AUGUST 4, 2021
ATLAS ASHORE – LAND EXCURSIONS
9-NIGHT HEART OF THE BLACK SEA
The tour is not available to wheelchair guests, those with physical limitations or other health concerns such as heart, respiratory, back or neck issues or pregnant women. There is a mandatory dress code for Chernobyl and all visitors must wear long pants only (no skirts, dresses, leggings, or shorts); a long sleeve shirt (no tank tops or short sleeve shirts) and closed toe shoes (no sandals or flip-flops). Shoulders, legs, and midriffs must be covered when entering religious sites. All safety equipment will be provided where needed. Guests are required to sign a waiver before being allowed to take part in the Chernobyl portion of the tour and must make sure to have their passports and other tour documentation with them at all times.

**Day 3** Have breakfast in the hotel and then transfer to Kiev where you will be treated to a sightseeing tour of the city before driving to the airport for your flight to Odessa. On arrival, transfer directly to your hotel in the city center where you will spend the night and have dinner.

**Day 4** Following breakfast and check-out at the hotel, travel by coach to the Palace of Count Pototsky which houses the Odessa Fine Arts Museum. The building is one of the most notable architectural monuments of Classicism which was popular in the early 19th century. Its maze of over 15 rooms contains treasures that include 15th century icons and works by Levitsky, Ayvazovsky and Repin. Your tour includes both the main floor and the underground grotto, which reveals a unique peculiarity of Odessa in that it has thousands of kilometers of underground catacombs.

Continue on with visits to the main temple of Odessa - Transfiguration Cathedral, famous Deribasovskaya Street, and the city garden. Enjoy a traditional lunch at a local restaurant before visiting the famous Odessa Opera House and Pymorsky Boulevard with its promenade, park, and numerous monuments to its notable past residents. Before your tour ends at the ship for embarkation, stop at the Potemkin Steps where you will have a wonderful view of the ship waiting in the harbor for you.

**Special Note:** This tour includes a mixture of mild to moderate activity over several days that includes significant walking, steps, inclines, and uneven surfaces.

**TO BOOK YOUR ATLAS ASHORE LAND EXCURSIONS, CALL OUR VOYAGE SPECIALISTS AT 1.844.44.ATLAS (28527)**

DISCOVERY BEYOND THE ORDINARY

Whether you’re the kind of explorer that likes to dive deep into a destination’s history or the thrill seeker looking for a rush of adrenaline, Atlas Ashore land excursions have adventures carefully curated for you. Get ready for your 2021 vacation and make plans to traverse the roads less taken.
**NVS302: NOVOROSSIYSK CULTURAL LANDMARKS, MUSICAL PERFORMANCE AND ABRAU-DURSO WINERY -**
**AUGUST 6, 2021 | $189.00**

**7.75 HOURS | MEAL: LUNCH**

Discover the “Hero City” of Novorossiysk with visits to some of its most important landmarks and later, listen to a musical performance before ending your day by indulging in some local sparkling wines at a shoreside winery.

Drive first to the historic battleship ‘Mikhail Kutuzov’ for an exterior visit of this imposing vessel. Commissioned in 1954, she served for many decades in Russia’s Black Sea Fleet until being opened to the public as a museum in 2002.

Traveling via the city center, make your way to the famous Malaya Zemla beachhead where you will find a monument that is dedicated to the Novorossisyk landing in 1943, when Soviet forces managed to secure the beachhead despite a strong counterattack by the Germans. The memorial houses portraits of Soviet heroes and a sculpture that memorializes the paratroopers. The land surrounding the memorial is preserved as it was in WWII, still covered with trenches and shell-holes.

Next, it’s time to familiarize yourself with some Russian folklore and classical music at the Dmitriy Shostakovich Novorossiysk College of Music. Be delighted by a concert of classical Russian music performed by the college’s students, many of whom have gone on to win national and international awards. A wide repertoire of changing compositions will bring to life the depth and cordiality of the Russian heart and soul and leave you with a new appreciation for this genre of music.

Leaving the city behind, enjoy a panoramic drive to Abrau-Durso village. Abrau Lake is a natural lake nestled on a mountainous peninsula. The lake is the largest in North Caucasus and the area is sometimes referred to as the “Russian Switzerland.” Stop for lunch here before heading to the Abrau-Durso Winery which is located on the shores of the lake. During your visit, tour the winery and learn about the history of the wines and how they are classified. Wines have been made in this region for over 140 years and are unique in that they are made according to French technology; however, they are impossible to confuse with any other wines because of their significantly “softer” taste as opposed to classical French Champagne. Discover this for yourself as you are invited to taste 6 varieties of the wines produced here.

Before driving back to the port, have a bit of free time to walk around the lake and take some photos or pick up a few souvenirs.

**Special Note: This tour includes approximately three hours of mild to moderate walking/standing that includes numerous steps. The tour is not available to wheelchair guests and is not considered suitable for those with walking difficulties. We recommend wearing weather appropriate comfortable clothing, flat walking shoes, a sun cap, sunglasses, and sunscreen. It is also recommended to bring a light sweater or jacket as it can be quite cool in the wine cellars.**
For those wishing a nice overview of the city and its marquee landmarks, this is the perfect choice as it showcases several notable sites.

Start off with a visit to the historic battleship ‘Mikhail Kutuzov’, now home to the Black Sea Navy Museum. Commissioned in 1954, she served for many decades in Russia’s Black Sea Fleet until being opened to the public in 2002.

Continue from here along the seafront, drinking in panoramic views of the city that include the memorial dedicated to its founders. Pass through the city center on your way to the famous Malaya Zemla beachhead where you will find a monument that is dedicated to the Novorossiysk landing in 1943, when Soviet forces managed to secure the beachhead despite a strong counterattack by the Germans. The memorial houses portraits of Soviet heroes and a sculpture that memorializes the paratroopers. The land surrounding the memorial is preserved as it was in WWII, still covered with trenches and shell-holes.

Next, travel into the heart of the city and Hero Square, location of the Eternal Flame. First lit in 1958, it has burned continuously since that time, memorializing all those who lost their lives in battle here. After some time for photos, drive back to the port.

Special Note: This tour includes approximately 90 minutes of mild to moderate walking/standing that includes numerous steps. The tour is not available to wheelchair guests and is not considered suitable for those with walking difficulties. We recommend wearing weather appropriate comfortable clothing, flat walking shoes, a sun cap, sunglasses, and sunscreen.

Discover the “Hero City” of Novorossiysk with visits to some of its most important landmarks and later, listen to a delightful musical performance.

Start with a drive from the port to the battleship ‘Mikhail Kutuzov’ for an exterior visit. Commissioned in 1954, she served for many decades in Russia’s Black Sea Fleet until being opened to the public in 2002 and serving as home to the Black Sea Navy Museum.

Your tour continues with a panoramic view of the city and a pass by the motor torpedo boat monument and Founders of the City Memorial. Further along, stop at the memorial complex Malaya Zemlya, which is dedicated to the Novorossiysk landing operation that took place there between September 10 – 16, 1943. From a distance you can view the monument and the paratroopers’ sculpture. The area around the monument is reserved and is still covered with shell-holes and trenches that are the same as they were during WWII.

Your final stop is at the Dmitriy Shostakovich Novorossiysk College of Music. Be delighted by a concert of classical Russian music performed by the college’s students, many of whom have gone on to win national and international awards. A wide repertoire of changing compositions will bring to life the depth and cordiality of the Russian heart and soul and leave you with a new appreciation for this genre of music. Afterwards, you will transfer back to the pier.

