

GREECE – KARPATHOS ISLAND IN THE SOUTH EAST AEGEAN SEA

8-day / 7-night moderate **GUIDED** inn-to-in walking visiting 9 villages & uninhabited Saria Island



Situated in the south eastern part of the Aegean Sea, Karpathos is a small paradise island with a backdrop of tall mountains and crystal clear sea views, the perfect location to see a traditional and unspoiled side to Greece and the ideal location for walking. Karpathos is unique as it is not yet overtaken by mass tourism, so you have the charm of authenticity, a welcoming smile of locals and completely preserved environment. This guided walk gives you access to the best of coastal and inland trails, hiking through traditional villages and showing breathtaking landscapes and local village life.

Karpathos is a small island, just 85km in total length, including Saria Island to the north. On this trip we visit 9 different villages, each with its own tradition, architecture and history, and taste the delicious traditional recipes made from locally harvested ingredients. The walking route takes us to the highest peak, Mount Kali Limni (1215m) and to the mountain village of Olympos, the ancient centre of civilization in Karpathos.

The locals here have a great pride and respect for the traditions of their ancestors. There are many festivals and events, traditional music and dances and the chance to experience genuine island hospitality. The island of Karpathos is a place to enjoy fresh seafood and the traditional Greek cuisine of the mountains, a place to discover the unique spirituality that comes from isolation and ancient history, and a place to discover yourself.

Dates: 9th April, 3rd May, 23rd May, 13th June, 17th October 2021

Cost from: \$2195 per person (twin share) Single room supplement on request

Includes: 7 nights' accommodation with breakfast in local hotels, luggage transfers, transfers including return airport transfers, local guides, snacks and boat tickets to Saria Island.

Not included: Insurance, drinks, lunches or dinners, entrance fees, tips or personal expenses

Difficulty: This tour is graded as **Moderate** as the terrain is generally on narrow tracks with walking times between 4 to 7 hours per day. Some sections are over rocky terrain and there are some more difficult climbs. In summer, warm temperatures can make the routes more difficult.

Suggested itinerary:

Day 1: Arrival in Pigadia (capital of Karpathos)

On arrival at the airport you'll be met by the guide and transferred to the hotel in Pigadia. After settling in spend the rest of the day at leisure, with a stroll through town, taking in the architecture and visiting the historical museum. Accommodation is in Pigadia for two nights.

Day 2: Pigadia – Menetes – Pigadia

walking @ 4-5 hours – altitude gain @ 423 - 470m

In the morning, transfer to Menetes village where the first walk starts, heading North through the region of Pigadia and visiting the villages of Aperi and Vollada. The guide will explain the history and the development of each place on the way to the village of Othos, where there is the chance to visit the cultural museum. Return to hotel in Pigadia for an afternoon at leisure.

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Day 3: Mount Kali Limni

walking @ 4-5 hours – altitude gain @ 470 - 1215m

Today's hike conquers the highest peak of Karpathos, Mount Kali Limni (1215 m). The view from the top is impressive and if the weather is good we can see clearly across the Aegean Sea to neighbouring islands such as Kasos, Rhodes and Crete. Stay overnight in the very small village Lastos, near to the Bay of Makris Gialos, and home to less than 100 people.

Day 4: Lastos to Spoa Village

walking @ 4-5 hours – altitude gain @ 960 - 610m

After breakfast, hike from Lastos to Spoa village through a variety of landscapes, including pine woods and old terraces. There are natural springs with cool water to drink. There is time to relax in Spoa Village which is a traditional village with only about 200 inhabitants, where it seems time has completely stopped. Everything goes *siga-siga* (slowly-slowly). The village is situated on a hillside overlooking the port of Aghios Nikolaos about 800 meters away, is surrounded by vineyards and has a number of traditional Greek taverns to visit.

Day 5: Spoa Village to Olypos Village

walking @ 6-7 hours – altitude gain @ 610 - 270m

Starting from Spoa village, the walk enters the Protected Environment Area of Karpathos, which includes 52.1km² of the sea bed and 102km² of land. It belongs to an eco-development network called "North Karpathos and Saria and coastal sea zone" that belongs to the "*Natura 2000*" network of protected areas. The rich flora includes more than 940 species of plants, 87 of which are endemic, rare or under threat of extinction. Today's destination is the village of Olympos – the capital of tradition and culture in Karpathos.

Day 6: Olympos to Diafani Village

walking @ 2-3 hours – altitude gain @ 270 - 0m

In the morning, there is a guided tour through the history of Olympos village to discover the secrets of this ancient community. We may meet craftsmen making the traditional leather boots (made either for work or dancing), or musical instruments for feasts and festivals. Don't be surprised if you happen to come across women wearing their traditional dress and baking bread in ovens alongside the narrow paths of the village. Perhaps enjoy the hot fresh-made pastries accompanied by a welcoming greeting or *mantinada*.

Visit the cultural museum of Olympos to learn more of the cultural heritage and its people, then pass an array of stone windmills on the walk to Diafani village to relax beside the sea with a choice of traditional tavernas for dinner. There is a two night stay in Diafani village, so plenty of time to explore.

Day 7: Saria Island

Depart from Diafani by boat to the uninhabited Saria Island, the far north of Karpathos. Walk across Saria from south to the north and take a guided tour of the abandoned rural settlement of Argos. On our return, pass a medieval hamlet once inhabited by pirates. Returning to the boat there is the opportunity to go snorkelling with a guide to discover the crystal clear waters and sea bed. Return to Diafani in the early evening and again there are several local restaurants to choose from for dinner.

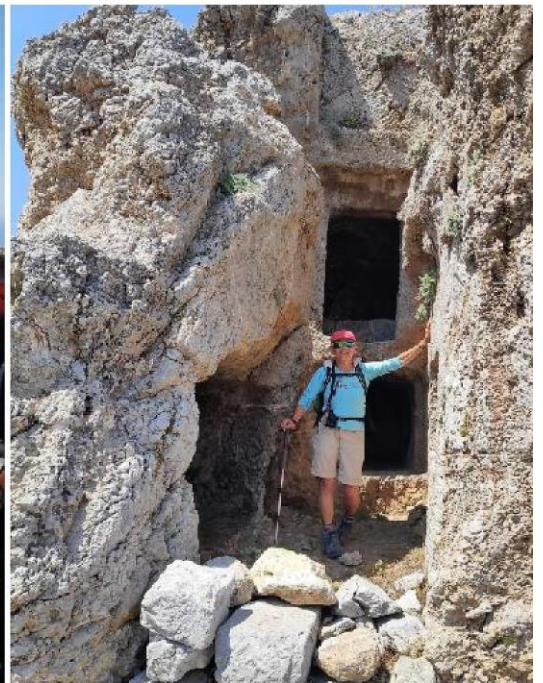
Day 8: Departure day

After breakfast there is an airport transfer from Diafani or take the ferry to other islands.

Outdoor Travel offers walks - guided in small groups or self-guided with inn-to-inn luggage transfers and meals - in most parts of Europe including in **Tuscany**, **Piedmont**, the **Amalfi** or **Cinque Terre** Coasts in Italy. Walk in Spain, France or coastal parts of Croatia and the **Lycian Coast** of Turkey.

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