

Kos

Greece

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Kos is a long, mostly flat island in the Dodecanese, close to the Turkish coast. It is famous as the home of Hippocrates, the ancient doctor, and it mixes ancient ruins, a medieval castle and long sandy beaches. Kos Town is the main base. It has a busy harbour, Roman and Hellenistic remains, and a cycle path along the sea.

The island suits a relaxed trip of beach days, cycling and short culture stops. Families and couples find easy beaches on almost every coast. Hill villages such as Zia give a quieter side, and ferries link Kos with nearby islands and Turkey.

When to visit

Late spring and early autumn are the best times. Days are warm, the sea is pleasant and the island is less crowded than in July and August. Summer is hot, dry and windy, and it is the busiest season. Winter is mild but wet, and many seaside businesses close.

Plan around Easter if you can. Greek Orthodox Easter brings processions and family gatherings in the villages, and the date changes each year.

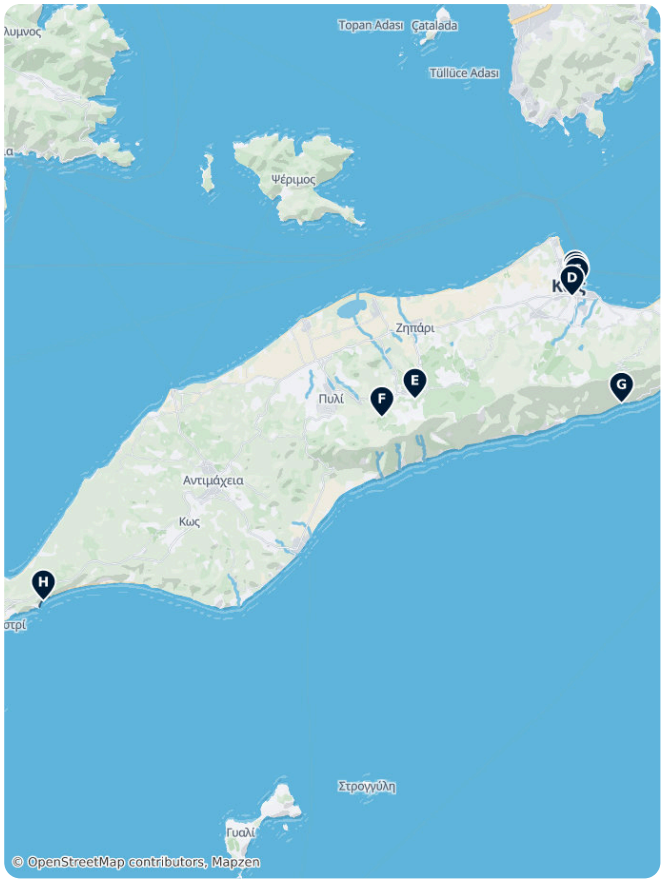
MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Fair Fair for cycling	14° / 17° Feels like 8°	12° / 7°	14 rainy days · Dry air
February	Fair Fair for cycling	14° / 17° Feels like 8°	12° / 7°	12 rainy days · Dry air
March	Good Good for cycling	15° / 18° Feels like 10°	13° / 8°	Dry air
April	Great Great for cycling	17° / 20° Feels like 13°	15° / 12°	20 sunny days · Dry air
May	Great Great for sightseeing	21° / 23°	18° / 15°	24 sunny days
June	Great Great for the beach	24° / 27°	22° / 19°	28 sunny days · Muggy, humid air · UV 9 (Very high)
July	Great Great for the beach	26° / 29°	24° / 22°	31 sunny days · Muggy, humid air · Windy · UV 10 (Very high)
August	Great Great for the beach	27° / 29°	25° / 23°	31 sunny days · Muggy, humid air · UV 9 (Very high)
September	Great Great for watersports	25° / 27°	23° / 20°	28 sunny days · Muggy, humid air
October	Great Great for sightseeing	22° / 25°	20° / 16°	22 sunny days
November	Great Great for cycling	19° / 22° Feels like 15°	17° / 12°	Dry air
December	Good Good for cycling	16° / 19° Feels like 11°	14° / 9°	14 rainy days · Dry air

