Code: GRE09-001

GREECE, on the steps of St. Paul

Greece is recognized as the cradle of Western civilization, language, writing, democracy, its philosophers, architecture, artists, comedy, theater, all of this, first the Roman Empire and then the whole West drew and incorporated into its culture. Christianity could not fail to start from Greece to begin its spread and here founded the Christian communities, the same canonical gospels were initially written in Greek.
This itinerary retraces the most significant places traced by St. Paul that we find in his letters. Modernity and time have erased many things but our guide will bring you back to the origins and you can listen to the story of the stones in the concordances and in the Pauline texts.
Thank you Greece for this immense patrimony you have given us.

Day 01 Arrival to Thessaloniki
Welcome to Greece
Upon arrival we will be greeted by our guide and driver and take our way to Thessaloniki, the second largest city in the country that took its name after Alexander the Great's sister. We will have a panoramic orientation drive in the city before checking in at our hotel to rest. Later in the afternoon, if time permits, we will have a walking tour on this beautiful seaside city and see the White Tower, trademark of the town. Dinner and overnight at our hotel .

Day 02 Thessaloniki Tour
After breakfast we'll have a complete tour of the city. Thessaloniki figures prominently in the New Testament as a world cultural center. This community was the center of Paul's activities in Northern Greece and it's where he preached and founded a church as well as wrote his two epistles to Thessalonians (Acts 17:1-9; 1 Thessalonians and 2 Thessalonians). We will visit the Byzantine churches of St. Demetrius and St. Sophia, the White Tower along with the Rotunda and Arch of Galerius in addition to many other sites. This evening we will enjoy dinner at our hotel.

Day 03 Thessaloniki-Philippi-Kavala
Today we will drive along the ancient route of Apostle Paul to Amphipolis (Acts 17:1). Continue our journey to ancient Philippi, which was named after the father of Alexander the Great. This busy Roman colony boasted a great library and theater. In Philippi, Paul preached, established the first church in Europe, and was to whom he wrote one of his epistles while imprisoned in Rome (Acts 16:11-40; Philippians). It was in this area that Paul met Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She and her household accepted Christ and were baptized in the nearby river (Acts 16:11-15). Next, continue to Kavala, ancient port of Neapolis (Acts 16:9-11). Return to Thessaloniki for dinner and overnight.

Day 04 Thessaloniki-Veria-Kalabaka
This morning we'll head to Veria (Berea of the New Testament), where Paul and Silas were sent by friends after being accused of treason in Thessalonika (Acts 17:5-15). Visit the Bema of Apostle Paul where he had stood and preached the Gospel to the local community. Continue to Kalabaka and visit the unique hanging Byzantine monasteries from the 11th

century. There are 24 but only 6 are inhabited nowadays and if time permits, we will visit one or two in order to have an idea of the monastic life through the years. Located over the cliff, the monasteries are accessible only by stairs or pathways into the rock and are included in the list of UNESCO World Heritage. Check in at our hotel for dinner and overnight.

Day 05 Kalabaka-Delphi
Depart from our hotel we'll head south to Delphi. Visiting the ancient sanctuary of Apollo, in Delphi, we will gain a greater understanding of the Greek religious heritage and their influence on the early Christian years. Delphi was regarded as the center of the world, the omphalos (navel), and the most important cultural and religion center of old times. You will see the Temple of Apollo, the Athenian treasury, the Theater, the Castalian fountain, the Stadium and the Tholos of Athena Pronaia. Dinner and overnight in Delphi.

Day 06 Delphi-Hosios Loukas-Athens
Today we'll drive through the beautiful scenery of the country passing by many villages in order to stop at Hosios Loukas monastery. We will have some time at this famous Byzantine Church of Hosios Loukas, a UNESCO World Heritage Monument, well known of its high architectural and the splendid mosaics. Then we'll continue to Athens where we will have free afternoon to explore city center and Plaka area, the ancient town of Athens on the foot of Acropolis. Dinner and overnight here.

Day 07 Epidaurus-Ancient Corinth
After breakfast we will start our way to Peloponnese peninsula where we will stop at hand made Corinth Canal connecting the Aegean and the Ionian seas. Then we will continue our journey to Epidaurus, the birthplace of Apollo's son, Asclepius the healer, god-physician of medicine. We will see the Asclepion, the healing center in classical world of 6th century BC and will see also the Theatre, the Thymele and the Stadium, with capacity around 15,000 persons. Then we drive to Ancient Corinth to visit the Bema where Apostle Paul worked for 18 months with tent makers Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:1-18). We will see the Peirene Fountain, the Temple of Apollo, the Temple of Asklepios, the Bema of St. Paul, the Roman Odeion, the Glauke Fountain, as well as the museum that hosts many ruins and status of that time. Return to our hotel in Athens for dinner and overnight.

Day 08 Full Day Athens
Today we will depart our hotel for a short drive to Athens and spend our entire day in this famous city. Visit the ruins of Parthenon, Erectheum and Propylae over Acropolis Hill and admire Mars Hill, the place where Paul proclaimed to the Athenians about the one true God. On top of Acropolis Hill you will have a view to the Ancient Agora; the former center of the Athenian public life back in the days. A panoramic tour of the city will follow where you will see most of the important sites of the city; the National University, the National Library, the Academy of Athens, the Parliament House, the Panathenaic Stadium, the Adrian's Arch and the Temple of the Olympian Zeus. Farewell dinner in a tipycal greece restaurant. Return to our hotel for overnight.

Day 09 Return Home
Today we will say goodbye to Greece and transfer to the airport to fly back home.

THE PRICE INCLUDES:
Accommodation at 4* hotels, airconditioned, double room with private bathroom and porterage service.
Full-board (American breakfast and dinner in hotel, lunches in the restaurant)
Farewell dinner in typical restaurant in Athens;
Deluxe bus for the whole tour, tools and parking fees, driver's fullboard also included.
Professional guide / tour escort speaking Spanish and / or English;
Individual wireless audio system
Entrance fees to archeological sites and monuments as per program
Full assistance from our offices in Greece.

THE PRICE DOESN'T INCLUDE:
Intercontinental flights and taxes
Travel Insurance
Drinks, tips, personal extras,
City taxes (where available to be paid at the hotels);
Any other feature not mentioned under "the price includes".

We suggest possible extensions for Italy:
(click on the link for the itinerary)

Rome	3 days
Rome and Vatican City	4 days
Rome and Assisi	4 days
Rome and Naples	4 days
Rome and Florence	4 days
Rome and Medjugorie	6 days