

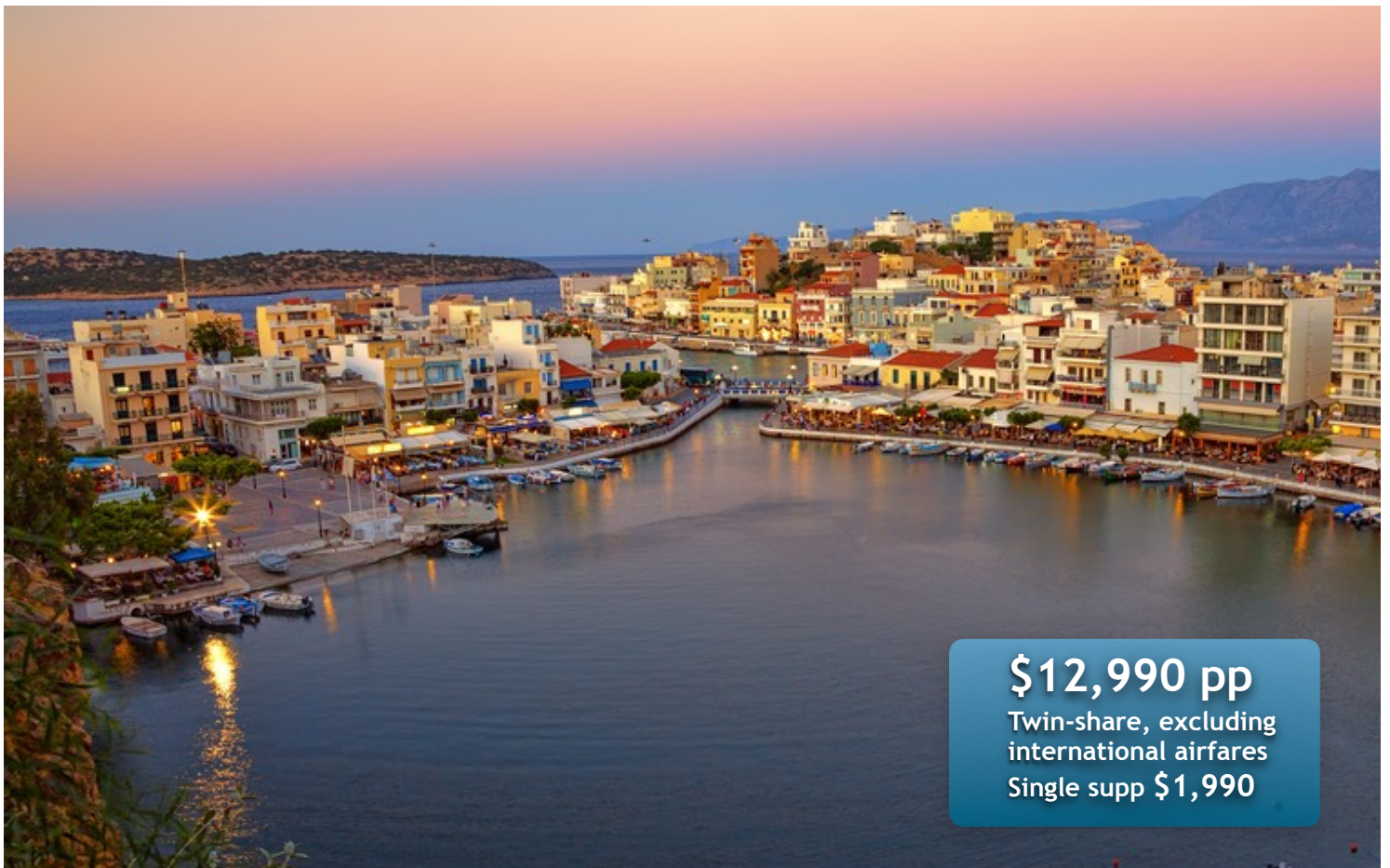
# Cyprus, Crete and Rhodes

Departs 24th April 2025

Blue Dot Travel







**\$12,990 pp**

Twin-share, excluding  
international airfares

Single supp \$1,990

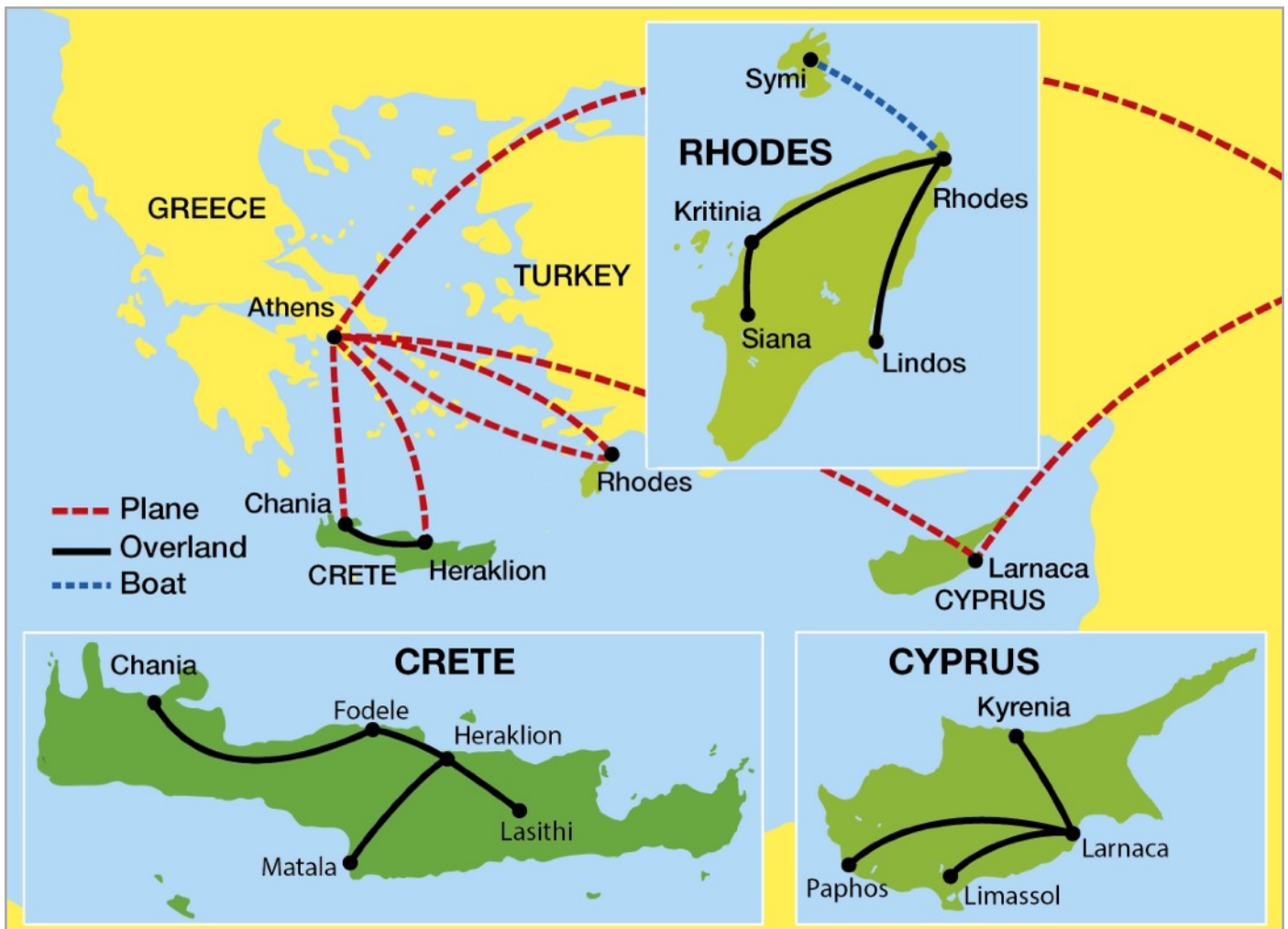
## CYPRUS, CRETE AND RHODES

The story of Cyprus' tumultuous past is told through its historic sites, its Roman ruins, its multi-faceted museums and its dusty urban streets. This ease of accessibility is highlighted in Paphos, where one of the most important archaeological sites sprawls like an ancient theme park next to a tourist resort. Experience the intrinsically different Greek and Turkish societies of modern Cyprus with its fractured identity, a passionate people and culture, and beautiful landscape and lifestyle.

There is something undeniably artistic in the way the landscape of Crete unfolds, from the sun-drenched beaches in the north to rugged canyons spilling into the cove-studded south coast. In between the valleys, villages are cradled in the landscape and the gorges have a cave where Zeus was born. Crete's natural beauty is equalled only by the richness of its history. The island is the birthplace of the first advanced society on European soil, the Minoans, who ruled over much of the Aegean some 4,000 years ago. You'll find vestiges of this mysterious civilisation all over Crete, including the famous "Palace of Knossos" and the legend of the labyrinth of King Minos and the slaying of the Minotaur by Theseus to save the king's daughter, Ariadne. At the crossroads of three continents, Crete has been coveted and occupied by consecutive invaders.

