

Ancient civilisations of the Eastern Mediterranean

From **9/4/2022**
to **19/4/2022**

Ship: **LE BELLOT**

From **Aqaba**
to **Valletta**



Board *Le Bellot* for a brand-new **11-day cruise** from **Aqaba** and the Jordanian shores to the capital of Malta, **Valletta**. As you sail along the waters of the Near East on this journey through the Eastern Mediterranean, the cultural discoveries and stunning landscapes are sure to impress you.

After your embarkation in **Aqaba**, your first port of call will be **Eilat** in Israel. Nestling at the northern tip of the Red Sea on the Gulf of Aqaba, this popular resort is especially renowned for its **sublime coral reefs**, guaranteeing dazzling dives in warm waters brimming with life.

You will sail on to Egypt, where you will call at **Ain Sukhna** in the northern Gulf of Suez. This Egyptian city is the ideal departure point for discovering the wonders of **Ancient Egypt**, such as the **pyramids of Giza** and the **Colossus of Ramesses II**.

You will cross the world-famous **Suez Canal**, built by Ferdinand de Lesseps and widened recently to facilitate trade. You will then join **Rhodes**, whose old medieval town, built by the Knights of St John, is surrounded by ramparts. It is the largest of the Dodecanese islands and was once home to one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World: its famous **Colossus**.

You will then set a course for Turkey, where you will call at **Kusadasi**. An old fishing village with history going back 5,000 years, not far from the Ephesus site, the town is now one of the country's most famous seaside resorts.

Your ship will take you to the southern Aegean Sea to discover the capital of Crete, **Heraklion**, built on a hillside overlooking the port and encircled by **formidable Venetian walls**.

Your cruise will come to an end in **Valletta**, capital of the island of Malta and former stronghold of the Knights of the Order of Malta.



The information in this document is valid as of 24/3/2021

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YOUR STOPOVERS :

AQABA

Embarkation 9/4/2022 from 16h00 to 17h00

Departure 9/4/2022 at 18h00

Located in the Red Sea within the eponymous gulf, **Aqaba** offers Jordan its only access to the sea. At the crossroads of the land and sea routes that linked Asia, Africa and Europe, the town is rich with more than 5,000 years of history. The warm waters of the Red Sea attract holidaymakers and divers to this seaside destination; the underwater sites home to coral and fishes are some of the most beautiful in the world. Aqaba is also the gateway to the magnificent **desert of Wadi Rum** and the marvellous site of **Petra**.

EILAT

Arrival 10/4/2022

Departure 10/4/2022 evening

Situated in the far south of the **State of Israel**, on the banks of the Gulf of Eilat, **on the edge of the Negev Desert** between Egypt and Jordan, **Eilat** is internationally renowned as a high-end seaside resort and spa town, as well as for its magnificent natural sites. The first references to this place date back to the time of King Solomon. His legendary mines are said to be located not far from the now-modern city. It is the departure point for visiting the **Masada fortress** and for the incredible experience of swimming in the **Dead Sea**.

AT SEA

Arrival 11/4/2022

Departure 11/4/2022

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.

AIN SUKHNA

Arrival 12/4/2022 at night

Departure 12/4/2022 early evening

Ain Sukhna, which means “hot spring,” is located in the Gulf of Suez, facing the Red Sea. Around fifty kilometres from the entrance to the Suez Canal, and less than two hours from the Egyptian capital, it is an elegant seaside town that is popular with wealthy families from Cairo. Ain Soukhna is an ideal base for discovering the marvels of Ancient Egypt.

CROSSING THE SUEZ CANAL

Arrival 13/4/2022 late afternoon

Departure 13/4/2022 late afternoon

Without the waterway linking the Red Sea to the Mediterranean this part of the world would be an arid sandy desert inhabited by a few nomads. **The Suez Canal** slices through 162 km of desert and was inaugurated in 1869 in the presence of Empress Eugenie, then nationalised by Nasser in 1956.

AT SEA

Arrival 14/4/2022

Departure 14/4/2022

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.

RHODES

Arrival 15/4/2022 early morning

Departure 15/4/2022 mid afternoon

With its particularly agreeable climate, the island of **Rhodes** invites you to walk its pathways and discover its immaculate villages and sumptuous medieval city, a UNESCO World Heritage site. At the centre of the island the mountains are covered in forest and on the western slopes we find vineyards and crops. Rhodes also owes much of its charm and its character to the **Knights of St John** who reigned over the island from 1310 to 1522 and built impressive defensive walls punctuated with majestic gateways. Do not miss this delightful island with its peaceful beaches and its large walkways, perpetuating the myth of the famous Colossus, the legendary statue that is one of the Seven Wonders of the World.

KUSADASI

Arrival 16/4/2022 early morning

Departure 16/4/2022 early afternoon

The attractive **seaside resort of Kusadasi** is located in a gulf on the western coast of Turkey. You can bathe there in clear waters or stroll along the coastal walk, in the shade of palms. In the historical district, you can take a mosey down the narrow streets and explore the colourful shops in the bazaar. Close by, the **Ephesus archaeological site** in the hillsides provides an opportunity to discover the ruins of one of the most famous cities of Antiquity.

HERAKLION, CRETE

Arrival 17/4/2022 early morning

Departure 17/4/2022 early afternoon

Heraklion, the capital of **Crete**, is the island's most populous city. The hustle and bustle of this seaport is an integral part of its charm. It is built on a hillside overlooking the port and is encircled by **impressive Venetian walls**. From the top of these, you will be able to enjoy one of the most beautiful views of the city. The old town is teeming with small shops, squares, cafés and vibrant architectural evidence of the city's long history. The **Palace of Knossos** illustrates the wealth and power of its legendary sovereign, King Minos. The **archaeological museum** houses one of the largest collections of Minoan artefacts and is worth a visit.

AT SEA

Arrival 18/4/2022

Departure 18/4/2022

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.

VALLETTA

Arrival 19/4/2022 early morning

Disembarkation 19/4/2022 at 08h00

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.