SPICE ROADS
CYCLING

TOURING

WILD NORTH GREECE: THESSALONIKI TO METEORA BY E-BIKE

Tour Code
GRC-WNG

9 DAYS
8 NIGHTS

Destinations	Greece
Tour Meets	Thessaloniki
Tour Ends	Thessaloniki
Fly in to	Thessaloniki Airport "Makedonia" (SKG)
Fly out of	Thessaloniki Airport "Makedonia" (SKG)
Group Size	4-16 riders
Minimum Age	18 (on scheduled departures)

ACTIVITY PROFILE

6 Cycling days	**350** km Total cycling distance
58 km Avg distance / day	**1149** m Avg climbing / day

PRICING

Price	US$ 4,250
Bike Hire (E-Bike)	Included
Single Supplement	US$ 395

DEPARTURES

16 May - 24 May 2027
05 Sep - 13 Sep 2027
19 Sep - 27 Sep 2027

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- ✓ SpiceRoads jersey
- ✓ Water bottle
- ✓ Support vehicle
- ✓ Guide(s)
- ✓ Meals (as indicated)
- ✓ Hotel drop off
- ✓ Accommodation
- ✓ Bike and helmet
- ✓ Snacks and drinks
- ✓ Entrance fees

WHAT'S EXCLUDED

- ✗ International flights
- ✗ Domestic flights
- ✗ Airport pick up
- ✗ Airport drop off
- ✗ Visa fees
- ✗ Alcohol
- ✗ Tips

TRIP PROFILE

We ride a total of **350 km** over **6 cycling days**. Daily distances average around 58 km with approximately 1,150 m of climbing per day, though the stages are uneven. The week starts with the tour's highest ascent on **Day 2** before settling into a sustained mountain rhythm through the *Pindus* range. The route leads through the remote *Prespes* lakes and the historic adobe villages of *Koretsia*, winding through the narrow *Portitsa Gorge* before a panoramic descent toward the sandstone pillars of *Meteora*. Highlights off the bike include exploring the 18th-century stone bridges of *Grevena* and a guided visit to the UNESCO-listed monasteries of *Meteora*. The trip is fully supported, and your guide's expert knowledge of the area and terrain means that you always know what is coming up in terms of distance and difficulty. This makes a tremendous difference, as does the constant supply of water and refreshments along the way.

Suitability

This tour is for riders with a consistent level of fitness who enjoy a mix of paved and unpaved terrain. While e-bikes provide assistance for the significant daily elevation gains, the trip is **not suitable for complete beginners** as it requires basic bike handling skills for descending and **requires comfort with daily climbing**. We recommend regular aerobic exercise or cycling in the weeks leading up to departure to ensure you can comfortably complete consecutive days in the saddle. The itinerary includes cumulative climbing that averages 1,150 m per day, so a moderate level of physical stamina and a willingness to tackle hills is helpful.

Biking Conditions

The terrain is approximately 78% paved and 22% unpaved, consisting of a mix of asphalt, hard-packed gravel, and forest roads. Most cycling takes place on quiet backroads and rural paths through the *Pindus* mountains, though some primary road sections are used to connect valley stages near *Kastoria* and *Grevena*. Surface conditions vary, with good asphalt on several stages and rougher gravel or rutted tracks on the more mountainous sections of **Day 2** and **Day 6**. While much of the route is on quiet countryside roads with minimal traffic, we will be regularly sharing the roads with other vehicles, including cars, motorbikes, and buses. Road surfaces can be variable, with occasional rough patches, potholes, or loose gravel. We generally ride rain or shine, but based on the guide's discretion or your level of comfort, modifications to the planned route can be made. It's all part of the adventure! Throughout the ride, the support vehicle is always nearby to offer refuge to any weary cyclists.

Accommodations

We stay in **comfortable mid-range hotels and characterful regional guesthouses** selected for their location and local character. In *Thessaloniki* we base ourselves at the **upscale urban hotel La Palace**, which offers neoclassical style and quality beds in the city center. The remaining nights take you to intimate properties: a scenic guesthouse overlooking *Prespa Lake* at high altitude, regional hotels in mountain villages, the atmospheric **stone villas of Pindos Resort** nestled among pines at 1,170 m, and a quiet garden hotel steps from *Meteora*'s monasteries. All properties feature private bathrooms, reliable hot water, and Wi-Fi; breakfast varies from buffet style to simple continental. Please be aware that some properties, while charming and full of local character, **may show signs of age**, and **service pace can be more relaxed** than you might expect in larger international hotels. For larger groups we may occasionally split the group between nearby properties or substitute a similar property if the listed one is unavailable.

