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ROADYOUR COMPLETE DESTINATION GUIDE  
In-depth reviews, detailed listings  
and insider tipsPAGE  
767SURVIVAL  
GUIDEVITAL PRACTICAL INFORMATION TO  
HELP YOU HAVE A SMOOTH TRIP

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Directory  
A-Z

THIS EDITION WRITTEN AND RESEARCHED BY

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Andrea Schulte-Peevers, Richard Waters

# PLAN YOUR TRIP

## YOUR PLANNING TOOL KIT

Photos, itineraries, lists and suggestions to help you put together your perfect trip

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## 21 TOP EXPERIENCES

Experiencing the Acropolis of Athens  
As part, present and past, the Acropolis is the heart of Athens. It is the only ancient Greek temple still standing on its original site. The Acropolis is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

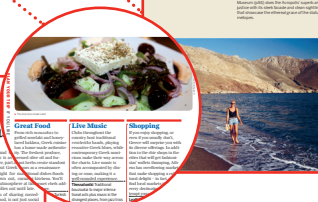
## Eat Like a Local

**When to Go**  
The best time to visit Greece is from May to September. The weather is warm and sunny, and the crowds are not too large. The food is delicious, and the wine is excellent. The beaches are beautiful, and the scenery is stunning.

**Food Seasons**  
The best time to eat in Greece is from May to September. The food is fresh and delicious, and the wine is excellent. The beaches are beautiful, and the scenery is stunning.

**Food Festivals**  
The best time to attend a food festival in Greece is from May to September. The food is fresh and delicious, and the wine is excellent. The beaches are beautiful, and the scenery is stunning.

**Best Markets**  
The best time to visit a market in Greece is from May to September. The food is fresh and delicious, and the wine is excellent. The beaches are beautiful, and the scenery is stunning.

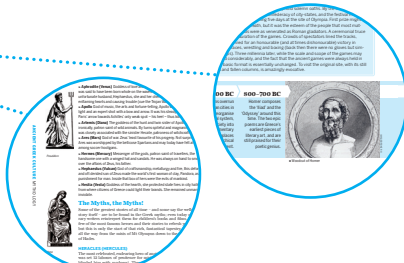


# UNDERSTAND GREECE

## GET MORE FROM YOUR TRIP

Learn about the big picture, so you can make sense of what you see

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➤ Every listing is recommended by our authors, and their favourite places are listed first

➤ Look out for these icons:



Our author's top recommendation



A green or sustainable option



No payment required

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# Greece

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## The Zagorohoria

Charming stone and slate mountain villages (p308)

## Meteora

Soaring rock pinnacles topped with monasteries (p237)

## Ancient Delphi

Where mythology and history meet (p205)

## The Acropolis

The most iconic monument of ancient Greece (p70)

## The Mani

Steeped in Maniot culture and perfect for hiking (p172)

## Hania

A labyrinth of gorgeous Venetian architecture (p469)

## Samaria Gorge

Carved between unending towering cliffs (p477)



# Top Experiences >





### Chris Deliso

**Northern Greece** Chris was drawing maps of the Aegean by age five, and 20 years later he ended up in Greece during an MPhil in Byzantine Studies at Oxford. Since studying Modern Greek in Thessaloniki in 1998, he's travelled frequently in Greece, including a year in Crete and sojourns on Mt Athos, where for this guide he helped trim the lemon trees to get a much-needed extra lunch amid Lenten fasting. He also enjoyed exploring Thessaloniki's nightlife and Epiros' mountains.

Read more about Chris at:  
[lonelyplanet.com/members/chrisdeliso](https://lonelyplanet.com/members/chrisdeliso)



### Des Hannigan

**Cyclades** Des has been wandering around Greece for years. In a previous life he worked at sea, valuable experience for coping with the Greek ferry system although he'd really like to hop the islands in a fast yacht or even an old caique. Des has covered the Cyclades, the Ionian and Saronic Gulf Islands and eastern Crete for Lonely Planet. He lives in the far west of Cornwall, England, where on very sunny days it can sometimes feel like Greece, except for the chilly Atlantic Ocean.



### Victoria Kyriakopoulos

**Eat Like a Local, The Greek Way of Life, Greek Cuisine, Music & Dance, Art & Literature** Victoria is a Melbourne-based journalist and travel writer who has written about Greece for more than 15 years. She wrote Lonely Planet's *Athens Encounter* and *Crete*, and contributed to *Greece* and *Greek Islands*, as well as international newspapers and magazines. Victoria was editor of *Odyssey* magazine, covered the 2004 Athens Olympics and has worked on several television shows about Greece.



