



Ciao Italy, Yassou Greece!

Designed by Donna Dalziel | 17 days | April 2023

Your Itinerary

Day 1: Board your overnight flight to Rome!

Day 2: Rome

Arrive in Rome

Welcome to Rome, the Eternal City. The city is an incredible mix of archaeological gems, Roman genius, Renaissance art and religious treasure.

Explore the Spanish Steps, Trevi Fountain, and Piazza Navona

Enjoy time in Piazza di Spagna. Climb the staircase to view the city below or take the time to wander through one of Rome's most popular shopping areas. Alternatively, snag a moment to relax amongst the hustle and bustle of the city while enjoying a traditional Italian treat- gelato. You should also make sure to wander over to the famed Trevi Fountain and toss in a coin to ensure your return to Rome.

Overnight in Rome

Day 3: Rome

Guided Sightseeing of the Colosseum & Roman Forum

Your guided sightseeing of ancient Rome takes you through the impressive architectural ruins of the Roman Forum, once the heart political and civilian life in the Roman Empire. You will also visit the Colosseum, where battle reenactments, animal hunts, theater performances, and gladiators once battled other warriors and beasts for their lives in front of 50,000+ spectators from all over the Empire.

Gladiator School Experience

Latin for swordsman, a gladiator was a slave, criminal or professional fighter in ancient Rome. Today you will learn the origin of the warriors and learn some of the techniques they used to conquer their enemies.

Overnight in Rome

Day 4: Rome

Guided Sightseeing of Vatican City

One of the world's largest domes is located in the world's smallest country. See both during your guided visit of Vatican City. Your expert local guide will bring you through the Vatican Museum, where elaborate galleries packed with one artistic masterpiece after another lead you directly to the Sistine Chapel and its famous fresco ceiling. Then, enter St. Peter's Basilica under the watchful eyes of the brightly dressed Swiss Guard. Inside, admire Michelangelo's Pietà and try to find the artist's signature (it is the only sculpture he ever signed).

Take a Bike Ride in Borghese Park

Borghese Park is a popular place for locals to picnic and enjoy nice weather. This afternoon, you will explore the park by bike!

Italian Cooking Class (Dinner is Included)

From pasta to pizza to cannoli, Italian food is beloved-and devoured-all around the world. This is your chance to step up to the stove and learn from a real Italian chef. Discover the basics of regional specialties and how a few quality ingredients can make all the difference. After you've helped prepare the food it's time for the best part: enjoying your mouth-watering meal.

Overnight in Rome

Day 5: Rome | San Gimignano | Florence

Transfer to San Gimignano

Free Time in San Gimignano

Your first stop today will be San Gimignano, famed in medieval times for its imposing towers and considered by many the loveliest of the Tuscan hill towns. Fourteen towers remain standing out of the original 70, bearing testament to the rivalry between two political factions of the Middle Ages-the Guelphs and the Ghibellines-that shaped history in this region. San Gimignano is also renowned for Vernaccia, a local white wine, which is central to the city's economy. Take some time to visit the Collegiata, climb the Torre Grossa to view the rolling countryside or you might choose to visit the 13th-century

Sant'Agostino church.

Continue on to Florence

Welcome to Florence, a jewel set deep in the heart of Tuscany. Florence is the birthplace of the Italian language, opera and the Renaissance, and where works of art like Michelangelo's statue of David and Botticelli's The Birth of Venus still reside today.

Stop for a Photo at Piazzale Michelangelo

As you arrive in Florence you will make a stop at Piazzale Michelangelo for one of the most breath-taking views of Florence.

Overnight in Florence

Day 6: Florence

Guided Sightseeing of Florence

Fall under the spell of the powerful Medici family on your guided walking tour of Florence. The Medici's dominated politics, banking and trade for generations in Florence, the capital of the Tuscany. See Giotto's Bell Tower and the imposing marble cathedral of the Duomo, the Cathedral that rises far above this city's otherwise low skyline. Stand before Ghiberti's legendary *Gates of Paradise* and pass the classical statues in the main square: Piazza della Signoria. Here you can see where Michelangelo's *David* originally stood.

