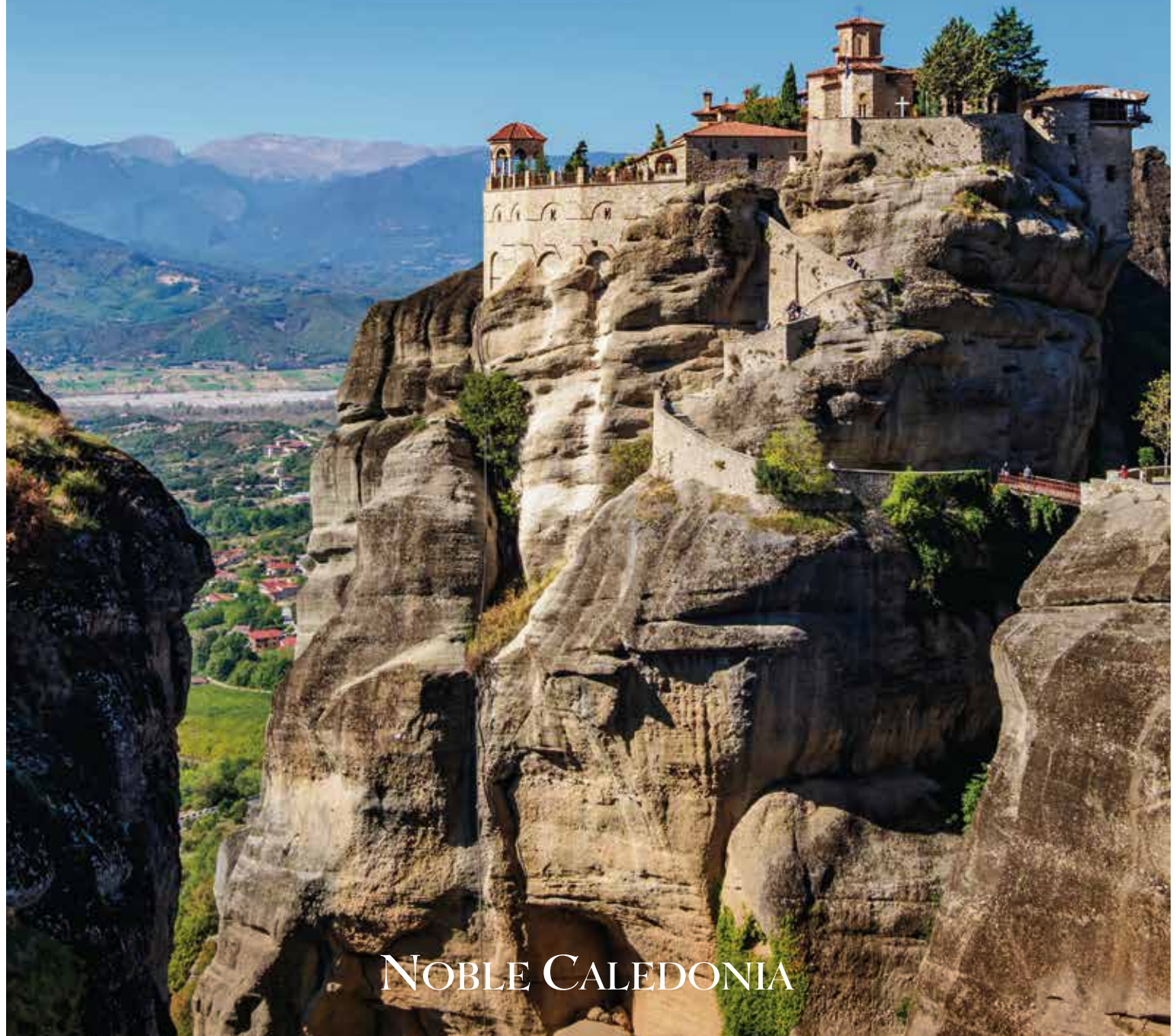


HIDDEN GREECE

An eight-night escorted tour to Greek Macedonia & beyond

7th to 15th October 2025



NOBLE CALEDONIA



Greece is justly famous for its islands, but on the country's mainland there are areas that present the traveller with exceptional beauty. Surprisingly, these areas remain relatively unknown and unexplored and whilst most tourists flock to the beach resorts, our in-depth exploration will instead venture into the heart of Northern Greece. Here we will discover an extraordinarily varied landscape as well as impressive archaeological and historic sites that reveal the progression of civilisation with many empires – Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman – all having left their mark.

