



The Greek Islands: Mykonos, Santorini & Crete with Marie

14 days | 17 days with Istanbul extension | May 04 2027—May 17 2027

It's nearly impossible to get a true taste of Greek culture without sampling its flavorful isles. Experience their relaxed lifestyle and meet friendly locals as you discover the character and history unique to each island. Absorb Hellenic heritage in ancient Athens before anchoring on the beaches of lively Mykonos. Continue your island-hopping as you cruise on the Aegean Sea to the volcanic shores of Santorini before soaking in Crete's legendary landscapes. Want to cross another country off the list? Extend your trip with a visit to Istanbul, where you can explore its rich history, vibrant markets, and stunning architecture.



Your tour package includes

- 12 nights in handpicked hotels
- 12 breakfasts, and 5 dinners served with beer or wine
- 3 sightseeing tours through ancient ruins, cliffside villages, and sun-drenched harbors
- 3 local guides who bring the legends of the Aegean to life
- Pre-booked transportation, including 1 private deluxe motor coach and 1 on-tour flight
- 3 scenic ferry transfers across the sparkling Aegean Sea

Included highlights

- Standing beneath the Parthenon's marble columns glinting in the sun
- Wandering the winding alleys of Mykonos Town, where whitewashed walls meet bursts of bougainvillea
- Exploring the ancient ruins of Akrotiri, preserved in volcanic ash like a Greek Pompeii

Tour pace

On this guided tour, you'll walk for at least 1.5 hours daily across uneven terrain, including paved roads and cobblestone streets, with steep hills and stairs.

For more information, contact

<https://groups.goaheadtours.com/tours/marielabbancztgig> | 1-800-438-7672 | marie@artoflove.com

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14 days | 17 days with Istanbul extension

Overnight Flight → 1 night

Day 1: Travel day

Board your overnight flight to Athens today.

Athens → 3 nights

Day 2: Arrival in Athens

Included meals: dinner

Welcome to Greece! Meet your Tour Director and fellow travelers at a welcome dinner tonight, served with beer or wine.

Day 3: Sightseeing tour of Athens

Included meals: breakfast

Nothing can prepare you for the sheer sense of awe you'll feel when you come face-to-face with Athens—where ancient architecture and artifacts coexist with modern life. Meet up with your dedicated local guide, who will introduce you to the highlights of this bustling capital.

- Pass by the Panathenaic Stadium, built entirely out of marble—the only such stadium in the world.
- Continue to Syntagma Square, home to the neoclassical Greek Parliament building, and admire the plaza's imposing marble steps, fountain, lush shade trees, and the elite ceremonial guards known as the Evzones.
- Reflect on the Arch of Hadrian, built to honor the Roman emperor, and imagine how its Pentelic marble stones were carted more than 11 miles from Mount Pentelikon in 131 A.D.
- View the remains of the sixth-century Temple of Zeus and gaze up at its 16 ornate Corinthian columns.
- Set off on a walking tour around the ancient Acropolis—site of the Parthenon, Temple of Athena Nike, and Erechtheion. You may have seen these enduring icons of antiquity in books and film, but now you're stepping through the work of craftsmen who quarried and honed these marble blocks thousands of years ago.
- Walk through the Plaka and enjoy free time to wander the narrow streets and charming

shops. Situated at the foot of the Acropolis, this district is one of the oldest parts of Athens and is known as “the neighborhood of the gods” due to the dozens of monuments strewn throughout.

Opt into the excursion to Cape Sounion today, where the remains of the Temple of Poseidon—dedicated to the Greek god of the sea—offer a perfect vantage point over panoramic views of the Aegean and its island chains.