Special Note: This tour includes approximately 90 minutes of mild to moderate walking/standing that includes numerous steps. The tour is available to wheelchair guests who have a collapsible wheelchair, are able to make their own way on and off the transportation and have a companion to assist them. We recommend wearing weather appropriate comfortable clothing; flat walking shoes; a sun cap and sunglasses.

Come with us and spend three days exploring both Novorossiysk and the indomitable city of Moscow, rich in history, culture, and character.

Day 1
Disembark the ship and commence a short city walk during which you will enjoy views of Tsemesskaya Bay, several monuments, and an exterior visit of the battleship “Mikhail Kutuzov”, one of the world’s legendary combat ships that now houses the Black Sea Navy Museum. After your guided walk, you will board your coach and travel to Abrau-Durso, often referred to as the “Russian Small Switzerland”. Abrau is a natural lake nestled in the mountains of the peninsula and is the largest mountain lake in North Caucasus. The history of the winery here goes back over 135 years and is a very unique place where Russian sparkling wines are made using classical French technology. The significantly “softer” taste of these wines has resulted in the winery winning many international awards and during your visit you will be treated to a tasting of five varieties of these sparkling wines.

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Following your winery stop, proceed to a local restaurant for lunch, after which you will transfer directly to the airport in Anapa for your flight to Moscow.

On arrival in Moscow, you will be greeted and transferred to the Radisson Royal Hotel (or similar). After check-in, board a boat for a beautiful sunset cruise on the Moscva River, followed by a welcome dinner.

**Day 2**

Your day starts with an early breakfast at the hotel and then you will tour the city, starting with the Kremlin grounds and Armoury Chamber. No visit to Moscow is complete without spending time exploring this iconic complex that is included as a UNESCO World Cultural and National Heritage Site. For centuries, the Kremlin has been witness to many well-known and tragic events in Russia's past and as such, is a treasure trove of Russian history. Begin with a tour of the extraordinary, State Armoury, the oldest museum in Russia and home to a vast collection of precious stones, 18th and 19th century jewelry and other priceless artifacts that date back to the 14th century. It is also home to an impressive collection of carriages that once belonged to Russian rulers and dignitaries, precious fabrics, royal gowns, and Faberge eggs. Your time here includes viewing Cathedral Square that consists of the Assumption, Archangel, and Annunciation Cathedrals; the Patriarch’s Palace; and the Ivan the Great Bell Tower complex.

Next, enjoy lunch at a local restaurant and then commence your tour of the city with a visit to the House of Romanov Boyards where the Romanov family lived in the 16th century. The first tsar of the Romanov dynasty, Mikhail Romanov was believed to have been born in this house in 1596. Today, it is a museum devoted to the lifestyle of the Russian nobility during the 16th – 17th centuries. Re-board your coach for a panoramic tour of the city that includes viewing the Novodevichy Convent, Moscow University, the Hill of Glory, and the Cathedral of Christ the Redeemer (if able to enter, please note shorts and sleeveless shirts are not permitted).

Continuing on, travel to Bunker 42 which was constructed in 1955 as a command post of the strategic nuclear forces of the Soviet Union. This anti-nuclear underground facility is located 213 feet under Taganka Square. During your tour, learn how the bunker’s construction serves as protection from the damaging factors of a nuclear explosion and get a sobering look at the seriousness of the risk of a nuclear war. See how staff members operated inside the bunker and watch a special effects imitation of a nuclear missile launch that definitely won’t leave you indifferent.

After the bunker tour, be treated to dinner in the unique and somewhat mysterious Bunker 42 restaurant, actually located within the depths of the bunker itself. After feasting on some traditional favorites, you will transfer back to the hotel for the night.

**Day 3**

Kick off your final day with breakfast in the hotel and then transfer to the airport for your flight to Sochi. After touchdown, transfer to a local restaurant for lunch before starting your afternoon of touring this wonderful Black Sea city most recently known for hosting the 2014 Winter Olympics. Begin with a drive up into the green hills that overlook Sochi’s beaches for a visit to Stalin’s Dacha. Nestled amongst towering California pine trees is the imposing two-story villa that was once Joseph Stalin’s secret dacha. The subdued grey-green color on its façade was intentional, serving to camouflage it from prying eyes, unfriendly visitors, or possible artillery attacks from the sea. Built in 1937, this stately residence with its shaded verandahs is now open to the public and serves as a remarkable and historic hotel for well-connected visitors to Sochi. The villa remains nearly as it was in Stalin’s time, with most of its original fixtures still in place. There is even a life-sized wax image of Stalin to be found here, seated at his table before a silver inkpot that was presented to him by Mao Zedong.

Your day draws to a close with a panoramic drive to the port where you will rejoin the ship.

**Special Note:** This tour includes a mixture of mild to moderate to activity over three days that includes, steps, cobblestone, and uneven surfaces. The tour may not be suitable for wheelchair guests; however, those who do participate must have a collapsible wheelchair, be able to enter and exit the transportation on their own and have a companion to assist them. Those with other physical limitations or health concerns should carefully evaluate their personal situation. We recommend wearing weather appropriate comfortable, smart casual clothing; flat walking shoes with a closed toe; a sun cap; sunglasses and sunscreen. The order of the sites visited may vary.
SOC501: WATERFALL TREK AND RAFTING THE DRAGON MOUTH - AUGUST 7, 2021 | $259

8 HOURS | MEALS: LUNCH

Spend the day hiking through a lush forest to a secluded grotto, then later, get your adrenaline pumping with some white-water rafting.

Travel from the port to the trail head where you will commence a comfortable hike through a subtropical forest, that makes its way along cliffs that at one time formed the ancient ocean bed. The well-marked path will lead to a beautiful grotto that features a 60-foot waterfall. The shape of the grotto's entrance resembles an open-mouth dragon and thus, how it got its name. An underground river flows from the "mouth" of the grotto and beside it is a small natural pool. Feel free to take a short dip; however, the water temperature is a chilly 50 degrees, even in summer! From here, transition to the Mzymta River where your rafting adventure takes place. After arriving, receive a safety briefing and then don your suit and equipment, all of which will be provided. Get ready for some fun! Along with your experienced instructor, you will navigate your way down the churning rapids of the river, even passing underneath a famous pedestrian bridge that is suspended nearly 700 feet above the gorge.

Leaving the water, there will be an opportunity for you to change back into your clothes and then make the short walk to a nearby restaurant that serves excellent Caucasian cuisine for your lunch. Afterwards, drive back to Sochi via another route so that you will see a different view of the surrounding landscape. Once back at the harbor, a short, guided walk will allow you to take photos and browse for souvenirs before heading back to the ship.

Special Note: This tour includes approximately 2.5 hours of moderate, physical activity that includes inclines, wooden stairs, natural and uneven surfaces. The tour is not available to wheelchair guests or those with physical limitations or other health concerns. Participants should be in good physical condition. We recommend wearing weather appropriate comfortable clothing; sturdy, flat walking shoes with a closed toe that can get wet; a sun cap; sunglasses and sunscreen. All safety equipment will be provided. Guests will need to sign a waiver before being allowed to take part in the tour.

