
GEEO ITINERARY

TURKEY 12/18/2022 - Winter

Day 1: Istanbul Arrive at any time in Istanbul. We highly recommend arriving at least a day or two earlier to see some of the sights. We can book you tours for those days.

Today is an arrival day and there are no planned activities. You are free to arrive in Istanbul at any time. Hotel check-in is 2 p.m., and luggage storage is available if you arrive before your room is ready. We HIGHLY recommend arriving in Istanbul at least a day or two before so you can see the main sights of this amazing city. We can help you sort out all of the details of an early arrival. Get the most out of your time in Istanbul by pre-booking our Alternative Istanbul Walking Tour and Bosphorus Cruise. And don't worry if you can't decide now. These activities are available for pre-booking any time before your tour starts, while any of the optional activities listed can be booked independently upon arrival in Istanbul. In the early evening, you will meet your tour leader and fellow group members for an important group meeting. Check the hotel notice board (or ask reception) for the exact time and location of this meeting. Afterward, there will be the option to head out for a meal together nearby in a local restaurant. If you arrive late, your group leader will leave you a message at the front desk.

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

Enjoy an orientation walk of Istanbul (3-4 hrs, 5-7 km). 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 evening 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 Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (Anitkabir), the father of the Modern Turkish Republic, en route to the Cappadocia region. Enjoy a home-cooked dinner with a local family.

We will continue our drive east with a stop along the way to visit the Mausoleum of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the father of the Modern Turkish Republic. The Mausoleum of Atatürk is located in Turkey's capital of 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. The local dinner may take place on any night in Göreme based on the family's availability. Approximate travel time: 5.5 hrs by private vehicle

Day 4: Cappadocia (B) Enjoy an included visit to the Göreme Open Air Museum before free time to explore this unique region. Enjoy a guided walk through the valley with a visit to an underground city.

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. We will also 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.

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

You will have a free day to explore the many sights of Cappadocia. 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. Pre-booking is available for Cappadocia Balloon Ride and Whirling Dervishes. If you pre-booked the Cappadocia hot air balloon ride, you will be flying on Day 4 or 5 (weather permitting).

Day 6: Cappadocia/Konya (B,D) Visit the Mevlana Museum and Mevlana Mausoleum in Konya before driving to nearby Beyşehir. Visit the Esrefoglu mosque, one of the unique mosques in the country.

Depart Cappadocia and drive to the region of Konya. In Konya, we will visit the Mevlana Museum and the mausoleum of Mevlana Rumi, a Persian Sufi mystic. Learn more about the mystic Islamic sect known as the Whirling Dervishes. You will then visit the Esrefoglu mosque, which is the biggest, best-preserved wooden columned and roofed mosque in the Islamic World. Approximate travel time: 4.5 hrs

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

We will start off early and drive to Antalya, arriving 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 (B) Enjoy more time to explore Antalya.

Enjoy more time to explore Antalya.

Day 9: Antalya/Pamukkale (B) Guided walk of Pamukkale and the ancient city of Hierapolis.

We leave beautiful Antalya behind and head to Pamukkale, passing through fruit orchards on the way. In the afternoon we will 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). Approximate travel time: 3.5 hrs by private vehicle

Day: 10 Pamukkale/Selçuk (B) Visit the ruins of the ancient Roman town of Ephesus.

Travel to the town of Selçuk. In the afternoon we will 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. Approximate travel time: 3 hrs by private vehicle

Day: 11 Selçuk (B, D) Free time to walk up to the ruins of the Temple of Artemis, the remains of St John's Basilica, visit the mosque of Isa Bey or just wander the streets and cafés of this vibrant Turkish town. Enjoy a cooking class in a nearby village in the afternoon.

Most of today is free. You will have time to walk up to the ruins of The Temple of Artemis, one of the seven ancient wonders of the ancient world. You can also check out the remains of St John's Basilica, visit the mosque of Isa Bey or just wander the streets and cafés 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. Late in the afternoon, drive to a nearby village for a local cooking class. Our host will demonstrate some Turkish dishes for everyone to enjoy at the end of the class.

Day 12: Selçuk/Bergama (B) Travel to the market town of Bergama, and explore the Acropolis of ancient Pergamon.

Today we travel to the market town of Bergama. We will explore one of Turkey's most impressive archaeological sites, the Acropolis of the ancient Greek city of Pergamon. There's plenty to see in this ancient settlement, with ruins large and small scattered over the upper and lower cities. Chief among these is the Temple of Trajan, the vertigo-inducing 10,000-seat Hellenistic theatre, the Altar of Zeus (sadly stripped of its magnificent frieze, which now resides at the Pergamon Museum in Berlin), and the whimsical mosaic floors in Building Z. Approximate travel time: 2.5 hrs by private vehicle

Day 13: Bergama/Çanakkale (B) Visit a handicraft workshop in Ayvalik, before enjoying free time in the surrounding area. Visit the ancient city of Troy en route to Çanakkale.

After leaving Bergama, our first stop will be the G Adventures' supported çöp(m)adam handicraft cooperation. Çöp(m)adam began as an experimental project in Western Turkey, meant to address the lack of employment opportunities for women alongside the importance of recycling/re-using. The co-op aims to use waste in a creative, aesthetic, and unique way, all while providing work for women from impoverished communities. When G Adventures travelers visit the workshop, they can purchase souvenirs and handicrafts that directly support the women that made them. After a visit to this project, continue exploring the seaside town of Ayvalık. Afterward, we drive further north to historic Troy, made famous by Homer's "Iliad." 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 full-scale replica of the Trojan horse. We will then continue on to the port city of Çanakkale. Approximate travel time: 3.5 hrs by private vehicle

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

We will have an early morning guided tour of Gallipoli, the site of a dramatic series of World War 1 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 Istanbul for the opportunity to finish up your sightseeing or get in some last-minute shopping. Approximate travel time: 4.5 hrs by private vehicle

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

You are free to depart at any time today. Please note that check-out time from the hotel is normally mid-morning, but luggage storage facilities are available. You can pre-book one of the following activities to experience after your tour ends: Dolmabahçe Palace Visit and Bosphorus Cruise or Istanbul Backstreets Walk. If you do, we recommend booking accommodation for an extra night in Istanbul. Want more adventure? Book two or more GEE0 trips in the same year and receive a discount! GEE0 will give you 10% off of the lesser value program(s) (up to 3 programs). If you don't see a program that interests you that pairs with this trip but still would like to extend your time abroad, let us know. We will work with you to find a non-teacher trip from our tour operator's much larger catalog. Even better, if you are an educator we can still offer you a discounted price on the trip you choose!