



Grand Tour of Greece: Athens, Corfu & Santorini

16 days | 19 days with Olympia & the Athens Riviera extension

If you've long dreamed of going to Greece but never quite knew where to start, consider this all-encompassing tour your perfect starting point. You'll take in the excitement of Thessaloniki and Athens, major cities where ancient history and modern living meet. You'll travel centuries back in time as you explore treasured historic sites such as Delphi (home to the Temple of Apollo) and Meteora (known for its cliff-top monasteries). You'll savor signature Greek flavors, from briny olives to tart kumquats to crisp, mineral-rich wines. And you'll lap up the brilliant sunshine, warm hospitality, and iconic architecture of three major island groups. If you still can't get your fill of Greece, continue to the Peloponnese peninsula. In this less-trodden corner of the country, an alpine ski town, a mythological burial ground, and a Bronze Age citadel are just a few of the wonders that await.



Your tour package includes

- 14 nights in handpicked hotels
- 14 breakfasts, and 5 dinners served with beer or wine
- 1 tasting of kumquat liqueur, your introduction to Corfu's favorite fruit
- 2 food tastings, including a sampling of briny Greek olives
- 9 sightseeing tours, diving deep into the nation's icons
- 1 expert Tour Director, your key to the country's culture
- 8 local guides who'll breathe life into Greece's myths and monuments
- Pre-booked transportation, including 1 private deluxe motor coach, 1 on-tour flight, and 4 ferry transfers
- Entrances to museums, landmarks, and more—so you can skip the lines

Included highlights

- Resting outside of Thessaloniki's Rotunda of Galerius, the preeminent example of Byzantine architecture
- Letting a sense of awe wash over you as you glimpse the monasteries of the Meteora
- Straining your ear in the Temple of Apollo, seeking ancient whispers from the Oracle of Delphi
- Contrasting the ruins atop the Acropolis of Athens with the modern city below
- Plunging into the welcoming waters of Santorini's caldera on our bestselling excursion
- Delving into the culture and myths of the Minoans at the palace of Knossos

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16 days | 19 days with Olympia & the Athens Riviera extension

Overnight Flight → 1 night

Day 1: Travel day

Board your overnight flight to Thessaloniki today.

Thessaloniki → 2 nights

Day 2: Arrival in Thessaloniki

Included meals: welcome dinner

Welcome to Greece! Get to know your Tour Director and fellow travelers at tonight's welcome dinner, served with beer or wine.

Day 3: Sightseeing tour of Thessaloniki

Included meals: breakfast, tasting

Set out on a guided tour of Thessaloniki, Greece's vibrant second city and a cultural capital shaped by centuries of history. Once the second-largest city of the Byzantine Empire, Thessaloniki blends ancient ruins, Ottoman influences, and modern-day energy. With your expert guide leading the way, discover why this coastal hub is known for both its layered past and contemporary spirit.

- Pass by the Hagios Demetrios, the city's most important church, dedicated to its patron saint. Built over the very site where Saint Demetrios was martyred in the fourth century A.D., the basilica holds centuries of spiritual and historical significance, as well as intricate mosaics worth a closer look.
- Marvel at the Hagia Sophia, a domed church modeled after its more famous namesake in Istanbul. One of Thessaloniki's oldest surviving churches, it has served as both a Christian cathedral and an Ottoman mosque, bearing the marks of both religions in its art and architecture.
- See the ancient Roman walls that once fortified Thessaloniki. Constructed during the early third century, these towering remnants give a sense of the city's strategic importance to resilience through multiple empires.
- Enter the Rotunda of Galerius (also known as the Rotunda of St. George), a massive circular

structure commissioned by the Roman emperor Galerius in the fourth century A.D. Originally intended as his mausoleum—or perhaps a temple—this architectural wonder echoes the design of the Pantheon in Rome.

