SPECIAL PAYMENT TERMS

For peace of mind, your payments are 100% refundable until June 28, 2021. See inside for more details.

VOYAGE ON THE
Black Sea
Aboard Island Sky • October 1–12, 2021
With archaeologist Owen Doonan
Dear Traveler,

Legendary Jason and the Argonauts searched for the Golden Fleece at the end of the known world—the Black Sea, between Europe and Asia Minor, along whose shores the fortunes of ancient empires waxed and waned. Join our fascinating Archaeological Institute of America lecturer and host, archaeologist Owen Doonan, and circumnavigate this fabled sea, discovering ancient civilizations, vibrant contemporary cultures, and beautiful landscapes.

Cruise round-trip from Istanbul aboard the 59-cabin Island Sky, visiting a variety of historic sites and cities, enjoying dance and music performances, and sampling delicious local cuisines. From the ports of Samsun, Trabzon, Batumi, Sochi, Odessa, and Varna, and via charter flight to Tbilisi, you will enjoy fascinating, included excursions. When we call at Samsun, you may choose between two included excursions, one of which is a special visit to the site where your AIA host has directed the Sinop Regional Archaeological Project for more than 20 years.

As we circumnavigate this historic body of water, you will enjoy a series of onboard lectures by Professor Doonan and one or more other experts. They and local guides at each port of call will put this complex region into context, touching on the vastly different countries and cultures that have coexisted on the Black Sea’s shores for millennia. And, to further enhance your experience, you may choose to extend your journey with a pre-trip stay in Istanbul.

The Island Sky comfortably accommodates 92 guests, and AIA travelers are sharing this adventure with members of other organizations, so I encourage you to contact our office today at aia@studytours.org or (800) 748-6262 to reserve your preferred cabin.

With kind regards,

R. Todd Nielsen
Director, AIA Tours
Archaeological Institute of America

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE OF AMERICA AND THE AIA TOURS PROGRAM
The Archaeological Institute of America (AIA) is the oldest and largest archaeological organization in North America. The AIA seeks to educate people of all ages about the significance of archaeological discovery. For more than a century the AIA has been dedicated to the encouragement and support of archaeological research and publication, and to the protection of the world’s archaeological resources and cultural heritage. By traveling on an AIA tour you directly support the AIA while personally gaining the benefit of the AIA’s network of scholars and worldwide contacts.
**Study Leader**

Archaeological Institute of America lecturer and host Owen Doonan has directed the Sinop Regional Archaeological Project in Turkey since 1996. He received his B.A. (1986) and M.A. (1989) degrees in Classics and Classical Archaeology at Tufts University, and his Ph.D. in Old World Archaeology from Brown University (1993). Professor Doonan began his teaching career in the Archaeology Department of Bilkent University in Ankara, Turkey (1992-1995). Since 2003, he has taught ancient Art History and Archaeology at California State University Northridge. Professor Doonan has served as President and Vice President of the L.A. County Society of the AIA, chairs the AIA’s Eastern Europe and Eurasia Interest Group, was recognized as the AIA’s G.M.A. Hanfmann Lecturer (2016-2017), and serves on the AIA Fellowships Committee. An active field archaeologist, he has also excavated in Italy, Greece, Spain, and Israel. Author of more than 50 books and articles, Professor Doonan has been awarded grants from the NEH, National Geographic Society, the Getty Foundation, and the Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung for his research. He is particularly interested in public outreach and proactive engagement with the Turkish-American community in North America and with our host community of Sinop, Turkey.

**Highlights**

- Enjoy **insider access to our lecturer’s excavation site** at Sinop Kale, as well as the nearby Sinop Archaeological Museum, one of the oldest museums in Turkey.
- Fly to **Tbilisi** on a private charter flight to explore the Georgian capital's bold Narikala fortress and Orthodox churches.
- Climb the spectacular heights of the culturally and religiously significant **Greek Orthodox Monastery of the Virgin Mary (Sumela Monastery)**, carved into the Pontic Mountains near Trabzon.
- Hear the music of the a cappella singers of Odessa's Uspensky Cathedral and enjoy **private concerts** in Odessa and Varna.
- Delight in a performance of incomparable Georgian folk dancers and dine on **local specialties** in Batumi.
- Explore the historic Turkish town of **Amasya**, where Pontic tombs honeycomb the mountains and fine classical Ottoman buildings line the riverbanks.
Itinerary

Friday & Saturday, October 1 & 2
Home / Istanbul, Turkey
Depart home on an overnight flight to Istanbul. Upon arrival on October 2nd, transfer to the Island Sky for a welcome orientation and reception while cruising the Bosphorus Strait.

