



CYCLADES 1 WEEK

Dazzling white villages, golden beaches and clear azure water are just the start of what these islands have to offer.

Within easy reach of Athens, these are the Aegean's most precious gems. Ancient Greek geographers gave this unique cluster of islands the name Cyclades because they saw that they formed a circle (kyklos) of sorts around the sacred island of Delos. According to myth, the islands were the debris that remained after a battle between giants. In reality, they resulted from colossal geological events like earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.

Their colours are blue and white like the Greek flag. The islands come in all sizes and, though the ingredients are the same – incomparable light, translucent water, heavenly beaches, lustrous white buildings and bare rock, each one has its own distinct character. The group's stars, Mykonos and Santorini, need no introduction but the lesser-known islands, big and small, are just as rewarding. For starters, try aristocratic Syros, cosmopolitan Paros, the sculptors' paradise of Tinos, bountiful Naxos, exotic Milos and historic Delos, not to mention the 'hidden gems' that adorn the Aegean, such as Tzia/Kea, Kythnos, Sifnos, Serifos, Amorgos, Sikinos, Anafi and Folegandros. Whether you're travelling with your family, friends or sweetheart, you're bound to find your summer paradise in the sun in the Cyclades.

Beaches of indescribable beauty in the Cyclades

What's your idea of the perfect beach? Green-blue water and white sand? Beach bars and water sports? Framed by rocks for snorkelling and scuba diving? Is a secret Aegean cove accessible only on foot or by boat? No matter what your ideal is, you'll find it in the Cyclades. First stop: Mykonos with its extra golden sand, turquoise water and 5-star facilities. Paradise, Super Paradise, Psarou and Elia, all rank in the top 10 beaches worldwide.

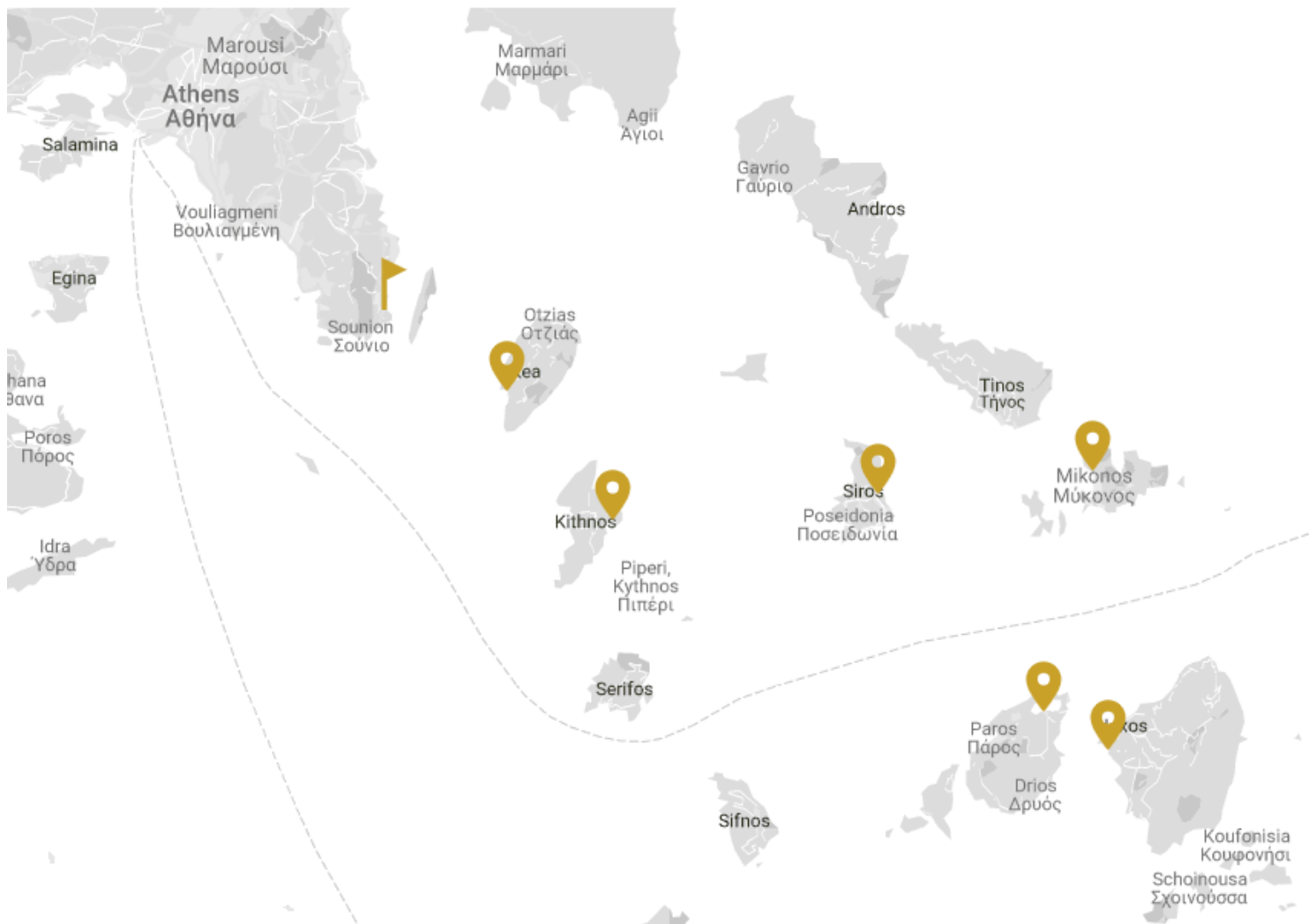
Next comes volcanic Milos, with the biggest range of colours and rock formations, such as at Sarakiniko and Kleftiko, and Santorini's black and red beaches like Kamari, Perissa and Perivolo that reveal the wild beauty of the Cyclades. Small Serifos is ringed with beaches, while rugged Amorgos can claim the 'Big Blue' at Agia Anna beach, where Luc Besson shot his seminal movie about testing the limits of man. Andros' 'secret' sandy beaches, like Ahla and Grias to Pidima, win rave reviews for being extra photogenic, as does Tinos for the round boulders at Livada and the enormous dune at Pachia Ammos (Fat Sand). For getting away from it all, both tiny Polyaigos, between Kimolos and Milos, and the Lesser Cyclades, near Naxos, offer unexplored destinations of raw beauty, for those who come by yacht.

