

Mediterranean Cruise Shore Excursions

Shore Excursion Highlights On Board Celebrity Cruise Lines' *Millennium*

After Barcelona, our first stop was at the **Port of Villefranche, France (Nice)**. We chose to join a group touring **Monte Carlo and Monaco** in the morning (4 hours) and then stroll the streets of Nice in the afternoon for some lunch and shopping on our own.

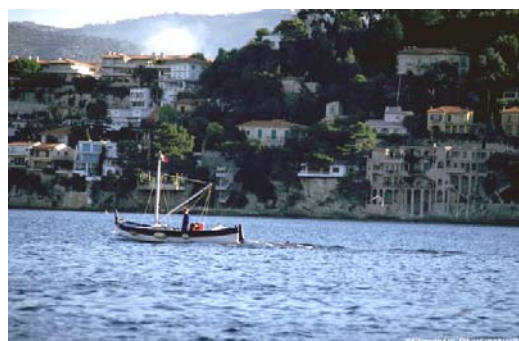
We boarded the motorcoach from Villefranche and drove along the Middle Corniche Road, viewing the pine-studded peninsula of St. Jean Cap Ferrat. We visited the **Rock of Monaco** where our guide escorted us on foot through the Old Quarter. We explored the vaulted passageways, saw the outside facade of the **Prince's Palace** and strolled through Palace Square. We visited the 19th century **Monaco Cathedral**, final resting-place of the Princess of Monaco, **Grace Kelly**. Leaving Monaco, we travelled along a portion of the **Grand Prix Motor Circuit** to grand principality and the magnificent city of **Monte Carlo**. Arriving at the **Place du Casino** in Monte Carlo, we had approximately 1 hour to explore this landmark and surrounding area. Monaco and Monte Carlo offer some of the most exclusive shopping, with all the top designers in the world, and best brands you can imagine. Our return to Villefranche was via the Lower Corniche Road and a spectacular panorama of **Beaulieu**, Villefranche and Nice unfolded before our eyes.

Once back in Villefranche we were able to take public transportation into the city of **Nice** via a city bus line (about a 30 minute bus ride). We arrived at the main bus terminal in Nice and walked into the city center to the famous **Promenade des Anglais**. Always bustling with activity the Promenade is exciting with its beautiful beach and tourists relaxing along the shore, vendors selling crepes, seaside restaurants and hotels. We enjoyed an excellent lunch at an open-air pizzeria while we watched the boats sail by and all of the fascinating action on the Promenade. After lunch – it was time to SHOP. The French department store (top quality and price), **Galeries Lafayette** close to **Place Massena**, is worth a browse. Good for clothes plus great bags, hats and jewellery. Nice's historic core with its many boutiques are along **rue Masséna**, **place Magenta**, **avenue Jean-Médécin**, **rue de Verdun**, and **rue Paradis**.

When we arrived at the **Port of Civitavecchia (Rome)** we chose to explore the countryside on an insightful **Olive Oil Tasting and Scenic Drive** (4 hours).



Heading north from Civitavecchia, we enjoyed the warm colours of the Etruscan countryside as we made our way on the comfortable motorcoach to Tuscania. This typical village stands at the top of a rocky hill overlooking the Maremma region. Tuscania dates back to the 9th-century BC. Although a terrible earthquake destroyed parts of the village in 1971, Tuscania's Etruscan and Renaissance buildings have been beautifully restored and still reflect the Etruscan history. We enjoyed a walk with our guide through the narrow cobblestone lanes of this charming village and had some excellent photo opportunities of the surrounding valleys. With some time on our own, we were lured to a small local bakery by the aroma of fresh baked bread where we were able to buy one of the mouth-watering baked goods to enjoy while we continued our stroll and an interesting visit to the local flea market.



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Leaving Tuscania, we travelled along the country roads to a local family-owned farmhouse that produces olive oil, vegetables, jams, and local products. On arrival, our host greeted us with an insightful look into the history of olive oil production. Once inside the charming restaurant we were able to sample different oils with typical Italian bruschetta bread, tomatoes, homemade jam and honey, all accompanied by local wine and liquors. Afterward we visited the family store and purchased a variety of products made fresh right on the farm, then relaxed on the patio before our return journey to the ship.

The **Port of Naples** was exciting for us as we were very much looking forward to our tour of the Amalfi Coast: **Exclusive Amalfi Coast, Positano, Sorrento & Pompeii** (9 hours, with lunch)

The transportation on this tour was via minivan, giving us the opportunity to reach **Positano** where large coaches are not permitted, allowing us the possibility to see the most important sights that characterize the Gulf of Naples. Departing from the pier we passed **Mount Vesuvius** as we began your coastal drive south to the ancient city of **Pompeii**, which is one of the most famous excavations in the world. Once a thriving empire over 1,900 years ago, it was devastated by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 AD when 30 feet of volcanic ash and pumice stone covered the city. As we entered Pompeii by the Sea Gate, a short walk took us to the city's hub, the Forum, surrounded by lavish temples and porticoes of wealthy patricians who moved to Pompeii to escape the turmoil of Rome.



