



Early Greek history is the story of internal struggles, from the Mycenaean and Minoan cultures of the Bronze Age to the competing city-states that emerged in the 1st millennium BC. Greece also hosted Alexander the Great's empire during the Hellenistic period. With the defeat of the Macedonians by the Romans in 168 BC, Greece became the cultural centre of Rome. Greece was also one of the most important cultural and commercial centres during the Byzantine period (4th-15th century AD). Today, Greece is one of the most important travel destinations in the world with a wide collection of historical monuments, ruins, cultural and natural attractions. With more than 2,900 islands and islets, 1,431 beaches, endless blue seas and over 3,700 km of coastline, Greece offers a lot to everyone. Out of 365 days a year, Greece's sunshine and blue skies are well above 217 days... Each and every of the islands and islets offer unique beauty, charm, great nature, superb beaches, history and adventure. Travel Talk Greece tours take you to the best and most popular Hellas islands including Cyclades (Mykonos, , los, Santorini ) islands in great convenience. We hope that our philosophy will exceed your expectations and the following information will help you enjoy a memorable journey in Greece.

### VISAS

EU members, as well as citizens of the US, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand are all automatically granted leave for a three-month stay in Greece. South Africans need a visa. Citizens of Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa, the UK and the US need valid passports to enter Greece and to re-enter their own countries.

### ESSENTIALS

Before you leave your country, we recommend you to make sure you have followings with you ;

- ➔ Passport
- ➔ Airline or transportation ticket
- ➔ Tour voucher
- ➔ Insurance policy
- ➔ Visas (if necessary)
- ➔ Label on your travel bag
- ➔ Pre-departure information
- ➔ Money (cash and/or travellers cheques)
- ➔ Credit card

### HEALTH AND SAFETY

It is recommended to all passengers travelling on Travel Talk tours to have personal insurance to cover all medical and repatriation costs. While there are no mandatory vaccinations for travellers to Greece it is advisable to ensure tetanus inoculations are up to date. Some travellers feel more confident with hepatitis and meningitis inoculations as well. Please consult a medical practitioner for advice. Bottled water is readily available throughout your tour and we recommend that you purchase this rather than drink the local tap water. While the local water is usually heavily chlorinated and safe, many people get upset stomachs after drinking it.

It is often difficult to find the precise medication that is available in one's home country, so we recommend that you carry all necessary medication with you.

Greece is one of the safest countries in Europe and offers European security standards, but you should always take the normal travel precautions. It is wise not to accept gifts of food or drink from any strangers for the risk of possibly being a victim of theft by drugging.

### WHAT TO WEAR...

Greece is a hot summer destination. So bikinis and beach wear are very much the dress for the day time. For odd cool evenings you might need something to keep you warm. A smart-casual look will work well at the local restaurants.

### MONEY

The Greek currency is the Euro (£1 is equivalent to € 1.30). It is cheaper to convert money in Greece than at home. Most towns and islands in Greece have ATMs that are linked into major international networks. Credit cards (Visa and Master Card are the most recognised) are accepted in most tourist areas, but if you are travelling off the beaten path, be prepared to use other forms of payment.

### WEATHER

Greece has a wide range of climate types, ranging from the semi-arid, semi-desert climate of south-eastern Crete to the cold, humid continental climate of Rhodope. The dominant condition of Greece's climate is the alternation between hot, dry summers and cold, damp winters typical of the Mediterranean. Considerable local variation results from elevation and distance from the sea. Generally, continental influences are felt farther north and in the centre of the mainland.

The main climatic regions of Greece are the mainland mountains, Attica (the south-easternmost part of the mainland) and the Aegean, the west including the Ionian Islands, and the continental north-east.

