travelidea

Fly & Drive to Peloponnese (10 days / 9 nights)





Peloponnese

If you love immersing yourself in the history of a new place, you're in for a treat. If you decide to make your own list of archaeological sites to visit in the Peloponnese, you might make the mistake of leaving some out. So, to help you choose, we've put together a selection of the highlights, including some of the best-known cultural sites in all of Greece. We explore the birthplace of the Olympic Games, Late Bronze Age settlements, famous medieval castles and ancient theatres that still resonate with the thunder of applause. Five are UNESCO World Heritage Sites (out of 18 in Greece) and, at each place we stop, we search for the hidden treasures that only a local guide could reveal.

Timeless villages, ancient monuments, medieval castles, rich history, natural beauty and spectacular beaches make the Peloponnese an ideal holiday destination at any time of year

The Peloponnese is a destination rich in history and scenery that you can visit in any season. Destinations of genuine natural beauty, with distinctive characteristics, welcome you with open arms all year round: Messinia, Elafonisos, Monemvasia, Mani, Porto Cheli, Kalavrita and Nafplio. This is the land of ancient Sparta, home of the sacred olive grove and birthplace of the Olympic Games. War, peace and culture saturate the towns and countryside of one of the most beautiful regions of mainland Greece. Here, the landscape is dotted with ancient monuments, including the ancient theatre of Epidaurus and its neighbour, the sanctuary of Asclepius (a UNESCO World Heritage Site).

The Peloponnese is a festival of contrasts: majestic mountains embraced by a spectacular golden coastline of endless beaches and exotic coves. Road travellers will never tire of the winding roads that disappear into the horizon (where the sea and sky become one), nor of the pristine landscapes, nor of the multicoloured waters and fertile valleys.

Its villages, both coastal and alpine, will enchant you with their ancient traditions and exceptional food. You will be transported to another era when you visit the ancient monuments and resplendent medieval castles erected by Venetians and Byzantines. Then, you will enjoy a well-deserved rest in a traditional guest villa in a village made entirely of stone.

A golden coastline of exotic beaches and picture-perfect bays

The Peloponnese coastline is home to spectacular sandy beaches and crystal-clear waters. Award-winning beaches include the exotic Elafonisos and Voidokoilia in Messinia. Other notable beaches include Kardamili and the Messinian Gulf, as well as Porto Cheli and Old Epidaurus.

A journey through history and ancient civilisations

In the Peloponnese you will experience the grandeur of ancient Greece. You will be amazed by the grandeur of ancient Olympia, the birthplace of the Olympic Games. You will tour Homer's "rich in gold" Mycenae. You will discover the temple of Apollo Epicurius at Bassae, a UNESCO World Heritage Site designed by Ictinus, the same architect who built the Parthenon. The Peloponnese is a live lesson in medieval and Byzantine architecture, as evidenced by the well-preserved castle of Mystras (Sparta) and the castles of Methone and Pylos.

Outdoor activities in paradise

The European Long-Distance Trail E4 passes through here and there are dozens of other marked trails in each area, especially on Mount Taygetos. The more courageous will certainly want to head to the climbing park in Lagada.

Home to olive groves and much more

The Peloponnese is world-famous for olive oil and Kalamata olives, but the sweet fragrance of orange trees in Sparta and Argos will stay with you forever. You will discover the wines of Nemea and Mantineia, as well as the famous Malvasia from Monemvasia, the regional sweet wine, called “the nectar of the nobles.” Pair it with the local homemade pasta called goges (a kind of flour-based gnocchi), the eliotyropita from Mani (cheese and olive pie) or the tyropsomo (cheese bread) from Neapolis.



Arcadia is known for its handmade hilopitas (a type of noodle) and trahana (rustic pasta), which are sold in shops along with other traditional products, including honey, chestnuts and the delicious seedless eggplants of the region, known as tsakonianas. You can't leave Mani without trying the cured meats and sausages and the various recipes with artichokes, a vegetable produced locally in large quantities, as well as beans and wild edible plants. Your meal will be rounded off with local Peloponnesian sweets such as diples (thin sheets of fried dough), pastelia (sesame with honey) and rafiolia (puff pastry filled with nuts). In Corinth, try the syrupy sweet made with rose water and the famous Corinthian raisins and currants.

