

GREECE & CYPRUS

with

FRIENDS OF ARCHAEOLOGY OF HOUSTON

**17 Days/ 16 Nights
May 2 - 18, 2018**

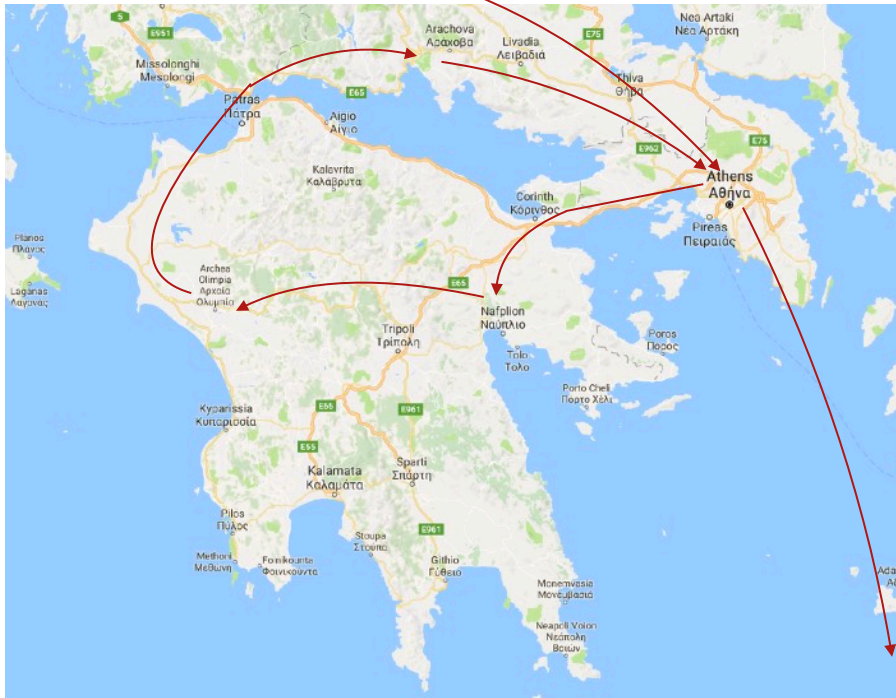


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 **TOURCOM™**

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Program outline:

Day 1: Wed, May 2	Leave USA for Athens, Greece
Day 2: Thu, May 3	Arrival in Athens / Athens
Day 3: Fri, May 4	Athens sightseeing / Athens
Day 4: Sat, May 5	Athens sightseeing / Athens
Day 5: Sun, May 6	Mycenae - Nemea / Nauplion
Day 6: Mon, May 7	Nauplion sightseeing / Nauplion
Day 7: Tue, May 8	Mystras - Olympia / Olympia
Day 8: Wed, May 9	Olympia sightseeing - Delphi / Delphi
Day 9: Thu, May 10	Delphi sightseeing - Arachova / Delphi
Day 10: Fri, May 11	Delphi - Athens - Fly to Larnaca / Larnaca, Cyprus
Day 11: Sat, May 12	Larnaca - Nicosia sightseeing / Nicosia
Day 12: Sun, May 13	Nicosia sightseeing / Nicosia
Day 13: Mon, May 14	Kyrenia sightseeing - Kakopetria / Kakopetria
Day 14: Tue, May 15	Excursion in Troodos Mountains / Limassol
Day 15: Wed, May 16	Excursion to Paphos / Limassol
Day 16: Thu, May 17	Kourion - Omodos / Limassol
Day 17: Fri, May 18	Departure



Highlights:

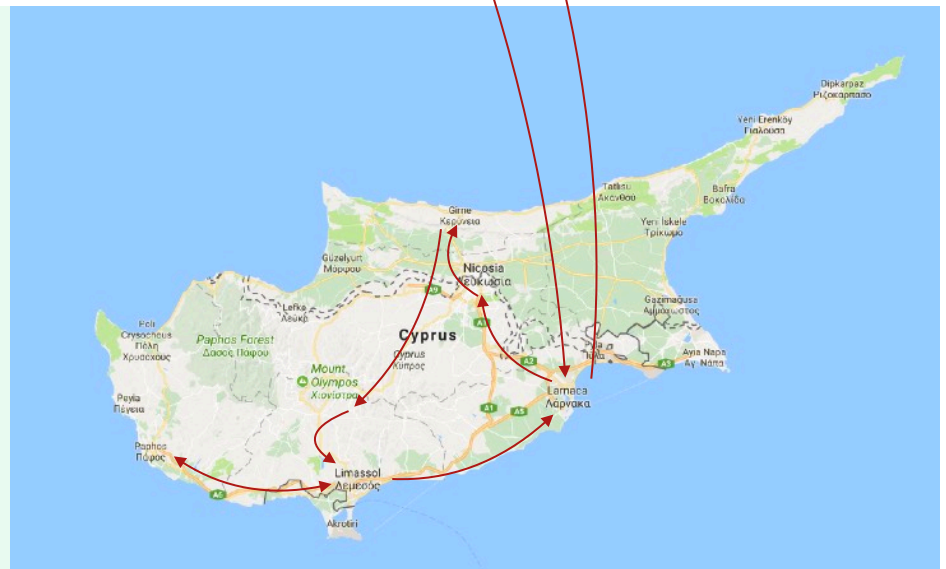
Greece:

- Parthenon & Acropolis Museum
- Cape Sounion Poseidon Temple
- Rebetiki music and dance in Greek taverna
- Archaeological sites of Mycenae and Epidaurus
- Archaeological sites of Olympia and Delphi
- Charming town of Arachova

Highlights:

Cyprus:

- Byzantine art in churches
- Nicosia Archaeological Museum
- Town of Kyrenia in Northern Cyprus
- Troodos Mountains & local villages
- Tombs of the Kings in Paphos
- Site of ancient Kourion
- Delicious food



INCLUDED SERVICES:

- Hotel accommodation at the hotel listed separately, or similar; with daily breakfast.
- Lunch and dinners as given in the itinerary.
- English speaking professional tour guides in each country.
- Transportation with AC vehicles & drivers.
- Arrival and departure transfers - only for suggested flight arrival & departures.
- All entry fees to places mentioned in the itinerary.
- Tips for included meals and accommodations.
- Local taxes, service charges.

NOT INCLUDED:

- International - local airfare (given separately below.)
- Visa fees if applicable (None required for this trip.)
- Drinks with included meals, except tea or coffee for breakfast.
- Arrival - departure transfers if on other flights than suggested group flights.
- Gratuities for guides & drivers.
- Personal expenditures like phone calls, laundry, medical expenses.
- Travel insurance (can be provided by Tourcom on request.)



FLIGHTS

FLIGHTS FOR GREECE & CYPRUS PROGRAM

On Air Canada - United Airlines - Aegean Airlines

May 2 Houston to Toronto
AC 2881 dep: 7:40 am / arr: 11:50 am

May 2 Toronto to Athens
AC 1900 dep: 4:40 pm / arr: 9:20 am on May 3

May 11 Athens to Larnaca
A3 908 dep: 6:30 pm / arr: 8:10 pm

May 18 Larnaca to Frankfurt
UA 9162 dep: 3:25 am / arr: 6:30 am

May 18 Frankfurt to Houston
UA 8866 dep: 10:00 am / arr: 1:45 pm

Economy class fare is: \$1180 including taxes, surcharges and fees as of December 22, 2017. Fares are based on availability and tend to go higher as we get closer to departure date. Once issued tickets are non-refundable.

These are suggested group flights; arrival and departure transfers in Greece & Cyprus are included in the tour cost.

HOTELS

Greece / 3-Star Hotels

Athens Acropolis Select
<https://acropoliselect.gr/?lang=el>

Nauplion Victoria
<https://hotelvictoria.gr/>

Olympia Europa
<http://www.hoteleuropa.gr/>

Delphi Nidimos
<http://www.nidimoshotel.gr/en/>

Cyprus / 3 & 4-Star Hotels

Larnaca Amorgos Boutique Hotel
<http://amorgoshotel.com/>

Nicosia Classic Hotel
<http://www.classic.com.cy/>

Kakopetria Ekali Hotel
<http://www.ekali-hotel.com/>

Limassol Ajax Hotel
<http://www.ajaxhotel.com/>

IMPORTANT NOTE FOR GREECE:

We were informed that starting with January 1, 2018, Greece put into effect a tourist hotel tax, as in other EU countries. The tax schedule is:

for 3-star hotels Euro 1.5 per room per night,
for 4-star hotels Euro 3 per room per night,
for 5-star hotels Euro 4 per room per night.

This tax is not covered by the tour cost, as this information was not available at the time of tour preparation. It will have to be paid on the spot, in cash, in Euros.

