



Athens, Greece

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## **Greece and the Passion Play 2020** **14 Days –September 16 to 29, 2020**

### **Day 1 – WEDNESDAY – September 16, 2020 - Depart USA**

Depart for your transatlantic flight to Athens. Enjoy hot dinner and entertainment aboard the airplane.

### **Day 2 - Athens**

Arrival at Athens Airport. Meet and greet by our representative and board the bus for the Transfer to Athens Center where we will start immediately with our half day **Athens City Tour** – the birthplace of democracy. Including: **Constitution Square** (Syntagma), the **House of Parliament**, the memorial for the Unknown Soldier and the University, the Academy and the National Library. Driving down Herodes Atticus Street you will see the Avzones in their picturesque uniforms and the Presidential Palace. On your way to the **Acropolis** you will see the **Panathenaic Stadium** (where the first Olympic Games of the modern era were held in 1896), the **Temple of Olympia Zeus** and **Hadrian's Arch**. On the Acropolis mount, you will visit the architectural masterpieces of the Golden Age of Athens: The Propylee, the Temple of Athena Nike, the Erechtheion and finally the Parthenon – the monument, which “puts order in the mind” and “is the harmony between matter and spirit.” We end the Tour at your Hotel. Remaining of the afternoon at leisure. Dinner and overnight at Hotel in Athens (D)

### **Day 3 – FRIDAY September 18, 2020 - Cruise to Mykonos**

After breakfast transfer to the **Port of Piraeus** and embark on a Three Days Cruise. Sailing at about 11.00 AM.

At about 6.00 PM Arrive at **Port of Mykonos**, famous for its nightlife and the windmills. After purchasing a shuttle bus ticket (about 8 Euro, not included in the trip price), we will take a **Private Guided Walking tour**, stroll around the narrow stone-paved streets lined by cubic white houses built in the Cycladic manner. Afterwards we can shop or enjoy a drink in one of the many waterfront cafes in “Little Venice”. At about 10.00 PM Depart Mykonos on the cruise ship (B, L, D)

### **Day 4 - Cruise to Kusadasi (Ephesus) and Patmos**

Early morning arrive in **Kusadasi** at about 7:00 AM. Disembark, meet guide and bus for a Half Day **Tour of Ephesus**. Tour of the Greek, Roman and Byzantine ruins of Ephesus, one of the world's finest archaeological sites. Walk through history along Marble Street lined with public buildings, the Arcadian Way, the splendid façade of the library of Celsus, the Baths of St. John, Hadrian's Temple, and Temple of Artemis – one of the Seven Wonders in the Ancient World. Return to the ship by noon time and sail to Patmos.

At about 4:00 PM. arrive to the **island of Patmos**; considered a holy island for the Christian religion. It was here in Patmos where John the Divine, while in exile, wrote the Apocalyptic Revelations, which constitute the last part of the New Testament. Disembark and meet with our Guide and bus.

The Half Day tour takes you to the **monastery of St. John**, which keeps its character of a medieval fortress. Inside the walls you will be able to admire the Byzantine wealth of the Christian Orthodox religion while from its high ground you will have the most stunning panoramic view of the luminous sea. After the visit of St. John Monastery, we proceed to the **Grotto – the Holy Cave of Apocalypse** where St John is said to have had the vision of fire and brimstone and dictated the book of Revelation. Return to the Port of Patmos – free time. Departure around 9:00 PM from Patmos on the Cruise vessel. (B, L, D)

### **Day 5 - Cruise to Heraklion and Santorini**

In the morning arrive at **Heraklion**, Crete, meet your guide and bus for a visit to the Minoan Palace of **Knossos**, home to king Minos and his legendary beast, the Minotaur. In the **Archaeological Museum** of Heraklion you can find the unbelievable works of art (pieces of sculpture and pottery, jewellery, arms, frescoes), that have been found in a number of Minoan sites all over Crete.

Then, sail north to the isle of **Santorini**, the most breathtaking of all the Greek islands. Santorini has a Mediterranean flair and is a famous vacation resort. Disembark the cruise ship and meet with our Guide and start the **Private Walking Tour** of the town and its magnificent island views. Take the cable car up the mountain for an elevated view of the Mediterranean Sea and the Santorini Island (ticket cost of about 8 Euro is not included in the trip cost). Afterwards you will have free time to shop or enjoy the many stores and coffee shops. The ship departs in the evening from the port in Santorini. (B, L, D)

### **Day 6 - Veria and Thessaloniki**

You arrive in **Piraeus**, Athens, early in the morning, after breakfast, you disembark and begin your journey in the mainland of Greece begins with the drive from Athens to **Thessaloniki**. On the way, you view the famous **Thermopylae Pass**, the beautiful **Valley of Tembi**, the legendary mountain **Olympus** and the Byzantine Castle of **Platamonas**. You arrive at **Veria**, where you visit the **Bema** of the apostle Paul. Continue to Thessaloniki, dinner and overnight. (B, D)

### **Day 7 - Philippi and Kavala**

After our complimentary breakfast at the hotel we begin our full day excursion.

In the morning - Travel east by coach, pass Apollonia to arrive at **Amphipolis** and visit part of the extensive site, including the North Wall. See both Beta and Gamma gates, and the remains of Strymon Bridge. View the 4th century B.C. **Lion Statue** that was

prominent on the ancient Egnatian Way that St. Paul would have travelled. Afterwards we continue to the **City of Kavala** and stop nearby the harbour of Kavala (biblical Neapolis), St. Paul's gateway to Europe - a busy port with striking castle and an imposing aqueduct built by Suleyman the Magnificent. See the Greek Orthodox seaside church (Agia Sofia) that marks Paul's landing spot. Lunch is on your own.

