
11-DAYS: IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ST. PAUL & THE EARLY CHURCH – A PILGRIMAGE TO GREECE AND TURKEY



DAY 1: DEPART USA

We depart USA en route to Athens, with complimentary meals and beverages served aloft.

DAY 2: ARRIVE ATHENS

We arrive in Athens and transfer to our hotel for dinner and the evening. (D)

DAY 3: ATHENS: CITY TOUR

This morning we make our way outside the city to the Monastery of Kaisariani, founded in the 11th century AD and consecrated to the Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple. We have a brief tour of the grounds, then some time for reflection and our Pilgrims' prayer to Mary with a time for the pilgrims to share their hopes for the pilgrimage. We then tour the city of Athens, including the agora where Paul addressed the Athenians, the famed Acropolis and Parthenon, Hadrian's Arch and the Temple of Zeus. We will have dinner in the Plaka area and return to the hotel. Mass will be celebrated at a local church. (B, D)



DAY 4: ATHENS: EXCURSION TO DELPHI

We make our excursion to Delphi, the Sanctuary of Apollo and the Oracle of Delphi. We visit the Arch, archaeological sites and the Museum. In the afternoon we return to Athens. Mass will be celebrated at a local church. Dinner is at our hotel. Overnight in Athens. (B, D)

DAY 5: ATHENS: MASS AT CATHEDRAL & CITY TOUR

This morning we join the Catholic community of Athens in their celebration of the Mass at the city's cathedral. This afternoon, we visit the Athens Archeological Museum, one of the finest in the world. The balance of the afternoon is at leisure. Then we gather for dinner at a local restaurant. (B, D)

DAY 6: ATHENS / PIRAEUS / CRUISE TO MYKONOS

After breakfast, transfer to the Port of Piraeus to board your Greek Island cruise ship, the MS Sea Diamond. Set sail at 11:00 AM and spend the afternoon enjoying the sun, warm sea breezes, pool and shipboard facilities. When we arrive at Mykonos later this afternoon, a shuttle bus will take us into town and a walking tour with our guide, through the town's labyrinth of winding alleyways and whitewashed buildings, basket-laden donkeys, cascading geraniums and upscale shops and cafes. Chic crowds flock to the island's trendy restaurants, discos and clubs each night. You can sit seaside, sipping ouzo and watching the sunset while listening to traditional Greek music. (B,L,D)

DAY 7: CRUISE TO KUSADASI, TURKEY & PATMOS, GREECE

This morning we drive through the colorful town of Kusadasi to reach Mt. Koressos. Situated in a small valley, it is here where we will visit the humble chapel which lies on the site of the little house where the Virgin Mary is believed to have spent her last days. Continue on to Ancient Ephesus and accompanied by our guide, we walk through the Magnesian Gate which is the entrance to the ancient city of Ephesus. Our guided walking tour will take us through one of the most magnificent excavations in the world. A highlight of our tour is the Great Theatre where St. Paul preached. It is the largest theatre in antiquity having a capacity of 24,000 people. Walk back to our motor coach along the Arcadian Way, where Mark Anthony and Cleopatra once rode in procession. While driving back to Kusadasi and just outside Ephesus, view the Basilica of St. John, which was erected over his grave in the 6th Century AD by the Emperor Justinian. Before returning to the ship, enjoy free time in Kusadasi.

Later this afternoon, return to your ship for lunch aboard as you sail toward Patmos, Greece. You'll arrive later this afternoon and disembark at Skala harbor, a lively place with whitewashed houses, flowered courtyards, tavernas and shops. The Island of Patmos is famous in history as the place where St. John wrote the Book of Revelation. Our tour takes us to the grotto where St. John lived and the nearby Monastery, built on one of the island's highest points, housing priceless icons and manuscripts in its Treasury. Return to the ship for dinner and overnight. (B,L,D)



DAY 8: CRUISE TO RHODES

This morning after breakfast we set off on our day's exploration of the Isle of Rhodes. We drive along the picturesque south-eastern coastline, scattered with white-washed villages, to Lindos, one of the most important of the three great cities of ancient times. See how this entire city is guarded by medieval walls which were constructed by the Knights of St. John in the 13th century. Within the walls stands the ancient Acropolis of Lindos, on the brink of a precipice 400 feet above the sea. From the Acropolis, we marvel at the breathtaking views covering the great expanse of the Aegean Sea and St. Paul's Bay, where the Apostle Paul cast anchor during his historic voyage en route to Ephesus. We ascend the great staircase leading from the Hellenistic Portico to the Acropolis and Temple of Athena. Should you wish to make your way up local transport, mules are available for a rental minor charge!

After our guided tour of the Acropolis, we enjoy some free time on our own in the village of Lindos before meeting up with your motor coach. Return to Rhodes city to enjoy a panoramic drive through the new part of the city before continuing to Mount Smith where you will view the ruins of ancient Rhodes, the Temple of Apollo and Diagoras Stadium. Afterwards your motor coach will drop you off at Porte d'Amboise where you will commence your walking tour through the medieval city of Rhodes. Follow your guide through the northern part where once lived the knights and their attendants. View the Palace of the Knights and continue your walk down Chevaliers Road in order to meet up with your motor coach at the marine gate and return back to the ship. (B, D)

DAY 9: CRUISE TO HERAKLION & SANTORINI

The ruins of Knossos—the capitol of Minoan Crete and today the island's major tourist attraction—are just five kilometers from Heraklion city center, and our shore excursion will take us to see this fascinating site. Other points of interest here include Knossos Palace; Heraklion's Archaeological Museum, one of the finest in Greece, housing exquisite findings from Knossos and other Minoan ruins; numerous Venetian fortresses, fountains and loggias scattered throughout the city and the Historical Museum of Crete, with its Byzantine and folklore collections. The open air market is a must-see, where a boisterous crowd buys and sells everything from goats and sheep to huge cauldrons of fresh yogurt.

We return to the ship to continue sailing to Santorini. This striking island, with breathtaking panoramas and rugged landscapes, is actually a volcanic crater slightly immersed in the sea. The island is famous for its whitewashed houses, narrow streets, open-air cafes and glittering boutiques which cling to steep cliffs, accessible by foot, cable car or mule. Our walking tour includes Oia Village with its cobble-stoned streets. We visit as well the village of Thera, with its dramatic scenic views and where enjoy a local wine-tasting. We return to our ship for dinner. (B, L,D)



DAY 10: ARRIVE PIRAEUS / EXCURSION TO CORINTH

In the morning we return to the Port of Piraeus. We journey to Corinth,

the largest city in the land now known as Greece. Here Paul spent 18 months, preaching to the Jews and Gentiles. The site is overlooked by an Acropolis housing the remains of the Temple of Aphrodite, goddess of love. In Corinth, Paul worked with Aquila and Priscilla and his trial by Gallio took place in the agora. The community he founded here caused him much grief and prompted him to write at least four letters. We celebrate our liturgy today in Corinth with a reflection on Paul the Missionary.

We complete our day in Epidaurus, one of the world's best-preserved amphitheatres with remarkable acoustics. Tonight we gather for a festive farewell dinner at a local restaurant. (B, D)

DAY 11: RETURN USA

This morning we transfer to the Athens Airport for our return flight to the USA. (B)

NOTE: While no changes are anticipated, there might be occasions when certain alterations become necessary to this itinerary due to changes in airline schedules or for other reasons. All Masses are subject