As we walked the streets with raised pavements on both sides and the stepping stones that ensured pedestrians a safe crossing at intersections, we could almost hear the voices of the past in this magical ancient city. After our tour, we returned to the entrance gate where we had the opportunity to purchase a refreshment at the restaurant and browse in the gift shop.



Leaving Pompeii on our drive towards **Sorrento**, we could see the dolomitic cliffs towering straight up out of the sea dotted with distinctive Italian villages. Arriving in Sorrento, we enjoyed the marvelous views of Naples Bay, strolled around the main square and explored the side streets where we found some wonderful Italian spices to take home. There are many souvenir shops and local specialties including articles of highly polished wood inlaid with beautiful marquetry. After exploring Sorrento on our own, we met our guide back at our mini-van which took us to an elegant local hotel perched high on the cliffs overlooking the sea. A delectable lunch, including wine, was served on the patio where we could enjoy the panoramic views and the company of our touring companions.

The scenery on the drive along the **Amalfi Coast to Positano** was breathtaking - a picture postcard come to life! I could not imagine a more intense, stunning view. Steep cliffs, lemon trees, olive groves and a patchwork of flat and domed roofs with vine-covered stairways tumbling down to meet the gentle curve of beach and the azure sea dotted with brightly coloured fishing boats. We enjoyed some leisure time on our own to explore this elegant spot with its designer boutiques & seaside cafés. The hand-made linen is exquisite - we purchased 'several' pieces before we said good-bye to the most beautiful spot in Italy.



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Artists and photographers around the world have portrayed the splendour of the magnificent island of Santorini in their works and we were eager to catch our own first glimpse of this ancient volcano that has captured the hearts of so many visitors. **Village of Oia & Santorini Island** (3 ½ Hours)

After going ashore by local tender boat to the port of Athinios, our coach climbed 800 feet to the top of the caldera. We had an excellent view of the still active volcanic islet in Santorini Bay and our guide provided commentary on the geological upheavals, which gave the island its unique form.

Driving through the picturesque scenery and small villages from the southern to the northern end of the island of Santorini, we travelled across rich, volcanic countryside to the beautiful village of Oia. The village is perched atop a craggy cliff at the northern most point of the island offering panoramic views of steep plummeting cliffs and nearby small islands surrounded by the deep blue sea. The charm of this lovely traditional and somewhat removed village lies in its very narrow, twisting cobblestone alleyways and steps. Walking through the village one can enjoy the views, admire the Cycladic architecture for which the town is well known, and visit many of the art galleries.

After our visit to Oia, we continued to a local winery for an opportunity to taste Santorini mezes (Greek Snacks) and a wine tasting while enjoying more of the magnificent views from a different vantage point. We visited the bodega where the wine is aged and had the chance to purchase some of the locally produced wines and island souvenirs. The tour concluded at the hilltop village of Fira, where we remained in town for lunch & shopping on our own. Watching the sunset from Fira is one of the most majestic sights in the world. After shopping we chose a restaurant with perfect views to enjoy a light meal, glass of wine and snap photos as the sun slowly set behind the silhouette of our cruise ship anchored in Santorini Bay. We joined the cable car (ticket provided) and descended to the old port where a local tender transferred us by ferry back to the ship. **Ωραία!!** (Beautiful)



I must admit, until I saw that our ports of call was going to include a tiny island in the Ionian Sea called Corfu – I had very little knowledge or insight into this part of the world and was uncertain as to what we were going to find. I was more than pleasantly surprised and absolutely fell in love with this community and its people. **Corfu Island, Greece** (4 Hours)



Corfu Town is the capital and main port of the island of Corfu and is one of the most charming, impressive and interesting cities of Greece. It is the largest town of the Ionian Islands and was built between two fortresses during the Venetian rule. One of the most famous of all the landmarks on Corfu, the Old Fortress, is known locally in Greek as the **Palaio Frourio** and is instantly recognizable, standing on an adjacent island and being surrounded by imposing fortifications. **The Achillion Palace**, located in the village of Gastouri, was erected in 1890 for Elizabeth, (Sissy) the Empress of Austria, and was used as her summer retreat. Later the Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany bought the Palace. Directly below, on the coast, is the unusual Kaiser's bridge, the stone built jetty where the Kaiser set out on his yacht for swimming trips. The Palace is definitely a place to take your camera. This beautiful building in picturesque gardens overlooks the sea and Corfu town. Famous to the British public as the birthplace of Prince Phillip, Achillion Palace is one of the most popular tourist attractions on Corfu. After an interesting and informative tour of the island, we spent some time on our own exploring the streets of beautiful Corfu town with its many shops, churches and parks. After our walk, we sat at a charming café close to the port and enjoyed a coffee while we watched the many tourists and locals bustling back and forth through the park and town square.

