

Grown-up Greece

Family holidays in the Med are all well and good, but sometimes the prospect of screaming children, tumbling waterslides and towels on sunbeds at 7am isn't quite what your clients are after.

If that's the case, and you've got a couple or group looking for an adult-only getaway without venturing too far afield, suggest Greece.

Cities steeped in history, secluded islands, stunning hikes, world-renowned parties and a plethora of 18-and-over resorts combine to create the perfect kid-free break. Whether it's a beach holiday, active getaway, culinary adventure or cultural expedition they're after, Greece is likely to have the answer.

ADULT-ONLY RESORTS

For clients seeking a complete break from family resorts, look to the likes of Rhodes, Crete, Kos

and Santorini, where you'll find a handful of hotels dedicated to all things adult.

Among those worthy of recommendation is the new luxury property Lindos Blu in Rhodes, built in the style of an amphitheatre on a hill overlooking the Med. It's especially good for active travellers, according to Travel 2's Lauren Ross, with water sports, diving, tennis, horse riding, hiking and cycling available. But it's also worth highlighting to foodies, as its Five Senses Art Kouzina restaurant focuses on innovative 'art gastronomy' dishes.

Over in Zante, Classic Collection Holidays has added the adult-only, boutique-style Zante Maris Suites, which opened this month in the quaint, quintessentially Greek resort of Tsilivi. Surrounded by olive groves on a hilltop overlooking the Ionian Sea, it has just 24



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suites. Zante Town is easily accessible for those after a spot of culture, so it's a good suggestion for older couples wanting a secluded retreat away from the hustle and bustle.

If a buzzy atmosphere is what your clients are looking for though, suggest the village of Laganas. Jet2holidays recommends the three-star-plus, adult-only Agrilia Hotel for groups of youngsters looking to live it up in the area without

blowing their drinks budget on accommodation. Set just outside the main resort, it's low-key, good value and modern, with a pool bar and occasional evening entertainment.

At the other end of the budget scale, Olympic Holidays recommends the adult-only Diamond Deluxe Hotel in Kos. This new resort is ultra-stylish - all glass stairways, marble sculptures, Amazonian flowers and ornate chandeliers - and well located, with a secluded beachfront setting, making it a honeymoon haven.

And if it's romance that clients are looking for, you can't go wrong with Santorini and its whitewashed houses, iconic red beach and caldera views. Suggest Sun Rocks Hotel for a five-star, couple-friendly stay surrounded by Cycladic architecture, vaulted ceilings and expansive verandas above the sparkling blue



Looking for an adult-only getaway? Head to Greece, writes Laura French

@laurafrench121

Sani Resort, Halkidiki



LEFT: Zante Maris Suites

RIGHT: Sun Rocks Hotel

BELOW: Mykonos



➔ Aegean – ideal for watching the sky transform when dusk hits.

BRANCHING OUT

Adult-only holidays don't only have to mean the exclusive, over-18 retreats though. If clients don't mind sharing the pool with older families, suggest Sani Dunes, which is set to open in Halkidiki in June with a new concept for the brand.

Targeted at 'grown-up' families and couples (it's open to over-12s), the hotel will feature a spa, bar, private beach, several pools and three restaurants, including Fresco, headed up by Michelin-starred Italian chef Ettore Botrini. It's all set close enough to the buzzing Sani Marina to warrant an evening's wander, and there's a handy teens' club for parents who do come with the kids and crave a bit of time alone.

If choosing just one island is proving too much, suggest combining more than one in a single trip. G Adventures' new eight-day, Sailing Greece – Mykonos to Santorini trip is a good option for those wanting to explore more than the mainstream sights. Guests will



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sail from Mykonos to Santorini via untouched Cyclades islands – likely stops include Naxos, Paros and Sifnos – stopping for hikes, snorkelling and down-time along the way.

Those more swayed by the prospect of a bigger ship can try Celestyal Cruises, which offers a range of itineraries in the region including the seven-day Idyllic Aegean from Mykonos via Samos, Milos, Syros, Kos, Ios and Athens, complete with dance classes and Greek cookery sessions.

GETTING ACTIVE

Water sports and activities might be a big seller with teens, but they can also draw in a grown-up crowd.

