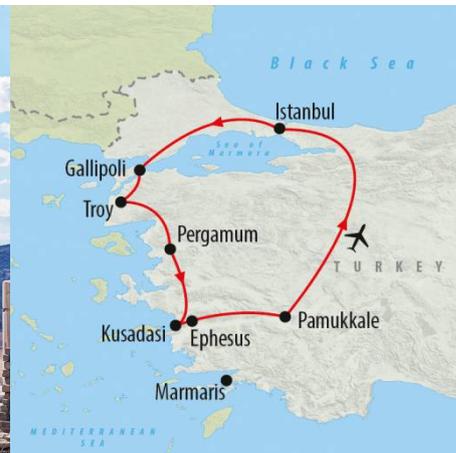


Aegean Explorer

7 Days | Starts/Ends: Istanbul



Kicking off in the powerhouse of the Ottoman empire - Istanbul, pay your respects at Gallipoli, get lost in the impressive Roman ruins of Ephesus and Pergamum, witness the beautiful Aegean Coast and dip your toes in Pamukkale's beautiful cascading mineral pools.

HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

Trip Highlights

- Istanbul - old city, Istanbul, Hippodrome, Blue Mosque, Hagia Sofia, Basilica Underground Cistern and Topkapi Palace
- Gallipoli Peninsular - ANZAC Cove, Lone Pine and Chunuk Bair memorials, trenches and battlefields
- Troy - ancient ruins, 9 cities, one on top of the other, dating back to 3000 BC & replica Trojan horse
- Aegean Coast
- Roman ruins of Pergamum and Ephesus
- Pamukkale thermal pools and Roman Hierapolis
- Turkish carpet weaving and leather manufacturing houses

What's Included

- 5 breakfasts
- 6 nights 4 star hotels
- Flight from Denizli (Pamukkale) to Istanbul

- Airport arrival transfer on day 1
- Guided sightseeing - Istanbul, Gallipoli, Troy, Ruins of Ephesus and Pergamum, Pamukkale terraces and Hierapolis
- Escorted by an English speaking, degree qualified Turkish tour guide
- All relevant transfers and transportation (excl overnight bus) in private modern air-conditioned vehicles

What's Not Included

- Tipping Kitty: USD\$40pp, paid in local currency
- Entrance Fees: USD\$85-95pp, paid in local currency
- Tip for your tour guide and driver. We recommend you allow USD\$5 - 7 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 : Istanbul

Saturday. Welcome to Turkey! Arrive Istanbul and included transfer to our hotel. Spend the afternoon at leisure or head out to explore the city. At 8 o'clock 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 : Istanbul



Istanbul. After a good night's rest and breakfast, we meet all our tour group members. At this point in time all entrance fees and your tip kitty will be collected. Shortly after we depart on a classic guided tour of the only city to span two continents.

Our sightseeing tour includes a visit to the stunning Blue Mosque (which faces the Hagia Sofia) and is famed for its blue Iznik tiles and unique 6 minarets, the ruinous Hippodrome – now a small park of sorts and once scene of chariot races and political activities in Byzantine times, Hagia Sofia Museum - constructed as a Basilica in the 6th century by Emperor Justinian, Topkapi Palace and the Underground Cistern – an ancient underground water tank - replete with carved and fluted Corinthian columns and a puzzling head of Medusa. Visitors walk on walkways

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suspended above the shallow water. It's very cool and peaceful.

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 needed safe cover for troops as they desperately fought the enemy.

Crossing the Dardenelles by ferry (offering panoramic views of the entire Gallipoli Peninsula) we proceed to our hotel for a little rest and relaxation.

Journey Time: Istanbul - Canakkale - Approx 5.5 hours Overnight - Canakkale (B)

Day 4 : Troy & Kusadasi

Gallipoli – Kusadasi. This morning we enjoy a short guided tour of Troy! If you've seen the movie – 'Troy' or read the 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

bear witness to a 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 the ancient ruins of Pergamum, once one of the Middle East's richest and most powerful little kingdoms, we'll enjoy a guided tour. 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. After exploring the ancient ruins, we continue to Kusadasi on the Aegean Coast via a leather manufacturing house.

