



Travel with the World Affairs Council of Charlotte

Journey to Enchanted Turkey: Where the East Meets the West

April 24 – May 4, 2015 (11-Days)
 *2-night optional extension to Istanbul

- *International Airfare from Charlotte (and back) included
- *Domestic Airfare within Turkey is included

“Walk in the footsteps of Roman emperors and Ottoman sultans. Explore some of the world's greatest monuments. Bargain-hunt your way through a twisted warren of marketplace stalls, pausing to sip tea with a merchant. Inhale the apple-flavored smoke from a water pipe as you listen to the strains of exotic music. And enjoy meeting some of the planet's friendliest people, whether you're chatting with a fisherman on a bustling bridge, haggling for a carpet, learning about Islam from a peace-loving Muslim, or playing backgammon with a grizzled old Turk.” – Rick Steve’s Europe

- For questions or information regarding the trip, please contact LJ Stambuk, President & CEO of the World Affairs Council of Charlotte via email (Istambuk@worldaffairscharlotte.org) or call 704-687-7760.
- Please contact our office at 704-687-7762 to confirm your interest in traveling with the World Affairs Council of Charlotte as soon as possible.

Day 1: Friday, April 24, 2015 Charlotte/Munich

Depart from Charlotte-Douglas International Airport via Lufthansa at 6:45 P.M. direct to Munich. There will be a short layover in Munich before continuing on to Izmir.

Day 2: Saturday, April 25, 2015 Munich/Izmir

Arrive in Izmir at 2:45 p.m. Meet the professional guide in the arrival hall and transfer to your hotel.

“The grand port city of [Izmir](#), the third largest in [Turkey](#), is a proudly liberal, long-time center of commerce that has emerged as a smart alternative base for travel in the west of the country. Formerly the Greek city of Smyrna, Izmir lives by its seafront kordon (promenade), which, especially around leafy Alsancak, is as fetching and lively as any in the world.” [Click Here to Read More](#)

Travelers will be transported to the [Grand Efes Swissotel \(5-Star\)](#) to check-in and freshen up before the welcome dinner at the hotel. **COMPLIMENTARY DINNER WITH WINE**

Overnight at the hotel. Click [here](#) to view photo gallery of the Grand Efes Swissotel.



Photo: Izmir

Complimentary breakfast included.

*“More than anywhere else, the Greco-Roman world comes alive at Ephesus. After almost 150 years of excavation, the city's recovered and renovated structures have made **Ephesus** Europe's most complete classical metropolis – and that's with 82% of the city still to be unearthed.*

As capital of Roman Asia Minor, Ephesus was a vibrant city of over 250,000 inhabitants. Counting traders, sailors and pilgrims to the [Temple of Artemis](#), these numbers were even higher, meaning that in Ephesus one could encounter the full diversity of the Mediterranean world and its peoples.” [Click Here to Read More](#)

After breakfast, meet the professional guide in the hotel lobby at 9:00 a.m.

Travelers will tour the ancient site of [Ephesus](#), an ancient Greek city on the coast of Ionia, three kilometers southwest of present-day Selçuk in İzmir Province, Turkey So important and wealthy was Ephesus that its Temple of Artemis was the biggest on earth, and one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

Continue on to explore the Odeon Theatre, previously used for meetings of the Bouleia or the Senate. After that, the group will have the opportunity to view the [Temple of Hadrian](#), one of the main attractions at Ephesus, with its beautiful arches on the front façade and reliefs of Medusa, one of the Gorgon sisters and daughter of Phorkys and Keto, the children of Gaea (Earth) and Oceanus (Ocean). According to the belief of Ephesians, the Medusa head on the porch would protect the city from its enemies.

Tour the newly excavated [Terrace Houses](#) on the Curetes street which belonged to the wealthy in Ephesus. Many of the buildings were luxuriously furnished private homes with fountains and central heating. Part of the architectural designs included peristyles (courtyard) surrounded by rooms without windows and mosaics and frescoes of mythological scenes. Some of the frescoes were scenes from the comedies of Menander and the tragedies of Euripides, illustrating Grecian influence in the design.

Proceed to the [Celsus Library](#), one of the most beautiful structures and recognizable icons in this ancient city. The library, built in 117



Photo: Celsus Library



Photo: Terrace Houses



Photo: Great Theater



Photo: Medusa (Temple of Hadrian)

A.D., was commissioned by Gaius Julius Aquila as a mausoleum for his father, Gaius Julius Celsus Polemaeanus, the governor of the province of Asia.

