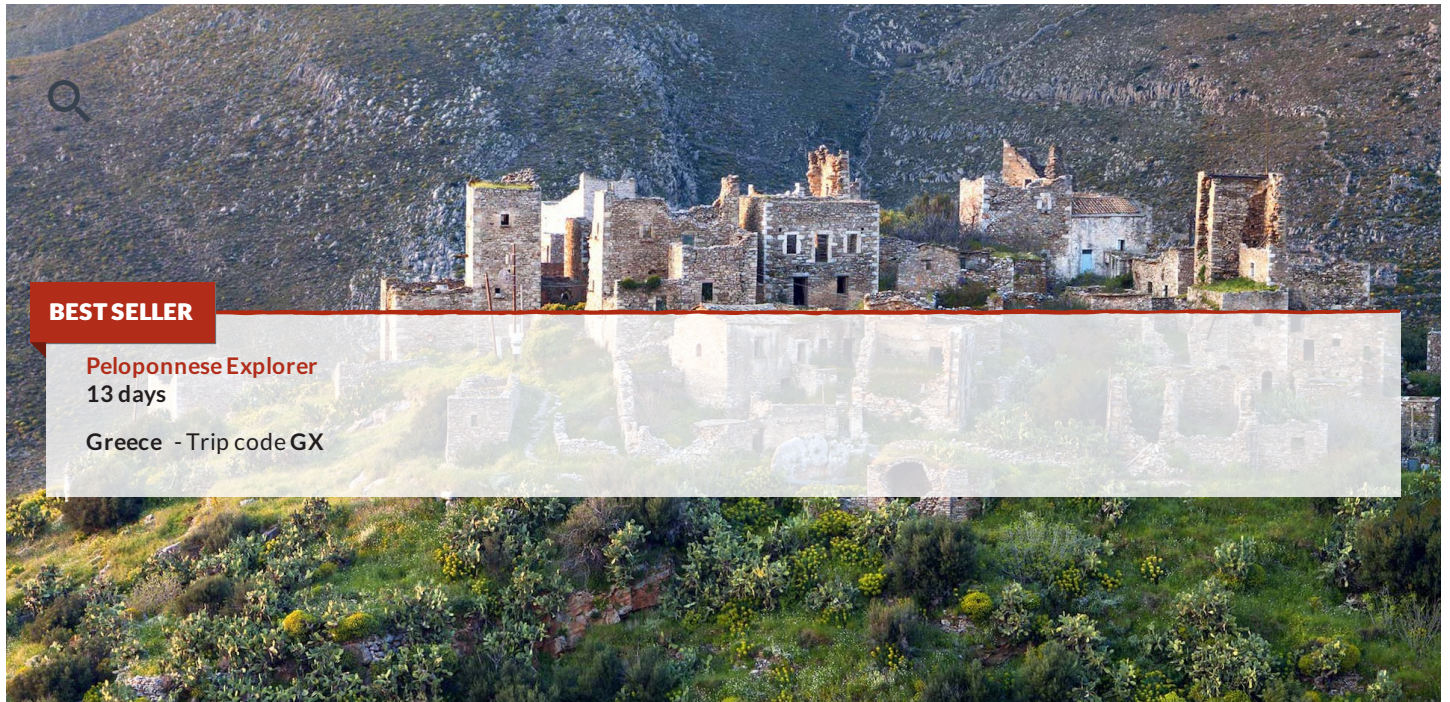


EXPLORE!



BEST SELLER

Peloponnese Explorer
13 days

Greece - Trip code GX

Peloponnese Explorer

Take a journey back in time on this historical trip to the Peloponnese region of Greece, which is steeped in myths and legends with tales of Hercules and of the Argonauts. Explore the magnificent ancient ruins of Olympia and discover the Byzantine ghost town of Mystras. Visit the Acropolis in one of the world's oldest cities, Athens, the Temple of Apollo in Delphi and the Kingdom of Agamemnon in Mycenae. There's also time to enjoy boat trips and to discover the very south of mainland Greece on the Mani Peninsula with its wild landscapes, marble-roofed tower houses and fantastic sea views from Cape Tenaro.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Athens** - Cultural capital of Greece
- ★ **Nafplion** - The first capital of modern Greece
- ★ **Areopolis** - The city of Ares, the Ancient Greek God of War
- ★ **Mycenae** - Classic ancient site
- ★ **Mystras** - Byzantine 'ghost town'
- ★ **Mani Peninsula** - See unique 'tower houses' and enjoy picturesque walks
- ★ **Pylos** - Relaxed old harbour town
- ★ **Ancient Olympia** - Birthplace of the Olympic Games
- ★ **Delphi** - Legendary site on Mount Parnassos

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:

Full on

Full on paced trips are for travellers who like their holidays packed with activities and experiences, moving on quickly from place to place with lots of early starts and long, busy days. Some may find them tiring, but others get a buzz from packing their precious holiday-time as chock-a-block full of new experiences as possible!

GROUP SIZE:

12 - 18

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

Itinerary

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

DAY 1 - Join tour in Athens

Join tour in Athens and check-in to our hotel. Athens is a heady mix of the ancient and the modern. It has been the capital of Greece for less than 200 years, but has grown rapidly in size in this time.



