



Indigo Gazelle Tours

Gallop Further

Genuine Greece Cuisine, Culture & Wellness Tour

Featuring Celebrity Chef & Mediterranean Diet Advocate, Amy Riolo

9 Days/8 Nights: June 7-15, 2024

*We should look for someone to eat and drink with
before looking for something to eat and drink.*

-- 4th Century BC Philosopher, Epicurus

Days 1-3

June 7-10, 2024

Thessaloniki

From “The Jerusalem of the East” to “Sophisticated ‘Second’ City”

Seemingly destined to play supporting actor to iconic Athens, Thessaloniki is comfortable in its role and delivers a stylish jackpot of cultural and culinary jewels for the discerning traveler—all in a dramatic seaside setting along the Thermaic Gulf where, on a clear day, mythical Mount Olympus looms to the southwest and chill café life hums. Named after Alexander The Great’s half-sister, Thessalonike, Greece’s second largest city of 1.5 million possesses a unique allure and vibrancy by virtue of being home to Greece’s largest university, The Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. This youthful energy is manifest in the thriving art and food scene which we’ll experience during our time here.

Our first full day will include a walking food tour with samples aplenty. From the sesame-studded bread rings found on street corners (“koulouria”), Thessaloniki’s famous “bougatsa” (filo pastries filled with sweet semolina custard or savory cheese or minced meat), to tangy goats-milk cheese (“myzithra”) and sweet and nutty sheep’s milk cheese (“graviera”) paired with highly-seasoned “pastourma,” an air-dried meat with Asia Minor roots, you’ll begin to understand Thessaloniki’s well-earned culinary chops. Then onward to its bustling open food markets for endless succulent olives and prized olive oils, the region’s renowned peaches, red Florina peppers, then fresh seafood—

marinated sardines, anchovies with lemon, and crispy “kalamari” ...all served with a shot of ouzo or “tsipouro,” Greece’s bracing distilled spirit of pomace. Perhaps a serving of “soutzoukakia” (spicy meatballs in tomato sauce) or “dolmades” (stuffed vine leaves) before concluding with Thessaloniki’s quintessential dessert of “trigona” (triangular shapes of baked phyllo filled with custard, and Greek coffee. With each taste we’ll learn of the culinary origins and reinterpretations of these delicacies that have transcended many empires and traditions across millennia. UNESCO designated Thessaloniki a City of Gastronomy in 2021 with good reason.

The next day, or primary focus will be more culture and (just a bit!) less cuisine. A guided tour of this walkable and welcoming city will reveal in sites and artifacts the mosaic of influences that our palates experienced the day before. Founded in 315 B.C., Thessaloniki possesses cultural imprints from the Classical Greece, Macedonian, Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, Ottoman, and contemporary Greece periods. Vast indeed! In addition, Thessaloniki’s Sephardic Jewish presence dates from the 2nd Century B.C., once numbering close to 60,000 and earning the moniker of “Jerusalem of the East” for its influence. Tragically, Germany’s brutal occupation of Greece during WW II and The Holocaust extinguished over 95% of Thessaloniki’s Jewish community, leaving only about 1,500 in the current day.

Although much of the city was destroyed by the fire of 1917 (the “Ano Poli”, or Upper City, largely avoided this catastrophe) many of its ancient churches, mosaics, and monasteries survived and are recognized as Paleochristian and Byzantine UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Among them, The Rotunda, built in the early 4th Century A.D. by Caesar Galerius, with its magnificent early Christian mosaics, and the enormous church of Saint Demetrius—the patron saint of Thessaloniki who was martyred on the original site—with its own resplendent mosaics from the 7th Century A.D. (the church suffered major damage from the 1917 inferno but has been carefully restored to its original design). The 15th century White Tower on the waterfront is a city landmark and, despite its notorious past as a torture chamber and prison, offers outstanding views of the bay and promenade. Along the way, we’ll also pass through the Arch of Galerius (erected in 303 A.D. to celebrate a victory over three Persians), pass by the ruins of the 1st Century A.D. Roman Agora, perhaps enter the 8th Century Agia Sophia Church to take in its impressive mosaics and frescoes, note that Mustafa Kemal Atatürk—revolutionary founder of modern Turkey—was born here and his home is now a museum, and finally, time-permitting, visit the Archaeological Museum which has treasures from the

Macedonian and Hellenistic epochs. These sites are just a fraction of Thessaloniki's cultural artifacts across time and space and may force you to reconsider a more appropriate title to "Second City."

