Treasures of the Aegean: Greek Islands Cruise, Athens & Istanbul

SMALL SHIP CRUISE TOUR

Plus optional extensions in

Ankara & Cappadocia, Turkey;
Athens & Peloponnese, Greece

2014
TGR/TGP/TR2/TGS/TG2/TSP/TGT

Grand Circle Cruise Line
Treasures of the Aegean: Greek Island Cruise, Athens & Istanbul
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1. PASSPORT, VISAS AND TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

Passport Required

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

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 and extensions:** 3 blank "Visa" pages.

Please take a 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 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 for Greece; Visa required for Turkey

- **Greece—no visa needed**: U.S. citizens do not need visas for stays of less than 90 days.
- **Turkey—visa required:** We suggest you obtain an e-visa in advance through the Turkish government's website. This will help you avoid last-minute complications such as long lines, or changes in price or entry requirements. We will send you the necessary visa application forms, instructions on how to fill them out, and the amount of the visa processing fees approximately 100 days prior to your departure. This information is provided by PVS International, a national passport service that we highly recommend.
- *NOTE: As of January 2014, the Turkish government announced that they will stop their "on arrival" visa program on April 10, 2014. This means that U.S. citizens who arrive in Turkey on or after April 10 must get their visa in advance.*

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

Greece: (202) 939-1300 Turkey: (202) 612-6700

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
Website: www.pvsinternational.org

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.)

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.**

Pacing

- 15 days, with 7 nights aboard M/V Artemis, and 4 hotel stays, including a single 1-night stay

Physical requirements

- Not accessible for travelers using wheelchairs or scooters
- Travelers using walkers, crutches, or other mobility aids must travel with a companion who can assist them throughout the trip, and may not be able to participate in all activities
- You must be able to walk 3 miles unassisted and participate in 6-8 hours of physical activities each day, including stairs

Climate

- Daytime temperatures range from 63-92°F during cruising season
- June-August are the warmest months

Terrain

- Travel over uneven walking surfaces, unpaved paths, hills and rocky slopes, stairs, and cobblestones
- Good walking shoes and a walking pole are recommended

Transportation

- Travel by 45-passenger coach, funicular, and 50-passenger small ship

Accommodation

- The M/V Artemis does not have elevators onboard

Cuisine

- Meals will be a mix of local specialties and familiar American standards
- Meals onboard feature a variety of entrée options, including vegetarian

Program Directors

- We reserve the right for our Program Directors to modify participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home if their limitations are impacting the group's experience

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 you receive any needed vaccinations we suggest that you check the current recommendations of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for your destination. You can contact them:

On-line — if you have access to the Internet, we suggest you visit the CDC's Web site at **www.cdc.gov/travel**, where you will find comprehensive information about preventing illness while traveling.

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 (but the CDC and your doctor may have health recommendations specific to you, so please check).

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.

Staying Healthy on Your Trip

Safe Food

We've carefully chosen the restaurants for your group meals. Be very careful with food sold from vendors on the street, and with uncooked fruit and other foods. Fruit that you peel yourself is usually safe—avoid lettuce and other unpeeled produce.

Restrictions for the optional Ballooning Over Cappadocia tour

(*Ankara & Cappadocia, Turkey* extension:)**:**

You must be physically able to climb in and out of the balloon basket (sides are 42" high), stand unassisted for an hour, and be able to adopt a bended knee/seated position for landing. You should ***not*** fly if: you've had recent surgery, have severe back or hip problems, are frail, have mobility problems, have certain pre-existing conditions (epilepsy, osteoporosis, etc) – among other restrictions. (Note also that there is a supplemental fee for passengers weighing more than 252 lbs.) Please contact our Traveler Support Team at 1-800-321-2835 for details.

Flights are regulated by the Civil Aviation Law under a public transport license and the balloon pilot is the final arbiter of whether to fly or not. Common reasons for not flying are weather/wind conditions that may not be obviously bad. A poor forecast can cancel flights on a seemingly perfect morning; wind speeds at altitude may be outside the balloons capabilities, or in wrong directions – but invisible from the ground. Rain and poor visibility are also deterrents. Disappointing as a cancellation may be, the decision always considers the safety of the passengers first.

3. LUGGAGE REGULATIONS

Size, Number and Weight Restrictions

In addition to the international flights, you will also take domestic flights within the region on your main trip. The luggage limits on these flights are less than the average allowance for international flights. **This means that even if your international airline offers a larger weight limit, you will need to pack according to the lower restrictions, as indicated in the following chart.**

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 **44 lbs for checked bags** and **17 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.

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.

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.*

Airport Security/TSA

Restrictions on what can be included in your carry-on luggage may change. To avoid inadvertently packing restricted items in your carry-on, we suggest that you consult the Transportation Security Administration website at www.tsa.gov/public, 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*.

Liquids and your carry on: Follow the **TSA's 3-1-1 rule**: Liquids must be in a 3.4 ounce or less (100ml) bottle (by volume); all bottles must be in a 1 quart-sized, clear, plastic, zip-top bag; 1 bag per passenger placed in screening bin. One-quart bag per person limits the total liquid volume each traveler can bring. The 3.4-ounce (100ml) container size is a security measure. This rule is used increasingly in Europe, and Turkey enforces it for all flights.

Locking your luggage:
To reduce the risk of damage to your luggage, *either* do not lock your bags when checking in for flights that originate in the U.S. *or* use TSA-approved locks. (These are locks that TSA screeners can open and relock with a special tool, avoiding damage to your luggage or lock if a physical inspection is required. Look for the words "TSA" or "TSA-approved" on the lock's packaging.) Outside of the U.S., we strongly recommend that you lock your luggage as a preventative measure against theft.

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. If you are flying domestically before your international flight, the 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/Istanbul—main trip & optional pre-trip extension: When you deplane from your connecting flight to Athens/Istanbul, 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.

Please note: *If you plan on booking your own international flights or arranging with our air department to arrive/depart on an earlier/later date than standard for your program, airport transfers will NOT be included in your program price. Transfers must be purchased separately, as an optional add-on, and are subject to availability. To learn more, or purchase airport transfers, please call our Traveler Support team at 1-800-321-2835. For more information, please see your Important Information booklet.*

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 over traveler's checks. Cash is more readily exchanged and accepted than traveler's checks, and sometimes commands a better exchange rate. 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 are *not* recommended. We urge you not to rely on traveler's checks for your personal expenses. They can be difficult to exchange and the commission fee for cashing them is quite high. Although most banks or exchange offices will cash them as long as you carry your passport with you, the exchange rate may be worse than exchanging cash. It's more practical to view any traveler's checks you might bring as a last resort in the event of a special situation. American Express Traveler's checks are rarely accepted in shops and restaurants.

