

Istanbul to Athens

14 days | Istanbul to Athens



From Istanbul - the great capital of the Ottoman Empire, to Athens - the ancient capital of Greece in 14 magical days. Discover archaeological treasures and natural wonders and discover the jewels of the Greek Islands; Rhodes, Santorini and Mykonos

HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

Trip Highlights

- Istanbul - old city, Blue Mosque, Hagia Sofia, Hippodrome, Underground Cistern and Topkapi Palace
- Gallipoli Peninsular - ANZAC Cove, Lone Pine, Chunuk Bair, trenches and battlefields
- Troy - Trojan horse, ancient ruins and Aegean coast
- Roman ruins of Pergamum and Ephesus
- Pamukkale thermal pools and Roman Hierapolis
- Carpet weaving demonstration and leather manufacturer
- Marmaris - on the Aegean Coast. Opt to extend with a beach stay or travel over to Greece!
- Rhodes - the largest of the Dodecanese Islands
- Santorini - beautiful volcanic island in the Cyclades

- Mykonos - a picturesque Cyclades Island
- Athens - capital of Greece, Constitution Square, Houses of Parliament, Memorials, National Library, The Acropolis - the Propylaea, Temple of Aterros Nike and the Parthenon

What's Included

- 13 breakfasts and 4 hotel dinners
- 13 nights 4 star & special class hotels
- One arrival transfer on Day 1 and One departure transfer on Day 14 included per booking
- Guided sightseeing - Istanbul, Gallipoli, Troy, Ruins of Ephesus, Pergamum, Pamukkale and Roman Hierapolis
- Escorted by an English speaking, degree qualified Turkish tour guide (days 1- 6)
- All relevant transfers and transportation in private modern air-conditioned vehicles (days 1 - 6)
- Rhodes to Santorini - one way economy flight
- Marmaris to Rhodes & Santorini- Athens ferry tickets.
- Please Note: This tour is semi independent from days 7 - 14, you will not be escorted by a tour guide

What's Not Included

- Tipping Kitty: USD\$40pp (Turkey Only), paid in local currency

- Entrance Fees: USD\$75-85pp, paid in local currency
- International flights and visas
- Tipping - an entirely personal gesture
- Items of a personal nature
- A hotel tax of €3.00 per room per night to be paid directly to the hotel at time of check in

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1 : Istanbul

Saturday. If arriving early enough into Istanbul, you'll have time to get acquainted with this remarkable city. Istanbul is easy to get around on foot and there are plenty of restaurants and cafes dotted about the city. Afternoon at leisure. **Overnight - Istanbul**

Day 2 : The Old City



Istanbul is the only city in the world to span two continents resting on the shores of the Bosphorus - the strait of water that divides the continents of Europe and Asia.

Istanbul to Athens - 14 days

www.onthegotours.com
 UK 020 7371 1113 info@onthegotours.com
 AUS 1300 855 684 aus-info@onthegotours.com
 NZ 0800 44 77 69 CAN 1 866 890 7038
 USA 1 866 606 2960 SA 0800 990 311

This information has been compiled with care and good faith. They give an accurate illustration of the proposed arrangements for this holiday. Circumstances beyond our control such as changes in local conditions, inclement weather or other reasons could force us to make changes to this itinerary. Any costs shown are subject to change, though are an accurate reflection of costs at time of writing. Please also note that visa requirements are subject to change and are the responsibility of the traveller and not that of On The Go Tours.

Istanbul to Athens

Its illustrious past leaves a rich legacy of churches, mosques, palaces and museums, complemented by the behemoth Grand Bazaar and colourful street life.

