

Christmas Turkey - 12 days

go guide

don't leave home without it



A World Of Discovery



There's no stuffing birds or entertaining aunts! Enjoy snowflakes on fairy chimneys, legendary sites at Ephesus, Troy and Aspendos, thermal springs at Pamukkale and Christmas Eve at St Nic's!



WHAT YOU SEE AND WHAT YOU GET

Trip Highlights

- Istanbul - Sultanahmet/ old Istanbul, Hippodrome, Blue Mosque, Hagia Sofia, Underground Cistern and Topkapi Palace
- Gallipoli Peninsular - ANZAC Cove, memorials, trenches and battlefields
- Troy - Trojan horse and ancient ruins
- Aegean Coast
- Roman ruins of Pergamum and Ephesus
- Pamukkale thermal pools and Roman Hierapolis
- Demre - home of the original St Nicholas
- Ancient ruins of Perge & Aspendos
- Konya - Silk Road & Mevlana Whirling Dervish Museum
- Ancient caravanserais
- Cappadocia region, fairy chimneys and underground city
- Ankara - Ataturk's Mausoleum
- Leather and carpet manufacturing houses

What's Included

- 11 breakfasts and 7 dinners including special Christmas Eve Dinner in Antalya overlooking the Mediterranean Sea

- 10 nights 4 star and special class hotels, 1 night 5 star hotel
- Guided sightseeing of Istanbul including the Blue Mosque, Underground Cistern, Topkapi Palace, Hippodrome and Hagia Sofia (exterior on day 2, interior on day 12)
- Guided sightseeing of Gallipoli, Troy, Ruins of Ephesus and Pergamum, Pamukkale and Roman Hierapolis, Perge, Aspendos, Konya and Cappadocia
- English speaking, degree qualified Turkish tour guide
- Airport arrival transfer on day 1 and departure transfer (to Ataturk International Airport) on day 12.
- Relevant transfers and transportation in private modern air-conditioned vehicles

What's Not Included

- Tipping Kitty: \$25 USD
- Entrance Fees: \$145 USD
- Tip for your tour guide and driver. We recommend you allow \$3 - 5 USD per day, per traveller as a tip for your guide and \$2 USD per day for your driver. Tipping your guide and driver is an entirely personal gesture.
- International flights and visa

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1 : Welcome to Istanbul

Sunday 18 December 2011. Arrive Istanbul and included transfer to our hotel. Spend the afternoon at leisure or head out to explore the city. This evening our tip filled welcome meeting takes place. Take the opportunity to meet your tour guide and travel companions then maybe head out for some dinner or a chat in the bar afterward. **Overnight - Istanbul**

Day 2 : Old City Sights

Istanbul. Enjoy a tour of old Istanbul. The only city to span two continents sits on the Bosphorus - the strait of water that divides the continents of Europe and Asia. Its illustrious past leaves a

rich legacy of churches, mosques, palaces and museums, complemented by the behemoth Grand Bazaar and colourful street life.

Sultanahmet, the compact old city of Istanbul, is full of parks, gardens and stunning sights. The Blue Mosque is famed for its blue Iznik tiles and unique 6 minarets. The Hagia Sofia, constructed in the 6th century, reigned as the grandest and biggest church in Christendom until the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, when it became a mosque. Today we view the Hagia Sofia from the outside as the historical site is closed on a Monday. An additional guided tour of the interior is offered on the final day of our tour for those who care to join.

Just around the corner is the stunning Topkapi Palace and the Underground Cistern. Rest of day free. Tonight, we are free to explore or relax in our hotel. **Overnight - Istanbul (B)**

Day 3 : Gallipoli



Istanbul – Gallipoli. Today, we travel to the WW1 battlefields of Gallipoli. Here, we'll embark upon a guided tour of the region, once the site of fierce fighting and today almost hauntingly beautiful, with its wooded landscape dotted with understated memorials to the war dead.

Our guided tour of the region will take in sights such as Lone Pine Australian War Memorial and cemetery, Chunuk Bair New Zealand War Memorial and cemetery, the Nek, Johnston's Jolly and the many fortified trenches still clearly visible amongst the scrub after all these years. Roughly 3 feet deep, the system of trenches provided much need safe

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cover for troops as they desperately fought the enemy.

