
MEDITERRANEAN CRUISE PORT CHEAT SHEET

This roundup shows which major Mediterranean ports are best by excursion (or by hiring your own private guide), and which are doable on your own. For detailed instructions and self-guided walks and tours in each destination, see the *Rick Steves' Mediterranean Cruise Ports* guidebook.

Destination (Port)	Excursion?	Public Transit Option (and Advice)
Barcelona	No	Ride the shuttle bus right into the heart of town, within easy walking distance (or Metro ride) of most sights.
Provence (Toulon/Marseille)	Yes	Various great destinations are within reach of the underwhelming port towns; an excursion can efficiently combine several. From Toulon port: 30-minute walk (or short bus ride) to train station, then 1-hour train to Marseille for onward connections. From Marseille port: Shuttle bus to Old Port, walk or ride Métro to train station, then take a train to Aix-en-Provence (45 minutes), Arles (1.5 hours), or Avignon (1 hour).
French Riviera (Nice/Villefranche/Monaco)	No	All three ports—and more—are connected by frequent, fast, and easy trains and buses (10-20 minutes between each one by train, longer but more scenic by bus). Train stations are an easy walk, public-transit ride, or taxi trip from each port.
Florence, Pisa, Lucca (Livorno)	Maybe	Shuttle bus into downtown Livorno; then public bus to train station; then train to Pisa (20 minutes), Lucca (1 hour), or Florence (1.5 hours). Excursions offer a no-hassle connection that also includes tours of the major sights.
Rome (Civitavecchia)	Maybe	Short walk to train station, then 45-80-minute train into Rome. Doable on your own, but an excursion helps you sightsee efficiently in this big city.
Naples, Pompeii (Naples/Sorrento)	No	From Naples port: Walk or take local buses or taxis to most sights in the city; Pompeii is an easy 40-minute train ride away. From Sorrento port: Easy train ride to Pompeii (30 minutes) or Naples (70 minutes).
Amalfi Coast, Capri (Naples/Sorrento)	Yes	Both are doable on your own from either port (especially Capri by boat—45 minutes from Naples, 20-25 minutes from Sorrento), but crowded and unreliable public transit risks not making it back in time. An excursion buys you peace of mind.
Venice	No	It's an easy 5-minute monorail ride to Grand Canal for a slow vaporetto cruise through town; or a speedy 30-minute express boat directly to St. Mark's Square. Even walking (about 45 minutes to St. Mark's Square) is delightful in this unique city.
Split	No	The port is just a few steps from the easy-to-tour Old Town.
Dubrovnik	No	Cruisers are either tendered directly to the heart of the Old Town, or docked at the big industrial port (15-minute bus or taxi ride from Old Town). Once in the Old Town, everything worth seeing is walkable.
Kotor, Montenegro	No	Ships dock directly across the street from the Old Town.
Athens (Piraeus)	Maybe	It takes 20-60 minutes by public bus, Metro, or taxi into downtown (depending on traffic). But the important ancient sites benefit from a good guide, and an excursion offers easy connections.
Greek Islands (Mykonos, Santorini, Corfu, Rhodes, Heraklion/Crete)	No	Usually easy and fast to get into town or beaches. Just relax and be on vacation. Exceptions: Katakolo port (an excursion makes seeing Olympia easier) and Heraklion (an excursion allows you to connect both in-town museum and out-of-town palace).
Other Ports (Katakolo/Olympia)		
Istanbul	No	Cruise ship drops you off near the Golden Horn, an easy walk or tram or taxi ride from virtually every major sight in town.
Ephesus (Kuşadası)	Yes	Reaching Ephesus requires a complicated ride in shared minibus taxis (30-40 minutes) plus a 15-minute walk; or a pricey taxi. An excursion makes transport easy, and the magnificent site warrants a good guide.