

Halkidiki

From the moment #TeamCoco arrived in Halkidiki, it was clear that in Greece, timings go out of the window, there is no such thing as an itinerary, and stress simply does not exist.

Words by **Vanessa Gainford**

Admittedly, it only took a few hours (and a few glasses of Champagne) to get used to having no plans but when in Greece, it is necessary to eat Greek, drink Greek and breathe Greek in order to live Greek. It's safe to say a few days of being honorarily Greek is good for the soul, especially when staying at Danai Resort & Villas; so rightly described as an Eden like haven.

Located on Sithonia, the second peninsula of Halkidiki and surrounded by Mediterranean gardens and the Aegean sea, Danai Resort & Villas is the ideal location for an escape from every-

day life and to be transported into complete bliss, whether that be by transfer, helicopter or charter jet.

The resort is home to 64 suites and villas; all hidden away amongst the greenery for the upmost privacy and each is individual in both architecture and interior design; featuring sea or garden views, most with private pools. From the smallest suite to the most recent build of the extravagant Green Pearl Villa, there truly is the perfect place for every taste.

The gardens and natural surroundings provide welcomed shelter from the sunshine and the perfect contrast to the luxury

of the resort. The private beach and beach cabanas are the ideal spot for ultimate relaxation; butler service, sunglass cleaning, refreshing towels and Champagne, make it possible to do hours of undisturbed sunbathing.

If relaxing gets a little too much then the beach is also the place for water sports, from water skiing to paddle boarding and scuba diving. If you want to keep up your workout routine, then the gym, fitness instructor, yoga classes, tennis court and horse riding, are all ways you can keep yourself active throughout your stay.

The resort is also home to a salon, fashion coaching and fancy





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boutiques but most importantly, the spa. Stocking products from brands like Valmont, and with facilities such as a reflexology bed, heated chaise lounges and saunas, it's clear that you're in good hands. The spa is a haven for peace and tranquillity, offering facials, massages and beauty treatments. After a complete pamper, a soak in goats milk and honey in the Cleopatra bath and continuous health refreshments, Danai ensures you leave the spa feeling like a new version of yourself.

Although Danai Resort & Spa has everything you could ever need, this peninsula is far too beautiful and historical not to explore. Danai provides guests the option to discover Halkidiki by Yacht or speedboat. Yacht charter comes with a picnic basket and on-board meal service along with the option of butler service and spa treatments. The trips allow you to combine sightseeing, luxury and leisure whilst sailing past and docking at locations such as Neos Marmaras, Diaporos, Kelyfos and Porto Carras. Mount Athos is a must, also known as the Holy Mountain and is a UNESCO



World Heritage Site, consisting of 20 Orthodox monasteries and is only accessible with certain permissions.

If you wish to venture further afield or on land then there is so much on offer. The cave of Petralona is perfect for both history and geography lovers as it's where the world's oldest discovered European man was found after 700,000 years, along with stalactites and stalagmites which have been forming for centuries. Next on the list is Nikiti village, the

staff at Danai Resort & Villas are able to recommend a variety of restaurants here and the old traditional village combined with pine trees and a long stretching beach is the perfect setting to soak up the Greek culture.

One of the highlights of being in Greece is of course the Greek cuisine and Danai Resort & Villas manages to exceed all expectations with every meal. From pianos and violins serenading you as you eat breakfast from being dragged away from your fourth course to join traditional dances before you return to your

table for a further three courses, each and every meal is enjoyable in every way. The Andromeda is an open-air restaurant with rustic flair; where you will watch chefs cook your meal as you listen to live music and experience true Greek celebrations in a truly authentic way.

It's impossible not to mention that Danai Resort & Villas is home to an award winning and one of the best three restaurants in Greece, The Squirrel. The menu offers a delicious blend of French and Mediterranean cuisine, served in multiple courses, each somehow getting better than the first. The Squirrel is an open air terrace with only five tables, all facing the sea and is purely candlelit making the evening truly exceptional.

If privacy is something you wish to have, then Danai goes above and beyond for their private dining experiences; they are completely secluded and indeed an experience of quintessential romance, impeccable views, service and cuisine with personal touches leaving you with a night to remember.

Built deep into the side of the mountain and equipped with rustic, antique furnishings is Danai's own wine cellar. With only candle light and naturally cooled temperatures, the cellar has a mystical and old-world ambience. Home to a minimum of 1700 etiquettes of finest wines carefully collected over decades and a wine list containing 20 of the most exquisite Champagnes, such as the top collectable Heidsieck Monopole 1907 'Goût Américain', the cellar is unique to say the least. Regular wine tastings with amazing sommeliers are an opportunity not to be missed and will leave you with whole breadth of knowledge and even more of an appreciation for wine.



Since its establishment 40 years ago by founder Danai, the resort has been supported by a genuine passion for hospitality and high standards making it the definition of luxury. The resort is family orientated, typically Greek, and is now looked over by her son, Kimon. Danai's influence is through all architecture and interior design, whereas Kimon ensures each stay is perfect. Taking guests individual needs into account, Danai Resort & Villas takes pride in exceeding expectations which will keep them returning year after year. From a beach proposal with a piano in the sea to surprise yacht trips with a picnic whilst a party, or even your wedding, is planned for you, they will ensure every moment is as unique as it is memorable. ■

