

A walk from the Valley of Butterflies to Agios Soulas and the village of Soroni



The total distance of this walk is 17km/10.5miles. The expected duration in a pace of 6km per hour is 3 h. The grade can be described as moderate. Most of the walk is along a wide forestry track. The twenty-minute stretch linking the Kalopetra Monastery and the forestry track is uphill and on a fairly steep, rough path.

You will need sturdy shoes or boots, sunhat, sunglasses, long-sleeved shirt, long trousers, cardigan, anorak, raincoat, raingear, water. How to get there: Bus to Petaloudes. To return: Buses depart Soroni, journey to Rodos City takes 45min.

Petaloudes - the butterfly valley - is as much a part of Rodos as the three notable ruins of Lindos, Filerimos and Kamiros. Perhaps it's even more of a mystery: no one seems to know exactly where the butterflies come from or how long they've been here. So join the hordes for half an hour and see the obligatory - deservedly so - Petaloudes. Exuberant vegetation floods the valley floor.

Just walking beside the stream here is a unique experience. But it's the presence of this myriad of butterflies that has made Petaloudes the island's natural treasure. When you've left this valley behind, you have the countryside to yourself and a few wild goats. You ascend the island's spine. Strawberry trees, tangled with bushes and scrub, wood the inclines. As you wind along the crests, your views will sweep down into the guillies and beyond the plains to the sea. On your descent to the plains, pines keep you company, until they give way to olive groves. As

you approach the homeward stretch, you'll come to Agios Soulas, the site of one of the island's biggest festivals. Here the park-like setting comes alive on the 30th of July, when the grounds surrounding the little chapel are the scene of athletic events, dancing, even horse-racing!

The walk begins just at the entrance to the Butterfly Valley. Before you start out, however, be sure to visit the part of the valley below the bridge. It's not to be missed. The steps beside the ticket office/gate lead you down to it and eventually to a bar/restaurant. Visit this part of Petaloudes first, and then return to the upper valley. From here, wind your way up the gorge, alongside a cascading stream. Only a flicker of sunlight penetrates the thick foliage. Little wooden bridges cross the still pools, steps climb the rock walls and the butterflies pattern the tree trunks in odd paislies. July to September is the best time to see this great deluge of butterflies (*Callimorpha quadripunctaria*). They're attracted to the valley by the strong resinous scent of the thorax tree.

Less than ten minutes up, a sign tells you that the valley has come to an end and to return. But you continue up the steps, above the falls. This short stretch is the most beautiful part of the park for me.

Five minutes later we climb above another waterfall and head along a dry streambed. There's no concrete pathway now! Almost immediately, you leave the streambed and continue over to the left. Here you'll find red dots - the trail markers. In half a minute you're crossing a side-stream and scrambling up a steep hill. Just over 15min from the entrance to the park, you're out in a clearing with olive trees. You'll see a chapel, the Kalopetra Monastery (built in 1784), not far above. From here you look down through the valley on to the coastal plain. From the monastery, head down the macadam road. Three minutes along, on a curve, you'll see a low cypress tree on the roadside on your right. If you look closely, it has a red arrow on its trunk. just across the road from it, a path ascends the ridge running down on your left. Follow it, keeping left and up.

Breasting the crest, two minutes up, the way swings left. Thyme, Spanish broom, Cistus and sage flank the path. Shortly you're passing through strawberry trees, dots keeping you on the trail. Ten minutes up there's an unimpeded view of the west coast. Minutes up from here an arrow points you on up the ridge, slightly left. Twenty minutes past the monastery you attain the vertex of the ridge dividing east and west. There's a splendid panorama. The greens roll down into browns, which in turn meet the blues of the sea. Profitis Ilias is the sombre mountain over to your left. Beyond it is Atavyros, the island's highest point. This whole range seems to have been the victim of a fire. Low-lying scrub fills the wound.

From the crest we leave the red dots and arrows. Head to the right, along a faint track passing below the crest. (The Short walk heads left here.) just over five minutes on, when the track forks, keep right. In three minutes you'll join the main forestry track (under 30min). Turn right. As it twirls around the knolls, you'll pass two tracks branching off to the right. Up here, the cool north-west breeze swishes off to the east, trailing whiffs of sage and thyme.

Forty-five minutes from the monastery (1h05min into the walk) we're looking out on to the thinning tail of Profitis Ilias, and, below it, the sheltered valley of Dimilia. To the west, forest reappears, spreading across the abrupt hills. Facing the sea, a wide, open valley reveals the Soroni plain. A little further on - at the 1h10min mark, you leave the main track and head for the sea. The turn-off is the next right. This is a wide track, snaking its way down a narrow bumpy ridge towards the plains below. Ten minutes down, at a fork, head off right on to another lateral ridge. Five minutes later, fork right again, down to another ridge.

