

# 10-DAY ESSENTIAL TURKEY



## OVERVIEW

Embark on a custom tour exploring the rich, historical land of Turkey over ten days!

Known for the enticing flavours of its exciting cuisine, its epic history and stunning scenery from beaches to mountains and cities, Turkey is an adventurer's paradise.

Over ten days on this Turkey vacation, you'll explore the space-like landscape of Cappadocia on a series of privately guided tours, visit the ancient city of Ephesus, spend a day at the natural thermal springs of Pamukkale and finally, explore the capital city of Istanbul on foot and on the water.

- Day 1: Welcome to Kusadasi!
- Day 2: Guided Tour of The City of Ephesus
- Day 3: Pamukkale
- Day 4: Fly to Cappadocia
- Day 5: Optional Sunrise Hot Air Balloon Ride & Guided North Cappadocia Tour
- Day 6: Guided South Cappadocia Tour
- Day 7: Fly from Cappadocia to Istanbul
- Day 8: Guided Tour of Istanbul
- Day 9: Morning Bosphorus Cruise & Free Time to Explore Istanbul
- Day 10: Departure from Istanbul!

## INCLUDED

- 9 nights accommodation
- 27 activities
- 9 breakfasts and 2 dinners
- Airport transfer
- Domestic flights
- Entrance fees
- Ground transportation
- Licensed English speaking guides

## EXCLUDED

- Travel insurance

## DURATION

10 days, 9 nights  
From: 23 Sep 2024, 00:00  
To: 02 Oct 2024, 23:45

## DESTINATIONS

Turkey: Kusadasi, İzmir, Selçuk, Pamukkale, Denizli, Nevşehir Merkez, Nevşehir, Avanos, Göreme Belediyesi, Çavuşin, Kaymaklı, Underground City, Ortahisar, Fatih, Istanbul, Üsküdar

## TRAVELLERS

6 travellers

Presented by Kerin  
from EYS Travel Planners

✉ [kerin@eystravelplanners.com.au](mailto:kerin@eystravelplanners.com.au)

☎ +61421857898

- International flights
- Entry visas / airport departure tax
- Alcohol beverages
- Gratuities
- Personal expenses
- Laundry
- Trekking permits

## NOTES

Quote is prepared for a min of 6 guests in single room occupancy.

### DAY 1: WELCOME TO KUSADASI!

Monday, 23 Sep 2024



Upon arrival, you'll be met by your guide and will hop in a private transfer from Izmir Airport to your hotel. You'll check into your beautiful hotel and then have the rest of the day free to relax at your hotel or explore the surrounding area. A welcome dinner will be served at a restaurant nearby your hotel.

🍴 Dinner.



**Private Driver**  
13:00 to 14:00

From: Kayseri Erkilet Airport  
To: Argos Hotel

Upon arrival, you'll be met by your guide and will hop in a private transfer from Kayseri Airport to your hotel.



**Efe Boutique Hotel**  
14:00 check-in  
10:00 check-out (26 Sep)  
3 nights

Across the street from the Aegean Sea, this informal hotel is a 5-minute walk from a castle on Güvercinada Island, 2 km from the D515 national road and 67 km from Izmir Adnan Menderes Airport.

Streamlined rooms with bright accent walls offer Wi-Fi, flat-screens, safes and minibars, plus balconies and sea views. Upgraded rooms add sitting areas and whirlpool tubs. Studios have kitchenettes. There's also room service.

A chic bar/restaurant features a terrace and sea views. Breakfast and parking are available.

Address: Hacıfeyzullah, Efe Boutique Hotel, Güvercinada Caddesi, Kuşadası/Aydın, Türkiye



**Kusadasi**  
14:00 to 18:00  
4 hours

Sitting on Turkey's western Aegean coast, Kusadasi is a beach resort town which is the perfect place to explore the ruins of the region such as the nearby Ephesus (Efes) and the natural beauty of the Dilek Peninsula.

Fringed by a beautiful seafront promenade, marina and harbour, the town has grown into a popular holiday resort and

a commonplace to depart on cruise ships. Dominating the gulf by the same name, Kusadasi boasts its fair share of beautiful beaches, cool alcoves, local restaurants serving delicious Aegean food and quality hotels.

Whether you're looking to relax on the beach, go trekking, scuba diving or exploring the nearby historical sites, Kusadasi is the perfect place to base yourself for a few days.

+ Optional Activity

Address: Kusadasi, Kuşadası/Aydın Province, Turkey

## DAY 2: GUIDED TOUR OF THE CITY OF EPHEBUS

Tuesday, 24 Sep 2024



Absorb yourself in history today with a guided tour of one of the Seven Ancient Wonders of the World, the site of Temple of Artemis and the ancient city of Ephesus. With its well preserved collonaded Arcadian Way, Hadrians Temple, Celsus Library, market and theatre, this archaeological site takes you a step back in time. Feel the mystical atmosphere of the city and stadium where chariot and horse races were once held. You'll finish the day at the last home of the Virgin Mary.

