

**Welcome to the Jewish Greece Odyssey Itinerary 2025!**  
**The main tour will focus on the Jewish communities and touring Greece. The pre-tour focuses on more of the Goddess - centered content.**

### **MAIN TRIP**

#### **Monday Mar. 3, DAY “1” – Athens; Acropolis, Parthenon & Jewish Athens**

On the first day we will visit the ruins of the greatest city-state of antiquity, the model for all cities that followed and the cradle of western civilization itself, the legendary “Athens of the Classical Era”!

We will visit the world-famous **Parthenon**, the temple dedicated to **Athena**, the patron Goddess of Athens, on the Acropolis. Apart from the Parthenon, on the hill of the **Acropolis** we will also see the **Erechtheion**, the Temple of **Athena Nike** and the **Propylaia**, the ceremonial gateway to the Acropolis of Athens. Our guide will bring the site alive and will help us understand its significance, its history and its artistic value.

A visit to the **Acropolis Museum** will complete our understanding of the site. In the “Parthenon Gallery” we will admire the original statues of the famous temple from a close distance. We will see the **Pediments** and the **Metopes of the Parthenon**, as well as the famous **Caryatides** and many votive offerings.

Contemporary Athens has the biggest **Jewish community** in Greece. We will visit the Synagogue, Jewish Museum and Holocaust Memorial. We will learn about the long history of the Jewish people in the area. We will see the former Jewish quarter and the picturesque alleys and nice little shops of the old city. Sometime in-between our explorations we will stop for **lunch in the old city (included)** to taste traditional dishes and also rest a little.

Early in the evening you will have **free time**. You can either return to the hotel or stay in the city center to roam about its markets, explore its corners and its cozy cafes.

**Dinner on Own:** Athens is known for Choriatici (Greek salad), Moussaka, Dolmades, and Baklava.

#### **Tuesday Mar. 4, DAY “2” – Athens, Chalkis, Delphi, Trikala.**

Early in the morning, we will take the highway heading North. Our first stop will be in a town that claims to be the oldest Jewish settlement in Europe; **Chalkis**. Even from the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE (just after the destruction of the 1<sup>st</sup>

temple) there seems to have been a Jewish Community in Chalkis, living in the same quarter and the Synagogue is in the same spot for last 2500 years. We will visit the 19<sup>th</sup> century Synagogue that today stands on the exact same location and we will learn about “**Romaniote Judaism**”. Also, we will visit the unique medieval Romaniote Jewish Cemetery, and the statue of the Jewish WWII hero Mordechai Frizis. (tickets & small donation to the community included)

We will continue onward with a visit to the world famous **Oracle of Delphi**. We will see the Archaeological site; follow the "Sacred Way", past the votive offerings of the Greek cities, to find the great **Temple of Apollo** and right past it, the Ancient Theatre. Later on, inside the museum, among the beautiful works of art, we will admire the “Charioteer”, the unique bronze statue of a young rider.

After **lunch (included)** on the mountain with breathtaking view of the gulf of Itea, we will head north to **Trikala**, a picturesque city by Lithaeos River. Before WWII there was an old, significant Jewish community in Trikala. The Synagogue is still in the heart of the former Jewish quarter. The new Holocaust Memorial lies nearby. (Tickets & small donation to the community included)

**After we check in the hotel, for those that want, we will walk the alleys of the former Jewish quarter which are today the most lively and popular part of Trikala, full of restaurants, tavernas and cafes.**

**(Dinner on your own) Try the Skopelitiki/ Tiropita which is a type of Greek cheese-filled pastry; cheeses: Kasseris, Manouri, Galotyri**

### **Wednesday Mar. 5, DAY “3” – Trikala, Meteora, Ioannina**

After breakfast we will head for the impressive geological rock formations of **Meteora**. We will drive up the rocks to experience the unique landscape and take pictures from a special view point. We will stop for a coffee/snack\* (**this snack is not included at the price**) at the town of **Kalambaka** where we can have a spectacular view of the huge rocks with the Medieval Monasteries on them still standing.

Then we will head for **Ioannina**, the biggest Romaniote Jewish community before WWII. In the citadel of Ioannina, we will walk the streets of the old city and the Jewish neighborhoods. We will visit the Synagogue . We will walk by the lake Pamvotis, on the spot where the Jewish community was arrested in 1944.

