

Overseas Adventure Travel®

THE LEADER IN CUSTOMIZED SMALL GROUP ADVENTURES SINCE 1978

Your O.A.T. Adventure Travel Planning Guide®



The Aegean Islands, Athens & Istanbul

2026

Overseas Adventure Travel®

347 Congress Street, Boston, MA 02210

Dear Traveler,

I am thrilled that you are considering exploring the world with O.A.T. There are so many wonderful destinations to discover, and the itinerary described inside is a perfect way to fulfill a travel dream.

When you join us, you will enjoy the thrill of off-the-beaten-path discovery coupled with the convenience of unpacking just once. Aboard our privately owned small ship, you will visit lesser-known ports that larger vessels cannot access—and enjoy intimate interactions with local people in your small group of no more than 25 travelers. You will get to know community leaders and try your hand at local trades during your *A Day in the Life* experience, share traditional fare and lively conversation during a Home-Hosted Visit, discuss the Controversial Topics impacting everyday life, and visit sites supported by Grand Circle Foundation.

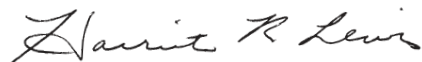
But your personal connections are not limited to your time on land—while onboard, you will enjoy the warm hospitality provided by our friendly, English-speaking crew, as well as the camaraderie of your fellow American travelers. Whether you travel with a partner, sister, friend, or independently, you will feel welcomed and included throughout your journey. And if you do choose to travel solo, you will enjoy an unmatched value, with our FREE or low-cost Single Supplements—just one of the reasons we continue to be the leader in solo travel.

To ensure you experience the true culture and feel supported every step of the way, we provide the services of a local Trip Experience Leader from the beginning of your adventure to the end. Along with introducing you to the history and culture of their homeland, these friendly experts will gladly help you out with any special requests to make your trip even more special. You can also rely on the seasoned team at our regional office, who are ready to help 24/7 in case any unexpected circumstances arise.

Plus, you can put your own personal stamp on your trip, like the, like the **87% of our travelers who customize their experience**. Perhaps you will choose to see more of your destination by adding an optional trip extension to your itinerary. You can also arrive a few days early to explore independently and get acclimated, customize your air itinerary, and more.

I hope you find this Travel Planning Guide helpful. If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to contact one of our Travel Counselors at **1-800-955-1925**.

Warm regards,



Harriet R. Lewis
Chair
Overseas Adventure Travel

CONTENTS

THE AEGEAN ISLANDS, ATHENS & ISTANBUL

Your Adventure at a Glance:

Where You're Going, What it Costs,
and What's Included **4**

Your Detailed Day-To-Day Itinerary **6**

Pre-Trip Extension **17**

Post-Trip Extension **21**

Deck Plans **26**

ESSENTIAL TRAVEL INFORMATION

Travel Documents & Entry Requirements... **28**

Rigors, Vaccines & General Health **30**

Money Matters: Local Currency &
Tipping Guidelines..... **34**

Air, Optional Tours & Staying in Touch **37**

Packing: What to Bring & Luggage Limits... **40**

Climate & Average Temperatures **46**

Aboard Your Ship: Cabin Features,
Dining & Services on Board **49**

ABOUT YOUR DESTINATIONS: CULTURE, ETIQUETTE & MORE

Culture in the Aegean **54**

Athens in Brief..... **61**

Shopping: What to Buy, Customs,
Shipping & More **63**

DEMOGRAPHICS & HISTORY

Greece..... **65**

Turkey..... **67**

RESOURCES

Suggested Reading **69**

Suggested Films & Videos **70**

Useful Websites **71**

Useful Apps **72**



Blue Mosque, Istanbul

The Aegean Islands, Athens & Istanbul Small Ship Adventure

Greece: Athens, Delphi, Meteora | **Greek Islands:** Syros, Mykonos, Paros, Santorini, Patmos, Kalymnos | **Turkey:** Ephesus, Istanbul

Small groups of no more than 25 travelers, guaranteed

17 days starting from \$8,395

including international airfare

Single Supplement: **FREE** or \$1,495

For departure dates & prices, visit www.oattravel.com/tgr2026pricing

Weave along the sun-drenched islands of the Aegean during a journey through classical Greece and Turkey. Delve into the sanctuary of Delphi, the clifftop monasteries of Meteora, and ruins of ancient Ephesus—and discover the longstanding traditions of the Aegean Islands modern-day inhabitants. Experience a 7-night voyage aboard the **50-passenger M/V Arethusa or M/V Athena** that includes Mykonos and volcanic Santorini. Plus, this trip has been enhanced with an additional day in Istanbul.

IT'S INCLUDED

- 15 nights accommodation, including 7 nights aboard the privately owned 50-passenger M/V *Arethusa* or M/V *Athena*
- International airfare, airport transfers, government taxes, fees, and airline fuel surcharges, unless you choose to make your own air arrangements
- 35 meals: 15 breakfasts, 10 lunches, 10 dinners—including 1 Home-Hosted Dinner—plus all onboard house beer, wine, and soft drinks
- 16 guided tours and cultural experiences
- Gratuities for local guides and motorcoach drivers
- All port charges
- Baggage handling for 1 piece of luggage per person, including tips
- 5% Frequent Traveler Credit toward your next trip

Prices are accurate as of the date of this publishing and are subject to change.



ITINERARY SUMMARY

DAYS	DESTINATION
1	Depart U.S.
2-3	Athens, Greece
4	Delphi • Arachova
5-6	Kalambaka • Meteora
7	Athens • Embark ship
8-12	Greek Islands
13	Kusadasi, Turkey • Ephesus
14-16	Disembark ship • Istanbul
17	Return to U.S.

PERSONALIZE YOUR ADVENTURE

OPTIONAL EXTENSIONS

Athens & the Peloponnese: From Homer to the First Olympics

PRE-TRIP: 5 nights from **\$1,495**

Cappadocia's Unique Landscapes & Vibrant Ankara

POST-TRIP: 5 nights from **\$1,395**

ARRIVE EARLY

We recommend that you relax after a long flight or explore more in depth before your trip. Prices shown include accommodations and private airport transfer.

- Arrive early in **Athens** before your Greece pre-trip extension or before your main adventure from **\$240** per room, per night

WHAT TO EXPECT

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ Moderate

Pacing: 16 days, with 7 nights aboard M/V *Athena* or M/V *Arethusa*, one three-night hotel stay, two two-night hotel stays, and one single-night hotel stay

Physical requirements: Walk at least 3 miles unassisted and participate in 6-8 hours of physical activities each day, including activities with 2 hours of walking on uneven surfaces uphill, with several sets of stairs (up to 60 stairs, consecutive) in Delphi

Flight time: Travel time will be 6-20 hours and will most likely have one connection

View all physical requirements at www.oattravel.com/tgr

THE GREEK ISLANDS: THE O.A.T. DIFFERENCE

Unbeatable Value: Travel at the lowest price and per diems in the industry.

People-to-People Experiences: Enjoy our **A Day in the Life** experience at a family-owned honey farm in Delphi, where you'll suit up and walk amongst the hives. Plus, split into smaller groups to enjoy an intimate **Home-Hosted Dinner** with local families in Kalambaka, where you'll learn about what life is like in this quiet region compared to bustling Athens.

O.A.T. Exclusives: Cruise for 7 nights aboard our privately owned, 50-passenger M/V *Athena* or M/V *Arethusa* for an intimate cruising experience—complete with a family-like atmosphere onboard and a dedicated crew. Experience a comprehensive itinerary with discoveries in Greece, the Greek Isles, and Turkey. Plus, dock in small, less-touristed ports like Patmos, where we'll meet local people where they live and work—including local cafés and other small businesses.

The Aegean Islands, Athens & Istanbul

YOUR DETAILED ITINERARY

BEGIN YOUR ADVENTURE WITH AN OPTIONAL PRE-TRIP EXTENSION

5 nights in *Athens & the Peloponnese: From Homer to the First Olympics*

Day 1 Depart U.S.

Day 2 Arrive Athens, Greece

Day 3 Explore Athens • Optional Cape Sounion tour

Day 4 Athens • Explore Epidaurus • Olympia

Day 5 Explore Olympia

Day 6 Olympia • Explore Nafplion

Day 7 Nafplion • Explore Mycenae • Athens • Join main trip

Day 1 Depart U.S.

Fly from the U.S. to Athens, Greece.

Day 2 Arrive Athens, Greece

- Destination: Athens
- Accommodations: Amalia Hotel or similar

Afternoon: Arrive in Athens, Greece's capital city. An O.A.T. driver will meet you at the airport and assist you with your transfer to the hotel, where you'll meet travelers who joined us on our *Athens & the Peloponnese: From Homer to the First Olympics* pre-trip extension and those who arrived early in Athens before the main adventure.

Upon arrival, your Trip Experience Leader will offer an optional orientation walk around the hotel's vicinity.

Dinner: On your own. Perhaps you'll try one of the restaurants recommended by our Trip Experience Leader during the orientation walk.

Evening: Take some time to settle in or rest up after your long flight. Or, feel free to discover nightlife in Athens—perhaps you'll stop by one of the city's many wine bars.

Day 3 Explore Athens

- Destination: Athens
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Amalia Hotel or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: For travelers whose flights arrived later in the evening on Day 2, your Trip Experience Leader will offer another optional orientation walk to get to know the area around your hotel.

Join your fellow travelers and Trip Experience Leader for a Welcome Briefing, complete with a refreshing morning beverage. Then the rest of the morning is yours to discover Athens. Check with your Trip Experience Leader for local recommendations.

Lunch: On your own.

Afternoon: This afternoon we'll visit the Acropolis Archaeological site. Your Trip Experience Leader will guide you on a tour of this marvel crowned by the majestic ruins of the Parthenon. It is perhaps the most architecturally perfect structure in the West.

Dinner: At a local restaurant, where you'll dine on local cuisine as you get acquainted with your fellow travelers over a Welcome Dinner.

Evening: At leisure—feel free to enjoy a nightcap at the hotel bar.

Day 4 Athens • Delphi • Arachova

- Destination: Arachova
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Parnassia Club Hotel or similar

Activity Note: Today's guided tour includes up to two hours of walking, with several sets of stairs (up to 60 stairs, consecutively). Also, please note that the itinerary varies slightly on Days 4–7 on certain departures. The activities shown below on these days are all included but may be experienced in a different order.

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Our day begins with a drive across the Thivan Plain before climbing the slopes of Mount Parnassus on our way to the picturesque mountain village of Arachova. Locals flock to Arachova each winter when its ski resorts open, but it's also a popular destination year-round for locals and visitors alike to escape the bustle of Athens for peaceful mountain views. Its storybook cobbled roads and old houses, too, make for relaxing strolls at any time of year. When we arrive, we'll take a short orientation walk with our Trip Experience Leader.

Lunch: At a local restaurant in Arachova.

Afternoon: We'll check in to our hotel in Arachova, and then have some free time to relax or explore independently.

Then, we'll drive to the Delphi Archaeological Museum, which we'll explore with our Trip Experience Leader or a local guide. The unmatched holdings here include the larger-than-life bronze Charioteer, dating to about 470 BC and one of the finest surviving bronze works of antiquity. The museum is filled with other masterpieces from the Archaic, Classical, and Roman periods, including scenes of the gods watching the Trojan War, a nine-statue family monument from the fourth century BC, and a sculpture of Roman Emperor Hadrian's beloved friend Antinoos.

You'll have a few hours to discover this archaeological site. Absorb the majesty of ancient Delphi, including the Temple of Apollo where the oracle once prophesied. This ancient sanctuary is beautifully set at the foot of a mountain with a vista over olive groves stretching to the Bay of Itea. Those entering the sanctuary of Apollo in ancient times first purified themselves with the water of the Castalia Fountain, situated in the area. As you approach the Temple of Apollo, you'll walk the Sacred Way used by ancient Greeks such as the historian Plutarch, who was a priest of Apollo at Delphi. See treasures built here by the Athenians, the Thebans, the Corinthians, and the Syracusans—the great powers of their day—including the theater, built to seat 5,000 people, from which it's possible to get an impressive view if you climb to the top row.

After our tour, we'll return to our hotel and have the rest of the day to explore at leisure.

Dinner: On your own in Arachova. Your Trip Experience Leader can recommend some of his or her favorite local spots.

Evening: Feel free to take the rest of the evening to rest up for tomorrow's discoveries. Or, your Trip Experience Leader will be happy to share their recommendations, if you'd like.

Day 5 Arachova • *A Day in the Life of a Delphi honey farm*

- Destination: Kalambaka
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Grand Hotel Meteora or similar

Activity Note: Travel time to Kalambaka will be approximately 4 hours.

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Today we'll drive to Delphi, where we will visit MoKa Honey Farm for our **NEW A Day in the Life** experience. The wild thyme and fir flowers that are native to this remote region of Greece result in the production of delectably sweet organic honey that has been prized since the days of the ancient Greeks. We'll learn more about this timeless tradition from a family that's helping to keep it alive.

When we arrive at the farm, we'll introduce ourselves to the family that owns, works, and lives here over a cup of traditional Greek coffee. The owner will speak to us about producing traditional, organic honey, and preparing it for sale in their local community and around the world.

After our conversation, we'll get a hands-on demonstration of the day-to-day tasks of the farm when we suit up in protective beekeeping gear and head out into the hives to meet the busy workers who make the farm thrive—the honeybees. If you're feeling bold, you can even try handling the bees yourself. We'll also have the opportunity to enjoy a taste of honey as it's harvested straight from the hive.

We'll spend some time with the bees, and then enjoy a demonstration of traditional Greek cooking. We'll also help our gracious hosts set the table.

Lunch: We'll sit down with our hosts, enjoy lunch together, and revel in the opportunity to converse and learn about daily life in this tranquil setting beneath the shadow of Mount Parnassus.

Afternoon: We'll clear the table and say our goodbyes, and travel overland for about 4 hours through a landscape studded with rocky pinnacles to Kalambaka. The gateway to Meteora, Kalambaka provides unique views of the nearby colossal rock formations you'll discover tomorrow, and features a towering Byzantine church in the town center. Shops full of artisan wood carvings, paintings, and embroidery line the streets.

Upon arrival, we'll check in to our hotel, and you can enjoy an afternoon at leisure after settling in. Perhaps you'll get cozy and listen to live music at a local lounge, or ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations.

Dinner: At the hotel.

Evening: The evening is yours to explore independently. Your Trip Experience Leader can offer discovery suggestions.

Day 6 Kalambaka • Explore Meteora • Home-Hosted Dinner

- Destination: Kalambaka
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Grand Hotel Meteora or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Your day begins with a drive to the towering rock formations, on top of which are built the famous monasteries of Meteora.

Upon arrival, we'll spend about three hours visiting two monasteries, some of which date to the 16th century. Meteora means "suspended in the air," and these retreats are indeed perched atop pinnacles that rise about 1,000 feet from the valley floor. For centuries, the monasteries served as Christian redoubts while the Ottoman Turks ruled Greece, and the monasteries are still in operation today.

Lunch: At a local restaurant.

Afternoon: We'll enjoy a bit of free time to explore independently and take in the views of Meteora. Then, we'll return to the hotel.

Dinner: We'll break into even smaller groups and drive to local homes in Kalambaka for a **Home-Hosted Dinner**. Your host family will hail from one of a variety of working- or middle-class backgrounds, from homemaker and teacher, to travel guide and gymnast.

Our group size allows us to sit down at the dinner table with our host and have a meaningful conversation about what everyday life is like in quiet Kalambaka, a town of about 12,000, in contrast to places like bustling Athens. You might gain a firsthand perspective of how local people feel about contemporary issues in Greece such as traditional familial dynamics and unemployment in rural Greece due to the country's economic challenges. Together, we'll share a home-cooked meal, typical of what local families in this region would enjoy in their daily lives.

Following our meal, we'll bid our hosts farewell and head back to the hotel.

Evening: The evening is yours with the freedom to enjoy your final night in Kalambaka as you'd like. Ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations.

Day 7 Overland to Athens • Embark ship

- Destination: Athens
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Arethusa* or M/V *Athena*

Activity Note: Today's transfer to Athens will take approximately 5 hours with two stops to stretch our legs and get lunch.

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: We'll depart our hotel and bid farewell to Kalambaka, embarking on an approximately 5-hour drive in total to Athens. We'll pause our drive along the way to stretch our legs.

Lunch: At a local restaurant.

Afternoon: We'll continue driving to the port of Piraeus. When you arrive, you'll embark your small ship. For the next seven nights, our privately owned 50-passenger vessel will be your home. The ship is staffed by a friendly, English-speaking crew who will be eager to welcome you aboard and show you to your room.

Later, your Captain will conduct a safety briefing, followed by an introduction to the crew. Then, join your small group in the lounge for the first in a series of nightly Port Talks. These informative conversations, led by your Trip Experience Leader, will give you an overview of the following day's itinerary and prepare you for the destination ahead. You'll also enjoy a Welcome Drink.

Dinner: You and your fellow travelers will be invited to the dining room for your Captain's Welcome Dinner.

Evening: Free to spend as you wish onboard as your ship sails toward the island of Syros.

Day 8 Explore Syros • Explore Mykonos

- Destination: Mykonos
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Arethusa* or M/V *Athena*

Breakfast: Onboard the ship.

Morning: Disembark your small ship to begin your walking tour of Syros—whose main port town, Ermoupolis, is the capital of the Cyclades. This is the largest of the island ports that you'll visit. In the late 19th century, it was the main port for all of Greece, and it has a wealth of beautifully restored historic buildings including old mansions and churches. Discover the charms of this lively traditional Aegean port town, including visiting the bustling local market. You'll also taste one of Greece's favorite sweets, *loukoumi*, a gelatin candy dusted with powdered sugar.

After the tour wraps up, enjoy some free time to peruse the tucked-away shops in the area that feature artisan soaps, jewelry, and much more. We'll make the return walk to the ship for lunch.

Lunch: Onboard the ship.

Afternoon: Our ship begins the cruise to Mykonos this afternoon. We'll begin boarding our tenders to port. Then, we'll embark on a walking tour of this popular vacation spot for international jet-setters.

After the walking tour, enjoy some free time before heading back to the ship. Feel free to return to your cabin and take some time to rest after today's discoveries before your Trip Experience Leader leads a Port Talk.

Dinner: Onboard the ship.

