



TREASURES OF TURKEY

A melting pot of cultures, Turkey is fascinating and exotic. With a 10,000-year-old history and more than 40,000 ancient sites, it is one of the oldest continually inhabited regions in the world.

Tailor-Made Journeys, Suggested Itineraries



Europe, Turkey



10 days from AU\$18,615 pp



Private

Journey Overview

A melting pot of cultures, Turkey is fascinating and exotic. With a 10,000-year-old history and more than 40,000 ancient sites, it is one of the oldest continually inhabited regions in the world. Discover its rich history, culture and beautiful landscapes as you journey from the delights of Istanbul to Gallipoli and on down the Aegean coast exploring archaeological sites and into the interior to the magical fairy chimneys of Cappadocia.

Journey Highlights

- Discover the hidden underground world of Istanbul's fascinating Basilica Cistern
- See how the Ottoman Sultans and their families lived with a visit to Topkapi Palace
- Remember the fallen at WWI cemeteries at Gallipoli
- Marvel at the open-air museums and fairy chimneys of Cappadocia
- Explore the ruins of Ephesus, one of the best-preserved ancient cities in the world
- Stay in a boutique hotel carved into the rocky hillside



Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive Istanbul

Arrive into cosmopolitan Istanbul, the city straddling two continents, Europe and Asia. You are met on arrival and transferred to your hotel located in the fashionable Nisantasi residential and shopping district. Uniquely combining the historic architecture of an Art Deco building with innovative interior design, the hotel is within walking distance of many upscale fashion design houses, cafes and restaurants.

The remainder of the day is at leisure to settle in.

Park Hyatt Macka Palas

Day 2: Istanbul

Start by visiting the most important landmarks of the old city, including the amazing and inspiring 6th century Hagia Sofia, marvelling at the structure's imposing façade and towering vaulted ceilings. Continue on to the Basilica Cistern, a subterranean structure commissioned by Emperor Justinian and built in 532. The largest surviving Byzantine cistern in Istanbul, it was constructed using 336 columns, many of which were salvaged from ruined temples and feature fine carved capitals.

Transfer to the periphery of the old city to explore the city walls dating to various eras of the city's storied history, and stop by Eyub Shrine, located right by where the land walls meet the Golden Horn, a sacred site for all Muslims.

In the afternoon continue to the Galata and Karakoy districts before watching the sun set behind the magical domes and minarets as the ferry rides through the evening Bosphorus breeze to Kadikoy, ancient Chalcedon, to explore the market. A feast to all the senses.

Park Hyatt Macka Palas / Meals: B

Day 3: Istanbul

Topkapı is the subject of more colourful stories than most of the world's museums put together. The home of sultans, courtiers, concubines and eunuchs lived and worked here between the 15th and 19th centuries when it was the court of the Ottoman empire. A visit to the palace's opulent pavilions, jewel-filled Treasury and sprawling Harem gives a fascinating glimpse into their lives.

Afterwards, stop in at the incredible archaeological museum.

In the afternoon, explore the Dolmabahce Palace, the largest and the finest example of the Ottoman New Baroque in the city, a monument to Turkey's westernisation. Its halls, chambers, gardens and baths are beyond comparison. Exploring Dolmabahce will present the connecting link between the classic Ottoman tradition and modern Turkey. After a short stop at the Maritime Museum to see the amazing collection of incredible old royal barges, explore the chic Nişantasi district, boasting elegant boutiques and espresso bars, reflecting another of the city's thousand faces.

Park Hyatt Macka Palas / Meals: B

Day 4: Istanbul

The Ottoman Empire reached its zenith in the 16th century. The royalty and the elite competed in embellishing the capital with wonderful mosques, schools, bathhouses and fountains. This was their Golden Age, and the master architect of this age was Sinan (1491-1588), said to be the greatest master builder of all time. Today you explore the Age of Sinan in Istanbul's imperial mosques and bazaars.

Visit Suleymaniye Mosque which is undoubtedly the most dignified building in the city. Symbolising the Ottoman glory of the reign of Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent, Suleymaniye is a miracle created by the great architect. Visit the glorious Rustem Pasha Mosque, another architectural delight from the Ottoman era, known for its outstanding Iznik tiles. Savour the sights and smells of the Spice Market where you are encouraged to taste the local delicacies. The most dazzling of all the bazaars is the Grand Covered Bazaar, built in 1461, and in service ever since. It contains 3,500 shops employing more than 20,000 people all under one roof; an average of 450,000 walk-ins every day animate the beautifully painted arches and columns. Everything imaginable is for sale, gold and silver jewellery, rugs, carpets, antiques, tiles, leather, souvenirs, but just seeing and experiencing this mother of all bazaars is worth the trip.

