

DENVER BOTANIC
GARDENS

GARDEN OF THE GODS

A Springtime Journey to the Greek Islands

April 26 - May 7, 2022



DENVER BOTANIC GARDENS

Dear Member,

It is with pleasure and excitement that I invite you to join me on a magical springtime journey to Greece and the Greek islands at the time of year when the entire country becomes a vast natural garden. Greece is home to a stunning number of plant species, comprising the richest flora in Europe. More than 6,000 species thrive here, of which about ten percent are unique and can be found nowhere else in the world. This is also the land that gave birth to the science of botany, beginning in the 4th century BC. Ancient Athenians planted the Agora with trees and plants and created leisure parks, considered to be the first public gardens.

On this springtime journey we will witness the beautiful display of wild flowers that cover the land as we explore ancient sites, old villages and notable islands. We start in Athens, the city where democracy and so many other ideas and concepts of the Western tradition had their origins, where we will tour its celebrated monuments and witness its vibrant contemporary culture.

From Athens, we will continue to Crete, home of the Minoans, who, during the Bronze Age, created the first civilization of Europe. Our three days on this fabled island will give us time to discover leisurely its Minoan palaces, see treasures housed in museums, explore the magnificent countryside and taste the food, considered to be the source of the widely-sought Mediterranean diet. Crete is also famous for its flora and medicinal plants which have been in high demand since antiquity.

From Crete, we will sail across the blue Aegean Sea to crescent-shaped Santorini, perhaps the most spectacular island in the entire Mediterranean. Inhabited by a sophisticated society in deep antiquity, half of the island subsided after a cataclysmic volcanic eruption in the late 17th century BC. Some archaeologists and others have seen this event as the origin of the legend of the lost continent of Atlantis. During our two-day stay we will explore incredible Akrotiri, the Bronze Age town that was entirely covered with pumice and ash from the volcano's eruption.

Continuing our journey in the Greek archipelago, we will reach beautiful Naxos, the largest of the Cycladic islands, known for its impressive main town, ancient monuments, Byzantine churches with exquisite frescoes, picturesque villages and sandy beaches. From Naxos, we will visit Delos, the sacred island where the divine twins Apollo and Artemis were born, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and Mykonos, the quintessential Cycladic island, known for its white-washed architecture and cosmopolitan atmosphere.

To explore Greece and its islands when the sites and landscapes are carpeted with a profusion of wild flowers and aromatic herbs is a rare privilege. I hope you will join me and fellow members of the Denver Botanic Gardens on this memorable travel experience to the "Garden of the Gods."

Sincerely,



Sarada Krishnan, Ph.D.
Director of Horticulture &
Center for Global Initiatives

P.S. We have selected as our tour operator Thalassa Journeys, whose principals are from Greece and bring five decades of experience in serving America's leading cultural, educational and scientific institutions on high-quality educational travel programs. DBG's Panayoti Kelaidis recently served as the lecturer on a Thalassa Journeys trip in Greece and his enthusiasm for the experience led to our choice of this distinctive tour for our members. **Please call Thalassa Journeys at 866-633-3611 with your questions or to make your reservations. Space is limited to 24 travelers.**

Cover: Santorini in springtime

EXPERT GUEST LECTURER



Dr. Sarada Krishnan is Director of Horticulture and Center for Global Initiatives at Denver Botanic Gardens where she is responsible for directing the design and maintenance of the horticulture displays and collections, and for developing and leading global projects. She is also a faculty affiliate with Colorado State University in the Department of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture. She earned her B.S. and Masters degrees in Horticulture in India and at Colorado State University respectively, and her doctorate at University of Colorado, Boulder where her research focused on the conservation genetics of wild coffee (*Coffea* spp.) in Madagascar.

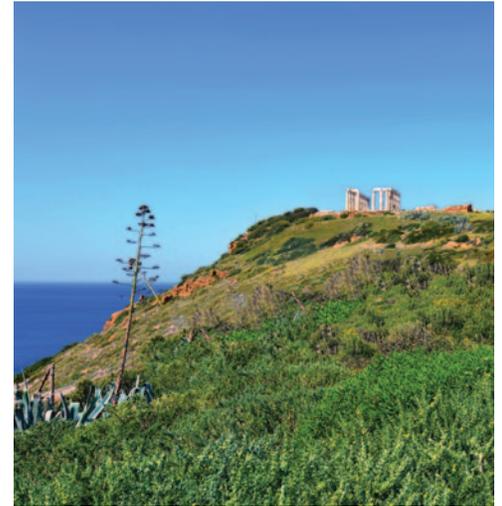
Sarada's broad interests include biodiversity conservation, agrobiodiversity, sustainable coffee cultivation, agroforestry, food security, botanic gardens and economic empowerment of women and girls in developing countries. She serves on numerous local, national and international boards and has published works on coffee genetic resources, botanic gardens and sustainable agriculture. An avid hiker, she can be seen hiking in the Rocky Mountains most summer weekends looking at wildflowers. An avid traveler, she has visited 39 countries to date and owns coffee plantations in the Blue Mountains of Jamaica.