Accommodation: Hotel Evripides (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Walking tour of Athens including a visit to the Acropolis

This morning we take an orientation walking tour which will take us past the Parliament buildings, through Syntagma Square and into the Plaka, to soak up the atmosphere of this old town. You'll notice the contrast between the modern capital and the old city - the well-heeled inhabitants of Kolonaki on the one hand, and the vibrant Plaka quarter on the other. In the afternoon we head for a guided tour of the Acropolis, a particular favourite. Here are the majestic ruins of the Athens of Pericles - the Propylaea (or marble entrance hall), the Parthenon (built by Ictinos 2500 years ago), the Temple of Athena Nike (the Wingless Victory), and - the

monument most venerated by the ancient Athenians themselves - the Erechtheion. Tradition relates that gods Athena and Poseidon quarrelled here. The sea-god struck the rock with his trident, causing salt water to gush out, while Athena struck it with her spear and brought forth an olive tree. As olives were deemed to be more useful, the other gods let her take the city under her protection. This afternoon will be free to explore the city where a visit to the Acropolis Museum is highly recommended.



Accommodation: Hotel Evripides (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 3 - Bus to Nafplion with an orientation walk on arrival

Leaving Athens after an early breakfast, we travel to Nafplion - the first capital of modern Greece and one of the most beautiful coastal towns in the Peloponnese. After checking-in to our centrally located hotel, we will take to the streets with an orientation walking tour of this charming town including the first Greek parliament and fine examples of Byzantine and Venetian churches and buildings. We complete the day with an optional walk around the headland following the coastal path to a beach. The evening is free for further exploration at your leisure.



Accommodation: Victoria Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - Walk to Palamidi Fortress and an excursion to Epidavros

Today we ascend to the Palamidi Fortress for great views. The Palamidi is actually comprised of three separate fortresses walled together. It was built in 1714 by the Venetians, taken by the Turks the following year, and held until they surrendered it to Kolokotronis after a 15 month siege during the War of Independence. After we make the 850- step ascent to the fortress (taxi are available!) We then travel south east of Nafplion to Epidavros. Dedicated to Asclepius, the healing god and legendary son of Apollo, the sanctuary here was one of the most important of the ancient world, and it remained a site of pilgrimage from the sixth century BC to Roman times. Epidavros is home to one of the greatest and best preserved of all ancient Greek theatres. With its backdrop of rolling hills, this 14,000-seat arena merges perfectly into the landscape, so much so that it was rediscovered and unearthed only in the last century. The acoustics of the amphitheatre are so incredible, it's said that even those sat on the highest tier will hear a coin drop on stage! After exploring the site, we will return by bus to Nafplion to enjoy an evening promenade and maybe dinner at one of the many

harbourfront restaurants.



Accommodation: Victoria Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 5 - Drive to Areopolis via the ancient ruins at Mycenae

Leaving Nafplion behind us, we first travel north to visit the mighty ruins of ancient Mycenae then south towards the heart of the Mani Peninsula. Perched on a hilltop overlooking the modern city, Mycenae is connected to the legend of King Agamemnon who commanded the 10-year long expedition against Troy. The site was unearthed by the archaeologist Schliemann in the 1870's and is prized for its Lion Gate and Royal Tombs. Equally impressive are the 'beehive tombs' which include the Treasury of Atreus: the lintel over the monumental Atreus door weighs over 120 tons! Inside, the structure is awesome: the principal chamber dates from about 1350 BC and emulates the grandeur of the Egyptian pharaohs. Homer's epithets of 'well-built Mycenae, rich in gold; are well born out in the superbly crafted gold and architecture of the tombs found here which can be seen at the museum. This afternoon, we move on to the city of Areopolis, our base for the next few days.



Accommodation: Hotel Mani (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 6 - Free day in Areopolis with the option to join a trip to Monemvasia

Areopolis is the main town (really a large village) on the Mani Peninsula. It lies some three miles from the sea, quite high up and well located for walks. Today has been left free to soak up the atmosphere of Areopolis, or alternatively take a trip to nearby town of Monemvasia - 'Greece's Gibraltar'. This 13th century Byzantine fortress town occupies a steep, rocky islet which is connected to the coast by a bridge, and it was amongst the first of the Peloponnese fortified towns to be liberated by the Greeks in 1821.



Accommodation: Hotel Mani (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 7 - Excursion to the Mani Peninsula including Vathia fortified village

The Mani is a naturally isolated and traditionally independent area and the people who inhabit its wild landscape have always

resisted change and clung to their ancient traditions. In addition to its interesting history of piracy, the feudal society which developed around the 14th century has left a unique architectural legacy in the form of many marble-roofed towerhouses, once used as a defence against enemy clans and as a sign of family prestige. Today we charter a bus to discover this fascinating region, visiting Cape Tenaro; the southern-most point of mainland Greece, Girolimenas and Vathia fortified village.



