

Turkish Delight

Istanbul, Cappadocia, Izmir, Bodrum



Providing the perfect introduction to the depth and diversity of Turkey's character, this rewarding tour will allow you to experience everything from the country's history and culture, to its food and natural landscapes. Exploring numerous highlights found predominantly in Turkey's west, this 11-day tour will introduce you to the mesmerising city of Istanbul, the unique landscapes of Cappadocia, the ancient history of Ephesus and the coastal playground that is Bodrum and its peninsula.

HIGHLIGHTS

- ❖ *Wander the vibrant and colourful bazaars of Istanbul*
- ❖ *Take a cruise along the waters of the mighty Bosphorus*
- ❖ *Float above the landscapes of Cappadocia on a hot air balloon ride*
- ❖ *Step back in time during a visit to the ruins of Ephesus*
- ❖ *Experience a traditional sailing experience around Bodrum's peninsula*

DAY TO DAY ITINERARY

Day 1: Istanbul

Arrive by a private transfer to your hotel in Istanbul.



Today, you can enjoy your private motor yacht cruise on the Bosphorus.

You'll embark your yacht from the Four Seasons Bosphorus pier to enjoy a private motor yacht cruise on the Bosphorus, the narrow strait of water separating the Asian and European continents and the lifeblood of Istanbul. Passing along the shores of the Bosphorus you will view magnificent palaces, restored Ottoman villas, impressive fortresses and the waterside residences of Istanbul's elite. Enjoy soft drinks on the motor yacht and see a different perspective of Istanbul, described by a Byzantine visitor in the 12th century as 'the city of the world's desire'.

Day 2 Istanbul

Today your professional guide will take you out for a full day of private sightseeing. You'll start with a visit to the Hippodrome, which was one of the largest chariot race grounds of the Byzantine Empire. Istanbul's Byzantine Hippodrome was the heart of Constantinople's political and sporting life, and the scene of games and riots through 500 years of Ottoman history as well. This was the largest hippodrome of the ancient world with a design that was conceptually based on the Circus Maximus in Rome. You will see Egyptian Obelisk, Serpentine Column, Constantine Column which remain from the original Hippodrome.

You will take a short walk to the Blue Mosque, completed in 1616, it is a triumph of harmony, proportion and elegance. The mosque was a part of a complex also including, tombs, fountains, kitchens, and a bath. Its colorful 260 windows enable the sunlight to reach inside. This makes the interior unusually light. The blue Iznik Tiles covering the walls have given the mosque its popular name, Blue Mosque.

Next, you will visit the magnificent Topkapı Palace, the residence of the sultans for almost three centuries. It is located on the promontory jutting out between the Bosphorus and the Golden Horn. This setting provides a magnificent view. The construction of the Topkapı Palace was completed between 1465 and 1478. Being the imperial residence of the sultan, his court and harem, the palace was also the seat of government for the Ottoman Empire. 4,000 people lived in the Palace.

After your lunch, you will visit St. Sophia, the church of the Divine Wisdom. The architectural marvel of all time. It was built during Emperor Justinian reign (AD 537) and it remained the greatest church in Christendom until the conquest of Constantinople in 1453 by Sultan Mehmet II who ordered the conversion of Hagia Sophia into a Mosque. In 1934, Atatürk proclaimed it a museum. The walls of this beautiful piece of architecture are decorated with gorgeous mosaics.

Next, you will visit the street stalls of the Karakoy area and sample their delicacies as you explore the neighbourhood. You can enjoy stuffed and fried mussels and encounter historical pickle-hawkers in the Fish Market, as well as enjoy Baklava tasting in Karakoy. Information about the seller and the food is explained throughout the tour, alongside a little bit of history. You will then visit Namli, a gourmet shop and restaurant carrying quality varieties of olive oils, international sauces, cheeses, helva, dried fruit and nuts, meze and other delicacies, as well as deli meats such as pastirma and sucuk. You may enjoy tasting some specialities that are in high demand by locals in the shop.

Day 3 Istanbul

Explore churches, mosques and bazaars on a city tour.

During this tour, you will first visit the Grand Bazaar, but not before having the opportunity to learn about the art of carpet weaving. The Grand Bazaar is the largest and oldest covered Bazaar in Turkey with more than 4,000 shops. A variety of Turkish handicrafts, oriental carpets, rare jewels, textiles, cotton towels, Iznik tiles and inexpensive souvenirs can be found, all sold in small shops next to each other. The streets are named according to the trades, such as gold and silver sellers, carpet sellers, booksellers, etc. The most oriental atmosphere in Istanbul is found in the bazaar.

Next, you will visit the Suleymaniye Mosque. Built by the great Ottoman architect Mimar Sinan on the order of Sultan Suleiman I (Suleiman the Magnificent), the Suleymaniye Mosque dominates the third hill of old Istanbul, and is strikingly graceful and less ornate than many other imperial mosques, thus lending itself to meditation and quiet reflection. Following this, you will visit the Church of St Saviour in Chora. Built in the 11th century, the walls are decorated with beautiful mosaics and frescoes. The mosaics depict the life of Virgin Mary and the infancy, genealogy and ministry of Christ.

