

# 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.

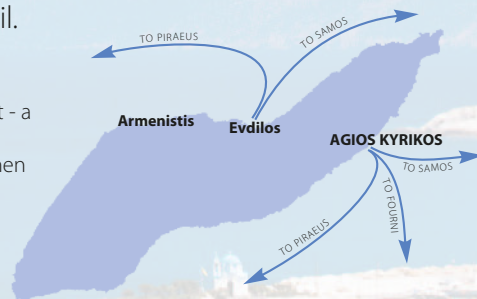
The island is also one of only five identified 'blue zones' on the planet - a place where people live remarkably longer lives. All the more wonder then that Ikaria is so little known.

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

Thursday flight Gatwick to Samos (note: inbound flight via Lemnos), ferry to Ikaria (1hr 30 mins - 2hrs 30 mins) and onward transfer to accommodation (30-90 mins depending on which port is used). For flight details see page 267. It is likely that an overnight on Samos will be required in at least one direction as ferries to Ikaria are erratic and timetables can chop and change throughout the season. We will not have precise transfer information until shortly before your departure, but rest assured all required transfers and necessary 3 star overnight B&B hotel(s) on Samos will be arranged for you by Sunvil.

Alternatively we arrange a tailor-made holiday using domestic flights from Athens, but this will also usually entail an overnight in Athens in one direction. Please ask for a costing.

### Multi Centre & Island Hopping

Ikaria can combine with Samos and/or Patmos or Kusadasi in Turkey (via Samos). Should ferry schedules remain the same as last year, twin-centre clients with Patmos need not make the mid-holiday transfer via Samos as there was a fast (90mins) direct catamaran service on Fridays and Sundays between the two islands. Ikaria can also be included in a tailor-made island-hopping itinerary with many of the Dodecanese islands e.g. Lipsi, Leros, Kos, Kalymnos and Telendos.

### 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 Evidilos, 30 mins by road.



## Erofilii Hotel Armenistis

The Erofilii is the highest category hotel on Ikaria 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.

At the lowest level there is a filtered seawater pool of some 90 sq m (depth 1.0m-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, 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 13/7 or commencing 31/8 onwards if booked by 31/3. Please enquire or check online availability for a costing.

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



Messakti beach



## Valeta Studios Armenistis

Beautifully located directly above the sea, the Valeta Studios are on a small headland between two of the best beaches on Ikaria – Livadi and Messakti. They are a ten minute walk via Livadi beach (twenty minutes walk by the road) from Armenistis village. 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, 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: Self Catering  
Studios for 2/3  
Family Units for 4/5  
Free WiFi



Livadi Beach and location of Valeta Studios

## 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



Nas Beach



Armenistis



## Discover Ikaria

One of Greece's most unusual yet beautiful islands, Ikaria has much to offer visitors. If you'd like to experience some of the island's more alternative activities during your stay then consider a company called 'Discover Ikaria'. Some of their activities are listed below.

### Short and easy walks

Easy walks in Ikaria's unique natural landscape throughout the whole year supported by local nature guides. These walks are suitable for anyone who has a basic level of physical fitness. Walking is on dirt roads or well-maintained rocky footpaths.

### Observation of the flora and fauna

Ikaria preserves its natural beauty,

authentic landscape and wilderness to this day. It's one of Greece's most unique islands and home to a wide range of ecosystems, including those found in mountains, forests, rivers, waterfalls, wetlands and valleys. These varied environments provide home and shelter for many rare species of plants and animals, and some of them can only be found on Ikaria.