Evening: We begin sailing to Paros late tonight. You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening onboard as you wish. Perhaps you'll enjoy a drink at the bar or relax in the lounge.

Day 9 Explore Paros

- Destination: Paros
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Arethusa* or M/V *Athena*

Breakfast: Onboard the ship.

Morning: Begin your discoveries in Paros with a visit to Lefkes. We'll disembark the ship and drive to the traditional village, at which point we'll set off on a walking tour of the narrow streets and past iconic white and blue homes.

We'll then drive to the fishing village of Naoussa, located on the northern bay of Paros and known for the bright blues of its ocean and myriad colorful fishing vessels roped up along the docks. We'll explore this area on a walking tour that will bring us down cobbled streets and past a variety of outdoor businesses that thrive due to the amount of sunlight this part of the island receives. After, you'll have some free time for shopping or further exploring the village.

Lunch: On your own in Naoussa. Ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations.

Afternoon: The afternoon is free for you to continue discovering the area on your own. You might like to explore Parikia, the capital of Paros and the location where our ship is docked. This is the island's bustling hub of art and culture which stretches out along the seafront, allowing you to gaze out on the other islands that dot the Aegean as you explore. Perhaps you'll visit the Paros archaeological museum, an open-air exhibit that allows you to get remarkably close to relics that are thousands

of years old, including a historic church. Then, join your small group in the lounge for a nightly Port Talk.

Dinner: Onboard the ship.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish. Perhaps you'll relax in the lounge with your fellow travelers, or rest in your cabin before tomorrow's discoveries. Overnight, our small ship charts a course to Santorini.

Day 10 Explore Santorini

- Destination: Santorini
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Arethusa* or M/V *Athena*

Breakfast: Onboard the ship.

Morning: We arrive on the island of Santorini very early this morning. This glittering island is the remnant of the rim of a volcanic caldera, much of which was blasted away by a huge eruption in 1600 BC. The bay enclosed by the crescent is nearly 1,300 feet deep.

Right after breakfast, we'll embark small boats to tender to Santorini's port and capital, Fira. The town of Fira is perched on the caldera rim, about 1,000 feet above the water. To get there, we'll take a funicular (cable car) for a short ride to ascend to the town. We'll arrive in Fira Town, witnessing gleaming white houses that look down hundreds of feet to the bay. Then, we'll drive to visit the nearby Akrotiri Archeological Site. We'll explore here with our Trip Experience Leader or local guide and learn about the excavations and findings dating back to the fifth millennium BC at Akrotiri—an ancient city buried by volcanic ash, similar to Pompeii.

Later, we'll drive to our next destination, the cliffside village of Oia. At every turn, Oia offers glimpses of alabaster seaside houses made for Venetian sailors; views of the Santorini caldera; and picturesque scenery set to white-yellow sunlight. Locals and visitors alike flock to Oia in the evenings for its spectacular sunsets. Throughout your walking tour, you'll visit local artisan shops, enjoy views of the caldera, and explore the beautiful blue-and-white Church of Panagia Platsani in the village center.

After our tour wraps up, you'll have some free time to peruse shops and cafés on your own.

Lunch: On your own in Fira. Your Trip Experience Leader would be happy to suggest the best spots for traditional seafood—or even some street-vendor falafel, depending on your preferences.

Afternoon: Free for your own discoveries in Santorini. Perhaps you'll stroll through the small village of Imerovigli and participate in an approximately one-hour cliff hike back to Fira.

Return to the ship in time for your Trip Experience Leader's nightly Port Talk.

Dinner: Onboard the ship.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish. Perhaps you'll enjoy a nightcap at the bar with your fellow travelers, or retire to your cabin for the evening. Later tonight, you'll cruise on to Kalymnos.

Day 11 Explore Kalymnos • Sponge fishing conversation

- Destination: Kalymnos
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Arethusa* or M/V *Athena*

Breakfast: Onboard the ship.

Morning: Our ship docks in Kalymnos early this morning. We'll step ashore and walk to a local sponge workshop for a conversation with its owner about the role of sponge fishing in Kalymnos' cultural identity, and its harmful impact on the local ecosystem.

In the days of antiquity, Kalymnos was once the sponge-fishing capital of the world. While the island's rocky terrain made the land difficult to inhabit, the bounty of the sea nonetheless drew throngs of intrepid divers seeking to make their fortune. While changes to the global economy and the invention of synthetic sponges have since reduced the prosperity of the trade, sponge fishing remains a beloved part of Kalymnos' cultural heritage, and fleets of ships still sail the surrounding seas in search of sponges today. Some, however, are concerned that this surge of sponge fishing is upsetting the delicate balance of the Mediterranean's ecosystem and must be reined in.

We'll dive into both sides of this topic during our conversation. We'll hear from a local woman who runs a small sponge workshop with her husband, who will tell us about how sponge fishing remains an important part of Kalymnos' economy. Our host's workshop has been in her family for three generations, and, like many Kalymnos natives, sponges are a part of her identity.

After, we'll bid our hosts goodbye and depart for a panoramic tour of the island. Known for its majestic mountains, avid climbers travel from all over the world to take on the challenge of Kalymnos' many climbing tracks. In contrast, the island's glittering beaches are perfect places to relax—but for a more active experience, many visitors take to the sea, scuba-diving in search of mysterious underwater caves and marine life.

On our tour, we'll get a sense of the island's history when we stop to visit the Traditional House, a museum featuring folk relics of Kalymnos' past. As we enter each room, we'll step back in time to discover what local life was like in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Lunch: Onboard the ship.

Afternoon: Feel free to relax in your cabin or watch the passing scenery from the lounge or the Sun Deck. We begin sailing to Patmos later this afternoon. Gather with your fellow travelers in the lounge for your nightly Port Talk.

Dinner: Onboard the ship.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the remainder of your night as you'd like. The ship is moored in Patmos overnight.

Day 12 Explore Patmos • Kusadasi, Turkey

- Destination: Patmos
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Arethusa* or M/V *Athena*

Breakfast: Onboard the ship.

Morning: We'll disembark our ship and drive to the beautiful and rugged island of Patmos, named a Sacred Island by the Greek government in 1981 and long a popular pilgrimage site.

The island served as exile for an important figure from history: St. John the Evangelist, one of Jesus' twelve apostles. At the time, the island's near inaccessibility made it a perfect site for the banishment of criminals and political agitators. Exiled from Ephesus, St. John lived in a grotto beneath the Temple of Diana for 18 months, between AD 95 and 97. It

was there that he was said to have received his vision of fire and brimstone and dictated the Book of Revelation.

This morning, embark on an included tour of this UNESCO World Heritage Site with your Trip Experience Leader or local guide. First, you'll visit the Holy Cave of the Apocalypse, where St. John lived and worked. If you see cracks in the walls of the cave, consider that they are said to have appeared when the apostle heard the voice of the Lord. You'll also explore the eleventh-century Monastery of St. John, built by the monk Christodoulos on the ruins of the Temple of Diana. Fortified over the next two centuries to protect it against marauding pirates, this imposing monastery is visible virtually everywhere on the island and has remained in continuous operation for more than 900 years.

You will see some priceless religious relics during your visit here, and be sure to listen for the remarkable acoustics inside the main chapel. Enjoy breathtaking views of the Aegean in Hora, the 17th-century town of dazzling white houses that tumbles down the hillside surrounding the citadel.

Lunch: Onboard the ship.

Afternoon: You're afternoon is free to continue exploring Patmos independently. Our ship departs for Kusadasi, Turkey, after which you can enjoy leisure time onboard. Feel free to make your way topside for panoramic views, and perhaps get a drink from the Sun Deck bar/grill.

Dinner: Onboard the ship.

Evening: Free to spend onboard however you wish. The ship arrives in Kusadasi late this evening and remains moored there overnight.

Day 13 Kusadasi • Explore Ephesus • Carpet weaving demonstration

- Destination: Kusadasi
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Arethusa* or M/V *Athena*

Breakfast: Onboard the ship.

Morning: After breakfast, we'll drive to nearby Ephesus to explore the ruins with a local guide before the crowds arrive. The best-preserved and, at 2,000 acres, most extensive classical Greco-Roman city in Asia, Ephesus is located 60 miles from Izmir, dates to at least 1300 BC, and was home to the early philosopher Heraclitus. As the commercial center and capital city of Roman Asia Minor, it was once the fourth-largest city in the Roman Empire, boasting a population numbering more than 300,000. One ancient legend attributes the founding of Ephesus to the Amazons of Greek mythology. Another credits the Athenian Androclus, who received advice from an oracle to establish a colony at the "place of the fish and the boar." And so, when he and his crew saw a wild pig charge out of underbrush set ablaze inadvertently by locals grilling fish, he staked his claim on the Anatolian shore.

After our Ephesus discoveries, we'll drive to a local carpet cooperative to learn how hand-woven Turkish carpets are produced from those who take part in this intricate craft every day.

Lunch: We'll enjoy lunch and conversation with locals at the carpet cooperative.

Afternoon: You'll head back to Kusadasi, where the remainder of the afternoon is free for you to make your own discoveries.

Dinner: Gather for your Captain's Farewell Dinner this evening, featuring a special menu and many memories to share with your small

group. While the dress code remains relaxed and smart casual, some travelers opt to wear a day dress or slacks to this event.

Evening: Enjoy your last night on the ship with your fellow travelers, perhaps taking to the top deck for views of the Aegean at night. The ship remains moored in Kusadasi overnight.

Day 14 Kusadasi • Disembark ship • Fly to Istanbul

- Destination: Istanbul
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Elite World Istanbul Taksim or similar

Breakfast: Onboard the ship.

Morning: After breakfast, bid your small ship goodbye as you disembark. We'll drive to the airport to catch our flight to Istanbul.

Lunch: On your own. Ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations.

Afternoon: We'll transfer to our hotel. Once we're settled in, our Trip Experience Leader will lead us on a discovery walk to a nearby neighborhood popular amongst the locals for shopping and spending time in one of the many traditional Turkish cafés. Here, you'll be free to explore on your own.

Dinner: On your own. Your Trip Experience Leader would be happy to suggest where to find the best Turkish meatballs.

Evening: At leisure. Feel free to head out to a nearby café for a sip of bold Turkish coffee and a slice of *baklava*, or retire to your room for the night.

Day 15 Explore Istanbul • Visit Hippodrome & Hagia Sophia • Discover Spice Market

- Destination: Istanbul
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Elite World Istanbul Taksim or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: We'll begin today with a city tour of Istanbul. Our first stop is the Hippodrome of Constantinople, a lively central square that was the social heart of the city during the Byzantine era. We'll witness the square's defining features—the soaring Obelisk of Theodosius, which dates to around 1500 BC and was transported to Istanbul (then Constantinople) in AD 390. You'll also see the fourth-century Constantine Column; the Greek Serpentine Column, one of city's oldest monuments, dating to 479 BC; and the German Fountain, a gift to the Ottoman Sultan in 1898. Then, you'll discover the remains of the Roman Hippodrome, where thundering chariots once competed in races. Wrestling, boxing, and other athletic events were also held here, as were political rallies.

After our tour of the Hippodrome, we'll continue our in-depth discoveries of Istanbul when we visit the magnificent Hagia Sophia—a true wonder of the Byzantine world. Completed under Emperor Justinian in AD 537, this massive building (known best for its resplendent dome) was a Christian church for nearly 1,000 years, until Mehmet the Conqueror claimed it for Islam. Kemal Atatürk, the revolutionary leader, and founder of the Republic proclaimed it a museum in 1934—but it has reverted to a working mosque in 2020. Its interior was designed as an earthly mirror of heaven, and as we explore, our Trip Experience Leader will point out the

stunning Byzantine mosaics and distinctive features that contributed to the success of this estimable goal.

Among the wonders of this remarkable structure is its huge dome—the model for Byzantine churches to come. As you enter the Hagia Sophia, note the cannonballs along the outer courtyard, which remain from the Ottomans’ siege of the city. Entering the sanctuary, you witness an immense vaulted ceiling that soars above the four arches on which it rests. Admire the marble walls and the juxtaposition of Islamic calligraphic roundels with golden Christian mosaics that are still being uncovered.

From here, you’ll discover Istanbul’s Spice Bazaar. The Spice Bazaar is the largest and most colorful spice market in all of Turkey. Located in the Eminönü quarter of the Fatih district, it is the most famous covered shopping complex after the Grand Bazaar.

Lunch: At a local restaurant.

Afternoon: Later, we’ll drive back to the hotel where the rest of the day is free.

Dinner: Enjoy dinner on your own. Ask your Trip Experience Leader for local recommendations.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Trip Experience Leader for nightcap recommendations.

Day 16 Istanbul • Topkapi Palace • Bosphorus cruise

- Destination: Istanbul
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Elite World Istanbul Taksim or similar

Activity Note: The Topkapi Palace is closed Tuesdays. If this day falls on Tuesday, you will visit the Istanbul Archaeological Museums and the Basilica Cistern instead.

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Today we’ll visit a few of the great landmarks of Istanbul’s historic Old Town, which has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Upon arriving, we’ll explore the sprawling Topkapi Palace, the maze of opulent buildings that served as the seat of the Ottoman Empire between the 15th and 19th centuries. Topkapi was a city-palace with a population of approximately 4,000 people. It housed all the Ottoman sultans from Sultan Mehmet II to Abdulmejid—25 sultans over a span of nearly 600 years. Today, it is the world’s oldest and largest surviving palace, one of the world’s richest museums, and a masterpiece of Turkish architecture—a complex of shady courtyards overlooking the Golden Horn, where the Sea of Marmara meets the Bosphorus. Your explorations include a tour with your Trip Experience Leader, and then some free time to explore at your own pace. Highlights include the weapons collection, and galleries exhibiting the imperial collection of crystal, silver, fabled jewels, and Chinese porcelain.

After our tour, we’ll drive back to the pier to embark the ship for our one-hour Bosphorus cruise.

Lunch: On your own in Istanbul’s Old Town—ask your Trip Experience Leader for the best place to find traditional *yufka* (Turkish flatbread) or lamb kebabs.

Afternoon: The afternoon is yours to explore Istanbul independently. You might take this opportunity to visit the Turkish and Islamic Art Museum.

Dinner: Enjoy a Farewell Dinner with your fellow travelers at a local restaurant, where you'll raise a glass to the adventures you've had on your Aegean journey.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations.

Day 17 Return to U.S. or begin your post-trip extension

• Included Meals: Breakfast

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Transfer to the airport for your flight home, or begin your post-trip extension to *Cappadocia's Unique Landscapes & Vibrant Ankara*.

END YOUR ADVENTURE WITH AN OPTIONAL POST-TRIP EXTENSION

5 nights in *Cappadocia's Unique Landscapes & Vibrant Ankara*

Day 1 Istanbul, Turkey • Nevsehir • Explore Cappadocia • Optional *Turkish Delight* tour

Day 2 Cappadocia • Optional *Ballooning Over Cappadocia* tour

Day 3 Cappadocia • Optional Whirling Dervishes tour

Day 4 Cappadocia • Transfer to Ankara

Day 5 Explore Ankara

Day 6 Ankara • Return to U.S.

PRE-TRIP

Athens & the Peloponnese: From Homer to the First Olympics

INCLUDED IN YOUR PRICE

- » 5 nights accommodation
- » 9 meals: 5 breakfasts, 2 lunches, and 2 dinners
- » Guided tours: Acropolis Museum • Mycenae • Olympia • Archaeological Museum of Olympia • Epidaurus • Nafplion
- » Services of our local Trip Experience Leader
- » Gratuities for local guides and motorcoach drivers
- » All transfers

PRE-TRIP EXTENSION ITINERARY

Discover a land steeped in ancient myths and enveloped in scenic beauty. Explore the splendor of Nafplion, the Bronze Age culture of Mycenae, and the sanctuary of Zeus in Olympia, home of the first Olympic Games. Conclude your exploration of the ancient Greek world with a two-night stay in Athens.

Day 1 Depart U.S.

Fly overnight from the U.S. to Athens, Greece.

Day 2 Arrive Athens, Greece

- Destination: Athens
- Accommodations: Amalia Hotel or similar

Morning/Afternoon: Arrive in Athens, where an O.A.T. representative will meet you at the airport and assist with your transfer to your hotel.

Today, make your first acquaintance with the storied capital of Greece on a guided walk around the vicinity of the hotel with your Trip Experience Leader and fellow travelers, including those who arrived early in Athens before their pre-trip extension.

Dinner: On your own. There are myriad options in your hotel neighborhood—ask your Trip Experience Leader for some restaurant

recommendations. You may choose to seek out a restaurant that serves classics like *dolmadakia*, or small grape leave rolls stuffed with lamb and rice.

Evening: You might wish to take a stroll to see what strikes your fancy. Or simply relax and enjoy the hotel's amenities.

Day 3 Explore Athens • Optional Cape Sounion tour

- Destination: Athens
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Amalia Hotel or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: You'll gather with your Trip Experience Leader for a Welcome Briefing in the hotel.

Then, you'll set off with your Trip Experience Leader or local guide on a tour of the Acropolis Museum. You'll explore it and learn what this birthplace of civilization was like in ancient times.

The rest of the morning is at leisure in Athens. Perhaps you'll view the Temple of Zeus and Hadrian's Arch, or admire still more classical architecture at the ancient Agora.

Lunch: On your own—you might wander to the ancient streets of the Plaka, a lively neighborhood set in the shadow of the Acropolis, where options abound. You may want to find a traditional, refreshing Greek salad, made with feta, kalamata olives, tomatoes, and cucumbers.

Afternoon: Continue exploring Athens at leisure. Gain a greater appreciation for the city's antiquity as you browse the exhibits of the National Archaeological Museum. Enter the bustle of daily life at Syntagma Square. Or find a serene oasis nearby at the National Gardens.

If you wish, you may join an optional tour to Cape Sounion, home of the Temple of Poseidon. Constructed by the Ancient Greeks around 400 BC, the temple has suffered damage from foreign invasions over the years, but the ruins remain an elegant and picturesque tribute to the mighty gods of the Greeks. We'll tour the impressive temple that stands tall with 16 of its 42 original columns: a feat that speaks to the strength of ancient Greek architecture. We'll learn about the mythological significance of the legendary temple.

Dinner: At a local restaurant in the Plaka neighborhood.

Evening: The evening is at leisure to gather your belongings for tomorrow's departure or indulge in a nighttime adventure in Athens' many lively *tavernas*.

