

# *Authentic* Greece

BOUTIQUE TRAVEL FROM  
OUR GREEK-TEXAN FAMILY

SMALL GROUP TRAVEL

May 16-26, 2024

Go off the beaten path with an engaging, Greek-Texan guide  
on this relaxed paced tour to the heart of Authentic Greece

For more information and to register online, visit:  
[www.SofiaTravel.org/texas](http://www.SofiaTravel.org/texas)



*We Invite You to*

# TRAVEL AS OUR GUESTS

*Yiasas!* We are so excited to offer our ninth Authentic Greece tour for the Texas Exes. With a mother from Vereia, Greece and a father from Irving, Texas, I take great pleasure in sharing my Greek heritage with my fellow Texans. Since our family started leading tours to Greece in 1984, our boutique company has been defined by one unique trait: personal attention at every stage of the tour. Rather than hand you off to a series of disjointed local guides, I look forward to personally guiding you through every site, creating a comprehensive narrative that will bring the 5,000 year history of the Greek people to life. My wife, Blake (UT '08), will answer every question you have before the tour and personally select every dish at every restaurant. We guarantee you the highest quality experience in Greece as we share with you the country and people that we love. Come travel with us!



*Your  
Travel Guides*

**ADAM AND  
BLAKE SPARKS**

## A COUNTRY ENSHROUDED IN MYTH

- Stay in four and five star accommodations in matchless, central locations
- Spend three serene nights on the unforgettable, car-free island of Hydra
- Ascend the Acropolis to the world-famous Parthenon and marvel at ancient sculptures
- Hear the words of the Apostle Paul in their original context in Athens
- Travel in a small group with personal attention from our Greek-American family
- Sail on the crystal clear waters of the Aegean Sea to off-the-beaten-path islands
- Discover the ancient elegance and reverence of the Greek Orthodox Church
- Receive matchless pre-tour service and information directly from your tour leaders
- Enjoy engaging, expert lectures and guiding covering 5,000 years of Greek history



Dear Texas Ex,

The Flying Longhorns are proud to once again partner with the Sparks family of Sofia Travel on a unique tour custom designed for Texas Exes! Our travelers so appreciate Sofia Travel's authentic experiences and family connections that the majority of their past travelers have traveled on another Sofia Travel tour within two years! The Sparks family goes above and beyond to guarantee every detail, from directly answering your questions before the tour to personally guiding you through every site. With personal attention as their hallmark, Sofia Travel offers boutique tours to Greece unlike any other.

This outstanding itinerary is brought to you by the Texas Exes Flying Longhorns travel program, which supports the association's mission of promoting and protecting The University of Texas at Austin and uniting its alumni around the world. While you do not have to be an alumnus of UT to travel with us, we do ask that all Flying Longhorns travelers have an active membership in the Texas Exes. Memberships start at just \$50.

The association is a huge proponent of continuing education, and there is no better classroom than our world. Experience rich history and culture in the company of your fellow Longhorns! Are you ready for the trip of a lifetime? We expect this limited-size tour to fill up quickly, so we encourage you to register today! Call the Sparks family at 214-493-3027 or email [Adam@SofiaTravel.org](mailto:Adam@SofiaTravel.org) with any questions or to reserve your spot! We hope you decide to join — it's our favorite trip!

Margaret, Janice, and Leslie  
Flying Longhorns Travel Team

*"I have never had tour guides as  
wonderful, gracious, knowledgeable  
and friendly as the Sofia Travel team."*

*-Carolann S., Authentic Greece 2013*



# Authentic Greece

5,000 YEARS OF THE INSPIRATIONAL GREEK SPIRIT

**MAY 16-26, 2024**

\$5,480 + AIR  
SINGLE ROOM: +\$1,250

SANTORINI: +\$2,990  
SINGLE ROOM: +\$1,650

## THREE UNFORGETTABLE DESTINATIONS



### Nafplio

Mainland Greece's most beautiful town, Nafplio is the perfect place to acquaint yourself with Greece's relaxed, life-affirming culture. The historic center, with its picturesque bougainvillea lined walkways, is an exotic mix of Venetian and Ottoman architecture. Enjoy the stunning sea views from your hotel room, located just steps away from the charming, cafe-lined main square of this quaint, walkable town.



