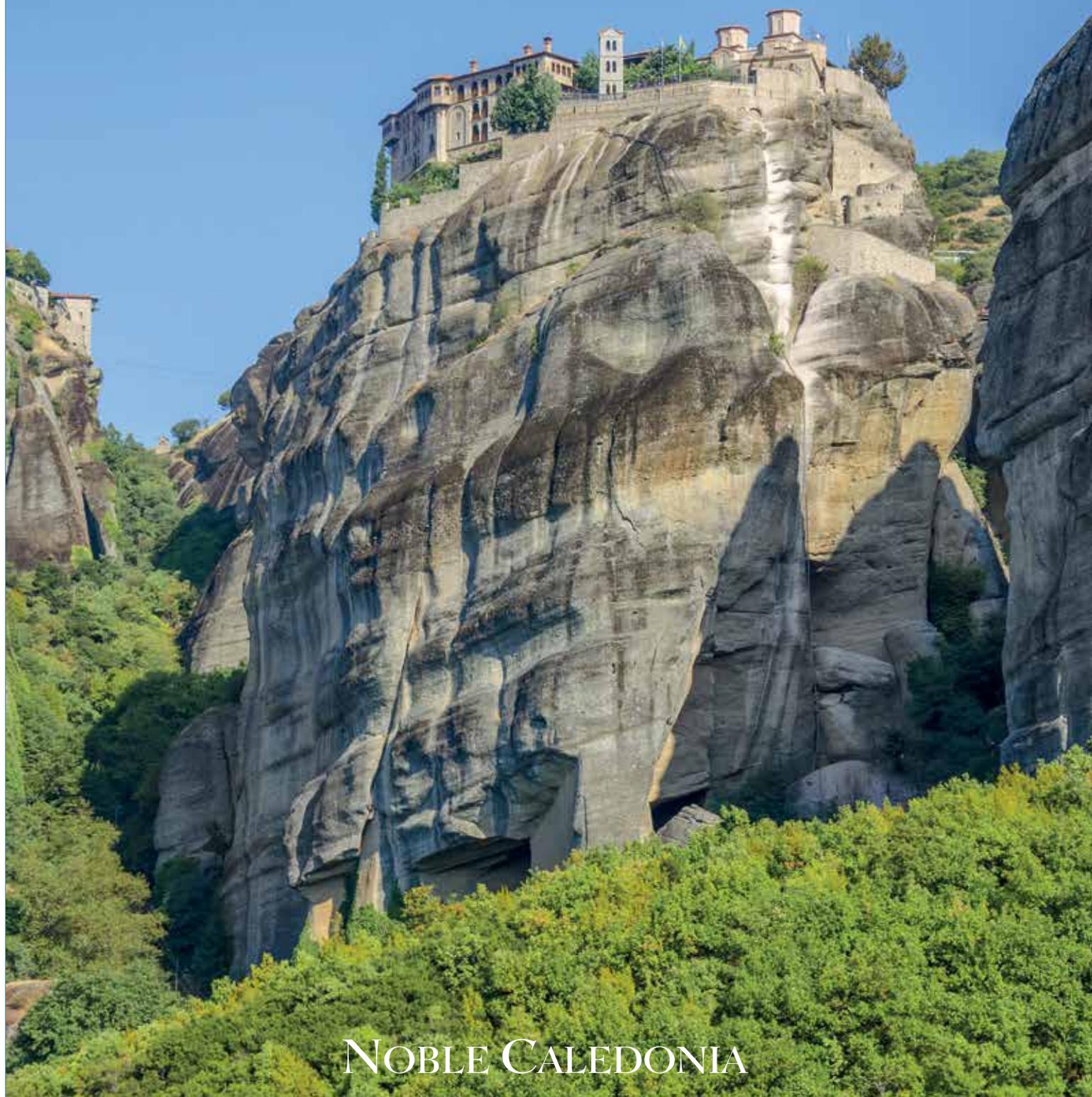


UNDISCOVERED GREECE

DISCOVER THE DIFFERENT FACE OF GREECE
& ENJOY CLASSICAL CHAMBER MUSIC AT
THE THESSALY CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL

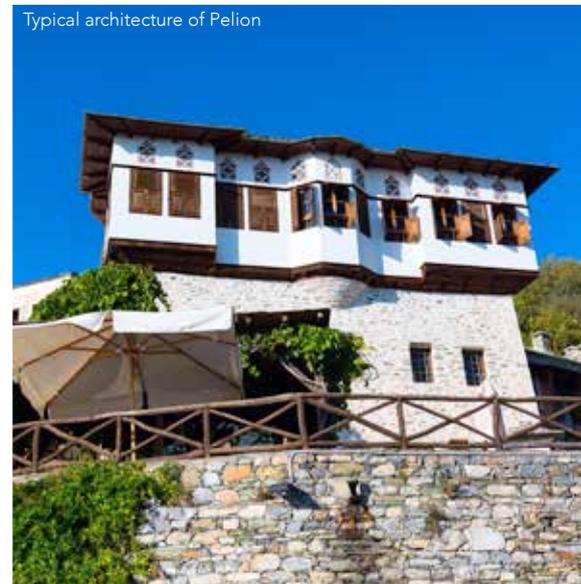
16TH TO 29TH JUNE 2018



NOBLE CALEDONIA



Meteora



Typical architecture of Pelion

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. One such place is Thessaly.

