



Greece's Ionian Islands: Athens, Kefalonia & Corfu

12 days | 15 days with Nafplio & the Athens Riviera extension

Visit the Ionian Islands, and you'll find postcard Greek beaches. But look beyond those sandy shores, and you'll see so much more: traces of British, French, Italian, and Turkish culture in the Old Town of Corfu; limestone mountains rolling across Kefalonia; and leaf-green scenery you wouldn't get on the Cyclades. On this trip, you'll visit three of the Ionians (and up to six if you take our excursions), experiencing life on some of the country's most underappreciated islands. And be sure to add the extension to Nafplio and the Athenian Riviera. You'll build a more complete and vibrant picture of Greece—one tinged with cerulean and emerald to complement those white-washed walls.



Your tour package includes

- 10 nights in handpicked hotels
- 10 breakfasts
- 4 dinners with beer or wine
- 1 wine tasting
- 1 liqueur tasting
- 3 food tastings
- 5 sightseeing tours
- Expert Tour Director & local guides
- Private deluxe motor coach
- 2 ferry transfers
- 1 on-tour flight

Included highlights

- Acropolis
- Athens food tasting tour
- Kefalonia's Melissani Cave Lake
- Olive oil tasting
- Kefalonian olive oil & wine tasting
- Archaeological site of Nicopolis
- Corfu's Old Town
- Corfiot kumquat tasting

Tour pace

On this guided tour, you'll walk for at least 2 hours daily across uneven terrain, along paved roads and cobblestone streets, and up some hills and stairs.

Group size

15–30

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Overnight Flight → 1 night

Day 1: Travel day

Board your overnight flight to Athens today.

Athens → 2 nights

Day 2: Arrival in Athens

Included meals: welcome dinner

Welcome to Greece! Land in Athens, Europe's oldest capital city and "the cradle of Western civilization." Meet your Tour Director and fellow travelers, transfer to your hotel, and relax for a while. Reconvene at a welcome dinner, served with your choice of beer or wine, and continue getting to know one another.

Day 3: Sightseeing tour of the Acropolis & tasting tour

Included meals: breakfast, tasting

Today, let a local guide introduce you to the ancient highlights and traditional flavors of this bustling city, home to the world's first democracy.

- See the Parthenon, Temple of Athena Nike, and Erechtheion on a walking tour of the Acropolis, Athens' ancient hilltop citadel and a UNESCO-recognized symbol of Greece.
- Set off on a guided walking tour of the artsy Psyrri neighborhood, home to artisan shops and live rebetiko (Greece's answer to the blues).
- Continue on through Monastiraki, a historic neighborhood centered on a famous flea market. Navigate its packed streets, and see if you can spot any of its Greco-Roman ruins.
- Stop to taste authentic Greek bites as you amble on, and get a feel for the pace of Athenian life.

Enjoy free time in Athens or add an excursion.
+ Mount Lycabettus Dinner

Kefalonia → 3 nights

Day 4: Ferry to Kefalonia

Included meals: breakfast, dinner

Travel across the Peloponnesian peninsula, stopping along the way to admire the Corinth

Canal—a lockless, four-mile-long cut that links the Aegean and Ionian Seas. Then, continue on to Patras, Greece's third-largest city, to board a ferry headed for the largest of the Ionian Islands: Kefalonia.

After settling into your hotel, sit down with your group for an included dinner, served with your choice of beer or wine.

Day 5: Melissani Lake, olive oil & wine tasting

Included meals: breakfast, tasting, wine tasting

Spend a full day exploring Kefalonia, a mountainous isle dotted with fishing villages. See its natural beauty firsthand; sample delectable cuisine and locally made (and globally beloved) wines; and catch some of the vibes that have inspired writers and artists across millennia.

- Drive across the island and admire dramatic coastal landscapes from a viewpoint above the white sands of Myrtilos, a beach frequently touted as one of Greece's best.
- Head to the outskirts of Sami village and stop at Melissani Lake—an underground cave filled with water so clear, boats look like they're hovering in the air. Board one with your group for a cruise, watching the sunlight that shoots down through an open ceiling dance and dazzle on the lake's surface.
- Stop by an olive oil mill and walk through the production process. See and smell each sensational step, then move on to a tasting of select oils paired with local products.
- Sit down with a local guide for an expert-led tasting of typical island wines: varietals like citrusy, acidic robola; sweet, full-bodied mavrodaphne; and sugary, sun-dried muscat.

