

Gastronomical Tour Greece – Group of Chefs Athens, Meteora and Thessaloniki From the 15th to the 22nd of January 2024 8 Days – 7 Nights

ITINERARY

DAY 0 – FLIGHT TO ATHENS (Sunday 14/01/2024)

23h45: Departure from the US (Newark Liberty, New York (EWR), NJ - Terminal B) to Athens (overnight in plane) – **Flight number: EMIRATES EK0210**

DAY 1 – ARRIVAL ATHENS (Monday 15/01/2024)

16h00: Arrival in Athens from New York & transfer to the hotel escorted by your host **Alexander Randan** who will escort the group during its entire stay (from A to Z).

±17h30: Arrival & check-in at **ELIA ERMOU HOTEL 4***
(Ermou 15-17, Athena 105 63)

Free time to relax & shower before our first **culinary experience in Athens**

19h00: Departure transfer from the hotel towards our first meeting point

- Meetings with our chef host **Marina** at the wine bar **TANINI**. We will try 5 different Greek local wines, pairing them with local cheeses. At the same place, with the help of Marina, we will experience a **quick cooking demo** on how to make the famous “**Tirokafteri**”. A traditional **spicy Greek Dip** made by Greek local cheeses.
- We will continue **walking** (around 15 minutes walk) towards the **bohemian area** of **Exarchia** in order to have our welcome dinner. **Dinner** at **PHARAOH** restaurant accompanied by 3 local wines. An amazing local experience which is away from the touristic part of the city. Our dinner will be made **by local flavors** in a wood fire cooking at a funky vibe restaurant. A lot had already been circling around between foodies for this particular place, as each of its four owners has a story to tell. **Manolis Papoutsakis**, famous chef from Thessaloniki made it to Athens, meeting wine expert

Perry Panagiotakopoulos, famous baritone **Dimitris Platanias** and renowned journalist **Fotis Vallatos**. The result? A funky wine bar restaurant with excellent music, traditional Greek dishes with a gentle twist and a hip crowd enough to make it a fun night out.

23h00: Return transfer to the hotel after our dinner always escorted by Alex

Overnight in **Athens**

DAY 2 – VARVAKEION MARKET, ATHENS FOOD TOUR & GASTRA

Buffet Breakfast at the hotel

09h30-13h30: Taste **Athens Food Walking Tour**

During this alternative food tour we will experience and visit the following locations:

- 1st stop at “**The Naxos Apothecary**” to learn about **Greek botany**, how it’s used in different pies and Greek cuisine. The Naxos Apothecary offers exclusive herbal blends, as well as **Greek mocktails** and cocktails designed by Popi Sevastos, known from the Nolan and Proveleggios bars. Climbing the stairs at the back we will reach the Herbal Tea Room, which houses more than **130 herbs** and super foods, including unknown herbs of **Naxos** and **rare roots**. Herbal teas and Pie **tasting** will have its honors.
- We will continue with the visit of **Varvakeion Market** (Meat, Fish and spices market)
- **Demonstration** at Varvakeion Market – Different cuts of fish, creation of “Greek Sushi” / Meat, etc. **live cooking experience** on a customized area of the market. We will taste **local dishes** and the chefs will have the opportunity to be involved on the live cooking demonstration. **Lunch** will follow at an amazing place next to the market.
- Continuation with the visit of **an authentic, traditional, dairy-products patisserie**, dating back to **1931** (tasting of Masticha yogurt, Ice cream, Galaktoboureko) – “**Stani**” is intended for those discerning palates that are nostalgic of true taste as it once was.

13h45-14h45: After lunch, **Panoramic Tour of Athens** by private bus escorted by your professional English speaking guide **IRENE ALEXOPOULOU**. Visit of the highlights sites of **Athens**, quick photo stop at the **Panathenaic Stadium**.

15h00-16h00: Visit of the **Acropolis**

16h30-17h45: Visit of the **new Acropolis museum**

17h30: Return transfer to the hotel after the museum. Arrival at the hotel around **±18h00**

Free time for one hour

19h00: Transfer towards a close village of Athens (40 minutes drive), named **RODOPOLI**

20h00-22h00: Dinner at **VLACHIKI GASTRA**, where we will experience one of the only places cooking still with the **old fashioned** way of **clay casseroles** where no electricity is needed. Visit of the place together with the owner and chef, he will explain the technique and of course we will **have traditional lamb with potatoes** cooked for hours in the clay casserole. Other plates will be served. After dinner we will have **traditional schnapps** made by the owner's daughters like **ARBARORIZA** and other flavors. We will also visit the **small cellar** of the owner and taste some of his **homemade wine** just underneath the restaurant. The owner's daughter will also explain how her father makes the famous "**spoon sweets**" of Greece.

