

An aerial photograph of a stunning turquoise bay. The water is crystal clear, revealing the rocky seabed. A small boat is visible in the lower center of the bay. The surrounding land is rugged and rocky, with a sandy beach area on the right. A tennis court is visible on the right side of the image, and a small building is situated near the water's edge. The overall scene is serene and picturesque.

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los island

On los, you can have your cake and eat it too – quite literally. Spend your days exploring the winding footpaths of the traditional hilltop old town or ensconced on a sandy beach. Discover the isolated interior and then return to town in time for the party. Or visit in the shoulder season for a quieter pace, when los draws families and more mature travellers. In July and August, it's still the much-loved stomping ground of youth and hedonism.

While los is a popular destination, there's a special magic at work here. You won't feel pressured or hassled; instead, the islanders take pride in working together to keep their visitors smiling – and returning.



Hora, Ormos and Mylopotas

los' four main centres sit nearly on top of one another on the west coast. The port, Ormos, is lined with tavernas and cafes and stretches out into sandy Gialos Beach, backed by beachside bars. Just 2km uphill (or 1.2km up a stone staircase), sits the capital of Hora, a stunning traditional village and the nightlife hub. From here, the road winds south to the brown sugar sand of Mylopotas Beach, with upscale and backpacker-style resorts. You'll find places to eat, sleep, drink and dance in all three settlements. Banks and grocery stores are in Ormos and Hora.

The bus terminal in Ormos is straight ahead from the ferry quay on Plateia Emirou. If you don't mind stairs, it's a fairly easy walk from the port to Hora; follow the signs off the main road out of town.

In Hora there is a seasonal information kiosk at the bus stop, across the road from the big cathedral. Hora's central square is Plateia Valeta, buried deep in the old town. The road straight ahead from Hora's bus stop leads to Mylopotas Beach.



Skarkos

Crowning a low hill in a picturesque plain just outside Hora, this Early to Late Bronze Age settlement has restored walled terraces and the low ruins of several Cycladic-style buildings for you to explore.

A small visitor centre and interpretation boards in Greek and English clue you in to what you're looking at. To drive here, take the turning between Ormos and Hora. To walk, follow the traditional stone footpath from the back of Hora, passing goats and farmhouses. (You will feel lost more than once but fear not.) The walk takes around 15 minutes.



Archaeological Museum

Finds from Skarkos are displayed at this thorough, if slightly dry, museum in the town hall next to the bus stop in Hora. There are also exhibits from island excavations in general.



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