

Mediterranean, treasures and civilisations

From **31/8/2021**
to **11/9/2021**

Ship: **LE BOUGAINVILLE**

From **Valletta**
to **Athens**



Fall under the spell of the **Mediterranean's key sites** during a 12-day brand-new cruise offered by **PONANT** on board *Le Bougainville*, discovering exceptional islands and cities.

From **Valletta**, you'll set sail towards **Sicily** and famous **Syracuse**, one of the most prestigious Sicilian cities, whose monuments are listed as a **UNESCO World Heritage**.

Le Bougainville will leave the Italian island for Greek shores, with a stop in the charming village of **Gythio**. To the south of **Peloponnese**, what was once the main port of ancient Sparta is the gateway to the Byzantine city of **Mystras**, a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**.

Santorini, one of the pearls of the **Cyclades Islands**, then awaits, unfurling the grandiose crater of its caldera. After a stop in **Patmos**, known as the "Jerusalem of the Aegean Sea" where Saint John is said to have written the Apocalypse, you'll head for **Delos**, a minuscule island in the Cyclades archipelago. According to mythology, Apollo was born here.

You'll then reach **Mykonos**, its beaches and windmills, and then **Syros Island**, will surprise you with its authenticity and neo-classical architecture. To round off your circuit around the heart of Greece, the region of Thessaly welcomes you at the foot of Mount Pilio, in the port of **Volos**! Among the treasures of this region, you will be able to discover the Meteora, a magnificent set of sandstone rock formations listed with UNESCO, atop which monasteries were built.

Le Bougainville will then make a detour via **the island of Hydra**, famous for its incomparable light, before calling at the charming town of **Nafplio**, the departure point for visiting the famous Epidaurus Theatre and the Mycenae site, listed as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.

Your cruise will end in **Athens**, the mythical city dominated by the Acropolis and its monuments that form **the most extraordinary architectural and artistic collection** bequeathed by Ancient Greece to the rest of the world.



The information in this document is valid as of 10/2/2021

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YOUR STOPOVERS :

VALLETTA

Embarkation 31/8/2021 from 16h00 to 17h00

Departure 31/8/2021 at 18h00

The whole of the Maltese capital Valletta is **UNESCO World Heritage** listed and occupies a peninsula in the north-east of the island. From the fountain of Tritons to Saint-Elme fort, there are as many majestic streets as there are narrow staircase vennels to explore. The painted loggia and carved corbels on the tall houses will accompany you in your explorations, and you'll rarely be bothered by traffic. You can visit the Grandmasters palace decorated with coats of arms and frescoes. **Saint-John's cathedral** and the ramparts which have guarded the city since the 16th century are also among the most emblematic sites of the city. Arranged in terraces, the **Barrakka Gardens** will punctuate your promenade with a green and floral experience.

SYRACUSE, SICILY

Arrival 1/9/2021 midday

Departure 1/9/2021 late afternoon

Its undulating rocky coastline, the endless sandy beaches, the menacing form of **Mount Etna** which surveys its island like a patriarch, the flowery gardens on the hillside... **Sicily** lays out its varied landscapes like a shopkeeper displays his wares. Described by Cicero as "the most beautiful city in the world", **Syracuse** was one of the most prestigious cities in Sicily and at her height was even a rival for Athens. **A central city of Ancient Greece**, it was home to a succession of civilisations, each of which has left their mark. The blend of Arabic, Roman, Norman, Byzantine and Spanish cultures makes Syracuse a town that is extraordinarily rich in fragrances, colours and flavours.

AT SEA

Arrival 2/9/2021

Departure 2/9/2021

During your day at sea, make the most of the many services and activities on board. Treat yourself to a moment of relaxation in the spa or stay in shape in the fitness centre. Depending on the season, let yourself be tempted by the swimming pool or a spot of sunbathing. This day without a port of call will also be an opportunity to enjoy the conferences or shows proposed on board, to do some shopping in the boutique or to meet the PONANT photographers in their dedicated space. As for lovers of the open sea, they will be able to visit the ship's upper deck to admire the spectacle of the waves and perhaps be lucky enough to observe marine species. A truly enchanted interlude, combining comfort, rest and entertainment.

GYTHIO

Arrival 3/9/2021 early morning
Departure 3/9/2021 early afternoon

Located in the south of the **Peloponnese**, on the Mani Peninsula, Cytheio was the main port and naval base of ancient Sparta, located around fifty kilometres inland. In Roman times, the port experienced significant expansion thanks to trading in imperial dye; in fact, the region had an abundance of murex, the rock snails from which this dye, loved by the Romans, was extracted. The town is nestled against Mount Koumaros and dominated by a citadel. Take a stroll and fall under the charm of the calm that reigns over the stairways bordered by small neoclassic houses with steps overrun with wild flowers.

SANTORINI

Arrival 4/9/2021 early morning
Departure 4/9/2021 early evening

The spectacular volcanic island of Santorini stands out proud in the Cyclades. Its basalt cliffs offer particularly expansive views of the Aegean. To enjoy these views, you can head for the capital, **Fira**. Its floral belvederes of bougainvillea provide a bird's-eye view of several thousand metres of coastline. Further away, the gorgeous village of **Oia** looks like a stairway of blue and white houses on the slopes of the volcano. In the south of the island, you will be able to visit the stunning ruins of **Akrotiri**, an ancient city destroyed by an eruption and covered with a thick layer of lava stone.