Day 1: Meet in Thessaloniki

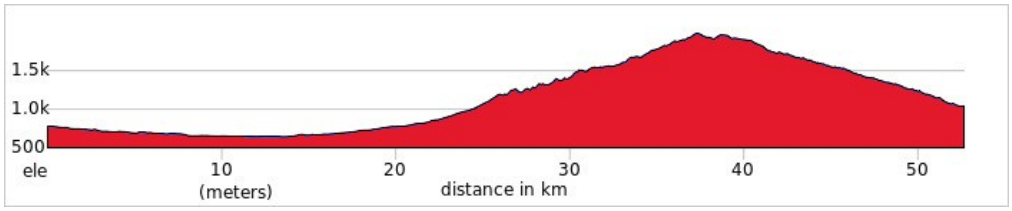
We meet in **Thessaloniki**, Greece's cultural gateway where the Aegean Sea meets the rugged Balkan interior. After check-in, the afternoon is free for exploration. We recommend a walk along the waterfront to the iconic **White Tower** or through the historic **Ladadika District**. In the early evening, we gather for a welcome briefing before sharing a group dinner at a local *taverna*. We enjoy authentic northern Greek flavours and the city's vibrant evening atmosphere as we prepare for our first day in the saddle. Please let us know if you need assistance with airport **transfers** or **pre-tour hotel bookings**.

La Palace hotel or similar in Thessaloniki Dinner

Day 2: Flampouro → Agios Germanos

We begin the day with a morning **transfer** (approx. 2h 30) from **Thessaloniki** toward the mountain village of **Flampouro**. After bike fitting, we tackle the rugged ascent to the **Vigla** pass, defined by the sharp switchbacks and alpine exposure of the northern frontier. We break for a hearty lunch at a local *taverna* to sample authentic regional flavours like roasted peppers and mountain tea. Cresting the summit, we are rewarded with a panorama across the **Prespa Lakes**, where the borders of Greece, Albania, and North Macedonia meet in a landscape of untouched wilderness. In the afternoon, we descent to **Agios Germanos**, a preserved stone village where the evening is yours to explore the historic streets and find a local spot for dinner.

hotel Panorama Breakfast, Lunch



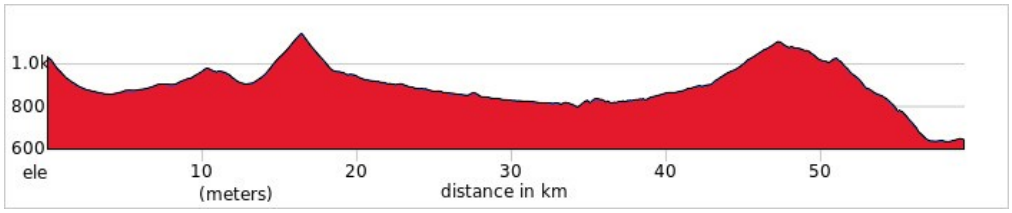
Ride 53km +1505m -1240m

Day 3: Agios Germanos → Chloi

We leave **Agios Germanos** behind to enjoy the easiest ride of our journey, **pedalling** through the northern hills. This stage offers a window into rural life, where we ride past traditional stone

houses and through landscapes that have remained largely unchanged for centuries. Along the route, we stop for a scenic *picnic lunch* to soak in the quiet beauty of the northern mountains. The afternoon is defined by a rewarding descent that leads us out of the high country and into the **Kastoria** basin. We finish our ride in **Chloi**, located on the outskirts of the historic city of **Kastoria**, known for its wealth of **Byzantine churches** and unique lakeside architecture. The evening is free to wander the vibrant waterfront and find a local spot for dinner.

