



Classic Greece & Santorini

Country(ies): Greece

Tour type: Shoestring

Transport: A/C car/minibus & ferry

Group size: Min: 4 | Max: 50

Days: 10 days

Start Location: Athens, Greece

End Location: Athens, Greece

Meals: Breakfasts - 9, Lunches - 0, Dinners - 3

Highlights:

Acropolis & Parthenon in Athens, UNESCO World Heritage site of Mycenae, Nafplion & Palamidi fortress, birth place of the Olympic Games at Olympia, Temple of Apollo at Delphi, clifftop monasteries at Meteora, beaches of Santorini



Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive in Athens, transfer to hotel

Upon arrival into Athens airport (ATH), you'll be met in the airport by one of our representatives who will then transfer you to your hotel. The rest of the day is then free for you to settle in, relax after your flight, and have a look around the area independently before meeting the group and starting the first sightseeing tours tomorrow morning.

OVERNIGHT: Athens hotel

MEALS: None

EXTRAS: Extra day in Athens - pre-tour Single room supplement (GRSGGS)

Day 2: Athens, city tour

Our tour of Athens starts this morning at the Panathenaikon (Kallimarmaro) Stadium where we'll learn about the first Olympic Games of the modern era which were held here in 1896. Continuing on we make several other stops to see more of ancient and modern Athens, including the Temple of Olympian Zeus, Hadrian's Arch, the Parliament building, memorial to the Unknown Soldier, the Academy, the University, the National Library, and Constitution Square (Syntagma). In the afternoon we head to one of the most important and famous ancient sites in the world, the Acropolis, which sits on top of a rocky hill overlooking the city, providing great views. You'll see the temple of Olympian Zeus and Hadrian's Arch, which formed a symbolic entrance to the city. You'll also tour the Temple of Nike, the most famous of Greek relics, the Parthenon, and see the original home of the marble sculptures removed by Lord Elgin that are now held in the British Museum in London. While at the Acropolis you'll also visit the impressive museum, the towering entrance of Propylaea, the Erechtheion, and the Temple of the Athene Nike.

OVERNIGHT: Athens hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 3: Olympia via Mycenae, Palamidi fortress & Napflion

We leave Athens early this morning and cross the Corinth Canal en-route to the UNESCO WOrld Heritage Site of Mycenae. Here we'll see the home of mythical Agamemnon, the Lions gate, royal tombs and the Cyclopean walls. After touring these sites with our guide we head on to Nafplion which was the first capital of Greece in the region of Argolis. The picturesque town here nestles at the foot of a cliff with the mighty ramparts of the Palamidi Fortress towering above. Our day ends with a drive to Olympia, we'll spend the night here.

OVERNIGHT: Olympia hotel **MEALS:** Breakfast.Dinner

EXTRAS:

Day 4: Olympia, drive to Delphi

We leave Nafplion early this morning and head to Olympia. This is the birthplace of the Olympic Games, which are thought to have begun here in 776 BC as part of a religious festival in honour of the king of the gods, Zeus. We'll visit the archaeological site of Ancient Olympia and learn more about the games' history, taking in the Temple of Zeus and Hera, the Stadium, the altar of the Olympic flame, and the museum which hosts an impressive statue of Hermes of Praxiteles.

Later in the afternoon we leave Olympia and head north over the Rio-Antirio Bridge to Delphi.

OVERNIGHT: Delphi hotel **MEALS:** Breakfast, Dinner

EXTRAS:

Day 5: Tour of Delphi, then through Central Greece to Kalambaka

Delphi was once considered the centre of the ancient world and we'll tour a range of sites here including the remains of the Temple of Apollo which are remarkably well preserved. We also take in the Temple of Athena, the Oracle of Delphi and the Castalian Spring before you can explore the Archaeological Museum of Delphi which hosts some of ancient Greece's best remaining masterpieces such as Eniochos the bronze Charioteer.

