

# PAISADVENTURE

## Turkey (20 Days) Customized for 4 Travelers

Explore the historic highlights and natural beauty of this diverse country shaped by ancient civilizations and powerful empires.

**Starts: Istanbul**

**Ends: Istanbul**

### Highlights:

Experience the incredible sights, sounds, tastes, and smells of Istanbul – start with Roman and Byzantine Constantinople, continue with the stunning mosques and ornate palaces built by the Ottomans, and finish with the complicated modern Turkish era. Spend time in pleasant Edirne, the second capital of the Ottoman Empire. Hike among the fairy chimneys of Cappadocia before soaring above the otherworldly landscape in a balloon. Fill up with an authentic Turkish breakfast in the well-preserved Ottoman village of Cumalikizik. Get lost in the bazaars of historic Bursa, the first capital of the Ottoman Empire. Follow the footsteps of the ancient Romans in Ephesus. Walk on the white travertine terraces of Pamukkale. Experience the dizzying heights of the theatre at ancient Pergamum. Wind down in the seaside resort town of Bodrum. Visit the endangered loggerhead turtles at Dalyan. Swim at the famous blue lagoon at Ölüdeniz.

### Itinerary:

#### Day 1: D

Arrive in Istanbul and check into your apartment near the Galata Tower. Get some rest, then start your exploration of Istanbul at Taksim Square, which is considered the heart of the city.



Continue with a walk down pedestrianized Istiklal Street, the former Grand Rue de Pera. Istiklal Street was the cradle of Western culture in the city during the Late Ottoman Period. Peek through the gates of the lavish former embassies to the Ottoman Empire, admire the fine architecture, stop to rest in pleasant tea gardens, pass through hidden corridors to see the fish market, and visit the two beautiful Catholic churches along the way.



Next, we'll wind our way down through the streets of the former Genoese district of Galata, passing Genoese buildings dating back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century and visiting the famous Kamondo Steps. From there, we'll walk down Bankalar Street past impressive bank buildings from the Late Ottoman Period. Finish with dinner at Ali Ocakbaşı in Karaköy.



## Day 2: BLD

Start the day with a visit to the magnificent Hagia Sophia, built by Justinian in the year 537. It was the largest Christian church in the world for over 1000 years. In 1453, it became a mosque, was turned into a museum in 1935, and was re-converted into a mosque in July 2020. The Byzantine mosaics are now covered but it's still an impressive building to visit.



After Hagia Sophia, walk across to its rival, the Blue Mosque. It was built in 1616 and the cost of construction nearly bankrupted the Ottoman Empire.



Next, sample historic recipes from the Ottoman kitchens at Matbah, in the shadow of Hagia Sophia, before enjoying some free time in the afternoon. Options include exploring the Hippodrome, visiting the Basilica Cistern (not included) or Istanbul Archaeology Museums, admiring the mosaics discovered in the old Byzantine Palace at the Great Palace Mosaic Museum, or seeing some incredible works at the Turkish and Islamic Art Museum. Dinner on Istiklal Street.



### **Day 3: BLD**

This morning we will visit Topkapı Palace. Walk through the halls of the Imperial Harem at your own pace to see the personal living quarters of the Ottoman Sultans for almost 400 years. Visit the Imperial Treasury to see the famed Topkapı Dagger. See the Imperial Council Chamber where the Grand Vizier (Prime Minister) of the Ottoman Empire held meetings with other ministers – and the Audience Chamber, where Grand Viziers would report to the Sultan and wouldn't know if they would come out alive! Have lunch at a restaurant within the palace walls before moving on to Hagia Eirini and the Grand Bazaar.



Even if you aren't into shopping, the Grand Bazaar is an amazing place to see. There are over 4,000 shops in what seems to be a chaotic environment, but it's actually very well organized. It's so big it even has its own zip code!



Next, walk to the Süleymaniye Mosque, which was the largest mosque in the city until 2019. It was built in the 1550s and is an architectural gem. There are wonderful views of Istanbul from just outside the courtyard. Enjoy some tea or coffee at a chocolate shop near the mosque, then take the metro to Taksim and grab some dinner at Fıccın, specializing in Circassian cuisine.