Chloi Guesthouse Breakfast, Lunch



Ride 59km +734m -1118m

Day 4: Kastoria → Grevena

We roll out from **Kastoria** for our longest day on the road, heading south toward the "City of Mushrooms," **Grevena**. We cover 75 km of rolling terrain, moving deeper into the northern Greek interior as the hills begin to sharpen toward the rugged **Pindos Mountains**. A traditional *taverna* lunch in **Neapoli** provides the perfect mid-day break before we pedal through the final stretch of foothills into **Grevena**. The town is famous for its mountain character and deep foraging traditions, making it the perfect place to finish a big day in the saddle. In the evening, we gather for a group dinner to refuel and share stories from the road.

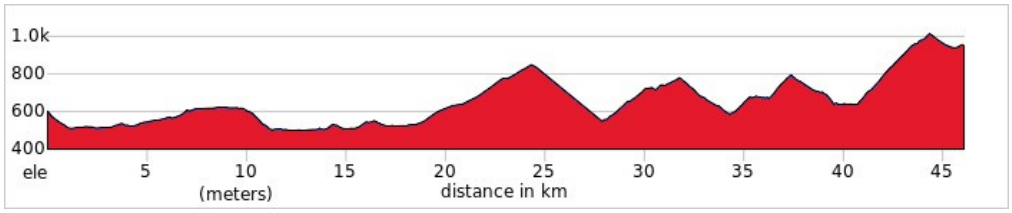
Achillion hotel Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Ride 75km +1077m -1110m

Day 5: Grevena → Ziaka Village

We set out from **Grevena** for a rewarding day of ascent through dramatic scenery and ancient architecture. We ride across the arched stone bridges of **Aziz Agha** and **Ziakas** as we work our way into the rugged interior of the **Pindos Mountains**. A traditional *taverna* lunch in **Trikomo** provides the perfect mid-day break before we continue toward the spectacular **Portitsa Gorge**. We take time to explore this narrow canyon, where a 200-year-old stone bridge sits tucked between massive limestone walls. A final climb brings us to **Ziaka Village**, a quiet settlement at the foot of **Mount Orliakas**. The evening is free to soak in the atmosphere and find a village spot for dinner.

hotel Ziakas Breakfast, Lunch

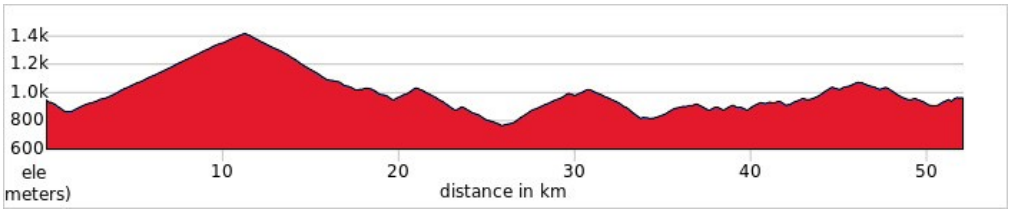


Ride 46km +1348m -991m

Day 6: Ziaka Village → Krania

We begin our ride from **Ziaka Village**, trading asphalt for the grit of the **Pindus** on the tour's most authentic off-road stage. We ride through the traditional stone houses of **Agios Nikolaos**, a village that feels frozen in time, before finding a spot in the wilderness for a *packed lunch*. The route leads us to the **Mikrolivado Watermill**, a historic piece of local heritage that shows how these isolated mountain communities once harnessed the river's power for survival. The terrain becomes even more dramatic as we enter the **Mileopotamos Gorge**. Here, the narrow limestone walls and deep river canyons reveal the rugged character of the northern Greek interior, making every meter of the climb worth the effort. We finish the day at a resort in **Krania**, a high-altitude sanctuary perfect for resting after a day on the trails. The evening is free to explore the village and find a local tavern for dinner.

