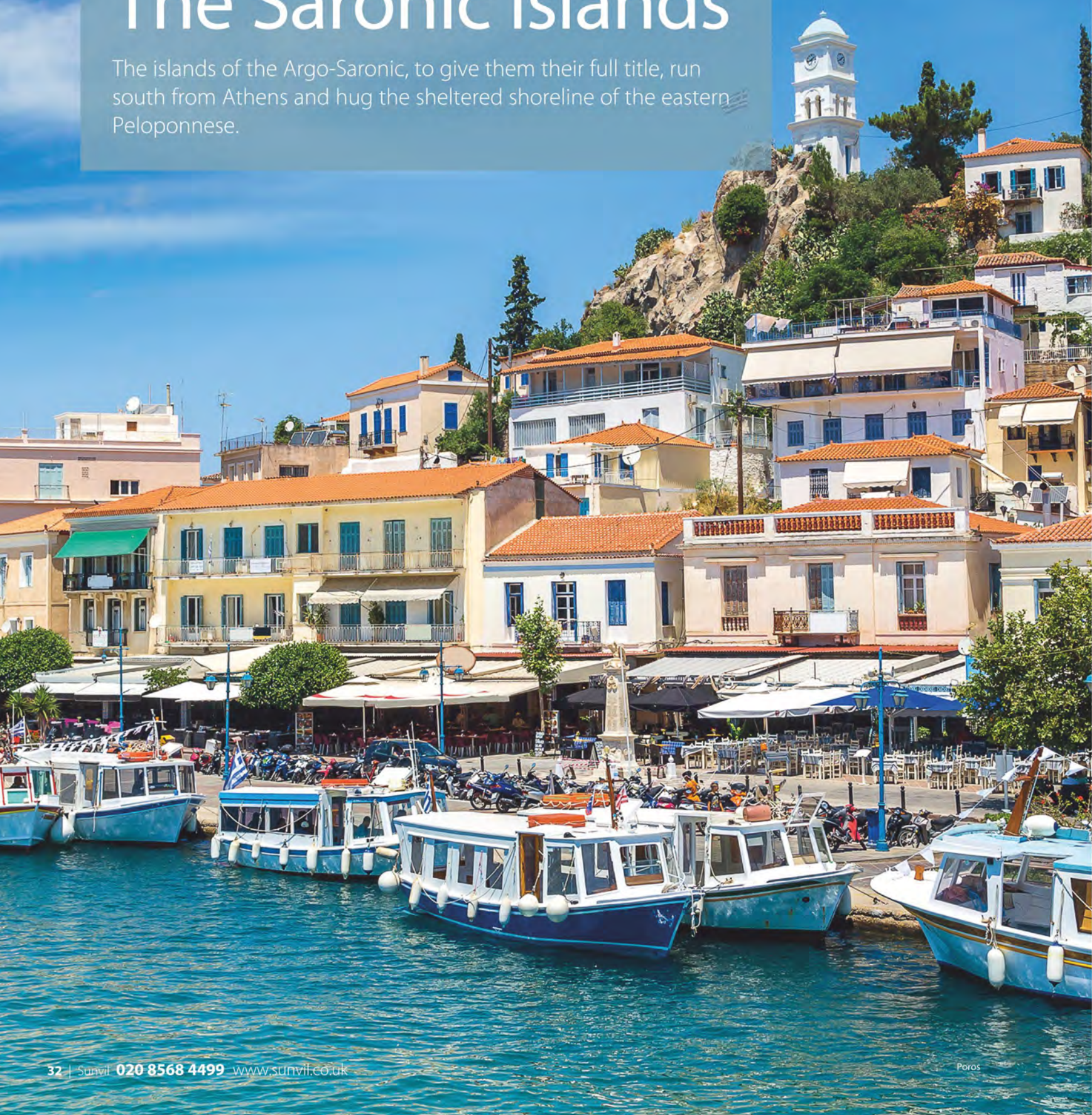


The Saronic Islands

The islands of the Argo-Saronic, to give them their full title, run south from Athens and hug the sheltered shoreline of the eastern Peloponnese.





