



# ANGEL Adventures

MEREDITH COLLEGE ALUMNAE TRAVEL PROGRAM

## **Greek Odyssey: From the Parthenon, to the Peloponnese, to the Islands in the Bright Blue Sea SEPTEMBER 22- OCTOBER 4, 2024**

Dear Meredith Alumnae and Travel Friends,

It is with a great deal of excitement that we share our plans for our Meredith tour to Greece, September 22-October 4, 2024. Our itinerary is designed to give an immersive overview into Greece, both past and present.

It is a paradox that Greek culture, so ancient, remains still one of the most vibrant today. Beginning in Athens, the heart of Greece and the site of the Parthenon, we will travel to historic sites on the mainland before flying to Santorini to island-hop by ferry. Mythology will come to life as we enjoy together local food, wine, music, and dance. But there will also be plenty of time to explore—and perhaps do a little shopping—on your own.

**Day 1** Sunday, September 22.

***Departure from the United States (if not traveling early.)***

**Day 2** Monday, September 23.

***Arrival in Athens***

Following our arrival, there will be an orientation to Athens by coach. The emphasis will be on “modern” traditions as exemplified by the Panathenaic Stadium, the site of the first modern Olympic Games, which were held here in 1896. Additionally, we will watch the changing of the guard at Parliament, a daily duty of the elite Evzone Presidential Guard, who honor modern Greece’s founding in 1832. The day will end with an authentic four course dinner with entertainment provided by musicians and dancers. We likely will see the sirtaki, Zorba’s dance, performed. Opa!

**Day 3** Tuesday, September 24.

***Athens***

Yesterday we had glimpses of ancient Athens, but today we will see it, feel it, and walk on it! Our touring day begins with a guided visit to the Acropolis of Athens, whose most famous building, the Parthenon, dates to the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE. The Acropolis is “the greatest architectural and artistic complex” of Greek antiquity, according to its UNESCO World Heritage citation. We promise you will agree. Then it’s time to digest what you have seen while dining together in the nearby Parthenon

Museum restaurant. This splendid museum, completed in 2009, is truly stunning, but the setting is beyond compare. On the top level, the Parthenon marbles are displayed with direct, panoramic views of the Parthenon itself. Following your self-guided exploration of the museum, the rest of the afternoon will be at your leisure.

**Day 4** Wednesday, September 25.

***Athens, Corinth, Epidaurus, Nafplio***

Yesterday we saw amazing architecture and splendid marble sculptures. Today we will see that the ancient Greeks were equally proficient creating sculptures from metal using the lost wax process. The National Archeological Museum in Athens, the largest in Greece, is a treasure trove of expressive works that still exist, miraculously, thousands of years after their creation. Next, we will travel by coach approximately 2 hours to the southwest into the Peloponnesian Peninsula to the city of Corinth, a rival of Athens in ancient times. Corinth was, and is, an import/export center, commanding an excellent position on the narrow isthmus that connects mainland Greece to the Peloponnese. From this location Corinth could control trade on both land and sea. Following lunch together and a bit of sight-seeing, it's on to Epidaurus where we will explore the Amphitheatre, a UNESCO World Heritage site dating from 340 BCE. It is considered by experts to be the most perfect amphitheater for both acoustics and aesthetics in all of Greece. Our final destination today is Nafplio, a picturesque coastal city and the first capital of modern Greece, where we will spend the night. If the amphitheatre in Epidaurus sparked an irresistible urge to perform, we have the solution, because we will close out the evening with dance lessons!

**Day 5** Thursday, September 26.

***Nafplio, Mycenae, Nemea, Athens***

From Nafplio we will travel a short distance north to Mycenae, undoubtedly the oldest mainland site we will tour on this trip. Bronze Age Mycenae, dating from 1750 BCE, was the first distinctly Greek civilization, credited with the creation of the first written records in the Greek language. Many stories in Greek mythology and literature are set in this far-off time. It is, of course, another UNESCO World Heritage site. Next, it's on to Nemes. In Greek mythology, Nemes was the home of the Nemean lion, one of Herakles' (Hercules) challenges. Our goal for going there will be less blood-thirsty than Heracles', and, instead, just plain thirsty as we tour a Nemean vineyard and then stay for dinner. We should be a very relaxed group of travelers as we head back to Athens for the night.

