

**TUR****Featuring Four Night Gulet Cruise****12 days**

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**Day 1      *Arrival in Istanbul***

Today we arrive in Istanbul and transfer to our hotel.

"If one had but a single glance to give the world, one should gaze on Constantinople," marvelled Alphonse de Lamartine, the 19th century French writer and politician. New Rome, Byzantium, Constantinople, Istanbul; the legendary city has served as the capital of the legendary Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman Empires. Though no longer a capital, Istanbul is the largest city and the cosmopolitan heart of Turkey, full of marvels and startling contrasts.

Overnight in Istanbul.

**Day 2      *Istanbul: City Tour***

We start our day with a panoramic drive around the Golden Horn and the great walls of Constantinople. The first recorded bridge over the Golden Horn was built during the reign of Justinian the Great in the 6th century at the western end of the city, and today we will pass the famous Galata Bridge and the Ataturk Bridge. As we drive along the Byzantine city gates and walls we will view the towering minarets of Suleyman's Mosque and the Galata Tower before arriving in Sultanahmet Square.

We'll begin the walking component of today's tour at the legendary Blue Mosque, built between 1609 and 1616 by Mehmet Aga. The inside is covered by more than 20,000 Iznik tiles. At the adjacent Hippodrome you will see the remains of the great sports stadium where chariot races were held in Roman and Byzantine times. We will also see an Egyptian obelisk, a giant needle of stone carved for the Pharaoh Tutmoses III around 1500 BC and brought to Constantinople by the Byzantine Emperor Theodosius in AD 390.

We continue to the church of Agia Sophia (St Sophia), built by the Emperor Justinian in 548 BC. It was the largest church in the Christian world for nearly 1,000 years. When the Ottoman Turks conquered the city in 1435 one of the first things they did was to convert St Sophia into a mosque. Today it is a museum featuring many beautiful Christian mosaics.

Outside Agia Sophia we descend underground to the gigantic cisterns that contained the vast water supply that allowed Constantinople to withstand so many long sieges. Here the many columns are reflected in the water while classical music plays quietly.

Balance of the day at leisure.

Overnight in Istanbul.

Meal Plan: Breakfast

**Day 3      *Istanbul - Canakkale***

After breakfast we drive along the Sea of Marmara through the small European part of Turkey known as Thrace. Only 3% of Turkey is in Europe, the other 97% known as Anatolia, is in Asia. One of the fascinations of Turkey is the huge number of peoples and empires that have occupied this land.

Before leaving Europe we visit Gallipoli, Gelibolu in Turkish. This narrow, mountainous peninsula on the northwestern side of the Dardanelles has seen more than its share of history with countless civilizations having battled for control over these straits for over 3,000 years. This is the historic World War I battleground where Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, father of the Turkish Republic, first rose to

prominence. Under the direction of Winston Churchill, an unsuccessful naval and land campaign failed in its attempt to capture Gallipoli, open up the Dardanelles, and seize Constantinople. This battleground is now marked with over 30 memorials.

We then cross the Dardanelles waterway by ferry from Europe to Asia where we visit the ruins of Troy where Greek and Trojan heroes fought for the beautiful Helen. Troy had been accepted as a legendary city for ages, but very few people believed in its true existence. Heinrich Schliemann excavated here at his own expense in the 1870s and discovered the spot where a sophisticated settlement had existed for centuries. As you stand on the ancient hilltop you can look out over the plain of Troy and feel the famous cool north wind blowing from the Dardanelles.

Overnight in Canakkale.

Meal Plan: Breakfast

#### **Day 4**      ***Canakkale - Kusadasi***

We have an early start today, travelling down the rugged Aegean coast and inland to the typically Turkish rural town of Bergama. Here we visit the Akropolis and Askleion of the Roman city of Pergamon, said to be one of the first hospitals in the world. We see a carving of two snakes wrapped around a drinking cup (a modern symbol of the medical profession), and a theatre where the mentally disturbed would allegedly act out their emotions (a forerunner of today's psychoanalysis?).

Later we travel through Izmir, Turkey's most important port. Here the blind poet Homer was born when the city was known as Smyrna. Also here in 1922 the Turks expelled the invading Greeks from Turkish soil during the Turkish War of Independence.

We continue to Kusadasi, a beautiful port city with a small island fortress. The island, attached to the mainland, gives the city its name: Kusadasi, "The Island of Birds."

Overnight in Kusadasi.

