

Greek Island Writers Retreat

Creating Word Pictures:
A Travel Writing Workshop

September 5-13, 2020



Shhhh – listen closely and you can hear it – the Muse is calling “*Come With Me!*” ...

We all need to nourish our writer’s passion, and what better place than the birthplace of literature! Drama, poetry, comedy, tragedy, all have roots in Greece. Is it the deep blue waters of the Aegean Sea? Since the days of Plato and Socrates, Greece has inspired writers to their best work. Now this can be YOU!

The island of Syros in the Cyclades is the best kept secret in the Aegean Sea – low key, easy going, yet infused with the exotic charm of the country that was home to ancient dramatists and poets. Each morning, you will start with an inspiring workshop.

Whether writing fiction, memoir, travel essays, or letters home, these workshops will offer inspiration and guidance to generate writing so vivid your notebooks might replace your cameras. Each day we will focus on a specific technique that offers innovative ways to capture experience and produce evocative, memorable writing. At the end of each morning workshop we will offer a writing invitation that will lead you into your day to explore the area with new ways of seeing and experiencing the beautiful land of Greece. You will come home with more than just memories, you will have pages filled with your words, “photos” you have written during this once in a lifetime experience.

By mid-morning, you will be free to sit on the open veranda and indulge your renewed passion for your craft, or to stroll the city responding to the morning workshop’s invitation. Stroll the local shops, watch the boats come and go at a port-side restaurant, go island-hopping to the famous places you see in movies. Early fall is the perfect time, the weather is comfortable. You can rent a scooter if you wish, but you likely won’t need to, there are literally hundreds of restaurants and shops and nooks and crannies to explore on foot, starting right outside your hotel. The locals will welcome you like family.

Ela (come), join us!

Sincerely,

Karen Shoemaker

Author

 **ExecutiveTravel**

Call Executive Travel’s Group Department today at 402-435-8888. Space is limited.

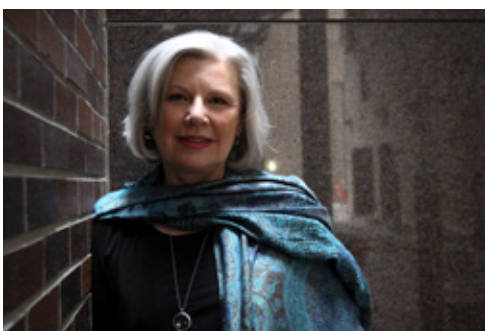


Start Each Day with a Workshop

Karen Gettert Shoemaker is an internationally published author and experienced writing mentor and teacher. Her novel, *The Meaning of Names*, was selected for the One Book One Nebraska statewide reading program in 2016 and the Omaha Reads community reading program in 2014. It is being republished in China in 2020. Her award-winning short story collection, *Night Sounds and Other Stories*, was republished in the United Kingdom in 2006.

She is a writing mentor with the University of Nebraska at Omaha’s MFA in Writing Program, leads independent writing workshops across the state, and serves as a manuscript consultant for aspiring writers.

Our journey has a maximum of 30 travelers of which the workshop enrollment is limited to 15 people. Small group size ensures participants will get personal attention and coaching.



September 5, 2020 Saturday

Depart from Omaha and take an overnight flight across the Atlantic to Athens. Enjoy in-flight entertainment and meal service as you start your Greek adventure.

September 6, 2020 Sunday

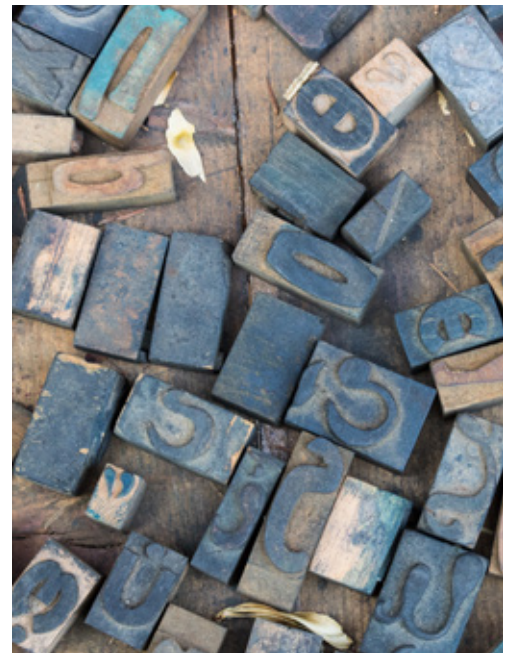
Upon arriving in Athens, you will transfer to your centrally located hotel. In the early afternoon and once all travelers have arrived, we will enjoy a panoramic city tour including a visit to the Acropolis Museum, followed by dinner in old-town Plaka. Then, off to bed – tomorrow starts early! D

