

Saronic Jewels

June 26 - July 3



In the southeastern Peloponnese Peninsula is found the Argo Saronic region where everything encourages you to pedal at a gradual pace, or *siga siga* (slow, slow) as the Greeks say. We bicycle, swim, smell the lemons, shop for quality souvenirs and take enlightening archaeology tours of legendary antiquities.

The tour introduces you to two islands, two World Heritage Sites, the incredibly lovely city of Nafplio which you will rate your favorite and overnight in a winery where wine-making from ancient days continues to imbue Peloponnese wines with a unique cachet and bouquet.

Trip Highlights

- Circumnavigate the island of Spetses
- Climb the 999 steps to Palamidi Fortress in Nafplio
- Wine tasting at a Nemean winery
- Enter King Agamemnon's beehive tomb at Mycenae
- Listen to a stage whisper at the ancient Epidavros Theatre

Start—End Points

Meet Day 1 in Athens at 9:00 am to fit the bikes, take an hour long ride in the car-free Acropolis area and a mid-afternoon boat to Spetses. Tour ends in Nemea where a 20 minute taxi ride takes you to Corinth train station for hourly departures to Athens (60 minutes) or Athens Airport (90 minutes).

Itinerary

Day 1: Spetses

After testing the bikes in Athens and a short spin in the car-free Acropolis neighborhood, we take a high speed boat to lovely Spetses. Children ride bicycles and honeymooners take horse drawn carriages in this romantic harbor town. Our welcome dinner is along the sea front.

Day 2: Spetses

Spetses is so small that we can circumnavigate it by bike in a couple of hours. At a half-way point we stop to swim at an appealing beach which has the added attraction of an underwater sea cave easily accessible from the water or by steps into an opening on land. If figs are in season, it is a divine pleasure to eat them right off the trees.

Day 3: Poros

A water taxi takes us back to the Peloponnese mainland where we cycle along the pleasantly flat coastline stopping for a cappuccino at Ermioni. A ten minute ferry ride puts us back on another island, Poros, whose harbor town is surrounded by olive trees, lemon trees and pine trees. The highest point on Poros (for ambitious bikers) is up to the Temple of Poseidon.



Day 4: Epidavros

The best part of today's cycling route is a stretch of road that looks down on the sea with tremendous vistas and next to zero traffic. The waters of Epidavros town are pure and clean and inviting for swimming. In the evening a half hour walk along the bay takes us to the town where everyone eats along the sea front.

Day 5: Nafplio

A one hour gradual climb brings us to Ancient Epidavros, the 3rd century BC outdoor theatre seating 12,000 spectators with impeccable acoustics. Epidavros was more famous in ancient times as the largest Asclepion healing center in Greece. Elegant Nafplio, the first capital of Greece, will bowl you over with its mansions and charm.

Day 6: Nafplio

After one hour's cycling amongst serene orange groves we reach Ancient Mycenae, home of the ruler who launched the Trojan War, King Agamemnon. He is buried in a beehive tomb that never fails to startle visitors with its architecture of geometric precision. We return early enough to explore Nafplio -- shop in local stores selling handmade jewelry, worry beads and arts, climb the 999 steps to the Venetian fortress Palamidi, take a quick boat to Bourtzi island or stroll the length of the

Day 7: Nemea

An easy ride to the famous Peloponnese wine country. Learn how wine is made, explore the winery's cellars, taste the varieties, experience the rhythms of the vineyards. A wine-focused evening makes a glorious farewell departure point.

