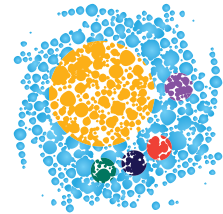


A World To Experience



Naxos

GREECE



*Naxos*



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# Naxos at a glance

*If you were asked how you imagined the place where Zeus, the father of the 12 ancient Greek gods, was raised, chances are your reply would include the following:*

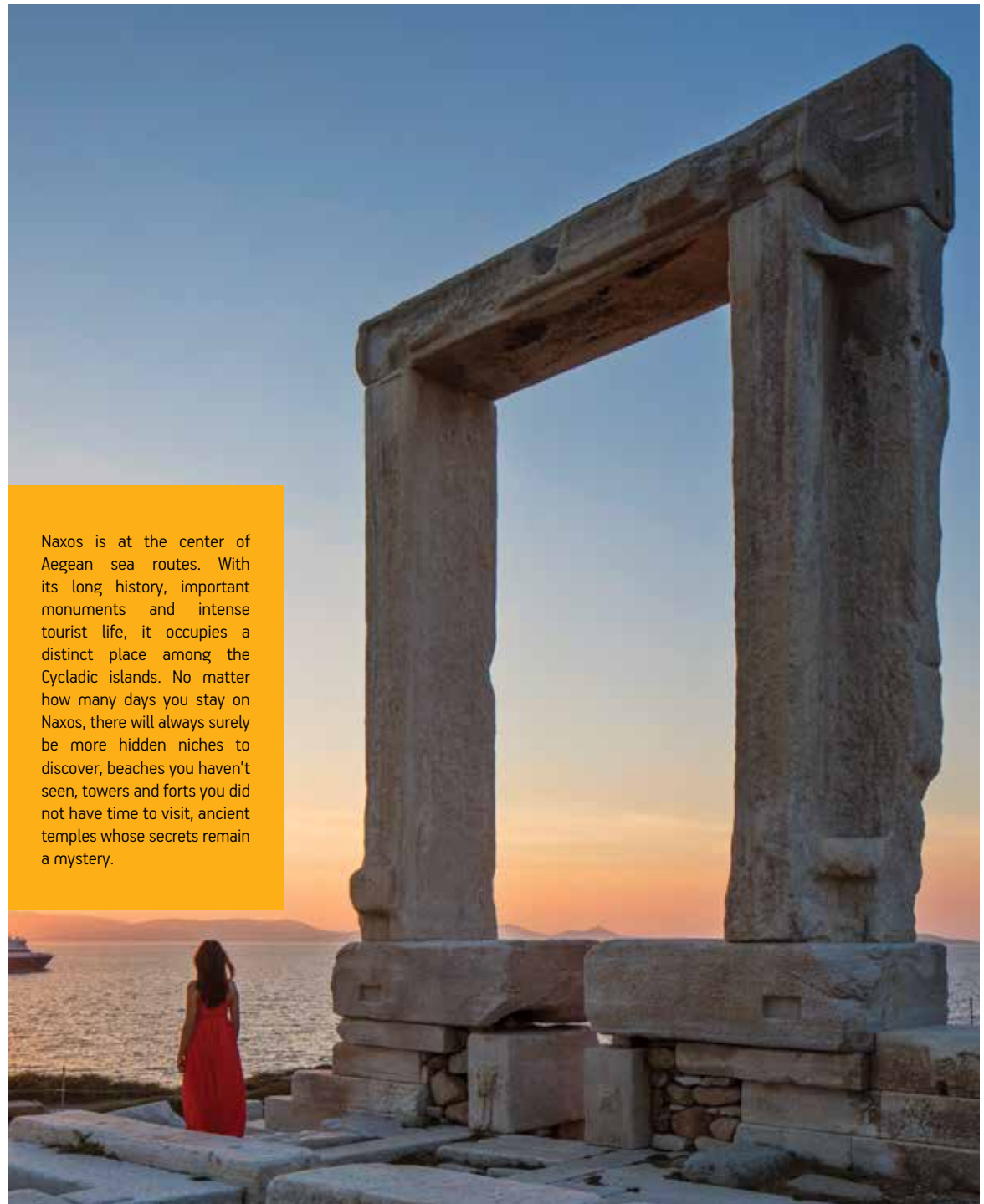
*fertile, imposing, exuding primeval majesty.*

*If you were asked what you imagined to be the dominant features on the island where Dionysus, the god of merriment, was born and raised, you would probably include fun, song and dance.*

*If, finally, you were asked how you imagined the scene of the wedding of Dionysus and princess Ariadne, you would probably respond, "Enchanting, almost magical..."*

*This is Naxos. A big island in the heart of the Aegean Sea, with imposing mountain massifs and fertile valleys, inhabited by cheerful people with a tradition in music and dance, and full of beauty that enchants visitors.*

Naxos is at the center of Aegean sea routes. With its long history, important monuments and intense tourist life, it occupies a distinct place among the Cycladic islands. No matter how many days you stay on Naxos, there will always surely be more hidden niches to discover, beaches you haven't seen, towers and forts you did not have time to visit, ancient temples whose secrets remain a mystery.



# Naxos nature

*"If paradise was on Earth, it would be here," wrote Nikos Kazantzakis, Greece's foremost 20th century writer, about the short spell he spent as a teenager in Naxos's fertile valley of Eggares.*

*The nature of Naxos talks to the heart of every artist with its authenticity, richness and simplicity. The island is marked by great variety: mountains with ravines, caves and gullies shade verdant valleys with olive, fig, orange, lemon trees and vineyards, abundant waters. The valleys end at smooth, sandy beaches adorned with juniper and tamarisk trees; villages are surrounded by fields and vegetable gardens; migratory birds find refuge on trees, while wild pigeons and swifts in the inaccessible coastal rocks. Protected biotopes with rare fauna and flora complete the mosaic of an island that offers the visitor all the lavish gifts of nature. But the seabed around Naxos also offers another, exciting world, with marine ecosystems of astounding beauty, huge variety, reefs and rocks full of life, meadows of *Posidonia oceanica* with colorful plates and reefs. Just pick your route, either on or off shore, and abandon yourself to the magic of Naxos's nature. The thrill is there throughout the year.*

## Geomorphology

Naxos has an area of 430sq.km and a coastline of 148km. It is a mostly mountainous island, with a widely alternating landscape (mountaintops, torrents, gorges and caves, predominantly encountered in the northwestern, northeastern and southeastern sections of the island). The flat areas (basins, plateaus, valleys) are found in the central and southwestern parts. The greatest part of the island's coastline is laced by pretty beaches, while almost the entire western

coast is an endless string of long, sandy beaches. Naxos's geological structure mainly consists of stone transformed into marble, emery, slate e.t.c.. The western section is dominated by granite, to which the beaches owe their formation. The significant alternations in geomorphology and the climatic conditions of the hinterland make Naxos a unique island which combines the rarity of the Cycladic landscape with the beauty of mainland Greece.



Allium Ampeloprasum



Relict Oak grove



## Naxos flora

The Cyclades in general and Naxos in particular have a rich flora, with mainly European features but also with elements from Western Asia and North Africa. Due to the large number of natural habitats and its significant water resources - at least by Cycladic standards - Naxos boasts a wide variety of species, with more than 963 recorded flowering plants (of which 51 are encountered only in the Aegean region) 12 only in the Cyclades and four are endemic of Naxos (*Cerastium runemarkii*, *Buple urumaira*, *Erysimum naxense*, *Symphytum naxicola*).

In contrast to island plant communities, many characteristic trees - particularly cultivated ones- are not indigenous but have been imported from other parts of the planet, as far back as antiquity: the tame olive tree (southern Turkey), the carob tree (Middle East), the giant reed (SE Asia), the broad-leaved oak tree, the chestnut and Aleppo pine trees (mainland Greece), the mulberry tree (Far East), the eucalyptus (Australia), as well as opuntia - or prickly pear- and agave plants (Central America) etc.

Some of the most important and characteristic plant communities of Naxos are found on the dwarf bush steppe, which - if not overgrazed- displays an impressive number of species. The dwarf bush ecosystems occupy a large part of the island, especially areas that suffered from wildfires in the past and without a deep soil.

On flysch (slate) substrates, the dwarf bush is typically dominated by the broom (*Genista acanthoclada*) while on limestone substrates thyme (*Coridothymus capitatus*) predominates. Perennial plants in dwarf bush ecosystems have certain common features: they are usually thorny or have fragrant foliage and frequently shed their leaves in summer - at least in part. Many of the aromatic plants that are used in European cuisine, such as thyme, savory and oregano, are found growing wild in this ecosystem.

Naxos used to be densely forested. Remnants of the old forests and Mediterranean shrubs (*maquis*) can still be found in remote areas of the island, particularly where some water is present in the subsoil. However, even in dry and calcareous soils, such as those that dominate the southeastern part of the island, Phoenician juniper (*Juniperus phoenicea*) scrub or open woodland can be found.

The sandy region of Alyko harbors one of the biggest stands of Large-fruited juniper (*Juniperus macrocarpa*) in Greece. Also in mountainous Naxos, there are small areas of regenerated Kermes oaks (*Quercus coccifera*) and Cretan maple (*Acer sempervirens*).

Lastly, below the peak of Mt. Zas, there survives a relict stand of large Holm oaks (*Quercus ilex*), a leftover from the island's wooded past. The best time of the year to become acquainted with the Naxian flora is the period between late March and mid-June when most plants flower.

Many interesting species can be easily observed along the various hiking trails of the island. In general, little-grazed areas in the mountains and in northern Naxos, but also in the Tragea region, offer the best opportunities to enjoy the local plants. More specialized habitats such as wet meadows and cliff faces in gorges harbor further interesting flowers and rare chasmophytes. For example, over 20 species of orchids (in the genera *Anacamptis*, *Neotinea*, *Cephalanthera*, *Ophrys*, and *Serapias*) have been found on Naxos.

*Ophrys Calypso*



*Hypericum perforatum*



*Orchis Anatolica*



## Naxos fauna

Naxos boasts a varied topography and a broad range of different natural habitats. From the coastline to the mountain peaks, the various ecosystems alternate harmonically, offering habitats to the richest community of fauna species in the Cyclades.

The most common species of marine mammals encountered in the waters around Naxos are the striped dolphin (*Stenella coeruleoalba*), and to a lesser extent the bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*), usually when they follow schools of fish and squid during their seasonal movements through the eastern Cyclades. The eastern side of the island still harbors a few individuals of the critically endangered Mediterranean monk seal (*Monachus monachus*), while loggerhead turtles (*Caretta caretta*) – another species of conservation concern – are frequently sighted.

*Laudakia stellio*



Among terrestrial mammals, hares (*Lepus europaeus*), rabbits (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*), hedgehogs (*Erinaceus roumanicus*) and stone marten (*Martes foina*) are the best-known and most frequently-sighted wild species. The relatively poor and dispersed bibliography, the product of old naturalists, also mentions the presence of deer on Naxos – at least until the first quarter of the 19th century- but without proving whether these were individuals of an indigenous

population or were - most likely - imported during the previous centuries - a frequent practice during Venetian rule.

Rodents, shrews and bats have not been adequately studied to date, which also goes for almost all invertebrates (insects, spiders, snails, worms etc.)

The amphibians and reptiles on Naxos have been investigated relatively well. The Cyclades are known for their abundant herpetofauna, and Naxos is no exception. The Green toad (*Bufo viridis*) and the Balkan frog (*Pelophylax kurtmuelleri*), the only two amphibian species on Naxos, are frequently found in the same wetlands as the Balkan pond turtle (*Mauremys rivulata*), which lives in the larger perennial sources of water.

Visitors ought to be aware that any other tortoise species encountered are not indigenous to Naxos, and have probably been freed by well-meaning animal lovers who did not realize that their survival would be very difficult.

Naxos hosts several species of lizards, such as the conspicuous Rough-tailed agama (*Stellagama stellio*), a large lizard often seen basking on dry stone walls. Even more common, especially on dry stone walls, is the smaller Aegean wall lizard (*Podarcis erhardii*), the males of which sport anterior green backs during the in spring mating season.

Two species of small gecko, the grey-colored Kotschy's gecko (*Mediodactylus kotschyi*), and especially the pinkish Mediterranean house gecko (*Hemidactylus turcicus*) can be observed commonly near house lights during warm nights. In contrast, the large-bodied and shy Balkan green lizard (*Lacerta trilineata*) prefers thickets and areas with dense vegetation. Finally, two smooth-scaled species of lizard, the Ocellated skink (*Chalcides ocellatus*) and the small European snake-eyed skink (*Ablepharus kitaibelii*) are more difficult to detect and prefer respectively grassy areas and sandy near-shore spots.

Along with lizards, Naxos harbors at least five species of snakes. These

animals, frequently underappreciated and misunderstood, play a vital role in the function of local ecosystems by consuming large amounts of rodents and various invertebrate pests. Much feared, but completely harmless is the Javelin sand boa (*Eryx jaculus*) a modestly-sized constrictor that spends most of his life underground.

The Four-lined snake (*Elaphe quatuorlineata*), a large-bodied though harmless snake, is considered a friend of the farmers due to the fact that it preys on rodents. Rarer species are the Long-nosed viper (*Vipera ammodytes*), a venomous but shy snake. Also rare are the European grass snake (*Natrix natrix*) and the European worm snakes (*Typhlops vermicularis*).

The most visible group of animals on Naxos is undoubtedly the birds. They range in size from the majestic Griffon vulture (*Gyps fulvus*), which survives in a declining population in the mountain interior, to the small-bodied Crested lark (*Galerida cristata*). Naxos attracts hundreds of bird species, many of which are rare or endangered.

Raptors, like Bonelli's eagles, Eleonora's falcons (*Falco eleonora*), hawks and owles, a surprising number of waterfowl including herons, ducks, geese and waders, grouses, swallows and blackbirds, as well as various seabirds, like seagulls, Cory's shearwaters, Yelkouan shearwaters and shags are either resident or frequently visit the island.

### Mount Zas and its cave

The summit of Mount Zas, which rises southeast of the village of Filoti, is the highest peak in the entire Cyclades region, with an elevation of 1,003m.

According to mythology, god Zeus spent his childhood years here and an eagle was said to have offered him the thunderbolt at the top of this mountain which subsequently helped him reign supreme on Mount Olympus. Besides its mythological interest, Mount Zas is endowed with wonderful natural beauty - a great place for trekking through old and very scenic routes.

*Tadorna ferruginea*



*Himantopus himantopus*



The cave of Zas, one of Naxos's most impressive natural sights, is located southeast of Filoti, at an altitude of 630m. The cave was first explored in 1962 and the excavations carried out in 1985-1986 and 1994 brought to light artifacts dating from the Neolithic to the Classical and Roman eras. Many of these are on display at the Naxos Archaeological Museum. It features large chambers that stretch up to 11m in length, an impressive interior decor with large stalactites and stalagmites, as well as rare stone formations.

### Natura 2000 areas

Naxos's particular environmental profile - the result of mild, traditional forms of land use now being applied at a decreasing rate - has received international recognition and Greece has included part of the island in the European network of protected areas Natura 2000. The network includes sections of central and southern Naxos, including Mt. Zas, the areas from Vigla to Mavrovouni and the sea area between the bays of Karades and Moutsouna.

*Seven wildlife sanctuaries have also been designated.*

*Emberiza cirius*



### Biotopes - wetlands

Starting from the sea zone and the coastline, then crossing the lowland areas and ending on the hills and uplands, a visitor comes across a spate of natural habitats unlikely to be found in on any other Cycladic island.

- The open sea and the coastal zone
- The steep, rocky coastline - particularly on the eastern side.
- The sandy and pebbly beaches and the sand dunes with juniper trees in southwestern Naxos.
- The coastal, seasonal wetlands, such as the lagoon of Alyki - the largest and most significant coastal wetland in the Cyclades, both in terms of biodiversity and populations, as well as in terms of the rarity of the birds that find permanent or temporary refuge in its waters; also, lagoons such as those of Mikri Vigla, Glyfada and Agios Prokopios, the wetlands of Kalantos, Agiassos and Potamides and the Ammitis estuary.

Hosts of birds, small reptiles and fish

find refuge in these small but important refuges. Naxos's wetlands belong to the list of the 380 protected biotopes of the Natura 2000 network.

- The traditional farming landscape, such as the fields at Livadi, the Baouzis plain, the Eggares valley and the cultivated terraces on the uplands.
- The dwarf bush steppes and shrublands.
- The ravines of seasonal torrents, with plane trees, wickers and oleanders throughout the island.
- The olive groves, such as that of Tragea and the smaller ones at Moutsouna, Messi and Lyona.
- The clusters of oak trees - remnants of old forests. Most of these are found on the eastern side of Mt. Zas.
- The clusters of broad-leaved trees, dominated by Kermes oaks and Cretan maples.
- The hills and mountains with precipitous rocks and steep drops. The most imposing mountain massifs are found on Zas, Fanari, Mavrovouni, Anathematistra, Korakias, Kalogeros and Ai-Lias.



### ***Routsouna waterfall***

Two important streams that start from the massifs of Koronos and Fanari run north and south of Keramoti respectively.

The two rivers converge at the western end of Keramoti, at a point named Dipotamata. Continuing its flow through rocks and rich vegetation, the stream unites with a creek running from Kanafa to create the Routsouna waterfall, a spectacular 20m drop. A plane tree is rooted at its base, while a lake of considerable depth offers a delightful swimming basin for Keramoti's youngsters during the summer months. From here, the water continues its flow all the way to the fields at Eggares and irrigates the area before reaching the sea, at Ammitis beach.

The area's water, which maintains its flow even during the summer months, creates an enchanting verdant locale that differs greatly from standard Cycladic settings. A uniquely beautiful path, starting near the old bridge of Keramoti, leads to the waterfall.

### ***Naxos marble***

Naxos's white marble has been one of the island's most important natural resources since antiquity.

It is mostly found on the western section of the island and its quality rivaled the marbles of any other origin.

Quarries are seen in various locations – the most important being the one near the village of Kynidaros, which has an imposing presence and makes for a lunar landscape that extends from the mountain side to the main road.

Marble in antiquity was the exclusive material used in sculpture and its significance is shown by the island's ancient quarries (Flerio, Melanes, Apollonas).

Splendid examples of the use of marble were the ancient sanctuaries of the Temple of Apollo, of Gyroulas at Sagri and of Dionysus at Yria.

The fact that the first marble statue of a large size was sculpted on Naxos in 660 BC (Kouros) signifies the importance of

the art of marble sculpture on the island, which is retained to this day.

Examples of this art can be admired on various buildings dispersed throughout the island, both ancient and modern.



### ***Alyko juniper forest***

Alyko peninsula, in southwestern Naxos, is home to one of Greece's largest and densest juniper forests. A land mass of approximately 200 acres, the peninsula is covered with age-old juniper trees, lentisc shrubs, heather, thyme, calycotomes and various wild flowers. Junipers, which cover the peninsula's greatest part, are gymnospermous coniferous trees, belonging to the Pinales category and the Cupressaceae family.

Their lifespan ranges between 200 to 300 years, and they measure up to six meters in height with a diameter of up to one meter. The root system of junipers stretches out in a radius at least double their respective height and includes an enormous amount of small and slender webbed roots that hold the sand and thereby maintain surrounding sand-dune formations. The Alyko juniper forest attracts wild life and is natural habitat for hares, reptiles, and numerous bird species.



### ***Emery***

Emery, a very hard type of rock with important industrial uses as an abrasive and burnishing agent, is found in abundance on the slopes of Mt. Amomaxis of Naxos, between the villages of Koronos and Apiranthos.

It is dark gray or black in color and the superior quality of Naxos emery (smirigli in the local dialect) has been known since antiquity. Virtually the sum of emery deposits that can be mined in Greece are found on the island.

The mining of emery was a hazardous occupation but also a significant factor in the survival of the inhabitants of the villages in the Naxos uplands.





# Naxos in myth and legend

*Mythology holds an outstanding position in Naxos's web of history and culture. The figures of Dionysus, Zeus, Apollo, Ariadne and Demeter are woven with indelible colors in memory and time, never ceasing to stir interest and imagination. In the island's age-old history myths blend with reality, with abundant archaeological finds dating to all periods throwing light on the historical reality behind every myth. Dionysus, Semele, Theseus, Ariadne, nymphs, Nereids - goddesses of the sea, tyrants, conquerors, pirates, noblemen and farmers and heroes have left their traces widely dispersed throughout the time and space of this island, composing a magical game between legends and history.*

## Zeus

The ancient Naxiots dedicated the highest mountain of their island to Zeus, the Father of the Gods, and named it after him.

According to ancient Greek mythology, narrated by Naxiot historian Aglaosthenes, Zeus, was abducted as a child from the Ideon Andron cave in Crete (Mt. Ide) and taken to Naxos in order to be saved from the fury of his father, Cronus.

He was raised in Zas cave - hence the sanctuary therein - until he was old enough to contest the leadership of the gods with a campaign against the Titans.

The sanctuary on the mountain slope was an important religious center for the farmers and shepherds of the area.

Two identical ancient inscriptions, carved on rock by the same technician in the 4th century BC, "ΟΡΟΣ ΔΙΟΣ ΜΗ-ΛΩΣΙΟΥ" ("Mount of Zeus, Protector of Sheep") indicate the exact location of the sanctuary.

Local worshippers wearing fleeces would climb up Mt. Zas at the height of the summer drought to beg the god to send his cool breezes and save them from the unbearable heat.

## Dionysus

Naxos claims a strong relationship with Dionysus, the ancient Greek god of merriment and wine.

He was said to have hailed either from the northeastern province of Thrace or from the East.

Diodorus Siculus, the ancient historian, wrote that Naxiots claimed that the god had been born on their island as the son of Semele - daughter of Cadmus, king of Thebes- and king Asterius (although the true father was considered to be Zeus, as was the case for all gods).

Zeus assigned his upbringing to the Naxiot nymphs Phyllia, Cleide and Coronis, who raised him in Zas Cave or, according to another version, in Kako Spileo (Evil Cave) in Koronos, where the inscription "ΔΙΟC ΔΙΟΝΥCΟΥ" is found.

Dionysus' male and female followers

were the satyrs and the maenads (or bacchantes) respectively, who danced and reveled, occasionally reaching ecstasy by drinking sweet Naxos wine.

Being the god of joy and merriment, Dionysus had ensured the fertility of vineyards on the island and the production of excellent wine.

In gratitude, the inhabitants of Naxos dedicated a temple to the god at Yria.

According to Plutarch, twice a year they also held festivities in his honor, Dionysia, which included contests and sacrifices. These took place simultaneously at Naxos city (present-day Chora) and Yria, and were held in the spring, when the vines sprouted, and in the autumn, when the grapes were harvested and pressed in order to prepare the wine.

## Dionysus and Ariadne

The famous myth of the marriage of the god of merriment Dionysus and princess Ariadne is centered on Naxos.

According to the myth - as narrated by the ancient historian Diodorus Siculus- Theseus, son of the king of Athens, killed the Minotaur, a creature with the head of a bull on the body of a man, with the help of the king's beautiful daughter, Ariadne. Escaping back to Athens, Theseus took Ariadne with him. Rough weather forced them to stop for a rest at Naxos, which was then named Dia. Theseus anchored his boat at Palatia - the small islet off Naxos harbor- where Ariadne, exhausted, fell asleep on the beach.

Theseus and his mates slept in the boat. Dionysus, who had seen Ariadne and fallen in love with her, visited Theseus in a dream and told him to get away without her. He initially objected but, fearing the consequences of disobeying the wishes of a god, was forced to leave.

Dionysus approached sleeping Ariadne and awakened her, whispering sweet words to her ear. Surprised, she immediately asked where Theseus was but was told that he had left.

The god of merriment then gave her wine to drink from a golden cup and offered her a golden wreath - the work of god Hephaestus - adorned with Indian gems arranged like nine stars.

According to one version of the myth, the wreath was a gift of the goddess of love, Aphrodite, and the Ores - deities of time and the seasons- for the marriage.

Indeed, it was supposed to be so bright that the gods raised it on the sky as a constellation and named it after Ariadne (Corona Borealis). Angry with Theseus for abandoning her, the princess accepted Dionysus' proposal. He led her away to Mt. Drios - present-day Koronos- on Naxos, and from there to Mt. Olympus, the residence of the gods.

## Apollo

Apollo, the god of light and music, was also worshipped on Naxos.

He was the son of Zeus and Leto, who, due to the fury and her persecution by Hera, Zeus' wife, was protected by Poseidon and was transported by dolphin to Delos, where she gave birth to Apollo and Artemis.

Apollo was worshipped in three places: Chora, where the Temple of Apollo is located - the grand gate of his temple, constructed by the island's tyrant, Lygdamis, but never finished- and is nowadays recognized as Naxos's main emblem; in Tragea - according to the testimony of historian Stephanos Vyzantios; and in the area of Apollonas, where the 3rd century BC inscription

“ΟΡΟΣ ΧΩΡΙΟΥ ΙΕΡΟΥ ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝΟΣ” is seen carved on a suitably sculpted rock, attesting to the existence of an open-air temple in antiquity, near the quarries.

The area also features the remnants of quarrying activity by the ancient inhabitants of the area, the Kouros of Apollo - the huge unfinished statue in supine position which some researchers consider it represents Apollo and others Dionysus.

The statue was likely destined for Apollo's temple at Yria. Another confirmation of the worship of the god is the huge statue which Naxiots dedicated to him at the sanctuary of Delos, bearing the inscription “ΝΑΪΙΟΣ ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝΙΟΣ” (“Apollonian Naxiot”).

## Demeter and Persephone



Demeter, the goddess of the fertility of the earth, and her daughter Persephone were worshipped with special affection by Naxiots. The myth of Mother and Daughter –who was abducted by Pluto and taken to the netherworld as queen of Hades- symbolizes the cycle of seasons.

The sorrow which accompanies the wilting of nature in the autumn and winter gives way to the joy brought by revivification in the spring and summer.

Naxiots built a splendid temple for Demeter –protector of the farmers and agriculture- at a conspicuous position in the fertile

valley of Baouzi, in the Sagri area.

The ruined temple has been recently restored, mostly with its original marble pieces that were collected from the surrounding area.

It is considered one of the most representative and important ancient temples, not just for the historical evidence and knowledge of Naxos society that it has provided but also for its contribution to understanding the ancient religion and worship.

It also features architectural elements which we find later in the Parthenon.

## Dionysus and the Tyrrhenean

In one of his fables, Homer narrates that Dionysus once chartered a ship from Tyrrhenean seamen to return to Naxos.

Unaware of their passenger's godly nature, the seamen attempted to mislead him and take him captive. When Dionysus realized this, he gave them wine to make them drunk. He also transformed the ship's oars into snakes, while a vine climbed up the mast, its branches laden with grapes.

Terrified by the sudden phenomenon, the seamen scurried into the sea and were immediately metamorphosed into dolphins.

## Other deities

Besides the prominent ancient Greek gods, the mythology of Naxos also involves a number of lesser deities. Ares, for instance, the god of war, was likely worshipped on Mt. Fanari, situated between the village of Apiranthos and the Tragea valley.

Naxiot historiographer Iakovos Grimaldi mentions that an inscription reading “TEMENISMA ΑΡΕΟΣ” (“Ares' place of worship”) was found among the ruins of the Church of Agios Georgios -which suggests the existence of a temple in honor of the god.

