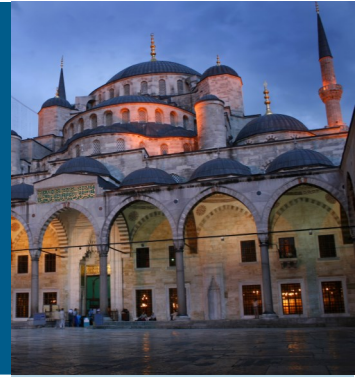
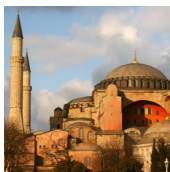


Best of Turkey

15 DAYS/14 NIGHTS- GROUP TRAVEL
SUGGESTED ITINERARY-CAN BE CUSTOMIZED



Historically, Turkey has always served as a gateway between eastern and western cultures, and even today one can still see the interesting blend of Islamic and Greco-Roman influences. Turkey is home to some of the most famous locations of the ancient world. Over two weeks, this comprehensive tour will expose you to a remarkable amount of Turkish history and culture. You will visit the ancient ruins of some of the world's earliest civilized cultures including Roman amphitheatres, early-Christian churches, Greek archeological sites and underground cities. You will gain an understanding of the Ottoman Empire through the nation's mosques, which are spiritual houses as well as places of great artistry. You will sample modern-day Turkish culture in its bazaars and village life. You will enjoy the beautiful Aegean coastline and stunning natural wonders.



DAY 1 ~ ARRIVE ISTANBUL

Welcome to Istanbul, the largest city in Turkey.

Formerly called Constantinople, Istanbul served as a former capital of the Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman Empires. Upon arrival to the airport, a local assistant will meet your group in the terminal's arrival call and accompany it to the hotel by private coach. (While most hotels have official check-in times at 2:00 pm, if rooms are not ready you and your fellow travelers are welcome to store their bags with the reception staff). During the arrival, feel free to get situated and begin exploring this fantastic city. Tonight enjoy a welcome dinner in the hotel's restaurant with your travel companions.



DAY 2 ~ ISTANBUL

After breakfast at the hotel, your group will meet a local guide in the lobby and proceed for a full-day tour of Istanbul by private coach. During the tour, you will see this city's truly splendid cultural attractions. Visit St. Sophia, the magnificent Byzantine

Church that was pillaged by Crusaders, converted into a mosque by the Ottomans – and today survives as fantastic museum. See the ancient Hippodrome, the former center for sports and political activities in Constantinople, as well as the Obelisk of Theodosius from Egypt, the Serpentine Column and the German Fountain. You will also see Istanbul's spectacular Blue Mosque, a magnificent 17th-century structure famous for its six minarets and for the 25,000 blue Iznik tiles that decorate its interior.

Following a lunch break in the Old Town, you will visit Topkapý Palace. This UNESCO World Heritage Site was the official residence of the Ottoman Sultans for four centuries. The tour will finish back at the hotel. Enjoy an evening at leisure.



DAY 3 ~ BURSA

After breakfast and check-out, travel south by private bus to Bursa, which was the first capital of the Ottoman Empire. Bursa is spectacularly situated at the foot of Mount Uludag - which in the time of the ancient Greeks was known as Mount Olympus. To

INCLUSIONS

- **2 nights each in Istanbul, Kusadasi, and Canakkale**
- **1 night each in Bursa, Ankara, Pamukkale, Seljuk, and Bergama**
- **3 nights in Cappadocia**
- **Breakfast daily**
- **Lunch and dinner per itinerary**
- **Ground transport via air conditioned luxury coach**
- **English speaking assistant and guides**
- **Admission tickets as outlined in itinerary**

EuropeExpress



HIGHLIGHTS

- **Tour the Blue Mosque, a landmark of the Byzantine and Ottoman cultures**
- **See the site where Alexander the Great cut the Gordion Knot**
- **Explore the fairy chimneys and rock-carved churches of Cappadocia**
- **Visit the pottery center of Avanos**
- **Visit the Temple of Artemis**
- **Explore Ephesus one of the world's finest archaeological sites**
- **See the library containing 200,000 writings given to Cleopatra**
- **Visit the legendary city of Troy**

arrive here from Istanbul, your group will catch the ferry across the Sea of Marmara to Yalova and then continue driving south to Bursa.

Upon arrival your group will have lunch in a special kebab restaurant before proceeding on a guided sightseeing tour of Bursa - during which you will see the Green Mosque, the Green Mausoleum, the Grand Mosque and the Old Bazaar. The tour will finish at your hotel this evening. Enjoy the evening at leisure to explore.



DAY 4 ~ ANKARA

After breakfast and check-out, travel east by private bus to Ankara. En route, your group will stop and visit ruins of Gordion, which was the capital of the ancient Kingdom of Phrygia. King Midas (who turned everything he touched to gold) and Alexander the Great (who supposedly cut the famous Gordion knot here) both formed part of local Phrygian legend. After lunch on own, your group will continue traveling east to Ankara, Turkey's capital city, which is home to the Turkish government, the State Opera and the National Ballet. After checking in at the hotel, the evening is free in Ankara.



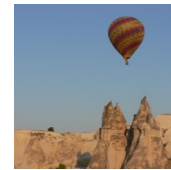
DAY 5 ~ CAPPADOCIA

After breakfast and check-out, your group will tour Ankara's amazing Museum of Anatolian Civilizations, which is home to an excellent collection of artifacts from the Hittite Empire (18th century BC to 1178 BC). After the visit to the museum and to the mausoleum of Atatürk, your group will travel southeast to Cappadocia, a region of immense historic and cultural heritage. After checking in at the hotel in the late afternoon, the evening is free in Cappadocia.