🍽️ Breakfast.



### Ephesus Guided Tour

09:00 to 16:00

7 hours

Absorb yourself in history today with a guided tour of the site of one of the Seven Ancient Wonders of the World.

Start your tour with the site of Temple of Artemis and the ancient city of Ephesus with its well preserved collonaded Arcadian Way. You'll then move onto Emperor Hadrian's Temple, the great Celsus Library, a market and the ancient theatre.

Feel the mystical atmosphere of the city and stadium where chariot and horse races were once held. You'll finish the day with by visiting the pilgrimage point claimed to be the last home of the Virgin Mary.

👤 guided

Address: Acarlar, Efes Harabeleri, 35920 Selçuk/İzmir, Turkey



### The Temple of Artemis

09:30 to 10:15

45 minutes

The Temple of Artemis, or rather the ruins of The Temple of Artemis, is located in Ephesus. The temple was one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World when it was in its final form. It was built to be dedicated to the ancient form of the goddess Artemis.

The temple experienced three phases of rebuild throughout various centuries before it was completely torn down, and today only ruins of this great architectural wonder remain.

It was originally built in the 6th century BCE and was of huge tremendous size. Drawings and miniature models of the original temple will give evidence to this. A deliberate fire in the 4th century BCE destroyed much of the temple. Following a rebuild, it survived until the Gothic invasion of 267 CE.

Unfortunately even after a third phase of rebuilding the temple was yet again torn down in 401 CE by a Christian mob. Today, you'll be able to observe the remaining foundations and a solitary column that remain at the site.

🗣️ guided

Address: Atatürk Mh., Park İçi Yolu No:12, 35920 Selçuk/İzmir, Turkey

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### **Ephesus**

10:30 to 11:15  
45 minutes

Ephesus is an ancient Greek city that dates back over 2,000 years. The Greco-Roman empire stretched across much of Europe and Asia, so it is no surprise that this huge ancient city can be found in western Turkey.

Ephesus is a world-renowned tourist attraction, particularly famed for the Temple of Artemis which is one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. There are a number of monumental buildings within Ephesus to visit such as the Great Theatre which was capable of holding 25,000 spectators; the whole site is filled with an atmosphere of cultural importance.

Ephesus was also one of the seven churches of Asia cited in the Book of Revelation, written by the Gospel of John in the New Testament. In 263, much of the city was destroyed by Goths and earthquakes that followed left much of the city to ruins. Although, of what remains, this ancient city is pretty spectacular.

🗣️ guided

Address: Atatürk Mh., Ephesus Archaeological Museum, Uğur Mumcu Sevgi Yolu, 35920 Selçuk/İzmir, Turkey

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### **Library of Celsus**

11:30 to 12:30  
1 hour

The Library of Celsus is a magnificent library which dates back to the early 2nd century and its one of the most famous monuments in Ephesus. This ancient Roman building has been extensively restored and was originally built as part of a complex.

The facade, which heightens the central elements, holds statues of the four virtues; Sophia (Wisdom), Arete (Goodness), Ennoia (Thought) and Episteme (Knowledge). These statues are replicas and the originals sit in Vienna's Ephesus Museum.

The library is said to one of the most impressive buildings of

the Roman empire and was originally built to store over 12,000 scrolls and to house the tomb of Celsus who is buried in a crypt beneath the library.

For many centuries the library was left to ruins after being destroyed by earthquakes and invasions, then in the 1970s it was restored and re-erected by archaeologists.

🗺️ guided

Address: Acarlar Mahallesi, 35920 Selçuk/İzmir, Turkey

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### **The Great Theatre of Ephesus**

13:30 to 14:30

1 hour

Perhaps the most spectacular structure in the whole of the Ephesus ancient city, The Great Theatre wows its visitors with its size and magnificent preservation considering it was first built in the 3rd century BC.

Although it was remodelled several times during the Roman Period, the Grand Theatre took 60 years to complete in total. It was capable of accommodating 25,000 spectators with 24,000 seats and 1,000 standing places. The Great Theatre was not only for dramatic theatre performances but also for social, political, economic and religious demonstrations as well as for gladiator games.

The stage is three storeys high with a facade decorated with columns, windows and statues facing the audience. Today the theatre carries the same grand atmosphere it would have had all those years ago. Several world-famous performers have performed in this theatre such as Elton John in 2001.

🗺️ guided

Address: Acarlar Mahallesi, 35920 Selçuk/İzmir, Turkey

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### **House of Virgin Mary**

15:00 to 15:30

30 minutes

The House of Virgin Mary was discovered in the 19th century following descriptions that were published in the book of a Roman Catholic nun and visionary, Blessed Anne Catherine Emmerich, who died in 1824; the book was published shortly after her death.

