



Greece expert

Greece expert **John Malathronas** had some great questions from members when he joined us in September – and replied to them while island hopping. Here are some of his answers



The imposing Monastery of St John is the first thing you notice on Patmos



There are beautiful views of the Aegean from the road on Andros



An atmospheric alley in Chania's Old Town

Easter celebrations

Q Friends have suggested visiting Patmos during the Greek Orthodox Easter. Any suggestions on how to get there and where to stay?

Simon Walton

A The trip sounds like a great idea. In 2014 the Greek Orthodox Easter falls on 20 April. Get there the Thursday before to see a re-creation of the Last Supper. At midnight on Saturday, the Resurrection of Christ is celebrated with fireworks. On Easter Sunday, the mayor holds a buffet dinner in the main square and all visitors to the island are invited.

The best hotels on the island are Patmos Aktis and Petra Hotel, both in the area of Grikos, 5km from the port of Skala, along with Hotel Skala (located in Skala itself) and Porto Scoutari, a few kilometres on the way towards Kampos.

There is no airport on Patmos. You can go from Piraeus on the mainland by Blue Star ferries (7 hours 30 minutes; www.bluestarferries.gr) or fly from Athens to the nearby island of Kos, and reach Patmos by hydrofoil in two hours.

Island hopping

Q My partner and I like the idea of Greek island hopping. We are thinking of going in May or June. Do you have some itinerary suggestions?

Tom Gordge

A June is the perfect time to visit. I'd take a ferry from Piraeus to Santorini and make my way back from there. Santorini's interior is strewn with boutique vineyards and the capital's museums are some of Greece's finest.

Paros has one of the most interesting churches in Greece, dating from the 4th century AD. After Paros try Naxos, which has some of the best beaches in Greece. Stay in Naxos Town.

After Naxos, visit Mykonos, which is a stunner despite hectic nightlife, but a bit expensive. Next up is underrated Tinos. Rent a car for the monasteries, non-touristy beaches and the marble village of Pyrgos.

Andros is green and different. Driving is a delight – the road is high up and you see the Aegean below you. From Andros take a ferry to Rafina on the mainland from where there are frequent buses to Athens.

Culture in Crete

Q I visited the Greek islands years ago and plan to go in April with friends. We want self-catering accommodation near a beach, and with a bit of culture, and like the idea of Crete. Our nearest airport is Edinburgh.

Rosie Birkinshaw

A In April, your best chance of a long spell of sunny weather in Greece is, indeed, on Crete. Some resorts may not have opened at that time as the economic crisis has shortened the summer season. But you should be able to find self-catering accommodation at bargain prices.

Thomas Cook and Jet2 fly direct from Glasgow to Heraklion, but the flights normally start in May – check in January. Otherwise, fly from Edinburgh or Glasgow to Athens and on to Heraklion or Chania.

The best place for two weeks in April would be Chania or Rethymnon. Both are postcard-pretty and Rethymnon has a nice town beach. As for culture, both Chania and Rethymnon have great museums and both have frequent buses to Heraklion and the ancient Minoan site of Knossos.