Day 4 Athens • Explore Epidauros • Olympia

- Destination: Olympia
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Hotel Europa or similar

Activity Note: Today's transfer to Olympia will take about 8 hours. There will be stops en route to visit the Corinth Canal and ancient Epidauros, stretch your legs, and enjoy lunch at a local restaurant.

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Today you'll transfer to Olympia.

Along the way, you'll pause at the historic Corinth Canal, gateway to the Peloponnese. Construction on the Corinth Canal was originally initiated by the Roman Emperor Nero as a way to link the Aegean with the Gulf of Corinth. But the four-mile-long ribbon cut through solid rock proved too difficult and the project was quickly abandoned. Since digging didn't begin again until 1881, in ancient times ships were simply dragged across the isthmus along a paved road. At one time, the great city-state of Corinth rivaled Athens in power and prestige, but its reputation for bawdy living caused St. Paul to criticize it mercilessly during his stay here in AD 52.

Then, we'll make our next stop in Epidauros, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the most famous ancient sites in Greece. Since early Greeks recognized Epidauros as the birthplace of Asklepios, the god of healing, the entire site was renowned for its extensive medical facilities and healing treatments from the sixth century BC until about AD 200. Today, Epidauros is perhaps more famous for its well preserved fourth-century theater, which you'll visit. It is renowned for its near-perfect acoustics: a coin dropped at the center of this 14,000-seat structure can easily be heard from its farthest reaches.

Lunch: At a local restaurant.

Afternoon: Upon arrival to Olympia, you'll check into your hotel, and spend the rest of the afternoon at leisure. You might take the time to settle into your room and get acquainted with your home for the next two nights.

Dinner: At the hotel restaurant.

Evening: The evening is at leisure. Nights tend to be quiet in Olympia, though you might find a café or two open late.

Day 5 Explore Olympia

- Destination: Olympia
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Hotel Europa or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: You'll set out on a roughly three-hour walking tour of Olympia—the site that gave birth to the Olympic Games, forerunner of our modern Olympic Games. The renowned athletic competition began here to honor Zeus in 776 BC and continued for the next thousand years. Plato, Socrates, Alexander the Great, and Nero are just a few of the historical figures that watched or participated in the games. After a visit to the original site of the games, you'll explore the vast holdings of the Archaeological Museum, which features a wealth of exhibits spanning Greek prehistory up to the Roman era, including the statue of Hermes and the infant Dionysus.

Lunch: On your own—your Trip Experience Leader can recommend a nearby café or restaurant.

Afternoon: Your afternoon is at leisure in the village of Olympia. You might delve deeper into sports history at the Museum of the History of

the Ancient Olympic Games, with antiquities ranging from the second millennium BC to the fifth century AD.

Later, you'll return to the hotel, where the rest of the afternoon is free to enjoy its amenities.

Dinner: On your own—you might sample a fusion of Greek, Mediterranean, and international cuisine at the hotel restaurant, or venture out to a nearby *taverna*.

Evening: Enjoy another quiet evening on your own in Olympia. Perhaps you'll sip a glass of *ouzo* at the hotel bar.

Day 6 Olympia • Explore Nafplion

- Destination: Nafplion
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Nafplia Palace Hotel & Villas or similar

Activity Note: The total travel time between Olympia and Nafplion, including stops in between, is approximately 5 hours.

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Today we'll make our drive to Nafplion.

Lunch: At a local restaurant.

Afternoon: After lunch, check into your centrally located Nafplion hotel.

Take some time to settle in before embarking on a walking tour. A lovely seaside town nestled between the mountains and Gulf of Argolis, Nafplion features charming Venetian homes and a picturesque harbor dominated by citadels. While the fortresses attest to a checkered military history, after independence from the Ottomans early in the 19th century, Nafplion became the first capital of liberated Greece.

Dinner: You'll enjoy Greek and international fare prepared from fresh, homemade ingredients over dinner with your fellow travelers at your hotel in Nafplion.

Evening: The evening is at leisure. To experience the nightlife of this charming city, head to the waterfront, where you'll find a number of options for relaxing and enjoying views of the city lights reflecting on the waves. You'll also find nightclubs and bars along the streets of the Old Town. Or relax at the hotel.

Day 7 Nafplion • Explore Mycenae • Athens

• Join main trip

- Destination: Athens
- Included Meals: Breakfast

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Begin today with a transfer to Mycenae, your next UNESCO World Heritage Site, where you'll tour the area with your Trip Experience Leader or local guide. A destination linked to Homer and his tales of glory and war, Mycenae was a sophisticated Bronze Age culture that occupied the region from about 1700 BC until they mysteriously vanished after

the Trojan War in about 1180 BC. While Homer wrote about Mycenae in his ninth-century BC epic poems the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, its actual location was thought to be lost to the mists of time until the amateur archaeologist Heinrich Schliemann found a treasure trove of gold masks, jewelry, and weapons here in 1874. Highlights of the ruins include a series of *tholos*, or beehive-shaped, tombs where Mycenaean kings were buried with their weapons and enough food and drink for their journey to the underworld.

Then, you'll drive to Loutraki, a picturesque seaside resort town on the Gulf of Corinth. You'll have a couple hours on your own here; perhaps you'll walk one of its many famous beaches, do some shopping, or seek out the town's famous archaeological site—the sanctuary of the goddess Hera.

Lunch: On your own in Loutraki.

Afternoon: We'll continue our drive to Athens. Upon arrival, you'll check into your hotel and join travelers arriving for their *The Aegean Islands, Athens & Istanbul* Small Ship Adventure.

OPTIONAL TOUR

Cape Sounion

(Day 3 \$70 per person)

Join our optional tour of Cape Sounion, home of the Temple of Poseidon. To get here, we drive along scenic roads, traveling along the coast through various resort towns to reach the promontory on which the temple stands, with thrilling panoramic views of the Aegean Sea. The Temple of Poseidon was built by the Ancient Greeks around 400 BC. When you consider the fact that Homer's epic the *Odyssey* revolved entirely around the perils of the sea,

it's easy to understand why the people of this island nation would go to such trouble to please the god of the sea, winds, and earthquakes. The temple has suffered damage from foreign invasions over the years, but the ruins remain an elegant and picturesque tribute to the mighty gods of the Greeks.

The winds on Cape Sounion can be very strong, so it is recommended that you bring a jacket for the brief ascent to the temple. The motorcoach ride to Cape Sounion is approximately 90 minutes.

POST-TRIP

Cappadocia's Unique Landscapes & Vibrant Ankara

INCLUDED IN YOUR PRICE

- | | |
|--|--|
| » Accommodations for 5 nights | » Services of our local Trip Experience Leader |
| » 12 meals: 5 breakfasts, 3 lunches, and 4 dinners | » Gratuities for local guides and motorcoach drivers |
| » Guided tours: Goreme • Pasabag • Ozkonak • Hattusas • Ankara | » All transfers |

POST-TRIP EXTENSION ITINERARY

Delve into Turkey's ancient civilizations as you journey from the otherworldly landscapes of Cappadocia to Ankara, birthplace of the legendary King Midas. Learn about the powerful Hittite civilization during a visit to their ancient capital, and explore the subterranean cave cities of Cappadocia and the ancient rock churches of Goreme.

Day 1 Istanbul, Turkey • Nevsehir • Explore Cappadocia • Optional Turkish Delight tour

- Destination: Cappadocia
- Included Meals: Dinner
- Accommodations: DoubleTree by Hilton Avanos or similar

Morning: Begin your transfer to the Istanbul airport for your flight to Nevsehir, bound for Cappadocia.

Lunch: Upon arrival in Nevsehir, lunch is on your own—ask your Trip Experience Leader the best place to find roast lamb or traditional Turkish barbeque nearby.

Afternoon: After lunch, feel free to take some time to make your first discoveries in Cappadocia, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in the heart of the Anatolian Plateau. The predominant earth surface of Cappadocia is a white volcanic rock called *tufa*. Centuries of

rain and wind have shaped the soft *tufa* into rhythmic flow patterns and tall cones and columns. Although the dust from *tufa* looks like sand, the area is not like a desert but is actually highly fertile, and people have inhabited the region since ancient times. Early Christians often burrowed into *tufa* rock to create hidden sanctuaries and escape persecution. It is said that the area has more than 600 Christian churches carved into the rock, some dating to the third century AD.

You'll begin to see Cappadocia's legendary fantastical landscapes and "fairy chimneys" when you visit the famous Goreme Open-Air Museum with your Turkish Trip Experience Leader. There, you'll see some of these ancient churches and chapels noted for their colorful frescoes.

Then, bring to life some of this region's ancient history when you learn firsthand about the art of pottery in Asia Minor. After,

you'll visit the cave workshop of a local potter for a special demonstration, and engage in an informative conversation about the details surrounding this centuries-old craft. Archaeologists have observed similarities between ancient Turkish pottery and that of the Greek Neolithic period—perhaps, by the end of the demonstration, you'll be able to discern this type of pottery's unique characteristics for yourself.

After our visit wraps up, we'll head back to the hotel and check in. You have some time at leisure before dinner.

Dinner: At the hotel.

Evening: Feel free to settle into your hotel and retire for the night. Or, join our optional *Turkish Delight* tour at a nearby restaurant, featuring a live performance of belly dancing accompanied by local music.

Day 2 Cappadocia • Optional Ballooning Over Cappadocia tour

- Destination: Cappadocia
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: DoubleTree by Hilton Avanos or similar

Early Morning: Early risers may choose to join your Trip Experience Leader for a unique experience: an optional hot-air balloon flight over Cappadocia, with the chance to view its surreal beauty from high above, illuminated by the rosy light of dawn. During this excursion, we'll soar over the amber terrain and fairy chimneys—all the while savoring this unique panorama in remarkable fashion. Travelers who partake in this experience will depart the hotel around 5am.

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: You might elect to get a more intimate perspective of the countryside during an exhilarating morning hike of about 1.5 hours to witness the beauty of your surroundings.

Of course, you also have the option to spend your morning at leisure—ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations, or perhaps engage in some of the suggested activities on Day 1.

Lunch: On your own. Your Trip Experience Leader will be ready with recommendations on local dishes to try—and where to try them.

Afternoon: Enjoy some free time after lunch to relax after your hike or morning of discoveries. Then, drive into the Pasabag Valley to witness the surreal rock formations known as “fairy chimneys.” Literally “Pacha’s Vineyard,” Pasabag Valley is also known as Monk’s Valley, as Simeon monks once went into hiding here. Marvel at the mushroom-like columns of stone with conical lids that seem to spring up from the valley floor.

After our tour, we'll head back to the hotel.

Dinner: At the hotel.

Evening: At leisure. Enjoy a nightcap at the hotel bar; take an evening stroll to observe Cappadocia’s landscapes by moonlight, or retire for the night to prepare for tomorrow’s discoveries.

Day 3 Cappadocia • Optional Whirling Dervishes tour

- Destination: Cappadocia
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: DoubleTree by Hilton Avanos or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Today we'll travel by bus to Ozkonak, one of the remarkable underground cities dotting the local landscape. During the Hittite era, as successive armies swept across Asia Minor, these multi-leveled complexes were built as uniquely defensible communities—all had heavy millstones for doors that could be rolled in place to seal off the outside world. There are believed to be about three dozen of these underground cities in the region, but few have been excavated. In Ozkonak, we'll explore some of the hundreds of rooms, wandering the narrow, sloping passageways between kitchens with enameled food storage areas, water cisterns, stables, and living quarters at the deepest levels—all well-ventilated by giant air shafts.

Lunch: At a local restaurant with your fellow travelers.

Afternoon: After our Ozkonak visit, we'll head back to the hotel for some leisure time.

Dinner: At the hotel.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish. Perhaps you'll share stories about your day with your fellow travelers over a drink at the bar.

Or, join our optional tour to witness the "Ritual of Sema." The Semazens, the so-called Whirling Dervishes, believe that the fundamental state of our existence is to revolve. From the smallest cell to the planets and the farthest stars, everything revolves. Thus, the ones who whirl participate consciously in the shared revolution of all existence. The Semazen (with their camel's-felt hats representing tombstones and wide white skirts symbolizing shrouds) stand with their arms crossed, ready to begin their turn. As they whirl, their motions represent a spiritual journey. Revel in this

spinning kaleidoscope of tradition and color as you observe their ritual. Cap off your experience with a taste of sweet Turkish sherbet.

Day 4 Cappadocia • Transfer to Ankara

- Destination: Ankara
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Amalia Hotel or similar

Activity Note: Your journey to Ankara today will be approximately 9.5 hours, with multiple stops along the way.

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: You'll begin your day-long journey to Ankara. En route, you'll stop to delve into a civilization that rivaled Egypt's during the second millennium BC with your Trip Experience Leader.

First, we'll drive to the ancient site of Hattusas, capital of the great Hittite Kingdom—a powerful empire of the Ancient Near East that ruled from about 1600 to 1200 BC. Located high on a rocky summit, Hattusas offers a wealth of archaeological treasures that have been recovered from this former center of the kingdom, including records offering extensive details concerning political and religious aspects of the culture. Enjoy a stop at Bogazkoy, a local village built on the ruins of the ancient Hittite capital, where you'll discover what it's like to live in the shadow of history during a city walking tour.

Lunch: At a local restaurant in Bogazkoy village.

Afternoon: You'll visit Yazilikaya, a sacred Hittite sanctuary of two chambers enclosed by natural rock formations. Hewn out of the rock are depictions of deities and a stone relief of King Tudhaliya IV that stands twelve feet high. Archaeologists estimate that the Hittites used this locale as a revered shrine as early as 1250 BC.

We'll drive back to Ankara in time to check in to our hotel and relax briefly before dinner.

Dinner: Enjoy a Farewell Dinner with your fellow travelers and Trip Experience Leader at the hotel. Raise a glass to toast to the discoveries you've made on this journey through the Turkish countryside.

Evening: On your own, with the freedom to seek out Ankara's delights independently. Your Trip Experience Leader will be happy to provide recommendations, should you like.

Day 5 Explore Ankara

- Destination: Ankara
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Ankara Hilton SA Hotel or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Set off on foot to enjoy a city tour of Turkey's modern capital this morning with your Trip Experience Leader. Ankara is a very old city, founded in 2000 BC, and there are several Roman ruins scattered throughout the metropolis. Archaeologists have also found artifacts that date to pre-Roman periods. But you'll find that much of Ankara's character is sophisticated and modern, from the educational institutions to the art galleries, from the music to the architecture. There are three symphony orchestras and five theaters, offering classical performances of ballet, opera, modern dance, and drama. On many levels, Ankara has become the cultural and political center of Turkey.

In the oldest part of Ankara, you'll venture to Ankara Castle, high on a hill overlooking the city. Little remains of the original complex, built by the Galatians, but much of the architecture from its Roman, Byzantine, and Selcuk eras may still be admired. You'll tour the old town just inside the castle walls, an area

where the traditional housing was concentrated during the 16th century for protection within the fortifications.

You'll then visit the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations, the finest Hittite museum in the country. It details the many cultures that have inhabited this region, starting as far back as the Paleolithic Age. The museum houses a priceless collection of artifacts from Neolithic, Hatti, Hittite, Phrygian, Persian, Galatian, and Roman times. The two buildings themselves, a *caravanserai* (an overnight site for caravans) and a *bedesten* (covered bazaar), are Ottoman structures that date to the 15th century. Vendors abound in this area, adding to the local color with their fragrant spices, dried fruits, and traditional Turkish handcrafts for sale.

Lunch: At a local restaurant.

Afternoon: You have the afternoon free to explore the city center. Though Ankara's origins are from ancient times, most of the city is modern and well planned. You can stroll its wide boulevards, take a quiet walk in a groomed park, or browse its elegant boutiques.

Dinner: On your own.

Evening: Feel free to retire for the evening, prepare for your flight home, or enjoy a final nightcap at the bar.

Day 6 Ankara • Return to U.S.

- Destination: Ankara
- Included Meals: Breakfast

Breakfast: An early breakfast will be served at the hotel this morning, depending on your flight departure time.

Morning: Transfer to the airport for your return flight to the U.S. via Istanbul.

OPTIONAL TOURS

Turkish Delight

(Day 1 \$40 per person)

Join an optional Turkish Delight evening. This is a fun and entertaining night on the town where you will enjoy belly dancing and the skilled movements of folkloric dancers performing an assortment of traditional Turkish dances.

Ballooning Over Cappadocia

(Day 2 \$300 per person)

You can rise early with us this morning (weather permitting) and get a new perspective on the intriguing *tufa* landscapes while gliding smoothly above them on our optional hot air balloon excursion. Sip a cup of hot coffee or tea as the crew prepares the balloon, then climb aboard. See the soft light of dawn spread over Cappadocia, as the balloon flight varies from low contour to get a good look at the sculpted *tufa*, to a somewhat higher altitude to give you a panoramic view of this strangely shaped landscape of eroded pillars and cones. After a gentle landing, enjoy a light breakfast on site and celebrate your adventure with a glass of champagne. You will receive a flight certificate to acknowledge your airborne experience. Remember to bring your camera for this excursion.

Between November and March, this excursion is subject to weather conditions and may not be available. If you choose to cancel less than 24 hours before the flight, the tour is non-refundable.

Whirling Dervishes

(Day 3 \$40 per person)

On this evening's optional tour, you have the opportunity to witness a ritual dance performance by the Whirling Dervishes, monks

of the Mevlevi sect of Islam, founded in the 13th century. During the dance, called a *sema*, the dervishes believe that their souls are released from their earthly ties and are free to joyfully commune with the divine. The dervishes spin shoulder to shoulder, both around their own axis and around one other, representing the Earth revolving on its own axis while orbiting the sun. The dancers are silent while performing the *sema*, accompanied by drums and chanting, as the ritual gradually transforms itself into rapid, spinning ecstasy.

Please note: Depending on the performance schedule, this optional tour may be offered on a different day.

