Hidden Gems of the Dalmatian Coast & Greece

SMALL SHIP CRUISE TOUR

Plus optional extensions in

Bled, Slovenia;
Athens & Peloponnese, Greece

2013

DAS/DCS 2013

Grand Circle Cruise Line
Hidden Gems of the Dalmatian Coast & Greece
Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION **4**

1. PASSPORT, VISAS AND TRAVEL DOCUMENTS **5**
- Passport Required 5
- Visas Not Required 6
  - No U.S. Passport? 6
  - Backup Photocopies 6
- Your Flight Itineraries 7

2. YOUR HEALTH **8**
- Keep Your Abilities In Mind 8
- Health Check and Inoculations 8

3. LUGGAGE REGULATIONS **10**
- Size, Number and Weight Restrictions 10
  - Airport Security/TSA 11

4. WHEN YOU ARRIVE **12**
- GCCL Air Travelers 12

5. MONEY MATTERS **13**
- How to Carry Your Money 13
  - Optional Tour Payments & Shipboard Expenses 14
  - Currency By Destination 14
- Shopping 15
  - By Destination 15
- U.S. Customs Regulations and Shipping Charges 16
  - Problem with a Purchase? 16
  - To Tip or Not to Tip 17

6. PACKING FOR YOUR TRIP **18**
- In General 18
- Clothing Options 18
  - Luggage Suggestions 19
- Packing Your Carry-On 19
- Travel Gear Suggestions 20
  - Clothing 20
  - Consider … 20
  - Medicines 21
  - Optional Gear 21

7. REGIONAL CLIMATE INFORMATION **22**

8. TRAVEL AND TECHNOLOGY **24**
- In General 24
- Regional Electricity 24
- Can you hear me now? 25
- Smartphones 25
  - Cell Phones 26

Phone Calling Cards 26
Photo Gear 26

9. GRAND CIRCLE CRUISE LINE'S SMALL SHIPS 28
Shore Excursions 28
Onboard Activities 28
Onboard Facilities 29
Ship Specifications 31

10. ABOUT YOUR DESTINATIONS 32
Athens in Brief—Base and Optional Extension 32
Dubrovnik in Brief 33
Zagreb in Brief 35
Slovenia in Brief—Optional Extension 35

11. DEMOGRAPHICS, HISTORY AND CULTURE 37

12. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES 41
Books, Maps, and Movies 41
Suggested Movies 43
Grand Circle Community & Useful Websites 45
Tourist Board Addresses 46

INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK
We've gathered some introductory information that may prove helpful for this Grand Circle Cruise Line itinerary. For detailed and timely information, it's wise to visit appropriate websites and confirm luggage regulations, weather conditions and other variable elements of your trip. If you expect to embark on personal exploration, or wish to discover more about the countries you visit, we suggest that you consult your choice of the many in-depth travel guidebooks devoted to your destinations. Refer to our additional resources section (at the end of the handbook) for other sources of insight.

ABOUT GRAND CIRCLE TRAVEL
Grand Circle Travel, founded in 1958 to serve the American Association for Retired Persons (AARP), is the leader in international travel, adventure and discovery for Americans aged 50 and over. Grand Circle vacations have been recommended by *The New York Times*, *Condé Nast Traveler*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Travel+Leisure*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Arthur Frommer's Budget Travel*, among other publications. But our most impressive reviews come from the more than one million people who have traveled with us and from readers of *Condé Nast Traveler* who placed Grand Circle Cruise Lines, the cruise branch of Grand Circle, in the Top 10 of the World's Best Cruise Lines for eight years — in 2012 ranking Grand Circle Cruise Lines the #1 World's Best River Cruise Line. Grand Circle has earned a spot on the prestigious *Condé Nast Traveler* Gold List for seven consecutive years as well. For 2011 *Condé Nast Traveler* named seven Grand Circle Cruise Line river ships among the 20 best river ships in the world; for 2012 the Grand Circle Cruise Lines was named to their Platinum Circle of top cruise lines.

YOUR GCCL PROGRAM DIRECTOR
During your Grand Circle Cruise Line Small Ship Cruise Tour, you'll have reliable assistance available at all times from an on-site Grand Circle Cruise Line Program Director. Your Program Director is fluent in English and can give you an inside perspective on your destinations. Along the way, your Program Director is supported by local tour guides who guide you expertly through particular sites and cities.

Many Grand Circle Cruise Line Program Directors are graduates of professional education programs for travel guides. In addition, they receive specialized training directly from Grand Circle Cruise Line, training that is based on what we've learned from thousands of past travelers about how to make the trip most enjoyable. Your Program Director offers both a deep knowledge of the region and a commitment to make this a very pleasant, informative, and rewarding travel experience for you.

Your Program Director will provide sightseeing tips, handle all travel details, reserve optional tours you choose to take, oversee your Discovery Series events, and provide any other assistance you may need. You will be in the company of the Program Director throughout your Small Ship Cruise Tour, and during the optional trip extensions in Slovenia if you choose to take it. During the extension in Greece you will be in the company of a Greek Program Director or Representative.

1. PASSPORT, VISAS AND TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

Passport Required

U.S. citizens need a valid passport for this itinerary.

Note

Your passport should meet these requirements for this itinerary:

- It should be valid for at least 6 months after your scheduled return to the U.S.
- It should have the recommended number of blank pages (see below for details).
- The blank pages must be labeled "Visas" at the top. Pages labeled "Amendments and Endorsements" are not acceptable.

Recommended number of blank pages:
This recommendation is based on a "worst case" scenario. On this trip you might use fewer pages depending on the whims of the Immigration officials you meet. Since the consequence of having too few pages can be severe—you could be denied entry into a country—we take a *better safe than sorry* stance, and we recommend these guidelines:

- **Main trip only:** If you are taking only the main trip, you will require 4 blank passport pages.
- **Optional extension to Bled:** You will need 1 more page for a total of 5.
- **Optional extensions to Athens & Peloponnese**: This extension does not require any additional pages beyond the 4 needed for the main trip.
- **Both the pre- and post-trip extensions:** You will need a total of 4 or 5 blank passport pages.

Please take moment to ensure that your passport meets *all* of these requirements. If not, you could be refused entry into a country and **you might be required by that country to return to the U.S. immediately, which would be at your own expense**.

If you need to renew your passport or get extra pages:
Contact the National Passport Information Center (NPIC) at **1-877-487-2778**, or visit their website at **www.travel.state.gov** for information on obtaining a new passport, renewing your existing passport, or for additional pages. You can renew your passport by mail if it is not damaged, you obtained it within the last fifteen years, and it's in the name you want on your new passport. Many local post offices carry forms for renewing by mail or obtaining extra pages. Allow several weeks for processing your passport. You may also contact our recommended visa service company, PVS International, at 1-800-556-9990 for help with your passport.

NOTE: When updating your passport, it is worthwhile to check the prices on all the different services that might apply to you. For example, it might be less expensive to renew your passport than to have pages added, depending on the number of pages you need.

Visas Not Required

Albania, Croatia, Greece, Montenegro, and Slovenia—U.S. citizens do not need visas for stays of less than 90 days in these countries.

If you are staying longer in any of these countries, you should check with their embassy for the applicable regulations:

Albania:	(202) 223-4942	Croatia:	(202) 588-5899
Greece:	(202) 939-1300	Montenegro:	(202) 234-6108
Slovenia:	(202) 386-6601		

No U.S. Passport?

Non-U.S. citizens or non-U.S. passport holders: If you are **not** a U.S. citizen or if you possess a passport from a country other than the U.S., it is your responsibility to check with your local consulate or embassy about possible visa requirements. Or, you may contact PVS International directly, who can also assist non-U.S. citizens.

PVS International
Passport & Visa Services
1700 N Moore Street
Rosslyn Center, suite 310
Arlington, VA 22209
Telephone: 1-800-556-9990

Backup Photocopies

The smartest and easiest security precaution you can take is to carry photocopies of the personal information pages of your passport, your air ticket, traveler's check serial numbers (if you're carrying these checks), and your credit cards. Store them separate from the originals. Bring along extra passport-sized photos. Add phone and fax numbers for reporting lost credit cards, for your travel protection plan company if you have purchased one and for your medical emergency network. This can save you immeasurable time, money, and bother if your documents are lost or stolen during your trip. In addition, you can scan these photocopies and email them to your personal email address so that a replacement can be printed out if needed (if/when Internet service is available.) Note, however, that photocopies cannot be used in lieu of your real passport – for crossing borders, etc.

Your Flight Itineraries

You will receive a preliminary flight itinerary approximately 75 days prior to your departure. Please examine it carefully to ensure that your first and last names appear exactly as they do on your passport. (We do not need middle names). You will receive your finalized flight itinerary in your final documents package approximately 14 days prior to your departure. If the airlines make a change in your flight times, we'll adjust your reservation accordingly. If time permits, we'll send you an updated flight itinerary. If the change is made close to your departure, you'll be advised by way of the finalized flight itinerary. You may also view your most up-to-date flight arrangements through the My Account feature of our web page, **www.gct.com.**

All flight arrangements are subject to change at any time for reasons beyond GCCL's control.

Depending on your airlines, you will most likely receive electronic tickets (E-tickets) for your flights. But occasionally, specific airlines or specific flights may require paper tickets instead. If needed, paper tickets will be sent as part of your final documents package. If you receive paper tickets, please guard them the way you would guard cash, as they cannot easily be reissued. Plus a reissue always entails a fee from the airlines that you would be responsible for.

During the course of your trip you may have regional flights within the destination. Due to international ticketing regulations, some of these flights must be ticketed within the country they originate from. If so, these flights may not be listed in your air itinerary, but your Program Director will advise you of these flight schedules during the trip. To see if your tour includes regional flights, please refer to your brochure.

Please note: If you've made your own international air arrangements, transfers are ***not*** included.
You are responsible for your transfers to and from the airport. Please refer to the enclosed hotel contact sheet for hotel information. The option to purchase your tour without international air is not available on all tours and may depend on the extensions you have chosen.

Round-trip airport transfers are available for purchase on this Cruise Tour. To take advantage of this offer, you simply need to arrive and depart on the same day and from the same airport as our air-inclusive travelers. Round-trip transfers will cost $100 per person, and are available for purchase up to 30 days prior to your departure. For more details, please visit our webpage at: www.gct.com/AirportTransfers. Or to purchase a transfer today, please call our Traveler Support Team at 1-800-321-2835.

2. YOUR HEALTH

Keep Your Abilities In Mind

Is This Adventure Right For You?

We've worked closely with our local Program Directors and regional associates to identify the aspects of this adventure that you should be aware of, from physical requirements to cultural factors. **Please carefully review the information below prior to departing on this adventure.**

We reserve the right for our Program Directors to modify participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home, if their condition would adversely affect the health, safety, or enjoyment of themselves or of other travelers.

Physical requirements: This adventure is suitable for GCCL travelers who live an active lifestyle, enjoy good health and mobility, and are comfortable participating in 6-8 hours of daily physical activities and sightseeing. You should be able to walk 3 miles unassisted over the course of each day. This adventure is not appropriate for travelers using wheelchairs or other mobility aids. Agility is required to board a small boat for a shore excursion.

Pacing: We'll have early morning departures a few days, and we'll depart before dawn on Day 16.

Climate & terrain: Due to the varied geography of the regions we visit on this adventure, you will experience a wide range of temperatures and weather conditions. The coastal regions of Croatia have a Mediterranean climate, and temperatures in June through August can reach as high as 110 degrees F. During the spring and fall it can be quite windy and therefore, cold. Inland Croatia and the Plitvice Lakes region have a continental climate typical of Eastern Europe. Bled is located in the alpine region and has short hot summers and long cold winters. We recommend that you bring a rain jacket and sunblock regardless of the time of year you travel.

