

ITINERARY
CLASSICAL GREECE
May 5 - 19, 2024



The Western Rock Nuthatch is found most often in places that do not have large trees, so these birds have adapted to use rock crevices as nest sites. This nest is on one of the buildings at Delphi. Photograph by participant Bill Murphy.

We include here information for those interested in the 2024 Field Guides Classical Greece tour:

- a general introduction to the tour
- a description of the birding areas to be visited on the tour
- an abbreviated daily itinerary with some indication of the nature of each day's birding outings

These additional materials will be made available to those who register for the tour:

- an annotated list of the birds recorded on a previous year's Field Guides trip to the area, with comments by guide(s) on notable species or sightings (may be downloaded from our web site)
- a detailed information bulletin with important logistical information and answers to questions regarding accommodations, air arrangements, clothing, currency, customs and immigration, documents, health precautions, and personal items
- a Field Guides checklist for preparing for and keeping track of the birds we see on the tour
- after the conclusion of the tour, a list of birds seen on the tour

Look at any map of Europe and you'll see that the continent's southeastern corner dissolves into a riot of islands, mountains, and rugged coastlines. This is Greece, a land of remarkable contrasts with a fascinating history that spans thousands of years of human civilization. For birders, Greece offers what is probably the most diverse and alluring suite of birds anywhere in Europe. Three bio-geographical zones intersect here, and the resulting mix of birds, representative of the Mediterranean, Balkan, and Asia Minor regions, offers many exciting possibilities.

On this tour, we'll visit a range of mainland sites from the Turkish border west through Thrace to Thessaloniki and south to Mount Olympus, Mount Parnassus, Delphi, and Athens. Among our destinations will be a string of wetlands, where we'll search for such gems as Great White and Dalmatian pelicans, Great Crested and Little grebes, Ferruginous Duck, Little Bittern, Pygmy Cormorant, Collared Pratincole, White-tailed Eagle, and Eurasian Penduline-Tit. Rugged

hillsides clothed in Mediterranean scrub (the famous *maquis*) and oak woodland shelter the likes of Sardinian, Eastern Olivaceous, and Rueppell's warblers, Black-eared Wheatear, Black-headed and Ortolan buntings, Sombre Tit, and a delightful set of shrikes: Red-backed, Lesser Gray, Woodchat, and Masked. Higher, amid pine-clad slopes, we should see a magnificent array of raptors, with four species of eagle and three species of vulture all possible, as well as such rare specialties as Long-legged Buzzard and the elusive Levant Sparrowhawk. This is old Europe, where Red-rumped Swallows still swoop through the streets and White Storks still nest on roof tops—along with their attendant “apartment block” neighbors, the Spanish Sparrows. As a dramatic contrast to the sunny Mediterranean coastlands, we'll also spend a morning on the lower slopes of spectacular Mount Olympus, famous as the home of Zeus and seat of the gods of the ancient Greeks; the mountaintop is a very rigorous climb of many hours (and miles!), so we won't be visiting the peak itself. We'll be able to climb higher on Mount Parnassus, where roads (most paved, some graveled) to several ski resorts allow us to more easily venture above the tree line.

The timing of our tour coincides with spring migration, which should add to our list a host of species heading for more northerly or westerly climes—though, of course, migration can be affected by weather. Collared and European Pied flycatchers may pause in hotel gardens (where Common Nightingales are often incredibly showy) while in open country, Tawny Pipits mix with local Calandra Larks. We have a good chance of seeing Red-footed Falcons hunting dragonflies from roadside wires, where they may be joined by colorful European Bee-eaters and European Rollers.

In addition to the excitement of birding, this tour offers the chance to sample some of the country's fascinating wealth of historical sites. We'll have a morning in Athens, where the remarkable Acropolis and Parthenon (and a visit to the fabulous new Parthenon museum) will be among the highlights. Later in the tour we'll visit Vergina, where royal tombs (including those belonging to Alexander the Great's father, Philip II, and his son, Alexander IV) and the remains of an ancient city were discovered in the late 1970s. There is now an impressive *in situ* museum housing the spectacular treasures recovered from the tombs. Later still, we'll wander among the sprawling ruins of Delphi, once (when it was home to the world-renowned oracle) considered to be the center of the world. And on our journey back to Athens, we'll detour to see the Byzantine chapel of Osios Loukas, famous for its fabulous gilded mosaics.



