sweets. Surna, produced from grape distillate in the mountainous areas of the island, is the perfect drink to accompany the mouth-watering local delicacies. Even more important however is the way these dishes are prepared and cooked to adorn the Rhodian table. International “bon viveurs” have one more reason to come to Rhodes: to enjoy delicious specialties that artfully blend tradition with a modern lifestyle. Rare grape varietals with a superior quality – Protected Designation of Origin, such as “Athiri” and “Amorianos” – are cultivated in the mountainous areas of the island. Rhodian wines are an ideal accompaniment for all local delicacies, enriching their flavors and offering a sense of euphoria. Thanks to their excellent quality and variety, many of them have become favorites in the international market. The aromatic flavors of the Rhodian cuisine leave a delightfully intense aftertaste that brings to mind images and emotions associated to the place and its people.
Conference tourism is one of the most important and profitable components of the tourist product on the island. The luxury hotel facilities of Rhodes feature ultramodern conference rooms, fully equipped with the latest in relevant technology and a capacity suitable for hosting conferences of an international scale. Moreover, these hotels have a long and proven experience in the successful organization of challenging conferences, organized by leading agencies and organizations from around the world; this experience has brought the island to the forefront of conference tourism in the Mediterranean. In recent years, all luxury hotels in Rhodes offer exquisite SPA & Thalassotherapy centers, designed with the most modern infrastructure and skilled staff to take care of one’s physical condition, health and harmony. They offer relaxation, rejuvenation, calmness, wellness using holistic therapies, aromatherapy and massages. Furthermore, Rhodes is one of the most popular destinations in the world for a memorable wedding ceremony. The breathtaking sites and historical monuments of the island, such as the medieval town, Lindos, Filerimos, Kallithea Springs and the Castle of Monolithos, create a perfect setting and form the backdrop of the happiest moments of thousands of couples in love. Apart from its high-level infrastructure, Rhodes provides overall safe accommodation, combining professionalism with local hospitality, natural beauties and historical monuments with a cosmopolitan atmosphere, Greek cuisine and nightlife.

Thanks to its abundant cultural and historical wealth but also to its large and modern conference centers, Rhodes has risen over the last two decades to a leading position among high-profile conference destinations.
Numerous cultural events, hosted by the Municipality of Rhodes and various arts organizations, are held in the City of Rhodes as well as in many other places around the island. Various festivals and high-level events covering a wide range of themes, from classical music and ancient drama to art exhibitions, book presentations and contemporary dance and film shows are organized in the summer, attracting residents and visitors alike. At the theatre of the Medieval Moat, at the Grand Master’s Palace as well as in various sites in the Medieval and the new town, one may attend world-famous cultural events: concerts of popular Greek and foreign artists, the ancient festival of Anthesteria (Flower Festival), the International Piano Competition held every two years, the Medieval festival, the Days of Music and many other interesting events for the island’s residents and visitors.

The “Days of Music” Festival of Rhodes, one of the most popular music festivals in Greece, in cooperation with the Live Music Now – Yehudi Menuhin Foundation of Munich, is held every September – an event that has become a standard for the last 12 consecutive years – against the mystical background setting of the medieval town.

Since ancient times, Rhodes has celebrated the festivities of the Carnival. Parades, masqueraders, stilt walkers and clowns have endless fun in the central squares of the city and its villages.

The Medieval Festival of Rhodes is a new institution resuscitating an important period in the history of the island. Brave knights, horses, dragons and witches come alive in the world-renowned Medieval Town and in the majestic fortresses across the countryside through cultural events and games for all ages.
In the south-eastern corner of the Greek archipelago, the Dodecanese (twelve islands) have for ever, throughout their tumultuous history functioned as a bridge between West and East, over their long and stormy history. By assimilating elements of many different cultures, these twelve jewels of the Aegean have kept their character intact, before finally becoming part of Greece after the last World War. All the islands of the Dodecanese are interconnected by sea on a daily basis – a dense coast-to-coast network that, in some cases, is complemented by air connections. Each island maintains its own personality, delightfully distinguishing it from the rest. Hence the wide variety of choice for those who visit. The two largest amongst all islands in the complex, Rhodes and Kos, are cosmopolitan and bustling, while the smaller ones, humble in profile, still boast of an individual character, promising different pleasures. Patmos, the holy island of Saint John the Divine, author of the Apocalypse, attracts visitors from all over the world, while Karpathos, more than any other island, maintains its traditional colour. Every year more and more tourists visit Kalymnos, the island of the sponge divers, that now competes with fascinating Leros, known for its lovely beaches. Both the Chorio (an abandoned settlement) and the Knights’ castle are well worth visiting. Every year more and more tourists visit Kalymnos, the island of the sponge divers, that now competes with fascinating Leros, known for its lovely beaches. Nisyros, with its unique active volcano and remote Astypalea and its magnificent Hora (capital town), offer tranquillity and relaxation. The smallest islands (Kasos, Lipsi, Agathonissi and Arkii) attract visitors who long to get away from the fast pace of modern life. The islands neighbouring Rhodes (Symi, Halki, Tilos and Kastelorizo) each boast of its own special character.

One-Day Escapades

1 Symi
Beauiful Symi lie within one hour’s boat trip from Mandraki, the medieval port of Rhodes. An island of sponge divers and seamen, it used to have a population of 30,000 before the Second World War and despite its small size was the richest island of the Dodecanese. Today Symi attracts many visi tors swarming to admire its beautiful neoclassical buildings, churches and the famous Archangel Michael monastery at Panormitis. A summer festival of important cultural events is hosted on a yearly basis.

2 Kastelorizo (or Megisti) is the easternmost Greek islandland of its history is legendary. Its island was evacuated in the Second World War for strategic reasons. Only 300 people live on the island today. The town, with its magnificent neoclassical houses, bears witness to the former prosperity of the island and its harbour is considered to be the safest natural anchorage in the Mediterranean.

3 Halki
Once an important sponge-diving centre, Halki was hit by the economic crisis at the beginning of the 20th century that resulted to its decline, similarly to many other islands of the Dodecanese. In the last few years tourism has begun to develop, bringing life to the island again. Emborio is the only settlement on the island, featuring grand houses and a picturesque waterfront offering fresh fish. Both the Chorio (an abandoned settlement) and the Knights’ castle are well worth visiting.

4 Tilos
The best way to explore the quiet island of Tilos is on foot. The island’s harbour is at Livadia, from where one may visit the village of Mikro Horio, deserted since 1950. A Maganari lighthouse, one should not forget to visit in the Palaeontology Museum, harbouring the petrified skeletons of dwarf elephants unearthed in Chaskalou. Also worth a visit is the 13th century fortified and frescoed monastery of Agios Fanourios, hosting a popular festival between the 25th and the 29th July each year.