

**Venice – Rovinj – Hvar – Dubrovnik – Kotor – Corfu –
Giardini Naxos – Sorrente – Ponza / Palmarola –
Civitavecchia**

All tours are offered with English speaking guides. The length of the tours and time spent on the sites is given as an indication as it may vary depending on the road, weather, sea and traffic conditions and on the group's pace. Minimum number of participants indicated per coach or group.

Walking tours in Croatia can only be guided in one language.

The level of physical fitness required for our activities is given as a very general indication without any knowledge of our passenger's individual abilities. Broadly speaking to enjoy activities such as hiking, biking, snorkelling, boating or other activities involving physical exertion, passengers should be fit and active. Passengers must judge for themselves whether they will be capable of participating in and above all enjoying such activities.

All information concerning excursions is correct at the time of printing. However Star Clippers reserves the right to make changes, which will be relayed to passengers during the Cruise Director's onboard information sessions.



ROVINJ, CROATIA

Porec & Wine tasting

Transport by air-conditioned motor coach and on foot

Minimum 20 participants, maximum 30

Duration 4 h30

€60

You will drive in air-conditioned comfort to one of Croatia's best loved tourist resorts. Porec is a historical and cultural jewel, dating from Roman times (50 BC). It is a typical example of Roman town planning with two main intersecting streets, Cardo and Decumanus, forming the backbone to the old town.

The tour includes an outside visit to the 6TH century Episcopal complex of the Euphrasian Basilica, an important monument which is a designated Unesco World Heritage site. You will also see Marafor, the oldest part of town, with the remains of two temples dedicated to Neptune and Mars, the House of Two Saints, the Istrian Parliament Building and the Leoni and Zuccato Palaces. There will then be some leisure time so that you can explore this charming little town on your own before the scenic drive to the Istrian hinterland.

After a short drive through the countryside we will arrive at Kruncici village and the Matosevic wine cellar. You will spend some time with the Matosevic family and get the opportunity to sample the fruit of their labours: red, white and dessert wines, as well as Grappa, accompanied by homemade cheese, Istrian Prsut (smoked ham) and Fritule (Croatian fritters), before returning to the port.

Upon arrival in Rovinj, your guide will take you on a short walking tour of this picturesque little town, so that you can get your bearings.

45 minute drive to Porec where you will spend about 1h45

30 minute drive to Kruncici village to taste some local wine

30 minute drive back to Rovinj

RIB Boat Sea Adventure

Duration 4h30

Minimum 8 participants, maximum 8

€146

The Rovinj archipelago and coastline are listed as "Landscapes of Outstanding Value" and once you have seen them you will understand why. The rugged coast with its holm oak and pine forests is enchantingly pretty. The protected area spans from St. John's Cape to Barbariga and encompasses all twenty Rovinj islands and islets and the coastal area up to a distance of 500 m from the coastline.

Red Island is comprised of two artificially connected islands in the Adriatic Sea. This is a popular destination for day trippers as these car-free islets, covered in pine forest and Mediterranean scrub, also boast several stony beaches and rocky coves.

Lim fjord, a sunken canyon valley in karst, is one of the most beautiful natural sites in Istria and one of the most stunning fjords outside Norway, with many secluded spots to delight visitors. The water in the fjord is more brackish and less salty than the open sea due to the many fresh water springs, and temperatures fluctuate. The water contains a lot of plankton and oxygen, so flora and fauna are abundant.

The area is a natural breeding ground for many species of fish, but is best known for its oysters which were praised by the celebrity chef Anthony Bourdain. There will be time for swimming and also for sampling some delicious local shellfish.

The tour includes a cruise around Roving archipelago and Lim fjord, a swimming break and some time at leisure at Red Island

Participants must be able to swim

This tour is not suitable for guests prone to motion sickness, guests with back and/or neck problems, guests with limited mobility

Guests are advised to wear a swimsuit under a cover-up with beach or boat shoes, and bring sun protection and a towel from the ship.

Guests must be at least 12 years old to participate on this tour.



HVAR, CROATIA**Hvar Island Tour**

By air-conditioned motor coach

Minimum 20 participants, maximum 90

Duration 3h30

€60

The island of Hvar is well known for its mild climate and lush subtropical vegetation as well as its cultural and historical monuments.

The coach will take you from Hvar to Starigrad, a small town famous for its large bay which has long been a source of inspiration for artists and poets. The town of Starigrad was the largest settlement on the island and dates back to the 2nd century BC. You will visit the Dominican Monastery, which boasts a well-stocked library and a priceless collection of books and paintings. After a short guided tour you will have some free time to wonder around on your own before continuing the scenic drive to the Village of Vrisnik. Here you will be given a warm welcome at one of the traditional country houses where your host will offer you, local wine. The island wines range from light whites to full-bodied reds, all of them are made locally and produced in small quantities. The wine will be accompanied by local specialities such as smoked ham and home-made cheese.

During the drive back to Hvar there will be a short stop at the site of the fortress which dominates the town, so you can enjoy the magnificent views of Hvar and the Pakleni islands.

This tour includes panoramic drives

You will spend one hour in Starigrad, with a guided tour and some time on your own

The drive from Vrisnik to Hvar takes one hour.

Hvar Jeep Safari

Minimum 4 participants per jeep, maximum 24

Duration 3 hours

€ 84

The Jeeps are parked just a few minutes away from the tender point.

The route towards the settlement of Milna is lined with vineyards, and from there you will carry on towards the bay of Dubovica on the southern part of the island of Hvar. Here you will turn off the road and follow a track to the highest peak on the island, St Nicola (626m).

From the top you can see the village of St Nedija which is famous for its local wine, "Plavac". The view from the chapel is well worth the short hike, as on a clear day you can see the neighbouring islands of Korcula, Susac, Vis, Brac, Solta, Paklinske and Scedron, as well as the Peljesac peninsula. The area has a tumultuous past and you will hear tales of pirates, local uprising, and sea battles between two Roman fleets near Scedar at the time of the Roman civil war as well as learning how the chapel itself is linked to the theatre in Hvar. It is also a perfect spot for taking photographs.

The jeep tour continues to Roskarnica; here your guide will tell you all about life in the olden days as you admire the stunning views across the fields.

