



PETER SOMMER
TRAVELS

EXPERT-LED

ARCHAEOLOGICAL & CULTURAL
TOURS & GULET CRUISES



2024

WELCOME TO PETER SOMMER TRAVELS



2024 marks the 30th anniversary of my first trip to Turkey to embark on a 2,000 mile walk retracing the footsteps of Alexander the Great. It was the experience of a lifetime and ever since, Turkey has had a very special place in my heart. My love for the country, its people, food and amazing archaeological sites is what first inspired me to create Peter Sommer Travels – I wanted to share the wonders of this country with curious travellers.

I can't wait to go to Turkey again this March, for a very special event; twenty-five tour leaders, licenced guides and members of PST's core team are gathering in Istanbul to explore what it is that makes PST tours so unique and to see what we can do to maintain their high quality and improve them further. We've never had such a big meeting before and the fact that so many of our guides want to come, speaks of their commitment to making the tours they lead the very best. It will be wonderful to see so many of the wider PST family all in one place.

Before looking further forward, let me briefly reflect on 2023. In March we were thrilled to win the AITO Tour Operator of the Year Gold award again. This makes 3 Silvers and 3 Golds since the presentation of these great accolades began in

2016. We are pleased that so many of you enjoy our tours and rate them so highly. You can read more than 750 independent reviews of our tours at [Aito/Peter Sommer Travels](#)

2023 saw the arrival of a few new faces at PST, expanding our team and bringing in a wealth of talent, knowledge and experience. Alex Stephens joined us as our new Client and Operations Administrator, responsible for bookings and enquiries. If you haven't already spoken to or been in touch with Alex, you are sure to do so going forwards. He will be the cheerful voice at the end of the phone. This is Alex's first job in the travel industry, so he is very busy learning the ropes and all the complexities of PST.

We were delighted to welcome Ian Finlay as a Non-Executive Director. I have known Ian for a long time. He generously offered valuable insights, help, support and guidance over the years and it was great to finally bring him on board. Ian has many years' experience in the travel industry and it is very helpful to get an outside perspective on how PST can build on our previous successes and continue to improve our offerings, always mindful of our original values: integrity, a friendly personal connection with our guests, meticulous attention to detail and a desire to enrich people's lives with amazing travel experiences whilst appreciating and respecting the countries we travel in.

We were equally delighted to welcome Joe Shingles as our Commercial Manager. An experienced tour operator, Joe has a vast knowledge of planning and running archaeological, historical, artistic, cultural, sailing and wine tours. His expertise is already helping us understand how we can organise PST better and plan more effectively. His insight will allow us to enhance your experience of travelling with us and enable us to improve our existing tours and create new trips to tempt you.

Looking ahead, brand new for 2024 is our [Turkish Odyssey: Archaeology, Food And Wine](#). We had the pleasure of running it as a private gulet tour a number of times in 2023. Following rave reviews, we wanted all of you to be able to experience its wonders and are very pleased that it is now on our official schedule.

Around Christmas we sent out surveys asking for feedback about what new tours you'd like us to offer in future. We are glad to say we had many replies. If you didn't complete a survey at the time, please get in touch because we'd appreciate as much input as possible. We can't wait to research, prepare and plan further! As we move forwards, we'll announce a range of new trips and are sure there will be something that will interest you.

I'm so pleased that 30 years on I can continue to share my love for Turkey with so many people and that PST can welcome guests to our other loved destinations. We are very grateful that so many of you trust us to make your trips special. It is especially gratifying and testimony to our great guides that you choose to travel with us year after year. A huge thank you to all our loyal previous guests and to all the new travellers choosing to make their first journey with us. We look forward to welcoming you in 2024!

Peter Sommer

WHY TRAVEL WITH US?

“2 weeks of wonder, both in in-depth history and archaeology and meeting and making amazing friends”

Gretchen Pickett, USA



ATTENTION TO DETAIL

We offer a select mix of escorted tours, all of which have been carefully researched and meticulously planned.

THE PERSONAL TOUCH

We strive for the very best in personal service and assure you of individual care and attention. As a previous traveller told us:

“The hospitality was exceptional, we felt like guests rather than customers.”

EXPERT GUIDES

Our tour leaders, archaeologists and historians, are great communicators, passionate enthusiasts and friendly hosts as well as being extremely knowledgeable.

BEAUTIFUL BOATS

We use hand-crafted traditional Turkish gulets of the highest standard: stylish and characterful, with modern conveniences and friendly and experienced crews. Alongside our scheduled trips, we offer expert-led gulet charters for private groups, large or small. We are happy to assist with any logistics you might require.

SMALL GROUPS

We have only ever taken small groups of like-minded people – typically between 10 and 14 on our gulet tours (max 18 on our 11 cabin Cruising the Cyclades/Dodecanese trips) and between 10 and 18 on our land tours – travelling in an easy-going informal style.

VALUE FOR MONEY - NO SURCHARGES

Our tour prices include almost everything except airfares. Customers tell us they are great value. The old adage ‘you get what you pay for’ is especially true when it comes to holidays and adventure travel. We will not levy surcharges for fluctuations in exchange rates or fuel prices or for any other reason. The price of the trip is the price you pay.

RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

We believe our tours are a positive force, holidays with a cultural purpose, bringing economic benefits to local people. We try where possible to minimise our impact on the environment. You can read our Responsible Travel policy online.

EXPERIENCE & QUALITY

Peter has been organising cultural tours since 1996. We aim to provide the very finest expert-led archaeological tours and gulet cruises. We want you to travel with us again and again – as a great many of our customers do.



Priene, Turkey

CROATIA

May/June September	25 - Jun 1, Jun 1 - 3 14 - 21	Cruising the Coast of Dalmatia: From Dubrovnik to Split & Split to Dubrovnik	44
June September	8 - 15 7 - 14	Cruising the Coast of Dalmatia: From Šibenik to Zadar	50
September	21 - 28	Walking and Cruising Southern Dalmatia	56
September	28 - Oct 5	A Gastronomic Gulet Cruise	60

GREECE

April May Oct	17 - 30 7 - 20 2 - 15	Exploring Crete	68
May Oct	8 - 22 2 - 16	Exploring the Peloponnese	74
June	9 - 23	Cruising the Dodecanese	82
June	17 - 29	Exploring Macedonia	88
August September	31 - Sep 7 7 - 14	Cruising the Aegean: From Kos to Patmos	94
September	1 - 15	Cruising to the Cyclades	98

ITALY

April May	16 - 29 7 - 20	Exploring Sicily	114
September	21 - 28	A Gastronomic Tour of Sicily	120
November	3 - 10	Exploring Rome	124

TURKEY

May October	12 - 19 6 - 13	Walking and Cruising Western Lycia	138
May September	19 - 26 22 - 29	A Gastronomic Gulet Cruise	142
May September	19 - Jun 2 3 - 17	Cruising the Lycian Shore	148
May	28 - June 4	Cruising the Carian Coast: From Mediterranean to Aegean	152
June September	4 - 11 3 - 10, 10 - 17	Cruising to Ephesus	156
September	17 - 24	A Turkish Odyssey: Archaeology, Food And Wine	160
September	17 - Oct 1	Cruising Western Lycia	166
October	1 - 8	Walking and Cruising the Carian Coast	170
October	1 - 15	Walking and Cruising the Lycian Shore	174

UNITED KINGDOM

May	28 - Jun 4	Exploring Hadrian's Wall	182
July	6 - 13	Exploring Hadrian's Wall - Cambridge University Alumni Tour	188

Interactive Brochure

This pdf brochure is now fully interactive so you can jump directly to the tour page number from the index, return to the index from the tour page,  link to 'back to back' and similar tours,  check the intensity guide for each tour  and [access our website](#).

ABOUT PETER SOMMER TRAVELS



Peter Sommer

Peter studied Ancient History and Archaeology at Birmingham University before completing a Masters on the archaeology of Central Asia. He has taught at Birmingham University and Istanbul's Bogaziçi Üniversitesi (Bosphorus University). In 1994 he walked 2,000 miles across Turkey, retracing the route of Alexander the Great, and fell deeply in love with the country. For this epic journey he received The Explorers Club of America Young Expeditioners' award. Two years into a PhD. at University College London, he was seduced into television to work on In the Footsteps of Alexander the Great (BBC/PBS). An award-winning documentary producer, he has shot around the world for acclaimed series like Millennium: A thousand years of history (BBC/CNN), Commanding Heights: the Battle for the World Economy (PBS/BBC), and Tales from the Green Valley (BBC).



Elin Sommer

Originally from Norway, Elin travelled as a youngster to London to study journalism. After her degree, she started working in television, and this is where she and Peter met. Elin worked as a Production Manager on a variety of documentaries such as Hostage, When Money Went Mad: the Story of the South Sea Bubble, Sleaze – the State of Britain and A Child's World, all for Channel 4. After television, she worked as a freelance translator and also ran her own natural skincare company. When Peter and Elin first started PST, Elin was Peter's right hand woman; looking after everything when Peter was away on reces and tours. She has been at the heart of the company ever since, being more or less involved depending on the arrival of children. These days Elin oversees company strategy alongside Peter and is in charge of HR, H&S, tech support and general admin.



Michael Metcalfe

Michael earned his PhD at University College London, focusing on the ancient Greek cities in the Eastern Aegean Islands and Western Turkey. While finishing this research, Michael lived and worked in Athens and Ankara as well as London, and took up his first academic post as Assistant Professor in Ancient History at The Mediterranean Center for Arts and Sciences in Sicily. A specialist in Greek and Latin inscriptions and social history, Michael is currently studying the unpublished diaries of early British Travellers to Greece, Turkey and Sicily, and is involved in publishing inscriptions from many parts of the Eastern and Central Mediterranean. He is the innovative and organisational force behind our tours in Greece, Italy and the UK and responsible for our private tours



Julie Sibley

Julie is our Office and Operations Manager, at the heart of all we do. After a long career in the corporate world she decided to make her lifelong fascination with archaeology her job! As well as the day to day running of the business she takes care of all our supplier contracts, is responsible for development and maintenance of our company website, advertising and media content and designs and produces our weekly newsletter and our annual brochure. Having travelled extensively in Greece, Turkey and Sicily she is also involved in the design, preparation and delivery of new tours and is destination manager for all of the UK and Ireland.



Paul Beston

Paul studied Ancient History at King's College, London, gaining a first, and then earned a distinction in his Masters. Alongside lecturing posts at King's and Royal Holloway in London, he has acted as an historical adviser for TV including HBO's Fire from Heaven. Previously he taught Classics in Hertfordshire but we are delighted that he is now full time with us. He is also working with Michael Metcalfe on the publication of some notebooks of early travellers to Greece. He has a lively interest in all periods and regions, but a particular passion for Late Antiquity, Roman Britain and the Near East. He also focuses on tour design, creative content, and writes our blog and newsletters.



Liga Hince

Liga has headed up our accounts department since 2018 and is responsible for keeping all of our finances in order. She also helps out with our administration and keeps the office running smoothly. Originally Liga is from Latvia and got her Master's degree in accountancy and economics at the University of Latvia. As part of a Latvian folk dance group, Liga danced her way across Europe and the Middle East, from Sicily to Israel, prior to 2006 when she moved to the UK which she has been busy exploring ever since. Liga speaks Latvian, Russian, English and very rusty German and enjoys reading, walking, traveling and dancing and especially loves her cup of coffee!



Alex Stephens

Alex is our Client and Operations Administrator and our main point of contact. He deals with all of our bookings, enquiries, general admin and very much enjoys talking to our guests on the telephone. An avid sportsman, Alex plays football regularly as part of a county level team. Alex is also a keen traveller with a love for history and archaeology, his most far flung journey to date was to Peru, where he hiked the Inca trail to Machu Pichu. Alex has a degree in Professional Policing from the University of Derby but decided to step into the travelling industry to better pursue his love of adventure.



Ian Finlay

Ian Finlay has spent more than 30 years in the travel and leisure space, becoming a director of more than 50 businesses, and running companies in 11 countries worldwide. Since 2018 he has taken on a plural career, and now enjoys working with a diverse group of high-quality travel businesses in non-executive roles, helping them grow and thrive.



Joe Shingles

Joe is our Commercial Manager and an experienced tour operator, with experience of planning and running archaeological, historical, artistic, cultural, sailing and wine tours. Alongside a wide travel experience, he has worked in sales, customer service, operational, marketing and commercial roles so will be helping in a lot of areas behind the scenes.

6 TIMES UK TOUR OPERATOR OF THE YEAR

AITO (THE ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT TOUR OPERATORS)

These awards are based on the highest scoring independent client reviews on the website of AITO, an association which represents more than 120 of Britain's best independent tour operators.

[Read over 750 independent reviews of our tours](#)



In 2022 we won a Silver British Travel Award and in 2023 we won Bronze, for Best Travel Company for Arts and Culture Holidays. We are delighted that so many of you enjoy our tours and that almost all of you consider our tours to be "excellent". We continue to strive to improve our offerings and always take customer feedback into account when planning our tours.



Our Local Partners

The success of any tour depends on logistics. These basic, behind the scenes, practical arrangements are the very necessary nuts and bolts of making a trip a success – from making sure a vehicle arrives at the right location, to the crucial matter of timing.

Meticulous planning is all very well, but actually making it happen is key. We depend on our local partners to ensure our escorted trips run smoothly.

In Turkey we work with Travel Atelier, a travel agency run by Murat Özgüç and his wife Pinar. We have worked with them for many years and rate them very highly. Murat organises hotels, transfers, and all other travel arrangements for our guests. He helps us both with our scheduled tours and our custom created tours. Cem Yücesoy is our logistics co-ordinator and tour manager extraordinaire. He has organised all our Turkey tours to date, from choosing minibus drivers to booking local guides.

In Greece we work with Dolphin Hellas, a travel agency of long standing offering a complete range of travel services. Run by Aliki Hamosfakidou, she and her team assist us in shaping and then co-ordinating perfect itineraries for our cultural tours throughout Greece.

In mainland Italy we work with King DMC for all our land tour services and in Sicily we work with Agave Travel Creative, run by Marcello Baglioni who specialises in slow travel, an in-depth exploration of Sicily's culture and cuisine. All our Italian tour logistics are coordinated through a team of local companies committed to outstanding customer service.

In Croatia we work with Ventula, who are responsible for organising the logistics of all our tours there, and our number one recommendation for add-on arrangements throughout the whole country. They are a relatively small company with a team of designated and experienced experts. Their specialities are tailor-made trips and highly personal service.



Peter & Cem

IN THE PRESS: RECOMMENDED BY

The New York Times

FT FINANCIAL TIMES

THE AUSTRALIAN

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

The Washington Post

THE SUNDAY TIMES

BBC

San Francisco Chronicle

The Sydney Morning Herald

The Telegraph

Traveller

THE TIMES



Peter Sommer Travels is a member of the United Kingdom's Association of Independent Tour Operators. AITO is the Association for independent and specialist holiday companies. Our member companies, usually owner-managed, strive to create overseas holidays with high levels of professionalism and a shared concern for quality and personal service. The Association encourages the highest standards in all aspects of tour operating.

Exclusive Membership

AITO sets criteria regarding ownership, finance and quality which must be satisfied before new companies are admitted to membership. All members are required to adhere to a Code of Business Practice which encourages high operational standards and conduct.



Financial Security

An AITO member is required to protect money paid by customers to the member for any holiday sold under the AITO logo. This protection applies to customers who are in the UK at the time of booking or to overseas customers who have booked directly with the member. Members have to comply with UK Government Regulations in this respect. Members submit details of their bonding or guarantee arrangements to the Association on a regular basis.

Accurate Brochures & Web Sites

All members do their utmost to ensure that all their brochures and other publications, print or electronic, clearly and accurately describe the holidays and services offered.

Professional Service & Continual Improvements

All members are committed to high standards of service and believe in regular and thorough training of employees. Members continually seek to review and improve their holidays. They listen to their customers and always welcome suggestions for improving standards.

Monitoring Standards

AITO endeavours to monitor quality standards regularly. All customers should receive a post-holiday questionnaire the results of which are scrutinised by the Association.

Responsible Tourism

All members acknowledge the importance of AITO's Responsible Tourism guidelines, which recognise the social, economic and environmental responsibilities of tour operating. Those demonstrating their achievements beyond the pure acceptance of this principle are recognised by the award of 2 to 5 star status. Peter Sommer Travels are proud to have been awarded 3 stars for Sustainable Tourism by AITO.

Customer Relations

All members endeavour to deal swiftly and fairly with any issues their customers may raise. In the unlikely event that a dispute between an AITO member and a customer cannot be settled amicably, AITO's low-cost Independent Dispute Settlement Service may be called upon by either side to bring the matter to a speedy and acceptable conclusion. For more information visit www.aito.com or call 020 8744 9280.

Flexible Booking

While deposit payments are non-refundable, because we have to make significant payments in advance to cover the costs of each tour, we want to be as fair and flexible as possible. If you need to change your booking, you can move your deposit to any of our other tours taking place in 2024 without a charge as long as you do this before the final balance payment becomes due (10 weeks before departure). We can also transfer your deposit to a friend or family member without any charge.

Flexible Final Balances

We will only ask you to pay your final balance 10 weeks prior to departure if we think that we can run a trip in a safe and enjoyable manner. If this is not the case, we will delay the final balance payment date until we are confident that the tour can go ahead safely. If, by 30 days prior to departure, we still feel that we cannot run a trip in a safe and enjoyable manner, we will cancel your tour and you can either receive a credit towards any trip in 2024 or 2025 or receive a full refund.

Financial Security

We have cast iron financial protection and are fully bonded through ABTA to ensure all your payments to us are fully protected.

The Association Of British Travel Agents (ABTA)

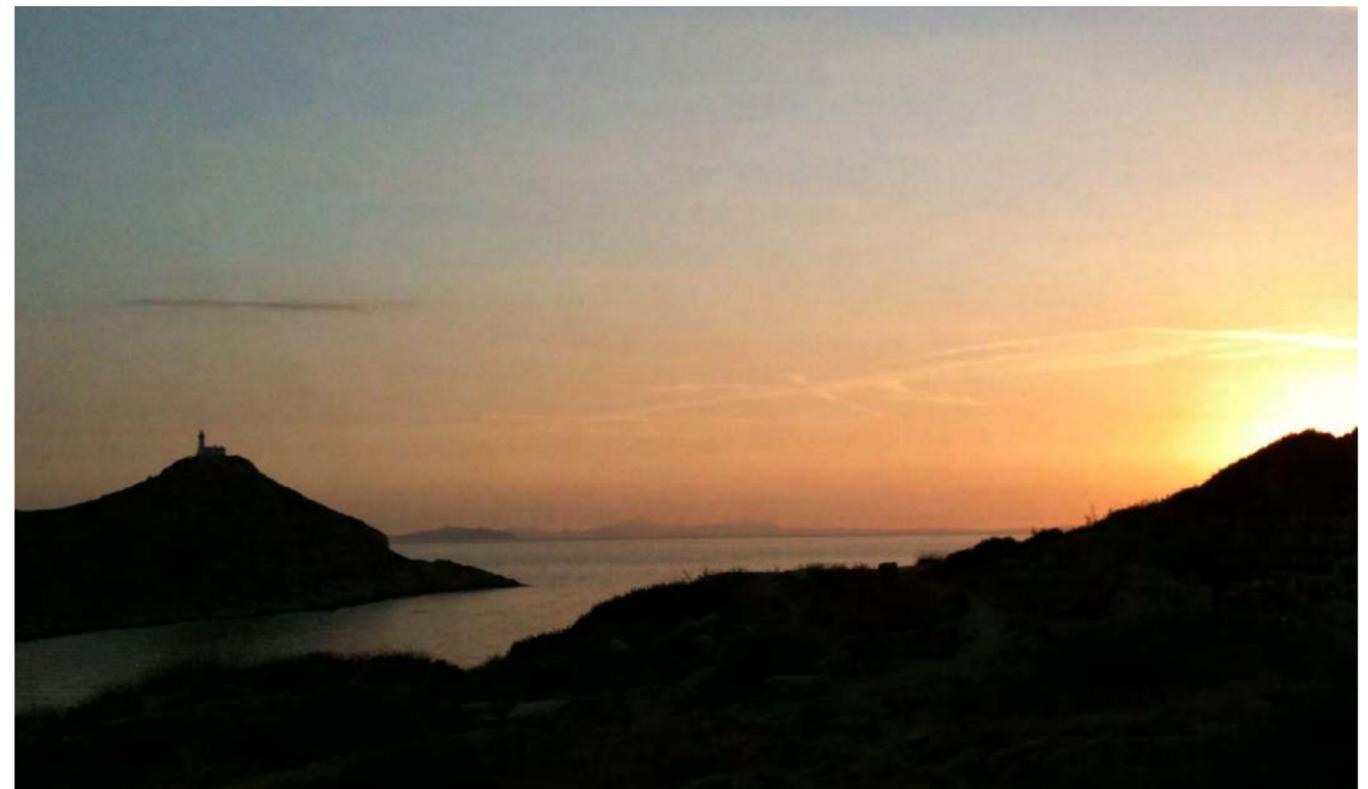
We are a member of the Association of British Travel Agents. Booking your holiday with an ABTA Member means that you'll be able to relax safe in the knowledge that you've booked with a reputable travel company. Find out more on the ABTA website.

The Association Of Independent Tour Operators (AITO)

We are a member of the Association of Independent Tour Operators (AITO) – the UK's leading association for independent and specialist holiday companies. Member companies, usually owner-managed, strive to create overseas holidays with high levels of professionalism and a shared concern for quality and personal service. The Association encourages the highest standards in all aspects of tour operating. In the past five years, we have won AITO's Tour Operator of the Year Gold award two times and the Silver award three times. For more information visit the AITO website.

Our Promise To You

As a small family run company, we always try to be fair, flexible and reasonable and to act with integrity. Our main aim is to ensure that all of our guests are more than satisfied with all of our services. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact us.



WHAT'S INCLUDED

On our Gulet Cruises:

Full board accommodation (except where specified)
Airport transfers on first and last day of tour
Road transfers by minibus
Site entrance fees and tips on land
Harbour fees and crew services
Excursions with expert guides
WiFi (coverage permitting)
Mineral water, tea and coffee and wine with dinner.

On our land tours:

Full board accomm (except meal exclusions for each tour)
High standard 3-5* hotels with character
Airport transfers on first and last day of tour
Road transfers by minibus
Entrance fees and tips on land
Excursions with expert guides
Mineral water, tea and coffee and wine with dinner.

Not included:

Flights and airport taxes
Visas
Travel insurance
Gratuities on the gulet. It is customary to tip the crew at the end of a tour.
Tips for drivers on land tours
Tips for guides (always welcome, but never expected.)
Meals on free days on land tours
Drinks from the bar on the gulet
Drinks from hotel bars or mini bars in hotel rooms.



HOW TO BOOK

Call us

From the UK - Tel: 01600 888 220

From the USA / Canada - Tel: 855 443 3027 (toll free) or 011 44 1600 888 220

From Australia - Tel: 00 11 44 1600 888 220

From Elsewhere - We welcome guests from all over the world. Please check the prefix you need to call international from your home country and then add 44 1600 888 220.

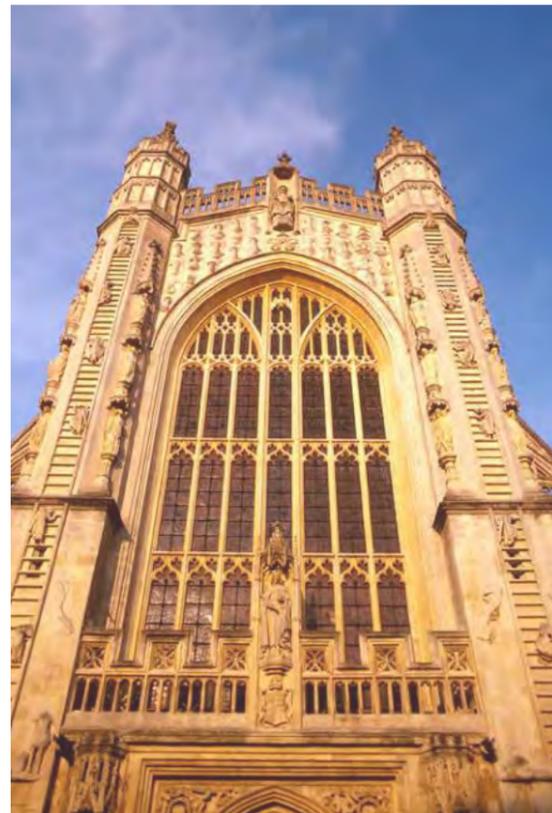
Our office, is open from 9 am to 5.00 pm GMT, Monday to Friday. Please leave a message on our answering machine outside of these hours.

Email us on

info@petersommer.com

We'll be delighted to help and will send you booking details by email.

We will be happy to hold a place (or places) for you on a trip for 1-week pending receipt of your deposit payment.



TOUR INTENSITY

How fit do I need to be to join one of your tours?

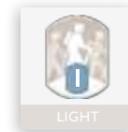
Our tours by their very nature involve a significant amount of walking, often in hot and humid climatic conditions, as well as scrambling over rough terrain on archaeological sites which are frequently rugged and with loose rocks underfoot. This can make them difficult to negotiate and physically tiring. Your physical fitness should therefore be of a level that will allow you to get the most from the chosen tour.

It's important to note that on our gulet cruises, we do at times go ashore using the gulet's dinghy. Therefore if you would like to join these specific onshore excursions, you will need to be able to safely descend/ascend the gulet's ladder and step into and out of the dinghy. Members of the gulet's crew and our guiding team will be there to assist you if needed but having good mobility and balance is important for your safety and enjoyment.

While all of our tours involve an element of walking, the distance, duration and terrain can differ considerably. So we've graded our trips to better help you assess the level of fitness needed in order to enjoy them to the full.

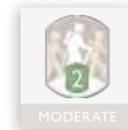
To help you choose the right holiday for you, each tour page has a logo indicating its rating. If you click on the logo you will be brought back to this page where you can read up about the level of fitness required to participate.

For our [walking and hiking tours](#) you can also read much more information on the details tab on the tour page on our website.



1. Light:

Our light tours include easy walks on mostly flat ground, often in towns or cities. Short stretches on tracks or paths may include some steps and uneven terrain. Walks are of short duration and distance, usually below 3km/2 miles or 2 hours, site tours likewise tend to be under 2 hours.



2. Moderate:

On moderate itineraries, key site tours can be of up to 5 hours' duration. Walks are rarely over 2 hours in duration and 5km/3 miles in distance. Walking is mostly limited to flat terrain or towns, but some stretches may be on relatively steep slopes and narrow paths.



3. Intermediate:

Our intermediate tours include stretches of walking on narrow tracks, across rough terrain or on steep slopes. Distances rarely exceed 5km/3 miles, but some walks may last over 2 hours. On city tours, entire mornings or afternoons are spent on foot (5 hours, including breaks). Site tours last up to 5 hours.



4. Energetic:

On energetic tours, we cover distances up to approx. 8km/5 miles per day, including hikes on rocky and rugged ground, sometimes off the beaten track, including some challenging tracks, paths requiring a good sense of balance, and long uphill or downhill stretches. Average walking/hiking duration is generally below 4 hours per day.



5. Intensive:

Our most intensive walking and hiking tours or cruises include some strenuous hikes on rough ground or across rugged terrain, ascents or descents on steep slopes (mostly on pathways), narrow tracks and other challenges. The longest hikes have a duration of up to 7-8 hours, covering maximum distances of approx. 18km/11 miles.



TESTIMONIALS



“ This trip hit five stars on all fronts. This was a mother/daughter trip and the first time in Crete for both of us. It exceeded all expectations. Our guide’s incredible knowledge and ability to weave history and myth together made the many sites we visited that much more fascinating. The hotels were unique, including old, remote village homes converted into charming hotels. The meals were a treat in themselves, locally sourced and deliciously prepared, and the itinerary took us through Crete’s variable and beautiful landscape. For anyone interested in history from that part of the world, I would highly recommend this trip.

Exploring Crete

Britt Chester &
Kristine Lynn
USA

“ My wife and I have traveled to Rome many times and were looking for something truly different. A history and archeological focused experience with a small group, led by someone who truly understand the history, not just a show and tell tour. Our guide was incredible, was always interesting, and took us to places we have not visited before. Highly recommend this trip !!!!

Exploring Rome

Craig & Mary
Kirsch
USA

“ The tour was superbly organised and incredibly interesting, even for a non archeologist. Richard kept us enthralled with the archeological gems of Lycia for the full 7 days. He is a gem himself. Ugur was a very personable tour manager - nothing was too much trouble for him. The boat, the crew, the meals - all great.

Walking and Cruising Western Lycia

Mark Goedecke
AUS

“ Wonderful combination of guided visits, excellent food and cruising along beautiful coastline.

Cruising to Ephesus

Bruce Wright
UK

“ Our tour was idyllic! There was a perfect balance of activities: charming villages to explore; lovely walks and drives through the rugged landscape; memorable meals both on board and in lively tavernas on shore; time to swim, kayak, read and relax, and above all many visits to ancient sites and museums wonderfully interpreted for us by our knowledgeable (and entertaining) guides. We topped it off with the Athens extension, which was a perfect way to consolidate and absorb all we had seen and learned in the islands. Our guide in Athens was superb, and every detail of our stay was thoughtfully arranged and provided for.

Cruising to the Cyclades & Heart of Classical Athens

Cynthia Seybolt &
Stan Emery
USA

“ We spent a wonderful week hiking, walking and exploring the remains of Hadrian’s Wall from coast to coast. Our guide was brilliant- archaeological, historical and linguistic information was shared in a manner of a master storyteller. The village of Blanchland was charming, the Lord Crewe Arms Hotel delightful, and the food at all locations was fabulous. Guides, staff, drivers all were top notch professionals- helpful, accommodating, patient, and a joy to be around.

Walking Hadrian’s Wall

Betsi English
USA

“ The itinerary took us to all the unmissable sites in the Peloponnese and the Mani and to some wonderful places that are quite off the beaten track. Our guides were most knowledgeable and entertaining and made this two weeks very special. The food and wine were generous and very well chosen, the best of Greece.

Exploring the Peloponnese

Sue Freathy
UK

“ This was our 9th holiday with Peter Sommer, which I think says it all. This time we organised a private charter with people we had met on previous trips. We spent two glorious weeks on a Turkish gulet, traditionally built but with all mod cons. We visited archaeological sites, not all open to the public, and were lucky enough to be taken around by archaeologists working on the site. We swam from the boat several times a day, explored the countryside a little and enjoyed the best food we have ever had on any holiday anywhere. It was a perfect combination.

Private Gulet Charter

Alison
Ledgerwood
UK

“ The transportation, food, and lodging locations were all wonderful. Our guide and the people we met at each stop were knowledgeable and interesting. Highly recommend this tour for the perfect blend of food and local history.

Gastronomic Tour of Sicily

Dawn DeMartino
USA

“ This cruise had been on my bucket list for the past five years and it was every bit as good, if not better, than I’d imagined it would be.

Walking and Cruising the Lycian Shore

Diny Slamet
AUS

“ We had explored Trieste, Slovenia and much of Croatia before embarking on our week’s holiday at Slano. We were blessed with excellent weather and fellow travellers we found sympathetic. Our crew were attentive, professional and the catering was first class - they did everything to make our cruise enjoyable. Lots of opportunities to swim from the gulet and our gastronomic excursions were both educational and delicious.

Gastronomic Gulet Cruise In Croatia

N & P Woodcock
UK

“ This trip was wonderful. We saw a lot, we learned a lot about the islands and their history, we had great meals both on and off the boat and we had time to explore both with the group and by ourselves. Our guides were exceptional, the captain and crew looked after us extremely well and we hope to travel with Peter Sommer Travels again before too long.

Cruising the Dodecanese

John & Elaine
Elkington
USA

“ Exploring Sicily exceeded all my expectations. The logistics were beautifully arranged. We never worried about a bag or a connection or an arrival time. The site selections were fantastic- we were treated to comprehensive tour of the most important sites of Grecian, Roman and early Christian Sicily. Our guide delivered unmatched lectures - thoughtful, challenging and very entertaining. Moreover, I discovered the tours are a lot of fun. Lunch and dinner were always wonderful and the addition to the tour of wine tastings, olive oil tasting and a chocolate tasting was inspired.

Exploring Sicily

Christopher
Ruggerio
CZ

“ Cruising for seven days along the tranquil azure colored coast of Turkey and encountering unexpected gastronomic and archeological delights at every turn was truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Our lovely expert guide Serdar can only be described as a Turkish National Treasure! Serdar’s extensive knowledge of Turkish history, culinary arts, archeological sites, and coastal geography was second to none. I cannot express enough in words how much this gentle and thoughtful man is utterly filled with knowledge and experiences regarding his beautiful country. Serdar introduced us to small non-touristy villages, breathtaking hiking trails, family-owned restaurants serving absolutely delicious Turkish food, and undiscovered and rarely visited archeological sites. All these experiences were shared with the other lovely tour guests with whom we thoroughly enjoyed their company.

Gastronomic Gulet Cruise In Turkey

Brian Hartman &
Odette Oesau
USA

“ Very well run tour with knowledgeable and enthusiastic tour leader and friendly crew. A nice blend of activity and rest/recreation time. Comfortable cabins and excellent fresh food every day. Thoughtful touches included visits to remote village restaurants for lunch during walks and icecreams at the end of a busy few hours of walking.

Walking & Cruising Western Lycia

Prof. Andrew
Goldsmith
AUS

“ A fascinating itinerary, extremely knowledgeable and attentive guides, very well put together practical arrangements, comfortable accommodation and travel, excellent eating and a great group of like minded guests - all the ingredients for an outstanding holiday.

Exploring the Peloponnese

Giles & Jane
Cockerill
UK

“ The tour truly lived up to its name, with exposure to a range of gastronomic delights from high end olive oil producers and vineyards to charming, rustic biodiversity farms. The food, wine and people were exceptional and the local guide knowledgeable about the archaeology and baroque architecture. Highlights included visiting the local food market with a renowned chef followed by a cooking lesson in his restaurant, and farmhouse lunches prepared by the family. The trip was crowned by a walk on Etna led by a volcanologist.

Mark Boast
UK

TESTIMONIALS



Gastronomic Tour of Sicily

“ The Gastronomic Tour of Sicily was superb. Best tour I have ever done. And Marcello, our tour leader, was truly outstanding...best guide/tour leader I have ever had ...nothing was any trouble for him to attend to and he genuinely cared about us all and our experience. And his knowledge of Sicily, its history, food etc. was top class. Thanks for a wonderful week. ”

Michael Edgar
NZ

Gastronomic Tour of Sicily

“ We chose Peter Sommer’s Cruising the Aegean: from Kos to Patmos because of our love of the Greek Islands and classical archaeology. Peter’s travel team arranged a beautiful, educational, as well as very relaxing trip. We were so fortunate to have two expert guides, as our local guide Tassos, is a specialist in Byzantine archaeology. Our expert guide, Tony Spawforth is an accomplished author and expert on classical history. He was delightful and had a great sense of humor. This was our first time on a gulet, and we thoroughly enjoyed the barefoot experience, delicious family style meals, camaraderie with fellow passengers and guides, and being pampered by the excellent crew. Peter Sommer’s cruises are definitely a repeater and we are already planning next year’s cruise. ”

John & Laurie
Gosch
USA

Cruising the Aegean from Kos to Patmos

“ This was a great combination of cruising the Carian coast of Turkey and walking in the coastal hills. We visited many remote ancient sites and our guide was extremely personable and informative. It was well organized and special care was taken to ensure that everyone was well looked after. The Captain and his crew were very friendly and helpful, and the food was always excellent with lots of local wine. A very enjoyable and informative week. ”

Anthony Boulton
CAN

Walking and Cruising the Carian Coast

“ A frequent visitor to Greece, I had never before been to Macedonia and I was awed by the its beauty, its lush countryside and verdant, mountainous west. It is impossible to overstate the wow factor of the museum at Vergina, now enclosing the tomb of king Philip II and the rich treasure found there. There were the expected highlights of the tour, but there were so many other treats and the ferry day-trip to the isle of Thasos was a lovely change of pace. Our guides Maria and Paul were extremely knowledgeable, considerate and good company. The food was splendid and we all appreciated the lengths Maria had gone to to order for us local dishes in each of the towns we visited. ”

Stella Graham
UK

Exploring Macedonia

“ Based in a beautiful hotel in Bath with daily excursions to archaeological sites, magnificent cathedrals, Roman baths & villas, Stonehenge at dawn from the inner sanctum, Avebury circles, etc. All the while being escorted by Paul Beston whose knowledge of each site seemed endless. ”

Rodney Hoare
AUS

Exploring Wessex

“ Our gulet cruise of east Turkey was comfortable, very well organised, with a brilliant guide and tour manager and crew, good food and good company. ”

Sir Gerald Warner
UK

Cruising the Lycian Shore

“ A 14-day trip along the Carian Coast of Turkey, visiting archaeological sites, wineries, villages, etc. Everything about the trip was wonderful. The food on the boat was truly excellent; traditional Turkish dishes, cooked by a masterful chef. All 13 of us on board were dazzled. Wonderful swimming in bays along the coast, two or three times a day. Archaeological sites were fascinating and our guides on board were excellent companions. ”

John Boyd
USA

Private Gulet Charter

“ Fantastic trip. The boat was comfortable and well maintained; the crew were attendant and helpful and the food was fabulous. The visits to the archaeological sites were very well organized and our guides were excellent. Our archaeological guide, Philip, was knowledgeable, enthusiastic, and an excellent presenter. Our local guide, Ayup, kept us informed on local foods, wines, and traditions. It was, by far, the best trip I have ever taken. ”

Elaine Sullivan
USA

Cruising the Carian Coast - Aegean to Mediterranean

“ A gulet trip in Croatia, stopping at numerous historic sites, with a fabulous guide, Mislav, on board and with a wonderful crew. Many great meals both on and off the boat. A comprehensive look at both the history and culture of this beautiful and interesting region. I highly recommend both this trip and Peter Sommer Travels. ”

Deborah Ware
USA

Cruising Dalmatia from Dubrovnik to Split

“ One of the best vacations I’ve ever had. The opportunities for swimming, kayaking, and hiking were all exceptional. The food was excellent and something of a miracle given the size of the gulet kitchen. The group was very congenial and a pleasure to be with. ”

Prof. Kathleen
Dracup
USA

Cruising Western Lycia

“ The gulet cruise was phenomenal and I will go on one again! I learned so much from the inland tours and the interaction with other guests of the cruise. One highlight was visiting an oyster harvesting operation on a floating barge. Now I understand why oysters are so expensive and will love them even more! ”

June
Thormodsgard
USA

Gastronomic Gulet Cruise In Croatia

“ I knew that Peter Sommer’s tours have attracted excellent reviews but the experience more than matched my high expectations. Each day was a delightful blend of cruising along the beautiful Turkish coast, fascinating excursions to visit amazing ancient sites, swimming in sheltered bays and long evenings around the table with excellent food, wine and new found friends. Everything was arranged at a relaxed and comfortable pace. Our trips ashore visited a series of increasingly spectacular ancient cities which were brought to life by our enthusiastic and very knowledgeable expert guide. It was a perfect holiday and many thanks to everyone involved. It turned out to be a life affirming experience. ”

Peter Glynn
UK

Cruising to Ephesus

“ Cruising the Coast of Dalmatia was the perfect adventure. A beautiful mahogany boat, wonderful crew and guide, fabulous food on board, interesting ports of call...the seven days just flew by. We travel quite a bit and this was the best trip my husband and I have ever been on. Each island visited was fascinating in its own right. We will be back for another Peter Sommer trip. ”

Cordelia
Andrews
USA

Private Gulet Charter

“ Peter Sommer Travels provided excellent organization and logistics, smoothly delivered. The food and accommodation were top notch, the guides were also top notch, the transportation by bus was very comfortable with expert driving, airport transfers were well organized and smooth, and the overall experience was terrific. ”

Patricia Wilson
CAN

Exploring Crete

“ We traveled by gulet along the Dalmatian coast, anchoring near important archaeological sites, cities with ancient origins and a National Park along the way. It was wonderful! Our guide, Filip, was extremely knowledgeable about all historical eras we encountered. He was energetic, funny, very sociable, attentive - a tremendous asset to both the social and the educational aspects of the trip. ”

Kenneth Gabard
USA

Cruising Dalmatia from Šibenik To Zadar

“ A wonderful week spent walking sections of Hadrian’s Wall learning about it’s construction, occupation, and reincarnation into other local buildings. The tour is led by an experienced archaeologist and the group is the perfect size to have in-depth technical discussions with the tour guide and other members regarding the archaeology, history, and geology of the Wall features. A physical workout for the legs, a mental workout for the brain, and a vacation for the soul. ”

James Covington
USA

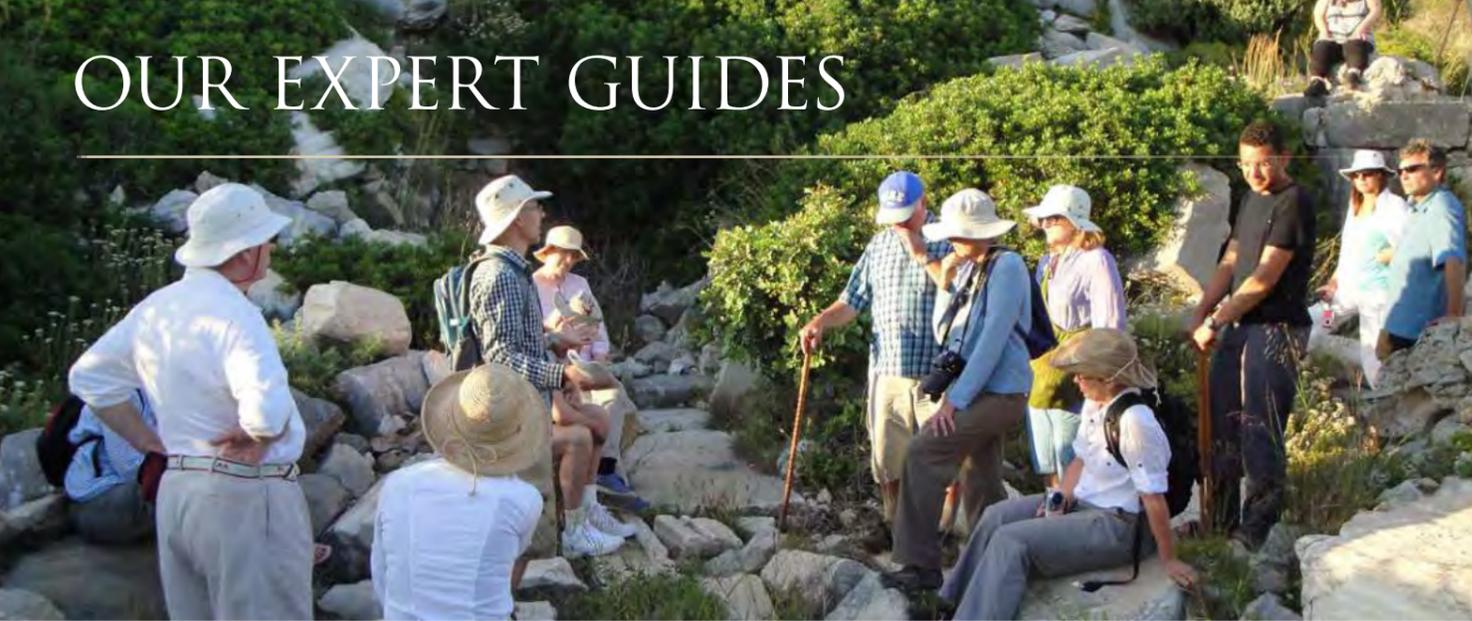
Walking Hadrian’s Wall

“ This was a remarkably well-organized two-week tour of the principal historical sites in the Peloponnese accompanied by two indefatigable and very knowledgeable guides. Such a tour, or anything approaching it in depth and breadth (including the accommodations), would have been impossible to arrange on one’s own and was by far the best tour of any sort that I’ve encountered. ”

Michael
Nossaman
USA

Exploring the Peloponnese

OUR EXPERT GUIDES



PETER SOMMER

Peter studied Ancient History and Archaeology at Birmingham University before completing a Masters on the archaeology of Central Asia. He has taught at Birmingham University and Istanbul's Boğaziçi University. Two years into a PhD at University College London, on the archaeology of northwest Turkey, he was lured into television to work on *In the Footsteps of Alexander the Great* (BBC/PBS). An award-winning documentary

producer/director, Peter has worked around the world for many acclaimed series. Peter is also a freelance writer and speaker who gives talks about travel, history and filmmaking.



PAUL BESTON

Inspired by finding a musket-ball in Gibraltar, Paul spent his childhood drawing Spartans, watching historical documentaries and devouring archaeology books. Certain that life ought to revolve around his passion for the ancient world he studied Ancient History at King's College, London, gaining a first and then earned a distinction in his Masters. Alongside lecturing posts at King's and Royal Holloway in London, he

has acted as an historical adviser for TV including HBO's *Fire from Heaven*. He has a particular passion for Late Antiquity, Roman Britain and the Near East.



MARCELLO BAGLIONI

Marcello first began his love affair with Italian food and wine as an 8 year old sous-chef in the kitchen of his father's Italian restaurant in Hollywood, California. He ended up going into the food business, working as the manager of a successful catering company, before moving to Sicily where he lived for almost two decades, immersing himself into the island's history, food and culture. Marcello set himself up as a one man Sicilian culinary-

cultural specialist, focusing on 'Slow Food' and 'Slow Travel'. He's been selected as Sicily's top travel specialist by Condé Nast Traveller magazine and one of their World's Top 126 Travel Specialists.



DR. MICHAEL METCALFE

Michael earned his PhD at University College London, focusing on the ancient Greek cities of western Turkey. For many years Michael was Assistant Professor in Ancient History at The Mediterranean Center for Arts and Sciences in Sicily, before joining Peter Sommer Travels. He is currently involved in the study of Greek and Latin inscriptions from all over the Mediterranean. He co-edited the *Blue Guide to the Aegean Islands* and

is contributing editor of the new edition of the *Blue Guide to Sicily*. Michael speaks Greek, Italian and Turkish. Not only is he 'enthusiastic, charming and knowledgeable' he is also a natural born organiser.



SERDAR AKERDEM

Peter has been working with Serdar since 1999. A man of many talents, not only is he a highly experienced location manager and tour guide, Serdar is a genteel, enthusiastic and knowledgeable archaeologist. He has lectured at a number of Turkish universities, and excavated and surveyed widely along Turkey's southern shore, including important work at Patara, Tlos, and Kaunos. His major passions are Roman architecture and

maritime archaeology. With his intimate understanding of the Turkish language, culture, and of course ancient sites, Serdar is a very valued tour leader.



DR. RICHARD BAYLISS

After a degree in archaeology Richard lived in Turkey working at the British Institute in Ankara as a resident archaeologist. He has travelled widely around the country over many years, surveying and excavating many celebrated sites. His PhD focused on the rise of Christianity in the Roman cities of Asia Minor (modern Turkey). After lecturing at Newcastle University, Richard has gone on to work in building design and heritage

conservation. An experienced tour leader, he has led a wide range of groups on our tours in Turkey. Noted for his knowledge and enthusiasm, he is an exciting and popular specialist guide.

OUR EXPERT GUIDES



PROF. JULIAN BENNETT

Julian studied Archaeology at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne and has excavated in Britain, Germany, Romania and Turkey. He has taught at Bilkent University in Ankara since 1995 and has a particular interest in the history, archaeology and architecture of Roman and Byzantine Anatolia. Julian has appeared in TV documentaries for the BBC, The History Channel and National Geographic. A well-travelled and experienced tour

leader, he has escorted groups throughout the Mediterranean for institutions such as the Smithsonian and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.



FILIP BUDIĆ

Steeped in the history and archaeology of Croatia, Filip has walked and travelled extensively across the mainland, coast and islands of his homeland. Passionate about history and archaeology he has worked on multiple excavations and surveys throughout Croatia as well as at sites in Kosovo, Germany, Greece, Israel and the Russian Federation. Filip holds a BA and MA in Archaeology from the University of Zagreb, where

he has won numerous awards and where he is currently completing his PhD. A true enthusiast and charming host, he has long expertise guiding in Croatia, Greece, Sicily and Turkey.



PROF. JIM CROW

Jim Crow is Professor of Classical Archaeology at Edinburgh University with special research interests in Byzantine Archaeology and Roman Frontier Studies. A graduate of Birmingham and Newcastle Universities he has worked in Turkey for over twenty years and recently completed a major research project on the Water Supply of Byzantine Constantinople and the city's hinterland fortification system 'the Anastasian Wall'. He

directed the archaeological excavations on Hadrian's Wall for the National Trust for some 5 years earlier in his career, and has led study tours to Istanbul and lectured on gulet cruises and for Cunard.



MISLAV FILEŠ

Mislav was born in Zagreb and after high school enrolled as an Archaeology undergraduate, carrying on through graduate years to his PhD. He is currently at the University of Zagreb. He has received Excellence Awards from the Faculty of Humanities and Social sciences for both undergraduate and graduate work. He was also awarded a scholarship of excellence from the City of Zagreb for undergraduate and postgraduate

studies as well as the award for excellence in PhD studies from the Department of Archaeology.



DR. MARIA GIRTZI

Born in Thessaloniki, Maria is an Archaeologist and professional tour guide. She studied Archaeology and Art at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and did her postgraduate studies on Greek Archaeology (MA and PhD) at the University of Birmingham in the UK. She has taught History, Archaeology and Art history at the Universities of Thrace, Birmingham (UK), Cornell (USA), the Hellenic Open University

and the Open University of Cyprus as well as working as a field archaeologist on excavations in Macedonia, Thrace and on Crete. Maria is the author of the book "Historical Topography of Ancient Macedonia".



PROF. OLIVIER HENRY

Olivier holds a degree in ancient history, two masters degrees in ancient history and classical archaeology and a PhD from the University of Bordeaux. After a couple of years at the University of Illinois, lecturing on ancient architecture, he worked at the French Institute for Anatolian Studies. He later held the Chair of Excellence in "Anatolian Archaeology" at the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris. Olivier has

been the Excavation Director at Labraunda since 2012. Fluent in French, English and Turkish, he also has a strong interest in Greece and Sicily. He is Professor of Greek Art and Archaeology at the University of Lyon.



LUCIA IACONO

Born and bred in Siracusa (Sicily), Lucia studied for a BA in foreign languages and literature at the University of Catania. She is a qualified tourist guide, specialising initially in the South-Eastern provinces of Ragusa and Siracusa. Lucia has over 20 years' experience in this field, but still works with the same passion and enthusiasm with which she began. She loves introducing people to the unbelievable wealth of art, archaeology

and culture that Sicily has to offer and is always on the lookout for something new, exciting and interesting that reveals the true quirks of Sicilian culture.



PROF. IVANA JEVTIC

Growing up in the former Yugoslavia, Ivana nurtured a passion for art and developed a particular interest for the history of the Balkans. She studied art history at the University of Belgrade before receiving her PhD at the University of Paris I-Panthéon Sorbonne. A specialist in Byzantine art, architecture and history, Ivana has been teaching in Istanbul at Koç University since 2010. Ivana has escorted many of

our guests in Istanbul over the years and received high praise. Not only has she led numerous tours in Croatia, she is internationally accomplished having led tours throughout Greece and Turkey.

