

EXPLORE!

Turkey in Depth

15 days

Turkey - Trip code TU



Turkey in Depth

Turkey is a country of contrasting landscapes and immense cultural riches. This all-encompassing trip takes-in the cosmopolitan city of Istanbul; explores rich ancient sites, such as Aphrodisias and Ephesus; discovers the unusual landscapes of Pamukkale and Cappadocia and visits the World War I battlefields of Gallipoli. Our journey also takes us along the 'Turquoise Coast' of Lycia, with its stunning beaches and quaint seaside towns.

Trip highlights

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

TRIP PACE:

Full on

Full on paced trips are for travellers who like their holidays packed with activities and experiences, moving on quickly from place to place with lots of early starts and long, busy days. Some may find them tiring, but others get a buzz from packing their precious holiday-time as chock-a-block full of new experiences as possible!

GROUP SIZE:

12 - 18

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Join trip in Istanbul

On arrival in Istanbul, we will check in to our conveniently-located hotel, within walking distance of many of the cultural and historical sites in the Sultanahmet district. As Constantinople, the city was the capital of both the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires, so today it is steeped in history and fascinating architecture. Modern day Istanbul also has much to offer its visitors, not least its famous cuisine and budding cafe culture. Depending on the time of your flight or if you're extending your stay by a night then we'd recommend visiting Istanbul's Grand Bazaar today, as it is closed on a Sunday, so there won't be the opportunity to go tomorrow.



Accommodation: Monaco Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Walking tour of Istanbul including the Blue Mosque

This morning we'll get our first chance to try a traditional Turkish breakfast which usually consists of fresh cucumbers, tomatoes, olives and occasionally fruit. Along with a variety of yogurts, cheese and bread. We then explore the 'Old City' on foot, visiting the famous Blue Mosque, the opulent Topkapi Palace and the historic hub of Sultanahmet Square. This afternoon is free for you to explore at your own pace. You may choose to visit the impressive 6th century Sunken Palace cisterns or the great Hagia Sofia, which reined as the greatest church in Christendom for 900 years. Alternatively, there is the chance to take a boat trip on the Bosphorus, offering stunning views of the Istanbul skyline. To appreciate the wonderful skyline of domes and minarets further, you may opt to climb the Galata Tower. This evening, you might choose to enjoy Istanbul's nightlife, with its large selection of restaurants, bars and entertainment. Your Explore Leader will be able to offer you advice based on your preferences.



Accommodation: Monaco Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 3 - Travel to Ankara; visit Ataturk's Mausoleum and the Museum of Anatolian Civilisations

Leaving Turkey's largest city behind us, we head for the capital of Ankara. Our journey will take approximately six hours, but we travel through interesting countryside and have plenty of breaks. During the summer months, we are likely to pass through huge expanses of sunflowers - an important oil crop in the country. When we get to Ankara, we will visit the impressive Mausoleum of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. This monumental building sits high above the city and honours the highly-respected leader of Turkey's fight for independence, widely regarded as the founder of modern Turkey. We'll also visit the superb Museum of Anatolian Civilisations, which gives a fantastic overview of Turkey's complex history. This evening, our centrally-located hotel provides an excellent base from which to explore the capital's restaurants and bars.



Accommodation: Ilksan-Deha Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - Visit Hacibektas Museum en route to Urgup; see Kaymakli underground city

This morning, we set off on our journey to Cappadocia, stopping en route in Hacibektas. The museum here once housed the famous Bektashi Dervish sect and is now recreated as it would have looked during the 13th century. An hour's further drive takes us to Urgup - our base for the next two nights from which we will explore the lunar landscape of Cappadocia. This area is famed for its unique geological formations and a history that stretches back to before the Hittites (2000 BC). This afternoon we visit Kaymakli Underground City. Built by Christians escaping Arab oppression and once home to 3,500 people, this troglodyte cave-city is one of the largest of 34 similar excavations in Cappadocia. Built under the Citadel of Kaymakli, it contains nearly 100 tunnels on eight subterranean floors. We will explore the four that are open to the public, containing stables, a church and storage places. After a busy day exploring you might like to try a popular local yoghurt drink called, ayran, it has an unusual salty and soured milk flavour.