ISLAND SKY (R,D)

Sunday, October 3
At Sea
Relax aboard ship as the Island Sky cruises along Turkey's coastline. Enjoy the beginning of the lecture program.

ISLAND SKY (B,L,D)

Monday, October 4
Samsun / Amasya
Dock in Samsun, where Ataturk orchestrated the birth of the new Turkish republic in the 1920s. Choose to: A) Drive to the fortified town of Sinop to visit an excavation site of a Late Roman complex as well as the impressive Archaeological Museum, or B) Travel to Amasya, the former capital of the ancient Pontic Kingdom and a treasure of rock-hewn tombs, classical wooden mansions, and Seljuk and Ottoman monuments.

ISLAND SKY (B,L,D)

Tuesday, October 5
Trabzon
Upon arrival in Trabzon, travel to the spectacularly situated Greek Orthodox Monastery of the Virgin Mary (Sumela Monastery) in the Pontic Mountains. View the monastery's colorful frescoes, some dating from the 9th century. Enjoy free time for independent exploration of the monastery before returning to the ship.

ISLAND SKY (B,L,D)

Wednesday, October 6
Batumi, Georgia
Batumi, a seaport on the Black Sea coast of Georgia, lies at the northern edge of the humid subtropical zone. This afternoon, visit the Batumi Botanical Gardens, which overlook the Black Sea and are among the richest botanical gardens in the world. Admire lush plantings from nine different floristic sectors, from the Caucasus to Australasia, the Himalayas, and the Mediterranean. Enjoy dinner off the ship and a performance by a noted Georgian folk dance ensemble.

ISLAND SKY (B,L,D)

Thursday, October 7
Tbilisi
Take an early morning charter flight from Batumi to Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia. On arrival explore the 4th-century Narikala Fortress, which dominates the Old Town skyline; Abanotubani, the historic bath house district; and the city's churches and Eastern Orthodox cathedral. Return to Batumi for dinner on board.

ISLAND SKY (B,L,D)

Friday, October 8
Sochi, Russia
Tour the host city of the 2014 Winter Olympics and discover the Russian Riviera for Stalin's Dacha and Matsesta Bathhouse.

ISLAND SKY (B,L,D)

Saturday, October 9
At Sea
The onboard lecture series continues as the ship cruises to Odessa.

ISLAND SKY (B,L,D)
Sunday, October 10
Odessa, Ukraine
Odessa is a city of resplendent mansions and fine old churches. Disembark this afternoon for a city tour and visit to the Holocaust memorial and the Potemkin Steps, famously depicted in Sergei Eisenstein’s classic 1925 silent film Battleship Potemkin. Tour the stunning Hapsburg-style opera house and delight in the enchanting singing of the Eastern Orthodox Uspensky Cathedral choir.
ISLAND SKY (B,L,D)

Monday, October 11
Varna, Bulgaria
Arrive in Varna, the largest city and resort on Bulgaria’s Black Sea coast, for an afternoon of exploration. Marvel at the world-class collection of Scythian gold from the 5th millennium B.C.E. at the archaeological museum, visit the imposing domed Cathedral of the Assumption, and enjoy an a cappella choir performance. Celebrate your Black Sea voyage at a festive farewell reception and dinner on board.
ISLAND SKY (B,L,D)

Tuesday, October 12
Istanbul / Home
Disembark and transfer to Istanbul airport for flights home. (B)

Optional Pre-Tour Extension in Istanbul
September 28–October 2
Spend three days exploring the exceptional treasures of Istanbul, including the Sultan Ahmed Mosque, popularly known as the Blue Mosque; Chora Church, a Byzantine marvel of fine mosaics and frescoes; Topkapi Palace, an opulent royal enclave; and the delightful Grand Bazaar.

