

ITINERARY:

TURKEY TROT

Burnt Pine -safari

(B): Breakfast; (BB): Bed & Breakfast; (L): Lunch;
(D): Dinner; (b): Bed only

Day 1,

Depart from your home city to Istanbul Turkey. Most flights are overnight, gateways are Chicago, Atlanta, and JFK

Overnight flight

Day 2,

After Immigration and clearing Customs, our ground representative will be there to transfer you to your hotel, while giving you a brief City Orientation tour along the way. The balance of the afternoon is free.

Day 3,

After breakfast you will start our trot by visiting the *Spice Market* with the enticing displays of Turkish delight and spices. Here you can find Turkish fine linens and embroidered elf slippers, in addition to the barrels of herbs and spices, pistachios soaked in honey (yet another traditional Turkish aphrodisiac). But the best fun is in jostling your way through the streets behind the building, where the true Turkish spirit shines through in vendors proffering morsels of soft cheese, spoonfuls of spicy ezme, and sample of succulent strawberries. From there you will visit the *Grand Bazaar*, the world's largest covered market finishes out the morning on a high note. There are 18 entrances and more than 4000 shops in the entire complex. Lunch will be at a local restaurant. Let me share a short note about Turkish lunches. We found the food in Turkey to be excellent, and one of the best parts was their form of appetizer called a mezes. They are small dishes ranging from salads, to marinated mushrooms, to meats, and shrimps, and start off a Turkish meal. It's a Turkish form of grazing or Tapas. You will miss them when you depart Turkey.

After lunch you will visit the *Underground Cistern*, which provided water storage for the ancient city. The Emperor Valens built it in 375 AD, an amazing architectural feat and an engineering marvel. From there we will visit the *Topkapi Palace Museum*, which was the lavish home to the Sultans for centuries since 1453 Legend claims that the ancient rod on display is that used by Moses to part the Red Sea when the Israelites were escaping Egypt. Other artifacts of similar fame include John the Baptist's gilded arm and Mohammed's beard, fingernails and foot imprint. You will also visit the *treasury section*, which contains jewel-encrusted thrones; the world's largest emerald, the famous Topkapi dagger, and the kitchen that currently house the greatest collection of Chinese porcelain. Transfer back to your hotel late afternoon.

TBD

Day 4,

The morning is at leisure, but there are two optional activities we can suggest. You could attend a *Turkish Cooking Course* and learn how to prepare authentic regional Turkish dishes and Ottoman classics in a half-day hands-on class in a fun atmosphere. An experienced Turkish chef will guide you through the class, while translations are done by Eveline, a Cordon Bleu graduate and fervent food lover. Or, visit a *Turkish Bath* at the historic *Cagaloglu Hamami*. Turkish baths originated in Roman times, but the real Turkish bath, came about from the Islamic requirement of cleanliness. After lunch you will visit the Roman *Hippodrome*, the scene of chariot races and political riots in Byzantine times and horse-back riding games and archery contests during the Ottoman era. From there you visit the *Hagia Sophia Basilica*, jewel of the Byzantine Empire. For many centuries it was the largest church in the world and today is the fourth largest. Emperor Justinian opened it in 537 AD. It was used as a church for 916 years, then as a mosque for 481 years. Then by order of the Founder of the Turkish Republic, Ataturk, it was made into a museum in 1934. You will then visit the monumental *Blue Mosque* called Sultan Ahmet Mosque, which was built between the years 1609-1616. The fabulous tiles from which it gets its name, gives the entire area a delightful atmosphere. Your next stop will be the *Turkish & Islamic Arts Museum* to see examples of fine Ottoman calligraphy in gold and intricate miniatures and illuminated manuscripts set in a historic 16th century palace. The evening is at your leisure.

