

World Cultural Heritage Letoon

Don't Miss

Gemile Island (Lebessos)



Gemile Island Visiting Hours

April 1 – October 31		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday		Saturday		Sunday	
Monday	8.30	8.30	8.30	8.30	8.30	8.30	8.30	8.30	8.30	8.30	8.30
	19.30	19.30	19.30	19.30	19.30	19.30	19.30	19.30	19.30	19.30	19.30
October 31 – April 1		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday		Saturday		Sunday	
Monday	8.30	8.30	8.30	8.30	8.30	8.30	8.30	8.30	8.30	8.30	8.30
	17.30	17.30	17.30	17.30	17.30	17.30	17.30	17.30	17.30	17.30	17.30



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Has St. Nicholas ever
been here?





Gemile Island (Lebissos)

Gemile Island is across Soğuksu Bay near the Blue Lagoon. Transportation to the island is provided from Gemiler Bay near Kayaköy. There are 4 church ruins, grave structures and medieval settlement ruins on the island. The structures of civil architecture consist of houses and cisterns. Some of the ruins can also be observed under water. It is believed that the island was inhabited in the 5th to 7th centuries, and abandoned in the 7th century after Arab raids. The churches on the island have been numbered during the excavations conducted by Kazuo Asano. The most magnificent church is named as the church number 3. Located at the highest point of the island, this church has a basilica plan.



A Religious Site on the Pilgrimage Road

Considering the churches on the island and other churches at Symbolon (Blue Lagoon) nearby, this area may be a bishopric center. Religious structures such as chapels, basilicas and tombs, which are concentrated in and around the island, indicate that the island became a religious site in 5th to 7th centuries. The presence of dense architectural structures on the island despite the lack of drinking water sources is a mystery. The cisterns on the island indicate that rain water was probably stored. The attraction of the island is thought to be due to the fact that it is frequented by Christians who were traveling for pilgrimage.



Why St. Nicholas Island?

A fresco on the abscissa of the church number 2 on the island reads "Hossios Nikolaos". Thus, since the church is thought to have been built to honor St. Nicholas of Sion who was born and lived in Alacahisar (Sion) near Demre in Antalya today, it was named as St. Nicholas Church. Moreover, Gemile Island was also known as St. Nicholas Island in the Middle Age.