

Bicycle Tours in Greece: Cycling Ancient Greece: Sparta to Kardamyli

OVERVIEW



Our bicycling tour of the Southern Peloponnese starts in ancient Sparta and covers the regions of Laconia and Messinia focusing on the Mani Peninsula, an area bursting with ancient and mythological history. The Mani Peninsula also has some of the most dramatic and varied scenery in Greece, much of it still wonderfully unexplored. You will bicycle through diverse landscapes including the lush, steep foothills of the Taygetos Mountains, pristine coastal coves dotted with tiny villages nestled amid olive groves, and arid landscapes peppered with abandoned stone towers in the south of the peninsula. We begin our cycling adventure in Mystras, home to one of Greece's most beautiful archaeological sites, and ride along hilly coastal roads, staying in the picturesque villages of Gythio and Areopoli before ending the tour with a two-day stay in charming Kardamyli.

***If this sounds great but you'd prefer a longer tour, check out our 12-day [Cycling Ancient Greece: Sparta to Kardamyli Plus! Pylos](#), where we'll continue our journey along the Akritas peninsula. This peninsula is known for its idyllic coastline and the medieval castles of Koroni, Methoni and Pylos.

HIGHLIGHTS

UNESCO World Heritage site of Mystras, History of the Ancient Spartans, Mysterious tower houses of the Deep Mani, Cycling on quiet roads, Spectacular coastal scenery and views, Experience traditional Greek village life

TOUR FACTS

Tour Style	 Classic: Learn more about our Classic tours at https://www.experienceplus.com/tours/bike-tour-styles/classic-tours
Includes	8 days, 7 nights' accommodations; meals as noted in itinerary; Admission to the Archaeological site of Mystras with guided tour; and the usual (see below).
Countries	Greece
Begin/End	Mystras/Kardamyli
Arrive/Depart	Athens International Airport (ATH)
Total Distance	291 km (181 miles)
Avg. Daily Distance	49 km (30 mi) per riding day
Tour Level	

Please Note: We may have small itinerary changes to this trip after you download this PDF document. If you have booked this trip and there are major changes, including changes to towns or activities, we'll email you directly. However, you should always be sure to refer to the  [online itinerary](#) for the most up-to-date trip information including arrival and departure tips before you depart for your trip:

<https://www.experienceplus.com/guided-bike-tours/greece/cycling-greece-sparta-kardamyli>

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DATES & PRICES

Dates	Price	Single Supplement*
☞ Sep 21-28, 2022	☞ USD\$4295	☞ USD\$550
☞ Oct 7-14, 2022	☞ USD\$4295	☞ USD\$550
☞ Apr 18-25, 2023	☞ USD\$4350	☞ USD\$550
☞ Oct 6-13, 2023	☞ USD\$4350	☞ USD\$550
☞ Oct 20-27, 2023	☞ USD\$4350	☞ USD\$550

*We are happy to match solo travelers who would like to share a room with someone of the same gender. If no match exists, due to hotel pricing, we will charge 50% of the single supplement rate. This fee will be collected at the time of the final payment. If a roommate assignment is available this fee will be refunded at the conclusion of the tour.

DAILY RIDE SUMMARY

Day	Distance/Gain	Terrain	Day Level	Notes
1	Test ride			
2	41km / 620m (26mi / 2034ft)	Hilly	▶▶▶▶▶	
3	64km / 656m (40mi / 2152ft)	Rolling hills	▶▶▶▶▶	
4	49km / 927m (31mi / 3041ft)	Very hilly	▶▶▶▶▶	
5	55km / 691m (34mi / 2266ft)	Rolling hills	▶▶▶▶▶	Longer optional ride available
6	47km / 667m (29mi / 2188ft)	Hilly	▶▶▶▶▶	
7	35km / 877m (22mi / 2877ft)	Mountainous	▶▶▶▶▶	
8	Last day			

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ARRIVAL INFO

Your tour starts with a complimentary ExperiencePlus! shuttle pick-up in downtown Athens on Day 1 (your spot is already reserved on this shuttle):

Note:

- **Meeting Time: 10:30 a.m.**
- **Meeting Hotel: Coco-Mat BC Hotel**

There will be a reminder note at the Meeting Hotel's front desk about the shuttle pick-up. The transfer will take around 3 to 3.5 hours and the driver will stop along the way for a quick snack and bathroom break.

