

PLACES TO STAY

The best hotels in Greece

Acropolis-like hotels on the wild mainland to palatial suites with private pools on magical islands, these are the best hotels in Greece right now

BY RACHEL HOWARD

16 January 2024

Just when you think you know **Greece**, you'll happen upon another slice of coast, sail to another island, or stumble across yet another one of the best hotels in Greece – and your perceptions are flipped all over again. Big-hitting **Santorini** (bright-white churches topped by blue domes that melt into the sky) and **Mykonos** (dinky beach bars arranged around a Venetian harbour) get a lot of attention. The scrubbier, craggier islands of **Crete** and **Corfu**, and the smaller, more bohemian flecks of land such as Antiparos and Syros are much-loved, too. On the mainland, Athens might be steeped in history but is always pushing boundaries with clever art, restaurants and bars. And across the whole country are some of **Europe's best hotels** – from sweeping retreats for switching off to stays built into caves and low-key hangouts that put wellness at the forefront of everything. Here, Athens-raised Rachel Howard picks her favourite hotels in Greece, from her favourite island spots to the mainland must-visits.



The Wild Hotel, Mykonos

The Wild has provenance: its creators were the restaurateurs behind Interni, a **Mykonos** institution with outposts in **Athens** and Belgrade. Family patriarch Nikos Varveris also created homewares brand Moda Bagno (not bad composite skills for a hotel). When they were small, Varveris would bring his children to jump off cliffs encasing a scoop of sand on Mykonos' peaceful southwestern coast. Now, grown-up Philip and Alex have created The Wild here. This laidback idyll of 40 rooms and suites, some with plunge pools (and a two-bedroom pool villa) opened on the cusp of the pandemic. Sofia Aperi and Matina Karava's architecture made use of local stones and woods. Polished-concrete spaces are softened with handcrafted lampshades and kilims. The suites resemble a higgledy chora – organic and rustic yet sleek. They tumble down to a curvy cliff-top infinity pool, and a small spa, bar and restaurant area. A stone staircase winds down to the **beach**.

The Wild eschews the raucousness of Mykonos. Instead, the sons followed the template and memory of their family home: a convivial, aesthetic space filled with friends with a busy kitchen. A slow-food philosophy is embraced, with family recipes and local produce at Taverna, a simulacrum of a village cafe, with its Myconian cheeses, crisp pies, meats and catches of the day. Pine-framed multi-level Raw, overlooking the beach, lantern-lit by night, is for botanical cocktails, sakes and Greek vintners. Food here speaks to demanding palates, with a Greek-Japanese plant-and-paleo-tilted menu by Kazouaki Sitamori. Rib-eye steaks and aubergines; Cycladic urchins and salmon roe; spicy tuna with black sesame and a vegan futomaki.

The Wild is built for eating beautifully, spa moments, long, poolside coffees, and beach lounging. This year they offer a rekitted sailing boat for trips to secluded swim spots off-island. Kick back and relax. The party is elsewhere. *Lydia Bell*

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