



Turkey: History, Culture, and the Mediterranean Coastline

DURATION | 12 Days

TRIP LEVEL | Moderate

Trip Overview

Explore the architectural splendor of Istanbul and the natural beauty of the countryside of Turkey with AdventureWomen! This 12-day adventure will take you from Istanbul to Ephesus and along the Mediterranean Coastline, where you'll experience the life and culture of modern and ancient Turkey. This itinerary offers a perfect blend of history, culture, and natural beauty, showcasing some of the best that Turkey has to offer. From ancient ruins to coastal wonders, each day promises a unique and memorable experience.

Trip Highlights

- Visit iconic sites like the Hagia Sophia and the Topkapi Palace. Stroll through the bustling Grand Bazaar, one of the world's largest and oldest covered markets.
- Explore the ruins of Ephesus. Wander through Cibyra, an ancient city known for its impressive stadium and theater. Marvel at the fairy chimneys and cave dwellings of Cappadocia.
- Sail through the stunning Kekova area on a private boat tour, where you can see the sunken city of Simena and swim in crystal-clear waters.

Map View



Trip Itinerary



Day 1

Arrive in Turkey!

Arrive in Istanbul, Turkey (IST) by 1:00 PM today. You'll be met by your guide at the airport and transferred to the hotel. There will be one group transfer provided (time TBD based on flights).

Transfers for other arrival times can be purchased for an additional fee. Check into your hotel and relax before dinner tonight. 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!).

Meals: dinner | Overnight: Kalyon Hotel



Kalyon Hotel

Kalyon Hotel Istanbul, a charming four-star boutique hotel, offers an ideal location in the heart of Sultanahmet, Istanbul's historic peninsula. Easily accessible from the city's airports, the hotel is within walking distance of iconic landmarks such as the Blue Mosque, Hagia Sophia, Grand Bazaar, and Topkapi Palace. Set along the scenic shores of the Sea of Marmara, guests can enjoy breathtaking views of the sea and watch ships traverse the ancient maritime route that links the Mediterranean to the Black Sea.

Amenities: complimentary toiletries, minibar, safe, flatscreen TV, Wi-Fi, air conditioning

Trip Itinerary



Day 2

Discover Istanbul

Today you'll visit Hagia Sophia, one of the most extraordinary buildings in the history of architecture. Dating from 537 CE, it is a monument to the golden age of the Byzantine Empire. Then you'll continue to the ancient Hippodrome and the iconic Blue Mosque, a wonderful example of Ottoman architecture, featuring a striking combination of domes, semidomes, and slender minarets.

Next is Basilica Cistern, the largest underground cistern of Byzantine Istanbul which was erected in the 530's. And finally, visit the Grand Bazaar, built in 1460 and home to lively shops. Enjoy dinner on your own this evening.

Meals: breakfast, lunch | Overnight: Kalyon Hotel



Trip Itinerary



Day 3

Topkapi Palace and Travel to Selçuk

Following breakfast, head out to Topkapi Palace, a historic palace that served as the primary residence of Ottoman sultans for nearly 400 years. The palace complex is an architectural masterpiece, showcasing a mix of Ottoman, Persian, and Islamic architectural styles. Topkapi Palace is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, attracting millions of visitors who come to explore its rich history, architecture, and cultural significance.

Head to the airport where you will board your 75-minute flight to Izmir, the largest city on the Aegean Sea. Upon arrival, you will be transported to your hotel in Selçuk. Check-in and unwind before dinner.

Meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner | Overnight: Kalehan Hotel



Kalehan Hotel

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

Amenities: complimentary toiletries, minibar, bottled water, safe, Wi-Fi, air conditioning

Trip Itinerary



Day 4

Selçuk and Ephesus

You'll start the day with a visit to an ancient cottage in the mountains believed to be the Virgin Mary's last home. Next, head to Ephesus, one of the ancient Mediterranean's largest cities to discover its marble-paved avenues, wonderfully preserved homes, temples, theaters, baths, and markets. Walk along the stone-paved streets of Sirince Village, abandoned by the Greeks during the population exchange of 1923, and now occupied by Turks who continue the Greek tradition of wine production.

After lunch, drive back to Selçuk to visit Artemision, the Temple of Artemis, one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world dating back to the 4th century BC.

Meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner | Overnight: Kalehan Hotel



Trip Itinerary



Day 5

Ephesus to Pamukkale

Located in Selçuk, the Ephesus Museum is home to an impressive collection of archaeological artifacts organized thematically, featuring exhibits on sculptures, Terrace Houses, coins, and more. Drive for approximately 2.5 hours to Pamukkale, famous for its natural travertine pools and channels and fascinating ruins. Check into your hotel before enjoying dinner with the group tonight.

Meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner | Overnight: Colossae Thermal



Colossae Thermal

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

Amenities: complimentary toiletries, hair dryer, minibar, coffee / tea maker, electric kettle, safe, flatscreen TV, cable / satellite TV, Wi-Fi, air conditioning

Trip Itinerary



Day 6

Explore Cibrya and Arrive in Kalkan

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 even try your hand at excavation under the watchful eye of local archaeologists.

