

Gyaros National Sea Park

37.612854, 24.714176020174



Gyaros (or Giura) has an area of 17 square kilometers and is located in the Northern Cyclades, north-west of Syros, from which it is 9 nautical miles away. Although in everyone's mind it is the desert island of exile, in ancient times it was inhabited and functioned as a city-state, even minting its own coins.

According to Homer it was the place where Poseidon drowned Aedes with his trident, thus punishing him for the disrespect he showed to the gods. The history of the island is "dark" and the connection with the exile starts from the Roman and Byzantine times.

During and immediately after the Civil War, Gyaros was turned into a prison and the only buildings one will see today on the island were built by the prisoners themselves, who exceeded 7,000. During the period of the dictatorship it was again used as a place of displacement of political prisoners. After colonization and until 2002 it functioned as a shooting range for the navy and since then it remains uninhabited with only visiting fishermen and hunters.

It was declared a historical site in 2001 by the Ministry of Culture. As unique as its history is, its natural environment is just as rare. In 2011 it joined the Natura 2000 Network and its vegetation consists of scrub and low or tall vegetation of the *Juniperus* spp species, while it is an important habitat for migratory birds, hosting 170 pairs of Eleonora's falcons (*Falco eleonora*) and eagles *Hieraaetus fasciatus*.

Along with the one source of fresh water that exists on the island, one will also find the snake species *Hierophis viridiflavus*. Gyaros is full of steep rocky shores and sandy beaches that host sand-fish communities and its dozens of sea caves are used by Mediterranean fur seals for breeding.

The island, which was stigmatized as a place of exile, has today become a place of life for some of the rarest marine mammals of the Mediterranean.

Overview

Purpose: Excursion	Type: Sights	Country: Greece
City: Gyaros		

Agent info

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Greek Map