



## Travel with the World Affairs Council of Charlotte *A Panhellenic Exploration: Journey across Mythical Greece*



**September 27 – October 8, 2019 (12 days)**

**\*Optional 3-day extension to Mykonos available**

**Please be sure to secure your seat for the trip with the World Affairs Council of Charlotte by sending in a \$500 deposit by Friday, June 21st, 2019.**

Please contact Noah Ameris at the World Affairs Council of Charlotte via [email](#) or call 704-687-7762 if you have questions or need more information about the trip.

*Prices for the trip and optional extension can be found on Page 14.*

## Day 1: Depart from Charlotte-Douglas International Airport on Friday, September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Time appropriate meals and in-flight services will be provided.

### Day 2: Saturday, September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019

### Charlotte/Athens

Arrive in the Athens airport and meet your Tour Manager and driver, who will begin your transfer to downtown Athens (35km/12 mi, 1 hr drive).

Check in at the scenic **Hotel Grande Bretagne**.

Unpack, relax and get ready for an evening in [Plaka](#), which is the oldest district in Athens and is located just around the corner from the Hotel Grande Bretagne.

*You will be mesmerized by the beauty of the houses with neoclassic colors, the architecture, the well preserved gardens, the elegance and the atmosphere of the whole area. Even Plaka's air is different: Softer, clearer and full of scents, like a gift from gods.*

[READ MORE](#)

The Plaka features picturesque views over the most iconic ancient Greek antiquities and is located in the shadow of the Acropolis. The moment you step onto the narrow paved lanes of the Plaka, you are transported through time to Ancient Greece.

**Your first meal in Greece will take place in a typical taverna by the Acropolis**, where you will unwind, eat traditional Greek food, and prepare for the beautiful and mystical journey ahead.

**Overnight at [Hotel Grande Bretagne](#) (Five Stars)**

**Meals included: flight meals, dinner**



[Hotel Grande Bretagne](#)



[The Plaka](#)

### Day 3: Sunday, September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2019

### Athens

**Complimentary breakfast at the hotel**

Greet the day with a guided sightseeing tour that uncovers the glories of Ancient Greece.

Ascend to the top of the Acropolis and visit the iconic Parthenon, which dominates the city and stands as a powerful and impressive memorial to the remarkable civilization that built it. From there, you



[Acropolis](#)

will be able to take in the magnificent view of the Agora and modern Greek architecture with a stroll through the [Acropolis Museum](#), an architectural jewel.

*With equal measures of grunge and grace, Athens is a heady mix of history and edginess. [READ MORE](#)*

Following this, you will be able to take advantage of exploring Athens at your own pace, perhaps with a visit to the Archeological Museum or to the top of Mount Lycabettus for the panoramic views.

### TEMPLE OF POSEIDON TOUR

In the late afternoon we will take a short drive out of town, to the temple of Poseidon, the ancient Greek god of the sea. [Poseidon's Temple](#) dominates the southernmost tip of Attica, where the horizon meets the Aegean Sea.

Perched on the craggy rocks of Cape Sounion, the temple is enveloped in myth and historic facts dated from antiquity to present times.

**Dinner at Anavyssos by the water**, on the way back to the hotel.

**Overnight at [Hotel Grande Bretagne \(Five Stars\)](#)**

**Meals included: breakfast, dinner**



[Mount Lycabettus](#)



[Poseidon's Temple](#)

**Day 4: Monday, September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

**Athens, Thermopylae, Trikala**

**Complimentary breakfast at the hotel**

### VISIT TO THERMOPYLAE

After breakfast at the hotel, we will depart for [Thermopylae](#) (200km/130 mi, 3 hr drive) for a visit to the site of the legendary battle where in 480 B.C. King Leonidas and his 300 Spartans stopped an army of 70,000 Persians led by King Xerxes.

