

TURKEY

History and Culture of the Past and Present

TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

- ▶ Visit the famous historical sites in Istanbul
- ▶ Enjoy a private cruise along the Bosphorus Strait
- ▶ Take part in the annual rose petal harvest in the Isparta province
- ▶ Explore the ancient city of Ephesus

TRIP ROUTE



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QUICK VIEW ITINERARY

Day 1	arrive in Istanbul, welcome dinner
Day 2	walking tour of the famous sites of Istanbul, private cruise along the Bosphorus
Day 3	visit Hagia Sophia, Basilica Cistern and the Spice Bazaar
Day 4	fly to Cappadocia, explore memorable landscapes
Day 5	visit the Goreme Outdoor Museum, pottery experience
Day 6	set out on a long day of driving to Isparta with several interesting stops along the way
Day 7	take part in the annual rose petal harvest
Day 8	visit an excavation site with a local professor, drive to Hierapolis-Pamukkale
Day 9	view Hierapolis majestic thermal springs, meet a local female entrepreneur
Day 10	tour Ephesus, visit the house of the Virgin Mary, and fly back to Istanbul
Day 11	depart Istanbul

ACTIVITY LEVEL

Moderate

TRIP PRICE

Main Trip: \$5,995

Optional Single Accommodations: \$1,000

Internal Air: \$500

TRIP DATES

May 16 - 26, 2025

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DAY 1
Friday
5/16/25

Arrive Istanbul

Welcome to Turkey! From the beauty of Istanbul's mosques to the spectacular ruins of Ephesus, the mystery and magic of extraordinary Turkey are yours to discover in this memory-making adventure.

Arrival Information

Arrive in Istanbul, Turkey (IST) by 1:00PM today.

Arrive in Istanbul

You'll be met by your guide at the airport and transferred to your hotel. There will be one group transfer provided (time TBD based on flights). Private transfers at other times can be purchased for an additional fee.

Check-in and Relax

Check into your hotel and relax before dinner tonight.

Welcome Dinner

Enjoy a lively welcome dinner at a local restaurant as you get to know your fellow travelers this evening. Share stories and learn about why everyone is excited to explore the Turkish sites (and sights!).

Accommodations

Armada Istanbul

Meals Included

dinner

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DAY 2
Saturday
5/17/25

Istanbul

At the crossroads of East and West and straddling two continents, it's no surprise that Istanbul is a cultural and ethnic melting pot steeped in historical legends that reach back thousands of years. The soaring tips of minarets define the city skyline while below, bustling marketplaces, ancient monuments, and non-stop water traffic are part of Istanbul's daily scene.

Visit the Famous Istanbul Sites

Today, you'll walk throughout the city of Istanbul, stopping for lunch along the way as you take in some of the ancient sites:

Topkapı Palace, the home and administrative headquarters of Ottoman Sultans for 400 years, where you'll see the Harem, the Treasure and the other sections of the Palace.

The Hippodrome, where you can still see the arched curving brick wall and the standing monuments along the central axis of the ancient hippodrome today.

Then, venture on to the Grand Bazaar which was built in 1460 and is home to thousands of shops and workshops.

Bosphorus Cruise

In early evening, you'll take a private boat trip along the Bosphorus, the natural strait that forms part of the boundary between Asian and European continents. Along the shores of the Bosphorus are old Ottoman villas, old palaces, fortresses and parks that contribute the beauty of the strait. Enjoy dinner on your own tonight after the cruise.

Accommodations

Armada Istanbul

Meals Included

breakfast, lunch

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DAY 3
Sunday
5/18/25

Istanbul

Istanbul, formerly known as Byzantium and Constantinople, is a captivating city that straddles two continents, Europe and Asia, separated by the Bosphorus Strait. It is renowned for its rich historical heritage, blending the influences of various civilizations, and is home to iconic landmarks like the Hagia Sophia. Istanbul is a bustling metropolis that offers a unique fusion of modernity and tradition, making it a vibrant and culturally diverse destination.

Continue your Visit of Istanbul

Today, after breakfast, you'll visit Hagia Sophia, one of the most extraordinary buildings in the history of architecture and a monument to the golden age of the Byzantine Empire, dating from 537 CE.

Next is Basilica Cistern which was the largest underground cistern of Byzantine Istanbul erected in the 530's.

