

Sacred Sites

April 28 to May 9
August 25– September 5



Plunge into the Peloponnese! No one comes to Greece without paying homage to at least one ancient ruin, and some of Greece's most legendary ruins lie here in the Peloponnese. Extensive biking enables you to visit a series of sacred sites, including Epidavros Theatre which once was the largest healing center in the ancient world. You also visit the home of the Olympics, a site that will unleash your inner athlete. Nature abounds on this tour that cuts through the Arcadian Mountains where traditional villages steeped in local culture abound. Many say the Peloponnese is the true Greece. Come judge for yourself!

HONORED



In its December 2008 issue Bicycling magazine named the Sacred Sites tour a Top Bike Ride of 2009!

Highlights

- Lion's Gate at Mycenae, Europe's oldest monument
- 999 steps to the 17th century Palamidi fortress, built by the Venetians
- Exploring Ancient Olympia
- 3rd century BC Epidavros Theater able to seat 15,000
- Stupendous promontory of the Temple of Poseidon

Start/End Points

Tour starts in Athens. On Day 1 we meet in the hotel lobby at 8:30 am. Tour ends in Nemea where a 20 minute transfer takes you to Corinth train station for hourly departures to Athens (60 minutes) or Athens Airport (90 minutes).



Day 1: Athens

The first Sacred Site we bike to is the magnificent Temple of Poseidon in Sounion at the southern tip of the Attiki Peninsula. From atop its promontory the glimmering Aegean Sea is visible for miles. In hugging the Attiki coastline we experience a favorite route of local Athenian cyclists.

Day 2: Nafplio

Today's highlight is biking to Ancient Epidavros, Greece largest ancient theatre. This 3rd century BC outdoor wonder seats 15,000 and its acoustics are still so impeccable spectators atop the last tier can hear whisperings from the Nafplio, modern Greece's first capital. You've probably never heard of it, but Nafplio will most likely rate as your favorite Greek town.

Day 3: Nafplio

An easy one hour ride through orange grove to Mycenae (a/k/a Mykines), a World Heritage Site. You will marvel at the unusual beehive tomb built for the mighty King Agamemnon who launched the Trojan War. Evening boat ride to Bourtzi island for a panoramic view of Nafplio, the Palamidi fortress and the expansive bay.

Day 4: Stemnitsa

The highest and most ascents of the tour. A "bald" tree-less mountain allowing panoramic views of distant mountains misleadingly resembling sea waves (2297 ft). After lunch the terrain turns forest-y, a bit steeper, climbing 4265 ft in the heart of Arcadia to Stemnitsa, a precious mountain village with stone houses and red tiled roofs overlooking the splendiferous Lousios Gorge.

Exclusions

- International airfare
- Transfers to/from airport
- Lunches
- Beverages, except house wine
- Travel insurance

Tour Price

2340 euros per person based on double occupancy

225 euros, single supplement

Note: tour prices are based on the euro which is the official currency of Greece. Exchange rates found at www.xe.com

Inclusions

- Accommodations in 3-4 star hotels ranging from upscale best-in-town to family run guesthouses. Tasteful, clean, air-conditioned, private bath, abundant hospitality, comfort. All accommodations come with breakfast. Tour price based on double occupancy. Check single supplement price for a single room.
- All dinners with local house wine.
- Specialized road or hybrid bike. Your choice. Triple chain ring, 27 gears. Road bike has carbon fiber fork. Hybrids have front suspension.
- Bike gear: odometer, 2 water bottles and cages, map holder or handlebar pouch, rear rack
- Support vehicle ("sag wagon") with bilingual driver. Vehicle carries spare parts, floor pump, ice cooler, water, nutritious snacks, bike tools, first aid kit, day packs, luggage and gives you a lift if you get tired. The driver is also a mechanic.
- Bike Guide who is also the Tour Leader handling the tour logistics.
- Cue sheets with GPS profiles
- Maps of the region
- Private 1 hour archaeology tour with professional licensed guides at Epidavros, Mycenae and Olympia.
- Entrance fees Epidavros, Mycenae and Olympia.
- Guided tour Cave of the Lakes + entry fee
- cooking class
- Trip packet with useful and interesting information
- CycleGreece jersey
- Gratuities, tips and VAT



