



Trip Summary

Island Hopping in the Greek Islands

TRIP AT-A-GLANCE

Dates: 10/3–10/11, 2009
Location: Cyclades Islands
Cost: \$3123-3320*
Rating: M
Activities: Hiking, Cultural activities
Meeting Place: Athens, Greece
Arrive: anytime October 3, one airport pick up at 4pm
Depart: anytime October 11, one airport shuttle at 10 am

* Deduct \$100 for registration by 04/03/2009 and 3% of the entire trip fee when the balance is paid by check

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- 9 days/8 nights in double room on B/B basis in hotels (3*hotels in Athens and local guesthouses on the islands).
- English speaking Greek expert tour leader and Adventures in Good Company guide
- All activities mentioned in the itinerary
- All breakfasts, 5 lunches, and 6 dinners (see itinerary)
- All transfers by private A/C buses and/or taxis
- Half-day sightseeing tour of Athens (entrance fees included)
- Ferry tickets (Athens-Naxos / Naxos-Santorini / Santorini-Athens)
- All transfers from the port to the hotels on the islands
- Arrival & Departure transfers at the scheduled time

Trip Highlights

- visiting the most beautiful villages in the Aegean Sea
- hiking winding paths past terraced hillsides and olive groves
- savoring scrumptious Greek food
- watching amazing sunsets from craggy coasts
- touring Athens, including visits to the Acropolis, the greatest monument in the Western world, the Parthenon, and Panathinaikon Stadium, the stadium where the first Olympic Games were held in 1896

Trip Overview

Our trip is designed for women who wish to explore the Greek islands. We will hike along ancient footpaths, sample Greek delicacies at local taverns, sit back to watch the street life, and swim in the azure seas. The Cycladic complex of islands is the most representative of the archetypal Greek style: fishing villages with whitewashed flat roofed houses and narrow streets, hundreds of chapels, rocky landscape contrasting with the deep blue sea, and bays with powdery white sandy beaches. On this trip we will visit the best spots as well as journey to the interior of the islands where we can experience firsthand the culture and habits of the islanders.

Our Itinerary

October 3 - Arrival in Athens

Transfer from Athens Airport to your hotel. In the evening meet with your guide for a short walking tour of Athens and enjoy a welcome dinner in a traditional Greek tavern in the old part of Athens, in Plaka, overlooking the Acropolis. (D)

October 4: Athens - Tinos

After breakfast, we enjoy a half day sightseeing tour of Athens, the hostess of the Olympic Games in 2004, with a professional guide. We visit the Acropolis, the greatest monument in the Western world, the Parthenon, and Panathinaikon Stadium, the stadium where the first Olympic Games were held in 1896. Late in the afternoon we depart to the port of Rafina to embark on the ferry that will take us to Tinos (5.30pm-9.10pm). (B, L, D)

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 |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| 120+ | All but \$50 |
| 120-91 days | 50% of deposit |
| 90-46 days | 50% of trip fee |
| 45 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 \$5 to \$10 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

October 5: Trekking Tinos

We depart by private motor coach to the village of Feletados where our hike begins. We hike up to an overlook behind a monastery, with stunning views of the Aegean Sea. We continue hiking on trails through small villages where we can stop for a Greek coffee. Then on to the village of Volax, almost hidden in the middle of rounded, granite boulders. Volax is noted for its traditional handmade woven baskets. A footpath winds down the valley to Agapi. We return to our hotel in the late afternoon, and have free time to explore the seaside near our hotel and go for a swim or relax by the pool. After a rest we all transfer to Tinos town, where we can spend some time shopping and visit Our Lady Church, one of the most important Churches of Greece, to view the miracle-working icon. (B, L)

Total hiking time: 3 - 4 hrs

October 6: Tinos to Naxos

This morning we take the ferry to the island of Naxos. We arrive shortly after noon and are taken to our hotel. Naxos is the largest of the Islands and known for its natural beauty. After lunch we'll have a chance to explore it with a hike along an old footpath to the picturesque village of Ano Potamia. After refreshing ourselves at the village spring, we continue uphill to the Apano Kastro (Upper Castle) with expansive views of the town and the port. This is the highest point of our hike and about a 400 ft elevation gain. Our hike finishes with an easy walk to the village of Halki and a visit to a small distillery that produces Kitron, the local specialty liquor. If the hike does not appeal to you, swimming and strolling in the old part of the town are a delightful option. (B, L, D)

Total hiking time: 2 - 3 hrs

October 7: Naxos

We start today with a drive to the little chapel at Santa Marina. Today's hike to the summit of Mt. Zeus, the highest point in the Cyclades, is probably the most challenging hike on this trip but the incredible panoramic views from the summit make it well worth it. We enjoy a picnic lunch at the top before continuing our hike along a road to the village of Filoti, the second-largest town on Naxos. From there we are transported back to our hotel and have the rest of the afternoon free for swimming or visiting the old part of Naxos town. If you prefer not to hike, spending the day relaxing and wandering through town or swimming are excellent options. (B, L)

Total hiking time: 4 - 5 hrs

October 8: Naxos - Santorini

We can linger over breakfast this morning or go for a walk along the beach before taking a noon ferry to the fairest island of the Cyclades, Santorini. Santorini, probably the best known of the Cyclades, was shaped by a huge volcanic eruption in 2000 B.C. that destroyed the town in the central part of the island and left a huge crater behind. Our ferry

Packing List

Please try to travel as light as possible. Although you do not need to carry your entire luggage while walking, you will still need to carry it over short distances. Also remember you unpack and repack on most nights. You can leave the luggage that you don't need on the trek at the hotel in Athens.

