

**Athens –Nauplion - Monemvasia – Pilos – Taormina -  
Syracuse – Gozo - Valetta**

**All tours are offered with English speaking guides. The length of the tour is given as an indication only as it may vary depending on the road, weather, sea and traffic conditions and the group's pace.**

**Time spent on site is also given on an indicative basis only. Minimum number of participants indicated per coach or group.**

**Some excursions are only available on certain dates and/or are dependent on the ship's arrival and departure times.**

**The level of physical fitness required for our activities is given as a very general indication without any knowledge of our passenger's individual abilities. Broadly speaking to enjoy activities such as hiking, biking, snorkeling, boating or other activities involving physical exertion, passengers should be fit and active. Passengers must judge for themselves whether they will be capable of participating in and above all enjoying such activities.**

**All information concerning excursions is correct at the time of printing. However Star Clippers reserves the right to make changes, which will be relayed to passengers during the Cruise Director's onboard information sessions.**



**NAUPLION, GREECE**

Nafplion is an enchantingly pretty coastal town which has often been called the most romantic destination in Greece, or the Greek Venice. It is the perfect place for strolling around, taking in the sights and generally soaking up the atmosphere. You will see stunning Venetian architecture, neo-classical mansions, a maze of little streets festooned with Bougainvillea, hidden squares and picturesque cafés, perfect for relaxing and watching the world go by.

This one time Capital of Greece (between 1833 and 1834) has been a major port since the bronze age and its strategic position is highlighted by the fact that it is protected by no less than three fortresses. Palamidi and Bourti built by the Venetians and Akroafplia behind the old town.

**Epidaurus**

By air-conditioned motor coach and on foot

Minimum 20 participants, no maximum

Duration 3hours

Euros 50

Epidaurus was the site of a shrine devoted to Aesculapius, the Greek God of Medicine. Patients would flock to the sanctuary seeking a cure for their ailments and Aesculapius would either effect a cure during their sleep or appear in a dream to the priests who would then treat the patient according to his instructions.

Apart from praying to be restored to health, Patients could indulge in thermal baths and hydrotherapy as well as “taking in a show”! Indeed, as soon as you arrive at the site you will walk through a beautiful grove to discover the famous theatre, one of the best-preserved monuments of the ancient world. The theatre can seat 14.000 spectators and is famous for its acoustics. It is still in use today and modern visitors enjoy musical productions and performances of Greek drama there. You will have some time to wander around, so you can test the wonderful acoustics for yourself.

The nearby museum houses fragments from the Asklepion sanctuary.

Return to Nauplion port.

The drive to Epidaurus takes 30 minutes each way

You will spend 2hours on site before returning to the ship

There is no uphill walking involved in this tour.

Walking is on flat ground, about 300m from the parking to the site.



### MONEMVASIA, GREECE

The island of Monemvasia was separated from the mainland by an earthquake in 375 AD and is sometimes called the Gibraltar of the East. The city was fortified during the 13th century under Byzantine rule, and was established as a successful trading port. The Pope ruled the city for a brief period from 1460-1464 before the Venetians took over, building a 535 ft long fortified bridge to protect them from their enemies. During Venetian rule the city flourished, the population reached 30.000 and many houses and churches were built. Later the city fell to the Turks who ruled for nearly 300 years from the mid sixteenth to the early nineteenth centuries, with the exception of a short-lived takeover by the Venetians.

The Walled lower town extends along the slopes of a 985ft crag that projects into the sea on the east side of the Peloponnese. The population of this impressive stronghold was gradually depleted as more and more of the inhabitants moved to the mainland. However, a restoration programme aimed at preserving Monemvasia's heritage has given the Lower Town a new lease of life, and people from the mainland have started to return to this attractive tourist centre.

The Upper Town is located on top of the Rock of Monemvasia. It is reached via a zigzagging path. Once an impregnable bastion, it is now completely uninhabited. Visitors can explore the remains of the ancient citadel-castle and have a look inside the church of Hagia Sofia. There are also fantastic views to be had of the surrounding area.

