

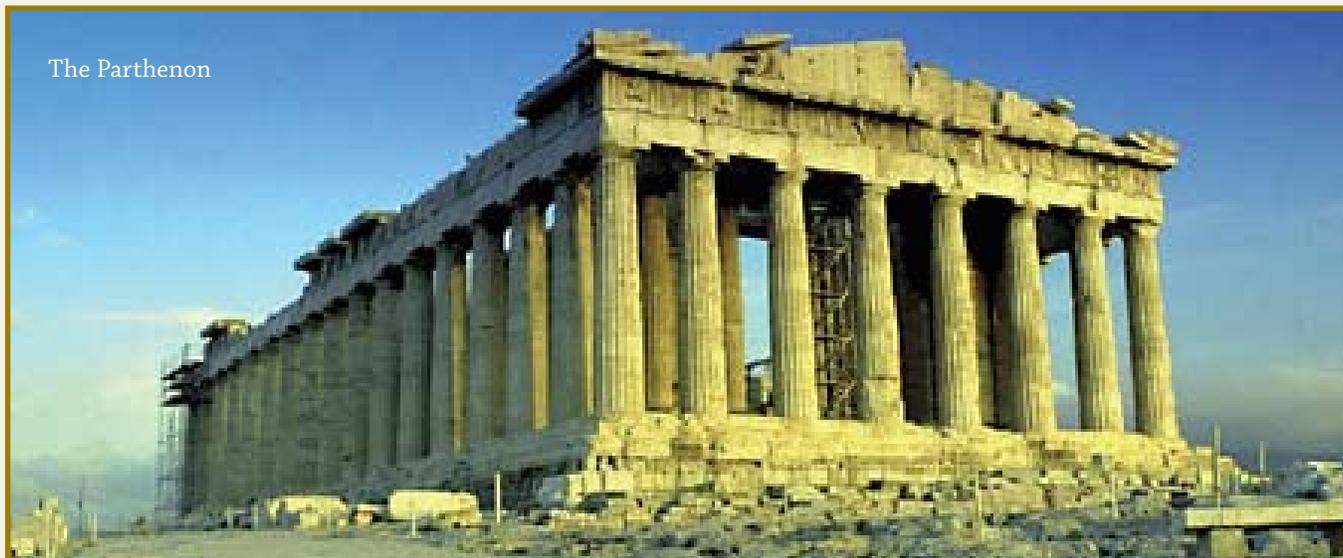
# ANCIENT GREECE

DETAILED ITINERARY

ISLANDS, MYTHS AND LEGENDS

Nov 12/18

The Parthenon



Journey into the realm of the gods - Athena, Apollo, Hercules, Poseidon and the mighty Zeus. Bring the mythology and legends of ancient Greece to life in an epic journey taking you from the impressive Parthenon in Athens' Acropolis, to Olympia, the birthplace of the Olympic games, to the stunning Greek islands.

We visit a myriad of ancient sites including the Parthenon, the Panathenaic Stadium and the Temple of Poseidon. Drive through the central Peloponnese, before arriving in Olympia, where the games began in 776 BC. The impressive Temple of Zeus was built here to honor the great god.

Continue on to Delphi, the heart of the ancient world, just as kings and warriors did, to consult with the oracle in exchange for great treasures. Drive through rural picturesque villages enroute to the impressive 14th-century Meteora Monasteries, set in the canyons of the Eastern

## FACTS & HIGHLIGHTS

- 17 land days • Maximum 16 travelers • Start and finish in Athens • All meals included • 5 UNESCO World Heritage Sites • The Parthenon • Journey to Cape Sounion • The rugged beauty of the Peloponnese
- Visit Olympia — the birthplace of the Olympic Games • Explore the Byzantine monasteries of the Eastern Pindus Mountains • Explore Tinos, Mykonos and Delos • Athens Archaeological Museum

## DEPARTURE DATES & PRICE

**Sep 07 - Sep 23, 2019 - \$6695 USD**

**Sep 09 - Sep 25, 2020 - \$6695 USD**

Please note: Due to ferry schedules, departure dates subject to change but everything in the itinerary will be included.

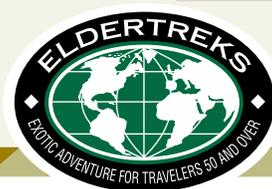
### Activity Level: 3

**Comfort Level:** For hiking enthusiasts. Terrain at ruin sites may be uneven and loose and slopes can be steep. Footing can be unstable on ferry crossings.

## ACCOMMODATION

Comfortable, well-located accommodations with private bathrooms throughout.

**ELDERTREKS**



SMALL GROUP  
**EXOTIC ADVENTURES**  
FOR TRAVELERS 50 PLUS

Pindus Mountains. Ample opportunities exist to meet many of the locals during our countryside explorations.

