Abercrombie & Kent



ANCIENT WONDERS OF THE AEGEAN: TURKEY & GREECE

Embark on a journey around the ancient world as you discover its most renowned monuments and archaeological sites. Unpeel layers of history and witness the influences cast by successive civilisations and the cultural achievements made.

Tailor-Made Journeys, Suggested Itineraries

Europe, Turkey, Greece

12 days from AU$21,025 pp

Private

Journey Overview

Embark on a journey around the ancient world as you discover Turkey and Greece's most renowned monuments and archaeological sites. Unpeel layers of history and witness the influences cast by successive civilisations and the cultural achievements made. Wander through timeless landscapes drenched in sunshine and dine out on the fresh and simple flavours made famous throughout the Mediterranean.

Journey Highlights

- Trace the history of Istanbul through its Imperial, Byzantine and Ottoman periods
- Soak up the sun-kissed Turquoise Coast and its ancient monuments
- Combine scenery, flora, fauna and ancient history in the Koycegiz River Delta
- Discover the beautiful island of Rhodes, visiting the village of Lindos, known for its clifftop Acropolis
- Sample the mouth-watering flavours of Greece as you wander around marketplaces and delicatessens in Athens



Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive Istanbul, Turkey

Arrive in the city straddling two continents and transfer to your hotel overlooking one of the world's most important waterways — the Bosphorus strait.

Shangri-La Bosphorus

Day 2: Istanbul

Today's adventure focuses on Istanbul's imperial heritage which spans 1700 years. Begin at the timeless Hagia Sophia, one of the greatest surviving examples of Byzantine architecture. Built as a church in 360, it was converted to a mosque in 1453 and a museum in 1935. Next stop is the 6th century Basilica Cistern. Perhaps the most unusual structure in Istanbul, it was originally built by Constantine in the early 4th century as a water reservoir for the imperial palace. It covers more than two acres and holds 18 million gallons of water. Onwards to the Hippodrome, a colossal stadium for chariot races and equine competition, built by Emperor Severus in 200.

Visit Sinan's wonderful Mosque of Sokollu Mehmet Pasha, completed in 1560, then continue to the periphery of the ancient city to view the world's most impressive City Walls. Enclosing the seven hills of the city, the walls were constructed between 413 and 447 by Theodosius II, just in time to turn back Attila the Hun. Next, take a public ferry from the Golden Horn across the Bosphorus to the Asia side, and watch the magical silhouette of the domes and minarets as the ferry rides through Bosphorus breeze to what was once the ancient settlement of Chalcedon. Explore the extensive food market in Kadıkoy before returning by ferry to Besiktas.

Shangri-La Bosphorus | Meals: B

Day 3: Istanbul

This morning, explore Topkapi Palace which was the centre of Ottoman government and the court. There's plenty of time to wander around the breathtaking grounds, domes, porticos, terraces and great halls of the Palace, marvel at its exhibits of costumes, Chinaware, jewels and manuscripts. Gaze at its marble and tile covered walls, royal chambers and beautiful gardens while admiring the spectacular views across Istanbul.

After a brief visit to the Istanbul Archaeological Museums complex, continue to Karakoy Markets — one of the oldest of the city, bustling every day since the 5th century. Next, take the 'tunnel' up to explore the district of Pera, the present-day heart of Istanbul, stopping for a coffee at the fabled Pera Palace Hotel.

Shangri-La Bosphorus | Meals: B

Day 4: Istanbul

This morning, stop by Naval Museum to see the exquisite collection of imperial caiques of the Ottoman sultans. Next, continue to the 19th century Dolmabahce Palace, the largest and the finest example of the Ottoman New Baroque in the city. Edifying the dynastic cultural discontinuity in an impressive eclectic Baroque, its halls, chambers, furniture, gardens and baths are beyond comparison.

