

# Amorgos

GASTRO  
NOMY &  
WINE TOURISM





Professionals in the field of gastronomy in its broadest sense – the agricultural sector, processing, hospitality, restaurants – have joined forces and created a society called the Gastronomic Community of Amorgos. Their goal is to make a ‘census’ of the quality produce and gastronomic possibilities of this Cycladic island, to create a more structured link between tourism and the food culture of the region and to promote Amorgos as a Food and Wine Destination. The idea is an initiative of the Greek Gastronomy Guide, which has developed the Gastronomy and Wine Tourism programme. The guide you have in your hands is a condensed version of the material and information that exist in greater depth and breadth in digital form at [www.greekgastronomyguide.gr/amorgos](http://www.greekgastronomyguide.gr/amorgos). The sponsor of this project is the Municipality of Amorgos.



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## A place rich in history

N 36o 84'  
E 25o 88'

Amorgos is a relatively large but narrow island in the Cyclades. Although it measures 121 square kilometres, larger than its neighbours Mykonos and Santorini, with 105 sq km and 75 sq km respectively, Amorgos has a population of just 1,800 permanent residents (based on the 2011 census), or approximately one tenth of the populations of those better known islands. The main reasons for this are its mountainous terrain and naturally its relative lack of tourist development and ferry connections. Its geography led to the formation of settlement clusters at Oxo Meria (Outer Place) and Kato Meria (Lower Place), while Megali Strata (Big Road) was the road that united the Hora or main town of Amorgos, formerly called Kastro, with Oxo Meria (Outer Place).

Today, after the opening of the road between Hora and the port of Aigiali in 1991, Megali Strata has become a unique path for walkers only. And, in fact, the island is an ideal destination for hikers, offering paths that lead to places of exceptional beauty, both wild and gentle. Its name is apparently derived from the amorgis, a rare kind of flax used to make



the traditional chitons or tunics of Amorgos. The island has two natural harbours, Katapola, below Hora, and Aigiali, and the islanders' chief occupations are in the sectors of farming, animal husbandry and fishing.

The most important landmark near Hora is the Monastery of the Virgin of Hozoviotissa, a breath-taking architectural feat that looks as though it has been carved out of the sheer side of a cliff. Amorgos became widely known after the release of Luc Besson's film, *The Big Blue*, in which the incredible blue waters of Agia Anna below the monastery and its dramatic setting stole the show from the

actual stars. Suddenly the island began attracting visitors and scuba divers from France and other European countries.

Amorgos first appears in history in the form of traces of human settlement during the late 4th millennium BC. Subsequently Amorgos became one of the most important centres of the Cycladic civilization. Minoa, Arkesini, Tholaria and Aigiali were its most important cities in the Classical era. During the Roman period it was a place of exile, a role it was given again by the Junta during the dictatorship of 1967-1974, when the colonels dispatched citizens who were opposed to them there, including the noted



businessman/philanthropist Vardis Vardinoyiannis.

After the Greek Declaration of Independence in 1821, Amorgos was united with the new Greek state. A plaque in its first school commemorates its founding on 6 June 1826 with funds donated by the Hozoviotissa Monastery, demonstrating that Amorgos possessed one of the first educational institutions in free Greece.

Today Amorgos is one of the few Cycladic islands that has remained untouched by mass tourism. Here you will find impressive monasteries, scores of chapels scattered in the countryside, traditional villages, charming traditional cafés, old footpaths, plenty of goats and

sheep, and smiling faces on the residents who love to sing and enjoy themselves and join with gusto the many local festivals and holiday celebrations. A 'good morning' on Amorgos is often accompanied by an invitation to sit and sip the local liqueur – 'rakomelo', or raki tempered with honey – and impromptu parties with music can occur at a moment's notice. The tavernas serve local dishes, while in the countryside the breeze carries with it whiffs of thyme, pennyroyal and sage and the white-washed chapels glisten in the glorious Aegean light.