No journey to Greece would be complete without a visit to the Greek Isles with their relaxed atmosphere and turquoise waters. Exploration is on foot; truly the best way to connect with the land, the people and their history.

Our epic journey to Greece concludes in Athens, as we bid farewell to a land of beautiful islands, ancient temples, friendly faces and a mythology that would even make the gods smile.



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## DAY 1 ARRIVE IN ATHENS

You are met upon arrival and transferred to the hotel. The remainder of the day is at leisure. Dinner tonight will be at a local restaurant in the Plaka district. Overnight in Athens.

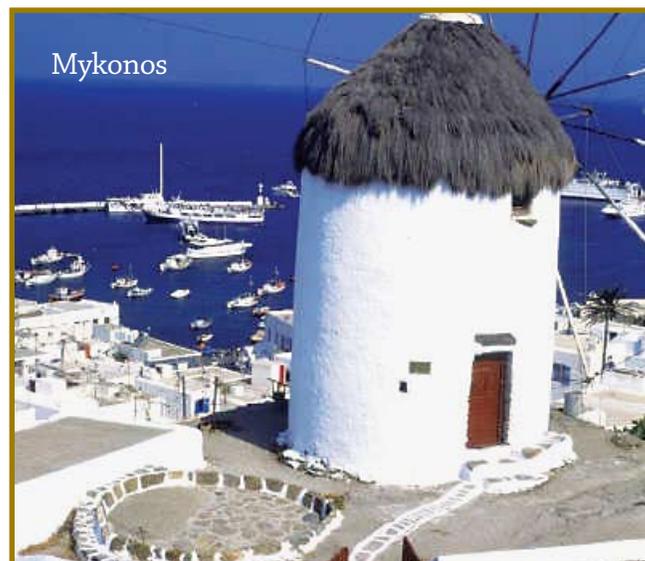
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## DAY 2 THE PARTHENON AND CAPE SOUNION

Other than the pyramids in Egypt, the Parthenon of Athens has probably received more attention from archaeologists, historians and architects than any structure from the ancient world.

Built in the 5th century BC during the Golden Age of Greece, the Parthenon was dedicated to the Goddess Athena. Today we see the highlights of Athens, the Acropolis, Constitution Square, the temple of Olympian Zeus, Hadrian's Arch and the Panathenaic Stadium where the first Olympic games of the modern era were held in 1896.

After lunch we have some free time to enjoy the old district of the Plaka. Later this afternoon, drive to the most southern point of Attica, Cape Sounion, to see the white marble pillars of the Temple of Poseidon.





For centuries, this temple acted as a landmark for boats sailing between Piraeus and the islands.

Overnight in Athens.

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### **DAY 3 THE BYZANTINE CITY OF MYSTRAS**

After an early breakfast we drive to Mystras via Corinth and Sparta. Once in Mystras we take a light hike to the Byzantine Citadel.

After lunch continue via Gythio to Deep Mani, a region of rugged beauty. For centuries the area has been protected from many invaders, resisting sea threats from fortified villages and mansions on the hill. The history of the area speaks of pirates and vendettas, patriotism, pride and faith. Not only architecture, but also nature fits with this tradition. A combination of rugged hills and deep blue sea, rocky slopes, hidden gorges, olive groves and peaceful fishing villages makes this area an explorer's paradise.

Overnight in Stavri.

### **DAY 4 CAPE TAINARO — ENTRANCE TO THE UNDERWORLD**

After breakfast our journey takes us to Cape Tainaro. On our way, we will stop for a short visit to the partially restored village of Vathia. The basic settlement of Vathia was formed mainly after the 18th century. It flourished in the 19th century and began to decline in the 20th. At Cape Tainaro we walk (approximately 3 hours) to the Lighthouse at Cape Tainaro, the southernmost area of continental Europe. Greek Mythology says that Cape Tainaro was the entrance to the underworld. On our walk today we enjoy the rugged landscapes of the Mani region. Overnight in Stavri.

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### **DAY 5 DIROS CAVES, KARDAMYLI**

This morning we travel to the picturesque village of Kardamyli. On the way we visit the Diros Caves, which were places of worship in Paleolithic and Neolithic times. They are part of a huge underground river system and are filled with stalagmites and stalactites. On arrival in Kardamyli, we take a light hike (approx. 1-2 hours) to visit the ancient ruins of the old city, including the church of St. Spyridonas and the dwellings of the Troupiani or Troupiakis-Mourzinos clan.

After lunch you will have some free time to stroll around this seaside town or join your tour leader for an optional hike.

Overnight in Kardamyli.

