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GREECE & TURKEY: TURKISH DELIGHT SMALL SHIP CRUISE

Welcome to Aurora Expeditions' Turkish Delight Steeped in the legacy of the Ottoman Empire, the cultural influence of which serves as our guiding light, Turkey and its neighbouring Greek islands beckon with tales of intrigue. Situated at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, this region of mesmerising contrasts enchants with its wealth of historical wonders, turquoise waters, and bustling bazaars. From the vibrant streets of Istanbul, where the echoes of sultans and their courts resonate through time, to the ancient marvels of Ephesus and the coastal fortresses of Bodrum and Marmaris, our journey unveils the captivating tale of faiths, conquerors and iconic figures that have shaped modern-day Turkey. In homage to the poignant history of Gallipoli, we pay tribute to the valour and sacrifice of the "sons from faraway countries," whose courage inspired Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's visionary reforms, paving the way for the transformation of the empire's remnants into a thriving republic. Join us as we delve into Turkey's enthralling blend of past and present, where our exploration of the Ottoman legacy follows a centuries'-old path designed to delight.



ITINERARY

Day 1 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

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After breakfast, enjoy a morning 'Your Choice' experience. Walk in Socrates' footsteps, explore the ancient wonders of the Acropolis, or immerse yourself in Athens' vibrant food scene with a local guide. You can then rejoin the coach to return to our hotel or take a leisurely stroll to the nearby 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 (lunch at your own expense). Tonight, we kick off our journey with a Welcome Event, 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: A Taste of Athens****

For foodie fans, travellers who have visited Athens before, and those who enjoy a personal view of Athens, this experience is perfect. We begin our guided walk at Syntagma Square, where Greece's Parliament building stands, guarded by traditionally attired Evzone guards. Our local expert warmly welcomes you to their home city, leading you on an intriguing walking tour through Athens' historical areas. With passion and knowledge, they unveil authentic Athens and its secrets.

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. Pause at a colourful local cafe to indulge in Greek delicacies such as olives, fragrant cheeses and cured meats.

Continue through Monastir Aki, famous for its bustling flea market and vibrant shops brimming with local crafts and souvenirs. From there, we wander to Thission, offering the best panoramic views of the Acropolis, Ancient Agora, and the majestic Temple of Hephaestus. Here, we 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 us a taste of this fascinating city.

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****Option 2 - Morning experience: Ancient Athens****

This comprehensive tour combines a visit to the Acropolis with the city's major landmarks. Begin with a view of the Greek parliament at Syntagma Square, once a royal residence, where the iconic Evzones still stand guard in traditional attire. Next, enjoy a brief photo stop at the Panathenaic Stadium, the site of the first modern Olympic Games in 1896, where athletes revived the ancient Olympic spirit.

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. (Note: Entrance time to the Acropolis is a local government stipulated time slot. The sequence of the above itinerary may change once the specific time slot is allocated.)

****Option 3 - Morning experience: 'In the Sandals of Socrates'****

Blending philosophy with the rich history of Athens, 'In the Sandals of Socrates' is the ultimate walking tour of the city. Our journey begins at the hilltop agora, where Athenians once gathered to freely express their opinions and debate issues of the day. Ancient Greece birthed Western philosophical ethics, thanks to Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, ensuring its place in history. Next, we head to Philopappos Hill, a significant place in the life of Socrates. Here, you'll find the prison where he was held for corrupting the youth of Athens, and the Pnyx, the birthplace of democratic ideals. The view of the Acropolis from the hilltop is stunning.

Strolling down a pedestrian street lined with cafes and vendors, we make our way to Hadrian's Arch and the Temple of Olympian Zeus. Our walk continues to the Lyceum, Aristotle's school, passing by the National Garden and Zappeion Hall. The tour concludes at the Lyceum, excavated and opened to the public in 2014. Here, we walk in the footsteps of great philosophers, linking ancient and modern Athens in this fascinating journey.

