



nofootprint

GREECE'S ULTIMATE ECO WALKING

The Ultimate
Walking Guide
around the
Greek Islands

A PUBLICATION OF NOFOOTPRINT ECO WALKS

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A journey of discovery and extraordinary beauty...

Dear friend

There isn't a better way to experience Greece and explore its natural beauty than by getting out and about on your own feet!

- ✓ For **passionate travellers**, the Greek islands have inspired poets and writers for years, many of which go for a holiday and ending up staying forever.
- ✓ For **nature lovers**, you'll enjoy dramatic coastal sceneries, stunning mountain views, astonishing landscapes with abandoned terraces, ruined windmills, caves, bridges, steep rocky cliffs, springs and small gorges... ravishing wild herbs and flowers... endemic wildlife... remote solitary beaches and coves with crystal clear waters!
- ✓ For **food lovers**, island hopping can be also described as tavern crawling!
- ✓ For **cultural admirers**, visit one of the numerous archeological museums, sites, byzantine churches, venetian towers, art galleries, dance festivals or just go in easter!
- ✓ For **walkers**, the Greek islands are a hiker's paradise with an innumerable network of ancient paths and well-organised systems of trails.

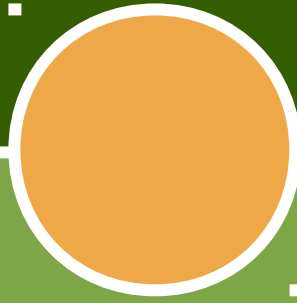
Every ancient walking trail has an ancient chapel en route for a spiritual lift in nature... just in Sifnos island they have 365 churches, chapels and monasteries!

Beautiful? The Greek islands are breathtaking!

Get the most out of your walking holiday adventure with our Walking holidays around the Greek islands guide!

Please find below general information on the landscape, flora and fauna, history... advice on when to walk, where to go, our favourite hiking trails and many, many tips!

"The Cyclades are breathtaking, and we have loved seeing them up close with our wonderful guide. Wildflower walks through hilltop villages, meals in local tavernas, swimming at lovely beaches – and excellent company. Many, many thanks, for your insights into Greek nature and culture – and for the chance to rest on those upward slopes!" Mark & Angie, Australia



PART 1

THE CYCLADES ISLANDS

The Cyclades islands

Barren landscapes in contrast with white washed houses and the endless deep blue of the Aegean sea... an ancient network of paths... traditional villages... gorgeous sandy beaches... solitary bays... picturesque fishing ports... friendly and hospitable islanders... delicious food... folk music... are a few examples of what you will experience while walking with us around the Cyclades islands.

The most famous island group in the Aegean Sea, the Cyclades, is a cluster of 24 inhabited islands that forms an imaginary circle (the name in English means: "circular islands") around the sacred island of Delos. They present the tips of drowned mountain ridges.



Although they share common characteristics, each Cycladic island offers you its own unique experiences: from the cultural life of Syros to the relaxed pace of life of the Small Cyclades to the culinary delights of Sifnos and the cosmopolitan lifestyle of Santorini.

You can combine a walking holiday in one or more of the following islands... and enjoy an experience of a lifetime! [Contact us](#) for further information and advice...

Landscape

The Cyclades islands and various islets and rocky outcrops that comprise the Aegean archipelago are peaks of an underwater mountain range, of Aigaiis continent, which once extended between the Eurasian and African tectonic plates, which sunk during the Tertiary period. The Aegean sea is surrounded by the coasts of mainland Greece, the coasts of Asia Minor and Crete.

The successive tectonic plates and the development of the volcanic arc have influenced the complex Aegean landscape of multitude islands, islets and rocks of varying sizes and shapes; islands with calcareous substrata eroding into cliffs, caves, gorges, ravines and plateaus... volcanic islands with impressive rock formations and natural springs, fumarols and petrified life forms...



In the Tertiary period, the islands were covered with tropical forests but they disappeared with the cooling of the climate during the Ice Age. In the post-glacial period, dense evergreen sclerophyllus forests developed, in which the holm oak predominated.

The vegetation started to change once again with the first human settlers during the Neolithic period, between 12,000 and 3,000 BC. The conquest of the land was dramatic. Utilisation of the land on mountain slopes for agriculture, clearance by fire

for grazing and cutting and utilisation of all wood resources led to a progressive degeneration and many of the smaller islands which were originally densely forested acquired a karstic landscape.

At the same time, settlers increased species richness by creating new habitats mainly through the cultivation of the land. Arable land was fairly easily sustained by traditional farming techniques such as fallowing, crop rotation and other inventive terracing practices. The result is an exceptional varied landscape of tiny villages which lay scattered across a mosaic of land use, crops, miniature olive groves, orchards, vineyards, vegetable gardens, footpaths, scattered farmhouse, cisterns and pigeon houses.

Flora

The landscape and vegetation differs widely among the Cyclades islands. The larger islands, Andros, Naxos, Paros, Sifnos and Tinos are greener and more mountainous and offer diverse landscapes with gorges, ravines, fertile valleys, rivers and springs.



While you walk the ancient rails you will find shade under trees such as Aleppo pines, mulberry trees, ancient chestnut oaks and cypresses, poplars... planes on squares... eucalyptus trees on roads... tamarisks on the beaches and, of course, olive trees all over. While you walk through people's orchards and courtyards you will observe trees that bear pomegranates, cherries, figs, walnuts, almonds, oranges and lemons.

Fauna in the Cyclades had to adapt to a hot and dry season, becoming drought-tolerant and fire-prone. The Med scrublands, "macchie" or "maquis" is a particular scarce ecosystem which covers around 0,5% of the earth's land surface. They are scrub formations dominated by woody evergreen plants with small, leathery, stiff leaves such as holm oak, wild olives and lentisk.



Where the aridity increases the vegetation is reduced, more open or scattered, with low thorny formations of hemispherical shrubs, called phrygana in Greece. Part of this phrygana ecosystem are fragrant plants whose essential oils are brought out by the heat and the most typical are oregano, thyme and sage.

Phrygana: thorny barnet, spiny broom, greek spiny spurge, tree spurge, thyme, lentisk, sage leaved cistus, cist rose, summer savory, pot marjoram, jerusalem sage, french lavender, greek sage, dodder.

Macquis: easter strawberry tree, strawberry tree, tree heath, carob tree, olive tree, kermes oak, storax, myrtle, common smilax, oleander, spanish broom, bean trefoil, large mediterranean spurge, lentisk or mastic tree, eastern strawberry tree, judas tree.

Forests: downy or pubescent oak, turkish pine, mediterranean cypress, valonia oak,

evergreen maple, turpentine tree.

- **Tip for walkers:** Walkers who visit the Aegean between February and April will experience some cool and damp days. The sea temperature is not ideal for swimming but this is compensated for by a green landscape with a variety of flowering plants such as asphodel, irises and tassel hyacinths. **Spring** is the **best time** to observe **orchids** which produce their beautiful flowers from February to April in the phrygana and on open, dry expanses of grass. As the temperature rises, the buses of the phrygana transform the landscape into fragrant sea of flowers.

At the end of April, the flowering period begins for many other plant species till June when most herbaceous plants start to dry out and a large part of the landscape is bathed in various yellow and brown tones. Some plants flower though in the summer such as the thistle, sage, thyme, winged sea lavender, yellow horned poppy and spiny startwort. Around September with the first showers plants such as sea squills, pine thistle and autumn crocus produce their flowers. **All seasons** have something to offer.



