

Ritzy Turkey 13 Days



Highlights:

- ★ **FREE UPGRADE** to higher end 5 star deluxe hotels or the best available ones in town including Ritz Carlton in Istanbul 
- ★ **FREE UPGRADE** meal plan with 7 special local flavor lunches/ dinners in different cities including Nusr-Et with Salt Bae 
- ★ **FREE GIVEAWAY** of two optional city tours (value U\$258/person)
- ★ **FREE GIVEAWAY** of Bosphorus cruise on private UTO VIP chartered vessel (value U\$99/person)
- ★ **FREE** Include Basilica Cistern, an underground reservoir in Istanbul as **complimentary from UTOvacation**
- ★ **FREE** Include the cable car ride in Pergamon as **complimentary from UTOvacation**
- ★ **Guarantee Stay** in Anatolian house cave hotel in Cappadocia
- ★ **Guarantee Stay** in thermal spring hotel in Pamukkale

- ★ All meals are covered for the entire trip
- ★ Visit 8 UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Sites 

Included:

1. Round-trip international flight
2. Hand-picked 5-star hotel accommodations
3. Sightseeing admission fees as listed on the agenda
4. Food as specified on the itinerary
5. Special cultural programs as specified in the schedule
6. Professional English speaking local tour expert
7. All tax and fuel surcharge

Excluded:

1. Travel insurance
2. Any personal expenses
3. Tour extensions and optional programs
4. Gratuity for tour guides and drivers
5. Single supplement fee: U\$2100





Day 1: Depart from USA/Canada

Breakfast: N/A | Lunch: N/A | Dinner: N/A

- On board international flight to Turkey.

Day 2: Istanbul Arrival

Breakfast: N/A | Lunch: N/A | Dinner: N/A

- Upon arrival, meet and greet then transfer to the hotel.
- Istanbul, the only city in the world that stretches across two continents, is the largest city in Turkey with a population of 20 million. Used to be the capital city for the Byzantine Empire, Latin Empire and Ottoman Empire, this ancient city has a long history, fascinating culture and gourmet food that attract visitors from all over the world.
- Rest up and get ready for your stoked itinerary tomorrow.

Remarks before tour starts:

- Conservative dress is recommended especially when visiting religious venues. No shorts or short skirts for ladies and bare shoulders/heads are better to be covered. Men are encouraged to choose long pants. Remove shoes when entering into the mosques.
- Ramadan is the holy month for the Islamic world and all Muslims have to fast from dawn to dusk without eating, drinking or smoking. Non-Muslims are not supposed to eat in public at this time.

Day 3: Istanbul

Breakfast: Yes | Lunch: Yes | Dinner: Yes

- Start off the day by visiting the UNESCO listed **Ancient Sultanahmet District** on the European side. **Sultan Ahmed Mosque**, also nicknamed the “Blue Mosque” owing to the blue glazed tiles the architects used for the decoration is a must-see sight. This massive construction is topped by over 30 domes and 6 minarets, big enough for housing 3500 pilgrims at the same time. Built between 1609 and 1616, the Blue Mosque mixed with Byzantine and Islamic styles is the city landmark building visible from across the **Bosphorus Strait**. Not far from here is the **Hagia Sophia**, a present-day museum and a 900-year-old Byzantine church as well as a 500-year-old Islam Mosque in the old time. When Muhammad II stepped in this grand cathedral in 1453AD, instead of ordering to smash the complex into pieces, he determined to modify the structure, kept St. Mary status, covered the Byzantine mural paintings with plaster and converted this Christian church to a Muslim mosque. Keep going to the **Egyptian Bazaar**, an ancient spice market and **Grand Bazaar**, one of the world largest and oldest markets featuring all kinds of commodities you can imagine. Walk around in the old town center at **Sultanahmet Square** where you could admire three remarkable historical remains: **Obelisk of Theodosius**, **Spiral Column** and **Constantine Column**. Last but not least, the final program today is the **Basilica Cistern** (Complimentary by UTO), an underground reservoir built in 532 AD for the water supply of the imperial palace. The accidental discovery of two upside down Medusa head sculptures has added more mystery and romance to this unique place which has appeared in many top-grossing movies.

- Special Dining**

- Overnight in Istanbul.





Day 4: Istanbul - Safranbolu

Breakfast: Yes | Lunch: Yes | Dinner: Yes

- Drive to Safranbolu (410km/256mi), once an important caravan station along the ancient Silk Road between the West and the East. This historical peaceful town, which was awarded UNESCO  World Heritage status, boasts its well preserved, red-roofed Ottoman architecture since the 13th century consisting of old mosques, old bath houses, old workshops and old stone-paving streets. Ascend to the top of **Hidirlik Hill** for a bird's eye view of Safranbolu and walk around the old town before an authentic Turkish dinner.

 **Optional Tour:** Enjoy a typical traditional Turkish bath for a relaxing evening U\$69/person

- Overnight in Safranbolu.

