

**GREECE ITINERARY:**  
**ATHENS, HYDRA & NAXOS**  
 August 24 – September 4

We were warned not to visit Greece in August, but it was the only time that worked for our schedules. It turned out to be a perfect time to visit. It was not too crowded, but that may be because we purposely picked islands that didn't cater to large cruise ships. It was very hot the first few days but we survived by swimming anytime we got too hot. And the last week was breezy and quite pleasant. Maybe we were just lucky! But at least in August you can pretty much be guaranteed sunshine! The itinerary below is for 10 days/11 nights, but you could certainly visit each island separately if you are looking for a shorter trip. As there is no ground transportation on **Hydra (Saronic Islands)**, activities are limited, but it's a wonderful place to relax and explore. We were very happy with 4 full days there, but you could certainly visit for 2-3 days and enjoy. **Naxos (Cycladic Islands)** has quite a lot of activities, as you can drive around the island, take one of a number of organized tours on the island and also to the numerous surrounding Cycladic Islands. You could easily use Naxos as a base for a longer vacation.

Date	To	Flight/Hotel/Car Details	Cost	Comments
Fri, Aug 24	Abby flies Paris to Athens	<p><i>Abby's flight:</i> AF2232            15:50 Paris, Charles de Gaulle (CDG) - Terminal 2D, Check-in by: 15:20            Arrive 20:05 Athens, E. Venizelos (ATH), Duration : 3h15 (non-stop)</p> <p><i>Hotel:</i> Hotel Phaedra            +30 2103238461,+30 210 3223321            16 Herefondos, Andrianou and Lyssikratous street, Plaka, Athens  <a href="http://www.hotelphaedra.com/">http://www.hotelphaedra.com/</a></p>	<p>€249 (Abby's flight, round trip)</p> <p>€80 (hotel, triple room)</p>	<p><i>Directions to Hotel:</i> From Athens El.Venizelos International Airport you use the metro "blue line" to Syntagma or the express bus, X 95 to Syntagma. Then you transfer to metro "red line" and get off at Acropolis metro station. You choose the exit "Makrygianni". As you see Akropolis in front of you, you walk forward and you enter a narrow road called Vyronos Street. After some meters, you turn on the right at Lyssikratous Street and reach a small square with a Byzantine church and our Hotel.</p> <p>I took the metro (€) from the airport to the hotel (just under an hour). A taxi would be €35 from the airport or €40 return to the airport and take about 30-40 minutes with no traffic.</p> <p>Hotel Phaedra is certainly nothing fancy – very basic rooms, but they are clean, the location is ideal (by the pedestrian streets of Plaka, under the Acropolis), the price is extremely reasonable and the hotel staff is extremely friendly and helpful (they speak English and French).</p>
Sat, Aug 25	Ferry Pireaus to Hydra	<p><i>Ferry Pireaus – Hydra:</i> 10am – 11:55am, FlyingCat1, Hellenic Seaways</p> <p><i>Hotel:</i> House Evdokia  <a href="http://www.hydrahouses.com">www.hydrahouses.com</a>            (Homeaway.com listing:  <a href="http://www.homeaway.com/vacation-rental/p384122">http://www.homeaway.com/vacation-rental/p384122</a>)</p>	<p>€76.50 (ferry for 3 people)</p> <p>€650 for 5 nights, sleeps 4 (25% deposit to hold reservation, balance due prior to arrival)</p>	<p>Ferries booked through <a href="http://www.mytravelnet.gr">www.mytravelnet.gr</a>            Reservation code: 1NHH0ZW9            Reservation ID: 1792 &amp; 1793</p> <p><i>Note:</i> No WiFi at the house but nearby cafes have it: Pirate is the best place, however Isalos closer to the house.</p> <p>It's quite easy to get to Pireaus on the metro – it only takes about 30 minutes, though leave extra time to find your gate when you arrive in Pireaus. It's a huge port and you may have to walk a fair bit once you arrive.</p> <p>Hydra is a wonderful island to visit especially in August as it is not a stop for the big cruise ships and there are no cars on the island (except trash trucks) so it never felt too crowded. Though Hydra is built into a mountain, so no cars means lots of walking – mostly stairs! You can hire donkeys (€5 each) to carry your suitcases up to your house.</p> <p>I would very highly recommend Evdokia house as a rental. The price is very reasonable and the house is extremely spacious, with a loft, high ceilings and two terraces looking out over Hydra's port. Lots of character.</p>