Next stop is the viewpoint of "Vidikovac" from where you will see the oldest city in Croatia, Stari Grad, (Old City) or Pharos, founded in 385 BC. Your guide will tell you about the first sea battle that ever took place in the Adriatic and talk about Hora (Ager) fields, a Unesco site that dates back to Roman times. The drive continues to Malo Grablje, passing the fifteenth century village Velo Grablje on the way. Lavendar oil has been produced at Velo Grablje since the 16th century. The village of Malo Grablje was founded in 1537 and deserted in the mid 20th century. You will learn all about the culture and history of the village and the island itself.

This jeep tour explores the rich history of the island of Hvar, known as the island of sun and lavender. The fragrance of these aromatic plants will delight your senses as you pass through vineyards, olive groves and abandoned villages, and listen to your guide talking about life in the olden days and the half-forgotten customs of yester year.

The jeeps will be driven by English speaking Croatian drivers.

Guides will provide commentary for the whole group at certain designated stops during the tour. The Jeep drivers are not guides.

The jeeps are closed vehicles.



Sailing tour to the Pakleni islands archipelago

By boat

Minimum 4 participants, maximum 10

Duration 3hrs/3h30

€75

Enjoy sailing in one of the most beautiful parts of the Adriatic; a favourite destination for all those who love the sea and islands. This tour is all about sailing, "poetry in motion", as some people call it. Let the wind and weather be your guide as you set sail from the town of Hvar to the labyrinth of islands that compose the Pakleni archipelago.

There will be a stop for swimming in one of the bays.

Hiking Tour

Transfer by bus and on foot

Minimum 4 participants, maximum 20

Duration approx. 4 h30

€89

(The exact duration of the tour depends on the pace of the group)

Your guide will meet you at the pier and accompany you on to the bus. After a 20 minute transfer by bus (14 km), you will reach the village of Velo Grablje, the starting point of the hiking tour. The path from Velo Grablje to Malo Grablje is part of an old trail which in medieval times used to link Hvar with Stari Grad on the north side of the island. The trail is practically all downhill, starting with approximately 20 steps and continuing as a short trek of approximately 1.5 km. Thereafter the route to Malo Grablje is on a wide gravel path.

It takes about one hour to walk from Velo Grablje to Malo Grablje with various stops on the way. Your guide will provide a running commentary during the hike, including such topics as traditional island life, the history of the villages, the most common medicinal plants and much more.

There will be a break for lunch at a traditional tavern in Malo Grablje set amidst spectacular scenery. The food will be cooked in an old-fashioned wood oven.

After lunch the walking tour continues to Milna, where you will have some time to swim or just relax on the beautiful shingle beach, before the transfer back to the town of Hvar.

Transfer from Milna to Hvar is approximately 20 minutes each way

The walk is 4 km long

The terrain is downhill practically all the way (90%) and rocky

You will need comfortable walking shoes (no sandals), sun screen and a bottle of water

There are many different hiking trails on Hvar island for all levels of ability. Depending on the group and the time of year, the guide may decide to change the hiking route

Beach wear and shoes for swimming (pebble beach) are recommended



Pakleni Archipelago Sea Kayaking Expedition

Duration 4 hours (depending on the group's pace)

Minimum 4 participants, maximum 14

€ 48

Activity level: Moderately strenuous

Your guide will be waiting to greet you on the pier and together you will walk to the kayak station.

After a safety briefing and instruction on paddling techniques you will be ready to set off on our sea kayak voyage of discovery along the beautiful Hvar coastline, exploring the little islands which form the famous Pakleni Archipelago. The name is sometimes translated as Hell's Islands (pakleni means hellish) but its origin is more likely to be derived from "Paklina" an archaic word meaning tar or pine resin, the substance which was used for coating local boats.

Far from being "hellish", the islands are a little taste of heaven offering unspoiled scenery, thick pine woods providing shade even on the hottest summer day and crystal blue waters.

The kayak expedition will take us past bays and narrow straits to small pebble beaches where you can swim, snorkel and relax.

You will be provided with a sea kayak (2 seats), paddle, life jacket, dry bag, spray skirt, and snorkeling equipment

Please bring: Sunscreen, hat, sunglasses, a long sleeved shirt (Lycra if you have it, cotton if you don't), quick drying sports shoes, swimming gear, towel

Depending on the final number of participants, the tour may leave from a different location

DUBROVNIK, CROATIA**Taste and Flavours of Dubrovnik**

Transport by air-conditioned motor coach

Minimum 20 participants, maximum 35

Duration 4 hours

€60

The tour starts with a pleasant drive along the Adriatic road to the town of Mali Ston, the "oyster capital" of Croatia. This little town is often described as Dubrovnik in miniature. It boasts impressive 5km long city walls, among the longest defensive walls in the world. Construction of the walls started in 1317 and was finally completed in the 16th century. You will also see the ancient salt pans that were in use during the Dubrovnik Republic; salt is still produced there to this day.

However, Ston is mainly famed for its oysters, and there are oyster farms dotted all around. Upon your arrival in Mali Ston, you will board a local boat which will take you to the oyster and mussel beds. Your guide will tell you about oyster and mussel production in the area and you will get to taste some of the freshest sea food you have ever eaten, including some Mussel Bouzara, a local dish consisting of mussels cooked in wine, olive oil and garlic.

After the visit you will return to your motor coach in Mali Ston and drive back to Dubrovnik.

There will be a short guided tour of Dubrovnik Old Town, and then you will be free to do some exploring on your own.



Dubrovnik Sea Kayaking

Minimum 6 participants, maximum 24

Duration 3h30

€44

The Dubrovnik Kayak tour is an unusual and original way to take in all the city highlights.

You will start the tour by rowing between the forts of Bokar and Lovrijenac. Bokar fort is one of the oldest of its kind and was built to protect Pile Gate and City Bridge. It was also used as a prison. Lovrijenac guards the west entrance and, unlike the other city forts which form part of the city wall fortifications, it stands alone perched high on a rock, earning it the name of "the Gibraltar of Dubrovnik". These days it is used as a venue for Dubrovnik's summer festival, as well as for staging Shakespeare plays, so its thick walls resound to the words of the Bard rather than the thud of cannon balls.

