

# KOUS ON KORINTH

Most of us who head to Greece usually have the same deal in mind: wind, waves, sun, and maybe a little (or a lot) of partying – usually on one of the many superb islands. But there's so much more for the adventurous windsurfer to explore in this beautiful country, says Greek wave warrior Thomas 'Kous' Kousioris...



**T**he Greek islands offer conditions that can satisfy just about any windsurfing requirement, and pretty much all round. Places like Samos, Naxos, Paros, Rhodes, Karpathos, Andros, Santorini and Crete need no introduction. Indeed, most Greek islands get good winds, but don't take it for granted. Good organisation always proves valuable, so be sure to check the weather on [www.gre78.gr](http://www.gre78.gr) before you book your tickets. The summer months are usually best, but many can offer great conditions outside of high season, and most islands have plenty of other attractions and good exploring on offer too. Yet although the islands can offer awesome holidaying, once you've seen a few you might well be thinking 'been there, done that'. So here are some alternative destinations in Greece that you might like to consider.

## Korinthian Gulf

The Korinthian (or Corinthian) Gulf is a deep inlet of the Ionian Sea that separates the Peloponnese peninsula from western mainland Greece, and is situated close to Athens. The Gulf has been blessed by the Greek gods, and offers the best winds when the forecast for other venues fails to deliver. When the direction is north-westerly, westerly or even southerly to south-westerly in Athens, the Gulf can boil with wind and waves. The windy zone starts from Alepochori, part of the Attica coast which is very close to Athens, and continues up to Patra. Here are a few of the windsurfing spots in this zone.

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For more detailed info please check the local websites [www.megara.gr](http://www.megara.gr), [www.loutraki.gr](http://www.loutraki.gr) and [www.akrata.gr](http://www.akrata.gr)



## Alepochori

Just an hour from Athens and 20 minutes from Megara, this is the place to go when the forecast winds are strong north-westerlies or westerlies. There are plenty of spots to sail, depending upon the strength of the wind and your level. On light wind days Alepochori can be suitable for freeride and freestyle, while in stronger winds it can deliver unbelievable conditions. The waves can reach up to mast-high in a Force 8, providing huge ramps for aerials and ideal hardcore onshore wavesailing conditions (but watch out for the massive shorebreak). Alepochori offers various hotels, rental apartments and camping next to the beach, and boasts all the facilities you could hope for – including lifeguards.

## Loutraki

About 20 minutes further up the coast from Alepochori and approximately 30 minutes drive from the main Athinon-Korinthou road, Loutraki offers similar conditions to Alepochori, but has an even denser population of lifeguards and a much more organised beach during the summer months. Bear in mind that parking close to the beach can prove rather difficult in the summer months, as it's very popular with tourists. The

shorebreak here can be really challenging for all levels of sailor, so take extra care when launching.

## Xilokastro (Kamari Beach)

A little further still (1hr 45min from Athens) you'll find Xilokastro. When you get there, take a left to Kamari beach. The advantage of Kamari is that when the wind blows from the west or north-west – even when it's light – you can catch some great sets and do some nice turns. Jumping isn't bad either, with plenty of decent ramps there for the taking. Kamari offers loads of parking, plenty of facilities, and (compared to Loutraki) doesn't have so many swimmers getting in your way. Most of the time Kamari proves a better choice than Alepochori and Loutraki (but that's not to do those two excellent spots down in any way). If you plan on staying for a while, Kamari has camping facilities and Xilokastro has plenty of hotels and nightclubs.

## Akrata

The last spot is about two hours' drive from Athens and the most distant among the described destinations. But the trip is well worth it and very enjoyable, as the scenery is fantastic and you'll be passing plenty of great beaches,

so you can choose which one offers the best conditions for your requirements.

When you arrive in Akrata, head to Scaraveos. This is the best part of the beach, and produces huge waves that are excellent for wave riding. There is also the Scaraveos Café-Club, which is great for taking on fuel in preparation for a 'big' windsurfing day. It's a great place to watch the action from, too, and is popular with spectators, so be sure to give those jumps and turns on the wave your best shot!

On a good day Scaraveos will remind you of Pozo. After maybe Alepochori, this is by far the most challenging spot of all on a big day, offering perfect clean waves for nice frontside waveriding and jumps, even when the wind is not so strong. In a Force 8 it can be pretty tricky though, and good timing is essential for launching and landing. The only negative is that, apart from the café, the beach doesn't have many facilities, so the scenery appears a bit more hardcore than in the other spots. (Some may view this as a positive though.) However, parking is fairly easy, and in the centre of Akrata you'll find plenty of hotels, camping and nightclubs during the spring, summer and autumn.

## Weather Watch

It's really important to check the weather forecast for the Gulf through local rather than European sites, since the Greek ones take the local effects into account. The two main websites that offer really accurate predictions for the Gulf are [www.meteo.gr](http://www.meteo.gr), which provides a three-day forecast, and [www.noa.gr/forecast](http://www.noa.gr/forecast). Check for direction and strength in the Athens forecast map (10-m wind) if you're interested in Alepochori or Loutraki. For Xilokastro or Akrata, navigate to the Sailing Forecast link, then click the Korinthian Gulf dot in the sailing forecasts map. There's now also a great new Wave Forecast section, which offers wave height forecasts for any period from 6 to 36 hours.

Finally, having covered almost everything in respect to windsurfing in the Korinthian Gulf, I'd just like to finish by saying that, although you do need to hire a car to travel around these spots, I am proud to say that the food, the hospitality of the people and the environment in the Gulf is simply awesome, and deserves a visit.

I look forward to seeing you there! ☺



**Thomas 'Kous' Kousioris (GRE-78) is supported by Ezzy Sails, Angulo Boards, Columbia Sportwear, Gecko Headwear, [www.kostakistrucks.gr](http://www.kostakistrucks.gr) and [www.wavewarriors.gr](http://www.wavewarriors.gr)**