

ATHENS TO VALLETTA: MYTHS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN CRUISE

Welcome to Aurora Expeditions' Myths of The Mediterranean Embark on an epic journey through legendary kingdoms, mythical lands and ancient sites as we explore Greece, Malta, Turkey, Montenegro, Croatia and Italy with Sicily. Discover tales of all-powerful gods and heroic figures in Greece and hear tales of the opulent communities of ancient Athens, Ephesus, and Dubrovnik. Immerse yourself in the rich folklore of Montenegro's waterfront villages and uncover stories of political fervour and island communities in Croatia. Witness Italy's enduring legacy of feudal kingdoms and tumultuous reigns of Roman emperors. This voyage promises experiences as diverse and captivating as the tales that have shaped these lands. Join us as we navigate these enchanting stories, to uncover enough intriguing titbits and inspiring trivia to last a lifetime.



ITINERARY

Day 1 Arrive Athens, Greece

Welcome to Athens. On arrival at Athens airport make your way to the arrivals hall to meet our representative, followed by a transfer to our group hotel. At the hotel, visit our hospitality desk in the lobby to meet our team who will provide you with useful information regarding pre-embarkation procedures and about your time in Athens.

You will also receive cabin tags for your luggage. Please clearly label the tags with your name and your cabin number on the ship. This evening offers time to relax in preparation for tomorrow.

Accommodation: Athens Hotel

Day 2 Athens



After breakfast, enjoy a morning 'Your Choice' experience. Discover Athens in a panoramic tour, explore the ancient wonders of the Acropolis, or immerse yourself in Athens' vibrant food scene with a local guide. Rejoin the coach to return to our hotel or perhaps enjoy an afternoon at the Plaka district. This charming area is filled with streets and alleys lined with restaurants, cafes, and shops--ideal for a bite to eat or picking up gifts.

Tonight, we kick off our journey with a Welcome reception - celebrating Greek style.

With a rich recorded history spanning 3,500 years, Athens is a city brimming with stories. Widely hailed as the 'cradle of civilisation' and revered as the birthplace of democracy, philosophy and theatre, Athens seamlessly merges its illustrious past with its vibrant present. This bustling metropolis, home to three million inhabitants, is adorned with a wealth of ancient sites that punctuate its landscape like temples, iconic columns and former city centres. Athens' influence in antiquity transcended its borders, ushering in a Golden Age characterised by political discussion, education and philosophy, hosting luminaries such as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. The democratic principles forged in Athens laid the groundwork for modern governance systems worldwide.

Yet, Athens is more than just a relic of ancient history. As a historical seat of power, it has weathered waves of invasions, shaping its contemporary identity with a diverse fusion of architectural styles, culinary delights and cultural traditions. Whether you are wandering amid ancient ruins or indulging in the flavours of modern Greek cuisine, Athens offers a captivating journey through the ages, beckoning travellers from across the globe to explore its timeless allure.

Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences.

Option 1 - Morning experience: Highlights of Athens

This panoramic tour offers a captivating introduction to the ancient city, with visits to its most iconic landmarks.

Begin at the Greek Parliament in Syntagma Square, once a royal palace, where the Evzones, dressed in traditional uniforms, stand guard in a solemn ceremonial display. Next, enjoy a photo stop at the historic Panathenaic Stadium, the site of the first modern Olympic Games in 1896, where the Olympic spirit was reborn. Continuing the Olympic theme, head to the Temple of Zeus, a colossal, ruined sanctuary dedicated to the king of the Olympian gods. Then, take in sweeping views of the Acropolis, the ancient citadel perched high above Athens, home to legendary temples like the Parthenon, built in honour of the city's patron goddess, Athena. On a facing hilltop lies the Agora, the bustling heart of ancient Athenian life, a vibrant marketplace and political centre where citizens once gathered to shop, debate, and shape the course of democracy.

Option 2 - Morning experience: A Taste of Athens

For foodie fans and return travellers to Athens, this is an ideal excursion. Stroll through Plaka, the charming 'old quarter' of Athens nestled at the base of the Acropolis. Admire its eclectic neoclassical architecture, picturesque alleys, and inviting



tavernas. We pause at a colourful local cafe to indulge in Greek delicacies such as olives, fragrant cheeses and cured meats, and treat ourselves to a traditional Greek coffee, accompanied perhaps by a sweet delight like baklava, a favourite among Greeks for its rich layers of pastry, nuts and honey. Our morning offers a taste of this captivating city, where the people's passion for food rivals their deep devotion to their country.

Option 3 - Morning experience: The Acropolis

Perched high above the city, the Acropolis is not only an architectural marvel, but also a symbol of the birthplace of democracy. This ancient citadel stands as a testament to the enduring legacy of Greek culture and ideals, representing advancements in art, architecture and political thought that originated in Athens. Feel the essence of civic pride and religious devotion in ancient Greek society, at the city's centre for political and cultural life. The Parthenon exemplifies the height of classical Greek architecture, adorned with Doric columns and intricate sculptures. Built under the leadership of Pericles, the Parthenon symbolised the city's wealth and power, with friezes and statues depicting various mythological scenes.

After touring the Acropolis, take a short walk to the Acropolis Museum. This modern museum houses over 3,000 artefacts from the Athenian Acropolis, offering unique insights into ancient Greek life and including an archaeological excavation beneath it.

Accommodation: Athens Hotel

Meals: Breakfast, Welcome Reception (includes drinks and canapes)

Day 3 Embark Athens (Port: Piraeus)

Enjoy a leisurely day in Athens at the convenience of your Athens hop-on-hop-off bus. Revisit your favourite sites, relax by the hotel's pool, or discover hidden treasures on your own exploration. The pass makes it easy to navigate the city, while the warm Greek hospitality ensures you are never far from helpful advice on how to make the most of your visit.