As for terrain, we'll walk on city streets, uneven cobblestone paths, and rocky slopes. Sturdy walking shoes and a hiking pole are recommended. You must be in good health and physical condition.

Transportation: We drive overland in an air-conditioned coach, and cruise in a private small ship. Anytime you cruise on open water your ship is subject to the state of the weather and seas. You can expect to encounter pitching, rolling and possibly rough seas. If you suffer motion sickness, have preventive measures available. We'll board a small boat for a shore excursion—agility is required for this.

Group size & leadership: 25 maximum. We share our ship with one other group of 25 GCCL travelers. Each group has its own Program Director.

Health Check and Inoculations

If you have any ongoing medical conditions or concerns about your health, we highly recommend that you schedule a checkup with your personal physician at least six weeks in advance of your departure date. Your trip will take you into remote areas, with no nearby medical facilities. Please notify us in writing about any medical condition that may require special attention. (If your report is normal, you don't need to send it to us.) If you do send us a medical report, we don't use it to determine if you should take this trip, or if you are likely to enjoy it. Those decisions are up to you and your doctor. Discuss with your doctor any aspects of your international itinerary that may affect your health and be

guided by his or her advice. A loose filling or developing cavity would be difficult to remedy while you are traveling. You may want to have a dental exam before your trip.

If you have a condition that requires special equipment or treatment, you must bring and be responsible for all necessary items related to your condition. If you take medications regularly, be sure to pack an ample supply that will last your entire trip, as obtaining refills of your medication can be difficult during your trip. Pack these medications in your carry-on bag, and keep them in their original, labeled containers. To be prepared for any unforeseen loss of your medications, you should also bring copies of the prescriptions, written using the generic drug name rather than a brand name.

Vaccinations:

Check with the CDC: To ensure that you receive any needed vaccinations check the current recommendations of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for your destination.

On-line —visit the CDC's website at **www.cdc.gov/travel**.

By phone—at the CDC's Hotline toll-free at **1-800-232-4636** 24 hours a day. Please note that automated information may be arranged topically by disease, rather than by country or region.

Consult your doctor: After checking the CDC's recommendations we strongly suggest that you consult your family physician (at least 6 weeks prior to departure) concerning any vaccinations or medications that you may need on this trip. At the time of print there were no specific vaccinations required for entry into any of the countries on your itinerary.

Prescription Medications

If you take prescription medications regularly, be sure to pack an ample supply that will last your entire trip. Pack these medications in your carry-on bag, and keep them in their original, labeled containers. To be prepared for any unforeseen loss of your medications, you should also bring copies of the prescriptions, written using the generic drug name rather than a brand name.

Also, when you visit your doctor, get a prescription for an antibiotic medication for gastrointestinal illness. In addition, you should ask your doctor for a prescription for a pain medication, such as Tylenol with codeine. You might need this in the unlikely event of an injury in a location where medical attention would be delayed. Our Program Director does not carry prescription medications.

3. LUGGAGE REGULATIONS

Size, Number and Weight Restrictions

If you know current industry standards for international flights you can start to plan what type of luggage you'll use, how much clothing to bring, etc. The following information can help you in your trip preparations. We'll remind you to confirm your U.S./international luggage limits (and update regional limits, if applicable) in your final documents (arriving about two weeks before your departure).

MAIN TRIP LIMITS	
Pieces per person	One checked bag and one carry-on bag per person
Weight restrictions	Varies by airline. The current **standard** is **50lbs for checked bags** and **15 lbs for carry-on bags**.
Size restrictions	Varies by airline. Measured in linear inches (*length+width+depth*). Generally, **62 linear inches is the checked bag limit**; **carry-on limit is 45 linear inches**.
Luggage Type	A sturdy, fabric-sided suitcase with built-in wheels and lockable zippers is recommended.
TRIP EXTENSION(S) LIMITS	
The extensions have the same luggage restrictions as the main trip.	
REMARKS / SUGGESTIONS	
One suitcase and one carry-on bag per person: Due to the space limitations on bus transfers, you'll be restricted to one suitcase and one carry-on bag per person. This is to ensure that we have room for everyone's luggage. We ask that you abide by this limit to avoid inconveniencing your fellow travelers and prevent additional airlines luggage fees (which are your responsibility). Most airlines now charge to check more than one suitcase per person for flights to Europe and other international flights. **Note**: Enforcement of published restrictions by countries and airlines is a matter of governmental and corporate policy. Enforcement may include spot checks and may be inconsistently applied. Expect penalties and fines to be imposed immediately, however, when and if enforced. Before you choose to ignore the published restrictions you should ask: *Do I feel lucky?* And, even if you answer yes, you should make sure that you have the ability to pay the fine.	

Should I confirm luggage restrictions with my U.S./international airline(s) before departure?
Absolutely, confirm current restrictions about a week or so before your departure. You should take this step no matter if your vacation has a lower limit then the average international flight or not, because there may be recent changes, such as new security regulations, or an update to the standard weight/size allowances. For your convenience, we maintain a list of the toll-free numbers for the most common airlines on our webpage in the *FAQ* section.

You should also check with the airlines on luggage fees—many airlines charge to check luggage, sometimes even on international flights. Others will charge a fee if you bring a second carry-on item, like a purse or a laptop. **These fees are not included in your trip price**; they are payable directly to the airlines. If you are making a connecting flight, you should also confirm if your luggage can be checked through to your final destination. For more information about air travel, see the "Air Travel" section of your Important Information booklet.

Airport Security/TSA

Restrictions on what can be included in your carry-on luggage may change. To avoid packing restricted items consult the Transportation Security Administration website: www.tsa.gov/public.

Liquids and your carry on: Follow the **TSA's 3-1-1 rule**.
(Note that this rule is used increasingly in Europe.)

For flights that originate in the U.S:
Do not lock your bags when checking or use a widely available TSA "accepted and recognized" lock.

For flights originating outside the U.S.:
We recommend you lock your luggage as a precaution against theft. Have the keys handy, as you may need to open your luggage for a security screening or for customs in the U.S. or Europe.

4. WHEN YOU ARRIVE

GCCL Air Travelers

U.S. Departure: If you are among a group of ten or more GCCL travelers who depart the U.S. from your international gateway city, it is our goal to have a GCCL Representative assist you at the U.S. airport with the check-in of your flight. Unless there are extenuating circumstances beyond our control, the Representative will be at the check-in counter three hours before your departure time and at the gate one hour before your departure time (security permitting).

Please note that if you are arriving at your international gateway city via a connecting domestic flight, the Grand Circle Cruise Line Representative will be stationed at the check-in counter for your departing international flight, not at the domestic arrival gate.

Important note on porters: *Airport porters are NOT allowed in the customs hall area. On arrival, you must take your luggage off the baggage carousel and load it onto a cart, which you will then move through customs. When you exit customs, you'll handle your cart until reaching your motor coach. Your motor coach driver will load your luggage onto your motor coach.*

Arrival in Athens/Zagreb—main trip & optional pre-trip extension: When you deplane from your connecting flight to Athens/Zagreb, a Grand Circle Cruise Line Representative will meet you at the airport after you exit Customs and assist you with the transfer to your hotel.

U.S. Return: At the end of your base trip or optional post-trip extension, you'll be transferred by motor coach to the airport for your return flight to the U.S. If you are among a group of ten or more GCCL travelers who return to the same U.S. gateway city, a GCCL Representative will meet you as you exit Customs and help you find taxis, buses, hotel accommodations, or connecting flights. Again, it is our goal to have our GCCL Representative waiting to assist your group. In rare instances, unforeseen circumstances may prevent this service.

Name Tags: *Please remember to wear your Grand Circle Cruise Line nametag when you exit Customs, upon arrival and when you return to the U.S., so that you are readily identifiable as a GCCL traveler.*

5. MONEY MATTERS

How to Carry Your Money

Generally speaking carrying a mix of different payment methods is the best option—some cash for exchange, a couple of credit/or debit cards, and *maybe* a few traveler's checks as a last resort—so that you'll be prepared for any situation. In this section, we offer some tips on each type of payment method.

Cash or Traveler's Checks?

Cash has an advantage. Cash is readily exchanged and accepted. Cash is also a better choice for rural or undeveloped areas where ATMs and credit card machines are scarce.

Bringing cash is a good idea—does that mean U.S. dollars or local currency? **There is no need to obtain local currency before your trip.** You can change money when you arrive — at banks, most hotels, and money exchange offices. **Please note that torn, dirty, or taped U.S. bills may not be accepted for exchange.** In some countries you do not even need to exchange money at all—U.S. dollars are sometimes fine. For more information on what type of currency can be used on this trip, see the "Currency" section.

Traveler's checks—*NOT* recommended: Due to security and value issues, Traveler's checks have generally been superseded by the flexibility of credit, debit & ATM cards. Traveler's checks are sometimes impossible to exchange. Many stores and restaurants simply don't accept them, and, if accepted, fees are astronomical. If you must have them, consider them a last, desperation "cash" resort.

ATMs

When traveling, typically PLUS, Cirrus, and other bank networks are available throughout large cities and small towns. Always notify your bank before you leave home that you are going abroad so that they may remove any blocks on your account and also ask them about the number of withdrawals you may make abroad. For cash withdrawals, don't forget to memorize the actual ***digits*** of your card's 4-digit PIN (Personal Identification Number). Many keypads at foreign ATMs only display digits and do not include letters on their keypads.

TIP: *Many banks charge a fee ranging from $1 to $5 for every time you use an ATM in a foreign city. Others will charge you a percentage of what you withdraw. Check with your bank on what fees they charge before you leave the country. That way you can decide if it is better for you to take out one or two large sums, or make smaller but more frequent withdrawals. Your Program Director can advise you on ATM locations, but when to exchange money is left to your discretion.*

Credit Cards (and Debit Cards)

Even if you do not plan on using it, having a credit or debit card as a "backup" is helpful in an emergency. Though major American credit cards (Visa, MasterCard, American Express) and debit cards with a credit card logo are accepted abroad, not every shop will take every card. So it is best to ask if your type of card is accepted before deciding on your purchase, and having a couple different cards can be useful. Note that the Discover credit card is not widely accepted outside the U.S.

***TIP**: Many credit card companies and banks have fraud alert departments that will freeze your card if they see suspicious charges—such as charges from another country. To avoid an accidental security block, it is a good idea to notify your credit card company or bank that you will be using your cards abroad. You can do this by calling their customer service number a week or two before your departure.*

You should also double-check what phone number you could call if you have a problem with a card while you are abroad. Don't assume you can use the 1-800 number printed on the back of your card—most 1-800 numbers don't work outside of the U.S.!

Please be aware that credit cards might not be accepted for small purchases or in the markets. Discover credit card is not widely accepted outside the U.S. Keep your receipts in case you have questions about the conversion or exchange rate. Also, keep your receipts as proof of purchase for items to be shipped home.

Optional Tour Payments & Shipboard Expenses

During your trip you will be able to book optional tours directly with your Program Director. He or she will ask you to confirm the payment for these tours by filling out a payment form. Optional tours can only be purchased with a credit or debit card. We accept Visa, MasterCard, Discover Card, or American Express credit cards only. (We also accept debit cards with the logo of one of these credit card companies, but it must be a card that allows you to sign for purchases.)

In order to process these charges, there can be a delay of 2-3 months from the date of your return for the charges to be posted to your account. Therefore we ask that you use a card that will not expire in the 2-3 months following your return. Because our headquarters are in Boston, charges may appear to be from Boston or might be labeled as "**OPT Boston**" (depending on your credit card company).

