

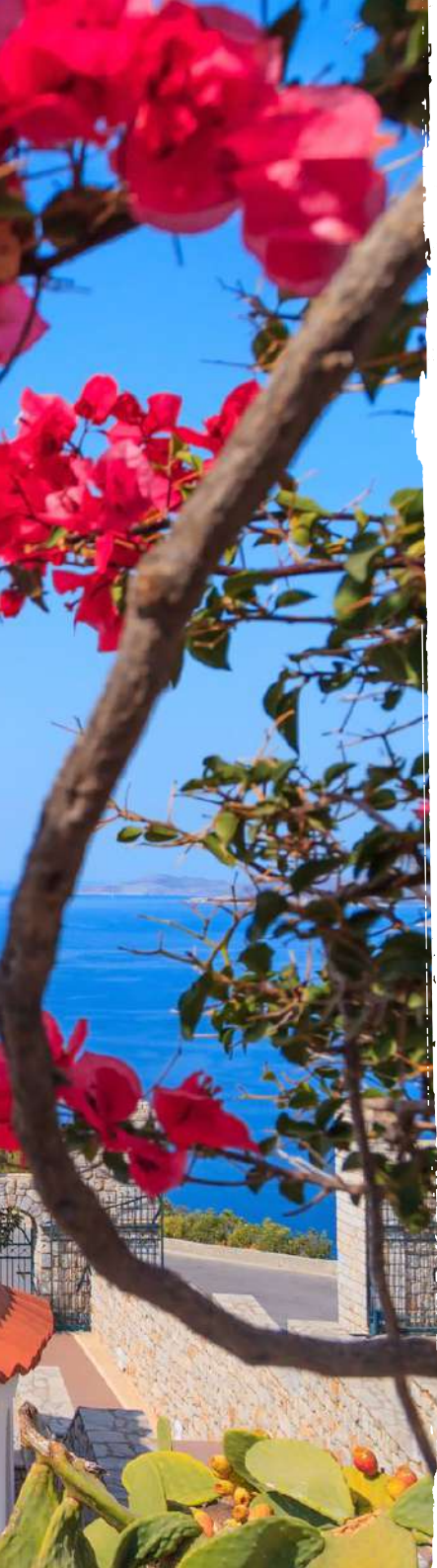
travel counsellors



A GUIDE TO
Greece







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Easy and quick to get to and abundant in wonderful places to stay, whether you're looking for a spacious private villa for that longed-for family reunion, a boutique retreat or a world-class luxury resort, Greece is a perfect pick for a classic Mediterranean holiday.

Whether you head to the mainland or to one of the famous Greek islands, this is a place dedicated to the simple pleasures of life: long lazy lunches, languid boat-trips and sunset aperitifs in an unparalleled setting of beaches, olive groves and mountains dotted by Greek ruins, Byzantine churches and other remnants of lost civilisations that have become almost organic features of the landscape. The result is a unique, timeless atmosphere and a destination in which switching off from the modern world is guaranteed.

Greece Statistics

| | | | |
|------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Population | 10.72 million | Official language | Greek |
| Capital | Athens | Time zone | GMT+2 |
| Currency | Euro | Flight time: | 4 hours from London |

Average daytime temperatures in Greece (°C):

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|
| Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec |
| 10 | 10 | 13 | 16 | 21 | 26 | 29 | 29 | 24 | 20 | 15 | 12 |



Interesting facts

- Greece has more than 6,000 islands and islets, only 227 of which are inhabited.
- No point in the country is more than 85 miles from water.
- Greece is home to 18 UNESCO World Heritage sites, with a further 14 on the list for possible inclusion.



- This is one of the world's sunniest places, with more than 3,000 hours of sunshine a year.
- The country has more than 300 mountains, accounting for a full 80% of its terrain.
- It also has 300-plus indigenous grape varieties, and a wine-making tradition dating back to 4000BC.



Flavours of Greece

Kolokythokeftedes

Balls, patties or fritters made with grated or puréed courgette with dill, mint and spices, usually served with tzatziki.



Spanakopita

A traditional spinach and feta cheese pie served hot or cold, best accompanied by a simple tomato, cucumber and pepper salad or a yogurt dip with fresh mint leaves.



Souvlaki

Often served still on the skewer or fast-food style in pitta bread with chopped tomatoes, onions and tzatziki.





