

TURKEY & GREECE

With a 3-day cruise through the islands of the Aegean
April 7, 2024 – 20 Days

WELLS GRAY TOURS
a world to experience



Turkey and Greece are fascinating countries, thanks to a long and varied history. During this tour, you will explore the modern cities that have sprung up among the ancient sites, cruise the stunning islands of the Aegean Sea, and discover the fascinating history of the Turks and Greeks. This tour flies to Istanbul and returns from Athens. The leisurely schedule includes 4 nights each in Istanbul and Athen, and a 3-day Aegean cruise with stops at 4 islands. Expert multilingual guides travel with us during 8 days in Turkey and 7 days in Greece, supplemented by the knowledge of local experts in several cities!



INTERNATIONAL
TOUR



GROUP SIZE



ACTIVITY LEVEL

► **46 Meals Included:**

18 breakfasts, 10 lunches, 18 dinners

► **Fares per person:**

\$10,910 double/twin; \$12,765 single – Category IA cabin

\$11,110 double/twin; \$13,055 single – Category XA cabin

\$11,240 double/twin; \$13,240 single – Category XB cabin

Other cruise categories also available

► Please add 0.4% GST.

► **Experience Points:** Earn 185 Experience Points

► **Departure from:** Lower Mainland



Providing Quality Packaged Travel Since 1972

ITINERARY

Day 1: Sunday, April 7

A home pickup with a ride to Vancouver Airport is provided. Meet your fellow travellers from the BC Interior and Victoria at YVR. Our overnight flight on Lufthansa departs in late afternoon.

Day 2: Monday, April 8

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, driver, and coach meet us at the airport, and we drive to the And Hotel for a four-night stay. This intimate hotel has a superb location in the historic district of Sultanahmet. A welcome dinner is planned.

Meals included: Dinner

Accommodation: And Hotel

Day 3: Tuesday, April 9

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 **Bosporus 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 Bosporus Strait taking in sights on both the European and Asian shores including mosques, fortresses, and palaces. The Bosporus is 31 km long and 3 km wide, connecting the Black Sea and the Sea of Marmara.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: And Hotel

Day 4: Wednesday, April 10

We visit landmarks of Istanbul such as the **Topkapi Palace**, including the treasury section, Hagia Sophia, **The Blue Mosque**, and the Hippodrome. There is free time in the Grand Bazaar to browse some of its 3,500 shops.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: And Hotel

Day 5: Thursday, April 11

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 and cultural folklore entertainment with belly dancing.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: And Hotel

Day 6: Friday, April 12

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.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Parion Hotel Canakkale

Day 7: Saturday, April 13

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 some of the ruins of this once magnificent city now lie underneath the modern city of Bergama.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: TBA

Day 8: Sunday, April 14

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 Celsius. We stay overnight at the fabulous Colossae Hotel and Spa which utilizes the hot springs water for its own pools.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Colossae Hotel Pamukkale



Day 9: Monday, April 15

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 nearby **Kusadasi**.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Derici Hotel

Day 10: Tuesday, April 16

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. We board the **Celestyal Olympia** in Kusadasi and depart 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 it is quite fascinating to watch the fishermen unload their



catch of vividly coloured sea urchins, small silvery fish, and globular orange sea creatures.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Celestyal Olympia

Day 11: Wednesday, April 17

Overnight **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.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: *Celestyal Olympia*

Day 12: Thursday, April 18

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 whitewashed houses perched on the edge, or to watch the famous sunset in Oia.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

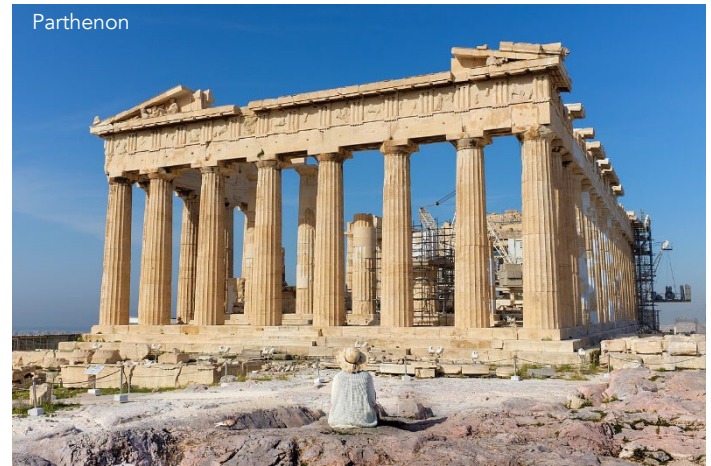
Accommodation: *Celestyal Olympia*

Day 13: Friday, April 19

We arrive at Piraeus, Greece, and disembark *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: the ruins of the amazing **Parthenon**, the Propylaea, the Temple of Athena Nike, and the Erechtheion, plus the Acropolis Museum. We stay two nights at the 4-star Hotel Amalia which has an excellent location opposite the Greek Parliament and the National Gardens.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Hotel Amalia Athens



Day 14: Saturday, April 20

We drive the coastal route to Corinth with a stop at the engineering marvel of the **Corinth Canal**. It opened in the 1890s and crosses the isthmus between the 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 Agora marketplace.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Hotel Amalia Athens



Day 15: Sunday, April 21

Leaving Athens, 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 archeological site, we visit the Lion's Gate, the Cyclopean Walls, and the Royal Tombs. We stay overnight in **Olympia**, cradle of the Olympic Games.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Arty Grand Hotel Olympia

Day 16: Monday, April 22

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.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Amalia Hotel Delphi

Day 17: Tuesday, April 23

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 great 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.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Amalia Hotel Kalambaka

Day 18: Wednesday, April 24

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 for another two-night stay. Our farewell dinner is at a local Greek tavern in Plaka (the old city) with **folklore dances** and music show.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Hotel Amalia Athens



Day 19: Thursday, April 25

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.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Hotel Amalia Athens

Day 20: Friday, April 26

We fly on Lufthansa from Athens to Frankfurt and on to Vancouver, arriving in mid-afternoon. Transportation is arranged from YVR to your home in the Lower Mainland.