Accommodation: Athens Hotel

Meals: Breakfast, Welcome Event canapes

Day 3 Embark Athens (Port: Piraeus)

Enjoy a leisurely morning in Athens. Revisit your favourite sites, explore the city's markets and shops, or discover hidden treasures on an independent exploration. Athens' extensive



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metro network 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 time.

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 Chios (Port: Chios)

Today's port of call is an island that remains "off the tourist trail" gifting us a true insight into Greek island life. Chios, an island steeped in history and myth, draws its name from Chios, the son of Poseidon. In antiquity, it was a pioneering city-state, known for minting coins and developing a democratic system akin to Athens.

The island played a significant naval role, initially allied with Athens and later gaining independence, before numerous invasions finally handed it to Greece. Today, Chios blends its ancient legacy with a tight-knit community life. Explore the streets of our port of call, Myrina, this afternoon to admire Ottoman fountains, a picturesque town square with marble works and palm trees, and a lively waterfront, all clad with the unique mastic resin that defines the island's character. This morning, we will enjoy an excursion to the heart and soul of the island.

****Option 1 - Morning experience: Masters of Mastic****

This island is renowned for its mastic-producing villages, where you will find houses adorned with intricate patterns created by

this unique resin. No visit to Chios is complete without a trip to a traditional mastic farm and the Mastic Museum. At the farm, our host demonstrates the meticulous process of preparing the ground beneath mastic trees. Mastic tears, sticky droplets that form on the tree's trunk and branches, are harvested to create this unique product. The Mastic Museum offers an insight into the significance of mastic to the islanders, showcasing how this unique resin has shaped the local culture and environment. Experiencing the charm of the mastic villages, where traditional houses reflect the island's rich heritage and artistry, is a true insight into the island's psyche.

****Option 2 - Morning experience: A Celebration of Souma****

Discover the charm of Chios with a visit to Vesta, where the traditional art of making souma comes to life. Souma, a colourless alcoholic beverage made by distilling grape marc, is a staple of Aegean islands like Chios, Rhodes and Paros. Once a welcoming treat for visitors, it's still celebrated with enthusiasm on Chios, with several souma festivals on the annual calendar. At Vesta, you will delve into the souma-making process with a souma master and experience its unique flavours firsthand. This combination of souma and a visit to the quaint town of Vesta provides an authentic glimpse into Chios's rich cultural and culinary heritage.

****Option 3 - Morning experience: The 'Ghost Town' of Anavatos****

A 45-minute drive from Myrina takes us to the 'ghost town' of Anavatos. Standing as a haunting reminder of Chios's troubled past, this abandoned village, with its grey-stone houses and

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narrow, winding streets, sits precariously atop a steep cliff. Built for military defence, Anavatos became a tragic symbol during the 1822 Ottoman invasion. Faced with the threat of capture, villagers leapt from the cliffs, choosing death over surrender. Today, the village preserves its medieval appeal capped by its fortress, the Church of Taxiarchis, and an old school. Despite its eerie silence, a few locals remain in the lower part of the town, offering insights into the village's history and showcasing local products like honey and cheese.

Day 5 Lemnos (Port: Myrina)

Located in the northern Aegean, Lemnos is one of Greece's larger islands, having been captured from Turkey just over a century ago. Its tranquil lands offer a retreat off the beaten path, making it perfect for travellers seeking a break from the commercial tourist enterprises of its southern counterpart. With a rich history stretching back to antiquity, the island is renowned for its archaeological sites and its significant role in Greek mythology as the legendary homeland of the god Hephaestus.

In more recent times, Lemnos served as a hospital during the evacuation of wounded from the Gallipoli landings, endearing it to ANZACs. The island is home to three Commonwealth war cemeteries, commemorating this connection. Additionally, the Australian town of Lemnos, established in Victoria in 1927 as a settlement for returning World War I soldiers, was named in honour of the island. During World War II, Lemnos was used as a German naval base. The economic hardships of the 1950s led to significant emigration due to widespread poverty. Visiting Lemnos offers a unique opportunity to explore both the ancient tales of Greece and the modern challenges the islands of Greece have faced.

