



TennisOx
INCREDIBLE HOLIDAYS



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The Costa Navarino Experience



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1. About

ABOUT US

Specialists in small group tennis travel we are focussed on creating relaxed, enriching overall experiences. Seasoned international travellers with a long tennis engagement, both playing at home and internationally, and visiting ATP and WTA tournaments.

We have visited Costa Navarino since 2021 and from this background, and our love of tennis, we are uniquely positioned to create an overall experience in a way that a travel generalist with a much broader offering cannot.

We have established a close relationship with the Mouratoglou Tennis team in designing the tennis programme, and the resort owners for overall service expectation, accommodation and dining. With them we are committed to delivering a truly personal service. We can tailor to trips to meet personal goals for an exceptional break. This might be organising golf, intense tennis training for advanced players, or a special occasion.

Our vision is to build a community of lovers of the sport who can share quality tennis and develop and grow new networks which endure long after the visit to Costa Navarino. We believe that the real value is in what stays with you; the friendships, the memories, and the community that lives on long after the closing points are played.

As set out in this brochure we are trusted members of ABTOT, an Approved Body appointed by the UK Government Department for Business and Trade. You can book in confidence and with complete peace of mind that your pre-payments for your trip are fully protected.

THE TENNIS RETREAT

We view these trips as a retreat. Time spent away from the usual routine, a deliberately chosen opportunity for rest, reflection, and some focused time on our love of tennis. Below is a flavour for how the week is organised.

Step off the plane into warm Mediterranean sun. After arrival formalities a 45-minute drive through **Peloponnese** countryside dense with Kalamata olive groves and the **Ionian Sea** gradually comes into view. Soon you are in **Costa Navarino** sitting quietly in its stunning coastline on the Ionian Sea. Buildings of stone designed in the style of old Messinian mansions.

Check-in to the **five-star Westin Resort**, then take a wander for first sight of the beautiful surroundings to be home for the week. An early evening **Welcome Reception**, to unwind, meet fellow travellers, discuss and plan the week ahead. An easy-going group of individuals, friends, couples brought together by a common love of tennis and luxury travel. Not forgetting **non-playing** travel companions who are well looked after. There is something for everyone.

A **breakfast** of fresh local produce and diverse buffet of international cuisine in Morias restaurant. A short shuttle ride and you are at the **Mouratoglou Tennis Centre** for your first session. Admire the world-class clay courts and surroundings whilst you meet the coaches. Feel like a pro for two hours with **passionate**, skilled coaches on meticulously maintained courts. Improve in these daily sessions over the course of the programme designed specifically for us. With no more than four players per court per coach. If desired book optional additional coaching sessions, free play or challenge the

The Costa Navarino Experience

coach. Though two hours a day is more than enough to benefit. A late afternoon closing fun tournament run by the coaches to practice what you have learnt rounds off the tennis.

After tennis do as much or as little you wish. Wellness in the Anazoe Spa, water sports, visit local natural or historical sites, or just rest on the Dunes Beach or by the pool. Non tennis travel companions might play a round of golf. Barbouni perhaps for lunch on the Dunes Beach or the poolside restaurant.

Midweek meet for dinner, including drinks, with our group in Flame, or a similar resort restaurant. In a relaxed and easy-going atmosphere. Other evenings at complete leisure, maybe informally arrange dinner with some of the group, or simply take personal time.

Everything is organised and taken care of in person from start to finish. A programme designed to be carefree with none of the pressure from a rigid schedule.

Head home with a tinge of sadness, but with memories and new friendships which will endure long beyond the last tennis session. Feel rejuvenated, stress free, relaxed and ready for the Autumn to come.

2. Key Information

ABOUT COSTA NAVARINO

Costa Navarino is a sustainably driven destination in the Mediterranean, located in the Greek region of Messinia in the southwest Peloponnese. One of the most unspoiled and breathtaking seaside landscapes, this is a region shaped by 4,500 years of history. The Costa Navarino philosophy is driven by a genuine desire to preserve the natural beauty and heritage of Messinia.

With a total of four luxury resorts, four signature golf courses, private residences, more than 40 dining and entertainment venues, and an abundance of sports and entertainment experiences across its sites, Costa Navarino has established Messinia as a place to visit as well as to live.