History imbues the air in the old towns of Chania and Rethymno where a labyrinth of laneways, laid out by the Venetians, are lorded over by mighty fortresses and where gorgeously restored Renaissance mansions nestle beside mosques and Turkish bathhouses. In the end though, it is the people that create the most vivid memories. Crete's people champion their unforgettable unique culture, customs and time-honoured traditions.

Rhodes is rightly celebrated for the splendour of its medieval architecture and evocative old town and it is generally considered one of the most beautiful of the Greek Islands. The crusader Knights of St John (1309-1522) called Rhodes home after their expulsion from the Holy Land, and it is their legacy of massive castles and the old town that we enjoy today. Here, according to legend, stood the Colossus of Rhodes, a bronze statue of Helios, the Sun-God, erected in 290BC, standing astride the harbour entrance and one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.



**Thursday 24th April  
DEPART AUSTRALIA**

Depart for Larnaca, via Athens. Main group flight is EK413 21.10/05.40 and connect to EK109 08.00/11.10 but please check your own flight itinerary.

**Day 1, Friday 25th April  
ARRIVE LARNACA**

**Welcome to Cyprus!**

Arrival and group transfer (15-minute drive) to the Hotel Lvadhiotis (or similar) for check-in and rest after a long flight. In the afternoon, our guide will meet the group at reception for an afternoon stroll around Larnaca. An official welcome dinner is at a local tavern within walking distance from the hotel. *D*

