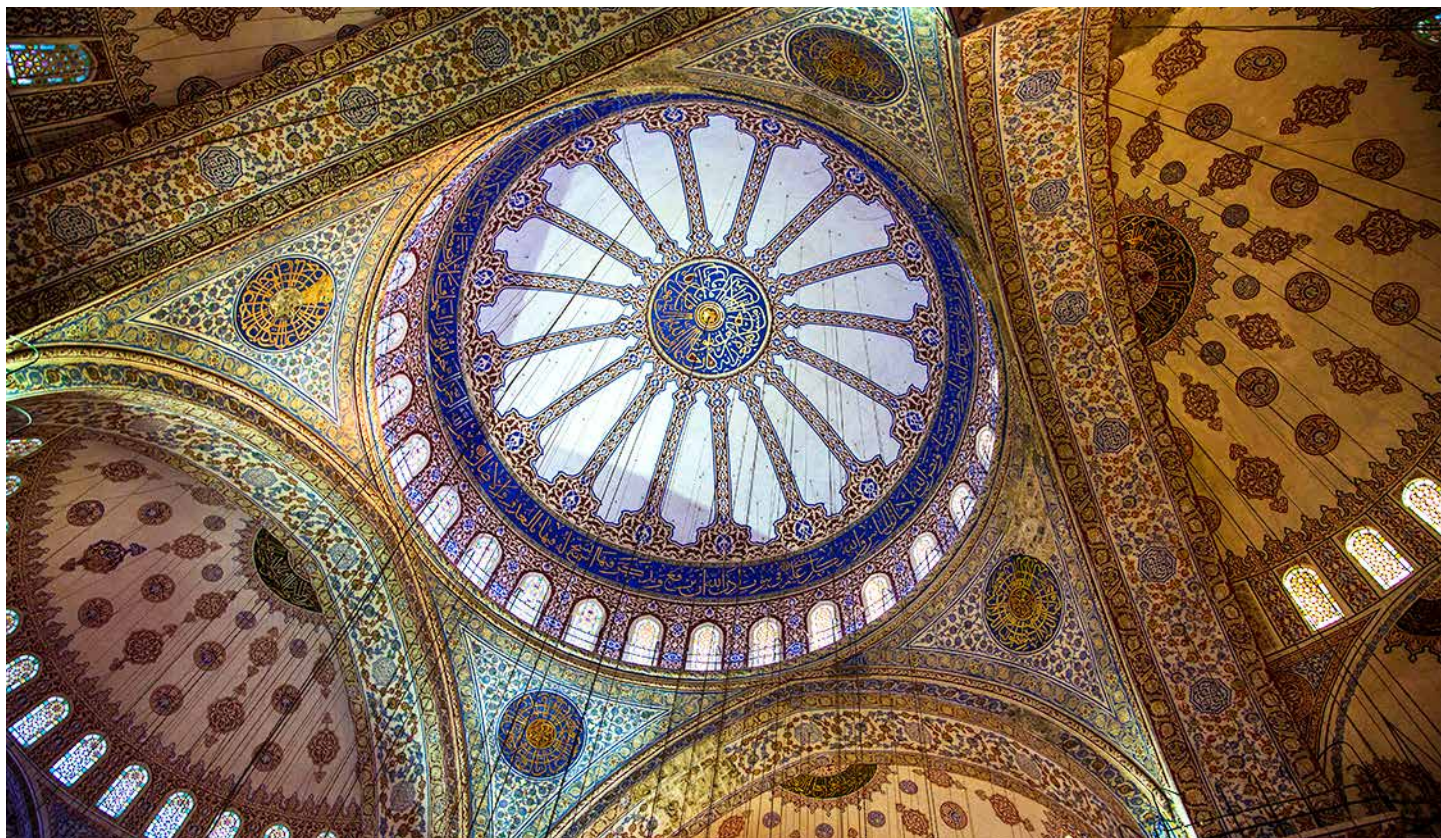


Discover Turkey Private Journey

FROM ROMAN RUINS TO IMPERIAL ISTANBUL



WHEN TO GO

January to December

For our Private Journey trips, you choose your own group and your preferred dates—there are no set departure dates. Private Journeys are available to groups as few as two people or as large as you like. While many guests choose to book this tour exactly as is, our Area Specialists can work with you to customize it to your wishes. Contact us for availability, questions, or to book your adventure!