OUR EXPERT GUIDES



NOTA KARAMAOUNA

Nota has a degree in Archaeology and Art History and a Masters in Byzantine Archaeology, and has been travelling to Turkey, especially Cappadocia, for many years, captivated by its multicultural history, the spectacular landscape and the warm local hospitality. Nota has excavated and surveyed at a number of sites in Cappadocia and elsewhere in Turkey and at sites in Greece, ranging from the island of Kos to central Athens. Alongside her academic studies she has worked for a specialist Byzantine photo library and the Byzantine Museum of Athens.



PROF. TONY SPAWFORTH

Tony Spawforth is an Emeritus Professor of Ancient History at Newcastle University, UK, Visiting Fellow at the British School at Athens (2015) and a former fellow of the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton. A freelance writer, lecturer and well-known television broadcaster his published books include *Greece: An Oxford Archaeological Guide*, *The Complete Greek Temples*, *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* and the best-selling

Versailles: A Biography of a Palace. Tony has excavated on Crete and Sicily and has considerable experience as a tour leader across the Mediterranean.



PROF. GRAHAM OLIVER

Graham undertook both his undergraduate and doctoral studies in Classics at Oxford University before moving to The University of Liverpool in 1994, where he taught until 2013. He then moved to Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island where he is Professor of Classics, Chair of Classics and Professor of History. Fluent in French and Greek, Graham has lectured in the USA and throughout Europe to audiences of all ages. He

believes passionately in bringing history and the ancient world to life, and has worked and travelled extensively in the Mediterranean and led numerous groups around the region's archaeological sites. We are delighted Graham can share his knowledge and enthusiasm with our guests.



DR. NIGEL SPIVEY

Nigel is a Fellow of Emmanuel College, Cambridge University, where he teaches Classical Art and Archaeology. His research interests cover the breadth of the Greek and Roman world and he has excavated at several Etruscan sites. His books include *The Ancient Olympics*, *Greek Art* and *Panorama of the Classical World*. Nigel is a renowned TV presenter, whose credits include the BBC's *How Art Made the World*, *Kings and Queens*

and *Heroes of World War II*. Nigel has been leading tours for us for many years and his knowledge and passion make him an ideal guide in bringing the ancient world to life.



ANASTASIOS PAPAPOPOULOS

As an archaeologist, Anastasios has dug a huge variety of sites in Greece, covering thousands of years of its history – everything from the Neolithic to the medieval Byzantine era, particularly in his beloved north. He has a degree in history, an MA in Byzantine Archaeology and is studying for a PhD at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. Having excavated widely, he has turned his encyclopaedic knowledge in a new direction and become a

licensed guide. As well as working with us, he designs his own cultural tours in and around Thessaloniki with an extraordinary array of themes encompassing a phenomenal historical sweep.



DR. PETER TOMKINS

Peter fell in love with Crete in 1991 on a gap year spent travelling in Greece. After reading Classics at Oxford, the call of Cretan prehistory became too great to ignore and, after an MA in Archaeology at University College London, there followed a PhD thesis on the Cretan Neolithic at the University of Sheffield. Since then, he has held a series of research and teaching posts at universities and research institutions in the U.K., Belgium, Greece

and Italy. He is a specialist on the Neolithic and Bronze Age of the Aegean with a focus on Crete.



GULET CRUISES

CRUISING THROUGH HISTORY

The shores we travel along offer some of the most spectacular cruising in the Mediterranean, Aegean, Adriatic Seas, replete with stunning views and beautiful coves. Studded with antiquities, large stretches of these coastlines, (especially along Turkey's south coast), remain largely undeveloped, still lapped by the clear waters on which the great names of the classical world once sailed: Pericles, Julius Caesar, St. Paul...

As we cruise on Homer's 'wine-dark sea', or set off to explore the stunning interior, we enter a forgotten land and discover a lost world of temples, tombs and theatres. In many places you can literally stroll through an olive grove, stumble upon a Roman temple still standing proud and have the place all to yourself.

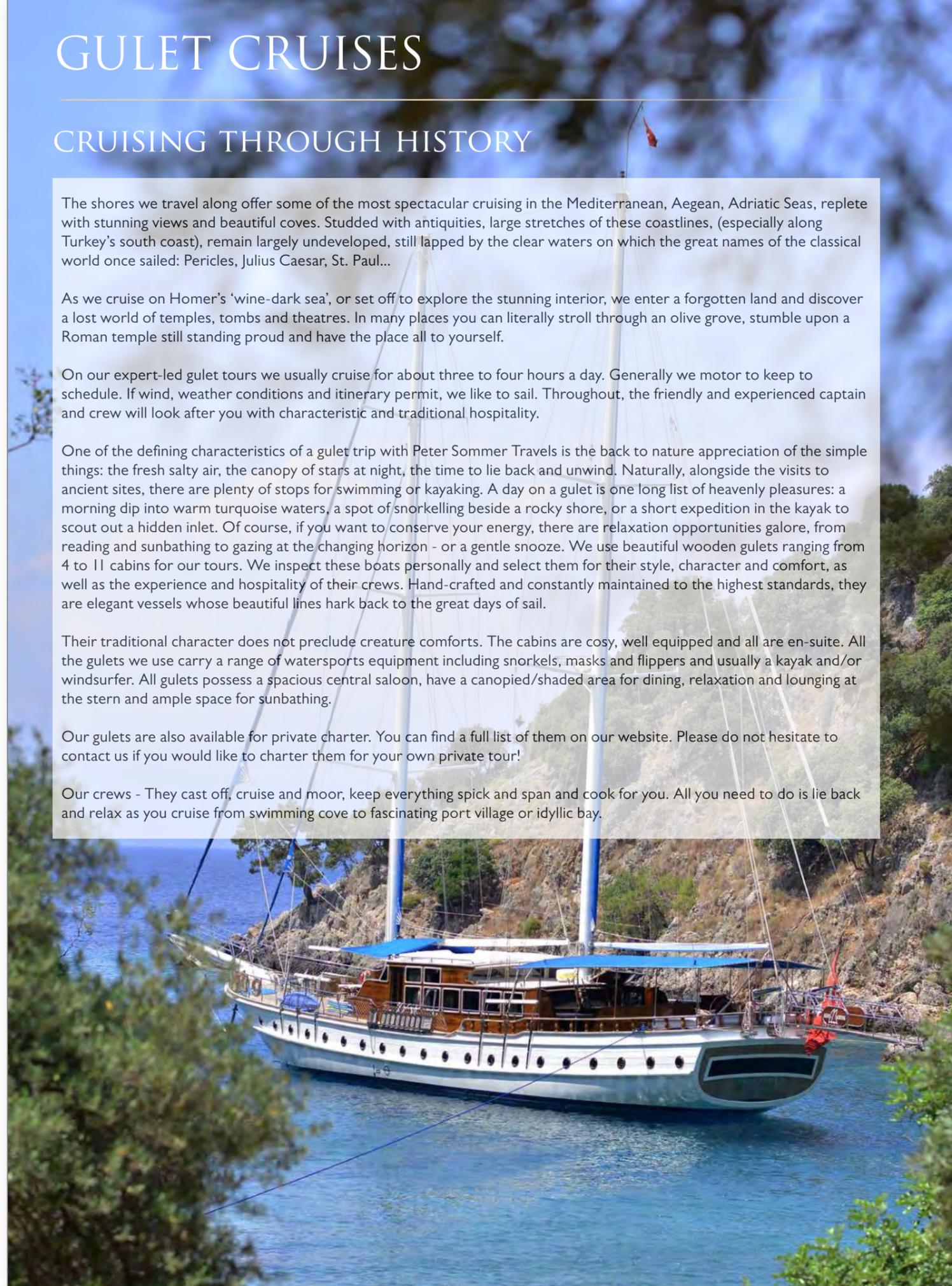
On our expert-led gulet tours we usually cruise for about three to four hours a day. Generally we motor to keep to schedule. If wind, weather conditions and itinerary permit, we like to sail. Throughout, the friendly and experienced captain and crew will look after you with characteristic and traditional hospitality.

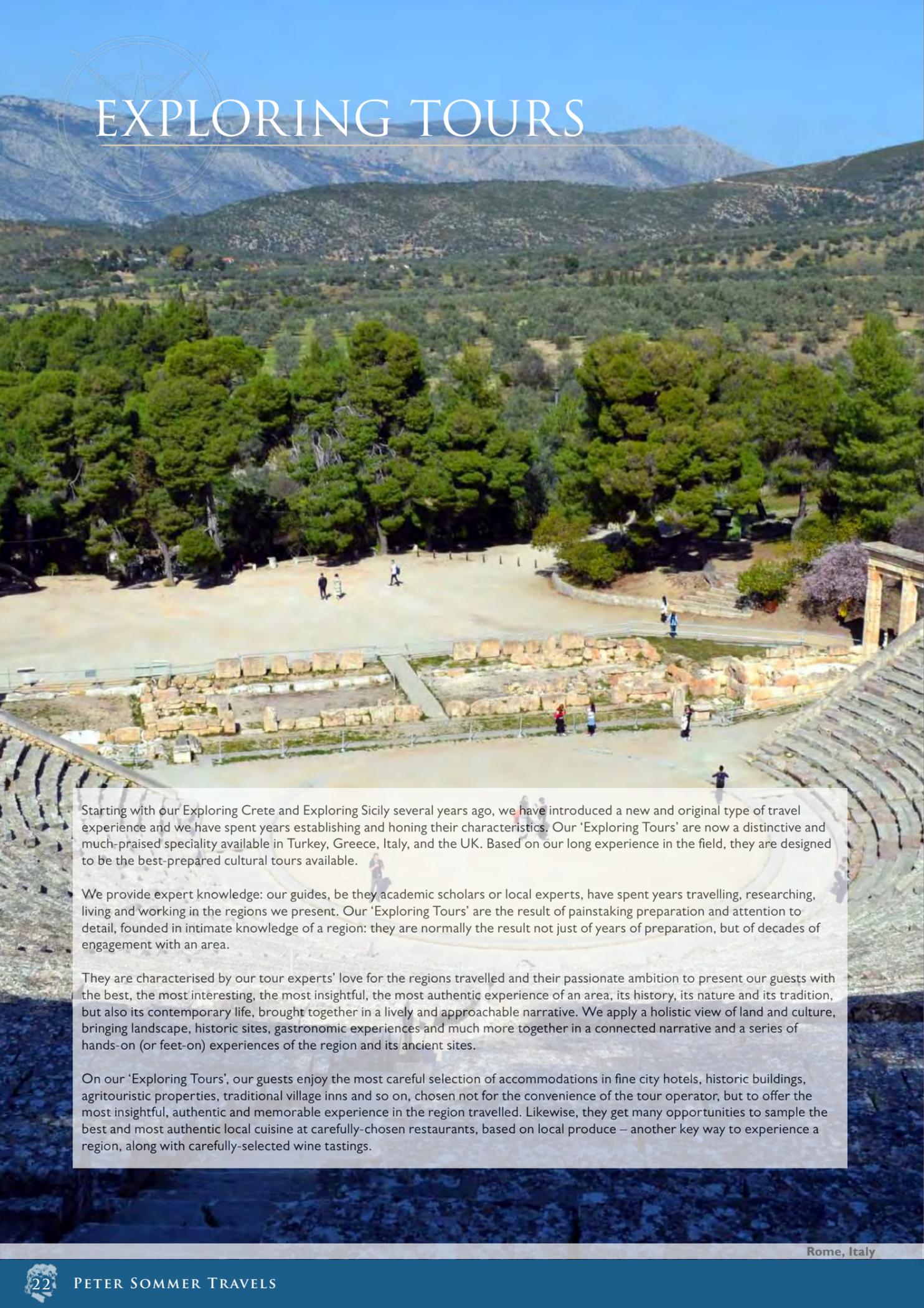
One of the defining characteristics of a gulet trip with Peter Sommer Travels is the back to nature appreciation of the simple things: the fresh salty air, the canopy of stars at night, the time to lie back and unwind. Naturally, alongside the visits to ancient sites, there are plenty of stops for swimming or kayaking. A day on a gulet is one long list of heavenly pleasures: a morning dip into warm turquoise waters, a spot of snorkelling beside a rocky shore, or a short expedition in the kayak to scout out a hidden inlet. Of course, if you want to conserve your energy, there are relaxation opportunities galore, from reading and sunbathing to gazing at the changing horizon - or a gentle snooze. We use beautiful wooden gulets ranging from 4 to 11 cabins for our tours. We inspect these boats personally and select them for their style, character and comfort, as well as the experience and hospitality of their crews. Hand-crafted and constantly maintained to the highest standards, they are elegant vessels whose beautiful lines hark back to the great days of sail.

Their traditional character does not preclude creature comforts. The cabins are cosy, well equipped and all are en-suite. All the gulets we use carry a range of watersports equipment including snorkels, masks and flippers and usually a kayak and/or windsurfer. All gulets possess a spacious central saloon, have a canopied/shaded area for dining, relaxation and lounging at the stern and ample space for sunbathing.

Our gulets are also available for private charter. You can find a full list of them on our website. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like to charter them for your own private tour!

Our crews - They cast off, cruise and moor, keep everything spick and span and cook for you. All you need to do is lie back and relax as you cruise from swimming cove to fascinating port village or idyllic bay.





EXPLORING TOURS

Starting with our Exploring Crete and Exploring Sicily several years ago, we have introduced a new and original type of travel experience and we have spent years establishing and honing their characteristics. Our 'Exploring Tours' are now a distinctive and much-praised speciality available in Turkey, Greece, Italy, and the UK. Based on our long experience in the field, they are designed to be the best-prepared cultural tours available.

We provide expert knowledge: our guides, be they academic scholars or local experts, have spent years travelling, researching, living and working in the regions we present. Our 'Exploring Tours' are the result of painstaking preparation and attention to detail, founded in intimate knowledge of a region: they are normally the result not just of years of preparation, but of decades of engagement with an area.

They are characterised by our tour experts' love for the regions travelled and their passionate ambition to present our guests with the best, the most interesting, the most insightful, the most authentic experience of an area, its history, its nature and its tradition, but also its contemporary life, brought together in a lively and approachable narrative. We apply a holistic view of land and culture, bringing landscape, historic sites, gastronomic experiences and much more together in a connected narrative and a series of hands-on (or feet-on) experiences of the region and its ancient sites.

On our 'Exploring Tours', our guests enjoy the most careful selection of accommodations in fine city hotels, historic buildings, agritouristic properties, traditional village inns and so on, chosen not for the convenience of the tour operator, but to offer the most insightful, authentic and memorable experience in the region travelled. Likewise, they get many opportunities to sample the best and most authentic local cuisine at carefully-chosen restaurants, based on local produce – another key way to experience a region, along with carefully-selected wine tastings.

A key ingredient that goes into these trips is bold outside the box thinking: always favouring the best experience – the most interesting story, the best dishes, the most beautiful and informative site tours, the most characteristic accommodation – over commercial convenience. Our 'Exploring Tours' are perfect as a profound introduction for a visitor who has never been to the region, but they are also a superb next step for the connoisseur, the person familiar with an area from previous travels.

Our 'Exploring Tours' are all of this: the best-prepared combination of the geography, nature, culture, archaeology, history, gastronomy, tradition of a place, accompanied and told by experts who know the region intimately. We normally schedule these trips at the perfect travel seasons, when the weather conditions are ideal to fully enjoy the region in question. In Turkey, Greece and Italy, that means we favour the Mediterranean's brilliant spring (April/May), when landscapes are strewn with wild flowers, or the luscious late summer/early autumn (September/October), when the summer heat and the summer crowds have been and gone and a balmy calm prevails for many golden weeks. In the UK, we use the summer months (June, July and August).

Join us for one of these unique experiences, of knowing exactly where you are in time and space and context, and of experiencing and enjoying it to the utmost. Exploring in the true sense of the word: that's what we do at Peter Sommer Travels.

FAMILY TOURS

“ONE OF THE 3 BEST FAMILY HOLIDAYS OF A LIFETIME” - CONDÉ NAST TRAVELLER

“ONE OF THE 20 BEST FAMILY HOLIDAYS” - THE TIMES

Our family holidays are designed to be relaxing and stimulating, fascinating and fun for all ages.

What could be more fun for your family than to experience an unforgettable real-life adventure, exploring ancient mysteries and glorious landscapes, playing and relaxing, while travelling on a wooden boat? And what could be a better holiday for you than to share all that joy in a perfectly stress-free setting?

We started organising expert-led cultural gulet cruises for families a number of years ago, as many of our guests had asked us to create tours they could enjoy together with their children and grandchildren. Since then, they have become a regular feature of our yearly tours – and one of our favourites! Like our other escorted tours, Peter Sommer Travels' family holidays are cultural gulet cruises, led by an expert guide. Visits to ancient sites will take you and your children deep into the past and offer you a vivid and hands-on glimpse of antiquity.

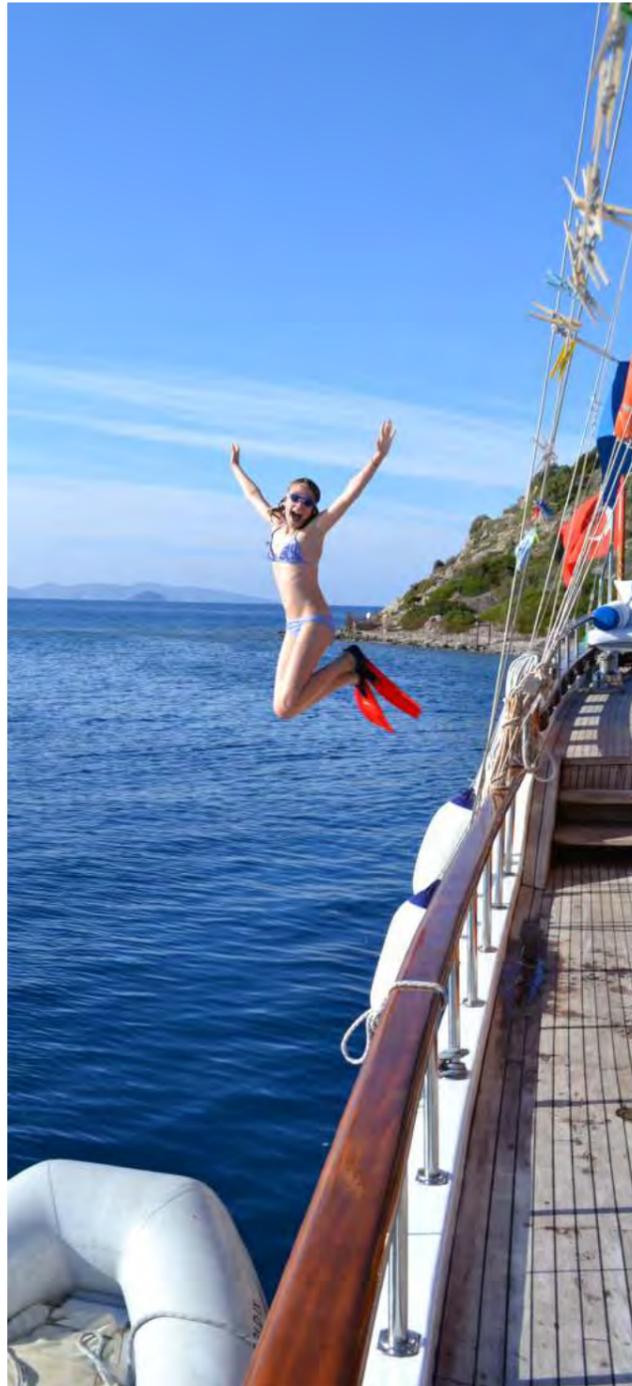
You'll explore the world of the Greeks and Romans in colourful detail, from the grand scale of culture and history to the nitty-gritty of daily life: what they ate, how they built temples or homes, what their toilets were like, how they were treated at the doctor's and lots of fun facts. All this and more in places boasting some of the era's finest artistic and architectural achievements.

Alongside our archaeological adventures, there is the sheer joy of the cruise itself, gliding across the sea aboard a beautiful traditional Turkish gulet. Our gulet holidays offer plenty of opportunities for guests of all ages to swim, kayak or snorkel in azure waters, to lie back and read as the world goes by, to observe the perfectly clear sky at night (perhaps even some shooting stars) and to enjoy the delicious home-cooked food freshly prepared on board. When we hike off into the hills, we're almost certain to encounter goats, tortoises and various creepy-crawlies and while at sea there is always the chance we'll see dolphins and turtles!

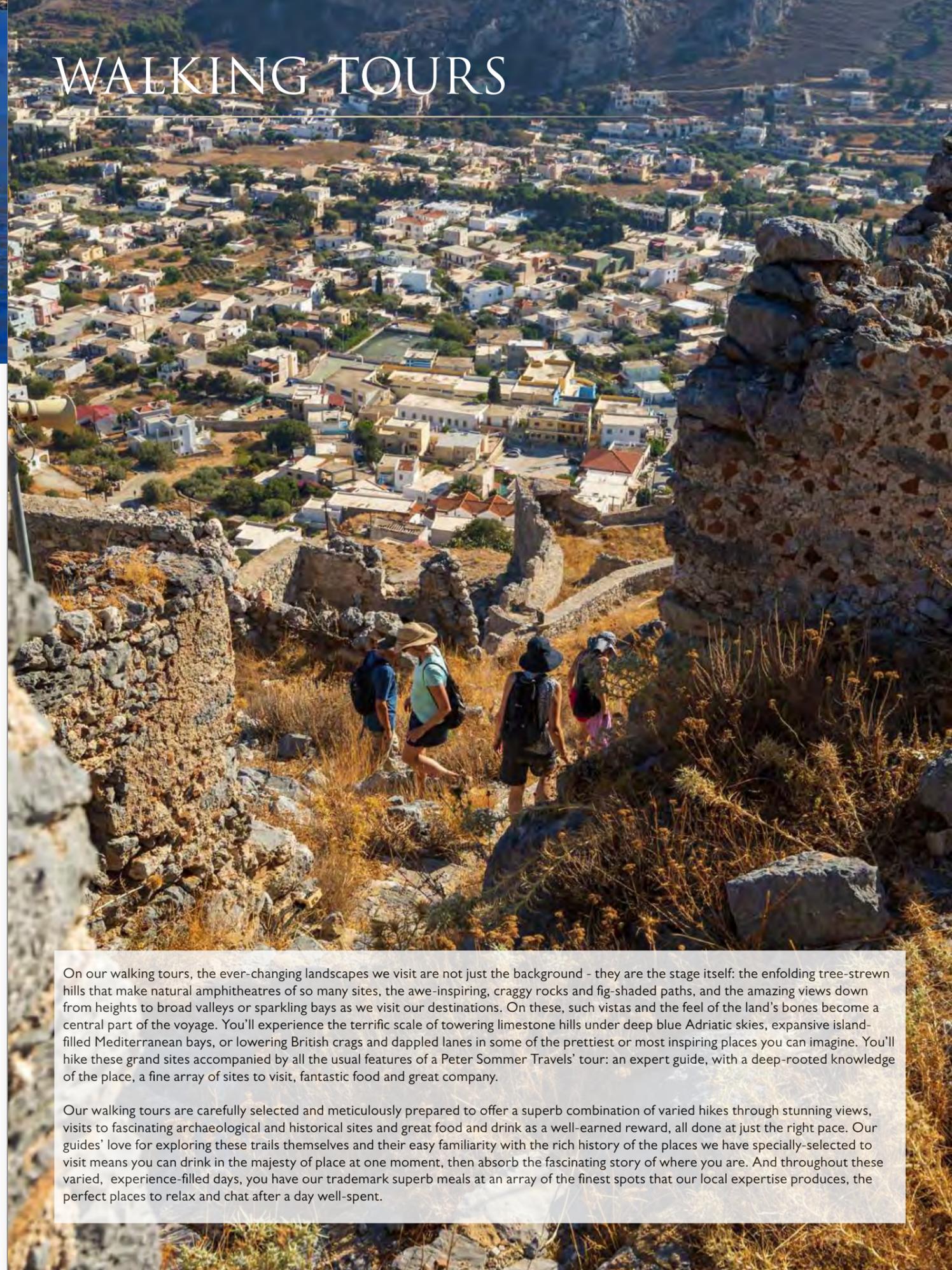
Our scheduled family tour for 2021 is *Cruising the Aegean: From Kos to Patmos*. A family adventure that offer a complete panorama of the ancient world as well as time to play, swim, snorkel, read, sunbathe, nap, or simply enjoy the beautiful boat and the wonderful scenery in the company of friends and loved ones.

“We had the most remarkable family tour with Peter Sommer Travels. Not only was everything perfect, but we felt, in every instance, that our guides and our gulet crew truly cared about us, and did their best to make this trip memorable. For our well-traveled children (aged 9 and 6) this definitely has become the most eye-opening, adventurous, and stunning journey of their life.”

Ilya Strebulaev, USA



WALKING TOURS



On our walking tours, the ever-changing landscapes we visit are not just the background - they are the stage itself: the enfolding tree-strewn hills that make natural amphitheatres of so many sites, the awe-inspiring, craggy rocks and fig-shaded paths, and the amazing views down from heights to broad valleys or sparkling bays as we visit our destinations. On these, such vistas and the feel of the land's bones become a central part of the voyage. You'll experience the terrific scale of towering limestone hills under deep blue Adriatic skies, expansive island-filled Mediterranean bays, or lowering British crags and dappled lanes in some of the prettiest or most inspiring places you can imagine. You'll hike these grand sites accompanied by all the usual features of a Peter Sommer Travels' tour: an expert guide, with a deep-rooted knowledge of the place, a fine array of sites to visit, fantastic food and great company.

Our walking tours are carefully selected and meticulously prepared to offer a superb combination of varied hikes through stunning views, visits to fascinating archaeological and historical sites and great food and drink as a well-earned reward, all done at just the right pace. Our guides' love for exploring these trails themselves and their easy familiarity with the rich history of the places we have specially-selected to visit means you can drink in the majesty of place at one moment, then absorb the fascinating story of where you are. And throughout these varied, experience-filled days, you have our trademark superb meals at an array of the finest spots that our local expertise produces, the perfect places to relax and chat after a day well-spent.

Kalymnos, Greece

FOOD TOURS

WE TAKE FOOD VERY SERIOUSLY



Along with the sites and itineraries, good food plays a key role in the design of our tours and cruises. For us, meals are much more than a practical necessity: they are a pleasure to be shared with our guests and moreover a central aspect in experiencing the local culture and the area's gastronomic wealth. In that sense, each of our itineraries is a culinary exploration.

On our gulet cruises, the on-board cooks freshly prepare a wonderful variety of dishes in the ship's galley using fine local ingredients. These daily delights are complemented by shore meals in excellent and atmospheric restaurants and tavernas along the itinerary.

On our land and city tours, you'll enjoy meals at a range of carefully selected venues, usually our guides' personal favourites, based on in-depth local knowledge. They represent the full scope of the region's culinary achievements and specialities, ranging from authentic "home cooking" to truly gourmet food, always rooted in local tradition and based on the strengths of the area's produce.

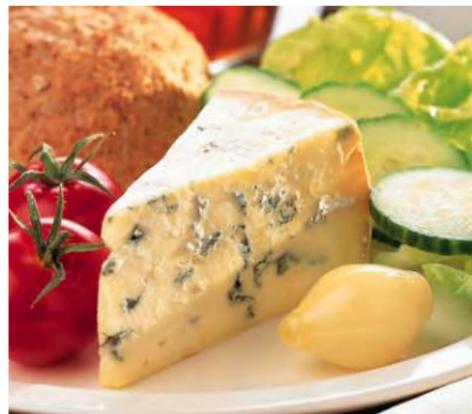
There are countless delights you will taste on our tours: succulent fish, freshly grilled or barbecued, accompanied by a whole array of refreshing dips and salads; stuffed roast lamb prepared especially for us on a small Greek island; authentic pizza served in a tiny Neapolitan restaurant; fresh pomegranates, cherries or peaches just picked from the tree; subtly seasoned Turkish meatballs on a rooftop terrace overlooking Old Istanbul; delicate stuffed zucchini flowers in a Cretan mountain village; organic olives and their aromatic oil; handmade Turkish baklava; the sweet baby tomatoes of Santorini; freshly caught crab overlooking the Northumberland Coast; mature, tangy cheddars and ripe local cheeses from the West Country, fresh scallops or oysters from Ireland's wild Atlantic Coast or the whole range of handmade Italian pasta...

If gastronomy is a special interest of yours, you should join one of our designated culinary itineraries - but every one of our tours is a pleasure for all the senses!



Designated Gastronomic Tours

For the "foodies" among our guests, we offer a growing range of special gastronomy-themed tours and cruises. Like all our trips, they are centred on expert-guided visits to important and beautiful ancient sites. At the same time, they offer you a deeper understanding of the local culinary tradition. By exploring local markets, picking wild foods, visiting traditional producers and participating in the preparation of delicious meals, you will gain a profound insight and knowledge of a region's culinary culture.



FOOD TOURS

WE TAKE WINE VERY SERIOUSLY

Wine: Ancient Tradition and Local Culture

Wine culture goes back to the Bronze Age and was a central aspect of Greek and Roman life, society and culture. Today, wine still holds a distinctive and evocative role in the areas we travel. Italy is famed for its venerable vintages; Greece has recently rediscovered and redeveloped its ancient tradition of advanced viticulture; Dalmatia is famous for its deep dark reds grown on precipitous slopes to catch hundreds of hours of sunlight and its reflection from the sea below; Turkey has fledgling but dynamic wine producers and the UK's wine industry is flourishing with sparkling wines becoming a speciality.



On all our tours, we serve a select range of wines representing the products of the country we travel. When we visit wine-producing regions, we also organise wine tastings at hand-picked estates. It is our firm conviction that savouring and enjoying local wines is a key way to appreciate a region's culture - an experience we love to share with our guests.



PRIVATE TOURS

Are you looking for a very special holiday - a uniquely memorable experience to share with your loved ones, your family, your friends, or your colleagues? If so, a Peter Sommer Travels' private tour is your ideal choice!

Peter Sommer Travels' tailor-made trips are renowned for their carefully crafted itineraries and the superlative knowledge and skills of the guides who lead them. They are crafted by people who have devoted their lives to travelling as extensively as possible through the cities and regions of Greece and Italy, Turkey and Croatia, the UK and Ireland. They have explored the numerous archaeological sites and museums, strolled through the many towns and villages, walked the country lanes and hiking routes and have sought out the very best food and wine on offer in each and every season.

If you and your family or friends would like to take advantage of this experience, we would be delighted to create a specially arranged expert-led tour, perfectly suited to your precise interests and desires. You can choose a land tour or a private gulet charter or a combination of the two. Working closely with you to determine the perfect shape your trip should take, we will craft an itinerary that contains everything that you wish for, together with experiences and sights that you would never otherwise have known existed. Our expert guides and local guides look forward to welcoming you.

BY SEA

Our private charters feature the same qualities that distinguish our scheduled gulet cruises: comfortable and stylish boats, painstakingly prepared itineraries, a perfectly balanced mix of relaxation and activity and of course - delicious food, all accompanied by our expert guides and local guides. Our charters are available from late spring (April/May) to early autumn (September/October). Charter prices vary according to the season. Since the best boats book up well in advance we recommend you get in touch as early as you can.

We provide a range of fully crewed boats, maintained to the highest safety standards, ranging from 4 to 11 cabins (6 to 20 guests). You can follow one of our established itineraries, modify it to suit your personal interests, or ask us to design your dream tour from scratch. We will then organise everything: the fully-crewed boat, airport transfers, access and transport to the sites, and of course meals on board and ashore.

BY LAND

Our tailor-made expert-led land tours can focus on a single region or city, or we can create an itinerary for you that weaves together several different regions within one country e.g. Athens and Crete in Greece, Istanbul and Cappadocia in Turkey, Sicily and Rome in Italy, Zagreb or Dubrovnik in Croatia and many of the regional centres across the United Kingdom and Ireland. Maybe you'd like to combine the highlights of several different countries, such as a tour of the classical capitals of Europe, combining Rome with Athens and London?

From boutique hotels and country houses to 5-star hotels, we will find the accommodation that suits your needs. We pride ourselves on our flexibility and capacity to arrange all aspects of your journey so you can sit back and relax knowing everything is taken care of. Whatever your interests, we can create a tour to suit your tastes and desires.



PRIVATE CHARTERS IN CROATIA

Croatia's Adriatic Coast is a superb area for boating; due to the country's complex geography and many islands (there are over 1,000 islands, islets and reefs), Croatia's coastline is the third longest on the entire Mediterranean (after Greece and Italy). Encompassing three of the country's historical regions, Istria, Croatia Proper and Dalmatia, the area offers an extraordinarily rich variety of experiences. Remote coves and popular beaches, tranquil historical towns and upmarket resorts, rocky slopes and lush forests: there is much to discover for any traveller, no matter what their tastes and interests might be. Croatia's geographic diversity is complemented by its unusually varied history, making this stretch of shore a meeting place and melting pot of many peoples and cultures throughout time, scattering the coast with a treasure trove of rich historical and archaeological heritage.

Are you dreaming of a trip that allows you to experience and explore a fascinating historical region, but also to relax and simply enjoy yourself? In that case, you should consider a private gulet charter with Peter Sommer Travels in Croatia. While our scheduled tours in Croatia follow set itineraries, a private charter is designed according to your very own wishes and ideas, making it an immensely personal high-quality option, your very own trip. We provide a lovely gulet with a seasoned crew as well as Peter Sommer Travels' trademark team of expert guides. We make you aware of what options, routes and site visits are available, and in a process of careful preparation we create your dream holiday.

"We were exceptionally well looked after and there was something for everyone be it swimming in a secluded bay, to chilling with a G&T on the foredeck to scrambling over ancient ruins with a guide who was both funny and interesting. I would thoroughly recommend Peter Sommer private charters to anyone who wants a break from the modern world with a service that is truly personal."

Randall Gordon-Duff, UK



PRIVATE CHARTERS IN GREECE

The Greek islands are justly famed for their history, their relaxed pace of life, fresh and healthy cuisine, their rugged landscapes and the beautiful seas that surround them. A prime destination for sailing holidays and gulet cruises, their lively harbour towns, evocative ruins and beautiful museums provide something for everyone; and each island has a distinctive character of its own.

The Dodecanese, stretching in a scattered row along the Turkish coast, are a fascinating region to visit. Retaining much of their traditional outlook, these islands are distinguished by a genuine and generous hospitality and wonderful local cuisine, as well as their magnificent scenery that varies from verdant valleys to starkly rocky shores, even including a still-rumbling volcano, and by a surprising wealth of historical sites from many periods and superb museums. With one or two weeks to hand, a cruise through these islands is an ever-changing feast for the senses that can be indulged in from late May to early October. The famous Cycladic islands are the iconic image of insular Greece, with their villages of blue-and-white painted churches and houses, their distinctive landscapes set between sea, rocks and sky and their world-renowned archaeological sites. They can be difficult to navigate during the high-summer months when a strong prevailing wind blows through the central Aegean, but are a perfect destination in May, June and September.

Only a handful of gulets operate from Greek ports, leaving most of the market to the larger and more flexible Turkish gulet fleet. However, all Turkish gulets that cruise through the Greek islands must, by law, begin and end their trip in Turkish ports. As the major Dodecanese islands are all located within a few hours of a Turkish port, it is easy to cruise among them for nearly all of a one- or two-week trip. In fact, they are so close that we often visit one or two of them on private cruises that are otherwise focussed entirely on the delights of the Turkish coastline!



PRIVATE CHARTERS IN TURKEY

The coastal waters of south-western Turkey are renowned for their gentle waves and predictable seasonal winds. They have consequently become a haven for waterborne vacations and the growing gulet industry has led to the development of new marinas and harbours to complement the small coastal towns and villages that have dotted this coastline from time immemorial.

The choice of gulets in Turkey is unrivalled in scope and quality, as are the number of cruising itineraries that can be tailor-made for you. The principal cruising area stretches from Kuşadası (the modern port for ancient Ephesus) located half-way up the country's western coast, to the bustling city of Antalya near the mid-point of its southern shore.

The famously clean and clear waters of the Turquoise Coast from Bodrum to Antalya provide the perfect conditions for swimming, kayaking and snorkelling and this opportunity is gratefully taken advantage of on all of our cruises in the area.

The Carian coast of Turkey is an untouched and verdant delight to the senses, perfect for a relaxing cruise visiting spectacular sites such as grandiose Knidos, or off-the-beaten-track gems such as the seaside fortress of Loryma, still only reachable on foot or by boat.

The Lycian shore, home to iconic funerary monuments set in glorious isolation, has a wealth of beautiful coves and bays in which your gulet can drop anchor for the night, together with some lively harbour towns for those interested in indulging in some evening entertainment ashore.

On the western coast you can visit a string of world-famous ancient cities including Ephesus, Priene and Miletus, enjoying the greatest highlights of the ancient world from the relaxed comfort of your gulet.

A one- or two-week gulet cruise along any of these coastlines can easily be combined with a visit to one or more of the Greek islands that lie tantalisingly off-shore, giving you the opportunity to experience two of the most timeless cultures of the Mediterranean.



OUR GULETS

CROATIA



NAUTILUS - 8 CABINS

8 double Up to 12 guests Refit 2014 Length: 31m (101ft)



Nautilus is a magnificent, bright and airy gulet, a light and rather modern interior style in contrast to the darker wooden character of traditional gulets and is fitted out with all standard mod cons including a hot tub jacuzzi on deck. Although she has rigging, she does not sail but is one of the largest and most spacious gulets in Croatia

CROATIA - 7 CABINS

4 double, 3 twin Up to 12 guests Built 1998 Length: 32m (105ft)



Made of beautiful timber, she can accommodate up to 12 guests in 4 doubles and 3 twins. She is one of the largest gulets available in Croatia, with copious deck space throughout, open for sunbathing in the front and covered at the back. Her special features include a jacuzzi on the front deck.

PERLA - 7 CABINS

5 double, 2 triple Up to 12 guests Refit 2007 Length: 26m (85ft)



The Perla is an elegant 7-cabin gulet, with a beautiful teak deck and mahogany hull. She is sleek and comfortable with 5 doubles and 2 triple cabins accommodating up to 12 guests. She is spacious, full of character and is fitted out with all standard mod cons.

LIBRA - 6 CABINS

6 double Up to 12 guests Refit 2014 Length: 34m (110ft)



Libra is an elegant and cosy classic gulet, ideal for comfortable travel characterised by the use of beautiful mahogany. She has 6 double cabins, offering accommodation for up to 12 guests and generous space is available on the front and stern decks.



AURUM - 6 CABINS

6 double Up to 12 guests Refit 2015 Length: 33m (108ft)

Aurum is a fine high-end gulet based on the Dalmatian Coast of Croatia. With 6 double cabins, she has space for up to 12 guests. Her lovely mahogany finish, comfortable furnishings and ample deck space, including a panoramic fly bridge, make her a wonderful choice for exploring the region's coast and islands.



ALBA - 5 CABINS

1 master, 1 VIP double, 2 double, 2 twin Up to 10 guests Refit 2014 Length: 30m (98ft)

Originally a traditional Turkish handmade wooden gulet, Alba has been restyled into a cross between a gulet and a motor yacht. Owner by the same local Croatian family for two generations, she is extremely comfortable, blending a modern feel and style with its original character and heritage.



MALENA - 5 CABINS

4 double, 1 twin Up to 10 guests Built 1995 Length: 26m (85ft)

Malena is a 26 metre classically designed gulet. Air-conditioned throughout, she offers spacious accommodation for up to 10 guests in 4 double cabins & 1 twin cabins. Each cabin has its own private bathroom with shower.



DOLCE VITA - 5 CABINS

2 master, 2 double, 1 triple Up to 10 guests Refit 2015 Length: 34m (110ft)

A luxury-class gulet offering spacious accommodation and great style. Her 2 master, 2 double and 1 triple (double & single bed) cabins are beautifully crafted from mahogany and come equipped with TV, DVD player and minibar. She even has a jacuzzi on deck.



OUR GULETS

GREECE & TURKEY



TERSANE 8 - 14 CABINS

6 double, 4 twin Up to 28 guests Refit 2020 Length: 42m (138ft)
4 triple

Tersane 8 is a comfortable and spacious 14 cabin gulet ideal for large groups and families. She has 6 double, 4 triple and 4 twin cabins. She has a large lounge and ample seating areas both at the front and rear of the boat and throughout the vessel as well as sun decks. She has traditional woodwork throughout and is full of character.



AEGEAN CLIPPER - 11 CABINS

5 double, 6 twin Up to 22 guests Built 1999 Length: 41m (134ft)

The largest gulet we regularly use (she has a 33m-long deck), she is truly magnificent and is kept in gleaming condition by her Owner/Captain Ergün, who has a vast wealth of experience of cruising in Turkey, Greece and beyond.



KAYHAN 11 - 10 CABINS

6 double, 4 twin Up to 20 guests Built 2002 Length: 34m (110ft)

One of the gulets we use most frequently for our scheduled tours and one that we have been working with for well over a decade. She is impressively large, with an enormous flybridge, offering a great deal of deck space to relax in comfort, while also retaining the elegant lines and character of a traditional gulet. All cabins are en-suite and equipped with modern conveniences like air conditioning and hair dryers.



SUNWORLD IX - 8 CABINS

4 double, 4 triple Up to 20 guests Built 1999 Length: 30m (98ft)

A gorgeous gulet that is perfectly suited to host large or small groups on all of our Turkish and Greek tours. She is elegant, spacious and of classic design with beautiful mahogany fittings and stylish furnishings.



SULTAN A - 8 CABINS

6 double, 2 twin Up to 16 guests Built 1995 Length: 28m (92ft)

Hand-crafted from mulberry, mahogany and teak, this beautiful gulet unites traditional character with modern conveniences. One of our most popular gulets for private charters, she is frequently requested by name by guests who return year after year.



OĞUZ BEY - 8 CABINS

2 master, 2 double Up to 20 guests Refit 2014 Length: 32m (105ft)
4 twin

A classical, traditional gulet beautifully refitted in 2014 with elegant interiors, contemporary decor and comfortable cabins. She is spacious with plenty of room for relaxing on deck and ideal for exploring the Greek Islands or coast of Turkey.



SUNWORLD 8 - 8 CABINS

5 double, 2 twin Up to 17 guests Refit 2009 Length: 30m (98.5ft)
1 triple

Virtually identical to her sister ship (the Sunworld IX) this is a splendid gulet with gorgeous mahogany woodwork. She provides ample space above and below decks where you can relax in comfort while cruising or at anchor.



KAYA GÜNERI 3 - 8 CABINS

4 double, 4 twin Up to 16 guests Built 2001 Length: 29m (95ft)

A spacious and pretty gulet, Kaya Güneri 3 offers air-conditioned comfort with a saloon and bar. She has a spacious and comfortable aft deck with cushions, outdoor dining facilities and sun deck. Elegant and full of character she is perfectly designed for private charters for smaller groups and families.



MATINA - 8 CABINS

2 double, 4 twin Up to 18 guests Refit 2018 Length: 38m (124ft)
2 triple

Matina is one of the very few Greek owned and operated gulets and one of the absolute top of the range gulets in all Greece. She is a luxurious traditional wooden gulet and one of the largest and most spacious. She is fully equipped, stylish and beautifully designed.



QUEEN OF SALMAKIS - 8 CABINS

2 masters, 4 double Up to 18 guests Built 2019 Length: 39m (128ft)
2 triple

The Queen of Salmakis is a luxury class gulet offering modern and spacious accommodation. Each cabin also has a large modern en suite bathroom. She is fully equipped with all amenities and has the added luxury of a jacuzzi on deck as well as an assortment of water toys.



FLAS VII - 8 CABINS

2 master, 4 double Up to 17 guests Refit 2014 Length: 33.5m (110ft)
2 twin

Flas VII is ideal for large families or groups of friends. She has spacious fore, side and aft decks, outdoor dining space, cushioned lounging areas and sun mattresses. The elegant interior and cabins have high ceilings, generous storage space, and roomy en suite bathrooms. The interior also has a lounge, cushioned seating areas and indoor dining.

OUR GULETS

GREECE & TURKEY



NORTHWIND - 8 CABINS

4 double, 4 twin Up to 16 guests Refit 2018 Length: 33.5m (110ft)

Northwind is a classically styled Turkish gulet based in Rhodes and sails under the Greek flag. She is a great choice for family groups who want to cruise in style and comfort in the Greek Islands. She is well equipped with en-suite bathrooms, air-conditioning and plenty of deck space for sunbathing and relaxing.



ATHEN.A - 8 CABINS

6 double, 2 twin Up to 16 guests Built 2013 Length: 32m (105ft)

Athen.A is a high-quality Greek flagged gulet. All cabins are air-conditioned. There are generous indoor and outdoor dining areas, and the air-conditioned saloon has TV, DVD and a music system. There is also a large sun deck with mats as well as a covered seating area in the stern. She is full of character and is fitted out with all standard mod cons.



PRENSES LILA - 8 CABINS

6 double, 2 twin Up to 16 guests Refit 2012 Length: 36m (118ft)

Prenses lila is a popular 8 cabin gulet, ideal for large groups and families on our expert led cruises. She can accommodate 16 guests in 6 double and two twin cabins, all en-suite, generous in size and fitted with all mod cons. On deck there are two dining tables, fore and aft, and plenty of comfortable seating for relaxing, reading and enjoying drinks at sunset.



KAYA GÜNERI 1 - 7 CABINS

2 double, 2 twin Up to 14 guests Built 1997 Length: 26m (85ft)
3 triple

Spacious and comfortable, Kaya Güneri 1 is air-conditioned, with saloon and bar, outdoor dining facilities and sun deck. Full of character she is perfectly designed for private charters for smaller groups and families.



KAYA GÜNERI V - 6 CABINS

2 master, 2 double Up to 12 guests Built 2009 Length: 39.5m (130ft)
2 twin

A high-class gulet, the Kaya Güneri V is elegant and very stylish. She is beautifully crafted with spacious cabins made from mahogany and her crew will ensure that your time on board is truly memorable.



LA REINE - 6 CABINS

2 double, 4 twin Up to 12 guests Refit 2019 Length: 24m (79ft)

La Reine is a classical gulet perfect for private charters in the Greek Islands. She has a great lounge area with large windows, spacious decks with shaded areas, en suite bathrooms and air-conditioning. She is fully equipped with a range of water toys.



CEVRI HASAN 4 - 6 CABINS

4 double, 2 twin Up to 12 guests Refit 2015 Length: 25m (82ft)

Stylish and comfortable Cevri Hasan 4 has ample seating areas and a sun deck at the front and dining space at the back, she is a great choice for families and groups of friends.



GEMIBAŞI - 4 CABINS

1 master, 3 double Up to 8 guests Refit 2008 Length: 23m (75ft)

This elegant gulet has 1 master cabin and 3 doubles (1 with an upper bunk). The en suite bathrooms have electric toilets, wash basin and shower and all modern conveniences. She is stylish, characterful and perfect for a relaxing tailor-made private gulet charter for a family or small group accompanied by an expert guide.



DISCOVER CROATIA



Zadar

Šibenik

Trogir Split

Brač

Hvar

Vis

Korčula

Mljet

Slano

Dubrovnik

MAPS

CROATIA



CRUISING THE DALMATIAN COAST: FROM DUBROVNIK TO SPLIT & ITINERARY REVERSED

“Fantastic trip with the perfect combination of guided tours and free time spent on deck, sunbathing, swimming or lounging in the shade.”
Eva Lindgren, Sweden

Dalmatia is a region of immense natural beauty and historical significance, an area where many fascinating strands in the story of human struggle and achievement are woven together into an extraordinary tapestry of culture.



Dubrovnik



CRUISING THE DALMATIAN COAST: FROM ŠIBENIK TO ZADAR

“The combination of beautiful scenery, history, culture, good food and good company is impossible to resist!”
Simon Tompsett & Alison Ledgerwood, UK

Cruising the Dalmatian Coast: from Šibenik to Zadar offers an astonishing historical and cultural tour of one of Croatia’s most diverse coastal regions, an area rich in verdant landscapes and sparkling seascapes.



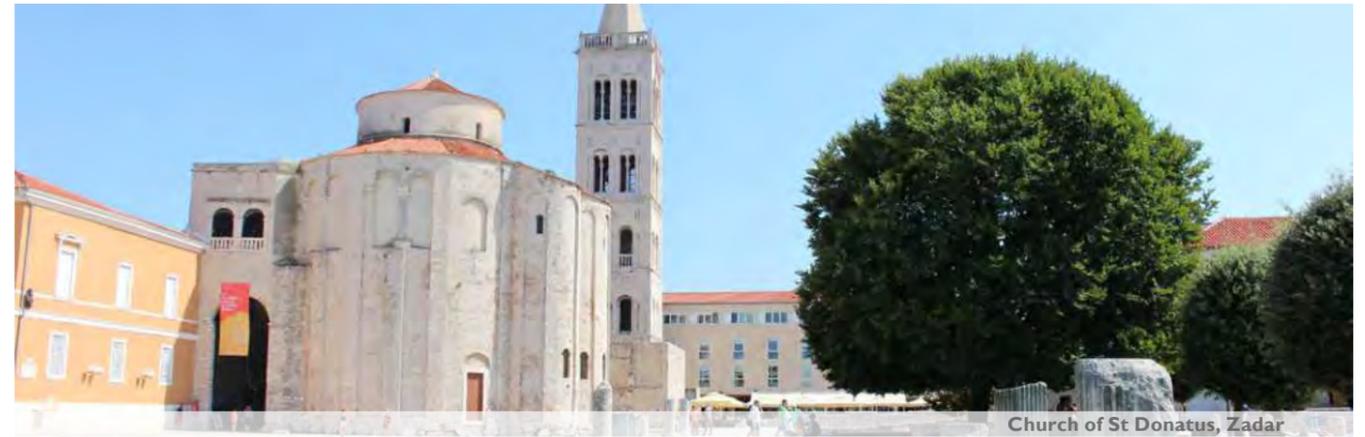
Pučišća, Island of Brač



WALKING AND CRUISING: SOUTHERN DALMATIA

“From the moment we stepped on board the gulet we knew we were going to have an amazing week. The food was delicious, the wine excellent and the attention to detail was second to none. Impressive!”
Gillian Fraser, UK

Walking and Cruising Southern Dalmatia is an enticing combination of a gulet cruise with walks and hikes through some of the region’s most beautiful landscapes.



Church of St Donatus, Zadar



A GASTRONOMIC GULET CRUISE

“I had seen others describe Peter Sommer Travels trips as ‘bucket list’ experiences, and I can now see why. My culinary gulet tour of Croatia is an experience I will never forget. My only hope is that it ends up NOT being a once in a lifetime event, and I will get the chance to do another tour with the company sometime very soon!”
Shannon Rogalski, USA

Croatia’s Dalmatian Coast and its setting between cultures has created a wonderful cuisine; in itself a major attraction for the traveller.



Salt Pans, Nin

CRUISING THE DALMATIAN COAST:

FROM SPLIT TO DUBROVNIK & DUBROVNIK TO SPLIT

MAY 25 - JUNE 1
SPLIT TO DUBROVNIK



JUNE 1 - JUNE 8
DUBROVNIK TO SPLIT



SEP 14 - SEP 21
SPLIT TO DUBROVNIK



TOUR GUIDE: MISLAV FILEŠ , DR. FILIP BUDIĆ OR PROF. IVANA JEVTIC
- £3,695 PER PERSON / SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: £1,125



Dalmatia, the southern part of Croatia's Adriatic Coast, is a region of immense natural beauty and historical significance, an area where many fascinating strands in the story of human struggle and achievement are woven together into an extraordinary tapestry of culture. Even a casual glance at the map reveals much about this unusual place: while Croatia as a whole is set between the Mediterranean, the Balkans and Central Europe, Dalmatia itself is a country of mountains, sea and islands – important for ancient travellers and traders and perfect for a gulet cruise!

