

April 22 - May 3, 2007

The Cradle of Western Civilization

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 "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 Athens.



The Acropolis

We'll end our ArtVenture with four nights on the island of Crete, home to the ancient Minoan civilization. We'll visit the Palace of Knossos and explore the island from Zeus' birthplace to the charming resort town of Agios Nikolaos.

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 — experience it for yourself!

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

New York departure :	\$3980
Land Only:	\$3050
Single supplement:	\$580

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

The following services are included:

Airfare:	Roundtrip air from New York to Athens. Roundtrip air from Athens to Crete. All customs fees and airport taxes included.
Hotels:	10 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; 1 lunch, 5 dinners.
Guides:	Local English-speaking guide throughout.
Baggage:	Porterage of one large suitcase per person.
Entrances:	Entrance fees to all sites included in the itinerary.
Insurance:	Complete travel insurance including cancellation coverage.



Delphi



Sunday, April 22. Evening departure from New York’s JFK Airport.

Monday, April 23. On arrival at Athens Airport, we will be met for transfer to our hotel in the village of Tolo, about 1.5 hours from Athens. There will be time to relax before an introduction to Greece and our welcome dinner. **(D) Overnight: Tolo**

Tuesday, April 24. Today we visit the beautiful site of the theater at Epidavros. Excavated about 100 years ago, the theater is still in regular use for performances and features amazing acoustics. The rest of the site contains the Aesclepium (the first hospital) and a museum. The afternoon and evening are free to relax or explore nearby Nafplion, the first capital of modern Greece and a jewel of Venetian architecture. **(B) Overnight: Tolo**

Wednesday, April 25. Leaving Tolo, we head toward Mycenae, excavated in 1876 by Schliemann, who found the fabulously rich



Tolo

royal graves. This was the home of Agamemnon, and his Lion Gate remains just as Homer described it. Next, we cross the plains of Argos to Corinth, where we’ll explore the ancient city, tour the excavations of “the wickedest city on earth,” and see where St. Paul was arrested. After time for lunch we follow the coast of the Gulf of Corinth westward, crossing the new suspension bridge to the north side near Patras. Leaving the Peloponnese, we travel up into the mountains of mainland Greece to our hotel in Delphi, where dinner awaits. **(B, D) Overnight: Delphi**

Thursday, April 26. This morning we explore Delphi, home of the famous Oracle, with a local guide. In the afternoon there will be an opportunity to hike up Mount Parnassus, behind the town, for spectacular views down to the Gulf of Corinth. A free evening. **(B) Overnight: Delphi**



Ancient Mycenae

Friday, April 27. Today we travel through Thebes of ancient legends, passing the place where Oedipus supposedly killed his father. Arriving at our hotel in Athens, we will have a guided tour of the National Museum, with its treasures from Mycenae. This evening we dine at a taverna in the Plaka, the old part of the city, with live Greek music. **(B, D) Overnight: Athens**

Saturday, April 28. A short walk from our hotel takes us to the Acropolis, the main site of classical Athens, with its temples and museum and wonderful views over the ancient city center. The afternoon and evening are free for lunch and dinner and to wander through the Plaka. **(B) Overnight: Athens**

Sunday, April 29. Transfer to Athens Airport for the short flight to Crete’s Hania Airport. We’ll be met by our bus and take a quick tour of the old town of Hania, with its 16th-century Venetian walls, before heading along the coast to Rethymnon, a picturesque 16th-century port town dominated by a Venetian fortress. We arrive at our hotel in Heraklion with time to rest before dinner. **(B, D) Overnight: Crete**

Monday, April 30. After a leisurely breakfast we depart for 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. After an extensive visit we will adjourn for lunch (included) before an afternoon visit to the National Museum. Free evening. **(B, L) Overnight: Crete**



Minoan Palace, Knossos

Tuesday, May 1. This morning we head inland to the 3,000-foot-high Lasithi Plateau, green, fertile, and irrigated by white-sailed windmills. The first stop will be Psychro to visit the Dictean cave, the mythical birthplace of Zeus; then we’ll visit the 13th-century church of Panaghia Kera, with its frescoes from the late Byzantine period (subject to special opening arrangements). We’ll continue to Agios Nikolaos where we’ll have time for lunch and to explore the chic resort town. We have a free evening in Heraklion. **(B) Overnight: Crete**



Rethymnon harbor

Wednesday, May 2. Heading south across the island, we’ll visit the less well-known but impressive Minoan site at Festos. We’ll stop in Matala, famous for its cliff caves, on our return to Heraklion for a free afternoon. We end our ArtVenture with a night of traditional Cretan food and dancing. **(B, D) Overnight: Crete**

Thursday, May 3. Transfer to Heraklion airport for the short flight to Athens and return flights to the U.S. **(B)**

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