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

****Option 1 - Morning experience: Lemnos' Archaeological Wonders****

Prepare to be transported back in time as we explore the island's most captivating archaeological sites.

Our first stop is the Ruins of Hephaistia. This ancient city flourished during the 5th and 4th centuries BCE and served as the political and religious centre of the island. Imagine bustling streets, grand buildings and the daily life of an ancient city, as you immerse yourself in its remnants. Next, we delve into the Sanctuary of the Cabeirians, shrouded in mystery and legend. Dedicated to the Cabeiri, deities associated with rebirth, nature, and Hephaestus, this sanctuary offers a glimpse into ancient spiritual practices. Exploring the site, we feel the energy of the rituals that once took place here. Our final site holds a legendary Greek myth. A narrow opening leads into the Sea Cave of Philoctetes. According to legend, this cave was where the Greek hero Philoctetes was abandoned by his comrades when a snake bite refused to heal. He had with him the mythical bow and arrows of Heracles, thought to have special powers. Eventually, the Greeks realised that they needed Philoctetes' powerful weapon if they were to succeed in the Trojan War, leading them to return to Lemnos to save him.

****Option 2 - Morning experience: Lemnos - a Wine in the Making****



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Dive into the world of Lemnian wines with an engaging tour of a local winery. Experience the island's unique vineyard practices, where vines are grown low to the ground to protect them from strong winds and conserve water. This adaptation, influenced by Lemnos' volcanic soil, has shaped the distinct flavours of its wines for centuries. The island's winemaking tradition dates to ancient Greece when Lemnos was celebrated as a premier wine-producing region. During the Roman era, techniques were refined, and Byzantine monks further preserved this vinous heritage. Your tour features a presentation of signature Lemnian wines, including the sweet Muscat de Lemnos and the robust Limnio. Enjoy a tasting session paired with local cheeses and appetisers, all while soaking in the stunning views and exploring Lemnos' rich winemaking legacy.

****Option 3 - Morning experience: Mythical Myrina****

Embark on a fascinating exploration of Myrina, the historic heart of Lemnos, where the old port captures the essence of the past. Divided by the imposing castle, the town reveals two distinct faces. To the east, the Tourkikos Gialos (Turkish Port) retains Ottoman influences, evident in its name and architecture. To the west, the Romeikos Gialos (Greek Port) embodies the island's Greek heritage.

As you stroll through Myrina with your local guide, the rich history of the town unfolds through its architecture. Admire the grand mansions built by affluent Lemnians from Egypt, each telling a story of prosperity and cultural exchange. The journey takes you to the Archaeological Museum, where a diverse

collection of artefacts from sites like Poliochni, Kavirio and Hephaistia, provides a deeper understanding of Lemnos' ancient past. The visit also includes the Episcopal Church, the Metropolis of Lemnos, adding a spiritual dimension to your historical adventure.

Day 6 Istanbul, Turkey (Port: Istanbul) – Overnight in Port Istanbul

After a morning at sea, we enjoy lunch onboard as we sail the Sea of Marmara and navigate the Bosphorus Strait en route to Istanbul. Approaching this fabled city by sea is quite an epic feat, gifting us dramatic views of the city's minareted skyline.

Istanbul, a city steeped in exotic allure, conjures visions of belly dancing, bustling bazaars and flying carpets. Spanning Europe and Asia across the Bosphorus Strait, this vibrant metropolis serves as Turkey's cultural and economic hub, blending ancient Byzantine and Ottoman legacies with modern dynamism. Formerly known as Constantinople in honor of the Roman Emperor Constantine, Istanbul captivates from its iconic landmarks--the domes of the Hagia Sophia and the towering minarets of the Blue Mosque, to the labyrinthine Grand Bazaar, where centuries-old trade traditions thrive amid carpets, spices and crafts, Istanbul exudes a palpable sense of history that excites the senses.

We disembark and meet our guides for a local's view of Istanbul. Catching a ride on one of Istanbul's popular trams, we head to the hilltop suburb of Sultanahmet, where we spend the afternoon with Constantinople's iconic trifecta: the Blue Mosque, Hagia Sophia, and Topkapi Palace.