Discover Turkey Private Journey

FROM ROMAN RUINS TO IMPERIAL ISTANBUL

This Private Journey brings you an insider's view of the rich culture and ancient heritage of Turkey, with visits to dazzling Istanbul and to the surreal fairytale landscape of Cappadocia in the interior heartland. Heading along the Aegean Coast, explore glorious Ephesus, the best preserved Roman city in the Mediterranean, and lovely off-the-beaten-path sites such as exquisite Priene, with its Temple of Athena. Incorporated into your Private Journey are walks on ancient trails through beautiful countryside of olive orchards, visits to serene rural villages where you can sip tea in cafes under age-old plane trees, and opportunities to mingle with the locals in farmers markets and artisan workshops. An optional mid-trip extension brings you to Aphrodisias and the remote sanctuary of Zeus at Labranda.

Itinerary

DAY 1

ISTANBUL

Arrive in Istanbul, where you are met by our transfer agent and assisted to your hotel. The one-hour drive brings you to the hotel, located in the pleasant Sultanahmet district, the heart of the Old City, within walking distance of all the famous sights. You will meet your guide at 9 am in the lobby tomorrow morning. Overnight at Hotel Levni in the heart of Istanbul's fascinating walking district...meals on your own

About Istanbul: The Old City, or Stamboul as it is sometimes known, is a great district to explore on foot. Many of its most famous sights are within easy walking distance of one another. The Hagia Sophia was once the largest enclosed space in the world and the greatest church in Christendom. Set atop a hill, the domed basilica of this 6th century cathedral, known as the Church of Holy Wisdom, was the dominant feature of the city's skyline until the 16th century. Mehmet the Conqueror converted the Hagia Sophia into a mosque following the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, and Atatürk converted it into a museum in 1935, but it has now been converted back to a Mosque. The restored Basilica Cistern, close to the Hagia Sophia, is an underground chamber built by Justinian in 532 AD for storing the imperial water supply. Also nearby is the Sultan Ahmet Camii, or Blue Mosque, with its six slender minarets visible for miles around. It is known as the Blue Mosque for its blue-themed interior, replete with panels of floral-motif tiles (20,000 of them) and graceful arabesque stenciling. Topkapi Palace, heart of the Ottoman Empire and home of the sultans for four centuries, is a marvelous imperial labyrinth set on the tip of a peninsula where the Golden Horn joins the Bosphorus. Although the original palace was constructed in the 15th century, most of the buildings we see today date from the 18th century. Of particular fascination is the Harem, the set of "forbidden" apartments where the Sultan's wives, concubines, and eunuchs lived. Topkapi is also the place to feast your eyes on the fabulous treasures of the sultans, from jewel-encrusted daggers to golden caskets to the 86-carat Spoonmakers Diamond.

DAY 2

ISTANBUL

Head out with your guide to visit the great monuments of Istanbul, a city straddling two continents and once the capital city of the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires. Your morning walking tour in the historic Sultanahmet area includes visits to the Hagia Sophia, Basilica Cisterns, and Blue Mosque. (Please note: the Blue Mosque is undergoing restoration and if not completed we will visit the Suleiman Mosque as an alternative, one of the most famous Mosques of the Ottoman period overlooking the Bosphorus.) After lunch, you will tour the fabulous Topkapi Ottoman palace, where the bejeweled robes, goblets, and other treasures of the sultan are on view, then walk through the Covered Bazaar to the Spice Market. At dusk, board a ferry and ride up the Bosphorus to the Yenikoy district, criss-crossing between Europe and Asia as you enjoy views of Dolmabahce Palace, Rumeli Hisar Castle, and waterfront



TRIP DETAILS AT-A-GLANCE

Length:	9 days
Arrive:	Istanbul, Turkey
Depart:	Istanbul, Turkey
Lodging:	3 nights in 4-star hotels, 2 nights boutique cave hotel in Cappadocia, 3 nights small country hotels
Meals:	All meals included except 5 dinners (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
Activity:	Archaeology, Cultural Adventures, Snorkeling, Walking
Trip Level:	1 2 3 4 5 6 Overland travel with easy to moderate city walks and cultural exploration in Istanbul and small villages, with hikes in Cappadocia and ancient sites

HIGHLIGHTS

- An insider's introduction with a top-notch private guide throughout the journey
- Hilltop villages, majestic Roman ruins of Ephesus and Bodrum
- Cappadocia, with its other-worldly landscape and traditional villages
- Optional extension to Aphrodisias, a spectacular World Heritage Site

Itinerary

yalis (traditional waterfront homes from the Ottoman period).) After a ferry boat cruise up the Bosphorus at dusk, enjoy a welcome dinner at a lovely waterside restaurant before transferring back to your hotel. Overnight at Hotel Levni...BLD

Walking Time: Approximately 4 hours



DAY 3

SIRINCE / EPHEBUS

Transfer to the airport and fly to Izmir, then continue on a drive to the charming hillside village of Sirince, inhabited by Greeks until the 1920s. The Greeks left in a mass exodus, replaced by immigrant Turks from Greece following the population exchanges at the end of the Turkish War of Independence. The charm and lifestyles of the Sirince villagers remains intact, with villagers growing grapes for their local wines as well as olives for their own olive oil.