Drive for approximately 2 hours to Kalkan, a small town in the Antalya Province of Turkey and beautifully located on Turkey's Mediterranean coast, then check-in at your hotel. Tonight, dinner is on your own, choosing from a diverse selection of local restaurants.

Meals: breakfast, lunch | Overnight: Likya Residence



Likya Residence

Likya Residence Hotel & Spa is a boutique retreat, offering a serene and peaceful getaway in a relaxed, comfortable setting. Nestled on the Mediterranean coast, the hotel provides breathtaking panoramic views from its spacious suites. The hotel features two freshwater outdoor swimming pools, along with an indoor pool within the luxury spa. The spa offers a variety of indulgent treatments, including massages, skin and body therapies, as well as a fitness center, traditional Turkish bath, sauna, and steam room.

AMENITIES: complimentary toiletries, hair dryer, minibar, safe, flatscreen TV, Cable / Satellite TV, Wi-Fi, air conditioning



Trip Itinerary



Day 7

Kekova to Antalya

Following breakfast, you'll journey to Ucagýz, where you will explore the small islets, coves, and submerged ruins of the enchanting Kekova area by private boat with lunch on board.

The tour includes a visit to the medieval fortress of Simena, boasting 5th-Century BC rock tombs and the world's smallest ancient theater. You will also have plenty of opportunities to swim! Following your tour of the Simena Fortress, engage with a local female ice cream maker in Kekova, who will share insights into her ice cream-making process.

Meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner | Overnight: Akra Hotel



Akra Hotel

Drawing inspiration from the Mediterranean, Akra delivers an unforgettable stay, blending modern luxury with the city's dynamic energy. Every moment is designed to immerse you in a world of comfort, quality, and indulgence. Akra offers a prime seafront location with a private platform where you can soak up the sun and enjoy the crystal-clear waters. Stay active at the fitness center, or take advantage of the tennis courts, yoga, and Pilates classes.

Amenities: complimentary toiletries, hair dryer, minibar, coffee / tea maker, safe, flatscreen TV, Cable / Satellite TV, Wi-Fi, air conditioning



Trip Itinerary



Day 8

Old Town Antalya

After breakfast, head out to Antalya Old Town, also known as Kaleiçi, the historic heart of Antalya. It is characterized by narrow winding streets, Ottoman-era architecture, and historical buildings that date back centuries. The area has a unique atmosphere, blending old-world charm with vibrant local life.

Enjoy lunch at a seafront restaurant. Return to the hotel and take advantage of some free time to indulge in swimming and stroll along the seaside in the afternoon. Have dinner as a group tonight.

Meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner | Overnight: Akra Hotel



Trip Itinerary



Day 9

Ancient Cappadocia

After breakfast, fly to Cappadocia, then drive for 90 minutes to Uchisar, a massive outcropping of tufa rock used as a shelter and fortress in ancient times. Enjoy lunch in Goreme town then explore the Goreme Open Air Museum, a collection of churches and monasteries for which this area is famous. Take in the beautiful frescoes and art in the churches that are part of this UNESCO World Heritage site. Drive 90 minutes to Pashabag, an old monastic settlement with a unique landscape filled with fairy chimneys. Continue to Devrent, where you will explore the lunar surroundings on foot before checking into your hotel in Cappadocia.

Meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner | Overnight: MDC Hotel (or similar)



MDC Hotel (or similar)

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: complimentary toiletries, minibar, bottled water, tea/coffee maker, safe, flatscreen TV, Wi-Fi, air conditioning

Trip Itinerary



Day 10

Further Cappadocia Exploration

Today you will explore the amazing stone architecture hidden beneath ground in Cappadocia. Then head to Avanos, a nearby town with a long history of pottery making. The town's red clay, sourced from the Kızılırmak River, is ideal for pottery production. You'll witness skilled artisans crafting traditional ceramics and visit vibrant local markets where you can purchase a variety of handmade crafts, textiles, and souvenirs.

Enjoy a delicious lunch at Kizilvadi restaurant, located in the garden of a natural rock-cone house. Then set off on an afternoon hike through Red Valley, dotted with hidden rock-carved churches. Enjoy dinner as a group this evening.

Meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner | Overnight: MDC Hotel (or similar)



Trip Itinerary



Day 11

Back to Istanbul

After breakfast, you'll take a morning flight back to Istanbul for a final day of exploration in this majestic city. Visit the Spice Bazaar, dating to the 1600s when it was the last stop for camel caravans traveling the Silk Road from China, India, and Persia. In the early evening, you'll take a private boat trip along the Bosphorus, the natural strait that forms part of the boundary between the Asian and European continents, to view Ottoman villas, palaces, fortresses, and parks. Share stories with your traveling companions about your mutual exploration of Turkey during a celebratory farewell dinner in a local restaurant.

Meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner | Overnight: Kalyon Hotel



Kalyon Hotel

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Amenities: complimentary toiletries, minibar, safe, flatscreen TV, Wi-Fi, air conditioning

Trip Itinerary



Day 12

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. Depart Istanbul, Turkey (IST).

What's Included

What's 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

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.