The bedridden German nun, of whom's book led to the discovery of the house, was able to describe the house in great detail including the domes on the top of the house and the fireplace. The book was read by a French clergyman who came to the site and found the house matching the description, sending word back to Rome.

Since its discovery this Catholic and Muslim shrine located on Mount Koressos near to Ephesus has maintained a steady stream of pilgrims visiting the site believing Mary, the mother of Jesus, was taken there by Saint John to live out the remainder of her life.

The shrine has merited many visits from popes including Pope Leo XIII in 1896 as one of the earliest and Pope Benedict XVI in 2006 as one of the most recent. The flowers that surround the house are said to have healing properties and inside the house you'll see crutches and canes said to have been left behind by the healed.

👤 guided

Address: Sultaniye Mahallesi, 35922 Selçuk/İzmir, Turkey

### DAY 3: PAMUKKALE

Wednesday, 25 Sep 2024



Pamukkale is the centre of a thermal spring with healing properties. Due to the chemical properties in the water, pure white coloured travertine and water terraces have been created on the mountain slope. Visit the travertine and the Ancient City of Hierapolis which has the biggest Necropolis with 1200 gravestones in Anatolia. The sacred pool also is one of the highlights of the site; shallow thermal waters ripple over a wonderful scattering of ancient roman ruins which lie beneath.

🍽️ Breakfast.



#### Pamukkale Tour

09:00 to 14:00  
5 hours

Pamukkale is the centre of natural thermal spring waters with healing properties.

Due to the chemical properties in the water, pure white coloured travertine and stepped water terraces have been created on the mountain slope. It has a resemblance of cotton piles which led to its name, the 'Cotton Castle' in Turkish.

Visit the travertine and the Ancient City of Hierapolis which has the biggest Necropolis with 1200 gravestones in Anatolia. The sacred pool also is one of the highlights of the site. There, shallow thermal waters ripple over scattered ancient roman ruins which lie beneath.

👤 guided

Address: Pamukkale, 20190 Pamukkale/Denizli, Turkey



#### Pamukkale

09:15 to 11:00  
1 hour 45 minutes

Also known as the Cotton Castle, Pamukkale carves azure terraces into the landscape. When you first see Pamukkale, it's hard to believe it is not a mirage.

The limpid pools jut out from the steep valley, forming warm, shallow pools of crystal clear waters that look out into the southern countryside. Literally translating to "Cotton Castle", Pamukkale is a geological phenomenon of white stalactites that could only be comparable to a champagne waterfall of thermal springs, topped by the Ancient Greek city, Hierapolis.

Please note that in order to preserve this phenomenon, you are not permitted to swim in it.

🗺️ guided

Address: Pamukkale/Denizli, Turkey



### Hierapolis

11:45 to 13:45

2 hours

Protruding out from Pamukkale springs is the Cotton Castle, the ancient ruins of baths and temples of what was once a bustling city.

Estimated to date back to the 2nd century during the Seleucid Empire of the Hellenistic era. Hierapolis was used as a healing centre using the rich natural properties of the springs. It is thought that the area was named after the wife of Telephus, son of Hercules.

The city is said to have been a dwelling for two of the Christian Apostles before it was almost completely destroyed. It was then rebuilt during the Roman era to create a thriving city that was the home of philosophy and creativity, inhabiting over 100,000 people. At this time, the city was famous for its healing properties that came from the minerals of the springs.

The city changed hands over the years, from Byzantine to Persian and Seljuk before it became a key excavation site to unearth the buildings of times past, now there is a museum featuring the restored features.

🗺️ guided

Address: Hierapolis, 20280 Pamukkale/Denizli, Turkey

## DAY 4: FLY TO CAPPADOCIA

Thursday, 26 Sep 2024



This morning, your driver will transfer you to the Izmir airport for your flight to Kayseri. Upon arrival at Kayseri airport, your driver will pick you up and transfer you to your hotel in Cappadocia. You'll then have the rest of the afternoon and evening free to spend as you wish. You may want to explore the area on your own or simply relax at your hotel.

🍳 Breakfast.



### Private Driver

10:00 to 11:00

From: Kuşadası

To: Izmir Airport



### Plane

12:30 to 13:30

From: Izmir Airport

To: Kayseri Erkilet Airport



### Private Driver

14:00 to 15:00

From: Kayseri Erkilet Airport

To: Cappadocia



### Balloon Cave Hotel

15:00 check-in

09:00 check-out (29 Sep)

3 nights

Our hotel is located in Goreme where is the center of Cappadocia, it has got 12 rooms and each of them is decorated with local and traditional hand craft, the hotel has got roof top restaurant and swimming pool.

