Tour Code
CRMA

ADVENTURESABROAD

ADRIATIC & MEDITERRANEAN 'Cruise & Tour'

Albania, Montenegro, Croatia, Sardinia, Mallorca, Barcelona, Monte Carlo

17 days

Created on: 29 Mar, 2024

Day 1 Arrival in Tirana

Today we arrive in Tirana, capital of Albania. Tirana is located on a plain on the site of a Byzantine fortress and has been the capital since 1920.

Once infamous for its isolation, Albania is one of the smallest as well as the poorest countries of Europe. Today this is a country that is slowly making the transition to open-market economy and moving on the road to progress. In the heart of the Mediterranean, on the Adriatic and Ionian Seas, Albania is soon to become one of Europe's most interesting getaways. Still relatively unspoiled by globalization, you will notice an inspiring mixture of civilizations and cultures, making this country truly unique.

Overnight in Tirana.

Included Meal(s): Dinner, if required.

Day 2 Tirana - Kruja - Tirana

This morning we travel to Kruja, a small town perched high on the face of a hill and the centre of the Albanian resistance against the Ottoman Turks under the leadership of national hero, Scanderbeg. We visit the fortress of Kruja, the Scanderbeg Museum, Ethnographic Museum, and the old bazaar full of souvenirs, including hand-made articles.

Afterwards we depart for Tirana. We take a tour of the capital including Ethem Bey Mosque, and Clock Tower.

Late afternoon we return to our hotel in Tirana.

Overnight in Tirana.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 3 Tirana - Berat

Today we will drive to Berat known as a "city of one thousand windows", and declared a "museum city" and UNESCO protected site. A highlight of any trip to Albania, Berat is one of the country's most beautiful towns. The old name of the city was Antipatrea, built on the slopes of mountain Timori, with a castle dominating over the city. Within the city walls there are houses and the Onufri Museum, where we see paintings by this outstanding painter from the 16th century, as well as paintings from his son Nikolla.

We will spend most of our time touring in the old part of the town. This is perhaps one of the best-preserved Ottoman cities in the Balkans, with a lively lower town and a beautiful medieval citadel district on top of the hill. One of Berat's highlights is a visit to the inhabited citadel. Once inside the walls, we can visit ruined mosques and several medieval Orthodox churches, all intact and with restored frescoes and icons. The famous Onufri museum is housed in a wonderful church and holds the best collection of Albanian icons. In the lower town we will see the Leaded Mosque, so named for the roofing material, the Bachelor's Mosque, the Sultan's Mosque and the Ottoman han (inn).

Overnight in Berat.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 4 Berat - Durres - Shkoder (Shkodra)

Our destination for today is Durres (formerly Durrazzo), Albania's second largest city and one of its oldest towns. Legend has it that Durrazzo

was founded by the Illyrian King, Epidamnos, who called it by his own name and named the port after his grandson, Dyrrah. It was for centuries the largest port on the Adriatic and got back into world highlights when in 1939, the Italian troops met brief but fierce resistance, and those killed defending it are now regarded as the first martyrs of the War of National Liberation.

Our visit to Durres will include the archaeological museum and the Roman amphitheatre. The amphitheatre is the largest in the Balkans and located in the city close to the harbour. This 1st century construction is currently under consideration for inscription as a UNESCO World Heritage site. We will also walk from the amphitheatre over to the ruins of the Roman Baths located behind the Aleksander Moisiu Theatre on the central square.

Later in the afternoon, we continue onwards to Shkoder, one of the oldest and most historic places in Albania, as well as an important cultural and economic centre. During many different epochs it has retained its status as a major city in the Western Balkans, due to its strategic position near the Adriatic and the Italian ports, but also with land-routes to other important cities in neighbouring countries.

The town was known as Scodra during antiquity, and was the capital of the first kingdom of the Illyrian tribe of the Ardiaei, since the middle of the 3rd century BC. Its importance is heightened by the Lake Shkodër to the west of the city, the largest in the Western Balkans, straddles the border between Albania and neighbouring Montenegro.