22h00: Return transfer to the hotel always escorted by Alex

Overnight in **Athens**

[DAY 3 – MARKELLOS OLIVE / SKOURAS WINERY / ATHENS \(17/01/2024\)](#)

Buffet Breakfast at the hotel

08h30: Departure towards the Peloponnese always escorted by your host Alex Randan

10h00-11h30: Visit of the olive oil domain of **MARKELLOS** in Corinth for an advanced **olive oil tour & tasting** - including a **virtual reality presentation** of the harvest. Four generations of family tradition in extra virgin olive oil production, is unveiled in front of you! Walk around the **old olive groves**, where the first olive tree of the family was planted by the great grandfather Dimitris. Step into the ancestors' paths, on the ancient **Solygeia soils** where the sacred olive tree has survived through the centuries!

11h30: Continuation towards **Skouras Winery** in Nemea **region**

12h30-13h00 - Arrival at the **winery and tour** in the facilities

13h00-14h30 - **Cooking Class** with chef **COSTAS PAPASTAMATIS** in the domain itself

Below you will find some of the dishes that we are going to prepare during the cooking:

- ❖ Salad
- ❖ Appetizer: Black eye bean salad with tarama mousse, salami and kalamari
- ❖ Main course: Cabbage rolls with ground beef, aromatic herbs, rice and egg lemon sauce & 'Giouvetsi beef'- Slowly cooked caramelized beef baked in the oven with 'Hilopita' pasta
- ❖ Dessert: Orange pie with chocolate ganache

± **14h30-16h30** - Food and wine pairing

- ❖ Salad Wine - Salto
- ❖ Appetizer Wine - Peplo

- ❖ Main Course Wine - Megas Oenos
- ❖ Dessert wine - Titanas

16h45 - Departure from the winery

±18h30: Arrival at the hotel

20h15: Departure walking from the hotel (around 10 minutes walk) for our dinner in **Athens city centre**

20h30: Dinner at **OINOSCENT** followed by local wines.

22h00: Return to the hotel always escorted by Alex

Overnight in **Athens**

DAY 4 – MARKET & CHALVA / COOKING WITH MARIA/ DINNER ALERIA **(Thursday 18/01/2024)**

Buffet Breakfast at the hotel

09h00: Departure from the hotel always escorted by your host Alex Randan

09h30-10h30: Quick stop at another important Market of **Attica Area**. Stop at the local store inside the market “**MEZEKLIKIA**” to try **some traditional cold cuts** and traditional schnapps like “**Tsipouro Psimeno**”. “Mezeklikia” inside the vegetable Market, is half a delicatessen and half restaurant where amazing and **rare Greek products** can be found.

11h00-12h30: Continuation, visit and tasting of the famous **Halva of DRAPETSONA**. It may be considered an exaggeration, but many consider Drapetsonas halva to be the best halva in the world. At times there have been many eutrapelas and a lot of overcrowding in trying to get halva customers from all over Greece.

- ❖ 1924 – The workshop is opened by Kostas Mezardasoglou, from Asia Minor, who settled in Drapetsona after the Catastrophe. Giorgos Mazardas - Kostas' son - slowly takes over the workshop, learning the work alongside his father.
- ❖ 1984 – Giorgos collaborates with Eumorfios Kosmidis.
- ❖ 1986 – George's place is taken by Nikolaos Gavrilis, also from Asia Minor.
- ❖ 2002 – Emmorfios Kosmidis retires. Nikolaos Gavrilis maintains the "unique" shop.

13h00-16h30: **Cooking class activity** with our local **chef Maria** at a traditional tavern followed by a **traditional lunch** with all the cooked goods.

16h30: Return walking to the hotel – (around 15 minutes walk)

17h00-19h00: Free time to discover the city centre by its own means

19h30: Transfer towards the restaurant of our dinner

20h00-22h00: Dinner at the awarded restaurant **ALERIA**

Aleria opened its doors in 2006 in Metaxourgeio neighbourhood, located in the heart of Athens. Owner, Nikiforos Kechagiadakis, discovered this neoclassical gem of the 19th century and immediately felt that this was the ideal place to house Aleria, a place where the comforting feeling of home would meet a sophisticated fine dining atmosphere, where guests would relax and enjoy a unique gastronomical experience.

22h15: Return transfer to the hotel

Overnight in **Athens**

DAY 5 – ATHENS / TRUFFLE HUNT METEORA / MONASTERIES

(Friday 19/01/2024)

Buffet Breakfast at the hotel and check out

07h30: Departure for Kalambaka (Journey 355 km – journey time 4h30 + 1 stop for rest).

