

PORTS

ATHENS (PIRAEUS), GREECE



Piraeus serves as Athens' primary port. Attractions here include archeological and maritime museums, the hilltop quarter of Kastella, Mikrolimano's seafood restaurants and the remains of the Piraeus Wall. After making the 6-mile journey to Greece's capital city, head to the Acropolis, the 7-acre rock formation that's home to the Propylaea, Erechtheum, Parthenon and Temple of Athena Nike. Nearby, the Acropolis Museum features exhibitions dedicated to these monuments and offers views of the city. Guided excursions may visit the Temple of Olympian Zeus; the Theatre of Dionysus, possibly the world's oldest theater; and the Panathenaic Stadium, site of the first modern Olympics. Occurring every hour on the hour, the changing of the guard ceremony at the Monument of the Unknown Soldier is a spectacle worth seeing. Food tours entice with Athenian delicacies such as olives, feta cheese and baklava.

Language: Greek
Currency: Euro (EUR)

THESSALONIKI, GREECE



This Macedonian capital is the second largest city in Greece, with a history that dates back to the fourth century B.C. Visit the archaeological museum displaying the artifacts and remains of Sindos, Vergina and the famous tombs of Macedonia, including the Tombs of King Philip II, Alexander the Great's father. Also be sure to visit the famous Citadel and the basilica dedicated to St. Demetrius.

Language: Greek
Currency: Euro (EUR)

IZMIR, TURKEY



Izmir is one part idyllic fishing harbor, one part holiday retreat, filled with the remains of ancient civilizations. The city lies at the head of a long and narrow gulf filled by ships and yachts. The constant and refreshing sea breezes temper the heat of the palm-lined promenades and avenues which follow the shoreline, and the terraces that climb the surrounding mountains. Visitors in the summer months will particularly enjoy the International Arts Festival and the International Fair.

Language: Turkish
Currency: Turkish Lira (TRY)

ISTANBUL, TURKEY



Istanbul, Turkey is one of the world's most interesting cities. Cruise passengers get a striking view of the minaret-pierced skyline as the ship pulls into port. The treasures are plentiful here; visitors marvel at the great architectural triumph of the Blue Mosque, the glorious frescoes and mosaics of the Chora Church and the amazing Grand Bazaar.

Language: Turkish

Currency: Turkish lira (TRY)

VOLOS, GREECE



This picturesque town earned its place in history as the birthplace of Achilles and the port from which Jason set out to find the golden fleece. Visitors can explore nearby quiet villages with cobblestone streets and quaint churches. At Meteora, you can view the fortress-like "monasteries of the air," which were built atop rock pillars in order to protect the monks from invaders. Sitting 900 feet above the plains of Thessaly, they are a remarkable sight.

Language: Greek

Currency: Euro (EUR)

MYKONOS, GREECE



Greek mythology contends that Mykonos is the rock that Heracles hurled to defeat the Giants. The island, part of the Cyclades archipelago, is known for its nightlife and slew of white-sand beaches, including Elia and Kalafatis, which are perfect for swimming and sunbathing. Steady breezes provide optimal conditions for activities such as surfing and parasailing. Revisit the 19th century at Lena's House, an annex of the Folklore Museum, and marvel at the Mediterranean views outside Paraportiani Church. Once used to grind wheat and generate energy, the town's famous windmills now make for great photo ops, particularly when shot from Alefkandra. This district, dubbed "Little Venice" because of its colorful houses perched along the sea, is home to trendy bars and art galleries. Boats are available to transport you to the archeological site of Delos, believed to be the birthplace of deities Apollo and Artemis.

Language: Greek

Currency: Euro (EUR)

SANTORINI, GREECE



Santorini embodies all that has made the Greek Islands legendary—splendid beaches, unparalleled architecture, dramatic cliffs, and quaint villages. The archipelago, perched on the edge of an active volcano's caldera, is one of Greece's Aegean gems. Blue-domed churches cap white-washed streets and white-, red- and black-sand shores are lapped by azure waters. Sunsets paint the bluffs in an array of oranges, pinks, and plums—prime camera fodder for that perfect photo. Visitors can stroll cobblestone streets to browse shops and chow down on authentic dolmades and moussaka; tour local vineyards for sips of wine sourced from grapes grown in the rich, volcanic soil; or go on an excursion to the island's highest point, the 1,860-foot Mount Profitis Ilias, for panoramic views and a look at an 18th-century monastery.

Language: Greek
Currency: Euro (EUR)

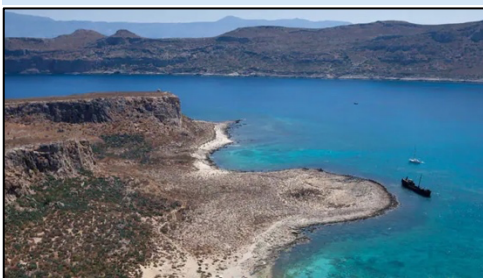
RHODES, GREECE



This island is celebrated for its natural beauty and delightful climate. Its most outstanding site is the Acropolis of Lindos; take a donkey trek to the site and pass charming, whitewashed cottages on the way. The island's capital city is ringed with more than two miles of 15th-century walls. Most excursions include the medieval castle and Turkish market.

Language: Greek
Currency: Euro (EUR)

CRETE (HERAKLION), GREECE



A string of high mountains divides this Greek isle into four regions, each with its own distinct landscape. Half-day excursions visit two main attractions — the restored 4,000-year-old Minoan palace of Knossos and the unparalleled archaeological museum in Heraklion. Tourists venturing out on their own may want to visit the colorful fruit and vegetable market or drive to a quaint fishing village.

Language: Greek
Currency: Euro (EUR)