

Duke
TRAVELS

With **Dr. John Virdin**, Director of the Ocean Policy Program & Associate Professor of the Practice in Marine Science and Conservation at Duke's Nicholas School of the Environment

IMPRESSIONS OF LIFE IN THE GREEK ISLANDS

Athens, Rhodes, Chalki, Symi and Crete

May 13 - 24, 2026



Symi, one of the most attractive Greek islands

Dear Duke Travelers,

Perhaps more than any other land, Greece has exerted a profound and lasting influence in the development of the Western World. Democracy, philosophy, scientific inquiry, the theater, and historiography, among others, were born in Greece. This is also a land of magnificent ancient monuments, legendary landscapes, iconic islands, picture-perfect seaside villages and towns, a celebrated cuisine, and a vibrant contemporary lifestyle. The attractions Greece offers have made the country one of Europe's premier destinations.

Impressions of Life in the Greek Islands begins in Athens, the capital of the country and Europe's oldest city. After exploring its glorious monuments and witnessing its contemporary life, we will fly across the Aegean to Rhodes, the beautiful island of Helios, the sun god, where the Colossus, one of the original Seven Wonders of the Classical World stood. In addition to exploring Rhodes, we will visit two, small neighboring islands: Symi, that features one of the most beautiful harbor towns in Greece, and seldom-visited Chalki. From Rhodes, a short flight will take us to legendary Crete, the island that gave Europe its first civilization, the brilliant Minoan civilization that flourished in the Bronze age, as witnessed at the Palace of Knossos. Also visit the seaside town of Rhythemno with its Venetian architecture and enjoy the healthful Cretan cuisine that gave birth to the Mediterranean Diet.

Accompanying us throughout will be **Dr. John Virdin**, Director of the Ocean Policy Program at Duke, who will share his knowledge through a series of lectures and an Expert Thalassa Journeys Tour Guide, **Sofia Valsamaki**, who will enrich our journey with her insight and expertise on the remarkable places we explore.

There is no better way to experience the treasures of Greece -past and present -than with Duke on this distinctive journey.

Forever Duke,



Beth Ray-Schroeder '83
Senior Director, Duke Travels
Duke Alumni Engagement and Development

DUKE FACULTY

DR. JOHN VIRDIN

Director of the Ocean Policy Program at Duke & Associate Professor of the Practice in Marine Science and Conservation at Duke's Nicholas School of the Environment



John Virdin has over twenty years' experience in studying and advising government policies to regulate human use of the oceans. His focus has been largely on managing fisheries for food and livelihoods, expanding to broader ocean-based economic development policies, coastal adaptation and more recently reducing

ocean plastic pollution. Virdin directs the Ocean Policy Program at the Nicholas Institute for Energy, Environment & Sustainability, aiming to connect Duke University's science and ideas to help policymakers solve ocean sustainability problems. He co-created and teaches an introductory course for undergraduate students to understand the role of ocean policy in helping solve many of society's most pressing development challenges on land. His talks will explore ocean sustainability issues in the Aegean Sea and beyond.

