

The Glory of Greece

**Exploring the Cradle of Western Civilization
October 16 - 25, 2009**

presented by

Alumnae & Alumni of Vassar College

Long ago the ancient poets wrote the first epics of war and love, families and feuds, trickery and revenge, Gods and Heroes. Here, in glorious Greece, you'll see where theater was born, consult the oracle at Delphi, stand where Paul preached to the Corinthians, and walk under the Lion Gate at Mycenae, just as the blind poet Homer recorded it nearly 3,000 years ago.



The Acropolis of Athens

The "wine-dark sea," written about by the poets of many ages, is still here, and so are remnants of the legendary past that have given birth to so much of our language and literature. Our first stop is the small fishing village of Tolo, an ideal base from which to explore much of "Classical Greece." Visits will include the theater at Epidavros and ancient Mycenae, famous from The Iliad. We'll cross the Gulf of Corinth, stopping in the ancient city for a visit, and travel back in time to Delphi where the most famous oracle in ancient Greece was consulted; perched on a mountainside, it is a dramatic and evocative site. In Athens, we'll visit the Acropolis, explore the National Museum, soak up the city's history, and sample food and nightlife in the Plaka, the old section of the city.

We'll end our adventure with an optional extension for three nights on the island of Crete, home to the ancient Minoan civilization. We'll visit the Palace of Knossos, home of the Minotaur, and explore the island from Zeus' birthplace to the charming resort town of Agios Nikolaos.

The cost of this itinerary, per person, double occupancy is:

New York, JFK Departure:	\$4490
Land Only:	\$3390
Single supplement:	\$680

Airfares are available from many other U.S. cities. Please call for details.

The following services are included:

- Airfare:** Round trip economy class flights New York-Athens. All customs, fees, taxes, etc. included.
- Hotels:** 8 nights accommodation in first-class hotels. All hotel taxes and service charges included.
- Coaching:** All ground transportation as detailed in the itinerary.
- Meals:** Continental breakfast daily, 3 dinners, 1 lunch.
- Guides:** Vassar Professor Robert DeMaria. Local English-speaking guide throughout.
- Baggage:** Portage of one large suitcase per person.
- Entrances:** Entrance fees to all sites included in the itinerary.

Crete Extension: The cost of the 3-day extension to Crete is **\$1490** per person, double occupancy (single supplement \$280). This includes round trip airfare from Athens to Heraklion, 3 nights at a first-class hotel, a local guide throughout, and all meals and sightseeing as described in the day-by-day itinerary overleaf.

Key to included meals: B - breakfast, L - lunch,, D - dinner

Greece offers an unparalleled experience. The sun shines, the sea is warm, the food is delicious and varied, the people are friendly, and it has thousands of years of fascinating history, but don't take our word for it, come and experience it for yourself in the company of other Vassar alums and Professor Robert DeMaria.



Delphi



Friday, October 16. Evening departure from New York.

Overnight: Plane

Saturday, October 17. On arrival at Athens Airport, we will be met for the transfer to our hotel in the village of Tolo. We'll cross over the Corinth Canal on the way and stop and marvel at this wonder of modern engineering (although it was actually started by the Romans). On arrival in Tolo there will be time to unpack and relax before we gather for a welcome dinner. **(D)**

Overnight: Tolo

Sunday, October 18. This morning we visit Mycenae, excavated first in 1876 by Schliemann, who found the fabulously rich royal graves. This was the home of Agamemnon, of Trojan War fame, and his Lion Gate is still here, just as Homer described it. After our tour of the site, we'll stop at a nearby restaurant for a traditional Sunday Greek lunch and then return to Tolo mid-afternoon. The evening is free in Tolo. **(B, L)**

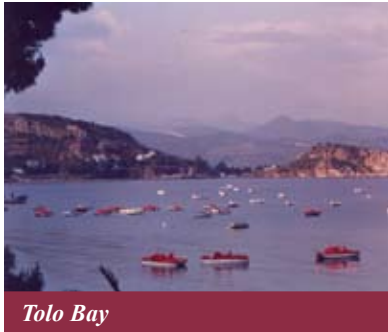
Overnight: Tolo

Monday, October 19. Our visit today is to the beautiful site of Epidavros. The ancient theatre was excavated about 100 years ago and is still in regular use for Classical Drama. It has amazing acoustics. The rest of the large site forms the Aesclepium, the first Hospital, and the museum has a collection of some of the early medical instruments. We'll return to Tolo for a free afternoon or, alternatively, you could stop off in nearby Nafplion and explore its Ventian fortress, the Palamidi. The evening is free as well and there is a regular bus service back to Tolo. **(B)**