## The Hozoviotissa Monastery

Carved into a sheer cliffside 300 metres above the sea, the Monastery of the Virgin Hozoviotissa, the island's most emblematic building, rises above the Hora. Imposing and unassailable, it is considered the most impressive monastery in the entire Aegean, not only because of its singular vertical construction, but also because of the way in which its eight storeys seem to be hooked into the cliff and glued onto the narrow ledge. One dominant architectural feature is its unusual dimensions; while the



width of the building is greater than 40 metres, its eastern wall which includes the entrance to the monastery is no wider than 5 metres. There are more than 100 rooms in the monastery, including monks' cells, refectories, kitchens, storerooms, cisterns, guest rooms, a library and sacristy.

The road from the Hora is less than five minutes from the east coast and from there, a well-made path along the cliff's edge will take you about 15 minutes to walk up to the monastery. The awe you feel climbing next to the abyss is hardly less than the wonder you'll experience as the monastery rises before your eyes. Tradition maintains that it was finished in 1088 during the reign of the Byzantine emperor Alexios I Komninos at the spot where an icon, said to have hailed from Hozova in Palestine, was found. The monastery had an illustrious past but today it has only four monks, who on weekdays welcome visitors with characteristic hospitality, offering them cool water, Amorgos 'psimeni raki' (spiced raki) and 'loukoumia', gummy sweets also called Turkish delight. The ascent to the highest visitable point in the monastery takes place via an internal staircase and always accompanied by a monk. The view from the balcony next



to its church will take your breath away. The monastery's feast day falls on 21 November, when the Orthodox celebrate the Virgin's Presentation into the Temple to be consecrated to God by her parents. This is the day when the monastery is at its most alive, thronged by the locals as well as faithful making a pilgrimage from nearby islands – Anafi, Koufonisia, Irakleia, and Naxos – who come on specially chartered boats. The whole evening before, at Vespers and the neighbouring chapels the bishop of Thera. Amorgos presides, while people come and go, pay homage to the icon, say their prayers and eat some fava, yellow split pea puree, the traditional festive dish. The next morning after the mass, the congregation, who usually number more than 500 people, are given a meal that consists mainly of Lenten fare, salt cod with garlic sauce and potato stew.



## The gastronomic traditions of Amorgos



Long and narrow, Amorgos is so mountainous that only in the north around Aigiali and at Kato Meria is the land flat enough to be cultivated. Life in most of the islands was harsh and ascetic in the inhospitable stony landscape. But in clearing the stones, the inhabitants sculpted the terraces on which they could grow their meagre crops and these are genuine architectural monuments to their persistence and perseverance. They also built the dry-stone walls that surrounded the structures

where their animals sheltered and they themselves lived. Among these picturesque walls in the dry surroundings, prickly pears flourish and form an impenetrable safety barrier against possible invaders as well as protection against fires. The fruit of these large cactuses is consumed raw, simmered into jam, and distilled into an aromatic liqueur along with grapes, honey, sugar and herbs. The most noticeable inhabitants of the island are the fifteen thousand sheep and goats



that roam freely among the mountains. You will meet them on the roads where they will sometimes be caught sitting, rather blasé but also annoyed to be disturbed by something as alien as a car. The dozens of windmills scattered round the island remind one of the relationship the locals had with wheat and bread. Indeed, many people still grind their own flour, especially around the time of the various church festivals, when they make 3- and 5-kilo loaves from barley and wheat, while on the eve of St Paul's day they make a barley and wheat bread, which they turn into rusks called 'pavloi' in his honour. The cuisine of Amorgos boasts several interesting specialties, the most famous of which are patatato and psimeni raki. Patatato, its signature dish, is a stew of kid and of course potatoes. You will find it at most of the island's restaurants and tavernas, but everyone knows that the best patatato is found at the festival of Agia Paraskevi at Kato Meria,

where it is simmered overnight in a huge cauldron. Psimeni raki is Amorgos' signature drink, and it's offered along with 'loukoumia' to visitors at the Hozoviotissa Monastery in the guest quarters. Psimeni raki is also served to women guests. The story goes that several years ago, when the women of Amorgos were searching for a way to participate in the island's social life but did not want to drink the strong raki (think of schnapps) the men liked, they invented a more palatable liqueur that blended raki with honey and aromatic herbs and spices. It is called 'psimeni' or roasted for two reasons: one, because the honey is caramelized by cooking it very slowly and, two, because the spirit 'cooks' or ages with the passage of time.