Tradition has it that when Ares killed Adonis - Aphrodite's beloved one- the giant Aloades brothers, Otus and Ephialtes, twin sons of Poseidon, confined him in a big earthen pot for 13 months for punishment. After his release, he sought refuge on Naxos and hid in a place where “the stone devours iron” –considered to be the Bitsa peak on Mt. Fanari.

According to the myth, the Aloades brothers possessed supernatural strength, which grew dangerously with age.

They threatened to dethrone Zeus from Mt. Olympus. In order to deal with the threat the Father of the Gods sent them to Naxos to find their mother who had been abducted by the Naxiots. Whilst out in the wild looking for their mother, Artemis the goddess of hunting, devised a trick whereby they killed each other. The Naxiots buried them and worshipped them like heroes.

The quarry workers in the Flerio area of Melanes designated them as their protectors due to their supernatural strength, hoping this would help them in their hazardous and demanding job.

This is suggested by an inscription found in the area which refers to a place of worship for Otus and Ephialtes.

Sanctuaries found in caves and mountain peaks also indicate the worshipping of other deities, as for instance of the Nymphs in the Eggares area - according to an inscription in the cave church of Gennisi (Nativity), at the foot of Mt. Kalo. Similar signs of predating ancient worship have been found at the churches of Panagia Kaloritza in the Damarionas area, and in Nyfiotissa, a small cave chapel at Amelathi position, Tsikalario.

An identical sanctuary has been found in Panagia Spiliotissa church, at Argia. Hephaestus, the god of fire and metalworking, was said to have learned his trade on Naxos and then went to Lemnos.

And last, the prevalent view has it that Naxos was named after the king of Karia, a dominion in Asia Minor whose inhabitants, the Kares, also colonized the island.

In Greek mythology, however, Naxos was the son of Apollo and Akale, daughter of King Minos of Crete –which indicates the connection of the island with the Minoan Civilization.

The first name of the island was Stroggyli (“round”), followed by Dia and then Naxos.



# A place in history

*Naxos stands out for its age-old history which goes back into the mists of time. Located in the center of the Cyclades island group, it was one of the oldest hubs of civilization - not just in Greece but in Europe as a whole.*

Naxos has been uninterruptedly inhabited since the 4th millennium BC. The first inhabitants are thought to have come from the northeastern Greek region of Thrace. According to the myth, King Voreas's son, Voutis, seeking women companions, arrived in Thessaly, central Greece, where he pursued the Bacchae nymphs, abducted some of them, including Koronis and Iphimedia, and brought them to Naxos.

The Thracians dominated for 200 years and were succeeded by the Carians. The latter came from Asia Minor and were led by Naxos, who imposed his name on the island. Homeric-era elements survive in idiomatic forms spoken on Naxos today.

The oldest, to date, archaeological find on the island and among the oldest in Greece was located in Stelida - pyrite processing workshops of the Middle and Upper Paleolithic Period (c. 80000-10000 BC). Other finds attest to a developed society at the end of the Neolithic civilization but Naxos's first important period of civilization is the Cycladic, in the 3rd millennium BC.

There is evidence that the island had a dense population, mostly spread in small settlements on its eastern side. A larger and much more developed settlement, however, with meticulously built houses



and numerous pottery items, has been discovered at Grotta, where main town Chora is today. Cemeteries of the era have been found throughout the island, with masterpieces of art and style virtually found in all tombs.

Naxos emerges from archaeological research as one of the most important centers of the Proto - Cycladic civilization.

An oligarchic society ruled by a sizeable and powerful nobility, which lived on the hill of present-day Kastro in Chora and the various medium-size towns of the island, had been formed by the 7th century.

The majority of the people were engaged in agriculture, animal farming, fishing and crafts.

Naxos colonized Arkesini - and perhaps Aegiali on Amorgos - and formed a close relationship with Thera (Santorini). In 734 BC it offered its navy to the city of Chalkis (on the island of Euboea), to help the city transport colonists to Sicily, where one of the first Greek colonies was named Naxos.

The archaeological finds from the Mycenaean and Geometric eras, particularly the ceramic items, are highly aesthetic. The gigantic statues of Naxos - Kouroi- lie unfinished at the ancient marble quarries of Melanes and Apollonas, abandoned due to technical reasons or political and accidental events, such as the death of a client. Another famous find also dating to this era is the statue of Artemis, a votive offering of Nicandre (650 BC) -of a rich Naxiot family- at the holy sanctuary island and religious center of Delos.



The Sphinx of Delphi, the famous Lions, the House of Naxiots and numerous votive offerings at Delos and other prominent sanctuaries stand as irrefutable witnesses of the civilization, prosperity and power of Naxos and its economic dominance over this most important religious center.

It was in Naxos that the large-scale plastic arts - born in Greece during the Archaic period- first showed all the elements of the monumental. This fact, combined with the development of the small-scale plastic art (idols) during the 3rd millennium, led to the view that the plastic arts were born on Naxos. The abundance of marble undoubtedly contributed to this development. Emery - an exclusively Naxiot product- was used in the final abrasion and polishing of works in marble. Naxiot craftsmen were much-sought and appear to have been so rich that they donated themselves to the gods large and costly works of theirs.

Naxos also made a key contribution to the emergence of the monumental form of Greek architecture, particularly of the marble Ionian school. At the Yria sanctuary, one can see - step-by-step - all the phases of the development of Greek architecture: from the single-space temple (around 800 BC), made from woodwork and bricks, to the archaic, Ionian-style Hekatompedon (100 feet long), which included the adyton -reserved for mystical worship-, a monumental colonnade at the entrance, marble altar and marble colonnades in the interior.

The all-marble temple of Apollo and Demeter at Gyroulas, Sagri is of the archaic type of Telesterion -initiation hall dedicated to mystical rituals. It is the sole well-preserved example of a Telesterion, belonging to the period of the tyrant Lygdamis (around 530 BC) - in common with the great temple of Apollo, on the isle of Palatia, at the Chora harbor.

The Classical era on Naxos -as in the rest of Greece- was marked by tremendous cultural achievements but also numerous and long wars. In 490 BC Naxiots adopted a passive stance in the face of the Persian attack. Most fled to the mountains, while those who remained in the city were taken captive, their city was destroyed and the sanctuaries were torched. In the naval battle of Salamis, however, the Naxiots absconded from the Persians and fought on the side of the Athenians.

In the 4th century, Athens and Sparta -the two great powers of the day- clashed over control of Naxos. While a member of the Island Commonwealth, Naxos fell in succession under the influence of the Ptolemies of Egypt, the Macedonians and the Rhodians.

After 41 BC Naxos was part of the Roman province of the islands which was governed from Rhodes. The Romans often used it as a place of exile. Its religious affairs were also administered from Rhodes during the early Christian era.

## Byzantine period

Many scholars consider that the center of Naxos during Byzantine times was in the area of Apano Kastro – Tragea – Aperathou, and in the broader district of Sagri - Kastro t'Apalirou, stretching as far as Agiassos bay.

The Tragea area, with the many and noteworthy churches, has been described as "Little Mystras" –an analogy with the Byzantine citadel in the southern Peloponnese, in the midst of farming countryside.

Kastro t'Apalirou, built in the 7th century, controlled not only extensive farming areas of the island but also the sea area among Naxos, Paros and Ios which, most likely, was part of the route from Crete to Constantinople. Its construction coincides with the difficult period set by a cutoff in sea communications between the eastern and the western Mediterranean, the first Arab incursions and the end of the monopoly for Byzantine traders, and is seen as part of the broader efforts of the Empire to buttress the defensive capability of the Aegean islands.

Naxos held a prominent position in the administration of the Empire – accompanied by economic prosperity in the so-called "dark centuries" of Byzantium (7th-9th), when it was linked to the Iconoclastic movement that was hostile to icons.

Naxos pioneered sculpture in marble and played a leading role in the forging of the Cycladic civilization.

About 500 churches of all architectural styles and fortified monasteries indicate that during Byzantine times, people continued to seek new forms of expressing their inner selves in architecture and iconography.

Ancient temples were converted into paleo-Christian basilicas, such as Agios Ioannis at Gyroulas, Sagri. Also, many churches feature successive construction phases which begin in the early Christian centuries, such as Panagia Protothroni in Chalki, Panagia Drossiani in Moni and Christ Photodotis in Danakos.

## Venetian and Ottoman occupation

Around 1207 AD (according to the most prevalent historical view), the Venetian Marco Sanudo occupied Naxos and Andros, and founded the Duchy of the Aegean Sea with Naxos as the capital –thereby ushering in the Latin ascendancy in the region which lasted for centuries. Sanudo gradually conquered all the Cycladic islands, except Tinos and Mykonos which were controlled by the Ghisi family. Despite their Venetian origins, the Sanudos acknowledged as superior authority the Latin Emperor of Constantinople (conquered in 1204) rather than Venice, towards which they followed an independent policy –as far as the geopolitical conditions of the era allowed. Friction with Venice grew and the Duchy ultimately became a Venetian protectorate. According to the local tradition, Sanudo divided the island into feuds which were allotted to the Latin nobility. The period of the Sanudo



ascendancy was marked by turbulence, as they were forced to be on a continuous war footing to deal with the Ghisis, the pirates roaming the Aegean, Venetian interventions, as well as the Byzantine fleet of Emperor Vatatzes of Nicaea who had never abandoned his claims on the Cyclades. The dynasty produced seven dukes. The last one, Niccolo Dalle Carceri, son of Duchess Fiorenza Sanudo, was murdered in 1383 by Francesco Crispo, the pro-Venetian ruler of the island of Milos, during a hunting outing near the village of Melanes. Crispo, who had married into the Sanudo family, took over the Duchy and the dynasty he founded produced a line of 12 dukes. When the renowned Ottoman admiral Hayreddin Barbarossa conquered the Cyclades in 1537-38, the Duchy of the Aegean Sea was already in a state of decline and administrative disarray. Duke Giovanni IV Crispo was allowed to remain in charge of his dominion on condition that he paid heavy taxes to the Ottoman treasury. This exacerbated the dire economic situation and his son, Jacopo IV Crispo, who succeeded him upon his death in 1564, was imprisoned by the Turks two years later, following representations to Sultan Selim II (1566-1574) by local Greek notables who asked for greater fairness in the administration. The end of the Crispo dynasty, however, ushered in new Latin

feudal lords. Prominent families, like Barozzi, Grimaldi, Justiniani, Della Rocca and De Modena either bought land or acquired it through marriage, creating large estates. The "Place of Filoti" was a case in point. The feudal order and Venetian legal system was retained by the Ottoman administration and, in fact, brought about an intensification of the conditions of serfdom for the local population. The Turks did not colonize Naxos and the other Cyclades. Few settled on the islands, due to the fear of pirates, and very few inhabitants converted to Islam.

## Modern history

The first initiations into the Greek revolutionary movement against the Ottoman Empire in Naxos took place at the end of 1820 and the island joined the fight on May 6, 1821. Dozens of Naxiots are recorded in the so-called Archive of the Struggle at the National Library of Greece. Leading figures were the bishop of Paros and Naxos, Ierotheos, and Michail Markopolitis.

Naxos and the Cyclades became part of the modern Greek state after the end of the revolution. The region was liberated from the Axis occupation during World War II in October 1944, along with the rest of Greece.



# Culture

*The human presence on Naxos spans thousands of years, endowing the island with a rich cultural mosaic of various periods and influences. Due to its geographical position, Naxos has been a center of communication and exchanges among the inhabitants of neighboring islands, but also among different races and ethnicities. Naxos flourished during the period of the Cycladic Civilization, between 3000 and 2000 BC, thanks to trade, seafaring and its mineral wealth, notably marble and emery.*

## Geometrical era necropolis

A Geometrical era (9th-8th century BC) cemetery has been discovered at Alonakia position, at the SE foot of Apano Kastro hill. The finds in the circular tombs, which included pottery, golden jewelry, lances and burned fruit, are exhibited at the Naxos Archaeological Museum in Chora. At the same location there is an ancient, 3m upright stone tomb (menir), considered unique in SE Europe. Unfortunately, valuable data were removed when it was looted and its dating remains speculative, c. 1300 BC.



## Prehistoric acropolis of

The low hill at Korfari, Amygdalies, is situated NW of Panermos bay, on Naxos's southern coast. Excavations at the top of the hill brought to light a fortified settlement dating to the second half of the 3rd millennium BC (2500-2300 BC). The finds include about 20 small, stone-built rooms inside an elliptically-shaped fortification wall with five horseshoe-shaped towers.

The fortified acropolis of Panermos has an architectural form unique in the broader Aegean region and was a landmark in the development of Naxian society. It was a collective project, the planning, construction and operation of which depended on the existence of a hierarchical society.

From this point of view, the acropolis

constitutes a unique monument of the passage from the small farming communities to those of an "urban" character.

From that point in time, life in the Cyclades continued in the early urban centers, many of which are still alive –the most characteristic example being that of Grotta, in main town Chora.



## Yria

One of the most important sanctuaries of ancient Naxos, dedicated to the god Dionysus and possibly a female deity of nature, functioned at Yria, south of Naxos town and in the middle of the fertile valley of Livadi, between the 14th century BC (Mycenean era) and the Roman period. Worship was conducted outdoors up until the Middle Geometric period (850-750 BC), when four sequential buildings were constructed with the same orientation. These were designed to serve the permanent and growing needs of the faithful in an area whose swampy geomorphology caused them particular difficulties. The last of all buildings at the site, a monumental temple constructed around 580 BC (Archaic period), has been restored in the framework of a joint research program involving the University

of Athens and Technical University Munich. The Yria temples provide unique and full evidence of the birth of Greek marble island architecture.

This temple was converted into a Christian basilica in the 5th or 6th century AD. Frequent floods, however, caused it to be abandoned and worship was transferred to the neighboring church of Agios Georgios.

The complex included a catering facility for the faithful. The initial building, dating to the early Archaic period, was replaced by larger ones during the Classical and Roman periods.

*A limited sample of the movable finds unearthed after a long excavation in the area is exhibited in the building of the Museum Collection.*



## The ancient Naxos aqueduct tunnel between Barou and Kaminia

The entry and exit points of the underground tunnel of the ancient aqueduct were discovered at the positions of Barou and Kaminia respectively, after copious excavations.

This important and difficult engineering work, constructed during the initial phase of the aqueduct (late 6th century BC), was designed to also tap the waters from Kampones spring, near the exit point of the tunnel, in addition to those coming from the beginning of the aqueduct at Flerio.

The tunnel is about 220m long, with heights of 1.40m-1.60m in the sections that have been explored.

The water flowed in a trench covered with slabs.

During Roman times, two large shafts for collecting and cleansing water, now about 3.70m high, were dug near the entry and exit points of the tunnel,

and were connected with built arched constructions with the entry and exit points in the rock.



## The ancient sanctuary at Flerio water spring

At the center of the lush district of Flerio and just a few meters above the fountainhead of the ancient aqueduct is a sanctuary dedicated to the female deity of the fertility of the earth, and to the twin brothers Otus and Ephialtes. Worship here began around 800 BC and continued intensively up to the 6th century, gradually declining later.

The sanctuary became the favorite place of worship for the laborers in

the neighboring marble quarries who attributed properties of supernatural strength to the twin deities and considered them to be their patrons and succors in their demanding job.

The most common votive offerings to the temple were experimental, failed or deficient marble objects.

The worship of the female deity is deduced by clay female figurines and a host of objects related to the art of weaving, such



as whorls and loom weights.

They are all exhibited at the Melanes Museum Collection. The excavations at the sanctuary unveiled three sacramental structures, outdoor areas for the worshipping of earth deities and a complex of auxiliary buildings.

Despite their rather humble character,

these structures provide evidence of the first steps of Naxiot craftsmen towards the mastering of monumental architecture - for instance, the single-piece marble doorstep, with a lintel and pilasters in one of the sacramental buildings, is considered the forerunner of monumental doorways.

## The ancient Naxos aqueduct

As early as the Archaic period, when the island was ruled by the tyrant Lygdamis (550-524 BC), Naxiots tapped the rich sources in the lush area of Flerio, Melanes and the neighboring area of Kampones in order to solve the water problem of Naxos city.

The first aqueduct (late 6th century) comprised clay pipes laid in a ditch. The second, constructed during the Roman years, features two clearly distinct phases and comprises a pipe built with hydraulic mortar, with underground and elevated sections. Both aqueducts, following the same course, began from a source that can be seen under a later construction in a vegetable garden at Flerio today, crossing

a distance of 11km, it ended at a point in the city that has not been determined.

The elevated Roman-era aqueduct would have probably ended at today's Trani Fountana - a cistern constructed during the same period. Maintenance shafts that also served as water collectors existed along the aqueduct. The importance and degree of technical difficulty in the construction of the project is indicated by the fact that a 220-meter tunnel had to be dug through the mountain between Flerio and Kampones, in order to tap a source in the latter area.

*The information center at Flerio has a wealth of relevant material.*



## The ancient sanctuary of Apollo and Demeter at Gyroulas, Sagri

In the 8th century BC, the inhabitants of the area began worshipping the deities of nature outdoors, on a mound hulking over the beginnings of a fertile valley in the Gyroulas district, south of the village of Sagri.

A monumental, all-marble temple was constructed at the spot in the late 6th century. According to a number of indications, the sanctuary was dedicated to the deities of Apollo, Demeter and

Kore, with an emphasis on their earthen characteristics.

The worshipping of earth deities, which was related to fertility and the growth of vegetation, is deduced by the erection of the sanctuary in the midst of an area rich in productive resources and appropriate mainly for farming. The sanctuary also served as a factor of social cohesion in the broader district, besides being one of the

most significant steps in the development of classical Greek architecture.

During the paleo-Christian period (5th-6th century AD), the temple was converted into a basilica. Up until the 8th century, when it was abandoned, a variety of workshops were developed around it, for the production of olive oil, wine and ceramic items. Later, the worship was resumed in the small chapel of Agios Ioannis Theologos (St. John the Theologian), which was built under the

arch of the ruined basilica. The chapel was moved to its present position in 1977 so that restoration work could be carried out in the ancient temple. The project was part of a research program that involved the University of Athens and Technical University Munich.

*The most important finds from the excavations carried out are housed in the building of the Museum Collection very near the site.*



### The *Kouros* statues at the ancient marble quarries (Faraggi and Flerio areas)

One of Naxos's two main marble quarrying areas in antiquity is located in the greater Flerio area (the other is in the area of Apollonas).

The locale is replete with remnants of the quarrying activity (wedge - slots, rectangular wedge holes, series of small circular holes made with chisel, abounding marble rubble) but the main attraction is the two oversized but incomplete stone figures of unclothed young men (*Kouros*), dating to the early 6th century



BC. In antiquity works of such size would initially undergo rough processing at the quarry - to prevent damage of the finished surface during transportation - and be completed at their destination.

In both cases of the *Kouros* of Naxos accidents evidently occurred during their transportation from the slopes of the quarry down to the stream, as limbs of the statues were broken (the legs of the

*Kouros* at Faraggi and the right foot of the *Kouros* at Flerio), causing them to be abandoned.

The failed projects paint a vivid picture of the difficulties and duress suffered by the quarryers of the day, who sought consolation and spiritual support in Otus and Ephialtes - the giant twin deities worshipped at the nearby sanctuary of Flerio springs.

### The ancient quarry and the *Kouros* of Apollo

Near the coastal settlement of Apollonas is one of the two ancient marble quarries of Naxos, where sculpture, the greatest art of antiquity, emerged.

Hundreds of half-finished statues and blocks of marble would be slid down on ramps from here to the pier of the ancient port of Apollonas for further transportation to the island of Delos and many other places.

The half-finished, colossal statue of *Kouros* of Apollo and numerous remains of marble works and other half-finished *Kouros* are still seen at the quarry today, along with abundant traces and evidence of the quarrying process all over the hill. The ancient sculptors disposed useless

debris - mainly gravel - by throwing it down the slopes above the sea.

The locals contend today that this discarded marble still covers the coastal slopes and has been used to build the farming terraces.

The top of the hill above the quarry - named Grammata- features an inscription that reads "ΟΡΟΣ ΙΕΡΟΝ ΧΩΡΙΟΥ ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝΟΣ" ("Holy Mountain of Apollo").

It dates to the 5th-4th century BC and probably belongs to a sanctuary of the god that existed there.

The most impressive sight at the ancient quarry of Apollonas is the half-finished statue, known as the *Kouros* of the god Apollo.



The statue, lying in supine position and longer than 10m, dates to the 6th century BC and archaeologists differ on whether it represents Apollo or the god Dionysus.

The fact that construction of the giant temple of Apollo, the position overlooking the present-day port of

Naxos, is considered to have started in the same period as the date of the statue, has raised questions whether the Kouros was somehow linked with the temple.

The statue was never finished either because it broke and a repair was impossible, or because the order was cancelled or never paid for.



### Chimarros Tower

The legendary tower of Chimarros at Filoti is considered one of the important ancient monuments of the island. Built on a hilltop by the road to Kalantos, it is named after two streams (chimarros in Greek) that defined the area's east and west.

Researchers believe the tower dates back to the late 4th century BC and view it as a fine example of Hellenistic-era defense-related architecture.

Constructed with huge marble boulders, it was circular and its original height measured approximately 20m with a 9.2m diameter at its base. It consisted of four levels connected by a marble staircase and was surrounded by a square wall measuring 35m in length at each flank.

Today, the tower's exterior remains preserved in considerably good condition, standing at a slightly reduced height of

approximately 15m. Large sections of its interior have either collapsed or are dilapidated.

Parts of the walling at the perimeter still remain, as do remains of constructions that once stood within the property. Some of them were olive mills.

As is also the case with other similar fortified towers in the Cyclades, the precise purpose and usage of Chimarros Tower is not clear. Purposes varied depending on eras and locations. Some research suggests that Chimarros stood as a base for a small military unit and also served as a hideout for the area's residents along with their livestock.

According to another view, it served as a transmission point for messages in the form of fire or smoke to other similar towers on Naxos and neighboring islands.

### The Mycenaean tomb at Chosti

The Mycenaean tomb at Chosti is an important and rare monument in the Cyclades, being one of only three vaulted tombs that have been discovered in the region -the other two are those at Agia Thekla on Tinos and at Aggelika on Mykonos.

It is also rare in the sense that it is located in a highland area, far away from the major Mycenaean settlement that was situated in Chora.

It comprises a circular burial chamber, built with huge blocks of rock in scaled horizontal layers that create a dome. The blocks support one another without mortar, and the tomb has a diameter of 3.30m at the base and a height of 2.40m. The roof was sealed with a large slab and the entrance to the tomb was on the eastern side, at the end of a small passageway with built-up sides. After the burial, the dome and passageway

were covered by an earth mound but, as indicated by an opening on its south side, the tomb has been looted in the past and thus valuable items and information about its identity have been lost. It is, however, supposed that it was built circa 1300 BC and that it is the tomb of a local ruler, whose name, though, cannot be identified by the poor findings that remain. It is supposed again that his name might bare relation to the name of the site (Axos) where the tomb lies. In turn, the name Axos may derive from Naxos, the name of the first king of the island who came at the head of colonists from Asia Minor. The monument attracts hundreds of visitors annually.

*The monument is situated approximately 200m outside the village of Komiaki, with which it is connected via a footpath.*

### Archaeological site of Grotta

Part of the Mycenaean capital of Naxos, dating to 1300 BC, was discovered under Cathedral square, on the northern side of the port. It is part of the ancient agora and the settlement of the capital.

Archaeologists believe that the Mycenaean acropolis was situated on Kastro hill. The large cemeteries of the era were located at Aplomata and Kamini, to the east.

Part of the ancient settlement has been submerged into the sea. The site is suitably organized and accessible for visitors.



# The churches of Naxos

The number of churches with frescoes is estimated at around 120 –out of a probable initial total of about 200, including those with iconography that has been found to have been whitewashed up to five times.

The Byzantine churches are dispersed throughout the island but with greater density in the valleys, such as in the Sagri area - where the early Byzantine fort of Apaliros has a commanding presence- and the central basin of Tragea, where the mid-Byzantine Church of Panagia (Virgin Mary) Protothroni has been in uninterrupted service to this day.

The architecture of Naxos's Byzantine comes in mainly three styles: the three-aisled basilica (to which most churches belong), the free cruciform (about 12) and the circumscribed cruciform (five or six of great importance). There are also arched-roof and mausoleum-type churches, single-aisled basilicas - with or without a dome - and a "three-in-one" architectural

*Naxos's prominent position in the Aegean Sea during Byzantine times (6th-15th centuries) is indicated by the large number of churches that date to this period and which is not rivaled by any other island in the region.*

marvel with multiple domes, Panagia Drossiani in Tragea.

Many Byzantine churches lay abandoned for a long time and an inestimable number of frescoes are thought to have been lost due to dampness and erosion.

In the last 50 years or so, however, the archaeological service has carried out a vast amount of restoration and maintenance work.

## Panagia Drossiani (6th century)



The Church of Panagia (Virgin Mary) Drossiani - a short distance from Moni, on the way to Chalki- is one of Naxos's oldest.

The church, part of an old monastery, has a unique architectural style, with bare stone-walls, a triple-alcove, coniform dome and three adjoining chapels on the northern side with square dome bases on their roofs. Some of the frescoes that have been saved date to the 6th century and are considered among the oldest

in the Balkans, while the rest belong to the period between the 11th and 14th centuries.

The church also features a marble iconostasis, marble stands for votive candles and the old icon of Panagia Drossiani - connected with many legends and traditions.

According to one of these, the church was so named because the area was blessed by Virgin Mary with plentiful waters and was therefore 'cool' (Drossia=coolness).

## Monastery/Tower of Christ Photodotis (6th century)

Photodotis is Naxos's oldest and perhaps most important fortified monastery.

Located at an idyllic spot at an altitude of 500m, north of the village of Danakos and amidst age-old oak trees, fig trees and vineyards, the imposing structure was built on the ruins of a 6th century basilica some 300 years later. The location offers superb views of the Aegean Sea and the island of Donoussa.

The monument comprises two floors. The ground floor is taken up by the three-aisle church. The dome is supported by four marble pillars and the marble iconostasis bears elaborate sculptures. One of the two rooms on the right of the main church was most likely a crypt.

The first floor, which is accessed via an

external, stone-built staircase, features an atrium dominated by the dome. This is surrounded by the abbot's quarters, monks' cells and bastions.

The founding of the monastery is shrouded in legend. According to the most prevalent version, it was the fulfilling of vow by a princess who faced great danger while sailing off Naxos. She is said to have picked the particular spot because she saw a light coming from it, hence the name, which means "Light Giver".

The church is dedicated to the Transfiguration of the Savior, celebrated with vespers on the eve and mass on August 6.

An age-old plane tree in the courtyard offers respite from the heat in summer.



## Panagia Protothronos (6th - 7th century)

The Church of Panagia (Virgin Mary) Protothronos at Chalki is one of Naxos's oldest and most important religious monuments. Initially built in the early Christian period as a three-aisled basilica with a synthronon and bishop's throne, it was converted into a cruciform, domed church in the 9th century. Two additional aisles were built later. The interior has five

layers of frescoes, of the early Christian period, non-pictorial of the iconoclastic period of the 9th century, and of the 10th, 11th and 13th centuries. The fresco in the alcove of the altar depicting Virgin Mary with a spindle is considered unique in the Balkans. It was given the name Protothronos because it was the seat of the Bishop.



## Panagia Kera (9th century)

About 1.5km SW of the settlement of Atsipapi, at Loiri, is the 9th century Byzantine church of Panagia Kera (Holy Lady).

Its architectural style is the rare transitional cruciform, circumscribed by a dome.

