

# EUROPE'S ANCIENT CIVILISATIONS



## Israel, Egypt, Cyprus, Greece, & Turkey



From the Red Sea, through the Suez Canal, and into the central Mediterranean, this voyage aboard *Le Champlain* devotes 13 days to exploring the iconic sites of this exceptionally culturally rich corner of the world, encompassing Israel, Egypt, Cyprus, the Turkish coast, and the Greek Islands of Rhodes and Crete.

This voyage is in alliance with Smithsonian Journeys, the travel program of the Smithsonian Institution, the world's largest museum, education and research complex. Drawing on Smithsonian's vast resources dating back 175 years, these sailings will feature notable experts and experiences that embrace local cultures & dive deeper into a destination's history, cuisine, language, environment, and wildlife. For more than 50 years, Smithsonian Journeys has been rooted in and focused on cultural immersion and discovery – with a goal of inspiring guests to become global citizens through travel.

- ✓ 12 night cruise on Luxury small ship *Le Champlain*
- ✓ Gourmet cuisine in choice of restaurants, 24 hr room service
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\$11,986 is per person twin share in Deluxe Stateroom on Deck 3. Includes Welcome Offer (for first-time PONANT Travellers, past guests receive alternate savings) and exclusive France and Leisure Early-Booking Bonus. Price is correct at date of publication (05 FEB 2023). See [au.ponant.com](http://au.ponant.com) for full details

**2 APRIL 2024 - AQABA.** Embarkation from 4:00 pm to 5:00 pm. Departure 2/4/2024 at 6:00 pm

Located in the Red Sea within the eponymous gulf, Aqaba offers Jordan its only access to the sea. At the crossroads of the land and sea routes that linked Asia, Africa and Europe, the town is rich with more than 5,000 years of history. The warm waters of the Red Sea attract holidaymakers and divers to this seaside destination; the underwater sites home to coral and fishes are some of the most beautiful in the world. Aqaba is also the gateway to the magnificent desert of Wadi Rum and site of Petra.

**3 APRIL 2024 - EILAT.** Situated in the far south of the State of Israel, on the banks of the Gulf of Eilat, on the edge of the Negev Desert between Egypt and Jordan, Eilat is internationally renowned as a high-end seaside resort and spa town, as well as for its magnificent natural sites. The first references to this place date back to the time of King Solomon. His legendary mines are said to be located not far from the now-modern city. It is the departure point for visiting the Masada fortress and for the incredible experience of swimming in the Dead Sea.

**4 APRIL 2024 - AT SEA.** A day at sea is a truly enchanting interlude, combining comfort, rest and entertainment.

**05 APRIL 2024 - AIN SUKHNA.** Ain Sukhna, which means "hot spring," is located in the Gulf of Suez, facing the Red Sea. Less than two hours from the Egyptian capital, it is an elegant seaside town that is popular with wealthy families from Cairo. Ain Soukhna is an ideal base for discovering the marvels of Ancient Egypt.

**06 APRIL 2024 - CROSSING THE SUEZ CANAL.** Without the waterway linking the Red Sea to the Mediterranean this part of the world would be an arid sandy desert inhabited by a few nomads. The Suez Canal slices through 162 km of desert and was inaugurated in 1869 in the presence of Empress Eugenie, then nationalised by Nasser in 1956.

**07 APRIL 2024 - ASHDOD.** On the eastern shore of the Mediterranean, discover Ashdod, the largest port in Israel. An former Philistine city, the town is today home to the only museum in the world dedicated to the culture of this ancient people. Ashdod is also famous for being one of the gateways to Jerusalem. This city is one of the most sacred in the world with its millennia-old history, its spirituality, and its incredibly rich religious heritage. Within its defensive walls, the Old City holds over 200 historic monuments including the Western Wall (or Wailing Wall), the Dome of the Rock, and the Holy Sepulchre. Visiting Jerusalem makes for a fascinating and moving experience as you immerse yourself in a mystical and magical place.

**08 APRIL 2024 - LIMASSOL.** Bathed by the azure waters of the Mediterranean, Limassol enjoys a privileged natural position in southern Cyprus. Fall under its spell: nestled between lush mountains and idyllic fine sandy beaches, its history dates back to Ancient times. This charming city shelters many archaeological sites. Discover this rich cultural and architectural heritage, such as the emblematic 12th-century Byzantine castle where Richard the Lionheart married Berengaria of Navarre.

**09 APRIL 2024 - PAPHOS.** In southwest Cyprus lies Paphos, a modern town and sought-after seaside resort of this island situated in the eastern Mediterranean. The impressive Byzantine fort can be discovered during a walk around the port and provides a glimpse into the past of the Cypriot city. Important ruins bear witness to the cult of pre-Hellenic fertility deities and then the goddess Aphrodite, who, legend has it, was born in Paphos. By the sea in the lower town, the Kato Paphos archaeological park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, reveals many ruins of villas, fortresses, theatres and tombs.

**10 APRIL 2024 - RHODES.** The island of Rhodes invites you to walk its pathways and discover its immaculate villages and sumptuous medieval city, a UNESCO World Heritage site. At the centre of the island the mountains are covered in forest and on the western slopes we find vineyards and crops. Rhodes also owes much of its charm and its character to the Knights of St John who reigned over the island from 1310 to 1522 and built impressive defensive walls punctuated with majestic gateways

**11 APRIL 2024 - KUSADASI.** The attractive seaside resort of Kusadasi is located in a gulf on the western coast of Turkey. In the historical district, stroll down the narrow streets and explore the colourful shops in the bazaar. Close by, the Ephesus archaeological site in the hillsides provides an opportunity to discover the ruins of one of the most famous cities of Antiquity.

**12 APRIL 2024 - HERAKLION, CRETE.** The hustle and bustle of this seaport is an integral part of its charm. It is built on a hillside encircled by impressive Venetian walls. From the top of these, you will be able to enjoy one of the most beautiful views of the city. The old town is teeming with small shops, squares, cafés and vibrant architectural evidence of the city's history. The Palace of Knossos illustrates the wealth and power of its legendary sovereign, King Minos.

**13 APRIL 2024 - AT SEA.**

**14 APRIL 2024 - VALETTA, MALTA.** Arrival early morning with disembarkation at 8.30am.