### EATING & DRINKING

To speak of Greek cuisine will awaken any tastebuds. There need not be anything overcomplicated here, as the local cuisine is as fresh and exquisite as anywhere, sharing many characteristics with other cuisines of the region. Greek cuisine makes good use of olive oil, vegetables, herbs, wine, fish and various meats including lamb, poultry, rabbit and pork. Also important are olives, cheese, eggplant, zucchini and yogurt. You can start your day with a "Greek Breakfast": toast with marmalades and an omelette filled with tomato, mushrooms and cheese. Lunch is generally a hearty and leisurely meal which can be served as early as noon, but most take it between 2 and 5pm after a day spent meandering or lying on the beach. Dinner is a drawn out and relaxed open air dining experience served until late (between 9pm and midnight). Mezés is a collective name for a variety of small dishes; great fun to share as a group and are typically served with wines or anise-flavoured liqueurs as ouzo or homemade tsipouro. Orektika is the formal name for appetizers and is often used as a reference to eating a first course of a cuisine other than Greek cuisine; dips like "Tzatziki" are served with bread loaf or pita bread. Moussaka is an oven-baked layer dish: ground meat and eggplant casserole, topped with a savoury custard which is then browned in the oven. There are other variations besides eggplant, such as zucchini or rice, but the eggplant version, melitzánes moussaká is by far the most popular. The papoutsákia ("little shoes") variant is essentially the same dish, with the meat and custard layered inside hollowed, sautéed eggplants. Gyros is a name that most tourists know, it is usually pork meat roasted on a vertically turning spit and served with sauce (often Tzatziki) and garnishes on pita bread. Greek alcoholic beverages include the anise-flavored ouzo, tsipouro (whose Cretan variation is called tsikoudia), kitron, a citrus flavoured liquor from Naxos and tentura, a cinnamon flavoured liquor from Patras. Local dessert and fortified wines include muscats (with the Muscat of Samos being the most well-known).

# GREECE

## PRE DEPARTURE GUIDE



### SHOPPING

No holiday is complete without a little shopping, like many other Mediterranean destinations you will find that there is some great shopping and purchases to be made in Greece. From the standard tourist souvenirs to fine boutique jewellery and clothing shops, you are bound to find something to satisfy the shopping itch. Since the antiquity, the wines of the Cycladic isles were highly esteemed. Santorini has uniquely flavoured wines, which today enjoy a widespread recognition and constitute a significant source of income for the islands. The crushed almond and marzipan confectionaries called "amygdalota", are popular all over the Cyclades.

### OPENING HOURS

The opening hours are not regulated in Greece, but banks and main post offices generally open from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm Monday to Friday. Shops are generally open from around 9:00 am to 2:00 pm, then 5:00pm to 8:00pm. Shops in touristy areas are open everyday from morning till late night..

### ELECTRICITY

All appliances require a double round pin type plug for 220 volts AC, 50-hertz.

### TIPPING

In principle prices are net, but it is usual to round up (taxi, restaurants, bars) and to give a few Euros to waiters and porters.

### FERRY TIMETABLE

Please find the timetable of ferries scheduled below. Please note that, timetable schedules may change due to heavy weather conditions and other circumstances.

From	To	Departure	Arrival
Athens	Mykonos	07:30	12:45
Mykonos	Santorini	09:50	11:40
Santorini	Ios	11:20	12:05
Santorini	Kos	00:50	05:45
Ios	Athens	18:00	23:15
Kos	Bodrum	09:00	10:00

### ACCOMMODATION

The hotel selection on Travel Talk tours is 2 and 3 star locally rated and the main criteria in the hotel selection process is cleanliness, private bathroom facilities, usually but not always centrally located. If you are travelling on your own, you'll be allocated a twin or triple room with other group members of the same gender. Travellers who have paid a single supplement will stay in single rooms. We can not guarantee the availability of double beds for couple travellers. Your Tour Leader will organise the rooming arrangements when checking into the hotels according to the rooming lists. Therefore we can also not guarantee any last minute changes to suit personal requirements of our passengers.

### AIRPORT TRANSFER

There is not an airport transfer provided by Travel Talk. You need to make your own way to the arrival hotel or boat. Please check arrival details to find your boat or hotel.

### OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Your tour Leader will inform you about optional activities and detailed information in every island such as places to visit, beautiful beaches to swim, places where you can hire bikes and ATVs in reasonable prices, water sports, restaurants with good Greek traditional food etc.

### ABOUT THE TOUR

Greece tours are a mixture of independent travel and a structured trip. While providing you with the necessary arrangements like accommodation and sight seeing, it allows you loads of free time to do your own thing and to plan your own day.

