

HARVARD

ALUMNI TRAVELS



LEGENDARY TURKEY

OCTOBER 13-27, 2023

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

ITINERARY HIGHLIGHTS: Istanbul, Ephesus, Turquoise Coast, Antalya

- Begin with four nights in magnificent Istanbul, where highlights include the Spice Market, the Blue Mosque, the Hagia Sofia, Topkapi Palace, and a private Bosphorus cruise.
- Discover Pergamum, one of Turkey's most spectacular ancient sites.
- Boarding a privately chartered yacht, take a day cruise along the "Turquoise Coast" visiting hidden sites and enjoying secluded coves.
- In Antalya, tour the acclaimed Archaeological Museum, then encounter Perge's outstanding Grecian ruins.

ACTIVITY LEVEL: 3

SCHEDULE BY DAY

B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, R=Reception, D=Dinner

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 13

DEPART U.S. FOR ISTANBUL, TURKEY

In the evening, depart the U.S. on flights to Istanbul.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 14

ARRIVE ISTANBUL

After arriving in Istanbul, meet the tour director and transfer to the hotel located near Taksim Square, the heart of modern Istanbul. Please note that as guests' arrival times may vary greatly, no group activities or meals have been planned for this day. You are free to explore the area around the hotel or simply relax after your overseas flights.

Dinner tonight is on your own.

Overnight: *Hilton Istanbul Bosphorus*

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 15

ISTANBUL

Spend your first day in Istanbul touring the legendary city. This morning, walk along the lively, pedestrian Istiklal Street, lined with boutiques, galleries, restaurants, and late Ottoman-era buildings.

Take a panoramic drive along the historic walls of Istanbul's Old City, before traveling to the Spice Bazaar area, overlooking Istanbul's Golden Horn (the main inlet feeding into the Bosphorus) to visit two landmark mosques: Rustem Pasha, a small, intimate mosque with exquisite Iznik tiles set in beautiful floral and geometric designs; and then the Mosque of Suleiman the Magnificent, the 16th-century imperial mosque which ranks as one of Istanbul's best-known sights. The mosque features a massive central dome and splendid tilework, and its four 250-foot minarets preside over the city.

From here, take a short walk to Istanbul's renowned Spice Bazaar, with exotic spices, nuts, and dried fruits from around the world. After lunch on your own, take a private cruise on the Bosphorus, one of the most strategically significant waterways in the ancient world, and still the dividing line between Europe and Asia.

In the evening enjoy a welcome dinner of traditional Turkish fare at a local restaurant.

Overnight: *Hilton Istanbul Bosphorus* (B, D)

MONDAY, OCTOBER 16 ISTANBUL

This morning, cross over Galata Bridge and tour Old Istanbul, home of splendid mosques and palaces. Visit the ancient Roman Hippodrome with its 3,500-year-old obelisk and continue on to the marvelous Blue Mosque, topped by six slender minarets. Inside is one of the world's great collections of blue Iznik tiles (20,000 of them), along with 260 stained glass windows.

Next, visit the renowned Museum of Turkish & Islamic Art housing artifacts from the Ottoman (14th to 20th centuries), Seljuk (11th to 13th centuries), and earlier periods beginning in the 8th century. In the restored Palace of Ibrahim Pasha, the museum displays both everyday items and ancient pieces of art including carvings of wood, glass, and stone.

After enjoying lunch together at a local restaurant, continue on to famed Hagia Sophia, which was the world's grandest Christian cathedral when it was built in 537 CE. It was converted into a mosque in the 15th century, then operated as a museum for nearly 100 years before being re-opened as a mosque last year.

Return to the hotel late this afternoon and enjoy the rest of the day at leisure. Dinner tonight is on your own.

Overnight: *Hilton Istanbul Bosphorus* (B, L)

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 17 ISTANBUL

This morning, visit Topkapi Palace, dramatically set on a promontory with remarkable views over the Bosphorus. This vast palace, the home of Ottoman sultans for 400 years, once housed as many as 4,000 royals, courtiers, and hangers-on. Among other magnificent artifacts on display here, see priceless paintings, jewel-encrusted swords, and delicate porcelains.

Next, visit the Basilica Cistern, the marble-columned underground chamber that provided water to Istanbul in antiquity. Fed by nearly 12 miles of aqueducts and supported by 336 columns, the cistern once held more than 21 million gallons of water and provides the setting for the climactic scene in Dan Brown's novel *Inferno*.

The next stop is the vast Grand Bazaar, one of the world's largest covered markets. Some 5,000 shops and stalls compete for shoppers' attention, selling jewelry, pottery, leather, Turkish delicacies, and much more. The remainder of the afternoon and evening is free for independent exploration. You have your choice of many excellent restaurants for lunch and dinner on your own.