YOUR MEDITERRANEAN SMALL SHIP

Small Ship Adventures aboard our privately owned, award-winning, 50-passenger small ships

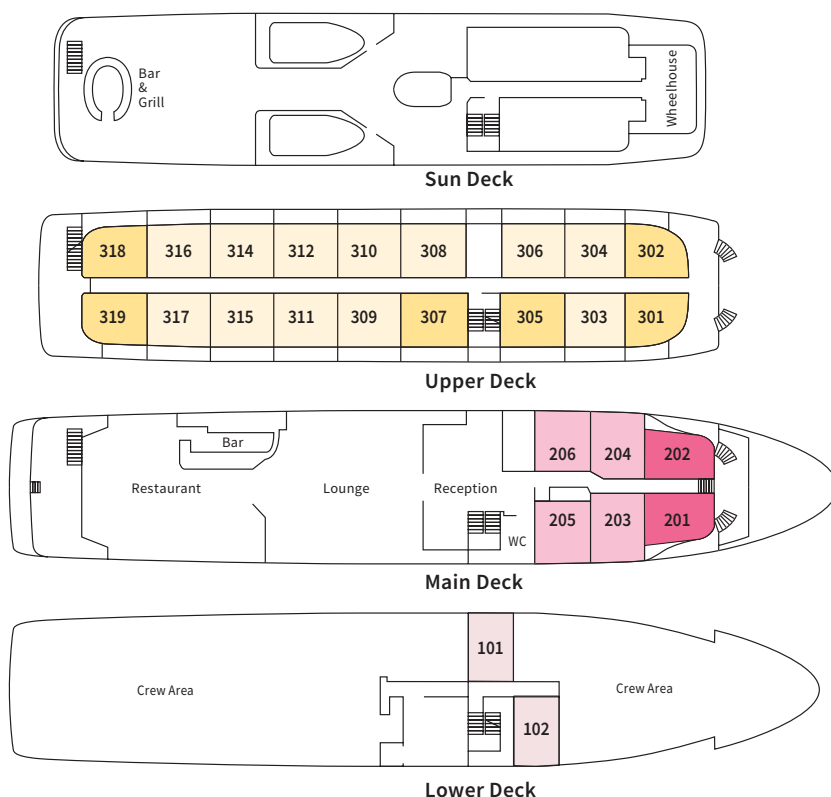
During your travels in the Mediterranean—including the Aegean and Adriatic seas and French and Italian Rivas—you'll be cruising aboard one of our 50-passenger small ships, rated excellent by 96% of travelers. The M/V *Athena*, M/V *Artemis*, and M/V *Arethusa* were designed and built to carry just two groups of 20–25 (average of 22) travelers, each with its own local Trip Experience Leader. These ships are the perfect size to navigate the islands and shores of the Mediterranean—and then slip into the smaller ports and harbors for the night, well away from the larger cruise ships.



SHIPBOARD FEATURES

- **Restaurant with single, open seating:** Savor regionally-inspired dishes or American favorites during all meals.
- **Comfortable lounge:** Relax with old friends and new, and participate in onboard discussions and lectures.
- **Complimentary beverages:** Enjoy house beer and house wine—as well as soft drinks—at any time of day while onboard.
- **Wireless Internet access:** Connect online in cabins and common areas. *Please note: Connectivity may be limited at certain points throughout your cruise.*
- **Outdoor common areas:** Relish coastal views from your seat on the Sun Deck—perhaps with a cocktail from the outdoor bar.
- **English-speaking crew:** Enjoy dedicated attention from our international staff throughout your voyage. Plus, all shipboard announcements are made in English for your convenience.

MEDITERRANEAN SMALL SHIPS



CABIN CATEGORIES

	A	Cabin with private balcony – 150-170 sq. ft.
	B	Cabin with private balcony – 150-170 sq. ft.
	C	Cabin with portholes – 160 sq. ft.
	D	Cabin with portholes – 160 sq. ft.
	S	Single cabin with portholes – 140 sq. ft.

Registry: Malta

Length: 193 ft.

Beam: 35 ft.

Draft: 10 ft.

Cabin Size: 150-170 sq. ft., with 2 single cabins of 140 sq. ft.

Number of Cabins: 26

Passenger Capacity: 50

Built: 2007

International crew: 21

Passenger Decks: 3

Group Size: 25 travelers, maximum, with 1 Trip Experience Leader

Stairs, no elevator

This ship complies with the latest international and U.S. Coast Guard safety regulations and is outfitted with the most current navigational and communications technology. It has retractable fin stabilizers to help reduce discomfort during rough seas.

CABIN FEATURES

- 24 double-occupancy cabins from 150–170 sq. ft.; 2 single-occupancy cabins at 140 sq. ft.
- All outside-facing with either portholes or a balcony
- Two single beds (convertible to one full); one single bed in single-occupancy cabins
- Wireless Internet access, closet, bed-side tables with lamps, desk with mirror, flat-screen TV, telephone, safe, mini-refrigerator, individually controlled air-conditioning, and dual electrical outlets
- Private bath with shower, hair dryer, and toiletries



Cabin on the Upper Deck of the M/V Athena

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS & ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Your Passport

- Must be in good condition
- Must be valid for at least 6 months after your scheduled return to the U.S.
- Must have the required number of blank pages (details below)
- The blank pages must be labeled “Visas” at the top. Pages labeled “Amendments and Endorsements” are not acceptable

Need to Renew Your Passport?

Contact the National Passport Information Center (NPIC) at **1-877-487-2778**, or visit the U.S. Department of State’s official website at **www.travel.state.gov** for information on obtaining a new passport or renewing your existing passport. The U.S. Department of State allows for passport renewal by mail or, for applicable citizens, renewal online. We advise you review the process and requirements for online passport renewal on the official website.

You may also contact our recommended visa service company, PVS International, at **1-800-556-9990** for help with your passport.

Please note: Your passport should be valid for at least 6 months to join this trip.

Recommended Blank Pages

Please confirm that your passport has enough blank pages for this adventure.

- **Main trip only:** You will need 4 blank passport pages.
- **Greece: Athens and Olympia:** No additional blank pages are needed.
- **Turkey: Cappadocia and Ankara:** No additional blank pages are needed.
- **Both a pre- and a post-trip extension:** No additional blank pages are needed.
- **Stopover in Amsterdam, Helsinki, Munich, or Rome:** You will need to add 2 additional pages to the applicable total listed above.
- **Stopover in Barcelona, Copenhagen, Istanbul, London, Madrid, or Paris:** You will need to add an additional page to the applicable total listed above.

Visa Required

We’ll be sending you information with instructions, application forms, and fees about 100 days prior to your departure. In the meantime, we’re providing the information below as a guideline on what to expect. This information is for U.S. citizens only. All visas and fees are subject to change.

- **Europe (Greece):** Starting in 2025, U.S. citizens will be required to fill out an online European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS) visa-waiver to enter countries in the European Union. There is no confirmed start date for the ETIAS at the time of printing. The ETIAS will be valid for 3 years.
- **Turkey (extensions or stopover):** No visa required.
- **United Kingdom (stopover only):** The United Kingdom requires an Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) for entry. This includes entry to England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. You will need an ETA if the UK is your final destination or if you are transiting through a UK airport. The ETA will be valid for 2 years.

Traveling Without a U.S. Passport?

If you are not a U.S. citizen, or if your passport is from any country other than the U.S., it is your responsibility to check with your local consulate, embassy, or a visa services company about visa requirements. We recommend the services of PVS International, a national visa service located in Washington D.C.; they can be reached at **1-800-556-9990** or **www.pvsinternational.org**.

Traveling With a Minor?

Some governments may require certain documentation for minors to enter and depart the country or to obtain a visa (if applicable). For further detail on the required documentation, please contact your local embassy or consulate.

Emergency Photocopies of Key Documents

We recommend you carry color photocopies of key documents including the photo page of your passport plus any applicable visas, air itinerary, credit cards (front and back), and an alternative form of ID. Add emergency phone numbers like your credit card company and the number for your travel protection plan. Store copies separate from the originals.

If you plan to email this information to yourself, please keep in mind that email is not always secure; consider using password protection or encryption. Also email is not always available worldwide. As an alternative, you could load these documents onto a flash drive instead, which can do double-duty as a place to backup photos during your trip.

Overseas Taxes & Fees

This tour may have taxes and fees that cannot be included in your airline ticket price because you are required to pay them in person onsite. All taxes are subject to change without notice and can be paid in cash (either U.S. or local currency).

RIGORS, VACCINES & GENERAL HEALTH

Is This Adventure Right for You?

Please review the information below prior to departing on this adventure. We reserve the right for our Trip Experience Leaders to modify participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home, if their condition would adversely affect the health, safety, or enjoyment of themselves or of other travelers.

GROUP SIZE

- This adventure has a maximum group size of 25 travelers with a local Trip Experience Leader exclusive to O.A.T.
- Please note that there may be large crowds at certain iconic sites. Your Trip Experience Leader will get priority admissions if possible, and make slight changes to your itinerary in order to take advantage of less busy times to visit.

PACING

- 16 days, with 7 nights aboard a small ship, one three-night hotel stay, two two-night hotel stays, and one single-night hotel stay

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

- Walk at least 3 miles unassisted and participate in 6–8 hours of physical activities each day
- Our activities include up to 3.5 miles of walking on uneven surfaces uphill, with several sets of stairs, an equivalent of 6 to 10 floors consecutively in Delphi and around 100 steps at the monastery at Meteora.
- Agility, balance, and strength are required for possible rough seas
- Not accessible for travelers using wheelchairs or scooters
- Travelers using walkers, crutches, or other mobility aids must travel with a companion who can assist them, and may not be able to participate in all activities
- We reserve the right for Trip Experience Leaders to restrict participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home, if their limitations impact the group's experience

TERRAIN & TRANSPORTATION

- Uneven walking surfaces, unpaved paths, hills and rocky slopes, and stairs
- Gangway incline can be steep when docked at a pier
- Travel by 50-passenger small ship, 34-seat coach, and cable car
- Your small ship does not have elevators onboard

- Your ship captain will recommend docking or tendering to the Greek Islands depending on rough seas
- You must be cleared by a country's local port authorities before disembarking
- Weather conditions and tides may require adjustments to your itinerary

CLIMATE

- Daytime temperatures range from 65–85°F during early summer and 75–100°F during late summer; June–August are warmest months

Restrictions for Optional Tour: Ballooning over Cappadocia

NOTE: This optional tour is only offered during the Cappadocia extension.

You must be physically able to climb in and out of the balloon basket (sides are 42" high), stand unassisted for an hour, and be able to adopt a bended knee/seated position for landing. You should not fly if: you've had recent surgery, have severe back or hip problems, are frail, have mobility problems, have certain pre-existing conditions (epilepsy, osteoporosis, etc) – among other restrictions. (Note also that there is a supplemental fee for passengers weighing more than 252 lbs.) Please contact our Traveler Support Team at 1-800-221-0814 for details.

Flights are regulated by the Civil Aviation Law under a public transport license and the balloon pilot is the final arbiter of whether to fly or not. Common reasons for not flying are weather/wind conditions that may not be obviously bad. A poor forecast can cancel flights on a seemingly perfect morning; wind speeds at altitude may be outside the balloons capabilities, or in wrong directions – but invisible from the ground. Rain and poor visibility are also deterrents. Disappointing as a cancellation may be, the decision always considers the safety of the passengers first.

Steps to Take Before Your Trip

Before you leave on this adventure, we recommend the following:

- Check with the CDC for their recommendations for the countries you'll be visiting. You can contact them online at **www.cdc.gov/travel** or by phone at **1-800-232-4636**.
- Have a medical checkup with your doctor at least 6 weeks before your trip.
- Pick up any necessary medications, both prescription and over-the-counter.
- Have a dental and/or eye checkup. (Recommended, but less urgent)

No Vaccines Required

Recommended Vaccines

At the time of writing there were no required vaccines for this trip. The CDC recommends that all travelers be up to date on their routine vaccinations and on basic travel vaccines like Hepatitis A and Typhoid, but these are suggestions only. However, this could change in future so we encourage you to check with the CDC yourself before meeting with your doctor.

Medications for This Trip

Also, when you visit your doctor, get a prescription for an antibiotic medication for gastrointestinal illness. In addition, you should ask your doctor for a prescription for a pain medication. You might need this in the unlikely event of an injury in a location where medical attention would be delayed. Our staff do not carry prescription medications.

Malaria Medication Not Needed

Occasionally, we will receive questions about the need to get anti-malaria pills for Turkey. According to the CDC, the risk of malaria in Turkey is “very low” and not an issue at all on a typical cruise itinerary like this trip.

Traveling with Medications

- **Pack medications in your carry-on bag** to avoid loss and to have them handy.
- **Keep medicines in their original, labeled containers** for a quicker security screen at the airport and a better experience if you get stopped by customs while overseas.
- **Bring copies of your prescriptions**, written using the generic drug name rather than a brand name to be prepared for any unforeseen loss of your medications.

We recommend checking with the State Department for medication restrictions by country: **travel.state.gov** (Go to “Find International Travel Information”, select “Country Information”, then enter the country into the search bar; if you don’t see any medications specifically mentioned under the “Health” section, then you can presume major U.S. brands should be OK).

Staying Healthy on Your Trip

Jet Lag Tips

- Start your trip well-rested.
- Begin a gradual transition to your new time zone before you leave or switch to your destination time zone when you get on the plane.
- Attempt to sleep and eat according to the new schedule.
- Avoid heavy eating and drinking caffeine or alcoholic beverages right before—and during—your flight.

- Drink plenty of water and/or fruit juice while flying
- Stretch your legs, neck, and back periodically while seated on the plane.
- After arrival, avoid the temptation to nap.
- Don't push yourself to see a lot on your first day.
- Try to stay awake your first day until after dinner.

Allergies

If you have any serious allergies or dietary restrictions, we advise you to notify us at least 30 days prior to your departure. Please call our Travel Counselors at **1-800-221-0814**, and we will communicate them to our regional office. Every effort will be made to accommodate you.

Water

- Tap water aboard ship and in Athens is safe for drinking, however if you know that your stomach is particularly sensitive to changes in diet/water you may want to drink bottled water instead.
- Outside of Athens, we recommend that you drink bottled water.
- Tap water in Turkey is usually safe, but many travelers opt for better-tasting bottled water, which is readily available (but sometimes pricey in the most popular travel areas).

Food

- We've carefully chosen the restaurants for your group meals.
- Be very careful with food sold from vendors on the street, and with uncooked fruit and other foods. Fruit that you peel yourself is usually safe—avoid lettuce and other unpeeled produce.

MONEY MATTERS: LOCAL CURRENCY & TIPPING GUIDELINES

Top Three Tips

- **Carry a mix of different types of payments**, such as local currency, an ATM card, and a credit card.
- **Traveler's checks are not recommended.** They can be difficult to exchange and the commission fee for cashing them is quite high. It's more practical to view them as a last resort in the event of a special situation.
- **In general, you will not be able to pay with U.S. dollars on this trip;** you will need local currency instead.

Local Currency

For current exchange rates, please refer to an online converter tool like www.xe.com/currencyconverter, your bank, or the financial section of your newspaper.

Euro Countries: European Euro (€)

Turkey: Turkish lira (TL)

How to Exchange Money

If you want to exchange money before your trip, you can usually do so through your bank or at an exchange office. Your departure airport in the U.S., a travel agent, or an AAA office are also possible outlets. Or you can wait and change money on the trip instead—but it might be helpful to arrive with some local currency in case you run into a bank holiday or an “out of order” ATM.

On your trip, the easiest way is to withdraw funds from a local ATM. The ATM will give you local money and your bank at home will convert that into U.S. dollars.

You can also exchange cash at some hotels, large post offices, and money exchange offices. To exchange cash, you'll usually need your passport and bills in good condition (not worn, torn, or dirty). New bills (post 2004) are best.

Please note that many banks in Europe will only exchange money for their own customers. Never exchange money on the street. All exchange methods involve fees, which may be built into the conversion rate; ask beforehand.

ATMs

When using the ATM, keep in mind that it may only accept cards from local banks, and may not allow cash advances on credit cards; you might need to try more than one ATM or more than one card. Many banks will charge a set fee or a percentage fee each time you use a foreign ATM. We

recommend that you check with your bank before you depart. Don't forget to memorize the actual digits of your card's PIN number (many keypads at foreign ATMs do not include letters on their keys—they only display numbers.)

In most countries, ATMs are widely available in major cities. If you are in a rural location, it will likely be harder to find an ATM. If you are visiting a country that has different expectation for ATMs, they will be listed below.

Greece: ATMs are common throughout Greece.

Turkey: ATMs are common throughout large cities and small towns in Turkey.

Credit & Debit Cards

While traveling, most countries and major cities will accept credit cards. We suggest that you bring one or two, especially if you are planning a large purchase (artwork, jewelry). We also suggest that you bring more than one brand of card (i.e. Visa, MasterCard, American Express) if possible, as not all are accepted around the world. If you are visiting a country that does not commonly accept credit cards, they will be listed below.

Greece: Credit cards are widely accepted in Greece, but street vendors will require cash. Some small shops and restaurants may also require cash so it is always good to ask before making a purchase.

Turkey: Credit cards are widely accepted in Turkey, but street vendors and small shops may require cash.

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Notify Card Providers of Upcoming Travel

Many credit card companies and banks have fraud alert departments that will freeze your card if they see suspicious charges—such as charges or withdrawals from another country. To avoid an accidental security block, it is a good idea to notify your credit card company and/or bank you will be using your cards abroad. You can do this by calling their customer service number a week or two before your departure. Some banks or credit card companies will also let you do this online.

You should also double-check what phone number you could call if you have a problem with a card while you are abroad. Don't assume you can use the 1-800 number printed on the back of your card—most 1 800 numbers don't work outside of the U.S.!

On Board Ship: Two Separate Bills Will be Issued

- **Shipboard account:** This bill is for any on board purchases (drinks, souvenirs, etc.) and is calculated in Euros. This bill is payable at the front desk by cash or credit/debit card only. For cash, we accept only Euros. For credit/debit cards, we accept MasterCard and Visa. Other forms of payment, such as checks, Discover, and American Express are not accepted.

- **Optional tour account:** This bill is for any optional tours taken during the trip and is calculated in U.S. dollars. This bill is paid with your Trip Experience Leader (they will have you fill out a form) by credit/debit card only; other forms of payments such as cash and checks are not accepted. For more information on optional tours—including which cards we accept for payment—see the “Preparing for Your Trip” chapter.

***Please note:** Payments made by credit card may take up to three months to process. We ask that you use a credit card that will not expire until three months after your trip ends. Because our headquarters are in Boston, the charges may appear to be from Boston or might be labeled as “OPT Boston” (depending on your credit card company).*

Exchange Services

Due to international banking laws, we are not able to exchange money onboard the ship. If you need to obtain local currency, please see the “How to Exchange Money” section for helpful tips and information.