Overnight in Shkoder.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 5 Shkoder, Albania - Kotor, Montenegro

After breakfast, we travel along the scenic coast road to Kotor in Montenegro, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Kotor was inhabited even at the times of Illyrians and Romans. Its history is also entwined with that of the Venetian Empire. On our afternoon walking tour we see a number of the city's fortifications and monuments dating from the time of Venetian rule, including the Cathedral of St Tryphon, which contains a rich collection of artifacts. Older than many famous churches and cathedrals in Europe, the Cathedral of St. Tryphon has a treasury of immense value. In its interior there are frescos from the 14th century, a stone ornament above the main altar in which the life of St. Tryphon is depicted, as well as a relief of saints in gold and silver. The most representative works of Kotor's masters and craftsmen are kept in this Cathedral, making its collection quite unique.

Within its walls, the city of Kotor has retained a mediaeval feel. A map of the old city shows hardly a single right angle; the town consists of a maze of tiny alleys that meet unexpectedly to form "squares" that are anything but square. Overshadowed by both towering cliffs and the high walls of four-storey stone houses, some of these narrow lanes must never see sunshine. One of the great pleasures of Kotor is wandering at random through this little labyrinth.

Overnight in Kotor.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 6 Kotor, Montenegro - Dubrovnik, Croatia

Driving along the shores of Kotor's famously scenic bay, we arrive in Dubrovnik, Croatia, one of Europe's loveliest and best-preserved mediaeval cities, and transfer to our hotel.
Today's program features a walking tour of Dubrovnik's historic center. Dubrovnik has been called "Croatian Athens" and the "Pearl of the Mediterranean" for its astounding beauty, sophisticated history and culture, and prosperity.

Over the course of its tumultuous history, the city had to be extensively reconstructed; the earthquake of 1667 destroyed much of the city; and in recent memory, the town was bombarded by over 2,000 shells in 1991-92. After great international efforts, the city has been restored to its former glory, with its towering fortifications, magnificent medieval architecture, red tiled roofs, winding paved streets and picturesque harbours.

We walk the walls of Dubrovnik, considered by many to be a highlight of our visit. The total circuit is nearly 2km / 1.25 mi, and from the bastions you will have magnificent views of the city's monuments, including the Minceta Tower, Revelin Tower, and the mighty fortress of St. Lawrence, with walls 12m / 40 feet thick!

Overnight in Dubrovnik.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 7 Dubrovnik - Split

Today we travel along the coast to Split, (ancient Spalato), the second largest city of Croatia. The historic city center actually lies in the walls of the enormous retirement Palace of the Roman Emperor Diocletian, built between 295-305 AD. The palace served as a palace, military fortress, and later, a fortified town. The city is enclosed by huge walls, pierced by 4 main gates, one on each side of the rectangular plan. Later you may wish to walk the promenade along the harbour when it comes alive with locals taking an evening stroll or relaxing in the seaside cafes outside the ancient palace walls.

This afternoon we have a walking tour through the heart of ancient Split. We will visit the cryptoporticus (underground vaults) of the Palace, the Mausoleum and Church of St. Donatus, the Peristyle court, and explore the ancient narrow streets still paved with the lustrous white stone of Brac Island. We will also exit the Golden Gate of the palace to see the huge bronze statue of St. Gregory of Nin made by Ivan Mestrovic, the most celebrated sculptor of modern Croatia.

Overnight in Split.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 8 Split - Zagreb

We take the 8.30 am fast intercity train to Zagreb along a route considered to be one of the most scenic in Europe. This afternoon, we have a city tour including Governor Jelacic Square, undoubtedly the very heart of the capital. Located in Zagreb's center, the square is dominated by the statue of Josip Jelacic who became the governor of the triple Kingdom of Dalmatia, Croatia, and Slavonia on the 23rd of March, 1848.