**Day 2, Saturday 26th April  
KYRENIA – NICOSIA**

Today, we'll drive to the Turkish region of Northern Cyprus - occupied by Turkey since 1974. Passports are required today and tomorrow as you are entering Turkish territory. We'll drive past the beautiful landscape of the Pentadaktylos, meaning 'Five Fingers,' mountain range. The first stop in the North is to Bellapais Abbey, situated in the village of Bellapais. It is considered one of the best-preserved examples of Gothic architecture on the island and is built almost entirely out of local limestone. Then we'll explore the picturesque town of Kyrenia with its horseshoe-shaped harbour, its spectacular medieval

castle and its maze of narrow streets with exquisitely preserved stone houses. The most important monument inside the town is the Kerynia Castle Museum, which has, amongst other exhibits, a famous Shipwreck dating to circa 300 BC. From Kyrenia, we'll next visit Nicosia ("Lefkosia"), the only divided capital city in the world. We enter the city by driving along the Green Line, the capital's dividing borderline, passing by the newly restored Famagusta Gate. We continue to the Archbishop's Palace to view St. John's Cathedral. Our tour continues to the picturesque old quarter of "Laiki Yitonia" where we'll have time to walk around the charming winding alleyways lined with numerous traditional houses, shops and galleries. Dinner at a fish tavern. Overnight at Livadhiotis Hotel (or similar). *B/D*