On our final morning, we depart for the airport after breakfast. Our flight to Ikaría will have a brief stopover on the island of Lemnos before continuing to our next destination, Ikaría, with its own unique culture and cuisine.

Days 4-9

June 10-15, 2024

Ikaría

"The Isle of Longevity"

"Genuine Greece" is said to reside in the northeast Aegean, off the well-worn (but still beautiful) circuit, on the rugged, rustic, authentic, wind-whipped island of Ikaría. We'll approach this 21 mile long x 5 mile wide island by plane, recalling mythological Icarus' hubris as his waxed wings melted in the sun, plunging him into the sea and birthing his namesake memorial (we'll keep our hubris in check). Today, it is also known as "the island where people forget to die," and the perfect place for us to discover culinary medicine – and just how delicious "culinary medicine" can be with a unique workshop presented by Chef Amy Riolo.

One of only a handful of "Blue Zones" around the world—a locale where inhabitants live measurably longer, more lucid, more active, and healthier lives—Ikaría will reveal its longevity formula during our four day stay here. Rx #1: Keep your watches stowed away. Rx #2: Lace up your walking shoes. Rx #3: Yawn. Restorative nap anyone? Rx #4: Commune. Dance. Work those "komboloi" (worry beads). Friendship, fellowship, intergenerational connectivity are keys—long coffees and backgammon with fellow Ikarians deliver years. Rx #5: Find a passion—work, a hobby, a vocation—and don't quit it (don't "retire" in the traditional sense); Rx #6: Learn those dietary secrets (polyphenol/fountains of youth spoiler alert: potent homemade wine, herbal tea, goat's milk, Greek coffee, native thyme honey, wild greens, locally harvested sea salt, legumes, olive oil, infrequent meat) with two unique cooking classes led by Chef Riolo during our stay here:

(1) At our villa compound, Chef Riolo will lead an intimate Greek rustic bread and/or pastry-making (baklava, loukoumades, kourembiedes (Greek sand tarts), and finikia are all sweet possibilities) after her lecture on Greco-Roman, Byzantine, and Ottoman influences on cuisine; and

(2) Chef Riolo will also orchestrate a cooking class of Ikarian longevity specialties one evening. The menu may include: “kopanisti” (Ikaria’s soft cheese); stuffed zucchini fritters; fried feta with honey; mousaka; pastitsio; lentil salad with fennel, onions, and herbs or the simple and fresh “horiatiki” (village) salad; “hortopita” (wild greens savory pie); or collard green dolmades filled with dried corn and herbs. Can you taste the vigor and vitality on your palate?

Our initial base will be in the walkable, placid seafront village of Faros (we’ll transfer here from the airport less than 10 minutes away) with a line of lazy and picturesque beach tavernas and a captivating view of the Fourni Islands straight away (over your left shoulder, admire the volcanic-like face of Mount Kerkis on Samos). Here, we’ll enjoy several convivial meals and acclimate to the island’s languid, present, joyful pace. The nearby scenic and quiet Iero Beach is the gateway for a short hike to Dionysus’ Cave, the legendary birthplace of this god. A tour of the dramatic 4th Century BC Drakano Watchtower is another pilgrimage we must consider. With good fortune, we may also be regaled by stories from the island’s lone Orthopedist who also happens to be a farmer, winemaker, fisherman, sailor, sea-salt gatherer and all around good-vibe Doctor. In him and other Ikarians you meet, you will profoundly see that zestful, carefree essence which rewards them with a “Blue Zone” ribbon.

We’ll also take an overnight excursion across the island’s mountainous spine (the highest elevation is over 3,400 feet), affording us dramatic Aegean vistas and the redolent scent of pine and sage as we make our way down to the slightly more buzzy seaside village of Armenisits. En route, take note of older women foraging for wild herbs, the checkerboard of bee boxes on a slope, a shepherd with his flock, and the many old goat trails (“monopatia”—the natural Ikarian StairMaster)—all part of Ikaria’s self-sustaining ethos and “Blue Zone” formula. If time allows, you may venture a peek at famed, nearby Nas Beach near the ruins of the ancient Temple of Artemis, hear the roar and see the violent surf of the Aegean in contrast to Faros’ calm waters—rip currents are severe here, so take caution if you elect to wade.