As we explore the Sultan's precinct, our guides tell tales of the

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city's celebrated past. Begin your journey at the ancient Hippodrome, once Constantinople's vibrant sporting and social centre. This historic venue hosted thrilling chariot races and political events, and today, in the Hippodrome area, remnants like the Obelisk (erected by the Egyptian Pharaoh Tutmosis), the Serpent Column, and the Column of Constantine still stand as silent witnesses to their storied past.

From here, we admire the venerated Blue Mosque*, renowned for its six minarets and iconic blue Iznik tiles, while our guides explain the profound influence of the Islamic faith on the lives of the city's inhabitants. Just steps away is the Aya Sofya, or the Hagia Sophia Grand Mosque*, a masterpiece of Byzantine architecture. Originally built as the "greatest church in Christendom", the Hagia Sophia now stands as a testament to time and the dynamic history of the city.

The highlight of our afternoon is a visit to the Sultan's private residence, Topkapi Palace. Here, we explore the state rooms, museum and grounds of this opulent palace. Designed to reflect a tented lodge, Topkapi captures the essence of the nomadic Ottoman lifestyle in a permanent structure. Libidinous sultans, ambitious courtiers, attractive concubines and scheming eunuchs lived and worked here for four centuries when Constantinople was the heart of the Ottoman Empire. A visit to the palace's opulent pavilions, jewel-filled treasury, and sprawling grounds offers a fascinating glimpse into their lives. (Note: This tour includes an interior visit to Topkapi Palace. A visit to the interior of the Blue Mosque and Hagia Sophia is included in our Grand Mosque 'Your Choice' experience.)

Reboarding our tram, we bid farewell to our guides and return to

the ship to watch the sun set over Istanbul, while enjoying dinner. We will remain moored in Istanbul overnight, allowing you to explore and experience more of this vibrant city tomorrow.

Day 7 Istanbul (Port: Istanbul)

Our 'Your Choice' experiences offer an eclectic collection today. Choose to explore the city's Islamic masterpieces, shop until you drop at Istanbul's Grand Bazaar or join a street food tour of the city's famous spice market. Our experiences are all in the morning today, as we are sure you will want to explore Istanbul for yourself before we set sail in the late afternoon. We will travel on the local trams with our guides, to avoid Istanbul's famous traffic congestion, giving you even more time to enjoy this fascinating city.

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

****Option 1 - Morning experience: Istanbul's Majestic Mosques****

Join a locally guided tour of Istanbul's two historical mosques. The Hagia Sophia, a fusion of Christian and Islamic architecture, serves as a gateway to the city's past. Commissioned by the Emperor Justinian I and consecrated as the Church of the Holy Wisdom in 537 CE, this monumental place of worship was converted into a mosque by the Ottomans in 1453. The church's main dome was so vast that it remained unsurpassed for over 1,000 years. Eight mammoth wooden panels with the names of God, the Prophet Muhammad and the first caliphs inscribed in gilt on them, along with numerous chandeliers hanging from the soaring ceiling, create a sight and story of monumental

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significance.

The Blue Mosque, built to honour the Ottoman Sultan Ahmet, offers a strikingly photogenic facade. Its exterior features a cascade of domes, while its six minarets call worshippers to prayer five times daily. Inside, the Blue Mosque boasts an interior adorned with over 20,000 Iznik tiles, creating a stunning visual spectacle. With 260 windows illuminating its vast prayer space, the Blue Mosque is set to impress all who visit.

Choose to return to the ship with our local guides, in time for lunch, or stay on in Sultanahmet, which is a short walk to many of Istanbul's sites, including the city's Grand Bazaar.

****Option 2 - Morning experience: The Grand Bazaar****

Originally a vaulted warehouse built by order of Sultan Mehmet some 500 years ago, Istanbul's Grand Bazaar covers the area that once housed the city's caravanserais. This sprawling labyrinth of shops, lanes, corridors and small eating halls offers a delightful morning of exploration. As you stroll through the bustling corridors of the Grand Bazaar, with over 4,000 shops, you will discover a treasure trove of goods ranging from spices and textiles to jewellery and ceramics. Your guide will assist you with traditional haggling, providing insider tips on what to buy, where to buy it and how much you should really pay.

