

16 Day Tour of Turkey

Embarking on a mysterious journey to Turkey by leaving Melbourne 7 Jan 2017 and arriving Istanbul 8 Jan 2017. Welcome to Istanbul, a city with a mysterious past filled with myriad of cultures blended into unmatched splendour. Arrive in Ankara at early morning. Embark into a lifetime adventure.



Day 1 : (Sun) 8 Jan 2017 → Istanbul - Gallipoli - Cannakale

Transfer to the Gallipoli Peninsula.

Visit Anzac Cove and the poignant Lone Pine Cemetery, the Dardanelles and Ferry crossings from Eceabat to Canakkale.

Dinner and Overnight Cannakale (D)

Day 2 : (Mon) 9 Jan 2017 → Troy – Assos – Pergamum – Izmir

Breakfast at hotel. Check out. Today we begin our tour to the legendary city of Troy to see the replica of the wooden horse. We visit the ruins, which sparked our interest as we entered Assos (Acts 20:13-14) where Paul boarded to sail to Mitylene—the relatively intact city walls, the lookout tower, theater and agora. The Byzantine church turned mosque is no longer used. From the top of the volcanic hill we have a spectacular view (if it is clear) of Mitylene located on the sea twelve kilometers away.

Then we travel to Pergamon to visit the Acropolis, Temple of Athena, Serapis Temple, Heroon, Sanctuary of Athena, Library of Pergamon, Temple of Tragan, Theatre, Zeus Altar, Kizil Avlu. Our sites today are Pergamum (Church of Pergamum 3) and the small ruins at Thyatira. Pergamum, perched on the hilltop above the modern city of Bergama, is one of the most dramatic sites in Turkey. Strolling through the significant unearthed remnants of marble temples, one



Temple of Trajan - PERGAMUM

wonders at the “technology” which made the construction possible. From the mountainside we descend to the valley and tour the ancient medical center, the Asclepion, established by the great physician, Galen.

Dinner and Overnight Izmir (B, D)

Day 3 : (Tues) 10 Jan 2017 → Izmir – Akhisar (Thyatira) – Sardis – Alasehir – Kusadasi

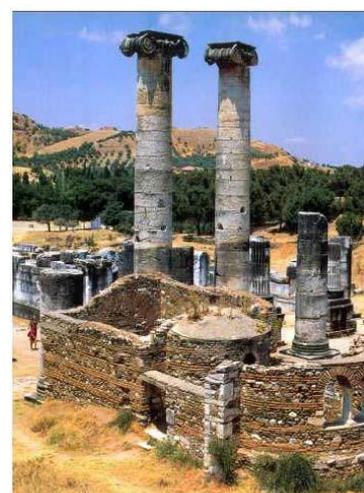
Early morning breakfast at hotel. Check out. First visit St Polycarp Church. Despite natural disasters and marauding armies amid shifting ruling powers, Izmir (ancient Smyrna) is one of the oldest continuously inhabited communities of the world and the 3rd largest city in Turkey. Its early Christian influence rest primarily on the work of Polycarp, a bishop here from 115-156 AD and ultimately a martyr for his faith. John told the Christians in Smyrna (Church of Smyrna 2) not to be afraid to suffer but “...be faithful till death” (Revelation 2:10-11).



Visit the Smyrna Castle and Roman Agora. The ancient city of Smyrna has Hittite remains still visible today. Despite natural disasters and marauding armies amid shifting ruling powers, Izmir (ancient Smyrna) is one of the oldest continuously inhabited communities of the world. Its early Christian influence rest primarily on the work of Polycarp, a bishop here from 115-156 AD and ultimately a martyr for his faith. John told the Christians in Smyrna (Church of Smyrna 2) not to be afraid to suffer but “...be faithful till death” (Revelation 2:10-11)

After that we drive to Akhisar (Thyatira) (Church of Thyatira 4) to visit the White Castle. The ancient city of Thyatira is now occupied by the modern town of Akhisar. Here the few ancient ruins are merged into the town around it so close your eyes and imagine the once thriving commercial city.

