

The Five Islands

Travel Guide

By Trina Love

Asteria: The Island of Beauty & Debauchery

A beautiful lagoon full of rolling, blue waves embellishes the tiniest of the Five Islands. Its opulence binds to the mind, making Asteria a notorious destination of pretenses and beauty. As the water taxi speeds through the lagoon, salt water sprays into the vehicle, pelting my face. Buildings and homes made of the white asbesta-stained rocks rise up out of the water like tombstones. The azure lagoon slivers down the center of the city like a narrow blue ribbon, evenly dividing Asteria into two parts. East Asteria, on the left, boasts massive homes that start at the water and crawl up a steep mountainside. Sprinkled on the dock front are nostalgic eateries reminiscent of Italy, a gothic uncovered theater made of stone, retail shops, water sport rental kiosks, a 24 hour bakery, a non-denomination church that looks like a medieval castle, and a fish market that sells, guts, cooks, and catches seafood from the lagoon. Lavish hotels, expensive restaurants, and tourist shops jam the waterfront of West Asteria, hiding clusters of small, indigent villages.

Each building rolls into the other, unique in shape, but all sharing the white rock outer casing and red metal scale roofs. The original five clans that settled Asteria and made it the bustling, successful tourist spot that it is today live on the docks of East Asteria, their austere homes sidling horizontally and vertically on the mountain. Canals crawl beside the homes hooking one area to another.

On this water highway, long buses float by packed with blue-collar Astreites returning to West Asteria from work, holding bags replete with groceries, books, and other tender. Water taxis streak from one side of the lagoon to the other, gathering tourists from hotels and whisking them to the Marina where yachts the height of skyscrapers wait with cocktails, cuisine, and chaos all night long.

Evil burrows in the hearts of the Astreite Clan members who fancy wealth and money above all else. Preservation of their family names and stature preclude things that most people hold dear. The pristine buildings, clean cobblestone streets, and clear water mask the debris and secrets burdening the minds of these ancient Astreites. Although they smile, shake hands, and appear cordial, their cunning brains are always spinning.

The water taxi driver is beautiful, flawless...as are most Astreites. Tall, lean, suntanned, sinister, distinguished, and arrogant. You can travel to any of the Five Islands and know when you see an Astreite. They must learn that distinct air of importance at birth. And no matter what their occupation, they all have it... The innocuous way they slide their gaze down their nose and peer at you through gorgeous green eyes that can still your heartbeat. Their clipped, precise dialect is unmistakable, as if royalty is speaking. Yet underneath that beauty, poise, and wealth lies an undercurrent of wickedness and veiled corruption that the average tourist never realizes until it is too late.

Levante: The Magic Land

Levante has the largest population of the Five Islands. Independently resourceful, it doesn't rely on tourism for its livelihood, and 95% of the population are native Levanites. The pristine asbesta rock is Levante's source of income. Yet it comes at a deadly price.

As I stroll through the expansive, white desert of Levante, the breeze carries a stench of burnt flesh and sizzling organs. The bright white sand blinds me against the sun's rays. The island's small airport sits in the center of the desert, round and stacked like a wedding cake. One must procure a camel or a donkey to get from the airport to other places on the island. Only the Levante Royals are allowed to have cars. The natives are against the pollution. Everyone travels by animal, mostly camel. The mighty mammals move about Levante as if they are humans with rights and heritage, their long necks protruding proudly from bodies made for transporting. Every Levanite owns a camel, except the Royals who drive Bentleys or ride elephants. One of the things I remember most about Levante is how after it rains, the odor of wet camel settles on the desert like a blanket.

Civil unrest and tribal pride taint the necromantic atmosphere. The tribes are distinct, which is what you are likely to remember of this land besides the occasional foul smell. Coastal Levante houses the Levan Tribe, a tall, lithe exotic race with bronze skin, sparkling eyes the color of honey, tight, curly tresses that know no boundaries or rules, and lean, athletic bodies. Their homes are nestled in and perched atop the ivory cliffs, in hues of pastel pink, shocking blue, bright yellow, and other festive colors. These open, colorful homes advertise the asbesta stones. The amphibious Levan Tribe feeds the rest of the island with seafood from the unsound Cyan Sea.

The Mountain People inhabit the far west of the island, harboring their alchemy. They rarely leave the island. At least 6'7 tall, the Mountain People are a race of unaged men with skin the color of milk and eyes the color of asphalt. Tall, wiry, and brittle, their shoulders round and some have hunched backs. Their hair is stringy and thin, the color of dirty oil. Their pink lips loom in their pale faces, intermingled with vacant eyes and towering height, they look like mistakes, hodgepodge vestiges of some magical joke. These silent, quiet creatures hide their intellect and cunning behind their odd physical appearance, and are a nightmare to any unsuspecting Five Island tourist.

Mid Levante is a deep valley, a crease in the Earth, where the mines and caves of asbesta rock, Levante's livelihood, are excavated. Flanked by the Plintiri Mountains in the West and the Coast in the East, Mid Levante has a secret race of people.