Shipboard Expenses: Credit card payments (as above) are accepted for shipboard expenses. Debit cards, including debit cards with credit card functionality (i.e. those with a Visa, MasterCard, etc. logo) cannot be used for payment onboard ship.

Currency By Destination

For current exchange rates, please refer to our website, your bank, or the financial section of your newspaper.

In Albania

The basic unit of currency in Albania is the lek (L). Banknote and coin denominations are as follows:

- Banknotes: 100, 200, 500, 1,000, 2,000, and 5,000 Lek
- Coins: 1, 5, 10, 20, and 100 Lek

U.S. dollars are not widely accepted for payment in Albania; local currency is preferred.

In Croatia

The basic unit of currency in Croatia is the kuna (Kn). Banknote and coin denominations are as follows:

- Banknotes: 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, 500, and 1,000 Kuna
- Coins: 5, 10, 20, and 50 Lipa; 1, 2, 5, and 25 Kuna

U.S. dollars are not widely accepted for payment in Croatia; local currency is preferred.

In Greece, Montenegro, and Slovenia,
The euro is the monetary unit of Greece, Montenegro, and Slovenia. Euro banknote and coin denominations are as follows:

- Banknotes: 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, and 500 Euro
- Coins: 5, 10, 20, and 50 cents; 1 and 2 Euro

U.S. dollars are not widely accepted for payment in these countries; euros are preferred.

Shopping

It is Grand Circle Cruise Line's goal to identify and provide you with shopping opportunities that highlight unique, locally produced products with good value from reliable vendors. For this reason there may be scheduled visits to local shops during your adventure. There is **no** requirement to make a purchase during these stops, and any purchase made is a direct transaction with the shop in question, subject to the vendor's terms of purchase. **Grand Circle Cruise Line cannot be responsible for purchases you make on your trip or for the shipment of your purchases.**

If you plan a major purchase, we strongly recommend that you research the prices and quality available at home before your trip. Just one visit to an import shop or gold dealer will put you way ahead when you go shopping. This is the only way to know if you are getting a good price.

By Destination

Crafts & Souvenirs
On the Dalmatian coast, shop for agave thread lace from the island of Hvar and silk embroidery from Dubrovnik region, products made from the local limestone, wines, brandies, art, tapestries, embroidery, filigree jewelry, and other locally-made items. You can find good deals on handicrafts at the central market in Zagreb. Typical Croatian souvenirs include gingerbread hearts (Licitar), lavender oil, olive oil, red coral jewelry (note that red coral is illegal import into the U.S. but allowed if in jewelry,) neckties, vegetable spices, Zagrebački melem ointment, and ballpoint pens.

Goods from all over Greece are available in stores in Athens. Specialties include handicrafts, gold and silver jewelry, embroidered shirts and dresses, fabrics, flokati rugs of fluffy sheep wool, pottery, onyx, marble, alabaster, and leather goods. These are available in the main shopping area downtown around Syntagma, Omonia, and Kolonaki squares as well as in Monastiraki, the flea market, where shopping sometimes involves bargaining. Some of the best jewelry comes from Ioannina, ceramics from Sifinos and Skopelos, and embroidery from Skros, Crete, Lefkas, and Rhodes. Thessaly and Epirus regions specialize in flokati rugs.

Bled handicraft shops feature locally made ceramics, woolens, wood carvings, embroidery, leather boxes, tapestries, filigree jewelry, pumpkin seed oil, hand painted beehive panels, honey brandy, and handmade carpets. Idrija lace and Rogaska crystal are Slovenian specialties.

Your purchase decisions are very personal. If you plan a major purchase, we strongly recommend that you research the prices and quality available at home before your trip. Just one visit to an import shop or a dealer will put you way ahead when you go shopping. This is the only way to know if you are getting a good price. You must use your best judgment when deciding whether an item is worth the price being asked.

Bargaining
Bargaining is not appropriate in any of the shops on this itinerary. Some bargaining is acceptable at open-air markets. Croatia has a long tradition of tourism, so don't be surprised that vendors can be quite adept at judging at first glance how much money you are ready to spend.

If this is your first experience at bargaining, don't worry—you'll quickly find your own style. Your opening offer should be well under the asking price. The only rule is that, if you make an offer, you should be prepared to buy at that price. And remember, whatever price you pay is okay, as long as the item is worth that price to you.

U.S. Customs Regulations and Shipping Charges

Exemption Amounts
Articles totaling $800, at fair retail value where they were acquired, may be imported free of charge if you bring them with you. A flat rate of duty—usually a percentage—will be applied to the next $1,000 worth (fair retail value) of merchandise. The U.S. Customs Inspector determines the value of your items when you enter, and is not bound by your bill of sale. In almost every case, however, a genuine bill of sale will be honored.

Fees on Items Shipped Home
Items shipped home are *always* subject to duty when received in the U.S. There will also be charges for shipping. Although some shops abroad may offer to include shipping and duties in the price, this typically means shipping to the customs facility closest to you and payment of the *export* duties (the fee to remove an item from its country of origin) not door-to-door shipping or *import* duties (the fee the U.S. government charges to bring an item into the U.S.). All additional duties or shipping charges would be the responsibility of the purchaser—you.

Therefore unless the item is small enough to mail or to be sent by a global parcel service (like FedEx) you should be prepared to pay customs duties and for shipping or pick-up from the nearest customs facility. This is why the U.S. Customs & Border Protection service states: "The most cost-effective thing to do is to take your purchases with you if at all possible."

Illegal Items
It is illegal to import products made from endangered animal species. U.S. Customs & Border Protection will seize these items, as well as most furs, coral, tortoise shell, reptile skins, feathers, plants, and items made from animal skins. For more information on what you may or may not bring back into the United States, you can obtain the publication "Know Before You Go" from the U.S. Bureau of Customs & Border Protection by phone, mail or from their website:

U.S. Bureau of Customs & Border Protection
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20229
Tel. **1-877-227-5511**
www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/

Problem with a Purchase?

The best way to address a problem with a purchase is to not have one in the first place! So don't forget to examine merchandise before paying for it, check contracts or agreements before signing, and review your receipt before leaving the shop. For major purchases, don't hesitate to ask in advance about the return policy—local practice may vary from U.S. standards, so don't assume that you have a certain number of days after the purchase to speak up.

But what if you do discover an issue with an item later on? In that case, your best recourse is to contact the vendor directly. For this reason we recommend that you keep a copy of all your receipts, invoices, or contracts, along with the shop's contact information. Expect that any resolution will take longer than it

would in the U.S. due to delays in communication, the complexities of international shipping/customs duties, and even cultural differences in how business is conducted.

To Tip or Not to Tip

Sometimes *that* is the question. The good news is twofold: we're fresh out of Shakespearean soliloquies, so no thesauri will get hurt here; and the answer the question "**to tip or not to tip** (and how much to tip if you so choose)" is ***always*** a personal decision. Tipping is a common practice both at home and abroad and we offer these guidelines to answer requests for appropriate tipping amounts. It can be useful to have this information on site – when the question *must* be answered – and ahead of time for travel budgeting purposes. Tips below are quoted in U.S. dollars; tips can be converted and paid in local currency (usually preferred) or in U.S. dollars (personal/traveler's checks should ***never*** be used for tips).

GCCL Program Director: If you are pleased with the services of your Program Director, you can give a gratuity at the end of the trip. As a guideline, many travelers give $7-$10 per person, per day.

Included Meals: Your Program Director will tip waiters for included meals. If you order something extra, a small additional tip is appreciated, but is not strictly necessary.

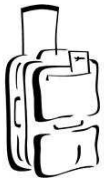
Shipboard: Shipboard gratuities to the cruise personnel are not included in the cost of your cruise. The ships' tipping guidelines recommend a flat tip of $10-$12 U.S. per person, per day, which will be pooled equally among all cruise staff. For your convenience tips for the crew can be paid by credit card, in U.S. cash or in local currency.

Drivers: $3-$4 per person, per day

Local guides: $3-$4 per person, per day

Housekeeping staff at hotels: $1-2 per room, per night

6. PACKING FOR YOUR TRIP



In General

Travel light: The top two comments we hear from travelers about packing are "I wish I had brought less" and "I wish I had double-checked the weather." In an effort to help you bring less, we offer these lists, which have been compiled from suggestions by Program Directors and former travelers. Meant as only jumping-off points—the lists offer recommendations based on experience, but not requirements. You might also want to refer to the climate charts in this handbook or online weather forecasts before you pack. And finally, remember the *Golden Rule of Traveling Light:* gather what you think you need, and then leave half the clothes homes and take twice the money.

Pack casual clothes: Comfortable, informal apparel is perfectly acceptable at each of your destinations. Basic pants, shirts, sportswear, everyday dresses/skirts, supportive shoes, and functional outdoor clothes that are relatively easy to care for are recommended. Our list suggests several layers of clothing, so you can adjust to warmer and cooler conditions. Most of your clothing can be cotton or cotton-synthetic blends. If you like to hand-wash your clothes, bring socks, underwear, and even shirts and pants made of synthetics or cotton/synthetic blends that will dry overnight. You can also buy clothing specially designed for travel.

Greece, Croatia and Slovenia are modern societies, and casual clothing is acceptable in most situations for both men and women. Some religious sites, like Greek Orthodox churches and monasteries, require that visitors of both genders dress modestly. Modestly dressed usually means covered from shoulders to below the knees—no shorts, no sleeveless shirts, and no low or revealing necklines. On days touring other sites in Greece, basic jeans, sleeveless shirts, everyday skirts or slacks, and shorts are perfectly acceptable.

Comfortable, supportive walking shoes are essential: You'll be on your feet and walking a lot, sometimes over rough and slippery surfaces, so choose your footwear carefully. The soles of your shoes should offer good traction. You can find especially supportive or light hiking shoes designed for walking.

Recommended rain gear: Regardless of season or region, rain will happen. Packing a waterproof, lightweight shell or jacket, preferably with a hood, is wise. A folding umbrella is an option, but is less effective on windy days, can break, and won't do double duty as an added layer for warmth.

Clothing Options

We've included information below on the weather you can expect for the regions you'll be visiting on your travels. Taking into account the climate you'll encounter and the general suggestions we offer above will enable you to create a flexible wardrobe that's light enough for sophisticated travel and will guarantee comfort in all the conditions you can expect to encounter. The luggage weight and size restrictions imposed by travel realities today have made traveling light an absolute necessity. With modern fabrics – Gore-Tex, Polarfleece, polypropylene, etc. – lightweight packing for comfort and protection through a wide range of weather is easy. A visit to any on-line or local sporting goods/outdoor stores (L.L. Bean, REI, EMS, etc.) will yield a treasure trove of lightweight, specialized, and fashionable clothing and gear that is readily adaptable to your itinerary.

Luggage Suggestions

Consider a duffel bag or soft-sided suitcase for your checked luggage. Due to space limitations on our motor coaches, you are allowed one piece of checked luggage per person. Porterage at airports and hotels is provided for **one** bag per person. All bags should have luggage tags.

Consider a daypack or small backpack as your carry-on bag. It will do double duty during excursions and walking trips. A daypack leaves your hands free and distributes its weight onto your back. Packed with daily travel needs (sweater, camera, rain/wind jacket, water bottle, etc.), it will compress to fit the storage space of foreign motorcoaches, and yet still have room for an impulse buy at a local street market.