Sights and attractions of the Peloponnese:

• **Castles:** The castles of Monemvasia and Nafplio (Bourtzi, Acronauplia and Palamidi) are considered among the most romantic places in Greece and are ideal for two-day getaways.

• **Alpine villages:** Picturesque mountain villages such as Stemnitsa, Dimitsana, Karitena, Vytina and Trikala are beautiful destinations for a winter or spring holiday. Throughout the peninsula, you will find stone-built villas and traditional tavernas serving tried-and-tested Greek recipes.

• **Nature:** Nature in all its splendour: take the opportunity to experience the fairy-tale-like Foli Forest, Gialovas Wetland, Dirou Caves, hikes in the Lousios Gorge and Tsivlos Lake.

• Rio-Antirius Bridge: Completed in 2004, the Rio-Antirius Bridge is the longest cable-stayed bridge in the world. When lit up at night, it's quite a sight to behold.

• Ancient Olympia: One of Greece's most important archaeological sites. Visit the stadium, temples and settlements of the original Olympic site. And don't forget the Temple of Zeus, once home to the legendary golden statue of Zeus, considered one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World and destroyed in the 5th century AD.

• **Ancient Messene**: Founded in the 4th century BC and located just 30 km north of Kalamata, the city of Messene is notable for its towering perimeter walls erected in the 3rd century BC, its massive Arcadian Gate and its eight towers that still stand.

• Ancient Epidaurus: The famous theatre of Epidaurus is one of the most important monuments of Ancient Greece. Built between 340 BC and 330 BC, the theatre combines elegance, perfect acoustics and symmetrical proportions.

• **Temple of Apollo Epicurius**: Just like the traveller Pausanias in the 2nd century BC, you too will be impressed by the isolated temple of Apollo Epicurius at Basas (meaning "little valley in the mountains"). The first monument of Ancient Greece to be declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO (in 1986), it will remain etched in your memory.

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Day 1 – Arrival in Athens

Upon arrival at Athens International Airport, meet and receive service from our Spanish-speaking professional assistant and transfer to your hotel.



Balance your day off and overnight. (No meals). If time permits depending on your arrival time in Athens, you can enjoy one of our optional tours. (Cape Sounio or Athens by night Tour with traditional Greek show).



Day 2 – City Tour * (optional , regular & shared)

Half-day tour of Athens with visits to the archaeological site of the Acropolis (Parthenon) and the New Acropolis Museum. After breakfast at the hotel, pick up for our Athens sightseeing tour. Our half-day tour of Athens begins with a panoramic tour of Syntagma Square, passing by many tourist attractions such as the National Garden, Hadrian's Arch, St. Paul's Church, Parliament and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, the Catholic Cathedral and Schliemann House. We will then pass through the Athens Trilogy, which includes the University of Athens, the Academy of Athens and the National Library.

Our licensed guide will make you feel like you are experiencing the old and new history of Athens firsthand as you look at these majestic buildings. We continue for a photo stop at the Panathenaic Stadium, also known as Kallimarmaro Stadium, where the first Olympic Games were held in 1896. As we continue, we pass Zappeion and the Temple of Olympian Zeus. Finally, we will visit the archaeological site of the Acropolis, a UNESCO world heritage monument and visit Propylae as well as the small temple of Athena Nike.



Of course, our visit will not be completed without the Parthenon and the Erechtheum. After the visit to Athens and the museum tour we continue with a pleasant short walk passing through Herodion and the Dionysus Theater, to visit the New Acropolis Museum. Duration of the visit in approximately 5 hours. At the end of our visit, return to your hotel. The rest of the day free .

