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Between Sea and Sky: Homer's Greek Islands 2026

2 OCT – 22 OCT 2026

Code: 22636

Tour Leaders Dr Heather Sebo

Fitness Level

Level 3 - Challenging
Among our most physically demanding

Travel to the fabled palace kingdoms of Minoan Crete, the fortress citadel of Mycenaean Greece, Olympia, the ancient oracle at Dodona and finally to the Ionian islands of Kefalonia, Ithaca & Corfu.

Overview

Image 1: Ithaca walk - courtesy Malcolm Sinclair

Where it all began: A Journey through Homeric landscapes

Travel to the fabled palace kingdoms of Minoan Crete, the citadels of Mycenaean Greece, as well as Corinth, Olympia, Messene, the ancient oracle at Dodona and the Ionian islands of Kefalonia, Ithaca & Corfu.

- Dr Heather Sebo will share her lifelong love of the ancient world and trace each phase of our journey through the Homeric poems with talks, readings, and storytelling.
- Visit some of the world's most fascinating museums including the archaeological museums of Hania, Heraklion, Olympia, Corfu, the newly opened Museum of Ancient Eleutherna, and Hania's Nautical Museum featuring the reconstructed Minoan ship *Minoa*.
- Explore the old city of Hania, visiting the Venetian fortification and Ottoman quarters.
- View recently discovered gold treasure from the Tomb of the Priestesses at the Necropolis of Orthi Petra at Eleutherna Crete.
- Visit Phaistos and Knossos: built at the dawn of Western civilisation; part palace, part bull leaping arena, part dancing space, part labyrinth, warehouse and, sacred *temenos*.
- Explore the fabled fortress citadel of Mycenae 'rich in gold', the military stronghold of Homer's King Agamemnon.
- View the Palace of Nestor, considered to be the best-preserved Mycenaean palace in all of Greece.
- Explore the beautiful ruins of the city of Messene in the south-west of the Peloponnese.
- Visit Olympia: the archaeological site of the prestigious Games established in honour of Zeus, king of the gods, in 776 BCE.
- Venture to the ancient oracle of Dodona in Northern Greece. Older even than Delphi, here barefoot priests lie on the ground to interpret the rustling leaves of Zeus' holy oak tree.
- Sail the crystal-clear waters and picnic on the banks of the Acheron River, believed in ancient times to be one of the five great rivers of the Underworld, the Land of the Dead.
- Visit the last outposts of Mycenaean civilisation on Kefalonia after the Bronze Age collapse, including the Mazarakata Cemetery, and walk the 7th-century Cyclopean fortification walls of ancient Krani.
- Take a boat trip across the stunning underground Melissani Lake.
- Experience the remote villages and byways of the luminous island of Ithaca and ponder the age-old question of whether this place is really 'rocky Ithaca', the kingdom of Homer's Odysseus.
- Conclude with 3 nights at the newly renovated 5-star Akrotiri Beach Resort Hotel, Paleokastritsa which provides spectacular views of the Ionian Sea. We explore the Paleokastritsa Bay's rock formations and caves, looking for the place where the shipwrecked Odysseus might have made safe landfall after his epic swim.

Overnight Hania (2 nights) • Heraklion (3 nights) • Nauplion (2 nights) • Pylos (2 nights) • Olympia (1 night) • Kefalonia (2 nights) • Ithaca (3 nights) • Ioannina (2 nights) • Corfu (3 nights)

Introduction

Our journey will take us to destinations that were luminous in the imagination of the poet we call Homer. We visit places named in the poems, see objects, landscapes, and buildings described in them, hear the stories, rituals, ideas, and beliefs preserved in them.

Our journey will take us to the citadels of the Bronze Age Minoan and Mycenaean civilisations, Eleutherna, Knossos, Kefalonia, and Mycenae; also to the iconic 8th-century BCE cities and sanctuaries of Corinth, Olympia, Nauplion, and Ambracia (now modern Arta in Northern Greece). It will take us far off the beaten track to Dodona, the oldest oracle in Hellas (older than Delphi), the Nekromanteion at Ephyre where inquirers called up the souls of the dead, and to the fabled Acheron, the Underworld River of Hades, fed at its source by countless miraculous springs. Finally, our journey will take us to the mythical islands of Ithaca, Kefalonia, and Corfu, deep in the blue Ionian Sea.

Homer stands at a crossroads; he was heir to, and greatest exponent of, a bardic tradition that preserved detailed knowledge of the deep Bronze Age past. But Homer is also of his own time of the 7th century BCE, agog with cultural ferment, exploration, trade, and fabulous stories about new lands. In Homer we have it all, on the one hand privileged memory of the past, on the other, a new critical spirit of inquiry and individualism. Our tour allows us to encounter his world (and beyond) with enhanced understanding and love for his winged and wonderful words.

Take an epic journey right across Greece, south to north, from Crete to Corfu—to the vibrant world of modern Greece, but also to the deep past of the poet we call Homer as Heather Sebo presents 'The Labyrinth and the Dancing Floor: Homer's Mythic Crete'.

https://youtu.be/_vULeu7gNYk

Leaders

Dr Heather Sebo

Heather completed her PhD in the Department of Classics at the University of Melbourne in the field of Greek Myth and Drama. She is an Honorary Associate in Classics at La Trobe University and is currently coordinating the subject "Classical Myth" and lecturing in the Centre for Classics and Ancient History. Heather is also Performance Consultant in Ancient Drama at Complete Works Theatre Company.

Before committing to an academic career, Heather had a long history in secondary and community education as a teacher, examiner and in curriculum development. She also recalls with great pleasure her time as curator of a significant private collection of Greek and Roman and has maintained a strong engagement with the visual arts. Heather has become well known as a guest lecturer in venues ranging from the Red Stitch Theatre to the National Gallery of Victoria. Recent personal highlights have been script writing and presenting for the Stork Theatre Iliad and Odyssey Literary Digs, involvement in "The Body Beautiful in Ancient Greece" (visiting exhibition, British Museum), and publication in the distinguished journal Arethusa (47:2): "Strife and Starvation. Euripides Helen". Heather first joined ASA as a tour lecturer in 2016, and has led the successful 'Homer Literary Tour: In the Footsteps of Odysseus through Turkey and Greece' (May 2016) and 'Between Sea and Sky: Homer's Greek Islands' (2018 and 2022).

Combine this tour with

Slovenia: Villages, Castles, Vineyards, Scenic Valleys and the Julian Alps 2026
3 SEP – 20 SEP 2026

Crossroads of the Caucasus: Azerbaijan, Georgia & Armenia 2026
2 SEP – 22 SEP 2026

Tunisia: From Carthage to the Sahara 2026
27 OCT – 13 NOV 2026

Itinerary

The following itinerary describes daily activities which may change or be rotated and/or modified in order to accommodate alterations in opening hours, road conditions, flight and ferry schedules. Participants will receive a final itinerary together with their tour documents prior to departure. The tour includes breakfast daily, lunches & evening meals indicated in the detailed itinerary where: B=breakfast, L=lunch (on several days this will be a boxed/picnic lunch) and D=dinner.

Hania, Crete - 2 nights

Day 1: Friday 2 October, Arrive Hania

- Tour commences at 7pm in the foyer of the Porto Veneziano Hotel
- Welcome Meeting
- Light Evening Meal

Meeting Point: The tour commences at 7pm in the foyer the Porto Veneziano Hotel, located in the heart of the old city of Hania. There will be a short welcome meeting followed by a light dinner in the old town.

We begin our journey on Crete, a mysterious land that gave birth to Europe's first civilisation. In the stories of Greek myth, this civilisation, called the 'Minoan' after the legendary King Minos, belongs to the Golden Age. Homer says that Crete had 100 cities and sent 80 ships to the Trojan War when Odysseus could only manage 12 ships from Ithaca and all the surrounding islands including Kefalonia! Crete figures large in Homer's *Odyssey*; his hero Odysseus claims to have visited on the way out to and home from Troy. He even masquerades as the younger brother of the Cretan king!

Our first destination is the beautiful city of Hania in Western Crete. Hania is built on an earlier settlement that Homer calls Kydonia, and this name is also found in the Mycenaean Linear B tablets (1100 BCE). The powerful city of Kydonia was a leader in resisting successive invaders, Romans, Arabs, the Venetians, and the Turks. During their rule, (1205-1669), the Venetians changed the name to La Canae – the channel – from

which comes the modern name Hania. But even today, the province around Hania retains the ancient name, Kydonia. (Overnight Hania, Crete) D

Day 2: Saturday 3 October, Hania – Aptera – Hania

- Ancient Aptera
- New Archaeological Museum of Hania
- Shipyard Moro, Nautical Museum: featuring the reconstructed Minoan ship *Minoa*
- Orientation walk of the old city of Hania, visiting the Venetian fortification and old Venetian and Ottoman quarters
- Welcome Dinner

We begin this morning with a visit to ancient Aptera, which overlooks Souda Bay and offers panoramic views across the plain of Armeni to the White Mountains. 'Aptera' means wingless; the city got this name from a mythical story about a singing contest between the dangerous bird-women, the Sirens and Zeus' daughters, the Muses. When the Sirens lost the contest, they shed their feathers, turned white, and fell into the sea. Much of the area remains unexcavated but we will see the impressive fortified city walls reminiscent of the Cyclopean walls of Tiryns and Mycenae. We also see the remains of a small 1st-century BCE temple of Demeter, a theatre and vaulted cisterns of the Roman period – according to one source they were used for grain storage.

