INCLUDED EXCURSIONS
(over $300 savings per person)

SANTORINI – Spectacular Oia Village on the caldera rim

Our tour to Santorini’s jewel, the village of Oia, is a trip into the picture-perfect world of an island where romance and beauty reign supreme. As we board our tour to discover the island’s second largest village, we will drive by the picturesque villages of Firostefani, Imerovigli, the “balcony to the Aegean”, and Megalochori surrounded by its famous vineyards, where we will stop briefly to capture the experience with photos. Our tour will continue with a panoramic drive by Santorini’s caldera which offers breathtaking views. We will admire from afar the village of Fira, the capital of the island, as well as Thirassia, Palea Kameni and Nea Kameni -- three of the five islands which form the cluster that surround Santorini. As we arrive in Oia we will walk through the gleaming white streets of the village through a beautiful labyrinth of shops, cafes, art galleries and hotels, harmoniously built in the unmistakable Cycladic style. You will have free time to enjoy your moments in one of the world’s best known and loved living postcards -- taking photos of the awe-inspiring scenery, shopping for fine jewelry or art, or simply relaxing and breathing in the beauty of Santorini.

RHODES - Acropolis of Lindos and the Citadel of the Knights

Centuries of culture and layer upon layer of extraordinary civilizations await to be discovered during our bus tour through impressive Lindos and within the awe-inspiring structure of the Acropolis of Lindos. We will follow the footsteps of heroes as we walk along the Knight’s Street in the heart of historical Rhodes. The seven lodges of the Order, still bearing their original coats of arms, are displayed along the cobblestone street where Rhodes’ history was written for over two centuries. Sitting at the top of Knights Street, the Grand Master’s Palace is well worth its name. You will be awed by the fort’s imposing Gothic architecture and strength displayed throughout its court structures, as you get a glimpse into the fascinating era of the Knights. We will end our tour of historical Rhodes with free time so that you may fortify your memories of Rhodes at your own pace.

KUSADASI, TURKEY - Ancient Ephesus through the ages

Our Ancient Ephesus bus tour is a journey through the golden ages which shaped a pivotal center of commerce and spirituality. Built 3,000 years ago, Ephesus shaped the history of Greek, Turkish and Christian civilizations from its privileged location, chosen (according to legend) by the oracle of Delphi. A site of pilgrimage, due to its proximity to the Temple of Artemis (one of the 7 Wonders of the World) and the presence of major Christian figures (the apostles Paul and John and the Virgin Mary) within the city walls, Ephesus is currently one of the largest Roman archaeological sites in the Mediterranean. The splendour of its golden age is visible throughout its streets and exceptionally well-preserved ruins. As we explore this UNESCO World Heritage Site you will have the opportunity to breathe in the centuries of cultural effervescence, visible in the Ephesus Agora, Odeon, the Houses of the Patricians, the beautiful Temple of Hadrian and the astonishing Library of Celsus. You will also have the opportunity to bargain and shop local merchandise such as carpets, leather goods, souvenirs etc.
OPTIONAL EXCURSIONS

MYKONOS

Cycladic Tastes - Half Day: Up to 4 ½ hours

Savor the delights of Mykonos with a foodie tour around the island capital. You’ll see the city’s highlights and neighborhoods all while sampling the best food and drink that Mykonos Town has to offer. We’ll start it all with a caffeine kick at Café Barco where you’ll be served a traditional coffee and sweet treat, after which we’ll stroll past the famous windmills, through the narrow, cobbled lanes of Little Venice and the Three Mills to the one and only Paraportiani Church. Next, try some Greek peppers and olives washed down with some local raki before heading to Gioras bakery to eat their famous cheese and onion pie. We continue our food odyssey at Popolo where you’ll sample local bruschetta, and then it’s onto the pretty garden of Cine Manto to taste fresh Greek salad, beer and Mykonian sausage. And last but not least, you’ll have some fig cheesecake served with olive marmalade waiting for you at Il Forno di Gerasimo.

Mykonean Dinner - Half Day: Up to 4 ½ hours

With never-ending rows of whitewashed houses, churches, boutiques and hidden lanes, Mykonos Town is a haven to explore. We’ll set off on foot around Chora, the historic heart, gradually weaving our way to Little Venice where you’ll spot colorful houses dripping into the bright blue sea and al fresco terraces buzzing with cocktail and coffee drinkers. Then, it’s over to the town’s most famous landmark – the Windmills – that stand tall by the sea, providing the most romantic spot to watch the sunset. Our next stop on the walking tour will be Panagia Paraportiani, a beauty of a Byzantine church dating back to 1425 and one of the most photographed on the island. Afterwards, it’s time to take your seat at the dinner table for a real Greek feast rounded off with a side order of some feet-stomping music and traditional island dancing.