The [Great Theater](#) was first constructed in the Hellenistic Period, during the 3rd century B.C. It's located on the slope of Panayir Hill, opposite the Harbor Street, and easily seen when entering from the south entrance to Ephesus. It is one of the most impressive buildings in Ephesus, with a seating capacity of 25,000. The theatre was used for concerts and plays, religious, political and philosophical discussions and gladiator and animal fights. The [Marble Road](#), that runs between the Library of Celsus and the theater is also part of the sacred walk way that leads past Panayirdagi to the Temple of Artemis.

INDEPENDENT LUNCH

Lunch: Recommended restaurant is the “Bizim Ev Restaurant” in Sirince Village

After lunch, travelers will have the unique opportunity to visit the [House of the Virgin](#), located in a nature park between Ephesus and Seljuk. It is believed to be the last residence of the Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus. The building was rediscovered in the late 19th century by Lazartis from Smyrna based on the vision of a German nun. The site is officially declared a shrine of the Roman Catholic Church and was visited by Pope Paul VI (1967), Pope John Paul II (1979) and Pope Benedict XVI (2007).

The tour will include a visit to the [Basilica of St. John](#), where the Apostle John was believed to have spent his final years in the region around Ephesus before his passing. Three hundred years after the death of St. John, a small chapel was constructed over the grave in the 4th century. The Church of St John was changed into a magnificent basilica during the reign of Justinian I.

Return to the hotel and enjoy the evening at leisure.

INDEPENDENT DINNER

Dinner: Recommended restaurant is the “Yengec Restaurant,” which serves fresh seafood near Izmir’s beautiful sea cordon

Overnight at [Swissotel Grand Efes \(5-Star\) in Izmir](#)



Photo: Marble Road



Photo: House of Virgin Mary



Photo: Ruins of Basilica



Photo: Swissotel Grand Efes

Complimentary breakfast included.

“The windswept ruins of Pergamum, which surround the modern town of Bergama, are among the most spectacular in Turkey. Pergamum was one of the world’s major powers, though it had only a relatively brief moment of glory, notably under the rule of Eumenes II (197 BC–159 BC), who built the city’s famous library. Of more lasting influence perhaps was the city’s Asklepiion, an ancient medical center that had its heyday under the renowned early physician, writer, and philosopher Galen (131 AD–210 AD). By then Pergamum was capital of the Roman province of Asia, which for centuries supplied the empire with great wealth.” ([Source: Fodor Travel](#))

After breakfast, meet the professional guide in the hotel lobby at 9:00 p.m. for an excursion to the ancient site of [Pergamum](#).

Pergamum existed approximately from 5th century B.C., but it became significant in the Hellenistic Age (323–30 B.C.), when it served as the residence of the Attalid dynasty.

Upon arrival, the group will tour the [Acropolis of Pergamum](#), a dramatic structure, perched atop a high, steep-sided hill to the northeast of the modern city center. The great temples and dramatic theater are visible from anywhere in the city, as they were meant to be. Pergamum was once famous throughout the known world as a seat of learning, scholarship and medicine.

Continue on to the [Library of Pergamum](#), built by Eumenes II, second in size only to the Library at Alexandria in Egypt. Pergamum’s library was said to have had 200,000 volumes. The size and quality of the collection was enhanced by the use of parchment, a leather writing material that was developed at Pergamum.

Before we stop for lunch, travelers will have the opportunity to view the [Temple of Trajan](#), which was built in the 2nd century A.D., in the Corinthian order as a tribute to Trajan, by his adopted son, Hadrian. Whether it stood southwest of Trajan's Column, where Santa Maria de Loreto now stands, or northwest of the column, where the 16th century Palazzo Valentini now stands, is still a matter of debate.

INDEPENDENT LUNCH



Photo: Pergamum



Photo: Asclepiion



Photo: Pergamum

Lunch: Recommended restaurant is the “Saglam Restaurant”

After lunch, visit [Asclepion](#), the greatest medical center of its time, rivaling and nearly overshadowing the Epidaurus in Greece. Founded by a man named Archias, the Asclepion of Pergamum became famous under Galen (131-210 AD), a local physician who pursued his medical studies in Greece and Alexandria (Egypt) before settling in the area as doctor to Pergamum's gladiators.

Return to the hotel and enjoy the evening at leisure.