September 7, 2020 Monday

An early morning breakfast is followed by transfer by private motorcoach to the ferry that will take us to Syros. When we arrive in Hermoupolis, we will transfer the short distance to the Hotel Hermes. We will enjoy lunch at the hotel where we will formally introduce our workshop leader, and provide a packet with maps, tours, events, and “things you want to know” about your stay. You will be totally equipped to plan your stay: prices, schedules, and events, excursion options, all in a handy guide. You may go solo or team up with others, or decline in order to heed the waking muse and write. The afternoon is yours to begin exploring Hermoupolis. B | L

September 8-11, 2020 Tuesday-Friday

Breakfast is followed by the daily Writing



Workshop taking place at our hotel. The remainder of the day is at leisure. Don’t be afraid to try a narrow alley between buildings. They can be some of the most charming eateries you will find. Don’t forget to indulge in one of the many gelato shops – they are sooo good!

On Friday evening, and due to the late return to Athens tomorrow, we will have a celebratory dinner - a time to relish, with people who will undoubtedly have become best friends. B (Daily) | D (Friday)

September 12, 2020 Saturday

Breakfast at the hotel prior to check-out at 11:00 AM.

Enjoy one last lunch on the island before heading for the ferry back to Athens. We will be met at the dock by the private motorcoach that will take us to our centrally located hotel.

September 13, 2020 Sunday

After breakfast, we have arranged your transfer from the hotel to Athens airport in plenty of time to check in for your flight and clear security. You may do some last-minute shopping at the duty-free shops before boarding and flying west across the Atlantic Ocean, back to the United States. Arrival to Omaha airport tonight. B | Meals served onboard your international flight.

Itinerary is subject to change.

B = Breakfast L = Lunch D = Dinner



Excursions (not included):

Sightseeing

Tour Hermoupolis – the capital of the Cyclades!

Start from the port with a visit to “El Greco”, a treasured painting discovered in the Church of Dormition of the Virgin Mary. Stroll the marble-paved streets, visit the Municipality Hall done by Architect Ernest Chiller and don't forget the Archaeological Museum. Enjoy the Catholic Nannery Monastery and the Church of Annunciation of the Lord, pass through the neoclassical mansions and swing by St. Nicolas Orthodox Church. The Vatican donated part of the Sacred Relics of St. Nicolas in Bari, Italy, to Syros' St. Nicolas Church. Visit the Apollo Theater of Hermoupolis, built in 1864 by the French architect Piotr Chabeau. It constitutes a miniature replica of the opera house of Milan, La Scala, built with white marble and limestones. The Apollo Theater was the first opera house in Greece and until 1944 many Italian operas were presented there. The building was destroyed by the Germans during WWII but restored during 1970-1980. Today the Apollo Theater hosts some of the most important events and festivals in the world.

Tour medieval Ano Syros!

Talk a walk or a motor tour to Ano Syros (upper Hermoupolis), make a stop to enjoy the Anemomilos (windmill) with the stunning view of the hill of Ano Syros. Visit San Giorgio's Cathedral, the Center of



Catholicism in the Aegean Sea. Stroll through the narrow streets of Ano Syros, visit the Catholic Church of San Sebastian and Virgin Mary di Karmilo. Swing by the Folk Museum to learn about Marcos Vamvakaris, one of the most important bouzouki players in Greece. If your appetite calls for a meal, you can enjoy the most stunning views of the port of Hermoupolis while enjoying a delicious local meal.

Tour the northern and southern part of the island!

