



Athens and the Greek Isles



The roots of modern Western Civilization lie on the hundreds of rocky islands that dot the Aegean Sea and on the rugged, mountainous mainland of Hellas (Greece). The earliest civilization that we call "Greek" began on the Island of Crete in the midst of the wine-dark Mediterranean Sea around 2500 BCE. People from Egypt, the Middle East, and to the west settled on this rocky island and began a brilliant "Minoan" civilization that would span about 1,000 years. From the early Greeks we inherited such important things as a belief in democracy, equality under the law, and even trial by jury. The Greeks are also responsible for introducing many literary forms and were pioneers in many fields such as physics, philosophy, logic, history, geometry, the theater, and biology.

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Itinerary Overview

**Day 1 -
Monday, May 14**
Flight to Athens

**Day 2 -
Tuesday, May 15**
Arrive Athens – Walking Tour

**Day 3 -
Wednesday, May 16**
Athens City Tour

**Day 4 -
Thursday, May 17**
Athens – Ancient Agora &
National Archaeological Museum

**Day 5 -
Friday, May 18**
Athens to Mykonos

**Day 6 -
Saturday, May 19**
Mykonos to Santorini

**Day 7 -
Sunday, May 20**
Villages and Wines of Santorini

**Day 8 -
Sunday, May 21**
Santorini to Heraklion

**Day 9 -
Monday, May 22**
Knossos Palace - Flight to Athens

**Day 10 -
Tuesday, May 23**
Flight from Athens to Charlotte

Athens and the Greek Isles

May 14-23, 2018

Join us in May, 2018, for an exciting 10-day tour of the Greek capital city **Athens** and three of the most beautiful Greek Isles: **Mykonos**, **Crete**, and **Santorini**. We will have the opportunity to sample traditional Greek food and beverages, enjoy Greek music and folk dancing, and travel across the spectacular **Aegean Sea** from one island to another on our itinerary. This Gaston College Tour promises to be an educational opportunity of a lifetime, even for those of us who have visited the Greek World in the past.



DAY 1 **Monday, May 14** **Flight to Athens**

- Depart Charlotte on your overnight flight to **Athens**.

DAY 2 **Tuesday, May 15** **Arrive Athens – Walking Tour**

- Arrival at the Athens airport. Your guide will greet you on arrival and you transfer to your hotel.
- In the afternoon, we will gather and drive to the center for our first orientation walk in the beautiful area of **Plaka**.
- Starting from **Syntagma Square**, we will explore the picturesque streets of Plaka with the neoclassical buildings and the numerous little shops and taverns. The way will lead us to the famous **Tower of the Winds**, and before we know it we will be bargaining for our little souvenirs in the busy flea-market in **Monastiraki**.
- We will continue our walk along **Adrianou street** right next to the ancient Greek and Roman

market with great views to the **Acropolis** and the **Temple of Hephaestus** (the best preserved ancient temple).

- We will conclude at a local restaurant for our **welcome dinner** in **Thisio**.
- Return transfer to our hotel for overnight.



DAY 3 **Wednesday, May 16** **Athens City Tour**

- This morning is dedicated to exploring the city of **Athens**. We begin with a panoramic tour to the most important monuments and landmarks of the city including the **Panathinaikon**

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Temple of Athena Nike

stadium, the **Zappeion**, the temple of **Olympian Zeus**, **Hadrian's Arch**, **Syntagma square**, the **Parliament**, the **Tomb of the Unknown Soldier**, **Schliemann's House**, the **Academy**, the **University**, the **National Library**, and the **Old Parliament**.

- Next we head for our guided visit to the **Acropolis**, including the **Propylae**, the **Temple of Athena Nike**, the **Parthenon**, and the **Erechtheion**.
- Later, we continue on foot along **Dionysiou Aeropagitou Street**, to the **Museum of Acropolis**, voted one of the best museums in the world.
- After our guided visit we will be free to explore more of Athens on our own.

