

THE STOREY FAMILY



Greek Islands Adventure



Athens · Naxos · Paros · Santorini

📍 The Big Picture

A southbound island hop: fly overnight Sept 13, land in Athens the 14th, then work down the Cyclades and fly home the 25th.



WHEN
Sept 14-25

WHO
4 travelers

NIGHTS
11 on the ground

WHERE
Greece

The Odyssey (a trailer)

Two nights in Athens, then three each on Naxos, Paros, and Santorini — a southbound island hop stitched together by short domestic flights and fast ferries, with a boat day or a guided outing folded into almost every stop. Odysseus needed ten years to cross this same wine-dark sea; you’ll manage it in eleven days, with air conditioning and someone else carrying the bags.

The package is comprehensive. Here’s the short version — what’s already covered, and what you’ll pick up yourselves.

In the package	Your own cost (not included)
• All 11 hotel nights • Every tour & boat day (8 outings) • Domestic flights & all ferries • Private transfers + airport VIP greet • 3 dinners built in (tour, table, BBQ) • Porters & agency coordination (fancy)	• The other 8 dinners • Tips (modest by local custom) • Drinks, shopping & extra activities • Hotel stay tax & incidentals

No line-item math here. But if you’re wondering what nudged the total upward, it’s Counsel’s private room — the one splurge with a face attached to it. Call it self-knowledge: *gnōthi seauton*, know thyself — he runs hot and sleeps alone. Mom still has it covered.

Four Horsemen of the Acropolis

Traveler	Role & the fine print
JoAnn	World Traveler & Trip Architect. Also the Bank of Mom — funding much of this and, by every account, enjoying each euro of it.
Matt	Resident Counsel & Chief Skeptic. Houston. Runs hot, requires his own room.
Mark	First Mate & Watch Enthusiast. Austin. Can locate a Rolex counter from three islands away. A seasoned Europe hand (with Mom).
Wendy	Chief Enthusiasm Officer & Continental Liaison. Austin, by way of the Netherlands. Actually Dutch; knows Europe — much of it with Mark. Here to shop, and never at full price.

✈ Your Flights *(Hermes, god of travelers, has the wheel)*

Everyone's on American, Houston and Austin crews converging onto the same transatlantic aircraft. The story is in the last column.

Flight	Route & times	JoAnn	Wendy	Mark	Matt
AA 2504	IAH → ORD Sep 13 • 11:00a–1:54p ★ First Class	8F	8A	8B	8C
AA 160	ORD → ATH Sep 13 • 5:15p–11:35a (+1)	18D	18A	18H	18L
AA 325	ATH → CLT Sep 25 • 1:00p–5:30p	28A	27L	27J	29A
AA 1840	CLT → IAH Sep 25 • 7:55p–9:36p	8C	8F	8B	9F

The Great Seat Migration

The Houston→Chicago hop now opens up front in **first class** — Wendy, who can smell a seat sale from three time zones away, tracked down the upgrade and seated all four together (her and Mark's treat). Even Matt tolerates the family beside him for that one. But the moment the real flight begins he's gone: 18L drops the whole center block of a wide-body between him and everyone else across the Atlantic, and on both returns he's a window one row back. The official position, per Resident Counsel: he likes a window and won't share heads, shoulders, knees, and thighs. The rest cluster; Matt migrates. Wave when the drink cart comes by.

☀ The Trip, Alpha to Omega

The unexamined trip isn't worth taking (even Socrates would pack a guide), so here's the script. A note on pace: it moves, which suits JoAnn, who never stops moving — you can already hear her going 🎵 "Mamma Mia, here I go again." 🎵

🏛 ATHENS Sep 14–16 • 2 nights 🗡

📍 **Where you'll stay:** [Hotel Grande Bretagne](#) — the city's grande dame on Syntagma Square, with a rooftop bar over the Acropolis (check-in 3:00p Sep 14, out 11:00a Sep 16). **Rooms:** 3 deluxe city-view rooms. • **Air conditioning in every room.**

Sun • Sep
14

Land Athens **11:35a** (AA 160). A VIP greeter and porter meet you at the gate and fast-track you through the airport; private car to the Grande Bretagne (45 min). Afternoon and evening free to settle in. *Dinner on your own.*

Mon • Sep 15 **Acropolis & Acropolis Museum** guided tour, 8:00a–12:00p (licensed guide, entries included) — wear grippy shoes; the old marble is polished slick, and a blister is the one Achilles’ heel that outlasts the Acropolis. Free afternoon to rest. Then the **Flavors of Athens** food tour, 5:00–9:00p — tastings equivalent to dinner. **Dinner included.**

Tue • Sep 16 Morning free. Transfer to the airport 11:40a; fly **Athens → Naxos 2:10p** (45 min). Dinner that night is on Naxos.