Pindos Resort Breakfast, Lunch

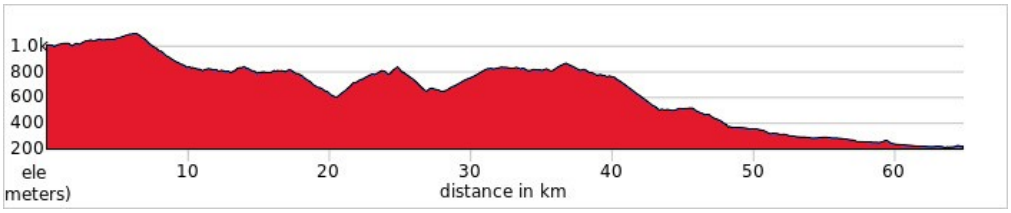


Ride 52km +1384m -1362m

Day 7: Krania → Meteora

We leave the high peaks of the **Pindus** behind, trading the deep forest for a long descent toward the legendary rock formations of **Meteora**. The route through **Panagia** and **Matoneri** offers a mix of mountain scenery and traditional villages, leading to panoramic views as we drop toward the **Thessalian plain**. We stop for a *packed lunch* along the way while the horizon begins to shift. As we approach the final stretch, the dramatic sandstone pillars of **Meteora** rise abruptly from the valley floor. These towering formations, crowned by centuries-old monasteries, signal our arrival at this UNESCO World Heritage site. We end the day at a hotel nestled at the base of these landmarks, with the evening free to explore the local atmosphere and find a spot for dinner.

Meteoritis hotel Breakfast, Lunch



Ride 65km +843m -1631m

Day 8: Meteora → Thessaloniki

We trade our bikes for hiking boots to walk the ancient paths of the monks through the heart of **Meteora**. The trail leads us beneath the ruined monastery of **Pantocrator** and through a lush forest toward the restored monastery of **Ipapanti**. We continue past the ruins of **St. Dimitrios** before reaching the clifftop to visit one of the historic monasteries perched high above the valley floor. Our descent into **Kastraki** follows the traditional routes used for centuries, passing the cave of **St. George Mandila** where colorful scarves hang as offerings from local climbers. Following a final *taverna* lunch, we board our bus for the three-hour **transfer** back to **Thessaloniki**. We spend our final evening together sharing a farewell dinner to celebrate our week in the mountains.

La Palace hotel Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Ride 7km +615m -320m

Day 9: Thessaloniki Departure

Our northern Greek adventure officially ends after breakfast this morning. If you choose to stay longer in **Thessaloniki**, you can wander the vibrant waterfront promenade toward the iconic **White Tower**, explore the Byzantine walls of the **Upper Town**, or enjoy the bustling atmosphere of the **Modiano Market**. Please let us know if you need assistance with airport transfers or post-tour hotel bookings, as these are not included in the main price. We are happy to help you organise these final details for your journey home or an extended stay in **Thessaloniki**.

Breakfast

Disclaimer: The adventure cycling tours we operate often go beyond the beaten track, and the countries where we ride are not always predictable. Due to these reasons, it is occasionally necessary to reroute or update itineraries. Our guarantee is that we will not change a trip unless for safety or to improve it. Our listed hotels are always accurate at the time of writing, but should we have to change any hotel, it will always be for a similar or better one.

NUTS & BOLTS

Bikes

We include high-quality **e-bikes** on this tour so you can enjoy the Greek mountain scenery with a comfortable level of support. We provide **Giant Talon E+2** e-bikes or similar, offering smooth electric assistance and reliable components. If you choose to bring your own bicycle, a **hardtail e-mountain bike** is ideal, but a standard mountain bike with high-volume tires will also get the job done. Whichever bike you choose, please ensure it is in excellent mechanical order before arrival.

Bike Repairs

Basic spares and tools are carried by the guide and on the support vehicle, though we cannot guarantee having spares for every conceivable problem. Carrying a basic tool kit, a spare tube and a pump while riding is recommended.

Safety

Wearing a helmet is required on all our biking adventures and is non negotiable. If you do not wear a helmet you will not be allowed to cycle. Your tour leader is trained in first aid and emergency rescue, but to a large degree you must be responsible for your own safety while riding. It is therefore compulsory that you take out travel insurance that will cover you for a mountain biking tour.

Guides

You will be led by a local English-speaking guide and if the group is 9 people or more we will add another guide to the tour. All our guides are well informed in the history, culture and religions of the area where you are biking and are skilled at passing that knowledge on to you. Your guide is also medically trained and an experienced cyclist, able to handle most minor repairs en route.