Over the centuries, many peoples have passed through Dalmatia, settled, competed, fought and interacted. From Dalmatian and Illyrian tribesmen via Greek colonists, Roman and Byzantine soldiers and emperors, to Croat warriors, Venetian traders, Ottoman and Italian fleets and French and Austro-Hungarian governors and engineers, they have left behind a unique cultural heritage, waiting to be explored and enjoyed.

It is almost impossible to describe the splendour of the miraculously well-preserved Palace of the Roman Emperor Diocletian at Split, repurposed as a medieval city centre, or the grandeur of Dubrovnik, heart of the thriving Renaissance trading republic of Ragusa, with her broad streets, fine monuments and mighty walls. Both are listed by UNESCO as World Heritage and the tiny and intimate walled town of Korčula on the island of that name, a true Adriatic gem is on the tentative list for World Heritage status. Alongside these, there is much more to be discovered: the lofty slopes of Brač with grand views over the surrounding islands, the theatre-like harbour town of Hvar, its monuments and traditions revealed by a leisurely stroll through lanes and squares, the vineyards of remote Vis, first planted by ancient Greeks from Sicily, engulfed in the scent of wild herbs...

All of these joys await you, along with many opportunities to swim in azure waters, to relax on your elegant gulet, to sample the delicious Croatian cuisine – uniting all the cultural influences that have affected the region with the high-quality meats and fish it produces – and to try the islands' fine wines. This trip is unforgettable, a holiday of great beauty and a voyage of discovery.



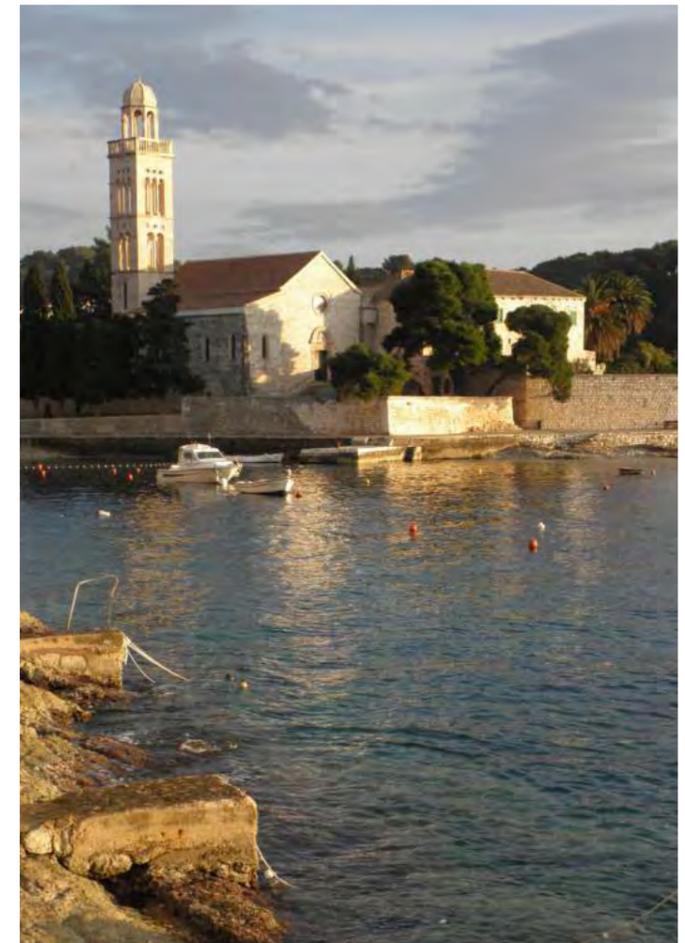
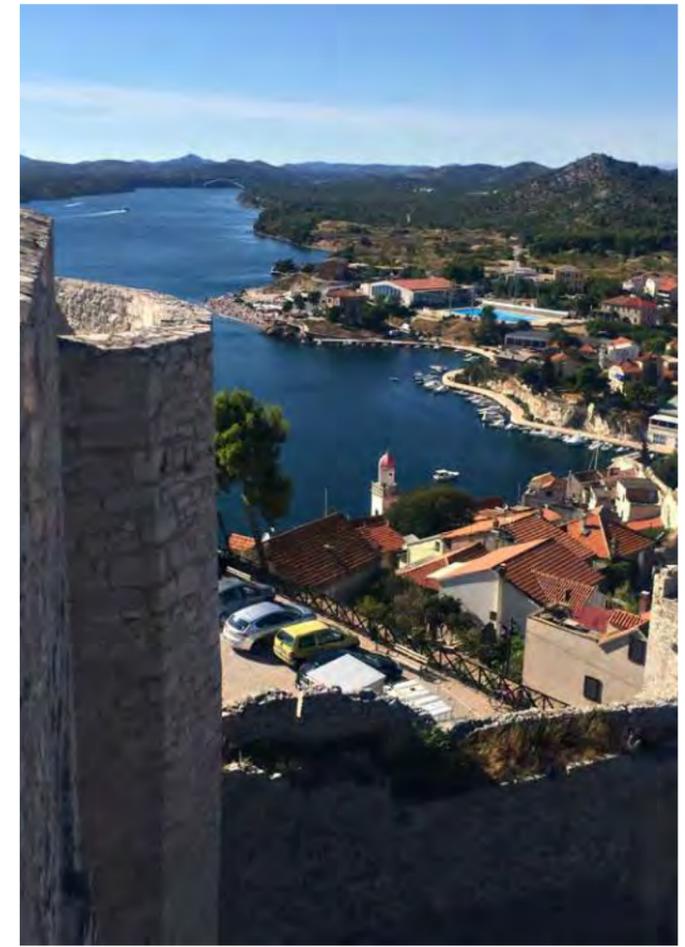
Hvar Town, Island of Hvar



CRUISING THE DALMATIAN COAST:

FROM SPLIT TO DUBROVNIK – MAY 25 TO JUNE 1 & SEP 14 TO SEP 21

- Day 1:** Our gulet is about 20 minutes from Split Airport at the Marina Baotić near Trogir. Welcome drinks and dinner on board.
- Day 2:** In the morning, we enter the harbour of Split. The medieval heart of this lively city sits within the towering remains of the Palace of Diocletian, built for the Roman emperor's retirement in AD 305 and the best-preserved structure of its kind. We explore its underground vaults, its walls and gates, as well as the wonderful domed cathedral – originally built as Diocletian's mausoleum. In the afternoon we cruise to a pretty bay on the island of Brač, for a swim.
- Day 3:** We begin the day ascending the summit of Vidova Gora, the tallest Mountain in the Adriatic islands, to enjoy the splendid view over the Dalmatian coast and islands we'll be exploring over the coming week. We then visit the stonemasonry school of Pučišća, where the island's ancient tradition of working and producing high-quality stonework continues to this day. Brač stone was used not only in the construction of the Palace of Diocletian but also in a number of other famous buildings like Berlin's Reichstag. After a visit to the archaeological museum and restored olive oil mill in the charming village of Škrip and a delightful lunch we rejoin our gulet and cruise south.
- Day 4:** On to beautiful Vis, the most remote island on our itinerary. In the afternoon, we go ashore to explore the beautiful medieval harbour of Komiza, before a wine tasting at a unique and excellent local winery set in a World War Two bunker. We'll then stroll around the charming town of Vis and enjoying a sumptuous dinner of local seafood at one of the best restaurants in the region.
- Day 5:** A short cruise to Hvar town, a labyrinth of stone houses set between slopes and sea, including the archaeological collections housed in the castle overlooking the port and in the seaside Franciscan monastery, which reveal the island's past identity as the ancient Greek city of Pharos. In the afternoon we head east towards the island of Korčula.
- Day 6:** We explore the picturesque lanes and squares of Korčula Town and visit its beautiful cathedral, followed by the ecclesiastical museum, a veritable cabinet of curiosities and the city museum with its archaeological exhibit. After a delicious lunch we'll cruise east for a swim off the verdant island of Mljet. We spend the evening in a pretty cove.
- Day 7:** Time for the tour's final highlight. After a leisurely morning and a final swim, we visit Dubrovnik, once better known as Ragusa, Venice's chief rival in the Adriatic. We take time to absorb its unique atmosphere, touring its remarkable walls, which protected the city from attack for many centuries and explore the grand streets and elaborate monuments of its historic centre. Farewell dinner on the gulet.
- Day 8:** Transfers from Slano Bay to Dubrovnik airport, about one hour away.



CRUISING THE DALMATIAN COAST:

FROM DUBROVNIK TO SPLIT - JUNE 1 TO JUNE 8

- Day 1:** Our gulet is in Slano Bay about one hour from Dubrovnik airport. Welcome drinks and dinner on board.
- Day 2:** In the morning we visit Dubrovnik, once better known as Ragusa, Venice's chief rival in the Adriatic. We tour its remarkable walls, which protected the city from attack for many centuries, explore the grand streets and elaborate monuments of its historic centre and pay a visit to the superb maritime museum. In the afternoon, we set out for our first crossing, to a quiet cove off the island off Mljet.
- Day 3:** We continue to the verdant island of Korčula. After lunch, we explore the picturesque lanes and squares of Korčula Town and visit its beautiful cathedral, followed by the ecclesiastical museum, a veritable cabinet of curiosities, and the city museum with its archaeological exhibit.
- Day 4:** We make a long westward voyage to Vis, the most remote island on our itinerary. In the afternoon, we go ashore to explore the beautiful medieval harbour of Komiža, before a wine tasting at a unique and excellent local winery set in a World War Two bunker. We'll then stroll around the charming town of Vis and enjoying a sumptuous dinner of local seafood at one of the best restaurants in the region.
- Day 5:** We cruise to the island of Hvar where we explore Hvar town, a labyrinth of stone houses set between slopes and sea, including the archaeological collections housed in the castle overlooking the port and in the seaside Franciscan monastery, which reveal the island's past identity as the ancient Greek city of Pharos. Later, we cruise to the nearby Pakleni islets to spend the night in a quiet cove.
- Day 6:** We continue to the lovely port of Milna on the island of Brač. From here, we set out to the stonemasonry school of Pucišća, where the island's ancient tradition of working and producing high-quality stonework continues to this day. Brač stone was used not only in the construction of the Palace of Diocletian but also in a number of other famous buildings like Berlin's Reichstag. We then venture inland to the charming village of Škrip with its local archaeological museum. We enjoy a rustic lunch at a restored olive oil mill and then ascend the summit of Vidova Gora, the tallest Mountain in the Adriatic islands, to enjoy the splendid view over the Dalmatian coast.
- Day 7:** We head north to the harbour of Split, ancient Spalatum. The medieval heart of this lively city sits within the towering remains of the Palace of Diocletian, built for the Roman emperor's retirement in AD 305 and the best-preserved structure of its kind. We explore its underground vaults, its walls and gates, the wonderful domed cathedral – originally built as Diocletian's mausoleum – and the Temple of Jupiter. There is also time to take in the place's unique atmosphere – and perhaps engage in a little shopping. In the late afternoon we cruise to a small island for a final swim before moving to our final mooring at Marina Baotić. Farewell dinner on the gulet.
- Day 8:** Departure transfers to Split Airport approx. 20 minutes away.

GO BACK TO BACK

CRUISING TO EPHEBUS
JUNE 2 - JUNE 9

CRUISING THE DODECANESE
JUNE 9 - JUNE 23

FROM ŠIBENIK TO ZADAR
JUNE 8 - JUNE 15

SOMETHING SIMILAR

A GASTRONOMIC GULET CRUISE
IN CROATIA

CRUISING THE AEGEAN
FROM KOS TO PATMOS

CRUISING TO THE CYCLADES

EXTEND YOUR STAY

If you would like to spend some extra time in Croatia or Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia, Slovenia and north-east Italy (incl Venice) we are happy to recommend our local agent. Please do say hello from us.

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CRUISING THE DALMATIAN COAST:

FROM ŠIBENIK TO ZADAR



Šibenik Cathedral

JUNE 8 - JUNE 15
SPLIT TO ŠIBENIK



SEP 7 - SEP 14
ŠIBENIK TO SPLIT



TOUR GUIDE: MISLAV FILEŠ , DR. FILIP BUDIĆ OR PROF. IVANA JEVTIC
- £3,695 PER PERSON / SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: £1,125



INTERMEDIATE

This is a very different experience, a cruise offering a quieter, more intimate and more off-the-beaten-track take on Dalmatia and its wonderful cuisine, all in the company of one of our expert guides.

The cruise features a wealth of unique natural vistas. From Šibenik's towers, the view opens upon a forested coastline mirrored by serried tiers of islands, seemingly stretching beyond the horizon. In the Krka Valley, a river has spent eons eating its way through horizontal layers of limestone, forming a series of great waterfalls: an astonishing sight. The same can be said for the Kornati archipelago, a surreal panorama of countless tiny rock islets piercing through the shimmering surface of the Adriatic.

Quieter and less frequented than the south, the region offers a dazzling mosaic of cultural and historical attractions. Beautiful Šibenik is graced with a truly magnificent cathedral and a trio of mighty fortresses. Zadar's Venetian walls protect a most unusual heritage of Eastern and Western architectures as well as one of the most outstanding collections of ancient glass in Europe. In Nin, a tiny lake island hosts one of Croatia's medieval capitals, its belfries dreaming away in serene dignity. Magnificent Trogir offers a near-fully preserved medieval cityscape, recognised by UNESCO as a World Heritage site.

Cruising the Dalmatian Coast: from Šibenik to Zadar brings you to all these experiences in style and comfort aboard a traditional Turkish-built gulet, approaching the islands, coast and towns on the glittering Adriatic. Our team of expert guides will breathe life and meaning into the area's history and the boat's crew will make sure that your trip is memorable and idyllic from beginning to end, not least through their delicious offerings of Croatian cuisine, complemented by meals in selected restaurants ashore.

This wonderful itinerary has its own distinctive pace and character, fashioned to best reveal the region and sites it explores. Join us and enjoy the full and fascinating panorama of the ancient land's beguiling beauty.



CRUISING THE DALMATIAN COAST:

FROM ŠIBENIK TO ZADAR - JUNE 8 TO JUNE 15

- Day 1:** Our gulet is about 20 minutes from Split Airport at the Marina Baotić near Trogir. Welcome drinks and dinner on board.
- Day 2:** We begin our historical adventure by exploring Trogir. This medieval city, set on a little island, preserves its Romanesque and Gothic streetscape nearly completely. We explore its labyrinthine lanes, delightful piazzas, charming sea front and the cathedral of St. Lawrence with its magnificent portal, one of the finest works of Romanesque Art in Europe. We then cruise along the beautiful shores of Šibenik County to swim and spend the night in a lovely bay.
- Day 3:** In the morning, we enter the vast estuary of the river Krka, mooring at the beautiful riverside town of Skradin. From there, we set out for the historic citadel of Bribir, ancient Varvaria, where a mighty Roman fortification wall surrounds the remains of many eras, including the early Middle Ages, when Bribir became a centre of nascent Croatia. Later, we admire the magnificent waterfalls near Skradin, before cruising through the Šibenik archipelago for a delightful swim and a quiet bay.
- Day 4:** In the morning, we head north, close by the location of the Gnalić shipwreck. This Renaissance merchant ship, named Gagjana, sank in 1583 on a voyage from Venice to Constantinople, the cultural beacons of the era, carrying an unbelievably rich cargo of manufactured goods from all over Europe, which were then discovered in an underwater excavation. Swimming en route, we cruise to Zadar, ancient Iader and Venetian Zara, a city where history abounds. We explore the Venetian fortifications, Roman walls, fascinating church of St. Donatus with its strong Byzantine and Carolingian influences and the excellent archaeological museum.
- Day 5:** In the morning, we visit the incredibly beautiful museum of ancient glass at Zadar, witnessing a presentation of the millennia old art of glass-blowing. We then head inland on an excursion to Nin, one of Croatia's first medieval capitals, set on a tiny island in a serene lagoon. The local archaeological museum sets the scene for a place of immense historic depth. Nearby, we enjoy a delightful lunch and wine tasting at a local vineyard before cruising out to a cove on one of the neighbouring islands.
- Day 6:** We journey through the fabled Kornati Islands, a fairytale scattering of innumerable rock islets set in one of the most striking maritime landscapes in the entire Mediterranean. In this National Park of crystal clear waters, glorious swim spots abound. Conditions permitting, we visit Tureta, a Byzantine beacon fortress forming part of a long string of such sites along the Dalmatian shore.
- Day 7:** A morning cruise south through island clusters, perfect places to swim. In the afternoon we go ashore to explore the impressive and beautiful city of Šibenik, with its crooked lanes, quaint squares and superb cathedral, a masterpiece bridging the Gothic and Renaissance styles, now a UNESCO World Heritage site. High above are grand medieval fortresses, built to secure this valuable and strategic town, which offer vast and epic views out to sea. The city's archaeological museum is one of the best in Croatia.
- Day 8:** Departures from Šibenik, about an hour from Split airport.



CRUISING THE DALMATIAN COAST:

FROM ŠIBENIK TO ZADAR - SEP 7 TO SEP 14

- Day 1:** Your gulet awaits you in historical Šibenik, about an hour from Split airport. Welcome drinks and dinner on board.
- Day 2:** In the morning, we enter the vast estuary of the river Krka, mooring at the beautiful riverside town of Skradin. From there, we set out for the historic citadel of Bribir, ancient Varvaria, where a mighty Roman fortification wall surrounds the remains of many eras, including the early Middle Ages, when Bribir became a centre of nascent Croatia. Later, we admire the magnificent waterfalls near Skradin, before cruising through the Šibenik archipelago for a delightful swim and a quiet bay.
- Day 3:** In the morning, we visit the delightful little archaeological museum in the seaside town of Biograd na Moru. Its exhibits include parts of the extraordinary cargo of the Gnalčić shipwreck, discovered only a few miles away. This Renaissance merchant ship, named Gagiana, sank in 1583 on a voyage from Venice to Constantinople, the cultural beacons of the era, carrying an unbelievably rich cargo of manufactured goods from all over Europe. We then cruise to Zadar, ancient Iader and Venetian Zara, a city where history abounds. We explore the Venetian fortifications, Roman walls, fascinating church of St. Donatus with its strong Byzantine and Carolingian influences and the excellent archaeological museum.
- Day 4:** In the morning, we visit the incredibly beautiful museum of ancient glass at Zadar, witnessing a presentation of the millennia old art of glass-blowing. We then head inland on an excursion to Nin, one of Croatia's first medieval capitals, set on a tiny island in a serene lagoon. The local archaeological museum sets the scene for a place of immense historic depth. In the afternoon, we cruise out to a cove on one of the neighbouring islands.
- Day 5:** We cruise out to the fabled Kornati Islands, a fairytale scattering of innumerable rock islets set in one of the most striking maritime landscapes in the entire Mediterranean. In this National Park of crystal clear waters, glorious swim spots abound. Conditions permitting, we visit Tureta, a Byzantine beacon fortress forming part of a long string of such sites along the Dalmatian shore.
- Day 6:** A morning cruise south through island clusters to explore the impressive and beautiful city of Šibenik, with its crooked lanes, quaint squares and superb cathedral, a masterpiece bridging the Gothic and Renaissance styles, now a UNESCO World Heritage site. High above are grand medieval fortresses, built to secure this valuable and strategic town, which offer vast and epic views out to sea. The city's archaeological museum is one of the best in Croatia.
- Day 7:** We cruise along the beautiful shores of Šibenik County, passing by countless islands, before finally making our way to Trogir. The medieval city, set on a little island, preserves its Romanesque and Gothic streetscape nearly completely. We explore its labyrinthine lanes, delightful piazzas, charming sea front and the cathedral of St. Lawrence with its magnificent portal, one of the finest works of Romanesque Art in Europe. Farewell dinner on board.
- Day 8:** Departures from Trogir to Split airport, about 20 minutes away.

GO BACK TO BACK

CRUISING THE AEGEAN
FROM KOS TO PATMOS
AUG 31 - SEP 7

FROM SPLIT TO DUBROVNIK
SEP 14 - SEP 21

CRUISING TO EPHEBUS
SEP 15 - SEP 22

SOMETHING SIMILAR

A GASTRONOMIC GULET CRUISE
IN CROATIA

WALKING AND CRUISING
SOUTHERN DALMATIA

CRUISING TO THE CYCLADES

EXTEND YOUR STAY

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WALKING AND CRUISING: SOUTHERN DALMATIA



SEP 21 - SEP 28



TOUR GUIDE: MISLAV FILEŠ , DR. FILIP BUDIĆ OR PROF. IVANA JEVTIC
- £3,695 PER PERSON / SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: £1,125



An enticing combination of a gulet cruise with hikes through some of the region's most beautiful landscapes. Ancient forts, beautiful towns, great castles and churches line the trail, and our guides will use them to bring the country's rich and turbulent history to vibrant life.

A series of highlights await you day by day. At Ston, you'll walk atop the unique 5-km (3-mile) wall, the longest linear defence in medieval Europe, built in the 14th and 15th centuries to protect a landscape of prime agricultural land and precious salt pans in one of the Adriatic's most important wine-growing regions. On Mljet, a network of hiking paths and tracks will offer you an ever-changing set of vistas, taking in sea, lakes, hills and valleys. Near Orebić on the Pelješac peninsula, you will discover a mighty Iron Age citadel, a long-forgotten centre of tribal power, set on a remote and wild plateau high above the sea. On Hvar, you will explore the Stari Grad Plain, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, where local farmers are using the same tracks and maintaining the same field boundaries that their ancient Greek forebears laid out when they colonised the island 100 generations ago: a living archaeological landscape. On Brač, the monastery of Blaca with its white plastered roofs sits in a silent valley far away from the travails of modern civilisation, reachable only on foot.

You will also experience this magnificent stretch of Croatia's coast through its delicious local produce: a cornucopia of delights await: fresh seafood, fine wines and superb meat and cheese dishes. Travelling aboard a traditional and elegant gulet, you'll have the pleasure of anchoring in beautiful bays and coves and picturesque harbours, the perfect way to discover the Dalmatian coast.



Church and Benedictine Monastery, Island of Mljet



WALKING AND CRUISING: SOUTHERN DALMATIA

- Day 1:** Our gulet is in Slano Bay about one hour from Dubrovnik airport. Welcome drinks and dinner on board.
- Day 2:** In the morning, we walk the "Great Wall of Ston", one of the most unusual historical fortifications in Europe. Erected in the 14th and 15th centuries to protect the precious salt pans and the peninsula itself, the wall stretches for 5.5 km from Ston to Mali Ston. In the afternoon, we make the short crossing to the verdant island of Mljet.
- Day 3:** On Mljet, we explore an important nature reserve, following romantic forest tracks and hiking paths passing a Roman palace, an Illyrian stronghold, a pretty pair of lakes and a beautiful medieval monastery set on a lake island. Later, we cruise to the straits between Korčula and Orebić.
- Day 4:** In the morning, we hike up to the beautiful Nakovana plateau, high above Orebić on the Pelješac Peninsula. In an evocative landscape setting, we discover a stupendous prehistoric hillfort, an ancient sacred cave and a picturesque abandoned village.
- Day 5:** In the morning, we head to the island of Hvar. Here, we make our way from the serene little port of Stari Grad to walk in the hills above the Stari Grad Plain before exploring the plain itself, Croatia's most unusual World Heritage site: the field system laid out by the Greek settlers of Pharos 24 centuries ago, and still in use.
- Day 6:** We cross to the wonderful island of Brač. Here, we hike up to admire the views from Vidova Gora, the highest peak of all the Adriatic Islands, followed by a wonderful forest walk to the mountain village of Gazul, where we enjoy a rustic traditional lunch.
- Day 7:** We trek through the Blaca Gorge, visiting the striking Blaca Hermitage, a monastery founded in the Renaissance period and in use until 1963. A last swim and then a delicious final dinner.
- Day 8:** Departure transfers to Split Airport approx. 20 minutes away.



GO BACK TO BACK

FROM SPLIT TO DUBROVNIK
SEP 14 - SEP 21

A GASTRONOMIC GULET CRUISE
SEP 28 - OCT 5

WALKING AND CRUISING
THE LYCIAN SHORE
SEP 28 - OCT 13

SOMETHING SIMILAR

WALKING AND CRUISING
THE LYCIAN SHORE

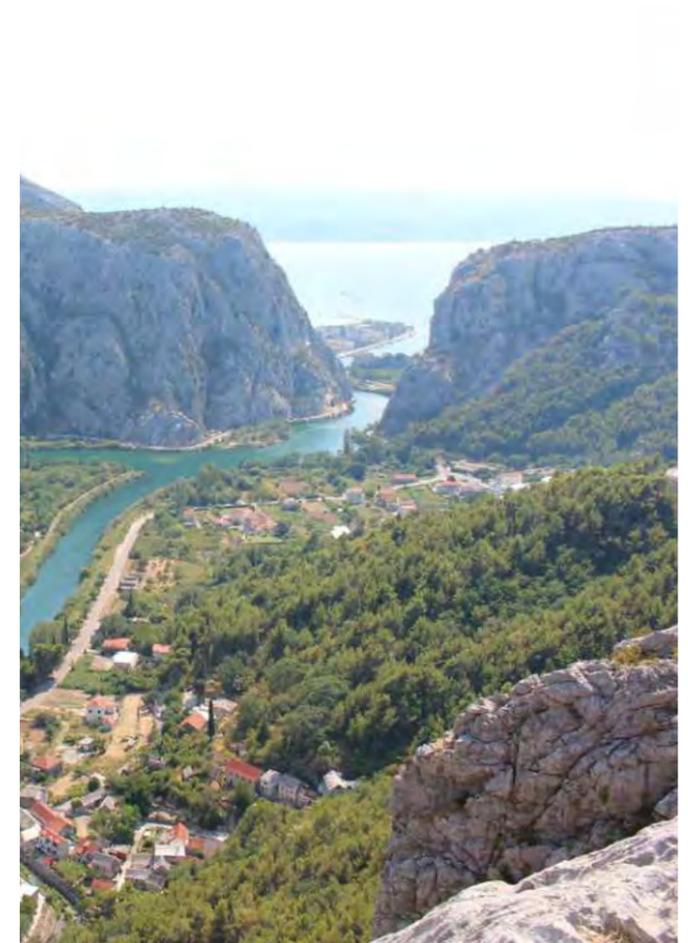
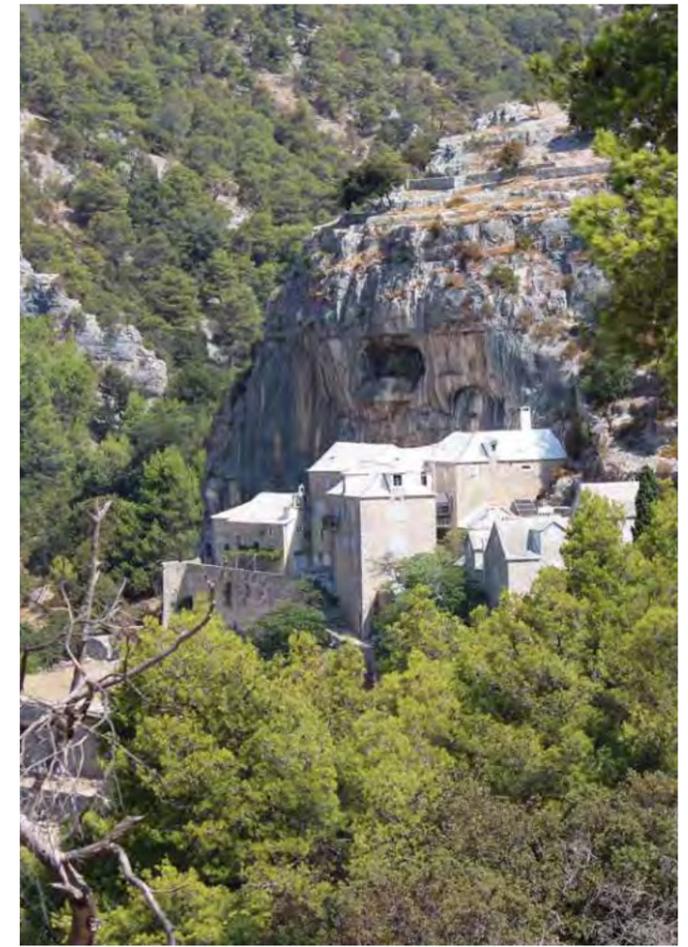
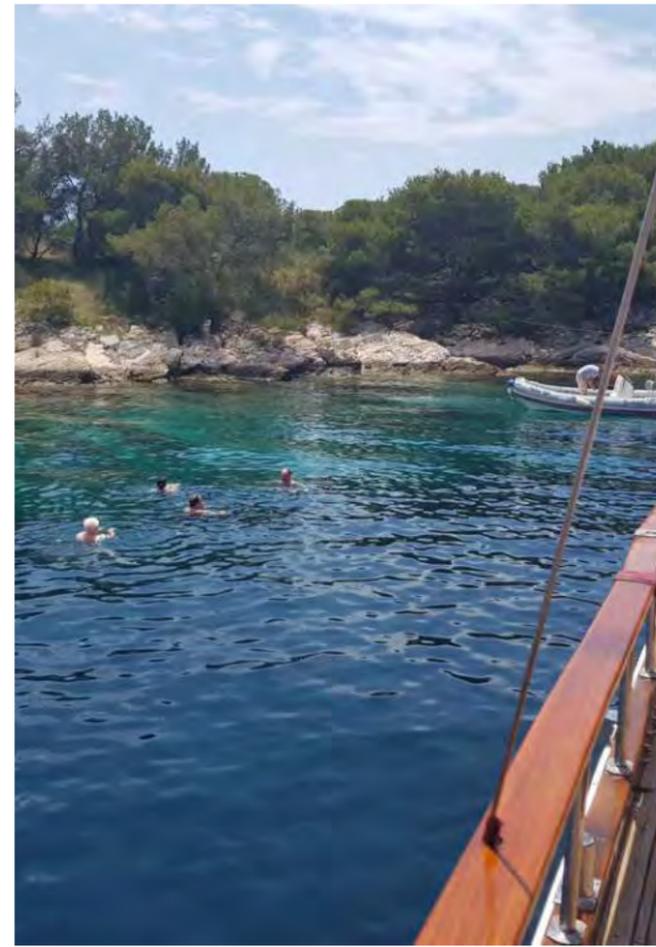
WALKING AND CRUISING
WESTERN LYCIA

WALKING AND CRUISING
THE CARIAN COAST

EXTEND YOUR STAY

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A GASTRONOMIC GULET CRUISE



SEP 28 - OCT 5



TOUR GUIDE: PROF. MISLAV FILEŠ, DR. FILIP BUDIĆ OR PROF. IVANA JEVTIC
- £3,695 PER PERSON / SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: £1,125



LIGHT



There are many great reasons to come to the Dalmatian Coast on our Gastronomic tour of Croatia: a beautiful maritime landscape, numerous picturesque old towns and cities, filled with myriad treasures, and the fascinating and convoluted history of a region that has often been at the intersection between different cultural spheres. It is this setting between cultures that has created Croatia's wonderful cuisine: in itself a major attraction for the curious traveller.

Croatian cooking is based on the excellent produce the country provides, both from her shores and inland regions: a vast array of fish and seafoods, excellent local meats, vegetables a-plenty and a great range of fruit, pampered by the many days of sunlight that Dalmatia is famous for. But it is the way these ingredients are used that makes Croatian food so distinctive: over the centuries, Croatians have incorporated influences from all over the map into their local cuisine. Mediterranean, Adriatic and Venetian, Balkan Slavic and Central European, Ottoman Turkish and Austrian influences have all made their contributions.

On this, one of our classic gulet cruises in Croatia, we will explore the food and cuisine of Dalmatia, Croatia's most maritime region. Travelling on an elegant gulet, with ample opportunity to swim in blue Adriatic waters, to admire the scenery and to simply relax aboard, but also to marvel at some of Dalmatia's cultural wealth, we will discover the gastronomic riches of islands and mainland in the most insightful and enjoyable fashion possible. Visiting local producers, sampling the most authentic regional dishes, the area's finest wines, best liqueurs and most exquisite olive oils, participating in cooking classes led by experts and eating at selected konobas (a unique Dalmatian phenomenon that has evolved out of traditional wine cellars) and restaurants, you will spend a week discovering the delights of Croatian cooking – and doing so, you will gain a deep understanding of the region's past and present.



A GASTRONOMIC GULET CRUISE

- Day 1:** Our gulet is at Marina Baotić, about 20 minutes from Split Airport. Welcome drinks and dinner aboard.
- Day 2:** We cruise to Split, where the enormous Roman Palace of Diocletian was repurposed as a medieval town centre. Here, we accompany a local chef to the markets to buy ingredients for what is to be our lunch of Dalmatian specialities. We make lunch together, in the form of a superb and highly enjoyable cooking class. In the afternoon, we cruise south to the island of Brač.
- Day 3:** We begin the day ascending the summit of Vidova Gora, the tallest Mountain in the Adriatic islands, to enjoy the splendid view over the Dalmatian coast and islands we'll be exploring over the coming week. From there we descend to beautiful Bol, on the south coast, for a wonderful wine tasting and to begin our exploration of Croatian wines. We then head for lunch and a tour of a restored traditional olive oil mill in the charming village of Škrip, with a chance to taste local cheeses, pršut (cured ham), wine, oil and jams. Later we rejoin our gulet and cruise to the island of Hvar.
- Day 4:** We head inland to explore the Stari Grad Plain, a UNESCO-listed World Heritage site, where today's farmers still grow their vines, fruit, vegetables and grains in a system of fields set up by ancient Greek colonists 2,400 years ago. We move on to a wine tasting to sample some lovely Hvar wines paired with chocolates homemade locally and infused with herbs grown on the island. Later we travel up into the hills for lunch at a konoba set amidst olive groves and with breathtaking views over the Stari Grad plain and towards Brač. In the afternoon we cruise to a bay where we overnight.
- Day 5:** Crossing to the island of Korčula, we visit the sleepy village of Žrnovo, where a local family produces an amazing array of organic products from exclusively local sources: olive oil, vinegar, dried fruit and fruit preserves, candied citrus peels, liqueurs and vermouth, herbal teas, capers, pickled onions and much more. Afterwards, we visit one of the few wineries that grow and produce Grk and sample this prized local wine before heading to the picturesque medieval town of Korčula.
- Day 6:** After a leisurely start to the day, we go ashore to explore the Dingač region on the Pelješac Peninsula. The local vineyards, set on immensely steep south-facing slopes, receive over 2,500 hours of sunshine per year, its intensity increased by reflection from the sea. From the Plavac Mali grape, local winemakers produce one of Croatia's most celebrated red wines, known as Dingač: an intensely aromatic dark red dry wine of profound flavours. We visit a winery to see the vineyards and sample their produce and then overnight nearby.
- Day 7:** We journey to one of the area's famous oyster and mussel farms, set in a shallow inlet. We discover how these shellfish have been cultivated through history and then have a chance to sample them together with a classic traditional seafood dish. We then visit the historic town of Ston, which was strongly fortified by medieval Ragusa (modern Dubrovnik) to guard the area's resources, especially the enormous local salt pans which we explore before cruising south for our final swim and farewell dinner.
- Day 8:** Transfer to Dubrovnik airport, about one hour away.



GO BACK TO BACK

WALKING AND CRUISING DALMATIA
SEP 21 - SEP 28

A GASTRONOMIC TOUR OF SICILY
SEP 21 - SEP 28

WALKING AND CRUISING
WESTERN LYCIA
OCT 6 - OCT 13

SOMETHING SIMILAR

A GASTRONOMIC GULET CRUISE
IN TURKEY

A GASTRONOMIC TOUR OF SICILY

A TURKISH ODYSSEY: ARCHAEOLOGY,
FOOD AND WINE

EXTEND YOUR STAY

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DISCOVER GREECE



Thessaloniki

Athens

Peloponnese

Cyclades

Dodecanese

Crete

MAPS

GREECE



EXPLORING CRETE: ARCHAEOLOGY, NATURE AND FOOD

"We had a fantastic tour with Peter Sommer Travels. The choice of destinations, food and accommodations were excellent, with awesome and really interesting settings. We could not have chosen a better way to see and learn about Crete!"

Dougald Brown & Patricia Wilson, CAN

A spectacular tour of the legendary island of Crete, with its coasts, mountains, gorges and fertile plains, as well as its historical villages and towns.



EXPLORING THE PELOPONNESE

"We toured the Peloponnese with 2 excellent guides who made the archaeology and history come alive. Scenery was fantastic including the spring flowers and verdant hills."

Thomas Robinson, USA

The Peloponnese conjures up images of ancient glories, epic struggles, valiant heroes and majestic vistas. The mere mention of names like Arcadia or Corinth, Sparta or Olympia, Nemea or Mycenae awakens our imagination, reminding us of fascinating legends and dramatic historical scenes reaching far across the ages.



CRUISING TO THE CYCLADES

"Cruising the Cyclades in a charming and comfortable Turkish gulet, expertly guided across the rich history of islands both large and small, eating local cuisine in spectacular locations and swimming in remote and tranquil coves. Difficult to think of a better holiday to combine relaxation and stimulation."

Nick Mottram, UK

Join us for the ultimate Greek island adventure.



CRUISING THE DODECANESE

"This was our second trip and every bit as wonderful as our first. The gulet was spacious and comfortable. Our fellow travelers were all engaging, intelligent and fun. We meshed beautifully, in large measure due to the humor and kindness of our guides."

Lanny & Barbara Fields, USA

This spectacular cruise takes you from the famous island of Kos through the entire Dodecanese chain, including eleven of the most beautiful and evocative of the Greek islands and three UNESCO-listed World Heritage sites.



CRUISING THE AEGEAN:

FROM KOS TO PATMOS

"The captain, crew and guides were all interesting and went out of their way to accommodate our every wish. Meal times were an event; the regional cooking was exceptional and visits to restaurants and vineyards were unique and introduced us to great wines and some very good fine dining."

Prof. John Kelly, UK

The Dodecanese islands are perhaps the most ethereally beautiful part of the Aegean.



EXPLORING MACEDONIA

"Relaxing and stimulating at the same time, I can't recommend their tours highly enough. Maria and Paul are an outstanding dynamic duo."

Elly de Gooyer, AUS

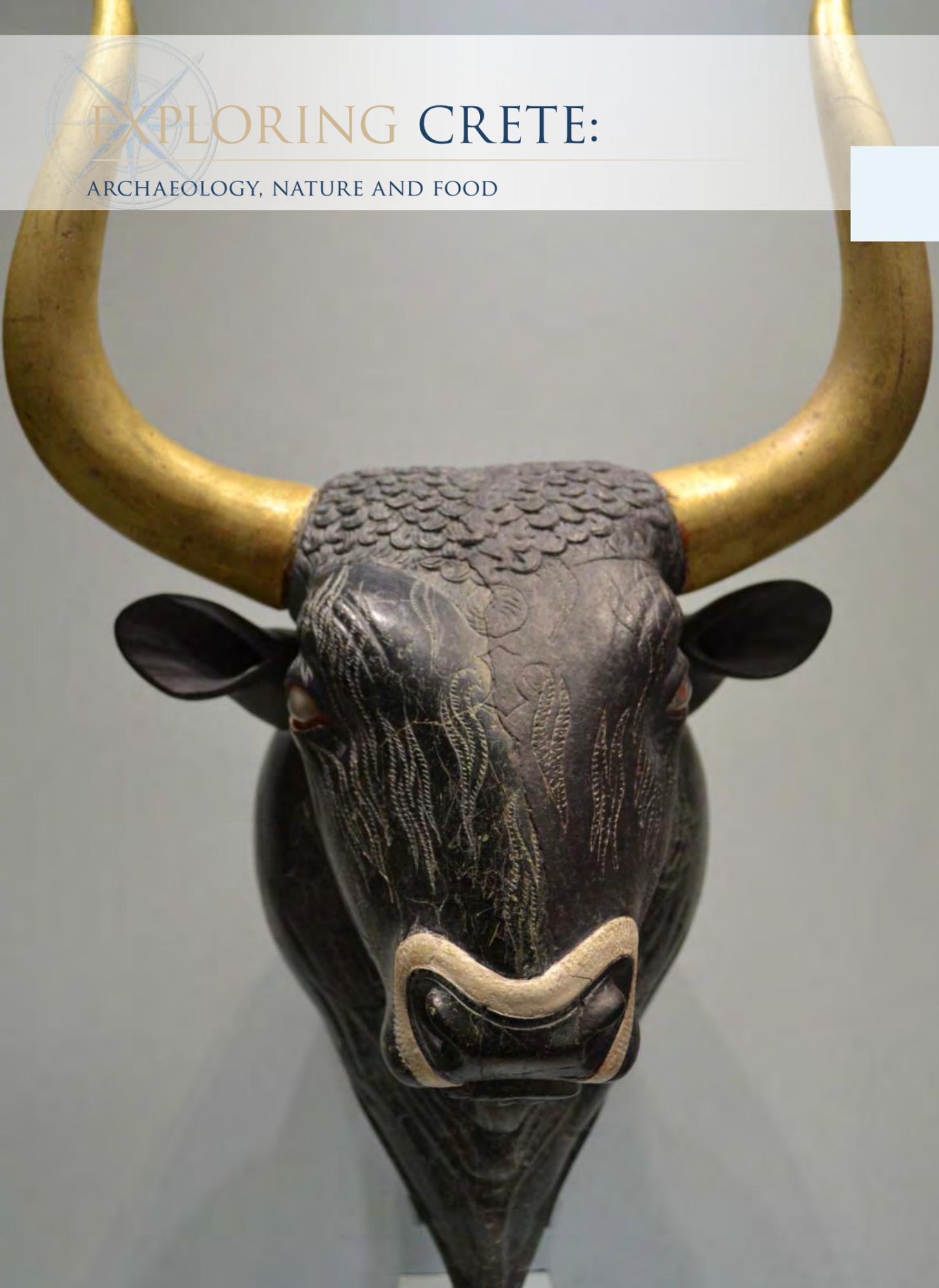
A desperately beautiful country with a history threaded with triumphs and turbulence as Macedonians alternately rise to political and cultural dominance or fight invaders – or each other – for the wealth of the land.





EXPLORING CRETE:

ARCHAEOLOGY, NATURE AND FOOD



Heraklion Archaeological Museum

APR 17 - APR 30



MAY 7 - MAY 20



OCT 2 - OCT 15



TOUR GUIDES APRIL: PAUL BESTON & DR. MARIA GIRTZI - £4,615 PER PERSON / SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: £695

TOUR GUIDES MAY: PROF. GRAHAM OLIVER & DR. MARIA GIRTZI - £4,645 PER PERSON / SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: £695

TOUR GUIDES OCT: PAUL BESTON & DR. MARIA GIRTZI - £4,675 PER PERSON / SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: £795

INCLUDES ALL MEALS EXCEPT 1 LUNCH AND 2 DINNERS



Our Exploring Crete tour is the ideal opportunity to experience this fascinating island to the full. You will visit its most important ancient sites, including the famous prehistoric Minoan palaces, but also veer off the beaten track to explore many of Crete's hidden gems. Our tour of Crete includes a vast variety of different landscapes and ancient sites, bringing you into direct contact with the island's coasts, mountains, gorges and fertile plains, as well as its historical villages and towns.

Crete is the largest of the Greek islands and its historical significance is second to none, ranging from Stone Age seafarers and Neolithic farmers to the mysterious and fascinating Bronze Age civilisation of the Minoans. The island's renowned Classical cities and the rich remains of the Roman, Byzantine, Venetian and Ottoman cultures lead us right through to its turbulent 20th century history.

As well as its historical and archaeological riches, the island is a place of extraordinary natural beauty and diversity. Its inhabitants are fiercely proud of their homeland and maintain its many traditions, including the fabled Cretan hospitality. As a result of its varied nature and past, Crete also boasts one of the most celebrated variations of Greek cuisine.

Our Crete tour is complemented by excellent meals in carefully selected restaurants and tavernas, as well as wine tastings from regional vineyards. At night, you will be staying in beautiful surroundings, ranging from high-quality city hotels via an elegant Venetian palazzo to traditional inns in serene mountain villages.

Your tour guides have excavated, surveyed, researched and travelled around Crete and are passionate connoisseurs not only of its archaeology, but also of its landscapes, people, traditions and products. Their in-depth knowledge will be your shortcut to a superb experience of one of Europe's most celebrated destinations.

If you have never visited Crete, this expert-led archaeological tour is the perfect way to explore this wonderful and fascinating Greek Island; if you have been before, we are sure you will see it afresh and from a completely different perspective – in the company of two archaeologists who know the island intimately.



Knossos



EXPLORING CRETE:

ARCHAEOLOGY, NATURE AND FOOD

- Day 1:** Arrival in Heraklion. Transfer from the airport about 15 minutes away. Welcome drinks and dinner. Our city hotel will be our base for the first two nights.
- Day 2:** We follow the coast east to the extensive remains of the Minoan Palace at Malia and its surrounding town, founded over 4,000 years ago. Beautifully preserved just as it was excavated, Malia serves as a perfect introduction to Bronze Age archaeology, the Minoan civilisation and the nature of their 'palaces'. We'll have our first encounter with the spaces and architectural features we'll meet – rearranged and adapted – at the various Minoan sites as our journey continues.
- Later, we drive up into the Dikti Mountains to the celebrated Lasithi Plateau, 1,000m above sea level and famous for its white-sailed windmills. After our first village lunch, we make a short climb to one of the region's sacred caves, a key feature of ancient Crete's religious customs, and first used many generations prior to the Minoans, before returning to Heraklion.
- Day 3:** We begin exploring East Crete by visiting the scenic Hellenistic city of Lato, set on a saddle between twin peaks ringed by awe-inspiring heights, and boasting wonderful views over the beautiful gulf of Mirabello. For Homer, Crete was the land of "one hundred cities", the city-states of the first millennium BC. We'll use the ancient remains to discover how people lived, and how they governed themselves with surprising sophistication even in these now remote uplands.
- Next, we stop at the Byzantine-Venetian church of Panayia Kera, famous for the lavish frescoes covering every inch of its walls with intricate tales to inspire devotion, a prime example of the island's Byzantine heritage, here fused with some Venetian influences.
- After lunch, we continue to the incredibly well-preserved Minoan town of Gournia, where we can walk along the 3,500-year-old streets and alleyways hugging the flanks of a rocky hill overlooking the sea. House after bronze age house gives us the best impression we can get of ordinary daily life, and above them an impressive public building with clues to the deep religious devotion of the settlement's people.
- We spend the next two nights in the comfort of a modern hotel right set on the curving shore of pretty Ierapetra over the topaz blue waters of southeast Crete.
- Day 4:** This day is devoted to the island's easternmost region, where we visit three archaeological treasures.
- At Siteia, we tour our first archaeological museum, not very large but offering a superb overview across the material culture of Minoan Crete, with collections of pottery, stone vessels, clay sarcophagi, precious jewellery and much more from many sites in the east of the island, culminating in the famous gold-and-ivory Palaikastro 'Kouros', a superb piece of Bronze Age sculpture, painstakingly restored from the hundreds of fragments it was left in after its last time above ground, three and a half millennia ago.
- Keen to know more, we stop at the place where the 'Kouros' was found: the Minoan town of Palaikastro itself, to learn of its heyday and its violent destruction. Here, we learn about the fate of the "Kouros" and the questions arising from it, but also about the historic cult of Zeus as a boy.
- We lunch close to the crashing waves of the perfect beach at Kato Zakros, in an 'island' of rich farmland cut off by magnificent bleak hills and the Gorge of the Dead. With this amazingly scenic backdrop, we then tour the Minoan town and palace of Zakros itself, an artistic centre whose craftsmen produced some of the finest masterpieces of Minoan civilisation and whose trading contacts reached out to Egypt and beyond before it was brought down in flames. In the afternoon, we return to our hotel.
- Day 5:** We head west for a key highlight of the tour: Crete's most famous archaeological site, the great Minoan Palace of Knossos, the oldest, largest, and most elaborate of these sites. We'll hear of its long history, its place in myth and learn of its discovery by Sir Arthur Evans and the controversial but iconic reconstructions he made on the site, which leave such an indelible impression. In its wide courts, shaded colonnades and intricate arrangements of room after room, floor after floor, we can really get to grips with what these palaces looked like and think about what they were for, who lived in them and how they functioned in still-debated ways in Minoan society.
- Later, we enjoy lunch and a wine tasting in the lush Peza region, the heart of Cretan winemaking since the Minoan era. We continue south into the Asterousia Mountains, towering above the rugged southern coast, where we spend the first of three nights in a picturesque mountain village amid the high peaks.





EXPLORING CRETE:

ARCHAEOLOGY, NATURE AND FOOD

Day 6: In the morning, we descend to the green Mesara Plain, to investigate the island's Roman and Early Byzantine capital, Gortyn. We visit the heart of this extensive site, still under excavation. Our visit begins with the famous Gortyn Law Code, one of the longest ancient Greek inscriptions ever found and hugely informative for our understanding of city-state laws and the workings of daily life for those who tend to get left out of the histories. Then, we set out on an easy stroll through old olive groves concealing parts of the ancient city, some excavated and some still unexplored. We return to our mountain village for a free afternoon in its picturesque winding lanes and bathing in the sheer visual opulence of its views. After lunch, there is time to enjoy our mountainous abode.

Day 7: The day is devoted to the Minoan presence in the Mesara, Crete's largest plain and agricultural heartland. Our first visit is to the Minoan Palace of Phaistos, arguably the most beautiful of its kind, perched on a jutting spur that seems to leap into space high over the lush valley in a striking setting overlooked by snow-capped Mount Ida, the island's towering central peak. Very close by, we disentangle the complex ruins of Agia Triada, a finely-equipped, though not huge, Minoan town that may have been a summer residence for the Bronze Age rulers of southern Crete. We'll hear about the incredibly rich finds made here, ready to admire them up close when we visit the Archaeological Museum in Heraklion at the end of the tour.

We'll have much to remember in the evening as the shadows cast by the enfolding peaks lengthen and we look out across the Libyan Sea in an idyllic evening soundtracked only by the sound of goat bells amid the solitude.

Day 8: We start the day with a short tour of the excellent and award-winning folklore museum at Voroï, to see impressive handiwork wrought by the hands of virtuoso craftspeople in weaving, basketry, beekeeping and the other skills of traditional rural life.

We then continue into western Crete, stopping by the Late Minoan-Mycenaean cemetery of Armenoi, its scores of rock-cut graves scattered in an oak forest. Surrounded by the serenity of the site, we learn about the changes the island underwent during and after the 15th century BC and we learn about the young people that were laid to rest here, before entering the largest and most elaborate of the tombs.

After lunch and a tasting at a famous winery in the most fertile part of West Crete, we end the day at a historic seafront hotel in the beautiful Venetian city of Chania, our base for the next three nights.

Day 9: We make our way to the westernmost shore of the island, where we begin the day in a fertile plain beneath a sheer-climbing acropolis and in sight of wave-battered rocks. We are at the site of ancient Phalasarna, where the geological story competes with the historical in impressiveness. We'll see the beautifully-preserved harbours of this ancient city – part flourishing port, part pirate's nest – the mooring rings for the ships still in place at the empty quayside. Complex artificial channels protected the ships, brilliantly-preserved fortifications the city – but neither proved adequate against two insuperable forces: nature and Rome. The whole port was heaved above sea level by a mighty geological paroxysm in the fourth century, but by that time the city was already dead, laid waste by Roman arms centuries earlier.

