

Costsaver: Wonders of Turkey

Day 1 - Arrive Istanbul

It's the city Napoleon said should be the capital of Earth and while it may not quite have reached that stature, Istanbul's history as the capital of two great empires has left an enviable legacy of art, architecture and culture. Where better to begin your journey across Turkey than in its capital, the gateway to the Orient? Arrive at your hotel and explore the city your way before meeting your Travel Director and fellow travelers for a glimpse into what lies ahead.

Accommodations: Aspen Hotel

Day 2 - Istanbul sightseeing and free time

Discover how centuries of Ottoman rule shaped the city's heritage as the meeting point between East and West when you join your Travel Director this morning for a guided sightseeing tour, including a visit to Hagia Sophia, once the leading church in Christendom, the Hippodrome and see the Blue Mosque. Later, you'll have some time to explore Istanbul your way or consider an Optional Experience to Topkapi Palace Museum, and a cruise on the Bosphorus, separating Europe and Asia.

Accommodations: Aspen Hotel

Meals: Breakfast

Day 3 - Istanbul – Ankara

Ramble past the colorful displays of lanterns, pottery and fabric as you wander through one of the world's oldest and largest covered markets, the Grand Bazaar. The scents of Turkish tea will linger long after you leave Istanbul, bound for Ankara. Arriving in the Turkish capital, you'll visit the Museum of Anatolian Civilisations, before an evening to do as you please.

Accommodations: New Park Hotel

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 4 - Ankara – Cappadocia

The hometown of the Hittites is under the spotlight this morning. Visit the Mausoleum of Ataturk, the founder and father of the Turkish Republic, then continue to the whimsical landscapes of Cappadocia and visit the underground city of Saratli. This evening you could join an Optional Experience with the Whirling Dervishes, watching them whirl around and around in remembrance of God.

Accommodations: Ramada by Wyndham

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 5 - Cappadocia sightseeing and free time

Cappadocia's fairy-tale chimneys take center stage this morning as you journey to Pasabagi and Red Valley. Visit a regional rug production center then enjoy an afternoon on your own amidst the fantasy landscapes left by Mother Nature in the ochre rock. An Optional Experience in Göreme reveals how Christians once worshipped in the many rock churches that remain to this day. This evening, dinner is served at your hotel.

Accommodations: Ramada by Wyndham

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 6 - Cappadocia – Konya – Pamukkale

First up is the ancient city of Konya, the final resting place of the Sufi philosopher Mevlana whose famous mausoleum you will visit before continuing to the cotton fortress of Pamukkale, home to mineral-rich thermal waters which cascade down snow-white travertine terraces.

Accommodations: Richmond Thermal

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 7 - Pamukkale – Hierapolis – Izmir

The ethereal white pools and terraces that cascade down surrounding cliffs are a sight to behold this morning as you see the ruins of the ancient Roman health spa of Hierapolis. Head west to the Aegean coastline, arriving in Izmir in time to spend some time exploring this pretty port town, with its lengthy promenade. Learn about its multicultural past, and its history as a Greek city. Consider joining an optional seafood dinner at a favorite local restaurant renowned for its stunning views.

Accommodations: Doubletree by Hilton Alsancak

Meals: Breakfast

Day 8 - Izmir Free Time

Today is free for you to enjoy at leisure or our Optional Experience could see you visit Ephesus, a 2,000-year-old site and home to the iconic Library of Celsus and Hadrian's Temple. Included in this experience is a visit to the stone cottage, where the Virgin Mary is said to have spent her final years before a lunch is a local restaurant.

Accommodations: Doubletree by Hilton Alsancak

Meals: Breakfast

Day 9 - Izmir - Pergamon - Troy - Çanakkale

Visit the ancient kingdom of Pergamon this morning, most notably its Asclepion Medical Center, which still bears the image of the snake-entwined staff that remains a symbol of medicine in modern times. Next on today's agenda is a visit to Troy, an ancient city that inspired Homer's tales about the wrath of Achilles and the siege of the same city, which was only broken through the clever construction of a wooden Trojan horse, a replica of which can still be seen today. Continue to Çanakkale later where dinner is served at your hotel this evening.

Accommodations: Büyük Truva Hotel Çanakkale

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 10 - Çanakkale - Gallipoli - Istanbul

A poignant start to the day sees you visit Gallipoli, where significant World War I battles were fought with heavy losses on both sides. You'll visit Anzac Cove, Lone Pine Cemetery and Chunuk Bair paying tribute to the brave soldiers who lost their lives in this relentless conflict. Later, return to Istanbul. As your journey through Turkey draws to a close, there's always time for one last Raki!

Accommodations: Aspen Hotel

Meals: Breakfast

Day 11 - Depart Istanbul

Your whirlwind encounter with the wonders of Turkey has come to an end. You've stood at the crossroads of East and West, trod in the footsteps of the ancients and admired ethereal landscapes that belong in a storybook. For now it's time to end this chapter with a heartfelt farewell to your newfound friends.

Meals: Breakfast