Later we head further inland through some beautiful villages and towns of Central Greece, seeing some of the traditional local architecture, before arriving at the small picturesque city of Kalambaka which nestles at the foot of the mountains of Meteora.

OVERNIGHT: Kalambaka hotel **MEALS:** Breakfast, Dinner

EXTRAS:

Day 6: Clifftop monasteries of Meteora. Return to Athens

This morning's tour is truly spectacular, as we explore the unique landscape and rock formations of Meteora. There are towering cliffs here with ancient Christian monasteries built perched on the tops. We will visit some of the monasteries and also enjoy the amazing views to them across the valleys and marvel at how they must have been built.

Note: The monasteries at Meteora have a strict dress code. Women need to wear a long skirt, dress or sarong (trousers or shorts covering the knees are not enough). Men must wear long trousers. Sleeveless shirts are not allowed. Please ensure you have appropriate clothing ready for this day.

We'll then return to Athens, passing Trikala, Lamia and Thermopylae, taking a short stop on the way to see Leonida's Monument. Finally we return back to Athens in the early evening. This is the last night of our Classic Greece tour, while this tour continues on to Santorini tomorrow.

OVERNIGHT: Athens hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 7: Ferry to Santorini

We pick you up from your hotel early this morning and transfer you to the port where you'll board the ferry and head out into the Aegean Sea and the Cyclades islands. Our normal ferry departure is the Blue Star line departing at 07.25 and arriving in Santorini at 14.50 though these times are subject to change. On arrival in the breathtaking island of Santorini we get our first view of the huge underwater caldera (crater) and surrounding cliffs that were created by a huge volcanic eruption in the 16th century. The two main towns of the island, Fira and Oia cling to these cliffs with their whitewashed, cubist style houses overlooking the bay and beaches made up of black, red and white lava pebbles. Its a spectacular setting and after transferring you from the port to your hotel, the rest of the day is free for you to relax and start exploring. Our local representative will give you a briefing on the island's geography, what you can see and do independently, and what optional activities are available.

OVERNIGHT: Santorini hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 8: Santorini, free day

Your day is free today, and you can start to explore the island in more depth. There are a range of popular boat trips available to take you around the crater. These include options to hike up to the active volcano, swim in the warm thermal waters of the hot springs, take a therapeutic mud bath, stop at Red Beach and White Beach to swim and snorkel, visit Thirassia and explore its villages. You can also eat lunch or dinner on board, and watch the sunset below Oia on some trips. Other half and full day tours available include winery tours (Santorini has some great wine), cooking classes, and visits to ancient Akrotiri where you can see the ruins of the village left behind after the volcanic eruptions that made the island uninhabitable. There are also many different beaches around the island you can visit, and taking a hike around and between the villages on the edge of the caldera is a great experience. You can walk from 2 to 5 or more hours, and explore tiny winding alleys through different villages higher up or lower on the cliffs. You'll meet great views around almost every corner and finishing in Oia to enjoy a drink and the sunset is a particular highlight. Rental cars are also available if you'd like to explore further afield.

If you would like to extend the tour by adding more days on Santorini, or to finish the tour early here and stay on independently, please contact us for details.

OVERNIGHT: Santorini hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 9: Santorini, return to Athens

We pick you up early from your hotel today and transfer to the port to board the ferry for your journey back to Athens. Our normal ferry is the Blue Star line departing at 06.10 and arriving in Athens at 11.15 though times are subject to change.

On arrival in Athens we transfer you to your hotel and you then have the whole afternoon free for some final sightseeing, souvenir shopping, and a last taste of Greek food and wine before you depart tomorrow.

OVERNIGHT: Athens hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 10: Athens, transfer to airport

Your tour ends after breakfast today and your time is free until we transfer you back to the airport for your departure flight. Extra nights in the hotel in Athens are available on request.