In autumn, the hunting season, the locals have a preference for the wild rabbits that abound on the island and for partridge. From the bay of Aigiali to the southwest up to the bay of Kalotari-tissa, the sea is full of fish which the island's fleet of 33 small and larger fishing boats try to exploit. The most common fish in their catch, depending on the season, are dentex, groupers, small tuna, bonito and stone bass. The local fish soup, kakavia, is made with scorpion fish, rock fish and other small fry. Before the arrival of electricity and refrigerators, housewives used to fry or sun dry such fish as red mullet and then marinate them in olive oil, vinegar and rosemary. This dish, called savori, is common throughout the islands and, preserved this way, the fish will keep for months. It is surprisingly tasty. As for octopus, it is served fried, grilled or stewed.



## Cultivations – products



The steep rocky slopes of this mountainous island are home to thousands of sheep and goats who graze inside fenced areas of rich pasture. Their diet of wild grasses and herbs makes their meat and cheeses particularly flavourful. Among the cheeses are the Amorgiano, a hard goat cheese, which can also be eaten fresh. Other cheeses are myzithra (an unsalted ricotta-like cheese made from the whey from the production of hard cheeses); xynomyzithra (salted, 'sour' myzithra made from full milk, consumed fresh, especially with salads); and the local kopanisti, a tangy soft cheese that is found throughout the Cyclades and has been awarded PDO status. The cheeses of Amorgos are extra delicious since they are made with unpasteurized milk. But you will have to go there to taste them since the law forbids their export, even to the rest of Greece. The mountains of Amorgos are covered with aromatic herbs, a special oregano called arganiá, sage, rosemary, pennyroyal, thyme and mallow, which are used in tisanes. In recent years,

some of the younger islanders have been occupied with collecting and standardizing these herbs, participating in exhibitions and winning awards, especially for their wild oregano and sage.

In the mountain areas, beekeepers harvest honey, mainly from thyme and wild flowers. And after the first rains of autumn, the mountains also yield a large variety of edible mushrooms collected by those in the know, which the locals either fry or stew with tomatoes.

Among the island's native plants most prevalent is the caper, which grows in the most inaccessible places and whose buds liven up the local salads. On the coasts you will also find kritamo and almyrithes, two kinds of samphire, which can either be pickled or lightly boiled and served with salads and fish. Some islanders and taverna owners also gather their own salt – fleur de sel – from the rocks and use it to flavour their food. The valleys are home to olive groves, mainly



the koroneiki, manaki, hondrolia varieties (the largest grove is at Aigiali and yields 30,000 kg of oil every year); barley and wheat fields, vegetable gardens, aubergines grown with little water), potatoes, pulses (beans, blackeyed peas, broad beans, chickpeas), and above all fava. The Amorgos variety of this

popular pulse comes from a local plant called 'katsouni', Pisum sativum, not the vetch of Santorini, and is actually a type of pea. The locals call fava purée 'katsouni' or 'mageirema' (cooked). Before WWII the island boasted 2,000,000 sq m of vineyards, which today have been reduced to about 200,000 sq m, mostly given over to local



varieties, the white Athiri, Aidani, Potamisi and the red Voudomato, Mandilaria and Fokiano, vinified by the growers themselves and served at tavernas. Finally, the most abundant summer fruits of Amorgos are table grapes and many types of figs, which are also sun-dried or oven-dried and preserved with bay leaves for the winter.

## Traditional cuisine – Characteristic dishes

Despite its small population, its mountainous geophysical configuration and its relatively meagre crops, Amorgos nevertheless boasts some exceptional products and dishes, which give the island a distinctive gastronomic identity. The island's abundant herbs and edible greens, whose flavour is heightened by the salt air, add extra taste to its sheep and goat meat, local pulses (especially fava and chickpea soups) and garden vegetables, when combined in simple dishes on top of the stove or in a wood-burning oven.



### Patatato

This signature dish of Amorgos is basically a stew of kid and potatoes. You will find it in most of the island's tavernas and restaurants and everyone knows that the best version is dished out to all comers at the festival of Agia Paraskevi in Kato Meria. The recipe hangs in the church kitchen and has been prepared for the past 45 years under the supervision of Vangelis Mendrinou, the chief cook. The ingredients used are kid, large potatoes, onions, olive oil, finely chopped fat, garlic, allspice, cinnamon, black pepper, coarse salt and a cup of sweet wine.