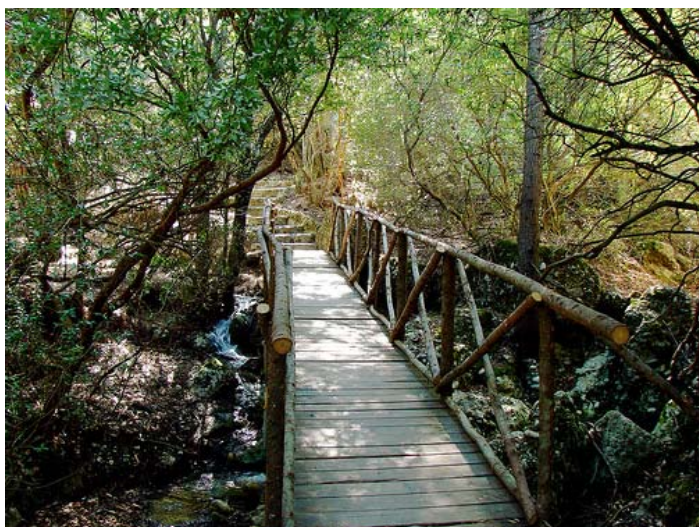
The Eleousa/Soroni road becomes your way one hour and fifty minutes from the monastery (2h10min into the walk). Turn right. During the afternoon there's very little traffic on this road. Ten minutes along you'll probably be grateful for the water fountain on the roadside to the right.

If you're not tiring at this point, and you're 'into' chapels - or monasteries (moni), as the Greeks call them - you've another nearby. A little over five minutes from the water fountain a gravel track turns off to your right to Agios Georgios (signposted). About ten minutes along the track stands the chapel, built in 1830.

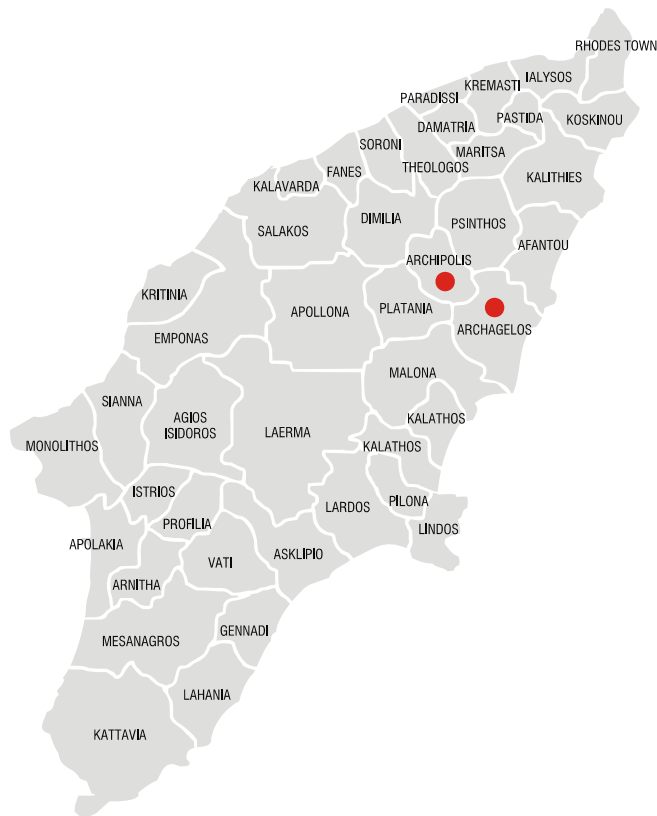
The main walk passes this detour and comes to Agios Soulas, set back off the road in a grove of eucalyptus, pines and cypress trees. Narrow tarred roads lead up to the chapel grounds, where there's a bar/restaurant (only open in July), toilets, water fountains, a playground, and a race track. Yes, a race track. The most important event of the entire festival is the horse racing! The chapel itself is very simple.

Soroni lies another half an hour down the road, or 2h 55min into the walk. The bus stop is five minutes from the junction, to the right - opposite the bus shelter on the other side of the road. If you have a fairly long wait for the bus, why not go for a dip? Ten minutes down the road opposite the bus stop, there's a pleasant stony beach with a couple of bar/restaurants.

