

Athens – Mykonos – Kos – Patmos - Kusadasi – Dikili – Canakkale – Istanbul

All tours are offered with English speaking guides. The length of the tours is given as an indication only as it may vary depending on the road, weather, sea and traffic conditions and the group's pace.

Time spent on site is also given on an indicative basis only. Minimum number of participants indicated per coach or group.

Some excursions are only available on certain dates and/or are dependent on the ship's arrival and departure times.

Depending on what activities you would like to participate in, the general fitness levels vary. If you like to enjoy walks and other sporting activities like hiking, snorkeling and boating, an average to good fitness level is required.

MYKONOS, GREECE

The reason for Mykonos's enduring popularity is immediately apparent.

A charming little harbour, lined with cafés and colourful fishing boats, greets the eye and provides a scenic façade for the maze of narrow cobble stoned streets that lie behind. On either side of the streets you will find picturesque whitewashed houses, local handicraft shops, boutiques, waterfront cafes and of course the island's mascot: the Pelican. Don't be surprised if you encounter one of them wandering the town with you. Two of the best places to visit are Little Venice, located on the southwestern side of town, with its waterfront cafes and spectacular views of the sunset, and the famous Windmills (adjacent to Little Venice, on Kato Myli Hill), one of the landmarks of Mykonos. Take the time to explore this captivating island; you won't have to venture very far before you come across beautiful beaches and coves with azure blue water lapping on the shore.

Be warned, this island casts a spell on all who visit her and your first trip to Mykonos, will certainly not be your last!.



KOS, GREECE

Kos was home to Hippocrates, the Father of Modern Medicine. In the middle of the island, in front of the “Castro” or castle of the Knights of St John, stands a huge old plane tree, known as the ‘Hippocrates plane tree’. According to local legend the tree was planted by the famous Greek physician, who used to teach the art of medicine under its shade. Since the tree is 500 years old and Hippocrates lived around the 5th century BC, it is obviously not the same one, but may possibly be a descendant of the original tree which allegedly stood there 2400 years ago. Kos has many venerable ruins, but perhaps the most famous is the site of the Asklépéion, the world’s first medical centre founded by Hippocrates himself. The Asklépéion was known for its therapeutic treatments and soothing environment and is the ancestor of today’s spas and thermal resorts.

Kos, the Island of Hippocrates

By air-conditioned motor coach and on foot.

Minimum 20 participants, no maximum

Duration approximately 3h30

€47

The excursion starts with a visit to the Asklépéion, probably the most famous and important archaeological site on the island. Built during the course of the 4th century BC, the Asklépéion was both a temple dedicated to Asklépios, the God of Health, as well as a healing resort. The site is known throughout the world, as it was here that Hippocrates practiced medicine and wrote the Hippocratic Oath, a code of ethical conduct still used by doctors today.

The next stop is the lovely mountain village of Zia, a great photo opportunity with its panoramic views of Kos Island. Zia is a centre for local arts and crafts as well as producing local honey and many of the dried herbs used in traditional Greek cuisine. While you are there, don’t forget to visit the picturesque village church.

On the return journey to the Port of Kos, we will make a last stop at Hippocrates’ plane tree located near the ancient castle fortress. According to local legend Hippocrates taught his students under that very tree some 2500 years ago.

Kos by bicycle

Minimum 10 participants, maximum 30

Duration 2h30

€60

Cycling enthusiasts will enjoy this ride through the historical town of Kos.

The excursion starts from the pier with a first stop at the Plane tree of Hippocrates, located near the harbour on Platanous square in front of the Castle of the Knights of St John. According to local legend it was here that Hippocrates taught medicine some 2500 years ago.

You will ride through the harbour area and across the old part of town. There will be a brief stop at the ancient market place before proceeding to the impressive Odeon amphitheatre and the excavation sites where you will learn about the Nymphaeum and Xysto ruins from the Hellenistic and Roman eras.

Before returning to the ship there will be a stop at a traditional Greek café for a refreshing drink or a Greek coffee.

- The pace of the tour depends on the participants – it is not a race
- The tour takes about 2h30 including a 30 minute stop at the Odeon, 30 minutes at Platanous square and 20 minutes at the café.
- It will be hot, so don’t forget to take sun screen and a bottle of water
- You will be provided with a helmet



PATMOS, GREECE

Known as the “Jerusalem of the Aegean”, life on Patmos seems to revolve around its religious heritage. The island was home to the apostle Saint John while in exile from Rome, and it was here that he wrote the Book of Revelation.

