

# Turkey – The Aegean Sea and 3 of the 7 Wonders of the Ancient World

12 Days / 11 Nights

*Crossing the Sea of Marmara, The Islands of Rhodes, Patmos, Samos*

*Istanbul – Bandirma – Canakkale – Troy – Assos – Ayvacik – Edremit – Ayvalik – Bergama – Izmir – Kusadasi – Ephesus – Selcuk – Priene – Miletus – Didim – Bodrum – Marmaris – Pamukkale – Afyon – Kutahya – Bilecik – Iznik – Yalova - Istanbul*



## **Day 1:** \_\_\_\_\_ – *Istanbul*

Depending on the customs formalities, arrival, late at night, in Istanbul and accommodation at a hotel in the historical centre of the city.

**Istanbul 3+ Star Hotel BB**

**BB**

## **Day 2:** *Istanbul, The New Rome or The Gate of the Orient*

Breakfast. **Optionally** a 2 hours **cruise**, with a private boat, on the shores of Bosphorus or free time. During the cruise – which starts from the natural estuary **The Golden Horn** – you will admire: **Galata Bridge**, the **Bosphorus Straits** (which binds Europe to Asia and the Black Sea to the Sea of Marmara), **Galata Tower** from Galata Quarter, the ancient Pera, the traditional palaces and houses, painted red, named **Yaliii**, situated on the Asian shore, the huge bridges that bind the two continents, **Rumeli Hisari Fortress**, **Anadolu Hisari**, **Dolmabahce Palace** (Turkish Renaissance style), **Ciragan Saray** (today a luxury restaurant), **Cuciuksu Palace** (Turkish Rococo style), **Beylerbey Palace** (with Classical and Oriental Baroque elements), **The Military Navy Academy**, **Ortakoy Mosque**, a true jewel in stone that has become a symbol of the city, the old Hrisopolis today **Uskudar** (where Constantine defeated Licinius), **The Mosque** of Princess **Mihrisah**, the old customs, placed on a small island in the middle of the straits – **Kizkulesi** or **the Leander Tower**. The visit continues with **The Mosque of Soliman** or **Suleymania**, a masterpiece of the great architect Sinan, near the **University** and **The Mosque of Bayazid** near **the Great Bazaar**. Free time.

**Reccomendations:** **1.** **Optionally**, we can head for the **Camlicea Hill**, the highest hill in the city, full of antennas, from where you can admire one of the most beautiful sunsets in the world, the place from where Bosphorus seems to be a thin river. A tea or coffee in one of the restaurants, especially designed with Ottoman style furniture from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. **2.** The palace-museum **Cuciuksu** or **Beylerbey Saray**. **3.** The palace-museum **Dolmabahce**. **4.** A walking tour in **Pera**,

climbing the Galata Tower. **5.** A fish meal in **Kumkapi** or on the **Galata Bridge**, at one of the restaurants under the bridge, while admiring the passing ships. **6.** A stroll in **Parcul Yildiz** (behind the Ciragan Saray Palace). **7.** Yerebatan Sirneci, Roman underground water deposits.

