



# UNDISCOVERED GREECE

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

15<sup>TH</sup> TO 24<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2019

NOBLE CALEDONIA

Mount Olympus from Dion



Makrinitza village



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, Thalassa Journeys and the programme features the Thessaly Chamber Music Festival as well as time to 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 four night stay in Larissa will give us the opportunity to take excursions to nearby places of interest, including Trikala, the reputed birthplace of Aesculapius, the god of healing.

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, beach 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.



Thessaly Chamber Music Festival



## CLASSICAL CHAMBER MUSIC

Adding to the uniqueness of this itinerary 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, Thessaly’s vibrant capital and the main city. Check in to the centrally located Divani Palace Larissa, our base for the next four nights and enjoy a welcome dinner this evening at a local restaurant. (D)

**Day 2 Larissa.** Located in central Greece, Thessaly is one of the country’s most interesting areas and yet it mostly remains beyond the usual tourist circuits. Strabo, the ancient geographer and historian, called it, “a country most blessed.” In the morning, visit the superb Diachronic Museum, whose exhibits of artefacts chronicle the history of Larissa and Thessaly from the Paleolithic period to the late Byzantine era, a span of about 10,000 years. Enjoy the afternoon at leisure and dinner at a local taverna. This evening we will attend the opening concert of the Thessaly Chamber Music Festival at Larissa’s 3rd century BC theatre. (B, D)

**Day 3 Larissa, Meteora & Trikala.** We leave Larissa in the morning for Meteora, one of the most extraordinary sights in Greece and perhaps in all of Europe. Rising from Thessaly’s valley, the Meteora Monasteries (“monasteries in mid-air”) are gigantic rocks on top of which are monasteries built by hermits some 600 years ago, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Visit the monastery of St. Varlaam, originally founded in the 14th century, which is covered with fine frescoes. The monastery’s refectory has been turned into a museum to house the monastic treasures. Continue to Trikala for lunch. The Homeric Trikke, Trikala is the reputed birthplace of Aesculapius, the god of healing. Return to Larissa for dinner before the concert this evening at Larissa’s Folklore Museum. (B, L, D)

**Day 4 Larissa & Dion.** We depart Larissa in the morning to visit one of the area’s premier wineries to taste the wines and enjoy lunch in



the countryside. The undulating hills north of Larissa have been known for their vineyards and wine production since antiquity. Continue on to Dion, a cult centre in antiquity and now an important and evocative archaeological site. Situated on the foothills of Mount Olympus, Dion was a sacred city dedicated to Demetra, the earth goddess, later supplanted by Zeus, after whom it was named. The city became prominent in the 4th century BC under Philip II and his son Alexander the Great. Explore the site, including the museum that houses an extensive superb mosaic found in Dion, and stop at a local taverna for dinner. Return to the hotel after the concert this evening which will be held at Dion's Archaeological Museum. (B, L, D)

**Day 5 Larissa to Portaria, Pelion.** Today we will drive from Larissa to Pelion, one of Greece's most characteristic and unspoiled areas, stopping along the way for lunch. As in antiquity, thick forests of chestnut, oak, beech olive and fruit orchards cover the slopes of Pelion's massif and, according to Greek mythology, Pelion was the home of the centaurs, depicted as half man, half horse creatures. The profusion of the vegetation, the magnificent scenery, the surrounding blue sea, the villages with the preserved architecture,

and the friendly and hospitable people make Pelion one of the most beautiful and welcoming places in Greece. Our home in Pelion will be the Xenia Palace Portaria, in the charming village of Portaria. Enjoy dinner at the hotel and our concert this evening will take place on a terrace in Portaria overlooking the surrounding hills and the city of Volos. (B, L, D)

**Day 6 The villages of Pelion.** Spend the day exploring inner Pelion's villages. Drive the forested road to the village of Kissos and visit the old church of Aghia Marina, whose interior is entirely covered in exquisite frescoes. Continue to the Aegean Sea coast for lunch at a seaside taverna after which we will spend some free time in this lovely spot where, weather permitting, you may enjoy a swim. Continue on to the lovely family-owned Hotel Lost Unicorn, in the characteristic village of Tsangarada, for coffee and tea. Dinner will follow our concert this evening which will be held at Kissos' church of Aghia Marina. (B, L, D)

