



Global | **Learning
Across
Borders**
EXPERIENCE MATTERS®

Greece Revealed: Beyond the Beach, Behind the Ruins
Spring/Fall Semester Program



- *Experience, travel – these are as education in themselves.* •
--Euripides



Most would be content with cobalt waters, postcard beaches, whitewashed villages, iconic ruins, a token dance with a friendly islander, and an irresistible diet of olives, feta cheese, and baklava. But shouldn't the Alpha of western civilization—and its many fascinating permutations and contemporary anomalies—deserve more attention than the clichéd formula doled out every summer for tourists? Shouldn't the culture whose literal translation of “hospitality” is “love of the stranger” (*philoxenia*) beckon one beyond ouzo and bouzouki in search of authentic off-season Greece and Greeks? It is easy to surrender early to this country given its staggering scenery, weight of history, and wealth of monuments. Yet for the curiously-committed, the Greece semester program of Global Learning Across Borders™ (Global LAB) offers students an opportunity to uncover Hellenic dimensions and depths beyond the familiar.

Beginning in Athens and concluding in Istanbul, this experiential education program will allow for cultural immersion opportunities in relatively untrammled regions of both the Greek mainland and islands, including the Peloponnese, Macedonia, and the Northeast Aegean. As with all Global LAB semesters,

our survey of the culture will be broad, engaging, and multi-faceted: home-stays with warm and welcoming Greek families; basic Greek language instruction; cultural discussions on topics including Greek Orthodoxy, Byzantine history, Classical Greece, the arts, contemporary gender issues, and state relations with Turkey and the Balkans; service activities ranging from planting trees near Olympia to volunteering at a wildlife rehabilitator on the isle of Aegina; independent study projects (ISPs) which could explore diverse topics such as Greek cooking, ancient and contemporary music, philosophy, shepherding, mythology, local folklore, spiritual traditions, pottery, painting, ship-building, or archaeological preservation; and select excursions to locales both grand and subtle—from a circuit of the spectacularly perched monasteries of Meteora and a trek around and atop fabled Mt. Olympus, to encountering little-trafficked nooks on the isles of Chios and Samos—calibrating the daily native rhythms—and sharing a coffee and conversation with a village elder at the local *kafeneion* (café). The Parthenon and Delphi will also duly capture our attention and imagination, as well they should.

The final week's crossing into Turkey and transition from Europe to Asia (and from Christianity to Islam) are symbolic of Global LAB's mission: deconstructing misperceptions across borders and enhancing an awareness and understanding of the many shared traits and aspirations of different communities and cultures. Echoing Euripides, this experience will be filled with many such enlightening journeys.

Primary Locations

Athens, Delphi & Mount Olympus - Αθήνα, Δελφοί, και Όλυμπος

The oldest city in Europe, named after the goddess of wisdom, will be our introduction to Greece and the setting for the first week of the semester. Athens, with its over 4 million inhabitants—nearly half of the entire Greek population—has experienced a cultural renaissance since hosting the 2004 Olympics. Once synonymous with traffic and smog, and disparaged for its lack of modernity, Athens is now more sophisticated and cosmopolitan. Some would even venture “hip” with its rejuvenated art scene and an urban renewal that better integrates its classical sites with the contemporary lives of its passionate Athenians. Because it exemplifies Hellenism like no other Greek locale, because of its very



contradictions, and because its gritty charms only start to surface with an extended stay, we will choose to linger a bit and separate from the Acropolis-and-Out crowd.

During our stay here, we'll nestle in the Plaka, Athens' historic district, and launch our cultural experience with a lesson in “survival Greek” (you'll begin to appreciate the truth to the phrase, “It's Greek to me”), attend guest lectures on classical art, the role of religion in contemporary society, a primer on Greek history post-independence, and meet various Athenians for their perspectives on issues past, present, and future. Abbreviated ISPs will begin, taking advantage of the city's array of resources, and we'll engage in a community service effort with a local school. Guided antiquities tours of the magnificent Acropolis, the Ancient Agora, the Odeon of Herodes Atticus, and the renowned National Archaeological Museum will dramatize Athens' imprint on history. Finally, an excursion to Sounio and its impressive Temple of Poseidon; a trek to the highest point in Greece and abode of the ancient gods, Mount Olympus (9,571 feet); a pilgrimage to Ancient Delphi—“The Navel of the Earth”—with its riveting sense of place; and a few

days of service at a wildlife rehabilitator on the adjacent Saronic isle of Aegina will complete this initial phase of the semester.