We will have an early dinner at the hotel ([Included](#)) and spend the night at Ioannina. Ioannina has **an olive variety called *Konservolia*** that's worth trying and goes great with a local dish, **Alevrópita**, literally "flour pie" but **more similar to a feta** cheese flatbread with herbs

In addition to traditional spirits and wine, Greece is also known for its fruit-based liqueurs. These liqueurs are typically made with a variety of fruits and herbs, and are often served as after-dinner drinks or digestifs. Some popular fruit-based liqueurs in Greece include cherry, apricot, and quince liqueurs.

- This will not be a full lunch, but we will have an early dinner.

### **Thursday Mar. 6, DAY "4" – Ioannina, Metsovo, Vergina, Veria, Thessaloniki**

This day starts with the cute little village of **Metsovo**. We will stop at the main square where we will have some free time to see the village. You can sit at one of the traditional cafés to taste a local sweet or just wander around the little shops with traditional products on the main square.

Our exploration of the North of Greece continues with the story and glory of Alexander the Great, as our next visit is **Vergina**, the capital of the kingdom of Macedonia back then. We will visit the Archaeological site and museum and we will have lunch at a local restaurant. ([Lunch included](#))

Next comes the fairy-tale-like little town of **Veroia**. The central quarter of **Barbouta** which hosted the Jewish community before WWII. It is still the most beautiful part of **Veroia** and the 19th century Synagogue remains on the spot.

Early in the evening we will reach **Thessaloniki**; a city that was once known as "Madre de Israel" and "Little Jerusalem". Before WWII it was the largest Sephardic community of Europe as well as being by far the largest Jewish community of Greece. Today, it is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest city of Greece with a rich Jewish background as well as a strong Byzantine and Ottoman one. We will settle in our hotel and have the evening free to rest or maybe pay a first visit to the city on our own. ([Dinner on our own /not included](#))

### **Friday Mar. 7, DAY "5". Thessaloniki; Jewish Tour & Kabbalat Shabbat**

This day is dedicated to the discovery of the "**Jerusalem of the Balcans**". Thessaloniki was once home to Europe's biggest Jewish community. Sephardic Jews arrived in the city following their expulsion from Spain in 1492, with their influence so significant that Thessaloniki would be

nicknamed “La madre de Israel” (The mother of Israel) in the Judeo-Spanish language Ladino. In the modern city of Thessaloniki (Salonica), if one knows where to look, there are many traces of a Sephardic city like no other in Europe. The community was completely destroyed in WWII and today only 2% of this community still lives in the city.

We will visit the Synagogues, the Jewish Museum, Eleftherias Square, and other Jewish sights. We will also visit monuments of the other cultures of the city like the Ottoman Hammam, the Roman Rotonda, old Byzantine churches and of course, the landmark building of the city, the White Tower. At some point we will stop for lunch ([Not Included](#)). We will continue with the great villas of the Jewish industrialists and the upper city, where we will admire the Panoramic view of Thessaloniki. We will end up at our hotel and have a free afternoon and evening which you can spend either shopping, having coffee in the old city or relaxing.

A little before sunset, we will walk to the Synagogue for a Shabbat service where we will have the opportunity to hear a Sephardic rite in one of the most important Sephardic settlements in the world. Apart from the religious interest, there is also a cultural aspect to this visit. After the Synagogue we will have **Kabbalat Shabbat dinner at the kosher restaurant.** ([Dinner included](#))

### **Saturday Mar. 8, DAY “6”. Shabbat in Thessaloniki**

Shabbat Options: Rest:) and/ or Attend Shabbat service at the Synagogue (Sephardic) or a short walking tour to the centre of Thessaloniki. After that, you will taste the Greek “**meze**” (small plates of varieties to share)... maybe with a little house wine at a local place known to serve the best “meze” in town! ([the lunch included](#) will have been prepaid before Shabbat).

The afternoon will be free for you to return to the places you found most interesting or to explore the city even more.

[Dinner on your own](#) then we will gather back for Havdalah at the hotel. If you want to prepay dinner at the hotel that is an option.

Try the local Sephardic delicacies: Among the dishes on offer at a restaurant set in a former Jewish neighborhood, are borrekitas de meredjéna, (pies stuffed with aubergine); nogada, (meatballs with walnut sauce;) and huevos haminados, (slow-cooked eggs marbled with coffee grounds) and the famous **Trigona Panoramatos**, custard cream filled pastries, have become Thessaloniki's trademark.