Sirince is a wonderful place to mingle with locals and to absorb the Old World atmosphere. After lunch, continue to

Ephesus, declared capital of Roman Asia by Emperor Augustus, who turned it into a major trading and banking metropolis. In this remarkably well-preserved Roman city, where Marc Anthony romanced Cleopatra and St. Paul preached, explore on foot for about 2.5 hours among finely restored theaters and homes, stroll the marble-paved Arcadian way, and feel transported back to Roman times. The city's magnificently restored ruins include a library, temples, agoras, baths and brothels, marble streets, and amphitheaters. Under Roman rule, Ephesus allowed religious freedom for its inhabitants, and the result was a wonderful mixture of cultures. The late afternoon is a great time to visit Ephesus, when the light is soft and the crowds are gone. Overnight at Charisma Hotel in Kusadasi...BL

DAY 4

PRIENE / DIDYMA / EUROMOS / BODRUM

Today you head south from ancient Ionia to Caria, with time for exploration and lunch. The scenery is delightful, starting with the fertile valley of the Meander River delta, where cotton and sesame is grown. This soon gives way to lofty hills flanked by extensive groves of olive and Aleppo pine. These hills harbor some very rewarding ancient sites. Arrive at Priene on the slopes of Mt. Mycale. Often compared favorably to Delphi for its natural setting, Priene is also known for its extensive Temple of Athena, built with funds dedicated by Alexander the Great. An hour further by road, arrive in Didyma, site of the colossal Temple for Apollo, still in a great state of preservation. After lunch nearby, drive to Bodrum, with a short stop at Euromos to stretch your legs and explore the beautiful 2nd century Temple of Zeus, hidden in an endless grove of olives on the flanks of Mt. Latmos. Overnight at The Marmara Bodrum...BL

Driving Time: Approximately 3-4 hours

Itinerary

DAY 5

BODRUM

Bodrum, ancient Halicarnassus and the premier city of Caria, is Turkey's favorite vacation town. It's lively year-round, with whitewashed, bougainvillea-clad houses surrounding two natural harbors lined with yachts and cafes. The Castle of St. Peter dominates the peninsula between the two harbors. One of the seven wonders of the ancient world, the Mausoleum of Mausulus, was also located in Halicarnassus. Visit the unique Museum of Underwater Archeology established within the Castle of the Knights (Castle of St. Peter), see the boatyards where traditional "gulet" wooden yachts are made, explore the remains of the Mausoleum, and walk the narrow pedestrian streets lined with artisans and curio shops. Lunch is at a restaurant a short drive away, with time after our meal for a swim in the sea. Return to Bodrum for dinner on your own. For those who enjoy nightlife, Bodrum has many bars and a famous outdoor dance club overlooking the castle. Overnight at The Marmara Bodrum...BL



DAY 6

CAPPADOCIA (OR JOIN OUR APHRODISIAS MID-TRIP EXTENSION)

Transfer to the airport and fly to Kayseri via Istanbul, then drive to the picturesque citadel town of Urgup. After lunch, a gradual downhill hike on well-established paths brings you to Goreme, an open-air museum of frescoed, rock-cut churches. From here, another delightful hike, also gradually downhill, brings you through Bagli Dere ("the Valley of Spears") to enjoy panoramas of the fairy-chimney tufa formations for which the Cappadocian landscape is so famous. Later, enjoy an optional visit to a pottery-making town of Avanos, with its pretty riverside setting. Overnight at a "cave hotel" with comfortable and well-appointed rooms with a private bath...BLD

Driving Time: Approximately 1-2 hours

Walking Time: Approximately 4 hours

DAY 7

CAPPADOCIA

Start the day with a morning hike from Ortahisar to the unspoiled village of Cavusin through the pastoral Gulludere Valley. The hike takes about three hours, with ample stops, on a gradual downhill dirt/sand path and brings you past surreal fairy chimneys, through vineyards and apricot orchards, and among hidden and frescoed cave churches to Cavusin. You also have the option of participating in a thrilling hot air balloon ride at dawn this morning (at additional cost—if interested, please contact us). Following lunch, a short drive brings you to the Underground City of Kaymakli, where thousands of Byzantine-era villagers and monks could seek refuge for months at a time during