THALASSA JOURNEYS TOUR GUIDE

SOFIA VALSAMAKI

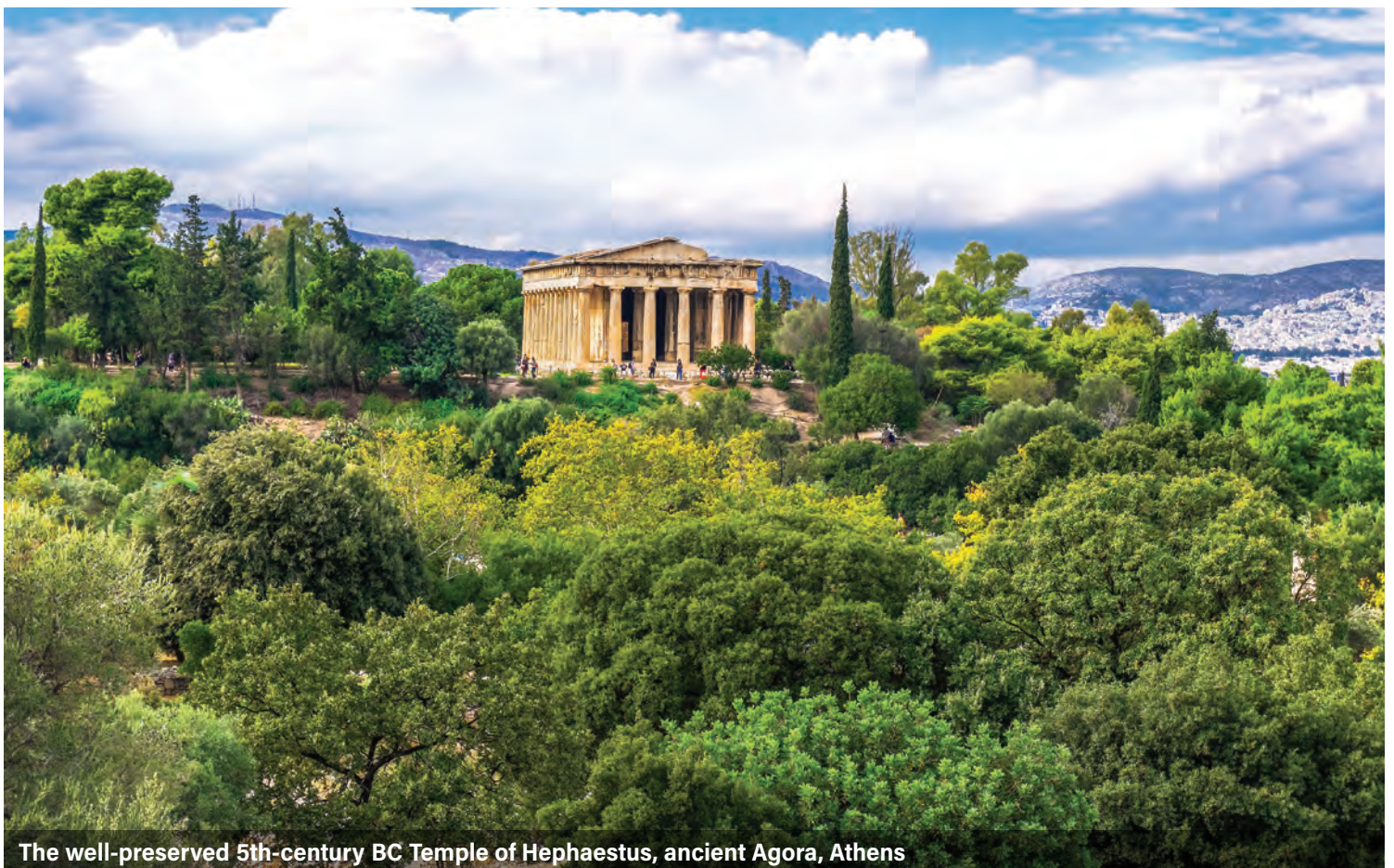


Sofia Valsamaki is an experienced tour guide with a career spanning more than three decades. She graduated from the School for Guides in Athens in 1989 and has since guided visitors of all ages and backgrounds through archaeological sites, museums, monasteries,

and art galleries. Her goal has always been to spark curiosity and inspire genuine interest in every experience. Through storytelling and personal perspective, she strives to help others fall in love with her country—seeing it through her eyes and transforming each tour into something memorable, meaningful, and uniquely personal. Sofia is fluent in Greek, French, and English.



Palace of Knossos, Crete



The well-preserved 5th-century BC Temple of Hephaestus, ancient Agora, Athens

FOR RESERVATIONS AND INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT **DUKE TRAVELS** AT (919) 684-2988

ITINERARY



WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 2026

DEPART THE US

THURSDAY, MAY 14

ATHENS, Greece

Arrive in Athens and transfer to the *Hotel Athens Capital* (or similar), conveniently located just off Syntagma Square. This evening, gather with fellow Duke travelers for a welcome dinner. (D)

