

HARVARD

ALUMNI TRAVELS



LEGENDARY TÜRKIYE

October 10–24, 2025

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Beginning with four nights in magnificent Istanbul and ending in Antalya, explore ancient ruins such as Troy and Ephesus, visit important historical sites including Gallipoli, and experience stunning landscapes along the Turquoise Coast.

SCHEDULE BY DAY

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

FRIDAY, OCT 10

DEPART FROM HOME CITY

We depart the United States early this evening on our flight bound for Istanbul.

SATURDAY, OCT 11

ARRIVE ISTANBUL

Arrive this morning in Istanbul. Meet your local representative and transfer to your hotel, located near Taksim Square, the heart of modern Istanbul.

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 our hotel or simply relax.

Dinner tonight is on your own.

Overnight: *Hilton Istanbul Bosphorus*

SUNDAY, OCT 12

ISTANBUL

The legendary city of Istanbul, divided by the Bosphorus Strait, is where East and West meet in a fascinating melding of cultures.

Set out for a short walk along lively, pedestrian Istiklal Street, lined with boutiques, galleries, restaurants, and late Ottoman-era buildings.

Then head 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 the Mosque of Suleiman the Magnificent.

The latter 16th-century imperial mosque ranks as one of Istanbul's best-known sights. It features a massive central dome and splendid tilework, and its four 250-foot minarets preside over the city.

From here, 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.

Return to your hotel in the late afternoon.

In the evening, take a short walk to a local restaurant for a welcome dinner of traditional Turkish fare.

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

MONDAY, OCT 13

ISTANBUL

In the morning, cross over Galata Bridge, which spans the Golden Horn, and tour Old Istanbul, home of splendid mosques and magnificent palaces.

Stop at the ancient Roman Hippodrome with its 3,500-year-old obelisk brought from Egypt in 390 CE, where chariot races once took place.

Continue 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.

Then 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 to the 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 recently.

Return to your hotel late this afternoon.

The remainder of the evening is free. Dinner tonight is on your own.

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

TUESDAY, OCT 14 ISTANBUL

Visit splendid 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.

Then visit one of Istanbul's ancient Roman cisterns, marble-columned underground chambers that provided water to the city in antiquity. Fed by miles of aqueducts, the cisterns once held millions of gallons of water.

The next stop is the vast Grand Bazaar, one of the world's largest covered markets. Some 5,000 shops and stalls along 60 streets 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.

Overnight: *Hilton Istanbul Bosphorus* (B)

WEDNESDAY, OCT 15 ISTANBUL / GALLIPOLI / CANAKKALE

Rise early to begin a full day of travel southward from Istanbul.

The first stop is Gallipoli, set along the northern coast of the Aegean Sea, where in 1915 Allied troops were defeated in a major battle by the Turkish army led by Lieutenant-Colonel Mustafa Kemal. Better known as Ataturk, Kemal parlayed his popularity as a war hero and Turkish nationalist policies into a post as the leader of modern Turkey. Large numbers of casualties were suffered here, and those who gave their lives are honored at the 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—and excavations have revealed the remnants of at least nine civilizations here dating back 5,000 years.

Continue to Canakkale, arriving in time for dinner at the hotel.

Overnight: *Doubletree by Hilton Canakkale* (B, L, D)

THURSDAY, OCT 16 CANAKKALE / PERGAMUM / KUSADASI

Today explore one of Turkey's most spectacular ancient sites: windswept Pergamum, a major power in the 3rd and 2nd centuries BCE, with a wealth of Hellenistic ruins.

Located on a lofty isolated hill sixteen miles from the Aegean Sea, Pergamum existed at least from the 5th century B.C. but became

important in the Hellenistic age of 323-30 B.C. under the Attalid dynasty. During that time, the fortress and palace stood on the peak of the hill, while the town itself occupied the lower slopes. Under the Roman Empire, the city was situated on the plain below. Pergamum was one of the most important and beautiful of all Greek cities in the Hellenistic Age; it is one of the most outstanding examples of city planning in that period. It also contained a library excelled only by that at Alexandria in Egypt. Many remains of its monuments can still be seen, including the Pergamum Altar.

Continue to Kusadasi and have dinner at your hotel.

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

FRIDAY, OCT 17 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.

Also 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 Kusadasi late this afternoon.

Enjoy an evening at leisure and dinner on your own.

Overnight: *Charisma De Luxe Hotel* (B, L)

SATURDAY, OCT 18 KUSADASI / EPHEBUS

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. The basilica was constructed by Justinian I in the 6th century and modeled after the now lost Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople.

Learn more about Ephesus through the ages at the Ephesus Museum, housing treasures from the archaeological site.

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 Kusadasi late this afternoon and dine together tonight at your hotel.

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

SUNDAY, OCT 19 KUSADASI / FETHIYE

En route to Fethiye today, stop in Dalyan and board a small skiff for a trip through an intriguing maze of channels.