**Day 6** Friday, September 27.

***Athens, Intra-Vacation Air, Santorini***

Off to the islands! At mid-morning we will fly to Santorini, also known as Thera. With a local guide we will see the massive Thera volcano caldera and hot springs. After this energizing tour, our viewing of the famous sunset at the town of Oia will be a laid-back entrée to an evening at leisure.

**Day 7** Saturday, September 28.

***Santorini, Excursion to Akrotiri***

Akrotiri, an archeological site dating to 1450 BC, is a Bronze Age site founded by the Minoans, an Aegean civilization that had highly developed architecture and lively art strongly influenced by the

sea around them. Following our guided tour, we will head to Perissa Beach, one of the most beautiful in all of Greece, for lunch on your own. Then it's on to Emporio Village, which may—at the risk of sounding repetitive—be one of the most beautiful blue and white villages in all of Greece. Be forewarned that exploration on your own in this small, charming village will likely result in a few hundred photographs. The day will end with a wine tasting, followed by dinner at our hotel. Isn't this a perfect Greek island day?!

**Day 8** Sunday, September 29.

***Santorini, Naxos***

Today we leave Santorini by ferry for our second island, Naxos. A day of leisure at our seaside hotel will be followed by a dinner surprise: German food! This area is a very popular vacation spot for Germans seeking sunshine and golden sand beaches, so German restaurants and beer abound.

**Day 9** Monday, September 30.

***Naxos, Paros***

On to island number three, Paros! Paros may be the quietest, most non-touristy of the islands we'll visit. It was the source for the gleaming white Parian marble used for some of the finest Greek sculptures. After our arrival by ferry, we will spend the day making personal choices: will it be a cooking class or an island tour or an active day or one spent relaxing at our gorgeous hotel on an island famous for its beaches? Your Tour Director will be happy to offer suggestions.

**Day 10** Tuesday, October 1.

***Paros, Myconos***

Island number #4: Myconos is our ferry destination today for a two-night stay. Upon arrival we will have a walking tour of the Old Town. While Myconos is known for its nightlife, we're going to break with that tradition and visit a farm instead. We'll share a delicious lunch made from locally sourced food. The rest of the afternoon can be spent in the leisure pursuits of your choosing. And when evening comes, the choice about whether to party like a local (or a visiting celebrity) or to cocoon at our hotel is completely up to you.

**Day 11**, Wednesday, October. 2.

***Myconos, Excursion to Delos***

If truth be told, the main reason we are staying on Myconos is so that we can easily take a day-trip to the incomparable island of Delos. Delos was thought by the ancients to be "the most sacred of all the islands," (Callimachus, 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE), because it was said to be the birthplace of Apollo, the sun god, and his twin sister, Artemis, the moon goddess. At one point it was considered to be the greatest commercial center of the entire world—when the known world was a much smaller place. Attacked and virtually abandoned after 69 BCE, successive waves of invaders mined its temples and palaces. Today no one except caretakers and researchers may live on the island, which is in its entirety a UNESCO World Heritage Site. After traveling back to Myconos, we'll end our day with a traditional Mykonian dinner.

**Day 13** Thursday, October 3.

***Myconos, Athens***

After ferrying from Myconos to Athens, an approximately 4-hour journey, we will have time to remedy any souvenir gaps or take in another historic site on your own. Then as night falls, we will take the funicular up Lycobettus Hill. This hill is similar in height to the geologic formation that holds the Acropolis. It is an ideal location to look out over the glittering city at night, with the Parthenon and temples of the Acropolis glowing in the distance. Our final dinner will be shared in this magical location.

**Day 14** Friday, October 4.

***Athens, departure for the US (or extended individual travels.)***

This morning we'll say goodbye to Greece as our tour ends. But if you have found Greece as captivating as Betty and I have, you will be back. To borrow Edgar Allen Poe's words, from the poem, "To Helen," we have only begun to discover, "The glory that was Greece." Let's paraphrase that to say, more accurately, "The glory that was, **and is**, Greece." We hope that you will join us! Contact Taylor Twine at 919-760-8712 or by email at [twtwine@gmail.com](mailto:twtwine@gmail.com) to reserve your space.

With best wishes for safe travels always,

Becky Bailey, Betty Webb, and Taylor Twine