Next on the agenda is Lokrum island. Legend has it that Richard the Lionheart was cast ashore here after being shipwrecked in 1192, luckily you will be spared a similar fate. After steering a course around the island you will reach Betina cave, a hidden gem accessible only by sea. Here we will stop for a snack and you will have some leisure time to go swimming in the crystal-clear Adriatic before rowing back to the departure point and returning to port.

2 participants per kayak

We recommend you bring swimsuits, towels, sun hat and sun screen

There is a 15-minute walk to the kayak base

Legends & Curiosities

Off the usual tourist radar

Duration 1h30

Minimum 10 participants, maximum 18

€25

Discover the everyday life of the folk who live within the walls of Dubrovnik's Old Town. A stroll through a maze of narrow streets and little squares will conjure up the shades of the past. Visit the oldest parts of the town off the tourist radar; discover hidden treasures around every street corner, local churches and places not mentioned in any guide books. During your guided tour you will be regaled by stories and legends of Dubrovnik's old town and the history of the Republic of Ragusa.



The Great Dubrovnik Treasure hunt: Five hundred years of Fine Art

On foot

Duration 3 hours

Minimum 10 participants, Maximum 18

€40

Take a leisurely guided stroll through this medieval town and learn all about the history of the Dubrovnic Republic and its rich artistic and architectural heritage. The tour includes visits to a choice selection of museums.

The Rector's palace, now the town's cultural history museum, is one of Dubrovnik's priceless treasures; an outstanding secular monument which combines gothic and renaissance architecture. The rector was elected for a period of one month, and during that time not only was he forbidden to bring his family to live with him, he could not leave the palace himself without asking the permission of the senate. Here you will see rooms restored to their former glory and furnished in period style, portraits, coats of arms and coins.

The Sponza palace which now houses all Dubrovnik's historical archives is another fine mix of gothic and renaissance styles. Since it was first built in the XVIth century it has served as a customs house, mint, treasury and armoury as well as being home to Dubrovnik's first literary institution founded by a group of poets at the end of the XVIth century. It holds the distinction of being one of the very few buildings in the Old Town to have emerged unscathed from the terrible earthquake of 1667.

The Church of St Blaise was not so lucky; the original construction dating from 1368 was severely damaged in the quake and was replaced in 1715 by the baroque style building you now see. Saint Blaise is the patron saint of Dubrovnik who averted a catastrophe in 971 by forewarning the City Elders that a surprise attack by the Venetians was imminent. The marble altars in the church are particularly impressive and on the main altar there is a gothic statue of St Blaise himself, dating from the fifteenth century. This gold-plated silver statue shows St Blaise holding the town of Dubrovnik (as it was before the earthquake) in his hands. The fact that this statue survived the earthquake which destroyed the original church and a subsequent fire is considered to be something of a miracle.

The Roman Baroque Cathedral of the Assumption of the Virgin is another « new » building, completed in 1713 after the earlier construction was destroyed by the earthquake. It is a veritable treasure trove and houses some 138 gold and silver reliquaries fashioned by local goldsmiths from the 11th to the 17th century. The reliquaries contain relics of St Blaise and a fragment of the Holy Cross. There is also a polyptych (panelled painting) of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary from Titian's studio and a painting attributed to Raphael.

However, the best artwork is to be found at the Dominican Monastery Museum. The building dates from the fourteenth century (about the same time as the city walls) and looks more like a fortress than a religious building: all the better to protect the incredible collection of paintings from the fifteenth and sixteenth century. You can admire work by the Dubrovnik school of painters, the Venetian school, Titian's painting of St Blaise, Flemish paintings, relics, jewellery, manuscripts and incunabula.

The tour continues with a visit to the Franciscan Monastery with the church, one of the finest Roman Gothic buildings in Croatia, the pharmacy dates from 1317, the third oldest still functioning pharmacy in the world, the museum library with an exhibition of liturgical artifacts, some paintings of old masters such as "Ecce Homo" by Francesco Raibolini (15th century), a 14th century head relic of St Ursula and the painting of Vlaho Bukovac the founder and chief representative of the Croatian modern art.

The excursion price includes entry to the treasury of the Dubrovnik cathedral, the Dominican Monastery Museum, the Franciscan monastery Museum and Pharmacy.



KOTOR, MONTENEGRO

Perast & Kotor

By bus and boat

Minimum 20 participants, maximum 120

Duration 4 hours

€50

Upon disembarkation you will drive through the beautiful bay of Kotor to Perast, a small baroque village hidden behind the islet of the Lady of the Rocks. The most outstanding buildings here are from the 17th and 18th centuries. It is a tranquil place which abounds in sacred monuments such as the Church of St Nicholas, built between the 15th and 17th centuries. You will also get to visit the Maritime Museum.

Afterwards there will be some free time so you can explore Perast on your own before we take a boat to the islet Gospa od Skrpjela or Lady of the Rocks, and its church of the same name.

Gospa od Skrpjela is a baroque church situated on one of the two islets in the Bay of Kotor, just opposite Perast. Legend has it that the island was made over the centuries by devout mariners who, after finding an icon of the Madonna and child on a rock in the sea on July 22nd 1452, swore that they would drop a rock at the site after every successful sea voyage. Thus as time went by, the islet gradually emerged from the sea. The custom remains to this day, and on July 22nd every year at sunset the locals take part in the "fascinada" a tradition whereby they take out their boats and throw rocks into the sea. The church contains 68 magnificent paintings by Tripo Kokolja a famous 17th century artist from Perast. His masterpiece is without doubt a 10m long painting depicting the Death of the Virgin. After visiting the island you will take the boat back to Perast and board the coach for the drive from Perast to Kotor, a charming medieval town lying beside a beautiful fjord.

This UNESCO heritage site is the old maritime centre of Montenegro; it abounds in monuments, shops, cafés and restaurants. The 12th century Cathedral of St Tripun and the orthodox church of St Luka will be viewed from the outside.