Itinerary



times of peril. Here you walk for one hour through a fascinating warren of underground tunnels to explore the residences, stables, refectories, churches, and kitchens. Return to your hotel for dinner and overnight. Tonight you'll attend a Whirling Dervish Sema dance at an original 12th century Seljuk caravanserai. The "dance" of the Whirling Dervishes is called Sema, inspired by Rumi, the mystic poet, as well as part of Turkish culture. Overnight at "cave hotel" ...BLD
Hiking Time: Approximately 4 hours

DAY 8

CAPPADOCIA / ISTANBUL

After a morning tour, transfer to the Kayseri airport and fly to Istanbul, with dinner on your own. Overnight at Hotel Levni...BL

DAY 9

DEPART

Transfer to the airport and depart on homeward-bound flights...B



Pricing

TRIP COST

Prices are per person, based on double occupancy
2026

\$6,595 (5-6 members)

\$7,295 (4 members)

\$8,295 (3 members)

\$10,195 (2 members)

Single supplement: \$975

Internal airfare: \$515 (subject to change)

Optional Wine Tasting in Cappadocia: \$65

Optional Cooking Class in Cappadocia or Istanbul: \$120

Optional Hot Air Balloon Ride in Cappadocia from: \$325

Optional Full Day Tour of Pera District in Istanbul from:
\$305

Prices are based on double occupancy and not guaranteed until services are confirmed.

Make it Your Trip!

The prices above are for the ready-to-book adventure outlined in this Detailed Itinerary, a popular option that has been handcrafted by our Area Specialists to include the best of every destination. While many travelers choose to book this tour as is, our Area Specialists are also happy to work with you to customize this Private Journey to suit your specific interests and style of travel. We can arrange for longer or shorter stays, or add an extension to additional places of interest. We can even add special activities or customize excursions depending on your interests. We invite you to contact us to discuss your options!

TRAVEL INSURANCE

We highly recommend you purchase travel insurance. You can take advantage of a comprehensive Travel Protection Plan designed for Wilderness Travel by Travelex, or purchase other insurance on your own. See our website for details: wildtrav.com/insurance

TRIP COST INCLUDES

- Expert leadership of local guides
- Accommodations in hotels
- All meals included except 5 dinners as indicated in Detailed Itinerary
- All ground transportation and baggage handling from meeting until departure
- All activities as indicated in Detailed Itinerary

TRIP COST DOES NOT INCLUDE

- Travel to and from the arrival and departure location as indicated in Detailed Itinerary
- Additional hotel nights outside the trip's scheduled dates
- Optional gratuities to guides or staff
- Optional travel insurance
- Other expenses of a personal nature (some alcoholic beverages, laundry, etc.)
- Visa fees
- Any activities and services described as an upgrade or optional

SIGNING UP FOR A TRIP

Early reservations are recommended since accommodations often sell out far in advance. Please call 1-800-368-2794 and ask for our Africa Manager or email africa@wildernesstravel.com with any questions that you may have about this trip. To reserve your Private Journey, we will need to know your preferred dates of travel. We will then check availability and send you a proposed itinerary with exact pricing for your adventure. We can typically hold a provisional booking for one week. At that time, we must collect your initial deposit or accommodations will be released. We accept Visa, Mastercard, or American Express card. Upon receipt of your deposit, we will send you a Welcome Packet that includes a letter of confirmation, Detailed Itinerary, Trip Application, Medical Form, and Pre-Departure Information Booklet with information to help you prepare for your adventure. Please see our Cancellations and Transfer Fee Schedule for specific payment information.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

At time of reservation	\$1,000
90 days prior to departure	Balance

CANCELLATION AND TRANSFER FEE SCHEDULE

Minimum fee: \$500 per person

61-90 days prior to departure: 25% of trip cost

46-60 days prior to departure: 50% of trip cost

45 days or less: 100% of trip cost

*Please note that this differs from our regular catalog departures.

Optional Aphrodisias Mid-Trip Extension

On this mid-trip extension, hike to a Byzantine monastery and to neolithic caves, walk around Pamukkale's famous travertine pools and sacred spring, visit the archaeological site of Labranda, and discover the beauty of ancient Aphrodisias, a World Heritage Site famed for its art sculpted from marble quarries.