Located in the centre of Greece, fronting the Aegean Sea on the east, and stretching on the west to the soaring Pindus Mountains, Thessaly presents an extraordinarily varied landscape as well as impressive archaeological and historic sites that reveal the progression of civilisation from the Neolithic period to the Early Christian era. "God-like" Achilles was a native son, and so was Jason, who led the Argonauts in quest of the Golden Fleece.

We are operating this tour in conjunction with our American associates, Chamber Music Hellas and the programme will explore the most significant and interesting places of Thessaly. We will begin in Larissa, the vibrant and prosperous capital of the province, settled since the earliest times. Not far away is Meteora ("monasteries in mid-air"), one of the most extraordinary sights, not only in Greece but perhaps in all Europe. Our three night stay in this remarkable place will give us the opportunity to explore it leisurely and also take excursions to nearby places of interest, including Trikala, the reputed birthplace of Aesculapius, the god of healing; Metsovo, a charming mountain town and lake-side Ioannina, an old centre of learning and the headquarters of the notorious Ali Pasha in the late 18th century and early 19th century.

We will conclude our Thessaly journey in glorious Pelion, the legendary home of the centaurs, depicted in many ancient Greek sculptures as half-man, half-horse creatures. Thick forests of chestnut, beech and oak cover Pelion's massif, while a profusion of herbs, olive and fruit trees thrive on the lower slopes. Scattered are villages that have changed little through the centuries.



Metsovo

CLASSICAL CHAMBER MUSIC

Adding to the uniqueness of the journey is the series of concerts of classical chamber music we will attend that will take place at historic sites. Organised by and operated under the auspices of the Thessaly Chamber Music Festival, the concerts feature mostly accomplished American musicians of the classical music repertory. The Chamber Music Festival of Thessaly will present chamber music concerts in unique historic venues throughout the region of Thessaly. The programmes, curated by the festival's Artistic Director, composer/pianist Lowell Liebermann, will present iconic masterpieces of the chamber music literature alongside the most beautiful and exciting compositions of Greek classical composers, as well as other neglected and unusual masterworks. The internationally-recognised performers will include violinist Bella Hristova, cellist Dmitri Atapine, violist Dimitri Murrath, clarinetist Yoonah Kim, pianists William Hobbs, Adela Hyeyun Park and Lowell Liebermann. It is not often that a traveller can enjoy classical music of the highest calibre in a 3rd century BC theatre, or an 18th century church covered with Byzantine frescoes.

THE ITINERARY

Day 1 London to Thessaloniki to Larissa, Greece. Fly by scheduled flight to Thessaloniki and transfer to Larissa, the capital of Greece's Thessaly region. Our hotel for the next four nights is the Larissa Imperial Hotel.

Day 2 Larissa, Tyrnavos & Ellassona. After breakfast we explore the countryside around Larissa, driving to Dendra, believed to be the site of the Homeric site of Argysa, and to Tyrnavos, known for its fine production of ouzo. Continue to Ellassona, located on the lower southwest side of Mount Olympus, with its fine Byzantine bridge that spans the river, and the attractive 13th century monastery of Panaghia Olympiotissa (Virgin of Mount Olympus). After lunch in Ellassona, return to Larissa. Early in the evening we will attend the opening concert of the Thessaly Chamber Music Festival, held at Larissa's superb 3rd century BC theatre.

Day 3 Larissa. This morning we visit the Diachronic Museum, whose interesting exhibits chronicle the long history of Larissa and the surrounding area. The afternoon is at leisure for individual exploration of the town. Later we attend a concert at the Archaeological Museum.

Day 4 Larissa & Dion. Today we take a full-day excursion to Dion, a cult centre from the earliest times, and one of the most beautiful and important ancient sites of Greece. Situated on the foothills of Mount Olympus, Dion rose to prominence in the late 5th century BC. To reach Dion, we will drive through the Vale of Tempe, famed since antiquity for its natural beauty, and the massive Castle of Platamonas. We attend a concert held at a historic site in the Dion area.