The porch of Caryatids on the Athenian Acropolis





Acropolis Museum



Temple of Poseidon, Sounion

ITINERARY

Tuesday, April 26, 2022

DEPART THE USA

Depart the United States for Athens, Greece.

Wednesday, April 27

ATHENS, GREECE

Arrive in Athens and transfer to the elegant *Hotel King George*, located on Constitution Square, the heart of the city and within walking distance to many of Athens's attractions. In the evening, enjoy a welcome dinner.

Meals: D

Thursday, April 28

ATHENS and SOUNION

One of the world's most venerable cities, Athens is the capital of Greece and Europe's oldest city. Its ancient monuments are testimonies to its glorious past that gave birth to democracy and many other ideas and concepts that form an integral part of the Western tradition. In the morning, tour the Acropolis. Occupied since prehistoric times, the rocky plateau of the Acropolis rises dramatically out of the plain and dominates the modern city as it did in antiquity. The incomparable Parthenon and other temples and structures built in the 5th century BC

represent the highest achievement of architecture and art of the Classical period. Visit also the Acropolis Museum, which houses an outstanding collection of sculpture and other artifacts. In the afternoon, drive along the Athenian Riviera to Sounion to visit the Temple of Poseidon, magnificently set above the sea. Dwarf bearded irises and other flowers carpet the site. Dinner will be served at a local taverna.

Meals: B, D

Friday, April 29

ATHENS/HERAKLION, Crete

Fly in the morning to Heraklion, Crete's largest city and main commercial center. Upon arrival, transfer to the *Hotel GDM Megaron*, located near the old harbor and the Venetian fortress. The largest of the Greek islands, Crete is the reputed birthplace of Zeus and home of Europe's earliest civilization, the Minoan, which dominated the Aegean world and parts of the Mediterranean, starting at around 2000 BC, the period when the celebrated palaces began to be built. With an incredibly beautiful and varied landscape that harbors about 2,200 plant species, of which 170 are endemic, outstanding archaeological sites and museums, a population renowned for its friendliness and hospitality, and a cuisine that has been studied by the world's nutritionists for its health benefits, Crete is a



Mesembryanthemum Pink Wild Flowers

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Santorini

beguiling place to visit and explore. In the afternoon, tour Heraklion, including the enormous Venetian walls (Crete was under Venetian rule from 1204 to 1669); the church of Aghios Titos; the Venetian City Hall and its loggia; and the Historical Museum, whose exhibits offer an examination of Cretan history.

Meals: B, L, D

Saturday, April 30

EXPLORE CRETE

Today's exploration of Crete will reveal the island's beautiful and varied landscape, some of its ancient sites and the charming town of Rethymnon. Drive to Gortyn, the ancient city that rose to power during the 1st century BC when it became the capital of the Roman province of Crete and Cyrenaica (North Africa). Gortyn is noted for the Law Code, laws inscribed on columns, in 450 BC. Nearby is the Minoan palace of Phaistos, dating from the second millennium BC, beautifully situated in the fertile plain of Messara, overlooking Mount Ida, the birthplace of Zeus. Continue to the seaside resort town of Aghia Galini for lunch, and then drive through the scenic Amari Valley to Rethymnon, one of Crete's most atmospheric towns, known for its well preserved architecture from the Venetian and Ottoman periods. Explore the old town's narrow alleyways before returning to Heraklion.

Meals: B, L

Sunday, May 1

KNOSSOS and the HERAKLION MUSEUM

In the morning explore the magnificent palace of Knossos, the largest Minoan palace in Crete.

