



8 Days

Greece

The Bear Necessities

A friendly Mediterranean country with big cuddly bears? We bring you the 'bear necessities' of Greece... This conservation trip to northern Greece will open your eyes into the research and conservation of the European Brown Bear, amongst other animals. We get out on foot with experienced trackers and environmental researchers to learn the art of setting camera traps which we'll be checking on later in the week. You'll get to listen to both sides of the conservation story from the local farmers and the conservationists. With Lake Prespa, Europe's most important wetlands a stone's throw away, you have the chance to see some of the most accessible wildlife in Europe on this great alternative biology adventure in Greece.



Recommended tour itinerary

Day
1

Arrive in Thessaloniki

Fly from the UK to Thessaloniki. Upon arrival we transfer to the Pindos mountain range. Once in the mountains, we settle in to the accommodation for a quick freshen up before meeting our nature guides and the experts on large mammals. In the afternoon, we'll head out on a short trek into the local area (which is bear habitat) to get an idea of our surroundings before settling down for dinner and a presentation on the European Brown Bear and the efforts of CALLISTO, the Greek wildlife charity.

Day
2

Kastoria (North Pindos)

Before breakfast, we'll get up early and head out to locate an area where brown bears are active. Hopefully we'll be lucky in spotting some of these amazing animals. After returning to our accommodation and a hearty breakfast, we watch an outdoor presentation of field research methods, including the use of radio telemetry equipment and methods of radio tracking animals, finding signs for recording bear presence, measuring footprints to determine the size and age of a bear and the setting and operating of remote camera traps. We'll learn how the locals have to live in co-existence with the bears and how the charity are raising awareness throughout the local communities of the benefits that bears bring. In the afternoon, and pulling out our best BBC Earth camera team impressions, we get to install some camera traps to try and catch the bears on film.

Day
3

Kastoria-Grammos

Another early morning (and you thought bears were renowned for sleeping!) to try and see a bear in its natural habitat. After breakfast, we head up Grammos Mountain, the 4th highest in Greece standing at 2,250m near the Albanian border. This area is a forestry region full of pine and beech trees and where we meet local livestock breeders who show us how they manage their herds with special fences and guard dogs to keep the bears at bay.

Day
4

Grammos

After our busy day yesterday, this day will be dedicated to the exploration of our local area, and an interesting one too! Depending on the season we may be able to listen to wolf howling with the wolf experts from CALLISTO. We'll be out on foot, exploring the area and the local villages and farms in the very rural and beautiful part of Greece.





Day
5

Grammos-Prespa Lake

We have a transfer today, heading to Lake Prespa, a freshwater lake with an abundance of flora and fauna. The drive will take most of the morning, but the scenery will be spectacular. When we arrive at the lake, we head out to learn about the water management and conservation measures currently being undertaken in the area. Our guide will be on hand to answer questions and tell us about this amazingly diverse habitat. This area is one of the most important wetlands in Europe and are considered to be a paradise for migratory birds; hundreds of bird species, many of them endangered, nest and breed here, among them the Dalmation pelican, the cormorant and the heron.

Day
6

Psarades

Today we head out on the 'floral trail' - this is an area where over half of the plants, birds, amphibians and mammals native to Greece can be found. After lunch, we drive to the town of Psarades for a boat trip. As its name indicates – Psaras meaning "fish" – is a traditional fishing village where the last census recorded only 83 inhabitants. On the boat trip we will be able to see the birdlife, post-Byzantine frescos (ancient paintings) on the rocks and the hermitages built on the cliffs of the lake.

Day
7

Prespa Lake to Thessaloniki

Our journey back to Thessaloniki today will not be the final goodbye yet. Stopping off in Nymphaeon we visit the Arcturos Brown Bear sanctuary in the Nymfaio Forest, western Macedonia. Arcturos is a non profit, non governmental, environmental organisation (NGO) founded in 1992, focusing on the protection of wildlife fauna and natural habitat in Greece. It was driven by constant need to solve the problem of bear and wolf imprisonment. Here we are guaranteed to see the bears up close and personal. Rescued bears are brought back to strength here where they are fed and looked after. We will also visit the wolf sanctuary where we can see the other half of Europe's large natural predators before heading to Thessaloniki for our final evening .

Day
8

Return to the UK

After breakfast in our hotel we transfer to the airport in time for our flight back to the UK.

Further information

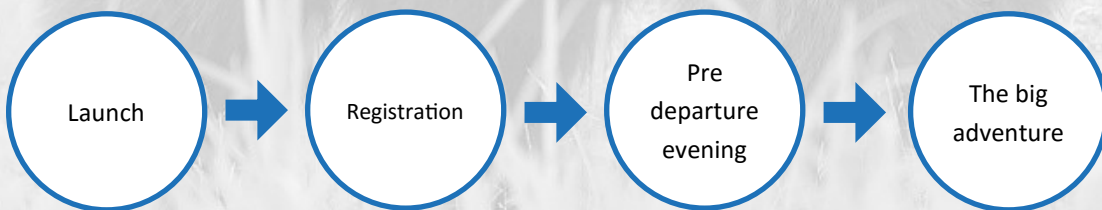
Look what's included!

- International flights
- All accommodation
- All food
- All transportation and activities
- Bi-lingual, first-aid qualified local tour leader
- Parent and student trip launch evening
- Pre-departure preparation evening
- 1-day offsite safety INSET day for staff
- ATOL financial protection
- Medical Emergency / Repatriation Travel Insurance
- Group first aid kit and prescription meds pack
- BS8848 safety management and risk assessments
- Detailed pre-departure information and kit lists
- Comprehensive teacher travel packs
- Permanent operations team in your destination
- 24-hour UK operational support whilst overseas
- Carbon offsetting of all flights
- Free t-shirt for every participant and teacher

What's excluded?

- Transport to airport in UK
- Drinks (advice will be given on purification of water)
- Visas or tourist cards if required
- Any required inoculations
- Personal spending money
- Tips for guides, drivers and porters
- Airport departure taxes paid locally
- Cancellation and personal effects insurance

Your educational journey timeline



Physical journey rating:

● ● ○ ○ ○ 2/5

Some low level physical activities included in your trip, including walking on uneven terrain, maybe a morning/afternoon trek of two to four hours. That said, no physical preparation is required to make the most of the tour. High humidity and temperatures can occur at certain times of the year.

Culture shock rating:

● ● ○ ○ ○ 2/5

Expect to find local life broadly familiar to that in the UK, however aspects of the trip are likely to be in remoter areas where differences are more profound. Whilst English may not be the native language, you can expect it to be widely spoken. There may be some cultural differences and although western pallets should be well catered for there will be the opportunity to try new dishes.



A journey of 1,000 miles...

Starts with a single step... Contact us now to start your educational journey.

1 Get your tailor-made proposal and further information

If this itinerary doesn't quite scratch your educational travel itch then let us tailor-make one for you. Our wealth of experience and expert in-country contacts means we can design an itinerary just for you. Contact us for more information and a detailed quote.

2 Ask for risk assessments and marketing materials

We can provide initial risk assessments and destination threat assessments to help you with your expedition approval process. Ask for posters and your pre-booking information pack too.

3 Arrange a trip launch evening at your school

This is a chance for students and parents to hear more about the planned adventure with a comprehensive information evening and an opportunity for questions.



t: 01392 660056 | e: schools@thestc.co.uk | w: www.thestc.co.uk