

In the Footsteps of Saint Paul & Mount Athos, 7 days

🕒 7 ημέρες

A 7-Day Pilgrimage Journey Through Macedonia and the Spiritual Heart of Orthodox Christianity

Follow one of the most meaningful Christian routes in Europe on a journey that combines the apostolic legacy of Saint Paul with the timeless spirituality of Mount Athos. From Philippi, Kavala, Thessaloniki and Veria, where Saint Paul preached and established some of the earliest Christian communities in Europe, to the monasteries of the Holy Mountain, this itinerary offers a unique blend of faith, history, culture and spiritual reflection. Travellers will visit places directly connected with the Acts of the Apostles, walk through important early Christian and Byzantine sites, and experience the monastic traditions of Mount Athos through prayer, hospitality and participation in the daily rhythm of monastery life. This is more than a sightseeing journey. It is an opportunity to discover the roots of Christianity in Europe and to experience places where faith has remained alive for centuries.

Sustainability Certification



Awards



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Highlights

This inspiring pilgrimage journey brings together some of Northern Greece's most important Christian and Byzantine landmarks. Discover Thessaloniki, closely linked to Saint Paul and his Epistles to the Thessalonians, and visit the Church of Saint Demetrius, the Rotunda and the historic Upper Town. Continue to Kavala, ancient Neapolis, where Saint Paul first arrived in Macedonia, before exploring Philippi, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the traditional Prison of Saint Paul and the Baptistery of Saint Lydia. In Veria, visit the Bema of Saint Paul, another significant stop on his missionary journey. The spiritual experience deepens at Mount Athos, beginning in Ouranoupoli and continuing through Karyes, the Protaton and the revered icon of Axion Estin. Highlights include Simonopetra Monastery and Vatopedi Monastery, with opportunities, where permitted, to attend Orthros, Divine Liturgy and Vespers and experience authentic Athonite hospitality.



General Information

Your package includes:

- 4-star hotel accommodation in Thessaloniki, according to the final programme
- Breakfasts at the hotel
- Welcome and farewell dinners in Thessaloniki
- Private coach transportation for all services outside Mount Athos
- Airport transfers on arrival and departure
- Professional English-speaking guide or tour escort according to programme requirements
- Guided sightseeing in Thessaloniki
- Full-day excursion to Kavala, Philippi and Saint Lydia
- Visit to Veria and the Bema of Saint Paul
- Transportation between Thessaloniki and Ouranoupoli
- Assistance with the organisation of the **Diamonitirion / Mount Athos entry permit**
- Ferry transportation to and from Mount Athos, where specified
- Local transportation within Mount Athos according to the confirmed programme
- Monastery accommodation, subject to confirmation and availability
- Meals offered by the monasteries during the stay on Mount Athos
- Visits to Simonopetra and Vatopedi monasteries, subject to monastery approval and operating conditions
- Organisation and local support throughout the programme
- All applicable local taxes and service charges, unless otherwise stated

Your package excludes:

- International or domestic flights
- Travel insurance
- Personal expenses
- Drinks and meals not specifically mentioned in the programme
- Entrance fees to archaeological sites and museums, unless otherwise stated
- Tips for guides, drivers and local staff
- Porterage
- Any additional transfers or services not included in the confirmed itinerary
- Private meetings with monks, spiritual fathers or monastery representatives unless specifically arranged and confirmed
- Any special donation or contribution requested by monasteries
- Visa expenses, where applicable
- Mount Athos entry permit fees, unless specifically included in the final quotation
- Any service affected by weather conditions, ferry changes or monastery operational requirements
- Any service not expressly mentioned under "Included"

Important Note

Entry to **Mount Athos** is subject to the regulations of the Holy Community and requires advance approval and the issue of a **Diamonitirion**.

Accommodation, monastery visits, ferry schedules, local transfers and participation in religious services are always subject to availability, weather conditions and the daily programme of the monasteries.

The programme may therefore be adjusted without altering the spiritual and cultural character of the journey.

Itinerary

Day 1 - Arrival in Thessaloniki | In the Footsteps of the Apostle Paul

Arrival at Thessaloniki “Makedonia” Airport, welcome by your tour escort/guide and private transfer to the hotel.

In the afternoon, begin your exploration of Thessaloniki, the city where the Apostle Paul preached and established one of the earliest Christian communities in Europe.

Visit the Church of Saint Demetrius, the city’s patron saint, with time to venerate the holy relics and visit the historic crypt.

Continue with a visit to the Rotunda, followed by the Upper Town, where you can enjoy panoramic views over Thessaloniki and the Thermaic Gulf.

During the tour, special reference will be made to the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, which connect the city directly with the earliest years of Christianity.

In the evening, enjoy a welcome dinner at a traditional restaurant.

Overnight in Thessaloniki.

Day 2 - Kavala, Philippi & Saint Lydia | The Beginnings of Christianity in Europe

After breakfast, depart for Kavala, ancient Neapolis, the port where according to tradition the Apostle Paul first set foot in Macedonia after travelling from Troas.