Char-grilled octopus

Slow-braised on a bed of mixed herbs before being scorched, served simply with lemon, a drizzle of extra-virgin olive oil and black pepper or ladolemono (lemon and oil dressing).



Moussaka

The classic crowd-pleaser of minced lamb, aubergine and potato topped with béchamel sauce, best eaten with crusty bread and a tomato and cucumber salad.



Karythopita

A spiced, moist walnut cake made with brandy, olive oil, orange or lemon rind, cinnamon and cloves, excellent served with a dollop of Greek yogurt.





Spending money

Wondering how much you'll need when visiting Greece? Here's a little look at some of the things you might be buying whilst you're there.



Acropolis entry fee in peak season

€20



Santorini to Mykonos ferry crossing

€40-80



Cocktail

€8



Three course meal for two in a restaurant

€60



Palace of Knossos entry fee

€15



TC Recommended

The view from the Acropolis was astonishing (I'd recommend getting there early to beat the cruise ship crowds, as the sun is rising). The shops of Monastiraki are worth a look with a mixture of tourist tack and wonderful antique shops. The temperatures were perfect when we went in late October in the mid-20s, I'd certainly recommend visiting outside of the hot mid-summer months.

Karen, Travel Counsellor, offering her recommendations for Athens



From Gouvia you can jump on the bus and take a short 15-minute ride to Corfu Town for a night out or afternoon sightseeing. I really have had some of the best meals I have ever eaten in Corfu Town and can highly recommend visiting. Corfu Town is the capital and the main port, the best viewpoint is from the Old Fortress, from there you can see the whole city and mainland Greece.

Vicky, Travel Counsellor, offering her advice for your time in Corfu

If you don't want to drive yourselves, or have children and want to stay near to the beaches, then there are plenty of really fantastic hotels in the Rethymno area which have lots of kids clubs and facilities for families, plus excursions can be arranged if you want to go further afield. You can even go on trips to other islands, including the very beautiful Santorini.

Advice for families visiting Crete from Sharon, Travel Counsellor



A large red column stands in front of a stone wall. To the right, a mural is partially visible, showing a blue sky and a red landscape.

Experiences

Nine-day Island-hopping Adventure

Begin in Mykonos, where you'll be free to wander the whitewashed streets of the Chora, sample authentic Mediterranean flavours in the traditional tavernas and visit the rustic church of Panagia Paraportiani.

From here you'll hop aboard the high-speed ferry to Santorini with its clifftop Cycladic houses. As well as relaxing and exploring under your own steam, you can take a sunset boat tour and taste ouzo in a family-owned distillery.



In Crete you'll discover the capital of Heraklion and learn of its storied past at the iconic Minoan Palace of Knossos, with its vibrant murals, imposing red columns and glorious throne room, and the Venetian port. Seek out the island's most beautiful beaches starting with Matala and Agia Pelagia.



Cretan Cooking Class in Heraklion

Discover the island's culinary heritage and learn to prepare Cretan favourites yourself under the guidance of local cooks. In a stone village with Aegean views, cook then sit down to feast on dakos (rusks with tomato sauce and feta), dolmadakia (rice-stuffed vine leaves), lamb with artichokes, yemista (stuffed vegetables) and pies with cheese and honey, all made with the freshest seasonal ingredients and accompanied by local wines.



Total Athens Tour

Spend a day wandering along the Greek capital's secret alleyways and into authentic neighbourhoods you won't find in your guidebook, to browse bohemian shops amidst locals, spot colourful street art and hidden courtyards, and sample local treats in independent cafés and bars. Guides will share with you the most entertaining urban stories and myths and introduce you to the best local spirits and tastiest meze. Proceeds go to support artists and other young Athenians.



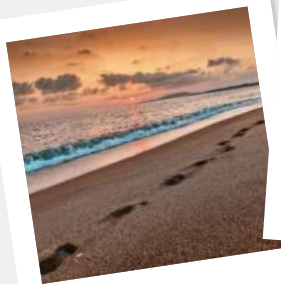
Mainland Greece

Halkidiki, Preveza, Athens, Peloponnese

Made up of three peninsulas jutting into the Aegean, Halkidiki in north-east Greece is home to Greece's best beaches nestled amidst fragrant pine forests and unspoilt villages. Or head to the north-west mainland, for lush green Preveza with its coastal villages including Párga – a gorgeous natural harbour rich in waterside tavernas in which to indulge in fish fresh from the boats.