Inner bags: Packing is easier if you use inner bags to help organize your gear. Use plastic bags, nylon stuff sacks, or packing cubes to organize inside your suitcase. Isolate liquids, store camera gear and important papers in heavy-duty Ziploc style bags.

Tip**:** *Bring a second, empty lockable bag folded into your main suitcase, with a luggage tag and small lock. Use this to carry souvenirs home – but remember that you may incur extra luggage fees. If you're traveling with a companion we recommend "cross-packing," i.e., pack 2 outfits of your clothing in your companion's luggage and vice-versa, in case one bag is delayed.*

Packing Your Carry-On

Using a daypack as a carry-on bag for your flights is a smart solution. We **strongly urge** you to pack your carry-on with at least one full change of clothes, your camera gear, medications, changes of socks and underwear, your important travel documents, and other irreplaceable items, in case your checked bags go astray. Store camera gear and important papers in plastic bags to protect them from dirt and moisture. With a daypack you can then remove these items on arrival and load your bag with the gear you'll need on walking tours and excursions.

NOTE: Restrictions on what can be included in your carry-on luggage change frequently. To avoid inadvertently packing any restricted items in your carry-on luggage, we strongly suggest that you consult the Transportation Security Administration website, at **www.tsa.gov** which keeps a current list of restricted items. From the main website click on *Our Travelers*, then *Air Travel*, and then you will see a link for *Prohibited Items*.

Travel Gear Suggestions

Though it's fun to do things the locals do, it can be frustrating when daily necessities or conveniences from home aren't available. To travel wisely these days you must juggle your personal needs and preferences against the physical constraints of your transportation—whether it's an international airplane, a transfer motorcoach, a small ship or a daylong trek on a camel. You'll have to distinguish between what you **must** have, what you'd *like* to have, whether you can zip your suitcase closed, and what you can reasonably expect to wrestle through airport hallways and security checkpoints. Consult the following items to create your personal checklist – ignoring what you don't need and making the tough decisions over borderline cases. Remember that many airlines today will charge you extra for added luggage.

Our hotels/ships provide basics like soap and shampoo, but if you are sensitive to fragrances or new products, you may wish to bring your preferred brands. Most hotels do *not* provide a washcloth, so you may wish to pack one.

What not to pack: do not pack aerosol cans, as they tend to leak during air travel. Avoid packing glass bottles; use plastic containers instead. Leave at home checkbooks and any credit cards not essential for your trip, valuable jewelry, and anything that you would hate to lose.

Don't Forget: Emergency photocopies of your passport, air itinerary, and prescriptions, a list of your credit card numbers and phone number to reach the credit card company or bank to report loss or theft.

Clothing

- ❑ Shirts: short and long-sleeved in a breathable fabric, (cotton or blend.) Polo shirts are more versatile than T-shirts; sleeveless tops are optional.
- ❑ Light rain jacket/windbreaker with hood
- ❑ Shoes and socks: comfortable walking, running shoes, or light hikers
- ❑ Consider casual good-traction shoes, or sport sandals
- ❑ Pants/jeans: Comfortable and loose fitting is best for comfort and movement.
- ❑ Walking shorts: long cut for modesty
- ❑ Cotton sweater or sweatshirt for the air-conditioned bus
- ❑ Wide-brim sun hat or visor (seasonal)
- ❑ Swimsuit, for hotel pools
- ❑ Underwear and sleepwear

Consider …

- ❑ Daily essentials: toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, hairbrush or comb, shaving items, deodorant, shampoo/conditioner, shower cap, body soap, etc.
- ❑ Spare eyeglasses/contact lenses and your prescription
- ❑ Sunglasses and a neck strap
- ❑ Sunscreen, SPF 15 or stronger.
- ❑ Insect repellent with DEET
- ❑ Compact umbrella
- ❑ Pocket-size tissues
- ❑ Moist towelettes and/or anti-bacterial "waterless" hand cleanser
- ❑ Flashlight, extra batteries/bulb
- ❑ Passport, air ticket, credit card photocopies
- ❑ Extra passport-sized photos
- ❑ Moisturizer, lip balm
- ❑ Travel money purse, worn under your shirt or jacket; money belt

Medicines

- ❑ Your own prescription medicines
- ❑ Vitamins
- ❑ Cold remedies: Sudafed/Dristan
- ❑ Pain relievers: Ibuprofen/naproxen/aspirin
- ❑ Laxatives: Senokot/Ex-Lax
- ❑ Antihistamine: Benadryl
- ❑ Stomach upset: Pepto-Bismol/Mylanta
- ❑ Anti-diarrheal: Imodium
- ❑ Band-Aids
- ❑ Moleskin foot pads
- ❑ Antibiotic: Neosporin/Bacitracin
- ❑ Motion sickness medicine

Optional Gear

- ❑ Travel alarm or watch with alarm
- ❑ Compact binoculars
- ❑ Hanging toiletry bag with pockets
- ❑ Hair dryer (provided in hotels & onboard)
- ❑ Washcloth, handkerchiefs
- ❑ Basic sewing kit
- ❑ Hand-wash laundry soap (Woolite), clothespins/travel clothesline/stopper
- ❑ Electrical transformer & plug adapters—see “Regional Electricity” below
- ❑ Travel journal/note pad/reading material
- ❑ Home address book
- ❑ Photos, small gift for home-hosted visit
- ❑ Phrase book
- ❑ Collapsible walking staff
- ❑ Pocket calculator for exchange rates

7. REGIONAL CLIMATE INFORMATION

We can't predict the weather you'll have on your travels – our local weathermen are lucky to get tomorrow right! So, as your departure nears, it's a great idea to visit the *My Account* feature of **www.gct.com** for a current 10-day forecast of temperatures and conditions at your destinations. Or check Internet weather sites (www.wunderground.com is very comprehensive) for those forecasts and tweak your wardrobe accordingly. You'll find historical averages and general information on local climates below – but, given recent weather extremes, it's even more important to consult up-to-the-minute resources.

The costal region of Croatia has a Mediterranean climate. Inland Croatia (including Zagreb) has a more continental climate typical of Eastern Europe. Due to the varied geography, you will experience a wide range of temperatures and weather conditions on this adventure. In Croatia during June and August, temperatures can hit peaks as high as 110. Rain can come at any time and with it the temperature can drop dramatically. Water temperatures are warm enough for swimming June-September, but are too cold the rest of the year.

In contrast, the coastal regions of Greece have an almost ideal climate—plenty of sunshine and dry air most of the year. During spring and early fall, days are generally very comfortable. Although temperatures usually range from 60° to 80°, occasionally they reach extremes of warm and cold. From May to July beaches are less crowded than during the heart of the summer and the water can be warm enough for swimming. In spring, Athens' surrounding hills come to life with gentle hues of green and colorful wild flowers. Coastal breezes often moderate summer heat, but on calm summer days, Athens can be very hot.

Climate Charts

The following charts reflect the average *climate* as opposed to *weather* conditions. This means they serve only as general indicators of what can reasonably be expected. As your departure approaches you may wish to monitor current weather conditions online. Here is the official data from the weather observation stations closest to our destinations.

Here are the data from the weather observation stations at or closest to our destinations:

MONTH	DUBROVNIK, Croatia			SPLIT, Croatia		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Avg. number of days with Rainfall	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Avg. number of days with Rainfall
JAN	52-41	66-62	14	52-38	70-58	12
FEB	53-41	65-60	13	53-39	67-54	12
MAR	57-45	68-60	14	58-43	72-55	12
APR	62-50	66-58	14	63-48	70-54	13
MAY	70-57	66-58	12	71-56	69-54	12
JUN	77-64	60-55	9	79-63	63-49	10
JUL	82-69	52-49	6	85-67	58-42	5
AUG	82-69	55-51	6	84-67	62-44	7
SEP	76-64	62-56	8	78-61	73-51	8
OCT	69-56	69-62	12	69-54	76-59	12
NOV	59-48	70-64	14	60-46	73-60	13
DEC	54-43	68-65	14	54-41	72-60	13

MONTH	ATHENS, Greece			LJUBLJANA, Slovenia		
	(main trip and optional extension)			(for BLED optional extension)		
MONTH	ATHENS, Greece (main trip and optional extension			LJUBLJANA, Slovenia (for BLED optional extension)		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Avg. number of days with Rainfall
	55-44	75-63	1.9	36-23	91-77	14
FEB	55-44	75-62	1.6	40-25	90-65	14
MAR	60-47	76-60	1.6	50-31	91-57	15
APR	66-52	75-58	0.9	57-37	88-52	17
MAY	74-60	73-54	0.7	67-45	86-52	18
JUN	83-67	68-48	0.3	73-52	87-55	19
JUL	89-73	59-42	0.2	77-55	87-53	16
AUG	88-72	58-41	0.3	77-55	90-53	14
SEP	83-67	64-47	0.4	69-49	95-60	13
OCT	73-60	71-57	2.1	58-41	95-68	15
NOV	64-53	76-64	2.2	44-31	93-78	15
DEC	58-47	76-65	2.4	37-26	92-84	16

Please note: The data cited here reflect *climate* as opposed to *weather* conditions, and serve only as general indicators of what can reasonably be expected. A 60 degree ***average*** high temperature means that days may be as warm as 80 or as cool as 40 – but it's most likely you'll encounter temperatures in the 50 to 70 degree range.

8. TRAVEL AND TECHNOLOGY

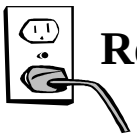
In General

Smartphone, tablet, digital camera/camcorder, MP3 player: travel today can involve technology that didn't exist even five years ago. The usefulness of digital devices is enormous: smartphones can keep you connected and offer up-to-the-minute information via your cell plan or a local Wi-Fi connection. With a tablet (or smartphone) you can store multiple country guidebooks, access maps and connect to the internet in a small, lightweight device. (***Tip**: you can download **this** document from the Grand Circle Travel website and import it into your tablet or e-reader, many of which can display PDF files.)*

Compact and lightweight, digital camcorders and cameras take high definition movies and still images of the people you meet and places you visit. For robust use a laptop may be effective; for occasional use it's wiser to rely on Internet cafes or a tablet and hotel Internet access rather than shoulder the heft and size of a laptop.

To use these devices you should first consider the services available at your destinations. You'll encounter a range of electrical standards, varied plug configurations to access the local current, erratic availability (electricity and internet access), and differing technological standards.

You'll need to assess your power and data storage needs, and the accessories required to recharge/connect/use these devices. Finally, it's smart to read the owner's manual *before* you depart. Pay particular attention to electrical, power and storage requirements to ensure that you understand exactly what you need. Thorough preparation is the best guarantee that your devices will work up to their potential.



Regional Electricity

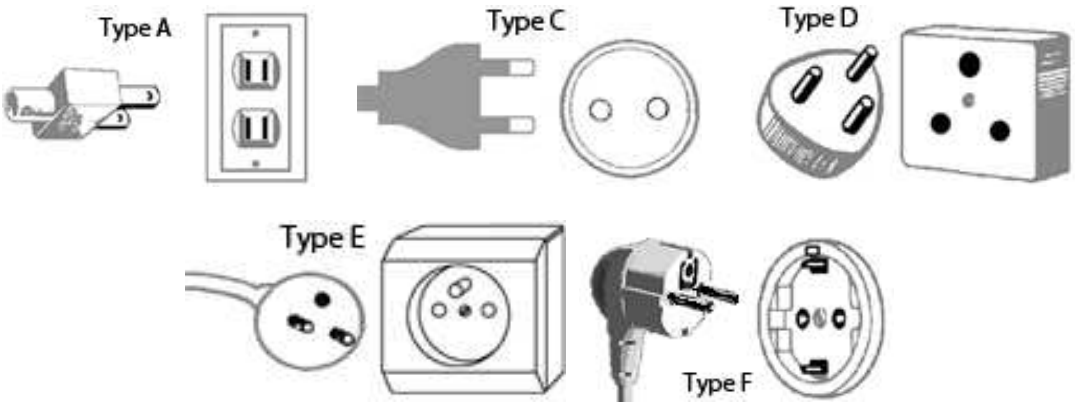
The standard U.S. electrical system — 110V 60Hz current and flat two- or three-pronged polarized plug system — is rare elsewhere. The rest of the world overwhelmingly uses 220-240V and 50/60Hz current with a variety of plug shapes, sizes, and configurations. Some plugs will work with multiple receptacles, while others won't. Europe is largely standardized to the Type C "Europlug."