Neilson is opening the 53-room adult-only Buca Beachclub this summer, next to its Messini resort. Guests will be able to get involved in the usual activities next door – including tennis, sailing, mountain biking and windsurfing – while enjoying adult-only activities such as yoga back at base camp.

In a similar vein, Mark Warner will be holding its own adult-oriented weeks at its Levante and Lakitira resorts in Rhodes and Kos from June 10 and September 27 respectively. Designed to give solo travellers a chance to mix, the 'Club Mark Warner' programme offers rooms without a single supplement, as well as social activities.

"While families can still visit during these weeks, the

resorts very much have an adult feel," says Julie Franklin, agency sales manager for Mark Warner. "We open it up to couples, single parents who may wish to bring their children (and take advantage of childcare) and groups of friends looking to have a really sociable week."

Active breaks don't all have to be limited to a resort, of course. Much of Greece is a haven for hikers and bikers, so for couples or older groups of friends looking for a peaceful break in the hills, suggest a walking tour. Crete offers ideal terrain and idyllic views, and Intravel's self-guided tour of the southwest coast is an excellent way of exploring it. ➔



➔ Travellers will witness plunging mountain landscapes, intriguing ancient ruins and the spectacular Irini Gorge as they pass through Aiolos, believed to be the home of the god of the winds; Gramvousa, known as 'pirate country'; and Elafonisi, land of the cyclops, according to Homeric legend.

► **CULTURE AND GASTRONOMY**

Speaking of legend, mainland Greece is a history-lover's dream, which makes a city break here a popular option with older holidaymakers. Remains of Roman, Byzantine, Ottoman and Venetian empires and ancient monasteries are scattered across its landscapes. Nowhere is it more concentrated than in Athens, where historic sites such as the Parthenon – set atop the Acropolis citadel – overlook museums housing ancient Greek artefacts.

Elsewhere Thessaloniki, which dates from 315 BC, is well worth a visit, with its Byzantine walls and ancient monuments that intertwine with bustling shopping streets and packed-out cocktail bars. For those wanting to



PICTURE: INNTRAVEL; ANTONIS ELEFTERAKIS; MARKELLOS PLAKITSIS



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combine it with more history, suggest Titan's Ancient Wonders of Greece tour, which adds in visits to the Argolis region – the location of Homer's House of Atreus – and Kalambaka, which is home to the iconic 11th-century Meteora monasteries.

For an alternative way of experiencing these historic routes, think wine. Arblaster & Clarke's The Story of Greece tour takes guests on a cultural mission from Thessaloniki to Athens, with expert guidance from master connoisseur Derek Smedley. They'll stop at historic, scenic vineyards, from Ktima Alpha in the north to the Gaia Estate on the Peloponnese peninsula, with ample opportunity for tasting along the way (and all without the kids).

If clients are more tempted by the food side of things though, they're in the right place, too. From souvlaki to tzatziki via lamb klefτικο and gyro, Greece excels in all things gastronomic, so suggest a culinary tour for those wanting to get the most out of their trip.

Intrepid Travel's Real Food Adventure round trip from Athens is dedicated to doing just that, with everything from ouzo to olive oil on the tasting agenda, as well as cooking classes in Poros, beach time in Kardamyli and historic musings at the Theatre of Epidaurus. The minimum age is 15, meaning clients will be able to savour the tastes without distractions from younger ones, and wash it all down with a glass of well-deserved wine – here's to being a grown-up. **TW**



Thomson offers seven nights at the five-star, adult-only Tui Sensimar Kallistion Resort & Spa by Atlantica in Crete from £987. The price is based on two adults sharing, and includes flights from Gatwick on June 30 and transfers. thomson.co.uk

GAdventures' eight-day Sailing Greece – Mykonos to Santorini trip starts at £899 on a room-only basis. The price excludes flights. gadventures.co.uk

A week at Sun Rocks Hotel, Santorini, costs from £1,682 with **Kuoni**, based on two sharing a junior suite in November. The price includes breakfast, Aegean Airlines flights from Heathrow and private transfers. kuoni.co.uk



ABOVE: Crete

LEFT: The Parthenon