

# THE GREEK KITCHEN GETAWAYS

## SPECTACULAR METEORA

### FULL ITINERARY

#### DAY 1 ATHENS

**Meals included:** Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

**Activities:** Welcome meeting 08:30/Athens food tour 09:00 4hrs/Cooking class 13:30 4hrs

**Note:** In case you are unable to check into your Athens hotel, luggage storage is provided at The Greek Kitchen

Arrive at The Greek Kitchen in Central Athens by 08:30am to meet your Greek Kitchen Host and travel companions.

This is where your trip begins! Wake up with a coffee or tea as your Host goes through the trip itinerary. Here you can ask any questions you might have regarding the journey and get to know the other members of your group.

This morning it's your chance to discover the world of Greek produce, markets and shopping on an in-depth tour of the Athens' Central Market district on the Athens Food Tour with Lunch.

Taste your way through a wide variety of locally produced items from breads and pastries to seasonal fruit, nuts and herbs; discover the diversity of Greek cheeses on offer with a visit to a dairy store that also happens to sell some of the most delicious yoghurt available in the city.

Greece is home to a rich collection of liquors and wines so it's only right to stop off at an old *kava* for a tasting: They have excellent honey as well!

In the meat market you'll get to construct your own chicken *souvlaki* sticks to grill with your lunch back at The Greek Kitchen. Non meat-eaters won't be left out, as vegetable sticks will be available too!

The food tour is the perfect way to experience daily Athenian life, where the locals shop, eat and socialize. After the tour you'll head back to The Greek Kitchen to enjoy your lunch and spend some quality time with your host who will give you tips on how to spend your free time in the city.

The market tour might be complete but your day of getting to know Greek food is far from over! After some time to relax you'll join a cooking class at The Greek Kitchen led by one of our local, home cooks, where you'll prepare 4 traditional family dishes; the menu changes seasonally in order to always use the freshest ingredients at peak flavor.

Once the cooking is done sit down, enjoy your food and if you have the energy the center of Athens is just on the doorstep where the bars and clubs stay awake into the early hours...

**Please remember:**

- A copy of your passport, travel insurance with company contact details on

## **DAY 2 KASTRAKI**

**Meals included:** Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

**Activities:** Meteora Sunset Tour with wine tasting 4hrs/Street food and Backgammon night

**Transport:** Athens Metro/Cross Country Train/Private Transfer to Hotel

Meet early in the hotel reception for the short walk to the metro station at Monastiraki, from here it's a short trip to Athens Train Station at Larissa. The train journey from Athens to Kalambaka, the town that sits at the foot of the mighty Meteora rock formations is approximately 5hrs giving you the chance to sit back and enjoy the view of the Greek countryside as it wizzes past.

On arrival the group will be met by a private transfer that will take the luggage to the hotel and drop you off at the charming Meteora Family Restaurant in Kalambaka where every day 4 generations of women from the same family serve up their signature local dishes: take a plate, go into the kitchen and choose which dish you want to eat!

After lunch some free time will give you the chance to explore this small town, take in the views of the rocks that loom above it and search for some of the special products unique to this area of Greece.

This evening the activity is an incredibly special private sunset tour of Meteora. Led by a local guide you'll ride in comfort to viewpoints that take in the pure majesty of the area before heading up to the top of the rocks to see the sunset in one of the most beautiful places in the country.

Here your Greek Kitchen Host will introduce you to a range of local wines paired with a fine selection of produce to really compliment the view. The sunset tour also includes a visit to a unique Byzantine church that survived the destruction of the entire town during German occupation in the 1940's; filled with beautiful frescos and interesting architectural features there really is no other church like it in Greece.

As the sky darkens the group will head to Kastraki village and the hotel where we will have already been checked into. After freshening up in your room we welcome you to join us for drinks and canapés on the hotel terrace under the twinkling stars.

### **DAY 3 KASTRAKI**

**Meals included:** Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

**Activities:** Hiking and Monastery visits 5hrs/Baklava Class and Liquor tasting

**Transport:** Private bus/Easy hiking

After breakfast it's time to meet your Greek Kitchen Host for a morning of history, culture and exploration as you head out to explore the wonderful world of the Meteora monasteries with a local guide on a private hiking tour that we believe is the best way to experience this UNESCO World Heritage site.

Taking an easy path that's away from the road, your guide will lead you to dreamy ruins, amazing rock formations in stunning nature and to visit 3 of the monasteries including one that is only accessed with a professional guide and far from the throngs of tourists, it's an incredibly beautiful place to visit and one that very few people know about. The hiking tour will end at the most famous monastery of them all: Megalo Meteora, where you'll have time to wander the buildings, admire the views and learn about the local monastic life that's existed here for centuries.