**Day 7 Volos & Dimini.** Situated at the head of a spacious bay, Volos, Thessaly's main port city, occupies the site of Bronze Age Iolcos, the home of Jason, and the place from which he led the Argonauts in quest of the fabled

Golden Fleece. A replica of the Argo, the boat of Jason and the Argonauts, is moored in Volos' harbour. Drive in the morning to Volos and then on to Dimini, one of the most important Neolithic settlements in Greece. Settled around 5000 BC, Dimini's excavated houses, workshops and narrow streets provide a vivid picture of a Neolithic village. Continue to Nea Anchialos, a notable early Christian town that was abandoned in the 7th century and visit the site. Volos is known throughout Greece for its cuisine of a vast array of small dishes that are akin to tapas, which we will taste during lunch. After lunch, visit the superb Archaeological Museum of Volos, known for its collection of painted stelae from the nearby ancient site of Demetrias. Following the museum visit, we will continue to the headquarters of the Lyceum of the Women of Volos, an educational and philanthropic institution, where we will be hosted by its officers. The Lyceum's Neoclassical building includes a collection of traditional costumes. Enjoy dinner in Volos and this evening's concert will be held in the elegant main hall of the Volos Conservatory. (B, L, D)

**Day 8 Cruise the Pagasitic Gulf.** This morning we cruise the Pagasitic Gulf, the great waterway that borders Pelion's west shore, on a privately chartered boat. Sail first to the uninhabited islet of Prasouda, where the crystal-clear waters are ideal for swimming. Then on to Paleo Trikeri, a small island near the mouth of the gulf, where motor traffic is not allowed. Disembark and walk the short distance to the island's only village, crowned by an old Byzantine castle. This idyllic isle is known for its seafood, which we will enjoy during lunch at a restaurant facing the bay. Return to the hotel in the afternoon. (B, L)

**Day 9 Makrinitisa.** Spend the morning at leisure to explore Portaria at your own pace. In the afternoon drive to Makrinitisa, one of Pelion's most striking villages. Built on the side of a hill near Portaria, Makrinitisa is known as "Pelion's balcony" on account of its superb position that opens up to wide vistas. Old timber-framed houses and mansions with slate roofs are built on steep terraces. Its spacious square has a sculptured marble fountain and provides fine views. Explore this delightful place before the festival's closing concert at Portaria's church of Arghios Nikolaos, after which there will be a farewell dinner. (B, D)

**Day 10 Pelion to London.** Transfer to the airport in Thessaloniki for the 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: **£4795**  
Single: **£5495**

**PRICE INCLUDES:** Economy class scheduled air travel  
• Four nights accommodation at Divani Palace Larissa • Five nights accommodation at Xenia Palace Portaria • Meals as listed (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)  
• Wine, beer & soft drinks with lunch and dinner • Seven concerts as listed • Noble Caledonia Tour Manager • Guest Speaker • Local guides • Excursions • Gratuities • Transfers • Airport taxes.  
**Not Included:** Travel insurance, meals other than those stated.





## YOUR ACCOMMODATION

We have selected two of the region's finest hotels available for our stay.



Divani Palace Larissa



Xenia Palace Portaria



Deluxe Room



Lounge



Classic Pool View Room



Restaurant

### Divani Palace Larissa

One of the oldest settlements in Greece, Larissa is a major Greek city which offers visitors historical sites, museums, numerous shops, bars and restaurants, and the centrally located Divani Palace Larissa hotel is the ideal base from which to explore this ancient town. The hotel's air-conditioned rooms are styled in a palette of natural colours and each deluxe room is approximately 20 square metres in size and features an LCD television, safe, mini-bar, deep soaking tub, premium bathroom amenities, individual climate control and a private balcony with wonderful city views. The gourmet hotel restaurant provides traditional Greek and international cuisine and its bar is a great place for relaxing with a cocktail in the evening. The Larissa Spa Centre is the ideal place to unwind, featuring an indoor pool with waterfall heads, a steam bath and a varied menu of professional treatments. For exercise enthusiasts, the hotel also has a fully equipped fitness centre.

### Xenia Palace Portaria

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 feature a bathtub or shower, bathrobes, slippers and toiletries.

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