



Adventurebug Worldwide Ltd

Bespoke adventure travel & events since 2000

REAT Tourism License AT/MA/00022 Company Registration B93050763
Apto. Correos 1031, 29680 Estepona, Malaga, SPAIN TEL (34) 635 817 819

Classic Panorama of the Greek Islands

Cultural (non active) Exploration Tour – 11 nights



From Athens to Crete, Santorini to Mykonos and Delos with many hidden treasures in between join us on this fantastic discovery tour of the Greek Isles. Be tempted by tasty local cuisine and volcanic wines or the celebratory tones of Raki. Gaze endlessly at the bluest of seas and become lost in the labyrinth of cobbled lanes leading to peaceful coves and sun swept beaches. View first hand Classical Greek ruins and learn how this early civilization shaped the very world we exist in today. The god Apollo himself was born on these islands, so could there be a more appropriate place for a journey of discovery?

Our trip is considered an easy-paced excursion that is full of variety. Expect to be on the move daily exploring the authentic side of Greece. Options for light walks are built into the program and free time is calculated for those seeking other aspects such as a cookery course, a scenic kayak day, snorkeling and diving or simply escaping the crowds and surrendering to the many galleries, craft shops and seascapes the islands have to offer. Expect comfortable bus transfers, short flights and some ferry journeys between the islands.



WHAT TO EXPECT & HIGHLIGHTS

- 10 nights comfortable accommodation in 3 & 4 star minimum hotels (most with swimming pools)
- Meals included (as per itinerary)
- Private transfers, ferries and internal flights are included
- All tipping is included in your tour (except for local guides, porter services if elected and maid services)
- Hiking routes in both village and natural park landscapes on all islands
- Entrance fees and tickets arranged for all main historic sites, wine tasting and museums
- Local English speaking guides where applicable
- A wide range of experiences that are suitable to all interest levels





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ITINERARY

Day 1 – Arrive Athens

Meals included: welcome dinner

Accommodation: Astor Hotel 4 stars (central) <http://astorhotel.gr/> Athens



Activities:

Your journey will start in Athens, Greece's lively capital. It is one of the world's oldest cities and there's a feast of things to see and do. Airport transfers are not included and it's easy, safe and economical to travel to the hotel via Direct Bus, Metro or Taxi. There are no activities planned today so you may arrive at any time. In the evening you will meet your tour leaders and fellow travelling companions at a welcome dinner at 7 pm (meet in hotel reception). Your tour leaders will give you a briefing on what lies ahead. This evening you will enjoy a

group dinner together at a local restaurant in the *Plaka* neighborhood of Athens. Please note, tomorrow is a guided tour of Athens and we will provide a comprehensive list of what the tour will cover at a later date. Other recommended Athens Attractions (not covered on tour day): *The Acropolis Museum, The Museum of Cycladic Art, The Art Foundation* and the *Benaki Museum*. Walking in the National Garden and around the Parliament is quite pleasant too and a nice way to acclimate after your long journey.

Day 2 –Tour Athens

Meals included: breakfast only

Accommodation: Same as above



Activities:

This morning we set off with a local Athenian Guide for a full tour of Athens historical and cultural highlights including a visit of the Acropolis and the Parthenon as well as a short private bus tour of the city center, passing the Temple of Zeus, Hadrian's Gate and a number of Neo classical buildings of importance. On foot we'll stroll the old quarter known as *The Plaka*, the Agora-Athens Market and the Flea Market Monastiraki as well as the unique Anafiotika district. In these regions, surrounding the Acropolis we find many ruins of Greek and Roman origin and some unique Byzantine churches.

Lunch you can take at your own disposal in an area of numerous cafes. Expect to walk throughout the morning, take lunch and then have the 1 hour bus tour. Tonight's dinner is not included – offering you the chance to sample some local dishes in local restaurants right near the hotel.

TECHNICAL RATING: Easy – city walking but over cobbles and slippery stone steps at times. Supportive shoes advised and a hiking pole if you feel it will help with balance and/or coordination on the steps of the Acropolis.