The Sacred Island of Delos - Half Day: Up to 4 ½ hours

The most sacred island in ancient Greece is just a short boat trip away from Mykonos, nestled in amongst the Cyclades Islands. And with Delos covered in temples, sanctuaries and ancient monuments dedicated to the gods Apollo and Artemis, you can’t help but be swept away by the magic of it all. You’ll spend half a day unravelling centuries of history, enjoying free time to explore Delos’ Chora and treading past ancient treasures at the Archaeological Site of Delos, including the most photographed of them all – the Avenue of the Lions. Walk down the central colonnade - the House of Naxians - and gaze up at the Doric Temple of Delians, dedicated to Apollo. Stop and stare at the Sanctuary of the Bulls as well as the Agora of Hermaists and soak up the once-upon-a-time glory of ancient Greek civilization. It’s one of Greece’s most important archaeological and mythological sites, which was once a buzzing trade center. What’s more, as the birthplace of Apollo and Artemis, you’ll be exploring the Archaeological Site of Delos, a rich and extensive UNESCO world heritage site, with the help of a knowledgeable guide on this tour.

Mykonian countryside tour with Hora & Little Venice - Half Day: Up to 4 ½ hours

This tour encompasses the best of Mykonos outside its main city. We will drive around the island to get a glimpse into its beaches such as Ornos (one of the most family-friendly on the island), St Anna (protected by two hills called “Aphrodite’s breasts”), and Kalafatis (a paradise for water sports and windsurfing). We will stop briefly at each of these natural splendors for photos. We will then leave the seashore and drive inland to Ano Mera, a village which remains one of the rare unspoiled parts of the island. Home to the Panagia Tourliani Monastery from the 16th century, the village
unfolds around its impressive bell tower and marble fountain. Coming back to Chora we will go for a short stop to Panagia Paraportianí, the iconic 15th century Byzantine church. We will conclude our bus tour at the picturesque Little Venice -- the perfect spot for a cocktail on the sea.

Mykonos Walking Tour - Half Day: Up to 4 ½ hours

We start our walking tour in Little Venice (Alekandria), a district located at the sea, famous for its picturesque medieval buildings, adorned with colourful wooden balconies. This western part of Mykonos Town is one of the most beautiful and romantic places on the island, especially as you enjoy a cocktail in one of its many bars and cafes. Then we focus our attention on one of the most recognized landmarks of Mykonos, the famous Windmills. From as early as the 16th century, the windmills were intensely used in the island’s production of wheat and bread. The area of the windmills has a stunning view of Little Venice and is the most popular place in Mykonos from which to watch the glowing sunsets. The next and final stop is Panagia Paraportianí, a true Byzantine architectural jewel. This whitewashed church, which dates back to 1425, is the most photographed of the 400 churches on the island of Mykonos. You will then have free time to savour a coffee or wander around Chora, the central part of Mykonos Town, with its maze of tiny streets and whitewashed lanes, houses and churches, and numerous little shops, boutiques, art galleries, stylish bars and restaurants.

OPTIONAL EXCURSIONS

PATMOS

Traditional Feast in Patmos - Half Day: Up to 4 ½ hours

If you’re looking to really soak up and savor culture in Patmos, then this traditional feast is the crème de la crème. You’ll be whisked from the port in Skala to a traditional taverna – scenic drive included – where a true banquet of flavor and color awaits. Pull up a chair to the wooden tables, all laden with steaming hot food, and tuck into a wealth of mouth-watering traditional dishes. They all sing with local ingredients and spices, and are made as they have been for decades. And in true Greek fashion, every meal will be capped off with some music that really puts the ‘live’ in lively. You’ll soon find yourself up on your feet on the dancefloor, arm in arm with your fellow guests and dancing the one and only Greek Zorba. It’s an immersive experience in Greek culture and cuisine to leave Patmos on a sweet note.

