

DISCOVERING THE CULINARY TREASURES OF GREECE

DISCOVERING THE CULINARY TREASURES OF GREECE is an 8-day journey to Athens, the Peloponnese, and Crete in May 2010, the most magical time of the year in Greece for witnessing and savoring the country's traditional food ways.

Participants will enjoy an insider's look at the culinary treasures of one of the Mediterranean's oldest and most healthful cuisines with well-known Greek food expert Diane Kochilas as your guide and with Yiorgos Kalostos, the organizational and creative force behind the culinary preservation program "Aegean Cuisine" and Managing Director, Center for Business and Technical Development for the S. Aegean.

In addition to two days in Athens at a top hotel in the heart of the city, participants will visit two of the most important food areas in Greece: The Peloponnese and Crete. Trip attendees will enjoy a wide range of culinary and cultural experiences, including:

- Hands-on and Demo classes with premiere Greek chefs and Diane Kochilas
- Visits and hands-on cooking classes inside local village homes, in both venues, for an incredible glimpse of the authentic country cooking of Greece
- Visits to acclaimed food artisans, including award-winning winemakers, cheese makers, beekeepers, fishermen, pasta makers, farmers, foragers, etc.
- Market tours
- Two lectures on the historical and nutritional facets of Greek cuisine, including a talk by world renowned physician-nutritionist Dr. Antonia Trichopoulou
- Visits to major historical and archeological sites
- Carefully structured menus that give the widest possible dining experiences, without repetition

Participants will be provided with:

- Contact information of all places and people visited
- Background material on Greek cuisine, wines, spirits, food products, etc.
- English language recipes of all foods and dishes sampled
- The GreekGourmetraveler magazine, pub. by Greek Foreign Trade Board
- Copy of the book Aegean Cuisine, by Diane Kochilas, pub. KETA S. Aegean
- List of restaurants, shops, and other points of interest for each venue, to facilitate independent exploration of each place
- Maps
- An apron or other culinary souvenir of the trip

Discovering the Culinary Treasures of Greece, covers all of the following components:

- Private cooking classes with emphasis on hands on culinary experience. This includes master chefs at well-known cooking schools, culinary museums, or historic venues.
- Recipes (in English) at demonstrations and hands on classes
- Behind the Scenes visits to food artisans (such as olive oil-makers, cheese-makers and other food producers), vintners, and local food markets (including retail and wholesale purveyors)
- Other areas of culinary interest unique to the region that offer "hands on" experiential learning with participatory demonstrations
- One meal that offers a unique or exceptional culinary experience, sometimes as part of the cooking class, sometimes as a separate experience
- Ample time (about three-quarters of the trip) devoted to culinary experiences and experiential learning; the rest to cultural tours and historical sightseeing as well as sufficient time for participants to explore each area independently.

Logistical proponents:

- 8 hotel nights plus 1 night in flight (arrival/departure flights)
- Double and single room occupancy at top, centrally located hotels, within walking distance of points of interest, with traditional Greek breakfast, excellent service, authentic ambience and architecture, etc
- Welcome night function by one of Athens' top chefs in a rooftop venue that offers the city's best view of the Acropolis

- At least one meal per day (exclusive of breakfast) as part of the program
- Farewell night gala with hospitality a la Grecque
- Ground transportation to and from all locations
- Air-conditioned coaches of appropriate size per location
- All gratuities
- Travel support (ticket confirmations, Meet & Greet services, portorage)
- Translations when required
- Buses and hotels outfitted with requirements for people with special needs
- Dates chosen not to overlap with major holidays

DISCOVERING THE CULINARY TREASURES OF GREECE / WORKING PROGRAM:

Day 1

Arrive Athens Monday, May 3, 2010

(Airport pickup, meet & greet, portorage services provided)

Monday: One night in Athens at the Electra Palace Hotel, or other, comparable, hotel, centrally located in downtown Athens.

Upon arrival, participants will receive a list of local points of interest, restaurant etc., to help them explore the area before the evening's activities.

Evening Welcome Reception and Dinner: Electra Palace Restaurant with chef Yiorgos Venieris. Stunning View of the Parthenon in the Background

Day 2 – 5/4/10

Tuesday

7.15-8.15 a.m. Traditional, Healthful Greek Breakfast at hotel.

8:30 – 13.00 visit to Acropolis and New, internationally acclaimed Acropolis Museum, with experienced tour guide

13.00 - Lunch and Lecture with Greek Academic/Writer at the Acropolis Museum. Subject: Continuity in Greek Cuisine, From Antiquity to the Present.

Lunch Theme: Ancient Ingredients, Modern Flavors Culinary

14.30 Return to hotel. Afternoon free to shop and roam around central Athens, Monastiraki, Plaka.

17.00 – Option of one of two activities:

A) Walking tour of the Central Market and Environs, with sample tastings of regional cheeses, olives, preserves, rusks, and more in various points along the way with Diane Kochilas

B) Cooking Class with Greece's Premiere Pastry Chef, Stelios Parliaros and Diane Kochilas. Theme: Honey, Olive Oil, Fruits, Nuts, and Grains: The Healthful Sweets of Greece

20.00 Evening free to roam and dine on own. List of restaurants and points of interest will be provided.

Day 3 – 5/5/10

Wednesday

7.00 -8.15 – Traditional Greek Breakfast

8.30 – Depart for Nafplion.

11.30 – Arrive Nafplion. Stay at Hotel Byron, a traditional hotel in the old city; or at a combination of very nearby traditional hotels, such as HotelMarianna or Pension Acronafplia.

11.30 – 15.30 Free time to walk around Nafplion, shop, etc. List of restaurants provided. Light lunch suggested, on own.