INDEPENDENT DINNER

Dinner: Recommended restaurant is the “Tavaci Recep Usta,” which serves delightful Turkish cuisine

Overnight at [Swissotel Grand Efes \(5-Star\) in Izmir](#)

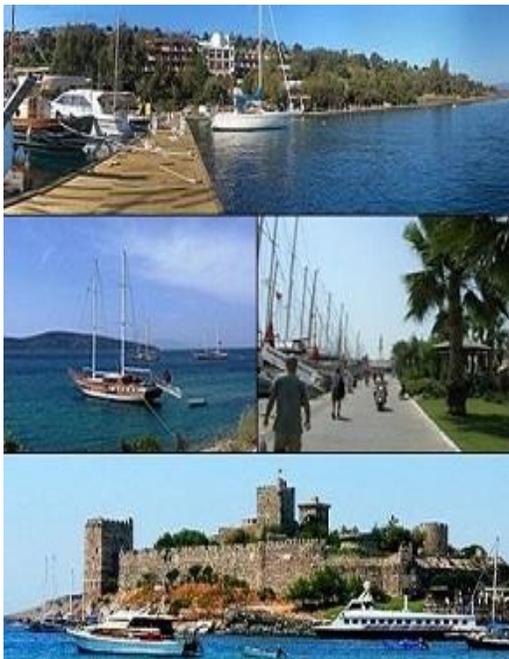


Photo: Sacred Asclepion Of Pergamum:

Day 5: Tuesday, April 28, 2015

Izmir/Bodrum

Complimentary breakfast included.



After breakfast, meet the professional guide in the hotel lobby at 9:00 a.m.

Travelers will be transported to [Bodrum](#) via charter bus. The trip will take approximately three hours.

Upon arrival in Bodrum, the group will check in at the [Marmara Hotel \(5-Star\)](#), which stands on the hilltop of Bodrum, one of Turkey’s premier resort cities, also considered the “new St. Tropez.”

INDEPENDENT LUNCH AND DINNER

Enjoy the afternoon at your leisure. Dinner is recommended at the hotel.

Overnight at [The Marmara Hotel \(5-Star\)](#) in Bodrum.

Click here to view the “[Marmara Hotel](#)” photo gallery

Complimentary breakfast included.

“More than any other Turkish seaside getaway, it (Bodrum) has an enigmatic elegance that pervades it, from the town's grand crowning castle and glittering marina to its flower-filled cafes and white-plastered backstreets. Even in the most hectic days of high summer, you can still find little corners of serenity, in the town and especially in its outlying coastal villages.” [Click Here to Read More](#)

After breakfast, meet the professional guide in the hotel lobby at 9:00 a.m. for a half-day of sightseeing.

You will see the collections from the [Museum of Underwater Archeology](#), located inside the castle. The museum, the most important of its kind in the world, contains treasures from a series of historic wrecks discovered along Turkey's southern shores. Mycenaean and Canaanite artifacts recovered from a 12th century B.C. wreck found off Cape Gelidonya (Antalya) in 1960 formed the original core of the museum. On display in the castle's Gothic Chapel is a full-scale reconstruction of a third of an Eastern Roman wreck from the 7th century A.D. You will also see incredible finds from the world's oldest known shipwreck, a 14th century B.C. vessel excavated off the coast of Uluburun.

In the castle, travelers will have the opportunity to tour the [Glasswreck Hall](#). During summer of 1977, the Institute of Nautical Archaeology (INA) along with the Bodrum Museum of Underwater Archaeology, excavated a medieval shipwreck at Serce Limani, a natural harbor on the southern Turkish coast. The ship had set sail in around 1025 A.D from the southern part of the Syrian coast then ruled by the Fatimid caliphs and was carrying a variety of cargo which included three tons of glass cullet in the form of raw glass and broken glassware. The glass cullet was being transported to some small glass factory located within the Byzantine Empire, most probably in either the Crimea or the lower Danube river region.

Continue on to the [Carian Princess](#) exhibit, which evokes the last days of the ancient greatness of Halicarnassus, the capital city of Caria and the site on which Bodrum's stands



Photo: Museum of Underwater Archeology



Photo: Glasswreck Hall



Photo: Part of Carian Princess exhibit

today. It is a reminder of the Hecatomnid dynasty that ruled Caria from 392 B.C. until the city fell to the Macedonian armies of Alexander the Great, a disaster from which it never recovered.

At the end of the half-day tour, travelers may explore the picturesque town of [Bodrum](#) at their leisure.

INDEPENDENT LUNCH AND DINNER

Dinner: Recommended restaurant is the “Kocadon Resurant,” which serves fresh seafood



Photo: Town of Bodrum

Overnight at the [Marmara Hotel \(5-Star\)](#) in Bodrum.

Day 7: Thursday, April 30, 2015

Bodrum/Kayseri/Capadocia

Complimentary breakfast included.