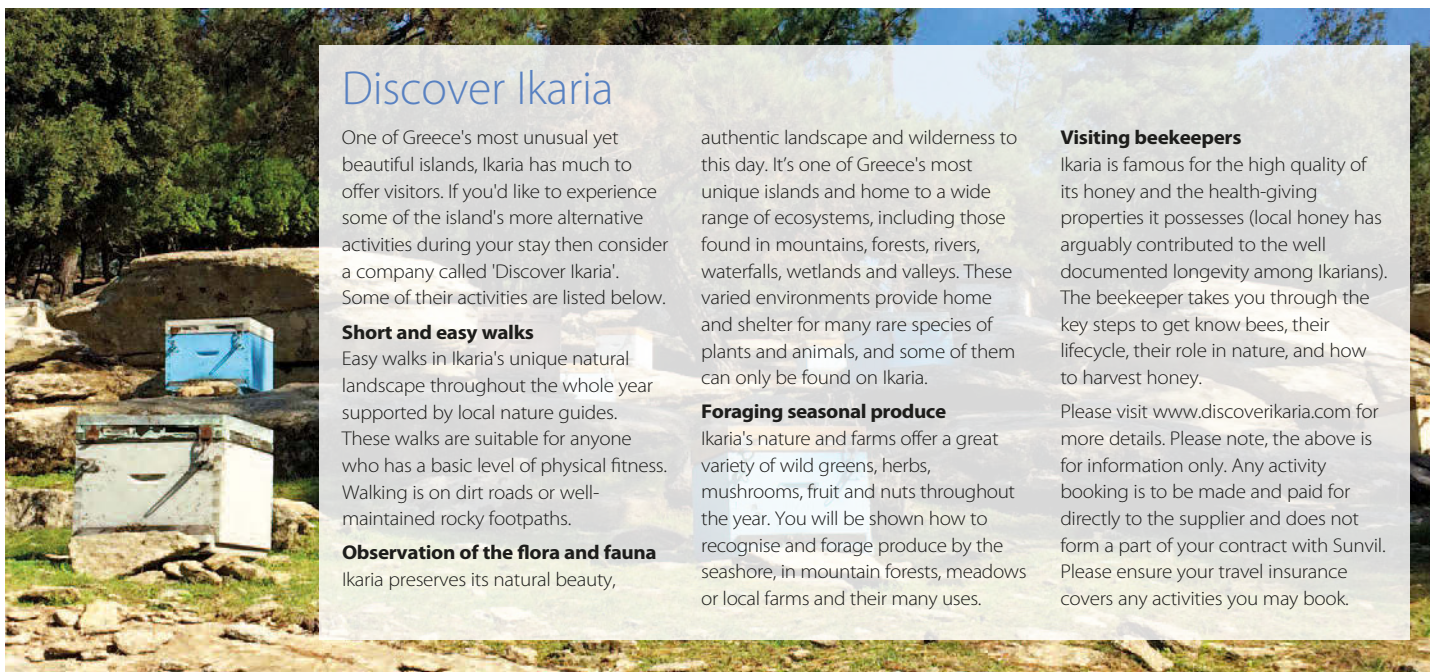
### Foraging seasonal produce

Ikaria's nature and farms offer a great variety of wild greens, herbs, mushrooms, fruit and nuts throughout the year. You will be shown how to recognise and forage produce by the seashore, in mountain forests, meadows or local farms and their many uses.

### Visiting beekeepers

Ikaria is famous for the high quality of its honey and the health-giving properties it possesses (local honey has arguably contributed to the well documented longevity among Ikarians). The beekeeper takes you through the key steps to get know bees, their lifecycle, their role in nature, and how to harvest honey.

Please visit [www.discoverikaria.com](http://www.discoverikaria.com) for more details. Please note, the above is for information only. Any activity booking is to be made and paid for directly to the supplier and does not form a part of your contract with Sunvil. Please ensure your travel insurance covers any activities you may book.



IKARIA		Prices shown are in £'s per person departing on or between dates shown																											
ACCOMMODATION	PERSONS BASIS	May 25		Jun 01, 08		Jun 15		Jun 22		Jun 29		Jul 06		Jul 13		Jul 20, 27, Aug 03, 10, 17		Aug 24		Aug 31		Sep 07		Sep 14		Sep 21, 28			
		1 Wk	2 Wks	1 Wk	2 Wks	1 Wk	2 Wks	1 Wk	2 Wks	1 Wk	2 Wks	1 Wk	2 Wks	1 Wk	2 Wks	1 Wk	2 Wks	1 Wk	2 Wks	1 Wk	2 Wks	1 Wk	2 Wks	1 Wk	2 Wks	1 Wk	2 Wks		
Erofil	Side Sea View	2	BB	826	1008	864	1045	870	1054	873	1126	941	1194	941	1269	1016	1347	1052	1383	1050	1236	888	1074	892	1070	867	1042	837	1008
	Sea View	2	BB	836	1037	882	1082	889	1092	892	1170	968	1246	968	1408	1130	1574	1166	1611	1164	1392	930	1158	934	1123	878	1065	848	1031
Muses Cottages	Cottage	2	SC	791	976	878	1062	884	1072	888	1076	888	1076	888	1076	888	1178	1023	1314	920	1109	902	1031	845	974	828	955	799	923
		3	SC	767	918	844	995	851	1004	853	1006	853	1006	853	1006	853	1087	967	1188	871	1013	854	955	817	918	800	900	772	870
Valeta	Studio	2	SC	754	860	798	904	805	912	806	942	834	970	834	970	834	1044	942	1152	838	946	821	909	804	892	788	874	759	844

Payment by Credit or Charge Card will incur a 2% processing charge (note: should this change due to the credit card companies increasing their charges to us, you will be advised at the time of booking). Departure date determines basic holiday cost. Prices include all airport/fuel charges & taxes known at the time of printing – for surcharge policy see booking conditions. Prices based on Gatwick departures. To add: any regional flight supplements, room & board supplements (see text – single room prices on request), Travel Insurance. Please reconfirm prices with us at the time of booking in case of errors or changes.