

# Glories of Greece

Thessaloniki & Macedonia, Meteora, Nafplion & Athens,  
with visits to Delphi, Epidaurus & Mycenae

## Day 1: USA to Greece

Your Greek adventure begins today as you travel to the airport for an overnight flight across the Atlantic to Greece.

## Day 2: Thessaloniki, Greece's Second City

After a short stopover we arrive late morning in Thessaloniki, Greece's second city. This afternoon a short city tour will introduce you to this historical trading city, at various times home to Romans, Ottomans, & others. Sights will include the remains of Roman Thessalonica, the old city walls, the Chain Tower & Citadel, & the city's noted Byzantine churches. After transferring to our hotel for a two night stay, there will be time to relax & refresh before a group dinner.

## Day 3: Thessaloniki

This morning you'll have the opportunity to relax and recover from your transatlantic flight, before discovering Thessaloniki further. Or explore the city's renowned markets in the company of your tour leader who will be on hand to familiarize you with the city. This afternoon we will visit the city's excellent Archaeological Museum, home to the fabulous 'Gold of Macedon' treasures found in the tomb of Phillip II, father of Alexander the Great.

## Day 4: Veria, Vergina, & Meteora

Today we depart Thessaloniki, for the journey southwest to Meteora. En-route this morning we'll visit two ancient sites: Veria (ancient Berea), like Thessaloniki itself, was visited by St. Paul as he traveled through the region spreading the Christian message: & Vergina is home to one of Greece's greatest archaeological treasures, the Tomb of King Phillip II. Stopping for lunch along the way, we travel on this afternoon to the Meteora area where we will see the world famous Byzantine monasteries, perched precariously atop rocky outcrops. A highlight of our trip will be the scenic drive & a visit to one of the monasteries. We end our day in the town of Kalambaka, nestled below the monasteries.

## Day 5: Ancient Delphi & Nafplion

After breakfast today we begin our journey south towards the Peloponnese, Greece's southern peninsula. A full morning's drive will bring us to Delphi, site of the legendary oracle & center of the ancient Greek world. Delphi's location, on the slopes of Mount Parnassus, is as spectacular as its history. After time for lunch in the nearby town we'll visit the ruins of Delphi, including the Sanctuary of Apollo & the stoa of the Athenians. We'll also visit the site museum, which contains masterpieces of ancient Greek sculpture.

Later this afternoon we continue on our way, crossing the Corinth canal to the Peloponnese peninsula. Our destination is Nafplion, a beautiful port of stepped streets that was the first capital of modern Greece, where we will stay for two nights.

### **Day 6: Nafplion, Mycenae, & Epidaurus**

This morning we begin with a visit to ancient Mycenae, said by Homer to have been the home of King Agamemnon, who led the Greek armies to Troy. The archaeological site here is quite small but very impressive, & the excellent museum helps to bring to life the city ruins.

Later we'll stop to see the huge 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!

Arriving back in Nafplion at lunchtime, you'll have time for a leisurely lunch before a short walking tour will introduce you to the city. Then your afternoon is free to explore this charming city further (perhaps visiting one of the city's three Venetian fortresses) or simply to relax in one of the many pavement cafes, or perhaps to shop.

### **Day 7: Athens**

Departing Nafplion this morning, we make the short drive to the Corinth Canal, an engineering wonder in the 1890s that cut through the four-mile-wide isthmus & allowed ships to avoid a treacherous sea journey. After a short stop we'll continue on towards Greece's capital city Athens, arriving before lunchtime.

This afternoon a guided city tour will introduce you to Athens, including a visit to the Acropolis to see the Parthenon & Temple of Athena Nike. We'll also visit the Agora, the ancient market place of Athens, & the Temple of Olympian Zeus, the largest temple in the ancient world.

Dinner this evening will be taken at a local restaurant in the central Plaka district, the popular & picturesque heart of the city.

### **Day 8: Athens**

Your full-day in Athens begins with a relaxed walking tour through the narrow streets & shady squares of Plaka, once home to villagers from the Greek islands who recreated their native environment on the slopes of the city's ancient Acropolis.

After lunch enjoy an entirely free afternoon to explore Athens at leisure, or choose to join your tour leader for a visit to the world-renowned National Archaeological Museum.

This evening we rendezvous again for dinner, & afterwards you can opt to join your tour leader for a funicular ride to the top of Lykavitos Hill, the highest in the Athens, for stunning nighttime views over the city.

### **Day 9: 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 10: Athens to USA**

Transfer to the airport for your flight to the US, arriving home later the same day.