Levante is a duplicitous land, from its chalky, windswept desert with the stench of death to the black water of the Straight of Levante that flows vertically through the island, cutting it in two

like a line of black ink. As I peer into the murky Straight, the shadow peering back at me isn't my own.

Petramos: The Mythical Island

I caution against traveling to Petramos. Psychological preparation is necessary for such an undertaking. Petramos is never the same place twice, and it is particular to each person who visits. This mythical island manifests your fears, taking you on a psychological journey through the crevices of your psyche, unraveling what binds you. Everyone's passage here is unique, morphing into what your soul needs and fears.

Any ancient myth imaginable inhabits Petramos, the Native American, Norse, Greeks, Jewish, and Roman's mythology. It is all alive and manifested on Petramos. It can free, bind, or kill you. It all depends on your cerebral steadiness.

No one is from Petramos. It is a concocted island, steeped in antagonistic history and rich in nature, bestial aberrations, and rare evolution. Petramos belongs to everyone who needs it. The only unchanging thing on Petramos is the Isle of Winter, the beach/tourism area at the front of the island, and the underground tunnels. The Isle of Winter is a thick river that cuts through the white landscape and winds through the terrain like a highway, similar to a thick line of blue ink drawn haphazardly on white paper. It splits the island in two, and is the bluest body of water you'll ever see. It is perfectly still. No ripples or movement, like distilled chlorinated pool water. You cannot see where it begins or where it ends. It originated from the tears of a goddess and is privy to the horrors and dreams of everyone who encounters it.

The Five Islands reside in a wide arc around the central point of the Earth where the angels, demons, gods, demigods, and anomalies enter and exit the Earth. Petramos sits the closest to this point and pulsates with ancient energy and power.

As I write this, I am lost on Petramos, sitting captivated beside the Isle of Winter.

Mizone: What you see is what you get

The Mizonites are simple, blue collar, peaceful people. Barterers, cooks, carpenters, bricklayers, seamstresses, gardeners, swimmers, fishermen, bartenders, printmakers, painters, brewers, construction workers. Trade people. They only want enough money for expenses and necessities. Decadence is deplorable to the Mizonites; instead, the basics are enough. They reject material exuberance and instead treasure family. They are a collective body, all related in some fashion, existing as one.

It is kept very quiet, and the Mizonites pay to have the numbers fudged to their disadvantage with the Five Island government, but Mizone is the richest and wealthiest of the Five Islands. Their buildings and homes are made of the root asbesta rock, the brown rock. They add no coloring or additives. These homes blend into the rustic cliffs that they are situated in.

The seven-mile long trading center in the apex of their island is the biggest attraction to this place. The artist from West Orteles, the Levan Tribe from Levante, and the socialites from Asteria all bring their goods to Mizone's trading center to sell. The other lure to Mizone is the ancient Zefoe Castle that belonged to the Zefoe family from Romania. Made of majestic metal, it is the sturdiest building on Mizone and the tallest. It is said to be inhabited by the vampire Icarus, but this is not confirmed. Although, no one that enters the castle is seen or heard from afterwards. After these disappearances, the Five Island government made it illegal to enter the castle, but you can stand outside of it all you want.

Mizone is a water city; canals and waterways transport commuters. There are no roads, only walkways. Speedboats, canoes, kayaks, and sailboats are the modes of transportation. Beautifully decorated bridges demand your attention, situated over every canal.

The Mizonites are

Orteles: The Macabre Land

Orteles is the largest of the five islands. It's vast and unevenly distributed landscape was split into West and East Orteles. After the Orteles Civil War in 1970, the Five Island governing body divided Orteles into two distinct parts, allowing the separate sanctions to coexist separately and peacefully. If the Artists, who inhabit West Orteles and the Seekers of East Orteles could split the island in two, they would. Not possible, so instead, they dealt with the imaginary line the government had drawn, and had lived without issue for the last 40 years. Now, there seems to be a bit of discord rippling through Orteles. The Seekers, an unevolved species, antiquated in their thinking, technology, and industry were not happy about the success the Artist experienced over the past 20 years. And we know that jealousy leads to all types of debauchery, which was just what the Seekers planned.

East Orteles is a land of gray spikes and spindles. Medieval Castles ascend from the bright sand, reaching towards the sky with jagged apexes and geometric actualizations. Precise edges adorn every structure in Orteles, rendering it extremely functional and cost effective, but terribly unimaginative. The metal city is drab and cold, uninviting and eerie. The people of East Orteles, the Orts, are no more than 5'6, rotund, and loud. Their vanilla skin and long tongues remind me of reptiles. Amphibians. Their brown eyes glow an iridescent sheen that is almost trance like. They speak in monotone. Their minds whir like computers, processing everything in numbers. Everything is computerized. The mainframe, Oxon, controls everything there.

West Orteles is an Artist colony, replete with shapes and colors, an imaginative land of happiness and wealth. It's a hidden place, non-existent if you ask most people there. The gothic castles and structures of East Orteles hide it from the south side, and from the North, the Cyan Sea side, its hidden behind a bevy of cotton clouds and rumbling fog. The Ortelians habitate this area. They worship