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 DISCOVER cards are not widely accepted outside of the U.S.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Turkey has been phasing in a new type of credit card technology, called a "smartcard" or a "chip-and-PIN" card. These cards have an embedded computer chip instead of a magnetized strip, and the card owner authorizes a purchase by entering a PIN (personal identification number) instead of signing a slip. Some businesses in Turkey have already switched to the new system completely; some can process both smartcards and regular cards; and some haven't switched at all.

This new technology is not common in the U.S., so occasionally there are machines in Turkey that can't read U.S. cards. Or the machine can read the card, but asks for a PIN. While you can ask your credit card company if your cards have a PIN on file, this is not common for U.S. cards, so mostly likely the answer will be "no". But even so, there's no need to worry. In many shops in Turkey you will still be able to sign a slip as usual. And if the shop in question requires a smartcard, you can always try a different form of payment, like a debit card or cash. (U.S. debit cards usually have a PIN, so sometimes they work when credit cards don't.)

Since there is no way to predict in advance what each shop will do, we recommend that you bring more than one type of payment when you go shopping. For example, a mix of a couple different credit cards, a debit or ATM card, and some cash is ideal—you'll be prepared for anything. And remember to memorize your PINs as numbers because the keypads in Turkey rarely have alphabetic characters.

***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 should 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. 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, 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 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 Greece

The euro is the official currency of Greece. U.S. dollars are not commonly accepted in Greece.

- Bills come in denominations of 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, and 500
- Coins come in denominations of 5, 10, 20, and 50 cents; 1 and 2 euro

In Turkey

The currency in Turkey is the Turkish lira (TL). The Turkish lira is divided into 100 kurus (pronounced "koo-ROOSH"). U.S. dollars can sometimes be used in Turkey.

- Bills come in denominations of 1, 5, 10, 20, 50, 100 and 200 TL
- Coins come in denominations of 1, 5, 25, and 50 kurus and 1 TL

Some businesses in Turkey will accept U.S. dollars (or euros). This is more common in places/businesses that cater to tourists. Accepting U.S. dollars is legal, but since it is not the official currency of Turkey, the businesses that accept dollars can do so on their own terms. This means that they may set their own exchange rate and might not be able to make change for large U.S. bills. Generally, you'll be better off having Turkish lira for everyday use, and using U.S. dollars only as a backup.

Shopping

There is **no** requirement to make a purchase during stops at local shops or markets, 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.

Souvenirs

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.

Turkey also offers many fine craft items at good prices. Traditional souvenirs include beautiful rugs, tiles, pottery, gold jewelry, and products made of copper, silk, and leather.

Your purchase decisions are very personal. Ultimately, you must use your best judgment when deciding whether an item is worth the price being asked.

Bargaining

Some shops have fixed prices. In other places, merchants enjoy negotiating over prices. 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

For all things related to U.S. Customs, the ultimate authority is the U.S. Bureau of Customs & Border Protection. Their website, **www.cbp.gov** has the answers to the most frequently asked questions. Or you can call them at **1-877-227-5511.**

The top three points to know are:

- At time of writing, your personal duty-free allowance is $800 for items brought with you. Items totaling more than $800 are subject to duty fees.
- **Items shipped home are always subject to duty when received in the U.S**. Even when the shop has offered to include shipping and duties in the price, this typically means shipping to the nearest customs facility and payment of the *export* duties—not door-to-door shipping or payment of the *import* duties. All additional duties or shipping charges would be your responsibility. Unless an item is small enough to send by parcel service (like FedEx), chances are you will need to arrange shipping or pick-up once the item is in the U.S. and will need to pay customs duties.
- 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.

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. Of course, whether you tip, and how much, is always at your own discretion. For those of you who have asked for tipping suggestions, we offer these guidelines. All tips are quoted in U.S. dollars; tips can be converted and paid in local currency or in U.S. dollars. Do not use personal or traveler's checks for tips.

GCCL Program Director: It is customary to express a personal "thank you" to your GCCL Program Director at the end your trip, especially if he or she has provided you with individual assistance. As a guideline, many travelers give $7-$10 per person, per day.

Included Meals: Your Program Director will tip waiters for included meals.

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 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.

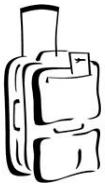
Drivers: $3-$4 per person, per day

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

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

TIP*: We recommend you carry small-denomination banknotes (totaling about $75-$100 U.S., per person) in either local currency or U.S. dollars to facilitate tipping.*

6. PACKING FOR YOUR TRIP



In General

Travel light: **PACKING FOR TRAVEL** Just as no two people are the same, your packing needs aren't like anyone else's. The trick of packing is to bring only what you need to be comfortable – and only you can determine what answers that need. We've compiled some *suggestions* from our local Trip Leaders and from past travelers to help you refine your packing – and to ensure that nothing critical is forgotten.

Our travelers' top three comments about packing are "I wish I had brought less," "I should have double-checked the weather," and "You said I'd need (*insert something you don't need here*) and I didn't." These suggestions are springboards, **not** requirements – take them with a grain of salt. Finally, remember the **Golden Rule of Packing Light**: whatever you think you need at first—take half the clothes and twice the money.

Pack casual clothes: Comfortable, informal apparel is perfectly acceptable at each of your destinations. Basic pants, shirts, sportswear, everyday dresses/skirts, and supportive shoes are recommended.

Functional Tips
Functional outdoor clothes that are relatively easy to care for are recommended. As you will experience a wide range of temperatures and weather conditions, our list suggests several layers of clothing. Most of your clothing can be made of cotton or cotton-synthetic blends. If you like to hand-wash your clothes, bring socks and underwear, and even shirts and pants, made of silk, synthetics, or a cotton-synthetic blend that will dry out overnight. You can buy clothing designed especially for travel. Look for clothes that offer adequate sun protection.

October-March departures it can be quite cold or rainy. We suggest packing sweaters, long pants and a rain jacket for departures during this time.