±12h00-15h00: Arrival in **Kalambaka** where we start our **truffle hunt activity** in the forests of the region (40-minute journey on foot). In the beautiful unknown forests of the region, a short distance from Kalambaka, the chefs can enjoy an unprecedented truffle hunt, taste a **pasta recipe, cook with truffles** and learn about **mushrooms**. With the help of an awarded trained dog we will succeed to find the best truffles of the region

Cooking demonstration and lunch during the activity (cooking in the forest)

15h30-17h30: Visit one of the most famous monastery of **Meteora**, "suspended in the air", built at the top of gigantic rock towers which suddenly arise in the plain of Thessaly escorted by your licensed English guide **DOMINIKI KALAFATI**

18h00: Arrival & check-in at **GRAND METEORA 5***

(Kastraki Kalmpaka, Kastraki 422 00)

Buffet Dinner (drinks not included) at the hotel

Overnight in **Kalambaka**

DAY 6 – KALAMBAKA DEPARTURE / THESSALONIKI (Saturday 20/01/24)

Buffet Breakfast at the hotel and check out

08h30: Departure towards **Thessaloniki** (230km trip) escorted by your host Alex Randan

±12h00: Arrival in Thessaloniki and check-in at **CITY HOTEL 4***

(Konninon 11, Thessaloniki 546 24)

12h30: Meeting with our chef/culinary expert **SMARAGDA MAKRI** at the lobby. Smaragda is a passionate cook that has studied at **École Ritz Escoffier** and food has always determined her since a little girl. Wine connoisseur, as she owns a wine L3 Hestia diploma from Wspc and has recently become a honey sensory analyst. She loves to taste and explore the unique Greek honeys.

Departure towards the master of **BOUGATSA** the traditional desert of Thessaloniki. **Demonstration** on how the air Filo is opened in the traditional way. After our visit we continue towards the center of the city. We **split into 2 groups** for the **walk through MONDIANO and the other 2 food markets**. We will meet again all together at the end at the **OUZERI** where we will have **our late lunch / dinner** as during the tour we will of course be **tasting several products** to fill up our stomachs.

Tasting spots during the tour:

- ❖ Bougatsa master class
- ❖ Sweets of the spoon (different local flavours)
- ❖ Platter of cheeses and other local goodies with a shot of tsipouro
- ❖ Tasting of 3 different types of honey in a coffee shop
- ❖ 1 Wine tasting in one of the markets with a side dish
- ❖ **Late lunch/dinner:** Ouzeri: 3 first + aged fish, roe, salad, grilled fresh squid and seasonal fish, followed by Vidiano or Assyrtiko wine

Return **walking** after the meal to the hotel escorted by Alex Randan

- ❖ **Please note that no other meal is included after the end of the tour as the activity is going to finish quiet late and most of the group will be probably full enough.**

Overnight in **Thessaloniki**

DAY 7 – THESSALONIKI VISITS / COOKING CLASS WITH SMARAGDA

(Sunday 21/01/24)

Buffet Breakfast at the hotel

09h00-13h00: Panoramic Tour of Thessaloniki: Visit of the upper city (walls, citadel of the Heptapyrgion, the Church of Ossios David, St. George) & of the lower city (St. Nikolas of the Orphans, the Arch & the palace of Galerius, the Roman market - the ancient agora & the Roman baths, then the churches of Prophitis Illias, Saint Demeter & Saint Sophia). **Walking tour** to learn about the history of the city escorted by your professional **English speaking guide DIMITRIS SARMANIOTIS**

13h30-15h30: Lunch at the excellent **sea food** restaurant **MAYRI THALASSA**

Mavri Thalassa (which means Black Sea) is a destination for gourmands, an irresistible culinary experience that brings **seafood gastronomy** to Thessaloniki. On a continuous quest for excellence, it fuses the old with the new, the timeless with the modern, and the local with the universal.

Return transfer to the hotel after lunch and free time (for about 01 h 30')

17h00: Transfer from the hotel towards the restaurant where we will have our **private cooking demonstration** and **farewell dinner with Smaragda.**

Some of the plates during the cooking:

- ❖ Trahana soup with 3 types of mushrooms and roasted pine nuts
- ❖ Politiki Salad (traditional of Thessaloniki)
- ❖ Smyrna soutzoukaki with red sauce served with traditional local pasta
- ❖ Halva with orange slices and cinnamon in the oven

We will taste several plates:

- ❖ yapraki", i.e. dolmades with minced meat and egg lemon, fava with pita
- ❖ We will also taste local stuffed cabbage leaves or stuffed zucchini
- ❖ Dessert
- ❖ 1 ouzo
- ❖ 2 glasses of white bulk **Koniordos**

