

Day 1 - July 30,2008 - Wednesday - Depart for Athens

The Trip over: depart from the U.S. for Athens, Greece - 10:28 AM

Day 2 - July 31,2008 - Thursday - Arrive in Athens

Today we arrive in Athens at 11:30 AM, where an OAT representative meets us at the airport and assists with our transfer to our hotel, the [St George Lycabettus Hotel](#). Enjoy a short orientation walk in the vicinity of the hotel.

This evening, we enjoy a welcome dinner at our hotel.

Day 3 - August 1, 2008 - Friday - Athens

- Athens city tour
- Cruise to Itea via Corinth Canal
- Board the [M/V Athena](#)

After breakfast, we enjoy a tour of this lovely historic city. We ride past the historic Panathenean Stadium, originally constructed in 330 BC and restored for the first modern Olympic Games in 1896, the Greek Parliament building, where the ceremonial guards in traditional Greek dress watch over the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, and the Presidential Palace. Designed in neo-classical style, the three-storied Presidential Palace elegantly combines elements of Greek, Roman, and Renaissance architecture.

Our tour continues with a walk to the Plaka, the Old Quarter. This area contains many archaeological sites, including the famous Tower of the Winds that is a part of the ancient Roman Agora.

We then depart for Mikrolimano and enjoy an included lunch before embarking our ship. We cruise through the Corinth Canal and continue to Itea, a port town near Delphi where we'll moor for the night. As we cruise, the crew joins us for a welcome drink and a briefing before dinner on board. We arrive late in Itea and overnight onboard in the port.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 4 - August 2, 2008 - Saturday - Itea

- Explore Ancient Delphi
- Cruise to Corfu

This morning, we disembark in Itea for about a 40-minute ride to Delphi. Here we enjoy a half day of discovery, including the Temple of Apollo where the oracle once prophesied. This ancient sanctuary is beautifully set in a landscape fit for a god, at the foot of a mountain with a vista over olive groves to the Bay of Itea.

Those entering in ancient times first purified themselves at the nearby Sanctuary of Athena, where the enigmatic Tholos - a round building of unknown purpose - stands as it has since the fourth century B.C. As we approach the Temple of Apollo, we walk the Sacred Way used by ancient Greeks such as the historian Plutarch, who was a priest of Apollo at Delphi. We'll see treasures built here by the Athenians, the Thebans, the Corinthians, and the Syracusans - the great powers of their day - and enter the theatre, built to seat 5,000 people, from which it's possible to get an amazing view if you climb to the top row.

We then enter the nearby Delphi Archaeological Museum. The unmatched holdings here include the larger-than-life bronze Charioteer, dating to about 470 B.C., one of the finest surviving works of antiquity. The museum is filled with other masterpieces from the Archaic, Classical, and Roman Periods, including scenes of the gods watching the Trojan War, a 9-statue family monument from the fourth century B.C., and a sculpture of Roman Emperor Hadrian's son Antinoos.

We return to the ship for lunch, after which you can explore the city of Itea or enjoy a refreshing dip in the sea at local beaches during hot summer days. We dine on board this evening, and our ship cruises through the night to Corfu.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 5 - August 3 2008 - Sunday - Corfu

- Cruise to Corfu
- Villa of the Empress Sisi tour

Enjoy a leisurely morning on board; we arrive in Corfu in the late morning. After lunch, enjoy a fairytale excursion to the 19th-century villa of Elizabeth, Empress of Austria and Queen of Hungary. In her day, Elizabeth was known by the nickname of "Sisi," and was as popular as the late Princess Diana of England. Uncomfortable with the constraints of court life in Vienna, in her later years Sisi retreated to Corfu and immersed herself in the world of the ancient Greeks. Today, we'll tour the palatial village she had built in Corfu between the years 1890-1892, which she named the Achillion. The large neo-classical building and vast gardens surrounding it are lavishly decorated with artwork, including two notable statues of Sisi's favorite Greek hero, Achilles.

You'll have some free time in the town of Corfu to make your own discoveries before we return to the ship. This evening, relax during a Greek dinner onboard and enjoy a Greek-style party on deck. The ship remains moored through the night at Corfu.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 6 - August 4, 2008 - Monday - Saranda, Albania

- Overland to Butrint
- Cruise to Kotor

We cruise this morning to Saranda, Albania, then travel overland to visit the ruins of Butrint, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Inhabited since prehistoric times, Butrint was the site of a Greek colony, a Roman city, and a bishopric of the Byzantine Empire. Following a period of prosperity under the Byzantines, then a brief occupation by the Venetians, the city was abandoned in the late Middle Ages after marshes formed in the area. The present archaeological site is a repository of ruins representing each period in the city's development.