### Andrea Schulte-Peevers

**Crete** Andrea has travelled the distance to the moon and back in her visits to around 70 countries, but she'll forever cherish the memory of first setting foot on Crete some 15 years ago and being instantly charmed by its people, the rich tapestry of their traditions and their long and proud history. She has written or contributed to some 60 Lonely Planet books, including the *Crete* regional guide. Her current home is in Berlin.



### Richard Waters

**Dodecanese, Greece Today, History, Ancient Greek Culture, Architecture** Since gorging himself on whitebait in Corfu in the '70s, Richard has been back to Greece more than fifteen times. He loves its people, its varied landscape and perhaps most of all its myths, and has written about them for various newspapers including the *Sunday Times*. He lives with his family in the Cotswolds, works as a freelance journalist and photographer, and when he's not travelling, pretends he's still a surfer. You can read some of his work at [www.richardwaters.co.uk](http://www.richardwaters.co.uk).



## OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Melbourne, London and Oakland, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

## OUR WRITERS



### Korina Miller

**Coordinating Author, Plan (except Eat Like a Local), Finding Your Perfect Island, Understand title page, Nature & Wildlife, Survival Guide** Korina first ventured to Greece as a backpacking teenager, sleeping on ferry decks and hiking in the mountains. She has since found herself drawn back to soak up the dazzling Greek sunshine, lounge on the beaches and consume vast quantities of Greek salad and strong coffee. Korina grew up on Vancouver Island and has been

exploring the globe since she was 16, working, studying and travelling in 36 countries en route. Korina has written nearly 20 titles for Lonely Planet.



### Kate Armstrong

**Peloponnese, Central Greece (except Pelion Peninsula)** Having studied history and fine arts, Kate Armstrong headed to Greece aeons ago to view her first (non-celluloid) *kouros*, and fell in love with the country. For this edition she ventured to the 'navel' of the earth at Delphi and the inspiring rock pinnacles of Meteora. She devoured several sheep (inevitable at Easter time), drove over 6000km and was treated to more hospitality than Aphrodite herself. Kate's freelance writing

adventures appear at [www.katearmstrong.com.au](http://www.katearmstrong.com.au).

Read more about Kate at:  
[lonelyplanet.com/members/kate\\_armstrong](http://lonelyplanet.com/members/kate_armstrong)



### Alexis Averbuck

**Athens & Around, Saronic Gulf Islands, Ionian Islands** Alexis lives on Hydra, Greece, and takes regular reverse R&R in Athens, and makes any excuse to travel the isolated back roads of her adopted land. She is committed to dispelling the stereotype that Greece is simply a string of sandy beaches. A travel writer for two decades, she's lived in Antarctica for a year, crossed the Pacific by sailboat and written books on her journeys through Asia and the Americas. She's also a

painter – visit [www.alexisaverbuck.com](http://www.alexisaverbuck.com).

Read more about Alexis at:  
[lonelyplanet.com/members/alexisaverbuck](http://lonelyplanet.com/members/alexisaverbuck)



### Michael Stamatios Clark

**Central Greece (Pelion Peninsula), Northeastern Aegean Islands, Evia & the Sporades** Michael's Greek roots go back to the village of Karavostamo (Ikaria), home of his maternal grandparents, and one of his destinations for this guide. His first trip to the islands was as a deckhand aboard a Greek freighter, trading English lessons for Greek over backgammon. For this edition, Michael hiked Skopelos, tested Ikaria's thermal sea waters, and sampled retsina and *tsipouro* along the way.

## OVER MORE PAGE WRITERS

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# itineraries

*Whether you've got six days or 60, these itineraries provide a starting point for the trip of a lifetime. Want more inspiration? Head online to [lonelyplanet.com/thorntree](http://lonelyplanet.com/thorntree) to chat with other travellers.*



10 Days

## Athens & the Islands

Begin your tour with a couple of days in Athens, home of some of the world's most important ancient sites and museums. Take in Athens' markets, contemporary art scene and brilliant nightlife. From here head to the Cyclades. Catch a ferry from Rafina for a day or two on the classy island of **Andros**, enjoying its fine beaches and art galleries. Move along to **Tinos** (a pilgrimage island for many Orthodox Christians), with its dramatic landscape and countless Venetian dovecotes. Next in line is chic **Mykonos**, famous for its colourful harbour, bars and beaches. From here take a daytrip to the tiny sacred island of **Delos** to explore its ancient ruins. Hop back on a ferry to **Naxos**, the greenest and most fertile of the Cyclades and a haven for walkers.

