



# ISLAND HOPPING IN THE AEGEAN SEA:

Athens, Rhodes, Chalki, Symi and Crete

September 24 - October 5, 2026



Symi, one of the most attractive Greek islands



Dear Alumni and Friends,

Perhaps more than any other land, Greece has exerted a profound and lasting influence in the development of the Western World. Democracy, philosophy, scientific inquiry, the theater, and historiography, among others, were born in Greece. This is also a land of magnificent ancient monuments, legendary landscapes, iconic islands, picture-perfect seaside villages and towns, a celebrated cuisine, and a vibrant contemporary lifestyle. The attractions Greece offers have made the country one of Europe's premier destinations.

*Island Hopping in the Aegean Sea* begins in Athens, the capital of the country and Europe's oldest city. After exploring its glorious monuments and witnessing its contemporary life, we will fly across the Aegean to Rhodes, the beautiful island of Helios, the sun god, where the Colossus, one of the original Seven Wonders of the Classical World stood. In addition to exploring Rhodes, we will visit two, small neighboring islands: Symi, that features one of the most beautiful harbor towns in Greece, and seldom-visited Chalki. From Rhodes, a short flight will take us to legendary Crete, the island that gave Europe its first civilization, the brilliant Minoan civilization that flourished in the Bronze age, as witnessed at the Palace of Knossos. Also visit the seaside town of Rhythemno with its Venetian architecture and enjoy the healthful Cretan cuisine that gave birth to the Mediterranean Diet.

Joining us throughout the trip is **Eirini Koumboura**, an Expert Thalassa Journeys Guide, who will enrich our journey with her insight and expertise on the remarkable places we explore.

There is no better way to experience the treasures of Greece –past and present –than with Vanderbilt on this distinctive journey.

Sincerely



Cary DeWitt Allyn  
Director, Vanderbilt Travel Program

#### ACTIVITY LEVEL

Travelers can expect an estimated total of 2-3 hours of walking at an easy pace per day. Since this program features archaeological sites and guided walks of ancient towns, excursions may involve walking on inclined or uneven surfaces such as rocky or unpaved paths and navigating cobblestones or flights of stairs without handrails. During site visits, guests may need to stand briefly if seating is not available. Boat transfers can require taking a few steps onto or off a moving craft with assistance from a crewmember. Embarking and disembarking from motor coaches and other transportation methods will also be necessary. Your willingness to explore will help you get the most from this unforgettable experience.

## EXPERT THALASSA JOURNEYS GUIDE

### EIRINI KOUMBOURA



Eirini was born in Athens, where she continues to explore and connect with her roots. She is a certified tour guide, having completed two years of study at the School of Tour Guides, and also holds a degree in History and Archaeology from

the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. Her specialization in Classical Archaeology, along with the successful completion of her doctoral thesis at the same university, has given her a strong academic foundation.

She has taken part in archaeological research programs and excavations under the Ministry of Culture, gaining first-hand insight into the daily lives and cultural expressions of ancient Greek and other civilizations. Eirini's interests span a broad range of subjects—from the humanities and technology to religion, music, and the economic and social structures of both Greek and international cultures. Her anthropocentric approach, combined with her scholarly depth, enables her to craft meaningful, story-driven experiences that offer travelers lasting insight into the human dimension of history.

## ABOUT THALASSA JOURNEYS

**Thalassa Journeys** is a tour company founded by the men and women who, working as Travel Dynamics International, pioneered educational and cultural travel in the 1970s in partnership with the leading educational, research, cultural and performing arts institutions in the United States. For more than 45 years our mission was to provide robust, intellectually stimulating experiences to lifelong learners who see travel as an opportunity to expand their understanding of the world and their place in it. This same mission guides us today. We believe that the most rewarding travel experiences happen when small groups of like-minded individuals share an enthusiasm for engaging with the richly varied environments of the world, and with the history, culture, ideas and ideals of the people who inhabit them.