Address: Balloon Cave Hotel, Ragıp Üner Caddesi, Göreme/Nevşehir Merkez/Nevşehir, Türkiye

## DAY 5: OPTIONAL SUNRISE HOT AIR BALLOON RIDE & GUIDED NORTH CAPPADOCIA TOUR

Friday, 27 Sep 2024



Today, you'll have the option to begin the day with a sunrise hot air balloon ride to see the beauty of Cappadocia from the sky. Later, you'll set off to explore the beauty of this space-like landscape on a privately-guided North Cappadocia tour, including the Devrant Valley, famous for its irregularly shaped rock formations, Pashabag known for its 'fairy chimneys', Avanos, and Goreme. During your tour, you'll have lots of opportunities to explore as you introduced to what was Mesopotamia.

🍳 Breakfast.



### Hot Air Balloon Ride in Cappadocia

05:00 to 06:30

1 hour 30 minutes

One of the most bucket-list-worthy activities to do in Cappadocia is hot air ballooning at sunrise. With a rocky landscape like no other, experiencing its breathtaking topography from the sky is a must-do when visiting.

Taking off before sunrise, you will glide high up in the sky as the sun starts to emerge and the scenery unfolds beneath you. Gently drift past rose-coloured valleys, picturesque vineyards and fairy chimneys.

The panoramas and vistas you'll experience from the basket will provide you with incredible memories and memorable photos of the landscape from above.

+ Optional Activity

Address: 50180 Göreme Belediyesi/Nevşehir Merkez/Nevşehir, Turkey



### Private Driver

09:00 to 15:30

From: Cappadocia

To: Cappadocia

You'll embark on a private North Cappadocia tour for the day with a professional, private, English-speaking guide.



### Devrent Valley

09:15 to 10:00

45 minutes

Let your mind run wild in the 'Imagination Valley', with no cave churches or temples to be found, the valley has never been inhabited. Perhaps, while we are imagining things, it could be because of the perplexing shape of the rocks that are



found here.

Sticking out of the landscapes, the rock appears as if they have been carved, however, this is the good work of mother nature, forming what has been referred to as a lunar landscape. Walking around, see what you can see; leave your expectations behind!

Address: devrent mevkii no:1, 50500 Aktepe  
Köyü/Avanos/Nevşehir, Turkey

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### **Avanos**

10:15 to 11:15

1 hour

Walking along the cobbled streets of this charming town you'll feel as though you have been transported back in time.

Avanos is a town rooted in tradition that dates back to Hittites in 1600 BC. The people of the town make earthen pottery using red silt Kızılırmak; the oldest ceramic practice known today but still remains the most profitable trade in the community. As you walk through the town, you'll see the red material everywhere.

Surrounding the city, there are many attractions, including old churches, ancient underground cities and cave houses that offer a unique insight into life here over the centuries.

Address: Avanos, Nevşehir, Turkey

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### **Göreme**

11:30 to 12:15

45 minutes

On the outskirts of the charming village of Goreme, monasteries stand side-by-side in a hand-hewn complex, centred by a church.

As you walk through the passages you'll be encompassed by vast murals that are filled with vibrant colours, igniting the sandstone walls. Dating back to the Seljuk period, there are 11 structures in total, including the nunnery, interconnected by simply being from the same rock face.

Address: Merkez, Goreme Open Air Museum, Müze Caddesi, Göreme Belediyesi/Nevşehir Merkez/Nevşehir, Turkey

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### **Esentepe Panoramic Viewpoint**

13:00 to 13:45

45 minutes

Located between the small towns of Goreme and Uchisar, the panoramic viewpoint of Esentepe is a regular stop for many that are on an excursion around Cappadocia.

From the viewpoint you can observe the incredible landscape formed from solidified lava streams that date back to the Neocene period, resulting in an otherworldly lunar-like landscape.

Esentepe looks over the Pigeon Valley, and on a clear day, you might even catch a glimpse of Mount Erciyes in the distance. Around the viewpoint, you'll find evil eyes and small lanterns that hang off trees, and some refreshment shops that

serve some food and drink.

Address: 50180 Göreme/Nevşehir Merkez/Nevşehir, Turkey



### Uchisar Castle

14:00 to 15:15

1 hour 15 minutes

Standing proudly at the highest point of Cappadocia, Uchisar Castle is a unique landmark of the town of its same name.

The unusually shaped castle is multilayered and features a plethora of internal connecting rooms connected by secret passages, tunnels and pathways. Nowadays the rooms are used for housing pigeons, as their droppings are valuable fertilisers for the orchards and vineyards.

What makes the castle truly special isn't just its construction, but it's spectacular views over the town and arid landscape below, as well as Mount Erciyes in the distance.

Address: Tekelli Mahallesi, 50240 Uçhisar Belediyesi/Nevşehir Merkez/Nevşehir, Turkey

## DAY 6: GUIDED SOUTH CAPPADOCIA TOUR

Saturday, 28 Sep 2024



This morning, after breakfast, you'll start the day on a privately-guided South Cappadocia tour and by hiking in the Rose Valley. You'll then continue to Cavusin one of the oldest settlements of Cappadocia, the underground city of Kaymakli and Ortahisar, with its unique castle. Next up, after lunch, you'll explore the fascinating Kaymakli Underground City and your final stop will be at Ortahisar, a small town home to a unique jagged castle which has become an iconic landmark.

