

# GO GREECE BY THE BACKROADS



**11 – 25 October 2023**

There's more to Greece than the Greek islands and we want to do it justice not just follow the crowds.

While our itinerary includes a number of Greece "must sees" – the Acropolis, Delphi, Olympia, Meteora – Greece isn't only about ancient ruins and monasteries. When planning this tour we sought out villages that ooze old world charm, places where commercialisation has not made much impact. We added in some destinations where we found hotels with a special quality, perhaps a super friendly family running it, or stunning traditional architecture.

We discovered roads that wound and twisted through mountain ski resorts, others that followed rugged coastlines viewing seas so perfect and blue, and other less-used roads that pass through groves with olive trees both sides.

This itinerary provides a well-rounded look at the Greek mainland, its cities, towns, villages and countryside; its people and their way of life; its ancient history and culture; and, of course, it's delicious, fresh cuisine. Our aim is to ensure you have a holiday that fills you with adventure every day and is one to remember.



### 11 October 2023. Day 1 (Wednesday) ARRIVAL DAY

Touchdown in Athens, it's time to get ready for your Greek adventure! Catch a cab, or your pre-booked transport, from the airport to the hotel. Time is allowed for you to settle in, maybe catch up on sleep, and then if you want you may enjoy some freedom to explore the city. Our hotel is located in the ancient and historic Acropolis and Plaka neighbourhoods. Loads of restaurants both Greek cuisine and international are plentiful in this area if you need a bite to eat. Please note that Check In time at the hotel is 2.00PM. If you arrive prior to 2pm the hotel is happy to store your luggage for you while you check out Athens. Overnight stay at hotel in Athens.

### 12 October 2023. Day 2 (Thursday) 24 HOURS IN ATHENS

After breakfast we have arranged a four-hour walking tour of the historic Acropolis and nearby Plaka area. Included in the walking tour will be opportunities to try different kinds of Greek snack food. Before we can get on the bikes we have to fill out the rental motorbike paperwork and pay motorcycle security deposits so have allowed time in the afternoon for this. Once completed we will celebrate (but not too much) the start of our fun-in-the-sun adventure with a fabulous traditional Greek 'welcome dinner'.  
*Overnight at hotel in Athens. (Breakfast and Dinner)*

### 13 October 2023. Day 3 (Friday) ATHENS TO GALAXIDI. 235KM

Today we leave Athens to explore the Greece mainland. After Riders Briefing we head off into the morning traffic. Time for us to get used to the riding conditions and negotiating our way through the local traffic. As soon as possible we leave the highways and continue on Greece's excellent, and lesser used, backroads. We are heading for the Gulf of Corinth and the coastal town of Galaxidi. Prior to the 1950's Galaxidi was only accessible by boat and in keeping with its history many former ship captains have retired there. Neoclassical houses and the old captains' mansions around the waterfront of this picturesque port town add to its charm. Wander down from our hotel to the waterfront where there is an array of great restaurants to choose from.

*Overnight stay at Galaxidi. (Breakfast and Lunch)*



**14 October. Day 4 (Saturday) GALAXIDI TO LAKE PLASTIRA. 265KM**

An early(ish) start to beat the crowds at historic Delphi. It's a short 35KM ride to Delphi with enough time to check out this major archeological site and well-preserved ruins. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, Delphi ranks with the Acropolis in Athens and ancient Olympia as top tourist attractions of the Classical period of ancient Greece. Its wealth of archaeological treasures combines with its magnificent mountain setting. After Delphi we continue climbing the winding and twisting Parnassus Road into the mountains passing through a ski resort (could be cold up here so have a spare layer on hand)

After lunch we continue on to our overnight destination of Lake Plastira – one of the largest man-made lakes in Greece. Stunning alpine peaks of the Agrafa Mountains, forested hills, narrow inlets of water all feature in this area.

*Overnight stay at Lake Plastira. (Breakfast and Lunch)*

**15 October. Day 5 (Sunday) LAKE PLASTIRA TO KASTRAKI – METEORA. 120KM**

From Lake Plastira we ride twisting back roads through alpine villages to Kastraki which, along with nearby Kalabaka, are the main towns in the region known as Meteora. The word Meteora literally means 'hovering in the air'. Amazing rock structures as big as mountains with monasteries perched atop them is what the region is famous for. After lunch in Kalabaka there's time to check out the monasteries. These huge rock formations looming up from the earth with monasteries balanced somewhere high on the rocks are awe inspiring. Monks lived in caves here as far back as the 11th Century. During an age of Turkish occupation, brigandry and lawlessness, they climbed higher and higher up the rock face until they were living on the inaccessible peaks. Here they built the first monasteries by bringing material and people up with ladders and baskets.