**Day 3, Sunday 27th April  
FAMAGUSTA – SALAMIS – AYIA NAPA**

On the island's eastern side lies the beautiful coastal town of Famagusta, trapped in a time-lock since the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974. We'll explore the old city medieval walls, the spectacular Gothic Cathedral of St. Nicholas, now operating as a mosque and the famous 'Othello's Tower'. Stroll through narrow streets, shop in the Bazaar and then drive close to the 'Ghost Town', the sealed-off area of Famagusta. Together, we will discover the historical background of Famagusta with visits to the ancient capital Salamis, founded in the 11th Century BC, right after the Trojan War. Then, we'll



visit the archaeological site, which includes a beautiful ancient Greek theatre, Hellenistic theatres, and Roman Colonnades. Our last stop will be Asia Napa, one of the most well-known resorts in the Mediterranean Sea. Around 1500 AD, a monastery was built around the cave, in honour of the Virgin Mary of Ayia Napa. Dinner is at a restaurant by Larnaca Promenade. Overnight at Livadhiotis Hotel, Larnaca. **B/D**



 **Day 4, Monday 28th April**

**KOLOSSI – KOURION –  
PETRA TOU ROMIOU –  
PANAYIA – PAPHOS**

Today, our excursion will be all about history, legends and the spectacular views over some of the most beautiful parts of Cyprus. The first visit will be at the Crusader Castle of Kolossi, a fine example of military architecture. Then we stop at the ancient city of Kourion, where we'll see the

famous Greco-Roman theatre and mosaics and enjoy the view that the Greeks and Romans had inside this amazing ancient city. Archaeological evidence and historical sources depict Kourion as one of Cyprus's most important ancient kingdoms. Our journey will continue past the Episkopi, a British military base and then to Aphrodite's Rock, one of the island's most famous attractions. Here we will see the place where the Goddess of Love and Beauty was born from the foam of the sea. Then on to the stunning Chrysorrogiatissa Monastery, established in 1152. Lunch is at a family-owned winery, Vouni Panagia. Our last stop is at Paphos, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Discover the remarkable history of this city, passing by the Catacombs of St. Solomoni, the Pillar of St. Paul, and the House of Dionysos. Check in to the hotel in Limassol for a three-night stay. Dinner will be at a local restaurant in the old city. **B/L/D**

 **Day 5, Tuesday 29th April**  
**THE BATHS OF APHRODITE – AKAMAS**

Today's excursion is optional and more appropriate for the fitter amongst the group. (Importantly, this is only suitable for those who can walk through bushland and up and down hills for a few hours. It is considered a light-medium trek). Those not joining have a day at leisure or may join the group but not do the walk. Those joining the trek will wind through beautiful forests, canyons, and deserted beaches. The Akamas peninsula, named after an Athenian warrior and son of Theseus, who arrived here after the Trojan War, is a unique area, both geologically and ecologically. It is also home to the Baths of Aphrodite. Legend has it that after swimming in the bay's crystal clear waters, Aphrodite would bathe in the waters of a small grotto shaded by an old fig tree. According to mythology, this is where Adonis saw and fell in love with her while hunting in the Akamas forest. Dinner tonight is at a seafood restaurant. A picnic lunch box for the trekkers can be arranged (at own cost) if required. **B/D**

