

Best of Turkey Itinerary (Gita Travels Inc)



Sep 25 – Oct 4

Cities visited:

Kusadasi	(2 nights)
Pamukkale	(1 night)
Cappadocia	(2 nights)
Istanbul	(3 nights)

DAY 1 – Depart from U.S.A. (Sep 25)

You will depart from JFK at 4 p.m. and arrive in Istanbul the next morning.



DAY 2, 3 - KUSADASI (Ephesus) (Sep 26, 27)

Arriving in Istanbul, you will take a connecting flight in the early afternoon to Izmir. In Izmir, your guide and driver will pick you up and drive you to Kusadasi where you will stay at a Hotel featuring a private beach on the coast. All rooms will have a superb view of the Aegean Sea and the Greek Samos Island on the horizon. Dinner will be at the hotel.

The next day, we will drive to the incredible city of Ephesus and its colossal Greek Theater, which is still used for performances today. The Marble Road, the Celsus Library, and the Temple of Diana are just a few of the things that we will be seeing here. We will also visit the house where the Virgin Mary lived her final days. After the crucifixion of Jesus, St. John brought her to Ephesus. We will then return to the hotel where we will have dinner at the hotel (buffet dinner includes vegetarian dishes).



DAY 4 - PAMUKKALE (Aphrodisias) (Sep 28)

On the way to Pamukkale, we will drive to Aphrodisias, the city of art dedicated to the Goddess Aphrodite. Octavian once said that "of all the cities in the world, Aphrodisias is my favorite." The marble theatre here is beautiful and the stadium that seats over 35,000 is immense. It is also the largest in the world and the best preserved. Aphrodisias was a center to cultivate the finest sculptors, whose works were found all over the Roman Empire.

In Pamukkale, we will visit its famous snow-like travertine of calcium. Pamukkale is one of the natural wonders of the world with strikingly beautiful mineral springs clinging to the hillsides that will amaze you. We will stay at the 5-star Colossae Hotel, with a thermal mineral pool for your enjoyment. The Colossae is the best available hotel in the area. A 5-star buffet will be served at dinner (a variety of vegetarian dishes will be available).



DAY 5, 6 – KONYA / CAPPADOCIA (Sep 29, 30)

On the way to Cappadocia, we will drive to Konya to visit the Whirling Dervish Museum. Afterwards, we will continue to Cappadocia. Our stay will be at the spectacular Cappadocia Cave Suites, the newest and most "luxurious cave living" in Cappadocia. This hotel's eighteen spacious units all have windows with views to the outside, most feature a Jacuzzi, several rooms have fireplaces and five units include two bedrooms. Some units have beautiful 200-year-old wooden ceilings and one unit is decorated in original 8th century painted frescoes showing the Maltese cross. The views are spectacular with the Fairy Chimneys in sight. A vegetarian dinner will be at the Cave Suites restaurant. Breakfast will also be served to you at the Cave House.



While in Cappadocia we will enjoy the unique landscapes of wind and rain eroded volcanic rock formations and see the amazing underground churches and cities carved into the rocks by early Christians. We will also visit ancient handicraft shops, the village of Soganli where the world famous Cappadocia dolls are made and a caravan-saray, an ancient caravan motel. Discovering the unknown Cappadocia, we will take wonderful strolls and go off the "tourist track", visiting small villages. In addition, we will also enjoy excellent lecture-demonstrations on Turkish cuisine.



DAY 7 - ISTANBUL (Oct 1)

After breakfast, we will take a morning flight from Kayseri to Istanbul. Upon arrival in Istanbul in the afternoon on Turkish Airlines, we will be met by a guide and driver, who will take us to the 5-star Eresin Topkapi Hotel to check-in.

Afterwards, our guide and driver will pick us up at the Eresin Topkapi Hotel and take us to the **Sultanahmet area**, which was one of the first trade centers of the Ottoman Empire, to visit the historical caravanserai of **Koprulu Mehmet Paşa**. Established in 1635, this staff house was where important political ministers or advisors would stay. Although this house has now been renovated by gallery owners, Antique Carpet, one of the rooms has been restored to how it would have appeared during the Ottoman Empire. Taking a virtual time machine back to this historic period, we will be served a traditional Turkish snack and Turkish Chai or coffee as we are introduced to the traditions and history of Turkish folk art, rugs and kilims. We will also visit the **Grand Bazaar**. In the evening, a vegetarian dinner will be served at a local Turkish restaurant.



DAY 8 - ISTANBUL (Oct 2)

Istanbul, once called Byzantium in the 7th century B.C., was named Constantinople in 326 A.D. by Constantine the Great when he moved the capital of the Roman Empire to what is now Istanbul. Istanbul received its current name from Mehmet II in 1453 and is the only city in the world that spans two continents. In Istanbul, we will visit several of Turkey's most famous museums and mosques. **Topkapi Palace** was first built by Mehmet the Conqueror in 1453 and was the home of the sultan until the 19th century. **St. Sophia** was built by Roman Emperor Justinian and was completed in 537 A.D. It was the greatest Christian church in the world for more than 1000 years. The **Blue Mosque** was commissioned by Sultan Ahmet in 1603 and was constructed with the deliberate intention of rivaling the St. Sophia. In addition, we will visit the **Hippodrome, Spice Market** and the **Underground Cistern**. We will have a vegetarian dinner served with wine and lots of live music and entertainment by a gypsy orchestra before returning to the Eresin Topkapi hotel.



DAY 9 - ISTANBUL (Oct 3)

Today, we will continue our tour of Istanbul with our guide. In the morning, we will take a **private Bosphorus cruise**. Afterwards, we will visit the **Archaeological Museum** and the **Rustem Pasha Mosque** with its exceptional tiles. In the evening, we will have a vegetarian set menu at an Indian restaurant. At the end of the evening, you will be taken back to your hotel, the Eresin Topkapi.

DAY 10 - Depart for U.S.A. (Oct 4)

Early in the morning, you will take a flight from Istanbul back home to the United States, arriving the same day.

Accommodations will be provided in the hotels listed above or similar.

**For more information please contact Gita Travels Inc:
Phone: 248-689-5201 email: Gita@GitaTravels.com**