🍳 Breakfast.



### Private Driver

08:30 to 15:30

From: Cappadocia

To: Cappadocia

Today, you'll embark on a privately-guided South Cappadocia tour in a private car.



### Rose Valley

09:00 to 10:30

1 hour 30 minutes

One of the most unique areas of Cappadocia, Rose Valley is made up of a fairytale-like landscape of rock formations and sharp ridges that have been formed over thousands of years. What makes the panorama even more special is the minerals of the sandstone have a pink tinge, which gives it an ethereal feel, especially during sunset.

Rose Valley is the perfect backdrop for some stunning hiking in Cappadocia, which is scattered with white rocks, rose-coloured canyons and sandstone formations. The hiking trail winds up and over the many hills with a moderate incline and provides incredible views along the way.

👤 guided

Address: 50180 Göreme/Nevşehir Merkez/Nevşehir, Turkey

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### Çavuşin

10:45 to 11:45

1 hour

Carved into the cliff-face, Cavusin is an ancient Greek cave village in Cappadocia that is one of the oldest settlements in the region.

Cavusin was abandoned in the 1950s following an earthquake, while much of the village was destroyed, forcing people to relocate, a lot of the village remains intact to walk around, some of which have been turned into shops, restaurants and hotels.

Cavusin is widely known for its 5th century Church of John the Baptist, which is the oldest and largest church in the Cappadocia region. The church remains abandoned, while there are no current efforts to preserve it, some caution is greatly encouraged.

🗺️ guided

Address: Çavuşin, 50502 Çavuşin/Avanos/Nevşehir, Turkey

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### Kaymakli Underground City

12:45 to 13:45

1 hour

Located in the city of Capadoccia, Kaymakli underground city is one of the largest underground settlements in the region. Featuring a maze of caves, tunnels and rooms, the city dates back to the Hittites and Phrygians Period in B.C 3000. Using the soft volcanic rock of the area, the city was initially built to house citizens that could use the tunnels to protect themselves from any attacks.

Nowadays it is possible to visit 4 of the 8 floors in Kaymakli, and visitors can walk around the numerous living spaces, communal kitchens and stables that was once the home of 3,500 people. The caverns are spacious and well lit and make for a fascinating visit for those wanting to step back in time.

🗺️ guided

Address: Cami Kebir Mahallesi, yeraltı şehri, Belediye Cd., 50760 Kaymaklı/Nevşehir Merkez/Nevşehir, Turkey

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### Ortahisar

14:00 to 15:00

1 hour

Famous for its centrally located rock castle, Ortahisar is a small town in Cappadocia that still retains a rural feel despite its development in the past few years. Due to its interesting geological structure Ortahisar stores much of the area's fruit supply in cave dwellings, as it keeps the temperature the same in any season.

Stroll around Ortahisar's charming cobbled streets, the central square and worn stone-houses for a feel of its arcadian atmosphere. Although a handful of hotels and boutiques have started to pop up, Ortahisar still holds a rustic slow-paced feel and is a wonderful place to witness the beauty of old

Cappadocia.

🗺️ guided

Address: Ortahisar, 50650 Ortahisar/Ürgüp/Nevşehir, Turkey

## DAY 7: FLY FROM CAPPADOCIA TO ISTANBUL

Sunday, 29 Sep 2024



This morning, you'll check out of your hotel and travel to Kayseri Airport for your flight to Istanbul. Following a two-hour flight, you'll arrive in Istanbul and then be picked up by your driver and transferred to your hotel in the city. You'll then have the rest of the afternoon and evening to explore the capital city of Turkey on your own or relax at your hotel.

🍽️ Breakfast.



**Private Driver**  
09:00 to 10:00

From: Cappadocia  
To: Kayseri Erkilet Airport



**Plane**  
11:30 to 13:30

From: Kayseri Erkilet Airport  
To: Istanbul Airport



**Private Driver**  
14:00 to 14:30

From: Istanbul Airport  
To: Yasmak Sultan Hotel



**Yasmak Sultan Hotel**  
14:30 check-in  
10:00 check-out (02 Oct)  
3 nights

Centrally located in a world-renowned city with three thousand years of history, Yasmak Sultan Hotel boasts impeccable Turkish hospitality.

The hotel has all the modern amenities needed to make guests feel at home. Each of the different-sized rooms features tasteful decor with traditional Ottoman touches, modern furniture, functional design with a relaxing ambience.

Olive Anatolian Restaurant is located on the rooftop of the hotel. Pursue a trace of history just by looking at the panoramic view of Istanbul Peninsula while dining. Sultan Spa and Wellness Centre ensures you will not compromise your exercise routine while you are here. After your work-out, unwind with a dip in the pool, relax in the sauna, or enjoy the worldwide famous Turkish Bath.

