

STAR FLYER
7-NIGHT: NORTHERN CYCLADES
 Summer 2018

**Athens – Kusadasi – Patmos – Amorgos –
 Mykonos – Monemvassia – Athens**

All tours are offered with English speaking guides. The length of the tours 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.

Fitness requirements vary according to the chosen activity, hiking, snorkelling and boating require an average to good level of fitness.

KUSADASI, TURKEY

Ephesus & The Virgin Mary's House
 By air-conditioned motor coach
 Minimum 20 participants, no maximum
 Duration: 4 hours
 Euros 55

Ephesus was the "First and greatest metropolis of Asia". The city dates back to 3000BC and in its heyday was the Roman capital of Asia Minor with a population of a quarter of a million. The remains of this important Ionian city bear witness to its glorious past. The well-preserved ruins include a theatre, the Hadrian Gate, the Celsus Library, Curetes Street (one of the 3 main streets) the Fountain of Trajan and the Odeon (used for poetry readings and prize giving ceremonies). Ephesus had many famous inhabitants and visitors, one of whom was Saint Paul. Saint Paul's diatribe against the cult of Artemis at the theatre of Ephesus caused a riot in the city. The uprising was instigated by the silversmiths and jewellers who made a good living selling silver statuettes of the goddess and were afraid that business would suffer if the citizens adopted a new religion. Nevertheless Ephesus was to become one of the most important cities in early Christianity. Six years after the death of Christ it was visited by the Virgin Mary and Saint John, and the house where Mary is said to have spent her last days is situated at the top of "Bulbul" mountain, 9 km distance from the town.

Pope Paul VI in 1969 and Pope John Paul II in 1979 proclaimed the house to be a place of pilgrimage. The building you will see on site is a church dating from the 7th century.



Ephesus & Terraced Houses

By air-conditioned motor coach

Minimum 20 participants, no maximum

Duration: 4 hours

Euros 60

English speaking guides only

Ephesus, which dates back to 3000BC, was one of the most important centres of the ancient world and is certainly the best preserved. The port city of Ephesus was the point of departure for the famous royal highway that led through Sardis into Lydia. Because of its strategic position, Ephesus developed into an important political and economic centre, and became the capital city of the Roman province of Asia. The remains of this important Ionian city are miraculously still standing today and bear witness to its glorious past. The well preserved ruins include the Theatre, the Hadrian Gate, the Celsius Library, Cures Street, the Fountain of Trajan and the Odeon. Opposite the Temple of Hadrian on the slopes of Bulbul Mountain you can see terraced houses, the roof of one house forming the terrace of the house above it. These dwellings were also known as the "Houses of the rich" as they are finely decorated with mosaics and frescoes and had heating and hot and cold water. Built in the period of Augustus, they continued to be inhabited until the 7th century, albeit in a modified form. Two of the houses have been totally restored.

Cookery Class in Sirince

By air-conditioned motor-coach

Minimum 12 participants, maximum 30

Duration: 4 hours

Euros 80

English speaking guide only

After leaving the ship at Kusadasi, you will set off for Sirince village. The drive will take approximately 30 minutes. On arrival you will have half an hour's leisure time to explore the village on your own and admire the 200 year old Greco-Turkish houses. The cookery class will take place in a typical village house a five minute walk away.

Turkish food ranks among the top three world cuisines with its unique cultural and historical heritage, fusion of Eastern and Western traditions and the use of an incredibly wide variety of natural ingredients. Each region has contributed its own specific dishes to the national repertoire, adding to the richness and complexity of Turkish cuisine.

During the cookery class, you will get the opportunity of trying a variety of simple yet delicious recipes all made from high quality natural ingredients. The highlight of the tour comes when you finally get to taste the fruit of your labours, enjoying the true flavour of Turkey in an authentic village setting.

After the meal Turkish tea or coffee will be served.



PATMOS, GREECE

Saint John's Monastery & The Cave of the Revelation

By air-conditioned motor coach

Minimum 20 participants, no maximum

Duration: 3 hours

Euros 52

During his two year exile on Patmos (around 97 AD), Saint John lived in a cave on the way to Chora. It was here that he reputedly heard the voice of God dictating the text of the Book of Revelation and penned the final book of the bible.

The short trip from the Port of Scala to the village of Chora will be by local bus. Here you will visit the Monastery of St John which is protected by fortified walls. The monastery itself is perched high on the top of a hill, overlooking the harbour. It dates back to the 11th century and is one of the holiest places of the Orthodox Church with many sumptuous chapels and treasures. The frescoes on the church walls are outstandingly beautiful and the monastery museum boasts a fascinating collection of Byzantine icons and ancient Gospels from the 6th century. After the monastery you will visit the Grotto of the Apocalypse and see the rock pillow St John slept on and the stone ledge he used as a desk. Three fissures can be seen in the rock face from which the voice of God is said to have issued forth. The fissures represent the Holy Trinity.