An alternative Shorter walk: A moderate circular tour (1 h 20min) starts and finishes at Petaloudes. Follow the main walk as far as the 40min mark - to the viewpoint at the top of the crest. Here, when the main walk continues to the right on a faint track, the short walk heads down the track to the left. Ten minutes down this track, come to a junction: turn sharp left and head straight down. The Psinthos (macadam) road is met in five minutes. Turn left. A little over five minutes walking returns you to the Kalopetra Monastery. Here you can either rejoin the Petaloudes path we climbed at the start of the walk or continue down the road back to the bus stop (another twenty minutes). Equipment: sturdy shoes, sunhat, sunglasses, suncream, long-sleeved shirt, cardigan, picnic, water.



A walk from the village of Arhipoli to the village of Archangelos



The total distance of this walk is 11km/ 6 1/4 m. The expected duration in a pace of 6km per hour is 1 h 40 min. The grade can be described as easy. Walk is along a gravel track.

Equipment: sturdy shoes, sunhat, sunglasses, long-sleeved shirt, long trousers, cardigan, raingear, raincoat and water. How to get there: Bus to Archipoli. To return: The return is from Archangelos, from where there are numerous buses.

In fact, the best time to make this walk is late afternoon or early evening, when the countryside is bathed in a soft purple light. You'll start out from the quiet hillside village of Archipoli, ascend a pass up into goat country, and step into a landscape right out of a classical painting. The air will be scented first with pines and then thyme. This scene is neither dramatic nor spectacular. It is simply perfection, and remains one of my most vivid walking memories.

So while the walk is ideal for beginners, it's also ideal for the energetic. Simply tack it onto Alternative walk 7 and make a day's outing of it. You will virtually cross the island. This does, however, leave a gap in the middle - the four kilometres between Eleousa and Archipoli. It can either be filled by a bus journey or walked. The road is sealed, but little used.

Start the walk in Archipoli. Head out of the village on the Kolymbia road. After 10min walking, just past a sharp, descending S-bend, and just before a culvert, you'll see a wide gravel track on your right. Turn onto it and gently climb between two forested ridges towards an enclosed valley. A small

streambed, filled with plane trees, lies below the track. Oleander bushes splash pink along the valley floor. At 20min into the walk come to a junction. Keep left and up. For the first thirty minutes walking, you're enveloped in sweetly-scented pines. Then the trees slowly abate, yielding to a landscape of Launaea, thyme, sage and Spanish broom. Goats hop about the rocky crags of the ridge. At 45min a track joins from the left and you begin the descent over the pass. The way gets rougher and more narrow.

At 50min into the walk, through a gap in the hills, Archangelos and its Profitis Ilias (the mountain behind the village) come into view. Between here and there lie groves of flickering, silver-grey olive trees, catching the evening breeze. Squares and oblongs of freshly-harvested wheat fields patch the Plain. Under a retiring sun, this scene is perfection. A building and a water trough sit squeezed into the gap here between the ridges, overlooking this splendid view.

When you reach the olive groves below, the way swings back to the right, and minutes along you come to a junction. Keep straight on, passing a small building beside the track. You now meander through ageing olive trees. A few vineyards and fruit trees break the monotony of colour. Tethered donkeys bray out, seeking whatever attention they can get. You'll see the farmers returning to the village. They generally stop and offer you a lift.

At about 1 h into the walk, you join a gravel track coming in from the right. A 'shocking' blue shrine on your left alerts you to it. Keep straight. Ten minutes along, this track forks; head left. For those running low on 'walkers' petrol', there's a water fountain two minutes past the fork. Then, without warning, ten minutes later, the way becomes tarred. You'll cross the main Rhodes-Lindos road at 1 h 30min and head into Archangelos. Continue straight on, across the road, bearing left. After crossing a small stream, keep right. At the T-junction, a minute on, right again, and you're in the main street. The bus stop is just past the first alleyway heading into the houses, on your left. (Not the Stegna road, the next one.) But first you may have time to climb to the castle and admire the view!

Medieval Highlights



A confusion of influences assail the senses on a walk through the old town. The stoic grandeur of the medieval fortress-like buildings seem at odds with the narrow alleyways and homespun architecture of the houses. Graceful minarets, rickety balconies, tranquil squares with fountains and shady trees still exude an oriental air. Blue glass eyes, to ward off evil, Loukouma and the names of many dishes in restaurants are all part of the Turkish legacy.

A visit to all or some museums is usually on everyone's list. Even if ancient remains do not excite, the Museum of Decorative Arts with its insight into life during the past couple of hundred years, will interest all the family. If time is pressing, and there is only time for one museum visit, save it for the Palace of the Grand Masters. The Exhibition of Archaeological Excavations, displaying finds from Prehistoric to Hellenistic times is clear, informative and above all fascinating. The palace closes at 3pm and admittance to the museum stops at 2.30pm but the exhibition demands much longer than half an hour.

