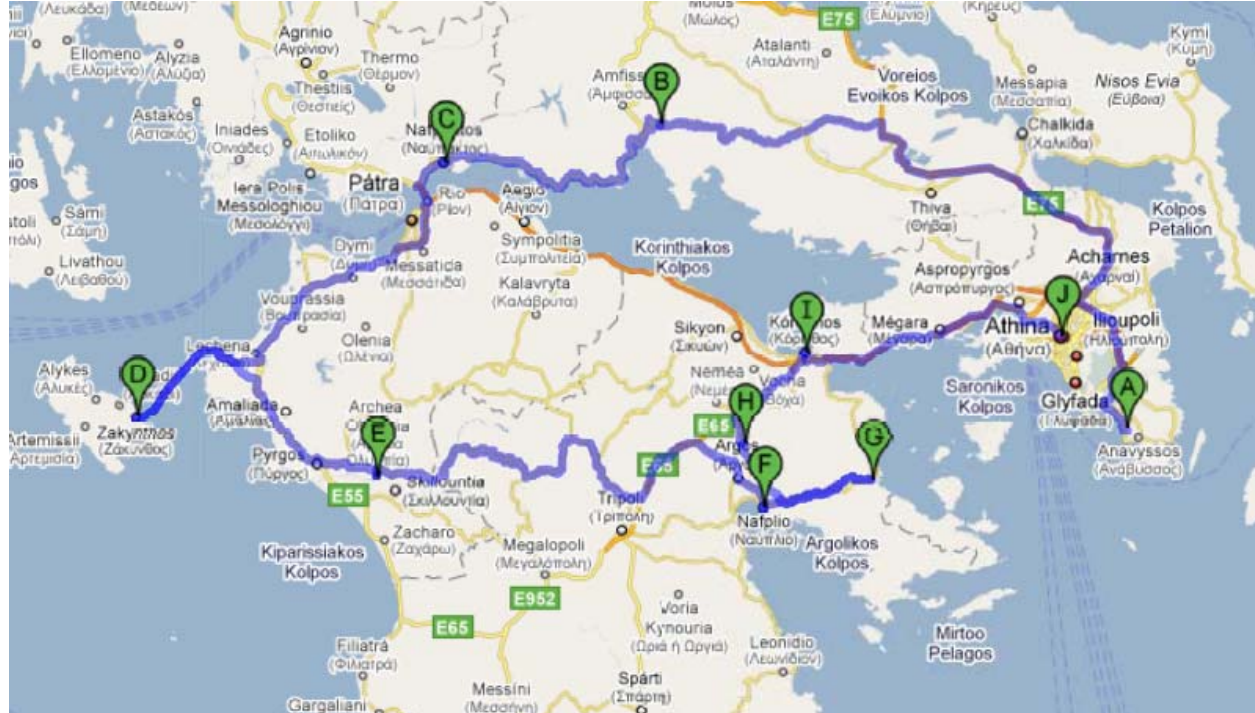


The Mainland

A 5-day tour to Delphi, Nafpaktos, Zakynthos, Olympia, Nafplion, Epidauros, Mycenae, Corinth, finishing with Athens

<http://web.mit.edu/manoli/www/gallery/peloponnese/peloponnese-frame.html>



1.1 Delphi

<http://web.mit.edu/manoli/www/gallery/delphi/delphi.html>

Delphi is one of the most important archaeological sites of Greece, and accordingly, it seems to appear in the itinerary of every traveler who is attracted to the oracle that influenced affairs in the known world for over a thousand years. Delphi was considered by the ancients to be the center (Omphalos = navel) of the world, and the oracle of Delphi was a religious center, most famous for its accurate predictions of the future. The oracles were given by Pythia, the priestess who muttered incomprehensible sounds in a state of trance, which in turn were translated in comprehensible language and give to those who made the pilgrimage in search of answers.

Today, Delphi is one of the most attractive archaeological sites of Greece. Its rich grounds and museum represent classical antiquity with such clarity even the uninitiated visitor can grasp. Its importance as an archaeological site, coupled with its location at an idyllic landscape makes it one of the most visited sites of Greece.

Highlights of the archaeological site of Delphi include the Temple of Apollo, the Tholos, the theater, the stadium, and the treasuries of the Athenians and the Syphnias.

The temple of Apollo appears in ruinous state in the center of the sanctuary. Only a few of its Doric columns remain standing, but its imposing foundations are a visible reminder of the Temple's splendor in ancient times. The present ruins of the temple date back to the 4th c. BCE.