The Aegean region finally lies at the point of contact of three continents, which accounts for much of the diversification of the island fauna and flora. Endemism is exceptionally high and many call the Aegean a "**botanist's paradise**". Both the origin of these islands and the way and time they were created, led to the development of an extremely rich biodiversity of the local flora, which includes 1,400 species in the Cyclades, 83 out of which are endemic.

Fauna

The evolution of fauna in an island depends on the possible means of dispersion. With the exception of some islands close to the coast of minor Asia (such as Kos, Samos and Lesbos) which were connected to the mainland till the last Ice Age, most Aegean islands have a long history of isolation. The Latin term for the word island is insula, which in modern Italian evolved to "isola" and the resemblance with the word "isolamento" (isolation, but insulation as well) certainly is not accidental. In the limited insular ecosystems species had their time to change by piling characteristics and, generation-by-generation, to distinguish in new ones. Nowadays islands are considered as natural laboratories where many theories can be tested since they represent simple and closed systems in comparison to inland areas.

The Aegean is thus rich in endemic species and subspecies although many endemic species were wiped out through hunting or competition with humans (i.e. dwarf elephant of Tilos which had the size of the donkey). Many species encountered in the Aegean originated in Asia Minor or the Balkan peninsula. There are 6 lizard and three snake species of Asian origin



which are restricted to the islands and not found anywhere in Europe such as:

- the endemic species of **Milos viper** *Macrovipera schweizeri* (limited to Milos and neighboring islands of Kimolos and Polyaigos)
- the **lizard of Milos** *Podarcis milensis*,
- the **crocodile lizard** *agama stelio* and
- the **lafiatis snake** *Elaphe quatuorlineata*.

Hares, wild rabbits, tortoises and hedge hogs can also be encountered while walking. That completes the list of fauna on the Cyclades.

Many walkers are worried about snakes but snakes are seldom seen as they disappear instantly as they hear you approaching. Large snakes are usually harmless. The poisonous viper is similar to an adder and grows up to 50 cm. Its bite can be fatal if you don't seek medical assistance. Bites from this venomous snake are rare, and the venom is not usually potent enough to cause death. But it can make you sick and it can ruin your holiday if you don't act immediately. There are also scorpions, though their painful bites are not fatal and they are rare.



Marine world

While you walk and explore the islands you will end up at remote, solitary beaches with crystal clear waters. There is nothing more refreshing than plunging into the sea water after a long hike! If you enjoy snorkeling you will appreciate the remarkable rich fauna that the Greek waters harbour. Imagine that the Greek sea is home to 447 of the 519 species that live exclusively in the Mediterranean as well as 9 resident marine mammals.

The Greek seas support some of the most important remaining marine mammal and turtle populations in the Mediterranean, including:

- 2 species of whale: **Sperm whale** and the **Cuvier's Beaked** whale,
- 4 species of dolphin: the **Bottlenose** dolphin, the **Striped** Dolphin, the **Common** Dolphin and **Risso** dolphin,
- the Mediterranean **monk seal**, the most endangered marine mammal in the world, and
- 3 species of sea turtle: the **loggerhead turtle**, the **green** turtle and the **leatherback** turtle.

The monk seal has been a part of Greece's natural and cultural heritage and is described in The Odyssey. The head of a monk seal was even found on a coin dated 500 B.C. Now, however, around 250 monk seals are left.

Regarding fishes, there are more than 200 species of fish such as mullets, snappers, sea breams and groupers but also octopuses, squids, cuttlefishes,



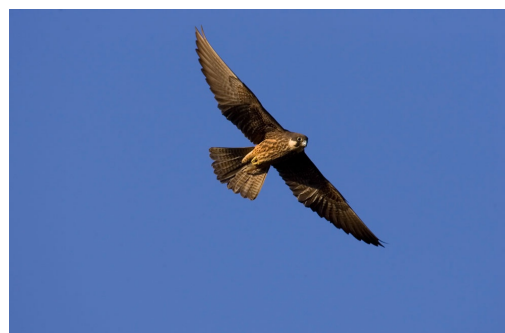
lobsters and seahorses. You will have the chance to taste some amazing fish dishes at the local fish taverns!

Birds

Many walkers wish to combine walking with birdwatching as the spring and autumn migration periods coincide with the best periods for walking around the islands.

Starting early in spring, bird lovers can observe migratory birds which find a resting place in the islands on their journey across the sea. The islets, islands, rocks of the Aegean sea constitute a safe place to rest and feed. More than three hundred species have been recorded in the Aegean and we can be divided into 2 major categories: birds occurring all year round or for long periods of time and passage migrants occurring only for a few days or hours.

The spring migration starts mid-Feb, when the first birds arrive from Africa and peaks in mid-end April. It goes on throughout May in declining numbers and ends in June. The Autumn migration covers a prolonged time period. Starting from the end of June, it peaks the 2nd half of August, continues in September and October and is completed in November. The number of birds in autumn is much higher as juveniles have joined in.



Most common species you will encounter:

Sea birds: Cory's Shearwater, European Shag, Great Cormorant, Cory's shearwater, Yellow legged gull, Auduin's Gull, Yelkouan Shearwater.

Land birds: Bonelli's Eagle, Long-legged Buzzard, Eleonora's Falcon, Chukar Partridge, Crested Lark, Pied Wagtail, Sardinian Warbler, Blue Rock Thrush, Northern Wheatear.

History

The Cyclades are one of the island groups which constitute the Aegean archipelago and can be found southeast of mainland Greece. The name refers to the islands forming a circle (kyklos) around the sacred island of Delos.

The Cyclades form a bridge between European and Asian cultures. Carians, the first immigrants, came from Asia Minor. Stone idols, known forms of art of the Mycenaen period, were carved as early as 6,000 years ago, 3,500 years prior to the rise of the ancient Greek civilisation.



After the arrival of the Dorians from the north around 1100 BC, the Cyclades became part of Greece and Delos its intellectual and cultural centre. Here was the nucleus of the Athenian-Delian League, the protective alliance against Persia, which bound the Greeks of the Aegean and Asia Minor with Athens. The final victory of the Greeks against the Persians in 449 BC kept the Asian conquerors from invading the Mediterranean for 200 years. Immense riches were amassed on Delos. When Athenians carried off the treasure and tried to make vassals of its allies, the islands fought against Athens in allegiance with Sparta in the Peloponnesian war. The outcome forever weakened Greece which fell under the Macedonia rule in 339 BC under Alexander the Great who carried Greek culture (hellenic) for a short period up to India. Having made Greek culture their own, the Romans, as the later rulers, helped its spread throughout Europe after 146 BC.

Christianity became the state religion of the eastern Roman empire, still known as Byzantium after 391 AD. Following the fall of the Western Roman empire in 476 AD during the migration of peoples, the eastern part remained an upholder of Graeco-roman culture. Byzantium, the 2nd Rome, missionized the Slaves and spread Greek ideas as far as Moscow. However, Europe began to drift apart in cultural terms and religious differences also deepened. In 1054 the schism of the eastern Greek-orthodox Church from the Western Latin Church and Rome reached a climax.



In the meantime, a new great Asian power had assembled on the eastern borders of Byzantium, the Turkish Ottoman empire. It pushed westward with immense force. Owing to the good trade relations of Byzantium with Asia and the silk road, rival Venice induced the Crusaders to conquer the Capital Constantinople in 1204. The Cyclades came under Venetian nobility and were conquered by the Turks in 1453. The advanced Greek civilisation of the middle ages no longer flourished. Greek life was dominated by Turkish influence for 350 years. Only on Tinos were the Venetians able to hold out longer and Syros had a special status by virtue of French protection.

Finally at the outset of the 19th century, the political stability of post-Napoleonic Europe and classicism in art increased awareness of the East. Philanthropists from many countries supported the Greek struggle for independence after the 1821 and Greece became part of Europe again.