We will begin in Thessaloniki, Greece's second largest city and home to an unforgettable array of Byzantine churches, featuring important early Christian mosaics. Our five night stay in this remarkable city will provide us the opportunity to explore at a leisurely pace and also discover nearby places of interest including the towering ruins of Philippi with its enormous Late Roman basilicas and Pella, capital of Philip's empire and the birthplace of Alexander the Great. We will also gain a fascinating insight into the first capital of the Kingdom of Macedonia during our visit to the Royal Tombs at Vergina. Continuing west we will visit one of Greece's most extraordinary sights, Meteora "monasteries in mid-air"; the sheer spectacle of these dramatic rock formations will most certainly provide you with a lasting memory. We conclude our journey with three nights in the charming city of Ioannina on the shore of beautiful Lake Pamvotis from where we discover the Epirus region visiting the beautiful Zagorochoria villages which appear frozen in time, and the ancient and little-known city of Nikopolis, founded by Augustus to celebrate his victory at the Battle of Actium..

The itinerary will be well-paced so that, when not enjoying the guided tours or exploring independently, there will be time to relax and appreciate the tranquillity of these wonderful settings. In a world that has become saturated with excessive tourism, it is rare to find a region that can be discovered in a way that feels authentic and our unique tour visits many places more popular with local tourists and provides opportunities to experience the eponymous Greek hospitality and the wonderful cuisine steeped in tradition.

The Itinerary

Day 1 London to Thessaloniki, Greece. Fly by scheduled flight to Thessaloniki. Transfer to the Mediterranean Palace Hotel for a five night stay. The afternoon is at leisure. Meet your fellow passengers for a welcome drink before dinner at a local restaurant. (D)

Day 2 Thessaloniki. This morning we will explore the historic city of Thessaloniki. Founded by King Cassander of Macedonia in 315 BC, the city boasts a variety of Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, Ottoman and modern Greek architecture and traditions. Starting at the White Tower, which was built in the 15th century by the Ottomans, we will continue to the Archaeological Museum to learn about the city's long history. Next we take a panoramic drive taking in Aristotal University of Thessaloniki, the largest in Greece and the ancient Acropolis that offers sweeping views of the city below. We will visit the imposing 5th century Church of Demetrios, a Byzantine structure built to honour the Christian martyr and patron saint of Thessaloniki. After lunch return to the hotel where the remainder of the afternoon and evening are at leisure. (B, L)

Day 3 Philippi & Kavala. After breakfast we will drive to Philippi which, founded in 360 BC by Thracians, was soon conquered by Philip II of Macedon who fortified and renamed the city after himself. During the Hellenistic period the city grew and gained many public buildings. Over the centuries the city has witnessed many historic events including the Battle of Philippi in 42 BC and the arrival of the apostle Paul, who founded the first Christian church on European territory in 49/50 AD. The city was gradually abandoned in the early 7th century due to large earthquakes and was completely deserted in the 14th century after the Turkish conquest. Excavations of the site began in 1914 and today we will explore the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Philippi as well as the Archaeological Museum. Afterwards we will drive to the town of Kavala, one of the loveliest cities in Northern Greece. We will explore the city's old town by foot taking in its narrow-cobbled streets and traditional Macedonian style buildings. We will see the imposing aqueduct which stands 25 metres tall with 60 arches that was built in the 16th century. After some free time, we will return to Thessaloniki in the late afternoon for an evening at leisure. (B, L)



Ioannina & Lake Pamvotis



Thessaloniki

Day 4 Pella & Vergina. Today we will head inland leaving behind the Aegean coast for dramatic mountain scenery. We will continue to explore the history of Macedonia with a visit to Pella, the ancient capital of the Kingdom of Macedonia which during the reign of Alexander the Great became the de facto capital of Greece. This ancient site is a wonderful example of urban planning with its grid-like layout and we will have the opportunity to admire the colonnades, beautiful mosaics and military glories of the Macedonian kings. We will walk to the remains of the king's palace and visit the museum with its wonderful collection of pottery, jewellery and mosaics. From here we continue on to Vergina to visit the royal tombs of the Macedonian kings, the most important of which is that of Philip II. This UNESCO World Heritage Site was only excavated in 1970 and is an impressive site. There will also be a chance to explore the museum which holds many of the items found in the tombs before returning to Thessaloniki in the late afternoon. Enjoy the evening at leisure. (B, L)

Day 5 Naoussa. After breakfast we will drive to the Vermio Mountains where myth says Dionysus, the god of wine, dwelt. Take in the beautiful countryside, forest-covered mountains and vine-covered hills as we drive towards Naoussa. Here we will visit two vineyards to sample the different wines. After lunch at a local restaurant, we will head back to the coast where the rest of the day is spent at leisure to relax. (B, L)