After your breakfast, meet the professional guide in the hotel lobby at 7:30 a.m. and transfer to Bodrum Airport for your flight **PC#4173** departing **Bodrum at 9:40 a.m.**

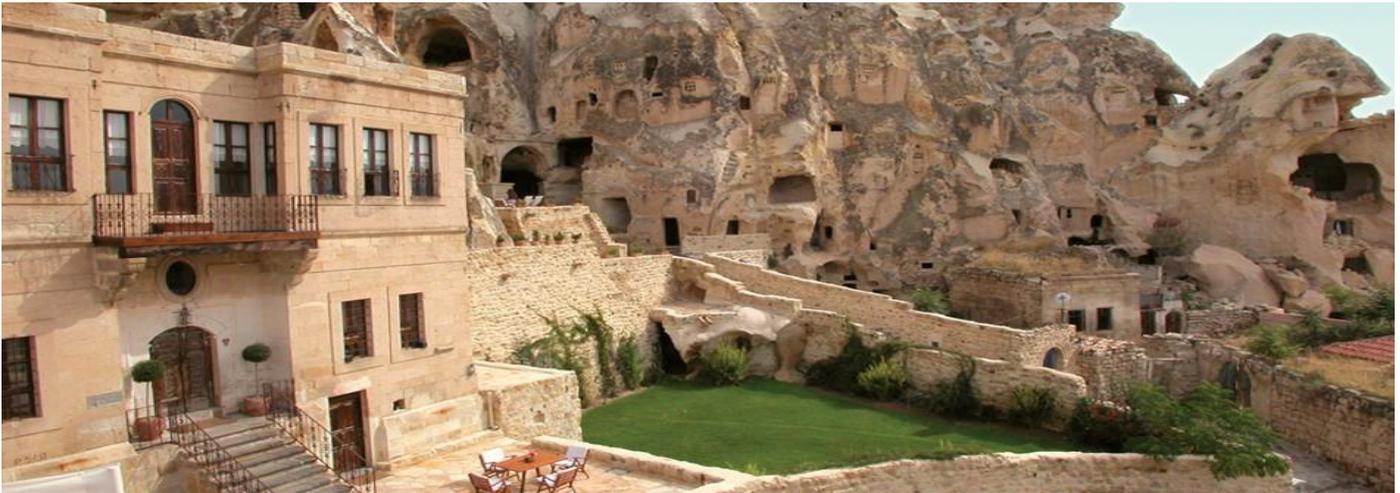


Photo: Yunak Evleri

Arrive in Istanbul at 10:50 a.m. and connect to flight **PC#4462** departing at 11:40 a.m. Arrive in **Kayseri at 1:30 p.m.** and transfer to your hotel, the [Yunak Evleri](#), which is a combination of six cave houses and one mansion with a total of 30 cave rooms dating back to the 5th and 6th centuries and crowned with a 19th century Greek Mansion.

INDEPENDENT LUNCH

"[Cappadocia](#), a dreamy slice of central Turkey dotted with 'fairy chimneys' (rock formations), has a history every bit as remarkable as its landscape. Volcanic eruptions created this surreal moonscape: the lava flows formed tuff rock, which wind and rain sculpted into sinuous valleys with curvy cliff faces and pointy fairy chimneys. Cappadocians chiselled homes in the soft rock, paving the way for cave-dwelling hippies and today's boutique fairy-chimney hotels."

[Click Here To Read More](#)

The region of [Cappadocia](#) is the jewel of Central Anatolia and home to a bewitching landscape of spectacularly eroded hardened volcanic ash known as "tuff." The unique characteristic feature of this landscape is the remarkable conical rock outcrops know as fairy chimneys. The softness of this rock formation (tuff) made it easy to excavate, paving the way for dwelling spaces and boutique "fairy-chimney" hotels.

Journey through [Zelve](#), where three canyons meet in the Valley of Monks. The rock face at Zelve is honeycombed with caves and churches, and much of the decorations inside the churches are symbolic of Christian influence in the area. Travel through the spectacular [Pasabag Valley](#), which is also known as the "Valley of the Monk," is a five-minute drive from Goreme and home of the most striking fairy chimneys in Cappadocia with twin and even triple rock cap - formations that are unique even for Cappadocia. Pasabag means "Pasha's Vineyard," a name it received after the Byzantine Greek population left the region, which is located in the middle of vineyards. Enjoy a photo stop and capture wonderful images of this unique landscape.

Arrive in the pretty town of [Avanos](#), which has long been a center for pottery artisans as it lies on the banks of the [Red River](#), where clay supplies are abundant. Make a visit to a pottery workshop to meet the artisans and see their works displayed in a vast underground cave complex.

JUST ADDED

In the evening, travelers will visit a historic Caravanseri in Goreme for a *Sema*, or Whirling Dervishes performance. The Sema ceremony represents the human being's spiritual journey, an ascent by means of intelligence and love to Perfection (Kemal). Turning toward the truth, he grows through love, transcends the ego, meets the truth, and



Photo: Cappadocia



Photo: Zelve



Photo: Town of Avanos



Photo: Pottery

arrives at Perfection. Then he returns from this spiritual journey as one who has reached maturity and completion, able to love and serve the whole of creation and all creatures without discriminating in regard to belief, class, or race.