Clustered around a spacious courtyard, the palace contains a maze of rooms and passages that probably generated the concept of the labyrinth, home of the mythological monstrous Minotaur, half-man, half-bull. More than any other palace, Knossos reveals the brilliance and refinement of the Minoan civilization. Walls decorated with frescoes illustrate life as it was some 4,000 years ago. Continue to the superlative Archaeological Museum, home to the world's finest Minoan artifacts. Spend the afternoon at leisure to explore Heraklion on your own. Enjoy dinner at a restaurant specializing in Cretan cuisine.

Meals: B, D

Monday, May 2

HERAKLION/SANTORINI

Sail in the morning across the blue Aegean Sea to volcanic crescent-shaped Santorini, perhaps the Mediterranean's most spectacular island. Be on deck as the ship approaches Santorini to admire the spectacle of Phira, the island's white-washed main town, perched on the 1,000-foot-high volcanic caldera. After checking in at the *Hotel Santorini Palace*, visit the Museum of Prehistoric Thera, whose exhibits provide a fine introduction to the island's Bronze Age civilization. Then drive the short distance to Oia, the picturesque small town that is sited at the northern tip of the ridge.

Meals: B, L

Tuesday, May 3

SANTORINI

Known in classical antiquity as Thera, the

island was a flourishing trading center inhabited by a sophisticated society during the Bronze Age. In the late 17th century BC, a massive volcanic eruption collapsed half of the island and buried Akrotiri, its main town, in a thick layer of ash and pumice, preserving its houses, streets and squares as they existed 3,700 years ago. Some have connected the disappearance of half of the island to the legend of Atlantis. Starting in the late 1960s, excavations by Greek archaeologists brought Akrotiri to life, becoming one of the world's most important archaeological sites. Akrotiri conveys a powerful lifelike picture of a well-organized and prosperous Aegean prehistoric city. Spend the afternoon at leisure to explore and enjoy Phira on your own.

Meals: B

Wednesday, May 4

SANTORINI/NAXOS

Leave Santorini in the morning and sail to Naxos, arriving early in the afternoon. A major center of the prehistoric Cycladic culture and the birthplace of Dionysus, the god of the grape harvest, winemaking, wine and ecstasy, Naxos is known for its varied landscapes, ancient sites, picturesque old villages, Byzantine churches decorated with high quality frescoes, and fertile soil that supports a vibrant agriculture. In the 6th century BC it excelled in marble-sculpting. In the afternoon, explore picturesque Chora, the island's main town, its narrow streets spread below the Kastro, a citadel built by the Venetians, who held the island from 1207 to 1537. Visit the archaeological area of Mitropolis, which displays habitation from prehistoric times to the Roman period, and the Archaeological



A small chapel in Santorini

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Museum. Facing the town is a small islet, connected to the town by a causeway, on which are the remains of a temple built in the 6th century BC. Our home for the next two nights will be the boutique *Porto Naxos Hotel*. Meals: B, D

Thursday, May 5

NAXOS/DELOS/MYKONOS/NAXOS

Cruise to uninhabited Delos, the small island that was sacred to the ancient Greeks, on account of its being the birthplace of the divine twins Apollo and Artemis. The group of islands in the center of the Aegean Sea are called Cyclades because they form a circle around Delos. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, Delos is a vast archaeological site and a veritable open air museum. Walk the Sacred Way to see the remains of sanctuaries, temples, the celebrated Terrace of the Lions and houses, some of which contain exquisite mosaics. Adding to the unique beauty of the place is that at this time of the year Delos is awash with flowers. After exploring Delos, sail across the short channel to Mykonos, the quintessential Cycladic island, known for its white-wash houses and chapels, cosmopolitan atmosphere and smart cafes and shops. Spend time at leisure to explore Mykonos on your own before returning to Naxos.

Meals: B, D

Friday, May 6

NAXOS/ATHENS

Naxos was sacred to Dionysus, and we start our exploration of the island at his Sanctuary, a cult center since the 8th century BC. Continue to the Temple of Demeter, which was constructed in 530 BC, and then to the village of Chalki, with its distinctive architecture and the church of Protothronos, dating to the 6th century. Nearby are the villages of Moni, home of the equally early church of Panaghia Drosiani that contains important frescoes; Apeiranthos, perched on a high cliff; and Flerio, site of an ancient marble quarry, where we see two unfinished monumental statues from around 570 BC. Lunch will be served at a village taverna. In the late afternoon, fly from Naxos to Athens with farewell dinner and overnight accommodations at the *Athens Sofitel Airport Hotel*. Meals B, L, D

Saturday, May 7

ATHENS/USA

Transfer from the hotel to the Athens Airport for the return flight home.