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Day 3 – Transfer to Crete – Exploration of Vamos rural Village

Meals included: breakfast, dinner

Accommodation: Kriti Hotel 3 stars (central) <http://www.kriti-hotel.gr/> Chania (Crete)

Activities:



This morning we transfer (early) to the airport and take a 50 minute flight to the island of Crete, the largest and most southerly of the Greek islands. Upon arrival we transfer to *Vamos* for an easy cultural walk and then Chania, our base for the next three nights. *Vamos*, a traditional village of Crete is renowned for its rich cultural heritage. Here we hike through countryside to the village of Douliana with its traditional houses,

old ruins, ancient stone roads and secret nooks. At the end of the hike, a short drive takes us to a wonderful beach where you can choose lunch. In Chania, our hotel is located only minutes walking from the historic center and the charming Venetian Port. After settling into the hotel, we tour the old town and discover what makes Chania so special and why it has been called 'the jewel of Crete'. Time permitting, we visit the agora (or municipal market), which is in the centre of town. We also pass a number of historical churches including the Catholic Church of the Isodion and the Agios Fragiskos Church (now home to the archaeological museum). We will wander through the charming old harbor area, with its two Venetian shipyards and Great Arsenal building. The old Venetian lighthouse stands tall over the port and was reconstructed during Turkish rule, to include a minaret. Heading deep into the narrow cobblestone alleys of the Venetian town we discover a range of Venetian and Turkish architecture including impressive facades in old mansions in the once aristocratic area. Many of these have been converted to guesthouses. Dinner tonight is included and we'll dine in a restaurant located on the historic Venetian waterfront!

TECHNICAL RATING: Easy – moderate with some gentle hills. Support poles and sport shoes recommended for *Vamos*.

Day 4 – VISIT AGIA IRINI GORGE & SUGIA, Coastal town, CRETE

Meals included: Breakfast

Accommodation: Same hotel, Chania (Crete)

Activities:

This morning we leave the hotel early for the one hour drive to the beautiful region of Crete's beautiful hiking area the *Agia Irini* gorge. From a mountain village we view a wonderful gorge, where we encounter dramatic and varied landscapes from spectacular mountains to dense forests, with great walls of limestone surrounding us. If you like, we can walk a little and see rocky riverbeds, along the steep sides of mountains and through rich vegetation of trachea pine, Mediterranean cypress, beech, carob tree and kermes oak. In the rocks a number of herb varieties can be found including the healing Greek herb, Dittany (*Dictamo*), used for the relief of stomach pain and arthritis. The aromas from the native wildflowers and herbs fill the air. A variety of interesting fauna lives in the gorge including the endangered bearded vulture, partridge, Bonelli's eagle and golden eagle. If lucky we may even catch a glimpse of



the Kri-kri goat (or Cretan Ibex), now found only on Crete and three smaller neighboring islands. The Kri-kri was thought to have been worshipped on Crete during antiquity - a theory supported by the excavation of several wall paintings depicting the animal. This rewarding visit will conclude with our arrival in the coastal town of *Sugia*, on the southern side of Crete where you



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can take your lunch and support this remote seaside hamlet. This is a great place to relax after a day's visit and you can enjoy a swim as well as a refreshing drink or try some local seafood in one of the traditional seaside tavernas. At end of the day you will enjoy a picturesque two-hour drive back to Chania.

TECHNICAL RATING: If you choose to walk a little, expect loose stones in places. Steep valley walls and a variation of surfaces – including stream beds. Hiking poles and closed shoes with ankle support advised.

Day 5 - Hiking and Discovery of Elafonissi Lagoon Reserve

Meals included: breakfast and picnic lunch

Accommodation: Same hotel, Chania (Crete)



Activities: Today we explore another dimension of Crete. After our long hike the previous day, we have devised a selection of scenic visits that offer great insight into life on this historic island. *Elafonissi* is considered Crete's prettiest natural coastal area and we'll do some walking and historic site visits here. We'll also stroll through a rural mountain village that

sees very little tourism – admiring the simplistic way of life and architecture dating back hundreds of years and If weather permits, we'll hike the Pilgrim's route up (15 minutes) to an Orthodox St. George temple (Cave of Agia Sofia) and shrine built in a magnificent cave overlooking a dramatic gorge. All in all a varied day of being out in wonderful nature and exploring the region on foot and with the services of our private coach.

