

Greece, 12 Days · Tailor-made by car

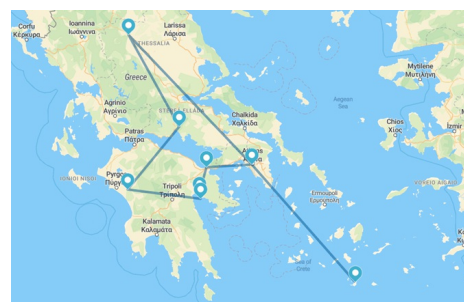
The Peloponnese, Meteora Monasteries and Santorini Route

Explore the birthplace of Classical Greece on an unforgettable tour through the country's most emblematic places. Athens is the starting point for this fascinating tour that will take you to the major cities of Classical Greece. The first ones are located on the Peloponnese peninsula, an area dotted with forests, beaches and mythical cities such as Olympia, Delphi, Mycenae and Epidaurus. To reach them, you'll have to pass through the Corinth Canal, an incredible feat of engineering that links the Aegean Sea to the Ionian Sea, crossed each year by more than 10,000 boats. Step foot in the stadium where athletes competed in the first Olympic Games in Olympia. Feel like Saint Paul preaching from the pulpit of Corinth, a strategic city that was the source of eternal disputes, seeing as traffic between Africa and the Peloponnese was regulated from here. Visit Nafplio, former capital of Greece and known as "the city of the four fortresses", once used for protection from enemy attacks. In Mycenae, the city that Perseus founded and home to the protagonists of Homer's Iliad, you'll find ruins among which the tomb of Agamemnon is believed to be excavated in the rock. And when you get to Epidaurus, you'll be left speechless by the incredible acoustics of its ancient theatre, one of the best preserved in the world. It's said that a coin dropped on the stage can be heard from the very highest seat... and this in a structure that can fit 15,000 people! Discover the origin of the Pythonesses and the famous oracle of Delphi. But the truly unforgettable image of this trip will be Meteora. Here you'll find spectacular monasteries perched on towering rocks and boulders impossible to access in ancient times except with the help of ropes and pulleys. An architectural complex that will leave you speechless and take you off to a haven of seclusion and meditation like no other in the world. And as the finishing touch, enjoy a refreshing dip in the crystal-clear waters of Tolo beach. An unforgettable trip where culture, nature and the history of humankind go hand in hand.

End your adventure with a few relaxing days in Santorini.

Departure date: Departures from June 2026 till May 2027

From: Dublin, Shannon, Cork



ARCHAEOLOGICAL

CULTURAL

Travel details

DAY 1 · CITY OF ORIGIN - ATHENS

Flight departure from the city of origin to Athens and rental car pick-up.

And here your adventure on Greek soil begins! Depending on the time you arrive, head out to visit some of the most emblematic places in the capital of Greece. That said, tomorrow will be spent enjoying the city of Athens and its surroundings.

Welcome to the cradle of civilisation! You'll think that you're leafing through a history book when you visit the city, because every corner cherishes a memory of ancient times. We should warn you to be patient, though, as there tend to be queues at most major monuments. One option is to buy tickets beforehand or get a city pass that includes entrance to several major sights.

And the other option is to leave it for tomorrow at 8.00 in the morning. That means you'll make the most of your time and avoid the big queues.

We start by visiting the incredible Acropolis, one of the most important historical monuments in the world. Declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, it was also nominated as one of the New Seven Wonders of the World. It's breathtaking to look up and admire its sheer grandeur. It was built in the fifth century BC and houses some of the most famous monuments in Athens, such as the Erechtheum, the Propylaea and the Temple of Athena Nike, among others. The most important is the Parthenon, the undeniable symbol of Athens and all of Greece. It's a building that has dominated the top of the Acropolis for over 2,500 years and a masterpiece of classical architecture. This temple, in Doric and Ionian style, was dedicated to the goddess Athena, the protector of the city. Stroll calmly around this hill and let your imagination run wild at every portico, every column and every temple. Can you imagine what life was like before the ruins? This will definitely give you a more realistic image of the significance of this place. Keep this frame of mind when you reach the Ancient Agora, located next to the Acropolis, and the place where the commercial, political, religious and social life of the city took place. This is where the laws were approved, trials were held, artisan products were sold... Democracy was born here and philosophers such as Socrates or Plato once walked and taught in this public space. Also here is the Museum of the Acropolis, the most important museum in the whole country and where you can see the authentic Acropolis caryatids, i.e. architectural columns which take the form of a standing female figure. To have a typically Greek dinner, we recommend a trip to Plaka, known as the "Neighbourhood of the Gods" because of its proximity to the archaeological sites. It's the oldest and liveliest part of the city. Here you can take one of the typical photos of Athens with the Acropolis in the background, as you're right at the bottom of the hill. Restaurants are usually open until late, giving you plenty of time to savour one of Greece's most famous dishes: moussaka, a take on lasagne with minced meat, aubergines and tomato.