FRIDAY, MAY 15

ATHENS

Ancient Athens was the birthplace of democracy and many other ideas and concepts that form an integral part of Western tradition. Its magnificent monuments that have survived from antiquity

are testimonials to its glorious past. After breakfast, travel to the Acropolis. Explore the stunning architectural marvel of the Parthenon, built in the 5th century BCE as a temple to the city's protector, the goddess Athena. Also tour the Acropolis Museum, an award-winning collection of artifacts from excavations of the Acropolis. Following an included lunch, visit the Agora, the civic and commercial center of ancient Athens, where the carefully restored remains include the 5th century BC Temple of Hephaestus and the Hellenistic Stoa of Atallos, which houses the splendid Agora Museum. (B,L)

SATURDAY, MAY 16

ATHENS/EPIDAUROS/NAFLION/MYCENAE/ATHENS

Today, explore storied sites in the Argolis region of the Peloponnese, where many ancient myths and legends are rooted. Cross the Corinth Canal on the way to Epidauros, the sanctuary of Asclepius, the god of healing. Epidauros is famous for its magnificent 4th-century BC theater, noted for its perfect acoustics and harmonious proportions. Lunch will be served in the seaside town of Nafplio, one of Greece's loveliest old towns. On the return to Athens, visit Mycenae, the most important center of the Bronze Age Mycenaean Civilization, and home of Agamemnon, who led the Greeks against Troy. (B,L)

SUNDAY, MAY 17

ATHENS/RHODES

This morning fly to Rhodes, known in ancient times for its Colossus, an enormous bronze statue of the god Helios, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. A medieval stronghold, the town was constructed by the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem. After lunch walk through the Old Town, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, along the Street of the Knights, where crusaders lived, followed by a visit to the Archaeological Museum. Check in to the *Rodos Park Hotel* (or similar), your home for the next four nights. (B,L,D)

MONDAY, MAY 18

RHODES/CHALKI/RHODES

Today, travel to the tiny, seldom-visited island of Chalki, just off Rhodes' western coast, to get a sense of the rhythm of life away from major cities and tourist sites. Nimborio, the main harbor, is a



Street of the Knights, Rhodes



Outdoor dining at Heraklion's Peskesi restaurant, which serves traditional Cretan dishes from centuries-old recipes.

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The 4th-century BC Temple of Athena on the Acropolis of Lindos, built on the precipice of the rock

vehicle-free area where brightly colored neoclassical houses line the waterfront, and where the Church of Agios Nikolaos boasts a beautiful bell tower and a pebble mosaic courtyard. Explore the nearby abandoned village of Chorio and the medieval castle built by the Knights of St. John. Have lunch at seaside tavern before returning to Rhodes. (B,L,D)

TUESDAY, MAY 19
RHODES/LINDOS

This morning, leave Rhodes town and travel south along the coast to the village of Lindos, where you will enjoy a lunch of traditional Lindian cuisine at Mavrikos restaurant. Tour the narrow alleyways of this lovely village, and then either walk or ride a donkey to the top of the acropolis, where the Knights of St. John erected fortifications to protect against Moorish invaders. The ramparts offer magnificent sweeping views across St. Paul's Bay to the Turkish coast. (B,L)

WEDNESDAY, MAY 20
RHODES/SYMI/RHODES

A short ferry ride brings you to Symi, one of Greece's most attractive islands, with beautifully proportioned neoclassical mansions rising above its harbor. Named for the wife of Poseidon and said to be the birthplace of the three graces, Symi was an important part of the Roman and Byzantine empires. Visit the 15th-century Panormitis monastery and explore two museums—one dedicated to folklore, the other an ecclesiastical museum with rich collections of relics. Lunch at a local restaurant will be followed by time at leisure to explore the town of Symi before returning to Rhodes. (B,L)

THURSDAY, MAY 21
RHODES/KAMEIROS/HERAKLION

A leisurely morning is followed by a drive along the western coast of the island to Kameiros, one of the best-preserved Hellenistic cities in Greece, where the ruins provide a fascinating glimpse into urban life in the period between the death of Alexander the Great and the

