



Greek Islands



THIS EDITION WRITTEN AND RESEARCHED BY

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PLAN YOUR TRIP

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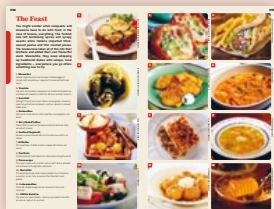
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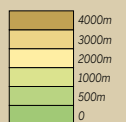
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ELEVATION



BULGARIA

THRACE

Skyros
Eclectic history and
artistic delight (p457)

Istanbul

Sea of
Marmara

Lesvos

Quiet beaches and cool
pine forests (p402)

Santorini

Sophistication and spectacular
landscapes (p211)

Patmos

Join the Easter festivities
(p361)

Olymbos

Colourful village clinging to
a mountain edge (p323)

Rhodes Old Town

Magical walled
medieval town (p304)

Preveli Beach

Watched over by a picturesque
monastery (p272)

Knossos

Restored Minoan
palaces (p259)



On the Road



Plan Your Trip

Itineraries



10
DAYS

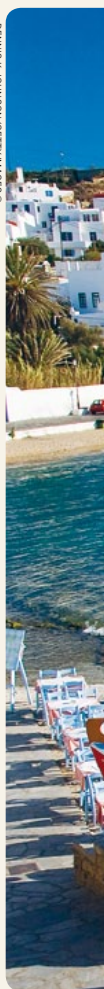
Athens & the Cyclades

If you're short on time, this itinerary packs a punch in just ten days. Take in the must-see attractions in Athens, visit a few of the popular, bustling islands, and chill out in quieter havens where you can soak up that slow-paced, island-life experience. Transport between these islands and the mainland is plentiful.

Begin your tour with a couple of days in **Athens**, home to some of the world's most important ancient sites. Be sure to visit the

Acropolis, try to catch a play at the ancient Odeon of Herodes Atticus and wander through the Acropolis Museum. Take in Athens' lively markets, contemporary art scene and brilliant nightlife. From here head to the Cyclades, which pepper the sea south of the mainland.

Catch a ferry from **Rafina** to spend a day or two on chic **Mykonos**, famous for its colourful harbour, hopping bars and beaches full of sun worshippers. From here take a day trip to the tiny sacred island of **Delos** and explore its ancient ruins. Hop back on a ferry and head to **Naxos**, the greenest and most fertile of





Hora (p171), Mykonos

the Cyclades. Visit the island's hilltop, Venetian-walled old town and then rent a car to explore its quaint smaller villages and sugar-soft beaches. From here it's a quick ferry ride to **Paros** which has an atmospheric, cobbled main town filled with trendy boutiques and excellent dining. Head to the northern tip of the island to visit the cool seaside village of Naousa where you'll find hip cafes and excellent seafood.

Your final destination is spectacular **Santorini** (Thira). The dramatic sheer cliffs of its volcanic caldera were created by one of the largest eruptions in history; as the sun sinks into the sea, the reflections off these cliff faces are stunning. Join the throngs and enjoy the view with a cocktail in hand. Visit the island's excellent wineries, new brewery and its volcanic beaches, along with the truly impressive Minoan site of Akrotiri. From here you can hop on a flight back to **Athens**.



2
WEEKS

Crete & the Dodecanese

With divine beaches, atmospheric towns and jaw-dropping sights, Crete is a full destination in itself. From the eastern side you can reach the neighbouring Dodecanese by ferry or on a short flight from Iraklio. The Dodecanese offer a wealth of diversity, and a speedy catamaran service that makes island-hopping a joy.

Begin in **Iraklio**, visiting the excellent Archaeological Museum and taking a day trip to the impressive Minoan ruins of **Knossos**. En route see the surrounding **Peza** wine region, which is nestled in 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 a hip ambience in equal portions.

Agios Nikolaos is a great base for exploring the surrounding region. Take in **Golden Beach** (Voulisma Beach) and **Istron Bay** for long stretches of sand. Take a short ferry ride across the Gulf of Mirabello to see the massive fortress on fascinating **Spinalonga Island**. Explore nearby Minoan ruins including **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.

From Agios Nikolaos, continue east via **Sitia** to the white sand of **Vai**, Europe's only natural palm-forest beach. You can also travel 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, fascinating Byzantine chapels and the white-sugar-cube village of Lindos. 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 and to sip coffee and cocktails in Kos Town's lively squares. From Kos Town you can catch onward flights to **Athens**.