Greece is a modern society, so for most of the tours you can dress as you would at home for a vacation in a sunny climate. 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. At Greek Orthodox monasteries, women are asked to wear long skirts (below the knee) instead of trousers or jeans. On days touring other sites in Greece, basic jeans, sleeveless shirts, everyday skirts or slacks, and shorts are perfectly acceptable.

In Turkey your dress should be somewhat conservative to be respectful of the local culture. Sleeveless tops for ladies are acceptable in the larger cities, but may not be seen as appropriate in the small villages. You might want to keep a light jacket, sweater, or shawl with you when going sleeveless, to cover up when necessary. Very short shorts—on men or women—and mini skirts are considered disrespectful, and will draw unwanted attention.

Visitors of both genders should dress modestly when visiting a mosque. (Modestly being covered from shoulder to below the knee.) In mosques, it is customary to remove your shoes. Turkey's secular government does not require women to cover their hair, but some Muslim women chose to do so. As a visitor, you will not be required or expected to cover your hair, except *perhaps* in a mosque, where it would be considered a sign of respect. If a mosque requires a head covering or special dress, they will typically have pieces to lend or rent, so you do not need to bring your own.

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 duty 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

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, easy to care for and fashionable clothing and gear that is readily adaptable to your itinerary.

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.

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
- ❑ For cooler months (October-March): sweaters, fleece, warm jacket
- ❑ 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
- ❑ If you wear skirts, one long (below the knee) skirt for visits to Greek Orthodox monasteries

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
- ❑ Washcloth (not always supplied)
- ❑ 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 (this is provided in all hotels)
- ❑ 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 hiking pole or walking stick
- ❑ 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.

Athens and the Greek Islands: Greece has 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 moderate summer heat, but on windless days Athens can be very hot.

March and April are the beginning of the tourist season on the Greek islands; November is the end. During these "shoulder seasons" many tourist shops and restaurants may be closed. However, this offers the experience of witnessing more of the local life of the islands.

Aegean Islands: The summer heat is even more tempered by fresh daytime breezes. During the three summer months, the *Meltemi*, a persistent northerly wind, occasionally reaches near gale force. Known by the old Greeks as the *Etesian* northern winds, it results from a high-pressure system over the Balkan/Hungary area and a relatively low-pressure system over Turkey.

The temperatures in March, November and the end of October are the same as in winter months. For this reason we suggest that you bring sweaters, long pants, and a rain jacket if traveling at this time of year. Also, you may find it too cool to comfortably wear sandals at this time of year.

Istanbul Situated in the Marmara region, Istanbul tends to be hot and slightly humid at high summer (late July to early September), with very little cloudy weather or rain and temperatures in the 70s or 80s. From May to early July, and again from late September to November, the weather tends to be moderate with some rain, but mostly clear days and pleasant temperatures in the 60s and 70s. In the winter (mid-December to mid-March) it's rainy and cold with some snow; average afternoon temperatures are in the low 40s.

Ankara/Cappadocia—(optional extension): In Turkey's central plateau region the autumn and spring seasons are typically beautiful, with sun-filled skies and pleasant temperatures in the 50s, perhaps even in the 60s. Though evenings are always cooler, due to the high altitude. Winters are cold with snow and ice patches. Summers are hot and dry with cool evenings (cool enough for a sweater).

The Peloponnese—(optional extension): Like mainland Greece, the Peloponnese has a Mediterranean climate that becomes cooler as you go further inland from the shore. Mild and rainy winters give way to warm and dry summers. Most days are sunny, but rainfall can occur.

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:

Average Daily High/Low Temperatures (°F), Humidity, & Monthly Rainfall

MONTH	ATHENS, Greece (main trip & optional extension			LARISA, Greece (for Meteora)		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)
JAN	57-45	75-63	1.9	50-33	90-69	1.3
FEB	57-45	75-62	1.6	54-34	89-62	1.2
MAR	60-47	76-60	1.6	59-38	90-59	1.4
APR	67-53	75-58	1.0	67-43	90-53	1.3
MAY	75-60	73-54	0.6	78-52	89-47	1.5
JUN	84-68	68-48	0.2	88-59	80-35	1.0
JUL	89-73	59-42	0.2	92-64	73-32	0.8
AUG	89-73	58-41	0.3	91-63	76-36	0.6
SEP	83-67	64-47	0.4	83-57	81-41	1.2
OCT	74-60	71-57	1.9	72-50	87-55	2.1
NOV	66-54	76-64	2.2	60-42	92-69	2.2
DEC	59-48	76-65	2.5	52-36	92-75	2.0

MONTH	NAXOS, Greece			ISTANBUL, Turkey		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Avg. number of days with rainfall	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)
JAN	58-49	75-70	13	46-37	82-71	3.7
FEB	58-49	75-69	12	47-37	81-68	2.8
MAR	60-50	76-70	10	51-40	83-65	2.3
APR	66-54	75-66	8	60-47	81-61	1.7
MAY	72-60	77-67	4	69-54	84-59	1.2
JUN	78-67	75-63	1	78-62	83-55	0.9
JUL	80-71	74-65	--	82-66	83-51	0.7
AUG	80-71	76-68	--	82-67	84-52	0.6
SEP	77-68	75-69	1	76-61	82-53	1.1
OCT	71-62	77-72	5	67-55	83-61	2.1
NOV	66-57	76-71	9	57-47	81-66	3.5
DEC	60-52	76-72	13	50-42	81-71	4.0

MONTH	ANKARA, Turkey (optional extension)			KALAMATA, Greece (for the Peloponnese optional extension)		
	Temp. High-Low	**% Relative Humidity (avg)**	**Avg. number of days with rainfall**	**Temp. High-Low**	**% Relative Humidity (am-pm)**	**Avg. number of days with rainfall**
JAN	35-20	78	16	58-42	85-65	20
FEB	40-23	73	15	58-41	84-62	22
MAR	50-29	68	15	62-44	90-60	15
APR	60-38	65	17	66-48	91-59	15
MAY	68-44	65	17	73-55	89-55	13
JUN	76-49	63	13	83-62	84-44	6
JUL	82-55	56	7	86-67	83-47	4
AUG	83-55	53	5	88-66	86-50	6
SEP	76-47	55	5	83-61	88-51	12
OCT	65-39	61	10	77-57	86-60	15
NOV	51-30	70	12	66-49	89-69	22
DEC	40-26	78	16	58-43	88-69	29