The dates currently on offer for 2025 are for 7 nights commencing 7 September 2025, 14 September 2025, 21 September 2025 and 28 September 2025. Other dates may be added according to demand and availability.

INCLUDED IN TRIP

Private Transfers in each direction between Kalamata Airport and The Westin Resort, Costa Navarino. There are flexible options available as to type and size of vehicle. Transfers will be confirmed when we have your flight details. Transfers from Athens airport and elsewhere in Greece can be quoted on request.

Accommodation 7 nights in the 5-star Westin Resort, Costa Navarino, in a Deluxe Garden View room. Room upgrades, including Superior Garden View or Deluxe Sea View, can be quoted on request and subject to availability. Further information on the rooms is included in this information pack and available on the Westin Costa Navarino website.

If you are travelling together but only one of you is joining the tennis we will provide a tailored quote to reflect this, and whether the non-player would like to attend the welcome reception and group dinner.

The Costa Navarino Experience

Breakfast daily buffet breakfast in the Westin Morias restaurant with an extensive traditional Greek and International offering to start the day.

Dinner on one evening in one of the Resort restaurants, including house wine, Greek beer, soft drinks, still & sparkling water, filter coffee, tea, gratuities

The timetable leaves plenty of personal time to be enjoyed as wished. However, if some or all on a particular trip would like to have dinner together on other nights, we will arrange those during the week. Similarly for excursions or other activities.

Welcome drinks reception in the Westin Lobby early evening on arrival day. An opportunity for everyone to meet, get to know each other and discuss the plan and arrangements for the week.

Tennis Programme 14 hours of tennis comprising 12 hours of group coaching and a 2-hour closing event such as an Ultimate Tennis Showdown tournament. Play is on the Mouratoglou Tennis Centre clay courts with a maximum ratio of one coach to four players. Subject to availability it will be possible to book additional coaching or court time. All coaches are proficient in English.

We can accommodate a range of skill levels each week, including beginners, and it will be helpful if at the time of booking you could give an indication of how long you have played tennis and your current level. There is something for everybody and you can expect to improve your play over the week.

Please note the need to, ideally, wear clay court shoes but minimum proper tennis shoes in order to protect the clay courts and against injury. Contact us if you have any questions on this.

Westin Workout fitness centre and indoor pool access.

Climate Resilience Fee a daily government charge applied by hotels on a per room basis. Revenue from the fee is allocated to a dedicated emergency fund. Total €105 per room for the week.

Host personal services before and during your stay, including organisation of ad hoc requests.

We require a minimum of **6 rooms booked** in order for the trip to take place.

EXCLUDED

Flights or other transport to and from arrival point in Greece

Insurance personal travel insurance to cover unforeseen cancellations or emergencies, including repatriation in the event of accident. Please see Booking Conditions Clause 3

Transfers from Athens or other airports. These can be quoted for upon request.

Non tennis playing travel companions are welcome, and we will create a bespoke quote and organise other activities in advance, for example golf, subject to availability

Loyalty Reward Points or similar schemes operated by Westin are not awarded for these stays. The hotel may request loyalty membership numbers for statistical purposes

Tips and gratuities for hotel staff, drivers, coaches etc.

PASSPORT AND VISA REQUIREMENTS

The UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) issues travel advice on destinations, which includes information on passports, visas, health, safety and security and more.

Foreign travel advice for people travelling on a full "British Citizen" passport is available on the UK Government website [Foreign Travel Advice](#)

This includes Passport Validity and Visa Requirements. Make sure that your passport is stamped on entry and exit. You can also sign up for email alerts.

The European Union Entry / Exit system is due to start in 2025. When this system is introduced entries and exits for non-EU nationals will be registered electronically in the EES system. The EU Commission is expected to finalize the exact start date by April or May 2025. Longer processing times for the new biometric checks are likely when the system finally comes into effect.

LOCATION

Messinia enjoys an excellent climate, with balmy springs, warm summers and mild winters.

