



# Best of Turkey

15 days

## Tour Description

*The exotic land of Turkey served as a gateway between eastern and western cultures and contained some of the most famous locations of the ancient world. Visit the structures of some of the world's earliest civilized cultures including amphitheatres, temples and underground cities. Gain an understanding of the later Ottoman Empire through its mosques - spiritual symbols as well as places of great artistry. Sample modern day Turkish culture experienced through its bazaars and village life.*

## Highlights

- ❖ Tour the Blue Mosque, a landmark of the Byzantine and Ottoman cultures
- ❖ See the site where Alexander the Great cut the Gordian 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

## Sample Tour Itinerary

### *Istanbul – 2 nights*

#### **Day 1: Arrive Istanbul**

Arrival to Istanbul airport and transfer to your hotel for dinner and overnight.

#### **Day 2:**

After breakfast at the hotel proceed for a full day tour which takes you through splendid attractions of Istanbul. Visit St. Sophia, the magnificent Byzantine church, a mosque during Ottomans and a museum today. Byzantine Hippodrome, the former center for sports and political activities in Constantinople. Obelisk of Theodosius from Egypt, the Serpentine Column and the German Fountain. The Blue Mosque, a magnificent 17th century mosque famous with its six minarets and 25,000 pieces of Blue Iznik tiles decorating the interior. Following a lunch break in the old town, you will visit Topkapý Palace, the former Imperial residence from where the Great Ottoman Empire was once ruled.



### ***Bursa – 1 night***

#### **Day 3:**

After breakfast drive to Bursa, the first capital of the Ottoman Empire, situated at the foot of mount Olympus. After lunch in a special 'Kebab' Restaurant, visit the Green Mosque, Green Mausoleum, Grand Mosque and the Old Bazaar.

### ***Ankara – 1 night***

#### **Day 4:**

Early depart to visit the Phrygian capital Gordion, where Alexander the Great cut the famous Gordion knot. After lunch continue to Ankara.

### ***Cappadocia – 3 nights***

#### **Day 5:**

Morning visit to Museum of Anatolian Civilizations and the mausoleum of Atatürk. Drive to Cappadocia arriving late afternoon at the hotel.

#### **Day 6:**

In this unique region of volcanic landscapes and 'fairy-chimneys', we visit the open-air museum of 'Göreme', where the rock-carved churches contain ancient frescoes. After lunch, continue to Zelve valley and Uçhisar Castle and visit the underground city of Kaymaklı.

#### **Day 7:**

Morning visit to Ortahisar village and the pottery center of Avanos. Afternoon visit to the valley of Ihlara. Lunch will be served in a typical restaurant.

### ***Pamukkale – 1 night***

#### **Day 8:**

Early drive to Pamukkale, the 'Cotton Castle' to see the white travertines and underground hot water springs. After lunch at a local restaurant, visit the ruins of Hierapolis and the museum.

### ***Kuşadası – 2 nights***

#### **Day 9:**

Morning drive to Aphrodisias, the city dedicated to the goddess of love where we will visit the temple of Artemis. After lunch continue to Kuşadası for dinner.

#### **Day 10:**

Day at leisure in Kuşadası.



### ***Ephesus – 1 night***

#### **Day 11:**

After breakfast drive to Ephesus, one of the world's finest archaeological sites, where we visit the Arcadian way, the splendid façade of the Library of Celcus and see the amphitheater which is still used. Following the lunch we visit the house of the Virgin Mary, spectacularly situated above the ruins and the Archaeological Museum at Seljuk.

### ***Pergamum – 1 night***

#### **Day 12:**

Morning drive to Pergamum, once one of the small kingdoms in the Middle East. Visit the Acropolis where you will see the great amphitheater, the library which once held 200,000 volumes (that later Marcus Antonius gave to Cleopatra), the sanctuary of Athena, and the monumental altar of Zeus. After lunch at a local restaurant, visit Asclepium, the world's oldest medical center, built in the name of the god of healing, Asclepius.

### ***Troy – 2 nights***

#### **Day 13:**

Early depart to visit the legendary city of Troy where we see the ruins of nine levels from different periods built on top of each other and an enormous reconstruction of the famous wooden house.

#### **Day 14:**

Complete day at leisure to explore the city or take an optional tour.

#### **Day 15:**

This morning we transfer to Istanbul International Airport with ample time to check your luggage and board your flight back to the USA.

### **INCLUSIONS**

- Accommodations: Istanbul 2 nights, Bursa 1 night, Ankara 1 night, Cappadocia 3 nights, Pamukkale 1 night, Aphrodisias 2 nights, Ephesus 1 night, Pergamum 1 night, Troy 2 nights, Istanbul 1 night
- Meals: Continental breakfast daily, lunch and dinner as noted in itinerary
- Ground transportation via air conditioned luxury coach
- English speaking assistants and guides
- Admission tickets as outlined in the itinerary