

With Distinguished
Guest Lecturers

SKEPTIC
The Skeptics Society

JOURNEY INTO ANTIQUITY

Greece, the Greek Islands,
Turkey & Cyprus



NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT
(Limited Availability)

Kore, Archaic Greek sculpture, Acropolis Museum, Athens, Greece

A Cruise Aboard the New 96-Stateroom Cruise Ship *DIANA*
September 23 – October 5, 2023

SKEPTIC

The Skeptics Society

Dear Friends,

We are delighted to invite you to join two distinguished scholars, Karen Armstrong and John Prevas, on this remarkable journey that will begin in Istanbul, cruise the fabled Greek islands, coastal Turkey and Cyprus, and end in Athens. These are the lands where some of antiquity's most powerful and magnificent cities thrived and made contributions that gave rise to our Western tradition.

After exploring Istanbul, ancient Byzantium, which Emperor Constantine renamed after himself and designated the new capital of the Roman Empire, we make our way through the Sea of Marmara to visit the storied ruins of Troy before calling in Chios to discover the 11th-century Byzantine monastery of Nea Moni. Continuing along the Turkish coast and the route of Alexander the Great's early conquests, we explore stunning Ephesus, one of the world's great archeological sites. On Patmos we discover the cave where St. John received visions of the Apocalypse, and in Rhodes we explore one of Europe's best preserved medieval towns. Along the mountainous coast to the south, we make calls at the ancient Lycian capital of Xanthos and the Hellenistic complexes at Perge and Aspendos before disembarking in Cyprus and flying to Athens.

For two days in Athens, one of the world's most venerable cities, we will explore its ancient monuments that stand as testimonials to its glorious Golden Age of the 5th-century BC.

Throughout the voyage, our distinguished guest lecturers, Karen Armstrong and John Prevas, will engage us in a series of lectures and discussions centering on the history of this region, events that took place here that changed the course of history, and on the cultures and ideas that rose here that shaped the Western world we know today.

Our exploration of the ancient shores of the storied Aegean Sea will be aboard *Diana*, a new-generation, state-of-the-art cruise ship that will launch in April 2023, and will accommodate only 192 guests in beautifully appointed and spacious staterooms and suites.

Please join us on this once-in-a-lifetime Journey Into Antiquity.

Best wishes,



Dr. Michael Shermer
Executive Director
The Skeptics Society

P.S. 7% of your cruise fee will be a tax-deductible donation to The Skeptics Society – a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization.

DISTINGUISHED GUEST LECTURERS

KAREN ARMSTRONG



Karen Armstrong is the author of numerous books on religion, including *A History of God*, which became an international bestseller. Her other works include *The Battle for God: A History of Fundamentalism*; *Islam: A Short History*; *The Great Transformation: The Beginning of Our Religious Traditions*; *The Case for God*;

as well as a memoir, *The Spiral Staircase*. Her most recent works are *The Lost Art of Scripture: Rescuing the Sacred Texts* (2019) and *Sacred Nature: How Can We Recover Our Reverence for the Natural World* (2022). Her books have been translated into 45 languages.

She has addressed members of the US Congress on three occasions and lectured to policy makers at the US State Department. In 2006, she was invited by Kofi Anan to join the High-Level Group of the new UN Alliance of Civilizations; in 2008, she was awarded the Franklin D. Roosevelt Four Freedoms Medal; in 2009, she won the TED Prize and with TED founded the Charter for Compassion, which is now a global movement. From 2008 to 2016, she was a Trustee of the British Museum; in 2013, she was awarded the inaugural British Academy Al-Rodhan Prize for Improving Intercultural Relations; in 2017, she was awarded the Princess of Asturias Award for Social Sciences and an OBE (Officer of the Order of the British Empire).

JOHN PREVAS



John Prevas, Professor of Classics at the University of South Florida, is the author of five books on leadership figures from the ancient world, including *The New York Times* best-selling *Power, Ambition, Glory – The Stunning Parallels Between Leaders of the Ancient World and Today*, which he co-authored with Steve Forbes. Also an adventurer, John has

climbed the Alps in search of Hannibal's pass, and followed in Alexander the Great's footsteps through the "terrorist belt" of Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan. John is a frequent speaker at the Smithsonian Institution and other organizations and has been featured on C-Span, the History Channel, CNN, CNN International, and Fox.

