



## The Greek Islands: Crete & Santorini

10 days | 13 days with Delphi & the Athens Riviera extension

No matter how you cut it, the Greek islands are a multifaceted paradise, and after admiring their gleaming highlights, you'll be left craving more. Begin your tour in Athens, a city that needs no introduction, before journeying to Crete. Here, on the largest of Greece's islands, you'll marvel at the Venetian handiwork of charming Chania's harbor; walk among vestiges of the Bronze Age Minoans in Heraklion; and discover the joys of Cretan cuisine through olive oil, wine, and other local delights. Then, you'll head to Santorini—painted in those famous flashes of white and blue—for some seaside R & R. Go for a walk, a swim, or a sail, taking in its volcanic terrain from all angles. And if you're interested in capping your trip with a mythical twist, add the extension to Delphi. (Maybe you'll catch the oracle's whispers riding the wind.)



### Your tour package includes

- 8 nights in handpicked hotels
- 8 breakfasts
- 1 lunch
- 3 dinners with beer or wine
- 4 sightseeing tours
- Expert Tour Director & local guides
- Private deluxe motor coach
- 1 ferry transfer
- 2 on-tour flights

### Included highlights

- Temple of Zeus
- Acropolis
- Parthenon
- Venetian port of Chania
- Palace of Knossos
- Akrotiri excavations
- Mount Profitis Ilias
- Village of Pygos

### Tour pace

On this guided tour, you'll walk for at least 1.5 hours daily across uneven terrain, along paved roads and cobblestone streets, and up steep hills and stairs.

### Group size

15–28

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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! Meet your Tour Director at the airport and transfer with them to your hotel, where you'll get to know your fellow travelers over a welcome dinner served with your choice of beer or wine.

### Day 3: Sightseeing tour of Athens

*Included meals: breakfast*

Meet up with a local guide for an introduction to Greece's bustling capital, home to the world's first democracy and over 3,400 years of recorded history.

- Pass by three points of interest: the Olympic Stadium, Syntagma Square, and the Arch of Hadrian. Now home to various local soccer teams, the Olympic Stadium was erected in 1982 and has hosted a slew of important sporting events since—the grandest being the Summer Games of the 28th Olympiad. Syntagma Square memorializes the signing of the first Greek constitution in 1844, following an armed rebellion against the rule of King Otto. Carved from marble and standing since the second century, the Arch of Hadrian is an iconic landmark of modern-day Athens.
- View the ruins of the Temple of Olympian Zeus. Built less than a kilometer from the Acropolis, this structure dates back to the sixth century B.C. and, when intact, was the largest temple in Ancient Greece.
- See the classically inspired Old Royal Palace, home of the Hellenic Parliament, and drive through Plaka—the historic “neighborhood of the gods” built in the shadow of the Acropolis.
- Set off on a walking tour around the Acropolis of Athens, a millennia-old, UNESCO-listed citadel and the enduring

image of Greece. First properly developed by the renowned politician Pericles, it now contains the ruins of the Parthenon, Temple of Athena Nike, Erechtheion, and dozens of other archaeological sites.

Enjoy a free afternoon in Athens or add an excursion.

+ Greek Dance Lesson & Taverna Dinner

## Chania → 2 nights

### Day 4: Flight to Chania

*Included meals: breakfast, dinner*

Fly to Chania, a coastal city on Crete's northwestern shore that has passed between Greek, Venetian, and Ottoman hands through the centuries. After settling into your hotel, join your group in the evening for an included dinner, served with your choice of beer or wine.

### Day 5: Sightseeing tour of Chania

*Included meals: breakfast*

This morning, join a local guide on a walking tour of Chania's Old Town, a historic quarter especially tinged by its Venetian heritage.

- Step inside Trimartiri—a Greek Orthodox cathedral dedicated to the Virgin Mary—before visiting Etz Hayyim. The only synagogue on the island, this still-active place of worship is a symbol of the city's age-old Jewish community.
- Walk along the Old Venetian Port of Chania, a harbor that's served the city since the mid-1300s. Catch a glimpse of its famous Egyptian lighthouse, and pass by the Yiali Tzami—a former Ottoman mosque, instantly recognizable by its main dome, that nowadays houses art exhibitions.

*Please note: Etz Hayyim closes on Saturdays and Sundays*

Enjoy a free afternoon in Chania or add an excursion.

+ Crete Olive Oil Tasting & Dinner

## Heraklion → 1 night

### Day 6: Transfer to Heraklion & sightseeing tour

*Included meals: breakfast, lunch*

Board your bus and cruise past Crete's olive-covered landscapes en route to Heraklion—an ancient port town that was once the hub of the Minoans, Europe's first civilization. Disembark and enjoy an included lunch before setting off on a guided tour.

- Visit 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 the myth, King Minos imprisoned the Minotaur in the heart of a labyrinth).
- See the Heraklion Archaeological Museum, home of the world's preeminent collection of Minoan art and many artifacts taken from the excavation of Knossos and other dig sites around Crete.

## Santorini → 2 nights

### Day 7: Ferry to Santorini

*Included meals: breakfast*

Board a ferry and chart a course across the Aegean Sea to Santorini, the crown jewel of the Cyclades islands. Built up by lava flows over thousands of years and irrevocably changed by a devastating eruption in 1,600 B.C., its rock-laden terrain and flooded caldera are a definitive example of the stark beauty of volcanic landscapes.