Quickly reached from Athens in as little as 40 minutes, the Saronic Islands are a great choice for those looking for a small Greek island with a short same-day ferry connection. And ideal as a twin centre holiday with Athens itself.



Aegina

Aegina is one of the closest islands to Athens, taking just 40 minutes on one of the frequent hydrofoil services from Piraeus to reach. It is of course popular with Athenians to visit at weekends, which has the advantage of keeping taverna standards up and prices down.

Aegina Town is colourful with a long waterfront lined with tavernas known for their fresh fish. There are neoclassical buildings, narrow back streets and shaded squares to explore. There are beaches and also the ancient Temple of Athena to explore.



Agistri

Tiny Agistri (55 mins from Piraeus), at just 13 sq kms in size, is the smallest of the Saronic chain and often overlooked. But the island packs a punch far greater than its size.

Agistri is heavily forested - in fact over 80% of the island is pine-covered. Easy walking is an attraction - 3 walking paths have now opened up, with more to come. Agistri is very good value and prices are reasonable. Friendly, laid-back, genuine and very Greek, Agistri is a secret that you will not regret discovering.



Poros

The green island of Poros (80 mins. from Piraeus) hugs the Peloponnese coastline and is actually two islands connected by a small bridge. The bulk is called Kalavria, covered with pine and olive trees and edged with inviting coves, rocky shores and some sandy beaches such as lovely Askeli just 2 kms from the port. Poros' proximity to the mainland is an advantage. It is just a 5 minute water taxi or ferry ride over the strait from Poros to the Peloponnese, facilitating organised classical tours.



Hydra

Due to good ferry links from Athens the island has always been popular with weekenders, and in recent years has moved upmarket and become very fashionable.

The main town and port is one of the most beautiful in Greece, with preserved neo-classical mansions, whitewashed village houses and narrow cobbled lanes climbing steeply up from the horse-shoe shaped harbour. Quite rightly, the whole is preserved as a national monument.



Spetses

Spetses (2hrs 15mins from Piraeus) is known as a retreat for the well-heeled Greeks, as evidenced by the discreet walled villas and glitzy yachts in the marina. Spetses Town is most attractive, with whitewashed bougainvillea-strewn mansions, wide piazzas and a pretty old harbour. The best beaches are in the south. Walking trails run through the centre. As on Hydra, cars are banned, so transportation is provided by horse-drawn carriage, bicycles, water-taxis and many buzzing mopeds.

Aegina, Agistri & Poros

Aegina is both historic, with important archaeological sites dating back to the 6th century BC; cosmopolitan and untouched. Heavily forest Agistri is laid-back, genuine and very Greek. Poros is green with some sandy beaches and a charming town. Each unique, fascinating to discover and complementary when combined.

Rastoni Hotel Aegina Town, Aegina

The 14 room Rastoni Hotel is built on what was a pistachio farm in a quiet residential area a 15 minute walk from Aegina Town and harbour. Ferries, shops, restaurants and cafes are all around, as is the beach and the archaeological site of Kolona.

The hotel, in colonial style, is surrounded by a shady, well tended garden where breakfast can be taken. There are many small fountains, nooks and crannies, benches, chairs and tables within

the gardens - ideal for a quiet read or snooze. Pistachio trees abound!

Accommodation is offered in standard rooms (ground floor with direct access to the gardens) and superior rooms (with sea view and balcony). All have A/C, WiFi and shower room.

A recommended and comfortable base from which to explore Aegina, or to simply recharge batteries in glorious, peaceful surroundings.

Board Basis: Bed & Breakfast
Guide price from **£1125 per person***



Oasis Scala Beach Hotel Skala, Agistri

The Oasis Scala Beach Hotel is, we think, the best hotel on Agistri. Directly above Skala's sandy beach, it's just a couple of minutes' easy walk from the centre of the village with its choice of tavernas, cafés and small shops.