The dome is supported by arched walls

resting on rectangular pillars, while in the northern section the corner cupolas feature horizontal slates.

The church also features an episcopal throne, and Byzantine frescoes have been discovered under the whitewashed internal surfaces.



## Agia Kyriaki (9th century)

Agia Kyriaki church is located at Kalloni position, roughly 3km from Apiranthos. It dates back to the Iconoclastic period of the 9th century and constitutes one of the most significant Byzantine monuments in the entire Balkan region. The church features a spate of frescoes, including a stand-out work depicting birds with ribbons on their necks, on the altar's arch.



## Agios Mamas or Panagia Theoskepasti (10th century)

The lush valley of Potamia hosts the Byzantine chapel of Agios Mamas - patron saint of shepherds.

Also known by the name of Theoskepasti, the chapel is one of the island's oldest and was most likely built on the foundations of an early Christian church around the middle of the 10th century.

It is cruciform and of considerable architectural and archaeological interest, with noteworthy sculptures

and frescoes inside.

According to an engraved inscription in the chapel, a bishop named Leon was responsible for its construction.

Before the Frankish Conquerors Agios Mamas was the seat of a Greek Orthodox diocese.

*It is accessed via a footpath starting at the village of Potamia.*



### Panagia Damnotissa (9th - 10th century)

Panagia (Virgin Mary) Damnotissa is a pretty, cruciform church with a dome of the 9th-10th centuries, situated where the Daminos settlement once existed. It retains three layers of frescoes dating to the 12th and 13th centuries, and parts of a marble-sculptured Byzantine altar screen of the 11th century.



### Agios Georgios Diassoritis (10th - 11th century)

Agios Georgios Diassoritis is a Byzantine church in the Tragea valley, located between Chalki and Monitsia. It is a cruciform, domed church of the 10th-11th centuries, with many and rare frescoes mainly of the 11th century. It is said to have been built on the ruins of an ancient temple of Zeus but this has not been officially verified by research.



### Agii Apostoli (10th - 11th century)

Agii Apostoli is a cruciform, domed Byzantine church of the 10th-11th centuries and of rare architectural style, being the only two-storey church found on Naxos. It is located next to the abandoned settlement of Metochi. The top floor, which was probably a chapel, is accessed via an external staircase starting above the entrance. The interior retains very few frescoes of the 12th-13th centuries, discovered under a whitewash cover.



### Agios Ioannis Prodromos at Kerami (11th - 13th century)



The square, domed Church of Agios Ioannis Prodromos (St. John the Baptist), of the 11th-13th centuries, is supported by four arches which place it in the so-called "mausoleum"-style category.

It was later elongated with the addition of an arcade. The church retains unique frescoes of the 13th century - some in archaic style, as the one on the dome with three angels holding a disc in the center depicting Christ Pantocrator.

The Holy Altar and the wood-carved altar screen are also saved.

## Agios Nikolaos at Sagri (11th century)

Agios Nikolaos is a single-aisle domed church in Ano Sagri, with an interior covered by successive layers of frescoes depicting the birth and baptism of Jesus Christ. The most recent fresco layer dates back to 1270. Few but very characteristic details from the 11th and 13th centuries may be detected, as can donor names.



## Timios Stavros monastery (11th - 12th century)

Timios Stavros monastery is located in the Agiasos plain, outside Sagri and is one of Naxos's most characteristic monuments. The church belonged to the rare type of the simple four columned with dome. Recently in the east part of the Katholikon were discovered frescoes of 11th-12th century. The name of Sagri is in fact a corruption of Sainte Croix (French for Holy Cross - or Timios Stavros in Greek). The tower owes its presence to the overall uncertainty that prevailed in the Aegean as a result of piracy in the Middle Ages. After the tower was abandoned by the last

group of monks in the early 19th century, control was assumed by the newly-founded Greek state in 1834. For many years, it hosted families of potters who lived and worked there. Around the end of the 19th century it was sold to the Bazeos family, whose successive heirs have maintained ownership to the present day. *The tower has been thoroughly restored and since 2001 has been hosting one of the most important cultural events in the Cyclades every summer, the Naxos Festival, organized by the Aeon cultural, non-profit association.*



## Panagia Ataliotissa (14th century)

Panagia Ataliotissa, a church dedicated to the Assumption of Virgin Mary, is located approximately 400m north of the village of Galini.

This cruciform, domed basilica is a listed monument and is believed to have been built on the remains of an ancient temple dedicated to the goddess Artemis by a young noble woman hailing from Attalia in Asia Minor who reached Naxos

carrying an icon of the Virgin Mary in the 8th-9th centuries. This icon went missing in the 19th century but resurfaced in the last century. The church also possesses more exceptional icons from the 17th century, while layers of old frescoes have been discovered, some of these from the Byzantine period (14th century). The marble altar screen has replaced an older wooden one.



## Monastery of Panagia Ypsiloteria (16th century)

The impressive, Greek Orthodox fortified monastery of Ypsiloteria (or Ypsili), some 600m past the village of Galini, served as a center of rebellion by the locals against the repression of the Latin nobility in a number of historical instances. Built by Iakovos Kokkos in 1600, its particular feature is a semi-circular tower to the southwest, which is not found in other similar structures on the island. The complex also retains the church, more towers and defensive murder-holes over the gate. The austerity of its external architecture gives way to more contour structures in the interior.



# Art and people

*Naxos has always nurtured a lively relationship between man and art, ever since the first statuettes, the first vessels and the first creations in marble by known and unknown technicians in the Proto-Cycladic period (3200-2000 BC).*

*Temples and sanctuaries, citadels, mansions and humble folk houses were mingled into the indissoluble web of time together with traditional crafts, such as weaving, wood carving, iconography etc.*

*Alongside, music, song, feasting and dance gave an outlet to joy, the sorrows and the dreams of the people of Naxos, leaving an invaluable legacy to modern researchers.*



## Naxos traditional architecture

Naxos's architectural heritage, shaped by the different cultures of peoples and conquerors that set foot on the island over the ages, features a wide variety of monuments which reflect a rich folk tradition in the building of houses, churches and other edifices.

The period that made the most decisive contribution to the Naxos's present architectural profile is that of the Frankish dominance, which accounts for Chora's medieval citadel (Kastro) and the imposing Venetian tower houses dispersed throughout the island.

Architecture in the villages remained traditional, as construction was based on the dictates of climate, geomorphology, the particular housing requirements, the options available to the local masons and the building materials accessible in each locality.

The overall picture of Naxos's architecture fits the general style characteristic of the Cycladic groups of islands: White houses –with two levels at most and no surface being absolutely flat- built next to each other, their courtyards accessed via stone-paved alleyways and stairs. Residences were of three main types: the mansions, the folk houses and the tower houses.

Chora's mansions are perhaps the oldest type of city dwellings in the Cyclades, belonging to wealthy traders. Their main



characteristics were the large rooms, the high ceilings, thick stone walls and luxury internal design. The central chamber of the residence was the spacious living room, while the basement was occupied by large areas for the storage of products. The mansions outside Kastro were built by wealthy Greeks. Most mansions were fortified structures.

Folk houses were the most widespread type of residence. In their simplest, earliest form they comprised a single, large room for living and storing goods. Subsequent forms included separate rooms for the kitchen, bedrooms and a cellar. The kitchen also served as the dining room, where the family gathered and received visitors.

Most of Naxos's impressive tower houses were built by the Venetians around 1600, for protection from pirates and for establishing their authority on the local population. Some 30 such tower houses are saved today, mostly located in the island's most fertile areas.

They were all in the color of the stone and earth of the surrounding area so as not to be easily visible from afar.

Ramparts, bastions, murder holes and large and strong gate doors were regular features which added to the defensive capability and imposing character of the towers.



## Folk art

Naxos has a rich folk art, handed down the generations through the centuries. Whether in the narrow alleys of the old town, or in the villages and the farming communities of the countryside, a broad variety of folk art is waiting to be discovered.

Over the centuries the island hosted renowned masters of artistic creation, self-taught artists that became grand tutors of the younger generations. The secrets of art were passed from mother to daughter, from father to son, from craftsman to apprentice, being continuously enriched with new perceptions.

Old embroidery items dating back many generations are now works of art. Vocations such as those of the weaver, the embroiderer, the mason, the painter, the silversmith and the goldsmith, the stone and wood carver, the potter and the basket weaver flourished on Naxos and, although many of them are disappearing, they have left behind an invaluable wealth of knowledge about folk art.

The beautiful fabrics from Apiranthos, Moni and other upland villages, the wood carvings and the pottery, the traditional small furniture, tools and hand-made jewelry are only a few examples of local handicrafts.



## Music and dance

Feasting, music and dance were always deeply embedded in the life of Naxiots, being means of expressing feelings and emotions, antidotes to adversity and sorrow.

Naxos's music and dance tradition is deeply rooted and virtually impossible to trace, both in terms of time and location. Ancient artifacts from as far back as the Proto-Cycladic period, depicting musical and dance illustrations stand as proof of Naxos's uninterrupted and age-old connection with dance and music.

Despite the wider impact of modern day lifestyles and the invasion of new musical tastes, Naxos's traditional form of dance music remains very much alive. Entire musical families – musicians, vocalists, and lyricists – based in the villages of Kynidaros, Komiaki, Koronos, Apiranthos and Filoti, continue as worthy ambassadors of the age-old music and dance traditions

of their homeland. As for Naxiots' dancing ability, it is a talent developed from childhood and eventually mastered as a result of continual participation in local music and dance events.

Naxos's dance styles may be listed as: syrtos (slow or fast); ballos (slow or fast) - a natural evolvement and result of various syrto dances; vlacha; dirla; vintzileadistikos; kotsatos; and nikindres. However, a variety of other styles originating outside Naxos, such as Kalamatianos, Paros's Ageranos, tsifeteli, chasaposerviko, and zeibekiko, are often danced at festivities on the island, as are foreign dances, including tango and waltz. Generally speaking, dance proceedings at celebrations on the island begin with slow-paced styles, gradually liven up with faster, bouncier styles, and eventually wind up with the ballos, a style danced by couples, face to face.



# Chora, Naxos

*Aegean-style whitewashed houses, old stone-built mansions, narrow alleys and arches and much more comprise Chora, the settlement spreading in and around Naxos's medieval citadel founded by Marco Sanudo –its first Venetian ruler in the 13th century.*



Deep in the mists of time, the beginnings of the history of Chora are intertwined with mythical beings, legends and heroes that are later succeeded by distinct eras: Mycenaean, Roman, Byzantine and the periods of Venetian and Ottoman occupations.

Its many monuments speak about a splendid past - the most characteristic one being Portara, the imposing propylon, or monumental gateway of the 6th century temple of Apollo on Palatia, the islet by the harbor.

One glimpse of Chora's past is given by the archaeological site of the Mycenaean city of Grotta - large parts of which are submerged in the sea or lie under the built-up northern section of the town. Equally rich is Chora's medieval history, amply indicated by its monuments and

neighborhoods from Kastro to Bourgos. But the town also has a modern side, full of life throughout the year, with dozens of shops, restaurants, bars and cafes. It has all the services needed by the visitor and its shops supply all the local products, items of folk art (fabrics, baskets, ceramics) and jewelry, while its restaurants feature the broadly varied local cuisine. It is not surprising that Chora is one of the favorite towns for visitors in the Cyclades.







## The Temple of Apollo or Portara

Portara, a huge marble gate and the single remaining part of an unfinished temple of Apollo of 530 BC, is Naxos's emblem and main landmark. Standing on the islet of Palatia, at the entrance to Naxos harbor, it comprises four marble parts weighing about 20 tons each.

Its construction was initiated by the tyrant Lygdamis in the 6th century BC, according to the specifications of the temples of Olympic Zeus in Athens and of the goddess Hera on Samos. It measured 59m in length and 28m in width, and its entrance was on the western side - an unusual feature for an Ionian-style temple.

The monumental gate seen today, which led from the vestibule to the main part of the temple, lies amidst traces of its foundations and those of a peripheral colonnade that was never completed. An arched Christian church was built on the ruins in the 6th or 7th century.

The islet of Palatia has been associated with the worship of Ariadne – a Cretan princess- and Dionysus, the god of wine and merriment. Because, according to mythology, Dionysus abducted the princess at the beachside of Palatia, the islet is considered the place where Dionysian festivities were first held.

Portara today is connected with the Naxos mainland via a paved footpath.

*The spot offers one of the most enchanting sunsets in Greece.*



## A tour of Kastro

There are few places in Greece where one may go back in time and get a feeling of what a medieval town was like –architectural structure and details still intact. The fortified citadel of Naxos, or Kastro, is one of these. The conversion of many mansions within its bounds into museums and the maintenance of others by their owners makes Kastro a veritable medieval museum with a unique atmosphere.

For defensive reasons, Kastro was not exposed to the sea, but the island's hinterland instead. Two settlements were developed outside Kastro after

its construction: Bourgos, an affluent neighborhood to the west, and Nio Chorio to the south.

**Kastro** had three gates: Paraporti, its southern gate and main entrance for visitors; the northern entrance, or renowned Trani Porta; and a southeastern gate, Piso Paraporti, which has not been saved.

Passing through the surviving gates, the visitor enters another world of tranquility, narrow alleys, courtyards adorned with flowers, and old mansions with coats of arms on their lintels.



*A vertical incision on a marble pilaster at Trani Porta offers an advance glimpse into the medieval world the visitor is about to enter: this was a Venetian measure of length for the fabrics which traders sold to the aristocracy.*



Entering the citadel via Trani Porta, you see the Della Rocca Barozzi Tower on the right. It is one of the oldest mansions in Kastro and houses today **the Venetian and Folk History Museum**, featuring the old furniture of the mansion and heirlooms of the era. The museum periodically also hosts painting and sculpture exhibitions.

Next to the Venetian Museum is **the**

**Tower of Crispi** - the only one surviving of Kastro's twelve towers that are believed to have originally stood to protect it. According to local legend, the tower served as the palace of the dynasty of the same name. In actual fact, however, it was built by the illegitimate son of Duke Guillermo II Crispo (r1453-63), Jacobo, who did not have hereditary rights to the dynasty.



These days, the tower serves as a **Byzantine Museum**, as had been specified by its last private owners, the P. Glezos family, when they donated it to the state. The tower is also known as the Glezos Tower, or of Aperathitissa –derived from Apiranthos, the donor family's

hometown. The lintel at the tower's entrance is adorned with rather unusual heraldry that combines both Ottoman and Russian elements. It pertains to diplomas in recognition of services offered to the two great powers in the late 19th century by one of the tower's lords, Iossif Barozzi,



an official in the service of Russia. On the way to Kastro's central square you see the **Catholic Cathedral**, a medieval building with marble floor and memorial stones depicting the family crests of some of the most prominent Catholic families that lived on the island in the last five centuries. You will note the distinct Byzantine, double-sided icon of Virgin Mary in an upright position. The other side depicts Saint John the Baptist.



Directly behind the Catholic Cathedral and next to the Catholic Episcopal Palace is the Orthodox Church of **Panagia (Virgin Mary) Theoskepasti**.

This church is double-aisled, its section to the right dedicated to Virgin Mary, and the side to the left to Agia Anastasia Pharmakolytria (Deliverer from Poisons).

This may well be the oldest of the citadel's surviving monuments and its heritage includes the "Theoskepasti Codex" and double-sided, portable icons.



The **Capuchin monastery** is located east of Theoskepasti church, close to Kastro's Piso Paraporti gate. It comprises a church, dedicated to San Antonio di Padua, and the main building.

The church is single-aisled with impressive icons, while its marble flooring is decorated with the coats of arms of nobles such as the Coronelli-Castri and Lorentani-Crispo families. The Capuchins reached Naxos in 1628.

The church also served as a school.

The Codex of the Capuchin Monastery, which has survived, offers an important account of its history, as well as the history, life and adventures of the entire Kastro citadel during most of the period of Ottoman rule.

The uphill street leads to the **Naxos Archaeological Museum** - one of undoubtedly special interest, with exhibits spanning thousands of years. It is housed in an old, five-storey mansion - the old School of Commerce, which author Nikos Kazantzakis attended for a year in his teens. Its exhibits include finds from Naxos and the neighboring islands of Keros, Donoussa and Koufonissia dating from the late Neolithic Age (4th millennium) to the early Christian era (6th century).

Besides excellent specimens of Proto-Cycladic marble idols, which rival those in the Archaeological Museum of Athens, the Naxos collections also include important ceramic finds belonging to the



late Mycenaean era, funerary offerings made of gold, silver and copper, glass objects of the Roman period, parts of statues and sarcophagi, as well as bronze weapons and tools. An impressive mosaic floor depicting a half-naked woman riding a sea monster is exhibited on the ambient roof of the posterior part of the building.



Next to the School of Commerce is the **Capella Kazatza** church, built in the 13th century or, according to other scholars, in the 14th century.

The School of Commerce is certain to have been established thanks to Capella's strong financial standing - further bolstered as a result of donations made by worshippers from the 17th century onwards.

Opposite the Archaeological Museum is the **Ursuline School and Monastery**.

The school began operating normally in 1739 but efforts to establish a girl school were first made a century earlier, by Frenchman Robert Saulger, the Jesuit superior and historian of Naxos.

The property was purchased by the Greek state in 1986 and has since served as a cultural institution.

The monastery was recently renovated by the Archbishopric of Tinos and Naxos and the building is mainly used as an educational and cultural center.





## Bourgos

When Chora became the island's capital following the establishment of Venetian rule in the 13th century, the Lower, or Inner Kastro became the ruler's residential palace. North and northeast of Kastro, the citadel, emerged a quarter inhabited by the bourgeois class of Latin conquerors and Greeks who were not preoccupied in the farming sector. This settlement was Bourgos.

The quarter was marked out by three gates: *Porta tou Gialou*, which bore the Crispo family's coat of arms; *Exobourgo*, where the Church of Prophetis Ilias stands; and *Pyli tis Evriakis*, the entry to the Jewish quarter. Initially, Bourgos did not border on

*Bourgos (from the Italian word "borgo", meaning fortified settlement) was the conurbation of Naxos.*

the sea and it remains unknown when it acquired its final layout.

A stroll around Bourgos's narrow, covered alleyways offers the enchanting experience of a virtual labyrinth.



## Panagia Myrtdiotissa

Panagia (Virgin Mary) Myrtdiotissa, an islet with a whitewashed chapel in the middle of Naxos harbor, stands as the first picturesque sight to greet the visitor's eye.

According to historical sources, this islet in antiquity served as a place of worship of the god of the sea, Poseidon. These days developed as a sight that may be visited, it

offers unique views of Portara and Naxos's main town, Chora.

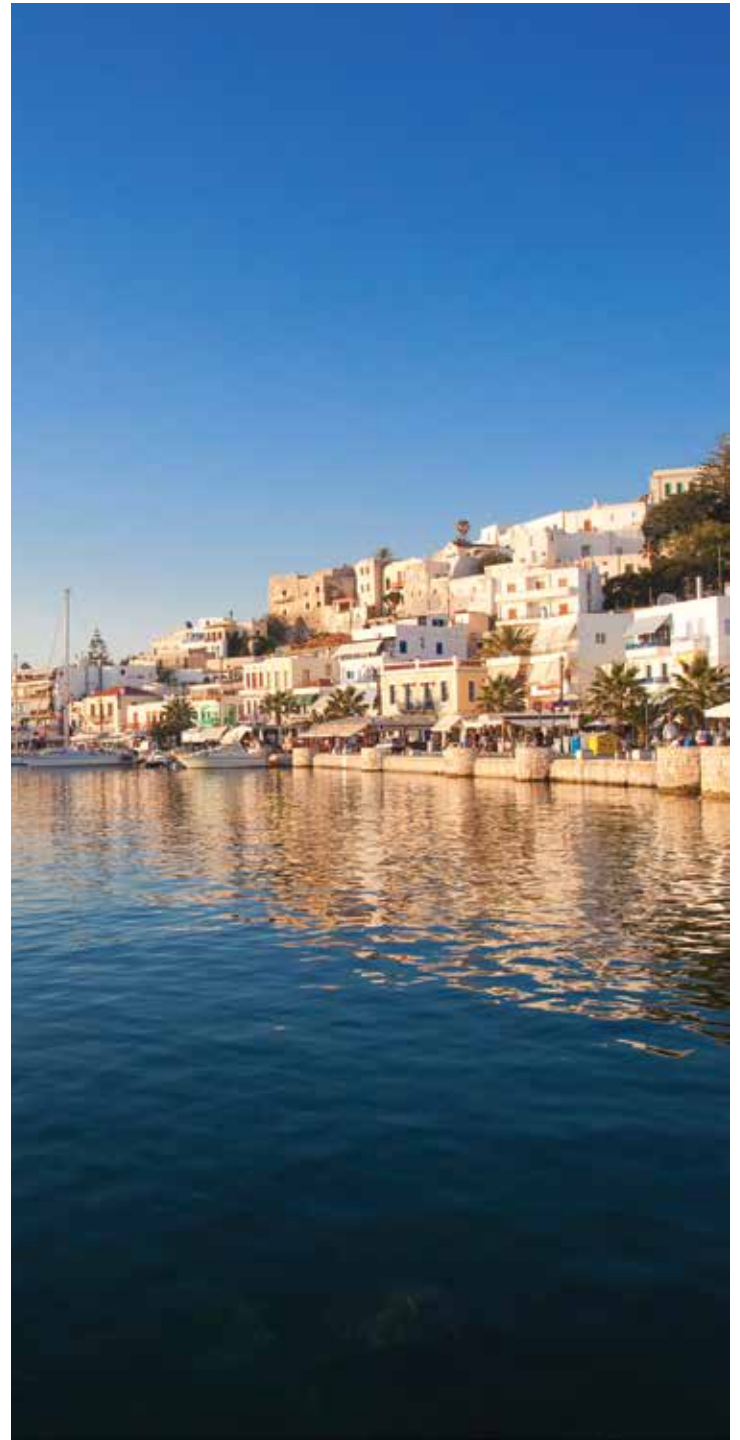
The chapel, from which the islet takes its name, is dedicated to Virgin Mary.

It is honored annually on September 24, with a ceremony worth attending if on Naxos at the time. Access is only by boat from the harbor.



## The Orthodox Cathedral

Very near the harbor, in the Grotta area, the Orthodox Cathedral was built in place of a smaller church, Zoodochos Pigi, and acquired its present-day shape between 1780 and 1787. Materials from older churches and ancient buildings were used in its construction. It is said that the church's granite pillars were transported from the ruins on the island of Delos—a religious center in antiquity. The interior includes icons from the times of Ottoman rule and a gospel, which, according to tradition, was donated by Catherine the Great of Russia. The archaeological grounds in front of the cathedral, developed into an archaeological park, remain open for visitors.



# The villages of Naxos

*A tour of the villages of Naxos is a unique experience, a journey into the history and past of the island, with myths and heroes, medieval legends, folk customs that survive intact to this day. Coastal areas are refreshed by Aegean Sea breezes, the uplands by mountain coolness. Colors alternate, and so do the sounds: the waves, the gurgling waters of a stream, the squeaking reeds, the rustling leaves and so many other sounds accompany the visitor on every step. Churches and monasteries of rare historical value, mansions and towers, caves, trails, mines, threshing floors and vineyards give these villages a great wealth of sights that is difficult to encounter on any other island.*

## Agios Arsenios or Agersani

Agios Arsenios, or Agersani as the locals call it, is one of the largest villages of western Naxos, about 7km south of Chora. According to tradition, the village was named after the chapel that predated it and still stands today.

Wandering about Agios Arsenios, with the pretty traditional houses and their well-tended flower courtyards, you will encounter the large, renovated church of Agios Spyridon and the 18th-century

church of Agios Nikolaos which also served as an observatory when the Aegean Sea was still haunted by pirates. The wood-carved altar screen, the icons, the ecclesiastical utensils and the holy books are all rare and priceless, considered museum pieces.

The sights of the greater area, well-known for its many old chapels, include two old windmills on Stroumpoulas hill and the small tower of Agios Nikolaos



with the characteristic dovecotes. Ruins of an ancient fort are seen at Elliniko position, a hill on the southern side of the village, and evidence of an ancient temple and broken vessels have been found at Petradia, a neighborhood at Yria.

Agios Arsenios is one of Naxos's most fertile villages and its inhabitants,

numbering more than 700 are preoccupied with farming and animal breeding. The well-known Naxos potatoes come from here. Tourism has been growing in recent years, as the area includes some of the most beautiful and longest beaches on the island, like Agios Prokopios, Agia Anna and Plaka.

## Galanado

Galanado, a village built in amphitheatric fashion and with views of the lush valley of Livadi and of Chora further beyond, is said to derive its name from the French word 'galant', meaning 'gentlemanly' and 'courteous'.

The valley of Livadi is one of the most fertile of the island, and so the main source of income of Galanado's approximately 450 inhabitants is farming, hence the large quantities of potatoes and milk produced. The parish Church of the Holy Spirit was

built in 1780, as inscribed on the lintel above the door of the left nave.

On the eve of Holy Spirit Day, which differs from year to year, the village celebrates with a big feast with live traditional music, food and wine, while a procession of the icon takes place after mass on the Day itself.

Huge stone blocks standing at a spot east of the village, between the churches of Agios Georgios and Agia Irini, are thought to belong to a Paleolithic settlement.

## Belonias Tower

*A short distance from Galanado, in the valley of Livadi, stands the tower of Belonias - one of the best preserved on Naxos.*

*It is an imposing structure, built around 1600, and the location affords superb views of Chora - the main town. It is privately owned and inhabited.*

*Right next to the building is the 'twin' chapel of Agios Ioannis, dating to the 13th century - a rare example of a church with one Catholic and one Greek Orthodox aisle.*



## Glinado

Glinado is a farming village, one of the three that share the fertile Livadi valley –the largest on the southwestern side of the island.

The valley extends from the coast to the hills and Glinado, spreads out at an elevation of about 100m, features some attractive old, island-style houses and offers panoramic views and beautiful sunsets to watch.

The oldest sight in the Glinado area, about 500m before you reach the village, is the single-aisled, arched-roofed

Church of Agji Saranta, which belonged to the Xiropotamos monastery of Mount Athos. The lintel of the building which once hosted monks bears the date 1638.

Glinado, with 585 permanent residents, has two hotels, rooms to let, tavernas and is a good shopping hub.

The attractive church of Agios Nikodemos at the entrance to the village, built in 1990, celebrates on July 13 and 14, and the traditional feast at the square includes good food and live traditional music.



## Galini

Galini is a small farming village built in amphitheatric fashion on the western side of the Eggares valley, 6km from Chora, with pretty houses and well-tended flower

gardens.

Just 100m outside Galini is the Church of Panagia Attaliotissa, dedicated to the Dormition of the Virgin, and some 500m



further on is the impressive fortified monastery of Ypsili, one of the most characteristic of the island.

Galini has some 300 permanent residents with a keen interest in maintaining traditional customs.

At Easter they light the perifanes (reed bundles) for the procession of the Epitaph, in Halloween the koderlati dance in the square, while on August 15, the Epitaph

of the Holy Lady is processed through the village, followed by a big feast at the central square.

A small hotel and a taverna operate here. Ammitis beach is about 1.5km from the village. A very attractive old footpath near Galini, part of the trail once used by monks during Byzantine times, leads to the ancient springs of Messonissi which have water throughout the year.

## Danakos

Danakos is a small picturesque village situated deep in a gorge at the foot of Mt. Zas. It is one of the island's oldest settlements, mentioned by Homer and ancient historian Thucydides - among others, but this is also attested by the numerous remains of ancient cemeteries, wells and Byzantine chapels in the area. The village is well-known for its plentiful and clear water springs.

