



# Trip Summary

## Sea Kayaking in the Grecian Isles

### TRIP AT-A-GLANCE

Dates: May 23-31, 2011  
 Location: Ionian Sea, Greece  
 Cost: \$ \*2590  
 Rating: 3  
 Activities: sea kayaking, cultural exploration  
 Meeting Place: ATH airport or our hotel  
 Arrive: arrive at ATH in time by 4pm or 5:30 at hotel  
 Depart: anytime May 31st

\* Deduct 5 % for being one of the first 5 to register (by 01/23/11) and 3% of the entire trip fee when the balance is paid by check.

### WHAT'S INCLUDED

- 8 nights double occupancy accommodations (6 in hotels and 2 in tents).
- An English speaking Greek tour leader (or 2, at least one is likely to be male) and 1 Adventures in Good Company guide
- All activities mentioned in the itinerary
- All meals from dinner the first night to breakfast the last day.
- All transfers within Greece
- All entries into archaeological sites and tour guides
- Ferry tickets to islands
- Arrival & Departure transfers at the scheduled time
- All group camping equipment
- All kayaking equipment, including kayaks (double and single), spray skirt, paddle and pfd.

### WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Airfare to/from ATH
- Guide gratuities
- Bottled water, except at meals
- Sodas or alcoholic drinks
- Single supplement available for \$300

### Trip Highlights

- Kayaking crystal clear blue seas
- Exploring remote islands and small villages on the Ionian Sea
- Savoring scrumptious Greek food
- Touring Athens, including a visit to the Acropolis and the Parthenon, the greatest monument in the Western World, as well as the new Acropolis museum.

### Trip Overview

Sea kayak crystal blue seas, savor authentic Greek food, and explore quaint Greek villages! The Ionian Sea has long held an irresistible fascination for seafarers and it is easy to see why. Set off the western coast of Greece, dozens of islands extend from uninhabited sandy beaches to forested mountains rearing high out of the clear blue waters. The islands are lush and green, awash with olive groves, cypress trees and carpeted with wildflowers in the springtime. The islands each have their own distinct character and are dotted with charming villages. Every day we paddle in the area's protected waters, visit local villages on foot and enjoy local tavernas for dinner. Please join us as we sample the natural and cultural delights of the Ionian Sea.

### Our Itinerary

#### Itinerary:

The itinerary below is a general description of what we plan to do. We may follow it exactly or we may modify it based on weather, group wishes, or other factors.

#### May 23 (Monday) Arrival in Athens

Arrive anytime before 4pm today. Our Greek guide will welcome you and assist with transportation to our hotel. In the evening we will meet as a group at our hotel, then take the tram to the famous (and scenic) Plaka for a short walking tour and a welcome dinner in a traditional Greek taverna. Overnight at a 3-star hotel in Athens.

#### May 24 (Tuesday) Acropolis and Museum, transfer to Vassiliki

Our Greek journey begins with a half-day sightseeing tour of Athens. Of course we can't leave Athens without a tour of the

## CANCELLATION POLICY

In the unfortunate event that you must cancel your trip, your refund will be determined by the following formula:

Days Prior to Trip	Refund
90 + days	All but \$50
90 – 61 days	50% of deposit
60 – 30 days	50% of trip fee
29 days or less	No refund

Adventures in Good Company reserves the right to cancel or alter a trip due to unforeseen weather, unsafe conditions, low registrations or other circumstances.

On the rare occasion when Adventures in Good Company must cancel a trip, all payments received to date will be refunded, including the non-refundable portion of your deposit.

Adventures in Good Company is not responsible for expenses incurred in preparation for any canceled trips, including airplane tickets.

## TIPPING GUIDELINES

Tipping at the end of the trip is optional. If you feel your guide(s) did an outstanding job and would like to reward them for their efforts, a suggested rule of thumb is US \$7 to \$12 per person, per day. Oftentimes, trip members organize a group envelope (this makes it anonymous) and present it at the last shared meal.