### LANGUAGE

The Greek alphabet is a set of twenty-four letters that has been used to write the Greek language since the late 9th or early 8th century BCE. It is the first and oldest alphabet in the narrow sense that it notes each vowel and consonant with a separate symbol. Below you'll find some important phrases

- Hello, goodbye: Yah-sas (polite); Yah-soo (familiar)
- Good morning: Kah-lee-meh-rah
- Good evening: Kah-lee-spe-rah
- Good night: Kah-lee-nee-khtah
- Yes: Neh
- No: Oh-hee
- Maybe: Toh-skep-to-meh
- Please: Pah-rah-kah-lou
- Thank you: Ef-khah-ree-sto
- Pardon me: Sig-no-mee
- Who: Pyos
- When: Poh-teh
- Today: See-mer-a
- Yesterday: Kthes
- Tomorrow: Av-ree-o
- Help: Vo-ee-thee-ah
- How much: Po-so kah-nee
- Do you speak English: Mee-lahs ahn-glee-kah
- I don't speak Greek: Dhen mee-laho el-leenee-kah
- I don't understand: Dhen-kah-tah-lah-veh-no
- Bill, please: Lo-gahr-yah-smo
- Doctor: yah-tros
- Police: As-tee-no-mee-a
- Open: Ah-nee-kto
- Closed: Klee-sto
- Good: Kah-lo
- Cheap: Ftee-no
- Expensive: Ah-kree-vo

# THE BALKANS

## PRE-DEPARTURE GUIDE

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Travel Talk Balkans tours take you on an unforgettable journey across a fascinating region that has shaped the history of modern Europe. It is where Europe meets the Orient (East); where Christians and Muslims have cohabited for centuries, and formed its unique cultural and social fabric. This geography hosted huge incidents in history from the splitting of Roman Empire into two, to the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand that sparked World War I, and witnessed many wars and struggles – the “powder-keg of Europe” due to strong ideals of the natives. Whilst the Balkans hold such a rich history, the region is truly blessed with its astonishing natural beauty; magnificent mountains covered in tall green forests, crystal waters and endless white beaches. The Balkans are a unique facade of Europe with its familiar, yet distinct style and vibe – where people of many nations have met, lived, and warred over thousands of years. Travel Talk Balkan tours gives you the option to map out your favourite countries with a wide range of tours from 4 days up to 21 days. Follow the legacy of each nation, country by country; sail like a pirate to Dubrovnik, march through the remnants of the Yugoslav war, pose with Alexander the Great, and let Socrates enlighten you in Athens.

### VISAS

Visa is not required for a maximum stay up to 90 days for Australia, New Zealand and United Kingdom, United States of America, Canada passport holders to enter the following countries; Serbia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Albania, Macedonia, Greece, for other nationalities you can check the visa requirements from the link below.  
<http://www.doyouneedvisa.com>

### ESSENTIALS

Before you leave your country, we recommend you to make sure you have followings with you ;

- ➔ Passport
- ➔ Airline or transportation ticket
- ➔ Tour voucher
- ➔ Insurance policy
- ➔ Visas (if necessary)
- ➔ Pre-departure information
- ➔ Label on your travel bag
- ➔ Money (cash and/or travellers cheques)
- ➔ Credit card

### HEALTH AND SAFETY

It is recommended to all passengers travelling on Travel Talk tours to have personal insurance to cover all medical and repatriation costs. While there are no mandatory vaccinations for travellers to Balkan countries, it is advisable to ensure tetanus inoculations are up to date. Some travellers feel more confident with hepatitis and meningitis inoculations as well. Please consult a medical practitioner for advice. Bottled water is readily available throughout your tour and we recommend that you purchase this rather than drink the local tap water. While the local water is usually heavily chlorinated and safe, many people get upset stomachs after drinking it.

### WHAT TO WEAR...

**In Spring** (April-May) and Autumn (October-November) it will be comfortable during the day but may be cool or even chilly at night and you may encounter rain. It is advised to bring a warm jacket or sweater and a windbreaker.

**In Summer** (June-September) wear cool, cotton clothing, a hat and sunblock lotion. It is recommended to have a light sweater for cool evenings but rain won't be a big problem. Get ready for hot, hot weather.

**In Winter** (December-March) you will need warm, woolen clothing and rain gear.

### MONEY

Credit cards, foreign currencies ( US Dollar, Euro, British Pound ) are accepted in most hotels and shops, and nearly all ATMs accept international bank cards in the Balkan countries.

