

SKEPTIC

With Distinguished Guest
Lecturer, **RICHARD DAWKINS**

THE SEA OF HOMER:

A Voyage From Athens to Istanbul Exploring
the Fabled Greek Islands

September 7 - 17, 2025



Monumental gate of a 6th century BC
temple, Naxos, Greece

Aboard the New Expedition Cruise Ship *DIANA*

SKEPTIC

Dear Friends,

This distinctive voyage through the heart of the Aegean is the perfect introduction to all that this fabled sea, which Homer famously described as "wine-dark," has to offer. And early September is the perfect time of year to visit.

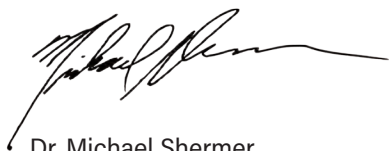
Ancient sites and monuments—the Parthenon, Minoan Knossos, and medieval Rhodes, all of them UNESCO World Heritage Sites—share the landscape with the homes of present-day farmers in the villages on Naxos and Chios. Great Byzantine churches and castles—including the UNESCO Site at Nea Moni—exist in the same space as the painted townhouses of quaint island ports like Rethymno and Mytilene. This is truly an experience not to be missed.

We are privileged to have distinguished guest lecturer **Richard Dawkins** who will share his expertise and experience in a series of lectures and discussions throughout the voyage.

Adding to the appeal of this journey is our ship. Built in Finland and launched in early 2023, *Diana* is a state-of-the-art, new generation expedition cruise ship that accommodates just 192 guests in superb surroundings that include spacious staterooms and suites and elegant lounges. *Diana* is also equipped with the latest environment-friendly technology.

I hope you will join Richard Dawkins and fellow travelers on this thoughtfully designed voyage of discovery and rediscovery of the ancient world.

Warm regards,



Dr. Michael Shermer
Executive Director
The Skeptics Society

P.S. 8% of your cruise fee will be a tax-deductible donation to The Skeptics Society – a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization.

DISTINGUISHED GUEST LECTURER

RICHARD DAWKINS



Richard Dawkins is one of the world's most respected scientists, writers and thinkers. His books on science have significantly impacted his own field of evolutionary biology, and his critiques of religion, culminating in his best-selling book *The God Delusion*, have made him a leading advocate for secularism and evidence-based thinking. From 1995 to 2008 Richard Dawkins was the Charles Simonyi Professor of the Public Understanding of Science at Oxford University. He is an internationally best-selling author. Among his books are *The Ancestor's Tale*, *The Selfish Gene*, *The Blind Watchmaker*, *Climbing Mount Improbable*, *Unweaving the Rainbow*, *A Devil's Chaplain*, *The God Delusion*, *The Greatest Show on Earth*, *The Magic of Reality*, *An Appetite for Wonder*, *Outgrowing God*, and *Flights of Fancy*. Dawkins is a Fellow of the Royal Society and of the Royal Society of Literature. He is the recipient of numerous honours and awards, including the 1990 Michael Faraday Award of the Royal Society, the 1994 Nakayama Prize, the 1997 International Cosmos Prize for Achievement in Human Science, the Kistler Prize in 2001, the Shakespeare Prize in 2005, the 2006 Lewis Thomas Prize for Writing about Science, and he was named Author of the Year at the 2007 Galaxy British book Awards. His around-the-world speaking tour is the focus of a 2013 documentary *The Unbelievers* which also features appearances by Woody Allen, Stephen Colbert, Cameron Diaz, Ian McEwan, Ricky Gervais, Stephen Hawking, Eddie Izzard, Bill Pullman, and Sarah Silverman. Dawkins was named the top "World Thinker" by a 2013 Prospect Magazine poll of 10,000 readers from over 100 countries. He coined the term "meme" in his book *The Selfish Gene*, a term that has gained significant prominence in the online world. In 2006 he founded the Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason & Science (www.richarddawkins.net) to promote a more scientifically literate and secular world. His American foundation merged with the Center for Inquiry in 2016 with the mission to foster a secular society based on reason, science, freedom of inquiry and humanist values.



THE NEW 192-GUEST EXPEDITION CRUISE SHIP *DIANA*



Oceanview Stateroom



Balcony Suite



Swan Restaurant



Swimming Pool



Observation Lounge

Built in Finland, and launched 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 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.