11 Dinner in Athens · your open evening (the 14th)

A Little Taste of Home · *Greek, hearty* · \$\$ (~7-min walk, Monastiraki)

Warm, much-loved spot famous for slow-cooked lamb and brisket and genuinely personal service.

Reservations: Recommended.

Brigante · *Italian* · \$\$ (2-min walk)

A tucked-away neighborhood gem for a night off from Greek food — superb fresh pasta and pizza.

Reservations: Recommended (closed Sundays).

Bandiera · *Modern Greek bistro* · \$\$ (~8-min walk, Psiri)

Trendy, lively bistro with standout moussaka and a buzzy atmosphere; great value.

Reservations: Recommended.

📍 Steps from the hotel — Athens

See & shoot: Start upstairs at the hotel’s own **GB Roof Garden** for the classic Acropolis-over-Syntagma view. Behind the square, the **National Garden** and neoclassical **Zappeion** are a shady escape, the marble **Panathenaic Stadium** is a short walk, and **Anafiotika** — a tiny Cycladic quarter under the Acropolis — is the city’s prettiest photo lane. The guard changes on the hour at Parliament.

Coffee & a sundowner: Coffee at the Roof Garden or a Kolonaki café; for sunset, **A for Athens** (Monastiraki rooftop — arrive ~6pm) or the cheaper **360 Cocktail Bar** next door.

For Mark: Voukourestiou is watch row — **ORA Kessaris** (8A) and **Gofas** (18) are official Rolex dealers, with **Patek Philippe**, AP, JLC, and Panerai boutiques a few doors apart. All closed Sundays; Kessaris runs Mon 10–5, so the free **Monday afternoon** is the window (it shuts at 5, when the food tour starts). Wendy’s shops line **Ermou** and Kolonaki nearby.

📍 **Where you'll stay:** [Laguna Coast Resort](#) — a brand-new, spa-like SLH retreat ~10 min from Naxos town, near a protected turtle beach. **Rooms:** a Golden Reef 2-level villa (private pool) plus a Cedar Forest suite (private pool). • **Air conditioning in every room.**

Tue • Sep 16	Arrive Naxos ~2:55p; transfer to Laguna Coast. Evening free. <i>Dinner on your own.</i>
Wed • Sep 17	Naxos Village Mini Tour for Food Lovers , 9:30a (5 hr) — three traditional villages, cheese and specialty tastings, olive-oil museum, and a Kitron liqueur tasting at the island's first licensed distillery. <i>Dinner on your own.</i>
Thu • Sep 18	Half-day catamaran cruise , 9:00a (5½ hr) — swimming, SUP, and snorkeling (Neptune permitting), with a traditional lunch aboard (wine, beer, raki). Back mid-afternoon. <i>Dinner on your own.</i>
Fri • Sep 19	Transfer to Naxos port 10:10a; ferry Naxos → Paros 11:10a (25 min).

🍴 **Dinner in Naxos** • three open evenings (16th–18th), all in Chora old town

[Taverna Naxos](#) • Traditional Greek • \$\$ (~10-min drive, Chora)

Atmospheric old-town taverna among the island's best — kleftiko and Naxian cheese balls, big portions.

Reservations: Recommended, especially after 8pm.

[To Elliniko](#) • Greek, family-run • \$\$ (~10-min drive, Chora)

Open-air, family-friendly favorite for slow-cooked Naxian goat and rosto. Excellent value.

Reservations: Advised in peak season.

[Doukato](#) • Greek, romantic • \$\$ (~10-min drive, Chora)

Dinner-only spot down a pretty side street with a romantic terrace — standout souvlaki and fig-pomegranate salad.

Reservations: Recommended.

📍 Steps from the hotel — Naxos

See & shoot: The **Portara** — a giant marble temple gate on an islet by the harbor — is the sunset shot (go in the last hour of light); the **Kastro**, the Venetian castle quarter, is a maze of whitewashed lanes made for getting lost. Near the hotel, **Plaka** beach and the **Alyko** cedar forest (with its street-art-covered ruin) are quiet and photogenic.

Coffee & a sundowner: [Portara Café](#) by the port for the island's best coffee and brunch; for evening, [520 Bar](#) pours sunset cocktails from a 1700s building above the harbor, or find the candlelit [naxos cafe](#) in the old-town maze. Chora is also where to pick up leather sandals (try Pagonis).