Gelato-Making Demonstration

One of Italy's most beloved sweet treats, gelato is its own unique type of ice cream. It is made with the finest and freshest ingredients and comes in a dizzying array of flavors. Enjoy a private demonstration of how it is made.

Free Time in Florence

Take time to make your own explorations of Florence. You may wish to visit one of the city's many fine museums or stroll across the Ponte Vecchio to explore the Oltrarno neighbourhood.

Overnight in Florence

Day 7: Florence | Ancona

Transfer to Ancona

Board a Night Ferry to Greece

Relax in cabin accommodations as you sail through the night to Greece.

Overnight on the Ferry

Day 8: Igoumenitsa | Meteora

Disembark in Igoumenitsa and Transfer to the Meteora Region

Head toward the majestic vistas of the Meteora region. More than 20 monasteries are nestled among these black mountains.

Guided Sightseeing of Meteora

A local guide introduces you to the Meteora region, home to many examples of Byzantine art and architecture. Renowned for its many cavelike monasteries built directly into the hillsides, Meteora draws visitors and missionaries yearning for a glimpse of the ancient life of the pious recluse.

Visit a Monastery in Meteora

Take an expert-led tour of the Meteora Monasteries, which are located atop the different natural pillars. Set high in the sky,

the location feels almost magical, and provides breathtaking views. It was settled during the 11th Century by monks, and attracted

not only the deeply religious, but also ancient Greek philosophers, poets, and painters.

Overnight in the Meteora Region

Day 9: Meteora | Delphi

Transfer to Delphi

On the slopes of Mount Parnassus lies Delphi, home of the mystical Oracle. For centuries, ancient Greeks would communicate with the gods here, seeking advice and answers at this magical site where the heavens and the earth were said to meet. Delphi was considered not only the centre of worship for the god Apollo, but also the centre of the world.

Guided Sightseeing of Delphi

Greeks believed Delphi to be the centre of the world, and a site that originally belonged to Mother Earth. As you explore the sacred hills with a local guide, ponder the mysteries of what lies in your future, as did Greece's ancient military leaders, who left gifts for the Oracle in hopes of good fortune in battle. Then visit the Temple of Apollo where, according to legend, the gods communicated with mortals. Conclude with a stop at the Delphi Museum, whose collection boasts many artifacts dating back to 550 B.C., reminiscent of ancient Greece's mythical past.

Overnight in Delphi

Day 10: Delphi | Athens

Transfer to Athens

Welcome to Athens, the Cradle of Democracy and birthplace of Western civilization. A modern city with a strong connection to its ancient history, Athens has been a centre of culture, politics, and history for thousands of years.

Guided Sightseeing of Athens

An expert local guide introduces you to the antiquities of Athens. Partially on your coach bus and partially on foot, get to know this ancient city named after Athena, goddess of war and wisdom. Climb up to the Acropolis to view the majestic Parthenon, an impressive architectural feat and symbol of western civilization. After descending from the "sacred rock" be sure to check out the marble filled Panathenaic Stadium, which held the first modern Olympic Games in 1896. Finally, visit the Acropolis Museum, which houses nearly 4,000 artifacts from the Acropolis and surrounding site.

Overnight in Athens

Day 11: Athens | Mykonos

Depart on 4-Day Greek Islands Cruise

This morning, you'll check in for your Greek islands cruise voyage, which sails out of Athens. A captivating four-day odyssey lies ahead, with stops at some of the Mediterranean's most historically and culturally rich islands and seaports. In between ports of call, you'll have plenty of time to enjoy the activities on the ship. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner are included on-board the cruise each day. Free-time options on board typically include shopping, games, fitness activities, swimming and sunning.