On returning to Hania, we visit the New Archaeological Museum, opened in state-of-the-art premises in April 2022. Highlights are an, as yet unpublished, assemblage of clay bull votive figurines and the famous "Master Sealing" a seal impression showing a male figure towering over a Minoan town by the sea – possibly Kastelli Hill near our hotel. We also make a quick visit to Shipyard Moro, a division of the Nautical Museum of Crete in order to see the *Minoa*, a full-size replica of a 16th-century, BCE Minoan vessel.

The afternoon is dedicated to exploring the beautiful architecture and narrow streets of the Venetian harbour district and the maze of narrow streets in the Splantzia/Daliani District. At the entrance to the harbour lies the Firka Fortress, built by the Venetians (1206-1669) to serve as a local garrison and later used for the same purpose by the Ottomans (1669-1898).

This evening we enjoy a welcome dinner at a local restaurant located in the old town. (Overnight Hania, Crete) BL

Heraklion, Crete - 3 nights

Day 3: Sunday 4 October, Hania – Eleutherna – Heraklion

- Arcadia Monastery
- Ancient Eleutherna Archaeological Site including the Necropolis of Orthi Petra
- The Museum of Ancient Eleutherna

Today we drive 23 kilometres southeast of Rethymnon to the fortified Arcadia Monastery, which sits on a high fertile plateau on the northwest side of Mount Ida (in myth, a birthplace of the sky god Zeus). As early as the 16th century the monastery was a place for science and art with a school and a rich library. It was also noted for its rich production of olive oil and wine produced by the monks that lived in the monastery and farmers that worked the monastery's extensive lands. The monastery played an active role in the Cretan resistance to Ottoman rule and in the revolt of 1866, provided refuge to nearly 300 guerrilla fighters and some 700 women and children.

Next, we visit Eleutherna, an ancient city-state that lies a few kilometres from the Arcadia Monastery. Eleutherna was a major city in 900-600 BCE, the crucial period for the final crystallising and preserving in writing of the Homeric poems. Burials at Orthi Petra confirm Homer's account of funeral rituals and in particular, the Warrior's Tomb confirms the practice of revenge killing of captives described at *Iliad* 22.163-77. Rich finds from the excavation are on display in the new museum including a perfectly preserved bronze shield from Warrior's Tomb (c.700 BCE) and spectacular gold and jewelled adornments from the Tomb of the Four Priestesses (c. 675 BCE), including a series of intricate gold brooches, one depicting a male god flanked by two lions and another showing animal combat very like that described at *Odyssey* 19.225-31.

Mid-afternoon we continue our journey to Heraklion, the capital of Crete. Our boutique hotel is located in the heart of the city. (Overnight Heraklion) BL

Day 4: Monday 5 October, Heraklion – Zominthos – Knossos – Heraklion

- Minoan 'palace' complex of Zominthos (to be confirmed in 2026)
- Minoan 'palace' complex of Knossos
- Traditional Cretan Dinner at the Herb Restaurant

Over the next two days we visit the most important Minoan archaeological sites.

In the morning, we hope to have special permission to visit Zominthos, a unique Minoan mountain site that is closed to the public and still under excavation. Zominthos is the best preserved of all Minoan sites. So far, 1800 square metres have been excavated, including an 80 room, three-story structure built with large, elongated stones and fragments of blue and red wall plaster. There have been astonishing finds including objects bearing the elusive hieroglyphic Linear A script. Indeed, excavators believe that they may find a Linear A archive with a sufficient number of texts to make decipherment a possibility. Zominthos is a remote site, 1200 metres above sea level, but in Minoan times on the direct route from Knossos to the cave on Mt. Ida (modern Mt. Psiloritis) where the god Zeus is said to have been hidden by his mother Rheia "under the secret places of earth" until he came of an age to challenge his father Kronos for supremacy of the universe. Like many other other Minoan centres Zominthos was destroyed by a violent earthquake.

In the afternoon we set out for Knossos, the famous Minoan 'palace' complex on Crete. The site was excavated and reconstructed by Sir Arthur Evans in the early years of the twentieth century. Evans' reconstruction is controversial, but it does offer a vivid experience of how Minoan palatial complexes may have looked in the Bronze Age.

Evans thought that the Knossos complex, with its three-storied maze of corridors and rooms, was the labyrinth where the Athenian hero Theseus killed the Minotaur. In the *Iliad,* Homer mentions the dancing floor that the craftsman Daedalus built for Ariadne at Knossos. It is also very possible that Homer's description of King Alkinoos' shining palace preserves a collective memory of Knossos (*Odyssey* 7.84-107).

Tonight we shall enjoy a traditional Cretan banquet at the Herb Restaurant. (Overnight Heraklion) BLD

Day 5: Tuesday 6 October, Heraklion – Phaistos – Heraklion

- Minoan 'palace' complex at Phaistos
- Heraklion Archaeological Museum

This morning we drive inland to the Minoan palace complex at Phaistos with its evocative view over the

Messara Plain. According to myth, Phaistos was founded by Rhadamanthys, brother of King Minos, both of whom ultimately became judges of the dead in the Greek Underworld. Like Knossos, the complex at Phaistos also dates to about 1900 BCE, but here we see the original ground plan of a Minoan palatial complex without the overlay of Arthur Evan's reconstructions. Phaistos remained the same throughout several cycles of destruction and rebuilding until it was abandoned in about 1400 BCE.

In the afternoon we visit the Heraklion Archaeological Museum, one of the world's great museums with marvellous finds from all over Crete. The displays cover a span of 7,500 years, but the museum is most celebrated for its collection of beautiful and sophisticated objects from the Minoan civilisation, including frescoes from Knossos, the distinctive faïence figurines of the snake goddess and the mysterious Phaistos disk. Other exhibits include a Boar's Tusk Helmet that exactly matches Homer's description of the helmet worn by Odysseus in the *Iliad* (10.261-65). (Overnight Heraklion) BL

Nauplion - 2 nights

Day 6: Wednesday 7 October, Heraklion – Athens – Piraeus – Corinth – Nauplion

- Morning flight from Heraklion to Athens (A3305 0935-1030)
- Optional visit to The Archaeological Museum of Piraeus (time permitting)
- Ancient Corinth: Archaeological Site & Museum

This morning we fly from Heraklion to Athens and then journey to the port city of Piraeus where there will be time at leisure for lunch. Time-permitting there will also be an optional visit to The Archaeological Museum of Piraeus which covers a period spanning the Mycenaean era until Roman times and explores ancient Pireaus as an important trading centre of the Eastern Mediterranean.

Following a seafood lunch at the port of Piraeus, we journey by coach to Nauplion via Corinth. Homer tells us that Corinth is the birthplace of the Bellerophon, the hero who tamed the winged horse Pegasus and killed the Chimera (*Iliad* 6. 155-202). In Corinth we visit the site of the ancient city at the base of the rocky Acrocorinth, described in the *Iliad* as 'the luxurious'. The first thing that catches the eye are the monumental surviving columns of the early Greek temple of Apollo. (This will make a fascinating comparison with the much later temple of Apollo when we visit Bassai.) Just north of the temple was the Asklepion, a healing centre dedicated to Asklepios, the son of Apollo and a theatre.

However, it was trade that made Corinth's fortune. Commanding the Isthmus connecting northern and southern Greece and access to the east and west (paved in the 7th century BCE), it was ideally placed for trade and commerce. Corinth had established a colony at Syracuse by 733 BCE, and at Kerkyra (modern Corfu) by 709 BCE. Corinthian pottery from as early as 800 BCE is found at Ithaka and Delphi. After 550 BCE, nearly every structure at Delphi had Corinthian terracotta roof tiles and Corinthian silver coinage was circulating in Southern Italy. The *Odyssey* reflects the excitement and danger of this new world of trade and exploration. In a telling masquerade, the goddess Athene claims to be a merchant seeking bronze in exchange for his cargo of iron and interestingly the olive trunk that Odysseus uses to blind the Cyclops is estimated to be the size of the mast of a 'cargo-carrying ship' (*Odyssey* 1.184 and 9.322).

In the afternoon we drive to the pretty harbour town of Nauplion. It was named after Nauplios, son of the god Poseidon and grandfather of the more famous Nauplios who, in revenge for the execution of his son Palamedes, ignited false signal fires that caused the Greek fleet returning from Troy to shipwreck on the rocks of Euboea. (Overnight Nauplion) B

Day 7: Thursday 8 October, Nauplion – Epidauros – Mycenae – Nauplion

- Theatre and Sanctuary of Asklepios, Epidauros
- Fortress City of Mycenae: Treasury of Atreus & Acropolis
- Afternoon at leisure in Nauplion

Yesterday we spoke about an Asklepion at Corinth, this morning we travel to Epidauros, the oldest healing centre in Greece. Ritual healing was already practised at Epidauros in the Mycenaean age and by the 6th-century BCE it was the most important sanctuary of Asklepios in the Greek world, famous for the range of procedures and therapies it could offer. Asklepios' sanctuaries were set apart in locations chosen for their beauty, tranquillity and abundance of water. There is evidence that priests and workers remembered the most successful remedies and in so doing developed a body of medical knowledge. There were eventually over 700 Asklepieia across the Mediterranean.