From here a private transfer will take you down the road passing ancient sites of worship, tombs and hermit caves before arriving in Kastraki village for an included lunch; only fresh, local produce is used to create these delicious seasonal dishes. Kastraki is well known for roasted meats and there are joints slowly cooking in ovens and on spits at tavernas everywhere.

The afternoon is free for you to wander the streets of the village, head into Kalambaka or just relax at the hotel pool.

This evening's meal is at a local taverna in Kalambaka, before dinner you'll learn how to prepare a Baklava, the sweet, phyllo pastry and walnut dish that's steeped in history and claimed to have been created by the populations of at least 8 countries.

After dinner relax with your Host and learn about the local alcoholic production industry with a liquor tasting, there's a whole world out there beyond ouzo...

## **DAY 4 KASTRAKI**

**Meals included:** Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

**Activities:** Kalambaka Mushroom Museum/Truffle and Mushroom Foraging Expedition/Traditional Village visit

**Transport:** Private bus/Easy hiking

Today the group heads for the great outdoors, starting with a visit to the excellent Kalambaka Mushroom Museum to learn about the different species of mushroom and truffle that can be found in the area. Then in the company of a professional forager the group will head out into the forest in search of these delicacies - your guide will teach you what to look for when foraging so that you're sure to collect the safe varieties.

Once you have all the ingredients needed a cook will rustle up an amazing pasta dish in the forest for an alfresco dining experience!

It's a heavy lunch but you're in the right place to stretch your legs and walk it off with a gentle hike then a private bus ride to the northern edge of the Meteora rocks. Here the small village of Gavros has celebrated the comings and goings of life in a much-unchanged way for more than 200 years.

Village life in Gavros is centered around the activities of the picturesque monastery of Agios Theodoron, climb the steps up the rock to enjoy amazing views out over the landscape one final time before heading back to the hotel for an included evening meal.

### **Please remember:**

- Part of the activity today is hiking and the monasteries are accessed via flights of stairs so it's important to wear comfortable shoes and bring a walking pole if you need one

- The monasteries are all functioning religious sites and it's important to dress respectfully - no bare shoulders for anyone, men's shorts below the knees and women to wear long skirts that the monasteries provide at the entrance
- The weather can change quickly in this region of Greece so it's important to wear layers and be prepared for hot weather as well as sudden downpours

## DAY 5 ATHENS

**Meals included:** Breakfast/Lunch

**Activities:** Local Food Tour

**Transport:** Private transfer/Cross Country Train 5hrs

One of the best things about this trip is that the final day has plenty of time to relax and enjoy yourself before getting the train back to Athens. Make the most of your free morning at the hotel pool; take a last walk around Kastraki village or head to Kalambaka to pick up a final few mementos.

At midday you'll join a private food tour of the area, stopping at tavernas and wineries and getting a chance to pick up some amazing local produce from roadside market stalls. You'll eat enough not to be hungry again for a while, however pack some food for the ride back to the capitol as the train won't be pulling into Athens until almost 10:30pm

From here your Greek Kitchen Host will help you arrange taxis onto your next destination.

## TOUR INFORMATION

**ACCOMMODATION:** Comfortable en-suite rooms in charming, independently run hotels with breakfast included. All of our hotels have Wi-Fi, air conditioning and safes that are either in the rooms or at reception.

**TRANSPORT:** By using the Greek public transport system where possible we are able to pass the savings on to our Getaway Guests with more cost-conscious trip prices.

All private transfers are operated by licensed, insured, tested and reviewed companies that meet the high standards of The Greek Kitchen.

**SINGLE TRAVELLERS:** Being single can be expensive and we don't believe in penalizing single travellers so anyone travelling independently on a Greek Kitchen Getaway will be automatically be roomed with another single traveller of the same gender identification; unless they choose to purchase a private room at the time of booking.

**FAMILY TRAVELLERS:** We welcome travellers aged 12 to 17 on our Getaways as long as someone who is at least 18 years old accompanies them. Family rooms can be provided on request and sibling will always be roomed together. To make things easier for the travelling family for every one child place purchased on a Greek Kitchen Getaway a second child travels for free. Be sure to ask about this at the time of booking.

**PRIVATE ROOM:** For those who prefer their privacy, the option to have your own room throughout the trip is available for an extra fee that is displayed in the booking details for the Getaway booked. The private room option is not included in the cabins on night ferries.

**SAFETY:** While Greece is blessed with one of the lowest crime rates in Europe there are teams of professional pickpockets out and about as in most major cities. Paying attention to your belongings and exercising common sense should give you a stress-free trip.

**YOUR GREEK KITCHEN HOST:** Our Hosts are the face of The Greek Kitchen and we are so proud of them. All are native to Greece and have come together to share their passion and expert local knowledge for their homeland to make sure that you; our Getaway Guest has the best experience possible. They are trained in first aid and competent in dealing with any situation. Your Greek Kitchen Host is here to lead you through the country and introduce you to unique, fun and fascinating experiences that will enrich your time with us. They know all the best places to visit, eat and see and will surprise you throughout the journey. Your Greek Kitchen Host isn't here to hold your hand or carry your luggage but they will take care of you.

