



## Religious & Cultural History Tour 18 Day First Class

### Day 1: Depart Boston

We depart Boston today and take an overnight flight to Athens, Greece.

### Day 2: Arrive in Athens

We arrive in Athens this evening and are met by a Pilgrim Tours assistant who will welcome us to Greece. We'll check into our hotel and enjoy the remainder of the evening, free for leisure after an introductory meeting for our group.

### Day 3: Athens – Acropolis, Parthenon, Mars Hill, Olympic Stadium

Today we enjoy a full day tour of Athens, the founding center of democracy. We visit the Acropolis, the Parthenon, and Erechtheum before visiting Mars Hill where St. Paul conversed with philosophers. Additional sites include the Agora (ancient market place and center of Athenian public life), the House of Parliament, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Olympic Stadium, and the Presidential Palace. This afternoon we'll have some free time to visit a museum or the famous Plaka, with its multitude of shops and cafes.

### Day 4: Corinth/ Mycenae – Corinthian Canal

Following breakfast this morning we depart Athens and travel west. We will have a rest stop and a chance for photos at the fa-

mous Corinthian Canal. We then travel to the ancient city of Corinth, where we will visit the Archaeological Museum and see the ruins that have been uncovered to date. While there, we'll discuss aspects of life in this city that will help to make some of the comments in the New Testament letters more understandable. After this visit we will travel to Mycenae where the remains of the ancient city date back to the Bronze Age. This will provide us with the opportunity to review some of the history that led to the preparation of The Iliad. We will stop to investigate an enormous beehive tomb before returning to Athens.

### Day 5: Delphi

From Athens we will take a full day tour to Delphi, which was a major site for the worship of the Greek god Apollo and the site of the Pythian Games. This will help us to understand the prophetic tradition of ancient Greece. We will return to our hotel in Athens for dinner.

### Day 6: Cruise - Mykonos

We sail this morning from Athens to the quaint isle of Mykonos, called the island of windmills. We will have an opportunity to experience the waterfront, lined with shops and cafes, or to stroll the charming walkways through a maze of whitewashed buildings before returning to the ship for dinner and evening entertainment.

### Day 7: Cruise - Ephesus and Patmos

Docking in Turkey, we will enjoy a tour of Ephesus, 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 excavations 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 the Temple of Hadrian. The Great Theatre, built in the 4th century B.C., could accommodate 24,000 spectators and is famous even nowadays for its acoustics. This afternoon we will visit the Isle of Patmos, under statutory protection as a historic monument. Here you may choose an optional tour to see the fortified monastery of St. John and the cave claimed to be where John received the Revelation. Back on the ship, we will enjoy the Captain's dinner before settling into our cabins for the night.





### **Day 8: Cruise - Crete and Santorini**

Crete is the largest and the most rugged of the Greek islands. You may choose an optional 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 we will visit the island of Santorini, perhaps the most breathtaking of all the Greek Islands. The town of Thira, where whitewashed houses, narrow streets, open-air cafes and glittering boutiques cling to steep cliffs, is accessible by foot path, cable-car or mule. You may choose to take an optional tour of sailing around an active volcano crater and swimming in the water heated by hot springs, or a driving tour of the island concluding with a walking tour of Thira. Again we will return to the ship for dinner and evening entertainment.

### **Day 9: Morning flight to Rome - Catacombs, Trevi Fountain & Pantheon**

This morning we depart Athens and fly to Rome. Upon our arrival in Rome we meet our tour guide and first visit the Christian Catacombs where thousands of Christians were buried in a remarkable tiered series of galleries. Next we will make our way into central Rome and enjoy a walking tour with highlight stops at the Spanish Steps, Trevi Fountain, the Pantheon and Piazza Navona. Late this afternoon we will check into our hotel and have dinner.

### **Day 10: Rome - Vatican, St. Peter's Basilica, Sistine Chapel, Scala Santa, Abbey of Three Fountains & St. Paul's Basilica**

After breakfast, we'll have a full day of site seeing. First, we'll go to Vatican City where we will visit the Basilica of St. Peter, the Sistine Chapel, and the Vatican Museum with stunning works of art at every turn. After some free time for lunch, we will stop at The Abbey of the Three Fountains, the traditional site of St. Paul's martyrdom. Next, we will visit the 4th century Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls, the site of Paul's tomb, and the Scala Santa where Martin Luther may have been frustrated by the medieval practice of indulgences. Tradition holds that these are steps from Pilate's Judgment Hall in Jerusalem that were brought to Rome by Helena, the mother of Constantine.