This is followed with a visit to the ruins of Sardis, capital city of ancient Lydia. It is one of the most picturesque areas of any of the Seven Churches. John admonished that the Church of Sardis (Church of Sardis 5) for their outward appearance of prosperity and activity did not tally with the finished work—“though you have the name of being alive, you are dead...” (Revelation 3:1-2). There we see the early church remaining in Sardis (Sardis Gymnasium, Jewish Synagogue, Diana Temple). Sardis, an ancient political and cultural center in Anatolia, was the capital of the Lydian Kingdom. The expression “rich as Croesus” comes from the fact that the Lydian ruler was extremely rich in his day. In the 6th century BC, Persians built a royal road beginning in Sardis and extending 1600 miles into southwest Iran. The ruins at Sardis are quite impressive, divided by a highway that extends from Izmir to Ankara. To the north of the highway are the public toilets, gymnasium and its excavated synagogue—the size and grandeur attesting to the influence of Jews in Roman times. In the Pactolos Valley stands the Artemis Temple, one of the largest of the ancient world. Ruins of a small building at the southeastern corner of the temple belonged to 4th century AD, and are believed to be an early Christian church, subject of John’s text on the church at Sardis in Revelation where he commended them that “.....who is victorious will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out the name of that person from the book of life, but will acknowledge that name before my Father and his angels” (Revelation 3:5).



Temple of Artemis - SARDIS

Then we continue to Alasehir to visit the early church remaining in Philadelphia (Church of Philadelphia 6), the city of Brotherly Love, is our next stop. Founded in 189 BC as part of the Pergamum Kingdom, today some ruins of the city wall and some arches indicate from workmanship,

materials and style that it dates from the late Byzantine era, St John Basilica. Philadelphia was one of the two churches about which John said nothing negative. The most interesting remains of Christian Philadelphia are part of a Byzantine basilica and some 11th century frescoes.

Dinner and Overnight Kusadasi (B, D)

Day 4 : (Wed) 11 Jan 2017 → Patmos – Kusadasi



Monastery of St. John - PATMOS

Day trip to Patmos Island. Depart from Kusadasi port at 07:00 am by private boat (maximum capacity 60 persons) to the sea for an excursion to the Greek Island of Patmos. Arrive Patmos island at 11:00 am. Meet with Greek guide and visit the Monastery of St John (Agios Ioannis o Theologos {"St. John the Theologist"}), and the Cave of Revelation {Cave of the Apocalypse}. Church tradition indicates that John moved to Ephesus with many Palestinian Christians around A.D. 65 before the fall of Jerusalem in 70. During Nero's persecution against Christians in Rome at that time, both Peter and Paul were martyred in Rome. As the leader of the

Asian church John was targeted by Roman authorities and exiled to Patmos (Rev. 1:9) during the reign of Emperor Domitian in 95 AD. While on the beautiful rocky island, John received his apocalyptic vision about the spiritual situation of seven churches in Asia Minor as well as about the future of the church and the world (1:10-11, 19). The order of the seven churches "Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea". Depart from Patmos at 3:00 pm. Arrive back to Kusadasi at 7:00 pm.

Dinner and Overnight Kusadasi (B, D)

Day 5 : (Thurs) 12 Jan 2017 → Ephesus – Kusadasi

For ancient pagans and Christians alike, Ephesus (Church of Ephesus 1) was a religious centre and has the largest excavated ruins in the western world.

The cult of Artemis flourished here, and Temple of Artemis which was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

The Virgin Mary House is said to have spent her final days nearby.

Ephesus brings us to the most impressive archaeological site in Turkey. As we stroll the streets of the ancient city, it is easy to imagine it as it appeared to Peter and Paul, both preached proclaiming the gospel in this theatre that became a powerful trading post of the Roman Empire. This was later to become the honeymoon playground of Anthony and Cleopatra. Stroll the streets; imagine the sounds of the people—merchants declaring wares for sale; scholars holding philosophical discussions; servants tending to the needs of masters. Walk the ancient marble streets as your guide points out the wealth of antiquity: Baths of Scholastica, the Library of Celsus, the Grand Theater, the Odeon, the Gymnasium, the Fountain of Trajan, the Temple of Hadrian - and the surprisingly efficient public toilets. Undoubtedly one of the most beautiful cities of the ancient world, Ephesus has special significance for Christians. From here Paul preached, Timothy taught, while later, John warned the church at Ephesus "...you have abandoned the love (you had) at first." (Revelation 2:4).



Temple of Hadrian - EPHESUS

The tour includes a visit to St. John's Basilica built by Emperor Justinian in the 6th century. Under the central dome, the grave of the Apostle John is believed to be located. The Ephesus Museum is one of Turkey's best. The two greatest exhibits are the marble statues of Artemis. One is from the 1st century AD and the other 2nd century AD. Other marble and bronze statues are displayed along with jewellery, coins and other artefacts of the Ancient World.

Dinner and Overnight Kusadasi (B, D)

Day 6 : (Fri) 13 Jan 2017 → Kusadasi – Laodicia – Colossae – Pamukkale

Breakfast at hotel. Check out. Then a drive to Laodicia (Church of Laodicea 7). The Christians of Laodicea, one of the Seven Churches, (Rev. 3: 14-22) were chastised for being lukewarm, "You are neither cold nor hot" (Rev. 3: 15), and for being too comfortable incorporating pagan and Christian beliefs. In the famous scripture from Revelation (3: 20-21), Jesus says to the Laodicean church: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock...". Today, there are many acres of ruins to see, including the stadium and columned streets. Visit the Christian Ruins, Statue of Emperor Augustus, Aqueduct, Stadium, Ephesian Gate.