Mid-afternoon, we transfer from our hotel to the port of Piraeus to board the Douglas Mawson and sail towards the famed island of Mykonos. This evening, we enjoy a 'Welcome Aboard' dinner where we meet our crew and Aurora Expeditions team.

Day 4 Mykonos (Tender Port: Mykonos)

This morning, we arrive at one of Greece's most renowned islands. The island of Mykonos, with its iconic whitewashed buildings and charming cobblestone lanes, has been a crossroads of cultures for centuries. Renowned for their hospitality, the people of Mykonos excel at making visitors feel at home amid the island's historical treasures and picturesque landscapes. From ancient ruins to traditional windmills, Mykonos offers a captivating glimpse into a storied past. The local cuisine, festivals and vibrant arts scene reflect a deep cultural heritage, making Mykonos a unique and enriching destination. While recent years have boosted its reputation for vibrant nightlife, bustling beaches, and world-famous beach clubs, there is much more to discover beyond the surface of this famed island. Delve deeper, and you will find a community that embraces tradition, a fact that truly shines when you engage with the locals. Take the time to chat with them, and you will find that the true wealth of Mykonos lies in its people.



Spending time at one of Mykonos's famous beaches is a popular way to enjoy your day. If this is your preference, we recommend taking a taxi from the port to your chosen beach. Mykonos' most popular beaches are lined with restaurants, clubs, and hotels, which provide rows of recliners on the section of the beach adjacent to their property. These establishments often sell food and beverages to their beachfront clients and, in recent years, charge a fee for using their facilities.

Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences.

Option 1 - Morning experience: Mykonos Town - Chora

We start our morning with a short walking tour of Mykonos Town, also known as Chora, before time to explore independently. This mesmerising town is a maze of narrow streets, characterised by brilliant white buildings adorned with vibrant blue accents. The bustling alleyways are filled with chic boutiques, quaint cafes, and lively tavernas, offering a diverse array of experiences. The iconic windmills, once used to mill grain and a symbol of the island's agricultural past, stand proudly overlooking the Aegean Sea. The enchanting waterfront area of 'Little Venice' blends historical charm and contemporary vibe.

Option 2 - Morning experience: Mythical Delos

More than any other island in the Cyclades, Delos holds deep significance in Greek mythology and history. Revered as the birthplace of Apollo and Artemis, it was a major religious and cultural centre, thriving from around 900 BC to AD 100. Over time, it evolved from a sacred site to a busy commercial hub before declining after pirate raids and shifting trade routes led to its abandonment. Today, Delos is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, with extensive ongoing excavations that rank among the most important in the Mediterranean.

Just nine miles off the coast of Mykonos, a thirty-minute boat ride brings us to this remarkable site. We explore the remains of its ancient civilisation, walking through the sacred Agora and past the famous Terrace of the Lions, as our guide brings Delos to life. Afterward, we return to Mykonos town. Choose to remain on the island or join our tender and return to the ship for lunch.

Option 3 - Morning experience: Panoramic Mykonos and Ano Mera village

Our panoramic island tour begins with a scenic drive, showcasing views of the ancient island of Delos, Mykonos's waterfront tavernas and eclectic yachts anchored off Ornos Beach, along with a photo stop at the popular Agios Ioannis Beach. From here we pass the beaches of Kalafatis and Agia Anna en route to Ano Mera village. Choose to browse the village independently or join your local guide for a walking tour of the stunning 16th-century Panagia Tourliani Monastery, dedicated to the protectress of Mykonos. This quintessentially Cycladic village's public square is encircled by a labyrinth of interconnected lanes, where traditional bakeries, cafes, and tavernas offer an authentic taste of local life.

Day 5 Ku adasi, Turkey (Port: Ku adasi)



We meet the Turkish coast at Ku adası which draws visitors with its vibrant bazaars, waterfront cafes, and nearby beaches. This historic settlement, with roots in the Leleges and Carian civilizations, is close to the ancient city of Ephesus, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. In the Ottoman era, Ku adası thrived as a key port city, highlighted by the impressive Ku adası Castle, or Pigeon Island, built to defend against pirates. The 17th-century Ökuz Mehmed Pasha Caravanserai, originally for traders and their animals, now operates as a hotel and marketplace.

Our day in Ku adası offers a delightful mix of historical significance, Ottoman architecture, and lively shopping, along with a chance to see the ancient city of Ephesus, head inland to the bazaar in irince, or board a traditional Turkish sailing boat to sail the coastline.

Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences.

Option 1 - Morning experience: Ancient Ephesus

Join a guided tour of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Ephesus this morning. Step into history with our locally guided tour of Ephesus, one of the best-preserved ancient cities in the world. Originally a Greek settlement, Ephesus flourished under Roman rule, with the Emperor Hadrian dedicating a temple to himself, and the Emperor Trajan adding aqueducts and roads. Sadly, the city's importance declined due to invasions, and the silting of its harbour, which hindered trade, eventually leaving the city in ruins. This guided tour offers a fascinating insight into the lives of those who once thrived here, as we wander among the remarkable ruins of this ancient metropolis.