**Accommodation in Istanbul 3+ star hotel, in the historical part of the city.**

**Istanbul 3+ star Hotel BB**

**BB**

### ***Day 3: Istanbul, the city of Constantine, the capital of Byzantium***

Breakfast. After breakfast, we begin the tour of the city founded by the emperor Constantine, the old Constantinople, also called „Deutea Roma” or „The New Rome”, capital of both the Byzantine and the Ottoman Empires, the only city in the world lying on two continents. You will visit: the former Orthodox cathedral **St. Sophia**, built on the site of the ancient temple of Apollo, turned into a mosque after the city was conquered by the Turks, today a museum. We will continue with a visit to **The Roman Hippodrome** built by Septimius Severus, **The Blue Mosque**, **The Hamam-Roxelana’s Baths**, **The Fountain of Ahmet III** and **Topkapi The Museum/ Palace** (entrance fee), which includes 4 courts. The first court (free access) with **the St. Irina Church** (closed to the public), the only church that has never been turned into a mosque, the second court where there are displayed carriages, Ming and Yang china, celadon vases and expensive items made of silver and ivory, miniatures, china of Sevre and of Maisen, the old Treasury, today an exhibition of weapons, The Divan, **The Harem** (separate ticket). Then the third court with the **Thesaurus**, The Audience Hall, the Library of sultan Ahmet III and the last court, the private court of the sultan’s family, with the **Bagdad** and **Revan** pavilions. Free time. You can have a meal or a cup of coffee on the palace terrace, from where the view of Bosphorus and the Marmara Sea will take your breath away. In the evening a tea and a hookah on one of the terraces near the secular cathedral of Aya Sophia, or in the **Arasta Bazaar**, a picturesque place, where you can watch for free a dervish show (in summer). The visits last for approximately 4 hours.

**Reccomendations:** Do not miss the **Kapalicesarsi** or **The Great Bazaar**, the largest covered bazaar in the world, historical monument. **2. The Egyptian Bazaar** or **the Spice Bazaar** (the 17<sup>th</sup> century) from Eminonu (harbour).

**Accommodation in Istanbul 3+ star hotel, in the historical part of the city.**

**Istanbul Hotel 3+ stele BB**

**BB**

### ***Day 4: Istanbul – Bandirma – Canakkale – Troia – Assos – Ayvalik***

Ferry: Istanbul – Bandirma approx. 2 hours/ Bandirma – Canakkale – Troia – Assos – Ayvalik – 369 km – 5 hours, 30 min.

Breakfast. Early in the morning you will go to the harbor in Istanbul to embark the ferryboat. You will cross **The Sea of Marmara**, approx. 2 hours, to Bandirma. You will continue the journey along the coast, towards **Canakkale**, on the shore of the **Hellespont** or of the **Dardanelles**, a strategic strait throughout history. You will visit the city of **Troy**, immortalized by Homer in the two epics, The Iliad and The Odyssey. You will continue the journey along the **Edremit Gulf** among the endless plantations of olives and we will stop in **Assos**, to visit the city-state, created after Plato’s model, described in his famous political work – *The Republic*. Aristotle has also lived in Assos – the most famous of Plato’s students – who founded a school of philosophy. A stroll between the columns still evokes the atmosphere in which the great orator and thinker lived... In Assos you will see: **The Temple of Athena**, built in 530 BC in Doric style, the

citadel, with rock walls of 14m in height and 3km in length, **The Ancient Theatre** spectacularly placed with view to the seaside and the almost isolated **old harbor**. You will visit the old village of **Brehamkale**, with typical houses and a lifestyle that hasn't significantly changed throughout the centuries, and which has become an oasis for the artists in Istanbul. Free time for a bath.

**Dinner and accommodation in the area of Ayvalik/Saramsakli/Kucukkuyu.**

**Ayvalik 3+4 star Hotel BB**

**HB**

### ***Day 5: Bergama – Izmir – Kusadasi***

Ayvalik – Bergama – Aliaga – Izmir – Kusadasi. 270 km, 4 hours.

Breakfast. Departure for Bergama where you will visit the two archaeological sites: **Akropol** and **Asklepion**. You will continue the journey to **Izmir**, the ancient Smirna and a short **walking tour of Izmir**, in passing. On the way to Bergama you will pass through **Ayvalik**, a fishing harbor situated in a brilliant gulf in front of the island of Lesbos. The old Ayvalik is a sleepy resort-town, with wooden houses, with winding alleys, reminding of Greece rather than Troy. An entirely Greek city up to 1923, Ayvalik offers the most beautiful lavender sunsets, which turn the island of Lesbos into a mysterious realm. You will continue the journey to Bergama. The great Hellenic city of **Bergama**, once was a centre of culture, commerce and medicine, that was in rivalry with the other Hellenic centres in the Mediterranean Sea. The old **Pergamon**, is the place where parchment was invented and the place of the famous Library that Antonius offered Cleoptra as a wedding gift and which was lost along with the rest of the Alexandrian collection.