PART 2

Why a walking holiday
in the Cyclades is
ideal for you

Why a walking holiday in the Cyclades is *ideal* for you

If you enjoy variety

The Cyclades offer great diversity and a range of places and landscapes that cannot be found together anywhere else. It's like having a miniature world, where everything is included:

lofty mountains, fertile valleys, plateaus, springs, rivers, caves, picturesque villages, an innumerable network of ancient paths, Byzantine chapels, Venetian towers, Kouros statues, ancient sites, endemic wildlife, unique customs and cultural happenings...



as well long sandy beaches with crystal clear waters... plus an overwhelming number of activities for the visitor to choose from.

➤ **Picture of a day walking at Naxos island**

"Day 2: This hike starts from the beautiful village of Apiranthos built at the foot of Mt. Fanari, with its venetian towers, pretty old two-story houses, marble paved alleys with arches and picturesque squares. While we have a drink we'll introduce you to the unique biodiversity of the Aegean and the islands of the Cyclades that will definitely make your walks more interesting! We'll then take the trail to the summit of Fanari and admire the panoramic view of the Cycladic islands.

The path continues through impressive landscapes and rock formations towards the villages of Kaloxylos and Chalki. Kaloxylos is one of Naxos most picturesque villages, situated in an area lush with olive, plane and oak trees, well-known for its pretty houses and especially for the rare flowers in their courtyards. We'll finally continue towards another beautiful village, Chalki, where we'll end the day with a delicious supper that the owners prepare with their own organic ingredients."

Read the whole [itinerary here...](#)

➤ **Feedback from a British walker in Naxos & Amorgos:**

"Climbing to the top of Mount Zas on Naxos – birthplace of Zeus... Walking the ancient marble paved mule tracks passing varied landscapes of olive groves, picturesque villages, deep ravines, rocky outcrops and an ever changing coastline where islands appear and disappear beneath startling blue skies, haze and shifting clouds... The swim in crystal clear sea at Lionas... Wonderful pebbles there too!.. Arriving at the bay of Aegali with the sun setting behind us and the moon rising above the steep slopes of Amorgos..."

Sunset drinks at Amorgis in Aegali... Breakfasts at Hotel Kymata in Naxos... Seeing a griffin vulture. A feast for the senses! ” Lisa, UK

If you are a nature lover

You'll enjoy dramatic coastal sceneries, stunning mountain views, astonishing landscapes with abandoned terraces, ruined windmills, caves, bridges, steep rocky cliffs, springs and small gorges... enjoy ravishing wild herbs and flowers... encounter endemic wildlife... reach remote solitary beaches and coves with turquoise blue waters.



Greece has over 6,000 species of wildflower, some unique. There are more than 100 varieties of orchid alone! You'll be amazed by the number of migratory birds that you'll meet everyday while walking or even relaxing on the beach. The rocky islets and coastline of the Aegean offer the ideal shelter for thousands of birds to rest in their long migratory journey.

- **Tip for walkers: Spring** is really the best time to experience nature and **observe flora and fauna** in the Greek islands. By Easter it has been raining for quite a while and all the islands are unrecognizable. Forget about the barren islands of the Cyclades! The hills in spring and during easter are carpeted with lush vegetation... the flora is quite spectacular with a good showing of wild flowers.

If you enjoy warm temperature & clear blue skies

The Aegean is characterized by a Mediterranean climate with hot, dry summers and mild to cool, wet winters. The air is usually hot during the day and pleasantly warm at night. Spring and autumn are the best times to visit Greece, specifically May, June, September and October, if you enjoy mild weather and you wish to avoid the heat of the summer.



- **Tip for walkers:** I would recommend if possible to **travel out-of-season**, in May, June, September or October. During these months, the islands are more relaxed and accommodation and travelling is cheaper. In May and June, as we mentioned above, the islands of Greece are much greener and full of flowers. The temperature of the seawater is a bit colder, but you can still swim. In September and October the islands are more dry and less green but the water temperatures of the sea are warmer. Outside the tourist season (November –

April) you can expect all kinds of weather, from thunderstorms, wind and even snow to lovely sunny days on which everybody rushes to the beach and a dip in the water.

Fascinating local culture

Unique landscapes with tens of quaint villages, Venetian castles, ancient temples, protected coves, cosmopolitan towns and endless sandy beaches where you can swim and eat at the family-run local tavernas. By walking around the islands you'll have the chance to experience the warm friendliness and hospitality of the islanders and discover an untouched traditional culture.



In Greek "panigiria", people of all ages gather, usually at the main square of the village, and under the uplifting sounds of the local musicians, they eat, drink wine and dance... till dawn. Since the ancient times, feasts would take place in order to worship the god of Dionysus, the god of wine and festivity. Nowadays the ancient custom of the "panigiri" lives on and it could be a one-in-a-lifetime experience for the traveller in Greece. In the islands of the Aegean, there are feasts throughout the year. If you are planning to walk around the islands, then I strongly recommend that you plan to attend one during your stay. Just [ask us](#) for dates and further information.

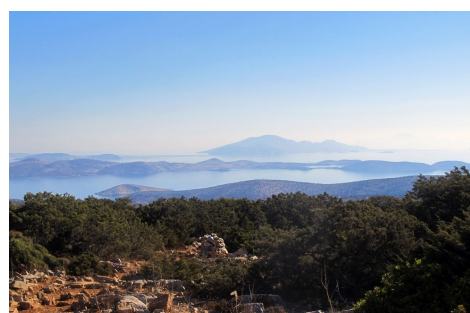
- **Tip for walkers:** Greeks are known for their **hospitality**... don't be surprised if while walking you are stopped by a local and find yourself at his house drinking his wine and other delicacies prepared by his wife.
- **Tip for walkers:** Don't miss the opportunity to attend and **participate** in a **local festival** or event!

Easter is the most important holiday in the Cyclades. You will have the opportunity to participate in magnificent Easter festivities that have remained unchanged for centuries! The uniqueness in celebrating Easter the traditional Greek way lies in the week leading up to the event (Holy Week) and reaches its climax on Easter Sunday. You will have the one-of-a-kind opportunity to delve into an overwhelming spiritual atmosphere and participate into sacred rituals, ancient-old traditions, gastronomical and musical celebrations!



Fascinating history

The Aegean Sea holds more history and legend in its waters than any other body of water in the world. This is the sea upon which thousand Greek ships sailed



when they set out to attack Troy and rescue the lovely Helen! The Aegean is where western civilization was born; civilizations such as the Phoenicians, Minoan Cretans, Ionians, Dorians and Persians inhabited its waters.

For its size, no other maritime area of the Mediterranean has comparable shoreline development. Both the continental shores surrounding the Aegean Sea and those of the islands are full of solitary bays and small fishing ports where seamen could find shelter at the dawn of European history, facilitating contacts between local people and those of three continents.

Because of the extraordinary taste of Greek cuisine

Greece's local cuisine is influenced by its multicultural Mediterranean heritage. African, European and Asian influences mark the variety of dishes available. Plus you will find that most of the ingredients used in the islands are produced locally and are organic. You will have the chance to taste delicious traditional home made dishes!



Food always tastes better when it's grown on the doorstep and island hopping to remote, smaller islands is a unique way to discover truly off-the-beaten-track local producers. Whether tasting freshly-picked home-cooked food at a family-run tavern, buying fresh fish from the fisherman, sampling olive oil from a small olive grove or tasting locally produced cheese, it will be a fascinating experience.

No language barriers

Almost everyone speaks English. Engaging with the friendly locals, ordering at a restaurant or finding your way around is easy and "rewarding".