Hosted by our expert guide, we stroll the marble streets of Ephesus, stepping back in time amid its remarkably preserved ruins. Hear echoes of the past at the Odeon, once used for meetings and concerts, and the Prytaneion, where sacred fires honoured Hestia. Visit the Library of Celsus, with its ornate façade and the tomb of Roman senator Celsus. Explore the Great Theatre, which held 25,000 spectators for gladiatorial contests and performances. See the Temple of Hadrian, dedicated to the emperor and decorated with intricate reliefs. Finally, walk through the agora, the bustling heart of Ephesus, where trade, politics, and daily life once thrived.

Option 2 - Morning experience: Explore the Village of irince

Leaving the coast behind, we head inland to immerse ourselves in the rural lifestyle of the village of irince. Join your local guide on a walking tour through its cobbled streets, lined with whitewashed houses and framed by lush hillsides. Known for its blend of Greek and Turkish heritage, irince offers a warm, authentic glimpse into village life.

At the heart of the experience is the local bazaar, where stalls overflow with handmade crafts, colourful textiles, and fragrant soaps. Sample and shop for regional delicacies like olive oil, fruit wines, dried figs, and pomegranate molasses, all produced by local families using age-old methods. You'll also find embroidered linens, ceramics, and spices that make for meaningful souvenirs. With time to explore at your own pace, this visit is ideal for culture lovers and curious travellers alike, offering a relaxed and sensory-rich encounter with one of the



region's most beloved villages.

Option 3 - Half-day experience: Sail the Aegean on a Traditional Gulet

Today we board a vessel slightly smaller than Douglas Mawson - a traditional Turkish gulet. Turkey's breathtaking coastline, hidden coves, and popular beaches offer an ideal setting for a day of exploration. Enjoy stops at secluded bays for swimming and snorkelling, with equipment provided to discover vibrant marine life and coral reefs.

Gulets, steeped in Turkish maritime tradition, started as ancient fishing and cargo vessels and have evolved into elegant wooden sailboats. Celebrated for their sturdy construction and graceful lines, gulets combine modern comforts with traditional craftsmanship. Built mainly in coastal towns like Bodrum and Marmaris, these vessels promise a relaxing day on the azure Aegean Sea. Lounge on sunbeds or seek shade on deck while savouring fresh Turkish dishes and local specialties prepared for lunch onboard, accompanied by local beverages.

Day 6 Santorini, Greece (Tender Port: Santorini)

As we arrive at Santorini, it is easy to see why this iconic island is a favourite among travellers. The sheer cliffs soaring above the Aegean Sea are awe-inspiring as we cross the immense crater of a submerged volcano that leads to its shores. Shaped by a cataclysmic eruption 3,600 years ago, Santorini is famed for its striking sunsets and unique caldera views. Named Thira in ancient times, Santorini has always attracted the curious. Its ancient ruins, including the Minoan site of Akrotiri, offer a rich cultural heritage reflected in local cuisine, wine production, vibrant festivals, and artisanal crafts. Santorini offers a deeply enriching experience that melds history and natural beauty into the ideal Grecian Island.

Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences.

Option 1 - Morning experience: The village of Pygros and Fira

As our coach ascends Santorini's rocky caldera wall we reach Pyrgos, the highest village on the island, famous for its breathtaking vistas. Pyrgos, once the capital of Santorini, preserves its traditional charm with narrow, winding streets, whitewashed houses, and blue-domed churches. Take a guided walking tour through the village's labyrinthine lanes, discovering its unique charm and rich history. Visit the Church of Theotokaki, one of the island's oldest churches, before time to take in the view at your own pace.

Following our visit to Pygros, we continue across the island to the capital of Santorini, Fira, which boasts extensive views over the caldera and offers an array of tempting boutiques and craft stores. Enjoy leisure time before our tour ends with a drive from Fira down to the port, where our tender awaits.

Option 2 - Morning experience: Oia and Fira

Our coach takes us to the picturesque village of Oia, home to around 1,000 residents. This charming village is renowned for its immaculate, white-washed houses and blue-domed churches. The residents here live a relaxed and traditional lifestyle surrounded by stunning views across the Aegean. You



will have free time to capture stunning photos and explore the quaint streets before we continue to the capital town of Fira, where we wander its narrow alleyways at leisure, before our tour ends with a drive from Fira down to the port, where our tender awaits.

Option 3 - Morning experience: Akotiri

Setting off from the port of Athinios, we drive to the ancient site of Akrotiri. This Bronze Age settlement, destroyed by a massive eruption in the 17th century BC, was buried under volcanic ash, which remarkably preserved the entire city. The people of Akrotiri were advanced for their time, with a well-organised society evidenced by their sophisticated infrastructure, vibrant frescoes, and complex urban layout. Its inhabitants had a high standard of living, with access to imported goods from across the Mediterranean. The ruins remained hidden until 1860, when workers quarrying volcanic ash for the Suez Canal uncovered them. The discovery of their homes and artefacts provides valuable insights into their daily lives and societal structure. Following our visit to Akotiri we continue across the island to the capital of Santorini, Fira, where our tender awaits.

Day 7 At Sea

Relax with a day at sea. As we sail from Santorini to the Peloponnese peninsula, the azure waters of the Aegean reveal a timeless landscape shaped by history and nature, dotted as island silhouettes. Relax and enjoy the view, attend an engaging presentation by our host, or sit down with our resident photographer to start designing your photo album. Whether you choose to unwind or get creative, this leisurely day offers the perfect break in our journey, with the islands of Greece behind us and the mainland's ancient site of Olympus ahead.

Day 8 Katakolon (Port: Katakolon)

Today, our 'Your Choice' experiences are truly Olympic in scope, offering you two classic Greek treats. A brief walk from our berth, finds the waterfront of Katakolon with its variety of shops and restaurants to explore. For those who would like to swim in the warm waters of the Ionian Sea, a short distance away, you will find the popular pebbled Plakes Beach, with the sandy stretch of Agios Andreas Beach is a mere five-minute taxi ride.

