



Grand Circle Travel

Treasures of the Aegean: Greek Island Cruise, Athens & Istanbul

Day 14
(L)

Kusadasi – Disembark ship – Ephesus – Carpet weaving lecture- 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.



Disembark your small ship in Kusadasi this morning and head out to probe the ruins of nearby **Ephesus**—one of the best-preserved and most extensive (2,000 acres) classical Greco-Roman cities in Asia. Located 60 miles from Izmir, Ephesus dates to at least 1300 BC and was home to the early



Philosopher Heraclitus. As the commercial center and capital city of Roman Asia Minor, it was once the fourth-largest city in the Roman Empire, boasting a population numbering more than 300,000. One ancient legend attributes the founding of Ephesus to the Amazons of Greek mythology. Another credits the Athenian Androclus, who received advice from an oracle to establish a colony at the "place of the fish and the boar." And so, when he and his crew saw a wild pig charge out of underbrush set ablaze inadvertently by locals grilling fish, he staked his claim on the Anatolian shore. Since 1992, Grand Circle Foundation has been contributing to the preservation and ongoing excavations of this remarkable site, with its donations to the Foundation of Friends of Ephesus.



Your discoveries in Ephesus include a visit to the **Basilica of St. John**, constructed in the fifth century over the tomb of the evangelist St. John, and the site of the **Temple of Artemis**, one of the original Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

After Ephesus, visit a local cooperative to learn how hand-woven Turkish carpets are produced, an exclusive Discovery Series event. You'll also enjoy an included **lunch** here.

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Late this afternoon, transfer to the airport for your flight to Istanbul. Arrival in Istanbul and transfer to the hotel.

Day 15
(B-D)

Istanbul

Spend the day getting to know Istanbul, the great romantic city straddling the Bosphorus Strait. This



morning, you'll visit a few of the great landmarks of the city's historic center, which has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. First, explore the sprawling **Topkapi Palace**, the maze of opulent buildings that served as the seat of the Ottoman Empire between the 15th and 19th centuries. The Topkapi was a city-palace with a population of

approximately 4,000 people. It housed all the Ottoman sultans from Sultan Mehmet II to Abdulmecit—25 sultans over a span of nearly 600 years. Today, it is the world's oldest and largest surviving palace, one of the world's richest museums, and a masterpiece of Turkish architecture—a complex of shady courtyards overlooking the Golden Horn, where the Sea of Marmara meets the Bosphorus. Highlights include the weapons collection, and galleries exhibiting the imperial collection of crystal, silver, fabled jewels, and Chinese porcelain. **Please note:** The Topkapi Palace is closed Tuesdays. If this day falls on Tuesday, you will visit the **Istanbul Archaeological Museums** and the **Basilica Cistern** instead.

You'll also visit the beautiful **Sultan Ahmet Mosque**. The mosque was built between 1609 and 1616 by the architect Mehmet under the orders of Sultan Ahmet I, who ascended to become the 14th ruler at age 14, and died 14 years later. The mosque is part of a large complex consisting of tombs,



medreses (theological schools), fountains, a health center, homes, storehouses, and other buildings, but it is best known for its courtyard, elegant domes, and six minarets soaring above the skyline. As you remove your shoes to enter the mosque, you'll see how it earned the name Blue Mosque: Its interior gleams with a magnificent paneling of blue-and-white Iznik tiles.

After **lunch on your own**, your tour continues at the magnificent **Hagia Sophia**, one of the most beautiful buildings in the world. Constructed as a Christian church during the sixth century, this Church of the Holy Wisdom served as the mother church of the Orthodox religion for more than



1,000 years. In 1453, the Ottoman Turks seized control of Istanbul and converted the church into a mosque, which it remained until 1935. Today, it is a museum. Among the wonders of this remarkable structure is its huge dome—the model for Byzantine churches to come. As you enter the Hagia Sophia, note the cannonballs along the outer

courtyard, which remain from the Ottomans' siege of the city. Entering the sanctuary, you will be awed by an immense vaulted ceiling that soars above the four arches on which it rests. Admire the marble walls and the juxtaposition of Islamic calligraphic roundels with golden Christian mosaics that are still being uncovered. **Please note:** The Hagia Sophia is closed on Mondays. If this day falls on a Monday, you will visit the St. Chora Museum instead.

Just outside, you'll also see the remains of the **Roman Hippodrome**, where thundering chariots once competed in races. Wrestling, boxing, and other athletic events were also held here, as were political rallies. Of special note at the Hippodrome is the Obelisk of Theodosius, which dates to around 1500 BC and which was transported to Istanbul (then Constantinople) in AD 390. You'll also see the fourth-century Constantine Column; the Greek Serpentine Column, one of city's oldest monuments, dating to 479 BC; and the German Fountain, a gift to the Ottoman Sultan in 1898.