Return to hotel and enjoy the evening at leisure.

INDEPENDENT DINNER

Dinner: Recommended restaurant is the “Muti Restaurant,” which serves local cuisine in a lovely atmosphere

Overnight at [Yunak Evleri](#) in Cappadocia.



Photo: Whirling Dervishes

Day 8: Friday, May 1, 2015

Cappadocia

OPTIONAL (COST TBD): An early start for a **Hot Air Balloon Flight** (one-hour) which is truly a once in a lifetime experience. There is no better way to see the distinctive landscapes of Cappadocia than by gently floating overhead in a hot air balloon. The skilled pilot will ensure that the balloon will drift gently over fairy chimneys, pigeon houses hewn into the unique rock formations, orchards and vineyards, through impressive valleys, each with distinctive rock formations, colors and features and then float up over rippled ravines for breathtaking views over the region before ascending to great heights for breathtaking views. Upon landing, celebrate the flight with a champagne toast! Return to the hotel for a homemade breakfast.



Photo: Hot Air Balloon Ride in Cappadocia

Cappadocia has an amazing landscape which makes these balloon flights one of the world's top three!

Complimentary breakfast included.

After breakfast, meet the professional guide in the hotel lobby at 9:00 a.m. for a full-day of sightseeing.

“One of Turkey's Unesco World Heritage Sites, the Göreme Open-Air Museum is an essential stop on any Cappadocian itinerary and deserves a two-hour visit. First an important Byzantine monastic settlement that housed some 20 monks, then a pilgrimage site from the 17th century, this splendid cluster of monastic Byzantine artistry with its rock-cut churches, chapels and monasteries is 1km uphill from Göreme's centre.” [Click Here To Read More](#)



Photo: Göreme Open-Air Museum

This morning, the group will visit the [Göreme Open-Air Museum](#), a popular attraction in the rocky landscape region of [Cappadocia](#). Well known for historic cave churches, it receives thousands of visitors weekly who have traveled from all over the world to see this [UNESCO](#) world heritage site. Manmade paths wind their way around small green hills, taking guests on a tour of churches carved into large boulders and rocks.

Continue on to the [Goreme Valley](#), which is entirely sculpted by erosion. Its surroundings contain rock-hewn sanctuaries that provide unique evidence of Byzantine art in the post-Iconoclastic period. Dwellings, troglodyte villages and underground towns – the remains of a traditional human habitat dating back to the 4th century – can also be seen there. The wonderful and primitive 11th and 12th century frescoes cover the walls of these churches. The oldest sanctuaries in the area date back to the 6th century. Among the 356 of churches, the most important ones are [Karanlık Kilise](#), [Yılanlı Kilise](#), [Elmalı Kilise](#) and [Tokalı Kilise](#).

Don't miss the opportunity to visit the [Mustafapasa Village \(Sinassos\)](#), which was the center of Cappadocia in the last century. Rich Ottomans built their splendid mansions from square stone blocks of tufa with beautiful neo-classical facades. On some mansions, a date or name has been finely written into the decorative stonework in Greek letters; something that still points to the thriving Greek Orthodox community of wealthy merchants who settled in the town in the late 18th and 19th centuries

INDEPENDENT LUNCH

Lunch: Recommended restaurant is the “Old Greek House Restaurant,” which is known for exquisite homemade meals cooked by the local village women

Complete the day by descending below the earth's surface into the [Kaymakli Underground City](#), where five levels below ground include; living quarters, kitchens, wine presses, storage rooms, stables and ventilation shafts. Early Christians carved out these subterranean complexes to avoid invaders who swept across the plains of Anatolia from the 6th to the 9th Century.

