

Greece and Her Islands

by Annette Dixon

After visiting and touring over 53 countries throughout my years, I have saved the best for last. Last year I decided to go to Athens, Santorini and Mykonos, visiting the ancient ruins in Athens, along with the temple of Apollo in Delphi. What I found in Greece are mountains, islands galore, archaeological digs everywhere, good, and decent middle class families. Many people have asked me why would I go to

Greece, since the country was broke? Since I have visited Asia and Africa, Greece looked like a goldmine.

In the year of 2009, after our recession, Greece inaugurated the Acropolis Museum, which is easily reached by the Metro, and located at the beginning of Dionysiou Arceopagitou Street, a pedestrian walkway that form the central axis is within the unified network of the city's archaeological sites.



Plaka Greek capital as it was 100 years ago leads toward the Acropolis with buildings that have a Cycladic architectural style. After WWII all buildings in Plaka district have been characterized as architectural monuments.

Athens would be easy for the American tourist to get around for they, too, have an open tour bus called Hop On Hop Off to enjoy the city and Piraeus. You can ask for the open top double decker bus for English speaking customers and

that will get you on and off the bus in Athens and also the use of city transit and also use for a second day.

There are also half and whole day tours to Cape Sounion and The Temple of Poseidon. The view of Saronic Gulf and scenic 5th Century BC Temple of Poseidon. It is best to go on a clear day in order to see seven islands. Sounion is known as the world famous spot at sunset, you will have a licensed guide to provide information of the places you will see along the way.



Another important tour is an all day Delphi Tours with lunch where you can visit the ancient Delphi and the Temple of Apollo. Delphi lies on the slopes of Mt. Parnassus and considered the center of the ancient world dating back to approximately 500 BC and now a Unesco World Heritage Site. The tour includes archaeological sites of Delphi and the Tempio of Apollo, Tre-

sury of Athenians and Delphi Archaeological Museum, where you see the Greek masterpieces, such as the bronze Charioteer of Delphi and the famous athlete Agias. After lunch, a short stop is the stunning mountain town of Arachova. I missed the tour to ancient Corinth but it was safe not going there at that time. Choosing the islands of Aegina, Poro, Hydra is great but there

are so many other Island to also choose from that Mykonos and Santorini is important.

Traveling in Athens for four nights was perfect for it gave me time to see Mykonos and Santorini plus other Islands. In Mykonos only a 45 minutes boat ride away is Delos, an island inhabited with huge archaeological site and home to the first multicultural civilization and trade. For this reason I loved the island of

Mykonos, and would go there again. Delos was the center of the Cyclades of the ancient world, the island of light and birthplace of Apollo and Artemis.

Mykonos is a town with white washed cubic houses, windmills and chapels, narrow streets with many shops and restaurants and wonderful to explore. You can enjoy this island in less than three days for the size of this island is only 33 sq. miles.



Santorini is known world wide and so many people love that Island. What I experience was the boat ride which was the Afroditi, Santorini's largest sailboat and the best on the island. The trip to the two uninhabited volcanic islands were different and when I got off the boat to walk on the volcano's petrified lava, now I was happy with Santorini. Cruising in the middle of Santorini Caldera where I was able to photograph a climb up an active crater at Nea Kameni and also see the island of Palea Kameni to soak in the natural hot springs. We anchored near Thirassia Island where we had dinner on board and enjoyed the mesmerizing seaside before departing in the Oia Sunset.

Just read Pano Koufonisi Greece is number 5 on the AWOL list for the 6th coolest European Islands. It's a tiny islet off the coast of Naxos.



It is home to 300 locals and about as many boats on that island. There are no proper roads very few cars and authentic Greek Island life as you can get. It has pristine beaches

and blue water of the Aegean Sea. You can travel there on fast moving Catamarans daily from Athens or Santorini. Enjoy Greece and her exotic Islands.



Such sights are visible to the naked eye, the 2500 year old Parthenon temple, built to honor the goddess Athena lies atop the Acropolis. It is difficult to write about a building so perfect in architectural design in ancient Greece only 300 meters south of the Acropolis is a 2009 modern art building; breath taking and host collections across three levels as well as in the archaeological excavation that lies at its foundations. What a magnificent panoramic sight of the Acropolis from all four sides in Athens. The Museum cannot be seen from the road.

Athens was great for sightseeing by bus, our guide took us to see the Panatheniac Stadium where the first Olympic Games of modern time were held in 1896, we continued to drive past the Temple of Olympian Zeus, Hadrian's Arch, The Parliament, in fact our hotel was walking distance from the Academy, the University, the National Library and Constitution Square.

Athens oldest and most picturesque neighborhood is the Plaka District with its cobblestone streets lines with boutique, souvenir stands, and flea market.

