



FLY & DRIVE

West Macedonia: Journey to a Cultural Experience



DAY 1: Arrival and overnight in Thessaloniki.

DAY 2: Thessaloniki “pearl of Macedonia”

Breakfast at the hotel. Sightseeing of Thessaloniki. Thessaloniki is 2320 years of age and is named after the wife of Kassandros (founder of the city) and step-sister of Alexander the Great. Contemporary Thessaloniki is a modern city of about 1.500.000 inhabitants. It is the second largest city in Greece. It is the economic and cultural center of the entire Northern Greece as well as a crossroad between East and West, North and South. Thessaloniki is a coastal city, rich in Byzantine churches, museums as well as numerous other important history and civilization monuments. The city’s most attractive places are: The archaeological and byzantine museum, ‘the White Tower’ (which is the symbol of the city), St. Demetrius cathedral, the Galerius Arch, Rotonda, St. Sophia’s church and the old city’s glorious walls, called, ‘Kastra’. Overnight in Thessaloniki.



DAY 3: Walk “through the Gardens of Macedonia” to Edessa (entire trip is approx. 120km)

Drive to Vergina. Stop at the archeological sight of Vergina (Aigai), one of the most important villages in Greece. Here we will visit the Royal tombs and admire the world famous gold findings. The city of Aigai was the ancient first capital of the Kingdom of Macedonia. We will then drive to Edessa (optionally stop next to Naoussa at the School of Aristotele) and finally visit the ancient city and waterfalls. Overnight in Edessa.



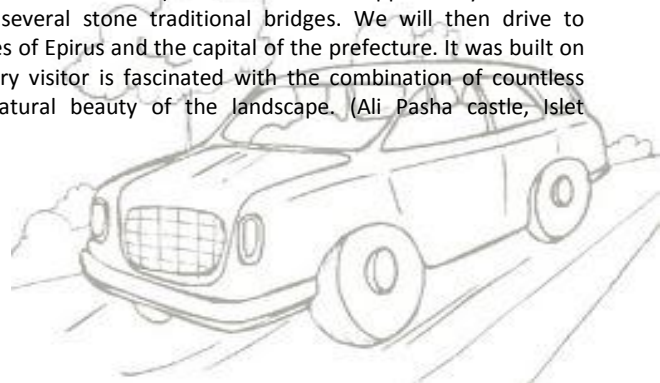
DAY 4: Kastoria “the city of Byzantine and post-Byzantine churches” and the capital of the production of furs. (entire trip is approx. 135km)

Breakfast at the hotel. Drive to Kastoria through Florina. Short stop at Florina’s archeological sites and Lake Vegoritida (we have the option to visit the Prespes lakes). We will have the time for sightseeing in Kastoria. Kastoria is built on the shores of a lovely lake with its 76 Byzantine churches, special architecture, its narrow lanes, and imperial mansions. It offers excitement that will fascinate every visitor. Kastoria flourished, both culturally and economically during the Turkish occupation, particularly from the 17th century and onwards. Since that time, the people of Kastoria have dedicated themselves to working with furs and to embroidery. Overnight in Kastoria.



DAY 5: Ioannina the biggest city of Epirus (entire trip is approx. 165 – 175km)

Breakfast at the hotel. Short visit at Dispilio – the prehistoric settlement situated on the southern shore of Kastoria Lake. It is one of the most important and oldest of its kind in Europe where the excavations unearthed a number of most significant findings. We will then drive to Ioannina through Zagorohoria (protected area of flora & fauna at the mountain of Pindos, the valley of Vikos – Aoois). You will have the opportunity to admire marvelous churches, numerous monasteries and several stone traditional bridges. We will then drive to Ioannina and we will explore one of the biggest cities of Epirus and the capital of the prefecture. It was built on the bank of Lake Pamvotis in 500 m altitude. Every visitor is fascinated with the combination of countless historical monuments and museums with the natural beauty of the landscape. (Ali Pasha castle, Islet monasteries, museum). Overnight in Ioannina.





DAY 6: Meteora "suspended in the air" (entire trip is approx. 110km)

Breakfast at the hotel. Drive to Meteora through Metsovo – one of the most picturesque and traditional towns in Greece, built in amphitheater style at an altitude of 1.156m. (short stop to taste local cheese “metsovone” and wine of local winery with Katogi Averof brand). Drive to Meteora and visit monasteries. The monasteries represent a unique artistic achievement and are one of the most powerful examples of the architectural transformation of a site into a place of retreat, meditation and prayer. Meteora is built under impossible conditions, with no possible roads and on rock pinnacles of deltaic origin which rise starkly over 400 m above the Peneas valley and the small town of Kalambaka. U.N.E.S.C.O has characterized the Holy Meteora as a "monument of Humanity that has to be maintained". Overnight in Kalampaka.

INTERESTING:

The monastery of Holy Trinity was a filming location in the 1981 James Bond movie: 'For Your Eyes Only'. The rock area was a primary inspiration behind the Linkin Park album of the same name.



DAY 7: Tempi – Dion – Katerini "Home of the Gods" (entire trip is approx. 180km)

Breakfast at the hotel. Drive to Dion across Macedonia, through Tempi – called “Garden of Europe”. The valley is actually an enormous valley separating the Olym. Mountains from the Kissafos. Stop in a small church of Agia Paraskevi and continue to the footsteps of Mt. Olympus. Visit the ancient site of Dion, where the mythical Gods were worshipped and where Macedonians paid their respects to the 12 Gods. We will visit a museum, a mosaic center and an archaeological site chronicling the history back to the 4th century BC. Finally, we have the option to visit Litohoro, a traditional Greek village. Overnight in Olympic Riviera area.

DAY 8: Departure (approx 70km)

Breakfast at the hotel. Drive to Thessaloniki & departure.

CATEGORY:	FLY & DRIVE
DURATION:	8 days / 7 overnights
INCLUDED:	accommodation on BB, Car rental, maps, all taxes
PRICE:	Please contact: info@melitours.gr

The tour can be generally rearranged depending on your needs. Arrival and departure are flexibly amended and the duration can also be shortened or extended. More services can be added.

