THE AUSTRALIAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE AT ATHENS

IN ASSOCIATION WITH ALUMNI TRAVEL
PRESENTS

HIGHLIGHTS OF GREECE

With Helen Nicholson | 26 March – 15 April 2020

ALUMNI TRAVEL

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HIGHLIGHTS OF GREECE with Helen Nicholson | TOUR OVERVIEW

YOUR TOUR LEADER: Helen Nicholson is an experienced, well-regarded study tour leader and has led more than thirty tours to Europe and Asia, including AAIA tours to Greece and Alumni’s Egypt, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, and Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia tours. She holds Archaeology degrees from the University of Sydney and has delivered numerous lectures, courses and study days for adult, museum and professional audiences. Helen spent several years working at the Powerhouse Museum and lectured and tutored at the University of Sydney for more than 20 years. She has worked on archaeological sites in Greece, Cyprus, Italy, Jordan, Cambodia and Uzbekistan, including the AAIA’s excavations at Torone and is a senior team member of Sydney University’s excavations at Paphos in Cyprus. Helen currently works as an archaeological consultant in Sydney.

This three-week tour takes in the highlights of Greece – from the Neolithic to the birth of the modern Greek state. It also offers opportunities to explore Greek culture today. Spring is a perfect time to visit Greece before the summer crowds arrive and when the countryside is carpeted with wildflowers.

Our journey begins in Athens where we visit museums and take in the stunning classical monuments on the Acropolis before heading to the Peloponnese and the first capital of Greece after independence, picturesque Nauplion. Here we step back into the Bronze Age with visits to Mycenae Tiryns and Nemea. The area is also famous for its wines and we enjoy a wine tasting at a local vineyard. From Nauplion we drive over the Taygetos Mountains to Sparta, Athens’ rival in the 5th century BCE. We visit the World Heritage listed site of Mystras before driving to Methoni, the southern most tip of the west coast. This strategic site was fought over by the Byzantines, Venetians and Ottomans. After a visit to the Bronze Age Palace of Nestor at Pylos we continue to Olympia. Here we explore the site of the ancient Olympic Games and visit the museum where impressive dedications made at this ancient sanctuary are displayed.

We then head off the tourist trail and explore the island of Ithaca, home to the Bronze Age hero Odysseus. Our ferry returns us to the mainland where we visit Messalonghi where Lord Byron died before continuing to the city of Ioannina. From here we visit the ancient sanctuary of Zeus at Dodona and the monasteries at Meteora. From Thessaloniki we explore the world of Alexander the Great with visits to Pella and the Royal Tombs Museum at Vergina where spectacular artefacts are displayed. We also spend a day taking in the numerous monuments, sites and churches of Thessaloniki, a vibrant and cosmopolitan city.

After a visit to the site of Dion we drive to Volos on the Pelion peninsula, from where Jason set off with the Argonauts. We visit the important Neolithic sites of Dimini and Sesklo and enjoy time in a mountain village. From Volos we drive to what may be one of Greece’s most impressive sites, the sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi, before returning to Athens.
HIGHLIGHTS OF GREECE with Helen Nicholson | TOUR ITINERARY

THU 26 MARCH    ARRIVE ATHENS
Flights arrive in Athens; transfer and check in to the hotel. We meet in the early evening for a welcome drink and mezedes and an orientation walk of our hotel environs. Overnight Athens (meals in flight)

FRI 27 MARCH    ATHENS
After an early breakfast we walk to the Acropolis for an 8 am entrance. Here we visit the Parthenon and Erechtheum and take in the views over the modern city before the crowds arrive. Afterwards there is a visit to the spectacular Acropolis Museum where finds and sculpture from the site are displayed. They are near our hotel so there is free time to either have lunch at the Acropolis Museum or in one of the nearby cafes. In the afternoon there is a visit to the National Archaeological Museum. Overnight Athens (B, D)

SAT 28 MARCH    ATHENS – DAPHNI – CORINTH – EPIDAURUS – NAUPLION
We leave Athens for the Peloponnese this morning. Our first stop is the Byzantine monastery at Daphni with its spectacular mosaics, before continuing to Corinth to visit the archaeological site and museum. After a photo stop at the Corinth Canal to admire this feat of engineering we continue to the ancient sanctuary of Asclepius and theatre at Epidaurus. Afterwards we drive to picturesque Nauplion one of Greece’s most attractive towns. The narrow streets in the old quarter are home to elegant Venetian houses and neoclassical mansions. Overnight Nauplion (B, D)

SUN 29 MARCH    TIRYN – MYCENAE – NEMEA
Today we visit the impressive Bronze Age sites of Mycenae and Tiryns and the site of Nemea where Pan-Hellenic athletic competitions were once held. This area is famous for its wines and today we enjoy lunch and wine tasting at a winery before returning to Nauplion in the late afternoon. Overnight Nauplion (B, L)

MON 30 MARCH    NAUPLION
We take in the spectacular views over Nauplion and the surrounding area from Acronauplia this morning and visit the Castle of the Palamidi. Afterwards there is a visit to the Archaeological Museum in Nauplion where impressive Bronze Age armour and finds from the area are displayed.

