



Greek Islands



Korina Miller,

**Alexis Averbuck, Anna Kaminski, Craig McLachlan, Zora O'Neill,
Leonid Ragozin, Andrea Schulte-Peevers, Helena Smith, Greg Ward,
Richard Waters**

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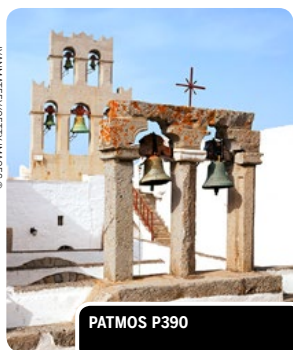
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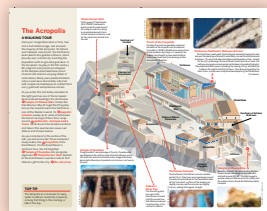
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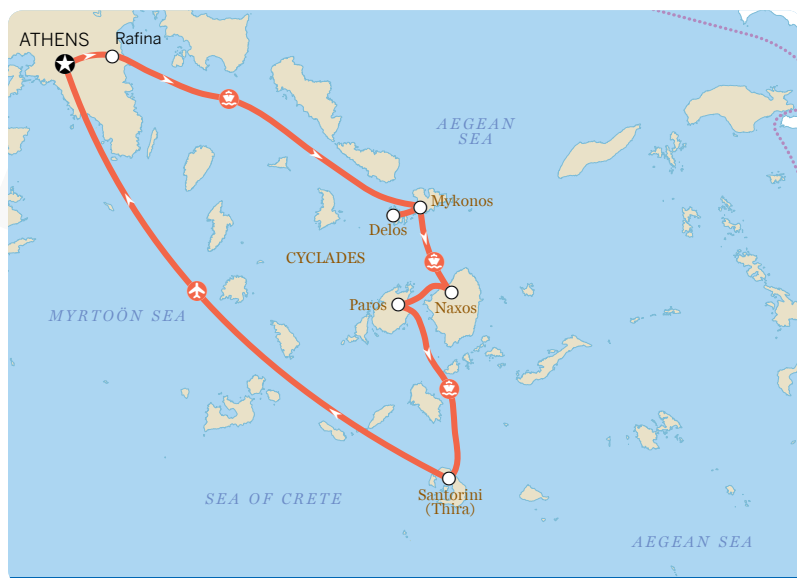
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Itineraries



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DAYS

Athens & the Cyclades

Yes, it's possible to island hop with just 10 days. Take in the must-see attractions in Athens, visit a few popular, bustling islands, and chill out in quieter havens where you can soak up that slow-paced island life. Transport between these islands and the mainland is plentiful.

Spend a couple of days in **Athens**, visiting the Acropolis, catching a play at the ancient Odeon of Herodes Atticus and wandering through the Acropolis Museum. Take in Athens' lively markets, contemporary art scene and brilliant nightlife.

Catch a ferry from **Rafina** to spend a day or two on chic **Mykonos** and enjoy the colourful harbour, vibrant bars and beaches full of sun worshippers. Take a day trip to sacred **Delos** and explore ancient ruins. Hop on a ferry to **Naxos**, the greenest of the Cyclades with its hilltop, Venetian-walled old town, quaint villages and sugar-soft beaches. Move on to **Paros**, whose cobbled capital is filled with trendy boutiques and excellent dining. Head to the seaside village of Naoussa for excellent seafood.

Lastly, visit spectacular **Santorini**, aka Thira, for stunning sunset views. Explore excellent wineries and volcanic beaches, along with the truly impressive Minoan site of Akrotiri. From here, catch a flight back to Athens.



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Top: Antique fountain,
Iraklio (p271)

Bottom: Windmills on
Lasithi Plateau (p232),
Crete

4
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, sun-baked 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. Join a fishing excursion from **Elounda** or 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 the walled medieval Old Town of **Rhodes 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**.



The Eastern Island Run

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 fairy-tale 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, make for **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**, aka 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. Its 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**.



The Ionians

If you have a hankering for island life along with beautiful architecture, scrumptious food, flour-soft beaches and dramatic scenery, a tour of the Ionian islands will more than satisfy you. This is doubly true if you're keen to toss some outdoor activities into your trip. Both the start and end of this itinerary are reachable by short, scenic flights from Athens.

