

15 DAY BEST OF TURKEY

DESTINATIONS

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İSTANBUL



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TOUR ITINERARY

DAY 1



Destination	Istanbul
Meals included	
Hotel	Hotel, or similar

Welcome to Turkey! Your adventure kicks off in Istanbul – the continent-straddling metropolis that the Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, and Ottomans have all called home. There's a welcome meeting planned at 1 pm, where you'll meet your group leader and fellow travellers. Afterwards, maybe get out and explore the frenetic streets of Turkey's crown-jewel metropolis. Your group leader will take you on a walking tour of the nearby neighbourhoods so you can get your bearings on what's around. Later on, why not gather together your new pals and seek out some Turkish cuisine in a street-side cafe.

Special Information: It's very important that you attend the welcome meeting as we will be collecting insurance details and next of kin information at this time. If you are going to be late please let your travel agent or hotel reception know. Ask reception or look for a note in the lobby for more information on where the meeting will take place.


Optional Activities listed are all entry only. Please note there is an Istanbul Museum Pass available for purchase at most Istanbul Museums. This card is valid for 5 days use and costs TL 185. This card is not available for entry at Dolmabahce Palace, Basilica Cistern and Galata Tower. For Monday departures we recommend you visit the magnificent Topkapi Palace today as it is closed on Tuesdays.

DAY 2

Destination	Istanbul  Mudanya  Bursa
Meals included	Breakfast
Hotel	Hotel, or similar

Depart Istanbul this morning by a fast ferry to the port of Mudanya (approximately 1 hour). Then it's a local bus to Bursa (approximately 1.5 hours), where you'll spend the night. Bursa is an old and important city with a rich and varied history. With elegant mosques, such as the supremely beautiful Yesil Camii, an intriguing covered bazaar, and teahouses filled with locals, Bursa offers a glimpse into the day-to-day of Turkish life. Spend this afternoon exploring the fascinating warren of streets and old Ottoman hans (warehouses). Bursa is also home to thermal springs nearby at Cekirge, famously used by Byzantine imperial families, so why not treat yourself to a soak, steam, and scrub Turkish-style. Otherwise, you could book into a traditional shadow puppet shows, or go find some local iskender kebab. Tonight, you'll be a guest at a Dervish Lodge to see a hypnotic performance of the sema (the Sufi ceremony of the whirling dervish) and learn about their mesmerising rituals.

DAY 3

Destination	Bursa  Selcuk
Meals included	Breakfast
Hotel	Hotel, or similar

Travel by public bus to the farming village of Selcuk (approximately 7 hours). Selcuk will be your base for exploring the nearby ruins of Ephesus tomorrow. In town, on the slopes of Ayasoluk Hill lie several historical buildings – you'll see the Isa Bey Mosque, a beautiful example of 14th-century Seljuk Turkish architecture, and the imposing Byzantine citadel of the Grand Fortress. Just below the fortress are the ruins of the Basilica of St John, built by Justinian I in the sixth century. A short distance out of Selcuk is one of the ancient world's Seven Wonders – the Temple of Artemis – although, sadly, only a single column (of 127 originally) remains. It was destroyed in AD401, after being successively damaged by floods, a Greek arsonist seeking notoriety, and the Goths. You'll arrive in Selcuk with enough time to check in to the guesthouse and then take a leader-led orientation walk around town.

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DAY 4

Destination	Selcuk
Meals included	Breakfast, Lunch
Hotel	Hotel, or similar

This morning, take a private minivan to visit the ruins of the ancient city of Ephesus – one of the best-preserved Greco-Roman classical cities in the world. Once the capital city of Roman Asia Minor, the city has a fascinating history, which really comes alive with a local guide to enhance your experience. Considering their age, the ruins are in incredible shape, and it's not difficult to imagine them in their full glory over 2000 years ago, equipped with running water, public toilets, a medical institute, a brothel and Roman baths. The theatre is well preserved and regularly hosts concerts, but it's perhaps the magnificent library that is the most striking. Later you will stop for lunch at a family-run restaurant, where you'll feast on gozleme made fresh before your eyes. This afternoon, drive out to the nearby picturesque village of Sirince and taste some locally produced fruit wines. This authentic Greek Ottoman village seems to have been overlooked by modern development and the unique local architecture nestled in the hills make for a photographer's dream.