**Day 4: B**

Take an early bus to Edirne, a city on the border with Bulgaria and Greece. It served as the Ottoman capital before the conquest of Constantinople and is full of architectural gems. Explore the UNESCO World Heritage listed Selimiye Mosque along with a few other historic mosques.



Visit the synagogue and bazaar as well as the excellent Ottoman Medical Museum, which once served as the most important medical school and research center during the height of the Ottoman Empire. You can wander around the rest of the city or see some of the small but enjoyable museums before returning to Istanbul.



### Day 5: BLD

Start the morning with a walk through the interesting Wednesday Market. This is a great chance to witness the lives of locals in a conservative part of the city.



Next, we'll walk down to the Golden Horn to Fener for a stop at the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, which is the global seat of the Orthodox Church. Visit the 18<sup>th</sup> century Church of St. George and get the chance to meet the Patriarch himself.



Make a quick stop to see the Bulgarian Orthodox Church of St. Stephen, which was prefabricated in Vienna and erected on the shores of the Golden Horn in 1898. It's one of the last surviving prefabricated cast iron churches in the world.



From there, we'll jump on a tram to Eyüp and ride the cable-car up to Pierre Loti. Relax and admire the views of the Golden Horn from the pleasant tea garden.



Ride the tram to Eminönü where we'll have lunch at Hamdi Restaurant overlooking Eminönü Square. After lunch, take a 90-minute cruise along the beautiful Bosphorus, enjoying the sights along both the European and Asian sides.



When we return, walk through the historic Spice Bazaar to see where many locals buy fresh fruits, fish, cheese, and other goods. Visit the intimate Rüstem Paşa Mosque, which features original 16<sup>th</sup> century tilework, and the New Mosque, which dominates Eminönü Square.



Continue across the Galata Bridge to take a ride up Tünel, the world's second oldest subway line, and walk through the lively Asmalı Mescit area. Head down Istiklal Street to Hatay Medeniyetler Sofrası and sample cuisine from Hatay (Antioch), one of Turkey's most delicious provinces.



#### **Day 6: BLD**

Start the morning with a traditional Turkish breakfast at Van Kahvaltı Evi in the bohemian Cihangir neighborhood. Next, visit Dolmabahçe Palace, which replaced Topkapı Palace as the seat of the Ottoman Sultan in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. This lavish European-style palace features the world's largest Bohemian crystal chandelier as well as other original furnishings.



Head to the picturesque Bosphorus village of Ortaköy, which is famous for its street food: stuffed baked potatoes and waffles. Sit in the square while chowing down on these specialties.



Cross the Bosphorus to the Asian side at Üsküdar. Walk along the seaside to the Maiden's Tower, which is full of legends and stories dating back to Byzantine times. Have tea while enjoying the views of the Bosphorus or take an optional boat ride to the tower and back.



Go back across the Bosphorus to Karaköy to try the most famous Turkish baklava in town at Karaköy Güllüoğlu. Take some time to explore a neighborhood that has had a resurgence as of late.



We'll then hop on a ferry and head back across the Bosphorus to Kadıköy, a cosmopolitan neighborhood where you can get a quick glimpse of how everyday Istanbulites live. Walk through the markets then enjoy a delicious dinner at Çiya, which specializes in kebabs and meze dishes. Finish with a stop for a Kup Griye, a famous local dessert invented at Baylan Pastanesi.



**Day 7: B**

Take a morning flight to Cappadocia. A local guide will meet us at the airport and take us directly to the Kaymaklı Underground City, one of the most interesting cave dwellings in the region. We then continue to Şahinefendi (ancient Sobesos) to see an archaeological excavation site with Byzantine-period mosaics.



Next, we visit Keşlik Monastery near Cemil, where ancient frescoes are hidden behind a thin layer of smoke. From there, we head to Mustafapaşa, formerly Sinasos, to see an old Greek town with beautiful old houses. Finally, get a panoramic view of the Red Valley.



**Day 8: B**

An optional balloon ride over Cappadocia at dawn, followed by the magical rock formations known as Fairy Chimneys at Devrent Valley and Paşabağ (Monk's Valley).



