

# **Eastern Mediterranean cruise captivates with old-world charm on land, and contemporary flair at sea**

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## **THE DESTINATION**

Our 10-day Celebrity Solstice Eastern Mediterranean cruise transported us to three spellbinding destinations: Italy, Greece, and Turkey. Italy is a place of wonder, from cathedrals and olive groves to ancient theatres and art galleries. Greece's whitewashed houses, beaches, and sunny days were truly a delight. Turkey is an antiquity lover's paradise, offering amazing archaeological sites, along with unparalleled shopping.

While the ancient ruins and spectacular history created memories we will always cherish, after exploring the world-famous landmarks of the old world, it was wonderful to come back to our ship and experience all the amenities the new world has to offer. We thoroughly enjoyed the modern staterooms, first-class dining, and unparalleled service on board our ship. We also found that sea travel was the optimal way to see Europe. Once we'd unpacked, all we had to do was relax and enjoy all the marvelous ports of call.

## **PORTS OF CALL**

### Messina, Italy (Sicily)

The third-largest city in Sicily, Messina is a modern port and the island's gateway to continental Italy. Founded in 8<sup>th</sup> century BC, it is the birthplace of Renaissance painter Antonello de Messina and the setting for Shakespeare's "Much Ado About Nothing."

#### *Shore Excursions*

- Taormina, Sicily – Both Roman and Greek influences are visible in Taormina, 56 km from Messina. Many buildings date back to the Middle Ages. The Greek Theatre is a major attraction.
- Mount Etna – 112 kilometers from Messina, Mount Etna is an active volcano, complete with hot gases, smoke, and bubbling lava.

### Piraeus, Greece (Athens)

Home to more than four million people, bustling Athens, the capital of Greece, is approximately seven miles from the port of Piraeus. Athens is one of the world's oldest cities, dating back 3000 years. It was the birthplace of Socrates, Pericles, Sophocles and many other prominent philosophers, writers, and politicians of the ancient world. It is often referred to as the "Cradle of Western Civilization" and the "Birthplace of Democracy."

### *Shore Excursions*

- Acropolis and Plaka – The Acropolis was a sacred site for ancient Athenians. At the top of this hill, you can view the ruins of three temples built in 5<sup>th</sup> century BC: the Parthenon, the Temple of Athena Nike, and the Erechtheion. The Plaka, the oldest section of Athens, is a lively place for strolling, shopping, and dining.
- Cape Sounion – Cape Sounion, 70 km from Athens, is the site of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC Temple of Poseidon; the area also boasts spectacular views.

### Mykonos, Greece

Mykonos is a popular tourist destination known for its cosmopolitan character and vibrant nightlife. Countless bays and beaches delight visitors, along with cobblestone streets, beautiful landscapes, whitewashed houses, and dozens of churches and windmills. Mykonos has a population of only 5000 inhabitants, but hosts 900,000 visitors annually.

### Shore Excursions

- Ancient Delos – Delos is home to the Temple of Apollo. According to mythology, Delos was the birthplace of Apollo, mythical god of sun, light, music, harmony, and beauty. Dating back to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC, the ancient ruins make Delos one of the most significant archaeological sites in the world.
- Mykonos On Your Own – It is very easy to explore Mykonos on your own. You might stroll around Mykonos Town, with its taverns and boutiques, churches and cobblestone streets. Or if a beach break is in order, take a taxi or bus to one of the many fabulous beaches the island has to offer.

### Kusadasi, Turkey (Ephesus)

Kusadasi is known for its historic and archaeological sites, mild climate, beautiful beaches, and excellent shopping. The nearby ruins at Ephesus are one of the key attractions, and have helped make this city of 50,000 one of Turkey's premier holiday destinations.

### *Shore Excursions*

- Best of Ephesus – An excellent introduction to the main attractions of Ephesus, a well-preserved ancient city 20 minutes from Kusadasi. Highlights of the excavations include the Artemis Temple, St. John Church, the Theatre, and the Celsus Library. Located on top of Bulbul mountain, nine km from Ephesus, is the House of the Virgin Mary, where Mary is thought to have lived her last days.

### Rhodes, Greece

Of all the Greek Islands, Rhodes is the most famous and historic. Its diversity means there is something for everyone to enjoy, including beaches, a medieval walled city, an ancient acropolis, and much more. The town of Rhodes is divided into two districts: the New town and the Old town, which is surrounded by medieval fortress walls.

#### *Shore Excursions*

- Historic Rhodes Walking Tour – Rhodes Old Town features the medieval city, which was built in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries AD. One of the best preserved fortified medieval towns, it is designated as a UNESCO world cultural/heritage monument.
- Journey to Lindos – Approximately 48 km from Rhodes Town, this ancient city features the Doric Temple of Athena Lindia, a double-winged portico, and the fortifications of the Knight of St. John.