Overnight stay in Athens.

DAY 2 · ATHENS

Replenish forces with a hearty Greek breakfast including cereals, nuts, toast and traditional yoghurt, because you'll be taking advantage of the day to see the very best of the city.

We suggest starting off at the Theatre of Dionysus, which was the largest theatre in ancient Greece. Today you'll see rows of seating carved into a verdant hillside at the foot of the Acropolis, reminiscent of its ancient splendour. Imagine great tragedies performed here, such as works by Sophocles, Euripides and Aeschylus... Nearby is the Roman Agora and the Tower of the Winds, which was used as a solar and hydraulic public timepiece. Also close by is Hadrian's Library, known as the "library of the hundred columns", built by the Emperor Hadrian to keep his vast collection of books. He thought that this would gain the respect of the Athenians. It's in ruins today, so you'll have to picture it when it was built back in 142 AD. If you're doing well with time, you could also pop over to Archaeological Museum of Athens. Only here will you find the most extensive collection of classical Greek sculptures and many other relics found in excavations, such as the authentic Mask of Agamemnon.

Ruins aside, today you need to discover even more of Greece's traditional cuisine. For example, try a gyro, a pita bread stuffed with roast beef, tomato, onion and salsa. They're easy to find, either in restaurants or on the street. As for traditional desserts, you have to try bougatsa, a dessert stuffed with minced meat, custard and cheese; and dipsles, deep-fried pastries with honey, nuts and cinnamon. And that's what Athens is all about: enjoy its salads and cheeses; mingle with its friendly people; soak up its Mediterranean atmosphere; and stroll through its picturesque streets always full of life. If you fancy a bit of shopping, take a wander along Ermou, Stadiou and Panepistimiou streets.

Surrounded by so much history, we also recommend strolling around the streets of the Greek capital, especially the Monastiraki neighbourhood, where you simply must visit its Flea Market. It's full of vendors both inside and on the surrounding streets, and is the best place to buy nuts, cheese and bread if you want a quick snack. Then you can head off to the National Garden of Athens. Just beforehand, you'll reach Syntagma Square and the Parliament. This is also home to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. The changing of the guard takes place here on the hour. This is the best way to see soldiers of the Greek presidential guard parade in their traditional costumes. These guards, known as "evzones", are in charge of protecting the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. If you want to take a photo with one of them, head to Irodou Attikou street, just behind the Parliament building. There's a guard there who will gladly accept to be part of your travel memories.

After this, you can head over to the Temple of Olympian Zeus and the former Panathenaic Olympic Stadium. If you didn't know already, the Olympic Games began in Greece and this stadium was the venue chosen to host the first Modern Olympics. And do you fancy rounding off the day by admiring the best sunset in Athens? Just climb up Mount Lycabettus and marvel at the sun going down in front of the Chapel of St. George. From here you can watch how the sun drops out of sight behind the mountains. (Note: If you're travelling in summer and want to escape the heat of the city for a while, or if you're in the city in winter and want to see the sea, we recommend you a trip out to the Temple of Poseidon, on Cape Sounion, as it's a truly magical place).

Overnight stay in Athens.

DAY 3 · ATHENS - PELOPONNESE (CORINTH - NAUPLIA - TOLO)

Say goodbye to Athens and head towards the Peloponnese, a peninsula located in southern Greece full of forests, mountains, beaches and historic towns such as Mycenae, Epidaurus and Corinth. The first thing is to drive for an hour to the west. Get ready to cross the famous Corinth Canal! It's worth stopping off to take a picture of this canal that links the Aegean to the Ionian, crossed each year by more than 10.000 boats.

