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Classical Turkey Tour: Istanbul, Cappadocia, Ephesus, Pamukkale, Izmir - 8 days

TR-03

This 8 day tour takes you to some of Turkey's most impressive spots. Begin in multi-faceted Istanbul, whose storied past has left a legacy of mosques, palaces and bazaars. Bisected by the Bosphorus, one of the most important waterways in the region, this city pulsates with life and quickly works its magic on those who visit. Equally captivating is Cappadocia, known for its underground caves and bucolic valleys littered with fairy chimneys. Over the centuries those who have made their home here have carved dwellings out of the soft rock, seamlessly integrating with the landscape. Finally, you'll tour historic Ephesus, once a thriving Roman port city until the coastline migrated westwards. You'll walk its cobbled streets to discover ancient temples and admire the magnificent Library of Celsus and Great Theatre.

DEPARTURE DATES: 04.27.2024; 05.04.2024; 05.11.2024; 05.18.2024; 05.25.2024; 06.01.2024; 06.08.2024; 06.15.2024; 06.22.2024; 06.29.2024; 07.06.2024; 07.13.2024; 07.20.2024; 07.27.2024; 08.03.2024; 08.10.2024; 08.17.2024; 08.24.2024; 08.31.2024; 09.07.2024; 09.14.2024; 09.21.2024; 09.28.2024; 10.05.2024; 10.12.2024; 10.19.2024; 10.26.2024; 11.02.2024; 11.09.2024; 11.16.2024; 11.23.2024; 11.30.2024; 12.07.2024; 12.14.2024.

ITINERARY

Day 1 - Istanbul
You'll arrive at Istanbul's Ataturk Airport and transfer to your city centre hotel. The sightseeing programme begins in earnest tomorrow but we'd encourage you to explore on your own if your arrival time permits. Overnight in Istanbul.

Day 2 - Istanbul
Today we aim to show you the highlights of Istanbul, beginning with the fascinating Topkapi Palace. Once it was the home of the Ottoman Sultans and exploring the different corners of this sprawling place is a delight. From its terraces, you'll enjoy the view over the Bosphorus and the Golden Horn. Hagia Sophia, centuries old and oozing charm, has been a church, mosque and museum in its long lifetime. We'll learn some of its secrets and admire its fabulous architectural detail before heading over to the nearby Blue Mosque. This is one of Istanbul's most famous sights, winning its nickname thanks to the blue Iznik tiles that grace its interior. After lunch, we tackle Istanbul's famous Grand Bazaar. Inside, a labyrinthine network of passageways leads to something like 4000 stalls. Getting a little lost is all part of the fun. Overnight in Istanbul. (Breakfast, lunch)

Day 3 - Istanbul
After yesterday's introduction to the city, we'll delve a little deeper into Istanbul today. After the Grand Bazaar, the Egyptian Bazaar is the most visited market by tourists but is also frequented by locals. It's easy to see why as you step foot inside this historic building that has stood close to the Bosphorus since the 17th century. Traders cheerfully hawk their wares, and you'll see heaps of spices such as cardamom and cinnamon alongside piles of mint and sugar-dusted Turkish Delight. There's always something to see at this bustling waterfront location, across the square from the Galata Bridge. Watch the fishermen casting their rods and opportunistic birds swoop down in the hope of a snatched meal. We'll continue up the Bosphorus on a sightseeing cruise. From the water, you'll chug past opulent mansions and elegant palaces - your guide will point out landmarks such as the Dolmabahçe Palace, Beylerbeyi Palace, Çırağan Palace and Rumeli Fortress. Sit back, relax and enjoy the scenery. Overnight in Istanbul. (Breakfast, lunch)