TECHNICAL RATING: Easy to moderate with some stone path, sandy coastlines and dunes. Hiking poles and solid shoes advised.

Day 6 –Crete – Santorini (Oia) / Hike Perissa to Kamari Coast

Meals included: breakfast, dinner

Accommodation: Finikia Memories Hotel (www.finikiamemories.com/), Oia, Santorini

Activities: Today we bid farewell to Crete and travel to spectacular Santorini, the southernmost island in the Cyclades group.



We leave the hotel in Chania very early for a bus transfer to Crete's capital, Heraklion – where we hop on a scenic 2.5 hour ferry (or short flight, pending season of travel), to Santorini. Upon arrival we transfer to *Perissa* where we have a seaside lunch and swim. From here we visit *Pyrgos village*, near Ancient Thira – a significant Classical Greek site perched 1000 feet above sea level on a rocky mountain spur. We then transfer to our hotel in Oia (pronounced 'ee-a'). Oia, one of Greece's first declared Heritage Villages for its beauty was built on a steep slope of Santorini's incredible volcanic

caldera and is a quieter part of the island compared to Fira, Tonight's dinner is included at our hotel - located on the outskirts of Oia and overlooking the medieval terracing and vineyards below.

TECHNICAL RATING: Easy village and beach visits today with some town walks over cobbles and small hills.



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Day 7 - VISITING Santorini's Caldera & Fira / Wine Tasting

Meals included: breakfast, wine tasting with complements

Accommodation: Same Hotel, Santorini



Activities:

Today we embark on visits and lookout points along Santorini's legendary caldera between Fira and Oia towns. The island we see today is what remains from a huge volcanic explosion that destroyed the early settlements and created a geographical caldera. This caldera offers spectacular natural beauty and is what makes Santorini such a special place. Our visit begins from our hotel in Oia and we follow the 'Caldeira' trail to Fira, the island's

lively capital. The journey follows the north-western rim of the caldera, passing steep cliff faces and experiencing breathtaking views along the way. For those wishing to walk extensions of this famous hike we can have you escorted with a guide. The journey comes to an end in Fira where free time is allotted for a visit and your lunch break. Later we tour the Sigalas Domain winery where vines are cultivated in an unusual way with the plants pruned to form a low basket shape that sits on top of the volcanic soil - with the basket shape protecting the grapes from strong winds. The Sigalas Winery is a unique family-run vineyard that has a conservational outlook for the entire island. Tonight we can return to Oia town for dinner and catch the famous sunset moment!

TECHNICAL RATING: Easy going town and countryside visits on foot with hiking options available.

Day 8 – Santorini (Free Exploration Day)

Meals included: breakfast

Accommodation: Same Hotel, Santorini

Activities:

Today we offer options to self explore other aspects of the Cycladic Island of Santorini. We recommend a cookery course if you can't get enough of Greek cuisine (subject to availability). Other options include taking a scenic tour of the Caldeira by traditional boats or catamarans – some with scrumptious lunch included. You can also explore more of Santorini's landscapes – taking a guided tour, or local bus to the famous Minoan ruins of Akrotiri and/or relaxing in Oia town and visiting the local museums and galleries. If you're really adventurous, why not try a beautiful and insightful kayak (or Stand up Paddle) tour program with a local operator (<http://www.santoriniseakayak.com/>)





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Day 9 – Santorini - Mykonos

Meals included: breakfast, packed lunch (for ferry), dinner

Accommodation: Hotel Mykonos View, Mykonos

<http://www.mykonosview.gr/>

Activities:

This morning we will ferry (2.5 hours) to the island of Mykonos. Mykonos, considered the most glamorous and cosmopolitan of the Cycladic islands, still holds on to its old-world charm – especially in the off season and many

locals maintain their peaceful island existence amongst the foreigners who grace their shores. Upon arrival in Mykonos, we go direct to our hotel on a hillside 10 minutes walk (or shuttle available), from Mykonos town followed by an insightful walking tour of Mykonos's charming Old Town and surrounding landscapes. Mykonos offers a captivating labyrinth of stone-paved lane ways, traditional whitewashed houses and windmills with many stories within these walls! Tonight's dinner is included at our hotel.

