

ISTANBUL, CAPPADOCIA & THE TURQUOISE COAST (8 NIGHTS – 9 DAYS)

DAY 1.

(-)



Istanbul

- Following our arrival in Istanbul we are met at the airport and transferred to our hotel where we will have our overnight stay.

DAY 2.

(B)

Istanbul

- Welcome Gift, **Nazar Boncuk (Turkish Blue Eyed Bead)** Nazar Boncugu is a glass bead that protects the holder from evil eye. It is pretty common in Turkey. Have a look around and you might discover countless Nazar Boncuks dangling from cars, from rear-view windows, backpacks, on necklaces and bracelets, pinned to the sweaters of babies and small children, and hanging above doors in restaurants, hotels, stores, and apartments. 
- We set off on a full day of sightseeing in Istanbul. We will start off with a visit to the renowned Sultanahmet Mosque, known popularly as **The Blue Mosque**, an incredibly beautiful mosque known for its blue Iznik (Nicaea) tiles are unique for the fact that it has six minarets. We continue on to the **Hippodrome**, once the vast arena that functioned as the heart of sporting (chariots races and athletics) events and political activities of the old city. From here we go to the nearby **Hagia Sophia**, the Church of Divine Wisdom. Ranking as one of the greatest marvels of world architecture, this awe-inspiring building was constructed as a basilica in the 6th century by Byzantine Emperor Justinian. From here short walk to the **Underground Cistern**, the largest of the many underground cisterns built during the Byzantine Empire to supply the city with water. This cistern is especially fascinating because the Byzantine builders recycled many stone structures—capital heads and columns— that had been used in earlier temples. Now an upside down Medusa stares out at us from her watery home. We continue our tour with a visit to the **Topkapi Palace**. This visit to the imperial palace of the Ottoman Sultans will include tours of the imperial treasury, the Chinese porcelain section, the calligraphy section and many more. We will also visit the jewelry collection segment of the palace. The tour will end with a visit to the **Grand Bazaar**, the vast and legendary covered market that is the biggest souk in the world with nearly 4000 shops of antiques, jewelry and carpets. During the visit of the **Grand Bazaar** we will be experiencing **Turkish coffee** from **Sark Kahvesi**, historical coffee roasters located in the Grand Bazaar. Each variety has been prepared with a blend of traditional knowledge, experience and an abiding “Love of Coffee” 
- Overnight stay at our hotel in Istanbul.

DAY 3.

(B)

Istanbul

- This morning we visit the renowned **Dolmabahce Palace**, was built between the years 1843 and 1856

by the armenian architects the Balyans. The design contains eclectic elements from the Baroque, Rococo and Neoclassic styles blended with traditional Ottoman architecture to create a new synthesis. It is the largest Palace in Turkey, its monoblock building occupies 45.000 m2. Continue our tour with a visit to the **Rustem Pasha Mosque**. Designed by the Ottoman imperial architect Mimar Sinan for Grand Vizier "Son-in-Law" Rüstem Pasha (husband of Princess Mihrimah Sultana, one of the daughters of Suleiman the Magnificent), the construction was carried out from 1561 to 1563. The Rüstem Pasha Mosque is famous for its many exquisite Iznik tiles that depict a wide variety of beautiful floral and geometric designs. These priceless tiles have been used to decorate the *mihrab*, *minbar*, walls, columns and the interior and exterior façades of the enclosed portico. These tiles use the cherry red that is characteristic of the early Iznik period (1555-1620). No other mosque in Istanbul makes such a lavish use of these tiles. Short walk to **Spice Market**. Built in 1664, this large, old stone building includes a large number of shops (and a restaurant on the second floor that has long held a venerable place in the life of the city). This collection of shops was actually part of the complex of the adjacent Yeni Camii (the "New Mosque," whose construction started in 1597 and finished decades later). Since its construction, the Egyptian Spice Market has specialized in the sale of exotic spices. Today, these lovely small shops continue to sell spices and now also sell dried fruits, nuts, seeds, and other edibles. Some of the shops are gradually being transformed into shops featuring jewelry and other high margin items. During the visit of Spice Market we will have a short break at **Ali Muhiddin Haci Bekir's shop** – the inventor of Turkish delight. From the time of its founding during the Ottoman Empire, the name Haci Bekir has become a legend in Ottoman and Turkish confectionery and a leading symbol of this art. Late afternoon we will have a **Cruise on the Bosphorus** with a regular boat. We'll cruise up Istanbul's winding straits and relax and admire the shoreline of beautiful mosques, lavish palaces, and decadent yalis. You'll see Dolmabahçe Palace, Beylerbeyi Palace, Ottoman summer mansions, the Ortaköy Mosque, the defensive Rumeli Fortress, and the Bosphorus Bridge, one of the world's largest suspension bridges, all while passing fishing boats, yachts, huge cargo ships, and tankers.

