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From
$9,289 USD

Single Room
$11,437 USD

Twin Room
$9,289 USD

Prices valid until
30th December 2024

21 days
Duration

Portugal, Spain
Destination

Level 2 - Moderate
Activity

Lisbon & Barcelona small group tour

Jun 10 2024 to Jun 30 2024



Small group Tour of Lisbon & Barcelona

Join Odyssey Traveller as we explore the history, culture, architecture, and cuisine of the cities of Lisbon and Barcelona over 21 days. This is a small group tour for up to 16 travellers. Join a group of like minded mature and senior travellers as a couple or solo traveller to explore and

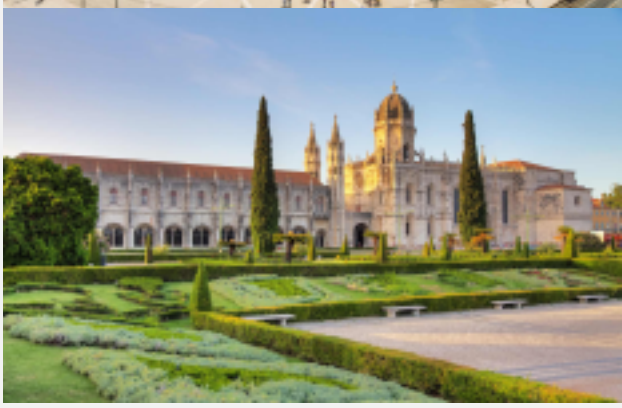
live briefly in two of Europes great historic cities.

This trip will not be confined to the two major cities, however, as we will also take excursions to famous heritage towns–such as Sintra and Montserrat–and smaller medieval and seaside towns–such as Nazare, Mafra, and Girona–that are not normally included in other commercial tours of the Iberian Peninsula. We will spend 10 nights each in Lisbon and Barcelona, staying in centrally located hotels close the cities' main sights for leisurely sightseeing, and using them as our base for our day trips as we venture deeper into Portugal and Spain. We will use private coaches and public transport when appropriate, and go on walking tours to experience the pulse and vibrancy of the cities. As always, participants on this small group tour will have the services of an Odyssey Program Leader and local guides who will share their knowledge of the places we will visit.

In addition to our history and cultural trips, we will also have time for vacation as the itinerary includes plenty of free time to relax or experience Lisbon and Barcelona on our own.







Lisbon

We begin our three-week tour in Lisbon, the capital and largest city of Portugal, sitting on the Atlantic coast and serving as the country's chief port. It is also distinguished as the westernmost capital city in continental Europe. The city's name is a variant of Olisipo, which may have been derived from the pre-Roman name for the Tagus River (Lisso). Lisbon's history has been shaped by the sea. As a port city, Lisbon has been a gateway to the wider world, molded by a succession of different cultures. In 711, Lisbon, along with most of present-day Spain and Portugal came under the control of the Muslim Umayyad Caliphate. During this period, Lisbon became one of the largest cities in Europe. The city's new rulers improved the fortifications of the castle and built town walls that still remain in place. Lisbon's oldest extant neighbourhood, Alfama – from the Arabic al-Hamma, meaning 'public

baths' – was built in this period.

The city reached its heights after the Reconquista and during the Age of Exploration. It developed its own architectural style, Manueline, named after its monarch Manuel I. This architectural style, seen only in Portugal in the 16th century, is characterised by rich and lavish ornamentation and nautical themes, such as moldings encrusted with carved barnacles and nautical instruments over windows and doors. The style flourished only for a few decades, bridging the Gothic style and the Renaissance and Mannerist styles that became popular in Portugal.

In 1755, Lisbon was totally devastated by an earthquake that destroyed its buildings and killed up to 60,000 people. The city rebuilt itself, and on this tour we will learn more about its history.