The highlight during this northern detour will be an exclusive tasting and scenic sunset dinner at a small, but acclaimed, winery in Ikaria's highlands. Here, the island's legendary method of wine-making via natural fermentation in earthen clay pots is being preserved; the indigenous "Pramnian" wine was referenced by Homer and Hippocrates and is noted for its dryness coupled with high alcohol content. Brace yourselves. There is also an interesting folklore museum on site and historian-architects will appreciate the old stone house on the property—built in the centuries-old fashion to evade pirates, using stone/slate, earth, and trees as camouflage from potential marauders 1,000 feet below at sea. You will see many such innovative structures if you look hard enough. If there is wine, there must be some live music which then means dancing in the vineyard (if that doesn't sound mythological enough) is a strong possibility. Ikarians (Greeks, for that matter) have a frothy fever for dance, and when the "Ikariotis" folk song strikes, the sensual, sinuous melody summons locals and travelers alike into that slow, curlicue of a festive circle that can go on until dawn. Pagan in origin, Ikaria's famous summer "panegyria"—festivals celebrating saint's/feast days and binding local communities—can attract thousands in a days-long, uninhibited blend of dance, music, wine, and good cheer. We'll orchestrate our own miniature, abridged panegyri this night. Magic dust from Dionysus' Cave has a long shelf life.

After breakfast the next day, we'll visit the quaint mountain village of Raches with its pretty stone square, cafes and shops before we return south to Faros. A coffee, a koulourakia (that addictive, buttery twist of a cookie), another shot of the local firewater, "tsipouro," a thunderclap of laughter among new friends...distill this variegated recipe for life and living for the journey back. Have a look at our quick reference-guide: [Ikaria: Isle of Longevity](#)

Our final night of the tour are back in Faros, and if a panegyri is scheduled in a nearby village, we'll go and immerse ourselves into this quintessential Ikarian spectacle—if not 'til dawn, at least until midnight. Any remaining time is for simple relaxation, a final Aegean swim, a long coffee, in our adopted village. Check, check, check on our longevity checklist.

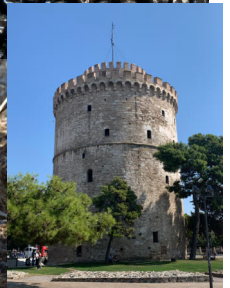
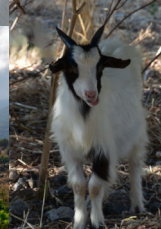
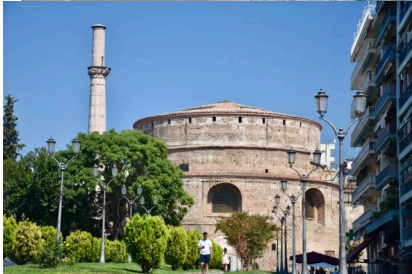
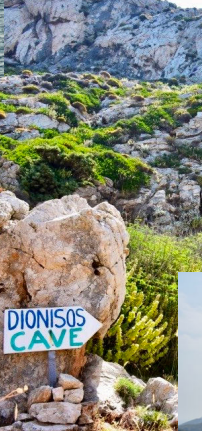
While some may elect to return home once our tour concludes, others may wish to give serious consideration to extending the journey. Where? For starters, Athens, of course. But also pulsing Mykonos, spiritual Patmos, or gorgeous Lipsi—all accessible by ferry from Ikaria—are a variegated, alluring trio of options. Whenever we decide to leave Ellas,

we'll hopefully not only pack feta-stained laundry and heather honey, but also those very real longevity and life-affirming habits, practices, and dispositions that can transfer, in some form, to our oft-overcomplicated, overcooked milieus back home. In the words of Nikos Kazantzakis' lyrical Zorba the Greek: "I felt once more how simple and frugal a thing is happiness: a glass of wine, a roast chestnut, a wretched little brazier, the sound of the sea. Nothing else."

Tour Details

Tariff: \$7,945 per person (double or single occupancy) inclusive of:

- Tour and Cultural Leadership Services of Alex Safos, Indigo Gazelle
- Culinary Leadership Services of Chef Amy Riolo
- In-country flight, one-way: Thessaloniki->Ikaria (1 checked bag per person included). International airfare and return travel from Ikaria is not included.
 - **This tour concludes on Ikaria after breakfast on June 15th to allow travelers the option to extend their trip by visiting other islands via ferry from the port of Agios Kyrikos or returning to the Thessaloniki or Athens via air and exploring the mainland before their return to the US. Indigo Gazelle is happy to offer suggestions to append to this tour.**
- All ground transportation/transfers during the tour except upon arrival in Thessaloniki
- Lodging, including taxes, in Thessaloniki and Ikaria
- Daily breakfasts in Thessaloniki and Ikaria
- Private guided cultural tour of Thessaloniki
- Admissions to sites and museums
- Private guided culinary tour of Thessaloniki
- A lecture on Thessaloniki by an acclaimed professor
- 1 lunch and 3 dinners in Thessaloniki (1/2 bottle of wine pp included for dinner)
- 4 lunches and 3 dinners in Ikaria (1/2 bottle of wine pp included for dinner)
- 1 pastry/bread-making workshop with Chef Riolo
- 1 Greek cooking class dinner with Chef Riolo
- Winery tour, tasting, and vineyard dinner in Ikaria with musical entertainment
- An olive oil and honey workshop/tasting conducted by Chef Riolo
- A culinary medicine workshop by Chef Riolo
- Presentation on "The Philosopher's Kitchen" by Chef Riolo
- Guided excursions to Ikaria beaches and sites of note (e.g. Dionysus' Cave, Drakano Tower)
- Gratuities for driver(s), guest speakers, and local guides