Steeped in maritime history, the picturesque port town of Katakolon remains the gateway to the ancient site of Olympia, and our port for today. One of the most important sanctuaries in ancient Greece, Olympia was dedicated to Zeus, the king of the gods. Every four years, athletes from across the Greek world gathered here to compete in various sports, honouring Zeus and fostering unity among the city states. The busy port town of Katakolon itself is a hub of activity, with its quaint streets lined with shops and cafes, while the Katakolon Lighthouse and the Museum of Ancient Greek Technology offer insights into the region's rich history.

Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences.

Option 1 - Morning experience: An Olympic Encounter

Renowned as the birthplace of the ancient Olympic Games, the 8th-century BCE site of Olympia was the Greek world's most revered religious sanctuary, dedicated to Zeus, the king of the gods. The site housed numerous temples, altars, and sporting facilities, with the Temple of Zeus featuring a 12.2 metre (40-foot) statue of Zeus sitting on an elaborate cedarwood



throne adorned with ebony, ivory, gold and precious stones. This statue was one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

Held every four years from 776 BCE to 393 CE, the games at Olympia attracted athletes from all over the Greek world. Over 45,000 spectators cheered on their sporting heroes, who competed in a range of sports such as running, wrestling, boxing, and chariot racing. The games were not only a display of physical prowess, but also a celebration of Greek unity and religious devotion. Victors were awarded olive wreaths and gained immense prestige and honour in their home cities.

Today, Olympia continues to influence the modern Olympic Games. Many of the ancient sports, lost throughout the centuries, were revived in 1896 by Pierre de Coubertin's 'Modern Olympics'. The Olympic flame, a symbol of peace and unity, is lit in a ceremony at the ancient site of Olympia before every modern Olympics and then relayed to the host city. Our local guide brings the story of Olympia to life with tales of sporting heroes, revered gods, and generations of families who have lived on this land. The museum is a short walk from the site and contains the 4th-century BCE statue of Hermes by Praxiteles, plus several finds from the excavations, including Paeonius' Nike of Victory, who according to Olympic legend, came down from the heavens to hand a palm leaf to every winner.

Option 2 - Half day experience: Farm and Feast

Nestled among olive trees and vineyards, this 30-acre, family-owned estate lies approximately 45 minutes from the port in the picturesque region of Floka near Ancient Olympia. Embracing traditional farming methods and organic cultivation passed down through generations, the estate exudes a timeless charm. Upon arrival, guests are greeted with a classic shot of ouzo, a beloved Greek spirit celebrated for its distinct anise flavour and potent clarity. Integral to Greek culture, ouzo is often savoured as an aperitif or paired with meze (small dishes).

Accompanying the ouzo is a freshly baked local pie, served as our hosts share insights into the estate's non-mechanised olive-harvesting techniques. Delve into a captivating history of olive oil and its revered properties, underscoring the profound connection between Greek cuisine and the land. Enjoy a leisurely stroll around the farm, interacting with the resident animals. Later, we gather in the charming stone farmhouse, now transformed into a cosy dining area. Here, indulge in a feast of traditional flavours sourced from the farm and the local area, complemented by the estate's wine drawn straight from large oak barrels. Our visit culminates in true Greek style with a lively sirtaki dance. Join in the celebration as guests and newfound friends of the estate embrace the joyous spirit of Opa!

Day 9 Corfu (Port: Corfu town)

We spend the morning on the island of Corfu before sailing in the early afternoon to the Baltic nation of Montenegro.

Located in the Ionian Sea, the island of Corfu is a captivating fusion of past dynasties, including the Venetians and the British, with notable ties to Queen Elizabeth II consort, Prince Philip, who was born on Corfu. Its rich history is evident in its diverse architectural styles, Byzantine churches, Venetian fortresses, and British colonial buildings. Corfu's Old Town stands as a testament to its cultural heritage, enclosed by Venetian



fortifications. Wandering through its narrow cobblestone streets reveals elegant mansions, Byzantine churches and charming squares. Venetian influences adorn the architecture, with arched colonnades, grand palaces, and picturesque bell towers.

A leisurely stroll along the iconic Liston Promenade, lined with cafes and boutiques, offers views of the surrounding sea and distant mountains. Every street seems to lead to a quintessential British icon: a cricket pitch. Beyond the Old Town, Corfu unveils a Greek lifestyle and seaside resorts.

Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences.

Option 1 - Morning experience: Achilleion Palace

Departing from the port of Corfu, we will head to the picturesque village of Gastouri to visit the romantic Achilleion Palace. Built for the famed Empress Sissi of Austria, renowned for her beauty and tragic death, the palace was inspired by her love for Greek mythology. Surrounded by classical Greek statues, the palace is a monument to platonic romanticism and escapism, aptly named after Achilles. You will have time to explore the manicured gardens, with its exotic imported plants from around the empire and the dramatic statue of the Dying Achilles, while enjoying extensive views of the Ionian Sea.

Option 2 - Morning experience: Walking tour of UNESCO World Heritage Site, Old Corfu Town

Explore Corfu's Old Town on a locally guided walking tour. The Old Town is an icon of the island, full of markets and shops. Wander its narrow cobblestone streets lined with Venetian-style buildings, revealing centuries of history. Discover iconic landmarks like the Liston Promenade and the grand Old Fortress, with expansive views of the Ionian Sea. Immerse yourself in the charm of Spianada Square, Greece's largest square, surrounded by elegant cafes and historic architecture. Encounter Byzantine churches adorned with frescoes, vibrant markets brimming with local crafts, and hidden tavernas offering authentic Greek cuisine. Let the stories of past rulers, Venetian rule, and British influence unfold as you delve into the rich history of this UNESCO World Heritage Site. Our guide will introduce us to Corfu town before we have time to browse the numerous shops and markets or relax and enjoy an Ouzo or two!