Blue skies, sunny days and pleasant temperatures (25° Celsius on average) make this blissful region an ideal destination to visit

Direct flights by main UK airlines serve
Kalamata airport - 42km (40 minutes) by car
Athens airport - 270km (3 hours) by car
Araxos airport - 168km (2 ½ hours) by car



3. How to book

If you are interested in making a booking, please return the Summary Information Request form stating your preferences and any special requests. Please note that room upgrades are subject to availability and need to be confirmed with the hotel.

We will then send you a Quote together with a Booking Form. Please return the completed form should you wish to proceed. We will then send a booking confirmation, invoice, and details of how to pay securely. We will hold your reservation for 5 working days to allow time to complete payment. We won't confirm until every detail is understood and itemised.

All bookings are subject to the Booking Conditions which we will send with your quote and are available to download on the website at [Booking Conditions](#)

4. Financial Protection

The Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT) provides financial protection under The Package Travel and Linked Travel Arrangements Regulations 2018 for TennisOx Limited 5613, and in the event of their insolvency, protection is provided for:

- Non-flight packages

ABTOT cover provides for a refund in the event you have not yet travelled or repatriation if transportation was included in your package. Please note that bookings made outside the UK are only protected by ABTOT when purchased directly with TennisOx Limited.

In the unlikely event that you require assistance whilst abroad due to our financial failure, please call our 24/7 helpline on **01702 811397** and advise you are a customer of an ABTOT protected travel company.

You can access The Package Travel and Linked Travel Arrangements Regulations 2018 here:

[The Regulations](#)

You can find out more about ABTOT here: [ABTOT](#)

5. Mouratoglou Tennis Centre

A UNIQUE TENNIS EXPERIENCE

In 2021 globally acclaimed coach of many professional players, Patrick Mouratoglou, opened his first European tennis centre at Costa Navarino. Now a state-of-the-art facility with 12 meticulously maintained clay and cushion hard courts, backed by trainers completely devoted to the sport, passionate and with vast experience.

Enjoy a bespoke tennis programme designed by with the Mouratoglou team exclusively for us. One coach, no more than four players per court for 12 hours of coaching culminating in a 2-hour fun UTS style tournament to conclude the week. A range of skill levels can be accommodated, for example a week might include a coach and court dedicated to a beginners group, or an advanced group. The goal is for everyone to improve their play over the course of the week; there is something for everybody.

Whilst the quality of the facility matters, it is coaches who define the experience. Many apply to Mouratoglou tennis centres worldwide, but few are chosen. Ultimately, they are ambassadors of the brand, and as well as technical skills, must be fully aligned with its values and capable of purposefully following the Mouratoglou methodology, delivering consistent high quality client outcomes wherever the centre is in the world. In this spirit the coaching team for the Costa Navarino 2025 season includes coaches who can teach beginners to professional players needing performance level training.

Additional optional private coaching or play can be arranged before or whilst on location. We have a close relationship with the tennis centre leaving us well placed to organise or create special events on request. This might be a tournament for a club group, a more intense tennis programme, private individual coaching or with one of the performance coaches. It is a considerable advantage using local coaches who are experienced with clay and the conditions generally.

Together with the Costa Navarino Resort and wider Messinia it makes for an unrivalled experience.



A typical late afternoon, sun setting in the west over the Ionian Sea. A beautiful sight and something similar to what we should expect as we wrap up the weeks tennis with an Ultimate Tennis Showdown (UTS) style tournament.



Away from the sea the area is made up of the rolling Messinian countryside of dense olive groves which run up to the tennis centre. A peaceful and relaxing surrounding in which to pursue tennis.

The development of Costa Navarino saw the biggest olive tree-transplanting programme in Europe, with more than 7,000 olive trees replanted to date. Additionally, more than 9,900 new indigenous trees and 1,200,000 endemic shrubs of different species have been planted so far.

6. The Westin Resort, Costa Navarino, rooms

Already well appointed the Westin Resort has upgraded its rooms for the 2025 season including newly designed bespoke furniture, new architectural and design lighting. The standard room quoted is a Deluxe Garden View. Other room types, examples shown below, can be reserved on request and subject to availability. The check-in time at The Westin Resort, Costa Navarino is 3:00 pm and the check-out time is 11:00 am.

