

2026 Greek Odysseys: From Athens to Syracuse

with Dr. Robert Garland

November 7-16, 2026



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November 7-16, 2026

From \$9,995

double occupancy, per person



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Sailing from Athens to Valletta, this voyage immerses you in the layered histories of the ancient Mediterranean. Along the way, you will encounter the Bronze Age citadel of Mycenae, the healing sanctuary and theater at Epidauros, the Byzantine fortress town of Monemvasia, and the monumental remains of Syracuse, one of the most important cities of the Greek world. Visits to Corfu, Gallipoli, and Crete reveal how myth, religion, and politics intersected with local identity and regional trade, while UNESCO sites such as the Palace of Diocletian at Split and the Old Town of Valletta underscore the enduring legacies of empire.

Throughout the journey, you will travel in the company of distinguished Professor Robert S. J. Garland, Roy D. and Margaret B. Wooster Emeritus Professor of the Classics at Colgate University, whose scholarship focuses on ancient Greek religion, society, and urban development. His onboard lectures and site-based commentary bring these ancient places into sharper focus, allowing each temple, theater, and cathedral to become a lens into the forces that shaped Mediterranean civilization, making this voyage an unparalleled learning experience.

Questions? Call 1-855-476-5080

TheGreatCoursesJourneys.com

Your Journey Expert



Dr. Robert Garland is the Roy D. and Margaret B. Wooster Professor of the Classics, Emeritus, in the Department of the Classics at Colgate University. His research and passion for ancient Greece has taken him throughout the Greek world for several decades. Professor Garland has a PhD in Ancient History from University College London. A former Fulbright Scholar, he was also a fellow at the Center for Hellenic Studies in Washington DC and a visiting scholar at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton. He has written 19 books, including *Greek Mythology: Gods and Heroes Brought to Life* and *Roman Legends Brought to Life*. He has also published extensively in academic and popular journals and served as a consultant for educational film companies. Professor Garland has taught 5 Great Courses: *The Other Side of History: Daily Life in the Ancient World*, *Living History: Experiencing Great Events of the Ancient and Medieval Worlds*, *The Greek World: A Study of History and Culture*, *Athenian Democracy: An Experiment for the Ages*, and *God against the Gods: The History of Monotheism and Polytheism*.

Highlights

- Travel alongside your expert for a uniquely immersive journey, connecting temples, theaters, and fortresses with the myths, politics, and histories that defined the ancient and medieval Mediterranean world.
- Join Professor Robert Garland for lectures in our state-of-the-art on-board theatre discussing the many different peoples of the region—the Minoans, the Classical Greeks, the Romans, the Byzantines—and the maze of wonder they left behind.
- Stand in the Sanctuary of Asklepios at Epidaurus, exploring how religion and healing intersected, and marvel at the acoustics of the 4th-century theater still in use today.
- Walk through the Lion Gate of Mycenae, the Bronze Age citadel whose tombs, walls, and myths illuminate one of the earliest and most influential civilizations of the ancient world.
- Explore Monemvasia, a Byzantine fortress town, where medieval chapels, Venetian mansions, and fortifications reveal centuries of shifting power, commerce, and cultural exchange in the eastern Mediterranean.
- Discover Syracuse's vast archaeological park, with its Greek theater, Roman amphitheater, and quarries, before wandering Ortygia's streets, where temples and Baroque piazzas reveal layers of history and myth.



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Itinerary



Day 1: Arrive in Athens

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, the enduring symbol of classical Greece. Ascend the sacred hill to view the Parthenon, Erechtheion, and Temple of Athena Nike, monuments that reveal how art, religion, and civic identity intertwined in the ancient world. Through your expert's interpretation, consider how these architectural masterpieces expressed the ideals of democracy, devotion, and beauty that defined Athenian life.

In the afternoon, enjoy lunch at your leisure, and continue to the Agora, the ancient civic heart of Athens where trade, politics, and philosophy converged. Walk through the reconstructed Stoa of Attalus, a vivid reminder of Athens' role as both a marketplace and a meeting ground of ideas. After time at leisure, transfer to Piraeus and embark *Le Champlain* to begin your voyage.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodations: *Le Champlain*



Day 3: Sanctuaries and Citadels

This morning, travel to Epidauros, site of the Sanctuary of Asklepios, where religion and medicine were closely intertwined in the ancient world. The sanctuary also includes a magnificent 4th-century theater, seating 12,000, whose design and acoustics illustrate both technical mastery and the cultural importance of performance in Greek civic and spiritual life.

Continue to Mycenae, the Bronze Age citadel that gave its name to an entire civilization. Passing through the monumental Lion Gate, examine shaft graves that reveal extraordinary artistry and wealth, reflecting the political and social complexity of this early culture. Nearby, the beehive-shaped "Treasury of Atreus" showcases advanced engineering and the blending of history with Homeric myth and has long been thought to be Agamemnon's tomb.

Including Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodations: *Le Champlain*



Day 4: Byzantine Beauty

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, 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 Champlain*



Day 5: Pottery, Wine, and Ancient Aegean Civilization

Crete, the cradle of Europe's first advanced civilization, reveals its long history through traditions still alive today. Begin in Thrapsano, a hillside village famed for pottery, where artisans continue to shape massive storage jars, or pitharia, using techniques that date back to the Minoans. Observing this craft offers insight into how material culture endured across millennia, preserving both function and identity.