### PILOS, GREECE

#### Nestor's Palace and Methoni Fortress

By air-conditioned motor coach and on foot

Minimum 20 participants, no maximum

Duration 4 hours

Euros 62

The drive from the Port of Pylos to Ano Eglianos and the ruins of Nestor's palace takes 20 minutes.

King Nestor was one of the legendary rulers who took part in the Trojan wars to wrest Helen away from Paris. The site dates from the Mycenaean era and the buildings were once richly decorated with frescoes and consisted of private apartments, baths, storage space, workshops, vast courtyards and a sophisticated drainage system. The Palace was burnt down in the 12th century BC.

The site was discovered in 1939 by the American archaeologist C.W Blegen and the Greek archaeologist K. Kourouniotis. During the excavations they unearthed hundreds of clay tablets bearing inscriptions, and this discovery contributed greatly to the understanding of the Mycenaean language, an early form of Greek.

The excursion continues with a visit to the Fortress of Methoni, 11 km distance from Pylos. The Castle of Methoni lies at the southernmost end of the west Peloponnesian Coast. The site was fortified as early as the 7th century BC and in the period between 395 A.D and 1204 A.D was used as a Byzantine fortress. In 1209 the Venetians became rulers of the area. During this period the magnificent castle was erected with its massive fortification walls and the town flourished, becoming known as a financial centre and busy commercial port. However, in 1500 Methoni was captured by the Turk Bayazit Pasha and entered into a long period of decline before once again coming under Venetian occupation from 1685 until 1715. Thereafter the Ottomans held sway, and their domination remained unchallenged until the Greek war of independence in the early 19th century. It was liberated by the French General Nicolas Maison in 1829, along with other Peloponnese towns.

The drive to the ruins of Nestor's palace takes 30 minutes

The drive to Methoni fortress takes 45 minutes

The return drive to the port takes 25 minutes

There is some uphill walking during the visits, so guests are advised to wear comfortable, non-slip shoes

This is an archaeological site with some remains



## TAORMINA, SICILY

Giardini Naxos is Taormina's small port. Taormina is the most important resort in Sicily and Southern Italy. It is located on Mount Tauro, between the jagged mountains and the calm Ionian Sea. The town's origins date back to 398 AD. The Romans considered Taormina an ally, but as the city sided with Pompeus against Octavianus, it was reduced to the rank of mere colony. Thanks to its strategic position, it remained important to the various powers that held sway over the island. In 902, after a long siege, it fell to the Muslims. They destroyed it, but the caliph Al Muezz later rebuilt Taormina on a grander and much more beautiful scale. In 1079 it was conquered by the Normans and was chosen as the seat of the Sicilian Parliament for the King's election in 1410. Its most important monument is the theatre, built in the 3rd century BCE by the Greeks and restructured by the Romans. The site is really spectacular. The theatre is situated between looming Mount Etna and the sparkling blue sea. It is one of the most beautiful landscapes in the world, a beautiful jewel set amidst the blue sky, aquamarine sea, green valley and white snow-capped peaks of Mount Etna.

## Mount Etna

(Depending on weather conditions and local authorizations)

By air-conditioned motor-coach

Minimum 18 participants, no maximum

Duration 5 h30

Euros 114

Majestic Mount Etna is Europe's largest active volcano, rising some 11.000 ft (3340 m). The slopes of the volcano soar up to over 3296m and its flanks are dotted with cones and craters. From the peaks you can gaze out across the Gulf of Catania and see the woods, orchards and vineyards below.

The main attraction is Etna's crater and the awe-inspiring petrified remains of the lava flows. The tour starts with a drive through the small town of Naxos. The scenic route to Mount Etna is a winding mountain road, passing the town of Giarre and the villages of Santa Venerina and Zafferana. The ever changing scenery is quite delightful : lemon groves, orchards, vineyards, chestnut and pine woods blend with the hardened lava and endless volcanic cones. The Silvestri crater is located about 1950 m above sea level.