After lunch and a traditional pottery demonstration in the town of Avanos, visit the Göreme Open-Air Museum to see the best examples of Byzantine art in Cappadocia. Climb up to rock-cut churches decorated with frescoes dating back to the 10-13<sup>th</sup> centuries. Finish with a climb up Üçhisar Castle for panoramic views of Cappadocia before an evening flight back to Istanbul and a 90-minute bus transfer to Bursa.



**Day 9: B**

Stop first in Cumalıkızık for a traditional Turkish breakfast before exploring one of the best-preserved Ottoman villages in the country.



After filling up, take the cable car up to Uludağ National Park for some easy hiking and great views of Bursa. There are restaurants in the park if you're still hungry. In the late afternoon, we'll take the cable car back down to the city.

**Day 10: BL**

Spend the day exploring the historic old city and castle. Get lost in the markets, see the Grand Mosque, Green Mosque, Green Tomb, Bursa Castle, and other architectural and historic highlights. Visit the Turkish and Islamic Art Museum. Have lunch at İskender, sampling the famous iskender kebab. Take a bus transfer to the airport and fly to Izmir in the late afternoon.



**Day 11: BL**

Begin a 3-day tour of the 7 Churches of Revelation with a local guide. He'll pick us up in Izmir and transfer us to Selçuk to see the Basilica of St. John, the House of the Virgin Mary, and Ephesus. Have a late lunch and see local handicrafts before driving to Pamukkale for the night.



**Day 12: BL**

In the morning, visit the ancient cities of Laodicea and Hierapolis. Walk on the white travertine terraces of Pamukkale, then drive to the ancient cities of Philadelphia, Sardis, and Thyatira. Continue to Bergama for the night.



**Day 13: BL**

Tour ancient Pergamum, visiting the acropolis and Askleion. Have lunch and drive to Izmir, where you'll see what's left of the ancient city of Smyrna. After saying goodbye to Denizhan, explore the maze of streets in the Izmir bazaar area followed by the lively waterfront, then turn in for the night.

**Day 14: B**

Take a morning bus to Bodrum. Enjoy a free day wandering through this seaside resort town. Visit the Crusader Castle of St. Peter, the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus, the ancient theatre, and get lost in the market; take a minibus to one of the small, picturesque villages near the city; or just hang out on the beach near the hotel.



**Day 15: BL**

Spend a relaxing day on the sea. Take a cruise to Orak Island and jump right off the boat to swim in crystal clear water at inaccessible coves near Bodrum.



**Day 16: B**

Transfer to Marmaris by bus in the morning. Spend the afternoon on the hotel beach or take the time to explore the historic harbor city.

**Day 17: BL**

Take a day trip to Dalyan, where you'll enjoy a mineral mud bath and a river cruise to the beautiful İztuzu Beach. See the endangered loggerhead turtles and ancient Kaunos along the way.



**Day 18: BL**

Take a day trip to Fethiye to swim at the famous Blue Lagoon (Ölüdeniz) and spend time at Saklıkent Gorge. If interested, you can go paragliding over the Blue Lagoon for an extra fee.

**Day 19: BL**

Fly back to Istanbul for one more night in the city.

**Day 20: B**

An airport transfer will pick you up early in the morning for your trip home.

**Package price: \$TBD per person (\$TBD/day)****What's Included:**

- 19 breakfasts, 12 lunches, 5 dinners
- All transportation and airport transfers
- All accommodation (19 nights in hotels)
- Flights between Istanbul and Cappadocia
- Flight from Istanbul to Izmir
- Flight from Dalaman to Istanbul
- Admission to government-operated museums listed in Istanbul
- Admission to Topkapi Palace and Harem in Istanbul
- Bosphorus cruise
- Admission to Ottoman Medical Museum in Edirne
- Admission to Dolmabahçe Palace and Harem in Istanbul
- Admission to Rumeli Castle in Istanbul
- Excursion to Cappadocia
- Cable car up to Uludağ National Park
- 7 Churches of Revelation Tour
  - Admission to Basilica of St. John
  - Admission to Ephesus
  - Admission to Laodicea archaeological site
  - Admission to Hierapolis and Pamukkale
  - Admission to Sardis archaeological site
  - Admission to Philadelphia archaeological site
  - Admission to Thyateira archaeological site
  - Admission to Pergamum Acropolis
  - Admission to Pergamum Asklepion
  - Admission to Smyrna Agora
- Admission to Crusader Castle of St. Peter in Bodrum
- Admission to Mausoleum of Halicarnassus in Bodrum
- Day cruise in Bodrum
- Day trip to Dalyan