 **Day 6, Wednesday 30th April**  
**KAKOPETRIA – KYKKOS – OMODHOS**

After breakfast, we'll drive towards the Troodos Mountains, the biggest mountain range in Cyprus, in the island's centre. Troodos' highest peak is Mount Olympus at 1,952m, considered the island's green heart. Many famous mountain resorts, Byzantine monasteries, churches on mountain peaks, and villages clinging to terraced hill slopes nest in its valleys. Our first stop is at Kakopetria, a well-preserved village with traditional picturesque houses dating back to the 14th century AD. Following Kakopetria, we will experience one of the wealthiest monasteries in Cyprus, Kykkos. The Holy Monastery of the Virgin of Kykkos was founded around the end of the 11th century by the Byzantine emperor Alexios I Komnenos (1081 – 1118) and lies at an altitude of 1318m on the northwest face of the Troodos Mountains. The day ends with a stop in another traditional village called Omodos, known as one of the best wine-producing villages on the island. To top off our day, we'll step into a winery and learn the history of the island's winemakers. And, of course, there'll be a chance to try and buy some while you're there! Dinner at the hotel in Limassol. **B/D**

**Day 7, Thursday 1st May**  
**IN TRANSIT**

Today, we say goodbye to Cyprus and fly to Heraklion, Crete via Athens. Fl GQ601 9.30/110.15. Transfer to GQ212 12.30/13.30.

**Welcome to Crete!**

Arrival at the airport in Heraklion (HER) in Crete. Our group will be transferred to the hotel in Heraklion town, where we will stay for the next four nights. Dinner at the hotel and overnight. **B/D**

 **Day 8, Friday 2nd May**  
**KNOSSOS**

Our tour today starts in Heraklion town, where we will visit the



archaeological museum, which hosts exhibits from the Minoan civilisation. This excursion continues to the island's most important archaeological and historical site, Knossos Palace. The most controversial and well-preserved Minoan archaeological site, the Palace of Knossos, is a must-see for any traveller to Crete. The size and variety of this vast palace complex's surviving layout, columns, walls, paintings, and sculptures give us an idea of Minoan life and take us back thousands of years. Afterwards, we will visit a local winery, where we will have the chance to taste different sorts of local Cretan wine accompanied by traditional snacks. Return to the hotel. Dinner is at a local tavern. **B/D**



**Day 9, Saturday 3rd May**  
**OLIVE OIL TASTING – KARA KARDIOTISSA – KRASI**

We'll visit a local olive oil factory in the morning to learn how the Cretan golden liquid is produced. After the tour, we'll have an opportunity to taste the product. Our tour continues to Lasithi Plateau. Lasithi Plateau is a varied, fertile landscape with many vegetable gardens. We pass old wind turbines that just a few years ago pumped water out of the ground for the fields. We will visit the monastery Kara Kardiotissa and then take a short break and try the local cheese pie with honey, which the region is famous for. We then head to the village of Krasi, where we see the mighty plane tree which, with a circumference of 18 metres, is said to be the largest plane tree in Crete and one of the largest in Europe. Tonight, we will have dinner at a local tavern in Heraklion. *B/D*



**Day 10, Sunday 4th May**  
**GORTYNA – FESTOS – MATALA**

We will start a relaxing trip to "antiquity" and sunshine southwest of Heraklion, beyond the mountains and through Crete's unique scenery! Our first stop is at Gortys, the island's capital, during the Roman occupation. Visit the ancient Forum and Amphitheatre, St. Titus Basilica (dating from 5th-6th cent. AD.), and admire the famous Doric Law Code carved into stone. Afterwards, we will visit Festos, the island's second major Minoan archaeological site on a hill overlooking the fertile Messara plain and offering a wonderful view of the Ida and Asterousia mountains. The ruins of the palace complex here bring evidence of a glorious past destroyed by fire and earthquake and rebuilt shortly after. The day tour continues to the village of Matala, well known worldwide as – among others – a favourite destination of hippies during the 70s. Enjoy the beach or stroll around in the village's narrow streets with many shops, cafes and tavernas. Dinner at a tavern. *B/D*



