Travel into the light

Rhodes
The Dodecanese - Greece
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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 festivals 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; its montage, 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 Stations of the Divine Passion and the exuberance of Easter, through unique customs and events, everything experienced with a strong Greek flavor, ever 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 V.I.P.'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! Tourists restfully idling with 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 pinned 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, an ultramodern 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. Which also explains why Rhodes was selected to host an EU summit during the Hellenic Presidency of the European Commission in 1988. 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 nightlife, sports, cultural events, day-trip possibilities to neighbouring 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

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The Colossus of Rhodes

The Colossus of Rhodes is one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. It was created by the great sculptor from Lindos, Chares and was dedicated to the Sun God, believed to have helped the Rhodians defeat Demetrius Poliorcetes (Demetrius the Besieger) in 305 BC. That majestic statue was brought down by an earthquake in 227–226 BC. The site at the harbor entrance to Mandraki where the Colossus is estimated to have stood, is now adorned by the statues of one female and one male deer – this animal having for some time now been symbolically identified with the island of Rhodes.

The Lighthouse of St. Nicholas

Built over the period between 1464 – 1467, the lighthouse of St. Nicholas was commissioned by Grand Master Zacosta. This is the sentinel of the port, it now welcomes friends from around the world.

The windmills of Rhodes, through a magnificent sunrise.

Local coins of Rhodes bearing on one side the effigy of the sun god Helios, protector of the island, and on the other a representation of a rose, symbol of the city.

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The windmills of Rhodes, through a magnificent sunrise.
The aquarium is in the northernmost tip of the city, the most important marine research centre in Greece. In its underground aquarium, the visitor can see many 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, very 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 innumerable 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 innumerable 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 is, 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 the world, hence 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 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 square inner courtyard. A considerable part of the Palace was destroyed during the Ottoman years and ruined it stood until the ’30s, when architects from Italy were commissioned to restore it to its actual splendor.

The Medieval Town
A World Heritage Site

The famous Gate d’Amboise is one of the most beautiful gates of the fortified medieval quarter. The famous Gate of Amboise, one of the most beautiful gates of the fortified medieval quarter. The famous Street of the Knights (Ippoton), the most important and imposing street in the Collachium leading to the Grand Master’s Palace. On this colonnade the former residences of the various national groups (“tongues”) of the Order of the Knights.

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In the present day, the Palace plays host to a museum; on show in its many rooms are findings from excavations at various sites of ancient and Medieval Rhodes.
The City Art Gallery contains works by the most important Greek artists. 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. Among 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. Bombard 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 night-clubs.

The Old Clock Tower, an imposing watchpoint, was commissioned in the late 19th Century by Fechti Pasha. The reward for those willing to take the climb to the top is the magnificent view over the Old Town.

A stroll 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.

2400 Years of History

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 keen seamen 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 Mycenaean. The first Dorian city-states appear in the 8th century BC: Ialysos, Lindos and Kamiros which, together with Kos and the Asia Minor cities of Cnidus and Halicarnassus, formed the Dorian 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 all the ancient trade routes linking 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 Asia Minor, passing through Rhodes, the Nile Delta and ending in Cyrene. All these cities minted their own currencies 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 impetus 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. 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, the sea as well as the beautiful sunset are just breathtaking.
Ialysos (also known as Trianda), the birthplace of many Olympic medallists, featuring 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 living here were the Karai (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 ancient city-state of Lindos experienced great naval and cultural prosperity. Home of the savant ruler Cleobulus, it was admired for its wealth, beauty and strategic position. Lindos has been home to great artists, such as Chares, designer and sculptor of the Colossus of Rhodes, Lysippus, Pythokritos son of Timocharios, who along with Athinodoros and Agisandros created the Nike of Samothrace and the Laocoon Group, as well as to the historiographer Evagoras of Lindos, Timachidas, author of the famous Chronicle of Lindos and the poet Cleobuline. Upon reaching 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 ship masters, 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 heart of Lindos, which also houses boucheries for water sports at the bay of Apostle Paul. Finally, its numerous stores, restaurants and clubs cater to the needs of even the most discerning visitors.

The Acropolis of Lindos rises imposing on a 116-meter Cliff, amputated by powerful walls, like a podium 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 marine prosperity continued until the 18th century.

Lindos (Moderation is best) land and sea of Lindos.
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 13th 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 surrounding necropoleis were uncovered in 1859 in what had over the centuries become a wooded area. It is a grid of tall stone buildings, fortresses, temples, palaces, private residences, and the Acropolis. The walled city was the center of trade and commerce.

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Kamiros Castles of Rhodes
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 monuments of Italian architecture stretching along the port, in Mandraki, are particularly interesting. Prominent features include the Hotel RODON, currently housing the Gastronomic 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. Archangelos, Koskinou and Fanes, lacey stone visitors with picturesque houses, painted in a unique style and decorated with embroidered artifacts, pottery and other ornaments made lingering in the past and still created today by the craftsmen of Rhodes. Along the motorway leading to Ialysos and 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 houses of Lindos create an impression by their traditional architecture and decoration. Impressive colonnaded entrances lead to courtyards filled with flowers, decorated with a flooding of white and black pebbles forming intricate mosaic designs, in harmony with the environment. Thanks to its cool climate, the area of Ialysos was always a preferred resort of the wealthy Rhodes, thus, here we encounter wonderful examples of architecture such as neoclassical features with beautiful interior decorations or villas with landscaped gardens.
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 Kalavous to Rassohini and from Limbaki to Alonnis and Fanes, 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 sensibility.

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.
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 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, Afandou and Kolymbia, the beach of the Panagia Tsambika, Lindos, Kiotari and Gennadi, Plimmyri 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.