Begin your tour in **Corfu**, where you can easily spend a couple of days wandering through the amazing blend of Italian, French and British architecture in Corfu Old Town, set between two spellbinding fortresses. The arcaded promenade is a hive of cafes, boutiques and restaurants where you can indulge in gourmet cuisine that packs a heavy Italian influence. Take in the island's world-class museums and fortresses. Explore picturesque coastal villages and lounge on fantastic sandy beaches. If you want to expend a bit more energy, Corfu is also a great place for windsurfing, or try biking in the island's mountainous interior.

From Corfu, hop on a ferry to tiny **Paxi**, where ancient olive groves and windmills dot the interior while tranquil coves beckon from the coastline. Snorkel in the crystal-line water and dine on seafood in colourful, Venetian-style harbour towns that beg you to stay. Drag yourself away to the west-coast beaches of **Lefkada**, where you can take water taxis to isolated stretches of sand and turquoise water. Head to the southern tip to windsurf before carrying on to sleepy **Ithaki**, where you can walk the paths of Homer and feel inspired by ancient Byzantine churches and monasteries.

Hop over to neighbouring **Kefallonia**; overnight in the picturesque village of Fiskardo, with its top restaurants. Kayak to isolated golden beaches and sample the island's unique, well-regarded local wine. Explore the Paliki Peninsula with its red clay cliffs, hilltop villages and powder-soft beaches. Catch a boat south to **Zakynthos** to take in the fabulous Byzantine Museum, then head for the verdant southern cape to escape the crowds. This island is the nesting ground of the endangered loggerhead turtle. From here you can grab a flight back to Corfu or on to Athens.

Map Legend

Sights

- Beach
- Bird Sanctuary
- Buddhist
- Castle/Palace
- Christian
- Confucian
- Hindu
- Islamic
- Jain
- Jewish
- Monument
- Museum/Gallery/Historic Building
- Ruin
- Shinto
- Sikh
- Taoist
- Winery/Vineyard
- Zoo/Wildlife Sanctuary
- Other Sight

Activities, Courses & Tours

- Bodysurfing
- Diving
- Canoeing/Kayaking
- Course/Tour
- Sento Hot Baths/Onsen
- Skiing
- Snorkelling
- Surfing
- Swimming/Pool
- Walking
- Windsurfing
- Other Activity

Sleeping

- Sleeping
- Camping
- Hut/Shelter

Eating

- Eating

Drinking & Nightlife

- Drinking & Nightlife
- Cafe

Entertainment

- Entertainment

Shopping

- Shopping

Information

- Bank
- Embassy/Consulate
- Hospital/Medical
- Internet
- Police
- Post Office
- Telephone
- Toilet
- Tourist Information
- Other Information

Geographic

- Beach
- Gate
- Hut/Shelter
- Lighthouse
- Lookout
- Mountain/Volcano
- Oasis
- Park
- Pass
- Picnic Area
- Waterfall

Population

- Capital (National)
- Capital (State/Province)
- City/Large Town
- Town/Village

Transport

- Airport
- Border crossing
- Bus
- Cable car/Funicular
- Cycling
- Ferry
- Metro station
- Monorail
- Parking
- Petrol station
- S-Bahn/Subway station
- Taxi
- T-bane/Tunnelbana station
- Train station/Railway
- Tram
- Tube station
- U-Bahn/Underground station
- Other Transport

Routes

- Tollway
- Freeway
- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary
- Lane
- Unsealed road
- Road under construction
- Plaza/Mall
- Steps
- Tunnel
- Pedestrian overpass
- Walking Tour
- Walking Tour detour
- Path/Walking Trail

Boundaries

- International
- State/Province
- Disputed
- Regional/Suburb
- Marine Park
- Cliff
- Wall

Hydrography

- River, Creek
- Intermittent River
- Canal
- Water
- Dry/Salt/Intermittent Lake
- Reef

Areas

- Airport/Runway
- Beach/Desert
- Cemetery (Christian)
- Cemetery (Other)
- Glacier
- Mudflat
- Park/Forest
- Sight (Building)
- Sportsground
- Swamp/Mangrove

Note: Not all symbols displayed above appear on the maps in this book



Zora O'Neill

Athens A freelance writer since 2000, Zora speaks Arabic with the accent of an Egyptian soap-opera queen. She has written more than a dozen guidebooks to many of her favourite places, from Amsterdam to Yucatan. She is the author of *All Strangers Are Kin*, a travel memoir about studying Arabic in the Middle East. She lives in Queens, New York – handy for airports, but also for fantastic food from all over the world.