Upon arrival, enjoy free time to explore its cliffside villages, roam its rugged hills, or simply soak in its charming culture before settling into your accommodations.

### Day 8: Sightseeing tour of Santorini

*Included meals: breakfast*

Take in the sights of Santorini—a volcanic isle known for its black-sand beaches, cliff-lined shores, and stunning whitewashed architecture—on a guided tour.

- Visit the prehistoric settlements that were unearthed during the archaeological excavations at Akrotiri.
- Ride to the top of Mount Profitis Ilias for panoramic views of the whole island.

- Stop in small, picturesque Pyrgos, a well-preserved medieval village that's situated on the island's highest point and is latticed with steep, cobblestone alleys.

Spend a free afternoon in Santorini or add an excursion.

+ Santorini Caldera Cruise & Dinner

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## Athens → 1 night

### Day 9: Flight to Athens

*Included meals: breakfast, farewell dinner*

Fly back to Athens, then celebrate your trip with your fellow group members over a farewell dinner, served with your choice of beer or wine.

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## Flight Home

### Day 10: Departure

*Included meals: breakfast (excluding early morning departures)*

Transfer to the airport for your flight home, or extend your stay a little longer. Mystical Delphi, legendary Marathon, the relaxing Athenian Riviera: You'd be in for three days well spent.

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## + Delphi & the Athens Riviera extension

For a different perspective on Greek culture through the ages, stay on tour with us for a few more days. From the Byzantine churches of Arachova, set against the hypnotizing beauty of mythic Mount Parnassus, to the religious ruins of Delphi, you'll tap into the country's rich spiritual history. Then, dig into ancient military history in Marathon before drawing your journey to an end with a rejuvenating night on the Athens Riviera.

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## Delphi Region → 2 nights

### Day 10: Delphi Region via Arachova

*Included meals: breakfast*

Make your way to the Delphi region via Arachova, a picturesque resort town over 3,000 feet up the southern slope of Mount Parnassus. Stroll through its charming cobblestone streets, marveling at Byzantine-era churches and mountainous landscapes that demand a picture. Then, continue on to your hotel in the Delphi region and enjoy free time for the rest of the day.

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### Day 11: Sightseeing tour of Delphi

*Included meals: breakfast*

Head back to the slopes of Mount Parnassus and visit the Archaeological Site of Delphi. Now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, it was once a sacred precinct, a spiritual focal point believed by the Ancient Greeks to be the "Navel of the Earth."

- Embark on a guided tour of the area, capped by a visit to the Temple of Apollo. Here, according to legend, the god Apollo prophesied 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 known as the *Charioteer of Delphi*

Spend a free afternoon in the Delphi region or add an excursion.

+ Hosios Loukas & the Gulf of Corinth

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## Athens Riviera → 1 night

### Day 12: Athens Riviera via Marathon

*Included meals: breakfast*

As you travel to the Athens Riviera, take in even more historic landmarks with a visit to the town of Marathon

- Learn about the Battle of Marathon. Waged on a nearby coastal plain in 490 BC, the clash marked a pivotal moment in the Greco-Persian Wars, when an outnumbered coalition of Athenians and Plataeans routed an invading Persian army.
- Enter the Tumulus of the Plataeans, a large burial mound where the fallen Plataean soldiers were laid to rest.

Continue on to your hotel on the Athens Riviera, then raise a farewell drink to your trip in the evening.

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## Flight Home

### Day 13: Departure

*Included meals: breakfast (excluding early morning departures)*

Transfer to the 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.ca/GIS](http://goaheadtours.ca/GIS) | 1-800-754-5066

## Day 3: Greek Dance Lesson & Taverna Dinner

\$129CAD/\$139CAD\* (4.5 hours, Departs in the evening, includes dinner)

Want to explore another facet of Greece's dazzling culture? This evening, head to a nearby dance studio and meet a professional dance instructor. Let them lead you through the steps of some traditional folk dances; once you've given them a try, move on to a local taverna for a delicious included dinner. Feast on Greek food and wine, then turn in for the night.

making your way back to your hotel.

## Day 5: Crete Olive Oil Tasting & Dinner

\$135CAD/\$145CAD\* (4.5 hours, departs in the evening, dinner included)

Head to a local olive oil farm outside of Chania where you'll enjoy an olive oil and wine tasting. Dip into the extra-virgin olive oil with a side of fresh-baked bread, then try five different wine varieties served with a dish of Cretan delicacies. End your night of food, wine, and fun with a dinner overlooking the stunning vineyard and olive groves.

## Day 8: Santorini Caldera Cruise & Dinner

\$205CAD (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. This excursion requires advance reservation and must be booked at least 20 days prior to departure.

## Extension excursion options

### Day 11: Hosios Loukas & the Gulf of Corinth

\$105CAD/\$115CAD\* (4.5 hours, departs in the afternoon, includes lunch)

Set out for the Gulf of Corinth, an inlet of the Ionian Sea that separates mainland Greece from the Peloponnese, and enjoy a relaxing included lunch of Greek specialties. Afterward, head to the country surrounding the Boeotian town of Distomo for a guided tour of Hosios Loukas. Founded in a picturesque valley over 1,000 years ago, this UNESCO-listed monastery is treasured as a prime example of Middle Byzantine architecture and art. Roam the grounds, examining Hosios Loukas' beautifully restored buildings and mosaics, before

\*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.ca/terms](http://goaheadtours.ca/terms)