DELUXE GARDEN VIEW ROOM (39m²) - included

Crystal clear seaside elegance meets optimum comfort in The Westin Resort Costa Navarino Deluxe Rooms (39m²), with their contemporary furniture lines, light wood, and the muted tones of sea and sand. Breathe in the fresh coastal air from your private terrace or patio overlooking the resorts' olive trees, landscaped gardens or swimming pools. Garden or resort view | Balcony or terrace | King-size bed or twin beds



SUPERIOR GARDEN VIEW ROOM (49m²) – optional upgrade subject to availability

Need a little extra room to stretch out? Save that Heavenly Bed[®] for bedtime. With one of our Superior rooms (49m²), you'll enjoy a separate lounge area to put your feet up and unwind at any time of the day. Our Superior rooms also feature private terraces and patios with a variety of views overlooking our gardens, pools and olive trees – the idyllic setting for you to recharge. Garden or resort view | Balcony or terrace | King-size bed or twin beds



PREMIUM DELUXE SEA VIEW ROOM (39m²) – optional upgrade subject to availability

You'll have every chance to ocean-gaze in The Westin Resort Costa Navarino Premium Deluxe Sea Rooms (39m²), with their floor-to-ceiling glass doors, and private open-air terrace, all with an unobstructed view of the majestic Ionian Sea. A truly refreshing atmosphere awaits you with contemporary interiors in pleasant seascape tones and beautiful light wood furnishings. Direct seafront view | Private terrace | King-size bed or twin beds



7. Restaurants (a selection)

A wealth of fresh, organically grown ingredients and a devotion to authentic gourmet cooking define the dining experience at Costa Navarino. In a stunning variety of dining venues, our acclaimed chefs serve a range of ethnic, continental, Greek fusion and local fare based on the lush flavors of the area's countryside and the finest Kalamata olive-oil.

MORIAS

at The Westin

Join us on a culinary journey to the most delightful world flavours, while exploring our diverse evening buffet offerings. An exciting selection of dishes and recipes, accompanied by a fine wine from our extended wine list. The Westin Guests Breakfast Area



FLAME

at The Dunes Clubhouse

Classic and signature cuts, some exclusive, are served on large wooden platters, complemented by the freshest ingredients from carefully selected small-scale local producers. Many of the specialty herbs and vegetables are handpicked by our chefs, direct from the restaurant's purpose-built gardens.



BARBOUNI

at The Dunes Beach

Named after the Greek word for "red mullet", Barbouni is a unique beachside spot for lunch and early dinner. The menu features freshly caught fish, seafood and signature delicacies with a focus on fresh, locally sourced ingredients and an extensive selection of fine wines.



DA LUIGI

at the Agora

The creativity and diversity of Italian cuisine is vividly portrayed with authentic flavours and traditional pizza-making. Your dining experience may well be combined with the time-honoured Greek tradition of outdoor cinema, on the Agora movie screen.



WESTIN POOL BAR

at The Westin

The sound of the Westin waterfall provides a relaxing backdrop to this pool restaurant offering refreshing beverages, fresh salads, snacks, light dishes and delightful desserts.



Restaurants - continued

ONUKE

at the Agora

Exceptional Japanese tastes and recipes featuring distinctively Greek ingredients and the finest fresh seafood from the region, in a cosmopolitan ambiance. The magnificent lounge area and the innovative cocktail list, promise to elevate your dining experience.



SOUVLAKERIE

at the Agora

Mouthwatering traditional Greek souvlaki, wrapped in grilled pita bread or on a skewer, accompanied by golden fries - cooked in Messinian extra virgin olive oil, and sprinkled with hand-picked oregano, plus a choice of favourite Greek dishes.



NARGILE

at the Agora

The aromas, images and sounds of the Middle East come to life as your taste buds delight in the flat breads, salads and grills of fine Lebanese cuisine. Indulge your senses with an authentic sheesha experience in an alluring Levantine atmosphere.



KAFENIO & DELI

at the Agora

Stop by for a traditional Greek coffee, slowly brewed the time-honoured way on hot ash, or a glass of ouzo for a gentle introduction to the Greeks' irrepressible zest for the good life. Take home a taste of Messinia at Deli, with natural products that also make novel gifts.



