

TURKEY & GREECE

With 3-day cruise through the islands of the Aegean
March 29, 2020 - 21 Days



a world to experience



Fares per Person: based on double/twin

\$8,640 Inside IB cabin

\$8,785 Outside XA cabin

\$9,110 Junior Suite SJ cabin

- > Please add 0.5% GST.
- > Other cruise categories and single fares are available.
- > **Early Bookers:** \$300 discount on first 8 seats; \$150 on next 4
- > **Experience Points:** Earn 170 points from this tour.
Redeem **170 points** if you book by December 18.



tour
a more intimate travel experience

Includes

- Transportation to Vancouver Airport and return
- Flight from Vancouver to Istanbul, Turkey
- Current air transport tax and security fees
- 16 nights of hotel accommodation and taxes
- Transfer from airport to Istanbul hotel
- Coach transportation in Turkey for 8 days
- Knowledgeable Turkish guide for 8 days
- Locally-guided tour of Istanbul
- Topkapi Palace & Hagia Sophia Museum
- The Blue Mosque & Hippodrome
- Istanbul's Grand Bazaar and Spice Market
- Cruise on the Bosphorus
- Turkish Bath
- Turkish Floor Show with dinner
- Ferry across the Dardanelles
- Guided tour of ancient City of Troy
- Guided tour of Pergamon & archeological site
- Thermal pools of Pamukkale
- Guided walking tour of Ephesus with Library of Celsus, Temple of Hadrian, and Terrace Houses
- Tour of a carpet factory
- Turkish fashion show
- 3 days & 3 nights on *Celestyal Olympia* cruise with islands of Patmos, Rhodes, Crete & Santorini
- Cruise crew gratuities and cruise taxes
- Tour on Rhodes to visit Acropolis of Lindos and Castle of the Knights of St John
- Tour on Crete to Minoan Palace of Knossos
- Coach transportation in Greece for 7 days
- Knowledgeable Greek guide for 7 days
- Locally-guided tour of Athens
- Acropolis Museum and Parthenon
- Epidaurus Theatre
- Mycenae ruins with Royal Tombs
- Original Olympic Games sites: Sanctuary of Olympian Zeus, Gymnasium, and Stadium
- Archaeological Museum of Olympia
- Archaeological site of Delphi with Sanctuary of Apollo and Museum
- Monasteries of Meteora
- Farewell dinner with folklore dances
- Transfer from Athens hotel to airport
- Flight from Athens to Vancouver
- Gratuities for Turkish and Greek guides & drivers
- Luggage handling at hotels, ship and airlines
- Wells Gray tour director throughout tour
- **47 meals:** 19 breakfasts, 10 lunches, 18 dinners

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Experience Turkey & Greece, the seat of civilizations, with Wells Gray Tours!


Without a doubt, Turkey and Greece are two fascinating countries, thanks to a history that has been long and varied. Their most famous civilizations include the Hittite, Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Seljuq, and Ottoman, and all are represented in beautifully preserved monuments. During this tour, you will explore the modern cities that have sprung up among the ancient sites, cruise among the awesome Aegean Islands, and discover the fascinating history of the Turks and Greeks.

Our Turkey & Greece tour flies to Istanbul and returns from Athens on Lufthansa, so that time is not wasted driving. Other companies offer tours that are only one to two weeks with itineraries that are either too hectic or do not visit all the favourite sights. This tour, lasting three weeks, allows a leisurely schedule with four nights in Istanbul and Athens, several two-night stays, and a three-day Aegean cruise with stops at four islands.

The tour is accompanied from British Columbia by a Wells Gray tour director. Thoroughly experienced multilingual guides travel with us on the drives through Turkey and Greece. Local guides conduct sightseeing tours in several cities. You will be expertly guided and well looked after!

Tour Notes

- A **passport** is required to visit Turkey and Greece and must be valid for at least three months after your return to Canada. A visa is required to visit Turkey. You must apply via a website prior to departure and the cost is US\$60. Wells Gray Tours staff can assist you if you do not have a computer. A visa is not required for Greece.
- **Currency & Expenses:** The currency in Turkey is the lira and, as of July 2019, a Canadian dollar is worth TL4.27. The currency in Greece is the euro and a Canadian dollar is worth €0.69. You should order lira and euros from your bank 1-2 weeks before departure, or plan to use ATMs. Credit cards are accepted almost everywhere, but less likely in the bazaars. Gratuities are included for all group meals, for guides and drivers in Turkey and Greece, and for the ship's crew.
- **Beverages:** Although most meals are included, it is not common practice to include beverages with meals. Bottled water is served, but any other beverage will probably be at your expense.
- **Rooms for singles** are often a different style or smaller size than twin rooms. Many hotels also limit the number of single rooms allocated to a group, so please book early if you prefer to travel single.
- **Triple rooms** are not available.

