

# Eating out in Kythera - A culinary delight of authentic Greek flavours

By Kalie Zervos



I have travelled to many places and islands of Greece, and not that I am biased, but the quality and value for money of the food in most Kytherian restaurants and cafes is quite high.

The food you find in the restaurants of Kythera can be described as authentic good wholesome Greek food. During the summer the restaurants make the most of the fresh summer produce.



Many restaurants have developed their own speciality dishes or specialise in one particular style of cuisine. In summer they have outdoor seating and are quite casual, with simple table settings, and you will find tables are lined with paper tablecloths featuring a map of Kythera. Most are open for lunch and dinner. Cafes are located all over Kythera but predominantly found in the larger and seaside towns, while the traditional kafenions are found in some villages. Lastly, one cannot forget the fantastic bakeries and patisseries of Kythera producing great bread, paximadia and local delicacies.

Below is a guide to Kytherian towns where some of the

restaurants, cafes, bakeries and patisseries are located. The list featured in this article is by no means the be all and end all of Kytherian dining, but merely a starting guide for you, in case you are stuck for choice.

## Northern Kythera

### *Karava*

This town is known for its natural water springs of Amir Ali, Portokalia and Keramari.

*Amir Ali Restaurant*- Located near the natural spring of Amir Ali in a very picturesque part of the town of Karava. It has limited parking and the roads leading to it are quite narrow, you may need to leave your car up further and walk down. The cuisine is simple Greek, featuring mezedes. In summer they often have live music.

*Karava Bakery* – Located roadside at the entrance of Karava from the road leading from Agia Pelagia. If you are coming from Potamos, drive through the town and follow the signs for Agia Pelagia. It is Kythera's newest bakery and housed in an old olive oil press factory. They produce great bread, and paximadia, my personal favourites are their Almond Paximadia.

### *Platea Amos*

*Varkoula Taverna* – This quaint little restaurant is located in Kythera's northern most town and offers great views of the lights of Peloponissos and the ships passing through Cavo Malea at night. They offer traditional Greek food specialising in seafood. Most Fridays and Saturday nights they have live music.



## Agia Pelagia

There are many restaurants and cafes found in Agia Pelagia and from year to year new ones pop up. Most are found in the strip in front of the beach. Some of the ones you will find there are as follows:-

*Dinos* - ideal for a casual meal of souvlakia and yeeros.

*Sembreviva café* - for desserts, with their speciality “Tsirigotiko” ice-cream featuring Kytherian honey, yoghurt and almonds.

*Akroyiali Ouzeri* - Offers good Greek food in a casual setting by the beach.

*Kaleris* restaurant – serves up more non-traditional Greek adapted food, two of the specialities not to be missed are the Manouri Cheese salad and the warm pan-fried cheese served with honey.

A short walk away from this strip you will also find restaurants and cafes near the molo of Agia Pelagia and up the side street near the old port customs building. These are:

*Portobello café and Café Blue* - both ideal for an afternoon frappe while watching the fishing boats come in and out and the massive cruise liners passing through Cavo Malea.

*Stella's* – serves up traditional Greek food

*Skolio* – as the name suggests is housed in an old school of Agia Pelagia just up a slight incline from the main road near the old Customs building of Agia Pelagia. The food here is quite unique and the menu changes regularly as seasonal foods are utilised. They often have small live bands playing during the summer months.

*Neo Kosmo* - leaving Agia Pelagia heading to Potamos there is a large beach to the left of the main road. Located at the beach is a restaurant by the same name, which is owned by an ex pat Greek American butcher and a Greek Australian. The meat dishes here are the specialities and if you desperately need of a hamburger fix, this is the place to get one.

## Potamos

The town of Potamos is the major commercial centre of the island and during the summer months is a hive of activity. On Sunday mornings the centuries old tradition of the pazari continues to this very day. You can buy locally grown fresh produce as well as the Kytherian specialities of rock salt,

honey and dried oregano. Most cafes offer free Wi-Fi, you will just need to ask for the code.

*Panaretos* – Is located on the platea of Potamos. They serve up generous helpings of tasty island food. On Friday nights during the summer months it is advisable to make a booking as the Potamos chamber of commerce pays for live musicians and the platea comes to life with Greek dancing.

*Psistaria* – The name of this restaurant escapes me, but everyone refers to it as the “Psistaria” which means grill house. They specialise in grilled meats, from pork and chicken souvlakia, yeeros and if you get there early you can get the kondosouvli which always sells out early. They have seating near the entrance to the bank and also in the colder months you can sit inside.

