

THE HISTORY OF THE ISLAND



The name of Hydra is owed to the rich waters, which sprang out from the quarries which existed in the antiquity. During the post-Helladic era, Hydra became an outpost of the Mycenaean kingdom as its land was suitable for supporting the mountain inhabitants the Dryopeans. During the end of Mycenaean era, Hydra was attacked by the Mycenaens. During the Persian Wars Hydrians are believed to have taken part in the historic Battle of Salamis. When the Macedonians appeared, Hydra, once again, served as a naval base for the powerful city of Halieis and when it was invaded and destroyed, Hydra fell into oblivion. After the Byzantine Empire was split, Hydra remained a Venetian dominion until it was passed to the Turks in 1460. At about that time Hydra was settled by Albanian refugees as well as Orthodox Christians, who were later joined by settlers from Epirus, Crete, Evia, Kythnos and Asia Minor. Then in the 18th century Hydra welcomed a large number of refugees from the Peloponnese during the Russo-Turkish war.



During the Ottoman occupation of Greece was abandoned by the Turks most likely because of its lack of water. By the end of the 18th century Hydra had become quite prosperous because of its commercial fleet which was trading as far as France, Spain and even America. During the Napoleonic wars it was the Hydrians' ships which broke the English blockades and were able to feed the hungry people of France and Spain. The island was quite wealthy at this time and was in a position to contribute its ships and supplies to the cause of Independence from the Turks.



Dimitrios Voulgaris,
seven times Prime
Minister of Greece.

The help of Hydra in the ethnic-liberating Battle of 1821 was important. It offered 130 ready to battle ships, with a tonnage of 30.000 tones, 5.400 men and 2.400 cannons. Hibraim called Hydra a "Little England". The Hydrian fleet dominated this sea during the war, contributing resolutely to the freedom of Greece. With the success of the Hydrian spongefishing fleet at the end of the 19th century the island again began a period of prosperity which lasted until 1932 when Egypt forbade fishing along it's coast and corruption in the industry caused profits to dwindle and loans to mount. By the second world war the Hydrians were again leaving the island, many of whom went abroad. During World War II, the Italian and German conquerors left the island in ruins.

In the 1950's Hydra was discovered by tourists, many of whom had read of it in Henry Miller's "Collossus of Marousi." Since then the island has prospered, living off its beauty. It is a popular, touristic island with artists as well as writers who come for inspiration and sometimes never leave !



HYDRA TODAY



The town is built amphitheatrically around the port. It looks glamorous like an art-paint, with grey, white and blue colours above the sea blue, a great example of architecture. Right and left from the entrance of the port, there are the **Parapets with the Canons**, which used to protect the town. At the left side of the port, lies the statue of **A. Miaoulis of the great known Hydrian warrior**.



Next to the Harbour Authorities is the **marble Archive Building of Hydra** and further we find the house of **Tsamados family**, which accommodates the famous **Sea Captain Academy**.

The road leads to the location "**Gymnastirio**" and to the piny area of the **Temple of Saint Fotini**. The road which begins from the middle of the port, leads to "**Kala Pigadia**" and it ascends to the **Temple of Prophet Elias** and the **Temple of Saint Eutaksia**.



At the centre of the port is located the **Cathedral** which was built in 1648 and reconstructed in 1774. Foretimes operated as the **Holy Church of Dormition**. Today, in the Temple, are located the headquarters of the **Town Hall** and the **Ecclesiastic museum**. At the right of the **Temple of Virgin Mary**, begins a tight, paved, ascending road, which leads to the old city, **Kiafa**. The road passes through the location "**Gyrokomeio**" and then leads to **Vlihos**. At the right side of the port, the coastal road passes under the **House of Koundouriotis**, from there reaches **Spilia**, then **Milous** and **Kamini** to finally arrive at **Vlihos**.

Main characteristic of Hydra is that there are **no wheeled vehicles** and the transportation of people is being made only by **donkeys**, a thing that makes the Island even more romantic.



The port of Hydra is filled with yachts, boats and cruisers. On the Island you will enjoy romantic walks in the narrows, picturesque, paved alleys. Generally, **Hydra is famous for the calm life is offers to the visitors in the day, but also for the intense, cosmopolitan night life**. Bar, pub, disco, with foreign-Greek music and rave-up till the morning.