A incredible feat of engineering that separates the Peloponnese peninsula from the European mainland, saving maritime traffic from sailing an additional 400 kilometres around the peninsula. This idea of creating a channel to save time and fuel first came from the Roman emperor Nero in the seventh century AD, but construction didn't take place until the 19th century. The next stop will be Corinth, a strategic city that has been source of disputes between the major empires of the ancient world. Pretty logical if you think that traffic between Africa and the Peloponnese, and of course the Aegean and the Ionian, was regulated from here. If you want to find out what remains of its historical splendour, you have to head out around 6 kilometres from the current city of Corinth. (Note: You can park at the gates of the site, but if there's no room, you'll find another free car park about 400 metres away). Inside, you can see the seven remaining columns of the Temple of Apollo, built in 550 BC, the Fountain of Pyrene, and the remains of the agora and the Roman market. In the centre, you'll come across a raised platform built in blue and white marble that is known as the bema. It was a kind of tribunal, as many sentences were issued from here. What's more, St. Paul is said to have addressed the Corinthians from this pulpit. You'll probably have heard of the famous Epistles to the Corinthians written by the saint, who lived in this city for two years. If you want to follow in his footsteps, you can also head to the ancient port town Kenchrea, where the saint landed. A must-visit here is the Acrocorinto, the acropolis of the ancient town. It's perched atop a mountain and surrounded by walls, as it was formerly used as a fortress and also as a religious centre. This was the place of worship of the goddess Aphrodite, but it also became the last line of defence in southern Greece. Take your time, enjoy the walk and, above all, the views from the top. You'll definitely get some good photos to show your friends back home. After this, drive for 50 minutes south to Nafplio, in Nafplion, the capital of the country between 1829 and 1834.

It's known as "the city of the four fortresses", which were once used for protection from enemy attacks. We recommend the Palamidi Fort, perched on a gigantic cliff towering 220 metres into the sky, because from the top you'll have stunning views of the town. It's probably best driving there, especially if you want to avoid the 900-plus steps up to the top! But there are also fortresses near the sea. One of them is the Bourtzi fortification, located on a small island 300 metres off the coast and built by the Venetians to control the sea and defend the town against Turkish attacks. It can be visited, but you'll have to take one of the organised boat trips over there.

As for the oldest part of the town, bear in mind that it's all pedestrianised. Therefore, you'll have to leave the car in the parking areas and then walk over. While strolling around, you'll be captivated by the beautiful streets with Venetian-style houses decorated with plants and flowers, nestled among typical Greek tavernas where you can savour sun-dried fish. And to wash it down, nothing better than a glass of ouzo, the quintessential anise-flavoured aperitif.

Fifteen minutes away is the coastal town of Tolo, famous for its golden sand beach, its crystal-clear waters and its seaside atmosphere. Take a quick dip to round off the day with stunning views of the bay and the island just opposite.

Overnight stay in Tolo.

● DAY 4 · PELOPONNESE (TOLO - MYCENAE - EPIDAUROS - TOLO)

Another day to continue exploring the Peloponnese. Half-an-hour north and located on the southern part the Gulf of Argos is Mycenae, which according to mythology was founded by Perseus, son of Zeus and Danae.

This city was so important in Ancient Greece that it lent its name to the Mycenaean period which dominated the country in the second millennium BC. It was also home to the Achaeans, who featured strongly in Homer's "Iliad". This legendary citadel has been an inexhaustible source of archaeological finds. Its most emblematic monuments include the Acropolis, a walled enclosure so impressive that according to mythology its stones were moved by Cyclops. As soon as you enter, you'll be awestruck by the famous Lion Gate, whose three-metre-tall figures form part of the oldest monumental sculpture in Europe. And it dates from 1250 BC. You'll also see a host of royal tombs, such as the Treasury of Atreus, a circular tomb accessed through a stone corridor dug into the hill. According to some archaeologists, this could be the actual tomb of Agamemnon. Many of the objects recovered from digs are on show at the adjoining museum, so pop in to see them if you have the time.

Otherwise, set off for Epidaurus, as it is an hour's drive away. If there's one must-see theatre in the world because of its grandeur, it's the theatre of Epidaurus, one of the great archaeological treasures of Classical Greece. Seeing its rows of seats, with capacity for 15,000 people and surrounded by nature, will leave you speechless. In fact, sound experts cannot believe their ears when they verify the spectacular acoustics of the theatre during a concert or a play. That's because it was built using the so-called golden ratio. It's even said that from the topmost row you could hear the whisper of anyone in the audience, so make sure you put this to the test when you visit. But this colossal theatre is not the only one you'll find in Epidaurus, as it's part of a larger site known as the Sanctuary of Asklepios, declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. This sanctuary started out as a group of temples dedicated to the god of medicine and ended up as a kind of hospital. After the visit, pop over to the small seaside village next to the ruins, have a bite to eat or a refreshing swim.

Then you can get back on the road to Tolo.

Overnight stay in Tolo.

● DAY 5 · PELOPONNESE (TOLO - OLYMPIA AND SURROUNDINGS)

Today starts off with a drive towards Olympia, which is about 3 hours west of Tolo.