From the taxi stand in Platia Rimini, head past the ranks of sponge sellers to enter the old town through the Freedom Gate (Pili Eleftherias). This narrow bridge has to cope with a steady stream of traffic, in both directions, as well as a swell of tourists. An early or later start will allow chance to observe the deer in their compound to the left or glorious curtains of bougainvillea

cascading down the walls, without being swept along by the crowd.

Once inside, leaving the traffic to hurtle left out through the Arsenal Gate, head up the right-hand side of Platia Simis. The tour starts in the Collachium, the Knights-preserve. To the left are the remains of a third-century BC Temple of Aphrodite and in front of this is a useful the layout of the town. Further up the rise, on the left, kastrou, is the Inn of Auvergne built in 1507 and more recently restored. A Byzantine baptismal font serves as an unusual fountain in the Argirokastrou Square and heaps of cannonballs, from the Turkish siege of 1522, are displayed as decoration. One of the earliest buildings in the Collachium fronts the square, the colour and texture of its stonework softened by a tumbling mass of bougainvillea. This was originally the Palace of the Armeria, constructed under the Grand Master Roger de Pinsot in the fourteenth century, and the First Hospital of the Knights. It was also used by the Knights and Turks as an arsenal but today it enjoys a more peaceful role, it houses the offices of the Archaeological Institute of the Dodecanese and is where the first museum is located.

The Museum of Decorative Arts: an off-putting title for a delightful and intimate Folk Art Museum where decorated tiles, intricately carved woodwork, brightly coloured Rodian style pottery and exquisite needlework are elegant reminders of an earlier culture. A reconstruction of the interior of a traditional Rodian house provides a good insight into everyday life. Even here, a Turkish influence can be detected. Many exhibits seem to originate from the island of Symi where women could appear well provided with rich dresses by owning just one long, sleeveless, elaborately embroidered 'gilet' to wear over a basic plain dress embroidered only round the neck, hem and sleeves.

Not much further up the street, again on the right, is the Ministry of Culture Museum Shop. For a piece of Creek history to take home, look no further. On sale are authentic casts of parts of friezes and funeral stele and replicas of ancient Greek jewellery. From hereon, souvenir shops jostle for attention with displays of gold and silver, leather, lace and the inevitable T-shirts.

On the opposite side of the road is the thirteenth century Byzantine Church of St Mary (Panagia tou Kastrou), which became the first cathedral of the Knights. A forced change of allegiance under Turkish rule saw its steeple converted into a minaret and renamed Enderoum. After a Christian massacre here in 1523 it became known to Rodians as the 'red mosque'. Converted back again for use as a Christian church it has become a fitting home for the Byzantine Museum which contains an exhibition of well displayed Byzantine paintings and frescos in an atmospheric setting. One fresco has even been transferred from Halki and is displayed on the ceiling of the barrel vault.

The cobbled street Odos Ipoton, the 'Street of the Knights', rises up right to the Palace of the Grand Masters. For the moment though, continue into Platia Moussieo (Museum). Tucked back on the left is a bank, separated from the rather undistinguished Inn of England by a narrow street. Of more interest are the eateries along the narrow alley which leads off the far left-hand corner of the square beyond the inn.

The impressive building to the right commands attention. This was the new Hospital of the Knights and their original raison d'être. Begun in 1440, over the remains of a Roman building, it was not until the Grand Master d'Aubusson took

charge over 40 years on that it was completed. It was built along similar lines to Byzantine hostelrys. Eight plain arches support the facade, the only relief to the severe exterior being the decorative, recessed Gothic arch of the main gateway which lies beneath the projection of the chapel above. Unfortunately, the original wooden main gate found its way to Versailles when it was sold by the Turks in the nineteenth century. After the Knights' departure it was used variously as a hospital then ignobly as a barracks. Skilfully restored by the Italians and again after suffering bomb damage during World War II, it now serves as the Archaeological Museum. The entrance opens into a courtyard, surrounded by a galleried upper story accessed by an outside stairway. Stone fragments and stacks of cannonballs, relics from various sieges, lie on the ground and a first-century BC marble statue of a crouching lion takes centre spot.

Upstairs is the large room which was the Infirmary Ward. What the small windowless rooms down the sides were used for is open to conjecture, possibly isolation wards or maybe wardrobes. Pilgrims came here for treatment until the needs of the Knights themselves became paramount. When this happened, the vow of poverty seems to have been conveniently forgotten! Simple wooden beds were replaced by beds decked with brocaded canopies and nothing less than silver plate was good enough to eat off.