Overnight: *Hilton Istanbul Bosphorus* (B)

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 18 ISTANBUL / GALLIPOLI / TROY / ASSOS

Early this morning, begin the full day of travel southward from Istanbul. Your first stop is Gallipoli, set along the northern coast of the Aegean Sea, where in 1915 Allied troops were defeated by the Turkish army led by Lieutenant-Colonel Mustafa Kemal, better known as Ataturk. Pay your respects to the large number of those who gave their lives here as you visit ANZAC Beach Cemetery.

Next, travel across the Straits of the Dardanelles to Troy, once believed to have existed only in Homer's epic poem. Heinrich Schliemann discovered the real Troy in the 1870s. Excavations have revealed the remnants of at least nine civilizations here

dating back 5,000 years. After an exploration of the ruins and relics here, continue on to Behramkale, ancient Assos, where you will spend the night.

Overnight: *Assos Eden Gardens (B, L, D)*

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 19 **ASSOS / PERGAMUM / KUSADASI**

This morning, depart for Pergamum, once one of the richest small kingdoms in Asia Minor and where one of the world's largest collections of books was housed. After stopping for lunch along the way, visit the magnificent Acropolis, which contains the ruins of Pergamum's acclaimed 200,000-volume library, so large it challenged the world's greatest library in Alexandria, Egypt. In fact, the Egyptians were so afraid that Pergamum would attract scholars away from Alexandria that they cut off the area's supply of papyrus, forcing the invention of *pergamem* (Latin for parchment) made from animal hides rather than papyrus reed.

Along with the library, the Acropolis boasts a great theater seating 10,000 and the marble-columned Temple of Trajan. Below the theater lie the ruins of the Temple of Dionysus and the Altar of Zeus in a marvelous setting shaded by evergreen trees. Much of Pergamum has been lovingly restored; it is now considered one of the premier ancient sites in Turkey.

After touring, travel to Kusadasi and check into the hotel, where the group dines together tonight.

Overnight: *Charisma Hotel (B, L, D)*

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20 **KUSADASI / EPHEBUS**

Today visit Ephesus, perhaps the world's best-preserved ancient city. In Roman times, Ephesus was the provincial capital of Asia, with a population of 250,000 at the height of its glory. An important Christian community arose here, and Ephesus was visited by St. Paul, who later wrote one of his epistles to the Ephesians. Perhaps its greatest claim to fame

is the fact that Ephesus once housed the Temple of Diana, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. Today the magnificently preserved ruins attract visitors from across the globe.

A full day of touring here includes the immense theater that holds 24,000 people and is still used today. Walk along the Sacred Way, where the rich once lived and where an ingenious water and sewer system was constructed beneath paving stones of marble. See the Temple of Hadrian, a Corinthian-style building with the head of Medusa on the porch to keep away evil spirits, and admire the Library of Celsus, which once held 12,000 ancient scrolls.

Following the visit of Ephesus proper, visit the acclaimed Terrace Houses, the "houses of the wealthy" located on the slopes of Bulbul Mountain. These hillside excavations provide a revealing look at family life during the Roman period.

Stop for a late lunch in the beautiful, rustic village of Sirince before returning to Izmir late this afternoon for an evening at leisure. From your well-located hotel you have your choice of several local restaurants all within a short walking distance.

Overnight: *Charisma Hotel (B, L)*

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21 **KUSADASI / EPHEBUS**

Return to Ephesus for a second day of touring, with visits to the Ephesus Museum and Basilica of St. John. Also stop at Sultankoy rug cooperative to see a demonstration of the ancient art of carpet weaving.

Break for a fresh and organic al-fresco lunch using ingredients from Sultankoy's own farm and orchards. Return to your hotel mid-afternoon.

Overnight: *Charisma Hotel (B, L, D)*

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 22 **KUSADASI / FETHIYE**

En route to Fethiye today, stop in Dalyan, to board a small skiff for a trip through an intriguing maze of channels. Reaching the Lake of Koycegiz, look out for the Lycian rock-cut tombs on the cliffs above. Dating to 350 BCE, the tombs number more than one thousand along Turkey's Mediterranean coast. Continue to the port town of Fethiye, known for its beautiful natural harbor.

Overnight: *Alesta Yacht Hotel (B, L, D)*

MONDAY, OCTOBER 23 **FETHIYE/CRUISING**

In the morning, take a coach to the Greek "ghost town" of Kayakoy, abandoned after WWI and now preserved as a historical monument.

Then board a private yacht for a Turquoise Coast "Blue Voyage" cruise along the stunning coastline that Antony is said to have given to Cleopatra as a wedding gift. Visit secluded coves (including Aquarium Cove, with its waters of brilliant blue and green), and have the opportunity to swim and snorkel, and enjoy lunch on board.