After leaving Thermopylae, we'll drive to the small island of Kefalonia and visit the quaint fishing village of Karavomilos (49km/25 mi) for an **organized lunch on the scenic shore**, which faces Thermopylae in the distance.



[Thermopylae](#)

## VISIT TO TRIKALA

Later in the afternoon, we will continue on to Trikala, stopping en route in Larissa, the capital city of Thessaly.

*Larissa. A "sweet" city amongst green dunes and imposing mountains. [READ MORE](#)*

Larissa has been inhabited for more than 10,000 years and its Byzantine and Ottoman past are visible throughout the city. In Larissa, we will take a short visit to an ancient theater and will perhaps catch a glimpse of Larissa's tiny Yeni Mosque.

Our final destination for the night is the Ananti City Resort in Trikala. The Resort houses a renowned spa and a roof top bar offering mesmerizing views of Trikala.

**Tonight's dinner will be served at the hotel.**

**Overnight at [Ananti City Resort](#) (Five Stars)**

**Meals included: breakfast, lunch, and dinner**



[Kefalonia Island](#)



[Trikala](#)

**Day 5: Tuesday, October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019**

**Trikala, Meteora, Itea**



[Meteora](#)

### Complimentary breakfast at the hotel

After breakfast, we will take a short drive (30km/20 mi, 30 min) to the Meteora District. Meteora is the second most important monastic center in Greece.

*Serene, spiritual, magical, mystical, extraordinary, breathtaking, immense, inspiring, impressive... A trip to Meteora offers the unique experience of nature's grandeur in conjunction with history, architecture and man's everlasting desire to connect with the Divine.*

[READ MORE](#)

The first ascetics came here in the 11th century and the place flourished as a monastic center between the 13th and 14th century. Many years ago, the only way to access the monasteries of Meteora was by climbing, to reflect the idea of striving for isolation and pursuit of God.

We'll visit two monasteries this morning: Agios Stefanos (built in the first half of the 15th century) and Varlaam (built in the 14<sup>th</sup> century).



[Agios Stefanos](#)

[Agios Stefanos](#) monastery is comprised of a small single-aisle basilica, built in 1350. The monastery's main cathedral is dedicated to St. Charalampos (Aghio Charalampos) and was built in 1798. Aghios Charalampos is decorated with amazing fretworks. Its imposing Holy Altar has been turned into a modern museum with the most impressive church heirlooms: Scripts, post Byzantine icons, canonicals and fabrics embroidered with gold, fretworks, fine silverware pieces etc.



[Itea](#)

The second monastery will be [Varlaam](#), first inhabited by monk Varlaam in the 14th century. The biggest part of the church that was built in 1542, is dedicated to Agios Pantes. The main body has many murals painted by the Theban painter Fragko Katelano in 1542. At the end of 16th century and in the beginning of 17th century the most organized bibliographic laboratory of Meteora monasteries and special gold thread embroidery workshop functioned here.

At the end of the visits we'll move to the nearby (5 mi) town of Kalambaka for **independent lunch**.

In the afternoon we'll head to Itea, on the shores of the Gulf of Corinth (230km/145 mi, 4 hr drive) and check-in at: **Nafsika Palace, where we will have dinner**.

**Overnight at [Nafsika Palace \(Four Stars\)](#)**

**Meals included: breakfast, dinner**



[Nafsika Palace](#)

### Complimentary breakfast at the hotel

We will go on a short scenic drive (16km/10 mi) through vineyards and olive groves, bringing us to mystical Delphi, the center of the universe for ancient Greeks.



[Ruins at Delphi](#)



[Temple at Delphi](#)



[Pyrgos](#)

*The history of Delphi begins in prehistory and in the myths of the ancient Greeks. In the beginning the site was sacred to Mother Earth and was guarded by the terrible serpent Python, who was later killed by Apollo. [READ MORE](#)*

Delphi is located on the south western slope of Mount Parnassus and showcases several monuments, demonstrating its importance to Ancient Greece. A local guide will show you the ancient site where ancient Greeks asked for counsel from its fabled oracle.