The Peloponnese - Πελοπόννησος

The Peloponnese, the storied hand-shaped peninsula that forms the southern reaches of mainland Greece, will be our base for the second phase of this semester. Often overlooked by tourists making a beeline for sybaritic islands, the Peloponnese is rich in history, World Heritage-caliber archaeological sites (think Olympia, for starters), natural beauty, and welcoming inhabitants...an ideal, not-yet-discovered setting for cultural immersion and our first home-stay experience.

The water-front village of Xylocastro, along the Corinthian Gulf, will be our leisurely base for the next few weeks from which to appreciate this region and its peoples. Home-stays and the inimitable human interaction it allows, formal Modern Greek language instruction, cultural lectures on topics such as Greek music, mythology, cultural preservation, and rural development will frame your time here. In addition, you'll participate in informal-yet-insightful roundtable discussions with the everyday hoi polloi (from the Greek "the many")—which could mean a talk with local artisans (e.g. jewelry-making, woodcarving, and weaving), sailors, farmers (the famous Kalamata olive is from here), beekeepers/honey-makers, archaeologists, religious figures, or students curious about the lives and hopes of their counterparts in America.

Community service activities and Independent Study Projects (ISPs) will also continue while in the Peloponnese. Service options could include: assisting on a sustainable fisheries project in the Corinthian Gulf; participating on an archaeological dig; ship-building; volunteering at a village youth or senior citizen center; teaching English; helping with the olive harvest if our timing is right; or assisting with a reforestation project in the wake of the devastating 2007 wildfires which torched this region in particular.

ISP topics may be extensions from those examined in Athens or they may break new ground given our extended stay on the peninsula. Mythology, drama, poetry, philosophy, architecture, regional spiritual traditions, cooking, archaeology, photography, or additional, intensive Greek language instruction are just some of the possibilities.

As throughout our Greece semester, we will set aside time to explore and experience the treasures this unique area has to offer. Such excursions will include: Epidavros with its remarkable, 2,000 year-old, acoustically-pure theatre which is still used in summer during the annual Hellenic Festival; Ancient Olympia, birthplace of the Olympic Games (entering the site's stadium is a surreal moment); the pretty seaside town of Nafplion—Greece's first capital after Independence—with its distinct Venetian and neoclassical character; and The Mani, the wild, rugged and remote area of the south-central Peloponnese with its dramatic scenery and spirited, self-sufficient people (the Maniots claim to be direct descendants of Spartans).



Ikaria, Chios, and Samos – Ικάρια, Χίος, και Σάμος

True to our mission of discovering the “real Greece”, we next head for the far-off islands of the northeast Aegean Sea, jagged shapes within flirtation of Turkey. We’ll have our first “real” Greek Ferry experience of consequence, churning the wine-dark Aegean for seven hours (or might it be more? No matter. The oft-used and oft-heard phrase of *Sigha, Sigha*—more or less “Slowly but Surely”—will be your salty embrace). You’ll learn soon enough that Greek islanders cherish the elasticity of time and frown on mainlander bustle. In due course, we’ll be delivered to the little-known island of Ikaria, the isle of mythical Icarus—Daedalus’ son—who escaped Minos’ prison on wings of wax...yet flew too close to the sun and crashed into the sea, thereby creating his namesake island.



Ikaria will be our home for this “island phase” of the semester, and with a multi-week stay, you’ll come to appreciate the islander mentality, simplicity of being, and its contrast with the Athenian heartland (the debate endures on which Greece is the right way). Not yet besmirched by mass tourism, Ikaria is a laid-back place with bohemian, festival-loving inhabitants, and your contact with foreigners will be rare if at all. It is also an island of stark beauty with strange rock formations, therapeutic hot springs, windswept mountains, and secluded white pebble coves.

