



## ” Mama Mia ” - Skiathos and Skopelos



**Skiathos** is one of Greece’s premier resorts with it’s 68 sand beaches, sun and lively nightlife. The capital is built on 2 hills above the new quay and the curving old harbour, separated by the charming islet of Bourtzi. With it’s red roofed, white-washed houses, many boutiques and restaurants it is pretty, lively, touristy yet charming, too.

We just made it to our rendez-vous with Jytte, Ole, Elinor and Frede after 24 hours of thunderstorms stranding us on tiny Trikeri Island some distance away! Having made it to the crowded harbour, we were reluctant to lose our space again. Instead, we had some fantastic days out on local boats, able to go much closer in to cliffsides, caves than we could on Havana and the fabulous cliffside Lalaria Beach- accessible only by boat. Ours ran straight up on the beach of grey pebble in crystal turquoise water. The captain’s Labrador provided entertainment by riding the waves in a life-ring.



Kastro, the old island capital from 1540-1829, perched dramatically on the clifftop and now a ruined city provided stunning views over the clear turquoise water and nearby islands. Once, accessible by drawbridge and one stone gate only, the fortified walls provided 300 houses and 20 churches with protection from pirates. Now it is silent, abandoned with only 2 churches, 2 furnished houses, birds and wild flowers left. A peaceful oasis.



Another highlight was our visit by car to Moni Evangelistrias Monastery, 450 m. above a deep gorge. Here the 2 remaining monks make and sell wine and keep a lovely courtyard of flowers and birds. We also enjoyed some of the long sandy beaches, and stopped for lunch in small beachside taverna.

“K..Cruises” gave us an unforgettable day out to the neighbouring islands of Skopelos and Alonissos.

**Alonissos** is tiny and very unspoiled. Its waters have been declared a national marine reserve, home to the Mediterranean Monk Seal and rare birds. We did see large pods of dolphins. The island has had it’s share of bad luck. Vines were destroyed by disease and Patitiri, the small capital, was hit by an earthquake in 1965. Now the old capital, high on the hill, is a warren of tiny white-washed streets and spotless, tiny houses- restored as summerhomes for wealthy Athenians. It has the most beautifully kept churchyard I have ever seen and with stupendous views. The caretaker says “yes, it is paradise”. Indeed, it is.



**Skopelos** (pop.4700) is less commercialised than Skiathos and is really very beautiful. They call it the island of “blue on green” for it is covered with the deep green of pine forests, with vineyards, olive groves, plum and fruit orchards that stretch right down to tiny, deep blue coves.

And ,ah yes, it is here that the current hit film “Mama Mia” was filmed in Sept. 2008. ( Of course, we had to see it – in a tiny open-air cinema on Skiathos where the occasional seagull flew past the screen and you could sit with your glass of beer or wine in your folding director’s chair. Great fun. )





**Skopelos Town** is a warren of whitewashed back streets, tiny houses with brightly painted doors and shutters and their characteristic, wooden balconies. Here, climbing high above the harbour and the blindingly white church on the quay, it is quiet. You begin to notice the many lovely and unusual details...hand-painted ceramic plates set into the walls, small scenes painted on the doorsteps, clay figures along the roof edge...and everywhere, skinny cats dozing in the sun and watching from the shadows....we have come very close to having a ship's cat many times now....



We visited several times, by car, by local bus taking a trip along the whole island and with "Havana" along the sheer cliffs.

We even developed a taste for the islands' speciality...grilled octopus legs washed down with ouzo! Many small ouzerias serve a selection of appetisers such as anchovies marinated in olive oil and lemon juice, small fried fish, garlic puree (our favourite...and why is the next table always deserted?), small fried chilli peppers...



And back on Skiathos again, we enjoyed every evening together - whether crammed into the cockpit of Havana for ouzo and grilled Greek sausages or out in the very cosy waterside tavernas! We had such a good time- it was over all too soon. Thanks to you for coming....Jytte, Ole Elinor and Frede. **Yassas!**



After a busy week, we decided to spend a few days away from the bustle of Skiathos. We ended up in the very lovely anchorage of Panormos on Skopelos- tied to a tree ! But it was so beautiful- like floating on the edge of the forest. We could "dinghy in " to the beachside taverna for lunch and swim from the boat. Nothing can be better.



Another lovely spot on Skopelos was the mountain village of Glossa which has managed to remain much the same for centuries. Everyone comes to eat in the "Agnanti Taverna" run by a local family for 50 years. Deep- fried feta drizzled with honey and sesame seeds...yum. They also make wonderful plum jam here!

We spent several quiet days before returning to Skiathos to welcome our next guests on their second voyage aboard...Jørgen and Peter (alias "skibsmatrose" and "skibslæge")...

