Tour Code
XTUR

ADVENTURESABROAD

Turkiye: Cappadocia & Lycian Way Walking Tour

Cave Churches, Ancient Paths & Turquoise Bays

14 days

Created on: 13 Nov, 2026

Day 1 Arrival Kayseri - Transfer to Cappadocia

Welcome to Turkiye, where volcanic landscapes and ancient civilizations create one of the world's most distinctive regions. We arrive at Kayseri Airport in central Anatolia and transfer approximately one hour to Cappadocia, the extraordinary realm of fairy chimneys and cave dwellings that has captivated travellers since the Silk Road era.

Our accommodation for the next three nights is a traditional cave hotel—rooms carved directly into Cappadocia's soft volcanic tuff, maintaining the region's architectural heritage while providing modern comforts. These atmospheric spaces stay naturally cool, with thick stone walls and vaulted ceilings that have sheltered inhabitants for centuries.

We gather this evening for our first meal together.

Overnight in Cappadocia (Goreme/Urgup).

Included Meal(s): Dinner

Day 2 Cappadocia - Rose Valley & Fairy Chimneys

For those interested, an optional hot air balloon flight launches before dawn, weather-permitting. Dozens of balloons rise simultaneously over the valleys as first light reveals the landscape's full strangeness—a geological fantasia of cones, towers, and mushroom formations extending to distant volcanic peaks.

After breakfast, we set out on foot through Cappadocia's signature terrain. Our walk from Red Valley through Cavusin to Pasabaglar follows ancient paths between formations that seem almost deliberate in their architecture.

The story begins 25 million years ago when eruptions from Mount Erciyes and Mount Hasan buried this plateau in volcanic ash hundreds of metres thick. As the ash compressed into soft tuff, wind and water carved the extraordinary shapes we walk among today—pinnacles, pillars, and cones rising 15-20 m (50-65 ft), their caps harder stone that protected softer layers beneath.

But geology alone doesn't explain Cappadocia. The tuff proved soft enough to carve with bronze tools, and for millennia people hollowed homes, churches, and entire underground cities from this rock. We explore cave churches where Byzantine Christians painted intricate frescoes—Christ Pantocrator, the Virgin and Child, saints and angels adorning vaulted ceilings in spaces carved by hand.

At Pasabaglar (Monks Valley), the fairy chimneys reach their most fantastic forms—some with multiple caps balanced improbably on narrow stems, looking more like sculptures than geology. Hermit monks once inhabited these towers, living in carved cells high above the valley floor. We visit a traditional pottery workshop in Avanos, where craftsmen demonstrate techniques passed down through generations, shaping the red clay from the Kizilirmak River into distinctive Cappadocian ceramics.

Walk Summary: 4 hours. 9 km/5.6 mi, 150 m/490 ft elevation gain, 200 m/655 ft descent. Moderate terrain, natural paths and rocky volcanic sections.

Overnight in Cappadocia.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 3 Cappadocia - Ihlara Valley & Underground City

This morning we transfer 45 minutes to Ihlara Valley, where the Melendiz River has carved a dramatic gorge through volcanic plateau. Our walk follows the river through a canyon that reaches 150 m (490 ft) deep in places, its walls riddled with cave churches dating from the 7th to 13th centuries.

The valley served as a retreat for Byzantine monks who carved churches directly into the gorge walls and decorated them with frescoes. Unlike the geometric patterns in Goreme's churches, many here feature narrative scenes—Daniel in the lion's den, the journey to Bethlehem, the Last Supper—painted in colours still vivid after centuries in cool, dry caves. We visit several churches accessible by carved steps, their interiors surprisingly spacious despite appearing as mere holes from below.

After lunch by the river, we continue to Derinkuyu, one of Cappadocia's most remarkable underground cities. Archaeologists estimate this subterranean complex could shelter 20,000 people across eight levels descending nearly 50 m (165 ft) into bedrock. We explore four accessible floors, moving through tunnels connecting living quarters, storage rooms, wine cellars, stables, and even chapels—all carved from solid rock.