*Overnight at hotel in Kastraki village. (Breakfast and Lunch)*



**16 October. Day 6 (Monday) KASTRAKI TO ARISTI-PAPINGO. 190KM**

From the Meteora region we have a fantastic ride to the mountainous Zagori region in the far North of Greece. Today's ride takes us through mountain passes with snow on the nearby peaks, and more of those great winding and twisting roads. The charming village of Papingo is our destination and the village is a great showpiece for the "Stonehouse" style of architecture that is common in this region and this village has many examples of this. We are surrounded by the Vikos National Park where you can view the towering Mt. Tympe and we will check out the Vikos Gorge which is one of the deepest gorges in the world.

*Overnight in hotel in Papingo (Breakfast and Lunch)*



**17 October. Day 7 (Tuesday) PAPINGO TO NAFFAKTOS. 280KM**

It's a big day of riding ahead as we leave the northern part of Greece and head south skirting the Western flanks of the Pindos Mountain range. Staying off the main highways we will encounter some awesome twisty winding roads, pass through quaint villages seldom visited by tourists, and see stunning lakes and tree covered mountains. After lots of magnificent scenery and a delicious local lunch en-route we will reach our destination Nafpaktos – which translates to 'Boatyard'. Nafpaktos is considered to be one of the most beautiful medieval towns in Greece. It is strategically located on the Northern Corinthian Gulf and was a former naval base during the Peloponnesian Wars. With its well preserved Venetian Castle sitting atop a hill above the town and picturesque historic harbour, plus numerous taverna, cafes, bars and shops...It is the perfect overnight stop.

*Overnight in hotel at Nafpaktos. (Breakfast and Lunch)*

**18 October. Day 8 (Wednesday) NAFFAKTOS TO KATAKOLO via Ancient Olympia. 190KM**

Before we leave Nafpaktos we visit the Venetian Castle on the hill above the township. Back on our bikes we cross the Gulf of Corinth on the Rio-Antirrio bridge – the world's longest multi-span cable-stayed bridge at 2,880 metres. Once we are across the bridge we are in the Peloponnese region of Greece.

Riding inland we take quiet country roads that lead us to the archaeological site of Olympia, the venue of the original Olympic Games. Olympia was founded in the 8th century B.C. Its extensive ruins include athletic training areas, a stadium and temples dedicated to the gods Hera and Zeus. There's plenty of time to take in the sights and history of Ancient Olympia.

It's not far to the coastal town of Katakolo and our family run hotel owned by Stefano a former sea captain and current harbour-master of Katakolo port.

*Overnight in hotel at Katakolo. (Breakfast and Lunch)*

**19 October. Day 9 (Thursday) KATAKOLO TO AGIOS NIKOLAOS. 190KM**

Start the day with an amazing breakfast full of fruit preserves and other homemade deliciousness. Heading inland and through the mountains and villages to the olive capital of Kalamata on the Messenian Gulf. We stop for a visit at the growers' market – a great opportunity to sample the region's famous olives, cheese and fruit selections. We are now at the base of the "Mani Peninsular" and it's a short but scenic ride to the sleepy, and still active, fishing village of Agios Nikolaos. How about a swim in the sea? It's a short stroll from our hotel.

*Overnight in hotel at Agios Nikolaos. (Breakfast and Lunch)*

**20 October. Day 10 (Friday) AGIOS NIKOLAOS TO GEROLIMENAS. 90KM**

From Agios Nikolaos we continue our ride on the central southern prong of the Mani and Greek mainland. With lots of coastal views and some unique architecture there is plenty to look at on our way. We stop for a delicious lunch at our favourite café right beside the water in Limeni.

Our destination, Gerolimenas, is a picturesque small coastal village in the most southern part, an area known as “The Deep Mani.” This is the region once known for its lawless chieftains and the feuding that took place in the region. With its rugged coastline broken by only the occasional cove the “deep Mani” is a region of Greece that few tourists visit and even less stay. The name means “Old Harbour.” Forget about shopping... there are no shops, just a few taverna and bars, but the swimming is divine.