At Delphi, we will visit the ruins of the Temple of Apollo that date back to 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE and the Delphi Archaeological Museum, featuring artifacts from between the Mycenaean era and Byzantine eras, unearthed during modern excavations. [The Museum](#), founded in 1903 is one of the most visited museums in Greece and has significant cultural importance.

Today, **lunch will be at your leisure** in the small harbor town of Galaxidi or in Nafpaktos, the site in Greek mythology where the Heraclidae built a fleet to invade the Peloponnese, both located along the Gulf.

Then it's across the waters on the Rio–Antirrio Bridge, officially the Charilaos Trikoupis Bridge, one of the world's longest multi-span cable-stayed bridges and longest of the fully suspended type. We'll reach Pyrgos after a 4hr drive (230km/145 mi) and **check in at Aldemar Olympian Village Hotel, where we will eat dinner.**

**Overnight at [Aldemar Olympian Village](#) (Five Stars)**

**Meals included: breakfast, dinner**

**Complimentary breakfast at the hotel** will be followed by a 45-minute drive to Olympia, which was the sight of a major Panhellenic sanctuary for Ancient Greeks. The sight was primarily dedicated to Zeus, but brought visitors from all over the Greek world.

In [Olympia](#), we will have a guided tour of the archaeological site, including a visit to the stadium that hosted the original Olympic games. The stadium hosted the iconic games for over 11 centuries, from the inception in 776 BCE to the last edition in 393 AD.

We will also visit the Archaeological Museum of Olympia's world-class collection of Greek artifacts and artwork. The museum, built in 1888 was the first museum in Greece built outside of Athens and was created to contain the treasures found in the Olympian archaeological dig-site.

After an **independent lunch break** by the ruins, we'll head across the heart of the Peloponnese for 200km/125 mi, through some of the most iconic scenery of Greece, up and down rolling mountain ridges and small valleys. We'll arrive in Nafplio before dinner and check in at the Amphitryon Hotel.

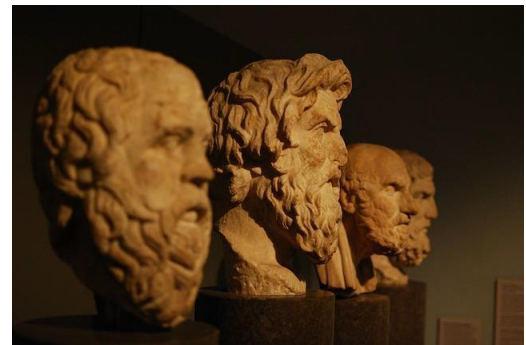
Dinner tonight will be at a **restaurant on the nearby water-front promenade**.

**Overnight at [Amphitryon Hotel](#) (Five Stars)**

**Meals included: breakfast, dinner**



[Ruins at Olympia](#)



[Greek artifacts](#)



[Amphitryon Hotel](#)

After **complimentary breakfast at the hotel**, a short drive (25km/16 mi, 40 min drive) will take us to Mycenae where we'll marvel at historic sites such as the Lion Gate, Royal Tombs, and the Acropolis. [Ancient Mycenae](#) is located in the foothills between Mount Agios and Mount Zara and was once home to the great mythical king Agamemnon.

The apogee of the Mycenaean people is dated back to the Late Bronze Age when Mycenae was the most powerful kingdom in Greece. Its great historical and mythological importance is recorded in iconic works like the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The first Mycenaean clans were formed as early as 1700 BC and first tombs date approximately to that same period.

A tour of the local museums with artifacts of the oldest Western civilization is included at the site.

