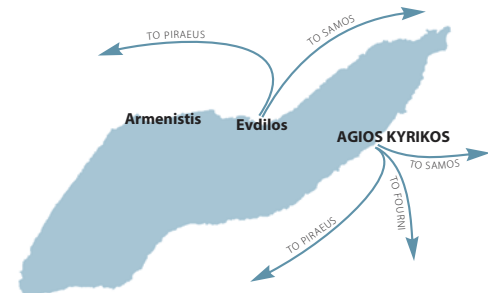




Ikaria

Ikaria is one of the most beautiful and unusual Greek islands we have ever set eyes upon. Its mountains, forests and beaches combine with the island's many legends, foibles and traditions in a heady Aegean cocktail.



The island is also one of only five identified 'blue zones' on the planet - a place where people live remarkably longer lives. All the more wonder then that Ikaria is so little known.

This is largely because it is remote, and historically an island of exile until relatively recently. Neglected by Athens for many years, and ill-served by ferries to this day, Ikaria was left to go its own way. Still difficult to get to, those who make the effort are richly rewarded.

Named after Ikarus, who flew too close to the sun and plunged into the sea here, Ikaria is 40 kms long but never greater than 8 kms wide. With Atheras soaring to over 1000 metres, this means some tortuous roads and dizzy drops, especially when crossing the island from the main port, Ayios Kirikos, in the south.

Our accommodation is close to the fishing village of Armenistis on the north coast, 57 kms from Ayios. With long whitesand beaches to the east and lush mountain behind, it is the prettiest seaside spot on the island, and the centre of what limited tourism there is.

The village has just the right number of tavernas, cafés and small shops to give enough variety. Five more (very good) restaurants can be found above the beautiful sandy cove at Nas 3 kms to the west, which has the remnants of a Temple of Artemis behind. Armenistis has a small beach of its own but, apart from when the meltemi blows, most people head for long Livadi or Messakti beaches just outside the village. Please be aware that Ikaria has some strong off-shore currents and it is not always safe to swim (main beaches have warning flags).

The forest on the mountainside directly inland from Armenistis is a natural paradise, full of the sounds of birdsong, rushing water and rustling pines. It hides lakes, monasteries and traditional villages, four of which (collectively known as Rahes) have produced a 25 km walking trail, split into sections, which starts just behind Livadi beach - but try not to reach Christos before the evening when it comes to life (the locals sleep for much of the day!).

There is limited public transport on

Ikaria and taxis can be hard to find, so car hire is highly recommended (4wd if going much into the mountains) - there is a lot to explore. Excursions do run, subject to numbers; some by jeep or 4wd minibus. One interesting trip last year included a visit to a winery followed by a traditional Ikarian dinner then an evening visit to the 'Asterix' village of Christos Rahes (see above).

Ikaria is famous amongst Greeks for its Panayiri's (Saint's Day festivals), natural beauty, local wine, fresh fish and sunsets. It is not famous at all elsewhere, which is why we would urge a visit to this magical, wild and quite unique island.

IKARIA INFORMATION

Getting to Ikaria

Flight to Athens (daily) and connecting flight in the afternoon to Ikaria; transfer from Ikaria Airport to Armenistis (c. 90 mins.). On the return the reverse applies with an afternoon flight Ikaria to Athens for connecting flight to UK. Odd durations are possible. Please note that if your flight from UK arrives too late for your onward flight to Ikaria (or vice versa) we shall overnight you either at an airport hotel or in central Athens with transfers.

Multi Centre & Island Hopping

Last year Ikaria had twice-weekly connections with Samos, Patmos, Fourni, Lipsi, Leros, Kalymnos and Kos.

Car Hire

See page 268-9 for details.

Representative

We do not employ a resident representative on Ikaria but have a local agent based in Armenistis.

Exchange Facilities

There is no bank in Armenistis and exchange facilities are limited so take a good supply of Euros. The nearest ATM is Evdilos, 30 mins by road. However all the Greek shops, tavernas, restaurants and cafés are now obliged to accept card payment.

Erofli Hotel Armenistis

The Erofli is the highest category hotel on Icaria and occupies one of the best locations – just on the edge of Armenistis, directly above the sea, a three minute walk from the centre of the village in one direction and to the start of beautiful Livadi beach in the other. Built into the hillside on four floors (please note there is no lift) all 31 rooms possess fridge, satellite tv, hair-dryer, safety deposit box, tiled shower/wc, air conditioning (once the outdoor daytime temperature exceeds 30C) and a very spacious balcony (four have a garden patio) – those to the front have panoramic vistas over sea and coast. Furnishings are of good quality and décor tasteful.



Erofli Hotel location (centre)

At the lowest level there is a filtered seawater pool of some 90 sq m (depth 1.3m-3.20m) and a small path leads down to the rocks and sea below.

The hotel has an airy reception/lounge/bar which leads onto the large sea-facing terrace where you may take breakfast. The hotel also has free WiFi and offers (at a local charge) yoga classes, massage treatments, an internet corner and a heated indoor thalassotherapy pool with jacuzzi (local charge).