## Our Itinerary Continued

Acropolis and Parthenon and then the new Acropolis museum (which is getting rave reviews) to see historical sculpture. We will have lunch on the terrace of the Museum with a view of the Parthenon and Acropolis in the background. Afterward we will depart on our bus for Vassiliki Village on the island of Lefkas (about a 6 hour bus ride), a quaint seaside town known for great windsurfing. Arriving in the early evening, we settle into the hotel before walking to the quay-side for dinner and a trip orientation. Overnight in a small local hotel.

### May 25 (Wednesday) Ithaki Island

This morning we take the local ferry to Ithaki, the legendary homeland of Odysseus, (2 hour trip). Arriving at Frikes Harbor mid-morning we will check in at our local guesthouse and then walk on a paved path to Stavros Village on the hill above the harbor. We continue our learning about Greek history with a visit to a beautiful Orthodox church as well as the Odysseus museum, which houses artifacts from the Homeric period. We will then walk down to the harbor of Polis for the first of many delightful swims. After lunch in Stavros, we will return to Frikes harbor for an introduction to our kayaks, emphasizing skills to help you paddle efficiently and safely for the week. A short paddle to a nearby beach will give us a chance to practice our new (or newly refreshed) skills. We'll return to Frikes in the late afternoon for dinner at a taverna by the harbor. Overnight in Frikes guesthouse. Trekking 2-3 hours (6.5 km - on paved roads); Paddling time 1-1.5 hours (distance 3NM).

### May 26 (Thursday) Frikes -Kioni-Return

We get an early start for our day paddle along the eastern coast of Ithaki to the picturesque fishing village of Kioni. Three ruined windmills welcome us into the port, which now attracts tourists with its excellent waterfront restaurants, cafes, and quality shops selling local handcrafts. Our lunch will be at a local restaurant that serves authentic home cooked dishes prepared by local village women - you can even walk into kitchen and choose your meal straight from the pots! After lunch we return to Frikes along the same route. The remainder of the afternoon is free to relax or swim at nearby coves, followed by dinner in another local taverna. Overnight in Frikes guesthouse. Paddling time 3-4 hours (distance 9 NM).

### May 27 (Friday) Ithaki - Kefalonia (Fiskardo)-Lefkada (Agiofili)

Today we leave Ithaki behind and head to Kefalonia, the largest of the Ionian Islands. On our way we will stop at the amazing beach of Aphales. The beach is completely isolated, with crystal blue water, white sand, and towering cliffs. After breaking for a swim and a snorkel, we paddle across the narrow channel to Kefalonia island and the northernmost tip of the island, the village of Fiskardo. Fiskardo is famous for the Venetian (19th century) architectural

## Our Itinerary Continued

buildings still intact and the contrasting cosmopolitan character that attracts many celebrities to it every year. From Fiskardo we take the ferry to Lefkas (Vassiliki 1.5 hours) where we will return to our kayaks (weather permitting) and paddle to the nearby beach of Agiofili, our camp for the night. Our support boat for this part of the trip will meet us at Agiofili with the camping equipment and all extra luggage we left on Vassiliki. After setting up our tents, there is time for a swim before a BBQ dinner on the beach. Paddling time 4-5 hours (distance 11 NM; 9 Frikes to Kefalonia; 2 Lefkas to Agiofili)

### **May 28 (Saturday) Agiofili -Sivota- Meganisi**

After a hearty breakfast we pack up our camp paddle along the southeastern coast of Lefkas Island. The stark white of the exposed cliffs contrasting with the deep blue of the sea makes this a particularly spectacular section of kayaking. Along our route we will stop at the tranquil, fjord-like Sivota Bay for a picnic and cold frappe or tea break (very Greek!). Our next stop is one of the many above-water coastal caves. We will spend time at this relaxing spot to kayak in and out of the cave and going for a snorkel. Our final destination is the beach of Agios Ioannis on the west coast of Meganisi. Meganisi is a small green island with mountains, cliffs, and beautiful beaches. After setting up our camp for the night, our support boat will transport us to the town of Spartahori for dinner. The town is the site of an old castle that offers spectacular views of the Ionian Islands. Overnight camping on the beach of Meganisi. Paddling time 4-5 hours (distance 10 NM)

