

ARETHUSA

Sunday

Day 9 - May 20, 2012 Cruise to Delos/Explore Delos ruins/Cruise to Naxos

This morning, we make a short cruise to Delos. The mythological birthplace of Apollo and Artemis, Delos has been settled for more than 5,000 years. We'll stroll among the restored remnants of markets, towers, and fountains, and see the preserved mosaics that earned this outstanding preserve of antiquities designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

After lunch onboard, we cruise to Naxos, arriving late this afternoon. This is the largest and most mountainous island in the Cyclades, topped by 3,294-foot Mount Zas. Regarded by the ancient Greeks as being sacred to Dionysos, Naxos still produces excellent wine. In Greek legend, this was also the island where Theseus cruelly abandoned Ariadne, breaking his promise to marry her in return for the help she had given him in defeating the Minotaur.

We dine aboard ship again this evening.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

ARETHUSA

Mon.

Day 10 - May 21, 2012 Explore Naxos/Walk to Melanes/Island Dinner/Cruise to Santorini

We ride across Naxos to the village of Kournochari and then take a walk to Melanes, a valley hamlet rich with fruit and olive trees, and visit a garden where a half-finished ancient *kouros* sculpture lies on the ground. This kind of statue of a young man from Greece's Archaic period may have been intended to portray a guardian of Zeus, and was modeled after the formal style of ancient Egyptian sculpture. From here, we transfer to Naxos Town and descend on foot to the harbor, where we return to the ship for lunch. Your afternoon is free to relax or to explore Naxos further on your own.

Gather in the early evening for a bus ride to some homes of local residents, where we'll enjoy a special island dinner. Later, back on the ship, we are treated to a lively dance performance by members of the island's folk-dancing association. Our ship charts a course

toward Santorini overnight.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

ARETHUSA

Tues

Day 11 - May 22, 2012 Explore Santorini/Ascend to Fira/Cruise to Amorgos

Alight from your ship this morning and take in the exquisite beauty of Santorini. This remarkable island is the remnant of the rim of a volcanic caldera, much of which was blasted away by a huge eruption in 1600 BC. The bay enclosed by the crescent is nearly 1,300 feet deep, and our destination, the village of Fira, is perched on the caldera rim, about 1,000 feet above the water. You may choose your method of ascent: a funicular (cable car) or a traditional donkey ride. In this spectacularly situated town, gleaming white houses look down hundreds of feet to the bay. We'll visit a local museum and learn about the excavations at Akrotiri—an ancient Minoan city buried by volcanic ash—during our tour here. Although the site of Akrotiri is not open to the public while it undergoes restoration, we drive to the picturesque village of Oia and learn about the fascinating ancient history of this area.

You may enjoy some free time in Santorini this afternoon, then enjoy dinner aboard the ship this evening. We cruise to our next port, Amorgos, an elongated island which winds like a serpent through the sea.

Breakfast, Dinner

ARETHUSA

Wed

Day 12 - May 23, 2012 Explore Amorgos/Cruise to Patmos

After breakfast this morning, we depart for the Hozoviotissa Monastery. The pride of Amorgos, the monastery was built into the cliff face to honor what the locals call "The Grace of Panagia," more commonly known as "The Virgin Mary." Perched hundreds of feet above the water, the monastery's interior is lined with icons, paintings, and collected treasures, and is presided over by monks.

After our monastery visit, enjoy free time in Amorgos. Settled since the fourth century BC, this unspoiled