Sun, Aug 26	Hydra	House Evdokia		<p>We spent most of our days in Hydra exploring the town (Chora) itself, and following photographer Anna Barry's walks: <a href="http://hydra-island.mondorotondo.de/Dateien/2_2_1_1_eng.html">http://hydra-island.mondorotondo.de/Dateien/2_2_1_1_eng.html</a>. The first 6 hikes she outlines start from the town; the others are longer hikes and/or require a water taxi. We especially enjoyed Hike 3: <a href="http://hydra-island.mondorotondo.de/Dateien/2_2_12_1_eng.html">http://hydra-island.mondorotondo.de/Dateien/2_2_12_1_eng.html</a>.</p>
Mon, Aug 27	Hydra	House Evdokia		<p><b>Hydra restaurant recommendations:</b> Hydra has a number of excellent restaurants. Generally, we preferred the restaurants a bit away from the port as they were generally more authentic. Though during very hot weather, the portside restaurants may be more comfortable as you get the sea breeze. Here are some of our favorites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Veranda</b> (Sahini St. a few blocks behind Pirate Bar on northwest corner of the port): Beautiful terrace high up overlooking the port, wonderful grilled vegetables and pasta.</li> <li>• <b>Taverna Gitoniko</b> (known to locals as "Manolis and Christina" on Spilios Haramas): looks like not much from the outside but they have a terrace upstairs and wonderful local cuisine. I especially liked the fried squid.</li> <li>• <b>Omilos</b> (Kostas Achilleas, just west of the port): Right on the water; a good pick if you are looking for something one evening that's a bit more elegant than some of the local taverns. Best to reserve ahead. The salad in a parmigian cheese bowl was amazing.</li> <li>• <b>Mandraki 1800 Taverna</b> (in the village of Mandraki, a few kilometers east of Chora): Wonderful seafood, local cuisine, free use of beach chairs for customers.</li> <li>• <b>Kodylenia</b> (in Kamini village, west of Chora): local tavern overlooking the small port of Kamini; wide arrays of local dishes.</li> </ul>
Tues, Aug 28	Hydra	House Evdokia		
Wed, Aug 29	Hydra	House Evdokia		