Alternatively, you can also use your free afternoon in Athens to explore on your own. Head back to the Plaka district or wander through Anafiotika on the northeast slope of the Acropolis. The latter neighborhood dates to the 19th century and is chock-full of charming, whitewashed cottages and vibrantly hued doors, the likes of which you might have seen—or will see soon—on Greece's Cyclades islands. + Cape Sounion

Day 4: Free day in Athens

Included meals: breakfast

Today, opt into an excursion steeped in mythology—a guided tour of the ancient archaeological site of Delphi. Succumb to the mystical ambiance that has captivated visitors for decades as you discover tales of the Oracle of Delphi, who was believed to deliver prophecies from her seat in the now-ruined Temple of Apollo. From the slopes of Mount Parnassus, you'll also have unfettered views of olive groves, rugged mountains, and the Gulf of Corinth. Prefer to continue your Athenian adventure on your own? Use your free day in Athens to stroll through Monastiraki, a historic neighborhood anchored by a famous flea market. Navigate its packed streets and see if you can spot any of its Greco-Roman ruins. + Delphi

Mykonos → 3 nights

Day 5: Ferry to Mykonos & sightseeing tour

Included meals: breakfast, dinner

We're off to the islands! Travel by ferry to Mykonos and join your Tour Director on a walk through Mykonos Town's labyrinthian streets, bursting with cafes, galleries, and shops.

- See the iconic white windmills of Mykonos Town—built as early as the 16th century and originally used to mill wheat and barley—and watch their thatched roofs dance in the sea breeze.
- Delight in Little Venice—perched right alongside the Aegean and inspired by its Italian namesake—where colorful, sun-splashed residences seem to melt into the water, their balconies hanging over the sea.
- Pass the Church of Panagia Paraportiani, eminently photographed for its Byzantine-era, whitewashed facade and intriguing curves.

Sit down this evening for an included dinner, served with beer or wine.

Day 6: Free day in Mykonos

Included meals: breakfast

Choose to spend your free day on Mykonos with a hands-on cooking demonstration. You won't just get to nibble and sip your way through fresh local fare—you'll also learn how to make Greek staples like tzatziki yourself. What better way to prolong the magic of your trip than by whipping up a tasty memory at home?

Not joining the excursion? Use your free day in Mykonos to hit the cobblestones. If visiting the island's famous beach clubs isn't your speed, head back to Little Venice for a stroll along the Old Harbor; hike down to Armenistis Lighthouse, one of the oldest in Greece; or get lost in Matogianni Street's shops and galleries and surrender to the soft, salty air on The Island of the Winds.

+ Mykonos Cooking Demonstration & Lunch

Day 7: Free day in Mykonos

Included meals: breakfast

Want to add another Greek island to your list? Add an excursion to legendary Delos for a guided tour of this mostly uninhabited island's remarkably preserved ruins, sanctuaries, and markets. Peer into its cosmopolitan past and importance as a cultural hub. If history isn't your thing, Delos's patch of the Aegean Sea gives you glimpses of scenic coastlines and neighboring islands.

You can also use your free day on Mykonos to hop between the island's renowned beaches.

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Relax on golden sands, swim in crystalline waters, or snorkel until you've worked up an appetite. Be sure to ask your Tour Director for suggestions on hidden gems and seasonal treats.

Please note: The excursion to Delos will run in the morning only during April and October and may run in the morning or afternoon from May to September.

+ Delos Island: Ferry & Temple of Apollo

Santorini → 3 nights

Day 8: Ferry to Santorini
Included meals: breakfast, dinner

You've seen the photos—now get ready to star in them yourself. Take a ferry to Santorini and enjoy a free afternoon on the island. You can admire the steep cliffs that plunge into the Aegean and the island's iconic caldera, dotted with whitewashed buildings. Then, eat your way through traditional dishes—like moussaka, a hearty eggplant dish, or tomato fritters—then use your free time to explore unique pebbly beaches and crystal-clear waters.

Sit down for an included dinner this evening, served with beer or wine.

Day 9: Sightseeing tour of Santorini
Included meals: breakfast

Your guided tour of Santorini will take you from dramatic black-sand beaches to jagged cliff-lined shores and back—a stark contrast to the island's beloved whitewashed buildings and sprays of bright fuchsia bougainvillea vines.

- Visit the archaeological excavations at Akrotiri, a settlement buried in volcanic ash, where richly pigmented Bronze Age frescoes and other Minoan artifacts survived a devastating volcano eruption in the 16th Century BCE.
- Head to the Caldera Viewpoint in Fira and take in the sweeping panoramas of the submerged volcanic crater, where the deep blue Aegean meets the island's dramatic cliffs in one of Greece's most iconic vistas
- See Mount Profitis Ilias, the highest point on all of Santorini and home to the Prophet Elias Monastery which sits perched atop the summit.
- Stop in small, picturesque Pyrgos, where you'll weave through the steep streets of this slightly off-the-beaten-path village.