*Selanas Cafe* - located at the top part of the platea offers casual dining such as pizza, souvlakia and mezedes. It is a meeting place on a Sunday mornings for many Aussie Kytherians.

*Karinos* - This traditional café located near the bank, offers coffees and sweets. On Sundays at lunchtime it is a great place to get an ouzo as they serve it up with grilled octopus and other mezedes.

*Astikon* – This was once the biggest cafenion of Potamos and was decorated with antiques which were sadly removed when the current operators took over. During the day you can get snacks and they make a great cappuccino freddo. Most of their seating is inside with limited seating outside. On most nights during the summer they feature live music which draws many young people from all over the island.

*Potamos Bakery* – Located at the top of the platea. This bakery specialises in traditional breads and the Kytherian “ladopaximada”. You will notice there is high demand for their paximadia especially on Sundays and as August comes to a close. You will need to get in early to avoid missing out as the Athenian Kytherians buy them in bulk.





## Central Kythera

### *Mitata*

*Michali's Restaurant* is located at the platea overlooking the valley gorge of Mitata near the church which was severely damaged during the 2006 earthquake. They offer traditional Greek food including grilled meat dishes.

### *Diakofti*

The main port of Kythera is located at Diakofti. The drive to Diakofti is one of the best road trips of Kythera with stunning views of the Eastern coastline along the way and upon approach has stunning views from above of the shipwreck and the stunning "lagoon" and island.

*Manoli's Seafood* – It is located to the left of the small fishing jetty at Diakofti. It offers tables by the beach. The food is typical Greek food featuring seafood.

*Zefyros* – Located next to the bridge at Diakofti beach. It is a great casual place for lunch where you can dine right by the sea. The food here is predominately seafood with summer legumes and vegetables such as vlitta on offer. The food here is quite tasty.

### *Paleopoli*

*Skandea* – The restaurant takes its name from the Ancient port which was once located in the area. It is located in a serene garden setting under the trees near Paleopoli beach. It is a little out of the way, but worth a visit. This restaurant offers good traditional Kytherian food. One of their specialities is "Paputsakia" stuffed baked eggplants.

### *Avlemona*

This quaint fishing village was a trading port town during the Venetian times and the remains of the Venetian fort is located on the point. Just off the coast of Avlemona is the shipwreck of the Mentor which sunk during a storm carrying the Parthenon Marbles. Unfortunately the marbles were extracted from the wreck and shipped to England, but the ship is still down there and in 2015 during late June and early July an archaeological dive continues to recover other artefacts.

*Botzio Café* – Set in a picturesque part of Avlemona and has seating overlooking the little cove below. It serves up coffees and sweets, one of their specialities is their "karithopita" walnut cake.

*Sotiris Seafood Restaurant* - This is the best known seafood restaurant on Kythera. It had humble beginnings and in recent years relocated to larger premises located in the heart of Avlemonas. You can get all types of seafood here. Seafood in Greece can be a little more expensive due to limited supply. The speciality of the restaurant is the "astakomakaronada" lobster with spaghetti in red sauce.

Other restaurants located in Avlemona are *Psomoladea* and *Mirodia Kalokeriou*. They were opened in 2014.



### *Milopotamos*

Milopotamos is a very picturesque village, boasting a waterfall near the heart of the town. As the name suggests the town was named after the water mills which were located just west of the town. Most are disused and crumbled but there is a great walking track which leads past some of these and down to another waterfall and pond. There is one water mill which has been restored and is known as Philipa's water mill and is located near the waterfall of Neraida.

*Platanos* - As the name implies this restaurant has tables set on the platea under the platanos (plane tree). In the summer months it is one of the most popular restaurants on the island with very generous portions. It is open in the mornings serving Greek coffee and offers traditional Kytherian sweets known as "dipples". Meals are served up from about 1pm until late from April until September. Some of their specialities are the tomatokeftedes (tomato patties), kolokithoanthous (zucchini flours stuffed with rice), rabbit stifado (stew in red sauce) and their Tsirigotiki salad.

*Kamari Café* - Located in a beautiful setting just down the stairs from the main platea of Milopotamos. You will need to cross the little stream to reach it. The café opens late morning and stays open until late in the summer months servicing snacks, coffees and alcoholic beverages.

*Litrivideo* – Is a wine bar located at the rear of the restored olive oil press factory which sells local wines and olive oil. Enjoy local wines and meze in a courtyard setting surrounded by herbs and flowers.

### *Fratsia*

Fratsia has the islands biggest platea which is the site of the yearly agricultural fair and dance which takes place in late August.