1827 BAR & LOUNGE

at The Westin

Named after the notorious Navarino battle, this stylish venue serves signature and handcrafted cocktail creations with local ingredients fused into unique flavourful combinations, mouthwatering dishes, light snacks, and a selection of draughts to choose from.



8. Anazoe Spa

Rejuvenate and relax at the 4000m² award-winning Anazoe Spa, while exploring a full range of specialty therapies and treatments, based on the harmonious combination of ancient wisdom and modern science, along with indulging Oleotherapy® (olive-oil) treatments, which were uncovered at Nestor's Palace and date back to Homeric times.

The name – Anazoe – derives from the Greek word for rejuvenation and encapsulates the underlying aim of the spa, which is a total revitalization of body and spirit in accordance with the ancient Greek maxim “a healthy mind in a healthy body”.

This unique wellness sanctuary features:

- 21 treatment rooms
- Indoor and outdoor treatment areas
- Kinesiotherapy
- Thalassotherapy and floating pools
- Ice-grotto rooms
- Herbal saunas
- Anazoe Shop



9. Dunes beach

The Dunes Beach is a beautiful, west-facing golden sandy beach which stretches for approximately a kilometre. This beach is part of the larger Navarino Dunes, that is also home to the resort. The beach boasts calm, crystalline waters of the Ionian Sea and offers amenities like sun loungers and umbrellas, making it a prime location for relaxation and enjoyment. Complete with restaurant and bar it's quite possible to while the day away until the sun sets. One of many spots to enjoy peace and calm.



10. Golf options

Whilst we are not knowledgeable about golf, we can say that Costa Navarino is now respected as a leading golf destination with four 18-hole signature golf courses. Booking in advance is highly recommended. Further details follow below, and we are happy to make and confirm all golf bookings. This is a brief overview of the golf courses available in Costa Navarino:

THE DUNES COURSE

Designed by two-time US Masters Champion Bernhard Langer in association with European Golf Design, The Dunes Course is Greece's first signature golf course. Set in diverse natural scenery with spectacular sea and river views, it takes its name from the tall dunes that separate several holes from a golden beach.

THE BAY COURSE

The Bay Course, designed by the legendary Robert Trent Jones Jr., offers panoramic sea and mountain views, with two holes playing along the historic Bay of Navarino. The course meanders through three contrasting natural landscapes that make for a dramatic and memorable round.

INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC ACADEMY COURSE

The International Olympic Academy Golf course designed by the two-time Masters champion and Ryder Cup legend José María Olazábal, set above the coastline and offer panoramic views of the surrounding countryside, the Bay of Navarino and the Ionian Sea.

THE HILLS COURSE

The Hills course designed by the two-time Masters champion and Ryder Cup legend José María Olazábal overlooks the rural landscape of Messinia with rugged mountains and small villages.

Each has its own distinct charm and challenges, ensuring something for every golfer's preference.

CLUBHOUSE ACADEMY

Before or after play, golfers can visit The Dunes Clubhouse, The Bay Clubhouse or The Hills Clubhouse. Each location offers breathtaking, elevated vistas of the golf course, providing an ideal backdrop for relaxation and an unforgettable dining experience. The Navarino Golf Academy offers professional tuition to players of every skill level, with instruction tailored to the specific needs of individuals or small groups and supported by the latest technology.

PRO SHOP

Golfers will find a wide selection of high-quality clothing and accessories to enhance your golfing experience at each of our four golf courses.

SHUTTLE SERVICES

There is a complimentary shuttle bus service, which conveniently transports guests from one golf course to another. The Dunes Course is conveniently situated within walking distance from both the Westin Resort. Additionally, the Bay Course is a brief 20-minute drive from the Dunes Course, while The Hills Course and International Olympic Academy Golf Course are approximately a 30-minute drive away.

RENTAL SETS

TaylorMade rental sets are available, again booking in advance is highly recommended

The Costa Navarino Experience

Golf continued

The Bay Course



The Dunes Course



11. Navarino Outdoors

Navarino Outdoors makes full use of the unspoiled countryside around Costa Navarino to offer a complete suite of exciting sports and outdoor activities. The experienced team of professionals will be on hand to provide any assistance, whether this means offering instruction and guidance to outdoor novices, or working alongside experienced hikers, mountaineers or cyclists (fees apply)

BIKING

Discover our cycling tours which will be tailored to suit from novice mountain bikers to experts. Our top-of-the-range mountain bikes available from the dedicated Bike Station will carry you along idyllic trails in style but are also well equipped to handle the most rugged terrain.