We'll also visit the small Kabatepe Information Centre and Museum (small entry fee) - a museum of modest proportions which exhibits period uniforms, weapons, copies of letters from servicemen and other poignant personal possessions. Outside the small museum are some memorial gardens and top views of the peninsular memorials dotted across the landscape. **Overnight - Canakkale (B, D)**

Days 4-5 : Troy & legendary Ephesus

Gallipoli - Kusadasi. This morning after breakfast, we depart Gallipoli, travelling across the Dardanelles from Eceabat to Canakkale by ferry from where we continue to Troy. If you've seen the movie - 'Troy' based on poet Homer's - 'The Iliad' you'll be familiar with Paris - Prince of Troy, his prized Helen and Hector - Prince of Troy on the Trojan side and Agamemnon and Achilles (he of the heel) on the Achaean (Greek) side. The legend of the lost city of Troy and Homer's poetry was brought alive by its rediscovery in 1863. Subsequent excavations revealed 9 ancient cities, one on top of the other, dating back to 3000 BC! We enjoy a tour of the ruins and see the replica of the stoic Trojan wooden horse that as the story goes - was filled to the gunnels with Achaean soldiers who helped sack Troy.

Driving further south to explore the ancient ruins of Pergamum. Home to one of the steepest, vertigo - inducing amphitheatres in the classical world, Pergamum was also famous for its asclepion (medical centre). See the Temple of Trajan and of course the Library, which in its time was said to rival the library in ancient Alexandria.

On day five we enjoy a guided tour of the Roman ruins of Ephesus. Positively the best-preserved classical city in the eastern Mediterranean, and among the best places in the world to get a feel for what Roman life must have been like. Ephesus, under the Romans was a vast city with a population nearing 250,000. We'll also visit a leather goods manufacturer. Turkey produces some of the finest leather goods in the world and many are made here before branding. **Overnight - Kusadasi (B:2, D:2)**

Day 6 : Pamukkale



Kusadasi - Pamukkale. Today we visit the famous gleaming white calcium terraced pools of Pamukkale. Known locally as the Cotton Castles,

they are a natural phenomena and gift of Mother Nature. Pamukkale was formed when warm, calcium rich mineral water cascaded over the cliff edge, cooling and depositing in the process. The calcium built natural shelves and pools on the cliffs, known as travertines. Today, many of the pools are closed to tourists. However, areas of the travertines can be walked upon, albeit in bare feet. We can also opt to enjoy a unique and very pleasant dip in the warm waters at the Pamukkale Thermal with its submerged fragments of fluted marble columns near the centre of the ruined spa town of Hierapolis, which was a Roman curative centre. **Overnight - Pamukkale (B, D)**

Day 7 : Xmas Eve at St Nic's

Pammukale - Antalya. The legend of Saint Nicholas (aka Santa Claus) began in Turkey! St Nicholas - a 4th century bishop gave anonymous gifts to dowryless village girls. He would drop bags of coins down the chimneys of their houses and this 'gift from heaven' would allow them to marry. We visit the church and tomb of St Nicholas before continuing to coastal Antalya for a top Xmas Eve dinner. **Overnight - Antalya (B, D)**

Day 8 : Christmas Day & Roman Ruins



Antalya - Konya. Merry Xmas! Enjoy a lazy morning in Antalya before travelling onward to Konya, stopping en route to visit the Roman ruins of Perge and Aspendos. Settled first by the Hittites around 1500 BC, Perge was an important city in Pamphylia (today's Mediterranean region). The ruins of the ancient theatre (capacity 12,000 people) boasting marble reliefs depicting the life and times of Dionysos along with the remains of the first church built in Perge, and various temples can be seen. Perge produced some famous notables of the day including Varius - the philosopher, the physician Asklepiades, the mathematician Apollonius and female Roman ruler of the city - Plancia Magna.

Nearby Aspendos is famous for its well-preserved theatre of antiquity. Built in the 2nd c. AD with a capacity for 15,000 people, it is still used today for performances and festivals today. Nearby the theatre are the remains of a basilica, agora and one of the largest aqueducts in Anatolia. We then continue to Konya - a town on the edge of the vast Anatolian Steppe. **Overnight - Konya (B, D)**

Days 9-10 : Cappadocia

Konya - Cappadocia. This morning we visit the Mevlana Whirling Dervish Museum - Konya is the

birthplace of the Turkish Mevlana. Continuing on to Cappadocia we stop en route to visit an ancient Silk Road Caravanserai and take a short walk through the beautiful Ihlara Valley. Tonight (day 9) why not join us on an optional and fun Turkish evening out.