Days 1-5 follow the regular discover Turkey Private Journey itinerary

DAY 6 HERAKLEIA / LAKE BAFÄ / KAPIKIRI / LABRANDA

Setting out from Bodrum, visit Herakleia en route to Lake Bafa, set in the peaceful valley of the Meander River surrounded by pine forests and olives groves. Here you'll explore the unspoiled lakeside village of Kapikiri, then enjoy a two-hour hike that brings you to the great Byzantine monastery at Herakleia and to neolithic caves with fascinating pictographs. After lunch in the village, visit the charming Carian site of Labranda, with its fascinating sanctuary of Zeus perched in a lovely setting overlooking the plains. Besides the four different androns ("men's sanctuaries") set into the hill at Labranda, there is an ancient sacred trail here that leads to the town of Milas. You may want to walk a little way on this ancient trail to stretch your legs and enjoy the beautiful countryside. Overnight in the village of Kapikiri on Lake Bafa at the Agora Pansiyon Hotel...BLD

DAY 7 APHRODISIAS / PAMUKKALE

This morning enjoy a drive to Aphrodisias, a marvelous World Heritage Site set in a mountain-ringed valley watered by the River Dandalaz. The city is crafted almost entirely of white marble and has a theater, a stadium capable of seating up to 30,000 people, a charming concert hall, two large agoras, two baths, and the huge Temple of Aphrodite, which was converted into a Byzantine church in the 6th century. From the acropolis hill behind the Aphrodisias theater, archaeologists have unearthed stone and bronze idols dating as far back as 3,000 BC, making Aphrodisias one of the earliest settlements in Asia Minor dedicated to the Megalo-Mater, the great mother. Continue in the afternoon on a drive of about 1.5 hours to Pamukkale, visiting the great ruined city of Hierapolis en route. The 1,000-foot-high Pamukkale plateau is covered in white travertine terraces filled with spring water. Some are shaped like shells, others like water lilies. The terraces are the result of ages of dissolved calcium bubbling up out of an ancient spring atop the plateau and are truly an



extraordinary sight, especially at sunset, when instead of gleaming white, they reflect shades of pink, purple, and ochre. Enjoy a walk around Pamukkale's famous travertine pools and sacred spring, which once fed the Roman bath at Hierapolis. The spring has been converted into a large warm-water pool with a floor decorated by submerged marble pillars dating to the Roman era. A dip in this pool is an unforgettable experience. Overnight at hotel in Pamukkale...BLD

Driving Time: Approximately 5.5 hours

DAY 8 CAPPADOCIA

Early morning transfer to the airport at Denizil for the flight to Kayseri via Istanbul, then drive to the picturesque citadel town of Urgup and continue with Day 6 of the regular Discover Turkey Private Journey itinerary.

2025 APHRODISIAS EXTENSION COST

From \$1,495 per person, double occupancy
Single supplement: \$185

Extension Includes: Services of local expert guides, hotel accommodations, meals as noted, entrance to thermal baths in Pamukkale, bottled drinking water throughout, ground transportation in air-conditioned vehicle, airport transfer on Day 8.

Does Not Include: Internal airfare, meals not specified (BLD) in this itinerary, beverages at restaurants or hotels, any activities described as optional, airport departure taxes, optional tipping or gratuities to staff, travel insurance, and other expenses of a personal nature (alcoholic beverages, laundry, internet, and so on).

Optional Extension: Inside Istanbul

We are delighted to offer this special, in-depth guided exploration of Istanbul that visits intriguing sites not seen on our trip's one-day Istanbul visit. Set astride both land and sea, Istanbul is truly the bridge between Asia and Europe and it's a wonderfully walkable city full of delights. We highly recommend extending your time in this fascinating city.

PRE-TRIP ITINERARY

DAY 1

ARRIVE IN ISTANBUL

You will be met upon arrival at Istanbul airport and transferred to your hotel. Meals are on your own today. Overnight at Hotel Levni.