HIKING

Our carefully designed hiking tours give you the opportunity to exercise while discovering the unique history and culture of the region. And there are plenty of sites of natural and historical interest to head for, such as sparkling waterfalls, lagoons and impressive ruins of fortresses.



ROCK CLIMBING

A tour to the island of Proti, the new climbing spot in Greece, is appealing for both newcomers and experienced climbers, families and adventurers. A large number of climbing routes and stunning views are waiting, and after the challenging climbing there is still time for a jump into the refreshing and turquoise water of the Ionian Sea.



MESSINIAN PICNIC

Hike up the hill to Profit Ilias chapel, over the famous Voidokilia beach, to savor a luxurious picnic prepared by local ladies, with Messinian recipes twisted into finger food and paired with wine, beer and fresh handmade lemonade.



12. Authentic Experiences

Discover the rich cultural heritage of the region and collect authentic experiences; cookery lessons in local homes, traditional olive harvesting, winemaking and tasting, art tours, philosophy walks and many more.

There are many great choices here

- Authentic village cooking & Dining
- Pasteli making
- Lalaggia & Lalaggides making
- Bread & lagana making
- Botanical gardens tour
- Organic vegetable garden tour
- Embroidery Workshop
- Mosaic Workshop
- Songs Around the Table
- Myths, Legends and Folktales
- Olive harvesting
- Olive oil tasting
- Wine masterclass
- Farm to table experience
- Art tour
- Astronomy nights
- Philosophy walks
- Fishing Experience



AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCES - continued

AUTHENTIC VILLAGE COOKING & DINING: Visit a picturesque village home and discover traditional Messinian cooking with the help of local ladies, who will share authentic family recipes passed down from mother to daughter. Learn how to prepare a typical Messinian menu, using regional techniques and fresh local ingredients, followed by a meal to savor the food prepared.

OLIVE OIL TASTING: Join a tutored olive oil tasting session in which you will learn by local experts how to discern the subtle flavours of the region's renowned extra virgin olive oil. Tasting sessions are held at Enoteca.

OLIVE HARVESTING: Experience first-hand one of Messinia's most enduring culinary traditions, as you participate in olives' seasonal journey from tree to table, from harvesting the age-old way to olives' pressing at a nearby mill, until you taste the region's renowned extra virgin olive oil that has been produced right before your eyes.

WINE MASTERCLASS: Expand your oenological knowledge at our Wine Masterclasses. Learn about Greek and local wines from the experts and assess the characteristics of certain Messinian Varieties. Tasting sessions are held at Enoteca, accompanied by savoury snacks.

FISHING & BIRDWATCHING: Visit Gialova lagoon, one of the most iconic spots in the region, and discover the art of shore fishing with the help of local fishermen or get up-close to more than 217 bird species that grace the lagoon in a guided birdwatching experience.

EMBROIDERY WORKSHOP: Discover this ancient craft, and the relaxation it brings, in a 90-min beginner-friendly class. Learn about the local styles and techniques handed down over centuries, master the basics, and create a piece of traditional embroidery.

MOSAIC WORKSHOP: Learn how to make classic and contemporary mosaics using local stone and marble. Familiarize your hands with mosaic tools, materials and techniques to create your own piece of art.

ASTRONOMY NIGHTS: Organized by the Navarino Environmental Observatory and Navarino Natura Hall, each Astronomy Night begins when the stars come out and usually lasts for hours, when planets glow brightly in the sky and starlight illuminates the night.

PHILOSOPHY WALKS: Follow in the footsteps of the ancient Greek thinkers on a "Philosophy Walk" against the idyllic backdrop of the Messinian countryside. Led by classical scholars, these walks offer a unique opportunity to discuss important modern-day issues through the prism of ancient Greek philosophical thinking and find answers to contemporary problems by drawing on the wisdom of the past.

