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Discover one of Greece's best-kept secrets... the remote and very beautiful Costa Navarino

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Check out Voidokilia beach, which has been named one of the world's best

If you're looking for escapism, I have just the place. Greece's best-kept secret paradise is otherwise known as the Westin Resort Costa Navarino.

It's nestled in Messenia, in the southwest of the country's Peloponnese peninsula. It's not a part of Greece often visited by Brits, but that's what makes it so special.

The resort, which has been open for six years, sits on a stunning, sweeping beach, surrounded by 6,500 olive trees.

It has two Starwood hotels – the Westin and the Romanos. And it's become far more accessible to UK visitors now that British Airways flies seasonally to nearby Kalamata from [Heathrow](#).



The resort is designed to be peaceful and relaxing

A comfortable, four-hour flight and we landed at one of the world's smallest – and most charming – airports. Incredibly, it takes just 60 seconds to stroll from cabin to baggage carousel. Then it's just a 40-minute drive through idyllic countryside to Costa Navarino.

This tranquil and beautiful oasis is all about relaxation and peace. To get you in the mood, the Anazoe Spa offers a full range of treatments. And even if, like me, spas aren't generally your thing, you're sure to come out rejuvenated after spending time in the ice-grotto rooms, mist showers and herbal saunas.

But don't panic if you want more out of your holiday than just chilling, as this five-star destination has a huge range of experiences on offer. Sports facilities include tennis, squash, badminton, table tennis, basketball, volleyball and even a climbing wall.

There are two championship golf courses – one of which was designed by former US Masters champion **Bernhard Langer**. The fairways meander through box canyons and olive groves overlooking Navarino Bay. They are attached to a clubhouse with a drinks list as long as your putt. Nearby, a golf academy provides expert instruction.



A light, airy room at the Westin resort

Families can take advantage of multiple pools, a kids' club, creche, nature centre – even a race track.

It's easy to get around – just hop on a buggy and you can reach any part of the resort in minutes. Or, take advantage of the dedicated bike station and hire two wheels to discover the unspoiled Messenian countryside.

Be sure to check out the stunning Polilimnio Waterfalls, as well as Voidokilia beach, which has been named one of the world's best.

When you tire of dry land, diving or snorkelling is a must as it's here you'll see magnificent Loggerhead sea turtles.



Relax by one of the resort's multiple pools

The resort's dive centre has special programmes for children aged 10 and above, which can even lead to Padi certification.

Other watersports on offer include yachting, water skiing, kayaking and paddle boarding. And when you've exhausted yourself trying out all the activities on offer, it's time to dine.

With 21 restaurants on site, all tastes are catered for.

Breakfast is served Mediterranean buffet-style and includes fresh local produce, including yoghurt, cheese and cold cuts from nearby farms.



The loggerhead turtles are a must-see

After all that, it's unlikely you'll need much for lunch, but I suggest finding a shady spot at Kafeneo, and trying the traditional Greek souvlaki and gyros (meat or vegetables grilled on skewers). They come wrapped in grilled pita bread, served with a glass of chilled Greek rose wine.

But my favourite place to enjoy Mediterranean cuisine was at Barbouni, a spectacular beach-side lunch spot, where you can snack on seafood and sip cold beers while gazing over the turquoise Ionian Sea.

When the sun finally goes down, I can highly recommend the steak dishes at The Flame restaurant. Or try the fresh pizza at Da Luigi, where guests can dine while watching a film at the outdoor cinema.

The ultimate place to take in the sunset though is at the vibrant Agora village square in the middle of the resort. It's set up like a traditional Greek village, and is surrounded by lively bars and restaurants.

Also on the subject of eats, I experienced an olive oil tasting session. Led by a local expert it was fascinating, and informative. Note: Always buy extra virgin olive oil and store it in a dry, dark, cool place.



The Westin resort is a tranquil oasis

If you want to learn even more about the local cuisine, take a cooking class. In fewer than 60 minutes, I discovered how to prepare, cook and serve traditional Greek noodles with chicken in tomato sauce. In less than six minutes, it was all gone.

Greek tradition has it that group dancing follows dinner, so be careful not to overindulge too much.

At last you're ready for bed and, as you would expect at an upscale resort, the huge suites are exquisite – and you won't forget the spectacular views from your balcony.

In fact, it's impossible to forget anything about the hidden gem that is Costa Navarino.

Just keep it to yourself, OK?

Get there

- British Airways Holidays has 7nts B&B at the 5* The Westin Costa Navarino Resort from £689pp, from Heathrow May 4-18, 2017. Book by November 20. ba.com/kalamata, 0344 493 0125.

Tourist info: westincostanavarino.com visitgreece.gr

Time zone: UK +2hr

Currency: Euro £1 = 1.09

Best time to go: Greece is the word in early May