

THE  TIMES**20 best boutique hotels in Greece**

3. Liostasi, Ios

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## If you've done Mykonos, Santorini, Corfu and Kefalonia, how about these boutique hotels on lesser-known Greek islands

### Saronic Islands

#### 1. Hotel Rastoni

##### Aegina

As the closest main island to the capital, Aegina is a weekend bolthole for Athenians, which means foreign visitors tend to miss out on its great beaches, fine Neoclassical architecture and the chance to visit the island's own Acropolis, the temple of Athena Aphaia. The quaint Rastoni hotel is surrounded by fig and olive trees and its 12 rooms are individually decorated in a chic style. The lobby even has its own ruins: an ancient wall and Mycenaean chamber tombs, revealed when the site was first excavated for building.

**Details** B&B doubles are from €80 (£66) (00 30 22970 27039, [rastoni.gr](http://rastoni.gr)). BA, easyJet, Aegean and Ryanair fly to Athens. Aegina is 30 minutes from the Athens port of Piraeus by hydrofoil

#### 2. Cotommatae 1810

##### Hydra

A visit to car-free Hydra is like a step back in time: old sea captains' mansions surround the harbour and the main methods of transport are donkey or fishing boat. The Cotommatae 1810 guesthouse — once a manor house — looks over the port from its lofty stone walls, and there's a splendid veranda with great views, too. The two rooms come with cast-iron canopy beds and antiques but are on the small side, so upgrade if you can to one of the five suites with exposed stone walls, wooden mezzanines and period pieces.

**Details** B&B doubles are from €110 (00 30 22980 53873, [cotommatae.gr](http://cotommatae.gr)). Hydra is 90 minutes from Piraeus by hydrofoil

### Cyclades

#### 3. Liostasi

##### Ios

Ios has gone upmarket from its old 1980s image as a grungy party island for rock-music lovers. Case in point is this hotel with stark white rooms, bespoke art and simple yet elegant furnishings. Green shutters in each room open out to delightful views over the Aegean from stone balconies, while the spa offers treatments from reflexology to after-sun care using yoghurt masks. Grandma's Restaurant serves Greek island specialities such as rooster in tomato sauce, beef fillet with cucumber pie and crab cakes in lime sauce.

**Details** B&B doubles are from €63 (00 30 22860 92140, [liostasi.gr](http://liostasi.gr)). BA and easyJet fly to Santorini, a two-hour ferry ride

away

#### 4. Elies Resorts

##### Sifnos

This 32-residence resort sits on gorgeous Vathi bay on the west coast of one of the Cyclades' most interesting islands. Sifnos has been inhabited since at least the 4th century BC and there are some fine fortified towns such as the island capital Apollonia and its sister settlement Artemonas, both in the centre of the island, as well as Kastro, built on the rocky cliffs of the eastern coast. Elies takes its name from the surrounding olive groves and its rooms, suites and villas have a typically cubic island style in ice white with modern art on the walls.

**Details** B&B doubles are from £180 per night ([booking.com](http://booking.com)). Sifnos is three hours from Piraeus by ferry

#### 5. Coco-Mat

##### Serifos

Serifos is renowned in Greek mythology as the island on which Perseus petrified the king Polydektes by showing him the head of the gorgon Medusa — and you would need a heart of stone not to fall in love with this hotel set on one of the island's best beaches. Formerly houses for the miners who extracted iron ore here, it has been converted into a series of residences with original stone walls, mosaic floors and doors that throw open to the white sands of the crescent-shaped Vagia beach.

**Details** B&B doubles are from €135 ([serifos.coco-mat-hotels.com](http://serifos.coco-mat-hotels.com)). Serifos is 90 minutes from Piraeus by ferry

#### 6. Ploes

##### Syros

As capital of the Cyclades, Syros' main town of Hermoupolis is rich in both monetary terms and history. The patriarch of modern Greece, Eleftherios Venizelos, was educated here at Greece's first public high school, while the port was once the most significant in the country. That wealth can still be seen today from the Apollon Theatre (a mini version of Milan's La Scala) to streets lined with Neoclassical mansions in an Italianate style. One such building is now home to Ploes, a five-star hotel with rooms featuring handmade rugs, Venetian chandeliers and bronze statues. There is also a delightful roof terrace with incredible harbour views.

**Details** B&B doubles are from €150 (00 30 22810 79360, [hotelploes.gr](http://hotelploes.gr)). Syros is two hours from Piraeus by ferry, or Olympic Air flies from Athens six days a week

#### 7. Salt

##### Milos

There are five rooms, five suites and a separate 125 sq m Sea House villa at this hotel on the island of Milos. All come with stark white interiors, rounded walls and beachcombed decorative touches such as pebbles, shells and driftwood. Milos is a volcanic island with more than 75 beaches and coves, ranging from tropical white sand to red and black pebbles — it is also where the statue *Aphrodite of Milos*, better known as the *Venus de Milo*, currently on display at the Louvre, was found in 1820 and has a fascinating system of catacombs dug into the volcanic rock.