ITINERARY



Sunday, September 7, 2025
DEPART THE UNITED STATES.

Monday, September 8

ATHENS, Greece

Arrive in Athens and transfer to the *Athens Capital Hotel* (or similar). Join Richard Dawkins and fellow travelers this evening for a welcome dinner. (D)

Tuesday, September 9

ATHENS/EMBARK

This morning, explore the Agora, the civic and commercial center of ancient Athens. Discover the well-preserved 5th-century BC Temple of Hephaistos and visit the Agora Museum, housed in the magnificently reconstructed Stoa of Attalus. After lunch at a local restaurant, tour the Acropolis, site of the incomparable Parthenon, representing, along with the other temples on site, the highest achievement of Classical architecture and art. Also visit the Acropolis Museum before transferring to Piraeus to embark *Diana* and set sail. (B,L,D)

Wednesday, September 10

NAXOS

In the morning, explore Naxos's main town, whose narrow alleyways surround the Kastro, a fortress built by the Venetians, who held the island from 1207 to 1537. Visit the Della Rocca-Barozzi Venetian Museum and the archaeological area of Mitropolis, featuring fragments of a Mycenaean city dating to the 13th century BC, and the remains of an unfinished 6th-century BC temple, including its iconic monumental gate. After lunch, travel inland to the Temple of Demeter, constructed in the 6th century BC, and spend the rest of the afternoon at leisure to explore Naxos town on your own. (B,L,D)

Thursday, September 11

SOUDA BAY/CHANIA, Crete

Chania is perhaps Crete's most picturesque town. The historic quarter, largely built by the Venetians, is filled with sunny squares and old neighborhoods where Venetians, Turks, and Sephardic Jews once lived. The town also boasts a new Archaeological Museum, which is well worth the visit. Spend the afternoon at leisure to discover lovely Chania on your own or travel eastward along Crete's north coast to Rethymno, one of Greece's best-preserved medieval towns, known for its architecture dating to the times when Crete was under Venetian and Ottoman rule. (B,L,D)

Friday, September 12

AGHIOS NIKOLAOS, Crete

The port of Aghios Nikolaos is your gateway to the magnificent palace of Knossos, the largest and most impressive Minoan palace in Crete. This UNESCO World Heritage Site consists of a maze of rooms, passages, and stairways that hint at the origins of the story of the labyrinth, home of the mythological Minotaur, half-man, half-bull. After your guided tour of the palace, continue to nearby Heraklion, where a lunch of traditional Cretan cuisine is followed by a visit



Aghios Nikolaos, Crete

to the exquisite Heraklion Museum, whose eye-opening exhibits reinforce the impression gained at Knossos of the brilliance and refinement of Minoan civilization. (B,L,D)

Saturday, September 13

RHODES/LINDOS

This morning tour Rhodes, known in ancient times for its Colossus, an enormous bronze statue of the god Helios, which was toppled in a major earthquake. A medieval stronghold, the town was constructed by the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem. Walk through the Old Town, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, along the Street of the Knights, where crusaders lived during their occupation, followed by a visit to the Archaeological Museum. After lunch aboard, travel south along the coast to the village of Lindos, one of the most beautiful villages in the Aegean Sea, its whitewashed houses built around the prominent rock on top of which is the ancient acropolis. (B,L,D)

Sunday, September 14

SAMOS

One of the wealthiest and most powerful city-states of ancient Greece, Samos reached the pinnacle of its prosperity in the 6th century BC, when it pioneered trade routes stretching from Egypt to Spain, and when magnificent public works were undertaken. Samos was also an intellectual powerhouse—Pythagoras was a native son, Aesop wrote his fables here, and many artists, writers and philosophers from throughout Greece were drawn to the island. Visit Samos's most important monuments, including the remains of the Heraion, an enormous shrine dedicated to the Mother Goddess; the monastery of Panaghia Spyliani; and the Archaeological Museum in Vathy. Time at leisure will be available to enjoy this lovely island on your own. (B,L,D)