Further details and pricing will be sent to confirmed participants.

PHOTO CREDITS: Batumi at night © Oleksii Grygorenko; Odessa Opera © Serhi Liakhevych; Sulfur Baths © Coconutdreams; Varna Cathedral © Aleksandar Todorovic; Batumi Botanical Gardens © Olya Solodenko; Abanotubani © Anthony Shaw; Sumela Monastery © Asafta; Sumela View © Petitfrere; Amasya © Xantana; Odessa Opera Interior © Ksya; Tbilisi © Saiko3p
General Information

Program Rates (per person)

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PROGRAM RATES INCLUDE
All accommodations, meals, and excursions as specified in the itinerary, including ten breakfasts, nine lunches, ten dinners, and ten nights aboard Island Sky • Comprehensive program of briefings, lectures, and presentations • Charter flights between Batumi and Tbilisi • Group transfers for all participants on group arrival and departure dates • All gratuities to porters, wait staff, guides, drivers and shipboard personnel for all group activities • Entrance fees and port charges • Welcome and farewell wine receptions • House wine, beer, and soft drinks with all group lunches and dinners • Bottled water on motorcoaches • Comprehensive packet of pre-departure information • Professional tour manager throughout the program

AIR ARRANGEMENTS
U.S. domestic and international airfare is not included in the program rates. Valerie Wilson Travel, Inc., can help with airline arrangements for this trip and can be reached at 877-376-1754. You are also welcome to book your air transportation through your local travel agent, an online travel site, or the airline of your choice. Further information about making flight arrangements will be sent to confirmed participants.

WHAT TO EXPECT
This is a moderately active trip for travelers who are flexible, comfortable traveling with a group, and can handle the vagaries of travel with good humor. Navigating uneven terrain, walking on cobblestone pavement, and standing for up to two hours in museums or other sites are the most strenuous activities. Some locations may have stairs without handrails. Travelers must be able to board the ship via a metal gangplank with rope handrails. The ship does not have an elevator, so you will need to navigate stairs, possibly while on choppy seas. If the tour manager decides that a participant cannot visit a site safely or in a timely manner, their judgment will be final. Where possible, an alternate activity may be suggested; additional costs may apply. Participants should be fit and in active good health. Limited medical facilities are available on board the Island Sky.

INSURANCE
Travel insurance for trip cancellation and interruption, medical problems, baggage loss and delay, etc., is highly recommended. Cancellation policies that apply to this expedition are included in this brochure. Information about travel insurance will be sent to confirmed participants.

The Island Sky is a 59-cabin all-suite expedition ship. All cabins have an ocean view, en-suite bathroom with marble-topped vanity unit and walk-in shower; sitting area, spacious wardrobe, safe, minibar, individually controlled heat/air-conditioning, flat-screen television and dressing table. The ship’s amenities include complimentary WiFi, a dining room, two lounges with bar service, a small library, an observation deck with comfortable lounge chairs, a hairdresser and laundry service. An elevator services all passenger cabin decks. The Island Sky’s chefs prepare quality international meals, predominantly Western-style, served at a single open seating. A friendly crew provides exceptional, personalized service, with more than a 1:2 crew-to-passenger ratio. The ship features advanced satellite navigation and communication equipment, roll stabilizers and a fleet of Zodiac landing craft.
TRIP CANCELLATION & REFUNDS

The itinerary and study leader presented for this tour are subject to modification and change by AIA Tours and Criterion Travel. Every reasonable effort will be made to operate the program as planned; however, should unforeseen world events and conditions require the itinerary to be altered, AIA Tours and the tour operator reserve the right to do so for the safety and best interest of the group. Any extra expenses incurred in this situation are the responsibility of the participant.

RESPONSIBILITY

By submitting your deposit, you are bound to the terms and conditions delineated throughout this brochure. Due to space limitations, these are not AIA Tours’ complete Terms & Conditions, which are available upon request, can be viewed on-line at www.aiatours.org, and will be sent to you along with a Release of Liability requiring your signature.

California Seller of Travel Program CST #2088800-40
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