Thurs, Aug 30	Ferry Hydra to Pireaus & Pireaus to Naxos	<p><i>Ferry Hydra - Pireaus: 7:20am – 9:15am, FlyingCat1, Hellenic Seaways</i></p> <p><i>Ferry Pireaus - Naxos: 4:45pm – 8:40pm, High Speed 5, Hellenic Seaways</i></p> <p><i>Hotel: Venetiko Apartments: <a href="http://www.naxos-filoxenia.com">www.naxos-filoxenia.com</a> Booking.com #957735792 Dionysou Street Naxos, 84300 Phone +30 69 77 99 80 34 E-mail <a href="mailto:info@venetiko.com">info@venetiko.com</a> Check-in 2:00 pm – 11:00 pm</i></p>	<p>€76.50 (ferry from Hydra for 3 people)</p> <p>€160 (tour for 3 people) + admission fee</p> <p>€4/person to Temple of Poseidon</p> <p>€153 (Naxos ferry for 3 people)</p> <p>€300 (apartment – sleeps 4, 4 nights)</p>	<p><b>Tour from Pireaus with Manos, private driver:</b> <a href="http://www.athenstourdriver.com/">http://www.athenstourdriver.com/</a> Manos Taliadouros (<a href="mailto:manos.tal@gmail.com">manos.tal@gmail.com</a>) The driver meets you near the dock (9:15am) holding a paper sign with our name on it. Cell# 00306979745904</p> <p>You don't want to be stuck in Pireaus for more than a couple of hours. Knowing we had 7 hours to kill, we arranged in advance for a driver to take us to the Temple of Poseidon (<a href="http://www.greece-athens.com/place.php?place_id=55">http://www.greece-athens.com/place.php?place_id=55</a>), about 65 km from Pireaus. We also stopped at a few points along the way and made it back to Pireaus in time for lunch before boarding our next ferry.</p> <p><i>Arrival in Naxos:</i> Vagelis Mihelopoulos (mobile phone: 6977998034) will be waiting for us with a sign that says "VENETIKO APARTMENTS" in the port 200 metres away from the exit of the ship, where the hotel owners wait for the clients.</p> <p>Venetiko Apartments is part of a small family-run cluster of hotels. The owners are very friendly and the location in the old town is perfect. I would highly recommend it. If you prefer to be on the beach, you will be a bit far from the old town. You must book far in advance to get the 4-person rooms.</p>
Fri, Aug 31	Naxos	Venetiko Apartments		<p>We spent most of the first day just exploring the unfinished temple of Apollo (on an island linked to the old town by a breakwater), the old market and Kastro (castle), then went for a swim of the breakwater.</p> <p><b>Naxos restaurant recommendations:</b> There were so many restaurants that I wanted to try, but we only had 4 nights! These restaurants were all excellent and right in the old town of Chora, along or close to the Old Market street:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Manolis Garden Taverna:</b> Beautiful, quiet garden setting, large menu selection, very friendly servers and excellent food. We ended up going back a second time.</li> <li>• <b>Lucullus</b> (<a href="http://www.lucullus.gr">www.lucullus.gr</a>) Local products and traditional Greek dishes but many with innovative twists. Get there early as it tends to get crowded.</li> <li>• <b>Vassilis:</b> Traditional Greek dishes and excellent seafood.</li> </ul>

Sat, Sept 1	Naxos/Tour to Delos and Mykonos	Venetiko Apartments	€135 (tour for 3 people)	<p>Tour Title: N01 Tour To Delos Mykonos  Book Date: 01-09-2012  Departure point: Port of Naxos at 9:15  Ending point: from Port at 9:15  Adults: 3  <i>Go directly to the port of Naxos to the "Naxos Star" tour boat - bring voucher. Be there at least 30 minutes before departure</i></p> <p>Unfortunately, this boat trip was cancelled due to high winds, which apparently is not uncommon. We decided instead to rent a car, as we had already cancelled our car rental for the next day in favor of an organized day trip. We rented from Hertz right on the port near the ferry arrival for €40 for the day. Hertz gave us a map with a green dotted "scenic route" circuit that we followed. We visited the villages of Halki and Apiranthos (where we ate lunch), then took the windy mountain road down to the west coast of the island and swam at Psilli Amos, where we practically had the beach to ourselves. We then went north to Apollonas, stopping at the Mycenaean Tomb at Koronida on the way. We then wound our way back along the coast to Naxos town.</p>
Sun, Sept 2	Naxos (with car)	Venetiko Apartments	33.77 GBP (car rental)	<p><a href="http://www.autoescape.com">www.autoescape.com</a>  Reservation # R0802X3359  Pick-up 8am, drop-off 9pm at Europcar CHORA  Directions: <a href="http://www.europcar.fr/location-voiture-NAXOS_ISLAND_.CHORA.html">http://www.europcar.fr/location-voiture-NAXOS_ISLAND_.CHORA.html</a></p> <p>We cancelled our car rental (and Autoescape.com gave us no trouble at all) as we had the chance to take a Hidden Naxos Tour with travel photographer and British expat/Naxos resident, Stuart Thorpe (<a href="http://www.naxos-photoworkshop.com/Hidden_Naxos_Tours.html">http://www.naxos-photoworkshop.com/Hidden_Naxos_Tours.html</a>). Stuart takes you down tiny dirt roads, shows you sites you would never find on your own, shares his knowledge of the area and shares local legends. I highly recommend his tours (and it would be best to book in advance). Stuart also brought us to a wonderful local tavern in a beautiful garden setting in the center of Koronos village for lunch: <b>Taverna "Platsa"</b>.</p>
Mon, Sept 3	Ferry Naxos to Pireaus	<p>Venetiko Apartments Check-out  08:00 am – 12:00 pm</p> <p><i>Ferry Naxos - Pireaus: 9:30am – 3pm, Blue Star Paros, Blue Star Ferries</i></p> <p><i>Hotel: Hotel Phaedra</i></p>	<p>€100.50 (ferry for 3 people)</p> <p>€80 (hotel)</p>	<p>We spent most of the day on the ferry. We purposely took a slower ferry back so we could see more. It was a bit of a free for all (as there are no reserved seats as with the hydrofoils) but it was nice to be able to sit outside. On the high-speed ferries you cannot go out on deck.</p> <p>Back in Athens, we walked around Plaka, the old quarter under the Acropolis and ventured up to the old and picturesque little neighborhood of <b>Anafiotika</b> (part of Plaka), just under the northeast side of the Acropolis. We had a wonderful last dinner in the garden of the <b>Psaras Taverna</b> (or Fisherman's Taverna): 16 Erechtheos, Plaka, <a href="http://www.psaras-taverna.gr/en/">http://www.psaras-taverna.gr/en/</a>.</p>