Upon arrival you will transfer to 4x4 minibuses or cable car to climb to approximately 2500m and then carry on upwards until you reach the base of the main crater 2950m above sea level. A professional mountain guide will accompany you on a 30-45 minute hike to see the most recent lava flow and walk around the crater (depending on volcanic activity).

We recommend comfortable shoes and a jacket or sweater. It can be cold and windy on Mount Etna, even in summer time

It is a 1h15 drive each way to reach Mount Etna

This tour is only available in summer, weather permitting. You will visit either the North or the South side of the volcano depending on current volcanic activity

You will reach an altitude of approximately 2950m above sea level – if you suffer from high blood pressure or heart disease please check with your doctor about the advisability of going on this excursion



**Sicilian brunch, wine tasting and transfer to Taormina**

By air-conditioned motor coach

Minimum 18 participants, maximum 40

Duration 7 hours

Euros 100

You will board the motor coach at the pier and travel on the southbound motorway to Giarre. At this point you will leave the motorway and continue to Mount Etna on a scenic road which winds around the mountainside, past the town of Giarre and the village of Santa Venerina, through vineyards and woodland. As you drive through the village of Santa Venerina you will see the traces of the damage caused by the 2002 earthquake.

The first stop is the country estate of the aristocratic di Villagrande family, where you will be welcomed by a member of the family who will take you on a tour of the cellar and the winery and tell you all about the qualities of Mount Etna wine from the point of view of a real expert. The views over the fertile valley are magnificent and it is these vine-covered fields that produce the local wine. A combination of local varieties of grape, an optimum climate and lava enriched soil combine to produce this unique wine. After the guided tour you will head back to the old stable where you will be served a Sicilian brunch prepared with local products and get to sample the different wines produced on the estate.

The excursion continues to Taormina. The town is perched on a terrace overlooking the sea and has a delightful medieval feel. There will be time for a stroll along the Corso Umberto. Just off this pedestrian street you will find many small boutiques selling local handicrafts and cafés where you can relax with a cup of real Italian coffee and enjoy some local sweets. You may decide to go and visit the Roman amphitheatre.

You will then be driven back to the pier.

45 minute drive from the pier to the Barone di Villagrande Estate

45 drive to Taormina

Wine and water included at lunch

**SYRACUSA, SICILY****Highlights of Syracuse**

By air-conditioned motor coach and on foot

Minimum 20 participants, no maximum

Duration 4h30

Euros 52

Departing the port, begin your tour with a 15 minute drive to the archaeological park. During a 1 ½ hour walking tour, your guide will acquaint you with the site's major highlights: Paradise Quarry with the "Ear of Dionysius," an ear-shaped cavern with unusual acoustics. Legend has it that Dionysius used to listen in on prisoners' conversations to learn about any planned conspiracies. The Greek Theater: this is the largest and most complete theater remaining from antiquity. The Roman Amphitheater: the ruins of this fine Roman Theater give an idea of the enormous arena.

Following your visit of the Archaeological Park, you will drive back to the old town of Ortygia. As buses are not allowed inside the historic part, you will leave the coach in the mandatory parking lot and continue on foot. Follow your guide during the walk of the historic town center. Starting with the Arethusa Fountain, you will proceed with a brief visit to the cathedral, and view other attractions such as the ruins of the Apollo Temple, Archimedes' Square with the Fountain of Diana, and Corso Matteotti, the main and most elegant shopping area of Ortygia. At the end of your visit, return to the parking area and rejoin your coach for the short drive back to the pier.



**NOTO, the Baroque pearl of Sicily**

By air-conditioned motor coach and on foot  
 Minimum 20 participants, maximum 40  
 Duration 4h30  
 Lunch included  
 Euros 99

After a 45 minute drive in air-conditioned comfort you will arrive at Noto, a town of 20.000 inhabitants known as the Baroque Jewel in the Sicilian crown.

The ancient medieval town was destroyed by an earthquake in 1693 but was extensively rebuilt in the 18th century. The remaining ruins of Noto antica are located in an archaeological site 10km from the town. It comes as no surprise to learn that Noto has earned a place on the UNESCO world heritage list; the magnificent architecture of its churches and noble buildings deserve no less and UNESCO also provides financial support for the reconstruction of monuments damaged by the latest earthquake in 1990.