TECHNICAL RATING: Easy - expect cobbled streets, roads and a few broken paths. Comfortable, non technical shoes are ok

Day 10 - Mykonos – Delos Island Guided Exploration



Meals included: breakfast only

Accommodation: Same Hotel, Mykonos

Activities:

Today we embark on an excursion to the island of Delos – a UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE Site and a 40 minute open deck boat trip from Mykonos. Ancient Delos has a vast and interesting history and it's one of the most important sites of archaeology in Greece. New discoveries of

ancient archaeological wonders are still made from time to time here. Considered a sacred place, it's acclaimed as the birthplace of Apollo and Artemis and it has been inhabited since around 3000 BC. The earliest shrines and temples were built around the 8th century BC. By the 5th century BC, the Athenians took control of Delos making it the location of the treasury. During the Hellenistic era, the island was one of Greece's most important religious and commercial hubs, attracting the wealthy from all over who contributed to the island's many temples and shrines. When the Romans set their sights on the island in 167 BC it became a free trading port and home to a flourishing slave trade market, with thousands of slaves being traded daily. Utilizing a local specialist guide, we will explore the site in-depth and gain an insight into this sacred island's intriguing history. Part of our visit can be to optionally walk up Mt. Kynthos – although only 367 feet, it offers a bird's eye view like no other of this fantastic historic site. Time permitting, we may hike in the rural landscapes that captures incredible views of the nearby surrounding islands of the Cycladic chain. In the afternoon, we return by ferry back to Mykonos where you can visit more of Mykonos town and catch some wonderful light on the famous windmills. Tonight you are free to explore on your own some tasty restaurants.

TECHNICAL RATING: Easy to Moderate with some stone paths and short tracks through the established ruins.



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Day 11 – Return to Athens (RAFINA area) / Final Night

Meals included: breakfast and dinner

Accommodation: Hotel Avra 4 stars, <http://www.hotelavra.gr/EL/> Rafina Region, East Attika.

After a free morning to self explore or enjoy our hotel, we can transfer by shuttle or walk 40 minutes to the port for our ferry to Rafina - a relaxing 5 hour boat journey on a large vessel where lunch snacks can be purchased. There are no organized activities today and you can explore more of Mykonos including the charming Folk Art and highly rated Archaeological Museums. There are also local buses, mopeds to rent or shared taxis if you wish to visit Paradise Beach or another famous coastal area of Mykonos. Our final night and farewell dinner are at the conveniently located 4 star Avra Hotel – located 2 minutes walk from Rafina Port, this wonderful location has a nice cove and is a quick 30 minute taxi transfer to the airport for your next day departure.

Day 12 – End in (RAFINA)

Meals included: Breakfast

Accommodation: None included

After breakfast you can depart for the airport or onward travels. Transfers to the airport are included by the hotel (scheduled mini bus transfers), and the distance is 30 minutes or so. If you are heading to Athens city again, local bus transfers from near the hotel are also available.

YOUR TRIP – WHAT TO KNOW

This trip can be enjoyed by just about anyone with a reasonable level of fitness. The days are spent exploring, mostly on foot and at an easy pace yet we always have our private bus service with us too. We like to complete most day visits by mid-afternoon, leaving you time to enjoy our stunning hotel locations and facilities and/or to explore more of the region on your own!

What is Included in your Tour

- 11 nights hotel accommodation twin or double share (SINGLE rooms subject to availability but not a problem normally)
- All meals as noted in above itinerary
- All transfers as per itinerary (private air conditioned coaches)
- Flight from Athens to Crete (1 way) with baggage allowance of 23 kg / checked bag and 1 carry on piece
- Ferry transfer from Crete to Santorini / Santorini to Mykonos and from Mykonos to Rafina (Athens region)
- Entrance fees: Athens (Acropolis and the Parthenon) – Crete, Agia Irini Gorge, Santorini Wine tasting visit, Delos Island UNESCO site and selected local museums and church contributions where suitable.
- Local professional English speaking guides in Athens, Crete & Delos Island
- Professional guiding services by Adventurebug throughout the tour
- Tips for all meals and transfers / drivers
- Taxes, permits and all associated agency fees (our prices are NET per person with no hidden fees)
- NOTE – Baggage allowance for our internal flights = max 23 kg (50 pounds) x 1 piece allowed plus normal carry-on baggage x 1 at 8 kg (17.5 pounds). Ferry transfers require that participants roll or carry their own baggage on / off ferries. Baggage is generally stored in open lockers (unlocked) at the low level on each ferry – valuables should be kept with you in carry on luggage at your location of seating. Security regarding baggage on ferries is not historically an issue.