Medieval gives way to an earlier era in other rooms along the gallery. It is difficult not to admire the art of the sculptor in Hellenistic times and the marble statuette of Aphrodite bathing, an adaptation of an earlier first century BC sculpture, is a fine example. There is also another sculpted Aphrodite from the third century BC more commonly known as the Marine Venus after being hauled out of the sea nearly 70 years ago. It is this sculpture which inspired the title of Lawrence Durrell's book *Reflections on a Marine Venus* about his life on Rodos. A second-century BC head, from a statue of the Sun God Helios driving his chariot in the sky, still has the holes where iron spikes for the sun's rays would have been positioned. It is thought that this was sited in the Temple to Helios. Grave stele, as here, provide an insight into the everyday life of ordinary people of the time. One from Kamiros depicts a fifth-century BC bas-relief of a girl saying good-bye to a dead mother and another, erected by Damokles to his dead wife Kalliaista, shows her seated in front of her maid. Besides these gems there are many funerary objects which is not too surprising, as most of the information gleaned about this early period comes from ancient cemeteries. Pottery figures strongly, especially Geometric and there are also some mosaics.

Leaving the Collachium with its austere façades, it is time for a complete change of scene. Continuing in the same direction, outdoor tables on the square at Folydorou are invitingly placed for the thirsty visitor and it is tempting to pause and watch the world go by. Moving on through the square, Sokratous is not difficult to miss. Its wide bustling street, reminiscent of its central role in the old bazaar rises up towards Suleiman Mosque. With the projecting wooden balconies (sachnisi) of its Turkish style buildings, this is the most famous and photographed street in the old town. A short diversion left here leads into Platia Ipokratous, beyond which is the medieval courthouse and stock exchange, the Kastellania, and close by the impressive Marine Gate.

Wandering up Sokratous could take a long time. Colour spills onto the street as traders entice with their assortment of wares, ikons, replica helmets, embroidery, carpet weaving, ceramics and leather sandals all clamouring for attention. Pastry shops and Cafes seduce the foot weary while the lure of shady alleyways suggest more peaceful oases. An arch jutting out into the street, the Aga Mosque, has so far restricted the view ahead but from hereon the Suleiman Mosqu comes into better focus. Built on the site of an earlier Church of the Apostles, it was constructed in honour of the Sultan after his conquest of Rodos in 1522 and rebuilt in 1808. The pink colour on many old buildings is not paint but a special pink cement used for waterproofing on floors, roofs, domes and walls. Do not continue up past the mosque but go right in front of it along Panetiou. The commanding walls of the Palace of the Grand Masters loom ahead. On the left are excavations of medieval buildings behind which is the Turkish school constructed on the site of the Conventual Church of St John destroyed in the 1856 gunpowder explosion.

A fragment of wall being the sole remains. Built in a plain architectural style during the fourteenth century it contained the tombs of the Knights, remnants of which are found in the Knights Hospital. Pass the top of the Street of the Knights' to enter the palace environs. At the end of the street is Platia Kleovoulou and the restored Loggia of St John which, when the Knights were in residence on the island, connected the palace with the Church of St John. Two round towers announce the entrance to the palace, its large pointed door being one of the parts preserved from the original building.

The Palace of the Grand Masters stands on the highest part of the Collachium, and was built on the probable site of the Sanctuary of Helios in the fourteenth century. Helios was the original sun god on Rodos but he appears to have been supplanted at some later time by Apollo who was also a sun god as well as sometime god of light, poetry, music etc. The role of gods being manipulated by different peoples to suit their personal requirements. Designed as a fortress in its own right with underground storerooms to withstand siege, it served as the Grand Masters' residence and the hub of the Knights' activities. Although it survived the Turkish siege of 1522 little damaged, its use as a prison and the earthquake of 1851 hastened structural decline.

The gunpowder explosion and fire 5 years later, coupled with removal of stone for other building work by the Turks, effectively sealed the fate of this once commanding edifice.

Left to languish for the next 80 years, it took a new master to restore its fortunes when, under the Italians in the 1930s, it was rebuilt as an intended summer residence for Vittorio Emmanuel III and Mussolini. The exterior is supposed to follow the style of the old building with the interior adapted more to modern day requirements with electricity and central heating. Even camouflaged lifts were installed so as not to appear incongruous in such a setting. Ostentation was more a

prerequisite than taste when it came to interior design, or so it seems. The lavish style extending to the use of Roman and Byzantine columns and importation of some fine Roman and Early Christian mosaics from Kos.

