
GEEO ITINERARY

Greece

Day 1: Athens Arrive in Athens at any time. Meet your group for a welcome meeting around 6:00 or 7:00 p.m.

Arrive in Athens at any time. Due to the potential for flight delays or cancellations, we recommend that you plan to arrive in Greece at least a day in advance. This will also give you time to adjust to the time difference and overcome any jetlag. We can book extra hotel nights for you in Athens before and/or after the trip. Please note that check-in at the hotel is usually around 2:00-3:00 p.m. There are no planned activities until an intro meeting around 6:00 or 7:00 p.m., usually in the hotel lobby. Check for a sign or ask at the reception desk about the exact time and location of the group meeting. Please make every effort to arrive in time for this meeting. If you are delayed and will arrive late, please inform us. Your tour leader will then leave you a message at the front desk informing you of where and when to meet up tomorrow. After the meeting, you might choose to get dinner at a nearby restaurant with your traveling companions and your tour leader to further get to know one another. **Please note:** All GEEO trips to Europe use public transportation. This means you will need to have luggage you can easily carry with you up and down stairs, on and off trains and buses, etc.

Day 2: Athens (B) Take an orientation walk in Athens. Afterward, explore freely and opt to visit the Acropolis site, the new Acropolis Museum, the Roman agora, or the National Archaeological Museum. Take time to relax at a local non-profit cafe, Shedia Home.

Athens is the capital of Greece, a city of culture, science, and commerce. From the colorful markets to the ancient monuments and the hustle and bustle of Plateia Syntagmatos (Constitution Square), Athens is rich with history and had a profound impact on the development of Western civilization. Named after the goddess of wisdom Athena, Athens encompasses eight hills within its borders. The most prominent of these, the Acropolis, stands as the ultimate architectural and artistic expression of the ancient Athenian spirit. Athens is a growing city, engulfing its neighboring suburbs all the way to Piraeus, the city's port and gateway to the Greek isles. Today, we enjoy a brief walk with the tour leader, who will give you some tips on finding things like supermarkets, main squares, and ATMs. For more specific or in-depth information, an official guided tour is recommended. You will then have free time explore on your own. Chances are other people in the group will want to see the same places as you, so typically the group will break off into smaller sub-groups to explore Athens. See our optional activities list further down on this page for our suggestions on what to see in Athens, although you will have to come in at least a day before our trip starts to see them all. Later in the day, be enriched and refreshed with drinks and a tour of local non-profit cafe, Shedia Home, which provides purpose and employment to over 150 individuals experiencing homelessness in Athens. You'll enjoy a drink while one of Shedia's guides recounts the recent history of Greece's financial crisis which has made initiatives like Shedia even more important for those who have found themselves without work and shelter. Your stop here supports their programs, including the cafe, art program, and magazine, all dedicated to supporting the community.

Day 3: Athens/Meteora (B) Visit to the stunning mountaintop monasteries of Meteora.

Today, we travel by train north to Kalambaka, our base for exploring the spectacular "hanging" monasteries of Meteora, perched atop pinnacles of rock. You may opt to do a sunset tour, where you can listen to the stories and legends of Meteora from a local guide. Visit one of the six active monasteries, see the Byzantine church of Virgin Mary, and enjoy great views from the most panoramic spots. The tour ends with an awe-inspiring sunset, which you will watch from a magical spot high up on the rocks of Meteora. Approximate travel time: 5 hrs by train

Day 4: Meteora (B) Spend a full day visiting the stunning mountaintop

monasteries of Meteora.

Today, we have a full day to discover the secrets of this mysterious and astonishing place. Learn about the monasteries' history from the monks themselves as you discover their rich heritage. We will take a bus up to see several monasteries in the area, built before any roads or settlements existed in the area and situated at over 2,000 feet above sea level on a precipitous rock pinnacle. Your afternoon is free to visit other monasteries or perhaps take a hike in the scenic local area. Please keep in mind that most of the monasteries require men and women to cover their knees and shoulders. Most provide clothing that can be borrowed, but they often are not freshly washed. Past travelers have told us that women need to wear skirts and that long pants are not acceptable. You can wrap a large scarf around your waist to act as a skirt.

Day 5: Meteora/Delphi (B) Visit Ancient Delphi and the Temple of Apollo.

An early departure by bus from Meteora takes us through spectacular mountain scenery around the imposing and mythical Mount Parnassos to Delphi. We will drive through the region of Thessalia to arrive at Delphi, a small town perched at the edge of a cliff with fantastic views of the valley below. Visit the ancient city of Delphi, at the base of Mount Parnassos, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site that includes ancient buildings like treasuries, a stadium, a gymnasium, an altar, hippodrome, and the Temple of Apollo. The Temple of Apollo dates back to the 4th century BC. Over the years, war and earthquakes have destroyed the site, but the ruins still standing today offer a fantastic insight into the lives of the ancient Greeks. Afterward, we spend the evening exploring the charming little town or relaxing in a small café enjoying the views of the nearby valley. Approximate travel time: 5-6 hrs by bus

Day 6: Delphi/Náfplio (B) Travel to Náfplio and explore the beautiful cobblestoned streets. Opt to climb the Acronáplia to soak in the views.