Lunch follows, before you will visit the Spice Bazaar, the second largest covered market in Istanbul. It was constructed in the 1660s as part of the Yeni Camii (New Mosque) complex. The name derives from the herbs, and spices imported from or through Egypt. It is still the best place to buy Turkish delight, dried fruit, exotic spices and herbs.

Day 4 Istanbul – Cappadocia



Private transfer to Istanbul Airport and take flight to Kayseri. On arrival in Cappadocia transfer to your hotel in a private vehicle.

First, you will visit Devrent Valley. One magical corner in the countless panoramic valleys of Cappadocia, here is an unbelievable landscape with its rock formations and savage feeling; one of the best introductions to understanding the formation of fairy chimneys.

Next, you will stop in the Pasabag Valley where the formation of the 'fairy chimney' can be best observed. Pasabag, the Pasha's Vineyard, is surrounded by incredible natural rock formations; a spectacular scene.

Last, you will visit Zelve, where three canyons meet in the Valley of Monks. The rock face at Zelve is honeycombed with caves and churches, and much of the decoration inside the churches is symbolic. You will visit the two most interesting churches; The Church of Grapes and the Fish Church.

Day 5 Cappadocia (Hot air ballooning in Cappadocia)

After an early morning pick up, you will take to the skies above Cappadocia to enjoy a thrilling and breathtaking ballooning experience. As you float over Cappadocia's unique landscapes, heading along its scenic valleys, you'll gain a greater appreciation of the sheer beauty of this area of Turkey. After your ride, you will head back to your hotel for a delicious breakfast.

Underground city and open-air museum tour

You'll meet your professional guide for your private day of sightseeing. You'll start your day descending below the Earth's surface into the Kaymakli underground city, where five levels extend below the ground and include living quarters, kitchens, wine presses, storage rooms, stables and ventilation shafts. Early Christians carved out these subterranean complexes to avoid invaders who swept across the plains of Anatolia from the 6th to the 9th century.

Next, you'll visit the Göreme Open-Air Museum, where icons and other figurative representations were prohibited. The 11th century represents the 'Golden Age' of religious art in Göreme. Then, you'll visit the Göreme Valley, which has been occupied since the dawn of history and is known as the 'Valley of the Churches'.

Day 6 Cappadocia - Izmir

Private transfer to Kayseri Airport to take connecting flight to Izmir via Istanbul. On arrival private transfer to your hotel in Izmir.

Day 7 Izmir

Ephesus ancient city tour

Discover this stunning ancient city, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, during a fascinating tour that will allow you to delve into the history and identity of this site. You will first visit the Odeon Theatre, where the state affairs used to be held, before viewing the Hadrian Temple which was dedicated in 118 AD to Hadrian, Artemis and the people of Ephesus. Next you will visit the newly excavated Terrace Houses located on top of the hill within the City of Ephesus. They were inhabited by wealthy Ephesians and are finely decorated with mosaics and frescoes.



After this, you will proceed to the Library of Celsus, the best-preserved structure of its kind. The inscription on the side of the building's front staircase says that the library was built by Julius between 114–117 AD, in his father's honor, after his death. Following this, you'll visit the Great Theatre, dating back to the Hellenistic period. In the 1st century AD it was successfully reconstructed, expanded by the Romans until it reached a seating capacity of 25,000.

After a delicious and traditional lunch, you will visit the House of Virgin Mary, where the Virgin is said to have lived in the last years of her life. The building was rediscovered in the late 19th century by Lazartis from Smyrna, based on the vision of a German nun. Finally, you will visit the Ephesus Museum to discover the many artefacts displayed here, which were found in Ephesus and other ancient sites in the region.

Day 8 Bodrum

Private transfer to your hotel in Bodrum



Day at leisure in Bodrum. Enjoy a day at leisure to relax at the hotel and enjoy the facilities, as well as the beautiful nearby beaches and the landscapes dotted with history.

Day 9 Bodrum

Bodrum Castle

Your professional guide will take you out for a private sightseeing tour. First, you will visit the Bodrum Castle which occupies the tip of the wedge-like peninsula at the centre of Bodrum. It is a splendid incarnation of medieval western military architecture, built at a time when the European Middle Ages were over, and castles of this type were fast becoming objects of nostalgia. It has a massive conglomeration of courtyards, turrets, galleries and sunken gardens.

During your time exploring the castle, you will also have the opportunity to visit the on-site Museum of Underwater Archaeology. Considered the most established of its kind in the world, here you can discover numerous treasures from historic shipwrecks discovered along Turkey's southern shores. Also, on display in the castle, and another subject of your tour, is a full reconstruction of one third of an Eastern Roman wreck, which dates from the 7th century. You'll find this wreck in the castle's Gothic Chapel.

Day 10 Bodrum

Private gulet boat cruise

You will enjoy a private adventurous sailing experience in a gulet, a typical wooden sailing boat from the region. You will enjoy crystal-clear water and swimming in the secret coves. You will have plenty of time for swimming, snorkelling, sunbathing and relaxing. A gourmet lunch will be served onboard your gulet. At the end of your voyage, you will have some time to stroll around Bodrum town.

Enjoy evening at leisure in the hotel and enjoy the facilities, as well as the beautiful nearby beaches and the landscapes dotted with history.

Day 11

Private transfer to Bodrum Airport.

Return home with wonderful memories

Turkey Map



