



15 Day Pilgrimage to Italy, Greece, Turkey & Croatia
Visiting Rome, Pietrelcina, San Giovanni Rotondo, Piana Romana, St. Michael's Cave, and cruise to Katakolon/Olympia, Greece, Izmir and Istanbul, Turkey, Dubrovnik, Croatia, Venice and Bari, Italy.

Cruise on the Costa Serena
Costa is Europe's #1 Cruise Line

April 28th – May 12th, 2010

YOUR TOUR INCLUDES:

- Roundtrip Air from New York
- Deluxe Motorcoach in Italy
- English Speaking Guide
- Sightseeing in Italy as per itinerary
- 3 nights in Rome
- 3 nights in San Giovanni Rotondo
- Breakfast and Dinner in Rome & San Giovanni Rotondo
- Tips for the Driver and Guide in Italy ONLY (Tips for the crew during the cruise are NOT included)
- Mass near the Tomb of St. Nicholas of Bari
- 7 nights on the ***Costa Serena***
- Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner Daily on your cruise
- All Entertainment onboard your Cruise Ship
- All taxes
- Daily Mass

*Fuel Surcharges may be imposed at the discretion of the airline or cruise ship line

PLACES TO VISIT IN EACH PORT OF CALL *Optional Excursions will be offered.

- Katakolon/Olympia, Greece site of the original Olympic Games
- Izmir, Turkey - Visit the home of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. John in Ephesus
- Istanbul, Turkey - Visit the Blue Mosque and the Hagia Sophia
- Visit the beautiful city of Dubrovnik and stop at the Cathedral to see the Tomb of St. Blaise
- Venice, Italy - Take a walking tour of the city

PRICE: \$ 3,299.00 per person double in an inside cabins
 \$ 3,199.00 per person triple in an inside cabin

 \$ 3,499.00 per person double in an outside cabin
 \$ 3,349.00 per person triple in an outside cabin

 \$ 3,759.00 per person double in a balcony cabin
 \$ 3,529.00 per person triple in a balcony cabin

ITINERARY:

Wed, April 28th: Newark/Rome - Depart Newark Airport on your overnight flight to Rome. Dinner served in flight.

Thu, April 29th: Rome - Upon arrival in **Rome** we are transferred to our hotel. En route we stop at St. Paul Outside the Walls for Mass. Remainder of the day is free.

Fri, April 30th: Rome/Pietrelcina/San Giovanni Rotondo - Morning departure to San Giovanni Rotondo. En route we stop at **Pietrelcina**, birthplace of Padre Pio. We visit his home, the Church of Santa Ana, where he was baptized and we have Mass at Santa Maria degli Angeli. We stop at **Piana Romana**, where Padre Pio received the invisible stigmata, before continuing to **San Giovanni Rotondo**. Upon arrival we visit the Basilica of Our Lady of Grace.

Sat, May 1st: St. Michael's Cave - This morning we visit **St. Michael's Cave**. After our visit we return to San Giovanni Rotondo for a free day of private devotion.

Sun, May 2nd: San Giovanni Rotondo - Free day for private devotions.

Mon, May 3rd: San Giovanni Rotondo/Bari/Costa Serena

Early morning transfer to Bari to board the **Costa Serena**. **Costa Cruises has been voted the “number one” cruise line in Europe.**

Bari, the second largest city in Southern Italy, was originally a large agricultural, industrial and mainly commercial centre, an active port and important exchange network with the East. Its origins are strictly tied with maritime activities which, in the Middle Ages, gave birth along the coast to an ordered quarter designed on a grid pattern apparently originating from Roman design and subsequently readjusted by the Byzantines.

In the old city there are the remains of the civilizations that governed Bari history. The Romans turned Bari into a very rich port able to host dozens of ships, which transported wine and wheat coming from the country in large quantities. The Byzantine developed the city's commerce till the Normans came and transformed Bari also from the architectural point of view, building churches, portals and palaces. In this period, the most important monuments were erected, such as Saint Nicholas and the Cathedral. The history of Saint Nicholas, the city's cathedral, is particularly charming. It was built between 1087 and 1197 to take custody of the body of the saint transported by 62 mariners from Mira, in Lycia in 1087. The church is one of the prototypes of Romanesque-Apulian churches. Its façade is majestic and simple, accompanied by two towers, divided in three by pilaster strips and open on top by two-light windows and on the bottom by three portals, the middle being exquisitely carved. It certainly represents the Christian temple that Bari citizens are most devoted to.

