

## 2023 HELLENIC ODYSSEY

1<sup>st</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> April

Star Wisdom, Mythology and the Human Soul

with Gillian Schoemaker and Alan Thewless

Our journey to some of the sacred places of Greece will take us to one of the pivotal cultures in the history of mankind. How can we understand the evolution of human consciousness and the changing relationship between man and the worlds of the Spirit? How can we find balance today?

The Hellenic Odyssey will take us to places where the Gods of the Heights and the Depths were honored, and we will explore their special and unique qualities together.

In ancient times human beings felt themselves in dreaming oneness with the heaven of stars and planets. The powers that worked through these realms were felt to be those same powers that sustain life within the body and guide the noble pathway of humanity's journey in soul. The Greek Myths, the 'histories' of humanity before history, arise out of this relationship of the human being with the cosmos.

During our Odyssey to the land of gods and heroes we will hear tales of divine and human beings intimately related to place and time. Furthermore, how the richness of these mythic tales also reveals the wisdom of the human being's unfolding, and high purposes, woven in the starry worlds. Through experiencing these connections, we may also experience greater clarity, and new intimations, concerning our own life's journey. On clear nights we may have opportunities to observe and find orientation to the same starry constellations and planets that are referred to in myth.

We will gather together regularly to hear about the places which we will visit and their significance, and to share our experiences with each other.

At the sites, we will try to sense and engage with the spirit of place through story, eurythmy, and informal talks from Alan, Gillian and Mari-Kaiti, our Greek guide.

Our active presence of awareness, openness and gratitude for what has lived, and still continues to live in these sacred places, can be seen as an offering of healing and respect.

There will be time for ponderings and wanderings too!

Time to enjoy the landscape and 'soul-scape' of Greece - the beautiful interplay of light, sea, sky and sun-warmed countryside.

Time, too, to ponder, relax, stroll, eat in waterside tavernas, and watch the world go by.

We have the great good fortune that the Hellenic Odyssey coincides with Orthodox Easter and we will be able to experience and share in this the most sacred and solemn festival of the Christian Year.

Covid protocols : currently there are no longer any restrictions.

### Itinerary

\* Denotes an included Odyssey meal.

**DAY 1** Arrival at Athens airport and take the metro to the Acropolis View Hotel, which will be our home for the next 6 nights. This is a simple hotel, which we choose for the wonderful view of the Acropolis from the roof-terrace, and its convenient situation near the lively and evocative old town of Plaka, with its old Frankish houses, winding alleys, cafes and tavernas. \* **Lunch** together, then free time till our brief introductory meeting before \* **dinner** at a roof-top taverna near the hotel, then an early night!

<https://www.acropolisviewhotel.gr>

**DAY 2** Meet Mari-Kaiti ,our knowledgeable guide, who will accompany us for the next two weeks. In the morning, we will first visit the wonderful Acropolis Museum and its glorious treasures, in order to orientate ourselves to the evolution of this iconic site. \* **Lunch**. In the afternoon, when the relentless crowds have largely gone, we will visit the Acropolis - the High City - with its temples - the Parthenon, the Erechtheion, the Propyleia. We'll also see the Areopagus - the Hill of Mars, where the Council of Nobles met, and from which St. Paul preached his sermon to the 'Unknown God'. Then we'll visit the theater of Dionysus, the first theater in the world! \* **Dinner**

**DAY 3** 8AM - day cruise to the nearby island of Aigina and its exquisite hill-top temple, dedicated to the nymph Aphaia 'the unseen one'. \* **Lunch** by the sea, then time afterwards to relax and stroll in the lovely little port before returning to Athens in the evening. Dinner on your own.

**DAY 4** 8.30 AM Departure for the visit to the Mystery center of Eleusis, not far from Athens, where the deeply secret cult of Demeter and Persephone, of death and rebirth, was celebrated. \***Lunch**. Free afternoon. \***Dinner**

**DAY 5** 9AM Morning visit to the National Museum, a fabulous collection of treasures. \***Lunch** together at the museum, then we drive down the coast of Attica to visit the gloriously positioned Temple of Poseidon, God of the sea, at Cape Sounion. \* **Dinner** together at a seaside taverna.

