

Location



On the south-east part of the island, on the right side along the main road of Kambos and four kilometers from Hora, the central Mastic villages are scattered over the so-called **Kambochora** region.

The formation of the municipality of **Kambochora** took place in 1990 after the uniting of six different colonies of the area, which were functioning as autonomous communities. As a result Halkios, Vavili, Vassileoniko, Ververato, Dafnonas and Zifias compose one municipality, which itself is well organized and represents the strength of the single community and their development towards a 'modern' society. The size of the municipality is fifteen square kilometers and its population, according to the census of 1991, is 2.939 citizens. All the colonies were located near the center of the island and the transportation is served by two main roads. The center of the municipality is Halkios, which has the largest population and a geographical position almost in the middle of all the other villages.

The services of the municipality are housed in the beautiful building of the Argendion School. It is a huge building, consisting of stone feature the characteristic architecture of the first years of the century, as it was built in 1917 by the Chian donators Pantelis Argentis and his wife Fani Skilitisi. Its initial purpose was to serve as a school for the local community. However

nowadays, since it has been renewed and restored appropriately, with expenses paid by the European Community, it does not only house the services of the municipality, but also the Model Nursery School of **Kambochora**, which was founded by the Municipality for the children of its citizens.



One of the first villages one encounters when touring through **Kambochora** is Vassilioniko. After leaving it behind the views change, with a more undulating landscape and scarce vegetation. The next village is Vavili, eight kilometers from Hora and one of the newest villages on the entire island. But not only this is what makes this place worth to stop for a walk: It is in the way to Sklavia, along a short path, surrounded by olive trees that begins just one kilometer off from Vavili. At the end of the path the Byzantine church of Panagia Krina is located, a well conserved and beautiful church, settled in an even more beautiful surrounding. The church, from 1197, is said to be one of the most characteristic copies of the Katholikon of Nea Moni in Chios. Yet its importance today lies more in the artistic, architectonical and sociological information it still offers, especially about the Byzantine painting at the turn of the century. Some of its artworks have been removed and placed at the Byzantine Museum (the mosque) at Vounaki Square.

The area where Sklavia stands is also very nice, with lots of springs and a nice view to Kambos. Some other villages that we find on the way around **Kambochora** are Kalkio, that gets its name from the craft of copper article its villagers worked in (gr. halkos = copper), and Zifias, the beloved home village of the academy professor Kon Amantos, and Ververato, a small village with the remains of a medieval tower and of ancient houses called "ellinospita". Behind these villages the Korakaris mountain is situated, a bare mountain with a little forest that the sea must have covered thousands of years ago, since some seashells were discovered even in the forest.

The next village is Dafnonas. Around it used to be some fields with towers in them, such as Vestarhato, Stratigato and Kanavoutsato. They, however, were belonging to Nea Moni. From the area one can also see Pafyllida, a green valley with plenty of springs, whose water is stored to irrigate the fields in the area. Surprisingly there are many legends telling about fairies and nymphs living there. One, for instance, refers to the bridge called "Koris Gefiri" over Parthenis with the marble "breast" of a young lady on top of it, who is said to have been built in the bridge to safeguard it against destruction. A similar legend exists for the famous bridge at Arta and both claim that the sacrifice of a maiden would help against evil.

Right after Tholopotami, the road forks out to Kalamoti on the left and Armolia on the right. Taking the the way to Kalamoti, one will come to Myrmigi, a small village, and after that to Exo Didima and Messa Didima, with the monastery of Agia Matrona at Halandra on the left.

From Kallimasia, a town a little bit to the north, the road goes down to Katarraktis and Nenita. Heading south one will find the beach of Voukaria. It is, besides being an excellent beach for swimming and fishing, the nearest point of Chios to the coast of Asia Minor, and devoted to Agios Ioannis Gridia.

From Nenita you can go to Vouno, a town with narrow lanes and tall stone houses connected to each other in the traditional defensive way with vaults called "skepasta". Worth seeing is the huge gate of the village and the observation tower, granting a unique overview over the village and the area. Finally, to the south of Voune, three small villages spread along a tiny valley: Flatsia, Kini, and Pagida.