## **Sunday Mar. 9, DAY “7”. Stay local or Optional Full-day excursion to Mount Olympus**

Choose to rest at the hotel or to explore more local places in depth such as the **Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki, Museum of Byzantine Civilization. White Tower of Thessaloniki, Arch of Galerius.** For those that prefer to relax, they can stay in the hotel and enjoy the facilities (like the swimming pool, spa etc) or go to the city. [Lunch on your own](#) or

Take an **optional full-day excursion to Mt Olympus**, the tallest mountain in Greece, the Sanctuary of Olympia, where the Gods lived according to the ancient religion. The “Olympic Games”, the whole “Olympian Religion” take their name from “Olympian Zeus”, or “Zeus of Olympus”. We will not climb to the top of the mountain but we will go on a pleasant ride in the foothills of the mountain, or maybe a small hike in the forest.

We will end up in a **farm** where we will learn how they make **wine and olive** oil. We will taste the wine, see the plantation and have a “**farm-to-table**” lunch. ([Lunch on the tour is included](#)) right there, in this traditional farm-house of Olympus. Bougatsa is the ultimate Thessaloniki breakfast. Or try Koulouri, a bagel-esque pastry filled with olive tapenade, cream cheese or a sweeter option with tahini and dark-chocolate chips worked into the dough.

[Dinner on own](#)

## **Monday Mar. 10, DAY “8”. Thessaloniki, Heraklion (Knossos Palace), Chania**

On the 8th day of our trip, after breakfast we will leave on flights to Crete. (FLIGHTS INCLUDED)

There we will visit the amazingly preserved prehistoric Minoan **Palace of Knossos**, where the **Labyrinth** and the **Minotaur** were in the mythical times.

Then we will have lunch ([included](#)) and head to Chania, at the west of the island. **Chania** is a charming little town of Crete with beautiful architecture and an old city with nice winding streets full of life. We will check into our hotel in Chania and have free time. You can go out for a first exploration or stay in the hotel and relax. ([Dinner on our own](#))

Some of the local standards are Dakos (salad), Kalitsounia, a sweet pastry Lihnarakia, (a small sweet pie with anthotyro cream cheese); Stamnagathi

or horta (greens in olive oil); **Staka with Eggs;**( eggs and cream) and **Raki, an anise liquor.**

## **Tuesday Mar. 11, DAY “9”. Chania; Jewish Tour & General Tour, Arts & Crafts Village**

Chania is a town of 3 cultures and 3 civilizations developing simultaneously for centuries. The Christians, the Muslims and the Jews, living together, interacting in the market in the morning but staying at different parts of the city with considerable peace among them most of the time. During the “**Jewish & General Tour of Chania**” we will visit the **Jewish quarter** as well as the Muslim and Christian areas and we will explain the history of the town and of the island as a whole. In the cute little Synagogue we will remember once again the Romaniote Jewish tradition and we will speak about the fate of the local community during WWII.

After the tour we will go for lunch ([included](#)) and taste delicacies from the Cretan land such as great cheeses, salads, olives, olive oil and wine. Simple things like tomatoes, and cucumber are just delicious)

In the afternoon we will visit the “arts & crafts” village of **Verekinthos** to see traditional arts and learn about them. They offer classes of pottery, ceramics and traditional sewing all year long. The workshops include creation with leather (leather bags, belts etc), jewelry, terracotta figurines, pottery and traditional musical instruments.

The evening is free. ([Dinner on our own](#)) You can stroll the busy streets of the old city once more and see the different ambience at night.

## **Wednesday Mar. 12, DAY “10”. Chania; Free day, Farewell dinner**

This is the last day of the trip, so you will have a free day to sleep a little more, take breakfast a little later maybe and go into the markets of Chania on your own to explore and find your favorite corners. Or book a local excursion to Zeus’s cave?

Optional food tour of the market a small “food tour”, tasting olives, cheese and cold cuts.[\(not included\)](#)

Try the local : Fried Zucchini Blossoms, sometimes stuffed with rice!

Rounding up our trip, at night, we will have a “farewell dinner” at a traditional tavern enjoying a show of live folk music. [\(Included\)](#)

### **Thursday Mar. 13, DAY “11”. Chania, End of Trip**

In the morning, after breakfast our trip will end, hopefully leaving you full of memories and experiences. Take the ferry back to Athens to catch the flight back or fly back.

After that, you can either stay at Crete for a bit longer, return home or If you would like to continue to see more, there is a “**Post-Trip**” that goes to **Santorini**. (Pls see below for details).

Whatever you choose to do, we are confident this trip will stay in your heart with lots of beautiful memories!

