GEEO ITINERARY

Turkey 6/23/2024

Day 1: Istanbul Arrive in Istanbul at any time. Meet your group for a welcome meeting around 6:00 or 7:00 p.m.

Arrive in Istanbul at any time. We highly recommend arriving in Istanbul a day or two early to fully explore this amazing city. This will also give you time to adjust to the time difference, overcome any jetlag, and avoid any disruption to your trip due to flight delays or cancellations. We can book extra hotel nights for you in Istanbul before and/or after the trip, as well as an Istanbul day tour and Bosphorus cruise. Please note that check-in at the hotel is usually around 2:00-3:00 p.m. There are no planned activities until an intro meeting around 6:00 or 7:00 p.m., usually in the hotel lobby. Check for a sign or ask at the reception desk about the exact time and location of the group meeting. Please make every effort to arrive in time for this meeting. If you are delayed and will arrive late, please inform us. Your tour leader will then leave you a message at the front desk informing you of where and when to meet up tomorrow. After the meeting, you might choose to get dinner at a nearby restaurant with your traveling companions and your tour leader to further get to know one another.

Day 2: Istanbul/Bolu (B) Enjoy an orientation walk around Istanbul before moving on to the city of Bolu.

Enjoy an orientation walk of Istanbul. Each walk varies, allowing your tour leader to show off their favorite spots around the city. Pass by city highlights such as the Topkapi Palace, the Hagia Sophia (also known as the Aya Sofya), and the Blue Mosque. Walks may also include the atmospheric Spice Bazaar or breathtaking Grand Bazaar. We highly recommend that you actually go inside these sights, which would mean either arriving a few days early or staying a few days after the tour ends. Istanbul is a safe, tourist-friendly city. In the afternoon we will travel to Bolu, a small city where we will stop for the night to break up the long drive to Cappadocia. Approximate travel time: 4 hrs by private vehicle

Day 3: Bolu/Cappadocia (B, D) Visit the Mausoleum of Atatürk, the father of the Modern Turkish Republic, en route to the Cappadocia region.

We will continue our drive east with a stop along the way to visit the Mausoleum of Atatürk, the father of the Modern Turkish Republic. The Mausoleum of Atatürk is located in Turkey's capital city, Ankara, and has become one of the sprawling city's must-see locations. Later in the afternoon, we will arrive in the region of Cappadocia where we will spend the next two and a half days exploring. There will be plenty of time to tour the area by bike, visit neighboring villages, trek regional valleys, or try a hot air balloon ride. During one of the evenings, travel to a nearby village and enjoy dinner with a local family. Enjoy seasonal homemade dishes, and talk with friendly hosts about life in rural Cappadocia. Approximate travel time: 5.5 hrs by private vehicle

Day 4: Cappadocia (B) Enjoy a visit to the Göreme Open Air Museum before free time to explore this unique region.

This morning we will visit the historic Göreme Open Air Museum, a complex of medieval painted cave churches carved out by Orthodox monks. Tour the more than 10 caves on site, and enjoy the color and vibrancy of many of the churches that are up to 1,000 years old. The rest of your day is free for optional activities, which are listed further below on this page. Outdoor enthusiast? Hire a bike to get around on two wheels or join your tour leader on an optional trekking tour through one of the beautiful valleys of the region. If you want to go further afield, take a local bus to explore nearby villages.

Day 5: Cappadocia (B) Have another free day in Cappadocia where there are many optional activities.

You will have another free day to explore the many sights of Cappadocia.

Day 6: Cappadocia/Güneysınır (B, D) Explore one of the many underground cities in the region. Visit Konya and its Mevlana Museum and Mevlana Mausoleum before spending the night in a local Turkish village. Visit a community park and cooperative, a project supported by G Adventures.