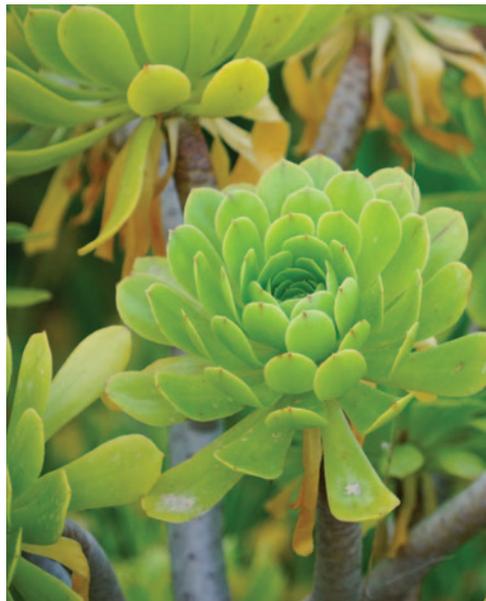
Meals: B



The celebrated spring fresco from Akrotiri, Santorini, c. 1550 BC



Delos



Houseleek in Mykonos



Tulipa praecox in the Cretan countryside

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Knossos

HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS

The health and safety of our travelers is of utmost importance to Thalassa Journeys. Accordingly, we require that all travelers provide proof of vaccination to participate on the tour. Thalassa Journeys follows the guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control, the World Health Organization and the protocols of our host country, Greece. We require that our tour manager, guides and motorcoach drivers are fully vaccinated. Our hotels and the venues for our included meals follow strict Covid-19 cleanliness protocols. Motorcoach capacity allows for safe distancing and masks may be required in public spaces. All guests will be provided with a sterilized whisper audio device that aids not only in hearing the tour guide, but in practicing social distancing. We appreciate the cooperation of all travelers in following these protocols to ensure a safe journey for all.

TRAVEL WITH A SMALL GROUP

When you travel with Thalassa Journeys, you will travel with a small group of like-minded travelers. Each of our programs normally consists of 18-22 persons. Traveling with a small group fosters a genuine sense of camaraderie, intimacy and exclusivity. The small size also allows for privileged access to places, less crowding at the sites and restaurants, and more meaningful discussions and interaction with the accompanying expert guest lecturer and local guide.

ABOUT OUR TOUR OPERATOR

Thalassa Journeys was established in 2018 by the principals of Travel Dynamics, the company that 50 years ago pioneered the concept of educational travel with America's leading educational institutions. The belief that travel is primarily a learning experience forms the core principle of Thalassa Journeys, which brings an unrivaled depth of experience to make your journey meaningful, unique and seamless. The founders of Thalassa Journeys are originally from Greece and know the country intimately. Thus you will enjoy access to places and partake of experiences that are not offered on other journeys to Greece.

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RATE

\$5,990 per adult, double occupancy.

Single room supplement: \$790

PROGRAM INCLUSIONS

- Two nights in Athens at the elegant *Hotel King George*; three nights in Heraklion, Crete, at the boutique *Hotel GDM Megaron*; two nights at the lovely *Hotel Santorini Palace*, Santorini; two nights in Naxos at the *Porto Naxos Hotel*; and one night at the *Athens Sofitel Airport Hotel*.
- American breakfast each morning at the hotels
- Four lunches and seven dinners at local restaurants, with wine or beer.
- Ship passage from Heraklion to Santorini and on to Naxos.
- All tours and excursions by private motor coach and professional English-speaking guides.
- Program of lectures and discussions by Sarada Krishnan, Director of Horticulture.
- Airport/hotel/pier transfers and handling of luggage in Greece at specified transfer times.
- Entrance fees to ancient sites and museums.
- Gratuities to drivers, guides and porters.
- The services of an experienced Thalassa Journeys trip director.
- All local taxes and service charges.
- The services of an experienced trip director.
- Comprehensive pre-departure material.

NOT INCLUDED: Airfare to Athens and within Greece; travel insurance; expenses of a personal nature; any meals and other items not mentioned in the itinerary and the Program Inclusions.

The combined cost of the flight from Athens to Heraklion and from Naxos to Athens is \$285 additional per person, subject to change, and will be provided by Thalassa Journeys. The cost will be included in your final invoice.