Plugging a 110V U.S. appliance into 220/240V 50/60Hz service will ruin the motor. We suggest that you choose *dual* voltage appliances (widely available) that work on both 110 and 220/240 voltage. Dual voltage appliances need only plug adapters.

If you bring 110V appliances, such as a hair dryer (note that hotels often supply hairdryers and coffee makers) or a shaver, you'll need a transformer (to halve the 220/240V current) as well as plug adapters. Regional transformer/adapter kits can be found at hardware or online stores. However, transformers can be unreliable and a broken one will leave you lugging a useless 110V appliance. Battery-operated alternatives are an option, but will need a supply of batteries.

On board our small ship, you will find both American outlets (plug Type A; running 110 volt electricity) and Western European outlets (plug Type C; running 220 volts). A hair dryer is provided in the cabin.

Electricity in Albania, Croatia, Greece, and Slovenia is 220 volts, 50 Hertz, and electrical sockets vary. Albania, Croatia, Montenegro, and Slovenia tend to use plug Type C (ungrounded) or F, and Greece uses Types C, D, E, and F.



If you use multiple digital devices—cell phone, digital camera, MP3 player, etc. – it's handy to have a travel power strip, perhaps with a surge suppressors and USB port for charging cell phones, MP3 players or e-readers without carrying device-specific plugs.

Can you hear me now?

Just picking up the phone or getting a paper can be a new experience in a foreign country. To ensure you are available during your trip to friends and relatives at home, you will receive two copies of your hotel list, including phone numbers, with your final documents package. One copy is for you to bring, and one to leave behind with friends or relatives in case they need to contact you during the trip.

When calling overseas from the US, dial 011 for international exchange, then the country's code, then and the number. The country code, which is indicated by a plus sign (+), is +355 for Albania, +385 for Croatia, +30 for Greece, +382 for Montenegro, and +386 for Slovenia. Phone numbers abroad may not have the same number of digits as US numbers; even numbers within a country can vary depending on the city and if the phone is a land line or cell phone. When calling from the US, you may need to drop the first digit of the area code.

When calling the US from abroad, generally you dial 00 for international exchange, then the US country code +1, and then the number with area code.

Smartphones

It will require some effort to get the most out of your smartphone when you travel. Even with an international roaming plan, costs can add up quickly – those handy apps often pile up download fees. The simplest solution is to shut down all cell phone functions, automatic data feeds and roaming options, and take advantage of your phone via any available Wi-Fi. With an Internet VOIP app (like Skype) you can make inexpensive calls. If necessary, turn international roaming back on and your phone will work as usual – albeit at added cost. If your phone doesn't support international roaming (most smartphones do), some carriers offer loaners.

App quality, availability and costs vary – as do platforms (iPhone, Android, Blackberry …), so again you'll need to do some legwork. Apps come in all forms: packing lists, currency converters, language translators, maps, journals, Wi-Fi hotspot finders … one problem is going to be searching through the vast array of available apps to uncover what works best and what you're likely to use most. Smartphones have a lot to offer, but their small size can be a drawback for some uses (maps, extended reading, etc.)

Cell Phones

If you want to use a standard cell phone while traveling overseas, be sure to check with your service provider (www.verizon.com, www.t-mobile.com etc.) to see if your phone will work outside the U.S. or whether you're better off renting an international phone. The websites www.travelcell.com and www.globalcellularrental.com have good information on rentals. Or, consider buying an inexpensive local phone for your stay.

Phone Calling Cards

If you don't carry a phone, you can use a prepaid calling card to call the U.S. with minimal additional charges. Besides the prepaid long distance charges, you might have a local fee of a few cents and possibly a connection fee if you are using your card at a hotel. Check with the reception desk prior to using it to avoid unexpected charges.

Calling cards purchased locally are usually less expensive than those purchased in the U.S. and are more likely to work with the local system. Note that dialing a U.S. 1-800 number outside the continental United States will incur costly long distance fees, since 1-800 does not work outside the U.S.

Photo Gear

For many people, capturing the highlights of their travel experiences in photographs or movies and sharing them is one of the most enjoyable aspects of the journey. Remember, however: some individuals and cultures and are less tolerant of photography than others. It's always best to respect local customs. And in some countries you might be charged for photography at specific sites, or banned from taking any photographs at all.

Digital cameras and camcorders are excellent travel companions—and many do dual duty by recording movies *and* still images. Fist sized camcorders can capture HD movies and high quality still photos; cameras the size of a deck of cards are great for snapshots and casual movie clips. With an ample supply of high-capacity memory cards you can record your whole trip with a small, lightweight package.

But you must remember the batteries. Recharging batteries is sometimes impossible, cameras can drain batteries *very* quickly, and replacements may be unavailable. Whether you need standard or proprietary batteries, it's wise to have spares. Be sure your charger will work with the local electrical system, and bring more than enough memory cards—they may be hard or impossible to find. Memory cards are small, thin and light: you can never have too much storage.

Compact cameras are impractical for distant subjects and are often weak in dim light. Some models have a zoom lens of up to 120mm, which is good for middle distances. For distant subjects a *megazoom* (with a zoom lens of at least 300mm) or a single lens reflex (DSLR) camera with up to a 300mm telephoto lens are good choices. With a DSLR you can use multiple lenses, though your gear can quickly get complex, weighty and cumbersome. Cameras or lenses that need a tripod are impractical for travel photography. A single mid-range telephoto lens (18-200mm) coupled with a small, fast prime lens (for low light/no flash situations) is an effective, flexible and compact kit. Consider mirrorless interchangeable lens cameras (MILC), which combine small bodies and multiple, small lenses with high quality for both still and HD movie images.

If you use a DSLR or MILC camera, protect the lenses with a UV filter and bring lens caps, covers, cleaning paper and a waterproof bag (a heavy duty Ziploc-style bag is good) to protect your gear. Be sure your camera has a flash that you can turn off, and if it's detachable, remember to pack it. (At many sites and museums, flashes are ***not*** permitted.)

Consider disposable cameras, as well. They are inexpensive and capable of acceptable photos as long as the light is not too dim or bright. X-rays do not damage the data of digital cameras (in any media format), and so pose no problems for travelers using digital cameras.

9. GRAND CIRCLE CRUISE LINE'S SMALL SHIPS

M/V *Athena* and M/V *Artemis*

Owned, operated, and staffed by Grand Circle Cruise Line, these ships were designed exclusively for two small groups of just 25 Grand Circle Cruise Line travelers, each with its own Program Director. On the main deck, you'll find our reception area and the ship's library. For relaxation, the lounge/bar features inviting leather couches and soft chairs. Topside, a sun deck has classic wooden deck chairs for admiring the scenery. When it's time for meals, our large dining area at the stern features a single seating policy. While cruising, we'll enjoy daily breakfast and lunch buffets; sit-down dinners feature international and local specialties paired with regional wines.

Included features of the M/V *Athena* & M/V *Artemis*:

The Ship:

- Restaurant with single open seating
- Open Sun Deck for prime viewing
- Shipboard activities
- Smoke-free environment
- All shipboard announcements made in English

All Cabins:

- All outside cabins
- Layout of 150-163 square feet (24 doubles) and 120-135 square feet (2 singles)
- Private bath with shower, hair dryer
- Color TV with movies, and a bow camera for ship-front views
- Ample closet and dresser space
- Direct-dial telephone

An important word: While our ships feature larger-than-usual cabins, please keep in mind that these ships are coastal vessels, not large ocean cruise ships. Coastal cabins, in comparison, are relatively small, and ship amenities, in general, are comfortable but not lavish.

Shore Excursions

Included during your cruise are many sightseeing tours. Other optional tours are available for purchase. Your Program Director will provide information on these optional excursions on your arrival. Please note that optional tours can only be purchased with a credit or debit card (as above.)

Onboard Activities

During your cruise you'll enjoy exclusive Discovery Series events, including group activities that relate to the region, theme dinners, organized discussions, and talks on upcoming ports of call. (All fees and prices onboard are in US dollars.)

Dining

You'll enjoy fine cuisine and excellent views in your ship's dining room, featuring a warm decor of dark woods, rich carpeting, floor-to-ceiling windows, and white-linen and china table settings. Your ship's daily service includes breakfast and lunch buffets, and a more formal dinner. Our professional chefs will create unique menus for you that feature regional specialties. Included with dinner are two complimentary drinks (choose from house wine, draft beer, or soft drink)

per guest, per dinner. In addition, a selection of other fine wines and beer is available for purchase. Passengers may also bring a bottle of their own favorite wine to dinner to enjoy at their table. Should you care to avail yourself of this service, there will be a corkage fee of approximately $5 per bottle, charged to your passenger account.

Please note that if you bring your own alcohol aboard, it can only be consumed in the dining room as described above, or in your cabin. Consumption of alcohol purchased outside the ship is not permitted in the lounge or public areas. We also offer complimentary coffee and tea throughout the day, available in the lounge.

Open-table, single seating for all meals: Each meal is open seating—reservations of any kind are not accepted. Dinner has only one designated time for its open seating, announced each day aboard ship.

Dining times: Dining times for all meals may vary depending on the day's sightseeing and sailing schedule, but in general, meal times are as follows:

Early riser breakfast: 7:00 -7:30 am
Breakfast: 7:30-8:30 am
Lunch: 1:00-2:00 pm
Dinner: 7:00 pm

Special diets & celebrations: Special diets, such as low-cholesterol or vegetarian, can be accommodated, as well as the recognition of an anniversary or birthday. Please call Grand Circle Cruise Line to submit your request no later than 45 days prior to departure. Religious dietary regimens, such as kosher or halal meals, cannot be prepared aboard ship.

Dress code: The dining-room dress code is casual, though most travelers dress nicely for the Captain's Welcome Reception and Farewell Dinner.

Non-smoking policy: The entire dining room is non-smoking at all times.

Embarkation/Disembarkation

On the day of disembarkation, your cabin will no longer be available after breakfast. You may sit in the ship's lounge or on the Sun Deck until disembarkation.

Onboard Facilities

Headsets

During your base trip, complimentary headsets will be provided on all of your included and optional tours, so that you can better hear your Program Director or local guide.

For your Relaxation

These include a sun deck with lounge, library, and lounge with bar.

Wi-Fi Access

Limited complimentary Wi-Fi service is available in select common areas on board the M/V *Artemis or the M/v Athena*. Wi-Fi service is not available in individual cabins, restaurants or other common areas. If you want to use the Wi-Fi connection you'll need to bring your own device (laptop/tablet/netbook) — ships do **not** rent or loan these devices. Shipboard access is subject to the challenges of travel: ship location, signal availability, and usage volume on board will affect connectivity and speed. The ship's Internet connection demands a strong 3G-cell phone signal, which is unavailable in many of the areas we visit, and connectivity can be limited. You can expect disruptions of both long and short duration. You may be able to take advantage of available shoreside Internet cafes, or hotel access if available.