📍 **Where you'll stay:** [Parilio, a Member of Design Hotels](#) — aka “**My Big Fat Greek Bedding**” — an architectural, earthy hideaway a 2-minute walk from Kolimpithres beach, with a big pool and acclaimed restaurant. **Rooms:** the Aurelia 3-bedroom villa (~100 m²) — all four of you under one roof. • **Air conditioning in every room.**

- Fri • Sep 19** Arrive Paros ~11:35a; transfer to Parilio. Evening: **At Home in Paros** — a **family-table dining experience** with Mrs. Maria, 4:50p (3h 40min), hands-on and shared around the table. **Dinner included.**
- Sat • Sep 20** **Full-day cruise**, 9:45a (8½ hr) to Antiparos, Despotiko, and Panteronisia on a Goldfish 43 catamaran — swimming, snorkeling, snacks aboard. *Dinner on your own.*
- Sun • Sep 21** **Day at leisure** — Naoussa's harbor, beaches, or the hotel pool. *Dinner on your own.*
- Mon • Sep 22** Transfer to Paros port 12:00p; ferry **Paros → Santorini 1:25p** (1h 40min).

🕒 **Dinner in Paros** · two open evenings (20th & 21st), in Naoussa

[Daverona](#) · *Creative Greek* · \$\$\$ (~10-min drive, Naoussa)

Refined, creative cooking on a little square by a church — sea bass ceviche, pork belly. A special-occasion pick.

Reservations: Essential.

[Notos](#) · *Seafood, waterfront* · \$\$\$ (~10-min drive, Naoussa dock)

At the end of the dock with sunset views — fresh octopus and clam linguine, relaxed and away from the crowds.

Reservations: Recommended.

[Yiannis \(Yianiyamas\)](#) · *Sushi / Asian* · \$\$\$ (~10-min drive, Naoussa center)

Sleek sushi-and-cocktails spot in the village center for a change of pace — fresh sushi, creative drinks.

Reservations: Recommended.

📍 **Steps from the hotel — Paros**

See & shoot: Kolimpithres' wind-sculpted granite coves are a two-minute walk. **Naoussa's** old **Venetian port** — the half-sunken castle ruin and whitewashed alleys — is one of the most photogenic harbors in Greece; **Parikia's** old town and the Ekatontapyliani church are worth the trip too.

Coffee & a sundowner: [Almond](#) for the best coffee in Naoussa; for sunset, [Sommaripa Consolato](#) (an elegant terrace above the old port) or [Linardo](#), the signature waterfront bar with the pink-and-purple door. The alleys are full of boutiques.

■ SANTORINI Sep 22–25 • 3 nights 🌊

📍 **Where you'll stay:** [Canaves Oia Suites](#) — a stylish cave-suite hideaway at the top of Oia's main street, with an iconic caldera infinity pool. **Rooms:** a two-bedroom plunge-pool suite plus an executive pool suite. • **Air conditioning in every room.**

Mon • Sep 22	Arrive Santorini ~3:05p; transfer to Canaves Oia. Evening free. <i>Dinner on your own.</i>
Tue • Sep 23	Sunset Caldera Cruise on a private Emily 46, 2:20p (5 hr) — swim at the hot springs, a BBQ dinner cooked aboard with wine, and the sunset over the caldera — Venus herself — before returning to Ammoudi. Dinner included.
Wed • Sep 24	Akrotiri & island orientation tour , 9:00a (3 hr, guide + entrances), then a 🍷 premium food & wine pairing with a vineyard tour , 12:00p (1h 45min) — Bacchus approves. <i>Dinner on your own.</i>
Thu • Sep 25	Departure. Transfer to the airport 7:30a; fly Santorini → Athens 9:20a (50 min), VIP meet & greet in Athens, then Athens → Charlotte 1:00p and Charlotte → Houston 7:55p.

🍴 **Dinner in Santorini** • two open evenings (22nd & 24th), walkable in Oia

[Roka](#) • Traditional Greek • \$\$ (short walk in Oia)

A tucked-away, homey favorite in a quieter corner of Oia — grilled octopus and moussaka at fair village prices.

Reservations: Recommended.

[Four Winds](#) • Greek, seafood • \$\$ (short walk in Oia)

Brother-run spot beloved for fresh sea bass and bream and warm hospitality — quality without the caldera-view premium.

Reservations: Recommended.