On these voyages, John will lecture on the history of the places we will visit and bring the past to the present.

FOR RESERVATIONS AND INFORMATION, PLEASE CALL **THALASSA JOURNEYS** TOLL-FREE AT **866-633-3611**

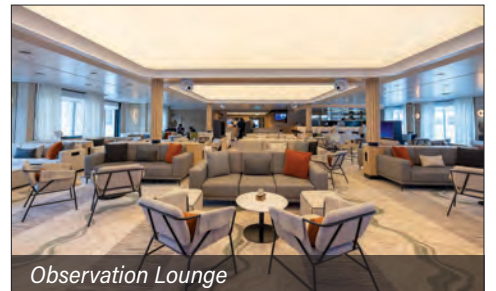
THE NEW 192-GUEST EXPEDITION CRUISE SHIP *DIANA*



Oceanview Stateroom



Balcony Suite



Observation Lounge



Sauna



Club Lounge



Outdoor Café / Bar with swimming pool

Constructed in Finland and launching in April 2023, Swan Hellenic's *Diana* is a new-generation expedition cruise ship. Although at 12,100 tons the ship is large enough to accommodate more than 350 passengers, *Diana* will accommodate a maximum of 192 guests in 96 spacious staterooms and balcony suites. The low guest density results in one of the most generous indoor and outdoor space-to-guest ratios among cruise ships.

Featuring the latest advances in technology and engineering, *Diana* is among the world's first environmentally-responsible ships. Equipped with hybrid engines, a system of powerful batteries, and a unique water filtration system, *Diana* leaves a minimal footprint. For cruising in Polar regions, the ship meets the stringent requirements of the new Polar Code with its high PC5 Category A ice-strengthened hull and other advanced features. A computer-controlled Dynamic Positioning System allows the ship to maintain position without anchoring. Operated by a complement of 135 experienced European officers and international crew members, *Diana*

will carry a fleet of Zodiacs, versatile landing boats, and kayaks. Powerful stabilizers provide a smooth ride.

Diana's interior spaces exude sophisticated elegance, with most rooms opening to panoramic views of the sea. All staterooms and suites face outside and are equipped with private facilities, climate control, TV, Wi-Fi and USB connections and other amenities. Of the ship's 96 staterooms, 76 have balconies. Public areas include a spacious observation lounge equipped with state-of-the-art facilities for lectures and presentations; a club lounge; a restaurant that accommodates all guests at one seating; an outdoor café/bar that surrounds the heated swimming pool; a wellness area with gym, spa, and sauna with an adjoining outdoor jacuzzi; library; beauty salon; and an infirmary that is attended by a full-time doctor and nurse. The ship also features expansive open-deck areas. Two elevators connect all decks. Attentive service is provided on a 24-hour basis. The outstanding cuisine is complemented by fine wines at lunch and dinner.

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ITINERARY



Saturday, September 23, 2023

ISTANBUL, Turkey/Embark

Arrive in Istanbul and transfer to the port to embark on *Diana*. Overnight aboard docked in Istanbul. (D)

Sunday, September 24

ISTANBUL

Founded by Greeks in the 7th-century BC and named Byzantion, in AD 324, Emperor Constantine made the city the capital of the Roman Empire, naming it after himself, Constantinople. For over 1,000 years, it was the capital of the Byzantine Empire. Renowned as the most resplendent city in Europe, in the 15th-century, it was taken over by the Ottoman Turks, making it the capital of the Ottoman Empire. Spend the day touring the city's principle historic monuments, including the Byzantine Church of Hagia Irene; the Topkapi Palace, the sumptuous place of the sultans for three centuries; the Sultan Ahmed Mosque, also known as the Blue Mosque; the Hippodrome; the underground Basilica Cistern; and the colorful Spice Bazaar. *Diana* will sail in the evening. (B,L,D)



