



Greece's Cyclades Islands: Naxos & Paros

9 days | 12 days with Crete & Athens extension

If you've heard of the islands of Mykonos and Santorini, you already know of the Cyclades. But what about Naxos and Paros? With all the dazzling whites and soothing blues of its famous siblings—and only a fraction of the tourist traffic—they'll rapidly become some of your favorite destinations. Begin this small group tour in Athens, cradle of Western civilization, before zipping off to vineyard-covered Paros. Then, sail to Naxos and tour its olive mills and villages before making your way home. Or, get even more out of your time in the sun with an optional stay on historic Crete, and stand in the shadows of the legendary Minoan civilization.



Your tour package includes

- 7 nights in handpicked hotels
- 7 breakfasts
- 1 lunch
- 3 dinners with beer or wine
- 1 wine tasting
- 2 tastings
- 1 cooking class
- 2 sightseeing tours
- Expert Tour Director & local guides
- Private deluxe motor coach
- 3 ferry transfers

Included highlights

- Athens food markets
- Acropolis
- Parthenon
- Paros wine tasting
- Eggares Olive Press Museum
- Greek cooking class
- Portara
- Temple of Apollo

Tour pace

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

Group size

12–22

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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 fellow travelers at a welcome dinner this evening.

Day 3: Sightseeing tour of Athens

Included meals: breakfast, tasting

A local guide introduces you to the ancient highlights and traditional flavors of this bustling capital, home to the world's first democracy.

- Set off on a guided walking tour of the Plaka District and the markets in the Monastiraki neighborhood.
- Stop to sample a variety of cheeses and loukoumades, a type of sweet fried dough.
- See the Parthenon, Temple of Athena Nike, and Erechtheion on a walking tour of the Acropolis.

Enjoy free time in Athens or add an excursion.

+ Food of Athens Walking Tour

Paros → 2 nights

Day 4: Ferry to Paros & wine tasting

Included meals: breakfast, wine tasting, dinner

Take a ferry to the beautiful island of Paros, which is known for its beaches and traditional villages. Enjoy free time to explore before heading to the charming seaside village of Naoussa this evening.

- Visit a family-run winery, where you'll learn about the production of red and white wines during a tour of its vineyard.
- Learn about the vineyard's unique type of grape vines, which are trained to grow close to the ground to protect themselves from the strong ocean winds.
- Sit down for a tasting of fruity, white Monemvasia wine and native, red Mandilaria wine, the two most popular varietals on the island.

- Enjoy a dinner of Greek specialties.
- Choose to spend free time in Naoussa or return to your hotel after dinner.

Day 5: Free day in Paros

Included meals: breakfast

Enjoy a free day on the island of Paros or add an excursion.

+ Paros Boat Cruise & Snorkeling

Naxos → 2 nights

Day 6: Ferry to Naxos, Eggares Olive Press Museum & cooking class

Included meals: breakfast, tasting, lunch

Take a short ferry ride to the neighboring island of Naxos. Then, discover the flavors and ruins that make the largest island in the Cyclades such a hidden gem.

- Visit the Eggares Olive Press Museum, one of the oldest remaining olive mills on the island, and learn about the different stages of olive oil production.
- Sample some of the locally produced olive oil.
- Head to a nearby village and join a local Naxos family for a hands-on cooking class.
- Learn how to make traditional Greek cuisine and enjoy eating the meal you crafted for lunch while sipping local wine.
- Make your way to the Old Town and walk along a causeway to reach the Palatia Islet and view the Portara, a marble doorway that's part of the unfinished Temple of Apollo.

Day 7: Free day in Naxos

Included meals: breakfast

Spend a free day on the island of Naxos or add an excursion.

+ Apeiranthos Village Hike, Lunch & Liquor

Tasting

Athens → 1 night

Day 8: Ferry to Athens

Included meals: breakfast, farewell dinner

Board a high-speed ferry back to Athens. Then, celebrate your trip with your fellow group members during a farewell dinner at a local restaurant.

Flight Home

Day 9: Departure

Included meals: breakfast (excluding early morning departures)

Transfer to the airport for your flight home or continue on to visit Crete and further explore Athens.

+ Crete & Athens extension

Haven't had your fill of ancient history or contemporary island life? Luckily, Crete has both in spades. Stay a little bit longer to put on your archaeologist hat with local experts and uncover the past (and plenty of sea views) in Chania, one of the island's major cities. Then, catch a flight back to Athens for one more night in the Greek capital.

Chania → 2 nights

Day 9: Flight to Crete, olive oil farm & winery

Included meals: breakfast, wine tasting, liquor tasting, tasting, dinner

Fly to Chania, a city located on the western end of the island of Crete and embark on a journey to discover the local flavors.

- Join a local guide for a tour of an olive grove, olive mill, and modern bottling factory.
- Continue on to a winery to learn about the island's wine-growing traditions, as you explore the vineyard.
- Sit down for a tasting of extra-virgin olive oil, as well as several types of Cretan wine and Raki liquor.
- Pair your samples with small bites, such as fresh bread with olive oil and oregano-lemon salt, cheese, tomatoes, cucumbers, olives, or smoked ham.