Day 10 Kotor, Montenegro (Tender Port: Kotor)

Early morning we cruise the fjord system leading us to the bayside city of Kotor. Montenegro's Bay of Kotor boasts stunning steep cliffs descending to a narrow inlet of the Adriatic Sea. Unlike true fjords shaped by glaciers, this bay is a ria--formed when rising sea levels submerged an ancient river valley. Characterised by its branching outline and large estuary, a ria like the Bay of Kotor offers exceptional natural harbor conditions. The bay's unique bay-within-a-bay configuration, featuring the 300-meter-wide Verige Strait, adds to its striking beauty.

Our tenders transfer us ashore from our point at anchor in the Fjord to Kotor, where we find a selection of 'Your Choice' experiences, with time this afternoon to take in the views from the deck of the Douglas Mawson or explore independently.

The boutique Balkan country of Montenegro, famed for its



rugged mountains and stunning Adriatic coastline, is home to one of the region's most enchanting destinations: Kotor. This historical town is packed with medieval charm. Surrounded by towering limestone cliffs and clear waters, the bay itself is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The people of Kotor and Montenegro are known for their warm hospitality and deep connection to their land and traditions. Montenegrins take considerable pride in their history and cultural heritage, which is reflected in their vibrant festivals, local cuisine, and traditional music. The city's history, coupled with the stunning landscapes of the fjord and the genuine warmth of its people, makes Kotor a highlight of any voyage.

Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences.

Option 1 - Morning experience: Vistas of Kotor

Our morning begins with an introductory guided walking tour through the charming streets of Kotor's Old Town, where we pass endless medieval architecture and delve into 2,500 years of history. After soaking in Kotor's enchanting atmosphere, we drive to the base of the cable-car station and embark on a 10-minute scenic cable-car ride, which offers the stunning views of Boka Bay. Ascending the summit of Lov en Mountain, be prepared to be captivated by sweeping views of Kotor, the Bay of Kotor, and the surrounding landscapes. Returning to town, we join our tender and return to the ship for lunch.

Option 2 - Morning experience: A Taste of Kotor

Experience Kotor with an added touch of local flair on a locally guided wine and food tour. This journey immerses you in Montenegro's culinary traditions, beginning with home-cooked local specialties made with passion and dedication. Delve into the town's history on a walking tour before exploring the bustling marketplace, the heart of Kotor, where we sample locally cured smoked ham, cheese, and olives.

Upon arriving at one of the city's cobblestoned squares we sample olive oil, homemade spreads, and freshly baked bread. Savour local favourites like black risotto and mussels in "buzara" sauce, all of which connect you to the rich culinary heritage of the coastal Balkan region. To complete our morning, choose to enjoy a Montenegrin wine, beer, or grappa, for a taste of Kotor's delicious local flair.

Option 3 - Morning experience: Boka Bays' Waterfront Wonders

Experience the beauty of Boka Bay on a scenic speedboat cruise, when we visit waterfront villages, church studded islands and some rather unique tunnels. Begin your journey at Our Lady of the Rocks, a solo baroque church sitting on an artificial islet in the Bay of Kotor. Here, you will find an original church built in 1452, adorned with 68 magnificent paintings by Tripo Kokolja. Our cruise continues to Perast, a charming Baroque village known for its rich maritime heritage. Stroll its cobblestone streets, where historical stone houses reflect the town's prosperous past. The centrepiece is the grand Cathedral of St. Nicholas, a striking 18th-century structure that dominates its famous skyline.



From Perast, our speedboat takes us to the intriguing Submarine Tunnels constructed by the Yugoslav Army, cleverly camouflaged with fake rocks to remain hidden from view, before we journey to Prcanj, a picturesque seaside town celebrated for its 17th- and 18th-century stone villas, remnants of its prosperous history as an administrative centre of the Venetian Republic. Finally, we visit the Church of St. Nicholas and the Franciscan Monastery at the foot of Mount Vrmac, where we learn about the Franciscan monks and the town's notable explorer, Ivan Visin, the first Croat to circumnavigate the globe.

Day 11 Dubrovnik, Croatia (Tender Port: Dubrovnik)

This stunning walled city boasts a history spanning over a millennium. Founded in the 7th century, Dubrovnik thrived as the Republic of Ragusa, a prominent maritime power. Its strategic location encouraged trade across the Mediterranean, with the associated wealth shaping its unique blend of architecture and culture. Throughout its history, Dubrovnik faced periods of prosperity and challenges, including conflicts with rival states and invasions. The city's formidable defensive walls, begun in the 9th century and expanded in the 14th and 15th centuries, symbolise its strategic significance. As a walled bastion, Dubrovnik is discovered on foot, which is reflected in our 'Your Choice' experiences today.

Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences.

Option 1 - Morning experience: Walking Dubrovnik

Begin your day with a leisurely walking tour through the enchanting streets of Dubrovnik's Old Town, where centuries of history whisper from every stone. Led by a knowledgeable local guide, you'll uncover tales of the city's vibrant past and present, without the steep climbs or strenuous pace.