Finally, visit the Spice Bazaar that dates back to the 1600's when it was the last stop for the camel caravans that travelled the Silk Road from China, India and Persia. Spices were also brought by ships set off from Alexandria in Egypt and docked just in front of the Bazaar.

Dinner

Enjoy dinner on your own this evening.

Accommodations

Armada Istanbul

Meals Included

breakfast, lunch

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DAY 4
Monday
5/19/25

Istanbul to Cappadocia

Once an active volcanic region, Cappadocia claims a landscape of surreal beauty —where strange and fanciful rock formations, known as the fairy chimneys, rise from the surrounding countryside. Entire underground villages carved out of tuff, soft volcanic stone, are tucked into this region and we explore the underground passageways, chambers, and monasteries that have sheltered thousands of people through the centuries.

Fly to Cappadocia After breakfast, head to the airport where you will board your 90-minute flight to Cappadocia, a historical region in Turkey.

Drive to Uchisar Upon arriving in Cappadocia, drive for about 90 minutes to Uchisar, a huge outcropping of tufa rock, used as a shelter and fortress in old times. View the rock fortress and accompanying old residential conical rocks from below and have lunch in Goreme town. Continue to Pashabag, an old monastic settlement with unique landscape filled with fairy chimneys. Then visit Devrent where you will explore the lunar surroundings on foot and view naturally shaped statues.

Hike in Red Valley Set off on an afternoon hike through Red Valley, another captivating landscape dotted with hidden rock-carved churches. After the hike, make your way to the hotel and check in. Enjoy dinner as a group this evening.

Accommodations

MDC Hotel

Meals Included

breakfast, lunch, dinner

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DAY 5
Tuesday
5/20/25

Cappadocia

One of the few completely land-locked regions of Turkey, Cappadocia covers an area of approximately 116 square miles. The volcanic material deposited by the eruption of Mount Erciyes and Mount Hasan made this an extremely fertile area for agriculture. Cherries, grapes, apricots, and chickpeas are among the many crops exported throughout the world.

Visit Goreme Open Air Museum

Visit the Goreme Open Air Museum, a collection of churches and monasteries set amidst the rocky landscape for which this area is famous. Take in the beautiful frescoes and art displayed in the churches that are a part of this UNESCO World Heritage site.

Lunch

Enjoy a delicious lunch in the village of Ayvali.

Explore an Underground City

There are several ancient underground cities in Cappadocia, and you will have the chance to explore some of the amazing stone architecture that is hidden beneath the ground. Meander through tunnels and see how the ancient people lived within this unique structure.

Pottery Experience

The art of Turkish ceramic pottery has evolved over time by the many civilizations that have inhabited the country. The technique used when crafting the ceramics allows the pieces to retain their strength and color for centuries. You will see some beautiful examples of Turkish pottery this afternoon before you head back to the hotel for dinner.

Accommodations

MDC Hotel

Meals Included

breakfast, lunch, dinner

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DAY 6
Wednesday
5/21/25

Cappadocia to Isparta

Today will be a long travel day as you make your way to Isparta, a province located in the southwestern part of Turkey that is home to extremely fertile land that produces such items as apples, grapes, and roses.

Travel Day

Today will be a long travel day, as you travel just over 300 miles to Isparta with several stops along the way.

First visit the Sultanhani Caravanserai, which was one of the major medieval inns that sheltered caravans and travelers along the famous Silk Road trade route. Built in 1229, this massive structure is decorated in ornamental marble and stonework.

After driving for about 90 minutes, you will stop in Konya, where you will visit the Mausoleum of the mystic Rumi, who is famous for founding the Order of the Whirling Dervishes. Then enjoy lunch as a group in a local restaurant.

After lunch, you will travel for just under 3 hours to the town of Egirdir.

Walk around Egirdir

Arrive in Egirdir, a town that is home to a beautiful fresh water lake. You'll explore the old monuments of the town by the lake and walk around the Yesilada (Green Island) which once had a monastery of women. After your walking tour, you'll drive just over 20 miles to Isparta.

Check-in and Dinner

Arrive at your Isparta hotel and check in before dining at the hotel as a group.

Accommodations

Barida Hotels

Meals Included

breakfast, lunch, dinner

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DAY 7
Thursday
5/22/25

Rose Harvest

Isparta, aptly named "The Land of the Roses", flourishes with roses and accounts for 65% of the country's annual rose production. The annual rose harvest takes place in May each year, and the rose petals are distilled to produce such products as rose water and rose oil.