Alternatively, discover the Peloponnese peninsula including the Costa Navarino. The southernmost part of the mainland, it offers up citrus and olive groves, vineyards and snow-clad mountain peaks, fantastic water sports, and landscapes dotted by Byzantine cities, classical temples, Mycenaean palaces, and Frankish and Venetian fortresses.

Worlds away from these peaceful spots but always great to visit, the capital Athens fascinates with its mix of iconic ancient sites and bustling modern neighbourhoods.





Ikos Oceania, Halkidiki

A permanent fixture on TripAdvisor's Travellers' Choice Awards list of the world's best all-inclusive resorts, this oasis of low-key luxury on a private beach on the blissful Halkidiki peninsula includes self-drive adventures discovering local landscapes and meals in authentic restaurants as part of your holiday package. On site there's everything from an Anne Semonin spa, power beach walks, yoga and introductory diving lessons to childcare catering for tots to teens.



Ikos Olivia, Halkidiki

Voted second-best all-inclusive resort in the world in the Travellers' Choice Awards 2020, this is another popular luxury property in the Halkidiki region, renowned for its diving, mountain-biking and even Greek dance lessons. Younger guests are equally well catered for, with a summer football academy, a crèche, kids' clubs and three children's pools. It's a great option for family reunions, with grandparents for instance, as it includes bungalows sleeping up to six.



The Westin Resort, Costa Navarino

The Westin Resort, Costa Navarino sits with its toes in the sand of the staggering, quite wild Blue Flag Beach with nesting turtles in summer, close to the iconic white-crescent Vodoikilia Beach. Each of its ground floor accommodations offer private infinity pools while families will find a seemingly endless list of ways to spend time between the two children hubs, the Aqua Park and the remarkable sports and activities.



The Romanos, a Luxury Collection Resort, Costa Navarino

The 12 tempting restaurants here range from local and international flavours to farm to table dining, and there's a vast spa, two 18-hole championship golf courses and a fabulous kids' clubs. Experiences include cookery classes with local women, cheese-tasting and -making, wine masterclasses, astronomy nights, mythological storytelling and even philosophy walks. Opt for a stay in one of the lavish Ionian Exclusive suites and villas for personalised butler service and unmatched amenities.



MarBella Elix, Parga

The latest edition to the prestigious MarBella Collection of luxury hotels has a glorious location on the Greek mainland near Parga and offers stunning Ionian views and a secluded sandy beach. There's also a salt-water pool, spa treatments based on essential oils and other organic ingredients, and Pilates and outdoor yoga sessions. Childcare comes courtesy of UK specialist Worldwide Kids, with an Adventure Club for teens hosting the likes of water sports, cooking lessons and football.



Sani Resort, Halkidiki

On the golden sands of Halkidiki, this famous property – named 'World's Leading Family & Beach Resort' and 'World's Leading Luxury Green Resort' in the World Travel Awards 2020 – comprises five hotels (Sani Beach, Sani Club, Sani Dunes, Porto Sani and Sani Asterias) sharing facilities including seven Blue Flag beaches with waiter service, five spas, a Dine Around programme, a Rafael Nadal tennis academy, a Chelsea FC football academy for kids and a Bear Grylls Survival Academy.



Corfu

Crystal-clear waters, brightly painted boats bobbing in bijou fishing harbours, and a charming interior of olive groves, wildflowers and fig and cypress trees awaiting those who venture off the beaten track... Corfu has lashings of natural beauty away from its larger resorts.

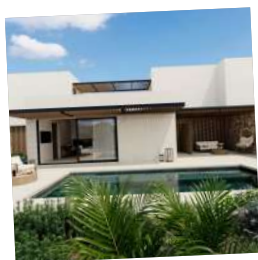
Corfu town is a stunner, with a quaint Old Town, a Venetian fortress with glorious views and a compelling Museum of Archeology with a terrifying Gorgon Medusa sculpture. Hikers pull on their boots to tackle Mount Pantokrator, the highest peak, while in the north, hidden coves and the isolated Diapontia Islands can be discovered by boat-trippers. And then of course there are the beaches – nearly 60 of them, with something for everyone, whether your bag is water sports or a spot of seclusion.