### **May 29 (Sunday) Meganisi- Kalamos - Mitikas**

With our muscles well tuned and our paddling strokes perfected, we get back into our kayaks for our final and longest paddle. This morning we will paddle under the stunning cliffs of Meganisi before embarking on our biggest crossing, 4 nautical miles. If the traditional Greek winds are with us (picking up between 2-4 pm) we should have calm seas to ease our crossing. If not, well, its a good thing we're experienced paddlers by now! We will stop in the village of Episkopi for a well-earned rest and lunch in a local tavern. After Episkopi we kayak the along the coast of North Kalamos, exploring many of the small beaches and often encountering dolphins along the way. We will end in the small and charming town of Mitikas on the mainland for dinner in a lovely restaurant. Overnight in a hotel with hot showers and soft beds, particularly welcome after our last 2 nights of camping. Paddling time 6 hours (distance 13NM)

### **May 30 (Monday) Mitikas- Delphi - Athens**

After breakfast we will once again board our private bus and drive to the archeological wonder of Delphi (about 3 hrs). After lunch in a local restaurant we take time to visit the museum and have a tour of the ancient ruins where the Oracle gave her predictions. After returning to Athens and to our hotel (2.5 - 3 hours), we toast the beauty of Greece and our own accomplishments, and bid a sad farewell to Greek cuisine and our comrades, with a final celebratory dinner.

### **May 31 (Tuesday)**

You are free to leave anytime this morning and we'll make sure you get safely to the airport and on your way. Alternatively, June is a terrific time to be in Greece and there is still much to see!

## Packing List

Don't bother buying fancy new gear for your trip. Comfortable clothes and used gear is best for saltwater paddling. Two person tents, sleeping bags, sleeping pad, life jacket and spray skirt are all provided by our Outfitter,

### CLOTHING

- 1-2 pair lightweight pants/capris: (Supplex, or nylon/polyester/spandex blend)
- 2 lightweight long-sleeved shirts – a button up and/or rash shirt is recommended for sun/getting wet while paddling
- 1 lightweight fleece jacket
- 1 **waterproof** rain jacket with hood (some women like a rain hat instead of using their hood)
- 3 pair lightweight socks: wool or synthetic equivalent (like running/biking socks or Smartwool liners)
- 1-2 pairs of shorts: Quick drying nylon is recommended for at least one pair
- 3-4 t-shirts (synthetic or lightweight wool is preferable, since this layer will probably get wet.)
- 1 pair sturdy walking shoes: light boots, athletic shoes
- 1 pair river shoes, aqua socks, or dive booties for loading and unloading kayaks in water.
- 1 wide-brimmed hat for rain, sun and high fashion
- underwear
- bathing suit (nylon shorts and a running bra can double as swimwear)
- gloves for paddling (recommended – bike gloves work well)
- comfortable, casual clothes for after kayaking, for wearing to dinner, in the hotels and in camp

### ESSENTIALS

- Passport, and one xeroxed copy**
- bandana
- headlamp and extra batteries
- sunscreen and lip protection with an SPF of 30 or greater
- 1 day-pack – to keep personal gear in kayak: sunscreen, camera, jacket, snacks. A dry bag will work for this, but you may want something for when we take hikes or walk into towns. Line with a plastic bag, as this will get wet.
- camera, film/memory cards and extra batteries
- small nylon or mesh stuff sacks and extra ziplock bags for organizing your personal gear
- insect repellent (small and optional)
- sunglasses with case and retention strap
- one quart water bottle

### TOILETRIES (small everything)

- medium sized towel (like a PakTowl)
- small amount of toilet paper; tampons or pads in ziplock bags
- biodegradable soap, toothbrush, paste, dental floss, lotion, extra contact lenses/glasses. Please minimize the amount of lotions, shampoo and soap you bring.
- personal "patch kit": bandaids, moleskin, ibuprofen, seasick medication (if tendency to motion sickness), immodium, and personal medications, if any. **Individuals allergic to insect stings must bring an epi-pen.** Please consult your physician.