**Details** B&B doubles are from €100 (00 30 22870 41110, [salt-milos.com](http://salt-milos.com)). Milos is four hours from Piraeus by ferry or Olympic Air flies from Athens daily

#### 8. Anemomilos

##### Folegandros

Settle down for breakfast under the pergola of this hotel perched on a 200-metre high cliff in Hora, the main town of Folegandros, and bask in some of the Mediterranean's most beautiful views — the mighty sea stretching as far as the eye can see. The apartments aren't bad either: three typically Cycladic cubic rooms, two of them accommodating two people and a suite for up to five, with white walls, nautical cushions and period furniture. Folegandros is the type of island you come to to relax and enjoy nature: there are just three settlements with a smattering of bars and restaurants.

**Details** B&B doubles are from €130 (00 30 22860 41309, [anemomilosapartments.com](http://anemomilosapartments.com)). BA and easyJet fly to Santorini, a one-hour ferry ride away

#### 9. Portes Houses

##### Koufonisia

Koufonisia, two islands between Naxos and Amorgos, is a stop on the *Agoni Grammi*: the "barren" (read unprofitable) ferry line that is subsidised in order to help islanders get around. As such, it's a seven-hour agony to get here — but well worth it if you want a taste of what Greece was like 40 years ago. Pano (upper) Koufonisi is an island of sea caves, small beaches and beautiful bays, as well as this hotel with 10 rooms decorated with natural minerals, wood, stone and bamboo that are right on the water's edge in the island's main village. Kato (lower) Koufonisi can be reached by caique (fishing boat) but be warned, there are more goats than people when you arrive.

**Details** B&B doubles are from €65 ([Booking.com](http://Booking.com)). Pano Koufonisi is seven hours from Piraeus by ferry

#### 10. The Windmill

##### Kimolos

This hotel on tiny Kimolos is one of Greece's most unusual. Set in a converted windmill that dates from 1852 and was once the residence of the island's doctor, it consists of just five rooms with a traditional feel but modern touches such as flat-screen TVs and USB ports through which to line up songs for the music system. Breakfast can be served on your terrace or balcony and there's a café-bar that looks over the uninhabited neighbouring island of Poliaigos. Kimolos may be one of the smaller islands in the Cyclades, but there is culture at the Archaeological, Folklore and Maritime museums, as well as gorgeous beaches that can only be reached by sea taxi.

**Details** Double rooms are from €70 (00 30 22870 51554, [ariahotels.gr](http://ariahotels.gr)). Olympic Air flies from Athens to Milos, a 30-minute ferry ride away

## Dodecanese

### 11. Petra Hotel

#### Patmos

Patmos, one of the northernmost of the Dodecanese, attracts thousands of pilgrims a year as many Christian scholars believe it was here that the Apostle John wrote the Book of Revelation after a visit from Jesus. This hotel — a member of the Small Luxury Hotels of the World — is another of the island's revelations. Forget typically whitewashed walls and flashes of Mediterranean blue, the rooms here have a much more Italian feel with ochre walls, granite floors and plump furnishings. Petra is the hotel's award-winning restaurant, while there's a decent spa and regular yoga retreats, too. The island is well worth exploring thanks to an imposing monastery dedicated to John, as well as the cave where Jesus is said to have appeared.

**Details** B&B doubles are from €156 (00 30 22470 34020, [petrahotel-patmos.com](http://petrahotel-patmos.com)). EasyJet and Ryanair fly to Kos, a two-hour hydrofoil ride away

### 12. The Old Markets

#### Symi

Back in the day Symi was one of the world's great sea sponge trading centres thanks to the brave divers who would take to the waters here to gather their bounty. With diving now banned to protect some of the submerged archaeological treasures around the island, the trade has died off — and with it these buildings that were once the vibrant commercial centre of the island. Now on Greece's register of national monuments, the former shops of this once-bustling agora have been converted into a luxury hotel. Its five rooms are themed — Ottoman, Venetian, Arabian, Alexandrian and the Symi Suite — but all have high ceilings, arched windows and wonderful styling.

**Details** Doubles are from €165 (00 30 22460 71440, [theoldmarkets.com](http://theoldmarkets.com)). EasyJet and Ryanair fly to Rhodes, a 45-minute ferry ride away

## North Aegean

### 13. Medieval Castle Suites

#### Chios

This hotel in the 14th-century village of Mesta certainly does what it says on the tin. The 20 rooms are in the village's old castle, built by the then occupying Genoese to protect the island's main produce — mastic gum — from marauding pirates. As you'd expect, the rooms, which are set around small courtyards, retain many original features — exposed stone walls, arched ceilings and wooden beams — married with modern marble bathrooms and comfy beds. The village is also home to the interesting Church-Monastery of the Archangels Michael and Gabriel, while nearby beaches range from the volcanic black pebbles of Apothika to pristine white sand at Agia Dinami.

