



The Greek Islands: Mykonos, Santorini & Crete with Martha Ryan

14 days | 16 days with Athens extension | Apr 03 2025—Apr 16 2025

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 (with a chance to return and explore some more when you stay with us for the Athens extension) 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.



Your tour package includes

- 12 nights in handpicked hotels
- 12 breakfasts
- 5 dinners with beer or wine
- 3 sightseeing tours
- Expert Tour Director & local guides
- Private deluxe motor coach
- 3 ferry transfers
- 1 on-tour flight

Included highlights

- Acropolis
- Parthenon
- Windmills in Mykonos Town
- Akrotiri excavations
- Village of Pyrgos
- Ruins of Knossos
- Heraklion Archaeological Museum

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/groups/tours/tgi-ryan> | 1-800-438-7672 | manitoumartha@aol.com

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14 days | 16 days with Athens 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, and lush shade trees.
- Admire 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.
- Drive through Plaka. 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 it.
- 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 films; now, you're stepping through the work of craftsmen who quarried and honed these marble blocks thousands of years ago.

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 Cruise & 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, blue-domed 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 volcanic eruption in the 16th century B.C.
- Ride to the top of Mount Profitis Ilias for panoramic views of Santorini, neighboring island chains, and the blue waters kissing the horizon.
- Stop in small, picturesque Pyrgos, where you'll weave through the steep streets of this off-the-beaten-path village.

Choose to hop on a catamaran for a steal-your-breath-away dinner cruise starring the cliffside village of Oia—Santorini's calling card. You can also spend your free afternoon poking around authentic shops and sampling the local wine if you're craving time to explore on your own.

+ 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

Board your bus and cruise past Crete's olive-covered terrain en route to 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.

- Visit 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).
- See the Heraklion Archaeological Museum, home of the world's preeminent collection of Minoan art and many artifacts taken from the excavation of Knossos and other dig sites around Crete.

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 Athens. With a history spanning more than 3,400 years, we know you'll want more time to delve into the Greek capital's ever-evolving cultural landscape. And if you're just craving another plateful of syrupy, sweet fried dough—those pillowy loukoumades—we're right there with you.

+ Athens extension

You've decided to treat yourself to two more days in Athens—and we're ready to help you fill them with more history, archaeology, and tangy, craveable cuisine. Ask your Tour Director for their best tips for exploring Greece's unforgettable capital, then go ahead and discover the city your way (or join our one of our specially curated excursions).

Athens → 2 nights

Day 14: Free day in Athens

Included meals: breakfast

Athens has no shortage of incredible restaurants serving Greek and international fare, but there's nothing like a home-cooked meal with friends and soon-to-be friends. Opt into the dinner excursion tonight and break bread with your local host.

You can also spend your first day in Athens scoping out the National Garden, a serene, green expanse in the heart of the city with ponds and shady paths that cross through ancient ruins. For a less crowded panorama of Athens, head to Mount Lycabettus, where you can hike or take the funicular railway to the top of the hill. Be sure to ask your Tour Director for their recommendations, too!

+ Athens Home-Hosted Dinner

Day 15: Free day in Athens

Included meals: breakfast

It's your last full day in Athens; let's make the most of it. Join the optional (but highly recommended) visit to the Corinth Canal. This narrow waterway connects the Gulf of Corinth to the Saronic Gulf and was an important navigational route upon its opening in 1893.

While it's too narrow for modern vessels, its steep limestone walls provide a scenic contrast to the aquamarine waters below. You'll then continue to the archaeological sites at Epidaurus and Mycenae to walk along some of the best-preserved ancient sites in Greece.

If you choose to spend your free day venturing out on your own, why not take in some of the city's street art? Wander through neighborhoods like Exarchia or Psiri and check out their colorful graffiti up close. Looking for another vantage point to admire Athens? Head to the Pnyx, a hill where ancient Athenians gathered for assemblies. You'll get views and a tranquil atmosphere.

Tonight, gather with your fellow travelers to enjoy a farewell drink.

+ Corinth Canal, Epidaurus & Mycenae

Flight Home**Day 16: Departure**

Included meals: breakfast (excluding early morning departures)

Transfer to the airport for your flight home, souvlaki 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/groups/tours/tgi-ryan> | 1-800-438-7672

Day 3: Cape Sounion

From \$75.00 . 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 \$119.00 . 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 \$119.00 . 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 Turliani 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 Cruise & Temple of Apollo

From \$125.00 . Visit the link above for pricing info. (5 hours, departs in the morning)

Journey by boat to the island of Delos, rich with mythological history and once one of Greece's most sacred spots. 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 \$119.00 . 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 step inside Etz Hayyim, the only synagogue on the island of Crete and a symbol of the city's enduring Jewish community. After exploring the synagogue, your guided tour ends at the port, where you'll visit an 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. Please note: Etz Hayyim is closed on Sundays.

Extension excursion options

*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. GAT 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 [goaheadtours.com/terms](https://groups.goaheadtours.com/terms)