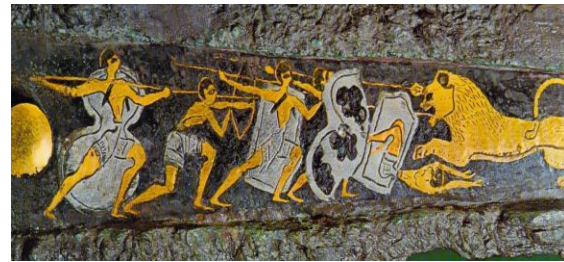
On the way back to the hotel, we'll stop at a local winery in Nemea, the largest Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) for red wines in Greece. Though Greeks have been making wine for millennia, it has only been in recent years that their popularity has taken off. **Here in Nemea, we will taste some of the local cabernet, sauvignon, and merlot.**

We will return to Nafplio and spend the rest of the day in leisure, allowing time to take in the charming town, known as one of Greece's prettiest and most romantic destinations. Nafplio features quaint narrow streets, dramatic Venetian houses, and a bevy of small quayside cafes and boutiques.

**Dinner will be taken at leisure in the town.**

**Overnight at [Amphitryon Hotel](#) (Five Stars)**

**Meals included: breakfast, wine tasting**



[Mycenaean Hunting Painting](#)



[Nemea](#)



[Nafplio](#)



**Complimentary breakfast at the hotel**

**VISIT TO EPIDAUROS**

After breakfast, we will drive to Epidaurus (30km/19 mi, 45 min drive) for a guided visit that will take us to the Ancient Epidaurus Theater and Museum.

Many important theaters were built by the Greeks in Thoricos and Corinth, Delphi and Delos, Dodona and Megalopolis, Syracuse and Milos and the one most recently excavated in Messini. However, the most beautiful and best preserved theatre lies in Epidaurus.

*Probably the most beautiful and best preserved of its kind, the theater of Epidaurus was built in the 4th century BC by Polykleitos the Younger. [READ MORE](#)*



[Epidaurus Theatre](#)

It appears, as you walk uphill coming from the entrance, like huge arms ready to embrace you and introduce you into the mysteries of tragedy or the gaiety of comedy. Famous for its acoustics, this theater offers moments of great emotion, whether you go there as a visitor or as a spectator.

**After an independent lunch**, we'll head along the coast to Metochi at the very southern tip of Argolis to embark for a very short ride to the island of Hydra.

Upon landing, while our luggage is transported separately, we will walk to the Bratsera Hotel.



[Bratsera Hotel](#)

**Dinner will be at sunset in a restaurant overlooking the harbor.**

**Overnight at [Bratsera Hotel](#) (Four Stars)**

**Meals included: breakfast, dinner**



[Hydra Mule](#)



[Hydra Beach](#)



[Hydra Church](#)



[Aerial View of Hydra](#)

### Complimentary breakfast at the hotel

Day 10 will be spent in idyllic Hydra. Enjoy a relaxing day on the island, widely considered as one of the most beautiful in Greece. Perhaps the most unique aspect of this stunning little paradise is that there are no cars or motor vehicles, aside from garbage trucks and ambulances. The main method of transportation here are the delightful mules and donkeys, as well as the water taxi. Its rustic beauty has attracted world-famous musicians like Leonard Cohen, celebrities like Sophia Loren and travelers of all kind who seek inspiration and never end up leaving.

Explore the island on your own:

- Ride a donkey: with over 1000 donkeys on the island, you won't be hard pressed to ride one, and you will notice that they add a distinctive touch to the island. You can find the donkey rank located outside the Alpha Bank of Hydra's Port.
- Visit the [Monastery of the Assumption of Virgin Mary](#): with 300 churches and six monasteries throughout the island, a traveler is spoiled for choice when choosing which to visit. The Monastery, however, is Hydra's main cathedral and is located in the center of the harbor underneath the clock tower.
- Climb the [Bastions](#): in the 18th century, Hydra enlisted the use of cannons to protect themselves from the Turkish fleet. Fortunately, the cannons were scarcely used as the Greek fleet excelled at protecting the island.
- Visit the island's museums: the Historical Archives Museum featuring artifacts and rare documents related to the historical, traditional and cultural aspects of the island dating back to 1708; the Kountouriotis dedicated to the hero who played a vital role in the War of Independence; or the Ecclesiastical Museum located on the west side of the Monastery housed in a former monk cell.