DAY 5

Destination	Selcuk 🚗 Pamukkale
Meals included	Breakfast
Hotel	Hotel, or similar

A train ride inland through mountainous landscapes (approximately 3.5 hours plus a short bus ride) brings you to one of Turkey's most photographed sites – Pamukkale – which literally translates to 'cotton castle'. Here, natural hot springs with a high calcium content cascade over the edge of the cliffs, leaving the earth bright white; hence the 'cotton'. Though you won't be able to bathe in these travertines, you can wade through them, and these pools are said to have many healing properties. Take some time to visit the nearby ancient city of Hierapolis and have a dip in what used to be Cleopatra's old pool. You can also check out the other ruins of the city – Hierapolis is known for its abundance of temples and religious structures, vast necropolis, amphitheatre and strange tombs.

DAY 6

Destination	Pamukkale 🚗 Kayakoy
Meals included	Breakfast
Hotel	Hotel, or similar

Take a bus ride south approximately 4.5 hours off the tourist trail to the village of Kayakoy. This small town acts as your base for exploring the Mediterranean coast, including the resort town of Fethiye and the renowned Blue Lagoon. Kayakoy was once a thriving place and now it's considered a ghost village, as its ancient stone houses were abandoned after their Greek inhabitants left Turkey during the great population exchange of the 1920s. Now protected by the Turkish government, it provides the opportunity to see an untouched, traditional Turkish town in quite an eerie location. One church in the lower area of the village, Kataponagia, is of particular interest due to an interesting room out the back – it was used to collect the bones of the dead. Pay to wander the ruins, enjoy the solitude, or simply chill out with a game of backgammon and sip tea with the locals.

DAY 7

Destination	Kayakoy
Meals included	Breakfast, Dinner
Hotel	Hotel, or similar

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Today, set out on a half-day trek along a section of rugged coastline, following part of the ancient walking trail of the Lycian Way to nearby Oludeniz (approximately 6 kilometres), where you can swim in the Blue Lagoon. You'll walk up a steep rocky path up the hillside, make your way through forest, and then up a hill with fantastic views out across the Mediterranean. At the final descent into Oludeniz, you'll be greeted with a breathtaking view of an arching peninsula of white sand beach separating the crystal waters from its lush banks and the town's trademark panorama. The myriad hues of colour between the waters and pine-forested hills is a sight to behold, and you'll soon realise why this is one of the most photographed beaches in Turkey. This evening, join your hosts for a Turkish barbecue dinner, relaxing in their garden and enjoying some delicious local food and lively company.

Special Information: The trek to Oludeniz is rated moderate to difficult, and a good level of fitness is required. The terrain under foot is sometimes slippery and uneven and there are periods of ascent and descent. Good walking shoes are certainly required. If you do have a good level of fitness, this will be an enjoyable and rewarding walk. If you are unsure as to your capability to complete this walk, please discuss with your group leader before undertaking so that other transport arrangements can be made.

DAY 8


Destination	Kayakoy  Kas
Meals included	Breakfast
Hotel	Hotel, or similar

Make your way the short distance from Kayakoy to Fethiye by dolmus – a Turkish shared taxi. From there, take a public bus to Kas (approximately 2.5 hours), with some spectacular coastal scenery along the way. The picturesque village of Kas – whitewashed buildings covered in bougainvillea and cobbled streets – is the southernmost of all the Turkish resorts, and the starting point for your coastal cruise. The best places in town to swim are from the waterfront restaurants that have their own private water access. For the price of an occasional drink, you get your own deck chair, umbrella and unbeatable views. When the sun goes down there is the chance to explore the handicraft markets, where you can find beautiful handmade wares with a distinctly Turkish flavour. Once you have checked in, take a leader-led walking tour of the town.

Special Information: The varying weather conditions over the touring season means your cruising itinerary for today and tomorrow is subject to change. During the cooler months of March, April, October and November you do not stay on boat and instead stay in a local guesthouse in Kas. In May, June, July and August we will spend one night on the boat and one night in a local pension in Ucagiz. In September, we will spend one night on the boat and one night in Kas.

Our Turkish Coast Cruise is operated on a traditional Gullet. Whilst the boat does have cabins and en-suite bathrooms, we prefer to treat this adventure like camping at sea. Cabins are used for storing luggage, changing and bathroom facilities only. Sleeping is on deck. A mattress, sheet and blanket are provided and it is up to you to find the best spot on deck and enjoy an evening drifting off to sleep under a starry Mediterranean sky, pretty awesome stuff.

