

ANCIENT CITIES OF THE MEDITERRANEAN - ITALY & GREEK ISLES LUXURY CRUISE

Set off a cruise discovering ancient Mediterranean cities. Between the Peloponnese to Sicily, each port of call will reveal grandiose heritage: Epidaurus and Mycenae, ancient jewels, both UNESCO World Heritage Sites; Monemvasia, a fortified city rising from the waves; Heraklion, guardian of Minoan mysteries; or Gythio, seaport of Ancient Sparta. They will all immerse you in the myths of the Mediterranean Sea. Corfu will then unveil its Venetian influences, the premise for your Italian ports of call. Between palaces and the fragrance of citrus fruits, discover Puglia and Gallipoli, meaning "beautiful city" in Greek, and Syracuse, with its labyrinth of small streets punctuated with churches and ancient vestiges, celebrating the soul of Sicily. _Some departures may have slightly modified itineraries. Please confirm the itinerary with an Expedition Specialist._



ITINERARY

Day 1 - Valletta

The whole of the Maltese capital Valletta is UNESCO World Heritage listed and occupies a peninsula in the north-east of the island. From the fountain of Tritons to Saint-Elme fort, there are as many majestic streets as there are narrow staircase vennels to explore. The painted loggia and carved corbels on the tall houses will accompany you in your explorations, and you'll rarely be bothered by traffic. You can visit the Grandmasters palace decorated with coats of arms and frescoes. Saint-John's cathedral and the ramparts which have guarded the city since the 16th century are also among the most emblematic sites of the city. Arranged in terraces, the Barrakka Gardens will punctuate your promenade with a green and floral experience.



Day 2 - Syracuse, Sicily

Its undulating rocky coastline, the endless sandy beaches, the menacing form of Mount Etna which surveys its island like a patriarch, the flowery gardens on the hillside... Sicily lays out its varied landscapes like a shopkeeper displays his wares. Described by Cicero as "the most beautiful city in the world", Syracuse was one of the most prestigious cities in Sicily and at her height was even a rival for Athens. A central city of Ancient Greece, it was home to a succession of civilisations, each of which has left their mark. The blend of Arabic, Roman, Norman, Byzantine and Spanish cultures makes Syracuse a town that is extraordinarily rich in fragrances, colours and flavours.

Day 3 - Reggio di Calabria

At the southern tip of the Italian boot, Reggio di Calabria guards the eastern shore of the Strait of Messina. From the lungomare, the sea front promenade, there are magnificent views over Sicily, a little over 3 km away, and Etna. Rebuilt after the 1908 earthquake, Reggio is set out in a grid pattern and has Art Nouveau and Belle Époque architecture that add to its charm. And the fragrance of bergamot, the citrus fruit that dominates the region's confectionery and perfumery. A visit to the National Archaeological Museum is a must. It is one of the most important in Italy and among its collections are the famous Riace Bronzes, the stunning Greek statues dating from the 5th century BC that were found off the coast in 1972.

Day 4 - Gallipoli

Gallipoli, which comes from the Greek kalle polis, meaning beautiful town, is very aptly named. Located on the heel of the boot, the town known as "the pearl of Puglia" has many attractions. The whiteness of its façades recalls its Greek origins while its architecture echoes its multiple influences. Its old town, perched on a limestone island, concentrates the cultural heritage of this city with a thousand faces, alternately a Roman colony, then Byzantine, the property of the Popes, Norman, under the rule of Taranto... By itself, it tells the story of the different civilisations of the Mediterranean Sea.

Day 5 - Parga

An ancient port in the Epirus region, picturesque Parga is located on the western coast of the Greek mainland. Ancient classical ruins and the Venetian citadel bear witness to the town's colourful history and the diverse influences that shaped it. Take the time to discover this ancient fishing village built like an amphitheatre, by strolling along the picturesque maze of pedestrian streets lined with small, typical Greek houses decorated with flowers and many lively taverns.