Lightweight clothes and sturdy shoes are recommended on this tour

The drive to Perast takes 20 minutes

You will visit the maritime museum in Perast and Gospa od Skrpjela church

Transfer by boat to the islet Gospa od Skrpjela

Blue cave speed boat adventure

Minimum 15 participants, maximum 18

Duration 3h30

80€

The Blue Cave is undoubtedly the jewel in the crown of the Lustica peninsula which separates the Bay of Kotor from the Adriatic Sea. This stunning natural phenomenon is caused by the sun's rays reflecting on the blue water inside the cave and creating a shimmering iridescent blue light.

Enjoy a scenic speed boat ride along the Montenegrin coast, passing villages and picturesque countryside, before you reach the Blue Cave situated just outside the bay.

Enter another world as you penetrate this impressive natural hall with its 9 metre high vault, sculpted from the rock. You will be spellbound by the play of light on crystal clear water so transparent you can gaze right down to the sea bed 13 metres below. If you want to you can go for a swim and make this a truly unforgettable « total immersion » experience.

Afterwards there will be a stop at Zanjice beach. This pebble beach with its mountain views and sheltered swimming was a favourite of Tito, the first President of Yugoslavia.

There will be time for a swim and some rest and relaxation before you board the speed boat for the return trip to Kotor.

This is a high activity level excursion

Participants should bring along comfortable shoes, swimsuits, towel, sunscreen and sun hat

You must be prepared to get wet on this tour; we recommend you don't take any valuables with you

The speed boat ride to the Blue Cave takes about 45 minutes and you will have approximately one hour's free time at Zanjice beach

Please note that because the entrance to the sea cave is so narrow, the boat will be unable to access the grotto in rough seas. The visit could be cancelled without warning and there will be no reimbursement.



CORFU, GREECE

Achilléion and the old town

By air-conditioned motor-coach and on foot

Minimum 20 participants, no maximum

Duration: 4 hours

€45

Enjoy a pleasant drive through the verdant countryside teeming with orange and lemon trees, cypresses and olive groves, to the village of Gastouri. This typical old village is the site of the marvellous Achilleion, built under the rule of Empress Elisabeth of Austria.

The Empress greatly admired the Greek hero Achilles and named her palace after him. After her assassination the villa was bought by Kaiser Wilhelm II and it was confiscated by the Greeks in 1914.

The building is in the Neo-classical style and boasts large frescoed rooms with traditional motifs, and souvenirs of Elisabeth and Wilhelm II. The Italian style terraced gardens are planted with flowers and trees and adorned with statues including one of the dying Achilles (the work of the German sculptor Herter). William II added a bronze statue of Achilles the Victor which he placed directly opposite.

Inside the palace you will visit the vast impressive rooms and stroll around the magnificent gardens filled with exotic plants and trees and commanding break-taking views of the Ionian Sea.

After leaving the Achilléion, the excursion continues with a panoramic drive to the old town and Spianada square. Explore the old quarter and walk through the narrow cobble-stoned streets known as Kantounia, past the old cricket ground. You will have some free time to stroll through the arcades of the Liston Piazza, once the site of the palace stables and see the old Church of Saint Spyridon with its priceless collection of icons and gifts offered to the patron saint of the island.

The coach will be waiting for you at the entrance to the old fort for the return journey back to the ship.

The use of cameras and video-cameras is free of charge in the Achilleion, but flash photography is forbidden

The Achilleion is a very famous site and can be very crowded (especially in July and August). Sometimes several ships dock at the same time which means that places of interest will be over-crowded. Please be patient, follow instructions and keep close to your guide at all times in order to hear the commentary (microphones etc are prohibited in some areas).

Corfu by sea

There is a short walk to reach the local boat

Minimum 10 participants, maximum 30

Duration 4 hours

€88

Your vessel on this Corfu Swimming Trip is a traditional Greek "Kaliki" fishing boat which has been adapted to transport tourists. Have your cameras at the ready, because we will pass by some of the most photogenic tourist attractions in the area, like Pontikonissi (Mouse Island) and Vidos Island.

The ship will sail in front of "Pontikonissi", which houses the Byzantine church of Pantokrator, Christ the Almighty, built in the 11th or 12th century. The church contains memorial tablets to Elizabeth Empress of Austria and Archduke Rodolfo. (stop, weather permitting, wet landing)

The ship will continue to Vidos island. This unspoilt green island is totally uninhabited, even though it is only half a mile's distance from Corfu town. You will see pristine beaches and little wooded paths leading to the old Serbian cemetery. Here you may take a swim in the warm crystal clear waters of the Ionian sea, stroll to the cemetery or just relax at a coffee shop. (WET LANDING you will have to swim to the shore)

On the way back there will be a stop at Espianada square in the old town of Corfu. Explore the old quarter with its fascinating narrow cobble-stoned streets. You will have some time at leisure to stroll through the arcades of the Liston Piazza and admire St Michael and St George's palace, and the old church of Saint Spyridon before returning to port.

Participants should bring swimsuits and towels

The tour is dependent on weather conditions and may be modified or cancelled at the last minute as per the Captain's decision

Passenger safety is our priority, and changes to the programme will be made for security reasons only.

Refreshments will be served on board

Itinerary may be reversed



All you ever wanted to know about Olive Oil

(but were afraid to ask!)

Transport by air-conditioned vehicle

Duration 4h30

Minimum 2 participants, maximum 18

€60

Take a trip to the heart of Olive Oil country with a visit to a mill producing award winning olive oil. The mill is located in a protected Natura 2000 region which boasts not only centuries old olive trees but also the remains of a Medieval castle, Castle Gardiki dating from the 13th century.

The Dafnis family, who own the Governor oil mill, will welcome you to their world and take you back in time for the ultimate Olive oil immersion experience! You will hear about the history of Olive oil production and the Dafnis family, as well as learning about the facts and myths surrounding olive oil.

Taste olive oil with one of the highest levels of phenolic compounds (anti-oxidants and free radical scavengers) in the world. The tour starts with a personally guided walk through the olive groves in the grounds of Gardiki castle. The authentic island atmosphere is unmistakable; you will meet our resident olive oil expert and hear about the world's oldest variety of olive. When you arrive at the oil mill you will experience our "taste like a pro" programme and learn how olive oil is produced.