We conclude our tour with a visit to a local studio workshop, where you will gain insight into the art of Turkish carpet weaving. Our host, Mr Ara, a third-generation carpet weaver of Armenian heritage, will share the secrets of this ancient craft. Learn about the different techniques, materials and designs that make these

carpets so special. Watch skilled artisans at work and understand the cultural significance behind these beautiful creations. Our morning concludes with a tram ride to the ship. Choose to return for lunch on board or stay on in town to explore further.

****Option 3 - Morning experience: Street Food and Spice Markets****

Immerse yourself in the vibrant and flavourful world of Turkish cuisine on this locally guided tour - perfect for food lovers and curious travellers alike. Experience the authentic tastes and aromas of Istanbul as we stroll through the bustling neighbourhoods of Karakoy, Taksim Square, and Galata. Our journey begins in the trendy and historic suburb of Karakoy. Here, you'll savour traditional Turkish breakfast items such as simit (sesame-covered bread rings) and borek (flaky pastry filled with cheese or meat), paired with a rich cup of Turkish coffee or tea in a local cafe. Next, we venture into the heart of Istanbul's culinary scene in Taksim Square, where you will sample a variety of authentic street foods that capture the essence of Turkish culture. Finally, we conclude our morning in the historic Galata district, where we visit a traditional baklava shop and indulge in this sweet delicacy before wandering through Galata's atmospheric streets and spice market, soaking in the flavours that define Turkish cuisine.

Day 8 Çanakkale (Port: anakkale)

At sunrise, we anchor off the historic landing beaches of the Gallipoli campaign at ANZAC Cove. After honoring the courageous souls who fought and fell here during WWI, we sail to the nearby port of Çanakkale. This morning, we will delve into



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the history of two pivotal battles fought over 3,000 years apart, exploring their profound impact on the region. We return to the ship for lunch and sail south, following the rugged coastline and waterfront towns towards one of the ancient world's iconic cities.

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

****Option 1 - Morning experience: The Gallipoli Campaign****

Embark on a poignant journey of remembrance through the Gallipoli campaign memorials high on the cliffs of this ill-fated land. During World War I, this rugged peninsula was the site of a fierce and tragic battle involving Allied forces, including Australian and New Zealand troops (collectively known as ANZACs), British, Indian and other Commonwealth nations, against its Ottoman defenders. Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, Turkey's founding president who fought for his homeland at this very spot, famously honoured the fallen with these words: "Those heroes that shed their blood and lost their lives... You are now lying in the soil of a friendly country. Therefore, rest in peace. There is no difference between the Johnnies and the Mehmets to us where they lie side by side here in this country of ours... You, the mothers, who sent their sons from faraway countries, wipe away your tears; your sons are now lying in our bosom and are in peace. After having lost their lives on this land, they have become our sons as well."

We tour the battlegrounds this morning in the presence of a local expert guide who crafts the story of those who fought and fell as we visit important landmarks, such as the moving cemeteries and memorials of Lone Pine and Chunuk Bair, which

stand as solemn reminders of sacrifice and reconciliation, symbolising the enduring friendship between nations once divided by war.

****Option 2 - Morning experience: Troy****

The legendary city of Troy reveals its secrets as we explore its ruins and the rich collection of artefacts in the Troy Museum. Although few structures remain, this site still encompasses the story of the men who fought for the 'impregnable' city over 3,000 years ago, offering us a glimpse into how ancient civilisations valued power in their times. Repeatedly excavated since 1870, the ruins have been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. As you wander through them with our local guide, the story of Troy unfolds amid its defensive walls and gates, temples and sanctuaries, and a central marketplace. The newly reopened Troy Museum provides a window into antiquity with thousands of artefacts, ranging from clay amphorae to gold jewellery. More than just a movie set for several films, the ruins of Troy display a chronological timeline, making it easy to track developments, such as 5th-century BCE technology, the burgeoning art scene, political power plays, and the daily life of its citizens.

