

## Travel 20 for 2020

## 17 KIMOLOS

Move over, Mykonos: this is the Cyclades as they used to be

Forget those overheated Greek islands where you practically have to book sun loungers before you board the plane. (Hello, Mykonos.) Kimolos is your word-of-mouth sleeper hit. Most discover its 1970s-Greece vibes after slipping over from noisier Milos on a day trip, or by answering the siren Instagram call of blindingly blue bays such as Galazia Nera and Kato Mersini, framing the island of Polyaiagos.

In 2020, as our hunger for time-warp travel takes hold, the most sought-after spots are these throwback charmers where you feel like a local by day two. Yes, we've tipped Kimolos before, but the It Isle's stock is booming more than ever, thanks to classy new stays from Aria Hotels: an elegantly restored 1850s windmill below the island's main town, Chora; and Thalassa Beach House, a luxe former boat shed with an eat-in kitchen that's steps from tranquil Zacharias beach. From next May, you can also hole up in a transformed *syрма* (a boat store cut into the rock) on Elephant Goupa beach, named for its mammoth-shaped boulder (doubles from £55, B&B; [ariahotels.gr](http://ariahotels.gr)).

Rent some wheels on Milos – you'll need them for Kimolos's rough-and-ready roads – and head over on the frequent ferry run. Buy your tickets on board (from £8 for cars and £2.50 for passengers; [kimolos-link.gr](http://kimolos-link.gr)).

Days are for drifting from beaches such as Prassa, in the northeast, with its pale



sands and glassy waters, to tamarisk-fringed Kalamitsi, on the southern coast. Here, the morning's catch is grilled for lunch at fisherman Stelios's beach taverna. For a gear change, join the yachties at To Kyma, in Psathi port, and feast on lobster and lime carpaccio by the water's edge (mains from £10.50). In the evening, float up to Chora to wander narrow whitewashed lanes and bijoux squares. Catch a free moonlit flick at the nomadic Cine Kalisperitis, sip a prickly-pear sundowner in the medieval Kastro quarter or park yourself centre stage at the suave Agora Cocktail Bar.

No one leaves without sailing around spectacular Polyaiagos on Captain Vangelis's sea taxi, the Delfini (£22; 00 30 69 722 72111, or ask the hotel to book). This volcanic marvel – at seven square miles, Greece's largest uninhabited island – has chalky-blue waters, castaway coves and an epic coastline. **Amanda Dardanis**

*A week at Aria's Milaki Kimolos starts at £825pp, B&B, including flights ([sunvil.co.uk](http://sunvil.co.uk))*



## 18 COSTA RICA

Get in the swing with celebs and surfers on the Nicoya Peninsula

Rippling, rainforest-covered mountains dropping to silky white beaches; elegant surf and yoga retreats; Pacific-view pools; the scent of wild ginger in the air ... no wonder hipster Hollywood has been helicoptering in to the remote Nicoya Peninsula for nearly a decade. Now, with new flights and freshly paved roads, it will be accessible to the rest of us.

Those flights are with KLM from London, via Amsterdam, to Liberia, in the province of Guanacaste. They mean you no longer have to endure a bumpy propeller-plane connection to Nicoya from the Costa Rican capital, San Jose. So, unless you particularly want to go via the city (you'll then have a long drive, a ferry ride and another long drive), a visit to any place on the peninsula begins at the car-hire counter in Liberia airport, 50 miles north of Nicoya. It's a slow but scenic drive from here – even the paved roads are rugged, so hire a 4x4.

The easiest route from Liberia runs three hours south-southwest to Nosara, a little fishing village that's now an eco-retreat for wealthy and woke Americans – including the starchitect Alan Wanzenberg, a former member of Andy Warhol's Factory, who has a house here. Chic-shack surf camps such as Burnt Toast dot the beaches (doubles from £38; [btsurfcamp.com](http://btsurfcamp.com)), and small hotels look out from the hills. Among the best of the latter is the Lagarta: the pool and the seven balconied Flor Blanca suites have views over a forest-backed bay to the sparkling Pacific (doubles from £150, B&B; [lagartalodge.com](http://lagartalodge.com)).

Ticos (as Costa Ricans call themselves) turn their noses up at Nosara for being too busy. They prefer Santa Teresa, a surfer village turned low-key celebrity retreat. This is where Chris Hemsworth and Gisele Bündchen and Tom Brady (who have a house in the hills) grab their boards before breakfast and wander to the waves on soft sands you could gallop a horse along for hours. Toucans float across the jungle-fringed beaches, hummingbirds flower-kiss orchids and the hillsides tinkle with the sound of Tibetan prayer bells emanating from the yoga and wellness retreats amid the trees.

Getting to Santa Teresa from Guanacaste used to involve a potholed switchback drive. From 2020, the road will be fully paved, if still tortuous and

steep. Allow half a day to arrive at an easy pace – drifting past the shimmering blue, island-specked Gulf of Nicoya, past half-moon coves and long,

sweeping bays, and in and out of tiny villages before climbing into dense forest and winding steeply down into Santa Teresa. The village is little more than a single street lined with surf shops, cafes (with superfood- and spirulina-packed menus) and informal fine-dining restaurants such as Koji's, owned by sushi master Koji Hyodo (mains from £10; [kojirestaurant.com](http://kojirestaurant.com)).

The hotels (most with just a handful of rooms) are in the wild environs. Latitude 10 is a long-term A-list favourite where Balinese-style hardwood villas are hidden in woodland next to one of the most beautiful beaches, Playa Cocal (doubles from £325, B&B; [latitude10resort.com](http://latitude10resort.com)). The infinity pool, muted tones and minimalist rooms of Mint, which opened in 2018, cluster in the hills above, next to a monkey-filled nature reserve (doubles from £135, B&B; [mintsantateresa.com](http://mintsantateresa.com)).

Go in the dry season, from December to April, avoiding the busy Christmas period. Allow at least 10 days, and be prepared to want to stay a good deal longer.

**Alex Robinson**

*A 10-day fly-drive starts at £2,438pp, B&B, including flights and car hire ([costaricarevealed.co.uk](http://costaricarevealed.co.uk))*



The whitewashed lanes of Chora, the island's main town