**Day 11, Monday 5th May**  
**KRITSA VILLAGE, SPINALONGA AND AGIOS NIKOLAOS**

Our first stop for today is Kritsa village. It is a

beautiful small village in the mountain foothills, with narrow winding lanes and plenty of local character. Renowned for the skill of local weavers and embroiderers, it is also famous for its picture-perfect whitewashed buildings set against the backdrop of the mountains. Our trip goes further to the eastern side of Crete, and the small fishing village of Plaka, where we get off the bus and board a boat heading to the small island of Spinalonga. Here, we open a new chapter in history... in front of us lies an imposing Venetian fortress that takes us back to when Crete was an important base for the mighty maritime and trading power. The old leper village on the small island, which can be visited amid the fortress walls, is impressive. The view from Spinalonga on Crete is breathtaking. After our return to Plaka, we will enjoy a traditional lunch at a local tavern. On the way

back to the hotel, we will stop at Agios Nikolaos where a beautiful town awaits us. Return to the hotel. Dinner at a local tavern. *B/L/D*



**Day 12, Tuesday 6th May**  
**MARGARITES – MONASTERY ARKADO – RETHYMNO**

In the morning, check out from the hotel. Today, we'll visit the village of Margarites, where the art of pottery has been cultivated since ancient times thanks to the natural resources of clay. In a ceramic studio, you will be introduced to the art of Cretan potters. We continue to Arkadi Monastery, located inland southeast of Rethymnon, a memorial to the Cretan struggle for freedom against Turkish rule. In Venetian times, the monastery was very prosperous and housed 300 monks. We continue to Rethymnon. Rethymnon embodies a valuable spiritual and cultural tradition rooted in the Venetian period. Here we will have a short city tour. Stroll through the small streets and enjoy the Venetian harbour. Then we will go to our hotel in Chania for the next three nights, the Hotel Kydon. Dinner at a local tavern. *B/D*



**Day 13, Wednesday 7th May**  
**APTERA – SOUDA CEMETERY – CHANIA**

Today, we will explore the western part of the island. We will start our tour from Aptera, an ancient city with a magnificent view of the white mountains. Here, you can see the particularly beautiful ancient theatre and the equally impressive two huge cisterns from Roman times. We will continue to Souda Bay War Cemetery to learn the allied history, including Australia's involvement. Continue to Chania town, the secret capital of Crete. Let's look forward to a walk through the picturesque streets of the old town. Dinner at a tavern in the Old Town. *B/D*



**Day 14, Thursday 8th May**  
**CENTRAL CRETE'S VILLAGES AND TOWNS**

Today, enjoy a day of discovery of the traditions and cuisine of Crete. We'll drive through small and traditional villages in central Crete to gain an authentic impression of the life of the Cretans. We will visit a farm, and learn how the locals thresh utilising the labour of donkeys and how they grind the wheat. There will be a demonstration of how the sheep are milked and how traditional Cretan cheese is made, with a visit to the cheese aging room. Afterwards, we will taste a selection of local products, as well as the cheese that was just prepared. Then, the group will head to a local tavern, where we will enjoy our lunch. Dinner at your leisure and at your own cost. (We suggest on the harbour in the Old Town). *B/L*

**Day 15, Friday 9th May**  
**TRANSFER TO RHODES**

After breakfast, check out and board our group transfer to the airport for the flight to Rhodes via Athens FL A3333 9.25/10.15. Connect to A3206 11.35/12.25.



## Welcome to Rhodes!

On arrival on the island of Rhodes, we'll transfer to the Hotel Mediterranean (or similar) where we will stay for the next 4 nights. **B/D**

### Day 16, Saturday 10th May RHODES CITY TOUR AND FILERIMOS

After breakfast, we'll explore the city of Rhodes, which was registered as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1988. It is considered one of the most well-preserved and densely populated medieval European towns. A naval superpower of the Hellenistic epoch and a target for numerous conquerors, modern Rhodes is a cosmopolitan centre concealing lots of surprises. We'll begin at the Acropolis of Rhodes, where the ancient Pythia Apollo Temple sits atop an archaeological reserve where the first Pythian



