

The best MARCO POLO Insider Tips

Our top 15 Insider Tips



INSIDER TIP Home-made liqueurs

In the stylish taverna *Elaiá* in the capital of the island, Sotiris treats his guests to a taste of his home-made liqueurs after they've finished their meals. He even makes a quite unique olive liqueur → p. 43

INSIDER TIP Sweet things from two worlds

Many Koans reckon the *Parádosi* bakery to be the best on the island. The owners belong to the Muslim minority and create delicious tarts, home-made ice cream and excellent Oriental pastries → p. 43

INSIDER TIP True hospitality

Guests staying at the small *Afendoulis* hotel are welcomed so warmly that they soon feel part of the family → p. 46

INSIDER TIP Dance in the Turkish baths

Clubbing at the *Hamam Club* means dancing in former baths between natural walls under a dome painted with murals (photo above) → p. 46

INSIDER TIP Zorbas open air

Consistently beautiful summers lure Hollywood stars outside too: you can watch them appear every evening on the screen of the *Cine Orféas* in the original version → p. 46

INSIDER TIP Design and sea

Only a narrow beach separates the *Kos Aktis* hotel from the waves of the Aegean Sea. Gaze at the ocean and the mountains of the Asia Minor coast from your bed → p. 47

INSIDER TIP Life in Ancient Greece

In the wilderness between Mastichári and the airport, there is a hidden gem of an outdoor museum depicting how wealthy Greeks lived in ancient times → p. 62

INSIDER TIP "Beautiful Greece"...

...is the translation for the traditional *I Oréa Elláda* farm house. A Flemish lady has converted it into a restaurant, selling paintings and renting out two apartments as well → p. 69

INSIDER TIP Farmer on the beach

With no taverna to be found anywhere nearby, a farming family from Kéfalos treats its guests to products from the region. Enjoy typically Greek cuisine – only 50 m from the beach → p. 72

INSIDER TIP Bubble Beach

The popular *Paradise Beach* harbours a secret that only reveals itself to snorkellers – this is the way to discover its bubbly underworld → p. 79

INSIDER TIP Under the leaf canopy

Hidden away, the *village square* of Mandráki on Nísiros is one of the most beautiful in the Aegean. Sit under the canopy of huge rubber trees and enjoy a succulent kid goat that fed on the aromatic herbs from pastures on the slope of the volcano → p. 89

INSIDER TIP Climbing with sea views

Those in the know appreciate the island of Kálimnos as one of the best climbing areas in Europe. Near-unique in the world: the immediate proximity of the climbing zones to the sea (photo below) → p. 93

INSIDER TIP Just dive in

The *Líamis Dive Centre* offers try dive courses in safe coves as well as adventurous trips to wrecks and into sea caves → p. 94

INSIDER TIP Oriental well-being

At *Artemis Hamam and Spa* in Tigáki, you can experience the rituals of a Turkish bath in a modern setting → p. 95

INSIDER TIP For horse-crazy kids

In Marmári, Erika Mastórou runs a riding stable for children and teenagers. But, it is not just the horses that make this place fun for the whole family... → p. 98



BEST OF...

GREAT PLACES FOR FREE

Discover new places and save money

● *Music of the spheres beneath the theatre*

Not only is a visit to the Roman theatre in Kos Town free – at the catacombs, spherical background music accompanies you through the history of the Roman building (photo) → p. 40

● *An ancient bargain*

Normally, you have to pay admission to tour the *Archaeological Museum* in Kos Town and the *Asklipion*, the most significant archaeological site on the island. But, on certain days in the off-season, you can visit both places for free → p. 48

● *Art at a hotel*

Even if you're not staying at the *Neptune Resort*, you can still admire the works of Peter R. Müller for free. On the premises of one of the island's best hotels, the Bavarian artist has recreated deities and heroic figures from Greek mythology as sculptures → p. 59

● *A view fit for a king*

The only other way to get a panoramic view like that from atop the walls of the *Antimáchia Castle* is to climb aboard an aeroplane. Not only is this fantastic view free, but you can also experience the imposing fortress with its wilderness full of lizards inside at no cost → p. 53

● *A monastery picnic*

At a restaurant, the prices would most likely reflect an amazing view like the one you can enjoy from the terrace of the abandoned monastery *Ágios Ioánnis Pródromos*.