We travel to Náfplio, often described as one of the country's prettiest towns, this morning. Lose yourself in the narrow pedestrian streets of the old town and explore the many sights, sounds, and smells it has to offer. Don't miss the climb up to the Acronáplia and Palamidi Fortresses, whose proud Venetian ramparts dominate Náfplio's skyline. The views from the top of Acronáplia are phenomenal, looking back over the bay to Argos and out into the Saronic Gulf. Approximate travel time: 5 hrs by private vehicle

Day 7: Náfplio/Chaniá (B) Spend a free day enjoying the area. Opt to visit Epidavros, as well as the nearby site of Mycenae, before an overnight ferry to Crete.

Today, you have a free day to enjoy Náfplio and the surrounding region. There is a wealth of ancient sights within easy reach of Náfplio if you're looking for some more culture to round out your experience. You might consider a guided tour of Epidavros (roughly €12 EUR), which is highly regarded as one of the most renowned of Greek ancient sights, housing a huge, well-preserved theater famous for its incredible acoustics, as well as the remains of an important medical sanctuary. Also close by, opt to visit famous Mycenae (roughly €12 EUR), a UNESCO World Heritage Site with spectacular ruins and a treasury. Once a major settlement of Greek civilization, Mycenae was occupied during the Neolithic period around 4000 BC and is linked to the mythology in Homer's epics, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. You could also visit Tiryns (roughly €8 EUR), a lesser-known Mycenaean site, hidden in the suburbs of Náfplio. Along with Mycenae, Tiryns is a listed UNESCO World Heritage Site and was first excavated in 1831 by German archaeologists. In the early evening we will travel to Piraeus in Athens and then board an overnight ferry to Crete in 4-berth mixed-gender cabins with a private bathroom and air-conditioning. Approximate travel time: 2 hrs by private vehicle (Náfplio to Piraeus); 8 hrs by overnight sleeper ferry (Athens to Crete)

Day 8: Chaniá Arrive on Crete. Enjoy a free day. Opt to relax at a café or wander the streets of the old town.

We arrive in Crete in the early morning. You have the rest of the day to enjoy relaxing at one of the many harbor-side cafés or wandering the streets of the old town with its fascinating blend of ancient and

modern, Turkish and Venetian architecture, reflecting the diverse history of the island. Crete is Greece's largest island, filled with stunning scenery and friendly people. Although most tourists only see the major towns on the north coast, we will be visiting some of the smaller towns of the Southwestern coast and interior, where our walks take place. Crete has an interesting and full history, beginning with the Minoan culture, which flourished from about 2800 BC and suddenly disappeared around 1450 BC. Crete then passed through the hands of the Romans, Genoese, and Venetians before the Turks finally conquered it in 1670. It became a British protectorate in 1898 after much social and civil unrest, and was finally united with mainland Greece in 1913.

Day 9: Chaniá/Agia Roumeli (B) Hike the famous and rugged Samariá Gorge. Transfer by ferry to Agia Roumeli, then hike as far into the gorge (and then back) as you like.

We start with a scenic drive from Chania to the coastal village of Sfkakia, and then catch a boat to Agia Roumeli, a fishing village at the end of the famous Samaria Gorge hike. The group will then hike into the Gorge and you can go as far in as you like—just don't go in too far, as you will need to hike back to Agia Roumeli afterward. Samaria Gorge is well known in Europe as a unique geological formation. It is the deepest and narrowest gorge on the continent. At one point, its width is less than 8 feet and the height of the stone walls exceeds 2,000 feet at many points. The natural beauty of the area overrides any feeling of exhaustion during the walk. Agia Roumeli is a small settlement at the exit point of the Samaria gorge. The village is built on the ancient site of Tarra, mentioned by many ancient writers as a small but independent-minded town. It used to mint its own coins, on one side depicting the Cretan mountain goat and an arrow, and on the other side a bee. Agia Roumeli is very remote, connected with neighboring towns and villages only by sea or footpaths. Please bring a day pack with any essentials needed during the hike, and ensure to wear proper hiking attire. Head towards the narrowest and most impressive part of the gorge, known as the Iron Gates. This makes for a perfect rest spot to enjoy a packed lunch (not included) by the river while appreciating the surrounding natural beauty. Continue hiking, returning to Agia Roumeli with plenty of time for swimming or resting on the beach. Approximate travel time: 1.5 hrs by private vehicle, 30 minutes by ferry

Day 10: Agia Roumeli/Loutro (B, D) Travel by ferry to Loutro. Opt to rent a kayak and explore secluded beaches and coves.