On this Aegean outpost, you will stay in rustic village home-stays or in basic shared apartments that are conducive to cross-cultural encounters. Modern Greek language instruction will recommence, and lectures and workshops will reflect your present geography: discussions on Ikarian history; folklore; Greece-Turkey relations; the rituals of *Panigyria* (the Dionysian festivals which accompany annual Saint’s Days); and possible roundtables with local farmers and fishermen. ISPs may tilt more towards the artistic given the island’s landscape with photography, painting, sketching, or sculpting as possibilities. And reflecting the gusto and documented longevity of Ikarians (these islanders reach the age of 90 at 4x the rate of others in the world), nutrition, cooking, music, poetry, storytelling—and, not to be underemphasized—dancing are others ready-made for research. For those interested in sailing, opportunities may surface as well. For our community service component, possible activities could include tree planting, fruit/olive harvesting, volunteering at an organic farm, shepherding (!), or assisting at a local archaeological site or renovation project. Aside from these options, however, we will dedicate a week collaborating with a local association dedicated to conserving Aegean flora and fauna; this will include a field course on a subject such as Aegean Marine Mammal Conservation and Research that will familiarize you, first-hand, with the serious environmental challenges this ecosystem faces.

*Whatever is good to know
is difficult to learn.*

--Greek Proverb

Not only will we get to know Ikaria—trekking village-to-village on well-worn goat paths, exploring hidden beaches, coming across 10th century Byzantine castle ruins, and discovering tucked-away, peaceful Byzantine chapels built into stone—we’ll journey to two other islands in this Northeast Aegean Archipelago: to Chios, the large, low-profile island renown for its mastic (gum) trees, traditional masticulture, and beckoning villages such as Pyrgi with its intricate grey-



on-white geometric and floral facades...and Mesta, a medieval castle town dearth of cars; and to lushly forested Samos—birthplace of Hera (wife of Zeus), Pythagoras, and Epicurus—with its throng-free aquamarine beaches and archaeologically impressive, World Heritage-listed village of Pythagorio.

Thessaly, Epiros, & Macedonia – Θεσσαλία, Ήπειρος, και Μακεδονία



After our authentic island immersion experience, we take a ferry back to the mainland where we'll finish our Hellenic chapter to the semester before concluding the program in Turkey. We first travel to the region of Thessaly in north-central Greece to marvel at the bizarre-but-beautiful area of Meteora (from the Greek “suspended in the air”)—rolling plains interrupted by sheer pinnacles adorned with monasteries dating to the 11th century. These remote, holy bulwarks ensconced atop monoliths acted as safe havens for Greek Orthodoxy during the waning days of the Byzantine Empire and increasing Ottoman influence. We'll spend a few days here, admiring the extraordinary geology on foot, touring the monasteries, meeting reclusive monks (some who travel by vertigo-inducing funicular), and absorbing the spirit and spirituality of this otherworldly place.

Next, we travel to the isolated, mountainous region of Epiros in the northwest, bordered by Albania and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Very few tourists make it here, so you will be rewarded with images and encounters that reveal yet another layer of Greece and Greeks. We'll visit the traditional, atmospheric mountaintop village of Metsovo, famous for its genuine hospitality, and whose locals are predominantly Vlachs—a historic, nomadic sheep-herding people who speak Arromanian (closely related to Romanian). Then we'll experience the highlight of Epiros, the magnificent Zagorohoria, a constellation of 46 preserved mountain hamlets flecked within the folds of the Pindos range and connected by a network of paths. The Zagorohoria are characterized by their limestone dwellings with slate roofs and while some villagers have caught on to the value of ecotourism, others continue a hardscrabble existence through farming and shepherding. Set in the grandeur of Vikos-Aoös National Park (home to the Vikos Gorge, the deepest in the world), we'll hike a bit to appreciate the splendor and the unique cultural exchanges reserved for this pristine corner of the country.

Thessaloniki, Greece's second-largest city, will be our final Grecian home. Located in the legendary region of Macedonia, Thessaloniki (aka Salonica) boasts a style and vigor the “big village” of Athens lacks. Tagged the “Seattle of the Balkans” because of its large collegiate population and artistic bent, the vibe here feels more about the future,

the possible, whereas Athens' forte feels anchored in history. And while Athens may be the crucible of classical Greece, Thessaloniki's Byzantine air is palpable (we are, after all, drawing nearer to Byzantium/Constantinople/Istanbul). With a week here, you'll be the judge. The nightly waterfront promenade (*volta*) from cafes to the landmark White Tower will help with your assessment, as will guest lectures on topics such as: Alexander the Great; Byzantine Hagiography and Iconography; The Balkan Wars; The Byzantine Empire; The History of Jewish and Muslim Communities in Thessaloniki; and Greece & The European Union. Abbreviated ISPs and a final community service activity will fulfill our Macedonian—and Hellenic—experience before we board a train and turn our sights East, to a new continent and new land, once Asia Minor, now Turkey.