Value for money

The Cyclades islands especially the smaller ones make for an affordable holiday destination. You'll be surprised by the prices of guesthouses, taverns and other services. [Contact us](#) for further information and advice...

Why a walking holiday in the Cyclades is not ideal for you

Don't go walking around the Greek islands if...

- × You don't want to **learn any Greek**. Learning even how to say "hello" and "good morning" can take you far and allow you to experience the Greek **hospitality!** Check our Greek vocabulary towards the end of this report...
- × You are a **fastidious time keeper**. Islanders are laid back! Plus walking holidays are for taking your watch off and **switching off**.
- × You **are on a diet**. You will amaze yourself with the choice of fresh and natural food in the taverns! Try local vegetables, fish dishes, taramasolata, goat roasted or stew, Greek yogurt with thyme honey!
- × ... you think it's all rolling hills. The Greek islands are definitely **mountainous!**



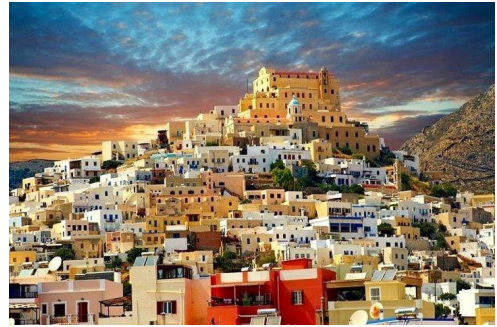
PART 3

Where to walk in the Cyclades

Where to walk in the Cyclades

Syros, the capital and jewel of the Cyclades

The neoclassical town of Ermoupolis, once a very important trade and industrial centre in the Mediterranean, is its trademark. You will walk on deserted ancient paths and trails, explore the medieval reservation of Ano Syros, the ancient ruins of Kastri, experience its unique cultural and social life, enjoy stunning mountain views and dramatic coastal sceneries... reach remote solitary beaches and coves with crystal clear waters.



Check for further information our [walking holiday itinerary in Syros...](#)

➤ Recommended routes:

1. Coastal trail to the akropolis of Kastri

Ermoupolis - Richopo - Platy Vouni - Glysoura - Kastri akropolis - Chalandriani

Walk from the outskirts of the town of Ermoupolis onto a beautiful coastal trail towards the akropolis of Kastri, very famous because of its findings from the early-Cycladic civilisation (3200-2000 B.C.) You'll enjoy magnificent panoramic views of the wild north-east coast of Syros and the surrounding islands and go through the traditional settlements of Platy Vouni and Richopo. Stop for a swim, snorkle and lunch at one of the most isolated beaches of the island, Glysoura. Walk towards the ancient settlement of Katri and have a break to admire its magical atmosphere. Walk at the village of Chalandriani and visit its local tavern for a drink and a meze.

Walking time: 3,5 hours hours. Actual walking with lunch and stops: 6 hours.
Grade: moderate.

2. Walk to the most remote beaches and lonely part of Syros!

Kambos - beach of Lia - Gria Spilia - Kambos

Start from the valley of Kambos and follow the beautiful trail to the beach of Lia. Stop for a swim and rest under the tamarisk trees. Continue by coast towards the shaded beach of Gria Spilia where you can stop for lunch before continuing to the bay of Grammata. Look on the rocks for the inscriptions outlined by sailors since ancient times with wishes and entreaties to the gods to continue safely their travel. After your return to Kambos visit the little village of St. Michelle and have supper enjoying the most impressive sunset.

Walking time: 3 hours. Actual walking time: 5 hours. Grade: easy.

3. **Ancient trail with panoramic views**

Papouri – beach of Aetos – beach of Varvaroussa – Delfini – Kini

From the traditional settlement of Papouri take the ancient trail towards the beach of Aetos and the beach of Varvaroussa, that is ranked amongst the islands' nicest beaches. You can have lunch and swim at the bays' secluded, turquoise waters. From Varvaroussa enjoy a walk along the coast to the beach of Delfini and then further to the bay and settlement of Kini. The trails are very beautiful, the panoramic views are marvelous.

Walking time: 2,5 hours. Actual walking time: 5 hours. Grade: easy.

➤ **Recommended hard copy & digital maps:**

1. Anavasi hard copy or digital version: <http://www.anavasi.gr/search.php?lang=en>
2. <http://www.hikingteam.gr/en/>
3. <http://www.cycladen.be/SyrosEng.htm>

Andros, the greenest island in the Cyclades

Andros is mountainous and is intersected with a number of mountain ridges which create numerous fertile valleys, steep ravines and deep gorges. In comparison to the rest of the Cyclades it rains a lot and there are numerous rivers, streams, springs and waterfalls. As a result Andros is remarkably green and characterised by a rich flora and diverse landscape which are waiting for you to be explored.



Check our our [walking holiday in Andros...](#)

➤ **Recommended routes:**

1. **Hiking into the wild! Manmade works of art by stone harmonious to the environment**

Ano Aprovato - Ano Palaiopoli - Pitrofos

The longest route in the network follows the old path which connected south west Andros to the central villages and Chora. Stop for a visit at the Olive Oil

Museum to see the renovated olive press. Have lunch at the picturesque village of Pitrofos and enjoy a gastronomic journey with the special dishes of island!

Walking time: aprx 4,5hrs. Actual walking with lunch and stops: 6 hours.
Grade: Moderate.

2. **Hike and get familiar with the rich naval tradition of Andros**

Apoikia Village – Pythara Waterfalls - Gialia Beach

Start the hike from the verdant village of Apoikia known for its springs. First stop will be at the impressive Pythara waterfalls which falls down into a crystal clear pool. Follow a stepped path, across lush landscapes of oaks, olive and walnut trees, along the river. While walking across the riverbed, you will have the chance to discover the unique nature of the island, visit old castle-houses, stone bridges, watermills, traditional olive presses, impressive old mansions, evidence of the maritime tradition of the island. Your final destination is the unspoilt beach of Gialia where you can stop for a picnic and a swim. Walk towards the Chora.

Walking time: 3 hours. Actual walking time: 5 hours. Grade: easy.

3. **Hike old Venetian cobbled paths leading to pre-industrial monuments**

Chora – Sineti – Dipotamata – Kochilou – Korthi bay

Starting from the Chora, follow the ancient path connecting the two old medieval castles of the island leading to the bay of Korthi. This route used to be the central agricultural and commercial avenue for southeastern Andros until 1950. Follow a well preserved stoned path to the mountainous village of Sineti. After exploring the village, continue towards the small river of Dipotamata and cross a long valley of extreme natural beauty and environmental interest.

The unspoilt natural environment offers shelter to a variety of animals and birds... as well as plants, such as oaks, ivies, fig trees and various herbs. 22 watermills which survive along the entire gorge. The old path leads to Kochilou, a traditional seamen's village. Take the picturesque downhill cobbled footpath and end your walk at Korthi bay.

Walking time: 4.5 hours. Actual walking: 6 hours. Grade: easy.

4. **Hike along the protected Achla river and reach unspoilt beach**

Vourkoti village – st. Nicolaos Monastery – river Achla – Achla beach

Start from an authentic rural village built at 620m altitude, Vourkoti village. Walk towards a deep river, cross it using an old stone footbridge and reach St. Nicolaos Monastery where you can stop for a visit and a rest. Follow an impressive agricultural path bordered by plane trees, stretching parallel to the river Achla, towards the homonymous rare and officially protected wetland. Your walk will end at the unspoilt beach of Achla, where the river estuary forms a small lagoon which constitutes a heaven for both migrant and resident birds. Its pebble beach, dunes, caves, crystal clear waters make it an ideal place for you to rest, swim and have a picnic.