### Kid with oregano

As we've said, the meat of the goats and lambs of Amorgos is succulent on its own simply because of the animals' diet seasoned by the salt air, and all that is needed for a dish to become divine is the addition of three or four simple ingredients. The procedure for this one is simple too. First, the pieces of kid are browned on all sides in a frying pan. Then, you heat some oil in a stewpot, saute some finely chopped onions, throw in the meat with a little salt, pepper, dried oregano, lemon juice or lemon zest and garlic, cover with water and simmer until tender.



### Grilled lamb chops

Here the chops should all be the same thickness, about 1.5 cm, from the ribs or cut from the leg with a thin layer of fat, where the meat is most tender. The chops should be from young lambs 4 to 12 months old, although many people prefer chops from the older ewes.

The charcoal should be medium to hot. Preheat the grill and brush it with oil and lemon. Grill the chops 5 minutes on each side until nicely browned and sprinkle with salt, oregano and thyme before serving.

### Baked aubergines with tomato sauce

This is a particularly delicious dish typical of Amorgos. To prepare it, the aubergines are sliced lengthwise and grilled before being placed on a baking pan and sprinkled with a tomato sauce that has plenty of caramelized onions. Crumbled myzithra cheese and feta and any other cheeses one likes are spread over this layer before being popped in the oven. The result is a mouth-watering dish that lingers in the memory.

### Cheese pies-Greens pies

The humble pies of Amorgos are fried and prepared with a dough made by adding olive oil, rakomelo, salt and tepid water to the flour. For cheese pies, feta and kefalotyri are used, while myzithra is added to make 'myzithropites'. Eggs are added to the mixture, along with pepper, nutmeg, cinnamon and mint – 'without mint you have nothing' is a common expression.

Depending on the season, the greens pies may contain spinach, 'vlita' (amaranth), poppy leaves, tordyllium, chervil, chard and any combination of a host of others, which have been finely chopped, squeezed dry, and sauteed with some finely chopped green onions. Chopped mint and wild fennel tips are added to the mixture which is then formed into little balls and wrapped in the thin pastry just like the little cheese pies.



## Yiaprakia or dolmades, stuffed leaves

This dish can be made in all seasons, in the winter with green cabbage leaves and from Easter throughout the summer with tender grape leaves.

The filling consists of finely chopped onion, dried or fresh mint and wild fennel tips, salt, pepper, olive oil and short grain rice. After the filling is wrapped with parboiled leaves, the dolmades are shaped into cylinders and placed in layers in a large saucepan, seam-side down, with a large plate on top of them to keep them from unfurling. They are then simmered in water to cover with some olive oil and salt. Served with an egg-lemon sauce, they are a Greek classic.



## Easter lamb

The Easter roast lamb or kid of Amorgos, and indeed many of the Cyclades, is not cooked on the spit as on the mainland, but stuffed with rice, liver, browned innards and herbs – dill, rosemary, etc. – and cooked in a slow oven. It is such a treat that some tavernas serve it all year long.



## The kavourmas of Amorgos

The island's confit of pork bears no resemblance to that of Northern Greece. Much more refined and light, it is prepared as follows: Lean pork, cut into small pieces, is marinated for two-three hours with spices, mainly cinnamon, and olive oil. The meat is then browned in

pork fat and then meat and fat are poured into a container – often a clay pot – and left in a cool place or the refrigerator to be eaten, sauteed on its own, or mixed with pasta or pulses. It's at its best and most succulent in a rich, flavouful omelette.



## Fava

The fava, split yellow pea puree, of Amorgos comes from a plant, *Pisum sativum*, that truly belongs to the pea family, whereas the more common fava of Santorini is really a vetch. It is usually eaten warm on its own or topped with chopped onions, olive oil, capers, caper leaves and lemon, whereupon it acquires the name 'pandremeni' or married. Shaped into balls with chopped green onions and wild fennel fronds and fried till crisp, it makes delicious fritters.