The hotel has 52 rooms. All are nicely furnished and mostly double-bedded. Rooms - Classic and Superior rooms, Junior suites, Suites and Family maisonettes - have A/C, WiFi, shower, covered balcony with sea, pool, garden or village/mountain

views. Some ground floor rooms have garden access.

There is a roof terrace Spa, with jacuzzis and massage treatments and a 90 sq m seawater pool, with a terrace cafe-bar and good restaurant are to one side.

Owners, Michalis and Dorina could not be more welcoming. Recommended.

Board Basis: Bed & Breakfast
Guide price from **£931 per person***

Golden View Hotel Askeli, Poros

This long established hotel of 55 rooms is directly on Askeli beach 2 km from Poros Town.

Rooms are double or twin bedded with bath and/or shower, A/C, WiFi, and ours are front sea facing with lovely views over the bay. Decor is in a traditional island style with dark wood furniture.

There are also open plan Junior Suites for 2-3 persons and 2-room Family Suites for up to 4. There is no lift.

Askeli beach is beautifully sandy and boasts a Blue Flag. The hotel is at

the start of the beach and has its own corner with sunbeds and umbrellas free to guests.

The freshwater pool measures some 100 sq m and there is a beach taverna. A variety of other restaurants and cafes can be found within a short stroll.

It is a 25 minute walk to town. A taxi is inexpensive.

Board Basis: Bed & Breakfast
Guide price from **£1100 per person***



Hydra & Spetses

Just 90 minutes by ferry from Piraeus, Hydra's neo-classical architecture and bustling port cannot fail to enrapture. Spetses too has elegant mansions and harbourside charm, but lace up your walking shoes and there is a tapestry of nature trails and small beaches to savour.

Orloff Hotel Hydra Town, Hydra

Built over 200 years ago for a Russian Count on the site of an old nunnery, the mansion has been carefully converted into a delightful boutique hotel of just 9 rooms. It is only a 2-3 minute walk up a gentle incline from the harbour (no steps).

The rooms have kept period features and are traditionally furnished with a modern aesthetic. All have A/C, WiFi, and a modern shower room. Superior rooms are larger with a sitting area and sofa.

Due to the age of the building there are no balconies (1 superior room has a small garden patio) but there is a charming shaded courtyard garden with tables and chairs - breakfast is taken here.

A stylish and beautiful hotel with excellent service and very well located.

Board Basis: Bed & Breakfast

Guide price from **£1718 per person***



Mistral Hotel Hydra Town, Hydra

Run by the same friendly family for over thirty years, and stone-built in keeping with the local mansion architectural style, this elegant guest house is set in the heart of the town a five minute walk (350m) from the port.

Perfect for exploring the car-free narrow streets of Hydra, this property is meticulously looked after, and all guests are guaranteed a warm welcome.

Each of the 17 air-conditioned rooms has its own character, bathroom with bath tub and is furnished and equipped to a high standard. Most benefit from attractive views over the town, and sea views are possible from some Superior rooms. The breakfast is served in the courtyard flower garden. Free WiFi is available in public areas.

Board Basis: Bed & Breakfast

Guide price from **£1318 per person***

Economou Mansion Spetses Town, Spetses

Standing above the narrow seafront road, this restored sea captain's mansion dates from 1851 and has just six cosy rooms. Carefully converted to preserve its character the hotel is a 10 minute walk from the centre and Dapia harbour.

All rooms have a traditional iron double bed, high wooden ceiling, A/C, WiFi and a walk-in shower. The studios have light cooking facilities. Due to the age of the building there are no balconies but most have sea views through the window and one

studio has an outdoor sea view patio in the garden to one side.

There is a delightfully furnished lounge, and a swimming pool (8m x 5m) in a walled garden area.

You will find a number of restaurants nearby, and it is a 10-15 minute walk to Kaiki beach.

Board Basis: Bed & Breakfast

Guide price from **£1370 per person***



* Guide prices are based on 2-sharing a lead-in room type for 7 nights in May and include return flights and transfers. Prices are subject to change and increases in airfares. Please visit our website for our latest prices and important further information on these properties, as well as more accommodation choices.