But, no one will bring you a bill if you pack a picnic full of cheese, fruit and wine to enjoy here → p. 78

● *Spa with a difference*

At *Embrós Thérme* thermal water, heated to a temperature of 45 °C/112 °F, flows into the sea. In an improvised pool between the rocks you will find mostly Greeks taking a free thermal bath → p. 51

●●● Dots in guidebook refer to "Best of..." tips

ONLY ON KOS

Unique experiences

● *Truly public*

Have you ever been present at a court session? At the *kafenion* next to the court building in Kos Town, you can follow court proceedings through the open doors with a cup of mocha in your hand → p. 43

● *Ottoman cuisine*

The tavernas on the *village square* in *Platáni* nearly all bear Turkish names – because Kos is the only Greek island apart from Rhodes where Muslims originally from Turkey still have their home. A good opportunity for a culinary treat: the spicy secrets of Asia Minor are an experience for the palate → p. 44

● *Cows on the beach*

On Kos, cows are nearly as omnipresent as in India. You find them in the countryside, on the beach or in the odd quiet alleyway. This is the only place in Hellas you will see this – and between *Tigáki* and *Mastichári* is *Cow Central* → p. 65

● *Making new friends*

The old farmers living right next to the ancient *tomb of Harmylos* in *Pýli* are often to be found sitting outside the small church waiting to chat to visitors and treat them with water or fruit – hospitality Koan style → p. 62

● *Old times*

If you want to see how older Koans lived when they were children, visit the *Traditional House* in *Antimáchia*, erected and furnished following historic models: cosy it might have been, though not very comfortable for sure. The attraction also shows how tourism has changed the island (photo) → p. 52

● *Celebrate together*

The small Koan churches located outside the villages usually have an area reserved for festivities with long tables and benches. If you're lucky, you can watch more than 1,000 locals eat, drink and party together after the service on the church feast day on the square at the church *Panagia Stylóti* near *Kéfalos* → p. 78



ONLY IN

DISCOVERY TOURS

1

KOS AT A GLANCE



START: ① Kos Town
END: ① Kos Town

Distance:
🕒 130 km/81 miles

10–13 hours
Driving time
(without stops)
3.5 hours



COSTS: admission for Asklepion 4 euros, Traditional House 1.50 euro, car hire from 55 euros with next-day return
WHAT TO PACK: swim gear, maybe a torch

Kos is small enough that you can get to know the entire island with a hired car in a single day. You will discover archaeological treasures nestled within the beautiful natural countryside and stroll through small villages in the island's interior. You can also learn about life on the island in earlier times, shop for arts and crafts and take a dip in the sea at one of the prettiest beaches on the island. A night-time swim in warm thermal water is a special treat at the end of the day.

Every corner of the earth has its own special charm. If you want to explore all the many different facets of this region, head off the beaten track or get tips for the best stops, breathtaking views, hand-picked restaurants or the best local activities, then these customised discovery tours are just the right thing. Choose the best route for the day and follow in the footsteps of the MARCO POLO authors – well-prepared to navigate your way to all the many highlights that await you along the tour.

08:00am Start early in the morning from ① **Kos Town** → p. 32 and drive to the ② **Asklepion** → p. 48. In the balmy early morning air around 8:30am, the view of the coast of Asia Minor across the water is still clear. Enjoy your first cappuccino or espresso on the village square in ③ **Platáni** → p. 40, before you head off on the **main island road** to ④ **Antimáchia** → p. 52, the village at the heart of the island. At the **Traditional House** in the village centre, you can travel back in time and explore the island's history.