- Examine the striking murals and gold-flecked mosaics inside the UNESCO-listed Rotunda, which reflect its transformation over centuries from pagan monument to Christian church to mosque—and now, a monument to Thessaloniki's diverse heritage.
- Walk along a breezy seaside promenade for sweeping views of the Thermaic Gulf, culminating in a visit to the iconic White Tower of Thessaloniki. Once part of the city's fortifications and later used as a prison, it now stands as a symbol of the city's resilience and charm.
- Stop for a tasting of local olives, a simple but essential part of Greek cuisine and culture.
- Wrap up with free time in the lively Ladadika district, known for its colorful buildings, cobble lanes, and laid-back atmosphere. Explore art galleries, browse boutiques, or grab a bite in a traditional taverna—perfect for soaking in the city's modern-day buzz with historic flair.

Spend the rest of your afternoon in Thessaloniki exploring on your own, or join us for an optional excursion to the Epanomi wine region to learn about the grape harvest and sample local varietals.

+ Thessaloniki Wine Tasting & Lunch

Meteora Region → 1 night

Day 4: Transfer to Meteora Region & sightseeing tour

Included meals: breakfast

Today, travel to the Pindus mountain range—the spine of Greece—and arrive in the remote village of Kalabaka. Then, take a guided walking tour of the Meteora monasteries, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Perched in isolation atop towering sandstone cliffs, the six surviving monasteries date back to the 14th century, when they were established by Orthodox Christian hermit monks.

- Enter two of the six surviving monasteries—such as the serene Monastery

of Roussanou with its lush flower gardens, the Monastery of Agios Stefanos and its panoramic valley views, or the Monastery of Varlaam with its centuries-old frescoes and ornate chapel.

- Hike among the rock spires of Meteora, breathing in crisp mountain air as you ascend paths once trodden by hermit monks. At the top, you'll be rewarded with sweeping vistas of the vast Thessalian Plain, framed by dramatic peaks and the sky.
- Hear about the local nuns who carry on the monastic traditions of the Eastern Orthodox Church. From their spiritual routines, the history of the monastic community, and the unique role women play in preserving this sacred way of life, you'll gain valuable insight to their way of life.
- Learn about Eastern Orthodoxy's rich traditions and how centuries of faith continue to echo through these mountaintop monasteries. From daily prayers to handcrafted icons, each detail tells a story of quiet devotion and enduring cultural heritage.

Corfu → 2 nights

Day 5: Transfer to Corfu

Included meals: breakfast, dinner

Cross the Pindus Mountains and make your way to the seaside town of Igoumenitsa. Board a ferry bound for the Ionian island of Corfu. In stark contrast to the arid, rocky Cycladic islands in the Aegean Sea, the Ionians are known for their lush, green landscape.

After settling into your hotel, enjoy an included dinner this evening, served with beer or wine.

Day 6: Sightseeing tour of Corfu

Included meals: breakfast, liqueur tasting, tasting

After spending the night in your hotel, begin your time in Corfu—a popular holiday spot renowned for its scenery and cuisine—with a guided sightseeing tour of its eponymous capital.

- See the city's Italian influence, courtesy of the old Venetian Empire, on display at Spianada Square, arguably the most impressive plaza in all of Greece.
- Enter the Holy Church of Saint Spyridon. Built

in the 1580s and adorned with dozens of icons and gold-and-silver censers, this Greek Orthodox church houses the sacred relics of the island's patron saint. (Fun fact: It also lays claim to the tallest bell tower in the Ionian islands!)

- Take a short drive to visit the gardens of Achilleion Palace and admire its exterior pillared colonnades. It was once the palatial summer residence of German Kaiser Wilhelm II and site of his diplomatic activity.
- Stop for a tasting of marmalade, liqueur, and other kumquat products. Originally from China, this bright orange fruit is synonymous with the island of Corfu, and goods made from it have Protected Designation of Origin status in Greece.

Enjoy a free evening in Corfu (or, if you want something a little more lively, add an optional excursion to revel in a traditional Greek dinner).