The Tholos must be one of the most-photographed monuments of Greece, and it has become the trademark image that represents Delphi in many people's minds.

<http://www.greeklandscapes.com/greece/delphi.html>

Getting to Delphi: By car, to reach Delphi from Athens it takes about one hour and thirty minutes. Drive north on E75, and then east through Livadia towards Itea. While the drive in the first hour is boring and uneventful, it becomes a bit more spectacular as the road climbs Mt. Parnasos and passes through the winter resort of Arachova. Delphi can be easily be part of a day trip from Athens, but should you need a place to stay overnight, the nearby town of Arachova offers a variety of clean and inexpensive accommodations during the summer.

1.2 Nafpaktos

Nafpaktos is a small historical and picturesque town 216 km. from Athens. It's built amphitheatrically on the side of a hill, which lies on the sea opposite to the Peloponnese between Delphi and Olympia. The old town situated in the Walls has kept its own style, its old face.

<http://picasaweb.google.com/manolik/PeloponeseXAchaia#>

<http://www.greek-tourism.gr/nafpaktos/indexuk.htm>

1.3 Zakynthos

Zakynthos or Zante is an enchanting island of incomparable natural beauty part of the Ionian Islands. It's not without a reason that the caretta-caretta turtles have chosen some of its magnificent beaches to lay their eggs. It has beautiful sandy beaches with crystalline waters which attract thousands of visitors every year. It is also famous for the endangered species of the sea turtle Caretta-Caretta which comes during the reproduction period to lay their eggs on the soft golden sand beaches of the island.

<http://www.zakynthos.net.gr/>

<http://web.mit.edu/manoli/www/gallery/zakynthos/zakynthos-frame.html>

<http://www.greeka.com/ionian/zakynthos/zakynthos-excursions.htm>

1.4 Olympia

Olympia Greece was the site of the ancient Olympic Games, which were celebrated every four years by the Greeks.

Olympia is located about 300 km from Athens and whichever route you choose to take, it will be an unforgettable journey. You travel across Peloponnese, through forested mountains, olive groves, vineyards and orchards. We recommend you stop at one of the beautiful, traditional villages to taste the local delicacies. If you choose the seaside route, you will pass through lovely villages built by the ocean. You should not miss the opportunity to see the majestic sandy beaches and the deep blue waters of the Corinthiakos and Patraikos gulfs.

<http://picasaweb.google.com/manolik/PeloponeseIOlympia#>

1.5 Nafplion

Old Nafplion is one of the most beautiful towns in Greece. The former capital of Greece may remind visitors of the Plaka but it's on the sea. With two mountains crowned by medieval fortresses overlooking the town and the small island fortress called the Bourtzi that once

protected the harbor, Nafplion is full of restaurants, shops, cafes, beautiful old buildings, hotels of all categories and a beach that you can walk to in ten minutes. For people who want to visit an island but don't like boats, Nafplion is a good alternative and just a 2 hour drive from Athens. It is also convenient to the important ancient sites of Mycenaee, Epidavros, Nemea, Argos and Corinth.

The town dates back to antiquity and this is why this historic town is thronged with tourists, who come here to catch a glimpse of the age-old relics that are testaments to its rich cultural past. The city is surrounded by small pristine villages, archeological sites and imposing fortresses dating back to the Byzantine Era. Elements of Venetian, Neo-Classical and Islamic architecture can be found in the churches, mosques, museums and buildings located in the area of the Old town. The Venetian architecture is also visible in the two famous fortresses of Nafplion, Palamidi and Bourtzi.

<http://www.greeka.com/peloponnese/nafplion/nafplion-excursions.htm>

1.6 Epidauros

Epidauros Theater is one of the most important ancient sites in Greece, with an almost perfectly preserved amphitheatre built 2,500 years ago and still hosting Greek dramas today. The World Heritage listed site is located at the eastern end of the Peloponnese, 62 kilometers south of the Corinthian Canal. Visitors come here by on day trips from Athens and when performances are held in the theatre during the annual Hellenic Festival Epidauros become one of the major cultural venues in Greece. According to Greek mythology Epidauros was the birthplace of Asclepius, the god of healing and son of Apollo. The site later became one of the most important centers of healing in the ancient world and by the 4th century BC the sick were travelling from far and wide to seek medical and mystical cures at the sanctuary dedicated to Asclepius.