 **Activity Level:** Moderate activity including walking tours of archaeological ruins, historic areas and markets where the motorcoach cannot travel. You should be able to climb many stairs without assistance, walk on sidewalks or streets with cobblestones or an uneven surface, and walk at an easy pace for up to a kilometre. Some hotels do not have elevators to all floors and rooms may be up a flight of stairs. Sometimes the coach cannot drive all the way to an attraction. There can be longer walks in the airports while travelling to Istanbul or home from Athens; request a cart or wheelchair at check-in if this could be an issue for you. Please consider these mobility issues prior to booking this tour. The coach cannot carry a scooter. If you are not able to participate in Activity Level 2, Wells Gray Tours recommends that you bring a companion to assist you. The tour director, guides and drivers have many responsibilities, so please do not expect them, or your fellow travellers, to provide ongoing assistance. If you are not capable of keeping up with the group or require frequent assistance, the tour director may stop you from participating in some activities or some days of the tour. In extreme situations, you may be required to leave the tour and travel home at your own expense; travel insurance will probably not cover you.

Celestial Olympia

Our 3-day and 3-night cruise in the Aegean is on board the *Olympia*, operated by Celestial Cruise Lines. The company operates two ships and is flagged in Malta. *Olympia* was previously a Royal Caribbean and Thomson ship and was used as a floating hotel for the 2014 Sochi Olympics. *Olympia* carries 1,664 passengers and is 704 feet long with nine decks. Amenities include a la carte restaurant, buffet restaurant, two lounges, five bars, casino, two pools, sauna, gym, medical clinic, spa and massage room, beauty salon, Internet area, library, and duty free store. Staterooms are insides, outsides, junior suites, and suites.

Olympia is not a luxury cruise ship on the level of Holland America or Norwegian. However, it is the only ship that offers a one-way cruise from Turkey to Greece with stops at the Aegean islands. There are four ports of call — Patmos, Rhodes, Crete, and Santorini. Shore excursions are included on Rhodes and Crete, and they can be purchased in advance or on the ship for Patmos and Santorini.

Itinerary

Sunday, March 29:

Transportation is provided to Vancouver airport and we fly on Lufthansa in late afternoon.

Monday, March 30:

Meals: D

We change planes in Frankfurt and continue to **Istanbul**, arriving about 5 pm (10 hours ahead of Pacific Time). **Welcome to Turkey!** Our local guide and coach meet us at the airport and we drive to Amiral Palace Hotel for a four-night stay. This intimate hotel has a superb location in the historic district of Sultanahmet. A welcome dinner is planned.

Tuesday, March 31:

Meals: B,L,D

Istanbul's strategic position along the historic Silk Road, rail networks to Europe and the Middle East, and the only sea route between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean helped create Istanbul's diverse population. Straddling the busy waterway of the Bosphorus Strait, Istanbul bridges Europe and Asia, making it the only city in the world situated on two continents. Byzantium, Constantinople, Istanbul - its three names span more than 2,600 years, nearly 1,600 of them as the capital of two of the greatest empires the world has known, Byzantine and Ottoman. The morning is leisure time to relax after the long flight. This afternoon, we cruise the **Bosphorus Strait** taking in sights on both the European and Asian shores including mosques, fortresses, and palaces. The Bosphorus is 31 km long and 3 km wide, connecting the Black Sea and the Sea of Marmara.

Wednesday, April 1:

Meals: B,L,D

During a full-day tour, we visit landmarks of Istanbul such as the **Topkapi Palace** including the treasury section, St. Sophia, **The Blue Mosque**, and the Hippodrome. There is free time in the Grand Bazaar to browse some of its 3,500 shops.

Thursday, April 2:

Meals: B,L,D

First, we visit the famous covered **spice market** which has operated since 1660. The heady aromas of saffron, cloves, sugar, and spice fill the air under the market's vaulted ceiling. Baskets filled with every spice imaginable add colours of gold, orange, yellow, and green, and the array of dried fruits and nuts is astounding. Afterwards, there is free time to stroll **Taksim Square**, the heart of modern Istanbul. A unique experience is included today — a Turkish bath. This evening, enjoy a Turkish floor show including a three-course dinner with wine or beer and cultural folklore entertainment with belly dancing.

Friday, April 3:

Meals: B,L,D

Leaving Istanbul, we drive west along the Sea of Marmara and ride a ferry across The Dardanelles to Canakkale. Nearby is the ancient city of **Troy** which is best known as the setting of the Trojan War, about 1200 BC. As described in Homer's *Odyssey*, after a 10-year siege, Troy fell to the ruse of the Trojan Horse. Excavations starting in the 1860s pinpointed the location of Troy and proved that a succession of cities had occupied this site. Today, we can stroll the city walls and streets. Tonight's accommodation is the five-star Parion Hotel in **Canakkale**.