We will be glad to arrange your pre- and post-tour stay at the Meeting Hotel for you upon request. Note that we will not sleep there as a group and the stay there is not included in the tour price. We have a special arrangement with the hotel and would ask that you contact us for details as soon as possible.

The below information will help you plan your arrival. For more tips or other routes, you might like [Rome2Rio](#). The fare and timing information listed below is approximate.

We recommend flying into the Athens Airport (ATH)

How to get to the Meeting Hotel:

- Taxi (45 min/EUR 40)

Or public transportation:

1. Metro Blue Line from the Athens Airport to Syntagma (Constitution Square), change to Red Line (direction Elliniko) and exit at Acropoli station (1 hr/EUR 10)
2. [Walk](#) from metro station to hotel (3 min)

For more travel planning tips, including our packing lists, visit our [Travel Planning Pages](#).

DEPARTURE INFO

We spend our last night of the tour in Kardamyli, about 170 miles from Athens.

The tour ends on the final day with a complimentary ExperiencePlus! shuttle drop-off at either

- Athens Airport (ATH); arrival at **1:30 p.m.** (3.5-hour transfer)
- or back at the Meeting Hotel (see arrival instructions); arrival 2 p.m. (4-hour transfer)

Shuttle reservations 30 days prior to the tour start are required. Reserve by [emailing us](#). If you can't make the shuttle, you will be responsible for your own transportation.

***Note:** Book your flight out of ATH after 3:30 p.m.

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Welcome to Greece!

Highlights Test ride through olive groves of Sparta, welcome dinner.

Meet this morning in Athens to transfer together to the town of Mystras, or the 'wonder of the Morea'. Mystras is just down the hillside from a UNESCO World Heritage Site, an ancient fortress considered to be one of the best-preserved medieval walled towns in the region. Built in 1249, the fortress sits on the slopes of the Taygetos Mountains overlooking Sparta and is where the last Byzantine emperor was crowned. Following your bike fitting, take a scenic test ride. This evening we'll enjoy a welcome dinner together.

DAY 1

Distance 19 km (12 mi)

Terrain Hilly

Level 

Meals Dinner

Lodging  Mazaraki Guest House

Mystras loop ride

Highlights UNESCO World Heritage Site of Mystras, foothills of Taygetos mountain range

Today we will take a loop ride through traditional villages and the land of the Ancient Spartans. We'll pedal through the foothills of the Taygetos mountain range, these mountains surround the Evrotas river valley and created a natural defense - one reason Ancient Sparta was never sacked. After our loop ride we will take a tour of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the Mystras fortress. The fortress was conquered by many including the Byzantines, Turks and the Venetians, and was finally abandoned in 1832.

DAY 2

Distance 41 km (26 mi)

Gain 620 m (2034 ft)

Terrain Hilly

Level 

Meals Breakfast

Cycle from Mystras to Gytheio

Highlights Ancient Sparta and Museum of the Olive and Greek Olive Oil

We leave the foothills of the Taygetos this morning and travel south towards the coast to Gytheio. This colorful town features a waterfront promenade with several restaurants and cafés that are buzzing with activity until late into the evening hours. Enjoy dinner on your own tonight in one of the many local restaurants in Gytheio.

DAY 3

Distance 64 km (40 mi)

Gain 656 m (2152 ft)

Terrain Rolling hills

Level 

Meals Breakfast, Dinner

Lodging  Las Hotel and Spa

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Cycling from Gytheio to Areopoli

Highlights Coastal cycling and the Mani Peninsula

Today's ride takes you along dramatic coastlines passing several traditional villages on your way to Areopoli, in the heart of the Mani Peninsula. Areopoli's narrow, winding city streets, restored pyrgi (fortified tower homes), and its delightful village plazas make this traditional settlement a charming place to call home for the next two days.

DAY 4

Distance 49 km (31 mi)

Gain 927 m (3041 ft)

Terrain Very Hilly

Level 

Meals Breakfast, Dinner

Lodging  Areos Polis Boutique Hotel

Areopoli loop ride

Highlights Byzantine churches, tower houses, Vatheia

We are in for a special day, as we ride from Areopoli to Gerolimena. As you cycle past Byzantine churches and sleepy fishing coves the quiet roads of the peninsula gives you a taste of peaceful Mediterranean lifestyle. Cyclists looking to add more miles will have the option to take a longer ride back to Areopoli.