We'll see traces of both at the excellent museum in Kissamos next – the catapult stones of the Roman legionaries at Phalasarna, and the remains of flourishing local communities hit by the catastrophes of earthquake and tsunami. We lunch by more peaceful shores, in the wide turquoise bay of the seafront at Kissamos, embraced by the painterly arms of distant hills.

In the afternoon we visit the historic monastery of Gonia. Its serene, ordered modern state hides its central role in much of Crete's turbulent revolutionary and wartime past. The beauty of the monastery is matched by the fine icon collection in the superb museum within.



Day 10: Free day, yours to relax by the clear waters of the harbour, explore the pretty streets of old Chania or dive in and go shopping in the more bustling parts! You may wish to take the chance to visit the spectacular new archaeological museum, opened in 2022. You are free to choose your own options for lunch and dinner.

Day 11: A morning drive takes us to the Akrotiri peninsula, where we visit the serenely beautiful Venetian-era monastery of Agia Triada, whose sienna-hued walls and welter of picture postcard viewpoints beg for a painter or photographer to immortalise them. If your tastes run to, well, tastes, there's the traditional olive press and the monastery's organic oils and wines that need attending to.

We drive by the magnificent Bay of Souda, where we stop to pay our respects at the island's British and Commonwealth war cemetery, set in a location central to the tragic events of the 1941 Battle of Crete.

Our next visit is to the vast Classical and Roman city of Aptera, sprawling prodigiously over a mighty eminence with impressive views over the blue bay and receding panoramas of mountain and shore. We'll take in the grand Graeco-Roman theatre and the huge cisterns that fed its Roman baths, all now watched over by a formidable Ottoman stronghold.

Following a delightful village lunch, we end the day in the grand Venetian city of Rethymno, where we stay in a 16th century palazzo for two nights. In the evening, advised by your tour experts, you can choose your own dinner among the many options available in the picturesque Old Town.

Day 12: In the morning, we tour the Fortezza, the well-preserved Venetian fortress whose frowning, mighty walls dominate Rethymno, commanding wide views across the Cretan Sea and the mountains to the west and east.

Then, we set out inland to Eleutherna, one of Crete's oldest and most important ancient cities, set in the beautiful Amari valley and the site of ongoing and superbly productive excavations. Its recently opened archaeological museum is eye-opening, revealing the broad trading contacts and considerable wealth that existed here in the Early Iron Age, just as the city-states began to develop. The rich burials of its warriors and priestesses are an outstanding highlight of this great display.

After a village lunch, we return to Rethymno. We explore some of the Venetian city's finest features on a pre-dinner stroll.

Day 13: We return to Heraklion to visit the superlative Archaeological Museum, housing one of the world's most important exhibits of prehistoric art and artefacts, a magnificent showcase of Minoan culture and the Greek and Roman ages in Crete. Our extensive tour takes in many wonders: the stunning achievements of Minoan potters, delicate works in ivory, painstakingly carved stone vases with rituals and myth played out on them, elaborate jewellery of gold and precious stones, masterpiece offerings to the deities whose images they bear. We'll see the world-class collection of famous and evocative fresco paintings from Knossos - lithe bull-leapers and the sinuous, privileged elite of Knossos. And we'll finally be able to satisfy our curiosity by getting up close to some of the amazing artworks we've talked about at their original find-spots earlier in our tour.

After a relaxing afternoon, we stroll through the Venetian heart of the city, once known as Candia, passing its main monuments and concluding with a final magnificent dinner.

Day 14: Transfer to Heraklion airport.



GO BACK TO BACK

FROM SPLIT TO DUBROVNIK
MAY 25 - JUN 1

CRUISING THE CARIAN COAST
MAY 26 - JUN 2

SOMETHING SIMILAR

EXPLORING MACEDONIA

EXPLORING ROME

EXPLORING SICILY

EXTEND YOUR STAY

THE HEART OF CLASSICAL ATHENS

ATHENS OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

EXPLORING THE PELOPONNESE

MAY 8 - MAY 22



OCT 2 - OCT 16



TOUR GUIDES MAY & OCT: DR. MICHAEL METCALFE & NOTA KARAMAOUNA

- MAY: £4,865 PER PERSON / SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: £775

- OCT: £4,925 PER PERSON / SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: £775

INCLUDES ALL MEALS EXCEPT 1 LUNCH AND 4 DINNERS



The Peloponnese conjures up images of ancient glories, epic struggles, valiant heroes and majestic vistas. The mere mention of names like Arcadia or Corinth, Sparta or Olympia, Nemea or Mycenae awakens our imagination, reminding us of fascinating legends and dramatic historical scenes reaching far across the ages.

The fame of this large peninsula that forms the southern part of the Greek Mainland rests on its long and often spectacular history, making it a veritable heartland of European and Western culture. From the first farmers of the Neolithic to the Bronze Age Mycenaeans, via the glories of Classical Greece and Rome and the splendours of the Byzantine Empire, all the way up to the Ottoman Empire and the Greek War of Independence, the Peloponnese has often been centre-stage to key historical events. The region is also central in Greek myth – home to the heroes of Homer's Iliad like King Agamemnon and Nestor, the deeds of Herakles (Hercules) and a place often frequented by the gods themselves, be it in love or wrath.

Join us in bringing these fascinating places and their history to life. You'll journey through stunningly beautiful scenery, from small fertile plains to rough and rugged mountains and rocky peninsulas jutting out into the blue waters of the Mediterranean. You'll discover many of the area's most famous highlights, including no less than six UNESCO World Heritage sites, such as the gargantuan Bronze Age fortifications of Tiryns and Mycenae, the Classical splendours of Olympia, famous for the games that still bear its name, Epidaurus with its beautiful theatre and beautiful Byzantine Mystras.

You'll also discover wonders off the beaten track, like mountainous Arcadia with its perched villages and gorge-side monasteries and the majestic Mani Peninsula, where a romantically wild landscape is perfectly matched by its traditional architecture. Naturally you'll savour some of the region's best traditional cuisine, sample many of the fine wines that have been cultivated here for millennia and stay in delightful accommodations and locations.

Led by a team of archaeologist guides with many years' knowledge and experience of the region, this tour will introduce you to the splendours of one of the ancient Mediterranean's most significant regions. As you explore its historical and cultural majesty as well as its natural beauty and living traditions you'll gain a true and unforgettable sense and understanding of what the Peloponnese was and is.



Lion Gate, Mycenae

Messene



EXPLORING THE PELOPONNESE

Day 1: Arrival in Athens. Transfer from airport, about 40 minutes away, to our hotel in the centre of the city. Welcome drinks and dinner.

Day 2: Today, we set out from Athens to begin exploring the Peloponnese! Our first stop is the Isthmus of Corinth, the neck of land that connects the Peloponnese and the mainland and places Corinth perfectly astride so many land and sea routes. We admire the mighty Corinth Canal, planned since antiquity and finally achieved just over a century ago, crossing its viaduct to enter the Peloponnese on foot.

We continue to Ancient Nemea, set in a fertile upland valley in the north of the Argolid. Here, we visit the sanctuary of Zeus, where important panhellenic (all-Greek) athletic games were celebrated every other year, the fame of which made Nemea a bone of contention between Corinth and its powerful neighbour, Argos. We pass through the long-vaulted tunnel to the beautifully-positioned stadium, its walls covered in graffiti left by ancient competitors. In the sanctuary itself, we explore the splendid Temple of Zeus and the museum, filled with finds from Nemea, as well as the Mycenaean Aidonia Treasure. Looted from a cemetery nearby, this important Bronze Age material mysteriously surfaced in the New York auction circuit and was eventually returned to Greece in 1996.

Later, we enjoy lunch and a tasting at one of the many Nemea wineries: the region is the oldest established wine appellation in the country, based on the delicious Agiorgitiko grape, producing a dark red wine of great warmth and character. A fine day behind us, we make our way to Nafplio, one of Greece's most attractive coastal towns for our first Peloponnesian night, in a restored Neoclassical building in the picturesque Old Town.

Day 3: We begin by visiting Nafplio's superb Archaeological Museum. Drawn from sites all over the Argolid, its displays bring us thousands of years of the ancient story of the region from the Palaeolithic right through to the Roman era. Some of the most famous archaeological finds of Greece are here, including the Mycenaean Dendra Panoply, one of the world's oldest surviving suits of full body armour.

A scenic drive into the southern Peloponnese begins on the peninsula's east coast, through the southern Argolid and then following the shore of what was once Kynouria, the buffer over which Argos and Sparta glowered at each other. We stop at Leonidio beneath towering bluffs and russet stone ramparts for a delicious rural lunch and then continue through the extraordinarily beautiful Tzakonian Mountains - ancient Parnon - to the village of Kosmas, a good 1,150m (3,770ft) above sea level, where we stop for coffee and traditional sweets.

Finally, we descend into the fertile hill country of Laconia, the historical territory of Sparta. Our destination is Monemvasia, a medieval fortified town set on a beautifully craggy quasi-island that juts into the Aegean Sea just off the eastern coast. It is our base for two nights, as we stay in a lovingly restored mansion dating back to the Venetian era.

Day 4: Today is entirely devoted to the history of Monemvasia and to the extraordinary beauty of this most unusual place.

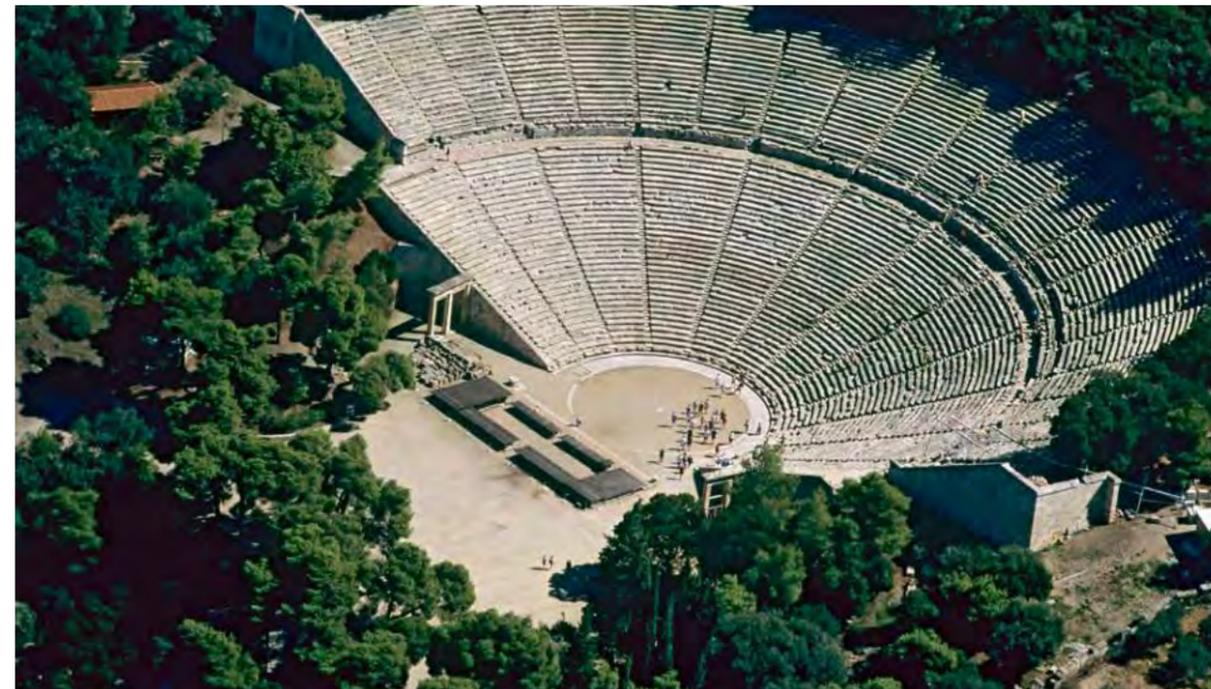
Founded as a Byzantine stronghold, perhaps a refuge for Peloponnesians fleeing raiding Goths and Slavs further north, Monemvasia soon became one of the most important towns and hubs of maritime trade in the area, later serving as a vital stepping-stone on Venice's route to the Eastern Mediterranean. We first explore the Lower Town with its characterful mansions, chapels, lanes and squares, nestling from the blue waters of the Aegean and the enemies they might bring within well-preserved medieval city walls. Next, we ascend the heavily fortified plateau above, crowned by the twelfth century Byzantine church of Agia Sophia, perched precariously on a cliff-top.

As Monemvasia gave its name to Malmsey Wine (also known as Malvasir or Malvasia), exported all over Europe in Venetian times, we visit an excellent local winery after lunch to taste the region's produce, all based on native Greek grape varieties. This is followed by an easy-going free afternoon to enjoy the serenity of the place or go for a swim if the weather suits. In the evening, you are free to choose among Monemvasia's dining possibilities.

Day 5: A big day, taking in one of the most important historical centres of the Peloponnese, Sparta, and its medieval successor, Mystras, the finest Byzantine site in the south of Greece.

We first travel westwards through Laconia to reach the modern town of Sparta, beneath which lie the scant ruins of its ancient predecessor, Lakedaimon or Sparta, the dominant power of the Peloponnese for many centuries. Visiting Sparta gives us an opportunity to talk about the ancient Spartans' unusual organisation of their state and its great emphasis on war, built on their oppression of their helot neighbours. Their rejection of luxury and monumental architecture means we encounter the city's peculiar character not in buildings but in the fine archaeological museum's excellent finds, which take us on to the affluence it achieved during the Roman era.

The afternoon holds one of the greatest delights of the entire Peloponnese: Mystras. Founded by Latin crusaders ('Franks') after 1204 and the Fourth Crusade, Mystras is nevertheless a key Byzantine site, seat of an autonomously-run despotate within the Byzantine Empire between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries. In those dying days of Byzantium, Mystras, with its direct connections to Constantinople, became a major centre of art and learning. Today, the town is abandoned, but its churches and monasteries still stand in great serenity and beauty on their lush green hillside overlooking Sparta below. High-quality frescoes decorate many of these monuments, opening great insights into an important and frequently overlooked part of European heritage, due to which Mystras is listed by UNESCO as a World Heritage site. In the late afternoon, we carry on southwards to Areopoli in the Mani Peninsula, where we spend the next two nights.



Day 6: This day is spent entirely within the Mani Peninsula, the central of the Peloponnese's three southern fingers and the southernmost part of continental Europe. Mani is a wild, rocky and rugged place, and the harshness of its landscape is matched by the legendary ruggedness of its inhabitants, and by their history and traditions, such as the defensive tower-houses that make up the older settlements.

Our first stop is at the spectacular caves of Diros, entered from a small cove and located just above sea level. Here, nature has spent the last few million years carving out a dazzlingly beautiful labyrinth of chambers and passages. Mostly flooded, they are accessible by boat and decorated with a stunning array of stalagmites, stalactites, draperies and other limestone concretions: a hidden world of dreamlike wonder.

From Diros, we follow the Mani's coast southwards towards a cove near Cape Tainaron, the southern tip of the peninsula. In antiquity, the waters around here, unavoidable for those crossing from the Central into the Eastern Mediterranean, were among the most feared in the Mediterranean, making the nearby coves and bays welcome places of shelter, to wait out adverse conditions or to recover from harrowing trips. Perhaps as a result of its association with naval tragedies, Cape Tainaron was also believed to be an entrance to Hades, the place where Heracles descended to the Underworld to catch Cerberus, the triple-headed dog, as one of his Twelve Labours. The place operated as an Oracle of the Dead for centuries. We also cast an eye on the nearby ruins of the Temple to Poseidon, god of the sea.

On our return southwards, we stop for a stroll in the famously picturesque and mostly abandoned village of Vathia. In the evening, you are free to choose among Areopoli's cozy eateries.



EXPLORING THE PELOPONNESE

Day 7: Travelling northwards along the western coast of Mani, we leave Laconia and enter Messenia. Still on the Mani, we stop (if possible) to visit one of the region's many tiny Byzantine churches, decorated with elaborate fresco decoration.

Our next stop is Kardamyli, a lovely and very ancient settlement notable for being offered to Achilles by Agamemnon in the Iliad, but also for having been the base and retreat chosen by Patrick Leigh Fermor, the famous British adventurer and travel writer, from the 1950s until his death in 2011. Leaving Mani behind, we head for the mountainous interior of Messenia, to the picturesque village of Mavromati for a rustic lunch, before exploring the vast ancient city of Messene, a site that is still undergoing extensive excavation and reconstruction by the Archaeological Society of Athens and which will surely become a UNESCO World Heritage Site before long. Messene is an unusual site as the result of an unusual history: for centuries, the region was under Spartan control and its inhabitants were not permitted to dwell in cities, depriving them of the most defining feature of ancient Greek societies, namely the city-state. Only after Spartan dominance was broken by the Theban general Epaminondas at the Battle of Leuctra in 371 BC did Messenia gain independence. The new capital city was thus essentially a Theban gift, but what a gift!

We spend the afternoon admiring this glorious site at the foot of Mount Ithome. We explore its theatre, agora, council chamber, column-lined avenues, gymnasia and stadium, surrounded by the most stupendous Late Classical city walls in all of Greece. In the evening, we descend to the shore and the city of Kalamata, famous for the olives and oil from the surrounding plain.

Day 8: A diverse day, full of lush and inviting landscapes and seascapes.

In the morning, we travel to the southwestern tip of the Peloponnese, to Methoni, Venetian Modon, facing the Ionian Sea. It was here that Geoffrey I of Villehardouin, one of the most fascinating characters in the complex history of Frankish Greece first made landfall in 1204, following the Fourth Crusade and the dismemberment of Byzantium. A few years later, Methoni fell to Venice, and later see-sawed in control between Venice and the Ottomans until 1715. We engage with this turbulent history by visiting the stupendous Venetian fortifications, built upon the remains of Byzantine and earlier predecessors and once encompassing a large castle-town. The peninsular setting of the complex, lapped by deep blue waters, makes the visit unforgettable.

We then continue northwards along the coast, stopping at Pylos, an attractive Neoclassical town set upon its famous nearly fully-enclosed Bay. This was the site of two important battles during vastly different eras: the Battle of Sphacteria in 425 BC, during the Peloponnesian War, remembered as the first time that Spartan warriors surrendered, and the 1827 naval Battle of Navarino, during which an Allied fleet of the 'Great Powers' (British, French and Russian) virtually destroyed an Ottoman-Egyptian one, thus enabling the Greek revolutionary troops to strengthen their hold on the Peloponnese.

Later, we reach the site of Ano Englianos, a hilltop surrounded by windswept olive groves, where excavations have revealed an important Late Bronze Age Mycenaean Palace. The well-preserved structure, protected by a modern shelter, is surprisingly well-preserved, making it one of the most revealing buildings of its kind, the centre of the Mycenaean state. Ano Englianos, usually identified as Homer's Pylos and thus as the 'Palace of Nestor' has yielded extensive Linear B archives, providing ample evidence of the Mycenaean 'palace economy', a theme we begin to explore here. We also cast a glance at the fine tholos tomb, a 'royal' burial monument of the fourteenth century BC close to the palace. Near here, the celebrated fifteenth century Tomb of the Griffin Warrior was discovered in 2015.

Continuing northwards, we leave Messenia and enter Ilia, ancient Elis, the western region of the Peloponnese, heading for the town of Olimpia (Ancient Olympia), our base for the following two nights.



Day 9: A stupendous day, all of it spent in Elis, dedicated to two important sites from very different eras.

In the morning, we drive to Cape Kyllini, the western tip of the peninsula, to visit the mighty castle of Chlemoutsi (originally named Clairmont). This strikingly dominant edifice was constructed by Geoffrey I Villehardouin in the 1220s to strengthen his control over his Principality of Achaea. Unlike Methoni, it was never actually besieged, but came under Byzantine control in 1427, only to be surrendered to the Ottomans in 1460. The impressive complex, with an outer enceinte overlooked by a hexagonal keep comprised of tall Gothic-style halls, is one of the most significant monuments of western-style medieval architecture in Greece. It now houses an excellent new museum devoted to what is known in Greece as the Frankokratia, the period of Western rule following 1204.

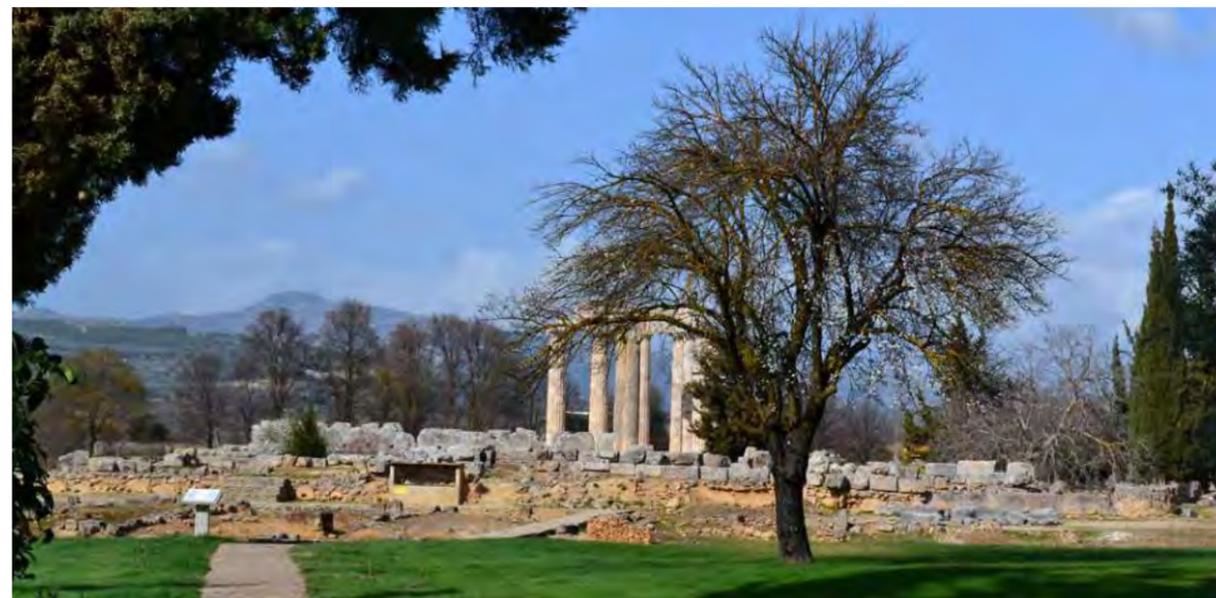
We then return to Olimpia to visit the most famous archaeological site in the entire Peloponnese: Ancient Olympia. Set on the confluence of two rivers, the Alpheios and the Kladeos, the great sanctuary of Zeus has been attracting visitors since antiquity, when it was the venue of the famous athletic contents in honour of Zeus that took place every four years, the Olympic Games, supposedly founded in 776 BC. A panhellenic event, they were an occasion for individuals from all over the Greek World as far as southern France, Asia Minor, the Black Sea and North Africa, to meet in friendly competition, maintain contacts and exchange ideas. They were therefore not just a defining aspect of Greek culture, but one of the ways it was transmitted, expressed and reformulated over time.

We do justice to this UNESCO World Heritage Site with a thorough tour. It takes in the training grounds and a hostelry outside the sanctuary proper, and the shrines and altars within. Special highlights are the Temple of Zeus, once home to one of the Seven Wonders of the World (the huge gold-and-ivory statue of Zeus), the Workshop of Pheidias where it was crafted, the Temple of Hera, perhaps the oldest standing Greek Temple, and the stadium said to have been set up by Heracles himself.

In the evening, you are free to dine a la carte at your hotel or in the nearby town.

Day 10: In the morning, we continue our exploration of the sanctuary of Zeus, with a thorough visit to the superb site museum - early, before the crowds arrive. The museum contains one of the finest collections of Greek art anywhere in the world, including the breath-taking pediments of the Temple of Zeus, the stunning Nike of Paionios, and the extraordinarily beautiful Hermes of Praxiteles, a rare example of a surviving masterpiece by one of ancient Greece's most famous sculptors.

We then follow the poets in turning our attention from victors to the ethereal heartland of the Peloponnese: Arcadia. We travel eastwards, climbing into the Arcadian mountains, a landscape of rugged beauty, of seemingly untouched forests and of small villages perched on steep slopes. Our first destination is the famous Temple of Apollo Epikourios at Bassai, another UNESCO-listed monument. Standing in a remote mountain setting, 1,130m (3,700ft) above sea level, it is the second-best-preserved Classical Temple in Greece, with all four colonnades and the sanctuary walls mostly in place. We examine the temple's many unusual features, establishing its exceptional nature and the peculiarities of Arcadian architecture, and see at first hand the challenge of maintaining the now-fragile structure and the ambitious ongoing project to preserve it for the future.



Day 11: We continue, via the attractive mountain town of Andritsaina, through more stupendous countryside, to spend the first of two nights in our hotel in the historic town of Dimitsana, set high upon the slopes of a deep valley, with the Lousios River rushing far below.

Returning to Dimitsana, the rest of the day is free, allowing you to enjoy the lovely setting, find a nice place for lunch, to explore the lanes of Dimitsana or just to relax before joining your guides for dinner. One site worth visiting is one of the most unusual exhibits in the Peloponnese, the Museum of Water Power. Beautifully presented, its restored watermills illustrate the role of water power in the pre-industrial and early industrial economy of the region not just for grinding grain, but also for felling and the production of gunpowder. The latter was an important industry in Dimitsana, making the place an important centre of the Greek War of Independence in the 1820s.



EXPLORING THE PELOPONNESE

Day 12: Leaving Arcadia's Mountains behind, we explore the region's eastern plains before returning to the Argolid.

In the morning, we descend from Dimitsana to visit the important ancient city of Mantinea, astride the age-old land road linking Sparta with Corinth and Central Greece. Surrounded by its beautiful remains, we learn of Mantinea's turbulent history, and of the two great Battles of Mantinea, in 418 and 362 BC. The former saw a crushing Spartan victory over Athens and its allies, the latter a victory of newly-dominant Thebes over the Spartans that also saw the death of the victorious commander Epaminondas.

We move on to Mantinea's neighbour and great enemy, Tegea and its new archaeological museum. The highlight here are the architectural and figural sculptures from the Temple of Athena Alea. Designed by the renowned fourth century BC sculptor Skopas, they are of extraordinary quality.

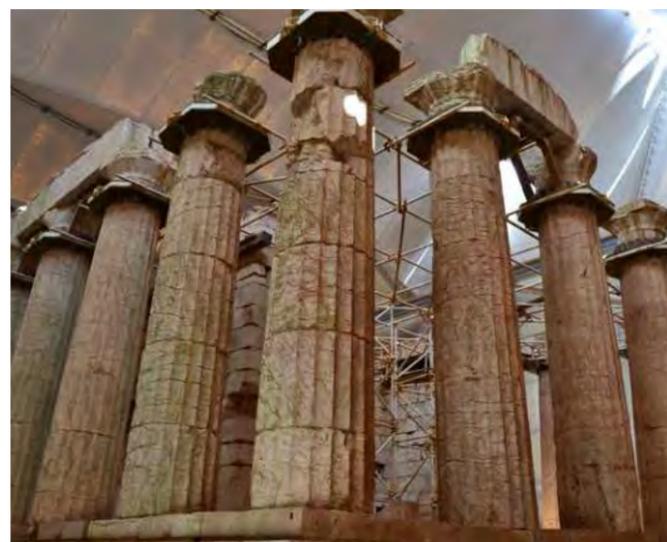
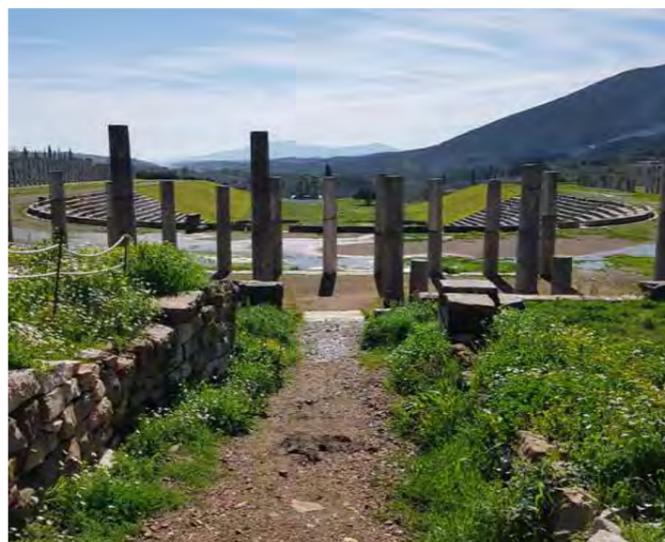
After a pleasant wine tasting and lunch, we return to Nafplio in the afternoon for two more nights.

Day 13: Today, we explore part of the Argolid, a region that plays a pivotal role in Greek mythology, prehistory and history, visiting two of Greece's most famous archaeological sites, both of them listed as World Heritage Sites by UNESCO.

First, we traverse the Argolic Plain to reach Mycenae, a place whose name rings through the centuries, its Bronze Age greatness inspiring Greek mythology and especially the Homeric epics. The enormous citadel would be an impressive site even if it had been left half-buried, but 150 years of scrutiny since Schliemann's discoveries in the 1870s, have added many layers of fascination to this incredible place. Every part of this site has a name that resounds in archaeological history - the Lion Gate, the two Grave Circles that yielded one of the richest treasures in all of European prehistory, the upper citadel with the remains of the Palace, and the extension added to the citadel shortly before its violent destruction in the early twelfth century BC. Outside the imposing cyclopean walls, we admire some of the enormous domed tholos or 'beehive' tombs, including the most famous of all, the Treasury of Atreus, with its huge dome, the largest span from its erection in the thirteenth century BC to that of the Roman Pantheon fourteen centuries later. Our visit is capped with a visit to the local archaeological museum, where a wealth of material illustrates all aspects of Mycenaean life.

We cross to the Argolid's Saronic Gulf coast for a pleasant seaside lunch before visiting our second major archaeological site today: the great sanctuary of Asklepios at Epidaurus. This was the most famous shrine to the god of healing in Greece, and it is from here that his cult spread across the country. Lying in an enchantingly beautiful spot among pine-shaded hills, it was a major centre of faith healing in antiquity, becoming a veritable spa by Roman times. Among the surviving structures serving the cult of Asklepios is the abaton, where the faithful received healing visions in their sleep. The most celebrated aspect, however, is the enormous theatre, praised for the beauty of its proportions already in antiquity. Surprisingly well-preserved, it seats over 13,000 spectators and has remarkable acoustic properties.

Back in Nafplio, you are free to choose from among the town's countless restaurants.



Day 14: The day begins with a morning visit to the great Mycenaean citadel of Tiryns, a UNESCO-listed World Heritage Site, whose vast Late Bronze Age fortifications crown a limestone outcrop that has been a centre of human activity for millennia. We explore the sophisticated defensive architecture of the site, with its complex gate structure, chambers embedded in the incredibly thick walls, sally ports and extensions, and the remains of the Mycenaean Palace and its throne room whose power they symbolised.

Our time in the Peloponnese draws to a close, but not without a last hurrah as we stop at ancient Corinth, one of the most important archaeological sites in Greece. Famed for its wealth, and sometimes its decadence, the city had two golden ages, one during the Archaic era of the seventh and sixth centuries BC, the other during the Roman period. Our visit begins at the museum, where a newly-designed exhibit explains the development of Corinth as a region, a city-state and major commercial power with its own specialised export industry, perfume and perfume vessels, the latter decorated in the characteristic black-figure technique, a Corinthian invention.

Next, we visit the heart of the ancient city itself, discovering both its Greek and its Roman past, by examining the many layers of architectural remains lying under, in and around the Roman forum. A very early Archaic temple and a series of Roman shrines, grand colonnades, a huge fountain house, shops and marble-paved streets give life to the city, along with the bema or speaking platform from which Saint Paul spoke to the Corinthians, all overlooked by the mighty citadel of Acrocorinth.

In the afternoon, we return to Athens, where our final visit is to the National Archaeological Museum, whose collections are among the finest and most extensive in the world. We begin with the prehistoric material, where we admire the treasures discovered in the Mycenaean shaft graves, including the so-called Mask of Agamemnon and an array of gold objects, weaponry, personal ornaments, vessels made from rock crystal and ostrich eggs, so vast that it's hard to believe they're from one time and place. We also seek out frescoes and other finds from Mycenae and Tiryns and the Linear B writing that opens up their world. Afterwards, we stroll through the museum's unique collection of Greek sculpture, highlighting the development of this singular expression of Ancient Greek creativity with pieces that remind us in particular of our Peloponnesian odyssey.

Day 15: Transfer to Athens airport.



GO BACK TO BACK

FROM SPLIT TO DUBROVNIK
MAY 25 - JUN 1

CRUISING THE CARIAN COAST
MAY 26 - JUN 2

SOMETHING SIMILAR

EXPLORING MACEDONIA

EXPLORING CRETE

EXPLORING SICILY

EXTEND YOUR STAY

THE HEART OF CLASSICAL ATHENS

ATHENS OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

CRUISING THE DODECANESE



JUNE 9 - JUNE 23



TOUR GUIDES: DR. MICHAEL METCALFE & NOTA KARAMAOUNA
- £5,925 PER PERSON / SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: £1,850



Symi

This spectacular gulet cruise in Greece, starting and ending in Bodrum, takes you through the entire Dodecanese chain (plus the island of Samos), beginning with the famous island of Kos and including eleven of the most beautiful and evocative of the Greek islands and no less than three UNESCO-listed World Heritage sites.

The islands' strategic location, between the open Aegean and the mainland of Asia Minor, has made them a well-connected cultural interface throughout history. Carians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Venetians, the Crusader Knights of St. John, Ottomans and Italians visited or settled them, leaving behind a rich legacy of grandiose ancient sanctuaries, mighty castles, serene monasteries and traditional villages, all set within an ever-changing maritime scenery.

The sites you see on this itinerary include world-famous relics, like the Asklepieion of Kos, the extraordinary archaeological museum of Samos, or the medieval fortifications of Rhodes, each among the best of their kind. On the smaller, off-the-beaten-track islands you gain a more intimate view of traditional Greek island life, with their picturesque harbours, village squares adorned with pebble mosaics, and beautiful domestic architecture. These islands are also rich in diverse landscapes: craggy hilltops, strange volcanic formations, and of course coastlines featuring a succession of bays and islets. Another highlight of the cruise is the series of meals you will enjoy at selected venues throughout the islands, ranging from home cooked local cuisine in family-run tavernas to real gourmet food, the finest the region has to offer.

Sightseeing aside, your stylish gulet will moor in secluded coves, allowing you to bathe in azure seas, admire the pristine scenery, or simply relax. From fabulous food to epic history, this is a fascinating journey through Greek culture, past and present. Don't miss it!



CRUISING THE DODECANESE

NB: The itinerary on this cruise is likely to change slightly according to the weather conditions. Some modifications regarding the order or days of crossings, or visits are likely to occur.

Day 1: Our gulet awaits you in Fethiye Marina. We cruise into the spectacular bay for swimming, welcome drinks and dinner on board.

Day 2: After some necessary formalities, a long and scenic morning cruise brings us to the great island of Rhodes. We moor just below the medieval city walls of Rhodes Town, a major centre in Antiquity, in the Middle Ages, and now. The city of Rhodes was founded in 408 BC by a 'synoikismos', a moving-in-together of the earlier cities of Ialysos, Kameiros and Lindos, which changed the fate of the island and its surrounding region. A major regional power in the Hellenistic period, after Roman and Byzantine rule, it was taken over by the Knights Hospitaller or Knights of Saint John in 1310. Under these Knights of Rhodes, there was a complete reorganisation of the city, leaving us one of the best-preserved medieval ensembles in Europe, with streets, lanes, squares and houses still following their fourteenth-century outline: a deserving World Heritage site.

We begin in the former Hospital of the Knights of Rhodes, one of the most significant pieces of Crusader architecture in the Aegean. It now houses the island's main archaeological museum. Its rich trove of treasures is fit for the largest island of the Dodecanese: examples of Rhodian sculpture, sensual and sensitive at the same time, are one of the highlights, but the Hellenistic pebble mosaics, a Macedonian tradition transferred to wealthy Rhodian homes in the third and second centuries BC, are as spectacular. There is also a superb display about the island's prehistory, when Rhodes was a key recipient of first Minoan and later of Mycenaean influences. We follow with a visit to the grandiose Palace of the Grand Masters of the Knights, rebuilt as a royal residence by the Italian occupants in the 1930s and embellished with many fine Roman mosaics from the excavations in Kos. Wending our way back, we have dinner in Rhodes town.

Day 3: Our morning is given over to medieval Rhodes. We start by walking through the huge rock-cut moat, reflecting the Knights' increasing sense of insecurity in the changing geopolitical theatre of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, a fine example of medieval defensive architecture. Then, we set out for the island of Symi. Weather permitting, we stop for a chance to swim in a pretty cove below steep cliffs. Once we continue, we are eagerly watching on deck as we enter Symi's lovely neoclassical port town, one of the loveliest sights in the Mediterranean, built on nineteenth-century affluence from sponge-trading and shipbuilding. Striking pastel-coloured homes cascade down the slopes towards the harbour.

Day 4: We have an early morning wander through Symi's winding and stepped streets, making our way from the harbour settlement up the traditional main artery, the many-stepped Kali Strata ('beautiful street') to the upper village. Along the way, we admire its many fine mansions, all following the same basic design but featuring an endless variation of Neoclassical façade decorations, revealing the great wealth that was once concentrated on this tiny and rocky island.

Returning to the gulet, we set out for Tilos, the 'greenest' island in the Dodecanese. Tilos is the first Aegean island to rely entirely on renewable energy, and the only island to ban all bird-hunting, but to begin with it's a fine place for lunch and an afternoon swimming session. We dine on board.

Day 5: We see a unique side to Tilos' buried past - palaeontological finds of the island's extinct species of pygmy elephant. These odd mammals, apparently survivors of a wider-spread species that got stranded after the last ice age(s) in many islands from Sicily via Crete to the Dodecanese, appear to have continued on Tilos until fairly recently: 6,000 years ago.

We then make our rather more nimble way to a bay on the north coast for another picturesque swim before we continue a short distance in the late afternoon to the beautiful island of Nisyros. We travel inland to see the stunning fortifications at Paliokastro, one of the best examples of military architecture of the Classical to Hellenistic eras in the Greek Islands, in a superb setting overlooking the sea. Then, we continue to a viewing point at the rim of the caldera, the volcanic centre of Nisyros, to gaze down into the Stefanos steam crater, estimated to be about four thousand years old. It is a fascinating place, offering deep insights into a geologically volatile region. We dine at Emporio.



Day 6: After some time in Mandraki, a morning crossing takes us to a cove off the volcanic islet of Giali for a leisurely swim in a place of unique archaeological heritage. For thousands of years, it was important as one of only two sources of obsidian, the natural volcanic glass that was used in prehistory to make supremely sharp cutting tools. In recent years, it has also produced high-quality pumice and perlite, two distinctively volcanic resources.

We make an afternoon crossing to the great island of Kos and its ancient harbour. Founded in 366 BC as another 'synoikism' of the earlier Koan cities, Kos Town quickly became one of the main commercial centres in the Dodecanese, famed for its wine and set on one of the major Mediterranean trade routes. The destruction of its later successor by a devastating earthquake in 1933 led to a major rebuilding by the Italian authorities then in control of the island, and to a series of excavations, many of which are preserved as archaeological parks within the new town: a charming juxtaposition of old and new. We visit the ancient harbour quarter and the agora or market, the meeting space defining an ancient city, and the superb archaeological museum, displaying the city's history from prehistory to the Roman era. Its collection of sculpture is superb, featuring many depictions of Greek mythological characters, as well as a wealth of other fine finds, throwing light on many aspects of the wealth and sophistication of ancient Greek and Roman Kos. It's in this fine location that we dine this evening.

Day 7: After breakfast we visit one of the most important sites on Kos: the Asklepieion, the great sanctuary of Asklepios, the God of Healing, a place revered across the ancient world. Its remains, set on a slope with wonderful views across the straits to Asia Minor, are a key example of Late Classical architectural planning and drew the hopeful and fearful from a wide swathe of the ancient world in search of the God's help.

Back in town, we visit the well-sited and impressive castle: a very solid reminder of how precarious the late fifteenth century was in the Aegean, even if its name – Nerantzia, from the orange groves formerly nearby – sounds more peacefully bucolic. Taking our lunch aboard the gulet, we make our way to Pserimos and another appointment with inviting waters.

Day 8: We visit Leros today, where we have much to explore. We begin in Lakki Town, once Porto Lago, an Italian military town of the 1930s, built in the style known as 'razionalismo', an odd combination of stark fascist aesthetics, Bauhaus modernism and Art Deco eclecticism. Next we explore the Castle of Panteli, visible from most of Leros, which is really three castles, one built around the other in succession, exemplifying the structural differences between an eleventh-century Byzantine fortification, one built by the Crusader Knights of Saint John in the fourteenth century, and the Knights' own fifteenth-century modification, a reaction to the introduction of gunpowder. In the castle's chapel, we catch a glimpse of the miracle-working icon of the Virgin of the Castle. Here, we also learn about the events of the pivotal Battle of Leros in October and November of 1943, when, despite a desperate Allied intervention, the island fell from Italian to German control.

In the late afternoon we make the journey to the holy island of Patmos, and a dip in Grikos Bay. We dine on board.

Day 9: Having breakfasted, we make our way to Patmos harbour and set out to explore the island. Patmos is where Saint John is believed to have received his vision of the Apocalypse. As a result, it has been a centre of Christian worship for many centuries. We explore the resulting Byzantine riches, inscribed by UNESCO as a World Heritage site. At the monastery of the Revelation, we find a medieval church grafted onto the cave said to be the venue of John's account, a place of dense atmosphere and dignity. The main Monastery of Saint John, founded nearly a thousand years ago by the Blessed Christodoulos, is one of the chief Byzantine treasures in the Aegean, sternly fortified on the outside, and serene and beautiful within, with superb frescoes revealing the full splendour of Late Byzantine art, of a quality we would expect to find in a metropolitan centre like Constantinople or Thessaloniki. The monastery museum houses rare treasures, including fragments of the most famous Byzantine book, the Purple Codex, and an icon by Domenikos Theotokopoulos, the Cretan painter later known as El Greco. The monastery is surrounded by the immensely picturesque Chora, a fine town of traditional mansions from the last four or five centuries.

After lunch, we leave Patmos behind and set course for Fournoi, dining aboard.



CRUISING THE DODECANESE

Day 10: Daybreak has us in the enfolding arms of the spellbindingly pretty island of Fourni and its crystal-clear waters. Enchanting now, recent years have revealed they lie over nearly 60 shipwrecks spanning the fourth century BC to the nineteenth century AD, making the island – suddenly and unexpectedly – one of the major concentrations of archaeology in Greece.

Our prime visit here is to one of the finest places of its kind in the Mediterranean, the ancient marble quarries of Petrokopio, which will have drawn some of those vessels. Here we can see part-completed works for magnificent ancient buildings – a column here, an architrave there – and great blocks for sarcophaguses waiting to be hollowed out to house recipients they never met, all in an extraordinary setting.

We'll have lunch back at Fourni town before getting under way for our next target: Samos.

Day 11: A day on Samos. This great island was one of the most powerful Greek city-states in the Aegean, especially during the sixth century BC, when it was a place of great wealth and unusual sophistication and innovation. If we needed proof of that, we're more than answered by our first site.

We visit the Heraion, one of the most important shrines in the region, said to be the birthplace of the Goddess Hera, and the site of her wedding with Zeus. The sanctuary, another World Heritage site, set in an atmospheric wetland area by the sea, was richly embellished, especially with the huge Temple of Hera, built and rebuilt in the sixth century BC. The massive foundations and the single standing column allow us to appreciate the lost grandeur of this vast structure. After lunch, we make our way to the island's modern capital, Vathy, where the archaeological museum contains the rich finds from the Heraion, including fantastic examples of early Greek sculpture. Among these is a stunning colossal kouros, an Archaic statue of a nude young man and the largest known piece of its kind.

There is also a vast array of small finds, among them bronzes from all over the eastern Mediterranean and even further afield, rare carvings in ivory and wood, and much more. In the afternoon, we return to the boat and swim off the beach before dinner in Pythagoreio. This charming port village was built on the ruins of the ancient island capital. In antiquity, it was called Samos, like the island itself, but today it bears the name of the island's most famous son, Pythagoras.

Day 12: Samos still has some amazing sites to share with us. We begin with the famous Tunnel of Eupalinos, a precocious wonder of ancient Greek engineering. Another achievement of the island's golden age in the sixth century BC, it is cut through sheer rock for a length of over a kilometre. It served as the base tunnel for an aqueduct which runs in a separate tunnel below its floor, supplying the city of Samos with fresh water while being invisible to any attacker or besieger.

The story of how the tunnel was made, by teams working towards one another from both ends, has been painstakingly reconstructed by archaeologists and is truly marvellous. Next, we visit the superb and state-of-the-art archaeological museum of Pythagoreio, a carefully designed exhibit that strives to present the history of this age-old settlement and to bring the life of the ancient city of Samos back to life: its prehistory, its shrines, its graves, its art and its domestic life.

After lunch on board, our next destination – and our next swim – await: Leipsoi.

Day 13: After breakfast, we make our way through more superlatively pretty waters, with a beautiful backdrop for another memorable swim. After lunch we continue our journey to the rugged island of Kalymnos and its main town and harbour, Pothia, where we have dinner.

Day 14: We have a walking tour of Pothia, a picture perfect Aegean harbour town that any tourist brochure would be proud to have, and which would leave any photographer blissful. The local archaeological museum provides a fitting introduction to the earlier history of the Greek islands, demonstrating how even remote places like Kalymnos were integrated into an Aegean cultural continuum from the Bronze Age on, both as recipients of cultural influences and as participants in them.

The museum's collection of sculpture, from the island's main sanctuary to the God Apollo, but also from the bottom of the sea nearby, is one of the best in any provincial Greek museum, not least because of the wonderful Lady of Kalymnos, a nearly fully preserved bronze statue of a woman dating to the 4th or 3rd century BC. As Kalymnos is the last island in the Aegean to maintain a sponge-diving fleet, a tradition going back millennia, we also visit a local sponge-washing workshop to learn more about this ancient trade.

With this stunning final reminder of the wonders of the islands, we cruise to Bodrum, where there may be time for a last encounter with the waters in another famed place, a Wonder of the ancient world. There'll be a few formalities, but once that's done we have a splendid final meal together with some magnificent memories to recall.

Day 15: Transfers to Airport.



GO BACK TO BACK

DUBROVNIK TO SPLIT
JUN 1 - JUN 8

CRUISING TO EPHEBUS
JUN 2 - JUN 9

SOMETHING SIMILAR

CRUISING DALMATIA

A TURKISH ODYSSEY

CRUISING TO THE CYCLADES

EXTEND YOUR STAY

THE HEART OF CLASSICAL ATHENS

ATHENS OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

EXPLORING MACEDONIA



JUNE 17 - JUNE 29



TOUR GUIDES: PAUL BESTON & DR. MARIA GIRTZI - £4,475 PER PERSON / SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: £795
INCLUDES ALL MEALS EXCEPT 1 LUNCH AND 3 DINNERS



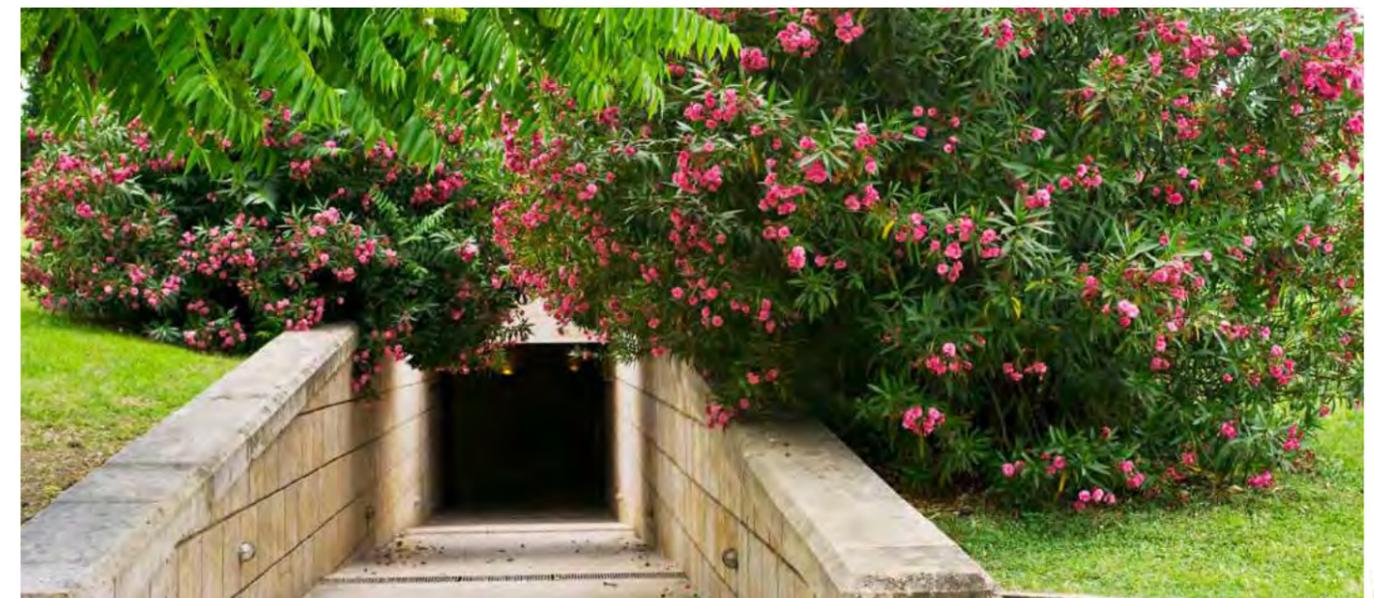
Gold Larnax and Crown, Vergina

You can't separate them: Macedonia and Alexander the Great go hand in hand, and Alexander will always be in the first breath of any discussion of why you should come. But did anyone tell you how beautiful his kingdom is? Rugged mountains, their steep slopes thick with trees, make it a tough land to dominate, hard to weld together. They provide a perfect backdrop for the fertile plains of the Macedonian lowlands, the core of the ancient kingdom, a place to develop a deep and distinct culture and produce fine treasure. Beyond the plains there are the deep blue waters of the Aegean Sea, inviting for us, and a gateway to the islands, but often a threat for Macedonians. And there you have the twin attractions: desperately beautiful country with a history threaded with triumphs and turbulence as Macedonians alternately rise to political and cultural dominance or fight invaders – or each other – for the wealth of the land.

It was this dividable land that was definitively brought together and harnessed by King Philip II of Macedon. Our tour will show you the scale of that achievement, right up to the very spot of his dramatic end. You'll see where Alexander spent his formative years in his father's kingdom and the wealth that surrounded their Argead dynasty, the profits of conquest fit for the warrior descendants of heroes.

Between the sun-drenched beaches and the snow-dusted mountains, Macedonia has a wealth of sites, well-known and obscure, not only from the time of Philip and Alexander but also of their distant ancestors, and those of the later masters of the region – Romans, Byzantines, Crusaders and Ottomans. As well as world-famous highlights like the royal tombs at Vergina and the embattled imperial splendour of Byzantine Thessaloniki, you'll come to the great sanctuary of Zeus at Dion in the shadow of Mount Olympus and the towering ruins of Philippi with its enormous Late Roman basilicas. They are matched by a throng of lesser-known marvels: one of Europe's oldest lake settlements at Dispilio, the seat of long-forgotten Iron Age warrior kings at Aiani, and a marvellously-preserved Classical Greek island city on Thasos. You'll explore the remains of private homes, two millennia old and more, room by room at Olynthos, a great late Classical city doomed at Philip's hands; you'll be entranced by a medieval fairytale town rising from a misty lake at Kastoria – and so much more...but for the rest, you'll need to give in to the temptations of reading the itinerary...