ART TOUR: Art is a fundamental aspect of the Costa Navarino experience, with original works by Greek and international artists forming an integral part of the interior design in Navarino Dunes. A 90-minute guided tour of the art collections gives guests the opportunity to gain an appreciation of artworks and artifacts of the 17th-19th centuries.

BOTANICAL TOUR: Enjoy a fascinating morning learning about local herbs and their unique benefits for the human body. The tour takes place in our botanical gardens.

13. The Region of Messinia

FLORA

Messinia harbours a colourful mosaic of rich and diverse flora, including Greek Firs and Black Pine trees in the woodlands of Mount Taygetos, Aleppo Pine trees in the coastal forests around the Nedas estuary, as well as Mediterranean maquis, irises, orchids, Juniper trees and Posidonia sea grass.

FAUNA

Thanks to its unique geographic location, Messinia is one of the first places in continental Greece (and mainland Europe in general) where migratory birds stopover in the spring. There are some sparsely inhabited places, which host significant populations of songbirds, raptors and sea fowl. The Mount Taygetos ridge is a haven for a variety of bird species. The upland forests and alpine areas, as well as the gorges on the lower parts close to Messinian Mani, are among the richest habitats for raptors and forest species (such as woodpeckers). The outstanding natural heritage of Messinia includes also the second most important Mediterranean habitat of the *Caretta caretta* sea turtle in the Gulf of Kyparissia, the Mediterranean seal and the Bottlenose dolphin around the Inousses islets near Methoni.

GIALOVA LAGOON

A key stopover in the flyway of migratory birds, Gialova lagoon, Greece's southernmost major wetland, has been declared an Important Bird

Area (IBA), providing shelter to 271 of the 442 recorded bird species in Greece and supporting a mosaic of habitats. It is the only refuge in Europe of the African chameleon, a unique species of reptile that changes skin color depending on its mood and surroundings. This magnificent lagoon, surrounded by the natural bay of Voidokilia and featuring a significant sand-dune ecosystem is also an archaeological site, making it one of the best-known ecotourism destinations in Messinia.

HABITATS

Important habitats for conservation are present in many areas of Messinia: the coniferous forests of Greek Fir and Black Pine trees on Mount Taygetos, the Mediterranean Strawberry tree forest on Sapienza Island, the sand-dune ecosystem in the Gulf of Kyparissia, the caves in the Nedas gorge, and Gialova lagoon, the biggest wetland of Messinia.

VILLAGES OF MESSINIA

Messinia is dotted with quaint villages of traditional stone houses, steeped in history and lore where Greek hospitality, unaltered through the centuries, is wholeheartedly offered all year round, especially by local establishments such as welcoming cafes and old-time tavernas.



14. Historical sites

With a fascinating history that goes back 4,500 years, Messinia's cultural past reveals a rich tapestry of kings and queens, honor and tradition, war and friendship. The Romanos Resort provides the ideal base from which to explore this checkered past. Classical temples, Byzantine churches, medieval castles and three UNESCO World Heritage sites are all within easy reach, both in Messinia as well as in the broader region. Some significant historical sites are:

- Vaulted Tombs
- The Palace of Nestor
- Ancient Olympia
- Temple of Apollo Epicurius
- Ancient Messini
- The Castle of Kyparissia
- Paleokastro, Pylos
- The Castle of Kalamata
- The Castle of Koroni
- The Castle of Methoni
- Neokastro, Pylos
- Church of Transfiguration
- Andromonastiro
- Church of Saint Theodora
- Bay of Navarino
- Museum of Chora
- Museum of Pylos
- The Castle of Mystras



15. Natural attractions

Apart from the historical sites, Messinia is also blessed with a wealth of natural attractions that are within easy reach and certainly worth a visit. Nearby islets, some with interesting historical background, offer a pristine environment for relaxation and exploration while the mainland is a veritable kaleidoscope of sandy beaches, deep gorges, enchanting lakes, sparkling waterfalls, olive groves and vineyards. Some of the natural attractions are:

- Voidokilia beach
- Finikounda beach
- Neda river
- Fanari and Sfaktiria islets
- Schiza Islet
- Sapientza
- Taygetos
- Fanari Islet

