



Treasures of Travel

Treasures of Istanbul, 2023

~ 7 days/5 nights ~

Please note: This tour is not offered as a pre-planned group tour.

We would be delighted to meet the expectation of the interested individuals and/or groups with the below example outline of the trip, based on the highlights of the country, or custom design one working around the offered itinerary according to your special interest and desire to make it unforgettable experience.

Imagine a city having been the capital of Greek, Roman, Byzantine, and Ottoman Empires for more than 2,000 years; a bridge between Asia and Europe, once part of the Great Silk Road where it ended. Istanbul is a pivotal point of three great religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam that still coexist next to each other in harmony; and finally chosen by the European Community as the 2010 cultural capital of Europe.

This journey takes you from the ancient history of Istanbul including the Neolithic time, and leads, enriches and enlightens you through layers of civilizations on top of one another and finally connects you to the present city. You will learn in depth about its natural splendid beauties, history, culture, array of cuisine.

There is no other city as unique in connecting your heart and soul, as this. It's truly unforgettable journey of life time!

You will experience the throbbing labyrinthine bazaars; some of the oldest buildings in the world still in use daily; the richly colored tiled walls covering many mosques, made with techniques based on Chinese porcelains traded during the early Silk Road era. Some frescos of Christian churches pre 500 AD will allure you in this exotic city. Take the opportunity to experience a Turkish bath (hamam) and partake of the little restaurants where a small group can fit in (without too much notice) getting the opportunity to choose from the menu the local people have for daily consumption and relish watching the preparation of your selection. A cruise on the Bosphorus by ferry is a must for enjoying seeing the shorelines separating Europe and Asia.

Day 1

Depart the USA. Overnight flight to Istanbul.

Day 2 ~ Istanbul

Upon arrival in Istanbul, we will meet you at the airport and **transfer** to your hotel for overnight.

Day 3 ~ Istanbul

Today we'll start exploring **Istanbul, the UNESCO World Heritage Site**, in order to feel its pulse and learn about the past of this ever fascinating, one of the most beautiful cities in the world, so rich in old sites, arts and crafts, as well as hospitable people; no wonder it always

attracts its guests back like magnet, once they've listened to Istanbul's heartbeat. We will start the day with a walk to the **Hippodrome**, arena for political, cultural, and sports activities during Roman, Byzantine, and Ottoman times, the **Blue Mosque**, famous for its Iznik blue tiles; and **Topkapi Palace**, which has been home to Ottoman Sultans for 400 years.

Day 4 ~ Istanbul

In the morning we'll tour **St. Sophia**, which used to be the largest Christian church in the world for more than 1,000 years. Nearby is the Underground Palace, or **Basilica Cistern**, with its mystical atmosphere and marble columns surrounded with water. Finally, we will head to the most famous museum in Turkey, **Istanbul Archaeological Museum**, which is the part of the complex also including Ancient Orient Museum and Tile Museum (kiosk).

Day 5 ~ Istanbul

We will follow the ancient city walls of Istanbul to the **Chora Museum**, which has the most beautiful Byzantine mosaics in Turkey. Next, we will take a **Bosphorus cruise** between the two continents to see the fabulous palaces and villas that hug the shorelines. We'll end our day with a **tour of the old and new city**, including the Galata and Pera districts with a visit to **Jewish Museum**.

Day 6 ~ Istanbul

Today we will tour the famous **Grand Bazaar** and **Spice Market**, then continue on to **Fener**, known as the Greek suburb where the Greek Orthodox Church and the residence of the Patriarch are located. From here we will make our way to **Balat**. It is nearby and known as the Jewish suburb housing one of the oldest Synagogues, Ahrida.

In the afternoon we will visit **Kumkapi**, the Armenian suburb where the residence and church of Armenian Patriarch is. Not far away, there is a small Saint Sofia church which was built before the other (larger) St. Sofia, in 532 AD. Today it is in use as mosque surrounded with art galleries, and small work shops.

Day 7

This morning we will **transfer** you to the airport for your flight home.

Best time to travel:

Spring ~ fall