

2026 The World of the Greeks: From Myth to Empire

with Dr. Sheila Hoffman

October 24-November 1, 2026



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From \$9,740

double occupancy, per person



2026 The World of the Greeks: From Myth to Empire

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Setting sail from the ancient splendor of Athens, this round-trip voyage journeys across the glittering Aegean and celebrates Greece's timeless allure. Walk in the footsteps of the gods at Delphi, a site famous in antiquity and the home of the oracle of Apollo, as well as one of the most impressive sites in Greece. Explore the birthplace of the Olympic Games in Olympia. Stand amid healing history at the Sanctuary of Asklepios in Epidaurus. Wander the stone lanes of Monemvasia, a hidden medieval citadel rising from the sea.

Throughout the journey, you'll travel with Dr. Sheila Hoffman, who has lived in five different countries and adventured through more than 40 others on five continents as a scholar of art history, world cultures, and symbols. Her onboard lectures and site-based commentary will peel back the many layers of meaning that lie hidden behind the art and architecture of the sites you'll visit, making this voyage an unparalleled learning experience.

Your Journey Expert



Dr. Sheila Hoffman is a scholar of art history, world cultures, and symbols who has taught and lectured around the world as a guest of governments, universities, and on tours. She is Senior Lecturer in Art History at the University of Massachusetts Lowell. Professor Hoffman has two doctoral degrees: one in Art History from The Sorbonne in Paris and the other in Museology from the Université du Québec à Montréal. She has appeared on many science-based television series, appearing on the Science, Discovery, and Travel Channels among others as an expert contributor on numerous topics related to ancient cultures and religions. The author of several books and articles, she serves as the Reviews Editor for the *International Museum Worlds Journal*. Professor Hoffman is currently working on her first Great Course, on the great libraries of world history.

Highlights

- Travel alongside your expert for a uniquely immersive journey, connecting the landscapes and archaeological sites of Greece with the myths, inscriptions, and histories that shaped its classical heritage.
- Delve into the sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi, exploring its temples, theater, stadium, and museum to understand its role as one of the most influential religious and political centers of the ancient world.
- Examine the roots of Greek identity at Mycenae and Epidaurus, from the Lion Gate and royal tombs of the Bronze Age citadel to the perfectly preserved theater renowned for its acoustics and architectural beauty.
- Walk the medieval streets of Monemvasia, a fortified Byzantine town built into the rock, where chapels, mansions, and walls reveal Greece's layered history from antiquity through the Middle Ages.
- Explore Hydra's maritime legacy, touring stone mansions, a 17th-century cathedral, and a patrician home that illustrate the prosperity of this car-free island shaped by seafaring traditions.



The World of the Greeks: From Myth to Empire

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Itinerary



Day 1: Welcome to Greece

Arrive in Athens International Airport Eleftherios Venizelos (ATH), Athens, Greece where you will be met by your driver and transferred to the Athens Capital Hotel—MGallery Collection (or similar) for overnight. This evening, join your fellow travelers and your Great Courses Journeys Expert for a welcome cocktail reception. Dinner will be at your leisure.

Included Meal: Reception

Accommodation: Athens Capital Hotel-MGallery Collection (or similar)



Day 2: The Ancient Heart of Athens

Set out in the morning with your expert and a local guide for an exploration of the Acropolis where you'll see the Parthenon, Erechtheion, and Temple of Athena Nike. In the afternoon, enjoy lunch at your leisure, and continue to the Agora and walk through the reconstructed Stoa of Attalus. After time at leisure, transfer to Piraeus and embark *Le Champlain* to begin your voyage.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodations: *Le Champlain*

Day 3: Journey to the Center of the Greek World



This morning, sail through the Corinth Canal, the narrow waterway cut in the late 19th century to link the Aegean and Ionian Seas. As the ship transits, your expert offers commentary on the canal's historical significance, from classical ambitions to modern engineering, setting the stage for understanding Greece's geography and connectivity.

Arriving in Itea, continue to Delphi, once believed to be the center of the world and home to Apollo's oracle. Explore the Temple of Apollo, ancient theater, stadium, the sanctuary of Athena Pronaia, and the treasures of city-states lining the Sacred Way. In the museum, sculpture and inscriptions reveal Delphi's enduring role in religion, politics, and identity across the Greek world.

Including Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodations: *Le Champlain*



Day 4: Farming and Culture in the Countryside

This morning begins with a drive inland through a landscape shaped for millennia by olive groves and vineyards, arriving at the village of Olympia. You'll explore the modern community, where shops feature local products such as olive oil, honey, and handicrafts that reflect traditions rooted in antiquity.

