

GREAT BASIN COLLEGE GOES TO GREECE & TURKEY

12 days

Itinerary downloaded on: February 22, 2024

Day 1: *Departure*

Today we fly from Salt Lake City to Istanbul, Turkey.

Day 2: *Istanbul*

Today we arrive in Istanbul and transfer to our hotel.

Although thousands of years have passed, Istanbul still retains its geographical importance. Today Istanbul is a huge metropolis connecting continents, cultures, religions and is home to eleven million people (2007). It is one of the greatest business and cultural centers of the region.

Overnight in Istanbul.

Meal Plan: Dinner

Day 3: *Istanbul: Hippodrome, Topkapi Palace & Grand Bazaar*

Following breakfast, we visit the Hippodrome and the Blue Mosque, famous for its delicate blue ceramic tiles.

Next we visit the spectacular Topkapi Palace, built on one of the seven hills of Istanbul. This huge complex commands views of the Sea of Marmara, the Bosphorus and the Golden Horn. It was the seat of government for the Ottoman Empire for many centuries (1453-1852). We see the extravagant Treasury, the priceless Chinese porcelain, and more.

Our last stop will be Grand Bazaar which is amongst attractive shopping centers and the biggest "souk" in the world with nearly 4,000 shops of antiques, gold, jewelry, carpets and leatherwear.

Overnight in Istanbul.

Meal Plan: Breakfast

Day 4: *Istanbul: Hagia Sophia, Spice Bazaar & Bosphorus Cruise*

This morning we begin at the church of Hagia Sophia. This church-turned-mosque-turned-museum takes the breath away with the sheer architectural size of its interior and magnificent dome.

We continue to the aromatic Spice Bazaar, where the smells of cinnamon, clove and thyme rise from hundreds of colourful muslin bags at every store front.

We then board our ferry boat for a relaxing cruise along the shores of the legendary Bosphorus, the natural gateway that divides Asia

and Europe. As you sit back and may enjoy tea from traditional small cups, numerous summer palaces and palatial homes will pass by on either side.

Disembarking at the northern end of the strait, we enjoy our lunch (own cost) at a local fish restaurant before we proceed to Kariye (Chora) Museum to see the marvelous mosaics of the late Byzantine.

Overnight in Istanbul.

Meal Plan: Breakfast

Day 5: *Istanbul - Gallipoli - Canakkale*

After an early breakfast, we will begin our scenic drive down to Gallipoli, historically famous for being the site of many battles during WW1. Then we will visit Anzac Cove, Ceremonial Ground for Dawn Service, Lone Pine and some shelters and tunnels before we cross the second strategic waterway, the Dardanelles, and land in Asia. We proceed to our hotel in Canakkale.

Overnight in Canakkale

Meal Plan: Breakfast and Dinner

Day 6: *Canakkale - Troy - Pergamon - Kusadasi*

We drive to Troy, referred to in Homer's "Iliad" and "Odyssey." Troy is, in fact, nine cities superimposed one upon another. Troy VI pertains to the famous Trojan War of Homer where the legendary heroes included Agamemnon, Achilles, Ulysses and Nestor on the Greek side; and Priam, Hector and Paris on the Trojan side.

Continuing on our journey we will stop by the hauntingly beautiful Pergamon. Among the impressive structures of this city, dating from 3rd BC, we will see the Altar of Zeus, Temples of Dionysus and Trajan and the 200,000 volume library which was surpassed only by that found in Alexandria at the time. Leaving Pergamon we settle at our hotel in nearby Kusadasi.

Overnight in Kusadasi

Meal Plan: Breakfast and Dinner

Day 7: *Kusadasi: Ephesus*

Following an early breakfast we will proceed to the ancient city of Ephesus.

Ephesus was undoubtedly one of the most important cultural centers of the ancient world. Impressive structures we will see include the Library of Celsus, Temple of Hadrian, Theater and Odeon. We will also stop by at the Temple of Artemis, which was one of the Seven Wonders of antiquity. Close by is the House of the Virgin Mary where she is believed to have spent her last years. On August 18, 1961, Pope John XXII proclaimed the House of Virgin Mary at Ephesus to be sacred. Pope Benedict XVI paid a visit and led a Mass at the church in November 2006.

Overnight in Kusadasi.

Meal Plan: Breakfast and Dinner

Day 8: Kusadasi - Cruise Embarkation

This morning we board our cruise and sail to Greece. Our first stop will be Patmos.

You will have free time today to explore the island to see its landscape of outstanding natural beauty comprising of rocky hills, dozens of tongues of land reaching out into the sea, tranquil beaches and many picturesque inlets. Before arriving at the port, a stop of 10 minutes is made at the square at Kambos in the north part of island.