DAY 5

Distance 55 km (34 mi)

Gain 691 m (2266 ft)

Terrain Rolling hills

Level 

Meals Breakfast

Lodging  Areos Polis Boutique Hotel

Cycling from Areopoli to Kardamyli

Highlights Messinia, olive groves, Old Kardamyli, visit with a local farmer

A beautiful descent leads us to the picturesque fishing village of Limeni. After Limeni we have a challenging climb, but will then be rewarded with a stunning descent into Kardamyli during the second half of the ride. The September 21 departure will stay at Diapori Suites hotel.

DAY 6

Distance 47 km (29 mi)

Gain 667 m (2188 ft)

Terrain Hilly

Level 

Meals Breakfast, Dinner

Lodging  Kalamitsi Hotel
 Hotel Vardia
 Diapori Suites Hotel



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Kardamyli - Rest Day or Ride

Highlights Explore old Kardamyli, olive oil tasting

Today is an ideal day to rest and enjoy the elegant seaside village of Kardamyli. Take in its picturesque neighborhoods of stone built houses and restored medieval towers, or grab a book (our hotel has many) and lounge on the beach. Or if you prefer a ride, we'll offer a loop option that will stun you with its panoramic views of the sea and views towards Mt. Taygetos. Explore remote villages and find an opportunity to talk to some of the few remaining but very friendly inhabitants before dropping back to the coast and treating yourself to a refreshing and leisurely swim and lunch. This afternoon, learn everything there is to know about Kardamyli's most famous product during our visit of a local olive-oil producer. Dinner tonight will be a special one. The September 21 departure will stay at Diapori Suites hotel.

Transfer to Athens


Highlights Transfer to Athens

Your tour ends after breakfast. We'll transfer you back to Athens today - unless you are staying in the region and touring more of ancient Greece. Whatever you decide to do, safe travels.

DAY 7

Distance 35 km (22 mi)
Gain 877 m (2877 ft)
Terrain Mountainous
Level 
Meals Breakfast, Dinner
Lodging  Kalamitsi Hotel
 Hotel Vardia
 Diapori Suites Hotel

DAY 8

Level 
Meals Breakfast, Dinner

INCLUDED

WHAT'S INCLUDED

When you book a tour with ExperiencePlus! our goal is to ensure your only focus each day is to hop on your bike and explore scenic cycling routes in new destinations. Inclusions may differ depending on which tour style you pick but all ExperiencePlus! tours include the three most important aspects of a guided bike tour.

- Superb tour leaders who are fun and multilingual, bi-cultural experts, and cycling enthusiasts. They will support you and help you navigate confidently on and off the road.
- High quality bikes selected for the terrain you are cycling on and correct bike fitting to ensure comfortable cycling. More details on our bikes page: <https://www.experienceplus.com/what-to-expect/our-bikes/>
- Thoughtfully designed itineraries and routes that take advantage of stunning cycling destinations and the freedom of bicycle travel.

PRE-TRIP SUPPORT

- Bicycle training programs designed specifically for your tour and fitness level.
- Planning tips on what to pack, hotel recommendations and other helpful details from our Travel Planning Pages: <https://www.experienceplus.com/blog/travel-planning/>
- A gift of your choice (cycling jerseys, socks, or a t-shirt) as our way of saying thanks for choosing ExperiencePlus!
- *Traveler services including assistance booking extra nights at the tour starting and ending hotels. (*Not included on Explorer Tours.)
- See "What's Included" for tour-specific inclusions and be sure to check the "Keep in mind" section under "Tour Summary" online.

BICYCLES

For a full list of what's included with your bike see our bikes page (<https://www.experienceplus.com/what-to-expect/our-bikes/>) . If you would like to bring your own pedals and shoes we recommend doing so. On Explorer tours we include a GPS device on all bikes. We ask that you bring your own helmet to ensure the best fit. Please ask if you would like us to provide you with a gently used helmet and we will do so.

NAVIGATING, DAYSHEETS AND VAN SUPPORT:

Each day you'll receive a daily briefing with a highlighted route map. About 14 days prior to your tour, we will provide you with access to RideWithGPS Experiences, our platform

to distribute information on each tour day's activities, meals and ride, as well as GPS-routes.