Discover even more of what Syros has to offer ... Visit the southern and northern part of the island. Kini village, a fishermen's shelter, St. Barbara Monastery with its miraculous icon which (with prayers) helped eliminate the plague in Syros, stop at the local productions of loukoumia (similar to Turkish delight), experience the villages of Manna, Azolimnos, Vari, Megas Gialos, and the amazing village of Poseidonia where wealthy shipowners in Medieval times spent their summers in their beautiful mansions.

Join a food tour!

Discover Syros' local production of cheese, Tsipouro/Raki (similar to Ouzo), olive oil, wine, pastries, and loukoumia (Turkish delight). With a food specialist, you will learn everything about Syros' cuisine and taste the unique local products. Learn about Greek herbs, the philosophy and techniques characterizing Greek traditional island cuisine.



Shop!

The endless variety of shops are unique, family-owned enterprises with the owners at the cash register. No big commercial malls, but plenty of choices - books, art, clothes, souvenirs, chocolates, fresh food stands, and not a corporate logo in sight. The streets are clean, safe, walkable, many with no vehicular traffic. Pedestrian promenades offer architecture of ancient Greece at every glance and lush flowers to complement the marble balconies and streets. Prices are very reasonable, and credit cards are welcome.

Go Island Hopping!

Take a quick ferry ride to one of the neighboring islands in the Cyclades. Hobnob with the rich and famous in Mykonos, or visit the birthplace of the Greek Gods on Delos, an uninhabited island. Visit Tinos, the island of miracles and the largest pilgrimage center in Greece. Authentic villages, verdant sceneries, and delicious local products are what characterize Tinos.





To register contact:



1212 O Street • Lincoln, NE 68508

Phone: 402-435-8888 (ask for Group Department)

Fax: 402-435-2735

GroupDepartment@executivetravel.com

www.executivetravel.com

ONLINE REGISTRATION LINK:

executivetravel.com/SYROS20

Package Price:

Package Price: 12-15 participants:
 Per person in a shared double room: \$1,995
 Per person in a single room (limited rooms*): \$2,395

Package Price: 16-30 participants:
 Per person in a shared double room: \$1,795
 Per person in a single room (limited rooms*): \$2,195

The Writers Retreat is limited to 15 participants.

*Remember our "Pair & Share" service for solo travelers.

A non-refundable deposit of \$500 per person is required upon signing up. The deposit can be paid by cash, check or credit card. The balance is due on May 15, 2020, and is non-refundable.

The balance can be paid by cash or check. Credit card payment(s) (any payment applied to the tour after the deposit) will access a 3.5% fee.

This tour will be materialized with a minimum of 12 and a maximum of 30 travelers. Should we, for any reason, not be able to guarantee this departure, we will refund all funds paid 90 days prior to departure.

Travel Insurance:

We recommend travel insurance to help protect you and your trip investment against the unexpected. For your convenience, we offer a plan provided by Travelex Insurance Services, priced from \$131 per person (covers land up to \$2,000 per person.) For full pricing grid and highlights, please review the enclosed brochure.

For complete details of this travel protection plan, visit policy.travelexinsurance.com/CTSB-0819. Travelex Insurance Services, Inc. CA Agency License #0D10209. Travel Insurance is underwritten by Berkshire Hathaway Specialty Insurance Company; NAIC #22276. YIE

Tour Activity = LEVEL 1

Involves walking over relatively level terrain, possibly some cobblestone, gravel or a few steps. Comfortable shoes are recommended. LEVEL 1 is a typical level for our City Journeys. You may walk (much) more than what we have included in our tour program; it's up to you. If you plan to visit the Acropolis Hill, you should consider this trip a LEVEL 2.

The price quoted is based on a USD/EURO exchange rate of 1.15 (1 USD = 0.85 EURO). We reserve the right to adjust the price at final payment if the exchange rate increases.

