

Northern Hemisphere Adventure – Greece 2017

Day One - Thursday 22 June 2017



This morning we decided to sleep in before going upstairs for breakfast. The restaurant is a roof top restaurant with lovely views of Athens. You get a great view of the Acropolis and the Parthenon from the restaurant as you can see from the image. We had a lovely healthy breakfast and decided to skip the hot breakfast since we had so many of these in Scotland.

After breakfast we decided we would go for a walk up to the Acropolis. We took the Metro to the nearest station and started the long walk up to the top of the hill where the Acropolis stands. We took a slow walk trying to preserve Maree's bad knee. The walking poles we bought are certainly assisting her with the walks up and down the hills.

On reaching the entry gates to the Acropolis we found that they now charge €20 for the privilege of seeing the Acropolis up close. I don't mind paying entrance fees if the money goes towards the restoration of the historic ruins. I suspect though that due to the ailing Greek economy that the government probably takes a good amount of it.



Parthenon with the crowds

The walk up to the Acropolis is via a series of marble steps accompanied by everyone else in Athens it seems. The marble is quite slippery despite wearing the proper walking shoes. At one point we found that it was probably too risky for Maree to continue to the very top due to her knee, even walking with the pole. So, we positioned her where she could view the Parthenon while I went further to take the photos. Maree was disappointed she couldn't get to the top, but she really wasn't that far away and she could clearly see the archaeological building.

Day Two - Friday 23 June 2017

Today was a leisure day. We virtually only went out for lunch and dinner. Lunch was at another very nice Taverna.



Day Three - Saturday 24 June 2017

Maree has injured her back and with her unable to walk easily with her knee we are not sure where we will go from here. The bathtubs in the hotel are very deep and Maree slipped when trying to get out of the empty tub, exacerbated by her sore knee making it difficult for her to climb out. She may recover on the cruise but there are lots of steps on the yacht. I am going to cancel some of the Iceland excursions that involve the high-speed rib boats as they bounce hard on the water and not recommended for back problems.

Well, we have now joined the Windstar. It is a lovely five-mastered diesel-powered yacht. Maree is coping well with the steps as we packed our walking poles for Iceland; not expecting to use them in Greece. So, we are starting the relaxing part of the Holiday. I of course need my internet, so I have that at USD245 for seven days. Worth it so I can update the blog, Maree can play her Words with Friends and we can send and receive emails. So, some pics follow that we took as we left the port of Piraeus. The first port we get to in the morning at 7am is Nafplio. We had a morning tour booked but we have had to cancel that one as I consider Maree will not be up to the walking. Instead, she has booked in for a deep muscle massage that will hopefully give some relief.



Image of our yacht, WINDSTAR



Pool Deck



View Departing Piraeus

We had a lovely dinner this evening in the AmphorA dining room. The food is excellent, but I must admit it does cater towards the American traveller. There are no Greek dishes offered which is a shame as Maree and I experienced some great Greek dining at the Tavernas in Athens. The cruise may be the only opportunity for the Americans to experience Greek food and they won't on this vessel, unfortunately.



Veranda Restaurant for Breakfast and Lunch



Main Course Angus Steak (Steve) Sole Roulade (Maree) - AmphorA Restaurant

Day Four - Sunday 25 June 2017

Maree wasn't a lot better this morning, so we called in the Ship's doctor. A very pleasant

and helpful chap. He has given Maree an injection and prescribed tablets that should help her to mend. We cancelled the massage as Maree would not be able to get to the massage rooms. We will try again when she is mobile.



View of Nafplio Harbour

It is lunchtime now and Maree has been able to get out of bed and stand up herself which is a positive sign; but still in a little discomfort. She is still not venturing out the cabin at this stage. Windstar does not have elevators or wheel chairs to assist movement. Also it is one flight of stairs to the main restaurant for the evening meal and two flights to the deck and for lunch. Fortunately they also provide room service for all passengers so we are persevering with room service for Maree's meals at the moment. She is happy but really frustrated she just can't get up and move around. All being well, especially as she was able to get up herself at lunchtime, she will be able to start to move around the ship tomorrow and we can see how she goes tomorrow before we consider doing excursions. Tonight we sail from Nafplio to Mykonos.