Saturday, April 4:

Meals: B,L,D

We continue down the west coast to **Pergamon** which dates to 280 BC. Perched atop a wind-swept mountain, Pergamon is listed in the Bible as one of the Seven Churches of Asia. Pergamon flourished until the 14th century and once rivaled the more famous cities of Alexandria, Ephesus and Antioch in culture, commerce and medicine. Under Ottoman rule, it was abandoned and, today, some of the ruins of this once magnificent city lie underneath the modern city of Bergama. We stay overnight at Dikili Holiday Village.

Sunday, April 5:

Meals: B,L,D

We drive inland to **Pamukkale**, a unique natural phenomenon where hot mineralized water flows from springs to create pools and terraces that are visually stunning. The early Turks attributed healing powers to the hot springs as the waters seemed to cure many ailments. The temperature in the 17 natural thermal pools ranges from 35 to 100 degrees C. We stay overnight at the fabulous Colossae Hotel and Spa which utilizes the hot springs water for its own pools.

Monday, April 6:

Meals: B,L,D

During the return to the coast, we stop to explore the ruins of **Ephesus**. Founded about 6000 BC by the Ionian Greeks, it became the most important commercial centre of Asia Minor. It was abandoned 600 years ago and excavations started in 1863. Our walking tour includes Domitian Square, Hercules Gate, Fountain of Trajan, The Baths of Scholastica, Temple of Hadrian, Library of Celsus and, the most magnificent structure in Ephesus, Grand Theatre. In the **Terrace Houses** section, the oldest building dates to the 1st century BC. Here we see fine mosaics and frescoes, and the remarkable heating system using clay pipes. We stay overnight in **Kusadasi** at Derici Hotel.

Tuesday, April 7:*Meals: B,L,D*

This morning, we visit a carpet factory with an opportunity to buy a genuine, magnificent Turkish rug, and are also treated to a fashion show. In Kusadasi, we board the **Celestyal Olympia** and sail at 1 pm. The **Aegean Sea** has about 1,415 islands, mostly belonging to Greece. At 6 pm, we arrive at the first island port, **Patmos**. The island covers only 33 square km and has a population of 3,000. It is home to the sacred Cavern of the Apocalypse where John was inspired to write the Book of Revelations. Sometimes called the "Jerusalem of the Aegean", Patmos is an official pilgrimage site for members of the Catholic faith. Visits to the Cave of Revelations and to St. John's Monastery are worthwhile. Being an island, Patmos has a very active small port and watching the fishermen unload their catch of vividly coloured sea urchins, small silvery fish and globular orange sea creatures is quite fascinating.

Wednesday, April 8:*Meals: B,L,D*

Overnight the *Olympia* sails southeast to **Rhodes** and docks from 7 am to 6 pm. The Island of Knights may be best known for the Colossus of Rhodes which was a giant bronze statue at the harbour, erected in 280 BC and destroyed by an earthquake 50 years later. A shore excursion is included to visit the Acropolis of Lindos, a natural citadel first built in the 4th century BC and fortified successively by the Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Knights of St John, and Ottomans. We also see the Castle of the Knights of St John, the Staircase of the Propylaea, and Columns of the Hellenistic Stoa. Back in the port of Rhodes, you can stroll the streets of the Medieval Town and tour the Palace of the Grand Master.

Thursday, April 9:*Meals: B,L,D*

From 7 am to noon, the ship stops at Heraklion, the capital of **Crete**, largest of the Greek Islands. It is well-known in legend for being the birthplace of Zeus. We take a tour to the **Minoan Palace of Knossos**, first settled about 7000 BC with buildings dating to about 2000 BC. Knossos is sometimes called "Europe's oldest city". It was abandoned around the 9th century AD when the population shifted to the coast and the buried ruins were discovered by archeologists in 1878. The excavations now indicate that the palace covered six acres and had 1,300 rooms. In the afternoon, we sail north to the beautiful volcanic island of **Santorini**. The ship arrives at 4:30 pm and departs at 9:30 pm. Optional shore excursions can take you to the spectacular caldera with white-washed houses perched on the edge, or the famous sunset in Oia.

Friday, April 10:*Meals: B,D*

We arrive at Piraeus, Greece, and disembark the *Olympia*. Our Greek guide and coach meet us and we drive into nearby **Athens**. We see the Temple of Olympian Zeus, Hadrian's Arch, and the Panathenean Stadium, site of the first modern Olympic Games in 1896. At **The Acropolis**, we visit the architectural masterpieces of the Golden Age of Greece: the Propylaea, the Temple of Athena Nike, the Erechtheion, and finally the ruins of the amazing **Parthenon**. We stay two nights at the 4-star Hotel Amalia which has an excellent location opposite the Greek Parliament and the National Gardens.