Walking time: 5 hours. Actual walking: 7 hours. Grade: easy to moderate.

➤ **Recommended hard copy & digital maps:**

1. Anavasi hard copy or digital version: <http://www.anavasi.gr/search.php?lang=en>
2. <http://www.androsroutes.gr>

The “unknown” Cycladic island of Tinos

Tinos is known by locals for its numerous deserted ancient paths and trails, unique architecture of pigeon houses, windmills and countless churches, stone walls, fountains, giant rocks with strange shapes... You will walk through villages untouched by time... you will observe the unique flora and fauna of this mountainous island...



[Read about our walking holiday in Tinos...](#)

➤ **Recommended routes:**

1. **Hike through traditional villages towards incredible 'lunar' Volax**
Steni – Dyo Choria – Triandaros – Arnados – Tzadros – Kehros – Falatados

Start from the picturesque village of Steni and pass through some of the most beautiful villages of Tinos. Walk up to Dyo Choria, and then continue your exploration around the villages of Triandaros, Arnados, Tzadros, Kehros and Falatados. These villages will impress you with their medieval air, architecture and lovely views of the southern part of the island and the neighboring Cycladic islands. It's hard to choose from the many spots where to stop to rest, relax and have a snack.

Continue your walk towards an area of outstanding natural beauty towards the village of Volax. Large, almost perfectly round grey rocks dot the plateau and slopes around Volax, creating a stunning sight and unique geological phenomenon. Its unique surrounding of big round rocks gives the whole landscape a lunar appearance.

Walking time: 3,5 hours hours. Actual walking with lunch and stops: 6 hours.
Grade: easy.

2. **Hike to the granite work of Xombourgo to admire the impressive views**
Tarampados – Kambos – Loutra – Koumaros

Starting from the picturesque, medieval village of Tarampados, explore the village and the surrounding 20 well-preserved pigeon houses, some of which are truly works of art. Follow a network of paved paths and dirt roads in one of

the fertile valleys of the island, across farming landscapes and olive groves, towards the villages of Kambos, Loutra and Koumaros.

Continue your walk towards Xombourgo, a huge granite mountain 640m high, passing through the ruins of the Venetian castle of St. Helen, which used to be very powerful and protected the island from enemies and pirates. Walk to the top to admire the impressive views.

Walking time: 3,5 hours hours. Actual walking with lunch and stops: 6 hours.
Grade: easy.

3. **Cross fertile valley to reach remote lighthouse & solitary beach**

Falatados – Livadha valley – Livadha beach – lighthouse

Begin your walking adventure from the traditional settlement of Falatados. Take the ancient stone-paved path that crosses the Livadha valley, follow a riverbed characterized by its rich vegetation, mainly of plane and oak trees. There are remains of old water-mills and picturesque chapels along the path where we can stop to rest. Reach the solitary beach of Livadha which stands apart because of its sculpture-like rocks and fine sand. Perfect place for relaxing, swimming and a picnic.

Continue your walk towards the lighthouse on the northeastern tip of Tinos where you will have the chance to admire the magnificent views to the deep blue of the Aegean sea and surrounding Cycladic islands.

Walking time: 4 hours. Actual walking time: 6 hours. Grade: moderate.

4. **Walk across remote land to the 'marble' village of Tinos**

Platia – Karabousa – Ag. Paraskevi – Panormos bay – Planitis – Pyrgos

Start your hike from the small, well-preserved village of Platia and follow a not so widely known but marked path towards the remains of the village of Karabousa. Continue to explore this wild land till you reach the Church of Ag. Paraskevi to observe the Saint's miraculous icon and stop for a snack and a rest. Descend towards the beautiful bay of Panormos and walk along the coast to the beaches of Voula, Aghia Thalasa, Kavalorko towards the island Planitis.

The hike will end with a visit to the biggest "marble" village of Tinos, Pyrgos. Apart from its spectacular views you will admire plenty of marble adornments on houses, churches and in the pretty town square, as this village has a long tradition of carving and is home to many marble artists. The lovely Platanos square awaits for you to enjoy a delicious meal prepared with local ingredients!

Walking time: 2,5 hours. Actual walking time: 4,5 hours. Grade: easy to moderate.

➤ **Recommended hard copy & digital maps:**

1. Anavasi hard copy or digital version: <http://www.anavasi.gr/search.php?lang=en>
2. <http://www.cycladen.be/TinosEng.htm>

Sifnos, the gem of the Cyclades

Traditional villages of snow-white houses with traditional chimneys made of potter's clay, 365 small churches with blue domes, a Venetian castle, ancient ruins, an inexhaustible variety of beautiful hiking trails which lead to tranquil sandy beaches, delicious local food and wine...

Read about our [walking holiday in Sifnos...](#)



➤ Recommended routes:

1. **Walk untouched & peaceful parts towards isolated beach**

Apollonia – Ag. Marina – Ag. Konstantinos – Panayia Toso Nero – Apollonia

Hike around the highest hill of the monastery of Profitis Ilias passing the church of Ag. Marina, Ag. Konstantinos and Panayia Toso Nero reaching the isolated little pebble beach of Vlasi. Time for a swim at its crystal clear waters. During the walk you'll enjoy magnificent panoramic views of the whole island and the surrounding islands of the Cyclades.

Walking time: 4,5 hours. Actual walking: 7 hours. Grade: Moderate.

2. **Circular walk to admire picturesque villages with stunning views**

Apollonia – Kato Petali – Kastro – Panayia Poulati – Artemonas – Ano Petali - Apollonia

Follow the beautiful trail from Apollonia towards the Kastro reservation. The beautifully paved path is a flight of stairs – zigzags between fields with olive trees, bee hives and some pigeon towers. You'll pass from the pretty village of Kato Petali and within the hour you'll reach Kastro, one of the most picturesque villages and the most important from an archeological point of view. The village will impress you as it keeps its fortification medieval (Venetian) structural form unalterable. After you explore the village continue along the coast towards the church of Panayia Poulati. Walk uphill towards the village of Artemonas with its neoclassical mansions and architecture and stroll towards the picturesque village of Ano Petali and finally Apollonia.

Walking time: 2,5 hours. Actual walking time: 4 hours. Grade: easy to moderate.

3. **Archeological tour to the Mycenaean citadel of Ag. Andreas**

Apollonia – Katavati - Monastery of Fyrogia - Ag. Andreas – Ag. Nikolas T'Aerina - Vathy

Take the path from Apollonia towards the reservation of Katavati and the monastery of Fyrogia and the hill of Agios Andreas to admire the most important archaeological site of Sifnos, the Mycenaean citadel of Ag. Andreas

while enjoying the panoramic view over the villages of Sifnos and the nearby islands.

Continue your hike towards the magnificent monastery of Agios Nikolas T'Aerina, an ideal place to stop for a rest, a snack or to admire the view. A beautiful path will lead you to the long beach of Vathy where you can swim and watch the colorful sunset.

Walking time: 3,5 hours. Actual walking time: 5 hours. Grade: easy to moderate.

4. **Walk through a Natura 2000 area to the loneliest part of Sifnos**
Vathy – Fikiada bay – Platy Yialos

Fikiada is ranked amongst the islands' nicest beaches and can only be reached on foot or by boat. Start the hike from the bay of Vathy and walk for a little bit more than an hour through a Natura 2000 area enjoying an environment of extreme beauty. You can have lunch and swim at the bays' secluded, turquoise waters. From Foikiada take the trail towards another magnificent bay and beach, Platy Yalos.

Walking time: 2,5 hours. Actual walking time: 5 hours. Grade: moderate.