Following the principles of our acclaimed Exploring tours, the best-prepared land tours available, Peter Sommer Travels has crafted an unforgettable itinerary in this extraordinary part of the world, a tour ideal either for the first-time visitor to Macedonia, or as a profound deepening of the experience, revelatory even for those who have travelled there before. Meticulous attention has gone into every detail: superb accommodation in selected characterful locations, fascinating in their own right; excellent meals that reflect the full spectrum of the local tradition, wine-tastings highlighting this ancient product of the area, and a succession of site visits offering insights into the breadth of the region's culture and history, eagerly brought to you by our trademark team of expert guides.





EXPLORING MACEDONIA

Day 1: Arrival in Thessaloniki. Transfer from the airport (about 30 minutes away) to our hotel in the impressive historic centre, the political and cultural capital of Northern Greece. Our welcome dinner takes place in the midst of twenty-three centuries of rich history.

Day 2: After temporarily saying goodbye to Thessaloniki, we explore the heartland of ancient Macedonia, the lands that became the core of her power under Philip II. Our first stop is not far. A hidden gem in unprepossessing industrial surroundings: our first Macedonian tomb and one of the finest, its brilliantly-preserved subterranean façade vividly painted with images of warriors and nobles at a feast.

We move on to Pella, the city chosen by Philip as his capital, the birthplace of Alexander. This carefully-planned city illustrates the new ambition of Macedonia, with vast, refined houses orbiting a huge and extravagant agora. We'll take in the excellent site museum, including the famous pebble mosaics with their evocative celebration of the hunting prowess of Macedonia's transformative generations.

We then drive to our next base, the ancient city of Edessa, set on rocky heights from which waterfalls fountain forth over a glorious plain artistically broken by rugged green hills: a perfect vista to gaze down over.

Day 3: We explore Macedonia's southern frontier, an often-contested route into and out of the kingdom as the balance of power shifted.

A leap forward in time leaves us in no doubt that the embattled nature of this region remained a constant long after the ancient world. We visit the brute mass of the sprawling crusader castle of Platamon, latched onto a great crag overlooking the coast. Here, we first encounter the shattering of the Byzantine Empire by the Fourth Crusade which would see Macedonia bear the brunt of decades of strife, for which Platamon offers a potent symbol.

After lunch, we return to the days of ancient Macedonian power at the royal ceremonial and religious centre of Dion, a great city dominated by the eastern slopes of Mount Olympus. Under the gaze of Cloud-Gathering Zeus himself we visit this enormous site, filled with shrines and temples, some still being excavated. We see many of the already uncovered monuments, including the theatre where Alexander first assembled his troops and sought divine favour for the fateful expedition that would plunge into the empire of the Persians and change the world forever.

Day 4: To understand Macedonia's early history, and the scale of the task its kings had of welding the country together, you have to leave the plains. And so we head into Upper Macedonia and what was once the capital of the semi-independent kingdom of Elimia, Aiani. Reading the ancient historians, one could come away with the impression these fringe territories which proved so difficult for the Macedonian kings to control before the fourth century were barbarous, backward and wild. Our visit to Aiani's excellent museum quickly shows this isn't the case: the splendid artefacts here, and the royal tombs not far away, show these kingdoms had much more to them than we once thought, and make their role in Macedonian history far more explicable.

After lunch in Aiani, we drive on towards our next base, Kastoria. But there's time for a stop first at Dispilio, one of the most extensively-studied prehistoric settlements in the country where lakeside houses on the tranquil shores of Orestiada, now visible as full-scale reconstructions, revealed organic material dating back to its Neolithic occupation over millennia, 8,000 to 5,000 years ago.

Shortly after, we reach Kastoria, further up the lake, wreathed by hills and studded with tiers of wonderfully aesthetic historic houses. We stay the night in traditional Ottoman-era mansions amid this almost unbelievably charming ensemble.

Day 5: Kastoria is on a near-island in the lake, a tree-strewn verdant neck of land set delightfully ablaze by a spill of red terracotta-tiled roofs. Its position at the very edge of the Byzantine Empire gave it special political and military significance, leading to its adornment with an astonishing wealth of Byzantine churches from the tenth to fourteenth centuries, distinguished by superb decorative brickwork and a wealth of fresco decoration. We visit some of the finest and also admire the brand-new Byzantine Museum whose excellent displays throw light on this important imperial outpost.

In the afternoon, we stop for a wine-tasting at a famous estate in the Amyntaio region before making our way to Naousa, at the margin of hill and plain. A perfect base from which to view Philip's kingdom.

Day 6: Now we understand the story of its rise to prominence, we return to the heartland of Philip's realm.

Here, Alexander spent his formative years, and so our first visit is to the Nymphaion, an idyllic shrine to the water deities at Mieza which Aristotle chose as the school for the prince and other sons of Macedonia's elite. We'll experience the space that formed a generation who would go on to found empires and reshape the history of continents, famed not just in war, but for patronising scientists and poets, establishing great libraries and exploring a new, wider world.

We next take in the new Vergina museum, which has an extraordinary range of displays covering Macedonia's rise to power, including the lavish burials of early rulers from the royal tombs and the magnificently impressive façade of the palace from which its Hellenistic kings ruled.

This might well be enough for a satisfying day, but in some ways is made mere prelude to the overture which follows:

The Tomb of Philip.

Undoubtedly one of the greatest highlights of the trip, we enter the great mound at Vergina, laid over the first cluster of royal tombs discovered here by Manolis Andronikos at the end of the 1970s. The subterranean interior, now one of the finest archaeological museums in the world, allows us to visit the unbelievably rich and historically unsurpassed finds laid out right by the tombs in which they were found. Here we came as close as is now possible to the epoch-making Philip, to Alexander's son and others from the peak of Macedonia power in an absolutely transformative and unforgettable experience. More words would be useless – even alone, this visit will make the tour a once in a lifetime experience.

Suitably stunned, we return to nearby Naousa for dinner.

Day 7: Having seen Macedonia become a rich and powerful kingdom under Philip, we head east for a new base to see how he expanded the kingdom far beyond its old limits. We head into the lovely Chalkidike peninsula and one of the most important archaeological sites in Greece: famed, but doomed Olynthos. An important Greek city which gave Athens and Sparta much trouble, it proved too much of a threat to Philip, who besieged and snuffed it out in 348 BC. The trauma of its abrupt end leaves us with one of the best-preserved classical cityscapes anywhere in Greece, where we can walk its grid of streets through astonishingly preserved houses two and a half millennia old, where citizens lived in peace and comfortable power. Until Philip came.

After lunch on the splendid coast of the peninsula, we head back north and make our way to Kavala, a modern port town with ancient roots, and capped by a splendid mediaeval fortress, to check-in to our hotel.





EXPLORING MACEDONIA

Day 8: Our day is devoted entirely to the island of Thasos, located just a few miles off the Macedonian coast in the Aegean Sea, which we reach in a captivating crossing, mount Pangaeum and the coast receding as we head for the great green hogsbacked isle over glistening waters and past islets perfectly placed to make the trip a visual treat.

We begin by heading to the southern coast at Alyki, where we'll find an unusual shrine complex, Byzantine basilicas and a unique sprawling site which was a major source of Thasian wealth: one of her marble quarries. Thasian marble was prized across a wide part of the classical Mediterranean, and we can see the workfaces from which it was won, hewn right down into the sea. The precious cargo and the buildings it made may be long-gone, but the imprint of the workers' hard toil is everywhere here.

Driving back north beneath the steep and majestic heights of Thasos, we return to Limeni, site of the ancient city. The city was founded by Parian Greek colonists in the seventh century BC, and rapidly became wealthy. Its remains are threaded through the modern town – a city gate with a huge, exuberant relief of a characterful Silenus, a market square bedecked with shrines and temples, and an excellent archaeological museum.

We return to Kavala in the late afternoon, the golden light making the return voyage even more pleasant.

Day 9: We leave Kavala and head north, firstly for one of the most important places of Roman Macedonia and a UNESCO World Heritage Site: Philippi. Founded by Philip near the mines of Pangaeum, it sprang to the forefront of historical events as the site of the defeat of Caesar's assassins, Brutus and Cassius, by the triumvirs Mark Antony and Octavian – the future first emperor, Augustus. The city became a Roman colony and we explore its commandingly-sited theatre and sweeping forum, filled with Latin inscriptions and proclaiming the grandeur of its Roman status. The site played another famous part in history through the visit – not trouble-free - of St Paul to one of the earliest Christian communities here. We'll visit sites linked to that important encounter, and a mass of imposing Roman and Byzantine churches that tell Philippi's later story.

After visiting a leading winery, we make our way to our new hotel, particularly enjoyed by previous Macedonia Explorers, in the town of Drama.

Day 10: We journey back to the Chalkidike peninsula, this time to its eastern coast and the intriguing remains of an ancient Greek city scattered across a rugged hill over a pretty bay. Great enough in themselves, what makes the remains of Stageira even more attractive for us is that this is the city in which Aristotle was born, and these are buildings which he will have known and entered before us. The city was another of Philip's victims in 356 BC, but was rebuilt at Aristotle's request as he became tutor to Alexander. Among the remains is a monument that has recently been suggested as his tomb and hero-shrine, giving us another close encounter with a remarkable man.

After a lunch on the lovely shore below Stageira, we head to a site associated with some other renowned figures of the classical period, the great ancient city of Amphipolis. Set on heights over a great bend in the River Strymon, Amphipolis was an imperial foundation of Athens in the run-up to the Peloponnesian War. Torn from her in a famous battle in 422, it allows us to encounter the Spartan general Brasidas and the Athenians Cleon and Thucydides at close hand. Athens never accepted the loss, and it became a bone of contention with Philip when he took the city in 357. Amphipolis became the centre of Macedonian rule in the east of the kingdom and the place where Alexander marshalled his troops in 334 en-route to his epic campaign in Asia. We see the results in the excellent site museum, including finds from the nearby Kasta tumulus – huge, enigmatic, mysterious and recently revealed as an exceptional archaeological site.

We return to Drama for a free evening in lovely surroundings.

Day 11: We bid farewell to Drama and head back to Thessaloniki for a couple of days taking in its long and epic history. Founded by Cassander, one of the successors of Alexander, in 315 BC, it has been successively a great Hellenistic city, Roman provincial capital and imperial residence, Byzantine metropolis, seat of a Crusader kingdom and an Ottoman multi-ethnic city and centre of Sephardic Jewish culture, and all have left their traces.

We begin with its Byzantine period, when it was the second city of the great empire, by viewing the mighty fortified citadel high above the city, with sweeping views down to the sea over seemingly endless Roman walls equally impressive for their extent, scale and superb preservation. We descend a little to visit the city's emotional heart, the basilica church of St Demetrios, which still preserves celebrated decorative traces of its origins in the seventh century, when it was the seat of the city's hopes and fears as the saint saved the city from siege after siege. After lunch, before checking into our hotel, we visit the city's wonderful Byzantine Museum, a triumphant display of mediaeval Greek history and culture. Your afternoon and evening are then free to explore one of the greatest of European cities.

Day 12: We step back further into Thessaloniki's history, beginning with a walking tour of an extraordinary series of related monuments in the historic centre. These all originated as part of an imperial palace complex of the early fourth century built by the emperor Galerius and vast in scope. The imposing Rotonda was perhaps begun as Galerius' mausoleum, but has a spellbinding interior from its later life as a church, its ceiling lavishly enlivened with remarkable mosaics and drawing our gaze ever upward. We then admire the intricately-sculpted reliefs of Galerius' arch with its story of imperial triumph – transient, as it turned out for Galerius, but we can tell that tale in front of vivid images of Persian defeat. Finally, we are dwarfed by the huge remains of the central palace complex itself, a labyrinth of halls, baths and audience chambers in towering red Roman brick, all surrounded by the modern city's busiest quarter.

We then take a very short drive to the Archaeological museum, one of the finest in Greece. The displays are beautifully done and have some truly outstanding finds – it's almost unfair to single out the amazing Derveni krater and the colossal treasure house of finds from the gold-rich Macedonian tombs. An amply rewarding visit for these new wonders alone, it's also an ideal place to remind ourselves of the stellar variety of ancient finds and sweep of history we've encountered during our time together. No doubt we'll have a lot to talk about in the evening while enjoying our final meal.

Day 13: The end of our Exploring Macedonia tour. Transfer to Thessaloniki airport as our trip becomes outstanding memories.



GO BACK TO BACK

SIBENIK TO ZADAR
JUN 8 - JUN 15

SOMETHING SIMILAR

[EXPLORING CRETE](#)

[EXPLORING THE PELOPONNESE](#)

[EXPLORING SICILY](#)

EXTEND YOUR STAY

[THE HEART OF CLASSICAL ATHENS](#)

[ATHENS OFF THE BEATEN TRACK](#)

CRUISING THE AEGEAN:

FROM KOS TO PATMOS

AUG 31 - SEP 7



SEP 7 - SEP 14



TOUR GUIDES AUG: DR. NIGEL SPIVEY & DR. MARIA GIRTZI
TOUR GUIDES SEP: PROF. TONY SPAWFORTH & DR. MARIA GIRTZI
- £3,225 PER PERSON / SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: £975



LIGHT

The Dodecanese islands are perhaps the most ethereally beautiful part of the Aegean. Set in a sparkling topaz-blue sea, they have a rich and intricate history stretching back millennia, and a distinctive culture. From the deck of our gulet, you will cruise in comfort as the islands come to you, each with its own distinctive silhouette and story: mountainous Kalymnos; Nisyros with its brooding volcanic cone; Patmos crowned by its extraordinary monastery – a World Heritage Site – and serene, secluded Leipsoi. Anchoring in coves of the bluest shimmering water and harbours with bright white houses rising above you can relax as you wish before dining on meals freshly-prepared on board or go to specially selected tavernas on the islands themselves. In a tranquil and unhurried way, you can drink in the vistas of picturesque villages, rocky backdrops and volcanic cones as verdant headlands and glittering bays slide by.

The islands have a long history as a place where cultures met and learned from each other, or came into conflict. Our expert guides will introduce you to some of the finest traces of this long past. You will see the great columned temples of the Greeks, including the famed healing shrine of the God Asklepios on Kos, and their spectacular statues, some newly brought up from the depths of the sea. Roman imperial rule brought with it great commerce and affluence, as witnessed by elaborate homes and their fine contents, a testament to a long era of peace. As the Roman Empire became the Christian Byzantine Empire, so we find artists' hands turning to the intense and timeless emotion-filled icons of Orthodox Christianity, and lovingly-made manuscripts prepared in the exceptional monasteries central to their way of life.

With the fading of Byzantine power, we encounter new strands in our story: the Crusader Knights of St John, who ruled the islands and added their own military stamp to them as they strove long and hard in a doomed struggle to maintain an increasingly-isolated Christian outpost in the east. The long Ottoman years followed, adding another layer with their own characteristic architecture and culture, fountain houses and baths. From the unexpected and singular traces of Italian occupation, we reach modern times and the captivating culture of today's islanders. From the food, sounds and atmosphere of the welcoming tavernas, via a wine-tasting taking in local produce prized by hard graft from a most unlikely landscape, to the unique local craft of sponge-diving, you will come away feeling truly immersed in this varied archipelago's many delights.



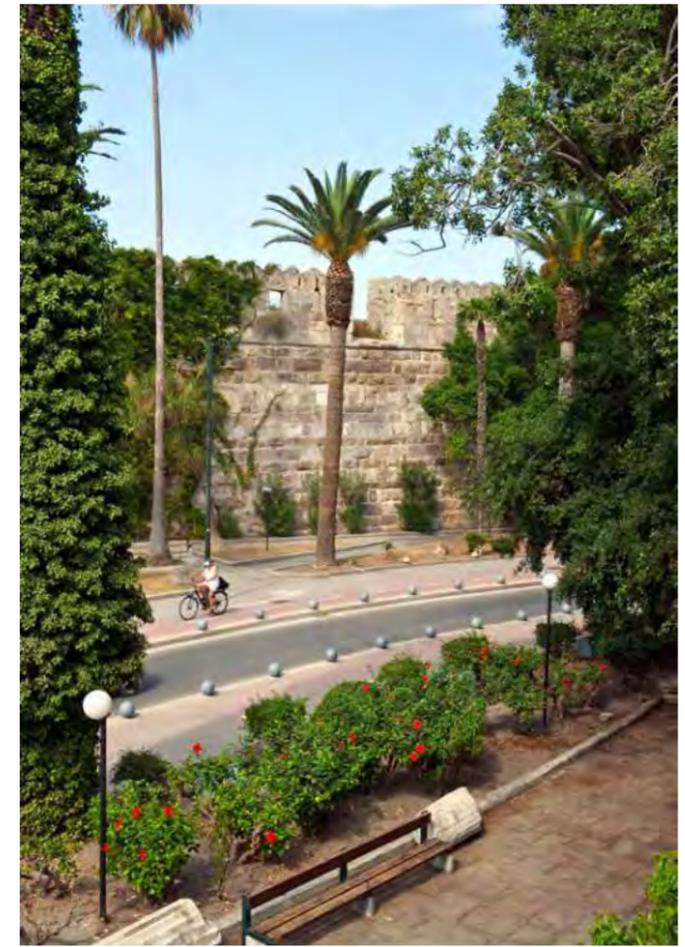
Kos



CRUISING THE AEGEAN:

FROM KOS TO PATMOS

- Day 1:** The start of our Aegean cruise. We embark on our gulet, about 40 minutes from Kos airport, in the town's harbour. Welcome drink and dinner on board.
- Day 2:** We begin our adventure cruising towards Giali, a small island famous for its rich supplies of pumice and obsidian, a rare volcanic glass, used for cutting tools since early prehistory. There is ample time to swim and relax before we enter the port of Mandraki on Nisyros. Here, we discover the astonishingly well-preserved Classical or Hellenistic fortification of Palaiokastro, perhaps built by Carian satrap Mausollos to protect his domains, or by the Rhodians to secure their northernmost possessions. Afterwards, we enter the island's huge volcanic caldera to visit the atmospheric steam crater of Stefanos, where we see, hear and smell the true nature of Nisyros: the whole island is an active volcano. We walk past mud pools to stand in the stark amphitheatre of its crater where hot water bubbles on the surface and steam vents from beneath, leaving mounds of crystallized sulphur, before heading off to enjoy a well-earned dinner with unforgettable views of the island.
- Day 3:** We set out for the rugged island of Kalymnos. In the early afternoon we visit the beautifully laid-out archaeological museum, home to a surprisingly rich collection of ancient Greek sculpture. Outstanding even besides the fine marbles is the over life-size 'Lady of Kalymnos', a superb and near-complete bronze statue of a himation-swathed woman, drawn up from the sea as recently as 1994 after being found by fishermen. Kalymnos being the last redoubt of the once extensive sponge-diving industry, we take the opportunity to visit one of the remaining sponge-washing workshops and observe this almost-lost art first-hand, before setting out for a calm cove to spend the night in.
- Day 4:** In the morning we cross to the little-visited island of Leros. Here, we take a stroll around the Italian military town at Lakki, a unique planned outpost built in the 1930s adhering to razionalismo, the then-showpiece architectural style, before making our way to the formidable medieval Castle of Panteli. Its extensive medieval walls crown the heights of the former ancient acropolis as it sits high above a deep blue sea and overlooks a fascinating scenery of coves, bays, and a dense jumble of ornate mansions. Originally a Byzantine stronghold, it later became a major outpost of the Hospitaller Knights of St John, who greatly expanded it to ward off the threats of the fiercely-contested fourteenth century Aegean. The castle's military history extends as recently as the tragic Dodecanese campaign of 1943 and overlooks the theatres of the Battle of Leros, making it the perfect place to tell that dramatic story. In the afternoon we set out for a cove where there is plenty of time to swim before dinner.
- Day 5:** In the morning we cruise to Patmos to explore its extraordinary cultural riches, some of the most memorable images of our tour. We discover the Cave of the Apocalypse, now a chapel, and traditionally the refuge of St John the Divine as he composed, or transmitted, the Book of Revelations. At the great Monastery of Saint John, we find one of Greece's greatest medieval treasures, whose soaring and stout walls house some extraordinary Byzantine survivals. Clustered around is the breathtakingly beautiful Chora, the island capital with its maze of cobbled streets and beautiful houses. The setting, listed by UNESCO as a World Heritage site, is stunning and reveals a thousand years of life in a small and remote island uniquely connected to a greater world. Later, we set out for another quiet cove.
- Day 6:** Today is all about relaxation as we set off for Leipsoi where we anchor in a beautiful bay. There is plenty of time for swimming, and later also to explore the lovely little port town of Leipsoi, a peaceful place that seems lost in time.
- Day 7:** In the morning, we cruise southeast, anchoring near the tiny islet of Pserimos with a permanent population of just a few dozen. There is a last chance to swim before lunch on board, and we make our return to Kos. We begin by strolling through the ancient city's harbour quarter with its shrines and residential areas, before exploring the archaeological museum of Kos, a superb collection of sculpture, pottery and other finds, ranging from prehistory to the Roman era. Afterwards we go to the beautifully-set Asklepieion, the most important sacred site on the island. The extensive shrine, an important international sanctuary where pilgrims sought the attentions of the healing god Asklepios while they slept, post-dates Hippocrates, the 'father of medicine' so closely associated with Kos, but the picturesque terraces, monumental stairways and ornate columns attest the god's lasting presence. Farewell dinner on the gulet.
- Day 8:** The end of our Aegean cruise. Transfer to Kos airport.



GO BACK TO BACK

CRUISING TO EPHEBUS
SEP 8 - SEP 15

CRUISING THE LYCIAN SHORE
SEP 8 - SEP 22

A TURKISH ODYSSEY
SEP 15 - SEP 29

SOMETHING SIMILAR

CRUISING TO THE CYCLADES

CRUISING THE DODECANESE

EXTEND YOUR STAY

THE HEART OF CLASSICAL ATHENS

ATHENS OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

CRUISING TO THE CYCLADES

SEP 1 - SEP 15
BODRUM TO BODRUM



SEP 15 - SEP 29
BODRUM TO FETHIYE



TOUR GUIDES SEP 1: DR. MICHAEL METCALFE & NOTA KARAMAOUNA
TOUR GUIDES SEP 15: DR. MARIA GIRTZI AND ANASTASIOS PAPADOPOULOS
- £5,925 PER PERSON / SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: £1,850



Astypalaia

Join us for the ultimate Greek Islands tour and explore the astonishing historical wealth and natural beauty of the Aegean Sea in spring when the sites are carpeted with wild-flowers or in autumn when the shores and coves are inviting us to swim in lovely warm waters. Clear blue seas, vast island-dotted horizons and a stunning range of prehistoric, ancient and medieval treasures combine to make Cruising to the Cyclades the quintessential Greek Islands experience.

This two-week gulet cruise in Greece, through the Dodecanese and Cyclades archipelagos includes about a dozen Aegean islands in its itinerary. Our visits are a carefully chosen mix of the world-famous (such as glorious Santorini, laid-back Kos, mountainous Naxos and UNESCO-listed Delos) and rarely visited secrets of the Aegean (such as remote Astypalaia, picturesque Nisyros and tiny Anafi), each one with its own distinctive character and beauty.

This region has been a crucible of history from the very earliest times. Its archaeological sites range from whole Bronze Age cities to Classical temples, Roman towns, Byzantine monasteries and Crusader castles, as well as countless traditional villages and towns. Our expert guides will bring them all to life, and as the islands glide by you will travel through the pages of history.

Avoiding the hectic crowds and the hustle and bustle of conventional island-hopping, you will travel in style aboard a beautiful and traditional gulet. The delicious meals prepared by the on-board chef will be a constant highlight of your journey, as will the many lunches and dinners ashore, all carefully chosen to showcase authentic Greek cuisine and traditional hospitality.

On this tour you will feel the excitement of discovery, crossing wide open seas or narrow straits to drop anchor at a new island, be it in a bustling port town, a tranquil seaside village or a peaceful cove, and there will be plenty of time to relax, swim, snorkel or kayak, or just lie back and watch the ever-changing island scenery. A unique experience of exploration and relaxation and a perfect mix of culture and nature, in a truly epic maritime setting.

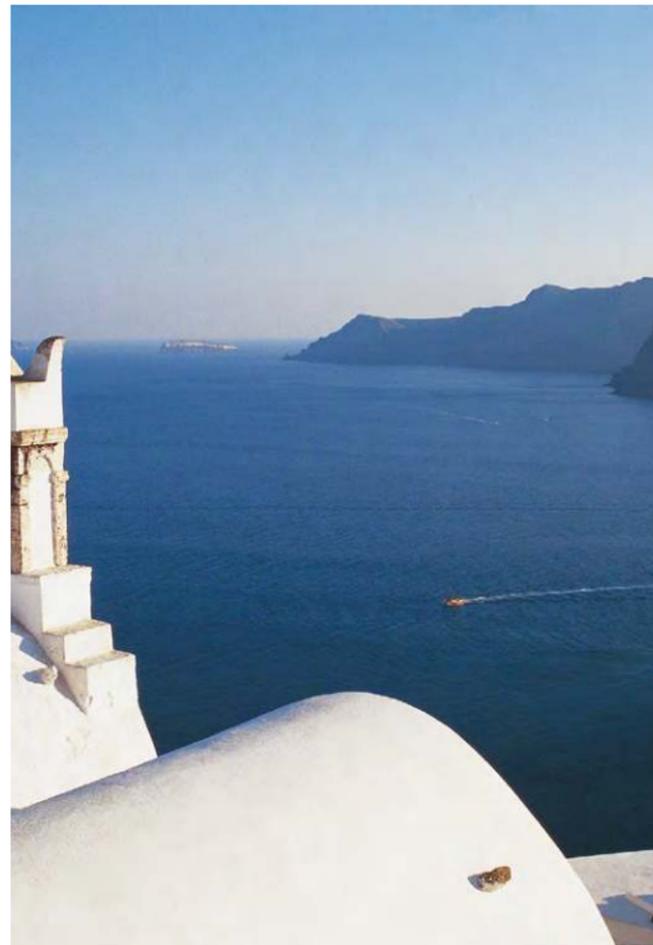
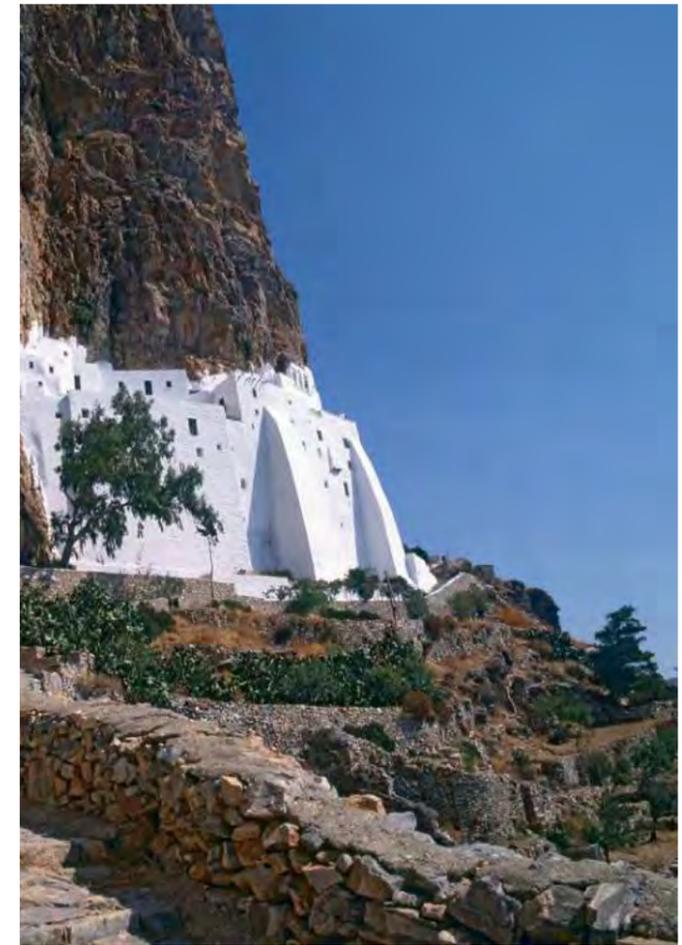


CRUISING TO THE CYCLADES

FROM BODRUM TO BODRUM - SEP 1 TO SEP 15

NB: The itinerary on this cruise is likely to change slightly according to the weather conditions. Some modifications regarding the order or days of crossings or visits are likely to occur, so please bear that in mind when reading.

- Day 1:** Our gulet is about 40 minutes from Bodrum Airport in the beautiful harbour of the city, site of ancient Halicarnassus (in Latin) or Halikarnassos (Ancient Greek). If possible, we set out into the Aegean in the late afternoon. We serve welcome drinks and dinner on board.
- Day 2:** We make an early crossing to Greece, arriving at Pothia, the capital and port town of Kalymnos in the Dodecanese Islands. The bustling settlement, surrounding the harbour in a striking setting, is dominated by houses and mansions from the 19th and early 20th centuries, witnesses to the island's erstwhile wealth won by its large fleet of sponge-diving vessels. After an island lunch, we walk through quiet streets and lanes – our first stop really is the perfect Greek island town! - to visit the excellent local archaeological museum, the biggest surprise in the Dodecanese. It makes a great introduction to the archaeology of the Aegean Islands and has an outstandingly fine collection of Archaic and Classical Greek sculpture, including the stunning Lady of Kalymnos, a near-fully preserved bronze statue of a woman recovered from the seabed near the island. Returning to the harbour side, we get to grips with the tradition of sponge-diving, Kalymnos being the last Aegean Island to retain a sponge-diving fleet, and the properties of this unique natural resource. After, we aim to continue westwards to the tiny islet of Levitha, halfway between the Dodecanese and the Cyclades.
- Day 3:** Wonderful maritime scenery abounds, often giving us great views across vast swathes of the eastern Aegean as we make the long and scenic westward crossing to the picturesque harbour of Katapola on the stupendously rugged Cycladic island of Amorgos. Katapola was the harbour of Minoa, one of the three independent city-states of ancient Amorgos, and the physical remains of its distant past are visible here and there on the island. We make our way to the interior, where we visit the supremely picturesque historic capital, Chora. Once again it steps straight out of a Greek island fantasy, with a wealth of whitewashed houses and chapels set along labyrinthine lanes, all overlooked by a tiny but imposing Venetian castle. As the first of a series of Cycladic Island towns on our itinerary, it's a great location to see how people once lived in these villages. Later, we continue to the island's southern shore, where a stepped path leads to the astonishing Chozoviotissa monastery, an extraordinary gleaming post-Byzantine marvel, seemingly pinned to a cliff-face overlooking the impossibly blue waters of the Aegean. The Chozoviotissa is unique: the top floor is the oldest part of this astounding building.
- Day 4:** An early crossing takes us through the Little or Lesser Cyclades. We might stop for a view of the islet of Keros, a protected archaeological zone not currently open to the public, where recent British and Greek excavation have discovered important evidence of the Cycladic Civilisation of the Early Bronze Age. We continue to Naxos, the largest of the Cycladic Islands, and to its capital town and main harbour, also called Naxos. First settled some 6,000 years ago, it is one of the oldest continuously-inhabited urban settlements in the world. It was the capital of the Classical Greek city-state or polis of Naxos and from the 13th to 16th centuries the seat of the Venetian Duchy of Naxos. In the early afternoon, we walk up to the latter's castle, surrounded by another labyrinthine settlement, and visit the Archaeological Museum. These have rich displays of Cycladic material, including a thought-provoking collection of Cycladic figurines, the famous stylised marble statuettes, influential on modern art, that characterise the Early Bronze Age culture of the islands during the 3rd millennium BC. Up in the Castle we hear of Marco Sanudo, the Venetian adventurer who founded the Duchy in the early 13th century. In the evening we take a stroll to the Portara, the enormous and famous marble gateway that stands on a headland just outside Naxos port, probably intended as the entrance to a never-finished 6th century BC temple. The Portara and its striking vista of Naxos Town and Castle make a perfect setting for an atmospheric sunset!



Day 5: Naxos deserves more exploration, so we make our way to the interior of the island. We visit the site of Yria, the legendary birthplace of Dionysos, God of wine, theatre and other good things, where we can trace the development of Greek temple building from its very beginnings to the 6th century BC, from mud and wood to marble, in the very place where stone architecture was invented. If we can, we'll also drop by the 6th century BC Temple at Gyroulas/Sangri, sacred to Demeter and among the earliest marble buildings in Greece. Our next stop is the 1,500-year-old church of the Panagia (Virgin) Drosiani with its unusual and very early frescoes, fascinating in themselves and even more so when we consider the cultural and theological background that produced them. After a village lunch we explore the ancient marble quarries at Flerio, where unfinished 2600-year-old statues lie as if asleep on the ground, accidental witnesses to an essential element of Greek culture and to the central role Naxos played in it – stone sculpture also started here! After returning to our boat, we set out northwards for Rhineia, near the more famous islet of Delos.

Day 6: We make a short early morning crossing to Delos. One of the most important archaeological sites in Greece – and the world, as one of UNESCO's World Heritage sites - the islet is nearly entirely covered in unusually well-preserved ancient ruins. Being the mythical birthplace of two Olympian gods, Apollo and his twin sister Artemis, Delos was sacred across Greece, attracting ambitious cities and kings from ever greater distances to make their mark with offerings, especially after Athens made it central to its imperial ambitions in the 5th century BC. Later, the island was favourably taxed by the Romans, bringing great wealth – from some dark trades - and making it a major commercial centre. This has left a grand legacy of shrines and multiple temples to Apollo as well as the streets and homes of the affluent trading city that existed here in the last two centuries BC. We'll visit public buildings like the theatre to admire its rich array of sculpture, but also see the household items on display in the local museum. Delos makes for a long and fascinating visit. In the afternoon, we cross southwards to Paros.

Day 7: We devote the whole morning to Parikia, Paros' lovely capital. It's a place with a long history, beautifully laid out from the Neolithic to the Hellenistic and beyond in the town museum, but also woven throughout its fabric, from the charming church of Ekatonapyliani - ultimately stretching back to the earliest days of Christianity as a legal religion in the fourth century – to a fortified Venetian kastro which manages to cheer as much as it overawes. Assembled almost haphazardly from the ancient city's building stones and columns, it gives the impression of being thrown together playfully in some archaeological Jenga of child's building blocks. It leaves a particularly warm impression to talk over during lunch on the gulet before we head seaward again to find some quiet cove on Ios or Sikinos to while away the day and wait for the sunset.

Day 8: In the morning we continue southwards to Santorini (or Thera) and enter the enormous caldera, stark witness to a long history of huge volcanic eruptions. Reaching Santorini by boat is a unique experience, both awesome and beautiful, as sheer cliffs of lava and pumice rise from the deep blue waters of the Aegean, with the toy-like clusters of whitewashed houses and blue-domed chapels that mark the famous crater-side villages sitting above like some other-worldly icing. We take the cable-car up to Fira, the island's capital. Here we visit the wonderful Museum of Prehistoric Thera, housing a fascinating array of finds from the Bronze Age settlement of Akrotiri, which we visit tomorrow. The astonishingly lovely painted household pottery from the site, the wealth of imported objects and most of all the famous Akrotiri frescoes - which now have a whole floor to themselves, amply justified by their rich and very mysterious narrative content - combine to throw some light on the affluence of the Bronze Age city, and on its refined and joyful aesthetics. There is ample time to explore the bustling byways and shops of the town, or to relax on one of countless caldera-side terraces before we dine in a well-hidden local taverna serving the typical Santorini specialities and finally return to our gulet.

Day 9: We make our way up to Fira a second time to further explore Santorini. Our first and most important stop is Akrotiri itself, the site sometimes described as a 'Bronze Age Pompeii', since it was both destroyed and preserved by the great eruption of the 17th or 16th century BC. There are few archaeological experiences to march this, as we view 3,600-year-old houses built of mudbrick and wood but still standing up to three storeys high, representing only a part of what must have been a much larger town. We'll see what excavation can tell us about the lay-out of the town, how the buildings were lived-in and how some special features give us insights into the beliefs and ceremonies of their long-departed inhabitants. After a tasting session at one of Santorini's finest wineries, where we encounter the Assyrtiko grape special to it, we have another delightful local lunch, and return to our boat.



Day 10: We start our day on Santorini's small, rarely visited, and unspoiled neighbour Anafi; perhaps just to have a little walk through its single village, or maybe to visit the post-Byzantine Kalamiotissa monastery, built over an imposing ancient temple of Apollo. We continue to the remote island of Astypalaia. Administratively part of the Dodecanese, historically more closely connected with the Cyclades and geographically far from either, Astypalaia is a place apart, or a place in between. We find a lovely cove to relax and enjoy the soothing waters of the Aegean once again.

Day 11: We spend the morning and early afternoon in one or several coves of Astypalaia, devoting our time to the joys of sea and scenery, of swimming and relaxing. In the late afternoon, we ascend the island's superb traditional Chora, another labyrinth of twisting stepped paths, whitewashed houses and countless chapels, a place of supreme serenity and beauty, crowned by the mighty castle of the Venetian Querini family. From the castle there are stunning views across Astypalaia and the surrounding seas and even to distant islands on a clear day.

Day 12: Continuing eastwards from early on, we return to the Dodecanese. We usually make our first anchorage off the tiny island of Giali, between Kos and Nisyros. Well-known in prehistoric archaeology as one of only two sources of the natural volcanic glass obsidian in the Aegean, it was first settled in the Neolithic, so that sought-after obsidian could be traded throughout the surrounding islands and adjacent mainland. Today, it has quarries exploiting the island's excellent pumice and perlite, unique materials that result from the area's volcanic history. Our main reason to linger is the pristine surrounding waters, inviting us to indulge in some leisurely swimming. Later, a short crossing takes us to Nisyros, another little-known island, which is a semi-extinct volcano rising above the waves of the Eastern Aegean. We moor at Mandraki, the main settlement, and one of the most attractive in the Dodecanese, our final labyrinth. Stretched out along the coast with a twisting main street, its squares decorated with lovely pebble mosaics in a Dodecanesian tradition, Mandraki is peaceful and atmospheric, picturesque, and steeped in tradition. After a short visit to the Archaeological Museum of Nisyros, with its fascinating collection of finds from the island's ancient cemeteries, you'll have some free time to explore at your own pace. Later, an inland excursion takes us first to the great Classical fortification of Paliokastro, one of the finest examples of Ancient Greek defensive architecture in the region, and then to the caldera, the collapsed crater at the core of the Nisyros volcano. There, we visit the phreatic steam-volcanic crater of Stefanos, a place that is both weird and remarkable, before dining on the caldera rim.

Day 13: We make an early crossing to Kos, the second-largest island of the Dodecanese, where we moor in what has been the island's main harbour for nearly 2,400 years, overlooked by the great castle of the Knights of Saint John since the 14th century AD. Kos Town is fascinating. A major earthquake in 1933 led to extensive excavations of the Greek and Roman remains beneath the town on the one hand, and to its rebuilding by the Italian authorities then in control of the island on the other, resulting in a place where surprisingly attractive modernist architecture rubs shoulders with a series of archaeological parks that act as windows into the past. We visit the agora, formal core of the ancient city, founded in 366 BC, when the preceding multiple city-states of Kos decided to unite into one city. The agora combines commercial (market), administrative, religious, and representative functions. In the Casa Romana, we discover a luxurious Romanera home that has been reconstructed on its original foundations: its architectural refinements and especially its decorative mosaics are a joy to behold. Our tour finishes at the Archaeological Museum, with a wonderful collection of high-quality Greek and Roman sculpture from various public buildings and private homes. (Note that the order of visits on Kos, as on any other island, can change, according to various factors).

Day 14: We make our way inland, to the island's most famous site, the sanctuary of Asklepios, the god of healing, set on the verdant slopes above Kos Town. There, we admire the sanctuary's complex design, indicating the sophistication of the designers who planned it, and marking one of the earliest examples of a fully integrated architectural ensemble, planned from scratch, in Greece. Enjoying the panoramic views it offers across the narrow straits between Kos and the Bodrum peninsula, we also learn about the functioning of an Ancient Greek healing shrine, about ancient Greek medicine and about Hippocrates, the most famous denizen of Kos. Later, there is a final chance to shop, snack or just relax in the bustling town square before our final crossing, back to Bodrum and to our last dinner on board.

Day 15: Transfer to Bodrum airport.



CRUISING TO THE CYCLADES

FROM BODRUM TO FETHIYE - SEP 15 TO SEP 29

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- Day 3:** Wonderful maritime scenery abounds, often giving us great views across vast swathes of the eastern Aegean as we make the long and scenic westward crossing to the picturesque harbour of Katapola on the stupendously rugged Cycladic island of Amorgos. Katapola was the harbour of Minoa, one of the three independent city-states of ancient Amorgos, and the physical remains of its distant past are visible here and there on the island. We make our way to the interior, where we visit the supremely picturesque historic capital, Chora. Once again it steps straight out of a Greek island fantasy, with a wealth of whitewashed houses and chapels set along labyrinthine lanes, all overlooked by a tiny but imposing Venetian castle. As the first of a series of Cycladic Island towns on our itinerary, it's a great location to see how people once lived in these villages. Later, we continue to the island's southern shore, where a stepped path leads to the astonishing Chozoviotissa monastery, an extraordinary gleaming post-Byzantine marvel, seemingly pinned to a cliff-face overlooking the impossibly blue waters of the Aegean. The Chozoviotissa is unique: the top floor is the oldest part of this astounding building.
- Day 4:** An early crossing takes us through the Little or Lesser Cyclades. We might stop for a view of the islet of Keros, a protected archaeological zone not currently open to the public, where recent British and Greek excavation have discovered important evidence of the Cycladic Civilisation of the Early Bronze Age. We continue to Naxos, the largest of the Cycladic Islands, and to its capital town and main harbour, also called Naxos. First settled some 6,000 years ago, it is one of the oldest continuously-inhabited urban settlements in the world. It was the capital of the Classical Greek city-state or polis of Naxos and from the 13th to 16th centuries the seat of the Venetian Duchy of Naxos. In the early afternoon, we walk up to the latter's castle, surrounded by another labyrinthine settlement, and visit the Archaeological Museum. These have rich displays of Cycladic material, including a thought-provoking collection of Cycladic figurines, the famous stylised marble statuettes, influential on modern art, that characterise the Early Bronze Age culture of the islands during the 3rd millennium BC. Up in the Castle we hear of Marco Sanudo, the Venetian adventurer who founded the Duchy in the early 13th century. In the evening we take a stroll to the Portara, the enormous and famous marble gateway that stands on a headland just outside Naxos port, probably intended as the entrance to a never-finished 6th century BC temple. The Portara and its striking vista of Naxos Town and Castle make a perfect setting for an atmospheric sunset!
- Day 5:** Naxos deserves more exploration, so we make our way to the interior of the island. We visit the site of Yria, the legendary birthplace of Dionysos, God of wine, theatre and other good things, where we can trace the development of Greek temple building from its very beginnings to the 6th century BC, from mud and wood to marble, in the very place where stone architecture was invented. If we can, we'll also drop by the 6th century BC Temple at Gyroulas/Sangri, sacred to Demeter and among the earliest marble buildings in Greece. Our next stop is the 1,500-year-old church of the Panagia (Virgin) Drosiani with its unusual and very early frescoes, fascinating in themselves and even more so when we consider the cultural and theological background that produced them. After a village lunch we explore the ancient marble quarries at Flerio, where unfinished 2600-year-old statues lie as if asleep on the ground, accidental witnesses to an essential element of Greek culture and to the central role Naxos played in it – stone sculpture also started here! After returning to our boat, we set out northwards for Rhineia, near the more famous islet of Delos.

- Day 6:** We make a short early morning crossing to Delos. One of the most important archaeological sites in Greece – and the world, as one of UNESCO's World Heritage sites - the islet is nearly entirely covered in unusually well-preserved ancient ruins. Being the mythical birthplace of two Olympian gods, Apollo and his twin sister Artemis, Delos was sacred across Greece, attracting ambitious cities and kings from ever greater distances to make their mark with offerings, especially after Athens made it central to its imperial ambitions in the 5th century BC. Later, the island was favourably taxed by the Romans, bringing great wealth – from some dark trades - and making it a major commercial centre. This has left a grand legacy of shrines and multiple temples to Apollo as well as the streets and homes of the affluent trading city that existed here in the last two centuries BC. We'll visit public buildings like the theatre to admire its rich array of sculpture, but also see the household items on display in the local museum. Delos makes for a long and fascinating visit. In the afternoon, we cross southwards to Paros.
- Day 7:** We devote the whole morning to Parikia, Paros' lovely capital. It's a place with a long history, beautifully laid out from the Neolithic to the Hellenistic and beyond in the town museum, but also woven throughout its fabric, from the charming church of Ekatonapyliani - ultimately stretching back to the earliest days of Christianity as a legal religion in the fourth century – to a fortified Venetian kastro which manages to cheer as much as it overawes. Assembled almost haphazardly from the ancient city's building stones and columns, it gives the impression of being thrown together playfully in some archaeological Jenga of child's building blocks. It leaves a particularly warm impression to talk over during lunch on the gulet before we head seaward again to find some quiet cove on Ios or Sikinos to while away the day and wait for the sunset.
- Day 8:** In the morning we continue southwards to Santorini (or Thera) and enter the enormous caldera, stark witness to a long history of huge volcanic eruptions. Reaching Santorini by boat is a unique experience, both awesome and beautiful, as sheer cliffs of lava and pumice rise from the deep blue waters of the Aegean, with the toy-like clusters of whitewashed houses and blue-domed chapels that mark the famous crater-side villages sitting above like some other-worldly icing. We take the cable-car up to Fira, the island's capital. Here we visit the wonderful Museum of Prehistoric Thera, housing a fascinating array of finds from the Bronze Age settlement of Akrotiri, which we visit tomorrow. The astonishingly lovely painted household pottery from the site, the wealth of imported objects and most of all the famous Akrotiri frescoes - which now have a whole floor to themselves, amply justified by their rich and very mysterious narrative content - combine to throw some light on the affluence of the Bronze Age city, and on its refined and joyful aesthetics. There is ample time to explore the bustling byways and shops of the town, or to relax on one of countless caldera-side terraces before we dine in a well-hidden local taverna serving the typical Santorini specialities and finally return to our gulet.
- Day 9:** We make our way up to Fira a second time to further explore Santorini. Our first and most important stop is Akrotiri itself, the site sometimes described as a 'Bronze Age Pompeii', since it was both destroyed and preserved by the great eruption of the 17th or 16th century BC. There are few archaeological experiences to march this, as we view 3,600-year-old houses built of mudbrick and wood but still standing up to three storeys high, representing only a part of what must have been a much larger town. We'll see what excavation can tell us about the lay-out of the town, how the buildings were lived-in and how some special features give us insights into the beliefs and ceremonies of their long-departed inhabitants. After a tasting session at one of Santorini's finest wineries, where we encounter the Assyrtiko grape special to it, we have another delightful local lunch, and return to our boat.
- Day 10:** We start our day on Santorini's small, rarely visited, and unspoiled neighbour Anafi; perhaps just to have a little walk through its single village, or maybe to visit the post-Byzantine Kalamiotissa monastery, built over an imposing ancient temple of Apollo. We continue to the remote island of Astypalaia. Administratively part of the Dodecanese, historically more closely connected with the Cyclades and geographically far from either, Astypalaia is a place apart, or a place in between. We find a lovely cove to relax and enjoy the soothing waters of the Aegean once again.
- Day 11:** We spend the morning and early afternoon in one or several coves of Astypalaia, devoting our time to the joys of sea and scenery, of swimming and relaxing. In the late afternoon, we ascend the island's superb traditional Chora, another labyrinth of twisting stepped paths, whitewashed houses and countless chapels, a place of supreme serenity and beauty, crowned by the mighty castle of the Venetian Querini family. From the castle there are stunning views across Astypalaia and the surrounding seas and even to distant islands on a clear day.
- Day 12:** Continuing eastwards from early on, we return to the Dodecanese. We usually make our first anchorage off the tiny island of Giali, between Kos and Nisyros. Well-known in prehistoric archaeology as one of only two sources of the natural volcanic glass obsidian in the Aegean, it was first settled in the Neolithic, so that sought-after obsidian could be traded throughout the surrounding islands and adjacent mainland. Today, it has quarries exploiting the island's excellent pumice and perlite, unique materials that result from the area's volcanic history. Our main reason to linger is the pristine surrounding waters, inviting us to indulge in some leisurely swimming. Later, a short crossing takes us to Nisyros, another little-known island, which is a semi-extinct volcano rising above the waves of the Eastern Aegean. We moor at Mandraki, the main settlement, and one of the most attractive in the Dodecanese, our final labyrinth. Stretched out along the coast with a twisting main street, its squares decorated with lovely pebble mosaics in a Dodecanesian tradition, Mandraki is peaceful and atmospheric, picturesque, and steeped in tradition. After a short visit to the Archaeological Museum of Nisyros, with its fascinating collection of finds from the island's ancient cemeteries, you'll have some free time to explore at your own pace. Later, an inland excursion takes us first to the great Classical fortification of Paliokastro, one of the finest examples of Ancient Greek defensive architecture in the region, and then to the caldera, the collapsed crater at the core of the Nisyros volcano. There, we visit the phreatic steam-volcanic crater of Stefanos, a place that is both weird and remarkable, before dining on the caldera rim.

Day 13: We set out for Symi, off to the east. On arrival at St George's Bay we'll stop for lunch and perhaps a swim. Once we continue, we'll eagerly watch on deck as we enter Symi's lovely port town, one of the prettiest sights in the Mediterranean, built on its nineteenth-century affluence derived from sponge-trading and shipbuilding. Striking pastel-coloured homes cascade down the slopes towards the harbour, the many-stepped Kali Strata ('beautiful street') from the upper village thronged with fine neoclassical mansions.

Day 14: Today is given over to our passage to the wide and sparkling bay of Fethiye, through seas of the richest deep blue, past beautifully green and lofty hills and shapely headlands on one of the most celebrated parts of Turkey's wonderful coast. Though you'll already be wishing you had longer – and thinking of all you'll tell friends and family – it's not quite over yet. There's still some more magnificent food, wine and company to be had, and perhaps a last dip in perfect waters.

Day 15: Transfer to Dalaman airport.



GO BACK TO BACK

WALKING WESTERN LYCIA
MAY 12 - MAY 19

CRUISING TO EPHEBUS
SEP 15 - SEP 22

WALKING AND CRUISING THE
CARIAN COAST
SEP 29 - OCT 6

SOMETHING SIMILAR

CRUISING THE LYCIAN SHORE

A TURKISH ODYSSEY

CRUISING THE DODECANESE

EXTEND YOUR STAY

THE HEART OF CLASSICAL ATHENS

ATHENS OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

EXTEND YOUR STAY



Temple of Nike, Athens

ADD-ON TOURS IN GREECE

We have created two tours that offer you the chance to extend your travels immediately before or directly after your cruise or land tour in Greece. If you have never travelled to Athens before, or if you have been multiple times, we have the perfect itinerary for you.

Our award-winning tours explore regions, coastlines and island archipelagos that are often far removed from the bustling and lively capital cities our international travellers fly into. The very names of these cities are redolent of modern culture, ancient history, archaeology, good food, excellent local wine and so much more besides. If you are travelling to Greece for the first time, or if you have been many times before how could you not be tempted to pay even a brief visit to Athens, home of the famous Acropolis, and the city where democracy was born and the dramatic arts invented?