#### Santorini, Greece

Santorini was created when a volcano erupted in 1450, giving the island the crescent shape we see today. Among the most popular Greek islands, Santorini is best known for its beaches and its whitewashed cliff-top villages, which offer stunning views of the Aegean Sea. Fira, the capital, overlooks the caldera and was rebuilt in 1956 after being devastated by an earthquake.

#### *Shore Excursions*

- Village of Oia and Santorini Island – Oia, the northernmost centre on the island, is Santorini's most picturesque village. It is 11 km from Fira and is famous for its spectacular sunsets and cliff-top houses.
- Volcano Hot Springs Tour – Travel to the island of Nea Kameni and walk on top of the Daphni lava flow, the oldest lava on the island. Then, experience the thermal springs by the island of Palaia Kameni.

#### Naples, Italy

Naples is known for its rich history, art, culture, and gastronomy, and has been existence for 2800 years. It is the third-largest city in Italy, with a population of 1.5 million. The Bay of Naples makes it Italy's second most important seaport, surpassed only by Genoa.

#### *Shore Excursions*

- Taste of Sorrento and Pompeii – In 79 AD, the eruption of Mount Vesuvius buried the town of Pompeii, 23 km east of Naples. Today, visitors can view the excavation sight and see the remains of the public buildings, streets, temples, shops, theatres, and public baths. Sorrento, 52 km east, is a beautiful holiday resort area with many cliff-side citrus and olive gardens.

- Island of Capri – A 50-minute boat ride from Naples, this mountainous and romantic island is one of Italy’s top tourist attractions. With churches, gardens, and natural attractions such as the Grotta Azzura (Blue Grotto), it’s easy to see why Capri is such a popular resort destination.

## **ACCOMMODATION**

The Celebrity Solstice’s staterooms are well appointed, warm, and inviting. The lighting, furnishings, and other amenities make you feel right at home. Staterooms range from 177 to 1291 square feet, with categories to match every taste and budget: inside, ocean view, verandah, Sky Suite, Celebrity Suite, Royal Suite, and Penthouse Suite. Verandahs range from 53 to 389 square feet. A typical stateroom with balcony includes twin beds, a sitting area with sofa, 32” flat-screen LCD TV, floor-to-ceiling windows, a vanity, and ample storage space. The large bathroom with shower offers amenities such as a hair dryer.

## **DINING**

The Celebrity Solstice has no shortage of culinary delights. There are many restaurants to sample, including the buffet-style Oceanview Café; the healthy-alternative AquaSpa Café; and the Mast Grill, ideal for those who like to relax by the pool with a snack. Grand Epernay presents fine dining at its best, and, for a unique occasion, try one of Celebrity’s specialty restaurants. Most non-alcoholic beverages are included, so there will never be a fear of going thirsty or hungry!

## **ACTIVITIES/ENTERTAINMENT**

Jam-packed with activities, the Celebrity Solstice has a daily program offering a variety of events and different programs throughout the day. There really is something for everyone. Some of the more popular events include bingo and games of chance at the onboard casino. There are movies showcased in the theatre twice a day, fitness and dance classes, computer courses, port and shopping seminars, bocce and croquet at the Solstice’s unique lawn club, and much more. The choices are truly endless. In the evening, catch the entertainment in the main theatre; from karaoke to comedians, something is sure to amuse.

## **GETTING THERE**

Air Canada, Lufthansa, KLM, and British Airways offer scheduled flights to the European continent, where you can connect on to Rome. Seasonally, there are charters to Rome from Canada.

## **TRAVEL TIPS**

- Carry a passport valid for at least six months after your date of return.

- Before you leave home, go online at [www.celebritycruises.com](http://www.celebritycruises.com) and complete your online check-in. If you do not have access to a computer, your Calgary Co-op Travel consultant will be happy to assist you.
- Celebrity may hold your passport during your trip; bring additional photo ID to use while in port.
- Currency is U.S. dollars on board the ship; at each port of call, the currency is Euros.
- Shore excursions can be booked online 120 days prior to departure. We recommend you book your excursions well in advance.
- Gratuities are charged to your onboard account in the amount of \$11.50 U.S. per day, per person.

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

Want old-world charm *and* new-world convenience while you tour the most famous landmarks on the planet? Cruise with the experts. Contact Alicia Berlinger at 403-299-4370, email [aberlinger@calgarycoop.com](mailto:aberlinger@calgarycoop.com); or Rudie Gluckie at 403-299-4130, email [rgluckie@calgarycoop.com](mailto:rgluckie@calgarycoop.com). Or visit any Calgary Co-op Travel office; dial our call centre (403 299-4144) for service after hours, Sundays, and holidays; or book online 24/7 via [www.calgarycoop.com](http://www.calgarycoop.com).