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Not Included

- *Tips for local Greek guides and room service and/or baggage handlers*

Non-included Meals

Some meals are not included on our tour (please refer to itinerary). We feel you'll benefit from getting out and discovering the local cuisine. So when a meal is not included, it's a great opportunity to try something new. Your guide will offer tips on where to get the best meal, or you might decide to dine out as a group and experience the fun together. For lunches not included, sometimes a stop in the local market or small stores offer the best choice and healthiest range of food. We encourage this because it helps support the local economies apart from the cafes and restaurants normally used.

Optional Extras

Please refer to our separate document.

Vaccinations

Vaccinations are not normally required for this trip. Please talk to your doctor about the up-to-date information for this region. We're travel planning experts, not doctors and defer to medical specialists when it comes to inoculations.

Visas and Permits

Greece – As an EU member, a visa is not required for Greece for a stay of 3 months or less for Americans, Canadians and European passport holders. All other nationalities should check their visa requirements with the relevant consulate.

Insurance

You are required to have travel insurance before taking part on this tour. We strongly recommend cancellation insurance as well as normal coverage for health, evacuation and medical issues.

Responsible Travel

Adventurebug's *Responsible Travel Ethos* is at the heart of everything we do, from getting the basics right like respecting local cultures, customs and the natural environment, to initiating projects that make positive contributions to communities - to our staff's volunteer efforts on a wide range of events and projects.

Customs and Culture

Greece is in many ways a modern, European nation and at the same time, very backwards compared to what you are used to – especially in reference to customer service, opening and eating times, street noise, smoking in some public places, traffic and simply the chaotic way many of the Greeks go about their daily life. Also we recommend you adjust to the timings that Greek society revolves around – including the typical mid afternoon siesta! Don't come to Greece expecting the same levels of service and mannerisms typical of your homeland – you may be disappointed. Instead, come with an open mind and take everything in stride – you wouldn't be travelling to foreign lands if you expected everything to be the same as home! The Greeks love to share their land, culture, traditions and gastronomy with visitors. They have immense patience, especially on the smaller islands to meet visitors quirky demands and they deserve our respect and tolerance as well.



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Special Dietary Needs and Medicines

Vegetarian diets can generally be accommodated to with ease, but don't be surprised if fish is offered to you as a vegetarian...Greece retains an old world mentality in many places – especially on the islands. Special diets such as gluten free (celiac) and lactose intolerance can be a challenge so we recommended you bring supplements from home just in case. Medicines and glasses / contacts prescriptions we strongly recommend you bring from home as resources can be very scarce on the islands.

ATHENS arrival and departure Information

We do not provide transfers to and from the Athens and the final Rafina based hotel. However, getting to and from the airport is very easy in Athens. There include a direct bus from near the hotel (best option), the Metro line and/or a shared taxi. Travel time is approximately 40 minutes by taxi up to 1 hour 15 min max by shuttle bus and 1 hr by train. A taxi price is normally about 50 euros for 3 persons sharing with luggage. The direct bus approximately 6-7 euros and the train about the same as the bus. The access to the airport from our final hotel (near Rafina), expect a 30 minute taxi transfer. The 2017 price for this taxi (per car 1-4 people), is 35 euros between the hours 0800 and 2400 and 50 euros between 2400 and 0800 in the morning.

FURTHER READING

Lonely Planet Travel Guides - Greece

The Odyssey - Homer

Zorba the Greek – Nikos Kazantzakis

Apartment in Athens – Glenway Westcott (1945)

Corelli's Mandolin - Louis de Bernieres

Eleni – Nicolas Gage

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

In the case of a genuine crisis or emergency, your local operator, Adventurebug Worldwide can be reached as follows:

OFFICE (Adventurebug) + 34 952 894 308 / info@adventurebug.com

Matt Butler (Guide) + 34 635 817 819

European (911) 112