Your final destination is spectacular **Santorini** (Thira). The dramatic sheer cliffs of its volcanic caldera were created by one of the largest eruptions ever recorded and offer an amazing perch from which to watch the sun sinking into the sea. From here you can hop on a flight back to Athens.



## One Month The Grand Tour

A month is long enough to experience the huge variety of sights and activities that Greece has to offer.

After exploring bustling **Athens** for a few days, head to the pretty Venetian city of **Nafplio** on the Peloponnese peninsula. Nafplio was the first capital of independent Greece and is the perfect base for day trips to **Ancient Mycenae** and the **Theatre of Epidavros**, celebrated for its perfect acoustics and a venue for live performances in summer. Head south from here to the attractive fishing town of **Gythio**, from where you can catch a ferry across to sleepy **Kissamos-Kastelli** in Crete. En route stop at the delightfully unspoiled island of **Kythira**. Once in Crete, rent a car and before you do anything else, head south to **Elafonisi** beach – Crete's most stunning stretch of sand. From there, journey back up along the northern coast to charming **Hania**, with its beautiful harbour and labyrinth of backstreets. From there, continue your road trip to the capital **Iraklio** and the nearby magnificent Minoan ruins of **Knossos**.

From Iraklio, begin your island hop north by jumping on a ferry to **Santorini (Thira)**, an island not to be missed for its stunning volcanic setting and intriguing villages. Next unwind for a few days on some of the smaller islands such as **Anafi** and **Koufonisia**, both perfect for beach lovers. When you're fully recharged, hit the bars and clubs of hedonistic **Mykonos**. From Mykonos, catch one of the weekly flights to cool, cultured **Thessaloniki** in northern Greece. Check out the impressive Roman and Byzantine architecture, sample some Ottoman-inspired cuisine (particularly the pastries!) and enjoy the vivacious arts scene. From here, work off the pastries on the nearby slopes of **Mt Olympus** (2918m), Greece's highest peak and first national park. You'll encounter a huge diversity of plant and birdlife along these ancient trails. Next visit the mesmerising monasteries of **Meteora**, perched high on narrow pinnacles of rock and once the home of hermit monks. Your last stop is at unforgettable **Ancient Delphi**, former home of the mysterious Delphic oracle and steeped in atmosphere and Ancient Greek history; just the place to ask what to do next. From Delphi it's a short trip back to Athens.



## Three Weeks Ionians & the Peloponnese

If you're a hankering for island life along with beautiful medieval towns, ancient historic sights and dramatic scenery, a tour of the Ionian Islands and neighbouring Peloponnese peninsula will more than satisfy you. This is doubly true if you're keen to toss some outdoor activities into your trip.

Begin your tour in **Corfu**, where you can easily spend a couple of days wandering through Corfu Town's amazing blend of Italian, French and British architecture of its Old Town, indulging in gourmet cuisine, exploring picturesque coastal villages and lounging on fantastic sandy beaches. If you want to expel a bit more energy, Corfu is also a great place for windsurfing and biking in the island's mountainous interior. From Corfu, hop on a ferry to **Kefallonia**. Stay overnight in the picturesque village of Fiskardo, kayak to isolated golden beaches and sample the island's well-reputed local wine.

From Kefallonia, it's a short ferry ride to Kyllini on the Peloponnese Peninsula. Visit the sanctuary of **Ancient Olympia**, where you can stand in the stadium that hosted the first Olympic Games. Stay overnight in the town and take in some of the excellent museums. Head south to the captivating, World Heritage-listed ruins of **Mystras**. This massive ancient fortress town was the last stronghold of the Byzantine Empire.

Continue south to the rugged and remote **Mani**, where you'll encounter villages filled with fascinating architecture and the remnants of the unique Maniot culture. This region is a haven for hikers with the dramatic Taygetos Mountains and tiny, isolated coves. It's also home to one of mainland Europe's most southerly points at **Cape Tenaro**, made famous in Homer's 'Iliad'. Follow the coast east to spectacular **Monemvasia**, Greece's answer to France's Mont St-Michel, and spend at least a day exploring the medieval cobbled alleyways and a night staying in atmospheric lodgings within the walls of its medieval town.

