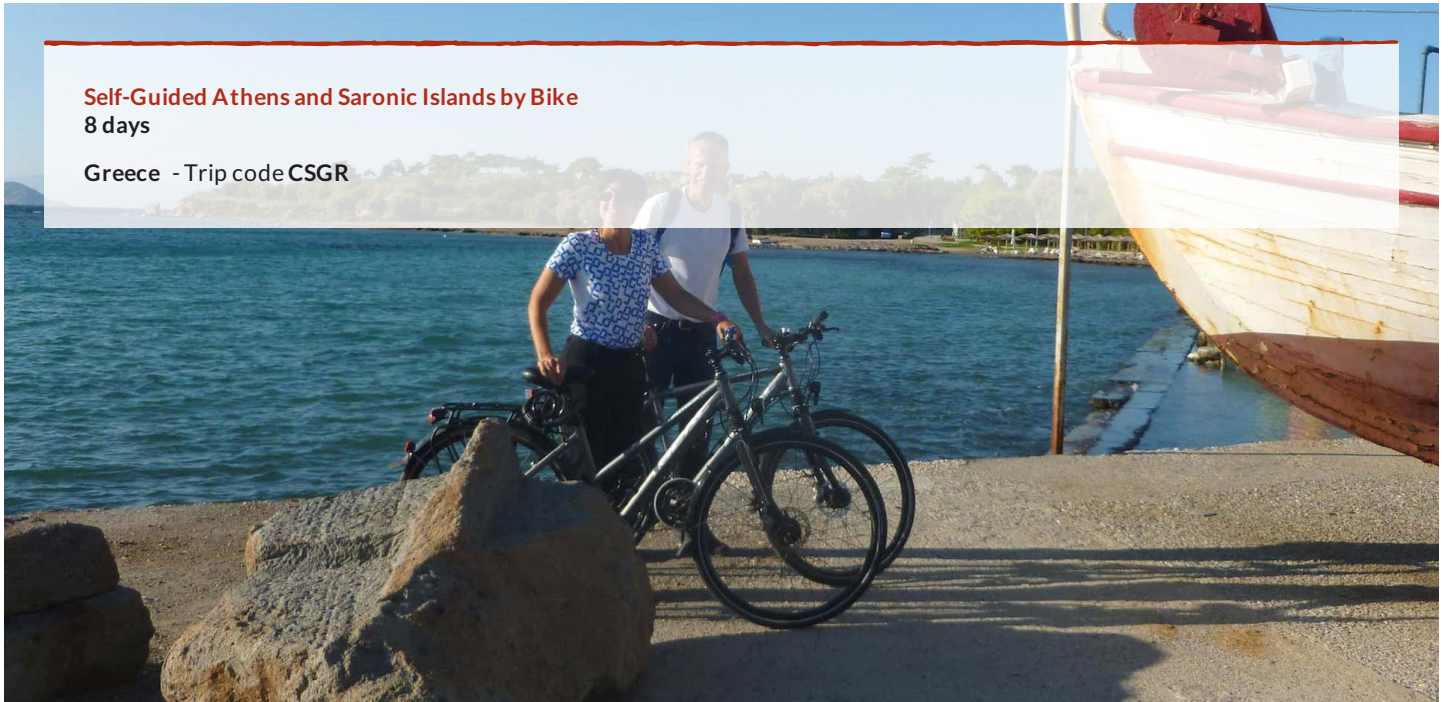


EXPLORE!

Self-Guided Athens and Saronic Islands by Bike

8 days

Greece - Trip code CSGR



Self-Guided Athens and Saronic Islands by Bike

Explore the Greek islands of Poros and Aegina in the Saronic Gulf on this self-guided cycle trip. From Athens you travel by boat to the islands, each with its own unique charm. On cycle routes you explore the beaches, wetlands, beautiful coastline, villages and ancient sites. The temple of Aphaia is arguably the jewel in the crown of Aegina. Please note that in the quieter months (April and November, December) there are more limited ferry connections and we can offer start dates on Sunday or Tuesday only. The daily ferry times change throughout the year which can affect the amount of cycling possible each day. This itinerary is designed to accommodate the ferry schedule with a number of optional cycle rides during the week and it is important for you to be happy adopting a flexible approach to each day. Also on rare occasions there can be last minute ferry schedule changes throughout the year so the itinerary sequence and duration on the islands can vary.

