

Ancient Cities of the Mediterranean

From **01/06/2026**
to **09/06/2026**

Ship: **Le Bougainville**

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



Between Greece and Italy, set off aboard Le Bougainville for a cruise discovering two civilisations that have left traces of their intertwined presence in the Mediterranean. During an **extraordinary nine-day odyssey**, you will hear accounts of the history and secrets of the shores of the Mediterranean Sea.

Throughout your journey, you will benefit from an excursion included per person per port of call, to choose from a selection offered by PONANT. During this cruise, discover **Reggio Calabria and the famous Riace bronzes** during a visit to its prestigious **Museum of Magna Graecia**; dive into Sicilian baroque architecture with a visit to the village of Noto from **Syracuse**; or visit the **ruins of Mycenae and Epidaurus** from **Nafplio**. The diversity of experiences on offer promises you intense and varied moments (to discover the full range of excursions, go to the itinerary tab).

Italy, with its ancient archaeological sites, Renaissance palaces, citrus perfumes and internationally recognised cuisine, will welcome you for a few days of unforgettable visits. In the southernmost part of the Boot, you will sail towards **Sicily**, the **Puglia** region and **Calabria**, with three ports of call. Stroll the paved streets with their unique charm in **Syracuse**, walk on the lungomare, the sea front promenade, in **Reggio di Calabria** with the majestic **Etna** as a backdrop, and travel through time and history as you discover the former Greek city of **Gallipoli**.

It will now be time to set sail towards **Greece**. The legendary Peloponnese will plunge you into the country's tumultuous and glorious past. **Nafplio** is an opportunity to discover the mythical sites of **Epidaurus** and **Mycenae**, respectively an ancient theatre and a pre-Hellenic city, both of which are **UNESCO World Heritage Sites**. **Monemvasia**, a gem breathing poetry and revealing its Venetian and Byzantine architecture, commingles with the hustle and bustle and charm of **Gythio**, which was a former seaport of Sparta then a Roman naval base. In Epirus, you will be transported by your exploration of **Parga**, bathed by the Ionian Sea, with its fortress, built by the Normans in the 14th century, overlooking the pretty fishing port.



The information in this document is valid as of 11/04/2026

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YOUR STOPOVERS :

VALLETTA

Embarkation 01/06/2026 from 16:00 to 17:00

Departure 01/06/2026 at 18:00

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 02/06/2026 early morning

Departure 02/06/2026 evening

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.

REGGIO DI CALABRIA

Arrival 03/06/2026 early morning

Departure 03/06/2026 early afternoon

At the southern tip of the Italian boot, **Reggio di Calabria** guards the eastern shore of the Strait of Messina. From the *lungomare*, the sea front promenade, there are magnificent views over Sicily, a little over 3 km away, and Etna. Rebuilt after the 1908 earthquake, Reggio is set out in a grid pattern and has Art Nouveau and Belle Époque architecture that add to its charm. And the fragrance of bergamot, the citrus fruit that dominates the region's confectionery and perfumery.

GALLIPOLI

Arrival 04/06/2026 early morning

Departure 04/06/2026 late afternoon

Gallipoli, which comes from the Greek *kalle polis*, meaning beautiful town, is very aptly named. Located on the heel of the boot, the town known as “the pearl of Puglia” has many attractions. The whiteness of its façades recalls its Greek origins while its architecture echoes its multiple influences. Its old town, perched on a limestone island, concentrates the cultural heritage of this city with a thousand faces, alternately a Roman colony, then Byzantine, the property of the Popes, Norman, under the rule of Taranto... By itself, it tells the story of the different civilisations of the Mediterranean Sea.

PARGA

Arrival 05/06/2026 early morning

Departure 05/06/2026 mid afternoon

An ancient port in the Epirus region, picturesque Parga is located on the western coast of the **Greek mainland**. **Ancient classical ruins** and the **Venetian citadel** bear witness to the town's colourful history and the diverse influences that shaped it. Take the time to discover this ancient fishing village built like an amphitheatre, by strolling along the picturesque maze of pedestrian streets lined with small, typical Greek houses decorated with flowers and many lively taverns.

GYTHIO

Arrival 06/06/2026 midday

Departure 06/06/2026 evening

Located in the south of the **Peloponnese**, on the Mani Peninsula, Gytheio 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.

MONEMVASIA

Arrival 07/06/2026 early morning

Departure 07/06/2026 evening

The jewel of the southern Peloponnese, **Monemvasia** is the romantic refuge for Athenians. Given the poetic nickname of the “stone ship”, this majestic peninsula is home to an incredible **fortified medieval village**, lying at the foot of its abrupt cliffs, which seems to have been cast by the gods from the **Aegean Sea**. Contemplate the horizon from its ramparts, a veritable walkway defying the azure waters, and stroll through its vaulted narrow streets with their thousand shades of ochre. At the crossroads of western and eastern influences and the maritime routes of the continent, Crete and the Cyclades, Monemvasia has preserved in this magical decor the treasures of Venetian and Byzantine architecture.

NAFPLION

Arrival 08/06/2026 early morning

Departure 08/06/2026 early evening

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 09/06/2026 early morning

Disembarkation 09/06/2026 at 08:00

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.