

1 THE IMPERIAL TOUR

>Daily Morning Tour



We begin our tour of the Sultanahmet district, the heart of old Istanbul, at **Saint Sophia***. Built by the Emperor Justinian in the early 6th century AD and designed by Anthemius of Tralles and Isodore of Miletus, the church is one of the marvels of world architecture. Converted into a

mosque in 1453, it is now a museum. Its massive dome still dominates the skyline of old Istanbul. It is also famed for its mosaics, including



glittering portraits of emperors and empresses and a poignant Virgin and Child. Next we visit the **Blue Mosque** which takes its name from the exquisite tiles adorning its interior. Built by Sultan Ahmet I in the early 17th century, and designed by a pupil of Sinan, the greatest of Ottoman architects, it is the

only imperial mosque with six minarets. Its courtyard is especially grand. The **Hippodrome**, the stadium of ancient Byzantium, held 100,000



spectators and featured objects from all corners of the empire. Of these, an **Egyptian obelisk** and a bronze sculpture of three entwined serpents from Delphi survive. The **Grand Bazaar** was the commercial heart of the old city and its 4,000 shops are full of treasures including carpets and kilims, silks, jewelry, ceramics, icons, and leather goods. Wandering through the Grand Bazaar, indulge in some shopping, Ottoman style.

(Afternoon tour also available on Tuesdays)

*On Mondays, when Saint Sophia is closed, we visit the Chora Church, famed for its mosaics and frescoes.

Special

FULL DAY OLD CITY

2 OTTOMAN SPLENDOURS

>Daily Afternoon Tour



We begin our tour at **Topkapı Palace**, which, from the 15th to the 19th century, was the principal residence of the Ottoman Sultans. We will visit the fabulous **Imperial Treasury** and the **Baghdad Kiosk**.

Topkapı Palace is now a museum and has unrivalled collections of jewelry, including the **Spoonmaker's Diamond**, the 3rd largest in the world, Ottoman court costumes and ceramics, notably one of the world's finest collection of **Chinese celadon ceramics**, much of it gifts from other rulers. Interestingly, some of the ceramics have a special glaze that was said to change color in the presence of poison. We also visit the **Imperial Armory**, displaying centuries of Ottoman weaponry. But perhaps the loveliest features



of Topkapı Palace are its courtyards with their ancient trees, and it is easy to imagine the sultan strolling here far from the cares of state and empire.



The **Süleymaniye Mosque** is the largest and grandest of Istanbul's imperial mosques. It dates from the 16th century heyday of the Ottoman Empire, and was designed by Sinan, the greatest architect of his day and originator of the Classical Ottoman style of architecture. Of the 2,000 structures Sinan designed, Süleymaniye Mosque and its complex of charitable institutions rank among the most important. (Every day except Tuesdays.)

*Note: On days when the Süleymaniye Mosque is closed for renovations, we visit the Rüstem Pasha Mosque, another masterpiece by Sinan that has the most exquisite and extensive Iznik tile decoration of any mosque in Istanbul.

3 MORNING BOSPHORUS CRUISE



We begin with a brief visit to the 17th century **Spice Bazaar***, one of Istanbul's most colorful and bustling attractions. Next, we take an unforgettable cruise along the **Bosphorus**, the

majestic strait that runs through Istanbul, linking Europe and Asia. From our cruise boat, we view the dramatic sights lining the Bosphorus' wooded shores: mosques, a bridge that for a time was the world's longest and the massive **Rumeli Hisari**, a fortress built by Mehmet the Conqueror in just three months as he prepared to take Istanbul. Also noteworthy are the **19th century mansions** of the Ottoman elite and the Sultans' fanciful gingerbread **palaces and hunting lodges**.