Streams and brooks used to power a number of mills in the old days. The remnants of seven of these mills can still be seen in the lush gorge today, where plane trees and oleanders predominate. The main feature of the valley is the water spring on its western side. Cultural events, such as kouzinomagiremata (cookery contest) and concerts by well-known

Greek artists are held at the plateau under the age-old plane tree by the water spring every summer.

But the spot is worth seeing regardless of the timing, Naxos's oldest monastery, Photodotis, located at a short distance from the village, is also a must for visitors. Zoodochos Pigi ("Spring of Eternal Life") is the holy patron of the village. The church is located next to the fountainhead. Vespers are held on the eve and mass in the morning on the annual Zoodochos Pigi Day, which is always on the Friday after Easter. The holy icon is then paraded around the village. Feasting follows in the local tavernas.

Danakos today has some 70 permanent residents, the majority of whom are animal farmers, stone masons and millers.





## Eggares



Eggares is a small farming village in the midst of a fertile plain still bearing the marks of blissful times that left an indelible impression on prominent writer Nikos Kazantzakis in his teens, at the end of the 19th century, as he recorded it in his "Report on Greco".

With plentiful waters, the Eggares plain, just a few kilometers north of Chora, accounts for a sizeable part of Naxos's agricultural production.

The village has about 200 permanent residents but the population swells nearly five-fold in the summer. The hub of the village is its attractive, stone-built main square, next to the Church of Kimissis Theotokou (Dormition of the Virgin).

Along the two streams that traverse the village are two now uninhabited neighborhoods, Messa Gitonia, where the Foufopoulos tower is, and the



abandoned settlement of Lagada, which features seven listed watermills. These are pre-industrial era structures that were still in operation until the 1960's. Just beyond Messa Gitonia lies the now half-ruined church of Panagia Monastiriottissa, likely built in the 9th century on the foundations of an ancient temple. The remains of some frescoes are visible.

A short distance outside Eggares is a two-arched, elegant marble bridge, built in 1899. In the days before domestic water supply housewives would bring their clothes to the stream and light a fire under the bridge to heat water.

East of the village is the hill of the Nativity, with a small chapel built into the rock -where a sanctuary of the Nymphs existed in antiquity. The spot offers superb views.

The tavernas in the village serve excellent traditional dishes, prepared with fresh local produce which is in abundance.

The biggest feast in Eggares takes place on August 15, when the church at the square celebrates.

It is held in the courtyard of the primary school, with local delicacies and wine, live music and dancing.

### Olive mills (Tryo)

*Eggares has two wonderfully restored olive mills. The first is located by the entry point into the village and, according to the inscription on the press, is dated 1885. It now houses the municipal office and the village clinic.*

*The second, situated in the center of the village, next to the Church of Kimissis Theotokou is said to be several decades older, although the olive press is dated 1884. Both mills are on the main road*

*and, therefore, easily accessible.*

*The building, which is privately owned by Nikoletta A. Lianou, now operates as a museum. It is a stone-built structure, 100 sq.m. in area and comprising two sections: the traditional, with all the old olive oil producing equipment, and an exhibition area for olive products.*

*Audiovisual material on the production process is available.*



## Prantounas (Panos) tower

*This is an imposing mansion, a short distance outside the village and seen from afar. The lintel above the gate, dated 1787, bears the name of its first owner, Andronikos Prantounas. It later came under the ownership of a former mayor of Naxos, Panos Foufopoulos –by whose name it is also referred to. Next to the tower is one of the seven watermills in the area, which operated until the 1950's.*



## Messi

Messi is a small, picturesque village in the northeastern part of the island, with a centenarian plane tree ("Platanos") next to a water spring as landmark.

The water of the spring has been dubbed "elixir of youth" as the village is noted for the longevity of its inhabitants. Platanos is also the venue of all social events.

Other sights are the renovated traditional olive oil press (known by the locals as "fabrika") and the Folk History Museum, housed in the old primary school.

Messi holds its big religious feast of Agia Paraskevi on July 26.

According to the oral tradition, Drakondospilio, a cave with stalagmites and stalactites near the village, provided a refuge for local people whenever pirates raided the island in the old days.

On the way from Messi to the village of Apollonas is the summit of Kalogeros, with a castle that was inhabited from antiquity to the Middle Ages.



## Kynidaros

Kynidaros, a village in the Naxos uplands, about 15km east of main town Chora, carries a rich and tumultuous past as well as a vibrant musical tradition, as highlighted by the numerous events staged here - possibly more frequently than in any other village of Naxos. Kynidaros sits on a rocky hillside, 400m above sea level, next to the island's marble quarry, and is surrounded by olive, plane and oak trees. According to tradition, a merciless pirate invasion dated around the 15th century prompted the village's few survivors to relocate to its present spot, farther inland, for greater security. The village's original position, Kioura, was in the picturesque valley of Chalandra - the starting point of the ancient aqueduct of Lygdamis in the 6th century BC. The remains of the ancient village and its dilapidated

Byzantine churches, Agios Dimitrios and Agios Artemios, can still be seen in the valley. Also, a 10-minute walk along a pleasant footpath through the Chalandra valley, will take you to the same-name church, built in 1780. The main sources of income of the village's present day population, numbering approximately 400, are the nearby marble quarries, agriculture and livestock farming. Work aside, music and dance holds a special spot in the hearts of locals, so much so that, according to a popular joke, the people of Kynidaros learn to dance before they can walk! Summer evenings are regularly filled with the sounds of traditional musicians at village tavernas. This village's musical inclination is highlighted by the local origins of the Konitopoulos family - a prevalent force in island folk music for many years.



## Moni

This village in the Naxos uplands (elevation 500m) rewards visitors with infinite views of the central Tragea plateau - and the sea on a clear day- as well as with its strong traditional color. Houses are spread out in amphitheatric fashion on a mountain slope, on both sides of the central cobblestoned street. They are stone-built in the traditional style - Moniots have been well-known as skilled stone masons.

Cars are out of bounds of the picturesque alleyways which will bring you to the central cobblestoned square, two old

olive mills, the parish Church of Agia Fotini and a traditional well at one end of the village.

The countryside around Moni is very fertile and produces high quality vegetables. Vineyards host some 20 vinification varieties and Moni wines and raki spirit are highly rated.

The village also retains alive the craft of the traditional loom, supported by the Moni Weavers Association.

Moni has some 200 permanent residents but the population swells in the summer. There are three tavern/coffee shops.



## Potamia

Potamia is a traditional village set in the heart of a wonderfully lush and cool valley, replete with monuments of Naxos' history and its economic and cultural past since the Middle Ages -water mills, chapels and ruined towers.

The village derives its name from the streams crossing the area (potami= stream, river), which realized its heyday during the period of Frankish rule, when it was a popular country resort for the Venetian nobility.

Located in the center of the island, it comprises four neighborhoods -Ano Potamia, Messi Potamia, Lierado and Kato Potamia- which retain their traditional color in the midst of an idyllic environment with abundant waters, age-old plane trees and lush gardens.

A standout feature in Ano ("Upper") Potamia is the square with the old water font, next to the chapel of Agios Ioannis Theologos (1799), while one of the 14 old watermills situated on the outskirts of the settlement has been restored and can be visited.

The unfinished archaic stone statue of Kore - a mythical female figure- is seen just outside the upper part of the village, on the way to Chalki. A male counterpart is found some distance away, on the way to the village of Melanes. Agios Georgios, built in 1898, is the parish church in Messi ("Middle") Potamia

The Lierado neighborhood, the next one in line, hosts the area's most impressive sight, the three-storey, 17th century tower house



of the Kokkos family, next to the small stream.

The church of Kato Potamia, dedicated to Panagia (Virgin Mary), was built in 1871 and is considered miraculous by the islanders. The most important of the 37 churches in the Potamia area is Agios Mamas, a Byzantine 10th century basilica at Mitropolou position, on the way to Filoti. Agios Mamas is considered the patron saint of shepherds.

The area is a walker's paradise, with many trails, traditional stone bridges, ponds with ducks and waterfalls in the winter months. The main source of income for the approximately 300 permanent residents of Potamia today is farming.

The village is well-reputed for its sweet preserves, excellent cheeses and wine. The taverna in Ano Potamia is well-known for its setting and appetizing tidbits.



## Kokkos Tower

A three-storey, 17th century tower house built by the Greek Orthodox Kokkos family in the Lierado neighborhood, is the most impressive sight in the area, amidst olive and plane trees. A watermill is in the basement and interesting inscriptions can be seen on the lintels above the entrances.

According to legend, the tower, which was once also owned by the Barozzi family, was part of the setting of a Romeo-and-Juliet like love affair that involved members of the rival Kokkos and Barozzi families.

It lay half-ruined for many years but was recently restored by its present owner, Stratos Foutakoglou.

## Sagri

Built on a fertile plateau in Naxos's west, Sagri is one of the island's most picturesque villages. Its name is a corruption of Sainte Croix (French for Holy Cross), as the nearby monastery was called. The archaeological site of Gyroulas, 4km from Sagri and featuring its recently restored Temple of Demeter, is the wider area's most significant sight. Besides the surrounding sights, the village itself, comprising Ano (Upper) Sagri and Kato (Lower) Sagri, is a listed and protected settlement due its superb architecture. It is worth visiting the impressive former monastery of Agios Eleftherios in Ano Sagri. Its tower-like church, which served as a school during Ottoman times, nowadays houses the Folklore Museum. The remains of two Venetian towers may be seen at Kato Sagri. A third, Paleologos Tower, dating back to 1699, now restored, is located close to the village, about twenty minutes away.

The area's Byzantine churches are also noteworthy. Highlights include Panagia (Virgin Mary) Orfani, next to Paleologos Tower, Panagia Arkouliotissa, Panagia Kaloritissa, Agios Artemios and Agios Nikolaos, amongst a host of others.

The current population at the village numbers roughly 550. Farming and livestock breeding are the main vocations here. Cafes and tavernas offering homemade-quality food as well as local delights operate at the village. Sagri hosts annual traditional feasts on the Assumption of the Virgin Day, August 15; July 1, Agii Anaragyri Day; and November 8, Taxiarchon.

The district is graced with renowned beaches such as Orkos and Mikri Vigla, ideal for windsurfing and kite surfing enthusiasts, Kastraki, Glyfada, the wonderful sandy beach at Alyko, and the superb juniper forest.



## Oskelos Tower

Located by the seaside road close to Kastraki, Oskelos is one of Naxos's few towers built close to the sea. It dates back to the 17th century and is distinguished by its considerable height and its strong defensive character. It originally belonged to Ieronymos Conte, before its ownership was transferred to the Sommaripa family. Offering an exceptional view towards Paros and Ios, the tower is open to visitors.



## Skado

Skado is a small, traditional settlement, situated in amphitheatric fashion on the slopes of Mt. Koronos. Its beautiful two-storey houses emerge through a lush environment and it is said the name is derived from the abundant fig trees (Sykies) that surround the village.

Skado is one of the emery producing villages of Naxos and inhabitants have shares in the mines they work. Due to the fact that the village never had a developed farming sector, many people starved to death during the German occupation, when the mines were closed.

Today the village has a population of 85 residents and quite a few abandoned houses but it comes alive during the summer. Among the sights worth seeing are the old olive-mill in the center of the settlement and the church of Panagia, built during the Ottoman occupation and celebrating on August 15. The folklore collection of Mariago Pittara, exhibited in a house and courtyard in the village, includes furniture, wooden and iron tools, weapons, ceramic beehives, household utensils, local costumes, embroidery and equipment for the production of wine and cheese.



## Keramoti

A traditional mountainous village, Keramoti is located at what is referred to as Stavros tis Keramotis, the largest intersection of rural roads in Naxos's uplands district.

Here, a small whitewashed church, dedicated to the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, offers a tremendous view of parts of Naxos's east coast, as well as the west coast. Built deep amid a nature-rich ravine graced by small stone-walled houses and narrow picturesque alleys not accessible to cars. This village remains unadulterated, its traditional character is fully preserved. A square, or *platsa*, as it is referred to by locals, featuring the old village olive mill, lies at the village center. The square is surrounded by pavements that fill with people during the summer months. The village café-taverna, located just off the square, serves as the meeting

point for locals.

A folklore museum whose collection is constantly being enriched operates at the yard of the village church, dedicated to Saint John the Theologian (Agios Ioannis o Theologos).

A major traditional celebration is staged on Worship of the Cross Day (Stavroproskynisi), 28 days before Easter Sunday. The occasion's traditional music, dance, local culinary delights and abundant local wine all make for a festive day. The surrounding picturesque region offers plenty to see, including the Routsouna waterfall, the Kadis settlement, the old stone-and-marble bridge running across the southern stream, the old laundry installations, two watermills and the old water reservoir that irrigates the vegetable gardens in the Perada valley.



## Vivlos (Tripodes)

Tripodes, or Vivlos, is one of the largest and most picturesque villages in southwestern Naxos, 9km from Chora and very near the famous beach of Plaka.

With whitewashed houses, slate-paved streets and windmills, it exudes an authentic Cycladic ambience and is one of Naxos's most lively villages, with more than 700 permanent residents.

Tripodes has prospered thanks to the plain of Plaka where, besides the nationally famous Naxos potatoes, fruit, vegetables, barley and vines are also cultivated.

The list of sights includes the imposing parish church of Panagia Tripodiotissa - the village patron saint, a number of traditional windmills - a landmark at the entrance to the village, the Plaka Tower - also known as Paleopyrgos or Ariadne's Tower, and the Folklore Museum, housed in the restored olive mill.

Several cafés are found around the square with the big eucalyptus trees, while ample local production ensures a wide array of delicacies and good wines in the village tavernas. A big feast for Panagia (Virgin



Mary) is held on August 23, attracting people from all over the island.

At one of the locations that the settlement is said to have been in the past, Kechries, are the ruins of the tower of Ga - a resort of Ioannis Ga, a Naxos notary.

A little further west are the ruins of the tower of Ai Giorgis, which, built like an eagle's nest on a precipice, seems to have served as a protective bastion for Ga tower.



## Vivlos Folklore Museum

*The Vivlos Folklore Museum is housed in the restored olive mill of the village which has a full display of the old equipment, with the millstones that crushed the olives as a centerpiece.*

*The museum also hosts objects of a bygone era, unknown to the younger generation, that were generously contributed by the villagers.*

*Visitors also see a big collection of traditional utensils (earthen pots and pans, braziers etc), artisans' tools (shoemaking, weaving, cheese making), farmers' equipment and apparel, old costumes, a loom and its parts, old fabrics, an old island bedroom and much more that acquaints visitors with the traditional way of living, working and the everyday habits of villagers in the days of old.*



## Filoti

Economically and culturally vibrant Filoti is the largest of Naxiot villages. Set amphitheatrically on the slopes of two hills at the foot of Mount Zas, it is virtually surrounded by impressive summits which leave two openings, one headed west to Tragea, the other south to the local livestock farms. Roughly 60,000 sheep are reared in this area.

Filoti, whose name hails from ancient times and is thought to be of Ionian origin, is comprised of three smaller settlements, Rachidi, Klefaro, and Liiri, with a total population of 1,500 who cherish their hometown and traditions.

Filoti's liveliness and cultural richness is made evident upon entry to the village while headed for its main square. Cultural venues and sights stand on both sides of the road, including an ancient-styled sports and entertainment theater, a war-heroes' cenotaph, and the Filoti Association Cultural Center which houses a library, cinema and a reading club.

The village's main square, Gefyra, is surrounded by cafes, traditional eateries offering mezedes (small dish varieties), restaurants and a variety of retail outlets. An imposing plane tree dominates the square's center.

The stone-paved road left of the square leads to one of the village's two neighborhoods, Klefaros. The lovely Panagia (Virgin Mary) Filotitissa church is located here, while the Barozzi Tower, an imposing vestige of the island's lengthy period of Frankish rule, stands tall a little further down the road.

A marble tap accompanied by a marble wall inscription, next to the tower, dates back to the times of King Othon (first king of modern Greece who reigned between 1832-62). The uphill route south of the tower leads to the village's other main neighborhood, Rachidi.

Other worthwhile village sights include the Greek Numismatic Collection Museum of Nikolas Moustakis, housed at a well set-up

space by the main road.

About 2km from Filoti, at a spot with superb view of the village, is the old stone fountain of Arion. It is said that the water of the spring, under the age-old plane tree, never stops gurgling, even during periods of drought.

Popular traditions, including the ancient customs of Chirosfagia, Klydonas and

Plitheri, remain very much alive at Filoti.

The village also hosts the island's biggest traditional feast, with dancing to the sounds of local violin - a three-day event starting August 15 when the Church of Panagia Filotitissa honors the Assumption of the Virgin.

Filoti is well-known for the excellent quality of its livestock products, such



as lamb and goat's meat, a variety of cheese products (kefalotyri, anthotyro, xinotyro, arseniko, myzithra), while a woman's cooperative is reputed for the sweet preserves (glyka koutaliou) it produces and sells.



## Kalantos

Kalantos, a seaside village with a population of approximately 10 permanent residents, is located at Naxos's southernmost point.

Many migratory birds flying in from Africa find refuge in the rich wetland of the area. Kalantos is about 20km from Filoti by road.



## Apiranthos

Apiranthos, or «t'Aperathou» in local speech, is built at the foot of Mt. Fanari, at 600m above sea level and 28km from main town Chora.

Venetian towers, pretty, old two-storey houses, marble paved alleys with arches above them, picturesque squares and the poetic disposition of Apiranthians combine to create a rare atmosphere in the Cycladic islands.

Its inhabitants are considered to have largely come from other areas (e.g. Crete, Asia Minor) and Apiranthos's local language idiom, mores and customs are

quite distinct from other Naxos villages. This small but particularly energetic community has developed while keeping its local color largely unaltered. Its «Nikos N. Glezos library» is the largest in the Cyclades, and it features a few very interesting museums and a women's weaving cooperative. The entrance to the village features the impressive Zevgoli Tower (17th century), built on a rock. It is also the starting point for a tour of the marble-strewn alleyways, before you end at the square with the cafes.



The Church of Panagia Aperathitissa, built in the 18th century, has an imposing presence in the main street. Apiranthos has a number of very interesting museums. The Archaeological Museum mainly hosts finds of the Proto-Cycladic period, the Geological Museum

features some rare and unique items among its approximately 2,000 exhibits, the Natural History Museum includes a collection of the area's fauna, flora and a small aquarium, while the Folklore Museum displays traditional fabrics, embroidery and tools.



Also, not be missed is the small Aegean Children's Art Museum, which deals with children's relationship with toys and more, from antiquity to modern times. It is also worth visiting the Church of Agia Kyriaki, which dates to the period of Iconoclasm (9th century) and is one of the most important Christian monuments in the Balkans.

*Parking space is available at the entry point to the village and there is public transport to and from Chora.*

*Journeys are more frequent in the summer months.*



## Moutsouna

All settlements on Naxos's eastern coast are considered as outlets to the sea of Apiranthos, and properties are overwhelmingly owned by its residents. Moutsouna, the largest of them all, lies in the island's only natural harbor and is a picturesque hamlet with a sizeable number of rooms-to-let and fish tavernas lined along the beach. The place also features

the installations of the old cable railway that was used to transport the emery from the mines of Koronos to the sea up until the 1970's. The southbound coastal road leads to the smaller hamlets of Ligardia, Kanaki and Klidos and their beautiful beaches. Ligardia and Klidos represent Apiranthos's main animal farming areas. In between

them, Kanaki, with the enchanting beach of Psili Ammos, has an agritourism facility, attractive tavernas and cafes. The road ends at the sheltered Panermos harbor, with an attractive sandy beach.



### **Bardani (Sforza-Castri) Tower**

Bardani Tower was once owned by the Sforza-Castri family - one of the most powerful on the island - for whom the Apiranthos area was an important domain. The tower was built in the 17th century, as can be deduced from a surviving contract concerning the property's ownership, dated February 27, 1726. The contract describes a transfer of ownership of various properties, including this tower, from "Chrousakis Castri and his spouse Marietta" to their son, Iakovos Castri. The tower remained a part of the family's estate for generations until the 19th century.



### **Zevgoli Tower**

Zevgoli Tower, a two-storey Venetian-era stone structure that has been renovated and is now inhabited, is located close to the center of Apiranthos. This impressive monument, built on a rock at the entry point to the village in the 17th century, was originally owned by the Castri family, then by the Sommaripa family. The ancestors of the present owners acquired it immediately following the Greek Revolution in 1821. As was also the case with the Barozzi Tower in Filoti, this tower served as a residence for feudal lords of the era. The tower features Aegean-style arches and many verandas and balconies which are well worth going up to for the view it offers.

On the hill behind the cove are the remains of the prehistoric acropolis of Amygdalies - the most ancient settlement in the Apiranthos area.



### **Small Archaeological Museum**

A modest establishment in Apiranthos's main street hosts the most important archaeological finds of the area.

The Apiranthos Archaeological Museum was founded by a local initiative in 1960, initially hosting the collection of Michalis Bogdanis. It was later enriched with the discoveries of excavations in the area and the finds of local farmers while they tilled their land.

The exhibits include oil lamps and small receptacles of the Proto-Cycladic

period (3000-2700 BC), Cycladic idols and vessels, sculptures, parts of marble architectural structures, tools, weapons etc.

The most important exhibits, due to their rarity, are considered the 10 stone slabs with rock drawings of scenes of everyday life, found at Korfi t'Arioniou - a hill overlooking the eastern coast of Naxos, where archaeologists believe that there was a small sanctuary and a watch tower.



### **Geological Museum**

This small but impressive museum, housed in the building of the Apiranthos primary school, displays more than 2,000 samples of rock, minerals, ores and fossils from Naxos and beyond, and is considered one of the richest of its kind in Greece.

Part of the collection has been donated

by former mayor Manolis Glezos (see Personalities section), at whose initiative the museum was reopened on a comprehensive basis in 1987 after some 20 years.

Emery, a dark rock used extensively in antiquity and quarried locally near



*Apiranthos, takes center stage among the exhibits, occupying one of seven sections.*

*In the other sections, the museum also presents a wide array of samples of minerals from the Cyclades, the rest of Greece and other countries.*

*They include marble samples from Naxos and Paros, obsidian blades from Milos, pumice stone from Santorini, volcanic stone from Mt. Aetna and Mt. Vezuvius, bauxite and kyantite from Brazil as well*

*as pieces of meteorites.*

*The fossils display includes the bones of a dwarf elephant that lived on Naxos some 70,000 years ago.*

*A highlight is a ray-emitting apparatus which reveals colors of rocks normally invisible by the naked eye.*

*The museum shop sells a wide array of souvenirs at reasonable prices, such as worry-bead sets, jewelry and various decorative items.*



### **Visual Arts Museum**

*The Visual Arts Museum of Apiranthos, housed at the culture center's ground level, is located on the main road prior to the village entrance. It was founded in 2008 by the Friends of Museums and the N. N. Glezos Library Society and features works (paintings, sculptures, engravings) by Naxos-based artists.*



### **Apiranthos Folklore Museum**

*Located at Apiranthos's main square, Platsa, the Apiranthos Folklore Museum possesses over 1,200 items of popular art - all donated by locals.*

*The exhibits include a wide array of equipment used in the cultivation, collection and threshing of crops, as well as in bread making.*

*Other items on show include furniture, domestic utensils, musical instruments*

*- such as the doubaki, a percussion instrument, tsabouna, a traditional bagpipe, and souvliari, a wind instrument, traditional costumes, as well as woven fabrics that highlight the skills of local women.*

*Various ceramic pieces, books, paintings as well as traditional music CD's -all rendered by local artists- are on sale at the museum, helping maintain it.*



### **Natural History Museum**

*The Natural History Museum of Apiranthos, set up in 1966, displays a wide array of samples of the area's flora and fauna. It is divided into two sections, one focused on the sea, the other on the land. It includes an aquarium, an exceptional collection of shells, dolphin skeletons, whale bones, as well as an*

*impressively large flora collection -the result of extensive research at the water basin of Perachoritis torrent. The museum has also developed important educational activities, organizing and hosting conferences and events with themes focused on flora, fauna and ecology.*



## Koronos



Koronos is one of the oldest settlements in northeastern Naxos, set in a lush, enchanting spot at 540m above sea level, on the slopes of a ravine between Mt. Amomaxis and Mt. Koronos.

Koronos first appears on written records at about 1200 AD and was one of the 56 municipalities into which Marco Sanudo (1153-1227), the first Venetian Duke of Naxos, divided the island.

The village prospered considerably thanks to the emery mining industry before World War II, when its population numbered about 3,000. Today, it is one of the island's most picturesque villages. Its pretty houses retain intact the traditional architecture and are divided

in seven neighborhoods (Anegyrida, Kastro, Livadaki, Kato Gitonia, Pano Gitonia, Platsa and Provolakia) which are connected with picturesque alleyways and countless flights of stairs.

Almost all neighborhoods have their own square and old water fountain. The central square is called the Platsa by the locals.

The tourism infrastructure includes rooms to let, coffee shops, tavernas, traditional product workshops, an eco-museum (where many events are held) and a Folklore Museum - housed in a traditional guesthouse.

Around Koronos, you can visit the monastery of Panagia Argokilotissa and

the seaside settlement of Lionas –the old port for exporting emery before the cable railway was constructed.

Finally, it is worth visiting Atsipapi, a medieval settlement in northeastern Naxos that dates to the 15th century although the materials in some of the ruined houses suggest it may be much older (8th-9th centuries).

The most important sight of the village is the Church of Agios Issidoros - built before the 11th century, while about 1.5km after Atsipapi, at the Loiri position, is the 9th century Byzantine chapel of Panagia Kera, with a very interesting architectural style and traces of frescoes inside.



## Emery mines

An area of some 250 hectares on the slopes of Mt. Amomaxis, in the northeastern part of Naxos, is dotted with hundreds of small emery (smyrida in Greek) mines which date from the Bronze Age to the present.

The economy of the villages in the area (Smyridochoria) was for long dependent on the operation of the mines and the stories and legends still heard here about the hardships and hazards the miners faced are countless.

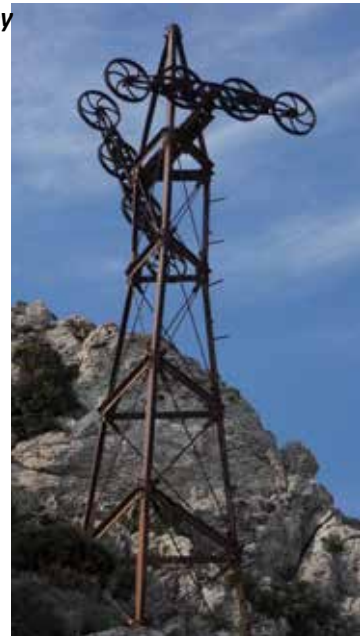
The Smyridochoria are Apiranthos,

Danakos, Keramoti, Skado, Messi but particularly Koronos, whose inhabitants continue to own most allotments in the deposits. About 50 mines, whose labyrinthine galleries reach depths up to 600m, have been in operation in recent years. Their various nicknames include wars or battles (e.g. Korea, Vietnam) and foreign countries (Americana, Abyssinia). The narrow entry points of many of them and their installations are visible along the rural road connecting Koronos with Lionas.