In myth, Asklepios was the mortal son of the god Apollo with a woman called Koronis, Homer says that he was was taught the healing art by Chiron, "the most richteous of the centaurs (*Iliad* 4. 219). But when Asklepios used his skill to bring the dead back to life, Zeus was angered that the distinction between human beings and divinity had been breached, struck him with a thunderbolt and cast him into Hades. Ultimately Zeus had a change of heart and made him a god. By 600 BCE Asklepios was worshipped as a divinity along with his daughter Hygieia, goddess of health.

The ancient Greeks associated Asklepios with Dionysos, the god of theatre, and saw theatre and music as critically important for health and healing both in the individual and in society. Consequently, there is almost always a theatre near, or included in, a sanctuary of Asklepios. The spectacular theatre at Epidauros, famous for its acoustics and with a capacity for 14,000 spectators, is possibly the best conserved in the world and is still used for musical, poetical and theatrical performances.

Next, we travel to Mycenae, described by Homer as 'rich in gold'. Mycenae gave its name to the Mycenaean civilisation; the supposed time period of Homer's stories of the heroes and the Trojan War. We enter the stern citadel through the monumental Lion Gate and visit Grave Circle A where Schliemann found the famous gold mask that he believed was the death mask of King Agamemnon himself! It was from Mycenae that Agamemnon set out to join the Greek armada against Troy. It was also the scene of his murder at the hands of his wife Clytemnestra and his nephew (her lover) Aigisthus. From high up on the citadel, with panoptical views of the surrounding countryside, she certainly would have seen Agamemnon coming! When we meet Agamemnon in the Underworld, he condemns Clytemnestra but praises Odysseus' faithful wife Penelope, saying that her story will be "a thing of grace for the people of earth" (*Odyssey* 24.191-203).

We shall return to Nauplion at midday for an afternoon at leisure. (Overnight Nauplion) B

Pylos – 2 nights

Day 8: Friday 9 October, Nauplion – Lerna – Messene – Pylos

- The House of Tiles, Lerna
- Ancient Messene

Early this morning we depart Nauplion for Messene via Lerna, famous in myth for the story of Herakles' (the Roman Hercules) battle with the lethal Hydra, a venomous monster with the terrifying ability to regenerate multiple heads. At Lerna, we will stop at the remarkable Early Bronze Age site of the 'House of the Tiles', ca. 2200 BCE, a complex building predating the earliest Minoan structures on Crete. Among the finds were clay sealings for a large number of storage jars, boxes, and baskets. In the same area were found large

quantities of pottery. The building was destroyed by fire and never re-built.

We continue our journey across the Peloponnese to the impressive, wonderfully preserved, little-known site of ancient Messene. Messene has a unique history in that for close to four hundred years, the region was under total Spartan control. From about the 750's BCE the Messenians anticipated what was coming. There is evidence that tomb-cults flourished in the area in an attempt by the local population to stress their ancestral links to the land and claim it as their own. It was a hopeless cause. Spartan dominance is already apparent in the *Iliad* when King Agamemnon (brother of the King of Sparta) offers Achilleus rulership of seven cities on the Messenian Gulf as an inducement to re-join the fighting at Troy (*Iliad* 9.149–153).

The Spartan conquerors did not permit the Messenians to dwell in cities, depriving them of cultural autonomy and the ability to organise. It perpetuated the savage enslavement of their descendants, known as the Helots. In 420 BCE, the ancient historian Thucydides writes: "Most of the Helots were the descendants of the old Messenians that were enslaved long ago…" (1.101.2)

Spartan control was ultimately broken by the Theban general Epaminondas at the Battle of Leuctra in 371 BCE and the new capital city was founded in 369 BCE. It is said that the city walls, the most stupendous in Greece, were completed in just 85 days. Epaminondas' freeing of the Messenians and construction of their new city was designed to ensure Sparta never rose as a martial power again. It was also an expression of the Classical ideal that Greek citizens should never be slaves to other Greeks.

In the late afternoon we drive to the charming fishing village of Pylos, overlooking the Bay of Navarino, scene of the Battle of Sphacteria in 425 BCE when it is recorded that for the first time ever, Spartan warriors surrendered alive. (Overnight Pylos) BL

Day 9: Saturday 10 October, Pylos – Methoni – Pylos

- Neo Kastra (Ottoman Castle) & Pylos Archaeological Museum
- Methoni Castle & Island of Bourtzi
- Afternoon at leisure

Pylos and the surrounding area are rich with Homeric associations. It was on one of the beautiful beaches of this coast, possibly Nararino Bay, that Odysseus' adult son Telemachos, accompanied by the goddess Athene, made landfall having sailed from Ithaca. The shallow sea-shore of Nararino Bay would offer an ideal anchorage for a Bronze Age ship. Telemachos arrives during the grand sacrifice of a hundred oxen (a *hecatomb*) to honour the sea-god Poseidon. He is cordially received by King Nestor who gives him a detailed account of the Greek departure from Troy and the homecoming of the warriors at the end of the war, but King Nestor can tell him nothing about the pressing question of his father Odysseus' eventual fate (*Odyssey.* 3 .80-220; 248-312).

Two castles protect Navarino Bay, one is built on the Bronze Age acropolis, the other Neo Kastro, an Ottoman castle constructed in 1573, is a now a superb museum; an evocative setting for a display of artifacts from the wider Messenia region. These include objects from prehistoric to Roman times, and of special interest for us are the fragments of frescos from Nestor's palace, an abundance of jewellery, animal figurines and ceramics from the miraculously unlooted Mycenaean tombs of Voidokilia and Koukounara and, of course, the linear B tablets. The castle also hosts a display of underwater antiquities from shipwrecks around the Peloponnese and submerged settlements.

From Pylos we continue to a small peninsula on the southwestern corner of the Peloponnese to visit the castle town of Methoni. There has been a city on this small peninsular since ancient times. Scholars identify

it as the site of the town of Pedasos mentioned by Homer in the *Iliad* as one of the seven towns offered by Agamemnon to the angry Achilles in order to induce him to return to battle. Homer calls Pedasos "rich in vines", a description recalled in the modern name. (In Greek myth, Methoni was a daughter of Oineus, the King to whom the wine-god Dionysos gave the secret of wine-making.) Methoni was fortified in the 4th century BCE and it was on these ancient ramparts that the Venetians built the castle of Methoni in 1209. The Venetian castle is celebrated as the most beautiful in Greece. It occupies the whole cape and even the small island of Bourtzi, which is connected to the mainland via a small stone arched bridge, has been fortified.

Following some time at leisure for lunch in Methoni we return to Pylos where the remainder of the day is at leisure. (Overnight Pylos) B

Olympia - 1 night

Day 10: Sunday 11 October, Pylos – Nestor – Kyparissia – Bassae – Olympia

- Mycenaean site of the 'Palace of Nestor'
- Temple of Apollo Epicurius at Bassae

This morning we travel to the Mycenaean site identified as Homer's "Palace of Nestor" at "sandy Pylos". The first traces of the ancient Greek city of Pylos and the fabled palace were unearthed in 1939, a discovery that has changed our understanding of Aegean prehistory. The 3,200-year-old ruins that Homer describes as "the glorious dwelling of the king" are the best-preserved Mycenaean palace complex ever excavated in Greece. It was a magnificent two-story structure with elaborate frescoes, inlaid floors and all the indications of a luxurious lifestyle including the warm baths and fine clothes described in the *Odyssey* (3.465-8). The palace supported a developed textile industry and perhaps the sweet wine aged for 11 years that King Nestor serves at *Odyssey* 3.390-92, is a memory of the famous honey-wine of Mycenaean Pylos. Indeed, archaeologists have discovered a separate building that functioned as a wine cellar with ceramic wine storage jars and thousands of drinking vessels. One of these jars was labelled with the symbol for "wine with honey". We know that at Pylos wine was flavoured with herbs and flowers and that the palace was also the centre of a sophisticated perfume industry. The Linear B tablets provide a unique window into these and many other aspects of life at Pylos and in so many ways, confirm the narrative of the *Odyssey*; not least in the record of banquets as well as sacrifice and offerings to Poseidon and other gods. Almost eight decades later the discoveries continue, showing what an exceptional place ancient Pylos once was.

From Nestor's palace we journey north to the charming seaside town of Kyparissia where we enjoy lunch at a local tavern. In the *Iliad*, Homer lists Kyparisseeis as one of the cities that combined to send ninety ships to fight at Troy under the leadership of King Nestor (*Iliad* 2. 593). The Roman poet Ovid has a story that Kyparissos was a beautiful boy who was transformed by Apollo into a Cypress (Kyparíssi) tree. (*Metamorphoses* 10.106-42).