Meals included: Breakfast

EXPERIENCE TURKEY & GREECE, THE SEAT OF CIVILIZATIONS

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 tour flies to Istanbul and returns from Athens. If you compare, please note that other itineraries are only one to two weeks which does not provide enough time to properly enjoy these world-class monuments. This three-week tour allows a leisurely schedule with four nights each in Istanbul and Athens, and a three-day Aegean cruise with stops at four islands.

This tour is accompanied by a Wells Gray tour director and thoroughly experienced multilingual guides travel with us on the drives through Turkey and Greece.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Transportation to/from Vancouver Airport
- Flight from Vancouver to Istanbul, Turkey
- Current air transport taxes and security fees
- 1 checked bag per person
- 15 nights of hotel accommodation and taxes
- Transfer from Istanbul Airport to hotel
- Coach transportation in Turkey for 8 days
- Knowledgeable Turkish guide for 8 days
- Cruise on the Bosphorus
- Guided tour of Istanbul landmarks
- Topkapi Palace
- Hagia Sophia Museum
- The Blue Mosque
- Istanbul's Grand Bazaar and Spice Market
- 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 Turkish carpet factory
- Turkish fashion show
- 3 days & 3 nights on *Celestyal Olympia* cruise with stops at 4 islands
- Cruise crew gratuities
- Port charges and cruise taxes
- Guided tour on Rhodes
- Acropolis of Lindos
- Castle of the Knights of St. John
- Guided tour on Crete
- Minoan Palace of Knossos
- Coach transportation in Greece for 7 days
- Knowledgeable Greek guide for 7 days
- Guided tour of Athens landmarks
- 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 and docents
- Luggage handling at hotels and ship
- Wells Gray tour director throughout tour
- **46 meals:** 18 breakfasts, 10 lunches, 18 dinners

TOUR NOTES

- **Celestyal Olympia:** Our 3-day and 3-night cruise in the Aegean is with Celestyal 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 an à 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.



- **Documentation:** A passport is required to visit Turkey and Greece and must be valid for at least six months after your return to Canada. An electronic visa is required to visit Turkey. You must apply online prior to departure and the cost is US\$60 (details in your documents at final payment). 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 2023, a Canadian dollar is worth TL19. The currency in Greece is the euro and a Canadian dollar is worth €0.68. 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.
- **Flight seating:** We are unable to take requests for window or aisle seating on the planes. The airline will not accept them, as group seating is assigned as a block. If this is important to you, we suggest you take the "No Flight" option with a fare reduction of \$1,995 and book your own flight which allows seat selection.
- **Flight upgrades:** Please enquire about current prices for upgrades on the flights from Vancouver to Istanbul and Athens to Vancouver. Premium economy and business class may be available.
- **Food Allergies:** You must notify us no later than at final payment if you have a food allergy. This tour goes to some places where restaurants may not be able to satisfy all food allergies. An allergy causes medical distress, a preference does not. For some allergies, please consider bringing your own snacks or food items so you are not dependent on what restaurants are able to serve.
- **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.



This tour is limited to 25 participants for a more intimate travel experience.



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. Please consider these mobility requirements prior to booking this tour. The coach cannot carry a scooter or motorized wheelchair. **Everybody** participating in this tour is expected to be capable of handling Activity Level 2. 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.

TOUR POLICIES

Payments: A deposit of \$800 per person is requested at the time of booking and balance is due January 4, 2024. By paying the deposit, you agree to the Terms & Conditions, Activity Level and Cancellation Policy outlined. Payments can be made by online banking or cheque (1.5% discount on tour fare), or by Visa or Mastercard (\$5,000 limit per person on credit cards).

Cancellation Policy: Up to December 4, 2023, your tour payments will be refunded less an administrative charge of \$100 per person. From December 5, 2023 to January 4, 2024, the cancellation charge is \$300 per person. From January 5 to February 5, the cancellation charge is 50% of the tour fare. From February 6 to March 4, the cancellation charge is 80% of the tour fare. After March 4, there is no refund.

Itinerary and Fare Changes: Due to continuing after effects of the pandemic, sometimes we are notified about changes to the itinerary prior to departure and sometimes during the tour. We do our best to substitute a similar service if something cancels, but occasionally the only alternative is to provide a refund for the missed activity. Please note that if we are forced to cancel a component of an extensive tour due to an issue beyond our control, the current penalties still apply if you choose to cancel the entire tour. Fuel surcharges and changes to currency exchange rates, taxes or other tour costs can occur at any time, therefore Wells Gray Tours reserves the right to increase fares due to such changes up to departure.

Home Pickup: Home pickups are included within Greater Vancouver. Please request no later than at final payment.

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.

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Experience Points or E-points: This tour earns 185 e-points. Each time you travel on a Wells Gray tour, you earn e-points that are added to your account after the tour returns. One e-point equals \$1. Redeem your earned points on select tours or accumulate enough points to earn a free tour! Redemptions offered until January 4, 2024.

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

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