



Treasures of Travel

Classic Turkey Tour, 2023 *~ 22 days/20 nights ~*

Imagine one tour that offers a combination of unusual and intriguing natural wonders; inspiring archaeological and historical sites; beautiful beaches; fascinating museums and exotic bazaars. This is it! One morning you might be watching the sun rise from the heights of a hot air balloon over Cappadocia – the next day watching the same sun set beyond the clear waters of the Mediterranean. Where else can you eat breakfast in Europe, and lunch in Asia? An unforgettable three-week journey!

Day 1

Depart the USA. Overnight flight to Turkey.

Day 2 ~ Ankara

We will meet you at the airport in Ankara and take you to your hotel. **Overnight in Ankara.**

Day 3 ~ Ankara

Ankara, the ancient Ankuwash or the Angora, has been the capital of the Turkish Republic since 1923. In the morning, we will visit the **Museum of Ancient Anatolian Civilizations**, the best museum in Turkey for pre-classic exhibits. In the afternoon, we will travel to **Gordion**, the city of legendary King Midas and the capital of the Phrygian Empire, where Alexander the Great cut the “Gordion Knot”. **Overnight in Ankara.**

Day 4 ~ Cappadocia

Today we'll head south to the fascinating region of Cappadocia, stopping en route at the Hittite capital **UNESCO World Heritage Site Hattusas**, which dates from 3,000 BC. Highlights of the site include: the Great Temple, Lion's Gate, and the Citadel. At the famous **Shrine of Yazilikaya** you will see reliefs of 63 gods and goddesses carved on the rock walls. At the end of the touring day we'll reach Cappadocia, whose unique landscape was created eons ago by volcanic eruptions. **Overnight in Cappadocia.**

Day 5 ~ Cappadocia

Cappadocia- one of the most important national parks in Turkey is also **the UNESCO World Heritage site**. The special composition of the rock in this fascinating area allowed the carving of above or underground cities where thousands of people lived. We will visit one of these **underground cave cities**, with multiple homes and churches, which were especially used as shelters in the times of wars; and **Pasabagi** with its unique “fairy chimneys”. According to the legend, these odd-shaped rocks housed fairies that were capable of casting spells. We will climb the **Uchisar Fortress** for a panoramic view of the beautiful **Goreme Valley**; visit **Urgup**, known for its Selcuk and Ottoman historical works, its kilims, handicrafts, and local wines; and tour **Avanos**, which is famous for its pottery. **Overnight in Cappadocia.**

Day 6 ~ Konya

En route to Konya we will visit the **Selcuk Kervansaray** (camel palace) where caravans stopped to rest along the world famous trade route- ancient Silk Road. Before arriving at our final destination we will also explore the world's first city, **UNESCO World Heritage Site, Catal Huyuk**, which is still under excavation. While in Konya, the city where Mevlana founded the Mevlevi Order of Whirling Dervishes, our tour will include: a visit to the **Museum of Mevlana**, the **Karatay Medresesi** with its beautiful display of Seljuk tiles; and the wood and stone Selcuk carvings of **Ince Minare Medresesi**. **Overnight in Konya.**

Day 7 ~ Pamukkale

This morning we will start our journey to Pamukkale (**ancient Hierapolis**), **UNESCO World Heritage Site**. The cliffs of **Pamukkale** are covered with brilliant white mineral deposits, with pools of clear warm water fed by thermal springs, creating a unique and beautiful natural wonder. This site was a famous health spa in ancient Greek and Roman times and is still in use today. You may soak in the pools and view the beautiful marble columns, toppled by earthquakes that lie at the bottom; then explore the ruins of ancient Hierapolis with its theater, Temple of Apollo, colonnaded street, bath and its extensive necropolis. **Overnight in Pamukkale.**