We set sail for Katakolon, Greece at 2:30 PM

Tue, May 4th: Katakolon/Olympia (Greece) Arrival at 8:00 AM. *Optional Excursions will be offered

Katakolon is a small port founded in the first half of the 19th century and linked to the legendary and nearby **Olympia**. According to the annals, which describe in detail and with some legend, the birth and history of Olympia, the city is a pastoral site chosen by the king of the gods Zeus to promote his culture among the Greeks.

Olympia, together with Delphi, the city dedicated to Apollo, and Athens represents the most important mythological places in traditional Greece. The Olympic Games originated here and, according to the Hellenic tradition described by the Greek poet Pindar, their origin is in honor of Pelope, a legendary character, after whom the Peloponnese was named. In the beginning the Games were composed of few disciplines, deriving from military arts characterised by loyalty and courage and lasted just one day often interrupted by religious ceremonies. Subsequently the celebration of the Olympic Games, every four years at the summer solstice, lasted for a few weeks and at this time all conflicts had to be suspended to enable the performance of the games. The ceremony was strict. Women, except for Hera priestesses were not allowed, upon punishment of death. All competitors had to be Greek. The winners (at the time there were no sponsors or money compensation) were awarded by public triumph, they were included in a golden register engraved in stone and a life size statue was erected.

After over 1200 years of continued history, the Olympic Games were stopped in 393 AD by Theodosius I and started again in Athens in 1896 upon initiative of the French Baron Pierre de Coubertin. Life in Olympia takes place around the sacred walls of the Sanctuary where all the temples and religious buildings are situated. Olympia was discovered in 1776, but the most important excavations are recent. Zeus' temple for instance was entirely brought to light by German archaeologists who succeeded in reconstructing part of the front and side columns collecting the statues of Greek winners, votive offerings and small temples damaged by a series of earthquakes unfortunately frequent in the past.

We set sail to Izmir, Turkey at 1:00 PM

Wed, May 5th: Izmir (Turkey) Arrival at 8:00 AM *Optional Excursions will be offered

Izmir has preserved its prosperity, mainly thanks to the commercial activity of its port which has been an important stop along the routes between East and West. In the large square, dominated by the modern clock tower in Arabian style, a present for the German Kaiser, William the 2nd, you can see the City Hall, the Konak Camii, little mosque decorated with glazed tiles and surrounded by a large garden and the City Cultural Centre. In the centre of the city, on the west side of the train station (Basmane Gari), you find the large green area of the Kultur Park, with a Luna Park, a Zoo, a small lake and pavilions where, every year, starting from the second half of August to September, the International Izmir Fair takes place, it is perhaps the most important commercial fair in the Mediterranean.

You can visit the Archaeological Museum inaugurated in 1983 containing finds from Ephesus, Belevi, Myrina and Eritre. The old building next to the Archaeological Museum is the Ethnographic Museum displaying interesting art collections and traditional handicrafts: ceramics, copper tools, embroidery, traditional costumes, shawls and decorated fabrics, carpets, arms and armors.

*Not to be missed is the Church of Saint John, considered to be the most important Byzantine building in Ephesus. Justinian and the Queen Teodora had the Basilica built in the 6th Century A.D. on the ruins of a small church, on the tomb of St. John, who died in Ephesus in 100 A.D. Also visit the House of the Virgin Mary, declared a pilgrimage place in 1892. Mary lived in a house on the Bulbul Mountain in Ephesus for 46 years, which was forgotten up until 200 years ago. The House of the Virgin was made famous by the travels of Pope Paul VI, Pope John II and the recent visit of Benedict XVI.

***One of the OPTIONAL TOURS in Izmir**

SAINT JOHN AND THE HOUSE OF THE VIRGIN MARY

Adult 55 Euro (approx. \$ 77.00) 5 1/2 hours approximately

The tour will take you to the Fortress of Selcuk, where you will find the church of Saint John, considered to be the most important Byzantine building in Ephesus. Justinian and the Queen Teodora had the Basilica built in the 6th Century A.D. on the ruins of a small church, on the tomb of St. John, who died in Ephesus in 100 A.D.. The tour will then continue to the House of the Virgin Mary, declared a pilgrimage place in 1892. Mary lived in a house on the Bulbul Mountain in Ephesus for 46 years, which was forgotten up until 200

years ago. The House of the Virgin was made famous by the travels of Pope Paul VI, Pope John II and the recent visit of Benedict XVI. There will be some free time in a typical shop before returning to the ship.