The Palace of the Grand Master, Rhodes, Greece

Monday, September 25

CANAKKALE/TROY

Located on the southern shore of the narrow channel of the Dardanelles, the port of Canakkale is our gateway to storied Troy where excavations began in the second half of the 19th-century and have revealed nine different layers of cities superimposed in rings on a massive mound rising above the "windswept Plain of Ilium." As Homer recounts in the *Iliad*, one of these cities is where the Greeks fought the Trojans over a period of ten years before King Priam's city finally fell to Odysseus's ruse of the Trojan Horse. (B,L,D)

Tuesday, September 26

CHIOS, Greece

Chios, the legendary birthplace of Homer, is known for its beautiful landscapes, historic sites and old villages. Here we visit the Monastery of Nea Moni, built in the 11th-century in a wooded vale in the center of the island. Now a UNESCO World Heritage site, Nea Moni is decorated with exquisite mosaics and frescoes. In the afternoon, take an excursion to the traditional old villages of Mesta and Pyrgi, and also visit the interesting Mastic Museum. (B,L,D)

Wednesday, September 27

KUSADASI/PRIENE/EPHESUS, Turkey

From Kusadasi, on Turkey's Aegean coast, we drive to Priene, site of a well-preserved 4th-century BC city. Dominating the site is the imposing Temple of Athena, a superb example of Ionic architecture set against a backdrop of tree-covered hills. In the afternoon, explore Ephesus, one of the world's most celebrated archaeological sites. Renowned in antiquity as a center of worship of the mother goddess Cybele, Ephesus was also one of the communities where St. Paul preached the gospel of Christianity. See the stunning façade of the Library of Celsus, the Temple of Hadrian, the Theater, and other large public monuments, as well as restored houses that give a glimpse into the daily lives of the ancient Ephesians. (B,L,D)

Thursday, September 28

PATMOS, Greece

The rugged island of Patmos is where St. John the Evangelist was exiled during the reign of the Roman Emperor Domitian and is said to have received visions of the Apocalypse, which later became the Book of Revelation. Visit the 11th-century Monastery of St. John with its enormous towers, domed roofs, belfries and battlements. Admire the artistry of the icons, manuscripts and fine embroideries. Enjoy time at leisure in Chora, the island's main town, one of the most beautiful in the Greek archipelago. (B,L,D)

Friday, September 29

RHODES

Call in Rhodes, among Europe's largest medieval towns, and once the site of the Colossus of Rhodes, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. Explore the Old Town including the Palace of the Grand Master and the Archaeological Museum. In the afternoon, travel to the village of Lindos, where either by walking or taking



Temple of Hadrian, Ephesus, Turkey

a donkey ride, we will ascend to the top of the acropolis to visit its monuments, admire the incredible view, and walk the narrow alleyways of the village. (B,L,D)

Saturday, September 30

KASTELLORIZO

From antiquity to the mid-20th century, Kastellorizo's position in the maritime route between the Aegean Sea and the coast of the Middle East has given this Greek island an importance beyond its tiny size. Remote and undisturbed by mass tourism, Kastellorizo's spacious horseshoe harbor lined with Neoclassical houses and mansions presents one of the loveliest and most harmonious sights in the entire Greek archipelago. Enjoy exploring the town's narrow alleyways and the waterfront's boutiques and cafes at a leisurely pace. Weather permitting, visit the captivating Blue Grotto, which is larger and as impressive as the more famous grotto in Capri. (B,L,D)

Sunday, October 1

FETHIYE, Turkey

From Turkey's Fethiye, visit nearby Xanthos, the most prominent city of ancient Lycia, built on a cliff overlooking a river. Xanthos boasts significant remains, including a theater, temples, an agora, unique tombs with rock-cut facades, and sarcophagi mounted on pillars. (B,L,D)

Monday, October 2

ANTALYA

From Antalya, the largest seaside resort on the Turkish Riviera, travel inland to visit two of Turkey's most famous ancient sites: Perge and Aspendos. The Greco-Roman ruins of Perge, once among the