**Serbia** : Local currency is Dinar, 1 GBP is about 135 Serbian Dinar.

**Bosnia & Hergovina** : Local currency is Bosnian Mark, 1 GBP is about 2,25 Bosnian Mark.

**Croatia** : Local currency is Kuna, 1 GBP is about 8 Kuna.

**Albania** : Local currency is Lek, 1 GBP is about 150 Lek.

**Macedonia** : Local Currency is Denar, 1 GBP is about 70 Denar.

**Greece** : Local currency is Euro, 1 GBP is about 1,15 Euro.

### WEATHER

Balkan countries have wet, cold and often snowy winters and has the highest rainfall from November to February. Spring in Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Albania, are damp with mild temperatures and it is relatively dry in the summer

Month	Belgrade		Kotor		Ohrid		Skopje	
	C	F	C	F	C	F	C	F
Jan	2	41	5	48	2	50	1	32
Feb	3	43	10	50	3	52	3	34
March	8	45	8	52	6	55	8	41
April	13	54	13	61	10	61	13	52
May	17	61	20	68	15	68	17	61
June	19	70	25	77	19	77	22	68
July	23	73	28	82	21	82	22	73
Aug	23	73	27	81	21	82	24	73
Sept	19	68	23	73	17	77	18	64
Oct	20	61	13	64	13	68	13	55
Nov	13	54	8	59	8	59	8	46
Dec	6	46	5	50	3	54	2	36

### DISTANCES

The following information will give you a better idea of the times travelled to help you plan your day;

Sofia - Belgrade	4,5 Hours
Belgrade - Sarajevo	5 Hours
Sarajevo - Mostar	2 Hours
Mostar - Trebinje	2 Hours
Trebinje - Dubrovnik	1 Hour
Dubrovnik - Trebinje	1 Hour
Trebinje - Kotor	2 Hours
Kotor - Budva	30 mins
Budva - Tirana	4 Hours
Tirana - Ohrid	2,5 Hours
Ohrid - Skopje	3 Hours
Skopje - Sofia	3,5 Hours
Skopje - Thessaloniki	4 Hours
Thessaloniki - Kalambaka	3 Hours
Kalambaka - Meteora	3 Hours
Meteora - Delphi	4,5 Hours
Delphi - Athens	2 Hours

# THE BALKANS

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### EATING & DRINKING

**Serbia** has a unique, extremely diverse mix because of all the major influences it has had over years of being under foreign rule. When it was under the Byzantine Empire, it received a lot of Mediterranean influences. Then, when it was under the Ottoman Empire, oriental and Turkish characteristics were imbued.

When it comes to drinks, there are a host of alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages available in Serbia. For tradition lovers, the traditional drink in Serbia is Rakija. For the more contemporary drinkers, there is a wide abundance of beer and wine.

**Croatia** cuisine is Slavic, with the influence from the neighboring countries which played a part in forming the country's history in the distant or more recent past. The dishes in the inland regions are based on the produce from the land such as meat, pulses and cereals. On the coast, where fish, seafood and vegetables are widely used, the cultivation of grapes and the production of wine is a centuries-old tradition in both continental and coastal regions. The spectrum of high-quality wines and brandies is indeed wide (there are up to 700 wines with protected geographical origin). In the south people customary drink «Bevanda» with their food (heavy, richly flavored red wine mixed with plain water), and in the north-western regions, «Gemist» (dry, flavored wines mixed with mineral water).

**Bosnia and Herzegovina's** cuisine are mainly dishes made out of meat particularly Beef, and Lamb. Part of Bosnians do not eat pork because they are Muslims. Traditional food is often prepared with meat, and meals are plentiful and delicious. The meat is of extraordinary quality, often organic, and well prepared. Meat is the ingredient of some of the most popular Bosnian dishes such as bosanski lonac, ćevapi, begova čorba, burek, and grah. Regarding the alcoholic beverages, beer, wine and different homemade spirits are quite popular in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The local beer offer is quite extensive – Sarajevo beer, Pilsner Tuzla, Preminger Bihać, Nektar Banja Luka etc. Herzegovina traditionally produces good wine. Red and white dry wine from Herzegovina is of the surprising quality.

**Greece**, to speak of Greek cuisine will awaken any tastebuds. There need not be anything overcomplicated here, as the local cuisine is as fresh and exquisite as anywhere, sharing many characteristics with other cuisines of the region. Greek cuisine makes good use of olive oil, vegetables, herbs, wine, fish and various meats including lamb, poultry, rabbit and pork. Also important are olives, cheese, eggplant, zucchini and yogurt.