Overnight: *Alesta Yacht Hotel (B, L)*

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 24 **FETHIYE / ANTALYA**

Set out this morning on a scenic drive along the coastal road to Antalya, stopping along the way in Demre (ancient Myra). Here visit the 6th-century Church of St. Nicholas, known for its impressive frescoes, its significance to both Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox Christians, and as its namesake's inspiration for Santa Claus.

Travel on to the evocative seaside ruins of Phaselis, the ancient Greek and Roman port city, now a national park. Continue to Turkey's premier resort town of Antalya.

Overnight: *Akra Barut (B, L, D)*

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 25 **ANTALYA**

Today discover Antalya's charming old city (Kaleci) on a morning walking tour through its narrow streets and past historic buildings, mosques, and parks.

After lunch at a local restaurant, visit Antalya's acclaimed Archaeological Museum, housing priceless artifacts unearthed from sites throughout the region.

Overnight: *Akra Barut (B, L)*

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 26 **ANTALYA / PERGE**

In the morning, tour the ruins at Perge, an ancient Greek city once among the world's prettiest and most prosperous. Also visit the Duden Waterfalls, which tumble about 130 feet into the Mediterranean.

The afternoon is at leisure.

Tonight, celebrate your Turkish adventure over a farewell dinner at a local restaurant.

Overnight: *Akra Barut (B, D)*

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 27 **DEPART FOR U.S.**

Transfer to the airport early this morning for your connecting flight to the U.S. (B)

OPTIONAL EXTENSION: **CAPPADOCIA & KONYA** **OCTOBER 27-31, 2023**

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 27 **ANTALYA / KONYA**

Guests who are joining the optional extension to Cappadocia will have a motorcoach transfer via historic Konya.

Travel east of Antalya for a visit to the Theatre of Aspendos, the world's best-preserved Roman theatre. This 12,000-seat semicircular structure was built in 155 CE and provides an incredible opportunity to sit on the same stones as the ancient Greco-Roman citizens of this area once did.

Then head through the Taurus Mountains to historic Konya, enjoying lunch at a mountainside restaurant along the way. Upon arrival in Konya, we visit the Mevlana Museum, home of Turkey's renowned Whirling Dervishes, a mystic order whose members dance wildly to free themselves from earthly bondage. This museum is actually the mausoleum of Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Rumi (known as Rumi or Mevlana), a 13th-century Persian Sufi mystic whose legacy, influence, and poetry extend worldwide. For years, an order of dervishes had their lodge in this complex, until the building was converted to a museum in 1926. Now housing Rumi's sarcophagus, the museum also contains some of the mystic's writings, including the *Diwan-e Shams-e Tabrizi*, a 40,000-line collection of lyric poetry considered one of the finest works in Persian literature.

After checking into your hotel, dinner is on your own tonight.

Overnight: *Hilton Garden Inn (B, L)*

SATURDAY—MONDAY, OCTOBER 28-30

CAPPADOCIA

This morning, travel to Cappadocia in central Turkey. Renowned for its awe-inspiring natural rock formations, which were utilized for everything from housing to churches and even complete underground villages, Cappadocia is as magical today as it was when early farmers discovered the fertile powers of the volcanic ash that covered the area thousands of years ago. Cappadocia became a haven for the first Christians, who ultimately carved more than 3,000 churches in the porous rock, painting many of them inside with splendidly preserved scenes from the Old Testament.

For the next three days, explore more of this unique region. Tour the rock churches of the

Goreme Valley, including the open-air museum with 8th-century murals; and the refuge of Kaymakli, which was constructed over a period of centuries and provided a safe haven for Turks during times of war and conflict. A maze of tunnels reaching four stories deep, this underground city held as many as 3,000 people who were able to breathe thanks to a ventilation system that allowed fresh air into the complex structure.

Also visit the vast Zelve Valley complex of caves laced with dwellings, churches, and public spaces where villagers lived until just 50 years ago; and marvel at the fairy tale chimneys at Pasabag; and the troglodyte villages of Cavusin and Uchisar.

During a stop in the charming town of Avanos watch local craftspeople as they practice their arts, which include fashioning beautiful hand-colored pottery; and weaving rugs of natural colored wool, a regional specialty that has been perfected by the Turks over many hundreds of years and continues to be passed down from generation to generation.

Enjoy two dinners at your hotel during your time here, and one dinner with the group at a local restaurant.

For those who wish, an optional early morning balloon ride may be available on Thursday (at additional cost), space and weather-permitting. The ride offers an unparalleled view of the lunar-like landscape and may be reserved on-site during your stay. At the time of printing, the cost of the balloon ride is approximately \$300 per person.

Overnight: *Yunak Evleri Hotel (B, L, D)*

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 31

RETURN TO U.S.

Early this morning transfer to the airport for your connecting flight to the U.S. (B)