TBD

Day 5,

This morning you will visit the opulent and exotic last palace of the Ottoman rulers- *Dolmabahce Palace*-. Built as a residence for the Sultans in 1854, it is a Turkish-Indian baroque masterpiece worthy of a storybook. Overlooking the Bosphorus, it is definitely unique with 14 tons of pure gold being used in its interior decoration. It houses priceless paintings, furniture and a rich collection of Bohemian crystal. Afterwards, you will cruise up the *Bosphorus* gliding past opulent palaces, exquisite mosques, imposing fortresses and traditional wooden Ottoman mansions. You will be having lunch at a seafood restaurant called "Karaca", which overlooks the river.

After lunch you will transfer to Ataturk Airport for a commercial flight to Izmir. From there you will transfer to Kusadasi on the Mediterranean where you will spend the next three nights. This is the closest town to Ephesus.

TBD

Day 6,

This morning you will head to Ephesus; it's your chance to sit in the same theatre where St. Paul preached. Or, become a Roman conqueror, and add *Ephesus* to your mighty empire. Ephesus is considered one of the most complete ancient cities; it contained everything for education, politics, entertainment and sport. It boasts the Library of Celsus, the Roman Baths, the Gate of Hadrian and Roman Terrace Houses. Ephesus is

still the best preserved classical city on the Mediterranean, and perhaps the best place in the world to get the feeling for what life was like in Roman times. As a strategic coastal gateway to the Eastern World, this Ionian refuge grew to be the second largest city in the Roman Empire, and is one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

Lunch today is at a local restaurant in the pastoral village of *Sirince*. The village is located on a hillside surrounded by apple and grape orchards. Greeks originally settled Sirince; then was inhabited by the Ephesian Christians, who, displaced during the Selcuk conquests, moved up into the surrounding hills. In the Greek exchanges of 1924, Muslims from Salonica resettled here, creating a farming community highly adept at winemaking. Apple wine is a local specialty. After lunch you will visit the *Basilica of St. John* and the house where the *Virgin Mary* spent the last years of her life. After the death of Christ, John came with Mary to Ephesus, living most of his life in and around Ayasoluk Hill and spreading the world of Christianity as Paul did before him. John's grave was marked by a memorial, which was enclosed by a church of modest proportions in the 4th century. During the reign of Justinian, the emperor had a magnificent domed basilica constructed on the site. The tomb of St. John located under the main central dome elevated the site to one of the most sacred destinations in the middle Ages. After returning to our hotel this afternoon dinner will be on your own.

TBD

Day 7,

Today we will explore the remains of *Aphrodisias*, the city dedicated to the goddess of love and home to a school of sculpture that made its way across the Roman world. We will visit the Temple of Aphrodite and one of the finest ancient stadiums ever built.

Lunch will be at a local restaurant. On the way back to your hotel, you will stop at a Government Rug Shop and Leather shop. They seem to have the best prices and offer the best quality, along with free shipping.

You are on your own for dinner tonight. If you haven't tried the outdoor terrace garden restaurant on top of the hill at Kismet Hotel, then don't miss it tonight. The setting overlooking the harbor is spectacular and the food is excellent.

TBD

Day 8,

After breakfast we will transfer back to Izmir for your return flight to Istanbul. From the Istanbul Airport you will transfer back to your hotel choice. The afternoon is at leisure to explore new spots, finish shopping, or re-visit a favorite site.

TBD

Day 9,

Today is your last day in Turkey unless you are extending on a post Cappadocia trip. In any event, you will be transferred to the airport in order to connect to either your homeward bound flight or you're flight to Nevsehir (Cappadocia)

If you are going home you will arrive back in the US the same day where you will clear US Customs & Immigration. Welcome home!

HAVE A GREAT TIME

A great add-on is a trip to magical Cappadocia. You should plan on spending at least two nights for this add-on.

The area of Cappadocia is justifiably famous for its lunar landscape with underground cities carved by wind and rain from soft volcanic tuff or pumice like stone. Byzantine Christians carved churches into rock in Cappadocia, and sheltered themselves from the armies of the Abbasid Caliphate in cities descending hundreds of feet below the earth. Over 3,500 rock churches have been identified in the area. Some are very elaborate and are lavishly decorated with frescoes; many of these 9th and 11th century art works still remain.