➤ **Recommended hard copy & digital maps:**

- Anavasi hard copy or digital version: <http://www.anavasi.gr/search.php?lang=en>
- <http://www.sifnostrails.com>

Naxos, the richest and most multifaceted island

You will experience lofty mountains, fertile valleys, plateaus, springs, rivers, caves, picturesque villages, Byzantine chapels, Venetian towers, Kouros statues, ancient sites, endemic wildlife, unique customs and cultural happenings... as well the longest sandy beaches in the Aegean...

Read about [our walking holiday in Naxos...](#)



➤ **Recommended routes:**

1. **Circular walk around Naxos' most traditional villages**
Apiranthos – Mt. Fanari – Moni – Kaloxylos – Chalki

This hike starts from the beautiful village of Apiranthos built at the foot of Mt. Fanari, with its venetian towers, pretty old two-story houses, marble paved

alleys with arches and picturesque squares. While we have a drink we'll introduce you to the unique biodiversity of the Aegean and the islands of the Cyclades that will definitely make your walks more interesting! We'll then take the trail to the summit of Fanari and admire the panoramic view of the Cycladic islands.

The path continues through impressive landscapes and rock formations towards the villages of Kaloxylos. Kaloxylos is one of Naxos most picturesque villages, situated in an area lush with olive, plane and oak trees, well-known for its pretty houses and especially for the rare flowers in their courtyards. Next stop the picturesque village of Chalki, where you can end the day with a delicious supper.

Walking time: 3,15 hours. Actual walking time: 5 hours. Grade: moderate.

2. **Walk to the top of Mt. Zas, the highest peak of the Cyclades**

Filoti – Ag. Marina – peak of Mt. Zas – cave of Zas – source of Arion - Filoti or vice versa

Start the walk from the village of Filoti and walk the highest peak of the Cyclades, Mount Zas, which stands at an impressive 1,004m. The magnificent Zas mountain is named after Greek God Zeus, the father of all the other Gods, who supposedly spent his early life on Naxos. On clear days, you can see all the Cycladic islands that surround Naxos. On the way back explore the biggest cave on the island which will impress you with its stalagmite structures. Continue the famous water source of Argion, which is an ideal spot for a picnic and enjoying the peace and quiet of nature.

Walking time: 3,5 hours. Actual walking time: 5 hours. Grade: moderate.

3. **Ancient path crossing inland towards a solitary beach**

Village of Koronos – bay of Lionas

Take your time to explore the rustic, tranquil village of Koronos. The path starts from the village and continues through a very remote area of the island, with stunning nature and mountain views. The path will lead us to the beautiful beach of Lionas with its multicoloured pebbles. Reward yourselves with a refreshing swim at its crystal clear waters followed by a delicious supper at one of our favourite fish taverns of the island.

Walking time: 2,5 hours. Actual walking time: 4 hours. Grade: easy.

4. **Ancient trail through picturesque villages & agricultural land ending at Demetra's ancient temple**

Chalki – Tsikalario – Chimaros – Damalas – Santri – temple of Demetra

Chalki is a beautiful village with unique architecture such as tiled roofs, balconies and yards, very different from the typical Cycladic style. Take the beautiful paved path to the outskirts of Halki towards the settlement of Tsikalario. At the small square with the little church and washing area for the locals, you turn towards the settlement of Chimaros. Chimaros means stream and is named after the river that crosses the village in winter/sprint. Beautiful landscapes, agricultural farms, towers and flora on the path towards Sangri. From Ano Sangri you can reach the ruins of the Temple of Demeter, one of the

most interesting archaeological monuments on the island which was made of marble and dates back to 530 B.C.

Walking time: 2,5 hours. Actual walking time: 4 hours. Grade: easy.

➤ **Recommended hard copy & digital maps:**

1. Anavasi hard copy or digital version: <http://www.anavasi.gr/search.php?lang=en>
2. <http://www.cycladen.be/NaxosEng.htm>

Small Cyclades: a taste of real Greece

South of Naxos there is a group of small islands called the Small Cyclades; Amorgos, Iraklia, Schinoussa, Pano & Kato Koufonissi and Donoussa. Until recently, these islands were very isolated so they still remain unspoilt... a small heaven of peace, Greek hospitality and traditional culture.

Read about our [walking holiday in the Small Cyclades...](#)



➤ **Recommended routes:**

1. **Circular ancient path connecting unspoilt villages in Amorgos**
Aegiali - Langada - Ag. Theologos - Tholaria - Aegiali

The most beautiful place to stay is the stunning bay of Aegiali known for its long sandy beaches, picturesque fishing port and four traditional villages built at the top of the hills surrounding the bay. Start from the fishing port and take the road that leads to the village of Langada. At the first double crossing, go right,, and after 50 metres you find the old trail to Langada off the left, indicated by a wooden sign. This circular ancient path is covered with various endemic and local herbs and flowers and will take you to Langada, Stroubos, Ag. Theologos monastery, the village of Tholaria and finally back to Aegiali bay.

Walking time: 3 hours. Actual walking time: 5 hours. Grade: easy.

2. **Walk along the spine of Amorgos**
Chora - Monastery of Hozoviotissa - Asfodilitis - Aegiali

Start your hike from one of the most scenic "choras" in the Aegean, the Chora of Amorgos. Walk its narrow streets and admire its numerous chapels, windmills, castle, picturesque white washed houses. Take the trail towards the famous monastery of Hozoviotissa, built to protect a virgin Mary icon believed

to have arrived from Palestine. Built into the face of a cliff, it provides a breathtaking view of the sparkling deep blue waters of the Aegean Sea. It is, with no doubt, the pride of Amorgos. Walk along the spine of the island, pass medieval hotels, deserted villages, breathtaking landscapes till you reach the bay of Aegiali... our favourite walk in the island.

Walking time: 4 hours. Actual walking time: 6 hours. Grade: easy to moderate.

3. **Walk and explore the unspoilt island of Iraklia**

Panagia - Papas - Profitis Iloas - Marousou - Panagia - Agios Georgios

Iraklia is the most unspoilt island of the Small Cyclades. It has a population of 80 people who are known for their hospitality. Start the walk from the main village of Panayia and hike to the highest peak of the island, Papas. Descend towards Moni Profitis Ilias and then turn right towards cape Marousou where you can observe the high cliffs, one of the few places that the Griffon vulture lives and breeds. Return to the main village where you can enjoy home made food at Maria's place.

Walking time: 2 hours. Actual walking time: 3 hours. Grade: easy.

4. **Hike to the largest unspoilt cave of the Cyclades**

Agios Georgios - cave of Agios Ioannis - Charakas - Vourkaria - Agios Georgios

Take the ancient path that crosses the island inland, passes the deserted village of Ag. Athanasios till you reach the largest cave in the Cyclades, Ag. Ioannis cave. You'll be surprised by the stalactite formations inside. After exploring the cave continue towards cape of Charakas and if you wish descend to the solitary beach of Alimia for a swim and snorkle around a 2nd World War hydroplane that lies at the bottom of the bay. Return taking the coastal path towards Vourkaria bay and the little fishing port of Ag. Georgios.

Walking time: 4 hours. Actual walking time: 7 hours. Grade: moderate.

➤ **Recommended hard copy & digital maps:**

- Anavasi hard copy or digital version: <http://www.anavasi.gr/search.php?lang=en>
- <http://www.cycladen.be/IntroductionEng.htm>

Santorini, the most sought after place for a romantic getaway in Greece!

Santorini will take your breath away with its white Cycladic houses lining the cliff tops, the amazing views to the Caldera and Nea Kameni (the volcano), the spectacular sunsets, the black and red beaches... Few places in the world



combine such amazing sceneries, beautiful beaches, ancient cities, gastronomical food, fabulous wine... and an active volcano!