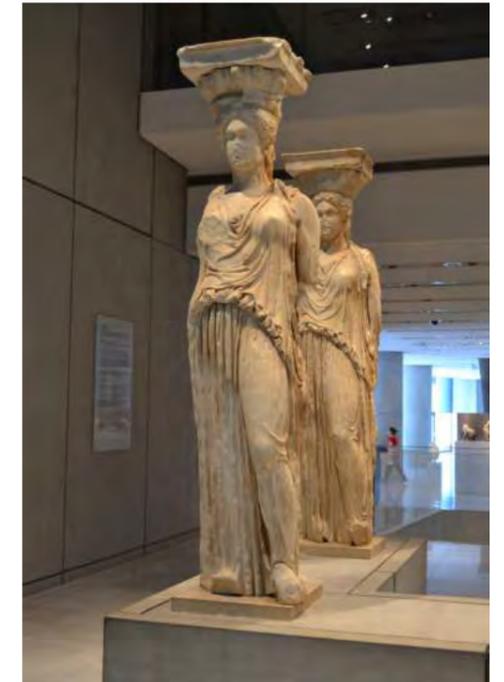
Of course, if you see something that you want to change, or would prefer to include instead, or if you have less or more time in which to travel, please just let us know and we will craft an itinerary just for you.

THE HEART OF CLASSICAL ATHENS

This tour gives you an overview of the most important archaeological sites and exhibits in Athens in just a few days, perfect for a first-time visitor, but also as a 'refresher' for those who have visited before. The focus is on the Classical era, the 5th and 4th centuries BC, when Athens was at the height of her political power, ruling the Aegean and re-inventing herself as a cultural beacon.

The tour includes all major monuments in the city. In the park-like Agora, you discover the economic, political and commercial heart of the city. At the Theatre of Dionysos, you visit the birthplace of an art form, where Sophocles, Aeschylus, Euripides and Aristophanes first produced their masterpieces. Nothing compares to the magnificent Acropolis, our next destination, home to the Parthenon and the Erechtheion, two of the most influential works of world architecture. The magnificent state-of-the-art Acropolis Museum houses the fascinating material excavated on the sacred rock, including a superb exhibit of the Parthenon's much-admired and much-discussed reliefs and statues. At the National Museum, a vast treasure house containing many of the finest works of art ever discovered in Greece, you can marvel at the wonders of Mycenaean Greece, observe the development of Greek sculpture or study the scenes of life, death and myth depicted on Athenian pottery.

All this glory is embedded in a vibrant contemporary city. Modern Athenian urban life is another part of the experience, making this a tour that encompasses five millennia of history. The experience is completed by our selection of restaurants, introducing you to the best of Greek cuisine and the finest samples of Greek wines available in Athens.



ATHENS OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

A tour designed for those who have been to Athens before and are eager for more, but also for newcomers looking for an unconventional and inspirational take on this great city. If you've already visited Athens, you will have seen all or many of the must-see Classical monuments in the centre. But a first-time visit to a great city can rarely do more than scratch the surface: there is always more to see, to experience, to savour, to discover. Less famous sites and museums hold great treasures of beauty and insight; side-streets and back lanes open up new perspectives and vistas; local guides reveal unheard stories and show you their very venues; entirely new and fascinating aspects of the place and its history, ancient and modern, can be explored and enjoyed.

You will enjoy sweeping views from Mount Lycabettus, the striking limestone outcrop next to the centre, taking in all of Athens from ancient monuments to modern sprawl, down to the sea and beyond. You will have time to examine the superb collection of medieval and post-medieval art and artefacts in the eclectic Benaki Museum: stunningly ornate Ottoman-era interiors, wonderful traditional costumes from across Greece, countless further unexpected beauties, all explained and brought to life by our expert guides. You will also have a chance to admire the timeless art on display in the grand Byzantine Museum: venerable icons, dazzling frescoes, a forgotten phase of Greek sculpture. In Piraeus, you will discover unparalleled ancient treasures - including extraordinary bronze statues - in the port city's Archaeological Museum, before exploring the ancient harbour's defences. In Central Athens, our exploration next brings us to the Temple of Olympian Zeus, the largest in the Greek mainland, and absorbs the historic spirit of the Pnyx, where the full assembly of the ancient city's citizenry debated war and peace. We then scale the Hill of Philopappos, crowned by an ancient tomb that offers panoramic views of the Acropolis.



DISCOVER ITALY



MAPS

ITALY



EXPLORING SICILY

“Excellent itinerary; great hotels; wonderful sites to visit; a great group of fellow travellers from all around the world; and, finally, an excellent local guide and outstanding academic leader.”
Stephen White, UK

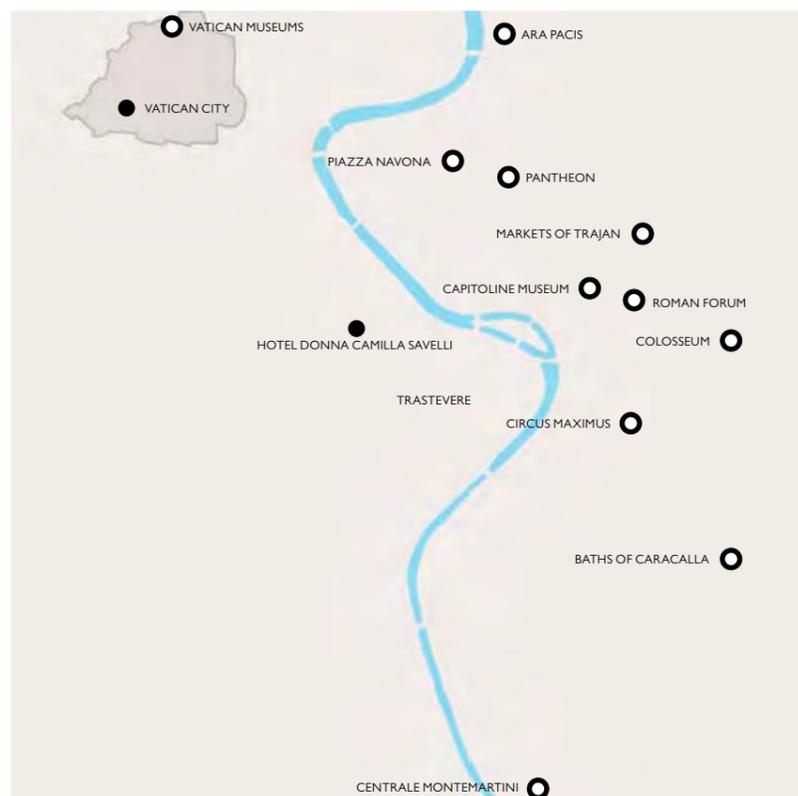
An unforgettable encounter with the island’s long history and culture, where honey-coloured ancient temples lie amid orange groves and almond trees.



A GASTRONOMIC TOUR OF SICILY

“An unforgettable experience leaving me thirsting for more. A wonderfully balanced experience of food, wine, history, walking, and places, all done at an unhurried pace.”
Marcella Steinbauer, SA

Eastern Sicily is home to a wonderfully vibrant culinary tradition thanks to its abundant and delicious local produce and a vast range of cooking styles drawn from the many peoples who graced these shores.



EXPLORING ROME

“I went to Rome with Peter Sommer Travels, not only because they explore its usual ancient ruins, but because they take you to many other surprising sites too. Our accommodations at the Donna Camilla Savelli hotel seemed like a little oasis in the bustling City. Paul Beston seemed to know every stone of ancient Rome. He had an answer to all our questions, which were many. Afterwards a friend and I went to Florence and our comment was: ‘We are missing Paul, he would know the history behind this building! We wished he were there!’ ”
Monica Von Meerheimb, CAN

Consuls, emperors and popes have decided the continent’s destiny from here and the rich heritage of Rome’s history is inscribed in every street and stone, in the very fabric of the city, waiting to be discovered.



Equestrian Statue of Marcus Aurelius, Capitoline Museum

EXPLORING SICILY

APR 16 - APR 29



MAY 7 - MAY 20



TOUR GUIDE APR: PROF. OLIVIER HENRY & ANDREA GIARDINA
TOUR GUIDES MAY: PAUL BESTON & ANDREA GIARDINA
- £5,665 PER PERSON / SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: £850
INCLUDES ALL MEALS EXCEPT 2 LUNCHEES AND 2 DINNERS



The Motya Charioteer

Lying at the heart of the Mediterranean and commanding the narrow sea-lanes that connect east to west and north to south, Sicily attracted merchants, seafarers and settlers from every point of the compass.

The passage of time and a host of invaders have bequeathed a wealth of archaeological sites and monuments to the island. Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Normans, Byzantines and Aragonese have all left their enduring legacy on Sicily in the form of rich and diverse cultural and culinary traditions.

This tour provides an unforgettable encounter with the island's long history and culture. Not only does it take in the wonderfully preserved remains of the Greek, Roman and Phoenician cities that stud its coasts, where honey-coloured ancient temples lie amid orange groves and almond trees, it also explores the baroque towns that hug its steep hills and the great modern metropolis, Palermo. The temple-crowned cities of Selinunte and Agrigento, and the ancient island-city of Motya, now rest in a serene splendour belying their dramatic and turbulent histories. From the heights of Erice, home to Venus, Goddess of love, you will see the majestic sweep of the coast, before travelling east to the vine-clad slopes of Mount Etna. As well as its historical riches, the island is a place of immense natural beauty and diversity. We traverse its many varied landscapes filled with springtime flowers and enjoy a number of pleasant walks to savour the romantic vistas.

Sicily's picturesque and historic towns are a feast for the senses, and there will be plenty of time to explore their piazzas and meandering streets, or sample their increasingly renowned and varied wines before ending your day in atmospheric hotels or grand rural estates set in the heart of the Sicilian countryside. Our tour is complemented by excellent meals in specially chosen restaurants, wineries and local trattoria, highlighting some of Sicily's richest gastronomic traditions.

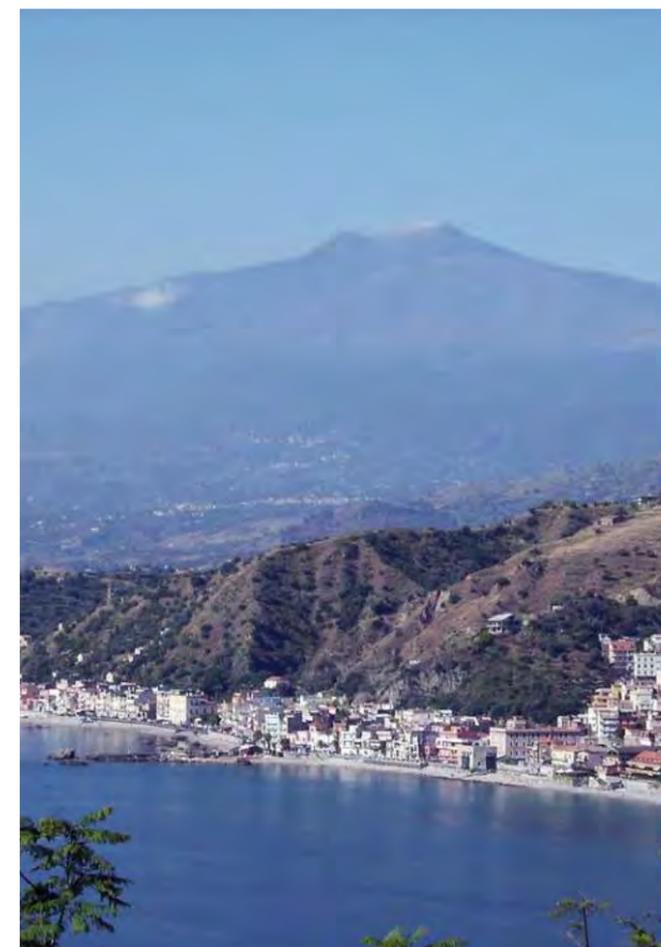
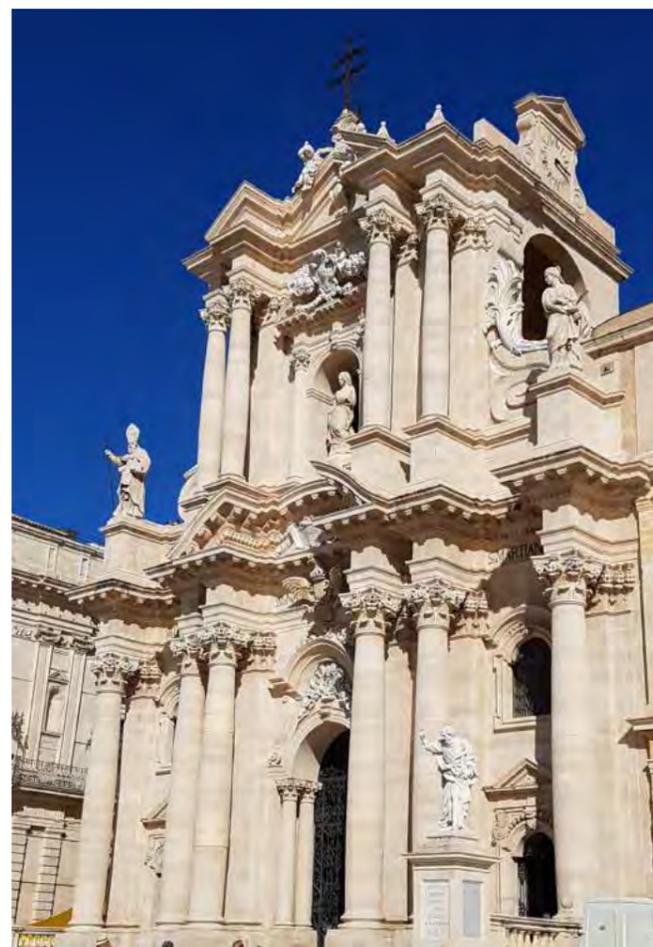
The expert guides who will accompany you on the tour both know Sicily intimately. Their in-depth knowledge and love of the island will be your shortcut to a superb experience of one of Europe's most celebrated destinations.





EXPLORING SICILY

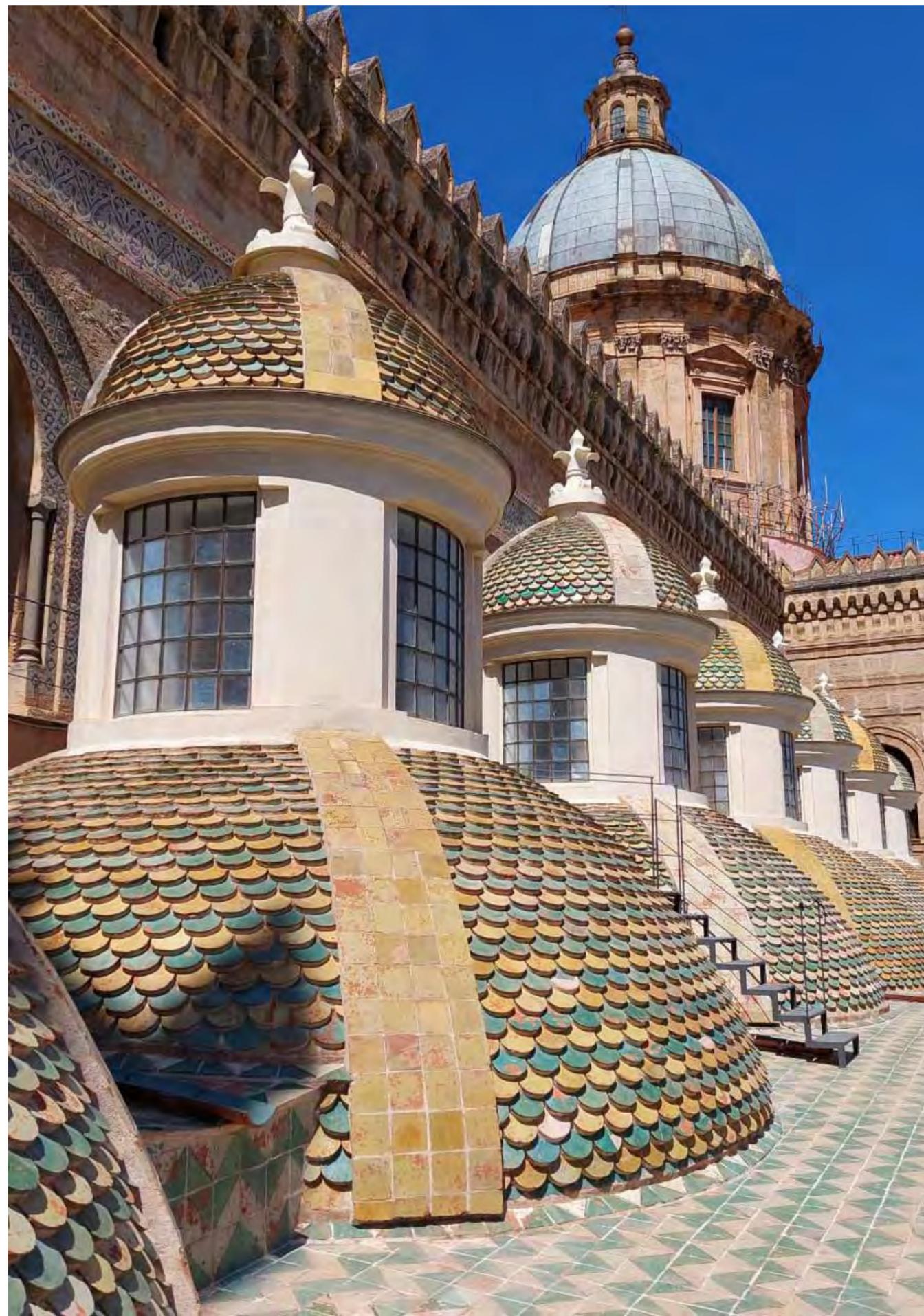
- Day 1:** Transfer from Catania airport approx. 45 minutes away to Siracusa, ancient Syracuse, one of the most important of all ancient Greek cities. The evening begins with a walking tour of Ortigia and welcome dinner.
- Day 2:** A short journey up the beautiful Anapo valley brings us to the World Heritage Site of Pantalica, an enormous late Bronze Age necropolis, with its many tombs honeycombing the rocky hills. After indulging in a traditional Sicilian country lunch near the town of Palazzolo Acreide, we visit the hill-top site of the Greek colony of Akrai before returning to Siracusa. The evening will be free to explore more of the city, sample the local specialities and dine at a restaurant of your choice.
- Day 3:** A day in Siracusa. We begin with the Archaeological Park, planted with gloriously scented lemon groves, which contains some of Syracuse's finest ancient monuments, including a Greek theatre that remains in occasional use today. Syracuse's darker history can be witnessed at first hand in the extensive quarries, excavated by armies of slaves, where we will enter the famed Ear of Dionysius with its unusual acoustics. We then find our way to a different hypogean treasure, making our way beneath the attractively ruined church of St John the Baptist to find atmospheric medieval remains and, deeper still, startling broad subterranean highways flanked by hundreds of niches and tombs where the city's earliest Christians found rest together in the Roman period. After a morning of unforgettable sights, we will enjoy a relaxing lunch before visiting the Paolo Orsi Archaeological Museum.
- Day 4:** A full day of exploration begins with a journey south to the lovely Baroque town of Modica, rising steeply in terraces from the valley floor. Fortified by its unique chocolate, derived from the original Aztec recipe, we carry on to the Greek city of Gela on the south coast, to view its extraordinarily well-preserved city walls and get our first glimpse of the long sandy southern beaches. We finish the day in Palma di Montechiaro.
- Day 5:** A free morning to relax in the superb Agriturismo and enjoy its extensive grounds before heading to the medieval and modern centre of Agrigento to enjoy a sumptuous lunch, stroll through its streets, admire its churches and civic architecture, and pause at the Santo Spirito convent to try some of the nuns' delicious cakes and biscuits.
- Day 6:** The morning is spent exploring the heart of Agrigento, ancient Akragas, a Greek city famed for its wealth and extravagant spending. The collection of Classical temples here is one of the finest to be seen anywhere in the Mediterranean. In the afternoon, we complete our tour of the ancient city and its renowned museum, and enjoy a relaxing dinner in beautiful surroundings.
- Day 7:** A drive along the coast through Montalbano country brings us to the breath-taking ancient site of Selinunte and its famous temples, devastated by the Carthaginians in 409 BC. In the afternoon we take a leisurely walk through the ancient quarry of the Cava di Cusa, where column drums still lie unfinished in an attractive landscape of olive groves and vineyards.
- Day 8:** We continue to Sicily's western coast and take a short boat trip to the island site of Motya, a major Phoenician city destroyed by Dionysius of Syracuse in 398 BC. The extensive remains of the city include the Tophet (a cemetery for children sacrificed to their gods) and, in the on-site museum, the Motya Charioteer, one of the most celebrated Classical Greek sculptures. After Motya, we travel to Marsala to enjoy a sumptuous lunch, and then to ancient Lilybaeum and the Baglio Anselmi Archaeological Museum to view the well-preserved remains of a Carthaginian ship and the beautiful finds from this ancient multi-cultural city, many of which retain their original painted decoration.
- Day 9:** Our first stop is the mediaeval town of Erice where you are free to take lunch at a restaurant of your choice and to take in the sweeping panoramic vistas from its heights. We continue on to the ancient city of Segesta, with its fine Doric temple in a tranquil and beautiful setting, and the stunning views from its beautiful little theatre on the adjacent hillside and finish the day in Palermo.
- Day 10:** We begin the day with a walking tour of central Palermo designed to orientate you in the bustling and lively capital city of the island – quite a change of pace from the quiet tranquility of the last few days! A major highlight is the spectacular Archaeological Museum filled with the very best finds from the sites that you have so recently visited. The afternoon is entirely given over to free time in which you can explore the markets and shops, enjoy some street food, find a restaurant for dinner, see a puppet show or visit some of the city's attractive medieval churches and nineteenth century opera houses. You are free this evening to dine at your leisure.





EXPLORING SICILY

- Day 11:** In the morning we take a short drive to Monreale where we will visit Monreale's 12th Century Cathedral, one of the finest Norman churches, blessed with a beautiful golden cycle of Byzantine-style mosaics. After absorbing the splendid view of Palermo below, we head on to the Greek city of Himera (site of two enormous battles that changed the history of the entire island) and end the day with a relaxing late afternoon at our hotel in the rolling hills at the foot of the Madonie Mountains on the north coast.
- Day 12:** We journey into the interior to visit the lovely archaeological museum of Aidone and have lunch in a renowned local restaurant. In the afternoon we visit the sprawling and opulent Roman villa of Piazza Armerina, with its world-famous mosaics, and then continue on to our final accommodation of the tour in the centre of Catania.
- Day 13:** Having caught many glimpses of Mount Etna in the distance, we finally visit it for a guided hike on the volcano's slopes before refreshing ourselves at a nearby restaurant. Afterwards we visit our final site, the dramatically situated Greek and Roman city of Taormina, perched above a beautiful stretch of coast.
- Day 14:** Transfer to Catania airport, just over 20 minutes drive away.



GO BACK TO BACK
 FROM SPLIT TO DUBROVNIK
 MAY 25 - JUN 1

CRUISING THE CARIAN COAST
 MAY 26 - JUN 2

SOMETHING SIMILAR

EXPLORING THE PELOPONNESE

EXPLORING CRETE

EXPLORING MACEDONIA

EXTEND YOUR STAY

THE HEART OF THE ETERNAL CITY

ROME OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

A GASTRONOMIC TOUR OF SICILY



SEP 21 - SEP 28



TOUR GUIDE: LUCIA IACONO - £3,995 PER PERSON / SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: £395
INCLUDES ALL MEALS EXCEPT 2 DINNERS



Eastern Sicily is home to a vibrant culinary tradition that mixes delicious local produce with cooking styles drawn from its many foreign rulers, from the Byzantines to the Arabs, and from the Normans to the Spanish.

The rolling hills and fertile plains produce seemingly unlimited quantities of fresh fruit, nuts and vegetables, while abundant flocks and herds produce delicious cheeses and meats. These riches are surrounded by plentiful fishing grounds, filling the market stalls with an enormous range of marine delicacies. To complete the picture, Sicily now produces some of the most highly regarded new wines in Europe, the perfect accompaniment to its long-renowned ices, fruit drinks and digestifs. This veritable cornucopia of delights provides all the ingredients for a magnificent voyage of cultural and gastronomic discovery.

The modern cuisine is one of the defining creations of the uniquely diverse past of this great island and its history, culture and archaeology will be fundamental elements of our journey. As we travel through the ever-changing landscapes of Eastern Sicily we will discover how the Bronze Age civilizations left their mark on the rolling hills of Pantalica (one of several UNESCO World Heritage sites we will be visiting on this tour); we will walk through an elegant Roman farmhouse with world-famous mosaics at Piazza Armerina; and we will sample almond granitas in Noto, one of the most beautiful baroque towns in Europe.

Your guide on this tour has lived and worked in this region for many years. She has drawn deeply on her personal knowledge of land and people to bring to you a tour that combines practical cooking experience with highlights of the region's cuisine and visits to key historical and cultural sites.

As this Sicily food tour relies so closely on seasonal produce, the itinerary may change slightly to take advantage of the best culinary delights on offer. We are certain that any food and wine lover will be in raptures over this week-long cultural and gastronomic feast.



A GASTRONOMIC TOUR OF SICILY

- Day 1:** Arrival in Catania. Transfer from the airport to our hotel in Siracusa approximately 45 minutes away. Welcome drinks and dinner as we introduce you to some of the tastes and flavours of Sicily.
- Day 2:** The day begins with a drive to Palazzolo Acreide, where we visit the Archaeological Park. Afterwards we head to a nearby olive farm where the owners are producing award-winning organic extra virgin olive oil from native, centuries-old, olive trees. We tour the farm before enjoying a wonderful lunch of local delicacies. We return to Ortygia in the late afternoon and, after a brief rest, enjoy a Sicilian wine-tasting aperitivo with a local expert Sommelier.
- Day 3:** We meet our culinary expert for a stroll through Ortygia's bustling food market. Under his guidance we sample the local produce in preparation for a private cooking class in his restaurant. In the afternoon we will explore the city's long history and visit the Syracuse Archaeological Park before taking a walking tour of the historic centre as the sun sets. The evening is free to dine at your leisure.
- Day 4:** The day begins with a tour of the beautiful baroque town of Noto and a granita tasting. Later we head to an artisanal Dairy Farm where we take an exclusive tour before experiencing a rustic Sicilian lunch. In the afternoon we head for Ragusa, check in to our hotel and take an early-evening stroll around the historic centre of Ragusa Ibla before dinner.
- Day 5:** A day to delight the senses begins with a walking tour of the historical centre of Scicli, and a visit to a beautiful herb farm for an aromatic tour that will inspire cooks and gardeners alike. The visit will conclude with a tasting lunch, on a terrace overlooking the beautiful southern coast. In the afternoon we visit Modica for a demonstration of traditional Modicano chocolate making. In the late afternoon we return to Ragusa and the evening is free for you to dine at leisure.
- Day 6:** We journey to Vizzini to visit and tour a fabulous biodiversity farm before meeting up with our expert chef and rolling up our sleeves for a pasta-making class followed by a splendid lunch. We then continue on to Mt Etna to check into our final hotel and, after some time to relax, enjoy a wine tasting and dinner.
- Day 7:** We spend the morning walking on Mt. Etna in the company of an expert volcanologist. We'll stroll through verdant woods of pine and silver birch before ascending to a lunar landscape of lava flows and ash filled craters with incredible views all around. Afterwards we visit a local winery to enjoy a rustic lunch and sample the award-winning wines that thrive on Etna's slopes in the company of an expert Sommelier. A last chance to relax, then a sumptuous farewell dinner.
- Day 8:** Transfer to Catania airport, just over an hour's drive away.



GO BACK TO BACK

GASTRONOMIC CRUISE IN CROATIA
SEP 28 - OCT 5

CRUISING WESTERN LYCIA
SEP 28 - OCT 5

WALKING & CRUISING
THE CARIAN COAST
SEP 29 - OCT 6

SOMETHING SIMILAR

GASTRONOMIC CRUISE IN TURKEY

GASTRONOMIC CRUISE IN CROATIA

A TURKISH ODYSSEY

EXTEND YOUR STAY

THE HEART OF THE ETERNAL CITY

ROME OFF THE BEATEN TRACK



EXPLORING ROME



NOV 3 - NOV 10



TOUR GUIDES: PAUL BESTON & VALERIA LENUZZA - £3,995 PER PERSON / SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: £795
INCLUDES ALL MEALS EXCEPT 2 DINNERS



It's impossible to describe a Rome tour without a sense of amazement and pleasure. First of all it comes from the immense historical significance of the place. Here, consuls, emperors and popes decided a continent's destiny. Here you stand where every street has meaning, where something pivotal happened in every square. Walking for just moments will take you from the scant archaeological traces of the first settlement and places linked to the legendary founders, to sweeping views crammed with the mighty remains of the greatest power of antiquity. At the height of its empire Rome was a super-city controlling the lands from Scotland in the north to the Sahara in the south, and from Portugal in the west to Armenia in the east, the only time this vast territory was ever ruled by a single power. Everywhere you look bears that imprint and leaves you stunned.

Our tour puts you where names seared into our collective memories literally stood and made history: the Scipios, Pompey and Cicero, Caesar and Antony. We walk through the works of Augustus, Claudius, Trajan and Hadrian, of Constantine and Nero, places bound up with the lives of St Paul, Livia, the Borgias, Colonna and Medici, Raphael, Michelangelo ... the sheer range of makers of history, art and culture whose traces we follow is staggering. Is there any place with a more breath-taking roll call of associations?

Amazement also comes from the surpassing beauty everywhere one turns, and from buildings that impress by sheer scale and engineering brilliance or from their almost unfathomable artistry. Each corner turned, every new view brings a colossal wealth of outstanding sights, from the familiar to hidden surprises. They make for a city of amazingly rich complexity; one that's very easy to see and be awed by, but one where it's easy to miss so much that is fulfilling. Our tour helps you untangle the densely woven layers of the city's remains – you won't just see Rome with us, you'll come away knowing it. It's the most profound and worthwhile way to see the city.

We take you to the greatest and most famous sites and tease out their full story and meaning, but go beyond the basic script of other tours to tell you the full, rich history of every location. To bring out hidden details in the life of the place, and hidden nooks and objects in even the most famous spots and museums to make for a far more satisfying encounter than you might otherwise settle for. And we take you to places that, while less well-known and free of crowds are every bit as impressive and memorable as what's to be found on itineraries less passionate about this city's wonders.

(And we go beyond, too: one of the highlights for many people is our journey down to the unbelievable expanse of Rome's great port, Ostia, where whole ancient streetscapes are preserved, filled with ancient eateries still with traces of their wall-paint, and of houseblocks where you can follow the traces of Roman families up flights of stairs as far as second floors and gaze out over whole ancient neighbourhoods in stupendous states of preservation.)

One of the great pleasures of leading this tour is hearing the gasp as people arrive at our hotel and get their first glimpse of its spectacular seventeenth century façade. Even our residence is the work of a master – the distinctive genius of Borromini, baroque in style but singular and wonderful in appearance and an absolute pleasure to call home during our stay. We're in Rome's most atmospheric district, Trastevere, wrapped in high-walled seclusion if we wish, but with a vivid and rejuvenating culture of restaurants and bars in easily and companionable reach. One of the city's most famous churches, the city walls and a lovely view from the banks of the Tiber lie at the end of the shortest of walks. There's no better home-base from which to build memories, there's no way to do it more rewardingly and comprehensively than by Exploring Rome with us.



The Colosseum



EXPLORING ROME

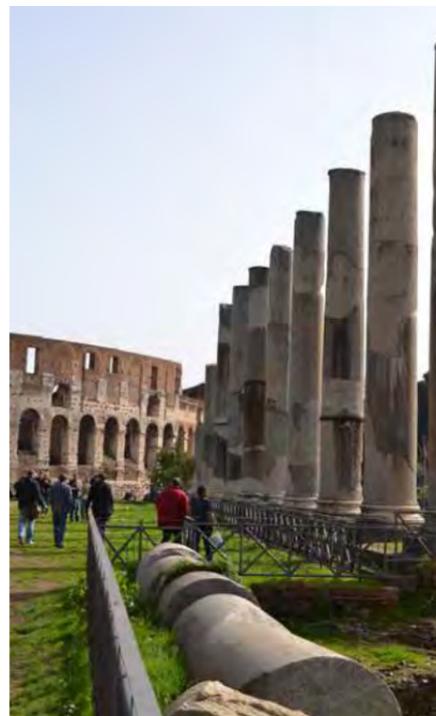
Day 1: Transfer from the airport. Rome Fiumicino is about 30 minutes away. Our hotel, the Donna Camilla Savelli, once part of the convent of Santa Maria dei Sette Dolori is an early highlight: a beautiful baroque work with a distinctive brick façade, set in a walled enclosure in Rome's wonderful Trastevere district. An area set back a little from the city's bustle, but where Rome's most pleasant evening atmosphere can be experienced a stone's throw away, if you want it; and all very conveniently close to the Tiber within easy reach of the city's most historic streets.

Day 2: In a city as filled as Rome is with history and wonderful monuments of unsurpassable beauty, no slow build-up is necessary. We begin with a magnificent overture, a banquet for the senses, a full-scale assault of vistas and buildings, associations and stories. The ancient Romans intended exactly this effect – to stun the onlooker with Rome's eternal majesty. We join generations of previous pilgrims in falling under the city's spell, and so we begin with Rome's ancient heart, the Forum Romanum (the 'Roman Forum' proper). It's a surprisingly small space hemmed in by the great rocks of the Capitoline and Palatine hills, a natural arena where the greatest names of Roman history fought for power and prestige. Amidst an extraordinary concentration of famed and marvellous buildings jostling for space, with little to disentangle their history for the unaided traveller, we introduce the city, civilisation and empire of Rome amid stunning surroundings. Overshadowed by the might of the Temple of Venus and Rome, the House of the Vestals, the Arch of Titus and the awesome columns of the Temple of Antoninus and Faustina, we bring the city's story to life, making sure to bring out the hidden and less-well-known sites and stories the average visitor, and the average tour, miss. And with every step you have to remind yourself that you walk where Antony spoke over Caesar's body, where Cicero delivered stinging orations, and the legions processed in triumph. You're in Rome!

We pass on to the newly-accessible imperial forums, vast works from the peak of the empire's power where some of the most lavish buildings and artworks of the emperors displayed their might, culture, and their care for the populace. It all makes for an absolutely extraordinary and unforgettable morning.

After lunch, we continue with the marvels by visiting the Flavian Amphitheatre, the Colosseum so intertwined with the fate and image of Rome. We trace the well-worn footsteps of the Romans and rise out as they did to see the lofty tiers soaring over the central ellipse, where gladiators – and emperors – sought the crowd's roaring approval. And with this, the day is still not done. We finish with one of Rome's finest imperial monuments, which fittingly seals the day by marking a turning point in its history. The Arch of Constantine, the first Christian emperor, covered with reliefs representing his victory, and others taken from earlier monuments of past glories.

A day where you've seen more than you might in a week. And yet this is just the beginning of your tour.



Day 3: We're called back to the fringes of yesterday's marvels to visit the transformational works of the emperor Trajan. We begin with his famous column, wrapped in fine spiralling sculpture depicting his conquests on the Danube, which any reader of Roman history will recognise as the go-to images of Roman power for legions of publishers. We then visit what the spoils of empire funded: one of the best of Rome's ancient sites, but one that is surprisingly little known, or noted, by most modern visitors. Their loss, but you won't miss out. In this, the magnificent Markets of Trajan, we walk down complete Roman streets miraculously preserved, and into a giant ancient hall left almost intact amid all that has happened over nearly two millennia since it was built. We walk past Roman shops and offices on the original street surface with fine views over the imperial forums and the Capitoline Hill, and see some of the amazing finds and artworks that once adorned the area.

The rest of the day is given over to the first Emperor, Augustus. We stand in the presence of perhaps the most delicately beautiful and famous decoration the city offers, the altar known as the Ara Pacis. Sculpted on every surface with reliefs by the finest craftsmen of the Augustan age, it's set in a fantastic modern museum which sets it off perfectly. We complete the Augustan story by viewing his huge, newly-restored mausoleum. Our intent is to go inside, but if the current temporary closure is still in place, we'll complete our day with a visit to the magnificent Piazza Navona, with its stupendous fountains with intertwining statuary, masterpieces of the baroque, and something of an ancient secret in its story. Fortunately, in Rome, even the back-ups would be first tier draws elsewhere!

Day 4: Our morning begins at the foot of the Campidoglio, where the outlandish genius of the Vittoriano monument towers above us, perhaps the most famous symbol of the modern capital. We view it and the ancient remains at its base before ascending.

But ascending to what, and on what? Our target is among the world's greatest and oldest collections, the Capitoline Museums. Here since the fifteenth century, it stands on the potent history of the Capitoline Hill, where some of the city's finest monuments, some incorporated into the structure, stood, and where some of Rome's earliest foundational stories took place. And we get there via stairs that are themselves the work of Michelangelo, like much of the museum complex. Once again, Rome impresses with how ever-present the marvellous is. Inside, we have a cornucopia of famed works to see. It's hard to pick out even a few, but shall we just mention the Dying Gaul, the equestrian Marcus Aurelius, the colossal head of Constantine and Commodus' bust, wreathed in Hercules' lionskin? And then there's perhaps the finest view of the Forum....

After a lunch no doubt filled with talk about what we've seen, we turn to an equally splendid afternoon. A short walk takes us to the Sacred Area of the Largo Argentina – another of Rome's newly-opened archaeological spots. We see some of the city's most venerable temples and hear some of the site's secrets before moving on.

And we move on to, there's no other way to put it, the most wonderful building in existence: Hadrian's Pantheon. Words are almost pointless here: you'll know what we mean when you're standing there on its glossy marble floor, unable to prevent yourself looking up to the height of its extraordinary dome and the oculus open to the sky, mouth open and your entire body about to rotate in obedience with the building's unspoken command, as you think: "I'm never going to forget this."

Since we have to leave the Pantheon at some point, the rest of our day takes us through the city's famed and elegant Campus Martius district, centrepiece for imperial monuments and refined Renaissance palaces. Our short walking tour takes in the colossal Hadrianeum and brings us to the Column of Marcus, a companion and contrast to that of Trajan, marking harder times for Rome, and concealing from all but the most-aware visitor, one of Rome's nicest depictions of divine intervention. We'll help you find it.





EXPLORING ROME

Day 5: We take a day outside the City to see what enabled such a colossus to function at the height of empire. Driving down to the coast, we come to the huge archaeological site that is Ostia Antica, the ancient port of Rome. Once again, it's difficult to do full justice to the place. Here we have a vast ancient city, street after street stretching into the distance, with structural preservation on a level to match Pompeii. We pass through the ancient necropolis into a complete Roman cityscape, taking in the city's fast-food bars, its fantastically-preserved Mithraic temples, and even the barracks of its firefighters, all rising well above our heads. We pass through baths and past the huge capitol, we walk up to the first and second floors of apartment buildings and stand awestruck at the business complex of its main piazza, where the offices are all decorated with mosaics of elephants and ships, dolphins and stevedores that are simply heart-warmingly charming and unforgettable.

On our return to the city, there are some wonderfully pretty monuments of the Roman republic to view near the Forum Boarium, a connection to a famous movie, and then it's back to our nearby hotel.

Day 6: Rome's store of spectacular ancient structures is by no means exhausted, as we prove with a visit to the gargantuan imperial entertainment complex, the Baths of Caracalla. Feeling almost too huge to be ancient, this sprawling masterpiece in red brick bears traces of what was once almost outrageously extravagant decoration in marble with wonderful mosaic floors - black-and-white and polychrome - everywhere, niches for some of the greatest statuary in Rome in every towering wall and huge pools for the citizenry to bathe in the emperor's care. And, if you know where to look, signs of how the patrons idled away their time.

We journey a little further away from the centre, through the mighty walls of Aurelian to just outside the ancient city. Here, we head underground to the oldest and most famous of the city's catacombs, with endless galleries bearing the small recesses of early Christian graves before we end with superb built and painted 'pagan' tombs, and a place of surpassing importance to early Christians.

On our return within the walls, we finish the day with a lesser-known gem of Roman museums, the Centrale Montemartini. This is a wonderful collection of some absolutely outstanding pieces, some connected to places we've already visited, some magnificently new to us - in an outlandish context that should not work, but triumphantly succeeds. A perfect end to a great day.

Day 7: Our final day, and we turn - in part - from imperial Rome to Papal Rome. We feast on the wondrous collections of the Vatican Museums, a mesmerising array of some of the most famous wonders from Antiquity, and a few more recent masterpieces that you just may have heard of. Gallery after gallery brings yet more astounding works - the Laocoon, imperial sarcophagi in rich-hued porphyry, colossal statues of gods, emperors and empresses, the Apollo Belvedere and the inspirational Belvedere torso, all in spaces - the Raphael Rooms! - that are themselves frescoed masterworks of the greatest artists and architects. We arrive at the sublime Sistine Chapel, the culmination of an unforgettable display.

Once more, the day is far from over. We depart the museums via St Peter's itself and marvel at Michelangelo's Pietà and Bernini's sumptuous baldacchino, not to mention the perfection of the façade and square outside before heading for our final lunch together.

In the afternoon, we bid the city farewell in a perfect spot, the Castel Sant'Angelo. Originally the tomb of Hadrian, later a Papal fortress, prison and residence, it perfectly summarises our visit and provides the most atmospheric envoi imaginable.

Day 8: Transfers away from Rome, pending our inevitable returns.

SOMETHING SIMILAR

EXPLORING THE PELOPONNESE

EXPLORING CRETE

EXPLORING MACEDONIA

EXTEND YOUR STAY

THE HEART OF THE ETERNAL CITY

ROME OFF THE BEATEN TRACK



EXTEND YOUR STAY



ADD-ON TOURS IN ITALY

We have created two tours that offer you the chance to extend your travels before or after your land tour in Italy. Whether you have never travelled to Rome before, or if you have been multiple times, we have the perfect itinerary for you. Of course, if you see something that you want to change, or would prefer to include instead, or if you have less or more time in which to travel, please just let us know and we will craft an itinerary just for you.

THE HEART OF THE ETERNAL CITY

Rome has been the pivot of so many of the world's great historical events, the node of so much culture that it's easy to find approaching it quite daunting. Where do you begin? What are the key places to visit to make the most of your time without being rushed? How can a new visitor avoid missing some hidden gem when hurrying along the well-trodden tourist paths? How, in short, can you take in the magnificence of the eternal city at the right pace, without having to think of where to get the right food and wine? That's what this tour will give you. We have designed it for those new to the city, who want a strong cultural and historical introduction to the city in a shorter space of time than our normal tours, while maintaining the same reliable level of expertise and the full aesthetic and sensory experience you'd expect. If you've been before but want to gain a deeper appreciation of the city's most iconic monuments and most telling back stories that comes with our expert guides, this tour is also for you.

Visiting the Roman Forum, we'll carry you from the earliest days of Rome and the foundation of the Republic, through its violent death-throes and the rise of the Empire and the end of the ancient world. You'll see the great and lavish monuments of the emperors, built to their own glory or for the entertainment of their people, whose remains inspired the centuries after the empire fell. The exquisite Pantheon and the majestic Colosseum filled them with awe, as they will you. The later ages of Rome's history won't be neglected – you'll see the refined churches of the early medieval period and the wondrous architecture and painted chapels of the Rome of Michelangelo, as well as the intricately carved fountains and pious ecclesiastical sculpture of the Renaissance and Baroque city. A city with so much to offer should be appreciated, not rushed.



ROME OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

For those who have seen Rome before and want to go beyond the main sites, or see some of what's new, we offer the perfect way to extend your stay in Italy. This exhilarating tour allows you to encounter some of Rome's great archaeological sites away from the main routes, brings you some of her finest and most impressive museums, and takes you to areas even at the centre that have been newly excavated or extended. Here, with our usual carefully chosen fine dining and great wines, with expert guides by your side, is the best way to make sure that your next visit to Rome isn't the same as your last. You'll encounter the vast edifices of the Roman emperors, even the streets of the ancient city. You'll see some of the greatest collections of ancient art and architecture, from some of the largest and most breathtaking Roman mosaics and reliefs beset with a myriad of figures, to some of the finest celebrated bronze sculpture in the world set amidst unforgettable and surprising backdrops.

The glories of medieval, Renaissance and early modern Rome are a rich part of our story, and you'll find plenty of places to immerse yourself in their unsurpassed brilliance. After seeing the sumptuously rich collection of the Villa Borghese in its beautiful parkland and the opulent and towering church of St John Lateran, you'll see why papal Rome breathed authority and power both politically and artistically and drew pilgrims from around the world. At the serene Protestant Cemetery, you'll find where some of the more famed of them found rest, nestling incongruously under an ancient Roman pyramid, contrasting the calm atmosphere of this pretty space with the touching subterranean memorials of the early Christian catacombs. From beneath the city to the heights of its great towers and domes, accompanied by authoritative admirers of this fantastic place, there's no more rewarding and enjoyable way to expand your acquaintance with Eternal Rome.



DISCOVER TURKEY



MAPS

TURKEY



WALKING AND CRUISING:

WESTERN LYCIA

"An excellent and well organised trip, that, uniquely, catered for all tastes - walking, cruising, touring, architecture and history - in a happy and inclusive atmosphere. One felt as if one had been invited to cruise on their private yacht by old friends who were determined to cater for your every whim!"

Memo & Maria Spathis, UK

There is no better way to enjoy the superb landscapes and fascinating history of this area than to do so on foot.



CRUISING THE LYCIAN SHORE

"The perfect combination of relaxation and learning. We swam off the boat, visited ancient sites and enjoyed some very good food. We had never been on any other type of organised tour before our first trip with Peter Sommer Travels in 2013. We have now done seven and are already thinking about where to go next year. That probably says more than any review we could give."

Simon Tompsett & Alison Ledgerwood, UK

This tour explores the virtually undeveloped shore of ancient Lycia, on Turkey's breathtaking turquoise coast.



CRUISING TO EPHEBUS

"The cruise was all we hoped it would be - with visits to archaeological sites that would have been difficult for us to see any other way. And all in the excellent company of a small group of like-minded fellow passengers from around the world. It was an enriching experience that we will not forget..."

Stephen & Joan Weighell, UK

Beginning in Bodrum, ancient Halicarnassus and following the shores of the ancient regions of Caria and Ionia, this cruise makes for an ideal introduction to the glories of Turkey's archaeological heritage.



A GASTRONOMIC GULET CRUISE

"Serdar shared his epicurean and archaeological expertise with us. He was a fountain of knowledge and a considerate and valuable leader. It was a pleasure to spend a memorable week with him on the Turquoise Coast! Thank you so much."

Don & Kathy Mercereau, CAN

This is a journey to treat your taste buds, a voyage of discovery through Turkish Mediterranean cuisine.

CRUISING THE CARIAN COAST

"We had been recommended to take this trip and it is one of the more memorable in our extensive travels. The food, scenery, our tour leader and guide plus the company of our fellow guests made it a wonderful week. The visits to the sites each day were a highlight made even better with a swim before and on returning to the gulet."

Carole Ferrier & Jim Harvey, AUS

Enjoy magnificent scenery, clear blue waters and landscapes of unforgettable beauty. A perfect combination of cultural experience and quality time.



A TURKISH ODYSSEY

"This trip will stay with us forever. A wonderful combination of cruising and visits to historic sites with an expert guide who communicated so well made it quite magical. The cook on board produced a vast spread at every meal and the crew were professional and friendly. Would we go on another voyage of discovery with Peter Sommer Travel? YES!."

Ian & Alison Robertson, AUS

A tour for those who want to get to know the history, culture and unforgettable food of Turkey rather than just go there.



MAPS

TURKEY



WALKING AND CRUISING:

THE CARIAN COAST

“The combination of cruising, walking through fascinating archaeological sites, meeting friendly Turkish villagers, swimming in warm clear waters and being fed delicious healthy Turkish food in good company - is just a winner!”
Suzie Allman, AUS

A fantastic walking and hiking tour that combines a cruise along this beautiful and undeveloped coast with walks along the Carian Trail, one of Turkey’s most spectacular footpaths.



WALKING AND CRUISING:

THE LYCIAN SHORE

“Peter and Cem make you discover and love Turkey: its culture, its hidden treasures, and its people. Truly, it is a unique, unforgettable, magical experience.”
Sophie Lasserre, FRA

Exploring on foot offers a uniquely profound and enjoyable engagement with this strikingly beautiful landscape and its history.



CRUISING WESTERN LYCIA

“From start to finish this was a fabulous experience- the scenery was breathtaking, the intellectual stimulation and greater appreciation for Turkey’s history was exciting and the food-oh how we looked forward to each meal! The pace was perfect.”
Barbara Fouhy, USA

Explore a magnificent stretch of coastline behind which developed an extraordinary culture and a fiercely independent people – the Lycians.



WALKING AND CRUISING: WESTERN LYCIA



MAY 12- MAY 19



OCT 6 - OCT 13



TOUR GUIDE MAY: PETER SOMMER - £2,895 PER PERSON / SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: £875

TOUR GUIDE OCT: DR. RICHARD BAYLISS - £2,925 PER PERSON / SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: £895



INTENSIVE

This is a dream trip for walkers and sailors alike, with fabulous swims and stunning archaeology thrown in for good measure.

The Lycian Way, rated by The Sunday Times (UK) as one of the ten best walks in the world, follows over 300 miles of ancient roadways, mule tracks and shepherds' paths along one of Turkey's most remote and untouched coastlines.

On this week-long cruise, we follow a selection of its finest sections, each remarkable for its beauty and interest. On average, we hike about 5-6 miles (8-10km) per day. Our floating home is an elegant hand-built gulet, moving us along the shore and treating us to perfect relaxation and delightful meals each day.

Like the explorers of old, you will have unique access to the ancient sites within their natural settings. The tour includes samples of Lycia's most celebrated cultural and archaeological 'must-sees', such as Kayaköy/Levissa, an incredibly atmospheric ghost town abandoned by its Greek inhabitants after the First World War, Simena, an age-old citadel surrounded by a jumble of Lycian sarcophagi and vastly monumental Patara, capital of Roman Lycia.

Hiking on ancient and historic roads and footpaths, following the course of a 2,000-year-old aqueduct and hearing the tales of those who strolled here before us, from Greeks and Romans to modern shepherds, witnessing the breathtaking wealth of scenery from azure shores via fertile and cultivated valleys to craggy mountains, makes for an immensely memorable experience. The combination of exhilarating hikes, expert-guided site visits, wonderful swims and mellow moments of sheer relaxation, plus of course the gulet's superb cooking, will make this trip refreshing and relaxing, a tour like no other.