Day 5 Larissa, Meteora & Kalambaka. We leave Larissa in the morning for Meteora, one



Ioannina



Mylopotamos beach, Pelion



Makrinitza village

of the most extraordinary sights in Greece, perhaps in all of Europe. The Meteora Monasteries ("monasteries in mid-air"), comprise a series of monastic buildings built some 600 years ago on top of gigantic rocks that rise abruptly from the valley of Thessaly. Visit a few of the monasteries, and after lunch at a local taverna, check-in at the Divani Meteora Hotel in nearby Kalambaka, our base for three nights. Later in the afternoon enjoy a concert held at an outdoor spot overlooking Meteora's enormous rocks.

Day 6 Kalambaka, Metsovo & Ioannina. Leave the hotel in the morning for a full-day excursion that will lead through some of Greece's most magnificent mountainous scenery. Stop at Metsovo, a charming town with impressive traditional houses, set below a towering mountain chasm. From Metsovo, continue to Ioannina, driving the route that is considered one of Europe's great mountain journeys. Located on a rocky promontory that projects into a lake, Ioannina first came to prominence early in the 13th century, reaching its zenith in the 18th century. Tour the town and enjoy lunch at a lakeside restaurant. Return to Kalambaka in the afternoon.

Day 7 Kalambaka & Trikala. Morning at leisure. In the afternoon, drive to nearby Trikala. The Homeric Trikke, renowned in antiquity as the birthplace of Aesculapius, the god of healing, Trikala is now a charming town built along the banks of a river. Explore the town, including the quaint old district of Varousa, the remains of the Asclepieion, and the Kursum, a mosque designed by Sinan, the great Ottoman architect, and built by local craftsmen in 1557.

Continue to the impressive fortress, dating to the Byzantine period, where we will attend a concert.

Day 8 Kalambaka, Portaria & Pelion. Leave the hotel in the morning for Pelion, driving through Thessaly's rich agricultural land. Located on the southeast coast of Thessaly and above the city of Volos, Pelion is a tree-covered massif that faces the sea. According to Greek mythology, it was the home of the centaurs – half man, half horse creatures. Thick forests, groves of olive and fruit trees, as well as a profusion of herbs and other plants cover the slopes of this mythical mountain. Scattered are villages that have retained their unique character and architecture. Our home for the next six nights in this enchanting place will be the Xenia Palace Portaria, in the quaint village of Portaria, the gateway to Pelion. Enjoy a concert at an old electric power station, now a performing arts centre.

Day 9 The Villages of Pelion. Spend the day exploring Pelion's deeper massif and villages. Drive the forested road to Hania and Zagora, Pelion's largest village, located on the eastern side of the mountain facing the Aegean Sea. On to Kissos, whose old church of Aghia Marina is covered with paintings, and to delightful Tsangarada, to tour the Serpentine Garden and enjoy lunch at a taverna serving local specialties. Following lunch, drive to a nearby private outdoor theatre, built in the style of ancient Greek amphitheatres, and set in a splendid setting offering outstanding views of the surrounding countryside, where we will attend a concert.

Day 10 Cruise the Pagasitic Gulf. Today we cruise the great Pagasitic

Gulf, which lines Pelion's west side, on a privately chartered boat. Sail to Prasouda, an uninhabited islet surrounded by crystal clear waters that are ideal for swimming. Continue to Paleo Trikeri, a small island near the mouth of the gulf, where motor traffic is not allowed. Disembark and walk to the island's only village, crowned by a Byzantine castle, now a monastery. This idyllic isle is known for its seafood, which we will taste during lunch.

Day 11 Makrinitza & Milies. Drive to the nearby village of Makrinitza, known as "Pelion's balcony" on account of its superb position on the side of the mountain that opens up to wide vistas. Old timber-framed houses and mansions with slate roofs are built on steep terraces. The centre of the village is a large square that forms a belvedere that overlooks a ravine. Continue to delightful Milies, where we will have lunch, especially prepared for us by the village folk. In the afternoon, attend a concert in Milies's splendid 18th century church of Taxiarchon, whose interior is entirely covered with luminous frescoes.

Day 12 Volos & the Ancients Sites of Sesklo & Dimini. Spread below Pelion, the port city of Volos and the area around it have been inhabited since prehistoric times. Volos occupies the site of ancient Iolcos, the home of Jason, and the place from which he led the Argonauts in quest of the Golden Fleece. Start today's exploration at Sesklo, which was settled in 6500 BC. Nearby is Dimini, one of the better known Neolithic sites in Greece, and then on to Nea Anchialos, considered to be among the most important early Christian sites in the country. Volos is known throughout Greece for

its flourishing food scene, which we will enjoy during lunch. This afternoon, visit Volos's superb Archaeological Museum, where, after visiting the exhibits, we will be treated to a concert.

Day 13 Portaria & closing concert at Demetrias. Spend most of the day at leisure in Portaria. Explore the village independently or enjoy a walk on one of the country lanes. Late in the afternoon we attend the closing concert of the Thessaly Chamber Music Festival, which will be performed at the 3rd century BC theatre of Demetrias.