## **PRE TRIP**

### **For those that want to arrive earlier and see more of the history and legends of the Greek Goddesses**

#### **Thursday Feb. 27, Half-day excursion to the East coast of Attica (Athens)**

We begin the pre- tour in the afternoon. We will explore a part of Attica (Athens’ Metropolitan area) less known to tourists, to discover the **Temple to Artemis**, goddess of the hunt, protector of wild nature, and free spirit. After the guided tour of the Temple of Artemis and the Museum, we will pass from the **beaches of the west coast** to see the suburbs that Athenians prefer for the summer months and, perhaps have a coffee by the sea.

We will return to Athens around dinner. [\(Included\)](#)

#### **Friday Feb. 28, Archaeological Museum, Kabbalat Shabbat**

The 2nd day of the Pre-Trip is dedicated to the **National Archaeological Museum of Greece**, the largest collection of Greek antiquities in the world! We will visit the Museum with a guided tour. We will learn about the pre-classical deities (before the Olympian Religion of the 12 Gods of Olympus),

**Minoan Goddess of fertility** (or Earth or Mother, holding 2 snakes in her hands), Mycenaean female goddesses and priestesses etc. We will see the treasures of Atreas, probably belonging to the mythical king Agamemnon, one of the leaders in the Trojan War.

[Lunch not included](#)

Afternoon will be free to explore the **Markets of Athens**: Varvakeios(food), Antique market at Avissinias, Thissio for a coffee/sweet or dinner with Acropolis view.

We will gather again around 4:30 pm to go to **Beth Shalom Synagogue of Athens** and hear the mixed Sephardic-Romaniote *minhag/custom* that is followed today by the Jewish Community of Athens.

After that, we will have **Kabbalat Shabbat dinner** at the kosher restaurant of Athens. ([Dinner Included](#)) At night you can walk the neighborhood a little and see the Athenian nightlife, as the kosher restaurant is right in the middle of it.

### **Saturday Mar. 1, Full-day excursion to Corinth, Epidaurus & Elefsina**

Starting from Athens early in the morning, we will go on a Full-Day excursion to see interesting sites in the South. First, we will visit the site of the **Eleusinian Mysteries** in the honor of Goddess Demeter and her daughter Persephone. The sanctuary was “Panhellenic” (not local but for all Greeks) and the “mysteries” as they were called, were the most famous and authoritative of all mystical religious rites of ancient Greece.

Next, we will visit the **Corinth Canal** and see the amazing view from above. Heading for Ancient Corinth we will stop for lunch ([included](#)) and later we will visit the site of the **ancient Agora of Corinth**. There, among other things, we will see the 2 inscriptions of the **ancient Synagogue** of Corinth, the Archaic temple god Apollo and the Bimah (platform) that Paul the Apostle spoke to the Corinthians.

Early in the afternoon we will visit the **Archaeological Site of God Asclepius** with the Ancient Theatre of **Epidaurus** with its world known acoustics, and the Museum.

In the evening, we will return to Athens, for [Dinner on our own](#).

### **Sunday Mar. 2. Half-day excursion to Sounio & the Athens Riviera**



**Sounio** is the south most edge of Attica where the majestic **Temple of Poseidon** was built 2.500 years ago. We will see the temple and take in the location and the view. We will drive the west coastal road of Attica, often called "**Athens Riviera**" because of its beauty and also its cosmopolitan character.

Around noon we will be back to Athens leaving free time for the group. **(Lunch on our own)** Maybe a walk in the center or a snack/lunch would be a good idea or maybe a little rest at the hotel.

In the evening we will join those flying a day early before the official tour starts for **dinner all together. (included)** The entire group will meet each other and we will discuss the main trip that starts tomorrow!

*Note: The "Pre-Trip" includes the hotel for the night of Sunday March 2<sup>nd</sup>. For those that participate in the "Main Trip" only, the hotel of the night of Sunday March 2<sup>nd</sup> is **not** included.*

*The "Main Trip" starts on Monday March 3<sup>rd</sup> at 8:30 in the morning with the Jewish Walking Tour. The meeting place of the group will be at a central place of Athens or at the hotel of the group (Pre-Trip).*

*If someone wants to spend the night of Sunday March 3<sup>rd</sup> in the hotel of the group without participating on the -1 day of the "Pre Trip" they can do it paying only the supplement of the hotel for that night, but you must let us know when you register.*

*Dinner Sunday night is not included as our tour officially starts on Monday. However, the dinner is included that night for those that participate in the last day of the pre-trip. If someone joins for the dinner only, the price is 25 Euro per person (if they have informed us in advance). It is 30 Euro per person if someone joins in the dinner last minute.*

## **POST TRIP**

**Thursday Mar. 13, DAY "plus 1". Chania, Santorini**

After breakfast we will be transported to the port of Heraklion to take the ship to **Santorini**, one of the most popular Greek islands with the characteristic “Cycladic” architecture (low white houses with blue windows alongside winding streets) and the elegant atmosphere. Upon arrival we will have lunch ([not included](#)) and go to settle in our hotel.