Patmos consists of three peaks connected by two isthmuses with a long, narrow coastline and many small bays. The main port, Scala, is typically Greek with whitewashed houses, narrow lanes, flower filled courtyards, tavernas and shops. The city of Chora is a favourite hideaway for the rich and famous, including the Agha Khan. Perched on top of a hill stands the Holy Monastery of the Theologian which, together with the Cave of the Apocalypse, commemorates the site where St John the Theologian, the “Beloved Disciple”, composed two of the most sacred Christian works, his Gospel and the Apocalypse.

Saint John’s Monastery and the Cave of the Revelation

By motor coach and on foot

Minimum 20 participants, no maximum

Duration 3 hours

€49

During his two year exile on Patmos (around 97 AD), Saint John lived in a cave on the way to Chora. It was there that he reputedly heard the voice of God dictating the Book of Revelation and penned the final book of the bible.

The short trip from the Port of Scala to the village of Chora will be by local bus. Here you will visit the Monastery of St John which is protected by fortified walls. The monastery itself is perched high on top of a hill, overlooking the harbour. It dates back to the 11th century and is one of the holiest places of the Orthodox Church, with many sumptuous chapels and treasures. The frescoes on the church walls are outstandingly beautiful and the monastery museum boasts a fascinating collection of Byzantine icons and ancient Gospels from the 6th century. After this visit you will be taken to the Grotto of the Apocalypse to see the rock pillow where St John laid his head and the stone ledge he used as a desk. Three fissures can be seen in the rock face from which the voice of God is said to have issued forth. The fissures represent the Holy Trinity.

After seeing the grotto you will return to the ship.

- Shorts and bare shoulders are forbidden in the monastery precincts (this applies to both men and women)
- Please be advised that there are about 25 steps at the site of the monastery and the cave of the revelation
- If the site is too crowded then the order of your visit may be reversed
- Some refreshments will be served in Chora.



Essence of Icons

By small coach and on foot

Minimum 10 participants, maximum 25

Duration 3h30 / 4 hours

€69

English speaking guides only

More a spiritual journey of discovery than an excursion, this visit takes you to the heart of religious art and provides a deeper understanding of the harmony and symbolism of the icon.

The coach leaves the port of Skala and takes you to the ancient hill top village of Chora, the island's capital. First stop is the tiny Convent of Zoodoho Pigi (The Spring of Life), built in 1607. On one side of the cobbled courtyard lies a chapel with recently restored frescoes dating from the 17th century and an intricately carved icon wall. On the other side is a small gift shop selling handicrafts made by the nuns. A winding, narrow street leads to the 11th century monastery of St John the Theologian. The main church is covered with icons and frescoes dating back to the 12th century and there is an impressive gilded icon wall.

The highlight of the visit is the rare opportunity to see the monastery's icon restoration workshop where you can admire the skilful and meticulous work of the craftsmen and learn something about restoration techniques.

Next stop is the monastery museum, a treasure trove of Byzantine objects and documents dating from as early as the 6th century, as well as a wonderful collection of icons by famous artists, including an early El Greco.

Before leaving Chora there will be a stop for refreshments and a chance to enjoy the panoramic view before the coach returns to the Port of Skala. The excursion ends with a visit to an artist's studio. You will get the opportunity to meet the artist and discover the many different techniques involved in icon and traditional painting.

- Comfortable shoes are recommended and appropriate dress (covering shoulders and knees)
- There is a 10 minute walk to the convent and a 15 minute walk to the monastery.



Art and history tour

By motor coach and on foot

Minimum 10 participants, maximum 15

Duration 3h15

€ 56

Our main destination is the old village of Chora, the island's capital, which stands high on the hilltop looking down over the port of Skala. From here we will have the opportunity to photograph the breathtaking panoramic view, learn a little about the islands historical background and discover the stunning architecture of houses dating from the fifteen to eighteen hundreds.

After a short walk through the winding cobbled streets we arrive at the house of Simandiris. Here we will have the unique experience of seeing the interior of a traditional Patmian house along with antique furniture, embroidery, and paintings collected over 8 generations of the Simandiris family members.

Just around the corner is the tiny convent of Zoodoho Pigis (the spring of life) built in 1607. On one side of the cobbled courtyard is the chapel where we discover an array of recently restored 17th century frescoes, the timeless art of the icon along with a beautiful carved icon wall. On the floor is a small gift shop where one can purchase handicrafts made by the nuns.