Continue to Magna Grecia Farm, a family estate where viticulture and olive cultivation illustrate practices central to Greek identity since classical times. Here, discussions reveal how agriculture tied to geography and climate sustained communities for centuries. Your visit concludes with a lively demonstration of traditional Greek music and dancing, highlighting how cultural expression, like farming, continues to connect modern Greece with its ancient heritage.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodations: *Le Champlain*

Day 5: Olive Oil across the Ages in Sparta

From the port of Gytheion, travel inland to explore Sparta, long recognized for its fertile land and ideal climate for olive cultivation. Since antiquity, olives have been central to Spartan life, economy, and identity, and this legacy is vividly presented at the Museum of the Olive and Greek Olive Oil. Exhibits trace the evolution of cultivation techniques, pressing methods, and the symbolic importance of olives in Greek religion and society.

Continue to Estate Theodorakakos, a family-run vineyard dedicated to sustainable viticulture. Here, learn how agricultural traditions have adapted to modern practices while maintaining ties to centuries of cultivation. Discussions highlight how olive and wine production together demonstrate the enduring relationship between land, economy, and culture in Greece.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodations: *Le Champlain*

Day 6: From the Middle Ages to Modernity

Monemvasia, a walled fortress often compared to Gibraltar, flourished in the Middle Ages as a strategic stronghold and vital hub for trade. Its prosperity was fueled by the export of Malmsey wine, which became highly prized among European elites. As you walk through its narrow streets, you'll encounter Byzantine chapels, Venetian mansions, and artisan workshops that reflect the wealth generated by this trade, culminating in a visit to the Church of Christ Elkomenos, a striking example of Byzantine architecture.

Beyond the fortress, continue into the countryside to the Liotrivi Estate, a restored 18th-century mansion. Here, learn how olive oil and wine production were intertwined with local economy and daily life, and how these agricultural traditions illustrate the enduring connection between land, commerce, and cultural identity in Greece.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodations: *Le Bougainville*



Day 7: Sanctuaries, Citadels, and Civic Life



This morning, travel to Epidaurus, site of the Sanctuary of Asklepios, where healing and religion were deeply intertwined in the ancient world. Here, you will also encounter the remarkable 4th-century theater, seating 12,000 and whose architectural design and flawless acoustics reflect both technical mastery and the cultural importance of drama in civic and religious life.

Continue to Mycenae, the powerful Bronze Age center that gave its name to an entire civilization. Explore the citadel, entering through the monumental Lion Gate, and examine its shaft graves, which reveal wealth, artistry, and social organization. Nearby, the beehive-shaped “Treasury of Atreus” illustrates advances in engineering and the myths that later associated the site with Agamemnon and Homeric legend.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodations: *Le Champlain*



Day 8: Hydra’s Maritime Past

From afar, Hydra appears barren, but as you approach its harbor, the amphitheater-like sweep of stone mansions testifies to its remarkable maritime past. In the 17th and 18th centuries, Hydra’s seafaring captains amassed great wealth through trade and naval service, transforming the island into a center of prosperity and influence. Touring the town on foot—Hydra prohibits automobiles—reveals the enduring imprint of this era. Visit the Cathedral of the Dormition of the Virgin, an important religious and civic landmark, and the Koundouriotis Mansion, today part of the National Museum, which offers insight into the architecture and lifestyle of an 18th-century patrician household.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodations: *Le Champlain*

Day 9: Goodbye, Greece

After breakfast aboard, disembark and transfer to Athens International Airport Eleftherios Venizelos (ATH), Athens, Greece, for flights homeward.

Included Meals: Breakfast

What's Included:

- Comprehensive 7-night cruise aboard the deluxe *Le Champlain*
- One pre-night at the Athens Capital Hotel-MGallery Collection (or similar) in Athens, Greece, with welcome reception (dinner on own) on October 24, 2026
- One PONANT EXPLORATIONS Tour Director dedicated to The Great Courses Journeys from the Pre-Night on October 24, 2026, through the end of the voyage/disembarkation on November 1, 2026
- Half day of touring in Athens, with transfer to pier for embarkation on October 25, 2026
- One exclusive The Great Courses Journeys onboard hosted cocktail reception
- 2-3 onboard lectures given by The Great Courses Journeys Expert
- One shore excursion exclusively custom for The Great Courses Journeys
- Great Courses Journeys at each port of call led by expert guides
- Captain’s gala dinners and cocktail receptions aboard ship
- All meals aboard ship including early riser’s coffee and pastry, breakfast, lunch, afternoon tea, dinner
- Open bar aboard ship excluding premium alcohol, including select wines with lunch and dinner
- 24-hour complimentary room service
- Comprehensive pre-departure materials
- Unlimited WiFi (as available via satellite)
- Airport/hotel/pier transfers and handling of luggage on official arrival and departure days, October 24, 2026 and November 1, 2026, respectively
- Port taxes and charges
- Gratuities to shipboard personnel, porters, guides, and drivers on tours

