

The top 10 beach holidays in Greece

Our experts' top 10 beach and seaside holidays in Greece for 2016, including the best spots for families, watersports and relaxation in destinations such as Crete, Rhodes, Lesbos and Skópelos



Greece has way beyond its fair share of beaches Photo: Freesurf - Fotolia



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For more general advice on booking a holiday in Greece, see our **Greece summer holidays guide**. Our guide features expert recommendations for **beach, villa, culture, food and drink** and **activity** holidays.

• The 19 best Greek islands

1. Iguana Beach, Crete

Lucky Haniá has two lovely, clean, amenitized town beaches, 4km west at the end of a frequent urban bus line. They're separated by a headland, with a third, westerly cape graced by the little Church of the Holy Apostles, which lends its name to the area. The easterly cove is smaller and crowded, but more protected from occasional surf; the second, universally known as "Iguana" after its quirky kantína and sunbed concession, is bigger and more exposed, but the thick sand shelves gently enough for kids, and the pristine water rates a Blue Flag. The closest recommendable lodging is the Sorta Apartments in Makrys Tihos district, with seven fully self-catering units in somewhat bright colour schemes, or the bigger, nearby Athina Beach Hotel, both friendly, five minutes' walk to the beach and offering free Wi-Fi. *Marc Dubin*

2. Kálathos, Rhodes

Rhodes' south-east, Mediterranean-facing coast has far better beaches, and is usually less windy, than the north-west shore; Kálathos beach ranks among the best. The sand is on the coarse side but there's 4km of it, and it's never busy; the water is clean and brisk, with moderate shelving off. Just inland the five-star Atrium Palace Hotel, an unobtrusive, family-friendly "thalasso-spa resort", occupies vast, luxuriantly landscaped grounds with novelty pools, mini-golf, tennis courts and assorted restaurants. Standard doubles have large bathrooms and parquet floors, while "Signature Villas" are quietest and most have private pool. *MD*



Kálathos is less windy than the north-west shore

[Check availability](#)

3. Vaterá, Lesbos

At 7km this is the island's longest beach and among its best. From the sand (scattered pebbles) you gaze south to Turkey and the islands of Híos and Psará. The sea is generally warm and, barring storms, flat. Aside from an ancient temple at Ágios Fokás cape just west, there's absolutely nothing to see out here at the end of the world. Developments straggle some ways either side of a coastal T-junction, so it's not high-density, and pine-fringed hills inland add to the allure. Taverna Akrotiri at Ágios Fokás has much the best eats locally. Among hotels, two to single out are Vaterá Beach , now in its second generation of management, and the Aphrodite Beach , both with creditable restaurants. *MD*

Double room at Vaterá Beach from £45 (00 30 22520 61212, vaterabeach.gr) and from £39 for a double room at Aphrodite Hotel (00 30 22520 61288, aphroditehotel.gr).

Check availability: [Vaterá Beach Hotel](#) / [Aphrodite Beach Hotel](#)

• [Greece's 11 least populated islands](#)

4. Pelion peninsula

North-eastern Pelion conceals beaches of various sizes and consistencies. Sandy Papá Neró, south-east of busy Ágios Ioánnis, is excellent, with cars banned and a top taverna (Papoutsis). Next up is pebbly Damoúhari, which appeared in Mamma Mia!; a tiny castle and Barba Stergios fish taverna command the cove. A coastal path or more roundabout road system leads beyond to Mylopótamos, twin pebble coves joined by a rock-tunnel, with caves and overhangs. Have lunch nearby at Angelika Seafood Taverna. For big sand, Potistiká, with dramatic rock formations, fits the bill. Too crowded? Beyond the boulders, Meláni beach is within walking distance. Theodorides Estate is prime lodging near Papá Neró. Damouhari Hotel is an idiosyncratic “village” of stone-built studios and rooms. Equidistant from Damoúhari and Mylopótamos, in Mouresi village, the Old Silk Store makes a fine, olde worlde retreat.

Theodorides Estate from £95 (00 30 24260 31872; pelioncountryvillas.com); Damouhari Hotel from £70 (00 30 24260 49840; damouchari.gr); the Old Silk Store from £55 (00 30 24260 49086; pelionet.gr/oldsilkstore). MD

• Epirus: the best-kept secret in Greece?