On day 10, we explore the stunning lunar landscapes of Cappadocia and enjoy a guided tour of the Goreme Valley - one of Turkey's most extraordinary national treasures. The utter improbability of the seemingly surreal landscape has to be seen to be believed with its 'stuff of fables' cave dwellings and phallic 'fairy chimneys' landscape. Whole troglodyte villages, subterranean churches and fortresses have been hewn from the soft, porous, eerily eroded rock of Cappadocia. The crumbling legacy of persecuted Christians trying to escape the Muslim onslaught in 1st-10th centuries AD by effectively heading underground is one of Turkey's finest attractions. Dinner on day 10. **Overnight - Cappadocia (B:2, D:1)**

Day 11 : The Nation's Capital



Cappadocia - Istanbul. Travelling via Ankara to Istanbul, we visit Anitkabir, the massive mausoleum of Mustafa Kamel Atatürk. We arrive in Istanbul this evening. **Overnight - Istanbul (B)**

Day 12 : 29th December 2011

Thursday 29th December. Istanbul. Thursday 29th December 2011. This morning after breakfast (at approximately 9:00am) you can opt to join us for a guided tour of the interior of Hagia Sofia in Sultanahmet. Taking the city's local tram, called the Metro, our tour guide will escort the group to the grand historical site, conduct a guided tour and return to the hotel before 12 noon. Budget approximately 25 TL for the excursion including entrance fee and tram ride. Our tour concludes upon arrival to our hotel and onward departure transfer to the airport. We hope you had a wonderful Christmas in Turkey!(B)

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Climate

Turkey is a destination that can be visited year round. Temperatures in Turkey during the Northern Hemisphere summer are generally high, particularly during the summer months from June through September. April can spring up surprising results. Days can be amazingly warm, though temperatures do drop at night, so pack some warmer clothes. Summer in Turkey for



the most part is hot and dry. For the beach worshipper, June through September is best, when you'll enjoy glorious Mediterranean sun. Turkey is a lovely winter destination, the weather is usually temperate, although from December through to February you may enjoy a little snow in Istanbul, Anatolia or Cappadocia. Whatever month you consider, you'll be rewarded with seasonal variations that range from leaf-strewn autumns to sun-kissed summers.

Health Requirements

Recommendations - Tetanus and Polio, plus Typhoid and Hepatitis. Contact your local healthcare provider for the most up to date information.

Currency

We recommend you carry a mixture of cash and a debit/credit card. The Turkish Lira is fully convertible and can be obtained before departure or upon arrival. ATM facilities, banks and exchange booths are available in all major cities and towns. Avoid changing the bulk of your money at the airport, the exchange rates are usually more favourable in the city.

Credit cards are widely accepted in large restaurants, hotels and shops. Although merchants may place a surcharge of up to 10% on credit card purchases. Ensure you have sufficient funds in cash before travelling outside major cities and towns. Travellers cheques are hard to exchange, so best not to bring them.

Turkish Lira - abbreviated to TL or TRY.

USD 1 = TL 1.8

GBP 1 = TL 2.8

EURO 1 = TL 2.5

AUD 1 = TL 1.8

Time

Turkey is 2 hours ahead of GMT.

Essential Packing

- A small daypack for your day-to-day needs.
- A photocopy of your passport data pages.
- The voltage in Turkey is generally 220V and outlets fit a two-pin European plug. You should pack a Universal Adaptor and check that it is suitable for Turkey.
- Spare camera batteries/memory card so you can go snap happy.
- If you fancy a tippie, take advantage of Duty Free.
- Buy some Lira at the airport upon arrival.
- Buy a phrasebook and practice your holiday Turkish.
- Keep a supply of small notes for local transactions.

Holiday Money

Funds collected in Turkey for entrance fees and tip kitty (if applicable to your holiday) or optional excursion that you may wish to participate in are payable in local currency (TL).

Pre-Tour Accom & Arrival Transfers

If you would like to arrive into Turkey prior to your tour or stay on longer, we can arrange pre or post tour accommodation for you. Pre/post tour accommodation is located at the hotel your tour commences/ends and is inclusive of breakfast.

If arriving on day 1 of a holiday or booking pre-tour accommodation with us on a tour or short stay that includes an airport arrival transfer (as indicated in the 'What's Included' section of this Go Guide) we will be at the airport (Ataturk or Sabiha Gokcen), ready to transfer you to your hotel.

If arriving prior to 8am on day 1 (essentially on a flight that arrives very, very early in the morning) you will need to purchase a night of pre-tour accommodation to save you waiting until standard hotel check in time, which is generally 2pm.

ARRIVING VIA ATATURK AIRPORT

As you enter the arrival hall in Ataturk Airport turn LEFT and walk along the concourse. Look to the right, our representative will be waiting here behind the barricade, displaying an on the go sign. Remember, the representative won't know what you look like, so it will be important to look out for our company sign, in order to facilitate rendezvous.

SABIHA GOKCEN AIRPORT

If arriving into Istanbul Sabiha Gokcen International Airport, an additional 50km from the Istanbul city centre. Please be timely in exiting customs and in meeting our awaiting representative, who will be holding an on the go tours sign.

If your tour or sailing holiday does not include an arrival transfer you will need to make your own way to the tour start point. Details of the tour/sailing holiday start point can be found on your tour voucher.