## Emery transportation cable railway

The transportation of emery from the mines to the shipping stations at Moutsouna and Lionas was initially conducted with donkeys over rough trails but this was both energy- and time-consuming. The construction of a cable industrial railway in 1926-29 was the first important infrastructure project to be implemented on Naxos and represented a milestone for the industry. It stretched for 9 kilometers from Stavrolagada to Moutsouna and comprised 72 iron pylons with a height of between five and 43 meters, 170 wagons, two engines and seven observatories. Its operation required between 42 and 68 workers. The cable railway added an impressive dimension to the landscape of the island, giving the entire northeastern coast of Naxos a new, unique look and becoming a source of inspiration for various artists. After the construction of a road in 1982, the transportation of emery is conducted with trucks.



## Koronos olive mills (fabrikes)

Two of the five old olive mills ("fabrikes" in the local dialect) that existed in Koronos village, those of the Boulamatsades family and of the church, in the Livadaki neighborhood and very near the primary school, have been restored and can be visited.

Their features include the threshing floors, the huge stone cylinders that crushed the olives and iron presses.

## Chalki

Heading for the Tragea valley from Naxos Town the visitor is struck by the change in scenery.

The vast blue expanse of the sea, the sandy beaches and the dry Cycladic landscape suddenly give way to a lush valley: age-old olive, plane and oak trees, vines and fruit groves surrounded by towering summits – a landscape reminiscent of mainland Greece and dotted by eight beautiful villages.

Chalki, the head village, is the most alluring of them all.

Tradition has it that its name derives from a family of bronze smiths that were settled here by the Venetian rulers (chalkos=bronze).

Thanks to its position at the center of the island's road network, Chalki thrived and prospered as the commercial hub of the entire Naxos uplands district up until a few decades ago.

This is no longer the case but the



wonderful neoclassical mansions with the large balconies, the adorned roofs and the paved courtyards bear witness to past prosperity. Its noteworthy

sights - on a par with the village as a whole - include the Church of Panagia Protothronos, the imposing, 17th century Barozzi Tower and the pretty



mansion housing the historic Vallindras distillery, which has pioneered the renowned citron liqueur. New facilities have made the place even

more attractive for visitors in recent years, including an art gallery, excellent restaurants and inviting snack bar – cafes at the square



### **Barozzi-Gratsia Tower**

Behind the Church of Panagia Protothronos in Chalki, the bastions of the 17th century Barozzi-Gratsia Tower make an impressive sight. The monument comes in three levels, with strong walls, iron-barred windows, heavy wooden gates, wooden drawbridge, murder hole to thwart attackers with scalding water and coats of arms that indicate its successive owners and repairs. The tower belonged to the Barozzi family in 1690. It was

subsequently acquired by Domna Mariora Mavrogeni who, in turn, sold it to Aga ("Lord") Georgakis Fragopoulos together with the olive mill and the surrounding area. Fragopoulos eventually sold it to G. Gratsia. The monument is associated with many legends and folktales about beautiful girls of the nobility, great love stories and thrilling adventures. An attempt at restoration a few years ago did not materialize.



### **Akadimi**

With small houses close to each other and replete with colorful gardens, the village of Akadimi, in the heart of the Tragea valley, is as pretty as a picture postcard. The landmark of the village is the imposing tower house of Markopolitis –one of few on Naxos that was not built by the Venetian conquerors. Other sights worth a mention are the watermills of Barozzi and Goufas, a traditional olive mill and the Byzantine Church of Theotokos (Virgin Mary) –the patron saint of the village- which celebrates on November 21.



### **Markopolitis (Papadakis) Tower**

With strong defensive walls and a drawbridge, the Markopolitis Tower, at the entrance to the village of Akadimi, holds a special place in Naxos history. Built in the late 18th century as a palace for the honored Politis family, it served as a bastion of the revolts against Frankish feudal lords in the Tragea valley.

A leading figure in the revolts was Markos Politis, or Markopolitis, who was ultimately exiled to Lesvos and was hanged by the Turks in 1802.

The tower has three levels, with an excellent internal architecture and a rich décor.

The mixed Greek-Latin inscription "1776 ΔΙΕΞΟΔΟΥ ΜΑΡΚΟΣ ΠΟΛΙΤΗΣ" is seen on the lintel of the entrance to the second level, below the coat of arms.

The monument has belonged to the Papadakis family since 1888.



### **Kerami**

Another pretty village in the valley, about halfway on the road connecting Chalki and Filoti, and with wonderful gardens and cool courtyards, has experienced a revival in recent years, with a rough doubling in the number of houses.

The heart of the village beats around the parish church of Agios Taxiarchis where many attractive cafes and tavernas are found.

### **Markopolitis (Kalavros) Tower**

Beside the tower in Akadimi, Markos Politis, or Markopolitis, was also said to be the owner of the tower in the center of the village of Kerami. This was built in the second half of the 18th century, featuring three levels.

The last level was unfinished and roofless and was completed by the Kalavros family, who own it today.



## Monitsia

Another picturesque village, with flowered courtyards and set amidst the olive groves and the lush vegetation of the Tragea valley. It used to be a potters' village and Capuchin friars once founded the first school on Naxos outside main town Chora. Monitsia, where an increasing number of people, including foreigners, are choosing to build their holiday homes, is surrounded by a number of quaint Byzantine churches, such as the impressive basilica without a dome of Ai Sideros –in the upper neighborhood of Rachi. The churches of Panagia Rachidiotissa, Agios Antonios and Ai Nikolas are at short distances outside the village. Inside the village is the restored church of Agios Vassilios.

## Tsikalarío and Chimarros

These are the two hamlets that form the settlement of Zoodochos Pigj in the Tragea valley. they are closely linked with Apano Kastro - an important fortified position from antiquity to Venetian times. Located to the west of the village and reached via a footpath from Tsikalarío, it is one of Naxos's most impressive

monuments. The remnants of a huge wall built with large rectangular blocks evidently belong to the Classical era, while the fort seen today was built by the Venetians in the mid-13th century and named Apano (Upper) in order to distinguish it from Chora's Kato (Lower) Kastro.



## Kaloxylós

One of Tragea valley's most picturesque villages, next to Chalki. Situated in an area lush with olive, plane and oak trees, it is well-known for its pretty houses and especially for the rare flowers in their courtyards.

The entry point to the village is dominated by the big church of Agia Triada (Holy Trinity), featuring a carved marble iconostasis and Byzantine icons. Nearby is a disused olive mill that has been renovated and can be visited.

The verdant hills around the village, dotted with chapels –notably Panagia Damniotissa and Agios Ioannis Theologos—are ideal for walks and trekking.



## Ioannis Sakelliadis olive mill

*Ioannis Sakelliadis's olive mill is housed in the Kokkos tower house in Kaloxylós, which, according to an official record, was built before 1664.*

*A manual olive mill was first operated on the ground floor in 1880.*

*The facility was electrified in 1928, thanks to a diesel-fueled generator that supplied the entire Tragea valley, but ceased operating in 1987.*

*It is now open to the public.*



## Damarionas

Situated on the southern side of the olive groves in the Tragea basin, the picturesque village of Damarionas, with its mansions, whitewashed houses and alleyways, churches in the authentic Cycladic style and pretty squares, has been officially designated as a traditional settlement. The locale is graced by traditional cobblestone paving and balconies laden with plant pots and

protruding flowers. Standout features are the mansions of Promponas, Vassilikoula and Bakalena, Potirou square with the huge old plane tree, and the old churches of Christ, in Patelos square, and of Ai Giorgis. The permanent population now is around 500 and the basic sources of income are farming and animal rearing. A modern olive mill is operated in the



village. A big fete is held on August 6, when the Church of Christ celebrates the Transfiguration of the Savior. The greater area around Damarionas is dotted with many very old and picturesque

chapels, as the notable Kaloritza - built in a cave on the western side of Mt. Ai Lias, and more in the Baouzis area. Damarionas's Androniki cultural center hosts various events and exhibitions.

## Apaliros Castle



*Towering on a steep hill over a fertile plain between Sagri and Agiassos, this important Byzantine castle offers visitors fabulous views of the island's entire southwestern coastline.*

*According to recent research, the castle was not only a defensive bastion against pirate raids but also, especially during several centuries during the Byzantine empire, the center of a lively city with a relatively large population.*

*Though no record detailing the city's founding exists, abundant ceramic remains and coins found here suggest it*

*was established before the 7th century. It is certain, however, that Apaliros was abandoned in the 13th century when the island was invaded by the Venetians of Marco Sanudo, in the years following the Fourth Crusade.*

*Apaliros stands as an excellent example of early Byzantine town planning.*

*The remains of fortification walls, water tanks, storage facilities, ovens, churches, roads, an olive press and scattered evidence of some 250 homes are seen in and around the castle today.*

## Damalas

Damalas, a small village near Damarionas spread in amphitheatric fashion at the foot of a hill, is visible from many other locations on the island and offers fantastic views.

Presently inhabitants are few but with a keen of hospitality and preserving their culture and traditions.

A restored olive mill is located at the lower part of the village's main square and includes all the old equipment and accessories, which are in a very good

condition.

Besides the annual event when olive oil is extracted in the autumn, the mill also offers presentations of the process to schools and other groups

The village, in common with the entire Tragea valley, also has a strong tradition in pottery due to the clayey soil in the area. The parish church of Agia Irini, built around 1800, features an elaborate marble altar screen and a singular marble font.



## Kaloritza cave - monastery

The fascinating cave of the Nativity and the remains of the early Byzantine monastery of Kaloritza are found above Timios Stavros monastery, on the slope of Mt. Prophitis Ilias.

The natural cave, which measures approximately 30m in length and 10m in width, was likely converted into a church in the 4th century because, according to tradition, an icon of the Nativity of Christ was found by a shepherd inside it. Above the cave are the remains of the

monastery, which is dated between the 11th and 13th century. The church inside the cave features the remains of a central arch, a bishop's throne, frescoes of the pre-iconoclastic and post-iconoclastic periods, as well as one depicting the Nativity, created in 1619.

Outside the cave are found the remains of monastic cells, a bakery and an atrium with suspended arches which date to the post-Byzantine era.

## Vourvouria

Vourvouria is a small, picturesque village in central Naxos, situated in a fertile area between two streams.

According to one version, the name Vourvouria is derived from the word vourla - the reeds that grow in abundance by the streams.

Besides the stone-built mansions with the large balconies and the arched courtyards, the sights of the village include the old churches of Agios Konstantinos (1311), Agja Paraskevi (1397), Agios Georgios

(1762) and Agios Prokopios, founded around 1809.

The village also features the ruins of three old olive mills, while at a short distance outside it are the old outdoor laundries next to a well.

The parish church of Agios Prokopios celebrates on July 8 and, according to custom, a litany of the icons takes place around the alleyways under the sound of the bells.



## Melanes



The community of Melanes is considered one of Naxos's most ancient settlements, built in amphitheatric fashion on the slope of a hill overlooking the same-name fertile valley.

According to the mythological tradition, the name of the village (which refers to the black color) is derived from the locals' mourning the mutual killing of

the two semi-god giant brothers Otos and Ephialtes, sons of Apollo, who were thus punished by the chief god, Zeus, for displaying arrogance. According to another, more rational version, the name is due to the valley's dark soil.

The settlement now numbers about 600 permanent residents who are mostly occupied with farming but are also





reputed as skilled masons.

The church of the village is dedicated to Agii Apostoli and celebrates annually on June 29, when a big feast, lasting three days, starts, featuring live traditional music, dancing, local treats and wine.

The greater Melanes area hosts some of the island's most important antiquities.

The entry point of the ancient Naxos aqueduct, which supplied the city with water from the area, and the ancient

sanctuary of the water springs have been found at the position of Flerio.

Also, the giant, abandoned statue of Kouros, a work of the 6th century BC, has been found at the ancient marble quarry - a short distance outside the village.

Other sights worth seeing are the summer resort of the Jesuits at Kalamitsia and the olive mill at Demari.

*The village has traditional cafes and tavernas reputed for their local delicacies.*



### Agios Thalleleos

Agios Thalleleos is one of the four settlements comprising the community of Melanes, in western Naxos.

Its small houses, built in compact fashion next to each other, are spread out at the foot of a low hill overlooking a beautiful valley with groves and vegetable gardens. Agios Thalleleos, a 3rd century Christian martyr, is the village's patron saint and

the church - part of an old monastery - celebrates on May 20, when a big fete is held.

The most important sight in the settlement is the section of the ancient Naxos aqueduct that was discovered at the eastern end of the village. It dates to the late Roman phase of the project and has been restored.



### Kourounochori

Kourounochori is one of four beautiful villages in the Melanes valley. Built on the lush slope of a hill, it is well-protected from northerly winds and noted for its mild climate throughout the year.

Flowers fill courtyards and gardens adorn the windows of the pretty one- or two-storey houses - this is why Kourounochori is also frequently referred to as "flower village".

The mansions dotting Kourounochori (Mavrogenis, Demari, Galanos, Kokkos) and the engraved inscription commemorating the visit of King Othon in the 1830's provide reminders that it has long been a popular destination for noted personalities and still impart an air

of nobility.

The Fragopoulos Tower, one of the oldest on the island, and the museum housed in the old primary school host the very interesting finds from the ancient Naxos aqueduct.

Kourounochori today numbers some 100 inhabitants, noted for their hospitality. The two restaurant/cafes offer tasty dishes prepared with local products.

The Church of the Savior, in the center of the village, celebrates annually on August 6. After mass, the priest blesses grapes in prayer for a good crop and then shares them out to the flock.

A big feast follows, with live music, dancing, local delicacies and wine.

### Fragopoulos - Della Rocca Tower

*One of the island's oldest fortified towers, dating back to the 14th century, is found in Kourounochori. The three-storey building is surrounded by courtyard and features bastions, murder-holes for thwarting attackers with scalding water, and cages.*

*A marble table is found on the veranda, bearing the inscription "1727 D.R.SCNOSPA" - a remnant from past Venetian owners of the tower, the Sommaripa family. It was later acquired by a man named Fragopoulos and now belongs to the Della Rocca family. Legend has it that one of its early owners, the Duke of Naxos Niccolo III dalle Carceri, was murdered in the area in 1383 by Francesco Crispo, who succeeded him.*



## The Jesuit summer resort at Kalamitsia



*An impressive complex that was built as the summer resort of Jesuit monks in the 17th century is seen at Kalamitsia, between the settlements of Melanes and Potamia.*

*Construction of the complex was funded by the family of the head of the Jesuit order himself, Robert Saulger.*

*Being a distinct mixture of western and local architecture, it includes many*

*rooms, a chapel, auxiliary buildings such as dovecote, stable and olive mill, and a huge garden featuring terraces, bearing walls, cisterns and flights of stairs.*

*Due to the luxury that characterized it, it was dubbed as "the Jesuit palace" and became the object of both admiration and criticism in its heyday, encountered in many reports of travelers and Papal emissaries.*



## Myli

A wonderful landscape and a sense of a pristine natural environment enchant the visitor to Myli, a small village situated in western Naxos's lush Melanes valley. Its name is derived from the many old watermills - some of which still feature the funnels that supplied the water which powered the millstones.

The village comprises three small settlements - Kato (Lower), Messei (Middle) and Pano (Upper) Myli.

Kato Myli, the oldest of the three settlements, has low, two-room houses with courtyards which are mostly abandoned. A cluster of five or six, two-storey houses built in the 1930's and a whitewashed paved alley is all that remains of Messei Myli, while in Pano Myli, where most of the few inhabitants live now, efforts are being made to restore several houses in their traditional form. The watermills dot the wonderful trail which connects the three settlements, going through lush vegetable gardens and cool plane trees. The few welcoming inhabitants add to a special sense of joy and a time backdrop.



## Komiaki

Komiaki is the northernmost village of Naxos, situated on the ridge of Mt. Koronos.

Surrounded by orchards and grapevines, it overlooks the Icarian Sea, although it is not visible from the coastal areas of Naxos.

The area was inhabited in prehistoric times, as indicated by the existence of a Mycenaean domed tomb and by its name which is derived from the ancient settlement of Komi.

The sights include the post-Byzantine Church of Theoskepasti, in the center of the settlement, and, at a short distance from the village, the restored buildings of the watermill, the olive mill and the traditional wine press that can be visited. Another important sight is the monastery of Agia, situated at an idyllic location.

A water spring in its courtyard is surrounded by age-old plane trees. One can also visit the monastery of Phaneromeni, in the shape of a Venetian tower, which is built on a hill and has commanding views of Naxos's northwestern coastline. It is dedicated to the Dormition of the Virgin and celebrates on August 15, with religious services and food offerings lasting three days.

A Frankish tower can be seen at a steep,

strategic point between Komiaki and the abandoned village of Skeponi. The remains of another Frankish tower are found at Kana position.

The village has coffee-shops and tavernas serving local dishes and the highly-rated Komiaki wine.

The custom of the Swing (Kounia), where the local boys set up the swings for the girls and recite improvised poems to them, is held on Easter Monday.



## Apollonas

Apollonas, the port of the settlement of Komiaki on Naxos's northeastern coast, has been inhabited since antiquity, mainly on account of the marble quarry that extends to the north and west. It was also the port from which Naxos marble was exported throughout the operation of the ancient quarry.

The huge ancient marble statue (Kouros) of Apollo lies in supine position just a few meters outside the entry point to the village, while remnants of the ancient port have been found at Marmara position.

Another sight in the area is the ruins of the prehistoric fort of Kalogeros, towering on a hilltop above the inlet.

Apollonas today is the most touristically developed settlement of northern Naxos.

Featuring picturesque white houses spreading behind an attractive sandy beach, rooms to let, hotels, tavernas and cafes, it is suitable for relaxing breaks and as a base for exploring the surrounding area which is replete with unique sights.

Agios Ioannis is the patron saint of the settlement and celebrates on August 29. Vespers on the eve are followed by a litany procession of the icon and

a traditional feast in the local tavernas. The village also holds the annual Fisherman's Fete on June 28, when the blessing of the waters and boats is followed by traditional feasting.



# Beaches



*Many Cycladic islands are renowned for their beaches but Naxos is the only one that can boast an endless coastline comprising a string of beaches of incredible beauty: superb turquoise waters and golden sands; beaches unspoiled or organized; beaches to discover, for water sports or family recreation; beaches next to ancient monuments, near important wetlands, medieval forts or Byzantine churches; beaches only steps away from the main town, Chora, and beaches in areas of exceptional natural beauty, untouched by civilization or tourism. Naxos has something for everyone – this is what makes it one of the most popular Aegean islands.*

Below is a presentation of the best-known beaches, beginning from Chora and according to geographical orientation. However, there are dozens more waiting to be discovered.



## From Chora heading South:



### Agios Georgios

A favorite of the locals, as it is located next to Chora and is suitable for a swim without having to leave town. It has shallow waters, adversely affected only by strong northerly summer winds. Organized with sun umbrellas and sunbeds, especially by the hotels, taverns, and cafes. The beach's southern end is dominated by windsurfers, as it is considered to be one of the island's spots for surfing.



### Agios Prokopios

Located 5km from Chora and 2km long, Agios Prokopios is one of the best beaches in the Mediterranean, highly graded every year for the transparency and cleanliness of its waters, the beauty of the landscape and the comfort it offers to visitors.

It has been named after the picturesque chapel at the beginning of the beach.

Endowed with coarse sand and crystal-clear waters, Agios Prokopios is one of Naxos's best organized beaches and attracts large numbers of holidaymakers.

Most tourism-related shops such as mini markets, taverns, cafés, car and motorbike rental agencies, are located at the beach's eastern flank.



### Agia Anna

Among the most famous beaches on the island, Agia Anna is a favorite among Greek and foreign tourists - an endless stretch of golden sand and turquoise crystal-clear waters. It is organized for the best part, with sun umbrellas and sunbeds, and many tavernas and beach bars in the posterior part.



## Plaka

No longer a favorite of the hippies as in the 1960's and 1970's, Plaka beach today remains one of the most attractive and popular on Naxos.

An endless stretch of golden sand with crystal-clear waters and views of Glaronissia and Paros, Plaka is a continuation of Agia Anna beach.

Its "trademark" sand dunes in the posterior part appear even more exotic with the presence of sea lilies after

August.

Plaka is an organized beach with umbrellas and sun beds - but also natural shade from junipers near the water - and a heaven for sea sport fans.

There are shops for renting out equipment and training for all levels of windsurfing, wakeboarding, kneeboarding and sailing. It is lined with cafes, beach bars and tavernas catering for all tastes.



## Orkos

Comprising a series of small inlets between Plaka and Mikri Vigla, Orkos is located on Naxos's southwestern side. Shady, isolated, covered with coarse sand along the beach areas and offering crystal-clear blue waters, Orkos truly is an ideal place for individuals seeking peace and isolation.



## Mikri Vigla

Mikri Vigla was used as an observation point during Frankish rule, designed to provide advance warning against pirates approaching the island.

These days it rates as one of the most gorgeous beaches on the island. A rock divides the beach into two parts, nicknamed "Partheno" on the north side and "Limanaki" on the south side. This spot is ideal for windsurfing and is considered the island's best location for kitesurfing as the bay is sheltered and winds are suitable for flights over Naxos's beaches.



## Kastraki

Kastraki is a small cove located behind the Mikri Vigla peninsula and next to Glyfada beach. Its fine white sand and tranquil waters attract numerous visitors. Sunbeds and umbrellas are available here.



## Glyfada

Glyfada is an enormous sandy beach on the southwestern coast of Naxos. The landscape here features sand dunes and shady juniper trees at many points. Glyfada is a great place for swimming, fishing, sea sports, as well as walking from end to end. Owing to the extensive size of this beach, it never fills, not even during the busiest month of August, despite attracting many visitors.



## Alyko

The small inlets located below the juniper tree forest at Alyko peninsula offer visitors gorgeous sandy beaches with turquoise waters. Surrounded by sand dunes with junipers, these inlets offer a view of southern Naxos's ridges. They are quiet, exotic, and suitable for all.



## Pyrgaki

Pyrgaki is an attractive, white-sand beach on the southern coast of the island, near the Alyko juniper forest and very quiet. It offers views of the nearby islands of Iraklia and of Ios further beyond. Ideal for a chill-out as it is never crowded.



## Agiasos

Agiasos beach offers an enticing 750-meter stretch of fine sand and crystal-clear, shallow waters on the southwestern coast of Naxos. It is one of the island's most unspoiled beaches.

To the side, the visitor may explore small

inlets with caves suitable for spear-gun fishing, while a small wetland at one end hosts many bird species.

A number of picturesque fish tavernas offer excellent food, while those looking for quiet holidays will find rooms to rent in the summer hamlet behind the beach.



## From Chora heading North:



## Grotta

Grotta, Chora's northern beach, has been named after the Italian word for "cave". The small cove has pebbles and some sand, and offers a unique view of Temple of Apollo on the left and of the new neighborhood of Grotta on the hill to the right. The Grotta area was the location of Naxos's Mycenaean city, one of the most important in the Aegean region. Part of the ancient constructions are submerged in the sea.





## Ammitis

This is the beach of the village of Eggaras, on the island's northwestern coast. It has a long, sandy stretch, very clean waters and offers wonderful sunsets to watch. It is relatively exposed to northerly winds, so it is appreciated by windsurfers, as well as by nature lovers due to the wetland at the estuary of the stream.



## Chilia Vryssi

Chilia Vryssi is an attractive beach on the northwestern coast of Naxos. Sheltered from almost all kind of winds, with fine pebbles and shallow clear waters, it is ideal for everyone.



## Mikra

Sandy, picturesque and well protected from windy weather, Mikra caters to all tastes, especially individuals preferring tranquility and relaxation. It is ideal for families with small children, couples, nature lovers, fishing enthusiasts.

## Kamos

A sheltered beach on the island's northwestern coast, Kampos is recommended for swimming and fishing. An adjacent cove, Agios Mamas –known for an annual traditional celebration staged by the church at the location every September 1- is a popular mooring spot for small fishing boats. An ideal beach for families with small children, couples, nature lovers and fishing enthusiasts.



## Abram

The Abram cove is on Naxos's northwestern coast, between Chora and Apollonas. It is a small pebbly beach in an idyllic location with trees, shrubs and water sources. Private houses dot the green milieu.



## Agii Theodori

Agii Theodori bay, named after the local chapel, is a few kilometers before the tower of Agia and features a long beach with pebbles and sand.

Crystal-clear waters and various rock formations add to the idyllic scenery.

The spot offers views to Paros and Mykonos in the distance and is ideal for those looking for a more isolated spot to chill out.



## From the North to the Eastern coast:



### Apollonas

Apollonas, a lovely beach accompanying the settlement of the same name, is located on Naxos's northeastern coast. This beach is sandy and its waters pure turquoise. Well protected from southerly winds, it is suitable for all tastes. Several tavernas and small shops operate by the beach. The spot's small pier caters mostly to fishing boats and small leisure boats. It is easily accessed via a tarmac road.



### Lionas

This is the attractive beach at the picturesque Lionas cove, on the island's northeastern coast. Wildly beautiful, with white pebbles and crystal-clear waters, it is ideal for those seeking a chill-out.

The location has rooms to let and good fish tavernas. A traditional boatbuilding and repair yard is at one end of the beach.



## From the Eastern coast going South:



### Azalas

Located 11km from Apiranthos on Naxos's northeastern side, next to Moutsouna bay, this beach is accessed via a dirt track on the left-hand side of the road shortly before you come to Moutsouna village.

It is marked by reddish-colored rocks at one end; thin and coarse pebbles on the beach, sand inside. Several tamarisk trees offer shade.

During the summer months, public transport runs daily to Moutsouna village, with a stop at the intersection, from where you may walk to the beach.



## Moutsouna

Moutsouna bay hosts two lovely beaches with thin sand and transparent, shallow waters, ideal for families with small children. The first, Ai Giannis, extends below Moutsouna's picturesque tavernas, while the second, Tigani, is a little farther to the south.



## Klidos

Klidos is a complex of sandy beaches with crystal-clear waters. It is located next to the settlement of the same name, on the island's southeastern coast. Quiet and isolated, the beaches at Klidos are perfect for tranquility and relaxation.



## Panermos

Sheltered by the gulf at the island's southeastern coast, Panermos harbor is almost always windless. It is equipped with a small pier and features a lovely sandy beach with immaculately clean waters. A small canteen offering snacks and refreshments operates next to the beach during the summer months. The hill above the beach features the remains of the prehistoric acropolis (fortified citadel) of Amygdalies, considered to be the most ancient inhabited spot in the Apiranthos area. The acropolis, which offers stunning views of Koufonissia islands, is reached via a signposted track beginning at the beach.



## Ligardia

Ligardia, a small pebble-covered beach with deep waters, lies next to the settlement of the same name, on the island's eastern coast. This spot is ideal for free-diving and spear gun fishing. Access is via the coastal road starting at Moutsouna and Ligardia is the first settlement on the way.

## Psili Ammos

A spellbinding beach on the island's southeastern coast, Psili Ammos is spread before a juniper tree forest and offers a view of neighboring Koufonissia. The beach here is covered with fine sand and its waters are crystal-clear and shallow. Ideal for tranquility and relaxation. Access is via the coastal road starting at Moutsouna.