You will find out how to recognise high quality olive oil and tell the difference between top quality and non extra virgin oil. You will also hear about the amazing therapeutic and health benefits of this "Natural Healer".

During your time at the mill you will sample olive oil with bread, tomatoes, feta cheese and a homemade cracker as well as enjoying a glass of wine.

The drive to the oil mill is 22km each way.

Panagias Monastery and panoramic transfer to Paleokastritsa

By air-conditioned motor coach

Minimum 15 Participants, no maximum

Duration 4 hours

€44

Enjoy a pleasant drive to the holiday resort of Paleokastritsa, driving through verdant countryside teeming with orange and lemon trees, cypresses and olive groves.

This outstandingly beautiful extended village on the mid-west coast of Corfu is one of the most visited places on the island. The village is set against a high cliff covered with millions of olive trees and other greenery. Admire the five pine clad promontories and small bays of yellow sand or white pebbles bathed by crystal clear water.

You will visit a thirteenth century Byzantine monastery, with its church, Byzantine icon museum and original stone olive oil press. After the visit you will have some free time to go swimming or have a drink at one of the beach front cafés.

Next there will be a short stop at Bella Vista, a famous view point to get a bird's eye view of beautiful Paleokastritsa.

After leaving Bella Vista, you will be driven back to the port of Corfu.

The use of cameras is free of charge in the monastery of the blessed Virgin Mary, but flash photography is forbidden inside the church

If you wish to swim, don't forget your bathing costume and beach towel (there are changing facilities and a shower at the beach)

Depending on timing and the ship's schedule, you may be dropped off in Corfu city to return to port at your own convenience.



TAORMINA, SICILY

Giardini Naxos is Taormina's small port. Taormina is the most important resort in Sicily and Southern Italy. It is located on Mount Tauro, between the jagged mountains and the calm Ionian Sea. The town's origins date back to 398 AD. The Romans considered Taormina an ally, but as the city sided with Pompeus against Octavianus, it was reduced to the rank of mere colony. Thanks to its strategic position, it remained important to the various powers that held sway over the island. In 902, after a long siege, it fell to the Muslims. They destroyed it, but the caliph Al Muezz later rebuilt Taormina on a grander and much more beautiful scale. In 1079 it was conquered by the Normans and was chosen as the seat of the Sicilian Parliament for the King's election in 1410. Its most important monument is the theatre, built in the 3rd century BCE by the Greeks and restructured by the Romans. The site is really spectacular. The theatre is situated between looming Mount Etna and the sparkling blue sea. It is one of the most beautiful landscapes in the world, a beautiful jewel set amidst the blue sky, aquamarine sea, green valley and white snow-capped peaks of Mount Etna.

Mount Etna

(Depending on weather conditions and local authorizations)

By air-conditioned motor-coach

Minimum 18 participants, no maximum

Duration 5h30

€ 114

Majestic Mount Etna is Europe's largest active volcano, rising some 11.000 ft (3340 m). The slopes of the volcano soar up to over 3296m and its flanks are dotted with cones and craters. From the peaks you can gaze out across the Gulf of Catania and see the woods, orchards and vineyards below.

The main attraction is Etna's crater and the awe-inspiring petrified remains of the lava flows. The tour starts with a drive through the small town of Naxos. The scenic route to Mount Etna is a winding mountain road, passing the town of Giarre and the villages of Santa Venerina and Zafferana. The ever changing scenery is quite delightful: lemon groves, orchards, vineyards, chestnut and pine woods blend with hardened lava and endless volcanic cones. The Silvestri crater is located about 1950 m above sea level.

Upon arrival you will transfer to 4x4 minibuses or cable car to climb to approximately 2500m and then carry on upwards until you reach the base of the main crater 2950m above sea level. A professional mountain guide will accompany you on a 30-45 minute hike to see the most recent lava flow and walk around the crater (depending on volcanic activity).

We recommend comfortable shoes and a jacket or sweater. It can be cold and windy on Mount Etna, even in summer time

It is a 1h15 drive each way to reach Mount Etna

This tour is only available in summer, weather permitting. You will visit either the North or the South side of the volcano depending on current volcanic activity

You will reach an altitude of approximately 2950m above sea level – if you suffer from high blood pressure or heart disease please check with your doctor about the advisability of going on this excursion



Sicilian brunch, wine tasting and transfer to Taormina

Venice to Civitavecchia itineraries only

By air-conditioned motor coach

Minimum 18 participants, maximum 40

Duration 7 hours

€100

You will board the motor coach at the pier and travel on the southbound motorway to Giarre. At this point you will leave the motorway and continue to Mount Etna on a scenic road which winds around the mountainside, past the town of Giarre and the village of Santa Venerina, through vineyards and woodland. As you drive through the village of Santa Venerina you will see the traces of the damage caused by the 2002 earthquake.

The first stop is the country estate of the aristocratic di Villagrande family, where you will be welcomed by a member of the family who will take you on a tour of the cellar and the winery and tell you all about the qualities of Mount Etna wine from the point of view of a real expert. The views over the fertile valley are magnificent and it is these vine-covered fields that produce the local wine. A combination of local varieties of grape, an optimum climate and lava enriched soil combine to produce this unique wine. After the guided tour you will head back to the old stable where you will be served a Sicilian brunch prepared with local products and get to sample the different wines produced on the estate.

The excursion continues to Taormina. The town is perched on a terrace overlooking the sea and has a delightful medieval feel. There will be time for a stroll along the Corso Umberto. Just off this pedestrian street you will find many small boutiques selling local handicrafts and cafés where you can relax with a cup of real Italian coffee and enjoy some local sweets. You may decide to go and visit the Roman amphitheatre.

You will then be driven back to the pier.

45 minute drive from the pier to the Barone di Villagrande Estate

45 drive to Taormina

Wine and water included at lunch



SORRENTO, ITALY

Pompeii

By air-conditioned motor-coach and on foot

Minimum 20 participants, no maximum

Duration 4 h30

€ 69

Ancient Pompeii was a prosperous provincial center with an estimated population of 20,000. An earthquake destroyed much of the town in 63 AD. Rebuilding was still in process when the volcano erupted again 16 years later. The whole town was buried beneath more than 20 feet of ash and pumice stone.