*The shrub-studded grassy habitat on the lower slopes of Mount Parnassus is perfect for birds such as Woodchat Shrike, European Stonechat, and Eurasian Green Woodpecker. Photo by guide Megan Edwards Crewe.
Photograph by guide Megan Edwards Crewe.*

We want to be sure you are on the right tour! Below is a description of the physical requirements of the tour. If you are concerned about the difficulty, please contact us about this and be sure to fully explain your concerns. We want to make sure you have a wonderful time with us, so if you are uncomfortable with the requirements, just let us know and we can help you find a better fitting tour! Field Guides will not charge you a change or cancellation fee if you opt out within 10 days of depositing.

Physical requirements of this tour

- **TRAILS & WALKING:** Moderate amounts of walking (up to 3 miles per day), generally along roads or wide tracks, sometimes on stony or uneven ground. Some (optional) sections may be quite steep. For instance, one birding area at Mount Olympus is reached by climbing down a long set of eroded earth and wood “stairs”. Some pathways and steps at cultural sites are paved in marble, which may be slick if wet. Our guided tours at cultural sites involve some elevational change and require the ability to climb stairs.
- **POTENTIAL CHALLENGES:** We may spend a bit of time standing in one place to watch birds on this tour, and participants will need to be able to spend a good part of some days on their feet. A small folding stool can provide relief as needed.
- **PACE:** On most days, there will be optional pre-breakfast outings from our lodgings (walks in the 6:30-7:30 a.m. range), with breakfasts served in the 7:30-8:00 a.m. range. A few days will feature afternoon breaks at our lodgings, with optional outings in the later afternoon, but on most days, we’ll be away from the hotel all day, returning between 5:30 and 6:00 p.m.
- **ELEVATION:** At no time during the tour will we reach an altitude higher than 6500 feet. We may spend a few hours at that altitude while visiting a ski area on Mount Parnassus.
- **WEATHER:** In May, the weather in Greece is typically delightful, with daytime temperatures ranging from the mid 50s F to the high 70s. We may encounter the occasional rain shower.
- **VEHICLE SEATING:** So that each participant has equal opportunity during our travel, we employ a seat rotation system on all tours. Participants will need to be flexible enough to maneuver to the back of the vehicle on occasion. Those who experience motion sickness will need to bring adequate medication for the duration of the tour, as we are not able to reserve forward seats for medical conditions.
- **BATHROOM BREAKS:** Whenever possible, we’ll use modern, indoor restrooms. However, these are not available in many of the locations where we’ll be birding, so participants should be prepared for the need to take the occasional “bush stop.”
- **OPTING OUT:** Where we are staying multiple days in the same lodging, participants can easily opt to sit out a day or sometimes a half-day. This will not be possible on days when we are changing locations.

If you are uncertain about whether this tour is a good match for your abilities, please don’t hesitate to contact our office; if they cannot directly answer your queries, they will put you in touch with the guide.

About the Birding Areas



Evros Delta—The Evros Delta, one of Europe’s largest river deltas, forms part of the border between Greece and Turkey. Despite a long history of habitat degradation, this site still attracts a wealth of birds, particularly during migration. Though much of the area has been converted to farmland, there are still some extensive areas of wetland, and new areas have been re-flooded in recent years. And even the farmland can yield good sightings: here Black Kite, Western Marsh-Harrier, and—with luck—Levant Sparrowhawk can be found, while Lesser Gray Shrikes hunt from roadside bushes and wires, and flocks of Red-footed Falcons work recently harvested hayfields. Good dirt roads on raised dykes give easy access and good views of the birds as we work from freshwater habitats favored by Whiskered, Black, and White-winged terns, Little Bittern, Purple and Squacco herons, Glossy Ibis, Wood Sandpipers, and Great Reed Warblers through tamarisk scrub to saline lagoons. Lines of poplar trees hold breeding Eurasian Hobby, Eurasian Golden Oriole, and Eurasian Penduline-Tit. Closer to the river, flooded areas usually hold good numbers of “Black-headed” Yellow Wagtail and assorted waterfowl, with Garganey and Common

Shelduck being the most attractive prospects. Nearby, dry salt-steppe country attracts Tawny Pipits and Greater Short-toed Larks. The saltiest water usually holds parties of loafing Greater Flamingoes, Eurasian Curlew, and both Dalmatian and Great White pelicans, and it's a good place to scan the skies for the fabulous White-tailed Eagle, which has bred here for years and may be seen anywhere in the area. While shorebird numbers will depend on weather conditions, we should see flocks of Little Stints, Curlew Sandpipers (some likely to be in wonderful cinnamon breeding plumage), and boisterous Ruff—and the “vagrant migrant” possibilities seem nearly endless. Pied Avocets are regular breeders, as are Spur-winged Plovers, here on the very northwestern edge of their range.



