



Turkey – Istanbul & Cappadocia

10 days

Tour Description

Explore the land where east meets west on this 10 day trip to Istanbul and the unusual landscape of the Cappadocia region. Explore bustling markets filled with exotic wares, beautiful mosques full of decorative tiles, Oriental carpets and other treasures. Enjoy boat journeys gliding past lovely countryside views and skylines filled with mansions and palaces. Partake in traditional Turkish culture at a folk evening filled with the sights, sounds and tastes of the country.

Highlights

- ❖ Tour the magnificent Blue Mosque
- ❖ Shop the fabulous Grand Bazaar
- ❖ Visit to the Egyptian Spice Market
- ❖ Boat cruise between Europe and Asia viewing palaces, mansions and villas
- ❖ Turkish Night experience of Turkish food, music and folk groups
- ❖ Explore Derinkuyu, the underground city of Cappadocia
- ❖ Visit the town of Avanos, famous for its earthenware pottery

Sample Tour Itinerary

Istanbul – 6 nights

Day 1: Arrive Istanbul

Arrive in Istanbul, the city that spans two continents, Europe and Asia. Transfer to your hotel. Brief orientation followed by a free day to enjoy at your own leisure.

Day 2:

Full day tour takes you through the splendid attractions of Istanbul. Visit St. Sophia, the most magnificent Byzantine Church. It was a mosque during the Ottoman period and a museum today. See the Byzantine Hippodrome, the former center for sports and political activities of Constantinople. View the Obelisk of Theodisius from Egypt, the Serpentine Column and the German Fountain of Wilhelm II. The Blue Mosque stands out as a magnificent 17th century Mosque famous with its six minarets and 25,000 pieces of blue Iznik tiles decorating the interior. After lunch, visit Topkapı Palace, the former imperial residence from where the Great Ottoman Empire was once ruled. Proceed to the Grand Bazaar, famous for its 4,000 shops of precious handmade carpets, jewelry, leather and souvenirs.

Day 3:

Morning visit to the Egyptian Spice Market, built in the 17th century, followed by a boat cruise between Europe and Asia which past the Ottoman Palaces of 'Dolmabahce' and Beylerbeyi' palaces and many beautiful 19th and 20th century wooden houses, mansions, and modern villas. After lunch at a fish restaurant overlooking the Bosphorus, drive to Çamlica Hill, the highest point in Istanbul, offers magnificent panoramic views across the city and the Bosphorus. After a short drive we reach the small village of Beylerbeyi, to visit the 19th century Summer Palace of the Ottoman Sultans with its original furniture and magnificent garden. Overnight at hotel.

**Day 4:**

Departure from Istanbul in the morning transferring across the Sea of Marmara by ferry to Yalova enjoying the lovely countryside views. Continue on to Bursa, the first capital of the Ottoman Empire and an important trading and cultural center. Bursa has some impressive monuments from the early Ottoman period. It is also a popular thermal center. We'll have lunch at one of the typical Turkish Restaurants in the town. Visits will include the Ulu (Great) Mosque, the Silk Market, Green Mosque, Tombs of Osman and Orhan and the Muradiye Complex. Return to Istanbul late evening.

Day 5:

Morning departure for a half day tour including a visit to the Land Walls of Theodisius, sheltering the city built in 410, followed by the Aqueduct. We'll also see the Church of Chora, considered to be one of the most beautiful examples of a Byzantine church, later converted into a mosque, then finally a secularized museum. Nearby visit the Blachernae Palace, once the seat of emperors. In the evening depart for 'Turkish 'Night' at one of the most exclusive night clubs of the city. Your evening will include a full meal with traditional Turkish delicacies and drinks, and a show with belly dancers, Turkish music and folk groups from various areas.

Day 6:

Full day Princes's Islands tour. Cruise across the Sea of Marmara to Princes's Island, stopping at Büyükada, the popular summer resort with sandy beaches and pinewood trees. This was once a pleasure island of Byzantian princes. We'll tour the island in horse-drawn carriages before lunch. During the afternoon you'll have time at leisure for strolling around in the harbor area.

Cappadocia – 3 nights**Day 7:**

Morning transfer to Istanbul Airport for a flight to Kayseri airport. After a quick photo stop near Mount Erciyes we'll visit the Karabas, Yılanlı and Kubbeli Churches with 45 minutes free time in the area. Visit to Sahinefendi Village where the 12th century Kirksehitler church, with beautiful frescoes, stands. Continue on to the old Greek village Sinasos with traditional stone houses with carved facades. After lunch visit the famous 'Fairy Chimneys' in Urgup and Ortahisar Castle.

Day 8:

Visit Pigeon Valley where strange caves dot the area. Next we'll see Derinkuyu, an underground city where thousands of people took refuge, along with their livestock, from persecution during the Byzantine period. See Ihlara Valley a 10 mile long gorge cut into volcanic rock. Walk along the valley and stop for lunch in a restaurant by the river. Visit the Yaprakhisar village and Selimiye Monastery before returning back to your hotel for dinner and overnight.

Day 9:

Full day touring in Cappadocia; visit the Göreme Open-Air-Museum with its fairy chimneys and dozens of cave churches decorated with unique frescoes depicting various scenes from the Bible. After lunch in the area, visit the Zelve Valley, the earliest-settled and last-abandoned monastic valley. Then we'll see the natural Citadel of Uçhisar, the tallest point in the Cappadocia region, continuing on to the town of Avanos, famous for its earthenware pottery and ceramic trade dating back to the Hittites.

Day 10:

Transfer to the airport for your flight to Istanbul, connecting on to USA



INCLUSIONS

- Accommodations: Istanbul 6 nights, Cappadocia 3 nights
- 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