Venture into the northern reaches of the Bosphorus through quaint neighbourhoods that used to be fishing villages then discover Sadberk Hanim Museum, Turkey's first a privately-operated museum. The museum lies on two separate parts and showcases exhibitions of more than 20,000 pieces artifacts of Turkish and Islamic works and archaeological relics belonging to Prehistoric, Protohistoric, Neolithic, Mycenaean, Geometric, Archaic, Classical, Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, and Ottoman eras.

Next, take a private boat ride on the Bosphorus against the majestic skyline of Istanbul and watch the splendid mansions, Judas blossoms, forts and palaces. Created by a cataclysmic flood some 7700 years ago, the Strait connects the Black Sea with the Mediterranean and is one of the busiest waterways in the world.

Shangri-La Bosphorus | Meals: B

Day 5: Istanbul – Izmir – Ephesus – Bodrum

Transfer to Istanbul airport for your flight to Izmir then head directly to Ephesus. Step back thousands of years into Classical times as you wander the streets of this ancient site, one of the world's most impressive archaeological wonders. As far back as 6000 BC, the city was an important seaport during the Hittite Empire. It became the largest urban settlement in the eastern Mediterranean and a powerhouse of the ancient world. Later, roots of early Christianity were found here: a tomb, attributed to John of the Book of Revelations, St Paul preaching at Ephesus and a small hut said to be the place where the Virgin Mary spent the last years of her life.

Visit the site of the impressive Temple of Diana, considered one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, and gain privileged access to the Terrace Houses where the wealthy lived. These have been excavated to expose beautiful mosaic floors and frescoed walls, not usually open to the public. Time also to take a seat at the ancient Theatre, admire the Library of Celsus as well as the public baths, the Arcadian Way, Marble Street and more.

Head south towards Bodrum, stopping on the way to explore the remains of the Temple of Apollo at Didyma — amongst the most impressive from the Hellenistic period. Pause also at the Temple of Zeus at Euromos, one of the best-preserved temples from antiquity.

At the end of a long, but incredibly rewarding day, arrive at your chic and trendy hotel, The Marmara Bodrum, with stunning views across Bodrum Harbour.

The Marmara Bodrum | Meals: B

Day 6: Bodrum

Bodrum is a charming Aegean city with whitewashed buildings in the Greek island style and palm-lined streets. At its heart lies the marina and the waterfront which overflows with shops and restaurants. At one end of the harbour is an islet topped by the 15th century castle built by the Knights of St John. A large ancient theatre dominates the landscape and hundreds of 'gulets' (Turkish sailing boats) crowd the harbour. Your exploration here starts with a visit to the Bodrum Underwater Archaeology Museum, housed in the Castle of St Peter, where you will find an extensive collection of ancient amphorae, an astonishing assortment of ancient glassware and some fascinating shipwrecks, all found along the coast of southwest Turkey.

Enjoy an afternoon at leisure. Alternately, you may choose from a number of options to continue your explorations (at additional cost). Enjoy a hike to the ancient city of Pesada which will captivate you with its rich history, lush local flora and breathtaking panoramic views of the Aegean Sea. Or, head off on a 4x4 jeep safari to Sleep Valley, an area famous for its stunning scenery of mountains, rivers, lakes, forests and caves. You may also choose to tempt your tastebuds with a market visit and cooking class in the nearby village of Bitez.

The Marmara Bodrum | Meals: B

Day 7: Bodrum – Göcek

Travel east along the Turquoise Coast today to Göcek visiting Stratonicea along the way. This is one of the most beautiful ancient cities in southwestern Turkey, still inhabited until the 1960's. Meander along the Ottoman-era stone pavements to the Hellenistic gymnasium, the city walls, gates and Town Hall, theatre, temples and more. Pause for a breather in the nearby village of Bozuyuk and continue to the Koycegiz River Delta.

