

GEOGRAPHY OF MYKONOS ISLAND

The Greek island of Mykonos is situated in the center of the Aegean Sea 150 kilometers east of Athens and is part of the group of islands known as the Cyclades. Although it is the most famous of this group it is actually the smallest covering an area of just 90 square kilometers. Its rocky terrain rises from the sea to form gentle hills and small valleys with the two highest points being small mountains of 369 and 392 meters in elevation. The islands geologic makeup is that of granite which in some areas has been carved into interesting forms through the erosive action of wind, sea and sun. In previous years deposits of high quality clay and barite, a mineral used as a lubricant in the oil drilling process, were once extensively mined. There are no rivers to speak of but of its many seasonal streams two have been harnessed by dams to create sizable re

servoires. Despite its small area, part of Mykonos' fame comes from the fact that it has over twenty accessible sandy beaches earning the name "Capri of Greece". The main town or "Hora" is situated on the west coast of the island with the smaller village of Ano Mera located close to the island's center.

CLIMATE OF MYKONOS ISLAND

The two most common elements of climate for which Mykonos is famous are sunshine and wind. Rainfall is infrequent, generally falling between the months of February and March, allowing the sun to shine for as many as three hundred days of the year. Because of this arid condition natural vegetation is limited. During the summer months the temperature may occasionally reach the upper 30's but due to the cooling factor of the frequent winds an average of 28°C can be expected. Winters on the island are mild with an average temperature of 15 degrees. It is only on very rare occasions the thermometer may reach freezing. Due to the moderating influence of the surrounding sea the island's temperatures are usually 2 degrees warmer in the winter and 2 degrees cooler in the summer than mainland Athens. This condition directly effects the cycle of both domestic and wild vegetation as the growing season occurs from the beginning of winter and ends in mid summer. Of the winds that affect the island two kinds are most common. During the winter months heavy winds from the south arrive and often bring with them electrical storms. Of these the most famous wind is the "Sirocco" which every spring brings sand from the deserts that boarder the Mediterranean in the form of red rain. As the season heads toward summer the north wind takes over and with various degrees of strength, blows daily. The most notable of these winds is the "Meltami" that during July and August will blow steady throughout the day and then reduce its velocity during the night. Gale-force winds are not uncommon.