<http://www.greeklandscapes.com/greece/epidaurus.html>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epidauros>

1.7 Mycenae

Mycenae is one of the most important ancient cities of Greece; it is the great city and Palace of King Agamemnon. The ruins of the Mycenaean Acropolis themselves are a delight. The awe inspiring "Lion Gates" (the earliest known piece of monumental sculpture in the European continent) take you to the interior of the acropolis, and a steep path leads your climb through several ancient buildings and pathways, towards the palace where Agamemnon was murdered by his wife Clytemnestra and her lover after he returned victorious from the Trojan War.

<http://www.greeklandscapes.com/greece/mycenae.html>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mycenae>

1.8 Acrokorinth

Don't miss the castle of Acrokorinthos, with a 360 degree view of mountains and sea around. It was built by the Venetians in the 13th century to protect the area of Isthmos. It is built in the site of the ancient acropolis of Korinthos, on a hill overlooking the town. The excavations began in 1929 and today it is one of the most important medieval castles in Greece.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acrocorinthus>

2.0 Athens

Athens has a myriad museums and things to see (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Athens>), but we only recommend spending a day at most, as it is pretty hot in summer. Here are a few highlights not to miss.

2.1 Acropolis

2500 years of history, one of the most famous monuments of the world! A must see!

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acropolis_of_Athens

http://odysseus.culture.gr/h/3/eh351.jsp?obj_id=2384

2.2 Acropolis Museum

The newly opened architectural wonder at the foot of the acropolis. Book online for 5 Euros, and make sure to reserve in advance! Really worth a visit.

<http://www.theacropolismuseum.gr/default.php?pname=Timetables&la=2>

2.3 Plaka

Walking around the pedestrian streets and shops at the foot of the acropolis is a worthwhile experience. Great place to get souvenirs from your travels.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plaka>

2.3 Mont Lycabetus

A cute monastery and a 360 degree view from the heart of Athens are two of the treats you'll get climbing up, but the journey is also worth it. You can walk up for the exercise, or take a little train from the Kolonaki side of the hill.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lycabetus>

2.4 Kolonaki

The 'Gucci' neighborhood of Athens, filled with little coffee shops and fashion shops. Great place to stroll and grab a frappe after visiting the Lykabetus.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kolonaki>

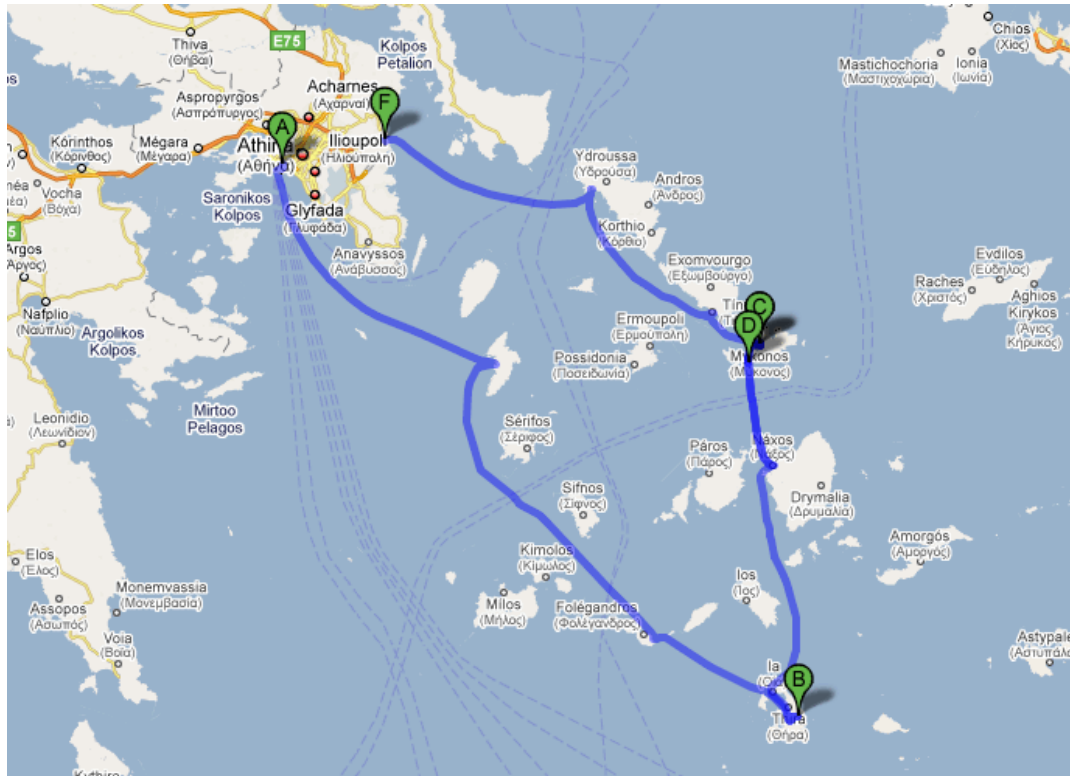
2.5 Parliament, Tsoliades, and changing of the guard

