



## First Class 15 Day Tour/Cruise Package

# Greece & Italy

### Day 1: Depart USA

Overnight flight to Athens.

### Day 2: Arrive Athens

We fly to Athens and check into our hotel. You will have the remainder of the day free to relax or take a stroll along the streets of Athens to enjoy the flavor of the city. (B, D)

### Day 3: Cruising Mykonos

We sail this morning from Athens to the quaint isle of Mykonos, called the island of windmills. Experience the waterfront lined with shops and cafes and then stroll the charming walkways through a maze of whitewashed buildings before returning to the ship for dinner and evening entertainment. (B, D)

### Day 4: Ephesus and Patmos

Docking in Turkey, enjoy a tour of Ephesus, the city of the Bible and one of the largest restorations still in progress with miles of ancient treasures. Ephesus was once a thriving port town of 250,000 people. Today you can still see the spectacular excava-

tions of the major streets in this ancient city including the Agora, the Odeon, the Library, the marble-paved main Street, the Baths, Trajan's Fountain, the Residences of the Patricians, the Prytaneum, and Temple of Hadrian. The Great Theatre, built in the 4th century B.C., could accommodate 24,000 spectators and it is famous even nowadays for its acoustics. This afternoon we visit the Isle of Patmos, under statutory protection as a historic monument. Here we have a tour to see the fortified monastery of St. John and the cave claimed to be where John received the Revelation. Back on the ship, enjoy the Captain's dinner before settling in to your cabin for the night.

### Day 5: Crete and Santorini

Crete is the largest and the most rugged of the Greek islands. Take a tour to Heraklion and the fantastic ruins of the Palace of Knossos. Discovered in 1899 and partially reconstructed, the elaborate Palace is believed to be the mythical Labyrinth of King Minos and the seat of ancient Minoan culture. This afternoon visit the island of Santorini which is perhaps the most breathtaking of all the Greek Islands. You may choose to take an optional panoramic bus





tour viewing some of the most spectacular scenery of the Aegean. Travel through countless villages and settlements with delicate architecture and beauties eventually arriving in Oia. During your time in Oia, visit the many narrow streets, open-air cafes and glittering boutiques. Upon returning to the ship, we view the lace-like caldera, the little islands of Thirasia, Palea, & Nea Kameni. We arrive at the ship for dinner and evening entertainment. (B, D)

#### **Day 6: Disembark Cruise – Ancient Corinth & Cenchreae**

We disembark the cruise this morning and travel west with a rest stop and photos at the Corinth Canal. Next, we visit ancient Corinth, the city that inspired many of Paul's most familiar letters and is a highlight for the New Testament scholar. See the Archaeological Museum, the Market Place, the Bema, and the Temples. To enjoy a devotional in the midst of the ruins of the church of Corinth and see the pillars, steps, and public worship place where

Paul preached will enhance your understanding and love for the Bible. The ruins of this important cultural center are fascinating as we walk along the stone path that the Apostle Paul walked. The engineering skill and intellect of these people are evident in the water systems that still flow from ancient to modern day. Our guide will be sure to show you the room dedicated to the medical care of that period. We travel on to the top of the nearby Acropolis where our guide will speak on the worship practices and point out the bird's eye view of what was a bustling city of around 800,000 during Paul's stay. Another important stop is a visit to Diolkos where we view the paved trackway which enabled boats to be moved overland across the Isthmus of Corinth and served as a life line for Corinth. This shortcut allowed ancient vessels to avoid the long and dangerous circumnavigation of the Peloponnese peninsula. Before returning to Athens, we will visit Cenchreae, the ancient port region of Corinth. Acts 18:18 states the Apostle Paul stopped at Cenchreae during his second missionary journey, where he had his hair cut to fulfill a vow.

#### **Day 7: Athens**

Following breakfast this morning we tour Athens, the foundation of democracy. We visit the Acropolis, the Parthenon, and Erechtheum before viewing Athens atop Mars Hill where Paul stood and preached the truth to the Gentile nation. From atop Mars Hill we view the Agora below, the ancient marketplace and center of Athenian public life. Additional sites viewed during our panoramic bus tour are, the House of Parliament, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Olympic Stadium, and Presidential Palace. An option later this afternoon is a visit to the famous Plaka with a multitude of shops and cafes.