SOC502: A TREKKING ADVENTURE OVER 3 PEAKS AND SOCHI'S ALPINE OLYMPIC VILLAGE - AUGUST 7, 2021 | $349

10 HOURS | MEALS: LUNCH

Spend the day trekking in the Caucasus Mountain ridge, hiking between three peaks that rise to heights of over 7,500 feet above sea level.

Drive approximately one-hour from the port to the viewpoint at the Ahshtyrsky gorge where your trek will begin. From the viewpoint, walk a short distance to the Mzymta River where you can take some photos before transferring to the cable car station at the Krasnaya Polyana Resort. This modern cable car will transport you 7,500 feet to Black Pyramid Peak where you will commence a four-mile hike that transits Alpica Peak. Stop for lunch here and then continue on until reaching Rosa Peak where your trek concludes. The trail that rises above the clouds leads you through clear streams, berry shrubs, a patchwork of alpine flowers and a valley of Rhododendrons. You will most likely also see flocks of wild mountain goats, cows and horses along the way. Drink in spectacular views over the Alpine Olympic Village and the famous Olympic resort Rosa Khutor, which was specially built for the 2014 Winter Olympics. Mountains rising nearly 10,000 feet that some years remain snow-capped all year long, form a dramatic backdrop and make for stunning photos.

After taking time for photos at Rosa Peak, you’ll take the cable car down to the Olympic Village level and re-board your coach for a panoramic tour through the Alpine Olympic Village. Afterwards, drive back to the port in Sochi via a scenic route through the Rosa Valley.

Special Note: This tour includes approximately four hours of moderate to vigorous walking and hiking that includes some steep inclines, natural and uneven surfaces. The tour is not available to wheelchair guests, those with physical limitations or other health concerns. The cable car transfer consists of both enclosed gondolas and open-air chair lifts and therefore, the tour may not be suitable for those with a fear of heights. Participants should be in good physical condition. We recommend wearing weather appropriate comfortable clothing that should include light trousers or shorts in the summer months; sturdy, flat sport shoes or hiking boots with a closed toe; a sun cap; sunglasses and sunscreen. No additional equipment or special skills are required. The use of hiking poles is preferable but not mandatory.
SOC301: BEST OF SOCHI - TEA HOUSES, STALIN’S SECRET DACHA AND OLYMPIC PARK - AUGUST 7, 2021 | $225.00

8 HOURS | MEALS: LUNCH

This all-encompassing full day experience covers all of the major highlights visitors to Sochi won't want to miss. Be introduced to Russian tea culture, visit historical Stalin's Dacha, and see sites where the 2014 Winter Olympic Games were held.

The day begins with a drive outside the city to the Dagomys Tea Plantation where you will learn about the culture surrounding the history and production of Russian tea and its importance to the local economy. It is not common for tea to be grown in colder northern climates, but special frost-resistant varieties have been created by Russians and their efforts produce some outstanding teas.

Traveling back to Sochi, you'll see its historic town center, the Winter Theater, pass along the seaport and Primorsky Boulevard and have a view of Sochi's magnificent spas that resemble palaces more than health resorts. Then it's back to the past as you drive up into the green hills that overlook Sochi's beaches for a visit to Stalin's Dacha. Nestled amongst towering California pine trees is the imposing two-story villa that was once Joseph Stalin's secret dacha. The subdued grey-green color on its façade was intentional, serving to camouflage it from prying eyes, unfriendly visitors, or possible artillery attacks from the sea. Built in 1937, this stately residence with its shaded verandahs is now open to the public and serves as a remarkable and historic hotel for well-connected visitors to Sochi. The villa remains nearly as it was in Stalin's time, with most of its original fixtures still in place. There is even a life-sized wax image of Stalin to be found here, seated at his table before a silver inkpot that was presented to him by Mao Zedong.

Following your visit to the dacha, enjoy lunch at a local restaurant and then return to modern day with a visit to Olympic Park. Take part in a tour conducted by golf cart as you view memorable locations from the 2014 Winter Olympics that include the Olympic Stadium Bolshoy Ice Dome, the Iceberg Skating Palace, Shayba Arena, Adler Arena, Ice Cube Curling Center, and the main Media Center. Included is the first Formula 1 Grand Prix racing circuit in Russia. Time will be allowed for photos at the Olympic Cauldron, Medals Plaza Square, Wall of Champions, the Olympic Rings and in front of several of the venues.

After your visit to Olympic Park, transfer back to the pier.

Special Note: This tour includes approximately 2.5 hours of moderate walking that includes a few steps. The tour is available to wheelchair guests who have a collapsible wheelchair, are able to make their own way on and off the transportation and have a companion to assist them. We recommend wearing weather appropriate comfortable clothing; flat walking shoes; a sun cap; sunglasses and sunscreen.

SOC302: SOCHI MARQUEE ATTRACTIONS AND OLYMPIC PARK - AUGUST 7, 2021 | $169.00

4 HOURS | MEALS: LUNCH

Discover marquee Sochi attractions on this tour that gives you a panoramic tour of the city, visits the renowned Matsesta Spa and then travels to Sochi's Alpine Olympic Village.

From the port, drive to the majestic Winter Theater, the cultural center of the city where you'll stop and have an opportunity to snap some photos of its beautiful colonnaded exterior. During this panoramic look at Sochi, you will also see the Russian Orthodox Church of Michael Archangel and Art Square before making your way to the Matsesta Spa. Housed in a palatial building, it's one of Sochi's oldest and most popular sulfur-springs spas. The word Matsesta literally means "fire-water" and was named so by the ancient Adygs. The waters here are said to contain over 27 minerals that are considered to be therapeutic for the treatment of several medical conditions.

From here, join the highway to the Olympic mountain venues. The highway itself is part of the Olympic legacy and crosses breath-taking canyons and gorges as it winds its way to the Alpine Olympic Village. On arrival, hop on one of the Olympic Park golf carts and take a tour of some of the Olympic venues where the competitions took place. Included is the Fisht Stadium, the Bolshoy Ice Dome, the Iceberg Skating Palace, the Shayba Arena, the Adler Arena Trade and Exhibition Center, the Ice Cube Curling Center, the Main Media Center and not necessarily related to the Olympics, the first circuit to host a Formula 1 Grand Prix race in Russia.

Following your tour of the Olympic Village, enjoy lunch at a local restaurant before traveling back the port.

Special Note: This tour includes approximately one hour of mild walking that includes a few steps. The tour is available to wheelchair guests who have a collapsible wheelchair, are able to make their own way on and off the transportation and have a companion to assist them. We recommend wearing weather appropriate comfortable clothing; flat walking shoes; a sun cap; sunglasses and sunscreen.

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Get a glimpse of Sochi via a panoramic drive through the city and then it's up into the lush green hills to explore Stalin's secret dacha before heading to the renowned Matsesta Spa.

A narrated panoramic drive through Sochi starts your experience as you view several notable sites. Then head into the hills above the city that overlook Sochi's beaches for a visit to Stalin's Dacha. Nestled amongst towering California pine trees is the imposing two-story villa that was once Joseph Stalin's secret dacha. The subdued grey-green color on its façade was intentional, serving to camouflage it from prying eyes, unfriendly visitors, or possible artillery attacks from the sea. Built in 1937, this stately residence with its shaded verandahs is now open to the public and serves as a remarkable and historic hotel for well-connected visitors to Sochi. The villa remains nearly as it was in Stalin's time, with most of its original fixtures still in place. There is even a life-sized wax image of Stalin to be found here, seated at his table before a silver inkpot that was presented to him by Mao Zedong.