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

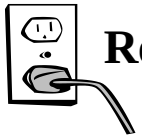
In General

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

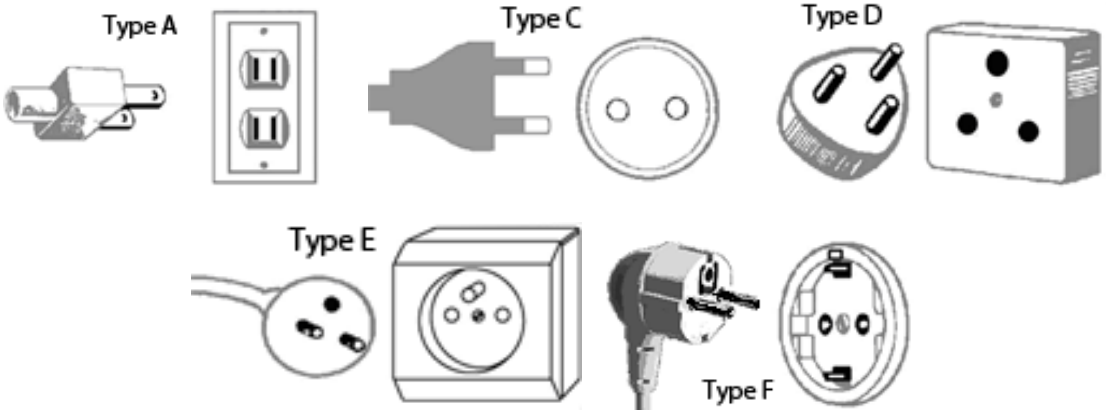
The standard U.S. electrical system — 110V 60Hz current and flat two- or three-pronged polarized plug system — is rare elsewhere. The overwhelming choice for the rest of the world is 220-240V and 50/60Hz current with a variety of plug shapes, sizes, and configurations. Some plugs will work with multiple 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 bring *dual* voltage appliances (widely available) that work on both 110 and 220/240 voltage. Dual voltage appliances are inexpensive and need only plug adapters.

If you bring 110V appliances, such as a hair dryer (note that hotels often supply hairdryers and coffee makers) or shaver, you'll need a transformer (to halve the 220/240V current) in addition to plug adapters. Regional transformer/adapter kits can often be found at hardware or online stores but transformers tend to burn out, so it might be better to leave those larger items at home

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 Greece and Turkey is 220 volts, 50 Hertz, and electrical sockets vary. Greece uses Types C, D, E, and F. The most common plugs in Turkey are Type C and E.



Because you'll need various plug types on this trip, it may be a good idea to invest in a versatile and lightweight all-in-one, universal adapter/converter combo. If you use multiple digital devices—cell phone, digital camera, and MP3 player for instance – it's also handy to have a travel power strip, perhaps with a surge suppressor and USB-style port for charging cell phones, MP3 players or e-readers without the use of 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 +30 for Greece and +90 for Turkey. 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 the apps via 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 some cost. If your phone doesn't support international roaming (most smartphones do), some carriers offer loaners.

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 places you may be charged for photography at specific sites, or restricted from any photography 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 good 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. 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 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 SHIP CRUISE TOURS

M/V *Artemis*

Owned, operated, and staffed by Grand Circle Cruise Line, these ships were designed exclusively for our travelers. 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 *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 card.

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 Turkey and Greece if you choose to take them.

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.

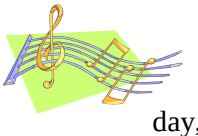
Embarkation/Disembarkation

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.



Recreational Facilities

These include a sun deck with lounge, library, and lounge with bar. The bar is open all day, with soft drinks, beer, wine, and liquors for sale.

Wi-Fi Access

Limited complimentary Wi-Fi service is available in select common areas on board the M/V *Arethusa*. 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 and Linen 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. There will be one change of bed linens during your cruise. Towels are changed daily.

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 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 Hospitality Desk Representative will be able to assist you with suggestions and arrangements of activities you wish to participate in during your stay.

Internet and Email

Most hotels in Turkey and Athens have Internet services available, some for free, some based on a fee for use. Many hotels provide complimentary Wi-Fi service in a common area, like the lobby or reception, but not in the guest rooms. Internet cafes are also available at different points throughout our adventure. You can either bring your own device during the trip and use Wi-Fi where it is available, or leave it at home and rely on places that provide computers, like a hotel with a business center or Internet cafes. Internet access, however, is not available is on board your ship.

Cruising and The Greek Islands

As any sailor will tell you: you don’t command the sea – it commands you. Most of the time things go along without complications, but all cruising is subject to the vagaries of winds, tides, and water, and flexibility of mind is vital to ensure a relaxed and full experience during your cruise. Port calls to the Greek islands and on your stop in Kusadasi, particularly in high season, occur at the pleasure of the local port authority, and marine traffic can create delays that might result in some re-scheduling. More frequently visited islands – Mykonos, for instance – are very traveler-friendly. At less frequented islands you may discover that local restaurants don’t accept credit cards. More shops and restaurants will be open in Mykonos on the shoulder months of the holiday season than will be open on the less frequented islands. In high season the more renowned islands will be busy and crowded; others will be more relaxed and not as congested.

Istanbul in Brief—Base and Optional Extension

City Layout

European Istanbul is divided by the Golden Horn, a freshwater outlet, into two principal regions: the Old City, which is south of the Golden Horn, and Beyoglu (BEHY-oh-loo), which is north of it and more modern. Two bridges span the Golden Horn—the Ataturk and the Galata—and serve as the major thoroughfares that connect these two different sections of town. Ferries also run between them, and are a primary transportation mode for locals who live on one side and work in the other.

The Old City was part of the site chosen by Constantine the Great for his capital, and contains most of the historic sights of Istanbul. Here you’ll find the Blue Mosque, Sancta Sophia, Topkapi Palace, Hippodrome, and Grand Bazaar. Istanbul University is also located in the Old City.

Modern Beyoglu is home to most of the city's luxury hotels, banks, hospitals, and consulates. This district's central hub is Taksim Square, from which many avenues branch off and lead to various sections of the new city. *Cumhuriyet Caddesi*, a wide, tree-lined road, offers sophisticated nightclubs and fancy restaurants. *Istiklal Caddesi* (Independence Avenue), the main street in Beyoglu, is now a pedestrian mall. Leading off Istiklal Caddesi are numerous atmospheric side streets and alleys that are fascinating to explore. The 19th-century palace of Dolmabahce is situated at the edge of Beyoglu, on the shores of the Bosporus.