Tues, Sept 4	Fly Athens to Paris (Abby)	<i>Abby's flight:</i> AF2333 7:05 Athens, E. Venizelos (ATH), Check-in by: 6:35 Arrive 9:30 Paris, Charles de Gaulle (CDG), Duration : 3h25 (non-stop)		I had a very early flight so I reserved a taxi in advance: €40 and about 30 minutes (with a crazy driver who went twice the speed limit).
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**OTHER USEFUL LINKS:**

- **Walking and hiking in Hydra**
  - [http://hydra-island.mondorotondo.de/Dateien/2\\_2\\_1\\_1\\_eng.html](http://hydra-island.mondorotondo.de/Dateien/2_2_1_1_eng.html)
  - <http://www.greecetravel.com/hiking/hydra.html>
  - <http://www.aartworld.com/Walks/Hydra%20Walk%201.pdf>
- **Walking and hiking in Naxos**
  - <http://www.cycladen.be/NaxosEng.htm>
  - <http://www.prokopis.com/naxos-info/naxos-walking.htm>
- **More on Naxos:** <http://www.greektravel.com/greekislands/naxos/>
- **Greece ferry schedules** (domestic and also to/from Italy): [www.greekferries.gr](http://www.greekferries.gr) or <http://www.greek-islands-ferries.gr/>. Note that the ferry schedules are only announced 2-3 months in advance so do not get frustrated if you cannot find the right ferry and it's far in advance! Bu do book ASAP once you are able.

**OUR FERRY RESERVATIONS:**

0109769722	PIRAEUS - HYDRA	25 August 2012, 10:00	25 August 2012, 11:55	FLYINGCAT 1	Hellenic Seaways	5011000869	3	0	76.50 EUR
0109769722	HYDRA - PIRAEUS	30 August 2012, 07:20	30 August 2012, 09:15	FLYINGCAT 1	Hellenic Seaways	5011000869	3	0	76.50 EUR
0109769722	PIRAEUS - NAXOS	30 August 2012, 16:45	30 August 2012, 20:40	HIGHSPEED 5	Hellenic Seaways	5011000869	3	0	153.00 EUR
0109769723	NAXOS - PIRAEUS	03 September 2012, 09:30	03 September 2012, 15:00	BLUE STAR PAROS	Blue Star Ferries	29320913	3	0	100.50 EUR