### OPTIONAL PERSONAL GEAR

- binoculars
- small pocket knife
- waterproof camera bag
- your favorite snack (we will also provide group snacks periodically during the day)
- snorkeling gear (some will be available, but you may want to have your own) there is limited marine life.
- electric converter (Greece is 220V and plugs are two round prongs) and adaptor
- 10 ft light cord and 4-6 clothespins, detergent
- ear plugs (for a good night's sleep)
- watch: water resistant
- camp chair (Crazy Creek type)
- book, journal and pen
- extra sunglasses

## Notes on the Packing List

**CLOTHING:** Greece is typically pleasant at this time of year - warm and dry-but it can rain as well. You may also feel cooler out on the water and after being in the sun all day than the air temperature indicates. Bring clothing that can get wet (synthetics are best). Clothing will get salt stains, so don't bring new clothing.

**FABRIC NAMES:** Synthetic fabrics are often specified on this equipment list. The synthetics do not absorb much water compared to cotton—thus, they continue to provide warmth when wet. Plus they dry faster than cotton, which is important on a water-based trip. The specific fabric name is not as important as having material with these qualities. Wool is also a very good choice, especially some of the new clothing made by Ibex or Smartwool. It is 100% merino wool, keeps you warm and dry and is not itchy.

**RAIN GEAR:** Typically we recommend rubberized rain gear for sea kayaking trips, since they are warm, work best in steady downpours, and their effectiveness is not diminished by salt water. Since this trip is in Greece during the late Spring, we are recommending a jacket made of waterproof/breathable fabric or coated nylon. This layer may be worn more often as a wind-proof layer than a rainproof layer on this trip, so having it be breathable is a good addition. However, it still may rain. Coated nylon is not very breathable, but it is lightweight, waterproof, and can be relatively inexpensive. Gore-tex (and other brand-identified waterproof materials) is a great material, but can be quite expensive. **If you have any questions about raingear, please call us.**

**SHOES/BOOTS:** You will need two types of footwear: one for boat-wear and one for hiking/camp-wear. For boat-wear bring something that can get wet such as river shoes (Texas/Chacos, Keen, Solomon), aqua socks or dive booties. Your other pair can be light-weight boots or athletic shoes. Saltwater makes sandals straps really “crunchy” and can lead to bad blisters. Make sure that you camp shoes are comfortable for walking. You may want to bring a couple lightweight pairs of socks to wear under your water shoes as well (helps prevent blisters).

**WATERPROOF BAGS:** We recommend a water-proof dry bag for your personal day gear – water, sunscreen, snack, hat, sunglasses, camera, a layer of clothing - several companies make vinyl bags with good closures (Phoenix, Outdoor Research, Cascade Designs). Wide-mouthed plastic jars are good for film, first aid supplies, and the like. Ziplock bags are handy for many uses. Waterproof bags for your clothing and other personal items (not needed for a day paddle) must be small enough to fit into the small hatches of the kayak. A number of smaller, well compressed bags, is better than one large bag. We recommend 10-15L size for your trip gear. If you can't find or don't want to go to the expense of purchasing waterproof drybags you can also make your own with plastic bags, rubberbands, and nylon stuff sacks (a sleeping bag stuff sack works well for this purpose).

**BRINGING YOUR CAMERA ON A SEA KAYAKING TRIP:** Ocean water is highly corrosive to camera equipment. To protect your camera from the salt, pack it in a waterproof sports bag. Many outdoor retailers and most camera shops have inflatable bags that are waterproof, float, and cushion your camera against bumps. Phoenix, Basic Designs, and manufacturers of whitewater equipment make inflatable camera bags. Ammo cans can be purchased at Army surplus stores.

Items on your packing list can be purchased through a number of outdoor outfitters including:

Recreational Equip. Inc (REI)  
800-426-4840  
www.rei.com

Eastern Mountain Sports (EMS)  
603-924-7231  
www.ems.com

Sierra Trading Post  
800-713-4534  
www.SierraTradingPost.com

Also check out the websites on the Affiliate page of our website (under Resources)

## Additional Trip Preparations

### HELPFUL WEBSITES

#### MOVIES

*Mamma Mia* – the ABBA musical set in the Greek Isles is fun.

### WEATHER

The Ionian gulf, where we will be kayaking, is part of the Adriatic Sea, which separates Greece and Italy. Its waters are typically calm, clear and sheltered by the bulk of the Greek mainland.

The temperatures are typically in the upper 70s during the day and lower 60s during the night. Exposure to the sun, however, is deceptively high. Generally speaking rain is unlikely, There is also a regular afternoon breeze. The sea temperature is pleasant, though in May could feel cool.

### EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

Since we will be changing lodging most nights, and also camping the best number to leave is the Adventures in Good Company office (877) 439-4042 and we will do everything we can to get in touch with you.

### CONDITIONING

Additional aerobic conditioning is unnecessary for anyone who already exercises regularly. If you don't, you will probably find that you have more energy during the trip if you start a moderate exercise program a couple of months before your trip. For example, you might start walking 3 or 4 times a week for half an hour, at a pace that is brisk enough to make you breathe deeply. Hills are good for this. Other options are working out at a health club on a stairmaster or treadmill, aerobics classes, cross country skiing or any activity that makes you breathe deeply.

This trip does encompass some long days of paddling. For that reason we suggest you do some additional strength training. Paddling primarily works the upper body, back, and stomach muscles, so conditioning should take those areas into account. Muscular endurance is more critical than strength. If you do any strength training, more repetitions with low weights is better than few repetitions with high weights. Yoga is also a great addition for kayaking trips. Most people with chronic back problems do fine in a kayak, but you should consult with your doctor first. If you use a lumbar roll or support, bring it along.

### RECOMMENDED PRE-TRIP READING

**Dinner with Persephone: Travels in Greece** by *Patricia Storace* is one of the best travelogues written in the last ten years about any country. It is beautifully written, full of insight into the Greek character and the country.

**Travelers Greece: Memories of an Enchanted Land.** An anthology of travel writing by John Tomkinson of over 100 visitors to Greece spanning a period of more than 3 centuries, from the late 16th to the early 20th.

**Athens: The Collected Traveler.** Part of a series by *Barrie Kerper* published by Fodors. It is packed with essays about different aspects of travel, food, culture and many other aspects of Greece.

**The Iliad or The Odyssey** by Homer. Classic poetry from ancient Greek times.

**Greece: A Love Story**, edited by Camille Cusumano. Women share firsthand experiences of the people, history, and landscape of Greece. Recommended by a previous participant.

## Special Considerations for International Trips

### PASSPORT

A valid passport is required for travel in Greece. You will need to present it at the airports before and after your flights. Be sure to carry a photocopy of your passport in a separate location, for security's sake. It is also a good idea to leave one with somebody at home. If you already have a passport, check to make sure it is still current (they expire every 10 years). Passports can be renewed through the mail. If you are getting a passport for the first time, you must submit your application in person.

For information on how to obtain a passport, download an application from [travel.state.gov/passport/passport\\_1738.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html), ask your travel agent, or call the Passport Office at 202-647-0518. Allow at least 6 weeks.

### MONEY

Greece is one of the members of the EU and has converted to the single European currency, the Euro. The current exchange rate is approximately 1 Euro to 1.30 US dollar, although this does fluctuate. Travelers cheques and foreign money can be changed at banks and airports, and very often at major hotels (generally at a less attractive rate). Travelers cheques are less generally accepted than they used to be. To avoid additional exchange rate charges, we recommend taking travelers cheques in Euros.

Credit & debit cards: MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted, but many small establishments - shops and restaurants - only accept cash. It is advisable to ask merchants if they accept credit cards before trying to purchase items if they do not display the insignia in the window. You should be aware that to purchase products or services on a credit card a fee of 5%-10% sometimes is applied.

ATMs are plentiful in Greece. In most cases, you pay only your usual bank fee rather than a commission, though this may vary depending on your bank's policy. If you are unsure about compatibility, contact your bank or credit card

company. Generally, you will get the best available exchange rate at ATMs as well. Street-side ATMs are still the most common, though a few hotels, restaurants, and tavernas may have one.

You will need spending money for beverages in restaurants (aside from water), guide gratuities and any snacks you wish to buy when we have rest stops at tavernas.

### STAYING IN TOUCH

There are a variety of internet cafes in Athens, that charge a fee per hour to use. Once we leave Athens internet access will be a bit more sporadic, though some of our hotels may have internet .

From Greece it's easy to telephone anywhere in the world from public phone booths. The most common way to make calls is to use an international phonecard, which can be bought at post offices and newsstands. To call to Greece from the US, start with 011, 30, the city code (120 for Athens) and then omit the first 0 in their number. Greece is 2 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time. When it is noon in Greece, it's 2 a.m. in L.A. and 5 a.m. in New York.