From Kyparissia we head inland through the Arcadian mountains to the Temple of Apollo Epicurius (Greek Epikourios), "the helper" at Bassae (or Vassae—Greeks pronounce "B" as "V"). We are now in Arcadia a domain of Apollo, the god of order, music, clarity and light. As we are now aware, Apollo, father of Asklepios, is also associated with healing and the epithet "the helper" is sometimes said to refer to his power of deliverance from plague.

The temple, built 420-400 BCE by Iktinos, the architect of the Parthenon, is the most unconventional but also one of the best preserved in Greece. Its dramatic, remote location recalls the traditional description of Apollo as the one "who shoots from afar", the god of the "lyre and the bow". Again, we remember that it

was at the festival of Apollo that Odysseus strings the great bow with the same ease and expertise that a musician would string a lyre. With the blessing of Apollo, Odysseus takes his revenge on the suitors, at last restoring rectitude and order in his household (*Odyssey* 21). The temple at Bassae is now covered by a permanent protective roof. (Overnight Olympia) BLD

Argostoli, Kefalonia - 2 nights

Day 11: Monday 12 October, Olympia – Kyllini – Poros – Argostoli, Kefalonia

- Olympia: Archaeological Site
- Olympia Museum
- Archaeological Site & Museum of Ancient Elis
- Ferry from Kyllini to Poros, Kefalonia

This morning we visit ancient Olympia and its excellent museum, where we will see the famous metopes and pediments from the Temple of Zeus and the *Hermes with the Infant Dionysus* by the late classical sculptor Praxiteles.

We can form a vivid idea of the nature and conduct of athletic events at ancient Olympia from Homer's description of the funeral games for Patroklos at *Iliad* 23. Held in honour of Zeus, king of the gods and said to have been founded by Heracles, the traditional foundation date for the games was 776 BCE. The Greeks thought that the spectacle of intense physical competition involving beautiful human bodies would be as delightful and pleasing to the gods as it was to them.

Because it was truly a Panhellenic occasion in which all the Greek city-states participated, a sacred truce was announced before each of festival to allow visitors to travel safely. During the truce, wars were suspended, legal disputes and executions were forbidden.

Pheidias' gold-and-ivory cult statue, one of the wonders of the ancient world, was housed in Zeus' temple. Pausanias tells us that the seated god was so huge that if he had stood up, he would have taken off the roof. Sadly, the statue has not survived. Outside the sanctuary were sports structures, thermal baths, and accommodation for guests.

At midday we journey north to Kyllini, situated in the westernmost part of Elis and the Peloponnese. En route we stop at the archaeological site and museum of ancient Elis. The new museum which offers panoramic views over the plain of Elis includes a mosaic floor from a 3rd century AD mansion with the symbols of Apollo and the Muses and the labours of Hercules.

From the port of Kyllini we make the crossing by ferry to Poros, a picturesque small town located in the southeast of Kefalonia. Kefalonia, the largest of the Ionian Islands, is believed by some scholars to be Odysseus' homeland of Ithaca rather than the neighbouring island that is known as 'Ithaca' today. Homer does mention "men of Kefalonia" fighting with Odysseus at Troy, but scholars sometimes explain this by saying that Kefalonia was a general name for the whole group of Ionian Islands, including Ithaca. Our visit will give us an opportunity to discuss this fascinating question.

On arrival we transfer by coach to Argostoli, the capital of Kefalonia. Overlooking the island's main port, the town is located on the east coast of a peninsula surrounded by wooded mountains. The cobbled promenade which skirts the harbour, leads us past small tavernas, and cafes to the Argostoli Square. (Overnight Argostoli, Kefalonia) BL

Day 12: Tuesday 13 October, Kefalonia: Argostoli – Mazarakata – Sami – Razata – Argostoli

- Mazarakata Mycenaean Cemetery
- Short boat trip on Melissani Cavern-Lake
- Optional walk to the Cyclopean Walls of Ancient Krani, Razata

We begin our tour of Kefalonia with a visit to Mazarakata village, where we explore the Mycenaean Cemetery. Consisting of 17 chamber tombs, this is the largest Mycenaean graveyard on the island and is of great significance as the tombs were found unplundered. However, most of the the grave goods were donated by the Swiss born British governor De Bosset to the Museum of Neuchâtel, Switzerland in 1814, where they are still held.

Caves are important in ancient religion and in Homeric poetry. They are often considered to give access to a divine realm and to the land of the dead. Mid-morning we travel by coach to Melissani, a stunning underground lake located northwest of Sami. The caves are part of an extensive network of largely uncharted underground channels through which water flows across the island to the sea. The Melissani Cave roof collapsed in ancient times, allowing sunlight into its clear waters and creating an ever-changing range of blue and green hues in the 32-metre deep lake under the roof opening. It is said that the cave and lake take their name from the nymph Melisanthi, who loved the god Pan – half man and half goat – and who drowned herself in the lake when Pan rejected her love.

An excursion by small boat offers breathtaking views of this natural phenomenon. Those who claim the actual home of Odysseus was Kefalonia rather than Ithaca even point to the cave as being Homer's famed 'cave of the Nymphs', one of the distinctive landmarks that Athena mentions to convince Odysseus that he is back in his homeland after twenty years away from Ithaca. (*Odyssey* 13.344-351).

Following lunch in a local taverna in Sami, we travel to the ancient citadel of Krani. Here we visit the mighty Cyclopean fortifications, dating from the 7th or 6th century BCE, considered among the best extant specimens of Greek military architecture. One level down are traces of a temple dedicated to the goddess Demeter and her daughter Persephone. Access to the walls is on foot only (approx. 1.5kms). (Overnight Argostoli, Kefalonia) BL

Vathy, Ithaca (Ionian Islands) - 3 nights

Day 13: Wednesday 14 October, Arogostoli, Kefalonia – Skala – Sami – Vathy, Ithaca

- Roman Villa at Skala
- Drogarati's Cave
- Archaeological Collection of Sami
- Ferry from Kefalonia to Ithaca

This morning we visit the remains of a 3rd-century Roman villa at Skala. The villa features some remarkably well-preserved mosaics depicting the sacrifice of a bull, a motif we will have seen many times in the course of our journey.

Nearby is the Drogarati Cave, discovered 300 years ago after a strong earthquake created an entrance. The cave is 150 million years old and features a large room with magnificent white and red stalactites and stalagmites, formed and coloured by chalk, limestone and the rock's iron content.

Following some time at leisure for lunch we visit the Archaeological Collection of Sami. Opened in 2021,

this new museum features an exhibition "Sami: a historic port of the Mediterranean", and includes exhibits from the Neolithic era to Roman times.

In the late afternoon we take the ferry from Kefalonia to the port of Pisaetos, Ithaca, and then journey by coach to our hotel located in the heart of the picturesque port of Vathy. (Overnight Vathy, Ithaca) B

Day 14: Thursday 15 October, Ithaca: Villages of Anogi, Stavros and Exogi

- Archaeological Museum of Ithaca
- Navy and Folklore Museum of Ithaca, Vathy
- Monastery of Panagia Kathariotissa, Anogi
- Menhirs of Anogi
- The Church of the Dormition of the Virgin, Anogi
- Stavros Archaeological Museum
- Optional County walk to the archaeological site of the Palace of Odysseus, Exogi

I am Odysseus son of Laertes, known before all men
for clever and crafty designs, my fame goes up to the heavens.
My home is sunny Ithaka. There is a mountain there
that stands tall, leaf-trembling Neritos, and there are other islands
settled around it, lying very close to one another.
There is Doulichion and Same, wooded Zakynthos,
but my island lies low and away ,last of all on the water
toward the dark, with the rest facing east and sunshine,
a rugged place, but a good nurse of men; for my part
I cannot think of any place sweeter on earth to look at. (Odyssey 9.19-28)

We begin the day with a visit to the small archaeological and folklore museums in Vathy. The archaeological collection includes everyday objects from all over the island dating from prehistoric to Roman times. Of special interest are some locally made vases from about 800 BCE inscribed with early examples of the Greek alphabet.

On our island tour we begin with a visit to the Monastery of Panagia Kathariotissa with its wonderful views over the whole island, the almost entirely deserted village of Anogi with its impressive menhirs (whose origin are purely geological and not anthropogenic) and, after collecting the key from a remaining resident, the 12th-century church of The Dormition of the Virgin with its beautiful frescoes.

At the Stavros Archaeological Museum we will see a collection of objects, including a set of fragmentary bronze tripods found in a cave at Polis Bay, that are often cited as evidence that Ithaca is in fact the true homeland of Homer's Odysseus.

Finally after time at leisure for lunch in Stavros, we will embark on an optional cross-country walk from the village of Exogi to the archaeological site known as the Palace of Odysseus. The walk is a wonderful experience, but travellers need to be aware that it involves a steep downhill route of about 2.6 kilometres along ancient cobbled goat tracks. Some of the landmarks on our walk can be identified with locations in the *Odyssey*, such as Hill of Hermes, Polis Bay, Rheithron Harbour and Melyandrios Spring. (Overnight Vathy, Ithaca) B

Day 15: Friday 16 October, Ithaca: Villages of Lefki, Frikes and Kioni

- Church of Saint Nicolaos of Xenon (the Foreigners) with its celebrated icon attributed to El Greco, Vathy
- Island tour of Lefki, Frikes and Kioni villages

Today we begin with a visit to the picturesque Church of Saint Nicolaos of Xenon, located in the old town of Vathy. Within, a rare Byzantine icon of Jesus Elkomenos (Jesus in Pain) is attributed to El Greco.