Cuisine

Turkish cuisine is thought by many to rank with French and Chinese as one of the world's great basic cuisines. The ingredients are often very simple, but are prepared with such care and finesse that the result is incredibly tasty. In brief, traditional Turkish cuisine is based on lamb and fresh vegetables. You'll find lamb, beef and chicken (but very little pork, which is forbidden to Muslims), and seafood is popular, too – particularly in Istanbul. However, lamb is the foundation.

Most of our travelers find the food in Turkey to be excellent. When you consider that the Ottoman Empire once stretched from the very gates of Vienna, across the Mediterranean and North Africa, and all the way to central Asia, you can begin to grasp the complexity and subtlety of Turkish cuisine. Turkey is also one of only seven nations on earth to produce a food surplus, so there is an abundance of fresh and wonderful fare. We generally eat in small local restaurants or at our hotels.

For breakfast you might want to try Turkish yogurt. The breads are fresh and tasty, too. Turks usually serve their tea black and very sweet; and the coffee served is generally Turkish style, strong and black in a small cup.

A big meal usually starts with mezes, a selection of all sorts of appetizers and salads. Don't pass up the böreks, which are pillow-shaped turnover pastries filled with cheese, meat, parsley, and herbs. Dolma is the name for grape leaves stuffed with rice, nuts and currants. There may also be soup (çorba), such as lentil with rice and lemon, or creamy tomato soup.

Lamb, chicken, and beef are the basic meats, often served as shish kebab with rice *pilav* on the side. Fish and shellfish are wonderful; do try the *barbunya* (red mullet) and *kilic baligi* (swordfish). *Pasta* means pastry – not noodles – in Turkish. The Turks are notorious for having a sweet tooth, which will become obvious if you bite into a honey-soaked piece of *baklava* pastry.

Vegetables are on an equal footing with lamb. Many of the best Turkish dishes consist of excellent fresh vegetables cooked with just one or two condiments and a bit of diced lamb for flavor. Fruit—and Turkey abounds in excellent fruit—is readily available with any meal.

Vegetarianism is not prevalent in Turkey. If you merely want to minimize consumption of meat, you'll have no problem as Turkish cuisine has many dishes in which meat is used merely as a flavoring, not as a principal element. However, if you want to avoid meat completely, you'll have to choose carefully. A good dish to try is *menemen*, tomatoes topped with eggs and baked; it is fairly spicy. Eggplant, cheeses, *pilafs* and yogurt are good supplements. Note that many of the bean dishes such as *nohut* (chick-peas, garbanzos) and *kuru fasulye* (fava beans) are prepared with lamb as a flavoring.

Restaurants (*restoran, lokanta*) are everywhere, and most are inexpensive (approximately U.S. $6 to $8 per person for a meal). Specialties include *patlican salatasi* (pureed eggplant, perhaps mixed with yogurt); *palamut* (a darkish, full-flavored tuna) and *levrek* (sea bass); *karisik izgara* (a mixed grill of lamb); and *dolma* (stuffed vine leaves): the hot ones (*etli*) have ground lamb in them; the cold ones are made without meat, and seasoned with olive oil (*zeytinyagli*).

Turkish desserts are rich. They tend to be very sweet, soaked in sugar syrup. Many are baked, such as crumpets, cookies or shredded wheat, all in syrup. *Baklava* comes in several varieties: *cevizli* is with chopped walnut stuffing; *fistikli* is with pistachio nuts; *kaymakli* is with clotted cream. *Krem karamel* is the Turkish version of flan, and *sutlac* is a milk-and-rice pudding. As an alternative to sweet desserts, Turkish fruit can't be beat. Try *kavun*, a delicious, fruity melon.

Drinking Water

Tap water in Turkey is *usually* safe, but many travelers opt for better-tasting bottled water, which is readily available (but sometimes pricey in the most popular travel areas.)

Local Transportation

Metro: Istanbul's ambitious plan to have a modern rapid-transit system is well under way. The system runs from about 6 am to a little past midnight. The fare is less than US$1.

The Tunnel was the first underground railway line opened in 1875. Still today this short line is important for urban transportation. Trains operate every 3.5 minutes and a trip takes about 15 minutes. The line runs from *Karakoy* to *Tunel* upper station and is linked to Taksim Square by a vintage tram.

The Light rail line was built in 1989, and runs from Aksaray towers in the western suburbs, to Yenibosna. It has a total length of 18 km with 16 stops. *Aksaray, Emniyet, Ulubatli, Bayrampasa, Sagmacilar, Kartaltepe, Otogar, Esenler, Terazidere, Davutpasa, Merter, Zeytinburnu, Bakirkoy, Bahcelievler, Atakoy, Yeni Bosna.*

The Modern tram line was built in 1990 and runs through the older parts of the city.

The Full metro line was built in 2000 and runs from Taksim to 4 Levent. It has a total length of 7 km with 6 stations. Taksim, Osmanbey, Sisli, Gayrettepe, Levent, 4 Levent. Recently a new line was opened which runs from Kabatas to Taksism Square or vise versa.

Taxi: Thousands of yellow taxis throng Istanbul's streets. Most are powered by clean-burning natural gas, and all have digital meters, which the drivers are required by law to run. That doesn't, however, mean they always do. If your driver doesn't start the *taksimetre*, or tries to haggle the start of the trip instead of running it, just point to the meter emphatically and say ***Taksimetre!*** (TAHK-see-MEHT-treh). This will ensure you are charged the correct price.

Turks don't tip taxi drivers, they round up the fare. If it ends up being US $4.75, a Turk will round it up to $5. In many cases if the fare is US $5.25, the driver will require only US $5, and not bother with the change. As a foreigner, your driver may assume you'll give a tip, but you needn't unless the driver provides some special service, such as helping with lots of heavy luggage.

Athens in Brief—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 making 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.

11. DEMOGRAPHICS, HISTORY AND CULTURE

We encourage you to learn about the regions of the world you will soon be exploring before your departure. The ancient and contemporary cultures of this area are rich and complex. Even a small amount of background reading can help you make sense of the kaleidoscope of facts and impressions that will come your way. Having some knowledge in advance can complement and enrich what you can learn from your expert Program Director.