On the **Akropol** you will see: **The Temple of Trajan**, the famous **Library of Pergamon**, **The Great Theatre** dramatically situated on the edge of a cliff, **The Temple of Zeus**, the altar of Zeus (the frizes are in Berlin). The visit continues with the **Asklepion**, the first complete resort for health recovery in history. Mineral springs, baths in sacred healing waters, psychotherapeutic treatment (dreams were being analyzed 2000 of years before Freud), theatre plays, relaxation after the stressful Greco-Roman life... The medicine school here has greatly influenced the medical developments both in the West and in the East. In Asklepion you will see: **Via Tecta** – The Sacred Way, **The Round Temple of Asclepios**, **The Theatre**, **The Library**, the springs and the **medical clinic**. Departure for Kusadasi.

**Arrival in Kusadasi, dinner and accommodation.**

**Kusadasi 4 star Hotel BB**

**HB**

### ***Day 6: Kusadasi – Ephesus\* – Selcuk – Kusadasi***

Approx. 50 km in total.

Breakfast. Free time for beach and bath in the famous resort of the Aegean Sea. Optional: (is Turkish monopol) a trip that lasts half a day, during which you will visit: the ancient **Ephesus**, **The House of Virgin Mary**, **St. John Church** from Selcuk built by the Emperor Justinian and one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world – **The Temple of Artemis at Ephesus\***. Short stop on the way for a tea and a „gozleme”- typical Turkish meal. Trip with a local guide. Or, optionally, you can go to the island of Samos (informative price - 40€) or on the Island of Patmos where St. John wrote the Gospels. The trips to Samos and Patmos lasts an entire day.

**Arrival in Kusadasi, dinner and accommodation.**

**Kusadasi 4 star Hotel BB**

**HB**

### **Day 7: Kusadasi – Priene – Milet – Didim – Kusadasi**

Kusadasi – Priene – Miletus – Didim – Kusadasi. Approx. 100 km, 1 hour and 45 min between the cities. In total, 3,5 hours.

Breakfast. Free time for beach and bath in the famous resort of the Aegean Sea. Optional: a one day trip during which you will visit the ancient cities of **Priene**, **Miletus** and the Oracle of **Didima**, or trip to the island of Samos or the island of Patmos. (1) **Priene** is spectacularly placed, on a slope above the Meander Valley, in the Mycale Mountains, pine forested, majestically presiding over the ruins. You will see: **The Theatre** in classical Hellenic style, **Agora**, **The Byzantine Church**, the house of Alexander the Great and **The Temple of Athena Polias**. The temple designed by the architect Pitheos (the one who has also designed The Mausoleum of Halicarnassus) was used as model of Ionic architecture for more than 2 centuries. (2) Departure for **Miletus**, the original homeland of Greek philosophy, of Thales, the most important port city of the Ionian League and the richest *emporium* (commercial port in a foreign country) in its time. In Miletus you will see: **The Theatre**, **The Baths of Faustina**, **The Gymnasium**, the **Karavansaray** and **The Ilyas Bey Mosque**, dating back to 1404, exquisitely decorated. (3) The last stop will be at **The Temple of Apollo (the god of the sun)** from **Dydima**, where you will also have a meal, in a restaurant in front of the famous oracle of the ancient world. The temple is the most impressive monument on the west coast of Ionia. Beach and bath in **Altinkum** (transtaled as Golden Sand) at a couple of miles from the temple, or in Kusadasi on the way back.

**Arrival in Kusadasi, dinner and accomodation.**

**Kusadasi 4 star Hotel BB**

**HB**

### **Day 8: Kusadasi – Bodrum/Halicarnassus\*- Marmaris**

Kusadasi – Bodrum - 146 km, 2 hours and 20 min.

