

# Greek Islands & Turkey Cruise

8 DAYS / 7 NIGHTS - GROUP TRAVEL  
SUGGESTED ITINERARY - CAN BE CUSTOMIZED



This itinerary is absolutely ideal for travelers who are eager to experience the world's greatest attractions from the ancient world – from the comfort of a relaxing cruise ship. The histories of Greece and Turkey have been overlapping since the time of Antiquity. Both nations are connected to some of history's (and mythology's) best characters and moments. Combine the capital city of Athens with truly fascinating, ancient sightseeing in both Greece & Turkey. Then stir in gorgeous views and the blue waters of the Aegean – what vacation recipe could be better?



## DAY 1 ~ ATHENS

Morning arrival to Athens, Greece's classical yet very cosmopolitan capital city.

A local assistant will meet your group in the terminal's arrival hall and accompany it to the hotel by private bus. Most hotels' official check-in time is 2:00 pm; however, if your group arrives before this – it is no problem to store your baggage with the reception staff. The rest of the day it at leisure for you to get situated and begin exploring the ancient city of Athens. Tonight there will be a group dinner in the hotel's restaurant.



## DAY 2 ~ CRUISE

After breakfast and check-out, your group will travel by private bus to Piraeus

Port to embark on a fantastic 4-night cruise on the sparkling, blue waters of the Aegean Sea. The ports of call include the Greek Islands of Mykonos, Patmos, Rhodes, Crete (Heraklion), and Santorini as well as the seaside resort town of Kusadasi on mainland Turkey. Breakfast and dinner will be included on the ship each day.

After departing Piraeus Port, your group's

first visit will be to the island of Mykonos. White-washed homes set very near the water, tiny chapels and windmills are characteristic of this very beautiful, Cycladic island. Despite the fact that at first glance – Mykonos resembles a fishing village, it's actually one of the most cosmopolitan Greek islands. Since the 1960s Mykonos has attracted many international visitors, artists, celebrities and travelers with an appetite for sandy beaches and nightclubs. While in Mykonos, you can either explore the island on your own or participate in a guided walking tour of Hora, the island's capital.



## DAY 3 ~ CRUISE

Today you will stop in the seaside resort town of Kusadasi, which is located

on Turkey's Aegean Coast. From here you can take a shore excursion to Ephesus. This ancient Greek city was widely known throughout the ancient world for its Temple of Artemis, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. While the origin of Ephesus is Greek, most of the ruins that you will see today are Roman, and in terms of preservation – these ruins rival those of Italy's Pompeii. Ephesus also

## INCLUSIONS

- 3 night in Athens
- 4 nights on cruise
- Breakfast daily
- Lunch and dinner per itinerary
- Ground transport via air conditioned luxury coach
- English speaking assistant and guides
- Admission tickets as outlined in itinerary

## HIGHLIGHTS

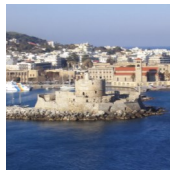
- Guided walking tour of Hora
- Visit ancient Ephesus, home to Turkey's version of Pompeii and believed to be the last home of the Virgin Mary
- Explore Patmos, home to the Monastery of St. John
- Visit Crete, home of the ancient Minoan Civilization
- Explore the dramatically beautiful, volcanic island of Santorini
- Traditional Greek dinner with Bouzouki music and folk dancers in Athens

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has an interesting history with early Christians. It is believed that the Virgin Mary eventually settled here and lived until her assumption. St. Paul also lived in Ephesus for two years. It is also believed that St. John the Evangelist spent his last years in the region around Ephesus.

Later on today, the cruise ship will stop in Patmos, a small Greek island in the Aegean Sea. Patmos is believed to be the place where St. John wrote the text of the Book of Revelation while in exile. The Monastery of Saint John the Theologian, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, was constructed on one of the island's highest points. It is home to many treasures including priceless icons and manuscripts; monks still reside in the monastery today.