Rose Harvest

Enjoy breakfast at your hotel this morning before starting your 25-mile drive to Güneykent (or Ardıçlı) Village in the mountains, one of the many rose growing places in Isparta province. Try your hand at harvesting roses in the field alongside a village woman who will demonstrate the proper method to pick and handle the flowers. Afterwards, visit a traditional distiller where you'll see the distillation process first-hand and have the chance to buy rose products like rose oil, rose water, and a variety of cosmetics that contain roses.

Lunch

After the harvest, enjoy a lunch at a local restaurant in the village.

Hike around Golcuk

Following lunch, you'll pass through Isparta on your way to Golcuk, a volcanic lake in the middle of the caldera. Set out on a 2.5-mile hike around the flat ground surrounding the lake and take in the scenic views.

Dinner

Join your fellow travelers for dinner at the hotel tonight.

Accommodations

Barida Hotels

Meals Included

breakfast, lunch, dinner

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DAY 8
Friday
5/23/25

Isparta to Pamukkale

It will feel like you've stepped onto another planet when you first lay eyes on the bright white travertine thermal pools at Pamukkale. This area has been renowned for its healing baths of brilliantly blue, mineral-rich waters. Nearby are the impressive ruins of Hierapolis.

Explore Cibyra

Today you will explore the ancient city of Cibyra along with Associate Professor Sukru Ozudogru who will give an informative talk about the many excavations that are underway in the area. You can try your hand at excavation under the watchful eye of local archeologists.

Lunch

After lunch in a local restaurant, drive for about 90 minutes to Pamukkale. This town is famous for the thermal waters which flow over the breathtaking travertine terraces that line the hillside.

Check-in and Dinner

Check into your hotel before enjoying dinner with the group tonight.

Accommodations

Colossae Thermal

Meals Included

breakfast, lunch, dinner

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DAY 9
Saturday
5/24/25

Pamukkale to Selcuk

1923 saw what came to be known as the population exchange between Greece and Turkey, as over 1.5 million people were forced to become refugees of their native country. Tonight, you will hear a granddaughter retelling the story of her grandparents who were forced to leave Greece and come to Turkey during this time.

Visit Hierapolis-Pamukkale

Enjoy your visit of Visit Hierapolis-Pamukkale, famous for its self-built travertine pools and channels and its fascinating ruins.

Lunch

Today's lunch will be at a restaurant along the way.

Visit the Temple of Artemis

After lunch, you'll visit Artemision, the Temple of Artemis, which dates back to the 4th century BC. While only two columns remain of the original structure, you can get a good sense of the magnitude of the original temple.

Sirince Village

Walk along the stone-paved streets of Sirince Village, which was abandoned by the Greeks during the population exchange of 1923. The settlement is now occupied by Turks who continue the Greek tradition of wine production.

Check in your Hotel and Dinner

Check in your hotel in Selcuk after your day of exploration, and enjoy dinner at the hotel tonight. After dinner, you will be joined by the hotel owner. She will discuss her grandparents' experiences, detailing their migration from Greece to Turkey during one of the significant episodes of relocation between the two countries.

Accommodations

Kalehan Hotel

Meals Included

breakfast, lunch, dinner

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DAY 10

Sunday

5/25/25

Selcuk to Istanbul

Head back to Istanbul and enjoy one last day of exploration in the city before the farewell dinner this evening.

Explore Ephesus

After breakfast, you'll tour glorious Ephesus, one of the best preserved ancient cities in the world. Marble paved avenues, wonderfully preserved homes, temples, theaters, baths, markets, brothels, libraries, and gymnasiums bring us back to the splendor of the ancient world.

Visit the House of Virgin Mary

After lunch, you'll visit an ancient cottage on the slopes of the mountains that is believed to be Mary's last home.

Fly back to Istanbul

Head to the airport this afternoon for your flight back to Istanbul.

Farewell Dinner

Share stories with your traveling companions about your mutual exploration of Turkey during a celebratory farewell dinner in a local restaurant.

Accommodations

Armada Istanbul

Meals Included

breakfast, lunch, dinner

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DAY 11
Monday
5/26/25

Depart Istanbul

All great adventures must one day come to an end. This morning, enjoy your last breakfast in Turkey and say “hoşça kalın” to your new friends before departing for the airport.