+ Corfu Tavern Dinner

Delphi Region → 1 night

Day 7: Transfer to Delphi Region

Included meals: breakfast, dinner

Board a ferry back to the mainland from Corfu.

Then, travel to the Delphi region, home of the legendary mystical Oracle.

Sit down for an included dinner this evening, served with beer or wine.

Athens → 2 nights

Day 8: Sightseeing tour of Delphi & transfer to Athens

Included meals: breakfast

Journey to the slopes of Mount Parnassus and visit the Archaeological Site of Delphi. Now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Delphi was believed by the ancients to be the Navel of the Earth and a spiritual focal point for all Greeks.

- Embark on a guided tour of the Temple of Apollo, where, according to legend, the god Apollo once spoke in prophecy to mortals through the voice of the oracle and high priestess, Pythia.
- Take time to explore the ancient treasures at the Delphi Museum, including the life-size bronze statue named the Charioteer of Delphi.

- Visit Arachova and soak in the breathtaking mountain landscape as you stroll through the town's cobblestone streets.
- Enjoy free time for lunch or to explore the village and admire its many Byzantine-era churches.

Then, continue to Athens and enjoy a free evening in the city—ask your Tour Director for a recommendation.

Day 9: Sightseeing tour of Athens

Included meals: breakfast

Nothing can prepare you for the sheer sense of awe you'll feel when you come face-to-face with Athens—where ancient architecture and artifacts coexist with modern life. Meet up with your dedicated local guide, who will introduce you to the highlights of this bustling capital.

- Pass by the Panathenaic Stadium, built entirely out of marble—the only such stadium in the world.
- Continue to Syntagma Square, home to the Neoclassical Greek Parliament building, and admire the plaza's imposing marble steps and fountain, lush shade trees, and the elite ceremonial guards known as the Evzones.
- Reflect on the Arch of Hadrian, built to honor the Roman emperor, and imagine how its Pentelic marble stones were carted more than 11 miles from Mount Pentelikon in 131 A.D.
- View the remains of the sixth-century Temple of Zeus and gaze up at its 16 ornate Corinthian columns.
- Walk through Plaka's narrow streets and charming shops. Situated at the foot of the Acropolis, this district is one of the oldest parts of Athens and is known as the neighborhood of the gods due to the dozens of monuments strewn throughout.
- Set off on a walking tour around the ancient Acropolis—site of the Parthenon, Temple of Athena Nike, and Erechtheion. You may have seen these enduring icons of antiquity in books and film, but now you're stepping through the work of craftsmen who quarried and honed these marble blocks thousands of years ago.

Enjoy a free afternoon in Athens—we recommend returning to the Plaka district—or join the optional excursion to Cape Sounion. On a clear day, you might spot five of Greece's Ionian islands dotting the sparkling Aegean Sea.

+ Cape Sounion

Santorini → 2 nights

Day 10: Ferry to Santorini

Included meals: breakfast

You've seen the photos—now get ready to star in them yourself. Take a ferry to Santorini and enjoy a free afternoon on the island. You can admire the steep cliffs that plunge into the Aegean and the island's iconic caldera, dotted with whitewashed buildings.

You can eat your way through traditional dishes—like moussaka, a hearty eggplant dish, or tomato fritters—then use your free time to explore unique pebbly beaches and crystal-clear waters.

Please note: For an additional cost, you can book a visit to the village of Oia through your Tour Director.

Day 11: Sightseeing tour of Santorini

Included meals: breakfast

Your guided tour of Santorini will take you from dramatic black-sand beaches to jagged cliff-lined shores and back—a stark contrast to the island's beloved whitewashed buildings and sprays of bright fuchsia bougainvillea vines.

- Visit the archaeological excavations at Akrotiri, a settlement buried in volcanic ash, where richly pigmented Bronze Age frescoes and other Minoan artifacts survived a devastating eruption in the 16th Century B.C.
- See Mount Profitis Ilias, the highest point in all of Santorini and home to the Prophet Elias Monastery which sits perched atop its summit.
- Stop in small, picturesque Pyrgos, where you'll weave through the steep streets of this slightly off-the-beaten-path village.