REGISTRATION

Enclosed is my check or credit card no. for \$_____ (\$ 1,000 per person) as a deposit to hold _____ place(s) on ***Garden of the Gods***, April 26- May 7, 2022. I understand that final payment is due ninety (90) days prior to departure and is payable by check or credit card.

Please make check payable to and mail with this registration form to:

Thalassa Journeys

8815 Conroy-Windermere Rd., Suite 406, Orlando, FL 32835

Phone Toll-Free: (866) 633-3611

AmEx Discover Visa MasterCard

No. _____

Exp. _____ 3- or 4-Digit Security Code _____

DR./MR./MRS./MS. FIRST LAST

DR./MR./MRS./MS. FIRST LAST

ADDRESS

CITY/STATE/ZIP

TELEPHONE (DAY) (EVENING)

E-MAIL

Preference at hotels:

Double accommodation

Single accommodation

Share with _____

Each participant must sign below: I/We have read the "General Information" section and agree to its terms.

SIGNATURE DATE

SIGNATURE DATE

GENERAL INFORMATION

PAYMENT SCHEDULE: A deposit of \$1,000 per person is required to reserve your space on the tour. Final payment is due 90 days prior to departure. Payment can be made by personal check or charged to a credit card.

CANCELLATIONS & REFUNDS: All cancellations are subject to a \$300 per person administrative fee. Cancellations received 61-90 days prior to departure will be assessed a penalty equal to 50% of the total program cost per person. Cancellations received within 60 days of departure are subject to 100% cancellation penalties. Requests for cancellations must be made in writing. No refunds will be made for any part of this program in which you choose not to participate.

INSURANCE: We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance, which is available for coverage of expenses in conjunction with cancellation due to illness or accident. Baggage insurance is also recommended. In the event that you must cancel your participation in a travel program, trip cancellation insurance may be the only source of reimbursement.

ITINERARY: The itinerary, accommodations and arrangements are subject to change at the discretion of Thalassa Journeys.

RESPONSIBILITY: Please read carefully the following terms and conditions, which constitute the sole, legally enforceable agreements between the traveler and Thalassa Journeys. Thalassa Journeys acts solely as agents for the traveler with respect to all transportation, hotel and other tour arrangements. In that capacity, we exercise all reasonable care possible to ensure the traveler's safety and satisfaction, but, we neither assume nor bear any responsibility or liability for any injury, death, damage, loss, accident, delay or irregularity arising in connection with the services of any ship, airplane, train, automobile, motor coach, carriage or other conveyance, or the actions of any third-party, involved in carrying the traveler or in affecting these tours. We are not responsible for damages, additional expenses, or any other losses due to cancellation, delay or other changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, civil disturbances, acts or threats of terrorism, travel warnings or bans, termination or suspension of war risks or other carrier insurance, quarantine, acts of God or other causes beyond our control. All such losses must be borne by the traveler, and tour rates provide for arrangements only for the time stated. In the event of cancellation, delay or rescheduling mandated by any of the aforesaid causes beyond our control, the traveler shall have the option of accepting in lieu of the original tour such rescheduled tour or other substituted tour(s) as may be offered by us, or else, receiving a refund of as much of such advance tour expenditures as we are able to recover on the traveler's behalf from carriers, third-party tour vendors, etc., but, we shall not have any obligation or liability to the traveler beyond the foregoing. We reserve the right to make alterations to the tour's itinerary and to substitute hotels, transportation methods, or lecturers if this is required. We reserve the right to cancel, delay, or reschedule any tour prior to departure, and, so long as this is not due to any of the aforesaid causes beyond our control, the traveler shall be entitled to a full refund of all monies paid to that point if he/she so desires. No refund shall be made for any unused portion of any tour. By forwarding their deposit(s), the traveler certifies that he/she and/or their dependents, minors or others covered thereby do not have any mental, physical or other condition of disability that could create a hazard for them or other travelers. We reserve the right to decline to accept or to decline to retain any person as a member of any tour should such person's health, condition or actions adversely affect or threaten the welfare or safety of other travelers or impede the tour. Baggage or valuables brought on the tour shall be transported, handled or stored at the traveler's risk entirely, and, we shall bear no liability or responsibility for any damage or other loss thereto. Resolution of any disputes arising hereunder shall be affected exclusively in the state or federal courts presiding in Florida, pursuant to applicable Florida law.

RATES: Tour costs are based upon current airfares, tariffs, and currency values. While we do everything possible to maintain the listed prices, they are subject to change.

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