THE NITTY GRITTY

Passports and Visas

Greece is in the Schengen Area. Citizens of the UK, US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand travel without a visa for up to 90 days in any 180-day period. Citizens of the EU, Switzerland and Norway enter on a valid national ID card or passport. Everyone else should check with their nearest Greek embassy, since the visa-free list is long and we sell to more nationalities than the obvious few. Your

passport must be valid for at least three months beyond the date you leave and must have been issued within the last ten years, a rule that catches renewed passports carrying months over from the old one. The Entry/Exit System is in operation, so on your first entry to the Schengen Area you'll register a facial image and fingerprints at the border in place of a passport stamp. A separate travel authorisation, ETIAS, will apply to visa-exempt travellers once it starts. Check the official EU page for the current position before you travel: Travel to Europe. Use government sites only. Paid look-alike authorisation sites exist and charge for nothing.

Health & Insurance

No vaccinations are required to enter Greece. The CDC recommends every international traveller is up to date on MMR: see the CDC's Greece page. Travel insurance is essential and has to cover cycling and medical evacuation, which matters on mountain routes where the nearest well-equipped hospital can be a long drive from the road. EU citizens should carry a European Health Insurance Card and UK citizens a Global Health Insurance Card, both of which give access to state-provided healthcare on the same terms as a Greek resident. Neither replaces travel insurance: they don't cover repatriation, evacuation, or treatment in a private clinic.

Weather

We ride Greece in April, May, August, September and October. The climate is Mediterranean, but the north and the Pindus run considerably cooler and wetter than the islands. Spring and autumn bring daytime highs of roughly 18 to 26°C (64 to 79°F) at lower altitudes. August is the hottest month by a distance, regularly above 33°C (91°F) away from the coast, with the mountains giving the only real relief. Weather at altitude changes quickly, and even in late spring a mountain pass can be ten degrees colder than the valley you left an hour earlier.

Food

Greek cooking is the Mediterranean diet as it's actually eaten: olive oil, bread, pulses, vegetables and whatever's in season. *Moussaka* layers aubergine and spiced meat under béchamel. *Horta* is wild mountain greens boiled and dressed with lemon and oil, and it appears on every table in the north. Grilled octopus, *gemista* of stuffed tomatoes and peppers, slow-cooked goat and thick sheep's yoghurt are staples, and the salad arrives with a slab of feta on top rather than crumbled through. In the mountains of Epirus and Greek Macedonia the cooking turns heavier: pies with hand-rolled pastry, beans, and cheeses from the high pasture. Meals are served family-style to share. We cater for dietary requirements when you tell us at the time of booking.

Drink

Tap water is safe to drink across mainland Greece. Coffee is a serious business: order a *freddo espresso* or *freddo cappuccino* in summer, which is what everyone around you is drinking, or a slow-brewed Greek coffee in the older cafés. Greek wine has come a long way and the north is where the good reds are: Xinomavro from around Naoussa is the one to order, firm and long-lived. *Ouzo* and *tsipouro* are the anise and grape spirits poured after a ride or with a plate of small dishes. Alcohol isn't included in the tour price.

Solo Travellers

SpiceRoads welcomes solo adventurers and does not charge a mandatory single supplement. We arrange for you to share a room with another traveller of the same gender. If no match is available, you receive a single room at no additional cost. If you prefer to guarantee your own private room for the duration of the trip, a single supplement is available at the rate listed in the tour pricing.

Extra Expenses

Greece is better value than most of western Europe, particularly away from the islands. Budget cash for meals and drinks outside the itinerary, entry to archaeological sites, monasteries and museums, and anything you buy along the way. Riders tend to come home with olive oil, mountain tea, honey, olive wood and the ceramics sold in the hill towns.

Tipping is customary but modest. In restaurants, rounding up or leaving 5 to 10% is normal. Check the bill first, since a service charge is sometimes included. Round up taxi fares. Hotel porters and housekeeping are usually given a small note. In a village *kafeneio*, leaving the coins from your change is plenty and nothing more is expected.

Money

The currency is the euro (€). Cards are accepted almost everywhere: hotels, restaurants, shops and even small tavernas now take Visa and Mastercard, and contactless is standard. Cash

machines are widely available in every town and take international cards. Carry a small amount of cash anyway for village tavernas, roadside stalls, small entry fees and mountain places where the connection drops and the terminal stops working.

GENERAL BOOKING INFO

If this is the tour for you here's what you need to do to confirm your place:

FLEXIBLE BOOKING CONDITIONS

Booking a SpiceRoads cycling adventure is easy and we try to do everything possible to make sure you have full flexibility and peace of mind. We do not require a deposit to hold your place on a tour and once full payment has been made your money is protected in our client account and you have the flexibility to cancel or change your booking if needed.