Then drive to the unexcavated city of Colossae (Honaz - Ancient metropolis of Phrygia, the recipient of Paul's letter). It is where Paul wrote a letter to Colossians, the town of Colossae which now has fallen into obscurity.

Visit the site of the Roman city of Hierapolis. Hierapolis (Pamukkale) the dazzling white hillside is startling as we approach the site. The first reference to Hierapolis in the New Testament associates the city and the church there with the work of Epaphras, who in prison later became acquainted with Paul. Hierapolis (Pamukkale), a spectacular sight offering hot springs and calcified, cascading white terraces resembling snow, is the result of the calcium deposits developed over time as water flowed over the area. Here we associate Philip the Evangelist with the early church. Paul mentions Hierapolis along with Laodicea as the center of Epaphras's ministry. Another less known resident of the city was Papias, a disciple of the Apostle John. the Gate of Domitian, the Arcadian Way, Necropolis and Philip's tomb.



HIERAPOLIS

Dinner and Overnight Pamukkale (B, D)

Day 7 : (Sat) 14 Jan 2017 → Pamukkale – Pisidian Antioch – Cappadocia

Breakfast at hotel. Check out and drive to visit Pisidian Antioch. Pisidian Antioch goes back to some time between 310-280 BC. The first Biblical reference to this city is Paul's mention in Acts 13:14-16 on his first missionary journey. Yalvac Pisidian Antioch was where Paul preached in a synagogue. Pisidian Antioch goes back to some time between 310-280 BC. Visit an old road from the time of Paul where the first Biblical reference to this city is mentioned by Paul Acts 13:14-16 on his first missionary journey.

Then visit Caravansaray of Sultanhanı or Agzikarahan

After that, drive to Konya, ancient name is Iconium, where St. Paul preached and encouraged believers during his first missionary journey (Acts 14:1-6). Iconium was once the home of the sect of mystical Muslims called Swirling Dervishes. After this visit, take a drive to magical Cappadocia.

Dinner and Overnight Cappadocia (B, D)

Day 8 : (Sun) 15 Jan 2017 → Cappadocia

Full day tour in Cappadocia. Your adventure in Cappadocia continues with a Balloon Ride in early morning (06:00-08:00). Visit Goreme Open Air Museum to see Byzantine Frescoes, Tokah Kilise, Basil Kilise, Elmali Kilise, Azize Barbara Kilisesi, Yilanli Kilise, Karanlık Kilise, St Catherine Chapel, Carikli Kilise, Nunnery, the Troglodyte Village of Avcılar, Ortahisar, and Avanos Village and Pasabag (Monk) Valley (to see St Simeon church & mushroom shaped fairy chimney). It is almost impossible to personify the wonders of Cappadocia, where for centuries people have been carving churches,



monasteries, and entire towns out of the soft, volcanic turf. Even before mankind came to work on the landscape, wind and rain had fashioned it into fantastic, otherworldly shapes. The valley is crowded with forests of towering pinnacles (sometimes referred to as "fairy chimneys") colored in eye-popping shades of pink, bluish white and yellow ochre. The Goreme Valley, site of many churches with vibrant colored frescos, is also on our itinerary.

Dinner and Overnight Cappadocia (B, D)

Day 9 : (Mon) 16 Jan 2017 → Cappadocia

Visit Cappadocia Derinkuyu Underground city, Uchisar Castle to see the panoramic points to see the cone of Uchisar & Guvercinlik Valley, and Ihlara Valley. Cappadocia transports you into a geological wonderland. Step back in time and discover the strange, but beautiful, formations of the region, which give it an otherworldly appearance. Historically it dates to the 19th century BC when Assyrian traders developed native city-states later followed by the Hittite, Persian, Roman, Byzantine, Seljuk, Ottoman and Turkish periods. Christianity came early to the area as Apostle Paul passed through on his way to Ankara (Ankara). The region became home to many monasteries as those of the early church sought refuge from the distractions of the world. Estimates place as many as 600 rock-cut churches in the hillsides. In the days of Arab raids, homes were dug to form underground shelters, which ultimately became underground cities. The largest, Derinkuyu, houses an entire community of homes, storehouses, wine cellars, stables, tunnels, water wells, church, graves and school. The Uchisar Fortress, carved out of a natural hill dominating the area, stands on the top with breathtaking views of the surrounding formations.