Depart Cappadocia to the town of Derinkuyu. Here we visit one of the underground cities (there are approximately 30 in the region) that were famously used as hiding places for Christians escaping the persecution of the Roman Empire between the fifth and tenth centuries. See how people transferred their surface lives to this underground world – there are cellars, rooms for food storage, kitchens, churches, stables, wine and oil presses, and shafts for ventilation. Have a quick lunch before journeying to the region of Konya. In Konya, opt to visit the Mevlana Museum and the mausoleum of Mevlana Rumi, a Persian Sufi mystic, to learn more about the mystic Islamic sect known as the Whirling Dervishes. We will then visit the Neolithic proto-city settlement of Catalhoyuk. There are no streets, and houses are closely clustered with rooftop access for travel. Witness the cultural evolution from the first settlers in 7500 BC to the remnants of the urban center we see today. We'll then continue our drive to our village homestay where we will have the opportunity to learn about local Turkish life. We will first visit the Güneysinir Community Park. Located in a region prone to drought and economically-dependent on agriculture, Güneysinir is in need of diversified opportunities. Our partner G Adventures is investing in an almond plantation that doubles as a community park. While the park will be a beautiful place for travelers and locals to visit, it will also provide a source of shade and water retention, as well as a reliable source of income for the community. Afterward, enjoy a home-cooked meal before settling down for the night. Bathroom facilities and sleeping arrangements are multi-share. Approximate travel time: 4-4.5 hrs, including stops

Day 7: Konya/Antalya (B) Wander the lovely seaside town of Antalya.

We will start off early and arrive in Antalya around lunchtime. With a free afternoon, wander the charming cobbled hillside streets of the district of Kaleici, a great place to stop and have a drink with amazing views of the marina below. For a break from the hustle and bustle, head for the greenery and teashops at one of Antalya's beautiful parks or catch some sun at a nearby beach. Approximate travel time: 5 hrs by private vehicle

Day 8: Antalya/Kaş (B,D) Spend the afternoon onboard a boat in the Mediterranean Sea and enjoy a freshly prepared dinner before disembarking the boat and driving to our hotel for the evening.

Spend the afternoon onboard a boat in the Mediterranean Sea and enjoy a freshly prepared dinner before disembarking the boat and driving to our hotel for the evening. Drive to the beautiful coastal village of Demre for lunch. After, board our boat for an afternoon on the Mediterranean Sea. The boat trip includes sailing around Kekova Island, with plenty of time to enjoy the sunshine and scenery. We'll have the chance to get off the boat and climb a hill to reach a medieval castle used by the Byzantines in Simena, a beautiful ancient city that dates back to the fourth century BC. Find ruins of a Roman settlement, including a small amphitheater. Take a few moments to look out at the gorgeous view of the quiet harbor below. Later, walk to Simena Castle to enjoy the views and archaeological ruins. Then opt to go for a swim in the crystal clear waters or just relax on deck. Approximate travel time: 3 hrs by private vehicle

Day 9: Kaş (B) Opt for a morning swim and some relaxation before traveling on to Kaş.

Enjoy breakfast at the hotel. Opt for a morning swim and some relaxation before returning to Demre and continuing on to the coastal town of Kaş. Spend some time in the afternoon exploring the cafés lining the cobblestoned streets of Kaş. Approximate travel time: 45 minutes by private vehicle

Day: 10 Kaş/Pamukkale (B) Guided walk of Pamukkale and the ancient city of Hierapolis.

Leave the beautiful sea behind and head to Pamukkale, passing through fruit orchards on the way. Tour the white cliffs of Pamukkale to learn about this World Heritage-listed site and natural wonder. Made up of 17 hot water springs, the cliffs are formed when the calcium carbonate hardens with time. Explore the ancient site of Hierapolis built on top of the white "castle." See the large, ancient baths within the city (thought to be evidence that the hot springs of Pamukkale were used as a spa since the second century BC). Later, opt to visit the Hierapolis Archaeological Museum, which is filled with works of art from excavations at Hierapolis and towns in the surrounding area, such as jewelry, sarcophagi and Bronze Age crafts. You might also choose to Take a plunge into an ancient swimming pool, preserved from the second century BC. Wade around in the thermally heated fresh mineral water around fallen marble columns, capitals, and plinths said to have come from the nearby Temple of Apollo. Kick back and relax, but don't forget admission is limited to two hours. Please bring a swimsuit if you wish to take part in this activity. Approximate travel time: 5 hrs by private vehicle.