*Overnight in hotel at Gerolimenas. (Breakfast and Lunch)*



**21 October. Day 11 (Saturday) GEROLIMENAS TO MONEMVASIA. 160KM**

Prying ourselves away from the gloriousness that is Gerolimenas we set off for our next destination. Our route to Monemvasia has us following the elevated coastal road with views galore of the Laconian Gulf. In the distance we'll see the shipwreck (not from ancient times) of the SS Dimitrios which is very well represented in social media snaps. We leave the Mani region and continue on the Peloponnese toward our overnight destination of Monemvasia. The old town of Monemvasia is a medieval fortress town situated on an island linked by a causeway to the mainland. Within the fortified walls are many Byzantine churches. Our accommodation for the next two nights is within the walls of the ancient fortress.

*Overnight in Monemvasia Castle. (Breakfast and Lunch)*

**22 October. Day 12 (Sunday) MONEMVASIA - FREE DAY**

There is a whole day to explore within the walls of Monemvasia Castle. Plenty of souvenir or gift hunting opportunities here, some fabulous dining options and even wine tasting all within the castle walls. For something more energetic there are excellent swimming spots and if you want to really exert yourself hike up to the top of the rocky outcrop and check out the 12<sup>th</sup> century Agia Sophia church. The views up here are unmatched. The modern town of Monemvasia is a short walk across the causeway of you want to venture further.

*Overnight in Monemvasia Castle – same hotel. (Breakfast)*



### **23 October. Day 13 (Monday) MONEMVASIA TO TYROS . 140KM**

After a leisurely breakfast it's time to remount our machines and continue our adventure. An abundance of gloriously winding, twisting roads, many of which follow the coastline, take us to Tyros our final destination in the Peloponnese.

Tyros a small seaside town on the Argolic Gulf, an old naval town which is more popular as a Greek summer holiday destination than a place for foreign tourists. It's quaintness, and friendliness touched a chord with us. Our accommodation is located right by the seaside.

*Overnight in hotel at Tyros waterfront village. (Breakfast and Lunch)*

### **24 October. Day 14 (Tuesday) TYROS TO ATHENS. 196KM**

Time for a final swim in the Myrtoan Sea before we head off on our final day on the motorbikes. We ride the coastline on brilliant winding roads aiming for Athens. We'll have lunch and view the marvel that is the Corinth Canal. Once we cross the Corinth Canal we have officially left the Peloponnese region. We have a few kms to cover and before we know it we're back in Athens.

Negotiating the streets for a second time we will go direct to the motorbike rental shop to hand back our bikes. The fun is not over yet as we celebrate our awesome moto holiday with a final group dinner.

*Overnight at the same Athens hotel. (Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner)*

### **25 October. Day 15 (Wednesday) ATHENS**

This morning is at your leisure. Check Out time is 12.00 noon. Transfer to the airport for your departure flight or onward trip to the Greek Islands. Please advise us if you require late check out or if you are staying longer in Greece and require additional accommodation (additional costs apply)

*(Breakfast)*

### **Tour Ends**

Are you planning on extra time in Greece, maybe head out to some islands, before or after the tour?

Let us know if there's anything we can assist you with.



### COST for the tour on a twin share basis

RIDER Honda CB500X or Suzuki 650 V-Strom	NZ9995
RIDER BMW 1250GS (1 only available)	NZ11245
RIDER BMW F750GS or BMWF850GS	NZ10845
PILLION	NZ8095
Passenger in support vehicle	NZ8095
SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (OWN ROOM)	+ NZ1295

There are limited numbers of motorcycles. We will do our best to supply your first choice model.

DEPOSIT                    NZ1000 PER PERSON

To book online, with an option to pay by credit card, click on the link below  
<https://bythebackroads.com/go-greece/> and scroll down.

### What Is Included

- 14 nights accommodation based on sharing Twin/Double.
- Breakfast every day
- 11 x fabulous Greek lunches
- Welcome and Farewell dinners as per the tour itinerary
- Motorbike rental cost (standard motorcycle cost – see next page under Motorbikes)
- Accompanying tour vehicle for our non-riders and our luggage
- Four hour ancient Acropolis and Plaka Walking Tour – includes traditional Greek snacks along the way
- Personally guided by Angela and Mike

### Excluded Services

- International flights, Petrol for Motorbike, Airport transfers, Highway Tolls, Insurance fees, Tips and personal expenses



If there's anything else that we can help you with please give us a call or email us on [adventure@bythebackroads.com](mailto:adventure@bythebackroads.com)

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