Greece at a Glance

Greece Today
Capital: Athens
Population: 10,737,428
Ethnic groups: Greek 93%, other (foreign citizens) 7%
Note: percents represent citizenship, since Greece does not collect data on ethnicity
Languages: Greek
Religions: Greek Orthodox 98%, Muslim 1.3%, other 0.7%
Time zone: EET or Eastern European Time, which is EST +7 hours

Holidays:
01/01 New Year's Day
01/06 Epiphany
03/03 Clean Monday
03/25 25th of March
04/18 Good Friday
04/20 Easter Sunday
04/21 Easter Monday
05/01 Labor Day
06/09 Holy Spirit Monday
08/15 Dormition of the Holy Virgin
10/28 The Ochi day
12/25 Christmas Day
12/26 Second Day of Christmas

Greece is a religious country, with about 98% of the population belonging to the Greek Orthodox Church. Other religious minorities are a few Roman Catholics and Jews, mainly in the north. Religion dominates many aspects of everyday life and churches are abundant all over the land. Religion also plays a part in all the main festivals. Weddings, baptisms and name's days are the most celebrated events, with much feasting, drinking and merrymaking.

Geography
The peninsula that constitutes mainland Greece is surrounded by more than 3000 islands, of which 169 are inhabited. The islands are divided into six groups: the Cyclades, the Ionians, the Dodecanese, the islands of the Northeastern Aegean, the Sporades and the Saronic Gulf islands. The two largest islands, Crete and Evia, do not belong to any group. Roughly four-fifths of Greece is mountainous, with most land lying over 1500m (4920ft) above sea level. Epiros and Macedonia, in northern Greece, still have extensive forests, but goat grazing, felling and forest fires have seriously denuded the rest of the country.

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.

Greek history extends at least as far back as 3000 B.C. with the Cycladic and Minoan civilizations. By 1600 B.C., there were Mycenaean settlements on the mainland. Then at about 1100 B.C., a Greek tribe called the Dorians settled into the existing Greek cities and blended, not always kindly, with those already there. This transitional age of Greek history lasted about 100 years. Around 800 B.C. the Greek alphabet came into being. Among the earliest literary texts written in the Greek alphabet are Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

In the following centuries, in what came to be known as the Aristocratic Age (800 to 600 B.C.), Greece came to focus on achievements in architecture, art, drama, philosophy, science, and—above all—democracy. These achievements, and others such as their Olympic Games, helped to mold the character of the ancient Greek world.

From 480 to 430 B.C., in 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. In the 4th century B.C., King Philip II united the Greek city-states, while his son and successor Alexander the Great spread the Greek culture and language to the end of the then known world.

Later, Greece was conquered by the Romans (200 B.C. to A.D. 300). Though the early rulers were relatively benign, Athens lost the freedom and democratic structure that had nurtured its greatest cultural accomplishments. Yet Athens did retain its reputation as a place of philosophical thought, and remained a center of learning and religion. With the downfall of the Roman Empire, the empire's eastern region, known as Byzantine, carried on the Greek legacy and introduced the Christian religion to the area.

As the center of the new Byzantine Empire was focused on the capital, Constantinople (present day Istanbul), Athens became somewhat of a provincial city. But Greek influence pervaded the new empire in art, architecture, and literature. Particularly of note are the striking Greek-style icons that today have become synonymous with Byzantine art. Ironically, it was these manifestations of Christian devotion that ended up creating a firestorm of controversy in the 8th century AD during what became known as the "Iconoclast movement". The movement believed the icons violated a biblical injunction against "graven images" and thus were heretical. Icons were destroyed, painted and plastered over, and did not make a full return until the 11th and 12th century revival of the icon in mosaic form.

Religious controversy was not limited to art alone. Throughout the 11th and 12th centuries the two great theological centers of Constantinople and Rome were constantly fighting for supremacy. Eventually, the theological, political, and linguistic differences between the two lead to the "Great Schism"—the division between the Western Church (today's Roman Catholic Church) and the Eastern Church, centered on Constantinople. It is a tribute to the Greek influence in Byzantine culture that the Eastern Church became known simply as "Greek Orthodox".

With the theological division came aggression; in 1204 crusaders of the 4th Crusade attacked and conquered Constantinople, and what is today's Greece fell under Latin rule. Sixty years later the Greek provinces were restored to the Byzantine Emperors, but the empire was divided between two competing dynasties. The internal competition weakened the empire just as the Ottoman dynasty began its ascent; after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the Ottomans conquered Greece and ruled it for 400 years.

On March 25, 1821 the Greeks declared their independence from the Turkish Ottomans. The Greek War of Independence, which would last nearly a decade, caught the imagination of the European artistic community. It was a source of inspiration for many, like the French painter Delacroix and the English poet Lord Byron, who actually fought on the Greek side. Following the war, Athens became the capital of liberated Greece in 1834. In many ways, the war was a return by Greece into wider European politics as the British, the French, and the Russians actively supported the revolution as military allies against the Turks. So it is not too surprising that in both World Wars Greece fought at the side of the Allied Forces. After WW II Greece was one of the first members of the NATO Alliance, joining it in 1952.

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 plebiscites 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 to power the Social Demokrat Party.

Turkey at a Glance

Area: 302,535 square miles
Capital: Ankara
Government: Republican parliamentary democracy
Languages: Turkish is the dominant language in the Turkic language group, which also includes such lesser-known tongues as Kirghiz, Kazakh, and Azerbaijani.
Location: Turkey occupies the Asian peninsula of Anatolia (Asia Minor) and a tiny corner of the European peninsula of Thrace. These two regions form a land bridge, which is interrupted by a narrow waterway called the Bosporus. To the west, Turkey is bordered by the Aegean Sea, Greece, and Bulgaria; to the east, by Georgia, Armenia, and Iran; on the north, by the Black Sea; and to the south, by the Mediterranean Sea, Syria, and Iraq. While most of Turkey is in Asia, because of her membership in the Council of Europe she is regarded as a European country.
Geography: Turkey is relatively big (larger than Texas) and has a varied geography. Many visitors come to Turkey expecting to find mostly dusty deserts, palm trees, and camel caravans, when in fact its diverse landscape also includes lots of craggy snowcapped mountains, gentle hills, broad lakes, cool pine forests, and miles of white beaches.
Largest City: Istanbul
Population (2013 estimate): 80,694,485
Religion: Turkey is officially a secular state, although 99.8% of the people are Muslim (mostly Sunni)
Time Zone: Turkey goes by Eastern European time: two hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time, or seven hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time. When it is noon in Turkey, it's 5 am in New York, and 2 am in Los Angeles. In the warm months from late March through late September, Turkish clocks are turned ahead one hour for daylight saving time.

