

Cyclades Donkey Paths



When most people fantasize of Greece, what comes to mind are scenes of stark whitewashed houses against a blinding blue sea. In other words, they envision the Cyclades Islands. The walks in this trip hug sea coasts and climb modest mountains, none steep enough to intimidate the moderate walker.

The paths take you from village to village along routes that the villagers themselves have used for centuries, primarily with donkeys. You are never far from the sea and almost every summit provides a postcard view of the sea and distant islands. Each island is a honeymoon-type haven with romantic sea vistas, windmills, olive groves and ancient ruins.

Trip Highlights

- Hike the charming “kalderimis” of Andros
- Tour sacred Delos, one of Greece’s most treasured sites
- Seaside dining in Little Venice of Mykonos island
- Hike to Za cave and other footpaths on Naxos island
- Walk on a pumice path on Santorini to Ancient Thira

Trip Duration

8 days

Start and End Points

Start: Andros island, take ferry from Rafina

End: Santorini

Day 1: Andros

Andros is the most northerly of the Cycladic islands and the second largest. For hikers, it has a rich network of walking paths known as “kalderimis” some of which are dirt, others paved, and many pass through the local walls built in Andriotic style alternating between small rocks and large vertical like rock plates.

Day 2: Andros

Seneti hike — the route’s terrain has high rocky cliffs and is pristine with no villages en route. Andros had many shipping magnates who built beautiful homes and appreciated culture. Visit the archaeology museum for an exquisite statue of Hermes from the 1st century BC.

Day 3: Mykonos

Catch the morning ferry from Andros to Mykonos, Greece’s most well-known island, and particularly famous for its sandy beaches. Today is a relaxing day with long beach strolls.

Rating

Easy. Most hikes last 2-4 hours, one-half day and they are none too steep. Mild ascents. Casual pace.

Day 4: Naxos

Hike sacred Delos island which lies about 20 minutes or so by boat from Mykonos. Delos was the political and religious centre of the Aegean and celebrated as the birthplace of Apollo. Wealthy merchants and bankers from all over the eastern Mediterranean lived in Delos. Afternoon ferry to Naxos.

Day 5: Naxos

This walk starts in Filoti where you take a peak inside Za Cave not far outside town. The route takes you on exquisite stone paths, through valleys, and past water mills, shady plain trees, and the 15th century fortified tower of Fotodótis. The day offers a true taste of Naxian countryside before ending in Apiranthos, the most charming mountain village on the island.

Day 6: Santorini

Your route is Fira, via Firostefani and Imerovigli, to Oia (pronounced E-ah). A portion of the hike takes you through these towns themselves, giving you the opportunity to admire modern Cycladic architecture along with timeworn churches. The path which hugs the spine of the ridge offers a spectacular view of the entire sea and caldera. Sunset wine tasting.

Day 7: Santorini

Your hike starts by walking underneath stone arches in Emborio which takes you outside, on a gradual ascent, which passes traditional homes, threshing circles, old cactus, and various caves. The highlight is ancient Thira, extensive ruins from the 9th century BC onward. You also ascend to Mt. Profitis Ilias, Santorini's highest point at 1,857 feet.

Day 8: departures

Daily flights from Santorini to Athens

Trip Price

Trip price depends on the number in your party, level of accommodations, extent of services requested and optional activities sought. See "Pricing" link on website and "Vacation Profile Contact Form"

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

Cost per person

1-4 persons — 2430 euros
5-8 persons — 2270 euros
9-12 persons — 2103 euros
12-16 person — 2150 euros

Add 10% to cost for high season: July and August

Basic Inclusions:

- ◆ ferry transfers to each island
- ◆ transfers to/from hotels
- ◆ transfers for hikes
- ◆ 3-4 start accommodations
- ◆ daily breakfast
- ◆ maps of each island
- ◆ day to day itinerary with activities and logistics
- ◆ pre-tour trip packet with info about Greece, the region you will visit, recommended places to eat, phone numbers and other useful information

Exclusions:

- ◆ International and domestic air fare
- ◆ meals except breakfast

Optionals

- ◆ Personal bilingual Aegea hiking guide throughout the trip
- ◆ Hotel upgrades
- ◆ Ancient Delos guided tour
- ◆ Transfer to Rafina port
- ◆ Walking sticks

Travel Times

April to June and October/November are lovely months but the Cyclades is at its glory in July and August. Although hotter for hiking, the ambiance is perfect. Hike early mornings or late afternoons





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