Breakfast. Departure for the sunny Bodrum in the Kingdom of Caria. **Bodrum**, the ancient **Halicarnassus**, is Herodotus' homeland, the father of history. Here was born Herodotus, related to the Carian royal family, in the period of Greek-Persian wars. You will visit **The Mausoleum of Halicarnassus\***, one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world. Free time for a stroll in the harbor and in the bazaar, which is full of light, shops and fish restaurants, spread along the beach. The ones who are interested in history, can visit **St. Peter Castle** placed on a promontory in the harbor. It was built by the Knights of St. John (the knights of Rhodes), with materials originating from the Mausoleum. The work began in 1402 when the knights came here and continued until 1522 when it was finished. It was abandoned by the knights shortly, after the loss of the island of Rhodes. On the way to Marmaris, short stop in a pine forest, at a trout farm.

**Arrival in Marmaris, dinner and accomodation.**

**Marmaris 3+/4 star Hotel HB**

**HB**

### **Day 9: Rhodes\*, the island of roses and sun...**

Breakfast. Free time for beach and bath in Marmaris. Optional: a one day trip in **the island of Rhodes**. The island of the Knights of St. John, or the Hospitaller Order, is one of the most beautiful islands of Greece. The trip lasts for one day, during which you can visit: **the Mandrikos Port**, where **The Colossus of Rhodes\*** was once rising to the sky, one of the 7 wonders of the world, **the city of Johanists**, **the former hospital** in which the knights were offering

accommodation, today **The Museum of Archaeology**, **The Palace of the Great Master** of the Order, the defense walls of the city, imposingly tall and thick, **The Italian Church**, a gothic building from the time when Rhodes was under the jurisdiction of Venice. The narrow streets, full of magic, shops that offer all kinds of souvenirs, restaurants and shaded terraces, all give an irresistible charm to this island. It is one of the most beautiful Greek islands. You can go to the beach in the island of Rhodes, near the city. In the evening, return to Marmaris with the speed catamaran (1 hour). Recommendation: in the evening, hamam – authentic Turkish bath.

Recommendations for the ones who are not visiting Rhodes: **1) The Dalian Delta:** a tour on the channels of the Delta of the Dalian River, you will see the Licean tombs that are carved in rock, mud, beach and bath, (the huge turtles of 1m, you can only see them when they lay eggs, in spring, and the access in the Delta is then prohibited). **2) Jeep safary.** **3) The Island of Cleopatra**, you will see the ancient theatre on the island, beach and bath. **4) Cruise** along the shores. **5) Cruise** to Bodrum. **6) Trip to Knidos**, ancient Hellenic city, of fascinating beauty, on the Datca Peninsula. **7) A walk in Icimeler or Turunci** (there is a minibus from the centre). Or beach and bath in Marmaris. The optional trips above, are paid for in Marmaris at the local operators, they include lunch and they are very cheap, between 10 and 20 €.

#### **Dinner and accomodation in Marmaris**

**Marmaris 3+/4 star Hotel HB**

**HB**

#### ***Day 10: Marmaris – Aphrodisias – Pamukkale***

Marmaris – Mugla – Tavas – Aphrodisias – Hierapolis – Pamukkale – 207 km, 3 hours, 45 min + 100 km, 1 hour Aphrodisias

Breakfast. In the morning, departure for **Pamukkale** via Denizli. On the way there you will visit the old city of **Aphrodisia**, famous in the entire Asia Minor as centre of sculpture and arts. Buried by earthquakes in the late Antiquity, forgotten by the world, Aphrodisia was brought to light in 1960 with financial support from *National Geographic*. A secret, unmatched deposit of marble sculptures, which have been the lode of most statues in the Roman times. The signatures of others that were found in the Roman world, from Spain to the Danube, indicate a distinctive and influent sculpture school. You will see: **The Theatre, The Stadium, The Baths of Adrian** and the monumental ruins of **the Temple of Aphrodite**. Arrival in **Pamukkale** and the visit of the famous limestone waterfalls and of the ancient city of **Hierapolis**. You will visit: **The Theatre Adrian**, the most beautiful of its kind in Turkey, a jewel in stone, **The Gate of Frontonius, The Arch of Domitian, The Gymnasium, The Basilica with Pilasters, The Roman Baths** later on turned in The Byzantine Basilica, **The Nimpheum, The Temple of Apollo (the god of the sun) with Plato's Cave, The Baths of Cleopatra**, the Roman streets, **the necropolis, the walls of the city**. Accomodation in Pamukkale, in the wonderful Lycos Valley from Phrygia. Bath in the thermal water pool of the hotel. You can use the pool for free until late at night. (The hotel has thermal waters).