Continue on with a drive to the famous Matsesta Spa, one of the oldest sulfur-springs spas. First opened in 1902, the spa is one of Sochi's most popular and is housed in a palatial building. The waters here are said to contain over 27 minerals, including Sulphur, iodine and bromine which are considered therapeutic in the treatment of some medical conditions. Enjoy time to stroll about and take photos before it's time to drive back to the port.

**Special Note:** This tour includes approximately two hours of mild walking that includes a few steps. The tour is available to wheelchair guests who have a collapsible wheelchair, are able to make their own way on and off the transportation and have a companion to assist them. We recommend wearing weather appropriate comfortable clothing; flat walking shoes; a sun cap; sunglasses and sunscreen.

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**SOC303: A PANORAMIC LOOK AT SOCHI AND STALIN’S SECRET DACHA - AUGUST 7, 2021 | $69pp**

3.75 HOURS | MEALS: NONE

Spend a delightful evening at Sochi's excellent Art Museum where in one of the halls you will be treated to a wonderful performance by the local chamber orchestra and later, enjoy dinner at a nearby restaurant.

Your evening begins with a short drive from the port to the Art Museum. The museum exemplifies the beautiful architecture known as Stalin's “Empire” style. Founded in 1936, the building first housed the city's administrative offices but was later turned into the Art Museum. Three halls within the museum house exhibitions of art from the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. It is within one of these halls that you will be treated to your musical performance. The repertoire includes the compositions of several brilliant composers and is sure to make for a memorable experience.

Afterwards, it's a brief walk to a nearby restaurant where you can indulge your taste buds with a tasty dinner of local favorites. Once dinner is concluded, drive back to the port.

**Special Note:** This tour includes under one hour of mild walking/standing that includes a few steps. The tour is not available to wheelchair guests. Smart, casual dress is requested. Shorts, t-shirts, and sandals are not permitted.

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**SOC310: AN EVENING OF ART, CHAMBER MUSIC AND LOCAL CUISINE - AUGUST 7, 2021 | $199pp**

5 HOURS | MEALS: DINNER

Spend a delightful evening at Sochi’s excellent Art Museum where in one of the halls you will be treated to a wonderful performance by the local chamber orchestra and later, enjoy dinner at a nearby restaurant.

Your evening begins with a short drive from the port to the Art Museum. The museum exemplifies the beautiful architecture known as Stalin's “Empire” style. Founded in 1936, the building first housed the city's administrative offices but was later turned into the Art Museum. Three halls within the museum house exhibitions of art from the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. It is within one of these halls that you will be treated to your musical performance. The repertoire includes the compositions of several brilliant composers and is sure to make for a memorable experience.

Afterwards, it's a brief walk to a nearby restaurant where you can indulge your taste buds with a tasty dinner of local favorites. Once dinner is concluded, drive back to the port.

**Special Note:** This tour includes under one hour of mild walking/standing that includes a few steps. The tour is not available to wheelchair guests. Smart, casual dress is requested. Shorts, t-shirts, and sandals are not permitted.
SOC304: STALIN'S SECRET DACHA AND GASTRONOMIC MASTER CLASS - AUGUST 8, 2021 | $199pp

Experience Sochi's illustrious past with a visit to Stalin's secret dacha and then learn about traditional Georgian dishes at a legendary restaurant.

A narrated panoramic drive through Sochi starts your experience as you view several notable sites and stop for an exterior visit at the Winter Palace. Then head into the hills above the city that overlook Sochi's beaches for a visit to Stalin's Dacha. Nestled amongst towering California pine trees is the imposing two-story villa that was once Joseph Stalin's secret dacha. The subdued grey-green color on its façade was intentional, serving to camouflage it from prying eyes, unfriendly visitors, or possible artillery attacks from the sea. Built in 1937, this stately residence with its shaded verandahs is now open to the public and serves as a remarkable and historic hotel for well-connected visitors to Sochi. The villa remains nearly as it was in Stalin's time, with most of its original fixtures still in place. There is even a life-sized wax image of Stalin to be found here, seated at his table before a silver inkpot that was presented to him by Mao Zedong.

Next, travel to the elite Kavkazsky Aul restaurant for a masterclass in traditional Georgian dishes such as khinkali (dumplings), pkhali (a traditional Georgian dish of chopped and minced vegetables combined with ground walnuts, vinegar, garlic, and herbs), and khachapuri (an egg and cheese filled bread). Afterwards, before returning to the port, sit down and enjoy lunch while being entertained with a folkloric performance.

Special Note: This tour includes approximately 3.5 hours of mild to moderate walking that includes inclines, stairs, natural and uneven surfaces. Guests are cautioned that some of the surfaces can be slippery. The tour is not available to wheelchair guests, those with physical limitations or other health concerns. Participants should be in reasonably good physical condition and able to walk for several hours. We recommend wearing weather appropriate comfortable clothing; flat walking shoes with a closed toe and non-slip sole that can get wet, and a bring a light sweater or jacket as it can be cool within the cave.

SOC504: SPELUNKING ADVENTURE AT VORONTSOVSKAYA CAVE - AUGUST 8, 2021 | $199pp

8 HOURS | MEAL: LUNCH

Looking for something different to do while in Sochi? Come explore Vorontsovskaya Cave, the largest and most interesting of the Vorontsovskaya Cave Complex.

Travel from the port through picturesque forest scenery to the starting point for your cave exploration. On arrival, it’s a 45-minute forest walk along a dirt track that includes a slight ascent, to reach the cave entrance. Once there, you will be joined by a professional speleologist who will be your guide as you negotiate your way through the cave. Be captivated by uniquely formed stalactites and stalagmites and see the cave's subterranean river. The largest hall within the cave is named after the Greek deity Prometheus who legend claims, served out punishment for providing fire to humans by being chained to nearby Mt. Fisht. Also, within the cave, trails of prehistoric men have been found along with some of their remains and the remains of a prehistoric bear. Further explorations of the cave have also uncovered archaeological finds from different eras.

Following your cave visit, transfer to a local restaurant for a traditional Caucasian lunch before driving back to Sochi. Arriving in Sochi, enjoy a 1-hour walking tour of the historical center during which you can take photos and purchase souvenirs before heading back to the pier.

Special Note: This tour includes approximately 2 hours of mild walking/standing that includes a few steps. The tour is available to wheelchair guests who have a collapsible wheelchair, are able to make their own way on and off the transportation and have a companion to assist them. We recommend wearing weather appropriate comfortable clothing; flat walking shoes; a sun cap; sunglasses and sunscreen.

SOC304: STALIN'S SECRET DACHA AND GASTRONOMIC MASTER CLASS - AUGUST 8, 2021 | $199pp

5.5 HOURS | MEAL: LUNCH

Experience Sochi's illustrious past with a visit to Stalin's secret dacha and then learn about traditional Georgian dishes at a legendary restaurant.

A narrated panoramic drive through Sochi starts your experience as you view several notable sites and stop for an exterior visit at the Winter Palace. Then head into the hills above the city that overlook Sochi's beaches for a visit to Stalin's Dacha. Nestled amongst towering California pine trees is the imposing two-story villa that was once Joseph Stalin's secret dacha. The subdued grey-green color on its façade was intentional, serving to camouflage it from prying eyes, unfriendly visitors, or possible artillery attacks from the sea. Built in 1937, this stately residence with its shaded verandahs is now open to the public and serves as a remarkable and historic hotel for well-connected visitors to Sochi. The villa remains nearly as it was in Stalin's time, with most of its original fixtures still in place. There is even a life-sized wax image of Stalin to be found here, seated at his table before a silver inkpot that was presented to him by Mao Zedong.