FOOTWEAR

- 1 pair lightweight hiking boots with good ankle support. They should fit comfortably, without constriction, when you are wearing one liner sock and one hiking sock.
- 1 pair comfortable walking shoes – athletic shoes, Keens, sandals
- 2 pair thin liner socks: silk or synthetic equivalent (optional)
- 3 pair hiking socks: wool or synthetic equivalent (e.g. Thorlo, Smartwool, Ultrex, or Teko)

CLOTHING

- 2 pair comfortable, lightweight, synthetic hiking pants/capris (Supplex, or nylon/polyester/spandex blend)
- 1 lightweight long underwear top: silk, wool or synthetic equivalent (Capilene, MTS, or polypropylene)
- 1 lightweight fleece jacket/vest
- 2 pair shorts: nylon shorts with liners are comfortable and easy to wash (unnecessary if you use zip-offs)
- 1 lightweight long-sleeved shirt for sun protection
- 2-3 synthetic or lightweight wool short-sleeved shirts or T-shirts.
- 1 wide-brimmed hat for sun, rain, and high fashion
- 1 rain parka: a **waterproof/breathable** fabric like Gore-tex is preferable.
- Underwear and pajamas or whatever you like to sleep in
- swimsuit
- town clothes; e.g. pants, skirts, blouses etc.

EQUIPMENT

- 1 daypack lined with a plastic bag, large enough to carry your water, lunch, raingear, etc. A hip belt will make it much more comfortable to carry.
- pair of trekking poles (Highly recommended)

ESSENTIALS

- Passport** and Xeroxed copy
- sunscreen and lip block with SPF of at least 15
- sunglasses (100% UV blocking) and retention strap
- 2 liter water carrying capacity (water bottle or hydration system)
- 1-2 bandannas

TOILETRIES (small everything)

- toothbrush, small toothpaste, dental floss, shampoo, Purel, sanitary supplies and a zip-lock plastic bag, contact lens paraphernalia
- small personal "patch kit": bandaids, Compeed (blister bandaids) and moleskin, foot powder, ibuprofen, immodium, personal medications, if any. If you are prone to motion sickness, you may want to bring Dramamine, wrist bracelets or a homeopathic remedy – we have several ferry crossings. **Individuals allergic to insect stings must bring an epi-pen.** Please consult your physician and tell your guide.

OPTIONAL

- small journal and pen
- compact binoculars
- favorite snacks
- ear plugs (for a good night sleep)
- travel alarm clock or wrist watch with alarm
- electric converter if bringing hairdryer or similar (Greece is 220V and plugs are two round prongs)
- camera and film/memory card and extra batteries/charger
- shower shoes (like flip flops)
- a good book to read

Notes on the Packing List

Daypacks: We recommend a daypack with space for all of your items. Before you leave home check to be sure that your daypack is comfortable to wear all day. Having a daypack with a hip belt and padded shoulder straps will provide for much more comfortable hiking.

Footwear: Well-fitting, sturdy boots are very important to your safety and enjoyment. If you plan to buy new boots, break them in by wearing them around town and taking some short hikes *before* your trip. For general trekking, lightweight cordura or leather boots work well. Leather boots may be waterproofed in various simple ways, and cordura boots will be waterproof if they are lined with Gore-Tex. If you have weak ankles or are recovering from an ankle injury, get boots that come above the ankle - you'll find that this will give you more support in uneven or slippery terrain.

Personal First Aid Kit: Small first aid kit with familiar medicine you might need for personal use, ESPECIALLY blister or foot remedies like toe tubes, moleskin, gelskin, blister bandages or similar. The amount and kind you bring will depend on your tendency to blister but many people get blisters on hiking tours. Other suggestions: remedies for respiratory ailments? Stomach ailments? Sore muscles or joints? We will have a first aid kit too, but if you already know what works for you it's better to have it with you than experiment on a trip.

Clothing: Layering is the most practical and efficient method of insulating the body. Several layers of varied weight materials provide better insulation than one thick layer of clothing. Also, adding or subtracting layers allows you to adjust to the temperature at your particular level of activity. For October you can use long underwear as your base layer, your sun shirt as a second layer, and your vest as a third layer. And then your rain jacket as your wind layer if it gets chilly.