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## **DAY 6 TRAVEL TO OLYMPIA - BIRTHPLACE OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES**

Today we drive through the Central Peloponnese before arriving in Olympia, the birthplace of the Olympic Games. Here we visit the archaeological site of ancient Olympia, the archaeological museum and the monument of Cubertin.

The games began in 776 BC to honor Zeus and according to mythology, Pelops, the King of the Peloponnese was their founder.

Overnight in Olympia.

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## **DAY 7 THE HANDMADE TEXTILES, OLIVES AND VINEYARDS OF ARAHOVA**

We depart from Olympia this morning crossing over the newly constructed Rio-Antirio Bridge and drive along the Corinthian Gulf. On our way to the picturesque fishing village of Galaxidi, we will stop for lunch in Nafpaktos.

We continue our drive to the nearby village of

Arahova famous for its traditional textiles, olives and vineyards from which a fine black wine is produced. Today, Arahova's women continue the tradition of the famous Arahovian handmade textiles, using looms and natural dyes. Women who follow the traditional ways of preparation make savories which are based on local recipes such as marmalades, sweets, drinks, chilopitas, trahana and many others. Arahova is also a great place to shop for the locally produced brightly colored shoulder bags and rugs.

Overnight in Delphi.

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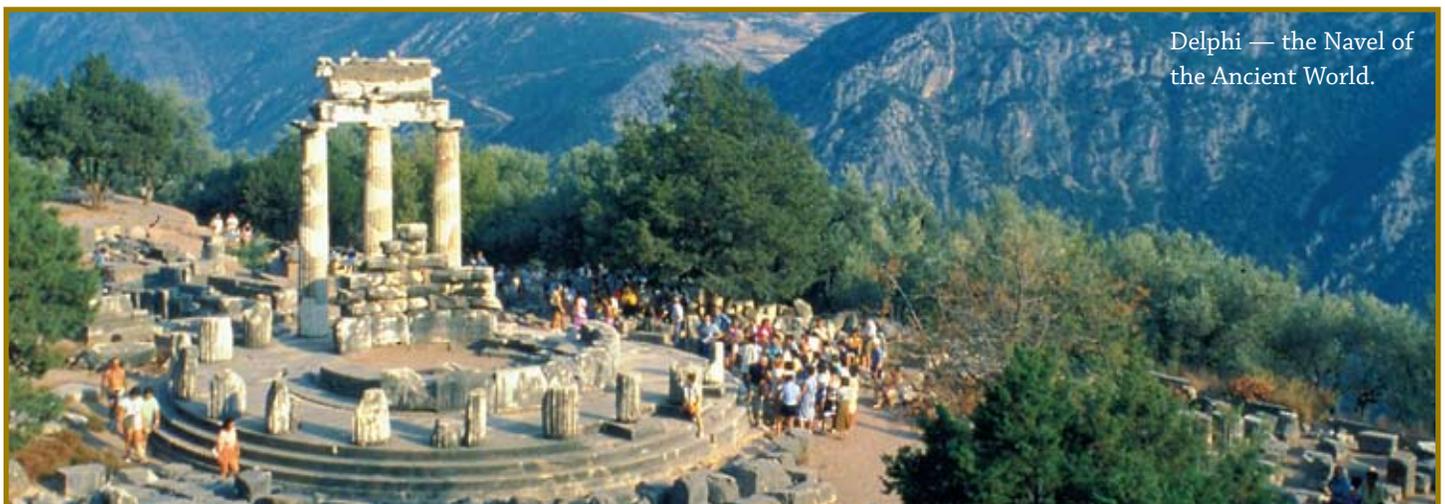
## **DAY 8 DELPHI - THE CENTER OF THE ANCIENT WORLD**

In the morning we are guided to the center of the Ancient World - the Omphalos (Navel) of the Earth. On the slopes of Mt. Parnassus, in a landscape of unparalleled beauty and majesty, lie the ruins of the Sanctuary of Apollo.

We visit the Treasury of the Athenians, the Temple of Apollo and the museum which contains masterpieces such as the Bronze Charioteer and the image of the famous athlete Aghias.

We drive north towards Meteora, arriving in the late afternoon.

Overnight in Kastraki.



Delphi — the Navel of the Ancient World.



Mystras.

## DAY 9 METEORA

The name Meteora, meaning “suspended in air” encompasses the 24 monasteries set in the canyons of the Eastern Pindus Mountains. The Byzantine Monasteries dating back to the 14th century were constructed on the tops of huge rock pillars, and are one of the most memorable sites in northern Greece.