Day 4 - Istanbul - Cappadocia
It's time to travel inland to one of Turkey's most breathtaking regions: Cappadocia. We'll hop on a plane to Kayseri and travel the last hour to Goreme by road, pulling over at a viewpoint to admire the sight of Pigeon Valley, Rose and Red Valleys, plus the villages of Goreme and Uchisar. Continuing on, we'll call in at Kaymakli Underground City. Part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site, this fascinating place comprises eight subterranean levels, four of which are open to the public, a labyrinth of narrow connecting tunnels and hollowed out rooms. Constructed by the Phrygians in the 7th and 8th centuries BC, at its peak this place was home to an estimated 3500 people. Back above ground, we'll admire distant Uchisar Castle. This ruined fortification perches on a craggy hilltop and in modern times many of its rock-hewn rooms have been repurposed as dovecotes. In the

nearby valley, the soft beiges of the sun-bleached tuff contrast with poplar and apricot trees. We'll move on to Avanos, for a pottery demonstration, before taking a stroll through the Pasabag and Devrent Valleys. It's here you'll see some of the highest concentrations of fairy chimneys, a landscape that wind and rain have sculpted over the centuries into phallic pillars of rock. Overnight in Cappadocia. (Breakfast, lunch)

Day 5 - Cappadocia
This morning you'll have the option of a sunrise hot air balloon ride. You'll soar on the thermals above Cappadocia's fairy chimneys, grazing the tops of fruit orchards. It's a privilege to be able to see the landscape from this vantage point and in the soft morning light it's extraordinarily beautiful. Some mornings, the sky is filled with balloons, which only adds to the magic and sense of wonder. The group sightseeing begins in earnest when you land, and we'll hike through the delightful Rose and Red valleys. Beside trickling streams, look up at cliffs punctured by pigeon lofts and ancient frescoed churches carved out of the rock. Later, we'll drive to Cavusin and take a look at a long-abandoned village before turning back to tour the superb Goreme Open Air Museum. Here, you'll discover some of the best examples of Cappadocia's rock-hewn churches. Finally today you'll get an insight into the area's rich cultural tapestry, visiting a cooperative where girls weave carpets for their wedding dowry in a tradition that's been passed down through the generations. Overnight in Cappadocia. (Breakfast, lunch)

Day 6 - Cappadocia - Izmir - Ephesus - Kusadasi
We'll have you up bright and early this morning for your direct flight to Izmir. Our first stop today is the House of the Virgin Mary, a Catholic pilgrimage site. They believe that the Apostle John built Mary, the mother of Jesus, a home in Ephesus, and that she lived here for the rest of her life. Though the Catholic Church has never guaranteed its authenticity, several Popes have paid it a visit. Close by, the ruins of ancient Ephesus await. We'll tour the Celsus Library, constructed in the 2nd century AD in honour of Tiberius Julius Celsus Ptolemaeanus, an influential and wealthy Roman senator. Architecturally, this is one of the most magnificent structures of its era and, as the third largest in the ancient world, could house an impressive 12000 scrolls. Celsus himself is interred in a crypt beneath the library. Afterwards, we'll continue on to the Great Theatre, a highly visible landmark on the flank of Panayir Hill. It seated an audience of 25000 people, making it the largest in Anatolia. It's older than the library, built in the 3rd century BC and later enlarged and remodelled by the Romans. Finally, we'll call in at a leather factory and then return to Kusadasi. Overnight in Kusadasi. (Breakfast, lunch)

Day 7 - Kusadasi - Pamukkale - Kusadasi
A destination has to be remarkably special to warrant a journey of 3.5 hours by road, but Pamukkale is undoubtedly one of those places. In air-conditioned comfort we'll travel to witness its incredible travertine terraces first-hand. The name translates as "cotton castle" and the Phrygians were the first to arrive, constructing a temple here in the 7th century. The Ancient Greeks followed and built a settlement they called Hierapolis. We'll tour its ruins and visit the necropolis too, which is one of the best preserved in the country. The Romans left their mark too, in the form of a theatre and Roman baths. These settlers were drawn, in part, by Pamukkale's thermal waters, as are today's tourists. The calcite-rich water cascades down the hill, collecting in pools whose soft turquoise colour contrasts with the brown and white of the rock. It's one of the most photogenic spots in the world and so it's hardly a surprise to learn that it is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. In the late afternoon, we'll make our way back to Kusadasi.
Overnight in Kusadasi. (Breakfast, lunch)