WALKING AND CRUISING: WESTERN LYCIA

- Day 1:** Our gulet is about 30 minutes from Dalaman airport at Göcek, a pretty harbour beneath mountains at the head of the Bay of Fethiye, on Turkey's Mediterranean coast. Welcome dinner aboard.
- Day 2:** We set out eastwards. Our first hike is from Faralya to Kabak through beautiful woodland and with wondrous views out across the mountains of Lycia to the sea.
- Day 3:** We drive inland to the impressive ancient ruins of Sidyma, a 2,500 year old Lycian city that surrounds a modern farming village. We hike down from the ancient site, enjoy a delicious picnic, then back to our gulet for a swim.
- Day 4:** We cruise by Kekova Island, then walk through the pretty village of Üçağız and its ancient Lycian burial grounds to the Ottoman castle at Kale. One of the most romantic stops of the holiday.
- Day 5:** A wondrous hike retracing the route of the Roman aqueduct to the grandiose ruins of ancient Patara. A sunset dip offers a refreshing finale. Overnight in the pretty harbour at Kalkan.
- Day 6:** A glorious trek from Ovacık across the shoulder of Babadağ (Father Mountain) to Faralya. Breath-taking vistas all day long culminating with a view from on high down into Butterfly Valley.
- Day 7:** West to explore the ghost town of Levissi/Kaya, abandoned by its Greek inhabitants in 1923. Hike back to the gulet near Gemiler Island, an area perfect for swimming, before cruising to the harbour of Fethiye.
- Day 8:** Transfer from our gulet to Dalaman airport, about 60 minutes away



GO BACK TO BACK

A GASTRONOMIC CRUISE IN TURKEY
MAY 19- MAY 24

WALKING AND CRUISING THE
CARIAN COAST
SEP 29 - OCT 6

SOMETHING SIMILAR

WALKING AND CRUISING THE
CARIAN COAST

WALKING AND CRUISING THE LYCIAN
SHORE

EXTEND YOUR STAY

If you would like to spend some extra time in Turkey we are happy to recommend our local agency there. Please do say hello from us.

Travel Atelier
Tel: +90 384 341 6520
www.travelatelier.com
info@travelatelier.com

A GASTRONOMIC GULET CRUISE

MAY 19- MAY 26
BODRUM TO GÖCEK



SEP 22 - SEP 29
GÖCEK TO BODRUM



MAY - TOUR GUIDE: SERDAR AKERDEM - £2,895 PER PERSON / SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: £875
SEP - TOUR GUIDE: SERDAR AKERDEM - £2,925 PER PERSON / SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: £895



So many of our guests have raved about the food served on our gulet cruises in Turkey and asked for recipes, that we decided to create a trip with an even more gastronomic flavour.

Not only will you enjoy all the usual dishes served up by the on-board cook, on this trip you will see demonstrations in small traditional restaurants and get involved in the cooking, conjuring up some of the excellent Turkish dishes you'll eat. You'll cook with local Turkish people and prepare regional delicacies.

This is a journey to treat your taste buds, a voyage of discovery through Turkish Mediterranean cuisine. But you won't miss out on the history. Your expert guide, Serdar, is an archaeologist who has been excavating in Turkey for many years. He also happens to be a foodie, a man with a great passion for Turkish cuisine. He will lead you on a culinary and cultural adventure through one of the least developed and most stunning areas of natural beauty in Turkey.

You'll explore some of Turkey's most impressive ancient sites, including monumental wonders like Kaunos (where Serdar has been excavating for more than 30 years) with its exquisite rock-cut temple tombs, and beautifully preserved Knidos, a stunning marbled city arranged around a double harbour. You'll also enjoy some wonderful walks in magnificent scenery and visit ancient towns like Lydae, set in remote and beautiful locations, which remain as yet completely unexcavated.



Sanctuary of Dionysos, Knidos



A GASTRONOMIC GULET CRUISE

BODRUM TO GÖCEK - MAY 19 TO MAY 26

Day 1: Our boat is about 40 minutes from Bodrum airport in the harbour.

Day 2: We cruise east along the Carian coast, with stops to swim and relax, before a demonstration of a special local dish in a small family run restaurant. Our very first local feast!

Day 3: We head south trying some Turkish recipes which we'll later have the chance to savour. In the afternoon we reach the spectacular Greek and Roman city of Knidos, on the tip of a long and sinewy peninsula to the south of Bodrum. With a double harbour offering shelter to ships plying north and south, Knidos made its mark on Greek history and grew rich from its stunning natural position, and we'll see the results in the grand and ordered city rising in tier upon opulent tier. Like many a classical predecessor, we'll anchor in the eastern harbour, the heart of the ancient city rising above us. Decades of excavation have freed a beautifully planned city from the soil, allowing us to wander through its streets and along terraces festooned with temples to be met with a magnificent view across the Aegean.

Day 4: East along the Datça peninsula to the main county town, Datça. We head inland to visit a small local winery producing a range of lovely wines from vines which thrive in the region. Wine production has been at the heart of the local economy for well over 2,000 years. Knidos, the ancient city we visited yesterday, produced huge quantities of wine from vineyards stretching throughout the peninsula, transported in locally made amphorae all over the Mediterranean. We'll savour a variety of wines in a delightful setting and then head into town to have lunch at a traditional lokanta, where you'll sample a number of classic Turkish dishes. You then have some free time to wander in town before we cruise on for another wonderful swimming opportunity

Day 5: We skirt the Greek island of Symi, travelling south-east preparing some classic local dishes as we go. We drop anchor below the magnificent walls of the fortress at Loryma. Rhodes, the great island sometimes visible off to the south-east, made sustained efforts to control this whole coast, and the catapults once positioned in Loryma's squat towers provided a powerful means to dominate the fine bay below, then noted for its strategic value, now peaceful enough to provide a glorious spot for a swim. A short walk allows us to explore the spectacular site before dinner when we have the chance to try delicious bread freshly baked in a traditional oven.

Day 6: We take to a flat-bottomed river boat and make our way up the reed-walled Dalyan River to a small hamlet where we cook and eat with one of the village ladies who prepares food each summer for the archaeological team that works here. We then continue to the ancient city of Kaunos, spread between two great rocky outcrops, some set with tombs cut into the rock. A theatre and opulent public buildings, a late antique church and a castle high above them all strain to gaze ever more steeply over an ancient harbour doomed by silting to pass from busy activity to sit green and silent in testimony to the city's passing.

Day 7: We cruise east and drop anchor in the beautiful inlet of Ağılmanı and make our ascent by an ancient track. A slow and steady pace is all that is needed to crest the ridge and see monumental tombs standing nearly complete overlooking the Mediterranean Sea below. We've arrived at the isolated ancient settlement of Lydae, its ruins a diffusion of sculpture and inscriptions in the bowl of a valley silent but for the occasional tinkle of goat bells. We break bread and have wild sage tea with a local goatherd and see the traditional olive press where he and his family produce the most delicious olive oil. A last chance to swim then on to Göcek, a pretty harbour on the Bay of Fethiye for our final farewell dinner.

Day 8: Transfer to Dalaman airport about 30 minutes away.



A GASTRONOMIC GULET CRUISE

GÖCEK TO BODRUM - SEP 22 TO SEP 29

- Day 1:** Our boat is about 30 minutes from Dalaman airport at Göçek, a pretty harbour on the Bay of Fethiye. Welcome dinner on board.
- Day 2:** We cruise and drop anchor in the beautiful inlet of Ağılımanı and make our ascent by an ancient track. A slow and steady pace is all that is needed to crest the ridge and see monumental tombs standing nearly complete overlooking the Mediterranean Sea below. We've arrived at the isolated ancient settlement of Lydae, its ruins a diffusion of sculpture and inscriptions in the bowl of a valley silent but for the occasional tinkle of goat bells. We break bread and have wild sage tea with a local goatherd and see the traditional olive press where he and his family produce the most delicious olive oil.
- Day 3:** We take to a flat-bottomed river boat and make our way up the reed-walled Dalyan River to a small hamlet where we cook and eat with one of the village ladies who prepares food each summer for the archaeological team that works here. We then continue to the ancient city of Kaunos, spread between two great rocky outcrops, some set with tombs cut into the rock. A theatre and opulent public buildings, a late antique church and a castle high above them all strain to gaze ever more steeply over an ancient harbour doomed by silting to pass from busy activity to sit green and silent in testimony to the city's passing.
- Day 4:** We skirt the Greek island of Symi, travelling south-east preparing some classic local dishes as we go. We drop anchor below the magnificent walls of the fortress at Loryma. Rhodes, the great island sometimes visible off to the south-east, made sustained efforts to control this whole coast, and the catapults once positioned in Loryma's squat towers provided a powerful means to dominate the fine bay below, then noted for its strategic value, now peaceful enough to provide a glorious spot for a swim. A short walk allows us to explore the spectacular site before dinner when we have the chance to try delicious bread freshly baked in a traditional oven.
- Day 5:** Along the Datça peninsula to the main county town, Datça. We head inland to visit a small local winery producing a range of lovely wines from vines which thrive in the region. Wine production has been at the heart of the local economy for well over 2,000 years. Knidos, the ancient city we visited yesterday, produced huge quantities of wine from vineyards stretching throughout the peninsula, transported in locally made amphorae all over the Mediterranean. We'll savour a variety of wines in a delightful setting and then head into town to have lunch at a traditional lokanta, where you'll sample a number of classic Turkish dishes. You then have some free time to wander in town before we cruise on for another wonderful swimming opportunity.
- Day 6:** We head north trying some Turkish recipes which we'll later have the chance to savour. In the afternoon we reach the spectacular Greek and Roman city of Knidos, on the tip of a long and sinewy peninsula to the south of Bodrum. With a double harbour offering shelter to ships plying north and south, Knidos made its mark on Greek history and grew rich from its stunning natural position, and we'll see the results in the grand and ordered city rising in tier upon opulent tier. Like many a classical predecessor, we'll anchor in the eastern harbour, the heart of the ancient city rising above us. Decades of excavation have freed a beautifully planned city from the soil, allowing us to wander through its streets and along terraces festooned with temples to be met with a magnificent view across the Aegean.
- Day 7:** We cruise along the Carian coast, with stops to swim and relax, before a demonstration of a special local dish in a small family run restaurant. A last chance to swim then on to Bodrum, ancient Halicarnassus, for our final farewell dinner.
- Day 8:** Transfer to Bodrum airport about 40 minutes away.



GO BACK TO BACK

EXPLORING HADRIAN'S WALL
MAY 28 - JUN 4

CRUISING THE LYCIAN SHORE
SEP 8 - SEP 22

WALKING AND CRUISING THE
CARIAN COAST
SEP 29 - OCT 6

SOMETHING SIMILAR

A GASTRONOMIC CRUISE IN CROATIA

A GASTRONOMIC TOUR OF SICILY

EXTEND YOUR STAY

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CRUISING THE LYCIAN SHORE

MAY 19 - JUNE 2



SEP 8 - SEP 22



TOUR GUIDE MAY: DR. RICHARD BAYLISS - £5,095 PER PERSON / SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: £1,365

TOUR GUIDE SEP: DR. RICHARD BAYLISS - £5,125 PER PERSON / SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: £1,395



Ottoman Castle, Kale

This gulet cruise explores the virtually untouched coastline of ancient Lycia, on Turkey's breath-taking turquoise coast. The tour includes well-known highlights like the marble-clad city of Perge, where archaeologists are unearthing a site to rival Ephesus, Myra, with some of the finest rock-cut tombs, and Xanthos, a vast fortified citadel city that dominated the region for centuries.

These famous sights are complemented by a whole series of "hidden gems": ancient settlements, shrines and cemeteries set within the region's wonderful landscapes, waiting to be discovered and explored. Examples include magnificent Arykanda, surrounded by lovely natural scenery on the edge of a mountain, beautiful Phaselis, famed in antiquity for its rascally merchants and three fine harbours, now swathed in pine trees, and unforgettably picturesque Kale, where the cottages of a traditional Turkish village rub shoulders with a medieval castle, an ancient fortification and a vast necropolis. The cruise also includes a visit to the award-winning museum of Antalya, housing a remarkable collection of Roman sculpture, a tour of the islet of Gemiler, with the remains of an unusually elaborate Byzantine pilgrimage centre, and an opportunity to see Patara, where a huge and monumental Roman city is emerging from sand dunes.

Travelling below the soaring Taurus Mountains, we will discover the extraordinary heritage of one of antiquity's most mysterious peoples: the Lycians. Their enduring sense of identity prevailed for centuries, even as they adopted and adapted Persian, Greek and Roman cultural influences. It found expression especially in their unique funerary architecture, unlike anything else in the world, their tombs and sarcophagi still scattered around their once prosperous ports. We find many of them lying in rugged settings, seemingly untouched by human hands. Others are set within modern settlements, such as the lovely resort of Kaş, where rock-cut tombs, shaded by vibrant red bougainvillea, stand silent witness to the ancient city of Antiphellos.

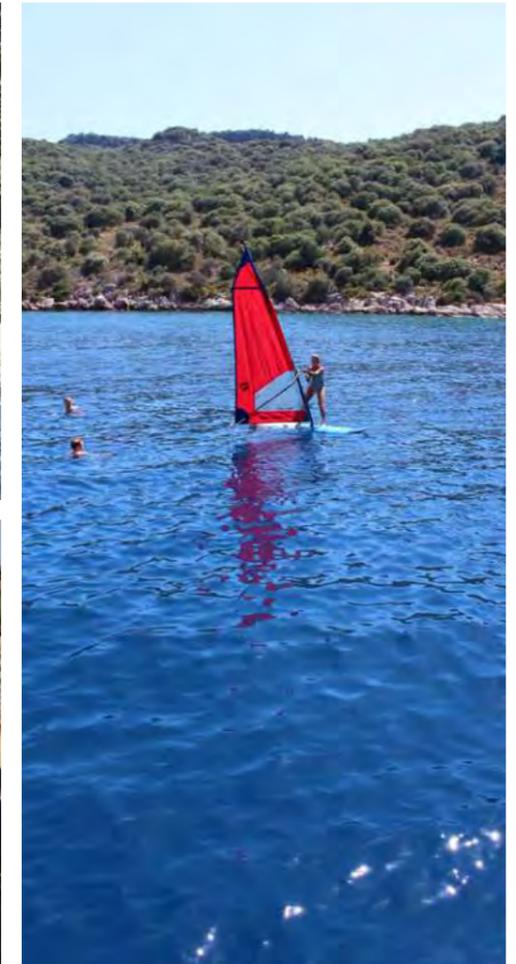
Each day we will take you back in time, guiding you through the fascinating story of how the region evolved from Classical antiquity through Byzantine, Seljuk and Ottoman times to the present day. Each visit is an archaeological adventure, part of a historical puzzle that reveals a remarkable story of civilisation. The enigmatic history of the ancient sites, their often astonishingly fine preservation and their stunning settings make this tour a very special treat for anyone seeking inspiration from past human achievement.

The spirit of discovery, finding new sites, new beauties and new mysteries day by day, is balanced by the time we spend cruising on a beautifully hand-crafted Turkish gulet, the ideal way to explore the maritime region of Lycia. Of course, there are frequent opportunities to swim in the crystal waters of the Turquoise coast, to kayak, to go for a hike and admire the local flora or simply relax on deck. Naturally, delicious Turkish food, freshly prepared aboard or in selected local restaurants is a vital component of this. This balance of fascinating historical narrative, immense natural beauty and time spent unwinding aboard, distinguishes Cruising the Lycian Shore, a holiday designed to relax and inspire in equal measure.



CRUISING THE LYCIAN SHORE

- Day 1:** Our boat is about 30 minutes from Dalaman airport in the pretty harbour of Göcek. Welcome dinner on board.
- Day 2:** A chance to unwind in the Bay of Fethiye.
- Day 3:** We cruise through the stupendous Bay of Fethiye, with ample time to swim, relax and admire the scenery of sea and mountains, before visiting Gemiler Island, where Japanese archaeologists have revealed an extraordinary Byzantine pilgrimage centre, perhaps connected with St. Nicholas of Myra, with multiple chapels and churches linked by a most unusual long vaulted corridor that ascends towards the island's summit.
- Day 4:** On to Kaş, a beautiful town of whitewashed houses shaded with lush purple bougainvillea. Scattered among and around the modern settlement are the remains of the ancient city, Antiphellos: some remarkably fine sarcophagi and rock-cut tombs, a temple and a well-preserved theatre with a magnificent sea view.
- Day 5:** East to the picturesque village of Üçağız, old Teimiussa, one of the most evocative of all Lycian burial sites. A jumble of ancient sarcophagi, cut from the area's craggy limestone, lines the shore, overlooked by a tiny fortification. Many of them bear fine relief decoration.
- Day 6:** We travel into the mountainous interior to visit Arykanda. Here, Turkish archaeologists are uncovering a large Greek and Roman city in a spectacular setting of slope and forest, often likened to Delphi. The monumental baths, the perfect little Greek theatre and adjacent stadium, and the unusual series of tombs make Arykanda a highly memorable place to explore.
- Day 7:** We continue to Phaselis, at times the seat of pirates who terrorised the region's rich trade routes. Its three harbours now lie serene amid pine trees and there is much to see of the ancient city's centre with its impressive public buildings.
- Day 8:** On to Antalya, the south's most vibrant city. We visit its super archaeological museum, a treasury of Roman sculpture. We'll also explore Roman Perge, a vast and stunningly monumental Greek and Roman city. We stroll through colonnades and markets, marble-clad bathhouses and a pristine stadium, all overlooked by massive fortifications.
- Day 9:** We turn back southwards to Olympos, an ancient city in a most unusual setting along the banks of a river in a canyon. We follow an ancient sacred route to visit the Chimaera, a natural phenomenon where flames burst from the ground, giving rise to the legend that the mythical beast of that name lies buried beneath the earth.
- Day 10:** We visit Myra, home of St Nicholas, famed for its near-complete Roman theatre and superb rock-hewn tombs. Walking through its port, Andriake, we discover a giant cistern and granary built by the Emperor Hadrian, as well as an ancient synagogue and a huge purple-dye workshop.
- Day 11:** We return westwards, to Üçağız a tiny fishing village built upon the ruins of ancient Simena and surrounded by its cemeteries of sarcophagi and rock-cut tombs. The Ottoman castle, built upon an ancient citadel, offers superb views across the region.
- Day 12:** We cruise along the shore of the sunken ancient city on Kekova island then set off for the picturesque harbour tour of Kalkan. From here, we travel inland to Xanthos, occasional capital of ancient Lycia, where archaeologists have been digging for half a century. Great fortifications surround a vast ancient city, unusually also including part of its cemeteries, with some of the finest of all Lycian tombs. Among them are the extraordinarily elaborate and unusual pillar tombs and some beautifully sculptured sarcophagi.
- Day 13:** We travel to Patara, initially a harbour town dependent on Xanthos, later the Roman capital of Lycia. Here, the sand dunes that have protected the ruins for centuries have been gradually shifted to uncover an astonishingly rich ancient city, with an enormous theatre, a vast granary, column-lined streets and its stunning Roman lighthouse, one of the oldest extant examples in the world. A unique highlight here is the bouleterion, the plenary chamber of the Lycian confederation, an ancient political entity that helped inspire the United States Constitution.
- Day 14:** After a leisurely morning given over to swimming and relaxation, we moor at Fethiye, ancient Telmessos, where we explore the monumental Temple Tombs, probably the resting places of local royalty, before ending the tour with a sumptuous farewell meal on board the boat.
- Day 15:** Transfer to Dalaman airport, about an hour away.



GO BACK TO BACK

CRUISING TO EPHEBUS
JUN 2- JUN 9

CRUISING THE CARIAN COAST
SEP 1 - SEP 8

SOMETHING SIMILAR

CRUISING THE DODECANESE

CRUISING TO THE CYCLADES

EXTEND YOUR STAY

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CRUISING THE CARIAN COAST:

FROM MEDITERRANEAN TO AEGEAN

MAY 26 - JUNE 2



SEP 1 - SEP 8



TOUR GUIDE: DR. FILIP BUDIĆ - £2,895 PER PERSON / SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: £875

TOUR GUIDE: PETER SOMMER - £2,925 PER PERSON / SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: £895



a marvellous combination of superb archaeological sites and a remarkably beautiful maritime landscape – a stretch of Turkey's Turquoise Coast that so far remains mostly untouched by mass tourism and other modern developments.

Starting in Göcek, a quiet small town in a lovely setting on the Gulf of Fethiye this cruise follows the convoluted shoreline of Caria, made up of deep inlets and long peninsulas forming a complex and diverse geography where land and sea constantly embrace one another. It ends at the lively harbour of Bodrum, ancient Halicarnassus and the birthplace of Herodotus.

Along the way, we visit a series of fascinating archaeological sites, each of them with its own story to tell about the past of Caria, a region that often found itself at the intersection of different cultural and political realms, adopting and adapting features from all of them. They include famous ancient cities like Knidos, in a stunningly beautiful peninsular location overlooking twin harbours, and spectacular Kaunos, overlooked by uniquely elaborate rock-cut tombs. We also get to explore more remote spots, such as the mighty Rhodian fortification at Loryma, one of the best examples of defensive architecture to survive from antiquity, the virtually unknown town, surrounded by evocative grave monuments, and long-forgotten Lydae, hidden away on a wild promontory far away from roads, towns and modern life.

And it's not all archaeology. We aim for all of our trips to be gastronomic adventures where you can enjoy the local food and wine. Near the lovely little town of Datça, you'll visit a small winery to try a few bottles and then have lunch at a traditional lokanta, where you'll be able to sample a variety of delicious, freshly cooked home-style Turkish dishes.

Along with this engrossing narrative about the fate and deeds of humankind throughout time, this gulet cruise also offers many opportunities to just sit back and enjoy the magnificent scenery, dip into the clear blue waters of the Mediterranean, or stroll through landscapes of unforgettable beauty – a perfect combination of cultural experience and quality time.



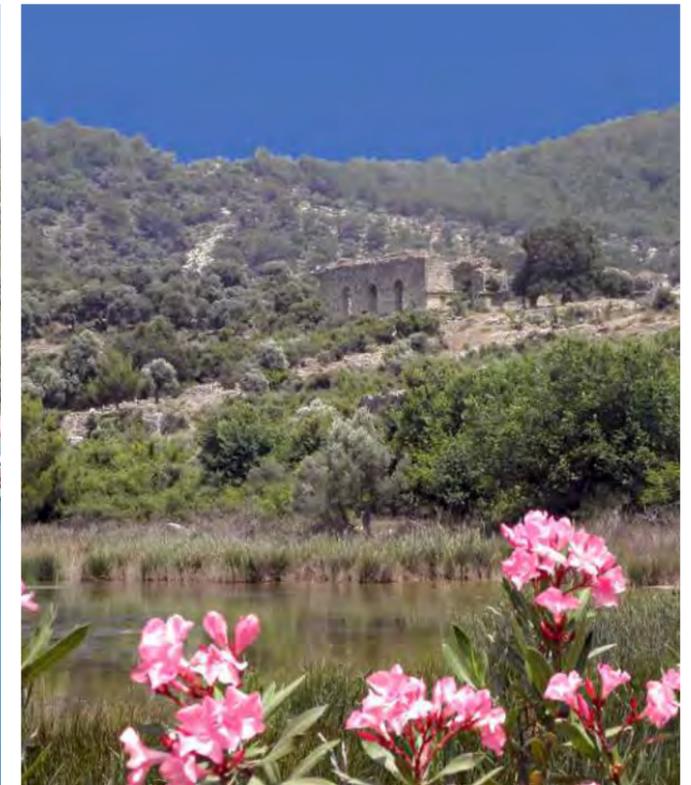
Cliff Tombs, Dalyan



CRUISING THE CARIAN COAST:

FROM MEDITERRANEAN TO AEGEAN

- Day 1:** Your gulet awaits you in the marina at Göcek, about 30 minutes from Dalaman airport. Welcome drinks and dinner on board.
- Day 2:** We cruise towards the gulf of Fethiye today, where a choice of marvels lies open to us. We drop anchor in the beautiful inlet of Ađlımanı and make our ascent by an ancient track, steep in places, but a slow and steady pace is all that is needed to crest the ridge and see monumental tombs standing nearly complete overlooking the Mediterranean Sea below. We've arrived at the isolated ancient settlement of Lydae, its ruins a diffusion of sculpture and inscriptions in the bowl of a valley silent but for the occasional tinkle of goat bells. Two thousand years ago, a settlement flourished here, now it lies beautifully desolate at the hand of earthquakes, leaving mounds of sculpted rubble, a scatter of ancient buildings and, strewn between, a profusion of ancient sculptures and inscriptions, columns and capitals, lying as if they'd never before been found.
- Day 3:** We head west and treat you to a fantastic site that will nevertheless contend with the uniqueness of the journey to reveal it as the greatest memory of a superb day. We drop anchor in a bay and taking to a flat-bottomed river boat, we enter a lagoon filled with turtles and make our way up the reed-walled Dalyan River. Our route twists and turns through narrow waterways, other channels appearing and disappearing, until we glimpse the great slab-sided horn of rock that tells us we're close to our destination, the ancient city of Kaunos. We disembark at this striking site, spread between two great rocky outcrops, with others marching into the screens of distant hills, some set with tombs cut into the rock. A theatre and opulent public buildings, a late antique church and a castle high above them all strain to gaze ever more steeply over an ancient harbour doomed by silting to pass from busy activity to sit green and silent in testimony to the city's passing.
- Day 4:** Heading west may bring us wonderful views of the Greek islands of Rhodes and Symi as we cruise along the forest covered slopes of the Bozburun peninsula, studded with coves and bays. One of these is watched over by the magnificent fortress of Loryma, built around 300 BC by the people of Rhodes, once the major naval power in the region, which made sustained efforts to control this entire coast. The catapults once positioned in the squat towers of Loryma's gleaming walls provided a powerful means to dominate the fine bay below, then noted for its strategic value, now peaceful enough to provide a glorious spot for a swim. A lovely walk across rugged ground allows us to explore the walls and shrines that fortified the soldiers before returning to this natural night-time anchorage.
- Day 5:** North-west to the Datça peninsula and the main county town, Datça. We head inland to visit a small local winery producing a range of lovely wines from vines which thrive in the region. Wine production has been at the heart of the local economy for well over 2,000 years. Knidos, the ancient city we visit tomorrow, produced huge quantities of wine from vineyards stretching throughout the peninsula, transported in locally made amphorae all over the Mediterranean. We'll savour a variety of wines in a delightful setting and then head into town to have lunch at a traditional lokanta, where you'll sample a number of classic Turkish dishes. You then have some free time to wander in town before we cruise on for another wonderful swimming opportunity.
- Day 6:** Our voyage brings us to the spectacular Greek and Roman city of Knidos, on the tip of long and sinewy Datça peninsula north of Bozburun. With a double harbour offering shelter to ships plying north and south, Knidos made its mark on Greek history and grew rich from its stunning natural position, and we'll see the results in the grand and ordered city rising in tier upon opulent tier. Like many a classical predecessor, we'll anchor in the eastern harbour, the heart of the ancient city rising above us. Decades of excavation have freed a beautifully planned city from the soil, allowing us to wander through its streets and along terraces festooned with temples to be met with a magnificent view across the Aegean.
- Day 7:** A last chance to swim as we cruise north to Bodrum. In the late afternoon we visit the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World and Bodrum's magnificent Crusader castle, which houses one of the finest museums of underwater archaeology in the world. A final opportunity to shop.
- Day 8:** Transfer to Bodrum airport, about 40 minutes away.



GO BACK TO BACK

EXPLORING THE PELOPONNESE
MAY 8 - MAY 22

CRUISING TO EPHEBUS
SEP 8 - SEP 15

CRUISING THE LYCIAN SHORE
SEP 8 - SEP 22

SOMETHING SIMILAR

A GASTRONOMIC GULET CRUISE

A TURKISH ODYSSEY

EXTEND YOUR STAY

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CRUISING TO EPHEBUS

JUNE 2 - JUNE 9



SEP 8 - SEP 15



SEP 15 - SEP 22



TOUR GUIDE JUNE: DR. FILIP BUDIĆ - £2,895 PER PERSON / SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: £875
TOUR GUIDE SEP: PETER SOMMER & TBC - £2,925 PER PERSON / SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: £895



A classic gulet cruise that takes in a series of the country's most important and interesting archaeological sites, including the stunning ruins of Ephesus.

Beginning in Bodrum and following the shores of the ancient regions of Caria and Ionia, this cruise makes for an ideal introduction to the glories of Turkey's archaeological heritage. It takes in some of the most impressive and best-understood sites in the country, a veritable succession of "must-see" highlights, as well as a number of more intimate "off the beaten track" remains and includes a visit to the astoundingly monumental ruins of Ephesus.

Cruising to Ephesus opens up a panorama of the ancient world, presenting a great variety of extraordinary visits, ranging from prehistory via Classical Greek and Roman antiquity to the Middle Ages and beyond. Every day will bring new insights and new beauties to behold.

Ancient cities and sanctuaries are the central themes of this cruise. From ancient Iasos, where the remains of a once-vibrant port town are scattered among olive groves to the mysterious mountaintop sanctuary of Zeus at Labraunda and the beautiful Temple of Zeus at Euromos. A major highlight of this tour is Ephesus, capital of Roman Asia and one of the most magnificent ancient sites in the world, with its vast theatre, ornate library and wonderfully decorated Roman mansions. At Miletus, we explore the vast ruins of a "lost" city that was a major centre of culture in Greek and Roman days, as well as its main shrine, the huge oracular Temple of Apollo at Didyma. Priene, in its remarkably beautiful wooded setting, is the most clearly accessible and comprehensible of all Greek cities, its private homes and public buildings there to see.

Archaeology apart, Cruising to Ephesus also includes much time for swimming, sunbathing, admiring the scenery or simply relaxing on our beautiful gulet.



Temple of Apollo, Didyma



CRUISING TO EPHEBUS

Day 1: Your gulet awaits you in the harbour of historic Bodrum, about 40 minutes from Bodrum airport. Home to an impressive Crusader castle and the site of the ancient Mausoleum of Halicarnassus it is a truly appropriate place to begin!

Day 2: A gentle cruise north-east, with plentiful swimming opportunities on the way, before mooring in the late afternoon in the pretty harbour of ancient Iasos where archaeological excavations are revealing a vital and beautiful classical city. Long-lived, though often beset by dangers, its remains range across the millennia from a Bronze Age settlement, through the classical and Hellenistic city and its Roman successor with their theatre, council building and temples right through to the Middle Ages, with the city crowned by a medieval fort, and a lonely Byzantine tower standing sentinel over the port in the midst of the sea.

Day 3: Our journeying today takes us inland, into an olive grove where we are suddenly met by the sixteen standing columns of a well-preserved temple, once the chief holy place of the city of Euromus, dedicated to its local version of Zeus. Unusually, the columns bear inscribed panels recording the lavish gifts of notable benefactors, gifts which don't seem – however – to have been enough to complete the temple, as the unfinished fluting of those triumphantly standing columns testifies.

From one Zeus, we visit another, Zeus Labraundus or Stratios in his great oracular shrine at Labraunda at a steep and vertiginous site in the mountains, site of a Carian last-stand against the Persians. The sublime location in which the temple sits, and the unusual structures built on the shoulders of its lofty terraces by the Carian kings makes this a truly unique site.

In the afternoon, a chance to swim, kayak, snorkel and relax as you cruise westwards.

Day 4: After breakfast, we have a short drive to the great ancient city of Miletus. One of the most significant of all ancient Greek sites, she was a powerhouse of early Ionia, a centre of colonisation and precocious producer of philosophers. Now that the sea has long withdrawn its favour, the city sprawls over an extensive inland site with a brooding atmosphere, a vast theatre, spacious agoras and impressive Roman baths remaining to witness the city's ancient greatness and its turbulent history. After a break, we'll then make another short journey to one of the most impressive classical sites in the Aegean: Didyma. In ancient times this was an oracle-temple of the god Apollo, and one with a roller-coaster history of highs and lows: of guardianship by the renowned Branchidae and destruction, and then of rich patronage from kings and emperors for a temple famed for its secure guidance alternating with periods of inexplicable oracular silence.

What this has left us is one of the greatest, and most unusual, temples of the Greco-Roman world, huge in size and intricately carved from the iconic Medusa with its deeply-knotted brow right down to the ornate detailing even of the column bases, making them beautiful for the god. Inside the temple, past a spill of cogwheel-like column drums, its walls marked with curious signs whose meaning is debated, you'll come to the breath-taking central space, a vast quadrangle laid out below and hear what we can tell of this leading oracle. In the afternoon, we leave behind the Branchidae and have a glorious cruise north to an area famous from Greek history, with the island of Samos on our left and Mount Mycale, where the Greeks won the Ionians freedom from Persia, dead ahead. We anchor off the southern coast of what is now the Dilek peninsula, a National Park whose rugged hills are smoothed over with a ruffled green carpet of trees and where herds of wild horses roam free.

Day 5: We head north to Kuşadası. From there, we travel a short distance to the town of Selçuk, where we visit the Archaeological Museum as an appetiser for our visit to the great city nearby. This is a richly-filled repository of Ephesus' story, replete with ornate detailing from the city's great buildings, baroque Roman sculpture, tense classical lions, images of Roman notables and fine ivory carvings, and the iconic statue of Ephesian Artemis. We'll be more than ready to see the home of these marvels, and we'll enter the great city, the Metropolis of Roman Asia, just as the main crowds are leaving, ready to explore the vast site at leisure. We'll walk in awe through street after street of one of the greatest cities of the ancient world, through its monumental squares and along marble-paved roads stretching into the distance, whether towards the expanse of the 25,000-seat theatre, or the lovingly-decorated storeys of the Library of Celsus dominating the viewer as they strain for height. From these outstanding public buildings, we'll turn to the remarkable Terrace Houses, a huddle of fine residences filled with room upon room, space upon space, from open courtyards where the owners displayed their public face to an impressed world, to the intricate warren of more private rooms, lavishly bedecked in mosaics, wall paintings and marble inlay. It stands in the first rank of sites where we can get a real feel for the lived life of the Roman era.

Day 6: Heading south overland, we come to Priene, an almost perfectly preserved Greek city fanning out beneath a towering perpendicular brow of gnarled rock which gives this special site an aesthetic appeal to match its archaeological importance. Here we have an important city of middling rank, filled with Classical and Hellenistic remains, crucially without much of the overwhelming overlay of titanic Roman structures. This allows us a fine impression of the Greek world of the city-state and the kings after Alexander, before that Roman imprint. We'll walk its extensive streets and houses, admire the beauty of the Greek theatre and the deft sculpting of its most prestigious seats. Awed, we'll come to the bouleuterion, the ancient council building with its tiers waiting for the city's leaders and be rapt by the perfect vista of the standing columns of the temple of Athena framing the sheer rugged bluff of Priene's great rock rising behind them.

We then return to the coast for a swim in waters where history was made.



Day 7: After a leisurely day cruising around the Bodrum peninsula, we put in at Bodrum itself, the ancient city of Halicarnassus. As Halicarnassus, it has fascinating historical connections. These come not merely in terms of the history itself, though these are extensive enough: a Greek city with a strong Carian element in its population, its name is intimately linked to the great Carian rulers Artemisia and Mausolus (whose 'Mausoleum' was one of the Seven Wonders), and to that of the Macedonian conqueror, Alexander, who subjected it to a siege, relayed to us with dramatic interludes, in 334. The historical connection also comes with the development of the idea itself, Halicarnassus being the birthplace of Herodotus, the 'father of history', and one of the most engaging writers of the ancient world.

In the late afternoon we visit the site of the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus and the magnificent Crusader castle impressively sited on a peninsula stretching out into the blue waters of Bodrum's expansive harbour. Fascinating in its own right, bearing warnings to spies and the arms of Henry VII of England, the castle's story is further enriched by housing one of the finest museums of underwater archaeology in the world. We'll discover finds from two Bronze Age wrecks of unsurpassed significance, viewing across a gap of nearly three thousand years remains of the Mycenaean era in a site of the Crusader and Turkish periods which rests on a Classical city. A superb way to bring our encounters with the long story of this coast to a close, leaving us plenty to talk about at our farewell meal.

Day 8: Transfer to Bodrum airport.

GO BACK TO BACK

CRUISING THE CARIAN COAST
MAY 28 - JUN 2

CRUISING FROM KOS TO PATMOS
AUG 31 - SEP 7

A GASTRONOMIC GULET CRUISE
SEP 22 - SEP 29

SOMETHING SIMILAR

A GASTRONOMIC GULET CRUISE

A TURKISH ODYSSEY

EXTEND YOUR STAY

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A TURKISH ODYSSEY:

ARCHAEOLOGY, FOOD AND WINE



SEP 15 - SEP 29



TOUR GUIDE SEP: FILIP BUDIĆ - £5,125 PER PERSON / SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: £1,395



Here is a tour that brings the delicious and the sublime together to a level of rare perfection. In this odyssey you'll reap the rewards of our decades of experience on this most wonderful Turkish coast: all our years of familiarity with some of the finest and most inspiring sites of the ancient world, of contacts – and friendships – made with some of the greatest artisans and cooks of a region famed for its production of fine foods, and for superbly rich fields and waters offering the freshest and most delicious ingredients.

This is a tour for those who want to get to know the history, culture and unforgettable food of Turkey rather than just go there. Our deep knowledge of the history of this region, drawn from the years of personal research or excavation experience of our expert guides, makes its long and intricate history clear and vivid, unwrapping the story of the many civilisations that have made their mark here. We know intimately the finest sites to tell that story – from the famous world heritage sites to lesser known but awe-inspiring sites so well-hidden that they're a revelation even to professionals in the field. As for the food and wine, we've taken our time sampling the best restaurants and wineries to be found in the entire region – and that's a pretty high bar when you consider its renown.

Here you'll experience our award-winning approach to sharing our love and knowledge of Turkey with you, in one of the regions we know best. Relaxing on the deck of a gulet, you'll watch one of the most beautiful coasts in the Mediterranean glide by, knowing all the hard work's been done for you, just waiting for the next image-perfect bay to come around, or for a fascinating trip to one of the world's finest ancient Greek temples.



A TURKISH ODYSSEY:

ARCHAEOLOGY, FOOD AND WINE

- Day 1:** Our boat is about 40 minutes from Bodrum airport, in the town's beautiful and historic harbour, site of the famed ancient city of Halicarnassus. Welcome drinks and dinner aboard.
- Day 2:** We cruise east and take a short drive inland to the rustic village of Etrim where we will prepare some classic Turkish dishes, enjoy a delicious lunch and see how Turkish carpets are traditionally made by skilled hands which have been doing it for half a century. We then head further east to swim and spend the night moored up in a beautiful bay.
- Day 3:** We head inland to Milas, home to a wonderfully colourful market with all manner of produce pouring in from the surrounding countryside and lots of locals coming to shop. We'll have a chance to stroll around and soak up the vibrant atmosphere before we have lunch.
- Day 4:** In the pretty hills to the east of Bodrum is a family run winery, perfectly situated to cultivate wine grapes including a number of indigenous white wine varieties. We'll explore the vineyards, production facilities and cellars to find out about their sophisticated processing and fermentation techniques before enjoying a splendid lunch and sampling a variety of their wines and award-winning olive oil. In the afternoon we cruise east.
- Day 5:** Today we set out on a journey inland to the little-visited but hugely important site of Stratonikeia. Excavated intensively over the last decades by a brilliant Turkish team, an entire ancient city is slowly being revealed and restored within the charming embrace of a rich Ottoman trading town that was mostly abandoned after an earthquake in the 20th century. From the lovingly restored mosque and Seljuk bathhouse to evocative ruined townhouses of the glorious marble city of Roman and Hellenistic times, Stratonikeia is a feast for the eyes which is growing grander every year. This is a site that has the potential to revolutionise our knowledge of this part of the ancient world. From here, we travel a little way further inland to the beautiful sanctuary site of Lagina, dedicated to the Goddess Hecate, and site of some of the most important festivals in the land of the Stratonikeians. Many of the buildings here have been wrenched and twisted by seismic activity, and the result is a photographer's dream.
- Day 6:** Kedreai, a small island charmingly located at the head of the Ceramic gulf, is our destination today. Erroneously associated with the famed Egyptian Queen Cleopatra, who won the hearts of both Julius Caesar and Mark Antony, this island is also renowned for a beautiful beach that is like nothing else in the area, with distant hills fading to blue and purple at the further shore across the waters. Blessed with a theatre, sanctuaries, residential quarters, and harbour, this is also a lovely ancient city to explore by wending our way on paths through the trees. We then cruise southwest for an afternoon of swimming and relaxing.
- Day 7:** Our voyage brings us to the spectacular Greek and Roman city of Knidos, draped along the tip of the long and sinewy Datça peninsula. With a double harbour offering shelter to ships plying their way north and south, Knidos made a deep mark on Greek history and grew rich from its stunning natural position. We'll be awed by the result: a grand and ordered city rising in tier upon opulent tier. Like many a classical predecessor on this route, we'll anchor in the eastern harbour, with the heart of the ancient city rising above us. Decades of excavation have freed a beautifully-planned city from the soil, allowing us to make our way through its streets and along terraces festooned with temples to be met with a magnificent view across the Aegean.
- Day 8:** East along the Datça peninsula to the main county town, also Datça. We head inland to visit a small local winery producing a range of delectable wines from the vines which thrive in the region. Wine production has been at the heart of the local economy for well over 2,000 years. Knidos, the ancient city we visited yesterday, produced huge quantities of wine from vineyards stretching throughout the peninsula, transported in locally made amphorae all over the Mediterranean. We'll savour a variety of them in a delightful setting and then head into town to have lunch at a traditional lokanta, where you'll sample a number of classic Turkish dishes. You then have some free time to wander in town before we cruise east to the Bozburun peninsula for another wonderful swimming opportunity.
- Day 9:** We make our way inland along the gorgeous Resadiye peninsula to see how olive oil has been produced both in the past and today in the scenic village of Bayir where an old friend has laboured to conserve and restore his grandfather's historic mill. Just downhill, we find the main working olive oil mill in the region, family-run for other locals and small farmers. We'll enjoy a wonderful lunch, including a very special cold-pressed extra virgin olive and traditionally-produced herb oils. We spend the night in another beautiful bay.



A TURKISH ODYSSEY:

ARCHAEOLOGY, FOOD AND WINE

Day 10: We journey south to one of our favourite restaurants, right by the sea in the hamlet of Söğüt. After a fabulous seafood lunch and plenty of time to savour the sublime seascapes, we take a scenic drive to the tiny inlet of Serçe Limani, an idyllic narrow cove whose waters once covered the shipwreck of a Byzantine vessel filled with a delicate cargo of glass, revealed in a ground-breaking American excavation. More finds from other ancient shipwrecks remain in the sea's grip beneath. En route we drive through the territory of Phoenix, a wild and remote citadel city and discover the remarkable ancient pyramidal stones found only in this peninsula, whose purpose remains something of a mystery.

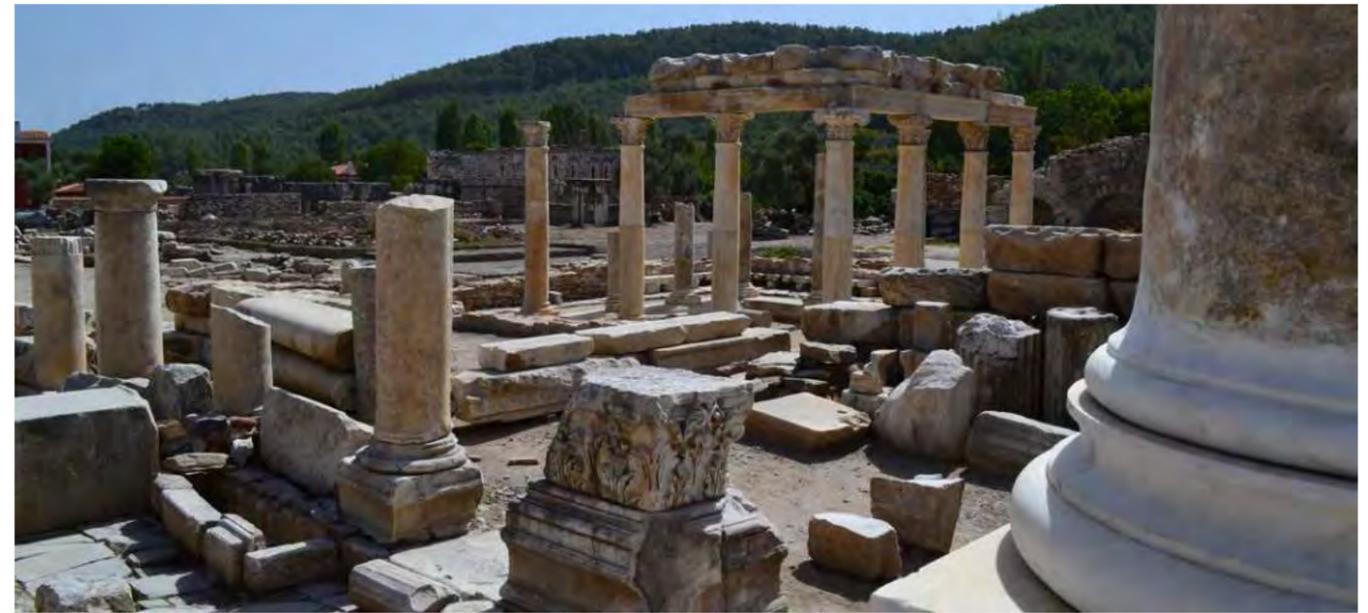
Day 11: Heading south we have wonderful views of the Greek island of Symi as we cruise along the forest covered slopes of the Bozburun peninsula, studded with coves and bays. One of these is watched over by the magnificent fortress of Loryma, built around 300 BC by the Rhodians, then the major naval power in the region, which made sustained efforts to control this entire coast. The deadly catapults once mounted in the squat towers of Loryma's gleaming walls ensured domination of the splendid bay below, then treasured for its strategic value, now peaceful enough to provide a glorious spot for a swim. A fine walk across rugged ground allows us to explore the walls and shrines that protected the soldiers before returning to this natural overnight anchorage.

Day 12: We head east and treat you to a day where you may have trouble deciding if it's the fantastic site or the uniqueness of the journey that makes for the greatest memory. We'll drop anchor in a bay and take to a flat-bottomed river boat, pass through a lagoon filled with turtles and make our way up the reed-walled Dalyan River, so remote-seeming that all trace of busy civilisation seems blotted-out. Our route twists and turns through narrow waterways, other channels appearing and disappearing. At a small hamlet, we cook and eat with one of the village ladies who prepares food each summer for the archaeological team that works here. We then continue to the ancient city of Kaunos, spread between two great rocky outcrops, some set with tombs cut into the rock. A theatre and opulent public buildings, a late antique church and a castle high above them all strain to gaze ever more steeply over an ancient harbour doomed by silting to pass from busy activity to sit green and silent in testimony to the city's passing.

Day 13: We cruise to the mouth of the shimmering gulf of Fethiye, where we have a remote and hidden marvel to visit, known by only a few. We drop anchor in the beautiful inlet of Ađlımanı and make our ascent by an ancient track, fringed by shady trees and steep in places. A slow and steady pace with magnificent views over the deep turquoise of the water soon sees us crest the ridge and reveals a magnificent sight: monumental tombs standing nearly complete in a secluded and dramatic landscape, veiled from most eyes by a cinematically-perfect curtain of hills. We've arrived at the isolated ancient settlement of Lydae, its ruins a spray of sculpture and inscriptions in the bowl of a valley utterly detached and silent but for the occasional tinkle of goat bells. Two thousand years ago, a settlement flourished here, now it lies beautifully desolate: mounds of sculptured rubble, a scatter of ancient buildings and, strewn between, tumbles of ancient statues and inscriptions, columns, and capitals, lying as if they'd never been seen over the long centuries since falling into ruin. We break bread and have wild sage tea and local honey with the goatherd who still lives amid the ancient ruins tending his animals and beehives, producing olive oil and collecting wild herbs like sage, oregano and thyme in a lifestyle that feels timeless and a privilege to encounter.

Day 14: We continue into the Gulf of Fethiye for a day given over to pure relaxation. As we make our way to Göcek, at the head of a beautiful bay with impossibly ultramarine waters thronged with islands, sublime views accompany swimming and sunbathing in the morning, cruising or sailing in the afternoon.

Day 15: Transfer to Dalaman airport, about 30 minutes away.



GO BACK TO BACK

FROM SIBENIK TO ZADAR
SEP 7 - SEP 14

CRUISING TO EPHEBUS
SEP 8 - SEP 15

WALKING AND CRUISING THE
CARIAN COAST
SEP 29 - OCT 6

SOMETHING SIMILAR

A GASTRONOMIC GULET CRUISE

CRUISING TO EPHEBUS

EXTEND YOUR STAY

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CRUISING WESTERN LYCIA



SEP 28 - OCT 5



TOUR GUIDE: DR. NIGEL SPIVEY - £2,925 PER PERSON / SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: £895



Pillar Tomb, Xanthos

This cultural tour and gulet cruise in Turkey explores a magnificent stretch of coastline behind which developed an extraordinary culture and a fiercely independent people – the Lycians.

Travelling aboard a beautiful Turkish gulet there are plenty of opportunities to swim in the crystal waters of the turquoise coast. Mooring in secluded bays, we set out on foot to walk on paths lined with wild herbs, or stroll through olive groves strewn with rock cut tombs.

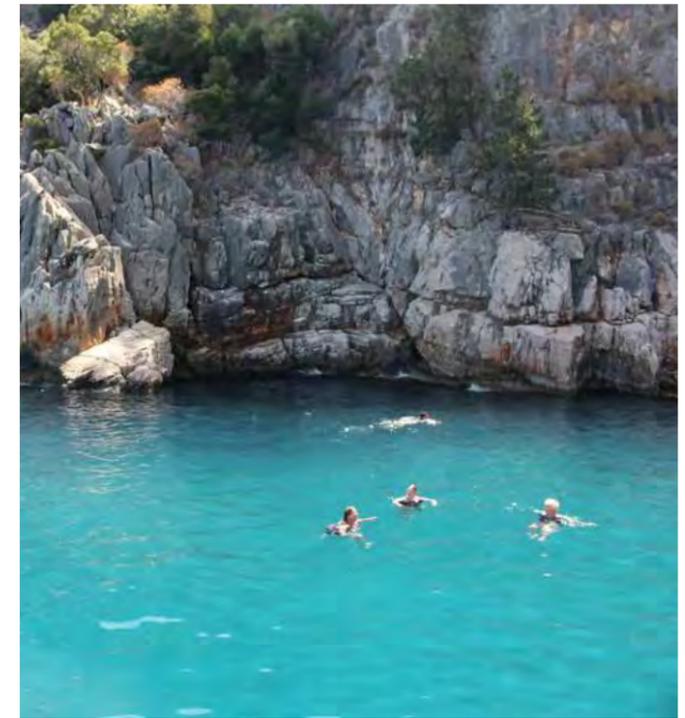
Once a day we visit one of the ancient cities that adorn this timeless coast. Highlights include Xanthos, the great capital of ancient Lycia, whose great treasures caused an extraordinary stir when they were brought to the British Museum; and Gemiler, where a small town clings to the slopes of a rocky island. It blossomed for just a couple of centuries in Byzantine times, decked out with houses and resplendent with a processional way and five churches.

We also have the opportunity to see Patara where archaeologists are uncovering a massive and monumental site, birthplace of St. Nicholas (Santa Claus), besieged by Brutus (the murderer of Julius Caesar) and visited by St. Paul.