Trip highlights

- ★ Athens - Superb mix of ancient civilization and a modern city
- ★ Poros - the lively and green island
- ★ Psifita protected wetlands - cycle on the Peloponnese peninsula
- ★ Aegina - Superb beaches, peaceful and pistachio groves
- ★ Ancient civilization - temples of Poseidon and Aphaia

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

TRIP PACE:

No pace rating

No pace description

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Holiday starts in Athens

Your holiday starts in Athens. After checking into your hotel, you may choose to spend the rest of your day exploring. An optional guided cycle tour of Athens can be arranged for this evening (must be booked and pre-paid with Explore in advance). The tour starts at 18:00 hrs from a central point in Athens and takes three hours with an English speaking guide, using 'city bikes' - European style bikes with high handlebars and just a few gears. This excursion is not exclusive to Explore and may have a maximum of 15 people. If planning to book this tour you will need a flight which arrives into Athens by 15:00 hrs. Your bikes for the rest of the trip will normally be delivered to Piraeus port to meet you on day 2 for the ferry crossing. You will be required to sign an agreement of care upon receipt of the bike and will have the opportunity for a quick test ride along the quay. Occasionally due to the type of ferry booked the bikes may instead be delivered straight to Poros and will be waiting for you on arrival in Poros. You will be given an envelope containing all the ferry times and ferry vouchers for the duration of your holiday either at your first night's accommodation, or on the transfer to the port on day 2. You will need to exchange the ferry voucher for your ticket at the port. Details of how to reach the start point of your holiday can be found on our website in the tour specific 'dates and prices' section by clicking on 'Joining Info' and then the 'Show More' button.



Accommodation: Novus City Hotel (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Ferry to Poros; introductory cycle ride

Today you will be driven with your luggage to Piraeus to catch the ferry to Poros. Your bike will be waiting for you at Piraeus ferry port and you will need to take your bags and bike with you on the ferry. The car ferry takes 2.5 hours from Piraeus to Poros. The ferry schedule changes throughout the year and in case there is no car ferry you will travel by hydrofoil (Flying Dolphin) or high speed boat (Flying Cat). Due to lack of room on these smaller boats your bike may instead be sent to Poros on the previous day and will then be waiting your arrival at your accommodation on Poros. The optional Athens bike tour (see day 1) is also possible to do at 09:30 hrs this morning if you had a late flight arrival time yesterday. Depending on the ferry arrival time in Poros a first bicycle ride may be possible this afternoon on the island. There is a short route along to the monastery of Zoodochou Pigis as well as two additional loops to the beach and to the peninsula town of Poros. Alternatively these rides could be left until tomorrow. Your total cycling distance today is approximately 15 kilometres (total ascent/descent 350 metres) with a further optional 8 kilometres possible.



Accommodation: Hotel Saga (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 3 - On Poros - ride to former Russian base and Temple of Poseidon

Today's suggested cycle ride takes you to the western and central part of Poros. Firstly you ride along the coast to the west where you have the possibility to stop at a former Russian Navy base. Through a wooded area you will gradually ascend to a small plateau, one of the few arable areas of Poros. Once on the top you can cycle a loop to visit the beautiful archaeological site of the Temple of Poseidon (entrance not included). Note: At the western point you can walk on a stony path to the beautiful restored lighthouse of Poros and back (1 hour, 3 kms total). Your route continues with a steep descent to Poros town. Your total cycling distance today is approximately 15 kilometres (total ascent/descent 375 metres) with a further optional 5 kilometres possible.



Accommodation: Hotel Saga (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - Return ride on the Peloponnese peninsula to protected wetlands of Psifta

Today we suggest a ride on the Peloponnese peninsula and you start off with a short ferry ride to Galatas. From here you start cycling through agricultural lands, ascending to the local town of Taktikoupoli from where you descend rather steeply to the coast. The route then hugs the coast as you peddle to the wetlands of Psifta (protected area). The last section runs back to Galatas along the same route as in the morning before returning to Poros on the same small ferry. Your total cycling distance today is approximately 33 kilometres (total ascent/descent 350 metres).



