



The Occidental Tourist ~ A Turkish Delight

11 days / 10 nights

In the southeastern corner of Europe lies the Turkish Republic—a land of beauty, abundance, great cities, quaint villages, fertile mountain valleys, and azure seas. It is the home of the Turks, a proud people with a great heritage, a deep history, and a smile for every visitor.

Turkey is part of Europe, but it is hardly like the rest of Europe. It has a special place in world geography, history and commerce. For centuries, the fertile peninsula called Anatolia or Asia Minor, has been a land bridge linking Europe with Western Asia. In Istanbul you can actually walk across a great bridge from one continent to the other. For thousands of years people have migrated across this beautiful land, or have sailed along its shores. Many people have stopped to enjoy its natural beauty and wealth, and have left behind wonderful treasures of art and architecture.

Turkey's history starts in prehistoric times and includes many important events. Classical Hellenic culture and art was born on these shores and great men of philosophy, science and literature lived and worked here. Rome ruled Anatolia and the Romans built hundreds of great theatres. At Ephesus, Roman audiences listened to the sermons of St. Paul as he toured the Seven Churches of Asia. St. Paul was born in Tarsus, on Turkey's southern shore. The Virgin Mary lived her last years here in a small cottage near Ephesus, a fact confirmed by the Vatican and Pope John II, who personally visited this site.

Santa Claus, of all people, was born here! Yes, Saint Nick (Nicholas) actually began his fabled existence during Roman times as a bishop in a city on Turkey's south coast. He gave his first Christmas presents to the local young people. After his death he became a saint, and the Church of Saint Nicholas, in the town of Demre, celebrates his life and work.

Turkey has seen some amazing things over the centuries. Ancient Troy was the scene of a fabled bloody deceit. In medieval times, the Crusaders marched through Anatolia. They built romantic castles while carrying out their brutal campaigns. Constantinople was the seat of the Ottoman Empire's vast land holdings during more than 400 years of expansion. Thousands of young men lost their lives at Gallipoli during World War I as the Empire was in its own death throes.

Cross the bridge from the Western world you have always known to a land of mystery and romance. For thousands of years the Orient and the Occident have come together in Turkey, and in their coupling they have created wondrous works to be enjoyed today. Join us where the mysteries of the East, the beauties of nature, and the

pleasures of modern living are blended in fabulous ways rarely experienced by “The Occidental Tourist.”

ITINERARY IN BRIEF

Day one - Arrive at Istanbul Airport and transfer to the hotel + Welcome dinner at the hotel. We host a meeting with the group to explain about the country, the next days of tour and provide general information.

Day two - Breakfast and departure for a tour of Istanbul: We visit the Hagia Sophia Mosque, as well as Topkapi Palace and end the day at the Grand Bazaar (this is a walking tour). In the evening include a dinner at a traditional Ottoman. Overnight in Istanbul

Day three - Breakfast and departure for a tour of Istanbul Palaces: Boat tour through the Bosphorus to see the Fortress Rumelihisar, Ciragan Palace and Beylerbeyi Palace. The tour ends at the Eminönü District where we will board a vehicle and go to Dolmabahçe Palace for a visit. The next stop is the Spice Bazaar. At the end of the day we'll be back at the hotel for packing and relaxing. Overnight in Istanbul.

Day four - Early breakfast, check out and departure to the airport. We'll fly from Istanbul to Cappadocia. Our tour starts upon arrival at Kayseri airport. Magnificent Cappadocia: we visit Goreme Open Air Museum to see ancient cave churches and one of the most well preserved collections of frescoes from the early days of Christianity. From there we'll visit the Valley of Pasabaglari, home to the most beautiful fairy chimneys. The tour also includes a gastronomic experience at a traditional Anatolian house where we enjoy homemade Turkish food. We'll also visit Avanos town to see a pottery atelier and learn the ancient technique used by the Hittites to produce their ceramic artworks. Check in at the hotel by the end of the afternoon and dinner. Overnight in Cappadocia.

Day five - Hot air balloon flight at sunrise (optional) + Breakfast and departure to continue touring Cappadocia: We'll visit Derinkuyu underground city, the largest ancient multi-level city of its kind, big enough to have sheltered as many as 20.000 people together at some point. Our next stop is Ihlara Valley, a green canyon known as the oasis of Cappadocia. We'll do a 4 km hike through the valley and at the end we'll be back to the main region to visit a traditional carpet atelier and learn with local women, how to produce the famous handmade Turkish rugs. For lunch we'll have a classic Anatolian experience: Turkish street food. Our tour ends at a scenic Panorama where we enjoy a cup of Turkish coffee and a spectacular view. In the evening we will have a traditional valley dinner with belly dance performance and traditional music. Overnight in Cappadocia.

Day six - Early breakfast, check out and departure to Kayseri airport where we'll board a flight to Izmir. Arrival and transfer to Kusadasi. Check in, rest day and dinner at the hotel. Overnight in Kusadasi.

Day seven - Breakfast and departure for a tour of the ancient city of Ephesus. Its excavated remains reflect centuries of history, from classical Greece to the Roman Empire -- when it was the Mediterranean's main commercial center -- to the spread of Christianity. After visiting Ephesus we'll visit the Virgin Mary's house, where it is believed that she lived her last days together with St. John. Our lunch will be at Selcuk town and the tour ends at the archeological museum. Dinner at the hotel and Overnight in Kusadasi.

Day eight - Free day with an optional cruise to the Greek islands, departing from Kusadasi. Dinner at the hotel and overnight in Kusadasi.

Day nine - Breakfast, check out and departure to Izmir airport where we will board a flight to Istanbul. Arrival, transfer to the hotel, check in and rest day.

Day ten - Today we tour the Asian side of Istanbul, cruising past the Bosphorus bridge and visiting some of the most interesting attractions of the Anadolu Side such as Turkey's biggest mosque and the Kuzguncuk neighborhood, famous for its colorful mansions, traditional bakeries and beautiful cafes. Return to the hotel at the end of the day and prepare to celebrate at our special farewell dinner.

Day eleven - Breakfast, check out and departure to Istanbul Airport.