Payment

A non-refundable deposit of \$1,000 per person is due by March 15, 2024

Balance of payment, \$6,945 per person is due by April 6, 2024

*Only checks—payable to “Alex Safos, Indigo Gazelle”—are accepted; mail to:

Alex Safos
Indigo Gazelle Tours
2321 Nordok Pl
Alexandria, VA 22306

Terms & Conditions

Cancellation Policy: Tour cancellations must be made in writing and are effective from date of postmark or email time-stamp. Deposits are partially refundable: traveler cancellations made before April 6, 2024 will result in a 50% refund of the deposit. Cancellations made after April 6, 2024 are subject to full forfeiture of the tour price unless the tour is fully subscribed and your space is resold (in which case a \$500 service fee will apply). Leaving the tour in progress, for any reason whatsoever, will not result in a refund, and no refunds will be made for any unused portions of the tour.

Indigo Gazelle reserves the right to cancel any tour due to insufficient enrollment that makes the tour economically unfeasible to operate or because of good-faith concerns with respect to the safety, health, or well-being of the participants, including the tour leader. Indigo Gazelle also reserves the right to interrupt the tour once in progress because of good-faith concerns with respect to Covid, other identified pandemics, terrorism, and/or the safety, health, and well-being of all participants, including the tour leader. Indigo Gazelle strongly considers guidance from the US Department of State and CDC in addition to other official and unofficial sources in these matters. If a tour is canceled for any of these reasons prior to departure, the tour price will be refunded minus 50% of the partially refundable deposit. Participants leaving the tour in progress, for any reason whatsoever, will not result in a refund, and no refunds will be made for any unused portions of the tour if Indigo Gazelle cancels the tour in progress due to the aforementioned reasons. Participant costs to leave the tour will be the responsibility of the participant. Trip Interruption coverage—in addition to Trip Cancellation coverage—is therefore **highly recommended** for such scenarios.

International travel, accommodations, and ground transportation before the tour commences on the afternoon of June 7, 2024 upon check-in at your Thessaloniki hotel are the sole responsibility of the traveler as are expenses once the tour concludes on Ikaria the morning of June 15, 2024. **Do not** make travel arrangements to Greece before first contacting Indigo Gazelle to ensure the tour is fully booked.

This exclusive small group tour is limited to 8 participants with a minimum of 6 to be realized.

Refundability of airline tickets are up to the respective carriers/providers and the tour participants' travel insurance which is **highly recommended**.

***Travel Insurance/Trip Cancellation/Trip Interruption/Overseas Medical Insurance/Emergency Evacuation coverage are not included.* Travel and Trip Cancellation (especially "for any reason" coverage), and Trip Interruption insurance along with Overseas Medical Insurance with Emergency Evacuation coverage is highly recommended.**

Meals, snacks, beverages, services, and activities not noted in the itinerary above are at the discretion and cost of the traveler.

Extra baggage fees beyond the standard allowance are the responsibility of the traveler.

Unless otherwise noted, alcoholic beverages are not included.

Fares for taxis, buses, or other transportation for independent excursions are not included.

Tips to bellhops and hotel staff for luggage assistance or other personal services are not included.

Note that this tour involves moderate exercise with significant walking at all destinations with hilly elevations. Please be physically prepared and pack appropriate footwear.

Accommodations in Thessaloniki will be in 4-5* full-service lodgings. In Ikaria, travelers will share adjoining, limited-service luxury villas but have their own private bedroom and bathroom along with a communal pool. There will also be an overnight at a 3* seafront hotel in northern Ikaria.

By participating on this tour, you hereby grant Indigo Gazelle permission to use any and all proprietary and copyrighted media (photos, video, audio, etc.) created/captured by Indigo Gazelle on this tour for marketing, advertising, promotional, and/or educational purposes.