Return Transfer to the hotel after the dinner

Overnight in **Thessaloniki**

DAY 8: THESSALONIKI / DEPARTURE DAY (Monday 22/01/2024)

Buffet Breakfast at the hotel and check out

09h00: Departure transfer from the hotel to the **airport of Thessaloniki** always escorted by **Alexander Randan & Véronique**

09h20: Arrival at the airport and assistance with the check-in formalities

11h20: Flight Departure towards **Athens**











❖ **Flight Number: A30111 / From: Macedonia, Thessaloniki (SKG), Greece / To: Intl Eleftherios Venizelos, Athens (ATH), Greece**











12h15: Arrival in **Athens** International Airport

Free time at the airport until the departure flight towards the USA

17h10: Flight Departure towards **New York** – **Flight number: EMIRATES EK0209**
End of our services

INCLUDED IN THE PROGRAM:

- 4 nights in Athens, at **ELIA ERMOU HOTEL 4***
- 1 night in Meteora, at **GRAND METEORA 5***
- 2 nights in Thessaloniki, at **CITY HOTEL 4***
- Buffet Breakfast included at all the hotels according to the program
- **DAY 1:**
 -  The tasting of 5 wines and several cheeses + demo cooking at TANINI wine bar
 -  The dinner at PHARAOH restaurant together with 3 local wines
- **DAY 2:**
 -  The food tour/lunch in Athens escorted by a local food expert as mentioned above
 -  The Panoramic Tour of Athens
 -  The Acropolis + Acropolis museum tickets
 -  The licensed English speaking guide + headphones during the visits
 -  The dinner at VLACHIKI GASTRA restaurant
- **DAY 3:**
 -  The visit at MARKELLOS OLIVE OIL DOMAIN
 -  The visit, wine tasting, cooking & lunch at SKOURAS wine domain
 -  The dinner at OINOSCENT

- **DAY 4:**
 -  All the morning visits as mentioned in the program (Mezeklikia, Drapetsona Halva)
 -  Cooking Activity with chef MARIA followed by a traditional family style lunch
 -  The dinner at ALERIA fine dining restaurant
 - **DAY 5:**
 -  The Truffle Hunt + Cooking Class activity in the forest in Kalambaka
 -  The visit of one or two monasteries escorted by a licensed English speaking guide
 -  The buffet dinner (drinks not included) at the hotel GRAND METEORA 5*
 - **DAY 6:**
 -  Full Day gastronomic activity/market walk in Thessaloniki as mentioned in the above
 -  The culinary expert escorting the group
 - **DAY 7:**
 -  The panoramic tour and visits of Thessaloniki escorted by a licensed English guide
 -  The lunch at the restaurant MAYRI THALASSA
 -  The cooking class activity in Thessaloniki, followed by a dinner with Smaragda
 - **DAY 8:**
 -  Departure transfer to the Airport and assistance with the check-in formalities
-

- All the transfers, excursions & visits by private grand tourism coach according to program
- A professional English speaking host escorting the group from Day 1 to Day 8 to ensure the smooth logistics of the activities and general program in Athens, Meteora and Thessaloniki
- **VERONIQUE BANZET** as a chaperon during the journey
- City tax at the hotels
- VAT and Local taxes

NOT INCLUDED:

- Plane tickets
- Insurance – ***VeronicTravel highly recommend the purchase of Travel Insurance NO REFUND WITHOUT A TRAVEL INSURANCE .***
Ask VeronicTravel for subscribing an insurance to be covered during your trip.
- ***VeronicTravel strongly recommends reviewing your passport expiration date. NOTE: Some countries require that passports are valid 6 months beyond the dates of travel.***
- Personal Expenses, tips, etc...

RATES JANUARY 2024:

- **20 persons: 2.996,00 €** per person, in a twin/double room
- ❖ **Supplement for single rooms: 480,00 €** per person

RATES & PAYMENT

TOTAL for 6 single rooms and 7 double/twin rooms.

6 single rooms: 20.856 euros

7 double/twin rooms: 41.944 euros

Total: 62.800 euros

\$20,000.00 USD deposit (€ 18.000 Euros exchange rate) paid by
check on 05/21/2023

\$49,300 USD (€ 44.800 Euros) due on 12/05/2023

**The exchange rate is as today, November 21st 2023
It may change until the payment of the balance.**

CANCELATION

**No refund if any cancelation
NO REFUND WITHOUT A TRAVEL INSURANCE.**

***VeronicTravel highly recommend the purchase of Travel Insurance.
Ask VeronicTravel for subscribing an insurance to be covered during your trip.***