We return to the ship for lunch and begin cruising toward Kotor, which is in the tiny Republic of Montenegro.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 7 - August 5, 2008 - Tuesday - Kotor

- Kotor Walking Tour

This morning, our ship arrives in Kotor. Then, after lunch on board, we go ashore in Montenegro this afternoon to discover the perfectly preserved historic center of Kotor on a walking tour. In the Middle Ages, this natural harbor on the Adriatic coast was a walled city and an important artistic and commercial center with well-known schools of masonry and iconography. Here, we'll explore the maritime museum that preserves the rich seafaring heritage of this region.

This evening, enjoy an enchanting performance by local entertainers.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 8 - August 6, 2008 - Wednesday - Kotor/Dubrovnik

- Optional Cetinje tour
- Our Lady of the Rocks visit
- Cruise to Dubrovnik

This half-day morning tour visits Montenegro's cultural heart and one-time capital, Cetinje. Along the way enjoy a scenic uphill ride that culminates in a spectacular view of Kotor Bay. Then we'll stop in the historic village of Njegusi, famous for their smoked ham and a local cheese. We'll sample a few of Njegusi's home-grown delicacies before continuing on to Cetinje, nestled at the foot of Mount Lovcen and encircled by steep hills. After a guided tour of the palace of King Nikola, you'll have free time to explore the cultural treasures of this ancient royal town. The cost of this optional tour is approximately \$80. Please note: This tour includes a drive along a steep, narrow mountain road.

After lunch aboard ship, we make a stop in Montenegro in front of Perast, so we can take small boats to visit the baroque "Our Lady of the Rocks" shrine on a manmade islet. The shrine contains 68 paintings by local 17th-century artist Tripo Kokolja, while its greatest treasure is the icon of Our Lady of the Rock, painted by the Dubrovnik artist Lovro Marinov Dobricevic. Then we continue our cruise toward Dubrovnik, the first of our stops in the Croatian region of Dalmatia. This evening we'll enjoy dinner onboard.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 9 - August 7, 2008 - Thursday - Dubrovnik

- Dubrovnik City Tour
- Home-Hosted Dinner

With its old section, the Start Grad, surrounded entirely by white stone walls, Dubrovnik gleams like the proverbial City on a Hill. Our tour today in this historic gem includes visits to the Rector's Palace, a Franciscan Monastery housing one of Europe's oldest pharmacies.

Regarded today as one of the world's most exquisite walled cities, Dubrovnik's character reflects its storied past as an independent city-state that rivaled Venice. Also known by its Latin name, Ragusa, this was a fortress city that served as the base for a fleet of ships that carried trade between much of Europe and the Middle East. The city-state's period of autonomy extended from 1358 to 1808. In recent times, some of Dubrovnik's historic sites sustained damage in the Balkan conflicts of the early 1990s, but the city has been peaceful for over ten years and largely restored under UNESCO supervision. OAT's parent company contributed to this restoration work with a donation from the Grand Circle Foundation.

After lunch onboard, your afternoon is at leisure to explore Dubrovnik on your own - you might wish to climb the city's ramparts or visit some of Dubrovnik's hidden museums. Tonight, discover the warmth of a Croatian welcome when we enjoy a home-hosted dinner.

During the night we cruise to Korcula, the largest of the archipelago's 48 islands and the site of a picturesque medieval town.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 10 - August 8, 2008 - Friday - Korcula/Dubrovnik

- Korcula Walking Tour

After breakfast, we soak up the history of Korcula, which among other things is the center of a proud musical tradition. We visit the spot believed by many historians to have been Marco Polo's birthplace (only one stone wall of the house remains). We also get acquainted with Korcula town's history - which included centuries of rule by Venice - with a visit to its local museum. We learn about the historical importance of the Roman Catholic Church here as we visit St. Mark's Cathedral and the Treasury of the 14th-century Abbey Palace.