#### DAY 4 ~ CRUISE

Today the cruise ship will stop on the Greek island of Rhodes. Throughout the ancient world, Rhodes was well known for its Colossus of Rhodes, which was a massive statue of the Greek Titan Helios; it was one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. During your stop in Rhodes, a shore excursion will take place that will include a guided tour of the Acropolis of Lindos and of Rhodes' medieval Old Town, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Should your group decide not to participate in the shore excursion, there is still plenty to be enjoyed inside Rhodes' historic city walls, which contain many boutiques, street vendors, restaurants, coffee bars and art galleries.



#### DAY 5 ~ CRUISE

This morning we arrive to the island of Crete, the largest and most rugged of the Greek islands. Crete was home of the great Minoan Civilization, and the mythological home of Zeus. A shore

excursion to the nearby Knossos excavations is available this morning. Here you can see archaeological discoveries that reveal a very advanced, 6000-year-old civilization. Alternatively, you may prefer to visit to the wine region of Peza - which lies south of the port city of Heraklion - and the quaint market town of Archanes, a lovely place to experience local cuisine and culture.

Later this afternoon, you will arrive to what is arguably the best-known and most breathtaking of all of the Greek Islands: Santorini. Because of its volcanic origins, the island's formation and in particular its caldera are dramatically beautiful and quite rare. Santorini is interesting, historic and unimaginably picturesque. After Crete - nowhere else has as interesting archeological artifacts and ruins belonging to the ancient Minoan civilization. Many visitors also flock to scenic Santorini to taste its distinguished wines or to sunbathe on one of its many beautiful beaches - which are home to transparent, azure waters and black, red or white sand depending on which beach you visit.

While in Santorini, you can relax in a local café, swim or check out the many jewelry boutiques. Should your group like to participate in a shore excursion, it could visit the village of Oia - best known for its famous sunset views - or cruise around the active crater of the nearby New Kameni island, a fascinating place for fans.



#### DAY 6 ~ ATHENS

After breakfast your group will disembark the cruise ship in Piraeus and meet a local, English-speaking guide who will lead your group on an exciting, half-day sightseeing tour of Athens. See the most famous sights including the monumental gateway of Hadrian's Arch, the Panathenaic Stadium - the only major stadium in the world built entirely out of white marble -



**Why Should You Encourage Your Travel Agent to Book Your Group Through Us?**

***Ease of Use***

***Experience***

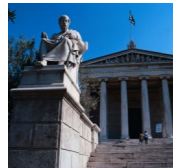
***Flexibility***

***Peace of Mind***



and the iconic Acropolis, a UNESCO World Heritage site that is home to the Parthenon, the Theatre of Dionysus and the Temple of Athena Nike.

A group lunch is planned during the tour, and afterwards your group will continue sightseeing with a drive to the scenic Cape Sounion, a rocky promontory that houses the ancient Temple of Poseidon, the god of the sea. After visiting the 2400-year-old temple and having some time to explore this scenic spot, the guide and driver will accompany your group to the hotel in Athens, where you will stay for the next two nights. The evening is at leisure.



#### **DAY 7 ~ ATHENS**

After breakfast in the hotel, enjoy the morning and afternoon at leisure in Athens. Consider paying a visit to the New Acropolis Museum or to the Ancient Agora. With tonight being your group's last night in Greece, a special evening has been planned which will begin with a scenic drive to the port city of Piraeus, where your group will enjoy ouzo with Greek appetizers in Mikrolimano Harbor. Afterwards you will return to Athens to visit its most-loved neighborhood: Plaka. This historic area was built on top of the ancient city of Athens. Here your group will visit a traditional Greek taverna for an evening of local dishes, Bouzouki music and Greek folk dances.



#### **DAY 8 ~ ATHENS**

After breakfast in the hotel, your group will check out and transfer by private bus to the airport for its return flight to the USA.

### **WHY TRAVEL WITH US ?**

Whether it is taking a family trip to Paris, an educational group to Barcelona, or a church group to Rome we can build an affordable, European trip tailored to your interests. From single city itineraries to multiple cities and countries, your travel agent will work with us to create custom tours for groups of 10 to 500 people.

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