Departure Transfers

We offer the following complimentary departure transfers: Aegean Explorer, Turkey Unplugged & Remembrance Day tours - departure transfers at 11am and 1.30pm on the final day of your tour (day 8 for Turkey & Tutankhamen tour) to Ataturk International Airport. Turkey & Tutankhamen tour: on day 8 at 11am & 9pm. Turkey Discovered: departure transfer on the final day of your tour at any time of day to Ataturk International Airport.

Christmas Turkey and Turkish Delight: departure transfer on the final day of your tour at any time of day to Ataturk or Sabiha Gokcen Airports. Flying Carpet Crystal Coast: departure transfer on the final day of your tour at any time of day to Izmir Airport.

Should you require a departure transfer at any other time, this can be booked in advance or locally.

Visas

Australian, British, Canadian, Irish and USA passport holders can obtain a 3-month tourist visa upon arrival at Istanbul Ataturk International Airport. Cost is currently USD\$20/EURO 15 for

USA, Irish and Australian passports, and USD\$60/EURO 45 for Canadian passports, GBP10/EURO 15 for British passports. South African passport holders can obtain a 30 day tourist visa upon arrival for USD\$20. South African citizens may be asked to show proof of funds upon arrival (50USD/day). New Zealand passport holders currently do not require a visa for a stay not exceeding 3 months.

Ensure that your passport is valid for at least 6 months from your date of arrival to Turkey. Please re-confirm all visa requirements with the Turkish embassy at least one month before travel. Visa procurement is subject to change and remains the responsibility of the traveller and not that of on the go.

Site Opening Times

Popular sightseeing spot in Istanbul are closed on specific days. Please plan your visit accordingly.

Hagia Sofia - Closed Mondays

Topkapi Palace - Closed Tuesdays

Grand Bazaar & Egyptian Spice Bazaar - Closed Sundays

Blue Mosque - Closed during all prayer times

During Ramadan (known as Ramazan in Turkey), some restaurants and shops (excluding those catering mainly for tourists) and attractions may close earlier, so scheduling may be slightly altered to ensure featured attractions are visited.

Shopping

Turkey is a virtual Aladdin's Cave. The Grand Bazaar in Istanbul is cavernous and full of unusual and everyday objects. Known locally as Kapali Carsi - the Grand Bazaar in Istanbul's Old City is a massive conglomeration of shops (some 4000) divided into areas specialising in gold, carpets, leather, souvenirs and clothing. Turkish handicrafts include a rich variety of textiles and embroideries, articles of copper, onyx and tile, mother-of-pearl, inlaid articles, leather and suede products. Jewellery, carpets and kilims represent top buys at the bazaar.

Opening hours: Mon - Saturday 0900 - 1300hrs and 1400 - 1900hrs (closed Sunday).

The Egyptian Spice Bazaar at Eminonu near Istanbul is an easy continuance from the Grand Bazaar or good start point before heading onto the cavernous Grand Bazaar. Here, you can buy a dizzying array of spices at a fraction of the cost you'd expect to pay back home. Pine Kernels, peppercorns, real Iranian saffron and other precious commodities are hawked here at knockdown prices! Real Turkish delight is available by the tonne as well. Why not the milk-based Turkish delight studded with pistachios!

Opening hours: 0900 - 1900hrs Monday - Saturday (closed Sunday)

Markets and bazaars abound in other towns, too. During your stay in Turkey, you may visit a leather manufacturer and emporium. Although the quality of some of the jackets and clothing outstanding, the initially quoted prices can also be rather outstanding. If you do fancy a particular item, haggle, even if you are in the confines of what looks to be a smart showroom.

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Carpet Buying

Turkey is justly famous for its carpets and kilims (a napless woven rug) and you'll be spoilt for choice. To ensure you get a good buy, spend time visiting several shops to compare price, pattern-type and quality. A good quality, long-lasting carpet should be 100% wool. Check the quality of the weave for possible holes. A wool carpet will have fine, frizzy fibres if you turn the carpet on its back. Cheaper carpets are made of cotton and most often the fringe will be, too. If you want a wool carpet and the fringe is of cotton, it's likely the carpet won't be a woollen one! The lies can be bigger than the fall of Ottoman Empire. Don't make the mistake of buying a cotton carpet at the price of a wool one! Many carpets are made to look like antiques at prices to match. Set your budget, don't be swayed (however good the complimentary mint tea or cool drink might taste), and bargain. And remember the caveat – 'Let the buyer beware'.

IMPORTANT: Any purchases made whilst travelling are at your own discretion. Make sure you are completely happy at the product you are purchasing. on the go will not become involved at any time, at a later date or once you return home should your purchase not live up to your expectations. Proceed with caution.

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