Overnight: Tolo

Tuesday, October 20. Today we have a full-day excursion from Tolo by boat to the islands of the Saronic Gulf - Hydra, with its beautiful, car-free harbor, Poros, and its Sanctuary of Poseidon, and Spetses, the setting for John Fowles' novel *the Magus*. We return to Tolo for a free evening. **(B)**

Overnight: Tolo



Tolo Bay

Wednesday October 21. Leaving Tolo, we'll stop at ancient Corinth, where we tour what was once called "the wickedest city on earth," and see the spot where St. Paul was arrested! After our visit, and time for lunch, we'll follow the coast around the south side of the Gulf of Corinth. We cross from Rion to Antirion, by the fabulous new suspension bridge completed for the 2004 Olympics. We head up into the mountains of mainland Greece to the center of the world - as Delphi was thought to be in classical times - where dinner awaits us at our hotel. **(B, D)**

Overnight: Delphi

Thursday, October 22. This morning we explore Delphi, home of the famous Oracle. This is a large site covering part of the hillside and down into the valley. Our local guide will introduce the main site and the museum, and the energetic can explore the lower sites at their leisure. This afternoon and evening are free. **(B)**

Overnight: Delphi

Friday, October 23. This morning we descend from the mountains, through Thebes of ancient legends, passing the place where Oedipus is supposed to have killed his father, and arrive at our hotel in Athens. After checking in to our hotel, we will have a guided tour of the National Museum, with its treasures from Mycenae and other important sites throughout the Hellenic world. The evening is free to find a taverna for dinner. **(B)**

Overnight: Athens

Saturday, October 24. Our day will start with a visit to the Acropolis, the main site of Classical Athens with its Temples and Museum and wonderful views over the ancient center of the city. It is a short walk from our hotel. The afternoon is free to take a leisurely lunch and to wander through the Plaka, the old part of the city with narrow winding streets bursting with stores and cafes. This evening we have dinner at a taverna in the Plaka with live Greek music. **(B, D)**

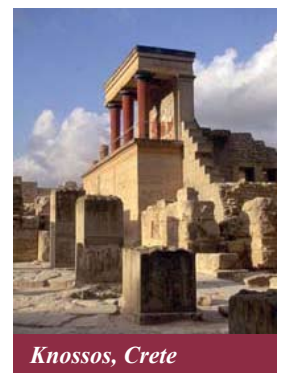
Overnight: Athens

Sunday, October 25. Transfer to Athens airport for return flights to the U.S. **(B)** Alternatively

Optional Crete Extension:

Sunday, October 25. This morning we transfer to Athens Airport for the short flight to Crete. After checking in to our hotel, we'll visit the National Archaeological Museum. This afternoon we visit the Palace of Knossos. Forever associated with King Minos and the fabled Minotaur, Knossos is the largest and best-preserved palace of the Minoan civilization, dating from between 1700 and 1400 BC. After an extensive visit of this large site we will return to our hotel for dinner. **(B, D)**

Overnight: Crete



Knossos, Crete

Monday, October 26. This morning we head inland, to the 3,000-ft-high Lasithi Plateau, green, fertile, and irrigated by white-sailed windmills. The first stop will be at Agios Nikolaos where we'll have time to stop and explore this beautiful resort town, then we'll visit the 13th-century church of Panaghia Kera, with its frescoes from the late Byzantine period. We'll continue through the mountains, stopping along the way and return to Heraklion for a free evening. **(B)**

Overnight: Crete

Tuesday, October 27. This morning we drive south across the island to the less well-known, but equally impressive Minoan site at Festos. We'll stop in Matala, famous for its cliff caves, on our return to Heraklion for a free afternoon. This evening we will end our stay on Crete with traditional Cretan food and, perhaps, dancing. **(B, D)**

Overnight: Crete

Wednesday, October 28. Transfer to Heraklion airport for the short flight to Athens and return flights to the U.S. **(B)**