

TURKEY FAMILY TOUR

Sailing the Turquoise Coast

13 days

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Day 1 Arrive 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," marveled 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.

Included Meal(s): Dinner, if required.

Day 2 Istanbul: Blue Mosque & Agia Sophia

Istanbul has been the capital of two of the world's greatest empires, the Byzantine and the Ottoman. Formerly known as Constantinople, this is a city of a thousand-and-one delights. We start our 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, and the walls are decorated with verses of the Koran in fine calligraphy. At the Hippodrome we see the remains of the great sports stadium where chariot races were held in Roman and Byzantine times. Here we 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 visit the church of Agia Sophia (Saint Sophia), which was built by the emperor Justinian between AD 532 and 537. It was the largest church in the Christian world for nearly 1,000 years. When the Ottoman Turks conquered the city in 1453 one of the first actions they took was to convert St Sophia into a mosque. Today it is a museum featuring many beautiful Christian mosaics. Outside St. Sophia we descend underground to the gigantic cisterns which contained the vast water supply which allowed Constantinople to withstand so many long sieges. Here the many columns are reflected in the water while classical music plays quietly.

This afternoon you can join us for an optional walking tour of the Grand Bazaar. This is one of the oldest covered marketplaces in the world containing over 4,000 shops where virtually anything can be bought.

Overnight in Istanbul.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 3 Istanbul - Antalya

A morning flight (75 min) takes us south to Antalya, located in the region called Pamphylia and founded by Attalus II, King of Pergamum in the 2nd century BC.

On arrival we will visit the excellent Antalya Archaeology Museum, then continue to Perge. Built around 1000 BC, Perge boasts a beautiful theater and the largest stadium in all Asia Minor. Alexander spent time here, as did the mathematician Appolonius. The city was by turns Pamphilian, Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, and Selcuk. We then visit Aspendos and the best-preserved theater in Asia Minor which is still used for performances.

Overnight in Antalya.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 4 Antalya - Myra - Demre: Gulet Cruise

Today we drive southwest toward Finike via the ruins of Myra and the Church of St. Nicholas (3rd century). Myra boasts one of the most colossal and well-preserved Roman amphitheaters in the world, complete with stone masks of the performers lying about. We explore 4th century BC Lycian house-tombs with richly-decorated facades carved out of the rock.

At nearby Demre we board our gulet and head west skirting the indented coast. As a point of interest, Demre is where the legend of Father Christmas ("Noel Baba" in Turkish) is said to have originated with a Christian bishop who gave dowries to penniless girls. The bishop became known as St. Nicholas.

OUR BOAT: Gulets are wooden boats, traditionally hand made by master craftsmen from the Bodrum area of Turkey. This classic gulet was once used by fisherman and sponge divers to transport their catch. Today they are purpose-built for the charter market with fittings and equipment designed for guests' comfort. A gulet is typically built of pine wood and styled with a pointed fore and round aft. The major difference between the Turkish and Western boats is that the Turkish boats are designed to allow passengers more space on the deck. The Bodrum built boats take as much advantage as they can of the pleasant climate of the south. An aft deck for dining and lounging in the shade of a sun awning and a forward deck with numerous sunbeds. Large living areas, air-conditioned twin-berth cabins (with WC, shower) and a sun deck furnished lounge area are typical. On deck there are sun lounges for sunbathing and relaxing as well as dining areas under sun awnings. Our gulet will range in size, depending on number of group participants.

NOTE: single cabins are limited in number. Late single supplement requests may need to double up on the gulet portion of the tour. The actual order of places visited may vary due to variables such as weather and other considerations.

The pace is, of course, relaxed with plenty of time for swimming, snorkelling and sunbathing on deck. During the day our gulet navigates for about 4 hours at most, stopping in the bays and isolated islands for swimming breaks or short visits to the shore. In some places where the gulet can dock close to the shore, you will be able to travel by smaller boat (dinghy) to the shore for a walk or to visit a place. Most of the places you visit are of historical and natural importance.

Overnight on Gulet.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 5 Kekova - Kas - Kalkan

The Gulf of Kekova is one of the most picturesque stretches of the coast and has several bays. On Kekova, there is no trace of the city which once dominated the island -- its ruins and foundations can now only be seen under the surface of the clear water on the northern side of the island. The name "Kekova" is Turkish for "plain of thyme" and describes the region encompassing the island of Kekova, the villages of Kalekoy and Ucagiz and the three ancient town of Simena. We will have a chance to hike to Kalekoy, a pastoral village crowned by a Crusader castle with dozens of impressive Roman sarcophagi strewn around its base.

Kas is just a little further on, and is slightly larger and more developed than its neighbours but still very charming, with streets and shops leading down to the sea. Kas was one of the earliest settlements of the Lycian era, when it was called Antiphellos. A large sarcophagus dominates the centre of town, and the sheer rock face overlooking Kas is dotted with Lycian rock tombs. After touring the village on foot (1 hr) we reach our anchorage at Kalkan for the night.

Overnight on Gulet.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 6 Oludeniz & Gemiler Island

Today we stop at Oludeniz, the "Dead Sea," below the resorts of Ovacik and Hisaronu. This azure lagoon, now part of a nature park, features on countless Turkish travel posters and is one of Turkey's iconic sights. The area southeast of the lagoon, fronting onto an attractive sandy beach, has developed into the popular resort village of Belceviz -- though it is far more commonly referred to, even by locals, as Oludeniz.