The Evros Delta is home to many waterbirds, including Dalmatian and Great white pelicans, and Great and Pygmy cormorants. Photograph by participant Sarah Carlson.

Dadia—Tucked away in low limestone hills clothed in many miles of pine forest, the Dadia Raptor Research Center specializes in the study of Greece's important population of birds of prey. Our main focus here is the center's feeding station, where a large blind overlooks a hillside that is regularly stocked with carcasses—attracting Cinereous (Eurasian Black) and Egyptian vultures and Eurasian Griffon. As many as four species of eagle can be seen here, and there are regular sightings of Eurasian Hobby, Common Buzzard, Northern Goshawk, and Black Stork. In the surrounding valleys, little rivers help to support good cultivation, and the region's farmlands offer a different suite of birds. We'll enjoy a picnic lunch in scenic, scrub-covered hills where Red-backed and Masked shrikes, Eurasian Hoopoe, Wood Lark, Sombre Tit, and Subalpine Warbler all breed, then spend the afternoon visiting a range of habitats in search of Short-toed Treecreeper, Hawfinch, Eurasian Turtle-Dove, Syrian Woodpecker, Little Ringed Plover, and Eastern Bonelli's Warbler.

Fanari/Porto Lagos—The area around Porto Lagos and the little seaside resort of Fanari is dominated by the large Lake Vistonida. Around its edges—and especially on the seaward side—lies a fringe of smaller pools, lagoons, and marshy areas. The vast range of wetlands offers chances for a variety of ducks, including Garganey and Ferruginous Duck, while salt pans often hold Greater Flamingo, Pied Avocet, Slender-billed Gull, and Gull-billed Tern. This is a good site too for Pygmy Cormorant, Lesser Kestrel, Whimbrel, White-winged and Whiskered terns, and Spotted Redshank. Stony fallow fields may hold a pair or two of Eurasian Thick-knees (Stone-Curlew), and by the end of our stay the distinctive "yow" call of Mediterranean Gulls should be well known to all!

Lake Kerkini—One of northern Greece's most important wetlands, Lake Kerkini appears to be a natural lake but was actually formed by the damming of the Strimonas River. It is a major wintering area for many birds that breed on the vast Danube Delta on the coast of Romania, and some of these birds (including increasing numbers of Graylag Geese) are still likely to be around when we visit. In particular, this is a good place to see Great White and Dalmatian pelicans side-by-

side for comparison, as well as good numbers of Eurasian Spoonbill, Pygmy Cormorant, and Great Crested Grebe. The flatlands surrounding the lake (the former floodplain of the river, now sadly drained for farming) have many stands of poplars which provide a home for Eurasian Golden Oriole, while the scattered farming communities are alive with chirpy Spanish Sparrows, many of which breed in “apartments” built into the bottom of White Stork nests. Perhaps the most delightful breeding species here is the European Bee-eater, which should be present at burrows in sandy banks, but it is the flooded pools and meadows that will really draw our attention. Squacco Herons, Little Egrets, and Little Bitterns can be present in surprising numbers, reed-fringed pools nearby are alive with croaking Great Reed Warblers, and bandit-masked Eurasian Penduline-Tits attend their extraordinary nests.



The Eurasian Blue Tit and other species more common in northern Europe will be seen when we visit the higher elevations of Mount Olympus. Photograph by participant Neil Wingert.

Mount Olympus—A real change to the habitats so far visited, Mount Olympus is high enough to offer a cooler climate and a new suite of largely northern European species. Song Thrush, Eurasian Blue Tit, European Robin, and Gray Wagtail may be familiar to those who have visited northern Europe, but are likely to be new for our list on this tour. A good road gives us easy access to the forests and we can bird without having to stray off onto difficult, stony ground. Eurasian Nuthatch, Long-tailed, Marsh, and Crested tits, Short-toed Treecreeper, and Eurasian Bullfinch will take a little more effort, but we should have a reasonable chance of finding most of them. The track down to the river here is quite steep (with scores of “steps” edged with wooden ties), but offers beautiful scenery and a chance of finding White-throated Dipper.