Kastellorizo, Greece



Monastery of St. John, Patmos, Greece

most prosperous cities of the Hellenistic world, include its great Stadium, a colonnaded and marble main street, and the Theater. At Aspendos, tour the grand 20,000-seat theater commissioned by Marcus Aurelius in the 2nd-century AD. It is one of the best preserved ancient theaters in the world, and serves as the site of an international opera and ballet festival every year. (B,L,D)

Tuesday, October 3

LIMASSOL, Cyprus/ATHENS, Greece

Disembark *Diana* in Cyprus's Limassol and transfer to the airport for the flight to Athens. One of the world's most venerable cities, Athens's ancient monuments are testimonials to its glorious past that gave birth to democracy, among other ideas and concepts. Tour in the afternoon the ancient Agora, the civic and commercial center of Athens and the living heart of its democracy. Spend the next two nights at the *Hotel Athens Capital* (or similar). (B, L)

Wednesday, October 4

ATHENS

Spend the morning at leisure for independent activities. Tour in the afternoon the Acropolis and its fabled monuments, including the incomparable Parthenon. Built in the 5th-century BC, the Parthenon and the other monuments on the Acropolis represent the highest achievement of architecture and art of the Classical period. Visit also the Acropolis Museum, which houses a remarkable collection of sculpture. Enjoy in the evening a farewell dinner. (B,D)