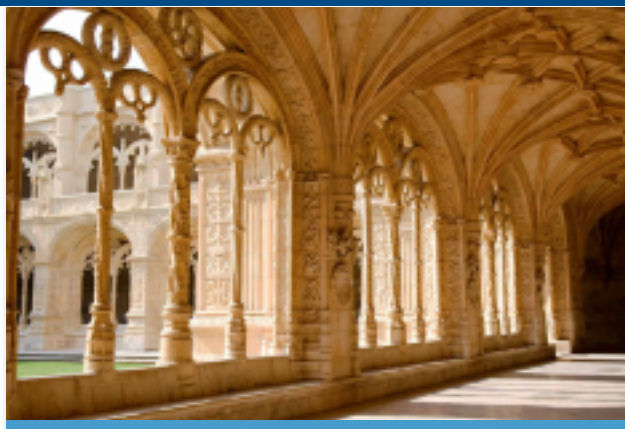
Lisbon Tour Highlights

We will visit several destinations listed by UNESCO as World Heritage Sites, including the iconic Belem district in Lisbon, the colourful Sintra historic centre filled with castles in the style of 19th century Romantic architecture, the medieval town of Obidos and the impressive Monastery of Batalha built to commemorate the 1385 Portuguese victory over the Castilians.

We will experience a stunning Fado performance at a local restaurant and visit the birthplace of Fado, Mouraria. Fado ("fate") is a type of Portuguese expressive and melancholic musical performance which dates back to the 1830s.

We will enjoy spectacular views of the cities we will visit, from famous viewpoints in Lisbon, and Cape Roca in the westernmost point of mainland Europe, which provides a panoramic view of the Atlantic. In Nazare, we will have a guided half-day tour to learn more about the town's fishing traditions and view the beach famous among surfers the world over for its giant waves.

In addition to these experiences, we will also sample Portugal's culinary offerings. We will have a special visit to the Fabrica dos Pasteis de Belem, which has been baking the Portuguese custard tart since 1837.







We will have chance to taste this creamy pastry–its secret recipe guarded since the 19th century–and stroll inside the beautiful café-factory.







Barcelona

Lisbon's history is entwined with that of Barcelona's. In 1578 the Portuguese kingdom's young king died on the battlefield and plunged Portugal into a succession crisis. The crisis of succession lasted two years. Emerging victorious was King Philip II of Spain, whose claim to the throne was through his mother, Isabella, the second child of Manuel I. Philip II united the Spanish and Portuguese crowns, putting the entire Iberian Peninsula, as well as Portuguese colonies abroad, under the rule of Spain for six centuries.

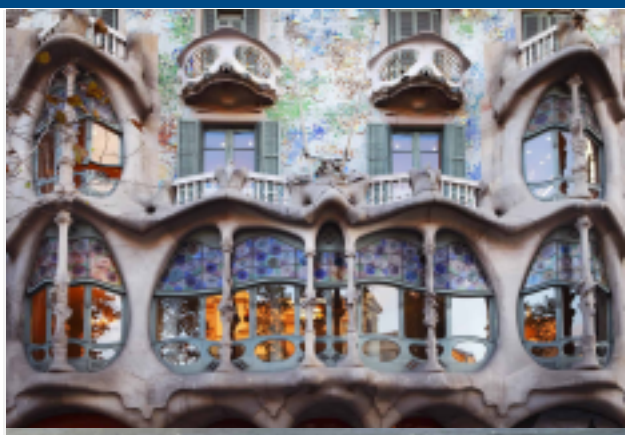
Barcelona has over 2,000 years of history, having been ruled by Romans, Visigoths and Franks. The city itself was founded as a military camp by the Romans at the end of the 1st century and named Barcino. It grew into a major trading city in the 12th century after the union of Catalonia and Aragon. It is now the sixth largest city in Europe, a dazzling seaside city alive with culture, colour and cuisine. Today, the city is one of Europe's most popular destinations, yet retains its unique culture and lifestyle.

Barcelona Tour Highlights

We will view the major sights in the heart of the city, including the many monuments designed by acclaimed architect Antonio Gaudi. We will visit its central square, Plaça de Catalunya, walk down tree-lined Las Ramblas and explore the medieval-era streets of the Gothic Quarter.

We will travel down to the foot of a striking multi-peaked mountain range to visit Monserrat (Montserrat in Catalan means "saw mountain"), and travel by cable car to an abbey nestled in the mountain to visit the Black Madonna. We will have a guided tour and tasting at a cava winery in Sant Sadurni d'Anoia. We will explore the medieval towns of Besalu and Girona. Fans of the show *Game of Thrones* may recognise Girona's Arab Baths and its cathedral as some scenes of the show were filmed

here.







Articles about Lisbon and Barcelona published by Odyssey Traveller.