Best months: May, June, July, August, September, October

Climate data: NASA POWER + Copernicus ERA5-Land and ERA5 · 1996–2025

Top sights

- Beside the harbour, A Castle of the Knights of Saint John was built by the Knights of St John in the 14th century. Its walls and moat are easy to explore on foot from the centre.
- B Plane tree of Hippocrates stands in the old town. By tradition, Hippocrates taught his students under a tree on this spot.
- C Ancient Agora lies next to the harbour. Columns and walls show where people gathered in ancient times, and the ruins are part of the town walk.
- D Casa Romana is a restored Roman house with mosaic floors. It shows how wealthy residents lived.
- The Asklepieion is the island's best-known ancient site, about 3 km from Kos Town. Pilgrims came here for healing, and Hippocrates is linked with the place. It has three terraces, temple remains and sea views.
- E Zia is a hill village on the slopes of Mount Dikaios. It is a popular stop for sunset views over the island and the sea.
- F Old Pyli is a ruined medieval settlement on a hillside above the north coast. It suits visitors who like quiet ruins and hill views.
- G Empros Thermes are natural hot springs on the south-east coast. Warm water flows into the sea, so you can soak by the shore.
- H Paradise Beach is a long sandy beach on the south coast near Kefalos, with clear water and beach bars.



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What to experience

- Ride the sea path from Kos Town in the early morning, before the heat.
- Soak in the hot springs at Empros Thermes, early or late in the day.
- Cycle to the Asklepieion for the hilltop sea views.
- Try kitesurfing or windsurfing on the windy north and west coasts. Schools offer lessons for beginners in summer.
- Take a day boat to Nisyros and walk into the crater, or spend a lazy day on a boat tour of the small islands.
- Walk the shaded paths of Plaka Forest for a break from the beach.

Day trips

Most day trips go by boat. Schedules change by season, so check sailings before you plan a day out.

- Pserimos: a small island north of Kos with a quiet beach. It is a short boat ride in season.
- Bodrum (A Bodrum) in Turkey: about 30 minutes to 1 hour by ferry from Kos Town. Sailings are few, often one or two a day, and fewer in winter, so check the day before. It has a castle, a marina and a large bazaar. You go through passport control on both sides, so take a valid passport and check entry rules for Turkey first.
- Kalymnos: a rocky island known for sponge diving and for climbing. Boats leave from Mastichari in the north-west.
- Nisyros: a volcanic island with a walkable crater. Day excursions leave from Kardamena in season.



Where to explore

- For another island in the Dodecanese, see Rhodes. Ferries run between Rhodes and Kos Town.
- Kos belongs to the South Aegean, together with Rhodes and the Cyclades. See South Aegean for the wider region.

Getting there

- **By air**: Kos Island International Airport, named after Hippocrates (KGS), is about 24 km from Kos Town near Antimachia. Many flights are seasonal charters, mainly from the UK and Germany. Athens is about one hour away by air. Public buses link the airport with Kos Town, Mastichari, Kardamena and Kefalos, and taxis run all day. Many tour operators include a shuttle.
- **By ferry**: the main port is in Kos Town. Ferries link it with Rhodes, Patmos and Athens (Piraeus). Smaller boats leave for Kalymnos and Pserimos from Mastichari, and for Nisyros from Kardamena.
- **From Turkey**: boats cross from Bodrum in about 30 minutes to 1 hour. Take your passport and arrive early for border control.

Getting around

- Bus: island buses link Kos Town with the airport and the main resorts. Buy a ticket on board for island routes. The main bus station is behind the old town, about 10 minutes on foot from the harbour. Evening and winter services are thinner.
- Taxi: taxis are useful for the airport and for evenings, and they are easy to find in Kos Town.
- Cycling: cycle paths run through Kos Town and along the east coast. Bike rental is cheap and easy.
- Car or scooter: a car helps for Kefalos, Zia and the quiet west coast. See the driving section.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

Moderate

Kos Town is compact and flat, but beaches and villages are spread out along the island.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

High

Cycle paths run in and around Kos Town.