**Details** Doubles are from €60 (00 30 22710 76345, [mcsuites.gr](http://mcsuites.gr)). Olympic Air flies to Chios from Athens

### 14. Armonia Bay Hotel

#### Samos

There must be something in the air in Samos: storyteller Aesop, mathematician Pythagoras and astronomer Aristarchus (the first man to propose a heliocentric solar system) were all born on the island. Soak up some of the famous Aegean sun that the latter might have gazed upon with a stay at this hotel, perched on a cliff with fabulous views over Tsamadou Beach to the fishing village of Kokkari. Rooms are basic but stylish with nice touches such as fresh flowers on the beds and verandas that look out to sea.

**Details** B&B doubles are from €60 (00 30 22730 922279, [armoniabay.com](http://armoniabay.com)). Olympic Air flies to Samos from Athens

## Sporades

### 15 .Bourtzi Boutique Hotel

#### Skiathos

There's a cool cocktail bar with white sofas, elaborate chandeliers and black-and-white prints at this modern design hotel in the heart of Skiathos's main town. Rooms have relaxing pastel walls and contemporary art, and there's a fine pool area. While most of the film *Mamma Mia* was shot on neighbouring Skopelos, some of the beach scenes were filmed here, as was the scene in which the three fathers meet for the first time in the island's evocative old port.

**Details** B&B doubles are from €69 (00 30 24270 21304, [hotelbourtzi.gr](http://hotelbourtzi.gr)). ThomsonFly ([flights.thomson.co.uk](http://flights.thomson.co.uk)) flies to Skiathos from May to September

### 16. Ikion Eco

#### Alonissos

Rocky uninhabited islets to the north of Alonissos have been designated a marine park to help conserve the largest known population of the Mediterranean monk seal, and the green theme continues at this hotel with a string of environmental certificates. Surrounded by pines in Cavo, it features 13 rooms and suites with a bright and breezy contemporary feel, while good beaches are just a few minutes' walk away.

**Details** B&B doubles start from €75 (00 30 24240 66360, [ikion.com](http://ikion.com)). Fly to Skiathos, which is a 90-minute ferry ride away

## Ionian

### 17. Perantzada 1811 Art Hotel

#### Ithaka

There's little wonder that Odysseus, the hero of Homer's epic poem *The Odyssey*, fought so many battles to return to Ithaka, for this tiny island wedged between Kefalonia and the mainland is one of Greece's most picturesque with its sheer cliffs, arid mountains, tiny villages, olive groves and sheltered coves. This hotel in the port town of Vathy is just as lovely. Housed in a

19th-century Neoclassical mansion, it has design touches from the likes of Verner Pantton, Tom Dixon and Philippe Starck. It consists of 19 rooms and suites with white wooden floors, elaborate chandeliers and bespoke art.

**Details** B&B doubles are from €115 (00 30 26740 33496, [perantzadahotel.com](http://perantzadahotel.com)). EasyJet, ThomsonFly and Monarch all fly to Kefalonia, a 30-minute ferry ride away

### **18. Torri e Merli**

#### **Paxos**

According to mythology, Paxos was formed when Poseidon attempted to lure the sea nymph Amphitrite by throwing his trident at Corfu, so breaking off a piece of the island. As if in tribute, there's a real romantic feel to this seven-suite hotel housed in a 17th-century former mansion house. Rooms have stone walls, exposed rafters, white French-style shabby chic beds and glass-fronted bathrooms, while there is a lovely tea room, Tisaneria, in the old cellar.

**Details** B&B doubles are from €170 (00 30 26212 34123, [torriemerli.com](http://torriemerli.com)). Ryanair, EasyJet and Aegean Airlines fly to Corfu, a one-hour hydrofoil ride away

### **Peloponnese**

### **19. Pension Amymone**

#### **Nafplio**

Technically, the Peloponnese is a peninsula rather than an island, but it has been separated from the mainland since the late 1800s by the Isthmus at Corinth. Nafplio, Greece's capital following independence from Turkey, also retains an island feel as the winding streets of its Old Town, full of quirky shops such as the Worry Bead Museum, are surrounded on three sides by water. This hotel created by Italian artist Francesco Moretti fits in perfectly thanks to its wooden sculptures, wrought-iron furnishings and recycled materials used for decoration.

**Details** B&B doubles are from €130 (00 30 27520 99477, [amymone.gr](http://amymone.gr)). Nafplio is a two-hour drive from Athens

### **20. Kinsterna Hotel**

#### **Monemvasia**

Just on the outskirts of the magical island castle city of Monemvasia in the southern Peloponnese, Kinsterna has been turning heads since it opened in 2010. The 27-room hotel is a converted Byzantine mansion, surrounded by rolling hills on one side and the blue of the Aegean on the other. Rooms have antique furnishings, wooden floors and marble bathrooms, while the hotel restaurant is on cantilevered platforms over the old water cistern from which the hotel takes its name.

**Details** B&B doubles start from €137 (00 30 27320 66300, [www.kinsternahotel.gr](http://www.kinsternahotel.gr)). EasyJet flies to Kalamata, a two-and-a-half-hour drive away