- Day trip to Fethiye and Saklıkent Gorge
- Accompaniment by the owners throughout the trip and local guides where applicable

#### **What's Not Included:**

- Entrance fees to museums and attractions not covered in the itinerary
- Admission to Basilica Cistern in Istanbul
- Boat ride to Maiden's Tower in Istanbul
- Balloon ride in Cappadocia
- Drinks during meals on the 7 Churches of Revelation tour
- Soaking in the thermal baths of Pamukkale (time-permitting)
- Paragliding at Fethiye
- Alcoholic drinks and optional items during meals included in the itinerary
- Personal expenses
- Minibar consumption and room service in hotels
- Excess checked luggage fees
- E-visas for Turkey (we're happy to assist you in acquiring your visa)
- Tips for local guides, hotel staff, and drivers
- Personal travel insurance (optional but highly recommended)
- Allow at least \$300 for meals not included

#### **Sustainable Tourism:**

- We aim to minimize our impact on the environment, including conserving water, not removing flora and fauna, staying on designated trails, and not littering.
- We are committed to supporting local businesses in Turkey as often as possible. This includes hotels, restaurants, transportation providers, and small local vendors.
- We ask our guests to respect the cultural and religious traditions and customs of the people they meet on their tour.
- We encourage our guests to do their shopping at local markets and shops rather than large commercial stores, and to purchase locally made goods as gifts and souvenirs rather than imported items.
- Our guests are responsible for complying with our sustainable tourism policy in order to protect the natural and cultural heritage of Turkey.
- For more detailed information, please read our sustainable tourism policy at [www.paisadventure.com](http://www.paisadventure.com).

#### **Accommodation:**

- Comfort packages: We've hand-picked our favorite B&Bs and boutique hotels at each destination. Because availability is limited at these hotels, we'll confirm them with you after they've been booked. In some places where premium accommodation is not available, we'll stay in hotels from the basic package.

- Basic packages: Accommodation is provided in budget hotels throughout the trip. These include business class hotels, lodges, or simple hotels with basic amenities.
- We book double or triple rooms depending on the number of guests on the tour. If anyone in your party would like a private room, please notify us ahead of time and we can give you the additional pricing for a private room.
- We understand how important it is to stay connected during your trip, whether it's for business or personal reasons. We do our best to make sure good Wi-Fi is available in each hotel. In a few places (especially in rural areas), the signal will be weak, or Wi-Fi is completely unavailable.

#### **Transportation:**

- We will use public transportation for most of the trip. A variety of transportation methods will be used, including public buses, metro, ferries, cable cars, and taxis.
- If you are prone to travel sickness, it's a good idea to bring travel sickness pills with you. They can also be readily purchased in any pharmacy.
- International flights are not included. If you need assistance with your flights, we can book them for you at an additional cost.

#### **Meals:**

- Sampling different food is one of the most exciting parts of traveling. Our goal is to make sure each traveler gets to sample the delicious Turkish traditional dishes that are available in different regions of the country.
- For all of the meals included in the itinerary, travelers can choose anything off the menu.
- Beer, wine, and mixed alcoholic drinks are not provided during meals included in the itinerary and must be purchased separately.
- When meals are not included, travelers have the choice of eating wherever they want. Generally, the food in Turkey is inexpensive by American standards but there are several opportunities to eat at more upscale restaurants if you desire.
- We can suggest local restaurants when meals are not included, and our guests are more than welcome to join us for these meals.
- We must be notified of all special meal requests before departure. This way, we can accommodate any dietary requirements.

