

Timeless Turkey 9 Days

Highlights:

- ★ **Hand-picked 5-Star Hotel Accommodations**
- ★ Immerse yourself in the 1500-year-old Hagia Sophia and learn the splendid history of Turkey
- ★ Visit the Sultan Ahmed Mosque, the city landmark of Istanbul
- ★ Compare the Topkapi Palace and the Dolmabahce Palace to further understand the development of the country
- ★ Unwind the story of Fall of Constantinople by overlooking the Golden Horn and Bosphorus Strait
- ★ Tour the UNESCO site Goreme National Park, a wide stretch of Karst topography with cave churches and underground dwellings
- ★ Soar over the most Moon-like place on earth in a hot air balloon at Cappadocia
- ★ Visit 3 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: US\$700





Day 1: Depart for Turkey

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

- On board international flight to Istanbul.

Day 2: Istanbul Arrival

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

- Upon arrival, meet and greet then transfer to 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 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:

- 1) Conservative dress is recommended especially visiting the religious venues. No shorts or short skirts for ladies and bare shoulders/heads are better to be covered. Men are encouraged to choose the long pants. Remove shoes when entering into the mosques.
- 2) 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: N/A | Dinner: N/A

- Start off the day by visiting the UNESCO  listed **Ancient Sultanahmet District** on European side. **Sultan Ahmed Mosque**, also nicked named 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**.
- Come back to 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 with dinner and folk-dance performance U\$79/person**





Day 4: Istanbul

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

- 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

- Let us first take you to the **Basilica Cistern**, an underground reservoir built in 532AD 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. Next stop is 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 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 the 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 architectures here in Classical, Gothic and Renaissance styles portray the golden era when this was all Genovese concession.
- Overnight in Istanbul.

Day 5: Istanbul - Ankara

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

- Morning bus ride to the capital city Ankara(270mi/440km), 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 Ataturk 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 the 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. Your next program is the **Museum of Anatolian Civilization**, a veritable treasure trove full of archeological artifacts and cultural relics from excavation sites across the Anatolia. Ascend to **Ankara Castle** on top of the old town hill to gain a panoramic view of the city before checking in your hotel in the capital.

Day 6: Ankara - Lake Tuz - Cappadocia

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

- Depart for Cappadocia(200mi/330km), an area with unrivalled 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 picture stop at **Lake Tuz**, *"Mirror of the Sky"*, an unusual pink color Salt Lake south of Ankara. Upon arrival at Cappadocia, check in your hotel and enjoy your free afternoon at this surreal region, the celebrated *"Most Moon-like Place on Earth"*.
- After dinner, you are invited to join us for an optional traditional folk-dance show. The UNESCO  listed **Sufi Whirling Dervishes** 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\$49/person





Day 7: Cappadocia

Breakfast: Yes | Lunch: N/A | 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 cancelled 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 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 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 196ft/60m 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 to support the warriors for months without any help from outside.

- Back to the hotel for a restful evening

Day 8: Cappadocia - Istanbul

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

- After breakfast, enjoy a scenic bus ride back to Istanbul and relax for the day.

Day 9: Depart from Turkey

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

- Morning check out from your hotel and head to the airport for your onward flight.

**BOOK
NOW!**



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