[Corinth Canal](#)



[Hydra Port](#)

- Walk from Kamini to Hydra Town: a beautiful walking route which goes from the picturesque fishing village of Kamini, west of Hydra Harbor, to Hydra Town. The walk is worthwhile as it is off the beaten path with no tourist shops and allows you to explore the parish church of John the Baptist, as well as stunning mansion ruins.

- Visit Rafalia's Pharmacy: considered one of the most beautiful pharmacies in the world, Rafalia's is an attraction well worth the visit and is one of the most important on the island. It is a family business founded in 1890 by Evangelos Rafalias, located within a gorgeous century-old mansion.

Tonight, explore one of the many **tavernas on the water for dinner independently.**

**Overnight at [The Bratsera Hotel](#) (Four Stars)**

**Meals included: breakfast**

**Day 11: Monday, October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

**Hydra, Metochi, Corinth, Athens**



[Greek Food](#)

**After complimentary breakfast at the hotel,** we will cross back to Metochi on the mainland and travel through Argolis and the Eastern districts of the Peloponnese to Corinth (120km/75 mi, 2.5 hr drive). We will stop for a photo opportunity at the jaw dropping Corinth Canal which links the Gulf of Corinth and the Aegean Sea.

We will then have a guided visit to the archaeological park at [Ancient Korinthos](#). The archeological site features ruins at Pirini fountain, the courtyard of Apollo, the foundations of a significant Roman basilica, the temple of the Fortune goddess, Tyche, and much more.

**After an independent lunch,** we will drive back to Athens (90km/55 mi, 1 hr drive).

Our last night in Greece concludes with **a final gourmet Greek meal at Piraeus,** after which we will return to the Hotel Grande Bretagne.

**Overnight at [Hotel Grande Bretagne](#) (Five Stars)**

**Meals included: breakfast, dinner**

**Day 12: Tuesday, October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

**Athens/ Charlotte**

**Complimentary breakfast at the hotel**

At the scheduled time, transfer to the Venizelos Airport (35km/22 mi, 1.5 hr drive) to board your flight to your next destination.

**Meals included: breakfast**

**Optional Three Day Extension**

**Athens/Mykonos**

**Day 12: Tuesday, October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019**



[Nissaki Boutique Hotel](#)

**\*\* In order to confirm the 3-day extension to Mykonos, we will need a minimum of 10 travelers\*\***

After **complimentary breakfast at the hotel**, we will depart early from the Hotel Grande Bretagne and transfer to the Athens airport for our 8:35 a.m. Olympic Airways flight to the beautiful island of Mykonos.

We will check in at the stunning **Nissaki Boutique Hotel**, which is located by the beach with dazzling views of the Aegean Sea.

*...A whitewashed paradise in the heart of the Cyclades where glamour meets simplicity. [READ MORE](#)*

The remainder of the day and evening will be spent at your leisure. Feel free to explore the island: tour the Archaeological or Maritime Museums, wander through the tiny capital town of Hora, or just unwind on the world-renowned beaches.

**Overnight at the [Nissaki Boutique Hotel](#) (Four Stars)**



[Mykonos Shoreline](#)

**Day 13: Wednesday, October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

**Mykonos**



[Beach in Mykonos](#)

**Complimentary breakfast at the hotel**

The day is yours! Continue exploring the delights that the island has to offer. \*Optional half-day guided tour of the island of Delos

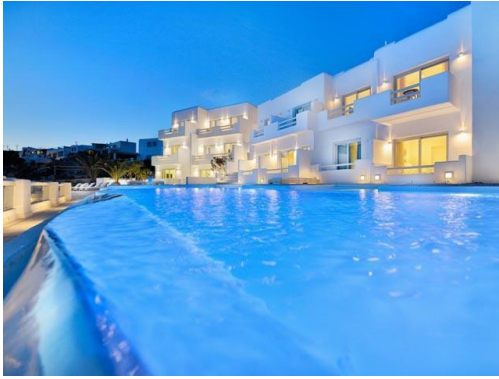
This evening will be spent at your leisure.

