



ITALY , ATHENS AND A GREEK ISLAND CRUISE – 2009 Itinerary

Day 1. Monday 13 April. Auckland Departure

Afternoon departure from Auckland on Thai Airways flight with arrival in Bangkok later that evening, connecting in Bangkok and arriving in Rome early the next morning.

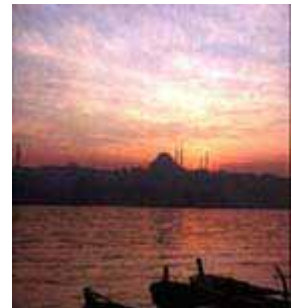
Day 2. Tuesday 14 April. Rome

Transfer to our hotel where we have arranged for immediate check in to your rooms with time to rest or explore on your own. This afternoon we have arranged to take you on an introductory sightseeing tour of Rome including the Forum and the Colosseum.



Day 3. Wednesday 15 April. Rome – Sorrento

We travel south via the autostrada to Monte Casino site of the famous battle in which the Anzacs played a major role following the invasion of Italy . A battle which signaled the beginning of the end of the second world war. We will pause at the grave site on the outskirts of Monte Casino before continuing on to Sorrento (B)



Day 4. Thursday 16 April. Sorrento - Isle of Capri

This morning we venture out to the fabled Isle of Capri located a short distance outside the Bay of Naples . This afternoon travel via the spectacular Amalfi coast to Villa Cimbrone at the town of Ravello .

Day 5. Friday 17 April. Sorrento - Pompeii

The ancient ruins of Pompeii are some of the most spectacular in Europe . In 79 AD the lava from nearby Vesuvius covered the thriving city. We will spend a morning exploring Including a visit to the gardens of Cassa Vetti. This evening enjoy dinner at a local restaurant.

Day 6. Saturday 18 April. Sorrento - Assisi

We begin early for the drive north, skirting Rome we proceed to the village of Bagnaia to visit the gardens at Villa Lante before continuing to Assisi , the famous hill top town and home of Saint Francis.

Day 7. Sunday 19 April Assisi - Florence

Time to explore the town of Assisi before traveling via Perugia and Arezzo to Florence . Enjoy fabulous views from the Piazzale Michelangelo overlooking the city.

Day 8. Monday 20 April Florence

Enjoy a morning introductory sightseeing tour of the city, then in the afternoon we'll discover the formal walled gardens of the privately owned Villa Caponi in the hills overlooking Florence . This evening we'll sample a range of local food at

an excellent local restaurant set in the Chianti hills outside Florence .

Day 9. Tuesday 21 April Florence

The morning is free then in the afternoon we'll see the unique water parterre, clipped green amphitheatre and grotto contribute to the once seen, never forgotten Villa Gamberaia. Almost destroyed in World War two, this impeccably maintained, privately owned garden has been thoughtfully restored and is a highlight of the tour.

Day 10. Wednesday 22 April Florence - Siena - Rome

This morning we drive through the famous Chianti region stopping at San Gimignano, known as the "Manhattan of Italy" because of its tall medieval towers, before continuing on to walled city of Siena . Enjoy a tour of the city and lunch in a local restaurant before returning to Rome in the late afternoon.

Day 11. Thursday 23 April. Rome

This morning is free for some shopping in Rome . This afternoon we visit Italy 's finest water garden. The magnificent sixteenth century Villa d'Este drew inspiration from the ancient classical ruins which we will see later in the day at Hadrians Villa. This evening enjoy dinner at an excellent village restaurant in Tivoli returning to Rome in the late evening for a spectacular tour of the city lights.

Day 12. Friday 24 April. Rome - Athens

This morning we fly from Rome to Athens followed by a brief introductory sightseeing tour en route to our hotel. This evening enjoy a tour of the city lights.

Day 13. Saturday 25 April. Athens - Cruise to Istanbul

Enjoy a morning sightseeing tour of the ancient city. Visit the Acropolis, spectacularly located overlooking the city, visit the archaeological museum and explore the bustling markets. In the afternoon we transfer to the port of Piraeus to board our ship for the cruise to Istanbul .

Day 14. Sunday 26 April. Istanbul

Overnight and day cruising the Aegean Sea , passing through the Dardanelles and the Sea of Marmaris to Istanbul where we arrive in the late afternoon.

Day 15. Monday 27 April. Istanbul - Kusadasi

On your morning tour you will discover the highlights of the city before departing in the late afternoon returning through the Dardanelles to the coastal resort of Kusadasi.

Day 16. Tuesday 28 April. Kusadasi - Santorini

A visit to Ephesus , once regarded as the commercial centre of the ancient world, is this afternoon's highlight. Explore the beautifully preserved library of Celsus, and the amphitheatre which offers a true sense of antiquity. This evening we depart for Santorini.

Day 17. Wednesday 29 April. Santorini and Heraklion

Once again we wake to a new destination, the magical Santorini. At lunchtime we leave for Heraklion, the capital of Crete and you should visit the fantastic

ruins of Knossos , believed to be the centre of ancient Minoan culture.

Day 18. Thursday 30 April Rhodes

Overnight cruising has us in the port of Rhodos at 7am with a whole day to explore this fascinating city. The Turks occupied the island for 400 years and there is the by now familiar site of mosques and minarets to remind us of the previous two weeks. We depart this evening and cruise to Patmos .

Day 19 Friday 1 May Patmos and Mykonos

By early morning we are in Patmos and in the late afternoon and evening we visit the famous island of Mykonos .

Day 20 Saturday 2 May Athens

All too soon we are back in Piraeus . This evening enjoy a farewell dinner in the famous Plaka area.

Day 21 Sunday 3 May Athens – Bangkok

Time for some last minute shopping in Athens before your afternoon flight to Bangkok .

Day 21 22 Monday 4 May. Bangkok

Early morning arrival in Bangkok , and because of the long layover we have booked into a central city hotel, time to rest or go shopping in the bustling city. Evening departure from Bangkok arriving in Auckland the following morning.

Day 23 Tuesday 5 May Auckland

Morning arrival in Auckland