Continue to Peza, one of Crete's most historic viticultural centers. Vineyards here have flourished since the Bronze Age, reflecting the deep connection between agriculture, trade, and ritual life in the ancient Aegean. Discussions highlight how Cretan wine supported local economies and religious practices from antiquity onward. A panoramic drive through Heraklion concludes your exploration of this island where myth, history, and tradition converge.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodations: *Le Champlain*



Day 6: Spartan Culture and Cultivation

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 illustrate the enduring relationship between land, economy, and culture in Greece.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodations: *Le Bougainville*





Day 7: History and Myth in Corfu

Corfu offers a unique blend of myth and history shaped by centuries of cultural exchange. Begin at the Archaeological Museum, where artifacts from temples and sanctuaries illuminate the island's role in the ancient Greek world. In Paleokastritsa, a landscape of dramatic cliffs and hidden bays, legend places Odysseus's fateful encounter with Nausicaa. The Monastery of the Virgin here, with its collection of sacred objects, reflects the enduring continuity of faith from antiquity to Byzantine times.

Continue to Lakones, a mountain village offering panoramic views from Bella Vista, along the shores where an angry Poseidon turned the ship of Ulysses to rock. Conclude with a drive through Corfu's Old Town, where Venetian fortifications and Byzantine monasteries reveal how the island served as a crossroads of power, commerce, and culture in the Ionian Sea.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodations: *Le Champlain*



Day 8: Southern Italy's Cultural Treasures

Southern Italy reveals its history through a rich interplay of art, architecture, and antiquity. In Lecce, often called the "Florence of the South," the exuberant Baroque style dominates the urban landscape. The Basilica of Santa Croce dazzles with its intricate carvings, while Piazza Duomo demonstrates the grandeur of ecclesiastical power. In nearby Piazza Sant'Oronzo, the Roman Amphitheater provides a striking reminder of the city's deep antiquity, seamlessly integrated into the modern streetscape.

Returning to Gallipoli, explore this historic port town whose prosperity long depended on maritime trade. Wandering its labyrinthine streets reveals layers of cultural influence, from glowing Mediterranean facades to the baroque Gallipoli Cathedral. Beneath the town, an underground olive oil mill testifies to its once-thriving role in the global trade of "liquid gold," underscoring how agriculture and commerce shaped the region's identity.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodations: *Le Champlain*



Day 9: The Ancient Ruins of Syracuse

On your final full day, explore Syracuse. Begin at the archaeological park, home to the Roman Amphitheater of Augustus and the Altar of Hieron II, a monumental sacrificial altar dedicated to Zeus. In the Latomie of Paradise, stand before the Ear of Dionysius. In Ortygia, layers of history remain visible: Baroque piazzas, the 6th-century Temple of Apollo, and the Piazza Duomo.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodations: *Le Champlain*



Day 10: Departure

After breakfast aboard, disembark and transfer to Malta International Airport (MLA) for flights homeward.

Included Meals: Breakfast

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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 November 7, 2026
- One PONANT EXPLORATIONS Tour Director dedicated to The Great Courses Journeys from the Pre-Night on November 7, 2026, through the end of the voyage/disembarkation on November 16, 2026
- Half day of touring in Athens, lunch on own, with transfer to pier for embarkation on November 8, 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 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, November 7, 2026 and November 16, 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



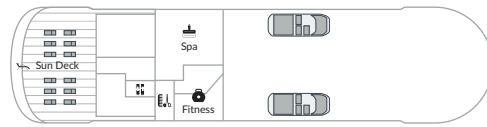
RESTAURANT



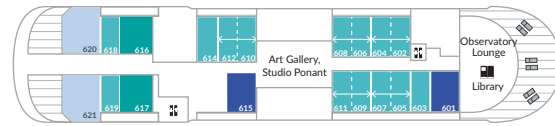
OWNER'S SUITE

Le Champlain Deck Plan & Pricing

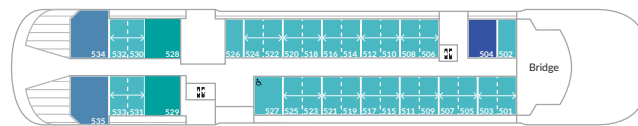
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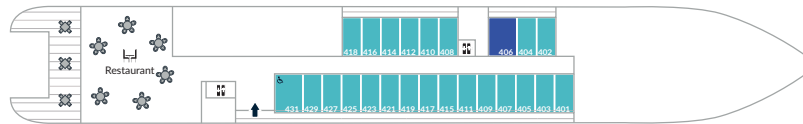
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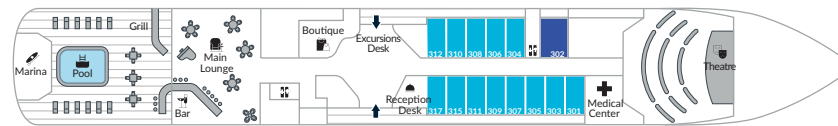
DECK 5



DECK 4



DECK 3



DECK 0 / The Blue Eye underwater lounge

- 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

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

CATEGORY	DOUBLE OCCUPANCY <i>per person</i>	SINGLE OCCUPANCY <i>per person</i>
Deluxe Stateroom - Deck 3	\$9,995	\$10,660
Prestige Stateroom - Deck 4	\$10,450	\$10,940
Prestige Stateroom - Deck 5	\$10,740	\$11,230
Prestige Stateroom - Deck 6	\$11,080	\$11,570
Deluxe Suite - Decks 3, 4, 5, 6	\$15,010	\$15,500
Prestige Suite - Deck 5	\$16,160	\$16,650
Prestige Suite - Deck 6	\$16,440	\$16,930
Privilege Suite - Decks 5, 6	\$17,010	\$17,500
Grand Deluxe Suite - Deck 6	\$19,560	\$20,050
Owner's Suite - Deck 5	\$26,940	\$50,690

Departure: Greek Odysseys: From Athens to Syracuse
November 7-16, 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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