The entrance to the main body of the palace is up the sweep of stairs to the left, opposite the pay desk immediately on entering. Inscriptions near this entrance appertain to the Italian Fascist regime and to Greek Independence gained in 1947. Ahead is the inner courtyard with its display of Roman statuary and off this courtyard is a snackbar and the entrance to the special exhibition within the palace of ancient local finds. The exhibition covers the period from prehistoric times to the Hellenistic City and includes some excellent mosaics. It is well annotated and displayed and time spent absorbing the information in here really helps to recreate the living and breathing Rodos of old. Climb the stairs to wander through the corridors and spacious rooms open to the public where a combination of seemingly wall to wall mosaics, statues, Italian Renaissance carving and scant furnishings add to the sterile atmosphere.

This mix of periods lie uneasily together. Views from the windows over the town and gardens give a different perspective as does a walk along the old city walls.

Walking the walls is an excellent way to appreciate them as a tremendous feat of fortification. It also provides a superb overview of the old town which helps to put the layout into perspective. Only accessible on Tuesdays and Saturdays at 2.45pm but often open from 2.30pm. Tickets at the entrance to the palace. The unguided walk starts up the steps and through the small Cannon Gate off the outer courtyard. Covering only about a third of its original length, the walk passes along the 'Curtains' defended by Auvergne, Aragon and England, in that order, ending at the Koskinou Gate. Descend into Efthimiou and follow right then round left along Dimosthenous to Platia Evreon Martiron, the Square of the Jewish Martyrs which is easily identified by its tasteless modern fountain of bronze seahorses. The square was renamed in memory of the remaining Jewish population, who were deported from this spot to concentration camps when the Germans arrived in 1943. Only a few Jewish families live in the old town now out of a population numbering 6,000 before 1939, a fortunate 4,000 of whom emigrated at the outset of war. Close by, in Dosiadou, can be located the synagogue. The next street out of the square on the left leads to the Ibrahim Pasha Mosque and very pleasant Platanos Square, reputed to have been used as a place of execution by the Turks with the Demerli Mosque lying a little further along. This is also a good area for exploring the numerous alleyways with less tourist shops.

Sokratous lies just north of here.

Leaving the palace, go left down Ipoton, the Street of the Knights', one of the best preserved medieval streets in existence. Besides being the main route from the palace to the port through the Collachium, it is the location of the inns of the various tongues. The present day pristine appearance of the cobbled street is thanks in no small measure to the Italians, who dismantled the Turkish addition of rickety wooden balconies to restore the late medieval architecture.

Now used mainly as offices, it lacks the buzz of habitation and shows itself for what it has become - a museum piece, nevertheless, it is an impressive street. Even before it gained its medieval mantle it was an ancient route to the port. From this angle, the first point to catch the eye is an arch spanning the street. The Inn of Spain lies to the right either side of the arch and the room above the arch belongs to it while opposite is the later built, more elaborate, Inn of Provence.

Lower down on the left is the small fourteenth-century Church of Agia Triada (Holy Trinity) attached to the Inn of France which was converted by the Turks to a mosque called Han-Zade and before the chapel the house belonging to its chaplain. Well down the street now, reach the richly ornamented Inn of France on the left where the coats of arms of France, with its three lilies and royal crown, and the Grand Master d'Aubusson with its cardinal's hat can be seen in a carved frame, dated 1495. The building across the road, next to the hospital, had connections with the Inn of Spain. Finally, near the bottom of the street on the left, is the Inn of Italy with its exterior showing simpler lines than those of the Inn of France.



The old quarter

Head across the top of Sokratous past the mosque of Suleiman into Ipodamou. On the right is the Turkish Library of Ahmet Havuz, whose collection includes a chronicle of the siege of 1522 and two illuminated Korans of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Immediately, the narrow cobbled street transports the visitor into a different age blanking out the hustle and bustle of the main tourist thoroughfare. Arches, protection against earthquakes, bridge the street, enticing alleyways, flower decked courtyards all exude a more tranquil air. Even the tourist shops become less intrusive. Divert left along Arhelaou, to Platia Arionos and the Turkish Baths.

Dominated by the Mustafa Pasha Mosque and baths of the same name, the square provides another opportunity to sit at one of the Cafes and absorb the atmosphere. This Turkish bath (hammam) still functions, despite bomb damage during World War II, and subsequent renovation work is difficult to detect to the non expert.

Return to Ipodamou to continue down the street. An intriguing wend through a narrow alleyway leads onto Omirou, emerging by the Ancient Market Garden Bar. Continue left along the street. There are better opportunities for sideways exploration and capturing a real flavour of the old town in this area.