Potistiká beach has dramatic rock formations

5. Velanió, Skópelos

Skópelos' idyllic coves and rock-top chapels were prime locations for the 2007 filming of Mamma Mia!. Velanió itself didn't feature, but it is the longest and least-developed local beach: 600m of scenic, pine-backed sand and fine gravel, with pristine sea and views across to Évvia. It's officially part-naturist. Since the kantína shut in 2013, you'll have to bring water and shade. To get there, drive 4km south from Skópelos Town to road's end at cramped, inferior Stáfylos beach, then walk (easily) five minutes east beyond the headland. The closest lodging is friendly Mando, between Stáfylos and town, which offers seaview balconies, a manicured-lawn setting, and a pool. Or it's just a few steps down to its own lido for those disinclined to walk to Velanió.

MD

[Check availability](#)

6. Vagia, Serifos

Ideal for nature lovers, Coco Mat Eco Residences are right on Vagia sand beach, so you can fall asleep to the sound of waves, and go out for an early-morning swim barefoot. The stone buildings – dubbed “bioclimatic architecture” – date from 1908 and have been renovated to create 13 spacious residences, sleeping two to four people. With whitewashed walls, and wood and stone details, they combine existing features with contemporary facilities – fully equipped kitchens, comfy Coco-Mat mattresses, and private sea-view terraces where you can eat breakfast (delivered each morning). The beach has a chic lounge-bar and daybeds, and the complex lies a 15-minute drive from hill-top Serifos Town. *Jane Foster*

[Check availability](#)

7. Kanali beach, Prezeva

Overlooking Kanali beach and the turquoise Ionian, Sesa stands on the Greek mainland, close to Prezeva and the island of Lefkada. It has just 10 rooms and a honeymoon suite, each themed around one of the elements that make up the hotel's name: Sea, Earth, Sand and Air. With chic minimalist interiors, they all have sea views, and extras such as espresso machines. Out front, there's a pebble beach with straw umbrellas, wooden sunbeds and a bar, plus a pool in the garden. The hotel restaurant serves creative Mediterranean dishes, such as pork fillet stuffed with spinach and sun-dried tomatoes, or sea bass with lemon risotto and asparagus. Being on the west coast, you get amazing sunsets too. *JF*

[Check availability](#)

8. Filaki nudist beach, Crete

For a complete back-to-nature experience, and an all-over tan, consider staying at a naturist resort. Vritomartis, near Sfakia on Crete's remote south coast, is on the Libyan Sea and is backed by the 2000m-high White Mountains. There are rooms in the main hotel building, as well as bungalows set in landscaped grounds with a 25m pool. A 10-minute walk east (also served by free minibus), Filaki nudist beach is made up of fine pebbles, and has sunbeds and umbrellas, and a canteen serving snacks. While nudism is the norm in the gardens and at the beach, clothing (even if it's just a towel) is mandatory within the Vritomartis indoor spaces. Extras include excursions, such as hiking nearby gorges, and activities, including Greek lessons and boules.

Double room at Vritomartis from £70 (00 30 28250 91112; vritomartis.com). *JF*

9. Chalkidiki, Sithonia

Some of Greece's best campsites are on the Sithonia peninsula, in northern Greece, east of Thessaloniki. Hidden away at the end of a rough track, immersed in olive groves, palms, eucalyptus and pine trees, and giving on to two pristine beaches, Camping Areti offers total peace and tranquillity. It's ideal for families, as the water is shallow and the seabed shelves gradually. Facilities include an excellent waterside restaurant serving delicious breakfasts, fresh fish and traditional Greek dishes, all made from local seasonal produce, a small shop stocked with foodstuffs and beach gear, tennis courts, and sea kayaks, which you can use to paddle to three nearby uninhabited islets.

From £45 per night for a family of four (areti-campingandbungalows.gr).

JF

• **What crisis? Greece expects record visitor numbers in 2016**

10. Dunes Beach, Peloponnese

On the west coast of the Peloponnese, giving on to Dunes Beach, a 1km stretch of fine golden sand, the Romanos Resort is part of the vast Costa Navarino complex. The seafront offers extensive watersports facilities, including wind surfing, kite surfing, sea kayaking, waterskiing and wakeboarding, as well as beach yoga, scuba diving and sailing. The Romanos has 321 rooms, suites and villas, the vast Anazoe Spa, and a choice of chi-chi dining venues. There's a kids' club (for ages 4-12) arranging various activities including eco-walks on the beach, and you can hire a bike and cycle to nearby Voidokilia, an almost circular bay of deep turquoise-blue water, rimmed by a sandy beach and backed by wetlands, often cited as one of the most spectacular bathing spots in Greece. *JF*

[Check availability](#)

For our other expert holiday selections in Greece see our top 10 **villa holidays**, **activity holidays**, **culture holidays** and **food and drink holidays**.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/hotels/11220713/The-top-10-beach-holidays-in-Greece.html>