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Top: Stefanos volcanic crater (p338), Nisyros
Bottom: Vai beach (p294), Crete

3
WEEKS

The Eastern Island Run

PLAN YOUR TRIP ITINERARIES

For intrepid travellers without a tight time schedule, Greece's eastern periphery offers languid coasts, lush scenery, amazing sights and divine beaches. Scheduled ferries are regular but not always very frequent; thankfully you won't be in any hurry to leave and many island hoppers would happily extend their exploration from three weeks to three months.

Begin your journey with a few days on **Rhodes**, wandering through the walled medieval Old Town and soaking up the contemporary, atmospheric nightlife. Visit the Acropolis of Lindos and the crumbling fairytale castles on the north coast, with their phenomenal views. If you have time, take a day trip to **Symi** to enjoy its picturesque harbour and the ornate Moni Taxiarchou Mihail Panormiti.

From Rhodes, set sail for the remote-feeling **Tilos**, a great place for bird lovers and walkers, with ancient cobbled pathways and tiny coves only accessible on foot. Head north to **Leros**, with its Italian-inspired architecture, ultra-relaxed vibe and fascinating bunker museum that reveals the island's starring role in WWII. Continue north to **Samos**, where you can hike through lush forests to secluded waterfalls and laze on idyllic beaches. From Samos, head to **Chios**, where you can get lost in the labyrinth of stone alleyways in the southern village of Mesta and then head into the interior to hike through citrus groves under the shade of towering mountain peaks.

The next stop is **Lesvos (Mytilini)**, birthplace of the poet Sappho and producer of some of Greece's finest olive oil and ouzo. Not surprisingly, it's also home to a hopping nightlife. Visit the island's fantastic modern art gallery and the hilltop Byzantine monastery of Moni Ypsilou with its glittering ancient manuscripts. Lesvos' landscape, with salt marshes, gushing hot springs, dense forests and soft beaches, is as diverse as its cultural offerings. From here hop to **Limnos** to dine on the day's catch at Myrina's waterside seafood restaurants. Carry on to secluded **Agios Efstratios** to stretch out on volcanic sand beaches before jumping on an overnight boat to **Athens**.

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ENILPOU/GETTY IMAGES ©



Top: Molyvos (p407), Lesvos
Bottom: Palace of the Grand Masters (p306),
Rhodes Old Town





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 17 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 Berlin.



Richard Waters

Dodecanese Richard is an award-winning journalist and works for *The Independent*, *Sunday Times*, *Wanderlust* and *National Geographic Traveller*. He lives with his fiancée and two kids in the Cotswolds. His spiritual home is Greece thanks to more than 20 visits, the first of which was as a kid in the '70s on the isles of Corfu, Rhodes and Zakynthos. He loves their myths, cuisine and, most of all, the Greeks themselves. Even in the midst of the crisis, he found them to possess their usual humour, warmth and stoicism. Richard also wrote the Greek Islands Today, History and Architecture chapters.



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, Cyclades Korina first ventured to Greece as a backpacking teenager, sleeping on ferry decks and hiking in the mountains. Since then she's found herself drawn back to soak up the timelessness of the old towns and drink coffee with locals in seaside *kafeneio*. Korina grew up on Vancouver Island and has been exploring the globe independently since she was 16, visiting or living in 36 countries and picking up a degree in Communications and Canadian Studies

and a MA in Migration Studies en route. Korina has written nearly 30 titles for Lonely Planet and also works as a commissioning editor and a children's writing coach. Korina also wrote the Plan Your Trip section, Nature & Wildlife chapter and the Survival Guide.



Alexis Averbuck

Athens & Around, Saronic Gulf Islands, Cyclades, Ionian Islands Alexis lives in Hydra, Greece, takes regular reverse R&R in Athens, and makes any excuse she can 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, Alexis has 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.

Read more about Alexis at:
lonelyplanet.com/members/alexisaverbuck



Michael Stamatios Clark

Northeastern Aegean Islands, Evia & the Sporades Michael's Greek roots go back to the village of Karavostamo on the island of 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 Greek lessons for English over backgammon. For this edition, Michael chewed mastic on Chios, listened to *rembetika* music on Skiros and tested the thermal sea waters of Ikaria, sampling Greek coffee and retsina along the way.



Victoria Kyriakopoulos

Victoria is a Melbourne-based writer, journalist and foodie who has lived, worked and travelled extensively in her ancestral home, feeding her passion and sharing her insight on Greece. She's written for newspapers and magazines around the globe and worked on Lonely Planet guides to Greece since 2001. Victoria wrote the Eat Like a Local, The Arts and Greek Cuisine chapters.

OVER MORE PAGE WRITERS

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