This morning we will hike the trails (approx. 1-2 hours) to the monasteries or opt for vehicle transportation. We visit the Moni Megalo Meteoro monasteries, then have lunch at a scenic picnic spot by the woods. After lunch we visit a workshop to see and learn how painters make Byzantine icons. In the evening, take a walk in Kastraki village and enjoy the last night in the Greek mainland.

Overnight in Kastraki.

## DAY 10 TO ATHENS, FERRY (CATAMARAN) FROM RAFINA TO THE ISLAND OF TINOS

After breakfast, we start our journey back to Athens, and specifically Rafina port, from where we will catch our ferry to Tinos island.

Many Greek Orthodox make pilgrimages to Tinos’ religious sites. The town of Tinos also has a bustling

waterfront with many shops.

Tonight we dine in a local restaurant in the main town.

Overnight on Tinos.

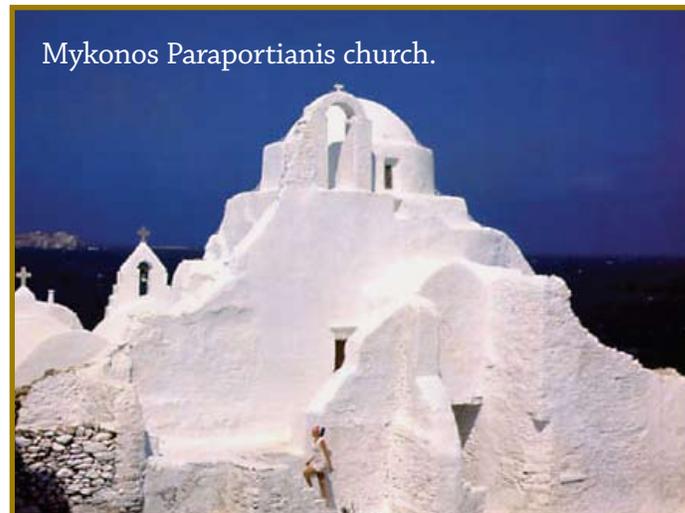
## DAY 11 TINOS, CHORA

After an early breakfast, we depart for the village of Exomburgo, where a stunning view of the Aegean awaits us. Explore the Venetian Castle, situated on top of an overgrown hill. This fortress was built on the ruins of Psofida, an ancient acropolis of the islands. Continue on to the Church of the Sacred Heart. Following the well maintained path to Chora, we will pass through the village of Tripotamo and the Church of Kyra - Xeni to end the trek in Chora. Wander through the white walled streets and lanes in one of the most picturesque Cyclades settlements. In the afternoon journey back to Tinos for a relaxing dinner by the sea.

Overnight on Tinos.

## DAY 12 TINOS, PYRGOS VILLAGE

This morning visit the picturesque village of Pyrgos. The largest village on the island, famous for its top quality white and green marble. On our walk through



the village, we will see small marble workshops, as well as the museum and cemetery of the island. Continue with a short walk down to Panormos beach, where we will have lunch. Return to our hotel in the evening and later on, enjoy another delicious dinner.

Overnight on Tinos.

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### **DAY 13 FERRY TO MYKONOS**

This morning we leave Tinos by local ferry to the cosmopolitan island of Mykonos.

According to Greek Mythology it's said that both Poseidon and Hercules had a hand in destroying some of the Giants that opposed Zeus on this very island. Later, as the story goes, the island was named in honor of Apollo's grandson Mykonos. Depending on time of arrival we may do a short walking tour of Chora (main town).

Overnight on Mykonos.

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### **DAY 14 THE SACRED ISLAND OF DELOS - THE TEMPLE OF APOLLO**

Today we take a small boat over to the sacred Island of Delos, which is believed to be the birthplace of Apollo, the son of Zeus.



Photo: © N. Kontos

With the arrival of the Mycenaeans around 1500BC and the Ionians in 1100BC, Delos was recognized as a place of worship. In order to acquire spiritual and political status, various Ionian Leagues began to compete by building elaborate shrines and temples to Apollo. In 425BC the Athenians decreed a purification of the island by removing all graves and passed a law that no one would be allowed to die or be born on Apollo's Island.

Exploring the island by foot, we will see Lion Avenue, the 3 temples of Poseidon, the stadium and old gymnasium. We also have time to visit the Archeological Museum before taking our boat back to Mykonos. This afternoon is free.

Overnight on Mykonos.

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### **DAY 15 RETURN FERRY TO ATHENS**

After breakfast we will take a midday ferry back to Athens for an evening free to enjoy this historic and exciting city.

Overnight in Athens.

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### **DAY 16 EXPLORING ATHENS**

This morning we visit the National Archeological Museum. Afternoon is free to visit the Temple of Zeus or take the funicular to the top of Lycabettus Hill for views of Athens and the Aegean Sea. We have our farewell dinner at a local restaurant in the Plaka.