PATMOS

Arrival 5/9/2021 early morning
Departure 5/9/2021 late evening

Patmos is one of the legendary must-see islands in the Dodecanese. This is where Saint John resided, presumed author of the last book in the Bible. The **cave of the Apocalypse** and the **Saint John Monastery** are dedicated to him. These sites, which are listed by UNESCO as World Heritage, are located at the top of a hillside planted with vines and orchards. On the shore, the crystalline coves of Kambos and Lampi offer absolutely gorgeous swimming areas.

DELOS

Arrival 6/9/2021 early morning
Departure 6/9/2021 midday

This legendary Cyclades island of Delos stands just a few miles southwest of Mykonos. The ceremonial solemnity of this **ancient holy sanctuary** will not leave you indifferent. The sheer size and importance of this UNESCO World Heritage site which covers over half of the island is thrilling in itself. From the Stoa of Antigonos, the **Terrace of the Lions**, to the carved marble animal statues, you will make discovery after discovery, against a backdrop of the Aegean stretching to the horizon. The theatre steps on the hillside are a particularly good place from which to enjoy the expansive view.

MYKONOS

Arrival 6/9/2021 early afternoon
Departure 6/9/2021 late evening

Nicknamed “little Venice”, Mykonos is famous for its **Alefkandra** district where houses are built right on the water’s edge. Their multi-coloured loggias are emblematic of this Cyclades island, as are the **pelicans** and **windmills**. You can get close up to the birds on the quaysides of the old port. Up on the hillside, you can see the windmill sails turning. In the cobbled streets of the pedestrian centre, bougainvillea bedeck immaculate facades. As you weave in and out of the little streets, snatches of coastline will undoubtedly call you to the island’s beaches, the quietest of which can be found on the northern coast.

SYROS

Arrival 7/9/2021 early morning
Departure 7/9/2021 midday

Located to the west of Mykonos, Syros is an attractive **island in the Cyclades**. It has been inhabited since early antiquity, as you’ll discover by visiting the **archaeological museum** in Ermoupoli, its capital built in the shape of an amphitheatre and stretching out over two hills. Don’t miss the **historical district**, where the beautiful houses are evidence of the island’s strategic location for trade, between the East and the West. Admire the superb **Agios Nikolaos Church** or **the Church of the Assumption of Virgin Mary**. Further on, the **medieval town** of Ano Syros allows to admire charming stairways and arched passageways, as well as small, white houses decorated with bougainvilleas.

VOLOS

Arrival 8/9/2021 early morning
Departure 8/9/2021 late afternoon

Volos, one of the **biggest port cities** in Greece, is located at the foot of **Mount Pelion**. According to mythology, Mount Pelion was a place of celebration for gods and heroes, and the home of the centaurs. The beauty of the place and the magical atmosphere that reigns here can indeed only have been inspired by the gods: the clear water that flows from a multitude of sources bathes the plane trees, apple trees, oaks, beech trees, gardenias, camellias, and hydrangeas that thrive in the fertile soil of **Thessaly**. Do not miss your chance to visit **picturesque village of Milies** in the hills, and to discover its traditional architecture.

HYDRA

Arrival 9/9/2021 midday
Departure 9/9/2021 early evening

This unusual gem belonging to the Saronic islands is located to the east of the Peloponnese. There are no cars here. Named after the island, the harbour town is layered up the slopes of a mountainous bay. You may be surprised to see beautiful **stone mansions**. These are traditional here, as are the multi-coloured **caïques** along the quays. Further along the shore, you will discover the Historical Archives Museum. Collections from Athens National History Museum are exhibited in the elegant **villa Koundouriotis**.

NAFPLION

Arrival 10/9/2021 early morning

Departure 10/9/2021 late afternoon

The engaging town of Nafplion is staggered up green hillsides of the Argolic Gulf, to the east of the Peloponnese. Do not be surprised by its extremely varied cultural heritage. Some of the must-see visits are the ancient agora on the plateau of Akronafplia, Italianate arcades in **Syntagma square** as well as the baroque fortress of **Palamidi** on a hillside of the same name. At the top of the hill, views of the gulf and the surrounding mountains are simply awesome. If you want to chill out by the water's edge, walk along the **Arvanitia promenade** to a beautiful creek in the shade of cedars and cypresses.

ATHENS

Arrival 11/9/2021 early morning

Disembarkation 11/9/2021 at 06h00

The Greek capital city is located on the edge of the Saronic gulf, in the east of the country. It bears a plural name in reference to the first villages that surround the **Acropolis**. You will be enchanted by the rocky plateau presided by its monuments listed as UNESCO World Heritage. In the city below, you can visit some of the liveliest districts in Athens: **Plaka**, with its maze of colourful streets, and where, in the evenings the drifting aroma of moussaka and garlic prawns will tickle your taste buds. The **National Archaeological museum** and the Cycladic Art Museum are also some of the city's key attractions and allow visitors to discover Athens' cultural past.