Read about our [walking holiday in Santorini...](#)

➤ **Recommended routes:**

1. **Fira to Oia with incredible views of the Caldera**

Fira - caldera - Oia

Take the trail that starts from the picturesque port of Fira and follows the rim of the caldera to Oia, passing the picturesque villages of Firostefani and Imerovigli. This hike is actually a spectacular, cliff-top walk with incredible views of the caldera, the volcano and the deep blue of the Aegean sea. This is the view that Santorini is so famous about and you will find out that you cannot get enough of it. Plan the walk so you reach Oia on time to watch the world famous sunset.

Walking time: 2.5 hours. Actual walking time: 4 hours. Grade: easy.

2. **Hike to the summit of Profitis Ilias, ancient Thera and Perissa beach**

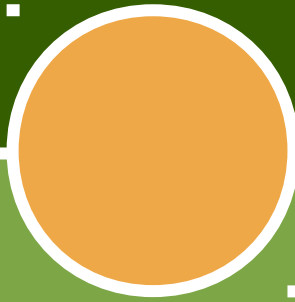
Emborio - Profitis Ilias – ancient Thera – Perissa

Start the hike from the traditional reservation of Emborio. The trail looks like a gorge as it goes up in between two hills and underneath two arches. As you admire the beautiful vineyards on the slopes towards Akrotiri you will soon reach the 567m summit of Profitis Ilias. Continue your hike through a magnificent mountainous landscape from Profitis Ilias towards ancient Thera, a must see! The excavations show remnants of houses, a small theatre, Roman baths, cisterns, a holy road e.t.c., dated from the 9th century AD until the Roman time. Finally take the path leading to the beach of Perissa.

Walking time: 2.5 hours. Actual walking time: 4 hours. Grade: moderate.

➤ **Recommended hard copy & digital maps:**

- Anavasi hard copy or digital version: <http://www.anavasi.gr/search.php?lang=en>
- <http://www.cycladen.be/SantoriniEng.htm>



PART 4

Typical Greek island culture

Typical Greek island culture

Contemporary Greek culture and traditions are very rich and diverse, reflecting Greece's location at the crossing point where the West meets the East and the country's great and turbulent history. Traditions, religion, music, language, food and drinks are the pillars of contemporary **Greek culture** and lifestyle, making the country an attraction point for visitors from all over the world.



Greeks really do live for the moment. They're very proud and passionate people who are keen to enjoy life, to spend time with friends and family. Although the country is in financial difficulty you will be surprised by their generosity and good nature. In the smaller islands, communities are small and they support each other. Make an effort to communicate with local people and get to know them. Have a look at our dictionary below - you'll find it very useful!

Most customs and traditions have a religious character (Christian Orthodox) and often their routes can be found in paganism. The most important are the carnival in February, Clean Monday on 14 March, Easter on 30 April, Greek Independence Day on the 25th March, the Ohi Day in the 28th of October and various local festivals that take place throughout the summer, especially in August which vary from island to island. Do a little bit research before you arrive or ask upon arrival for any celebration or festival. Don't miss it!

The Greeks are very superstitious, they believe a lot in religion but also in supernatural or paranormal phenomenon which can vary from island to island or even from village to village. The most common superstition is the Evil Eye (Mati).

Greeks as a whole are extremely proud of their history, their cultural heritage and their contribution to literature, art, philosophy and politics. They speak with intense passion of their country as the cradle of European civilization.



➤ **Tips for responsible travelers:**

- ✓ **Respect local customs and culture.** For example, don't wear a mini skirt to visit an Orthodox temple, they won't find it sexy! Or don't ridicule a local's behavior and customs even if they look funny to you. Behave to the locals as you would like a foreign visitor to behave in your country.
- ✓ Observe the behavior of the locals and **try to fit in.**
- ✓ Don't expect the place and people to adapt to your habits. In order to experience a place you need to **adapt to its rhythms.**

- ✓ Accept that people have a **different** and not “wrong” or “inferior” **way of life**.
- ✓ Communicate with locals and find out what their views are on the social, environmental, and economic reality in their country and on tourism. Share your reality and exchange ideas.
- ✓ **Show sensitivity** when taking photos of people and places. Just ask first their permission.

Greek food

Food and beverages are famous all over the world for both quality and taste. Greek cuisine is often cited as an example of the healthy Mediterranean diet while sharing food and drinks with relatives and friends is one of the basic elements of the Greek culture.



The mezedes or mezes are appetizers, served before or with the main dishes. They come in small plates and the most common are:

tzatziki, small pieces of octopus served grilled, boiled or fried, dolmadakia, fried squid, small cheese or spinach pies, various local cheeses such as the saganaki or graviera or goats cheese...

Greek island cuisine incorporates fresh ingredients which are usually cultivated locally. Actually most tavern owners in the Cyclades cultivate their own vegetables, have their own animals and make their own wine and olive oil.

Seasonings and herbs like dill, oregano and sage as well as garlic and onion form an important part of all the recipes while olive oil is added to almost every dish.

➤ **Tip for walkers:**

Our **top five must try foods** (and bonus drink!) whilst you travel around the Cyclades islands:

Taramosalata – a must try anywhere in Greece and our favourite dip, refreshing, tasty, simple and gorgeous. Goes very well with squid and other fish dishes.

Goat – roasted or as a stew, the goat falls off the bone, is tender and really tasty. Plus it's organic and the best meat to have while at the islands.

Octopus stew – when cooked well is delicious!

Greek yoghurt – Creamy and rich... the fresh local honey adds that extra bit to a wonderful breakfast dish.

Baclava – sticky, gooey, honey, nuts and filo pastry – no more to say!



PART 5

Who we are,
useful information &
travelling tips

A journey that leaves “No Footprint” ...

Nofootprint eco walks specialise in small group walking holidays in selected Greek islands and the mainland. Our holidays are not just an adventure, but an ecological, cultural, culinary and learning experience!

“Nofootprint” started as an effort to introduce travellers to an alternative way of experiencing Greece away from the mainstream... How?



- ✓ By taking our guests away from the touristic areas and showing them the small, unspoilt islands of the Aegean and Ionian seas; the **“Real Greece”**!
- ✓ By giving our guests a **hands-on experience** of typical Greek daily life and a feel for the “magic” and “spirit” of our country, its people and its amazing culture.
- ✓ By **introducing** our guests through observations, photography, presentations and discussions to the **unique flora and fauna** of each area.
- ✓ By exploring frescoed monasteries, ancient ruins and medieval castles during our walks the myths and legends come alive. The historical information provided by our guides will help you **understand the culture** and the current situation in Greece...
- ✓ By introducing our guests to the most **delicious Greek dishes** and fine wine prepared by local organic ingredients...

If you wish to combine the enjoyment of adventure, originality, authenticity and get off the beaten track... you'll find the holiday you're looking for.. Check our website: www.nofootprint.gr

Group, private or self guided;

You can either join one of our groups and planned guided walking holidays or... we can work together to create a walking holiday specially for you, your family and your friends! You can choose the day you would like to start your holiday, which island or islands to walk, the length of your holiday and so on. You can also choose to go on a



self guided walking holiday.

There is no right or wrong! What is important is what suits you!