Rather than scaling the city walls, you'll meander through the charming lanes and lively squares, pausing at iconic landmarks like the grand Pile Gate, built in 1537 and watched over by a statue of St. Blaise, Dubrovnik's beloved patron saint. Wander down the bustling Stradun, the city's main promenade, lined with elegant shops, cozy cafes, and architectural gems. Along the way, marvel at Onofrio's Fountain, the serene Franciscan Monastery, home to Europe's oldest pharmacy, and the stately Rector's Palace, a masterpiece of Gothic-Renaissance design. This tour is perfect for those who want to soak in the soul of Dubrovnik at a relaxed, unhurried pace.

Option 2 - Morning experience: Walking Dubrovnik and its City Walls

Experience the essence of Dubrovnik with a locally guided walking tour including walking it city walls. Stretching over one mile in length and rising 80 feet high, these walls offer panoramic views of the Adriatic Sea and the terracotta rooftops below. From the northern Min eta Tower to Fort Bokar at the southwestern corner, and ending at Fort St. John by the Old Harbour, the walls provide insights into Dubrovnik's resilience, contrasting with remnants of shelling damage from the 1990's conflict. Explore forts and towers, each steeped in history, while glimpsing into hidden gardens and courtyards along the residential fringes. A walking tour of Dubrovnik's Old Town and city walls promises an unforgettable journey through time.



Day 12 Kor ula (Tender Port: Kor ula)

We arrive at the island of Kor ula, where our 'Your Choice' experiences fill your morning, before we sail west mid-afternoon with our eyes set on Italy.

At 30 miles long and five miles wide, Kor ula is one of Croatia's smaller islands, yet its population of 15,000 makes it the country's second most populous. Often referred to as 'Little Dubrovnik' for its medieval squares, churches and palaces, Kor ula is steeped in Venetian architectural influence, a legacy of the stonemasons who flocked here during the Venetian era. The island is covered in dense woods and lush Mediterranean shrub, its coastline hiding many pristine bays and coves, whose numerous small villages produce olive oils, liquors, and some of the best white wines in Croatia; notably Grk and Pošip, which can only be enjoyed locally.

Kor ula's most notable claim to fame is as the birthplace of the indomitable explorer Marco Polo, with his legacy celebrated through place names and a dedicated museum. Cultural traditions thrive here, especially the Moreska sword dance, a captivating 16th-century performance, and Klapa, a popular form of cappella singing. With its blend of Adriatic charm and cultural heritage, Kor ula offers a unique glimpse into the heart of Dalmatian life, making it a top destination for travellers to Croatia.

Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences.

Option 1 - Morning experience: Walk Old Kor ula Town

Join our walking tour of Kor ula's medieval walled Old Town this morning, led by a local guide. Starting directly from the pier, we enter the meticulously laid out Old Town, designed in a fishbone pattern, with 26 cobblestone streets that naturally harness cooling winds.

Our walk showcases the exquisite craftsmanship of Kor ula's renowned stonemasons, whose work adorns buildings worldwide, with a visit to the Bishop's Palace to uncover its hidden treasures, including sketches and drawings attributed to Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Raphael, Tiepolo, and others. We will also visit the charming Church of All Saints, home to a remarkable collection of Byzantine icons. Afterwards, return to the ship for lunch, with views of the island and the Croatian coastline, or stay on the island for a further stroll, climb the Revelin Tower for a bird's-eye view, or relax at one of the many waterfront cafes.

Option 2 - Morning experience: Rural Kor ula and Boutique Wine Tasting

Start your tour with a scenic drive through Kor ula's beautiful Mediterranean landscape. Kor ula Island is famous for its white wines, making this tour perfect for wine lovers seeking an authentic local experience. After a short drive, you will reach Tasovac Winery, an award-winning, family-owned estate offering a traditional coastal atmosphere and a tasting of their exquisite wines.

Our scenic drive passes through small villages and vineyards, until we arrive at Toreta Winery, located in the heart of Kor ula



Island. Kor ula is renowned for its indigenous grapes, Grk and Pošip. The village of Lumbarda is famous for its Grk wines, while the island's interior villages are known for their Pošip wines, often compared to sauvignon blanc and chardonnay. Toreta Winery, a small boutique estate, is celebrated for its exceptional wines, liqueurs and olive oil. Here, you can also see old agricultural tools used for generations. After tasting, we return to Kor ula town.

Option 3 - Morning experience: A Taste of Kor ula

Our morning starts with a short walking tour of Kor ula town, before we head out of town. OPG Komparak greets visitors with a 300-year-old row of cypress pines shadowing a private entrance. This small distillery began production in the winter of 2020 amid a honey deficit. Beekeeper Vlaho Komparak, inspired by the abundance of bitter oranges in Kor ula gardens, created Trut gin. Honey is added before distillation to unify the aroma, and each bottle is dipped in beeswax. The first flavour, 'Signature', won silver at the Berlin International Spirits Awards, and since then, this sweet gin has become a Kor ula success story. We enjoy the Honey & Gin Experience at this organic farm, featuring an active beehive, gin distillery and olive oil production. We combine a tour of the farm with a tasting of honey, olive oil, marmalade, and the award-winning Trut gin.

Day 13 Bari, Italy (Port: Bari)

As the capital of Italy's up-and-coming Puglia region, Bari is undergoing a renaissance, transforming once-neglected suburbs into colourful neighbourhoods. The city's bustling port has been a hub of trade and culture for centuries, showcasing its rich maritime heritage, while Bari's charming old town, Bari Vecchia, features narrow, winding streets leading to historical sites like the Basilica di San Nicola and the imposing Norman-Swabian Castle. Famed for its orecchiette pasta, often handmade by local women right on the streets, Bari adds a personal touch to its culinary scene, with seafood a local specialty. Stories rich in legends such as that of Saint Nicholas, whose relics were brought to Bari from Myra in 1087, further enrich the city's mystical allure as does a devotion to the 150,000 tons of olive oil produced in the region annually, which funds its ongoing facelift.