Driving

- Is a car worth it? For a Kos Town stay, you do not need one. Buses, bikes and taxis cover the town and the nearby beaches. A car or scooter is useful if you want to reach Zia, Kefalos and the west coast.
- Roads: main roads are in good condition. Village roads in the hills need more care.
- Parking: parking in the old town and near the harbour is limited in summer. Park outside the centre and walk in.
- Scooters and quad bikes: they are common rentals. Check your insurance and wear a helmet.

Food & drink

Kos food is simple Greek island cooking. Seafood, grilled meat, local tomatoes and cheese are on most menus. Look for pitaroudia, chickpea fritters from the Dodecanese. Thyme honey and herbs from the hill villages make good gifts. The island gave its name to Cos lettuce.

Choose areas rather than single restaurants. In Kos Town, the old harbour front and the lanes behind it have many tavernas. In Kardamena, Mastichari and Kefalos, eat by the harbour. Zia has terrace restaurants with sunset views. Dinner starts late in summer.

What to eat & drink

LUNCH

Dolmades · Ντολμάδες
Vine leaves stuffed with rice and herbs, sometimes with minced meat, served warm or cold.

Greek Salad · Χωριάτικη σαλάτα
Tomato, cucumber, onion, olives, and a block of feta cheese, dressed with olive oil.

DINNER

Moussaka · Μουσακάς
A baked layered dish of eggplant, potato, and minced meat topped with béchamel sauce.

SNACKS & STREET FOOD

Souvlaki · Σουβλάκι
Grilled skewered meat, often served in a pita wrap with tomato, onion, and tzatziki.

Gyros · Γύρος
Spit-roasted meat sliced and wrapped in pita with fries, tomato, onion, and tzatziki.

Spanakopita · Σπανακόπιτα
A savory pastry filled with spinach and feta cheese, wrapped in flaky phyllo dough.

SWEETS & DESSERTS

Baklava · Μπακλαβάς
Layers of phyllo pastry filled with chopped nuts and soaked in honey syrup.

DRINKS

Greek Coffee · Ελληνικός καφές
Thick, unfiltered coffee traditionally served in a small cup, often with a glass of water.

Ouzo · Ούζο
An anise-flavored aperitif, usually served with ice and small plates (mezedes).

Retsina · Ρετσίνα
A distinctive resin-flavored white wine, a Greek tradition dating back centuries.

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Safety & health

Kos is safe for visitors. Petty theft is rare but possible in crowded places, so watch bags on the beach and in busy bars at night.

- Sun and heat: summer is very hot, with strong sun. Use sun cream, drink water and rest in the middle of the day.
- Sea: beaches on the north and west coasts can be windy, with strong waves. Follow local flag warnings.
- Wildfires: dry summers carry a risk of fires on the Greek islands. Follow local alerts and the advice of staff.
- The island has a hospital in Kos Town, and there are pharmacies in all main villages.

History

Kos has been an important island since ancient times. Hippocrates, born here around 460 BC, is called the father of medicine. People came to the Asklepieion to be healed, and a medical school grew around it.

In the Middle Ages the Knights of St John ruled the island. They built Castle of the Knights of Saint John to guard the harbour, and Antimacheia Castle to guard the island interior. Ottoman rule followed, and later Italy held the island from 1912 until the Second World War. Kos joined Greece after the war, in 1947.

A strong earthquake in 1933 destroyed much of the old town. Italian archaeologists then uncovered the ancient city, including Ancient Agora and Western Excavations. Today ancient, medieval and Italian-period buildings stand side by side in Kos Town.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for Greece at a glance:

CURRENCY

EUR €

EMERGENCY

112

ELECTRICITY



Type C / Type F
230 V · 50 Hz

LANGUAGES

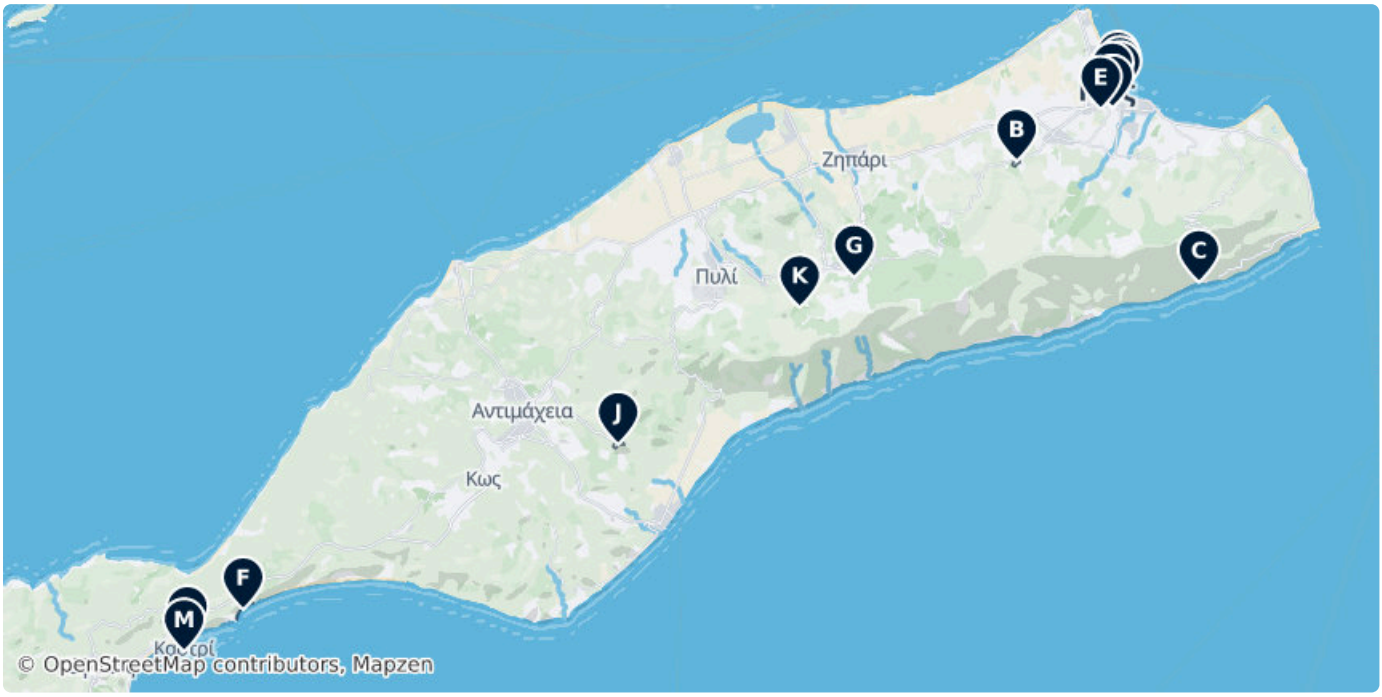
Greek

TAP WATER

Use caution

Kos Essentials

Kos centers on the legacy of Hippocrates, featuring the ancient Asklepieion healing complex and the legendary Plane Tree. The island's history spans from the Roman Odeon and Casa Romana's mosaics to the medieval Castle of the Knights and the Byzantine ruins of Palio Pyli. Natural highlights include the volcanic Empros Thermes and the mountain village of Zia. Along the coast, the ruins of Ayios Stefanos Basilica overlook Kastri Island, while Paradise Beach offers clear waters and sandy shores.





A Plane tree of Hippocrates

The Tree of Hippocrates is the plane tree under which, according to legend, Hippocrates of Kos taught his pupils the art of medicine.

1 Πλατεία Πλατάνου, Κως 85300, Greece (36.89476, 27.29095)



B Big temple of Asklepieion

The largest structure within the Asklepieion sanctuary, this 2nd-century BC Doric temple was dedicated to Asklepios. It occupies the highest terrace of the site, which served as the island's premier center for ancient medicine.

85300, Greece (36.87611, 27.25754)



C Empros Thermes

A natural thermal spring where sulfur-rich volcanic water flows from the rocks into a sea-walled pool. The geothermal water mixes with the Aegean Sea, creating a warm, mineral-rich bath used for its therapeutic properties.

853 00 Kos, Greece (36.84478, 27.31654)



D The Castle of the Knights of Saint John

Built between the 14th and 16th centuries, this castle still doesn't cease to amaze its visitors who marvel at its ancient beauty.

Ακτή Μιαούλη, Κως 85300, Greece (36.89611, 27.29030)



E Roman Odeon

Music competitions used to take place at this ancient open-air theater.