Address: Hoca Paşa, Yasmak Sultan Hotel, Ebussuud Caddesi, Fatih/Istanbul, Turkey



**Istanbul**  
15:00 to 18:00  
3 hours

Visiting Istanbul is nothing short of an extraordinary cultural experience. Due to its strategic location, it's east meets west theme permeates every corner of the city.

Straddling the line between two continents, Istanbul has passed through many conquerors - from the Greeks to the

Ottomans, not to mention its important location on the Silk Road that joined Europe to Asia. The city's diverse history thus has given it its fascinating edge in more modern times.

There are so many factors that make the city appealing it would be hard to choose just one. From its endless list of minarets to its mosaic-adorned Byzantine churches to its famously hospitable people, a trip to Istanbul is on to remember for most.

Must-see sights in the city include the Sultan Ahmed Mosque (also known as the Blue Mosque), Hagia Sophia, considered one of the most beautiful buildings in the world and the Grand Bazaar, a chaotic web of 60 streets selling anything from carpets to jewellery to leather.

+ Optional Activity

Address: Istanbul, Turkey

## DAY 8: GUIDED TOUR OF ISTANBUL

Monday, 30 Sep 2024



Today, you'll have a guided day tour of the city, including lunch. Start off with the UNESCO World Heritage-listed, Old Istanbul. Visit the Blue Mosque, Grand Bazaar and the Byzantine Hippodrome, where emperors once saw chariot races. You'll then go to the Hagia Sophia museum, a place of worship for 900 years, and finish the day at the lavishly appointed Topkapi Palace.

🍴 Breakfast.



### Istanbul City Tour

09:00 to 15:00

6 hours

Meet your guide today for a full day tour in Istanbul. The world's only city straddling two continents, the city of Istanbul dates back to antiquity. Its grand monuments bear testament to the ancient empires that made it their capital.

Your day of sightseeing includes visits to the magnificent Blue Mosque and Byzantine Hippodrome, known as Sultanahmet Square. Enjoy lunch in a local restaurant in the old city with the best local dishes near the historical sites.

Other highlights are St Sophia Basilica, the former cathedral nearly 1,500 years old and Topkapi Palace, once the home of Sultans and now housing Ottoman Empire treasures. Finish the day exploring the bustling Grand Bazaar.

🗣️ guided

Address: Istanbul, Turkey



### Sultan Ahmed Mosque

09:45 to 10:30

45 minutes

Commonly known as the Blue Mosque, the Sultan Ahmed Mosque is a popular tourist site in Istanbul which continues to function as a mosque. It was constructed between 1609 and

1616 during the rule of Sultan Ahmed I hence the name; the mosque contains the sultan's tomb.

The Blue Mosque stands out over Istanbul, its central dome being 23.5 metres in diameter and 43 metres high, surrounded by several smaller domes giving it a square shape. It was designed as a show of strength and to compliment the Hagia Sophia, another popular tourist site in Istanbul.

Its name 'the Blue Mosque' was given to it due to the 20,000 ceramic Iznik tiles, traditional tiles made in Turkey and known for their turquoise and red patterns, that decorate the interior which is lit by 260 windows.

The mosque was built with six minarets whereas most of the city's other mosques only had 4 minarets. This misunderstanding between the architect and the sultan caused a huge uproar as the only other mosque with six minarets was the prophet's in Mecca. The sultan solved this problem by ordering a seventh minaret to be added to the prophet's mosque in Mecca.

👤 guided

Address: Sultan Ahmet Mahallesi, Atmeydanı Cd. No:7, 34122 Fatih/Istanbul, Turkey



### **Grand Bazaar**

11:00 to 11:30  
30 minutes

As one of the oldest and largest covered markets in the entire world its no wonder that 250,000-400,000 people visit the Grand Bazaar every day. The construction of this bazaar began during the Ottoman period in 1455 and is situated on the crossroads of some very important trade routes in Istanbul.

Bazaars have been a longstanding feature of Turkish culture filled with all types of items from sellers from all over the world. Today, this tradition continues and the Grand Bazaar continues to thrive along with many other bazaars and markets within the city of Istanbul.

Originally consisting of two separate warehouses, the Grand Bazaar grew to the point where a domed roof was built to connect the two buildings together. Today, the bazaar covers an area of 33,000 square metres home to over 3,000 shops, several inns, water fountains, wells, a police station, two mosques and many cafes and restaurants.

For a first-time visitor, this matrix of shops with over 22 entrances can be a little overwhelming at first, but soon the market become familiar and you start to see how it is arranged on a grid plan with shops grouping themselves into what they sell.