After a chance to swim and lunch and enjoy this pretty spot, we sail to Gemiler Island where we can hike to the 6th C. ruins of a Byzantine monastic society. This tiny islet is sprinkled with ruined monastic buildings, Byzantine dwellings and churches -- one believed to have been

the original burial place of St. Nicholas, the inspiration behind Father Christmas.

Overnight on Gulet.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 7 Aga Bay - Lydea - Hamam Cove

This morning we can hike from Aga Bay to Lydea (3 hrs, optional), an ancient Lycian Oracle reached only by foot. This is one of the most spectacular hikes in the region -- high, rocky ridge tops with pine forests, shepherds' homesteads, and the aroma of natural herb gardens of oregano, thyme and sage lingering in the air.

We then continue to Hamam Cove, a wonderful stop with unbelievably beautiful sea and coastal scenery. In a typical Mediterranean fashion, local people are convinced that Cleopatra once swam here and so the site is often called Cleopatra Cove. We can swim and snorkel, searching for sponges, octopus and fish. An easy walk takes us along the cove. Then we sail towards our anchoring point for the evening.

Overnight on Gulet.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 8 Arrival in Fethiye: Disembark

Today we sail into Fethiye where we bid our gulet crew farewell and retire to a hotel.

Fethiye is a sizeable-yet-relaxed town with a friendly vibe and international atmosphere. It has grown from a modest trading port/fishing village and fertile tomato growing area to a rapidly expanding vibrant town and tourist holiday destination which offers many things to many people, from those with an interest in history and nature to those looking for sun, sea and great food.

While in Fethiye we will visit the cave tombs, located in the cliff on the south side of town. We will also see the Lycian sarcophagus -- there are a number of stone sarcophagii carved in typical Lycian style scattered around the town, with one of the most preserved ones lying in the yard of town governor's office. The Fethiye Amphitheatre, a coastal amphitheatre dating back to Hellenistic times (as far back as Alexander the Great), is also worth a look.

Overnight in Fethiye.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 9 Fethiye - Bodrum: Crusader Castle of St Peter

After breakfast we drive to Bodrum, site of one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World: the Mausoleum. This was also the birthplace of the Greek historian Herodotus. Today Bodrum's whitewashed houses scattered on the hillside overlook the perfect natural harbour. It's delightful to wander along the palm-lined marina in the evening and marvel at the yachts from all over the world.

This afternoon we visit 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.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 10 Bodrum - Didyma - Kusadasi

After a free morning in Bodrum, we travel northward along the Aegean coast, on winding roads through fields and olive groves, toward Kusadasi, a beautiful port city with a small island fortress. En route we stop at Didyma, an ancient Ionian shrine and the most renowned oracle of the Hellenic world, containing a temple and an oracle of Apollo.

Kusadasi has rapidly developed into one of the most popular seaside resorts of the coast and was most probably founded on the ancient site of Neopolis. Because of its beautiful location and its excellent hotels, it is an ideal base for Ephesus.

Overnight in Kusadasi.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 11 Kusadasi - Ephesus Site Tour - Istanbul

Today we visit Ephesus, one of the highlights of any visit to Turkey. During its Golden Age, the city was adorned with splendid monuments, theatres, agoras and libraries. The protector 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. We also include the special Terrace Houses section, which provides fascinating insight into family life during the Roman period.

In addition to the main site of Ephesus we will visit the superb Ephesus Museum. We also visit the traditional town of Selcuk with its many beautiful buildings, including the Isa Bey Mosque (built in 1307), remains of old Turkish baths, and a hill crowned by the Ayasoluk Fortress.

We proceed to Izmir for a late afternoon flight to Istanbul.

Overnight in Istanbul.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 12 Istanbul: Topkapi Palace

This morning we visit the Topkapi Palace, the great palace of the Ottoman sultans from the mid-15th to the early 19th century. It was from this vast complex of buildings that the mighty Ottoman Empire was administered. Today it is a huge museum containing ceremonial robes in silk and gold thread, Japanese and Chinese porcelain, European clocks, miniature paintings depicting Ottoman courtly life, and one of the largest jewelry collections in the world. Highlights of the jewelry collection include one of the world's largest diamonds, the Spoonmakers diamond, and the Topkapi dagger with three enormous emeralds in the handle.

The afternoon is free for you to explore Istanbul, a city crowded with beautiful mosques, churches and palaces. You may want to visit the Topkapi Harem before leaving the palace. Perhaps stroll down to the Spice Bazaar (Egyptian Bazaar), where spices, dried fruits, cheeses, sausages, jams, nuts, lokum (Turkish Delight) and other edibles fill many of the shops. This bazaar is located right at the southern end of the Galata Bridge on the Golden Horn in the Eminönü district, right next to the New Mosque (Yeni Cami). Alternatively, you may take an optional ferry ride up the Bosphorous towards the Black Sea. Along the shores of the Bosphorous are many summer palaces and old wooden houses dating from Ottoman times. Your Tour Leader will help you plan your day.

Overnight in Istanbul.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 13 Departure

Departure from Istanbul.

Canada/USA
1-800-665-3998

Email
sales@adventures-abroad.com

IYI YOLCULUKLAR/BON VOYAGE!

Included Meal(s): Breakfast