4 AFTERNOON BOSPHORUS CRUISE



We cruise the **Bosphorus** and from the deck of our cruise boat take in the sights and sounds of this legendary waterway, lined with **historic villages**, grandiose waterfront **mansions**,

imposing **fortresses**, like **Anadolu Hisari** and the **Baroque palaces** of the late Ottoman sultans. After our cruise, we visit the **Spice Bazaar**, a thrilling riot of colors, sounds and the rich smells of exotic spices.



* The Spice Bazaar is closed Sundays.

** The Spice Bazaar may be visited prior to the Bosphorus Cruise, depending on the number of tour participants.

Special

5 ASIA AND BEYLERBEYI PALACE

>Daily Afternoon



We begin by driving across the first **Bosphorus Bridge**, which for a time was the world's longest suspension bridge, and head for the summit of **Çamlıca Hill**, which affords panoramic **views of Istanbul**, the **Sea of Marmara** and the **Princes' Islands**. From here a short drive brings us to the **Palace of Beylerbeyi** on the shore of the Bosphorus. Perhaps the most elegant of the late Ottoman palaces, Beylerbeyi boasts six sumptuously furnished reception halls with

Bohemian crystal chandeliers and Sèvres and Chinese vases, including a main salon with an indoor fountain. The sultans' guests at the palace included Empress Eugénie of France, Shah Nasruddin of Persia and Grand Duke Nicholas of Russia. (Every day except Mondays and Thursdays.)

6 ISTANBUL BY NIGHT



We visit an **exclusive nightclub** where we will enjoy **authentic Turkish cuisine**, including the delicious array of appetizers known as *meze*. The Turks are justly proud of their food. They are equally proud of their traditional

music, and after dinner **folk musicians** from different regions of Anatolia will perform for us. And of course no night out in Istanbul would be complete without **belly-dancers**. We will be entertained by some of the city's finest.



7 THE PRINCES' ISLANDS

> Daily Full-day



If you find yourself feeling the need to escape from the bustle of Istanbul for a day, absolutely nothing could be easier. You simply join us aboard a ferry bound for the idyllic **Princes' Islands**, enjoying cool breezes and charming sights along the way. Our destination is **Büyükada**, the largest of the island chain, but we will pass by four other islands on the way. All these islands are famous for their mild climates, lush vegetation and ornate Ottoman houses, and on all of them cars are



strictly prohibited. On the Princes' Islands, the preferred means of transportation is the charming **horse-drawn carriage** known as the **phaeton**, which we will use on our circular tour of Büyükada, passing through delightful scenery studded with **elegant mansions** draped in



brilliant purple **bougainvillea**. You will feel as though you have suddenly stepped back into a bygone era that is more leisured and gracious, finding yourself almost expecting to see elegant 19th

century ladies and gentlemen come strolling toward you down the waterfront as they take their afternoon promenade. We will enjoy our **lunch** at the best of the many excellent traditional **fish-restaurants** that line the waterfront, gazing, as we enjoy succulent delicious **meze**



appetizers and **fresh fish**, across the water at the Asian shore of Istanbul, so close though it feels worlds away.

8 BURSA

>Full-day



We travel by ferry to [Yalova](#), then by luxury coach to the city of [Bursa](#), which dates back to the 2nd century B.C. The first capital of the Ottoman Empire, Bursa is one of the greatest treasure houses of Islamic architecture. We will first visit the [Green Mosque](#) and the neighbouring [Green Mausoleum](#), both world-renowned for their superb tile decoration, as well as the late 14th century [Great Mosque](#) and the



[Koza Han](#), which for centuries was the center of Bursa's flourishing silk trade. As the center of Turkey's silk production and importation, Bursa was also the home of the skilled artisans who produced kaftans, pillows, embroidery and other silk products for the Ottoman palaces until the 17th century. Afterwards, enjoy a leisurely cable car ride up the slopes of [Mount Olympus](#), in Turkish, [Uludağ](#), or if the



cable car is not running, take in the panoramic views from beneath the more than 1,000 year old plane tree that gives [Çınaraltı](#) its name. [Lunch](#) is at one of Bursa's most famous Turkish restaurants, the [Darüzzıyafe](#), where we will enjoy the finest



authentic Ottoman cuisine in a historic setting, where Sultan Murat the Second once dined. (This tour is available on Mondays, Thursdays & Saturdays. In the event the cable car is closed due to weather conditions, [Çınaraltı](#) is substituted for [Uludağ](#).)