Mutual Waiver and Indemnity Agreement

Indigo Gazelle Tours, LLC ("Indigo Gazelle") offers its participants the opportunity to experience international travel/culinary and cultural tours. Certain potential risks to personal health and safety are associated with international travel and residence in a foreign country. You should not participate in a such a tour unless you are willing to accept the associated risks.

Indigo Gazelle cannot guarantee the health and safety of participants in a travel abroad program or eliminate all risks from travel abroad environments.

By submitting your reservation form for this program and signing and dating this Mutual Waiver and Indemnity Agreement, you are agreeing to the following:

I understand that there are certain risks associated with international travel and residence in a foreign country and that Indigo Gazelle, including its owner and tour leader, cannot control or eliminate these risks.

I understand that these risks may include exposure to potentially serious health and safety hazards including, but not limited to: transportation accidents; storms, floods, earthquakes, and other natural disasters; infectious diseases, inadequate medical care, remote access to medical treatment; armed insurrections; and terrorist activities.

I understand that Indigo Gazelle is not in a position to guarantee my personal health or safety during my participation in a culinary and cultural tour abroad.

I understand that Indigo Gazelle cannot monitor or control all of the daily personal decisions, choices, and activities of individual participants.

I understand that Indigo Gazelle cannot assure that U.S. standards of due process apply in overseas legal proceedings or provide or pay for legal representation for participants.

I understand that Indigo Gazelle cannot assume responsibility for the actions of persons not employed or otherwise engaged by Indigo Gazelle, for events that are not part of the program, or that are beyond the control of Indigo Gazelle and its subcontractors, or for situations that may arise due to the failure of a participant to disclose pertinent information.

I understand that Indigo Gazelle acts only as an agent for the various independent suppliers that provide hotel accommodations, transportation, sightseeing, activities, or other services connected with this tour. Such services are subject to the terms and conditions of those suppliers. Indigo Gazelle and its respective employees, agents, representatives, and assigns accept no liability whatsoever for

any injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or any other incident which may be caused by the negligence, defect, default of any company or person in performing these services. Responsibility is not accepted for losses, injury, damages or expenses of any kind due to sickness, weather, strikes, hostilities, wars, terrorist acts, acts of nature, local laws or other such causes. All services and accommodations are subject to the laws and regulations of the country in which they are provided. Indigo Gazelle is not responsible for any baggage or personal effects of any individual participating in the tours/trips arranged by Indigo Gazelle. Individual travelers are responsible for purchasing a travel insurance policy, if desired, that will cover some of the expenses associated with the loss of luggage or personal effects.

I understand and hereby acknowledge that I assume all risks incurred by my participation in an Indigo Gazelle international travel program.

I understand that I have the option to invite an attorney review this document and advise me of my rights.

In consideration of being allowed to enroll and participate in an Indigo Gazelle international travel program, the traveler(s) listed on the reservation form hereby release Indigo Gazelle, its owner, agents, and employees from any and all claims arising out of or in any way connected with any Indigo Gazelle program and the traveler's/travelers' participation in the program, including, but not limited to the risks as outlined above.

Signature (required) _____ Date _____

Signature (required) _____ Date _____

Genuine Greece Cuisine, Culture & Wellness Tour

Thessaloniki ♦ Ikaria ♦ June 7-15, 2024 | RESERVATION FORM

To reserve a place, please return this form and a signed mutual waiver and indemnity agreement with your non-refundable deposit of \$1,000 per person by March 15, 2024 to:

Alex Safos
Indigo Gazelle
2321 Nordok Pl.
Alexandria, VA 22306
—Or call (571) 217-9059 or email alex@indigogazelle.com for more information

Final payment of \$6,945 per person is due no later than April 6, 2024.

Name/s of Traveler/s as depicted in Passport(s)

Date(s) of Birth _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____ Fax _____ Email _____

ACCOMMODATIONS

I wish to share a room with: _____

Double (1 shared bed) Twin (2 beds) Single Occupancy

PAYMENT

Enclosed is my check for my non-refundable deposit of \$1,000 per person, payable to "Alex Safos, Indigo Gazelle"

I/We confirm that I/we have carefully read and agree to the Terms and Conditions and Mutual Waiver and Indemnity Agreement of this program, and agree to full payment made out to "Alex Safos, Indigo Gazelle", by check no later than April 6, 2024. *Each participant must sign below:*

Signature (required) _____ Date _____

Signature (required) _____ Date _____