Next, travel to the elite Kavkazsky Aul restaurant for a masterclass in traditional Georgian dishes such as khinkali (dumplings), pkhali (a traditional Georgian dish of chopped and minced vegetables combined with ground walnuts, vinegar, garlic, and herbs), and khachapuri (an egg and cheese filled bread). Afterwards, before returning to the port, sit down and enjoy lunch while being entertained with a folkloric performance.

Special Note: This tour includes approximately two hours of mild walking/standing that includes a few steps. The tour is available to wheelchair guests who have a collapsible wheelchair, are able to make their own way on and off the transportation and have a companion to assist them. We recommend wearing weather appropriate comfortable clothing; flat walking shoes; a sun cap; sunglasses and sunscreen.

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Find yourself immersed in a beautiful forest of Yew trees and Boxwoods on a nature trail that delivers more than just a walking experience.

Drive from the port to the village of Khosta where your five-mile hike begins. Accompanied by your guide, see unique and legendary natural attractions such as the White Rocks of the Khosta River, a beautiful waterfall, an ancient fortress, a cave, and a Beech glade. All of these will make for an exceptional hiking experience that goes beyond the ordinary.

Following your hike, enjoy an open-air lunch alongside the Khosta River, accompanied by a delightful folk performance. Afterwards, drive back to the port in Sochi.

**Special Note:** This tour includes approximately three hours of moderate hiking/walking that includes inclines, natural and uneven surfaces. The tour is not available to wheelchair guests or those with physical limitations or other health concerns. Participants should be in good physical condition. We recommend wearing weather appropriate comfortable clothing; sturdy, flat walking shoes with a closed toe that can get wet; a sun cap; sunglasses; insect repellant and sunscreen.

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**SOC306: HIKING THE REMARKABLE YEW AND BOXWOOD GROVE - AUGUST 8, 2021 | $129 pp**

5 HOURS | MEALS: LUNCH

Russian tea has a rich history and is an integral part of Russian culture. Tea is not generally thought to thrive in a climate this far north but thrive it does and especially at the Dagomys Tea Plantation, the most northerly in Europe.

Begin with a panoramic drive through Sochi that has you viewing the Russian Orthodox Church of Michael Archangel, Art Square, and the Winter Theater amongst other highlights. Then, head out of town to the Dagomys Tea Plantation. This historic plantation is synonymous with tea in Russia. On arrival, enjoy walking about the plantation as a local agronomist explains how the tea is grown and processed. Before leaving, you’ll be invited to take part in a tea tasting that is accompanied by a snack of local tea cakes and a lively folkloric performance.

Continuing, return to Sochi and drive to Riviera Park, home to numerous amusement rides, games, art galleries and stately magnolia trees that were planted there by Russian cosmonauts. A short stop here allows time to stroll about and take some photos before rejoining your coach and transferring back to the port.

**Special Note:** This tour includes approximately 90 minutes of mild walking/standing with a few steps to negotiate. The tour is available to wheelchair guests who have a collapsible wheelchair, are able to make their own way on and off the transportation and have a companion to assist them. We recommend weather appropriate comfortable clothing; flat walking shoes; a sun cap and sunglasses.

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**SOC307: ICONIC RUSSIAN TEA HOUSES - AUGUST 8, 2021 | $69 pp**

4 HOURS | MEALS: SNACK

Russian tea has a rich history and is an integral part of Russian culture. Tea is not generally thought to thrive in a climate this far north but thrive it does and especially at the Dagomys Tea Plantation, the most northerly in Europe.

Begin with a panoramic drive through Sochi that has you viewing the Russian Orthodox Church of Michael Archangel, Art Square, and the Winter Theater amongst other highlights. Then, head out of town to the Dagomys Tea Plantation. This historic plantation is synonymous with tea in Russia. On arrival, enjoy walking about the plantation as a local agronomist explains how the tea is grown and processed. Before leaving, you’ll be invited to take part in a tea tasting that is accompanied by a snack of local tea cakes and a lively folkloric performance.

Continuing, return to Sochi and drive to Riviera Park, home to numerous amusement rides, games, art galleries and stately magnolia trees that were planted there by Russian cosmonauts. A short stop here allows time to stroll about and take some photos before rejoining your coach and transferring back to the port.

**Special Note:** This tour includes approximately 90 minutes of mild walking/standing with a few steps to negotiate. The tour is available to wheelchair guests who have a collapsible wheelchair, are able to make their own way on and off the transportation and have a companion to assist them. We recommend weather appropriate comfortable clothing; flat walking shoes; a sun cap and sunglasses.

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Equal parts of tranquil nature that includes a beautiful waterfall, combined with the thrills of rafting, define this tour. All capped off with a lovely lunch in the home of a Georgian family.

Begin with a picturesque drive to the Makhuntseti Waterfall, the highest in the Ajara mountain area. There will be plenty of time to drink in the scenery and take photos before traveling to the nearby village of Makhuntseti where your rafting adventure begins. On your way there, stop for photos at the Tamar Bridge, named after a former Georgian monarch. This impressively constructed 12th-century stone bridge was one of several strategically built so that horse and cart traffic could cross from one side of the river gorge to the other.

In Makhuntseti, after a safety briefing, board the raft along with your experienced guide-instructor and set off. The key word to this portion of your adventure is fun! For nearly four miles, you will guide your raft between the river’s boulders and over short cascades. The excitement of not knowing what will come next is pure exhilaration.

Leaving the river, change clothes (be sure to bring an extra set) and drive to the home of a local Georgian family where they will be your hosts for a lunch of delicious Adjarian dishes and homemade wine. The setting is warm and inviting and the company engaging. Following lunch, drive back to the port.

Special Note: This tour includes a limited amount of walking but does include some steps and guests must be able to enter and exit the raft with limited assistance. The tour is not available to wheelchair guests and may not be suitable for those with limited mobility. We recommend wearing weather appropriate comfortable clothing that can get wet, flat walking shoes with a rubber sole, a sun cap, sunglasses, and sunscreen. Please bring a change of clothes.
Visit Batumi’s diverse Botanical Garden that offers up a magnificent view of the sea and after a traditional snack with wine, explore Batumi with a combination walking and panoramic tour of the city’s main attractions.

Leave the port and drive to one of the most visited attractions in Batumi, the Batumi Botanical Garden. The garden is one of the largest and in post-Soviet Union times and boasts a rich diversity of plants and trees. It really has no comparison in that, plants that are endemic to completely different climatic and landscape zones co-exist here, side-by-side.

After exploring the walking trails at the Garden, drive to a local restaurant where you are treated to a traditional Georgian snack such as Khachapuri, a dish of cheese-filled bread, accompanied by a glass of local wine. Making your experience even more authentic, there will be a live musical performance.

A short panoramic drive brings you to Piazza Square, considered one of the most beautiful places in Batumi. While the name is distinctly Italian and therefore a little incongruous for Georgia, when it comes to architecture in Batumi, anything goes! The square is quite expansive and is surrounded by the Piazza complex that includes a hotel, restaurants, cave and pub. Some distinguishing features are its mosaics and stained-glass art. It also hosts outdoor concerts by world famous musician. Walk to the over 150-year-old St. Nicholas Church for a visit before rejoining your coach and driving to European Square for a photo stop.