Palace of Knossos, Crete



Nafplion



Enjoy the delectable Greek cuisine



The well-preserved 5th-century BC Temple of Hephaestus, ancient Agora, Athens



# ITINERARY



Thursday, September 24, 2026  
**DEPART THE US**

Friday, September 25  
**ATHENS, Greece**

Arrive in Athens and transfer to the *Hotel Athens Capital* (or similar), conveniently located just off Syntagma Square. This evening, gather with fellow Vanderbilt travelers for a welcome dinner. (D)

Saturday, September 26  
**ATHENS**

Ancient Athens was the birthplace of democracy and many other ideas and concepts that form an integral part of Western tradition. Its magnificent monuments that have survived from antiquity are testimonials to its glorious past. After breakfast, travel to the Acropolis. Explore the stunning architectural marvel of the Parthenon, built in the 5th century BCE as a temple to the city's protector, the goddess Athena. Also tour the Acropolis Museum, an award-winning collection of artifacts from excavations of the Acropolis. Following an included lunch, visit the Agora, the civic and commercial center of ancient Athens, where the carefully restored remains include the 5th century BC Temple of Hephaestus and the Hellenistic Stoa of Atalos, which houses the splendid Agora Museum. (B,L)

Sunday, September 27  
**ATHENS/EPIDAUROS/NAFPLION/MYCENAE/ATHENS**

Today, explore storied sites in the Argolis region of the Peloponnese, where many ancient myths and legends are rooted. Cross the Corinth Canal on the way to Epidauros, the sanctuary of Asclepius, the god of healing. Epidauros is famous for its magnificent 4th-century BC theater, noted for its perfect acoustics and harmonious proportions. Lunch will be served in the seaside town of Nafplion, one of Greece's loveliest old towns. On the return to Athens, visit Mycenae, the most important center of the Bronze Age Mycenaean Civilization, and home of Agamemnon, who led the Greeks against Troy. (B,L)

Monday, September 28  
**ATHENS/RHODES**

This morning fly to Rhodes, known in ancient times for its Colossus, an enormous bronze statue of the god Helios, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. A medieval stronghold, the town was constructed by the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem. After lunch walk through the Old Town, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, along the Street of the Knights, where crusaders lived, followed by a visit to the Archaeological Museum. Check in to the *Rodos Park Hotel* (or similar), your home for the next four nights. (B,L,D)

Tuesday, September 29  
**RHODES/CHALKI/RHODES**

Today, travel to the tiny, seldom-visited island of Chalki, just off Rhodes' western coast, to get a sense of the rhythm of life away from major cities and tourist sites. Nimborio, the main harbor, is a vehicle-free area where brightly colored neoclassical houses line the waterfront, and where the Church of Agios Nikolaos boasts a beautiful bell tower and





The 4th-century BC Temple of Athena on the Acropolis of Lindos, built on the precipice of the rock

a pebble mosaic courtyard. Explore the nearby abandoned village of Chorio and the medieval castle built by the Knights of St. John. Have lunch at seaside tavern before returning to Rhodes. (B,L,D)

Wednesday, September 30

#### **RHODES/LINDOS**

This morning, leave Rhodes town and travel south along the coast to the village of Lindos, where you will enjoy a lunch of traditional Lindian cuisine at Mavrikos restaurant. Tour the narrow alleyways of this lovely village, and then either walk or ride a donkey to the top of the acropolis, where the Knights of St. John erected fortifications to protect against Moorish invaders. The ramparts offer magnificent sweeping views across St. Paul's Bay to the Turkish coast. (B,L)

Thursday, October 1

#### **RHODES/SYMI/RHODES**

A short ferry ride brings you to Symi, one of Greece's most attractive

islands, with beautifully proportioned neoclassical mansions rising above its harbor. Named for the wife of Poseidon and said to be the birthplace of the three graces, Symi was an important part of the Roman and Byzantine empires. Visit the 15th-century Panormitis monastery and explore two museums—one dedicated to folklore, the other an ecclesiastical museum with rich collections of relics. Lunch at a local restaurant will be followed by time at leisure to explore the town of Symi before returning to Rhodes. (B,L)

Friday, October 2

#### **RHODES/KAMEIROS/HERAKLION**

A leisurely morning is followed by a drive along the western coast of the island to Kameiros, one of the best-preserved Hellenistic cities in Greece, where the ruins provide a fascinating glimpse into urban life in the period between the death of Alexander the Great and the establishing of the Roman Empire. After the visit to Kameiros, travel to the nearby airport for a flight to Heraklion, where you check in to



Outdoor dining at Heraklion's Peskesi restaurant, which serves traditional Cretan dishes from centuries-old recipes.