Many residents were killed by lethal sulphur fumes or struck by lava and pumice stone that rained down upon the city, but others escaped. Abandoned until the 18th century, Pompeii was frozen in time until excavations revealed this amazing archaeological site. Plaster was poured into empty spaces in the lava to make body casts of some of the victims, such as a young man stretched out to protect his mother and the famous twisted body of a dog still tethered by its chain.

The eruption of Vesuvius on August 24, 79 A.D. not only preserved structures but also evidence of the ancient way of life, such as a fully-equipped tavern with the last customer's money still on the counter. Admire the luxurious mansions and fabulous art of wealthy patricians who came to Pompeii to escape the turmoil in Rome. Their houses were designed around an inner garden with few windows on the exteriors, so residents could forget the outside world and get sunlight from their own courtyards. Visit some of the more modest homes, and explore ancient baths, temples, theaters, markets and the huge forum.

Large coaches cannot drive to the pier, so a mini-bus will shuttle tour participants between the pier and a main parking lot in Sorrento. (Same on the way back; a minibus will take you down to the pier)

The drive to Pompeii takes about one hour. We suggest comfortable shoes to walk on cobblestone streets.

Attractions are behind bars and glass windows in Pompeii.

Most of the shops in Italy are closed between 1 and 4 p.m.

At the end of the tour, you may choose to stay in Sorrento and explore the village on your own.

The site of Pompeii is very busy; it is important to stay with your guide at all times. The pace of the tour is moderate, as there are many highlights to visit in this vast city.

This tour is not recommended for guests with walking difficulties.

Timing is subject to traffic on the Sorrentine drive, especially during high season and weekends.

Pompeii (new programme including the latest discoveries)

Transport by air-conditioned motor-coach and on foot

Minimum 15 participants, maximum 30

Duration 4h30

€74

All the areas described were accessible at the time of writing, but could be closed without notice for further restoration work or similar

The ruined city of Pompeii lies at the foot of Mount Vesuvius, the only active volcano on mainland Europe.

In AD 79 a catastrophic eruption rained ash upon the town literally burying it alive in six metres of ash and pumice stone. A mere 16 years before this terrible tragedy the town had been badly damaged by an earthquake, and the townsfolk had not yet finished rebuilding and repairing all the damage.

At the first sign of the eruption, a column of smoke reaching nine miles into the sky, many people fled the city, so when the final flow descended the slopes of Vesuvius and engulfed the city only 2000 people remained.

Since that fateful afternoon on August 24th AD 79, Pompeii has been a sort of ghost town, a sleeping beauty, lying under a blanket of ash.

The first excavations started in the 18th century, and all the findings were taken to a museum in Naples. Since 1911 archaeologists have chosen to leave the artefacts in place which makes the site come alive, giving a vivid picture of everyday life in a Roman town. So far about three fifths of the total area has been explored.



The tour starts by the Porta Anfitheatro dating from 80 BC. This massive amphitheatre, with seating for 12000 spectators, is the oldest surviving Roman amphitheatre; close your eyes for a moment and you can almost hear the roar from the crowds as they watch the gladiators in mortal combat. Next to it lies the Palaestra, or gymnasium with colonnades around three sides and a swimming pool in the centre, a sort of Roman Sports club. Archaeologists have found quite a lot of graffiti in the toilets of the palaestra, much of it obscene, the sort of thing you might come across in public toilets today.

You will also visit the House of Julia Felix, a large Roman property on the Via dell'Abondanza, also known as the praedia (estate) of Julia Felix. This was the residence of one Julia Felix, obviously an astute businesswoman, who converted parts of the house into flats to rent, and public areas after the major earthquake in 62 AD left many people homeless. A notice on the front of the building reads "To let, for the term of five years from the thirteenth day of next August to the thirteenth day of the sixth August thereafter, the Venus bath, fitted up for the best people, shops, rooms over shops and second storey apartments in the property owned by Julia Felix, daughter of Spurius"

The house of Julia is complex of indoor and outdoor areas built around atria and courtyards. The property had enclosed gardens and a private water supply, as well as baths; statues and frescoes indicate that the property was extremely stylish and well equipped and indeed it took up one whole block of the city of Pompeii.

The Romans were concerned about cleanliness, hygiene and generally looking good, so it is perhaps no surprise to find 18 laundries in the town. The best preserved site is the Stephanus laundry. Here the scrubbing took place on the ground floor while the upper storey consisted of living quarters and a drying area. Instead of today's notion of "hand washing", in those days clothes were actually washed by foot! Garments were placed in vats of urine and water and trampled on by the laundry workers to get them clean.

The House of the Wounded Bear is another interesting find. It gets its name from a beautiful floor mosaic of a wounded bear with the greeting HAVE, an elegant roman alternative to the modern "Welcome" mat. The villa was re-opened to the public in 2016, after extensive restoration work was done on the mosaics and frescos to bring out the original colours. The house offers some of the finest examples of painting from the mid-1st century A.D and boasts a garden with frescoed walls and a fountain with a mosaic of Venus coming out of a shell.

There were 35 bakeries in Pompeii, which indicates the importance of bread in the Roman diet. The excavated remains of the bakery show that over the centuries bread making equipment has changed very little; wood was used for the ovens, mill stones were used to grind the wheat and produce flour, there was a place for kneading the dough and brick ovens were used to cook the bread.

The Romans were deeply superstitious and liked to have symbols of good luck around them. Outside the bakery belonging to N. Popidius Priscus, they found the following inscription "hic habitat Felicitas", or happiness lives here embellished with a carving of a man's phallus, a popular good luck charm.

Behind the temple dedicated to Jupiter lie the Forum Baths, which were built immediately after the founding of the colony by General Silla (80BC). The Women's and Men's facilities had separate entrances. The men's quarters had an apodyterium or dressing room, a tepidarium for medium hot baths, a frigidarium for cold baths and a caldarium for hot baths. The building was both aesthetically pleasing and practical with elegant decorations, little niches to store belongings, and a great bronze brazier for heating the water, as well as more than 500 lamps used for evening sessions at the baths.