The following list of articles published by Odyssey Traveller for mature aged and senior travellers may maximise their knowledge and enjoyment of Lisbon and Barcelona when visiting;

- History of Lisbon
- The Golden Years of Lisbon
- Travel Notes for Lisbon
- 15 of the best places in Spain to visit.
- Travel Notes for Barcelona
- Ten of the best books published on Spain
- Ten of the best art galleries in Europe to visit.
- Discovering Spain (and Portugal)

External articles to assist you on your visit to Portugal & Spain.

- The Culture of Portugal
- A Brief History of Portugal
- Portuguese Colonial War
- Lessons About the Moors in Spain
- Monarchs of Spain
- A Brief History of Spain

Other Odyssey Tours

This tour of Lisbon and Barcelona is only one of many Spain and Portugal tours offered by Odyssey Traveller. For more details, click the 'Top 5' or 'Itinerary' buttons above! If you're keen to experience this tour, please call or send an email. Or, to book, simply fill in the form on the right hand side of this page.







Highlights

1. Explore Lisbon's Belem district, which has many of the city's iconic monuments.
2. See the colourful Pena Palace, located at the top of the hill in the Sintra Mountains and celebrated as the grandest example of Romantic architecture.
3. Visit the Fabrica dos Pasteis de Belem, which has been baking the world-famous Portuguese custard tart since 1837.
4. Explore the city of Montserrat, and travel by cable car up to an abbey nestled in the mountain to visit the Black Madonna.
5. View the Gaudi-designed monuments in Barcelona.

Itinerary

Day 1

Locations: Lisbon

Overview:

We make our own way to our accommodation in Lisbon, where the group will meet with the Odyssey Program Leader. This evening the group will enjoy a welcome dinner at a nearby restaurant. (D)

Accommodation:

Altis Suites or similar



Day 2

Locations: Lisbon

Overview:

On our first full day in Lisbon, we will go on a guided tour of the neighbourhoods of Alfama and Graca, two of the oldest districts in the city.

We will stroll through the cobbled streets of **Alfama** and enjoy spectacular views of the city from several viewpoints. Many of the areas can be reached on foot, but as there are several steep streets we can take the tram in certain sections of the tour. This historical tour will include

- entrance to the 12th-century **Lisbon Cathedral**, the oldest cathedral in the city
- **Museum of Aljube**, which used to be a prison and is now a museum dedicated to the memory of the struggle against the dictatorship which governed Portugal from 1926 to 1974
- **Museum of Roman Theatre**, unearthed ruins of the ancient Roman theatre of the city of Olisipo, Lisbon's origins
- **Church of Sao Vicente de Fora**, known for having the world's largest collection of baroque tile art
- **Museum of Fado**, dedicated to Fado ("fate"), a type of Portuguese expressive and melancholic musical performance traditionally associated with pubs and cafes. The Lisbon style of Fado dates back to the 1830s, and we will experience this performance on Day 3

We will end the day's tour in the area of the **São Jorge Castle** (no internal visit) to view the Moorish castle overlooking Lisbon and the Tagus River.

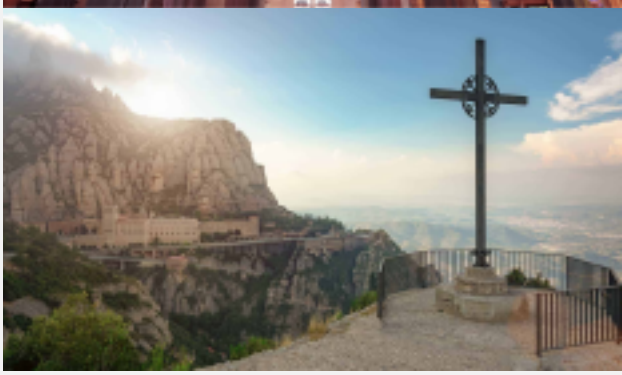
Dinner is at own expense. (B)

Accommodation:

Altis Suites or similar







Day 3

Locations: Lisbon

Overview:

Today we will go on a morning guided tour of **Fronteira Palace**, built in the 17th century and considered one of the most beautiful residences in Lisbon with its spectacular decorative tiles, frescoed panels, and works of art. This private residence of the Marquesses of Fronteira was built in 1671 as a hunting pavilion of the 1st Marquis of Fronteira, Dom João de Mascarenhas.