## Fish soup

Regardless of the type of fish used, this stew is the most exquisite gift from the sea imaginable and one of the oldest in Greek cuisine, dating to antiquity. In our day, kakavia, to use its Greek name, is the beloved soup of fishermen but also of those lucky enough to find the right fish. In Amorgos and in most of the other Cyclades, it is made with a combination of scorpion fish, eel, bream, grey mullet, and a host of little rock fish, plus onion, potato, celery, oil, salt and pepper. You will find it at a few of the island's fish tavernas.

# Restaurants and tavernas



In most of the tavernakia, humble tavernas, of Amorgos, you will be able to sample local recipes using fresh, local ingredients. On the beaches you'll be lucky enough to taste fish caught that very day, grilled or baked, along with octopus and squid, and perhaps even a lobster, though these are quite rare nowadays. At inland tavernas, though nowhere is far from the sea on Amorgos, apart from classic Greek dishes, the most popular island treats are based on its delicious meats. Kid will be found cooked with potatoes (patatato), lemon, stuffed as if for Easter, and grilled chops. Cured meats include a local variant on pastourma made with dried goat's meat, while pork is turned into a rich but delicate confit called kavourmas, which often ends up in a sumptuous omelette. The little triangular cheese and greens pies are fried rather than baked and you will find these and pureed fava dip at most tavernas. Other dishes to look out for are



aubergines baked with tomato sauce, chickpeas with greens, cabbage rolls (yiaprakia), stuffed courgette flowers, mushrooms and boiled wild greens. One unusual feature of Amorgos tavernas is that many of them bake their own breads and they are of exceptional quality. Rarely on a Cycladic island do you find such delicious bread.



## The cafés of Amorgos

In Greece cafés or kafeneia used to be just places where men could have a cup of coffee. Gradually, in the countryside and islands, especially, they became more like social clubs, where men would meet, solve the world's problems and discuss politics, play cards and backgammon, and generally enjoy themselves. Women did not set foot in them. They were sometimes called 'the country's little parliaments', but they were also a place where business meetings could be held as well as spontaneous parties. Provincial coffeehouses, especially, continue to be the intermediary between the village and the

outside world. While most of the island kafeneia have been modernized, transformed into more worldly cafés as a result of tourism and are no longer the exclusive preserve of men, the coffeehouses of Amorgos have retained the picturesque character of half a century ago along with their old functions. There is no village on the island that does not possess at least one coffeehouse that deserves a visit just to enjoy this particular ambience and have a thimbleful of Greek coffee or the local mezedes (little dishes) that accompany an ouzo or psimeni raki. Certain establishments stand out. In Katapola,

it's Prekas, the historic kafeneio on the port; In Hora, Parva's and Fotodotis are both famous, and the latter has music evenings. In Kato Meria, Maki's in Arkesini is run by the oldest proprietor on the island, while also worth a stop are Nikita's in Kolofana, and in Pyrgos, the traditional kafeneio that also serves mezedes (little dishes). In Ano Meria, the best places are Horeftis in Tholaria, which is also a wine/grocery shop and Kali Kardia; the attractive Moschoudaki in Langada; and Steki in Asfondyliti, an almost deserted but beautiful little village.





The Festival of Agia Paraskevi (25 July) at Kato Meria happens to be the biggest traditional panegyri in the Cyclades. Every year the islanders offer 150 sheep and goats and two or three steer and calves for the feast, and most of the volunteers who work on the festival preparations are farmers and shepherds. All the bread for the event is baked in the church oven, which can hold 56 round loaves weighing 2 ½ kg each, and if you think that about 750 such loaves are made for each panegyri, the mind boggles. The food is stewed in huge cauldrons under the watchful eye of archcook Vangelis Mendrinos. After vespers held in the church, the congregation – believers and

visitors – are led to open-air dining areas, where they are served generous portions of the classic patatato of Amorgos, with kofto and xydato?. Dozens of ‘waiters’ take the plates with the stew to the large courtyard and set the tables for each sitting (there are usually three to four sittings) for a total of 4,000 people or more. The dancing begins shortly after midnight and lasts until dawn, a little before the mass begins. At midday, the tables are set again and the feasting begins all over again, with the inimitable patatato in the leading role!