**FOOD:** Throughout the Getaway the Guest will have the possibility to eat a wide range of local dishes. The Getaway Team at The Greek Kitchen has found an extensive amount of tavernas, cafes, restaurants and experiences to ensure that you experience this range. We also want to support our Guests who have dietary requirements outside of the "normal sphere" of dining and are pleased to cater for people who cannot or choose not to eat certain ingredients.

Please check the “Included Meals” level in the “Good To Know” section of the website page for your Getaway to see how many meals are included. Be sure to have budgeted for meals not included. Where a meal isn’t included your Host will be able to provide you with a selection of places to eat that suit a variety of budgets and needs. Where meals are not included on the Getaway it is the responsibility of the guest to provide food, on long journeys it isn’t always possible to stop somewhere to eat and in this case it is the responsibility of the guest to have brought food with them.

**WATER:** Greece has very good drinking water and water bottles can be refilled in hotels and restaurants where a bottle of tap water is usually provided at the table. We ask that Guests refrain from purchasing one-use plastic disposable water bottles and any similar items in order to reduce plastic waste that is reaching critical levels around the world.

**MONEY:** In Greece we use the Euro and almost everywhere takes credit/debit cards however it’s always advisable to have cash with you for smaller purchases. Bargaining isn’t common on small items and is seen as rude. There are plenty of places to change foreign currency into Euros with the best rates of exchange given at banks. For purchases of larger items shipping can be arranged easily through the incredibly reliable Greek postal service.

**TIPPING:** Tipping your Greek Kitchen Host isn’t included in the price of your Getaway and while it’s not mandatory it’s always nice to have your hard work appreciated and we recommend €3-5 per person per day. For local guides and driver we recommend €2-3 per day and in restaurants, cafes and bars it’s common to round up the bill with 10% on top.

**INSURANCE:** It is the responsibility of the Getaway Guest to provide their own travel insurance and a copy of the documentation including the company contact details and policy information must be given to the Greek Kitchen Host at the welcome meeting on Day 1 of the trip. The insurance must be valid, cover full health and repatriation. Failure to produce this will mean cancellation of the trip without refund. Although not mandatory we do recommend insurance covering your personal belongings, The Greek Kitchen holds no responsibility for any lost, stolen or damaged items at any point during the trip.

**MEDICATION/MEDICAL CONDITIONS:** Please let your Greek Kitchen Host know about any medical conditions or medication you are on for the duration of your trip.

**LUGGAGE:** Generally with Greek Kitchen Getaways we suggest one easy to manage suitcase or backpack and one item of hand luggage with a daypack that can be used for any hiking trips or excursions. All luggage brought by the guest is their personal responsibility for care and transportation. Most Greek Kitchen Getaways use public transport and accommodation that might only have stair access to rooms: The lighter you travel, the better your experience.

**CLOTHING:** The Greek weather is usually reliably warm and sunny from April to November however it can change and preparation should be made for any adverse weather conditions such as strong winds, rainfall and heat waves.

Pack light, breathable clothing that is comfortable to wear in hot weather with footwear that is suitable for the city and the countryside. Wear a hat to protect your from the sun.

Please bear in mind that Greece is a conservative country and that dress codes exist in places such as museums, archaeological sites and centers of religion where shoulders, arms and legs down to below the knee must be covered. Nude or topless sunbathing is not considered acceptable outside of designated areas.

**BEHAVIOUR:** The team at The Greek Kitchen want you to enjoy your Getaway however anything deemed as "bad behavior" will not be tolerated, this includes but is not limited to the following: violence or any kind, unruly drunkenness, the use of any illegal or illicit drug, engaging with prostitutes, bring people into the tour who are not a paid member of the group, any behavior deemed racist/misogynistic/homophobic/transphobic or belittling to anyone regarding religious beliefs and is respectful of other Guests lifestyles and culture as well as respecting the local culture and traditions of Greece and the Greek people.

Theft and vandalism are taken very seriously in Greece and can be punished with prison sentences. The Greek Kitchen is not liable to assist anyone in the case that they are arrested while on a Getaway

It is also important that while on the Getaway that each Guest maintains a decent level of personal hygiene.

Breaches of any of these listed items plus any that the Greek Kitchen Host believes to come under the label of unacceptable behavior will be put forward for immediate consultation with senior Greek Kitchen Management and could result in the aggressor having the rest of their transport, accommodation and activities cancelled and being removed from the trip.



**FEEDBACK:** We are a growing company and your feedback can help us with this. At the end of each Getaway our Guests will be asked to fill in a feedback form that will be emailed to them.

If a guest has a complaint of a serious nature we request contacting us as soon as possible using the contact details provided on the welcome pack received after booking.