CRUISING WESTERN LYCIA

- Day 1:** Our gulet is 30 minutes from Dalaman airport, at the charming marina village of Göcek, overlooked by the steep mountains at the head of the Bay of Fethiye, on Turkey's Mediterranean coast. From its sparkling ultramarine waters, we'll look out at a story-book bay filled with islands, and enjoy our welcome dinner on board.
- Day 2:** The journey out of the bay is a thing of beauty in itself, and about the prettiest curtain raiser we could wish for. We take the route east, like venturesome sailors for millennia, though we're seeking different reaches. We come to the island of Gemiler. Close to shore it provides protection for boats within a myriad of inlets, coves and anchorages, all framed by green wooded hills and studded with islets that look like droplets in the shimmer from their heights. On the island's shoulders we see tiers of ruins, the first of a complex of early Byzantine churches that clamber up the spine of the island to a peak with stunning views. This pilgrimage centre to St Nicholas has a history that spans the end of the ancient world and the beginning of the mediaeval, ending when the seas brought dangers from afar. Now the water is perfect for swimming and snorkelling.
- Day 3:** We cruise on to Kaş, a beautiful harbour town of white-washed houses covered with purple bougainvillea. Deep green hills and rounded islands are matched as if by an artist against an underlying bedrock that reddens beautifully in the afternoon light. The ancient city, Antiphellos, is threaded through the modern town: Lycian sarcophagi can be found within the streets, and rock-cut tombs dot the hillsides. Past its terracotta-coloured Greek temple, we come to a gleaming theatre on a rise with a magnificent sea view, the arms of the surrounding bay stretching out to each other to offer the spectator a natural lyrical masterpiece.
- Day 4:** Our course takes us east to the picturesque village of Üçağız, another of the havens that ancient sailors relied on so heavily on the Lycian coast. A little place of rough stones, it lies on top of ancient Teimiussa, which here and there reveals itself – a fine Roman doorway here, a Lycian sarcophagus amid a riot of flowerpots there. As the lanes peter out, ancient walls stand amid the scrub near one of the most evocative Lycian burial sites: threaded along the shore, an absolute forest of tombs, some with their ancient Greek inscriptions to memorialise their long-gone owners. Then to nearby Kale, something of a fantasy destination where perched above a jumble of Lycian sarcophagi lies a crusader and Ottoman castle crowning the hill with its distinctive crenellations. One of the most romantic settings of the holiday.
- Day 5:** We set off west for Kalkan, to be found in the dictionary under 'beautiful', an archetype for a pretty beach coast. Then it's inland, up a famously fertile valley to the great ancient city of Xanthos, the centrepiece of ancient Lycia, from which powerful lords dominated the region, and in whose famous and picturesque tombs they found their rest. One of antiquity's most notable sites, attacked in turn by Persians and Brutus, the slayer of Caesar, its importance is reflected in the scale and impressiveness of the remains, with more still being revealed by archaeologists. The vast theatre, expansive Roman structures and the great Xanthian Obelisk, with its long inscription in the characteristic angular, half-recognisable alphabet of the Lycians make this a real highlight.
- Day 6:** We head to Patara, birthplace of St. Nicholas (Father Christmas) and a major naval and trading port of ancient Lycia, making it a way-station for saints Paul and Luke on their travels. Once again we come to a sprawling and outstanding complex of remains scattered over a wide area, its pretensions announced by a formidably impressive monumental arch dedicated to a Roman governor. Within are extensive and well-preserved remains, brought out of the sand-dunes by excavation, from the massive platform of a pharos-lighthouse (the oldest standing) to the column-lined arcaded streets to its historically most important gem. This is the imposing parliament building of the Lycian League, still standing in serene and imposing grandeur, once capital of a federal state of Lycia whose constitution was a formative influence on that of the United States.
- Day 7:** A last dip before cruising into Fethiye's welcoming embrace. But we're not yet finished: we make a visit to the rock-cut tombs of ancient Telmessus, the greatest of them with huge temple-facades, all rising in tier upon tier up the massive russet cliff-face. A magnificent, piercingly memorable final site before we descend for a last chance to shop and wander before our final meal together. A rousing finale for this inspirational Turkish odyssey.
- Day 8:** Transfer from our gulet back to Dalaman airport.



GO BACK TO BACK

WALKING AND CRUISING
SOUTHERN DALMATIA
SEP 21 - SEP 28

WALKING AND CRUISING
WESTERN LYCIA
OCT 6 - OCT 13

SOMETHING SIMILAR

A GASTRONOMIC GULET CRUISE

CRUISING TO EPHEBUS

CRUISING THE CARIAN COAST

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WALKING AND CRUISING THE CARIAN COAST



Walking to Knidos



TOUR GUIDE: DR. RICHARD BAYLISS - £2,925 PER PERSON / SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: £895



SEP 29 - OCT 6



A fantastic walking and hiking tour that combines a cruise along this beautiful and undeveloped coast with walks along the Carian Trail, one of Turkey's most spectacular footpaths. With its herb-lined paths, atmospheric ruins and hills swathed in pine and olive, this epic hiking route, some 500 miles long, will give you a real sense of remote, undiscovered Turkey. You'll follow some of its very best stretches, averaging about 5-6 miles walking a day with a traditional gulet ever present offshore, providing elegant transport, dining and accommodation.

Aboard our traditional and stylish Turkish gulet, our ever changing horizon is a wild, remote and mountainous landscape cut into long peninsulas, deep inlets, and secluded coves, perfect places for swimming, snorkelling or kayaking.

On foot we will be able to discover many remote archaeological sites and wonders, like Amos an ancient town perched on a splendid headland; the ghost village of Karamaka, abandoned by its Greek inhabitants during the exchange of populations in 1923; and Loryma, one of the most romantic and picturesque areas on the Turkish coast. From shepherds' trails to forest tracks, goat paths to ancient roads, we'll be walking back through time with beautiful views at every turn.

You'll come across seemingly lost Byzantine churches in dramatic settings, Ottoman cisterns in forgotten valleys, and a myriad of ancient tombs. This stretch of coast has been a vital and strategic thoroughfare throughout history and the wealth of archaeological sites is testament to its importance. You'll explore beautifully preserved Knidos, a monumental marbled city arranged around a double harbour, one of the greatest archaeological gems on Turkey's southwest coast. You'll also encounter a great many sites like Lydae and Phoenix that have yet to be properly studied, yet to receive any excavation or detailed survey. More often than not we'll be the only people exploring the historic ruins on our journey.

This tour weaves together a cornucopia of simple pleasures: magnificent sites, quiet coves, wondrous hikes and glorious swims. As with all our gulet cruises food is a key component. We'll enjoy beautiful lunches and dinners freshly prepared on-board by the gulet's cook, delicious picnics amongst ancient ruins and sumptuous meals at traditional local restaurants.

From rocky coastal paths and wooded paths cushioned with pine needles to stepped roads cut into the bedrock by ancient hands, this is a trip packed full of fascinating antiquities, superb swim stops and breath-taking panoramas.



WALKING AND CRUISING THE CARIAN COAST

- Day 1:** Your gulet awaits you in the harbour of historic Bodrum, about 40 minutes from Bodrum airport. Home to an impressive Crusader castle and the site of the ancient Mausoleum of Halicarnassus it is a truly appropriate place to begin.
- Day 2:** Our first voyage takes us to a beautiful bay to the south of Bodrum, where we head ashore and hike through splendid landscapes, ancient ruins and magnificent seascapes aplenty, to the spectacular Greek and Roman city of Knidos. Set at the tip of a long and sinewy peninsula, with a double harbour offering shelter to ships plying north and south, Knidos made its mark on Greek history and grew rich from its stunning natural position, and we'll see the results in the grand and ordered city rising in tier upon opulent tier. Decades of excavation have freed a beautifully planned city from the soil, allowing us to wander through its streets and along terraces festooned with temples. We re-join our gulet, anchored in the Knidos's eastern harbour, like many a classical predecessor, with the ancient city all around us.
- Day 3:** We head east through the necropolis of Knidos, one of the most extensive of antiquity, stretching some 7km beyond the city gates. Hiking along the hills, with gorgeous views out towards several of Greece's Dodecanese islands, we reach the famed Lion tomb of Knidos, perched atop a small headland jutting out to sea. Excavated by Sir Charles Newton in 1858, the colossal marble lion that once graced the apex of the tomb is now one of the highlights of the British Museum. In the afternoon we cruise east for splendid swimming opportunities.
- Day 4:** We go ashore in a remote bay and walk up to the seemingly lost village of Karamaka, occupied by Greeks until the extraordinary population swap of Christians and Moslems between Greece and Turkey following the First World War. On a hill gazing out to sea and the island of Symi, stand the ruins of windmill, churches and houses. We then hike through wild and beautiful terrain to the ancient harbour of Loryma, a very strategic bay in ancient times, ringed with ruins, where we overnight.
- Day 5:** This morning we head a short way inland to Phoenix, from an idyllic narrow cove whose waters once covered the shipwreck of a Byzantine vessel filled with glass, revealed in a ground-breaking American excavation. More vessels remain in the sea's grip beneath. Phoenix itself is a wild and remote citadel city, with beautiful landscapes and grand vistas all around, almost untouched by archaeologists. We hike from Phoenix along roads cut into the bedrock over 2,000 years ago, discovering remarkable pyramidal stones and all manner of ancient ruins as well as abandoned modern houses that utilised ancient inscriptions, statue bases and doorways within their walls. In the afternoon, we cruise north to relax and swim in a delightful bay.
- Day 6:** In the morning we hike through pine clad hills and past an ancient standing stone to the ancient city of Amos perched on a rocky headland, with wondrous views all around. Ongoing archaeological excavations are revealing Amos, with its lovely little theatre and impressive fortifications, to have been considerably larger than originally thought. In the afternoon we cruise east to the beautiful inlet of Ağlımani, a perfect place to unwind and swim.
- Day 7:** We hike up an ancient track, with part of the original road surfacing visible in places, to crest a ridge crowned with monumental tombs. These majestic mausolea, look out towards the Mediterranean Sea and also look over the isolated ancient settlement of Lydae, its ruins a diffusion of sculpture and inscriptions in the bowl of a valley silent but for the occasional tinkle of goat bells. Two thousand years ago, a city flourished here, now it lies beautifully desolate at the hand of earthquakes, leaving mounds of sculpted rubble, a scatter of ancient buildings and, strewn between, a profusion of ancient sculptures and inscriptions, columns and capitals, lying as if they'd never before been found. We hike past olive presses and a profusion of tombs, down a splendid track to a picturesque bay, popularly referred to as Cleopatra's, which lies on one side of a narrow isthmus that was completely walled off probably some 1,500 years ago. Here we re-join our gulet and enjoy a final swim before heading to our final port of call, the lovely little town of Göcek.
- Day 8:** Transfer from your gulet to Dalaman airport, about 30 minutes away.

GO BACK TO BACK

WALKING WESTERN LYCIA
OCT 6 - OCT 13

SOMETHING SIMILAR

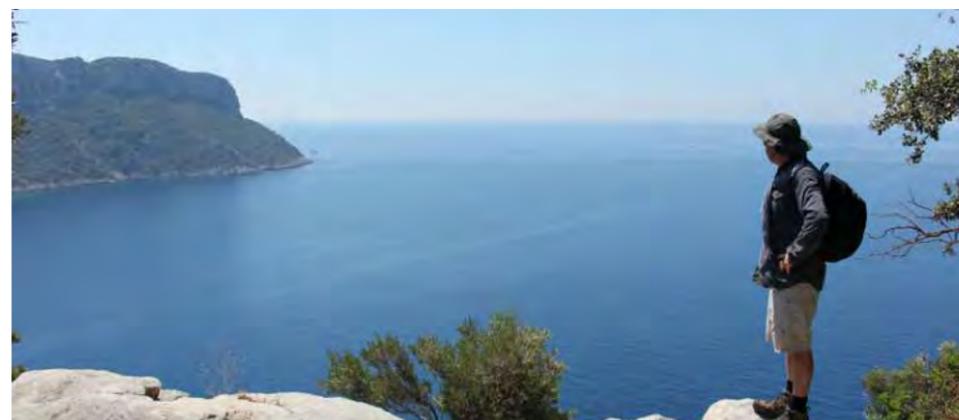
WALKING AND CRUISING
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WALKING AND CRUISING THE LYCIAN SHORE



View from Ottoman Castle, Kale



SEP 29 - OCT 13



TOUR GUIDE: PETER SOMMER - £5,125 PER PERSON / SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: £1,395



Over the years, many guests travelling on our "Cruising the Lycian Shore" trip found themselves fascinated and enchanted by the occasional strolls we took on the Lycian Way, Turkey's very first long-distance hiking trail. Their frequent inquiries inspired us to create an archaeological tour in Turkey that combines more hiking with historical adventures and the pleasure of a gulet cruise. Thanks to your inspiration, back in 2006, Walking and Cruising the Lycian Shore became the first of our walking holidays.

Rated by The Sunday Times (UK) as one of the ten best walks in the world, the Lycian Way follows over 540km (335 miles) of ancient roadways, mule tracks and shepherds' paths along one of Turkey's most remote and untouched coastlines. On this cruise, we follow some of its very best stretches, chosen for their beauty and interest, averaging about 9km (5-6 miles) of hiking per day. Our travelling offshore base is a beautiful traditional Turkish gulet, offering us elegant transport, delicious dining, comfortable accommodation and welcome leisure throughout the voyage.

An ideal tour for hikers and for lovers of the sea alike, the cruise also provides the cultural and archaeological experience that is the trademark of Peter Sommer Travels. Escorted by Peter Sommer himself, you will visit a whole series of ancient sites, stroll along Roman roads, trace the routes of 2,000 year-old aqueducts and follow in the footsteps of characters from the mysterious Lycians of antiquity via Alexander the Great to the nomadic herders of recent centuries.

Exploring on foot offers a uniquely profound and enjoyable engagement with the landscape and its history, including the opportunity to discover truly remote archaeological sites that cannot be easily reached otherwise. You will be able to hike through magnificent scenery high above the Mediterranean Sea, and see sites like wild and ancient Apollonia, with its grand necropolis and romantic theatre, or the extensive ruins of mountain-top Kyaneai, one of the most important cities of ancient Lycia.

Of course, we also visit Lycia's famous archaeological highlights, such as the regional Lycian capital at Pinara with its "royal" tombs, the monumental Roman port city of Patara and the Ottoman castle of Kale, ancient Simena, surrounded by age-old Lycian sarcophagus graves.

The combination of hikes through a succession of beautiful landscapes, expert-led visits to fascinating archaeological sites, cruising in pristine waters and delicious meals on board or in selected local restaurants, in addition to plenty of time to swim and relax, make this tour a perfect choice for the active and curious traveller. From footpaths by the coast to goat tracks high up in the hills, from age-old cemeteries to monumental ruined cities, this Lycian Way tour offers you stimulation and relaxation for mind, body and soul.



WALKING AND CRUISING THE LYCIAN SHORE

- Day 1:** The start of our tour walking the Lycian Way. Our gulet is about 30 minutes from Dalaman airport at Göcek, a pretty harbour beneath mountains at the head of the Bay of Fethiye, on Turkey's Mediterranean coast. Welcome dinner aboard.
- Day 2:** An easy first day spent in the Bay of Fethiye, with plenty of time for swimming, relaxing and admiring the scenery of sea and mountains.
- Day 3:** We set out eastwards to explore the atmospheric ghost town of Kaya/Levissi, abandoned by its Greek inhabitants in 1923. Later we hike back downhill to meet the gulet near Gemiler Island, an area perfect for swimming.
- Day 4:** We drive inland to Sidyma, to ramble the extensive 2,500 year-old cemeteries of an ancient city. After admiring its elaborate tombs and sarcophagi we hike down a hillside to the neighbouring village of Boğaziçi before returning to the boat for a swim.
- Day 5:** We drive the fertile Xanthus valley to ancient Pinara, where a mighty cliff riddled with tombs stands guard over one of the most striking and spectacularly situated archaeological sites in Turkey. Highlights include the great theatre and the "royal tomb", its fine reliefs depicting Lycian cities.
- Day 6:** East to investigate remote Apollonia, where an ancient Greek theatre stands amid the remains of a Byzantine fortress and basilica church, in turn surrounded by a vast and elaborate necropolis. We hike back through a wild landscape of karstic limestone and stubborn maquis to return back to the sea at ancient Aperlai, Apollonia's harbour.
- Day 7:** We cruise by Kekova Island to gaze at the Late Roman/Early Byzantine "sunken city" of Dolichiste. Later, we disembark at Üçağız, ancient Teimioussa, to explore its ancient cemetery, looking like so many sarcophagi scattered along the seashore by a passing giant. From here, we walk to Kale, ancient Simena, where another row of sarcophagi crowns the ridge leading up to an Ottoman castle built upon Byzantine and Hellenistic predecessors. One of the most romantic stops of the holiday.
- Day 8:** We visit Sura, site of a famous fish oracle dedicated to Apollo in a lush coastal valley, its main temple substantially preserved, then trek along a beautiful stretch of coast to the ancient city of Istlada, with various public buildings and more Lycian tombs, to reach our waiting boat.
- Day 9:** Inland to one of the most remarkable and significant city-states of ancient Lycia, mountain-top Kyaenai. Its theatre, market, baths and vast cemeteries (with over 300 sarcophagi!) stand witness to great affluence that has given way to a wild and inspiring nature. We overnight near Kaş, ancient Antiphellos, where a picturesque seaside town incorporates many ancient remains.
- Day 10:** One of the longest and most challenging days of hiking but well worth the effort. We trek along old migration routes and ancient ways with wonderful unforgettable views both inland and out to sea, discovering a wide variety of ancient Lycian ruins and then descend from on high on a remote and remarkable stretch of Roman road.
- Day 11:** We cruise west to the pretty harbour of Kalkan and then head inland. Starting at Delikkemer, the ingenious inverted-syphon bridge of a Roman aqueduct, we enjoy a medium length hike to the city it served, ancient Patara, where archaeologists are revealing the remains of a vast and monumental Roman city, one-time capital of the Lycian Confederation.
- Day 12:** After cruising north, we hike from Faralya to Kabak through a peaceful and remote landscape of cyclamen-filled woods and busy beehives with grand vistas of mountains and seascapes.
- Day 13:** The second-longest hike of the trip is the glorious final trek across the shoulder of Babadağ (Father Mountain), taking us from the coastal slopes high into the foothills of a wild mountainous landscape and down to cliffs overlooking the stupendous "Butterfly Valley".
- Day 14:** A day of total leisure aboard our elegant gulet, sailing and swimming. We moor in Fethiye, ancient Telmessos, for a final chance to shop.
- Day 15:** The end of our guided tour on the Lycian way. Transfer to Dalaman airport, about 60 minutes away.



GO BACK TO BACK

WALKING AND CRUISING
SOUTHERN DALMATIA
SEP 21 - SEP 28

EXPLORING CRETE
OCT 15 - OCT 28

SOMETHING SIMILAR

WALKING AND CRUISING
THE CARIAN COAST

WALKING AND CRUISING
SOUTHERN DALMATIA

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MAPS

ENGLAND



EXPLORING HADRIAN'S WALL: ROMANS, REIVERS AND ROMANTICS

"Amazing time, wonderful trip, well organized, lovely hotel, great food and walks along the wall and through museums that were spectacular. Daily trips to walk various sections of the Wall, see ruins of the forts, and visit museums to get a real sense of Roman Britain."

Joan Huzar, Victoria, Canada



Vindolanda



EXPLORING HADRIAN'S WALL: CAMBRIDGE ALUMNI TOUR

"An experience that could not be bettered. Great care had been taken in arranging every detail. Our guide was one of the best I've had on any tour, not only extremely knowledgeable but genuinely enthusiastic and able to convey that enthusiasm to others."

Cynthia Kahn, USA



Bamburgh Castle



Cragside House



EXPLORING HADRIAN'S WALL:

ROMANS, REIVERS AND ROMANTICS



Walking to Birdoswald



MAY 28 - JUNE 4



TOUR GUIDE: PAUL BESTON - £2,995 PER PERSON / SINGLE SUPPLEMENT £795
INCLUDES ALL MEALS EXCEPT 1 LUNCH AND 2 DINNERS



Join us on an exploration of the raw beauty and richly-layered history of this most distinctive English region. Few areas so large come to be defined by a single work of man, but the Wall Country has had a special character since the Romans first set this great work in trail over field, hill, crag and river nearly two thousand years ago. Today, we take you through a warm and welcoming countryside of ever-changing views, from bustling mediaeval market towns, through gentle farmland and craggy rocks strewn with tumbled Roman stones which give way to beautiful views of thick woods and wild loughs. This is a tour where the landscape itself inspires awe and is a character in its own right. It has drawn people from Romans through Anglo-Saxons and Vikings to mediaeval warlords, sinister Reivers and the Victorian romantics who fell in love with it and its stories.

Our encounter with the long history of this region begins as the Romans, after forty years in the north, built their mighty Wall, marching mile after mile across the neck of Britain, disregarding hills, rocks and rivers and definitively marked the land to the south as Roman. Though there is much to see and say about the military side of the wall – the physical awe, the impressiveness of Roman military power and organisation – there is also another more human tale to tell. Everywhere behind the wall, there are stories of strange gods, civilian bustle, military order and the daily lives of thousands of men, women and children. It is a Roman landscape unique in Britain for its diversity and scale.

With the end of Roman rule after some three hundred years, the ruins of the Wall became the homes of farmers, strongholds of lords, hide-outs of thieves and the building material of churchmen, but always remained a powerful reminder of what had once been. Our story continues with the Anglo-Saxons and then the stretching north of the great kingdom of England, marking the landscape with beautiful churches and gripping it with castles. Here, for centuries, England contested the land either side of the Wall with Scotland, leaving a trail of wars and raids and forging a tough, self-reliant and independent people.

In time, the border was pacified, and the hazards earlier people faced became part of the magnificent tapestry of a border history which drew people to a now-peaceful but storied and beautiful country, inspiring Scott, Kipling, Turner and William Morris, and the perfectly-placed grand home of the ingenious Lord Armstrong.

This tour offers a wealth of experiences: a remarkable landscape, a deep history, the stern traces of Roman power, the fascinating contact with individual lives carved in stone or left in the organic finds at Vindolanda, the aesthetic beauty of Cragston or Lanercost priory, the reminders of its dangerous past and the fantastic local food and drink. There is no better place to begin an exploration of England's long history, beautiful countryside and cultural richness.





EXPLORING HADRIAN'S WALL:

ROMANS, REIVERS AND ROMANTICS

Day 1: The start of our Hadrian's Wall tour. Arrival at our inn-hotel, set in the Tudor abbot's house of a medieval monastery at the heart of a pretty village of honey-coloured stone. Welcome drinks and dinner at the hotel.

Day 2: A day to gain an appreciation of the entire Wall system! We begin at Wallsend, and a lofty tower whose elevated view lays out the fort and baths beautifully clearly; the site museum helps us to start building a picture of what these forts were like – as well as answering a long unsolved question. We go on to the excellent Hancock Museum, a superb location to meet the soldiers, civilians and gods who inhabited the Roman Wall: one of the finest museums in the north country.

After a fine lunch, we cross the broad River Tyne to South Shields, and the unusual fort of Arbeia, entering through its imposing rebuilt gatehouse. A few carefully reconstructed buildings allow us to vividly imagine the original appearance of the other sites we'll visit. And there's a splendidly rich little museum with some of the most famous people of the Wall zone to encounter.

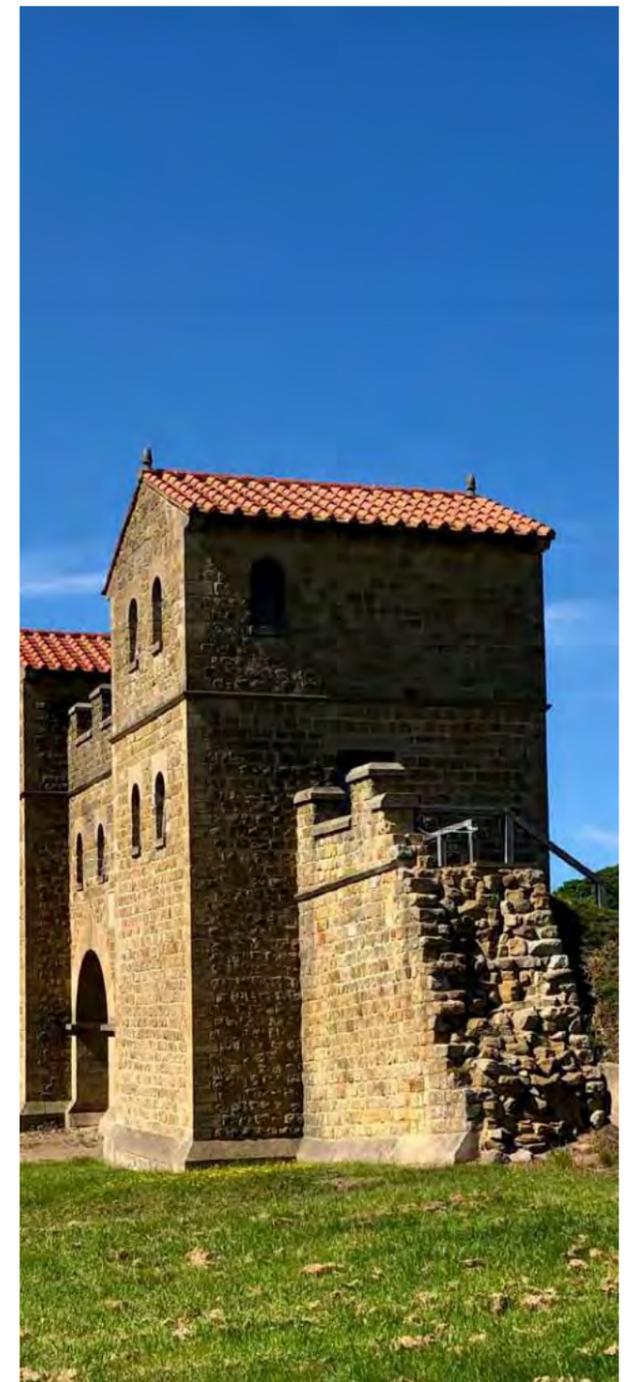
Day 3: A short journey takes us to Steel Rigg for a walk through the Wall's most breath-taking, wild and romantic scenery, the hard spine of the Great Whin Sill. This most iconic stretch of the Wall still preserves the feeling of being a frontier, as it drives its way through ragged, undulating terrain with fine views of Crag Lough and through the famous Sycamore Gap, still a spellbinding location even if temporarily lacking an eponymous tree. We walk to Housesteads, the most renowned fort on the Wall, where one of its largest forts peers over the Sill's precipice. Behind it is a civilian settlement where hooded local gods were worshipped, coins faked and an undiscovered murder committed.

After a well-earned picnic lunch, we visit the nearby temple of Mithras at Carrawburgh, whose well-preserved remains have much to tell about this enigmatic saviour-god.

Day 4: A day which reminds us just how much there is to tell beyond the straightforward story of the Wall as a Hadrianic military frontier. We look to the time before its inception and particularly at the emerging and exciting story of what was happening here long after the Roman garrisons were gone. Perhaps most excitingly, we take in a favourite site that allows us to immerse ourselves in the daily lives of the people of the Wall.

We begin at the village of Gilsland with our second hike along the Wall itself. This time, a much gentler walk past the exceptional milecastle at Poltross Burn brings us through attractive countryside to the Roman bridge at Willowford and over the intermittently turbulent river it once spanned. We'll then climb the rise to Birdoswald fort, perched on a great and dramatic spur which sweeps down majestically into the Irthing Valley, and whose fort buildings were used through the Dark Ages and into Medieval times. New excavations here are revealing impressive new buildings and are poised to expand the Wall's story hopefully in new directions.

After lunch at the famed Twice Brewed pub, we spend the entire afternoon at the extraordinary site of Vindolanda, one of the most important archaeological treasures in the entire Roman Empire. Here, the environment has preserved a bewildering array of everyday objects - personal letters, children's shoes, combs, even wigs – that allow us to come as close to real Roman life as it is possible to do. The remains of the fort, and the civilian town outside would be among the most impressive on the Roman frontier, even if they were not continually changing with the excavations that will be producing new insights as we visit. In recent years they have revealed an extraordinary story of the site's persistence long into the Dark Ages as a Christian centre, far beyond what had ever been expected. This will undoubtedly be one of your highlights.





EXPLORING HADRIAN'S WALL:

ROMANS, REIVERS AND ROMANTICS

Day 5: Our day begins with a short visit to the Roman Army Museum at Carvoran with some excellent modern displays complementing yesterday's story from Vindolanda. The fort lies on the site of the Roman fort at Magna, and new excavations have begun here (since 2023) which have the potential to bring us new finds of a similar quality because of its waterlogged location.

We then head west to a site renowned for its beauty, which lays bare how the Roman Wall faded, was reused and became the stuff of Romantic adulation: the wonderful red stone priory at Lanercost. Now a restful ruin, it stamped English medieval civilisation on an area buffeted by conflict, and was home to Edward I on his last, fatal journey north. After falling victim to Henry VIII its aesthetically perfect dilapidation in a remote and peaceful location provided inspiration for a generation of Victorian Romantics, including decoration by the Arts & Crafts movement.

After lunch, we continue west to the city of Carlisle, Roman in origin, and in mediaeval times guard and sentinel on a dangerously vulnerable invasion route. We visit the superb museum collection at Tullie House to see some of the finest finds from the Cumbrian end of the Wall, and then take in the mighty rust-coloured Carlisle Castle, key to the English West March and prison – not always successfully! - to some of the worst of the Reivers.

Day 6: We begin the day with a visit to the Roman town of Corbridge, hidden in a quiet spot by the Tyne. The singular, undulating, rumpled-carpet appearance of the site which you see walking down the main Roman street stems from the many layers of remains sagging over each other as you pass shops, granaries, fountains and houses lying over a series of early forts in this idyllic place, a favourite of many visitors. We move on a short distance to the pretty market-town of Hexham, visible from Corbridge and the centre in Tudor times of attempts to keep the Borderers under control. We visit its Abbey, begun in Anglo-Saxon times. Fragments of Roman buildings and inscriptions built into the ancient and long-hidden crypt beneath the lofty walls allow us to see where so much of Hadrian's Wall went, but there's a fascinating later history all its own, too.

You are free to choose a place to lunch and wander the charming streets of this attractive town so central to Border history. In the afternoon, we depart the genteel respectability of Hexham and return to the Wall at Chesters, here set in gently rolling riverside parkland. Beautifully framed by wooded low hills and the churning river, Chesters is blessed with a fine Edwardian museum filled with a mass of inscriptions and finds enriching our knowledge of the lives of the Roman-era inhabitants and the bewildering array of gods they worshipped, and the best Roman baths on the Wall.

Day 7: Today we see how the border country was tamed after a long period as a medieval battleground and turbulent Elizabethan crime scene. We begin on the east coast with the magnificent castle of Bamburgh, soaring on an impregnable craggy rock, and trace its history from being an Anglo-Saxon royal centre, refuge of saints and target of Vikings, through its time as a mighty English royal fortress, philanthropic school and finally, to stately residence of the Victorian industrialist and inventor, Lord Armstrong.

After lunch, we travel through the hilly wilderness west of Bamburgh to Armstrong's masterpiece, his house nestled in the forest at Craggside surrounded by sublime lakes and woods, tiered rockeries and gardens spilling down to a fine iron bridge spanning a pretty stream. The natural beauty of the site is brilliantly balanced by Armstrong's ingenuity in the house, the first to use hydroelectricity, and filled with the paraphernalia of civilised and refined modernity. After a rich and rewarding day, we have our farewell dinner.

Day 8: The end of our Exploring Hadrian's Wall tour. Transfer to Newcastle airport or train station.

GO BACK TO BACK

A GASTRONOMIC GULET CRUISE
MAY 19 - MAY 26

CRUISING THE DODECANESE
JUN 9 - JUN 23

SOMETHING SIMILAR

[EXPLORING CRETE](#)

[EXPLORING SICILY](#)

[EXPLORING MACEDONIA](#)

EXTEND YOUR STAY

If you would like to spend some extra time in the UK do please get in touch with us.

We can create private and add-on tours based on our previous itineraries for:
[Exploring Wessex](#)
[Exploring Wales](#)





EXPLORING HADRIAN'S WALL:

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE ALUMNI TOUR

This trip is open to friends and family of the Alumni of Cambridge and Oxford Universities

Join Professor Jim Crow on an exploration of the raw beauty and richly-layered history of this most distinctive English region. Few areas so large come to be defined by a single work of man, but the Wall Country has had a special character since the Romans first set this magnificent work in progress over field, hill, crag and river nearly two thousand years ago. Today, we take you through a warm and welcoming countryside of ever-changing views, from bustling medieval market towns, through gentle farmland and craggy rocks strewn with tumbled Roman stones which give way to beautiful views of thick woods and wild loughs. On our Hadrian's Wall tour the landscape itself inspires awe and is a character in its own right. It has drawn people from Romans through Anglo-Saxons and Vikings to Medieval Warlords, sinister Reivers and the Victorian Romantics who fell in love with it and its stories.

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In time, the border was pacified, and the hazards earlier people faced became part of the magnificent tapestry of a border history which drew people to a now-peaceful but storied and beautiful country, inspiring Scott, Kipling, Turner and William Morris.

This archaeological tour of Hadrian's Wall offers a wealth of experiences: a remarkable landscape, a deep history, the stern traces of Roman power, the fascinating contact with individual lives carved in stone or left in the organic finds at Vindolanda, the aesthetic beauty of Cragstone or Lanercost priory, the reminders of its dangerous past and the fantastic local food and drink. There is no better place to begin an exploration of England's long history, beautiful countryside and cultural richness.



JULY 6 - JULY 13



TOUR GUIDE: PROF. JIM CROW - £2,995 PER PERSON / SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: £795
INCLUDES ALL MEALS EXCEPT 1 LUNCH AND 2 DINNERS



- Day 1:** Arrival at our inn-hotel, set in the Tudor abbot's house of a Medieval monastery at the heart of a pretty village of honey-coloured stone. Welcome drinks and dinner at the hotel.
- Day 2:** A day to gain an appreciation of the entire Wall system! We begin at Wallsend, the elevated view laying out its fort and baths beautifully clearly before we go to the excellent Hancock Museum, a superb location to meet the soldiers, civilians and gods who inhabited the Roman Wall. After a fine lunch, we cross the broad River Tyne to South Shields, entering through its imposing rebuilt gatehouse. The evening is free to dine at your leisure.
- Day 3:** A short journey takes us to Steel Rigg for a walk through the Wall's most breath-taking, wild and romantic scenery, the hard spine of the Great Whin Sill. This most iconic stretch of the Wall still preserves the feeling of being a frontier, as it drives its way through ragged, undulating terrain with fine views of Crag Lough and through the famous Sycamore Gap. We walk to Housesteads, the most renowned fort on the Wall, where one of its largest forts peers over the Sill's precipice. Behind it is a civilian settlement where hooded local gods were worshipped, coins faked and an undiscovered murder committed. After a well-earned lunch, we visit the nearby temple of Mithras at Carrawburgh, whose well-preserved remains have much to tell about this enigmatic saviour-god.
- Day 4:** A day which allows us to immerse ourselves in the daily lives of the people of the Wall. We spend the whole morning at the extraordinary site of Vindolanda, one of the most important in the entire Roman Empire. Here, the environment has preserved a bewildering array of everyday objects - personal letters, children's shoes, combs, even wigs – that allow us to come as close to real Roman life as it is possible to do. The remains of the fort, and the civilian town outside would be impressive even if they were not continually changing with the excavations that will be producing new insights as we visit. After lunch, a gentle walk past the exceptional milecastle at Poltross Burn brings us through attractive countryside brings to the Roman bridge at Willowford and over the intermittently turbulent river. We'll then climb the rise to Birdoswald fort, perched on a great and dramatic spur which sweeps down majestically into the Irthing Valley, and whose fort buildings were used through the Dark Ages and into Medieval times.





EXPLORING HADRIAN'S WALL:

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE ALUMNI TOUR

Day 5: We begin the day with a visit to the Roman town of Corbridge, hidden in a quiet spot by the Tyne. The singular, undulating, rumpled-carpet appearance of the site which you see walking down the main Roman street is owed to the many layers of remains sagging over each other as you pass shops, granaries, fountains and houses built over a series of early forts in this idyllic place. We move on a short distance to the pretty market-town of Hexham, visible from Corbridge, to visit its Abbey, begun in Anglo-Saxon times. Fragments of Roman buildings and inscriptions built into the ancient and long-hidden crypt beneath the lofty walls of the Abbey allow us to see where so much of the Wall went. You are free to choose a place to lunch and wander the charming streets of this attractive town so central to Border history. From the respectability of Hexham, we return to the Wall at Chesters, here set in gently rolling riverside parkland. Beautifully framed by wooded low hills and the churning river, Chesters is blessed with a fine Edwardian museum filled with a mass of inscriptions and finds enriching our knowledge of the lives of the Roman-era inhabitants and the bewildering array of gods they worshipped, and the best Roman baths on the Wall. The evening is free to dine at your leisure.

Day 6: We pass beyond the western section of the Wall and through breath-taking stark hills looming over deep, winding valleys and roaring becks to the Irish Sea coast at Maryport, to see how the Roman frontier involved far more than the Wall alone. Standing sentinel on a bluff with views of Scotland and the Isle of Man, Maryport houses an internationally-important collection of altars to the great state god of Rome, Jupiter Optimus Maximus, and some delightfully rustic images of less far-famed deities. Afterwards, we head to the outskirts of the Lake District for a well-earned lunch before heading back to Wall country. To cap a day in which we'll have seen so much of the raw beauty of nature, our final destination lays bare how the Roman Wall faded, was reused and likewise became the stuff of Romantic adulation by visiting the distinctive red stone priory at Lanercost. Now a restful ruin, it stamped English medieval civilisation on an area buffeted by conflict, and was home to Edward I on his last journey north. After falling victim to Henry VIII it drew the interest of Victorian Romantics, including decoration by the Arts & Crafts movement.

Day 7: We head north across a wild and sparse country to see Rome's furthest outposts, and for a last encounter with the medieval history of the borderlands. We begin at Melrose, with the expansive remains of its splendid abbey, resting place of the bodies – and hearts – of famed Scottish kings. We then turn to the place's earlier history as a frontier, and visit the Roman outpost fort of Trimontium, a new museum telling its story brilliantly. Southward lies a region speckled with a great concentration of hillforts and markers of Roman presence as we head down their Dere Street, we stop for a walk in country that still feels distant from any centre, beautiful, raw-boned and wonderfully remote. This takes us to a rarely visited gem, the fort of Bremenium at High Rochester, its walls and gates brilliantly preserved and enfolding traces of later border history that have become so familiar now. With a last look at the landscape that's made our week unforgettable, we take out leave. After a rich and rewarding day, we have our farewell dinner.

Day 8: Departure from your hotel and transfer to Newcastle train station.

SOMETHING SIMILAR

EXPLORING CRETE

EXPLORING SICILY

EXPLORING MACEDONIA

EXTEND YOUR STAY

If you would like to spend some extra time in the UK do please get in touch with us.

We can create private and add-on tours based on our previous itineraries for:
Exploring Wessex
Exploring Wales



EXTEND YOUR STAY



The Roman Baths

ADD-ON TOURS IN THE UK

We have created two tours that offer you the chance to extend your travels before or after your land tour in Italy. Whether you have never travelled to Rome before, or if you have been multiple times, we have the perfect itinerary for you. Of course, if you see something that you want to change, or would prefer to include instead, or if you have less or more time in which to travel, please just let us know and we will craft an itinerary just for you.

FROM STONEHENGE TO GEORGIAN BATH

All of England's history can be seen in this region replete with World Heritage Sites. From the ancient chalk downlands of Wiltshire, through the lush tree-clad hills and combes of Gloucestershire to the misty beauty of the Somerset Levels, this is the England of the mind's eye. Dramatic cathedrals with soaring spires, serene abbeys, elegant Roman villas and the deep past of Stone Age England, where it all began.

Through encounters with the awe-inspiring great stone circles at Stonehenge, the Celts and Romans, the castles and holy places of the Middle Ages, and the new Kingdom of England - transformed as the old religion is broken - we see beautiful monasteries suppressed, the varying fortunes of the great families, as some fall in Civil War and the refined and genteel world of Georgian elegance and high society in the respectable, elevated beauty of Bath.

All of this accompanied by some fine dining, visits to traditional English pubs, locally brewed ales and ciders and tastes of some of the world famous specialities of the region. From green fields with enigmatic henges, outposts of Roman civilisation in wooded valleys, emblems of Norman power and Georgian taste, there is no finer place to begin your exploration of England's long and inspiring history.



EXPLORING SOUTH WALES

The unique story of south and west Wales, lands with a long and complex history of invasion, accommodation, resistance and conquest, through all of which distinct local forms of power, culture, religion and dialect persisted. Today, we can take you to a land of overpowering natural beauty with a welcoming character, some of the finest historic sites in the British Isles and truly delicious traditional dishes.

The history of this region is one of an ebb and flow of outside control, the coastlands and rivers aiding invasion, the brawny hills providing a refuge and redoubt to keep incomers penned to the fringes. The pattern is repeated over and over again - Romans, Irish, Vikings, Normans, English all settle, push and fortify, build towns, leaving their imprint - while in the uplands local powers persist, fight, accommodate. It leaves a remarkable historical story, and epic tales of loss and triumph marked across the land by Roman forts, early medieval saints with chapels and cults scattered far and wide, enigmatic Dark Age tombstones of half-known rulers, and Arthurian tales laid on the bones of Roman walls. And then, most visible of all, the enmeshing net of castles, among them the most colossal in Britain, to hold down the land for the mighty Marcher lords, a challenge both to Welsh independence and English kings, and the wonderful churches and abbeys in tranquil locations through which they showed their devotion. So conquest came - but not an End, just a new Act: the dramatic story of the resurgent Welsh taking to larger stages with the emergence of the Tudors, giving us the opulent houses of the new nobility, the stark trial of Civil War, and fairytale palaces built with wealth hewn from the mountains themselves.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Our Guests:

What sort of people go on your trips?

Our archaeological tours are very much self-selecting. The people who come on our trips are usually well travelled, enthusiastic, and curious about exploring new countries and cultures. They come from an incredibly wide range of professional backgrounds. Some have never been on an archaeological tour before, others have explored ancient sites all over the world. On average about a quarter of the people on our trips are single travellers. About 40% of our guests come from the UK, 40% from the US, with the remaining 20% split between Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Europe, and beyond. Many of the people who travel with us first find out about Peter Sommer Travels through personal recommendations. Many clients travel with us again and again.

Age Of Travellers:

How old are the people that travel with you?

Our trips tend to appeal to quite a wide age range. Generally speaking, most are in the 40-70 age bracket. Our family tours have attracted parents with children aged between 6-17. We have mums and dads bringing their grown up children along in their 20's or 30's, and we are finding more and more people in their 30's and 40's coming on our trips – those who are no longer interested in basic beach holidays, but are wanting to explore and learn at the same time as having a relaxing time in a beautiful place with marvellous food. Our oldest client so far has been a fit and able 90 year old, with four of our tours under his belt.

Seasickness:

I am concerned about the possibility of feeling seasick on a gulet trip. Does it get rough, how often do your passengers get sick, and what do you recommend to avoid mal de mer?

In terms of seasickness, water conditions are generally quite calm compared to the large oceans. The Mediterranean, being non-tidal, is a very different proposition to the great seas and oceans, but of course the weather can blow up at times. The gulets we use are all broad and beamy and of a decent length so they offer a very comfortable ride. We watch the weather very closely and try to avoid rough seas. Invariably there are plenty of places around the coast to take shelter and hide from the elements if the wind does start to blow up. For the large part we cruise close to the coast and a wealth of coves and hidden bays.

In terms of prevention, we know some people who swear by travel sickness pills, others who swear by wrist bands that apply pressure on acupuncture points, some who recommend specialist patches applied to the skin, and we've had a number of ladies who insist that brandy helps! Most people tell us that being on deck in the sunny fresh air gazing at the ever changing horizon is more than enough to ward off any feelings of mal de mer. We hope this goes some way to relieving your anxiety and settling your stomach!

Transfers:

How do people get to the gulet, or the first hotel, at the start of a trip?

We meet guests at the local airport or train station closest to the starting point of a tour, and then, on the final day of a trip, escort them to the local airport or train station closest to the ending point. These airport transfers are included in our tour prices.

Flights and trains: How do we book?

After a customer makes a tour booking, we recommend times to arrive for the start of a tour, and what times fit best for departure at the end of a trip. International and domestic flights and rail are not included in the price of a tour, and we don't sell tickets ourselves. We do work with several specialists and are more than happy to put customers in touch with them if they so desire. Travellers need to pay for their air or rail tickets themselves which they can do via our specialists, through the internet, or via an agent they already know.

Extend your stay:

We'd like to see more of the area and stay in a nearby city for a few days either before or after our tour or gulet cruise.

We have created add-on tours that offer you the chance to extend your travels immediately before or directly after your cruise or land tour. We are also more than happy to recommend a small number of characterful hotels that we have personally visited. Please contact us for details.

Single Supplement:

As a single traveller, do I need to pay a single supplement if I am willing to share a cabin or hotel room?

The majority of the time our single customers choose to splash out and book a cabin on a gulet, or a hotel room for themselves, but if you have a single travelling companion you are willing to share with, or there is another single traveller booked on a trip who is willing to share a twin bedded cabin or hotel room, we will be more than happy to waive the single supplements.

Sailing:

How often do your gulets sail?

We usually cruise for about three to four hours a day, generally by motor to keep to schedule, so we can visit sites in the itinerary at the right time of day and with plenty of time to explore them thoroughly. The gulets we use on our scheduled tours all have sails, and are capable of sailing, but gulets are large and heavy (making them very stable), weighing in at over 100 tonnes. Unlike light fibreglass boats, they require a fair amount of wind to get them sailing, and we don't sail in strong winds, as this would be uncomfortable for guests and would require a much larger crew. Weather and time permitting we hope you'll have the opportunity to sail at least once in a one week trip, but sailing is not guaranteed so we recommend you expect to be cruising throughout to avoid disappointment.

Watersports:

What 'toys' are provided on a gulet? Is there anywhere to snorkel?

Most gulets come equipped with a canoe, and a small selection of flippers, masks, and snorkels. The snorkelling equipment comes in a range

of sizes from child's to adult's. If you do have your own flippers and snorkelling equipment we do recommend bringing them so that you know that they fit and also that you don't have to wait for someone else to finish using a set. There are many wonderful coves and bays which are perfect for swimming and snorkelling.

Bed Linen And Towels:

Are towels and bed linen provided on board?

All bed linen is provided on the gulet. Depending on the temperature and individual preference there is a choice of blankets and duvets to keep you warm at night. Each guest has two towels – one for the bathroom and one for swimming. All bed linen and towels are laundered once a week.

Air Conditioning:

How well does air conditioning work on gulets?

All the gulets we use for our scheduled tours are equipped with air conditioning. However, because of noise restrictions (the air conditioning requires power from the on board generator) gulets are not permitted to run air conditioning in harbour, nor are they permitted to run it throughout the night when moored out of harbour. In hot temperatures when moored out of a harbour, the Captain usually runs the air con in the evening to cool cabins before guests retire. Many guests make a virtue of the heat to sleep out on deck under the stars.

Electricity On Gulet:

Are there electrical outlets on the gulet, and what adaptors do we need?

Electricity aboard is 220V and requires two pin (round) plugs. There is at least one plug in each cabin, so people can use hair driers/shavers etc. and of course you can charge up phones/camera batteries there. When docked in a designated harbour the gulet receives electricity directly by cable from shore mains power. While the gulet is cruising or anchored out in a bay its electricity is provided by the generator so there will be periods during the day and night when the electricity is not on.

Noise:

Can it be noisy at night during a gulet cruise? Should I bring earplugs?

On our gulet cruises, we often spend nights anchored in remote coves and bays, either as the only boat present or along with few others. Traditional wooden boats do make sounds; you may hear the wind whooshing through the rigging, the waves lapping against the side of the boat, ropes stretching, timbers creaking, the crew getting up to make your breakfast etc. Sometimes the gulet may begin moving early in the morning and the generator will come on before breakfast to enable cooking and to provide hot water. As well as the peace and quiet and proximity to nature, nights out in bays have the advantage of allowing guests more swimming opportunities, both in the evening and early the following morning.

Other nights are spent moored in small ports or marinas. The frequency of such nights depends on the itinerary in question (some have more harbour nights than others) as well as the weather. Nights in harbour can be a little warmer, because towns are generally warmer and there is less opportunity for a through breeze. They can also be noisier than nights in bays with a range of potential noise sources, ranging from chatting on neighbouring boats to shore traffic and music etc. from local restaurants and bars, even occasional concerts. Harbour nights offer many advantages: the opportunity to go ashore for a stroll or for shopping, enjoy a coffee or glass of local wine before or after dinner, the chance to observe town or village life. We try where possible to offer a mix of nights in harbour and out in bays so our guests get a full and rounded experience. If you are concerned about noise or are a light sleeper we recommend you bring ear plugs with you for your own comfort.

Internet Availability:

Is wi-fi available on your gulets? Will there be good cellphone/mobile reception during the trip?

All gulets on scheduled tours carry a wi-fi router. It provides web access to a limited number of internet-enabled devices at the same time. We ask that guests use the wi-fi responsibly and avoid large down/uploads and be mindful of other guests, logging devices off when not in use. Internet access relies on land-based 3G/4G networks; signal quality can vary, occasionally there is none. Especially on our island tours, but also along remote stretches of the coast, we may be out of reception range for considerable periods of time, at times even whole days. If you expect to be using large amounts of bandwidth and need independence from the on-board wi-fi, you may consider buying a local pay-as-you-go SIM card for your phone or tablet, as many of our guests do. Our guides can assist you with that. Mobile/cellphone signal depends on our location. There is coverage along most of the coast but at times it may be weak or SOS-only level. If you plan to use your own mobile/cellphone, please ask your provider about roaming rates and activation procedures.



GENERAL INFORMATION

✦ Visas

Turkish visas are required for all tours in Turkey and some gulet cruises in Greece. Visas are easily obtained online at www.evisa.gov.tr and must be purchased before you travel.

Citizens of European Union or Schengen Treaty member states need no visa for Greece, Croatia or Italy. Those from the United States, Canada and Australia do not need to apply for a visa to visit Greece, Croatia or Italy for trips of less than 90 days duration.

United Kingdom citizens will not need a visa for short trips to most EU countries. You'll be able to stay for up to 90 days in any 180-day period. Different rules apply to Croatia. If you visit Croatia, visits to other EU countries will not count towards the 90-day total. Other nationalities should contact their local consulate or ask us for further advice.

✦ Health

Guidelines laid down by the UK Department of Health say you do not require any specific inoculations for the areas covered in these tours.

✦ Payment Protection

We are a Member of ABTA, membership number Y6151. Peter Sommer Travels Ltd. has provided a Bond held by ABTA to meet the requirements of the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992. All passengers booking with us are fully protected as detailed in the ABTA Bond for their initial deposit and balance payments made, in the unlikely event of cancellation or curtailment of your travel arrangements due to our insolvency.

✦ Data Protection and Use of Images

In order to provide your holiday, we need to collect certain personal details from you and as appropriate, pass these on to suppliers and other third parties. We would like to keep and use these details for the purpose of sending you our brochure and other marketing material in the future. Full details of our data protection policy can be found on our website.

We often take photographs or videos during a tour for publicity purposes. Naturally we like to have some photos that include our lovely guests. We like to use these images in our brochure, other printed materials and on our website. We may also send them to the news media for PR. We need your permission to do this and would be most grateful if you would let us use the photographs taken during a tour that may include you. Rest assured we do not use guests' names together with the photographs.



Picture Acknowledgements:

In addition to our own photographs and those supplied by; The GNTO, The National Trust, English Heritage, VisitEngland, Visit Scotland, The Irish Tourist Board, The Croatian Tourist Board, and © Crown copyright 2018 (Visit Wales), many of the images in this brochure and on our website were very kindly sent in by our guides and guests. Many thanks to you all.





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