On arrival you will leave the coach and set off to explore this charming town on foot. The main street is accessed via an imposing gateway, the Porta Nazionale, which leads the way to some of Noto's most important monuments. You will pass by the 18th century cathedral whose dome collapsed in 1996 as a result of structural damage caused by the 1990 earthquake. Other fine buildings include the city hall, the archbishop's palace, the church of Santissimo Salvatore and the Villadorata palace, all superb examples of Sicilian Baroque architecture from the early 18th century.

Noto is as indomitable as a phoenix rising from the flames; whatever challenges nature throws its way, it stands proud as the Baroque Capital of Sicily.

Before driving back to Syracuse you will be treated to lunch accompanied by four different wines at the Palazzo Modica a beautiful Baroque building in the city centre

Inside visits include the cathedral and the Palazzo Modica

Outside visits to the main street Corso Vittorio Emanuele, Palazzo Nicolaci and Palazzo Villadorata

The drive to Noto takes 45 minutes

**GOZO, MALTA****Highlights of Gozo**

By air-conditioned motor coach  
 Minimum 15 participants, no maximum  
 Duration 4 hours  
 Euros 45

The Ggantija Temples are two prehistoric temples on Gozo, the second largest island in Malta. One of them is considered to be the oldest stone structure in the world, predating the Giant Pyramids and Stonehenge by several hundred years. The temples are dedicated to the Great Earth Mother, and the round curved architecture symbolises the body of a powerful full figured Mother goddess. Local legend recounts that a female giant built the temple walls in one day and a night, while nursing a baby at the same time, and indeed the name Ggantija is Maltese for Giant's grotto. The temples were a place of pilgrimage and sacrifice for the ancient peoples of Malta. Take a walk around this fascinating site before heading off to Victoria the capital of Gozo. Victoria (so named in honour of Queen Victoria's golden jubilee celebrations in 1887) nestles beneath a powerful old citadel. The walled castle dominates the town and its fortifications afford superb panoramic views of the whole island. Inside the citadel you can admire the fine baroque cathedral, built on the site of a Roman temple dedicated to Juno.

After leaving Victoria, you will drive to the Basillica of Ta Pinu, which became a centre of pilgrimage in 1883 after a local woman heard the voice of Our Lady while praying in the small chapel which once occupied the site. The monumental shrine which stands there now was built between 1920 and 1931. You can explore the church and enjoy the sweeping coastal views. The next stop takes you to Fungus Rock known as the Dwejra Seascape. Admire this unique rock formation before continuing across the east coast to capture the coastal views of Ramla l-Hamara (The Red Beach). On the drive back to the pier there will be a photo stop to take pictures of the wonderful view across to Comino Island, also a location used for the movies "Troy" and the "Count of Montecristo".



## VALETTA, MALTA

**Malta's Capitals: Mdina & Valetta**

By air-conditioned motor coach and on foot

Ends at the airport

Minimum 15 participants, no maximum

Duration 4h30

Euros 52

Take the scenic route to Malta's old capital, Mdina - one of the world's finest examples of a living medieval city. Stroll through the city's streets and let your guide give you an introduction to the history and orientation. Enjoy the sweeping views from the bastions, over the valley and the surrounding areas. After your walking tour, you will be given free time during which you can either visit the cathedral or choose to relax at one of the pavement cafes or do a souvenir shopping. Ride by coach to Valletta - the present-day capital. You'll walk to St John's Cathedral, complete with elaborate in-laid marble tombstones and monumental artwork. View the Grand Master's Palace from the outside - it now houses the Parliament and the President's Office. Your last stop will be at the Barracca Gardens on the highest point of the 16th-century bastion walls that the Knights of St John built to protect their city. Take in the splendid view of the Three Cities and Fort Ricasoli.

St John's cathedral is closed on Saturday afternoon, Sundays and Public holidays

