

THE
GRANGE  FESTIVAL

Athens

27th September – 1st October 2023



Wednesday
27th September

Morning / afternoon:

Individual arrivals into Athens.

From 3.00pm - check in at the luxury 5-star **Hotel Grande Bretagne**, centrally located on Syntagma Square in a beautifully restored Neo-classical building dating to the 19th century. The rooms are classically furnished but feature all modern conveniences. Facilities include a swimming pool, and the renowned rooftop restaurant has one of the finest views of the Acropolis in the whole city.

8.00pm:

Our welcome dinner is at the hotel's excellent **GB Roof Garden Restaurant**, where Executive Chef Asterios Koustoudis has earned a deserved reputation for his modern updates of classical Greek dishes. From the roof terrace we will enjoy breathtaking views of the Acropolis at night.



The Acropolis at night

Thursday
28th September



Parthenon

Morning:

Breakfast at the hotel.

Our day begins with an early morning visit to the **Acropolis**. Arguably the most significant landmark in the whole of Western civilization, the site is most serene and impressive in the early morning. The Acropolis was home to one of the earliest Greek settlements in the Neolithic period, around 5000 BC. Fortified during the Mycenaean period, with Cyclopean walls surrounding a royal palace and temple dedicated to Athena, it was in the 9th century BC that the site became the true heart of the Athenian city-state.

We begin at the Parthenon, the most iconic temple of Ancient Greece which was begun in 447 BC at the height of Athenian power. The **Parthenon** was originally intended to house the 12m high statue of Athena Parthenos, sculpted by Pheidias in ivory and gold, no trace of which survives today. In the 6th century AD the temple was converted into a Christian church, dedicated to the Virgin Mary, and in the early 1460s was even used as a mosque following the Ottoman conquest.



Temple of Hephaestus, Agora

We next make our way to the excellent [Acropolis Museum](#), opened in 2009 as a much needed home for the many extraordinary archaeological finds from the Acropolis site. Displaying in excess of 4,000 objects over an area of 14,000 sqm, highlights include the renowned Moschophoros, one of the earliest examples of Greek marble sculpture from the late 6th century BC which depicts a young man carrying a calf; scenes from the Parthenon frieze displayed in their correct order in a beautiful sky-lit gallery; and the original four caryatids from the Parthenon's south porch. We enjoy a tour of the museum's highlights followed by refreshments in the cafe.

Continue to the [Agora](#), the market place and political heart of Athens from as early as 3,000 BC, as well as the centre of the city's social life. The various ruins which were brought to light by excavations in the 1930s date from between the 6th century BC and 5th century AD. The best preserved building is the towering 5th-century BC Temple of Hephaestus, the terrace of which allows good views over the Agora.

Lunch:

At [Kuzina](#), a modern Greek restaurant in the heart of Athens. Renowned Chef Aris Tsanaklidis creates unique dishes combining the flavours of traditional Greek cuisine and culinary innovation.

Afternoon:

We continue to the [Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation](#), home to one of the world's most valuable private collections amassed during the second half of the 20th century. The creation of a museum was a lifelong mission for Basil and Elise Goulandris, part of the wealthy Goulandris shipping dynasty, and this was finally realised posthumously when the museum opened to the public in 2019. The couple were avid collectors of Impressionist, Modernist and Post-War masters, including rare treasures by seminal artists Cézanne, Van Gogh, Chagall, Monet, Degas, Miró, Giacometti, Picasso and Pollock. The collection also has magnificent collection of Greek modern and contemporary art, including works by Bouzianis, Tsarouchis, Moralis and Takis.



Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation



B&M Theodorakis Foundation

Return to the hotel for some time at leisure.

Evening:

This evening we are treated to a **special opera recital at the B&M Theodorakis Foundation for the Fine Arts and Music**. Designed by the architect Vassilis Tsagris at the end of the 1920s, it is located in the heart of Athens, just across from the Greek Parliament.

The non-profit organisation founded by Bassilis and Marina Theodoraki, focuses on music and the visual arts, promoting the work of Greek artists both in Greece and internationally. We will enjoy a special performance and drinks reception at the Foundation.

Following the performance, we continue to dinner at **Cookoovaya**, founded by five celebrated Athenian chefs to offer good local food in a glamorous ambiance that is reminiscent of the 1940s.

Morning:

Breakfast at the hotel.

We drive southeast of Athens to visit the **Archaeological Site of Vravra**, also known as Brauron, situated near the coast. First inhabited during the Neolithic Age, Vravra was a sacred site among ancient Athenians with the Temple of Artemis at its heart. According to Greek mythology, Iphigenia and her brother Orestes fled to Vravra after escaping from the Taurians in the Black Sea. They built a temple dedicated to the goddess Artemis, where Iphigenia served as high priestess. Here, we are greeted by fellow Grange Festival patron, **Diane Katsiaficas**, Professor in the Department of Art at the University of Minnesota, who will guide us around the fascinating site. We hope to arrange for **musical excerpts to be performed from Iphigénie en Tauride, a 1779 opera by Christoph Willibald Gluck**.

Lunch:

We drive north along the coast to Aghios Nikolaos where we enjoy lunch at **Xypolitos Taverna**, specialising in fresh fish and local dishes, with spectacular sea views.



Archaeological Site of Vravra

Afternoon:

Following lunch, we continue to the **private residence of Diane Katsiaficas**, where we are treated to pudding and coffee, followed by a special tour of the stunning cliff-top gardens overlooking the Aegean.

