

With Professor Jared Diamond

SKEPTIC

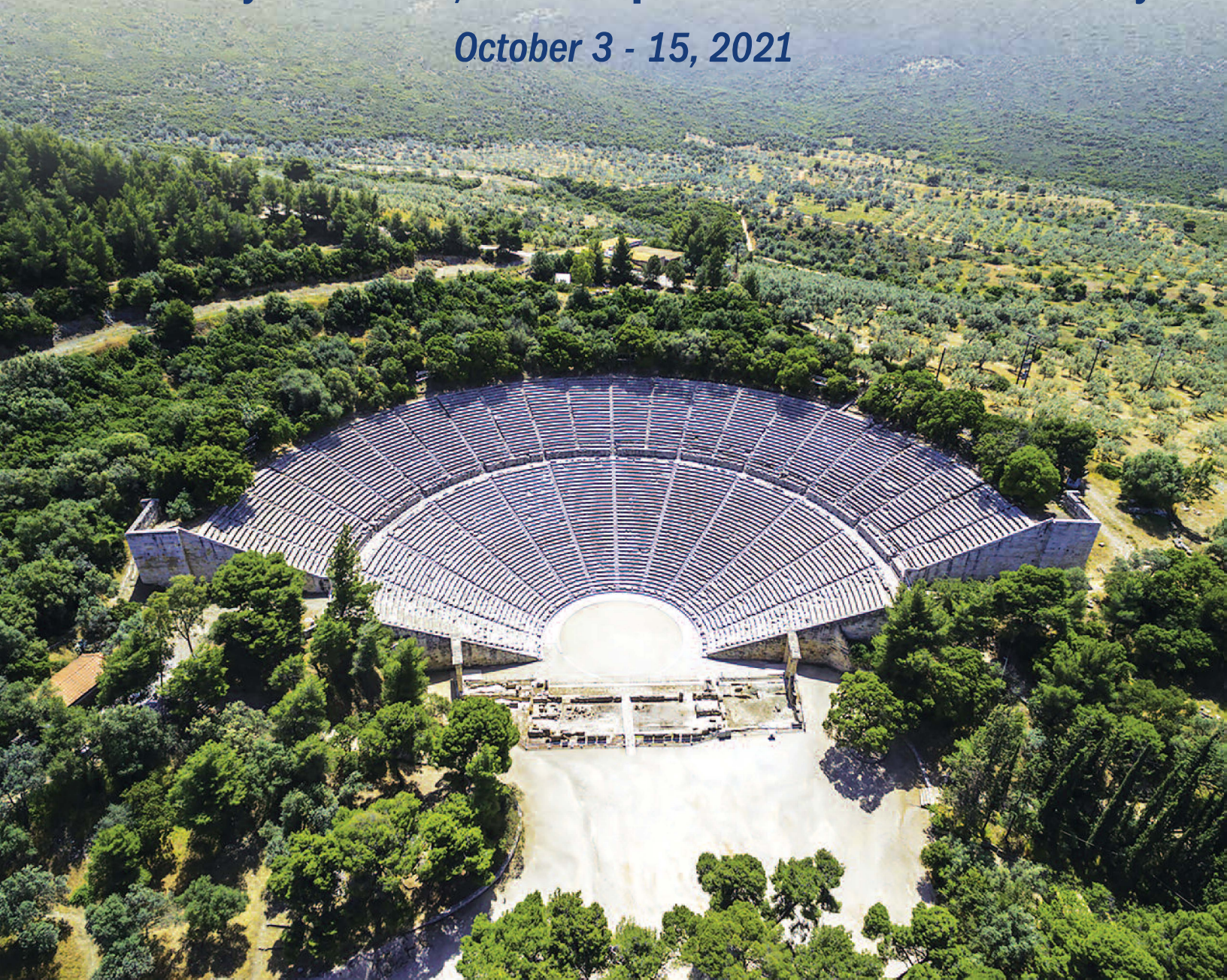
The Skeptics Society

Presents

GREECE & MAGNA GRAECIA

A Journey to Athens, the Peloponnese and Southern Italy

October 3 - 15, 2021



Dear Friends

I am pleased to announce this rare opportunity for Skeptics Society members and friends to explore ancient sites of Greece and southern Italy in the company of **Professor Jared Diamond**, the Pulitzer-prize-winning and best-selling author, and a frequent lecturer of our Distinguished Science Lecture Series.

