

# 11-Day Turkey Tour

## featuring the Seven Churches of Revelation

### DAY 1

### DEPART USA

Today we depart from the USA on our overnight flight to Istanbul. (meals aloft)

### DAY 2

### ARRIVE ISTANBUL

Arrive to Istanbul and transfer to our hotel for dinner and overnight. (meals aloft,D)

### DAY 3

### ISTANBUL

Today we tour Istanbul, visiting the spectacular Blue Mosque, the 17th century Ottoman Mosque famous for its six minarets. After leaving your shoes at the door, step inside to see the brightly-colored interior decorated with at least 20,000 shimmering blue Iznik tiles and stained-glass windows. We spend some time at Topkapi Palace, the former residence of the legendary Ottoman sultans, now converted into a museum. It consists of several exhibition halls, such as the treasury, the harem, and the ceramics section. This afternoon we visit the great Hagia Sophia, the headquarters church of the Byzantine empire and the largest building at that time, later converted into a mosque. In 1935, under the secular republic of Turkey, it reopened as a museum famous for its mosaics, and then in 2020 it was again reclassified as a mosque. Nearby we see the Basilica Cistern, one of several hundred ancient cisterns that lie beneath the city. We conclude our day with some time at the Grand Bazaar, a market of over 3,000 tiny shops, and then we return to our hotel for dinner and overnight. (B,D)

### DAY 4

### ISTANBUL/TROY/CANAKKALE

We depart Istanbul this morning and drive southwest along the Sea of Marmara. Near Canakkale, we cross the Dardanelles, a narrow strait in northwestern Turkey connecting the Aegean Sea to the Sea of Marmara. We proceed to Troy, long thought to be simply an imaginary city from Homer's Iliad. However, Troy was excavated in the 1870s by Heinrich Schliemann, a German amateur archaeologist who also found the



remains of nine successive civilizations, one on top of the other, dating back 5,000 years. We continue to Canakkale and check into our hotel for dinner and overnight. (B,D)

### DAY 5

### PERGAMON/THYATIRA/IZMIR

This morning we drive to Pergamon, the early Roman capital of the Roman province of Asia and today known as Bergama. Recipient of the apostle John's third letter in revelation, it was celebrated worldwide for its magnificent library with the 200,000 scrolls which Anthony presented to Cleopatra, for its parchment made of goatskin known as "Pergamum paper" used as a substitute for Egyptian papyrus, and for its Aesclepion (with its symbolic entwined snakes), which was the most advanced medical center in the ancient world. The largest of all Hellenistic theatres stands here and the city's temples are remarkable for both their size and beauty. From here we continue to Thyatira, one of the Seven Churches of Revelation as well as a major commercial center of ancient Asia Minor, from which Lydia a seller of purple came (Acts 16:14). We travel on to Izmir, biblical Smyrna. Here we check into our hotel for dinner and overnight.

(B,D)

### DAY 6

### SARDIS/PHILADELPHIA/ HIERAPOLIS/PAMUKKALE

Today we first visit Sardis, set upon a steep hill surrounded by an impregnable citadel and one of the most picturesque areas of the Seven Churches. We will visit its famous third-century Jewish synagogue, the largest synagogue ever excavated, with a seating capacity of a thousand persons. Other highlights include the Gymnasium, House of Bronzes, Temple

of Artemis, and the ancient Church. We travel to Philadelphia, another of the seven churches of Revelation, and an important Christian center during Byzantine times. The modern town of Alasehir is built over ancient Philadelphia, although the ruins of a Byzantine basilica built of brick with a high arch and frescoes are still visible. The city was destroyed by earthquakes in AD 17 and AD 23. We proceed to Hierapolis and see its well-preserved baths, the basilica (dating back to the 6th century AD), the Temple of Apollo, and the theater. Then we continue to Pamukkale, known as the "Cotton Castle" because of its fantastic calcium formations and pools of natural warm water, for dinner and overnight. (B,D)

**DAY 7** **COLOSSAE/  
LAODICEA/KUSADASI**

This morning we travel to Colossae, recipient of one of Paul's letters, and home to Philemon. We then journey to Laodicea, where Mark, Timothy and Epaphras brought the Gospel and established the first church. In Revelation the church members were condemned for their "lukewarm attitude" toward Christianity. Highlights of our tour may include the nymphaeum, the amphitheater, the hippodrome, and the council chamber. After our time here, we proceed to Kusadasi for dinner and overnight. (B,D)

**DAY 8** **EPHESUS/KUSADASI**

This morning we journey to Ephesus where Paul spent two years and which had become the capital city of the Roman Province of Asia by the time John wrote the Book of Revelation to the churches there. We walk through history in a city founded as early as the 10th century BC. In the magnificent excavations we see streets lined with wonderful public buildings such as the Baths of Scholastica, the Library of Celsus, the

Temple of Hadrian, and the great Theatre where the Ephesians screamed against Paul (Acts 19:28). We visit the Terrace Houses, also called "The Houses of the Rich." These Roman Villas are located opposite the Hadrian Temple and provide information about family life during the Roman period. Then we travel to nearby Selcuk to view the remains of the Temple of Artemis and the Basilica of St. John. Following our full day of touring, we return to our hotel in Kusadasi for dinner and overnight. (B,D)

**DAY 9** **KUSADASI/PATMOS**

This morning we board our charter boat at the port of Kusadasi for our full-day excursion to the former Roman prison island of Patmos where John received his "Revelation." Here we visit the Grotto named for his book and the Monastery of St. John which houses ancient manuscripts, including an early one of the Gospel. Later this afternoon we sail back to Kusadasi and return to our hotel for dinner and overnight. (B,D)

**DAY 10** **IZMIR/ISTANBUL**

This morning we spend some time in Smyrna (modern day Izmir). Its advantageous location at a central and strategic point on the Aegean coast of Anatolia helped it rise to prominence. Acts 19:10 suggests that the church there was founded during Paul's third missionary journey. We visit the ancient Agora and the Church of St. Polycarp, who was Smyrna's first bishop. After our tour, we transfer to the Izmir airport for a short flight to Istanbul. Upon arrival in Istanbul, we check into our hotel for dinner and overnight. (B,D)

**DAY 11** **ISTANBUL/USA**

We transfer to the airport early this morning for our journey back to the US, arriving home later today. (B,meals aloft)



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