## Festivals and holidays

The festivals on the Aegean islands and indeed throughout Greece are those unique moments during the year when the members of every community get together to honour the patron saint to whom the local church, chapel or monastery is dedicated. After the service, the solemnity turns into celebration which is part of the rite of unity and belonging. The mass and prayers, the food and drink, various customs linked with the phases of agricultural or pastoral life, dancing, singing and having a good time are the ingredients that make up a panegyri or festival, and they are of enormous interest both as a whole and independently. For this reason, church festivals



as a social event represent an unparalleled quintessence of life and culture that is rarely found at other types of celebration. On Amorgos, these festivals seem to be endless, occurring all over the island all year long. The season begins with Carnival and the ‘Kapetanios’ parade at Langada and ends on 21 November with the Presentation of the Virgin at Hozoviotissa. Some festivals are conducted more formally at monasteries, like Agia Paraskevi, others take

place in private chapels, fields or pastures near villages, while still others are held in high, remote locations, where getting there can be quite a challenge, as at the feast of the True Cross at Krikelo on 14 September.



**The Captain's Parade**  
a moveable feast at Langada

**The Resurrection days after Easter**  
Potamos

**All Saints Day**  
56 days after Easter  
Hora

**The Festival of Agioi Anargyroi**  
1 July  
Tholaria

**Agia Paraskevi**  
25 July  
Kato Meria

**Psimeni raki festival**  
26 July  
Katapola

**The Saviour**  
6 August  
at Loza near Hora

**Dormition of the Virgin**  
15 August  
most villages

**Pasteli festival**  
first Sunday after  
15 August  
Hora

**Xerotigano Festival**  
early  
September  
Aigiali

**Festival of the True Cross**  
15 September  
Krikelo

**Presentation of the Virgin**  
21 November  
Hozoviotissa  
Monastery

**St Nicholas**  
6 December  
Katapola

On Amorgos the churches and chapels possess an architectural detail that distinguishes them from the rest of the Cyclades. Here the domed roof is often made from large flat slabs on two levels, one row below and the adjacent one on top, like massive roof tiles, which are whitewashed like the rest of the building. The result is truly aesthetically pleasing, particularly where there are several small domes in a row, conjuring up the image of foam-tipped waves.



simple farmers, fishermen or working men who built chapels as a vow in thanks for the restoration of a loved one's health or to have the grace and blessing of their patron saint. The little churches stand in their fields, next to the rocks so as not to waste an inch of the fertile soil that was so precious. Every place that had such a chapel eventually took its name from it, as the locals would give the area around it the name of the saint they were 'hosting'. And one would say that nature with its chapels calms, consecrates and takes its name. ??? These chapels, small though they may be, often have a little rectangular shed or building next to them called the panegyrospito or festival house, which acts as a dining area where on the day of the feast, the worshippers eat and drink in honour of the saint.



from the 19th, 18th and 17th century, and there are even a few from the Pre-Byzantine and Byzantine era. Their builders were sometimes communities, sometimes private individuals. Prosperous merchants, pious homeowners or seafarers who risked their lives in storms would build churches in the villages dedicated to the saint who protected them. But there were also a few well-to-do

On Amorgos, as on most of the Cyclades, there are chapels scattered throughout the countryside, and they are certainly among the most characteristic features of these islands. Their dominant characteristic (whether they are in a village or outside it) is their humility, which comes from their small scale and their simplicity. Most of the churches were built in the 20th century, several date



## The chapels of Amorgos

Psimeni raki  
Kavourmas  
Xerotigana  
Pasteli  
Honey  
Herbs  
Cheeses  
Bread

The pasteli of Amorgos is distinct from that of the other Cyclades because it is both softer and chewier and it contains a pinch of cumin. Both pasteli and xerotigana were served on special occasions and in the old days when food was much less abundant and a family was planning for a wedding, they would plant sesame a year or two before the happy event and save it for making the two sweets to be given to the wedding guests.