Choose to join a walking tour of Bari or travel an hour inland to the unique town of Alberobello to view its quirky Trulli houses. For your convenience, a complimentary shuttle will operate this afternoon from the port to the centre of Bari.

Option 1 - Morning experience: Bari Food Trail

Bari's old town comes alive on this guided walking food tour, where history and flavour are deeply intertwined. As we explore its winding alleys, we may spot local women handcrafting orecchiette pasta on their doorsteps -- a cherished tradition in this southern Italian city. Along the way, we'll sample iconic street foods like the beloved panzerotto, a crispy, cheese-filled pastry. But the food is only part of the experience. Each dish tells a story of resilience and resourcefulness, reflecting a time when Bari was a poor city and even the simplest ingredients were considered a delicacy. Through its flavours, we taste the enduring spirit of Bari itself.

Option 2 - Morning experience: Trulli Unique Alberobello



A one-hour drive takes us to the unique town of Alberobello, where our local guide introduces us to its streets lined with enchanting Trulli houses. These whitewashed limestone dwellings with their conical roofs, are a UNESCO World Heritage Site, symbolising the region's rich architectural heritage. Strolling through Alberobello's narrow lanes makes you feel like you're in a fairytale village. The story behind the Trulli is as fascinating as their appearance. Their cone-shaped roofs, constructed without mortar, allowed residents to dismantle the houses quickly -- an ingenious form of tax evasion during medieval times when property taxes were levied based on the number of permanent dwellings. Today, Alberobello is more than just a historical curiosity; it is a vibrant town where we can explore local crafts, savour traditional Apulian cuisine and immerse ourselves in the magical ambience of this wonderfully quirky town.

Day 14 At Sea

Enjoy a leisurely day at sea, when you can do as much or as little as you, please. Perhaps enjoy a relaxing sauna or take some sun in or by the pool on the Sun Deck. Otherwise, find a cosy spot in one of the ship's observation lounges to enjoy a book or catch up on editing your photos.

Day 15 Syracuse (Port: Syracuse)

Syracuse's delightful jumble of Greek, Roman, medieval and baroque layers make every street corner and every ancient site a story unto itself. Our 'Your Choice' experiences offer a fascinating morning, leaving your afternoon free to stroll the short distance to the island of Ortigia. The small Baroque Island of Ortigia, the historic heart of Syracuse, has been inhabited for over 3,000 years and is celebrated for its Greek heritage. As a UNESCO landmark, Ortigia features stunning church facades, vibrant outdoor restaurants, and elegant piazzas. Surrounded by sea, it offers a pleasant afternoon visit, blending historical charm with a coastal vibe.

Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences.

Option 1 - Morning experience: Syracuse and the Parco Archeologico della Neapolis

Once a rival to Athens, Syracuse is home to one of Sicily's archaeological sites - the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Parco Archeologico della Neapolis. Our local guides tell tales of past realms as we view the 16,000 capacity Greek Theatre, and the 2nd-century Anfiteatro Romano, originally used for gladiatorial combats and horse races, before standing at the foot of the monolithic Altar to Hieron II where up to 400 oxen would be sacrificed in one ritual. Beside the theatre, and just as fascinating, we find the limestone quarries that supplied stone for the ancient city. Honeycombed with catacombs below, and citrus trees above, it is also where the 7,000 survivors of the 5th-century war between Syracuse and Athens were imprisoned.

Option 2 Morning experience: The Baroque Town of Noto

An example of architectural elegance, Noto is one of Sicily's most picturesque towns. Completely destroyed by the 1693 earthquake, it was rebuilt on a new site under the scrutiny of Guiseppe Lanza, the Duke of Camastra, whose passion for all things baroque is evident at every turn. Framed by baroque palazzi and grand churches, Noto's main square became a



symbol of the Risorgimento, the 19th-century movement for Italian unification. Eighty-five years later, during World War II, British forces arrived in Sicily as part of Operation Husky and liberated Noto. The town was among the first in Italy to be freed, with locals welcoming the Allies with what was described as 'unbridled enthusiasm.'

Day 16 Disembark Valletta (Port: Valletta)

As a matter of Mediterranean real estate, Malta has location, location, location. For fun in the sun and an island lifestyle that may be ideal, but when it comes to defence from invasion it is not. A convivial, family orientated people, the Maltese have fought hard to defend their country against everyone from the Greeks to Napoleon.

Their bravery in World War II during the second siege of Malta moved King George VI to award the nation the George Cross which appears on the Maltese flag and coat of arms.

Our day is spent in Malta's celebrated capital, Valletta, which remains a historical city with streets of fascinating sites telling more than their fair share of stories. We join a local guide this morning for an exploration of Valletta's essential sights. We spend time at the Barrakka Gardens to gain a perspective of the city's harbour from a naval point of view before exploring the Grand Masters Palace and Armoury, where we uncover an impressive collection gathered by The Knights Hospitaller of St. John, while the multimedia show, Malta Experience, places thousands of years of Malta into perspective.

This afternoon, you will have time for independent exploration, before transferring to our hotel for check-in.

Accommodation: Valletta Hotel

Meals: Breakfast onboard

Day 17 Depart Valletta

After breakfast, check-out of your hotel and farewell your fellow travellers as you transfer to the airport for your onward flight.