- Your introduction to Istanbul concludes with a stroll through one of the largest (and with its origins in the 15th century, the oldest) covered markets in the world, Istanbul's **Grand Bazaar** (known as the Covered Bazaar to the Turkish people). As you browse among the 4,000 shops stretched along miles of labyrinthine passageways, you'll find that the street names recall the days when each trade had its own quarter: goldsmiths' street, carpet sellers' street, and the street of the skullcap-makers. Perhaps you'll find a bargain in brilliant hand-painted ceramics, copper and brassware, gleaming gold jewelry, spices, leather goods, traditional costumes, and antiques. **** Unique Moment :** 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” **Please note:** The Grand Bazaar is closed on Sundays. If this day falls on a Sunday, you will visit **Istiklal Street**, the **Fish Market**, and the **Galata District** instead.

- This evening, celebrate your travels with a Farewell Dinner with your fellow travelers at **Hamdi Restaurant**, www.hamdi.com.tr Hamdi Restaurant has been serving its traditional south eastern kebabs since it originated in 1970 and is the place to go for this famous Turkish dish. The popular restaurant is situated in the historic Eminönü district (West of Sultanahmet), and offers stunning views over the Golden Horn. The menu provides a wide choice of meat dishes and superior quality of service, making Hamdi Restaurant one of Turkey’s first class restaurants.

Menu

White Flat Bread & Water
¼ Turkish “Tulum” Cheese (made in goat skin)
Served with fresh butter
Mini Turkish Pizza
Stuffed giant meat ball
Appetizer
Spoon Salad
MIXED KEBAP PLATE;
(Served with Rice, Tomatoes, Pepper, Onion)
½ Pistachio Kebab
½ Vegetable Kebab
2 Pieces of Shish Kebab
2 Pieces of Chicken Shish
2 Slices of Baklava (Dessert)

- Overnight at our hotel in Istanbul.

Day 16
(B)

Istanbul - Return to U.S.

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for your flights home or begin your post-trip extension in Ankara & Cappadocia, Turkey.

B = Breakfast L = Lunch D = Dinner

PAX **PACKAGE PRICE with The Marmara Taksim Hotel, 5 Star www.themarmaracollection.com**
(Standard City View Room) or Titanic City Hotel Taksim, 4 Star www.titanic.com.tr (Standard Room) :

01 \$ 682.-
02 \$ 375.- per person in twin/double room



03	\$ 305.- per person in twin/double room
04	\$ 270.- per person in twin/double room
05	\$ 250.- per person in twin/double room
06-09	\$ 236.- per person in twin/double room
10 - 15	\$ 220.- per person in twin/double room
16 - 21	\$ 211.- per person in twin/double room
22 - 27	\$ 199.- per person in twin/double room
28 - 33	\$ 192.- per person in twin/double room
34 - 39	\$ 188.- per person in twin/double room
40 - 45	\$ 185.- per person in twin/double room

*** Single Supplement : FREE**

Our Services Include:

- 2 nights hotel accommodation at The Marmara Taksim Hotel (Standard Room) or Titanic City Hotel (Standard Room) or similar
- Sightseeing as per above itinerary
- Selected Unique Moment listed below
- Entrance fees of the specified museums in the itinerary
- Specified meals (2 Breakfast, 1 Lunch and 1 Dinner)
- Private Transportation by A/C deluxe motor coach
- Private English Speaking Professional tour guide
- Gratuities for local guides and motor coach drivers
- Gratuities for the hotel and restaurant staff
- Service charges & local taxes

Our Services do not include:

- Flight tickets (International & Domestic)
- Drinks and meals which are not listed at the itinerary
- All personal expenses

SELECTED UNIQUE MOMENTS (included in our package)

Karavan's reputation is based upon supplying competitive prices with innovative programs, which produce results for our partners and this is something we have built up over the years. Our experience has shown us that the right DMC needs to be able to develop and deliver products and services which stand out from the crowd and are competitive at the same time. We have specially tailored and introduced "Unique Moments" in our tours such as



Karavan Travel™

Private Visits to museums, local “street” food tasting along the itinerary including Turkish coffee and baklavas in Legendary locations. Wine tasting in Diyarbakır, visit to the only Turkish Gourmet Museum in Turkey, Champagne in Mount Ararat’ Private dinners and lunch organizations in Ephesus. Typical home cooking in Cappadocia, school visit, weddings in villages. Lecture on site by the professors leading the excavations. Please find below the “**Unique Moments**” services included in the itinerary.

- **Turkish Blue Eyed Bead (Day 14)**
- **Turkish coffee from Sark Kahvesi (Day 15)**

SUGGESTED HOTELS

ISTANBUL

The Marmara Taksim, 5 Star
www.themarmaracollection.com
or similar,

ISTANBUL

Titanic City Hotel Taksim, 4 Star Superior
www.titanic.com.tr
or similar,