Zagreb is located on the intersection of several important routes between the Adriatic coast and Central Europe. It offers visitors the Baroque feel of the Upper Town, picturesque open-air markets, and various kinds of shops.

Overnight in Zagreb.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 9 Zagreb, Croatia - Rome, Italy: City Tour

We fly to Rome this morning and then begin our guided tour* of Rome at the 2,000 year old colosseum. Built to seat 55,000 spectators, this arena staged Rome's most brutal gladitorial combats. Next we walk through the Roman Forum where we will see the Curia, the Rostra, the Temple of Vesta, the Basilica of Constantine, and the Arch of Titus. Continuing onwards and upwards we reach the Campidoglio (Capitoline Hill), seat of the Roman Senate since the 12th century and the original citadel of the city. This beautiful square was redesigned by Michelangelo in the 16th century.

We arrive at Piazza Navona where we can break for lunch at one of the many restaurants and cafes on or near the square. In the square itself we can admire the impressive Fountain of the Four Rivers, with detailed figures representing the Nile, Ganges, Danube and Palata rivers.
We continue to the famous Trevi Fountain, designed by Nicholas Salvi in 1732. It's water was supplied by one of Rome's earliest aquaducts. Throwing a coin into the fountain is said to ensure your safe return to Rome. We also visit the temple-turned church called the Pantheon, and have the opportunity to admire its perfect proportions on our way to the Spanish steps, where we finish our day's tour. Balance of the day at leisure.

* NOTE: Due to traffic problems and the fact that today's sites are reasonably close to each other, much of today's tour will occur on foot and with Rome's efficient public transit system (cost of tickets included).

Overnight in Rome.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 10 Rome - Cruise Embarkation 'Coastal Hideaways'

This morning is free for those who may wish to visit the Vatican and St. Peter's Basilica. Understandably the place is visited by more than 3 million people a year and can be very busy.

We depart mid-day for the port and transfer to our luxury accommodation onboard the Oceania Riviera and settle in for the following week of premium cruising (your Tour Leader will accompany the group for the cruise portion).

For details on the Oceania cruise vessel "Riviera," go to www.oceaniacruises.com/ships/ and select "Riviera." Tour price is based on "Cabin Category C: Deluxe Ocean View." Down / upgrades may be available.

Overnight onboard the Oceania Riviera.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 11 Positano, the Amalfi Coast & Pompeii

Today we travel from Positano along the famous Amalfi Coast on a winding road carved out of the rock in the mid-19th century. This scenic and unforgettable drive takes us to Amalfi, a resort town on the peninsula of the same name where we take a walking tour of the city. We will see the beautiful Duomo cathedral with its 13th century bell tower, the main square of the town, and the Cloister of Paradise.

We then make an excursion to Pompeii, dug out from the inundation of volcanic ash and pumice stone that covered it by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in AD 79. The entire area is a fantastic record of how ordinary Romans lived their lives. We will see the House of Vetti, the most elegant of the Pompeii villas and we also look at the House of Mysteries. The nearby House of Faun takes up a city block and has four different dining parlours and two spacious gardens.

We return to Positano and board our cruise ship (packed lunch provided).

Overnight onboard the Oceania Riviera.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 12 Cagliari (Sardinia)

This morning we arrive in Cagliari (Sardinia); on arrival we visit the Roman amphitheatre constructed in the third century. The theatre is one of the most striking reminders of Imperial Rome to be found in Sardinia. We can see the underground passages for the wild animals.
After the theatre we visit the archaeological museum, the Duomo and the Bastion of San Remy with its superb views of the city and port.

Overnight on board our Oceania cruise ship.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 13 Palma de Mallorca, Spain

We arrive midday at Palma de Mallorca. A short taxi or bus ride will take us to the town centre where we will explore on foot the maze of cobbled streets, plazas, hidden courtyards and some amazing architecture of the old city's Gothic Quarter and the Cathedral de la Seu and Alumdaina Royal Palace.

Return to our Oceania Cruise ship.