We will then continue by foot through a labyrinth of atmospheric lanes winding their way past the foot of the monastery of st John to the mansion of Nikolaidis. This historical homestead has recently been restored under the supervision of the Greek Ministry of Culture to protect Byzantine Antiquities. After the fifteen hundreds Patmos enjoyed an influx of rather wealthy ship owners and merchants who built large luxurious houses displaying their powerful class and allowing them protection against numerous pirate attacks.

The Nikolaidis Mansion, built in the seventeen hundreds, is a wonderful example of these grand homesteads and houses – an excellent exhibition showing not only the islanders way of life but also a varied collection of local archeological finds. On the ground floor we find storerooms for food stuffs, a cooking area with its original foumo (oven), water tanks for the collection of rainwater and its own private chapel named after St Nikolas. Three staircases lead to the 2nd floor where we find verandas, the formal reception room and the sleeping area, along with a magnificent ambataros (a separating wooden partition), decorated with tradition folk painting. The ambataros was a grand status symbol of the time.

Before returning by coach to the port of Skala we conclude our tour with refreshments in a beautiful environment with a spectacular view.



KUSADASI, TURKEY

In the Hellenistic Era, Kusadasi was called Neopolis and was a resort area of the big city of Ephesus. During the Middle Ages the name changed to Scala Nuova (New Pier) and the importance as a port continued until the development of Izmir harbor. Originally developed by the Venetians and Genoese, much of what remains today--including the city walls--is a result of the Ottoman conquest in 1413. Today, with several new hotels, the marina and the port, the major activity is tourism. Kusadasi has preserved the charm of small towns. It is refreshing to walk through its narrow pedestrian streets, the local market place and to see tradesmen playing backgammon and calling to one another across the street.

Ephesus & the Virgin Mary's house

By air-conditioned motor-coach

Minimum 20 participants - no maximum

duration 4 hours

€55

Ephesus today is the impressive remains of what was the "first and greatest metropolis of Asia". The city dates as far back as 3000 BCE. In its prime, it had a population of a quarter million and was the Roman capital of Asia Minor. The remains of this important Ionian city are vivid witnesses of its glorious past. Among the well-preserved ruins, the Theater, the Hadrian Gate, the Celsus Library, the street of the Curetes, the Fountain of Trojan and the Odeon are the most remarkable. Ephesus had many famous residents and visitors. One of them was Saint Paul. Paul's speech in the theater against the cult of Artemis caused a demonstration of the traders of Ephesus, because one of their best-selling items was a silver miniature version of the Artemision (temple of Artemis). Nevertheless, Ephesus became one of the first important parishes of Christianity. Six years after the death of Christ, the Virgin Mary and Saint John visited Ephesus. The house on top of Bülbülda is believed to be the last home of the Virgin Mary. Pope Paul VI in 1969 and Pope John Paul II in 1979 proclaimed the house as a place of pilgrimage. Today's structure is a church that dates to the 7th century.

Ephesus and terraced houses

By air-conditioned motor-coach

Minimum 20 participants, no maximum

duration 4hours

€ 60

English speaking guide only

The best-preserved ancient site in the world, which extends back into the third millennium B.C., Ephesus was one the most important centers of antiquity. The harbor city Ephesus was the point of departure for the famous royal highway that led through Sardis into Lydia. Because of its location, Ephesus developed into an important political and economic center, and became the capital city of the Roman province of Asia. The remains of this important Ionian city are standing miraculously today, vivid witnesses of a glorious past. Among the well-preserved ruins, the Theater, the Hadrian Gate, the Celsius Library, the Street of the Curetes, the Fountain of Trojan, the Odeon are the most remarkable Houses on the slopes behind Ephesus are to be seen opposite the Temple of Hadrian. Those on the upper slopes are reached via steps. They are situated on the slopes of Bülbül Mountain, with the roof of one house forming the terrace of that above it. They were inhabited by wealthy Ephesians, and are finely decorated with mosaics and frescos. Built in the period of Augustus, they were much altered and continued to be inhabited until the 7th century AD., according to the evidence of excavations. Two of the insulate houses have been totally restored.



Cooking Class in Şirince

By air-conditioned motor-coach

Minimum 12 participants, maximum 30

Duration 4hours

€ 80

English speaking guide only

After disembarkation from the ship in Kusadasi, we will depart for Sirince village. The estimated travel time to Sirince is about 30 minutes. When we reach Sirince village, you will see a 200 year--old Greco-Turkish houses. You will have about half an hour to explore the village on your own prior to the cooking class. The cooking class will be held in a typical village house about a 5 minute walk from the village. As you may know; Turkish food is renowned as one of the top three world cuisines. Turkish cuisine, like its cultural mosaic, is very colorful and contains countless different tastes. Since the Turkish cooking tradition has a unique historical heritage and makes use of an incredibly rich variety of natural ingredients; this has all led to a unique fusion of East and West.