Daily information also includes Tour Leader phone numbers, hotel information and interesting historical and cultural information. On Classic, Bike and Boat, Spotlight and Expedition tours we also navigate using our signature chalk dust arrows. Our arrows make navigating very easy—you may never need to look at the map. On Explorer tours the terrain and destinations are not always conducive to using chalk arrows so we'll ride as a group or you can navigate on your own with the GPS tracks. On tour you will have a support van providing water and snack resupply, mechanical assistance, a lift for tired cyclists, and luggage transfers. On some itineraries the van will not be able to follow sections of the route that stray from the road for example onto cycling paths.

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Need More Miles? On many days it is possible to add miles to the day, just talk to your tour leader about your options.

Need Fewer Miles? If you aren't sure about your abilities or how much you want to ride remember the support van is available to offer snacks, encouragement, a lift over the next hill, or to the next hotel. You are on vacation and we're here to help make it perfect for you.

TIPPING YOUR TOUR LEADER TEAM:

If you feel your tour leader team has demonstrated great expertise and service, common practice within the travel industry is to tip. Tipping is voluntary and greatly appreciated, and gratuity amounts vary widely. Should you decide to leave a tip, as a guideline, we suggest 5% of the tour cost per traveler – this is for the entire tour leader team, not each tour leader. You can give the tip to any member of the tour leader team, as they share it evenly. In order to avoid social tensions, we encourage you to tip as individuals and not as a group. If you feel your tour leaders did not quite meet your expectations, please let us know. *Tips are included in Expedition pricing.

PHOTOS:

By reserving space on tour, you agree that ExperiencePlus! may use, re-use and reproduce any images, photos or videos sent to us, or taken by our guides or travelers free of charge and without your right to inspection. If you do not want us to use any images of you on tour, you must inform your tour leader in writing at the start of the tour.

STYLES **OUR TOUR STYLES**

We realize that one size does not fit all and there are as many ways to travel by bike as there are different types of cyclists and travelers. No matter what you are looking for in a cycling vacation, we have a tour with just the right pace for you.

Classic Tours: Dream of traveling through a region by bike? then our Classic style bike tours are for you! Our unique chalk arrows lead the way as you explore small villages and world-class cities while traveling at your own pace.

- Tour Length: 7-15 days
- Hotels: 3-4 stars, most itineraries include at least one two-night stay at the same hotel.
- Road Type: Pavement, bike paths.
- Multi-night Stays: Occasionally
- Navigation: Chalk Arrows
- Price: \$\$\$
- Tour Levels: 1-4.5

Explorer Tours: Travel further off the beaten path - we let the destination dictate where we ride, not the road surface.

- Tour Length: 7-8 days
- Hotels: 2-3 stars, occasional multi-night stays at the same hotel.
- Road Type: 30-50% gravel or hard-packed dirt, the rest pavement.
- Multi-night Stays: Occasionally
- Navigation: Group riding and GPS
- Price: \$\$
- Tour Levels: 1-4

Spotlight Tours: Multi-nights stays, loop rides, choose from a selection of activities or enjoy hotel amenities during your free time.

- Tour Length: 6-7 days
- Hotels: 3-5 stars, typically 3-nights spent in one hotel and 2-nights in the other.
- Road Type: Pavement
- Multi-night Stays: Min 2 night stays
- Navigation: Chalk Arrows
- Price: \$\$\$
- Tour Levels: 1-4

Bike and Boat Tours: Spend days cycling and your evenings relaxing on a private boat as you cruise to your next port.

- Tour Length: 7-8 days, some itineraries have land-based extensions available.
- Barge/Boat: 3-4 star, same cabin for the entire boat trip.
- Road Type: Pavement
- Navigation: Chalk Arrows
- Price: \$\$\$
- Tour Levels: 1-4

Expedition Tours: Multi-week tours where you spend long days on the bike with the added satisfaction of pedaling across multiple countries.

- Tour Length: 15-40 days
- Hotels: 2-4 stars, typically there is a 2-night hotel stay every 5-7 days.
- Road Type: Pavement with occasional hard-packed dirt or gravel.
- Multi-night Stays: On rest days
- Navigation: Chalk Arrows
- Price: \$\$\$
- Tour Levels: 4-5

**LEVELS**

We know that travelers have different cycling abilities and preferences for the number of miles, elevation gain, and type of terrain they want on a bicycle tour. We have rated each day of our tours on a scale of 1-5. Our Tour Level's are an average of the day rating on tour. We recommend looking at the daily summary on the PDF and Website Itinerary to see details about each day's ride.