The afternoon is free to explore the town that was the first capital of Greece. Overnight Nauplion (B)

TUE 31 MARCH    NAUPLION – MYSTRAS – SPARTA
Today we leave Nauplion and drive south to Sparta. Little remains to be seen today of this once powerful ancient city. Nearby is the spectacularly located World Heritage listed site of medieval Mystras, a centre of Byzantine power from the 13th century. It was here that the last Byzantine Emperor was crowned in 1448. The palaces, monasteries and churches appear to spill down the hillside with many decorated with superb frescoes. Overnight Sparta (B, D)

WED 01 APRIL    SPARTA – METHONI
Before leaving Sparta we visit the award-winning Museum of the Olive and Greek Olive Oil. Afterwards we drive across the Peloponnese to Methoni at the southern tip of the west coast of Greece. Methoni’s strategic importance saw it held by the Byzantines and the Venetians after the Fourth Crusade in 1204 until taken by the Ottomans. Overnight Methoni (B, D)

THU 02 APRIL    METHONI – PYLOS – OLYMPIA
This morning we visit the Castle of Methoni before driving the short distance to Pylos where we visit the Bronze Age Palace of Nestor. In the afternoon we drive to Olympia. Overnight Olympia (B, D)

FRI 03 APRIL    OLYMPIA
Occupied since prehistoric times it was from the 10th century BCE that the Greek god Zeus was worshipped at the site. The Olympic Games, founded in 776 BCE, were held in his honour. We have the whole day to enjoy this World Heritage listed site at a leisurely pace and visit the Archaeological Museum where impressive finds from the site are displayed. Overnight Olympia (B, D)

SAT 04 APRIL    OLYMPIA – ITHACA
We go off the tourist trail today and catch a ferry to the island of Ithaca, home of the Homeric hero Odysseus. After checking out of the hotel we drive to Patras for a midday ferry to the island. It was from Ithaca that Odysseus set sail for Troy and after ten years fighting in the Trojan War he spent an adventurous ten years returning home. Today the island is a tranquil and quiet haven. Overnight Ithaca (B, D)

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TOUR ITINERARY

SUN 05 APRIL  ITHACA
Today we crisscross the island taking in spectacular scenery and visiting picturesque villages and archaeological sites. This includes a visit to the Archaeological Museum and the Folklore Museum. Overnight Ithaca (B, D)

MON 06 APRIL  ITHACA – MESSALONGHI - IOANNINA
It is an early start today for our ferry back to the mainland. We then visit Messalonghi where Lord Byron joined the Greek independence movement and where he died in 1824. After free time for lunch we drive inland to the historic city of Ioannina. Overnight Ioannina (B, D)

TUE 07 APRIL  IOANNINA – METEORA - IOANNINA
A visit to the rock monasteries at Meteora is not for the faint hearted. These were first occupied in the 11th century. There is the option of a more leisurely day today exploring the historic sites in Ioannina itself. Once ruled by the infamous Ali Pasha the city has many impressive Ottoman monuments. This includes a boat trip to the island in Lake Pamvotida to see the Byzantine monasteries there. Overnight Ioannina (B)

WED 08 APRIL  IOANNINA – DODONA - THESSALONIKI
This morning we check out of our hotel and visit the nearby sanctuary of Zeus at Dodona, famous in antiquity for its oracle. Afterwards, we continue through to Thessaloniki, the second largest city in Greece. In the evening we take a stroll in the environs of our hotel and enjoy dinner in a local restaurant. Overnight Thessaloniki (B, D)

THU 09 APRIL  THESSALONIKI – PELLA – VERGINA - THESSALONIKI
The day is dedicated to Philip II and his son Alexander the Great. Pella is the site of Philip’s capital, while Vergina is the older capital of Macedon. In Vergina four tombs have been comparatively recently excavated under a huge tumulus, one now identified as that of Philip himself. The finds are spectacular. On our return to Thessaloniki we take in the views from the city walls and visit the Archaeological Museum. Overnight Thessaloniki (B)

FRI 10 APRIL  THESSALONIKI
Kassander founded Thessaloniki in the 4th century BCE although archaeology has revealed that people lived here in the Bronze Age. Centuries later it became the capital of the Roman Tetrarch Galerius.

