

Journeys of Paul in Turkey & Greece

15 Days / 13 Nights



Day 1 Depart USA

Day 2. Istanbul

Welcome to Istanbul, a city with a mysterious past, where East meets West and myriad of cultures and blended all into an unmatched splendor. Enjoy first views on the way to our Hotel located right in the heart of town. Overnight in Istanbul.

Dinner at your Hotel.

Day 3 Istanbul

Our full day tour of the old city begins as we step onto the grounds of the Topkapi Palace, the last residence of the Ottoman Turks. Poised on the hilltop of the Golden Horn, it beckoned home the sultans of old and today it has that same magnetic appeal. Just around the corner we will visit St. Sophia—now a museum, the original structure was built by Constantine in 326 A.D., and for 916 years it functioned as a Christian church. With its 184' dome, mosaics and frescoes, it is considered an architectural wonder. Of it, Justinian stated, "Solomon, I have surpassed you." Across the street we enter the Yerebatan Sarayi(Underground Cisterns) built during the time of Justinian I and probably by Christians when one considers the manner in which many of the temple columns and capitals are placed. From here we take a short walk along the Hippodrome built in the times of Byzantium for horse and chariot races. Today, on the site of the imperial box seats, is the William II Fountain, and monuments line the field where once as many as 100,000 sat or stood and cheered at athletic competitions. As we continue our walk, we reach Sultanahmet Mosque better known as the Blue Mosque, a name derived from its exquisite, blue-colored tiles decorating the interior of the building, which is further distinguished by its six minarets.

This afternoon, we head to the Grand Covered Bazaar, a maze of streets and shops under an intricately painted, vaulted roof. It is a world unto itself abounding in the sights, aroma and sounds of old Turkey. Overnight in Istanbul.

Day 4 Fly to Ankara, drive to Cappadocia

Breakfast at hotel and early departure to drive to airport for your domestic flight to Ankara. Short panoramic tour, visit Hittite Museum and drive to Cappadocia, a unique landscape!

Drive to hotel in Cappadocia for dinner and overnight.

Day 5 Cappadocia

Today you may have an optional Hot-Air Balloon Ride Cappadocia is one of Turkey's most fanciful and recognizable landscapes, and during this optional hot-air balloon flight, we'll soar over its amber terrain and fairy-tale chimneys, savoring a unique panorama in the quiet, rosy light of dawn.

After breakfast, this morning we drive to Kaymaklı Underground City. During the Hittite era, as successive armies swept across Asia Minor, underground cities were built as a uniquely defensible community, approximately eight stories underground. We can explore some of the hundreds of rooms, wandering the many narrow, sloping passageways between kitchens with enameled food storage areas, water cisterns, stables, and living spaces—all well ventilated by air shafts. At one time, several thousand people lived here. Following our underground city discovery, we'll see more of this scenic area of Cappadocia. Such as Pasabag Highly remarkable earth pillars can be seen here, in the middle of a vineyard, hence the name of the place which means: the Pacha's vineyard. Pacha means "General", the military rank, in Turkish and it is a very common nick name. This site is also called Monks Valley. Dinner and overnight in Cappadocia.

Day 6 Cappadocia, Konya

We will be at the famous Goreme "open-air museum," a group of ancient churches carved from the rock. Most of these chapels have colorful frescoes inside, which date from the tenth to the 13th centuries. Then we drive shortly to Uchisar Castle which is the panoramic watching point Cappadocia. Many rooms, steps, tunnel and galleries inside the castle. Avanos, the latter providing us with the opportunity to purchase some of the hand-turned pottery and tile that has been shaped here for millennia and some of the techniques still used date back to Hittite times to 2000 BC.

This afternoon we drive to Konya. We have an opportunity to visit a modern church called St. Paul Church in Konya. Paul and Barnabas visited the city on Paul's first missionary journey (Acts 13:51–14:7). Here they preached in the synagogue and then the city. After about three months the opposition became so great that they had to flee for their lives to Lystra and Derbe. Paul revisited the city on his second (Acts 16:2) and probably third journeys. Iconium is situated at the western edge of the great Anatolian plateau at an elevation of 3,600 feet (1,100 m.) and roads from the east, especially from Cilicia (Tarsus) gather to it.

Dinner and overnight at Konya.



Day 7 Pisidian Antioch, Pamukkale

*From Iconium we drive to Pisidian Antioch .*The history of Pisidian Antioch goes back to some time between 310-280 BC. The first Biblical reference to this city is Paul's mention of it in Acts 13:14-16 as the synagogue from which he preached his first recorded sermon during his first missionary journey. The day ends at Pamukkale for dinner and overnight.