Tipping Guidelines

Of course, whether you tip, and how much, is always at your own discretion. But for those of you who have asked for tipping suggestions, we offer these guidelines:

- **O.A.T. Trip Experience Leader:** It is customary to express a personal “thank you” to your Trip Experience Leader at the end of your trip. As a guideline, many travelers give \$10–\$14 USD (or equivalent in local currency) per person for each day their Trip Experience Leader is with them. *Please note that these tips can only be in cash. If you are taking any of the optional extensions, your Trip Experience Leader during the extension(s) may not be the same as the one on your main trip.*
- **Shipboard Crew:** We recommend a flat tip of \$16–\$18 U.S. per traveler, per day. You’ll give this tip once—at the end of your cruise—and it will be pooled among the entire crew. **Policy Update:** *Due to international banking laws, we are no longer able to process crew tips on a credit card; crew tips can only be in the form of cash.*
- **Housekeeping at Hotels:** We recommend \$1 per traveler, per day. (This is for hotels only; on the ship Housekeeping are part of crew, so you don’t need to tip them separately.)
- **Included in Your Trip Price:** Gratuities are included for local guides and motorcoach drivers on your main trip, extensions, and all optional tours.

AIR, OPTIONAL TOURS & STAYING IN TOUCH

Land Only Travelers & Customized Air

Quick Definitions

- **Land Only:** You will be booking your own international flights. Airport transfers are not included.
- **Air-Inclusive:** You booked international air with us. Airport transfers are included as long as you didn't customize your trip's dates (see next bullet).
- **Arrive Early or Stopover (select adventures only):** If you chose one of these Customization options and purchased air through O.A.T, accommodations and airport transfers are included. However, if you chose one of our Customization options, but did not purchase air through O.A.T., accommodations are included, but airport transfers are not. If you chose one of our customization options, and purchase air through O.A.T. but not the accommodations, the airport transfers are not included. We have included transfer options below.
- **Customization on Your Own:** If you have not purchased air through O.A.T. and decided to arrive early, stay longer, or stop in a connecting city on your own, you are responsible for airport transfers and accommodations. For your convenience, a preliminary list of your included hotels is available on your My Planner at www.oattravel.com/myplanner under "My Reservations" to help you with selecting a hotel for your additional time.

Air Inclusive Travelers

If you have purchased international air with us, there are some points that may be helpful for you to know.

- **Flying with a Travel Companion:** If you're traveling with a companion from a different household, and both of you are beginning and ending your trip at the same airport on the same dates, let us know you'd like to travel together and we'll make every effort to arrange this (please note, however, that this is not always possible). If you request any changes to your flights, please be sure that both you and your companion tell us that you still want to fly together.
- **Selecting Your Seats:** If your airline allows pre-assigned seats, you will be able to select and view them directly from the airline's website after booking. Some airlines will not allow seat confirmation until your reservation is ticketed 45-30 days prior to departure, and/or they may charge a nominal fee. You may locate your itinerary on an airline's website utilizing the Record Locator Number found on the Air Itinerary in your My Planner.

Airport Transfers Can Be Purchased

For eligible flights, airport transfers may be purchased separately as an optional add-on, subject to availability. To be eligible, your flight(s) must meet the following requirements:

- You must fly into or fly home from the same airport as O.A.T. travelers who purchased included airfare.
- Your flight(s) must arrive/depart on the same day that the group arrives or departs.
- If you are arriving early, you must have arranged the hotels through our Arrive Early personalization option

Airport transfers can be purchased up to 45 days prior to your departure; they are not available for purchase onsite. To learn more, or purchase airport transfers, please call our Travel Counselors at **1-800-221-0814**.

If you don't meet the requirements above, you'll need to make your own transfer arrangements. We suggest the Rome to Rio website as a handy resource: www.rome2rio.com

Optional Tours

Optional tours are additional add-on tours that allow you to personalize your adventure by tailoring it to your tastes and needs. And if you decide not to join an optional tour? Then you'll have free time to relax or explore on your own—it's about options, not obligations.

What You Need to Know

- All optional tours are subject to change and availability.
- Optional tours that are reserved with your Trip Experience Leader can be paid for using credit/debit cards only. We accept MasterCard, Visa, and Discover credit cards; we can also take MasterCard or Visa debit cards as long as the card allows you to sign for purchases. (You won't be able to enter a PIN.)
- To ensure that you are charged in U.S. dollars, your payment will be processed by our U.S. headquarters in Boston. This process can take up to three months, so we ask that you only use a card that will still be valid three months after your trip is over. The charge may appear on your credit card statement as being from Boston, MA or may be labeled as "OPT Boston".
- Your Trip Experience Leader will give you details on the optional tours while you're on the trip. But if you'd like to look over descriptions of them earlier, you can do so at any time by referring to your Day-to-Day Itinerary (available online by signing into My Planner at www.oattravel.com/myplanner).

Communicating with Home from Abroad

Cell Phones

If you want to use your cell phone on the trip, check with your phone provider to see if your phone and service will work outside of the U.S. It may turn out to be cheaper to rent an international phone or buy a SIM card onsite. If you want to use a local SIM, just make certain your phone can accept one.

Calling Apps

Another option is to use a smartphone app like Skype or FaceTime. These services are usually less expensive than making a traditional call, but you'll need a Wi-Fi connection and the calls may count towards your phone plan's data allowance. Many smartphones—and some tablets or laptops—come with one of these apps pre-installed or you can download them for free from the appropriate apps store.

Calling Cards and 1-800 Numbers

When calling the U.S. from a foreign country, a prepaid calling card can be useful because it circumvents unexpected charges from the hotel. Calling cards purchased locally are typically the best (less expensive, more likely to work with the local phones, etc.).

One reminder: Do not call U.S. 1-800 numbers outside the continental United States. This can result in costly long distance fees, since 1-800 numbers do not work outside the country.

Internet and Email

Most hotels in Turkey and Athens have Internet services available, some for free, some based on a fee for use. Many hotels provide complimentary WiFi in a common area, like the lobby or reception, but not in the guest rooms. Internet cafes are also available at different points throughout your trip. You can either bring your own device during the trip and use WiFi where it is available, or leave it at home and rely on places that provide computers, like a hotel with a business center or Internet cafes. Internet access, however, is not available is on board your ship.

How to Call Overseas

When calling overseas from the U.S., dial 011 for international exchange, then the country code (indicated by a plus sign: +), and then the number. Note that foreign phone numbers may not have the same number of digits as U.S. numbers; even within a country the number of digits can vary depending on the city and if the phone is a land line or cell phone.

Greece: +30

Turkey: +90

PACKING: WHAT TO BRING & LUGGAGE LIMITS

Luggage Limits

MAIN TRIP LIMITS	
Pieces per person	One checked bag and one carry-on bag per person.
Weight restrictions	Varies by airline. The current standard is 50 lbs for checked bags and 15 lbs for carry-on bags.
Size Restrictions	Varies by airline. Measured in linear inches (length+width+depth). Generally, 62 linear inches is the checked bag limit; carry-on limit is 45 linear inches.
Luggage Type	A sturdy, fabric-sided suitcase with built-in wheels and lockable zippers is recommended.

TRIP EXTENSION(S) LIMITS
If you are taking the Ancient Glories: Olympia, Nafplion & Athens extension, the luggage limits are the same as the main trip. If you are taking the Ankara & Cappadocia, Turkey extension, checked luggage will be limited to 44 lbs and carry-on bags are limited to 17 lbs.

REMARKS/SUGGESTIONS
One suitcase and one carry-on bag per person: Due to the space limitations on bus transfers, you'll be restricted to one suitcase and one carry-on bag per person. This is to ensure that we have room for everyone's luggage. We ask that you abide by this limit to avoid inconveniencing your fellow travelers and prevent additional airlines luggage fees (which are your responsibility). Most airlines now charge to check more than one suitcase per person for flights to Europe and other international flights. Luggage rules: Luggage rules and limits are set by governmental and airline policy. Enforcement of the rules may include spot checks or may be inconsistent. However one thing is the same across the board: If you are found to have oversized or overweight luggage, you will be subject to additional fees, to be assessed by—and paid to—the airline in question.

Don't Forget:

- **These luggage limits may change.** If the airline(s) notify us of any changes, we will include an update in your Final Documents booklet.
- It's a good idea to reconfirm baggage restrictions and fees directly with the airline a week or so prior to departure. For your convenience, we maintain a list of the toll-free numbers for the most common airlines on our website in the FAQ section.
- **Baggage fees are not included in your trip price;** they are payable directly to the airlines.
- The luggage limits above are based on your regional flights, which may be less than your international flights. Even if your international airline offers a larger weight limit, you will need to pack according to the lower restrictions.

Your Luggage

- **Checked Luggage:** Consider a duffel bag or soft-sided suitcase. Look for one with heavy nylon fabric, wrap-around handles, built-in wheels, and a heavy duty lockable zipper. Due to space limitations on our motorcoaches, you are allowed one piece of checked luggage per person. Porterage at airports and hotels is provided for **one** bag per person. All bags should have luggage tags.
- **Carry-on Bag:** You are allowed one carry-on bag per person. We suggest a tote or small backpack that can be used as both a carry-on bag for your flight and to carry your daily necessities—water bottle, camera, etc—during your daily activities.
- **Locks:** For flights that originate in the U.S., you can either use a TSA-approved lock or leave your luggage unlocked. Outside of the U.S. we strongly recommend locking your luggage as a theft-prevention measure.

Clothing Suggestions: Functional Tips

- **Travel light:** A good rule of thumb is to gather together everything you want to bring; then take half of that. To have a varied travel wardrobe, yet keep your luggage light, we recommend you select a color scheme and pack color-coordinated clothing items that can be mixed to create different outfits.
- **Consider clothing designed for travel, sports, or camping:** With modern fabrics, lightweight packing for comfort and protection through a wide range of weather is easy.
- **Plan to dress in layers on shore excursions.** Be prepared for a variety of weather conditions: warm days with sun, chilly temperatures with showers, and evenings that could dip into the 40s or 50s, depending on your travel season.
- **Bring rain gear:** Regardless of your month of travel, rainfall is certainly a possibility. We suggest you bring a folding umbrella and waterproof shell. Water-resistant walking shoes are advantageous in case heavy downpours pass through.

- **Good walking shoes are critical.** This program features many included tours that follow steep, unpaved or cobbled routes; and even an average day of light sightseeing or shopping can put great demands on your feet. If you prefer more ankle support, take light hiking boots. In case you get caught in the rain, we suggest you bring an extra pair of walking shoes, and rain boots or galoshes. Aboard ship, you'll want non-slip shoes with rubber soles.

Style Hints

- **Pack casual clothes:** Comfortable, informal apparel is acceptable at each of your destinations. At dinner, you will not need to wear “dressy” clothing; men do not need jackets or ties and women do not need fancy dresses. You may want one or two “smart casual” outfits for the Welcome Reception or Farewell Dinner, but it's completely up to you.
- **Dress modestly:** Some religious sites, like Orthodox churches and Muslim mosques, strongly prefer that visitors of both genders dress modestly. In this context, “modestly dressed” usually means covered from shoulders to below the knees—no shorts, no sleeveless shirts, no low or revealing necklines, and women may be required to wear skirts below the knee.
- **In many Orthodox churches or Muslim mosques, local women will cover their hair with a scarf;** as a visitor you are usually not required to do the same, but doing so would be a nice way to show respect.

Recommended Packing Lists

We have included suggestions from Trip Experience Leaders and former travelers to help you pack. These packing lists are only jumping-off points—they offer recommendations based on experience, but not requirements. Each travelers packing list may be different depending on the climate you are used to. We recommend using **www.weather.com** and consulting the “Climate” chapter of this handbook.

And don't forget a reusable water bottle—you'll need it to take advantage of any refills we offer as we are working to eliminate single-use plastic bottles on all of our trips.

Recommended Clothing

- ☐ Shirts: A mixture of short and long-sleeved shirts to layer
- ☐ Trousers, jeans, or skirts
- ☐ Comfortable walking shoes and/or water resistant shoes
- ☐ Light rain jacket/windbreaker with hood
- ☐ Sleepwear
- ☐ Socks and undergarments

- ☐ A jacket or sweater, depending on the time of year

Essential Items

- ☐ Daily essentials: toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, hairbrush or comb, shaving items, deodorant, etc.
- ☐ Spare eyeglasses/contact lenses and your prescription
- ☐ Sunglasses with a neck strap
- ☐ Sunscreen, SPF 15 or stronger
- ☐ Travel money bag or money belt
- ☐ Moisturizer, lip balm
- ☐ Wide-brim sun hat or visor
- ☐ Pocket-size tissues
- ☐ Moist towelettes (packets) and/or anti-bacterial hand lotion
- ☐ Light folding umbrella
- ☐ Photocopies of passport, air ticket, credit cards
- ☐ Camera, spare batteries, and memory cards

Medicines

- ☐ Your own prescription medicines
- ☐ Vitamins
- ☐ Cold remedies: Sudafed/Dristan
- ☐ Pain relievers: Ibuprofen/naproxen/aspirin
- ☐ Laxatives: Senokot/Ex-Lax
- ☐ Stomach upset: Pepto-Bismol/Mylanta
- ☐ Anti-diarrheal: Imodium
- ☐ Band-Aids, Moleskin foot pads

 Antibiotics: Neosporin/Bacitracin

Home-Hosted Visits

It is customary, though not necessary, to return your hosts' generosity with a small gift. If you do bring a gift, we recommend that you bring something the whole family can enjoy, or something that represents your region, state, or hometown. Get creative and keep it small—peach jelly from Georgia, maple sugar candy from New England, orange blossom soap from California; something that can be used or used up is best. When choosing a gift, be certain to consider the local culture as well. For example, we do not recommend alcohol in Muslim countries because it is forbidden in Islam, and your hosts may be religious. Not all of our adventures include a home-hosted visit; please check your final itinerary before you depart.

Electricity Abroad

When traveling overseas, the voltage is usually different and the plugs might not be the same shape.

Voltage

Electricity at hotels in Greece and Turkey is 220–240 volts. In the U.S. it is 110 volts. Most of the things a traveler will want to plug in—battery chargers, smartphones, tablets or computers—can run off both 110 and 220–240. But you should check the item or the owner's guide first to confirm this before you plug it in. Plugging a 110V U.S. appliance into 220/240V 50/60Hz service will ruin the motor. If you have something that needs 110 volts—like a shaver or a hairdryer—you can bring a transformer to change the current. (But transformers tend to burn out, so it might be better to leave whatever it is at home.)

Aboard the ship, cabins are equipped with both 110-volt and 220-volt outlets.

Plugs

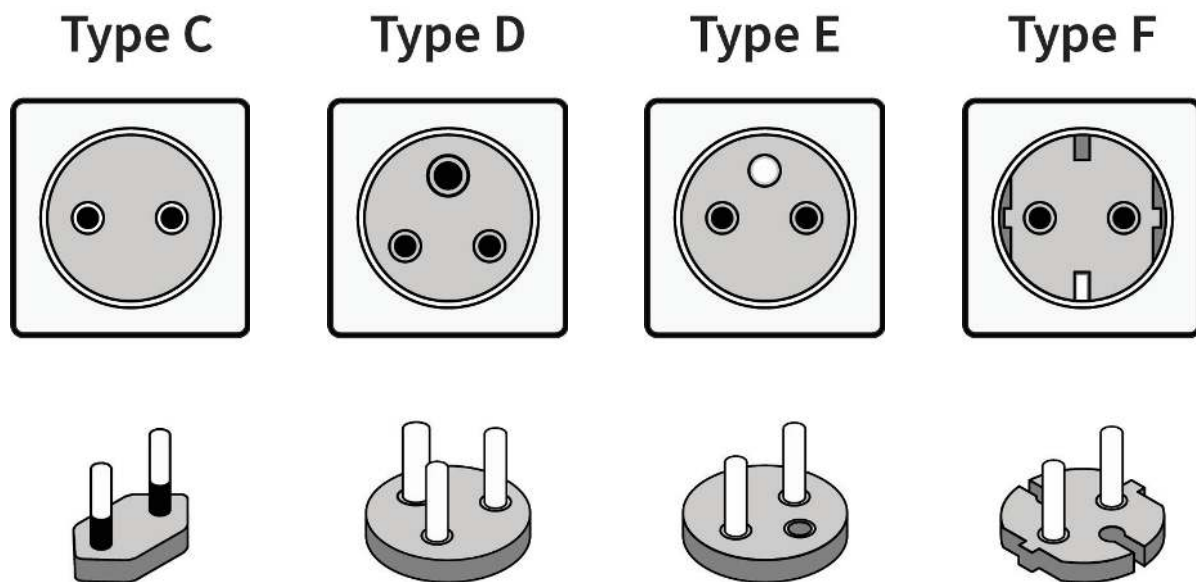
Aboard ship, there are both standard American plugs and Western European Type C plugs.

In hotels, the shape of plugs will vary from country to country, and sometimes even within a country depending on when that building was built. To plug something from the U.S. into a local socket you'll need an adapter that fits between the plug and the socket. Because you'll be visiting multiple countries on this trip, it may be easier to purchase an all-in-one, universal adapter/converter combo. Versatile and lightweight, these can usually be found at your local electronics goods or hardware stores. Sometimes you can buy them at large retailers too, like Target or Walmart. If you forget to bring an adapter, you might also find them for sale at the airport when you arrive at your destination.

Different plug shapes are named by letters of the alphabet. Standard U.S. plugs are Type A and Type B. Here is the list of plugs for the countries on this trip:

Greece: C, D, E and F

Turkey: C and E (note that C plugs fit into E sockets)



CLIMATE & AVERAGE TEMPERATURES

Greece: The coastal regions of Greece have an almost ideal climate—plenty of sunshine and dry air most of the year. During spring and early fall, days are generally very comfortable. Although temperatures usually range from 60 to 80 degrees, occasionally they reach extremes of warm and cold. From May to July beaches are less crowded than during the heart of the summer and the water can be warm enough for swimming. In spring, Athens' surrounding hills come to life with gentle hues of green and colorful wild flowers. Coastal breezes often moderate summer heat, but on calm summer days, Athens can be very hot.