Included

- 2 nights in Athens at 3-star hotel (Hotel Attalos or similar)
- 5 nights in Syros at 3-star hotel (Hotel Hermes)
- 7 x breakfast
- Dinner on arrival day in Athens
- Lunch on arrival day in Syros
- Farewell dinner (Syros or Athens)
- "Writers Retreat Introduction" in Syros at Hotel Hermes
- 4 days of "Writers Retreat" by Karen Shoemaker held at Hotel Hermes, Syros
- Private transfer from Athens airport to your hotel in Athens
- Roundtrip motorcoach transfer from hotel in Athens to/from Piraeus port
- Roundtrip motorcoach transfer from Syros port to/from Hotel Hermes
- Private transfer from hotel in Athens to Athens airport on departure day
- Roundtrip ferry tickets (Blue Star Ferries), economy class, Piraeus-Syros-Piraeus
- Athens panoramic city tour, visit at the Acropolis Museum, with licensed English-speaking guide

- English-speaking assistance on motorcoach transfers
- All local hotel taxes and fees as per August 7th, 2019

Excluded:

- Airfare and additional baggage fees (carry-on and first checked bag up to 50 lbs, free)
- Travel insurance
- Professional fees, \$75 per person due at time of registration
- Gratuities (estimate \$5 per day for your tour guide and \$3 for your motorcoach driver, on days with such services)
- Personal expenses
- Meals other than mentioned in the tour program
- Beverages at meals mentioned in the tour program
- Entrance fees to monuments and/or museums other than mentioned
- Anything not mentioned in the inclusions

Airfare:

Group airfare is offered by Executive Travel. Refer to page 6 for details. All registered participants will be informed of the airfare once available.

Forwarding registration and deposit signifies that you agree to the terms and conditions of this tour which can be found at <http://executivetravel.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Terms-and-Conditions.pdf>

Call Executive Travel's Group Department today at 402-435-8888. Space is limited.



Optional Workshops

Travel isn't simply about going somewhere, it's about being somewhere.

Each morning of our retreat on the island of Syros we'll begin our day in a small-group workshop designed to invite the muse into our day. We'll discuss various writing techniques and try out a few writing prompts that stretch our writing muscles. You'll leave each morning workshop enlivened with new techniques to incorporate into your writing life and travel experience. At the end of the week you'll have a notebook filled with written memories and details that could rival your photo album for vividness and beauty. The focused attention that writing demands of you provides unlimited opportunities to explore not only the world around you, but the worlds inside of you as well.

Some of you may find the morning workshops are only the beginning of what you hope to find on this beautiful island retreat. You may want more individual attention during our travels, and to that end we are offering two additional options to work with the workshop leader:

1. Individual Consultation: 30-45 minute one-on-one meeting to discuss individual writing goals (anything from craft issues to publishing questions), guidance on making the most of the writing retreat, and advice about how to live the writer's life wherever you are. (Limited number of appointments available. Pre-scheduled appointments will be held after each morning workshop.)

The cost is **\$145 per person.**

2. Learning to See with a Writer's Eyes: 2-3 hour walk and talk around the island in search of stories and poems. We'll apply the techniques explored in the morning workshops and make up more as the situations demand. This option will include impromptu writing exercises. (Limit 3 people per walk. Schedule and destinations to be determined with each group. Participants responsible for own expenses during the walk.)

The cost is **\$125 per person.**

If you are interested in signing up for either of these two options, or have questions, please contact Karen Gettert Shoemaker at larksongwritersplace@gmail.com.

Remember there are a limited number of spots available for these options so please sign up early.

JOIN OUR GREAT AIRFARE!

We offer group airfare with United Airlines:

9/5/2020 - Omaha* - 12:00 PM - Newark - 4:39 PM
9/5/2020 - Newark - 5:45 PM - Athens - 10:30 AM (9/6/2020)
9/13/2020 - Athens - 12:15 PM - Newark - 4:20 PM
9/13/2020 - Newark - 8:00 PM - Omaha* - 10:12 PM

Group air is offered at \$1,540 per person including taxes and fees, economy class.

*Ask us for airfare from a different hometown/state (a small difference in pricing may occur).

Group airfare comes with seat assignments 30 days prior to departure. Executive Travel cannot confirm precise seat numbers earlier than 30 days prior to your departure, and therefore cannot guarantee the availability of specific seating on the aircraft. We do our best to honor your preferences (window, aisle seat).

Economy Plus seating upgrades may not be available when traveling on a group air contract. If you have frequent flyer miles (MileagePlus), please note those may not be used to upgrade your seat when traveling on a group air contract. Contact us if you have any questions about this and kindly note that certain exceptions may exist.

RESERVE YOUR AIRFARE WHEN SIGNING UP!