The evening is free. ([Dinner on your own](#)) You can explore Thira or rest at the hotel.

### **Friday Mar. 14, DAY “plus 2”. Santorini, Tour of Santorini, Wine Tasting, Thira, Oia & Sunset**

Today we will start fresh to see the wonders of Santorini. We will go to Thira, we will see the majestic volcano of Santorini and all places that one needs to see. We will stop at a winery for wine-tasting. We will taste the local world famous and many times award-winning “Assyrtiko” white wine. Later we will have lunch ([included](#)) and taste the gourmet creations of the local cuisine which combines the traditional recipes with a touch of modernity, accompanying them with Assyrtiko wine of course!

We will end up at Oia where we will be able to admire the famous sunset that made Santorini a world destination of wedding ceremonies! [Dinner on your own](#).

### **Saturday Mar. 15, DAY “plus 3”. Santorini, End of Post Trip**

After breakfast our post-trip experience will have been completed. You can continue your vacation, choose another destination or fly to Athens to return home.

#### **INCLUDED:**

\*Hotel are 4 & 5 stars for all nights after a day of programming (double occupancy/single upcharge)

\*[Breakfast and one meal per day \(lunch or dinner\)](#)

\*Breakfast at every hotel after the night spent there

\*Meals that mention "included" in the program

\*Bus for all transportation mentioned in the itinerary/except where walking

\*Experienced group leader

\*Licensed guide for all visits to archaeological sites

- \*Entrances for archaeological sites that mention "included" in the program
- \*All hotel taxes
- \*Donation to the Jewish communities of Chalkis and Trikala and to the Synagogue of Veria
- \*Airplane tickets from Thessaloniki to Crete
- \*Ship tickets from Heraklio to Santorini (post trip)
- \*Wine tasting in Santorini (post trip)
- \*Water on the bus
- \*Bus transfer from Heraklion to the airport/port (post trip)
- \*Bus transfer from Santorini hotel to the airport (post trip)
- \*Flight tickets from Santorini to Athens (post trip)

### **NOT INCLUDED**

- International flights
- Cost of extra luggage on domestic flight (luggage limit is 15 kilos)
- Tips to hotel/lodge staff and porters
- Gratuity to tour driver / guide
- All items of a personal nature, such as laundry and drinks
- Cost of Covid testing, if required
- Transfers from the airport
- Hotels if you come in the night before a day of touring
- Everything that is mentioned in the program as "optional"
- Everything that is not mentioned in the program
- Dinner Sunday night march 2nd unless you are on the pre-tour
- Flight or Ferry back from Chania to Athens

**PRICES: This trip includes a number of ala carte options:**

### **MAIN TRIP**

March 3- March 11, 2025	(20 persons)	<b>3,079</b> (Euros)
	(25 people)	<b>2,932/€</b>
includes CRETE! (Bring your friends)		

### **OPTIONS:**

Mount Olympus optional tour (18+pp)	<b>137€</b>
( 12+pp)	<b>158€</b>

## PRE TRIP PRICE:

Sunday(1day) March 2 Pre-Trip	(10pp)	177€
	18pp	149€
Saturday 2 Days/March 1&2	(18pp)	379€
Friday 3 Days Feb 28/March 1 & 2	(18pp)	583€
	(10PP)	700€
(Thurs- Sunday 4 Days (02/ 27- 03/02):		
	(18pp)	806€
	(10pp)	977€

This tour price is for a group of 20 people, if we have 25 we will LOWER the price by 150 Euros, so bring your friends!

## POST TRIP PRICE to SANTORINIi

POST-TRIP (3 Days)	(18pp)	823€
	(10pp)	937€

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT 60€ a night

Registration open now

Here are the deadlines:

Register before [August 1](#) and receive 100€ deduction early bird pricing

\*500€ deposit due [August 15](#)

(400€ fully refundable/100€ non-refundable until Nov 1, 2025)

1800€ Euros due Dec 1, 2024

Balance to be paid in cash upon Arrival

Deposits to be done by Bank Transfer