Saturday, April 11:*Meals: B,D*

We drive the coastal route to Corinth with a stop on the way to view the engineering marvel of the **Corinth Canal**. It opened in the 1890s and crosses the isthmus between the Greek mainland and the Peloponnese Peninsula. Founded about 6000 BC, the city of Corinth was St. Paul's home for two years. We visit the ruins of the ancient city such as the 1st century shops, Apollo's Temple, and the Agora marketplace.

Sunday, April 12:*Meals: B,D*

We follow the scenic coastal road to Epidaurus with its 4th century BC theatre, noted for astonishing acoustics. Next is the town of Nafplion, a modern seaside resort crowned by the mighty ramparts of the Palamidi Fortress. The last stop is **Mycenae**, the Homeric city of Atreides, the city "rich in gold" of the ancient poets. At this archaeological site, we visit the Lion's Gate, the Cyclopean Walls, and the Royal Tombs. We stay overnight in **Olympia**, the cradle of the Olympic Games, at the Arty Grand Hotel.

Monday, April 13:*Meals: B,D*

During the morning, we visit archaeological sites such as the Sanctuary of Olympian Zeus and the Ancient Stadium where athletes performed in the original **Olympic Games**, possibly as early as 776 BC. We walk among the impressive remains of the Gymnasium and the Temples of Hera and Zeus. We also visit the Archaeological Museum that displays Praxiteles' magnificent statue of Hermes. Then we drive through the plains of Ilia and Achaia, and cross the Gulf of Corinth on the lofty **Rio-Antirrio Bridge**, the world's longest multi-span cable-stayed bridge. We stay overnight in Delphi at the Amalia Hotel.

Tuesday, April 14:*Meals: B,D*

Delphi was once considered the centre of the Ancient World and its prestige extended far beyond the borders of the Hellenic world. Set on the slopes of Mount Parnassus, in a landscape of unparalleled beauty, lie the remains of the Sanctuary of Apollo, dating from the 4th century BC. We visit the Temple of Delphi and walk the Sacred Way to the Athenaeum Treasury. In the afternoon, we head to **Kalambaka**, a small town situated at the foot of the astonishing complex of Meteora's gigantic rocks. Tonight's accommodation is at the Amalia Hotel.

Wednesday, April 15:*Meals: B,D*

We visit the **monasteries of Meteora** which are perched on the tops of rock towers hundreds of metres high. They were built between the 14th and 16th centuries and are now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Within the monasteries are exquisite specimens of Byzantine art. This afternoon, we return to Athens and stay two nights at the

Amalia Hotel. Our farewell dinner is at a local Greek tavern in Plaka (the old city) with **folklore dances** and a music show.

Thursday, April 16:*Meals: B,D*

This is a free day. **Athens** has numerous attractions, ancient and modern, and we saw only a selection on our first day here. There is a great variety of shopping at nearby Ermou, Kolonaki, and Voukourestiou streets.

Friday, April 17:*Meals: B*

We fly on Lufthansa from Athens to Frankfurt and on to Vancouver, arriving in mid-afternoon. We stay overnight at the Pacific Gateway Hotel near the airport.

Saturday, April 18:*Meals: B*

Transportation is provided back to Victoria and your pickup point.

Tour Policies

Payments: A deposit of \$800 per person is requested at the time of booking and the balance is due December 18, 2019. By paying the deposit, you agree to the Terms & Conditions, Activity Level and Cancellation Policy outlined.

Cancellation Policy: Up to November 18, 2019, your tour payments will be refunded less an administrative charge of \$100 per person. From November 19 to December 18, the cancellation charge is \$400 per person. From December 19 to January 17, 2020, the cancellation charge is 50% of the tour fare. From January 18 to February 18, the cancellation charge is 80% of the tour fare. After February 18, there is no refund.

Fare Changes: Changes to currency exchange rates or taxes and surcharges from the airline, cruise line, and other tour suppliers can occur at any time and are beyond the control of Wells Gray Tours, therefore Wells Gray Tours reserves the right to increase fares due to such changes up until the time of departure.

Travel Insurance: A Comprehensive Insurance policy is available through Wells Gray Tours and coverage is provided by Travel Guard. Policies purchased at deposit include a waiver of the pre-existing condition clause for medical and cancellation claims, otherwise policies can be purchased no later than at final payment. Please contact us for details.

Tour 25: This is a Tour 25 departure, meaning the tour is limited to 25 participants, a more intimate travel experience.

Photo Credit: Pergamon (Wikipedia)

E-points: This tour earns 170 e-points. Each time you travel on a Wells Gray tour, you earn Experience Points, or e-points. One e-point equals \$1. Redeem your points on select tours or accumulate enough points to earn a free tour! Redemptions offered until December 18.

Consumer Protection BC Licences: Kamloops 178, Vernon 655, Kelowna 588, Penticton 924, Victoria 65842

