



A typical whitewashed windmill on the Greek island of Ios

Circling Back to the Cyclades

AS A NEW generation of Greeks reclaim their heritage, they're looking past overtouristed islands like Mykonos to quiet stunners such as Ios. Reachable only by boat (including a daily ferry from Santorini), this 42-square-mile island in the Cyclades archipelago largely retains its traditional way of life. Shepherds guide flocks through the fertile valley of Epano Kampos and along mountain footpaths. Its oldest archaeological site, Skarkos, dates from the third millennium B.C., and the 16th-century monastery of Pyrgos sits below the island's highest peak. Dirt tracks lead to more than two dozen pristine beaches, which veteran philhellenes call some of the finest strands in the Aegean. "We saw what happened to other Greek

islands transformed by overdevelopment. We're determined to save Ios from that fate," says Vassiliki Petridou, president of Luxurios Island Experience, a local eco-resort company. In the only town on the island, Chora (a hippie haven during the 1970s), guests stay in laid-back lodgings ranging from the chic new Agalia Suites, a 14-room boutique hotel, to family-run guesthouses on narrow stone walkways. Tavernas serve grilled squid, *horta* (wild greens), and local wine. Even when backpackers descend in August, nature reigns supreme across the island—much as it did in Homer's time. —**COSTAS CHRIST**

■ **TIP: SIP PLOMARI OUZO AT FREE BAR ON MYLOPOTAS BEACH, A ONETIME HIPPIE HANGOUT THAT STILL DRAWS WANDERERS.**

ATLAS

Ios Island, Greece



Second-century writings claim Ios as the final resting place of Homer; followers visit his (unverified) tomb at the island's northern tip.

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