Mount Parnassus—This is another mountain block, but one that is very different from Mount Olympus. Much of the forest here is composed of pure stands of Grecian Fir, with pines confined to the northern slopes. The limestone ground is very rocky, and the stony outcrops are home to Rock Buntings. Mistle Thrush, Firecrest, and Coal Tit are among the most common species, and we have a chance at Black and Eurasian Green woodpeckers. Red-backed and Woodchat shrikes breed in grassy clearings, and the presence of several ski stations gives us the opportunity to get above the tree line with no difficulty. The barren limestone slopes up here hold few birds, but there are some special ones. Yellow-billed (Alpine) Choughs wheel around in trilling flocks and Black Redstarts, Northern Wheatears, and Rufous-tailed Rock-Thrushes busy themselves among the rocks.

Delphi—The town of Delphi lies well into the Mediterranean habitat zone and its hillsides are characterized by low, sparse scrub. At the time of our visit, *Spartium* and *Phlomis* bushes are likely to be covering the hills in a cloth of gold, providing a wonderful backdrop to our birding. The *Sylvia* warblers are well represented here, with Sardinian and Subalpine both being common, while the dapper, white-whiskered Rueppell’s Warbler will be high on our list of priorities. European Stonechat, Eastern Orphean Warbler, Cirl Bunting, Black-eared Wheatear, and Sombre Tit are all here, too, and we’ll

keep an eye out overhead for Common Buzzard, Short-toed Snake-Eagle, and Peregrine Falcon. Both Blue Rock-Thrush and Western Rock Nuthatch are surprisingly common and approachable, and the olive groves are likely to be alive with Eastern Olivaceous Warblers, but we'll need to search the more remote rocky gullies to find Rock Petronias.



*White Storks are a common sight in northern Greece, where some places even erect special nesting platforms for them.
Photograph by guide Megan Edwards Crewe.*

Itinerary for Classical Greece

Note: For a list of each day's special target birds, please be sure to check the appropriate "About the Birding Areas" section on the preceding pages.

Day 1, Sun, 5 May. Flights depart the US for Athens.

Day 2, Mon, 6 May. Arrival in Athens and transfer to our hotel. Please plan to arrive in Athens in time to meet the group in the hotel lobby at 7:00 p.m. for a brief get-acquainted session before our evening meal. (On each night of the tour, we'll discuss our plans for the next day—along with suggested clothing and key target species—at dinner.) Night in Athens.

Day 3, Tue, 7 May. Athens; afternoon flight to Alexandroupolis. Today, we'll have a grand tour of ancient Athens, including a fully guided tour of the famous Acropolis and Parthenon—a UNESCO World Heritage Site—and the fabulous new Parthenon museum. Bring your binoculars, as the ruins are home to a surprising variety of birds. If our afternoon flight to Alexandroupolis (**included in the tour fee**) is in the late afternoon (flight times change occasionally), we'll have lunch in one of Athens' many eateries, then return to our hotel for the bus transfer to the airport for the short (45-60 minute) flight. Otherwise, we'll make our way to the airport and get lunch from one of the restaurants at the airport. Once we reach Alexandroupolis, we'll meet our bus driver and make the 45-minute drive to our hotel, which stands in the small town of Soufli, near the edge of the vast Dadia Forest. Night in Soufli.

Day 4, Wed, 8 May. The Evros Delta. We'll spend all of today on the Evros Delta, a huge wetland reserve that forms part of Greece's border with Turkey. Despite a long history of habitat degradation, this site attracts a host of birds ranging from raptors and warblers to herons, waterfowl, and shorebirds. We'll start the day in an area of arable fields and work our way from freshwater reed beds and riverbanks through increasingly saline wetlands to the coast. Along the way, we'll enjoy a picnic lunch in the field. Night in Soufli.



The Dardia Raptor Research Center offers a feeding station where we should be able to see a variety of raptors, including Eurasian Griffon and Cinereous and Egyptian vultures. Photo by guide Megan Edwards Crewe.

Day 5, Thu, 9 May. Dardia Raptor Research Center and forest surroundings. This morning, we'll visit the famous Dardia Raptor Research Center, which is nestled within a wonderfully scenic pine forest. After a visit to a blind overlooking the center's raptor feeding station—which offers us our best chance for Cinereous and Egyptian vultures and Eurasian Griffon—we'll explore the woodlands around the site, home to Eastern Bonelli's Warblers, which should be on territory by now. Then we'll move down into the surrounding countryside, visiting a mixture of arable fields, scrub-covered hillsides, and forested slopes in a search for a multitude of species; we'll enjoy a picnic lunch en route. Night in Soufli.