The name will definitely ring a bell. That's because this city is where the Olympic Games began about 3,000 years ago, which today are still a symbol of friendship and fraternity throughout the world. If you don't want to miss out on anything about the history of Greece, then this is a must-see. You can still see the stadium, with a 192-metre track where the first events were held. The Olympic flame is still lit every four years, in keeping with ancient tradition. The first Olympic Games were dedicated to Zeus, so next to the stadium is the Temple of Zeus, which housed the statue of the god, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. You can also see part of the workshop of the sculptor Phidias and the Temple of Hera. Just imagine the first ever Olympic athletes getting ready to compete in front of more than forty thousand people! Don't leave without taking a picture at the start line. However, if you really want to understand what Olympia signified, it's best to visit the city's Archaeological Museum. Here you can see some of the most important works of classical art. Thanks to your rental car, you can leisurely explore the surroundings of Olympia at your own pace. Expect fertile lands, valleys and hills dotted with vineyards, and reed-filled lakes with sheep grazing alongside. A truly memorable rural landscape. If you want something to eat, head to the main avenue and you'll find all kinds of restaurants where you can continue savouring new Greek dishes. Now's a great time to try keftedes (leek, chickpea and tomato meatballs) and grilled octopus or calamari.

Overnight stay in Olympia.

● DAY 6 · OLYMPIA - DELPHI

Get ready to bid farewell to the Peloponnese. It's time to leave the peninsula and venture into mainland Greece.

And the destination is one of the most beautiful and magical places on the tour: Delphi. On seeing its captivating beauty, you'll understand why the ancient Greeks believed this to be the centre of the world.

The magic that oozes from this fantastic place is complemented by the excellent reconstruction that has been carried out.

There are some 250 kilometres between Olympia and Delphi, which along the E55 and E65 motorways should take around 3½ hours. The drive is pleasant and for much of the way you'll be hugging the coastline, so make sure you enjoy the scenery. Ahead is one of the most interesting days on the whole tour.

Our tip is to wear comfortable footwear today, because Delphi is in the foothills of a mountain range and the route through its archaeological area will involve the odd uphill climb. Once in Delphi, get hold of a map or pay for an expert guide who speaks your language. The town cherishes masterpieces such as the Temple of Apollo, which housed the famous Oracle of Delphi. It is the origin of the Pythia, and in its maximum splendour was the meeting point for dozens of priestesses who would predict the future (or at least try to). Taking centre stage is the well-preserved Theatre, with spectacular views and a capacity for about 5,000 people, and the Stadium, where some 7,000 people would gather to watch sports and games. The archaeological zone may take up a whole day, so our advice is to choose what you want to see and set aside some time to discover the natural setting of Delphi. It is not the most touristy part of the area, but it is very interesting. Highlights include the mountainous part of Agioi Pantes, which can be accessed by road and offers a panoramic view of coastal towns such as Itea and Galaxidi. These two resorts are easy to reach thanks to your rental car, as they're in the same bay. Enjoy delicious Greek cuisine while sitting on one of their waterfront terraces. That said, keep track of time because you simply must view the sunset from a rooftop bar back in Delphi.

Overnight stay in Delphi.

DAY 7 · DELPHI - METEORA - KALAMBAKA

Morning departure from Delphi towards the north of the country. There are three-and-a-half hours ahead before reaching Kalambaka, the gateway to the Meteora region.

It's well-known for the twenty medieval monasteries that were erected on a mysterious and elevated rock formation that protected the town. You'll think they're hanging down from the clouds! An image that will instantly make you question how it was ever possible to build such an architectural wonder in that place and at that time. Especially if you take into account that this area was once only accessible via rope ladders or pulleys. This is a unique place that seems to have been deliberately isolated from the world. Not surprising, though, when you consider that they were built to fend off attacks from the Turks. This is clearly a haven of meditation and seclusion. Even before the tenth century BC, hermits were living here in the cavities of the rocks, where they created small oratories for prayer. Perhaps because of this, this mountain has since ancient times been considered a small monastery city. Only thirteen monasteries remain, and just six are open to visitors. As a whole, this UNESCO World Heritage Site sublimely combines natural beauty and spirituality. The largest of all is the Great Meteoron, aka the Monastery of the Transfiguration of Christ. Its interior is decorated with frescoes, tapestries and engravings, and houses a small museum filled with ancient manuscripts, books and sacred art objects. This is also the highest monastery, standing at 415 metres above sea level. Climb up to it through a tunnel dug into the rock! To reach the 14th-century Agia Triada (Holy Trinity) Monastery, you'll have to climb up around 140 steps also dug into the rock. You need to be fit, but the reward when you get there is a privilege: sweeping views of Thessaly towards a never-ending horizon. The monastery with the most relics is Agios Stefanos (St. Stephen's), now a nunnery where they nurture Byzantine music and hagiographic painting, which reflects the history of the life of saints. From the Monastery of Roussanou, as well as from the viewpoint of Psaropetra, you'll get a stunning view of the valley and other monasteries. A landscape pierced with impregnable cliffs of outstanding beauty. The most interesting way to reach the monasteries is on foot, because only then will you pass by the picturesque village of Kastrani and see the paths and steps carved in the rock. If you do walk, you must be physically fit and well supplied, because there are quite a few steep climbs and descents before arriving. (Note: If you prefer, you can reach the monasteries by car, as they're all well connected by road. Just remember that it's going to take a few hours to see them all and, on top of that, each monastery closes on a different day each week, so you'll never be able to enter all of them in a day trip. Check opening times before setting out. It's also important to wear appropriate clothing. Both men and women should cover their shoulders and legs). When you finish this wonderful and awe-inspiring visit, you can head down to Kalambaka for a relaxing dinner.