Laundry Service

Laundry service is available for a fee (currently it costs about $5 per shirt). Please note that neither self-service laundry facilities nor dry cleaning services are available.

Linen Service

There will be one change of bed linens during your cruise. Towels are changed daily.

Lounge/Bar

The bar is open all day, with soft drinks, beer, wine, and liquors for sale.

Medical Care

Our entire fleet adheres to stringent European safety standards. Ships feature fully staffed reception desks for most of the day (from 7:00 AM to 10 PM) and each cabin is equipped with an emergency call button available to alert the Captain.

Drinking Water

Tap water aboard ship is safe for drinking. Bottled water is also available for purchase. There is one ice machine onboard.

Telephone Services

To make telephone calls from the ship, you will be charged on your shipboard account on the last day of the cruise. Phone calls are directly from your cabin and through satellite, and ***are charged per minute without regard to whether or not it is a local, international or Calling Card based call***. We advise you to use it only for an emergency, as this is a satellite connection and a very expensive service (for example, calls will cost about $10.00 per minute).

Smoking/Non-Smoking Policy

All cabins are non-smoking. Smoking is permitted only outside on the sun deck. Smoking is not allowed anywhere else on the ships.

Ship Specifications

The ships are of Malta registry with international crews and feature the following specifications:

	Entered service	*Length*	*Width*	*Passenger capacity*	*Crew members*	*Decks*	*Cabins*	*Elevator*	*Chairlift*
M/V *Athena & M/V Artemis*									
	2008	193	35	50	21	3	26	no	no

10. ABOUT YOUR DESTINATIONS

We're including some handy practical details and a brief introduction to the places you'll visit on your Small Ship Cruise Tour. If you expect to explore in depth on your own, we recommend that you consult one of the many available book-length guides to your destinations. If you have one or two specific sites, museums or features that you're interested in, an Internet search is the ideal way to get-up-to-date information and details. And of course your Grand Circle Cruise Line Program Director or Representative will be able to assist you with suggestions and arrangements of activities you wish to participate in during your stay.

Athens in Brief—Base and Optional Extension

City Layout and Details

Athens has two main centers: Syntagma (Constitution) Square and Omonia Square. Approximately a mile apart, these two squares are connected by two parallel avenues, Stadiou Street and Panepistimiou Street. From Syntagma Square, Mitropoleos Street leads, slightly downhill, to Monastiraki Square, near the flea market and the Plaka district. From Monastiraki Square, mile-long Athinas Street leads to Omonia Square. In the triangle formed by these three squares—Syntagma, Omonia, and Monastiraki—lies Athens's inner city, its shopping area, the central market, the main department stores, the post offices, banks, and many tavernas and restaurants.

Two helpful orientation landmarks are the Acropolis and Lycabettus Hill (the latter with the small white church and the Greek flag on top). Both are visible from most parts of the city.

Cuisine

Greek cuisine, rich in vegetables, is considered to be very healthy as well as mouthwatering. Dishes like *kokinisto* (veal in tomato sauce), *mousakas* (baked layers of eggplant, minced meat and potatoes topped with cheese), and *fassolada* (a hearty bean soup with tomatoes, onions, carrots and celery) provide a delicious experience for travelers. *Pasta* means pastry – not noodles – in Greek, which will come in handy when you want to try desserts like the wonderful *galaktaboureko*, a rich pastry filled with custard, cream and syrup.

Drinking Water

Tap water is safe to drink in Athens, but outside the city, drink bottled water. You may want to bring a water bottle or canteen for sightseeing excursions.

Laundry Service

Laundry service and dry cleaning are available through your hotel for an additional fee.

Local Transportation

The Athens Metro has been dramatically improved and expanded in the recent years imaking it one of the most modern and efficient systems in the world. It has 3 lines, which are distinguished by the colors used in maps and signs (green, blue and red). The green line, which is the oldest and for the most part runs on the ground, connects Piraeus to Kifissia. The blue line runs from Monastiraki to Doukissis Plakentias and the Eleftherios Venizelos International Airport, and the red line from Aghios Antonios to Aghios Dimitrios. The first train of the day departs at 5:30 am and the last departs at 12:10 am.

There are many taxis in Athens, which can be recognised by the yellow colour of the vehicles. The minimun charge is 3 Euros. The taxi fare between the airport and the city center is roughly 35 Euros during the day and 50 Euros at night. Radio equipped taxis are available for a small extra fee.

Dubrovnik in Brief

City Layout and Details

Dubrovnik is situated along the shore of the Adriatic. The rim of its medieval Old Town, known as Stari Grad, begins along the shore and circles around to the north, and is protected by fairly massive walls and stone fortifications. A jetty and small harbor offer views of the coastal area.

Stradun, many centuries old, is the Old Town's main street and the popular promenade of residents and visitors alike, narrowing as it extends away from the sea. You'll find an assortment of cafés, boutiques, and intriguing little shops along this ancient city lane. Most of the alleys of the Old Town are outlined by high walls and their pattern may seem complicated, but this historic walled section covers a fairly small area, making it easy to become familiar with the few main roads. Automobiles are not allowed, so you can thoroughly enjoy your strolls here and take your time browsing. You can even walk along the wall for an unparalleled perspective of the area's layout and architecture. You can gain entrance to this walkway at either end of the Stradun, at the Pile Gate on the western wall and beneath the City Bell Tower. Inside the Old Town you will find the historic old cathedral dating back to the 13th century, the graceful Sponza palace, and a Franciscan monastery that includes a museum. Beyond the walls of the Old Town is the New Town section of Dubrovnik. Walking these streets you will find more modern shops and more restaurants with fresh local cuisine.

There are many historic sites in Dubrovnik, and part of the intrigue of this city is happening upon some of the lesser-known ancient structures as you walk the city lanes. One of the more renowned sites is the Franciscan Monastery, one of the oldest functioning pharmacies in the world. Its apothecary shop dates back to 1391, and the building also holds very old musical scores and manuscripts, along with the works of local painters and jewelers.

The artistic life of Dubrovnik is celebrated at various festivals throughout the year, and many buildings house examples of the creative spirit of the residents. A small museum at the Dominican Monastery displays a good collection of 16th-century religious art done by local artisans. The Luza Art Center is one of many art galleries worth browsing, and the courtyard of the Sponza Palace often holds exhibits of contemporary art. The Sponza Palace is certainly worth visiting for its own merits. This graceful and ornate building combines both Venetian Gothic and Renaissance styles of design, and was once a customs house and mint.

One of the symbols of Dubrovnik is the impressive Minceta Fortress. This circular bastion along the city's walls was completed in 1464 according to plans detailed by the Renaissance architects Juraj Dalmatinac (of Croatia) and Michelozzi (of Italy). Another structure that draws much interest is the Onofrio Fountain, created in 1444 just inside the Pile Gate.

Near Luza Square, once the center of medieval Dubrovnik, stands the 18th-century baroque Church of St. Blaise. A statue of an armored knight stands on guard nearby, known as Orlando's Column. It was erected in the 1400s as a tribute to freedom. Government rulings were proclaimed here, and the right arm of Orlando became the state's standard of measure for length (the Ragusan cubit).

If you're seeking a museum to visit, Dubrovnik has several to offer. In addition to the museum of the Dominican Monastery mentioned above, there is also the gothic Rector's Palace, also known as Duke Palace, exhibiting baroque artwork, historical items of the region, and furnished rooms depicting medieval trappings and décor, housing more than 15,000 exhibits of cultural and historical significance. The Rupe Ethnographical Museum displays traditional occupations, architecture, and costumes of the nation. The museum itself is carved out of rock, the structure formerly used as underground storage units for grain, to protect food supplies during periods of siege. In addition, the Maritime Museum is situated in the fortress Sveti Ivan (Fort of St. John), along with the Aquarium of the Institute of Biology for those interested in the marine species of the region.

Attractions in the vicinity of Dubrovnik: With a little planning, there are sites of interest just outside of the city's environs if you wish to venture further afield. As mentioned earlier, a short boat ride from Dubrovnik brings you to the lovely Island of Lokrum, said to be where Richard the Lionhearted was shipwrecked. Boat lines can also take you offshore to Sipan, Kolocep, or Lopud.

Cuisine

In Croatia, you can sample fresh seafood, including oysters, accompanied by local wines. The Zinfandel grape originated here, so you may want to try a local wine made from it. Croatia also has a stronger alcoholic beverage, *rakija*, in several differently flavored or spiced varieties, such as *travarica*, which has added herbs is one regional specialty. In Dalmatia, local dishes include *pasticada* (stuffed beef cooked in wine), a black risotto, and *prsut*, a distinctively flavored smoked ham. For a sweet treat in Dubrovnik, order the caramel cream called *rozata*.

Local Transportation

Dubrovnik is a compact city and it is a delight to explore on foot, especially since Stari Grad (the Old Town) does not allow motor vehicles. If you want to roam further, there are many regular buses that can take you throughout the New Town and to destinations outside of Dubrovnik. You can buy bus tickets from the bus driver (exact change please) or from a local newspaper kiosk.

You can also take advantage of the marine mode of transportation and relax on a boat for a short ride to Lokrum Island. This isle is a nature park complete with the medieval ruins of a Benedictine Monastery, a botanical garden, and rocky beaches where you can walk or just find a quiet spot to sit and take in the ocean vistas.

You enter the old town through Pile Gate, where you can obtain tourist information (open Mon-St 8 m to 8 pm and n Sundays from 8 am to 4 pm). Here you can buy maps of the city and get information on local buses.

Zagreb in Brief

City Layout and Details

Zagreb's historic central area consists of two sections: the Upper Town (*Gornji Grad*), which as the name implies is on a hilltop, and the Lower Town (*Donji Grad*). Ban Jelacic Square, the city's central public space, is on the border between the Upper and Lower Towns. It's called *Trg Bana Jelačića* in Croatian; Trg means "city square." In the upper town, winding streets lead to the Croatian Parliament building. The city's central open-air market (*Dolac*) is here, as well as the charming, pedestrian-only street *Tkalčićeva*. On the hill named Kaptol what was once a religious town merged in 1850 with secular Gradec to create the core of modern Zagreb. You can explore Gradec by following the major street Ilica from Ban Jelacic Square, then turning up Tomiceva where a funicular takes you up the hill.

The streets of the Lower Town were laid out in a neat grid in the late 19th century. In broad outline they form a "U" shape known as "the Green Horseshoe" that encompasses many of the city's main cultural institutions and public buildings. These include the Croatian National Theater, the Arts and Crafts Museum (featuring crafts from the Baroque period to the 20th century), and the Mimara Museum—highly recommended for it outstanding collections of textiles, paintings, sculpture, and ceramics. Here there are also a Technical Museum, the city's Botanical Garden, and the Strossmayer Gallery of Old Masters with works by famous Italian and Dutch painters.

Local Transportation

Zagreb has an extensive bus and tram system that can get you around at minimal expense. You can purchase tickets from street kiosks (slightly cheaper) or onboard; be sure to get your ticket time-stamped when you first board at tram. Regular tickets are good for one and a half hours; all-day tickets are also available. The tram system can get you as far as Sljeme on the outskirts of town for a popular excursion to the heights of Mt. Medvednica. Taxis are also readily available in central Zagreb and are metered at a regulated rate.

Newspapers & Magazines

For current information about goings-on in the city, see *Events and Performances*, which is published monthly by the Zagreb Tourist Board. *In Your Pocket, Zagreb*, an English-language guide that is updated bimonthly is also helpful.