CONFIRMING YOUR BOOKING

Just complete our online booking form or send your booking details offline (email or post), and we will confirm your participation. No deposit is needed to confirm your place on a SpiceRoads tour.

You are advised to read our Booking Conditions in full before you make your payment and should you require further clarifications of any of the conditions below, please email us or call our office.

TRIP STATUS

There is a minimum number of participants (usually 2) required to enable the trip to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to Depart'. Once a trip is guaranteed to depart you are free to book your flights and make other travel arrangements. If the trip status is 'Limited' will mean we have only a small number of spaces available for booking. If you are unsure about the trip status, please email us or call our office.

BOOKING ONLINE

From the tour page, click the 'Book Now' link. All departures for this tour will appear, just select the date you'd like to travel. For the next steps, you'll need to know the names of the people travelling. If you wish you can also provide extra details such as passport numbers, height (for bike hire), or you can add that later by logging into Manage My Trip (we'll set up an account for you automatically if you don't already have one). Our system will contact you from time to time to fill in the missing information, as it will be required before departure. However, if the trip that you are booking offers a child discount, you will have to fill out the date of birth of each rider (so we can calculate the appropriate discount).

If you are having any problems please send us an email, or give us a call (+66 026 3295) and one of our travel specialists will assist you with your booking.

BOOKING OFFLINE

Just call us or send an email indicating which trip you want to join and we will happily send you a list of questions and process your booking for you.

DEPOSITS AND PAYMENTS

We do not require a deposit or full payment to book a place for you on a tour.

The balance of the tour's cost (final invoice) will need to be paid 60 days before the departure date with fees for any bicycle rental(s), single supplement(s) and extra hotel nights.

In the case where a booking is made when there are less than 60 days until the tour departure date, the tour's cost should be paid in full within 72 hours of receiving an invoice from SpiceRoads. Payment can be made by credit card using our online payment gateway or by bank transfer. When making payment online you will need to confirm that you have read these booking conditions during the "checkout" process, which equates to agreeing to the terms of services and stipulations as indicated in this document.

In all cases, tour fees need to be paid "in full" before participation in a tour. No person(s) will be allowed to join a tour without fully settling their invoice and receiving a confirmation number from SpiceRoads.

The exception can be made for last-minute miscellaneous fees that can be paid locally (visas, additional local hotel bookings, etc.) can be settled on the day of arrival.

FULL FLEXIBILITY FOR TOUR CANCELATIONS

If the tour is cancelled or postponed by SpiceRoads because we didn't make the trip numbers and the tour can't run, we will make a full cash refund (by bank transfer or on your credit card).

If the tour is cancelled for any other reason, including due to Covid related travel restrictions, we will give you a full credit (with no deductions for admin or any other small-print item) to use on any SpiceRoads tour with no time limit. (Exceptions being flights, special permits and other non-refundable items and these will be advised when booking the trip).

Before paying for your tour, you can cancel your booking with no charge and up until 40 days before departure, you can change your booking to another travel date or move your booking onto another SpiceRoads tour with no charges.

If you need to cancel after you have made full payment, please see our cancellation policy.

Loyalty Riders Club

For those who have been on several long tours with us, we reward customer loyalty by offering repeat customers a special discount off the tour price (excludes single supplement and bike rental). If this is your fourth scheduled tour or more you will receive a 5% discount. If this is your eighth scheduled tour or more we will extend a 10% discount. The discount will be reflected in your online booking, but please contact us if any questions. Loyalty discounts cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. Note: Only tours of 7 days or more will be applicable for a loyalty discount.

International Flights

International flights, to and from the start and finish points are not included in the tour price. Once your tour is Guaranteed to Depart you can book your flight. Please contact us for advice before arranging flights for the best arrival and departure times. We would only cancel a trip for an extreme circumstance, but in that case, where we cancel your trip, we cannot be liable for losses incurred relating to any flight booking you have made. Please claim any losses from your travel insurance that you acquired when you booked your holiday.

Newsletter

Our adventure travel e-newsletter is full of travel news, trip information, interesting stories and contests. To avoid missing out on special offers and updates from SpiceRoads, be sure to subscribe.

CONTACT US

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