

## Friends of Kastellorizo

"giving back to the island of our forebears"



### ENJOY KASTELLORIZO

An Island Guide

Welcome... to Kastellorizo the easternmost island of Greece and the Aegean, enchanting mystical and magnificent

### Communications

#### Telephone

There are public OTE telephones in the Agora, and in the main square, next to the travel agent. You can buy international phone cards at the periptero, next to Meltemi Bar.

#### Internet

Internet is widely available, both at accommodations and at cafes and restaurants. Internet is free.

#### Hellenic Post

The post office can be found on the western side of town, behind the Megisti Hotel. Hellenic Post offers a world class postal service. If you want items to be sent to you in Kastellorizo, then simply have them addressed to you by name, hotel if appropriate, and Megisti, 85111 Greece. There are no street names in Kastellorizo, so if you are expecting an item, you need to check from time to time.



### Important Numbers

Medical Centre: 22460 49267

Police: 22460 49333

Harbour / Port Authority: 22460 49270

Customs Office: 22460 49009

Post Office: 22460 49298

### Borders: Military and Naval Presence

As Kastellorizo lies on the border with Turkey, the island has a strong monitoring military and naval presence. It is important to respect military personnel and heed the signs to keep clear of bunkers and installations, and they are not to be photographed under any circumstances. After work many of the servicemen can be seen relaxing at the cafes along the quay, in this state, feel free to chat with them - they come from many different parts of Greece.

### Port Procedures

As Kastellorizo is a compact harbour with some commercial traffic it is vital that all vessels entering the harbour contact the Port Authority (tel: 22460 49333) with your papers and follow their instructions. The Port Authority is located in a building on the Faros point which is port side as you enter the harbour. Simply mooring where you like is not acceptable and will prompt a stern visit from the Port Police. There are a range of yachting berths along the middle-end of the harbour, and for large yachts and ships along the commercial berth, however as this is shared with the regular ferry service and the Hellenic Navy it is even more important that the Port Authority is contacted prior to berthing and mooring.

## Kastellorizo

Kastellorizo or Megiste by its ancient name, is small, with a total area of just 9.78 square kilometres and a coastal perimeter of a mere 19.5 kilometres, but it has a significant past. It lies 2 ½ kilometres off the coast of Turkey, across the water from the township of Kas, once known as Antifilo, and 118 kilometres east of Rhodes, Kastellorizo's closest Greek neighbour. The island has one town, Kastellorizo, which at its height of wealth and commercial sea power boasted a resident population of almost 10,000 people at the turn of the 20th century.

### A Famous Harbour

Kastellorizo is blessed with one of the finest harbours in the Eastern Aegean. Visitors will observe how steeply the seabed slips away to the middle of the harbour. The harbour or Limani, as it is called, falls to a depth of 12 metres below sea level providing sufficient draft for large ferries and naval ships to berth with safety. For centuries, Kastellorizian seafarers earned their fortunes sailing from this harbour, but it also brought its share of trouble as successive invaders and colonisers competed for control of this eastern outpost and its accommodating harbour.

### A Colourful Past

Since Antiquity, Kastellorizo's harbour has been the envy of some of the world's great powers, and as a result it has had many occupiers keen to berth their ships in her safe waters, convenient to the Mediterranean's major trade routes: Turkey, Cyprus, Lebanon, Palestine and Egypt in the east; Italy, France, Spain, Portugal and North Africa in the west. Kastellorizo has variously been occupied by Dorians, Romans, Spaniards, Venetians, Ottomans, Italians, French and Britons. Regardless of the occupier, Kastellorizians have remained emotionally, spiritually and indomitably bonded with their island, whether they live on it, or at the far reaches of the world. After many centuries of continuing foreign occupation, in 1947, the island was finally reunited with a free, autonomous Greek state under the democratic Hellenic Republic.

### An Aegean Paradise

Aside from its beautiful harbour, perhaps Kastellorizo's most stunning wonder is the Blue Grotto, known locally as 'tou Parastà i trypa', said to have been declared superior to the Grotto of Capri by none other than King Vittorio Emanuele III of Italy after he visited the island in 1929. But Kastellorizo has much more: 12 satellite islets; wondrous open sea swimming; ancient paths meandering up rocky mountains; a Hellenistic citadel; and the Castle of the crusader Knights of St John of Rhodes. There are wonderful outdoor restaurants and cafes, bars open all night, museums, ancient churches and an architectural landscape that is unique to the Dodecanese islands. You might see dolphins and turtles frolicking in the harbour, or eagles flying high above you in the blue Mediterranean sky. Kastellorizo has something for everyone, and for every mood, all set against the backdrop of a spectacular natural theatre and an enchanting micro-cosmos.