Depart Istanbul

After breakfast at the hotel, you'll transfer to the airport for your flight home. The group transfer will be provided when most guests depart (exact time to be determined). Private transfers at other times are available for purchase.

Departure Information

Depart Istanbul, Turkey (IST).

Please note: AdventureWomen will attempt to adhere to the itinerary as much as possible. However, certain conditions (political, climatic, environmental, and cultural) may necessitate changes in the itinerary. AdventureWomen reserves the right to alter any itinerary at any time, if necessary. We will attempt to notify participants of changes as far in advance as possible. Costs incurred by such changes will be the responsibility of the participants.

Meals Included
breakfast

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Accommodation Details

Armada Istanbul The Armada is a centrally-located hotel that is within walking distance to many of the city's famous sites and has great views of the Blue Mosque and the Hagia Sophia from its rooftop terrace.

Amenities: soap, shampoo, conditioner, flatscreen TV, hair dryer, safe, air conditioning, Wi-Fi.

MDC Hotel Located in a historical building in Ürgüp's Old Town, this cave hotel features panoramic valley views and offers spacious rooms with flat-screen TVs and spa baths. Rooms also have heated marble floors, arched ceilings and stone fireplaces.

Amenities: Flat-screen TV, Tea/Coffee Maker, Air Conditioning, Wi-Fi

Barida Hotels Located in Isparta's city center, the Barida Hotels are comfortably elegant. The property features a spa with both a sauna and a Turkish bath as well as an indoor pool.

Amenities: safe, hairdryer, Wi-Fi

Colossae Thermal Just adjacent to the UNESCO World Heritage Pamukkale Hierapolis, the Colassae Thermal features a spa and pool.

Amenities: soap, shampoo, hair dryer, air conditioning, Wi-Fi

Kalehan Hotel The Kalehan Hotel is a family-owned property that was built in the style of a traditional Ottoman Inn.

Amenities: hair dryer, air conditioning, Wi-Fi

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Included:

- ▶ Accommodations as per itinerary based on double occupancy
- ▶ All meals as listed in the itinerary
- ▶ All ground transportation
- ▶ One group transfer on arrival and departure
- ▶ Guided sightseeing and activities as indicated in the itinerary
- ▶ All gratuities except for head guide

Not Included:

- ▶ International airfare
- ▶ Cost of hospitalization or evacuation
- ▶ Fees for passport, visas, immunizations, or travel insurance
- ▶ Items of a personal nature
- ▶ Meals not specified in the itinerary
- ▶ Alcoholic beverages (unless otherwise specified)
- ▶ Gratuities for head guide

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Cancellations and Refunds

Notification of cancellation must be made in writing to AdventureWomen, LLC (email will be accepted). Full payment is due 90 days prior to departure date.

- For cancellations received 89-60 days prior to the trip departure date: 50% of the package price is non-refundable and non-transferable.

- For cancellations received 59-0 days prior to the trip departure date: 100% of the package price is non-refundable and non-transferable.

You are highly encouraged to purchase **trip cancellation insurance** to cover emergency situations. Travel insurance information will be sent to you once you have registered for your trip.

Deposit Transfer

You can transfer your deposit to another trip with no additional fee if you notify us within 120 days of the original trip departure date. We can hold your deposit for up to six months as a credit. Failure to book a new trip within this timeframe will result in the forfeiture of your deposit. Please note that this policy doesn't apply to extensions purchased with the main trip, for which the deposit is non-refundable and non-transferable. Please note that the deposit for extensions is non-refundable and non-transferable.

No Smoking Policy

Beginning in 1995, our trips became smoke free. Please note that there will be no smoking by any participants on AdventureWomen trips.

Health Insurance

You must have your own health insurance to participate in an AdventureWomen trip.

Adventure Travel Today

We define "adventure travel" as travel in which one actively participates, as opposed to a "tour," in which one is more or less a passive observer. AdventureWomen designs and organizes trips all over the world for women who want an active, out of the ordinary experience, and meet new friends. **Most of all, we want our trips to be fun!** In this spirit, the successful adventure traveler should be a good-natured realist and have a sense of humor! Adventure trips, by nature, require that participants be self-sufficient, flexible, and able to accept situations as they exist, and not just as they would have preferred or expected them to exist. The constraints of scheduled group traveling also necessitate that each of us be understanding of and sensitive to others. Being on time is important, and contributes to the congeniality, success and well-being of both individuals and the group!