Day 5: Safranbolu - Ankara - Lake Tuz - Cappadocia

Breakfast: Yes | Lunch: Yes | Dinner: Yes

- Morning bus ride to the capital city Ankara (230km/140mi), the second largest city of Turkey. Upon arrival, go straight to **Anitkabir**, the Mausoleum of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Elected to be the first president in 1923, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk has been highly respected as the founder of the Republic of Turkey who had abolished the Sultan Monarchy of Ottoman Empire and brought the renaissance to modern Turkey by advocating and implementing a more secular state policy. There are 12 pairs of stone carved lion statues standing on both sides of the sacred walkway leading to the Grand Ceremonial Plaza, symbolizing the 24 Oghuz Turkic Tribes and adding solemn beauty to the whole tomb site. Depart for Cappadocia (330km/206mi), an area with unrivaled picture-perfect landform filled with imposing pillars, caves and valleys attracting world class filmmakers, photographers, newlyweds and hot air

balloon riders. On the way, make a brief stop at **Lake Tuz**, "Mirror of the Sky", an unusual pink color Salt Lake south of Ankara. Upon arrival at Cappadocia, enjoy this surreal region, the celebrated "*Most Moon-like Place on Earth*". Tonight, you are scheduled to join us for a unique dinner in the cave restaurant with a traditional folk-dance show and belly dance performance.

-  **Special Dining**
- Overnight in Cappadocia.

Day 6: Cappadocia

Breakfast: Yes | Lunch: Yes | Dinner: Yes

- We invite the early risers to participate in an unforgettable adventure (optional) by riding on a hot air balloon at sunrise time. Cappadocia is one of the top 3 world-famous destinations ideal for hot air balloon activity because of its breathtaking volcanic rock formations, unbeatable Moon-like terrain and epic history of legendary human settlement.

 **Optional Tour:** Morning hot air balloon ride U\$250/ person (U\$280/person or more if booking onsite subject to availability)

Remarks for hot air balloon experience:

- 1) We strongly suggest early booking as the demand is usually high and the availability is limited especially during busy seasons.
 - 2) The ride may be canceled any time depending on the weather conditions.
 - 3) Bring extra layers for the high-altitude chill and do not wear high heels.
 - 4) Follow safety instructions and keep the correct landing position.
 - 5) Participants are offered safety insurance by the reputable licensed service providers.
 - 6) Seniors above 60, kids under 5 or anyone with physical/health issues are not recommended for this activity.
- In the afternoon, you are scheduled to follow our guide to explore the UNESCO  listed **Goreme National Park**, a wide stretch of a rocky, water- and wind-eroded landscape



with cave churches and underground dwellings. Among the numerous valleys, rock towers, cliffs and peaks, **Guvercinlik Valley, Devrent Valley, Fairy Chimneys, Love Valley, Rose Valley, Pasabag** and **Three Beauties** are the most striking and picturesque ones. Around the 9th century AD, more Christians escaped to this remote and isolated place and settled down here to avoid the attacks from Arabs. People hewed out houses from the rocks and later added churches, markets, wineries and tunnels to create some huge interconnected communities. **Uçhisar Castle** was built on a steep slope of a 60-meter-high rock hill as a fortification functioned to ward off any invaders. The interior of the rock hill was unbelievably hollowed out to be served as a stronghold with water storage and food supply capable of supporting the warriors for months without any help from outside.

Optional Tour: 4X4 Jeep ride U\$69/person

- Take part in the heart-beating 4X4 jeep ride to explore more of this surreal territory.
- Overnight in Cappadocia.

Day 7: Cappadocia - Konya

Breakfast: Yes | Lunch: Yes | Dinner: Yes

- After breakfast, tour **Derinkuyu**, the famous 40-meter deep underground city built in the 7th century big enough for 15,000 people to survive at the same time. Then drive to Konya (270km/168mi), one of the oldest cities in central Turkey. Formerly the capital of the Anatolian Seljuk Sultanate as well as the pilgrimage site for Sufis until now, Konya was a key city in Turkish history. Proceed to the iconic **Mevlana Museum** with a striking green conical dome on top. This is also a mausoleum built to commemorate the 13th-century philosopher, poet, scholar and mystic Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi who founded the Mevlevi Order (Whirling Dervishes).
- Back to the hotel for a restful evening or take part in the optional UNESCO listed **Sufi Whirling Dervishes**

performance which has 800 years of history in Turkey and dancers believe while they spin and meditate set to the music, their soul could escalate to a more harmonious level between heaven and earth, much closer to the Creator.

Optional Tour: Evening Whirling Dervishes Performance U\$69/person

- **Special Dining**
- Overnight stay in Konya.

Day 8: Konya - Pamukkale

Breakfast: Yes | Lunch: Yes | Dinner: Yes

- Depart for **Hierapolis** (390km/240mi), the “Holy City” at Pamukkale, the UNESCO listed historical Greco-Roman ruin site featuring theater, church, bath house and **Necropolis** atop the Pamukkale hot springs used as a thermal spa since 2nd century BC. The unique carbonate mineral left by the flowing water has granted another name to the area as “Cotton Castle” referring to the white limestone formations of the hot springs. Wrap up the day by stepping in the **Hierapolis Archaeology Museum** to feast your eyes with precious artifacts discovered from this region.