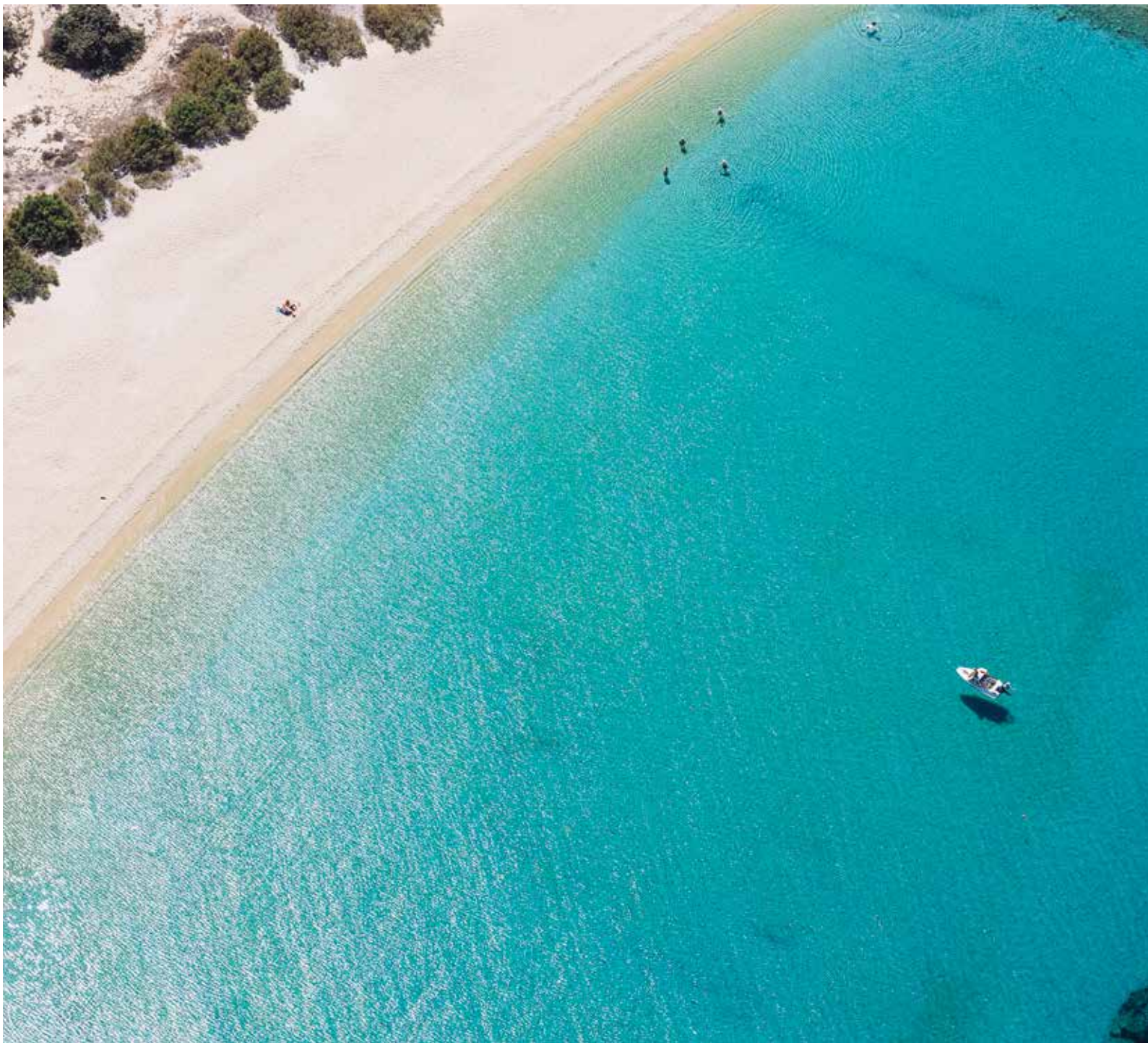


## Kalantos

This sheltered, beautiful beach at the edge of the bay with the same name, at Naxos's southernmost point, has an alluring stretch of sand and crystal-clear, shallow waters. A rich wetland has developed at the stream's end, hosting numerous birds amongst other species.

A marina/fishing pier in the bay offers protection from the annual northerly summer breezes (*meltemia*) and southerly winds.





# Walking trails of cultural interest

*Naxos footpaths, which constituted the main means of access and transportation from one village to another, and from the settlements to the fields and other farming areas from antiquity to the late 1960's, measure hundreds of kilometers in total length.*

*Of these walking trails and rural tracks, we propose seven specific routes, which have also been set on map. By exploring this network of trails of cultural interest - which will be continuously updated and extended - trekkers will have the opportunity to admire an environment of particular natural beauty and, at the same time, acquaint themselves with the island's history and culture.*

*The proposed routes offer direct access to ancient monuments, medieval towers, traditional farmsteads, monasteries, churches and chapels but also to water founts and mills and other important factors and aspects of the life of the people of Naxos.*



## Trail 1

*Aperathou - Agios Ioannis Theologos - Agia Kyriaki - Emery mines*



### Points of interest:

- Byzantine Church of Agios Ioannis Theologos (13th c.)
- Kamilaris bridge
- Byzantine Church of Agia Kyriaki (9th c.)
- Emery mine installations at Kakoryakas

*Byzantine Church of Agia Kyriaki*



This is the old mule trail treaded by workers from Apiranthos to the emery mines. Stone paved for the best part, it crosses a lush and varied landscape.

The mountainous village of Apiranthos, reputed for its traditional architectural profile and rich folk culture, is the starting point. The initial, verdant stretch of the trail, is dominated by oak, almond, fig, wild pear and curly maple trees, as well as kermes oaks, and follows a direction parallel to

the Karakogourna gully - replete with oleanders, wickers and bramble bush.

The Church of Agios Ioannis Theologos - the first stop after a small detour at the Afiklis area - is a rare example of an Asia Minor-type Byzantine basilica, built in the 13th c. on the site of an older church.

About halfway along the route, the landscape becomes rugged and the traditional stone work acquires a character of outdoor folk architecture, notably in the impressive bridge of Kamilaris.

Next stop is Agia Kyriaki in the Kalloni area - a church whose non-pictorial décor confirms that it dates to the 9th century period of Iconoclasm, when icons were hotly contested.

The trail then follows a smooth downhill to the emery mines of Kakoryakas, where interest centers on the old installations of the cable railway for transporting the ore, and the mining galleries.

The same footpath continues down to the coast, to Azalas beach.

Starting at the eastern approach to Filoti, Naxos's largest, animal farming village in the center of the island, the trail follows an uphill route from the chapel of Irini on a mountain slope with rich tree vegetation and vineyards. It soon reaches the nodal point of Agia Marina, at the foot of Zas, the highest

mountain in the Cycladic group of islands and named after Zeus, the Father of the Gods. Further uphill is the Levgasia spring and the ancient inscription, carved in the rock, ΟΡΟΣ ΔΙΟΣ ΜΗΛΩΣΙΟΥ, meaning "Mount of Zeus, Protector of the Sheep". The mountain holds great ornithological interest and hosts rare, endemic flora

Barozzi Tower



species.

The ascent to the summit (1,003m) offers unique views of the Aegean Sea and the other Cycladic islands.

From the summit, the trail initially follows a northerly direction and then turns west, with a steep descent. On the approach to Zas Cave, it becomes rugged and indiscernible. The cave, where - according to mythology - Zeus grew up, is of particular historical and speleological interest. Archaeologists believe it was

first inhabited in the Neolithic period.

The descent from the cave shortly leads to the Katafygi spring and then, on a restored, stone-paved footpath, to the Arion fountain - set in an appropriately arranged, idyllic location - a perfect resting stop for trekkers under the cool shade of an age-old plane tree.

The southbound trail to Filoti ends near a half-ruined windmill.

The last stretch back to the village is on the asphalt Filoti-Kalantos road.

Zas summit

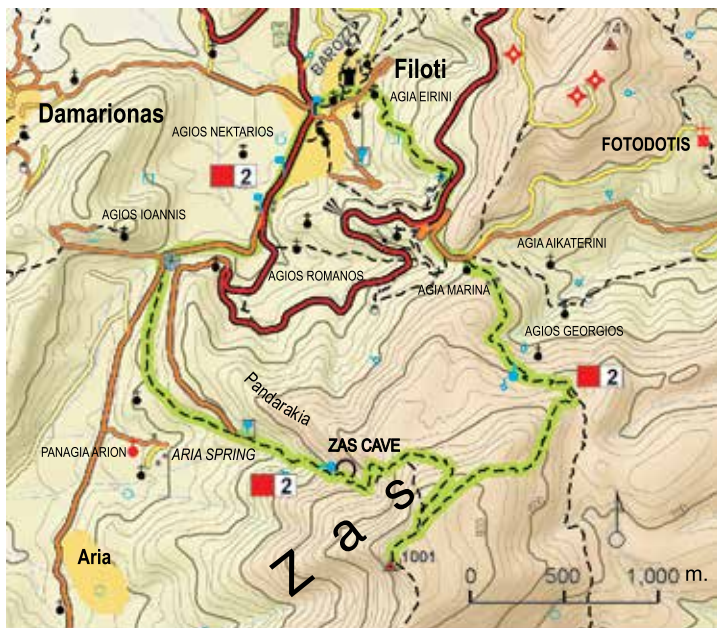


Arion fountain



## Trail 2

Filoti - Agia Marina - Levgasia - Zas summit - Zas Cave - Arion fountain - Filoti (circular route)



### Points of interest:

- Barozzi Tower (7th century, Filoti)
- Ancient mountain inscription
- Zas summit
- Zas Cave
- Arion fountain

### Trail 3

*Danakos - Monastery of Christ Photodotis - Pera Chorio Apiranthos - Agios Ioannis at Finelia - Kerami - Metochi - Tragea*



#### Points of interest:

- Fortified monastery of Christ Photodotis (initial construction: 6th c)
- Traditional windmill (Agios Ioannis at Finelia position)
- Perachoritis torrent dams
- Perachoritis spring/fountain
- Traditional grape vats and springs
- Byzantine Church of Agios Ioannis Prodromos (11th -13th c., Kerami)
- Markopolitis/Kalavros tower house (18th c., Kerami)
- Byzantine Church of Agii Apostoli (10th -11th c., Metochi)
- Byzantine Church of Panagia Protothroni (6th -7th c., Chalki)

Danakos



Fortified monastery of Christ Photodotis



The trail starts at the small village of Danakos, situated in a dell on the Naxos uplands, next to a rich spring at the foot of Mt. Zas. Initially stone-paved and uphill, the trail then crosses a forested area - mainly with oak and maple trees.

First stop is at the fortified monastery of Christ Photodotis, which commands sweeping views of eastern Naxos and the coast.

The church of this excellently restored monument features the remains of an early Christian place of worship - with non-iconographic décor- and 9th century frescoes.

The trail continues in a verdant landscape in the shade. At Karkos position, it forks out: a detour leads to Apiranthos, via Pera Chorio area.

The main route leads on to the cool gully of Perachoritis, where the modern water conservation dams catch the eye. A restored windmill stands where the footpath meets the provincial road, and right opposite is the Church of Agios Ioannis - for which the village of Apiranthos holds its biggest celebration

and feast. The trail continues through the lush Finelia area, following a winding downhill route to the Tragea plateau. This is the old footpath Apiranthos pupils would take to their school in Tragea.

Appropriately sign-posted, the trail joins the gully for a short distance and then becomes a farm road.

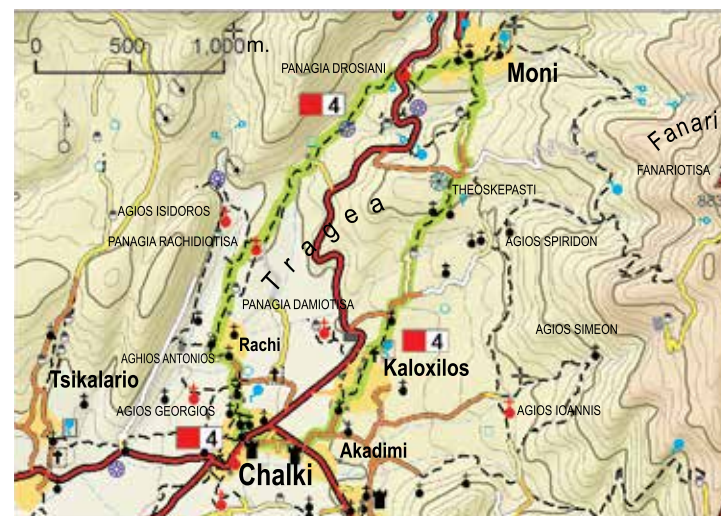
Before reaching the village of Kerami, the route goes past Agios Ioannis Prodromos - a square, domed church with finely maintained frescoes. The imposing Kalavros/Markopolitis tower house is seen at Kerami.

You are in the heart of the Tragea valley now. The trail continues to Metochi, where you see the remains of the tower of the same name and the cruciform domed Church of Agii Apostoli - a 12th-13th century construction of rare architectural style.

The termination point - and cultural highlight- of the walk is the Church of Panagia Protothronos at Chalki, a gem which has dominated Tragea's Byzantine "park" for 15 centuries.

### Trail 4

*Tragea (Chalki) - Agios Georgios Diassoritis - Monitsia - Panagia Rachidiotissa - Moni - Kaloxilos - Akadimi - Chalki (circular route)*



## Points of interest:

- Byzantine Church (11th -13th c.) and spring of Agia Marina (Chalki)
- Byzantine Church of Agios Georgios Diassoritis (10th -11th c., Chalki)
- Byzantine Church of Agios Antonios (13th c., Monitsia)
- Byzantine Church of Agios Nikolaos - Agios Dimitrios (13th c., Monitsia)
- Byzantine Church of Taxiarchis, Rachi (17-18th c., Rachi, Monitsia)
- Byzantine Church of Panagia Rachidotissa (12th -14th c., Rachi)
- Byzantine Church of Agios Issidoros (6th -7th c., Rachi, Monitsia)
- Traditional watermill (Moni area)
- Byzantine Church of Panagia Drossiani (6th c., Moni)
- Kaloxylos spring - fountain
- Byzantine Church of Agios Nikolaos (11th c., Akadimi)
- Byzantine Church of Panagia Akadimiotissa (11th -13th c., Akadimi)
- Markopolitis/Papadakis tower house (18th c., Akadimi)
- Barozzi/Gratsias/Fragopoulos tower house (17th c., Chalki)

Byzantine Church of Agios Georgios Diassoritis



Barozzi/Gratsias/Fragopoulos tower house



This trail follows a circular route around the largest part of the olive grove and the Byzantine "park" of Tragea, taking in the traditional, special-character settlements of Chalki - old commercial and administrative center in the Naxos uplands, Monitsia, Moni, Kaloxylos and Akadimi. It may be divided in two alternative walks, starting at Chalki and terminating at Moni, or vice-versa.

- The first, following a northwesterly direction from the exit of the rare Neoclassical formation of Chalki, takes successively in the churches of Agia Marina

(single-aisled, cruciform and incorporating ancient materials), Agios Georgios Diassoritis (with a small detour, featuring a host of frescoes), Agios Antonios and Agios Nikolaos/Agios Dimitrios at Monitsia, the early Byzantine, triple-aisled basilicas of Taxiarchis and Agios Issidoros (reached via short detouring footpaths), and Panagia Rachidotissa (domed cruciform).

The trail continues in a direction parallel to the gully and then climbs on an oak-forested landscape. An impressive watermill stands where the footpath meets the gully.

The ascent continues on a stone-paved

path leading to Panagia Drossiani. The church with the triple-alcoved, conical dome and the three adjoining chapels, adorned with frescoes in many layers dating between the 7th and the 14th centuries, is considered, along with Chalki's Panagia Protothronos, the most important in the entire Cycladic region.

The trail terminates at Moni, a farming, olive producing village which also has a notable tradition in weaving.

- The second trail starts in an easterly direction and then turns northeast. After going past the historic Barozzi/Gratsias/Fragopoulos tower house at Chalki, it

heads to Akadimi, where it meets three successive monuments: the Markopolitis/Papadakis tower house, the cruciform, domed Church of Panagia Akadimiotissa (via a short detour) and Agios Nikolaos, which features a marble iconostasis. It continues on an asphalted road to Kaloxylos. A stone-built bridge and fountain can be seen at the end of the picturesque village which is set among the olive groves and the orchards.

Ascending through a lush patch with oak, kermes oak and maple trees, and past a folk wood sculpture workshop and a traditional tavern, the trail ends at the square of the village of Moni.

Markopolitis/Papadakis tower house



## Trail 5

Tragea (Chalki) - Tsikalario - Apano Kastro - Agios Andreas - Ano Potamia





## Points of interest:

- *Byzantine church of Agios Stefanos (12th- 13th c., Tsikalario)*
- *Geometric era necropolis*
- *Medieval fortification of Apano Kastro*
- *Byzantine church of Agios Andreas, (13th- 14th c.)*

Apano Kastro



The trail starts at Chalki and crosses the valley of Tragea in a westerly direction. As you enter the settlement of Tsikalario, you come to a potable water fountain and the cruciform, domed church of Agios Stefanos, featuring 13th c. frescoes.

The landscape changes considerably after Tsikalario, being dominated by huge disintegrating rocks of magmatite which constitute one of the most ancient geological formations in the Cycladic region. Signposting leads to a Geometric era cemetery (9th -8th c. BC), where the remnants of circular tombs of ancient prominent families can be seen.

The route continues to Apano Kastro - an ancient fort on an imposing rock dominating the area. The fort, which was inhabited from the early historical era to the period of Frankish rule, is accessed via

a rough, diversionary footpath.

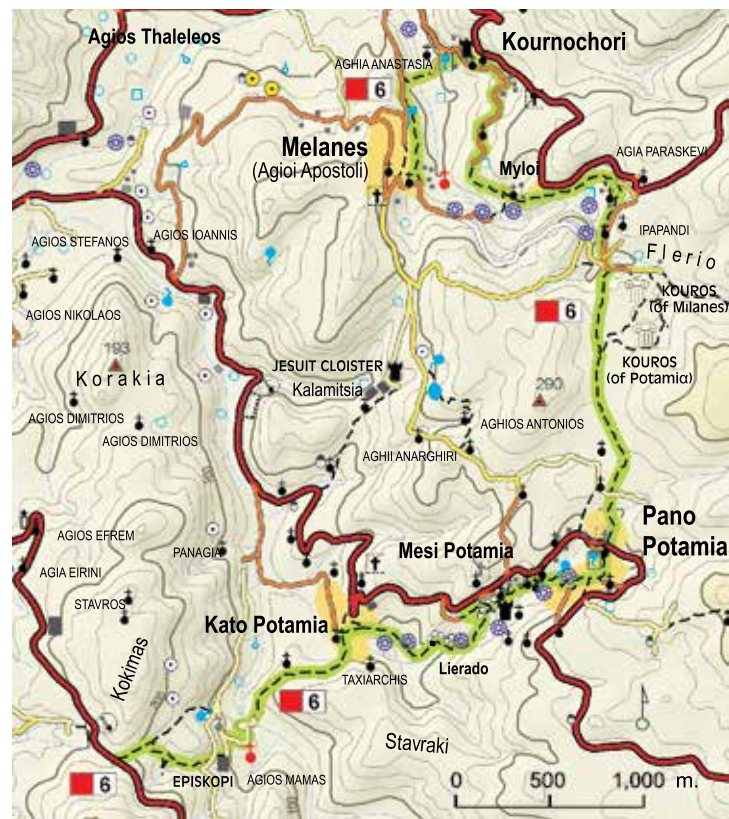
The medieval fortification and the half-ruined Byzantine and post-Byzantine churches of various architectural styles (particularly the roofless Church of Panagia Kastriani) are of special interest. The spot also offers superb views of central and southern Naxos.

The main trail continues in a circular fashion around the rock. The last stop before reaching Ano Potamia is the Church of Agios Andreas, where most of the 14th c. frescoes are still in very good condition.

This last section of the trail is a wide, stone-paved road - a remnant of the medieval way that connected Potamia valley with Apano Kastro and the valley of Tragea. The very last stretch of the walk is

## Trail 6

*Melanes (Agii Apostoli) - [Kourounochori] - Myli - Flerio (sanctuary of the springs, ancient quarries) - Ano Potamia - Messi Potamia - Kato Potamia - Episkopi (Agios Mamas) - Mitropolou*



## Points of interest:

- *Byzantine church of Agios Georgios (12th- 13thc., initial construction 4th -5th c., Melanes valley).*
- *Sommaripa/Fragopoulos tower house (likely 14th c., Kourounochori)*
- *Group of traditional watermills (Myli)*
- *Ancient aqueduct tunnel*
- *Springs sanctuary*
- *Ancient quarries - half-finished archaic Kouros*
- *Ancient fountain (Ano Potamia)*
- *Kokkos tower (17th c.)*
- *Byzantine church of Agios Mamas, (9th c., Episkopi)*

This is a long and widely varied route, crossing the water-plentiful central part of Naxos.

Starting at Agii Apostoli, the largest settlement of the village of Melanes, you have two options: The first will take you to picturesque Kourounochori, situated on the hill slope across the valley, with the imposing Sommaripa/Fragopoulos tower house –one of the oldest on the island.

The second alternative route crosses the lush Melanes valley and will take you past a number of sights, including the Church of Agios Georgios –initially a late Roman structure and one of the first venues of Christian worship identified on the island, with frescoes of various historical periods.

The two alternative routes meet on the narrow walkway connecting Kourounochori and Myli - which you reach after going past some imposing watermills at an idyllic location. The trail follows an elliptical course, below the installations of the ancient aqueduct, which can be visited, and ends at Flerio. There, you can see the archaic sanctuary by the water springs and the half-finished, huge, 6th century BC statues of Kouroi in the area of the quarries.

From Flerio, the trail initially goes uphill on a wide footpath towards Potamia.

Potamia



Along the route you will see threshing floors and lime furnaces in good condition. A marble-paved pathway leads to Ano ("Upper") Potamia, with the water-plentiful ancient fountain. Potamia's three settlements (Upper, Middle and Lower), with their impressively preserved traditional architectural profile, adorn the valley which is dotted with watermills, historic chapels and tower houses, threshing floors and olive presses.

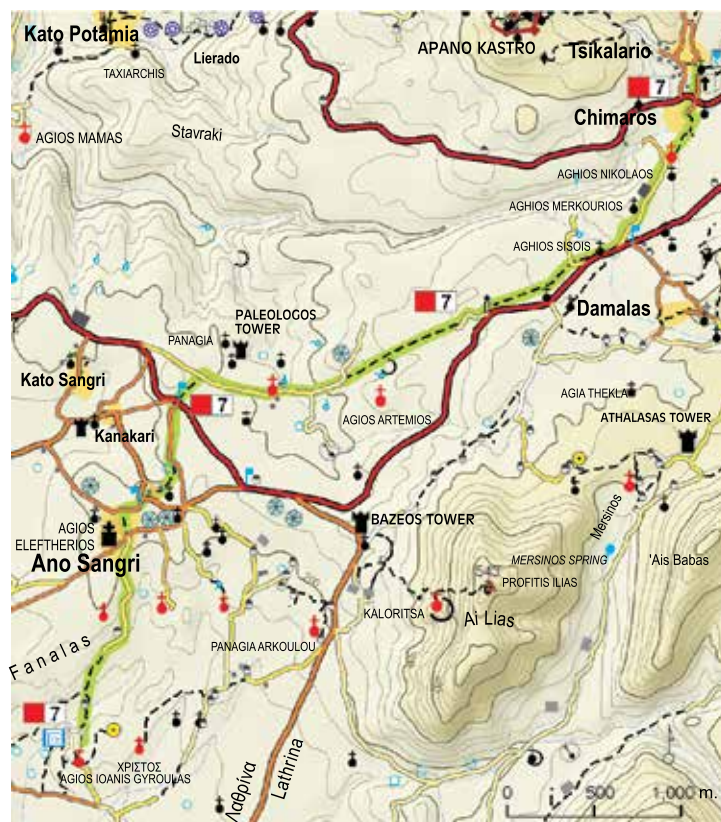
After Ano Potamia the trail forks out, with one leg going slightly uphill to Messi ("Middle") Potamia, crossing the settlement and rejoining the second leg alongside the stream at the shady Platanaki position, with a traditional, stone-built laundry facility.

At Lierado position, a downhill detour will take you to Kokkos tower, rising above the gully. After reaching Kato ("Lower") Potamia, the route takes you through fruit orchards to rejoin the stream. A short distance from the village, at Episkopi position, you will come to the big, historic Church of Agios Mamas, or Theoskepasti –a cruciform, domed structure with some rare frescoes and inscriptions.

The trail ends at Mitropolou position, by the Chora-Sagri road, which may be opted for as a reverse starting point of the route.

## Trail 7

*Tsikalario - Chimarros - Agios Sissois - Agii Anargyri - [Pyrgos Paleologou] - Sagri - [Agios Nikolaos] - Gyroulas (temple of Demeter)*



### Points of interest:

- Byzantine church of Taxiarchis (12th- 13th c., Chimarros)
- Byzantine church of Agios Artemios (9th c., Sagri district)
- Paleologos - Barozzi tower house (17th c., Kato Sangri)
- Byzantine church of Panagia Orfani (11th- 13th c., Kato Sangri)
- Complex of Agii Anargyri - Agia Marina - Agios Andreas (11th c., Kato Sangri)
- Byzantine church of Agios Nikolaos (11th-13th c., Sagri)
- Ancient temple of Demeter (6th c. BC, Gyroulas, Sagri)

The trail starts from Tsikalario, from the plateau where the font of Agios Stefanos is situated, goes past the primary school and heads for the adjacent pretty village of Chimarros via a narrow, cement-paved road. It then follows a southwesterly

direction on a path that crosses the stream and meets the chapel of Taxiarchis –recently restored and with non-iconographic décor. The footpath opens up into a farm road and reaches the attractive chapel of Agios Sissois, next to the provincial road.

The route now follows a southerly/southwesterly direction, initially on a farm road and then on an old, wide, cobblestone path. A short distance to the south is the Church of Agios Artemios - also restored and with non-iconographic décor.

The cobblestone path leads to the complex of Agii Anargyri, with a pretty courtyard in a lush location. Note the rare complex of three Byzantine churches and the frescoes.

The route returns on a farm road, a detour from which on the right will take you to the tower of Paleologos –the largest and one of the best preserved on Naxos. The cruciform, domed Church of Panagia

Orfani is nearby. The farm road leads to a footpath that brings you to the provincial road (bus stop). Cross the road exactly opposite and walk for a few minutes on the tarmac-paved road that diverts to Sagri. Continue on the cobblestone path around the small pine forestry and enter Sagri at the point of the primary school.

The settlement is of special historical and architectural interest. It is also the starting point for the last stretch of the trail, to the ancient sanctuary of Demeter and Kore. A small detour will take you to the Church of Agios Nikolaos, which features excellent frescoes.

The end of the trail at the small hill of Gyroulas is especially rewarding for the visitor. The largely restored archaic temple wields a commanding presence in the midst of a farming area. Research confirms that it was preceded on the same spot by an 8th c. BC farming sanctuary. The remains of a three-aisled, early Christian basilica of the 6th c. are also evident.

*Ancient temple of Demeter*



## Cycling routes

*Due to its considerable size and rich natural environment, which account for a broad variety of scenery and landscape - from the coastal to the upland areas - Naxos is highly suitable for mountain as well as road biking. The range of options is wide, from rural roads to exciting trails and specially designed cycling routes in various parts of the island.*

Below we set out some of these very interesting routes especially designed for cyclists, but don't let us preclude your talent for exploration –there are dozens of others waiting for you to discover.



## Route 1

*Chora - Eggares - Abram - Apollonas - Messi - Skado - Koronos - Apiranthos - Filoti - Chalki - Galanado - Chora.*



*Surface of trail: asphalt*

*Length: 83km*

*Ascent: 2,180m*

*Difficulty level: difficult*

*Suitable for: racing, touring and mountain bikes.*



This impressive route includes a stretch along the almost uninhabited northeastern coast of the island which ends at the fishing village of Apollonas.