Journey Time: Canakkale - Kusadasi - Approx 6 hours Overnight - Kusadasi (B)

Day 5 : Ancient Ephesus



Kusadasi. Today, we enjoy a guided tour at the legendary 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. It became the Roman capital of Asia Minor. We'll have plenty of time to tour the marble ruins of Ephesus. Be sure to see the famous Library of Celsus, the gymnasium of Vedius and Stadium, the great theatre and stroll the streets in the ruins of this large Roman ruined city. It's completely fascinating. We'll see public toilets, a brothel, fountains and various temples. Carpet weaving has long traditions in Turkey and afterward we stop to watch a demonstration of how they are made. Tonight, you may wish to consider heading out for dinner. Downtown Kusadasi is the place to go

with a varied choice of restaurants, pubs and cafes. **Overnight - Kusadasi (B)**

Day 6 : Pamukkale



Kusadasi - Pamukkale. Today, after breakfast, we drive to Pamukkale visiting the region's famed calcium rich terraced pools. 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, some of the pools are closed. However, areas of the travertines can be walked upon, albeit in bare feet.

We can however 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 in the centre of the ruined spa town of Hierapolis, which was a cure centre founded around 190 BC by the Romans. This evening we have some free time to relax and unwind.

Journey Time: Kusadasi - Pamukkale - Approx 3 hours

Overnight - Pamukkale (B)

Day 7 : Istanbul



Friday. This morning we make our way to Denizli airport for our flight to Istanbul. On

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arrival to Istanbul Airport we bid farewell to our group and representative and catch our onward flights.

Note: Please note your internal flight is currently arriving into the new Istanbul Airport airport at approx. 08:50am. Please ensure you book an international flight departing Istanbul after 1pm, allowing for flight delays. If you are departing via Sabiha airport you will need to make arrangements between airports and we recommend booking flights after 2:30pm. Alternatively, you could choose to extend your stay by purchasing an additional night's hotel accommodation.

Journey Time: Pamukkale - Istanbul flight - Approx 1.5 hours

HOTELS

The hotels listed below are ones which we frequently use on this tour. We reserve the right to substitute these hotels to ones of a similar standard when necessary.

Ramada Old City

A member of the reputable Ramada chain, the Istanbul Old Town property is modern and comfortable with excellent amenities. Guestrooms are bright and spacious with contemporary amenities. Two restaurants are on offer and our personal favourite is the wonderful roof top restaurant, serving delicious local cuisine coupled with a magnificent view of the City and Sea. The perfect way to end the day. Located very close to the Historical part of the city with major Monuments are all walking distance.



Tusan Hotel

The family run Tusan Hotel offers modern facilities in a tranquil setting. Rooms are comfortable and well equipped and offer guests beautiful forest or sea views. The hotel benefits from a private beach and an indoor and outdoor restaurant. A refreshing

pint of beer in the English Pub whilst challenging the bar staff to a game of pool is a great way to spend the evening. This accommodation sits within a beautiful pine forest looking across the Dardanelles with a private beach exclusively for guests.



Marina Hotel

Marina hotel is a modern hotel with a sea view and balcony from nearly every spacious room. It has recently been renovated and features an indoor and outdoor pool and you may also use the facilities and beach of 5-Star Pine Bay.



Own arrangements

Domestic Flights - Baggage Allowance

Please be mindful that the free baggage allowance for Economy Class travel on flights within Turkey is generally 15 or 20kg (varying by airline) with 5 - 7kg for hand luggage. Additional weight is charged per kilo and varies between airlines. Please ensure that you check these requirements prior to travel, if travelling with more.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Day 1 - Hotel Check-in & Welcome Meeting

Upon arrival, please check in with the hotel reception, you will need to complete a hotel registration card and hand over your passport to which you can collect from reception later in the day. Please look for the welcome sign located in the hotel foyer which will outline our arrangements for the coming days (including

the exact time of your welcome meeting this evening, usually at 8pm) and the name of your tour guide. You'll then receive a room key and you can head up to your room.

Please note that most accommodation is based upon twin share, i.e. rooms are made up as twin rooms with two single beds. At time of booking we do take requests for those who wish to share a double bed though with the constraints of each hotels inventory this cannot be guaranteed.

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 these trip notes) we will be at the airport (Istanbul or Sahiba 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 INTO ISTANBUL AIRPORT

When you enter the arrival hall in Istanbul Airport our representative will be waiting for you, holding 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, 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

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own way to the tour start point. Details of the tour/ sailing holiday start point can be found on your Tour Voucher.

Guides & Groups

Some of our group tours are sectors of a larger tour. Some travellers on your trip may only travel with you for part of your tour. It also might be that you end your holiday part way through a longer tour and others in the group continue on.

Entrance fees

On group tours, entrance fees to tourist sites are not included in our tour price (except on our City of Sultans tour). Funds will be collected in Turkey (and Egypt if travelling on one of our combo tours) for your entrance fees, that are payable in local currency - Turkish Lira and Egyptian Pounds and will be collected by your tour guide. You will find the cost of entrance fees noted under 'What's Not Included' on page 1 of this document. Entrance fee amounts do change, therefore upon arrival in Turkey your tour leader will outline the exact total of your entrance fees and collect this amount in Turkish Lira on day 2 of your tour. A breakdown of these costs is available upon request from your guide.