In the old town of Rethymno, Crete





The 16th-century Venetian castle still guards the harbor of Heraklion, Crete

the *Megaron Hotel* (or similar) for three nights. (B,D)

**Saturday, October 3**

### **HERAKLION/RETHYMNO/HERAKLION**

Today is devoted to exploring Crete beyond the capital city. Begin with a drive to Rethymno, one of Crete's most charming towns, known for its well-preserved architecture from the Venetian and Ottoman periods. Tour the town and enjoy time at leisure before driving to the hill country south of town for a cooking lesson, olive oil tasting and lunch at the historic *Kapsaliana Village Hotel*. Return to the hotel in Heraklion in the afternoon. (B, L)

**Sunday, October 4**

### **HERAKLION**

This morning, tour the Palace of Knossos, the largest and most magnificent Minoan palace in Crete. Clustered around a spacious courtyard, the palace contains a maze of rooms, passages and

stairways that may have inspired the concept of the labyrinth. Then visit the Archaeological Museum of Heraklion, whose eye-opening exhibits reinforce the impression gained at Knossos of the remarkable achievements of Minoan culture. Enjoy the afternoon at leisure in Heraklion, during which you may wish to visit the market to browse among the stalls that sell a variety of Cretan products, including its famed herbs. Enjoy a farewell dinner at *Peskesi* restaurant, one of Crete's finest, which specializes in the centuries-old cuisine of the island. (B, D)

**Monday, October 5**

### **HERAKLION/DEPART**

After breakfast at the hotel, transfer to the airport for flights homeward. (B)



The 4th-century BC theater of Epidauros



## RATE PER PERSON

\$ 7,590 per person, double occupancy.  
Single room supplement: \$ 1,890.

## PROGRAM INCLUSIONS

- Hotel accommodations throughout: Three nights at the *Athens Capital Hotel* (or similar); four nights at the *Rodos Park Hotel* (or similar), and three nights at the *Hotel Megaron* (or similar).
- Guided tours with Erini Koumboura an Expert Thalassa Journeys Guide.
- Full breakfast each morning at the hotels.
- Seven lunches and five dinners at local restaurants with wine or beer and soft drinks.
- Flights from Athens to Rhodes and Rhodes to Heraklion.
- Boat rides round-trip from Rhodes to Chalki and Symi.
- Airport/hotel/pier transfers and handling of luggage throughout the program as scheduled in the itinerary.
- All tours and excursions as described in the itinerary with a professional English-speaking guide.
- Entrance fees to museums, archaeological and historic sites.
- The services of an experienced Thalassa Journeys Trip Director.
- Gratuities to guides, drivers and porters.
- All local taxes and service charges.
- Complete pre-departure material.

**NOT INCLUDED:** International airfare; travel insurance; expenses of a personal nature; any items not mentioned in the Itinerary and the Program Inclusions.



Kore, Archaic Greek sculpture,  
Acropolis Museum

## REGISTRATION

VAND 26L-0924

Enclosed is my check or credit card no. for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (\$ 1,000 per person) as a deposit to hold \_\_\_\_\_ place(s) on **ISLAND HOPPING IN THE AEGEAN SEA**, September 24 - October 5, 2026 with Vanderbilt Alumni Association. I understand that final payment is due ninety (90) days prior to departure and is payable by check or credit card.

**For further information, and to reserve your space, please contact Vanderbilt Travel Office at 615.322.3673 or e-mail [alumni.travel@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:alumni.travel@vanderbilt.edu).**

If you would prefer to pay by check, please complete this form and return it to Thalassa Journeys to the address below. **Thalassa Journeys**, 8815 Conroy-Windermere Rd., Suite 406, Orlando, FL 32835  
Phone: (866) 633-3611

☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ Discover  
No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Exp. \_\_\_\_\_ 3- or 4-Digit Security Code \_\_\_\_\_

### Preference at hotels:

☐ Double accommodation ☐ Double Bed ☐ Single Bed  
☐ Single accommodation *Bed configuration cannot be guaranteed.*

FIRST MIDDLE LAST (AS ON YOUR PASSPORT) CLASS OF

FIRST MIDDLE LAST (AS ON YOUR PASSPORT) CLASS OF

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/STATE/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE (HOME) \_\_\_\_\_

(CELL) \_\_\_\_\_

**Each participant must sign below: I/We have read the "General Information" section and agree to its terms.**

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## GENERAL INFORMATION

**PAYMENT SCHEDULE:** A deposit of \$1,000 per person is required to reserve your space on the tour. Final payment is due 90 days prior to departure. Payment can be made by personal check or charged to a credit card.