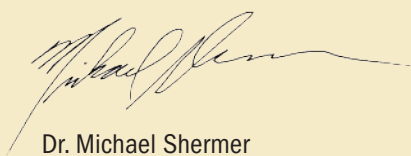
This unique journey explores parts of Greece and Italy that share a common history going back thousands of years. Beginning in Athens, travelers will visit its famed monuments that stand as testimonials to the incredible achievements of the Classical period (5th – 4th centuries BC) when the city reached its Golden Age. The trip then proceeds south to the Peloponnese, separated from the Greek mainland by the narrow sliver of the Corinth Canal.

The landmark archaeological sites, historic towns and the beauty of its scenery combine to make the Peloponnese one of Greece's most important and appealing areas. This was the home of the Mycenaean civilization, fabled Sparta and tranquil Olympia. It was the site of the Olympic Games, which were held every four years, from 776 BC until AD 393, a span of over 1000 years. Here, travelers will explore important sites that span the millennia, from the Bronze Age to the Byzantine period.

The discourse on Greek civilization will continue from the Peloponnese, under sail across the Ionian and Adriatic Seas aboard a modern ferry to southern Italy. After landing in Bari, the tour will spend three days in the heart of Puglia. This region was known in antiquity as Magna Graecia ("Greater Greece") due to the large number of cities founded by Greeks, starting in the 8th century BC. In all, 22 major settlements were established, some of them evolving into powerful centers of culture and learning. Several will be explored, as well as other attractions of Puglia, including the remarkable trulli villages.

This is a journey to extraordinarily beautiful lands that reveal the continuity of culture from deep antiquity to more recent times. I am delighted to offer our members the opportunity to join Professor Diamond on this magnificent travel and learning experience, whose lectures and discussions will shed light on various aspects of ancient Greek civilization.

With warm regards,



Dr. Michael Shermer
Executive Director
The Skeptics Society

\$699.00 of your tour fee will be a tax-deductible donation to the Skeptics Society—a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Cover: *The 4th-century BC theater of Epidauros*

EXPERT GUEST LECTURER Professor Jared Diamond



Prof. Jared Diamond is a Pulitzer-prize-winning author of five best-selling books, translated into 38 languages, about human societies and human evolution: *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, *Collapse*, *Why Is Sex Fun?*, *The Third Chimpanzee*, and *The World until Yesterday*. As a professor of geography at UCLA (University of California at Los Angeles), he is known for his breadth of interests, which involves conducting research and teaching in three other fields: the biology of New Guinea birds, digestive physiology, and conservation biology. His prizes and honors include the U.S. National Medal of Science, the Pulitzer Prize for Non-fiction, the Tyler Prize for Environmental Science, and election to the U.S. National Academy of Sciences. He is a director of World Wildlife Fund/U.S. As a biological explorer, his most widely publicized finding was his rediscovery, at the top of New Guinea's remote Foja Mountains, of the long-lost Golden-fronted Bowerbird, previously known only from four specimens found in a Paris feather shop in 1895.

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866-633-3611

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skeptical.com/Greece2020.**



JOURNEY HIGHLIGHTS

Attend lectures and discussions by Prof. Jared Diamond.

Visit magnificent ancient sites in Athens and the Peloponnese, dating from the Bronze Age to the Byzantine period.

Explore the rarely visited tower villages of Mani.

Cross the Ionian and Adriatic Seas on a modern ferry.

Walk the streets in Puglia's Alberobello, lined with the conical trulli.

ITINERARY

Saturday, October 3, 2021

DEPART THE USA

Depart from the US for Athens, Greece.

Sunday, October 4

ATHENS, Greece

Arrive in Athens and transfer to the deluxe *Hotel Grande Bretagne*, located on Constitution Square, the center of the city. In the evening, enjoy a welcome dinner.