Accommodation: Tassaray Vera Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 5 - Full day in Cappadocia

Later this morning we have the option of taking a three-hour walk through the remarkable Red and Rose Valleys, helping us to gain a better appreciation of this landscape. Formed by volcanic eruptions which covered the valleys with mud, ash and blocks of hard rock, over the ages this volcanic 'tufa' was sculpted by erosion into strange and improbable shapes. Byzantine hermits settled in this area and carved churches, houses, fortresses and even complete underground cities into these cone formations known as fairy-tale chimneys. This afternoon we visit Uchisar Castle, where rooms are carved into this massive rock on the top of the Uchisar citadel. From its peak, magnificent views can be gained of the whole region including the valleys that we walked through yesterday. We also spend time in the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the Goreme Open Air Museum, where we will explore its many rock-carved churches and monastic buildings; some of which feature a stunning collection of wall paintings.



Accommodation: Tassaray Vera Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 6 - Konya, home to the Whirling Dervishes en route to Egirdir

Leaving Cappadocia this morning, our first stop is the 13th century Sultanhani Caravansarai - once the largest roadside inn in Turkey, supporting the flow of commerce between the East and the West. We then drive for a further 2 hours to Konya - Turkey's holiest city and the home of the Mevlana sect, better known as the Whirling Dervishes. Here, we will visit the Mevlana Museum to learn more about Sufism and Whirling Dervish tradition. Later this afternoon, a drive of a couple of hours takes us to our night stop at the beautiful lakeside town of Egirdir. Here, you may have time to take a stroll along the lake shores or purchase some of the rose perfume the region is famous for, before watching the sun set over the lake.



Accommodation: Altingol Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 7 - Journey to Kas via the ancient town of Olympos

This morning we head towards the illustrious ancient town of Olympos. Although its early history is shrouded in mystery, we do know that it was an important Lycian city by the 2nd century BC and that the Olympians worshipped Hephaestus (Vulcan), the god of fire. Today, only fragmentary ruins are left in a lush, overgrown site overlooking the tropical coastline. We will enjoy a short, but steep uphill walk through forest to the 'Chimaera' eternal flame, before having the opportunity to enjoy a refreshing dip in the sea - don't forget your swim wear and a towel. Those who would prefer not to join this walk can choose to relax in the cafe at the bottom of the hill. Our journey continues to the unspoilt coastal town of Kas - our base for the next two nights.



Accommodation: Kekova Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast


DAY 8 - In Kas with the chance to sea kayak or visit Xanthos

With its old Greek houses and their picturesque balconies, the tiny seaport of Kas is one of the most beautiful on the Turkish Riviera. Today has been left free for you to relax and soak up the town's charming atmosphere or take part in an optional activity. You could take a boat trip to see the sunken ruins at Kekova or try your hand at sea kayaking. Kas is also a great place to pick up souvenirs, but don't forget to haggle! For a little more culture, it is possible to arrange a trip to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the ancient city of Xanthos.



Accommodation: Kekova Hotel (or similar)

 Standard Hotel

 Single room available

 Meals Provided: Breakfast


DAY 9 - Boat ride to Caunos and Iztuzu Beach; arrive in Dalyan

Today's early morning drive to Dalyan allows us to enjoy a gentle riverboat trip through the reeds of the Koycegiz River, looking out for loggerhead turtles in this serene setting. After viewing the rock-cut tombs of ancient Caunos from the water, we step onto dry land to explore the ruins further, which date back to 400 BC. Once again, we recommend packing your swimming costume today, as we have the opportunity for a dip in the inviting turquoise sea at Iztuzu Beach before heading back to our hotel in Kas.