We return to Athens to visit the **British School at Athens**. Founded in 1886, the BSA is a UK-registered charity that exists to promote research of international excellence in all disciplines pertaining to Greece and its wider Balkan, European, Mediterranean and Levantine contexts, from fine art to archaeometry, from ancient to modern times. The BSA is arguably best known for its long history of archaeological research at many locations in the eastern Mediterranean, with a strong focus on Greece, and including some ‘household names’, such as Knossos, Sparta and Mycenae. We enjoy a special visit led by archivist Amalia Kakissis, who will give a presentation on Irene Noel Baker’s fascinating family archive which dates back to the 1830s.



View from the garden of Diane Katsiaficas’ private home



Gennadius Library

We walk the short distance to the **Gennadius Library**, part of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens. The library is one of the most important libraries in Greece, with over 110,000 volumes on Greek history, literature and art from Antiquity until modern times. The library’s founder, Joannes Gennadius (1844-1932), wished “to form a library that represents the creative genius of Greece at all periods, the influence of her arts and sciences upon the western world, and the impression created by her natural beauty upon the traveler.” We are welcomed by the library’s Director, Maria Georgopoulou, for a special introduction to some of the rare treasures of the collection.

Return to the hotel.

Evening:

This evening is free for individual dinner arrangements.

Morning:

Breakfast at the hotel.

We make our way to [The Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center \(SNFCC\)](#) for a private tour. Opened to the public in 2016, the vast complex was created as a sustainable multi-space that would enrich the cultural facade of Athens, set within a beautiful 21-hectare park.

The centre itself was designed by renowned architect Renzo Piano, cleverly shaded by a 'magic carpet' roof covered with solar panels. The SNFCC is home to the Greek National Opera and the National Library, as well as hosting an impressive range of events and exhibitions. We will enjoy a private tour of the Center, and have the opportunity to explore the surrounding park.



Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center



The Artemision Bronze, National Archaeological Museum

Lunch:

We make our way to the nearby port of Piraeus for lunch at a local restaurant serving traditional Greek cuisine.

Afternoon:

We visit the [National Archaeological Museum](#), opened in 1891 to bring together the extensive collections located at various sites across the city. New wings were added in 1939, but during WWII the collections were buried underground to protect them from bombing. It was not until 1946 that the collections were restored and the museum reopened, and after a further 50 years of gradual renovation and reorganization the museum is now one of the most comprehensive in the world.



Takis Foundation

All periods of Greek history are well represented, with highlights including an intricate gold death mask believed to have belonged to King Agamemnon, an intact and graceful Hellenistic bronze statue known as the Youth of Antikythira, and some of the finest Amphorae in existence.

We return to the hotel for some time at leisure.

Evening:

This evening we are treated to a **private opera recital at the Takis Foundation**. The Foundation is dedicated to Panayiotis Vassilakis (known as Takis), who was a pioneer of kinetic art, and one of the most prominent personalities of both the Greek and the international art scene. This beautiful estate was created by the artist himself to present his work and the works of other European artists to the public.

Following the recital we enjoy a **private dinner in the garden of the Foundation**, with far reaching views across Athens.

Morning:

Breakfast at the hotel and check out.

We begin our final day with a visit to the **Byzantine & Christian Museum**, housed in the Villa Ilissia, a mid-19th century Florentine-style mansion built for the Duchesse de Plaisance, the wife of one of Napoleon's generals and a key society figure in Athens at the time. It was the collector Geórgios Sotiriou who converted the house into a museum in the 1930s and transformed the entrance into a stunning monastic courtyard. The collections trace the rise of Christianity, through to the advent of Byzantium and the eventual fall of Constantinople in 1453. The highlight of the collection is the excellent collection of icons, the earliest dating from the 13th century charting the progression of style through to the Renaissance-influenced icons of the 16th century.



Byzantine & Christian Museum

Our last visit is to the nearby **Benáki Museum**. The museum was founded in 1931 by Antónis Benákis, a successful cotton merchant, who donated the Neo-classical mansion and collection to the state in the 1950s. The works cover the entirety of Greek history, from the Neolithic period through to the 20th century, including paintings, jewellery, costumes, crafts and political memorabilia. Highlights include a stunning gold ship pendant from the early 17th century, set with blue and green enamel and decorated with pearls; an unusual 13th-century AD bowl depicting a colourful dancing figure; and an 18th-century richly embroidered cushion showing an elaborate bridal procession.

Lunch:

We enjoy a light lunch at the Benáki Museum's lovely **rooftop restaurant**, offering delicious simple cuisine on a fine terrace overlooking the city.

Afternoon:

Return to the hotel. Individual departures from Athens.



The Benáki Museum

Tour Price: Athens

The cost of the tour to Athens (4 nights) is:

- £4,670 per person, for double / twin occupancy.
- £5,898 per person, for single occupancy.

The tour cost includes:

- 4 nights accommodation in Athens at the 5-star **Hotel Grande Bretagne**
- Full breakfast in the hotel restaurants each day
- Meals at restaurants as per the itinerary:
 - 4 lunches
 - 3 dinners
- All visits, concerts and special private arrangements as per the itinerary
- Transportation by deluxe motor coach
- All museum entrance fees
- Services of an ArtsAbroad tour director throughout
- Expert Guides and Curators
- All gratuities for restaurants, guides, porters, drivers

The tour cost does not include:

- Flights to and from Athens
- 1 dinner
- Travel insurance
- Personal expenditure (such as laundry / telephone calls etc)

** Room upgrades may be available – please call ArtsAbroad if you would like further information. We will also be pleased to book additional nights before or after the tour.*

** Please note that the itinerary is subject to change.*

Tour arrangements by:

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