Day 6: Free day on Kefalonia

Included meals: breakfast

Enjoy free time to explore Kefalonia on your own or add an excursion for a beach day unlike any you've taken before.
+ Zakynthos & Shipwreck Beach

Lefkada Region → 1 night

Day 7: Ferry to Lefkada

Included meals: breakfast, dinner

Board a ferry this morning and travel north to Lefkada, an Ionian island famous for its sheer

cliffs, mountain villages and monasteries, and white-sand beaches. Disembark and enjoy a leisurely transfer to your hotel before sitting down for an included dinner in the evening, served with your choice of beer or wine.

Corfu → 3 nights

Day 8: Sightseeing tour of Nicopolis & ferry to Corfu

Included meals: breakfast

Head back onto the mainland to Epirus, a historically isolated region squeezed between the Pindus Mountains and the sea. Once there, take a scenic drive along its pristine coast to the ancient city of Nicopolis. Founded in 29 B.C. by the first Roman emperor, Octavian, the "city of victory" served as capital of the province of Epirus Vetus. Ruins dot the area to this day: Take a guided tour of the archaeological site to learn about the wars, destruction, and earthquakes the city has endured over the ages, and understand why it's been nominated for UNESCO recognition.

After finishing up in Nicopolis, board an afternoon ferry bound for the island of Corfu.

Day 9: 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 capital, Corfu Town.

- 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 Achilleion Palace, 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 add an excursion if you want something a little more lively).

+ Corfu Tavern Dinner

Day 10: Free day on Corfu

Included meals: breakfast

Enjoy a free day to explore Corfu at your leisure, or add a beachy excursion to check another pair of Ionian islands off your list.

+ Paxos & Antipaxos Boat Cruise

Athens → 1 night

Day 11: Flight to Athens

Included meals: breakfast, farewell dinner

Ease into the day with a free morning in Corfu: Relax in your hotel, head to a local cafe for a spot of Greek coffee, or get in some last-minute exploring before flying to Athens this afternoon. Then, celebrate your trip with your fellow group members over a farewell dinner, served with your choice of beer or wine.

Flight Home

Day 12: Departure

Included meals: breakfast (excluding early morning departures)

Transfer to the airport for your flight home, or add a little romance to a lovely trip by extending your stay with visits to oceanside Nafplio and the Athens Riviera.

+ Nafplio & the Athens Riviera extension

After all that fun in the Ionian sun, this extension's the perfect counterbalance. Begin in Mycenae, heart of a prehistoric powerhouse, before staying in Nafplio for two nights. Immerse yourself in the city's unique mix of Greek, French, Venetian, and Ottoman cultures—and maybe take a dip in the waters of the Aegean, too. Fall in love with its seaside splendor, then wrap up your trip with one relaxing night on the Athenian Riviera. Still craving history? Don't worry: We make a stop in old Epidaurus, home to a brilliantly preserved theater and one of the most important healing

centers of antiquity.

Nafplio → 2 nights

Day 12: Nafplio via Mycenae

Included meals: breakfast

Return to the Peloponnese and travel to Nafplio, a romantic seaside town with roots stretching back to Classical Greece. Pass by the Corinth Canal once again, then continue on to Mycenae, a UNESCO World Heritage Site that was once one of the most important urban centers of Bronze Age Greece.

- Explore Mycenae's citadel, including its main entrance, the Lion Gate. Erected sometime near 1250 B.C. and distinguished by twin lionesses over its threshold, it's the largest surviving prehistoric sculpture in the Aegean.
- Visit another archaeological site of epic provenance: the Treasury of Atreus. Also known as the Tomb of Agamemnon, this beehive-shaped burial ground (or "tholos" in Greek) dates back over three millennia and is inextricably linked to the mythical Trojan War through the kings for which it's named.
- Visit the royal cemetery known as Grave Circle A, which supposedly holds the remains of Agamemnon and his followers—and where treasures like the golden Mask of Agamemnon were unearthed.

Continue on to Nafplio and join your Tour Director on a walk through its charming old town.