Accommodation: Hotel Saga (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 5 - Ferry from Poros to Aegina Island. Optional rides

Today cycle from your hotel in Poros the short way down to the port, then take the ferry across to Aegina (ferry takes one hour). Depending on the ferry time table you could take an optional two hour (5.3 kilometre) walking tour on Poros, or explore by bike before before your ferry crossing. Once on Aegina cycle the short way to your accommodation (c. 1.5 km), then you can explore the old town of Aegina and its archaeological site and museums by bike or on foot. No set cycle route today, free time to explore Aegina.



Accommodation: Hotel Danae (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 6 - On Aegina - ride to picturesque village of Perdika

Today you have a relaxing day as we suggest a leisurely 10km ride south on the flat along the coast to the picturesque village of Perdika. In the summer months you can cross by fishing boat to the uninhabited island of Moni where people often visit for the relaxing beach. Alternatively you may prefer to walk inland to the 'ancient olive grove' or the summit of Ellanios Mountain (532m). Your total cycling distance today is approximately 20 kilometres (total ascent/descent 150 metres).



Accommodation: Hotel Danae (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 7 - On Aegina - cycle to Aphaia Temple and Agios Monastery

The cycle route today heads inland and gradually ascends to the monastery of Agios Nektarios, the Saint of the island. Many Greek-Orthodox believers go there on pilgrimage. Thereafter you cycle downhill towards the east coast. A short ascent takes you to the archaeological temple of Aphaia (altitude 165m). You may choose to visit the temple and afterwards you descend to the seaside resort of Agia Marina. From there you peddle to Portes, followed by a steep ascent to the hamlet of Anitseo where you can find a great tavern. Just down the road you will see a beautiful Byzantine church, built on and with the materials of a former temple of Zeus Hellanios. Finally the route descends to the west coast of Aegina and back to Aegina town. Your total cycling distance today is approximately 36 kilometres (total ascent/descent 400 metres) with a further optional 4 kilometres to see the Temple of Aphaia.



Accommodation: Hotel Danae (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 8 - Holiday ends in Piraeus

Today you will travel back to the mainland at Piraeus by ferry (with the bikes). The organised part of your holidays comes to end once the bikes are collected from you here. There are regular public transport connections with Athens Airport or you may prefer to take a taxi. To allow time for the ferry and travel to Athens airport you must book a return flight at 14:00 hrs or later.



Meals Provided: Breakfast



Why book this trip

Unlike many other operators, we include the hire of your bike in the overall cost of the holiday: you don't need to bring your own or pay extra to hire one locally. We also provide a pump, lock, spare inner tube and tyre levers. All you need bring is your own helmet.

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 7



Transport

Bicycle
Boat
Ferry



Accommodation

1 nights premium hotel
6 nights standard hotel

Trip information

Country information

Greece Holidays & Tours

Climate

Greece has predominantly hot, dry summers, May - October with temperatures reaching into the mid thirties in July and August. May and October themselves can be less predictable and may have some rain and cooler evenings. Wild flowers bloom in April and May adding much colour to the trails. At the beginning and end of the season the villages tend to be very quiet. Seasonal weather patterns can be unpredictable. Up to date information on the weather worldwide can be found by following the BBC weather link on this page.

Time difference to GMT

+2

Plugs

2 Pin Round

Religion

Orthodox

Language

Greek

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

The flexible itinerary with different cycle lengths and walks available, offers many opportunities for sightseeing along the way and exploring the ancient Greek culture. Day 1 or Day 8 (depending on your flight times) - Take time to visit the ancient Athens Acropolis and museum. Day 2 - Visit the Bell Tower in Poros for stunning views over the bay and the Monastery of Zoodochou Pigis 3 km from Poros town. Vagiona Beach is also worth a stop with its clear blue warm waters.