Istanbul, Turkey

Turkey, the proverbial crossroads of East and West, will be your end destination on our Greece semester journey. A colorful and fascinating culture—at once traditional and modern, secular and religious, European and Asian—Turkey’s many layers and diversity will grab and intrigue you even in our short time here. Greek Orthodoxy wanes, Islam waxes. Byzantine artifacts dissipate, Ottoman ones proliferate. And yet despite the historic rivalry between these two great cultures, what will strike you are not only their differences, but their many similarities.

Istanbul is the country’s cosmopolitan, cacophonous, aromatic, kaleidoscopic, and friendly heart. Here you will spend your final week familiarizing yourself with the city, Turkish culture, and Turks, including: taking basic Turkish language lessons; engaging in discussions on Islam, Atatürk and the founding of the modern, secular Turkish state,



and a primer on Ottoman History; participating on a roundtable with Turkish students; volunteering on a social welfare project; attending a Sufi Whirling Dervish performance; and experiencing a special two night home-stay with a Turkish family. Finally, you’ll tour Istanbul’s incredible array of monuments and sights—from the regal Blue Mosque and sublime Hagia Sophia to the Topkapi Palace and the famed Bosphorus, the narrow channel separating Europe from Asia. And for a quintessential Istanbul experience, you’ll wander and lose yourself, momentarily, in the Great Covered Bazaar, suffused with sounds and scents that will linger with you long after your return.

Please note that due to many factors, the above itinerary may change somewhat. Consult the appropriate Greece semester program blog for the latest and most accurate itinerary.

2012 Program Dates

Spring Term: *February 13 – May 12, 2012 (*pre-travel orientation in US, February 13-15)

Fall Term: *September 10 – December 8, 2012 (*pre-travel orientation in US, September 10-12)

Applications accepted year-round on a rolling admissions basis (group size: 6-12 students)

2012 Semester Program Tuition

\$17,595 (not including r/t international airfare or travel to point of group departure—NYC or Washington, DC). Tuition includes: pre-trip preparatory and educational materials and orientation; dedicated student web pages for program communications and resources; all logistical facilitation; all hotels and guest houses; all meals; all domestic air fares/taxis/buses/trains; museum, park and antiquities entrance fees; Global LAB faculty and instruction; local coordinators, cooks, porters; all program elements (independent study projects and apprenticeships, community service projects, home-stays, community support/charitable contributions). Please note: Additional expenses not covered by Global LAB include: inoculations, travel insurance and international medical and evacuation insurance; visa/passport processing fees; personal costs (laundry, phone calls/emails, souvenirs, etc.).

Cancellation/Refund Policy

While Global LAB would like to provide as much flexibility as possible, this policy is based on the timing of our commitments to instructors, international airfares and travel arrangements, confirmation of in-country program components, logistical administration, and student preparation. We recommend that participants purchase travel insurance to protect themselves against financial loss in the case of personal emergency or other unforeseen events requiring last minute cancellation.

Program Deposit

A \$500 program deposit is due with student application. \$250 of the deposit is refundable up to 90 days prior to departure. If a participant withdraws his or her application within 90 days of program departure, the deposit is nonrefundable. The \$500 deposit is fully credited toward program tuition. If Global LAB does not accept a student's application, the full deposit is refunded less a \$75 processing fee.

Tuition Balance

Tuition balance is due in full 60 days prior to program departure and is 50% refundable up to 30 days prior to departure. If cancellation occurs within 30 days of departure, 20% of tuition is refundable.

How to Apply & Eligibility

Global LAB accepts applications on a rolling admissions basis, accepting qualified applicants until programs are full (maximum of 12 participants). For this reason, we recommend candidates submit their applications as early as possible. Semesters are open to those ages 16-22. No language prerequisite is required. While the semester is geared toward interim or 'gap' year students, high school seniors as well as college freshmen and sophomores will be considered.

Credit

For high school seniors, Global LAB works closely with you and your school to ensure that you receive the fullest credit possible for participating. University students may also be eligible for credit. Contact our Director of Programs for the very latest credit information and guidance.



Global Learning Across Borders™, a non-profit 501(c)(3) based in New York, exists to educate and inspire new generations of young people to become responsible and committed global citizens in their local communities and beyond. We do this through international cultural immersion and community service programs for young adults; global studies professional development programs for educators; and by partnering with schools to help design and launch experiential global education and service programs.