- Overnight stay at our hotel in Istanbul

DAY4. (B)

Istanbul / Cappadocia

- After breakfast, we will drive to the Istanbul (Ataturk) Airport to catch our morning flight to Kayseri (Cappadocia). Arrive in Kayseri Airpory and private transfer to our hotel in Cappadocia. On th way we will visit the following sites;



- First, we will visit **Devrent Valley**. One magical corner in the countless panoramic valleys of Cappadocia, here is an unbelievable landscape with its rock formations and savage feeling; one of



the best introductions to understanding the formation of fairy chimneys. Then, we will continue to **Pasabag Valley** where the formation of “fairy chimneys” can be best observed. Pasabag, the Pasha's Vineyard, is surrounded by incredible natural rock formations; a spectacular scene. Then, drive down into the village of Urgup, where you will see the blending of landscape and buildings. Last, we will walk through the **Guvercinlik Valley**. The Pigeon Valley is one of the most famous valleys of Cappadocia and its name comes from the pigeon-cotes carved on its walls.

- We will spend our night at our hotel in Cappadocia.

**DAY5.
(B-L)**

Cappadocia

- After breakfast, our first stop at **Uchisar** where is situated at the highest point in Cappadocia, The top of the Uchisar Castle, provides a magnificent panorama of the surrounding area with Mount Erciyes in the distance. Many rooms hollowed out into the rock are connected to each other with stairs, tunnels and passages. At the entrances of the rooms, there are millstone doors, just like the ones in the underground settlements, used to control access to these places. Due to the erosion in places of this multi-leveled castle, it is unfortunately not possible to reach all the rooms. Most of the rooms, located on the north side of the castle are in use as pigeon houses (dovecuts) today. Farmers used these cave pigeon houses to collect the droppings of pigeons which is an excellent natural fertilizer for the orchards and vineyards. We will continue with visit of **Goreme** area. The small town of Goreme is situated in the middle of the Valley of Fairy Chimneys, surrounded by the eerie shapes and fantastic rock formations that have made the region famous. It is one of the few remaining villages where fairy chimneys and rock-hewn houses are still inhabited, and several restaurants and cafes are carved into the rock. Its biggest attraction is the Goreme Open-Air museum with over 30 beautifully frescoed Byzantine rock churches. The town makes an excellent base from which to explore the surrounding rock formations, villages, vineyards and attractions. For shoppers, carpets and Kilims are plentiful. **Goreme National Park** which was the official state during the period of the Roman Empire, was named “Cappadocia”, which means “The Country of White Horses” in Persian. The Goreme Open-Air Museum is the most visited of the monastic communities in Cappadocia and is one of the most famous sites in central Turkey. It is a complex comprising more than 30 rock-hewn churches and chapels containing some superb frescoes, dating from the 9th to the 11th centuries. Inconspicuous from the outside, the interiors are characteristically Byzantine with a central dome and a floor plan in the shape of a cross. We will have **lunch at a local village house** where you see may groups of women are cooking local bread together, these lovely people invite you to join them and to sit together. If you want you may try to cook traditional Turkish bread. Then you are going to be taken to a traditional Turkish house, to meet the members and to interact with the family. If you have already learned a little Turkish this is the right time to use local language. After lunch, we will continue our day descending below the earth's surface into the **Kaymakli Underground City**, where five levels extend below ground and include; living quarters, kitchens, wine presses, storage rooms, stables and ventilation shafts. Early Christians carved out these subterranean complexes to avoid invaders who swept across the plains of Anatolia from the 6th to the 9th Century. Shopping time for the well-known merits of the area before returning to the hotel.
- We will spend our night at our hotel In Cappadocia



DAY6. (B) Capadocia / Kas

- After breakfast, we will drive to the Kayseri Airport to catch our flight to Istanbul. Arrive in Istanbul, you will connecting your Dalaman flight on your own and arrive in Dalaman we will transfer to your hotel.
- We will spend our night at our hotel in Kas

DAY7. (B) Kas

- After breakfast, we have a full day tour to **Myra, Demre and Kekova**. See the finest monuments of historic Lycia, find sunken cities and uncover the origins of Santa Claus on this enthralling tour. Travel to one of the most beautiful parts of Anatolia to visit the ruined city of Myra with its impressive Lycian rock-cut tombs. View the ancient amphitheater, and the Church of St Nicholas, dedicated to the saintly man who became the model for father Christmas. Enjoy a **private** boat trip across the sea to Kekova Island. Beneath the clear waters you can see the remains of Simena, a city ravaged by earthquakes around two thousand years ago. Swim in the turquoise waters, once a favored haunt of pirates, before exploring an ancient cemetery with many magnificent tombs. It's a day full of great natural beauty and fascinating history.

