



Classic International Cruises

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Athena to be First Australian-Based Liner to Visit Pare Pare in Indonesia

Longest-ever Round-Trip Cruise from Australia for Classic International Cruises - Includes an Unprecedented Six Ports in Japan -

Australia's only traditional ocean liner, Athena, will become the first Australian-based cruise ship to visit the Sulawesi port of Pare Pare in Indonesia when she makes Classic International Cruises' longest-ever round-trip voyage from Australia next March.

The 550-passenger Athena will embark on a 38-night cherry blossom cruise to Japan, The Philippines, China, Malaysia and Indonesia from her summer base of Perth on March 7, 2012. The exotic, history-making voyage will be Classic International Cruises' first visit to Japan from Australia, while the first port of call, the town of Pare Pare on the Indonesian island of Sulawesi, is believed to be a first for an Australian-based ship.

From Pare Pare, Athena passengers can join day tours to the remote, culturally intact but famous Tana Toraja highlands where locals who believe strongly in an after-life conduct elaborate funeral rituals which involve spectacular, multi-day feasts and ceremonies that include interring coffins in holes chiselled out of massive rocks and cliff faces. The rock graves are then covered by wooden doors or windows and guarded by life-like statues. The Tana Toraja region – known as the 'Land of the Heavenly Kings' – is also famed for its striking and intricately decorated Tongkonan ancestral houses – traditional structures with a steep, upward-sloping roof that resembles the prow of a ship.

Athena will also take passengers to Manila, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Kota Kinabalu and an unprecedented six ports in Japan – Okinawa, Tokyo, cherry blossom-shrouded Osaka, the atomic bomb cities of Nagasaki and Hiroshima and the rarely-visited but beautiful port of Shimizu, backdropped by iconic Mt Fuji.

Offering 15 cruises in Australia this summer, the classic-styled, mid-sized Athena carries only 550 passengers in an intimate, yacht-like atmosphere and boasts personal, old-fashioned service, a relaxed onboard atmosphere and fine cuisine as well as traditional wooden deck chairs, marbled reception foyer, pool, fitness centre and sauna, five bars and lounges, nightclub, showlounge, casino, library, boutiques, cinema and two restaurants. And all cabins have a full-sized bath – a luxury only found in suites on the latest superliners.

Athena's 38-night round-trip Asian cruise sails from Perth on March 7, 2012, and is available from \$5995 per person, twin-share. Bookings are via travel agents. For general information, visit www.classicintcruises.com.

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