Our island tour takes us to the beautiful northeastern coast of Ithaca, with stops at the seaside villages of Lefki and Frikes. On the way, we visit secluded beaches and take the opportunity for an optional swim in the Ionian Sea. At the picturesque fishing village of Kioni, there will be time at leisure to lunch at one of the harbour side restaurants, to shop and to explore. (Overnight Vathy, Ithaca) B

Ioannina - 2 nights

Day 16: Saturday 17 October, Ithaca – Astakos – Arta – Ioannina

- Morning Ferry from Ithaca to Astakos
- Orientation tour of Arta, including the Byzantine Museum Church of the Parigoritissa (Consolation) and the medieval bridge over the Arachthos River

We depart Ithaca early this morning, and take the ferry across to Astakos in the province of Epirus in Northern Greece with its awe-inspiring Pindus mountain range and rich Byzantine and Ottoman influences. In Homer, Epirus is the home of the Thesprotians, good friends to Odysseus (*Odyssey* 16. 316-320).

The Corinthians captured Ambracia in 625 BCE. Three hundred years later, in 295 BCE, King Pyrrhus of Epirus made Ambracia the capital of his kingdom. Considered one of the greatest generals of antiquity, he fought the Pyrrhic War (280–275 BCE) to help the Greek city of Tarentum against the Romans. He was initially successful, but Plutarch quotes him as saying 'If we are victorious in one more battle with the Romans, we shall be utterly ruined.' This gave rise to the expression 'Pyrrhic victory'.

We take a short orientation tour of Arta viewing the Byzantine Museum/Church of Panagia Parigoritissa (Consolation), ca. 1290, with its breathtaking architecture and marvellous frescoes and icons. We also have refreshments at tearooms overlooking the famous medieval bridge on the Arachthos River.

Departing Arta, we begin our pilgrimage to the Greek Oracle of Dodona in northern Greece and spend the night in the capital and largest city of Epirus, Ioannina. (Overnight Ioannina) BL

Day 17: Sunday 18 October, Ioannina – Dodona – Ioanninaa

- The Sanctuary of Zeus at Dodona
- Archaeological Museum of Ioannina
- Walking tour of Ioannina Old Town
- Time at leisure

Unrecognised, in beggar's disguise, Odysseus prepares Eumaios and later, Penelope for his homecoming by saying that he has news from the King of the Thesprotians:

Odysseus has gone to Dodona, to listen
to the will of Zeus, out of the holy deep-leaved oak tree
for how he may return to the rich countryside of Ithaka,

whether in secret or openly, having been by now long absent.
So he is safe, as you see and is now coming back.
He is very close at hand…. (*Odyssey* 19. 296-301)

This morning we travel inland to the sanctuary of Zeus at Dodona, the oldest oracle in Greece. In prehistoric times it was a shrine of the Great Earth Mother. Homer says that the focus of the oracle was Zeus' holy oak tree and that barefoot priests called Selloi lay on the ground to receive the god's communication from the rustling of the leaves and branches. Achilleus prays to Zeus of Dodona to protect his dear friend Patroklos in battle (*Iliad* 16.233-35). The territory of Dodona sent twenty-two ships to fight at Troy.

The first, small temple to Zeus of Dodona was built at the beginning of the 4th century BCE. In the next two hundred years the site was embellished with other monumental buildings and finally, a stone theatre larger than the one at Epidaurus.

Late morning we return to Ioannina to visit the Archaeological Museum. The collection covers a wide time span from the first appearance of humans in Epirus during the Lower Paleolithic, 250,000 years ago, to late antiquity in late Roman times (3rd century AD). Most interesting for us is the display of lead tablets on which those seeking advice scratched questions addressed to Zeus.

With a history going back to Hellenistic times, Ioannina is now a thriving university town with a local artisan industry in exquisite silversmithing and jewellery making. Following time at leisure for lunch, we take a guided tour of the old town set within the impressive fortifications of Ioannina Castle. The remainder of the afternoon is at leisure. (Overnight Ioannina) B

Paleokastritsa, Corfu - 3 nights

Day 18: Monday 19 October, Ioannina – Nekromanteion Acheron – Igoumenitsa – Paleokastritsa, Corfu

- Nekromanteion Acheron
- Tour of the River Acheron by *varkakia* (small boats)
- Picnic lunch at the springs of the Acheron
- Ferry from Igoumenitsa to Corfu (late afternoon)

Today we visit an evocative structure near the confluence of the Kokytos (Lamentation) and Acheron (River of Woe) where Odysseus was said to have raised the shades of the dead at *Odyssey* 11. 25-28. The archaeologist Sotirios Dakaris thought that this was the Acheron Nekromanteion, mentioned by Herodotus, where the ancients performed rituals based on those described by Homer in the belief that by these means they could also speak to the dead. Dakaris' interpretation seemed to be confirmed by the discovery of a complex of underground corridors in which hundreds of late 4th century BCE vessels were found, as well as several terracotta figurines of Persephone. The most striking feature of the site is a subterranean, vaulted 'crypt' with walls over three metres thick. Dakaris theorised that that those seeking to communicate with the dead were predisposed to an "otherworldly" experience by an initial passage through the labyrinthine corridors, by making sacrifices and submitting to purifications, and by the consumption of hallucinogenic lupines and beans. However, this view is now strongly contested on the basis of new studies of the site.

We also take a boat trip down the Acheron River, however there will be no fire or lamentation for us. Our modern trip will be a scenic cruise past flocks of longhaired sheep and nesting nightingales. Later, we will picnic on the banks of the Acheron at its source, a place where the countless clear, crystal subterranean springs give rise to the beautiful river. No wonder the Ancients thought the Acheron rose up from the Underworld!

In the afternoon our journey continues north along the coastline to the port town of Igoumenitsa where we take the ferry across to the Island of Corfu. On arrival we transfer through forests of olive trees to Paleokastritsa (Old Castle). The Akrotiri Beach Resort Hotel, where we will be based for 3 nights, offers spectacular views overlooking Palaiokastritsa Bay. (Overnight Paleokastritsa, Corfu) BLD

Day 19: Tuesday 20 October, Paleokastritsa – Corfu Town – Paleokastritsa

- Old Fortress
- St. Spyridon Church
- Exploring Paleokastritsa Bay including Nausikaa Cave by private boat

This morning we journey from Paleokastritsa to Corfu Old Town. Corfu has been subject to repeated invasions in her long history and gradually became an island of fortresses. The earliest defences on the site of the Old Fortress date from about the 6th century AD (CE). The Venetian Old Fortress was designed in the mid 1500's and never succumbed to the Ottomans. It now houses the Public library.

We continue to the 16th-century church of Agios Spyridon, a fine basilica with magnificent frescoes. The church also holds the remains of St. Spyridon, Corfu's patron saint and also patron saint of potters. His body, brought here from Constantinople in 1453, is paraded through the town on festival days.

Corfu's unique location, close to Italy and with privileged access to the Adriatic, gives it a different character to the rest of Hellas. It was celebrated in antiquity for its abundance of fruit trees and flowers and was identified with the idyllic kingdom of the Phaiakians, Homer's Golden Age land where the trees and vines bear all year round and are never spoiled; where there is no winter and fertile gardens are watered by unfailing, crystal clear spring-water. The kingdom of the Phaiakians is Odysseus' final destination before his homecoming. He is hospitably received, first by the princess Nausikaa who happens upon him on the sandy bank where he has spent the night in the shelter of two intertwined bushes, and then by her parents, King Alkinoos and Queen Arete (*Odyssey* 6. 135-180 and 7. 139-134).

As it happens, the Phaiakians are marvellous sailors and the King agrees to outfit a ship and convey Odysseus home to Ithaca. But first, he hosts a lavish farewell banquet in Odysseus' honour and it was here that Odysseus tells the story of his adventures. After a long night of story-telling Odysseus says his farewells and makes his way to the Phaiakian ship, a magical ship responsive to human thought. As she slips between realms, Odysseus sleeps and does not wake up even when the sailors gently carry him onto the beach of his longed-for homeland. But the world never be the same again for the Phaiakians; Alkinoos' people have incurred the the Poseidon's enmity for their part in Odysseus' homecoming. Without warning, Poseidon stuns the living ship to stone as it re-enters the harbour.