LEVEL 1 - 1.5

Level 1 - 1.5 days will be mostly flat and the distance will rarely exceed 50 km. Level 1 - 1.5 tours are suitable for beginner cyclists, those traveling by bicycle for the first time, or multi-generational groups with a desire for a nice and easy bike tour with plenty of opportunities to stop and enjoy the scenery.

- **Average daily mileage:** 20 - 50 km. (12-30 miles) Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 0-400 M (0-1200 ft)
- **Terrain:** Mostly flat with occasional gentle climbs at a grade of less than 3%, that are sustained for a maximum of 3km. There might be a steeper but short climb.

LEVEL 2 - 2.5

Level 2 - 2.5 days are ideal for riders newer to bicycle touring looking for a bit of a challenge.

- **Average daily mileage:** 30-60 km (18 - 38 miles). Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 400 - 600 m (1200 - 2000 ft)
- **Terrain:** Mostly rolling terrain around 3%. Presents multiple 3% to 4% climbs. May present an occasional steeper climb.

LEVEL 3 - 3.5

Level 3 - 3.5 days are great for active individuals (who run, bike, swim etc. on a regular basis).

- **Average daily mileage:** 50-70km (30-45 miles). Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 600 - 900m (2000 - 2800 ft)
- **Terrain:** Multiple Climbs with grades of 4 - 6%.

LEVEL 4 - 4.5

Level 4 - 4.5 days are the best riding days for avid cyclists or very active individuals who are excited to challenge themselves on a bike.

- **Average daily mileage:** 70-90km (45-55 miles) Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 900-1000m (2800-3600 ft)
- **Terrain:** Presents multiple steep climbs (6% to 8% grades), 1 to 3km long. Alternatively, 4 – 6% grades for 6 kilometers or more.

LEVEL 5 (EXPEDITION)

Our Expedition tours designed for strong riders looking for the challenge of riding across countries or continents. Long daily mileages mean limited van support so we recommend these tours for riders who feel confident that they can ride every mile.

- **Average daily mileage:** 120 km (75 miles). Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 500-2000 m (1600- 6500 ft)
- **Terrain:** Expect and be prepared for any and everything.

REMEMBER

A tour level is the average of the days so we recommend you look at the day level on each day of the itinerary to help you better understand what to expect from your tour.

CHECKLIST

TO DO ONCE YOU'VE BOOKED!

- Read through your Reservation Confirmation (link sent to you by e-mail), it has important information to help you plan your trip!
- Check the date on your passport. The expiration date should extend three months past your date of return to your home country.
- Complete the Customer Information Form: <https://www.experienceplus.com/blog/travel-planning/customer-information-form/>
- We recommend you take out travel insurance. Find details at <https://www.experienceplus.com/blog/travel-planning/travel-insurance/>
- Choose a bicycle training program: <https://www.experienceplus.com/blog/travel-planning/bicycle-tour-training/>
- Peruse our country-specific Travel Planning Pages: <https://www.experienceplus.com/blog/travel-planning/>

6 TO 3 MONTHS PRIOR TO TOUR START DATE

- Review the arrival and departure information under the "Travel Information" tab to see meeting place and time, if a reservation on a complimentary ExperiencePlus! Shuttle (if applicable) is required, and other important information to help you plan your arrival and departure.
- Reserve your flights after you know you have a confirmed tour departure. Please check with our office if you do not know if your trip is confirmed.
- Book your pre and post-tour hotel nights.
- Begin your chosen training program
- Final payment is due 90 days (120 days for Bike & Barge/Boat tours) prior to the tour start. Please refer to your Deposit Payment Invoice and the Final Payment Reminder e-mail you have received for detailed instructions.

6 TO 2 WEEKS PRIOR TO TOUR START DATE

- Start reading one of the books or watching one of the movies from our Reading and Movie Lists: <https://www.experienceplus.com/blog/travel-planning/>.
- Plan what you are going to pack and start packing! Refer to the Packing Lists on our website at <https://www.experienceplus.com/blog/travel-planning/packing/>
- We'll email you your access code to Digital Daysheets, Hotel Itinerary, Participant Roster, names and contact information of your Tour Leaders, emergency phone numbers, and other important departure information about 2 weeks prior to your tour start date. All this will be provided to you via a feature called Experiences via the RideWithGPS App (tracks available but not necessary for navigation on Classic, Expedition, Spotlight and Bike & Boat tours).

DAY OF YOUR FLIGHT

Get as much sleep on the plane as you can. Pack one day of cycling gear in your carry-on just in case. See you soon!