Day 8 - Kusadasi - Izmir
It's time to say farewell to Turkey and make your way home. We'll see you safely off at Izmir Airport and hope you've enjoyed your stay. If you prefer, you can extend your stay and spend some days on the beach. Please contact us for more details. (Breakfast)

TOUR INCLUSIONS AND OPTIONAL EXTRAS

Included

Accommodation
Guided tours & cultural programme
English - speaking guides
Half board meals
Ground transportation
Airport transfers

Not included
Personal travel insurance
Optional excursions

Practical information
About Best of Caucasus company
Book with confidence - covid FAQs
Contact our travel consultants

AVAILABLE PACKAGES

COMFORT - 3* PACKAGE

Dates	Tour Price	Single suppliment
04/27/2024 - 05/04/2024	$2095	$575
05/04/2024 - 05/11/2024	$2095	$575
05/11/2024 - 05/18/2024	$2095	$575
05/18/2024 - 05/25/2024	$2095	$575
05/25/2024 - 06/01/2024	$2095	$575
06/01/2024 - 06/08/2024	$2095	$575
06/08/2024 - 06/15/2024	$2095	$575
06/15/2024 - 06/22/2024	$2095	$575
06/22/2024 - 06/29/2024	$2095	$575
06/29/2024 - 07/06/2024	$2095	$575
07/06/2024 - 07/13/2024	$2095	$575
07/13/2024 - 07/20/2024	$2095	$575
07/20/2024 - 07/27/2024	$2095	$575
07/27/2024 - 08/03/2024	$2095	$575
08/03/2024 - 08/10/2024	$2095	$575
08/10/2024 - 08/17/2024	$2095	$575
08/17/2024 - 08/24/2024	$2095	$575
08/24/2024 - 08/31/2024	$2095	$575
08/31/2024 - 09/07/2024	$2095	$575
09/07/2024 - 09/14/2024	$2095	$575
09/14/2024 - 09/21/2024	$2095	$575
09/21/2024 - 09/28/2024	$2095	$575
09/28/2024 - 10/05/2024	$2095	$575
10/05/2024 - 10/12/2024	$2095	$575
10/12/2024 - 10/19/2024	$2095	$575
10/19/2024 - 10/26/2024	$2095	$575
10/26/2024 - 11/02/2024	$2095	$575
11/02/2024 - 11/09/2024	$2095	$575
11/09/2024 - 11/16/2024	$2095	$575
11/16/2024 - 11/23/2024	$2095	$575
11/23/2024 - 11/30/2024	$2095	$575
11/30/2024 - 12/07/2024	$2095	$575
12/07/2024 - 12/14/2024	$2095	$575
12/14/2024 - 12/21/2024	$2095	$575

PREMIUM - 4* PACKAGE

Dates	Tour Price	Single suppliment
04/27/2024 - 05/04/2024	$2295	$695
05/04/2024 - 05/11/2024	$2295	$695
05/11/2024 - 05/18/2024	$2295	$695
05/18/2024 - 05/25/2024	$2295	$695
05/25/2024 - 06/01/2024	$2295	$695
06/01/2024 - 06/08/2024	$2295	$695
06/08/2024 - 06/15/2024	$2295	$695
06/15/2024 - 06/22/2024	$2295	$695
06/22/2024 - 06/29/2024	$2295	$695
06/29/2024 - 07/06/2024	$2295	$695
07/06/2024 - 07/13/2024	$2295	$695
07/13/2024 - 07/20/2024	$2295	$695
07/20/2024 - 07/27/2024	$2295	$695
07/27/2024 - 08/03/2024	$2295	$695
08/03/2024 - 08/10/2024	$2295	$695
08/10/2024 - 08/17/2024	$2295	$695
08/17/2024 - 08/24/2024	$2295	$695
08/24/2024 - 08/31/2024	$2295	$695
08/31/2024 - 09/07/2024	$2295	$695
09/07/2024 - 09/14/2024	$2295	$695
09/14/2024 - 09/21/2024	$2295	$695
09/21/2024 - 09/28/2024	$2295	$695