Day 6, Fri, 10 May. To Fanari. This morning, we'll explore the rolling hinterland just north of the coastal plain, where such treats as Isabelline and Black-eared wheatears, Masked Shrike, Olive-tree Warbler, and Long-legged Buzzard are all possible. After a picnic lunch, we'll start our journey to Fanari, our base for the next two nights. If time permits, we'll get our first taste of the Fanari wetlands, where a variety of migrant shorebirds may await us. Night in Fanari.

Day 7, Sat, 11 May. Fanari and Porto Lagos. A pre-breakfast walk near our hotel should reveal whether any overnight migrants have dropped in. While we're likely to be a bit late for any major movement, we still have a chance of locating a few stragglers, including Spotted Flycatcher, Willow and Wood warblers, and Whinchat. After breakfast, we'll spend most of our day visiting wetland habitats around Fanari and Porto Lagos, taking a picnic lunch with us. Night in Fanari.

Day 8, Sun, 12 May. To Lake Kerkini via Iasmos Gorge. After some early birding around Porto Lagos, we'll head north to Iasmos Gorge for a look at a graceful post-Byzantine stone bridge—and our first chance for Blue Rock-Thrush, Western Rock Nuthatch, Eurasian Crag-Martin, Gray Wagtail, Eastern Orphean Warbler, and more. After a picnic lunch we'll head west towards Lake Kerkini, stopping along the way to search for Yelkouan Shearwaters. The landscape will be quite varied, but the drive takes us mostly through arable country and provides some wonderful panoramas. Alpine Swifts nest in rocky outcrops here, and Woodchat Shrikes can be seen atop roadside bushes. Further on, we'll keep a keen eye out for Montagu's Harriers, which occasionally pass this way on their northward spring migration, as well as European Roller and Red-footed Falcon, which are distinctly possible on roadside wires. Night in Lithotopos.

Day 9, Mon, 13 May. Lake Kerkini. Although it was created artificially when the Strimonas River was dammed, Lake Kerkini has a very natural feel to it, particularly at the shallower northern end where we'll spend much of our day. At this time of year, flocks of herons, egrets, ibis, and cormorants feed before moving north to breed, mostly on the Danube Delta and along the Black Sea coast. Our journey around the lake takes us through scenic rolling countryside backed with the

higher hills that form the border with neighboring Bulgaria. We'll finish today's activities with dinner at a delightful village taverna where Water Buffalo sausages are a particular specialty! Night in Lithotopos.

Day 10, Tue, 14 May. To Vergina and on to Mount Olympus. Although today will be mainly a travel day, we'll make several birding stops and will have plenty of time to enjoy one of Greece's more spectacular archeological sites. We'll head southwest to Thessaloniki, then down the western side of the Thermaikos Gulf, making for Vergina, the first capital of ancient Macedonia. Of principal interest at this UNESCO World Heritage Site is a series of royal chamber tombs discovered in the late 1970s—with all of their treasures still intact. The tombs have been converted into an impressive *in situ* museum, and we'll spend some of the hottest hours of the day in its cool interior before continuing our way south.

Toward the end of our journey, the scenery will change dramatically as we get our first views (weather permitting!) of the impressive Mount Olympus which, at 9570 feet, is Greece's highest peak—once believed to be the home of ancient Greece's many gods. Our hotel is in a bustling little tourist village nestled at the foot of the mountain. Night in Litochoro.

Day 11, Wed, 15 May. Mount Olympus; to Delphi. This morning, we'll do some birding on the approach road to Mount Olympus, yet another UNESCO World Heritage Site. After a morning in the beautiful forest, we'll journey south again making for the modern town of Delphi, which is located just beside the famed ancient city. As we approach through the rugged foothills of Mount Parnassus, we'll soon find ourselves in a world vastly different from the lush green forests of Mount Olympus. Around Delphi, hot winds blow from the south and the hills are covered with low Mediterranean scrub, here known as *Phrygana*. The town sits atop a high sheer cliff providing spectacular panoramic views of other craggy hills and hundreds of acres of olive groves stretching as far as the Gulf of Corinth. Night in Delphi.