These weren't hiding places but sophisticated refuge cities used during invasions throughout history. Massive circular stones could be rolled across passages to seal sections, ventilation shafts carried air to the deepest levels, and communication wells allowed messages between floors. Standing in chambers that functioned as temporary cities makes Cappadocia's ancient inhabitants feel less like distant historical figures and more like ingenious survivors.

Walk Summary: 4 hours. 8 km/5 mi total, 250 m/820 ft descent, 150 m/490 ft ascent. River gorge path, natural terrain, carved steps.

Overnight in Cappadocia.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 4 Cappadocia - Fly to Antalya

Our morning walk through Love Valley provides a final encounter with Cappadocia's surreal geology. The valley's proper name is White Valley, but the shapes of its fairy chimneys—some reaching 15 m (50 ft)—earned it a more suggestive nickname. The walk descends gradually through formations ranging from slender pinnacles to massive towers, with views across valleys we've explored over previous days. Depending on the season, a river flows through the valley, its course marked by the majestically formed rock formations and fairy chimneys that give this landscape its otherworldly character.

After a chance to grab some lunch, we transfer to Kayseri Airport for our afternoon flight to Antalya on Turkiye's Mediterranean coast. The contrast proves dramatic—from Cappadocia's high plateau and volcanic stone to the Turquoise Coast's azure waters and pine-forested mountains. Antalya, Turkiye's fastest-growing city, serves as gateway to the ancient region of Lycia, where we'll spend our remaining days.

We check into our Antalya hotel and reconvene for our evening meal. The rest of the evening is yours to explore the old quarter or simply rest after our travels.

Walk Summary: 3 hours. 7 km/4.3 mi, 300 m/985 ft descent. Easy to moderate, natural paths through Love Valley.

Overnight in Antalya.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 5 Antalya - Fethiye via Saklikent Gorge & Tlos

Leaving Antalya, we drive west into the Taurus Mountains toward Fethiye. Our route takes us to Saklikent Gorge, Europe's second-longest canyon, where the Esen River has carved through limestone to create a chasm reaching 300 m (985 ft) deep. We walk along boardwalks suspended above the river, then wade through shallow sections where the gorge narrows to just a few metres wide, walls soaring vertically overhead.

Continuing toward the coast, we stop at Tlos, one of Lycia's most ancient and important cities. The site sprawls across a hillside with remains spanning millennia—Roman theatre and baths, Lycian rock tombs carved into cliff faces, Ottoman fortress ruins crowning the acropolis. Tlos claimed to be the oldest city in Lycia, and while such claims often prove unprovable, pottery finds here date to the Bronze Age.

We reach Fethiye by late afternoon. This harbour town sits on the site of ancient Telmessos, Lycia's most important city in Hellenistic times. The most visible remnants are the rock tombs carved into cliffs above the town—the Tomb of Amyntas, a 4th-century BC temple facade cut into sheer rock, dominates the skyline. We have time for a brief walk through the harbour area and old town before settling into our hotel, which will serve as our base for the next four nights.

Overnight in Fethiye.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 6 Fethiye: Kayakoy Ghost Village

A 15-minute transfer brings us to Kayakoy, the abandoned Greek village that stands as one of Turkiye's most poignant historical sites. Until 1923, this was Levissi, a thriving community of over 2,000 Greek Orthodox residents living in stone houses that climbed the hillside. The 1924 population exchange between Greece and Turkiye—part of the treaty ending the Greco-Turkish War—forced the entire Greek population to leave. The Muslim Turks who were supposed to replace them never came, and Kayakoy has stood empty for a century.

We walk through streets where doors and windows gape open, roofless houses revealing sky. Two churches remain largely intact—their walls still showing fragments of frescoes, their bells long silent. The village's position on the hillside means every step upward reveals new perspectives—houses cascading down the slope, the Mediterranean visible beyond pine forests, the sense of lives interrupted.