Reaching the Lake of Koycegiz, observe the Lycian rock-cut tombs on the cliffs above. Dating to 350 BCE, the tombs number more than one thousand along Türkiye's coast.

Have lunch together at a local restaurant by the Dalyan River before continuing to the port town of Fethiye, known for its beautiful natural harbor.

Dine together tonight at your hotel.

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

MONDAY, OCT 20

FETHIYE / CRUISING

In the morning, visit the Greek “ghost town” of Kayakoy, deserted after World War I and the Turkish War of Independence.

Residents abandoned approximately 1,000 stone houses here as well as two churches, which still retain some of their painted decoration and mosaic floors.

Then board a private yacht for a cruise along the Turquoise Coast, the stunning coastline that Antony is said to have given to Cleopatra as a wedding gift. With the scent of eucalyptus perfuming the air, and forested mountains as the backdrop, visit secluded coves (including Aquarium Cove, with its waters of brilliant blue and green), and have the opportunity to swim and snorkel.

Enjoy lunch on board.

After returning to your hotel, dinner is on your own tonight.

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

TUESDAY, OCT 21

FETHIYE / ANTALYA

Set out this morning on a scenic drive along the coastal road to Antalya.

Stop along the way in Demre (ancient Myra) for a visit to 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.

Continue to the evocative seaside ruins of Phaselis, the ancient Greek and Roman port city now a national park.

Arrive in the resort town of Antalya in time for dinner together tonight.

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

WEDNESDAY, OCT 22

ANTALYA

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, visit Antalya’s acclaimed Archaeological Museum, housing priceless artifacts unearthed from sites throughout the region.

Dinner tonight is on your own in this city known for its seafood and Mediterranean cuisine, and your evening is at leisure.

Overnight: *Akra Hotel* (B, L)

THURSDAY, OCT 23

ANTALYA / PERGE

Set off for a tour of the once-thriving Roman city of Perge, which reached its pinnacle during the era of Alexander the Great.

Among the outstanding ruins here are the ancient shopping arcade, the awe-inspiring 12,000-seat stadium, and a 15,000-seat theater.

Also visit the Düden Waterfalls, which tumble about 130 feet into the Mediterranean.

Return to your hotel in the afternoon.

Tonight, celebrate your Turkish adventure over a farewell dinner together.

Overnight: *Akra Hotel* (B, D)

FRIDAY, OCT 24

RETURN TO U.S.

Guests returning today to the United States will transfer early this morning to the airport for the connecting flight to the U.S. Those who are joining the Cappadocia & Konya Optional Post-Tour Extension will take a motorcoach transfer to Konya. (B)

**OPTIONAL POST-TOUR EXTENSION:
CAPPADOCIA & KONYA
OCTOBER 24–28**

**FRIDAY, OCT 24
ANTALYA / 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.

Continue through the Taurus Mountains to historic Konya, enjoying lunch at a mountainside restaurant along the way.

Konya is one of the oldest urban centers in the world. Excavations in Alâeddin Hill in the middle of the city indicate settlement dating from at least the 3rd millennium BCE. According to a Phrygian legend of the great flood, Konya was the first city to rise after the deluge that destroyed humanity. Still another legend ascribes its ancient name to the eikon (image), or the Gorgon's head, with which the mythological warrior Perseus vanquished the native population before founding the Greek city.

Check into your hotel and enjoy dinner on your own tonight.

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

**SAT, OCT 25–MON, OCT 27
CAPPADOCIA**

In the morning, visit the Mevlana Museum, the former home of Turkey's renowned Whirling Dervishes, a mystic order whose members dance wildly to free themselves from earthly bondage. The order of dervishes had their lodge in this complex until 1926, when the building was converted into a museum.

This museum is also 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. 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.

Continue 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 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. We 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 at a local restaurant.

Optional Balloon Ride: For those who wish, an optional early morning balloon ride may be available on October 27 (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 (your tour director can assist with recommending a reputable balloon company). As of March 2024, the cost of the balloon ride is approximately \$300 per person.

Optional Whirling Dervish Ceremony: There may also be the opportunity to attend a Sema ceremony, a traditional Turkish religious ceremony involving song and dance, to see the famed Whirling Dervishes while in Cappadocia. The ceremony is one of music, singing, and dancing, representing man's mystical journey from Earth through love. This event would be at an additional cost and reserved on-site, space permitting. As of March 2024, the cost to attend the ceremony is approximately \$40 per person.

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

TUESDAY, OCT 28

DEPART CAPPADOCIA FOR U.S.

Early this morning, transfer to the airport for your connecting flight to the United States. (B)

Please note: Parts of this trip involve considerable walking on uneven or cobblestone streets and negotiating sites of ancient ruins. You should be in good physical condition to enjoy the tour to the fullest.