We set sail to Istanbul, Turkey at 2:30 PM

Thu, May 6th: **Istanbul (Turkey)** Arrival at 7:30 AM ***Optional Excursions will be offered**

Byzantium, New Rome, Constantinople, **Istanbul**. Four cities, three empires, a history of over 3000 years of flourishing commerce between east and west. With Rome and Athens, Istanbul has written the most ancient and important history in the Mediterranean and signs of its power are evident in all monuments and remains.

Presently Istanbul is a very modern city, with over six million inhabitants at the same time maintaining its traditions and a deep tie to its roots. The Greeks named it Byzantium, while to the Romans it was the east version of Rome as it was built on seven hills. The emperor Constantine, confronting with the greatness of the city, transformed it into the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire.

Saint Sophia Basilica, presently a museum, is an extraordinary example of architecture with marble, metal and precious stones decorating the walls and galleries. The Blue Mosque, (Sultanhamet Mosque) had been conceived to supersede the basilica in beauty. With 6 minarets and its domes, it is one of the most beautiful and popular Islamic religion centers in the world. The Hippodrome was for centuries the core of public life. Of the original structure we can presently admire Theodosius Obelisk, the Serpentine Column in bronze and the brick Obelisk. Topkapi museum is the most important in the city. It contains Turkish ceramics, arms, china, books, miniatures and the treasure with jewels of the emperor, besides the relics of Mohammed, the Islam prophet.

We set sail to Dubrovnik, Croatia at 6:30 PM

Fri, May 7th: cruising...

Sat, May 8th: **Dubrovnik (Croatia)** Arrival at 12:00 PM ***Optional Excursions will be offered**

A charming port by the Dalmatian coast, set in front of a picturesque hillside, **Dubrovnik** is one of the most attractive destinations on the Adriatic Riviera. It has been extensively restored since suffering during the Balkan hostilities of the 1990s and, some would say, is more beautiful now than ever. The city's style and architecture is strongly rooted in its historical Venetian and, to a lesser extent, Turkish influence. This part of the Dalmatian coast played a vital role in the success of the Venetian Republic.

The most attractive section of Dubrovnik is the old city, Stari Grad, lined with cobbled streets, fountains, museums and churches. Its Venetian heritage is apparent in the family names of many of the residents. The main division between the two sections of the old city is called 'stradun', a word of Venetian origin.

The largely intact city wall, some of which was built 700 years ago, is one of the finest examples of its kind in the world. The importance of religion in the city's past and present culture is reflected in a number of impressive Franciscan and Dominican convents and churches.

We set sail to Venice, Italy at 5:30 PM

Sun, May 9th: **Venice (Italy)** 10:00 AM ***Optional Excursions will be offered**

Venice is considered the city of art, romance and prestige. The extraordinary architecture was built on an archipelago of small islands separated by a network of canals crisscrossed by approximately 400 bridges, once wooden and then replaced by stone.

The Doge under the protection of the Byzantine Empire governed Venice. In the 9th century the city became a very important commercial port, connecting the eastern and western markets through the Adriatic Sea. Its commercial power soon resulted in military power. Within a few years, Venice dominated the eastern Adriatic coast, reaching the East, colonizing the territories and conquering important markets, competing with Genoa and with the other Maritime Republics to assert its power.

In 1797 Venice was weak and after the Campoformio treaty, it was subject to Austria and subsequently annexed by Italy. The Grand Canal, offers a quick view of the most beautiful palaces in Venice: the Academia, the Cà d'Oro, the Casino, the palace of the Biennial, the University, the Chiesa della Salute and the popular Rialto Bridge, up to Piazza San Marco where the canal opens into a wide area. The square is the heart of Venice and its symbol. It is an architectural jewel and one of the most beautiful squares in Italy; a miracle built in trachyte and Istrian stone. In the past, religious and civil ceremonies took place in this square and also the famous Carnival. At its end there is the Basilica San Marco and the Clock Tower.

We set sail to Bari, Italy at 6:00 PM

Mon, May 10th: Bari/Rome Arrival at 11:30 AM - Upon arrival we are met by our motorcoach and transferred to Rome. En route we stop at the Basilica of St. Nicholas of Bari. We have Mass at the Tomb of St. Nicholas before we continue to Rome.

Special visit to the Basilica of St. Nicholas of Bari to see the relics of St. Nicholas. The remains of St. Nicholas were taken from southern Turkey in 1087. They lie in the crypt and are the source of pilgrimage for Catholic and Orthodox Christians.

Tue, May 11th: Rome – Today we have a Tour of Ancient Rome. We visit St. Peter's Basilica and we walk from Piazza Navona to the Trevi fountain. Remainder of the day is free to enjoy Rome on your own.

Wed, May 12th: Rome/USA – Morning departure to Rome airport for our return flight to the USA.