Time for a painless history lesson

Thousands of years of civilisation evolved here in the Cyclades, much of it visible in local archaeological sites and museums. You'll see its mystique encapsulated on the whole island of Delos and within Santorini's Akrotiri, the Minoan Pompei. It is also present in the two colossal horizontal statues lying on Naxos and in Kea's ancient Karthaia. Virtually every island has at least one ancient ruin. While beautiful, typically Cycladic churches exist on every island, the most visited are the 19th century Panagia on Tinos, the early Byzantine Ekatonrapyliani on Paros, and the 11th-century Hozoviotissa monastery on Amorgos. The best museums to visit are Santorini's Prehistoric Thera Museum; Andros' Contemporary Art and Archaeology Museum; the Industrial Museum at Syros' Ermoupoli; Amorgos' Archaeology Museum; Milos' museums of Mining and Archaeology, with a copy of the famous Venus de Milo; Tinos' Museum of Marble Crafts at Pyrgos and the Archaeology and Venetian museums on Naxos.

Action against a Cycladic backdrop

Known for the iconic blues and whites of their villages and their stunning beaches, the Cycladic islands also deserve worldwide renown for what their crystalline waters and rugged shorelines offer to sailors and sea lovers. Are you looking for action on the water? From the private coves of the Lesser Cyclades to wind and kite-surfing on Paros, and fun-filled watersports, there are options for everyone. On land, discover the well-marked hiking trails that exist on all the islands, especially Naxos, Tinos, Amorgos, Syros and Andros. They cross rugged landscapes made all the more enchanting by castles, chapels, ruined towers and temples shrouded in the mysteries of the ages.



Gourmet treats and superior wines

Every island specialises in a local treat with the distinctive flavour of the Aegean. Santorini's volcanic soil produces exceptional wines and extra delicious small tomatoes, capers, white aubergines, grown without water. On the other islands, look for wonderful cheeses like spicy kopanisti and xinotyro on Mykonos, arseniko on Naxos, San Michali on Tinos, Paros and Syros. The rich omelette called frouitalia on Tinos and Andros, sausages and cured pork fillet (louza) on Mykonos and Tinos, clay-pot chickpeas on Sifnos, and sweets like pasteli (sesame bars) and amygdalota (crushed almond shortbread) on all the islands. All the islands also distil their own versions of firewater but Tinos' raki is thought to be more refined and lighter, while on Amorgos they drink rakomelo, raki mixed with honey.



Starting Point	Swim / Stop	End Point	NM	Marina / Anchorage
Lavrion		Kea (Koundouros)	14nm	No / Yes
Kea		Syros (Ermoupoli)	42nm	Yes / No
Syros	Grammata	Mykonos (Tourlos)	22nm	Yes / No
Mykonos	Delos	Naxos (Agia Anna)	26nm	No / Yes
Naxos	Naxos town	Paros (Naousa)	12nm	Yes / Yes
Paros	Kolimpithres	Kythnos (Agios Ioannis)	42nm	No / Yes
Kythnos	Kolona beach	Lavrion Olympic marine	36nm	

The most significant sights in the Cyclades

- Santorini: Santorini's Fira and Oia at sunset and the majesty of the caldera.
- Mykonos: Cosmopolitan Mykonos, with its windmills and wave-lashed Little Venice
- Syros: Stately Ermoupoli on Syros, one of the most regal settlements in the Cyclades.
- Andros: The shipowners' neoclassical Andros town.
- Serifos: The steep cubist Hora of Serifos.
- Milos: Milos' Plaka with its castle and old churches.
- Tinos: The Volax plateau on Tinos with its giant granite boulders.
- Amorgos: The unspoilt villages of Tholaria and Langada on Amorgos.
- Paros: The little port of Naoussa on Paros and the island's mountain villages like Lefkes, Marpissa and Prodomos.