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Even though the city was devastated during the 1991-92 siege, today's Dubrovnik is remarkably captivating. Rebuilt and refurbished, many of the buildings that were damaged now shine brightly and its spirit is strong and vibrant. **Panoramic Dubrovnik & City Tour by Coach** (3 Hrs 45 mins)

Departing from the pier our motorcoach took us on a panoramic drive of Dubrovnik and its Riviera before continuing to Dubrovnik's Old Town. Our walking tour began at the Pile Gate (entrance to the Old Town) and down the main street called the Stradun. Inside protective walls, the pedestrian-only Old Town is bustling with activity. As we strolled down the marble-paved Placa (promenade) all the way to the Clock Tower, one of the most striking features that we noticed in this extraordinary town is how fresh, clean and unspoiled the city streets are.

Street sweepers are constantly on the move and everyone takes care not to litter. During the guided portion of our tour we visited the Rector's Palace that used to be the seat of the Dubrovnik Republic government, the Maritime Museum which presents the historic maritime heritage of the local area with an array of artifacts and documents from antiquity to present day, historic churches and the Dubrovnik market where locals set up tables in the morning to sell their produce. The most famous attraction of all is the ancient city wall and its towers that surround the Old Town. It's possible to walk the entire circumference and enjoy views of the harbour and the sea from each vantage point. A wonderful sight, as we peered over the top of the wall down to the Old Harbour below, was a unique tour boat anchored and waiting for its passengers. Designed after the pirate ships of old – this distinctive sailing vessel will take you on an insightful tour of the port of Dubrovnik.



We enjoyed some time on our own after our guided tour strolling the cobblestoned streets where we were greeted by a number of friendly felines that roam freely and bask in the warm sunshine on the steps and porches. Around the lunch hour, we noticed that the restaurants along the promenade were extremely busy with tourists lining up so we decided to venture off of the main square. There were many more excellent options at some of the quaintest little eateries away from the hustle and bustle. We happened upon an enchanting bistro where we relaxed and enjoyed a wonderful traditional lunch made with the freshest local ingredients – we savoured each mouthful. On our way back to the gates as we prepared to leave the Old Town, we made one more very important stop for a refreshing ice cream cone to enjoy on our walk back to the ship. There are city buses that stop right outside the gates and will take you back to the port – but we wanted to soak up as much local colour as possible so we braved the 40 minute walk through Dubrovnik's suburban district and along the wharf. It was an excellent opportunity to see how the city had evolved from its medieval origins to the vibrant, modern metropolis that Dubrovnik is today. A wonderful, fascinating destination that should not be missed.



Venice was to be the last port on our itinerary where we would spend one full day and night before disembarkation the next morning. A **MUST SEE** ... make your way to the top deck or get comfortable on the veranda of your stateroom as the ship cruises into the port of Venice in the morning. You will not want to miss this exciting spectacle!

There are a number of options for escorted shore excursions in this unique and fascinating city. This was my second visit to the 'Queen of the Adriatic' so we chose to explore the enchanting canals and shopping districts without the benefit of a guide feeling comfortable navigating the city on our own. Without a doubt, Venice is one of the most beautiful, romantic and popular cities in the world. If you plan to explore on your own as we did, it's a good idea to take some time before you arrive in port to study the layout of the city and choose which major attractions you'd like to visit or activities you are interested in. You will save a lot of time by mapping it all out ahead.

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A water taxi picked us up at the ship along with our fellow passengers who were touring Venice independently (roundtrip ticket to/from the ship by water taxi included). The taxi took us right to the 'heart' of the city, **Piazza San Marco**, where you could easily spend a couple of hours shopping and sightseeing. The world-famous, exquisite **Murano glass** can be found in every jewellery store in Venice. From very exclusive pieces to 'souvenir' priced trinkets, this is the ultimate Venice memento to bring home with you. Also known for its lace-making, you'll find stunning, delicate designs to add to your purchases. Although some tours can be expensive, a famous **Gondola** ride is an experience you will want to budget for if this is your first visit to Venice. Lunch at one of the charming restaurants that line the **Grand Canal** near the **Rialto Bridge** is a meal to savour. Linger for a couple of hours sipping espresso or enjoying the bouquet of one of the regions excellent wines as you watch the busy canal traffic and tourist activity. One of the best experiences of our entire trip!



Other Venice attractions to visit:

- *Saint Mark's Basilica* (Basilica di San Marco)
- *Santa Maria dei Frari Church*
- *Doge's Palace* (Palazzo Ducale)
- *Jewish Ghetto and Museum* (Ghetto Ebraico di Venezia)
- *Ca' d'Oro*: Museum with the private collection of Baron Giorgio Franchetti
- *Campo Santa Margherita*
- *Grand Canal Boat Tour*



All major cruise lines offer a variety of shore excursions to complete your cruise experience.

Talk to one of our expert cruise consultants today!