Day 9 Ku adasi (Port: Ku adasi)

Ku adasi, Turkey's beloved seaside town, 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 adasi thrived as a key port city, highlighted by the impressive Ku adasi Castle, or Pigeon Island, built to defend against

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pirates. The 17th-century Öküz Mehmed Pasha Caravanserai, originally for traders and their animals, now operates as a hotel and marketplace. A day in Ku adası offers a delightful mix of historical significance, Ottoman architecture, and lively shopping.

Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences. This includes an opportunity to visit Ephesus either in the morning, or late afternoon / early evening.

Ephesus

Choose to visit Ephesus in the morning for a locally guided tour with lunch at a local restaurant before returning to the ship early afternoon, or an evening visit departing the ship late afternoon and returning mid-evening (snack offered onboard prior to your departure). We ask that you choose only one option for Ephesus so that we do not surpass our daily ticket quota for this site.

****Option 1 - Half-day experience: Ancient Ephesus****

Join a guided tour of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Ephesus this morning with a traditional Turkish lunch after your visit, before returning to the ship mid- afternoon. 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, with it eventually being left 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-paved streets of Ephesus, stepping back in time amid the city's well-preserved ruins. Hear voices from long ago at the Odeon, a small theatre used for political meetings and concerts, and the Prytaneion, where sacred fires honoured the goddess Hestia. Visit the iconic Library of Celsus, once home to thousands of scrolls and the tomb of Roman senator Celsus. Its intricately carved columns and statues bring it to life. Explore the Great Theatre, which seated 25,000 cheering spectators for gladiatorial contests and performances. Discover the Temple of Hadrian, dedicated to Emperor Hadrian, adorned with detailed reliefs and sculptures. Finally, stroll through the agora, the commercial and political heart of Ephesus, where merchants traded goods, and citizens haggled over bargains and traded gossip, bringing to life the vibrant community of this ancient metropolis.

****Option 2 - Afternoon / evening experience: An Evening Exploration of Ephesus****

Our twilight tour of Ephesus begins in the late afternoon, following a mid-afternoon snack on the ship. As the sun sets, it casts a magical glow over the ancient city, and the cooler evening air and soft lighting create an enchanting atmosphere, enhancing the mystery of the ruins. Enjoy a more intimate experience as you explore the site with fewer visitors around. Please note: this tour does not visit the Grand Theatre, which closes at 6:00 pm.

Step into history on a tour of Ephesus, one of the best-preserved

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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, with it eventually being left 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.

****Option 3 - Full-day experience: Explore the Village of Iznik and Join a Hands-on Turkish Cooking Class****

Leaving the coast behind, we head inland to discover the rich flavours and traditions of Turkish cuisine while immersing ourselves in the rural lifestyle of the village of Iznik. Join a cooking class at the charming Nişanli Houses boutique hotel, beginning your culinary adventure with a hands-on session led by an expert chef, the guardian of generations-old family recipes. Prepare traditional Turkish dishes, learning the secrets of making classic mezes (appetisers), savoury pastries, and flavourful main courses using fresh, locally sourced ingredients, before enjoying a tasting session of your creations in the relaxed setting of Nişanli Houses. With full bellies, embark on a guided tour of Iznik, known for its traditional houses, cobblestone streets and lush surroundings. Explore the village's Greek and Turkish heritage with a local guide and browse local markets for handmade crafts, souvenirs and local delicacies such as olive oil, wine and dried fruits. This delightful experience is perfect for food enthusiasts and culture lovers alike.

Day 10 Bodrum (Port: Bodrum)

We awake in the popular resort town of Bodrum, ready for a day of fascinating experiences in a city rich with ancient artefacts. Once known as Halicarnassus, Bodrum was the birthplace of the Greek historian and geographer Herodotus, who wrote detailed accounts of the Greco-Persian wars and earned the nickname "Father of History." The town is home to the few ruins of the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, and the impressive Bodrum Castle built by the Knights Hospitaller in the 15th century. Renowned for its handcrafted wooden gulets plying the Turkish Riviera, Bodrum offers a captivating blend of ancient wonders, Ottoman heritage and local craftsmanship, making it an intriguing destination.

