

island owed its prosperity during ancient times to its proximity to the coast of Asia Minor. Its name derives from the Mourgos, a rare plant used to extract the red dye for royal garments. You'll have the rest of the morning to experience the traditional ambiance of this undiscovered gem.

After lunch back aboard our ship, we cruise to the isle of Patmos, arriving in time for dinner onboard.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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Day 13 - May 24, 2012 Explore Patmos/Cruise to Kusadasi, Turkey

This morning, we explore the beautiful and rugged island of Patmos, named a Sacred Island by the Greek government in 1981 and long a popular pilgrimage site. Though small in size, Patmos abounds in ancient myth. It was believed that Patmos originally existed at the bottom of the sea, visible only by moonlight, until Zeus gained permission from Poseidon, his brother, to raise it into the light and warm it into life. According to Roman legend, the island received its name when Poseidon stepped on it (*patima* being Greek for "step"). And it is also said that Orestes fled to this island to escape the vengeance of the Furies after he killed his mother, Clytemnestra.

The island served as exile for another important figure from history: St. John the Evangelist, one of Jesus' twelve apostles. At the time, the island's near inaccessibility made it a perfect site for the banishment of criminals and political agitators. Exiled from Ephesus, St. John lived in a grotto beneath the Temple of Diana for 18 months, between AD 95 and 97. It was there that he was said to have received his vision of fire and brimstone and dictated the *Book of Revelation*. He also wrote the Fourth Gospel during this period.

During this morning's included tour of this UNESCO World Heritage Site, we'll visit the Holy Cave of the Apocalypse, where St. John lived and worked. If you see cracks in the walls of the cave, consider that they are said to have appeared when the apostle heard the voice of the Lord. We'll also explore the eleventh-century Monastery of St. John, built by the

monk Christodoulos on the ruins of the Temple of Diana. Fortified over the next two centuries to protect it against marauding pirates, this imposing monastery is visible virtually everywhere on the island and has remained in continuous operation for more than 900 years. We'll see some priceless religious relics during our visit here, and be sure to listen for the remarkable acoustics inside the main chapel. We'll also enjoy breathtaking views of the Aegean in Hora, the 17th-century town of dazzling white houses that tumbles down the hillside surrounding the citadel.

After lunch back aboard our ship, enjoy some free time on Patmos before our ship sets sail for Kusadasi, arriving in the evening. Enjoy the Captain's Farewell Cocktail and Dinner as our ship remains moored at Kusadasi.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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Day 14 - May 25, 2012 Disembark ship/Explore Ephesus/Fly to Istanbul

We disembark our small ship in Kusadasi this morning and head out to probe the ruins of nearby Ephesus—one of the best-preserved and most extensive (2,000 acres) classical Greco-Roman city in Asia. Located 60 miles from Izmir, Ephesus dates to at least 1300 BC and was home to the early philosopher Heraclitus. As the commercial center and capital city of Roman Asia Minor, it was once the fourth-largest city in the Roman Empire, boasting a population numbering more than 300,000. One ancient legend attributes the founding of Ephesus to the Amazons of Greek mythology. Another credits the Athenian Androclus, who received advice from an oracle to establish a colony at the "place of the fish and the boar." And so, when he and his crew saw a wild pig charge out of underbrush set ablaze inadvertently by locals grilling fish, he staked his claim on the Anatolian shore. Since 1992, Grand Circle Foundation has been contributing to the preservation and ongoing excavations of this remarkable site, with its donations to the Foundation of Friends of Ephesus.

Our discoveries in Ephesus include a visit to the Basilica of St. John, constructed in the fifth century