Day: 11 Pamukkale/Selçuk (B) A scenic drive in the morning followed by free time in the afternoon. Optional visits to St John's Basilica and the Mosque of Isa Bey as well as the nearby picturesque village of Şirince.

Journey from Pamukkale to Selçuk in the morning, and then have a free afternoon. Opt to pre-book a traditional Selcuk cooking class, walk to the remains of St John's Basilica, visit the Mosque of Isa Bey or wander the streets of this vibrant Turkish town. Or catch a local “dolmus” bus to the picturesque village of Şirince (8 km) to sample some local wine or shop for crafts. For dedicated sunseekers, the beach at Pamucaki is also within reach. Approximate travel time: 3 hrs by private vehicle.

Day 12: Selçuk (B) Explore Ephesus in the morning then enjoy free time in the afternoon. Opt to visit one of the seven wonders of the world, the Temple of Artemis.

In the morning, tour the ruins of ancient Ephesus to get a feeling of what life must have been like during Roman times. Take in its massive, well-preserved theatre, which dominates the view down Harbour Street. See the two- story library, whose façade has been carefully reconstructed from all original pieces. Built in AD 125, it once held nearly 12,000 scrolls. Your free time is just that — yours. Use the afternoon to explore the area any way you like.

Day 13: Selçuk/Çanakkale (B) Visit the ancient city of Troy en route to Çanakkale. Enjoy a carpet demonstration before visiting the G-supported Cöp(m)adam handicraft cooperation. Spend the rest of the afternoon at the world-famous city of Troy before continuing to the harbour town of Çanakkale, a busy port with a thriving student population.

Settle in and enjoy the scenery as you travel from Selçuk to Bergama in a private vehicle (2 hrs). In Bergama, Enjoy an informative demonstration of one of the oldest art-forms in Turkish history. Gain a greater appreciation for the labour and workmanship involved in weaving rugs and carpets as you learn about the process. Next, travel from Bergama to Ayvalık (1-1.5 hrs) to participate in your G for Good Moment. At the the G-supported çöp(m)adam handicraft cooperation, all products are made out of recycled goods and by making a purchase it will directly support the local women who work in the workshop and over time has contributed to over 500 women who have been part of the project. After that, stop of to see historic Troy before ending the day in the port city of Çanakkale. Troy, made famous by Homer’s “Iliad,” (and more recently by Orlando Bloom and Brad Pitt). Tour the city that, for centuries, was regarded as just a myth, until its ruins were found in the mid-19th century. Don't miss the chance to have a photo taken with the Trojan horse. Finally, continue on to the port city of Çanakkale (approximately 45 min.). Approximate travel time: 6-6.5 hrs by private vehicle (with stops)

Day 14: Çanakkale/Istanbul (B) Guided tour of Gallipoli, including ANZAC Cove, the war cemeteries, and Lone Pine.

Travel by ferry to the Gallipoli peninsula, where we will have an early morning guided tour of the site of a dramatic series of World War I battles. Tour the grounds to see ANZAC Cove, the war cemeteries, and Lone Pine. Learn how the Turks fought off the numerically superior, but badly commanded, Allied forces who were forced to withdraw nine months later; this battle holds special significance for Australians and New Zealanders, as both nations lost many soldiers. Afterward, continue on to İstanbul for the opportunity to finish up your sightseeing or get in some last-minute shopping. Approximate travel time: 5 hrs total via ferry (30 mins) and private vehicle (4.5 hrs)

Day 15: Istanbul (B) Depart Istanbul at any time.

There are no planned activities today, so you may depart Istanbul at any time. If you wish to extend your stay in Istanbul, consider booking post-tour accommodation with us. Please note that check-out time from the hotel is usually mid-morning, but luggage storage services are available at the reception desk. Want more adventure? Book two or more GEEO programs in the same school year and receive a discount! GEEO will give you 10% off of the lesser value program(s) (up to 3 programs per year). If you would like to extend your time abroad but don't see another GEEO program that interests you, let us know. We can work with you to find a trip from our tour operator’s much larger catalog. Their tours are open to the general public and not designed specifically for educators, but we can still offer you and your travel companions a discounted educator price on any additional tours that you book.