Overnight in Athens.

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### **DAY 17 DEPART ATHENS**

Today we transfer to the airport for our departure flights.

# ANCIENT GODS: THE OLYMPIANS

The Olympians are a group of 12 gods who ruled after the overthrow of the Titans. All the Olympians are related in some way. They are named after their dwelling place, Mount Olympus.

## ZEUS

Zeus overthrew his Father Cronus. He then drew lots with his brothers Poseidon and Hades. Zeus won the draw and became the supreme ruler of the gods. He is lord of the sky, the rain god. His weapon is a thunderbolt which he hurls at those who displease him. He is married to Hera but, is famous for his many affairs. He is also known to punish those that lie or break oaths.

## POSEIDON

Poseidon is the brother of Zeus. After the overthrow of their Father Cronus he drew lots with Zeus and Hades for shares of the world. His prize was to become lord of the sea. He was widely worshiped by seamen. He married Amphitrite, a granddaughter of the Titan Oceanus. At one point he desired Demeter. To put him off Demeter asked him to make the most beautiful animal that the world had ever seen. So to impress her, Poseidon created the first horse. In some accounts his first attempts were unsuccessful and he created a variety of other animals in his quest. By the time the horse was created his passion for Demeter had cooled. His weapon is a trident, which can shake the earth, and shatter any object. He is second only to Zeus in power amongst the gods. He has a difficult quarrelsome personality. He is greedy. He had a series of disputes with other gods when he tried to take over their cities.

## HADES

Hades is the brother of Zeus. After the overthrow of their Father Cronus he drew lots with Zeus and Poseidon for shares of the world. He had the worst draw and was made lord of the underworld, ruling over the dead. He is a greedy god who is greatly concerned with increasing his subjects. Those whose calling increase the number of dead are seen favorably. The Erinyes are welcomed guests. He is exceedingly disinclined to allow any of his subjects to leave. He is also the god of wealth, due to the precious metals mined from the earth. He has a helmet that makes him invisible. He rarely leaves the underworld. He is unpitying and terrible, but not capricious. His wife is Persephone whom Hades abducted. He is the King of the dead but, death itself is another god, Thanatos.

## HESTIA

Hestia is Zeus' sister. She is a virgin goddess. She does not have a distinct personality. She plays no part in myths. She is the Goddess of the Hearth, the symbol of the house around which a new born child is carried before it is received into the family. Each city had a public hearth sacred to Hestia, where the fire was never allowed to go out.

## HERA

Hera is Zeus' wife and sister. She was raised by the Titans Ocean and Tethys. She is the protector of marriage and takes special care of married women. Hera's marriage was founded in strife with Zeus and continued in strife. Zeus courted her unsuccessfully. He then turned to trickery, changing himself into a disheveled cuckoo. Hera feeling sorry for the bird held it to her breast to warm it. Zeus then resumed his normal form and taking advantage of the surprise he gained, raped her. She then married him to cover her

shame. When Zeus was being particularly overbearing to the other gods, Hera convinced them to join in a revolt. Her part in the revolt was to drug Zeus, and in this she was successful. The gods then bound the sleeping Zeus to a couch taking care to tie many knots. After this was done they began to quarrel over the next step. Briareus overheard the arguments. Still full of gratitude to Zeus, Briareus slipped in and was able to quickly untie the many knots. Zeus sprang from the couch and grabbed up his thunderbolt. The gods fell to their knees begging and pleading for mercy. He seized Hera and hung her from the sky with gold chains. She wept in pain all night but, none of the others dared to interfere. Her weeping kept Zeus up and the next morning he agreed to release her if she would swear never to rebel again. She had little choice but, to agree. While she never again rebelled, she often intrigued against Zeus' plans and she was often able to outwit him. Most stories concerning Hera refer to her jealous revenge for Zeus' infidelities. Her sacred animals are the cow and the peacock. Her favorite city is Argos.

### **ARES**

Ares is the son of Zeus and Hera. He was disliked by both parents. He is the god of war. He is considered murderous and bloodstained, also a coward. When caught in an act of adultery with Aphrodite, her husband Hephaestus was able to publicly ridicule him. His bird is the vulture. His animal is the dog.

### **ATHENA**

Athena is the daughter of Zeus. She sprang full grown in armor from his forehead, thus has no mother. She is fierce and brave in battle but, only fights to protect the state and home from outside enemies. She is the goddess of the city, handicrafts, and agriculture. She invented the bridle, which permitted man to tame

horses, the trumpet, the flute, the pot, the rake, the plow, the yoke, the ship, and the chariot. She is the embodiment of wisdom, reason, and purity. She was Zeus' favorite child and was allowed to use his weapons including his thunderbolt. Her favorite city is Athens. Her tree is the olive. The owl is her bird. She is a virgin goddess.