Special Dining

- Overnight stay in Pamukkale.

Day 9: Pamukkale - Kusadasi

Breakfast: Yes | Lunch: N/A | Dinner: Yes

- Today is free for you to explore Kusadasi on your own for its well-known beaches or you may wish to join us for a full day excursion to Ephesus with lunch included.

Optional Tour: Full day exploring Ephesus with lunch U\$129/person (Free giveaway)

- Hop on our bus and unlock an enriching day with our local tour expert. Ephesus, so called “the Pompeii in



"Turkey", is by far the biggest and best preserved ancient Greek archeological site worldwide with about 3000 years of history and designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Used to be the first large scale cosmopolitan city in Asia, Ephesus was one of the five major thriving and prosperous Roman cities described as "A city not Rome but excels Rome". To your surprise, the bathroom, music hall, hospital, court house and temple you can see today are just a small portion of the structures already unearthed while most are still buried underneath. The **Temple of Hadrian**, the world first **Water-flush Toilet**, the earliest **Joy House Advertising Sign**, the **Amphitheater** and world third largest **Celsus Library** are all landmarks indicating how sophisticated and metropolitan Ephesus was. Visit **Ephesus Museum** at tranquil Selcuk and admire the priceless antiquities excavated from the whole district. Swing by **House of Virgin Mary**, the pilgrimage place where St. Mary spent her last years on earth.

- **Special Dinings**
- Overnight in Kusadasi.

Day 10: Kusadasi - Pergamon -Troy - Canakkale

Breakfast: Yes | Lunch: Yes | Dinner: Yes

• Your first program today is to touch down on the UNESCO listed Pergamon (196km/120mi), an ancient Greek city to the northeast of Kusadasi dating back to the Pre-Hellenistic period. Among the numerous historical sites, the **Theater of Pergamon** on the **Upper Acropolis** is the most impressive one as it is one of the steepest old theaters in the whole world. Take the cable car ride to the top of the Upper Acropolis (Complimentary by UTO FREE) and reach the best observation point for you to enjoy this mesmerizing town. Continue to Troy (195km/120mi) an old Greek town close to the Dardanelles Strait where the legendary Trojan War used

to happen. Immortalized in the prominent poem Iliad and Odyssey by Homer, the epic story of this battle together with the image of **Troy Horse** are so well-known around the world today. The **Archaeological site of Troy** has been added to the UNESCO World Heritage list as it has 9 layers of remains under the ground of about 100ft/30m deep from different eras all the way from the Bronze Age to the Byzantine time, totalling around 3400 years. The stoneware, bone objects, bronzeware and pottery from this heritage area reveal how flourishing Troy was when it was a busy and prosperous sea port back then. The ruins of the city wall, theater, temple all demonstrate how advanced European civilization was in the early age.

- Overnight stay in Canakkale.

Day 11: Canakkale - Istanbul

Breakfast: Yes | Lunch: Yes | Dinner: Yes

- After breakfast, enjoy a scenic bus ride back to Istanbul (310km/195mi) and the rest of the day is at your leisure.
- Check in the hotel and relax or you are invited to join us for the optional evening dinner cruise on the Bosphorus, the dividing line between East and West.

Optional Tour: Night cruise on Bosphorus on private UTO VIP chartered vessel U\$99/person. (Free giveaway) FREE

- **Special Dinings**
- Overnight stay in Istanbul.

Day 12: Istanbul

Breakfast: Yes | Lunch: N/A | Dinner: Yes

- Today is free for you to design your own agenda.
- "*If the whole world is one country, the capital must be Istanbul*". Join us for an optional full day in-depth tour to learn more about this appealing place.





Optional Tour: Full day exploring Istanbul with lunch U\$169/person (Free giveaway)

• Morning sightseeing is at the famed **Topkapi Palace**. Initially constructed by Muhammad II and expanded by Suleiman I, this royal palace is a huge compound consisting of imperial residence, library, mosque, school, hospital, and garden, spacious enough for 4000 dwellers. There were as many as 30 sultans who lived and ruled the vast country from this palace. Move to the **New District** on the European side and visit the **Dolmabahce Palace**, also called the “*New Palace*”, where the last 6 sultans resided. Enlightened by the Louvre and inspired by Buckingham Palace, this complex was designed to be fancy, luxurious and extravagant on a man-made land in water, overlooking the **Golden Horn** and the **Sea of Marmara**. Stroll along the lively **Istiklal Avenue** connecting **Galata Tower** and **Taksim Square** lined with boutiques, book stores, bistros, high end restaurants, music pubs, art galleries, movie theaters and libraries. The elegant and charming architecture here in Classical, Gothic and Renaissance styles portray the golden era when this was all Genovese concession.

Special Dining

- Overnight stay in Istanbul.



Day 13: Depart for USA/Canada

Breakfast: Yes | Lunch: N/A | Dinner: N/A

- After breakfast, transfer to the airport and board the flight back to your home.

**BOOK
NOW!**