Accommodation: Hotel Caria Royal (or similar)

 Standard Hotel

 Single room available

 Meals Provided: Breakfast


DAY 10 - Visit the ancient sites of Pamukkale and Hierapolis


Today we drive for about four hours to our hotel in Pamukkale. After spending the early afternoon relaxing by the pool, we will head out to explore this area known as the 'cotton castle,' taking its name from the white calcareous concretions deposited by mineral springs. Our first stop is the sacred site of Hierapolis - an ancient spa town with well-preserved Roman baths, tombs and an impressive theatre. People have been making the most of Hierapolis' thermal waters since the 2nd century BC and, as recently as the mid 20th century, hotels were being constructed on top of its priceless ruins. Luckily, UNESCO World Heritage status has saved it from further damage. We move on to view one of Turkey's most impressive natural wonders - the 'Frozen Waterfall'. A boardwalk offers us spectacular views of the unusual white cliff face with crystal blue pools and the huge valley below. Don't miss Cleopatra's Pool - an oasis of beauty with a mirror-like clarity that allows us to see deep down to the ruins below.



Accommodation: Venus Hotel (or similar)

 Standard Hotel

 Swimming pool available

 Single room available

 Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 11 - Visit Aphrodisias Greco-Roman site; arrive in Selcuk

Today we visit the Greco-Roman site of Aphrodisias - one of the most interesting and earliest sites in the region. The cult of Aphrodite, the goddess of love, had its most important temple here and the city also established itself as an artistic centre, inspiring some of the finest Carian sculptures. Many of these can be seen in the impressive museum on the site. The athletics stadium is one of the largest and best preserved from the classical world. Later, a three hour drive takes us to Selcuk, our base for two nights.



Accommodation: Cenka Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 12 - Explore Ephesus; chance to visit Selcuk Museum

Today we visit Selcuk's historic neighbour, the great Greco-Roman city of Ephesus. Once visited by Mark Anthony and Cleopatra, and also by St. Paul, inspiring the Epistle to the Ephesians, this famous Asia Minor seaport reached its zenith in the 2nd century AD. Ephesus became one of the main cultural and economic centres of the ancient world until it went into decline after the 7th century. Driving on a short distance, we will visit the famous Temple of Artemis, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, before returning to Selcuk for a free afternoon. In your own time, you may choose to explore St John's Basilica, the Isa Bey Mosque or Selcuk Museum. Alternatively, you may prefer to enjoy a bit of shopping or relaxation, soaking up the town's laid-back vibe. Selcuk is the ideal place to people-watch as you sip Turkish tea with the backgammon-playing locals in the many open air café's and parks.



Accommodation: Cenka Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 13 - See Pergamum Acropolis and Troy en route to Canakkale

Continuing our journey north past endless olive groves and pomegranate trees, we come to the Greco-Roman remains of Pergamum, now the typical Turkish town of Bergama. This is the place that gave its name to the word 'parchment', for which it was famous throughout the Middle East. We will visit the ancient Acropolis and later continue to the ancient site of Troy where, according to legend, the artful Ulysses devised the Wooden Horse strategy, thereby ending the 10 year Trojan War. Here, nine ruined cities, one on top of the other, have been uncovered, going back some 5,000 years. Troy VI is the assumed walled city of King Priam (1800-1275 BC), celebrated by the blind Greek poet Homer in the Iliad and all but lost in legend until unearthed by amateur archaeologist Schliemann in 1871. Later this afternoon, we drive a short distance to our hotel for the night, in Guzelyal.



Accommodation: Comfort Anzac Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 14 - Travel to the Gallipoli Battlefields; return to Istanbul

This morning, we board a ferry to cross the Dardanelles Straits to the Gallipoli Peninsula. It was here in 1916 that, after much bloody hand-to-hand fighting and loss of life, the ill-fated Allied campaign was forced to concede victory to the Turks and withdraw. We will visit the cemeteries, memorials and Anzac Cove before following the shoreline of the Sea of Marmara back to Istanbul for our final evening.



Accommodation: Monaco Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 15 - Trip ends in Istanbul

Our trip ends in Istanbul this morning after breakfast.