Istanbul, Turkey: Geographically, western Turkey, including Istanbul, is in Europe, while the rest of the country is in Anatolia and Asia Minor. As you move from the west to the east, the altitude goes up. Due to the varied geography, you will experience a wide range of temperatures and weather conditions in Turkey. Istanbul is cooler than most of the places you'll visit, but winters are mild and snow is rare.

Olympia, Greece: Like most of Greece, Olympia has a Mediterranean climate that becomes cooler as you go further inland from the shore. Mild and rainy winters give way to warm and dry summers. Most days are sunny, but rainfall can occur.

Cappadocia, Turkey: In Turkey's central plateau region the autumn and spring seasons are typically beautiful, with sun-filled skies and pleasant temperatures in the 50s, perhaps even in the 60s. Though evenings are always cooler, due to the high altitude. Winters are cold with snow and ice patches. Summers are hot and dry with cool evenings (cool enough for a sweater).

Aegean Islands: The summer heat is even more tempered by fresh daytime breezes. During the three summer months, the *Meltemi*, a persistent northerly wind, occasionally reaches near gale force. Known by the old Greeks as the *Etesiae* northern winds, it results from a high-pressure system over the Balkan/Hungary area and a relatively low-pressure system over Turkey.

End of October is still pretty warm, however November is less predictable. The weather in March is irregular as well, but usually with more rain.. For this reason we suggest that you bring sweaters, long pants, and a rain jacket if traveling at this time of year. Also, you may find it too cool to comfortably wear sandals at this time of year.

NOTE: If you are taking one of our optional stopovers before or after your OAT adventure, please be aware the climate and temperatures might be different from what you experienced during your tour. To prepare for weather differences and pack appropriate clothing, we recommend the following world weather sites:

- www.intellicast.com
- www.weather.com
- www.wunderground.com

Climate Averages & Online Forecast

The following charts reflect the **average** climate as opposed to exact weather conditions. This means they serve only as general indicators of what can reasonably be expected. An extreme heat wave or cold snap could fall outside these ranges. As your departure approaches, we encourage you to use **www.weather.com** for a more accurate forecast of the locations you visit.

Average Daily High/Low Temperatures (°F), Humidity & Monthly Rainfall

MONTH	ATHENS, GREECE			LARISA, GREECE		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Average # of Days with Rainfall
JAN	57 to 45	75 to 63	1.9	50 to 33	90 to 69	12
FEB	57 to 45	75 to 62	1.6	54 to 34	89 to 62	12
MAR	60 to 47	76 to 60	1.6	59 to 38	90 to 59	13
APR	67 to 53	75 to 58	1.0	67 to 43	90 to 53	11
MAY	76 to 60	73 to 54	0.6	78 to 52	89 to 47	10
JUN	85 to 68	68 to 48	0.2	88 to 59	80 to 35	7
JUL	90 to 73	58 to 41	0.2	92 to 64	73 to 32	5
AUG	90 to 73	58 to 41	0.3	91 to 63	76 to 36	4
SEP	90 to 70	64 to 47	0.4	83 to 57	81 to 41	6
OCT	74 to 60	71 to 57	1.9	72 to 50	87 to 55	10
NOV	66 to 54	76 to 64	2.2	60 to 42	92 to 69	12
DEC	59 to 48	76 to 65	2.5	52 to 36	92 to 75	13

MONTH	KUSADASI, TURKEY			ISTANBUL, TURKEY		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)
JAN	55 to 39	--	6.3	46 to 37	82 to 71	3.7
FEB	57 to 41	--	4.4	47 to 37	81 to 68	2.8
MAR	60 to 42	--	3.5	51 to 40	83 to 65	2.3
APR	66 to 48	--	1.9	60 to 47	81 to 61	1.7
MAY	75 to 53	--	0.8	69 to 54	84 to 59	1.2
JUN	82 to 60	--	0.4	78 to 62	83 to 55	0.9
JUL	86 to 64	--	0.1	82 to 66	83 to 51	0.7
AUG	86 to 64	--	0.2	82 to 67	84 to 52	0.6
SEP	80 to 59	--	0.9	76 to 61	82 to 53	1.1
OCT	73 to 53	--	1.6	67 to 55	83 to 61	2.1
NOV	64 to 48	--	3.6	57 to 47	81 to 66	3.5
DEC	59 to 42	--	5.8	50 to 42	81 to 71	4.0

MONTH	KALAMATA, GREECE			ANKARA, TURKEY		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Average # of Days with Rainfall	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Average # of Days with Rainfall
JAN	60 to 42	82 to 71	14	35 to 20	86 to 71	8
FEB	60 to 42	81 to 68	12	40 to 23	84 to 62	8
MAR	63 to 44	83 to 65	13	50 to 29	84 to 51	11
APR	68 to 48	81 to 61	11	60 to 38	84 to 46	17
MAY	76 to 54	84 to 59	9	68 to 44	86 to 44	17
JUN	84 to 61	83 to 55	6	76 to 49	86 to 40	13
JUL	88 to 65	83 to 51	3	82 to 55	77 to 35	7
AUG	88 to 65	84 to 52	4	83 to 55	73 to 33	5
SEP	84 to 61	82 to 53	8	76 to 47	75 to 34	5
OCT	77 to 56	83 to 61	10	65 to 39	80 to 42	10
NOV	69 to 50	81 to 66	13	51 to 30	86 to 54	11
DEC	62 to 45	81 to 71	17	40 to 26	87 to 69	10

ABOARD YOUR SHIP: CABIN FEATURES, DINING & SERVICES ON BOARD

M/V Athena, M/V Artemis & M/V Arethusa

Owned, operated, and staffed by us, these ships were designed exclusively for our travelers, and each features a similar layout. On the main deck, you'll find our reception area and the ship's library. For relaxation, the lounge/bar features inviting leather couches and soft chairs. Topside, a sun deck has classic wooden deck chairs for admiring the scenery. When it's time for meals, our large dining area at the stern features a single seating policy. While cruising, we'll enjoy daily breakfast and lunch buffets; sit-down dinners feature international and local specialties paired with regional wines.

Included features of your Small Ship

The Ship:

- Restaurant with single open seating
- Open Sun Deck for prime viewing
- Shipboard activities
- Smoke-free environment
- All shipboard announcements made in English
- Ice machine in the lobby
- Water fountains in the lobby

All Cabins:

- All outside cabins
- Layout of 150-163 square feet (24 doubles) and 120-135 square feet (2 singles)
- Private bath with shower, hair dryer
- Color TV with movies, and a bow camera for ship-front views
- Ample closet and dresser space
- Direct-dial telephone

An important word: While our ship features larger-than-usual cabins, please keep in mind that this ship is a coastal vessel, not large ocean cruise ships. Coastal cabins, in comparison, are relatively small, and ship amenities, in general, are comfortable but not lavish.

Cabin Assignments

You will receive confirmation of your deck and/or cabin category upfront in writing; it will be on your invoice and online in My Planner at www.oattravel.com/myplanner. However, your cabin number may not be assigned until you arrive on board the ship. (This is normal procedure for ships in many parts of the world, including Europe.) If there's no cabin number on your invoice or online, you can presume it will be assigned later and communicated to you when you board.

Dining

You'll enjoy fine cuisine and excellent views in your ship's dining room, featuring a warm decor of dark woods, rich carpeting, and white-linen and china table settings. Your ship's daily service includes breakfast and lunch buffets, and a more formal dinner. Our professional chefs will create unique menus for you that feature regional specialties. Included with both lunch and dinner are complimentary drinks; you'll be able to choose from house wine, draft beer, or a selection of soft drinks. In addition, a selection of other fine wines and beer is available for purchase, starting at approximately \$20–30 per wine bottle (prices vary according to vintage). Travelers may also bring a bottle of their own favorite wine to dinner to enjoy at their table. Should you care to avail yourself of this service, there will be a corkage fee of approximately \$10 per bottle, charged to your cabin account.

Please note that if you bring your own alcohol aboard, it can only be consumed in the dining room as described above, or in your cabin. Consumption of alcohol purchased outside the ship is not permitted in the lounge or public areas. We also offer complimentary coffee and tea throughout the day, available in the lounge.

Open-table, single seating for all meals: Each meal is open seating—reservations of any kind are not accepted. Dinner has only one designated time for its open seating, announced each day aboard ship.

Dining times: Dining times for all meals may vary depending on the day's sightseeing and sailing schedule, but in general, meal times are as follows:

- Early riser breakfast: 7:00 –7:30 am
- Breakfast: 7:30–8:30 am
- Lunch: 1:00–2:00 pm
- Dinner: 7:00 pm

Special diets & celebrations: Special diets, such as low-cholesterol, vegetarian, or gluten-free, can be accommodated, as well as the recognition of an anniversary or birthday. Please call us to submit your request no later than 45 days prior to departure. Religious dietary regimens, such as kosher or halal meals, cannot be prepared aboard ship.

Dress code: The dining-room dress code is casual, though most travelers dress nicely for the Captain's Welcome Reception and Farewell Dinner.

Non-smoking policy: The entire dining room is non-smoking at all times.

Embarkation/Disembarkation

On the day of disembarkation, your cabin will no longer be available after breakfast. You may sit in the ship's lounge or on the Sun Deck until disembarkation.

Headsets

During your trip, complimentary headsets (often called “whisper receivers”) will be provided on all of your included and optional tours, so that you can hear better over ambient noise. If you use a hearing aid or have a strong preference for a particular type of headphones, we highly encourage you to bring your own headphones/ear buds with you. The plug size is usually the same as that used by smartphones, computer jacks, etc. Headsets will also be available during the pre- and post-trip extensions, but not on the transfer day to/from the main trip.

Wireless Internet Access

Limited complimentary Wireless Internet service is available on board the ship. If you want to use the Wireless Internet connection you'll need to bring your own device (laptop/tablet/netbook) — ships do not rent or loan these devices. Shipboard access is subject to the challenges of travel: ship location, signal availability, and usage volume on board will affect connectivity and speed. The ship's Internet connection demands a strong cell phone signal, which is unavailable in many of the areas we visit, and connectivity can be limited. You can expect disruptions of both long and short duration. You may be able to take advantage of available shoreside Internet cafes, or hotel access if available.

Laundry and Linen Service

Laundry service is available for a fee. Please note that neither self-service laundry facilities nor dry cleaning services are available. Towels are changed daily, but only at your request. (We use the international signal that most green hotels have adopted — if you want a towel changed, leave it on the floor or in the shower. A towel on the rack or hung up indicates you'll reuse it.) Bed linens are not changed daily. Fresh bed linens are supplied at the start of every cruise, and if the cruise is longer than two weeks they will be changed every 14 days. For cruises less than two weeks long, you'll keep the same bed linens for the duration.

Medical Care

Our entire fleet adheres to stringent European safety standards. Ships feature fully staffed reception desks for most of the day (from 7:00 AM to 10 PM) and each cabin is equipped with an emergency call button available to alert the Captain.

On Board Activities

During your cruise you'll enjoy exclusive Discovery Series events, including group activities that relate to the region, theme dinners, organized discussions, and talks on upcoming ports of call.

Recreational Facilities

These include a sun deck, lounge, library, bar and dance floor. The bar is open from 9:30 am to 11 pm, and features both complimentary drinks (soft drinks, house beer, house wine, and non-alcoholic cocktails/beer) and drinks for purchase (spirits, alcoholic cocktails, bottled beers, and a selection of wines). Prices are in Euros.

Bicycles

We're pleased to offer complimentary bicycle rentals onboard your ship for use during free time, including all of the necessary safety gear, such as a helmet, brightly-colored safety vest, and a lock. Because there is a limited supply of bicycles available, they will be offered on a first-come first-served basis. For more information or if you are interested in using one of the bicycles, please speak to the Front Desk staff or Hotel Manager onboard your ship.

Telephone Services

To make telephone calls from the ship, you will be charged on your shipboard account on the last day of the cruise. Phone calls are directly from your cabin and through satellite, and are charged per minute without regard to whether or not it is a local, international or Calling Card based call. We advise you to use it only for an emergency, as this is a satellite connection and a very expensive service (for example, calls will cost about \$10.00 per minute).

Smoking/Non-Smoking Policy

All cabins are non-smoking. Smoking is permitted only outside on the sun deck. Smoking is not allowed anywhere else on the ship.

Shore Excursions

Included during your cruise are many sightseeing tours. Other optional tours are available for purchase. We will provide information on these optional excursions on your arrival. Please note that optional tours can only be purchased with a credit card or a debit card that doesn't require a pin.

Lost & Found

Any lost or forgotten items found on board the ship will be held for 90 days from disembarkation. After 90 days, all unclaimed items will be discarded or donated.

Ship Specifications

M/V Artemis

- **History:** Built in 2008
- **Size:** 193x35 ft
- **Capacity:** 50 passengers, 21 crew members

- **Layout:** 26 cabins, 3 decks; Elevator-no

M/V *Athena*

- **History:** Built in 2007
- **Size:** 193x35 ft
- **Capacity:** 50 passengers, 21 crew members
- **Layout:** 26 cabins, 3 decks; Elevator-no

M/V *Arethusa*

- **History:** Built in 2008
- **Size:** 193x35 ft
- **Capacity:** 50 passengers, 21 crew members
- **Layout:** 26 cabins, 3 decks; Elevator-no

ABOUT YOUR DESTINATIONS: CULTURE, ETIQUETTE & MORE

O.A.T. Trip Experience Leaders: A World of Difference

During your adventure, you'll be accompanied by one of our local, Trip Experience Leaders. All are fluent in English and possess the skills, certification, and experience necessary to ensure an enriching adventure. As locals of the regions you'll explore with them, our Trip Experience Leaders provide the kind of firsthand knowledge and insight that make local history, culture, and wildlife come alive. Coupled with their unbridled enthusiasm, caring personalities, and ability to bring diverse groups of travelers together, our Trip Experience Leaders ensure that your experience with O.A.T. is one you'll remember for a lifetime.

Cruising and The Greek Islands

As any sailor will tell you: you don't command the sea – it commands you. Most of the time things go along without complications, but all cruising is subject to the vagaries of winds, tides, and water, and flexibility of mind is vital to ensure a relaxed and full experience during your cruise. Port calls to the Greek islands and on your stop in Kusadasi, particularly in high season, occur at the pleasure of the local port authority, and marine traffic can create delays that might result in some re-scheduling. More frequently visited islands – Mykonos, for instance – are very traveler-friendly. At less frequented islands you may discover that local restaurants don't accept credit cards. More shops and restaurants will be open in Mykonos on the shoulder months of the holiday season than will be open on the less frequented islands. In high season the more renowned islands will be busy and crowded; others will be more relaxed and not as congested.

Culture in the Aegean

Playground of Zeus, Apollo, and Aphrodite, birthplace of the Olympic Games, academy of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, cradle of democracy and Western literature, Greece has had a legendary influence on world culture despite its small size. From its classical capital of Athens, to a countryside speckled with grand amphitheaters and sacred temples, to the sun-soaked islands that dot its coast, it's no wonder mighty heroes and ancient thinkers found inspiration in this Mediterranean oasis. In recent years, the country has fallen on harder times: A persistent economic crisis, frictions within the European Union, and immigration issues all present ongoing challenges. But in spite of it all, Greece's indomitable spirit lives on through its most valuable asset—its people. Warm, proud, and gregarious, Greeks cling fiercely to their long-held traditions—including a love of family and a passion for their famous cuisine—while focusing on shaping their future in a modern world.

By its continent-straddling location and by conscious choice, Turkey is a true cultural crossroads. For centuries, its people have been exposed to both eastern and western traditions, and at the same time, they have aspired to define and maintain their unique national identity. It is a core concept known as Kemalism, based on secularism, modernization and democracy, and was expressed in myriad ways such as the complete separation of religion and government; refinement of the Turkish language; replacement of the Arabic alphabet with the Latin one; the

support of science and education; and a patriotism that celebrates all Turks as equal citizens. Despite a recent conservative shift in government, for the most part, the ideals of Kemalism are still widely held.

Most Turks have a very strong sense of national pride, and want the world to see their nation as tolerant and advanced. Another core concept is generosity. This goes beyond the widespread tradition of alms giving and permeates daily interactions. For example, if you compliment a Turk on an object or personal belonging, they may feel compelled to give it to you. If you offer something once, a Turk may decline your offer out of modesty and politeness. But the rules of etiquette demand that you make a second offer, which may then be accepted. Deference to others is a key element in conversations, people are naturally helpful even to strangers, and elders enjoy special respect. If you are a guest in someone's home, you will likely be offered more food than you can possibly eat. Tea drinking is not just a way to slake thirst, it is a social ritual meant to signify good will, and you will be offered tea in many interactions. The belief is that any visitor is a "guest from God."

Religion and Religious Observances

The legend of the Greek Gods has survived the centuries through art, architecture, and stories. But the country began a shift to Christianity in 49 A.D. and the religion continued to grow in popularity over the next thousand years. In 1054, a dispute between the Pope of Rome and the Patriarch of Constantinople led to what is now known as "the Great Schism," and Christianity was forever divided into two branches: Greek Orthodox and Catholicism. Today, approximately 90% of the Greek population belong to the Church of Greece (Greek Orthodox Church), the third largest branch of Christianity after Catholicism and Protestant.

The role of the Orthodox Church is closely tied with Greek culture, as it became a vehicle for preserving Greek language and traditions under the Ottoman Empire. Despite the centuries of Ottoman rule from 1453 to 1821, Greek culture and the Orthodox Church persisted and religion continues to play a major role in modern society with about 200 million followers worldwide. Although people of the Orthodox faith celebrate many of the same major holidays as other Christians, the Greek Orthodox calendar is slightly different, usually falling a week or two after. Christmas, for example, is typically celebrated on January 7 and is dwarfed by Easter as the most important holiday.

Turkey is a secular country with a majority Muslim population—about 99.8%. But this is not based on any government survey—when people are born, they are just automatically registered as Muslim unless their parents have otherwise registered them to one of the constitutionally recognized minority religions: Christianity (which includes some Catholic and Orthodox sects) and Judaism. Most Turks (80%) belong the Sunni tradition of Islam; though about 20% freely follow a uniquely Turkish form of Shi'a Islam called Alevi, though it is not a recognized minority religion.

When Kemal Ataturk established the modern Turkish state in 1923, he was adamant about secularism, believing that religion was an impediment to Turkey's modernization and democratization. For many years most Turks accepted the strict separation of Islam and public

institutions, and fundamentalism was unpopular, but recently, there has been a shift. Under the government of religious conservative Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the teaching of Islam in schools is now compulsory.