Different tastes in every region contribute to the complexity of Turkish cuisine. In Şirince, you will have a chance to cook a delicious meal with all the variety and simplicity of the recipes and the quality of the ingredients. You will also get to taste them in a wonderful surrounding and the view of an old village. It will be one of those unforgettable moments and an experience for you. After tasting the food which you have prepared, Turkish tea or Coffee will be served.

- 30 minutes drive to Sirince
- The order of the tour may be reversed.



DIKKILI, TURKEY

Dikkili is a sleepy little beach town, authentically Turkish. The harbour is lined with open air restaurants and shops selling local delicacies. Nearby Berama is well worth a visit especially for its two main monuments: the Acropolis perched at a height of 280m and the Asklépéion.

Pergamon

By motor coach and on foot

Minimum 15 participants, no maximum

Duration: 4 hours

€60

Located in Bergama county in the province of Ismir, Pergamon is one of the major classical sites in Turkey and is considered to be one of the most beautiful cities of the ancient world.

During the Hellenistic period, Pergamon was an outstanding cultural hub for more than a century. During Byzantine times, Pergamon was the centre of a diocese. The stones from Hellenistic and Roman buildings, as well as ancient statuary were used as building material. In 716 the city was occupied by Arab invaders for a while and was captured by Turks in 1330. The German archaeologists Carl Human, Alexander Conze and R. Bohn first undertook the excavation of this site between 1878 and 1886. During this period the magnificent relief sculptures of the Altar of Zeus were discovered and shipped off to Berlin.

You will leave the motor coaches behind and board a cable car to reach the Pergamon Acropolis perched at an altitude of 350 m. The Upper Acropolis was the official city and home to the royal family and aristocracy as well as housing a garrison. Practically all the monuments date from the Hellenistic period except the temple of Trajan which is from the Roman period. You will see the foundations of the Royal Palace, the arsenal where weapons and stores were stocked, the Temple of Trajan, the Temple of Athena, the majestic theatre with its tiered seating built into the south slope of the acropolis, the Temple of Dionysus and the remains of the great library, the biggest in Asia minor, second only to the famous library in Alexandria. Ancient authors tell us that at one time Pergamon library contained 200.000 volumes. Mark Anthony had them taken over to Egypt as a gift for Cleopatra to replace the books that had been lost when the Alexandrian Library was burned down during Caesar's campaign.

After this visit you will board the coach for a short trip to Asklépéion, a site of thermal baths & pilgrimage which attracted visitors from all over the Empire.

You will follow the same route as that taken by the pilgrims and discover ruins that date back from the Roman period and the Emperor Hadrian. The name Asklépéion derives from Asklépios, the Greek god of medicine. This place of pilgrimage included a school of medicine, a philosophical centre a temple and even a theatre.

You will then be driven back to Dikkili.

- The price includes a return transfer by cable car from the parking lot to the Acropolis
- The drive to Pergamon takes 30 minutes



CANAKKALE, TURKEY

Canakkale is a town and sea port on the southern coast of the Dardanelles, protected by a fortress known as Kale-i-Saltaniye. Directly opposite the town, on the other side of the straits, is the imposing Kilitbahir fortress. These two castles were built by Sultan Mehmet in 1463 to control the straits at their narrowest point. Indeed, this area has been a place of conflict since the time of the Trojan War. Nearby is the city of Troy, scene of the most famous siege in history. The site was excavated by the archaeologist Heinrich Schliemann in 1871, and although Time has eroded almost all traces of the 3500 year old ruins, you can still imagine what Priam felt as he faced Achilles' army of Greek invaders.

TROY

By motor coach and on foot

Minimum 15 participants, no maximum

Duration 2h45

€60

Troy, with its 4000 year old history, is one of the most important archaeological sites in the world. The first excavations were carried out in 1871 by the celebrated archaeologist Heinrich Schliemann.

Unfortunately very little remains of the rich and flourishing town of Troy, one of the major towns in Classical history and, according to Homer's Iliad, site of the blood thirsty battles waged by Ulysses, Achilles and Agamemnon.