The seaside village of Loutro is situated at the end of Cape Mouri, where the ancient city of Finix once stood. The village was named after the baths (Loutra) found in the area, from which water was directed to nearby Anopoli. Loutro also served as the port of ancient Anopoli. Later, it became the winter time port of the town of Sfakia, due to the fact that the enclosed bay and the small island in its entrance create a natural harbor where ships can be safe even in the worst weather conditions. Loutro is completely inaccessible by major roads, with sea and mountain paths being the only transportation routes. These mountains rearing straight up from the sea, deep wooded gorges, ravines and valleys have been the site of many heroic deeds, ancient civilizations, and constant intrigue for thousands of years. Today, the village of Loutro is a magnet for tourists, especially for other Cretans who escape the crowded and noisy northern regions of Crete, for peace, fun, and relaxation. Loutro is their secret holiday hideaway not yet discovered by the average tourist. The majestic scenery, crystal clear Mediterranean water, friendly people, and peaceful atmosphere all make Loutro an ideal place to relax after all the distance we have covered. You can also rent a kayak (roughly €10 EUR) and head out on the clear, blue-green waters along the coast of Loutro. Approximate travel time: 30 mins by ferry

Day 11: Loutro Enjoy a free day in Loutro. Opt for a swim and tasty seafood meals at secluded restaurants, or hike Aradine Gorge.

Splash around in the beautiful waters along the coast of Loutro. Or head out into the Aradena Gorge to experience more of the area's gorgeous landscape. One of the most popular walks in western Crete, the main route from Marmara near Loutro to the Aradena village takes about 3 hours to complete. The path is steep and rocky in places, with incredible views of the landscape and local fauna. Keep an eye out for the griffin vultures flying above, whose nests are nearby.

Day 12: Loutro/Iraklio (B) Travel to Iraklio. Pay a visit to Knossos, site of a Minoan palace and residence of King Minos. Enjoy a cooking class and dinner with a local family.

Today we travel to Iraklio, also known as Heraklion. The capital of Crete, Iraklio is the fourth largest city in Greece. The bustling port town used to be the slave-trade capital of the Mediterranean when the Arabs were in control of the region. Enjoy an included visit to Knossos, known to be the largest archaeological site of the Bronze Age on Crete. Knossos was a major city ruled by King Minos and is believed to be the oldest city in all of Europe. Explore the ancient palace and surrounding city, re-discovered in the 1900s by the English archaeologist Sir Arthur Evans. Enjoy a cooking class and dinner with a local family who will share with you the secrets of home-cooked Cretan cuisine. Approximate travel time: 30 mins by ferry; 3.5 hrs by private transfer

Day 13: Iraklio/Santorini (B) Hop a ferry to beautiful Santorini. Enjoy two nights on the island.

Today, we travel by ferry to beautiful Santorini. Known as "Thira" in Greek, Santorini is the southernmost island of the Cyclades and is regarded by some as the most beautiful of the Greek Islands. Formed by a violent volcanic eruption, the ring-shaped island has a stunning caldera lined with high cliffs – easy to appreciate when arriving by boat. The shape of the crater ring has constantly changed over the last 3,000 years with several parts of the crater wall collapsing into the sea. Remarkably, the island has always been resettled due to the rich volcanic soil's fertile properties. The wines, tomatoes, and cucumbers from this island are extremely flavorful due to the soil composition and low rainfall. Visitors can make their way from sea level to the crater rim either by bus, gondola, or even a donkey ride. Fira, the main town, sits perched on the edge of the caldera with breathtaking views of multi-colored cliffs, sugar-cube architecture, and great shopping. Approximate travel time: 4 hrs by ferry

Day 14: Santorini (B) Enjoy a free day to explore. Opt for a half-day volcano tour, shopping, relaxing on the beach, or make your way to the crater's rim to savor the breathtaking view. Opt to enjoy a Santorini sunset tour.

Today is another free day to explore this magnificent island. You might opt to go on a half-day volcano tour, do some shopping, relax on the beach, or make your way to the crater's rim to take in a stunning view of the island and its surroundings. You may pre-book the Santorini Sunset Cruise (€130 EUR), which will allow you to soak in the views of Santorini from the water over dinner and toast to another beautiful day in paradise. Contact GEE0 to include this optional activity in your tour.

Day 15: Santorini (B) Depart Santorini at any time.

There are no planned activities today, so you may depart Santorini at any time. If you wish to extend your stay in Santorini, consider booking post-tour accommodation with us. Please note that check-out time from the hotel is usually mid-morning, but luggage storage services are available at the reception desk. Want more adventure? Book two or more GEE0 programs in the same school year and receive a discount! GEE0 will give you 10% off of the lesser value program(s) (up to 3 programs per year). If you would like to extend your time abroad but don't see another GEE0 program that interests you, let us know. We can work with you to find a trip from our tour operator's much larger catalog. Their tours are open to the general public and not designed specifically for educators, but we can still offer you and your travel companions a discounted educator price on any additional tours that you book.