Day 3 – Athens – day at your leisure

Breakfast at the hotel and rest of the day at your leisure. We can suggest optional tours as below:

At your leisure with a rented car

1. *OPTION A': Suggested and optional visit/tour: Full day excursion to Delphi*
   OPTION B': Suggested and optional visit/tour: Full day excursion to Argolis, the Corinth Canal, Mycenae and Epidaurus full day.
3. *OPTION C': ½ day visit to Cape Sonio and temple of Poseidon*

IMPORTANT NOTES:

The previous visits (1,2,3) are optional and at your own discretion. All three are visits to archaeological sites and the guide and tickets are recommended for visiting and we can arrange these services upon request.

With supplement and reservation from Travel Idea

OPTION D': One-day cruise to the islands of Argosaronic, Hydra, Poros, Aegina with lunch on board and party and transfer from hotel to port and return.

A one-day cruise with boarding from Athens to Hydra, Poros and Aegina. Enjoying the sun, the sea and entertainment. The daily cruise on three magical Greek treasures, Hydra, Poros and Aegina, through the islands of the Saronic Gulf is not just a journey, but an experience you will never forget. Come aboard and experience the harmonious combination of Greek hospitality and multicultural coexistence. A large group of people of different nationalities, customs, and cultures, together with unique Greek hospitality and entertainment, will travel like never before. You will dance and sing together through the deep blue waters of the Mediterranean, enjoying the sun, our tasty foods and delicacies.

SHORE EXCURSIONS to add with supplement

- *Hydra walking tour*
- *Panoramic tour of Aegina*
- *Aggistri Swimming Tour*
- *Aphaia and Agios Nektarios*
- *Combination of walking and Panoramic*
- *Combo Hike and Aphaia and Agios Nektarios*
- *Aggistri Walking and Swimming Tour Combination*
- *Agios Nektarios monastery*



OPTION E' Suggested and optional visit/tour: Full day excursion to Delphi

- *Highlights of a full day to Delphi*
- *Temple of Apollo –*
- *Visit to the archaeological site of Delphi Archaeological Museum of Delphi*

OPTION B' Suggested and optional visit/tour: Full day excursion to Argolis, Corinth Canal, Mycenae and Epidaurus full day.

- *Highlights of a full day to Argolis*
- *Corinth Canal: 20-minute photo stop Mycenae: Visit to the archaeological site*
- *Visit to the local museum*
- *Visit to the Tomb of Agamemnon Ancient theater of Epidaurus*



Day 4 – Drive from Athens to Peloponnese

Breakfast at the hotel, pick up your rental car and drive with destination Peloponnese and Nauplia, the famous first capital of Greece. Your way down to Peloponnese passes through the Corinth Canal and the first stop will be a look at the Canal from above.



After a short stop, you will continue to the archaeological site of Mycenae and Epidaurus, where you will visit the famous antiquities and monuments.

Ancient Epidaurus / The Theater of Ancient Epidaurus There will be an arrangement to meet a local Spanish-speaking guide in Mycenae and

Epidaurus that will help you learn more about these famous UNESCO World Heritage monuments.

After the visit, we suggest you make an optional short stop at a nearby local Greek restaurant to taste Greek cuisine and refresh yourself.



After lunch you continue your road trip to the Peloponnese and in approx. 40 minutes by car you will be in Nafplio, where you will stay for the next 2 nights, in the selected 4* hotel.

Night in Nafplio in the selected 4* hotel.

– SUGGESTED OR SIMILAR HOTEL in Nafplio area – HTL AMALIA 4*-

https://www.amaliahotels.com/el/nafplio/hotel/

Day 5 – Nafplio - Meet Nafplio, the 'Naples of the East' of the Venetians

Day at your leisure. Enjoy the morning strolling through beautiful Nafplio, the first capital of Greece. We recommend you visit the 2 fortresses that are symbols of the city, Bourtzi, the fortress on the sea, which has remained known by its Turkish name 'Bourtzi', which means tower, has become the trademark of Nafplion, as well as the fortress of Palamidi, which has been preserved in excellent



condition, is one of the greatest achievements of Venetian fortification architecture.

We recommend walking through the beautiful, narrow streets of Nafplio, the 'Naples of the East' of the Venetians, and spending a day in the old town and enjoying strolling through the narrow cobbled streets, with undeniable delicacy, atmospheric monuments and neoclassical mansions.