Monday, September 15

CHIOS/NEA MONI/MASTIC VILLAGES

Chios, known for its beautiful landscapes, is the legendary birthplace of Homer. This morning, drive to 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. Also visit the Byzantine 'ghost town' of Anavatos, abandoned following the Massacre of Chios in 1822. Lunch aboard ship is followed by an excursion to the south

of the island, where the aromatic mastic gum that was a favorite at Byzantine and Ottoman courts is produced. Explore two of the most prominent mastic villages: Pyrgi, where the facades of houses are decorated in intricate grey-and-white geometric patterns, and Vessa, whose narrow alleyways are lined with houses that contain architectural elements from the Genoese period. (B,L,D)

Tuesday, September 16

MYTILENE, Lesbos

This morning arrive in Mytilene, the artistic and commercial capital of Lesbos. Visit Agiasos, perhaps the most beautiful hill village on Lesbos, nestled in a wooded valley on the side of Mount Olympos. The village's narrow cobbled streets are lined with stone houses and artisanal shops. The church of Panaghia, which dates from the 1100s, houses an icon supposedly painted by Luke the Evangelist. Afternoon is at sea, cruising in the northern Aegean and through the narrow Dardanelles to Istanbul. (B,L,D)

Wednesday, September 17

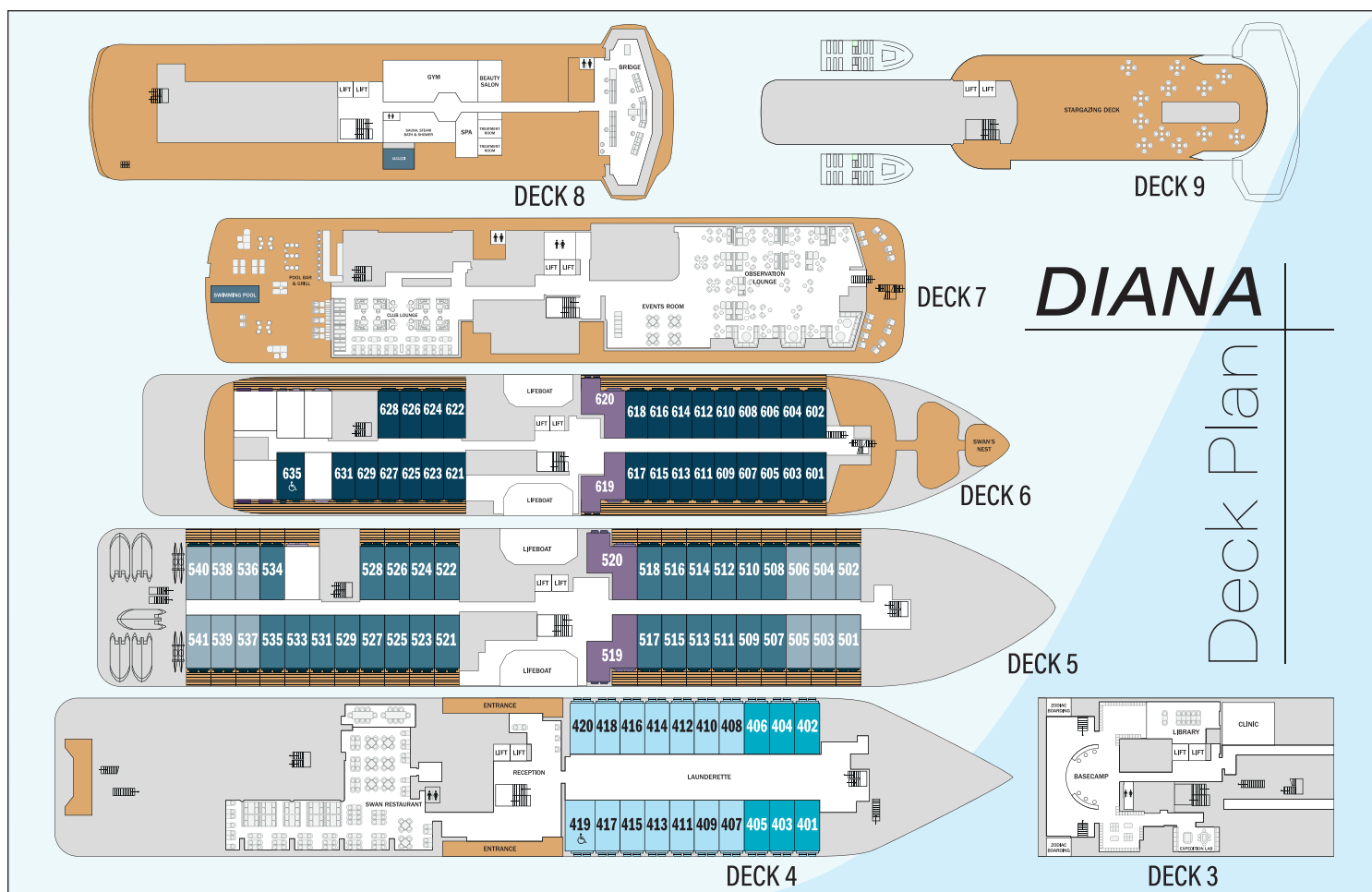
ISTANBUL/DISEMBARK

After breakfast aboard, disembark *Diana* and transfer to the airport for flights homeward. (B)

OPTIONAL ISTANBUL EXTENSION September 17 – 19, 2025

During your two-day stay in Istanbul sightseeing includes visits to Hagia Sophia with its superb mosaics; the Blue Mosque; the Hippodrome; the Archaeological Museum; Topkapi Palace, the opulent residence of the Ottoman Sultans; and the Grand Bazaar. Included are two nights at the *Pera Palace Hotel* (or similar), 2 breakfasts and 2 lunches; and transportation from hotel to airport on September 19th.

Rate per person, double occupancy: \$ 1,420
Single occupancy: \$ 2,290



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 401–406.	\$ 9,490
D	Oceanview staterooms with two large oval windows. 206 sq. ft. Deck 4. Staterooms 407–420.	\$ 9,990
C	Suites with balcony & living room area. 300 sq. ft. Deck 5. Suites 501–506, 536–541.	\$ 11,790
B	Suites with balcony & living room area. 300 sq. ft. Deck 5. Suites 507–518, 521–529, 531–535.	\$ 12,390
A	Suites with balcony and living room area. 300 sq. ft. Deck 6. Suites 601–618, 621–635.	\$ 12,810