Spend a free afternoon poking around authentic shops and sampling the local wine, or join the optional excursion and hop on a catamaran for a steal-your-breath-away cruise starring the village of Oia.

Please note: The visit to the Caldera Viewpoint may take place separately from the sightseeing tour.

+ Santorini Caldera Cruise & Dinner

Day 10: Free day in Santorini
Included meals: breakfast

Santorini's nutrient-rich soil lends itself perfectly to growing wine grapes. Get to know the island's unique vineyards when you choose to join the excursion to a local winery, complete with a tasting and accompanying lunch.

Prefer to spend the day on your own? You can sample even more traditional plates—like octopus or spanakopita—then explore the unique, black-pebbled shores and clear waters of Kamari Beach. End the day with a sunset stop at the lighthouse found on the southern tip of the island.

Please note: For an additional cost, you can book a visit to the village of Oia through your Tour Director. The visit will either take place on the evening of day 10 or the morning of day 11, depending on the ferry schedule.

+ Greek Wine Tasting & Lunch

Crete → 2 nights

Day 11: Ferry to Crete
Included meals: breakfast, dinner

Take a ferry to Crete, the largest of the Greek islands, this afternoon. The birthplace of the ancient Minoan civilization, Crete served as the backdrop for the mythical tales of King Minos, the labyrinth, and the Minotaur. Remnants of Minoan civilization can be found across the island, punctuating a diverse landscape that ranges from lush valleys and dramatic gorges to looming mountains and serene beaches.

Expect to be embraced by the locals' friendliness—perhaps alongside a shot of raki, a strong digestif made of distilled grape skins that's offered as a sign of hospitality.

Sit down for an included dinner this evening, served with beer or wine.

Day 12: Free day in Crete
Included meals: breakfast

Looking to uncover centuries of cultural diversity? Choose to join the excursion to Chania, a coastal city on Crete's northwestern shore that has passed between Greek, Venetian,

and Ottoman hands through the years. Embark on a walking tour of Chania's Old Town, a historic quarter tinged by Venetian heritage that also happens to boast a thriving Jewish community.

You can also use your free day to enjoy Cretan cuisine—grilled seafood and local cheeses like mizithra—at one of the island's many seaside tavernas or stroll along the warm sands of a beach (or three).

+ Chania

Athens → 1 night

Day 13: Sightseeing tour of Heraklion & transfer to Athens
Included meals: breakfast, dinner

Spend the morning getting to know Heraklion—an ancient port town that was once the hub of the Minoans, Europe's first civilization. Here, you'll set off on a guided tour of the ruins of the Bronze Age palace of Knossos. Part administrative center, part place of worship, it held a special place at the heart of Minoan culture (and was where, according to legend, King Minos imprisoned the Minotaur in the heart of a labyrinth).

Afterward, fly to Athens and celebrate your trip with your group at a farewell dinner, served with beer or wine.

Flight Home

Day 14: Departure
Included meals: breakfast (excluding early morning departures)

Transfer to the airport for your flight home or extend your stay to continue exploring Istanbul. Where East meets West, this mesmerizing city straddles two continents and layers millennia of history—from Byzantine mosaics to Ottoman palaces—into one unforgettable destination. And if you're just craving another glass of sweet apple tea and a few more bites of flaky baklava dripping with honey and pistachios, we're right there with you.

+ Istanbul extension

The cultural and economic capital of Turkey, Istanbul straddles Europe and Asia—both figuratively and geographically. Once known as Constantinople, this former capital of the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires has long been a

bustling and cosmopolitan crossroads. Experience the intersection of East and West at the Byzantine-built Hagia Sophia, the Ottoman-era Blue Mosque and the exotic Topkapi Palace.

Istanbul → 3 nights

Day 14: Flight to Istanbul

Included meals: breakfast, dinner

Today, you'll bid farewell to the ancient wonders of Athens and embark on a new adventure as you fly to Istanbul, Turkey. As you soar above the Aegean Sea, anticipate the vibrant blend of cultures awaiting you in Istanbul.