09/28/2024 - 10/05/2024	$2295	$695
10/05/2024 - 10/12/2024	$2295	$695
10/12/2024 - 10/19/2024	$2295	$695
10/19/2024 - 10/26/2024	$2295	$695
10/26/2024 - 11/02/2024	$2295	$695
11/02/2024 - 11/09/2024	$2295	$695
11/09/2024 - 11/16/2024	$2295	$695
11/16/2024 - 11/23/2024	$2295	$695
11/23/2024 - 11/30/2024	$2295	$695
11/30/2024 - 12/07/2024	$2295	$695
12/07/2024 - 12/14/2024	$2295	$695
12/14/2024 - 12/21/2024	$2295	$695

ALTERNATIVE TOURS AND TAILOR-MADE ARRANGEMENTS

In addition to organized group tours, we also offer individual trips. This could be an entirely separate holiday arrangement or an extension to a regular "Best of Caucasus" trip. Whether you would like to travel independently, or just with the group of your friends or colleagues, we can help to realise your holiday plans. Depending on your preference for either comfort or budget, we can help you to design the ideal itinerary and provide the optimal value-for-money quote. Please contact us for a quote.

Based on your chosen tour we believe you might be interested in alternative trips listed below:

> Short Break in Istanbul - 3 days (TR-01), Price from $495, 3 days
> Short Break in Istanbul with a Visit to Cappadocia - 6 days (TR-02), Price from $1,245, 6 days
> Best of Istanbul - 5 days (TR-04), Price from $995, 5 days
> Best of Turkey Tour - 13 days (TR-05), Price from $3,895, 13 days
> Discover Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan - 16 days (CT-02), Price from $3,195, 16 days
> Best of Azerbaijan - 8 days (AZ-02), Price from $1,395, 8 days

HOW TO BOOK

Step 1 - Choose Your Holiday & Departure Dates

It is important that you choose a trip that is well suited to your interests, capabilities and experience. All our staff has first hand experience of a range of Best of Caucasus holidays and will be happy to talk to you about your chosen trip, enabling you to assess its suitability. We also recommend that you read the descriptions of the relevant region, general information about our services, booking conditions, and trip dossiers carefully. Once you know what tour is right for you, as well as your departure dates, you can start your booking.

Step 2 - Complete the Booking Form

Online: log on to www.best-of-caucasus.com and open the tour you wish to book and click "Book now". To provide you with a more personalised and relevant experience in all your contact with Best of Caucasus, when you book online we ask you to register on our system. Once registered you can retrieve your bookings, update newsletter subscriptions, passenger and emergency contact details, submit special dietary requests, view invoices and receipts, download trip documents.

Email: alternatively, you can book your tour per email - info@best-of-caucasus.com, or

Phone: call us on **+1 (917) 259 13 33**

When booking by email or over the phone please confirm your personal details (full name and address), chosen tour, departure date, package type (hotel category), and available upgrades.

Step 3 - Confirmation of your booking

On receipt of your booking form, we will make any necessary reservations for you and send you confirmation invoice, including the flight details, and additional information about your destination: advice on visas, vaccinations and what to take. The invoice will also show you the exact due date of the payment.

Step 4 - Payment

Please note, if your departure date is more than 56 days you will need to pay the deposit, which should cover the full cost of the flight (if applicable), plus 10% of the land-only arrangements (minimum $250) per person towards your tour. The outstanding payment must be made 56 days prior to departure. If you book less than 56 days before departure, full payment must be made at the time of your booking. You can make your payment by bank transfer, debit or credit card, cheque, bankers draft or postal order. You will find all relevant payment details in your invoice.

YOUR NOTES

On request we can organise an additional programme for you, please inquire about the price and availability of the optional excursions.

Please find below some space to write down your queries or comments regarding this trip.