

Wish you lived here?

The Greek islands

Buyers are looking for a safe place in the sun on an isolated island, says Emanuele Midolo

For about a decade, Greece has been the enfant terrible of the European Union. However, the country has handled coronavirus well, with just over 3,000 cases and 190 deaths, despite being home to ten million people and having one of the oldest populations in Europe. Greece opened to international visitors this week, although the ban on air travel from Britain will remain in place for a further two weeks, until July 15. It's not surprising that the country has become one of the most sought-after locations for Britons in lockdown dreaming of a (safe) place in the sun. "In the past two months we have seen an increasing number of serious inquiries from the UK market," says Miltos Kambourides, a managing partner of Dolphin Capital, a real estate investment company. "It's clear the lockdown has prompted buyers to look into options for a second or third home in a place that feels safe and secure." Greece has more than 6,000 islands, but only 230 of them are inhabited. Some, such as Santorini and Mykonos, faced overcrowding issues pre-Covid, with more than 60 million tourists visiting the two islands every year. Others, however, are so small and



deserted that local authorities have encouraged I Lellenophiles to come and live on them. Here's a guide to what's on offer on the Greek islands.

Antikythera
This eight-square-mile island has only 24 residents, so the council is offering applicants a house with a plot of land and a monthly cheque of €500 (£450). The first settlers and their three children arrived in September, prompting the island's only school to reopen after 24 years. "We need to make Antikythera live and be full of children's voices," said Andreas Charchalakis, the island's mayor at the time. The island has beautiful beaches and is a 45-minute flight from Athens. However, it has only one food shop, one hostel and no bank.

Santorini and Mykonos
The priciest locations are Santorini and Mykonos. Rob Green, the founder of the estate agency Sphere Estates, is marketing Villa Fabrica, a lavish nine-bedroom, five-bathroom villa on Santorini with the island's classic whitewashed architecture. It has a guide price of €4 million (£3.6 million).

What Santorini and Mykonos offer, Green argues, is "predictable rental yields" and "certainty" when it comes to reselling a property. In Mykonos, Villa Agrari is available for €4.25 million. It features six bedrooms, five bathrooms and a pool; Villa Lia, a four-bedroom and four-bathroom villa on Mykonos's east coast, is on the market for €3 million. Both are for sale through Sphere Estates (sphereestates.com).

Corfu
This island has long been popular with the British. Kerkyra, as it is called in Greek, was ruled by the Venetians, the French and the British before reuniting with Greece in the 19th century. Marcus Gondolo-Gordon, the founder of Incognito Property, who lived on the island for 15 years and still has a holiday home there, says: "Greece is having something of a renaissance and, because of the positive way they have handled the Covid-19 crisis, has a hero status right now. We have noticed a lot of former Balearics and Côte d'Azur interest now moving over to Greece for its unspoilt resorts and islands." He is selling the Shell House, a newly built villa set in a 3.5-acre olive grove in the northeast of Corfu. The six-bedroom mansion features a pool, a gym, a sauna and a massage room (£3.3 million).

Private Islands
Gondolo-Gordon says he is getting "a far higher number of requests" for private islands, which he calls "the ultimate isolation station". He adds: "These are very rarely advertised, so we only handle these by request and keep them private." There are at least a dozen on the open market, including a 187-acre parcel of land on Kythnos, an hour's boat ride from Athens, for £2.5 million. The boat, sadly, is not included as part of the deal.



Above: Villa Lia, on the east coast of Mykonos, has four bedrooms and is on sale for €3 million through Sphere Estates. Right: the six-bedroom Villa Agrari is divided into four independent units. It has stunning views beyond the pool to the Aegean Sea, blue and white interiors, and a shaded outdoor eating area. It is on sale for €4.25 million through Sphere Estates



Ask an expert

Will my lodger have to leave?

I have an agreement with a lodger to use my spare room, which either of us can end by giving one month's notice. What is the position with lodgers during the pandemic?