Your tour ends with a panoramic drive back to the pier, stopping for photos at Prymorski Boulevard.

Special Note: This tour includes approximately two hours of moderate walking/standing and includes steps and uneven surfaces. The tour is not available to wheelchair guests or those with walking difficulties. We recommend wearing weather appropriate comfortable clothing; flat walking shoes; a sun cap; sunglasses and sunscreen.
Soak up the local atmosphere on this walking tour that gives a good overview of Sinop, its history, architecture, and culture.

Take a short walk from the pier to the Sinop Castle and Sinop Castle Walls for an exterior visit. Still dominating the harbor, this eighth-century A.D. fortification was built by immigrants and although much of it is in ruins, it still makes for an interesting glimpse into Sinop’s past.

Your walk continues to the Alaaddin Mosque, a 13th century mosque that is a good example of Selcuk architecture. There will be time for photos before heading to a nearby restaurant where you will be treated to a local pastry and traditional Turkish tea. Afterwards, walk to your final stop, the Sinop Museum.

The Sinop Museum has a collection of artifacts that date back to the Early Bronze Age and from the Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, Selcuk and Ottoman eras. The museum contains not only indoor exhibits but features an open-air section as well.

Following your informative museum visit, walk back to the pier with your guide.

Special Note: This tour includes nearly three hours of moderate walking/standing that includes steps and uneven surfaces. The tour is not available to wheelchair guests and is not considered suitable for those with walking difficulties. We recommend wearing weather appropriate comfortable clothing; flat walking shoes; a sun cap; sunglasses and sunscreen.

Take advantage of this perfect opportunity to experience Sinop’s natural beauty on this tour that travels into a forested nature park and visits Turkey’s only fjord.

A scenic drive brings you through a landscape of lush trees and foliage to the Hamsilos Fjord, the one and only fjord in Turkey. Serving as a natural harbor, the fjord is one of the most beautiful places in northern Turkey and is surrounded by a nature park and lush forest. Once you have arrived, your guide will give you a brief narrative about the area and its history and then you are free to explore on your own.

From here, drive to the Pasha Bastion, a semi-circular coastal fortification whose original purpose was to protect against attacks from the Black Sea. During your visit you can see some of the original cannons and enjoy some snacks and refreshments.

Before driving back to the pier, stop at Balatlar Church, a former Roman temple that was converted to a church in 660 A.D. It stands as an excellent example of Byzantium brick and stone masonry. In 2009, a stone chest was excavated from within the church which is believed to hold stored fragments of the cross on which Jesus Christ was crucified. The chest was named “Holystone” by the Christian world and now is on exhibit in the Sinop Museum.

Special Note: This tour includes approximately 90 minutes of moderate walking/standing that includes steps, walking over a wooden pathways and uneven surfaces. The tour is not available to wheelchair guests or those with walking difficulties. Participants should be in reasonably good physical condition. We recommend wearing weather appropriate comfortable clothing; flat, closed-toe walking shoes with a non-slip sole; a sun cap; sunglasses and sunscreen. Shoulders, legs, and midriffs must be covered when entering religious sites.
Discover Amasra’s key historical locations while drinking in the local atmosphere on this delightful walking tour.

A small Black Sea port town formerly known as Amastris, Amasra’s rich heritage includes Roman, Byzantine, and Genoese past inhabitants as evidenced by the Amasra Castle, your first stop. This is probably most notable on the north side of the castle which served as a Citadel. The enclosed area is now mostly residential, but you can still find some interesting carved relics that remain on some of the walls here. There is also a restored 9th century Byzantine Chapel and a church turned into a mosque that you will see.

Next, walk to the Amasra Archaeological Museum where you will find a variety of items on display that date back centuries and were found both on land and in the sea surrounding this area. Afterwards, make your way to a local tea house where you will take some refreshment. This makes for a perfect opportunity to interact with the locals in Amasra as they go about their daily lives. Following this, you have the option of remaining in town to further explore on your own or walking back to the tender pier and returning to the ship.

**Special Note:** This tour includes approximately three hours of moderate walking/standing that includes inclines, steps, and uneven surfaces. The tour is not available to wheelchair guests or those with physical limitations or other health concerns. Participants should be in reasonably good physical condition. We recommend wearing weather appropriate comfortable clothing; flat walking shoes with a closed toe; a sun cap; sunglasses and sunscreen. Shoulders and legs must be covered when entering religious sites.

Travel to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Safranbolu for a fascinating look at this city that once served as an important trading center.

While the drive out to Safranbolu, takes a bit of time (60 minutes), the passing colorful scenery makes the journey interesting and the time pass quickly. A must-see destination for anyone visiting the area, Safranbolu was the earliest town in Turkey to realize that preserving its old town could serve to draw tourism to the area. The success of Safranbolu’s efforts later inspired many other surrounding regions to similarly restore their own historic districts and preserve their levels of authenticity. Safranbolu itself is famous for its typical Ottoman houses and streets which led to its qualification as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The town’s key role in the caravan trade spanned many centuries, first developing as a trading center after the Turkish conquest in the 11th century. By the 13th century, it had grown into an important caravan station. The town’s layout is a testament to its organic growth in response to economic expansion, and its buildings are representative of its evolving socio-economic structure up to the disappearance of the traditional caravan routes and beyond.

Your time exploring the city starts with a visit to the old Agora and Cinci Han and then afterwards, enjoy some traditional tea and a Turkish pastry.

Rejoining your coach, drive back to Amasra, stopping along the way for a visit at the 18th-century Incekaya aqueduct. Constructed of rubble stone, it is a marvel of ancient engineering.

**Special Note:** This tour includes approximately three hours of moderate walking/standing that includes inclines, steps, and uneven surfaces. The tour is not available to wheelchair guests or those with physical limitations or other health concerns. Participants should be in reasonably good physical condition. We recommend wearing weather appropriate comfortable clothing; flat walking shoes with a closed toe; a sun cap; sunglasses and sunscreen. Shoulders and legs must be covered when entering religious sites.
Come explore magical, mystical Cappadocia, with its fairy tale landscape of natural wonders and colorful history.

**Day 1** Arrive in Istanbul and enjoy a full day of touring the city’s marquee sites. Following your day of exploration, return to the ship for a brief rest before heading out for a nice dinner that evening that also features an authentic whirling dervish show. Afterwards, return to the ship to overnight.

**Day 2** Disembark the ship and head to the airport for your flight from Istanbul to Kayseri in central Turkey – the gateway to the Cappadocia region. The area at times seems like something out of a dream, with its deep valleys, fissures, and slopes that were turned into cones and columns as mother nature carved away at the lava rock. The volcanic rock is also perfect for carving entire buildings and the area is famous for these carved homes, stables, churches, and small cells used by hermits and monks. Many people still live in these rock formations, which are naturally cool in the summer.

When you first arrive, you will find yourself in an area that resembles the surface of the Moon and it is here your adventure begins. Start by seeing the natural citadel of Uchisar, which will allow you to get an extraordinary panoramic view of the region. Enjoy lunch at a nearby restaurant before taking the walking path that connects to the Göreme Valley. This valley houses the Göreme Open Air Museum which features churches and monasteries hewn out of rock that are adorned with colorful frescoes. From here, drive to the town of Avanos for check-in at the Anka CaveSuit Hotel where you will have dinner and spend the night.

