
GEEO ITINERARY

APS Explores Turkey 6/21/2026

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

Arrival Arrive in İstanbul at any time today. There are no planned activities until the Welcome Meeting in the evening. Most flights use **Istanbul Airport (IST)**, though some use **Sabiha Gökçen International Airport (SAW)**.

Consider arriving in İstanbul 1-2 days early to explore the city, adjust to the time zone, and buffer against flight delays. We can book extra hotel nights for you in İstanbul before and/or after the trip, as well as an İstanbul day tour and Bosphorus cruise.

Hotel Check-in and Welcome Meeting

Hotel check-in is normally between 2-3 p.m. Check with reception for the exact time and location of the group welcome meeting, typically between 6-7 p.m. Please make every effort to attend this meeting. If you're running late, send a message in the group WhatsApp or call the emergency number on your trip voucher so that your tour leader can let you know where and when to meet the group.

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.

Joining Instructions

Pre-booked Transfer: If you've arranged an airport transfer, look for meeting point M55 after exiting through Gate 14. Your driver may not be holding a branded sign.

Taxi Options: Metered taxis take about 45-60 minutes depending on traffic:

- Yellow Taxi: 850-1000 TL (~30-35 USD)
- Turquoise Taxi: 950-1100 TL (~35-40 USD)
- Black Luxury Taxi: 1200-1400 TL (~40-50 USD)

Airport Shuttle (HAVAIST) It is possible to take the public [Havaist](#) bus from the Istanbul Airport to the old city (e.g., Eminönü stop), and then take a taxi from the bus station to your hotel.

FROM SABIHA GOKCEN AIRPORT (SAW): If you've pre-booked a transfer, meet your driver at meeting point M55 under column 13 after exiting the terminal. If you can't locate your driver, call the emergency number on your transfer voucher.

Accommodation: Hotel Centrum Istanbul (*or similar*)

** To confirm the hotel that your group will be using, please reach out to us or check your service voucher.*

Day: 2 İstanbul/Çanakkale Guided tour of Gallipoli, including ANZAC Cove, the war cemeteries, and Lone Pine. Continue on to the harbor town of Çanakkale.

Make an early morning visit to Gallipoli, where thousands gave their lives during WWI in the battle of the same name. 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.

Then, take a ferry from Gallipoli across the Dardanelles Strait to Çanakkale, a busy harbor town with a thriving student population. Join the crowds as they stroll the waterfront nightly.

Approximate travel time: 4.5 hrs via private vehicle (4 hrs) and ferry (30 mins)

Accommodation: Bogaz Hotel Canakkale (*or similar*)

Meals included: Breakfast

Day: 3 Çanakkale/Ayvalık/Bergama Enjoy a guided visit of Troy before arriving at Ayvalık. Visit a women's handicraft shop, a G Adventures supported project. Opt to enjoy a half-day boat trip. Later in the afternoon drive to Bergama for overnight.

See 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 it must have been while taking a tour of the remains. Don't miss the chance to have a photo taken with the Trojan horse.

Visit the çöp(m)adam handicraft cooperation. All products are made from recycled goods, and by making a purchase, you will directly support the local women who work in the workshop. Over time, this has contributed to over 500 women who have been part of the project.

Continue to Ayvalik and be charmed by the blend of old Ottoman architecture, cobblestoned streets, and an attractive harbor. In the afternoon, opt to charter a small boat from the harbor to cruise this beautiful area. Afterward, head to waterside restaurants for a sunset drink.

Approximate travel time: 4-5 hrs by private vehicle (with stops)

Accommodation: Berksoy Hotel Bergama (*or similar*)

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 4: Bergama/Selçuk Visit ancient Ephesus before continuing on to Selçuk.

Enjoy a free morning in Bergama before traveling to Selçuk, the base for exploring the ruins of the ancient Roman town of Ephesus. Tour the ruins 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.

Afterward, head to town and enjoy some free time to explore.

Approximate travel time: 2.5 hrs by private vehicle

Accommodation: Cenka Hotel Selcuk (*or similar*)

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 5: Selçuk During a free day in Selçuk, opt to pre-book the Pide Lunch and Demonstration, visit St John's Basilica and the Mosque of Isa Bey, or explore the nearby picturesque village of Şirince.

Opt to pre-book the Pide Lunch & Demonstration Selçuk (see the description in the Optional Activities section). Alternatively, you may choose to walk to the remains of St John's Basilica, once a grand basilica in Ephesus. Constructed by Justinian I in the 6th century, it was built where John the Apostle is said to be buried. You can also visit the centuries-old Isa Bey Mosque on the outskirts of Selçuk to see one of the oldest and most impressive works of art remaining in this region.

Another option is to catch a local "dolmus" bus to the picturesque village of Turkish-Greek village (5 miles away) to sample some local wine or shop for crafts. The village was settled when Ephesus was abandoned. Wander the narrow streets filled with people selling handicrafts, olive oil, and local wine.

Accommodation: Cenka Hotel Selcuk (or similar)

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 6: Selçuk/Pamukkale Guided walk of Pamukkale and the ancient city of Hierapolis.

Tour the white cliffs of Pamukkale to learn about this World Heritage Site and natural wonder. Made up of seventeen hot water springs, the cliffs were formed by calcium carbonate that hardened over time. Explore the ancient site of Hierapolis, built on top of the white "castle." See the large, ancient baths within the city, evidence that the hot springs of Pamukkale were used as a spa as early as the second century BC. Opt to take a plunge into an ancient pool and wade around in the thermally heated fresh mineral water. Please pack a swimsuit if you wish to take part in this activity.

Accommodation: Anya Resort Hotel Pamukkale (or similar)

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 7: Pamukkale/İstanbul Hop on a morning flight to İstanbul. Take a guided orientation walk before free time to explore some highlights, including the Grand Bazaar, Topkapi Palace or Hagia Sophia (or Aya Sofya).

Hop on a short flight from Cardak to Atatürk Airport in İstanbul, and then take a guided orientation walk before free time to explore some of the city's highlights, such as the Grand Bazaar, Topkapi Palace, or Hagia Sophia.

Approximate travel time: 1 hour by plane

Accommodation: Hotel Centrum Istanbul (or similar)

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 8: İstanbul Depart İstanbul at any time.

There are no planned activities today, so you may depart İstanbul at any time. If you wish to extend your stay in İstanbul, 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 [GFFO programs](#) in the same school year and receive a discount! GFFO will give you 10% off the lesser-value program(s) (up to three programs per year).

If you would like to extend your time abroad but don't see another GFFO program that interests you, [let us know](#). We can help you find a trip from our partner tour'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 of their tours, and you would still receive GFFO's fast and attentive customer service.

Meals included: Breakfast

***Itinerary Disclaimer:** While it is our intention to adhere to the routes described on our website, there is a certain amount of flexibility built into the itinerary and on occasion it may be necessary, or desirable, to make alterations. The itinerary is brief, as we never know exactly where our journey will take us. Due to our style of travel and the regions we visit, travel can be unpredictable. The information on our website is a general guide to the tour and region, and any mention of specific destinations or wildlife is by no means a guarantee that they will be visited or encountered. Additionally, any travel times listed are approximations only and subject to vary due to local circumstances.