This afternoon we will visit some of the places on Corfu that are identified with these episodes in the *Odyssey*. Following some time at leisure for lunch in Corfu Old Town, we return to Paleokastritsa Bay. Here, we embark small boats for our own exploration of the bay with its rock formations and caves, looking for the place where the shipwrecked Odysseus might have made safe landfall after his epic swim. In particular, we will visit the translucent Nausikaa Cave, named after the young princess who not only gives Odysseus some clothes but, in what must be the most gorgeous bath in all of literature, washes the crusted salt from his hair and body and soothes with oil his rough and swollen skin. Lawrence Durrell is not the only one who is sure that "Odysseus must have met Nausicaa at Paleokastritsa; it is not possible to believe otherwise."
(Overnight Paleokastritsa, Corfu) B

Day 20: Wednesday 21 October, Paleokastritsa – Corfu Old Town – Paleokastritsa

- Archaeological Museum of Corfu
- Guided walking tour of Venetian Old Town
- Afternoon at leisure to relax and enjoy the facilities of your hotel
- Farewell Dinner

This morning we visit the newly renovated Corfu Archaeological Museum to see, among other things, the oldest stone pediment in Greece from the western pediment of the temple of Artemis at the ancient city of Paleópolis (590-80 BCE). The monstrous Gorgon Medusa, flanked by panthers is a fearsome figure. We remember that it was fear of encountering the Gorgon head that led Odysseus to cut short his conversation with Herakles in the Underworld (*Odyssey* 11. 633-35.)

Heading west to the Venetian old town, we come to a maze of tiny streets with markets, coffee shops, and houses where real Corfiotes live. The hillside area known as Campiello, with its little squares, washing lines strung across narrow alleys, steps and curved streets is especially reminiscent of Venice. We will come across majestic architecture, including the splendid Liston arcade, and remarkable museums, including the Byzantine Museum and Museum of Asian Art, that are a testament to the rich intellectual and artistic life of the island.

After some time at leisure for lunch in Corfu Old Town, we return to Paleokastritsa for some time to relax and enjoy the facilities of our hotel. This evening we gather for a farewell meal where we can talk far into the night and after many wonderful feasts together in so many places, like Odysseus, we too say our farewells. (Overnight Paleokastritsa, Corfu) BD

Day 21: Thursday 22 October, Tour ends in Paleokastritsa, Corfu

- Tour concludes in the morning
- At leisure/Check out

Our tour ends in Corfu after breakfast. In the morning you will be required to check out of the hotel. Please contact ASA if you require assistance with a transfer to Corfu Airport. B

Accommodation

Hotels have been chosen for their convenient location. All rooms have en suite bathroom. Several hotels have swimming pools. Double/twin rooms for single occupancy may be requested – and are subject to availability and payment of the Double (as Single) Supplement. Further information on hotels will be provided in the 'Tour Hotel List' given to tour members prior to their departure.

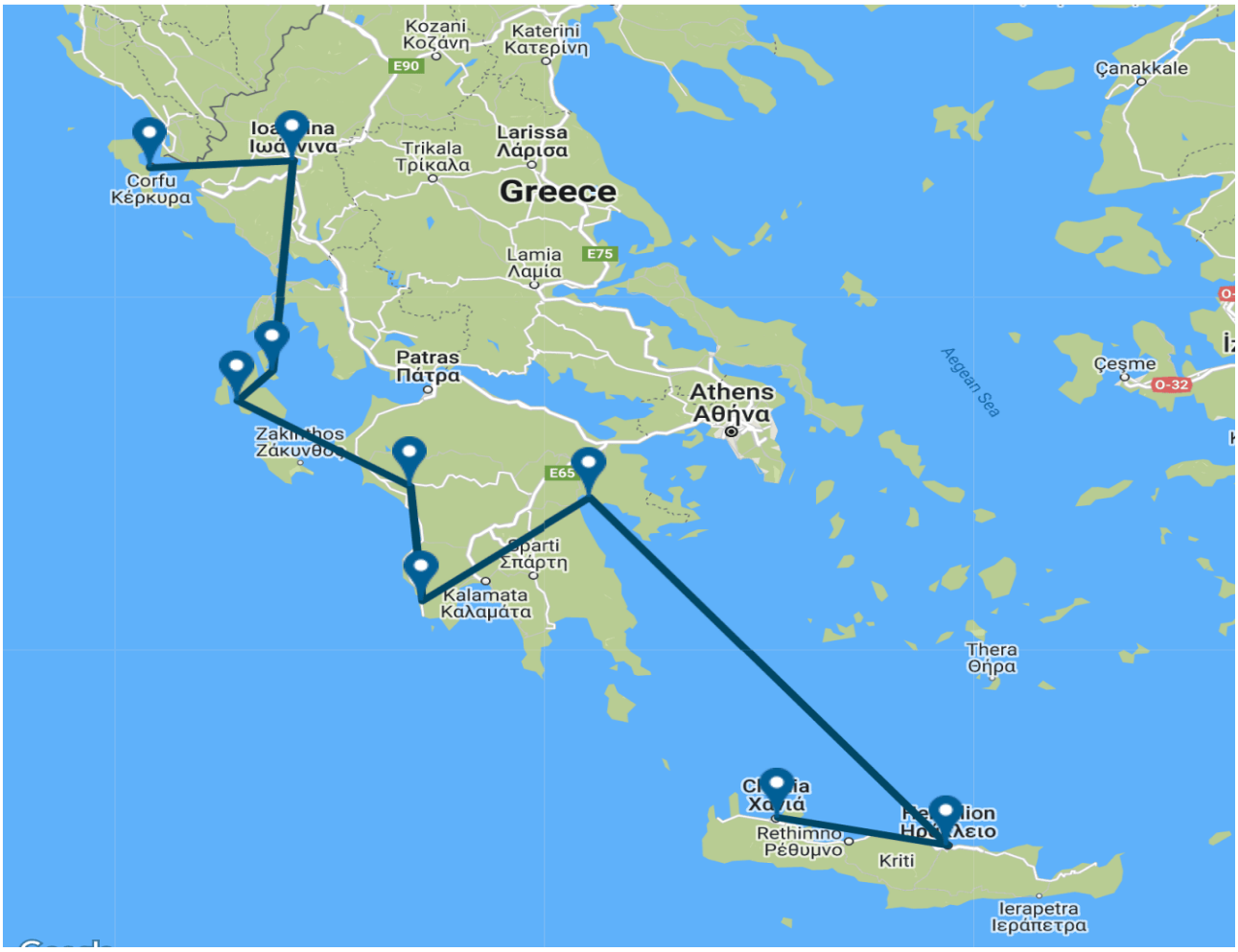
- Hania (2 nights): 3-star Porto Veneziano Hotel – located on the waterfront of the Old Venetian Harbour, 300m from the centre of the old town and excellent fish tavernas.
- Heraklion (3 nights): 4-star Lato Boutique Hotel – located inside the city walls, opposite the old city harbour, providing panoramic views of the Venetian Fortress and the Mediterranean Sea.
- Nauplion (2 nights): 3-star Hotel Rex – located 600m from the old city and main square.
- Pylos (2 nights): 4-star Karalis City Hotel & Spa – located a few metres from the village's main square and 150m from the harbour.
- Olympia (1 night): 4-star Hotel Europa – overlooking Ancient Olympia with a scenic view of the Arcadian Mountains and the Valley of Alpheios to the South.
- Argostoli, Kefalonia (2 nights): 4-star Kefalonia Grand Hotel – a boutique hotel overlooking the Bay of Argostoli, within easy walking distance of the city's museums and restaurants.
- Vathy, Ithaca (3 nights): 3-star Hotel Mentor – located in the heart of the picturesque port of Vathy, with rooms overlooking the bay.
- Ioannina (2 nights): 4-star Hotel Olympic – a modern hotel situated a short walk from the historic centre, shops and restaurants.
- Paleokastritsa, Corfu (3 nights): 5-star Akrotiri Beach Resort Hotel – renovated in 2022-2023 this resort offers spectacular views of Paleokastritsa Bay and the Ionian Sea.

Note: *Hotels are subject to change. In this instance a hotel of similar standard will be provided.*

Single Supplement

Payment of this supplement will ensure accommodation in a double room for single occupancy throughout the tour. The number of rooms available for single use is extremely limited. People wishing to take this supplement are therefore advised to book well in advance.