Visit Mykonos

The first island you'll visit is Mykonos, one of Greece's Cyclades Islands. Sometimes known as "The Island of the Winds" it was ruled by the Venetians in the 13th and 14th

centuries, and more recently was under Turkish occupation. Walk to the Church of Agia Kiriaki, which contains some of Mykonos's most fascinating and beautiful religious icons. Follow the quaint winding streets of the Old Town, where you may wish to browse amid the trendy boutiques and craft shops, to Three Well Square.

Overnight on Cruise Ship

Day 12: Kusadasi | Patmos

Visit Kusadasi

Discover the splendor of Ancient Ephesus, one of the largest Roman archaeological sites in the Mediterranean. You will see the exceptionally well-preserved ruins of the city, including the Ephesus Agora, Odeon, Houses of Patricians, Temple of Hadrian, Library of Celsus, Baths of Scholastica, and Pyrtaneum. During the excursion you will also have the opportunity to shop local merchandise such as jewelry, leather goods, and other souvenirs.

Visit Patmos

Enjoy time to make your own explorations around the whitewashed buildings of Patmos. Sometimes known as the Divine Island, Patmos is famous for a monastery dedicated to St. John who was said to have written the book of Revelations on the island. You may wish to walk the small, winding streets of Skala or venture to the Grotto of the Apocalypse.

Overnight on Cruise Ship

Day 13: Rhodes

Visit Rhodes

Rhodes, the largest of the Dodecanese Islands, was fortified by the Knights of the Order of St. John in the 14th century and is rich in history and culture. Visit the beautiful village of Lindos and its famous Acropolis or explore the streets of Rhodes' Old Town and the restored monastery of Philerimos.

Overnight on Cruise Ship

Day 14: Crete | Santorini

Visit Crete

Said to be the birthplace of Zeus, Crete is Greece's largest island with a culture and history of its own. Docking at the central port of Heraklion, you can explore some of ancient Greece's most interesting archaeological sites. Visit one of the Bronze Age's most impressive archaeological sites in the world, Knossos Palace. Also known as the Labyrinth, the palace appears as a maze of workrooms, living spaces, and storerooms close to a central square. See the Palace's Hall of the Royal Guard, the Hall of the Double Axes, the King's Chamber with its alabaster throne, as well as its beautiful courtyards and shrines. Four millennia ago, the complex was the ruling house and the religious centre for the entire region.

Visit Santorini

Santorini is often considered the quintessential Greek island, with its whitewashed houses perched on steep hillsides, landscapes of plunging cliffs and black sand beaches-as well as the only active volcano in the eastern Mediterranean. Visit the monastery of Prophet Ilias for a breathtaking view before continuing your explorations. You will see various layers of lava fixed on the face of rocks, each being another phase of the activity of the volcano. Pass through Fira, as well as the traditional villages of Firostefani and Imerovigli before arriving in Oia.

Overnight on Cruise Ship

Day 15: Athens

Disembark in Athens and Transfer to Central Athens

Walking Tour of the Plaka District

Get to know Athens during your Tour Director-led walking tour. Together you might stroll through the Plaka district or see the Athenian Trilogy.

Free Time at the Beach

Enjoy some time today to relax on the beach.

Enjoy an Upgraded Dinner in Athens

Late Evening Bus Transfer to Hotel

Overnight in Athens

Day 16: Athens | Aegina | Poros | Hydra

Enjoy a 1-day Saronic Islands Cruise (Lunch is Included)

Journey through the islands of the Saronic Gulf. Your first port of call is ancient Aegina, already well-known in the days of the pan-Hellenic Games. Then it's on to Poros, site of the Temple of Poseidon. Here, Demosthenes, a Greek orator who led the Athenian opposition toward Macedonia, escaped a death sentence by committing suicide. Last stop is Hydra, whose inhabitants figured prominently in the Greek War of Independence (Greece was a part of the Ottoman Empire until 1821). You'll also enjoy an included lunch during the cruise.

Overnight in Athens

Day 17: Depart for home