

İdil Elveriř – Travelmind-idilka, 31.08.2011

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A revival in the most western tip of Turkey: Gökçeada



Tepeköy square in Gökçeada on the evening of the feast on 15 August

My prior visits to Gökçeada have been emotionally overwhelming. In my third visit, I therefore decided to do better. I went back specifically to conduct an interview with a local friend to contribute to the story of the island to be known. In preparation of the interview, I attended the feast of the Assumption of Mary on the island. Lucky for me, my interviewee has been one of the initial organizers of the feast. I went to his native Tepeköy on 15 August the main square of which was full with tables. "Our" table was surrounded by other Greeks who have come a long way from all over the world to be together with their fellow islanders. As I was to witness in the night, they were there to continue a tradition and an identity that belonged to them since ancient times. A group of musicians from Greece started to play live music. As the night continued, the people danced the typical dances of nearby Aegean islands like Limnos and Lesvos as well as their own. This feast alone seems to be the biggest part of the Greek revival on the island today, for more about the revival see my [article](#) in Hürriyet Daily News.



Sunset at harbor in Gökçeada,
the most western tip of Turkey.

After the feast, I set off to explore the pristine beaches of the island. One of them was Saklı Liman also called Kacaklimani which as told by my interviewee was used as an illegal crossing point to Greece's Samothraki and Limnos islands. Leaving in difficult circumstances, many islanders could not afford proper channels to travel. Today, it looks like a very unlikely spot for migration. From Uğurlu, I headed all the way east to the Salt Lake and Aydıncık. My interviewee showed me a picture of the Salt Lake full of flamingos. However, when the military used it as a spot to test ammunition, they seemed to have left, never to be seen again:-).



One of the many chapels on the left of the picture in Gökçeada.



Pristine waters bay after bay in Gökçeada.



The salt lake in Gökçeada with kite surfers of Aydıncık in the distance.

The one hour road passes from virgin coves, vast and empty terrain that is- every now and then- dotted with chapels. There are no complexes in any of the coves,

however, until Aydıncık. In other word, unless you carry an umbrella and water with you, you cannot tolerate the sun for a quick bath despite the inviting tourquoise sea as there is no shade what so ever. So beware! But this journey is enough to make you realize how big the island in fact is. You should also know that [Lonely Planet](#) recently declared Gökçeada as one of the hidden coastlines of the Mediterranean.



Views of Chapel of Virgin Mary close to Aydıncık in Gökçeada.

The options to stay in Gökçeada are limited but thanks to the Kaleköy's recently opened boutique hotel Anemos, this seems to have changed. Contrary to its meaning in Greek (wind), it was very calm and peaceful. Thanks to its tasteful architecture, one does not even realize that there are 24 rooms. It is close to the center, to the harbor (fish restaurants) and Mustafa'nın Kayfesi up in the village of Kaleköy. Further, the sunset from Kaleköy is amazing.

After seeing the feast, talking to my friend/interviewee (and his family) and exploring the island more, I am convinced that there will be more stories emerging from the island in the near future as well as more development. I can only hope that it all happens a-la-Alaçatı style and not a-la-Bodrum.



Views from Anemos Hotel in Kaleköy, Gökçeada.



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