Kekova: An hour from Dalyangazi by sea, especially by sea especially enjoyable for the yacht-men, is the islands of Kekova (home of the sun). Kekova is also the name of picturesque islands, numerous bays and ancient cities. Along the northern shore of Kekova island, structural movements of the land over the years have caused some of the ancient houses to be totally submerged while remains of the others are scattered along the shore. A fascinating Lycian Necropolis chesttype tombs spread out along the coastline lies at Theimussa near the present day.

Myra: Some of the finest examples of Lycian funerary architecture are to be found at Myra, near the expanding present day town of Demre. The site, about a mile from the town includes a vast Roman theatre in good repair and built against a cliff face that also houses too impressive sets of Lycian tombs. Many of the tombs have long cabin features carved into the rocks, presumably reflecting the domestic architecture of the period. Carvings above are mostly in poor repair but the overall effect to this jumble of the architecture of death is dramatic.

St. Nicholas Church: Best known as the patron saint of children, who was born at Patara around AD. 300 and bishop of Myra where he died. The miracles he performed in life time and stories that surrounded him have identified today in the west with father Christmas.

DAY8. (B) Kas

- Breakfast
- Remainder of the day at your own leisure.
- We will spend our night at our hotel in Kas.

Suggested Biking Tour Activities
Difficulty Level 1: Easy Terrain: Flat, with some hills, but not too long or steep.

Difficulty Level 2: Moderate Terrain: Most of the terrain we cycle is moderate. There may be frequent hills, but seldom exceeding 8% and uninterrupted climbs seldom exceeding 350 m (1200 feet). Daily vertical totals should be generally less than 750 m (2500 feet). This is terrain the average



cyclist in good condition can handle.

Difficulty Level 3: Difficult Terrain: This is for the strong cyclist. The average cyclist needs special conditioning prior to cycling difficult terrain. There may be frequent, uninterrupted climbs exceeding 450 m (1500 feet) vertical with grades sometimes in excess of 10-12%. Less steep, but long climbs at altitudes exceeding 2250 m (7500 feet) also qualify for difficult. Daily vertical totals generally exceed 1000 m (3000 feet)

• **Suggested Hiking Tour Activities**

This hiking path starts from the east of Kas. The dazzling coastal view and tombs carved into sheer rocks from the Lycian Era seem miraculous. The winding path will sometimes take us to the shore, through the solitary maquis that embraces coastal rocky walls. Starting from the first minutes, we explore the geological history of the region, meet colourful flowers and every shade of green. It is nearly impossible not to be fascinated by the unspoiled view. We climb down to Limanagzi Beach, where cold turquoise waters are ready to rejuvenate you. Time to relax, and lunch. In the way back, we follow a different route: we walk among Lycian tombs, and from time to time, we look back on Limanagzi beach with regret... Before the path ends at Big Pebble Beach, we have another chance to relax in clear cold seas of Kas. Altitude: 0-50-0 meters. Hike time: 3 hours.

DAY 9.
(B)

Kas / Istanbul / UK

- After breakfast we will drive to the Dalaman Airport to catch our flight to Istanbul. Upon our arrival in Istanbul transfer to our connection flight back to UK.

B = Breakfast L = Lunch D = Dinner

INCLUDING

- 8 nights hotel accommodation throughout the tour at below specified selected hotels
- Sightseeing as per above itinerary
- Selected Unique Moment listed below
- Entrance fees of the specified museums in the itinerary
- Specified meals (8 Breakfast, 1 Lunch)
- Mineral Water during lunches & dinners
- Private Transportation by A/C deluxe vehicle
- Private English Speaking Professional tour guide
- Mineral water during the touring days
- Tips to the hotel and restaurant staff
- Service charges & local taxes

EXCLUDING

- Flight tickets (International & Domestic)
- Drinks and meals which are not listed at the itinerary
- All personal expenses
- Tips to the tour guide and driver.



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SELECTED UNIQUE MOMENTS (included in our package)

- **Turkish Blue Eyed Bead**
- **Turkish coffee** from Sark Kahvesi
- **Baklava** from the masters Unchanging taste in **Karakoy Gulluoglu Baklavicisi**
- **Turkish Delight** at **Ali Muhiddin Hacı Bekir's shop**
- **Lunch at a local village house** in Cappadocia