### **APOLLO**

Apollo is the son of Zeus and Leto. His twin sister is Artemis. He is the god of music, playing a golden lyre. The Archer, far shooting with a silver bow. The god of healing who taught man medicine. The god of light. The god of truth, who can not speak a lie. One of Apollo's more important daily tasks is to harness his chariot with four horses and drive the Sun across the sky. He is famous for his oracle at Delphi. People traveled to it from all over the Greek world to divine the future. His tree is the laurel. The crow his bird. The dolphin his animal.

### **APHRODITE**

Aphrodite is the goddess of love, desire and beauty. In addition to her natural gifts she has a magical girdle that compels anyone she wishes to desire her. There are two accounts of her birth. One says she is the daughter of Zeus and Dione. The other goes back to when Cronus castrated Uranus and tossed his severed genitals into the sea. Aphrodite then arose from the sea foam on a giant scallop and walked to shore in Cyprus. She is the wife of Hephaestus. The myrtle is her tree. The dove, the swan and the sparrow her birds.

### **HERMES**

Hermes is the son of Zeus and Maia. He is Zeus' messenger. He is the fastest of the gods. He wears winged sandals, a winged hat, and carries a magic wand. He is the god of thieves and god of commerce.

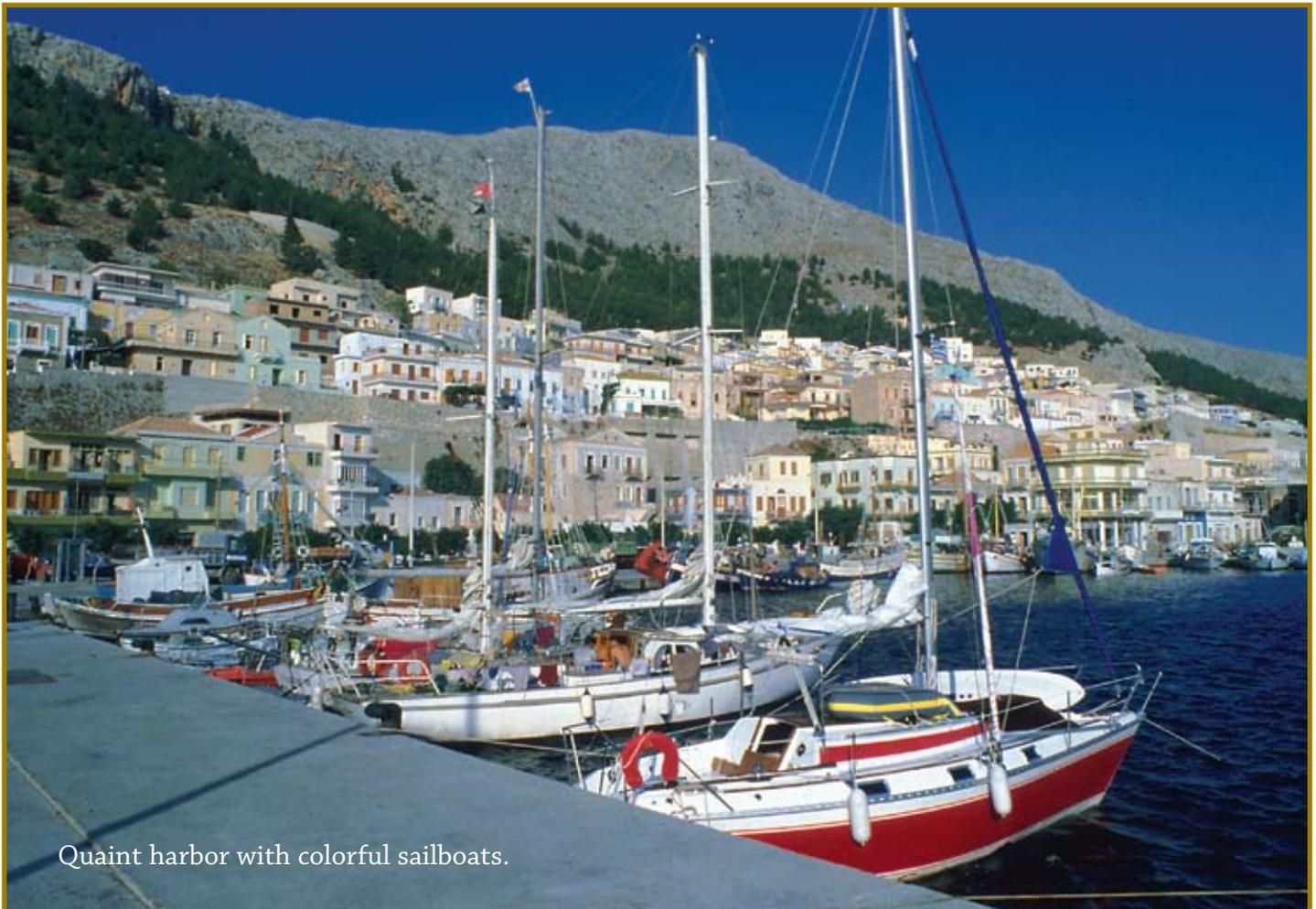
He is the guide for the dead to go to the underworld. He invented the lyre, the pipes, the musical scale, astronomy, weights and measures, boxing, gymnastics, and the care of olive trees.