**Overnight at the [Nissaki Boutique Hotel](#) (Four Stars)**

**Meals included: breakfast**

**Day 14: Thursday, October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

**Mykonos/London**



[Nissaki Boutique Hotel](#)

**Complimentary breakfast at the hotel**

Enjoy a leisurely morning in Mykonos before heading to the airport for our flight to London, arriving about 3:45 p.m. Transfer to the Sofitel Heathrow Hotel (attached to Terminal 5 and included in price) and check in for the evening.

Feel free to take the tube into London for dinner and an independent evening.

**Overnight at [Sofitel Heathrow Hotel](#) (Five Star)**

**Day 15: Friday, October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

**London/Charlotte**

**Complimentary breakfast at the hotel**

Transfer to Terminal 3 to check in for flight non-stop to Charlotte.

Flight subject to change.

## PRICE PER PERSON BASED ON DOUBLE OCCUPANCY

**\*LAND, TOUR, HOTELS, AND IN-COUNTRY FLIGHTS/ TRANSPORTATION**

\*\*Single occupancy rate available for an additional \$2,000

**Min. 20 Travelers**

\$5,586

**Min. 25 Travelers**

\$5,195

## MYKONOS EXTENSION - PRICE PER PERSON BASED ON DOUBLE OCCUPANCY

\*Single occupancy rate available for an additional \$515

\*\*includes hotel in London on return flight

**Min. 10 Travelers**

\$1,210

**Min. 15 Travelers**

\$1,135

**Min. 20 Travelers**

\$1,095

### AIR TRAVEL:

**Min. 10 Air Travelers**

**Min. 15 Air Travelers**

**Min. 20 Air Travelers**

**STANDARD TRIP: Roundtrip on Lufthansa: Charlotte – Munich – Athens – Munich – Charlotte**

Air/ government taxes and fuel surcharges will be billed at prevailing rate at time of invoice (approx. \$640)

\$1,306

\$1,204

\$1,154

**TRIP & MYKONOS EXTENSION: Roundtrip on American Airlines and British**

**Airways: Charlotte – Chicago – Athens – Mykonos – London – Charlotte**

Air/ government taxes and fuel surcharges will be billed at prevailing rate at time of invoice (approx. \$640)

\$901

\$807

\$514

**Price includes top-level hotels, all breakfasts, 1 lunch, 8 dinners, local transportation, several tours, and a highly qualified tour manager with dedicated local guides. Itinerary is subject to change as WACC secures meetings with US diplomats in Greece, as well as with local political, cultural, and business leaders.**

Travelers **must** be members of good standing with the World Affairs Council of Charlotte. If you are not a member, please contact [nameris@worldaffairscharlotte.org](mailto:nameris@worldaffairscharlotte.org) or call 704-687-7757. Individual membership starts at \$60 and is a tax-deductible donation.

- **A deposit of \$500 is due by Friday, June 21st, 2019 to secure your seat for the trip.**
- **Full payment is due no later than Friday, July 26<sup>th</sup>, 2019.**
- If you are traveling alone but would like a roommate, please let us know **as soon as possible** and we will work on matching you with another traveler.
- Business or First Class air travel is available. Please contact Jeff Knight ([jknight111@hotmail.com](mailto:jknight111@hotmail.com)) as soon as possible if you are interested in an upgrade.
- Please note that a 3% processing charge will be added to your payment if you choose to pay by credit card due to travel agency requirement. **No additional charge if you pay by check.**