OVERNIGHT: N/A MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: Extra day in Athens - post-tour

Included:

- All accommodation as stated in the itinerary in approx. 4-star level hotels & boutique guesthouses
- All transport and transfers
- Greek island ferry crossings as per itinerary
- Port-hotel-port transfers on Greek islands
- 24-hour airport arrival & departure transfer service
- Services of a professional local tour guide for mainland tours
- Services of a local tour leader on the islands
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary
- Tipping kitty

Excluded:

- International flights (available on request)
- Visa fees (see tour notes)
- Travel insurance (compulsory, available on request)
- Meals not indicated in the itinerary
- Entrance fees to sites visited (allow approx. EUR 23)
- Hotel residence tax (see tour notes)
- Drinks, snacks and other personal expenses (e.g. laundry)
- Tips for guide & driver
- Optional tours
- Any other items not mentioned above

Notes

The itinerary above is subject to change based on the Greek island ferry schedules. While it does not happen often, sometimes ferry schedules are changed without notice and ferries may also be cancelled completely due to poor weather conditions. In this event the program may need to be adjusted and you may end up spending more or less time in one location than originally planned. This is the nature of travel between the islands and we thank you for your patience and understanding in the rare event of this occurring.

Unlike many of the Greek islands, Santorini is an all year round destination, and remains a very attractive and interesting place to visit whatever time of year it may be. However, some hotels, shops, restaurants and attractions do close during the winter months (November to March). During this time we may use boutique style guesthouses located closer to the centre of Fira so that you are as close as possible to what is still open.

Options

Our tours are designed to include all that you need to enjoy a really special time in the destination you're visiting. However, we do also offer some extra options to complement the tour and add some additional sightseeing or activities, or some extra time at either end of the tour.

All accommodation based options (e.g. Single supplements, extra nights, cruise upgrades) should be booked and paid for in advance so that we can make the appropriate arrangements. Other options may either be booked and paid for in advance or while you are on the tour, though we recommend booking in advance to ensure there are no issues with availability.

Many options are priced the same throughout the year, but some may incur single or high season supplements - full details are given on the tour reservation form or on request.

Extra day in Athens - pre-tour

Min numbers: 1

This option adds an extra day to the start of your tour, staying in the same hotel as the main tour itself (subject to availability). Your airport arrival transfer is still included. Prices shown are per person and based on two people sharing.

Note: Single room and peak season supplements apply.

Extra day in Athens - post-tour

Min numbers: 1

This option adds an extra day to the end of your tour, staying in the same hotel as the main tour itself (subject to availability). Your airport departure transfer is not included. Prices shown are per person and based on two people sharing.

Note: Single room and peak season supplements apply.

Single room supplement (GRSGGS)

Min numbers: 1

The tour price is based on 2 people sharing twin/double rooms. This option books a single room in all the accommodation throughout the tour. If you are a single traveller and would be happy to share a room, let us know and we will see if we can pair you up with another single traveller of the same sex. If a room share is not available when you book then we will add the single room supplement to your booking and it will be payable with your balance payment unless we have arranged a room share for you by then. If a room share is arranged after you have paid the supplement then we will refund it to you. Room shares are arranged in order of booking.

Note: Single supplement prices may vary seasonally.

1. Group Size/Tour Leaders/Guides

Our Greece Shoestring tours are 'seat in coach' type trips, shared with other operators and run with a maximum of 50 travellers, and a minimum of 4 (average around 15-25).

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On our Greek tours we provide a professional local English speaking tour guide to accompany for all the historic sightseeing in and around Athens, Olympia and Delphi. When heading to the Greek islands our Athens guide or local rep will transfer you between between your hotel and the ferry port. You will not be accompanied on board the ferries, but our local representative will meet you on arrival in Santorini and transfer you to your hotel. They will give you a short briefing about the island, assist you with booking any local activities or options, and will be available to help with advice and information and assist you if you have any problems. Otherwise, your time on the island is left free and for independent exploration.

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Note: Please <u>download an up-to-date copy</u> of these tour notes shortly before you travel as itineraries and information does change from time to time.