DAY 2

PRINCE'S ISLANDS

Enjoy a scenic ferry ride to the Prince's Islands, an archipelago in the Sea of Marmara just off the Asian coast of Istanbul. These islands have always been considered one of the most picturesque spots of Istanbul. In the 19th century, grand Ottoman mansions were built here, complete with lovely gardens. Much of the beauty and romance of that time still survives today. Explore Prinkipo (Buyukada), the largest of the islands, by circling its coastline by electric carriage—gasoline powered vehicles are not allowed on this lovely island. Your ride takes you to the wilder and less

populated part of the island, through forests of age-old pine trees and alongside seaside cliffs. Lunch is at one of the famous fish restaurants along Prinkipo's seaside. After lunch, walk up to the monastery of St. George on Yucetepe Hill, perhaps lingering to taste some of the local wine produced here. Return to Istanbul on an early afternoon ferry. Later this afternoon, we can arrange an optional visit to the Turkish Hamam Bath for a traditional bathing experience. These historic baths are near your hotel, so those who do not wish to attend may return to the hotel. (The cost of the bath is not included—approximately \$30 per person.) Dinner is on your own, overnight at Hotel Levni...BL

DAY 3

PERA DISTRICT

Ride the streetcar to the Galata Bridge, then take the "Tunel," Istanbul's underground metro, for a quick one-stop ride to the Pera District. Walk over to the Galata Tower, a 14th century Genoese monument that offers breathtaking views of all of Istanbul and its shores. Stop in for a visit to the Calligraphy Museum that doubles as the local Convent of Whirling Dervishes. The Pera District is the new and fashionable part of "old Stamboul." This is where the embassies are located and where we see the real "Stamboullou" locals promenade. Walk along Istiklal Avenue, a pedestrian street lined not only with embassies



Optional Extension: Inside Istanbul

and churches but also with smart cafes, *patisseries*, great restaurants, and interesting shops in interior passageways, and stroll through the Flower Passage and Fish Market. After lunch at one of the many great restaurants in Istanbul, visit the sumptuous Dolmabahce Palace on the Bosphorus, the final residence of the Sultans, or the Maritime Museum, one of Istanbul's most interesting little museums, where among other things are palatial Ottoman *caiques* (private boats once used by the sultans). Dinner is on your own. Overnight at Hotel Levni...BL

ITINERARY-IN-BRIEF FOR POST-TRIP EXTENSION

Day 1: Explore Prince's Islands (same as Day 2 of previous itinerary).

Day 2: Pera District (same as Day 3 of previous itinerary).

Day 3: Depart Istanbul.

2025 INSIDE ISTANBUL TRIP COST

Pre-Trip (3 nights hotel in Istanbul)

From \$1,495 per person

Solo Traveler: from \$2,495

Single supplement: \$415 (for groups of 3 or more)

Post-Trip (2 nights hotel in Istanbul)

From \$1,395 per person

Solo Traveler: from \$2,195

Single supplement: \$345 (for groups of 3 or more)

Extension Cost Includes: Same private guide throughout, all hotel accommodations, meals as noted, entrances to museums and sites as noted, bottled drinking water, ground and ferry transportation.



Does Not Include: Any activities described as optional (Turkish Hamam Bath), meals not specified (BLD) in this itinerary, airport transfers, beverages at restaurants or hotels, customary gratuities to staff, additional hotel nights made necessary by airline schedule changes or other factors, and other expenses of a personal nature (alcoholic beverages, laundry, etc.).

Accommodations



HOTEL LEVNI

Istanbul, Turkey

Days 1 to 2 (2 nights), Day 8 (1 night)

This hotel's location could not be better—it's within close walking distance to all the major sights (you can see the outer walls of the Topkapi Palace from the hotel's front door). Guest rooms are well appointed, with comfortable beds and modern furnishings, and there is a Turkish bath, heated indoor pool, and fitness center on site. The service here is exceptional—the friendly and helpful staff goes the extra mile to make you feel welcome.



CHARISMA HOTEL

Kusadasi, Turkey

Day 3 (1 night)

The Charisma is set right on the beach, with ocean-swimming access from a private dock as well as a huge swimming pool and open-air restaurant facing the water. Spacious guest rooms have a sea view and a balcony for watching sunset over the Aegean.



THE MARMARA BODRUM

Bodrum, Turkey

Days 4 to 5 (2 nights)

Overlooking the city of Bodrum and its indigo-blue bay is the five-star Marmara Bodrum Hotel. Friendly staff welcome you into the airy lobby with a lounge, and the guest rooms have a private balcony and nice marble bathrooms. Looking to get the best view over Bodrum? The hotel has a wonderful bar and restaurant to watch the sunset over the bay, or you can walk out on the pool's terrace for sweeping panoramas above the city.



KALE KONAK CAVE HOTEL

Uchisar, Turkey

Days 6 to 7 (2 nights)

With views of Uchisar Castle on one side and the magnificent valley on the other, this boutique hotel is a wonderful base to explore the area. Like the name suggests, it is a cave hotel, and guest rooms are very atmospheric with beautiful arched ceilings that are carved right into the rock. Enjoy a delicious breakfast spread (the hotel's co-owner is a renowned chef), and feel free to unwind on the terrace, where you may see hot air balloons floating above the valley, or at the hotel's hamam (Turkish bath).

