



Escorted Tour – A Gastronomic Exploration of Western Greece



HOLIDAY TYPE: Small Group
VISITING:

BROCHURE CODE: 5995
DURATION: 7 nights

In Brief

Your exploration of Western Greece takes in charming cities, breathtaking rock formations and mountain scenery as you uncover the rich culinary traditions of the region and how it has been shaped by the landscape and history of its people. From farm to fork you will experience first hand how key ingredients in the local cuisine are produced and prepared, from wines and cheeses to the famous Kleftiko and its fascinating history. You will even take part in a hunt for luxurious truffles and enjoy an al fresco lunch prepared with this much valued ingredient.



What's included?

- **Flights:** return flights from London Gatwick to Aktion
- **Transfers:** All airport, accommodation and activity transfers are included
- **Accommodation:** 2 nights Brettania Hotel Ioannina, 1 night Liknon Hotel Kalambaka, 2 nights Zarkadas Hotel Zagorochoria and 2 nights Preveza Comfort Hotel Preveza
- **Meals:** 7 Breakfasts, 3 lunches, 3 dinners (all included lunches and dinners will include ½ a litre of wine per person)
- **The following are included in the holiday price:** walking tour of Ioannina, visit to the mountain village of Metsovo, touring the breathtaking landscape of Meteora and visiting 2 monasteries, truffle hunting and al fresco lunch, Zagori park hike, traditional Epirus cookery course with lunch including Kleftiko, winery tour and dinner
- Fully qualified English speaking guide throughout
- 24/7 assistance from our UK based operations team and in destination support from our local partners

Trip Overview

You will begin your exploration of Western Greece by immersing yourself in the charming city of Ioannina with a walking tour taking in the fortified old town, known as "The Castle." Ioannina boasts a rich cultural history, boasting historic buildings from both the Byzantine and Ottoman periods – its occupiers no doubt attracted by its enviable location overlooking the serene Lake Pamvotida.

We then journey into the mountains with a stop at the village of Metsovo, famous for its wealth of local produce including wine and cheese, the village itself is also a joy to wander around with its cobblestoned alleyways and traditional stone-built houses.

In Meteora, it is the stone itself which will take your breath away – with its soaring sandstone pillars rising to prodigious heights in amazing formations. This is a location that certainly earns its UNESCO World Heritage accreditation. At one time there were 24 monasteries perched on top of the rocks, with the isolated peaks providing the perfect place for a life of religious contemplation. Today there are just six monasteries still active and you will visit two of these and take in the stunning views afforded of the others. You will also take part in a unique truffle hunting experience followed by a

delightful al fresco lunch.

Lace up your hiking boots for a relaxing trek through Zagori National Park, with its famous gorges and stone bridges. You will stop at picturesque villages and learn about the history and culture of the region.

The cuisine of Epirus is distinct from the rest of Greece due to its reliance on local produce from the mountains and the influence of neighbouring cultures like Albania and Italy as well as the long influence of the Ottomans. You will learn to prepare regional specialties like Kleftiko, and enjoy a delectable lunch which you have had a hand in preparing.

Your week will conclude with a free day in the relaxed coastal town of Preveza, famed for its beaches and the ruins of the Roman city of Nicopolis nearby, but on route there from the mountains you will enjoy a local winery tour culminating in a delicious dinner.

Agenda

Please note the order of activities is subject to change

DAY
1

ARRIVAL, TRANSFER TO IOANNINA AND WELCOME DINNER

On arrival at Aktion airport, you meet your driver and guide and for the transfer to Ioannina (approximately 90 minutes). After checking in at your hotel you can unwind before enjoying your welcome dinner in a local restaurant.

Included Meals: Dinner

DAY
2

WALKING TOUR OF IOANNINA

Your second day dives into the heart of Ioannina with a guided half day walking tour. You will be captivated by the city's history, culture and architecture. Each of its atmospheric alleyways tells it's own story, and reveals the fascinating tale of a town which has spent centuries on the border of East and West. In the afternoon you will have time to explore further at your own pace, whether browsing through artisan boutiques or taking a boat out to the serene island at the centre of Lake Pamvotida – it was not always this way though as this was the scene of local ruler Ali Pasha's assassination in 1822.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY
3

JOURNEY TO KALAMBAKA WITH VISIT TO METSOVO

After a scenic drive, you'll arrive in Metsovo, a picture-perfect mountain village amidst the Pindus

mountains. Here, you feel as though you are stepping back in time as you enter a world of cobbled streets lined with traditional stone houses. The shops offer local specialties like smoked cheese and Katogi, a dry red wine with a unique character. You will have lunch in a restaurant in a village to enjoy the regional cuisine. After this you will journey onwards to your hotel at Kalambaka, catching your first glimpse of the Meteora monasteries on route. In total, driving time today will be approximately 105 minutes.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY
4

METEORA AND TRUFFLE-HUNTING

This morning's tour will take you up close to the iconic landscape of Meteora. You will be taken to the best viewpoints to enjoy vistas of all six of the remaining monasteries and visit two of them. The dedication of those first pioneers who chose to lead a monastic life here will be further underlined when you visit the hermit caves of Badovas.