In the afternoon, we will take a guided tour of the historic **Mouraria** neighbourhood at the foot of São Jorge (St. George) Castle, birthplace of Lisbon Fado and a vibrant art scene. Mouraria or “Moorish Quarter” was named as such as this became the sanctuary for Muslims after Afonso I reclaimed the city and banished Muslims living inside the castle walls. It continued to become a sanctuary for immigrants through the years, and today it is Lisbon’s most culturally diverse districts. Among the many sights we will see on our tour include the **Escadinhas de São Cristovão** which has walls of murals dedicated to Fado, and the home of singer **Maria Severa Onofriana** whose performances brought fame to Fado and lifted her to near-mythical status in Mouraria. She died from tuberculosis at the age of 26 in 1846, and today her old apartment is a fado venue.

In the evening we will have dinner and experience a performance of Fado at a local Fado house (possibly in the cosy Mesa de Frades, which used to be a chapel). (B, D)

Accommodation:

Altis Suites or similar

Day 4

Locations: Lisbon

Overview:

Today we will focus on the Portuguese Age of Discovery. We will spend the full day in the Belem neighbourhood, a village located at the mouth of the Tagus River, where Portuguese fleets departed to reach the



Atlantic and sail around the globe.

Many of the city's iconic monuments are located here. We will have a special visit to the **Fabrica dos Pasteis de Belem**, which has been baking the Portuguese custard tart since 1837. We will have chance to taste this creamy pastry–its secret recipe guarded since the 19th century–and stroll inside the beautiful café-factory.

We will move on to two UNESCO World Heritage Sites–the **Jeronimos Monastery**, a former monastery of the order of St. Jerome that has since been secularised; and the **Tower of Belem**, built around 1514 on the banks of the river to defend the port of Lisbon.

We will also explore the **Berardo Museum**, a museum of modern and contemporary art, and **Coaches Museum**, which houses a valuable collection of horse-drawn carriages.

Dinner tonight is at own expense. (B)

Accommodation:

Altis Suites or similar



Day 5

Locations: Lisbon

Overview:

Today we will enjoy a full day tour of Chiado, Principe Real and Estrela, newer neighbourhoods that offer upscale shops and glimpses into Lisbon's past. Among the monuments we will visit are the ruins of the **Carmo Convent**, a Catholic convent destroyed during the Lisbon earthquake of 1755 and which now remains as a reminder of the tragedy. It now houses the **Carmo Archaeological Museum**, which is dedicated to Portuguese history.

While Carmo Convent was destroyed, **Igreja de Sao Roque** survived the massive earthquake, and we will visit this as well. Sao Roque was the first Jesuit church constructed in Portugal.

There will also be time to visit Lisbon's landmark basilica, **Basilica da Estrela**, have food and perhaps go shopping in **Campo de Ourique,** and explore the **National Museum of Ancient Art,** Portugal's national

art museum. (B)

Accommodation:

Altis Suites or similar



Day 6

Locations: Lisbon

Overview:

Today is a free day to spend at our leisure. Use this time to relax or see more of the city. (B)

Accommodation:

Altis Suites or similar

Day 7

Locations: Lisbon - Sintra - Lisbon

Overview:

From Lisbon, we travel to the city of **Sintra**, a UNESCO heritage town famous for its 19th century Romantic architecture. Its historic centre is listed as a World Heritage Site. It has many royal palaces and gardens, and early today, to avoid the crowds, we will explore the colourful **Pena Palace**, located at the top of the hill in the Sintra Mountains. It has a mix of styles running the architectural gamut from neo-Gothic to neo-Renaissance, and is celebrated as the grandest example of Romantic architecture.

We will stop for lunch, possibly at Lawrence's Hotel restaurant. Lawrence's Hotel is the oldest hotel on the Iberian Peninsula, and known for lodging several important personalities such as Lord Byron and Portuguese writer Eca de Queiroz.

Still in Sintra, we will visit the magical **Quinta da Regaleira**, a palace and a chapel set on a hillside, which also showcases an eclectic mix of architectural styles. The property also has fountains, grottoes, statues, caves, and ponds connected above-ground through pathways and below-ground through tunnels lit with fairy lights. We will see the romantic **Monserrate Gardens and Palace,** which blends Moorish

Revival and neo-Gothic architectural styles, before driving back to Lisbon.

(B, L)

Accommodation:

Altis Suites or similar

Day 8

Locations: Lisbon - Obidos - Nazare - Batalha - Lisbon

Overview:

Today we will drive to **Obidos**, where we will enjoy a sightseeing tour. Obidos grew from a Roman settlement and a Moorish fortification, until it was extensively remodelled under Dinis I. Dinis I offered the town to his wife, Isabel, in the 13th century, and its architecture was enriched in the following centuries.

