



Legendary Türkiye

From Istanbul to the Turquoise Coast

Fascinating sights, scents, and sounds reign in this land where Europe and Asia meet. From Istanbul, magnificent “Empress of the World,” to ancient ruins, stunning landscapes, and the dramatic – and legendary – Turquoise Coast, Türkiye (formerly Turkey) engages and beguiles, offering us an unparalleled small group experience.

Itinerary

Created on Apr 1, 2025

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Day-by-Day Itinerary

DAY 1: Depart U.S. for Istanbul, Türkiye (formerly Turkey)

DAY 2: Arrive Istanbul

We arrive in Türkiye's cultural and spiritual heart today and transfer to our hotel located near Taksim Square, the heart of modern Istanbul. As guests' arrival times may vary greatly, we have no group activities or meals planned; we can explore the area surrounding our hotel, or simply relax. Dinner tonight is on our own.

DAY 3: Istanbul

We get our first real taste of this city straddling two continents today as we set out on a walking tour along lively pedestrian Istiklal Street, lined with boutiques, galleries, restaurants, and late Ottoman-era buildings. We see the magnificent 16th-century Suleymaniye mosque then walk along the shores of the Golden Horn. We'll visit intimate Rustem Pasha mosque, with its exquisite Iznik tiles, followed by the renowned Spice Market. After lunch on our own here, we take a private cruise on the Bosphorus, the waterway that separates Europe from Asia. This evening we take a short walk to a local restaurant for a welcome dinner of traditional Turkish fare.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 4: Istanbul

Today we encounter Old Istanbul, beginning with the ancient Roman Hippodrome, the 3,500-year-old obelisk brought from Egypt in 390 CE. Next we visit the Blue Mosque, with its 20,000 blue Iznik tiles and signature six minarets. We then visit the renowned Museum of Turkish & Islamic Art, housing priceless artifacts from the 8th to 20th centuries. After lunch at a local restaurant we continue on to Hagia Sophia, the 6th-century church that was Christendom's most important before becoming a mosque in the 15th century.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 5: Istanbul

This morning we tour splendid Topkapi, for 400 years the palace of Ottoman sultans that today ranks among the world's richest museums. We continue on to the Basilica Cistern, the marble-columned underground chamber that provided water to Istanbul in antiquity. Our next stop is the Grand Bazaar, the covered market housing some 5,000 shops along 60 "streets." The remainder of the day and evening is free for independent exploration.

Meals: Breakfast

DAY 6: Istanbul/Gallipoli/Canakkale

Leaving Istanbul this morning, we travel to the northern Aegean Coast for a brief visit to Gallipoli, haunting site of 31 Allied cemeteries from World War I. Then we ferry across the Dardanelles to Troy, once believed to exist only in Homer's epic poem until the present site was discovered in the 1870s. After touring here, we continue on to Canakkale, where we spend the night.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 7: Canakkale/Pergamum/Kusadasi

Today we explore one of Türkiye's most spectacular ancient sites: windswept Pergamum, a major power in the 3rd and 2nd centuries BCE, with a wealth of Hellenistic ruins. Then we continue on to Kusadasi.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 8: Kusadasi/Ephesus

Few ancient sites compare to Ephesus, the world's best-preserved classical city that we explore today. Dating to at least 1300 BCE, Ephesus was Asia Minor's largest metropolis and principal port. Our tour includes the Terrace Houses, the recently restored "houses of the rich," with their outstanding mosaic floors and frescoed walls. Then we enjoy lunch in the rustic village of Sirince.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 9: Kusadasi/Ephesus

We return to Ephesus to visit the Basilica of St. John, the 6th-century ruins that stand over what is believed to be the burial site of John the Apostle. Then we learn about Ephesus through the ages, as we tour the Ephesus Museum, housing treasures from the archaeological site. After lunch together, we stop at a carpet factory to watch a demonstration of this age-old craft.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 10: Kusadasi/Fethiye

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

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 11: Fethiye/Kayakoy/Cruising

This morning we coach to the Greek “ghost town” of Kayakoy, abandoned after WWI and now preserved as a historical monument. Then we board a private yacht for our Turquoise Coast “Blue Voyage” cruise along the stunning coastline that Antony is said to have given to Cleopatra as a wedding gift. We visit secluded coves (including Aquarium Cove, with its waters of brilliant blue and green), have the opportunity to swim and snorkel, and enjoy lunch on board.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 12: Fethiye/Antalya

We set out this morning on a scenic drive along the coastal road to Antalya, stopping along the way in Demre (ancient Myra). Here we see the Lycian-era rock tombs and Roman theatre. We 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. Following our visit here, we continue on to Türkiye’s premier resort town of Antalya.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 13: Antalya

We discover Antalya’s charming old city (Kaleici) on a morning walking tour through its narrow streets, past historic buildings, mosques, and parks. After lunch at a local restaurant, we visit the acclaimed Archaeological Museum, housing priceless artifacts unearthed from sites throughout the region.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 14: Antalya/Perge

This morning we tour the ruins at Perge, an ancient Greek city once among the world’s prettiest and most prosperous. We also visit the Duden Waterfalls, which tumble about 130 feet into the Mediterranean. Returning to our hotel, this afternoon is at leisure. Tonight, we celebrate our Turkish adventure over a farewell dinner together.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 15: Depart for U.S.

This morning we board an early flight for our return to the United States.

Meals: Breakfast

This tour itinerary was generated for Legendary Türkiye on Apr 1, 2025. Please visit the Legendary Türkiye page at <https://www.odysseys-unlimited.com/tours/asia-the-far-east/legendary-turkey/> for the latest and most accurate information.