Day 11: departures

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



Tour Price

1970 euros per person
250 euros, single supplement

Inclusions

- Accommodations in 3-4 star hotels ranging from boutique hotels to family run guesthouses. Tasteful, clean, air-conditioned, private bath, abundant hospitality, comfort. All accommodations come with breakfast. Tour price based on double occupancy.
- All dinners with local house wine.
- Ferry transfers to Spetses and islands and mainland
- Specialized road or hybrid bike. Your choice. Triple chain ring, 27 gears. Road bike has carbon fiber fork. Hybrids have front suspension. Click here for photos and specs
- Bike gear: odometer, 2 water bottles and cages, map holder or handlebar pouch, rear rack on request.
- 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 (click example).
- Maps and cue sheets
- Private 1 hour archaeology tour with professional licensed guides at Epidavros and Mycenae.
- Entry fees to Mycenae & Epidavros.
- Trip packet with useful and interesting information
- CycleGreece jersey
- Gratuities, tips and VAT taxes

Exclusions

- International airfare
- transfers to/from airport
- lunches
- Travel insurance

Mileage Summary

Mileage

Short route has vehicle transfers to start points. Support vehicle available for lifts. Additional mileage available for road warriors

Long Route 147 miles, 236 km, daily average 25 miles, 40 km

Short Route 97 miles 156km, daily average 16 miles, 26 km

Day 1 **Long & Short** 1 hour ride around Athens Acropolis

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Day 2 **Long & Short** 15.5 miles, 25 km, slight hills, hug coastline, highest ascent 328ft

Day 3 **Long** 37 miles, 60 km, 4 hours hug the coast, mostly flat, 1 tough climb of 820 feet **Short** 28.5 miles 46 km, hug the flat coast, transfer to vehicle at start of ascent

Day 4 **Long** 24 miles, 39 km hug the coast, 3 hours starts flat but has 2 big climbs, highest 738 feet **Short** 11 miles 18km transfer to top of hill, mostly downhill except for 623 feet climb

Day 5 **Long** 27 miles, 43 km about 8 miles to Ancient Epidavros climbing to 1150 feet, then mostly downhill to Nafplio **Short** 11 miles, 17 km ride to Epidavros, optional to cycle remainder downhill to Nafplio

Day 6 **Long** 25 miles, 40 km, primarily flat with two ascents at the end of about 400 feet **Short** 12.5 miles, 20 km. Same route except Long is roundtrip and Short is one-way.

Day 7 **Long & Short** 18 miles, 30 km easy, fairly flat route, negligible climbs



Athens Add-on Package

Highlights

The grand view of the Aegean from the promontory of Temple of Poseidon

Walking tours of the Athens and the Acropolis

Day 1: Athens

Morning transfer from Nemea to your hotel located within crawling distance of the Acropolis. In the afternoon we take you on a three hour walking tour of central Athens on a route that no other tour operator offers. The itinerary includes noteworthy houses and architecture in the Plaka, Socrates Cave, the Pnyx where democracy was born, Thissio cafes, the unique water clock and lots of interesting facts and anecdotes. (Actual walking for 3 hours).

Day 2: Athens

A three hour walking tour starting with the changing of the guard at Parliament and culminating in the incomparable Parthenon. A professional archaeology guide injects the walk with lively and fascinating insights. (Actual walking is 45 minutes). In the evening you will experience a cultural presentation of traditional Greek music and dance.

Day 3: Athens

An excursion to the magnificent Temple of Poseidon in Sounion at the southern tip of Attika Peninsula. Lord Byron carved his name in the marble but the graffiti cannot mar the temple's geometric precision nor its stupendous views. Bring your swimsuit for a dip in the sea before returning to the city.

Day 4: Departure

Private transfer from your hotel to Athens Airport.

Cost

900 euros per person
80 euros single supplement

Inclusions

- 3 nights in 4 star hotel within walking distance of Acropolis with breakfast (based on double occupancy)
- Transfer to Athens hotel on Day 8
- Transfer to airport on Day 11
- 3 hour walking tour of Athens with Aegea guide to areas not generally visited by other tour operators
- 3 hour Acropolis walking tour with professional guide
- Entry fee to Acropolis and surrounding antiquities
- Evening performance traditional Greek music & dance
- Private vehicle half day Sounio Excursion to Temple of Poseidon
- Entry fee to Temple of Poseidon

Exclusions

- all meals except breakfasts
- Travel insurance
- Optional tipping of guide and driver