We then continue to the fishing town of **Nazare**. In Nazare, we will have a guided tour to learn more about the town's fishing traditions and view the beach famous among surfers the world over for its giant waves. It is not unusual to see fisher women here still wearing traditional clothing: skirt with seven colourful layers (said to represent the days of the week), wooden clogs, and black headscarf.

Before heading back to Lisbon, we will stop at **Batalha** to visit its impressive monastery built in the Gothic and Manueline (Portuguese Gothic) styles. The Monastery of Batalha was built to commemorate the Portuguese victory over the Castilians at the 1385 Battle of Aljubarrota, ending the Castilian plan to capture the Portuguese throne. (B)

Accommodation:

Altis Suites or similar

Day 9

Locations: Lisbon - Mafra - Ericeira - Azenhas do Mar - Cape Roca - Lisbon

Overview:

Today we will go on an excursion to **Mafra** on the west coast, famous for its UNESCO-listed Palace-Convent, an imposing structure conceived by King João V in 1711. The Italian Baroque edifice, built from wealth generated by the gold from the Portuguese colony of Brazil, houses the king's and queen's palaces, the royal chapel, a Franciscan monastery, and a huge library containing 36,000 volumes, surrounded by a garden and royal hunting park.

From Mafra we will continue to **Ericeira**, a beautiful seaside town perched on a cliff overlooking beaches. After some free time exploring the town, the tour will go through the charming village of **Azenhas do Mar** with its whitewashed houses, and we will stop for a bit to enjoy the stunning views.

We will then transfer to **Cape Roca**, the westernmost point of mainland Europe. Here, we will enjoy a panoramic view of the Atlantic before transferring back to Lisbon. (B)

Day 10

Locations: Lisbon

Overview:

This is another free day we can spend at our leisure. Use this time to pack or do some last-minute Lisbon sightseeing as we will be heading to Barcelona tomorrow! (B)

Accommodation:

Altis Suites or similar

Day 11

Locations: Lisbon - Barcelona

Overview:

We will be taken by coach to the airport to fly to Barcelona.

Upon arrival at Barcelona, we will be transferred to our hotel, where we will also have our group dinner to begin the second leg of our twin city excursions. (B, D)

Accommodation:

Sercotel Amister Art Hotel or similar

Day 12

Locations: Barcelona

Overview:

Today will be spent exploring the vibrant city of Barcelona, particularly the Gothic Quarter and the Born neighbourhood, taking advantage of Barcelona's public transport. A local guide will then take us on a tour of the city. We will visit its central square, **Plaça de Catalunya** and walk down tree-lined **Las Ramblas.** Among the places we will explore in the medieval-era streets of the Gothic Quarter are:

- **the Jewish Quarter**, which has Spain's oldest synagogue
- the 15th-century **Basilica of Santa Maria del Pi**
- **Barcelona Cathedral,** seat of the Archbishop of Barcelona
- **Museum of the History of Barcelona**
- **Basilica Santa Maria Del Mar**, an outstanding example of Catalan Gothic

Accommodation:

Sercotel Amister Art Hotel or similar

Day 13

Locations: Barcelona

Overview:

Today we will be focusing on the Spanish Civil War. A local guide will take us through a series of sights relating to the war, explaining their relevance and the enormous impact of the conflict on Barcelona itself. The Spanish Civil War began in 1936 and continued until 1939, when the fascist leader Francisco Franco defeated the Republican forces and declared victory. Barcelona was one of the final cities to fall to Franco's rule, after his invasion of Catalonia. The half-day tour will end with a visit to **Castell de Montjuïc**, an old hilltop military fortress dating back to the 17th century, and which was used as a prison during the Civil War.

In the afternoon, we will have a tour of **Montjuïc**, including entrance to the **Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya**.

Our evening can be spent at leisure. We suggest staying to watch the music and light show at the Magic Fountain of Montjuïc before heading back to the hotel. (B)

Accommodation:

Sercotel Amister Art Hotel or similar

Day 14

Locations: Barcelona

Overview:

We will go on a market tour of **La Boqueria Market,** which dates back to the 13th century and a showcase of Barcelona's gastronomic delights. This will be followed by a cooking class, where we will learn how to prepare traditional cuisine. Lunch will be the sumptuous dishes we will prepare in the cooking class.