Xerotigana – Fried pastry strips  
The literal translation of these simple but exquisite treats – dry fries – does not begin to do them justice. Found in Crete and on other Cyclades islands, they are merely the thinnest of strips of an eggless dough, deep fried, and sprinkled with sesame seeds, cinnamon and honey. Twirled into coils, they resemble flowers. Although traditionally given as presents on Christmas and Easter, and to guests at weddings and baptisms, they are so beloved that they are on sale year round and have become a daily snack in many homes.



A plate of olives and three Amorgos cheeses, Amorgiano, Xynomyzithra and Kopanisti to accompany your psimeni raki

Psimeni raki and Turkish delight served in a cell at Hozoviotissa, with a view of the infinite Big Blue



All the perfumes and aromas of the Amorgos hills in attractive packaging

The most characteristic edible/ consumable souvenirs of Amorgos are psimeni raki (aged, spiced firewater), its aromatic herbs and honeys, all of which you will find at local gift shops. Other such souvenirs are not as readily available but definitely worth seeking out. These include the island's cheeses, to be found at its only cheese plant, and the delicious breads at the bakeries and at tavernas, where you can order more when you have a meal there. For those who have friends and relatives with a sweet tooth, though, the best gift comes from the pastry shops.

## Gastronomic souvenirs



### The Hora of Amorgos

is one of the most beautiful main towns of the Cyclades, beguiling its visitors.



## Sightseeing on the island

### The three villages of Pano Meria

Are not to be missed. Tholaria, Langada and Potamos stand out for the picturesque architecture of their houses, their flower-filled alleyways, their churches and their tavernas, and especially for the sublime view over the bay of Aigiali and the Aegean.



Amorgos is not an easy island. It does not have stunning geological phenomena or infinite beaches that seem designed for water sports. Its landscape however does possess incomparable energy for those who are open to it and its residents are proud of their homeland. The island is not in danger of succumbing to modern threats; It does not lend itself to mainstream lightness and trendy superficiality. Instead wild Amorgos appeals to those searching for something different. More than fifty beaches, 'unorganized', unpolluted, without umbrellas and all the related paraphernalia, bring you in immediate touch with 'the big blue'. Amorgos is an idea,

something unique, as unique as Nikos Gatsos' poetry collection of 1943, which he called 'Amorgos' not because of any particular connection to the island but 'simply because of its sound – a piece of something Greek.' Even today, almost eighty years later, the goats continue to scamper heedlessly on their daily routes along the mountain slopes and take their naps in the middle of the roads, while at its legendary festivals patatato continues to be simmered in 300 kg cauldrons and the strains of the violin and lute still play old folk songs serenading the beauty of the Amorgos sunrise, the sparkling sea, its springs and the girls who go to them with their water buckets.

### At the port of Katapola

Every evening the Skopelitis, the hardest little boat in the Aegean, leaves every morning from Amorgos to make the round of the Lesser Cyclades – Donousa, Schinoussa, Irakleia – and Naxos, returning to Amorgos in the evening. Only recently (2018) was Amorgos linked directly with Piraeus by the big Blue Star line. Before that the Skopelitis had been plowing the seas, winter and summer, in flat calms and furious winds, for 50 years to make its daily voyage, providing the only link these islands had to the world. The inhabitants of the Lesser Cyclades think of it as their home, and in 2013 its captain, Yiannis Skopelitis who took over from his father, Dimitris, was honoured by Lloyds of London as the 'ferry company of the year'.



The most exciting hiking trail on Amorgos, of the 20 paths that exist, is Megali Strata, which slices through the length of the island and was once the only connection between Pano Meria and Hora. The walk takes about 4 ½ hours and passes through the fascinating ghost village of Asfodylitis.



Visit our website [greekgastronomyguide.gr/amorgos](http://greekgastronomyguide.gr/amorgos)  
Surf the map of the island  
Get to know the members of the Gastronomic Community of Amorgos  
Discover the hot spots and their gastronomic treasures

## AMORGOS



• THOLARIA •  
• AEGIALI •  
• POTAMOS • • LAGADA

• ASFONDYLITIS

• CHORA •  
• CHOZOVIOTISSA

• KATAPOLA •  
• VROUTSI

• AGIA PARASKEVI • • KAMARI  
• KOLOFANA • • ARKESINI

GASTRO  
NOMY &  
WINE TOURISM



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