

Granite Springs Church

A Pilgrimage with Saint Paul: Greece & Turkey

March 28 – April 8, 2025

DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY

MARCH/APRIL 2025

Friday, March 28	Departure
-------------------------	------------------

D=IN-FLIGHT

The big day has arrived! This evening we'll meet at the San Francisco Airport to check in for the transatlantic flight to Istanbul, Turkey. Refer to the "Flight Schedule and Departure Instructions" for complete details.

Saturday, March 29	Arrive Thessaloníki
---------------------------	----------------------------

B=IN-FLIGHT

L=IN-FLIGHT

D=IN-FLIGHT

After changing planes in Turkey, we'll arrive in Thessaloniki, Greece's second-largest city and capital of the province of Macedonia. Here we'll check in for a two-night stay and a night of well-deserved sleep.

Sunday, March 30	Kavala > Philippi > Amphipolis > Thessaloníki
-------------------------	---

B=HOTEL

L=INDEPENDENT

D=INDEPENDENT

Today we will drive along the route of the Egnatian Way, the Roman road built in the 2nd century BC across the Greek peninsula from the Adriatic to the Aegean Sea. Our first stop is Kavala (ancient Neapolis), the port through which Paul passed with Silas on his way from Asia into Europe. Take time for lunch and sightseeing here before driving a short distance inland to Philippi, named for its founder, Philip II, the father of Alexander the Great. Here we visit the Greek Theater, a remnant of the original via Egnatia, the Roman Forum, and early Christian basilicas. Make a short stop to see the Lion Monument in Amphipolis and return to Thessaloníki, where the evening is free for an independent dinner.

Monday, March 31	Thessaloniki > Veria > Vergina > Kalambaka
-------------------------	--

B=HOTEL

L=INDEPENDENT

D=HOTEL

Our morning in Thessaloníki includes the Roman Agora, the Arch of Galerius, and the Byzantine Church of St. Demetrius. Departing Thessaloníki, we stop briefly to visit Berea (modern Veria), where tradition has Paul teaching the Bereans, as well as a monument dedicated to the apostle. Then travel the short distance to Vergina (ancient Aigai), to visit the museum there that was built over the tombs of Macedonian kings and displays the precious works of art found in them. Our day concludes in Kalambaka.

Tuesday, April 1	Meteora > Thermopylae > Athens
-------------------------	---

B=HOTEL

L=INDEPENDENT

D=RESTAURANT

We'll visit one of the famous Cenobitic Monasteries of Meteora today. Perched on top of huge columns of rock, they contain beautiful frescoes and icons and offer spectacular views. Stop at an icon workshop to see how these religious artifacts are made and then take a scenic drive to Athens, making a brief stop in Thermopylae on the way. This narrow passage is where 300 Spartans bravely fought against the massive Persian army led by King Xerxes in 480 BC. Upon arrival in Athens, we'll check in at the hotel and then enjoy dinner at Strofi restaurant overlooking the Acropolis.

Wednesday, April 2	Athens
---------------------------	---------------

B=HOTEL

L=INDEPENDENT

D=INDEPENDENT

A full day in Athens awaits! During our city tour, we see the Panathenaic Stadium, Constitution Square (Syntagma), the Hellenic Parliament, the Presidential Mansion, and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. After time for independent lunch, we head to the Acropolis, stopping at the Areopagus (Mars Hill) on our way up. This is where Paul gave his famous speech to the Athenian elders. The Acropolis is home to the most important religious shrines of Athens, including the Temple of Athena Nike, the Parthenon, and the Erechtheion with its Porch of Maidens. The evening is at leisure with an independent dinner.

Thursday, April 3	Corinth > Athens
--------------------------	----------------------------

B=HOTEL

L=INDEPENDENT

D=HOTEL

Take an excursion to Corinth today, the capital of Roman Achaëa that dominates land and sea routes across the isthmus linking central Greece with the Peloponnesus. See the Corinth Canal and Ancient Corinth, a very large site that is still being excavated, with its Temple of Apollo and the Roman Forum. If time permits, we'll drive up the Acrocorinth to see its impressive fortress. Upon return to Athens, relax over a group dinner at the hotel. (B, D)

Friday, April 4	Lavrion > Cruise: Mykonos
------------------------	-------------------------------------

B=HOTEL

L=ON-BOARD

D=ON-BOARD

Transfer to the port of Lavrion to board our cruise ship for visits to four Greek islands and the west coast of Turkey. Our first stop will be the island of Mykonos, a popular tourist resort known for its flowers, windmills, and whitewashed buildings. After exploring this island, we return to the ship and sail through the night to our next destination.

Saturday, April 5	Cruise: Kuşadası/Ephesus > Patmos
--------------------------	---

B=ON-BOARD

L=ON-BOARD

D=ON-BOARD

This morning, we arrive in Kuşadası on the Turkish coast and travel by bus the short distance to Ephesus during a private shore excursion. This magnificent ancient city is remarkably well preserved and features the Temple of Artemis (one of the seven wonders of the ancient world), the theater where a huge riot against Paul took place, the Library of Celsus, two agoras, the Odeon, Roman baths, and the Church of St. John. Then cruise to the island of Patmos, where John wrote the Book of Revelation. During an included (shared) shore excursion, visit the Monastery of St. John and the Grotto of the Apocalypse. Back on board, have dinner and sail overnight to Crete.

Sunday, April 6	Cruise: Crete
------------------------	----------------------

B=ON-BOARD

L=ON-BOARD

D=ON-BOARD

Arrive at the island of Crete this morning, birthplace of the Minoan culture and ministry location for Titus. Take an included (shared) shore excursion to Knossos, the oldest of the Minoan palaces and the first to be discovered. The remainder of the afternoon is free to explore beautiful Heraklion. You may wish to take a leisurely walk along the picturesque harbor and explore the iconic Venetian fortress of Koules, where breathtaking views and captivating tales of Venetian history await. At 6:00 p.m., the ship departs to cruise back to the mainland.

Monday, April 7	Lavrion > Athens
------------------------	----------------------------

B=ON-BOARD

L=INDEPENDENT

D=RESTAURANT

Our cruise comes to a close and we disembark at Lavrion. We'll have the day at leisure in Athens to explore independently and shop for our last souvenirs. We regroup and enjoy a farewell dinner at a restaurant in the *Plaka*, the oldest and most picturesque neighborhood in Athens.

Tuesday, April 8	Return
-------------------------	---------------

B=HOTEL

This morning, we'll transfer to the Athens Airport to check in for our flights back to Istanbul and then San Francisco. We are certain that your spiritual journey through Greece has been richly rewarding ~ and lots of fun!

(Meals included: B=breakfast, L=lunch, D=dinner)

Have a great trip – and thank you for choosing Witte Travel & Tours!



3250 28th Street SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49512
616.957.8113 | 800 GO WITTE
groups@wittetravel.com | wittetours.com