Practicing Muslims pray five times daily: dawn, noon, afternoon, sunset and evening. The exact time is listed in the local newspaper each day. The Call to Prayer, called the *ezan*, is sung or broadcast from minaret towers to remind the faithful that it is time to pray, and devout people will stop whatever they are doing, wherever they are, to observe it. If you find yourself near someone who is praying, do not stand in front of them. They are supposed to face in the direction of Mecca. And out of respect, please stay silent for the duration of the Call. Friday is the Muslim Sabbath day, but businesses usually remain open.

The biggest religious holiday is Ramadan, a month-long celebration meant to teach restraint and charity. During Ramadan, Muslims fast from dawn to dusk. This means no eating, drinking alcohol, cigarette-smoking, or even gum-chewing. Visitors are not required to fast; however, alcohol may not be served in some establishments and some restaurants may be closed. The museums and archaeological sites remain open. Each night at sunset, families and friends gather together to celebrate *iftar*—the breaking of the fast. The festivities often continue well into the night. The mosques and some streets are decorated with lanterns, special meals are prepared for the breaking of the fast, and nighttime social events and festivals are planned.

Ramadan follows a lunar calendar, so its dates change from year to year. If you're interested in checking what holidays fall during your trip, an online holiday calendar like www.timeanddate.com/holidays is a great resource.

Visiting Mosques and Churches

When visiting a mosque or church, it is polite for both men and women to be modestly dressed (no bare shoulders, no shorts, no short skirts). You will be asked to remove your shoes before entering in a mosque. Some but not all mosques require women to cover their hair. To be safe, bring a small head scarf. Typically, a mosque that requires head coverings will have pieces to lend or rent. If you happen to be in the mosque during the Call to Prayer, please stand in the back of the building while the faithful line the rows to pray; and please remain silent for the duration.

Language

It can be argued that the Greek language is perhaps one of the world's most famous, though one of the least commonly spoken, leading to the English idiom, "It's all Greek to me!" It certainly has the longest documents history, spanning more than 3,400 years. As the official language of Greece, 99% of the population speak the language. While the language may not be widely spoken, the Greek alphabet is more commonly recognizable and many common texts and literature can be traced back to Greek roots, including classics like *The Iliad*, *The Odyssey*, and the philosophical works of Aristotle.

Although native English speakers in Greece make up less than 1% of the population, English is commonly taught in schools so many people of the younger generations and those who work in travel and hospitality typically speak English as a secondary language.

The predominant (and official) language is Turkish, a Turkic language that is completely separate and distinct from Arabic, though some Arabic words have entered the lexicon. Until 1928, it was written using the Arabic alphabet, but Kemal Ataturk decreed that the Latin alphabet should be used and today that is the standard. Interestingly, today Turkish literacy rates are over 96%. The second most commonly spoken language is Kurdish, followed by Arabic and Zazaki (which is similar to Persian).

Only about 17% of Turks speak English as a second language, though the numbers are higher in major cities and among those who work in the travel and hospitality sector. The good news is that the friendliness of the Turkish people makes it easy to communicate even if you don't share a language. Any effort on your part to learn a few key words and phrases will be greatly appreciated.

Hotel Courtesy in Greece

Greek hotels do not allow food and beverages to be taken from their breakfast rooms, nor is it courteous to eat or drink food or beverages purchased elsewhere in hotel common rooms. In conformity with municipal laws to promote urban decorum, hotels do not allow hanging laundry on room balconies. Travel clotheslines, used in your bathroom, are a more private and effective solution.

The Finer Points of Turkish Etiquette

Don't let the fine points of Turkish customs worry you; Turks know that visitors can't be expected to know every detail. Much of what is considered polite in Turkey is similar to what's polite in the U.S. But as a matter of interest, our regional office has put together a list of "finer points" that might surprise you:

- Body posture is important. Sprawling, pointing the soles of your feet at someone, or keeping your legs crossed when someone speaks to you are seen as impolite.
- Even after eating, your host might press you to take more. Perversely, while it is polite to accept a first helping, it is polite to decline a second helping...at least at first. (Eventually giving in and accepting more because the food is just too good to miss is perfectly acceptable.)
- Blowing your nose loudly and in public is frowned on.
- If a piece of bread is dropped, you may see a Turk pick it up, kiss it, and touch it to their forehead. This gesture is in remembrance that bread is the stuff of life and a gift from God.

Toilets in Turkey

Although all our accommodations feature western-style toilets, some rest stops on the road and some public restrooms will have eastern-style squat toilets. For women travelers who are novices at using a squat toilet, a skirt might be easier to maneuver than trousers. (This does not mean you need to wear a skirt every day, just that it might be worthwhile to bring a skirt for days with long transfers through small villages. The other "trick" is to wear trousers, but roll up the legs.)

Public toilets may be hard to find; it is just not a common facility in this part of the world. And inevitably, when one is found it is out of toilet paper, or soap, or both. Carry a travel-sized roll of toilet paper or packets of tissues along something to clean your hands—like anti-bacterial gel or moist wipes—and you'll be prepared no matter what. Rest stops on the road will be widely spaced, and may be extremely basic. Despite their basic nature, there is often a small fee to use the restroom.

Because many buildings have older plumbing, with narrow pipes that easily clog, it is also common for public restrooms to offer a special trashcan inside the stall. Waste paper is put into the can instead of flushed. You may also see this arrangement when visiting a home.

Alcohol Consumption in Turkey

Although alcohol is forbidden by Islam, attitudes towards alcohol are more relaxed in Turkey and Central Asia than in the Middle East. In Turkey, alcohol is readily available in city restaurants and cafes, and areas that cater to foreign guests. (It is, however, heavily taxed.) Markets may not sell alcohol between 10pm and 6am (but restaurants can). You may want to try one of the local specialties—*raki* in Turkey. Just don't bring alcohol as a gift for the locals—if someone is personally strict in adhering to Islam, they won't be able to enjoy it.

Taking Photographs

When taking photos of people in most countries, be polite and ask permission to take a close-up. In many countries, you should not be taking photos of children or older women without permission. Do not take photographs of military personnel, military compounds, or other official institutions/personnel (such as police). This may result in the confiscation of your camera.

Please obey any signs regarding photos at museum or sites; the no-flash rule protects the fragile artifacts and artwork from damage by repeated exposure to light. Occasionally, there may also be a small fee levied by the museum or site for the privilege of taking photos.

Safety & Security

As you travel, exercise the same caution and awareness that you would in a large American city. Carry a one-day supply of cash, and your passport, in a travel pouch. Don't leave valuables unattended in your hotel room – use a room safe as needed. In any sort of puzzling street situation, try to keep one hand on your wallet or money belt.

Greek Cuisine

A perfect Mediterranean climate. More than 6,000 islands and no mainland location more than 90 miles from the sea. Bountiful (and mostly organic) olive groves, fruit orchards, pastures, and vineyards. With all this richness, Greece has had no reason to change or complicate its cuisine in thousand of years. Here, it is the quality and freshness of simple ingredients that makes every dish a flavorful standout. So, let's start as the Greeks do, with *mesethes*, or **mezes**. These are frequently described as appetizers and though a specific *meze* may be offered as a first course,

for most Greeks *mezes* is a separate event in and of itself. One goes out for *mezes* with friends and family, sharing various small plates of food, drinks, pastries, and conversation. You might be served one of the flavorful dishes below:

- **Pasta elias:** An olive paste to spread on breadsticks.
- **Feta:** A Greek brined white cheese that is soft and made from sheep or goat milk.
- **Kasseri:** A Greek hard cheese.
- **Sea bream:** A white fish with a rich flavor that is not too fishy. It is often served as a fillet and accompanied by baby potatoes or seasonal herbs.
- **Keftedes:** These are seasoned meatballs also accompanied by a dip.
- **Kolokythokeftedes:** Also known as zucchini fritters. These are often accompanied by *tzatziki* (yogurt, cucumber, and garlic dip), or *melitzanosalata* (eggplant dip), or *fava* (bean dip).
- **Dolmathakia or dolmas:** Are grape leaves rolled and stuffed with rice, pine nuts, meat, or other seasonings.
- **Moussaka:** A layered casserole of eggplant, ground lamb, tomato sauce, and potatoes covered in béchamel sauce and cheese, and spiced with cinnamon.
- **Pastitsio:** A lasagna-like dish made with pasta and ground beef or lamb, béchamel, cheese, cinnamon, and nutmeg.
- **Gyros and souvlaki:** These chunks or slices of seasoned grilled meat (usually lamb or pork) with chopped tomatoes and onions in pita bread, with lashings of *tzatziki* are sold in stalls everywhere.
- **Spanakopita:** A phyllo pastry layered with feta cheese and spinach.
- **Kakavia:** A specialty in the Aegean. This rockfish soup is made with cured sardines and various grilled whole fish drizzled with *ladholemono* (a lemon and oil dressing).
- **Arni me votana:** A lamb casserole with vegetables, beans, tomatoes, potatoes and herbs.
- **Kaimaki:** A sweet cream topped with nuts and honey that is famous in the Peloponnese
- **Pastitsada:** This signature dish of the Ionian islands is made with savory chicken or beef simmered in wine, cinnamon, garlic and spices. It's often served with *bucatini* pasta, a nod to the area's Venetian past.
- **Glyko kastano:** A chestnut pudding with honey and orange found in western Greece.
- **Revani:** A moist semolina cake with lemon and orange.
- **Eliopsomo:** A traditional Greek olive bread.

- **Tyropita:** This savory pastry is similar to *spanakopita*, but it's filling consists of cheese and eggs.

Turkish Cuisine

Turkey's storied gastronomic tradition is often ranked as one of the world's top three cuisines (alongside French and Chinese). Aside from Turkey's own rich agricultural bounty, its crossroads location has meant that exotic ingredients from Persia, Central Asia, Africa, the Mediterranean and beyond have graced the local diet for centuries. Then there is the technical artistry of the legendary Ottoman and Seljuk palace chefs—chefs who were often sent abroad (or imported from far-flung imperial colonies) expressly for the purpose of inventing and refining new dishes. Prepare to be delighted by dishes like these:

- **Borek:** A breakfast pastry of flaky phyllo dough filled with meat or cheese
- **Menemen:** A breakfast dish where eggs are whisked into a pot of cooked vegetables with broth that is something like a cross between scrambled eggs and stew.
- **Sulu yemek:** A traditional stew that can include any combination of vegetables and may include meat, poultry, sausages, or seafood. It is recommend you try this dish at an **ev yemekleri**, which is typically run by women and serve up home-cooked meals.
- **Hamsili pilav:** A seafood dish of oven baked rice layered with fresh anchovies.
- **Midye dolma:** A seafood dish of mussels stuffed with aromatic rice, nuts, and spices such as raisins, pine nuts, saffron, black pepper, cinnamon, red pepper flakes, parsley, and dill. Often found at a **balik restoran**, a fish and seafood restaurant.
- **Kebabs:** The most popular and well-known street food, here are dozens of varieties of these grilled (and often skewered) delicacies made of seasoned beef, lamb, or chicken. (The one thing you won't find in Turkey is pork, as it is forbidden according to the Islamic halal tradition.)
- **Pide:** A popular street food, **pide** is a flatbread-style pizza topped with your choice of **kasarli** or **peynirli** cheese, **yumurtali** (egg), **sucuklu** (sausage) and more.
- **Yaprak sarma:** A vegetarian dish of grape leaves filled with rice and seasoned with onion, mint, currants, peppers and cinnamon.
- **Taze fasulye:** A vegetarian dish of green beans simmered with tomatoes and onions
- **Dondurma:** An out-of-this-world frozen dessert made from orchid flour and a sweet, fruity resin called mastic. It's like ice cream that you eat with a knife and fork
- **Baklava:** A dessert pastry of layered phyllo dough, honey, and pistachios that is perhaps the most famous confection to come out of Turkey's imperial kitchens. It comes in several shapes and varieties: **cevizli** is with chopped walnut stuffing; **fistikli** is with pistachio nuts; **kaymakli** is with clotted cream.

Athens in Brief

City Layout and Details

Athens has two main centers: Syntagma (Constitution) Square and Omonia Square. Approximately a mile apart, these two squares are connected by two parallel avenues, Stadiou Street and Panepistimiou Street. From Syntagma Square, Mitropoleos Street leads, slightly downhill, to Monastiraki Square, near the flea market and the Plaka district. From Monastiraki Square, mile-long Athinas Street leads to Omonia Square. In the triangle formed by these three squares—Syntagma, Omonia, and Monastiraki—lies Athens's inner city, its shopping area, the central market, the main department stores, the post offices, banks, and many tavernas and restaurants.

Two helpful orientation landmarks are the Acropolis and Lycabettus Hill (the latter with the small white church and the Greek flag on top). Both are visible from most parts of the city.

Local Transportation

The Athens Metro has been dramatically improved and expanded in the recent years making it one of the most modern and efficient systems in the world. It has 3 lines, which are distinguished by the colors used in maps and signs (green, blue and red). The green line, which is the oldest and for the most part runs on the ground, connects Piraeus to Kifissia. The blue line runs from Piraeus Port to Doukissis Plakentias and the Eleftherios Venizelos International Airport, and the red line from Athoupoli to Elliniko. The first train of the day departs at 5:30 am and the last departs at 12:10 am.

There are many taxis in Athens, which can be recognized by the yellow color of the vehicles. The minimum charge is 5 euros. The taxi fare between the airport and the city center is 40 euros during the day and 50 euros at night. Radio equipped taxis are available for a small extra fee.

Istanbul in Brief

City Layout

European Istanbul is divided by the Golden Horn, an estuary, into two principal regions: the Old City, which is southwest of the Golden Horn, and Beyoglu (BEHY-oh-loo), which is northeast of it and more modern. Two bridges span the Golden Horn—the Ataturk and the Galata—and serve as the major thoroughfares that connect these two different sections of town. Ferries also run between them, and are a primary transportation mode for locals who live on one side and work in the other.

The Old City was part of the site chosen by Constantine the Great for his capital, and contains most of the historic sight of Istanbul. Here you'll find the Blue Mosque, Sancta Sophia, Topkapi Palace, Hippodrome, and the Grand Bazaar. Istanbul University is also located in the Old City.

Modern Beyoglu is home to most of the city's luxury hotels, banks, hospitals, and consulates. This district's central hub is Taksim Square, from which many avenues branch off and lead to various sections of the new city. Cumhuriyet Caddesi, a wide, tree-lined road, offers sophisticated

nightclubs and fancy restaurants. Istiklal Caddesi (Independence Avenue), the main street in Beyoglu, is now a pedestrian mall. Leading off Istiklal Caddesi are numerous atmospheric side streets and alleys that are fascinating to explore. The 19th-century palace of Dolmabahce is situated at the edge of Beyoglu, on the shores of the Bosphorus.

Local Transportation

Metro: Istanbul's ambitious plan to have a modern rapid-transit system is well under way. The system runs from about 6 am to a little past midnight. The fare is less than U.S.\$1.

The Tunnel was the first underground railway line opened in 1875. Still today this short line is important for urban transportation. Trains operate every 3.5 minutes and a trip takes about 3 minutes. The line runs from Karakoy to Tunel upper station and is linked to Taksim Square by a vintage tram.

The Light rail line was built in 1989, and runs from Aksaray towers in the western suburbs, to Yenibosna. It has a total length of 18 km with 16 stops. Aksaray, Emniyet, Ulubatli, Bayrampasa, Sagmacilar, Kartaltepe, Otogar, Esenler, Terazidere, Davutpasa, Merter, Zeytinburnu, Bakirkoy, Bahcelievler, Atakoy, Yeni Bosna.

The Modern tram line was built in 1990 and runs through the older parts of the city.

The Full metro line was built in 2000 and runs from Taksim to 4 Levent. It has a total length of 7 km with 6 stations. Taksim, Osmanbey, Sisli, Gayrettepe, Levent, 4 Levent. Recently a new line was opened which runs from Kabatas to Taksim Square or vice versa.

Taxi: Thousands of yellow taxis throng Istanbul's streets. Most are powered by clean-burning natural gas, and all have digital meters, which the drivers are required by law to run. That doesn't, however, mean they always do. If your driver doesn't start the taksimetre, or tries to haggle the start of the trip instead of running it, just point to the meter emphatically and say Taksimetre! (TAHK-see-MEHT-treh). This will ensure you are charged the correct price.

Turks don't tip taxi drivers, they round up the fare. If it ends up being U.S. \$4.75, a Turk will round it up to \$5. In many cases if the fare is US \$5.25, the driver will require only U.S. \$5, and not bother with the change. As a foreigner, your driver may assume you'll give a tip, but you needn't unless the driver provides some special service, such as helping with lots of heavy luggage.

Cuisine: Specialties of Istanbul

In Istanbul, seafood is especially popular, and you'll find lots of small restaurants along the Bosphorus Strait and Galata Bridge that sell local favorites like *balık-ekmek* (fish sandwich), *barbunya* (red mullet), and *kilic baligi* (swordfish).

Shopping: What to Buy, Customs, Shipping & More

There may be scheduled visits to local shops during your adventure. There is no requirement to make a purchase during these stops, and any purchase made is a direct transaction with the shop in question, subject to the vendor's terms of purchase. O.A.T. is not responsible for purchases you make on your trip or for the shipment of your purchases.

Returns

If you discover an issue with an item, you should contact the vendor directly and expect that any resolution will take longer than it would in the U.S. We recommend that you keep a copy of all your receipts, invoices, or contracts, along with the shop's contact information. Keep in mind, local practice may vary from U.S. standards, so don't assume that you have a certain number of days after the purchase to speak up or that you are guaranteed a refund.

Crafts & Souvenirs

Greece

Specialties include handicrafts, gold and silver jewelry, embroidered shirts and dresses, fabrics, flokati rugs of fluffy sheep wool, pottery, onyx, marble, jars containing traditional marmalade, herbs (oregano and thyme), honey bars and jars of honey, olive oil, and traditional beauty products made from olives. These are available in the main shopping area downtown around Syntagma, Omonia, and Kolonaki squares as well as in Monastiraki, the flea market, where shopping sometimes involves bargaining. Some of the best jewelry comes from Ioannina, ceramics from Sifnos and Skopelos, and embroidery from Skryos, Crete, Lefkas, and Rhodes. Thessaly and Epirus regions specialize in flokati rugs.

