

## Orthodox Easter in Thessaloniki

**Easter** is certainly the most important festival of the Greek Orthodox calendar. We celebrate the Resurrection of Christ, the victory of life over death, which coincides with the eternal rebirth of nature, meaning springtime.

Easter is for the Orthodox the largest and most moving religious feast, one of the strongest moments of the year for the faithful.

A moment that we invite you to discover and share.

Experiencing Easter with us in Greece, is to relive the events surrounding the crucifixion and resurrection through Orthodox liturgies in churches, steeped in history. It is living and discovering all the customs related to the celebration and trying traditional culinary specialties related to it.

Thessaloniki is a young and modern city with vibrant life. A city where it is nice to walk in the busy shopping streets or enjoy the waterfront and its open horizons that stop at the foot of Mount Olympus. Visiting Thessaloniki is to discover a long history of more than two thousand years and making a trip to the Eastern Roman Empire, the Byzantine Empire and the Ottoman empire, but also to understand the contemporary Balkans and Greece.

**Discovering Thessaloniki is discovering a unique culture**, the result of all the centuries it has been through, and all the people who have inhabited it.

Staying in Thessaloniki can be an opportunity to discover in northern Greece other pages of history and exceptional sites.

Organize your stay four (4, 5, 6 or more days) according to your needs and tastes.

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### 01 First Day

Landing at Makedonia Airport of Thessaloniki and transfer to the hotel.

A first walk through the city will allow you to familiarize yourself with the city and enjoy the waterfront.

### 02 Second day Maundy Thursday

Guided Tour. We will visit the White Tower, symbol of the city, where we will be told the history of Thessaloniki. We will go up to the top of the city, with its classified historic and architectural interests along the ramparts dating back to the birth of the city in 315 BC. From the acropolis of the city, Eptapyrgion, we will enjoy a panoramic view of the city, the harbor and the Thermaic Gulf. We will then visit the church of Saint Dimitrios, patron saint of the city (IV century). This church, originally built on the site of the martyrdom, became during the VII th century a basilica with five naves of the Hellenistic type. Visit the crypt of the church and we will discover the remains of early Christian churches.

We will discover the ancient agora dated to the foundation of city (III century BC). It was the center of the social, religious and commercial center until the fourth century of our era.

A few steps away from the Aristotelous Square, you walk through the colourful markets of Modianou or Kapani that will awaken all your senses.

We will walk along the remains of the palace complex of the Roman Emperor Galerius (III and IV century AD) covering an area of 150,000 square meters. We will find the Triumph Arch of Galerius (305 AD), that was built to celebrate the victory of Emperor Galerius over the Persians.

The Rotonda, one of the oldest buildings of the city which was also part of the complex. Built in Roman times, it was a church in Christian times and a mosque during the Ottoman era.

In the evening we will attend the Mass that commemorates the institution of Christ at the Last Supper (or Eucharist) with his disciples before his arrest.

### **03 Third day** Good Friday

It is very difficult to get lost in Thessaloniki. On one side there is the sea and on the other the mountains. Stroll at your leisure in the city streets, they will be quickly familiar. Do not hesitate to enter the many churches of the city. Most of them date back several centuries and conceal treasures of the Orthodox and Byzantine art. Take your time to visit the museums of the city, with the permanent collections and the temporary exhibitions. The museums in Thessaloniki are exceptional not only for the richness of their content but also for their design.

Depending on your interests and desires we will be happy to give you complete information on both the content of the museums but also the temporary exhibitions. In the evening we will attend the Good Friday Mass and we will follow the procession of the epitaph in the streets of the city.

### **04 Fourth day** Holy Saturday

The region of Thessaloniki has an infinite number of places and sites to visit. At a stone's throw from the city, choose one of our day trips and discover other sites or another page of history.

We will attend the Mass of the Resurrection and participate in the traditions linked to them. The lights go out and the priest announces the resurrection of Christ by spreading the holy flame amongst the faithful. We will experience the traditional red eggs and you will taste the traditional magiritsa, soup that is eaten after Mass which marks the end of the fasting period.

### **05 Fifth day** Easter Sunday

It's party everywhere today. We will live it. We will participate in cooking lamb on the spit and you can taste all the specialties that go along with it.

### **06 Sixth day**

Enjoy the last moments of your stay as you stroll along the waterfront, or as you walk through the commercial heart of the city, or take pleasure enjoying your coffee at Aristotelous Square.

Transfer to the Macedonia airport of Thessaloniki and departure.