Day 12, Thu, 16 May. Delphi. Another day, another UNESCO World Heritage site! But first, we'll spend part of the morning birding in an area of rock and scrub just west of town. Rueppell's Warbler will be our prime target, though we'll also keep an eye out for Rock Petronia, Subalpine Warbler, Eurasian Stonechat, Sombre Tit, and various raptors. After a taverna lunch in town, we'll head to the archeological site. In ancient times, Delphi—home to a renowned oracle, a famous spring, and temples to Apollo and Athena—was considered to be the center of the world, and rulers from many countries made pilgrimages to consult the Delphic oracle. We'll start with a guided walk, after which we'll be on our own, with time to explore the huge, ruins-studded hillside—and the excellent, recently upgraded museum, which houses some of the many treasures found on the site. Night in Delphi.



*Rueppell's Warbler breeds in the dry, scrubby habitats of southern Greece. We'll look for them near Delphi.
Photograph by guide Doug Gochfeld.*

Day 13, Fri, 17 May. Mount Parnassus. Taking a picnic with us, we'll spend today on Mount Parnassus, where we hope to find a number of new species. Tawny Pipit, Wood Lark, Linnet, and Northern Wheatear inhabit the rocky slopes, while much of the mountain's middle elevation is clothed in endemic Grecian Fir forest, making it a haven for the powerful Black Woodpecker. The forests are home as well to Firecrest, Eurasian Wren, Northern Goshawk, and Mistle Thrush, while rocky outcrops are favored by the colorful Rock Bunting. The presence of several ski stations allows us easy access to areas above the tree line where we'll search for Rufous-tailed Rock-Thrush, Black Redstart, and parties of Yellow-billed (Alpine) Chough. Night in Delphi.

Day 14, Sat, 18 May. To Athens. After a final morning's birding around Delphi, we'll make the final leg of our journey today, completing our circle around the country as we head back to Athens. On the way, we'll visit the remarkable monastery of Osios Loukas, which contains a 14th-century Byzantine chapel that's justly famous for its spectacular gilded mosaics; we birders will also enjoy its peaceful courtyards and resident Sombre Tits! A new highway system built for the 2004 Olympics should allow us an easy drive around the capital to our airport hotel. Night in Athens.

Day 15, Sun, 19 May. Departure. You may schedule your departure flight for any time today. Our hotel provides shuttle service to the airport. *Safe journeys!*

About Your Guides

Megan Edwards Crewe has been birding since childhood, when she discovered she could have her father all to herself (rather than sharing him with her brothers and sisters) if she was willing to get up very early on Saturdays and tromp around the woods in search of birds. After graduating from Purdue University, she sampled an impressive variety of jobs before discovering Field Guides. Since joining the company more than two decades ago, Megan—who brims with information and enthusiasm—has delighted in sharing the wonders and adventures of birding and the natural world with participants.

One unexpected bonus of the job has been meeting her British husband Mike, with whom she co-led a trip to France in 2000. They've bounced back and forth across the Atlantic since then, and are now settled in a small coastal village in Norfolk, England, where they're enjoying long walks around their "local patch" and slowly converting their half-acre garden into a wildlife refuge. Megan has been guiding our Greece tours since 2006.

*"Megan is a superb teacher and leader. She excels at getting everyone on a bird and her warmth and humor enhance the whole experience."
M.B., Classical Greece*

Visit <https://fieldguides.com/our-staff/> for complete Megan's tour schedule.

A **local guide** will be added as tour size warrants.

Financial Information

FEE: \$5650 from Athens

DEPOSIT: \$575 per person

FINAL PAYMENT DUE: November 7, 2023

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional): \$650

LIMIT: 12

All participants will be required to confirm they will have completed a full COVID vaccination course at least two weeks prior to the tour (which includes a booster for those eligible to have one). Note too, that many travel destinations may still require proof of vaccination for entry to bypass testing delays or quarantine, and that entry requirements for a destination can change at any time. Proof of a booster shot, too, may be a requirement for some travel destinations.

Other Things You Need to Know

TOUR MANAGER: The manager for this tour is Nicole Cannon. Nicole will be happy to assist you in preparing for the tour. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call her!

AIR ARRANGEMENTS: This tour starts and ends in Athens, and [one internal flight from Athens to Alexandroupolis](#) *is included in the tour fee* (on day 3). Field Guides is a full service travel agency and your tour manager will be happy to assist you with flights to join this tour. Field Guides does not charge a service fee for these services to clients booking a tour. However, we understand that tech-savvy clients often prefer to shop online or that you may wish to use mileage to purchase tickets. Regardless of which method you choose, your tour manager will be happy to provide assistance regarding ticket prices and schedules, along with rental cars and extra hotel nights as needed.