### Travel Information

**Travel Agents** There is one travel agent on the island Papoutsis Travel (tel: 22460 70605). To find out what events are happening each day on the island, you can also visit the Kastellorizo Information Centre.

**Airport** The airport is operated by Olympic Airways. If you need to contact the Airport Office at Kastellorizo (tel: 22460 49250) At this stage only Olympic Airways has flights to Kastellorizo, every day in Summer. However, take care in booking your connecting flights as the plane sometimes does not depart in inclement weather, and can be delayed from time to time.

**Ferries** Large commercial ferries generally service Kastellorizo from Rhodes (4.5 hours with Blue Star Ferries) twice a week in the high season, and during this summer every Saturday there is a fast hydrofoil alternative (2.5 hours to Rhodes) Ferries can be pre-booked but in general they are large enough to buy tickets on the day of departure. You can purchase these through travel agents, and in Kastellorizo, on the ferry dock until it is ready to depart. Timetables change so check with travel agents in the days ahead if you are in doubt - and be ready waiting for it to arrive as you will be surprised how quickly they come and then leave. During the high season there is also a daily ferry from and to Kas for those who prefer to depart this region from Turkey.

**Taxi** There is only one taxi (tel: 6938739178) on the island, and it is useful for trips to and from the airport, and for elderly people who find walking from one part of the harbour to another difficult.

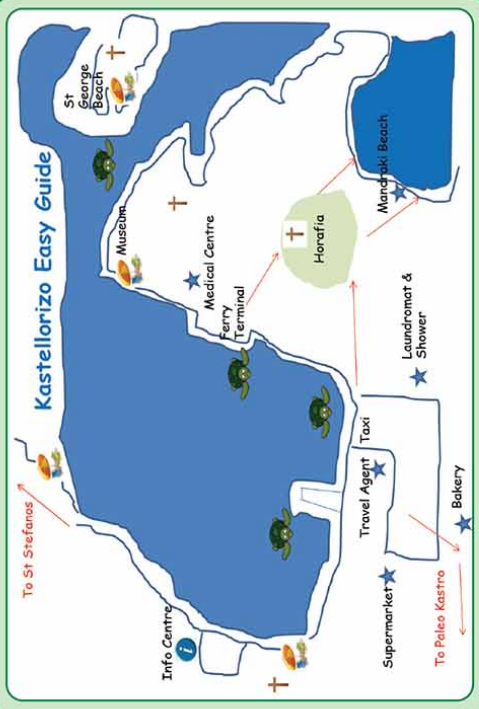
**Boats** There are a range of private tour and boat operators. You will find their advertisements on the harbour. They have a range of daily, half day, regular and unscheduled boat services, and services to Turkey. Some will also provide a water taxi service between the two harbours which can be a great help when you have a lot to carry. During the summer, boats go every Friday to Kas to enable people to access services and shopping in Kas. The boats leave at 08:00 and return around 13:00.



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www.kastellorizo.com





# ENJOYING ALL THAT KASTELLORIZO HAS TO OFFER - SOME HELPFUL FACTS AND TIPS

## Friendship and respect

Like all places, local people have their traditions and culture. Kastellorizians are friendly and welcoming, so take time to say hello and ask them about their island. Though life on the far flung islands of Greece is generally 'easygoing' and relaxed, visitors should take a little care to respect simple things like quietness during siesta time (the afternoon sleep is considered very important across Greece), and to observe a reverent attitude in religious buildings and cultural institutions.

## Cultural Discovery

There are multiple layers of culture in Kastellorizo, many of which may not be obvious at first – part of the adventure is peeling back the layers of history and seeing the island anew through its various archaeological strata. The best place to start is the island's Archaeological Museum at Kavos (tel: 22460-49283) which houses a collection of archaeological finds dating from Antiquity up to the 20th century. There are pots, amphorae, oil lamps and sculptures from the Classical and Hellenistic periods. Finds from shipwrecks include a spectacular collection of Byzantine pottery. The collection also includes folk and cultural artefacts, Kastellorizian dress, a model of a traditional house, embroidery, sponge diving suits, furniture and other articles of folk and religious history.