👤 guided

Address: Beyazıt Mh., 34126 Fatih/İstanbul, Turkey

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### Hippodrome of Constantinople

11:45 to 12:15

30 minutes

The Hippodrome of Constantinople was a circus used for sporting including blood sports, chariot racing and horse racing. The ancient emperors loved nothing more than spending their afternoon at the chariot racing, the Hippodrome of Constantinople was the social centre of ancient Istanbul.

The Hippodrome was built in 203 AD when the emperor at the time rebuilt the city of Byzantium and expanded its walls, building the Hippodrome of Constantinople at the same time. Its stands were capable of fitting over 100,00 spectators in them. The Hippodrome was the backdrop to many a political drama and unfortunately underwent significant damage during these periods.

The city of Constantinople was attacked during the Fourth Crusade and the Hippodrome was looted leaving it in despair. Following this attack in the 1400s, the Hippodrome was left to rot and occasionally used as a stone resource to build other monuments in the city. Today, it is more commonly known as a square named Sultanahmet Meydanı situated in the centre of Istanbul with many of the original ruins still remaining.

🗣️ guided

Address: Binbirdirek Mh., Sultan Ahmet Parkı, 34122 Fatih/İstanbul, Turkey

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### Hagia Sophia

13:00 to 13:30

30 minutes

The Hagia Sophia is an important monument and a spectacular example of the architecture of the Byzantine and Ottoman empires. Istanbul is a city that hosted many great empires during its history and the Hagia Sophia stands testament to the perfect combination of cultures under one dome.

Now over 1,480 years old, the Hagia Sophia stood for almost a millennium as a cathedral in the heart of Istanbul's Sultanahmet district. In 1453, the Muslim army breached its walls and converted it into an imperial mosque which served under the Ottoman rule for almost five centuries.

For the last 80 years, the Hagia Sophia has been an important museum showing the characteristics of two very different cultures. Today, it stands at the centre of an ongoing controversy as the Turks call for it to be converted back into a Mosque from a museum.

🗣️ guided

Address: Cankurtaran Mh., Soğuk Çeşme Sk. No:16, 34122 Fatih/İstanbul, Turkey



## Topkapi Palace

14:00 to 14:30

30 minutes

Now a large museum in Istanbul, Topkapi Palace once served as the main residence and headquarters of the Ottoman sultans during the 15th century. Palace construction began in 1459 and was originally called the 'new palace' to differentiate it from the palace in Beyazit Square.

It was expanded throughout the centuries and renovated in 1509 and 1665 due to an earthquake and fire respectively. As well as four courtyards and many small buildings, the palace contained a harem where the sultan's family lived. After the 17th century, the palace lost its importance and the sultans moved the court to the Dolmabahce Palace.

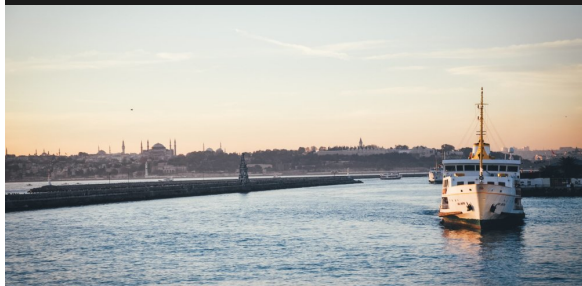
During the early 20th century, the Topkapi Palace was turned into a museum in which visitors can explore the most important rooms and chambers including the Ottoman harem and the treasury. The museum houses many artefacts from the Ottoman period including clothing, weapons, armour, religious relics and Topkapi manuscripts. It was added to the UNESCO World Heritage Sites in 1985.

🗣️ guided

Address: Cankurtaran Mh., 34122 Fatih/Istanbul, Turkey

## DAY 9: MORNING BOSPHORUS CRUISE & FREE TIME TO EXPLORE ISTANBUL

Tuesday, 01 Oct 2024



This morning, you will embark on a half-day cruise around the Bosphorus, a natural strait that separates Europe and Asia. On the cruise, you'll witness the dramatic sights that line the Bosphorus' wooded shores, from mosques to bridges to fortresses. You'll finish the cruise around midday and enjoy an afternoon at leisure in the city. A suggestion is to experience a traditional Turkish Bath in the Old City. We have a farewell dinner at a restaurant nearby your hotel.

🍴 Breakfast and dinner.



## Bosphorus Cruise

08:00 to 13:00

5 hours

Begin your half-day tour today with a brief visit to the 17th century Spice Bazaar, one of Istanbul's most colourful, bustling attractions. Then, you will embark on an unforgettable cruise along the Bosphorus, the majestic strait that runs through Istanbul, linking Europe and Asia.

From the cruise boat, you'll see the dramatic sights lining the Bosphorus' wooded shores: mosques, a bridge that for a time was the world's longest and Rumeli Hisari, a massive fortress built by Mehmet the Conqueror in just three months as he prepared to take Istanbul.