In the late afternoon, you may return to your hotel to enjoy the remainder of the day at leisure, or you can choose to take a private cruise on the Bosphorus (additional cost) against the majestic skyline of Istanbul and watch the splendid mansions, Judas blossoms, forts and palaces pass by. Created by a cataclysmic flood some 7,700 years ago, the strait connects the Black Sea with the Mediterranean and is one of the busiest waterways in the world. The strategic importance of the passage has always been of enormous proportions and its feature of a long and deep harbour ('Golden Horn') gave reason for the creation of a city.

Park Hyatt Macka Palas / Meals: B

Day 5: Istanbul - Gallipoli - Troy - Yeşilyurt

Drive west to the Gallipoli Peninsula, site of the infamous World War I campaign which took place between 1915 and 1916. Time at Anzac Cove is certain to inspire emotion as you visit some of the impressively maintained Commonwealth military cemeteries including Lone Pine. Cross the elusive Dardanelles by car ferry and onwards to Troy, where excavations first began in the late 1800's.

The legend of the Trojan War fuelled the imagination of generations: the legendary heroes of the war dictated moral codes of nobility; Alexander the Great's troops carried a copy of 'the Iliad'; the Romans believed they came from Troy; medieval kings sought legitimacy by tracing their origins to Troy. Troy is probably the most enigmatic ancient ruin anywhere. Drive across the 'rolling plains of Troy', down great country roads, and spend the night in a wonderful village named Yeşilyurt on the slopes of Mt Ida where you stay at an attractive boutique hotel renovated out of stone houses of the village.

Manici Kasri Boutique / Meals: B

Day 6: Yeşilyurt - Izmir

Be dazzled by the archaeological delights on offer today. First to Assos, which was founded in the 7th century BC and was an important centre in Greek and Roman times. This idyllic site, with its view over the Aegean and Lesvos is spectacular. The city's ancient walls are among the best preserved in Turkey and the Temple of Athena (530 BC) is sure to impress. Below is the lovely fishing village of Behramkale.

Continue through olive groves past pebbly Aegean beaches and fertile agricultural land to the ancient ruins of Pergamum, a very special ancient city which came into being in a very special way. Unlike other city states, Pergamon was the capital of a mighty kingdom in the centuries between Alexander the Great and Augustus, whose kings were sophisticated men with a drive for art. The wealth from agriculture and the gold mines flowed into artistic creativity of the highest calibre. The site itself is fantastic perched on a 300-metre high hill above lush plains. On the top was the Royal City adorned by wonderful monuments, a large theatre, temples, altars, palaces and the renowned library of 200,000 scrolls, commanding a spectacular panorama. See the Asclepion, the large medical complex fusing sacred and secular practices where Galen worked his wonders. Continue to Izmir and your hotel. If time permits, venture into Izmir's Agora and bazaars. Izmir is Turkey's third largest city, but with all the charm of an Aegean settlement. It is a very ancient city, going back at least 5000 years, and is said to be the hometown of Homer. Life here is laid back and the locals enjoy a stroll along the waterside promenade ("Kordon") especially at sunset over the Aegean.

Swissotel Büyük Efes / Meals: B

Day 7: Izmir - Ephesus - Izmir

This morning explore Ephesus, the best-preserved classical city in the Eastern Mediterranean. Dating back to 6000 BC, it was a vast and important seaport during the Hittite Empire and one of the cities settled by the Ionians after they were driven out of Greece late in the second millennium BC by the Sea Peoples. The site was a centre of the cult of Cybele, the Anatolian fertility goddess, from at least the 13th century BC. The Ionians named her Artemis, made her the goddess of the hunt and the moon and built a sanctuary. It was the largest urban settlement in the Eastern Mediterranean and a powerhouse of the ancient world. Later, the roots of early Christianity were found here. Enjoy special access to the Terrace House excavations where beautiful mosaic floors and frescoed walls have been unearthed, followed by the museum and the Temple of Artemis. On Saturdays and Wednesdays, explore the weekly farmer's market of Selcuk.

Swissotel Büyük Efes / Meals: B

Day 8: Izmir - Cappadocia

Fly to Kayseri (via Istanbul) in central Turkey, to the remarkable area known as Cappadocia. Millennia-long volcanic activity followed by an on-going process of erosion and contraction of the volcanic remains into a soft porous stone named tuff, have together created a landscape 'more unique' than any other. The valleys of tuff filled with 'fairy chimneys' became, at the hands of expert carvers, cave dwellings, monasteries and chapels, cellar villages and more.