Day 6 - Gythio

Located in the south of the Peloponnese, on the Mani Peninsula, Gytheio was the main port and naval base of ancient Sparta, located around fifty kilometres inland. In Roman times,



the port experienced significant expansion thanks to trading in imperial dye; in fact, the region had an abundance of murex, the rock snails from which this dye, loved by the Romans, was extracted. The town is nestled against Mount Koumaros and dominated by a citadel. Take a stroll and fall under the charm of the calm that reigns over the stairways bordered by small neoclassic houses with steps overrun with wild flowers.

Day 7 - Monemvasia

The jewel of the southern Peloponnese, Monemvasia is the romantic refuge for Athenians. Given the poetic nickname of the "stone ship", this majestic peninsula is home to an incredible fortified medieval village, lying at the foot of its abrupt cliffs, which seems to have been cast by the gods from the Aegean Sea. Contemplate the horizon from its ramparts, a veritable walkway defying the azure waters, and stroll through its vaulted narrow streets with their thousand shades of ochre. At the crossroads of western and eastern influences and the maritime routes of the continent, Crete and the Cyclades, Monemvasia has preserved in this magical decor the treasures of Venetian and Byzantine architecture.

Day 8 - Nafplion

The engaging town of Nafplion is staggered up green hillsides of the Argolic Gulf, to the east of the Peloponnese. Do not be surprised by its extremely varied cultural heritage. Some of the must-see visits are the ancient agora on the plateau of Akronafplia, Italianate arcades in Syntagma square as well as the baroque fortress of Palamidi on a hillside of the same name. At the top of the hill, views of the gulf and the surrounding mountains are simply awesome. If you want to chill out by the water's edge, walk along the Arvanitia promenade to a beautiful creek in the shade of cedars and cypresses.

Day 9 - Athens

The Greek capital city is located on the edge of the Saronic gulf, in the east of the country. It bears a plural name in reference to the first villages that surround the Acropolis. You will be enchanted by the rocky plateau presided by its monuments listed as UNESCO World Heritage. In the city below, you can visit some of the liveliest districts in Athens: Plaka, with its maze of colourful streets, and where, in the evenings the drifting aroma of moussaka and garlic prawns will tickle your taste buds. The National Archaeological museum and the Cycladic Art Museum are also some of the city's key attractions and allow visitors to discover Athens' cultural past.

Please note:

Itineraries are subject to change.



YOUR SHIP: LE BOUGAINVILLE

YOUR SHIP: **Le Bougainville**

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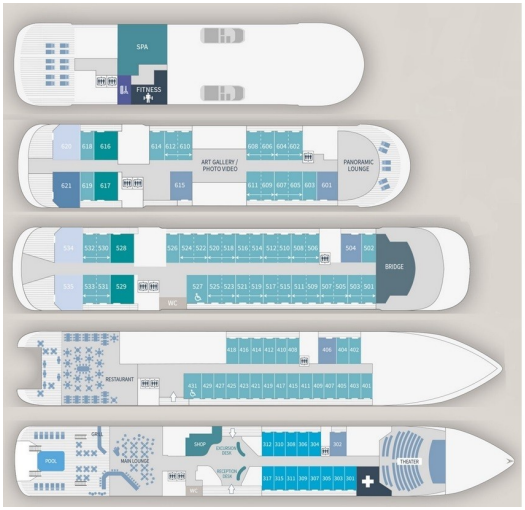
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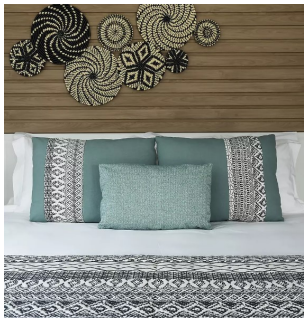
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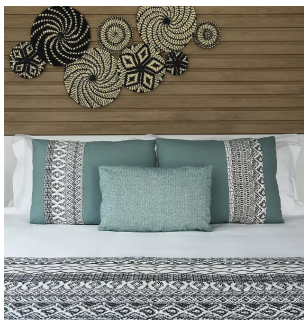
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