From Kayakoy, we follow an ancient Lycian path toward the coast, walking through pine forest with views toward Oludeniz lagoon—that impossibly turquoise bay featured in countless Turkish tourism posters. The path descends gradually along the ancient Lycian road beneath pine trees, with glimpses of bays below. We arrive at Oludeniz beach where we have time for swimming in the lagoon's warm, calm waters.

The optional tandem paragliding from Babadag (Mount Baba) launches from 1,960 m (6,430 ft) elevation—one of the world's premier paragliding sites. The flight lasts 30-45 minutes, circling over Oludeniz before landing on the beach.

Walk Summary: 2 hours. Kayakoy village exploration and coastal path, 150 m/490 ft descent. Natural paths, some steep sections.

Overnight in Fethiye.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 7 Lycian Way - Ovacik to Kozagac

The Lycian Way, marked with red and white blazes, stretches 540 km (335 mi) along Turkiye's southwestern coast—one of the world's ten most spectacular long-distance walks according to The Sunday Times. We tackle sections considered the route's highlights over the next several days.

This morning's walk begins near Ovacik village at 350 m (1,150 ft) elevation, climbing through pine forest with expanding views over Oludeniz lagoon and the whole region. The trail follows goat paths and ancient roads that connected Lycian cities millennia ago, now part of a long-distance hiking route established in 1999. After a climb from the slope of Babadag, we reach Kozagac village where we enjoy lunch at a traditional village house—simple home cooking served family-style in a garden setting.

After lunch, we descend to the coast for a boat excursion along the Turquoise Coast from Oludeniz to Butterfly Valley. Our vessel navigates pristine bays accessible only by sea, stopping for swimming in waters so clear that anchor chains remain visible 10 m (33 ft) below. The boat enters Butterfly Valley, a dramatic gorge where rare Jersey Tiger butterflies congregate in late spring and summer.

The afternoon on the water provides welcome contrast to morning's exertion, and we return to Fethiye by early evening (dinner on your own this evening).

Walk Summary: 4 hours. 9 km/5.6 mi, 400 m/1,310 ft ascent, 350 m/1,150 ft descent. Natural paths through pine forest, some steep climbing.

Overnight in Fethiye.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Lunch

Day 8 Lycian Way - Faralya to Kabak Beach

We start directly from our hotel, following the Lycian Way south along spectacular coastal cliffs. The trail brings us to viewpoints overlooking Butterfly Valley—the steep-sided canyon we visited by boat yesterday—now seen from above where the gorge cuts inland from the sea. The valley takes its name from the Jersey Tiger butterflies (Euplagia quadripunctaria) that shelter here during summer months, though the dramatic geology would be impressive even without its lepidopteran residents.

Continuing south along the coast, we reach Aktas beach for a rest stop and lunch break. Our walk continues with sea views to our right as the trail traces clifftops high above the Mediterranean. To our right, pine-forested mountains rise into the Taurus range; to our left, the sea extends toward Greek islands visible on clear days. This section represents the Lycian Way at its finest—ancient footpaths connecting coastal villages, views that shift with every turn, the sense of following routes traders and fishermen have used for millennia.

Our destination is Kabak, a small bay with a pebble beach backed by steep cliffs. The valley here remains relatively undeveloped—a few simple guesthouses and restaurants, but no large hotels or resorts. We have time for swimming in the bay's clear waters before returning to Fethiye.

Walk Summary: 5 hours. 11 km/6.8 mi along coastal cliffs, 150 m/490 ft elevation changes. Rocky paths with sea views, moderate terrain.

Overnight in Fethiye.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 9 Fethiye - Patara via Xanthos & Letoon

Leaving Fethiye, we drive south into the Lycian heartland. Our route takes us to Xanthos, the ancient Lycian capital and now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The city's name appears in Homer's Iliad—Sarpedon led Xanthian warriors to Troy—and archaeological evidence confirms settlement dating to the 8th century BC.