### **Day 11: Rome - Roman Forum, Coliseum, Mamertine Prison and travel to Assisi**

Today we will begin with a walking tour at the ancient Roman Forum. We will visit the Arch of Titus that commemorated the sack of Jerusalem by Titus in AD 70. We will view the Mamertine Prison, where tradition says the Apostle Paul was imprisoned.

Next, we will visit the Coliseum, where thousands of people and animals perished during gladiatorial games. The Coliseum first opened c. AD 80 and within 100 days of its opening, 5,000 wild beasts had been destroyed. Additional sites may include the Arch of Constantine and the Circus Maximus. This afternoon we will leave Rome and travel through scenic Umbria to the ancient walled hillside village of Assisi.

### **Day 12: Assisi - Basilicas and San Damiano**

This morning we will start with a guided tour of this beautiful, medieval town, which will include the Basilica of San Francesco, decorated with some of the most renowned frescoes in the world. We will take time to visit San Damiano and the Basilica of St. Clare. This afternoon will be free for personal exploration of the town's sites and shops.

### **Day 13: Travel to Florence with visit to Siena en-route**

We will depart Assisi this morning and travel to Siena. Here we'll have a guided tour to the Cathedral and there will be time inside for a lecture. Afterwards we'll have some free time in Siena before we transfer to Florence.

### **Day 14: Florence – Duomo, Baptistery, Michaelangelo's David**

This morning we will take part in a guided tour of one of the world's greatest artistic capitals, including the Piazza della Signoria, the Duomo, the Baptistery and a visit to the Accademia Gallery, home of Michelangelo's David. A stop may also be made on the hillside across the river from Florence where we will enjoy a panoramic view of the beautiful red-tiled roof cityscape. This afternoon will be free to enjoy shopping, visiting more galleries or strolling on the famous Ponte Vecchio, the old bridge that spans the Arno River.

### **Day 15: Florence and Flight to Istanbul**

This morning will be free for personal exploration of Florence. Early this afternoon we will transfer to Bologna where we'll take a flight to Istanbul. We will be met in Turkey by a Pilgrim Tour guide and get settled in our hotel.

### **Day 16: Istanbul – Blue Mosque, Hagia Sophia, Topkapi Palace, Grand Bazaar**

The tour today will combine elements from Greek Orthodoxy, from Roman and Ottoman empires, as well as from modern day Islam. We will visit the famed Blue Mosque and St. Sophia Church (Hagia Sophia). After lunch we will see the fascinating Topkapi





Palace that houses many priceless treasures from the era of the Ottoman Sultans. Then we will go to the Grand Bazaar before returning to our hotel for dinner.

### **Day 17: Istanbul – Museum, Cistern, Bosphorus**

This morning our guide will walk us through the wonderful exhibits at the Archaeological Museum. Treasures there include the sarcophagus of Alexander the Great, mosaic remnants depicting the times of Nebuchadnezzar, tablets of the Treaty of Kadesh (known to be between Ramses II and the Hittites during the 13th century BC) and many other wonderful items. Next we will visit the Underground Cistern, then the Spice Market. We will end this day with a private boat ride on the Bosphorus before returning to the hotel for dinner.

### **Day 18: Return Home**

We will transfer to the Istanbul airport this morning and fly home.

---

### **Outside Cabin - Only \$135**

#### **INCLUDED IN TOUR PRICE**

Airfare, including all air taxes, from Boston to Athens, flight from Athens to Rome, flight from Bologna to Istanbul, and flight from Istanbul to Boston. 13 nights lodging at first class hotels with breakfast and dinner daily, 3 nights standard outside cabins on cruise with all meals, tips, and port taxes included. Full time professional English speaking guides, services of long distance deluxe motor coaches and all entrances and transportation as appear on the itinerary. Tips to guides, drivers, and hotel staff plus an SSU administration fee.

#### **NOT INCLUDED IN TOUR PRICE**

Travel to and from Boston, lunches – except on cruise, optional shore excursions while on cruise, Turkey entry visa (must be obtained online before departure), optional travel insurance, optional credit card payment fee (3%).

**Please Note: Turkey Entry Visas\* must be secured in advance prior to arrival. Visas can be obtained in advance online at the link below. Optional shore excursions can be purchased on tour prior to cruise embarkation.**

\*Turkey “E-Visa” online purchase -  
<https://www.evisa.gov.tr/en/>

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

### **Date**

### **Land Only**

**2016**

**April 3**

**\$4,995**

**Single Supplement:**

**\$825**

**Special Rates for  
Pastors, Christian  
Educators & Custom  
Groups of All  
Sizes!**

**Contact  
Pilgrim Tours  
for a discount  
airfare quote  
from your  
city!**