Holidays:

01/01	New Year's Day
04/23	National Sovereignty and Children's Day
05/01	Labor and Solidarity Day
05/19	Commemoration of Atatürk, Youth and Sports Day
08/30	Victory Day
10/29	Republic Day

Turkey's interior is a high, arid plateau bordered in the north and south by rugged mountains. The country has a Mediterranean climate of dry, hot summers and mild, pleasant winters. The Turkish people welcome visitors.

Turkey is a largely Muslim country; however, Islam is no longer the state religion, nor is it the basis of Turkish law. In fact, in most respects, Turkey resembles a modern, westernized nation, with large, cosmopolitan cities, a strong industrial base and equal rights for women under the law. The literacy rates for women and men, however, aren't equal. As of 1995, 91.7 percent of men over 15 could read and write. Only 72.4 percent of the women could. And, while Turkey does seek to become a full-functioning part of the European Economic Community, it has to overcome some obstacles to do so.

The country's unique geographic position between Europe and Asia results in a rich blending of cultural influences, including Persian, Celtic, Roman, Arabic and Seljuk. Most of Turkey's 76 million residents are ethnic Turks, but about 20 percent of the population is Kurdish. About one half of the Turkish population lives in the four largest cities—Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir and Adana.

Historical Overview

Early History

The earliest known empire in the area now known as Turkey was the Hittite Empire. In the time before Christ, Asia Minor, as it was then called, served as a crossroads between the great civilizations of Europe and Asia. It is an ancient land with important archeological sites. Early Hittite civilization rivaled that of the Egyptians and Babylonians in terms of culture, arts and mathematical achievements. The Hittites kingdom was conquered, however, by the Assyrians, Greeks and Romans, respectively. Asia Minor became a Roman colony around 100 BC. In 330 AD, the city of Byzantium became Constantinople, when the Roman Emperor Constantine made it his capital and converted to Christianity.
From the fourth through most of the eleventh centuries, the area was the heart of the Byzantine, or Eastern Roman, Empire. Under Byzantine rule, Asia Minor flourished as a hub of the Christian faith as well as one of the world's most important trade centers. However, by the 11th century AD, Byzantine power had declined, and an army of Seljuk Turks invaded Asia Minor from Central Asia, bringing the new faith of Islam with them.

The Reign of the Seljuks

The Seljuks established a power base in Anatolia, with Konya as their capital and control center for their military conquests in Syria, Palestine and portions of the waning Byzantine Empire, (which was, at the time, the political center of the Christian faith). The Pope responded by waging a holy war against the Seljuks, who endured seven brutal crusades over the next two centuries.

Despite being under constant attack from European Christians, the Seljuks were able to keep their land holdings until the late 13th century – but their reign would soon come to an end. Interestingly, the Seljuk Empire would not be replaced by its European enemies but by warriors from their ancestral homeland of Turkistan. Forced by the Mongols to leave central Asia, the Ottoman Turks first entered the service of the Seljuks.

The Ottomans Seize Control

At the end of the 13th century, however, Turkish leader Othman I founded the Ottoman Dynasty in the Bursa region. Through a series of carefully crafted treaties, the Ottomans began building a small empire that eventually stretched into Eastern Europe. To build their army for conquest, Ottoman rulers conscripted the smartest and strongest boys among their Christian subjects and schooled them in the Muslim faith, as well as the ways of war. During the next 300 years, this army would become the most feared force in both Europe and Central Asia.

The Ottoman Empire reached its peak in the mid-16th century under the Emperor Suleiman the Magnificent. After its capture in 1453, Constantinople became Istanbul, the capital of the Ottoman Empire. By then the empire had grown to include Egypt, Syria, Arabia, Mesopotamia, Tripoli, Greece, the Balkans, and most of Hungary. At that point, however, Ottoman expansion essentially stopped, except for the acquisition of Cyprus in 1571 and Crete in 1669.

By late in the 17th century, successful opposition by Christian countries began. Through wars and revolts over the next two centuries, the Turks lost Hungary, Bulgaria, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Tripoli, Albania and Macedonia. As an ally of Germany in World War I, they also lost Syria, Arabia, Mesopotamia and authority over Egypt.

The Birth of a Nation

In response to the Greek occupation of Izmir in 1919, the Turks established a nationalist congress with Mustafa Kemal, later known as Kemal Ataturk, as its president. Kemal established a provisional government in opposition to the Allied-controlled government in Istanbul. He led his Turkish armies to victory against the Italians, French and Greeks, who were finally expelled from Turkey in 1922. The Treaty of Lausanne ended the conflict in 1923 and Turkey was recognized as an independent republic. Mustafa Kemal was recognized as republic's first president. He ruled the country until his death in 1938 and reshaped Turkey. His title Ataturk translates as "Father of the Turks."

It is said his political policy was "consistent and radical westernization. He introduced a new legal code. He reduced the influence of Islam in Turkey by abolishing Islamic law, stripping religious leaders of their power and giving equal rights to women. Under Ataturk, the alphabet changed the alphabet from Arabic to Latin, and the Gregorian calendar was accepted. He then set out to industrialize the economy under a system of state socialism. After his death, his party remained in power until Turkey's first free elections were held in 1950.

After World War II, Turkey furthered relations with Western Europe by joining the United Nations, moving toward open, democratic political institutions and increasing individual liberties. However, economic difficulties led to a military coup in 1960, followed by the adoption of a new constitution in 1961. This led to a series of civilian governments until 1971 when Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel was forced to resign in the face of strikes, student unrest, and opposition from extremists on both the left and the right. The nation struggled to find its political identity for the next decade, alternating between civilian and military rule.

In 1982, partly due to international pressure, a new constitution was adopted and, in 1983, political parties were restored. After that, Turkey began strengthening its western ties and, during the Gulf War, supported U.N. forces. During the 1990s, economic and political stability led to a lack of foreign investment in Turkey, but recent government policies promise a brighter economic future.

Cultural Interaction

Language Barrier

You can have some great "conversations" with local people who do not speak English, even if you don't speak a word of the local language. Indeed, this non-verbal communication can be a highly rewarding part of travel. To break the ice, bring along some family photographs, or a few postcards of your hometown. Your Program Director can help get the ball rolling. Keep in mind, however, that it is always good form to know at least a few words in the local language.