Island hopping in the Saronic Islands

Poros | Spetses | Hydra

The three Saronic Islands of Poros, Spetses and Hydra were some of the first islands featured by Sunvil over 50 years ago. Being close to Athens they are not new to tourism as they have long been weekend retreats for wealthy Athenians. However, this does not detract but in many ways enhances their appeal. These are sophisticated islands, each offering a unique blend of cultural richness, historical intrigue, and natural beauty.

We have suggested a ten night itinerary below but the flexible nature of our programme allows us to tailor-make a trip to suit your tastes and budget. A stay in Athens is also a natural partner to this island tour.

Day 1 - Arrival on Poros

On arrival at Athens Airport, transfer to Piraeus Port and onto to Poros (60-75 mins). Our accommodation on the island is centred in either the port town of Poros or Askeli, 2km from the port and home to a lovely sandy beach.

Overnight on Poros.

Days 2 and 3 – Explore Poros

Hugging the coastline of the Peloponnese, Poros is actually two islands combined by a small bridge. The larger isle, called Kalavria, is covered with pine and olive trees and edged with inviting coves, rocky shores and some sandy bays. The small islet is Spheria - volcanic and rocky, on which the tiered town of Poros is built, a delightful maze of narrow streets lined with traditional whitewashed houses and vibrant cafes.

From anywhere along the west and southwestern coast rewarding panoramic vistas of the mainland can be enjoyed.

We would recommend an organised day excursion

to the classical sites of Epidavros, Nafplion and Mycenae on the mainland.

Overnight on Poros.

Day 4 – Transfer to Spetses

Set sail for the elegant island of Spetses (90 minutes from Poros), steeped in maritime history and exuding an air of sophistication. It is known as a retreat for wealthy Greeks, as evidenced by the discreet walled villas and yachts in the marina.

Your accommodation will be in Spetses Town, a most attractive settlement with whitewashed bougainvillea-strewn houses, wide piazzas and a pretty old harbour.

Overnight on Spetses.

Days 5 and 6 – Explore Spetses

Spetses is a car free island, minus the handful of authorised local taxis. Transportation is instead by horse-drawn carriage, bicycle, water-taxi and moped; yet, at only 10 square miles, it could be argued that the best transportation is that of our own two feet.

Life is centred around the old harbour and the quaint alleys of Dapia, the new port. Outside of the town, you'll be greeted by local farmers herding their goats amongst the green hills, olive groves and pine trees, the tinkling of bells the only sound to disturb the natural calm. Hidden coves and sandy beaches such as Kaiki are waiting to be discovered.

Overnight on Spetses.

Day 7 – Transfer to Hydra

Conclude your adventure on the car-free island of Hydra (30 minutes from Spetses), a haven for artists and writers - Leonard Cohen, David Gilmour and Axel Jensen are among those attracted by its



laidback Greek lifestyle and cerulean waters.

Overnight on Hydra.

Days 8, 9 and 10 – Explore Hydra

Wander through the labyrinthine streets of Hydra Town, where traditional stone houses and neo-classical mansions create a picture-perfect scene. It is considered one of the most beautiful towns.

Unlike Spetses, all forms of motorised transport are banned on Hydra. This has allowed nature to flourish and the many, well-maintained marked walking trails encourage wider exploration of the island's meadows and farmlands, particularly beautiful in spring when peppered with wild, fragrant flowers.

Overnight on Spetses.

Day 11 Day of departure

Transfer by hydrofoil to Piraeus port (2 hrs 20 mins. to 3 hrs 15 mins.) and then onto Athens Airport for your return flight to the UK.