DAY 9

Destination	Kas 
Meals included	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Hotel	Overnight Gullet Boat, or similar


Today, transfer to the village of Kekova, some 50 kilometres from Kas, where you will board the gulet for a real Mediterranean experience. During the day, you'll have the chance to swim and snorkel in crystal blue waters, feast on fabulous local cuisine, cruise over an ancient sunken city and explore Lycian tombs. If the weather is right tonight, you and your group can get comfortable on deck and sleep beneath the stars tonight.

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DAY 10

Destination	 Antalya
Meals included	Breakfast
Hotel	Hotel, or similar

Take a short journey today as you continue your exploration of the Turkish Coast. Travel 3.5 hours to the jewel in the Turkish Mediterranean – Antalya. It's hard to get a bad photo of Antalya thanks to cobblestone streets framed by the marina on one side and the Taurus Mountains on the other. Arriving in the afternoon, your leader will introduce you to the delights of the old city with an orientation walk. Visit such sites as the clock tower, Hadrian's gate and the old Roman Harbour. Kaleici – the old city area that's now a historical zone and protected from modern development – is home to relics of Roman, Byzantine, Seljuk, and Ottoman eras. There's also an opportunity to swim, relax and enjoy stellar views overlooking the crystal blue Mediterranean, or to check out the Antalya Museum – one of the best in the country. Tonight, be sure to try some delicious local cuisine with some of your travel crew.

DAY 11

Destination	Antalya  Konya
Meals included	Breakfast
Hotel	Hotel, or similar

This morning, take a bus away from the coast and towards Konya (approximately 5.5 hours). While it's a long day of travel, the scenery will keep you entertained as you cross the Toros Mountain range. The city is closely linked with the whirling dervish sect of Islam developed by Celeleddin Rumi – one of Islam's greatest Sufi mystics. Mevlana – 'our master' – as he came to be known, believed that music and dance could induce a state of love and divine union, and so devised the whirling sema ritual. In town, you can visit the original Tekke of Mevlana, which holds many relics and is also the final resting place for Rumi. Also, get your bearings on an orientation walk to Aladdin Hill in Konya's centre. On the side of the hill are the sheltered remains of the palace of the Seljuk Sultans of Rum, while beneath the Alaettin Mosque are artefacts dating back to the Stone Age. Tonight, perhaps enjoy a refreshing tea or try some central Anatolian cuisine.

DAY 12

Destination	Konya  Goreme
Meals included	Breakfast
Hotel	Hotel, or similar

Leave Konya this morning by bus and head to the heart of Cappadocia (approximately 4 hours). The town of Goreme lies in a fantastic region of cones, needles and columns, fashioned by nature from the soft volcanic tuff rock. It's honeycombed with caves scooped out to make churches and dwellings that are known as fairy chimneys and castles. In times of peace, the people in this region lived on the land, but in times of war or persecution they took to living underground. When you arrive in Goreme, stretch your legs and take a leader-led orientation walk. Then grab a beer, a tea, or perhaps a strong Turkish coffee if you need a pick-me-up. Don't forget to pack sturdy walking shoes or boots and a comfortable daypack for exploring the valleys of Cappadocia.

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DAY 13

Destination	Goreme
Meals included	Breakfast
Hotel	Hotel, or similar

This morning is an ideal time to discover Cappadocia's unique landscapes from above – in a hot air balloon! Although this activity isn't included in your trip, it is a highly recommended optional experience that most travellers opt for to see the wondrous desert scenes at sunrise. Speak to your group leader earlier on in your trip to pre-book a spot. Otherwise, in your free time today, maybe visit the World Heritage-listed Goreme Open Air Museum. It's a monastic complex composed of churches, rectories and dwellings, and one of the earliest centres for religious education. There are at least 10 churches and chapels in the museum area, dating between AD900 and 1200, each one named after a prominent attribute by the local villagers, who were exploring these caves long before there was an entrance fee.

Special Information: Without a doubt, one of the most amazing memories of this journey is a hot air balloon ride over the majestic landscape to see this otherworldly scene at sunrise. Those who are interested in this optional extra will have a truly awe-inspiring experience. The cost of this activity varies depending on what type of flight you choose. This activity can only be booked locally. Please speak to your group leader as early on in your trip as you can to organise this.