Your attire is a key part of your non-verbal presentation. Your clothing should show a respect for local tradition. This means you should dress in a relatively modest style. Avoid revealing or tight-fitting outfits.

Religion in Daily Life

In Greece, the vast majority of the population is Greek Orthodox Christian. In Turkey, the majority is Muslim. Although the two religions differ markedly, what both countries share is the fact that religion plays an important role in daily life. For example, in both countries it is common for museums, governmental offices, and some businesses to close for significant religious holidays such as Easter or the end of Ramadan. Also in both countries, it is considered polite to be modestly dressed when visiting a religious building such as a church, monastery, or mosque. (Modestly dressed usually means covered from shoulders to below the knees—no shorts, no sleeveless shirts, and no low or revealing necklines. At Greek Orthodox monasteries, women are asked to wear a long skirt instead of trousers or slacks.)

***TIP**: Don't forget that the dates of religious festivals in Greece may not be the same as in the U.S. For example, in 2014, Greek Orthodox Easter will be on April 16. Islamic religious festivals follow a lunar calendar, and therefore can vary from year to year. In 2014 the end of Ramadan festival (Seker Bayrami) will run July 27-30.*

Taking Photographs

The etiquette of photographing most people in the countries on your itinerary is about the same as it would be on the streets of your hometown. You need permission to take a close-up, but not for a crowd scene. Be especially polite if you want to photograph an older woman. If you want to shoot a great portrait, show interest in your subject, try to have a bit of social interaction first. Then use sign language to inquire if a picture is OK. Your Program Director can help. Please note that in Greece, nuns and priests often do not want to be photographed, and be especially respectful of their wishes.

Safety & Security

Common Sense and Awareness

As you travel, exercise the same caution and awareness that you would in a large American city. Don't be overly nervous or suspicious, but keep your eyes open. If you are venturing out after dark, go with one or two other people. Carry a one-day supply of cash in your pocket. Carry most of your money, and your passport, in a travel pouch or money belt under your shirt. Replenish your pocket supply when you are in a safe and quiet place, or in our vehicle. You don't need to carry your passport every day; a photocopy, along with your driver's license, is sufficient.

Do not leave valuable items unattended in your room. Almost all of our hotels offer use of a hotel safe at the front desk or an electronic in-room safe (for which you can set a personal pin number). Please utilize them.

Pickpockets may create a sudden distraction. In any sort of puzzling street situation, try to keep one hand on your money belt. If an encounter with a local turns out to be long and complicated and involves money or your valuables, be very careful. Con artists sometimes target travelers.

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.

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.

Complete Mediterranean Wildlife by Paul Sterry (Field Guide) An illustrated survey of the plants, animals, birds, insects, marine mammals, and other wildlife of the Mediterranean region. May only be available through special order or online, but useful for a nature enthusiast.

Turkey:

A Traveller's History of Turkey by Richard Stoneman (History) A history that concentrates on the pre-Ottoman period, with smaller coverage allotted to the Ottoman and Ataturk eras. Useful for someone who wants an overview of early Turkish history. (And yes, there are two Ls in the title – the series is British).

Birds Without Wings by Louis De Bernieres (Literature) A sweeping historical drama that weaves together the lives of an Anatolian family, the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, and the rise of Ataturk. Highly recommended.

Crescent and Star: Turkey Between Two Worlds by Stephen Kinzer (History) Contemporary life, culture, and politics in Turkey, from a former New York *Times* Istanbul bureau chief.

Harem: The World Behind the Veil by Alev Lytle Croutier (History/Culture) A fascinating glimpse of harem culture, especially at Istanbul's Topkapi Palace. This book was originally published in 1991, so it may not be in stock at your local bookstore, but it can still be found online.

Innocents Abroad by Mark Twain (Vintage Memoir) Only part of this humorous book deals with Turkey, but that part is a must. Turkey has changed, but you'll recognize vestiges of the old country as described by Twain.

Pawn in Frankincense by Dorothy Dunnett (Novel) An acclaimed historical novel set during the time of the Ottoman Empire, featuring such characters as Suleyman the Magnificent and Roxelana.

River of the Dead by Barbara Nadel (Mystery) Inspector Ikmen heads to Mardin in Turkey's southeast in this 10th book in the series.

The Emergence of Modern Turkey by Bernard Lewis (History) A scholarly work covering Turkey's history from 1850 to 1950, with a few chapters on the earlier history of the Turks. It offers insight into the cultural and historical origins of modern Turkey.

The Fall of Constantinople, 1453 by Steven Runciman (History) Regarded as one of the best accounts of the conquest of Constantinople and final days of the Byzantine Empire. Originally published in 1965, but subsequently republished.

The White Castle and ***My Name is Red*** by Orhan Pamuk (Literature) Two moving historical novels by the winner of the 2006 Nobel Prize in Literature. *The White Castle* is tells the tale of a seventeenth-century Italian scholar who becomes enslaved in the service of an astronomer, while *My Name is Red* describes the events surrounding the murder of a miniaturist during the height of the Ottoman Empire.

Travelers' Tales Turkey by James Villers (Travel Narrative) An entertaining selection of short stories and essays about Turkey.

Turquoise, A Chef's Travels in Turkey by Greg and Lucy Malouf (Food) A combination cookbook and photo journal—recipes and hundreds of stunning color photographs of the landscapes, people, and food of Turkey.

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.

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.

Topkapi starring Melina Mercouri, Maximillian Schell, and Peter Ustinov (1964, color) A heist film about the theft of a jeweled dagger from the Topkapi Palace in Istanbul.

Crossing the Bridge: The Sound of Istanbul directed by Fatih Akin (2005, color) A Turkish documentary about the music scene in Istanbul that was screened at the Cannes Film Festival.

Midnight Express starring Brad Davis and Irene Miracle (1978, color) Based on the real experiences of an American tourist who was caught smuggling hashish out of Turkey. This is a famous film that has been referenced and parodied many times, but the harsh prison scenes can be hard to take.

Istanbul starring Errol Flynn and Cornell Borchers (1957, color) A suspected jewel thief returns to Istanbul and finds the woman he loved might still be alive.

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.visitgreece.gr/ Greece
www.gototurkey.co.uk/ **Turkey**
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