(Unnamed Road), Κως 85300, Greece (36.88965, 27.28477)



F Paradise Beach

Belonging to the most exquisite beaches of the island, this site offers crystal-clear water and good facilities.

Greece (36.76007, 27.00720)



G Zia

Athough this village is not very touristy, people are friendly here and there are several good restaurants and souvenir stalls around.

Ιάκωβου Ζαράφτη, Ζιά 85300, Greece (36.84611, 27.20495)



H Casa Romana

This house got its name after it was restored by Italians. There are beautiful mosaics everywhere around.

(Unnamed Road), Κως 85300, Greece (36.88994, 27.28858)



I Ancient Agora

Consisting of ruins of pillars and buildings, this place used to be the main town market where people met.

(Unnamed Road), Κως 85300, Greece (36.89347, 27.29108)



J Castle of Antimachia

Explore the ancient fortress built on a hill and enjoy the panoramic view of the Kos island and the sea.

85302, Greece (36.80284, 27.12858)



K Palio Pyli Historic Site

There are only ruins left from the former Byzantine castle at this site. However, you can still see that once it used to be magnificent.

85300, Greece (36.83829, 27.18735)

L Basilica of Ayios Stefanos

This site of a former basilica boasts a special charm and offers a magnificent view of the sea and the nearby Kastri Island.

(Unnamed Road), 85301, Greece (36.75258, 26.98916)



M Kastri Island

At a stone's throw from the shore of Kos, this rocky island is accesible by boat and features a small chapel. Quite a romantic place!

Greece (36.74917, 26.98806)



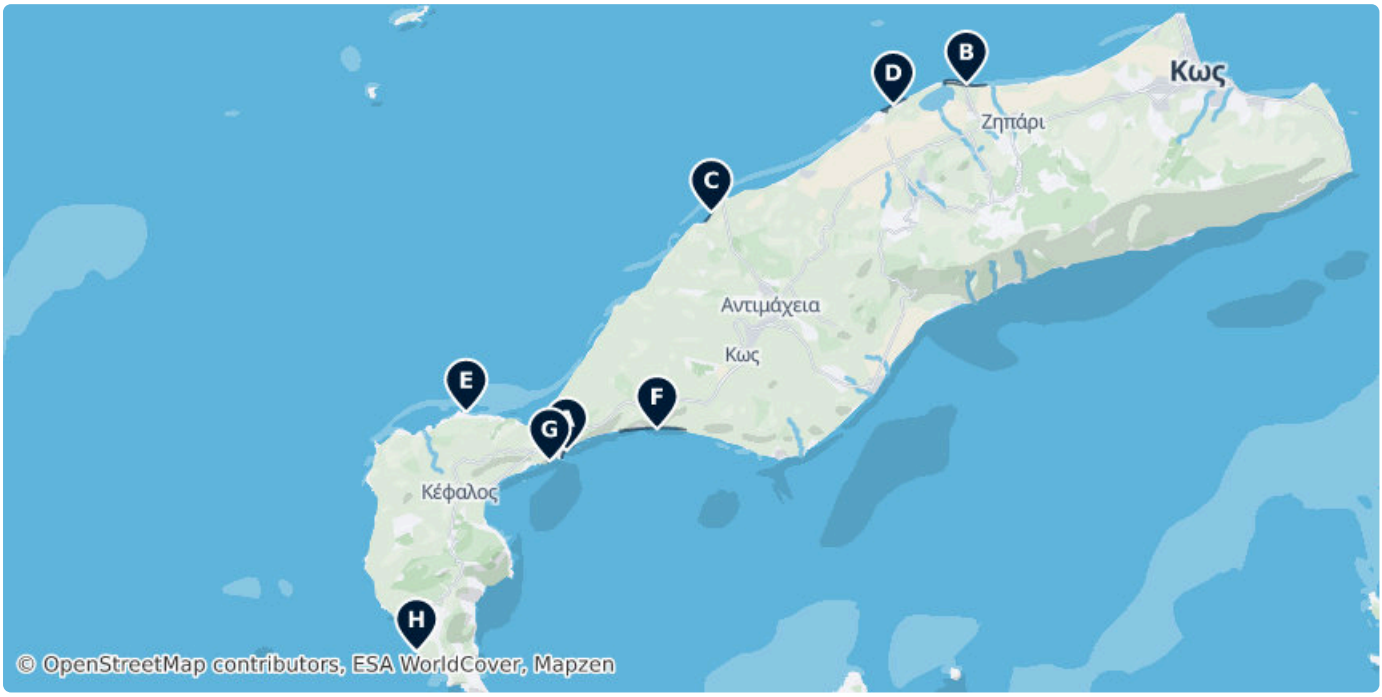
N Eleutherias Square

Eleftheria Square; literally meaning Liberty Square, is the main square in central Nicosia, the capital city of Cyprus, in Europe.