Today we embark on a classic guided tour of the city's highlights. Our first stop is Sultanahmet, the compact old city filled with 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. Just around the corner is the stunning Topkapi Palace where we spend time exploring the grounds and various museums contained within the Palace walls. Evening at leisure. **Overnight - Istanbul (B)**

Day 3 : Gallipoli



Istanbul – Gallipoli. Early this morning 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 ANZAC Cove, 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. **Overnight - Canakkale (B, D)**

Day 4 : Troy and Kusadasi



Gallipoli – Kusadasi. At Troy (the inspiration for Homer's Iliad and much more recently the movie Troy) we visit the Trojan Horse and ruins. We enjoy a guided tour of the ancient city that dates back to 3000BC! En route to Kusadasi, we explore the ruins of Pergamum with its impressive temples, library and medical facilities which made it a famous cultural and political centre of its time. Before arriving to Kusadasi a stop will be made at a local carpet emporium - Turkey produces some of the finest carpets in the world! **Overnight - Kusadasi (B, D)**

Day 5 : Ancient Ephesus

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. It revelled in its prosperity from commerce and visiting pilgrims who came to see its great Temple of Artemis - one of the Seven Ancient Wonders. All good things come to an end, however. The town's harbour, despite the efforts of various engineers and planners, silted up and cut Ephesus off.

Severed from its commerce, Ephesus quickly lost wealth and eventually by 6 AD, when the Emperor Justinian was looking for a suitable site to construct the St John Basilica, he bypassed Ephesus and chose Ayasoluk Hill in Selcuk, which eventually became the new city centre.

You'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. You'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. **Overnight - Kusadasi (B, D)**

Day 6 : Pamukkale Terraces



Kusadasi – Pamukkale - Marmaris. Driving east, we arrive at Pamukkale - home of the famous gleaming white calcium terraced pools. 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.

Take a barefoot walk along the travertines or opt for a dip in the warm waters of the Pamukkale Thermal pool, with its submerged fragments of fluted marble columns.

Our final stop is the ruined spa town of Hierapolis, before driving onward to Marmaris. **Overnight - Marmaris (B, D)**

Day 7 : Rhodes

After breakfast included transfer to Marmaris Port for a ferry to the Greek island of Rhodes, the largest of the Dodecanese group. Meeting you upon arrival, the remainder of the day is spent at leisure; perhaps visit Rhodes City and see the walls of a very well preserved Venetian castle; built by the Knights of Saint John, it is one of the finest examples of medieval architecture.

This tour is semi independent in style from days 7 - 14, so from once you arrive in Rhodes

Istanbul to Athens - 14 days

www.onthegotours.com
 UK 020 7371 1113 info@onthegotours.com
 AUS 1300 855 684 aus-info@onthegotours.com
 NZ 0800 44 77 69 CAN 1 866 890 7038
 USA 1 866 606 2960 SA 0800 990 311

This information has been compiled with care and good faith. They give an accurate illustration of the proposed arrangements for this holiday. Circumstances beyond our control such as changes in local conditions, inclement weather or other reasons could force us to make changes to this itinerary. Any costs shown are subject to change, though are an accurate reflection of costs at time of writing. Please also note that visa requirements are subject to change and are the responsibility of the traveller and not that of On The Go Tours.

Istanbul to Athens

until you depart from Athens you will not be escorted by a tour guide. **Overnight - Rhodes Hotel: Semiramis Hotel, Rhodes (B)**

Days 8-9 : Stunning Santorini



Rhodes - Santorini. Included transfer to the airport for a flight (via Athens) to Santorini. upon arrival you will be driven to your hotel to spend the next two days at leisure on this beautiful island. Santorini is located in the Cyclades island group, in the Aegean Sea. This dramatically striking volcanic island is the only inhabited Caldera (volcano cauldron) in the world, with towns and villages perched on top of the massive cliffs of the caldera and beautiful black and red beaches. Santorini is renowned for its spectacular sunsets and gorgeous villages with traditional white and blue architecture. Be sure to visit Fira and Oia, Santorini's most famous villages, which are perched on the edge of the caldera, offering amazing views over the Aegean and the volcano. **Overnight - Santorini (2) Hotel: Daedalus Hotel, Santorini (B:2)**

Days 10-11 : Cosmopolitan Mykonos

Santorini - Mykonos. On day 10 you'll be transferred to the pier to catch the ferry to Mykonos. Included transfer to your hotel where you'll spend the next two days at leisure. Mykonos island is famous for its cosmopolitan atmosphere and exciting nightlife. The picturesque Cycladic capital is full of whitewashed houses and blue domed churches and the island boasts magnificent sandy beaches. **Overnight - Mykonos (2) Hotel: Giannoulaki Hotel, Mykonos (B:2)**

Day 12 : Ancient Athens

Mykonos - Athens. Today you will be transferred to the port to take the ferry to Athens, arrival transfer and hotel check in.