### Day 8: Arrive Rome

We fly from Athens to the Rome airport, and transfer to our lodging for the next three nights. This afternoon we will take an afternoon tour of the Catacombs where thousands of Christians were buried in a remarkable tiered series of galleries. (B, D)

### Day 9: Forum, Mamertine, Coliseum, Ostia Antica

We begin our walking tour at the ancient Roman Forum, where our guide will divulge its secrets. We will visit the Arch of Titus which commemorated the sack of Jerusalem by Titus in AD 70. We will view the Mamertine Prison exterior, where tradition says the Apostle Paul was imprisoned. The Roman church would say that Peter was imprisoned here as well, but there is no imperial evidence that Peter was ever in Rome. Next, we visit the Coliseum, where thousands of people and animals perished during gladiatorial games. The Coliseum first opened in AD 80 and within 100 days of its opening, 5000 wild beasts perished here. The slaughter of both humans and animals continued for three more centuries. Historians believe the Coliseum could hold between 40,000 and 80,000 people depending on how close the seating was. The floor has recently had a plank placed over the middle making it accessible for people to walk over the labyrinth of brick cells, ramps, and elevators used to transport animals and gladiators into the arena. Hear the stories of the games that have fascinated people for hun-

dreds of years. We conclude our day at the ruins of Ostia Antica, which provides an excellent example of city life in classical times and the Ostian Gate, today called the Gate of St. Paul. (B)

### Day 10: Vatican Museums, St. Peter's, Scala Santa, Abbey of Three Fountains, St. Paul Outside the Wall

After breakfast you will begin a full day of sightseeing. First visit Vatican City where you will see the Basilica at St. Peter, the Sistine Chapel and the Vatican Museums with stunning works of art at every turn. After some free time for lunch, you will stop at The Abbey of the Three Fountains, the traditional site of Paul's martyrdom and the ancient street that he walked on. Next, visit the 4th century Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls, the site of Paul's tomb, and the Scala Santa, where Martin Luther made his stand against the practice of indulgences. This fascinating museum houses the Steps from Pilot's Judgment Hall in Jerusalem brought to Rome by Helena, the mother of Constantine. Additional sights include the Arches of Constantine and Titus, Circus Maximus and the beautiful marble monument called the Wedding Cake. (B)

### Day 11: Frescoes, Assisi, Florence

After breakfast you will say "Arrivederci Roma" and board your coach and travel through scenic Umbria to the ancient walled hillside village of Assisi. After lunch on your own, you will enjoy a



Three Fountains



guided tour of this beautiful, medieval town, which will include the Basilica San Francesco, decorated with some of the most renowned frescoes in the world. The stories of the sacrificial life of St. Francis will be an encouragement to us all. This afternoon, we travel on to the spa village of Montecatini Terme, our place of lodging for the next two nights in the heart of Tuscany. (B, D)

#### **Day 12: Beautiful Florence, Michelangelo's David**

You will spend the morning enjoying a guided tour of Florence, one of the world's greatest artistic capitals, which will include the Piazza della Signoria, Duomo, Baptistry and a visit to the Accademia Gallery, home of Michelangelo's David. A stop will also be made on the hillside overlook across the river from Florence where we will enjoy a panoramic view of the beautiful red-tiled roof cityscape. This afternoon is at your leisure to enjoy shopping, visiting more galleries or strolling on the famous Pont Vecchio, the old bridge which spans the Arno River. Remember that Florence leather shops are the best in the world and bargains on excellent quality goods are abundant. It may be the time to purchase those special Christmas gifts. (B)

#### **Day 13: Pisa & Verona**

The sightseeing this morning includes a tour of Pisa where you will visit the Baptistry, Duomo and the famous leaning tower in the Piazza dei Miracoli. This afternoon we stop in romantic Verona, medieval setting of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, with a walk through the historic center/shopping district to see the famed balcony of Juliet. Our lodging for the next two evenings will be in Venice Mestre. (B, D)

#### **Day 14: Charming Venice**

Start the morning sightseeing in style as your guide takes you by private boat along the Giudecca canal to meet your resident expert. Highlights of your walking tour are St. Mark's Square and the Byzantine splendor of St. Mark's Basilica, lavish Doges' Palace and the Bridge of Sighs. Afterwards enjoy Venice at your own pace, or join an optional gondola ride through the picturesque canal system, visit the many charming shops and take photos galore. (B)

#### **Day 15: Home**

This morning we transfer to the airport for our flight home. (B)

**PRICE PER PERSON:**  
BASED ON DOUBLE OCCUPANCY

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