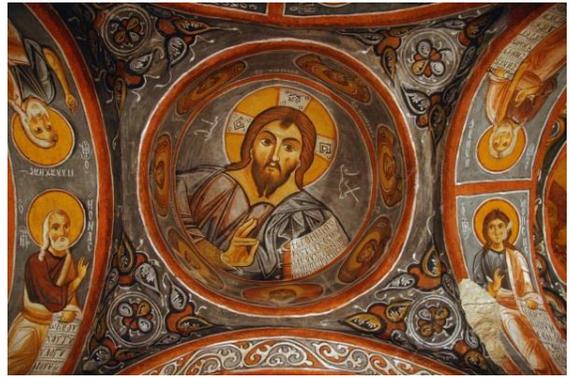


Photo: Göreme Open-Air Museum

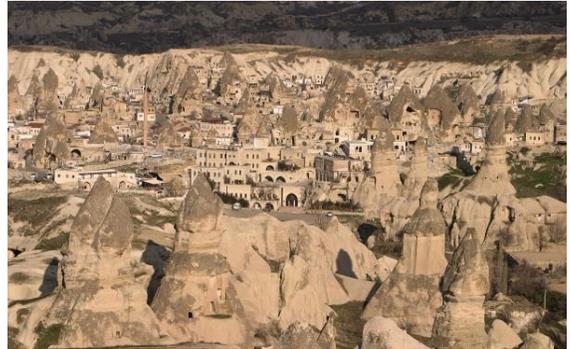


Photo: Goreme Valley

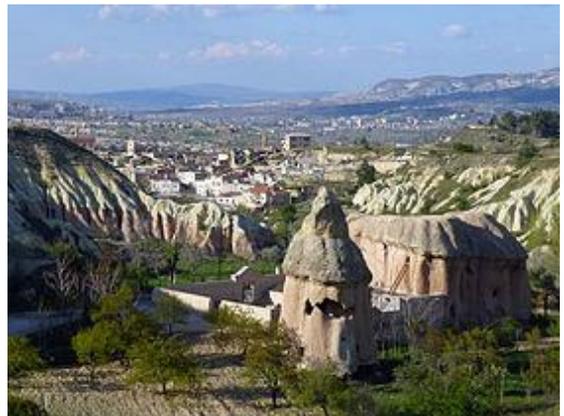


Photo: Mustafapasa Village

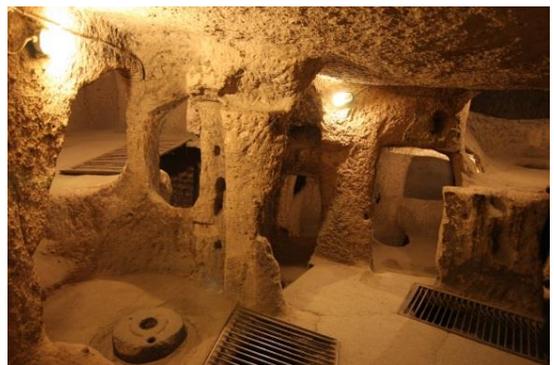


Photo: Kaymakli Underground City

At **4:00 p.m.**, travelers will be transferred to the **Kayseri Airport** for flight **TK#2015** departing at **6:00 p.m.** The group will arrive in Istanbul at **7:30 p.m.** and met by the professional guide for transport to the hotel.

COMPLIMENTARY DINNER

Dinner will be served at the “[Neolokal Restaurant](#)” located in the contemporary art space overlooking the Golden Horn



Photo: Neolokal Restaurant

Overnight at [Vault Karakoy, The House Hotel \(5-star hotel\)](#).

Click [here](#) to view the photo gallery of the Vault Karakoy

Day 9: Saturday, May 2, 2015

Istanbul

Complimentary breakfast included.

After breakfast, meet the professional guide in the hotel lobby at 9:00 a.m. for a full-day of touring.

“Istanbul is one of the world’s great cities, period. For millennia, this point where Europe meets Asia has been the crossroads of civilization. Few places on earth have seen more history than this sprawling metropolis on the Bosphorus. Once called Byzantium, then Constantinople, Istanbul boasts the opulent trappings of an epic past — from the Byzantine emperors and the Ottoman sultans of distant ages, to the modern Republic-builders and “Eurocrats” of our own time. And, as the biggest city of a moderate Muslim nation, Istanbul also offers the inquisitive traveler a unique opportunity to grapple with the rich and inspiring Islamic faith: Hear the eerie wail of the call to prayer echo across the rooftops, poke into a neighborhood mosque, and watch a dervish whirl in prayer. Set sail on the Golden Horn, and take in a spine-tingling skyline bristling with minarets.”

Click [Here](#) to Read More (Source: Rick Steves)

Your private tour of Istanbul starts with a visit to the [Hippodrome](#), which was one of the largest chariot race grounds of the Byzantine Empire. After visiting the Hippodrome, take a short walk to the [Blue Mosque](#), Istanbul’s most photogenic building, which was the grand project of Sultan Ahmet I (r 1603–17). Completed in 1616, the mosque’s wonderfully curvaceous exterior features a cascade of domes and six slender minarets. Blue İznik tiles adorn the interior and give the building its unofficial but commonly used name.