A short walk from Kolonaki takes through the National Garden and tiny zoo to the Parliament place and the changing of the guard. Great place to catch "Tsoliades" in their traditional costumes.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evzones>

The Islands

3 days in Santorini and 2 days in Mykonos/Delos, two of the most breathtaking islands of our planet



1. Santorini

Oia sunset: Oia is the most famous of all villages of Santorini. It is known throughout the world for its quiet life and fantastic sunset, and is certainly the most beautiful and picturesque village of Santorini.

Caldera walk from Fira to Oia: The Santorini Caldera undoubtedly is one of the natural wonders on planet earth. The volcanic explosion that occurred here more than 3500 years ago changed forever the topography of the Mediterranean coast.

Tour to the Volcano & hot springs: Two islets of black lava, the youngest islets in the Eastern Mediterranean, a crater and hot springs from the volcano of Santorini. This volcano was mentioned by the National Geographic magazine under the title "Doomsday Volcano".

Tour to Thirasia Island: Thirasia is a small island just opposite Oia village. It is a remote place with untouched nature and very few inhabitants.

Red & Black beach: The Red Beach, or Kokkini Paralia, is one of the most famous and beautiful of the beaches of Santorini. It is located near the village and ancient site of Akrotiri

Minoan city of Akrotiri, South of Fira: This Minoan settlement is one of the main attractions of Santorini. It is one of the most important archaeological sites of Greece and maybe of the whole world...

Donkey Rides In Fira and Oia

<http://wikitravel.org/en/Santorini>

<http://web.mit.edu/manoli/www/gallery/santorini/santorini-frame.html>

<http://www.greeka.com/cyclades/santorini/santorini.htm>



2. Mykonos

2.1 Delos Tour (Day trip from Mykonos)

The island of Delos is one of the most important mythological, historical and archaeological sites in Greece. It is the most important sacred area of the ancient world. It reveals a history of 3000 years. According to mythology, Delos is the birthplace of Apollo, god of music, of true and light, and his twin sister Artemis, goddess of hunting. The excavations in the island are among the most extensive in the Mediterranean. By the time of the Odyssey the island was already famous as the birthplace of the twin gods Apollo and Artemis. Delos had a position as a holy sanctuary for a millennium before Olympian Greek mythology made it the birthplace of Apollo and Artemis. From its Sacred Harbor, the horizon

shows the two conical mounds (image below) that have identified landscapes sacred to a goddess in other sites: one, retaining its archaic name Mount Kynthos, is crowned with a sanctuary of Dionysus. Established as a cult centre, Delos had an importance that its natural resources could never have offered. Between 900 BC and AD 100, sacred Delos was a major cult centre, where Dionysus is also in evidence as well as the Titaness Leto, mother of the above mentioned twin deities. Eventually acquiring Pan-Hellenic religious significance, Delos was initially a religious pilgrimage for the Ionians.

<http://www.greeka.com/cyclades/mykonos/island/mykonos-tours/m01-tour-to-delos/gallery.htm>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Delos>

2.2 Mykonos Little Venice

Little Venice is one of the most romantic place in the whole of Mykonos. The neighborhood of Little Venice is replete with elegant and gorgeous old houses that are situated precariously on the edge of the sea. Many have fallen in love with this charming neighborhood of Mykonos due to its magnetic appeal. Especially amazing is the sunset views from Little Venice. Its whitewashed edifices against the backdrop of the azure blue Aegean Sea are simply marvelous. The air of nonchalance that prevails in Little Venice disarms the most discerning of travelers. Little Venice is one of the most romantic place in the whole of Mykonos. Little Venice evolved from the picturesque Alevkantra beach and extends right into the peripheral areas of Kastro.

<http://www.greeka.com/cyclades/mykonos/mykonos-villages/mykonos-town/little-venice.htm>

2.3 Mykonos Little Venice Sunset view

2.4 Paradise Beach

Paradise Beach on the tiny Greek island Mykonos is one of the hottest beaches in the world. Decadence and hedonism are at display here throughout the summer season. The famous beach is nice and flat. There is a huge selection of popular bars playing music located on the beach. From late afternoon the party "takes off" and the beach guests starts dancing on the beach and in the bars.

2.5 The Windmills and Chora

<http://www.greeka.com/cyclades/mykonos/mykonos.htm>