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

****Option 1 - Morning experience: Discover Bodrum and its Underwater Archaeology Museum****

Explore the captivating old city of Bodrum, where history merges with modern charm. Guided by our local host, we wander through narrow, winding streets flanked by whitewashed houses, vibrant bougainvillea and bustling markets. Our guide leads us to historical landmarks such as the ancient city walls, Myndos Gate, and the crown jewel of Bodrum, Bodrum Castle. Housed within the castle walls is the Bodrum Museum of Underwater Archaeology, Turkey's exclusive centre for underwater treasures. Since 1964, it has displayed artefacts spanning from the 16th century BCE to the 16th century CE, retrieved from underwater excavations off Turkey's coast. Notable exhibits include the renowned Uluburun shipwreck, and the Serçe Limanı, popularly known as the Glass Wreck, offering fascinating glimpses into

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ancient maritime history and medieval Islamic glass production. The museum showcases Turkey's pioneering role in underwater archaeology, which offers an interesting insight into this unique field.

****Option 2 - Morning experience: Craft and Carpets at Etrim village****

Discover the rich cultural tradition of Turkish carpets on our journey to the craft village of Etrim. Here, we meet the skilled weavers who create these intricate masterpieces, each pattern imbued with deep meaning and symbolism. Unlike planned designs, Turkish carpets evolve organically as the weavers work, ensuring each piece is truly unique. In Etrim, we learn that weaving is practised exclusively by the village women, who undertake the entire process from carding and spinning wool to dyeing it with locally foraged herbs like wild lavender, meadow rue, and walnut shells. Walking through the village, we encounter elderly weavers in their simple homes with whitewashed walls and peaceful porches, unchanged for centuries. Our guide introduces us to local workshops and markets where carpets, pottery, and handmade soaps are proudly displayed. After a traditional Turkish lunch, we return to Bodrum, where you can independently explore its historic streets and attractions.

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

No visit to Turkey is complete without a day on a gulet. Cruise Bodrum's stunning coastline, passing picturesque bays, hidden coves and pristine beaches. Enjoy stops at secluded bays for

swimming and snorkelling with equipment provided to explore marine life and coral reefs. Cherished for their deep-rooted tradition in Turkish maritime history, gulets originated as ancient fishing and cargo vessels, evolving into today's elegant wooden sailboats. Renowned for sturdy construction and graceful lines, gulets offer modern comforts while preserving traditional craftsmanship. Built primarily in coastal towns like Bodrum and Marmaris, these vessels provide a relaxing day on the azure Aegean Sea. Lounge on sunbeds or find shade on deck, enjoying fresh Turkish dishes and local specialties prepared as lunch on board.

Day 11 Marmaris (Port: Marmaris)

At the centre of the 'Turquoise Coast' sits the ever-popular town of Marmaris. Filled with colourful waterfront cafes, traditional market shops and restaurants serving local fare, Marmaris is a delightful place to spend a day. This vibrant town is renowned for its busy marina and beautiful beaches. Visitors can explore the Marmaris Castle with its in-house museum, offering insights into the region's rich history. Under Ottoman rule, Marmaris flourished as a strategic port, which led to the construction of the castle by the 'man to rule the world', Suleyman the Magnificent, in the 16th century. The Ottoman influence is also evident in the town's architecture and layout, blending seamlessly with its modern amenities and picturesque setting, making Marmaris a popular stop on the Turkish Riviera.

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****Option 1 - Morning experience: A Traditional Turkish Bath****

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The tradition of Turkish baths, or hammams, dates to the Roman and Byzantine eras, although it grew into a cultural and social institution during the Ottoman Empire. Combining the Roman tradition of communal bathing with the Islamic emphasis on cleanliness and purification, these baths were not only places for hygiene but also social hubs where people gathered, relaxed and socialised. Today, Turkish baths remain popular due to their health benefits and the unique, immersive experience they offer, giving travellers a chance to combine relaxation with a traditional element of Turkish life.