Meals: D

Monday, October 5

ATHENS

Athens' ancient monuments attest to its glorious past. This is the birthplace of democracy and many other ideas and concepts that form the integral part of the Western tradition. In the morning explore the Agora, the heart of public life of ancient Athens. Here, Socrates conversed with his fellow citizens. In the afternoon, visit the Acropolis and its celebrated monuments, including the incomparable Parthenon and other temples built in the 5th century BC. Visit also the Acropolis Museum, which houses an outstanding collection of sculptures and other artifacts.

Meals: B

Tuesday, October 6

ATHENS/CORINTH/MYCENAE/NAFLION

Leaving Athens in the morning, drive over the steep banks of the Corinth Canal, the narrow

waterway that separates the Greek mainland from the Peloponnese. Stop at Old Corinth, one of the most prominent and powerful cities of ancient Greece. Visit the 6th-century BC Temple of Apollo, one of the oldest in Greece, and the museum. Continue to Mycenae, the most important center of the Mycenaean civilization that flourished in the second millennium BC, and home of Agamemnon. Walk through the monumental Lion Gate to explore the fabled citadel. End the day in nearby Nafplion at the *Hotel Ippoliti*.

Meals: B, L, D

Wednesday, October 7

NAFLION/EPIDAUROS/NAFLION

Situated on the shores of a spacious bay and crowned with two fortresses, medieval Nafplion is one of Greece's most attractive towns. Spend the morning at leisure to discover the town's narrow streets and graceful squares, lined with neoclassical buildings. In the afternoon drive to nearby Epidaurus, the shrine dedicated to Asclepius, the god of healing. A religious shrine, health center and popular spa in antiquity, Epidaurus is famous for its incredible 4th-century BC theater, known for its perfect acoustics and harmonious proportions.

Meals: B

Thursday, October 8

NAFLION/MISTRA/SPARTA

Drive through the heartland of the Peloponnese to Mistra. Built on a conical hill that commands superlative views of the plain of ancient and modern Sparta, Mistra was one of the last

flourishing centers of the Byzantine Empire. Today, it is an evocative medieval walled city, with several churches that contain luminous frescoes, palaces and houses from that period. Perhaps no other place in Greece gives travelers such a complete picture of the medieval period as Mistra does, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Overnight at the lovely new *Mystras Palace Resort and Spa*, located in the countryside near Sparta.

Meals: B, L, D

Friday, October 9

MISTRA/SPARTA/MANI/MISTRA

Very little remains of ancient Sparta, but the Archaeological Museum, which we will visit in



The illuminated Parthenon on the Athenian Acropolis



Nafplion, Peloponnese, Greece

the morning displays artifacts from excavations in Sparta and nearby sites. Continue to storied Mani, which offers some of the most distinctive landscape and architecture in Greece. Visit the caves of Diros, huge chambers with evidence of occupation in the prehistoric period, filled with impressive stalactites and stalagmites. After lunch, explore some of Mani's villages with their characteristic tower houses.

Meals: B, L, D

Saturday, October 10

MISTRA/OLYMPIA

Leave the hotel in the morning for Olympia, driving through the pretty country of Laconia and Arcadia. Olympia's beautiful setting in a river valley covered with evergreen oaks, poplars, planes and pines, coupled with its importance throughout antiquity, make it one of the most significant archaeological sites in Greece. A sacred precinct dedicated to Zeus, it was at Olympia that the Panhellenic games were held every four years from 776 BC to 393 AD, giving rise to the modern Olympics. Explore Olympia, seeing its temples, other public buildings and the stadium where the games were held. Also, visit the Archaeological Museum, which exhibits some of the best Classical and Roman sculptures in Greece. *Hotel Olympion Asty.*

Meals: B, L, D

Sunday, October 11

OLYMPIA/PATRA/FERRY CROSSING TO ITALY

Spend the morning at leisure in Olympia. After lunch, drive to the port city in Patra to board the ferry for the overnight passage to Bari, in Italy's Puglia region. Accommodations in outside cabins with private facilities.