SUGGESTED VISITS:

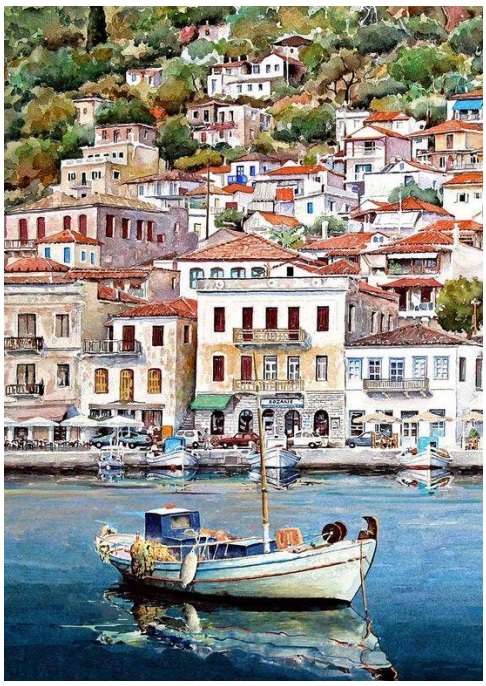
- The view from Palamidi Fortress
- Bourtzi, the fortress on the sea
- Walk along the promenade
- Walk to the romantic old town of Nafplio

Night in Nafplio in the selected 4* hotel.

– SUGGESTED OR SIMILAR HOTEL in Nafplio area – HTL AMALIA 4*-

https://www.amaliahotels.com/el/nafplio/hotel/

Day 6 - Nafplio – Githion - Monemvasia



Early breakfast and departure from your hotel. Today you will begin your journey to the southeast of the Peloponnese. Drive through the magnificent scenery of the Peloponnese and reach Gythion.

Gythio in Greece is a beautiful coastal town on the southern side of the Peloponnese, on the Lakonia peninsula in Greece. Built on the slopes of hills around a natural bay, Gythio is the largest city in the Mani region, an isolated and arid place with ghost towns and wild landscapes. The most popular beach in Gythio is Mavrovouni, a large beach with clean water. Because of the golden sand and crystal clear water, the endangered Caretta-caretta sea turtles prefer Mavrovouni to lay their eggs. Very conveniently located in the southern Peloponnese, Gythio can be a base for road trips to Monemvasia, Mystras, Areopoli, Diros Caves and Stoupa.

We suggest visiting the Castle Town of Monemvasia, which is among the most impressive places in Greece. Located on the southeastern side of the Peloponnese.

Monemvasia Greece was completely carved into the back of a sea rock in medieval times. This huge sea rock is not visible from the mainland so locals can avoid enemy attacks.



The only way to reach Monemvasia in ancient times was by boat, while later a paved road was built to connect the castle entrance to the mainland. That's how the name came out, that is, a single passage. A new city has been built on dry land, right in front of the rock. A walk-through Castle Town is a trip back in time, while the sea view from the top of the castle is stunning.

SUGGESTED VISITS:

- Monemvasia, a fairytale old town
- Monemvasia medieval castle
- Proof and resist odors

Accommodation at the selected hotel in Gythion 4*.

– SUGGESTED OR SIMILAR HOTEL in Gythion area – **HTL LAS HOTEL 4*-**
https://www.lashotel.gr/contact/

Day 7 – Githio – Mystras



We suggest visiting many sandy beaches and interesting sites surrounding this beautiful city. Mavrovouni is the most famous beach in Gythio, while very nice beaches are also Selinitsa and Ageranos. A short walk from the port of Gythio leads to the islet of Kranae, where the Historical Museum is located. Nice places such as the Diros Caves, the city of Areopolis and the fishing village of Gerolimenas are just a short drive from Gythio.

Today we suggest visiting Mystras, an archaeological site near Sparti, in the Laconia region. The castle town of Mystras was very strong in Byzantine times and in fact, in the last decades of the Byzantine period, this was the second most important city after Constantinople. At the top of the castle hill, there was the Palace of Despots, while Mystras Greece is mainly famous for its several Byzantine churches with interesting architecture and valuable frescoes.