You could start your exploration from the port of Scala and after exploring there, head to the central part of the island "Chora" which is the location of the Majestic Byzantine Monastery of St. John the Divine, built in 1088. Don't forget a visit to the Grotto of the Apocalypse, and then to the windmills of Chora, once upon a time the landmark of all Aegean islands. From here you can enjoy a beautiful view and have the chance to take photos. (Please note that all sightseeing on Patmos is at your own expense, your tour leader can assist you in organizing a guided tour.)

Overnight on board cruise ship

Meal Plan: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 9: Crete and Santorini

We continue cruising to Crete and then Santorini.

Crete is the largest and the most rugged of the Greek Islands. It is also the home of the great Minoan civilization and the mythological home of Zeus. We will arrive in the capital, Heraklion, where you can explore on your own or perhaps take a tour to Knossos. Here, Sir Arthur Evans's archaeological discoveries revealed a civilization dating back to 4000 BC, when a great empire flourished on the island. Based on the wealth of artifacts that were found, Evans theorized that this was the site of the ancient Minoan Kingdom.

Next, we will arrive on Santorini. You will have free time to explore this beautiful island. A unique sight is the various layers of lava that can be seen on the face of the rock, each layer another phase of the activity of the volcano. Built on the caldera rim, Oia is an excellent example of Cycladic architecture. On Santorini you may choose to have a Thira and/or Oia village tour (optional expense).

You can't miss the main town of Fira, an attractive town perched on the Caldera rim. Here you will have time to stroll along the lanes of the little town or relax over a coffee as you gaze down upon Kamenes, the two black volcanic islets in the caldera. A short cable car ride can take you down to the pier to rejoin the ship or you can go down the steps (all 500+ of them!!).

(Please note that all sightseeing on Crete and Santorini is at your own expense, your tour leader can assist you in organizing a guided tour.)

Overnight on board cruise ship.

Meal Plan: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 10: Arrival in Athens - Delphi - Athens

Today we arrive at the port of Athens and embark upon an excursion to Delphi, one of the most famous sites of classical Greece. Famous for its theater, Temple of Apollo and ancient ruins, Delphi was considered the center of the earth and the universe, and played a central role in the classical Greek world.

After taking a scenic drive through Levidia and Arachova (famous for its bright multi-coloured carpets), we'll arrive in Delphi at around noon. During your visit to Delphi we'll tour the archaeological site and its museum of treasures, including the unique bronze Charioteer, and proceed along the Sacred Way to the Athenian Treasury.

After an optional lunch at a hotel, you'll visit the famous Temple of Apollo and the Castalia Spring before returning to Athens with another stop at Levidia en route.

Overnight in Athens.

Meal Plan: Breakfast and Dinner

Day 11: *Athens: City Tour*

Today we enjoy a guided tour of Athens, the very heart and soul of Greece. Athens has been very nicely pedestrianized in recent years, and most sites of interest are easily and pleasantly accessed by foot or subway (rather than being trapped in Athens' horrendous traffic).

Our guided tour begins at the new Acropolis Museum, located at the foot of the Acropolis. The museum was built to house every artifact found on the rock and on its feet, from the Greek Bronze Age to Roman and Byzantine Greece. Nearly 4,000 objects are exhibited over an area of 14,000 square metres.

From here we will enter Plaka, the old town of Athens. Standing on a small square is the Lysicrates Monument, a cyclical tower from the 4th century BC. From here, it is just a brief walk along Dionysiou Areopagitou Street to the southern slope of the Acropolis -- the site of the Dionysos Theatre. Constructed in the 6th century BC, it is one of the world's oldest theatres and the place where the great works of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides and Aristophanes were first performed. We will also see a more recent theatre, the Odeon of Herod Atticus from the second century AD, which is still used for concerts and performances.

The Acropolis itself is adorned with magnificent buildings dating from the 5th century BC, the Golden Age of Athens. On the highest point on the Acropolis is the Parthenon, often considered the finest monument to Greek civilization. The temple was dedicated to Athena "Parthenos," the virgin and patron goddess of the city.

We'll descend the Acropolis and enter the Ancient Agora located adjacent to the Plaka. Among the numerous sights in this archaeological park are the well-preserved Temple of Hephaistos and the landmark Roman era Tower of the Winds. From here you are free to wander and explore on your own, or make your way back to the hotel with your Tour Leader's assistance.

Overnight in Athens.

Meal Plan: Breakfast

Day 12: *Athens*

Today is free in Athens.

Overnight in Athens.

Meal Plan: Breakfast

Day 13: *Departure from Athens*

Today we fly home from Athens to Salt Lake City.

Meal Plan: Breakfast