Meal Plan: Breakfast

#### **Day 5**      ***Kusadasi & Ephesus***

This morning we visit Ephesus, one of the highlights of any visit to Turkey, where we have a guided tour of the site. During its Golden Age, the city was adorned with splendid monuments, theatres, agoras and libraries. The protectress of the city was the goddess Artemis whose temple, dating back to 1300 BC, was considered one of the Seven Wonders of the World. As a prosperous trade and banking centre, Ephesus had a cosmopolitan population. It has been recorded that St John brought the Virgin Mary to Ephesus where she spent her last days after the death of Christ. On our tour of Ephesus we see a 24,000 seat amphitheatre, the Library of Celsus, and the marble-paved Arcadian Way.

In addition to the main site of Ephesus we will visit the superb Ephesus Museum.

Overnight in Kusadasi.

Meal Plan: Breakfast

#### **Day 6**      ***Kusadasi - Bodrum***

We have a leisurely morning in Kusadasi before departing for Bodrum. Upon arrival in Bodrum, we suggest a visit to the Crusader Castle of St Peter which dominates Bodrum Bay. The castle was built by the Knights Hospitaller in the early 15th century. Today the castle houses an excellent museum, mainly dedicated to the artifacts retrieved from the many ancient shipwrecks discovered off the Turkish coast. Many of the pieces in the museum have been excavated from below the sea bed by teams of archaeologists from Texas's A&M University.

Overnight in Bodrum.

Meal Plan: Breakfast

**Day 7      *Bodrum - Kos, Greece - Bodrum***

Today we have a day trip to the Greek island of Kos (bring your passport!). Our ferry takes about 60 minutes. Kos is a beautiful island dotted with historical remains and steeped in Greek mythology. The island is also said to be the home to Hippocrates and there is a medical sanctuary dedicated to the Asklepios (God of medicine) just outside of Kos Town. Kos is the third largest island of the Dodecanese archipelago.

The largest town on the island is Kos Town. Built around a picturesque harbour, Kos Town is an intriguing mix of ancient and modern. There you can find a wide selection of shops selling pottery and textiles including rugs and 'goat bags' made from goat's wool.

You can also spend an afternoon soaking up the town's history down the narrow streets of the Old Quarter or relaxing on one of the two public beaches. People watching could also be considered one of the city's greatest activities. One of the most popular activities on Kos is to rent a bike and show yourself around. The island is almost flat and the motorists here are more sedate than their mainland brethren. Alternatively you can explore using the local bus system.

Return to Bodrum.

Overnight in Bodrum.

Meal Plan: Breakfast

**Day 8      *Bodrum - Marmaris - Gulet Cruise***

We drive to Marmaris where we board our comfortable 'gulet'. The boarding starts late afternoon from Marmaris Harbour. On the first day on the boat, we start with dinner and an overnight stay onboard moored in Marmaris port. Marmaris, which was built upon one of the antique Karian cities Phrygia, has been under the rule of many different civilizations. The most valuable work of art that you can see today is Marmaris Castle dating from 1577. There is also a mosque and an eight room caravanserai covered with arches from the Ottoman Period. The ruins of the ancient times lie on Asar Hill, a small hill located on the northern side of the city. Being one of the most visited places in Turkey, Marmaris has also a large marina and an active night life.

Overnight on gulet.

Meal Plan: Breakfast and Dinner

**Day 9      *Gulet Cruise***

After breakfast, we sail towards Ekincik Gulf. You enjoy the natural beauty of the coast as you cruise along the coast. A fishing village called Dalyan will be our final destination for today.

Overnight onboard the gulet in the Gulf of Ekincik.

Meal Plan: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

**Day 10      *Gulet Cruise***

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We depart early for our cruise to Gocek Gulf and will anchor at Adali Bay for breakfast. For lunch and a swimming break, we will go to Manastir Bay. Manastir Bay is known as Cleopatra Bay or Sunken Bath Bay due to the beautiful underwater ruins of an old bath. We will anchor at Tersane Island for dinner and our overnight halt. This naturally protected harbour was used as a shipyard during Byzantine and Ottoman times.

Overnight gulet cruise.

Meal Plan: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

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**Day 11      *Gulet Cruise - Fethiye - Istanbul***

After breakfast, we cruise to Kizil Island for lunch and a swimming break. Arrival in Fethiye at about 4.00pm this afternoon from where we drive to Dalaman airport and take an evening flight to Istanbul.

Overnight in Istanbul.

Meal Plan: Breakfast and Lunch

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**Day 12      *Departure***

Departure from Antalya.

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Meal Plan: Breakfast