In the afternoon our next stop will be **Philippi**, which had a spacious forum and Agora and a theatre, which was also a gladiator arena. Nearby there is a crypt, which has been honoured since the fifth century as the place of St. Paul's first imprisonment, where Paul and Silas sang hymns and an earthquake set them free. Philippi is the place where the Apostle Paul arrived on the mainland of Europe in response to the vision of a Macedonian that he saw at Troas. Here in Philippi St. Paul first preached the Gospel in Europe.

**Visit Lydia Springs, the Baptismal Site.** Outside the ancient city, the River Gangites still flows through quiet countryside, where St. Paul addressed his first European congregations and the business woman, Lydia - a "seller of purple," who was the first to be baptized. There is a fine chapel commemorating this event. Return to Thessaloniki on the coastal road.

Dinner and overnight at your hotel in Thessaloniki. (B, D)

#### Day 8 - Thessaloniki and Kalambaka

In the morning, after breakfast, drive in **Thessaloniki** to see the landmark of the city, the **White Tower**, the **Walls** of the Byzantine **Acropolis**, the Roman **Arch of Galerius** and the **Rotonda**. Visit two of the city's oldest and most admired Christian churches, the **Basilicas of St. Demetrius** and **St. Sophia** (Divine Wisdom). Continue to **Kalambaka**, where you visit one of the amazing Byzantine monasteries of **Meteora**, perched on top of gigantic rock pinnacles. Dinner and overnight in Kalambaka. (B, D)

#### Day 9 - Delphi and Athens

Travel to scenic **Delphi**, one of the most beautiful places on the face of the earth, which in antiquity was believed to be the "navel" (omphalos) of the world. Walk on the Sacred Way to see the Athenian Treasury, the **Temple of Apollo**, where the oracle delivered her ambiguous prophecies and the Theater. Also, visit the **Museum** with its splendid collection of ancient works of art, including the **Sphinx of the Naxians**, the **Silver Bull**, the **Column of the Dancers**, the "Omphalos" and the pride of the museum, the 5<sup>th</sup> c. B.C. bronze "Charioteer". Continue to Athens for dinner and overnight. (B, D)

#### Day 10 – Ancient Corinth and Athens

After breakfast, you begin your trip to **Ancient Corinth**. This is the once glorious city near the Isthmus, where Paul met Aquilla and Priscilla and spent a year and a half working and preaching the Gospel. You visit the **Archaeological Museum**, the **Forum**, the **Temples** and the famous **Bema**, where Paul stood before Gallio accused by the Jews of Corinth. Then, you drive to **Cenchreae**, the little harbour Paul sailed back to Asia from, thus ending his second missionary journey. Afterwards return to Athens for your Athens sightseeing tour. Admire the architectural miracles of ancient Athens, as you follow your guide to the world renowned Acropolis, to see the **Propylea**, the **Erectheum** and the **Parthenon**. Visit **Mars Hill**, where Paul delivered his ingenious speech on the "Unknown God". View the **Agora**, the ancient center of the economic and public life of the city, where Paul preached to the skeptical Athenians. During the bus tour, you see **Constitution Square** with the **House of Parliament** and the **Tomb of the Unknown Soldier**, the **Temple of Zeus**, the **Old Olympic Stadium** and the **Neoclassical Buildings** of Athens. Dinner and overnight in Athens. (B, D)

#### Day 11 – Flay to Munich, Germany - Dachau

Early morning transfer to airport for flight to Munich, Germany.

Upon arrival at **Munich** International airport from Athens, we are met by our tour guide who will accompany us throughout. Our journey starts with a visit to the **Dachau Concentration Camp**. We tour the ground with a museum, its reconstructed barracks and crematorium where the holocaust is documented. Then on to a briefing sightseeing tour which leads us to the major and most beautiful sights of Munich, such as **King's Square** with its three temple buildings in the classical Greek style, the Pinakotheken Art Museums, the Hall of Generals, the **Angel of Peace** monument, **Maximilianeum** (Bavarian state parliament), the Royal Palace, the traditional Viktualienmarkt, an open air food market with colorful outdoor stalls, Karl Square (called "Stachus") and the medieval city gates, Palace of Nymphenburg - former summer residence of the Bavarian kings, the Rathaus and its famous Glockenspiel. We continue on to Upper Bavaria for dinner and overnight. (B, D)

#### Day 12 – SATURDAY September 27, 2020 - PASSION PLAY OBERAMMERGAU

After a late breakfast, we drive to **Oberammergau**. World-renowned, this quaint Bavarian town is the site of the extravagant Oberammergau Passion Play – performed only once every ten years. Take part in this once-in-a-lifetime experience. Beginning in the afternoon and involving almost all residents of the village, the play has a running time of approx. five hours with a three-hour intermission. Dinner and overnight in the Oberammergau area. (B, D)

#### Day 13 – NEUSCHWANSTEIN CASTLE - ANDECHS - MUNICH

This morning, an enchanting drive through Bavaria's forests and lake lands takes us to the elaborate **Neuschwanstein Castle**, surely the crown jewel of Bavaria Castles. Next, we drive to **Andechs Klos-terbrauerei** a popular pilgrimage site offering amazing views from Holy Mountain overlooking the shimmering blue waters of Lake Ammersee and the 17th-century Gothic church with onion-domed tower. Time for lunch on our own at the beer garden before we arrive in Munich area for dinner and overnight. (B, D)

#### Day 14 – September 29, 2020 - DEPART TO USA – Arrive home

We are transferred to the airport for our flight to the USA. Arrive back home.

\* This is a proposed itinerary that we can customize per tour leader requests.

\* As the tour will take place in the year 2020, the flights itinerary is not published yet and prices will be estimated.

\* Space is very limited.

(B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)

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