Athens is the capital of Greece and took its name from the ancient goddess Athena and is thought to have at least a 3000 year old recorded history which makes it one of the oldest cities in Europe. **Overnight - Athens Hotel: Parthenon Hotel, Athens (B)**

Day 13 : The Acropolis



Athens. You're free to independently explore the ancient capital today. Visit the legendary Acropolis and discover the architectural masterpieces of the Golden Age of Athens: the Propylaea, the Temple of Athena Nike, the Erechtheion and of course the spectacular and iconic Parthenon. Other sights of interest include Constitution Square, Hadrian's Arch, the Temple of Olympian Zeus and the Panathenaic Stadium where the first Olympic Games of the modern era were held in 1896. You can also see Evzones (ceremonial guards) in their distinctive uniforms at the Memorial of the Unknown Soldier and the Presidential Palace. **Overnight - Athens Hotel: Parthenon Hotel, Athens (B)**

Day 14 : Athens

Friday - Athens. After breakfast, included transfer to Athens Airport for your onward journey.(B)

HOTELS

Highlighted below are some of the hotels which we frequently use on this tour, though we reserve the right to substitute these hotels to ones of a similar standard.

Please refer to your Tour Voucher for your confirmed arrival hotel and further arrival information.

Radisson Blu Pera

Set in the Pera district of Istanbul, this exclusive hotel is well-located within walking

distance of most historic sites and public transport. Its luxurious guestrooms are comfortable and bohemian-style, offering city or estuary views alongside free WiFi and a complimentary tea and coffee set-up. On the top floor, you'll find the Hamdi Restaurant, which serves traditional Turkish cuisine accompanied by spectacular views of the Golden Horn. Guests can also enjoy pastries and coffee at the Luna Lounge or take advantage of the 24-hour room service. To top it off, the hotel also offers a gym, sauna, indoor pool and Turkish bath, offering ample opportunities for some rest and relaxation.



Point Hotel Taksim

Well-located just a short walk from the nearest Metro station, this modern hotel is a great base for exploring the sights of Istanbul. Light and spacious guestrooms offer air conditioning and free high speed WiFi. There's also an indoor pool, spa facilities and a fitness centre. Guests can enjoy a choice of eateries, including an authentic Japanese Restaurant and two café bars. However, this hotel's highlight is the top-floor View Point Restaurant, which boasts delicious Turkish and world cuisine alongside sweeping views of the Bosphorus Strait.



Kolin Hotel

Looking out across the Dardanelles, the modern and bright Kolin Hotel offers well appointed rooms with hard wood flooring and tasteful decor. The hotel also boasts a luxury spa, wellness centre and a number of mouth watering restaurants all set within

Istanbul to Athens - 14 days

www.onthegotours.com
 UK 020 7371 1113 info@onthegotours.com
 AUS 1300 855 684 aus-info@onthegotours.com
 NZ 0800 44 77 69 CAN 1 866 890 7038
 USA 1 866 606 2960 SA 0800 990 311

This information has been compiled with care and good faith. They give an accurate illustration of the proposed arrangements for this holiday. Circumstances beyond our control such as changes in local conditions, inclement weather or other reasons could force us to make changes to this itinerary. Any costs shown are subject to change, though are an accurate reflection of costs at time of writing. Please also note that visa requirements are subject to change and are the responsibility of the traveller and not that of On The Go Tours.

Istanbul to Athens

perfectly manicured lawns. Sipping a sundowner on the roof bar, overlooking the beautiful strait, is the perfect way to end the day. The hotel is located on the water's edge a short drive from the town centre with beautiful views out to sea.



