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PEACEFUL ISLANDS AND ANCIENT TREASURES OF THE MEDITERRANEAN

Towns and villages carved out of the water, legendary sites, infinite blue sea: between Italy and Attica, the Mediterranean continues to reveal all its treasures. In Sicily, here is Taormina, its medieval alleyways and its antique ancient theatre watched over by Mount Etna; then come Puglia and Gallipoli, unfolding their baroque pearls before making way for Greek shores. Here, legend and landscape are as one. Paxos, the island born of the gods, Parga and Galaxidi, charming little fishing ports, or Milos and its lunar landscapes, which gave birth to its famous Venus, are all perfect for wandering around. Just like Hydra, the eternal bohemian island, where it is good to lose oneself before reaching the immortal Athens.



ITINERARY

Day 1 - Valletta

The whole of the Maltese capital Valletta is UNESCO World Heritage listed and occupies a peninsula in the north-east of the island. From the fountain of Tritons to Saint-Elme fort, there are as many majestic streets as there are narrow staircase vennels to explore. The painted loggia and carved corbels on the tall houses will accompany you in your explorations, and you'll rarely be bothered by traffic. You can visit the Grandmasters palace decorated with coats of arms and frescoes. Saint-John's cathedral and the ramparts which have guarded the city since the 16th century are also among the most emblematic sites of the city. Arranged in terraces, the Barrakka Gardens will



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punctuate your promenade with a green and floral experience.

Day 2 - Taormina, Sicily

Located on Sicily's eastern coast, in the province of Messina, the seaside town of Taormina is Sicily's Saint-Tropez, boasting heritage sites, secluded beaches and luxury shopping. You can visit its medieval centre, suspended 300 metres above sea level, where terraces offer a spectacular view of the Mediterranean Sea. Another vestige from its past are the ruins of the Greco-Roman theatre. This extremely well-preserved site attracts visitors who are fascinated by the natural beauty of the area which overlooks a turquoise bay.

Day 3 - Gallipoli

Gallipoli, which comes from the Greek *kalle polis*, meaning beautiful town, is very aptly named. Located on the heel of the boot, the town known as "the pearl of Puglia" has many attractions. The whiteness of its façades recalls its Greek origins while its architecture echoes its multiple influences. Its old town, perched on a limestone island, concentrates the cultural heritage of this city with a thousand faces, alternately a Roman colony, then Byzantine, the property of the Popes, Norman, under the rule of Taranto... By itself, it tells the story of the different civilisations of the Mediterranean Sea.

Day 4 - Parga

An ancient port in the Epirus region, picturesque Parga is located on the western coast of the Greek mainland. Ancient classical ruins and the Venetian citadel bear witness to the town's colourful history and the diverse influences that shaped it. Take the time to discover this ancient fishing village built like an amphitheatre, by strolling along the picturesque maze of pedestrian streets lined with small, typical Greek houses

decorated with flowers and many lively taverns.

Day 5 - Paxi

Near the pretty port of Gaios, discover Paxos, a lush hideaway resting in the Ionian Sea. The island is planted with cypresses and ancient olive trees that once provided oil to Venice. The architecture is marked by a distinct Venetian influence. Succumb to the charms of this island where nature, ever-present, forms beautiful landscapes. From mountainous terrain to lovely fishing villages and hidden coves, Paxos reveals its authenticity to those willing to discover it.

Day 6 - Galaxidi

Encircled by captivating arid mountains and a sea front of unrivalled beauty, picturesque Galaxidi stands proudly in the Gulf of Corinth, on the shores of Krisaikos Bay. You will fall in love with the authentic character of this preserved and majestic town, with its paved little streets edged with former neo-classical residences, remnants of the naval era, and sumptuous religious buildings. Like one of the town's symbols: the church of Agios Nikolaos (Saint Nicholas). The building with Byzantine architecture dominates the town, and boasts two bell towers and a monumental dome.

Day 6 - Crossing the Corinth Canal

The Corinth Canal cuts through the Isthmus of Corinth, turning the Peloponnese into an island as it separates the region from the Greek mainland. Inaugurated in 1893, the canal is a little over six kilometres long and enables merchant vessels and passenger to avoid a long 400-km detour around the peninsula. The two sides of the canal reach a height of approximately fifty metres. From the exterior decks, don't miss this unique opportunity to watch the ship as it navigates along the narrow



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strip of water encased between tall, ochre cliffs. What an experience!

Day 7 - Adamas, Milos

Although Milos is especially renowned for the famous statue of Venus found in a field there and now displayed in the Louvre in Paris, this mineral island is also a geological treasure. Its volcanic origin is evident in its breathtaking landscapes and the colours of its cliffs, ranging from pure white to deep red. You'll discover the wild beauty of the shorelines lined with the most beautiful beaches in Greece from a ship deck, and you'll enjoy privileged access to emerald-green coves. Tiny fishing ports like Adamas hide there, with brightly-painted doors and terraces. Milos is a charming port of call in the heart of the Cyclades.

colourful streets, and where, in the evenings the drifting aroma of moussaka and garlic prawns will tickle your taste buds. The National Archaeological museum and the Cycladic Art Museum are also some of the city's key attractions and allow visitors to discover Athens' cultural past.

Please note:

Itineraries are subject to change.

Day 8 - 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, you will discover the Historical Archives Museum. Collections from Athens National History Museum are exhibited in the elegant villa Koundouriotis.

Day 9 - 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



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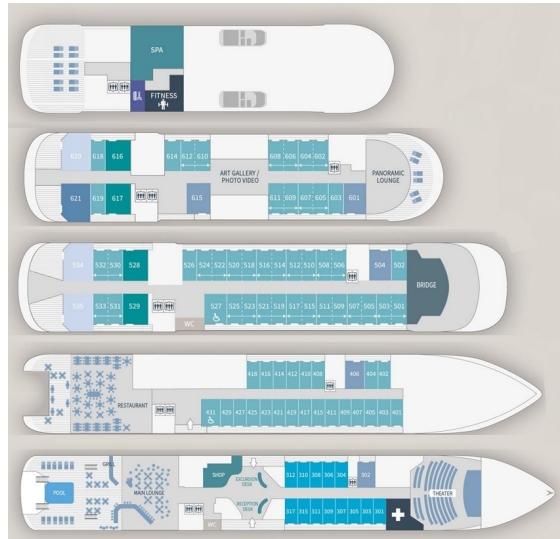
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