TOUR RATES:

Greece & Cyprus Trip:

Rate for 10-12 travelers	\$4,000 per person in double occupancy
Single Supplement	\$607

Greece portion only:

Rate for 10-12 travelers	\$2,241 per person in double occupancy
Single Supplement	\$275

Cyprus portion only:

Rate for 10-12 travelers	\$1,759 per person in double occupancy
Single Supplement	\$333

Rates are for credit card payment. There will be 3% reduction for payment by check.

- > Greece-only and Cyprus-only rates do not include arrival or departure transfers unless tour members are on the same flights with Greece & Cyprus trip tour members.
- > Separate transfer arrangements can be made at additional cost. Please call Tourcom for more information.
- > If, due to tour member cancellation, group size drops below 10, there will be additional supplement to these rates depending on the final size of the group.

PAYMENT AND CANCELLATION CONDITIONS:

During booking	Initial deposit of \$350 per person for Greece & Cyprus trip
	Initial deposit of \$200 per person for one country trip
Fri, Jan 5, 2018	Full payment is due.

Cancellation Schedule:

Cancellation before Fri, Jan 5, 2018	Full refund.
Cancellation on or between Jan 6 - Feb 1, 2018	Initial deposit non-refundable
Cancellation between Feb 2 - Mar 13, 2018	Initial deposit + 50% of tour cost is non-refundable.
Cancellation between Mar 14 - Apr 2, 2018	Initial deposit + 75% of tour cost is non-refundable.
Cancellation on or after April 3, 2018	No refund.

Program Details

Day 1: Wed, May 2, 2018 Leave Houston

We will leave Houston for Athens, Greece.

Day 2: Thu, May 3, 2018 Athens

We will arrive in Athens, Greece.

Welcome to one of the world's oldest cities, with its recorded history spanning around 3,400 years. Being a powerful city-state, Classical Athens was a center for the arts, learning and philosophy, home of Plato's Academy and Aristotle's Lyceum. It is widely referred to as the cradle of Western civilization and the birthplace of democracy.

Upon arrival, our guide will meet us at the airport and our driver will drive us to our hotel. If time permits, we will have an orientation walk at the Plaka area.

Overnight: Athens

Meals: Dinner at a typical tavern at the Plaka area.



Day 3: Fri, May 4, 2018 Athens

In the morning, we will have a city tour of Athens, during which we will visit the Parthenon and the new Parthenon Museum.

The Parthenon is a Doric peripteral temple on the Athenian Acropolis, dedicated to Athena, the patron of the city. The construction of this most important surviving building of Classical Greece began in 447 BC when the city was at the height of its power.

The new Parthenon Museum, which sits near the base of the Acropolis with direct view of the Parthenon, is one of the highest-profile cultural projects undertaken in Europe in this decade. The new facility, 226,000 square feet of glass and concrete designed by the New York-based architect Bernard Tschumi, replaces the old one, a small 1874 building tucked into the rock of the Acropolis next to the Parthenon.

After a light lunch at the museum, we will return to our hotel to rest until heading Cape Sounion. This site is the most popular afternoon destination not only to visit the Temple of Poseidon, but for the scenic drive along the coast of the Saronic Gulf. We'll watch the sunset from the temple perched on a rocky hilltop with a view across the Aegean Sea, extending all the way to Kea Island and the Peloponnese.

Overnight: Athens

Meals: B, light lunch at the Acropolis Museum, Welcome seaside dinner at the Cape Sounion.

Day 4: Sat, May 5, 2018 Athens

In the morning, we will visit the archaeological site of the Olympieion (or known as Columns of the Olympian Zeus), comprising of the Temple of the Olympian Zeus, the Roman Baths, classical residences, a basilica of the fifth century AD, and the Hadrian's Arch. Began in the 6th century BC, the temple was not completed until the reign of the Emperor Hadrian in the 2nd century AD.

We will continue with the Varvaikos agora, the hectic, colorful, historic meat market. It's a delightful area with an amazing range of olives, spices, cheeses, and deli treats.

After a light lunch in the area, we'll visit the Archaeological Museum, which is the largest museum in Greece, and one of the most important museums in the world devoted to ancient Greek art.

Later this evening, we'll go to a "rebetiki" taverna, a special place where we will blend with the Greeks and their culture.

Overnight: Athens

Meals: B, Light lunch with Greek mezes, Dinner with Rebetiko live music.

Day 5: Sun, May 6, 2018 Athens - Nauplion

In the morning, we will leave Athens for Nauplion.