15.30 – Depart for Spyropoulos (Organic) Winery in Mantinea.

16.45 – Tour of Winery and Cooking Class with Diane Kochilas and local chefs/cooks. Half the group will tour the winery, while half takes a one hour class; then the groups will switch. One hour tour of winery.

Theme: The Olive Oil Based Dishes of the Peloponnese.

20.00 Dinner in the winery's gorgeous cellar or, weather permitting, outdoor grounds, based on dishes cooked in class, with vertical tasting of Skouras's prized wines.

22.30 – Return to Nafplion

Day 4 – 5/6/10

Thursday

7.30-8.30 Traditional Greek Breakfast

9.00 Depart for the traditional, exquisitely preserved village of Psari, in Arcadia.

10.30 Arrive at Psari. Here the group will break up into 2 or 4 smaller groups and rotate activities, which will include:

- traditional bread baking (cooking class)
- traditional savory pies of the Peloponnese and beyond (cooking class)
- vegetarian fare of the Peloponnese (cooking class)
- visit to local cheese maker (feta)
- visit to olive mill
- visit to local pasta and trahana maker

Day's activities will end at 15.00.

Lunch all together in local traditional taverna, with specialties the group helped make as well as other local fare.

17.00. Leave for Nafplion

18.30 Arrive back in Nafplion

Evening free to explore Greece's beautiful first capital. List of restaurants provided for dinner on own.

Day 5 – 5/7/10

Friday

Early a.m. wake up and breakfast.

8.15 Drive south to Laconia or Mani

10.30 – Arrive . Visit Organic Olive Oil facility and have tasting of local Peloponnese Extra Virgin Olive Oils with slide presentation , so that participants get a full sense of the Greek olive oil experience (at a time of year when the harvest and pressing are long over).

Light snack on premises: tea/coffee, olives and olive oil, rusks, olive oil biscuits, fruits, etc.

12.30 – Group disperses and is transported to local homes, 7-8 participants per home, for hands on cooking lesson with local cooks. Menus will include lots of greens, legumes, vegetables, whole grains, and more. 4 to 5 dishes per group in venues that are the epitome of Greek hospitality. Lunch locally in each home. Translators will be provided at each venue.

16.30 – drive back to Nafplion.

18.30 – Arrive Nafplion. Evening free to roam the city and dine on own.

Day 6 – 5/8/10

Saturday

7 a.m. Breakfast in Hotel

7.30 Departure for Athens Venizelos airport

10.30-11 a.m. arrival at airport.

1 p.m. departure for Hania.

14:30 Settle into Hotel Kydonia in old port of Chania.

15:30 Light lunch near the market in Hania.

17:45 Leave for Vamos

18:30 Afternoon Cooking Sessions in the traditional village of Vamos: Classic of the Healthful Cretan Family Table, with local home cooks, in their homes. The group will break up into 5-6 smaller groups for this.

Sample Menu:

- *Homemade Phyllo pastry and Homemade Cheese or Greens Pies; some fried in olive oil, others baked.*
- *Various Greens and Meat or Fish Stews*
- *Artichoke and Broad Bean Braised Dishes*
- *Goat or Lamb with Wild Greens*
- *Eggplants with Xinohondros (the Cretan Trahana)*
- *Pastry Fritters Drizzled with Honey and Nuts or Cheese-Filled - - Pastries Drizzled with Honey*

22:00 Pick up from Vamos and Return to Hania

Day 7 – 5/9/10

Sunday

7:30 – 8:30 Traditional Cretan Breakfast at Hotel (Barley rusks, local cheeses, yogurt, honey, fruits, trahana, etc.)

8:40 pick up – 9.15 arrival in mountains outside Hania.

Half the group will head to the mountains for a greens and herbs foraging experience with a local expert (and translator); the other half will head to a local beekeeper in the same vicinity, for a hands on experience re Greek, and especially Cretan, honey. Vertical tastings of honey will be part of the session.

11:00 Groups switch.

Light, healthful snacks will be available in both venues.

13:00 Depart for Nychterida restaurant in Suda

13.30 -15.00 Demo and Partial Hands-On Cooking Session with Cretan chef Dimitris Skarmoutsos and 2 other local cooks.

Theme: Translating Crete's Healthful Classics for the American Table

15.00 Lunch and Lecture at the restaurant with guest speaker Dr. Antonia Trichopoulou. Theme: Why the Traditional Greek/Cretan Diet is so Healthy (alternatively, this might be done in the hotel, upon returning from the class).

Sample Menu:

Dako (Cretan Barley Rusk with Grated Tomatoes, Herbs and Local Sheep's Milk Cheeses)

Classic and not-so classic Greek and Cretan Meze Dips

Octopus two ways

Cretan vegetable meze and main courses

The Creamiest Fava (yellow split pea puree) with Several Garnishes

Bougatsa (with a local pastry chef, in Nychterida's kitchen)

17:00 Depart for Hania

Evening free to roam the city. List of local restaurants will be provided.

Day 8 – 5/10/10

Monday

7:30 breakfast

8:30 Depart for Traditional Bakery in Hania for a sampling and Demo of the Making of Paximadia, Crete's famous barley and other grain-based rusks, one of the most ancient, healthful, easy, accessible Greek products.

10.00 Depart for Marathi, a traditional village by the sea.

Cooking Class and Demo: Delicious Fish and Seafood Dishes of Crete and Beyond.

Fish and Seafood lunch by the sea.

Depart for Hania at 14.30

Afternoon free to roam around.

19:00 Depart for Suda and Nychterida, where chef-owner and consummate host Babbis Mastoridis will provide a gala goodbye, complete with Cretan dancing for all.

Day 9 – 5/11/10

Tuesday

Depart early a.m. flight for Athens and home