Treasures of Turkey.

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TURKEY | 9DAYS / 8NIGHTS
Route: Round-trip from and to Istanbul
Type of tour: Culture and nature
TOUR OVERVIEW

Turkey is more than the crossroads between east and west, it is the link that binds the present to the past, a diverse country where history and culture can be found at every turn. This epic nine-day odyssey begins and ends in Istanbul, taking in the country’s top cultural treasures, the sites of ancient and modern battles, the ruins of classical civilisations and some of the most breathtaking natural scenery known to mankind. Turkey is more than a country, it is a world unto itself. Domestic flights are used for long journeys thus sparing you hours sitting on a coach. Groups vary in size but are typically made up of about 6-10 travellers.

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

Istanbul: Visit Hagia Sophia, the Topkapi Palace, the Blue Mosque, the Hippodrome and the Grand Bazaar

Gallipoli: Pay homage to the tens of thousands of men who perished in one of World War I’s bloodiest campaigns

Troy: Journey back in time to the ancient Greece of Homer’s Odyssey at this historic site

Pergamon: Explore the ruins of what was one of the great cities of antiquity

Ephesus: Discover the ruins of this once vast city, including the Temple of Artemis, the Roman baths, the Library of Celsus and the House of the Virgin Mary

Sirince: A picturesque whitewashed Anatolian village, which is home to a thriving wine production industry

Pamukkale: Bathe in the calcium terraces of Pamukkale and enjoy some of the most beautiful vistas anywhere in the world

Hierapolis: This ancient Greek holy city boasts a well-preserved Roman theatre among a wealth of classical monuments

Cappadocia: Visit Uchisar Castle, Goreme Open Air Museum, the old cave houses of Cavusin, the ‘fairy chimneys’ of Pasabagi, the Devrent Valley and enjoy a wine tasting in Urgup

DON’T MISS

Istanbul: Head to Beyoglu and explore the cool cafés in the arcades perpendicular to Istiklal Caddesi to sip on a Turkish tea... or something a bit stronger

Sirince: Taste the town’s famous fruit wines, scent the local handmade soaps and savour the delicious walnut baklava pastries

Cappadocia: Visit the ‘cave town’ of Urgup in the evening to enjoy a local dinner or have a fun night

DAY BY DAY

DAY 1 | ARRIVAL IN ISTANBUL

Meet at the airport and transfer to your hotel. You will be given your room key and the rest of the day is yours to explore Istanbul. There are two airports in Istanbul: Ataturk Airport is 20km away from city centre and Sabiha Gokcen Airport is 55km away from the city centre. Transfer from Ataturk Airport to your hotel is included. If you arrive to Sabiha Gokcen Airport, please contact us for transfer rates.

- Overnight in Istanbul hotel on a bed-and-breakfast basis.
DAY 2 | ISTANBUL

Enjoy breakfast at the hotel before pick-up at 08:30 hours for a guided tour of Istanbul. Turkey's largest city is a treasure trove of cultural heritage with more than 27 centuries of history. Visit Hagia Sophia, the ancient basilica built by Emperor Constantine the Great in the fourth century, which for a thousand years was the largest church in the world. Here you can admire some of the most beautiful Byzantine mosaics to have survived the passage of time. Continue to the Topkapi Palace, the vast residence of the Ottoman sultans from the 15th to the 19th centuries. Wander its elaborately decorated halls and admire the exquisite collection of crystal, silver, Chinese porcelain and robes worn by the sultans and their families as well as the glittering jewels of the Imperial Treasury. Also on display is the Holy Mantle, which the Prophet Mohammed gave to a poet. Head to the nearby Sultanahmet Mosque, which is popularly known as the Blue Mosque because of the elaborate blue Iznik tiles decorating its interior. Adjacent are the ruins of the ancient Hippodrome, where chariot races were held during Roman and Byzantine times. Three monuments remain from this era: the Obelisk of Theodosius, the bronze Serpentine Column and the Column of Constantine. Break for lunch (not included) before visiting the Grand Bazaar in the afternoon. This covered labyrinth of streets and passages houses more than 4,000 shops with each trade having its own area: goldsmiths, carpet sellers, copperware and meerschaum pipes etc. After the tour, transfer back to accommodation. (Please note that Hagia Sophia is closed on Mondays, the Topkapi Palace is closed on Tuesdays and the Grand Bazaar is closed on Sundays. If your tour is on one of these days, visit the Basilica Cistern instead of Hagia Sophia and the Topkapi Palace, and the Spice Bazaar instead of the Grand Bazaar.)