These are our signature accommodations for this trip. Although it is highly unlikely, we may make substitutions when necessary. To see more photos and descriptions, please visit our *Discover Turkey Private Journey* webpage and click on "Accommodations."

Arrival & Departure

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

Upon confirming your trip reservation, we will send you a Welcome Packet that includes a list of documents (passport, visas, etc.) required for your trip. Please feel free to call if you would like this information before making your air arrangements.

Istanbul is the starting point of the trip. You will be met and transferred to the hotel upon arrival at the airport on Day 1. At the end of the trip on Day 9, you will be transferred to the airport in Istanbul for outbound flights. Our Arrival & Departure Logistics memo, included in your confirmation packet, has details.

FLIGHT ARRANGEMENTS

Trip members are responsible for making their own arrangements for air transportation. Please do not purchase your airline tickets until you are confirmed on the trip and have reviewed your proposed air schedule with our office. Once your tickets have been purchased, please send us a copy of your airline schedule so that we can send it on to the local guide (make sure to include your Trip Name and Trip Dates on it). Note: The name on your airline ticket must match the name on your passport exactly; otherwise you may be denied boarding. Please remember this when reserving your flights. In addition, your passport must be valid for at least six months after your date of return to the US (in most cases).

Trip Leaders



BIHTER KURANEL

Bihter Kuranel, a native of Istanbul, has been leading tours in Turkey for more than a dozen years. After earning a degree in Economics from the prestigious Bosphorus University in 1996, her interest in travel and meeting folks from other cultures led her to complete studies through the Ministry of Culture and Tourism to become a professional tourist guide in 1997. In addition to being an avid hiker and outdoorswoman, she has a special interest in architecture and literature. In her free time she enjoys music, plays the piano, and perfects her cooking skills using unique and fresh ingredients. Bihter is fluent in English and also has some command of French. She enjoys sharing her love for her country, and with her sociable, outgoing nature, we're confident you'll enjoy her company.



SAYAT TURABIK

Sayat Turabik, born in Istanbul, is an Armenian Turk who lives on one of the tranquil Prince's Islands, just a ferry ride down the Bosphorus from Istanbul. Sayat headed to the University of Wolverhampton in England for college, earning his degree in business and information technology then going to Germany to study German language at the Goethe Institute. He spent nearly a year traveling in Latin America, teaching English to local children, and then returned to Turkey to begin a career as a tour leader. "Being a professional guide gives me a chance to talk about my beloved country and its people, and at the same time introduces me to other people and cultures. Hearing trip members say "I love this country" is my biggest reward." Sayat speaks English, Spanish, and German and loves photography, volleyball, and off-the-beaten-path hikes in Turkey's mountains.



HALIL UYSAL

As the son of an officer in the Turkish army, Halil developed his love of travel while living and studying in many Turkish cities as he grew up. Upon completing his training as a tourist guide, he began leading and advising journalists on their travels in Turkey, and in 2016, started his academic journey as a lecturer at Cappadocia University, specializing in Turkish history, arts, cultures, and civilization. He has also spent time in Finland, doing research and attending a foreign language program, and in Brazil, where he had the chance to learn the language and get to know the country well. When not lecturing or leading trips, Halil loves to ski and swim, and was an amateur football and volleyball player. He is married and the father of twins.

Trip Leaders



SELÇUK YIGITSOY

Born and raised in Istanbul, Selçuk, a professional guide certified by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, has been leading tours throughout Turkey for over three decades. He is an avid traveler and has also guided tours for Turkish travelers farther afield. His special interests range from art history and classical music to archaeology, history, and cultural anthropology. “Sharing my love and passion for the cultural heritage of my country with its multifaceted historical layers has always been a profound motivation for my career,” he says.



MEHMET AYHAN

After receiving his degree in science and technology, Mehmet began teaching in a public school. But thanks to his deep interest in history and culture, he soon started studying Tourist Guidance at Cappadocia University, graduating in 2016. Since then, he has actively worked in the tourism industry in addition to continuing his academic career. He earned a Master’s Degree in Cultural Heritage at Hacı Bektasi Veli University and is currently working on a PhD in Tourist Guidance. Mehmet has a passion for traveling, learning, and sharing his knowledge, and is an avid reader of history, culture, archaeology, and international politics. He lives in Cappadocia with his wife and two children.



