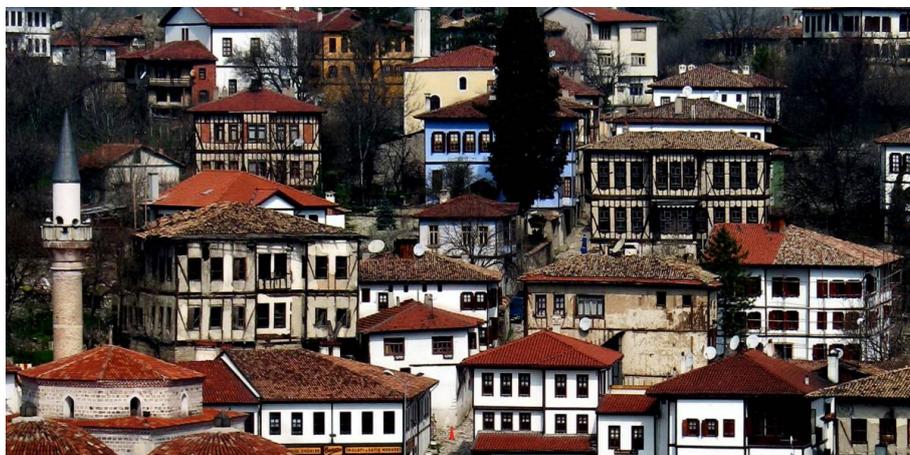


# Black Sea Discovery

## 7 days | Istanbul to Trabzon



Explore the sites of enchanting Istanbul, then get off the beaten track and discover the dramatic natural beauty of Turkey's Black Sea region; its breathtaking scenery, fascinating sights and charming historic towns.

### HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

#### Trip Highlights

- Istanbul - old city, Blue Mosque, Hagia Sofia, Hippodrome and Topkapi Palace
- Safranbolu - UNESCO Listed ancient town, old Ottoman Houses and collections of art
- Ancient Tombs of Boybat
- Sinop - Sinop Castle, Fjords and Alaadin Mosque
- Amasya, on the banks of the Green River and the 15th century Beyazit Mosque complex
- Hattusas - once the capital of the Hittite Empire
- Yazilikaya- a holy, open air sanctuary

#### What's Included

- 6 breakfasts and 4 dinners
- 6 nights 4 star hotels(3 star and 5 star hotel options are also available)

- Istanbul Airport arrival transfer and Trabzon airport departure transfer on days 1 and 7
- Guided sightseeing - Istanbul, Safranbolu, Sinop, Amasya, Hattusas and Yazilikaya
- English speaking, degree qualified Turkish tour guide
- Private air-conditioned transportation, all relevant transfers
- Entrance fees for all included sightseeing

#### What's Not Included

- International flights and visas
- Tipping - an entirely personal gesture
- Items of a personal nature

### DETAILED ITINERARY

#### Day 1 : Istanbul

Arrive Istanbul airport where you will be met by our representative and transferred to your hotel. Spend the rest of the day at leisure.

#### Overnight - Istanbul

#### Day 2 : Old City sights

This morning depart on a full day city tour, visit magnificent St. Sophia's Basilica built originally by Constantine the Great. We continue our visits with the fascinating and impressive Blue Mosque, famous for its six minarets, its beautiful blue Iznik tiles, unique architecture and marble latticework. Then visit the Byzantine Hippodrome where chariot

races and competitive athletic events took place. Finally we visit the famous vast and bustling Grand Bazaar **Overnight - Istanbul (B)**

#### Day 3 : Safranbolu



Istanbul - Safranbolu. After breakfast, drive to Safranbolu. Safranbolu is a town boasting a glorious collection of old Ottoman houses, with a rich collection of pieces of art which represents traditional Turkish life and culture. Its rich history and success in preserving it earned the town an inclusion on the UNESCO World Heritage List. The best known for its old Turkish houses, the town is attracting more attention especially as these 19th century homes are gradually disappearing from other areas of Turkey. Take a walk down the old narrow cobbled streets, and see some of the traditional crafts and trades that are still practised today. **Overnight - Safranbolu (B, D)**

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## Day 4 : Sinop

Safranbolu - Sinop. Leaving Safranbolu we drive to Sinop, visiting the Ancient Tombs in Boybat en route. Arriving at Sinop we admire the breathtaking views offered from Sinop Castle and visit the beautiful Sinop Fjords, which are the only unique formation of this kind in Turkey. The final stop of the day is at Alaadin Mosque, built in 1214 after the conquest of Sinop during the Selcuklu Period.

**Overnight - Sinop** (B, D)

## Day 5 : Samsun

After breakfast journey to Samsun, stopping en route to visit Gerze, a quaint fishing village. Your final stop today is historic Samsun (formerly known by its Greek name Amisos), a fascinating town of myths and legends, which was called the land of the Amazons.

**Overnight - Samsun** (B, D)

## Day 6 : Trabzon



It's an early morning departure to Trabzon along the beautiful Black Sea coast. Today visit the outside of the spectacular 1,600 year-old Sumela Monastery, perched dramatically on a steep cliff-face commanding excellent views of the surrounding forests. **Overnight - Corum** (B, D)

## Day 7 : Trabzon

Your Black Sea adventure comes to an end after breakfast today. Transfer to Trabzon Airport for your onward flight.(B)

### KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

#### 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](http://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 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.

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# Black Sea Discovery

## 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](http://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](http://www.oanda.com) or [www.xe.com](http://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 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

## Black Sea Discovery - 7 days

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# Black Sea Discovery

- 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 meyhan (tavern) which usually serves mezes, an extensive

array of cold appetisers as well as grilled kebabs and fish. Most common mezes are dolma (pepper or vine leaves stuffed with rice) and patlican 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 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 - 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. 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

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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 2020:

01 January

24, 25, 26 May

31 July

1, 2, 3 August

29 October

The Spice Bazaar and Grand Bazaar are closed as follows for 2021:

01 January

13, 14, 15 May

20, 21, 22, 23 July

29 October

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

All museums in Turkey will open at 1pm, on the 13th of May and 20th of July 2021

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

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