SAT 11 APRIL  THESSALONIKI – DION – VOLOS
The important Via Egnatia ran just north of the city and linked the Adriatic with the Bosphorus. Today we walk and explore sites, churches and monuments in the city including, the Archaeological Museum, Roman Forum and triumphal arch. Overnight Thessaloniki (B)

SUN 12 APRIL  VOLOS
The important Via Egnatia ran just north of the city and linked the Adriatic with the Bosphorus. Today we walk and explore sites, churches and monuments in the city including, the Archaeological Museum, Roman Forum and triumphal arch. Overnight Thessaloniki (B)

MON 13 APRIL  VOLOS – DELPHI
After visiting the Archaeological Museum at Delphi in the morning and then drive back to Athens. Tonight we gather in the evening for a farewell meal in a local restaurant. Overnight Athens (B, D)

TUE 14 APRIL  DELPHI – ATHENS
After visiting the Archaeological Museum at Delphi in the morning and then drive back to Athens. Tonight we gather in the evening for a farewell meal in a local restaurant. Overnight Athens (B, D)

WED 15 APRIL  DEPART ATHENS
Free morning in Athens before transferring to the airport for onward flights. (B, Meals in flight)
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GENERAL INFORMATION

TOUR PRICES:
- Land Only per person, twin-share $9,350.00
- Single supplement $1,995.00

LAND ONLY PRICE INCLUDES:
- Twin-share accommodation in comfortable hotels with private facilities
- Transport in comfortable air conditioned coaches
- Domestic flights and ferry crossings as per the itinerary
- Transfers, touring and entry fees as indicated
- Breakfast daily and other meals as indicated in the itinerary
- Service of a Tour Leader throughout the itinerary
- English speaking local guides
- All applicable tipping and gratuities for group arrangements
- Tour booklet

LAND ONLY PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:
- Return air travel from Australia to Athens
- Applicable passenger airport taxes
- Meals not listed in itinerary
- Beverages with meals
- City taxes for hotels
- Airport to hotel transfers if not travelling on suggested flights
- Visa requirements of the tour member
- Travel insurance
- Items of personal nature (phone, laundry)

AIRFARES:
Please contact Tony at Alumni Travel (tony@outandabouttravel.com.au) for the best airfares available at the time of booking.

I’M INTERESTED...HOW DO I BOOK?
Complete, sign and return the attached Alumni Travel Booking Form along with your deposit of $450.00 per person to Alumni Travel. Upon receipt of your Booking Form and deposit, you will receive a confirmation of your place in writing.

DEPOSIT AND FINAL PAYMENT:
The deposit is accepted as a first installment of the tour cost and will be fully refunded if the arrangements can not be confirmed or the tour is cancelled by Alumni Travel. Final payment for the tour needs to be received at least 60 days prior to tour departure. An invoice will be sent to you about a fortnight before the final payment becomes due.

CANCELLATION AND REFUNDS:
Any cancellation from the tour needs to be done in writing. The cancellation date will be taken from the day your written cancellation is received by Alumni Travel. Because of the tour cancellation charges imposed by our various suppliers, the following cancellation charges apply, per person:
- Over 60 days $50.00 - Administration Fee
- 59 - 40 days 25% of tour cost
- 39 - 10 days 50% of tour cost
- Within 10 days 100% of tour cost

If a difference occurs between these cancellation conditions and those imposed by our suppliers, then the conditions of the supplier shall apply. There is no refund before or after travel has commenced or for any unused portion of the tour, either in regard to the standard group arrangements or separate independent arrangements.

CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS:
Any payments by credit card will be subject to a non-refundable Merchant Administration Fee of 2%.

TRAVEL INSURANCE:
It is now standard policy with our company that all our international travellers have some type of international travel insurance, so that you are covered for any unforeseen circumstances that may arise. A comprehensive QBE insurance brochure is available from Alumni Travel. The insurance brochure contains the terms and conditions under which insurance cover will be offered to you.

ADDITIONAL TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS:
If you would like Alumni Travel to assist you with any additional arrangements pre or post tour, please contact our office for assistance at time of booking. All arrangements need to be finalised at least 30 days prior to your departure.

AMENDMENTS:
An administration fee of $30.00 per amendment will be charged for any changes made to any reservation within 30 days prior to your departure. Any additional charges imposed by our suppliers will also be payable.

PASSPORT AND VISAS:
It is the traveller’s responsibility to ensure that they possess the necessary travel documentation for the tour, such as a valid passport and any required visas. Your passport should be valid at least 6 months beyond the end of your journey and have two clear pages for each country to be visited in your journey.

FORCED CANCELLATION:
In the event that passenger numbers do not reach the minimum number of tour participants (approximately 12, excluding the tour leader) required for the tour, it may be necessary to either surcharge or cancel the tour. If such an event does occur, you will be notified at least 60 days prior to the tour departure.

TOUR PRICES:
This tour price has been calculated on the basis of exchange rates and tariffs at the time of print and is subject to change up until final payment has been received. At the time of final invoicing (approximately two months prior to the tour departure date), Alumni Travel reserves the right to re-cost the tour based on actual exchange rates. This could mean an increase or decrease to the above listed prices. Should you decide to cancel your arrangements on the basis of a change in the tour price, normal cancellation charges will apply.

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