

# Athens & the Peloponnese

Nafplion, Olympia, & Athens, with visits to Epidaurus, Mycenae, Delphi & the island of Hydra

## Day 1: Your Greek Adventure Begins

Meet up with your fellow travelers for your overnight flight across the Atlantic to Greece.

## Day 2: Welcome to Greece!

Arrival in Greece! After meeting your tour leader board your bus as we begin our exploration of mainland Greece, starting by crossing the Corinth Canal to the Peloponnese peninsula.

Our destination today is Nafplion: a beautiful port of stepped streets, overlooked by twin Venetian fortresses. Nafplion was modern Greece's first capital & today is a charming town of around 10,000.

After checking-in for a 3-night stay, our short walking tour will introduce you to the city & its history. Then enjoy free time to relax & recuperate after your long journey, perhaps on the beach or by exploring the Old Town.

## Day 3: Mycenae, Epidaurus & Nafplion

This morning we begin our sightseeing with a visit to the open-air theater at Epidaurus, fantastically well preserved & still able to seat 14,000, just as it did in the 4<sup>th</sup> century!

Later we'll stop to see the ruins of ancient Mycenae, said by Homer to have been the home of King Agamemnon, who led the Greek armies to Troy. An excellent small museum here helps to bring to life the surrounding city ruins.

Arriving back in Nafplion later this afternoon, you'll have time to explore some more, shop, or take a dip.

## Day 4: Set Sail to Hydra

Today we make a short drive to nearby Metoxi, a small fishing village & port from where we will take a water taxi across the water to Hydra, lying just a mile & a half off the Peloponnese coastline.

Hydra is one of the prettiest of the Greek islands, with a unique architecture that is protected by a strict development policy. Spend your day exploring the picturesque

harbor; swimming in the deep-blue waters, lazing on the sandy beaches or perhaps taking a donkey ride - cars & motorbikes are banned on the island.

Late this afternoon we will rendezvous for dinner before returning to Nafplion this evening after a great day out.

### **Day 5: Arcadia & Ancient Olympia**

Departing Nafplion this morning, we pass through the mountainous scenery of Arcadia - home to many of Greece's greatest archaeological sites & most beautiful beaches, as well as villages where life hasn't changed much in centuries.

This afternoon we visit Ancient Olympia to view the site of the original Olympic Games, held almost 2,800 years ago. See if you can set your own personal best in the arena where it all began! Our overnight hotel is close by.

### **Day 6: Delphi & Athens**

The new bridge at Patras will take us over the Gulf of Corinth this morning, to Delphi, where we visit the town & the site of the famed oracle. In ancient times, this was considered the center of the world, & travelers came from near & far to seek its wisdom. After lunch, we continue on to Athens, the historic & bustling capital of Greece, where we check-in to our centrally-located hotel before strolling through the narrow streets of the old Plaka district for a relaxed evening introduction.

Lying on the slopes of the Acropolis, the Plaka is full of restaurants, shops, & cafes, as well as private homes. It feels more like a village than the center of a major capital city.

### **Day 7: Athens in Depth**

The highlight of our morning guided tour of Athens is a visit to the Acropolis where we'll see the world-famous Parthenon & the Temple of Athena Nike. A short stroll downhill from the Acropolis, along new walkways laid out in preparation for the 2004 Olympics, we'll also see the huge Temple of Olympian Zeus.

During the afternoon a visit will be made to the National Archaeological Museum to view incredible ancient artifacts, many found in the places we have visited on our tour so far.

This evening, after dinner, we'll ride a funicular to the top of Lykavitos Hill for a panoramic view of the city, including the floodlit Parthenon!

### **Day 8: Athens at Leisure**

Today is almost entirely free for you to enjoy the Greek capital at your leisure.

There is plenty to do in this ancient city – visit the stadium of the first modern Olympics or the Ancient Agora, shop for traditional wares in the Plaka district, or see pre-historic cycladic or Byzantine art in one of the city's fine museums.

We'll get together later for a celebration of traditional Greek food, music, & dancing, to celebrate our final evening together. Opa!

### **Day 9: Homeward Bound**

Transfer to Athens' airport for a morning flight to the USA, arriving home later the same day.