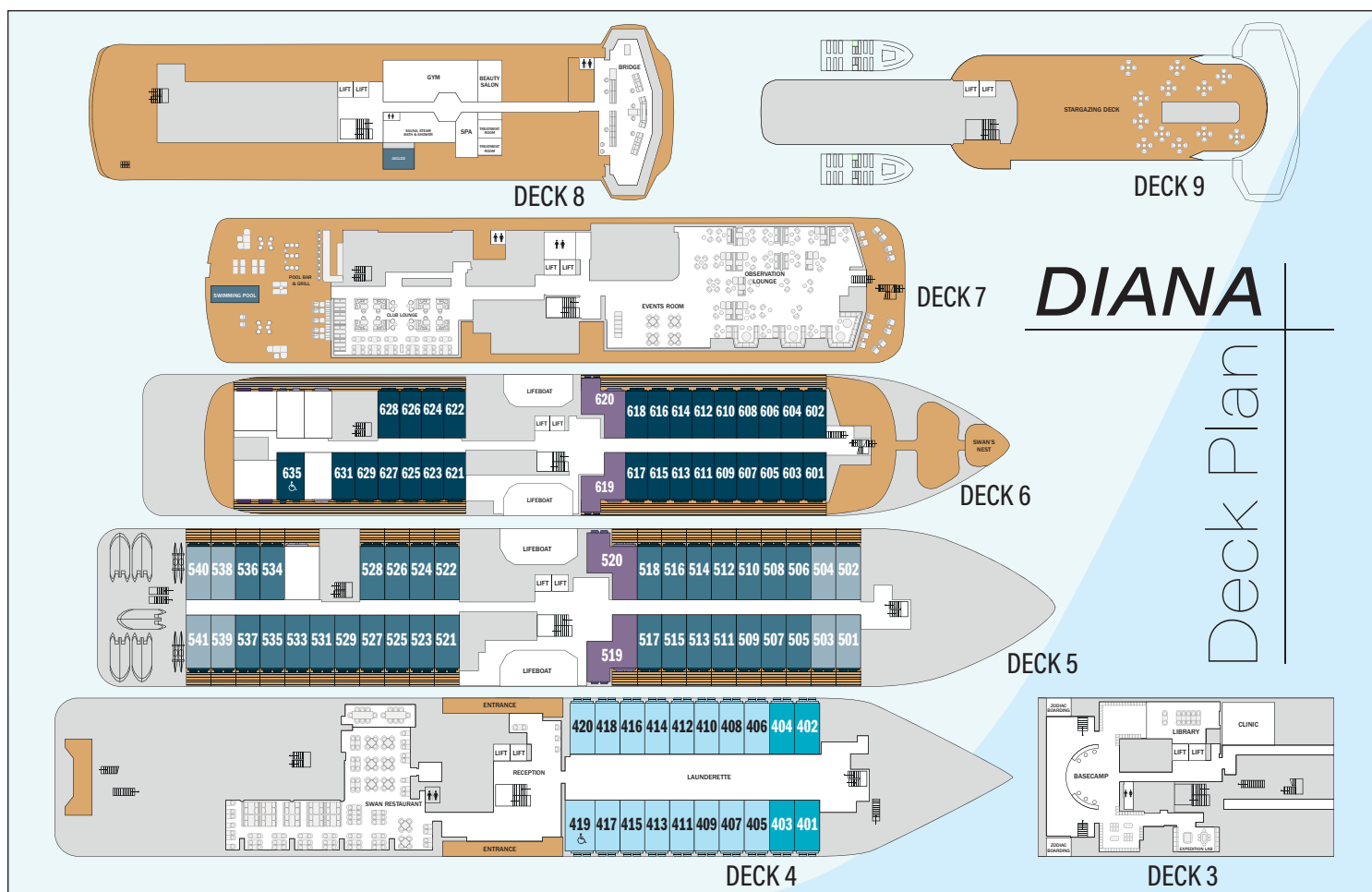
Thursday, October 5

ATHENS/USA

Transfer to the airport for the return flight home. (B)



The 11th-century monastery of Nea Moni, Chios, Greece



All accommodations aboard *Diana* are spacious staterooms and balcony suites. They are elegantly decorated, face outside, affording sea views, and include a queen-size bed that can be arranged as two twin beds, a spacious bathroom, mini-refrigerator, safe, ample closet space, climate control, telephone, TV, Wi-Fi, and USB connections, as well as other amenities.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	RATES PER PERSON / DOUBLE OCCUPANCY
E	Oceanview staterooms with two large oval windows. 206 sq. ft. Deck 4. Staterooms 401-404.	\$9,890
D	Oceanview staterooms with two large oval windows. 206 sq. ft. Deck 4. Staterooms 405-420.	\$10,210
C	Suites with balcony & living room area. 300 sq. ft. Deck 5. Suites 501-504, 538-541.	\$11,590
B	Suites with balcony & living room area. 300 sq. ft. Deck 5. Suites 505-518, 521-537.	\$11,990
A	Suites with balcony and living room area. 300 sq. ft. Deck 6. Suites 601-618, 621-635.	\$12,690
AA	Suites with large balcony, separate bedroom & living room. 474 sq. ft. Decks 5 & 6. Suites 519, 520, 619 & 620.	\$13,990

SPECIAL BENEFIT

Book this cruise program and receive a

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and Thalassa Journeys.

If you book your next cruise within
30 days after you return from
JOURNEY INTO ANTIQUITY,
you will receive an
ADDITIONAL 5% SAVINGS.

FOR SOLO TRAVELERS

A limited number of cabins are available for single occupancy in categories D to B at no additional charge.

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PROGRAM INCLUSIONS

The rates are all-inclusive. There are no hidden costs and no additional charges such as shore excursions or embarkation and port charges. Other than the international airfare and expenses of a personal nature, all else is included. Specifically, the rates include:

- Two nights at the *Hotel Athens Capital* in Athens (or similar).
- Welcome dinner in Istanbul.
- 10-day cruise aboard the new *Diana*, as described in the itinerary.
- Tours and shore excursions as described in the itinerary with professional local English-speaking guides.
- Lectures and discussions by Karen Armstrong and John Prevas.
- Airport/pier transfers and handling of luggage.
- All meals aboard the ship, with a selection of wines, beer and soft drinks during lunch and dinner.
- Welcome and farewell cocktail receptions aboard the ship hosted by the captain.
- Open bar with select alcoholic beverages.
- Coffee, including espresso and cappuccino, tea and soft drinks throughout the day and night.
- 24-hour room service.
- Gratuities to the ship's crew.
- Basic Wi-Fi aboard the ship.
- The services of an experienced trip director.
- All local taxes and service charges, including port and embarkation taxes.
- Complete pre-departure material.