Games occurred. We'll explore the Odeum, a school for orators, and learn about the Colossus of Rhodes, the gigantic statue named one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. At the harbour of Mandraki, we'll learn more about the history and construction of the statue before our walking tour through the paved streets of the Old Town. We will pass the Grand Masters Palace, Hospital of Knights, Gothic buildings, Byzantine churches, Turkish baths, Muslim mosques, and the beautiful town squares that are so much a part of everyday life. Finally, we will visit the ancient town of Ialysos and the hill of Filerimos, which has a medieval monastery. Dinner is at a local restaurant tonight. Overnight in Rhodes. **B/D**

### Day 17, Sunday 11th May WEST SIDE OF RHODES

Today, we explore the island's west side, visiting the small harbour of ancient Kamiros and The Castle of Kritinia, with the ruins of St.Paul's church perched high above the sea. We will have lunch (included today) in the quaint village of Embona, high in the hills near the island's highest point, Mt Ataviros. We will visit the local winery of Embona to see how they produce the region's wines and taste the local produce. After this,



we'll travel to Siana to stroll through the village and visit the Panteleimon Church. The local produce in Siana makes for great souvenirs and gifts. Dinner at your leisure and at your own cost tonight. Overnight in Rhodes. **B/L**

### Day 18, Monday 12th May EAST SIDE OF RHODES

Bring a torch and good walking shoes today! After breakfast, we'll head off for the East Coast to visit the charming bays, beaches and small settlements on the island's eastern side. Lindos, established around 3,500 years ago, stretches out in an azure bay. Walking through the town, we'll take in the traditional architecture, cozy shady streets, mosaic paths and house yards. Situated at the top of a steep rock, The Acropolis of Lindos harmoniously combined the Temple of Athena Lindia, the Byzantine church, Roman temple ruins, the medieval castle and a strong pinion wall encircling the complex. From the height of the Acropolis, we can enjoy stupendous views of the sea and the mountains as well as St.Paul's bay. To enjoy a tour of the town or ascend Acropolis, you can procure the services of a traditional Lindos taxi – more commonly known as a donkey - at a nominal cost. Today, we will also explore the Seven Springs. According to legend, the water in these brooks is miraculous. You might want to walk through the tunnel built by the Italians during the war. It's more than 180m long and only for those who like a challenge (and if you brought your torch). It leads to the shore of an artificial lake and is quite an adventure. Overnight in Rhodes. Dinner at a local restaurant. **B/D**

### Day 19, Tuesday 13th

#### May SYMI ISLAND

Overnight stay on Symi Island with dinner at a local restaurant before returning to Rhodes.

Note: We suggest you take a backpack with a change of clothes, valuables and other essentials when staying on Symi Island. The hotel will store our luggage, and we'll collect it upon return. **B/D**



### Day 20, Wednesday 14th May SYMI ISLAND – RHODES – ATHENS

We'll depart on the 8.00 am. ferry for Rhodes this morning, arriving around 10.30. You'll have time to grab some lunch and collect your bags back at the hotel before transferring to the airport for an afternoon flight to Athens FI A3207 13.15/14.15. We will transfer to the centrally located hotel for one night upon arrival in Athens. Dinner is at your leisure tonight, and your time in Athens will be unguided. **B**

### Day 21, Thursday 15th May ATHENS – DEPARTURE

Before we transfer to the airport for our flight home around lunchtime, the morning is free. Main group flight is EK210 16.05/23.11 **B**

### Friday 16th May

Connect to EK414 early morning on 16th May. 02.15/22.05. Arrive home.



Icon indicates a day where there is **moderate physical exertion**. A basic level of fitness is required: eg. A trek over 'mostly flat' terrain or climbing several flights of steps without the support of handrails or elevators.



Icon indicates a day where there is a **particularly active section**. A good level of fitness is required: eg. A longer trek over non-groomed, uneven terrain, or ascending to reach a panorama. May also include exposure to higher altitude. **An alternate activity may be offered if you choose to sit out an active section.** Please call - we are happy to discuss each tour in more detail.