Tour Map


Kozani
Κοζάνη
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Ioannina
Ιωάννινα
Trikala
Τρίκαλα
Larissa
Λάρισα
Corfu
Κέρκυρα
Greece
Lamia
Λαμία
E75
Patras
Πάτρα
Athens
Αθήνα
Aegean Sea
Çeşme
O-32
Zakinthos
Ζάκυνθος
E65
Sparti
Σπάρτη
Kalamata
Καλαμάτα
Thera
Θήρα
Rethimno
Ρέθυμνο
Kriti
Ierapetra
Ιεράπετρα

Tour Price & Inclusions

AUD $12,780.00 Land Content Only – Early-Bird Special: Book before 30 Sep 2025

AUD $13,180.00 Land Content Only

AUD $2260.00 Single Supplement

Tour Price (Land Content Only) includes:

- Accommodation in twin-share rooms with private facilities in 3- and 4-star hotels
- Meals as indicated in the tour itinerary where: B=breakfast, L=lunch & D=dinner
- Drinks at welcome and farewell meals. Other meals may not have drinks included.
- Transportation by air-conditioned coach
- Internal flights with A3: Heraklion-Athens (Day 6)
- Excursions by ferry, boat and high-speed catamaran: ferry from Kyllini to Kefalonia (Day 11), short boat trip on Melissani Cavern-Lake (Day 12), ferry from Kefalonia to Ithaca (Day 13), ferry from Ithaca to Astakos (Day 16), boat tour of the River Acheron (Day 18), ferry from Igoumenitsa to Corfu (Day 18), private boat tour to explore Paleokastritsa Bay (Day 19)
- Porterage of one piece of luggage per person at hotels (not at airports; limited service at ferry terminals)
- Lecture and site-visit program; tour reference material/notes
- National Guide in mainland Greece, Crete, Kefalonia, Ithaca & Corfu
- Entrance fees
- Use of audio headsets during site visits
- Tips for the coach driver, National Guide and restaurants for included meals

Tour Price (Land Content Only) does not include:

- Airfare: Australia-Hania, Corfu-Athens-Australia
- Evening meals & lunches not indicated in the tour itinerary
- Personal spending money
- Arrival & departure airport transfers
- Luggage in excess of 20kg (44lbs)
- Travel insurance
- Visas (if applicable)

Fitness Criteria & Practical Information

Fitness Level

Level 3 - Challenging

Among our most physically demanding

You must be able to:

- manage at least five to seven hours of physical activity per day with ease.
- walk at a regular to moderate pace; some days for at least 5-7km, over terrain which may include rocky and uneven paths, sometimes with steep inclines.
- negotiate challenging historic and archaeological sites many of which are large and unsheltered and may include several flights of stairs.
- stand for one to two hours during visits to galleries and museums without the need to sit.
- cope with a demanding tour schedule which includes some longer days, regular early morning starts, long distance travel, one internal flight and multiple journeys by boat or ferry.
- withstand varying climatic conditions such as humidity and heat.
- contend with a shower over a bath; walk-in showers may not be available at all hotels.
- board/alight coaches, ferries and small boats, some with steep steps, unassisted.
- manage your own luggage at some hotels and for all ferry transfers.

Fitness Levels
Please also view the fitness criteria required for our tours, graded from Level 1 to Level 3, at www.asatours.com.au/fitness-level/

All ASA tours are active programs suitable for people with a good level of mental and physical fitness and good mobility. They are not suitable for people who lack stamina, have difficulty walking at the group's pace or who have mobility issues. An unavoidable aspect of every tour is the need to manage walking, stair-climbing and standing for long periods of time.

It is a condition of travel that all participants agree to accept ASA's directions in relation to their suitability to participate in activities undertaken on the tour, and that ASA retains the sole discretion to direct a tour participant to refrain from a particular activity on part of the tour. Before enrolling on an ASA tour please read the fitness requirements carefully.

Managing your luggage during ferry transfers

You must be able to wheel your own luggage from the coach through the ferry terminal and then onto the ferry where storage racks are available on the ground level. The turn-around time for ferries is extremely efficient and therefore you need to be able to board the ferry with your luggage without delays. This includes the following ferry transfers:

- Kyllini to Kefalonia
- Kefalonia to Ithaca
- Ithaca to Astakos
- Igoumenitsa to Corfu

Booking Conditions

ASA RESERVATION APPLICATION FORM

Please complete the ASA RESERVATION APPLICATION and send it to Australians Studying Abroad together with your non-refundable deposit of AUD $1000.00 per person payable to Australians Studying Abroad.

ASA CULTURAL TOURS

Reservation Application

TOUR NAME _____

TOUR DATES _____

Please complete **one application, per person in block letters and sign**. Parental signature is required for participants under 18 years of age. Please mail this form with the appropriate deposit to: **P.O. Box 8285, ARMADALE, VICTORIA, 3143**. On receipt of this Reservation Application and deposit, ASA will process your booking and if approved, send you a tour confirmation.

Applicant Details (as in passport)

TITLE Mr ☐ Mrs ☐ Ms ☐ Miss ☐ Dr ☐ Other _____

FIRST NAME _____ Preferred FIRST NAME _____

MIDDLE NAME _____ SURNAME _____

POSTAL ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ COUNTRY _____ POSTCODE _____

TEL. (AH) ( ) _____ TEL. (BH) ( ) _____ Mobile Tel: _____

EMAIL address _____

Date of birth __/__/____ GENDER Male ☐ Female ☐

Passport

Number _____ Expiry date __/__/____ Nationality _____

☐ Colour copy of my current valid passport enclosed ☐ I'm renewing my passport ☐ ASA has a colour copy of my current passport

Covid Certificate

☐ A copy of my current international certificate enclosed

Travel Plans

☐ I plan to leave Australia before the tour commences. Planned departure date __/__/____

☐ I will be arranging my airfare independently and taking the Land Content Only option.

Tour Accommodation (rooming preferences)

I/we would like: ☐ a twin-bedded room ☐ a double-bedded room ☐ a room for sole occupancy

I am travelling: ☐ on my own ☐ with a friend/family member Travel Companion _____

Meals

☐ I do not have any specific dietary requests

Allergies: Refer to the Medical Information

Please **X** the box if you **CAN NOT** eat any of the following:

☐ fish ☐ poultry ☐ red meat ☐ dairy products

☐ eggs ☐ pork ☐ nuts

☐ Other _____

Correspondence

Your preferred method of correspondence ☐ Postal Mail ☐ Email Address _____

Emergency Contact Details

Note: this person MUST be available by telephone and be present in Australia for the duration of your tour with ASA

Name _____ Relationship to Traveller _____

Address _____

TEL. (AH) ( ) _____ TEL. (BH) ( ) _____ Mobile Tel: _____

EMAIL address _____

ASA CULTURAL TOURS

Medical Information

The purpose of seeking this information is to assist ASA to determine, where necessary, whether ASA is able to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate your specific needs and whether your health and safety (or that of your fellow travellers) is likely to be compromised given your choice of tour. It will also assist you and ASA if you fall ill or have an accident whilst travelling.

- ASA reserves the right to decline your Reservation Application if this Medical Information section is not completed properly and may reject or cancel your reservation, or terminate your participation on any tour, if ASA subsequently learns that you have failed to make full and proper disclosure.
- ASA is committed to protecting the privacy of your personal information. ASA's privacy policy is available for viewing at **www.asatours.com.au**
- If ASA has any concerns about the information you have provided, it will contact you to request clarification before considering your Application.
- ASA requires you to consider carefully your limitations in light of ASA's Physical Endurance Star Rating System in ASA's Brochure and Itinerary when choosing your tour.
- If you are not likely to satisfy ASA's Participation Criteria (see below), ASA, in its sole discretion, may reject your Reservation Application.
- It is a condition of your tour that you agree to accept the directions of ASA's Tour Leaders in relation to your suitability to participate in activities planned on tour.
- ASA reserves the right to cancel your participation on a tour if your behaviour is in ASA's opinion causing undue distress or damage to any person or their property.
- If your participation is discontinued during a tour, ASA will assist by arranging your onward travel (if required) at your own cost, but you will not be refunded for forfeited parts of the tour.
- ASA tour groups are not accompanied by a medical practitioner. ASA recommends that you see your doctor for advice about your specific needs while overseas. You may also wish to contact a travel and vaccination clinic for advice. www.traveldoctor.com.au tel:1300 658 444; www.travelvax.com.au tel: 1300 360 164.
- Travel insurers require you to declare all existing medical conditions.
- Please carry a complete list of medications with you during the ASA tour. Include **generic names** of each medication (consult your local pharmacy for information).

Please mark **X** in the YES or NO box to every question below and provide details where necessary:

Participation Criteria

To participate in an ASA tour, you must be reasonably fit, in good health and able to participate in all activities without assistance from Tour Leaders or other tour members. **You must also be fully vaccinated against Covid-19.** If you require assistance, a fit and able travel companion must undertake to accompany and assist you with all tasks for the duration of the whole tour. The responsibility of the Tour Leader is to ensure that the larger group enjoys a relaxing and informative journey, and he or she cannot be relied upon to provide ongoing individual assistance to any one guest.

	YES	NO
1. Can you walk and stand unassisted for at least 2-3 hours a day in hot, humid conditions?	◯	◯
2. Can you walk unassisted on and over uneven surfaces?	◯	◯
3. Can you climb at least 3 flights of stairs and/or walk up and down steep slopes unassisted?	◯	◯
4. Can you walk at a steady pace and no less than 1km every 15 - 20 minutes unassisted?	◯	◯
5. Can you organise, manage and carry your own luggage?	◯	◯
6. Can you follow and remember tour instructions and meet punctually at designated times and places?	◯	◯
7. Can you administer your own medication?	◯	◯
8. You do NOT have impaired vision or hearing which may impact your capacity to participate on this tour?	◯	◯

Mobility and Fitness

As many of ASA's international sites do not provide access to wheelchairs or similar mobility aids, we regret that ASA tours are not suitable for people who require the use of a walking frame, wheeled walker, wheelchair or motorised scooter.

	YES	NO
1. Do you suffer from any medical conditions that may compromise your mobility and/or fitness to participate on this program?	◯	◯

If yes, please specify

_____

If yes, how will you manage this on tour?