A "lodger" is someone who stays in another person's home, usually when the homeowner also lives there. There is no magic in using a written agreement describing someone as a "lodger". Many people who sign lodger agreements successfully argue in court that they are in fact tenants. For most purposes, genuine lodgers do not have any protection under housing legislation. For example, lodgers are "excluded" occupiers under section 3A(2) of the Protection from Eviction Act 1977 and owners do not have to go to court to evict them. The Coronavirus Act 2020 has extended notice periods for landlords to end assured shorthold tenancy agreements. The courts have also suspended possession proceedings and enforcement until August 23, 2020, but neither of these temporary arrangements apply to recovering a room occupied by a lodger. If the lodger does not have an agreement specifying a notice period, then they are entitled to "reasonable" notice to leave. During the Covid-19 crisis, it is likely that a court would treat a "reasonable" period of time quite generously, given the risk to the lodger's health of moving elsewhere. However, this does not apply where a lodging agreement gives a fixed period of notice (as in this case). Your lodger must therefore leave at the end of the notice period – and you won't then have to go to court to get the room back. Mark Loveday is a barrister with Tanfield Chambers. Email questions to brief.encounter@thetimes.co.uk

What £600,000 buys you in...

Kent
If you're looking for stucco and sash windows with none of the creaks or draughts then Broadwater House should tick a lot of boxes. Scheduled for completion early next year, the Royal Tunbridge Wells development will feature a period-style extension on a restored 19th-century mansion, with slick interiors by Ademchic, a design studio. This two-bedroom apartment features an open-plan kitchen/dining/living space, with cracking views across Hargate Forest. You can roam around the communal grounds, and the railway station is a ten-minute drive away. **Air pollution** 9.8mcg/m³ particulate pollution annual average, 0.2mcg/m³ below the WHO guideline of 10mcg/m³. **Upside** Great secondary schools near by. **Downside** You would get more for your money out of town. **Contact** broadwaterhouse.com



Devon
English Heritage describes this grade II listed Melville Aubin-designed house as "an almost perfectly preserved example of a Modern movement house". Dating from 1935, it is a veritable time capsule featuring the original Crittall steel windows, art deco door handles and an oak staircase with polished chrome handrails. More than 2,860 sq ft of accommodation is arranged over three floors and includes three bedrooms on the first floor and a roomy roof terrace and small room that could be a fourth bedroom on the top floor. It's less than a mile from the centre of Brixham, a harbourside town known for its yacht club and top-notch seafood. **Air pollution** 7.2mcg/m³, 2.8mcg/m³ below the WHO guideline of 10mcg/m³. **Upside** Art deco on the English Riviera. **Downside** The interiors need work. **Contact** themodernhouse.com



Suffolk
Tucked away on a quiet rural road, this grade II listed timber-framed farmhouse has bags of character; the oldest part is thought to be from the 13th century, while the main section is Tudor with an 18th-century façade. The six/seven-bedroom home comprises two reception rooms, a kitchen with an Aga, a pantry, a utility room and two bathrooms. You get more than half an acre of grounds, which includes raised beds and a crinkle-crackle, or wavy-walled, garden that is ideal for growing fruit trees. The pretty market town of Eye is about a mile away and Diss is a 20-minute drive. **Air pollution** 9.4mcg/m³, 0.6mcg/m³ below the WHO guideline of 10mcg/m³. **Upside** It has been in the same family for more than 200 years. **Downside** You have to walk through one bedroom to get to two others. **Contact** fineandcountry.com



Nouvelle-Aquitaine, France
Spend sunny afternoons poolside, apéritif in hand, at this four-bedroom country house with a separate one-bedroom guest house in the Vienne département. Sympathetically renovated, it comprises a study, laundry room and two receptions with handsome stone fireplaces and terracotta floor tiles. The property is half an hour from the cities of Poitiers and Châtelleraut (which both have TGV stations with 80 to 90-minute rail links to Paris), while flights to London Stansted take an hour and a half from Poitiers airport. You get 20 acres of land, including orchards, a vegetable plot, woodland and your own lake. **Upside** Blissful seclusion. **Downside** The slower pace of life won't suit everyone. **Contact** patrice-besse.com

