

The Small Cruise Ship Collection

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TREASURES OF THE AEGEAN SEA

Sail the Aegean Sea with PONANT and set off to discover Greece and its famous islands: the Cyclades and the Dodecanese Islands. From Istanbul, Le Lyrial will take you to exceptional sites during a new 8-day Mediterranean cruise. You will discover the volcanic island of Lemnos, near the Dardanelles Strait. Protected during Antiquity by Hephaestus, the god of fire, this green and lush island has now become one of Greece's major seaside resorts. You will set sail for the island of Patmos. Known as the "Jerusalem of the Aegean Sea", this island, where Saint John is said to have written the Apocalypse, offers unique landscapes combining white sandy beaches and rocky coves. The next stop will be at Delos, a minuscule island in the Cyclades archipelago. According to mythology, Apollo was born here. Like an open-air museum, Delos offers unique testimony of the civilisations that followed one another in the Aegean world. You will also discover Mykonos, an island of white windmills, sinuous lanes and whitewashed buildings, with a small port where fishing boats and dinghies lazily bob at the foot of the terraces. Le Lyrial will then make a detour via the island of Hydra, famous for its incomparable light and the calm of its small streets on which all motorised traffic is banned. Your cruise will end in Athens, the mythical city dominated by the Acropolis and its monuments that form the most extraordinary architectural and artistic collection bequeathed by Ancient Greece to the rest of the world.



ITINERARY

Day 1 ISTANBUL

Located on the Bosphorus, Istanbul is one of the most beautiful of all Turkish cities. Named Byzantium when founded by the Greeks, and then Constantinople under the Roman Empire, this city is steeped in history and, for this reason, is a listed UNESCO World Heritage site. On Sultanahmet hill, you'll see the great Blue Mosque, the mysterious Hagia Sophia and the vast Topkapi palace and its countless mosaics. In the Beyazit district, you can admire the elegant covered passages of the Grand Bazaar. A little further away, the delicate aroma of loukoum and spices will draw your attention at the Egyptian Bazaar.

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Day 2 LIMNOS ISLAND

A volcanic island located near the Dardanelles Strait, Lemnos was venerated during Antiquity. Legend has it that Hephaestus, the god of fire, had his forge here. Now one of Greece's major seaside resorts, Lemnos offers its visitors many superb sandy beaches. It is also home to several archaeological sites, such as the towers of Kastro, an ancient acropolis fortified by the Venetians, or the neolithic site of Poliochni and the city of Hephaestia. Renowned for its olives, fruits, wheat and honey, and for the authenticity of its inhabitants, Lemnos is also known for the quality of its restaurants, ideal for tasting typical Greek dishes.

Day 3 SYROS

Located to the west of Mykonos, Syros is an attractive island in the Cyclades. It has been inhabited since early antiquity, as you'll discover by visiting the archaeological museum in Ermoupoli, its capital built in the shape of an amphitheatre and stretching out over two hills. Don't miss the historical district, where the beautiful houses are evidence of the island's strategic location for trade, between the East and the West. Admire the superb Agios Nikolaos Church or the Church of the Assumption of Virgin Mary. Further on, in the medieval town of Ano Syros, succumb to the charms of its stairways and arched passageways, the small, white houses decorated with bougainvilleas, and the sweetness of the ambient air.

Day 4 PATMOS

Patmos is one of the legendary must-see islands in the Dodecanese. This is where Saint John resided, presumed author of the last book in the Bible. The cave of the Apocalypse and the Saint-John-the-Theologian Monastery are dedicated to him. These sites, which are listed by UNESCO as World Heritage, are

located at the top of a hillside planted with vines and orchards. On the shore, the crystalline coves of Kambos and Lampi offer absolutely gorgeous swimming areas. You'll be drawn to the bustle in Skala harbour and its taverns, famous for their fish soup and tiropita, which is a type of pasty filled with fresh Patmos cheese.