Meals Provided: Breakfast



What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 14



Transport

Bus
Boat
Ferry



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader
Driver(s)



Accommodation

14 nights standard hotel

Trip information

Country information

Turkey Holidays & Tours

Climate

Evenings and early mornings can be cool in the early and late season (before mid May and after early October). During the winter, temperatures usually hover between 0 and 10 degrees, but are usually wet, particularly around the coast. Summers are hot and dry with refreshing sea breezes. It is often cooler on higher ground and in the mountains and can be cold at night, even in the summer. Seasonal weather patterns can be unpredictable.

Time difference to GMT

+3

Plugs

2 Pin Round

Religion

Islam, Christian

Language

Turkish

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

Istanbul - Ferryboat rides on the Bosphorus 10 Pounds. Istanbul - Aya Sofia 7 Pounds Urgup - Turkish Bath 50 Turkish Lira (approximately 20 Pounds). Kas - Sea Kayaking over sunken ruins of Kekova 35 to 80 Pounds dependent on numbers Iztuzu Beach - Sea Turtle Hospital 5 Pounds Xanthos - approximately 40 Pounds per person (prices vary depending on group size and may go up or down if above or below 3 people)

Clothing

The long Turkish summer can be hot, although much of our route follows the coastline which is freshened by sea breezes. In the spring and autumn, a warmer sweater is recommended for the evenings, as is lightweight rainwear. In the winter, good quality rainwear is more suitable as there is a good chance of encountering rain. Temperatures may drop below freezing at night so wrap warmly - layers are best. When visiting mosques, women should cover their head, shoulders and knees, so it's handy to pack a scarf. Men should also ensure their knees are covered.

Footwear

Walking boots or trainers with ankle supports are recommended for walks. Comfortable walking shoes will be useful for exploring some of the ancient sites and sandals for general wear. Plastic sandals are useful for protecting your feet against sea urchins on the rocks and you can also swim with them on.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and daypack. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself.

Equipment

Bring a water bottle, torch, sunblock, sunhat, sunglasses and insect repellent. We also recommend bringing your swimwear and a towel for those opportunities to swimming.

Tipping

Explore leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Explore Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Local crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognised part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. Accordingly, you should allow 15 Pounds for tipping. In order to make things easier for you, the Explore Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the trip.

Country Information

Turkey Holidays & Tours

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price

£7

Dinner price

£13

Beer price

£2.7

Water price

£1

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Turkish Lira.

Recommended Currency For Exchange

Major foreign currencies such as US Dollars, £Sterling and Euros can easily be changed. We advise against travelling with Travellers Cheques as commission rates are high. Other currencies can be exchanged in larger cities. We advise you to change money in Turkey as rates tend to be better.

Where To Exchange

Most major towns - your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival.

ATM Availability

ATMs are widely available throughout Turkey. To avoid large queues at the airport exchanges, you may wish to xchange some lira before arriving.

Credit Card Acceptance

In major restaurants.

Travellers Cheques

Not recommended.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus, Boat, Ferry

Accommodation notes

Booking a Single Room

All of our group tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual

travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. Please refer to the tour notes where the single room option availability is detailed on a night by night basis for this tour, and the price for the available nights is detailed on the dates & prices tab by departure date. For Self-Guided trips the Single Room supplement offers the option of a single room each and is charged per person. The Single Room supplement also applies to the third person in a party of three that will be accommodated in a single room.

Our hotel in Egirdir is in a lovely spot beside the lake and is cooled by the breeze across the water, however please note that the bedrooms do not have air-conditioning.

Essential information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice click [here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, click [here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Essential Information

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa Information

Turkey: Visas are required by UK citizens. We recommend that you obtain your visa online, prior to arrival at <https://www.evisa.gov.tr/en/> This will cost US\$20 and you will need a blank page in your passport for the stamp. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and Booking Conditions.

Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer click [here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange

appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. Read more about them here.

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Non refundable permits

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Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against tetanus, typhoid, infectious hepatitis and polio. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure.