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Magical Beaches, Water Sports: Getting Physical in Rhodes

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The large luxury hotels of Ialysos – and mainly those in Ixia – welcome thousands of holiday makers, conference delegates and entrepreneurs, who come here to combine business and pleasure throughout the year.

In the bay of Kolymbia, and in Afandou, modern hotels and vast magnificent coastlines form a paradise 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.

The beach of Tsambika in Archangelos, in the shadow of the steep rocks of the monastery of the Virgin Mary, is one of the most beautiful bays of the island.

Crowded or more isolated, with pebbles or sand, each with its own unique character but all with crystal clear waters, the beaches of Rhodes are ideal for relaxation, sunbathing and water sports.
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 two beaches. The most world-famous eolian 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.

Rhodes also plays host to the Offshore Yachting Club of Rhodes, which apart from providing trainee and ongoing practice activities for its members, yearly activity: training boat sailing activities around the island – also engaging in the hosting of national and international open sea boat sailing tournaments, amongst which the much-celebrated Aegean Regatta, the Channel Regatta, etc. Available for rental, sailing boats of various types and classes.

For 25 years, the Inflatable Boats Association of Rhodes demonstrated its love for the sea every year by hosting events of national and international interest.
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.

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

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.

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.

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 recent development of two organized tennis and shooting clubs with modern facilities and equipment, operating as training and competition centres, as well as their links to the wide array of sporting options available on the island.
The mild climate of Rhodes, an abundant sunshine so favorable to the growth of the ever-thousands 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 unexampled 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 m. 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 Caretra - Caretta 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.
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. This is 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.

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.

Orchid (Ophrys spruneri)
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 Sylla (Syllus 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 Apallakia. July 27 is the date of one of the most picturesque festivals of the island, that of Agios Pantaleimon, in the mountain village of Sounio. 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 Thami, Virgin Ipens in Lindos, Virgin Pantanassa in Amandes, Virgin in Skiadi, Virgin Feneromon in Ixia, Virgin in Filerimos and Agios Nektarios in Kryoneri, near Archipoli, are peaceful places of prayer.

Places of Worship

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. The monastery of Archangel Michael in Thami is located within very short distance from the village of Lambi. The Holy, record-breaking and awe-inspiring, the site is inspired by the church of the Archangel, with its clustering facade, rightly considered the monastery one of the most popular religious tourism destinations in Rhodes.

A giant cross rises on top of the Filerimos hill. From there one has a bird’s eye view of the two airport strips below, against a wonderful natural setting – as for the sunsets from this spot, they are certain to create an indelible memory.

Asclepeion hosts the Byzantine church of the Assumption, which has the only known Byzantine murals known to date picturing the Revelation of John the Divine. The church and the religious and folk art museum are worth a visit.

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Local Flavors

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, rams, 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 fruit 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. Surnia, 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 vivants” have one more reason to come to Rhodes: to enjoy delicious specialties that artfully blend tradition with a modern lifestyle. Rare grape varieties 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 exuberance. 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.

Rhodian bee honey is the basic ingredient of the melekouni, a healthy sesame dessert that stands out for its great taste and nutritional value. Locally produced honey – yet another gift of this land, so diverse in its biological resources, so blessed by this eternal sunshine that helps juicy flowers grow and prosper – is appreciated for its high quality, flavor and texture, all of them helping earned the product place amongst world class honey.

Feta cheese, tomatoes, olives, and rustic wheat bread are all traditional parts of the Rhodian diet. Locally produced honey – yet another gift of this land, so diverse in its biological resources, so blessed by this eternal sunshine that helps juicy flowers grow and prosper – is appreciated for its high quality, flavor and texture, all of them helping earned the product place amongst world class honey.
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 ultimate 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 views and historical monuments of the island, such as the medieval town, Lindos, Filimone, Kalithea 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.

Business & Pleasure

Rhodes is famous far to sightseers, but to stay in even the highest expectations. No holiday is complete without a visit to the island’s bustling bars and beach clubs with famous guest DJ’s and live rock bands, setting the tone for hours of fun, its unique haunts for lovers of jazz or art music and for evenings of traditional music with a unique touch in the lives of residents and visitors.

Rhodes is ideal for people who wish to give each other a promise of eternal love.
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 hosted 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 Melina Mercouri theatre in the moat of the medieval town. Beneath the magic scenery of the ramparts, towers and walls, summer concerts, plays and dance performances take place.

The Medieval Festival of Rhodes is a new institution resuscitating an important period in 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.

The International Summer Music Academy is an important initiative for the cultural life of the island and offers the opportunity for talented musicians from around the world to improve and demonstrate their skills under the guidance of internationally renowned artists.

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In the southeastern 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, humbler 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. 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**

**Kastelorizo** (or Megisti) is the easternmost Greek island. In the beginning of the 20th century it had a population of 30,000, but was evacuated in the Second World War for strategic reasons. The town, with its magnificent neo-classical houses, bears witness to the former prosperity of the island. An hour’s boat trip from Mandraki, the medieval port of Rhodes, Kastelorizo is a real escape, a haven for nature lovers.

**Tilos**. This island was an important sponge-diving centre. Tilos is an hour’s boat trip from the medieval port of Mandraki. Excursions to the villages of Mikro Chorio (abandoned since 1950) and Megalo Chorio are worth a visit. A lot of interesting churches and beautiful palaeontology museums are to be found here.

**Symi**. A two-hour boat trip from Mandraki, Symi is a true gem. The town’s picturesque waterfront is flanked by lovely beaches with crystal-clear water. The island has a rich history, and its capital town, with its neoclassical buildings, is a real delight for the eyes.

**Halki**. Once the island of the sponge divers, Halki is now a perfect place for a peaceful getaway. The main settlement, Chora, is worth a visit for its picturesque waterfront and lovely beaches.