Advantages of joining a group or private guided holiday:

- ✓ A guided tour company **handles** all the **organization**. You may be too busy to plan your own holiday and conduct research on your preferred destination. Your guide will have planned everything for you so you make the most of your holiday. Transportation is also handled for you. You simply sign up for the preferred tour and show up at the designated time.
- ✓ You feel **safe** and **comfortable** exploring a foreign area as you have a local guide, someone who speaks the language and understands the culture. In some destinations safety is an issue and your tour guide helps you avoid potentially dangerous areas.
- ✓ You benefit from **inside knowledge** of a local person that you couldn't or need lots of time to acquire. Insider knowledge means that you'll experience situations that you may not have been able to if you were travelling on your own. For example, during our walking holiday in Naxos & the Small Cyclades in October, there was a wedding at the small island of Iraklia and the guide along with his guests were invited... Guides often share stories they have gained from personal experience and bits of history about places to give more depth to your experience. The company uses its knowledge of the area to schedule activities and visits during times when they aren't as busy.
- ✓ If you join a group of fellow like minded travellers you will have the chance to get to know people from other cultures and add a **social aspect** to your holiday. You also have the chance to share the experience with other people and you usually end up connecting with them and gaining good friends which last longer after the tour ends.

Advantages of self-guided tours:

- ✓ **Savings** is the main advantage of self-guided tours. Guided holidays can cost extra as there are more costs i.e. the guide's expenses and salary. Sometimes you can save on the food as they know where to take you or transportation... but in general it costs more, how much depends usually on the type of accommodation. There are more luxurious options as well as budget options.
- ✓ **Freedom** to make your own decisions and eat and sleep wherever you want to. During a self-guided tour you are more flexible and can proceed based on your mood and pace. You can decide what to do everyday and you can just change your mind and follow a different course each day.



Walking Grade

Matching the right walking grade to suit your ability and comfort level is key to your enjoyment. All our walking holidays can be adapted to be right for you!

Walks during our holidays can be challenging, moderate or leisurely or a combination of these:

- ✓ **Challenging:** If you already enjoy and are used to mountain or hill walking this will be ideal for you. You will walk more challenging tracks for around 6 hours per day including stops to rest.
- ✓ **Moderate:** This involves slightly less strenuous walking on easier to moderate slopes, tracks and paths which may be rough underfoot at times. There will be plenty of time to relax and observe the scenery. We walk for 4-6 hours per day.
- ✓ **Leisurely:** No prior walking experience and only an average fitness is needed. The day involves easier walks, mostly on well defined paths and gently slopes with no special difficulties. We walk for 2-4 hours per day including stops for relaxing, observing and resting.

What to bring with you

1. Your walking holiday kit

People booking our walking holidays in Greece often ask us for information about walking kit - here is our advice on what to wear and what to bring with you. Walking gear cannot be easily bought at the islands (only in Athens) so it is important to arrive well prepared.

Remember the famous quote: "There is no such thing as bad weather, only inappropriate clothing!"

2. Footwear

The most important thing to get right is your footwear. We recommend a strong pair of walking boots with good ankle support. These could be leather or a more modern lightweight waterproof fabric boot.

When trying them on in the store make sure you have on the right socks so that the fit is good and they are not too tight or too big, as this may lead to blisters. It is essential to "wear in" your boots before embarking on the full week's walking holiday.

An experienced walker might feel comfortable in a walking trainer. However, we recommend a boot with good ankle support. They give far greater stability on rocky, uneven or slippery trails and much greater protection against wet or muddy conditions.

3. Clothing

The best advice for clothing is to wear layers. Modern high-tech fabrics for shirts and walking trousers are windproof but also very quick drying, so if you get caught in a shower or rinse them through at night, they will be dry by morning.

- ✓ Two walking shirts & a pair of walking trousers should be sufficient for a week.
- ✓ On top of the shirt a fleece or light wool sweater will keep you warm - especially as temperatures can change swiftly according to altitude and wind chill factors.
- ✓ A good quality waterproof jacket is essential - and a hood will be useful too.
- ✓ A broad brimmed hat to shade your face from the hot sun is very important.
- ✓ Sunglasses to protect your eyes from the glare are another essential.

4. Walking Poles

Walking with or without poles is a matter of personal preference but two strong lightweight poles can greatly improve your stability and reduce wear and tear on your muscles and joints.

The best ones are made of carbon fibre but all poles should have comfortable cork handles with adjustable wrist straps. Think about how to pack your poles as they may be too long to fit in your hold luggage.

5. Day Pack

We recommend a lightweight back pack, with capacity of approximately 20 liters, to hold your water bottle, extra layers of clothing, a camera and a suncream.

The most comfortable ones sit away from your back to allow a flow of air between you and the pack. In all cases its a good idea to carry a large plastic bag to line the day pack and help to waterproof it, unless your back pack has a built-in waterproof cover.

6. Water Bottle

We recommend you use re-usable water bottles as this helps to reduce the needless waste of plastic. The water is not drinkable in the Small Cyclades or Santorini and buying plastic bottles is unavoidable. Naxos, Tinos and Anndros though have many springs where you can refill your water bottle.

- **Tip for walkers:** We recommend that you carry a minimum of 1.5 litres of water each day.

7. First Aid and Food

Always have a fully stocked first aid kit. If you join us or a guided tour, your guide will have one.

Other things to remember:

Dinners in the evening are usually relaxed and informal at local taverns.

It is always lovely to read about an area when you are travelling as this can truly bring the region to life. We have books about hiking, history and wildlife of the places we visit that you can borrow.

- **Tip for walkers:** The Greeks meet trekking with a lack of understanding. If you ask someone the way, it is better to ask the 'monopati', or you'll end up on a road.

The hikes usually lead from the mountains to the sea - so don't forget your swimming gear!

Travelling to Greece

After arrival in Greece via Athens airport, onward connection to the islands is by air or from the ports of Piraeus or Rafina by ferry. An overnight stay in Athens may be necessary. During the summer season there are also regular charter flights to Mykonos and Santorini which also have international airports and are very well connected with other islands in the Cyclades.

Ferry tickets can be booked in advance via the Internet or bought shortly before departure. During the busy month of August it is advisable to obtain tickets online for the onward journey in advance using a service such as www.ferries.gr

Ferry arrival and departure times are mostly adhered to, unless the wind and weather upset schedules. It is possible that smaller ferries may be cancelled if there is a storm. The large ferries such as the Blue Star Ferries are the last to be cancelled and they sail even with 8 beaufort. Usually the rough weather doesn't last for more than a day.

In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of fast boats which bring travellers to their destination in a short time, albeit below deck. Travelling on the open deck of a slower ferry offers wonderful delights - the wind in your face, the smell of the sea, an unfiltered view of the sparkling waves and the feeling that you are a very lucky person!

Depending on the island and the time of the year, there may - or may not - be people waiting in the harbor to offer rooms or apartments. It is easy to find good value and comfortable accommodation even last minute, upon arrival, except during the high season.

Contact our team for advice and further information at info@nofootprint.gr

For help and advice

Annie & Nikos, our dedicated team members, have acquired extensive knowledge of

the places we offer walking holidays to and built strong relationships with the local accommodation owners and other providers, meaning that you benefit from expert advice prior to your holiday.

When you contact our office, Annie or Nikos will be very happy to help you choose the walking holiday that is right for you and answer all your questions...

Call us at +30 6976 761492 or email us at info@nofootprint.gr

Walk in Greece and you will...

- ✓ explore Greece's variety of landscapes...
- ✓ enjoy stunning mountain views and dramatic coastal scenery...
- ✓ visit ruins of ancient cities and picturesque villages with white-washed houses
- ✓ come across ravishing flora and fauna...
- ✓ reach remote solitary beaches with crystal clear waters...

Whether you are an experienced hiker who is interested in challenging treks or a beginner who enjoys short hikes to admire beautiful sceneries while on holiday, you'll find what you're looking for.

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