9 TWO-DAY TOUR OF CAPPADOCIA



On our way to **Cappadocia**, we fly to **Ankara** or **Kayseri** and drive to **Üçhisar** in the midst of the Cappadocian heartland, where we will be staying at one of Cappadocia's unique boutique **Cave Hotels**. Cappadocia is a region unlike any other. Its extraordinary landscape is composed of soft volcanic stone that wind and rain have sculpted into fantastic clusters of multicolored spires and pinnacles. What is more, the softness of the stone encouraged the

medieval Christian inhabitants of the region to carve out of the living rock literally hundreds of churches, monasteries, towns and villages. A trip to Cappadocia is a magical experience you will never forget. On our way to Üçhisar we will stop off at the magnificent 13th century **Selçuk caravanserai** known as Ağzıkarahan, and at one of the region's famous 'underground cities'. These go down many storeys into the earth and are among the marvels of medieval engineering. Once in Üçhisar, we will visit the



great rock-hewn citadel that looms over the town. On our second day we will visit the open-air museum of the **Göreme Valley**, which contains the region's highest concentration of painted churches. The **frescoes** are among the masterpieces of Byzantine art. A short distance beyond Göreme lie the villages of **Avclar** and **Çavuşin**, both of which have many cave-dwellings, and the dramatic **Zelve Valley**.

10 FULL-DAY TOUR OF EPHEBUS



We catch an early flight to the city of **Izmir** on the Aegean coast, then drive south to the antique city of **Ephesus**. This is one of the world's richest and most rewarding archaeological sites with impressive ruins dating from the Classical Greek, Hellenistic, Roman and early Byzantine periods. It is also closely associated with the beginnings of the Christian faith. In addition to being the city to which the **Letters to the Ephesians**

were written, **St. John** and **St. Paul** both visited the city and the **Virgin Mary** herself is said to have spent her last days nearby. Among the highlights of our tour of Ephesus will be the antique theatre, the famed **Library of Celsus**, the brothel, the vast **Basilica of St. John**, the **Mosque of Isabey**, the **Temple of Artemis** (one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World) and a group of recently excavated early **Byzantine mansions** that feature incredibly well-preserved floor



mosaics and frescoes. At Ephesus, the past comes to life in a pageantry of architectural and artistic marvels the like of which can be found almost nowhere else in the world. Finally we will make a short pilgrimage to the **House of the Virgin Mary**, which stands high on a mountainside overlooking

the Aegean Sea and the Greek island of Samos.

11 GALLIPOLI BATTLEFIELD FULL-DAY TOUR

>Upon request



Early departure for Çanakkale, scene of the epic First World War amphibious landing. After touring Çanakkale, we cross the Hellespont to the battlefields of the Gallipoli peninsula, the

crucible where the national consciousnesses of Australia and New Zealand were forged in steel and blood. Planned by Winston Churchill the Gallipoli invasion was the first modern amphibious landing, and one of Turkey's greatest military victories of modern times, but it was won at the cost of enormous



losses on both sides, particularly among the heroic ANZAC (Australian and New Zealand Army Corps) troops. They landed at



what is known as Anzac Cove on April 25, 1915 and fought there eight months in a courageous but doomed struggle. Over 300,000 men from all sides were killed or wounded in the battle's eight furious months, making it one of the

bloodiest campaigns in history. In the words of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Turkish commander at the battle and founder of the modern Republic, "There is no difference between the Johnnies and the Mehments where they lie side by side in this country of ours... Having



lost their lives on this land they have become our sons as well."