At first the ruins may seem small and in a bad state of conservation, but the force of history and legend attached to this strategic location, site of innumerable power struggles and awash with the blood of heroes, outweighs any initial disappointment.

At the start of the visit you will be confronted by an enormous wooden reconstruction of the "Trojan Horse", the ingenious stratagem used by Ulysses to gain entrance to the city. The horse was, as we know, filled with Greek soldiers bent on the downfall of Troy. The site contains the remains of no less than 9 ancient classical cities, successively destroyed and rebuilt. The town's fortifications have been excavated, and the different historical periods of Troy I and Troy II are clearly visible. Your guide will accompany you on a little path around the ruins, which leads to a Greek theatre, the remains of the royal residence and the entrance to the city.

- The drive from Canakkale to Troy (30 km) takes 35 minutes



The Gallipoli Peninsula

By motor coach and on foot

Minimum 10 participants, no maximum

Duration 3h15

€60

The coach will take you to the pier for a ferry ride across the Dardanelles.

These days the atmosphere on the Gallipoli Peninsular is calm and peaceful, very different to the terror and bloodshed of the First World War when the Gallipoli campaign claimed almost half a million casualties.

You will visit the Lone Pine memorial, sacred to the memory of more than 4.900 gallant Australian and New Zealand servicemen who died in the Anzac area, and also the Chunuk Bair New Zealand memorial, ANZAC cove (where the Australian and New Zealand Army corps landed) and Johnston Jolly the scene of savage fighting in May 1915. You will then return to Ecebat and take the ferry back to Canakkale.

The World War I battle for control of the Dardanelles (Hellespont) strait was fought mainly on Turkey's Gallipoli Peninsula, with appalling casualties. Around 100.000 were killed and 400.000 wounded during the nine month campaign (1915-1916). The battlefields cover an extensive area from the tip of the peninsula north for over 35km (22 miles). The British Navy wanted to force a passage through the Dardanelles and attack Constantinople, thereby, knocking the Ottoman Empire, ally of the Central powers, out of the war. The Ottoman forces, some of whom were commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Mustafa Kemal (Ataturk), knew that an allied victory could lead to the conquest of their country.

The sound and fury of the battlefield is of course now silenced and the area is preserved as national park with many marble and bronze war memorials. A sobering reminder of the thousands of young lives sacrificed in the course of the Gallipoli campaign, this is one of the most emotionally fraught sites in Turkey.

- The ferry ride takes about 40 minutes (scheduled local ferries).
- You will spend about 1h30 on site



ISTANBUL, TURKEY

Istanbul has been an important city for thousands of years, thanks to its strategic geographical location. Nowadays it is a huge metropolis connecting continents, cultures and religions. Home to 11 million people it is one of the greatest business and cultural centres in the region.

Highlights of Istanbul

By air-conditioned motor coach and on foot

Minimum 10 participants, no maximum

Duration 4 hours

€60, The tour ends at the airport

€46, The tour ends in the city center

Discover some of the treasures of Istanbul during this city tour which ends at the airport.

You will visit the Hippodrome Square. Originally built by the Roman Emperor Septimus Severus back in 203 BC and further expanded by the Emperor Constantine to accommodate some 100.000 spectators, the Hippodrome was the centre of secular life in Byzantium and it was here that the crowds flocked to enjoy four horse chariot races and other forms of entertainment.

The monuments on the Spina (central line of the race course) which have survived to this day include the Egyptian Obelisk, the Serpentine Column and Constantine's Column.

The tour continues with a visit to the Blue Mosque, commissioned by Sultan Ahmet I when he was only 19 years old.

Construction work began in 1609 and took seven years to complete.

The mosque, with its six minarets, dominates the city skyline and has become the symbol of Istanbul. Inside the high ceiling is lined with blue Iznik earthenware tiles, hence the name "Blue Mosque".

The excursion ends with a visit to Saint Sophia, situated opposite the Blue Mosque. Saint Sophia was originally a church but was subsequently converted into a mosque and is now a museum. The building is famed for its splendid Byzantine architecture. The first church was built in the time of the Emperor Constantine and a later edifice was built on the same site by the Emperor Justinian in the 6th century. The Hagia Sophia was converted into a mosque in the 15th century after the city fell into the hands of the Ottomans. It was then that minarets and mausoleums were added to the structure.

Today this magnificent example of Byzantine architecture dominates the Old City. The dome of St Sophia is remarkable for its imposing proportions and the mosaics and frescoes decorating the walls are unique examples of Byzantine art.

- The drive to the airport takes approximately 45 minutes