AA	Suites with large balcony, separate bedroom & living room. 474 sq. ft. Decks 5 & 6. Suites 519, 520, 619 & 620.	\$ 17,290

FOR SOLO TRAVELERS | A limited number of cabins are available for single occupants in Category D at 120% of the per-person, double occupancy rate, and in Categories C, B, and A at 150% of the per-person, double occupancy rate.

LOYALTY REWARD PROGRAM

Travel on this cruise program and enjoy savings of **\$400 to \$900** per person on your next voyage with **THE SKEPTICS SOCIETY and THALASSA JOURNEYS** aboard a Swan Hellenic ship. Savings are determined by the stateroom category booked and is applicable when you reserve your trip within 30 days of the completion date of **THE SEA OF HOMER**

This saving cannot be combined with other offers and is subject to change.

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:

- One night at the *Athens Capital Hotel* (or similar), with breakfast.
- Welcome dinner in Athens and lunch on the day of embarkation.
- Cruise aboard the Swan Hellenic *Diana* as described in the itinerary.
- Group airport/hotel/pier transfers overseas at designated times on the indicated arrival and return dates, and handling of luggage.
- Private lectures by Richard Dawkins.
- Complete program of activities ashore, led by professional local guides, as described in the itinerary.
- 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, guides, porters and drivers.
- Basic Wi-Fi aboard the ship.
- The services of an experienced Thalassa Journeys Trip Director.
- All local taxes and service charges, including port and embarkation taxes.
- Complete pre-departure material.

NOT INCLUDED: International airfare; travel insurance; expenses of a personal nature; any items not mentioned in the itinerary or the above inclusions.



Heraion, Samos



Agiasos village nestled below Mount Olympos, Lesvos

GENERAL INFORMATION

SKEP 25D-0907

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 71-90 days prior to departure will be assessed a penalty equal to 50% of the total program cost per person. Cancellations received within 70 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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SKEPTIC

THE SEA OF HOMER

With **Richard Dawkins**

September 7 - 17, 2025



The 11th-century monastery of Nea Moni, Chios

FOR RESERVATIONS AND INFORMATION

PLEASE CALL

THALASSA JOURNEYS AT

866-633-3611

or email

reservations@thalassajourneys.com