

Holy Trails of Greece

In the Footsteps of Saint Paul with Patmos visit From Athens



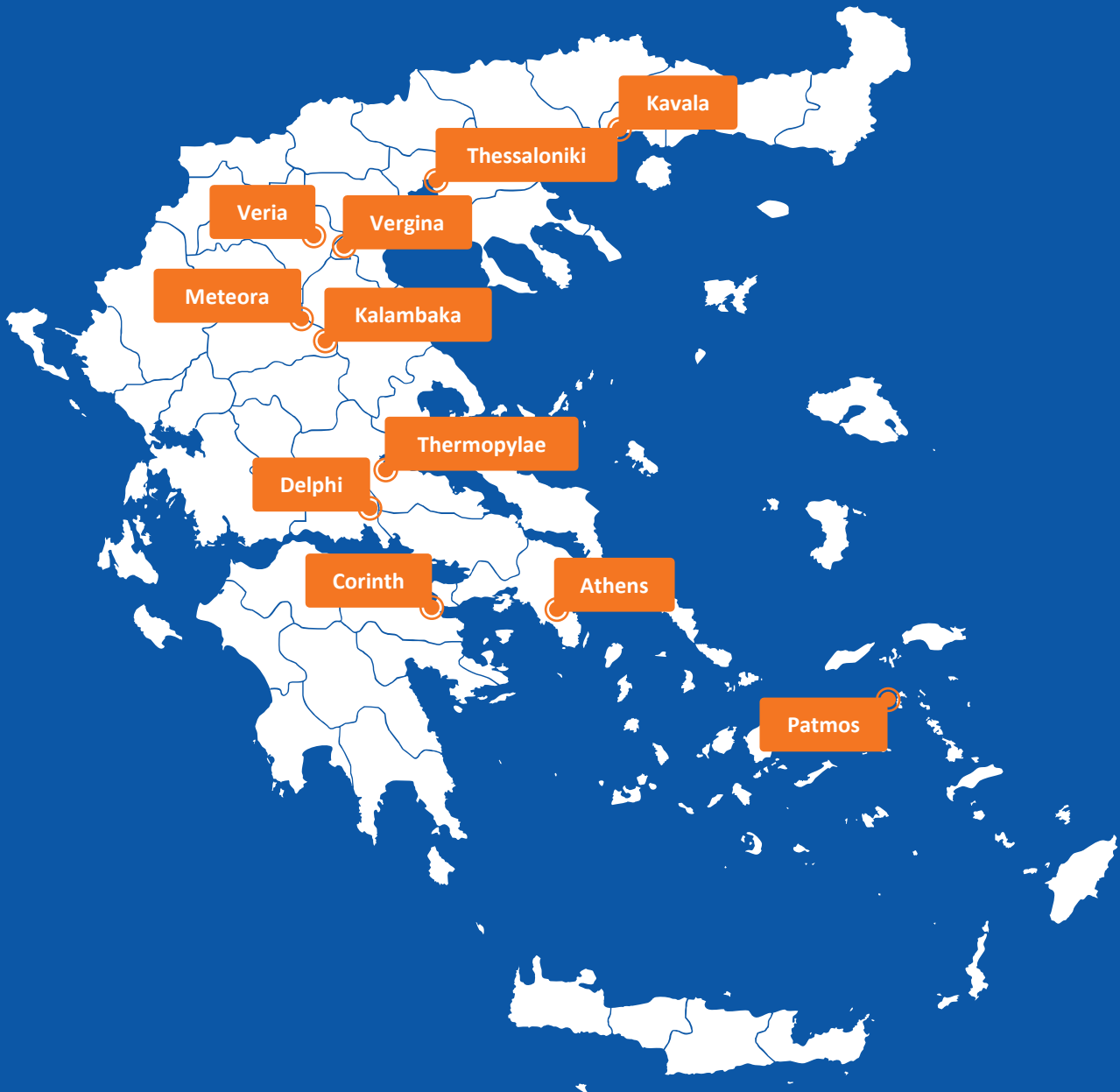
9 Days / 8 Nights

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Holy Trails of Greece

In the Footsteps of Saint Paul, from Athens





DAY 1

Arrival in Athens

- Upon arrival at Athens International Airport, you will be met by our representative and transferred to your hotel.
- Balance of the day at leisure.
- If time permits depending on your arrival time to Athens, you may enjoy one of our optional tours. (Cape Sounion or Athens By Night Tour with Traditional Greek show).
- Overnight stay in Athens.