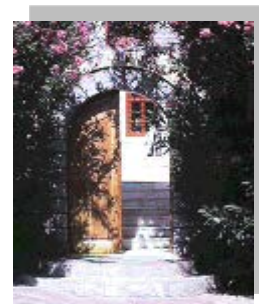


Hydra, with its continuous offering to tourism and to the culture of our country, remains **the adornment of the Saronic Gulf and one of the most important resorts that Greece has to offer**.



HYDRA : A UNIQUE DESTINATION !

What makes Hydra unique is the fact that it has escaped modern development. It does not have high rise apartment buildings and large hotels. In Hydra strict architectural conservation laws are enforced to preserve the beauty of the island.



NO NOISE POLLUTION : The island does not have an airport. Private vehicles or motorbikes are not permitted and there are no roads suitable for bus transport. Hydra has no land traffic, no annoying engines to disturb the peace.

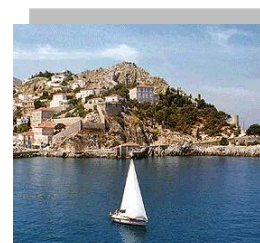
NO INDUSTRIAL POLLUTION : As the economy of Hydra consists of light tourism, traditional crafts, fishing and farming, there are virtually no activities taking place that pollute the environment.



UNIQUE ARCHITECTURE : You will not find anywhere else in Greece such a concentration of gracious 18th and 19th century architecture. In 1830 Hydra had a population of 30,000 and was dominated by wealthy merchants and ship-owners. Venetian builders, carpenters and artisans were imported to work on their mansions. Practically all have been preserved along with hundreds of smaller attractive houses. So the impression you receive when stepping off the boat at Hydra is little changed from that you would have received two centuries ago.

ART : All of the above features, plus a favourable climate and the natural beauty of the island attract prominent artists, writers and other creative people.

Hydra has been voted the **“BEST PRESERVED ISLAND OF THE MEDITERRANEAN”** by **UNESCO**. Hydra is unique for its ecological policies and acts of preservation.



WHERE TO SWIM... IF WEATHER PERMITS !!



Hydra has only a very few sandy beaches. Most of the places for swim are small bays and coves with pebbles or rocks. All Hydra beaches have crystalline waters.

Mandraki (MIRAMARE)

After 25 minutes walking distance from the main port, 7 minutes by boat, or 3 minutes by sea taxi, there is an organized beach called "**Mandraki**". Here you will also find water sports like windsurfing, skiing and beach volley.



Avlaki

Avlaki is consisting of a few small stretches of pebble forming a tiny beach. It can be reached from stone steps from Spilia Beach.

Agios Nikolaos

An organized beach, located on Hydra's west coast, Agios Nikolaos is a beautiful beach accessible by boat.



Spilia

Spilia (Cave) is a rocky area nearby the main harbour where the grey crags have been blasted and laid with cement which is forming sun decks. It can be reached by 5 minutes walking from Hydra port.

Hydronetta

Near Spilia is another beautiful beach for swimming in blue waters and music from the bar 20 hours a day, called "**Hydronetta**".





Kamini

Situated between Vlychos and Hydra Town, Kamini is a small fishing port surrounded by a few fish taverns; the small area is called Mikro Kamini (Small Kamini.) It can be reached by 25 minutes walking from Hydra port.

Vlychos Beach

Vlychos Beach is a small pebble beach with crystal-clear waters. A few taverns are available near the beach. Vlychos beach can be reached by a 40 minutes walk from the harbour or 20 minutes by taxi-boat.



Bisti

This small beautiful beach is run by the diving centre of Hydra but it can be used even without participating in the sportive activities which are kayak, snorkel and scuba dive. It is accessible only by boat.

Molos

About an hour walk from Hydra Town one can reach the quiet pebble beach of Molos. It can also be reached by taxi-boat.



Limnioniza

Accessible by private boat or taxi-boat, Limnioniza is a deserted pebble beach located in the heart of a small bay, to the south coast of Hydra.