

Bloomberg



Ask ChatGPT why it's so hard to plan a vacation and its top reason – of eight – is decision paralysis. Information overload comes second.

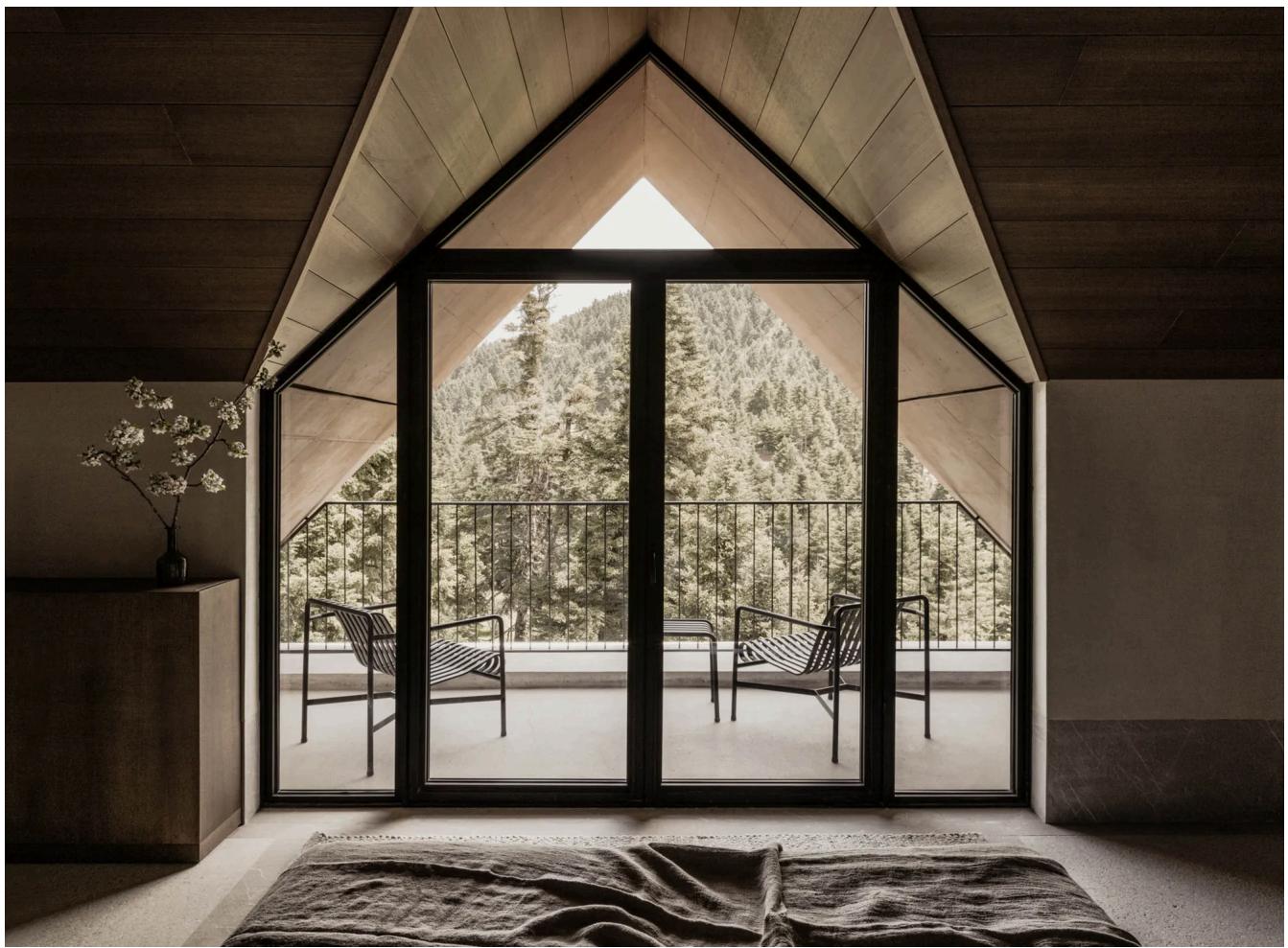
Like everything generated by the bot, that answer is overly simplistic. But it isn't wrong. To this list of concerns, we'd add the high stakes of limited time off, the difficulty of balancing discovery with relaxation and economic uncertainty. Never mind the gamble we all make when we have to choose between a perennial destination that may be overrun with crowds or an unknown spot that we may get all to ourselves. No wonder it's so hard to get started.

For our 10th annual travel guide for the year ahead, we've made it easier than ever to cut through the noise. The following 25 destinations are a mix of reinvigorated classics and under-the-radar gems, each brimming with new luxuries and creative energy. There are the Scottish islands you never considered, the big Asian food city that's not in Japan or Thailand, and stunning national parks with plush new resorts. There are the Greek mountains instead of the Greek isles (trust us on that one), the Argentine capital of land sailing and the Caribbean's queen of quiet luxury. Between what's opening in 2026 and what's brewing in the travel zeitgeist, we think all these places are on the verge of a deserved moment in the spotlight.