Monday, October 12

BARI/MONOPOLI, Puglia, Italy

Dock in the morning in Bari, the ancient Barium, settled by Greeks and an important port and commercial center under the Romans. Disembark and drive to the fishing port town of Monopoli, noted for its 12th-century cathedral, rebuilt during the Baroque period (18th century). Following a lunch of seafood and other local specialties, continue to our lovely boutique hotel, *Il Melograno*. The balance of the day is at leisure with dinner included this evening.

Meals: L, D

Tuesday, October 13

METAPONTUM & TARANTO

Although Mycenaean Greeks had a presence in southern Italy during the second millennium BC, it was shortly after 800 BC that Greeks began to settle in Italy's southern shores. The cities they founded, (twenty two major settlements were established), grew in wealth and stature, becoming important centers of culture and learning. This part of Italy was known as Magna Graecia, "Greater Greece." Leave the hotel in the morning to explore Metapontum, founded in the 7th century BC by settlers from Pylos in the western Peloponnese. The Doric temple known as the Tavole Palatine is one of the best preserved monuments of Magna Graecia. Continue to Taranto, the ancient Taras. Founded by Spartans in 708 BC, Taras became one of the most powerful cities of Magna Graecia. Today, Taranto is an important commercial port city. Tour the town, including the National Archaeological Museum, which houses one of the largest collections of antiquities in Italy. Meals: B, L



In medieval Mistra, Peloponnese, Greece

Wednesday, October 14

ALBEROBELLO/EGNATHIA

We begin the day exploring the town of Alberobello, a UNESCO World Heritage Site that features over 1,500 trulli structures. These remarkable, curious white-washed structures have pyramidal, conical or domed roofs built of corbelled local limestone without mortar, using a prehistoric building technique that has survived to this day. Lunch is at a traditional farmhouse that produces organic mozzarella, and other Apulian cheeses. We will be welcomed by the owner, Mariangela, who will show us how to make homemade mozzarella before we enjoy a meal of local specialties that she will prepare just for us. Continue to Egnathia, where we explore the remains of this Greek-Messapian town on the Adriatic Coast. In the evening, enjoy a farewell dinner.

Meals: B, L, D

Thursday, October 15

BARI/USA

Transfer in the morning to Bari's airport for the return flight to the USA.

Meals: B

ABOUT THALASSA JOURNEYS

Thalassa Journeys was established by the principals and managers of Travel Dynamics, the company that 50 years ago pioneered the concept of educational travel for America's educational and cultural institutions. The belief that travel is primarily a learning experience forms the core principle of Thalassa Journeys. We bring an unrivaled depth of experience to make your journey with us meaningful, unique and seamless. We will take you not only to marvelous places, but we will also bridge the past with the present, illuminate the ancient sites we explore – what they were, how they came to be, and why they matter to us – make them come alive, and enrich your mind and inspire your senses. We are steeped in the culture of our destinations and know the secret places often overlooked by the guide-books. We welcome you to the ever fascinating world of Thalassa Journeys.



Tavole Palatine, Metapontum, Puglia, Italy



The trulli of Alberobello, Puglia, Italy



Monopoli, Puglia, Italy



The Lion Gate in Mycenae, Peloponnese, Greece

R A T E

\$6,990 per person, double occupancy.
Single room supplement: \$1,390

P R O G R A M I N C L U S I O N S

- In Greece, two nights in Athens at the *Hotel Grande Bretagne*; two nights at the *Hotel Ippoliti*, Nafplion; two nights at the *Mystras Palace Resort and Spa*, Sparta; one night at the *Olympion Asty Hotel*, Olympia. In Italy, three nights at the *Hotel Il Meligrano*, Monopoli.
- Outside cabin with private facilities on the modern ferry from Patras to Bari.
- American breakfast each morning at the hotels.
- Seven lunches and seven dinners, with wine or beer.
- Lectures by Professor Jared Diamond.
- Transportation within Greece and Italy by air-conditioned Wi-Fi equipped motor coach.
- All tours and excursions as described in the itinerary with professional English speaking guides.
- Entrance fees to museums, archaeological and historic sites.
- Scheduled group airport/hotel transfer and handling of luggage on Oct. 4 in Athens and Oct. 15 in Monipoli/Bari.
- The services of an experienced Thalassa Journeys tour manager.
- Gratuities to guides, drivers and porters.
- All local taxes and service charges.
- Complete pre-departure material.

