
GEEO ITINERARY

Turkey 3/28/2024

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 rooms 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 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 in 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 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/Konya (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/Kekova (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: Kekova/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/Selçuk (B) Guided walk of Pamukkale and the ancient city of Hierapolis en route to Selçuk.

Leave the beautiful sea behind and head to Pamukkale, passing through fruit orchards on the way. 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). Afterward, we will continue driving to Selçuk. Approximate travel time: 8 hrs by private vehicle

Day: 11 Selçuk (B) Visit ancient Ephesus. Optional visits to St John's Basilica and the Mosque of Isa Bey as well as the nearby picturesque village of Şirince.

This morning 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. After, head to town and enjoy some free time to explore. Opt to pre-book a traditional Selçuk 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 "dolmuş" bus to the picturesque village of Şirince (5 miles away) to sample some local wine or shop for crafts. For dedicated sunseekers, the beach at Pamucaki is also within reach.

Day 12: Selçuk/Ayvalık (B) Spend the night in a converted Ottoman mansion. Visit the G-supported handicraft workshop during an orientation walk of Ayvalik, before enjoying free time in the surrounding area or opting for a boat trip or visit to the beach.

This morning we'll drive to the city of Ayvalik. Visit the G-supported çöp(m)adam handicraft cooperation. All products are made out of recycled goods and making a purchase 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. Ayvalik's blend of Ottoman architecture, cobblestoned streets, and attractive harbor make this stop a highlight. The beach of Sarımsaklı is a quick bus ride away and the harbor in town offers short cruises. After exploring, head down to one of the waterside restaurants for a sunset drink or meal. Then enjoy the hospitality and beautiful views from the family-run pension in a restored Ottoman mansion. Approximate travel time: 2.5 hrs by private vehicle

Day 13: Ayvalık/Çanakkale (B) Visit the ancient city of Troy en route to Çanakkale.

This morning we'll drive to historic 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. Imagine what a great city this must have been while taking a tour of the remains. Don't miss the chance to have a photo taken with the Trojan horse. We will then continue on to the port city of Çanakkale. Approximate travel time: 3-3.5 hrs by private vehicle

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 via ferry (30 mins) and private vehicle (4.5 hrs)

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. Want more adventure? Book two or more GEEO trips in the same year and receive a discount! GEEO 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!