Overnight stay in Kalambaka.

DAY 8 · KALAMBAKA - ATHENS

If you didn't make it to a certain monastery yesterday, today's the day to do so before returning to the capital of Greece. The drive from Kalambaka to Athens is fascinating. If you're travelling in winter, you'll probably see the peaks of the northern mountains covered in snow, while the forests will be lush and verdant. Plan your timings well today, as the journey to Athens alone will take you about 4 hours.

Once back in the capital, you can spend the rest of the day sightseeing, with must-sees including the Platonic Academy or Nea Filadelfeia Park.

You can also head up to the chic Kolonaki district and see two interesting museums: the Benaki Museum and the Byzantine Museum. One of our favourite neighbourhoods is Anafiotika. Entering it is like stepping foot on a typical Greek island, with its whitewashed houses dotted with plants. Meanwhile, the Exarquía neighbourhood is where you can mix with young people and view street art. This is a bohemian area popular with students and where every piece of graffiti is pure urban art. Then you can climb up Filopappou Hill. From here, you'll enjoy some of the best views of the Acropolis and the whole city. You'll have seen it on countless postcards of Greece, so now's your chance to admire it in real life. At night, take a tour of Gazi, Athens' most happening neighbourhood. Here you'll find bars, restaurants and clubs where a great time will be had by all.

Overnight stay in Athens.

● DAY 9 · ATHENS - SANTORINI

Arrival at the airport with enough time to drop off your rental car and flight to Santorini.

Arrival at the airport and transfer to the hotel. Accommodation.

● DAY 10 · SANTORINI

Day at leisure.

● DAY 11 · SANTORINI

Day at leisure.

● DAY 12 · SANTORINI - CITY OF ORIGIN

Transfer to the airport and flight back to the city of origin.

Arrival. End of the trip and our services.

Your trip includes

Your trip includes

- ✓ Return flight.
- ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Athens.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in Athens.
- ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Tolon.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in Olympia.
- ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Olympia.
- ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Kalambaka.
- ✓ Flight from Athens to Santorini.
- ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Santorini.
- ✓ Transfer from the hotel in Santorini to the airport.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in Tolon.
- ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Delphi.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in Kalambaka.
- ✓ Transfer from the airport to the hotel in Santorini.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in Santorini.
- ✓ Rent-a-car.

Your trip doesn't include

- ✗ Accommodation taxes in Greece direct payment in facility.
- ✗ Possible toll charges.
- ✗ Insolvency protection.

Destinations Visited

Athens



Corinth



Nafplio



Tolon



Archea Olympia



Delphi



Kalambaka



Santorini



Important remarks

- Triple rooms in Europe are generally rooms with twin beds or a double, in which a folding bed is installed to accommodate the third person. Due to the inconvenience this causes, we advise against using this option as far the possible.
- Check-in time at the hotel on the day of arrival depends on each establishment, but in no case will it be before 3:00 p.m., unless otherwise indicated.
- The proposed excursions and tours for each day are purely suggestions, as you can tailor the trip to suit your times, tastes and needs.
- A credit card is considered a guarantee, so sometimes you will need one for check-in at hotels.
- Hotels usually have cots available. Otherwise, babies will have to share a bed with an adult.
- To pick up your rental car, you'll need a credit (not debit) card in the name of the person who made the booking, who must also be the named driver of the vehicle.
- Consult the necessary documentation to enter the destinations visited and for transit in the countries where air stopovers are made.