The stunning views of open blue sea and green mountain coastline alone would make a stay here worthwhile.

Early Booking Offer

Reductions apply for holidays completed by 30/5 or commencing 26/9 onwards if booked by 31/3. Please enquire or check online availability for a costing.

The Hotel: Air Conditioning (high season)
3 Star Superior Bed & Breakfast Swimming Pool
Free WiFi



Valeta Studios Armenistis

Beautifully located directly above the sea, the Valeta Studios are on a small headland between two of the best beaches on Icaria – Livadi and Messakti. They are a ten minute walk via Livadi beach (twenty minutes walk by the road) from Armenistis village – a torch is recommended for late night returns. There is a handy restaurant almost next door if you don't want to go far.

Studios are ground floor (double plus single bed) or first floor (twin beds). Each is spacious and open-plan containing a kitchenette area with mini-oven, rings and fridge, a fan, TV, a hairdryer, tiled shower room and good-sized front balcony

or terrace with wonderfully open views over the sea and, to the side, the village – ground floor terraces are especially large. Furnishings and decor are modern, comfortable and of good quality.

Each pair of studios shares a common entrance hallway with an outside door and can therefore be combined for parties of up to five (one ground floor, one first floor).

Good standards, superb views and convenient for both beach and village.

The Studios: Family Units for 4/5
Self Catering Studios for 2/3
Free WiFi



Livadi Beach and location of Valeta Studios (far end)

Kimothoy Apartments Armenistis

Built above the sea on the edge of Armenistis in the direction of Nas, these modern apartments offer a peaceful stay, modern standards and panoramic sea views close to all the village facilities.

There are only four roomy apartments here. Ours are on the ground floor and comprise an air conditioned bedroom to the front with double bed, a separate kitchen/diner to the rear with 3-ring mini-oven and fridge, and a bathroom with shower.

Each apartment has its own good-sized north facing terrace opening

off the bedroom with uninterrupted views over open sea. Amenities include free WiFi, safety-deposit box, hair dryer and TV. Furnishings are simple, modern and tasteful and the owners provide daily cleaning.

A 5 minute walk brings you to the centre of the village and 12 minutes to Livadi Beach.

The Apartments: Self Catering
Apartments for 2
Air Conditioning
Free WiFi



Muses Cottages Nas

All you can hear is the sound of the waves from these five cottages. Standing directly above the sea, Muses boast panoramic sea views (and spectacular sunsets!) and are a five minute walk from beautiful Nas beach, reached by a rough path and steps down. Even closer, within a couple of minutes' walk, you will find three of the island's best-known restaurants.

Stepped down the hillside, the cottages possess an attractive traditional design and decor (predominantly blue and white), with high wooden ceilings and tiled floors. All are cool, spacious and open-plan, comprising double-bedded sleeping area, living room with full-sized sofa-bed, fitted kitchen with 2-ring mini-oven and fridge, room-safe and a bath with shower above. All have AC and are tastefully furnished. To the front

each cottage has an open sea-facing sun terrace from which to admire the views.

The owner, Dimitris, runs the first of the three fine restaurants here, which specialises in fresh local seafood. A local mini-market opens in season and Armenistis is 3 kms distant, via the small road which runs above the sea. Please be aware that Nas beach is (unofficially) naturist to one side.

Muses offer super individual accommodation in one of the most beautiful settings you could find.

The Cottages: Self Catering
Cottages for 2/3
Air Conditioning

IKARIA

Guide prices per person in £s departing during

ACCOMMODATION	PERSONS BASIS	Low Season (May - early Jul & mid Sep - Oct)				High Season (mid Jul - early Sep)					
		From		To		From		To			
		1 Wk	2 Wks	1 Wk	2 Wks	1 Wk	2 Wks	1 Wk	2 Wk		
Erofilii	Standard Room	2	BB	911	1113	1062	1341	1213	1569	1280	1634
	Standard Sea View	2	BB	928	1168	1140.5	1510	1353	1852	1424	1922
Kimothoy	1 Bedroom Apartment	2	SC	910	1112	1014.5	1262.5	1119	1413	1212	1505
Muses	Cottage	2	SC	860	991	985	1206.5	1110	1422	1250	1531
Valeta	Studio	2	SC	833	937	945	1123	1056	1309	1190	1443

Prices shown are indicative only and variable due to offers, changing flight prices and seasonal supplements - please call or check online for a confirmed costing (note: not all holidays can be checked online). Prices based on Gatwick flights and include transfers or car hire (see text); accommodation as described; and all airport/fuel charges & taxes known at the time of printing - for our surcharge policy see booking conditions at the back of this brochure. To add: room and board supplements (see text) - single room prices on request. Not all our accommodation is suitable for guests with reduced mobility. Please contact us to answer any questions you may have regarding our properties and to advise their suitability for people with health conditions or impairments. **Not included: Overnight Stay Tax of €0.50 to €4 per room, apartment or villa per night payable locally - the amount varies according to the category of the accommodation (i.e. most self catering and 1-2 star hotels = €0.50, 5 star hotels = €4).**