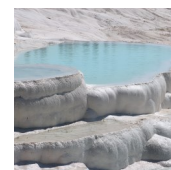
DAY 6 ~ CAPPADOCIA

After breakfast in the hotel, enjoy a full-day guided tour by private bus of this unique region of volcanic landscapes and "fairy chimneys." You will begin by touring the open-air museum of Göreme. This UNESCO World Heritage Site is famous for its unusual rock formations. During today's sightseeing tour your group will visit some of the rock-carved churches that contain ancient frescoes. After free time for lunch, your group will continue its tour by traveling to the Zelve Valley, the earliest-settled and last-abandoned monastic valley. See Uçhisar Castle and visit the underground city of Kaymakly before returning to your hotel in the afternoon. The evening is at leisure.



DAY 7 ~ CAPPADOCIA

After breakfast in the hotel, enjoy a second full-day guided tour of this special region. In the morning your group will visit the natural Citadel of Uchisar - the tallest point in the Cappadocia region - before continuing on to the town of Avanos, which is famous for its earthenware pottery and ceramic trade that dates back to the Hittites. A group lunch will then be served in a traditional restaurant. In the afternoon, the sightseeing will continue with a visit to the Valley of Ihlara. Your group will return to the hotel in the afternoon. The evening is at leisure.

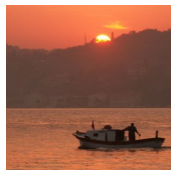


DAY 8 ~ PAMUKKALE

After an early breakfast and check-out, your group will travel west by private bus to the city of Pamukkale. A spectacular natural site known as the "Cotton Castle," Pamukkale is home to widely-frequented



thermal springs and the remarkable ruins of the ancient Greek city of Hierapolis and the museum both of which you will visit. Also during the tour, there will be a group lunch in a local restaurant. After sightseeing, your group will check-in at the hotel and spend the evening at leisure in Pamukkale.



DAY 9 ~ KUSADASI

After breakfast and check-out, your group will travel southwest by private bus to the ancient city of Aphrodisias. In ancient times, this city was dedicated to Aphrodite - the goddess of love. While in Aphrodisias, your group will visit the impressive Temple of Artemis. After free time for lunch, you will continue traveling west to the lovely resort town of Kusadasi, which is located on the beautiful Aegean coastline. Upon arrival to the hotel, you will check in and have free time to freshen up before tonight's dinner in the hotel's restaurant.



DAY 10 ~ KUSADASI

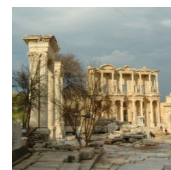
Enjoy a full day at leisure in spectacularly scenic Kusadasi. (Should your group wish to add additional sightseeing here, our Groups Department would be happy to make suggestions).



DAY 11 ~ SELJUK

After breakfast and check out, your group will meet a local guide and travel a short distance to the Roman ruins of Ephesus (Turkey's equivalent of Pompeii). This is one of the world's finest archaeological sites. During your tour your group will see the ancient Arcadian Way, the splendid facade of the Library of Celsus - and the amphitheater, which is still used today for performances.

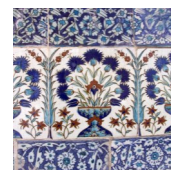
Ephesus also has an interesting history with early Christians. It is believed that the Virgin Mary eventually settled here and lived until her assumption. St. Paul also lived in Ephesus for two years. After free time for lunch, the tour will continue with a visit to what is believed to be the house of the Virgin Mary, which is spectacularly situated above the ruins. As the last stop on today's comprehensive tour, your group will pay a visit to the Archaeological Museum at Seljuk. The tour will finish at the hotel in Ephesus, and the evening is at leisure.



DAY 12 ~ BERGAMA

After breakfast and check out, your group will travel north along the coast to Pergamum. Mentioned in the Book of Revelations, the Kingdom of Pergamum's origins date back to the 16th century BC. Its library once held 200,000 volumes and was one of the best in the ancient world; it was pillaged by Marc Antony so that he could gift Cleopatra the library's best treasures.

While in Pergamum you will tour the Asklepion, an ancient medical center constructed to honor the god of healing. Your group will also see the great amphitheater, the monumental altar of Zeus and the sanctuary of Athena. (The group will also have lunch in a local restaurant in between sightseeing). After the tour, your group will check into the hotel and have the evening at leisure.



DAY 13 ~ CANAKKALE

After an early breakfast and check out, your group will continue traveling north the coast to legendary city of Troy. This archeological site contains over 4000 years of history - and it was the setting in Homer's Iliad of



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Peace of Mind



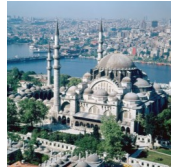
the epic battle between the Trojans versus the Achaeans (Greeks). On today's guided tour you will see the ruins of nine levels from different periods built on top of each other. You will also see an enormous reconstruction of the famous wooden house. After the tour, your group will check into the hotel and have the evening at leisure.



DAY 14 ~ CANAKKALE

After breakfast enjoy a complete day at leisure in the seaside town of Canakkale.

(Should your group wish to add additional sightseeing here, our Groups Department would be happy to make suggestions).



DAY 15 ~ ISTANBUL

After breakfast and check-out your group will transfer by private coach to Istanbul

Airport for its return flight to the USA.

WHY TRAVEL WITH US ?

Whether it is taking a family trip to Paris, an educational group to Barcelona, or a church group to Rome we can build an affordable, European trip tailored to your interests. From single city itineraries to multiple cities and countries, your travel agent will work with us to create custom tours for groups of 10 to 500 people.

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