

## Ephesus, Turkey (Kusadasi) (Special Eastern Mediterranean Itinerary)

The old town of Kusadasi rests on the west coast of Turkey (known as the “**Turkish Riviera**”). As a center for art and culture, this resort town attracts visitors with its close proximity to the Ephesus outpost. Ephesus itself was an ancient Greek city, and now an archaeological site.



Library of Celsus in Ephesus

Kusadasi is **perched on a bay**, sticking out into the Aegean Sea. Outdoor cafes serving thick coffee, Turkish baths, carpet and rug shops, and a modern European style are easily found in the town. The real draw here is nearby Ephesus, arguably the best-preserved ancient city in the Eastern Mediterranean, housing one of the seven wonders of the Old World. A visit to these ruins is like taking a step back in time to a place where both the Virgin Mary and Alexander the Great strolled, the great library housed thousands of scrolls, and St. Paul the Apostle lived and wrote.

Ephesus and the surrounding area has been inhabited from about 6000 BC. In the 10th century it became an Attic-Ionian colony, later joining the Ionian League. Alexander the Great later liberated the town in the Battle of Granicus. During the Roman period, Ephesus became capital of Asia Minor—second only in importance to Rome—and grew very prosperous. The city built the Temple of Artemis, the Library of Celsus, and the Theater, which could hold 25,000 spectators for **performances and gladiatorial contests**. Sadly, the city was destroyed by the Goths in 263 AD and the harbor was slowly silted up. The Turkish era of the city began in 1304 and it began to flourish again, only to be completely abandoned in the 15th century.

**Size:** 87 sq. mi. (224.6 sq. km.)

**Climate:** Humid subtropical

**Temperatures:** 7°F (7°C) to 72°F (33°C)

**Population:** 70,000

**Busy Season:** May to October

**Language:** Turkish

**Money:** New Turkish Lira (1 = \$0.54 US)

**Time Zone:** EET

**Transportation:** Walking, taxis, buses

**Phones:** Area code 90-0256, dial 155 or 112 for emergencies

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## Making the Most of Ephesus

### GETTING THERE

The Magic docks at Kusadasi Port, which extends out into the harbor and accommodates four large cruise ships. You can step right off the ship (no tendering necessary), stroll along the dock, and walk into the Grand Bazaar in a matter of minutes, if you wish. There are plenty of places to shop and eat—even a bookstore—right beyond the port gate. The Magic is scheduled to dock in Kusadasi on Saturday, June 22, 2013, Saturday, July 2, 2014, and Friday, July 18, 2014. All ashore is 7:15–8:00 am, all aboard is 6:30–6:45 pm.

### GETTING AROUND

In Kusadasi, it's easiest to simply **walk** around the town. Grab a map on your way off the ship, or pick one up from the Kusadasi Tourist Information Office across the street from the harbor. You can easily reach the “old” section of Kusadasi by walking north along the main street until you get to the top—you're looking for the ancient Kaleici neighborhood with tiny streets and even Turkish baths. **Taxis** and minibuses are also available, but they're really only necessary if you're going somewhere like Ephesus (14 miles away from port) or the House of Virgin Mary (10 miles away from port) on your own (but we really don't recommend that). As is usual with taxis in tourist areas, be sure you confirm the price in advance. Getting around when you're at **Ephesus**, which is a very large place, will require a great deal of walking and climbing. If you go as part of a port adventure, be aware that your pickup and drop-off may be a different points (i.e., drop-off at Magnesia Gate, pick-up at north end), so be sure you know.

### SAFETY

This resort town is **remarkably safe** compared to others on your cruise itinerary. Your biggest dangers are likely to be sunburn, dehydration, and possibly a bad deal on a souvenir. Just use common sense and stay aware.