- Overnight in Istanbul hotel on a bed-and-breakfast basis.

DAY 3 | ISTANBUL – GALLIPOLI – ÇANAKKALE (295km – 4 hrs)

Rise early for breakfast before departure at 07:00 hours for Gallipoli to visit the battlefields of one of World War I’s fiercest campaigns. Break for lunch (included) on arrival. This year marks the centenary of the Allied landings, which led to an unremitting nine-month-long war of attrition in this strategic corner of Europe. Begin at Kabatepe Museum, where the collection of artefacts brings home the harrowing horrors of war. Visit Ari Burnu Cemetery, which is almost right on the beach where the men perished, and Anzac Cove, named after the Australian and New Zealander troops who landed here. Visit also Beach Cemetery, Shrapnel Valley Cemetery and Plugge’s Plateau Cemetery to pay homage to the more than 100,000 men from both the Ottoman Empire and the Allied forces who lost their lives fighting for the Gallipoli peninsula. After the tour, cross the Bosphorus to Asia for check-in at your hotel.

- Overnight in Çanakkale hotel on a bed-and-breakfast basis.

DAY 4 | ÇANAKKALE – TROY – PERGAMON – KUSADASI (400km – 5 hrs)

Breakfast at the hotel with departure at 08:30 hours for the 30-minute drive to Troy to explore the site of the most mythical battle in history. Visit the archaeological site of Troy, where the face of Helen of Troy set sail to a thousand ships and where the legend of the Trojan Horse was born. Afterwards, take to the road for the three-hour drive to Pergamon, one of the most famous cities of antiquity. Break for lunch (included) on arrival. In the afternoon, discover the magnificent acropolis of Pergamon as well as the ruins of the temple and library. The modern town of Bergama, which stands just south of ancient Pergamon, is famous for its jewellery, gemstones and silver, and there is a brief stop en route for a jewellery centre visit. Arrive in Kusadasi in the early evening.

- Overnight in Kusadasi hotel on a bed-and-breakfast basis.

DAY 5 | KUSADASI – EPHESUS – SIRINCE – KUSADASI (60km – 1.5 hrs)

After breakfast at the hotel, depart at 08:30 hours for a guided tour of Ephesus, one of the best-preserved ancient sites in the world. There are more than two dozen monuments to admire along a V-shaped site at the foot of a hill. Stroll along the Curetes Street, visiting the Temple of Artemis, the Roman baths, the Library of Celsus and the Grand Theatre among other sites and continue to what some believe is the House of the Virgin Mary. Break for lunch (included) at about 13:00 hours. In the afternoon, visit a carpet-weaving centre to learn about this ancient Turkish craft en route to the picture-postcard village of Sirince, one of the finest example of Anatolian Greek architecture. The whitewashed houses on the slope of a hill stand in resplendent contrast to the thick vegetation surrounding them. Sirince is famed throughout Turkey
for producing some of the best wines in country – especially fruit wines made from ingredients such as blackberry, cherry and even kiwi. Visit a vineyard and learn how to make fruit wine from local producers. Along the way, there is a visit to one of the region’s most famous leather production centres, where you can avail of factory rates. During this tour, you will be spared the persistent sales pitches that are often a feature of markets in Turkey, allowing you to enjoy the shopping experience to the full.

- Overnight in Kusadasi hotel on a bed-and-breakfast basis.

**DAY 6 | KUSADASI – PAMUKKALE (185km – 3 hrs)**

Breakfast at the hotel is followed by departure at 08:30 hours for Pamukkale, arriving at about midday and heading to the hotel for check-in. Enjoy free time for lunch (included) and meet up again at 13.30 hours. Head to the glistening calcium terraces of Pamukkale for a guided tour of this natural wonderland. Pamukkale, which in English means ‘cotton castle’, is a series of cascading calcium terraces formed as a result of thermal springs. You have the option of relaxing in the warm waters. Continue uphill to explore the ruins of the ancient city of Hierapolis, where there is a well-preserved Roman theatre and ancient thermal baths, which have been restored and converted into an archaeological museum. Other significant sites include the Temple of Apollo, the Necropolis and the Nymphaeum. Overnight in Pamukkale hotel on a bed-and-breakfast basis.