Day 14 Pelion to London. Transfer to the airport in Thessaloniki for your return scheduled flight to London.

NB. Please note that there is a moderate amount of walking involved in this itinerary, often over uneven or relatively steep terrain. It is therefore not recommended for those with walking difficulties.

PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

Twin: **£3995**
Single: **£4895**

PRICE INCLUDES: Economy class scheduled air travel • Four nights accommodation at Larissa Imperial Hotel • Three nights accommodation at Divani Meteora Hotel • Six nights accommodation at Xenia Palace Portaria • Breakfast daily • Lunch on Days 2, 4, 5, 7, 10, 11 & 12 • Dinner on Days 7 & 13 (all meals include wine, beer and soft drinks) • Ten concerts as listed • Local guides • Excursions • Gratuities • Transfers • Airport taxes.
Not Included: Travel insurance, meals other than those stated.

YOUR ACCOMMODATION

We have selected some of the region's finest accommodation available for our stay.



Larissa Imperial Hotel



Lobby Bar



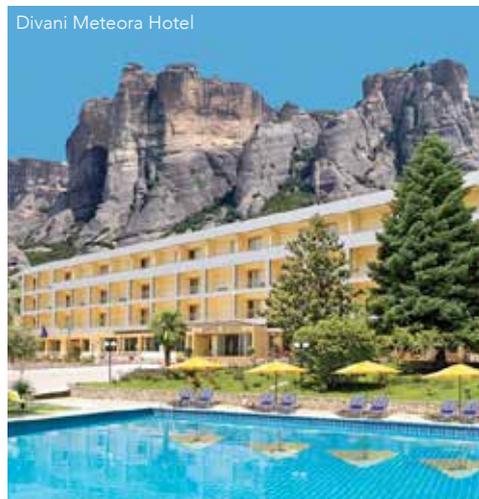
Superior Guestroom

Larissa Imperial Hotel

Ideally located on the outskirts of Larissa, the capital of Thessaly, and uniquely decorated with gleaming wood, shimmering marble and classical furnishings, this Art-Deco hotel features a spacious outdoor pool with hot tub, and a spa centre with indoor pool, sauna and hammam. Breakfast is served daily in the elegant Imperial Restaurant, where Greek and Mediterranean dishes accompanied by fine wine can also be enjoyed for lunch or dinner. The laid-back atmosphere of the lounge bar is perfect for a relaxing drink. During the summer months drinks are also served by the poolside bar. The 150 rooms of Larissa Imperial are classically decorated with earthy colours, silk textiles and handmade furnishings. Each room opens to a balcony or terrace with garden or pool view, and includes air conditioning, a safe, a wardrobe and a satellite TV. The mosaic-tiled bathrooms come with a bathtub or shower, bathrobes, slippers and toiletries.

Divani Meteora Hotel

Divani Meteora Hotel boasts modern design, renovated facilities and a breathtaking view of the surrounding landscape. Guests can relax by the outdoor pool and bar, or try the hotel spa featuring sauna, steam bath, Jacuzzi and fitness centre. The hotel has a direct view to the Convent of Ayios Stefanos (St. Stephen), one of the six monasteries that are open and accessible to the public. The hotel is also close to town and very well-located at the beginning of the main street in Kalambaka so guests can easily walk to bars, shops and restaurants. The welcoming M Restaurant has a relaxed atmosphere and is flooded with natural light during daytime. Enjoy its view of the Meteora rock pillars over breakfast, lunch or dinner. The chef prepares a variety of local and international dishes, with their own signature tastes, which you can accompany with a variety of wines. Divani Meteora Hotel's 165 guestrooms are appointed with modern amenities with the very best in comfort and views of Meteora or the mountain. Rooms also have Wi-Fi and mini-bar.



Divani Meteora Hotel



Deluxe Room



Lounge



Classic Pool View Room



Restaurant



Xenia Palace Portaria

Xenia Palace Portaria

Xenia Palace Portaria offers a comfortable stay with traditional elements. The hotel overlooks Volos, the Pagasetic Gulf and the mount of the Centaurs and features a spa-health club and outdoor pool surrounded by a furnished sun terrace. The Belvedere restaurant offers a hearty traditional breakfast based on local and organic products, while the cafe-bar La Veranda offers magnificent views and unique flavours of traditional and Mediterranean cuisine. The hotel's 75 rooms feature fine fabrics and are fitted with carpeted floors, well-chosen furnishings and warm colours. Rooms are equipped with a desk, air conditioning and minibar, bath or shower, hairdryer and toiletries.

NOBLE CALEDONIA

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All special offers are subject to availability. Our current booking conditions apply to all reservations and are available on request.
Cover image: Meteora