### SHOPPING

Looking for a little **Turkish delight**? You'll find this confection for sale, along with many other local items, including dark honey, traditional coffee and tea service, carpets and rugs (kilim), leather coats, copper trays, and gold and silver jewelry. If you are tempted to buy something called zultanite, check for authenticity. It's fine to haggle in the marketplaces—in fact, we'd say it's all part of the experience of shopping in a Turkish marketplace! Feel free to start at  $\frac{1}{3}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the offered price and work from there.

## Touring Ephesus



*The Great Theater in Ephesus is still used for concerts today.*

Most cruisers who go ashore are likely to be heading to the great **Ephesus**, which deserves a bit more attention. First, be sure to bring your warm weather gear (hat, sunscreen, and water), patience (for the crowds), and a sense of adventure. The main sites are the Library of Celsus (it once held 12,000 scrolls), the Temple of Artemis (one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World), the Great Theater (largest outdoor theater in the old world), the Odeon (a smaller theater that once had a roof), the Temple of Hadrian (reconstruction from fragments), the Temple of Domitian (largest temple in the city), the Fountain of Pollio, and two Agoras (assembly halls). Also here are the Terrace Houses, where the powerful and wealthy lived during the Roman period—among the six residential units you'll find detailed frescos and mosaics, courtyards, and evidence of clay pipes that provided heat and running water. You'll want to have a guide of some sort when visiting—there aren't many signs. If you're on your own, you can buy a tourbook on site or hire a local guide for a decent price. The entrance fee is 25 Lira, with the Terrace Houses an additional fee of 15 Lira. There's also a museum you can visit for 8 Lira.



## Embarking on Port Adventures in Ephesus

Of the 28 excursions offered by Disney Cruise Line at press time, here are our **recommended port adventures** for visitors to Kusadasi/Ephesus:

**See It All:** The Best of Ephesus tour (\$99/\$68 ages 3 to 9/\$0 ages 0 to 2) gives you a full-day experience where you get guided tours of all the major historical sites: House of the Virgin Mary, Ephesus, and St. John's Basilica. You even get lunch and a chance to visit Kusadasi. Best bang for your buck!

**Signature:** The Exclusive Ephesus and Terrace Houses with Archeologist Encounter (\$129/\$79 ages 3 to 9/\$0 ages 0 to 2) gets you to Ephesus and the Terrace Houses, as well as the opportunity to meet with a local archaeologist for 30 minutes to discuss the recent findings and techniques.

**Immersive:** The Ephesian Modus Vivandi excursion \$149/\$119 ages 3 to 9/\$0 ages 0 to 2) takes you to Ephesus, the Terrace Houses, and St. John's Basilica, and then gives you the opportunity to don period outfits and join a Roman feast with "Romans and Ephesians of Ancient Times." Fun!

**Spa:** Try the Turkish Bath Experience (\$55 ages 18 and up) for a visit to a traditional "hamam" (Turkish bathhouse) where you'll get to experience a cleansing ritual in the communal area—attendants will provide scrubbing and foam baths. An optional olive oil massage is available afterward for 20–25 Euro per person.

**Family:** The Ephesus and Sirince Village Featuring Exclusive Youth Activity (\$139/\$79 ages 5 to 9) offers a 105-minute guided walking tour of Ephesus followed by a visit to the village of Sirince where kids get the opportunity to make a Turkish bracelet. An al fresco buffet lunch is included. If you want something more active, consider the Ephesus and Aquapark excursion (\$110/\$75 ages 3 to 9/\$0 ages 0 to 2) which includes a tour of Ephesus and a 4-hour visit to a waterpark with 12 slides, a wave pool, and a lazy river.

**Armchair:** The Easy Ephesus tour (no price listed) is a bus tour to the Gate of Ephesus, a stop at the Statue of the Virgin Mary, a drive down to the lower gate of Ephesus, and then a stop at the Temple of Artemis. This 3–3.5-hour tour is designed for guests who have difficulty walking and is wheelchair friendly. The bus has an access ramp.