Pass the end of Fanouriou, by Hotel Paris, to shortly turn left through an archway into Platia Dorieos with its domed fountain which makes a great setting for eating out under the trees. Tucked into a corner, and almost masked by a taverna, is the old Byzantine Church of Agios Fanourios but dominating the square is the Retzep Pasha Mosque, one of the most striking of all the Turkish buildings. To regain Fanouriou, cross the square to the left, from the entry point, then turn right. Fanouriou is one of the oldest streets in the old town and can be better appreciated at this lower end. As the street rises up towards the Collachium, an increase in souvenir shops announces the return to the tourist heart. Emerge onto Sokratous by the Aga Mosque.

Acropolis & ancient stadium



A visit to Rhodes Town would not be complete without a trip up the hill of Agios Stefanos, better known as Monte Smith, named after the English Admiral Sir Sidney Smith, who kept watch on the Napoleonic fleet from there in 1802.

This was the second-century BC site of the ancient acropolis, excavated and restored, in part, by the Italians. Very little remains of the once magnificent Temple of Apollo, but a small Theatre and the Stadium have been restored.

Views over the town and across the water to Asia Minor are an unexpected bonus on this trip.

If you do not feel like to follow the 20 to 30 minute walk up, there is always a taxi or the regular blue bus which leaves from Mandraki waterfront. Do not forget to buy a prepaid ticket, also one for the return if required, from the kiosk by the bus stop which is validated in the machine on the bus. From Rimini Square head up Papagou, into Dimokratias then right up Venizelou, signposted Acropolis of Rhodes. Follow the signs from here to the large car parking area below the remains. First to catch the eye are the three columns from the Temple of Apollo, re-erected in a somewhat piecemeal fashion and which look better viewed from a distance. The small reconstructed 800 seat Theatre, more likely Odeon, sits beneath the site of the temple. Only the orchestra and three seats remain from the original structure, which was probably used for events associated with the cult of Apollo and maybe by the Rodian School of Rhetoric.

A much larger theatre is thought to have been sited elsewhere on the same hill. On the left is the reconstructed stadium of which again only a few rows, in the middle of the curve, are original. To the east of the stadium lay a Gymnasium. The Temple of Apollo sits on a platform above the huge retaining wall behind the theatre, approached by a flight of steps, and excavations close by are the remains of a fountain house and possible Nymphaia, for the worship of nymphs. To the north, foundations of a Temple to Zeus and Athena Polias have been revealed. Return down Voriou Ipirou for spectacular views over the town.



Mandraki & shopping



Most of the new town has developed since the Italian occupation of 1912. The added impetus of tourism, especially during the past 20 years, has greatly accelerated development even further. Besides being the shopping, administrative and business quarter, the northern tip also contains most of the hotels and revolves around the tourist industry. Mandraki Harbour is part of this quarter and a buzzing meeting place for locals and tourists alike. To the west, especially on the slopes of Monte Smith, are to be found leafy suburbs with larger houses and villas while the south has the densest population and the south-east most of the light industry. This too is the location of the CAIR (KAIR) winery which is only open to visitors for wine tasting on an organised tour.

Although this tour concentrates on the northern section, a walk round the outside of the old town walls is not without interest, nor a walk or drive down the Lindos road to Rodini Park where the famous Rodos 'School of Rhetoric' was located. The wooded park was designed and laid out by the Italians who populated it with deer and peacocks. According to legend, the Delphic oracle urged the introduction of deer as a means of ridding the island of snakes but, when the Italians arrived, all signs of deer had disappeared. Unfortunately, as with much of the Italian legacy, neglect has taken its toll and the deer have been long gone from the park. Depleted almost to extinction on the island, only a few deer remain in the moat of the old town and in a pen on Profitis Ilias. Also in the

vicinity is a large Hellenistic rock tomb, wrongly named 'tomb of the Ptolemies'.

Breakfast in the New Market (Nea Agora) makes a fitting start to this tour, as most local activity starts early. Using Rimini Square as the starting point, and before heading for Mandraki, wander into the lush gardens beneath the castle walls where the son et lumiere is held. The flowers here create a riot of colour, softening the gaunt crenellated walls of the palace towering above.

Its never too early for coffee, so it is straight to the harbour front and the New Market. An irregular seven sided construction built by the Italians in the Turkish style, this building displays an unusual departure from the more severe lines of their other building work. Round the outside are crowded numerous snack bars, Cafes and all manner of small shops selling herbs, spices, nuts, olives and duty free wines and spirits. Rodos was a duty free island and spirits are still cheap.

Inside the huge and colourful tree shaded courtyard, fresh fruit and vegetable stalls, butchers, tourist paraphernalia and Cafes combine in a kaleidoscope of constant activity. The large centrepiece has a dual function, fish market above and underneath, free WC's. Most of the fish market activity seems to take place around 8am, with the fresh catch spilling out into the courtyard area. Tiropitta, souvlakia and pizza snacks are readily available from kiosks, especially those hot from the oven at the kiosk in the exit to Platia Alexandrias. The smaller market Cafes provide good value for a quick breakfast or snack.