[Oia Vineyard](#) • Wine bar / Greek • \$\$ (short walk in Oia)

A calm wine-bar-meets-restaurant pouring local Santorini wines with creative small plates (no sea view, by design).

Reservations: Recommended (closed Sundays).

📍 **Steps from the hotel — Santorini**

See & shoot: You're on **Oia's main street** — the **blue-domed churches** (the classic three-domes shot), the **Byzantine castle ruins** for sunset (arrive early), **Ammoudi Bay** down the steps, and the windmills. Oia is basically one long photo op.

Coffee & a sundowner: [Meteor Café](#) for a caldera-view freddo espresso; [Sun Spirit](#) for cocktails by the windmill with an unobstructed sunset (turn up ~45 min early), or funky [Hasapiko](#) in a former butchery for later. Galleries and jewelry line the street.

🍷 The Office Pool

Somewhere between the jet lag, a 20,000-step day, and a ferry that waits for no one, someone is going to have a Moment. The early line: **Resident Counsel**, by a comfortable margin — he runs hot, and his mother's "casual stroll" is everyone else's cardio. Long shot: **Wendy**, who is Dutch and has seen worse. Smart money says **Mark** plays peacemaker — extends the olive branch, says "fist my bump," and talks everyone down before dessert.

🧳 Pack for it

Mid-September is warm and calm — highs in the mid-80s°F, evenings 65–70°F, sea ~75–77°F. Bring light layers and cottons in muted tones (navy, olive, stone, white), swimwear, sun protection, and a light jacket for boat evenings. Resist the head-to-toe white-linen "Mamma Mia" look, though — one linen piece reads local, the full set reads costume. Skip the sandals at home — **buy Greek leather ones in Athens** (simple two-strap styles, ~€30–60). Adapter for 220V outlets. And leave a little room in the bag for the trip home — once Wendy's been shopping, that suitcase is a bit of a Trojan Horse at Charlotte customs.

🧳 Before You Go

Follow up with the agency

- **USD invoice:** Georgia bills in euros only, so JoAnn used the euro proforma for her insurance — that item's resolved.
- **Boarding passes:** the agency will deliver domestic flight/ferry passes to your hotel the day before each, or post them in the Axis app — confirm which.
- **Good news — transfers are set:** the itinerary now includes specific pickup times for every transfer, so that earlier open item is resolved.

Money & payment

- **The balance is due August 14** — Georgia sent a Flywire payment link (set up ahead of her Aug 7–17 leave), and JoAnn is paying by card, so it's in hand. The euro is ~\$1.15, roughly flat since June. Live rate: [xe.com](https://www.xe.com).
- **A note for Wendy:** American ATMs and card readers never met a fee they didn't like — foreign-transaction charges, ATM surcharges, and the "would you like to pay in dollars?" conversion trick (always decline; the built-in rate is highway robbery). To a Dutch sensibility this is a personal affront. Bring a no-foreign-fee card and say no to the conversion to keep her blood pressure in range.

Flights to watch

Stop	You land	Then, inside the airport	Layover
Chicago (ORD)	Sep 13, 1:54p	Domestic arrival — reposition to your international gate for AA 160 (check the monitors).	3h21m comfortable
Charlotte (CLT)	Sep 25, 5:30p	U.S. re-entry: immigration → bags → customs → re-check → security → gate.	2h25m tight — the pinch point

Paperwork & insurance

- **Passports:** valid 6+ months beyond travel with 2 blank pages. Check the EU’s EES/ETIAS entry requirement status for Sept 2026. **One note for Matt:** Mark has Wendy to make sure his passport lands in the bag; you’re your own paralegal here — set yours by the door tonight. A forgotten passport is the one objection the gate agent will sustain.
- **Trip insurance:** handled — JoAnn secured a policy for the trip (smart, given the non-refundable flights and ferries).

Local basics

Your trip is run by [Original Senses](#) (found through Wendy Perrin’s vetted network) — Georgia Koutsoubi designed and manages the itinerary (PN 16989), with Danai Zei as senior manager. Emergency contact (agency): +30 694 646 5129 • Georgia direct: +30 694 572 3970. Currency is the euro; Visa/Mastercard/Amex widely accepted. Tipping is a courtesy, not required: restaurants ~5–7%, guides €50–100, transfers ~€20–30. A Greek SIM is easy to buy on arrival if you want a local number.

Meanwhile, Bark at Home

The home front is covered. Ava and March (Matt’s) and Abbey (JoAnn’s) are bunking with Grandpa Buz, while Ginger holds down Austin. Everyone’s accounted for; go enjoy Greece.