Slovenia in Brief—Optional Extension

Cuisine

If you care to sample typical foods of Slovenia, head for a local *gostilna* (inn or tavern). Soups include *jota* (sauerkraut and beans with pork) and *goveja juha* (beef broth with egg noodles). *Struklji* are dumplings stuffed with fillings that come in many varieties, some sweet and some savory. A variety of fillings are also used in preparing the festive dessert called *potica*. Other dishes served in Slovenia show the influences of neighboring countries: *rizota* (like Italian risotto), *zavitek* (like Austrian strudel), and *golaz* (like Hungarian goulash).

Newspapers & Magazines

In Slovenia's capital, *Ljubljana Life* is a free city magazine published for foreign visitors offering information about events, people, places, and all types of cultural and entertainment activities. The magazine is available at Ljubljana's Airport and at selected hotels, restaurants, tourist offices, and other locations around the city.

You may find some English periodicals and/or newspapers for sale at local kiosks; your Program Director can direct you to the nearest stand.

11. DEMOGRAPHICS, HISTORY AND CULTURE

Croatia at a Glance

Area: 21,829 square miles
Capital: Zagreb
Government: Presidential/parliamentary democracy
Language: Croatian (Hrvatski), with Italian, German, and English also spoken by some.
Location: Croatia is situated between the Pannonian plane and the Adriatic Sea in southeastern Europe. The irregularities of its Adriatic coastline have created over 1,000 islands. The region in the north of Croatia is a highland area with a mountainous climate.
Geography: Croatia is located in Southeastern Europe, bordering the Adriatic Sea, between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Slovenia. The terrain of Croatia is geographically diverse; flat plains along Hungarian border, low mountains and highlands near Adriatic coast, coastline, and islands.
Population (2011 estimate): 4 290 612
Ethnic groups: Croat 89.6%, Serb 4.5%, other 5.9% (including Bosniak, Hungarian, Slovene, Czech, and Roma)
Religion: Catholic Roman Catholic 87.8%, Orthodox 4.4%, other Christian 0.4%, Muslim 1.3%, other and unspecified 0.9%, none 5.2%
Time zone: Croatia is on Central European Time, which is six hours ahead of U.S. EST. Daylight Saving Time is in effect from the last Sunday of March until the last Sunday of October.

History

The Croats are believed to be a purely Slavic people who migrated and settled in present-day Croatia during the 6th century. After a period of self-rule, Croatians agreed to the Pacta Conventa in 1091, submitting themselves to Hungarian authority. By the mid-1400s, concerns over Ottoman expansion led the Croatian Assembly to invite the Habsburgs, under Archduke Ferdinand, to assume control over Croatia. Habsburg rule proved successful in thwarting the Ottomans, and by the 18th century, much of Croatia was free of Turkish control.

In 1868, Croatia gained domestic autonomy while remaining under Hungarian authority. Following World War I and the demise of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Croatia joined the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes became Yugoslavia in 1929). Yugoslavia changed its name once again after World War II. The new state became the Federal Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia and united Croatia and several other states together under the communistic leadership of Marshal Tito.

After the death of Tito and the fall of communism throughout Eastern Europe, the Yugoslav federation began to crumble. Croatia held its first multi-party elections since World War II in 1990. Long-time Croatian nationalist Franjo Tudjman was elected President, and one year later, Croatians declared independence from Yugoslavia. Conflict between Serbs and Croats in Croatia escalated, and one month after Croatia declared independence, war erupted.

The United Nations mediated a cease-fire in January 1992, but hostilities resumed the next year when Croatia fought to regain one-third of the territory lost the previous year. A second cease-fire was enacted in May 1993, followed by a joint declaration the next January between Croatia and Yugoslavia. However, in September 1993, the Croatian Army led an offensive against the Serb-held Republic of

Krajina. A third cease-fire was called in March 1994, but it, too, was broken in May and August 1995 after Croatian forces regained large portions of Krajina, prompting an exodus of Serbs from this area. In November 1995, Croatia agreed to peacefully reintegrate Eastern Slavonia, Baranja, and Western Dirmium under terms of the Erdut Agreement. In December 1995, the Croatian, Serbian and Bosnian governments signed the Dayton peace agreement, making a commitment to a permanent cease-fire and the return of all refugees.

The death of President Tudjman in December 1999, followed by the election of a coalition government and president in early 2000, brought significant changes to Croatia. The government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Ivica Racan, progressed in implementation of the Dayton Peace Accords, regional cooperation, refugee returns, national reconciliation, and democratization.

Theses changes, along with the November 23, 2003 national elections, which ushered in Prime Minister Ivo Sanader, lead the European Commission to report favorably on the country's development, and to encourage Croatia to apply for EU (European Union) membership. Negotiations began in 2004 but were slowed down by resistance from Slovenia, due to concerns about the designation of their border with Croatia. In September 2009, when Jadranka Kosor took over as Croatia's Prime Minister, she reached an agreement with the Slovenians that ended the blockade, allowing negotiations to continue. Croatia officially became a member of the EU in July 2013.

Greece at a Glance

Greece Today
Capital: Athens
Population: 10,737,428
Ethnic groups: Greek 93%, other (foreign citizens) 7%
Note: The percentages represent citizenship, since Greece does not collect data on ethnicity
Languages: Greek
Religions: Greek Orthodox 98%, Muslim 1.3%, other 0.7%
Time zone: Greece is on Eastern European Time, two hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (seven hours ahead of Eastern Time). Summer hours operate from the last Sunday in March until the last weekend in October.

Historical Overview
Athens, capital of "the cradle of civilization," is the site of the greatest achievements of the classical age of Greece. Its architectural, social, artistic, and political triumphs have become a universal legacy. Against its ancient standards are measured the cultural, intellectual, and spiritual development of all Western civilizations. The appeal of Athens to today's traveler, therefore, is not so much its modern attractions, but the allure of its extraordinary ancient sites.

Grecian history extends as far back as 3000 B.C. with the Minoan civilization of Crete. By 1400 B.C. there were Mycenaean settlements on the mainland. Then about 1100 B.C., a people called the Dorians invaded and wiped out all Grecian cities. The small communities created by the Dorians were bleak and illiterate. This Dark Age of Greece lasted about 100 years. Around 800 B.C., the Greeks came into contact with the Phoenicians, who gave the Greeks their alphabet; Homer learned it and then used it to translate his works onto stone. After this Aristocratic Age (800 to 600 B.C.) came the threat of the Persian Wars, which continued from 520 to 480 B.C.

From 480 to 430 B.C., the grand era known as the Classical Age, Athens and the whole of Greece experienced the peak of its ancient glories. It was during this period that the Parthenon was built under Pericles's rule; Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides were writing their plays; and Socrates and Plato were teaching.

Shortly thereafter, however, Athens was repeatedly conquered and dominated by foreign powers. Though the early rulers were relatively benign, Athens lost the freedom and democratic structure that had nurtured its greatest cultural accomplishments. First conquered by the Macedonians (360 B.C. to 300 B.C.) and later by the Romans (200 B.C. to A.D. 300), Athens remained an important seat of learning until the Edict of Justinian closed the schools of philosophy in A.D. 529. Under Byzantine rule (A.D. 300–1200), many temples were modified to Christian use, and Athens became somewhat of a provincial city. After the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the Ottomans seized the city and ruled for almost 400 years, during which time the most sacred sites of the Acropolis were damaged and desecrated. Athens became the capital of a liberated Greece after the end of the War of Independence in 1829.

The country was ruled as a monarchy until 1967, when former King Constantine fled Greece after failing to topple the dictatorship established earlier in the year. In 1974, five months after the restoration of democracy in Greece, the monarchy was formally abolished by plebiscite in favor of a republic. On January 1, 1981, Greece became the 10th member of the European Union. Recent events of note in Greece include the successful and symbolic hosting of the 2004 Summer Olympic Games in Athens, and the Parliamentary elections of 2009, which brought the Social Demokrat Party into power.

Slovenia at a Glance

Slovenia Today
Capital: Ljubljana
Population: 2,005,692
Ethnic groups: Slovene 83.1%, Serb 2%, Croat 1.8%, Bosniak 1.1%, other or unspecified 12%
Languages: Slovenian is the official language.
Religions: Catholic 57.8%, Muslim 2.4%, Orthodox 2.3%, other Christian 0.9%, unaffiliated 3.5%, other or unspecified 23%, none 10.1%
Time zone: Slovenia is on Central European Time, six hours ahead of Eastern Time. Summer hours operate from the last Sunday in March until the last weekend in October.

History
In ancient times the region was inhabited by the Illyrian and Celtic tribes. In the 1st century B.C. they fell under the Roman provinces of Pannonia and Noricum. The region was settled in the 6th cent. A.D. by the South Slavs, who set up the early Slav state of Samo, which in 788 passed to the Franks. At the division of Charlemagne's empire (843) the region passed to the dukes of Bavaria. In 1335, Carinthia and Carniola passed to the Hapsburgs. From that time until 1918 Slovenia was part of Austria and the region was largely comprised in the Austrian crownlands of Carinthia, Carniola, and Styria.

In 1918, Slovenia was included in the kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (called Yugoslavia after 1929), and in 1919 Austria formally ceded the region by the Treaty of Saint-Germain. In World War II Slovenia was divided (1941) among Germany, Italy, and Hungary. After the war, Slovenia was made (1945) a constituent republic of Yugoslavia and received part of the former Italian region of Venezia Giulia. In early 1990, Slovenia elected a non-Communist government and stepped up its demands for greater autonomy with the threat of possible secession. In February 1991, the Slovenian parliament ruled that Slovenian law took precedence over federal law. Slovenia declared independence on June 25, and federal troops moved in, but after some fighting withdrew by July.

The European Community and the United Nations recognized Slovenia, along with Croatia, as an independent country in 1992. Milan Kučan was elected president of Slovenia in 1990 and continued as president of the independent republic; he was reelected in November 1997. Slovenia became a member of NATO and the European Union in 2004, and adopted the Euro in 2007. In 2008 and 2009, Slovenia actively blocked the EU membership bid of Croatia due to disputes about its borders, but a compromise was reached by the end of 2009.

Albania Today

Capital: Tirana
Population: 3,639,453
Ethnic groups: Albanian 95%, Greek 3%, other 2% (Vlach, Roma (Gypsy), Serb, Macedonian, Bulgarian
Languages: Albanian is the official language
Religions: Muslim 70%, Albanian Orthodox 20%, Roman Catholic 10% (These are rough estimates only. In 1990, Albania began allowing private religious practice after decades of prohibition of religious observances; many are still hesitant to openly declare their religion.)
Time zone: Albania is on Central European Time, six hours ahead of Eastern Time. Summer hours operate from the last Sunday in March until the last weekend in October.

Geography: Albania is in Southeastern Europe, bordering the Adriatic Sea and Ionian Sea. The country is slightly smaller than Maryland, and lies between Greece to the south and Montenegro and Kosovo to the north. The geography is mostly mountains and hills, small plains along the coast, with farmland in between the two.

Montenegro Today

Capital: Podgorica
Population: 672,180
Ethnic groups: Montenegrin 43%, Serbian 32%, Bosniak 8%, Albanian 5%, other (Muslims, Croats, Roma (Gypsy)) 12%
Languages: Serbian 63.6%, Montenegrin (official) 22%, Bosnian 5.5%, Albanian 5.3%, unspecified 3.7%
Religions: Orthodox 74.2%, Muslim 17.7%, Catholic 3.5%, other 0.6%, unspecified 4%
Time zone: Montenegro is on Central European Time, six hours ahead of Eastern Time. Summer hours operate from the last Sunday in March until the last weekend in October.