DAY 14

Destination	Goreme
Meals included	Breakfast
Hotel	Hotel, or similar

Take a walk through one of the nearby valleys this morning. It could be the Valley of Love where the fairy chimneys, deserted rock cut homes, and churches with frescoes will astound you, or any of the other fantastic scenic routes that your leader knows. You can also explore the underground cities. Beneath Cappadocia's rock formations is a network of fascinating subterranean cities, which housed up to 10,000 people each. The largest are almost ten levels deep, with narrow passages connecting the floors like hamster tunnels. Your leader is available to make suggestions and help organise a guided visit, if you'd like. This evening, your leader will offer you the option of enjoying a meal with a local family in their own home. This is a unique experience, enjoying the warm hospitality of a Turkish family and admiring the spectacular views of surrounding countryside all at once. Otherwise, why not try the local testi kebab, an evening nargile (hookah) in one of the cafes, or a glass of the local wine, overlooking a valley of fairy chimneys.

Special Information: Optional activities listed are entry fees only and exclude any transport costs. Your group leader may suggest a group tour of the region complete with guiding and entry fees. Alternatively, there are local dolmus (minibuses) available to local attractions or join in tours you can book onto including 'red tour' and 'green tour', which take different routes around town.

DAY 15

Destination	Goreme → Istanbul
Meals included	Breakfast
Accommodation	N/A

This morning, have an early start and wave the fairy chimneys a fond goodbye as you transfer to one of the region's airports for a flight back to Istanbul. Depending on flight times and scheduled changes, expect to arrive back into Istanbul between 11.30 am and 2.30 pm. Once arrived at the airport, you are free to leave at any time, and your group leader can assist you with your onward journey. There is no accommodation for tonight; however, if you wish to spend a few more days checking out the sights of Istanbul, we'll be happy to organise additional accommodation for you (subject to availability), with an included transfer back to your Istanbul accommodation.

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Inclusions

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Accommodation: Hotel (13 nights), Overnight Boat (1 night)
- All Transportation
- Meals: 14 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 2 dinners as per itinerary
- Group size: Maximum 12 people.
- 1 English speaking tour leader – Will accompany the group throughout
- All accommodation as listed
- All entrance fees to the sites listed (except optionals)
- All activities listed in the itinerary unless a paid optional
- Comfortable, dedicated private transportation throughout
- 24/7 customer service and your own Dedicated Support Agent

Fine Print

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HOW TO BOOK & PAYMENTS

Deposit & Payments

- Book now and secure your package with only a \$400 deposit per person.
- Pay a 2nd instalment of \$676 per person within 28 days.
- You will then be invoiced for final payment 90 days prior to departure.

Booking Process

- Select the purple 'Reserve Your Seat' tab to begin your booking (you must 'Sign Up' first by entering your email and creating a password)
- Then select the purple 'Book now' tab of the tour you have selected
- Select your Departure Date, Departure City, Number of Passengers, Room Configuration, any Upgrade Options, and enter any Special Requests
- Click the purple 'Proceed to Secure Checkout' tab
- Enter your credit card or PayPal details to secure your deposit/payment. You may also pay via BPAY (not available within 70 days of departure)
- Once your order is complete, you will be prompted to complete a Booking Form so that we can fulfil your booking
- Your booking is confirmed once your Booking Form is submitted and you can begin the countdown to your Inspiring Vacation!
- You will then be allocated and contacted by one of our Dedicated Support Agent's (within 48 hours) who will support you right up until you return from your journey

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OPTIONAL TOURS

To enhance your journey, we are offering guests a choice of the following optional activities:

- Istanbul - Hagia Sophia - TRY100 (Day 1)
- Istanbul - Basilica Cistern - TRY30 (Day 1)
- Istanbul - Whirling Dervish show - TRY135 (Day 1)
- Istanbul - Topkapi Palace (Excluding Harem) - TRY72 (Day 1)
- Istanbul - Chora Church - TRY65 (Day 1)
- Istanbul - Archaeology Museum - TRY50 (Day 1)
- Istanbul - Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts - TRY50 (Day 1)
- Istanbul - Turkish Hamam (incl. massage) - TRY310 (Day 1)
- Bursa - City Museum - TRY5 (Day 2)
- Bursa - Muradiye Complex - TRY10 (Day 2)
- Selcuk - Basilica of St John - TRY25 (Day 3)
- Selcuk - Archaeological Museum - TRY25 (Day 3)
- Ephesus - Terrace Houses Entry - TRY45 (Day 4)
- Selcuk - Meryemana (Mary's House) entrance fee - TRY45 (Day 4)
- Sirince - Wine Tasting - Free (Day 4)
- Pamukkale - Hierapolis Museum - TRY12 (Day 5)
- Pamukkale - Hierapolis Cleopatra pool - TRY50 (Day 5)
- Fethiye - Oludeniz Blue Lagoon - TRY8 (Day 7)
- Antalya - Antalya Museum - TRY45 (Day 10)
- Konya - Karatay Museum - TRY5 (Day 11)
- Goreme - Hot Air Balloon, Cappadocia Deluxe Flight - EUR250 (Day 13)
- Goreme - Hot Air Balloon, Cappadocia Regular Flight - EUR195 (Day 13)
- Goreme - Underground city - TRY35 (Day 14)
- Cappadocia - Goreme - Open Air Museum - TRY45 (Day 14)

Costs are per person.

The optional tours and shore excursions can only be purchased on-tour with your guide or the ship staff, and are payable in local currency. Optional tours are subject to conditions such as traffic, weather and sightseeing schedules, as well as minimum numbers.

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EXCLUSIONS

- Return International Airfares
- Transfers
- Visas (if applicable)
- Travel insurance (compulsory)
- Tipping
- Anything not mentioned in the itinerary
- Optional activities
- Personal expenses

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Fitness Requirements

While the tour itinerary should give you some guidance and overview to the expected requirements, a basic level of fitness will be required. If you have any concerns please consult your healthcare provider prior to purchase/travel.

As a general rule, portage is not included, therefore at all times you are expected to handle your own luggage where help may not be available.

Tipping

A friendly reminder that tipping is not included in your package. While tipping is not customary, it's of great significance to the people who will take care of you during your travels, inspires excellent service, and is an entrenched feature of the tourism industry across many destinations.

You may also consider tipping your tour leader and driver for outstanding service throughout your trip. Remember, a tip is not compulsory and should only be given when you receive excellent service.

Accommodation

The accommodation listed is subject to change. Any changes will be of an equal or higher standard. Bedding configurations (double or twin) are requests only. All efforts will be made to meet your preferences, however, any changes are beyond our control.

Single Supplement

A single supplement is available if you'd prefer not to share a room on this trip from an extra \$165. The single supplement excludes Day 8 (overnight boat) where you will be in shared accommodation, and is subject to availability. Please speak to your booking agent for further information.

Triple Share

Not available.

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Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is required to protect yourself against the unexpected.

We have partnered with nib to offer our customers competitive rates for their travel insurance. You can book comprehensive or budget cover simply by clicking [HERE](#) to arrange your policy.

Visa & Passport information

It is the traveller's responsibility to ensure they have a valid passport. The passport must be valid for a minimum of six months from the intended date of your return.

Please note that these details are subject to change without notice. We recommend visiting <https://smartraveller.gov.au> for up to date information in terms of entry requirements.

Tour Documentation

Final documentation, including e-tickets and hotel details, will be provided approximately 30 days prior to travel.

Group Size

Maximum 12 people.

Children

Children must be 15 years old or over and share a room with parents at all times. Children are charged the same price as adults.

Tour Length

The total length of the tour in days includes time spent inflight and is subject to change, depending on the flight schedule. Please refer to the day-by-day itinerary for the time spent in your destination(s).

Group Meeting

This trip starts in Istanbul on Day 1 at 1.00pm. This allows time after the joining meeting to explore Istanbul with your Leader.

Internal Flights

There is an internal flight on this trip and most internal flights in Turkey have a luggage restriction of 15kg checked and 8kg cabin.

Itinerary

This itinerary operates on a seasonal Itinerary. See days 8 and 9 for further information.

Departure Information

On the final day, this trip finishes at the New Istanbul Airport between

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11.30am -2.30pm. Transport facilities are available at the Airport including Metro, Local Bus and Taxi to take you anywhere in the greater Istanbul.

Turkey

We recommend that you check your government's advice for their latest information on travelling in Turkey before your departure and ensure that your travel insurance covers you for all areas of your itinerary. We have links to prominent government travel advisories and regular updates on issues affecting this trip on our Travel Alerts page - www.intrepidtravel.com/au/travel-alerts

WHAT CLIMATE TO EXPECT

Click [HERE](#) for more information on the weather in Turkey.