Overnight on board our Oceania cruise ship.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 14 Barcelona

Barcelona, located on the Mediterranean Sea in the very north of the Spanish coast, is certainly the most cosmopolitan and economically active city in this country. Of course, Barcelona has an long history, and there are monuments of Romanesque, Gothic and Renaissance periods and before, but most characteristic is what has been built during the last 100 years.

We embark on the guided portion of our Barcelona sightseeing upon arrival (mostly on foot - leisurely pace). Our first stop is Parc Guell, a beautiful place in the morning. We have time to visit the Casa Gaudi with its collection of Gaudi-designed furniture. We'll walk through the Parc, ending up at the main entrance to visit the terrace and pavilion unit and Doric columns. Then it's on to the Picasso Museum for a +/- 60 minute visit.

Later we travel by local bus to Barcelona's most famous and most photographed attraction -- La Sagrada Familia Cathedral (Cathedral of the Holy Family), an amalgam of fantasy and Gothic impulses, and Gaudi's most unique piece of architecture. We explore the interior and also visit the cathedral museum during our stop.

We will aim to do a brief stroll down the avenue of Las Ramblas, the exotic "spine of Barcelona," with a stop to look at Palau Guell, another Gaudi creation before returning to our cruise ship.

Overnight on board our Oceania cruise ship.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 15 Marseilles, France

Marseille was founded sometime around 600 BCE by Greek mariners who called their settlement Massilia. Today it is a busy, famous -- as well as infamous -- port city of about a million inhabitants. We visit the Musee d'Histoire de Marseille, the market areas, as well as take a boat out to the 16th-century island fortress of Chateau d'If, which later became a prison made famous by Alexandre Dumas' book, The Count of Monte Cristo.

We begin with a visit to Notre Dame de la Garde. Much-cherished by the locals, this 19th century basilica will offer you an exceptional view of the city, Frioul Islands and the Chateau d'If. We continue on our journey, stopping at the Cité Radieuse (a Classified Historic Monument) of Le Corbusier, one of the architects of the Bauhaus Movement, where your guide will give you a history of this interesting site. Then continue on to the traditional fishing villages of Callelongue and Les Goudes, where you will learn the details of life in a Provence fishing village.

We make our way to the Abbey of Saint Victor. Built in the 1ast century, the abbey stands as the entry to the Old Port. After some free time to explore and enjoy the view from this old landmark we drive on the famous Canebiere, on way to the enchanting Longchamp Palace and its majestic fountain.

Overnight on board our Oceania cruise ship.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 16 Antibes, France & Monte Carlo, Monaco

Antibes is famous for its yachts, Fort Carre, museums dedicated to Napoleon and Picasso and the local parks and gardens. Overlooking the harbour is the impressive fort, built in the late 16th century and surrounded by a park. The Picasso Museum is located in the Grimaldi Chateau, historic home of the Monaco royal family. Picasso spent a short period just after World War II in the area and left what he produced to the city. The collection now includes 245 works by Picasso and many others by artists who were his contemporaries.

Later the ship sails to Monaco where we will have the evening free to explore this tiny domain which is a favorite haunt of the jet set. In the possession of the Grimaldi family for almost 700 years, a treaty with France guarantees Monaco's independence as long as the principality is governed by the Grimaldis. The fashionable enclave numbers only about 50,000 residents and is smaller than New York's Central Park, but it boasts some of the most expensive real estate in the world. In addition to luxury hotels and beautiful beaches, Monaco is noted for its mild climate and magnificent scenery.

Most of the sites in The Old Town (Monaco-Ville) can be reached via stairs and elevator after a 500 metre walk from the pier. Other sites in Monte Carlo are at a distance of half to one mile from the port.

Overnight on board our Oceania cruise ship.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 17 Disembarkation & Departure

We transfer to Nice airport for our departure flight home (Note: the transfer to Nice airport may be taxi and local train and you should be able to handle your own luggage).

BON VOYAGE!

Included Meal(s): Breakfast