Geography: Montenegro is in Southeastern Europe, between the Adriatic Sea and Serbia. The country is only 13,812 sq km, which means it is roughly the same size a Connecticut, yet it borders on five countries: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, and Serbia. The country is mostly rugged high limestone mountains and plateaus that dip down to costal plains.

12. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Books, Maps, and Movies

If your local store or library doesn't stock the books or movies below, the Internet offers a wide variety of options for finding older or rare stock – try AbeBooks (abebooks.com), Alibris (albris.com), Amazon (amazon.com) or Barnes & Noble (bn.com) — or any of the smaller websites. Of course, this selection is not meant to be comprehensive, and is offered as a starting point for your research.

Croatia & the Dalmatian Coast:

A Taste of Croatia by Karen Evenden (Food) This engaging memoir of a three-year sailing odyssey includes 100 easy-to-use recipes.

April Fool's Day by Josip Novakovich (Literature) The razor-sharp and darkly humorous story of Ivan, a Croatian born on April Fool's Day in 1948 who must survive Tito, a labor camp, and a civil war.

Black Lamb and Gray Falcon: A Journey Through Yugoslavia by Rebecca West (History) This description of a journey through Serbia and Montenegro (then Yugoslavia) in 1937 is widely recognized as a masterpiece. The landscape and people of Yugoslavia, its history, cultures, religions, and politics are brilliantly observed.

Central Europe: Enemies, Neighbors, Friends by Lonnie R. Johnson (History) A panoramic history of Central Europe. Stands out from other history books about the region because the author compares the underlying similarities between the different countries instead of just dividing them into East (Soviet Bloc) and West.

Croatia, a History by Ivo Goldstein (History) Focuses on the history of Croatia from the Middle Ages to the present day.

Croatia, Travels in Undiscovered Country by Tony Fabijancic (Travel Narrative) The author, who left Croatia when it was still part of Yugoslavia, writes with insight on his return. Organized geographically, he focuses on the coastal regions with chapters on Dalmatia, Dubrovnik, and Istria.

Dubrovnik, A History by Robin Harris (History) A scholarly but readable history of Dubrovnik from its origins in the 7th century until the collapse of the Republic in 1808. Recommended for the history buff.

Montenegro, A Novel by Starling Lawrence (Literature) Romance, intrigue, and the adventures of a reluctant British spy set in turn-of-the-century Montenegro.

The Balkans, a Short History by Mark Mazower (History) Published in 2002, this book provides a concise survey of the region's complex history and modern nation-building.

The Impossible Country: A Journey through the Last Days of Yugoslavia by Brian Hall (Travel Narrative) As Yugoslavia was deteriorating in the mid-1990s, the author was touring the region by bicycle, allowing him a unique chance to document the people, politics, and mood of the times.

Yugoslavia, Death of a Nation by Laura Silber and Allan Little (History) A well-presented account of the breakup of Yugoslavia and its consequences.

Greece:

A Concise History of Greece by Richard Clogg (History) An introductory, illustrated history of modern Greece, from the late 18th-century national movement to the present.

Ancient Greece: Art, Architecture, and History by Marina Belozerskaya and Kenneth Lapatin (Art/Architecture) A lively guide to the architecture, painting, and sculpture of ancient Greece with color illustrations.

Corelli's Mandolin by Louis De Bernieres (Fiction) This novel about village life in Greece during the Italian occupation in the 1940s is much better than the 2002 movie (called Captain Corelli's Mandolin).

Dinner with Persephone by Patricia Storace (Travel Narrative) An American fluent in Greek, Storace has a real understanding of contemporary Greece, and a flair for diving into some of its complexities. She received well-deserved acclaim for this 1997 book. If not in stock at your local bookstore, it can still be found online.

Eleni by Nicola Gage (Biography/History) The moving and tragic true story of a Greek mother who dared to arrange an escape for her four children from a communist labor camp in the late 1940s.

Greek Mythology by Edith Hamilton (Mythology) The classic introduction to Greek and Roman mythology that is used as the standard in high schools and colleges throughout the US. From the Olympians to the Trojan War, Hamilton presents the myths and adventure stories of the ancient world in a clear and accessible manner.

Sailing the Wine-Dark Sea: Why the Greeks Matter by Thomas Cahill (History) The fourth installment of Cahill's great "Hinges of History" series, this is an eloquent tribute to Ancient Greek society and civilization.

The Colossus of Maroussi by Henry Miller (Travel Narrative) The soul of Greece circa 1939. Miller captures the spirit and warmth of the resilient Greek people in this tale of a wartime journey from Athens to Crete, Corfu and Delphi with his friend Lawrence Durrell.

The Parthenon by Mary Beard (History) An absorbing tale of the construction of the 2,500-year-old Athenian monument by a Cambridge University classicist.

Slovenia:

After Yugoslavia by Zoe Bran/Zoe Schramm-Evans (Travel Narrative) An account by a Welsh novelist comparing two journeys through Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia, before and after the breakup of Yugoslavia, that paints a vivid picture of both the land's beauty and the consequences of war.

Flavors of Slovenia, Food and Wine from Central Europe's Hidden Gem by Heike Milhench (Food) An overview of the country's cuisine, folklore and legends. Recipes range from traditional favorites to Milhench's own savory creations.

Guidebooks:

Your Program Director will be happy to provide recommendations and suggestions during the trip, so a guidebook is not a necessity. But a good one can be invaluable as a one-stop reference, so for those travelers who have asked for suggestions, we offer these guidelines. Since different guidebook series each have their own target audience and structure, it is well worth your time to browse your local library or bookstore to find the one(s) you like best. To get you started, here is some general information on the most popular series:

Culture Smart! – Focuses on local customs and etiquette instead of sights, dining, etc.
DK Eyewitness – Innovative visuals make these books easy to use and a nice souvenir once the trip is over. The focus is primarily on the sights and activities.
Fodor's – A classic guidebook with strong information on activities, shopping, and dining. Good mix of upscale recommendations and budget suggestions.
Frommer's – A comprehensive guide series that is known for its restaurant recommendations.
Insight – Offers more information on history and culture than usual, nice visuals, good maps.
Lonely Planet – Practical guides geared towards a more adventurous traveler on a budget.
National Geographic – From the same company that publishes the magazine. Excellent photographs, good information on history, nature, and culture.
Rough Guides –For the independent traveler on a budget. Particularly known for their maps.

Maps:
Most hotels will provide maps free of charge at the reception desk or in your room. These maps are usually sufficient for our travelers, but if you plan on any independent exploration, you may wish to consider purchasing a map before your departure. This can be especially useful in a country that doesn't use the Roman alphabet as the hotel maps may only be printed in the local language.
Some recommended map series include: Rand McNally international maps (especially the StreetWise series), Insight's FlexiMaps, and Rough Guide's destination maps. We suggest that you visit your local bookstore or library to get a better sense of which type of map is best for your needs before making a purchase.

Suggested Movies

Here are few of our favorite movies that are about, or set in, or from the region you'll be traveling. Most are available at movie rental stores and websites—or even your public library. Sometimes films produced outside of the US may be harder to find, but they are usually available online.

What is a Man Without a Mustache? starring Leon Lucev and Zrinka Cvitesic (2005, color) A Croatian comedy about a young widow who falls for the village priest and his tough decision between her and the church. In Croatian with subtitles.

The Duel (also found under the title Anton Chekhov's "The Duel") starring Andrew Scott and Fiona Glascott (2010, color) An American production of a Russian novella starring Irish actors in Croatia turns out to be a complex and interesting period piece. Beautifully shot.

Witness starring Leon Lucev and Alma Prica (2005, color) In the 1990s a Serbian villager is killed by Croatian soldiers. Is it an act of ethnic hatred, a crime of opportunity, or something more? This story unfolds as each villager adds their own information and perspective. This film won several international awards for its unusual use of viewpoint (which moves from character to character) and its unflinching look at violence. In Croatian, with subtitles.

Josip Broz Tito (1987, color) and ***Slobodan Milosevic*** (2005, color) Part of A&E's noted "Biography" TV series.

Zorba the Greek starring Anthony Quinn, Alan Bates, Lila Kedrova, and Irene Papas (1964, color) Based on the novel by the same name, this film centers on Basil, a half-Greek Englishman and his friendship with Zorba, a larger-than-life peasant musician.

Shirley Valentine starring Pauline Collins and Tom Conti (1989, color) An unappreciated British housewife accepts an invitation to travel to Greece with a friend, and finds the escape she's been looking for.

My Life in Ruins starring Nia Vardalos, Richard Dreyfuss, and Alexis Georgoulis (2009, color) A romantic comedy about a tour guide set among the ruins of classical Greece. Nia Vardalos also wrote and starred in ***My Big Fat Greek Wedding,*** a 2002 comedy based on her own wedding. Although it takes place in Chicago among Greek-Americans *Wedding* gives a good sense of Greek cultural pride. (Plus it's very funny.)

Never on Sunday starring Melina Mercourt and Jules Dassin (1960, black and white) A Classics scholar tries to steer a Greek call girl towards a moral life in this modern take on the Pygmalion myth. In Greek and English.

The Guns of Navarone starring Gregory Peck, David Niven, and Anthony Quinn (1961, color) Follows six Allied and Greek soldiers as they try to disable the two German guns that are preventing the evacuation of British troops from a Greek island in WWII. But the real heavy artillery is the cast—Peck, Niven, and Quinn all won at least one Oscar each during their distinguished careers.

Grand Circle Community & Useful Websites

If you have access to the Internet, the following sites offer good travel information:

Grand Circle Travel Store
www.grandcircleshop.com

Electric current and plug types
www.kropla.com/electric2.htm

Foreign exchange rates
www.oanda.com/converter/classic

ATM locators
www.mastercard.com/atm for Cirrus ATMs
www.visa.com/pd/atm for PLUS ATMs

Tourist information
www.gnto.co.uk/ Greece
www.croatia.hr Croatia
www.countryconnect.co.uk/cgi-bin/toccsearch.cgi?alb Albania
www.visit-montenegro.com/ Montenegro
www.slovenia-tourism.si/intro/ Slovenia
www.inyourpocket.com/free-instant-city-guides.html

Travel books
www.amazon.com
www.barnesandnoble.com

World weather
www.intellicast.com
www.weather.com
www.wunderground.com

Foreign languages for travelers: basic terms in more than 80 languages
www.travlang.com/languages

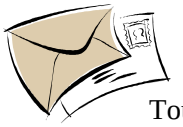
Travel tips: packing light, choosing luggage, etc.
www.travelite.org

Net café guide: 100s of locations around the globe
www.cybercafes.com

U.S. Customs & Border Protection: traveler information
www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel

Transportation Security Administration (TSA): agency that screens luggage in U.S.
www.tsa.gov/public

National Passport Information Center (NPIC): for passport information
www.travel.state.gov



Tourist Board Addresses

Tourist offices offer free brochures, maps, and pamphlets with information that pertains to many of your destinations. If these materials would enhance your vacation planning, you can write or call the following tourist board offices:

Greek National Tourist Organization
645 Fifth Avenue
903, Olympic Tower
New York, NY 10022
Telephone: 1-212-421-5777
Fax: 1-212-826-6940

Croatian National Tourist Office
350 Fifth Avenue, Suite 4003
New York, NY 10118
Telephone: 1-800-829-4416 (toll free)
Fax: 1-212-279-8683
E-mail: cntony@earthlink.net

Slovenia Embassy
1525 New Hampshire Avenue
Washington, DC 20036
USA
Telephone: +1-202-6675363
Fax: +1-202-6674563
Email: vwa@mzz-dkp.gov.si
Website: www.embassy.org/slovenia