The baths were badly damaged during the earthquake of 62 AD and the women's quarters, which were smaller than the men's facility, were being renovated at the time of the eruption.

One of the most beautiful and luxurious residences in Pompeii, open to the public after three years of excavation, is the House of the Faun, built in the late second century BC. The property has a surface area of 3000 m² and took up an entire city block. It belonged to a noble Roman family and was richly decorated with lavish floor mosaics including a mosaic of Alexander the Great defeating the Persians at the Battle of Issus. The residence was named the House of the Faun because of the exquisite bronze statue of a dancing faun placed in the centre of the impluvium (a stone basin used to collect rainwater).



The Forum, lined by rows of columns, was the main square and the centre of business, cultural and religious life in the town.

At the north end stood the Temple of Jupiter and in the right hand corner there was a Macellum or food market. Other buildings surrounding the forum include the Shrine of the Lares, the Temple of Vespasian, a hall for selling wool and the Curia where the town council met.

Nearby stood the Basilica, an important public building which was used as a law court and for business transactions. To the left you can see the Temple of Apollo, surrounded by 48 Ionic columns and in front of the basilica stands the House of Triptolemus, one of the latest houses to be opened to the public. The house dates back to the 2nd century BC and must have belonged to a wealthy and important family because it has two reception halls and two peristyles or courtyards.

The Forum granary on the west side of the forum was once a fruit and vegetable market but is now used to store artefacts from the excavation site, including all the paraphernalia of everyday life: crockery, pots, pans, jugs, bottles and amphorae used throughout the Mediterranean to transport oil, wine and fish sauce. There are also some plaster casts of victims of the eruption including a small dog with a collar writhing on its back.

The granary was built after the earthquake of 62 and might not have been completed at the time of the eruption.

Large coaches cannot access the pier so a minibus will shuttle tour participants between the pier and the parking area. On your return, the minibus will take you back to the pier.

The drive to Pompeii takes about one hour. We recommend comfortable footwear, suitable for walking on cobblestoned streets.

The attractions in Pompeii are behind bars and glass windows.

Most of the shops in Italy are closed between 1 and 4 pm.

At the end of the tour you may choose to stay in Sorrento and explore the village on your own.

The walking tour takes about 2h30; it starts from the Porta Anfiteatro and ends at the Porta Marina

The tour includes the highlights of Pompeii and the area newly opened to the public, Julia Felix Domus, the House of the Wounded Bear etc

Pompeii is a very busy site; it is important to stay with your guide at all times. The pace of the tour is moderate, as there are many things to see in this vast city

The tour is not recommended for guests with walking difficulties

Timing is subject to traffic conditions, especially during high season and weekends.

All areas mentioned are currently open, but could be closed without any notice in case of further renovation or else.



Ercolano

By air-conditioned motor-coach and on foot

Minimum 15 participants, no maximum

Duration 4 h30

€ 66

Herculaneum was destroyed by the eruption of Vesuvius on August 2nd 79 AD. The town was not an important commercial centre like Pompeii, it was smaller, wealthier and more residential. There was no open space or forum, just streets lined with villas and shops and, as is customary in Roman town planning, two very straight main roads crossing in the middle.

Vesuvius destroyed the two ancient towns in different ways. Pompeii was buried under layers of ash, while Herculaneum, much closer to the volcano, drowned under a sea of mud. Over time the mud hardened to a soft stone, preserving the city and nearly everything in it as a sort of fossil, so that the furniture, clothing and even some of the goods in the shops have survived. Excavations began by accident in 1709 when some workers were digging a well - they discovered a wall which was later found to be one of the stages of the ancient theatre. Later, there were many human skeletons uncovered at the ancient shoreline, suggesting that numerous inhabitants attempted to escape but perished when mountains collapsed and volcanic gases were released.

The excavation work since has brought to light sumptuous villas, baths, theatres and even a villa thought to have belonged to the father-in-law of Julius Caesar, called Villa di Pisone (Villa dei Papiri). Much of the town is still buried and excavation work continues today. Many buildings and their contents are in a remarkably good state of preservation.

Large coaches cannot drive to the pier, so a mini-bus will shuttle tour participants between the pier and a main parking lot in Sorrento. (Same on the way back; a minibus will take you down to the pier)

The drive to Ercolano takes about an hour

The tour is not recommended for Guests with walking difficulties.

At the end of the tour, you may choose to stay in Sorrento and explore the village on your own.

Large coaches cannot drive to the pier, so a mini-bus will shuttle tour participants between the pier and a main parking lot in Sorrento. (Same on the way back; a minibus will take you down to the pier)



Capri on your own

Transfer by boat to Capri

With an escort – this is not a guided tour

Minimum 15 participants, maximum 40

Duration 6 hours depending on local boat schedule

€ 69

Discover Capri on your own, with the help of some tips from a local guide to ensure you make the most of your visit

Capri is the outpost of Sorrento's peninsula. It is called the jewel of the Bay of Naples because of its unmatched scenery, clear skies and beautiful climate. Geologically, Capri is built on limestone. Dolomite cliffs, which at many points tower out of the sea, have been cut by time into fantastic shapes and marvellous grottoes. There are two main massifs: to the east is Monte Tiberio at 1,095 feet, and to the west Monte Solaro rises 452 feet above sea level. Capri itself is 452 feet high and sits between them. Capri has the Marina Grande to its north and the Marina Piccola on its southern side. The island's second residential centre, Anacapri, lies in a sweep of lush countryside to the west of Monte Solaro. Capri is derived from Greek Kapros, meaning wild boar. Inhabited since the Palaeolithic age, the island was, in classical times, first Greek then Roman. Many emperors lived part-time on Capri, and Roman nobles resided on or visited the island until the 6th century. The island endured Saracenic incursions in the 6th and 7th centuries and thereafter became the dominion of the Lombards, then Spain, then the French and British. Around the beginning of the 19th century, the island faced a more welcome artistic invasion when artists, writers and poets settled here.