Spend a free afternoon poking around authentic shops and sampling the local wine, or join the optional excursion and hop on a catamaran for a steal-your-breath-away cruise starring the village of Oia.

+ Santorini Caldera Cruise & Dinner

Crete → 3 nights

Day 12: Ferry to Crete

Included meals: breakfast, dinner

Take a ferry to Crete, the largest of the Greek islands, this afternoon. The birthplace of the ancient Minoan civilization, Crete served as the backdrop for the mythical tales of King Minos,

the labyrinth, and the Minotaur. Remnants of the Minoan culture can be found across the island, punctuating a diverse landscape that ranges from lush valleys and dramatic gorges to looming mountains and serene beaches.

Expect to be embraced by the locals' friendliness—perhaps alongside a shot of raki, a strong digestif made of distilled grape skins that's offered as a sign of hospitality. Sit down for an included dinner this evening, served with beer or wine.

Day 13: Sightseeing tour of Heraklion

Included meals: breakfast

Join a local guide this morning and get to know Heraklion—an ancient port that was once the hub of the Minoans, Europe's first civilization. Roll into town and enjoy an included lunch before setting off on a guided tour. Begin by visiting the ruins of the Bronze Age Palace of Knossos. Part administrative center, part place of worship, it held a special place at the heart of Minoan culture (and was where, according to myth, King Minos imprisoned the Minotaur in the heart of a labyrinth). Return to Heraklion and explore at your leisure. For a helping of history spiced with an ocean breeze, head to the Venetian Port and spy the Koules—a 16th-century fort guarding the approach to Heraklion's harbor. Or, take an optional excursion with us to indulge in some of Crete's regional fare, including tasty treats from a women's cooperative and locally grown wine.

+ Iraklio Wine Country Tasting Tour

Day 14: Free day in Crete

Included meals: breakfast

Enjoy a free day on the island to unwind and scope out a beach or two or continue getting to know this part of Greece through its cuisine. If you choose the latter, you'll join us on a visit to the historic port city of Rethymno before heading to a small family-owned farm. There, you'll tour its olive groves and gardens before sitting down for a traditional Cretan lunch served with local wines.

+ Venetian Rethymno & Crete Farm Lunch

Athens → 1 night

Day 15: Flight to Athens

Included meals: breakfast, farewell dinner

Fly back to Athens today. Then, celebrate your trip with your fellow group members at a farewell dinner this evening, served with beer or wine.

Flight Home

Day 16: Departure

Included meals: breakfast (excluding early morning departures)

Transfer to airport for your flight home—or extend your stay and step back in time in Olympia, where the ancient Olympic Games were born and temples still echo with the spirit of competition and myth. Then, slow down on the Athens Coast, where golden beaches, seaside tavernas, and sunset views over the Saronic Gulf offer a breezy, luxurious contrast to the city's historic heart.

+ Olympia & the Athens Riviera extension

Located in the southwestern region of Greece's mainland, the Peloponnese peninsula is chock-full of treasured archaeological sites and landmarks made famous by Greek mythology. You'll also find a few surprises there, such as an alpine ski town that's accessible by train and home to a moving museum that sheds light on life under Nazi occupation. The region is also less trodden compared to perennially popular places, like Athens and the Greek Islands. Both are among the reasons you'll likely fall in love with this corner of the country, where you'll explore the birthplace of the Olympic Games, a mythological burial site, an early capital of independent Greece, and more.

Day 16: Train ride to Kalavryta & transfer to Olympia

Included meals: breakfast

Transfer to the town of Diakopto. There, board the famous Odontotos rack railway for a journey that's widely considered to be the most scenic in Greece.