Photo: Hippodrome



Photo: Blue Mosque

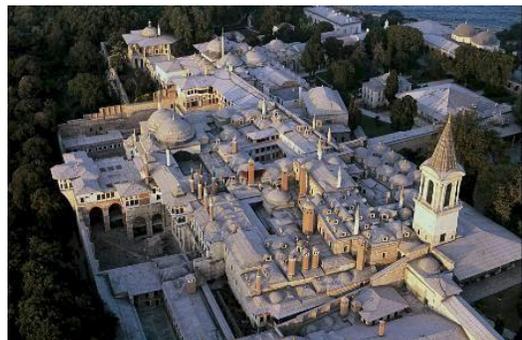


Photo: Topkapi Palace

Next, visit the magnificent [Topkapi Palace](#), the primary residence of the Ottoman sultans for approximately 400 years of their 624-year reign. It is located on the promontory jutting out between the Bosphorus and the Golden Horn, providing a magnificent view of this palace that was completed between 1456 and 1478. Being the imperial residence of the sultan, his court and harem, the palace was also the seat of government for the Ottoman Empire. Approximately 4,000 people lived in the Palace. In the treasury section of the palace, you will see breathtaking displays, including the 7th largest diamond in the world, the [“Spoonmaker’s Diamond”](#).

INDEPENDENT LUNCH

Lunch: Recommended restaurant is the “Ottoman House” which serves traditional Turkish cuisine

After lunch, visit [Saint Sophia](#), the church of the Divine Wisdom, a great architectural beauty and an important monument both for both the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires. Built during Emperor Justinian’s reign (A.D. 537), it remained the greatest church in Christendom until the conquest of Constantinople in 1453 by Sultan Mehmet II who ordered the conversion of the Hagia Sophia into a mosque. Kemal Atatürk secularized the building in 1934, and in 1935 it was made into a museum. Art historians consider the building’s beautiful mosaics to be the main source of knowledge about the state of mosaic art in the time shortly after the end of the Iconoclastic Controversy in the 8th and 9th centuries.

*“The Hagia Sophia was built in the remarkably short time of about six years, being completed in 537 ce. Unusual for the period in which it was built, the names of the building’s architects—[Anthemius of Tralles](#) and [Isidorus of Miletus](#)—are well known, as is their familiarity with mechanics and mathematics. The Hagia Sophia is a component of a UNESCO [World Heritage site](#) called the *Historic Areas of Istanbul* (designated 1985), which includes that city’s other major historic buildings and locations.” [Click Here to Read More](#)*

For those of you who enjoy shopping! Don’t miss the opportunity to check out Istanbul’s [Grand Bazaar](#), the largest and oldest covered Bazaar in Turkey with more than 4,000 shops. The bazaar has been an important trading center since 1461 and its labyrinthine vaults feature two bedestens (domed buildings), the first of which was



Photo: Saint Sophia



Photo: Spoonmaker’s Diamond



Photo: Grand Bazaar



Photo: Grand Bazaar

constructed between 1455 and 1461 by the order of Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror.

A variety of handicrafts, ceramics, gold, carpets, rare jewels and souvenirs all sold in rows of small shops located next to each other. A leisurely afternoon spent exploring the bazaar, sitting in one of the cafés and bargaining for purchases is one of the best ways to recapture the romantic atmosphere of old Istanbul.

Return to the hotel and enjoy the evening at leisure.

INDEPENDENT DINNER

Dinner: Recommended at the “Mikla Restaurant” which is located in Beyoglu area, serving international cuisine with a wonderful view of the whole city. Transportation to and from the restaurant can be arranged.

Overnight at [Vault Karakoy, The House Hotel \(5-Star\)](#)



Photo: Vault Karakoy, The House Hotel

Day 10: Sunday, May 3, 2015

Istanbul

Complimentary breakfast included.

After breakfast, meet the professional guide in the hotel lobby at 9:00 a.m. for a full day of touring.

Continue exploring Istanbul by visiting the [Church of Saint Saviour](#) in Chora. Built in the 11th century and decorated in the 14th, the Church of St. Savior in Chora (formerly the Kariye Camii and now the Kariye Müzesi) contains one of the best-preserved collections of Byzantine mosaics and frescoes in the world. Inside, there are about 50 mosaic panels dating from about 1310, most in excellent shape. Virtually all the subjects of the mosaics derive from the New Testament and they are presented in roughly chronological order. Most of the mosaics are in the exonarthex and esonarthex (two lateral west porches). These depict scenes from the life of the Virgin and the early life of Christ. [Click Here to Read More](#)