After a short stop at Corinth, we will drive to Mycenae, which was one of the major centers of Greek civilization, a military stronghold that dominated much of southern Greece in the 2nd millennium BC, and is in the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites.

We will continue to the small village of Nemea to have a light lunch with tasting of the famous Nemea wine. After lunch, we will drive to Epidauros which was a small city in ancient Greece in the Saronic Gulf. Reputed to be the birthplace of Apollo's son Asclepius, the healer, Epidauros was known for its sanctuary, as well as its theater. The Asclepieion at Epidauros was the most celebrated healing center of the Classical world, the place where ill people went in the hope of being cured. The prosperity brought by the healing center enabled Epidauros to construct civic monuments, too, such as the huge theater that delighted Pausanias for its symmetry and beauty, the baths and the palaestra. Designed by Polykleitos the Younger in the 4th century BC, the theater is marveled for its exceptional acoustics, which permit almost perfect intelligibility of unamplified spoken word from the prescenum (stage) to all 15,000 spectators, regardless of their seating.

After our sightseeing, we will drive to Nauplion, where we will spend the night.

Nauplion was the capital of the First Hellenic Republic, from the start of the Greek Revolution in 1821 until 1834. It is now the capital of the regional unit of Argolis. At a first glance, this seaside town looks like an Italian city because of its architecture and the colorful houses. We will enjoy the lovely, romantic downtown with cozy streets, pastry shops and tavernas.

Overnight: Nauplion

Meals: B, Wine tasting with lunch, seaside dinner in Nauplion



Day 6: Mon, May 7, 2018 Nauplion

Today we will enjoy an easy day in Nauplion. First we will visit the Palamidi Castle (known as 999 steps!). Built by the Venetians between 1711 and 1714 and was regarded as a masterpiece of military architecture, this vast, spectacular citadel, reachable either by steep ascent on foot or a short drive, stands on a 700 ft-high outcrop of rock that gives all-encompassing views of Nauplion and the Argolic Gulf.

Then we will hop on one of the little boats that drop anchor at the dock, and go to Bourtzi Isle to see the Castle of the Throne (Castello dello Soglio). Built in 1473 and has served variously as a pirate deterrent, a home for executioners and a hotel, the castle houses battlements which are identical in design to Moscow's Kremlin; both were built by 15th century Venetians.

After we return, we will learn how to cook Greek food at a Greek taverna. Rest of the afternoon is at leisure to enjoy.

Overnight: Nauplion

Meals: B, L (light lunch at the end of the cooking lesson, may need to order extra plates payable on the spot), D

Day 7: Tue, May 8, 2018 Nauplion – Mystras - Olympia

After breakfast, we will drive to Mystras on our way to Olympia.

Mystras is a fortified town and a former municipality in Laconia, Peloponnese. Situated on Mt. Taygetos, near ancient Sparta, it served as the capital of the Byzantine Despotate of the Morea in the 14th and 15th centuries, experiencing a period of prosperity and cultural flowering. Under the despot Theodore, it became the second most important city in the empire after Constantinople. The main church of Brontochian Monastery was completed around 1310.

The frescoes in the Peribleptos Monastery Church, dating between 1348 and 1380, are a very rare surviving late Byzantine cycle, crucial for the understanding of Byzantine art. Mystras was also the last center of Byzantine scholarship. Scholars based in Mystras influenced the Italian Renaissance.

In 1989, the ruins, including the fortress, palace, churches and monasteries, were named a UNESCO World Heritage Site. We will visit this ghost Byzantine town with its medieval fortress at its citadel, museum and some monastery and churches.

After our visit, we will drive on to Olympia.

Overnight: Olympia

Meals: B, Light Lunch, D at the hotel.

Day 8: Wed, May 9, 2018 Olympia - Delphi

Olympia was the site of the ancient Olympic Games, which were celebrated every four years by the Greeks throughout Classical Antiquity, from the 8th century BC to the 4th century AD. The first Olympic Games were in honor of Zeus. Olympia was situated in a valley in Elis, in western Peloponnesus. It was not a town, but a sanctuary with buildings associated with games and the worship of the gods.

The Archaeological Museum of Olympia is one of the most important museums in Greece, presenting the long history of the most celebrated sanctuary of antiquity, the sanctuary of Zeus. Among the many precious exhibits, the sculpture collection is for which the museum is most famous, the bronze collection, the richest collection of its kind in the world, and the large terracotta collection that are noteworthy.

