GARDEN OF THE GODS
A Springtime Journey to the Greek Islands

May 9 - 20, 2020

Featuring
BETSEY A. ROBINSON,
Associate Professor, Art History
Dear Alumni and Friends,

It is with pleasure and excitement that I invite you to join 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. 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. We are pleased to be co-sponsoring the trip with alumni from Tulane University, and to have as our accompanying guest lecturer Betsy Robinson, Associate Professor and Acting Chair of Art History at Vanderbilt. Her expertise in Greek art, architecture, and landscapes will add immensely to the trip experience.

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.

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. 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 us, and fellow alumni and friends of Vanderbilt and Tulane Universities, on this memorable travel experience to the “Garden of the Gods.”

Sincerely,

Cary DeWitt Allyn
Director, Vanderbilt Travel Program

P.S. We have selected as our tour operator for this program Thalassa Journeys, which brings over four decades of experience in operating distinctive educational journeys in Greece and throughout the Mediterranean. Vanderbilt Alumni can anticipate a truly unique and rewarding experience on this custom-designed journey. Please call Vanderbilt Travel Office at 615.322.3673 with your questions or to make your reservations.
Betsey Robinson (A.B., A.L.M. Harvard; Ph.D. Penn) is Associate Professor and Acting Chair of Art History, and a Mellon Faculty Fellow in Digital Humanities. She has been at Vanderbilt since 2008, where she teaches the history of Greek and Roman art, architecture, urbanism, and landscapes. Betsey has excavated in Italy, Israel, and Greece, where she has been part of the American School of Classical Studies excavations of Ancient Corinth since 1997.


She is currently working on projects on waterworks and ancient mosaics at Corinth as well as a new book on sacred Greek mountains and sanctuaries and their reflections in the art and literature of Rome and Constantinople. Betsey grew up sailing in Massachusetts, and began her archaeological career with deep-sea exploration between mainland Italy and Sicily.
I T I N E R A R Y

Saturday, May 9, 2020
DEPART THE USA
Depart the United States for Athens, Greece.

Sunday, May 10
ATHENS, GREECE
Arrive in Athens and transfer to the Athens Plaza Hotel, 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

Monday, May 11
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

Tuesday, May 12
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

Mesembryanthemum Pink Wild Flowers
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

Sunday, May 17

**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

**Delos**
displays habitation from prehistoric times to the Roman period, and the Archaeological 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 three nights will be the boutique Hotel Naxian Collection.
Meals: B, D

**Monday, May 18**

**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

**Tuesday, May 19**

**NAXOS**

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 before returning to the hotel and an afternoon at leisure. Enjoy a farewell dinner.

Meals: B, L, D

**Wednesday, May 20**

**NAXOS / USA**

Morning transfer to the airport for the flight to Athens to connect with the flight home.

Meals: B
RATE
$5,780 per adult, double occupancy.
Single room supplement: $680

PROGRAM INCLUSIONS
- Two nights in the heart of Athens at the Athens Plaza Hotel; three nights in Heraklion, Crete, at the boutique Hotel GDM Megaron; two nights at the lovely Hotel Santorini Palace, Santorini; three nights in Naxos at the Hotel Naxian Collection.
- 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 Professor Betsy Robinson
- 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.
Join BETSEY A. ROBINSON, Associate Professor of History of Art, on a unique journey to The Garden of the Gods.

May 9 - 20, 2020

For Reservations and Information, please contact Vanderbilt Travel Office at 615.322.3673