

ATHENS/CAPE SOUNIO EXCURSION

Saturday, December 9

ATHENS EXCURSIONS ARE NOT INCLUDED IN YOUR CRUISE COST. However, directly after disembarking the ship at the harbor of Piraeus on December 9, **we are offering a choice of two excursions that begin together (each approximately five hours).**

- 1) **ATHENS EXCURSION:** The first five-hour excursion is the fascinating, historic city of Athens. Acropolis Hill was the cult center of the pagan city of Athens in Paul's time. *This is also the first half of the second excursion.* [Lunch is included.](#) **The cost for ATHENS ONLY is \$100 per person.**
- 2) **ATHENS AND CAPE SOUNIO EXCURSION:** From Athens, we continue to Cape Sounio, 48 miles (77 km) south. Here, we will relax and enjoy the breathtaking Athenian Riviera and the legendary Temple of Poseidon known for some of the most spectacular sunsets in all of Greece. [Both lunch and a very nice dinner with a beautiful water view are included.](#) **The cost for ATHENS AND CAPE SOUNIO is \$150 per person.**

NOTE ON PRICING: We have tried to offer these excursions as reasonably as possible. However, when adding 13% VAT tax, a 9-10% additional increase for euro conversion, and tips to the price of the bus, driver, guide, and restaurants, as well as site fees, it is challenging to provide a price as low as we would prefer. You can compare to the [cruise excursions to Athens](#) that do not include lunch or as many sites. We believe our exceptional excursions are worth every penny and we hope you will love them!

ATHENS



The tour starts from the most important site of Athens, and one of the most important sites in the world, the **Acropolis of Athens**. The **Acropolis** is the highlight of the city with the **Parthenon**, a former temple dedicated to the goddess Athena, being the most recognizable part of the city. We will see the ruins of the **Propylaea**, the monumental ceremonial gateway to the Acropolis. The **Temple of Athena Nike**, where Athena, the goddess of victory, was worshipped is the smallest temple at the Acropolis, just to the right of the Propylaea. The **Erechtheion**, or Temple of Athena Polias, was an ancient Greek Ionic temple on the north side of the Acropolis, also primarily dedicated to the goddess Athena. The Temple of Zeus was a walled open-air sanctuary dedicated to the god Zeus around 500 BC. It sits to the east of Erechtheion.

At the foot of the Acropolis, there are ruins of two theaters. First, the **Theater of Dionysus**, the first theater ever built (fourth century BC) that could seat 17,000 people with excellent acoustics. The **Odeon of Herodes Atticus** theater is at the foot of the Propylaea. It is smaller and better preserved than Dionysus. Events still take place here today. The steep-sloped theatre was built in AD 161 by Herodes Atticus, with a with a three-story stone front wall and a wooden roof made from expensive Lebanon cedar. It was used as a venue for music concerts with a capacity of 5,000.

After the visit to the Acropolis, we continue to **Mars Hill (Areopagus)** (Acts 17:22-31) where Apostle Paul preached about the “unknown God.” Here is one of the most iconic views of the Acropolis.

We will also visit **Hadrian’s Arch** and the picturesque quarter of **Plaka**, where we can spend a little time wandering around the little shops bordering the **Ancient Agora (marketplace) of Athens**. The Agora was one of the major locations of the Apostle Paul. Here, he spent a great part of his stay in Athens, preaching to the Athenians about the true God of the Bible as opposed to their paganistic gods.

Just outside of Plaka, we pass the **Tomb of the Unknown Soldier** in front of the Parliament. Then a quick stop at the **Panathenaic Stadium** where the first modern Olympic Games were held in 1896.

CAPE SOUNIO



After **lunch in the Athens area**, we will drive south to **Cape Sounio**, reveling in the scenic **Athenian Riviera** - a world class destination combining beaches, leisure, and culture. Driving through old aristocratic summer resorts of the 50s, 60s and 70s and taking in the fascinating view of the deep blue Aegean Sea, we will find ourselves lost in the beauty of Mediterranean nature.

Photo alert: On the way, we will make a brief stop at the popular **Vouliagmeni Lake** to relish its natural beauty. Its water maintains the same temperature throughout the year due to a continuous supply from underground thermal springs and canals connecting the lake to the sea. Then, we will drive past Vouliagmeni Lake to the **Limanakia Vouliagmenis** beach where we will view strikingly beautiful tiny coves and bays surrounded by the crystal waters of the Saronic Gulf, blinding-white rocks, and Mediterranean scrub.

After this short stop we will continue all the way to Cape Sounion. Here is where the tour culminates - at the magnificent **Temple of Poseidon** - which was dedicated to the Greek God Poseidon. The beauty of the surviving ruins has impressed many travelers of the past centuries who have visited this magical place, among them - the famous poet, Lord Byron, who wanted to leave his signature on one of the columns. The ancient monuments with the immense mesmerizing blue of the Aegean Sea as a background are nothing short of magnificent. This is the location well-known for some of the most spectacular sunsets and photo-taking opportunities in all of Greece.

We will enjoy a nice **dinner on the coast** before returning to Athens and being dropped off at the Royal Olympic Hotel.

ATHENS IN THE BIBLE

HARBOR OF PIRAEUS



Most scholars believe that Paul traveled to Athens by boat from Berea and thus it is likely that he entered the city through its large port of Piraeus. The port was originally built in the 5th century BC and still thrives today. In ancient times Piraeus was connected to Athens by two parallel walls 600 feet apart.

TEMPLE OF ZEUS



Paul was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. Zeus, for whom a temple was built, was the sky and thunder god in ancient Greek religion, who rules as king of the gods on Mount Olympus. Begun in the 6th century BC, this temple was finally completed during Hadrian's reign in the 2nd century AD. Today 15 of the original columns are still standing.

MARS' HILL

On his visit to Athens, Paul gave a speech to the learned men of the city at the Areopagus (Mars' Hill). This is a prominent site located 140 feet below the Acropolis. In Paul's day, it was the meeting place of the main governing body of the city as well as the location of his preaching and famous sermon in Acts chapter 17.



Acts 17:16-34

¹⁶ "While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. ¹⁷ So he reasoned in the synagogue with both Jews and God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there. ¹⁸ A group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to debate with him. Some of them asked, "What is this babbling trying to say?" Others remarked, "He seems to be advocating foreign gods." They said this because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection.

¹⁹ Then they took him and brought him to a meeting of the Areopagus, where they said to him, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? ²⁰ You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we would like to know what they mean." ²¹ (All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas.)

²² Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: "People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. ²³ For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you.

²⁴ "The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. ²⁵ And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. ²⁶ From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. ²⁷ God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. ²⁸ 'For in him we live and move and have our being.'^[a] As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.'^[b]

²⁹ "Therefore since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by human design and skill. ³⁰ In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. ³¹ For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead."

³² When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, "We want to hear you again on this subject." ³³ At that, Paul left the Council. ³⁴ Some of the people became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others."

HADRIAN'S ARCH



Built by the Athenians in honor of the emperor Hadrian in AD 135, this marble gate was on a street leading from the ancient city to the new Roman one. An inscription on one side reads, "This is Athens, the ancient city of Theseus." An inscription on the other side reads, "This is the city of Hadrian and not of Theseus."