Tipping Kitty

It is customary to tip in Turkey. At the start of your tour we collect a small tipping kitty from all tour participants to cover tips en-route (to be paid in Turkish Lira). This saves you the hassle of when and how much to tip bellhops, luggage handlers, waiters, your airport representative and other support staff throughout your tour.

This tipping kitty does not include a tip for your tour guide (for a job well done!) where we recommend an amount of approximately USD \$4-5 per day, though the amount to tip your guide is up to you.

Time Keeping

In order that we show the best of Turkey in a non-hurried fashion to you, it is imperative you are ready for departure each day. Please do not delay and inconvenience fellow travellers. It is your responsibility to be at the proposed

meeting point for the group in time. We will depart at our specified times.

Departure Transfers

We offer the following complimentary departure transfers: Christmas Turkey, Turkey Unplugged, Turkey and Tutankhamun - departure transfers at 11am and 1:30pm on the final day of your tour (day 8 for Turkey & Tutankhamen tour) to Istanbul Airport.

Turkey Discovered: Departure transfer on the final day of your tour at 9am and 1pm.

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

Turkey Country Guide

Blue Mosque Renovations

The Blue Mosque (also known as Sultanahmet Camii in Turkish) is currently undergoing renovations and for the foreseeable future there will be scaffolding erected inside and other construction works will be taking place. Whilst we will visit the inside of the Blue Mosque when included on a tour, please be aware that some parts of the Mosque may be off limits to tourists.

Turkey: Visas

Please be advised that visa requirements are subject to change and that visa procurement is the responsibility of the traveller and not On The Go Tours. Please also ensure that your passport is valid for at least 6 months from your planned date of departure from Turkey.

After booking your holiday, please provide us with your passport details as soon as possible.

Australian, British, Canadian and Irish passport holders can obtain a 3-month tourist e-visa online prior to departure. Costs are currently USD\$60 for Australian and Canadian passport holders, USD\$20 for British, USA and Irish passport holders. South African passport holders currently need an e-visa but there is no charge for this. New Zealand passport holders currently do not require a visa for a stay not exceeding 3 months.

To arrange a Turkey e-visa online go to: <https://www.evisa.gov.tr>

After suspending all visa services for U.S citizens in October 2018, the Turkish Government have now announced the resumption of limited visa services for U.S. citizens. U.S citizens are not eligible for E Visas and must apply for a visa via their nearest consulate or embassy. Please note that the Turkish Government may change the visa requirements/restrictions at any time. If you are a U.S Citizen who plans to visit Turkey, it is essential that you contact your local Turkish embassy/consulate for the latest advice.

Turkey; Health Requirements

You should seek medical advice before travelling to Turkey from your local health practitioner and ensure that you receive all the appropriate vaccinations. As a guide Diphtheria, Hepatitis A and Tetanus is strongly recommended. The tap water in Turkey is generally considered safe to drink, but as a precaution against stomach upsets you may want to drink bottled mineral water, which is readily available from shops, hotels and restaurants.

Turkey: Fact File

Official Name: Republic of Turkey

Capital: Ankara

Population: 70 million

Total Area: 780,580 square kilometres

Official Language: Turkish. Kurdish, English and French also spoken

Religions: Islam 99.8%, Christian and Jewish 0.2%

Voltage: 230 volts

Dialling Code: +90

Time Difference: GMT/UTC +2. For other time differences please visit www.timeanddate.com

Turkey: Brief history

Present-day Turkey was created in 1923 from the Turkish remnants of the Ottoman Empire. In 1945 Turkey joined the UN, and in 1952 it became a member of NATO. Turkey intervened militarily on Cyprus in 1974 to protect Turkish Cypriots and prevent a Greek takeover of the island; the northern 37

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percent of the island remains under Turkish Cypriot control. Relations between Turkey and Greece have improved greatly over the past few years. Politically, modern Turkey was almost entirely the creation of one man, Mustafa Ataturk.

Turkey: Time & Voltage

Turkey is 2 hours ahead of Greenwich Meantime (GMT). From the last Sunday in March to the last Sunday in October, Turkey observes Daylight Saving and is 3 hours ahead of GMT. Standard voltage is 230 - 240 volts. Primary sockets generally require the 3 round-pin variety, similar though not identical to European sockets. Greek sockets are of the 2 round-pin variety. We recommend that you pack a universal travel adaptor. You will need a voltage converter and plug adaptor to use U.S. appliances.