**Day 3** Start the day with an optional early morning hot air balloon ride over the region. It’s an unforgettable experience as you silently glide over the dramatic landscape while the sun rises and casts its light on the scenery below. Coming back to earth, have a late breakfast at your hotel and then set out for a full day of exploring. First, you will head to the south of Nevsehir for a visit to the underground city of Kaymakli. Used for centuries as a place of refuge, these underground cities were mostly abandoned after 1923.

Continue with a drive to the Ihlara Valley with its incredible gorge that has a stunning river running right down the heart of the valley. Near the province of Aksaray, it is still considered part of the southern Cappadocia region. Take a mild walk along a leafy nature trail dotted with numerous cave churches you can explore. Then, following lunch in the picturesque town of Beli Sirma, you will head to Derbent and the Guvercinlik (Pidgeon) Valley for an orientation tour and a chance to do some shopping. At the end of your activities, return to the hotel for dinner and overnight.

**Day 4** Your final day starts with breakfast at the hotel and then a transfer to the airport where you will catch your flight to Kepez. On arrival, transfer directly to the pier and board the ship.

**Special Note:** This tour includes a significant amount of moderate to vigorous walking/standing that includes numerous steps and uneven surfaces. The tour is not available to wheelchair guests and is not considered suitable for those with walking difficulties or other health concerns. Guests should be in reasonably good physical condition. We recommend wearing weather appropriate comfortable clothing; flat walking shoes; a sun cap; sunglasses and sunscreen. Shoulders and legs must be covered when entering any religious sites. All shopping and/or carpet demonstrations are optional and at the guest’s discretion.
Off-the-beaten track in Turkey are hidden archaeological wonders that few visitors have the opportunity to explore. This experience delves into the lesser known, yet equally impressive sites of Sardes, Aphrodisias, Hierapolis and Sagalassos. There is also time at Pamukkale, where the stark white limestone basins of brilliant blue mineral springs beckon you to dip your toes. Overnight stays in Izmir, Pamukkale and the City of Roses complement this program that has you rejoining the ship in Kepez.

**Day 1** Disembark the ship in Istanbul and drive to Manisa where you will visit Sardes, once the flourishing capital of the ancient Lydian kingdom of the seventh century BCE. Strategically located on a spur of land at the foot of Mount Tmolus, it commanded the central plain of the Hermus Valley and was the western terminus of the Persian Royal Road. It was also the first city where gold and silver coins were minted. Following lunch, continue on with the scenic drive to Izmir where you will enjoy dinner and a panoramic tour of the area before retiring to your hotel for the night.

**Day 2** Following breakfast in the hotel, depart Izmir for Aphrodisias, one of the most important ancient sites in Turkey after Ephesus. It was during the Roman period around the year two BC that Aphrodisias was named after Aphrodite and kept gaining importance. One of the inscriptions on the theater’s stage walls mentions a golden Eros statue gifted by Caesar to Aphrodite.

Located near a marble quarry, the marble from here was widely used during the Hellenistic and Roman periods, and Aphrodisias became famous in the Roman world for its marble statues. The city was favored by both Julius Caesar and Emperor Augustus who gave it autonomy and tax-free status, stating it “the one city from all of Asia that I have selected to be my own.”

Following lunch at a local establishment, you will drive to Pamukkale where you will have dinner and overnight.

**Day 3** Early risers have the option to partake in a sunrise hot air balloon ride over Pamukkale. Afterwards, enjoy breakfast and then it’s time to tour the Pamukkale hot springs and Hierapolis ruins.

Pamukkale literally translates to ‘Cotton Castle’ and the brilliant white terraces of petrified limestone certainly conjure up that image. Within the stepped terraces are warm pools of brilliant blue mineral-rich water that invite visitors to dip their toes in and where Romans once bathed. There is also the famous “Cleopatra Pool” that Marc Anthony had built and gifted to her. An earthquake toppled the structure over the pool, but today you can still swim amongst the submerged columns.

What adds to any visit to Pamukkale is the opportunity to also visit the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Hierapolis. Hierapolis also means the sacred city and remains here include the Necropolis, the Temple of Oktokonus, a theater that features reliefs depicting the mythology of Apollo and Artemis, the Apollo sacred site, Roman Baths, and many other significant ruins.

Lunch will be served at an establishment in Denizli, after which there is a visit to Salda Lake before continuing on to Isparta (Egirdir) – nicknamed The City of Roses. Isparta is famous for its roses and rose products. The world’s largest producer of the Damascena rose, it exports rose oil around the world (including providing it to the grand mosque at Mecca) and also hosts a 2-day Rose Festival. After check-in at your hotel, enjoy dinner and a leisurely evening.

**Day 4** Your day commences with an early morning breakfast at the hotel and departure for Sagalassos, one of the best-preserved ancient cities in Turkey that was once the most important city of ancient Pisidia. Conquered by Alexander the Great in 333 BC on his way to Persia, it flourished after joining the Roman Empire in 25 BC.

Following your visit, you will make the 90-minute drive to Kepez where you will rejoin the ship.

*Special Note: This tour includes a significant amount of moderate to vigorous walking/standing that includes numerous steps and uneven surfaces. The tour is not available to wheelchair guests and is not considered suitable for those with walking difficulties or other health concerns. Guests should be in reasonably good physical condition. We recommend wearing weather appropriate comfortable clothing; flat walking shoes; a sun cap; sunglasses and sunscreen. Shoulders and legs must be covered when entering any religious sites.*
IST302: BYZANTINE TREASURES – ISTANBUL’S MOST ICONIC LANDMARKS - AUGUST 12, 2021 | $75 PP

5 HOURS | MEALS: NONE

Istanbul’s Byzantine past comes alive on this tour that visits its most iconic highlights and includes time for shopping at the inimitable Grand Bazaar.

Travel first to Hippodrome Square, location of the famous Egyptian Obelisk, Obelisk of Constantine, Serpentine Column, and the German Fountain, which was an important symbol of the close relationship between the Ottoman Empire and Germany at the beginning of the 20th century.

Next, make the short walk to the Byzantine Underground Cistern. The Cistern dates from the sixth century and features a roof supported by 336 Corinthian columns. Marvel at the ancient craftsmanship that created this “Underground Palace” as you tour the illuminated interior with your guide.

Another short walk brings you to the world-famous St. Sophia, the Church of the Divine Wisdom. Built during Emperor Justinian’s reign in AD 537, it remained the greatest church in Christendom until the conquest of Constantinople in 1453 by Sultan Mehmet II who ordered it to be converted into a mosque. The great dome, the semi domes, the north and south tympana, the vaults of the narthex, the aisle and the gallery at one time were all covered with gold mosaics, of which a good number have still survived.

Continue on by boarding your coach and traveling to the legendary Grand Bazaar. The Grand Bazaar is the largest and oldest covered bazaar in Turkey with ninety-two streets that house more than 4,000 shops. Side-by-side you will find shops selling a variety of Turkish handicrafts, Oriental carpets, rare jewels and of course, a wealth of inexpensive souvenirs. It is here where you will best experience Istanbul’s definitive Oriental atmosphere. If you choose, there is an optional carpet weaving demonstration you can attend prior to entering the Bazaar.

Following your visit to the Bazaar, drive back to the port.