- Roam through its bustling, taverna-lined squares and spot the imposing Palamidi, a Venetian fortress perched atop a hill over 700 feet above the city.
- Learn about Nafplio's history, including how it became the first capital of independent Greece in 1829.

Day 13: Free day in Nafplio

Included meals: breakfast

Spend a free day in Nafplio or add an excursion to the Saronic island of Hydra, a haven for artists and others seeking peaceful retreat.

+ A Day on Hydra

Athens Riviera → 1 night

Day 14: Athens Riviera via Epidaurus

Included meals: breakfast

Head into the countryside for a guided tour of the Sanctuary of Asklepios, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in the ancient Greek city of Epidaurus.

- Learn about its history as a healing sanctuary dedicated to the Greek god of medicine, where people went in search of physical and spiritual healing.
- Move on to the Ancient Theater of Epidaurus, one of the best-preserved Greek amphitheaters in the world and yet another UNESCO-recognized landmark.

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

Flight Home

Day 15: 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: goaheadtours.com/GIN | 1-800-597-0350

Day 3: Mount Lycabettus Dinner

\$99/\$109* (4 hours, departs in the evening, includes dinner)

This evening, board a funicular up to the top of Mount Lycabettus, the highest point in the city of Athens. Relax and admire the sight of sprawling Athens as you ride up to the hill's summit, roughly 900 feet above the city below. Once there, sit down for an included dinner at Orizontes restaurant, and tuck into Mediterranean dishes as you savor a sunset and one-of-a-kind views of the Acropolis. End the night by riding the funicular back down Mount Lycabettus and returning to your hotel. Please note: Travelers must feel comfortable climbing some stairs to enter the funicular. Additionally, we recommend dressing in business casual attire, but it isn't required.

Day 6: Zakynthos & Shipwreck Beach

\$105/\$115* (9.5 hours, departs in the morning, includes lunch)

Today, cruise through the sparkling blue waters of the Ionian Sea surrounding the island of Zakynthos. Sail past stunning sea caves—one of which had Poseidon's face carved into the rock by crashing waves—and keep an eye out for some of the isle's most famous inhabitants, loggerhead sea turtles. Afterward, continue on for a photo stop of Navagio Beach: Directly translating to "Shipwreck Beach," this cove's name comes from the wreckage of the MV Panagiotis, a large boat that ran aground in 1980 and has remained there since. Spend time snapping photos of beach and rusting vessel, then enjoy an included lunch at a nearby beach before heading back to port.

Day 9: Corfu Tavern Dinner

\$89/\$99* (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 10: Paxos & Antipaxos Boat Cruise

\$99/\$109* (10 hours, departs in the morning)

Today, set sail to explore the twin islands of Paxos and Antipaxos. Begin your journey with a visit to Ypapanti's Cave, a naturally formed cavern surrounded by cerulean waters. Hear how the Greek submarine Papanikolis would hide there during World War II and about the rumored secret passage used by its crew to return to town. Then, continue along Paxos' western coast, admiring its dramatic landscapes, before arriving at Paradise Beach on Antipaxos. Enjoy a walk along its white sands or a swim in its clear waters before returning to Paxos. End the day in Gaios, the island's

capital, where you'll have plenty of time to explore and grab lunch before cruising back to Corfu.

Travel tip: We recommend bringing a bathing suit, sunscreen, a towel, and a change of clothes on this excursion.

Extension excursion options

Day 13: A Day on Hydra

\$109/\$119* (9 hours, departs in the morning, includes lunch)

Enjoy a day on the island of Hydra, a no-cars-allowed artist's colony in the heart of the Saronic Islands. Begin by making your way to the seaside village of Metochi, where you'll then board a ferry to the island. Once on Hydra, you'll meet up with a local guide for a walking tour of this serene island's main town. Step inside the Rafalia pharmacy to see homemade herbal remedies in one of Greece's oldest pharmacies. Stroll past the house that singer-songwriter Leonard Cohen once called home before entering the beautifully preserved, Neoclassically styled Pavlos Kountouriotis Mansion. After visiting this mountaintop retreat, sit down for an included lunch on the island, then hop back on the ferry to sail back to the mainland.

Please note: Travelers must be comfortable walking for at least 2 hours with little sitting as there are no motor vehicles on the island.

*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. GAT 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 goaheadtours.com/terms