After seeing the grotto you will return to the ship.

- Shorts and bare shoulders are forbidden in the monastery precincts (this applies to both men & women).
- Photos and videos are not permitted in the churches nor in the monastery museum.
- Please be advised there are about 25 steps to reach the monastery and the cave of the revelation.
- If the site is too crowded then the order of your visit may be changed.

The Essence of Icons

By air-conditioned motor coach

Minimum 10 participants, maximum 15

Duration: 4 hours

Euros 74

More a spiritual journey of discovery than an excursion, this visit takes you to the heart of religious art and provides a deeper understanding of the harmony and symbolism of the icon.

The coach leaves the port of Skala and takes you to the ancient hill top village of Chora, the island's capital. First stop is the tiny Convent of Zoodoho Pigi (The Spring of Life) built in 1607. On one side of the cobbled courtyard lies a chapel with recently restored frescoes dating from the 17th century and an intricately carved icon wall. On the other side is a small gift shop selling handicrafts made by the nuns. A winding narrow street leads to the 11th century monastery of St John the Theologian. The main church is covered with icons and frescoes dating back to the 12th century and there is an impressive gilded icon wall. The highlight of the visit is the rare opportunity to visit the monastery's icon restoration workshop where you can admire the skilful and meticulous work of the craftsmen and learn something about restoration techniques.

Next stop is the monastery museum, a treasure trove of Byzantine objects and documents dating from as early as the 6th century, as well as a wonderful collection of icons by famous artists including an early El Greco. Before leaving Chora there will be a stop for refreshments and a chance to enjoy the panoramic view before the coach returns to the Port of Skala. The excursion ends with a visit to an artist's studio. You will get the opportunity to meet the artist and discover the many different techniques used in icon and traditional painting.



Patmos, Art and History Tour

By air-conditioned motor coach and on foot

Minimum 10 Participants, maximum 15

Duration: 3h15

Euros 59

Our destination is the old village of Chora, the island's capital, which stands high on a hilltop overlooking the port of Skala. Here you will get the opportunity to take some amazing photographs, as well as learning something about the island's history and seeing houses dating from the 15th and 18th centuries.

After a short walk along winding cobbled streets, we will arrive at Simandris House. This three hundred year old building boasts a remarkable collection of antiques including splendid gilded mirrors, paintings, silverware, and exquisite brocades accumulated by 8 generations of the Simandris family.

Just around the corner is the tiny convent of Zoodoho Pigis (the spring of life) built in 1607. On one side of the cobbled courtyard lies a chapel with recently restored frescoes dating from the 17th century and an intricately carved icon wall. On the other side is a small gift shop selling handicrafts made by the nuns. The excursion continues on foot through a labyrinth of winding streets, past St John's monastery, to the Nikolaidis mansion. This historical house was recently restored by the Greek Ministry of Culture. After the fifteen hundreds, Patmos enjoyed an influx of wealthy ship owners and merchants who built impressive mansions to symbolise their social status; the Nikolaidis mansion, built in the seventeen hundreds, is a wonderful example of these grand houses. On the ground floor you will see the storerooms for foodstuffs as well as a cooking area with its original founo (oven), water tanks for collecting rain water and a private chapel dedicated to St Nikolas. Three staircases lead to the 2nd floor where you will find verandas, a formal reception room and sleeping area complete with a magnificent ambataros (wooden partition) decorated with traditional folk painting. An ambataros was considered to be a great status symbol. There will be time to admire the panoramic views and enjoy some refreshments before returning to the ship in the Port of Skala.

AMORGOS, GREECE

Situated in the eastern Cyclades close to the Dodecanese, Amorgos is a small peaceful island of only 121 square kilometres, with about 1650 inhabitants. The general atmosphere is one of great serenity and attractions include beautiful beaches, crystal clear waters, whitewashed houses, windmills and a Venetian castle. In recent years the island has become more popular as a holiday destination, especially since the Luc Besson movie "The Big Blue" was filmed there. The most notable landmark on the island is the monastery of Panagia Hosviotissa, clinging to the cliff side some 300 metres above sea level. The monastery was founded by the Byzantine Emperor Alexios Komnenos. It was built to house a 9th century religious icon of the Virgin Mary. The icon, which is on public display inside the monastery, was said to have arrived mysteriously on the seashore aboard an unmanned boat coming from Palestine.

The capital of Amorgos is Chora, situated at the centre of the island. Here you will find wonderful examples of Cycladic architecture, picturesque churches and narrow cobbled paths leading to a Venetian fortress. Despite its small size, Amorgos has two ports: Katapola in the south west, full of narrow little streets, windmills, and blue and white painted houses and Aegiali a smaller harbour in the north east.