Accommodation: Hotel Mani (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 8 - Drive to the harbour town of Pylos via the ruins of Medieval Mystras

Leaving the Mani, we head north to the abandoned medieval town of Mystras. Clinging to a steep flank of the Taygetos range, some 150 m above the plain, Mystras is silent and ruined today but nevertheless evocative of the people who once lived here and made it prosperous. We wander the cobbled alleyways, exploring the various sun-bleached palaces and houses along the way. Although only ruins remain, the architectural styles and artistic excellence of many wall paintings, mosaics and decorative sculptures are worthy of close inspection. In the Upper Town is the vast arched hall of the Palace of the Despots, with its two standing towers. The beautiful Pantanassa Church, still used by a few smiling nuns, combines both Byzantine and Gothic elements and has some rather fine frescoes. Crowning the summit is the original Frankish Castle (Kastro) with its breathtaking overview of the plain of Sparta. Walking through this phantom city with its scattered ruins is like taking a journey back through time. Later we continue to the delightful little harbour town of Pylos.



Accommodation: Hotel Galaxy (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 9 - Free day in Pylos; chance to visit the Venetian fortress at Methoni

We spend the day in this picturesque place set amid olive trees, rocky meadows and offshore islands. The area around Pylos is ideal for personal explorations, on foot or by local transport. In Pylos the well-preserved Venetian fortress (Neo Kastro) is worth a visit. Alternatively, you could make the journey by local bus to Methoni (10 km to the south), possibly the most beautiful Venetian stronghold in Greece and home to an imposing 15th century castle. Another option is a walk along Gialova Lagoon to a medieval castle, and on to Nestor's Cave, finishing at a beautiful horseshoe-shaped white sand beach.



Accommodation: Hotel Galaxy (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 10 - Visit to Nestor's Palace and tour of the famed sights of Olympia

Driving north, we stop briefly at Nestor's Palace. Nestor, King of Pylos was one of the strongest and richest leaders of the Greeks during the Trojan War and built this once lavishly decorated palace in around 1500 BC. This afternoon we travel to the ruined monuments of ancient Olympia, birthplace of the Olympic games and one of Greece's most renowned historical sites, for a guided tour. The site lies in an enchanting valley setting close to the modern day town of Nea Olympia. The first monuments to be constructed were in the Altis, or sacred grove, and date back to the 10th - 9th century BC. Estimates indicate the games first began in 776 BC, after the worship of Zeus was established. Initially all the principal Greek cities took part in the Olympiads (which were held every four years). As well as wandering through the remains of the gymnasium, wrestling school, stadium and the Temple of Zeus, you could visit the excellent Archaeological Museum (optional) which has many remarkable exhibits on view.



Accommodation: Olympic Village (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 11 - Tour of Delphi including the Temple of Apollo

From Olympia, we head north. A scenic drive takes us through the largest olive grove in Greece to reach Delphi, where we have a guided tour. Perched on the rocky slopes of sacred Mount Parnassos (2459 m), Delphi was the perfect setting for mystery and religious prophecy. Here the god Apollo spoke through the medium of a priestess called the Pythia. After drinking the waters of the nearby Castalian Spring, said to echo with the prophetic voices of Apollo's muses, she swooned over intoxicating fumes emitted from a crack in the ground and uttered strange gabblings, which the priests then translated into verse and gave to the faithful. The answers were always so ambiguous that whatever happened they were bound to come true. The site's famous antiquities, including the Temple of Apollo, theatre, stadium and Marmaria Sanctuary are wonderfully picturesque, and the museum contains the much admired 'charioteer'.



Accommodation: Acropole Delphi Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 12 - Drive to Athens for your final evening

This morning there's a chance to take an optional walk to the temple of Athena to stretch your legs before we take the bus back to the capital. Free afternoon in Athens.



Accommodation: Hotel Evripides (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 13 - Tour ends in Athens

Our tour ends this morning in Athens.



Meals Provided: Breakfast



What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 12



Transport

Bus
Public Bus
Taxi



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader
Driver(s)
Local Guide(s)



Accommodation

12 nights standard hotel

Trip information

Country information

Greece

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 following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

If you are a student or over 65, please carry ID for half price entrance fees

Areopolis - Cave of Diros entrance fee/boat ride €12.00; Monemvasia €40.00 (dependent on numbers)

Clothing

July and August are the hottest months, but early and late in the season go prepared with clothing to suit drops in temperature and the odd shower. Women in trousers/shorts are not permitted to enter monasteries - please bring a skirt.

Footwear

Comfortable, well broken-in walking boots or shoes with good heel support are necessary for participating in walks and visiting the sites. Trainers and sandals are also recommended for relaxing.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and a daysac. Remember, porters are not available, so don't overload yourself. You'll also need to carry your luggage on/off buses.

Equipment

Water bottle, torch, sunhat and sun cream.

Tipping

Explore leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Local crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognised part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. Accordingly, you should allow 20 Euros for tipping. In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

Country Information

Greece

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

Bus, Public Bus, Taxi

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.

Price Guarantee

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 and Passport 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.

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.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

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, Polar, 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. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. 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.

Non refundable permits

Greece

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory but we recommend protection against tetanus and polio. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. 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 [Explore Travel Health](#) and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.
