

 **FRANCE**
THE FRENCH WAY

Crete, Greek Islands and Puglia

MONDAY 3 SEPTEMBER TO THURSDAY 20 SEPTEMBER 2018



Our Travel Philosophy

I have never been a great fan of the classic group tour mentality, and as a result strive to put together a programme which is very personable, and most of all fun! I think it is important that people see less, but see it better. I want people to meet locals and experience their lifestyles, as well as experiencing their history. I also want people to have time out, and the opportunity to relax as well - there's no point if you need a holiday at the end of the trip!! Don't be surprised if I get you out walking in the hills, swimming in the sea, or tasting food in a chef's kitchen. To think that you can do all this, as well as being looked after by a knowledgeable and personable guide! I am passionate about giving you the time of your life. It is not so much a case of making sure you see the tourist destinations as detailed by tour books, but encouraging you to open your eyes to see, sense and understand the world around you. This tour is magical and travels from Athens to the extraordinary island of Crete before being seduced by the colours and light of the Greek island of Santorini. We then travel to the "heel" of Italy to explore the region of Puglia – a wonderfully Mediterranean tour!



Athens, Greece

Monday 3 September to Wednesday 5 September 2018

We will start our tour this afternoon meeting at our hotel in the centre of Athens. During our time in Athens we will walk to the top of the Acropolis to learn about the basis of Greek mythology as well as to enjoy the astounding views. As well we will visit some important Greek monuments including the ancient Olympics site, yet still have time to wander through the centre of Athens.

Chania, Crete

Wednesday 5 September to Sunday 9 September 2018

Today we will be flying from Athens to Chania (Crete), from where we will drive to our beach front hotel just out of Chania. This will be our base for the next four full days of touring on the western end of the island of Crete. The town of Chania has had continual occupation for over 5000 years, possibly the longest and oldest reign of civilisation in the world – being here is an honour and quite moving. The island of Crete can only surprise and amaze you, from its history, to its beautiful beaches, to its Greek yoghurt with honey! You'll love it!

During our time here we will be spending days learning about the Second World War history and the input of the NZ, Allied and German forces from their arrival on the island through to their subsequent evacuation from the south side of the island. We will also be exposed to the Greek and Minoan history, and mythology associated with Crete, as well as spending time pottering around the attractive coastline and exploring our nearby town of Chania.



Agios Nikolaos, Crete

Sunday 9 September to Tuesday 11 September 2018

Today we are going to drive down to the eastern end of the island to fully experience the geography of the island. We have two nights at our lovely four star beach front hotel on the eastern end of the island in Agios Nikolaos. On our way there we are going to visit the remains of a Minoan Palace which pre-dates Greek history.

Santorini, Greece

Tuesday 11 September to Friday 14 September 2018

Today we will fly from Hiraklion to the island of Santorini. Over the next days we are just going to explore the island from one end to another, and especially just enjoy the views and the sunsets! The colours and light on this island are astounding.



Matera, Puglia

Friday 14 September to Sunday 16 September 2018

Today we will be travelling from Santorini via Athens to Naples by air. From the Naples Airport we are going to be driving to our hotel in the extraordinary town of Matera. The region of Puglia is very much the road less travelled by tourists, and we're lucky to be able to share it before everyone else knows about it. Throughout history this has been one of the poorest regions of Italy and in this town of Matera, where we will stay, people until very recently lived in the caves of the town. This is a unique and picturesque town where we will spend the next two nights.

Istria Valley, Puglia

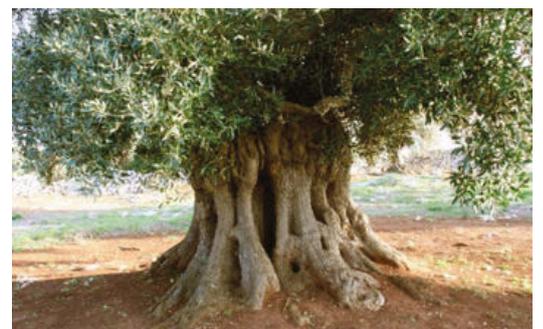
Sunday 16 September to Thursday 20 September 2018

We will travel the relatively short distance to the Istria Valley today, which is an ideal place to explore the wonderful region visiting towns with great sounding names such as Alberobello, Ostuni, Martina Franca and Locorotondo. Here one of the outstanding features of this region are the "trulli" houses with their conical stone roofs, a little like the bories of France.

This area is very rural and local, and offers something that you don't find elsewhere in Italy. Here we see a "bridge" between Eastern and Western Europe – ending up with a clash of styles and customs, a mixture of architecture. We visit whitewashed towns clinging to the tops of hills, bringing to mind the Greek settlers who were here in ancient times. This is an agricultural region where you will be surprised by the interesting level of productivity on these ancient lands. The region is calm, and you will notice the lack of English speaking tourists! As well as being introduced to the trulli structures, one of your lasting memories will be the 1000 year old olive trees all around us, and we will especially enjoy our time being introduced to these respected and protected "giants". To contrast this we will also experience the superb coastline on the Adriatic Sea with plenty of opportunity to sample the delicacies of this region.



Alberobello, Village of Trulli



Thursday 20 September 2018

Today our tour will end by driving back to the Naples Airport. From here you will be free to continue with your own travel arrangements either by travelling through to the Amalfi Coast, or to Rome, or you could fly directly to London or Paris from here.

Costings

It is of course too early to settle on a price for this tour. There will be a confirmed price by the end of August 2017.

As an indication of price I would envisage a pricing bracket of 6,200€ to 7,500€ per person (approx. NZ\$10,000 to \$12,000)(shared basis) for this 18 day holiday. My prices include all transportation, guiding, accommodation (a selection of charming three and four stay hotels), visits (unless mentioned otherwise), and many special meals are included. Not included in this is the internal travel from Athens to Chania, Crete to Santorini, and Santorini to Naples. The precise detail of what is included in the tour will be detailed with the confirmed price at the end of August.

Interested?

It is important if you are interested, to let me know promptly. As we travel with a maximum of eight persons in a nine seat minivan, it is wise to pencil your interest at this early stage in order not to miss out on the opportunity. If you have your name pencilled on the tour list now you will be assured a place (on a first in first served basis), but final confirmation will not be asked for until the end of October 2017, at which stage a deposit will be asked for.

Please contact me if you are interested:

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