SUNAY ETHEMOGLU

Originally from Germany, Sunay has lived in Turkey since she was 13. Her fascination with ancient cultures and natural history led her to a career as a guide more than 20 years ago, and she’s been sharing her passion for Turkey’s culture with travelers ever since. She now lives in Antalya, the Pearl of Turkey, with her husband and two children. When she’s not introducing guests to the wonders of Turkey’s treasures, she enjoys gardening, swimming, and yoga.



FARUK BAŞIBÜYÜK

Born in northwestern Turkey, Faruk Başibüyük has over 20 years of experience in the Turkish travel industry. Since attending Erciyes University for tour guiding, Faruk has guided extensively throughout Turkey, especially in Istanbul and Cappadocia. An expert in storytelling, he’s especially adept in historical and cultural guiding—he’s well-versed in Istanbul’s Byzantine, Ottoman, and modern history, along with art history and culinary experiences. He’s conversant in Spanish, and he operated boutique hotels in Cappadocia and Antalya for several years. Faruk lives in Cappadocia with his wife and son.

What to Expect

WHAT THE TRIP IS LIKE

This trip is rated Level 2+. This is a relaxed cultural adventure, with several walks or hikes of 2-4 hours that should be “easy-to-moderate” for the average active traveler. The cultural walks and hikes are a fascinating part of the trip, often bringing us to small villages or off-the-beaten-path ruins accessible only on foot. All hikes are optional. To ensure an enjoyable adventure in Turkey, all participants should make a special effort to be in good physical condition by engaging in a regular exercise regimen before the trip.

WEATHER

Istanbul and the coast have a predominantly Mediterranean climate, with Cappadocia in semi-arid Central Anatolia offering slightly cooler temperatures, making this a comfortable climate to visit year round.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT TRIP

Adventure travel often involves exotic destinations, unusual levels of physical exertion, or activities you may not have participated in previously. We work hard to help you choose the right trip for you, paying attention to your individual interests, abilities, and needs. If you have questions about the level of comfort or any of the activities described in this itinerary, please call Wilderness Travel at 1-800-368-2794 and ask for the Europe Manager or email us at europe@wildernesstravel.com

REFERENCES

We'd be happy to put you in touch with a past client that has traveled with us on this or a similar trip.

ABOUT PRIVATE JOURNEYS

Wilderness Travel Private Journeys are designed for people who want to travel with their own small private group, but who still want to experience the same superb itinerary design, great accommodations, and signature quality of Wilderness Travel's escorted group trips. These Private Journeys allow you to choose your own dates and your traveling companions—and enjoy the WT touch on all aspects of the journey.

TOUCAN CLUB

Please note that Toucan Club discounts do not apply for our Private Journeys. However, your participation on these trips will count toward your Toucan discount on future departures of Wilderness Travel's regular expeditions. For more information regarding our Toucan Club bonus program, please visit our website at www.wildernesstravel.com/resources/toucan-club/

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

At www.wildernesstravel.com, you can book your trip online or find out about added departures, last-minute deals, and one-time Limited Edition adventures that aren't listed in our catalog. You can also access our complete library of detailed itineraries filled with enticing photos and videos, read bios of our Trip Leaders, find descriptions of trip accommodations, and check real-time availability of any trips that interest you.



WILDERNESS TRAVEL HAS BEEN AWARDED:

Best Travel Specialists in the World: *Conde Nast Traveler*, 2024, 4-time winner

World's Best Tour Operators: *Travel + Leisure*, 11-time winner

Best Wildlife, Hiking & Walking Trips: *AFAR Magazine*, 3 years in a row

Best Adventure Travel Companies: *USA Today*

Trip of the Year: *Outside Magazine*, 9-time winner

50 Tours of a Lifetime: *National Geographic Traveler*, 9 years in a row

Best Adventure Travel Companies: *National Geographic Adventure*, 3-time winner

Please be advised that California has established a Travel Consumer Restitution Fund under the California Seller of Travel Law that took effect January 1, 1996. This fund is designed to protect consumers from unscrupulous practices by discount airfare ticket sellers or air charter operators. Unfortunately, this law does not cover non-California residents and, even in the case of California residents, it does not cover any foreign travel where the foreign "providers of transportation or travel services" are not in compliance with the Sellers of Travel Law (compliance being defined as registered as a Seller of Travel in California and a participant in the Travel Consumer Restitution Fund). Thus none of Wilderness Travel's tours qualify and we are required by law to advise each client that they are not covered by the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires sellers of travel to maintain a trust account or bond. This business has a trust account. California Seller of Travel #100769640

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