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

By special arrangement in Crete, and aligning with Professor Virdin's expertise, there will be an opportunity to visit the Cretaquarium, the largest aquarium in Greece, affiliated with the University of Crete and a marine park devoted to scientific research and education. We will be welcomed by the Director and scientists who are engaged in studying sustainability and conservation in the Mediterranean.

establishing of the Roman Empire. After the visit to Kameiros, travel to the nearby airport for a flight to Heraklion, where you check in to the *Megaron Hotel* (or similar) for three nights. (B,D)

FRIDAY, MAY 22
HERAKION/RETHYMNO/HERAKLION

Today is devoted to exploring Crete beyond the capital city. Begin with a drive to Rethymno, one of Crete's most charming towns, known for its well-preserved architecture from the Venetian and Ottoman periods. Tour the town and enjoy time at leisure before driving to the hill country south of town for a cooking lesson, olive oil tasting and lunch at the historic *Kapsaliana Village Hotel*. Return to the hotel in Heraklion in the afternoon. (B, L)

SATURDAY, MAY 23
HERAKLION

This morning, tour the Palace of Knossos, the largest and most magnificent Minoan palace in Crete. Clustered around a spacious courtyard, the palace contains a maze of rooms, passages and stairways that may have inspired the concept of the labyrinth. Then visit the Archaeological Museum of Heraklion, whose eye-opening exhibits reinforce the impression gained at Knossos of the remarkable achievements of Minoan culture. Enjoy the afternoon at leisure in Heraklion, during which you may wish to visit the market to browse among the stalls that sell a variety of Cretan products, including its famed herbs. Enjoy a farewell dinner at Peskesi restaurant, one of Crete's finest, which specializes in the centuries-old cuisine of the island. (B, D)

SUNDAY, MAY 24
HERAKLION/DEPART

After breakfast at the hotel, transfer to the airport for flights homeward. (B)



The 16th-century Venetian castle still guards the harbor of Heraklion, Crete



Enjoy the delectable Greek cuisine



Nafplion



The 4th-century BC theater of Epidauros

RATE PER PERSON

\$ 7,590 per person, double occupancy.
Single room supplement: \$ 1,890.

PROGRAM INCLUSIONS

- Hotel accommodations throughout: Three nights at the *Athens Capital Hotel* (or similar); four nights at the *Rodos Park Hotel* (or similar), and three nights at the *Hotel Megaron* (or similar).
- Lectures and discussions with Dr. John Virdin, Director of the Ocean Policy Program at Duke & Associate Professor of the Practice in Marine Science and Conservation at Duke's Nicholas School of the Environment.
- Full breakfast each morning at the hotels.
- Seven lunches and five dinners at local restaurants with wine or beer and soft drinks.
- Flights from Athens to Rhodes and Rhodes to Heraklion.
- Boat rides round-trip from Rhodes to Chalki and Symi.
- Airport/hotel/pier transfers and handling of luggage throughout the program as scheduled in the itinerary.
- All tours and excursions as described in the itinerary with a professional English-speaking guide.
- Entrance fees to museums, archaeological and historic sites.
- The services of an experienced Thalassa Journeys Trip Director.
- Gratuities to guides, drivers and porters.
- All local taxes and service charges.
- Complete pre-departure material.

NOT INCLUDED: International airfare; travel insurance; expenses of a personal nature; any items not mentioned in the Itinerary and the Program Inclusions.



Kore, Archaic Greek sculpture,
Acropolis Museum

REGISTRATION

DUKE 26L-0513

Enclosed is my check or credit card no. for \$ _____ (\$ 1,000 per person) as a deposit to hold _____ place(s) on **IMPRESSIONS OF LIFE IN THE GREEK ISLANDS** May 13 - 24, 2026, with Duke Travels. I understand that final payment is due ninety (90) days prior to departure and is payable by check or credit card.

To reserve your place, please contact **Duke Travels at (919) 684-2988**, or complete and return this form with your deposit of \$1,000 per person by mail with credit card or a check payable to **Thalassa Journeys** and mail with this registration form to:
Duke Travels, Box 90572, Durham, NC 27708-0572

If you mail in your reservation, please give Duke Travels a call so that space can be held.