#### **Dinner and accomodation in Pamukkale.**

**Pamukkale 4 star Hotel HB**

**HB**

#### ***Day 11: Pamukkale - Afyon - Kutahya – Bilecik – Izniĭ - Yalova – Istanbul***

Breakfast. Departure for Istanbul. You will cross **the Anatolian Plateau**. Short stop in **Iznik**, the ancient **Niceea**, where the Ecumenical Council took place in 325 AD – presided by the emperor Constantine himself – in which the creed was decided. You will pass with the ferryboat from Yalova to Pendik. You will continue the way to Istanbul. The last night, accomodation in the city on the shore of Bosphorus. Constantinople for ever...

**Istanbul 3+ star Hotel BB**

**BB**

***Day 12: Istanbul – \_\_\_\_\_ - Flight home***

Breakfast – open buffet. Departure for \_\_\_\_\_ on the same route.



**Price: 599 €**

**Price included:**

- Minibus transport 25 pax.
- Taxes for the road, highways, parking lots, bridges and tunnels.
- 12 accomodations in 3+ and 4 star hotels **BB** (accomodation with breakfast) minimum 3 **HB** (accomodation with demi-pension, breakfast and dinner).
- Transport with minibus with air conditioning, 3 stars during the entire trip.
- Tour companion and local tour guide during the entire trip.

**Not included:**

- Private cruise (only for group) on Bosphorus – approx. 15 €/ pax.
- The local guides are paid in Turkey.
- Entrance tickets for the touristic objectives (museums, churches etc).
- Medical insurance, expenditures and other personal acquisitions.
- Additional meals and drinks; supplements and personal, local trips.
- Tips (driver, guide, hotel). They are not compulsory.

**Note:**

- The optional trips are booked and paid for in Turkey and have nothing to do with the tourism agency organizing the tour.

**Remarks:**

- A group of minimum 15 - 20 persons. For less persons, the price is recalculated or the trip is canceled.
- Room supplement SGL 250 €
- Children under 12 will be accomodated in a triple room with a discount of 30 €.
- The tour program can be changed, meaning that the order in which some cities or tour objectives are visited can be changed without affecting the general structure of the tour program.

- Hotel and restaurant category is the official one in Turkey and it is approved by the corresponding Turkish Ministry.

**NB: The objectives marked with “\*” are 3 of the 7 wonders of the ancient world.**

**Necessary documents for your trip:** passport – valid for 6 months before departure date

**Application deadline:**

- 21 days before departure date.
- The tour program can be changed by the group leader depending on some special situations.

**Withdrawal requirements:**

- According to the agency general rules, in compliance with the Tour Service Contract.

**Mentions:**

According to the Turkish legislation, travel agencies that organize trips to this country shall have their tourists accompanied by a local tour guide all over Turkish territory, starting from the customs. As this means additional accommodation and guiding costs, the travel agencies choose to ignore the aforementioned law, in force for a long time. This is an accepted compromise but, in case of controls, Turkish police imposes a fine, not higher than the price for a local tour guide for the entire trip. Anyway, it is necessary to hire a local tour guide for the visits paid to the Turkish tour objectives to avoid conflicts with tour police. It is important to know that even if there are no controls but other tourists accompanied by a local tour guide, the latter can immediately call the local police, which he often does in case he notices a group of tourists without a tour guide. Thus, for an incident-free trip, local tour guides are included whenever this is highly necessary, in Istanbul and Cappadocia. Thank you for your understanding.

**Important:**

- Customs authorities are entitled to refuse any person they consider difficult to be trusted to enter the Turkish territory.
- The travel agency **shall not be held liable** for such situations that cannot be anticipated before departure and shall not reimburse the sums paid for the trip.
- Tourist shall undertake all risks associated with entering the Turkish territory and shall advise the travel agency on any incidents he may have been part of outside the borders (country of origin).