After getting checked into your hotel and some time to stretch after your flight, come back together with your group this evening for an included dinner, served with beer or wine.

Day 15: Sightseeing tour of the Blue Mosque

Included meals: breakfast

Head to the edge of Sultanahmet

Square—better known as the Hippodrome of Constantinople—to the imposing Blue Mosque this morning. Instantly recognizable by its six javelin-like minarets, cascading domes, and the colorful tiles that adorn its interior. Enter and admire this holy place, then sit down to learn more about Ottoman Islamic practices.

For the rest of the day, enjoy your free time exploring Istanbul's vibrant streets and historic sites on your own, or consider adding an evening Turkish cooking class excursion to immerse yourself in the local culinary delights.

Please note: Travelers must remove or cover their shoes when entering the Blue Mosque.

+ Turkish Cooking Class & Dinner

Day 16: Sightseeing tour of Hagia Sophia

Included meals: breakfast, farewell dinner

Make your way to the city's crown jewel: the Hagia Sophia. Originally built as an Eastern Orthodox cathedral in 360 A.D., this UNESCO World Heritage Site has also functioned as a mosque, Catholic church, and secular museum over the years—and held the title of world's largest building for close to a millennium. Step inside this beautifully ornamented structure and get lost in the moment.

Enjoy a free afternoon exploring Istanbul's bustling markets, like the iconic Grand Bazaar, on your own. Alternatively, opt for an enchanting cruise along the Bosphorus Strait by adding on this afternoon's excursion.

Sit down and celebrate your trip with your group during tonight's farewell dinner, served with beer or wine.

+ Bosphorus Straits Cruise & Lunch

Flight Home

Day 17: Departure

Included meals: breakfast (excluding early morning departures)

Transfer to the airport for your flight home, baklava in hand.

For more information, contact

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Customize your experience

Customize your tour by adding excursion options. Excursions offered on the same day will occur at different times, so there's no need to choose. Save \$10 when you book your excursion up to three days before your tour departs.* Excursions requiring advance reservation only list this discounted price. Call or go online to customize your tour: <https://groups.goaheadtours.com/tours/marielabbancztgig> | 1-800-438-7672

Day 3: Cape Sounion

From \$95.00 . Visit the link above for pricing info. (4.5 hours, departure time varies)

Journey to the southern tip of the Attica Peninsula to take in the sights of the Poseidon Coast, including sandy beaches, natural and manmade harbors, and, of course, the Aegean Sea itself. High above the sparkling shoreline, the Temple of Poseidon dominates the landscape. Of the original structure, 16 elegant Doric pillars remain. Afterward, decide how you'd like to spend your free time. Take a moment to look out from the lofty cliffside vantage point, where you can see five Aegean islands on a clear day. You may also choose to enjoy a coffee, stop in the souvenir shop, or stroll through the area. Please note: This excursion involves some walking on uneven terrain.

Day 4: Delphi

From \$135.00 . Visit the link above for pricing info. (11 hours, departs in the morning, lunch included)

Journey to the slopes of Mount Parnassus and the archeological site of Delphi, home of the mystical oracle. Embark on a guided tour featuring the Temple of Apollo, where, according to legend, the god Apollo once communicated with mortals. Greece's ancient military leaders customarily left gifts here in hopes of good fortune in battle. Then, take time to explore the ancient treasures, including a huge bronze charioteer, on display at the Delphi Museum. Continue on to the picturesque town of Arachova and enjoy a traditional Greek lunch at a local restaurant. Please note: This excursion involves some walking on uneven terrain and hills.

Day 6: Mykonos Cooking Demonstration & Lunch

From \$125.00 . Visit the link above for pricing info. (4 hours, departs in the morning with lunch)

Your first stop is the village of Ano Mera, where you'll pay a visit to the 18th-century Monastery of Panagia Tourliani and enjoy free time to explore the surrounding town square. After you've worked up an appetite in town, make your way to a local farm. Learn how to make traditional foods such as Mykonian pie and tzatziki and sample some of the regionally sourced ingredients used in the dishes. As you craft the cuisine, chat with your local host to learn about Greek culture. Then, try three different Greek wines and Raki, an anise-flavored liquor, as you enjoy lunch.