Next head north to graceful **Nafplio** with its mansions, museums and lively port. From here, it's easy to do day trips to the impressive acropolis at **Tiryns** and the citadel of **Mycenae**. East of here is the ancient theatre of **Epidavros**, where it's well worth taking in some star-lit classical performances. Then hop on ferry from nearby Methana to end your journey in **Athens**.





## Two Weeks Northern & Central Greece

This region packs in some of Greece's biggest ancient sites, unique villages, gorgeous landscapes, hip cities and plenty of sandy beaches on which to stretch out on. There are also ample opportunities to laze and you could easily extend this itinerary with a week or two of walking.

Begin in **Thessaloniki**, a laid-back city with a cutting edge art scene. Spend a couple of days exploring the backstreets, taking in the diverse architecture and indulging in delicious Ottoman-inspired cuisine. From here head for **Sithonia** on the Halkidiki Peninsula for a couple of days – you'll be surrounded by aquamarine water, pine forests and long sandy beaches.

Next, venture west to appreciate the lofty heights of **Mt Olympus**, home of the gods. Hikers can take the slopes or simply stay the night in a Macedonian-style house in nearby **Litohoro** to enjoy the view from a traditional wooden balcony. Carry on to **Meteora**: these ancient monasteries set atop seemingly swaying pinnacles of rock are instantly recognisable yet stunningly mesmerising in real life. Stay in the nearby otherworldly village of **Kastraki** to see the sun rise behind the rocks.

Continue west into the Pindos Mountains and a region known as **Zagorohoria**, with its endless walking opportunities and beautiful, timeless stone and slate villages. Once you're truly chilled, liven things up by spending a couple of days in **Ioannina**, a city with an arresting lakeside location and backdrop of sheer mountains. Wander through the evocative old quarter that's filled with Byzantine and Ottoman architecture and take in the buzzing cultural scene and nightlife that's buoyed by the city's large student population.

From here, journey south to magical **Delphi**, the ancient naval of Greece with its famed oracle. There are a number of worthwhile walks beginning here or visit nearby **Parnassos National Park** for skiing, rock climbing, hiking or just lots of fresh air. Return north to Thessaloniki, stopping en route for a couple of days on the **Pelion Peninsula**. Here you can follow cobblestone paths between villages to secluded sandy coves where the waves can lap at your toes before you have to head back to real life.





## Two Weeks Crete & the Dodecanese

Once considered out-of-the-way, Crete's eastern half has some fantastic sights and excellent towns that are making it an increasingly magnetic region. From here it's a short hop to the neighbouring Dodecanese, with their wealth of diversity and speedy catamaran services that makes island hopping a joy.

Begin in **Iraklio**, taking in the excellent archaeological museum and making a day trip to the impressive Minoan ruins of **Knossos**. It's worth taking in the surrounding **Peza** wine region en route, which is nestled amid a landscape of shapely hills, sunbaked slopes and lush valleys. From Iraklio head east along the northern coast to the relaxed resort-town of **Agios Nikolaos**, which dishes out charm and hip ambience in equal portions. This makes a great base for exploring the surrounding region. Take in **Golden Beach** (Voulisma Beach) and **Istron Bay** for long stretches of sand, and the massive fortress on **Spinalonga Island**, a fascinating spot that's just a short ferry ride across the Gulf of Mirabello. Visit the surrounding Minoan ruins, such as **Malia**, a palace still filled with mysteries, and rent a bike to explore the tranquil villages of the fertile **Lasithi Plateau**, lying snugly between mountain ranges and home to Zeus' birthplace.

Continue on to **Sitia** from where you can head for the white sand of **Vaï**, Europe's only natural palm-forest beach. You can also head south from here to **Kato Zakros** to hike through the dramatic Valley of the Dead.

From Sitia, get settled on a 10-hour ferry ride to **Rhodes**. Spend a couple of days exploring Rhodes Town's walled medieval Old Town and some of the surrounding beaches and Byzantine chapels. Catch one of the daily catamarans to lush **Nisyros** to explore deep within its bubbling caldera and then carry on to **Patmos** to experience its artistic and religious vibe and to visit the cave where St John wrote the Book of Revelations. Backtrack to **Kos** to spend a final couple of days on gorgeous, sandy **Kefalos Bay** to sip coffee and cocktails in its lively squares. From Kos Town you can catch onward flights to **Athens**.

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