Other noteworthy sights on this tour are the 19th-century mansions of the Ottoman elite and the Sultans' fanciful gingerbread palaces and hunting lodges.



Address: Bosphorus, Turkey

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### **Bosphorus**

09:00 to 10:00

1 hour

An incredibly strategic waterway, the Bosphorus is a natural strait that connects the Sea of Marmara and the Black Sea, separating the continents of Europe and Asia.

Spanning 32 kilometres both in a northern and southern direction, this inundated valley runs through the heart of Istanbul with 3 suspension bridges crossing over it.

The best way to enjoy the Bosphorus is on a boat cruise that explores its waterway or by visiting one of the many tea houses or restaurants that run along its shores.

Address: Bosphorus, Turkey

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### **15 July Martyrs Bridge (Bosphorus Bridge)**

11:00 to 12:00

1 hour

Far from any ordinary bridge, Bosphorus Bridge, officially known as 15 July Martyrs Bridge, is a bridge spanning the Bosphorus Strait and, more iconically, connecting the European and Asian sides of Istanbul.

Spanning 1560 metres, the Bosphorus Bridge was the fourth-longest suspension bridge in the world when it opened in 1973. Today, that place has fallen to the 21st-longest but it is still as iconic. In 2007, an LED lighting system called Color Kinetics was installed to enhance the bridge with a colourful light show every evening.

The bridge is the most famous landmark of Istanbul, Turkey's largest city.

Address: Kuzguncuk, 15 Temmuz Şehitler Köprüsü, Üsküdar/İstanbul, Turkey

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### **Istanbul**

14:00 to 18:00

4 hours

Visiting Istanbul is nothing short of an extraordinary cultural experience. Due to its strategic location, it's east meets west theme permeates every corner of the city.

Straddling the line between two continents, Istanbul has passed through many conquerors - from the Greeks to the Ottomans, not to mention its important location on the Silk Road that joined Europe to Asia. The city's diverse history thus has given it its fascinating edge in more modern times.

There are so many factors that make the city appealing it would be hard to choose just one. From its endless list of minarets to its mosaic-adorned Byzantine churches to its famously hospitable people, a trip to Istanbul is on to remember for most.

Must-see sights in the city include the Sultan Ahmed Mosque (also known as the Blue Mosque), Hagia Sophia, considered one of the most beautiful buildings in the world and the Grand

Bazaar, a chaotic web of 60 streets selling anything from carpets to jewellery to leather.

+ Optional Activity

Address: Istanbul, Turkey

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### **Beylerbeyi Palace**

14:30 to 15:30

1 hour

Beylerbeyi Palace is an impressive imperial residence that was built in the 1860s situated in the Üsküdar district in Istanbul. Originally commissioned by Sultan Abdülaziz to act as his summer residence the Beylerbeyi Palace does not skimp on its lavish details.

Often described as a miniature Dolmabahçe Palace, a large famous palace commissioned by Sultan Abdülmeçid, the Beylerbeyi Palace boasts 24 rooms, 6 halls and a hammam, which is a traditional Turkish bath.

The building facade is a beautiful display of white marble whilst the interior boasts crystal chandeliers, porcelain vases, elaborate twisting staircases and French clocks, making it quite the place to host parties for visiting dignitaries as it was often used for.

The palace has had many regal visitors over the centuries including the Empress Eugénie of France, and more recently the Duke and Duchess of Windsor.

+ Optional Activity

Address: Beylerbeyi Mahallesi, Abdullahağa Cd., 34676 Üsküdar/İstanbul, Turkey

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### **Spice Bazaar**

16:00 to 17:00

1 hour

The Spice Bazaar is one of the most famous covered shopping complexes in Istanbul, after the Grand Bazaar of course. A visit to Istanbul is not complete without visiting the beautifully atmospheric Spice Bazaar home to 85 stalls selling various spices, Turkish delight, sweets, jewellery, souvenirs, and dried fruits and nuts.

This bazaar is colourful, fun and fills your nostrils with its spices and scents as soon as you enter. Built in 1664, it is known in Turkish as Misir Carsisi or 'Egyptian Bazaar', as it was built using the revenues from the Ottoman eyalet, a primary administrative division of the Ottoman Empire, of Egypt in 1660.

The Spice Bazaar continues to be at the centre of the spice trade in Istanbul, however as tourism continues to grow, more and more spice shops are being replaced.

+ Optional Activity

Address: Rüstem Paşa Mahallesi, Erzak Ambarı Sok. No:92,

34116 Fatih/Istanbul, Turkey

**DAY 10: DEPARTURE FROM ISTANBUL!**

Wednesday, 02 Oct 2024



This morning, after breakfast, it is time to say goodbye to your Turkey vacation. You'll be transferred to the airport when you're ready.

🕒 Breakfast.



**Private Driver**

10:00 to 11:00

From: İstanbul

To: Istanbul Airport

You'll be transferred to the airport when you're ready.