Day 7: Delos Island: Ferry & Temple of Apollo

From \$139.00 . Visit the link above for pricing info. (5 hours, departs in the morning)

Journey by boat to the sacred island of Delos, Europe's largest open-air museum and birthplace of Apollo and Artemis. Your guided tour of the island's ancient city will transport you to the time when it was an important center for trade. You can explore the ruins of the Sanctuary of Apollo, the Sacred Cave, the Lion Terrace, and the House of Dionysus, where you'll find a breathtaking mosaic of the god of wine. Please note:

This excursion is seasonal and runs from April through the end of October only. It may also take place in the afternoon on some departures.

Day 9: Santorini Caldera Cruise & Dinner

From \$149.00 . Visit the link above for pricing info. (5 hours, departs in the afternoon, dinner included)

Board a catamaran and sail in comfort through Santorini's awe-inspiring caldera on this scenic excursion. You'll cruise around the volcanic island of Nea Kameni for views of the picture-perfect cliffside village of Oia (pronounced "EE-ah"). Situated on the western end of the island, Oia was once a maritime center, and stately captains' houses still sit on its high ridges. Spend the afternoon on the open waters as you snorkel in the ocean, sunbathe on the deck of the catamaran, and swim in a natural hot spring that was once the crater of a volcano. You'll enjoy unlimited wine, water, and soft drinks, as well as a buffet-style dinner of home-cooked Greek specialties, on board the boat as you take in the beautiful scenery. Please note: We recommend packing a bathing suit. This excursion is seasonal and runs from April through mid-October only. It is also weather-dependent.

Day 10: Greek Wine Tasting & Lunch

From \$89.00 . Visit the link above for pricing info. (4 hours, departs in the afternoon with lunch)

Santorini's volcanic landscape and nutrient-rich soil nurture a wealth of outstanding vineyards. You'll tour a local winery and learn about how the vines are trained to grow close to the ground, which helps protect the grapes from the strong ocean winds. Then, sit down for a lunch and tasting featuring some of their signature varietals including Assyrtiko and Vin Santo.

Day 12: Chania

From \$125.00 . Visit the link above for pricing info. (8 hours, departs in the morning, lunch included)

Travel to historic Chania, where a local guide introduces you to the city's Old Town. You'll visit Chania's cathedral before a walk through the Venetian quarter, where you'll walk by Etz Hayyim, the only synagogue on the island of Crete and a symbol of the city's enduring Jewish community. Your guided tour ends at the port, where you'll see the ancient Turkish Ottoman mosque. Lunch is included on this excursion, as is free time to get to know this beautiful city at your own pace.

Extension excursion options

Day 15: Turkish Cooking Class & Dinner

From \$119.00 . Visit the link above for pricing info. (3 hours, departs in the afternoon, dinner included)

Dive into Turkey's culinary traditions this evening during an interactive cooking class led by a local chef, where you'll learn to craft traditional Turkish dishes that are lovingly made and served by local families. Discover the rich history and cultural significance behind each dish as you prepare them. After the class, savor your culinary

creations during an included dinner, perfectly paired with local wine.

Day 16: Bosphorus Straits Cruise & Lunch

From \$85.00 . Visit the link above for pricing info. (5 hours, departure time varies, lunch included)

Cruise through the Bosphorus Straits, looking out on decadent Ottoman palaces and imposing medieval castles as you journey through the narrow waterway that separates Europe from Asia. On your way, you'll stop to visit the famous Egyptian bazaar, known as the Spice Market. After returning from your cruise, sit down to a lunch of Turkish specialties. Please note: This excursion is weather-dependent. In some cases, dinner will be offered instead of lunch.

*Optional excursions may be purchased up to three days prior to departure or while on tour. Pre-purchased optional excursions cannot be canceled within three days prior to departure or while on tour. Select optional excursions require advance booking and cannot be purchased or canceled after the advanced reservation deadline. Go Ahead Tours accepts payment by cash, Visa or MasterCard for optional excursions purchased on tour. Additional fees may apply for optional excursions purchased on tour. Excursions require a minimum number of participants to operate. Details and prices are subject to change. Due to seasonal hours of operation and availability, some excursions may not operate. If this occurs, you will be refunded any payments made for that excursion post-tour. Learn more at <https://www.goaheadtours.com/about/terms>.