**Macedonia**, Macedonian cuisine is one of the most popular cuisines in the Balkans, containing Turkish, Greek and Middle Eastern influences and spiced with some Italian, Mediterranean and Hungarian influences too. The relatively warm climate of the country provides excellent growth conditions for a variety of vegetables, herbs and fruits. Macedonian cuisine is also noted for the diversity and quality of its dairy products, wines, and local alcoholic beverages, such as rakija. Tavče-gravče and mastika are considered the national dish and drink of the Republic of Macedonia,

**Albanian** cuisine is characterized by the use of spices such as black pepper and Mediterranean herbs such as oregano, mint, basil, rosemary and more in cooking meat and fish, but also chilli pepper and garlic. Olive oil and butter are a main ingredient in dishes. Meat (lamb, beef, chicken, pork and rabbit) is used heavily in dishes in most of the country. Seafood specialties are also common in the coastal cities. Vegetables are used in almost every dish. Usually, Albanian farmers grow every vegetable

### SHOPPING

No holiday is complete without a little shopping, like many other Balkan destinations you will find that there is some great shopping and purchases to be made in Serbia, Croatia, Greece, Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina. From the standard tourist souvenirs to fine boutique jewellery and clothing shops, souvenirs you are bound to find something to satisfy the shopping itch.

### ELECTRICITY

All appliances require a double round pin type plug for 220 volts AC, 50-hertz.

### AIRPORT TRANSFER

Complementary arrival airport transfer is available on the first day of the tour for the flights landing to Sofia between 05:00am and 23:00pm (Only available for the tours departing from Sofia ). To confirm your airport transfer please email us following informations at least 10 days before your departure date. info@traveltalktours.com

- Travel Date
- Flight Number
- Local Arrival Time
- Name/s of the Passengers

Our rep will meet you according to your arrival time with a 'Travel Talk' sign at the airport, make sure you have received your airport transfer confirmation email. For private transfers please contact our Sales Office +44 20 8099 95 96 or info@traveltalktours.com

### MISSED YOUR WELCOME MEETING ?

If you are late and miss the welcome meeting, don't stress, just check the information board in the hotel lobby for the next day's programme.

# THE BALKANS

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### ACCOMMODATION

The hotel selection on Travel Talk tours is 4 star locally rated and the main criteria in the hotel selection process is cleanliness, private bathroom facilities, usually but not always centrally located. If you are travelling on your own, you'll be allocated a twin or triple room with other group members of the same gender. Travellers who have paid a single supplement will stay in single rooms. We can not guarantee the availability of double beds for couple travellers. Your Tour Leader will organise the rooming arrangements when checking into the hotels according to the rooming lists. Therefore we can also not guarantee any last minute changes to suit personal requirements of our passengers.

### TIPPING

Among the Balkan countries, tipping is not obligatory in restaurants, but if you are satisfied with the service then leave a 10 to 15% tip. At bars and with taxis leave a tip by rounding off the amount.

### OPENING HOURS

The opening hours for banks and main post offices generally open from.

**Serbia** : Weekdays 08:00 -19:00, Saturdays : 08:00 – 15:00

**Croatia** : Weekdays 08:00 – 16:00, Closed in weekend.

**Bosnia & Herzegovina** : Weekdays 09:00 – 17:00, Closed in weekend.

**Greece** : Weekdays 08:00 – 14:00, Closed in weekend.

**Macedonia** : Weekdays 09:00 – 17:00, Closed in weekend.

**Albania** : Weekdays 10:00 – 18:00, Closed in weekend.

### TOUR LEADER

Your tour leader's role is to ensure that all aspects of the trip run smoothly. He/she will share their local knowledge, advise you on ways to spend your free time and coordinate the day-to-day running of the tour. From time to time situations can occur and things may not go according to plan, and your leader may require your cooperation and understanding. If you have any problems on tour, please let your leader know so that the correct steps can be taken. Please bear in mind that when you travel on a combined tour, you will have different groups and a different leader for each leg.

### ENTRANCE FEES

- ➔ Catholic Church, Sarajevo : 1 €
- ➔ Ali Pasha Mosque, Mostar : 2 €
- ➔ St. Naum, Ohrid : 2 €
- ➔ St Sophia Church, Ohrid : 2 €
- ➔ St. Climent, Ohrid: 2 €
- ➔ Dubrovnik City Walls : 15 €
- ➔ Stradun Square, Dubrovnik : Free
- ➔ Budva Old Town : Free

### OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Kravice Waterfalls : 20 €
- Balkan Night Show : 20 €
- St. Naum tour : 15 €