Newspapers of all nationalities can be bought under the main gateway onto Mandraki.

More sophisticated cafes, with a price to match, line the Mandraki frontage and offer more comfortable seats but the accompanying exhaust fumes, noise and crush of people may not be to everyone's taste. On the plus side, the coffee is good and the cakes ...! Try the Greek ekmek which is particularly indulgent and delicious but very different from the original Turkish meaning of the word; bread.

Busy Mandraki Harbour, a name derived from its shape meaning, sheepfold, is crammed to capacity with sea craft during the summer. Besides use as an international yachting marina, the harbour accommodates local ferry and excursion boats including hydrofoils while larger ferries and cruise ships dock in the Commercial Harbour further south. A stroll along the harbour wall past the three windmills, where grain was milled for cargo boats, to St Nicholas Tower, now a lighthouse and chapel, provides a clear overview of the waterfront.

The view is thwarted somewhat by a forest of bobbing, jangling masts. One of the best vantage points is from the narrow channel at the harbour entrance, especially after 9am when a mass exodus of excursion boats clears the waterfront. Two bronze statues of a stag and doe guard the harbour entrance. The doe replacing a statue of an Italian she-wolf which now resides in the grounds of the Palace of the Grand Masters.

In many ways, Mandraki is the link between the old town and the new. This spacious frontage is where the Italians chose to construct a new commercial quarter. Designed with a mix of Venetian, Gothic and Arabic elements, these monumental public buildings dominate the shoreline. On the seaward side of the road is the Church of the Evangelist, built in 1925 on

the model of the Knights' Church of St John in the old town which was destroyed in the explosion of 1856. Next to the church is the Archbishop's Palace and then the former Governor's Palace, now Government House (Nomarhia), constructed in a more photogenic Venetian-Cothic style, whereas a Mussolini square style was used for the Town Hall, Post Office and National Theatre. Fashionable comment derides the tasteless grandeur of these honeycoloured buildings but, they at least provide a better foil for the medieval citadel than the angular mass of soulless concrete they mask.

North of Mandraki, off Platia Koundourioti, is the private Nautical Club and the start of the public beach. The coarse sand and shingle beach stretches round the point of Akrotiri Ammou (Sandy Beach) known also as Kumburnu Point. There is plenty of activity on these beaches in summer and changing facilities are available at the Elli Club for a small admission fee. The regimented rows of coloured beach umbrellas, all angled the same way, tell of the persistent breeze along the west coast. Moving west along Papanikolaou, the Murad Reis Mosque watches over a secluded backwater that was once the cemetery for the Turkish elite. Murad Reis himself was a prominent pirate killed during the Turkish siege of 1522 and his tomb is the circular mausoleum next to the mosque. Carved turbans top headstones of men while those for women are sharp-angled stone. Despite the air of obvious neglect, a dignified atmosphere still prevails where eucalyptus shade the graves of the many Moslem notables, including a Shah of Persia, which are transformed by carpets of white *Cyclamen persicum* in spring.

Leave this reminder of another age along Sava, in the direction of the sea. Still making for the point along the shoreline, pass the closed and shuttered Hotel des Roses; yet another abandoned Italian building. The Aquarium (Enidrio), its more grandiose title being the Hydrobiological Institute, sits in splendid isolation on the northernmost tip of the island and entrance to the subterranean grotto is behind the main building. In an attempt to simulate the seabed, fish found locally are displayed in tanks along the walls of a narrow twisting passageway while dried and pickled specimens of sword-fish, sharks and a whale can be viewed in separate rooms. A good place to go on a rainy day or to escape the heat.

Now for shopping! From the Aquarium head directly south through Platia Vas. Pavlou, across Papanikolaou into Grivas. The network of streets between here and 28th Octovriou is the tourist heartland of bars, restaurants and shops.

An inelegant collection by day but lively by night! For more upmarket shopping go east along Mandilara to Amerikis then head south. On Amerikas and 25th Martiou are what pass as department stores on Rodos. Make for Platia Cyprus (Kiprou) down Lambraki, a central point for banks and the more chic establishments.

Designer label fashions and shoes sit comfortably alongside discreet and alluring displays of gold. A decade ago, fur products shared the umbrellas prominence but, due to current lack of demand, these outlets have shrunk considerably.

Interspersed between these high-class retailers are some equally stylish cafes. The triangle bounded by Averof, Papagou and Platia Cyprus has been pedestrianised, making it very pleasant for browsing or just sitting where a small enclave of eastern style houses with wooden balconies has been preserved.