Day 5 DELOS & MYKONOS

This legendary Cyclades island of Delos stands just a few miles southwest of Mykonos. The ceremonial solemnity of this ancient holy sanctuary will not leave you indifferent. The sheer size and importance of this UNESCO World Heritage site which covers over half of the island is thrilling in itself. From the Stoa of Antigonos, the Terrace of the Lions, to the carved marble animal statues, you will make discovery after discovery, against a backdrop of the Aegean stretching to the horizon. The theatre steps on the hillside are a particularly good place from which to enjoy the expansive view. Nicknamed "little Venice", Mykonos is famous for its Alefkandra district where houses are built right on the water's edge. Their multi-coloured loggias are emblematic of this Cyclades island, as are the pelicans and windmills. You can get close up to the birds on the quaysides of the old port. Up on the hillside, you can see the windmill sails turning. In the cobbled streets of the pedestrian centre, bougainvillea bedeck immaculate facades. As you weave in and out of the little streets, snatches of coastline will undoubtedly call you to the island's beaches, the quietest of which can be found on the northern coast.

Day 6 PAROS

Famous for its white marble, the island of Paros is located in the Cyclades. Along the quays of Parikia, its main town, you'll see Byzantine churches and neoclassical buildings. To make the

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most of the turquoise waters, you can stop over in Naoussa. This little fishing port is bounded by a very beautiful cove and offers more than one café to sit and unwind.

Day 7 HYDRA

This unusual gem belonging to the Saronic islands is located to the east of the Peloponnese. There are no cars here. Named after the island, the harbour town is layered up the slopes of a mountainous bay. You may be surprised to see beautiful stone mansions. These are traditional here, as are the multi-coloured caiques along the quays. Further along the shore, within the walls of the “Monastery of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary” is a museum of Byzantine art. Collections from Athens National History Museum are exhibited in the elegant villa Koundouriotis.

Day 8 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. Don't miss anything of the city's cultural past. Pay a visit to the National Archaeological museum, or the Cycladic Art Museum.

Please Note:

Itineraries are subject to change.

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YOUR SHIP: LE LYRIAL

YOUR SHIP:

Le Lyrial

VESSEL TYPE:

LENGTH:

PASSENGER CAPACITY:

BUILT/REFURBISHED:

A sleek silhouette, a welcoming intimate atmosphere, discover aboard this new ship the philosophy that has made our sisterships such a success: the spirit of Yacht Cruises. Sailing under the French flag, this magnificent yacht of only 122 staterooms and Suites, with balconies, will join our fleet in April 2015. You will be enchanted by the contemporary decor inspired by the our destinations and the blue light of the Vega star in the Lyra constellation. The result is a subtle variation around a palette of blues, ranging from the luminous delicate grey-blue of the Polar ice to splashes of the vivid turquoise blue found in Mediterranean coves. A refined ambiance is enhanced by the quality of the workmanship and materials: white Corian counters in the lobby contrast with the warmth of leather to recall a boat's hull, while the central sculpture of enamelled pieces takes its inspiration from the sea. In the loungebar, the carpet picks up a tennis stripe theme symbolising a certain idea of cruising, one synonymous with French elegance and a chic seaside spirit. Please click the following links to read more about Ponant and the other Ponant cruise ships.



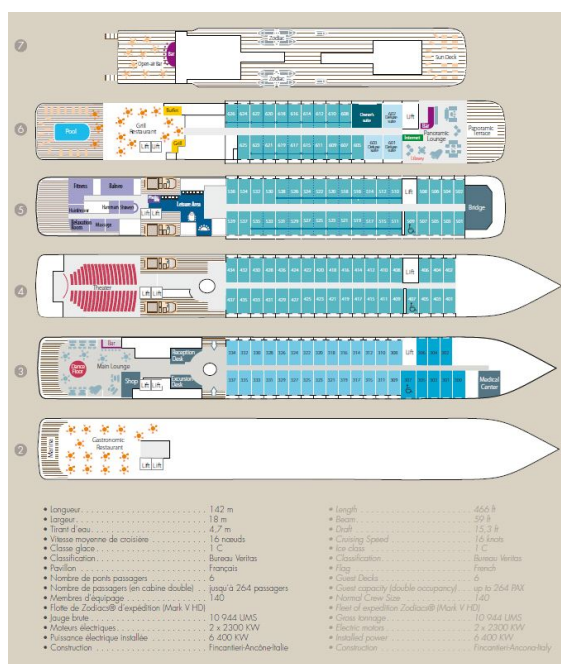
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