Photo: Church of Saint Savior

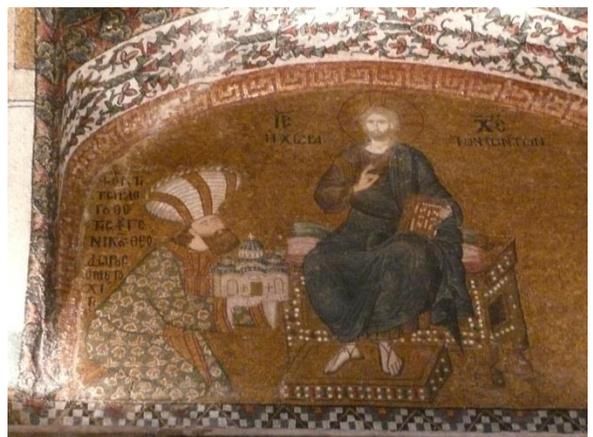


Photo: Mosaic of enthroned Christ with Theodore Metochite in the Church of Saint Savior

“Like most sites in İstanbul, the cistern has an unusual history. It was originally known as the Basilica Cistern because it lay underneath the Stoa Basilica, one of the great squares on the first hill. Designed to service the Great Palace and surrounding buildings, it was able to store up to 80,000 cu metres of water delivered via 20km of aqueducts from a reservoir near the Black Sea, but was closed when the Byzantine emperors relocated from the Great Palace.” [Click Here to Read More](#)

Descend underground into the [Basilica Cistern](#), which borrowed its name from the Ilius Basilica, is 143 meters long and 65 meters wide. The roof is supported by 336 marble columns, mostly in Ionic or Corinthian styles, each measuring 9 meters in length. Spaced at four-meter intervals, they are arranged in 12 rows of 28 columns each. The cistern was forgotten for centuries and only accidentally rediscovered by the Frenchman Peter Gyllius in 1545. While researching Byzantine antiquities in the city, he noticed that people in the neighborhood not only got a hold of water by simply lowering buckets through holes in their basements, they miraculously sometimes even caught fish this way.

INDEPENDENT LUNCH

Lunch: Recommended at “Hamdi Restaurant” which is known for serving delicious traditional Turkish Kebabs

Yet another shopper’s paradise! Check out the [Egyptian Bazaar](#), the second largest covered market in İstanbul. It was constructed in the 1660’s as part of the Yeni Camii (New Mosque) complex. The name derives from the herbs and spices imported from or through Egypt. It is still the best place to buy Turkish delight, dried fruit, caviar, exotic spices and herbs.

The group will continue on to explore the [Suleymaniye Mosque](#). Built by the great Ottoman architect Mimar Sinan on the order of Sultan Suleiman I (Suleiman the Magnificent), the Suleymaniye Mosque dominates the Third Hill of old İstanbul, and is strikingly graceful and less ornate than many other imperial mosques, thus lending itself to meditation and quiet reflection.

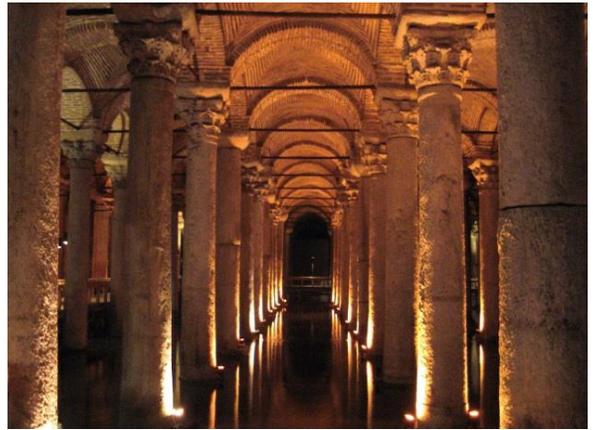


Photo: Basilica Cistern



Photo: Egyptian Bazaar



Photo: Suleymaniye Mosque

COMPLIMENTARY DINNER

Private farewell dinner will be served at “[The Bosphorus Lounge](#)” in Ortakoy overlooking to the Bosphorus. Enjoy Mediterranean cuisine with a wonderful view of the Bosphorus while accompanied by a live trio during the dinner. Transportation to and from the dinner will be arranged.



Photo: Bosphorus Lounge

Overnight at [Vault Karakoy, The House Hotel \(5-Star\)](#)

Day 11: Monday, May 4, 2015

Istanbul

Complimentary breakfast included.

In the morning, check-out of your hotel and transfer to Istanbul Airport for your departing *international flights. (*Flight TBD)

WELCOME HOME

Two-Day Optional Extension to Istanbul

Day 11-13: May 4 - May 6, 2015

Istanbul

Includes two nights at the [Vault Karakoy, The House Hotel \(5-Star\)](#), breakfast, VAT (value-added tax) and airport transfer on May 6th.

On the morning of May 6th, check-out of your hotel and transfer to Istanbul Airport for your departing *international flights. (*Flight TBD)

WELCOME HOME