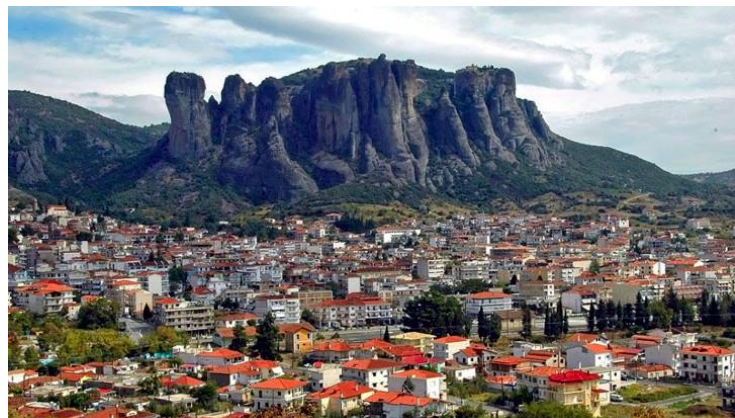
DAY 2

Osios Lucas - Delphi - Kalambaka

- After breakfast, depart from Athens with the guide for the visit to the Monastery of San Luca (Osios Lucas), one of the most important examples of Byzantine architecture and art (UNESCO World Heritage).
- Continue to visit the famous Archaeological Site of Delphi, known in ancient times for its mystical energy and for the power of the God Apollo. On Mount Parnassos, in a landscape of immense beauty, we find the ruins of the Sanctuary of Apollo and the Museum, full of masterpieces of ancient sculpture such as the bronze Auriga.
- After Delphi visit, departure for Kalambaka.
- Upon arrival in Kalambaka, check-in to hotel and overnight stay.



In the Footsteps of Saint Paul





DAY 3

Meteora - Vergina - Veria - Thessaloniki

- After breakfast at the hotel, visit the Meteora. Famous for its impressive and well-preserved monasteries, which contain an inestimable history and religious treasures, as well as exquisite examples of Byzantine art, remaining between earth and sky on top of huge rocks. Once the visit of the monasteries is over, we proceed to the city of Kalambaka for lunch and then we continue to Vergina, a small town in the northern part of Greece near Veria, capital of Imathia. The city became internationally famous in 1977, when the Greek archaeologist Manolis Andronikos unearthed what he thought was the burial place of the kings of Macedonia, including the tomb of Philip II, father of Alexander the Great. These artifacts established the site as the ancient city of Aigai. Visiting the museum that was inaugurated in 1993, you will understand that it was built in a way to protect the tombs, expose the artifacts and show the mound as it was before the excavations. The two most important tombs were not stripped and contained the main treasures that can be admired in the museum. The tomb of Philip II, father of Alexander, was discovered in 1977 and is divided into two rooms. The main room included a marble sarcophagus, and inside there was the larnax made of 24 carat gold and weighs 11 kilograms. Within the golden larnax the bones of the dead were found and a gold crown of 313 oak leaves and acorns 68, weighing 717 grams.



DAY 3

Meteora - Vergina - Veria - Thessaloniki

- The facade of the tomb of Alexander IV of Macedonia: In 1978 another burial place was discovered near the tomb of Philippe, who belongs to Alexander IV of Macedonia, son of Alexander the Great. It was slightly smaller than the previous one and also was not stripped. Your guide will take you inside the museum to see some of King Philippe's most important assets, including the King's Shield and gold-trimmed pettor. According to legend, the golden chest containing the king's bones was washed with wine and wrapped in a purple cloth. Moreover, you can learn how it was brought to light before seeing the golden chest. Also on display are the golden tiaras of unrivaled art, sumptuous wall paintings and a golden crown of oak leaves.
- After visiting the archaeological site of Vergina, our bus will take us to a small hill near the town of Veria, where local tradition holds that St. Paul has preached. A small shrine known as the Altar of St. Paul was erected in this place. Many religious ceremonies are still held at this altar today.
- After the visit to the Altar, we will return to the city of Thessaloniki, early in the afternoon.
- Overnight stay at hotel in Thessaloniki.