- Travel aboard the railway through the Vouraikos gorge and ascend to the alpine town of Kalavryta, where you'll find stone houses, intimate squares, crisscrossing alleys, and lively tavernas.
- Pay a solemn visit to the Municipal Museum of the Kalavritan Holocaust, built to commemorate a 1943 massacre and the destruction of the town by occupying Nazi troops.

Enjoy free time in this Greek ski town before continuing to your hotel in Olympia, where you can relax and rest up before another day of sightseeing.

Day 17: Sightseeing tour of Olympia

Included meals: breakfast

This morning, meet your local guide and tour the legendary Archaeological Site of Olympia, where the Olympic Games were born.

- View the ruins of the Temple of Zeus, once home to a statue that was one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.
- See the ancient Gymnasium and the site where the first Olympic Games took place.
- Step inside the Archaeological Museum of Olympia and enjoy free time to explore its world-renowned sculpture, bronze, and terracotta exhibits.

Spend a free afternoon in Olympia—ask your Tour Director for a recommendation—or sidle up to a cafe for some people-watching. If you join us on an optional excursion to a nearby estate, you'll get to take part in two beloved Greek pastimes: cooking and dancing. Opa!

+ Greek Cooking Demonstration & Folk Show Dinner

Day 18: Athens Riviera via Mycenae & Nafplio

Included meals: breakfast

Get to know more landmarks and history as you discover different parts of the Peloponnese peninsula. Your guided tour continues in the UNESCO-listed archaeological site of Mycenae. No visit to the eastern Peloponnese would be complete without a visit to the cradle of Mycenaean civilization, which peaked between 1400-1200 B.C. As you walk through the hillside citadel, you'll come across the remains of homes, storefronts, ancient tombs, and the mysterious beehive-shaped Treasury of Atreus (aka the Tomb of Agamemnon).

Afterward, transfer to Nafplio and join your Tour Director on a walk through its charming Old Town. Take in Syntagma Square (alive with locals enjoying coffee or a nightcap), quaint restaurants, and historical buildings around every turn. For a keepsake to take home, look for shops selling worry beads. Used for relaxation or stress relief across Greece, the city has a storied tradition of producing them.

Continue to your hotel on the Athens Riviera, then raise a glass and toast to your trip with a farewell drink this evening.

Day 19: Departure

Included meals: breakfast (excluding early morning departures)

Transfer to the Athens airport for your flight home.

Customize your experience

Customize your tour by adding excursion options. Excursions offered on the same day will occur at different times, so there's no need to choose. Save \$10 when you book your excursion up to three days before your tour departs.* Excursions requiring advance reservation only list this discounted price. Call or go online to customize your tour: <https://www.goaheadtours.com/GREG> | 1-800-597-0350

Day 3: Thessaloniki Wine Tasting & Lunch

From \$99.00 . Visit the link above for pricing info. (6 hours, departs in the afternoon, includes lunch)

Head south to the Epanomi wine region and visit a local winery, joining your guide on a walk through the vineyard to learn about the harvest process and spot bunches of Malagousia and Assyrtiko grapes used to create the winery's signature red and white Epanomi wines. Tour the production area to see first-hand how freshly picked grapes are turned into wine, then head to a local restaurant to round out the experience with a traditional Macedonian lunch.

Day 6: Corfu Tavern Dinner

From \$89.00 . Visit the link above for pricing info. (4 hours, departs in the evening with dinner)

Step back in time and savor authentic Greek specialties and hospitality at a rustic, family-run tavern in the picturesque village of Kinopiastes. Touted for its friendly atmosphere, the Tripa Tavern has drawn rave reviews from past patrons, including former Greek President Constantine Karamanlis, Aristotle Onassis, and Jane Fonda. While you sample hors d'oeuvres, hearty entrees, and tasty wines, the tavern staff will entertain you with song and dance.