Xanthos witnessed repeated sieges and destruction, most famously in 546 BC when Persian forces under Harpagus attacked. Rather than surrender, the Xanthian men killed their families and burned the city, then fought to the death. This act of mass suicide rather than submission became legendary—the historian Herodotus recorded it with a mixture of horror and admiration. The city was rebuilt, destroyed again by Brutus in 42 BC under similar circumstances, then rebuilt once more.

We explore the site with our guide, seeing the Roman theatre, the Lycian pillar tombs that are Xanthos's most distinctive features, and the Nereid Monument—a temple-tomb combining Greek and Lycian architectural traditions.

From Xanthos, we continue to nearby Letoon (also known as Pinar), the religious sanctuary that served all Lycian cities. Three temples dedicated to Leto, Apollo, and Artemis stand in a once-sacred grove. The site's most significant discovery came in 1973—a trilingual inscription in Lycian, Greek, and Aramaic that proved essential to deciphering the Lycian language. Letoon is one of the six most important ancient cities of the Lycian federation.

We continue to Patara village where we settle into our accommodation for two nights. The rest of the afternoon is free to explore Patara's small village center or relax before dinner.

Overnight in Patara.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 10 Delikkemer Aqueduct & Patara

From our accommodation, we transfer to Delikkemer, where a Roman aqueduct marches across the landscape on arches reaching 20 m (65 ft) high. Built to supply water to ancient Patara from mountain springs near Uzumlu village at the foot of the mountains, the aqueduct represents Roman engineering at its most impressive—gravity-fed channels carrying water across valleys and hills, some sections tunnelled through rock, others crossing open ground on these dramatic arches.

We walk following sections of the aqueduct route, eventually arriving at Patara itself. This was Lycia's principal port and the capital of the Lycian League—a democratic federation of cities that some historians consider one of the first republics in history. Saint Paul changed ships here on his journey to Rome. The city also claims to be the birthplace of Saint Nicholas (yes, that Saint Nicholas, who served as bishop of nearby Myra).

The ruins sprawl across a wide area behind what is now Turkiye's longest beach—18 km (11 mi) of uninterrupted sand. With our guide's explanation, we explore the theatre (seating 6,000), the triple-arched Arch of Modestus marking the city entrance, the bouleuterion where the Lycian League assembly met, temples, baths, main streets, and other ruins. Sand has buried and preserved much of Patara—archaeologists have only excavated a fraction of the site.

After touring the ruins, we have time at Patara's sandy beach for swimming and lunch. The beach remains remarkably undeveloped, protected as a nesting site for loggerhead sea turtles.

Walk Summary: 4 hours. 12 km/7.5 mi following aqueduct route, 200 m/655 ft elevation loss. Mix of ancient paths and country tracks.

Overnight in Patara.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 11 Patara - Kas: Coastal Walk to Limanagzi & Time at Leisure

This morning we transfer to the charming coastal town of Kas, where we'll spend the night. Today offers flexibility to explore at your own pace. For those wanting to stay active, an optional morning coastal walk to Limanagzi follows clifftop paths eastward, descending to a pebble beach in a protected cove. The walk rewards with swimming opportunities and coastal scenery.

Beyond this morning hike, Kas itself rewards wandering. Stone Ottoman houses line narrow streets, bougainvillea spills over walls, cafes fill with locals drinking tea and playing backgammon. The small Hellenistic theatre overlooks the harbour—one of the few ancient structures remaining from ancient Antiphellos, though Lycian rock tombs carved into cliffs above town provide reminders of deeper history.

Other options can be arranged through your tour leader in advance: boat excursions to Kekova's sunken city ruins (visible underwater in clear bays), or the ferry to Greek Kastellorizo island just 6 km (3.7 mi) offshore.

The afternoon remains free for relaxation, shopping (carpets, jewellery, ceramics), or simply enjoying lunch and a swim from the town beach. We reconvene this evening for dinner and a chance to share your day's adventures.