The Olivar Suites

Opening in July 2021, on the island's south-east coast, this enticing all-standalone-suite property, where most guests enjoy their own large private pools, serves as a home-away-from-home for discreet guests seeking privacy. It's a place devoted to relaxation, with all-day meze and other Corfiot and Mediterranean dining both from the restaurant and the bar, private suppers on the 200-metre-long beach, a spa scented by blossoming flowers, and outdoor yoga and Pilates.



Domes of Corfu

This 2021 addition to the ultra-chic Domes group features suites and retreats for all shapes and sizes of family, some with private pools, and even a Haute Living selection of residences that ramp up the five-star experience with the most lavish accommodation and exclusive services. The kids' club follows Montessori principles, and there's a splendid spa and the freshest seasonal Corfiot food, from fine dining to gourmet street fare served from pop-up food trucks.



Crete

Blessed with shimmering blue waters, picturesque white-washed fishing villages and breathtaking landscapes of vineyards, orange groves and rugged mountains studded with isolated chapels and forgotten ruins, the largest of the Greek islands is also the cradle of early Mediterranean civilisation. Its impressive remains from various periods include Minoan palaces, Byzantine churches, Venetian castles and Turkish minarets, but the absolute don't-miss is Knossos (Palace of Minos), the ancient palace around which the Minoan civilisation grew and flourished.

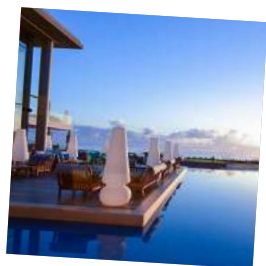
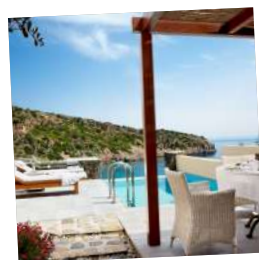
You're also spoilt for choice when it comes to great beaches, which include Váï (Finikodassos), a conservation area set against a backdrop of the biggest natural palm grove in all Europe, with fabulous snorkelling and windsurfing.





Daios Cove Luxury Resort & Villas

Named Greece's Leading Villa Resort in the World Travel Awards 2020, this super-stylish property blending into its incredible natural surroundings offers an indulgent spa and infinity pool and childcare by Worldwide Kids. It's also close to Aghios Nikolaos for those who like discovering local heritage and trying out authentic restaurants, bars and shops, and offers RIB boat-rides to secluded beaches and even the loan of Land Rovers to explore the island.



Nana Princess Hotel

This family owned luxury hotel is one of the newest five-star openings on the island of Crete, situated on a private sandy beach. The immaculate suites and villas come with their own pool or an outdoor heated whirlpool, and some with gyms and saunas. The Royal Wellness Club is an exceptional Spa for those looking for incredible tailored treatments and facilities. There's a Kids' club, three stunning restaurants serving Greek and International cuisine, three bars, two outdoor pools, tennis courts, sailing, diving, water sports and an 18-hole golf course nearby.



Santorini

Renowned around the world for the glorious sunset views from the top of its sheer cliffs, the mainly submerged volcanic caldera of Santorini mixes a geologically dramatic history with picture-postcard charm. Think white and blue Cycladic houses tumbling down towards the waters of the Med, pretty settlements including the capital Fira, Pyrgos and Oia, and alluring tavernas with alfresco terraces. Along the coasts there's volcanic-sand and multi-coloured beaches, and boat trips to the caldera's volcanic islands of Nea Kameni and Palia Kameni – including the latter's hot springs.

You can also taste local vintages in welcoming vineyards and explore the fascinating ruins of the Minoan city of Akrotiri, which was destroyed by the volcanic eruption of 1613 BC.





Mystique, a Luxury Collection Hotel

This exclusive, intimate property carved into the rugged cliffs of Santorini is an atmospheric joy, with stone-crafted, cave-style suites and villas with sea views across to an active volcano. An understated hideaway, it's much-coveted by honeymooners for its secluded terraces, its 150-year-old wine cellar with its wine-tastings, global cuisine and private candlelit dining, its open-air Charisma restaurant beside the infinity pool, and The Elios Spa, a haven of peace and tranquility.