Day 8 Hierapolis, Laodicea, Kusadasi

In Hierapolis(Pamukkale) the dazzling white hillside is a major tourist site today and probably even in ancient times. The first reference to it in the New Testament associates the city and the church there with the work of Epaphras, who in prison later became acquainted with Paul.

Laodicea was at the crossroads of north-south traffic between Sardis and Perge and east-west traffic from the Euphrates to Ephesus. From this advantageous location, the city became wealthy. John cited very harsh warnings of the "lukewarm" attitude of the church here (Revelation 3:15-17). Our touring day ends at Kusadasi.

Day 9 Ephesus

Ephesus, site of the world's largest excavated ruins, will amaze you with how vividly you can imagine the ancient city. Close your eyes for a moment and realize here the Apostles once walked along streets lined with wonderful public buildings such as the Baths of Scholastica, the Library of Celsus, the Temple of Hadrian and the Theater and the Temple of Artemis, one of the Seven Wonders. Later we visit St. John's Basilica where the Apostle John is buried and the Ephesus Museum, site of some of the best treasures of antiquity found in this region. Smyrna (Izmir) Old Smyrna was located just across the bay from present day Izmir. Polycarp, bishop from 115 to 156 AD, was one of the earliest members of the church at this site. There are several contemporary accounts of him and some of his own writings still preserved. In a letter to the Philippians he warned them "...the love of money is the root of all evil." A martyr, he was important to the early church as a preserver of the purity of the gospel. John told the Christians in Smyrna not to be afraid to suffer, but "...be faithful till death..." (Revelation 2:10-11) Dinner at the hotel. Overnight in Kusadasi

Day 10 Smyrna, Pergamum, Canakkale

Drive to Smyrna which holds a significant place in early church history. It was the home of several early martyr-saints, including Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna. Continue to Pergamum. Here we will visit Asklepion and the Acropolis. Continue to Troy, the immortal city of the legendary Helen of Troy and Trojan House which was destroyed and rebuilt nine times. Then on to Canakkale along the straights of Dardanelles for dinner and overnight at our hotel.



Day 11 Philippi, Kavala

After breakfast, we depart to Turkey-Greece borders and continue to Philippi, which was a Roman garrison town and the chief city in the province of Macedonia. It was here that Paul won his first European convert, a woman named Lydia from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods. Visit the Baptistry of Lydia., the market place (where Paul and Silas were brought before the rulers), the cistern which tradition identifies as the place where St. Paul was imprisoned. Dinner and overnight in Kavala.

Day 12 Thessaloniki, Athens

Today we begin our travels with a short tour of Thessaloniki, the “Queen of the North”, where Paul wrote two epistles to the ancient Thessalonians. Built by King Cassandros and named after the sister of Alexander the Great, the city flourished under the Byzantine Empire and it’s most important buildings date from those days. We continue to Veria where Paul stopped and preached. Evening FLIGHT to Athens. Arrival in Athens and on to our hotel for dinner and overnight.

Day 13 Athens

Our sightseeing will begin with an Athens city tour. Athens is one of the most glorious cities in the world and the cradle of western civilization as we know it today. For twenty five centuries, the panorama of this city is dominated by the rock of the Acropolis; we see the ruins of the Parthenon, the Erectheum and the Propylae. Thereafter, we will ascend Mars Hill where Paul spoke to the ancient Athenians about the one and only God. From here we have an excellent view of the ancient agora; former center of the Athenian public life. We continue for a drive through the city to see the House of Parliament on Syntagma Square, the evzones in their picturesque uniforms guarding the Presidential Palace and Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. We also see the Library, the University, the Panathenaic Stadium where the first Olympics of the modern era were held, the temple of the Olympian Zeus and Adrian's Arch. Afternoon is at leisure for shopping or time on your own. Dinner and overnight at our hotel.

Day 14 Athens (Corinth)

Today we travel to Corinth, the largest city in the land now known as Greece. Here Paul spent 18 months, preaching to the Jews and Gentiles. The site is overlooked by an Acropolis housing the remains of the Temple of Aphrodite, goddess of love. In Corinth, Paul worked with Aquila and Priscilla and his trial by Gallio took place in the agora. The community Paul founded here caused him much grief and prompted him to write at least four letters. We may gather around Paul’s Bema. Return to Athens for dinner and overnight.

Day 15 Depart

Transfer to the airport for your flight back home.