DAY 4

Philippi - Kavala - Thessaloniki

- After breakfast at hotel, drive towards Kavala, along “Egnatia” road built on the ancient Roman road “Via Egnatia” and passing by the lakes of Koroni and Volvi, as well as by the village of Asprovalta, with a visit to the Lion of Amfipolis.
- We continue with a visit to the place where Santa Lydia, the first woman in Europe, was christened Cristiana da San Paolo and to the archaeological site of Philippi, where we can find the ‘Forum Romanum’ and the ruins of the two Christian Basilicas (the prison where Saint Paul was held prisoner), as well as the ancient Greek Theater.
- At the end of the visit, depart for Kavala, stop to admire the beautiful town and its port and lunch in a local restaurant.
- In the evening arrival in Thessaloniki and overnight stay at the hotel.



In the Footsteps of Saint Paul





DAY 5

Thessaloniki - Thermopylae - Athens

- After breakfast at the hotel, meet with our guide and start the tour with a panoramic tour around the city. See the main places of interest in the city. Take a short break at the White Tower to take some pictures. Then continue the tour by visiting Agios Demetrios Byzantine church which is the most important church in Thessaloniki for religious, historical and artistic reasons. The most famous and interesting part of the church is the ancient underground “Crypt”. The crypt was rediscovered after the fire of 1917 and was finally restored as an exhibition / museum in 1988. According to Christian tradition, the Saint was imprisoned here and died in 303 AD. You will also have the opportunity to visit the “Vlatadon” monastery, also known as the “Tsaous” Monastery. It is a monastery in the Upper Town region of Thessaloniki. It is the only monastery of the Byzantine period of the city, founded in the mid-14th century, which remains open until today. During the 15th century the abbey prospered. After the capture of Thessaloniki by the Turks, some privileges were given to the monastery, validated with a “firm” by Sultan Mehmed II in 1446. In addition, some Ottoman-style buildings show that in the 16th century the monastery was inhabited by Turks. In 1801 the patriarch Cirillo Loukaris restored the monastery church, but in 1870 a fire destroyed part of it, including the library. The damages were repaired at the expense of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.



DAY 5

Thessaloniki - Thermopylae - Athens

- Today the Abbey belongs to the Ecumenical Patriarchate. From the original construction, the only thing that remains is the sanctuary and a few other architectural elements. Near the monastery church, which is dedicated to the “Transfiguration”, there is a vaulted chapel from the 14th century with period frescoes of the “Paleologo” family. According to local tradition, the monastery was built in the place where Paul preached and lived during his stay in the city. 93 codes and records of the monastery are saved and have been transferred to the “Moni Iviron of Mount Athos”, during the Second World War.
- After visiting the Altar, return to Athens by bus.
- On our way to Athens, a brief stop at Thermopylae, where the fierce battle between Persians and Greeks took place during the Persian invasion of 480-479 BC. The Greek force (300 warriors) was small but very determined able to take a stand against the huge Persian army.
- Arrival in Athens and overnight stay at the hotel.



DAY 6

Athens

- After breakfast at hotel, pick up for our Athens Sightseeing Tour. Our Athens Half Day Tour begins with a panoramic drive around Syntagma square, passing by many sightseeing hot spots such as National Garden, Hadrian's Arch, St. Paul's Church, Parliament, Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Catholic Cathedral and Schliemann's House. We will then drive past the Athens Trilogy which includes the University of Athens, the Academy of Athens, and the National Library. Our licensed guide will make you feel as if you are experiencing firsthand Athens's old and new history as you look at these stately buildings. We continue for a photo stop at Panathenaic Stadium, otherwise known as Kallimarmaro Stadium, where the first Olympic Games took place in 1896. As we proceed, we pass by Zappeion and the Temple of Olympian Zeus. Last but not least, we make our way to the archaeological site of Acropolis, an UNESCO'S world heritage monument and we visit Propylae, as well as the small Temple of Athena Nike. Of course, our visit shall not be completed without the Parthenon and Erechtheion. The expert guided Athens sightseeing and museum tour continues with a pleasant short walk passing by Herodion and Dionysos Theater, in order to visit the New Acropolis Museum. With this Athens half day tour, you will enjoy one of the top UNESCO'S world heritage monuments.
- At the end of our tour, transfer back to your hotel & balance of the day at leisure.
- Overnight stay in Athens.