You can also try getting a local Greece SIM card for your cell phone if your cell phone is GSM compatible. Some carriers also have international calling plans that you can pre-pay so you do not incur roaming charges; check with your carrier for options

### ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES

The electrical current in Greece is 220V, 50 Hz so travelers from the US need a three-tier standard power converter (or transformer). This converts European 220v to 110 v. Some US appliances can handle the wattage of European outlets without a converter (not hairdryers).

At minimum, make sure you bring a plug adapter for any electrical items you travel with - plugs have two round pins and many outlets are sunk into the wall.

## Getting There

### OUR TRAVEL AGENT

If you need assistance with making your travel plans, call Sara Schuitemaker at Scan East West Travel. Her toll-free number is 800-727-2157 and her email is [sara@scaneastwest.com](mailto:sara@scaneastwest.com).

### TRAVEL INSURANCE

We highly recommend travel insurance. We know that women never want to cancel their trips, and the reasons for doing so are always excellent. Occasionally it's a sudden illness; even more frequently it's the illness of someone they care about. Trip insurance at least minimizes the disappointment and expense during what is often a difficult time. In addition insurance covers the cost of lost baggage; medical expenses during your trip, including emergencies, repatriation, and evacuation; and trip delay. If you decide to purchase insurance, you can secure a policy through your own insurance company or enroll with the company we use, Travelex Insurance. Call 1-800-228-9792 or visit [www.travelexinsurance.com](http://www.travelexinsurance.com). The location code is 20-0016.

### TRAVEL

#### Arrival Information

If you are flying, you will fly into **Athens Eleftherios Venizelos International (ATH)**. Coming from the United States, there are several airlines that fly there: Air Canada, British Airways, Delta, Iberia Lines, KLM Royal Dutch, Alitalia, and Lufthansa all fly into Athens. You are free to arrive anytime on the 23rd and you will be met at the airport by one of the Greek representatives and transferred to our Athens hotel. If you come to Greece before the 23rd, you will need to get yourself to the hotel by 5:30pm on the first day. Please make sure your flight is scheduled to arrive by 4pm for the 5:30pm meeting time at the hotel.

#### Departure Information

You can depart anytime on the 31<sup>st</sup> and will be assisted with transportation back to the airport.

#### Lodging

Athens is a wonderful city to visit, and we highly recommend spending a few extra days exploring on your own.

We will send you the name of the hotel where we are staying in Athens in the pre-trip letter, or sooner, if you wish to stay extra nights at the same hotels.

Here are a few suggestions of places to stay:

#### In/near the Plaka:

The **Hotel Plaka** is in the heart of the Plaka and was a popular budget choice. A renovation in 2001 has turned it into more of a boutique hotel, but its location and size still make it a popular choice.

The **Kouros**, also in the Plaka at Kodrou 11, is in one of the former Plaka-area mansions. Now it offers a mere 10 rooms, all with balconies and ambiance.

The **Hotel Attalos** located next to the Monastiraki Flea Market and Metro Station, a five minute walk to the Acropolis and it is a block from Psiri, the hippest part of Athens with great cafes, ouzeries and restaurants. Modern facilities including 80 rooms, all with air-conditioning, cable tv, a safe, hair dryer and private bath; a roof garden, with a fantastic view of the Acropolis, Lycabettus hill and a panorama of Athens.

## Getting There Continued

The newly renovated **Athens Gate Hotel** is an A Class hotel operating all year round located in the heart of Athens just a few blocks from Syntagma Square.

**Hotel Phillipos** – a lovely 3 star hotel located just a few steps from the Acropolis and Plaka, adjacent to the new Acropolis museum, they are situated at the very heart of Athens historic center.

### Near the airport:

The **Holiday Inn - Attica Avenue**. Located about 10 miles from the airport, this hotel is loaded with amenities and an airport shuttle. Rooms run about 150 eu per night.

**Sofitel Athens Airport** a 5-star, modern, eight- floor property with a white exterior, situated within 50 metres of Athens International Airport and 35 kilometres from the centre of Athens.