Turkey: Currency

The official currency in Turkey is the Turkish Lira.

Euro, British Pounds, US Dollars and other major currencies can be exchanged locally or in advance of departure. Istanbul Airport offers currency exchange facilities. Additionally, exchange facilities are available at various bureau de changes and banks in major towns have ATMs. It's advisable to request bank notes in smaller denominations, as it can sometimes be hard to get change from large notes and smaller notes are handy for smaller purchases and gratuities. Traveller's Cheques are not recommended as they're often difficult to exchange and incur high fees.

Turkey: Geography And Climate

Turkey has borders with Greece, Bulgaria, Armenia, Georgia, Iran, Iraq and Syria with easy land and sea access to the Gulf States, the Levant and North Africa. It is the ninth largest country in the Middle East and the third largest in Europe. Turkey only consists of 23,000 sq. km in Europe: the remainder is in Asia. The Sea of Marmara and the Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits separate the European (Thrace) and Asian (Anatolian) parts of Turkey. Anatolia is a high plateau

region, rising progressively towards the east and broken by the valleys of some 15 rivers, including the Tigris and the Euphrates. There are numerous lakes including Lake Van, which is really an inland sea. In the north the chain of the Pontine Mountains runs parallel to the Black Sea; in the south, the Taurus Mountains almost touch the narrow, fertile coastal plain. The climate is temperate with hot, dry summers and mild, wet winters (harsher in interior).

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.

Visit www.worldclimate.com to get an idea of what the weather will be like on your tour.

Turkey: Money

ALL prices stated in this dossier are given as a guide only and are subject to change. All prices are quoted in US dollars.

Local currency

The monetary unit in Turkey is the lira, TL. For up to date exchange rates with your own currency visit www.oanda.com or www.xe.com. Changing money, credit cards & ATMs

Rates for foreign currency are always better inside Turkey. Private exchange offices have competitive rates and no commission. Banks are generally open Monday – Friday 8.30am – noon and 1.30pm -5pm. Most charge a commission of US\$2.50 for travellers cheques. ATMs are widely available in cities.

Entrance fees

Generally speaking most entrance fees will be covered by the recommended spending money. There are, however, other sites and museums that are not part of the tour programme which you may wish to visit in your free time. If you have an International Student Card you will often be entitled to reduced entrance fees.

Tipping

Many workers in Turkey are poorly paid and depend on tips for their main income. As tips are a normal part of everyday culture in Turkey we operate a compulsory tipping kitty to save you money and embarrassment. Each member of the group contributes to the kitty (approx US \$15 per person per week) and this is then used to pay tips to any people who provide services to the group as a whole e.g. porters, housekeeping staff in hotels etc. Except at the cheapest restaurants, a 10%-15% charge is added to the bill. As the money does not necessarily find its way to the waiter, you may want to leave an additional 10% on the table or hand it to the waiter.

Turkey: Optional Excursions

A full list of the main excursions available on each tour can be found on daily itinerary on these trip notes. All prices given are approximate and are subject to change due to local inflation or exchange rates.

Turkey: Local Transport

In Istanbul many of the sights are within walking distance of each other and the best way to get to know the area is on foot. However, it's easy and relatively cheap to jump in a taxi and criss-crossing the Bosphorus by ferry is great fun.

Turkey: Security

Most people find that Turkey is a safe and friendly country but as in any foreign place you should exercise a reasonable degree of caution. Don't walk around lonely back streets at night (particularly in Istanbul), don't wear expensive looking jewellery or a classy watch and don't carry a wallet in your back pocket. Don't carry your camera openly; always have it in a small day pack which is firmly attached to your body, preferably in the front in crowded

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places. Take particular care not to become too relaxed if you have had a few drinks and are returning to your hotel at night – it is best to always take a taxi. Always wear a money belt or leave your valuables, including your passport, in the hotel security box.

Turkey: 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
- Take out some Turkish Lira from the ATM facilities at the airport upon arrival
- Buy a phrasebook and practice your Turkish
- Keep a supply of small notes for local transactions

Is This Holiday For You?

Travelling to far-flung corners of the earth often involves encountering lifestyles and conditions that are very different from what you are used to back home. As such it is important to come prepared for unusual situations, local inadequacies and unpredictable events as and when they occur. Foreign travel is definitely not suitable for people who expect everything to go exactly as planned, as things can and do change in foreign countries. The people, customs, creed and languages are different from one region to the next.

Turkey is a country of unparalleled contrasts, a destination where you'll be afforded plenty of unique encounters, and if you can travel with an open mind you will have a wonderful time here. In return, please remember to demonstrate sensitivity and respect for local customs.