**DAY 6** 8AM Leave Athens for the long drive to Kastraki in the North of Greece, and the astonishing medieval monasteries of the Meteora, literally 'hanging in the air', built 1000ft high on massive boulders, vestiges of an ancient riverbed. Beautiful frescoes and icons, and a very special atmosphere. On the way, we will visit the secluded healing sanctuary of Amphiarios with its exquisite little theater. \* **Lunch** en route. We will stay at the Hotel Doupani, in the shadow of the rocks. \* **Dinner**

[www.doupanihouse.com](http://www.doupanihouse.com)

**DAY 7** 9AM Visit some of the monasteries of the Meteora. \***Lunch** together. Dinner on your own..

**DAY 8** Leave Kastraki for Delphi - the mountain sanctuary of the sun-god Apollo with its world-renowned oracle. \* **Lunch** en route. Upon arrival we will first visit the gymnasium of the athletes and the Temple of Athena, before we check into the Fetriades Hotel, with its stupendous views down the valley of olive trees to the sea. \* **Dinner** in the village of Delphi. [www.fetriades.com](http://www.fetriades.com)

**DAY 9** Full-day visit of ancient Delphi, superbly sited, winding up the mountainside. \* **Lunch** together. We will visit the splendid Museum in the afternoon. Dinner on your own.

**DAY 10** Departure for Olympia via Nafpaktos, an atmospheric, little medieval town where we'll have \* **Lunch**, then crossing the gulf of Corinth on the impressive Rio/Anti-Rio bridge to the Isle of Pelops, the Peloponnese. Dinner on your own.

We stay at the Neda Hotel.

[www.hotelneda.com](http://www.hotelneda.com)

**DAY 11** Full day visit of Olympia and the Games which were celebrated here. We'll hear of the original intentions and how they served the evolving human being. \* **Lunch**. Dinner on your own.

**DAY 12.** We'll travel through the idyllically beautiful landscape of Arcadia. With luck there'll be time for a short hike. \* **Lunch**. Tonight we'll stay in Dimitsana, one of the many charming hill villages. Dinner on your own.

We'll stay at the Nerida Hotel, beautifully situated above the Lousios gorge.

[www.nerida-hotel.gr](http://www.nerida-hotel.gr)

**DAY 13** Depart for elegant Nauplion, one-time capital of Greece, on the Peloponnese peninsula, with its port, lively alleys and piazzas. On the way we'll visit Mycenae, the citadel of Agamemnon with its Lion Gate, and the mighty beehive shaped 'Treasury of Atreus'\* **Lunch** together en route. .

\* **Dinner**. Tonight, we stay at the Rex Hotel, on the edge of the evocative old town with its winding streets. [www.rex-hotel.gr/](http://www.rex-hotel.gr/)

**DAY 14 Holy Friday** Visit Epidauros, a peaceful healing sanctuary with its beautiful theater

\* **Lunch**. **Free afternoon in Nauplion**. This is a day of great solemnity in the Orthodox Church - in the evening we may have the opportunity to experience the moving procession which follows the flower-decorated bier of the crucified Christ.

**DAY 15** Return to Athens. Free time. Lunch on your own.

5PM - we will gather to share our impressions and experiences of the Odyssey, before our

\* **Farewell dinner**. Overnight Attalos Hotel, close to the Metro to the airport.

[www.attaloshotel.com](http://www.attaloshotel.com)

**DAY 16 Easter Sunday** - Farewells and departure for the journey home.

#### **TOUR LEADERS:**

**Gillian Schoemaker** - born on Scotland, she is a eurythmist, living and working in Camphill School, Pennsylvania, as teacher and therapist. She is Adjunct faculty of the Association for Anthroposophic Psychology, of the Therapeutic Eurythmy Training in North America and Core faculty for the Camphill Academy.

