



8 HALKIDIKI Best for a family or three generations

Forget Mykonos or Santorini – for a sun-drenched Grecian holiday try the lesser known region of Halkidiki, on the mainland. It's quieter and more

relaxed with a stunning combination of mountains, shady forests and sandy beaches. The stunning **Ikos** Oceania is a luxurious cliffside resort with jaw-dropping views over the Med. It might be big – there are 298 rooms, a private beach and six swimming pools – and all-inclusive, but we were impressed by the way it still maintains the feel of a much smaller, boutique hotel. It's on six different levels, and each one has the feeling of being separate from the rest of the hotel.

Five restaurants are included in your stay (as well as drinks) and only one of them is a traditional buffet – the rest are à la carte. Our favourite was Ouzo, a traditional Greek taverna offering fresh salads and grilled fish drizzled with olive oil and lemon. Ikos Oceania also offers an innovative Dine Out option, which means you can eat at a handful of local restaurants with the bill included in your all-inclusive rate.

As well as a kids' club, there's an adults-only Astra Club, which is open until 2am, and an array of fitness classes from Pilates to Zumba. A highlight was morning yoga practised in a shady spot with the heavenly sea view as a backdrop. If you'd rather relax, book in at the spa, where French beautician Anne Semonin, who specialises in anti-ageing skincare, has devised the range of treatments. Try the blissful Shiatsu massage (£105 for 1 hour).

For those who prefer to be more active, canoeing, windsurfing and snorkelling are also included. If you can tear yourself away from the hotel, visit some of the picturesque villages nestled in the region's forests (the hotel can book taxis and make suggestions). Nikiti Old Town is beautiful with narrow cobbled streets and a 16th-century church.

THE COST Classic Collection Holidays (classic-collection.co.uk) offers seven nights at Ikos Oceania (ikosresorts.com) from £877pp in April, based on two adults sharing, on an all-inclusive basis with return flights from London Gatwick to Thessaloniki and private transfers.

INSIDER TIP

For a more exclusive stay, splash out on one of the 30 larger Deluxe Collection rooms. These have their own private pool and beach area.

secretescapes.com/ vouchers-offer

Gift vouchers from £25 to £10,000 for destinations as diverse as Lima and Iceland. The selection of spa breaks is fab, and there's always a line-up of tempting featured breaks at big discounts. **w&h**

LAST-MINUTE TRAVEL GIFTS

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Gift vouchers from £10 to £500 in multiples of £5. You can spend them in National Trust shops, cafés and admission points, or even use them towards a year's membership or a holiday cottage booking.

[prideofbritainhotels.com/ gift-vouchers](http://prideofbritainhotels.com/gift-vouchers)

Use vouchers to pay for rooms, meals, spa treatments or activities such as horse-riding or cookery classes. Better still, all vouchers redeemed in January are worth an additional 20% of the face value.

eurostar.com

Create e-vouchers from £10 to £250, with a festive design and personal message. Use towards any Eurostar booking – passengers get two-for-one entry to a range of museums and galleries in France and Belgium.

thevirgingiftcard.co.uk

Gift vouchers cost from £5 to £500 and can be used for holidays, flights, cruises, wine, hot-air balloon flights, cooking lessons and experience days.

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