_____

Allergies and/or Food Intolerances

ASA will make reasonable endeavours to organise meals to suit you, provided that you give ASA adequate notice of your specific dietary requirements or allergies. You may be required to research dietary alternatives, as not all destinations may be able to offer suitable food substitutes.

	YES	NO
1. Do you have any food allergies or intolerances?	◯	◯

If yes, please specify

_____

_____

2. Have you ever had an anaphylactic reaction to anything?	◯	◯

If yes, please specify

_____

_____

Do you carry an epipen?	◯	◯
3. Do you have any other allergies or reactions to anything, including medical drugs?	◯	◯

If yes, please specify

_____

_____

Existing Medical Conditions

You alone are responsible for managing any existing medical conditions, your medication and any medical equipment that you may need when on your tour. Please plan for contingencies and take extra medication, dietary supplements and/or fully charged batteries for medical equipment if your health and safety depends on these. You should take into consideration that power sources at some destinations may be unavailable, inadequate, inconvenient or unreliable.

	YES	NO
1. Have you any significant medical conditions that may impact your capacity to complete this tour?	◯	◯

If yes, please specify

_____

If yes, how will you manage this on tour?

_____

2. Do you require some form of powered medical aid, such as a CPAP machine?	◯	◯

These machines may not be operable on certain international flights, modes of transport, in remote or other areas with inadequate or unreliable power sources without a fully charged independent long life battery or batteries.

Diabetics: You may be travelling and sightseeing for many hours at a time. Insulin dependent diabetics must carry extra supplies of insulin (as this medication cannot be obtained in some destinations), regulators, applicators, storage and refrigeration equipment, as well as any necessary supplements. Accommodation may not provide refrigerators in rooms.

3. Are you diabetic?	◯	◯
Are you insulin dependent?	◯	◯
4. Do you suffer from travel sickness? Remember to use an appropriate medication while on tour.	◯	◯

ASA CULTURAL TOURS

Declaration, Liability and Booking Conditions

Declaration

I declare that: I have read and understood the ASA Tour Itinerary, Reservation Application and Booking Conditions. I am aware of ASA's terms as relating to refunds, cancellations, responsibility and liability. I understand that ASA relies upon this declaration when considering this Application. I accept the inherent dangers, risks and uncertainties in travel and those beyond ASA's control and understand they may occur before or during any tour. I have made full and complete disclosure and have not knowingly withheld any medical information about myself from ASA. I have completed this Reservation Application honestly and accurately. I warrant that I am able to participate independently in all activities described by ASA in the itinerary without assistance from any person.

I will advise ASA in writing if any aspect of my fitness and or health conditions change materially at any time before my departure date. I understand and accept that the itinerary, accommodation and lecturers scheduled for this tour may change.

I agree and consent that ASA may give my personal information in this Reservation Application to tour service providers and relevant authorities as required by law, but only for the purpose of making bookings with and engaging services associated with the tour. I understand that if I do not consent to the use of my personal information for this purpose, ASA will decline my Reservation Application.

In consideration of ASA's acceptance of my Reservation Application, I irrevocably release and indemnify ASA from all claims that I, or any other party, may have against ASA its employees, invitees, agents and contractors, however arising in respect of any loss, damage, injury, death or expense incurred in the course of booking, preparing for, travelling to, on and from or cancelling any tour.

I release and indemnify ASA with respect to:

1. Every general risk to which I or my personal belongings may be exposed in the course of preparing for, travelling to, on or from any ASA tour;
2. Every special risk, in particular medical risks, to which I may be exposed in the course of preparing for, travelling to, on or from any ASA tour arising from, including, but not limited to:
   a. intermittent power cycles and/or the temporary or permanent loss of power (beware CPAP or any other medical machine users);
   b. dietary, food or other allergies (ASA cannot guarantee that traces of items to which you are allergic are not present in food or drink you are served, medication you are administered or other substances with which you may come into contact);
   c. any event or situation that may compromise the administration of necessary medication or my health, safety and wellbeing generally; and
   d. any event or happening beyond ASA's control
3. All claims arising as a result of my or ASA's cancellation or termination of any tour, part of a tour or of my continued participation on a tour for any reason (subject to ASA's refund conditions below).

Limitation of Liability

ASA is not a carrier, event or tourist attraction host, accommodation or dining service provider. All bookings made and tickets or coupons issued by ASA for transport, event, accommodation, dining and the like are issued as an agent for various service providers and are subject to the terms and conditions and limitations of liability imposed by each service provider. ASA is not responsible for their products, services, terms and conditions. If a service provider cancels or does not deliver the product or service for which you have contracted, and does not give a refund, your remedy lies with the service provider, not ASA.

ASA will not be liable for any claim (e.g. sickness, injury, death, damage or loss) arising from any change, delay, detention, breakdown, border closures, cancellation, failure, accident, act, omission or negligence of any tour service provider or authority however caused (contingencies). You must take out such travel insurance as is available against such contingencies.

ASA's liability in respect of any tour cancelled or changed will be limited to the partial refund of amounts you have paid, less an administration fee of $500 and other costs and charges of third party service providers. No compensation will be payable to you by ASA where ASA cancels or changes a tour, or any part of a tour.

ASA reserves the sole discretion to cancel any tour or to modify itineraries in any way it considers appropriate and in the best interests of health, safety and wellbeing of tour participants. Tour costs may be revised, subject to unexpected price increases or exchange rate fluctuations.

Booking Conditions

DEPOSITS

A non-refundable deposit of $1000.00 AUD per person is required to reserve a place on an ASA tour.

CANCELLATION FEES

If you cancel your booking the following charges apply:

More than 75 days before departure: your initial deposit of $1000.00 is non-refundable.**

75-31 days prior 50% of total amount due

30-0 days prior 100% of total amount due

**$500.00 of this amount (ie 50% of your deposit) may be credited to another ASA tour departing within 12 months of the original tour you booked. We regret, in this case early-bird discounts will not apply.

We take the day on which you cancel as being that on which we receive written confirmation of cancellation.

UNUSED PORTIONS OF THE TOUR

We regret that refunds will not be given for any unused portions or services of the tour, such as meals, entry fees, accommodation, flights or transfers.

WILL THE TOUR PRICE OR ITINERARY CHANGE?

If the number of participants on a tour is significantly less than budgeted, or if there is a significant change in exchange rates ASA reserves the right to amend the advertised price. We shall, however, do all in our power to maintain the published price. Occasionally circumstances beyond the control of ASA make it necessary to change airline, hotel or to make amendments to itineraries. We will inform you of any changes in due course.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

ASA requires all participants to obtain comprehensive travel insurance. A copy of your travel insurance certificate and the **reverse charge** emergency contact phone number must be received by ASA no later than 75 days prior to the commencement of the tour.

FINAL PAYMENT

The balance of the tour price will be due 75 days prior to the tour commencement date.

PLEASE READ THE ABOVE CAREFULLY, PRINT AND SIGN BELOW

☐ I accept the conditions on this booking form

☐ I have read the information about the physical requirements of the tour in the detailed itinerary and confirm that I am able to meet these requirements

Applicant's Signature

Print Full Name

Dated

ASA CULTURAL TOURS

Payment Form

Tour / Course Name

Name of Traveller 1 _____

Name of Traveller 2 _____

I have enclosed a payment to the value of $ _____ (including CC or bank fee if applicable) for this tour

The above amount is payable for:

- ☐ Intention to Travel
- ☐ Tour Deposit
- ☐ Balance of Payment
- ☐ Upgrade from Intention to Travel to a Deposit
- ☐ Travel Insurance
- ☐ Other (eg. Airfares, Accommodation) _____

International Payments

Welcome to our international travellers! If you are making a payment and do not have an Australian bank account/credit card, we can only accept payment as follows:

- *via credit card with the applicable fee - the credit card company/bank will set the exchange rate*
- *via bank transfer; please give your surname and tour code (eg.Smith 21705) as a reference and ask your bank to allow for all charges.*

Bank cheques or personal cheques will not be accepted.

By Cheque (accept Australian cheques only)

Please make cheques payable to *Australians Studying Abroad*

Direct Deposit or Internet Banking

You will need to:

1. Provide your bank with ASA's bank details (see below) and the amount you wish to transfer OR make a direct deposit through any ANZ branch
2. Include any fees levied by the banks
3. Provide a reference number (Mobile or last name recommended).
4. Complete section below, including confirmation no. (given when transaction completed).

Australians Studying Abroad bank details

Bank	ANZ
Branch	420 St Kilda Road, Melbourne Vic
Swift Code	ANZBAU3M
BSB	013-423
Account No	3472-32759

Bank confirmation No. _____

Reference used: Mobile or last name recommended

_____

Date Money Transferred _____

Credit Card Payment

Credit card fees apply: Mastercard, Visa & American Express 2%

Please debit my: ☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa ☐ American Express

I authorise ASA to debit my credit card for the amount due plus the applicable fee as above

Credit Card Number _____

Expiry Date _____ Security Code (CVC) _____

Bank the Card is linked to (eg. NAB or ANZ)

_____

Cardholders Name _____

Cardholders Billing Address _____

_____

Postcode _____

State _____ Country _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Cardholders Signature

_____

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