Please be sure to check with your tour manager prior to purchasing your ticket to make sure the flights you have chosen will work well with the tour itinerary and that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. Once purchased, most airline tickets are non-refundable and carry a penalty to change. Field Guides cannot be responsible for these fees. **Also, it is imperative that we receive a copy of your comprehensive flight itinerary—including any and all flights not covered in the tour fee—so that we may track you in the event of missed connections, delays, or other mishaps.**

ACCOMMODATIONS: Accommodations are simple but comfortable throughout the trip, though rooms in some of the hotels are cozy in typical European fashion (smaller than those in most North American hotels). Our hotels are well placed for easy exploration of the various areas we'll be visiting. All rooms have en-suite bathrooms, though most of these will have showers only (no tubs). **Please note that guaranteed non-smoking rooms are not available.**

ALTITUDE: At no time during the tour will we reach an altitude higher than 6500 feet. We may spend a few hours at that altitude while visiting a ski area on Mount Parnassus.

DOCUMENTS: **US citizens will need a current passport for entry into Greece; we recommend the passport be valid for at least six months beyond your scheduled return.** If you are not a US citizen, please check with the Greek consulate nearest you for entry requirements. Information about consulates and entry requirements is generally available online or you can contact us and we will be happy to look this up for you. Passports should have an adequate number of blank pages for the entire journey. Some countries require a blank page for their stamp and as a precaution it is best to have one blank page per country you will visit or transit.

LUGGAGE: Please be aware that many airlines have recently modified their luggage policies and are charging additional fees for checked bags. Updates could easily occur before your departure, so you may wish to contact your airline to verify the policy. Additional charges for bags on any flights, whether these are covered by the tour fee or not, will be the client's responsibility.

TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS: The tour fee is **\$5650** for one person in double occupancy from Athens. It includes all lodging from Day 2 through Day 14, all meals from dinner on Day 2 through breakfast on Day 15, all ground transportation, **the internal flight from Athens to Alexandroupolis**, entrance fees, and the guide services of the tour leader(s). Tipping at group meals and for drivers, porters, and local guides is included in your tour fee and will be handled for the group by your Field Guides leader(s). However, if you would like to recognize your Field Guides leader(s) or any local guide(s) for exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that such tips are optional and not expected.

The above fee does not include your airfare to and from Athens, airport taxes, visa fees, any checked or carry-on baggage charges imposed by the airlines, any alcoholic beverages, phone calls, laundry, or other items of a personal nature.

The **single supplement** for the tour is **\$650**. If you do not have a roommate but wish to share, we will try to pair you with a roommate from the tour; but if none is available, you will be billed for the single supplement. Our tour fees are based on double occupancy; one-half the cost of a double room is priced into the tour fee. The single supplement is calculated by taking the actual cost of a single room and subtracting one-half the cost of a double room (plus any applicable taxes).

TOUR REGISTRATION: To register for this tour, please contact us at fieldguides.com/contact-us/. Our office will be in touch with you by email by the next business day (Mon-Fri) with instructions on how to complete our new electronic registration form and medical questionnaire. (We are no longer accepting the paper version.)

Please mail your **deposit of \$575** per person, or see <https://fieldguides.com/payment-options/> for our Payment Options. **Full payment** of the tour fee is due 180 days prior to departure, or **by November 7, 2023. We will bill you for the final payment at either 180 days or when the tour has reached sufficient subscription to operate, whichever date comes later.**

Since the cost of your trip insurance and airline tickets is generally non-refundable, please do not finalize these purchases until you have received final billing for the tour or have been advised that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate by your tour manager.

SMOKING: Almost all of our clients prefer a smoke-free environment. If you smoke, please be sensitive to the group and refrain from smoking at meals, in vehicles, and in proximity to the group on trails and elsewhere.

CANCELLATION POLICY: Refund of deposit and payment, less \$100 handling fee, will be made if cancellation is received up to 180 days before departure. If cancellation occurs between 179 and 90 days before the departure date, 50% of the tour fee is refundable. Thereafter, all deposits and payments are not refundable and non-transferable.

Our cancellation policy only applies to payments made to Field Guides for tour (and any services included in those fees). Airline tickets not included in the tour fee and purchased separately often carry penalties for cancellation or change, or are sometimes totally non-refundable. Additionally, if you take out trip insurance the cost of that insurance is not refundable, so it is best to purchase the policy just prior to making full payment for the tour or at the time you purchase airline tickets, depending upon the airline's restrictions.