Dinner and Overnight Cappadocia (B, D)

Day 10 : (Tues) 17 Jan 2017 → Cappadocia – Ankara

Breakfast at hotel. Check out of hotel. Drive to Ankara.

Dinner and Overnight Ankara (B, D)

Day 11 : (Wed) 18 Jan 2017 → Ankara

Breakfast at hotel. First visit Ataturk Tomb (Mausoleum). Kemal Atatürk, founder of the Republic of Turkey. Completed in 1953, it is an impressive fusion of ancient and modern architectural ideas and remains unsurpassed as an accomplishment of modern Turkish architecture. There is a museum housing a superior wax statue of Atatürk; writings, letters and items belonging to Atatürk, as well as an exhibition of photographs recordings of important moments of his life and videos from the establishment of the Republic.

Visit Ankara Anatolia Civilization Museum, Temple of Augustus, Roman Bath, Column of Julian and Ankara Citadel.

Dinner and Overnight Ankara (B, D)

Day 12 : (Thurs) 19 Jan 2017 → Ankara – Gordion – Pessinus – Yazilikaya – Bursa

Very early breakfast at hotel. Check out of hotel. On the way, visit Yassihöyük (Gordion) [King Midan's Earth Tumulus, Phrygian Valley, Midas Şehri] and Yazılıkaya with many monument writing-rocks and underground passages from the Phrygian age in there. Drive to visit Sivrihisar Castle. Then follow by visiting Kybele Temple in Pessinus previously known as Galatia whom Paul wrote the book of Galatians to.

Dinner and Overnight Bursa (B, D)

Day 13 : (Fri) 20 Jan 2017 → Bursa – Istanbul

Breakfast at hotel. Check out of hotel. Visit Nicea, you will see remains of Constantine's palace, now covered by the water at the shore of Lake Iznik. It was here in this palace chapel that the First Ancient Church Council convened in A.D. 325 to produce the Nicene Creed. Enjoy Nicea's St. Sophia Church, where the Seventh Church Council convened in 787. Take the fast ferry to Istanbul and leisure afternoon. Istanbul, the world's only city that spans two continents, was originally "Byzantium"; it became "Constantinople" in 4th. A.D. 330, when Emperor Constantine renamed it for himself and built a palace here. It became "Istanbul" in 1453. Experience the unique markets, peddlers, and stalls selling almonds, pistachios, iced drinks, and black coffee - a vigorous anthill of Turkish life.

Then the fast ferry to Istanbul to visit the Grand Covered Bazaar with its 4,000+ stalls—a shopper's perfect delight. Smell the scents and listen to the sounds of the traditional life of Turkey; bargain with the merchants and move on if the two of you cannot agree—there is another offer just down the aisle.

Dinner and Overnight Istanbul (B, D)

Day 14 : (Sat) 21 Jan 2017 → Istanbul

Breakfast at hotel. Today begins with a visit to the Hippodrome. Listen to the roar of 100,000 voices as they cheer their favorites to victory in the athletic competitions of antiquity. Then follow the street around to the Blue Mosque, mingle with the Islamic worshippers and stare with wonder at the marvelous blue-tiled dome and walls from which the mosque gains its name.

Across the way visit St. Sophia with its unparalleled majesty—stories told of the history of Christianity, Islam and rulers through the ages in the mosaics and frescoes that line the walls.



*Chora Museum
ISTANBUL*

From here make way to the Yerebatan Sarayi (Underground Cisterns) built during the time of the Byzantine Empire to provide the most often besieged city in the world with water. Constructed with columns and capitals from ancient temples, it is most decorative, thus referred to as a saray (Turkish for palace). We will visit the City Walls, Rumeli Fortress, and Church of St. Saviour in Chora which is located at the city walls and famous for its mosaics and frescoes. Then explore the spice market.

Dinner and Overnight Istanbul (B, D)

Day 15 : (Sun) 22 Jan 2017 → Istanbul

Breakfast at hotel. Visit Golden Horn, Süleymaniye Mosque. Visit Topkapi Palace, poised on the hillside of the Golden Horn. Visit the famous museum harem, Hagia Irene and see the largest 86 carats Spoonmaker's diamond. Enjoy the beautiful view of the Golden horn from café at Topkapi Palace.

Dinner and Overnight Istanbul (B, D)

Day 16 : (Mon) 23 Jan 2017 → Istanbul

Breakfast at hotel. Check out and depart Istanbul. May this trip's memories last a lifetime. Reflecting on the riches storehouse from these ancient Biblical sites, may God constantly use 7 churches in Revelation be a reminder to us as His disciples, serving Him faithfully for His kingdom, glory and honour.