Day 5: Olympia

Most of today's route is downhill with detours en route, including to a monastery built into a cliff from where you can see the "secret school" from the days of the Greek Revolution. A pit stop in Langadia to buy homemade "sun liqueurs" or hand carved canes with goat antlers. The ride cycles past the Olympia stadium, the ruins lying within a discus throw of our bike route.

Day 6: Lampei

In the morning tour Ancient Olympia, the actual grounds where the world's original athletes competed as early as 796 B.C. The modern Olympics were resurrected in 1896. After lunch, it takes roughly three hours to reach a traditional mountain village called Lampei where the loudest noise is simply the clang-y orchestra of goat and sheep bells.

Day 7: Kalavrita

We are cycling deep in mountain territory, mostly following a ridge, but a fair amount of rolling ascents and descents make the ride entertaining. The day's highlight is Cave of the Lakes, a series of subterranean lakes inside a huge cave. Thereafter an hour's climbing until reaching Kalavrita, a charming mountain village popular for skiing, paragliding and homemade products.

Day 8: Kalavrita

Rural cycling in Greece means minimal traffic. Today's bike ride is to a remote village with a special feature to Mega Spili, said to be Greece's oldest Greek Orthodox monastery and it is located in a cave. Kalavrita is known for its outstanding local products, such as *tentura* a liqueur that tastes like Christmas!

Day 9: Nemea

The last cycling day has lots of mileage but it is most is down hill and flat hugging the Corinth Gulf coast. Lunch in Xylokaastro where the pine trees border the beach. Ambitious cyclists can rendezvous with the vehicle at Ancient Corinth and Akrokorinthos Fortress whose strategic height offers panoramic views of surrounding seas. Overnight at a winery in Nemea -- taste & experience vineyard life!

Day 10: departures

Mileage Summary

Short route has vehicle transfers to start points. Except for Day 2, Long Route is all by bike. Support vehicle available for lifts. Additional mileage available for road warriors.

Total Mileage Long Route 448 miles
Short Route 274 miles
Average Daily Mileage Long Route 50 mi
Short Route 30 miles

Day 1 Long 52 miles about 4 hours, practically all flat except for 230 foot climb. Traffic early in ride but thins out later. **Short** 27 miles all flat plus 230 foot climb.

Day 2 Long 62 miles, series of climbs and a gradual ascent to 1300 feet **Short** 25 miles with a moderate gradual climb to 1300 feet and remainder all down hill

Day 3 Long & Short 34 miles roundtrip, 1 hour each way, flat until end with 3 km climb

Day 4 Long 65 miles crossing several mountains, 7 hours. **Short** 30 miles climbing mountains, about 3 to 3.5 hours

Day 5 Long 50 miles, about 3 moderate climbs, long descent. **Short** 36 miles 1 slight hill, long descent.

Day 6 Long & Short 26 miles, about 3 hours, first part is somewhat steep, then flattens out

Day 7 Long 46 miles hugging a mountain ridge, final hour one long climb. **Short** 36 miles hugging a mountain ridge, fairly flat

Day 8 Long 3 climbs with total elevation gain of 1732 feet over 17 miles and return trip makes 34 miles. **Short** 3 climbs with total elevation gain of 1732 over 17 miles. Vehicle transfer on return trip.

Day 9 Long 75 miles downhill and flat hugging the coast all the way to hotel. Takes about 5 hours. **Short** 50 miles downhill and flat until lunch stop on coast. Optional 10 miles add-on to Ancient Corinth and Akrokorinthos.