Accommodations



Luxury Ship *Le Champlain*

The five-star *Le Champlain*, part of the PONANT Explorers expedition yacht series, features 92 cabins accommodating 184 guests. Designed with advanced eco-friendly technology, its “Clean Ship” certification highlights energy efficiency and marine protection. Compact yet luxurious, it navigates shallow bays and sensitive environments while offering safe, comfortable voyages with custom stabilizers. **(7 nights)**

Athens Capital Hotel-MGallery Collection

Athens, Greece

The Athens Capital Hotel—MGallery Collection, a five-star boutique property in the heart of Athens at Syntagma Square, offers contemporary elegance blended with Greek cultural flair. Guests are welcomed into refined accommodations enhanced by curated artworks, while the rooftop pool and bar provide stunning views of the Acropolis. With its central location, thoughtful design, and exceptional amenities, the hotel is an ideal base for exploring the city’s rich history and vibrant culture. **(1 night)**



SPA



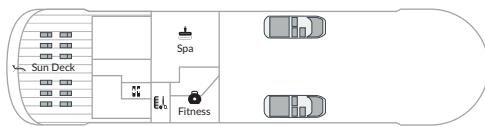
RESTAURANT



OWNER'S SUITE

Le Champlain Deck Plan & Pricing

DECK 7



● Deluxe Stateroom Deck 3

● Prestige Stateroom Decks 4-5-6

● Deluxe Suite Decks 3-4-5-6

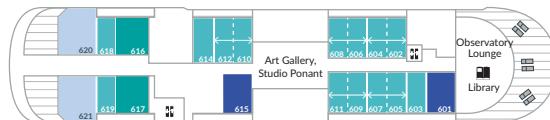
● Prestige Suite Decks 5-6

● Privilege Suite Decks 5-6

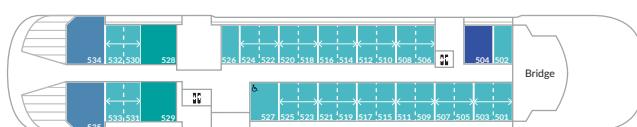
● Grand Deluxe Suite Deck 6

● Owner's Suite Deck 5

DECK 6

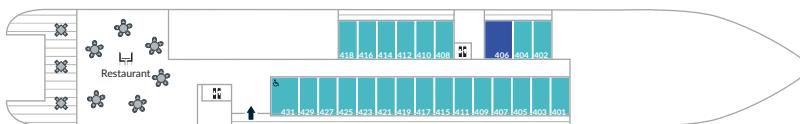


DECK 5

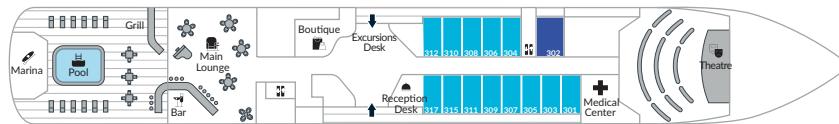


Suites 431 and 527 are designated for guests with reduced mobility.

DECK 4



DECK 3



DECK 0 / The Blue Eye underwater lounge

CATEGORY	DOUBLE OCCUPANCY per person	SINGLE OCCUPANCY per person
Deluxe Stateroom - Deck 3	\$9,740	\$13,330
Prestige Stateroom - Deck 4	\$10,010	\$13,730
Prestige Stateroom - Deck 5	\$10,280	\$14,140
Prestige Stateroom - Deck 6	\$10,600	\$14,620
Deluxe Suite - Decks 3, 4, 5, 6	\$14,300	\$20,170
Prestige Suite - Deck 5	\$15,370	\$21,770
Prestige Suite - Deck 6	\$15,640	\$22,180
Privilege Suite - Decks 5, 6	\$16,180	\$22,990
Grand Deluxe Suite - Deck 6	\$18,590	\$26,600
Owner's Suite - Deck 5	\$24,090	\$45,130

Departure: The World of the Greeks: From Myth to Empire
October 24-November 1, 2026 | Deposit: 25% of Tour Fare

You will be allocated a cabin within The Great Courses Journey's allotment, specific cabin requests based on availability.

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