Visit the Church of Saint Nicholas and the monument commemorating Saint Paul’s arrival in Europe.

Continue to Philippi, one of the most important archaeological sites in Northern Greece and a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Philippi is closely associated with Saint Paul, who established here the first Christian community on European soil.

During the visit, explore:

- The Ancient Agora
- The Early Christian Basilicas
- The Ancient Theatre
- The site traditionally known as the Prison of Saint Paul

Continue to the Baptistery of Saint Lydia, located near the river traditionally associated with the baptism of Lydia of Thyatira, regarded as the first Christian convert in Europe.

Return to Thessaloniki in the late afternoon.

Dinner and overnight in Thessaloniki.

Day 3 - Thessaloniki to Ouranoupoli & Mount Athos | Simonopetra Monastery

Early morning departure from Thessaloniki towards Ouranoupoli, the gateway to Mount Athos.

Upon arrival, complete the necessary formalities for the Diamonitirion, the official entry permit to Mount Athos, and proceed with ferry ticket arrangements.

Board the ferry and sail along the Athonite peninsula towards the Holy Mountain.

Arrival at the port serving Simonopetra Monastery.

Simonopetra Monastery

Founded in the 14th century by Saint Simon the Myrrh-streaming, Simonopetra is one of the most spectacular monasteries of Mount Athos, dramatically built on a steep rocky cliff high above the sea.

Upon arrival:

- Traditional welcome at the monastery guesthouse
- Refreshments offered according to Athonite hospitality
- Accommodation in the monastery guest quarters
- Introduction to the monastery and its spiritual heritage

Depending on the monastery's daily schedule and permission, there may be an opportunity to visit the Katholikon, chapels and selected areas housing important relics and treasures.

In the afternoon, participation in Vespers and the communal evening meal at the monastery refectory.

Overnight at Simonopetra Monastery.

Day 4 - Simonopetra Monastery | Day of Prayer, Reflection & Monastic Experience

The day begins early in accordance with the monastic rhythm.

For those wishing to participate, attendance at Orthros and Divine Liturgy, followed by the morning meal in the monastery refectory.

The remainder of the day is dedicated to experiencing the spiritual atmosphere of Mount Athos.

Subject to the availability and approval of the monastic community, there may be an opportunity for a spiritual discussion with a monk or elder on themes such as:

- Orthodox monastic tradition
- Prayer of the Heart
- Spiritual life on Mount Athos
- The history and daily life of the Athonite monasteries

Free time for personal prayer, reading, reflection and quiet walks in the surrounding natural environment.

In the afternoon, participation in Vespers and the communal meal.

Second overnight at Simonopetra Monastery.

Day 5 - Simonopetra to Karyes & Vatopedi Monastery

After the morning service and meal, depart Simonopetra and travel through the internal road network of Mount Athos.

Stop at Karyes, the administrative centre of the Holy Mountain.

Visit the historic Church of the Protaton, one of the most important churches on Mount Athos, where the famous icon of the Virgin Mary “Axion Estin” is kept.

Continue to the Holy and Great Monastery of Vatopedi.

Vatopedi Monastery

Founded in the 10th century, Vatopedi is one of the oldest, largest and most important monasteries of Mount Athos.

The monastery houses major spiritual and historical treasures, including:

- The Holy Belt of the Virgin Mary
- Wonderworking icons such as Paramythia and Pantanassa
- Important holy relics
- Precious manuscripts, books and Byzantine treasures

Upon arrival:

- Welcome at the guesthouse
- Traditional refreshments
- Accommodation in the monastery guest quarters

Depending on the monastery’s schedule and permissions, the programme may include a visit to the Katholikon, chapels and selected areas of the monastic complex.

In the afternoon, participate in Vespers, followed by veneration of holy relics and the communal evening meal.

Overnight at Vatopedi Monastery.

Day 6 - Mount Athos to Ouranoupoli, Veria & Thessaloniki

Early morning participation in the Divine Liturgy and breakfast in the monastery refectory.

Afterwards, depart Vatopedi and continue towards the departure point for the ferry back to Ouranoupoli.

Upon arrival in Ouranoupoli, board the private coach and continue towards Veria, another important stop on Saint Paul's second missionary journey.

Visit the Bema of Saint Paul, the monument commemorating the place where the Apostle preached to the people of Veria.

According to the Acts of the Apostles, the people of Veria welcomed his teaching with great openness and examined the Scriptures daily.

Time for a short visit to the historic centre of Veria before returning to Thessaloniki.

In the evening, enjoy a farewell dinner.

Overnight in Thessaloniki.

Day 7 - Thessaloniki | Departure

Breakfast at the hotel.

Depending on the departure flight time, free time in central Thessaloniki for a walk along the waterfront, shopping or personal visits.

Optional free time around the White Tower and the seafront promenade.

At the appropriate time, private transfer to Thessaloniki "Makedonia" Airport for the return flight.

End of services.

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For more information and real-time availability:

[View the trip online](#)

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