DAY 4 **Thursday, May 17** **Athens – Ancient Agora & National Archaeological Museum**

- After our breakfast, we will transfer by private vehicle to the **Thisio** area.
- This time we will explore the ancient Greek and Roman markets including the **Stoa of Attalos**.
- In the afternoon we will board our coach again for a transfer to the **National Archaeological**

Museum, the largest and most comprehensive museum in Greece, housing findings from all over country and from various periods of antiquity.

- The remainder of the day is at leisure.

DAY 5 **Friday, May 18** **Athens to Mykonos**

- We have an early breakfast this morning and transfer to the port of **Piraeus** to catch the local ferry to **Mykonos**.
- Arrival at the famous island of the international "jetset", welcome assistance, and transfer to our hotel.
- Rest of the day at leisure.
- Make sure to explore the bustling **Chora** (Mykonos town), with the maze of the narrow cobblestone streets, the numerous little shops, and the white-washed houses.
- Explore **Mando square**, take your photos at the famous windmills, and enjoy your drinks at the sea-front "**Little Venice**". The nights in **Mykonos** are endless and famous throughout the world.



Mykonos Town

DAY 6 **Saturday, May 19** **Mykonos to Santorini**

- Your morning will be at leisure to explore more of this unique island, and why not try one of its

famous sandy beaches.

- Early in the afternoon, we will be transferred to the port of **Mykonos**, for the local high-speed ferry to **Santorini**.
- Arrival in **Santorini**, welcome assistance and transfer to our hotel.
- You may take your first walks to **Fira** this evening to explore the little streets with the stunning views to the volcano while enjoying a drink in one of the numerous cafes and bars.
- Overnight in Santorini.



Pyrgos Church

DAY 7 **Sunday, May 20** **Villages and Wines of Santorini**

- Today we will have a relaxing morning.
- Early in the afternoon, we will gather to explore the beauties of this unique island.
- We will first head to the southeast side of the island where most of the unique black-sanded beaches are located.
- We will see **Perivolos** and **Kamari** and then we will continue toward the inland villages.
- First stop will be at **Megalochori**, the unique **traditional Cycladic village**.
- We will walk and explore the village and then we will continue to **Pyrgos** with its castle, the

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cobble-stone streets, and the white-washed houses.

- Climbing further high we will reach the monastery of **Profitis Ilias**, at the highest point of the island, with astonishing views.
- Our tour continues to a local winery, where we will have the opportunity to learn all about the Santorinian wines and taste some of them while gazing the fantastic view to the volcano.
- We will then head to the northern most tip of the island. Here is located the most famous village of the island, the spectacular **Oia**. Built at the edge of the caldera, with the best views to the volcano, the little islets and the **Caldera**, offers the most impressive images that will remain in your memories forever.
- We will take a walk to explore this unique village and find the perfect spot to watch the most famous sunset of the **Aegean** (weather permitting).
- Return drive to our hotel for the evening



Knossos, Crete

transferred to the port of **Santorini**, for the high-speed ferry to **Crete**.

- Arrival at **Heraklion** port, welcome assistance and transfer to your hotel in **Heraklion** for the evening.

DAY 9 Monday, May 22 Knossos Palace - Flight to Athens

- The day is dedicated to exploring the **Minoan** civilizations.
- After our breakfast, we will check-out from our hotel, and travel some 4000 years in the past, as we arrive at the Palace of **Knossos**. We will learn all about the mythical – half man, half bull – **Minotaur**, labyrinth where he was hidden, and how he was slain by **Theseus**.
- We will visit the **Palace**, see the throne room, the royal apartments and the central courtyard, and learn about the early Minoan civilization at the famous site unearthed by Sir Arthur Evans.
- Later, we will drive back to **Heraklion** town for our guided visit to the renovated **Archaeological**

Museum with unique findings from the area.