The right is reserved to cancel any tour prior to departure. In most such cases, full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. Note this exception, however: If you have been advised pre-tour that there is a non-refundable portion of your tour fee no matter the reason for Field Guides cancellation of the tour, that portion will not be refunded. The right is reserved to substitute in case of emergency another guide for the original one.

TRIP CANCELLATION & MEDICAL EMERGENCY INSURANCE: We strongly recommend you consider purchasing trip cancellation (including medical emergency) insurance to cover your investment in case of injury or illness to you or your family prior to or during a trip. Because we must remit early (and substantial) tour deposits to our suppliers, you acknowledge and agree that we will not issue a refund when cancellation occurs outside of our cancellation policy as published in the itinerary (see CANCELLATION POLICY). In addition, the Department of State strongly urges Americans to consult with their medical insurance company prior to traveling abroad to confirm whether their policy applies overseas and if it will cover emergency expenses such as a medical evacuation. US medical insurance plans seldom cover health costs incurred outside the United States unless supplemental coverage is purchased. Furthermore, US Medicare and Medicaid programs do not provide payment for medical services outside the United States.

When making a decision regarding health insurance, Americans should consider that many foreign doctors and hospitals require payment in cash prior to providing service and that a medical evacuation to the United States may cost well in excess of \$50,000. Uninsured travelers who require medical care overseas often face extreme difficulties. When consulting with your insurer prior to your trip, please ascertain whether payment will be made to the overseas healthcare provider or whether you will be reimbursed later for expenses that you incur.

US citizens will receive information from us regarding optional tour cancellation/emergency medical insurance. Our agent, CSA, will insure for trip cancellation and interruption, medical coverage, travel delay, baggage loss and delay, and emergency medical transportation. If you purchase the insurance prior to, or within 24 hours of making final payment for the tour, and cover all non-refundable parts of the trip (including any non-refundable flights and in some cases, other arrangements), pre-existing conditions are covered. You may purchase your CSA policy on-line by visiting our website at <https://fieldguides.com/trip-cancellation-insurance/> and clicking the link to CSA. The CSA webpage also includes a contact number.

Currently we are unable to offer CSA insurance policies to residents of New York and Hawaii. We have had clients provide positive feedback after acquiring insurance thru InsureMyTrip (<https://www.insuremytrip.com/>) in the past, and would suggest that company as an alternative. When purchasing insurance with a company other than CSA, you will want to understand whether the timing of your purchase will affect coverage before paying your first deposit. Insurance purchase requirements can vary from company to company, and such requirements could limit your options if you do not look into this until making your final payment for your tour. Please let us know if you have any questions about this.

Please note, once the insurance is purchased it is non-refundable, so please check with your tour manager prior to making the purchase to assure the tour will operate as scheduled. Citizens of other countries are urged to consult their insurance broker.

RESPONSIBILITY: For and in consideration of the opportunity to participate in the tour, each tour participant and each parent or legal guardian of a tour participant who is under 18 agrees to release, indemnify, and hold harmless Field Guides Incorporated, its agents, servants, employees, shareholders, officers, directors, attorneys, and contractors as more fully set forth in the Release and Indemnity Agreement on the registration form. Field Guides Incorporated acts only as an agent for the passenger in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, or other means, and assumes no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity caused by defect in such vehicles or for any reason whatsoever, including the acts, defaults, or bankruptcies of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. You acknowledge and agree that Field Guides Incorporated is not responsible for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, or other causes. The tour participant shall bear all such losses and expenses. Field Guides Incorporated reserves the right to substitute hotels of similar category for those indicated and to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary or caused by changes in air schedules. Field Guides Incorporated reserves the right to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at owner's risk entirely.

Participants should be in good health and should consult a physician before undertaking a tour. If you have questions about the physical requirements of a tour, please contact our office for further information. Participants should prepare for the tour by reading the detailed itinerary, the information bulletin, and other pertinent matter provided by Field Guides. Each participant is responsible for bringing appropriate clothing and equipment as recommended in our bulletins.

THE RECEIPT OF YOUR TOUR DEPOSIT SHALL BE DEEMED TO BE CONSENT TO THE ABOVE CONDITIONS. EACH TOUR PARTICIPANT AND EACH PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN OF A TOUR PARTICIPANT WHO IS UNDER 18 SHALL SIGN AND DELIVER THE RELEASE AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT AT THE TIME OF REGISTRATION.

5/18MEC
NCP 7/2020
NC 8/23; peg 11/23