### Hydra

Hydra is like a dream. Nearly unchanged from its 18<sup>th</sup> c. heyday, the tiny island of Hydra maintains a remarkable authenticity and charm. With no motorized transportation on the island, all goods are still transported by donkey along the narrow, white-washed streets. Stay in the former home of an 18<sup>th</sup> c. shipping magnate as we soak up the relaxed culture of this one-of-a-kind island.



### Athens

Few cities on the planet have shaped the course of history like Athens. Its 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC Golden Age set the foundation for all western history that followed. Now the capital of Greece, we enjoy the quaint neighborhood feel of our hotel's location at the base of the legendary Acropolis. Enjoy one of the city's best Parthenon views from our hotel's rooftop garden as we trace the unique legacy of this remarkable city.

**POSTTOUR EXTENSION**

# Santorini

**5\* LUXURY IN THE WORLD'S  
MOST AMAZING SETTING**

Spend three nights on the breathtaking island of Santorini, the crown jewel of the Aegean Sea. Enjoy endless sea views, sail on a private catamaran through the crystal clear waters, and watch captivating sunsets from the terrace of your traditional cave-style accommodations.



# Daily Itinerary

## DAY 1&2 ARRIVE, NAFPLIO



Arrive Athens, transfer to our seaside hotel and enjoy the stunning sea views from your room. After a welcome reception, we gather together for dinner al fresco at a family-run taverna. (D)

tour the Ecclesiastical Museum. Then, trace Hydra's important role in the Greek War of Independence at the Historical Archives. In the evening, we gather together for a drink on a stunning promontory as we watch the radiant sunset over the Aegean Sea. (B)

## DAY 7 HYDRA FREE DAY & HORSEBACK RIDE

Enjoy the day at leisure in Hydra town or relax on a tranquil, secluded beach. Optionally, take a horseback ride high over town to enjoy the spectacular views of the Aegean Sea. (B)



## DAY 3 NAFPLIO, THEATER OF EPIDAVROS

After a cultural orientation to life in Greece, explore picturesque Nafplio and peruse the local produce at its streetside farmers' market. Continue to ancient Epidavros and marvel at its magnificent theater, the best preserved from ancient Greece. In the evening, enjoy a festive dinner waterside accompanied by local musicians. (B,L,D)



## DAY 4 MYCENAE, NEMEA, VINEYARD TOUR

Visit the bronze-age palace citadel of ancient Mycenae, home to King Agamemnon of the Trojan War, and stand inside the Temple of Zeus in ancient Nemea. Then, continue to a countryside, family-run vineyard for a wine tasting and a sumptuous feast. In the evening, watch the sunset over the Aegean Sea from the panoramic vistas of Palamidi Fortress. (B,L)

## DAY 5 AEGEAN SEA CRUISE TO SPETSES

Set sail through the legendary Greek Islands on a private cruise to beautiful, off-the-beaten-path Spetses. Enjoy an elegant, seaside lunch before a carriage ride to the picture-perfect Old Port of Spetses. Then, stop for a swim in an idyllic cove off an uninhabited island. Arriving to unforgettable Hydra, check in to our traditional hotel and enjoy a festive dinner harborside as we settle into the slow pace of life on this charming island. (B,L,D)

## DAY 6 HYDRA WALKING TOUR

After a leisurely morning in this serene setting, tour the opulent 17<sup>th</sup> c. cathedral as we learn about Greek Orthodoxy and

## DAY 8 ATHENS, ACROPOLIS MUSEUM

Depart Hydra by high-speed ferry and check-in to our hotel at the foot of Athens' Acropolis before visiting the Acropolis Museum with its legendary Parthenon Marbles. In the evening, enjoy the unforgettable views of the Parthenon from our hotel's roof garden. (B,D)