4 Εικοστής Πέμπτης Μαρτίου, Κως 85300, Greece (36.89327, 27.28857)

Best Beaches in Kos

Kos boasts a diverse coastline with white-sand stretches and secluded rocky bays. Paradise and Flamingo beaches provide crystal-clear, shallow waters ideal for swimming, while Marmari is a hub for windsurfing and water sports. For a quieter experience, Camel Beach is framed by unique rock formations, and Agios Theologos offers tranquility on the island's western tip. Visitors can enjoy fresh seafood in the village of Mastichari, go fishing at the harbor of Limnionas, or visit Polemi Beach, the island's primary destination for naturism.





A Paradise Beach

Belonging to the most exquisite beaches of the island, this site offers crystal-clear water and good facilities.

Greece (36.76007, 27.00720)



B Flamingo Beach

Turquoise sea and fine white sand are the main features of this long beach. Access to the water is shallow and suitable for non-swimmers.

Greece (36.89000, 27.18430)



C Mastichari Beach

The beautiful long beach in the village of Mastichari is an ideal place to relax and try some delicious seafood.

85302, Greece (36.84450, 27.07134)



D Marmari Beach

Do you prefer tanning on a beach or doing water sports? In fact, it doesn't matter because you can do both at this place.

85300, Greece (36.88260, 27.15191)



E Limnionas

Not only can you swim or sunbathe at this small beach, but it is also a popular place to go fishing and boating.

(Unnamed Road), 85301, Greece (36.77370, 26.96275)



F Polemi Beach

If you are a fan of nudism, don't hesitate and come to this beach which is a mecca of all naturists of Kos.

Greece (36.76781, 27.04730)

nudistbeaches.info/beaches/greece/polemi-beach.htm



G Camel Beach

Surrounded by rocks and cliffs, this beach is named after the shape of one of them. It doesn't get overcrowded.

Greece (36.75633, 26.99967)