Religious visit to St. John's Monastery & the Grotto of Apocalypse - Up to 2 hours

On this excursion you are sure to experience the sacred grandeur of this intensely spiritual Dodecanese island. We visit Chora, St. John’s Monastery and the Holy Grotto of the Apocalypse, which for centuries have drawn pilgrims to Patmos for prayer, esoteric seclusion and solemnity. From the port of Skala we travel up the mountain by air-conditioned coach to immaculate Chora. Its skirting of traditional white houses encircles the bottom of the exterior walls of the Monastery of St. John the Divine. An architecturally homogenous village, the cobblestone streets and alleys of Chora are lined with mansions built by wealthy ship owners during the 17th and 18th centuries. As you wend your way up to the Monastery, at the top of the hill, be sure to seek out an authentic taste of this unique Dodecanese village along some of its quieter thoroughfares. Now surrounded by the village, the fortified Monastery of St. John, whose walls are more than 15 meters high, was built with local gray stone. In 1088 St. Christodoulos requested the entire island of Patmos from Byzantine Emperor Alexis I Comnenus so he could found a monastery dedicated to St. John. Even after “The Blessed” was driven from Patmos by pirates, monks continued building the monastery which, within a few centuries, became an important cultural, religious and spiritual center. Within its warren of chapels and courtyards, the Monastery of St. John houses
medieval icons of the Cretan school and the Chapel of the Theotokos (the Virgin Mary), whose beautiful frescoes date to the 12th century; the monastery’s main chapel dates to the end of the 11th century. There is also a museum within the monastery, with icons, religious objects of silver and gold, sacred relics and embroidered vestments of inestimable value on display. Halfway down the mountain to Plaka we stop at the Holy Grotto of the Apocalypse. According to Christian tradition, three fissures (a symbol of the Holy Trinity) opened in a wall in the grotto, and St. John heard the voice of God, who granted him a series of visions of the future (revelations), vivid pictures of how the Church would grow, battle the wicked powers of earth and hell and ultimately emerge victorious. The voice commanded the saint to transcribe these visions: St. John dictated the revelations to one of his disciples, Prochoros, and this text became the Book of Revelations. During his time in this sacred cave, St. John also composed the Fourth Gospel. The entrance to the grotto is marked with a mosaic of the visions of the saint. Inside the grotto, the nightly resting place of the saint’s head is fenced off and delineated in beaten silver. We return to Plaka, where you’ll have free time for shopping and a coffee beside the harbor. Close your eyes and let the grandeur of this miraculous island suffuse your soul.

**Patmos countryside tours with Chora & Grotto - Half Day: Up to 4 ½ hours**

We start our tour with a drive through Skala, the only port and the center of Patmos Island where you will also find a beautiful beach, the new modern marina and most cafes, restaurants, tavernas and bars of the island, all clustered together. Our first stop is the Cave of the Apocalypse -- an important place of pilgrimage as it is said to have been the place where St John heard the voice of God and where he received the words of the Revelation. We will then go to Chora, a medieval settlement from where you will enjoy a wonderful view of the Monastery of the Apocalypse, Skala and the northeastern side of the island. Its architectural details have been respectfully restored ensuring full harmony and balance with the sacred Monastery. Our exploration continues with a scenic tour of the rocky, volcanic landscape of the island where we will also stop to take pictures of the ethereal windmills. We will say farewell to Patmos at Arion Bar on the Skala promenade -- the oldest café on the island and the best place to enjoy a classic freddo cappuccino.

**Transfer to Agriolivadi Beach - Half Day: Up to 4 ½ hours**

Escaping the hustle and bustle to the peace and tranquillity of Patmos’ best beach is exactly what this half-day transfer promises. You’ll be transferred from the ship to Agriolivadi Beach, located just outside of Skala, where the time is yours to while away exactly as you wish. Here, plunge your toes into the fine, honey-coloured sand that stretches for endless miles around the bay, and float in the calm azure water, sheltered from the cool sea breezes. And as you sit back and soak up some golden sunshine, you can gaze out over the picturesque islet of St Thekla, which you can see shimmering in the distance. Or, bury your nose in your book and forget about passing time. Once you feel you need a break from all that relaxing, quench your thirst at the beach bar or give into temptation at the beachfront taverna where freshly-prepared food is dished out.

**OPTIONAL EXCURSIONS**

**HERAKLION**

**Venetian Heraklion and the Unique Archaeological Museum - Half Day: Up to 4 ½ hours**

Heraklion’s Venetian era has enriched the city with beautiful architectural structures and edifices that still stand today, representing its rich history. Our bus tour will immerse you into the Venetian heritage of Heraklion and Crete’s ancient glory and also allow you some free time to walk around Heraklion’s old city center, buy souvenirs or enjoy refreshing drinks in a cafe. We will drive by the proud Koules Fortress (the Venetian fortress dominating the harbour) and continue to the stunning Venetian Loggia, the 17th century administrative centre of the island. The masterfully intertwined Doric
and Ionic architectural details on its facade are a sample of the refined Venetian architecture and they underline the importance of Heraklion within the Venetian Republic. We will continue towards the Morozini fountain, another masterpiece from the same creator of the Loggia and the Church of St. Titus. As we approach the Archaeological Museum of Heraklion we approach the best Minoan art museum in the world, and one of the finest museums of Greek history and art. Founded in 1883, the museum brings to life over 5,500 years of Greek and Roman history, through its invaluable artefacts. The Minoan collection features exceptional findings from the archaeological site of Knossos, including ancient jewelry, everyday items, religious artefacts and the incredible bull’s head Royton.