**DAY 7 | PAMUKKALE – DENIZLI – KAYSERI – CAPPADOCIA (650km – flight time depends on connection)**

Transfer to Denizli Airport after breakfast for a domestic flight to Cappadocia in the heart of Anatolia. On arrival at Kayseri Airport in Cappadocia, transfer to your selected hotel in the region. The rest of the day is free at leisure.

- Overnight in Cappadocia hotel on a bed-and-breakfast basis.

**DAY 8 | CAPPADOCIA**

Enjoy breakfast at the hotel before heading at 09:00 hours for a guided tour of stunning Cappadocia. This volcanic region is the result of geological formations that began 10 million years ago and, as a result, large stalagmite-like pillars rise upwards from the earth, creating a unique otherworldly landscape. The beautiful horse country of Katpatuka, as the ancient Persians called Cappadocia, is a fairytale-like region that is both enchanting and mysterious. The adventure begins at Uchhisar Castle, the highest point in Cappadocia, a stack riddled with tunnels built over thousands of years. The ‘fairy chimneys’ around Uchhisar were hollowed out and used as graves during the Roman period. Continue to Goreme Open Air Museum, which is famous for the Christian churches cut into the rock and decorated with delicate Orthodox frescos relating the life of Jesus. Most of the churches date from the 10th to 12th centuries. Then head to explore the eerie abandoned cave village of Cavusin, which has lain empty since its Greek residents were transferred to Greece in the 1920s. Break for lunch (included) in the picturesque village of Avanos on the banks of the River Kizilirmak. The town is famous for its pottery and there’s a pottery workshop visit after lunch. Head to Pasabagi to see three-fairy chimneys, which look like giant stone mushrooms, followed by a visit to a workshop to see examples of famous handwoven Cappadocian kilim carpets. Drive to the Devrent Valley, which is popularly known as Imagination Valley, to see natural rock formations that resemble animals. Continue to Urgup for a wine tasting and to check out the fairy chimneys affectionately known as the Three Beauties. Return to accommodation by about 18:00 hours.

- Overnight in Cappadocia hotel on a bed-and-breakfast basis.

**DAY 9 | CAPPADOCIA – KAYSERI – ISTANBUL (770km – 1.5 hrs flight time)**

Savour one final breakfast in Cappadocia before enjoying some free time for shopping. Afterwards, depart for either Kayseri Airport or Nevsehir Airport, depending on which has the most convenient departure times, to catch the flight to Istanbul.

- Breakfast included.

END OF SERVICES
INCLUDED

TOUR GUIDE:
- Operated with professional English-speaking tour guides

ACCOMMODATION:
- Two nights’ hotel in Istanbul; one night’s hotel in Çanakkale; two nights’ hotel in Kusadasi; one night’s hotel in Pamukkale; and two nights’ hotel in Cappadocia

MEALS:
- Eight open buffet breakfasts and five lunches (D3, D4, D5, D6 and D8)

TRANSPORT:
- Transportation in an air conditioned, non-smoking coach; transfer from Istanbul Ataturk Airport; transfer to Denizli Airport; domestic flight tickets from Denizli to Kayseri/ Nevsehir and from Kayseri/ Nevsehir to Istanbul

ENTRANCE FEES AND ACTIVITIES:
- All monuments and visits as indicated: Istanbul guided city tour, Hagia Sophia; Topkapi Palace, the Blue Mosque and Grand Bazaar; Gallipoli guided tour; Troy guided tour; Pergamon guided tour; Ephesus guided tour; Sirince guided tour and wine tasting; Pamukkale and Hierapolis guided tour; and Cappadocia guided tour

NOT INCLUDED
- Items of a personal nature such as alcoholic drinks, laundry, and drinks and meals not stated explicitly in the programme
- Any others expenses which are not mentioned in the included section
- International flights
- All types of insurance
- Entry visa to Turkey

RECOMMENDATIONS
Comfortable and light clothing is the most suitable for travelling in Turkey. Visitors should not wear sleeveless shirts, shorts, short skirts or skimpy clothing when visiting temples, religious or official buildings. Sun protection, sunglasses, a hat and mosquito repellent can be very useful during your stay.