Clothing

Bring cycling gear such as quick drying cycle tops, padded cycle shorts and cycle gloves. Conditions vary throughout the year - the sun can be very strong in the height of summer though at the start and end of the year you should bring a warmer jacket/fleece. A waterproof cycle jacket is recommended in case of rain. A light windproof jacket is always useful.

Footwear

If you are not bringing cycle shoes then try to bring stiff-soled shoes as these are better for cycling - transmitting your energy into the pedals more efficiently. This becomes more relevant and recommended the more demanding the grade and distances to cover. SPD cycle shoes are not well suited to tours that combine sightseeing with cycling and the pedals cannot be fitted to these bikes. Comfortable shoes, trainers, sandals or flip flops are useful when not on the bike.

Luggage: On tour

Bring one main piece of baggage as per your airline luggage allowance, maximum 20 kg per person. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage if using public transport so don't overload yourself. Luggage transfers between hotels and to and from the ferries are normally arranged by the hoteliers. Mark your bags clearly and leave them at the place and time arranged with them. When travelling on public transport you should always take your luggage with you. This includes the ferries on tour, where your bags will be stored in the ferry baggage area.

Luggage transfer

Included between each hotel and to and from the ports. You will need to bring your bags with you for ferry transfers during the trip.

Equipment

On all Explore cycle holidays we strongly recommend you bring along and wear your cycle helmet. In case of an accident resulting in personal injury, certain insurance policies are invalidated in cases where a helmet was not being worn. Cycle glasses to protect against dust, pollen and the sun, padded cycle gloves and a water bottle or water delivery system (e.g. camelback or platypus) are also useful. You may choose to bring your own gel seat cover for added comfort. Other items to consider bringing are a sunhat and sun cream, torch, earplugs and insect repellent. If a handle bar bag or pannier is not provided (check bike details) then you may like to bring a small rucksack to wear while cycling. Please carry some or all of your cycling equipment e.g. helmet as part of your hand luggage. Maps - Along with the destination manual and route notes you will be sent a set of maps that have been created specifically for this trip to help you navigate. The route is marked on each map together with a series of numbered waypoints which correspond with instructions in the route notes. Should you wish to purchase a more detailed commercially produced topographical map we recommend the following:- Ermionis - Trizinia - Poros - Hydra - Spetses Hiking Map "Step by Step" 1:75.000 1st Edition / May 2011 Orama Poros Mini Map "Orange Blue" 1:20.000 2nd Edition / Apr 2014 Orama Athens / Aegina and Salamis Road - Tourist Map 1:50.000 / 2002 Road

Tipping

Local fees

The three longer ferry rides are included in the price of your holiday. The short ferry ride to the Peloponnese peninsula on day 4 is not included and you will have to pay this on the spot.

Country Information

Greece Holidays & Tours

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Dinner price

£12.00 - 16.00

Beer price

£3.5

Water price

£0.9

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Euro

Recommended Currency For Exchange

GBP Sterling or US Dollars, cash.

Where To Exchange

We recommend that you change any currency into Euros prior to arrival. Bureau de Change are generally only found in major cities and large airports

ATM Availability

Cash can be drawn from ATMs from all types of cards in most areas in Greece, including the islands.

Credit Card Acceptance

In major restaurants.

Travellers Cheques

Banking hours may make exchanging Travellers Cheques more difficult.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bicycle, Boat, Ferry

Accommodation notes

Booking a Single Room

All of our group tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. Please refer to the tour notes where the single room option availability is detailed on a night by night basis for this tour, and the price for the available nights is detailed on the dates & prices tab by departure date. For Self-Guided trips the Single Room supplement offers the option of a single room each and is charged per person. The Single Room supplement also applies to the third person in a party of three that will be accommodated in a single room.

Premium - The hotel for the first night is hand-picked and chosen for its location in the centre of Athens, this stylish and modern property has excellent facilities and a higher level of comfort and service, including two bars and a roof top pool. Standard - Our mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en-suite facilities.

Essential information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Essential Information

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa Information

Greece: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office. All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our [Essential Information](#) and [Booking Conditions](#).

Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Greece Holidays & Tours**Vaccinations**

Nothing compulsory but we recommend protection against tetanus and polio. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure.