Day 8 ~ Antalya

One of the most scenic drives, we will take, is the route through the beautiful **Taurus Mountains** to the harbor city of Antalya on the Mediterranean, one of the few cities that enjoys an appealing mixture of ancient and modern worlds. En route to Antalya we will visit **Aphrodisias**, the city of Aphrodite, the goddess of love and beauty. This interesting site has very impressive ruins and beautiful marble statuary. **Overnight in Antalya.**

Day 9 ~ Antalya

In the morning, we will tour the ancient sites of **Perge** and **Aspendos**, the latter has one of the best-preserved Roman theatres in the world. In the afternoon, we will visit the **Antalya Archaeological Museum**, one of the finest museums in Turkey, containing exhibits ranging from the Stone Age to the modern day Antalya. There will still be time to explore Antalya's old city quarter where many fine examples of Ottoman architecture are being carefully restored, and walk along the ancient harbor. **Overnight in Antalya.**

Day 10 ~ Fethiye

Our drive takes us along the beautiful Mediterranean coast to **the UNESCO World Heritage Site**, Lycian capital **Xanthus**, once the grandest city of Lycia, which is beautifully situated overlooking the Xanthos River. Next we'll tour **Letoon**, another **UNESCO World Heritage Site** which was the religious center of Lycia. **Overnight in Fethiye.**

Day 11 ~ Datca

This morning we will stop in **Dalyan** to view the ruins of the ancient Carian city of Caunos and the Lycian Temple tombs carved dramatically out of the cliff above the Dalyan River. Dalyan is also famous as the breeding ground of the *Caretta caretta* - **the loggerhead sea turtle**, a rare kind of turtle that lays its eggs and hatches its young on the beaches here, which are closed from June to September to accommodate the species. Next we will drive on to a peninsula which extends west into the Mediterranean Sea to the picturesque town of Datca to spend the night. **Overnight in Datca**

Day 12 ~ Bodrum

Today we will explore the city of **Cnidus/Knidos** with its two magnificent harbors - one on the Aegean coast and the other on the Mediterranean. There are also two impressive theaters, and a statue of Aphrodite made by Praxiteles which is believed to be the first free-standing monument of a woman. This Aphrodite of Cnidus became the standard against which all subsequent representations of feminine beauty were measured. We will travel to the harbor city of Bodrum (ancient Halicarnassus), home of Herodotus, father of history and Mausoleum of Halicarnassus, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. **Overnight in Bodrum.**

Day 13 ~ Bodrum

Strolling along the ancient harbor, we will come across many interesting shops to browse as we make our way to the **Museum of Underwater Archaeology** which is housed in the impressive **Castle of St. Peter**. The Museum contains many fascinating artifacts and restored shipwrecks from 14th - 12th century BC, retrieved from the dangerous waters along the peninsula. At the end of the day, we will visit the **Mausoleum of Halicarnassus**, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. **Overnight in Bodrum.**

Day 14 ~ Ephesus

Traveling further along the coast today, we will stop to explore **Euromos**, noted for a very picturesque Temple of Zeus, followed by three famous ancient cities that were once part of the Ionian League: **Didyma**, the religious center; **Miletus**, the business and cultural center; and **Priene**, the political center. We will carry on to Kusadasi, which has a beautiful location and houses a splendid boat harbor and fortress, for overnight. **Overnight in Kusadasi**

Day 15 ~ Ephesus

Today we will explore the fascinating Hellenistic and Roman city of **Ephesus** including its beautiful theater, Celsus Library, Temple of Artemis one of the seven wonders of the ancient world and intriguing ruins. In the nearby charming town of Selcuk, we will tour the **Museum of Ephesus** where, among many artifacts, we will see a well-known statue of Artemis. **Overnight in Kusadasi.**