Capri's Faraglioni and the Blue Grotto are very famous and beautiful. The Blue Grotto is the most celebrated of all the grottoes of Capri. It was already renowned in ancient times but was rediscovered in 1826 by Augusto Kopisch, a German. Many tourists visit the Grotto each year and never fail to be stunned by its magical atmosphere. The walls and concave ceiling of the grotto are so steeped in blue light that everything has a shimmering silver outline and even swimmers in the water look blue. A delightful climate, brilliant blue skies, lovely scenery and a host of other attractions make the island a perfect holiday resort in any season.

Take the opportunity of discovering Capri on your own! Your local guide will give you some great tips so you can make the most of your time on the island.

The price includes: Escort and the Hydrofoil ticket. Prices are subject to local regulation of entrance tax and maritime transportation monopoly.

The visit in Capri is entirely on your own. No visit is included.



Every Ash Cloud has a Silver Lining!

Transport by air-conditioned motor coach

Minimum 15 participants, maximum 30

Duration 7 hours

Lunch included

€119

This tour is not only for history lovers, but also for those of you who are interested in fine wine and the area's culinary traditions. We aim to show that there is definitely a positive side to living next door to an active volcano.

First of all, a taste of everyday life in a Roman town.

In 79 AD, before that fateful afternoon in August, Pompeii was a prosperous provincial town with an estimated population of 20,000. They were still in the process of repairing buildings that had been damaged by an earthquake sixteen years earlier, but apart from that it was very much "business as usual".

The first sign of the eruption was a towering column of smoke, nine miles high! Then ash and pumice stone rained on the town burying it under more than 20 ft of debris. Some of the citizens fled the city at the first sign of trouble but others were killed either by lethal sulphur fumes, intense heat causing their bodily fluids to boil, or were hit by lava and pumice stone.

Pompeii was left to slumber undisturbed under its ashy blanket until the 18th century when archaeologists started to explore this remarkable time capsule. Plaster was poured into empty spaces in the lava to make body casts of some of the victims caught in suspended animation, like the young man with arms stretched out to protect his mother, and the twisted body of a dog, still tethered by its chain.

This remarkable site is not about Roman ruins, broken columns and temples, it is about the townsfolk, the way they lived and of course the way they died. You will see a fully equipped tavern, with the customer's money still on the counter. Admire the luxurious mansions and fabulous art belonging to wealthy patrician families who came to Pompeii to escape the turmoil in Rome. Their "no expenses spared" houses were designed around an inner garden and had few outside windows, so that the owners could forget the world outside. You will also get to visit more modest dwellings as well as Public baths, temples, theatres, markets and the huge forum.

The volcano certainly brings death and destruction, as we have seen, but new life does spring up from the ashes. Vineyards flourish on the slopes of this sleeping monster, nourished by the incredibly fertile volcanic soil. Those who are brave enough to disregard the ever present danger and work the land, cultivate the same grape varieties as the ancients (as proved by excavated seeds). Some of these varieties can be found in Vesuvius's legendary wine "Lachryma Christi" or the tears of Christ. It is said that Christ wept over Vesuvius and from his tears grape vines blossomed, bearing grapes with a heavenly taste.

Casa Setaro is a winery located on the slopes of Vesuvius, just inside Vesuvius National Park. For generations the Setaro family have cultivated grapes and produced wine in the looming shadow of the volcano. The company is run today by Massimo Settaro, whose work ethic, craftsmanship and passion for wine was handed down to him by his father Don Vincenzo. It is therefore no surprise that his excellent wine "Lacryma Christi Don Vincenzo Riserva" is dedicated to the man who taught him all he knows. When you visit the Winery you will learn about the production process at Casa Setaro, which respects the environment and the natural characteristics of the grape variety.

The tour continues in the wine cellar which was dug out of the lava flow from the last big eruption. Here they will explain the wine making process from fermentation in steel vats to ageing in Oak barrels.

Afterwards you will be treated to a Neapolitan lunch consisting of five emblematic dishes complemented by 5 different wines.

Large coaches cannot access the pier so a minibus will shuttle tour participants between the pier and the parking area. On your return, the minibus will take you back to the pier.

The drive to Pompeii takes about one hour. We recommend comfortable footwear, suitable for walking on cobblestoned streets.

The attractions in Pompeii are behind bars and glass windows.

Pompeii is a very busy site; it is important to stay with your guide at all times. The pace of the tour is moderate, as there are many things to see in this vast city

The tour is not recommended for guests with walking difficulties

Timing is subject to traffic conditions, especially during high season and weekends.

At the end of the tour you may choose to stay in Sorrento and explore the village on your own.



PALMAROLA, ITALY

A ruggedly beautiful island cradled in the Golfo de Gaeta about half-way between Rome and Naples, Palmarola is the perfect stop for a beach day. The water is remarkably clear, and between the islands of Ponza and Palmarola, archeologists have uncovered a number of wrecks of Roman galleys dating from the Republican Period.

PONZA, ITALY

Located on the site of an extinct volcano which erupted some two million years ago, the island consists mainly of rhyolitic and andesitic rocks whose characteristic gray, yellow and ashy tuft formations combine to create a unique shade of blue. Ventotene and S. Stefano, 39 km to the east of Ponza are rich in acid and basalt rocks. Ponza is one of the treasures of the Tyrrhenian Sea and, according to legend, was the home of the sorceress Circe who seduced Ulysses. One look at the beauties of this enchanted island, and you will understand why Ulysses found it so hard to leave.

The area has many historical associations. The archipelago lying some 20 miles from the coast of Latium, was inhabited during the Neolithic period. The Phoenicians and Greeks inhabited Ponza after colonization by the Aurunci and built a fortified citadel there. Traces of the Cyclopean walls (so called because of the size of the blocks used) remain to this day. In 313 BC the Romans colonized Ponza and in customary fashion set about improving the infrastructure and amenities, building a magnificent aqueduct, still partially used today, as well as a temple devoted to the Dioscuri and another to the Venous Epiponzia. After centuries of naval battles and other tumultuous events, Ponza fell into the hands of the Bourbon family, who rebuilt the port area. A long period of isolation followed the island's unification with the kingdom of Italy, which was intensified during the twenty years of the Fascist regime. It was only after WWII that Ponza gained its reputation as an ideal holiday destination. The beautiful scenery, warm climate and rich history combine to make this island a true paradise on earth.

