

Aegina, an island ...many choices!

The Temple of Aphaia



The sanctuary of Aphaia is located at the northeastern tip of Aegina, overlooking the headland of Agia Marina, on a pine-clad hill offering a panoramic view over the sea.

Aphaia named Britomartis daughter of Zeus and Karne and a dear companion of Artemis. Minos, king of Crete, loved Britomartis, and to escape his attentions, she jumped into the sea. However, she became entangled in fishing nets. Artemis saved the girl from drowning and turned her into a goddess, venerated by the Cretes with the name Dictina (translator's note: the Greek word for nets is "dictia"). The Aeginitans believed that Britomartis emerged in Aegina, where she became invisible (translator's note: the Greek word Aphaea means "invisible") and lived in a forest. Thus, she was worshiped with the name Aphaea.

Remarkable is the fact that the distance (44,64 Km.) between the temple of Aphaea in Aegina and Acropolis of Athens is the same as the distance between the temple of Aphaee and the temple of Poseidon in Soufio (Cape in Athens).



The city of Aegina

The city of Aegina, which takes its name from the island itself, is situated on the western side of the island. As you enter the harbour that is buzzing with life, the small, snow-white and picturesque chapel of Ai-Mikolias (St. Nicholas) welcomes you from the jetty on the waterfront. The church of St. Nicholas, patron of the sailors, was built with funds raised by the seamen of Aegina. Saint Nicholas is so greatly adored by the local mariners that a common wish to those who is going to sail is: "may the saint sit at your rudder".

In the middle of the Saronic Gulf, sixteen and a half nautical miles from the port of Preaus, in the light blue waters of myth and history lies Aegina, or according to Herodotus, the island of Aegina, the first capital of modern Greece, the island whose ancient name has remained unchanged throughout the ages.

According to the ancient Greek myth, Aegina was the loveliest of river Asopos twenty daughters. Zeus, father of men and gods, fell in love with her. He transformed himself into an eagle and carried her away from Elious (today called Ai-Giorgos, East of Arcadia) to the then uninhabited island of Olonoi directly in the middle of the Saronic Gulf. The fruit of their love was Aeacus, who became the first and last king of the island that bore the name of his mother, Aegina, (or Aigina).

A side from the city of Aegina, you will come across cosmopolitan **Agia Marina**, the island's second port **Souvala**, little and peaceful **Vagia**, famous for its fresh fish **Perdika**, but also **Kipseli**, **Mesagros**, **Portes**, **Antiseo**, and many other small villages, all with unique beauty.

Upon leaving Aegina, don't forget to purchase pistachios, for they are famous for their wonderful flavor.

Agios Nektarios

On Aegina's main road leading to the inland, 6 km west of Aegina town is found the location Xantros, with a new-built large church and the old renowned monastery of Agios Nektarios. Agia Triada was erected in 1904 and the foundations were laid by Agios Nektarios himself on 1st January 1906. At that time Agios Nektarios was still director of the Rizarios School.

When the Saint died on 9th November 1920 his relics, were buried on the right side of the church, under a tall, deep-shaded pine tree. His grave and monastery remains to our days full of votive offerings and they are a place of religious pilgrimage, where thousands of devout believers flock daily to worship and begging his mediation for their physical health and spiritual deliverance



KOLONA

The archaeological site of Kolona is situated very close to the harbour. Venetian sailors named the hill "Kolona" after the columns (kolon=column) of the ancient temple of Apollo that served as a sign of orientation.

EKPAZ

At the foot of the hill descending from Lazarides, one comes across the EKPAZ. This is the first organization in Greece to obtain official permission to possess, treat, transport and release all species of indigenous wildlife.

Hundreds of volunteers from Greece and elsewhere have gained an unforgettable experience by taking part in different activities organized by the EKPAZ. All those who are interested in contributing to wildlife protection and maintaining the cleanliness of the facilities can be put up by the EKPAZ, where they may gain an unforgettable experience by working with the animals.

