

# Exploring the Best of Greece

Sept 15 -28, 2021

What a fascinating place to visit! Athens, 450 yrs BC, set the stage for the western world with democracy, theater, science, literature, mathematics, philosophy & art during 50 years of its "Golden Age". Classical Greece is a culture of many different peoples, religions & cultures. The myths of gods & goddesses we have read about come alive in these magical historical sites.



**Wed. Sept 15:** Arrive in Athens. Check into Acropolis View Hotel.

**Thurs. Sept 16:** 10:am-1:30: Authentic Greek food tour, off the beaten path for the tastiest! Afternoon: Return to hotel for a rest. 4:30-6:30, guided tour to Acropolis, Parthenon, Theater of Dionysis & Athena Nike. Insights into the ancient past & how they link to the present; foundational stories of Greek mythology; understanding of the Ancient Greek society; how Athens became one of the greatest cities of the ancient world.

**Fri. Sept 17:** Your Free day to explore & visit your choices: the Acropolis Museum, National Archaeological Museum, National Garden & Marketplace etc. Our hotel is walking distances to sites.

**Sat & Sun, Sept 18 & 19:** 2 Hr boat ride to island of Hydra for two nites. After the hectic pace of Athens, time to unwind & retreat to the traffic-free atmosphere of tranquil Hydra, the closest & one of the prettiest of the Cyclades, (Kee-klah-dhess) Islands. Guided walking tour. Enjoy a stroll to nearby villages. Explore isolated beaches and taverns by way of water taxis, (included in tour). Lots of burros & roosters. This island had been a leading navel power after Greece became independent in 1821. It's later fame is due to diving for sponges, featured in the movie, "Boy on a Dolphin", with Sophia Loren

**Mon & Tues, Sept 20 & 21:** By way of boat, leave Hydra for the Peloponnese peninsula. Our private English speaking driver with a luxury air-conditioned Mercedes Sprinter minibus, will pick us up in Ermioni, stopping at Epidavros. In the 3rd & 4th century BC, it was a major healing center in ancient Greece with a temple to Apollo. Today, the main attraction is the famous theater, the finest & best-preserved in all of the 132 theaters in Greece.

Next, a stop off at Mycene, some of the oldest ruins of European civilizations was a fortress city as a lead in power from 1600-1200 BC. The mysterious Mycenaeans, ancestors to the Greeks, assumed to have won the Trogen war, disappeared by 1100 BC. Similar to the Anasazi of the Southwest.

Two nights in Nafplio, a picturesque seaside town, once the capital of Greece in 1820, is an authentic Greek town. A two hour guided walking tour of Old Town will show off its elegant Venetian homes & Neoclassical mansions.

**Wed. Sept 22:** Depart am with short stop at Corinth, one of the most powerful & wealthy cities under Roman rule in 146 BC & an important archaeological site, Doric Temple of Apollo, the dominate site. The Corinth Canal completed in 1893 is also a major attraction, accommodating vessels of up to 10,000 tons. St Paul preached here in 51-52 AD and wrote the most quoted books of the Bible, 1st & 2nd Corinthians.

Early afternoon we arrive at Delphi, (dell-fee), for a one night stay & a guided tour of the Sanctuary of Apollo, Sanctuary of Athena & the Kastalian Spring. The Archaeological Museum contains the treasures from the ruins. Delphi's fame grew from the prophetess Pythia, resulting in the Pythian Games, second only to the Olympics. The ancients believed Delphi was the center of the world & marked it with a monument. You may need a jacket here due to the altitude, only just over 2,000 ft from sea level, but can feel chilly.

**Thurs. Sept 23:** Depart for Athens airport for a short flight to Santorini for two nights. Probably one of the world's most popular island, it is the most unique of the Mediterranean due to the caldera, a collapsed volcanic crater. Our lodging is Fira, the capital & main town. A guided tour will take us to the best spots, including Oia with the famed white houses with blue domes, historic wineries for wine tasting & beaches. This island boasts of 3500 years of wine making! There are actually 5 islands that make up Santorini, (Santa Irene). There will be free time for museums, shopping & exploring your personal interests.

**Sat. Sept 25:** A 3 hour boat ride to Naxos for two nights. This is an amazing island with so much diversity. It is the greenest of the Cyclades island group, high mountains & fertile valleys, some of the most beautiful beaches in Greece. In the villages they still wear traditional dress, weave on old looms & live off the land. The island has beautiful old Byzantine churches, monasteries & Venetian castles. It has been continuously inhabited since the 4th century BC.

Late afternoon, a guide will lead us on a walking tour of Old Town and the islands history, ending at "Portara" for a breathtaking, panoramic sunset view.

**Sun. Sept 26:** A two hour boat ride across the Aegean Sea to Delos, an uninhabited island, known as the most sacred from ancient times, 3,000 years ago. Mt. Kynthos, 370 ft holds the remains of the Temple of Zeus & Athena. The sides of the mountain are littered with remains of temples, overlooking the harbor & ruins of one the Aegean's finest cities, population approx. 30,000, including a slave trade. The birthplace of Apollo is represented by his Sanctuary as well as that of Artemis. The icons of this island are the five lion statues.

Next a 3 hour visit to the island of Mykonos, now a jetsetter island. Time to explore some of the spectacular views, Old Town, windmills & sandy beaches. If you like, you can rent a scooter & explore the whole island. Return to Naxos for the night.

**Mon. Sept 27:** We have the morning to explore more of Naxos, the 1207 AD Castle of Naxos, Vallinda, 1896 Citrus liquor distiller, traditional textiles & marble quarries. Mid afternoon, we fly back to a boutique hotel near the airport.

**Tues. Sept. 28:** “Lypirós”, regrettably time to fly home with beautiful memories & a camera full of unforgettable photos!

This completes the itinerary but I will be notifying travelers of “ need to know details” including: traveling in Greece, money, phones & wi-fi, best places to eat, list of our reserved hotels, help with flights to Greece & more history. Recommended reading: [www.greektravel.com/books](http://www.greektravel.com/books). Pausanias, Travels of Greece, five translated volumes, available on Amazon.

**I highly recommend travel insurance, the most popular:**

**Travelguard.com.**

**Covid vaccine required.**

**Trip Details:** Max of 10 travelers. Cost: \$1875/double. \$2695/single.  
Deposit: \$300. Balance due: July 15, 2021. Full refunds until July 15th, 2021. After July 15, refunds can be granted if your spot is filled.  
Includes: 13 nights lodging, 13 breakfasts, Food Tour, 8 guided sightseeing tours with local guides, 2 wine tastings, 5 island visits, 2 island flights, 4 ferries, private deluxe motor coach, drivers tips, departing airport shuttle transfer.  
Does not include: tips for guides or airlines to Greece.

**Payment Methods:**

Checks to Joyride SW Tours,  
P.O. Box 912,  
Green Valley, AZ 85622.  
Zelle or (credit card & Paypal add 3 %.)

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