**PIRAEUS (Greece)**

PIR02 - PLAKA, ACROPOLIS & ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM - 75 EURO

Duration: approx. 6 hours

Situated only a short distance from Athens, the port of Piraeus makes a perfect starting point for a visit to the Greek capital and, of course, the world-famous Acropolis, an ancient citadel that sits atop a rocky hill that rises 150 metres above the city in the Attica Basin. This UNESCO World Heritage Site is not only home to the archaeological remains of several ancient buildings, but also the location of the amazing Parthenon, the symbol of Athens. Built between 447 and 432 B.C., the Parthenon temple was originally dedicated to the Greek goddess Athena, was then converted to a Christian church in honour of the Virgin Mary in the 5th century A.D. and was finally turned into a mosque, for which a minaret was added to the complex, in the 15th century. Today, the Parthenon is widely seen to be an abiding symbol of ancient Greece and as the birthplace of modern democracy. To save your feet, the scenic tour will take you to see all the main attractions of this profoundly historic city from the comfort of a modern coach. You will have time to visit the amazing National Archaeological Museum – an archive of rare artefacts that knows no rival – and the meticulously restored old part of Athens, the so-called Plaka district. The beautiful old buildings in Neoclassical style, narrow lanes and archaeological remains that characterise the district give the place an old-world feel that is sure to capture your imagination. Your tour ends with your return to Piraeus and your ship. Please note: the tour includes a long, sometimes challenging walk on even uneven ground so not suitable for guests with walking difficulties or using a wheelchair.

PIR03 - CORINTH CANAL BY BOAT - 65 EURO

Duration: approx. 5.5 hours

Leave the port of Piraeus and enjoy a 1.5-hour drive by coach through the Greek countryside to Corinth Canal, where a short stop will be made to observe the boats that will very likely be passing through the narrow waterway. Separating the Peloponnese peninsula from the Greek mainland, the canal is 6.4 km in length, only 21.3 metres in width and was dug at sea level, which removed the need to build additional locks along its course. After swapping your coach for a small boat, you will embark on a leisurely and enjoyable trip along the canal. The steep embankments of the waterway are a testament to the engineering nightmare that building the canal posed. A snack will be served during your boat trip, at the end of which you will begin your return journey to Piraeus and the ship. Please note: guests using a wheelchair are advised that they must be accompanied by a paying helper to provide assistance with getting on and off the coach and that wheelchairs must be collapsible/foldable since the coach has neither a ramp nor a lift. Guests using a wheelchair who would like to participate in this tour are requested to contact the Shore Excursions’ Desk promptly once they are on board so that arrangements can be made. The excursion does not operate from November to March (inclusive).

PIR04 - ATHENS & ACROPOLIS - 69 EURO

Duration: approx. 5 hours

Take some time off the ship and head for Athens for a comprehensive sightseeing tour through the main streets and squares of a city steeped in classical history. Not only is Athens widely regarded as the cradle of western civilisation and the birthplace of modern democracy, it is also a cornucopia of visual delights you will not want to miss. After the city tour, you will continue on to Athens’ premiere landmark: the imposing Acropolis, a plateau that overlooks the town at a height of 150 metres. Among various other examples of classical Grecian architecture, the site is home to the world-famous Parthenon, a huge temple dedicated to the ancient Greek goddess, Athena, and one of the world’s greatest cultural monuments. A brief stop will be made for some souvenir shopping before the tour concludes with your return to the ship. Please note: the tour includes long walk with some uneven ground so is not suitable for guests with walking difficulties or using a wheelchair.

PIR08 – PANORAMIC TOUR OF ATHENS - 42 EURO

Duration: approx. 4 hours

This excursion is ideal for those unable to climb the steps to the Acropolis but who wish to gain an overall impression of Greece’s capital city. We will meet our guide at the port and board the bus for an excursion that covers the key attractions. As we drive from Piraeus to Athens, our guide will point out the main ancient and modern sites including Hadrian’s arch, the statue of Lord Byron, the Temple of Olympian Zeus, Constitution Square and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Our tour will continue past the National Gardens, the Panathinion Stadium, the Academy, the University and the National Library. You will be able to see the Acropolis from a distance and we will break to take photographs before proceeding to Plaka. You will have some time for free exploration or for shopping; your guide will help you finding the perfect souvenir to bring home. Please note: exterior visits only of the sites. Guests using a wheelchair are advised that they must be accompanied by a paying helper to provide assistance with getting on and off the coach and that wheelchairs must be collapsible/foldable since the coach has neither a ramp nor a lift. Guests using a wheelchair who would like to participate in this tour are requested to contact the Shore Excursions’ Desk promptly once they are on board so that arrangements can be made.

PIR09 – A VOYAGE TO ANCIENT GREECE - 79 EURO

Duration: 5.5 hours

Meet your guide at the port and board the bus for a sightseeing tour through the main streets and squares of this historically important city. After reaching Athens city centre, we will arrive at the famous Acropolis that towers imposingly 150 metres above the city; for thousands of years the Acropolis has been symbol of Athens and our tour will enable you to view the other masterpieces from Greece’s “Golden Age”. Prepare yourself to climb to the top of the Acropolis Hill (150 steps) to view the Erectheum, the Temple of Wingless Victory and the symbol of the Greek nation: the Parthenon. The temple is dedicated to the patron goddess of Athens, Athena, and is the largest and most impressive temple of all Greece. We will continue the tour through the Acropolis pedestrian zone to the new Acropolis Museum. Here we will enjoy a full 1.5-hour in the museum, where you can admire the statues, sculptures and marbles of the Parthenon with time for souvenir shopping before returning to the ship. Please note: the tour includes a long walk on uneven ground and is not suitable for guests with walking difficulties or using a wheelchair. This tour is not available for guests on board MSC Poesia.

