

## Thessaloniki City Tour

Duration: 3 ½ hours

By air-conditioned Motorcoach and Professional Guide

Thessaloniki, Greece's second largest city with population of some 1 million and vital cultural, industrial and commercial activity, lies amphitheatrically on the Thermaikos Gulf, on the slopes of Mount Chortiatis. Founded by the Greek Macedonian **King Kassander**, he named the city Thessaloniki after his wife who was also the half sister of **Alexander the Great**. During the Roman period, it was the capital of Macedonia Secunda and during the Middle Ages, it was the second city of the Byzantine Empire. For 400 years it was occupied by the Ottoman Empire, until it was finally freed in 1912.



Start your excursion viewing the **White Tower**, an historical landmark before continuing on to visit the **Archaeological Museum** which houses interesting finds from the Archaic, Classical and Roman periods, with findings of the Sindos area and a stunning exhibition of golden jewels. From here, drive by the International Trade Fair grounds and the **Aristotelion University**, which was established in 1926 and today is the largest of all universities in Greece. Next, make your way up to the once upon a time, **Acropolis**, located in the upper part of the city. It is here, where you will have a superb panoramic view of the entire city with the Thermaic Gulf and Mount Olympus in the background.



Further visit of **St. Demetrios Basilica** which was erected in the 5th century AD. The five aisled basilica suffered a tragic fire in the year 1917 but was later restored in 1948. Marvel at the beautiful mosaics, dating back from the 5th to 9th Centuries. From here, follow your guide to the area located under the basilica, where you will see the famous crypt, which according to tradition, was once the confinement for an officer by the name of Demetrios who was later executed by the Emperor Gallerius. Today, St. Demetrios is the patron Saint of the city.



Return to your motor coach and drive along the modern street, Egnatia, named after the famous Roman road, Via Egnatia. Whilst driving, view the **Arch of Gallerius and St. George's Rotonda**. The tour will end passing by the well preserved Byzantine Basilica of **St. Sophia**, an 8th Century structure, rich in mosaics and frescoes.