After visiting the archaeological site and the museum, we will drive on to the Agritourism Magna Grecia, which is a part of a 30 acre family property. Surrounded by vineyards and olive trees, we will enjoy the Greek countryside, and learn about growing and harvesting olives, see the related equipment, learn how to make olive oil soaps and bee wax skin creams. After enjoying our lunch there, we'll depart for Delphi.

Overnight: Delphi

Meals: B, Lunch at the farm, Dinner at the hotel.



Day 9: Thu, May 10, 2018 Delphi – Arachova - Delphi

Delphi is both an archaeological site and a modern town on the south-western spur of Mount Parnassos in the valley of Phocis.

In Greek mythology, Delphi was the site of the Delphic oracle, the most important oracle in the classical Greek world and a major site for the worship of Apollo after he slew the Python, a dragon who lived there and protected the navel of the Earth. At the archeological site, we will see the Temple of Apollo, the stadium, the theater among other buildings.

The Archaeological Museum houses mainly the offerings to the oracle and the architectural parts of the buildings.

We will have lunch at one of the local taverns overlooking olive groves. Later we'll enjoy coffee and will have a walk at the picturesque Arachova, a mountainside village (most cosmopolitan winter destination in Greece).

Overnight: Delphi

Meals: B, Lunch at a tavern, D at the hotel.

Day 10: Fri, May 11, 2018 Delphi – Athens – Larnaca, Cyprus

We will drive to airport at Athens to catch a flight to Larnaca, Cyprus.

Upon arrival, our guide will meet us and our driver will take us to our hotel in Larnaca. Afternoon is free to enjoy Larnaca, which is built over the original site of the ancient Kition.

Overnight: Larnaca, Cyprus

Meals: B

Day 11: Sat, May 12, 2018 Larnaca - Nicosia

After breakfast, we will visit the Cathedral of St. Lazarus.

Located in its own square in the town center, the magnificent stone cathedral is one of the most remarkable examples of Byzantine architecture in Cyprus. We will continue to Tekke Mosque of Hala Sultan, which lies in a serene setting on the shores of the Larnaca Salt Lake. We will drive to Kiti to visit the Church of Angeloktisti whose original apse has survived along with one of the finest pieces of Byzantine art on the island; a rare 6th century mosaic of the Virgin Mary and Child between the two archangels Michael and Gabriel. Such mosaics from this period have only been discovered in Cyprus and Mount Sinai. When we arrive at the parking area, we will walk through Laiki Geitonia, Ledras to a local restaurant.

After lunch, we will walk to the check-point and then to Saint Sophia Cathedral (Selimiye Mosque) which is housed in the largest and oldest surviving Gothic church in Cyprus, and then Buyuk Han, the largest caravanserai and one of the finest buildings on the island. We will walk back to the parking and drive to our hotel in Nicosia.

Overnight: Nicosia

Meals: B, L

Day 12: Sun, May 13, 2018 Nicosia

In the morning, we will drive to Famagusta Gate for a photo stop, then continue to the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist that remains the only church in Nicosia in which the whole of the internal frescoes have survived in their entirety. The four large icons on the iconostasis were painted by the Cretan master, Ioannis Kornaros in 1795 and 1797, and the 18th century frescoes depict scenes from the Bible and the discovery of the tomb of St. Barnabas at Salamis.

After we visit the Byzantine Museum to see magnificent icons dating from the 12th century when iconography was at its height and the famous 6th century mosaics torn from the Church of Kanakaria, we will walk to a local restaurant for lunch. After lunch, we will drive to the Archaeological Museum that houses artifacts discovered during numerous excavations on the island and traces the long history of civilization from prehistoric times to the early Christian period.

We will drive back to our hotel .

Overnight: Nicosia
Meals: B, L

Day 13: Mon, May 14, 2018 Kyrenia - Troodos Mountains

After we drive to the check-point, we will be transferred to St. Hilarion Castle, one of the three magnificent castles in the Kyrenia mountains, dramatically perched on a steep hilltop with commanding views over Kyrenia and the coast.



After taking in the mountain views from the castle, we will drive down to the Kyrenia Harbor, one of the most beautiful places in Northern Cyprus to relax and enjoy our lunch. After lunch, we will visit Kyrenia Castle, a 16th century castle built by the Venetians over a previous Crusader fortification at the east end of the harbor. We will continue with the Shipwreck Museum that houses the oldest trading ship known to us with her cargo. The ship sailed in the Mediterranean during the life time of Alexander the Great and his successors.

