

## RHODES, GREECE

### CHOICE OF TWO EXCURSIONS:



#### 1) ACROPOLIS OF LINDOS AND THE CITADEL OF THE KNIGHTS

This **HALF-DAY excursion** begins where One of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World once proudly stood - the **Colossus of Rhodes** and is of course long departed, probably destroyed by an earthquake. Nevertheless, as you arrive on this wonderful, historic island, you may just be able to imagine this statue of the Greek sun god Helios in 280BC, standing 100 feet tall in celebration of Rhodes' victory over Cyprus. The largest of the Dodecanese islands, Rhodes has a compelling back story and there are still remnants of its occupation by the Knights of St John during the Crusades. So, while the Colossus may not be there, you will be wowed by the many historical sites.

We travel about 34 miles to Lindos to see the impressive **Acropolis of Lindos** and **Doric Temple of Athena** high above the village, built in 300 BC. **Captains' mansions** constructed between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18th centuries are dotted here and there.

Back in Rhodes, we are immersed in the history of the island in the **Knights' Quarter**. We stroll through Gate d'Amboise to walk along the Street of the Knights and see where they lived, separated according to Order, their crests still visible today. We will also see (outside) the imposing **Palace of the Grand Master of the Knights of Rhodes**, a medieval castle also known as the *Kastello*. It's one of the few examples of Gothic architecture in Greece. The Byzantine citadel was built in the 7th Century, the palace itself in the fourteenth. Where the palace sits today could well have been the spot where once stood the Colossus according to recent studies.

## 2) PHILERIMOS CHURCH AND THE PALACE OF THE KNIGHTS



Our half-day tour begins at the Acropolis of Rhodes, just outside the city. It dates from the Classical Greek period and sits proudly on the hill of St Stephanos. We wander through the ruins of the Hellenistic Temple of Apollo with its impressive columns. Below is the restored Ancient Stadium of Diagoras and theatre. The stadium once hosted games in tribute to the sun-god Helios.

We then head for Philerimos, one of the great tourist attractions of the island. The beautiful Monastery of Panagia Philerimos is located on a hill above Ialysos, one of the three Rhodian cities that participated in the Trojan War. The Monastery, accessed by stone steps surrounded by Cypress trees, is dedicated to the Virgin Mary the Life-Giving Source and unusually is Gothic in style. It was built in the 15th Century by the Knights of St John.

We also take time to visit the Byzantine Church of St George Hostos with its rare frescoes depicting the Knights. Philerimos is also home to the 'Golgotha' a series of copper reliefs depicting the Passion of Christ.

We return to the capital Rhodes to learn more about the Knights, where they lived and how they were the last bastion of Christianity in a region dominated by the Ottomans who eventually captured the island in 1522. In the Knights' Quarter we visit the magnificent Palace of the Grandmaster, also known as the Castello. This too was built in Gothic style.

## RHODES IN THE BIBLE

*“And when we had parted from them and set sail,  
we came by a straight course to Cos, and the next day to Rhodes,  
and from there to Patara. After we had torn ourselves away from them,  
we put out to sea and sailed straight to Kos.” (Acts 21:1)*

Scripture and local tradition affirm that Paul visited the Greek island of Rhodes, which changed its course of history for almost 2,000 years. We can only imagine that Christianity must have spread from Rhodes after the Apostle's **visit**. The Colossus of Rhodes, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, fell during an earthquake in 226 B.C., but remains of it were seen as late as the 7th century A.D. Assuming that Paul's ship docked here, he would have seen ruins of the famous monument.

Another evidence of the church in Rhodes is the **Lindos** Chronicle, an inscribed stele that dates to 99 BC. It was discovered in reuse as a paving stone in a church below the acropolis of **Lindos**.

The importance of Rhodes in the New Testament period is also attested by the visits of Herod the Great to the island. Herod passed by Rhodes on his way to Brundisium in the 40s BC (Ant 14:370-78; War 1.277-81). After Antony's defeat at Actium in 31 BC, Herod returned to Rhodes to profess his loyalty to Augustus.