Vedema, a Luxury Collection Resort

Occupying a 100-year-old mansion within a spellbinding medieval village, this cossetting retreat offers light-suffused suites and villas nestled amidst lush gardens and vineyards. Its Alati restaurant has its own 400-year-old wine cellar, and there's also laidback poolside dining and a stargazing terrace. For a change from the pools, in the summer season you can spend a day at the volcanic-sand Perivolos beach with its private facilities and services.



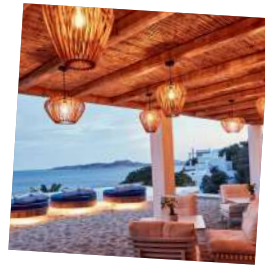
Mykonos

There's so much more to Mykonos than superclubs and beach parties: tiny, secluded coves, great water sports including windsurfing and diving, and an enchanting, minuscule, bougainvillea-swathed capital, Hora (Mykonos Town), dotted with boutiques, restaurants, churches, museums and art galleries.

Head away from the beaches and you'll also find a hilly interior studded with sleepy traditional villages and the more lively settlement of Ano Mera with its cobbled streets lined by bakeries, tavernas, cafe terraces and a 16th century monastery.

Mountain-biking is a popular way to discover the island, and there are daily boat trips to the UNESCO World Heritage listed sacred island of Delos, mythical birthplace of Apollo and Aphrodite and one of Greece's most significant and best-preserved archaeological sites.





Katikies

This member of the Leading Hotels of the World group combines Cycladic charm with a cosmopolitan vibe close to the stunning beach of Agios Ioannis. Set in a series of classic whitewashed buildings tumbling down the hillside, it has cool contemporary interiors in the seaside hues of white and blue, a champagne bar and restaurant serving everything from sushi to classic Greek dishes, and intimate Anatolian and Byzantine dining beside the infinity pool.



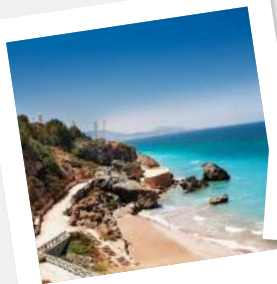
The hotel's personal lifestyle concierge immerses guests into an authentic side of Greece through bespoke experiences such as luxury yacht tours, excursions around Mykonos and one-of-a-kind wine tastings. The clutch of sophisticated suites features private pools or open-air jetted tubs and arresting views out to sea; sit back in your private oasis and let room service spoil you.



Rhodes

This is among the most popular of all the Greek islands for the miles of sandy beaches along its east coast, for the surfing and kiteboarding on its western and southern coasts, and for its plethora of characterful towns and villages. It also lays claim to having the sunniest climate in all of Greece.

Aside relaxation and water-sports opportunities galore, Rhodes' many attractions include the archaeological site of Lindos overlooked by its acropolis, with cobbled streets lined by 16th- to 18th-century 'captains' houses', and its boat trips to the unspoilt island of Symi to the north-west. There's also the elegant capital city of Rhodes Town, studded with Medieval fortifications and mosques.





Sheraton Rhodes Resort

In a prime position on a pristine private beach on the north coast of the island, ideally located for exploring Rhodes' delights – including the UNESCO World Heritage site of Rhodes' medieval Old Town – this airy contemporary resort has lots of space for all, including five pools: three large outdoor offerings, one indoor and a separate children's pool.



Other draws include sports courts, a pampering spa, a kids' club and playroom, and a wide array of dining options, including Greek cuisine on the rooftop terrace, Italian fare in the hotel's signature restaurant and Mediterranean dishes by the poolside. The surrounding traditional town of Ixia has lots of authentic restaurants and bars to discover too.



British Airways is a classic choice for your Greek holiday, servicing a total of 12 destinations on the mainland and across the islands: Athens, Santorini, Rhodes, Skiathos, Thessaloniki, Zante, Mykonos, Kefalonia, Kalamata, Crete, Corfu and Kos.

Euro Traveller

British Airways' Economy (Euro Traveller) tickets to Greece include contoured leather seats with fully moveable headrests and in-seat power, complimentary refreshments comprising a bottle of water and a snack, a generous baggage allowance, Wi-Fi on most aircraft, digital magazines and newspapers, and a personal protection pack including antibacterial wipes and hand sanitiser gel.

Club Europe

British Airways' European Business Class also extends to access to comfortable departure lounges and dedicated check-in desks where available, priority boarding, more personal space on board, complimentary food and drinks, a larger baggage allowance, and more Avios and Tier points.



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