Leonid Ragozin

Northeastern Aegean Islands Leonid studied beach dynamics at the Moscow State University, but for want of decent beaches in Russia, he switched to journalism and spent 12 years voyaging through different parts of the BBC, with a break for a four-year stint as a foreign correspondent for Russian *Newsweek*. Leonid is currently a freelance journalist focusing largely on the conflict between Russia and Ukraine (both his Lonely Planet destinations), which prompted him to leave

Moscow and find a new home in Riga.



Andrea Schulte-Peevers

Crete Born and raised in Germany and educated in London and at UCLA, Andrea has travelled the distance to the moon and back in her visits to some 75 countries. She has earned her living as a professional travel writer for over two decades and authored or contributed to nearly 100 Lonely Planet titles as well as to newspapers, magazines and websites around the world. She also works as a travel consultant, translator and editor. Andrea's destination expertise is especially strong when it comes to Germany, Dubai and the UAE, Crete and the Caribbean islands. She makes her home in Berlin.



Helena Smith

Evia & the Sporades Helena is an award-winning writer and photographer covering travel, outdoors and food – she has written guidebooks on destinations from Fiji to northern Norway. Helena is from Scotland but was partly brought up in Malawi, so Africa always feels like home. She also enjoys global travel in her multicultural home area of Hackney and wrote, photographed and published *Inside Hackney*, the first guide to the borough (<https://insidehackney.com>). Her 1000-

word autobiography won *Vogue*'s annual writing contest, and she's a winner of the *Independent on Sunday*'s travel writing competition.



Greg Ward

Ionian Islands Besides covering the Ionian and Dodecanese islands for Lonely Planet's *Greece*, Greg has also written the New Mexico chapter for Lonely Planet's *Southwest USA*, and has been writing for many years about other destinations including France, Spain, Japan, Australia, Hawaii and Belize. See his website, www.gregward.info, for his favourite photos and memories.



Richard Waters

Dodecanese Richard is an award-winning writer who first cut his travelling teeth in Guatemala, stumbling unprepared into the last days of the civil war whilst trying to nurse his camper van back to life. He writes for the *Telegraph* and *Sunday Times* on subjects including wildlife and adventure travel. For Lonely Planet he's cowritten over 25 books. He lives with his family in the Cotswolds. Greece has been in his blood since he visited Corfu as a kid in the first wave of British tourists.

He's been back 20 times and counting since. You can read some of his stories for the *Independent* at: www.independent.co.uk/author/richard-waters.



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 Franklin, London, Melbourne, Oakland, Dublin, Beijing and Delhi, 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

Curator 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, an MA in Migration Studies and a diploma in Visual Arts en route. As a writer and editor, Korina has worked on nearly 60 titles for Lonely Planet and has also worked with LP.com, BBC, the *Independent*, the *Guardian*, BBC5 and CBC, as well as many independent magazines, covering travel, art and culture. Korina wrote Plan Your Trip, Understand and Survival Guide.



Alexis Averback

Saronic Gulf Islands Alexis Averback has travelled and lived all over the world, from Sri Lanka to Ecuador, Zanzibar and Antarctica. In recent years she's been living on the Greek island of Hydra and exploring her adopted homeland. A travel writer for over two decades, Alexis has crossed the Pacific by sailboat, and written books on her journeys through Asia, Europe and the Americas.

She's also a painter – visit www.alexisaverback.com – and promotes travel and adventure on video and television.



Anna Kaminski

Cyclades Originally from the Soviet Union, Anna grew up in Cambridge, UK. She graduated from the University of Warwick with a degree in Comparative American Studies, a background in the history, culture and literature of the Americas and the Caribbean, and an enduring love of Latin America. Her restless wanderings led her to settle briefly in Oaxaca and Bangkok, and her flirtation with criminal law saw her volunteering as a lawyer's assistant in the courts, ghettos and prisons of Kingston, Jamaica. Anna has contributed to almost 30 Lonely Planet titles.



Craig McLachlan

Cyclades Craig has covered destinations all over the globe for Lonely Planet for two decades. Based in Queenstown, New Zealand, for half the year, he runs an outdoor activities company and a sake brewery, then moonlights overseas for the other half, leading tours and writing for Lonely Planet. Craig has completed a number of adventures in Japan and his books are available on Amazon. Describing himself as a 'freelance anything', Craig has an MBA from the University of Hawai'i and is also a Japanese interpreter, pilot, photographer, hiking guide, tour leader, karate instructor and budding novelist. Check out www.craigmclachlan.com.

OVER MORE PAGE WRITERS

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