Meals: Breakfast

Please note:

Itineraries are subject to change.



YOUR SHIP: DOUGLAS MAWSON

YOUR SHIP: **Douglas Mawson**

VESSEL TYPE:

LENGTH:

PASSENGER CAPACITY:

BUILT/REFURBISHED:

Douglas Mawson was launched in 2025. Named after the legendary Australian geologist and explorer, this new small ship embodies Mawson's pioneering spirit and is designed for global discovery. Featuring the revolutionary Ulstein X-BOW® and purpose-built with enhanced sustainability features, it takes a maximum 154 adventurers to the world's wildest places in smooth, quiet comfort. It boasts our most extensive range of cabins yet, including a range of single cabins. The Douglas Mawson features a host of amenities to help you connect with like-minded travellers and elevate your time onboard this floating base camp for adventure. After a long day of exploring, head to the back deck to swim in the heated outdoor swimming pool, find a sun bed to read on, or soak in one of two Jacuzzis. Work up a sweat in the gym before unwinding in the sauna, resolve to learn something new in the Citizen Science Centre, then enjoy a delicious meal with new and old friends in one of two restaurants. Or, with multiple observation areas throughout the ship, simply relax in comfort while you keep watch for wildlife or incredible landscapes unfold before you. While enjoying the luxurious amenities onboard, you can rest assured that the aim is to get you off the ship to explore the natural environment as much as possible to enjoy some unique activities remains unchanged. Newest Ulstein X-BOW ® The Douglas Mawson features the newest streamlined Ulstein X-BOW®, designed for global discovery. The revolutionary design cuts through the swell, offering unrivalled stability on ocean crossings and helping to reduce fuel consumption. It's just one of the many sustainability features that helps make travel more responsible. Heated Pool, Jacuzzis & Sauna In between landings, enjoy access to the onboard gym or unwind in the sauna. Or head to the back deck to swim in the heated outdoor pool, enjoy a drink at the pool bar, or soak in one of two Jacuzzis, watching the world go by. Leading Technology The Douglas Mawson is at the cutting edge of nautical technology, fitted with industry-leading technology including world-class return-to-port equipment. The ship also features a medical clinic designed for use in remote areas. Built for Adventure The Douglas Mawson features Zodiac access points and an activities platform, making boarding the Zodiacs as quick, efficient and safe as possible, minimising wait times and getting you closer to the action for longer. In our mudroom you will have access to lockers to store gear & boots and rapid drying areas for clothing. More Cabin Choices The Douglas Mawson features 11 different types of cabins, including a range of spacious single berth cabins - all adorned with elegant Nordic interior design features. Multiple Observation Areas As you explore the ship you will find indoor lounge areas with floor-to ceiling windows, and multiple open decks with expansive 270-360 degree views. The Glass Atrium Lounge inside the bow is a fantastic place to sit and watch for wildlife - with a drink in hand. There is no shortage of



spaces to take in the majesty of the incredible world outside! Lecture Theatre On all expeditions you will meet naturalists and local specialists, who offer presentations on their area of expertise to enhance your appreciation of the destination you are exploring. Join the team in the lecture theatre for presentations covering a broad range of topics to suit every interest, from history and culture to biology and climate change. Regardless of the topic, they all have one thing in common: they all aim to engage, educate, entertain and turn you into an ambassador for the planet. Citizen Science Center & Lounge Learn more about the world and the unique destinations Aurora visits by visiting the onboard naturalist and Expedition Team in the world-class Citizen Science Center. You will be rewarded for your thirst for knowledge with one of the best views on the ship. Library With floor-to-ceiling windows, the library is a peaceful sanctuary where you can find non-fiction books to read up on the day's destinations, use a public laptop to organise your photos or play board games with newfound friends. Choose from our range of informative non-fiction titles, wildlife guidebooks, travel journals, novels and a selection of children's books and board games. Wildlife guides, books and binoculars can also be found on the observation lounge on Deck 7. Mudroom No need to take your wet expedition gear back to your cabin to dry. Keep your cabin warm and cosy by leaving your outer jackets and pants in the mudroom. The mudroom is your launchpad for all shore excursions and activities. Here, you will have access to a locker when you can hang your gear up to dry, and store your boots between excursions. Swimming Pool & Jacuzzis There are two Jacuzzis on the top outside deck which offer amazing views of the world outside, a heated outdoor pool surrounded by sun beds you can relax on after a long day of exploring, and a pool bar. Gym & Sauna During your voyage, enjoy complimentary access to the gym or visit our sauna, which we highly recommend after the Polar Plunge! Restaurants One of the most important parts of any expedition is the food! Whatever adventures the day holds, you will be fuelled-up with hearty meals and delicious morning/afternoon teas cooked by our onboard chefs. Meals are a great time to soak up the expedition camaraderie in our open seating dining area. Share stories with your fellow travellers and ask our expedition team questions that may have come up during the day. Tea, coffee and snacks are available 24 hours a day, and our chefs offer different menu options and courses for each meal. Enjoy the range of house wine, beers and soft drinks included with dinner after a long day in the wild. We also invite you to join your captain and expedition team for informal Captain's Farewell drinks, with complimentary beverages and cocktail appetisers, followed by a 3 course meal. Bars & Lounges Communal meeting areas have always played a major role in fostering the warm camaraderie on board our ships. They are the heart of the expedition, where people meet to share tales from the day, swap photos, keep an eye out for wildlife and watch the sun go down. The bars and lounges on board are refined yet inviting places to gather, with floor-to-ceiling windows offering stunning views, and of course friendly bartenders to shoot the





breeze with.

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