During your visit, explore one of the most extraordinary treasures of sacred art: the rock-carved churches of Goreme, now an 'open-air museum'. Some of the finest examples of ninth and tenth century Byzantine wall painting are to be found in the churches of Cappadocia. What survives at Goreme and other sites scattered about Cappadocia marks out the region's rock-cut churches and chapels as one of the greatest museums of medieval art in the world. Your visit will include the Dark Church – one that has been beautifully restored inside to its former stunning glory.

Argos in Cappadocia / Meals: B**Day 9: Cappadocia**

Once heart of the ancient Hittite Empire and later a strategic point on the Silk Road, Cappadocia has an incredible historical heritage. Today, visit another marvel of the region: the 'underground city' at Kaymakli. The enigmatic cellar villages, over 40 of which have been discovered empty, are among the wonders of Cappadocia. The extensive network of rock-carved subterranean tunnels and hallways, storage and sleeping cells, air shafts and chapels is over 40-metres deep. With your guide, you will follow an illuminated trail and descend 20-metres. The implicit purpose and the date of the construction of these 'underground cities' is a mystery to this day.

Later, visit Avanos, a town on the Red River, well known for its pottery. Visit a workshop and learn about this traditional craft; even try your hand at the wheel.

Argos in Cappadocia / Meals: B**Day 10: Depart Cappadocia**

Transfer to the airport for your onward flight.

Meals: B

Map



Accommodation

Park Hyatt Macka Palas



Set in one of the city's most sophisticated districts, Park Hyatt Istanbul occupies a glorious Art Deco building with a distinctively ornamental façade. On stepping inside, you are greeted by a grand entrance which promises exceptional services and facilities.

The central location also makes for wonderful views from the spacious rooms and suites. Gaze over the city skyline, full of ancient spires, or the Bosphorus which connects the continents of Europe and Asia. Each habitation features inspiring interior décor, comfortable furniture and your very own Turkish bath. The wine bar is an ambient spot for a peaceful evening, and there are two excellent restaurants on site. Enjoy authentic Turkish treats at the lounge and indulge yourself with Italian fine-dining at Galvin.

The local neighbourhood is renowned for its shopping and dining, and it's a great place to soak in the elegance of Istanbul. You're also within easy reach of Topkapi Palace, once the Ottoman seat of power, and the world-famous Hagia Sophia.

Why we like it

- Great access to Istanbul's best shops, restaurants and historic sites
- Each room has a traditional Turkish bath

- Two stunning restaurants offering Turkish and Italian cuisine
- Enjoy locally inspired spa recipes and treatments

Manici Kasri Boutique Hotel



Situated on the slopes of Mount Ida, boutique hotel Manici Kasri offers atmospheric accommodation in uniquely designed guest rooms. Set in lush gardens the hotel has its own private beach area, two restaurants and views of the surrounding forest.

Swissotel Büyük Efes



Set in expansive landscaped gardens and overlooking the Kordon on Turkey's Aegean Sea, the Swissotel Büyük Efes is Izmir's best. Accommodation is offered in 457 luxury rooms and suites. Celebrated Colombian artist, Fernando Botero's sculpture, "Man on Horse", stands at the entrance of the hotel and leads guests into a living, breathing gallery of more than 800 artistic masterpieces from around the world, from emerging Turkish artists to established names such as Rabarama, Lorenzo Quinn, Mike Berg and Anthony Gormley. A selection of traditional Turkish and contemporary cuisine is on offer plus Pürovel Spa&Sport for health and wellbeing.

Argos in Cappadocia



The Argos Hotel is set in the centre of Cappadocia, famous for its distinctive “fairy house” rock formations and ancient archaeological sites. Gaze out over enchanting churches, monasteries, mansions and the distant Cappadocia Plateau beyond.

Choose from stunning accommodation options including stone houses and mansion rooms. All are furnished with opulent antique rugs and blankets. Some even feature private cave pools. Your immediate atmosphere is steeped in the quaintness of local Turkish life. Your window views capture the open landscape in all its glory. Stroll through tunnels and gardens as you explore the hotel and discover its amenities.

Seki Restaurant showcases the culinary highlights of Cappadocia. Savour locally sourced ingredients and sample high-quality regional wines. Regular concerts are held in the serene atmosphere of Bazirhane, an ancient building with natural acoustics. Be sure to partake in hot air balloon rides, bird watching, hikes and historic adventures on this fabled landscape.

Why we like it

- Restored historic building with tunnels and caves
- Some rooms offer private cave pools
- Stunning quintessentially Cappadocian views
- Delightful locally sourced dining
- The wine cellar includes local and home-grown wines

Dates & Pricing

From \$18,615 per person twin share (low season) and from \$22,365 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.

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