### ARTEMIS

Artemis is the daughter of Zeus and Leto. Her twin brother is Apollo. She is the lady of the wild things. She is the huntsman of the gods. She is the protector of the young. Like Apollo she hunts with silver arrows. She became associated with the moon. She is a virgin goddess, and the goddess of chastity. She also presides over childbirth, which may seem odd for a virgin, but goes back to causing Leto no pain when she was born. She became associated with Hecate. The cypress is her tree. All wild animals are sacred to her, especially the deer.

### HEPHAESTUS

Hephaestus is the son of Zeus and Hera. Sometimes it is said that Hera alone produced him and that he has no father. He is the only god to be physically ugly. He is also lame. Accounts as to how he became lame vary. Some say that Hera, upset by having an ugly child, flung him from Mount Olympus into the sea, breaking his legs. Others say that he took Hera's side in an argument with Zeus and Zeus flung him off Mount Olympus. He is the god of fire and the forge. He is the smith and armorer of the gods. He uses a volcano as his forge. He is the patron god of both smiths and weavers. He is kind and peace loving. His wife is Aphrodite. Sometimes his wife is identified as Aglaia.



Quaint harbor with colorful sailboats.

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

### 1. HOW BIG ARE THE GROUPS?

Each group is limited to 16 participants. Small groups are an important ingredient in adventure travel. They allow for more interaction and more personalized service throughout the itinerary.

### 2. WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE TOUR PRICE?

All accommodations throughout; all meals, starting with dinner on day 1 and finishing with breakfast on departure day (i.e. the last day of the ElderTreks tour); bottled drinking water throughout the trip; all internal transportation; airport transfers on day 1 and departure day (i.e. the last day of the ElderTreks tour); all day trips and entrance fees as outlined in the itinerary; tips for hotels (porterage), national guide, bus driver, restaurants and spot guides; services of a trip leader.

### 3. WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE TOUR PRICE?

International flights, tips to ElderTreks tour leader, alcoholic drinks, visas and travel insurance.

### 4. ARE THESE “EDUCATIONAL” TOURS?

Yes, in the broadest sense of the word, “educational”. We visit museums, ancient sites, temples and have talks and discussions on many aspects of history, culture and nature. But this is only a portion of the educational experience. We believe that it is equally educational to meet local people on a non-commercial basis, visit their homes and even try to learn a few words in the native language. Sometimes the most “educational” moments are wandering through the streets of a village.

### 5. HOW DO WE TRAVEL DURING THE TOUR?

All local transportation is included in the land price of the trip. We travel by bus, boat/ferry and foot.

### 6. WHAT ARE OUR ACCOMMODATIONS LIKE?

Comfortable, well-located accommodations. Some places overlooking the Aegean sea, others are located in beautiful alpine areas.

Please note: some of our hotels are small and do not provide porterage service.

### 7. WHAT ABOUT THE WEATHER?

Greece has a warm Mediterranean climate. Our adventures take place at the beginning of spring and fall when the

temperatures are mild. In April-May, you can expect temperatures between 60°F – 70°F (16°C – 21°C); in September-October, the temperatures are higher, between the high 60’s and 70’s°F (19°C – 26°C).

### 8. WHEN IS PAYMENT DUE?

A non-refundable deposit of \$500 USD (plus insurance if you require it) is due at time of booking and will reserve your place on the tour. Payment of the full land cost is due 120 days before departure. Cancellation charges are applicable and are outlined in the “Terms and Conditions” section of our brochure.

### 9. IS MEDICAL INSURANCE REQUIRED?

Insurance coverage is not included in the cost of your trip. Please note that medical insurance is not required for this adventure but is recommended. ElderTreks offers comprehensive travel insurance and we are happy to provide you with a quote if you call our office. If you are purchasing insurance elsewhere, please ensure you provide the details to ElderTreks as soon as possible.

*\*Please note those travelers with pre-existing medical conditions must take out travel insurance at the time of deposit*

### 10. WHAT SHOULD I TAKE ON THE TOUR?

There is a detailed “What to Take” list in our Trip Kit, which we will send to you after you have booked the trip.