Special Note: This tour includes approximately three hours of moderate walking/standing that includes a few steps and some uneven surfaces. The tour is available to wheelchair guests who have a collapsible wheelchair, are able to make their own way on and off the transportation and have a companion to assist them; however, the Underground Cistern is not wheelchair accessible. We recommend wearing weather appropriate comfortable clothing: sturdy, flat walking shoes with a closed toe; a sun cap; sunglasses and sunscreen. Shoulders and legs must be covered when entering religious sites.

IST303: ULTIMATE ISTANBUL - ESSENTIAL HIGHLIGHTS AND GRAND BAZAAR - AUGUST 12, 2021 | $145 PP

8 HOURS | MEALS: LUNCH

Explore both the Byzantine and Ottoman highlights of Istanbul on this comprehensive tour that showcases some of the city’s most remarkable attractions, visits the famous Grand Bazaar and includes lunch at a notable restaurant.

Start by driving from the port to Hippodrome Square, location of the famous Egyptian Obelisk, Obelisk of Constantine, Serpentine Column and the German Fountain, which was an important symbol of the close relationship between the Ottoman Empire and Germany at the beginning of the 20th century.

Next, make the short walk to the incredible Blue Mosque. Completed in 1616, it is a triumph of harmony, proportion and elegance. The Mosque’s colorful 260 windows enable the sunlight to reach inside and the blue Iznik Tiles that cover the walls are what gave the mosque its popular name, “Blue Mosque.”

Another brief walk finds you at the stunning Topkapi Palace, residence of the sultans for almost three centuries. Located on a promontory that extends between the Bosphorus and the Golden Horn, the views here are simply magnificent. Not only was the palace the imperial residence of the Sultan and his court, but it was also the seat of the government for the Ottoman Empire and housed upward of 4,000 people. During your visit, see the general exhibitions that contain artifacts and collection pieces that once belonged to the Ottoman Sultans.

Continuing on, walk to a nearby restaurant for lunch before commencing your afternoon of touring. Within walking distance of the restaurant is world-famous St. Sophia, the Church of the Divine Wisdom. Built during Emperor Justinian’s reign in AD 537, it remained the greatest church in Christendom until the conquest of Constantinople in 1453 by Sultan Mehmet II who ordered it to be converted into a mosque. The great dome, the semi domes, the north and south tympana, the vaults of the narthex, the aisle and the gallery at one time were all covered with gold mosaics, of which a good number have still survived.

Your final journey on foot brings you to the Byzantine Underground Cistern. The Cistern dates from the sixth century and features a roof supported by 336 Corinthian columns. Marvel at the ancient craftsmanship that created this “Underground Palace” as you tour the illuminated interior with your guide.

At this point, rejoin your coach and drive to the legendary Grand Bazaar. The Grand Bazaar is the largest and oldest covered bazaar in Turkey with ninety-two streets that house more than 4,000 shops that sell a variety of Turkish handicrafts, Oriental carpets, rare jewels and of course, a wealth of inexpensive souvenirs. It is here where you will best experience Istanbul’s definitive Oriental atmosphere. If you choose, there is an optional carpet weaving demonstration you can attend prior to entering the Bazaar.

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Following your visit to the Bazaar, transfer back to the ship.

Special Note: This tour includes over 3.5 hours of moderate walking/standing that includes some steps and uneven surfaces. The tour is available to wheelchair guests who have a collapsible wheelchair, are able to make their own way on and off the transportation and have a companion to assist them; however, the Underground Cistern is not wheelchair accessible. We recommend wearing weather appropriate comfortable clothing; sturdy, flat walking shoes with a closed toe; a sun cap; sunglasses and sunscreen. Shoulders and legs must be covered when entering religious sites. All shopping and/or carpet demonstrations are optional and at the guest’s discretion. On Fridays, the Blue Mosque may be replaced with the Nuruosmaniye Mosque.

Following your visit to the Bazaar, transfer back to the ship.

Special Note: This tour includes over 3.5 hours of moderate walking/standing that includes some steps and uneven surfaces. The tour is available to wheelchair guests who have a collapsible wheelchair, are able to make their own way on and off the transportation and have a companion to assist them. We recommend wearing weather appropriate comfortable clothing; sturdy, flat walking shoes with a closed toe; a sun cap; sunglasses and sunscreen. Shoulders, legs, and midriffs must be covered when entering religious sites. All shopping and/or carpet demonstrations are optional and at the guest’s discretion. On Fridays, the Blue Mosque may be replaced with the Nuruosmaniye Mosque.

Following your visit to the Bazaar, transfer back to the ship.

Days 2 If you like, you can start with an early morning optional hot air balloon ride over the region. It’s an unforgettable experience as you silently glide over the dramatic landscape while the sun rises and casts its light on the scenery below. Coming back to earth, have a late breakfast at your hotel and then set out for a full day of exploring. Head out first to the south of Nevsehir for a visit to the underground city of Kaymakli. Used for centuries as a place of refuge, these underground cities were mostly abandoned after 1923.

Continue with a drive to the Ihlara Valley with its incredible gorge that has a stunning river running right down the heart of the valley. Near the province of Aksaray, it is still considered part of the southern Cappadocia region. Take a mild walk along a leafy nature trail dotted with numerous cave churches you can explore. Then, following lunch in the picturesque town of Bell Sirma, you will head to Derbent and the Guvercinlik (Pidgeon) Valley for an orientation tour and a chance to do some shopping. At the end of your activities, return to the hotel where dinner is on your own and the remainder of the evening is at your leisure.
Day 3  Begin with breakfast at the hotel and then a panoramic transfer to the airport where you will catch your flight back to Istanbul. On arrival, check-in to your hotel and have the rest of the day to explore Istanbul on your own. Dinner is in the hotel.

Day 4  Your final day you will check-out of the hotel and transfer to the airport to catch your International flight home.

Special Note: This tour includes a significant amount of moderate to vigorous walking/standing that includes numerous steps and uneven surfaces. The tour is not available to wheelchair guests and is not considered suitable for those with walking difficulties or other health concerns. Guests should be in reasonably good physical condition. We recommend wearing weather appropriate comfortable clothing, flat walking shoes; a sun cap; sunglasses and sunscreen. Shoulders, midriffs, and legs must be covered when entering any religious sites. All shopping and/or carpet demonstrations are optional and at the guest’s discretion.
9-NIGHT HEART OF THE BLACK SEA | AUGUST 4, 2021

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ISTANBUL, TURKEY
☐ IST505MS: Mystical Cappadocia | August 12, 2021 Price: COMPLIMENTARY (for MAX SHORE) OR $1,750
☐ IST506MS: Hidden Treasures and Pamukkale Hot Springs | August 12, 2021 Price: COMPLIMENTARY (for MAX SHORE) OR $1,750
☐ IST510PST: Magical, Mystical Cappadocia | August 12, 2021 | Price: $999
☐ IST302: Byzantine Treasures – Istanbul's Most Iconic Landmarks | August 12, 2021 | Price: COMPLIMENTARY OPTION OR $75
☐ IST303: Ultimate Istanbul - Essential Highlights and Grand Bazaar | August 12, 2021 | Price: $145
☐ IST306: Istanbul's Ottoman Influence – The Blue Mosque, Topkapi Palace and Grand Bazaar | August 12, 2021 | Price: COMPLIMENTARY OPTION OR $75

NAME
ADDRESS
PHONE #
BOOKING #

NOTES

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