The island's cultural museum has been established in the old 18th century mosque at Faros on Kavos, housing evocative reminders of Kastellorizo's recent history, the museum is well worth a visit, particularly at times when a moving film about the island's recent history is screened.



## Good Books

A number of excellent publications are available in the island's shops that outline its history and culture – of particular note is the engaging: *Kastellorizo – An Illustrated History of the Island and its Conquerors* by Nicholas G Pappas; and the smaller *Kastellorizo – Off the Beaten Track* in the Aegean by I M Hatzifotis. There is also an interesting archaeological survey titled *Ancient Megisti – The Forgotten Kastellorizo* by Australian archaeologist, Norman G Ashton. A number of shops sell these publications and they make for informative and enjoyable reading.

## Temperatures

Kastellorizo lies in the Eastern Aegean, so temperatures can vary significantly from cold lows to sweltering highs. Average temperatures in summer range from lows of around 15° to highs of over 40° C, and in winter range from lows of - 4° to highs of 22° C. It is important to wear sunscreen, hats, and carry water on you at all times. Dehydration in the height of summer is a real risk. Water is readily available for purchase and you should carry a few litres per person for any extended walk around the perimeters of the town, on a boat trip, or up the mountains – and always tell someone where you are going.

## Swimming

Swimming in Kastellorizo is nothing short of amazing. The water is crystal clear, and there is almost no dangerous sea life. However there are sea urchins and razor sharp rocks, so hard soled swimming shoes are advised, as are goggles for sustained swimming in the salty water. Be warned, though, while the sea is usually calm, storms and wind can whip up quickly, so adventure into the 'blue yonder' is advised only for strong swimmers. Kastellorizo retains commercial harbour activity so only swim in designated areas with others. These include the waters off Megisti Hotel and Kastellorizo Hotel Apartments on western side of the harbour, and off the point at Faros, the eastern point at the entrance to the harbour. It is also possible to swim in the shallow Mandraki harbour, and off the rocks at Niftis Point (though they are treacherously sharp and the currents are deceptively strong here – only for strong and confident swimmers). Swimming across the harbour is forbidden because it is a danger to the swimmer, and to regular water traffic.



## Children

Greeks love children, and as a general rule, they are free to run as they please throughout the town, and make as much noise as they like. However, some small exceptions apply such as keeping children quiet during siesta time and in religious precincts. Otherwise, in Kastellorizo local children are quick to invite new arrivals into their games, so encourage children to get to know their local counterparts – friendships made on Kastellorizo can last a lifetime.

As with all of Greece, harsh rocky ground and centuries of habitation means that terrain, even amongst built up areas, can be rough and ready for young children. Good leather walking shoes are advised for trekking, sandals as the quay and streets are rocky and jagged, and hard-soled swimming shoes for swimming. Make sure you keep sunscreen, hats and swimming protection on them as the sun is very harsh. If your children require regular medication then it is advisable that you bring a supply to cover your stay on the island given its isolation. If you have a baby, Kastellorizo has some supplies, but again, nappies and other essentials can be purchased in Rhodes beforehand, if needed. Kastellorizo does have snakes and scorpions, however you are more likely to encounter these if you walk out of town in the scrub. Of course, diligence in watching children who cannot swim is a must as Kastellorizo Town is surrounded by sea.

## Walking

There are many spectacular walks on Kastellorizo. The first and most obvious is a walk around the harbour. There is an excellent walking guide called *Kastellorizo – Limani Walking Guide* produced by the Friends of Kastellorizo. Another walking guide is called *Capture Kastellorizo* – a walking guide and insight by Maria Pitsonis and provides a number of suggested walks around and over the island. During the summer, regular impromptu walking groups undertake various outings, usually on a days notice. They are not hard to find if you ask some of the locals, and everyone who likes walking is welcome to join them. As with many things in Kastellorizo, word of mouth is your best source. Again, do not walk without a good supply of fresh water and plenty of sun protection, and take care around rocks and steep stairs. There are also guided walks available, if you are interested. These can be booked in the Kastellorizo Information Centre office. Part of the fees are donated to Drasi Kastellorizou, our island's non profit organisation.