**CANCELLATIONS & REFUNDS:** All cancellations are subject to a \$300 per person administrative fee. Cancellations received 61-90 days prior to departure will be assessed a penalty equal to 50% of the total program cost per person. Cancellations received within 60 days of departure are subject to 100% cancellation penalties. Requests for cancellations must be made in writing. No refunds will be made for any part of this program in which you choose not to participate.

**INSURANCE:** We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance, which is available for coverage of expenses in conjunction with cancellation due to illness or accident. Baggage insurance is also recommended. In the event that you must cancel your participation in a travel program, trip cancellation insurance may be the only source of reimbursement.

**ITINERARY:** The itinerary, accommodations and arrangements are subject to change at the discretion of Thalassa Journeys.

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Please read carefully the following terms and conditions, which constitute the sole, legally enforceable agreements between the traveler and Thalassa Journeys. Thalassa Journeys acts solely as agents for the traveler with respect to all transportation, hotel and other tour arrangements. In that capacity, we exercise all reasonable care possible to ensure the traveler's safety and satisfaction, but, we neither assume nor bear any responsibility or liability for any injury, death, damage, loss, accident, delay or irregularity arising in connection with the services of any ship, airplane, train, automobile, motor coach, carriage or other conveyance, or the actions of any third-party, involved in carrying the traveler or in affecting these tours. We are not responsible for damages, additional expenses, or any other losses due to cancellation, delay or other changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, civil disturbances, acts or threats of terrorism, travel warnings or bans, termination or suspension of war risks or other carrier insurance, quarantine, acts of God or other causes beyond our control. All such losses must be borne by the traveler, and tour rates provide for arrangements only for the time stated. In the event of cancellation, delay or rescheduling mandated by any of the aforesaid causes beyond our control, the traveler shall have the option of accepting in lieu of the original tour such rescheduled tour or other substituted tour(s) as may be offered by us, or else, receiving a refund of as much of such advance tour expenditures as we are able to recover on the traveler's behalf from carriers, third-party tour vendors, etc., but, we shall not have any obligation or liability to the traveler beyond the foregoing. We reserve the right to make alterations to the tour's itinerary and to substitute hotels, transportation methods, or lecturers if this is required. We reserve the right to cancel, delay, or reschedule any tour prior to departure, and, so long as this is not due to any of the aforesaid causes beyond our control, the traveler shall be entitled to a full refund of all monies paid to that point if he/she so desires. No refund shall be made for any unused portion of any tour. By forwarding their deposit(s), the traveler certifies that he/she and/or their dependents, minors or others covered thereby do not have any mental, physical or other condition of disability that could create a hazard for them or other travelers. We reserve the right to decline to accept or to decline to retain any person as a member of any tour should such person's health, condition or actions adversely affect or threaten the welfare or safety of other travelers or impede the tour. Baggage or valuables brought on the tour shall be transported, handled or stored at the traveler's risk entirely, and, we shall bear no liability or responsibility for any damage or other loss thereto. Resolution of any disputes arising hereunder shall be affected exclusively in the state or federal courts presiding in Florida, pursuant to applicable Florida law.

**RATES:** Tour costs are based upon current airfares, tariffs, and currency values. While we do everything possible to maintain the listed prices, they are subject to change.

CST 2138603-50  
ST 42048



PMB 4077352301  
Vanderbilt Place,  
Nashville, TN 37240

PRSRT STD  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Brentwood, NY  
Permit No 36

VAND 26L-0924

# ISLAND HOPPING IN THE AEGEAN SEA: Athens, Rhodes, Chalki, Symi and Crete

**FOR RESERVATIONS AND INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT  
VANDERBILT TRAVEL OFFICE AT 615.322.3673**



The Athenian Acropolis