Visa Mastercard Discover

No. _____

Exp. _____ 3- or 4-Digit Security Code _____

Preference at hotels:

Double accommodation Double Bed Single Bed
 Single accommodation *Bed configuration cannot be guaranteed.*

I/we wish to register for the optional extension in Athens.

FIRST MIDDLE LAST (AS ON YOUR PASSPORT)

FIRST MIDDLE LAST (AS ON YOUR PASSPORT)

ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

TELEPHONE (HOME) _____

(CELL) _____

EMAIL _____

Each participant must sign below: I/We have read the "General Information" section and agree to its terms.

SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

GENERAL INFORMATION

PAYMENT SCHEDULE: A deposit of \$1,000 per person is required to reserve your space on the tour. Final payment is due 90 days prior to departure. Payment can be made by personal check or charged to a credit card.

CANCELLATIONS & REFUNDS: All cancellations are subject to a \$300 per person administrative fee. Cancellations received 61-90 days prior to departure will be assessed a penalty equal to 50% of the total program cost per person. Cancellations received within 60 days of departure are subject to 100% cancellation penalties. Requests for cancellations must be made in writing. No refunds will be made for any part of this program in which you choose not to participate.

INSURANCE: We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance, which is available for coverage of expenses in conjunction with cancellation due to illness or accident. Baggage insurance is also recommended. In the event that you must cancel your participation in a travel program, trip cancellation insurance may be the only source of reimbursement.

ITINERARY: The itinerary, accommodations and arrangements are subject to change at the discretion of Thalassa Journeys.

RESPONSIBILITY: Please read carefully the following terms and conditions, which constitute the sole, legally enforceable agreements between the traveler and Thalassa Journeys. Thalassa Journeys acts solely as agents for the traveler with respect to all transportation, hotel and other tour arrangements. In that capacity, we exercise all reasonable care possible to ensure the traveler's safety and satisfaction, but, we neither assume nor bear any responsibility or liability for any injury, death, damage, loss, accident, delay or irregularity arising in connection with the services of any ship, airplane, train, automobile, motor coach, carriage or other conveyance, or the actions of any third-party, involved in carrying the traveler or in affecting these tours. We are not responsible for damages, additional expenses, or any other losses due to cancellation, delay or other changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, civil disturbances, acts or threats of terrorism, travel warnings or bans, termination or suspension of war risks or other carrier insurance, quarantine, acts of God or other causes beyond our control. All such losses must be borne by the traveler, and tour rates provide for arrangements only for the time stated. In the event of cancellation, delay or rescheduling mandated by any of the aforesaid causes beyond our control, the traveler shall have the option of accepting in lieu of the original tour such rescheduled tour or other substituted tour(s) as may be offered by us, or else, receiving a refund of as much of such advance tour expenditures as we are able to recover on the traveler's behalf from carriers, third-party tour vendors, etc., but, we shall not have any obligation or liability to the traveler beyond the foregoing. We reserve the right to make alterations to the tour's itinerary and to substitute hotels, transportation methods, or lecturers if this is required. We reserve the right to cancel, delay, or reschedule any tour prior to departure, and, so long as this is not due to any of the aforesaid causes beyond our control, the traveler shall be entitled to a full refund of all monies paid to that point if he/she so desires. No refund shall be made for any unused portion of any tour. By forwarding their deposit(s), the traveler certifies that he/she and/or their dependents, minors or others covered thereby do not have any mental, physical or other condition of disability that could create a hazard for them or other travelers. We reserve the right to decline to accept or to decline to retain any person as a member of any tour should such person's health, condition or actions adversely affect or threaten the welfare or safety of other travelers or impede the tour. Baggage or valuables brought on the tour shall be transported, handled or stored at the traveler's risk entirely, and, we shall bear no liability or responsibility for any damage or other loss thereto. Resolution of any disputes arising hereunder shall be affected exclusively in the state or federal courts presiding in Florida, pursuant to applicable Florida law.

RATES: Tour costs are based upon current airfares, tariffs, and currency values. While we do everything possible to maintain the listed prices, they are subject to change.

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The Athenian Acropolis

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