It features a precipitous coastline, with small bays, vineyards and herds of sheep and goats. From Apollonas - famed for its traditional gourmet tavernas- starts a long

but not particularly steep uphill track to Koronos, the old, emery miners' village, which is worth a stroll around.

A short uphill stretch from Koronos to the wind power generators reveals a stunning view of the eastern coast and the upland valleys on the way to Apiranthos. The use of marble as a building material marks this beautiful mountainous village. It is worth stopping at the four but interesting museums, as well as at the attractive,

traditional cafes. Staying on a southbound course and after a short uphill, you begin the long downhill on the slope of Mt. Zas. After going through Filoti and crossing the big olive grove, you arrive at Chalki - the island's old capital.

Stay on the main road, leaving Sagri village on your left and, after passing through Galanado, you arrive at Chora. Galanado offers a captivating view of the western coast of the island and Paros.

## Route 2

*Chora - Glinado - Vivlos - Sagri - Damarionas - Filoti - Chalki - Potamia - Chora.*



*Surface of trail: asphalt*

*Length: 45km*

*Ascent: 730m*

*Difficulty level: medium*

*Appropriate for: racing, touring and mountain bikes.*

This picturesque route offers a great first impression of Naxos's varied landscape. Riding off from Chora, the island's main town, take a slight uphill in a southeasterly direction. Once past Glinado, you reach Vivlos, a village offering a superb view towards the island's west coast, as well as

Paros and the fertile plain that stretches south of the main town. At the edge of the village, a sudden yet brief uphill stage and the ensuing slightly downhill stretch leads to two petrol stations, on the left and right sides of the road. Turning left at the intersection towards Sagri and



passing through Apano (Upper) Sagri leads to the main road network. From this spot, follow the road signs to Chalki and two kilometers before the village, turn right to Damarionas, a beautiful village without much tourism activity. Staying on this road leads (on the left hand side) to mountainous Filoti, a village offering a



superb view of the Tragea plain and the island's mountainous massif. Look out for the numerous cafés and taverns along the village's main road for a small break. Taking the main road downhill in a northwestern direction leads to Chalki. At the entry point to the village, take a left turn in the direction of Chora at the main intersection and continue cycling until the edge of the village. From here, take a sharp right turn just before the little bridge,

pass by the village's last houses and follow the rural road towards Tsikalario and then Potamia. This route takes you through the arid, rocky and shaly landscape featuring the remains of the Byzantine Apano (Upper) Kastro at the top of the mountain. Ano Potamia's refreshing gardens, running waters and taverna by the fountain are ideal for a rest. Carrying on along the asphalt road takes you through Paratrechos valley and back to the main town.

### Route 3

*Chora - Aggidia - Kato Potamia - Messi Potamia - Pano Potamia - Kalamitsia - Melanes - Aggidia hill - Chora.*

*Surface of trail: asphalt and dirt*

*Length: 25km*

*Ascent: 350m*

*Difficulty level: medium*

*Appropriate for: mountain bikes.*



Ride off from Chora on the eastbound road to Aggidia. After a short uphill stretch, you enter Paratrechos valley and head for Potamia. Go past a concrete cement production plant and, at the somewhat indiscernible fork towards Agios Mamas, near the waste collection bins, take the downhill on the right in Paratrechos ravine. At least one kilometer on, you arrive at the stream.

Turn left at the cement-paved, slightly uphill road and proceed along and old stone wall.

Turn right at the next crossroads for Kato Potamia. Pass through the village in an easterly direction and follow the old trail - initially uphill and then downhill- to the bank of the stream below Messi Potamia.

Staying in the ravine amid the lush vegetation, you come to some stairs and soon reach the old watermill of Ano Potamia.

After a short uphill, go through the village to the small central square and then downhill to the taverna. Its enchanting garden and the



excellent quality water from the spring next to it provide a perfect excuse for a break.

Stay on the asphalt road from the parking area in a northwesterly direction to Messi Potamia. A small, cement-paved road from there leads to Melanes.

The route is variedly uphill and downhill. After passing the highest point, go downhill on the left towards the haunted ruin of the Jesuit monastery at Kalamitsia.

Return on the same dirt road in a northerly direction and as soon as you are past the mountain pass the view of the Melanes valley

opens up in front of you. Staying northbound, ride through the narrow alleys of the upper neighborhood of the village, then downhill to the crossroads at the old olive mill and turn left on the main road in the direction of Agios Thalleleos and Chora.

At least 1km on, take a right turn on a cement-paved uphill in a northwesterly direction and you soon have the view of the Eggares valley and the northern coast. Stay westbound on the initially uphill and winding route to Aggidia. From there, the country road leading to Chora is on the right.

## Route 4

*Chora (main town) - Kandili - Ypsiloteras monastery - Ammitis bay - Eggares - around Korakias hill - Kourounochori - Aggidia hill - Chora.*



*Surface of trail: asphalt and dirt road.*

*Length: 24km*

*Ascent: 572m*

*Difficulty level: medium*

*Appropriate for: Mountain bikes*



This is a greatly varied route on the hills around Chora. The main northern road in the direction of Eggares village climbs along the precipitous coastline, heading the contours of the area's small hills. Once at the point of the new cemetery, exit the main road and turn left onto the secondary

road headed in a northwesterly direction, towards the wind turbines. Enjoy the splendid view and start descending towards the fertile plain of Eggares. Crossing the flat land with the farming plots, the route leads to the northern edge of the plain. Take a right turn here and follow the asphalted

road section for a short distance. Before the bridge and almost straight on take the main road and head in an easterly direction until the end of the small valley. Enjoy the tranquility and relaxation offered by the adjacent stream, dry in the summertime yet rich in foliage.

Approximately 700m on, cross to the river's other side over a low cement bridge and carry your bicycle over the wide uphill stairs for a short distance until reaching a cement-surfaced road. To the left, towards Messa Gitonia, head up the slanted valley. Immediately after the water-pumping station, take a sudden right turn onto a rough dirt road that runs past Eggares

until reaching the asphalt road connecting Eggares and Melanes. Turn left at this point in the direction headed for Melanes. Turn right at the cattle farm and ride downhill along the main road headed for Chora, the main town. Approximately one kilometer after the intersection for Melanes, exit the main road and turn right onto a small cement-surfaced road that leads to a section of the ancient aqueduct. Continue heading uphill until reaching a point that opens up for a panoramic view of the Eggares plain. Turn left and head west. Pass by the antennas on your left and head downhill towards Aggidia and, from there, back to the main town.

## Route 5

*Chora - Yria - Vivlos - Sagri - Timios Stavros Monastery*

*- Agiassos - Pyrgaki - Alyko - Kastraki*

*- Mikri Vigla - Orkos - Vivlos - Glinado - Chora.*



*Surface of trail: Asphalt and dirt*

*Length: 52km*

*Ascent: 370m*

*Difficulty level: medium*

*Suitable for touring and mountain bikes.*

This greatly varied route combines villages somewhat isolated from tourism with attractive beaches.

From Chora, head for the archaeological site of Yria through the fields of the plain of Livadi. Entrance is free. Continue in a southerly direction, pass by the cheese-making facility, leave Agios Arsenios on your right and ascend to the main road. Traverse Vivlos village, with its old windmills, and continue in a southerly direction to the crossroads for Sagri on the left. An attractive downhill stretch brings you to the valley of Sagri, with the old monastery of Agios Eleftherios.

Outside the village, take a right turn on the main road towards the bay of Agiassos.

At the beginning of an 8km downhill is Timios Stavros Monastery, which merits a visit for the good views and the coolness it offers.

At Agiassos enjoy the beach and the

view of the Small Cyclades islands, and continue west along the southwestern coast towards Pyrgaki. Follow the dirt road towards Alyko beach - ideal for a swim when northerly winds blow.

Follow the asphalt road on the left and you come to the remains of a huge hotel complex at the tip of Cape Kouroupa. Return on the same road, which has minimal traffic, in a northerly direction. A detour for the Glyfada salt pan and the long beach is recommended.

Two kilometers on, turn left into the road for Mikri Vigla and cross an area with fields to arrive at the beach again.

The route continues through an area with fields, passing by the charming bay of Orkos. At the crossroads for Plaka beach take the uphill road to Vivlos.

The majestic view of the coastline compensates for the short but difficult ascent. From Vivlos descend through Glinado to Chora.



## Route 6

Chora - Agios Georgios - Laguna --- Stellida - Agios Prokopios  
- Agia Anna - Plaka - Orkos - Mikri Vigla - Kastraki - Cape Kouroupa  
- Alyko - Pyrgaki - Psili Ammos - Glyfada - Kastraki - Mikri Vigla  
- Orkos - Airport - Chora.



*Surface of trail: asphalt and dirt road*

*Length: 47km*

*Ascent: 310m.*

*Difficulty level: easy*

*Suitable for touring and mountain bikes.*

If you like sandy beaches and crystal clear waters, this is an exciting tour: Starting from the port of Chora and heading south, take the coastal road, pass in front of the Town Hall and alongside Agios Georgios beach, a sheltered little bay with calm waters, and continue until you reach Flisvos, a meeting point for surfers from all over the world, as Laguna of Naxos is the ideal spot for this watersport.

Continue on the asphalt road towards Agios Prokopios and turn right at the airport intersection alongside the barrier that separates Laguna from the brackish lagoon. At this spot the view of the town on the right is exceptional.

Continue on this road and at the next junction go straight uphill towards the hill of Stellida, from where you will have another wonderful view of the bay of



Chora.

Stay on the asphalt road going southwest, up to the western end of the coast and the church of Agios Prokopios.

From here the dirt road between the salt pans and the sand dunes will lead you to the village of Agios Prokopios, a place with hotels and tavernas.

Continue on the coastal road towards the bay of Agia Anna, with its picturesque little harbor and fishing boats.

Continue south until you reach the endless beach of Plaka with its unique sand dunes along its full length. At the end of the dirt road and moving away from the coast the route goes through an area of cultivated fields, heading towards Orkos and Mikri Vigla. The beautiful landscape here comprises granite rocks and small romantic bays.

Mikri Vigla, another vast beach with tavernas on the sand, is a well-known meeting point for kite surfing lovers who can be watched in action. Before you continue straight towards Kastraki, take a break from riding to ascend on foot the rocky hill with the exceptional view of

the beach and the island of Paros in the distance.

Stay on the asphalt road with spare traffic and continue to Glyfada after Kastraki. Have a rest here at the taverns of the area, from where you can venture out for a walk in the nearby beautiful and serene - but endangered - juniper forest - a protected area. Back on your bike, continue on the asphalt road in a southerly direction until you reach the ruins of an enormous abandoned hotel at Cape Kouroupa, viewing the bay of Alyko. From this point start your return journey, heading north to the crossroads for Kastraki and Mikri Vigla.

Following the same route as in the outbound journey, pass by Orkos and the cultivated fields until you reach the intersection for Plaka.

Turn left, take the new asphalt road and, heading north slightly uphill amid granite blocks, you meet the Agia Anna - Agios Arsenios road at a relatively elevated spot. Keep straight, going slightly downhill to the north and head back to Chora after passing in front of the airport.



# Activities



*Naxos offers a unique variety of outdoor activities for all age groups and tastes. Organized beaches provide comprehensive facilities for water sports and qualified staff is there to initiate you in any of them. Naxos beaches are ideal for windsurfing and it is not surprising that this is the most popular water sport. For sailing enthusiasts, the island features a very long coastline with lovely, sheltered coves and the main harbor offers the full range of services for boats. If, alternatively, you take to diving, it is worth consulting the various schools on the most interesting and suitable locations and any related information. If you are a beginner, the schools also provide full instruction and experienced professionals will accompany you in your initial forays into the big Aegean blue.*

*Naxos also offers many onshore sports and activities. Acquaint yourselves with Naxos's unique countryside via superb walking or cycling routes.*

*You will have the opportunity to see stunningly beautiful spots, lush landscapes, impressive monuments, Byzantine churches, water springs and fonts. You can also learn horse-riding and explore the island's nature on horseback, just like the good, old romantic days.*



## Water Sports

Naxos with its topology creates ideal conditions for the watersports aficionados, especially during the summer season when meltemi winds make noticeable presence.

In Naxos the most popular watersport is windsurf which has as a companion the meltemi, the positive north wind which blows throughout the summer during the day with average strength of 5-7 beaufort.

In Naxos one can find beaches for different levels (beginners, experts, advanced) as well as different disciplines (slalom/speed, wave, freestyle, free-ride). The beaches of Amiti, St. George (for north winds-meltemi) and Agjassos (for south winds) are offered for wave. In the lagoon of St. George are created the most ideal conditions for speed/slalom as well as one of the really growing fast discipline of freestyle (many riders from Greece and abroad choose the spot for their training). Moreover the lagoon with its shallow and calm waters, is one of the friendliest spots in Greece for those who want to make their first steps in the world of windsurf.

On the beaches of St George, Plaka and Mikri Vigla are operate sport clubs with up to date equipment for those who want to learn the secrets of the sports. Mikri Vigla is an international meeting point for passionates of windsurf as well as kitesurf - a similar and really

popular sport - (schools operate there for learning).

For those who love waterski, wakeboard or water games with bananas and tubes, the organised beaches of St. George and Plaka offer equipment for rental to enjoy a ride and get full with adrenaline.



## Sailing

With its infinite coastline and unique beaches, Naxos is a sailors' haven.

One can sail around the island and anchor at sheltered coves, marinas or designated anchorages.

Sailing round the southern coast of Naxos and back - some 40 nautical miles- is fully recommended in the summer, as this side is not affected by the seasonal northerly winds.

At Chora harbor you can anchor at the ante port, as well as on the external side of the main pier.

Docking berths inside the port are few, so you would have to make it there early in the morning.

Harbor facilities for sailors (water, mechanical and technical support, foodstuffs etc.) are comprehensive.



*You can also anchor at the following points::*

- 1.** Kouroupas cove - an open bay below the cape of the same name. The coast features several hotel units. You can anchor at the small pier, with sandy depths of 4m-6m and good holding.
- 2.** Panormos bay, on the eastern coast.
- 3.** Apollonas, a fishing village with a small harbor on the northeastern side. Its breakwater offers average shelter from northerly winds.
- 4.** Agia Anna cove, south of Agios Prokopios. It features a lovely sandy beach with a small pier.
- 5.** Agios Prokopios beach, about 3km south of the main harbor, where you can anchor offshore. It offers good shelter from northerly winds, despite the strong currents.
- 6.** Mikri Vigla, on the southeastern coast. A sandy beach with turquoise waters and excellent views, superb for swimming.



## Scuba diving

The island's varied coastline is a sure pole of attraction for scuba divers. Exciting explorations in shipwrecks, caves and sunken aircraft await those at an advanced level.

For beginners, the diving schools operating here offer a first class opportunity to discover the magic of the sea. They are located on the organized

beaches of the island and provide modern equipment and experienced staff. Recommended areas for diving are the shipwrecks Marianna and Baufighter, Frouros rocky islet and Megalo Glaronissi. In all cases, you can contact the diving schools that know best the most suitable spots for each interest and can direct you with safety in underwater explorations.



## Horse riding

A horse ride during your vacations is surely a special experience. You can ride on and along Naxos beaches, enjoying unique moments, but also on trails that offer the opportunity of acquainting yourself with the beauty of the island. Local operators offer rides on Naxos beaches to riders of

all levels. There are also ponies for children to accompany adults on bigger horses. Live up a unique experience on horseback on a beach (accompanied by a guide), enjoy a ride under a full moon or just experiment by the seaside and discover Naxos's unspoiled nature.



## For children

It goes without saying that Naxos is especially suitable for family holidays, providing parents and children the opportunity to engage in a wide variety of interesting activities. Youngsters are able to participate in a number of water sports, they can horse ride or enjoy the water slides near the organized beach of Agios Prokopios. There are also playgrounds in Chora, 5x5 soccer courts and basketball facilities.





# Naxos products

*Due to its size, central position in the Aegean Sea and natural wealth Naxos has been self-sufficient since antiquity. Its olive oil and fruit was renowned throughout the archipelago, while its wine was likened to the nectar drunk by the Gods. The island's fertile land continues to supply pure ingredients to the Naxian cuisine, while hundreds of traditional recipes that have been handed down from generation to generation have contributed to the creation of a plethora of flavorful dishes.*



*Naxos is also renowned for its unique cheeses, like arseniko, gruyere, myzithra, xinomyzithra, touloumotyri, anthotyro, afromyzithra, thilykotyri, kefalotyri, kopanisti, ladotyri, manouri. The island also produces excellent thyme honey and good wine. According to Greek mythology, Dionysus, the god of wine and merriment, was born on Naxos and planted the first vine as its patron.*

*The vinifiable varieties today mainly are athiri, aidani, potamissi, fokiano, mantilaria and some local strains. The edible varieties are mainly rozaki, sultanina and fraoula. The island also boasts a significant production of olives and olive oil, along with its animal farming sector. Goat and sheep breeding is mainly found in the uplands, while cattle stock predominates in the plains.*



### Naxian cheeses

Milk-producing cows have been reared on Naxos since the 16th century and so, cheeses from cows milk are a very old affair. There are references to cheeses even in ancient texts, while for other varieties only the oral tradition survives. Today, the Naxian cheese industry includes a wide variety of extremely interesting tastes. Interestingly, many local producers persist with the traditional production methods while having modernized their installations. Only a few characteristic Naxian cheeses are presented here but it is worth seeking out more.

The best-known Naxos cheese is the

gruyere, the production of which has been protected since 1988 and carries a Protected Designation of Origin (PDI) since 1996. It is made with a minimum 80% cows milk, 20% goat's and cheep's milk at most and traditional rennet. It is a hard, table cheese, with a pleasant flavor and fragrance.

Another PDI cheese is kopanisti. Depending on the era it is made with pasteurized goat's or cow's milk of Naxos. It is soft cheese ripening with flavor quite strong and quite spicy.

Another well-known Naxian cheese is *xinomyzithra*, a cream cheese with a

slightly sour taste, mainly made with goat's milk. It is ready in 24 hours after the milk has been drawn and has to be consumed within a few days because it is fresh and contains no preservatives. *Xinotyri* is the same cheese as *xinomyzithra*, only it is left to dry for several weeks, until it becomes hard.

Another traditional cheese variety is *kefalotyri*, locally known as *arseniko* ("masculine"), which is produced with 100% sheep's milk. It is a hard cheese in cylindrical shape, with a hard but relatively thin outer layer and a color between off-white to off-yellow. It has a pleasant salty and piquant taste and rich aroma.

Besides "masculine", Naxos also produces *thylikytyri* ("feminine cheese"). This is produced right after *arseniko*, it is white in color, with a velvety texture, light buttery flavor and a balanced salty taste. Despite being low-fat (19%-21%), it has a pleasant taste and it best accompanies wine.

Another cheese worth tasting is *komos*, prepared as a sequel to *thylikytyri*. The cheese-makers would gather what was left of *thylikytyri* and let it ferment with aromatic mountain herbs. The result was *komos*, a very low-fat cheese that best accompanies spirits, *ouzo* and *tsipouro*.



## Citron liqueur

Naxos's renowned citron liqueur is one of three Greek aperitifs marketed with a Protected Designation of Origin.

Citron groves are cultivated in the plains of Eggares and Sagri, but also in the hinterland valleys, where winters are mild and summers cool. Citron leaves are used to produce the "Naxos citron" liqueur and the fruit itself is used in various spoon sweets.



The production of the citron-flavored spirit,



originally known as *kitrorako*, is a very old affair, but around 1870 a new distillate was developed from alcohol and citron leaves – today's widely known Naxos citron liqueur.

The product was exported to many places abroad which had thriving Greek communities (Russia, USA, Egypt, Asia

Minor), took part in many Greek and international fairs and won many awards and distinctions (including gold medals in Marseilles in 1904, Bordeaux in 1907, Athens in 1903 and 1914 and Thessaloniki in 1936).

The production process starts with the

collection of citron leaves when they are fully fragrant - that is, from September and possibly throughout the winter.

After careful selection to exclude dry and diseased leaves, they are bathed in alcohol

in a traditional pot still. The essential oils of the leaves are dissolved in the alcohol and the distillate gives three basic spirit types: white at 33 degrees, green at 30 degrees and yellow at 36 degrees.



## The tasteful Naxos potatoes

The renowned Naxos potato is one of the most qualitative and tasteful products cultivated on Naxos. Potato cultivation in Naxos's fertile plains grew rapidly after the mid-19th century and the vegetable became one of the island's basic staples. Villages such as those in the valley of

Livadi produce large enough quantities to be exported to other parts of Greece. In the early 1950's the government designated Naxos as the location of the country's main Seed Potato Center, which would produce seedlings for distribution to other areas of Greece. The activity continues to this day.





## Honey

Due to its rich flora and high fluctuations in altitude, Naxos is ideal for the production of honey.

Bees mainly feed on thyme and heather, but also on summer savory, sage, oregano and spring flowers. The largest part of the 35 to 40 tons produced annually is thyme honey - the rest being mainly heather and spring flower varieties.



## Olives and olive oil

Olives and the oil extracted from them figure prominently among Naxian farming products. More than 270,000 olive trees are cultivated on some 3,000 hectares on the island - roughly half of them in the Tragea basin.

The main olive variety is *throumpa* but *manaki* and *koronia* are also encountered. Modern and restored olive mills in several villages attest to the importance of olive cultivation in the economy of Naxos.



## Naxos's sweets

Sweets and preserves occupy a distinct place in Naxos's gastronomic constellation. Recipes have been handed down from mother to daughter for generations and are prepared in the traditional way with pure local products. A large variety of them can be found in most villages.

One of Naxos's best-known traditional sweets is *melachrino* - a walnut pie containing a small quantity of locally produced citron liqueur and usually served with *kaimaki* ice-cream (made from sheep's milk). *Xerotigana* (fried dumplings) is another traditional treat, offered at various fetes.

Endowed with a wide variety of fruit trees, Naxos also offers an array of spoon sweets and preserves, the most characteristic of them being the varieties of cherry, citron, quince, sour cherry and papilona (a cross-fertilization between bergamot and bitter orange), which are sold at many outlets on the island.



## Traditional handmade fabrics

The art of weaving holds an important position in Naxian tradition.

In the old days, nearly all households had a loom (*krevataria* in the local dialect), where all fabrics were woven (curtains, bedspreads, tablecloths, pillowcases).

Today, bucking modern trends which tend

to eliminate all traditional handicrafts, the women in the villages of Apiranthos and Moni, maintain cooperatives that keep the art of weaving alive.

Impressive handicraft creations, in traditional designs and colors, are sold at the outlets of the cooperatives.





# Gastronomy

*Naxian cuisine stands out for its authenticity and flavor. It is a cuisine replete with fragrances of the earth and the sea, full of products of unique taste, and ideal base for novel, tasteful and nutritious dishes.*

*Naxian cuisine carries the distillate of many different elements of a rich and age-old culture. They are frugal and unpretentious elements, exactly as those of the earth where the culture sprang from. With flavors, colors and fragrances such as those of the olive tree, the grapes, the thyme and the citrus fruit. The frugality of the means of ages past is reflected in many imaginative dishes made with local materials and pure products that defy time to excite even the most demanding palates. Their main feature, however, is the balance of flavors and the purity of ingredients of the Naxian cuisine that make it ideal for health and longevity - in line with the famous Mediterranean cuisine of which it is part.*

## Kolokythopastitsa



Ingredients:

- 1 deep plateful of sweet pumpkin cut in pieces
- 1 deep plateful of onions
- 5-6 tbsps of flour
- 2 chili peppers
- salt
- Olive oil for frying

Seed and skin a large piece of sweet pumpkin. Cut it into slices slightly thinner than potato chips with a small knife and fill a deep plate with them.

Do the same with the onions.

Place them all in a bowl, mix and salt. Leave the mix for 10 minutes to bring the juices out.

Add the flour, the chopped chili peppers and mix well.

Pour plenty of olive oil in a frying pan, heat it up and throw the mixture in.

While frying, press the mixture with a fork to make it an even mass.

When the bottom side is cooked, turn the pastitsa over (like an omelet) for it to become crispy on both sides.

## Rosto



Ingredients:

- 1 chunk of pork leg with the skin
- 1 head of garlic
- 2 tsps of salt
- 1 tsp of pepper
- 2 cups of red wine
- 200 gr olive oil
- 3 tbsps tomato paste
- 1 bay leaf
- sugar (optional)
- spaghetti No. 3

Peel the garlic, mix the pepper and salt, carve holes in the meat with a knife and stick the seasoned garlic cloves in them. Dab the whole chunk of meat with salt and pepper and saute over a low fire until brown.

Add the wine in which you have dissolved the tomato paste, add the bay leaf and let it simmer for about 3 hours, adding water now and then.

In another pot boil the spaghetti for 8 minutes after adding salt and strain.

Remove the meat from the sauce, let it cool and then cut into slices.

Add the spaghetti to the sauce, stir well and serve, adding plenty of arseniko or xinotyro cheese.

## Naxian Kalogeros (beef stew)



Ingredients:

- 4 large eggplants
- 8 large cubes of beef (round or shank) stewed in tomato sauce
- 2 large tomatoes cutted in rounds
- 8 slices xinomyzithra cheese
- 8 slices Naxos gruyere (graviera) cheese
- pinch of cinnamon

Slice the eggplants in half lengthwise and cut a small piece from the back of the halves so they can sit nicely on a baking tray.

Score the surface and fry both sides until soft. Remove from frying pan and strain.

Place on a baking tray, back down.

Add the pieces of beef, the xinomyzithra, the tomato rounds and then the graviera on top. Sprinkle with a little bit of cinnamon and bake for 3 minutes at 200C until the graviera has melted. Serve with fried potatoes.

## Sefoukloti (chard pie)



Ingredients:

*For the stuffing:*

1 ½ kg chard (seskoula)  
4 onions  
8 spring onions  
1 bunch dill  
1 bunch fennel  
Salt and pepper  
1 cup white rice  
200 gr olive oil  
1 ½ cup sultanas

*For the pastry:*

1 kg all-purpose flour  
½ cup olive oil  
2 tbsp vinegar  
2 tsp salt  
200 gr full-fat yoghurt  
6 gr baking powder  
2 ½ cups water

Cut the chard into thick pieces. Sauté chopped or grated onion and greens in oil until browned.

Add the chard, dill, fennel, salt and pepper and saute for 7-8 minutes.

Add the rice and raisins, mix all ingredients together and then turn off the cooker.

Roll out the pastry into two pieces and spread one on a greased baking tray, empty the stuffing on it, cover with the second pastry piece and bake in a medium oven.

## Snails



Ingredients:

½ kg of snails in their shells, lightly boiled  
1,200 gr onions  
½ liter olive oil  
pinch of pepper  
½ bunch parsley  
3 ripe tomatoes  
½ kilo sweet potatoes  
½ tsp sugar  
2 cups water

In a saucepan, heat the oil and cook the onions until soft. Add the snails, the potatoes, salt, pepper and parsley. Bring to the boil and then add the sugar and tomatoes, simmering until the sauce starts to thicken.

Add the water and boil until you have a well-blended sauce.

This dish is preferably served hot.