DAY 7

Corinth - Athens – Ferry to Patmos

- This morning, we leave Athens for Corinth with a small stop in the Corinth Canal for photos, continuing to the ancient city of Corinth, visit to the archaeological museum, the market, the “Bema” of Saint Paul and the Temples. The ruins of this cultural center are fascinating as we walk along the route that the Saint Paul walked.
- We then return back to Athens towards Epidaurus, sanctuary originally dedicated to Aesculapius, inside of which is the famous theater, which even today leaves us amazed due to its impressive acoustics and in which representations are still taking place.
- In the afternoon, return to Athens for our visit to the Acropolis area and the Areopagus, where the Apostle Paul delivered his famous sermon about the “Unknown God”, introducing the message of Christ to the philosophers of Athens.
- Then, transfer to Piraeus port to board the ferry to Patmos.
- Overnight stay onboard.



DAY 8

Patmos – Athens

- Upon arrival in Patmos, an island of rare beauty captivating the visitor at first glance, with its picturesque harbor dominated by the imposing Monastery of St. John standing on the hill above, we proceed with our Patmos tour.
- Leaving Skala harbor, you take a drive to the impressive village of Chora. The Monastery of St. John is situated amongst gleaming white houses forming a startling contrast to its dark mass. The Blessed Christodoulos, Servant of Christ, built the Monastery in 1088. It has thick, high walls crowned all around with battlements and a total of eight chapels. The courtyard is laid with pebbles and decorated with arches through which one can see the intricately designed frescoes adorning the chapel entrance. The museum houses a magnificent collection of jeweled chalices, crowns and crosses. In addition, there are old writings dating back as far as 1073, icons and religious paintings including an original El Greco. Many exhibits from the library, which unfortunately is not open to the public, can also be viewed in the museum.
- The tour then continues with a visit to the Grotto of St. John, taking the form of a 17th century Monastery built around the cave where St. John lived for two years (95-97AD) during his writings of the Apocalypse. Inside one can see the stone which he is said to have used as a pillow.
- After the tour, transfer to Patmos port and board the ferry to Athens
- Overnight stay onboard.



DAY 9

Departure from Athens

- Arrive in Athens and direct transfer to Athens International Airport for your international flight.
- Alternatively, if your departure time permits, you can join one of our optional tours or explore the city of Athens for one last time and experience the Greek culture, leaving Athens full of memories.



Inclusions

- 3 Nights Athens hotel accommodation (3*/4*/5*) on HB basis
- 2 Nights Thessaloniki hotel accommodation (3*/4*/5*) on HB basis
- 1 Night Kalambaka hotel accommodation (3*/4*/5*) on HB basis
- 2 Nights onboard on Ferry from Piraeus to Patmos
- We follow the steps of Saint Paul as per the above Itinerary
- Entrance fees at Museums & Archaeological sites as mentioned above
- Licensed professional Guide on tours, whenever necessary
- Private transfers in Athens, from/to airport with professional driver
- Private transfers across all locations, as per itinerary
- Economy class ferry tickets (Piraeus – Patmos, Patmos – Piraeus)
- All taxes

Recommended participation: Group of minimum 15 persons

Suggested hotels:

Athens: 3* Athenian Montaza or similar, 4* The Stanley or similar, 5* Radisson Blu Park / Wyndham Grand Athens or similar

Thessaloniki: 3* Astoria Hotel / ABC Hotel or similar, 4* City Hotel / Anatolia Hotel or similar, 5* Onoma Hotel / Makedonia Hotel or similar

Kalambaka: 3* Orfeas hotel or similar, 4* Divani Meteora hotel or similar, 5* Grand Meteora Hotel or similar

Not Included

- International and/or Domestic flights
 - Other optional tours
 - Other Meals or Beverages
 - Other transfers
 - Climate Resilience Tax to be paid directly to the hotel
 - Gratuities (optional)
 - Any personal expenses
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- In case of an increase in the VAT or other taxes, including entrance fees, rates are subject to change without prior notice.
 - Rates may change during special periods such as Authentic Marathon dates, Christmas, New Year, Easter, International Congresses, Conventions and Fairs.
 - We would like to inform you that guests shall be required to pay directly to the hotel a “Climate Resilience Tax”, per overnight, per room. This tax goes directly to the state and the Hotel and/or travel agents have no interference. Hotel guests shall be requested to pay the Climate Resilience Tax directly to the hotel and is not included in our above offer.



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