

CLIA DESTINATION FACTSHEET

EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN



BEST TIME TO GO/WEATHER

Summers tend to last longer in the Eastern Mediterranean with temperatures often staying pleasantly warm deep into autumn. The main season generally starts in spring, with mild conditions and smaller crowds making this an ideal time to visit. The summer peak can be busy and blisteringly hot, before giving way to the autumnal months which are another good time to avoid the crowds and fierce heat.



10 REASONS TO CRUISE HERE

More to explore – the Eastern Mediterranean naturally divides into different regions and lends itself to vastly varying itineraries, from those concentrating on the Greek islands or the Adriatic Riviera to others featuring the Black Sea or the Holy Land.

Departure points aplenty – Venice is arguably the most unforgettable, while Piraeus (Athens) is an obvious choice for Greek island sailings and those heading further east. Istanbul is another. Eastern Med sailings also depart from other ports more westwards such as Civitavecchia (Rome) and Malta.

Cultural contrasts – from cosy tavernas in pretty Greek villages to busy bazaars thronging with bargain-hunters in Istanbul or the Venetian ambience of enchanting Adriatic towns and evocative aura of the Holy Land.

Longer summers – sailings benefit from warm sunny days that generally last longer than in the Western Mediterranean, often running to the end of October.

Ancient treasures – a veritable feast, with the most notable including the expansive Greco-Roman antiquities of Ephesus in Turkey; Athens' iconic Acropolis; the religious wonders of Jerusalem; and Katakolon in Greece, close to Olympia, the birthplace of the Olympic Games.

Renaissance glories – led by beautiful piazzas and palazzos of Venice whose influence can be seen along the Adriatic coastline in picturesque settlements of honey-stone hamlets with distinctive red roofs, bell towers and statuesque churches.

Islands galore – the Greek isles take centre-stage with popular stops including Corfu, Santorini and Mykonos along with hideaways such as Patmos and Milos. Malta, Sicily and Cyprus also feature in some itineraries as do the Dalmatian Islands in Croatia.

Wealth of history – the walled city of Dubrovnik with its atmospheric old town; the minarets and mosques of Istanbul; the turbulent past of the Black Sea where ports include stately Odessa, founded by Russia's Catherine the Great; and Malta with its links to the Knights of St John.

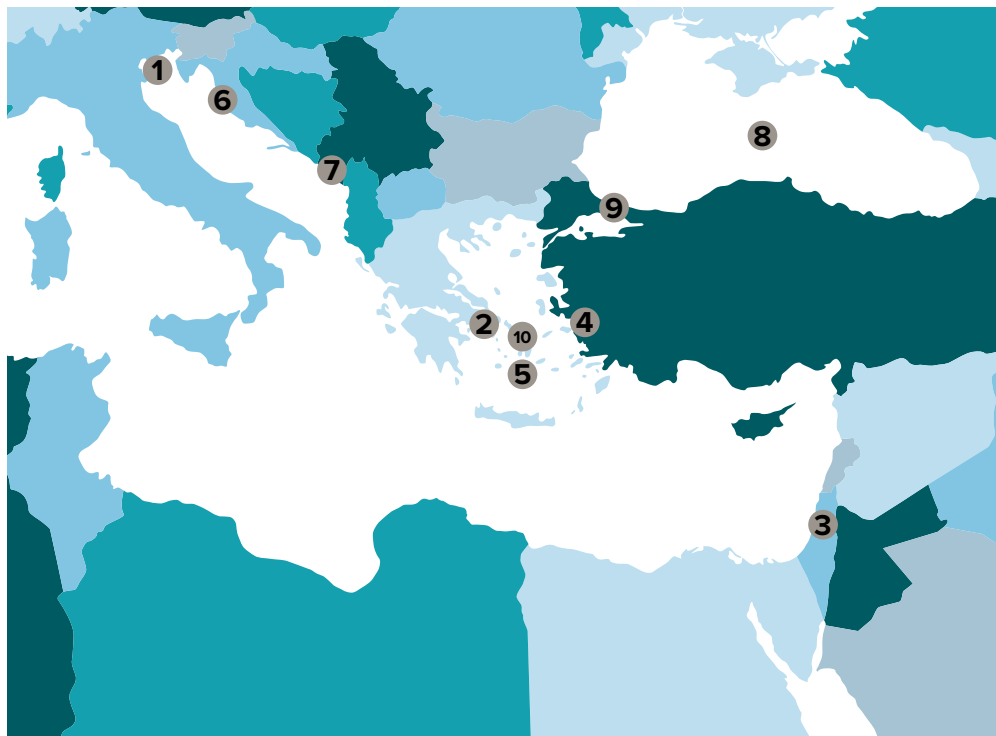
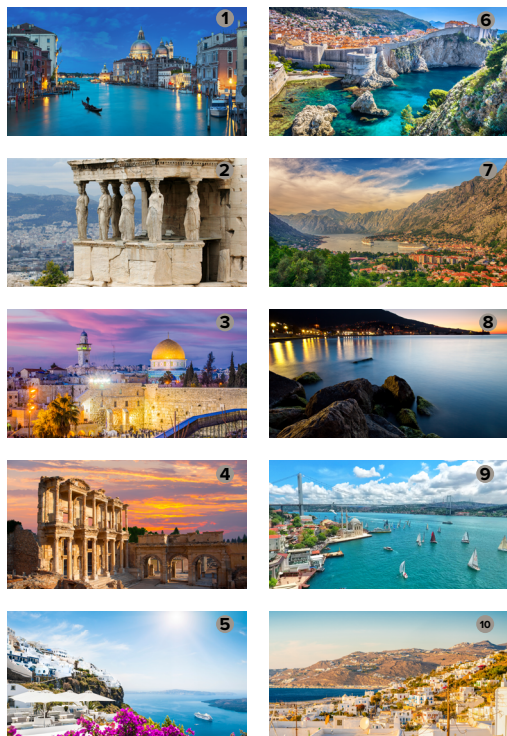
Beach life – from chic enclaves in Mykonos to pretty coves dotted along Turkey's coastline plus the beautiful seascape of Croatia with its offshore islands, renowned beaches of Cyprus and away-from-it-all Greek islands such as Ikaria.