Turkey

Traditional souvenirs include beautiful handmade rugs, tiles, pottery, gold jewelry, and products made of copper, silk, and leather.

Bargaining: In Turkey, some shops have fixed prices. In the open-air markets prices are usually flexible and negotiating is normal. The only rule is that if you make an offer, you should be prepared to buy at that price. Bring a mix of small bills so that you can pay in exact change.

Tip: Street vendors have been known to be persistent, so if you really aren't interested, it is best not to start the bargaining process, or even make eye contact.

Antiques: Items that are 100 years old or older are not allowed to leave Turkey. If someone offers you an antique item for sale, keep in mind that if it is truly more than 100 years old, they should not be selling it to you. They are either ignorant of the customs laws or the item is really not as old as they say it is.

U.S. Customs Regulations & Shipping Charges

For all things related to U.S. Customs, the ultimate authority is the U.S. Bureau of Customs & Border Protection. Their website, **www.cbp.gov** has the answers to the most frequently asked questions. Or you can call them at **1-877-227-5511**.

The top three points to know are:

- At time of writing, your personal duty-free allowance is \$800 for items brought with you. Items totaling more than \$800 are subject to duty fees.
- **Items shipped home are always subject to duty when received in the U.S.** Even when the shop has offered to include shipping and duties in the price, this typically means shipping to the nearest customs facility and payment of the export duties—not door-to-door shipping or payment of the import duties. All additional duties or shipping charges would be your responsibility. Unless an item is small enough to send by parcel service (like FedEx), chances are you will need to arrange shipping or pick-up once the item is in the U.S. and will need to pay customs duties.
- It is illegal to import products made from endangered animal species. U.S. Customs & Border Protection will seize these items, as well as most furs, coral, tortoise shell, reptile skins, feathers, plants, and items made from animal skins.

DEMOGRAPHICS & HISTORY

Greece

Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 50,949 square miles
- **Capital:** Athens
- **Population:** 10,775,643 (estimate)
- **Languages:** Greek
- **Geography:** The peninsula that constitutes mainland Greece is surrounded by more than 5000 islands, of which 220 are inhabited—169 have more than 150 inhabitants. The islands are divided into six groups: the Cyclades, the Ionians, the Dodecanese, the islands of the Northeastern Aegean, the Sporades and the Saronic Gulf islands. The two largest islands, Crete and Evia, do not belong to any group. Roughly four-fifths of Greece is mountainous, with most land lying over 1500m (4920ft) above sea level. Epiros and Macedonia, in northern Greece, still have extensive forests, but goat grazing, felling and forest fires have seriously denuded the rest of the country.
- **Religions:** Greek Orthodox 98%, Muslim 1.3%, other 0.7%
- **Time Zone:** Greece is on Eastern European Time, two hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (seven hours ahead of Eastern Time). Summer hours operate from the last Sunday in March until the last weekend in October.

National Holidays: Greece

In addition to the holidays listed below, Greece celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Easter. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit **www.timeanddate.com/holidays**.

01/01 New Year's Day

01/06 Epiphany

03/25 Greek Independence Day

05/01 Labor Day

08/15 Dormition of the Holy Virgin

10/28 The Ochi Day

12/25 Christmas Day

12/26 Synaxis of the Mother of God

Greece: A Brief History

The glory that was Greece reached its pinnacle during the Classical period, between 500 and 300 BC. But the seeds for that golden age, which has stood for centuries as a beacon of Western civilization, were sown at least 700,000 years ago, when humans first appeared in Greece. But it was during the Bronze Age, around 3,000 BC, when three major Greek civilizations emerged.

The Cycladic culture of the Aegean islands was sustained by farming and seafaring. But the small island populations made it hard for larger, more complex societies to organize. Not so for the Minoans of Crete, who created a palace culture, a written system of language, and effective military and mercantile sectors. Had Crete not been wracked by natural disasters, the Minoans may have prevailed against the mainland Mycenaeans who landed around 1400 BC. But their star faded in 1100 BC, when the Dorians took over, and Greece entered a Dark Age.

Light dawned again around 800 B.C., when the Greeks came into contact with the Phoenicians. The Greeks borrowed their alphabet, which Homer used to record his epics. This was followed by the Persian Wars, which continued from 520 to 480 BC, and prompted some Greek city-states to form an alliance under Athens called the Delian League. When Persia was beaten in 461 BC, the leader Pericles presided over Athens' golden age. He rebuilt the city, including its iconic Acropolis. Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides were writing plays; and Socrates and Plato were teaching. But when the Delian League clashed with the militaristic Peloponnesian League of Sparta, a Peloponnesian war persisted for 27 years, with Sparta prevailing.

Athens was conquered by Philip II of Macedon in 360 BC. When he was assassinated, his son Alexander (the Great) was embraced by Athens. Though Alexander built an empire that reached as far east as India, his death left Greece vulnerable. By 200 BC, Rome had annexed all of Greece, but they venerated the culture. Athens remained an important seat of learning until Justinian closed its philosophy schools in AD 529. Under Byzantine rule (AD 300–1200), many temples were modified to Christian use, and Athens became a provincial backwater.

After the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the Ottomans seized Athens and ruled for almost 400 years, during which time the Acropolis was desecrated. The Ottoman yoke was shaken off with the bloody 1829 War of Independence. Through the intervention of Britain, France, and Russia, Greece became a monarchy whose kings were largely foreigners. This helped to keep Greece out of World War I, but World War II was another story. The country was overrun by Hitler and the civilian population suffered greatly. More than half the nation's Jews were murdered.

In 1944, civil war broke out between the communist and monarchist resistance groups who had helped defeat the Nazis. It lasted for three years and took more lives than the entirety of World War II. A diaspora ensued, with many Greeks fleeing to Australia, the United States, and Canada. Greece joined NATO in 1952 and continued to be ruled as a monarchy until 1967, when former King Constantine fled Greece after a military junta. In 1974, democracy was restored and the monarchy was abolished in favor of a republic. In 1981, Greece joined the European Union.

The focus for 21st century Greece has been its economy. Integration with Europe brought a rising standard of living, but also skyrocketing costs and a serious debt crisis. This threatened to take down the EU, which provided bailouts that required strict austerity. Greeks endured record unemployment, protests, and successive governments. By 2018, Greece's credit rating improved and in 2019, the center-right New Democracy party of Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis won a landslide election, and did so again in 2023.

Turkey

Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 302,535 square miles
- **Capital:** Ankara (although Istanbul is the largest city)
- **Government:** Unitary Presidential Constitutional Republic
- **Languages:** Turkish is the dominant language in the Turkic language group, which also includes such lesser-known tongues as Kirghiz, Kazakh, and Azerbaijani.
- **Location:** Turkey occupies the Asian peninsula of Anatolia (Asia Minor) and a tiny corner of the European peninsula of Thrace. These two regions form a land bridge, which is interrupted by a narrow waterway called the Bosphorus. To the west, Turkey is bordered by the Aegean Sea, Greece, and Bulgaria; to the east, by Georgia, Armenia, and Iran; on the north, by the Black Sea; and to the south, by the Mediterranean Sea, Syria, and Iraq. While most of Turkey is in Asia, because of her membership in the Council of Europe she is regarded as a European country.
- **Geography:** Turkey is relatively big (larger than Texas) and has a varied geography. Many visitors come to Turkey expecting to find mostly dusty deserts, palm trees, and camel caravans, when in fact its diverse landscape also includes lots of craggy snowcapped mountains, gentle hills, broad lakes, cool pine forests, and miles of white beaches.
- **Population:** 84,680,273 (estimate)
- **Religion:** Muslim 99.8%, other 0.2%
- **Time Zone:** Turkey goes by Eastern European time: two hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time, or seven hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time. When it is noon in Turkey, it's 5 am in New York, and 2 am in Los Angeles.

National Holidays: Turkey

In addition to the holidays listed below,

Turkey: A Brief History

Long before recorded history, nomadic peoples inhabited Turkey. By 7000 BC, they'd ceased wandering and founded permanent settlements, including one of the world's oldest cities, Catalhöyük (outside Konya). Turkey's first empire arose during the Bronze Age with the Hittites. Rivals of Babylon and Egypt, they were eventually conquered by Assyrians and Greeks. Hellenic Turkey flourished in places like Troy, Lycia, and the Phrygia. After Alexander the Great "liberated" Anatolia from Persia, the Romans arrived in 129 BC, and made Ephesus their capital.

In 330 AD, the Roman Emperor Constantine converted to Christianity, renamed Byzantium Constantinople, and made it his capital. For the next seven centuries it was the heart of the Byzantine (Eastern Roman) empire. But by the 11th century AD, Byzantine power had declined, and the Seljuk Turks invaded from Central Asia, bringing Islam with them, and conquering Syria, Palestine, and parts of the waning Byzantine Empire. The rise of the Seljuks prompted Christian Europe to mount a series of bloody Crusades. The Seljuk's demise came in the late 13th century when Mongols swept across Anatolia, splintering the Seljuk empire into small principalities called beyliks. One of these was led by Othman I, founder of the Ottoman dynasty.

The Ottoman empire grew based on an administrative and military model called the janissary system. It plucked the smartest and strongest boys from conquered subjects, and schooled them in Islam and war. For 300 years, this army pushed the empire from Anatolia to the Middle East, North Africa, and into Europe. In 1453, the Byzantine Empire received a deathblow when the Ottomans took the capital, Constantinople. Ottoman culture reached its zenith under Suleiman the Magnificent (1520–66), who codified Ottoman law, ensured tolerance of Christians and Jews, sponsored a flourishing of the arts, and expanded the borders. His likes were never seen again and after a succession of weak rulers and growing opposition from European states, by the late 17th century the empire began to decline. Its final gasp came with World War I.

Turkey's next visionary leader arose just after the war, during the Greek occupation of Izmir in 1919. A commander called Mustafa Kemal led his armies to victory against the French, Italians, and Greeks, who were expelled in 1922. In 1923, Turkey became an independent republic, with Kemal as president. Given the title "Ataturk" (meaning "father of the Turks"), he initiated a program of modernization, democratization and radical westernization. Ataturk made sweeping reforms to ensure that the new republic would be secular, including a new legal code to supplant Islamic law, and the limitation of clerical power. Women were granted equal rights, the alphabet was changed from Arabic to Latin, and even western styles of dress were favored. Ataturk also instituted free and compulsory education, and industrialized the economy. Ataturk ruled until his death in 1938, but the pillars of his policy, known as Kemalism, are still revered.

After World War II, Turkey furthered relations with Western Europe by joining the United Nations, and increasing individual liberties. Turkish troops fought in Korea, and Turkey was made a member of NATO in 1952. However, economic difficulties led to a military coup in 1960, followed by nearly two decades in which Turkey alternated between civilian and military rule.

In 1982, a new constitution was adopted and Turkey resumed its western ties. During the Gulf War, it supported UN forces. In 2014, Recep Tayyip Erdogan became president, after having served as Prime Minister since 2003. A religious conservative, he has exerted authoritarian control, and criticism of his regime for suppression of dissent, human rights abuses, and attacks on journalists are some reasons why Turkey's accession to the EU has been stalled since 2016.

RESOURCES

Suggested Reading

Greece

The Rise of Athens: The Story of the World's Greatest Civilization by Anthony Everitt (2017, History) This book traces the origins of modern Athens and goes well beyond it, with plenty of entertaining detail about the figures who made it great, as well as those who contributed to its demise.

Ancient Greece: Art, Architecture, and History by Marina Belozerskaya and Kenneth Lapatin (2004, Art/Architecture) A lively guide to the architecture, painting, and sculpture of ancient Greece with color illustrations.

Dinner with Persephone by Patricia Storace (1996, Travel Narrative) An American fluent in Greek, Storace recalls a year of living and traveling there and the complexities, heartbreak, humor, and resilience of a people rooted in their glorious past, yet uncertain of the future.

The King Must Die and ***The Bull From the Sea*** by Mary Renault (1958, Fiction) Modern retellings of the Greek myth of Theseus and the Minotaur. Recommended by travelers.

Mythology: Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes and ***Greek Mythology*** by Edith Hamilton (1942, Mythology) These classic introductions to Greek and Roman mythology is still used as the standard in high schools and colleges throughout the U.S. From the Olympians to the Trojan War, Hamilton presents the myths and adventure stories of the ancient world in a clear and accessible manner.

Turkey

Birds Without Wings by Louis De Bernieres (2004, Fiction) A sweeping historical drama that weaves together the lives of an Anatolian family, the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, and the rise of Ataturk. Highly recommended.

Fragments of Culture: The Everyday of Modern Turkey by Deniz Kandiyoti and Ayse Saktanber (2002, Sociology) This carefully curated collection of articles by leading scholars from various disciplines offers a detailed and vivid portrait of daily life in contemporary Turkey.

The Bastard of Istanbul by Elif Shafak (2006, Fiction) Nineteen year-old Aysa is chafing to break free of the four headstrong women at the heart of her Istanbul family. But things change when her uncle's stepdaughter arrives from America. The two young women discover secrets that link their families to the 1915 Armenian genocide. The book caused a sensation in Turkey, where the author was put on trial for "insulting Turkishness."

The Janissary Tree by Jason Goodwin (2006, Historical Mystery) Winner of the Edgar Award, this is the first in a series of novels featuring the eunuch detective Yashim. Here, he prowls the alleys, harems, salons and mosques of 1836 Istanbul to solve three cases related to the historical disbanding (and slaughter) of the elite Janissary troops.

The Museum of Innocence (2008), ***The White Castle*** (1985), or ***My Name is Red*** (1998) by Orhan Pamuk (Historical Fiction) Three moving historical novels by the winner of the 2006 Nobel Prize in Literature. *The Museum of Innocence* is about a complicated love triangle in 1970s Istanbul; *The White Castle* tells of a seventeenth-century Italian scholar who becomes enslaved in the service of an astronomer; and *My Name is Red* describes the events surrounding the murder of a miniaturist during the height of the Ottoman Empire.

Suggested Films & Videos

Greece

Mamma Mia! (2008) and ***Mamma Mia, Here We Go Again*** (2018) (Musical Comedy) Yes, there is Meryl Streep and an all-star cast. Yes, there are the bouncy, nostalgic soundtracks based on hits by the 70s supergroup, ABBA. But there are also idyllic Greek islands, and whimsical fantasies about the life you could live there.

Troy (2004, Drama) This may not have been 2004's best film, but it was its highest grossing one, thanks to an all-star cast (Brad Pitt, Peter O'Toole, Brian Cox, Diane Kruger, and Orlando Bloom), sweeping sets, and an epic story based on Homer's *Iliad*. It concerns the motivations of the central characters as they reach their destinies during the historic battle between the Trojans, and the various Greek armies at their gates.

My Life in Ruins (2009, Comedy) A romantic comedy about a tour guide (Nia Vardalos) set among the ruins of classical Greece. Vardalos also wrote and starred in *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*.

Zorba the Greek (1964, Comedy/Drama) This classic still stands the test of time. Anthony Quinn plays the iconic Zorba, a lusty and exuberant musician, who strikes up a friendship with an uptight Englishman (Alan Bates) during a picaresque adventure in Greece.

The Guns of Navarone (1961, Action) Follows six Allied and Greek soldiers as they try to disable the two German guns that are preventing the evacuation of British troops from a Greek island in WWII. But the real heavy artillery is the cast—Gregory Peck, David Niven, and Anthony Quinn all won at least one Oscar each during their distinguished careers.

Turkey

Midnight Express (1978, Drama) Based on the real experiences of an American tourist who was imprisoned in Turkey for trying to smuggle hashish in the 1970s. With its gripping prison scenes and harsh portrayals of the Turkish police, the film was (and still is) controversial and unpopular in Turkey.

Bliss (2007, Drama) A gorgeous and surprising look at a difficult subject. When a young woman in an extremely traditional village is suspected of sexual relations outside of marriage, one of her distant cousins is recruited to commit an “honor killing,” but ends up trying to protect his potential victim instead.

A Touch of Spice (2003, Comedy/Drama). A favorite in Turkey, this heartwarming story follows a Greek boy growing up in Istanbul as he learns about food and life from his grandfather.

Uzak (Distant) (2002, Drama) Some consider this Istanbul classic to be one of the best Turkish films ever made. It concerns a country bumpkin who becomes the unwelcome guest of his city photographer cousin.

Kedi (2016, Documentary) A heartwarming documentary that follows some of Istanbul’s *ked*i—street cats that are beloved and cared for by multiple humans as community pets. The felines are an institution in Istanbul, and are pretty much given free reign to roam wherever they want—they’ve been known to show up at fashion shows, concerts, and even inside places of worship.

Useful Websites

Overseas Adventure Travel Frequently Asked Questions

www.oattravel.com/faq

International Health Information/CDC (Centers for Disease Control)

www.cdc.gov/travel

Electricity & Plugs

www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/plugs-and-sockets

Foreign Exchange Rates

www.xe.com/currencyconverter
www.oanda.com/converter/classic

ATM Locators

www.mastercard.com/atm
www.visa.com/atmlocator

World Weather

www.intellicast.com
www.weather.com
www.wunderground.com

Basic Travel Phrases (80 languages)

www.travlang.com/languages

Packing Tips

www.travelite.org

U.S. Customs & Border Protection

www.cbp.gov/travel

Transportation Security Administration (TSA)

www.tsa.gov

National Passport Information Center

www.travel.state.gov

Holidays Worldwide

www.timeanddate.com/holidays

Useful Apps

Flight Stats

Track departures, arrivals, and flight status

LoungeBuddy

Get access to premium airport lounges around the world

Timeshifter

Personalized tips for avoiding jetlag, based on neuroscience and your own data

GoogleMaps or Maps.me

Maps and directions anywhere in the world

Triposo

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For women only, it connects you with other female travelers

Happy Cow

Locate vegan and vegetarian eateries in 195 countries

Eatwith

Dine with locals all over the world

Meetup

Connects you with locals who share your interests

Skyview

Identifies constellations and heavenly bodies

Travello

Find travel friends on the road

ALIX for One

Created by and for women, it identifies solo-friendly dining spots in major international cities

TripWhistle

Maps your location and provides emergency numbers for police, medics, and more

GeoSure

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Chirpey

For women only, connect with other women, find out what's safe, meet up, and more



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