

**Fr. Bohdan and Dobr. Tania Hladio**

**Pilgrimage Tour of Greece**

**May, 2020**

**Friday, May 15<sup>th</sup>**

Depart Pearson International Airport in Toronto on AC 1900 at 1640.

**Saturday, May 16<sup>th</sup>**

Arrival at Athens airport at 0920 and transfer **in private** with English Speaking Assistant to the **Titania (4\*)** hotel (<http://www.titania.gr>). Check-in, free afternoon/evening (*optional walking tour for orientation purposes*). Overnight at the hotel.

**Day 2, Athens Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> of May**

Morning: Liturgy at a local Church (*note: In Greece services always begin with Matins at 7 AM, followed immediately [~8:30 AM] by the Liturgy, which finishes by 10 AM*). Participants are welcome to attend wherever they like. Breakfast will be available at the hotel for us until approximately 11:30 AM.

At approximately noon we depart by air conditioned coach on a private city tour. We will be seeing the Panathinaikon Stadium; the city's center, Syntagma Square with the House of Parliament and the monument to the Unknown Soldier. The University avenue that follows is full of Neoclassical palaces and buildings, the fine house of Heinrich Schliemann, the impressive National Academy, the conservative State University of Athens and the very rich and symmetrical National Library. We then continue on to Omonia Sq., then the fine Temple of Zeus with its Corinthian pillars and the Arch of the Emperor Hadrian where we will have a guided visit inside the archeological area. After this we will visit the Acropolis. The six million-year old (geological age) high point of ancient Athens was, for the first time, fortified in the Mycenaean's times and served as a sanctuary of the Greek goddess Athena. We will visit the Nike Wingless temple, the Erechtheion, the Propylea and the very impressive Parthenon.

Free evening. Overnight at hotel

**Day 3, Athens Monday 18<sup>th</sup> of May**

Breakfast at hotel. Free Day (*optional walking tour of the Plaka and Monastiraki areas in the morning*).

Overnight

**Day 4, Athens-Kalambaka Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> of May**

Breakfast. Free morning. At approximately 12 noon we depart the hotel for our tour of **Meteora**, passing the Thessalian Plain, the granary of Greece. After arrival short visit of the village of Kalambaka. **Dinner & Overnight** at the **Amalia Hotel (4\*)** (<http://www.amaliahotelkalambaka.gr>) in Kalambaka.

**Day 5 Kalambaka-Santorini-Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> of May**

Breakfast at Hotel.

Today we will see one of the most amazing places in Greece – Meteora. Meaning ‘suspended in air’ the name Meteora soon came to encompass the entire rock community of 24 monasteries, the biggest and most important group of monasteries in Greece after those in Mount Athos. There were no steps and the main access to the monasteries was by means of a net that was hitched over a hook and hoisted up by rope and a hand cranked windlass to winch towers overhanging the chasm. Monks descended in the nets or on retractable wooden ladders up to 40m long to the fertile valleys below to grow grapes, corn and

potatoes. The rock monasteries have been designated by UNESCO as a unique phenomenon of cultural heritage.

We will visit two monasteries. After our visits we will drive to Athens international airport, from which we will take an evening flight to Santorini. After arriving on the island - private transfer to **El Greco (4\*)** hotel (<https://elgreco.com.gr>). Overnight.

#### **Day 6 Santorini Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> of May**

Breakfast at Hotel. After breakfast we depart for our island tour in private with English Speaking guide. We will drive through the traditional village of Pyrgos in order to reach the mountain of Prophet Elias, short stop for panoramic photos from the highest spot of the island near the monastery. Next stop for wine tasting, at the heart of the island, in a local winery with magnificent view of the Caldera and the volcanic islands. You will have the opportunity to taste wines from the world famous “terroir” of Santorini. Free time for shopping wines and local products. After our wine experience we will drive north passing the villages of Firostefani and Imerovigli, in order to visit the traditional village of Oia, the most famous village of Santorini. Walk through the narrow streets among the whitewashed houses and the blue domed churches, to see the famous sunset. After sunset **dinner** in a local tavern. After dinner we return to the hotel.

#### **Day 7 Santorini, Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> of May**

Breakfast. Free day for personal activities. Overnight and **dinner** at hotel.

#### **Day 8 Santorini-Heraklion, Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> of May**

Breakfast. After noon (*time dependent upon 2020 Ferry Schedule*) pick up from the hotel and private transfer to port to take the ferry to Heraklion.