Poros



Duration

10 nights

Itinerary includes:

- Return flights to Athens
- 3 Nights on Poros - Bed and Breakfast
- 3 Nights on Spetses - Bed and Breakfast
- 4 Nights on Hydra - Bed and Breakfast
- Transfers and ferry tickets throughout
- Single room supplement on request

Guide price

Based on 2 sharing from **£1768 per person***

Island hopping in the Saronic Islands

Athens | Aegina | Agistri

Over the last few years Athens has rightly regained its reputation as a capital city which should be visited. After all, this is where modern history started and the sites are still there to be visited. Theatre and the arts are flourishing. There is a newfound optimism in the city. Hotels have upgraded, interesting restaurants abound and cafe life is as evident as ever.

Athens also has the advantage of being very close to the Saronic islands, ideal for a very contrasting multi centre trip. This ten night itinerary combines a busy city with quiet island life on Aegina and Agistri. We can, of course, alter the itinerary to suit tastes and budget.

Day 1 - Arrival at Athens

On arrival at Athens Airport, you will be transferred to your centrally located hotel (1 hour).

Overnight in Athens.

Days 2 and 3 – Explore Athens

We have designed this itinerary to allow two full days in the capital, the minimum needed to see the key sites and to uncover some of the city's alluring and lesser-known districts. Athens is built around seven hills with that of the Acropolis, the most striking and complete ancient Greek monumental complex still existing in our times. The views from the summit are worth the climb alone, but to stand in the shadows of the Parthenon, the Erechtheion and the Temple of Athena Nike – where since the 5th century BC others have stood before – is what will stir your emotions. The hill of Lycabettus is another exemplary vantage point affording views over the white-washed city towards the Acropolis and the coast.

Athens has a fantastic selection of museums including the New Acropolis Museum, The National Archaeological Museum, The Byzantine Museum and the Benaki Museum which also has an excellent restaurant and cafe with views over Athens. Then of course there is the Agora - Central Athens market, Psiri for its small streets, cafes, ouzeries and tavernas and Monastiraki Market. Walking tours and guided sightseeing are available.

Overnight in Athens.

Day 4 – Transfer to Aegina

Transfer to Piraeus Port and onto Aegina by hydrofoil (40 minutes).

Overnight on Aegina

Days 5 and 6 – Explore Aegina

Aegina is not a large island so a full day's exploring will get you pretty well acclimatised. There is the 6th century temple of Athena Aphaia, the ruined medieval village of Paleochora with its many Byzantine churches, the Cathedral of Saint Nectarios, the interesting Archaeological Museum of Aegina, The Tower of Markellos and don't forget the little fishing village of Perdika.

There are many sandy beaches on the island, some organised but also many secluded coves. The best known beaches are Souvala, Marathon, Agia Marina and Perdika. Wander around the narrow streets of the town and eat in a harbourside restaurant or taverna - Athenians love it here and so will you.

Overnight on Aegina.

Day 7 – Transfer to Agistri

A short, 10 minute ferry connects Aegina to the neighbouring island of Agistri.

Overnight on Agistri.



Days 8, 9 and 10 – Explore Agistri

Tiny Agistri, at just 13 sq kms in size is the smallest of the Saronic chain and often overlooked. For us however, this friendly, laidback island with its genuine and very Greek air, is a secret that you will not regret discovering.

Over 80% of the island is covered by pine forests. Easy walking is an attraction - there is nothing very steep (the highest point is 245m) and three marked walking paths have opened, with more to come. The waters around Agistri are turquoise-hued and very clear – head to Aponisi bay for waters reminiscent of the Caribbean. Kayaking and snorkelling are popular activities. In the evenings, taverna life spills onto the cobbled streets and twinkling lights illuminate the harbourside.

Overnight on Agistri.

Day 11 Day of departure

Transfer by hydrofoil to Piraeus port (1 hour) and then onto Athens Airport for your return flight to the UK.

Duration

10 nights

Itinerary includes:

- Return flights to Athens
- 3 Nights Athens - Bed and Breakfast
- 3 Nights Aegina - Bed and Breakfast
- 4 Nights Agistri - Bed and Breakfast
- Transfers and ferry tickets throughout
- Single room supplement on request

Guide price

Based on 2 sharing from **£1642 per person***

Aegina