Knossos Palace & Cretan Landscapes - Extended Half Day: Up to 6 hours

From Heraklion port, we’ll travel to the grand ancient city of Knossos – birthplace of Minoan civilization – on this extended bus tour. Take in centuries of history, architecture and art, and learn about the legends of Daedalus, Theseus and the formidable Minotaur as you roam from room to room at Knossos Palace. Step through the remarkable Hall of the Royal Guard and the King’s Chamber breathing in the legendary stories of King Minos. Then drive through poetic Cretan countryside to the traditional village of Thrapsano – known as Crete’s pottery village. Witness ceramic art and traditional pottery being made before your very own eyes and wander around a pretty hillside village suspended in history. Afterwards, you’ll journey along ancient wine routes and soothing landscapes to Myrtia village, just south of Heraklion. Here you’ll find the Nikos Kazantzakis Museum, dedicated to the life and work of Greece’s famous author.

Knossos Palace and the Archaeological Museum - Half Day: Up to 4 ½ hours

The ancient city of Knossos – birthplace of Minoan civilization – is our first stop on this half-day excursion. Your guide will bring to life the history and legends surrounding the wise King Minos, and as soon as you enter incredible Knossos Palace, you’ll be transported to another world. You’ll be led around the apartments and rooms, all spread around the Central Court, towards the jewels in the crown – the Throne Room, the Prince of the Lilies fresco, the imposing Grand Staircase and the Queen’s Megaron. Then, head to the Archaeological Museum of Heraklion where exhibits showcase the fascinating history of Cretan culture. Afterwards, we’ll journey to our final stop on the tour, historic Heraklion. Here you’ll set off on a guided walk of the center from Liberty Square to admire wonderful buildings such as the Koules Fortress that guards the Venetian port, the Loggia, Morosini Fountain and Basilica of Saint Mark. You’ll also pass by some of the city’s religious monuments including the Church of Agios Titos, the medieval monastery of Saint Catherine and the Church of Agios Minas, as well as the bustling shopping streets of Dedalou and the 25th August.

Minoan Palace of Knossos - 1st European civilization - Half Day: Up to 4 ½ hours

As we venture into the incredible open-air museum of the Palace of Knossos, our bus tour will take you along the proud Venetian heritage of Heraklion - the Koules Fortress (the stronghold overlooking the Heraklion harbour), the Venetian Loggia (the 17th century administrative and social center), the harmonious Morozini fountain and the 10th century Church of St. Titus. As you explore the Palace of Knossos, considered Europe’s oldest city, you are entering and experiencing the incredible world of the legendary Minoan civilization. The long and winding roads of Crete’s ancient city gradually expose the remarkable art, architecture and daily life of the Minoan people. Breathe in the millennia of history and imagine the legends of Daedalus, Theseus and the Minotaur come to life in the remarkable Hall of the Royal Guard and the Double Axes, the King’s Chamber or the Queen’s Apartment. Enjoy free time to savour the beauty and uniqueness of Crete’s largest city (and the fourth largest in Greece). The city is brimming with an assortment of museums that satisfy every taste- entre, full of busy cafes and elegant shops or retrace the steps of its Venetian rulers at the impressive fortified port, the vast arches and the arsenals.
Experience the Cretan countryside and lifestyle - Half Day: Up to 4 ½ hours

We begin our bus tour from the port of Heraklion, guarded by its Venetian Lions, and continue beyond the city’s landmarks and limits, on a panoramic drive to Peza, the wine valley of Crete. Over 20% of Greece’s wine production originates from the sun-kissed island of Crete and our drive will impress you with beautiful sights of Crete’s countryside and its 4,000 year old vineyards. As we arrive in Stironas, a small traditional Cretan village located at an altitude of 550m, you will embark upon a complete sensorial experience. The Botanical Parterre, a formal garden nesting a multitude of aromatic herbs and medicinal plants native to the mountains of Crete, will reveal to you some of Cretan cuisine’s secrets and indulge you with fragrances of all kinds. Our final and festive stop will be at the traditional Raki distiller of Stironas, where our host will greet you with pure Cretan wine produced and stored in his cellar and will share with you the secret art of wine producing and bottling. Following the Cretan hospitality, we will be invited to experience a traditional Cretan meal, with all the best natural products, while a group of traditional dancers will make you feel right at home.