MYKONOS, GREECE

Delos

By boat and on foot

A guided visit of the site

Minimum 20 participants, maximum 35

Duration: 3h30

(may vary depending on local boat's schedule)

Euros 60

The Cyclades were so called because they formed a Kiklo, or rough circle, around the sacred island of Delos.

Notwithstanding its small size Delos played an important role in antiquity for both commercial and religious reasons, and is nowadays considered to be one of the most important mythological, historical and archaeological sites in Greece.

The sanctuary dedicated to Apollo, who, according to mythology, was born on the island, attracted pilgrims and riches and was one of the most important religious sites in the Greek world. These days Delos is a desolate windswept island; a 2001 census put the number of inhabitants at 14. Only tourists now flock to the shrines and temples, but a sense of awe and religious fervour still pervades the ruins.

The modern quay leads directly to the archaeological site. You will walk into the heart of the sanctuary where you will see the Temples of Apollo, the sacred lake (now dried up) which witnessed the birth of Apollo and the unique marble lions of Delos. You will also visit impressive Hellenistic mansions with superb mosaics decorating the floors and walls and, time permitting, the museum.

- Transfer by public boat takes 30 minutes each way.
- The return on board by caique is scheduled at 13h30.
- Non-slip, comfortable shoes are recommended for visiting Delos as the pathways are uneven.
- No guides are allowed in the museum so you will have to discover its treasures on your own.

MONEMVASSIA, GREECE

The Peloponnesian city of Monemvasia was founded by the Byzantines in the 6th century and was fortified during the thirteenth century. The Byzantines also established a successful trading port, with links to Constantinople. When the rest of the region was captured by the Turks in 1460, Monemvasia remained unharmed by placing itself under the control of the papacy (1460-1464) and later under the Venetians (1464-1540).

The Venetians built a 535 ft long fortified bridge to protect them from enemy attacks. During their rule the city flourished, the population reached 30.000 and there was much building of houses and churches.

In 1540 the Turks gained control of Monemvasia and ruled for nearly three hundred years. The lower town extends along the slopes of a 985ft high crag which projects into the sea on the east side of the Peloponnesian. Protected by a surrounding wall it was once an unassailable stronghold, but over the centuries the population dwindled as many of the inhabitants went to live on the mainland.

However, thanks to a restoration programme aimed at reviving Monemvasia's heritage, the Lower Town has experienced a new lease of life and people from the mainland have started to return to what is now an attractive and bustling tourist centre. The Upper Town is situated on top of the Rock of Monemvasia and is reached via a zigzagging pathway. Formerly an impregnable bastion, it has been uninhabited for centuries, but still retains its impressive appearance.

Visitors can explore the ruins of the ancient citadel-castle and look inside the church of Hagia Sofia. There are also amazing panoramic views of the surrounding area.



ATHENS, GREECE

Athens and Acropolis Museum

By air-conditioned motor coach

Minimum 10 participants, maximum unlimited

Duration: 4h30 | Euros 69 (ends at the airport)

Duration: 3h30 | Euros 55

(Possibility to be dropped off in Athens)

From the port of Piraeus you pass the charming yacht harbour of Zea, where the foundations of the dock dating from the 5th century BC are clearly visible. Next is the attractive Mikrolimanon waterfront lined with inviting al fresco fish restaurants. It is but a short drive into cosmopolitan Athens, a mixture of modern buildings and great monuments. You will pass by the Temple of Zeus, the Panathenaic Stadium, the Parliament at Syntagma (Constitution) Square, the National Academy, the University, Library and Hadrian's Arch, before you finally arrive at the New Acropolis Museum. This building, located only 300 metres south east of the Rock of the Acropolis, was designed by Bernard Tschumi.

The museum was opened to the public in 2009 and nearly 4000 objects are exhibited on three levels with an area of 14.000 square metres. Exhibits include findings from the Acropolis archaeological site as well as artefacts from the Greek Bronze Age to Roman and Byzantine Greece. For those returning to the ship, the tour ends in the centre of Athens; the rest of the passengers will be transferred to the airport.

- The tour will end at Syntagma Square in Athens. The guide will then leave and the coach will continue to the airport (arrival 13h00/13h30)
- For the tour to carry on to the airport a minimum of 6 departing guests is required
- Passengers staying on board for the following cruise will be dropped off in Athens (return on your own to the pier).
- The duration of the tour very much depends on the traffic in Athens; if traffic is light the coach will arrive sooner at the airport.
- You will spend about two hours in the museum.
- The use of cameras and video cameras is free of

charge, but flash photography is forbidden in the museum.