A typical Turkish bath house experience begins with a skilled masseuse scrubbing your body with a coarse loofah, removing layers of dead skin and leaving your skin smooth and refreshed. This is followed by a luxurious soap massage and an aromatherapy-oil massage, where fragrant oils relax your muscles and soothe your senses. The masseuse works on your bones and muscles, imparting a feeling of relaxation and wellbeing. Modern bath houses may also include amenities such as saunas or splash pools as part of the experience. The combination of steam, heat and exfoliation helps detoxify the body, improve circulation and rejuvenate the skin, while the massage contributes to muscle relaxation, making the Turkish bath a timeless and cherished tradition. Please note: This option is not recommended for travellers with back problems or serious medical conditions, as the Turkish bath involves physical movements and massages.

****Option 2 - Full-day experience: The Ancient City of Knidos, Turkish Style Olive Oil and a Traditional Lunch****

Nestled on the Datça Peninsula where the Aegean and Mediterranean seas meet, the ancient city of Knidos beckons with its rich history and stunning landscapes. This once-thriving Greek city, renowned for its contributions to science, art and philosophy, offers a glimpse into the past amid Turkey's dramatic coastal scenery. Knidos, founded by Greek settlers in the 4th century BCE, quickly became a significant centre of commerce, science and culture. The city is famously known for its innovative urban planning, advanced medical school, and the magnificent Temple of Aphrodite, which once housed Praxiteles' renowned statue of the goddess. As you wander through the ruins with our local guide, it is easy to imagine the bustling streets and grand structures that once stood here.

After soaking in the story of Knidos, we enjoy a traditional lunch before our exploration continues with a visit to a local olive grove. This region of Turkey is known for its high-quality olive production, a tradition that dates to ancient times. We learn about the olive cultivation process, from tree to table, and taste some of the finest olive oil in Europe, before returning to Marmaris.

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

Originally known for building traditional Turkish sailboats called gulets, Marmaris has long been a favourite among sailing enthusiasts. Its 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

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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 12 Patmos, Greece (Port: Skala)

We return to Greece on the island of Patmos, where we spend a morning on one of our 'Your Choice' experiences. Returning to the ship for lunch, we sail for Athens in the early afternoon, enjoying a Farewell Dinner onboard this evening as the sun sets over another perfect Greek day.

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

****Option 1 - Morning experience: Explore Patmos****

The island of Patmos is famous for its Christian connections. Known as the site where St John authored the Book of Revelation, it attracts pilgrims and history enthusiasts alike. Dominated by a monolithic turreted monastery, and surrounded by whitewashed homes, its capital, Chora, is a photographer's dream. Visible from every point on the island, the 11th-century Monastery of St John the Theologian is reached by pathways adorned with pebbles. Its Byzantine frescoes of Saint John offer

insight into monastic life, while its library holds over 15,000 historic manuscripts. We explore this sacred place and the Cave of the Apocalypse, alongside quaint villages with whitewashed houses and cobblestone streets on a morning's exploration of Patmos.

****Option 2 - Morning experience: Sun, Sand and Island Charm****

Spend your morning at a popular beach, just a 10-minute drive south of the port. This charming spot, with a pair of traditional Greek tavernas as its backdrop, invites you to unwind on your reserved sunbed and enjoy the warm, clear waters. Take a leisurely stroll to the nearby village, for a taste of authentic local life. Wander through its quaint streets, then walk to the headland where a whitewashed chapel completes the quintessential Greek beach scene.

Day 13 Disembark and depart Athens (Port: Piraeus)

After breakfast, disembark the ship and say farewell to your fellow passengers before being transferred to the airport for your onward journey. We strongly recommend scheduling your departure for after 1:00 pm today to ensure you have sufficient time to catch your flight.

Please note:

Itineraries are subject to change.

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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

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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



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