Below the Medieval Castle, a new village has been built, where many traditional accommodations are located. The surrounding region is crisscrossed by numerous trekking trails that lead to beautiful places.



Accommodation at the selected hotel in Gythion 4*.

– SUGGESTED OR SIMILAR HOTEL in Gythion area – HTL LAS HOTEL 4*-

https://www.lashotel.gr/contact/

SUGGESTED VISITS:

We suggest visiting many sandy beaches and interesting sites surrounding this beautiful city. Mavrovouni is the most famous beach in Gythio, while very nice beaches are also Selinitsa and Ageranos.

- The picturesque port of Gythio
- Stately houses and charm
- "Dimitrios" shipwreck
- the Historical Museum on the islet of Kranae,
- the caves of Diros,
- the city of Areopolis and Limeni
- the fishing town of Gerolimenas.

Day 8 – GIthion - KardamIli – FINIKOYNTA



Breakfast at the hotel in Gythio and we continue our journey to the picturesque village of Kardamili after having passed through magnificent and impressive towns and cities like Areopolis, Koroni, Methoni and swimming to the crystal clear waters of beaches like Voidokilia and we finish to Finikounta.

Finikounda is today one of the most important tourist centers in the Messinia prefecture, harmoniously combining mountain and sea.

Visitors' eyes are mainly attracted by the stunning sandy beaches with crystal clear waters. In addition, the picturesque landscape and perfect tourist infrastructure have made Finikounda a popular summer destination. In Finikounda you will find a variety of wonderful beaches for all tastes. Here you will find extensive sandy beaches, but also pebble beaches, cosmopolitan, but also secluded and quiet, where you will have the opportunity to enjoy the sun, the sea and practice water sports, living moments of relaxation and carefreeness.

Alojamiento en el hotel seleccionado en Finikounta 4*.

SUGGESTED OR SIMILAR HOTEL in Finikounta – HTL PARADISE RESORT 4*-

https://www.paradise-resort.gr/

SUGGESTED VISITS:

- Koroni & Methoni
- Castle of Koroni
- Castle of Methoni
- Beach of Finikounta
- Pylos , Neokastro
- Stroll through the alleys of Pylos
- Beach of Voidokilia



Day 9 – FINIKOYNTA – OLYMPIA – Ancient Olympia "The eternal flame of the Olympic spirit"

Breakfast at the hotel in Finikounta, check out and drive via Koroni, Methoni, Pylos, a wonderful and very picturesque route. From Finikounda you can take interesting excursions in the surrounding area. We suggest visiting the traditional Methoni with the majestic Venetian castle, as well as the picturesque Koroni with the island character.

Drive to Olympia. Arrival and check in at the hotel in Olympia.

The rest of the day is free to enjoy as you wish.



Travel back in time to the origins of the Olympic Games at the most famous of Zeus's sanctuaries. A one-day visit to the birthplace of the Olympic Games is not enough, as there is much to absorb from ancient history that never ceases to amaze.

The centerpiece of the most magnificent of Zeus's sanctuaries was the 13.5 m high gold and ivory statue, dedicated to the king of the gods and created by the master craftsman Phidias. This work is considered one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. Although it no longer exists, you can appreciate its dimensions when visiting Olympia. Accommodation at the selected hotel in Olympia Antigua 4*.



– SUGGESTED OR SIMILAR HOTEL in Olympia area – HTL EUROPA OLYMPIA 4*-
https://hoteleuropa.gr/portal.php?action=&language=es

SUGGESTED VISITS:

A tour of the old stadium

- The Ancient Olympic Games brought to life

- The incomparable Hermes of Praxiteles

- The archaeological site

- Archaeological Museum of Olympia

Day 10 – RETURN TO ATHENS AND DEPARTURE FOR ORIGIN

Breakfast at the hotel, check out and at the indicated time transfer to the airport to take your return flight and leave the car.

END OF SERVICES