Day 9: Cape Sounion

From \$95.00 . Visit the link above for pricing info. (4.5 hours, departure time varies)

Journey to the southern tip of the Attica Peninsula to take in the sights of the Poseidon Coast, including sandy beaches, natural and manmade harbors, and, of course, the Aegean Sea itself. High above the sparkling shoreline, the Temple of Poseidon dominates the landscape. Of the original structure, 16 elegant Doric pillars remain. Afterward, decide how you'd like to spend your free time. Take a moment to look out from the lofty cliffside vantage point, where you can see five Aegean islands on a clear day. You may also choose to enjoy a coffee, stop in the souvenir shop, or stroll through the area. Please note: This excursion involves some walking on uneven terrain.

Day 11: Santorini Caldera Cruise & Dinner

From \$149.00 . Visit the link above for pricing info. (5 hours, departs in the afternoon, dinner included)

Board a catamaran and sail in comfort through Santorini's awe-inspiring caldera on this scenic excursion. You'll cruise around the volcanic island of Nea Kameni for views of the picture-perfect cliffside village of Oia (pronounced "EE-ah"). Situated on the western end of the island, Oia was once a maritime center, and stately captains' houses still sit on its high ridges. Spend the afternoon on the open waters as you snorkel in the ocean, sunbathe on the deck of the catamaran, and swim in a natural hot spring that was once the crater of a volcano. You'll enjoy unlimited wine, water, and soft drinks, as well as a buffet-style dinner of home-cooked Greek specialties, on board the boat as you take in the beautiful scenery. Please note: We

recommend packing a bathing suit. This excursion is seasonal and runs from April through mid-October only. It is also weather-dependent.

Day 13: Iraklio Wine Country Tasting Tour

From \$95.00 . Visit the link above for pricing info. (6 hours, departs in the afternoon)

Pay a visit to the village of Archanes and step inside a women's cooperative where local women prepare traditional baked goods and preserves. Sample some of their delicious homemade jams and baked goods made from regional ingredients, and help support agriculture in a fairly remote area of Crete. Afterwards, make your way to Iraklio wine country and tour a Cretan vineyard, then enjoy a wine tasting featuring varietals produced from Kotsifali, Mandilaria, and Malvasia grapes.

Day 14: Venetian Rethymno & Crete Farm Lunch

From \$155.00 . Visit the link above for pricing info. (9 hours, departs in the morning, includes lunch)

Make your way to the historic port city of Rethymno, where Venetian and Turkish influences remain. Stop at a traditional phyllo pastry workshop to observe how handmade phyllo is prepared and enjoy a tasting of traditional Greek sweets. Then, transfer to the center of Rethymno for a Tour Director-led orientation of the Old Town. View the Rimondi Venetian Fountain before enjoying free time to explore independently. Next, continue to a sustainable farm in the Chania region for a tour of the olive groves. Learn about local production methods before enjoying a tasting of the farm's cheeses and an included lunch made from locally grown products. Menu items might include Cretan cheese pies, gamopilafo, and salads made from locally harvested mountain bulbs. After lunch, transfer back to your hotel in Heraklion.

Extension excursion options

Day 17: Greek Cooking Demonstration & Folk Show Dinner

From \$69.00 . Visit the link above for pricing info. (4 hours, evening with dinner)

Head to a nearby estate in Olympia where you'll learn about Greek cuisine during a cooking demonstration. Then, enjoy a buffet dinner paired with Greek wine followed by a short, interactive dance performance. Please note: Customers will share stations during the cooking demonstration.

*Optional excursions may be purchased up to three days prior to departure or while on tour. Pre-purchased optional excursions cannot be canceled within three days prior to departure or while on tour. Select optional excursions require advance booking and cannot be purchased or canceled after the advanced reservation deadline. Go Ahead Tours accepts payment by cash, Visa or MasterCard for optional excursions purchased on tour. Additional fees may apply for optional excursions purchased on tour. Excursions require a minimum number of participants to operate. Details and prices are subject to change. Due to seasonal hours of operation and availability, some excursions may not operate. If this occurs, you will be refunded any payments made for that excursion post-tour. Learn more at <https://www.goaheadtours.com/about/terms>.