Rustic romance – atmospheric Kotor in Montenegro, tucked away in southern Europe's largest fjord; the captivating Adriatic coastal town of Piran in Slovenia; and escapist feel of the Cyclades isles of Symi and Sifnos.

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10 KEY ATTRACTIONS



- 1. Venice** – this world-famous city of canals and singing gondoliers is full of stately squares and grand palazzo that makes an unforgettable backdrop to any ship departure or arrival.
- 2. Athens** – the ancient roots of the Greek capital are plain to see with its most famous attraction, the Acropolis that gazes down upon a maze of streets filled with cafes and bars.
- 3. Holy Land** – Israel is a country of contradictions and contrasts, from the heady exuberance of Tel Aviv to the religious orthodoxy of Jerusalem with Biblical references every way you turn.
- 4. Ephesus** – reached from either Izmir or Kusadasi, this ancient port city, dating from the 10th century, is a bucket list draw that deserves its Unesco World Heritage status thanks to extensive well-preserved remains that line the stone-paved streets.
- 5. Santorini** – whitewashed houses clinging to the craggy slopes of this volcanic isle – created by a powerful eruption nearly 4,000 years ago – make this one of the most dramatic and photogenic Greek islands.
- 6. Croatian coast** – sparkling azure seas, beautiful beaches and enchanting coastal towns, led by the beguiling appeal of its two main draws, the beautiful walled city of Dubrovnik and the atmospheric charm of Split.
- 7. Kotor** – few places can match the spectacular mountainous backdrop of this atmospheric medieval hideaway, approached through the stunning Bay of Kotor in Montenegro, with labyrinthine stone streets brimming with history.
- 8. Black Sea** – the pretty coastline of Ukraine, more reminiscent of the Italian Riviera; stately cities; and the buzzing beach resorts of Bulgaria and Romania underpinned with dramatic history; make this a fascinating destination.
- 9. Istanbul** – this atmospheric Turkish city is a vibrant melting pot that straddles two continents. Its location marks the point where Europe reaches out to Asia amid the mosques and minarets of its winding streets and famous Grand Bazaar teaming with more than 4,000 shops.
- 10. Mykonos** – the ultimate party hotspot of the Greek islands, this chic hangout more reminiscent of Ibiza or St. Tropez is famed for its picture postcard prettiness, cool restaurants and stylish nightspots.

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10 THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GO:

Choose departure points carefully – flight prices to Athens can rocket in the summer months, whereas rates to other cruise departure points such as Venice or Civitavecchia can remain much more reasonable. Check and compare.

Big ship v small ship – larger ships will take you to the region's headline ports and bigger towns and cities while smaller vessels can moor up at the smaller islands where they will often be the only ones visiting at any one time.

Beaches or culture – check itineraries carefully to establish which ports have access to the best beaches and which are most conveniently located for historical sites, depending on what your customer is looking for.

Watch the summer heat – temperatures can get sky high, which makes exploring historical sites hot work. Cultural fans are best advised to plan such trips in the more temperate months of spring or autumn.

Get genned up – advise customers to study each port in advance so they can plan trips ashore and decide where best to take cruise ship excursions or do their own thing.

Be prepared – advise clients that there can be lots of walking around ancient sites on uneven paths and stone steps and remind them that religious sites will require visitors to be suitably dressed.

Get organised – be sure to book tickets or tours for the most popular attractions in busy tourist cities like Venice, Athens and Dubrovnik to avoid queues, particularly in the busy summer months.

Mobility issues – some smaller ports, such as those in the Greek islands and along the Croatian coast, can only be reached by tender, which could prove difficult for passengers with limited mobility.

Hotspots or hideaways – Mykonos and the larger Greek islands are ideal for livewires looking for action as are cities such as Athens and Dubrovnik, while smaller islands including Hvar (in Croatia) and Patmos (in Greece) or Nauplia on the Greek mainland are more chilled and peaceful.

Overnight stays – look for those in itineraries as some lines build in extra time to enjoy the likes of Mykonos and Santorini during evenings after the day-trippers depart.

