

Rhodes Scholar

This Greek island is a stunner for all the right reasons, writes Nathalie Craig

Rhodes has a winning combination of ancient history and modern style, pristine beaches and soaring mountains, and all within its compact size of 540 square miles.

One weekend would give you time to circumnavigate this incredible Greek island by car, but a week or more allows time to savour the treasures to be found there. We have hand-picked some of the best things to see, taste and explore during a stay.

SEE: MEDIEVAL FARE

At the top of the island sits Rhodes Old Town, constructed by the Knights of the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, who occupied the island from 1309 to 1523. Behind its impressive medieval walls is a labyrinth of ancient streets. Wandering this tangle of beautifully preserved paths is a thrill in itself, and don't worry if you get lost – it's all part of the fun.

When exploring this Unesco World Heritage Site, there are many monuments and museums to visit. The Palace of the Grand Masters is not to be missed. The structure is made up of several towers, pebble mosaic floors and antiques. It has more than 150 rooms, with around 20 open to tourists.

Another must-see attraction is the town of Lindos, commonly referred to as 'the jewel of Rhodes'. This picture-perfect town is made up of traditional white-washed houses lining the hillsides down towards turquoise [→](#)

→ waters. Cars cannot enter this medieval village so tourists must walk in on foot or ride in by donkey.

One of the main attractions in Lindos is its Acropolis, which sits proudly above the town. It's a steep but worthwhile 10-minute walk to the top where you can see the remains of the ancient Temple of Athena and a 20-column promenade. Entry is €12, but the fee goes towards maintaining the site and keeping it open. The views up here are some of the best on the island.

Back down in the centre of town there are rooftop bars, tavernas and gift shops as well as three pristine beaches.



PICTURE: SHUTTERSTOCK

ABOVE: Panormitis Monastery

LEFT: Lindos

but it's worth doing so to take a two-hour ferry trip to the nearby island of Symi.

It's easy to fall for Symi before you've even left the boat as you pull up at the island's crystal-clear harbour framed by tiers of pastel-coloured houses. The charm of Symi is its simplicity. The island has managed to avoid mass tourism and high-rise hotels,

giving it an unspoiled ambience. Ferries arrive in the island's main port of Yialos where you can find a stretch of cafes and shops. After strolling along this waterfront promenade you can rent a scooter for the day or jump on board the local bus (€1.50) to go sightseeing.

Less than 10 minutes on the bus will get you to the small coastal village of Pedi, where a 15-minute walk down a well-marked route leads you to the hidden oasis of St Nicholas Beach, though there is a water taxi service for those who like to arrive in style. Here dramatic, rocky mountains give way to azure water. A private stretch of sunbeds and umbrellas can be hired for €3.50, while a beach taverna offers traditional Greek dishes and drinks.

The food in Symi is fresh and delicious, especially the assortment of sublime seafood,

including its famously tasty, tiny shrimps. Top picks for a seafood feast include Taverna To Spitiko and Tholos in the main port.

Another must-see is the 18th-century Venetian-styled Panormitis Monastery on the island's southern tip. It's well worth a tour of this striking structure, said to be built on the site of an ancient temple dedicated to Apollo and boasting the world's highest baroque bell tower.

Do Something Different has Symi Island tours from Rhodes from £44 per adult and £22 per child. The package includes a morning visit to the main port and lunch, before setting sail for Panormitis to visit the monastery, then returning to Rhodes.

For those that have time, however, it's worth staying overnight in Symi and enjoying the peace that washes over this small island once the day-trippers have departed. [TW](#)



ASK THE EXPERT

Chara Florou, guest relations officer, Amilia Mare, Rhodes
 "Rhodes is easy to access from the UK with plenty of flights each week on a range of airlines, and it's the largest of the Dodecanese islands, with an abundance of beaches, valleys and ancient history. The Old Town's fortified walls, castle, pathways and elegant stone mansions make it one of the best-preserved medieval towns in Europe. We also have the sweetest fresh orange juice, plus great cafes, restaurants, bars and a lively nightlife."

TASTE: HOME COMFORTS

Traditional, family-owned tavernas cook up some of the best Greek cuisine in Rhodes.

Venture into the island's mountainous interior to find quaint tavernas like To Limeri Tou Listi in the village of Profilia. Sit on its terrace and enjoy expansive views of the mountains while tasting plates of mezze such as rice-stuffed vine leaves and pan-seared cheeses followed by slow-cooked meats. Their melt-in-mouth baby goat with bulgur is fabulous. And if the breeze starts to pick up, you'll also find warm Greek hospitality here too, with blankets handed



Lindos, known as the jewel of Rhodes, is a picture-perfect town with traditional white-washed houses lining the hillsides

BELOW: Aldemar Amilia Mare

out to patrons feeling the cold on the deck in the cooler months.

Another quality taverna to experience is Koukos in Rhodes Town, where stark white walls form a beautiful contrast against the floral roof terrace. The cafe is famous for its mouth-watering home-made Greek pies from the on-site bakery, though it has an extensive menu offering authentic Rhodian cuisine.

A taste of the island can also be found at your accommodation. Aldemar Resorts' five-star Amilia Mare resort in Kalithea, for example, offers its all-inclusive guests a special Greek-themed evening meal, complete with blue and white decor and live music.

First Choice offers a seven-night all-inclusive package at Amilia Mare Resort, including flights from Stansted and transfers, from £560 based on a May 9, 2018, departure.

EXPLORE: SAIL AWAY

It may seem counter-intuitive to leave the island paradise of Rhodes behind during your stay,



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Paphos, Cyprus

As holidaymakers increasingly seek to combine relaxation and leisure time with wellness and inner balance, the latest member to join the family of Louis Hotels is Louis Paphos Breeze, a sanctuary for body and mind. Located on the picturesque coast of Chloraka just north of the town centre of Pafos and surrounded by greenery, this is an Ultra All-Inclusive Resort for those who want it all: a holiday for adults and children, a gastronomic experience, and an escape from everyday life to relax and recharge.