#### **Money:**

- The currency in Turkey is liras (TL). Some vendors will accept US dollars but be aware you will probably get a terrible exchange rate.
- In Turkey, you cannot exchange money with a credit card.
- ATMs can be found in every city we visit, and credit cards are widely accepted, but keep in mind you may have to pay extra fees or currency conversion rates depending on your card issuer and bank. Have a backup if you plan to use a debit card.

- Don't forget to call your bank and credit card issuer to let them know your travel plans.
- Carry enough cash with you for souvenirs, meals not included in the itinerary, and personal expenses.

### **Tipping:**

- Generally, it's customary to leave a 10% tip in restaurants. Before you tip, make sure you check the bill to see if a service charge is already included.
- In hotels, you can tip porters US\$1 or 10 TL per bag.
- You can tip housekeeping US\$1 or 10 TL per person per day.
- If you take a taxi, you can round up the fare as a tip.
- On a group tour, you can tip the guide US\$3 per person per day.
- You can tip private local guides about US\$10-15 per person per day.

### **Clothing and Laundry:**

- Bring light clothing and comfortable shoes. We will do a lot of walking!
- We will often be visiting Muslim and Christian holy places throughout the trip, especially in Istanbul. We'll let you know ahead of time if you need to dress conservatively or if it's ok to wear shorts.
  - While visiting mosques, women will need a headscarf. Both men and women must have their shoulders covered and wear clothing past the knees. You will have to remove your shoes, and plastic bags will be provided to carry them while inside.
- Don't overpack! We suggest bringing only what you need along with a small daypack.
- Some of the hotels will provide laundry service at an additional cost. If not, we can help you find a solution if you need to do laundry at any point on the trip.

### **Safety:**

- You should take the same precautions as you would anywhere else in the world:
  - Watch your bags at all times and keep them closed. If you're at an outdoor restaurant, keep your bag on your lap or somewhere it won't get snatched.
  - Petty crime is the biggest nuisance. That doesn't mean you shouldn't wear expensive jewelry, just be cautious and be aware of distractions.
  - Don't pull out lots of cash in public, be alert while using your cell phone, and don't accept offers of meals or gifts from strangers.
  - During your free time, use your judgment to avoid areas that seem undesirable.
  - Be careful crossing the street! Pedestrians don't get the same respect as they do in the US.
- It's safe to bring your computer, smart phone, and SLR camera.

**Travel Insurance:**

- Personal travel insurance is optional but highly recommended. It provides medical coverage if you get sick, reimburses you if your luggage is stolen or your camera breaks, and helps you get home if you have a family emergency.
- For complete coverage, we recommend Allianz and Travelex.
- If you need assistance in acquiring a travel insurance policy, we can help.

**Other important information:**

- Drug use, sales, and/or possession is illegal and the punishments by law enforcement are extremely strict. Therefore, it is strictly forbidden for any travelers to use or possess illegal drugs. Anyone caught using or possessing illegal drugs will lose their place on the tour and no money will be refunded. This is a zero-tolerance policy!
- We denounce discrimination against anyone based on race, religion, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, citizenship, etc.
- Prescription drugs must be properly labeled in original containers and a note from the prescribing doctor is highly recommended.

**Itinerary Disclaimer:**

- We will do our best to follow the itinerary provided. However, there is some flexibility built in. In some cases, it's necessary to make changes to the schedule in order to provide better service or due to circumstances beyond our control, including inclement weather, flight delays and cancellations, unexpected museum and attraction closings, vehicle issues, labor strikes, passenger illness and emergency, etc.
- Group leaders, Paisadventure, and any supplier or tour operator in connection with this program are not responsible for any injury, illness, or loss to person or property, or any delay, inconvenience, or extra costs incurred due to delay or cancellations caused by weather or events beyond anyone's control.

**Suggested Packing List:**

- Passport
- Cash
- Credit or debit card
- Camera
- Light jacket
- Rain gear
- Hat
- Sunscreen
- Sunglasses
- Swimwear
- Comfortable walking shoes

- Hiking boots
- Sport sandals
- Prescription medications in original packaging (if applicable)