Optional Walk Summary: 3 hours return. 5 km/3 mi one way, 150 m/490 ft descent to beach. Clifftop paths, moderate terrain.

Overnight in Kas.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 12 Kas - Adrasan via Demre & Myra

We drive to Demre, ancient Myra, stopping first at the Church of Saint Nicholas. This 4th-century bishop became the prototype for Santa Claus through various cultural evolutions, though the original Nicholas was known for his generosity to the poor rather than Christmas deliveries. The church preserves his tomb (though Italian merchants stole his relics to Bari in 1087) and frescoes depicting his life and miracles.

Myra itself sits just outside modern Demre. The site's two most impressive features are the Roman theatre, well-preserved with ornate stage building decoration, and the cliff necropolis—dozens of Lycian rock tombs carved into sheer rock face, rising in tiers like apartment buildings. The largest tombs mimic the facade of wooden Lycian houses, complete with carved beams and doors that never open.

We also visit the Lycian Civilization Museum in Demre, opened in 2019 to present the history and culture of this ancient people who inhabited southwestern Anatolia for over a millennium before being absorbed into the Roman world.

From Demre, we continue along the coast to Adrasan, a small beach resort that will serve as our base for tonight. The setting is quintessential Turkish Mediterranean—pine-covered mountains descending to a long beach, mountains protecting the bay from winds.

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Overnight in Adrasan.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 13 Adrasan - Chimera Eternal Flames & Olympos - Antalya

Today combines natural phenomenon with ancient ruins and mythology. We begin in Ulupinar village at 550 m (1,805 ft) elevation, walking among centuries-old plane trees near waterfalls, descending through traces of the ancient Lycian road between pine trees thick with oxygen. First we descend 150 m (490 ft), then climb 150 m and 200 m (655 ft) more to reach the Chimera (Yanartas in Turkish)—eternal flames that burn from vents in the mountainside, fed by natural gas seeping through fissures in the rock.

The flames have burned for millennia, bright enough to be visible from sea at night—ancient sailors used them as a navigation beacon. Greek mythology explained them as the breath of the Chimera, the fire-breathing monster with a lion's head, goat's body, and serpent's tail that terrorized Lycia until the hero Bellerophon, riding the winged horse Pegasus, killed it. Modern geology offers less dramatic explanations involving methane, but the flames burning from bare rock—some 30 separate vents scattered across the hillside—remain genuinely eerie, especially after dark. We listen to the mythological Chimera legend that has not been extinguished for thousands of years.

After a short walk, we meet our vehicle and transfer to Cirali Beach for rest and a sea break at this protected turtle nesting beach.

In the afternoon, we visit ancient Olympos, a Lycian and Roman city now largely overgrown in forest along a stream valley that empties into the sea. Ruins emerge from vegetation—theatre, baths, temple walls, a Byzantine church, sarcophagi scattered among pine trees. The site was never fully excavated and isn't restored—you encounter it as early explorers did, discovering walls and tombs half-buried in forest.

After our visit to Olympos, we depart for Antalya, Turkiye's gateway to the Mediterranean coast and the endpoint of the Lycian Way. We check into our Antalya hotel and convene for our last meal together.

Walk Summary: 3.5 hours morning walk. 7 km/4.3 mi total, 450 m/1,475 ft total elevation gain (150 m descent, 150 m ascent, 200 m descent). Forest paths with oxygen-rich pine trees, mostly easy with 35% moderate sections.

Overnight in Antalya.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 14 Departure

Our final morning in Antalya is at leisure. Depending on flight schedules, you may have time to explore the old quarter (Kaleici) with its Ottoman-era harbour and narrow streets, arrange your own breakfast at a local cafe, or simply relax at the hotel before your travels begin.

We transfer to Antalya Airport for departures. Our journey ends here—from Cappadocia's surreal volcanic landscapes to the Lycian Coast's ancient paths, from underground cities to eternal flames, Turkiye has revealed itself in layers.

Bon Voyage! Iyi yolculuklar!

Included Meal(s): Breakfast