Day 6 Meteora & Ioannina. This morning we leave the coast and Thessaloniki behind and drive west heading through the inland mountains to the beautiful and impressive Monasteries of Meteora. Perched atop giant rock formations, there were once 24 monasteries from the 14th to the 16th centuries and today six remain open to be explored. The monasteries produced some of the best pieces of religious art and craft and still possess a wonderful collection of precious manuscripts. We will visit two of the monasteries depending on which are open at the time. After lunch we continue heading west, passing through mountain tunnels and beautiful scenery to reach Ioannina. After checking into the Hotel Du Lac for our three night stay there will be time to relax before dinner this evening. (B, L, D)

Day 7 Ioannina. Ioannina, the capital of the Epirus region in Northwest Greece, spreads out around the beautiful Lake Pamvotis. The city was founded by the Byzantine Emperor Justinian in the 6th century AD and flourished when many wealthy Byzantine families fled there in the early 13th century following the sack of Constantinople. Today we will explore the city and its surrounding area, starting with the Sanctuary of Dodoni which was home to the oldest of the Greek oracles. People would travel here from across Greece to consult with the priests about their futures. We will then take to the water and visit the Nisi (The Island) that sits in the middle of Lake Pamvotis. Take in this pretty and peaceful car-free island

as we explore and visit the Ali Pasha Museum. We will return to the mainland and explore Ioannina, a city with the feel of a bygone era. The city has been dominated by Christian, Islamic and Jewish influences over the centuries and this coexistence is evident in the historic centre. After lunch the afternoon will be at leisure to continue exploring Ioannina or return to the hotel. (B, L)

Day 8 Zagorochoria & Vikos Gorge. Today we will explore one of the most picturesque areas of Greece, Zagorochoria. The area is home to 46 small villages dotted through the mountains that have retained their traditional stone houses. As you drive through the mountains take in the turquoise waters of the Voidomatis River passing through lush trees. Our first stop will be the village of Papingo which is perched on a mountainside at the end of the Vikos Gorge before continuing to the village of Monodendri. Here we will explore the village by foot walking its cobbled streets to take in the beautiful traditional architecture, mansion houses and Byzantine churches. Lunch will be in a local taverna and this afternoon we will drive to Vitsa Village, known as the balcony of the great Vikos Gorge due to its stunning views. Return to Ioannina in the late afternoon and enjoy the farewell dinner this evening at a local restaurant. (B, L, D)

Day 9 Ioannina to London. After breakfast we check out of the hotel and drive to the ancient site of Nikopolis, built by Octavian in 28 BC after the defeat of Mark Anthony and Cleopatra at the Battle of Actium. Much was destroyed in the 11th century by Bulgarians but the scale of the 'City of Victory' remains impressive, its ruins including Roman and Byzantine walls, churches, a stadium and two theatres. We will explore the archaeological site and museum before taking lunch in Preveza. This afternoon we will transfer to the airport for the scheduled flight to London. (B, L)

PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

Twin: **£4495**

Single: **£5995**

PRICE INCLUDES: Economy class scheduled air travel • Five nights accommodation at the Mediterranean Palace Hotel in Thessaloniki • Three nights accommodation at the Hotel Du Lac in Ioannina • Meals as indicated (B - Breakfast, L - Lunch, D - Dinner) • Drinks with meals • Noble Caledonia Tour Manager • Excursions with local guides • Gratuities • Transfers • Airport taxes.

Not Included: Travel insurance.

Group Size: We are restricting the group size to just 25 participants.

YOUR ACCOMMODATION

For our escorted tour of Northern Greece we have selected two superb hotels in characterful locations:

Mediterranean Palace Hotel, Thessaloniki

Situated in the Old Port at the edge of the historic centre, the Mediterranean Palace Hotel is ideally located for exploring the historic city of Thessaloniki. This elegant hotel offers traditional Greek hospitality with luxury and style. The rooms measure between 23 and 28 square metres and are designed to be elegant and comfortable. They come with all the standard amenities including television, hairdryer, bathrobes, minibar, tea & coffee making facilities as well as complimentary Wi-Fi. The hotel features an all-day restaurant and a bar as well as a gym, swimming pool and beautiful spa.



Hotel exterior



Double room



Cookoo Restaurant



Spa area



Twin room

Hotel Du Lac, Ioannina

The Hotel Du Lac is a lakeside hotel offering traditional elegance and modern luxury. Located just a 15 minute walk from the centre of Ioannina, the hotel is close enough to explore the vibrant town whilst offering peaceful surroundings to relax in. Rooms measure a spacious 38 square metres and are simply and elegantly decorated. They feature the standard amenities including television, hairdryer, minibar, safe and complimentary Wi-Fi. The hotel offers four dining options including an all day café boasting breathtaking views of Pamvotis Lake and a bar. There is an indoor and outdoor pool as well as a spa complete with sauna and steam room.



Exterior and pool area



Twin room



Du Sel Restaurant



Myrtali Restaurant



Double room

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Our current booking conditions apply to all reservations and are available on request.

Cover image: Monastery of Varlaam, Meteora.