## Provatses with pork



Ingredients (serves 4):

1 kg sea lavender (provatsa)  
 4 pork chops  
 2 large potatoes  
 ½ bunch fennel leaves  
 2 wine glasses olive oil  
 2 large onions  
 Salt, pepper  
 2 eggs  
 Juice of 2 lemons

*"Provatsa" is the leafy part of sea lavender and grows in abundance around Greece, where it is also known as "amarando." The people of the Cycladic islands usually cook it with pork or cod (usually salted), making an egg-lemon sauce with the juice.*

Bring a large pot of water to the boil. Add the greens and cook until slightly tender. You don't want to over-cook the greens, so make sure there is still some bite in them. Drain and place to one side. Boil the pork and keep 4 cups of stock.

Put the coarsely cut potatoes in a saucepan, add the onion, finely chopped, the fennel leaves, also finely chopped, the boiled sea lavenders and the olive oil. Add the 4 cups of pork stock, the pork, salt and pepper. Bring to the boil adding a glass of water if the sauce reduces too quickly.

Cover the saucepan and simmer until the sauce thickens.

If you are using a pressure cooker, do not cook for more than 15 minutes

*For the egg-lemon sauce:* Beat the eggs well in a deep bowl, together with the juice of 2 lemons, while slowly ladling into the mixture small quantities of the cooled sauce, teaspoon by teaspoon, whisking continuously. Once the egg mixture has been well thinned with the stock and has warmed up, pour it into the saucepan, stirring vigorously. If the sauce is too hot, the egg mixture will curdle, so make sure that it has cooled down.

The Lenten or vegetarian version of this dish is made by replacing the pork with fillets of cod and the egg with a flour paste.

## Goat stuffed with greens (patouda)



Ingredients:

1 goat weighing 10 kg  
 ½ kg wild poppy greens  
 ½ kg chard  
 ½ kg spinach  
 2 cups of fennel finely chopped  
 2 cups of dill finely chopped  
 1 cup of mint finely chopped  
 1 kg parboiled rice  
 1 ½ kg onions  
 10 spring onions  
 1 cup of sultanas (optional)  
 Olive oil, water, salt, pepper

Wash all the greens thoroughly, remove tough stalks, chop finely and blanch in boiling water in a deep saucepan.

Drain in a colander.

Meanwhile, grate the onions in hot olive oil in the same pan and cook until they soften. Strain any excess liquid from the greens and add to the onions. Add the parboiled rice to the mix and cook for a few minutes.

Stuff the belly of the goat or lamb with the mixture and sew shut using strong string. Rub olive oil, salt and pepper all over the meat and cook in a preheated oven for about 3 ½ hours at 200C. Serve hot.

The sultanas may be optionally added to the stuffing.

## Naxian Macarons (almond sweets)



### Ingredients:

500 gr blanched almonds  
600 gr sugar  
100 gr thyme honey  
rose water  
icing sugar

In a saucepan, boil the almonds and sugar in a glass of water for 7-8 minutes until cooked. Take off the heat and set aside to cool.

Blend in a food processor to the consistency of finely-ground beef.

Place in a mixing bowl, add honey and knead.

If the paste is too crumbly add a little bit of water until you have a pliable mixture.

Shape into rough balls a little larger than a golf ball and allow to rest for a day.

Sprinkle with rose water and dip lightly in icing sugar.

## Melachrino (sweet)



### Ingredients::

15 eggs  
15 tbsps breadcrumbs or crushed rusk  
15 tbsps sugar  
2 glasses of coarsely ground walnuts  
½ small cup of citron liqueur  
½ tsp baking soda  
lemon grate  
½ tsp ground cinnamon  
½ tsp ground clove  
1 tbsp cocoa

### For the syrup :

6 cups sugar  
4 ½ cups water  
3 tbsps thyme honey

Beat the yolks with the sugar until they whiten.

In another receptacle, beat the egg whites into a stiff meringue.

Mix all the other ingredients except the liqueur and add to the yolk mixture, alternating with the meringue little by little.

Grease a medium-sized flat cake tin and pour in the mixture.

After it is baked, let it cool off and cut it. Sprinkle the citron liqueur.

In the meantime, prepare the syrup by boiling the water and sugar for 5 minutes. Add the syrup right away. Bake at 180C for 40 minutes. Do not open the oven during baking.

## Quince spoon sweet

### Ingredients:

1 kilo cleaned quinces  
1 kilo sugar  
1 cup water  
Rose-scented geranium leaves  
Juice of one lemon  
200 gr almonds peeled and blanched (optional)

Choose quinces that are not very ripe.

Wash them well and peel them, though not too deeply.

Quarter the fruit, scrape out the pips and cut into sticks, placing in a bowl of water with a bit of lemon juice so they don't blacken as you cut them.

Drain the fruit and place in a saucepan.

Add the sugar and water and bring to the boil over high heat so it doesn't darken.

As soon as the quince is soft, remove the saucepan from the heat, cover it and let the fruit rest for 24 hours.

The following day, boil the mixture until it thickens into syrup and add the lemon juice and Rose-scented geranium.

Remove from heat, extract the geranium leaves and add the almonds, mixing well.



## Sour cherry spoon sweet and syrup

### Ingredients:

1 kg sour cherries  
1 kg sugar  
½ cup water  
juice of half a lemon

Wash the sour cherries and remove the stones with a hair pin or with a special utensil, making sure to do so over a bowl so that you can collect the juice.

Wash the stones in a bowl with the ½ cup of water that you will later use for the syrup.

In a saucepan, layer the sour cherries with the sugar, adding the lemon juice, the collected sour cherry juice and the water (without the stones).

Simmer with the lid on the saucepan for several hours, removing the scum that collects on the surface with a slotted spoon at regular intervals.

When the mixture thickens, take off the heat and leave to cool overnight.

The following day, bring the mixture back to the boil, adding the lemon juice.

To make sour cherry syrup, add another ½ kilo of sugar to the original recipe and follow the same steps. Remove the syrup from the saucepan, saving the cherries for spoon sweet, and store in glass jars.

# Festivals and events

*Naxos's calendar year features numerous folk customs manifested through various festivals and events - some of them of simply symbolic nature.*

*Ancient ways and customs have lived on through folk rituals, both unadulterated and adapted to the religious, social and economic conditions of respective eras.*

*Scores of worthy cultural events organized annually by the Municipality of Naxos and Small Cyclades come as an addition to this wealth of customs and festivities.*

*As a whole, the events create an interesting cultural mosaic that is impressive for both Greeks and visitors from abroad.*



## Carnival

Carnival is celebrated in a unique way on Naxos, as the customs involved are an evolution of ancient Dionysian fetes, taking place in the same time of year as the ancient *Anthesteria*.

Hearty feasts, with violins, bag-pipe instruments (tsabouna) and

drums (doubakia) are an unflinching annual occurrence in the squares and courtyards of churches in many villages of the island, on the last Sunday of the Carnival season.

The feast continues into Clean Monday. In other villages, such as Danakos,

Apiranthos and Koronos, young men wearing hoods and bells (*koudounati*) and holding a phallic symbol (soba) create deafening noise in the alleys of the village - a custom signifying the arrival of spring and meant to drive the evil spirits away.

The procession ends at the village square, where the *koudounati* join the other dressed-up characters and begin the dancing and song that lasts well into the night.

The similar customs of *kordelati* and *foustanelati* take place in the villages of Galini, Melanes, Kinidaros and Eggares on Clean Monday.

Young men wearing colored ribbons and the national Greek costume of *foustanela* form groups (*bairakia*) and, led by the standard-bearer (*bairaktaris*), who holds a thick cane with a colored cloth, head for the neighboring villages where they invite local women to dancing at the square, to the tune of violins and lutes. Reciprocating, the women offer the men delicacies and wine.

In the old days the custom also functioned as a means of facilitating the meeting of young people from different villages and resulted in many marriages. But it is still observed in earnest, relayed from one generation to the next.



## Parade of Torchlights

On the Saturday eve before the annual Carnival parade, the streets of Naxos overflow with a crowd of torchbearers in a revival of an ancient custom known as Lambadifories.

Dressed and masked in black and white costume, hundreds of natives and visitors of all ages take part.

The custom has gained a popular

following and attracts participants and onlookers who visit the island to witness and experience this popular Carnival weekend event.

The route begins in the maze of streets around the castle in the Old Town of Naxos and flows onto the wide square in town, at the port, where the dancing and merriment continues into the night.



## Pig slaughtering

The roots of pig slaughtering, a traditional custom carried out on Naxos during carnival season, date back to ancient times, when meat was scarce and animal slaughtering was conducted as a group effort. Pig slaughtering is a sacrificial practice that echoes ancient sacrifices performed for cathartic purposes linked with attempts at foreseeing the future.

On Naxos, events of popular worship were incorporated with the farming sector. Pig farming assured families of their meat and animal fat supply for the entire year. When slaughtering pigs, the men of various villages followed a specific routine. Sizeable meat pieces

were placed in cauldrons and left to boil in their own fat before being stored away, lard included. This procedure often included the production of sausages and ham. The aforementioned procedure enabled meat to be stored away for extended periods of time. In previous eras, the entire village participated in the pig-slaughtering process, accompanied by music, an integral part of the ritual. Groups of friends would gather at homes to indulge in pork meat dishes and produce sausages. Family celebrations lasted for many days.

One may expect to find special dishes and celebrations at the villages of Filoti and Apiranthos during carnival season.

## Rakitzo

The traditional custom known as Rakitzo, associated with the distillation process of *raki*, a strong white grape-based spirit, is held either late October or early November in many villages of Naxos. After being pressed for wine, grape remains are placed in tanks with small amounts of must or water, as well as fennel or citrus - during the process's final round of distillation - for aroma. The tank is closed and after a period of fermentation a fire is lit, and *raki* begins to emerge and drop into an accompanying container. Every tank-full produces between 12 and 17 litres of *raki*. The moment chosen to remove the *raki* from the tank is crucial to its quality, or alcohol level. The first round of *raki* produced, known as *protoraki*, is so potent that it is used for medical purposes, such as potion for back rubs. *Rakitzo* proceedings are combined with traditional celebrations, with music as well as food grilled by the tanks. Copious supplies of *raki* and culinary specialities are offered to people in attendance.





## May Day

May Day proceedings on Naxos are particularly fascinating as they combine elements of ancient worship with nature's blossoming.

A wreath made of leaves and flowers all woven together, widely known as a Mais in Greece, is a tradition dating back to ancient times.

On May Day, the people of Naxos spend the day outdoors picking flowers for their wreaths to be hung outside the front doors of their homes until June, when they are burned as part of a custom known as Klidonas. On May 1 each year, the

Melanes Cultural Association organizes a competition for the best wreath of wild flowers, which receives an award.

The event takes place in Flerio, under the plane trees and the sound of the water springs, very close to the site of the ancient statue of Kouros.

A feast follows, with local delicacies and wine, traditional instruments, dancing and song until late in the evening.

Also, on this day, look out for a highly unusual custom in the village of Kynidaros, whereby donkeys are placed on display on home roofs.

## Celebration of Ai Giannis Klidonas



June 24 marks one of the biggest summer celebrations on Naxos. The nickname Klidonas is derived from the ancient Greek word *klidon*, meaning prognostic sound and used to describe the combination of random and incoherent words uttered during divination rituals.

Essentially, Klidonas is linked with a popular divination ritual said to reveal the identity of future husbands to unmarried girls. On the evening of June 23, the eve of Agios Ioannis (St John) celebrations, Naxos locals gather at squares, light fires, and burn their May Day wreaths,

each participant jumping over the fire three times. The role of the fire in these proceedings is one of purification, expelling all evil.

The event in some villages is accompanied by certain women's customs, such as drinking specially designated water, or eating fig leaves in salt and salty pies, which are supposed to make unmarried girls dream of the man they will marry. In some mountain villages, locals make a human-like figure out of hay, which ends up in the fire. Celebrations with music and dance follow.

## Other events

### Events organizes by Municipality of Naxos and Small Cyclades

Each year, the Municipal Authority of Naxos and Small Cyclades organizes various events during the summer months, offering visitors the opportunity to become acquainted with various aspects of domestic life on the island. Events include concerts, art, photography and sculpture exhibitions, theatrical performances, workshops, and, topping off all the activity, a wine feast.



### Naxos Festival

Since 2001, between the summer months of July and September, the Naxos Festival has served as a cultural meeting for original work by both domestic and foreign artists of various disciplines. The festival's events, including exhibitions, concerts, theater and dance, are primarily held at Timios Stavros Monastery which belongs to Bazeos family near Damarionas, a restored monument in Naxos's mainland. Also at the Temple of Dionysus at Yria –one of the most important sanctuaries of ancient Naxos- as well as various other venues on the island.



## Domus Festival at the Venetian Museum

The Venetian Museum, one of the most charming mansions of Kastro - Naxos's medieval citadel - on the northwestern side, hosts various musical events, including jazz, classical guitar, and piano performances.

Concerts here, also featuring local artists, take place between April and October.



## Wine Feast

The Wine Feast offers visitors a great opportunity to try Naxos's local wine, accompanied by delicious assorted small dishes (*meze* or *mezedes* in plural), mostly fish and seafood, all topped off by dancing to live music performed by local artists.

The event includes the foot pressing of grapes at a traditional wine press, as well as a speech on local vineyards so that, besides wine tasting, visitors may be informed about the unique qualities of Naxos wine.



## Potato Feast

Naxos's now famous Potato Feast is held every August with great success at Kapares position, Agia Anna. Thousands of people of all ages, both locals and visitors, are drawn to the feast to devour the island's potato-based recipes, made using locally produced potatoes and cooked with devotion and imagination. Celebration and dance, to the sounds of traditional songs, add to the overall enjoyment of this festive event, one dedicated to this local farming product linked - like no other - to the most delicious experiences in our lives.

## Elaia Festival

The Elaia Arts Festival, held at Kaloxylos, Naxos, early in August, offers visitors the opportunity to become acquainted with artists through their work. Sculpture, photography, live music, theater, as well as dance performances feature on the event's agenda.

The festival, which aspires to establish itself as one of the main events on the island's cultural calendar, offers visitors days dedicated to the arts, ones full of imagery, sound, color and music.



## The Fisherman's Feast

The village of Apollonas hosts an annual Fisherman's Feast on June 28. Besides attracting village locals, the event also draws visitors from Komiaki, the surrounding villages, as well as all other parts of Naxos. The feast begins with vespers service at Agios Ioannis (St John) church, followed by the blessing of waters and fishing boats. Next on the agenda is a celebration with live traditional music featuring some of Naxos's leading artists. The food served is comprised mainly of fish and seafood. The wine flows in abundance and the celebration usually lasts until the morning hours.



## Feast of traditional olive oil extraction

Olive trees are to be found all over Naxos, and the importance placed by locals on their cultivation is tremendous.

The number of olive trees on Naxos amount to over 270,000. The majority of these are located in the Tragea valley.

New and old olive presses, allowing visitors to observe the olive oil extraction process, exist in various villages.

This traditional process is turned into a feast at the village of Damalas, where anyone interested may take part every year, usually between late January and early February.

Once the work is done, local culinary delights and wine are offered to all, accompanied by traditional music.

## Naxathlon

The annual Naxathlon event is organized on Naxos every August for triathlon athletes, local and foreign, who compete over three stages and respective disciplines - open water swimming, cycling, and running.

The event draws exceptional athletes who have competed with distinction both in Greece and abroad.

It offers stirring moments for participants and spectators, including visitors to the island during the summer season.



## Demetria

The Demetria event, a cultural institution on Naxos, is held every year during the first week of August at Sagri, a traditional village.

It features mostly agritourism stalls where visitors may try goods produced by the blessed land of Naxos.

Concerts and theatrical plays take place at the courtyard of Agjos Eleftherios, a 17th century monastery.

Art exhibitions by established artists are held inside the monastery.

Visitors may enjoy the village's architecture, including the very well preserved stylish metallic front doors of homes, as well as photography exhibitions that take place along the village alleys.

Each year, the event is embellished with new features that serve to sustain the interest of visitors at high levels.



## Milossia

An annual wide-ranging sports event for young and old, Milosia, is staged every August in the village of Filoti.

The event, open to both locals and visitors, features tournaments for various sporting disciplines, including basketball, volleyball, beach volleyball, soccer, as well as long-distance running contests, cycling, athletics, and trekking at Mount Zas.



# Celebrations and fetes

*Naxos's folk fetes are centuries old and most are linked with the observance of saints' name days. Especially in the summer months, visitors have the opportunity to attend these events that combine religious sentiment with the island's music and dance tradition. Dance, song and food merge to form happenings where both locals and guests can revel until the early morning hours. Many virtually forgotten fetes have been revived in recent years.*

## Agios Nikodemos celebration

Naxos's patron saint, Agios Nikodemos Agjoritis, is honored in main town Chora on July 14. Events culminate in the litany of the holy icon and attract many visitors from neighboring islands and many places on the Greek mainland. The celebrations are also attended by high-ranking clergy from dioceses across the country. Agios Nikodemos is also celebrated with a traditional folk fete on July 14 at the village of Glinado. The attractive church is at the entrance to the village.



## Panagia Argokiliotissa pilgrimage

Naxos's largest pilgrimage is held annually on the first Friday following Easter, the Day of Zoodochos Pigi ("The Fountain of Eternal Life"), at the monastery of Panagia (Virgin Mary) Argokiliotissa. From the event's eve to the actual day, hundreds of worshippers from all over the island gather at the monastery to pay their respects to the icon—considered miraculous—and light candles. Many, as part of their religious offering, opt to arrive here on foot, persevering lengthy journeys through tracks. Ceremonies, officiated by the area's serving bishop and attended by government representatives, take place in an atmosphere of pomp and solemnity. Few Naxos islanders have never attended the event which also offers foreign visitors a close look at local traditions and customs.



## Panagia Myrtdiotissa

When sailors and seafarers from the islands of Tsirigo and Kythira, survived a sea storm just outside of Naxos, they built a little church on an islet, in the middle of the harbor, dedicated to Panagia Myrtdiotissa, protector of the island and natives of Kythira. On September 24 a beautiful celebratory feast honoring the church and the mariners of the island takes place on Naxos. The combination of the melodic chants of the priests and the traditional local music compose a unique canvas of melodies that is a special experience for visitors. In addition, on that day, not to be missed is the transfer of people to the little chapel aboard the boat, "Karamalis," that completes the scene that is sure to touch the hearts of those who witness it up close.





### Celebration of Chryssopolitissa at Chora

The important holiday of Isodia Theotokou (Entrance of Virgin Mary into the Temple) is celebrated in splendor and with the attendance of large crowds at the Church of Panagia Chryssopolitissa - Chora's patron saint- and then at the Cathedral of Zoodochos Pigi on November 21.

Events start on the eve with the litany of the icon of Panagia Chryssopolitissa from the Cathedral where it is kept. The procession ends at the celebrating church, where a series of services is

performed until the early morning hours, beginning with splendid vespers officiated by the local bishop. After vespers, in observance of a very old custom, the inhabitants in the neighborhood of the church offer pilgrims loukoumi sweets and raki spirit. Early on November 21, the icon of Panagia Chryssopolitissa is taken in a procession back to the Cathedral for the service proper.

After the end of service a litany of the icon follows around the streets of the town.

### Perifanes

Every year on Good Friday evening, young people in various villages of Naxos light up the perifanes (long and thick bundles of cane reeds), line up along the alleyways and await the procession of the Epitaph, creating a solemn atmosphere.



### Naxos folk fetes

- Theoskepasti at Komiaki and Potamia September 8
- Panagia Drossiani at Moni September 8
- Timiou Stavrou (Holy Cross) at Tripodes and Moni September 14
- Agios Artemios at Kynidaros October 20
- Agios Nikolaos at Kynidaros December 6
- Agia Irini at Kynidaros May 5
- Agios Thalleleos at Agios Thalleleos May 20
- Panagia Argokilotissa at Koronos Good Friday
- Agii Apostoli at Melanes June 30
- Agia Kyriaki at Potamia July 7
- Agios Prokopios at Agios Prokopis July 7
- Agios Nikodemos at Chora and Glinado July 14
- Agia Marina at Aggidia and Koronos July 17
- Agia Anna at Agia Anna July 25
- Agia Paraskevi at Kynidaros July 26
- Agios Panteleimon at Agersani July 27
- Sotiros (Savior) at Glinado, Damarionas and Kourounochori August 6
- Panagia (Assumption of Virgin Mary) throughout the island but especially at Filoti August 15
- Enniamera Panagia (Nine days after the Assumption) at Tripodes August 23
- Agios Ioannis at Apiranthos, Apollonas and Agersani August 29

# Nightlife

*Dance to the tune of Greek and foreign rhythms, sip excellent Naxiot wine, drink exotic cocktails and the local raki spirit with honey (rakomelo). Lose yourself in the buzzing streets of the Old Town and watch the moon while sitting at a seaside bar.*



As soon as dusk has turned into night, Chora is transformed into a centre of fun for all tastes.

Entertainment on Naxos has its own characteristics with something for everyone: clubs and small bars with Greek and foreign music; wine bars with a broad variety of wines and spirits and restaurants with live music.

Atmospheric venues - with superb views of the Aegean sea - where you can enjoy your drink listening to soft music, you will find in Chora, but also along the island's most famous beaches.

The farther away from tourist areas you go, the fewer the options for nightlife there are, but without a loss in quality, and with the added gain of tranquility.



## Business meetings

With developed farming and commerce since antiquity, Naxos has always managed to be self-sufficient – like few other islands in the Aegean region. Besides these two sectors, the island, in the last few decades, has also made great strides in developing its tourism industry.

Having established the infrastructure necessary for successful business meetings and conferences, it provides organizers and participants high quality hospitality services.

The range of venues available for business meetings includes particularly ambient facilities, such as the mansions of the medieval citadel, Kastro, as well

as highly-graded hotels with all modern comforts.

There is a full range of accommodation options, including luxury and boutique hotels as well as small, charming family guesthouses and villas.

Each option offers different advantages for the organizers and the participants but, in all cases, Naxos and its people are a guarantee for high-level professionalism and warm hospitality.

It goes without saying that your business meetings can be wonderfully combined with a broad range of other activities, such as cultural events, recreation, visits to archaeological sites, gastronomy tours, trekking and cycling.



## Weddings and Honeymoons

Naxos of the mythical and ancient love stories is the ideal place to organize your wedding and honeymoon. Feel the atmosphere of the place where the ancient god of merriment, Dionysus, finally caught up with his heart's favorite, the Cretan princess Ariadne, experience the medieval romantic ambience and its relaxing and lovable atmosphere. Whether you desire a civil or religious

ceremony, Naxos is ideal for you. Make your vows at the famous Portara, on the islet of Palatia, with the magical aura of antiquity, or at some picturesque chapel –one of dozens that the island has. And after the wedding, cast off your shoes, walk barefoot on the sand and abandon yourselves to the rhythm of an unforgettable beach party. If you are in love, Naxos is for you!



# The Basics: Getting to Naxos!

You've decided to visit Naxos and experience all the island has to offer. Located in the centre of the Cycladic islands, Naxos is accessible from various points, by air and by sea, year round. Here is a quick guide to help you plan your trip.

*Please note: Always contact your travel agent and/or the airline/sea transport line for the latest schedule information as schedules/timetables are subject to change.*

If you are flying into **Athens International Airport Eleftherios Venizelos**, you can catch a flight directly to Naxos with the national carrier. In the peak season there are additional flights. Keep in mind, that it is a good idea to book in advance as space is limited.

## Connection to Naxos from Athens by boat:

Another option from Athens - a route that most Greeks prefer due to the space availability and timetable frequency - is to travel by ferry or high-speed catamaran. The trip by boat is all part of the island experience. Most of the reservations may be booked directly online, or through your travel agent/service. Bus service to the **port of Piraeus** is available from the airport. The transport time from the airport to the port of Piraeus is about 1 hr 45 minutes. In addition, access to the port of

Piraeus from the airport is available by taking the Attiko Metro to the Monastiraki station and then making the connection to the ISAP train line to Piraeus.

*Note: In the summer months, a second port, **the port at Rafina**, about 30-45 minutes by car from Athens International Airport, also has boats departing to the Cyclades.*

## If you're flying into Mykonos or Santorini airports:

The international airports closest to Naxos are the airports at the nearby islands Mykonos and Santorini. If you are flying into these airports, connection to Naxos is then by sea. Frequent service by ferry and catamaran is available from both Santorini and Mykonos. In the off-season ferry service is available only from Santorini.

## Access from Crete:

Another popular destination, Crete, also has boat service to Naxos in the peak season.

*For updated information on accommodations, services, activities, cultural and other events on Naxos, please visit our website at [www.naxos.gr](http://www.naxos.gr). You may also find us on the following social media: Facebook: [naxosislandgreece](#), twitter: [@NaxosIslands](#), Google+: [Naxos Island and Small Cyclades](#), flickR: [Naxos Island and Small Cyclades](#), YouTube: [Naxos Island and Small Cyclades](#)*

## Useful telephones (international phone code +30)

SERVICE	TELEPHONE	FAX	E-MAIL	WEBSITE
HEALTH				
<b>Health center of Chora (town)</b>	22853 60500	22850 23867	info@naxoshospital.gr	
<b>REGIONAL CLINICS:</b>				
<b>Apiranthos</b>	22850 61206			
<b>Vivlos</b>	22850 41221			
<b>Komiaki</b>	22850 52213			
<b>Koronos</b>	22850 51280			
<b>Melanes</b>	22850 62372			
<b>Filoti</b>	22850 31404			
<b>Chalki</b>	22850 31206			
LOCAL AUTHORITY				
<b>Municipality Of Naxos and Small Cyclades</b>	22853 60100	2285023570	naxos@naxos.gov.gr	www.naxos.gr

SERVICE	TELEPHONE	FAX	E-MAIL	WEBSITE
SECURITY				
<b>Police station of Chora (town)</b>	22850 22100 22850 23280 22850 23801	22850 22100		
<b>Police station of Filoti</b>	22850 31224	22850 32222		
<b>Port authority</b>	22850 22300	22850 24549		
<b>Fire dept.</b>	22850 32199	22850 32899		
MORE				
<b>POST OFFICE</b>	22850 61206	22850 23299		
<b>NAXOS'S AIRPORT</b>	22850 23292	22850 24816	kanxtl@otenet.gr	
<b>TAXI</b>	22850 22444	22850 24076		
<b>BUS OFFICE</b>	22850 22291	22850 22999	info@destinations.gr	naxosdestinations.com





**MUNICIPALITY OF NAXOS AND SMALL CYCLADES**  
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- **Prehistoric acropolis of Panermos:** Anastasia Aggelopoulo, Archaeologist

- **The Kouroi statues at the ancient marble quarries (Faraggi and Flerio areas), The ancient sanctuary at**

**Flerio water spring, The ancient Naxos aqueduct tunnel between Barou and Kaminia, The ancient Naxos aqueduct, The ancient sanctuary of Apollo and Demeter at Gyroulas, Sagri, Yria:**

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- **Chora, Naxos:** Arsos Naxos, Historical club

- **Walking trails of cultural interest:** Tasos Anastasiou, South Aegean Region,

- **Cycling routes:** Giannis Nafpliotis, Michalis Roussos, Dieter Depnering

- **Gastronomy:**

**Rosto, Naxian Kalogeros (beef stew),**

**Sefoukloti, Goat stuffed greens**

**(patouda), Naxian macaroons (almond**

**sweets) & Photo of the recipe Provatses**

**with pork:**

**Kolokythopastitsa, Quince spoon sweet,**

**Sour cherry spoon sweet and syrup:**

«Xerolithies tis geusis» Dimitris Papadopoulos - chef

«Sto maerio tis naxou» Katerina Sideri

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