This evening, head to a local restaurant in the countryside and admire scenic views of the olive groves, as you enjoy an included dinner.

Day 10: Free day in Chania

Included meals: breakfast

Enjoy a free day in Chania or add an excursion.

+ Cretan Coast Boat Ride, Samaria Gorge Hike & Lunch

Athens → 1 night

Day 11: Flight to Athens

Included meals: breakfast

Fly back to Athens this afternoon. Then, raise a glass and toast to your trip with a farewell drink this evening.

Flight Home

Day 12: 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.com/GPN | 1-800-597-0350

Day 3: Food of Athens Walking Tour

\$95/\$105* (4 hours, departs in the afternoon)

Spend the afternoon in the vibrant Psyrri neighborhood, which is known for its galleries, boutiques, and delicious foods from all over the country. Join your local guide in Monastiraki Square for an introduction to the neighborhood, which is often considered the city's melting pot thanks to its variety of cultures. Visit a historic Athenian bakery that's famous for its koulouri—bagel-like baked goods sprinkled with sesame seeds—and learn about the health benefits of the tiny, tasty, nutty-flavored seeds. Then, sit down at a classic Greek cafe, where you'll learn about local eating and drinking customs as you share plates of local specialties with your fellow travelers. Next, enjoy a little caffeine jolt with a coffee or iced cappuccino before picking up a box of fresh loukoumades, or donut balls coated with honey and nutella. Wrap up the afternoon at the Metropolitan Cathedral, where you'll enjoy tastings of olive oil, balsamic vinegar, ouzo, mastiha, loukoumi, and—of course—baklava. You'll be sure to leave with a stomach full of Greek goodies.

Day 5: Paros Boat Cruise & Snorkeling

\$179 (7 hours, departs in the morning, lunch included)

Head to the port in Paros and board a catamaran to cruise to the nearby islands of Antiparos and Despotiko. You'll enjoy swimming and snorkeling at the picture-perfect Blue Lagoon on Antiparos, as well as in local sea caves, at the uninhabited Despotiko island, and on the idyllic Faneromeni Beach. A full Greek barbecue lunch of pork, chicken, and fish souvlaki paired with vegetables will be served aboard the boat. You'll also enjoy unlimited wine, beer, water, and soft drinks. After spending a full day sailing, island hopping, and taking in the beautiful coastal scenery of the Cyclades Islands, dock at the port in Paros and make your way back to your hotel. Please note: We recommend packing a bathing suit, sunscreen, and towel. Snorkeling equipment is provided. This excursion is seasonal and runs from early-May through the end of September. It's also weather-dependent. This excursion requires advance reservation and must be booked at least 20 days prior to departure.

Day 7: Apeiranthos Village Hike, Lunch & Liquor Tasting

\$109/\$119* (7 hours, departs in the morning, lunch included)

Drive into the mountainous region of Naxos and enjoy quaint villages and hikes as you make your way to the picturesque village of Apeiranthos. Begin in the traditional village of Ano Potamia, set off on an hour long hike to Kato Potamia alongside a local guide. Your next stop is at Panagia Drosiani Church. This is one of the oldest Christian monuments in the Mediterranean, and you'll enter the grounds to learn about the historic buildings. Continue to Apeiranthos for a guided tour where you'll see Venetian towers, classic white archways, and charming two-story homes as you pass

through tiny squares and by quaint cafes. Visit the Apeiranthos Women's Traditional Crafts Cooperative to learn how the women who work there produce traditional woven textiles. This handicraft has been passed from generation to generation, and you'll see the loom they use to make the traditional pieces. Then, enjoy an included lunch served with local wine at a nearby tavern. The day ends with a visit to Vallindras Distillery in the village of Halki. You'll take a tour of the distillery and learn about the production of kitron. This liquor is made from citron, a citrusy fruit that's similar to a lemon, but is less bitter. You'll enjoy a tasting of this traditional island liquor before heading back to your hotel. Please note: The hike is 60–90 minutes long over a hilly dirt and rock path with uneven terrain and lots of steps.

Extension excursion options

Day 10: Cretan Coast Boat Ride, Samaria Gorge Hike & Lunch

\$155/\$165* (10 hours, departs in the morning, lunch included)

Eat, hike, and swim your day away, as you explore picturesque southern Crete. Start the day by visiting the village of Chora Sfakion to enjoy a tasting of tiropita, a flaky cheese and egg pastry made with honey. You'll then board a boat and set off for Agia Roumeli. This village is home to rare flora, fauna, geology, and hiking trails through unspoiled nature. Join your Tour Director on a four-mile hike through Samaria Gorge, which is a Greek National Park, and part of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. Admire the towering rock walls as you make your way through the winding pathways. You'll also have free time to explore the village or swim at the beach in Agia Roumeli after your hike. Sit down for an included lunch before boarding the boat back to Chora Sfakion. Then, continue on to your hotel in Chania. Please note: We recommend packing a bathing suit and sturdy walking shoes. The hike is 1.5–2 hours long over a hilly dirt and rock path with uneven terrain and lots of steps. This excursion is seasonal and runs from May through early October. It is also weather-dependent.

*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