Our Yacht "Wind Star" in the port of Nafplio



View from the yacht in Nafplio Harbour

Day Five - Monday 26 June 2017

Maree woke this morning in a lot less pain. However, after getting up, standing, showering etc she found she was in a great deal of pain. We called the doctor who advised the pain is more than he thought it was and she should rest in bed as well as get up and walk around when she can. He said he will visit in the morning and if she is no better, he has recommended seeing an orthopaedic specialist when we dock in Turkey tomorrow. He will arrange this if necessary. If this occurs, then she may have to be offloaded from the voyage and we will have to make our way home and cancel the remainder of the holiday. Not an issue as we can always do it again. I'd rather hope she will be a lot better in the morning as, now, she is in no pain while sitting up in bed. I'd rather see her pain free than continue anyway. A cruise member travels with an electric heat pad and has kindly lent it to Maree for as long as she needs it. This is making a big difference for her so with that and the medication we may be able to travel onwards; but we will wait and see and take things slowly. We have cancelled all shore excursions as we do not want to risk aggravating the injury.

Meanwhile the views of Mykonos are lovely and just a shame Maree cannot see the views out of the porthole windows.





Day Six - Tuesday 27 June 2017

We arrived in Kusadasi, Turkey this morning. Maree was transferred off the yacht to hospital for tests at 09:00 local time. Following MRI and X-ray tests the orthopaedic specialist has determined the injury is a soft tissue trauma. The specialist has given her an injection for the pain and swelling and will keep her in for short observation until 20:00 this evening. We will then be transferred back to the yacht by ambulance, and we will continue the rest of the journey on Windstar to Athens. Maree and I have decided we will assess her discomfort level on Friday (we arrive in Athens Saturday morning) and decide as to whether we will continue to Iceland. Our travel insurance has covered all the costs so far - pays to travel with CGU insurance. I have asked them the question whether they will cover us if we choose to cancel on Maree's discomfort level. I am not worried if they don't as Maree's health is more important. We can always come back and redo the cruise (we love the yacht) and see Iceland another time if need be.

Day Seven - Wednesday 28 June 2017

Maree woke this morning in great spirits. She slept well and there was no pain or muscle spasms. She was able to get out of bed without my assistance. After getting dressed we went for a long walk up and down the corridor on our deck level. Later Maree tried the stairs and was able to, and quite easily I must add, get to deck three. From here she went to the outside decks to take in the views. It was a great site as Maree has been confined to her cabin since Sunday. The visit to the hospital yesterday and the treatment she received has worked well for her. She also received cheers and clapping from the other travellers and crew when they saw her enter the outside area. They have all been aware of her dilemma and the Medi Vac yesterday in Kusadasi.

Following are some images of Maree out and about and views of the islands of Patmos where we are anchored today.



View of

Patmos from the Wind Star



Maree up and about taking in the views.

Day Eight - Thursday 29 June 2017

Well we have arrived in Santorini and we are anchored in the caldera. The Santorini caldera is a large, mostly submerged caldera, located in the southern Aegean Sea, 120 kilometres north of Crete in Greece. Visible above the water is the circular Santorini Island group, consisting of Santorini (Thera), the main island, Therasia and Aspronisi at the periphery, and the Kameni islands at the centre. The caldera is composed of overlapping shield volcanoes, cut by at least four partially overlapping calderas, of which the oldest southern caldera was formed about 180,000 years before the present era. Although dormant, Santorini is an active volcano. Numerous minors and medium-sized, mainly effusive eruptions have built the dark-coloured lava shields of Nea and Palea Kameni inside the caldera. The last eruption was in 1950.

It is incredible seeing the white houses on top of the volcanic rim of the caldera. Not as many blue domed houses are on view through that you always see in the post cards.