This afternoon you will take part in a culinary treasure hunt as you seek truffles hidden in the fertile soil of the woods. Not only will you enjoy the splendour of nature surrounding you, but a talented chef will prepare a delightful al fresco lunch with your finds. In the afternoon, you will journey on to your hotel in Zagori and enjoy dinner there this evening. Total travel time today will be approximately 120 minutes.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY
5

ZAGORI NATIONAL PARK HIKE

This morning you will meet with a local guide who will lead your exploration of Zagori National Park. This gentle hike will take you through stunning scenery – the park is famous for its gorges, streams and iconic stone bridges. Not only will you learn about the local plants and animals as you go, but as you come across traditional villages on your route, you will uncover a way of life that has changed precious little over countless generations and become familiar with the rich history and culture of the region.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY
6

TRADITIONAL EPIRUS COOKERY LESSON, WINERY VISIT AND DINNER

You will learn the background of the traditional way of preparing food in Epirus, including unique cookware such as the Tavas and Saganika. Furthermore, you will get the chance to get "hands on" during the cookery lesson as you prepare a mouthwatering Kleftiko dish, which is unique to Epirus. After savouring the fruits of your labour with a delicious lunch you will continue on to Preveza, but not before stopping for a tour of a winery and a relaxing dinner. Total travel time today will be

approximately 120 minutes.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY
7

FREE DAY AT PREVEZA

Today you can spend at leisure on one of Preveza's unspoilt beaches, or if you are a history buff head to the archaeological museum of Nicopolis – or even to the site of the ancient city itself which is just outside of town. Or you can just explore Preveza's old town, with its colourful houses and narrow streets, at your own pace.

Why not round off your day on the charming Saitan Pazar street for a lovely authentic dinner in one of its restaurants. The perfect way to end an unforgettable adventure.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY
8

DEPARTURE

Today, you will return to Aktion airport for your flight home as your exploration of Epirus comes to an end.

Included Meals: Breakfast

Included Accommodation

Brettania Hotel, Ioannina (Nights: 1-2)



Conveniently located in the heart of Ioannina, opposite a park containing the famous Venetian clock, the Brettania Hotel has been a welcoming haven for travellers to Ioannina for over 60 years. The

town's charming streets, historical sites and local shops are all just a short stroll away.

Room type: The hotel offers comfortable double rooms, with amenities including:

- Flat-screen TV
- Air conditioning
- Hairdryer
- Kettle and coffee machine
- Safety deposit box
- Free WiFi

Hotel Liknon, Kalambaka (Nights: 3)



Hotel Liknon is well known for its comfortable accommodation, exceptional hospitality and location close to the Meteora monasteries, making it a great choice for those seeking to explore this UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The hotel features a variety of amenities, including a garden, a shared lounge, a terrace and bar.

Room type: standard double rooms are equipped with the following:

- Flat-screen TV
- Air conditioning
- Hairdryer
- Kettle
- Fridge
- Free WiFi

Zarkadas Archontiko, Monodendri (Nights: 4-5)



Zarkadas Archontiko is located in Monodendri, a traditional village on the edge of the stunning Vikos Canyon. The stone built hotel is in the heart of the village and has a rustic style that blends naturally with its setting. The hotel has plenty of outdoor seating as well as a swimming pool.

Room type: Built in a traditional mansion style, there is a wider variation of rooms on offer at Zarkadas Archontiko and many rooms boast garden or mountain views and some have a terrace and furniture. Common room amenities are:

- Flat-screen TV
- Hairdryer
- Safety deposit box
- Fridge
- Free WiFi

Preveza City Comfort Hotel, Preveza (Nights: 6-7)



Situated a five minute walk from the old town and just ten from the closest of Preveza's beaches (which are considered to be among the best in Greece) the City Comfort Hotel is ideally placed to allow you to either explore this historic gem of a town or just relax if you prefer. The hotel blends a minimalist and modern décor with the white walls synonymous with Greek architecture through the ages.

Room type: standard double rooms are all appointed with:

- 32" TV
- Air conditioning
- Hairdryer
- Mini fridge
- Safety deposit box
- Kettle (on request)
- Free WiFi

The Specifics

Group Size

We always try to provide an approximation of the group size you can expect to be with for the duration of each of our holidays. It may be that you are joined by others for parts of your holiday (such as transfers and particular activities) but the above number reflects those you can normally expect to be with from beginning to end. If group size is something which is particularly important to you, please speak to our Travel Experts and they can suggest the best holidays for you.

Tailor-made holiday group sizes will vary for all activities as will the group size for any additional activities you book.

Minimum and maximum age

If a specific minimum age applies to this holiday, it can be found in the Key Facts box on the holiday Overview page.

Unless otherwise stated in the in the Key Facts box on the holiday Overview page, the minimum age for participation in an Artisan holiday is typically 8 years old (there may be younger children in some destinations who have booked with other companies). If an adult-only environment is important to you, then please contact our Travel Experts and they will advise on the best dates and destinations for you. If you are looking for a holiday designed specifically for families then please see our sister company www.activitiesabroad.com

Itinerary amendments

The order of activities listed in this agenda is provided for guidance only, your final and detailed itinerary will be provided either with your final travel documents (which are uploaded into your online account around a week prior to departure) or upon arrival.

Terms and Conditions

Our full booking terms and conditions can be found on our website: <https://www.artisantravel.co.uk/booking-conditions>

Minimum travellers 10, Maximum travellers 20