We will have some free time until we meet again in the evening for dinner and a flamenco show. (B, L, D)

Accommodation:

Sercotel Amister Art Hotel or similar

Day 15

Locations: Barcelona

Overview:

The focus of today's tour is Barcelona's most famous resident, Antoni Gaudi (1852-1926). Barcelona is an architecturally wondrous city and perhaps the greatest influence on the city's style was architect Antoni Gaudi. Gaudi's style is distinctive and striking. One of his most famous works is the **Casa Batlló**, a strange skeletal house that is extraordinarily beautiful both inside and out. The Batlló family, who commissioned the house, put no limitations on the architect. It is now open to the public. We will also see the famous **Sagrada Familia** and the colourful **Park Guell.** We will also see the unusual **Casa Mila** also known as La Pedrera or "the stone quarry" due to its rough-hewn appearance. This was the last private residence Gaudi designed. (B)

Accommodation:

Sercotel Amister Art Hotel or similar

Day 16

Locations: Barcelona

Overview:

This is a free day to relax or to go exploring the city on your own. (B)

Accommodation:

Sercotel Amister Art Hotel or similar

Day 17

Locations: Barcelona

Overview:

This morning we will take a guided tour of the **Palau de la Musica Catalana,** a concert hall with striking modernist architecture. In the afternoon, we will visit the **Picasso Museum,** which houses one of the most extensive collections of Pablo Picasso's artwork, and **Palau Guell,** a mansion designed by Gaudí for the industrial tycoon Eusebi Güell and

another great example of Gaudi's unique architectural imagination.

(B, D)

Accommodation:

Sercotel Amister Art Hotel or similar

Day 18

Locations: Barcelona - Montserrat - Sant Sadurni d'Anoia - Barcelona

Overview:

Today is a full-day excursion to Montserrat. The city is located at the foot of the striking multi-peaked mountain range of the same name (Montserrat in Catalan means "saw mountain"). We will be visiting the **Santa Maria de Montserrat** on the mountain to view the **Virgin of Montserrat, one of the Black Madonnas** of Europe. To reach the Benedictine abbey and basilica, we will be taking a cable car ride that will also give us a panoramic view of the city.

This will be followed by a guided tour and tasting at a cava winery in **Sant Sadurni d'Anoia** before returning to our hotel. (B)

Accommodation:

Sercotel Amister Art Hotel or similar

Day 19

Locations: Barcelona

Overview:

Today is a free day to relax before our final full day of sightseeing in the city. (B)

Accommodation:

Sercotel Amister Art Hotel or similar

Day 20

Locations: Barcelona - Girona - Besalu - Barcelona

Overview:

Today we will venture out of Barcelona to the ancient Catalan city of **Girona** to explore the town. Its **Museum of Jewish History** documents a long history of Judaism in the city, which flourished in the 12th century. It also tells a fascinating story of the city's history. The **Arab Baths** are a 12th-century construction inspired by Roman baths and which are still largely intact. We will also see the beautiful **Girona Cathedral** with its 91 stone steps. Fans of the show *Game of Thrones* may recognise the Arab Baths and the cathedral steps as some scenes were filmed here.

On the way back to Barcelona we will stop at **Besalu**, a magnificent example of a charming medieval town.

In the evening we will sit down as a group at a local restaurant for our farewell dinner. (B, D)

Accommodation:

Sercotel Amister Art Hotel

Day 21

Locations: Barcelona

Overview:

The end of breakfast also marks the end of the tour and our services. (B)

Inclusions / Exclusions

What's included in our Tour

- 20 nights of hotel accommodation.
- 20 breakfasts, 2 lunches and 6 dinners.
- Applicable entry fees and services of local guides.

- Touring by comfortable and modern coach.
- Field trips as indicated.
- Gratuities and necessary tips.
- Services of an Odyssey program leader.
- Detailed tour information booklet.

What's not included in our Tour

- Return international airfare and departure taxes.
- Comprehensive international travel insurance.
- Items of a personal nature such as telephone calls and laundry.
- Meals not specified in the itinerary.

Level 2 - Moderate

Participants must be able to carry their own luggage, climb and descend stairs, be in good health, mobile and able to participate in 3-5 hours of physical activity per day, the equivalent of walking/hiking up to 8 kilometres on uneven ground.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any requests for further information about this tour or any others offered by Odyssey Travel.