We return to our ship for lunch onboard and in the afternoon you can continue your individual exploration of Korcula Island or just relax on the sundeck of your ship. You'll also enjoy an informative discussion about daily life and politics in contemporary Croatia. After a port talk from our Trip Leader, we enjoy dinner on board this evening. Then, our night cruise will take us to another Dalmatian Island - Hvar.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 11 - August 9, 2008 - Saturday - Hvar/Split

- Discover Hvar
- Visit Vrboska
- Cruise to Split
- Discovery Series Dalmatian Night Party

This morning, we ride through this luxuriantly green island's patches of lavender, rosemary, and heather to Hvar town, whose Venetian flavor (like Korcula's) reflects its long history of rule by that city-state. After a brief orientation we'll free time here to explore on our own. Next, we drive to the quaint seaside village of Vrboska, which lies in a picturesque cove surrounded by pinewood forests and lovely beaches. Founded in the 15th century Vrboska has a long fishing tradition, which we'll learn about with a visit to the city's Fisherman's Museum. After, we'll enjoy a wine tasting at a small, privately owned winery nearby.

After lunch on board the ship, we cruise to Split. After mooring for the night in Split, join us for a festive Discovery Series Dalmatian Night party.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 12 - August 10, 2008 - Sunday - Split

- Palace of Diocletian
- Optional Trogir tour

This morning in Split, we explore the Imperial Palace of the Roman Emperor Diocletian. This UNESCO World Heritage Site is the greatest Roman ruin in Southeastern Europe. Built like a fortress with walls 590 feet by 705 feet, the palace was occupied by the Emperor Diocletian from 300-313 AD. As you stand in the peristyle (central court) of this grand structure, its scale is sure to impress you.

The medieval town of Split took shape within the palace walls; Diocletian's Temple of Jupiter was converted into a Christian baptistery and his mausoleum became a cathedral. The entire old section of Split, with the palace as its centerpiece, is a virtual open-air museum with the city's contemporary life bustling through it.

We return to our ship for lunch on board, and then enjoy an afternoon at leisure in Split. You may also join an afternoon optional excursion to discover the ancient city of Trogir.

Our half-day optional tour introduces you to Trogir, a lovely old island community encircled by the sea and webbed by stone-paved streets and white buildings. This UNESCO heritage site was originally settled by the Greeks in the 3rd century B.C. and later developed into a major port during Roman times. Stroll the charming city square and take time to observe the historic architecture along the narrow streets of the city's Old Town. The town is connected to the mainland by an old stone bridge, and by a drawbridge to the island of Ciovo. The price of this optional tour is approximately \$60 per person.

After a port talk from our Trip Leader, we enjoy a Captain's farewell dinner onboard this evening.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 13 - August 11, 2008 - Monday - Disembark Ship

- Overland to Plitvice Lakes
- [Hotel Jezero](#)

This morning we disembark our ship and travel overland to the Plitvice Lakes region, arriving in time to enjoy lunch on our own. Afterwards, enjoy a walking tour of this beautiful region's lower lakes. Here, a 114-square-mile national park has at its heart 16 turquoise lakes that are linked by a series of waterfalls and cascades. The lake system is divided into the upper and lower lakes, with about 440 feet of elevation between them. The natural wonder has been recognized as a * UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1979.

This evening, we dine in our hotel. Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 14 - August 12, 2008 - Tuesday - Plitvice Lakes/Zagreb

- Zagreb City Tour
- [Sheraton Zagreb Hotel](#)

After breakfast, we transfer to Zagreb. Upon arrival, enjoy a guided tour of this city of about 750,000 people that has been Croatia's capital since 1557, beginning with a stroll through the Lower town, whose well-designed street grid was laid out in the 19th century. Here you'll be introduced to many of the Zagreb's civic and historic monuments. Then we'll take the funicular to the older Upper town, where we focus on the city's medieval landmarks.

This oldest part of the city developed between the 11th and 13th centuries from the two municipalities of Kaptol and Gradec, whose historic remnants you can still see today. Here we see the neo-Gothic Cathedral of the Assumption and St. Mark's Church. We'll end our tour at Zagreb's most colorful open-air market, called Dolac.

You will have some free time for shopping and lunch on your own and then the rest of the afternoon is free. This evening, dinner is on our own in Zagreb.

Included Meals: Breakfast

Day 15 - August 13, 2008 - Wednesday - Zagreb

- At leisure in Zagreb

After breakfast you're day is free to explore Zagreb at your leisure. This evening, we'll gather together for a festive farewell dinner.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 16 - August 14, 2008 - Thursday - Depart for the U.S.

After breakfast, depart for the airport to catch your flight back to the U.S. 7:40 AM. Arrive in Kansas City 6:23 PM

Included Meals: Breakfast