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Northeastern Aegean Islands

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Why Go?

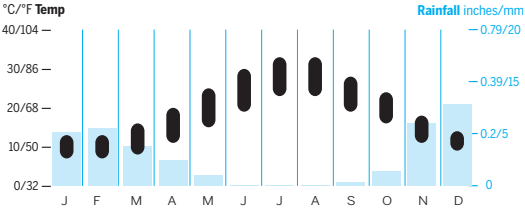
The wildly varied northeastern Aegean Islands (Τα Νησιά του Βορειοανατολικού Αιγαίου) invite intrepid travellers to escape the crowds, while experiencing old-fashioned island cuisine, culture and celebrations.

Eccentric Ikaria is marked by dramatic landscapes, pristine beaches and a laid-back, left-leaning population. Nearby Chios is an ecotourism paradise, provides fertile ground for the planet's only gum-producing mastic trees. The islands range from sprawling Lesvos, Greece's third-largest island and producer of half the world's ouzo, to mid-size islands like sultry Samos and breezy Limnos, and bright specks in the sea like Inousses and Psara. Samothraki is home to the ancient Thracian Sanctuary of the Great Gods.

This group is less compact than other Greek island chains. Thasos and Samothraki are only accessible from Northern Greece ports, while Ikaria is just a skip across the water from Mykonos. Lesvos, Chios and Samos offer easy connections to Turkey's coastal resorts and historical sites.

When to Go

Vathy Sámos



Apr & May Wild red poppies adorn the back roads, and Greek Easter livens up every village.

Jul & Aug Succulent apricots are in season, perfect for a picnic at the beach.

Oct & Nov Summer crowds evaporate, and hearty soups return to the tavernas.

Northeastern Aegean Islands Highlights

1 Challenge your brain cells at Ikaria's annual **international chess tournament** (p575)

2 Enjoy the Aegean's best lobster from a waterfront taverna while the sun sets over the **Fourni islands** (p581)

3 Wade through the river to wooded waterfalls in northwest Samos, followed by a swim and a drink on chilled-out **Potami Beach** (p592)

4 Wander along the winding stone alleyways of **Mesta** (p599) in southern Chios

5 Gaze out over Lesvos from the elevated Byzantine monastery of **Moni Ypsilou** (p613), home of priceless medieval manuscripts and ecclesiastical treasures

6 Contemplate the mysteries of the 10th century BC **Sanctuary of the Great Gods** (p623) on Samothraki

7 Cycle through lush old-growth forests at Thasos' annual **international mountain biking race** (p629)