- We will then continue on foot to explore the town with the **Freedom Square**, the pedestrianized streets, the **Morozini Fountain** (with its lions), the **Basilica of St. Mark**, the **Venetian Loggia** and the **Church of St. Titus**.
- You will also have some free time to explore the local market with various little shops offering unique local products.
- Later in the afternoon, we gather again and transfer to the airport for a short flight to Athens.
- Arrival and transfer to our hotel for overnight.
- After our return to Athens, we will celebrate the end of our exciting tour with a **gala Farewell Dinner** at a local restaurant in the **Plaka**, with a wonderful view of the **Athenian Acropolis** in the background.

DAY 10 Tuesday, May 23 Flight from Athens to Charlotte

- Our magnificent journey to Greece comes to its end today with a transfer to the airport at the indicated time, for our return flight back home arriving back in **Charlotte** later this evening.



Old harbor of Heraklion

DAY 8 Sunday, May 21 Santorini to Heraklion

- The morning will be at leisure for you to explore more of this unique island.
- In the afternoon, we will be



Streets of Plaka

Traditional windmills on Santorini



What IS Included in the Tour Package

- Round trip flights from Charlotte, NC to Athens on a regularly scheduled airline.
- All airport taxes and fuel surcharges (which are subject to change until time of ticketing).
- Internal airfare from Heraklion to Athens including taxes and fuel surcharges
- Accommodations in four- and five-star hotels (double-occupancy).
- All breakfasts at your hotel.
- Welcome dinner on our arrival day in Athens.
- Gala dinner on final day in Athens at the Strofi Restaurant.
- Professional English-speaking tour manager/ escort, plus Gaston College Tour Director.
- Transportation by private coach.
- Ferry tickets from Piraeus-Mykonos, high speed ferry Mykonos-Santorini-Heraklion in economy class
- All admission fees and excursions noted in itinerary.
- 100% Financial Protection through our Travel Trust Association License.

What is NOT included in the Tour Package

- Valid passport (Visas are not currently required for US citizens).
- Any fees that might be imposed by the airlines at the airport for checked baggage (one checked bag up to 50 lbs. is allowed).
- Porterage at hotels.
- Lunches and dinners, drinks with meals.
- Single room supplements (if requested).
- Tips for restaurants, driver and tour manager. Personal expenditures such as telephone calls, snacks, drinks with meals, laundry, etc.
- Cost of Gaston College registration on **April 19, 2018**.



All-Inclusive Tour Price

Land and air package:
\$3,555 per person, double-occupancy hotel with transportation and fees (based on 21 paying tour members).

Reservation Form

Athens & the Greek Isles

May 14-23, 2018

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM, DETATCH AND SEND TO GASTON COLLEGE STUDY TOURS AT THE ADDRESS BELOW.

Send a \$500 (per person) deposit by check or credit card (credit card payments can be made at 704.922.6435). Deposits must be received on or before January 30, 2018 to Bob Blanton at the address below.

Full name (as it appears on your passport): _____

Current address: _____

Telephone number: _____

Email: _____

Valid passport number (for airlines): _____

Expiration date: _____

Note: Many foreign countries now require that your passport be valid at least 6 months after you end your visit. Make sure yours will meet this requirement.

I wish to room with: _____

I require a private room at additional cost: _____

Special dietary/health needs (for hotels/airlines): _____

- I am covered by my own health/hospitalization insurance policy while overseas. You must provide proof of coverage.
- I plan to purchase additional health/hospitalization insurance (on my own). Trip Mate is our preferred company.

Bob Blanton, Study Tours Director
Box 76, Gaston College
201 Highway 321 South
Dallas, NC 28034-1499

Reservations

Athens & the Greek Isles
May 14-23, 2018

All prices based upon a minimum of 21 paying participants (prices are valid at the time of this printing, but are subject to change). Tours are sold on a first-come, first-served basis. *Checks should be made payable to Gaston College Study Tours, and payment should be sent directly to Bob Blanton, Gaston College Study Tours, Box 76, Gaston College, 201 Highway 321 South, Dallas, NC 28034.*

**Final Payment Deadline
February 14, 2018**



Gaston College
Opportunities For Life

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