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## GEEO ITINERARY

Private: Mainland 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. The Athens airport is **Athens International Airport Eleftherios Venizelos (ATH)**. 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 jet lag. We can book extra hotel nights for you in Athens before and/or after the trip. **Hotel Check-in and Welcome Meeting** Please note that hotel check-in usually opens around **2:00-3:00 p.m.**, so if your flight arrives early in the morning, you may wish to book a pre-trip hotel night so that you can rest when you arrive. 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. **Note:** *Like many GEEO programs in Europe, this trip uses 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.* **Joining Instructions** When you arrive at the airport, you can either take a taxi or use public transportation. A taxi from the airport to the hotel will cost around €38-€50 EUR. It is easy to get into the city from Athens International Airport by metro. The M3 to Agia Marina departs every 30 minutes. After 16 stops (about 40 minutes ride) get off at Monastiraki Station. You can walk from here about 15 minutes/1.3 km, or you can transfer to the M1 Metro for 1 stop, about 2 minutes to Omonia Station. The hotel is about 2 minute walk/240 metres from Omonia Station. Exit the station and Head west on Pl. Omonias toward 3is Septemvriou. Turn right onto 3is Septemvriou. Turn right onto Chalkokondili **Accommodation:** Parnon Hotel Athens (or similar) \* *For the actual hotel your specific departure will be using, please check your voucher.*

### **Day 2: Athens Take a morning guided walking tour to the Parthenon and Acropolis with a refreshment stop at a local non-profit cafe, Shedia Home. Enjoy a free afternoon followed by a cooking class with a local chef in the evening.**

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 visit the Acropolis, the ultimate architectural and artistic expression of the ancient Athenian spirit, as well as the Parthenon, built for the Goddess Athena in 447 BC. Despite the gradual state of ruin and damage sustained over time, this Greek temple still symbolizes the key ideals of harmony and balance that defined the Classical style of Greek architecture. During the walking tour, take time to relax at Shedia Home, a non-profit cafe providing 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 initiatives, including the cafe, art program, and magazine, all dedicated to supporting the community. Spend your free afternoon exploring landmarks like the Acropolis Museum or the Ancient Agora. 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. In the evening, join a cooking class with a local chef to prepare and enjoy a traditional Greek meal.

**Accommodation:** Parnon Hotel Athens (or similar) **Meals included:** Breakfast | Dinner

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### **Day 3: Athens/Meteora Visit to the stunning mountaintop monasteries of Meteora.**

Today, we travel 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 bus **Accommodation:** Hotel Kosta Famissi (or similar) **Meals included:** Breakfast

### **Day 4: Meteora Spend a full free day in the area exploring the monasteries, or opt to pre-book a guided hiking tour.**

Explore the Meteora area with free time today. Travel by local bus, or if you're feeling adventurous, lace up your hiking boots and explore the trails and monasteries on foot with a local guide. Choose to participate in an 8 kilometer (5 mile) guided hiking tour to the monasteries. First, visit the Megalou Meteorou Monastery, known for its dramatic location atop a towering rock formation. Afterward opt to hike to Varlaam Monastery, accessible by climbing 195 steps and known for breathtaking views and richly adorned with frescoes and religious icons. Choose to finish the day with a hike to Saint Nikolai Monastery, a lesser known but equally as beautiful complex, or otherwise head back to Kalambaka. *NOTE: 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.* **Accommodation:** Hotel Kosta Famissi (or similar) **Meals included:** Breakfast

### **Day 5: Meteora/Delphi Visit Thermopylae, Ancient Delphi and the Temple of Apollo during the day, followed by a free evening.**

Begin your day with a visit to Thermopylae, where you'll explore the site and Information Center dedicated to the famous battle that shaped Greek history. Continue to Delphi, where you'll take an orientation walk and tour the ancient city with a local guide. Travel through the scenic mountains around Mt. Parnassos to reach Delphi, a UNESCO World Heritage Site perched at the edge of a cliff with fantastic views of the valley below. Wander among 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 BCE. 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. Spend the evening at your leisure, exploring the charming town or relaxing in a café with views of the nearby valley. **Approximate travel time:** 5-6 hrs by bus **Accommodation:** Hotel Acropole Delphi (or similar) **Meals included:** Breakfast

### **Day 6: Delphi/Náfplio Travel to Náfplio with a stop at the Corinth Canal on the way. Take part in an orientation walk, then spend the evening exploring.**

We travel to Náfplio, often described as one of the country's prettiest towns, this morning. On the way, we will take a quick break at the Corinth Canal, a marvel of engineering, connecting the Gulf of Corinth to the Saronic Gulf in Greece. Once we arrive, enjoy a brief orientation walk, then lose yourself in the narrow pedestrian streets of the old town and explore the many sights, sounds, and smells Náfplio has to offer. Don't miss the climb up to the Acronáfpia and Palamidi Fortresses, whose proud Venetian ramparts dominate Náfplio's skyline. The views from the top of Acronáfpia are phenomenal, looking back over the bay to Argos and out into the Saronic Gulf. **Approximate travel time:** 5 hrs by private vehicle **Accommodation:** Park Hotel Nafplio (or similar) **Meals included:** Breakfast

### **Day 7: Náfplio/Athens Spend a free day enjoying the area. Opt to visit Epidavros, as well as the nearby site of Mycenae, before transferring to Athens in the late afternoon.**

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Today, you have free time 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 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 late afternoon, transfer back to Athens for the night. **Accommodation:** Park Hotel Nafplio (or similar) **Meals included:** Breakfast

## **Day 8: Athens Depart Athens at any time.**

There are no planned activities today, so you may depart at any time. The tour ends in Athens, and the nearest airport is **Athens International Airport Eleftherios Venizelos (ATH)**. If you wish to extend your stay in Athens, 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 GEEO programs in the same school year and receive a discount! GEEO 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 GEEO 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. **Meals included:** Breakfast

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**\*Itinerary Disclaimer:** While it is our intention to adhere to the routes described on our website, there is a certain amount of flexibility built into the itinerary and on occasion it may be necessary, or desirable, to make alterations. The itinerary is brief, as we never know exactly where our journey will take us. Due to our style of travel and the regions we visit, travel can be unpredictable. The information on our website is a general guide to the tour and region, and any mention of specific destinations or wildlife is by no means a guarantee that they will be visited or encountered. Additionally, any travel times listed are approximations only and subject to vary due to local circumstances.