In Dalyan, take an African Queen-style boat ride through the river reed beds to once-mighty Caunos, one of the most memorable sites in southwestern Turkey. The city was founded as early as the 9th or 8th century BC and from the 5th century BC onwards it took on the characteristics of a Greek city, before becoming Romanised. Admire the unique rock-cut temple tombs high on the cliff-side, explore the ruins of what used to be a well-known seaport and a centre for the trade of salt, slaves, and dried figs and wander past fields of cotton, pomegranate, peach, apricot and olives. Stop at beautiful Iztuzu Beach where loggerhead turtles nest every summer and continue to the lovely port village of Göcek for the evening.

D Resort Göcek | Meals: B

Day 8: Göcek – Rhodes, Greece

Transfer to Fethiye port for your jet ferry ride to Rhodes, 'Island of the Knights'. Rhodes sits along the waters of the Mediterranean like a storybook, where the history of Greece overlooks the architecture of Venetian, Ottoman and Italian occupiers. A large castle wraps around the coastline near the harbour, with strong stone walls that continue to be an imposing figure against the bright blue of the water. The old town sits inside the belly of the castle, one of the oldest inhabited medieval towns in Europe.

On arrival, you are introduced by your local guide to the island's fascinating history on a walking tour of the old town. Dominated by the imposing castle, it is one of the best-preserved medieval settlements in the world and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Spend the afternoon at leisure.

Kokkini Porta Rossa | Meals: B

Day 9: Rhodes – Lindos – Rhodes

According to myth, Lindos was founded by the Dorians who arrived in about the 10th century BC. The location of Rhodes made it a natural meeting place between the Greeks and the Phoenicians and by the 8th century, Lindos was a major trading centre. This morning, explore the lovely village of Lindos, known for its cliff-top acropolis which features monumental 4th century gates and reliefs from around 280 BC. Admire the Doric Temple of Athena Lindia and the 14th century Castle of the Knights of St. John. Among the town's whitewashed buildings, seek out the Virgin Mary of Lindos Church for its 15th century frescoes. Another afternoon at leisure.

Kokkini Porta Rossa | Meals: B

Day 10: Rhodes – Athens

This morning, you are privately transferred to Rhodes Airport for your flight to Athens before immersing yourself in its ancient wonders. Join your guide as you stroll on foot through Plaka to the Athenian Acropolis which towers above the modern city. Explore the small and elegant temple of Athena Nike, the Propylaia, the monumental entrance gate, the Doric temple dedicated to Athena and the Erechtheion with its famous porch. From the western part of the Acropolis, breathe in the spectacular views of the city below.

Of utmost importance is the Parthenon, or the Temple of Virgin Athena who was pure in mind, heart and body – Wisdom Incarnate, an image of God instilled within, and an icon of Athena's attributes. It was designed to attract her spirit to the place and embody her presence. The Parthenon was part of an ambitious building campaign on the Acropolis that began around 450 BC.

During the past 2,500 years, this apotheosis of ancient Greek architecture has been rocked by earthquakes, set on fire, shattered by exploding gunpowder, looted for its stunning sculptures and defaced by misguided preservation efforts. Amazingly, the ancient Athenians built the Parthenon in just eight or nine years. Repairing it is taking a bit longer. The restoration project is now entering its 47th year as archaeologists, architects, civil engineers and craftsmen strive not simply to imitate the workmanship of the ancient Greeks but to recreate it.

Stroll down the pathway to visit the Acropolis Museum —a 25,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art museum opened in 2009. It houses the statues and monuments recovered from the Acropolis, including what remains in Greece of the Parthenon Marbles, which are ingeniously staged to recreate the experience of viewing them on the Parthenon.

Xenodocheio Milos | Meals: B

Day 11: Athens

Throughout antiquity, Athens was adorned with great public buildings, financed first by its citizens, and later with gifts from Hellenistic kings and Roman emperors. Nowhere is the history of Athens so richly illustrated as it is in the ancient Agora, situated at the foot of the Acropolis. Today, enjoy a guided visit to the Agora, once the commercial, political and religious centre of ancient Athens and the focal point of public life. It includes some of the most important monuments of Athens including the 5th century BC Temple of Hephaistos which remains standing largely intact, and the Altar of the Twelve Gods — a central milestone from which distances were measured.