Turkey: Local food And Drink

Evening meals and lunches will generally be eaten in local restaurants. Please see your tour notes for details about any included meals.

Simple snack - \$2-\$5

Meal -\$5-\$15

Fancy restaurant - \$20-\$25

Your tour leader will take you to local restaurants, so you can experience the vast variety of Turkish cuisine.

Food

Lots of tasty treats are available in Turkey. Snacks include borek or poca (small pastries filled with meat, cheese or potato) sold from snack carts in the street, also simit (sesame-seed bread rings). Other snacks are lahmacun (small pizzas with meat based toppings) and in coastal cities midye tave (deep fried mussels). Main meals include several variations of the kebab, fish and seafood are good, but usually pricey and sold by the weight rather than by the item. Most budget restaurants are alcohol free. A useful exception is a meyhane (tavern) which usually serves mezės, an extensive array of cold appetisers as well as grilled kebabs and fish. Most common mezės are dolma (pepper or vine leaves stuffed with rice) and patlıcan salata (aubergine in tomato sauce). The best dessert is undoubtedly the honey soaked baklava. Turkish delight - solidified sugar and pectin, flavoured with rose water or pistachios, and sprinkled with powdered sugar - is another popular sweet.

Drink

All drinks such as bottled water or soft drinks are at your own expense at all times and are fairly inexpensive. Water from a tap or well should not be considered safe to drink. Bottled water, carbonated soft drinks and fruit juices are widely available throughout the country. Alcoholic drinks vary in price, with beer generally being the cheapest option.

1l of water - \$0.50

30cl bottle of soft drink - \$0.50-\$1

40cl bottle of beer - \$2-\$3

Turkish coffee is served in tiny cups and can be very strong. The same can be said for the tea (chai) which is served in delightful tulip-shaped glasses. The local firewater is anis-flavoured raki, stronger than Greek Ouzo. Alcoholic drinks are available in most places, but in smaller towns it is not as widely obtainable.

Turkey: 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 Kapalı 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 – 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 – 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.

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.

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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.

IMPORTANT FOR ALL SHOPPING

Set your budget and don't be swayed, remember the caveat – 'Let the buyer beware'. Any purchases made whilst on holiday with us, irrespective of whether the store is recommended by us or other, are at your own discretion. Please make sure that you are completely happy with the product you are purchasing and the delivery arrangements (we would recommend you take away with you any purchases rather than rely on shipping services). On The Go cannot be held responsible or accountable for items bought in country or shipping arrangements. We will not become involved later in your holiday or once you return home should your purchase not live up to your expectations. Proceed with caution.

Turkey: National Holidays

1 January - New Year's Day

23 April - Children's Day

1 May - Labour Day

19 May - Youth Day

30 August - Victory Day

6 October - Liberation War Day

25 December - Christmas Day

Important: there are several religious public holidays whose dates are determined by the Islamic lunar calendar and differ every year according to the universal Gregorian calendar.

The month of Ramazan (Ramadan), the ninth of the Islamic calendar, is a great time to travel in the region as you get a real insight into the Muslim faith. It is a time for spiritual reflection, prayer, doing good deeds and spending time with family and friends. The fasting is intended to help teach Muslims self-discipline, self-restraint and generosity. It also reminds them of the suffering of the poor, who may rarely get to eat well.

During the day, people must refrain from eating, drinking, smoking and sexual activity, so if you encounter someone who is a bit grumpy please be understanding, flexible and sympathetic. As tourists you will be generally unaffected although some places may close early, but your tour leader will do their best to plan around this. Most hotels bars and tourist restaurants will remain open.

In the evening you will experience a celebratory atmosphere at iftar, when people break their fast. To witness Ramazan is a real highlight making your tour in the region that bit more interesting. Each year it begins roughly ten days earlier than the year before, according to the Gregorian calendar.

Turkey: Site Opening Times

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

Topkapi Palace - Closed Tuesdays

Grand Bazaar - Closed Sundays

Blue Mosque - Closed during all prayer times and Friday's until 3pm

The Spice Bazaar and Grand Bazaar are closed as follows for 2019:

01 January

04, 05, 06 June

11, 12, 13, 14 August

29 October

The Spice Bazaar and Grand Bazaar are closed as follows for 2020:

01 January

24, 25, 26 May

31 July

1, 2, 3 August

29 October

All museums in Turkey will close at 1pm, on the 14th of June and 20th of August 2019

All museums in Turkey will close at 1pm, on the 24th of May and 31st of July 2020

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

Approximate Ramazan dates:

24 April - 23 May 2020

13 April - 12 May 2021

Aegean Explorer - 7 Days

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