A long-time lover of Greece, she has lived there and traveled extensively. She teaches eurythmy in the Summer School program of the department of Philosophy at Athens University. Gillian is interested in the relationship between the spirituality of human beings and landscape, and how the evolution of consciousness is revealed in art and architecture.

She has been organizing and leading Odyssey Journeys since 2002 in Egypt, Italy, Ireland, and Scotland, her native country. This will be the 5<sup>th</sup> Hellenic Odyssey.

**Alan Thewless** was born in Sheffield, England and moved to the USA in 2002. He carries a deep involvement in education as a healing art and has worked as a Waldorf Teacher and Special Educator for nearly 30 years. In the USA he completed studies in Anthroposophically extended psychology (Psychosophy) and Music Therapy. He has been a student of Astrosophy for over 30 years and regularly writes, gives courses and lectures on this subject, and on education, internationally. Since 2016 he has been author of the Holy Nights Journal, a pathway of contemplation and journaling through each of the Holy Nights of Christmas. He is a lyre maker and also project archivist for the Eckersley Shakespeare trust. He is on the adjunct faculty of the Association for Anthroposophic Psychology

**COST:** The price is approximately **\$3750**

The price is based on the exchange rate of the Dollar to the Euro in June 2022. Should this change significantly, we will adjust the cost accordingly.

#### **Included:**

- Accommodation in twin bedded rooms in comfortable 3-star hotels and pensions, chosen for atmosphere, charm and convenience (if you are traveling solo, we will assign you a room-mate of the same sex, depending on availability, otherwise single rooms may be available for a supplement, please inquire.
- Breakfast and most meals, including house wine
- Travel by ferry and private A/C coach
- Entrances to sites and museums on the itinerary.
- Services of our local, knowledgeable guide.

**NOT included:**

- Meals in free times, not specified in the itinerary; snacks and beverages.
- Tips and gratuities to our guide

When you register, we'll send you -

- Suggested preparatory reading material
- What to bring
- Some tips on what to expect in Greece

**REGISTRATION**

NAME (as it appears on your passport)

ADDRESS, TELEPHONE # and passport #:

SHARING A ROOM WITH:

During the Odyssey we will be accommodated in comfortable 3\* hotels, chosen for charm, convenience, or both. We will travel in our own private coach

You need to have good physical and mental health, please note that this Odyssey is unsuitable for those who have mobility issues - we will be walking extensively on uneven ground, and up and down some quite steep slopes, steps and staircases.

The Hellenic Odyssey is organized for us by the reputable Dolphin-Hellas Travel Agency in Athens. I have been working with them for many years, and they have been unfailingly helpful, efficient, charming and good friends.

Reservations should be made as soon as possible. Your check of \$1600, payable to 'Hellenic Odyssey', and with ODYSSEY on the memo line will secure your place. Should you have to cancel, and we cannot fill the place, this non-refundable deposit will cover your part of the shared costs. The balance will be due at the end of February 2023.

**CANCELLATIONS:** Because costs arising from cancellation must be carried by the individuals concerned, in these uncertain times it's essential you take out travel cancellation insurance, which can be combined with insurance to cover the tour. We are, essentially, a group of friends traveling together.

In the event that the tour is under-subscribed, either a higher fee may be required, or the tour will be canceled, so ensure that your insurance covers cancellation due to insufficient numbers. In either case, all participants will be advised by the beginning of April.

In the event that either leader is unable to come on the tour, every effort will be made to find a substitute. However, no responsibility is attached to either Gillian, Alan, or Dolphin-Hellas Agency in Athens.

You are responsible for your travel arrangements to/from Athens, but do not book your flight until it is sure there are sufficient participants, and the Odyssey will take place.

The airport is about 45 minutes from the city, Taxis cost around €40.

If necessary we will offer transport from and to Athens airport, for which there will be an additional fee.

Your passport **MUST** be valid for at least 6 months after the end of the tour, otherwise you will not be permitted to fly.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Gillian Schoemaker

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