*Familia* – Is a fairly new restaurant which opened for business just before Easter 2014. It is located on the big platea of Fratsia. The cuisine is quite unique with great twists on typical Greek dishes.

*Café Myrto* - is located at the other end of the platea, and this is a traditional kafenion.

### **Karvounades**

Karvounades Bakery – Is located just past the main square of Karvounades. It is best to park your car at the platea and walk to it as it is located in one of the narrowest parts of the main road. Here you can pick up rustic breads and paximadia. Also available are great snacks for the beach such as their tiropites and spanakopites.

### **Tsikalaria**

Xekandaros – Is run by ex pat Australians and during the summer months offers live music on some Friday or Saturday nights. They serve up all types of Greek food.

### **Southern Kythera**

#### **Livadi**

The second busiest commercial centre of Kythera. On Wednesday afternoons during summer they hold markets along the roadway selling local produce.

*Toxotis* – This is one of few restaurants on Kythera which operates all year round. It specialises in meat dishes, cooked by rotisserie and grilled over the coals. Their lamb cutlets platter is very enjoyable. This restaurant is very popular, so you may need to book ahead in the summer months.

*Pierros* - This is a family business started years ago by a father and continued on now by the sons. It offers good home style Greek cuisine, which is tasty and served in generous portions. This restaurant too is opened all year round.

*Rena's Patisserie* – If you have a sweet tooth it is well worth a stop to this patisserie when visiting Livadi. It is the best known sweet shop of the island. They produce all types of sweets, chocolates and cakes. You can dine it or take away.

Livadi Bakery – Don't be surprised if you hear an Aussie accent behind the counter. The bakery produces all types of bread and sells great bougatsa.

#### **Kalokerines**

This town is a little out of the way, but you will pass through it to get the biggest monastery of the island known as Mirtidiotissa, a serene stunning place well worth a visit.

*Maria's sweets* – The store is located next to the restored windmill. The shop offers many traditional Kytherian sweets such as rozedes, melomakarina, amigdalota, dipples as well as selling preserves, local sage and camomile teas and local Kytherian honey. The windmill is opened to visitors and is worth a visit to see how wheat was ground in bygone years to produce flour.

### **Kalamos**

This town is quite remote and to reach it you can go via Kato Livadi or from Kapsali.

*Filios Taverna* – It is well worth the drive to get to this restaurant. You will need to follow the signs through the town of Kalamos to reach the restaurant. It is located at the end of the town, with ample parking opposite. It is set above the roadway and tables are nestled amongst the trees. It offers great food specialising in traditional cooked meals. The restaurant opens at 4pm daily. Many beach goers spending the day at Halkos beach tend to make their way to Filios for a very late lunch or early dinner. If you are intending to eat dinner there during summer you may need to make a reservation to avoid disappointment.

### **Hora**

In the capital of Kythera there are a few cafes located on the platea of Hora which offer coffees and sweets.

*Fos Fanari Cafe* – Located at the start of the narrow road just off the platea. During the summer it has a great vibe both day and night especially on the balcony section. They make the best Cappuccino Fredo on the island. They offer snacks, ice creams, sweets and alcoholic drinks. During summer there are often live acts performing.

*Fossa Cafe* - Located just down from Fos Fanari, it has an interesting view of the gorge below.

*Zorbas* – This restaurant is located about half way down the narrow roadway of Hora on the left as you walk towards the Kastro. In the summer it has outdoor seating on a rooftop only accessible by stairs. They specialise in good grilled food.

Belvedere Pizza – If it is pizza you are after then this restaurant is one to visit for the breathtaking night views of Kapsali and the Kastro of Hora. It is located in the lower part of Hora, just walk through Hora towards the Kastro and follow the signs once you reach the church of the Estavromeno.

### **Kapsali**

*Magos* – This restaurant is well known for its seafood. It is located at the far end of Kapsali Bay. Here you can get fresh fish and other seafood which is delivered fresh daily from the fishing boats moored opposite. If it is available try their kakavia (fish soup).

*Hydragogio* – Located at the opposite end of Kapsali to Magos and offers beautiful views of Kapsali Bay. The restaurant takes its name from the water reservoir which is close by. The food here is quite different with twists on traditional Greek cuisine.

*Lemoni Café* - This place offers breakfast, snacks for lunch, crepes, ice creams and sweets. It is open until late. It is located next to Magos.

*Vanilla Café* - This café is well known for its crepes. Here you can enjoy both savoury and sweet crepes with one of the specialities being the chocolate Nutella crepes.

*Vlastos* – serves up souvlakia, yeeros and other “casual” food.

*Photos courtesy of Stephen Trifyllis & George Giaouris*