As you will see Maree is almost back to her usual self. Walking a lot easier now and managing stairs well. I insist she still takes it easy, and we will now continue our adventure to Iceland after leaving the cruise on Saturday morning. We certainly recommend this type of cruising. It is a small yacht with only 148 passengers and 101 crew and you are well looked after, and this is just perfect for us. No formal nights - perfect. There are two other yachts in the Wind Star Group - Wind Surf and Wind Spirit and two cruise ships as well. We prefer the yacht. Maree and I are enjoying it so much we are seriously considering doing a back-to-back Wind Star cruise in June 2018. The plan is to start with the cruise from Venice via Croatia ending in Athens and staying on board and continuing with the same cruise we are doing now. We want to do this cruise again as it is relaxing, and we have not been able to leave the vessel due to Maree's injury.



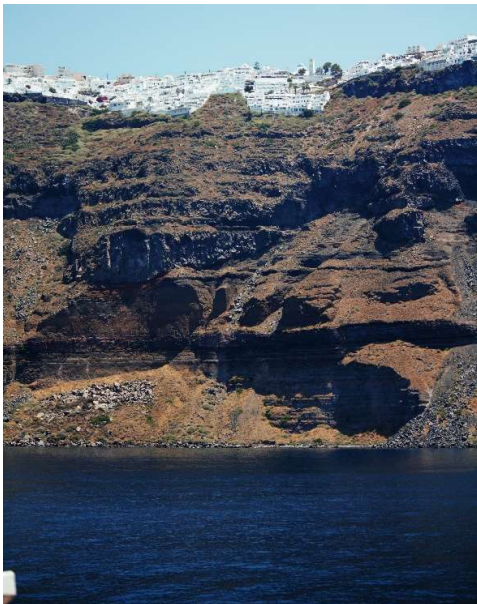
Some images of Santorini for you to enjoy.



Cable Car - saves the long walk up the zig zag pathway



The long walk if you don't take the cable car option



Houses on the Volcanic Rim

Day Nine - Friday 30 June 2017

Today we arrived at Monemvasia. Monemvasia is a small town and is located on a small island off the east coast of the Peloponnese. The island is linked to the mainland by a short causeway of about 200 metres in length. The area consists mostly of a large plateau some 100 metres above sea level, up to 300 metres wide and 1 kilometre long. It is also the site of a powerful medieval fortress.

The weather is very hot today with the max reaching 40 degrees. The passengers who decided to go ashore soon returned as it was just too hot to walk around. The yacht has a marina at the stern, and this is opened up when the vessel is at anchor and not docked at a pier. The marina gives the passengers the opportunity to swim in the sea, use paddle boards, lying on the floating carpets and there is an inflatable that is used to take those interested, water skiing. Many passengers took advantage of the opportunity to go swimming.

The yacht also has a second restaurant that is setup each evening on the rear deck and provides dinner for up to 30 people. Bookings are essential and you can only use this restaurant once during a seven-day cruise. The reason is to allow all passengers the opportunity to dine in this restaurant "Candles". Maree and I dined there this evening, and we were fortunate to get one of the tables for two that was shaded by the sails of the vessel. The vessel was underway when we started to dine, and it was a very pleasant experience.

Tonight, we are sailing to Athens where we will disembark and make our way to London for an overnight stay at the Sofitel Hotel at Terminal 5 London Heathrow.

Following are some images taken during the day.



Monemvasia Island



Monemvasia Village



Monemvasia Town Square



Maree and Steve dining at Candles on Wind Star



View of Candles Restaurant on rear of Wind Star

Day Ten - Saturday 1 July 2017

Today we disembarked Wind Star after a great cruise. Despite Maree's injury, we both enjoyed the cruise very much. So much so we will be back next year (so Maree can get off the yacht to see things).

After disembarking at Piraeus we were transferred to Athens airport where we boarded our flight to London. Tonight, we are staying at the Sofitel at Terminal 5 Heathrow. The only image today is of Maree on our flight from Athens to London showing you she is recovering quickly following the treatment she received in Turkey.

Tomorrow, we leave Heathrow and fly on to Reykjavik for our Iceland Adventure.

We both hope you enjoyed reading about our travels around the Greek Isles.

Maree and Steve