PIR16 – BREATHTAKING VIEWS OF ATHENS AND PLAKA - 42 EURO

Duration: approx. 4 hours

Spend a few hours on dry land to experience Athens from two very different perspectives: from the lofty heights of Mount Lycabettus, the tallest peak in the vicinity, and then at ground level in the city’s sprawling historical quarter, the so-called Plaka District. Your Athenian adventure begins with a round-up of the city’s main sights by coach, after which you will head out to the foothills of Mount Lycabettus. The Lycabettus Funicular Railway will then be responsible for aiding your ascent up the mountain – a spine-tingling experience in itself. At the top, you will be rewarded with spectacular, 360° views of Athens and the surrounding area. Some free time for you to take photos and enjoy the unique mountain atmosphere is then scheduled before you head back to the city and the Plaka historical quarter. This fully pedestrianized part of town is characterised by a maze of narrow lanes, stunningly beautiful Neoclassical architecture and close proximity to the Acropolis, for which reason it is also called “The Neighbourhood of the Gods”. You will have plenty of time to spend enjoying these exceptional surroundings at your own pace before your journey begins back to Piraeus and your ship. Please note: depending on where the coach stops, there will be a total of 157/167 steps to negotiate on a terrain that is sometimes flat and sometimes with steps. The total duration of the climbing to the hill is 10/15 minutes. This tour is not suitable for guests with walking difficulties or using a wheelchair.

PIR18 – DELUXE VISIT TO THE ACROPOLIS AND THE CORINTH CANAL - 135 EURO

Duration: approx. 7 hours, lunch not included

Take some time out to visit two of the most famous places in Greece on a tour devoted to delivering maximum entertainment and insight into the chosen locations: the perfectly proportioned Parthenon and the thoroughly impressive Corinth Canal. After covering the short distance from Piraeus to Athens’ upper city, you will pass through the Propylaea Gateway to reach the monument that embodies classical Greece: the Parthenon atop the Acropolis. Dating back to 432 B.C., the imposing Parthenon overlooks and affords gorgeous views of the no less beautiful Temple of Athena Nike, the Erechtheion and Athens’ old town. Next up is the colossal structure of the Corinth Canal. Separating the Peloponnesian peninsula from mainland Greece, the narrow canal was carved out of solid rock and completed in 1893, but only after many and varied obstacles had been overcome. After boarding a local boat in the village of Isthmia, prepare to be awe-struck as you cruise down the canal with perpendicular walls rising steeply to either side. Once back on terra firma, you will also have a chance to take some photos from the lofty height of a bridge spanning the canal. Your tour will then draw to a leisurely close with your return drive to Piraeus and your ship. Please note: the tour includes a long walk on uneven ground and is not suitable for guests with walking difficulties or using a wheelchair. For guests on board MSC Fantasia, this tour is available only on 07.10.2017.

PIR23 – AUGMENTED REALITY ACROPOLIS VISIT & ACROPOLIS MUSEUM

Duration: approx. 7 hours

When near Athens, visit the Acropolis – arguably the city’s most prominent landmark – but this time with an augmented reality twist. The all-day outing begins with a short coach drive to Athens, the capital of Greece, and the famous location. You’ll then have to climb some 150 steps to reach the ancient complex at the top of Acropolis Hill. Once you’ve been kitted out with a smart device, you’ll then get to enjoy an augmented visit and see images of how the Parthenon, the Temple of Athena Nike or the Erechtheion would have looked in their heyday. At the end of your AR visit, you’ll continue on foot through the Acropolis pedestrian zone to reach the New Acropolis Museum. Plenty of time will be yours at the museum to see its many exhibits, which include statues, sculptures and marbles from the Parthenon. You’ll also be able to visit the gift shop to browse for a souvenir before re-boarding the coach for the journey back to Piraeus. Please note: the tour includes a long walk on uneven ground and is not suitable for guests with walking difficulties or using a wheelchair. This tour is available only for guests on board MSC Poesia and MSC Musica.

PIR25 – ATHENS BY COACH & YABANAKI BEACH

Duration: approx. 6 hours, lunch not included

While a generous portion of sun, sea and sand at Yabanaki Beach tops the bill of this enjoyable tour, it begins with a panoramic coach ride to Athens, passing the 5th-century defensive port of Zea on the way. A coach-based roundup of Athens main landmarks then follows, after which you’ll continue on to the seaside resort of Varkiza and Yabanaki Beach. This well-appointed location offers all the usual beach amenities, several water-based activities and a number of Greek tavernas should you fancy a drink or something to eat (at extra cost). You’ll be able to spend about 3 hours at the beach before the coach picks you up again for the journey back to the ship. Please note: sunbeds and umbrellas will be available for use free of charge at the beach; water sports are also available at extra cost not covered by the price of the tour. Guests are recommended to wear swimwear under their clothes and to bring a hat, sunscreen and towels. The tour runs from June to September and is available only for guests on board MSC Poesia and MSC Musica.