Day 16 ~ Ayvalik via Sardis and Pergamum

We will travel north along the Aegean coast today, with a stop to visit Sardis with its impressive **synagogue, gymnasium-bath complex**. Sardis the capital of ancient Lydia is also known as the residence of Croesus, the king of Lydia from 560 to 547 BC until his defeat by the Persians, who was renowned for his wealth in ancient times, as well as credited for issuing first true gold coins besides silver ones. We will continue on to **Pergamum**, which has an interesting ancient medical center and acropolis listed as **the UNESCO World Heritage Site**; it is especially famous for its library, once one of the most extensive in the world. Pergamum is also famous for the origination of parchment, from which we derived our modern writing paper. We will spend the night in the seaside town of Ayvalik. **Overnight in Ayvalik**

Day 17 ~ Canakkale

Today we will continue our drive along the northern Aegean coast, stopping at **Assos**, a very important city during the 4th century BC; it was a well-known center for the study of philosophy and natural sciences. Aristotle, who later became a tutor of Alexander the Great, taught here. The city was protected by a magnificent wall, one of the most impressive fortifications in Anatolia. The view from the **Temple of Athena** over the ancient ruins and the ancient/modern harbor down below is particularly beautiful. Next we will tour **the UNESCO World Heritage Site Troy**, the site of Homer's classic epic "the Iliad", where nine different layers of civilization have been uncovered and partially excavated. **Overnight in Canakkale.**

Day 18 ~ Edirne

In the morning we will cross the famous Dardanelles **by ferry to Gallipoli Peninsula**, where we will visit some of the memorials to those who died in World War I during the famous Battle of Gallipoli. Next, we will travel through Thrace (the European section of Turkey) along the Sea of Marmara to Edirne (ancient Hadrianopolis). Once we arrive in Edirne we will have a walking tour to enjoy this friendly city. **Overnight in Edirne.**

Day 19 ~ Istanbul

We will spend the day exploring Edirne before heading to Istanbul. Edirne has a long and turbulent history as the area around it has been the site of about sixteen major battles and sieges from the days of the ancient Greeks. We'll start our sightseeing with **the UNESCO World Heritage Site Selimiye Mosque**, built 500 years ago by famous Ottoman architect Mimar Sinan; next, head to **Rustem Pasha Kervansaray, Bedestan, Kavaflar Arasta, the Archeological museum, old city** and the **synagogue**. In the evening we'll arrive in Istanbul for overnight.

Day 20 ~ Istanbul

The whole day will be dedicated to the exploration of **the UNESCO World Heritage Site, Old City of Istanbul** 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. Today we will visit the legendary **Topkapi Palace**, home to the Ottoman Sultans for more than 400 years. Nearby is the Underground Palace, or **Basilica Cistern**, with its mystical atmosphere and marble columns surrounded with water. Finally, we will tour the most famous museum in Turkey, **Istanbul Archaeological Museum**, which is the part of the complex including Ancient Orient Museum and tile museum (kiosk) as well. Overnight in Istanbul.

Day 21 ~ Istanbul

We will tour the **Grand Bazaar** and **Spice Market** followed a **Bosphorus cruise** between the continents to see some of the interesting historical buildings, as well as the fabulous palaces and villas that hug the shoreline. We will end our sightseeing day with a **tour of the old and new city**, including the Galata and Pera districts. Overnight in Istanbul.

Day 22

We will **transfer** you to the airport for your departure flight to the USA.

Departure Dates: Based on 22 days/20 nights

May 1 – May 22

September 25 – October 16

Tour Price:

\$4,300.00 per person in double room and 10 ~ 12 guests traveling together

\$800.00 single supplement

Price Includes:

- Accommodation for 20 nights at selected 4 & 5 star hotels, and/or restored Ottoman mansions and special boutique hotels
- Breakfast daily
- 10 dinners
- Daily private sightseeing by comfortable air-conditioned minibuses or vans
Including professional driver
- English speaking and knowledgeable guide
- Entrance fees to the sites indicated in bold on the itinerary
- Ferry across the Dardanelles
- All arrival and departure transfers
- Baggage handling
- Bosphorus cruise in Istanbul

- Complete information package with itineraries, travel and visa information, and luggage tags