Arrival to Heraklion and private transfer to the **Olive Green (4\*)** (<https://www.olivegreenhotel.com>) hotel. Overnight.

#### **Day 9 Heraklion Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> of May**

Morning Liturgy in Heraklion at Agios Titos Cathedral (a four minute walk from the hotel). Breakfast will be available for us at the hotel till 11 AM.

Afternoon tour (1400 – 2000 hrs.): wine tasting at a wine cellar in Heraklion; then a visit to an olive oil growing and production facility in Ag. Nikolaos for 45 minutes. **Dinner** at a coastal restaurant in the area of Ag. Nikolaos. After dinner return to hotel.

#### **Day 10 Heraklion-Chania Monday 25<sup>th</sup> of May**

Breakfast at hotel. After breakfast we will walk to the Archaeological Museum (5 minute walk), which houses a unique collection of artifacts from the Minoan civilization the displays of idols made of terra cotta, marble and alabaster, collections of gold, jewelry, ivory, figurines, sarcophagi and frescoes will give you an insight into this artistic-minded civilization and complement your visit to Knossos.

Our bus will pick us up from the museum and we will be driven to Knossos, the ancient capital of the great king Minos. The original palace of Knossos was constructed around 1.900 B.C. Some two-hundred years later it was destroyed by an earthquake and rebuilt on a grander scale. The final catastrophe occurred around 1.500-1.450 B.C. with the eruption of the volcano in Santorini. Despite this blow, people continued to live there for another fifty years, until a fire swept throughout the city circa 1.400 B.C.

After visiting the Palace we depart by bus for Chania. Check-in at the **Hotel Kydon (4\*)** (<https://www.kydonhotel.com>). Free evening (*optional walking tour for orientation purposes*).

### **Day 11 Chania Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> of May**

Breakfast at hotel. After breakfast we will have a full day tour of the area east of Chania, including Akrotir and Agia Triada Tsagarolon. Return to hotel. Free evening.

### **Day 12 Chania Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> of May**

Breakfast at Hotel. Guided walking tour of the Old City of Chania including the Venetian harbor and its many cafés and restaurants, museums, churches, Minoan excavations, narrow alleys with picturesque houses, the famous lighthouse, the covered market and many shops, some of which offer very interesting products. Among other points of interest we will visit the Byzantine and Venetian fortifications; the Venetian harbor; the Chania lighthouse; the mosque of the Janissaries; the covered market.

### **Day 13 Chania Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> of May**

Breakfast at hotel. Pick up from hotel and transfer to Monastery of Chisopigi to attend the liturgy. Return to hotel, free afternoon.

At night farewell **dinner** with traditional food and music in the Old City.

### **Day 14 Chania Friday 29<sup>th</sup> of May**

At the convenient time pick up from hotel and depart to the airport. We will depart Chania for Athens on the most convenient flight. Our return flight to Toronto is AC 1901, departing Athens at 1245 and arriving in Toronto at 1645.

#### NOTES:

1. *Participants from outside of the Toronto area are encouraged to consult our travel agency when booking their connecting flights into Toronto.*
2. *There is a fair amount of walking involved. Participants should be able to walk one kilometre at a medium pace without becoming winded.*
3. *The schedule includes opportunities for sightseeing, visiting Churches and Monasteries, and free time. During the free time participants may choose to visit places of personal interest (e.g., the Byzantine, Benaki, or Acropolis Museums in Athens; the caldera in Santorini; one of the many gorges of Crete, etc.) or simply to relax.*
4. *Dress code when visiting Monasteries or Churches is modest length skirt for women and long pants for men, both men and women should wear shirts/blouses which cover their shoulders.*
5. *It is strongly recommended that participants obtain cancellation insurance as well as out of country medical insurance. This can be arranged through the travel agency.*
6. *Details of the itinerary are subject to change.*

Cost of tour: \$4,495 per person, double occupancy. A \$1,000 non-refundable deposit is due upon reservation, with the balance to be paid by 1 March 2020. Tour cost does not include gratuities nor lunches. Breakfast is included daily, and dinners as per the itinerary.

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To reserve your spot on this tour please contact Nick Dimitrakopoulos at *Mr. Travel* by e-mail at [nick@mrtravel.ca](mailto:nick@mrtravel.ca), or by telephone at 416.461.2424 or 1.800.339.9891.