Hydration: It is very important to your safety and enjoyment to have an *independent* ability for accessing your water. As you are hiking you will need water to be accessible in order to drink frequently. One method is to have a water bottle attached to your waist strap. Another option is to use a **HYDRATION SYSTEM** such as CamelBak, Platypus, and Gregory bladder bags which are simply a collapsible water bag with a hose attachment that you drink from. These fit inside your pack with the hose positioned over your shoulder where you can access your water without the use of your hands. Some models are designed to attach to the outside of your pack. Bladder bags can hold 40-100oz. of water.

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

www.united-

hellas.com/tourism/index1.htm

Cyclades islands Travel Guide -, Amorgos, Andros, Antiparos, Ios, Milos, Mykonos, Naxos, Paros, Santorini, Serifos, ...

<http://www.trekking.gr/?version=en>

The official site of our Greece tour operator.

WEATHER

The weather in Athens in October is typically beautiful, with temperatures typically in the 70s during the day and lower 60s during the night. On the islands, the temperature at this time of year is also quite pleasant, but much cooler. Daytime highs average in the upper 60s and nighttime lows in the 40s. Generally speaking rain is unlikely, although it could still rain and the wind can pick up at this time of year.

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

Trekking Hellas is our outfitters for the trip. Their telephone number is +30.210.3310323. We will send you a list of the hotels we are staying at in the pre-trip letter. Otherwise call 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.

You may want to incorporate some strength training in as well. 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. Give us a call if you need more specific guidance.

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.

Greek Salad: A Dionysian Travelogue by *Miles Lambert-Gocs*. A rollicking odyssey through the Greek islands and mainland with Grecophile and ex-Athenian wine reporter Lambert-Gocs whose book *The Wines of Greece* won awards from the Wine Guild of the UK and the Angelo Hellenic League. This book is like the Greek version of the movie *Sideways*, a medley of wit and insight about Greece with local wine and food as the backdrop.

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 Cyclades: Discovering the islands of the Aegean, by John Freely. A charming and informative companion for anyone exploring these enchanting islands. Includes history, mythology, flora and much more.

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

Getting There

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. The location code is 20-0016.

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 Lineas, KLM Royal Dutch, Alitalia, and Lufthansa are several airlines that fly into Athens. Arrive anytime on the 3rd but there will be a group transfer from the airport to our Athens hotel at 4pm

Lodging

Athens is a wonderful city to visit, and you may want to spend a few extra days exploring on your own. 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. It can be reached at 210 323 8461 (from within Greece - add your international dialing code and 30 when dialing from outside Greece).

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 at night. hotel's 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.

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.

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.

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, ask your travel agent, or call the Passport Office at 202-647-0518. Allow at least 6 weeks.

VISA

No Visa is needed to travel in Greece

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 and some of the villages may have an internet café.

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 a 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.

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ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES

The electrical current in Greece is 220V, 50 Hz so travelers from the US need a three-tier standard travel converter. Make sure you bring a plug adapter for any electrical items you travel with - plugs have two round

pins. Some specialty travel stores carry adapters and can help you chose the right one.

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 1.49 US dollar, although this can fluctuate. Travelers cheques and foreign money can be changed at banks, railway stations 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, travelers are advised to take 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.

Special Tip: In busy tourist locations, it's very common for the machines to run out of money on weekends and to stay empty until mid-week. The Greek ATMs with signs in English or other languages generally run out of money first. The all-Greek ATMs ten feet away will often still have Euros. This can take a little bravery, but can literally pay off. In most cases, if you put your card into one of these all-Greek ATMs, the display will come up in English.

In restaurants the law requires menu prices to include service charge, and tipping is a matter of personal choice - most people leave some small change if they're satisfied.

Our Itinerary Continued

arrives about 3 pm and after settling into our hotel we have the rest of the afternoon free to admire the breathtaking view of the volcano. (B, D)

October 9: Santorini

Today we hike from our hotel in Fira to the picturesque village of Oia. Starting from the cable car station, the first 40 minutes is a stone-path that turns into a footpath. The hike goes along the rim of Caldera (the collapsed crater) where the picture opportunities are legion. We end up in the village of Oia where we have time to explore its narrow passageways and quaint shops before returning to Fira. There may be some time at the end of the day to visit one of its famous wineries or just wander in its picturesque alleys and do some shopping. That night we share dinner in a tavern overlooking the volcano.

(B, L, D)

Total hiking hours: 4 - 5 hrs with picnic time

October 10: Santorini - Athens

We have free time today. One very popular option is swimming at the black beach of Perissa. The black sand comes from the old volcanic eruption and the swimming here is great! Or optionally you may want to visit the still active volcano or one of the wineries that dot the landscape. In the afternoon we transfer to the airport of Santorini for a short flight back to Athens. After transferring to our hotel we go out for a final farewell dinner, celebrating the end of our island hopping tour and our new understanding of Greek life. (B, D)

October 11: Departure

You are free to leave anytime this morning and we will transfer you to the airport at about 10am. Alternatively October is a good month to visit Athens and there still is much to see!

