

Turkish Treasures: Istanbul to Cappadocia

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Overview

The Highlights

- Visit to UNESCO World Heritage sites of Goreme Open Air Museum & the ruins of Hierapolis
- Explore the ancient port city of Izmir
- Stroll along the marble streets of Ephesus
- Admire the whimsical rock formations of Cappadocia
- Discover Ozkonak Underground City, a hidden subterranean labyrinth that once sheltered entire communities from invaders

- Spend four nights on board the private *Golden Eagle Danube Express*
- Two nights at a five-star hotel in Istanbul
- Two nights at a five-star hotel in Cappadocia
- Sightseeing tour of Istanbul, including a private Bosphorus cruise & Topkapi Palace
- Optional hot-air balloon ride over of Cappadocia at sunrise

The Tour

Set off on an unforgettable journey through Turkey, where ancient history, stunning landscapes, and vibrant culture come together. Travel in style aboard the [Golden Eagle Danube Express](#), exploring famous landmarks and hidden gems along the way. Perfect for those who love authentic and immersive experiences with a touch of luxury.

Itinerary

Day 1: Istanbul

Arrive in Istanbul, where you will be met and transferred to the luxurious Four Seasons Bosphorous (or similar) for a two-night stay.

This evening, enjoy a welcome reception dinner that will give you the opportunity to meet your fellow travelers.

Days 2 & 3: Istanbul

Istanbul is the fabled city that spans Asia and Europe. Today, we will visit a selection of Istanbul's must-see historic sites and see how old meets new and east meets west.

You will begin with a visit to the Hippodrome Square, the former social heart of Byzantium, where chariot races once captivated crowds. You will continue on to The Sultan Ahmet Mosque (the Blue Mosque), one of the most famous monuments in both the Turkish and Islamic worlds.

Continue to the incomparable Hagia Sophia, built in the 6th century by the Emperor Justinian as one of the largest basilicas in the Christian world.

After lunch in a local restaurant with Ottoman delicacies, visit Topkapi Palace, the crown jewel of the Ottoman Empire, with its treasury and exotic buildings overlooking the Golden Horn. It is the largest and oldest palace in the world and was the primary residence of the Ottoman Sultans from 1465 to 1853.

Explore the haunting Underground Cistern, an eerie yet beautiful marvel of ancient engineering. Our private Bosphorus cruise showcases Istanbul's skyline from a unique perspective, gliding past opulent palaces, vibrant waterside mansions and historic fortresses.

There is also time to explore the aromatic Spice Market before we transfer to the station to board the *Golden Eagle Danube Express* on the afternoon of Day 3.

Settle into your private cabin and enjoy dinner on board as the train takes us to our next destination.

Day 4: Izmir & Ephesus

This morning, wake to the vibrant city of Izmir, one of Turkey's most important port cities with a rich blend of Greek, Roman, and Ottoman influences. After a visit to Agora, a well-preserved marketplace from the Roman era, the journey continues to the fabled ancient city of Ephesus.

Wander through the marble streets of Ephesus, where grand temples, amphitheaters, and the awe-inspiring Library of Celsus remain as a testament to the city's former glory as one of the most important cities of the ancient Mediterranean. Feel history come alive as you stand where the philosopher Heraclitus once stood. After this enchanting tour, you'll re-board the train, ready for the next destination.

Day 5: Denizli - Hierapolis & Laodicea

Arrive in Denizli for a full-day exploration of the mesmerizing ruins of Hierapolis, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Built atop the famous hot springs, this Greco-Roman city was a spiritual and healing center. Stroll through the ancient necropolis, and take in the grandeur of the theatre, with sweeping views over the surrounding landscape.

Continue to Laodicea, another ancient city that played a pivotal role in early Christian history, known for its wealth and textiles. The juxtaposition of sacred history and silent ruins will leave an indelible mark on your soul.

Day 6: Ankara

Wake to the capital city, Ankara, a bustling metropolis where the pulse of modern Turkey beats strong. Your visit will include the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations, a treasure trove of artefacts that trace the timeline of this region's civilizations, from the earliest Neolithic settlements to the Hittites and beyond.

Next, pay homage to Turkey's founding father at the grandiose Mausoleum of Ataturk. Set atop a hill, this monumental structure is not only a shrine to one of history's great leaders, but also an architectural masterpiece, embodying the strength and ambition of a newly born nation. Enjoy lunch at the elegant Divan Çukurhan, a historic inn turned into a luxury hotel, before re-boarding our train.

Day 7: Cappadocia

Enjoy your final breakfast onboard before arriving in Kayseri and transferring to Cappadocia, known for its unique landscapes shaped by volcanic activity and erosion.

Your tour begins at the Ozkonak Underground City, a hidden subterranean labyrinth that once sheltered entire communities from invaders.

After lunch at Bizim Ev Restaurant, explore the magical Pasabag and Devrent Valleys, filled with fairy chimneys and dreamlike landscapes.

End the day relaxing at the luxurious five-star Yunak hotel for a two-night stay.

Day 8: Cappadocia

Begin your day with an optional hot-air balloon ride, soaring over Cappadocia's stunning landscapes as the sunrise paints the valleys in golden light. This wonderful experience allows you to see the natural beauty of Cappadocia from a truly unique vantage point.

Afterward, visit the Goreme Open Air Museum, a UNESCO World Heritage site that holds some of the finest rock-cut churches in the world, adorned with ancient frescoes. A stop at Pigeon Valley, Uchisar, and Ortahisar towns will round off your day, before enjoying a lavish farewell dinner at the spectacular Maara Konak.

Day 9: Cappadocia

Following breakfast on the final morning, we will be transferred to the airport for onward flight departures.

Dates & Prices

More

A minimum of emergency medical and evacuation travel insurance is required for this journey.