

300 Spartans

An extraordinary tour featuring a professor of ancient military history from West Point Military Academy.



Duration

12 days

Date

May 26 to June 6, 2009

Highlights

- Daily “seminars” by historian expert in ancient Greek military history
- 7 World Heritage Sites
- Visit Marathon battlefield
- Exceptionally healthy Mediterranean meals
- Swimming in Europe’s cleanest waters

Greece is a land where warfare and momentous events have often changed the course of world history. While the Minoan and Cycladic Civilizations were considered peaceful, the same cannot be said for the history that followed their era.

The peoples of Ancient Greece were either recovering from war, at war, or preparing for war. Epic battles, global conquests, city-state rivalries --- against this fiery backdrop, the Greeks generated their unprecedented contributions to world culture and humanity.

Who were the Greeks fighting and why? How was military technology developed and applied? Did a bellicose culture enable Greek citizens to develop democracy?

These absorbing questions and more are addressed by our expert historian, West Point Military History Professor Eugenia C. “Jennie” Kiesling. As we visit legendary sites, she illuminates our understanding of the complexion and complexities of the Ancient Greek Military.

Day 1: Tuesday May 26, Athens

Welcome to Greece! The rendezvous point for our Greek military history tour is the Athens War Museum. To the backdrop of mega maps and an array of weapons from stone axes to heavy artillery, you will meet the tour’s star attraction, West Point Military History Professor Eugenia C. “Jennie” Kiesling. Afternoon excursion to the incomparable Acropolis.

Introductory Seminar: A Sweeping View of the Greek Military.

300 Spartans 2009



Day 2: Wednesday, May 27 Athens

Morning excursion to Eleusis, Athens first major battle site and home of the Eleusian Mysteries. Much to see in Athens: Socrates Cave, the Agora, Kerameikos Cemetery, Changing of the Guard at Parliament, 1896 Olympic Stadium, Temple of Zeus, National Archaeology Museum. And in between everything, time to stroll, shop and linger in a café in old Plaka.

Seminar: Athenian Imperialism

Day 3: Thursday, May 28 Athens

Visit to the legendary Marathon battlefield — we're a little early for the 2500th anniversary in 2010 when a Greek soldier ran to Athens to proclaim the Greek victory over the Persians. The day climaxes off at tip of the Attika peninsula to visit the formidable Temple of Poseidon in Sounion.

Seminar: The Persians & Battle of Marathon.

Day 4: Friday, May 29, Delphi

We visit legendary Thermopylae where in 480 BC King Leonidas of Sparta and his 300 heroic men held off the mighty Persian army in one of history's greatest land stands. Nearby en route we stop at the Chaironeia battle site where Philip II of Macedonia defeated Athens, memorialized by a gigantic — and photogenic — stone lion.

Seminars: 1) Thermopylae & Spartan Military Culture, 2) Theban Sacred Band.

Day 5: Saturday, May 30 Killini

Tour Ancient Delphi — the center of the universe is how the ancients regarded Delphi, home to the oracles whose prophecies guided rulers on all affairs, including whether to wage war or retreat. We pass through Nafpaktos, site of the decisive Battle of Lepanto which in 1571 staved off the Ottomans from encroaching in Europe.

Seminars: 1) Oracles & Tyrants: Delphi's Political Role, 2) The Battle of Lepanto.

Participants

Minimum: 12
Maximum: 20

Price

4560 euros

Single Supplement

500 euros

Current exchange rates

<http://www.xe.com>

Inclusions

- 11 nights accommodations in 3 and 4 star hotels with breakfast
- 9 dinners with house wine
- 4 lunches
- daily seminars by expert scholar of ancient Greek military history
- Mini-van or coach with bilingual driver
- Local Tour Director / Guide
- Professional archaeology guides at major sites
- Entry fees to all major ruins and museums
- Pre-tour info packet with materials about Greece and the tour
- VAT and taxes



300 Spartans 2009

Day 6: Sunday, May 31 Kalamata

Tour Ancient Olympia. The Games were so important the Greeks calculated time in 4 year Olympiads. During the Games a moratorium on war existed while athletes and fans passed freely to Olympia. In the afternoon we reach the World Heritage Site of Bassae where the mercenary soldiers of Arcadia sought spiritual succor and sustenance at the Temple of Apollo Epicurius.

Seminars: 1) Sports in Greek Society 2) The Arcadian Mercenaries.

Day 7: Monday, June 1 Sparta

After a terrifically scenic ride through Greek countryside, we arrive at the fascinating but abandoned Byzantine town of Mystras, another World Heritage Site, erected in 1249 and occupied by Turks and Venetians. In Sparta, come pay your respects to the statue of Leonidas.

Seminars: 1) Frankish Conquest of 1204, 2) Sparta's Military Caste.

Day 8: Tuesday, June 2 Nafplio

Leaving Sparta, we head first to Nemea, famous today for its wine but known in ancient times for its Sanctuary of Zeus and the venue where Hercules performed the first the Twelve Labors. Our focus is Mycenae, just down the road, home of King Agamemnon, commander-in-chief of the Greeks during the Trojan War. By early afternoon we reach Nafplio, the prettiest city in the Peloponnese and the former capital of modern Greece.

Private tour by professional guide at Mycenae

Day 9: Wednesday, June 3 Nafplio

Yesterday Mycenae. Today Tiryns. These two cities mentioned often in the Iliad and the Odyssey dominated the eastern Mediterranean from the 15th to the 12th century BC. Next we visit Argos which became the chief Peloponnese city in the 7th century BC. We cap off the morning climbing the 999 steps up to Nafplion's formidable Venetian fortress, the Palamidi.

Seminar: The Trojan Wars.



Professor Eugenia C. "Jennie" Kiesling teaches ancient and modern military history at the United States Military Academy, West Point.

Educated in history, classics, and rowing at Yale, Oxford, and Stanford University, she has a particular fondness for Greek naval warfare.

Her publications include articles on ancient military discipline and Herodotus' military history as well as the book *Arming Against Hitler: France and the Limits of Military Planning*. (University Press of Kansas, June 1996)

Day 10: Thursday, June 4 Nafplio

You will sit in the last row of Epidavros Theatre, built in the 3rd century BC, and remarkably hear whispers from the stage. A renown theater, then and still today, Epidavros was also the most famous healing center of the Classical world. Thereafter, a lazy day at the popular beach of Tolo. Evening treat, a boat ride to little Bourtzi island.

Private tour by professional guide at Epidavros

Day 11: Friday, June 5 Corinth

Ancient Corinth was a major player in the Peloponnese Wars that preoccupied the region for centuries until eventually the Romans came and destroyed the city. We also have a delightful opportunity to walk across the 1898 Corinth Canal. Afternoon is free for swimming at our seaside hotel or visiting Loutraki's famous thermal baths.

Seminar: Corinth & the Peloponnese Wars.

Day 12: Saturday, June 6 Departures

Corinth to Athens Airport is about 80 minutes.



Cycling Tour

Professor Kiesling is also a keen cyclist and is scheduled as the bike guide and lecturer for the May 12-23, 2009 Sacred Sites cycling tour.

This tour is with Aegea's dedicated cycling division, CycleGreece. See www.cyclegreece.gr

The Sacred Sites tour is featured in the December, 2008 issue of Bicycling magazine.