## DAY 9 ATHENS WALKING TOUR

Visit the world-changing sites of Athens, including the Theater of Dionysus, the birthplace of drama and comedy. Ascend the Acropolis to marvel at the stunning Parthenon as we discuss Greek democracy. At the Areopagus, hear the words of the Apostle Paul in their original context. Then, enjoy lunch and free time in the traditional Plaka marketplace district. (B,L)

## DAY 10 ATHENS, CAPE SOUNION

After a free morning, visit the National Archaeological Museum, home to the world's greatest collection of Greek antiquities. Then, enjoy a festive final dinner at a seaside taverna before marveling at the stunning sunset over the Aegean Sea from the unforgettable promontory of the Temple of Poseidon at Cape Sounion. (B,D)

## DAY 11 DEPART

Depart Greece renewed and inspired, or continue to the stunning island of Santorini. (B)



# TEXAS EXES AUTHENTIC GREECE REGISTRATION FORM

1<sup>st</sup> Traveler Name, Exactly as on Passport      Name for Name Tag      Birthday (M/D/Y)      Gender

2<sup>nd</sup> Traveler Name, Exactly as on Passport      Name for Name Tag      Birthday (M/D/Y)      Gender

Address      City      State      Zip

Phone Number      Email Address

OCCUPANCY      SANTORINI EXT.      FLIGHTS  
☐ Double Room      ☐ Yes      ☐ Please look at flights for me  
☐ Single room      ☐ No      ☐ I will make my own flights  
and airport-hotel transfers

DEPOSIT  
☐ Master Card      (#) \_\_\_\_\_ travelers x \$800/person/tour      = \$ \_\_\_\_\_ = total \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ Visa      (#) \_\_\_\_\_ travelers x \$1,200/person/extension      = \$ \_\_\_\_\_ = total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card Number      Expiration      Security Code

Signature of Card Holder      ☐ I have read & accepted the attached Terms & Conditions

**Detach and mail to: Sofia Travel, 3907 Cherrywood Rd., Austin TX 78722**  
**Call us at 214-493-3027 or email Adam@SofiaTravel.org with any questions**

## Terms and Conditions

Price: \$5,480 per participant in double room occupancy (+\$1,250 as a single); Santorini Extension \$2,990 per person in double room occupancy (+\$1,650 as a single). International airfare is in addition to this price.

Included in price: Shared double room accommodations in four and five star accommodations; meals as indicated in the itinerary, including house wine with dinner; transportation and entrance fees to all sights, museums, and activities as indicated on the itinerary; airport-hotel transfers for travelers taking Sofia Travel arranged group flights; daily accompaniment and on-site instruction from Sofia Travel staff; hotel portage for one suitcase; all taxes, fees, and gratuities.

Not Included in Price: International flights and all associated costs; airport transfers for travelers making their own air arrangements; single room supplements; meals not listed in the itinerary; optional activities; additions and changes to the listed program; travel insurance; excess baggage; individual transfers; internet or telephone fees at hotels; laundry; additional drinks, snacks, special meal requests and items of a personal nature.

Activity Level: Travelers should be able to enjoy walking unassisted for an extended period of time without resting, be sure-footed on uneven surfaces, enter and exit a moored boat, and walk up and down inclines and multiple flights of stairs easily and without assistance. Due to its unique position on the rim of an ancient volcano, the hotel in Santorini includes multiple flights of stairs between the hotel entrance, the rooms, and the breakfast area. Travelers are responsible for carrying their own carry-on luggage at all times.

Reservation and Deposit: A non-refundable, non-transferable deposit of \$800 per tour and \$1,200 per extension is required at the time of reservation to guarantee a place on the tour. The full balance is due December 8, 2023.

Luggage: Limit of one suitcase and one carry-on per person. Travelers are solely responsible for complying with all airline baggage weight and size limits. Hotel portage is included for one suitcase per person. Carry-on luggage will be the responsibility of passengers at all times.

Flights: Flights arranged by Sofia Travel are subject solely to the policies of the respective airlines, and seating arrangements cannot be guaranteed until time of check-in. Sofia Travel is not responsible for any expenses incurred due to flight cancellations or changes. Travelers making their own flights may need to pay for airport-hotel transfers if arrival and departure times do not match group flight times.