Then we will depart from Kyrenia to Kakopetria, a town on the north facing foothills of the Troodos Mountains. It stands at an altitude of 2190 ft, and it is the highest village in the Solea Valley. We will check in our hotel to spend the night.

Overnight: Kakopetria

Meals: B, L, D

Day 14: Tue, May 15, 2018 Troodos Mountains - Limassol

There are over sixty churches in Cyprus with Byzantine and post-Byzantine frescoes. Of these, ten that are situated in the Troodos Mountains have been inscribed jointly on the UNESCO World Heritage List as the "Painted Churches in the Troodos Region". Today we will visit three of them.

In the morning, we will drive to the Church of Agios Nikolaos tis Stegis (St. Nicholas of the Roof) which is only 3 miles away from Kakopetria. The domed cross-in-square church once belonged to a monastery complex and derives its name from its pitched timber that was built to protect it from the weather. It is the only surviving monastery church of its kind on the island and is covered entirely in wall paintings from the 11th to the 17th centuries.

Then we will drive to Lagoudhera Village to visit Panagia Arakiotissa, a 12th century church covered with fine frescoes. We will continue to Nikitari Village, to visit Panagia Asinou, which is a small church dedicated to the Virgin of "Phorbia" and is adorned with frescoes from 12th to 17th century.

After a morning full of art, we will enjoy lunch at a local tavern, before we continue on to Kykkos Monastery and the Museum. Dedicated to Panagia (the Virgin Mary), the monastery possesses one of the three icons attributed to Apostle Luke the Evangelist.

Then we will drive to Limassol, a city on the southeastern coast of Cyprus. It's known for the centuries-old Limassol Castle. We will check in our hotel.

Overnight: Limassol

Meals: B, L

Day 15: Wed, May 16, 2018

Paphos - Limassol

Our drive along the south coast to Paphos starts with a photo stop at Petra tou Romiou, the legendary birthplace of Aphrodite. Ancient patron goddess of Cyprus emerged from the sea at this point in a surge of sea foam.

Then we will visit Agios Neophytos Monastery, founded in the 12th century by Neophytos, the Cypriot recluse and writer, on the way to Paphos.

Nea Paphos refers to the Ancient city of Paphos which was founded in the late 4th century BC. According to legend, Nea Paphos was founded by Agapenor, leader of the Arcadians during the siege of Troy. The site was well chosen for it had an excellent harbor and soon outstripped the older city (Palae Paphos). Now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the remains found here span over 2, 000 years.

First we will visit Paphos' most impressive site, the Tombs of the Kings. Seven tombs, all scattered over a wide area and all are accessible to the public were found. The most recently restored tomb is No. 3 and is the most impressive, with a below ground atrium surrounded by impressive Doric columns. These rock cut peristyle tombs, built in the Hellenistic period, have their best parallels in Ptolemaic Alexandria.



We will continue to Paphos old harbor to have our lunch before we will visit three Roman villas; the House of Theseus, the House of Aion, the House of Dionysos decorated with lavish mosaics.

Then we will drive to Agia Kyriaki Chrysopolitissa, ruins of a charming, rustic church built in the 13th century and known for its colorful mosaic floor. We will also see the famous pilgrimage site, St. Paul's Pillar.

We will drive back to Limassol to check in our hotel.

Overnight: Limassol

Meals: B, L

Day 16: Thu, May 17, 2018 Limassol - Omodos

A morning seaside drive will take us to site of ancient Kourion, a Greek city dedicated to Apollo. The dominant feature at the site today is the large theater, which has been partially restored and is now used for modern performances. We will see three private residents, the House of the Gladiators, the House of Eustolios and the House of Achilles, which were decorated with fine mosaic floors, and the Sanctuary of Apollo Hylates, ("Apollo of the Woodlands"), charmingly situated amongst the surviving woodlands.

After the archaeological site, we will drive to and visit the Castle of Kolossi. Then we will continue to Omodos Village to visit Timios Stavros Monastery and enjoy lunch at a local tavern. Omodos is considered the "center of wine" on the island. The village produces a lot of wine and holds an annual wine festival in August.

We will drive back to our hotel.

Overnight: Limassol

Meals: B, Farewell Dinner

Day 17: Fri, May 18, 2018 Departure

We will be transferred to the airport to take our flight back home.

Meals: B