Better yet, much of this year's list goes big on value, swapping overtouristed and overpriced spots for places where you can easily find high-end hotels for less than \$500 a night.

Amassing this list takes all year. To create it, we collect and track news from hundreds of sources, cross-check it with travel experts we trust across the globe, and send reporters to the frontlines of the next big trends. The result is a roadmap for 2026 that's both novel and reliable, packed with surprises and guaranteed delights.

It's also packed with all the information you need to plan your trip. Select your nearest departure city from the drop-down menu to get personalized, month-by-month estimates for hotel and flight costs to each of our recommended destinations. Powering it all are some 2.5 billion data points from [Kayak](#), whose insights are combined with recommendations from local operators to help you decide the best and worst times to travel.



EUROPE

THE GREEK MOUNTAINS

BECAUSE SANTORINI AND MYKONOS ARE SO 2025

Share this destination   

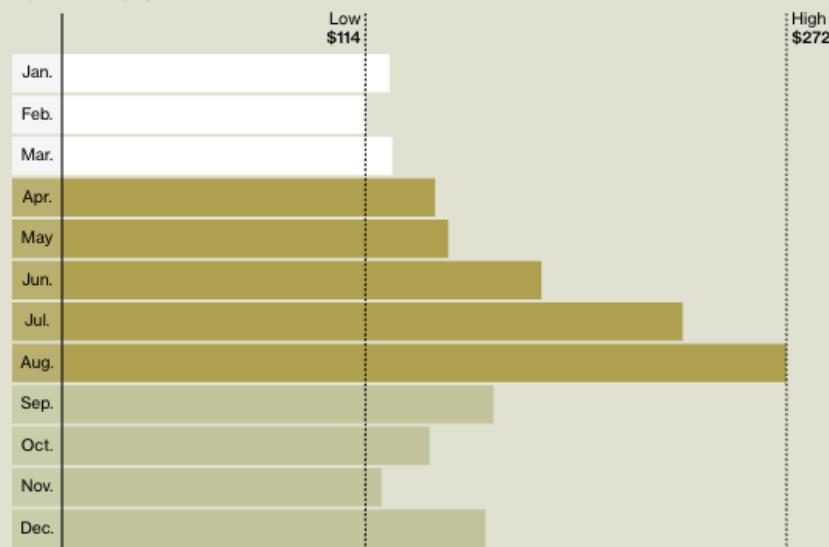
The next big travel hot spot in Greece requires no \$1,000-a-night room, no jostling for a beach club reservation, no crowded ferry to a remote island. In fact, it doesn't involve islands at all. Far from the thump-thump-thump of Santorini and Mykonos is a region of traditional farms and cheesemakers, thousand-year-old monasteries carved into rock faces and old stone buildings galore. Welcome to the Greek mountains.

As far as they may be from the islands, in geography and spirit, northern Greece and the inner Peloponnese contain many of the same culinary delights and luxury pursuits as their Ionian and Cycladic neighbors – and then some. At the Grand Forest Metsovo, in the northwestern Pindus Alps, for example, you can swim in a hilltop infinity pool, then bicycle past thickets of black fir trees and taste cabernet sauvignon from high-altitude vineyards. Metsovo and other mountain towns are already beloved by Greeks as wintertime hangouts.

PLAN YOUR JOURNEY

When to travel:  Best  Neutral  Worst

HOTEL PRICES



► Notes on prices from KAYAK

Only so many new resorts can open to meet the growing demand: In 2022 the Greek government put mountain habitats under environmental protection laws, halting further construction to prevent overdevelopment and, worse, overtourism. It means a spate of recently opened projects may be the last of their kind.

One of them, Manna, is a five-star hideaway with 23 rattan- and linen-decked rooms in the fir forest of Arcadia, about a 2.5-hour drive west of Athens. A 46-mile network of hiking trails connects it to a string of charming, postcard-size villages. Whether you choose Manna or one of its competitors – the spa-driven Euphoria Retreat, perhaps, or the plush farm digs at Opora Country Living – chances are you'll stay far from the crowds and below a \$500 nightly rate.

WHEN TO GO

Spring offers the most pleasant temperatures for hiking, and blooming wildflowers will be at their dazzling best at the end of April. The summer is an ideal option for a “coolcation” away from the heat of Athens.

WHEN NOT TO GO

Areas like Metsovo are at their busiest during peak ski season from January through March, so for a quieter trip to Greece, avoid the winter prime time.

WHOM TO CALL

Trufflepig