Cancellation Fees: Sofia Travel must receive all cancellation and refund requests in writing. Registration and extension deposits are non-refundable and non-transferable. Cancellations received on or after December 10, 2023 will carry a 50% cancellation penalty, cancellations received on or after March 16, 2024 will carry a 75% cancellation penalty. No refunds will be given on or after April 27, 2024. All cancellation fees are based on the total tour price including all flights, extensions, and additional costs.

Insurance: Travelers are highly recommended to purchase travel insurance. Information will be sent with your Texas Exes confirmation. Travelers are fully responsible for understanding and agreeing to all stated terms and conditions of any third party insurance policy they may choose to purchase and absolve Sofia Travel of any responsibilities, payments, or refunds regarding travel insurance.

Documentation: U.S. citizens require a valid passport. The traveler assumes complete and full responsibility for, and hereby releases Sofia Travel from, any duty of checking and verifying any and all passport, visa, vaccination, health screening, or other entry requirements for each destination, and all safety and security conditions during the proposed travel. Please note that customs agents often require passport validity for six months from the return date of travel. Assuring passport validity for travel is the sole responsibility of the individual traveler.

Statement of Responsibility: Sofia Travel (ST) or the Texas Exes (TE) shall not be held responsible for any wrongful or negligent acts or omissions or defaults by any supplier or other party not directly owned or controlled by ST/TE or by the failure of any equipment operated by any such supplier or other party. ST/TE shall not be liable for any loss, injury, or damage to person, property or otherwise, in connection with any accommodations, transportation, or other services, resulting directly or indirectly from any acts of God, dangers incident to the sea, fire, breakdown of machinery or equipment, acts of government of other authorities, wars whether or not declared, hostilities, civil disturbances, strikes, riots, thefts, pilferages, epidemics, pandemics, quarantines, medical or customs regulations, defaults, delays or cancellations or changes to itineraries or schedules. Neither ST/TE nor any of its affiliates or subsidiaries shall be or become liable or responsible for any additional expenses of liability sustained or incurred by the tour member as a result of any of the aforementioned causes. ST/TE is released from any and all claims and causes of action that a tour participant may hold for personal injury, property damage or wrongful death, arising out of participation in tour activities. ST/TE does not have special knowledge regarding the hazards of medical procedures in any location, suitability of medical travel for any person, financial condition of any supplier, unsafe conditions, health hazards, weather hazards, political conditions, or climate extremes at locations to which you may travel. ST/TE responsibility to passengers carried in vehicles and aircraft for transfer and excursions and tours is governed by the laws of the respective countries in which the tours take place and no other country. All claims against ST/TE must be made within 30 days of travel and are subject only to the jurisdiction of the courts of the country in which the cause of action arises. The right is reserved to substitute hotels and to alter itineraries. Individual or group cancellations due to factors outside of ST's control will be subject to the listed cancellation fees. All tickets and vouchers issued for transportation and services are subject to the terms and conditions under which such transportation and services are provided to the participant by the owners or contractors. Venue for any disputes is Travis County, TX. This contract shall be governed by the laws of the State of Texas.





**TEXAS**  **EXES**

— FLYING LONGHORNS —

**SOFIA TRAVEL CO.**

3907 CHERRYWOOD RD  
AUSTIN, TX 78722

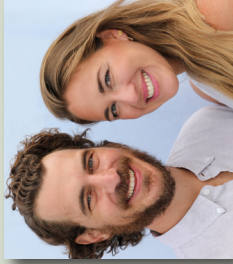
214-493-3027

[WWW.SOFIATRAVEL.ORG](http://WWW.SOFIATRAVEL.ORG)

**HAVE A QUESTION?**

**CONTACT YOUR TOUR  
GUIDES DIRECTLY**

**ADAM & BLAKE SPARKS  
214-493-3027**



**Experience the difference of a boutique travel provider  
as our Greek-Texan family's personal guests**

**"The best tour guides we have ever experienced"**  
- Darlene C., Texas Exes Authentic Greece 2013