### 11. WHAT MEALS ARE INCLUDED?

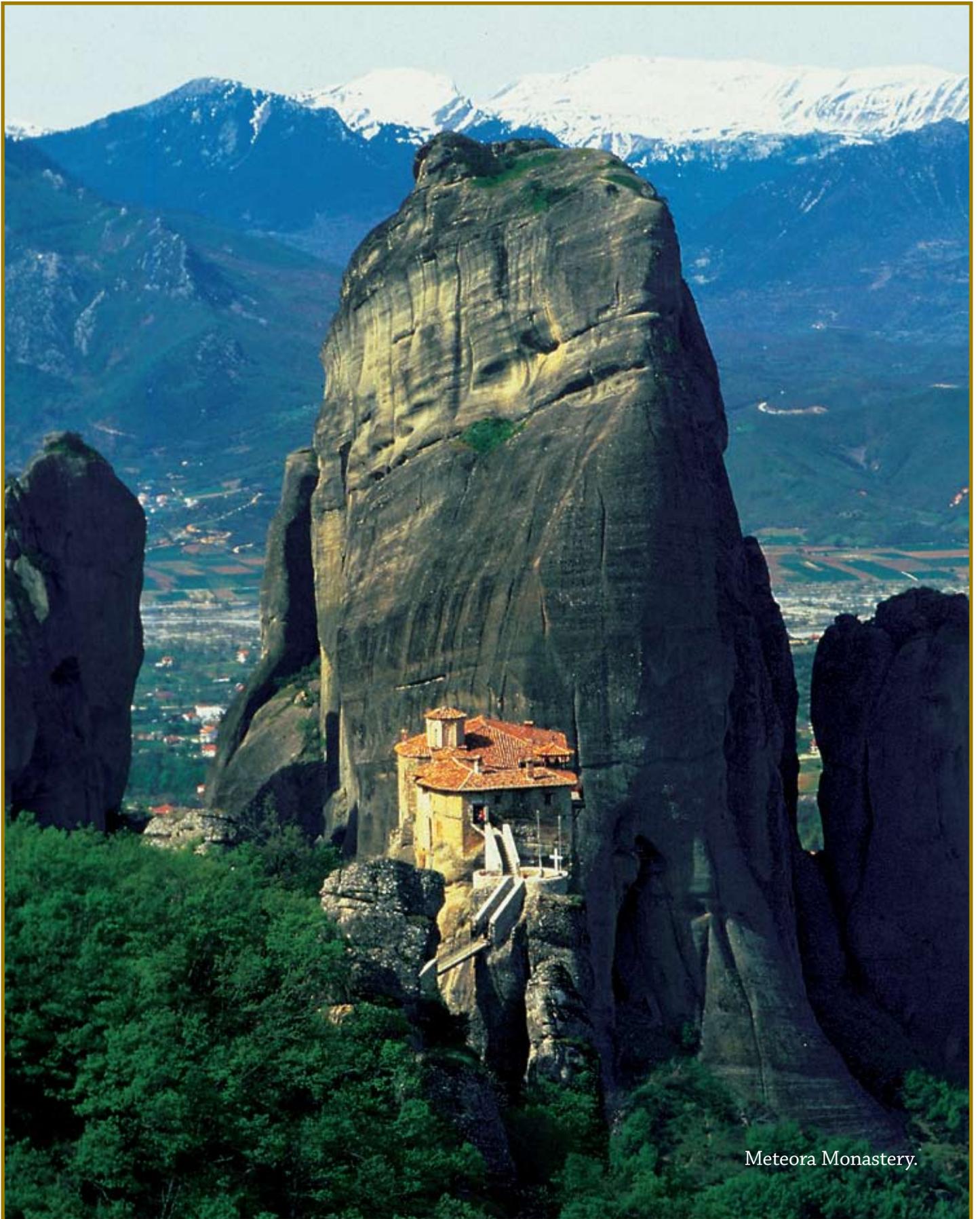
All meals during the itinerary are included, starting with dinner on day 1, and finishing with breakfast on departure day. We eat a variety of local foods prepared in a wide range of settings.

### 12. CAN YOU ARRANGE MY FLIGHTS?

We would be happy to take care of your air arrangements. ElderTreks offers personalized flight itineraries — not group flights. Stop over enroute, come in a few days early, or extend your stay. Call us for a customized itinerary.

### 13. WHAT IF I WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION?

If you have any further questions about the adventure, please call our office for more details. A Trip Specialist will be happy to answer your questions. A Trip Kit containing further details on the destination will be sent to you once you have booked the trip.



Meteora Monastery.