Afterwards, join a local foodie on a ‘neighbourhood walk’ as you visit the Athens Central Market with colourful and fragrant food stalls run by animated food sellers, fishmongers and butchers vying for a sale. Browse through family-run delicatessens selling olive oil, cheeses, fresh herbs, local wine and Greek pastries, which you will have a chance to taste along the way. Stop for traditionally made delicacies including gyros, loukomades and baklava and enjoy sips of Greece’s strong and tasteful spirits. The afternoon is at leisure to explore on your own.

Xenodocheio Milos | Meals: B

Day 12: Depart Athens

Transfer to the airport for your departure flight.

Meals: B

Map


Istanbul
TURKEY
GREECE
Ephesus (via Izmir)
Athens
Bodrum
Göcek
Rhodes
CRETE
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
ARRIVE/DEPART
AIR
ROAD
FERRY

Accommodation

Shangri-La Bosphorus



The Shangri-La Bosphorus is a grand 19th-century palace cum luxury hotel in the heart of Istanbul, fronting the Bosporus Strait. This property is immediately recognisable by its distinctive façade. Prepare to be stunned by intricate arched windows, ornamental rows of pilasters and the elegant double cornice of this impressive edifice. The exceptional service begins the moment you step into the impressive foyer.

Throughout the hotel, window views showcase the picturesque waterfront and the glorious cityscape of Istanbul. The rooms and suites are expertly furnished with Ottoman designs and historic and contemporary artworks, complimented by good amounts of space and natural light.

Wind down by one of the two outdoor pools with cabanas and loungers with views to the shores of Asian Turkey. You will also find a large indoor pool at the highly commended spa. Four stunning restaurants offer the finest flavours of the Near East. Dine in the best outdoor viewing points and most sumptuous spaces within this palace hotel.

Why we like it

- A former palace surrounded by lavish gardens
- Impressive views of the waterfront and the city
- Ottoman style rooms with splendid artworks

- Fantastic choice of restaurants and pools

Kokkini Porta Rossa



Enter Kokkini Porta Rossa through its beautiful red doors. This wonderful boutique property has old world beauty and quality matched with modern touches and comforts and is perfectly situated in Rhodes Old Town.

The hotels name – meaning red door – was originally inspired by the Gate of St John, which is called ‘’Red Gate’’ in memory of the knights who lost their lives by defending the city.

This small luxury hotel hosts just six suites, each with unique décor but a shared warmth and welcoming atmosphere. Savour a multi-course breakfast, using organic, locally sourced produce with a Mediterranean twist. With an after-dinner open bar and a well-stocked mini bar in every suite, you’ll always be set for a sundowner. The deeply knowledgeable hosts will reveal historical facts and guide you through elements of Rhodes you’re unlikely to uncover on your own. Nikos and Angela are admirable ambassadors of philoxenia, the Greek notion of hospitality.

Dates & Pricing

From $21,025 per person twin share (low season) and from $23,069 per person twin share (high season). Solo travellers on request.

As this Tailor Made Journey can be personalised to your specific requirements, it is not available for online booking. Depending on your preferred dates and arrangements, final pricing will vary.

Please call A&K on 1300 851 800, send us a **booking enquiry** to book this journey or contact your travel advisor.

Abercrombie & Kent

Call Us Now on 1300 851 924 within Australia

Melbourne Office:

T: +61 (0)3 9536 1800
F: +61 (0) 3 9536 1805
E: contact@abercrombiekent.com.au

Address

Level 26 (North Tower)
80 Collins St
Melbourne, VIC, 3000

International:

New Zealand Call: 0800 441 638
Asia Call: 800 4747 7700