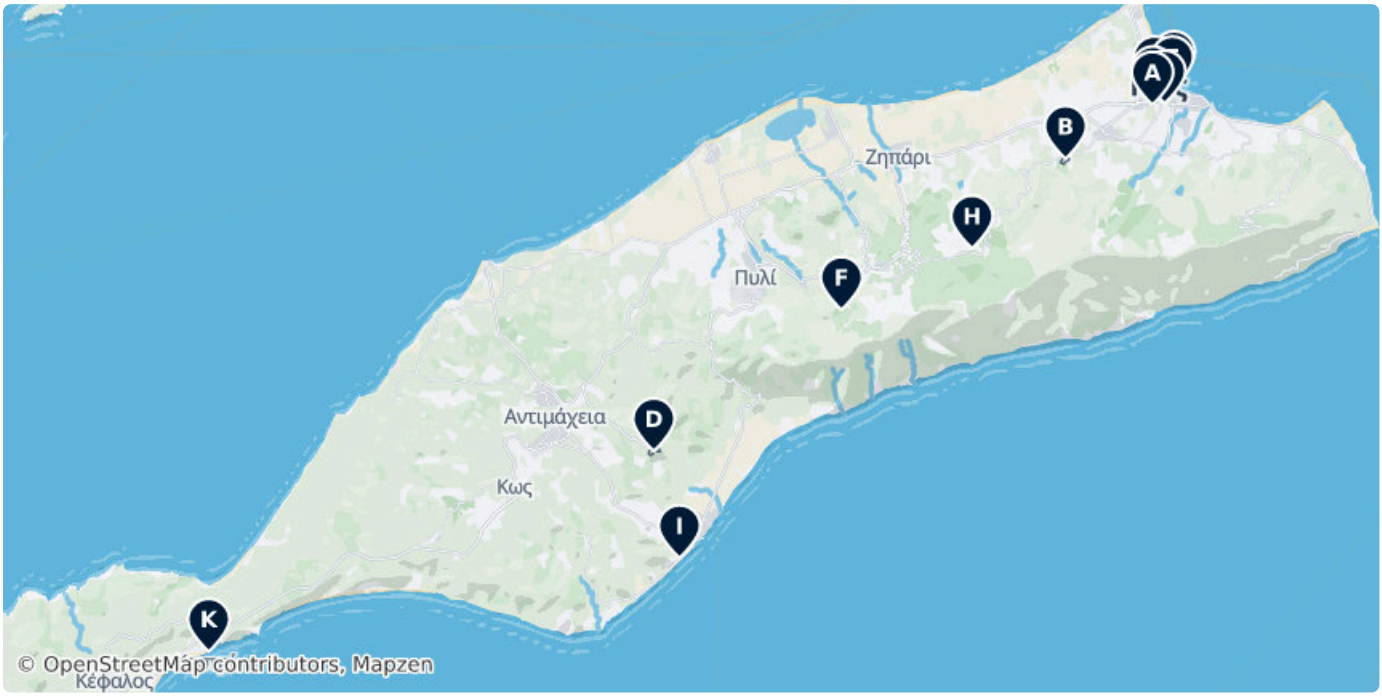
H Agios Theologos

If you are looking for a secluded but picturesque beach, come to Agios Theologos and relish the tranquility.

Greece (36.68874, 26.94077)

Ancient Ruins of Kos

Kos serves as a living museum of Aegean history, showcasing architectural remains from the Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine eras. This collection features the Asklepieion, an ancient healing center dedicated to the god of medicine, alongside the Roman Odeon and the mosaic-filled Casa Romana. The island's defensive history is preserved in the medieval Castle of Antimachia and the hilltop ruins of Palio Pyli. Visitors can explore urban life through the Ancient Agora and the Xisto Gymnasium, or discover early Christian influence at the seaside Basilica of Ayios Stefanos.





A Roman Odeon

Music competitions used to take place at this ancient open-air theater.

(Unnamed Road), Κως 85300, Greece (36.88965, 27.28477)



B Big temple of Asklepieion

This 2nd-century BC Doric temple stands on the highest terrace of the Asklepieion sanctuary. Dedicated to the god of healing, the site features surviving marble columns and foundations that once housed the sanctuary's cult statue.

85300, Greece (36.87611, 27.25754)



C Casa Romana

This house got its name after it was restored by Italians. There are beautiful mosaics everywhere around.

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F Palio Pyli Historic Site

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85300, Greece (36.83829, 27.18735)



G The Gymnasium

Also known as 'Xisto', this structure served as a training center for sportsmen. There was also a swimming pool here.

5 Νισυρίου, Κως 85300, Greece (36.89100, 27.28499)



H Haihoutes - Ghost Town

Also known as Agios Dimitrios, this abandoned settlement features stone houses and narrow alleys characteristic of traditional Dodecanese architecture. The village was largely deserted in the mid-20th century, leaving behind a preserved shell of rural island life.

(Unnamed Road), Άγιος Δημήτριος 85300, Greece (36.85365, 27.22826)



I Alasarna Archeological Site

Kardámaina or Kardámena, is a small Greek town 7 km from Kos Island International Airport at Antimacheia, situated mid-way along the south...

(Unnamed Road), 85302, Greece (36.77606, 27.13660)

J Ancient Stadium

One of the ruins in this area used to be an athletic stadium in the past. Imagine Greek heroes competing here!

9Α Λεωφόρος Τσαλδάρη, Κως 85300, Greece (36.89352, 27.28538)

K Basilica of Ayios Stefanos

This site of a former basilica boasts a special charm and offers a magnificent view of the sea and the nearby Kastri Island.

(Unnamed Road), 85301, Greece (36.75258, 26.98916)

L Knightly Residence of Governor

Now serving as the Archaeological library, this building with long and rich history used to be a military seat and a cafeteria in the past.

2 Ακτή Μιαούλη, Κως 85300, Greece (36.89482, 27.29159)

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