NOT INCLUDED: Airfares for international flights; travel insurance; expenses of a personal nature; any items not mentioned in the itinerary or the above inclusions.



Mosaics in ancient Xanthos, Turkey



Temple of Athena in the ancient city of Priene, Turkey



Spice Bazaar, Istanbul, Turkey

GENERAL INFORMATION

SKEP 23D-0923

PAYMENT SCHEDULE: A deposit of \$1,500 per person is required to reserve your space on the tour. Final payment is due 90 days prior to departure. Payment can be made by personal check or charged to a credit card.

CANCELLATIONS & REFUNDS: All cancellations are subject to a \$300 per person administrative fee. Cancellations received 61-90 days prior to departure will be assessed a penalty equal to 50% of the total program cost per person. Cancellations received within 60 days of departure are subject to 100% cancellation penalties. Requests for cancellations must be made in writing. No refunds will be made for any part of this program in which you choose not to participate.

INSURANCE: We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance, which is available for coverage of expenses in conjunction with cancellation due to illness or accident. Baggage insurance is also recommended. In the event that you must cancel your participation in a travel program, trip cancellation insurance may be the only source of reimbursement.

ITINERARY: The itinerary, accommodations and arrangements are subject to change at the discretion of Thalassa Journeys.

RESPONSIBILITY: Please read carefully the following terms and conditions, which constitute the sole, legally enforceable agreements between the traveler and Thalassa Journeys. Thalassa Journeys acts solely as agents for the traveler with respect to all transportation, hotel and other tour arrangements. In that capacity, we exercise all reasonable care possible to ensure the traveler's safety and satisfaction, but, we neither assume nor bear any responsibility or liability for any injury, death, damage, loss, accident, delay or irregularity arising in connection with the services of any ship, airplane, train, automobile, motor coach, carriage or other conveyance, or the actions of any third-party, involved in carrying the traveler or in affecting these tours. We are not responsible for damages, additional expenses, or any other losses due to cancellation, delay or other changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, civil disturbances, acts or threats of terrorism, travel warnings or bans, termination or suspension of war risks or other carrier insurance, quarantine, acts of God or other causes beyond our control. All such losses must be borne by the traveler, and tour rates provide for arrangements only for the time stated. In the event of cancellation, delay or rescheduling mandated by any of the aforesaid causes beyond our control, the traveler shall have the option of accepting in lieu of the original tour such rescheduled tour or other substituted tour(s) as may be offered by us, or else, receiving a refund of as much of such advance tour expenditures as we are able to recover on the traveler's behalf from carriers, third-party tour vendors, etc., but, we shall not have any obligation or liability to the traveler beyond the foregoing. We reserve the right to make alterations to the tour's itinerary and to substitute hotels, transportation methods, or lecturers if this is required. We reserve the right to cancel, delay, or reschedule any tour prior to departure, and, so long as this is not due to any of the aforesaid causes beyond our control, the traveler shall be entitled to a full refund of all monies paid to that point if he/she so desires. No refund shall be made for any unused portion of any tour. By forwarding their deposit(s), the traveler certifies that he/she and/or their dependents, minors or others covered thereby do not have any mental, physical or other condition of disability that could create a hazard for them or other travelers. We reserve the right to decline to accept or to decline to retain any person as a member of any tour should such person's health, condition or actions adversely affect or threaten the welfare or safety of other travelers or impede the tour. Baggage or valuables brought on the tour shall be transported, handled or stored at the traveler's risk entirely, and, we shall bear no liability or responsibility for any damage or other loss thereto. Resolution of any disputes arising hereunder shall be affected exclusively in the state or federal courts presiding in Florida, pursuant to applicable Florida law.

RATES: Tour costs are based upon current airfares, tariffs, and currency values. While we do everything possible to maintain the listed prices, they are subject to change.

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Join Karen Armstrong and John Prevas on JOURNEY INTO ANTIQUITY

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**NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT
(Limited Availability)**



The well preserved Roman Amphitheater, Aspendos, Turkey

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