## Island Day Trips

A number of local tour operators run some excellent day, half day, and shorter trips. These are advertised around the harbour and variously include: trips to the Blue Grotto, St George island, the island of Rho, and to Kas in Turkey. These adventures are relatively cheap, and give you the opportunity to see more of this beautiful corner of the eastern Mediterranean.

### Kastellorizo Information Centre

An office with information about Kastellorizo, what to see and do, where to go for specific assistance, has now opened on the island. It is located opposite Little Paris restaurant, and is open from 9.00 a.m.

### Visits to Turkey

Regular weekly trips are made to Turkey by boats from Kastellorizo. Kas, the township that can be seen across the channel, is a vibrant Turkish resort town with an excellent market for all kinds of goods and fresh food, plus a compelling array of Turkish cuisine, rug shops, with spice and nougat shops amongst them. There are also ATMs, a post office and duty free shops. However, to get there it is necessary to cross the border so you will need your Passport.

## Eating and Drinking

One of the great Kastellorizian pastimes is enjoying the harbour from a restaurant or café table at the edge of the quay. There is good variety of places to choose from, and it is great to try them all. Though there is no pressure to tip. It is polite to at least leave a small tip after a meal. Greeks generally eat a very light early breakfast, a late lunch between 1pm and 2.30pm, and after siesta can wait until 9 or 10pm at night to venture out for dinner.

## Siesta

Siesta in Greece is actually defined in law and it is required that between the hours of 2.30pm and 5.30pm quietness is observed, within reason. Siesta is taken seriously and local businesses may shut largely because the summer days are very long, and the heat in Greece can become oppressive. The best advice – take a siesta and you will be rejuvenated for a balmy evening of festivity.

## Environment

Greece is now taking environmental issues very seriously. It is important to respect the environment by throwing litter and cigarette butts in the bin, not the harbour, and cleaning up after yourself if you are picnicking in the mountains, or elsewhere. There is also a recycling programme, initiated by Drasi Kastellorizou, and supported financially by the Friends of Kastellorizo. You will see the car picking up recycling materials (plastic, paper, aluminium) during the mornings and early afternoons. Please support this programme by asking shopkeepers to use their recycling bins to dispose of materials. You can also collect materials and then ask for a pickup at the Kastellorizo Information Centre.

## Money

Kastellorizo still predominantly runs on cash, apart from some of the tourist shops, the travel agencies and the hotels. Most of the cafes, the duty free shop, restaurants, convenience stores and tour operators will generally accept only cash. Currently there is only one ATM on the island at the National Bank of Greece on the quay. The branch is usually open on weekdays between the hours of 08:00 and 14:00. There are a number of ATMs in Kas, Turkey, and of course in Rhodes. It is a good idea to arrive on the island with sufficient cash for a few days, though the ATM is quite reliable. In general, most businesses are unlikely to accept travellers cheques.

## Medical and Pharmacy

Kastellorizo, despite having a small hospital and medical supplies, is still isolated, and any serious injury or illness requires transport to Rhodes. It is therefore important for anyone visiting the island with ongoing need for pharmaceuticals or other types of medical assistance to ensure they bring a sufficient supply with them for the duration of their stay. The island is served principally by the Medical Centre on the eastern side of the quay near the commercial ferry berth (tel:22460 49267)



## Health and Safety

The health and safety issues in Kastellorizo relate to the rugged and rocky environment with uneven steps and paving care should be taken and sensible shoes worn for long walks. Heat exhaustion and dehydration can be avoided by carrying water. Some people may suffer heat rash or other allergies which are generally treatable at the Medical Centre. Importantly, if you are on medication, make sure you bring an ample supply for your time on the island. There is no guarantee the medical centre will have a replacement.

## Water and Sanitation

Kastellorizo has no natural water supply so water should be treated with respect and not wasted. Running tap water is sourced from the island's reservoirs which are replenished regularly by ship from Rhodes. If you think you will be sensitive to the island water, make sure you keep a supply of bottled water with you. To clean clothes you should use water sparingly or get your hotel to launder for you. In terms of sanitation and toilets, the island has a very old sewage system, so please take care not to jam toilets. In some houses and hotels it is forbidden to flush paper down the toilet. Please make sure you know the rules and abide by them. Sewage and plumbing problems can be very difficult to resolve and can affect large parts of the island.