NOT INCLUDED: Airfare; travel insurance; expenses of a personal nature; any items not specified in the Itinerary or in the Program Inclusions.

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The seaside village of Limeni, Mani, Peloponnese, Greece

GENERAL INFORMATION

PAYMENT SCHEDULE: A deposit of \$1,000 per person is required to reserve your space on the tour. Final payment is due 90 days prior to departure. Payment can be made by personal check or charged to a credit card.

CANCELLATIONS & REFUNDS: All cancellations are subject to a \$300 per person administrative fee. Cancellations received 61-90 days prior to departure will be assessed a penalty equal to 50% of the total program cost per person. Cancellations received within 60 days of departure are subject to 100% cancellation penalties. Requests for cancellations must be made in writing. No refunds will be made for any part of this program in which you choose not to participate.

INSURANCE: We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance, which is available for coverage of expenses in conjunction with cancellation due to illness or accident. Baggage insurance is also recommended. In the event that you must cancel your participation in a travel program, trip cancellation insurance may be the only source of reimbursement.

ITINERARY: The itinerary, accommodations and arrangements are subject to change at the discretion of Thalassa Journeys.

RESPONSIBILITY: Please read carefully the following terms and conditions, which constitute the sole, legally enforceable agreements between the traveler and Thalassa Journeys. Thalassa Journeys acts solely as agents for the traveler with respect to all transportation, hotel and other tour arrangements. In that capacity, we exercise all reasonable care possible to ensure the traveler's safety and satisfaction, but, we neither assume nor bear any responsibility or liability for any injury, death, damage, loss, accident, delay or irregularity arising in connection with the services of any ship, airplane, train, automobile, motor coach, carriage or other conveyance, or the actions of any third-party, involved in carrying the traveler or in affecting these tours. We are not responsible for damages, additional expenses, or any other losses due to cancellation, delay or other changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, civil disturbances, acts or threats of terrorism, travel warnings or bans, termination or suspension of war risks or other carrier insurance, quarantine, acts of God or other causes beyond our control. All such losses must be borne by the traveler, and tour rates provide for arrangements only for the time stated. In the event of cancellation, delay or rescheduling mandated by any of the aforesaid causes beyond our control, the traveler shall have the option of accepting in lieu of the original tour such rescheduled tour or other substituted tour(s) as may be offered by us, or else, receiving a refund of as much of such advance tour expenditures as we are able to recover on the traveler's behalf from carriers, third-party tour vendors, etc., but, we shall not have any obligation or liability to the traveler beyond the foregoing. We reserve the right to make alterations to the tour's itinerary and to substitute hotels, transportation methods, or lecturers if this is required. We reserve the right to cancel, delay, or reschedule any tour prior to departure, and, so long as this is not due to any of the aforesaid causes beyond our control, the traveler shall be entitled to a full refund of all monies paid to that point if he/she so desires. No refund shall be made for any unused portion of any tour. By forwarding their deposit(s), the traveler certifies that he/she and/or their dependents, minors or others covered thereby do not have any mental, physical or other condition of disability that could create a hazard for them or other travelers. We reserve the right to decline to accept or to decline to retain any person as a member of any tour should such person's health, condition or actions adversely affect or threaten the welfare or safety of other travelers or impede the tour. Baggage or valuables brought on the tour shall be transported, handled or stored at the traveler's risk entirely, and, we shall bear no liability or responsibility for any damage or other loss thereto. Resolution of any disputes arising hereunder shall be affected exclusively in the state or federal courts presiding in the City of New York, pursuant to applicable New York law.

RATES: Tour costs are based upon current airfares, tariffs, and currency values. While we do everything possible to maintain the listed prices, they are subject to change.