Charisma Hotel

The Charisma is a modern and elegant hotel with spacious rooms. The rooms are equipped with jacuzzi, LCD screen television, split air conditioning, mini-bar, electronic safe box, hairdryer and free internet connection. Towering over the Aegean Sea's outstanding view, the Hotel is just 15 minutes by walk from Kuşadası's shopping and entertainment area.



Orsmaris Boutique Hotel

Orsmaris Boutique hotel was completely renovated in 2006. The hotel offers a warm and inviting atmosphere with a professional approach and excellent service. The rooms are spacious, beautifully decorated and command spectacular views out over the sea. Diners have the option of sitting indoors or al fresco as they feast on sumptuous Turkish and international cuisine. Guests can also enjoy the two outdoor pools and surrounding flower garden. The Hotel is situated by the sea and 5 km away from Marmaris city center.



Our partners

This tour is operated in conjunction with our trusted partner and you will join travellers who booked through different operators, not solely On The Go.

The sightseeing group may vary in size from 2 – 24 persons.

Greece Visas

Australian, British, Irish, New Zealand and United States passport holders do not require a visa to enter Greece. South African passport holders are required to obtain a visa in advance from the Greek Consulate prior to travel. Visas cost €60 and applications must include 2 x recent passport photos and confirmation of travel. Proof of funds may also be required (usually €40 a day).

Please ensure that your passport is valid for at least 6 months from your date of arrival to Greece. Please re-confirm all visa requirements with the Greece 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 Tours.

Semi-independent tour

This tour is escorted by a tour guide for days 1 - 6. From day 7 onward guests will travel independently aboard ferries and flights. Before departing Turkey please take the time to sit with your tour guide to discuss the onward arrangements for your holiday. At this point in time you will also be given your Rhodes – Santorini flight ticket, to which you will be responsible for, from here forward.

At each new port of call you will be met at the ferry port by an On The Go Tours representative (in conjunction with our local partner on the islands (Santorini - Bellonias Travel. Land line: +30 2286032026, Mykonos - Big Blue Travel. Land line: +30 2289022404 and for all other islands Prestige Travel: Mobile: : +30 6936564516) who will transfer you to your included accommodation and confirm the time you will be collected from your hotel to be transferred to the port/ airport for the next leg of your journey.

Our partners will also need to provide you with hotel and ferry vouchers for the onward travel. You will receive the following documentation at each port of call:

RHODES - Hotel voucher for Rhodes

SANTORINI - Hotel voucher for Santorini and Ferry Ticket Santorini – Mykonos

MYKONOS - Hotel voucher for Mykonos and Ferry Ticket Mykonos - Athens

ATHENS - Hotel voucher for Athens

Greece Hotel Tax

From January 2018, a new "overnight stay" tax has been imposed by the Greek government. This tax amounts to €1.50 per room per night for 3 star hotels, €3.00 per room per night for 4 star hotels and €4.00 per room per night for 5 star. This tax cannot be included in our tour price and you will need to pay this upon check in at each hotel so please budget accordingly.

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.

Istanbul to Athens - 14 days

www.onthegotours.com
 UK 020 7371 1113 info@onthegotours.com
 AUS 1300 855 684 aus-info@onthegotours.com
 NZ 0800 44 77 69 CAN 1 866 890 7038
 USA 1 866 606 2960 SA 0800 990 311

This information has been compiled with care and good faith. They give an accurate illustration of the proposed arrangements for this holiday. Circumstances beyond our control such as changes in local conditions, inclement weather or other reasons could force us to make changes to this itinerary. Any costs shown are subject to change, though are an accurate reflection of costs at time of writing. Please also note that visa requirements are subject to change and are the responsibility of the traveller and not that of On The Go Tours.

Istanbul to Athens

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 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.

Greece Country Guide

Greece Visas

UK, AUS, NZ, USA and CAN passport holders do not require a visa at present to enter Greece for touristic purposes, for a stay of up to 90 days in any 180-day period.

For passport holders of other nationalities not included here, please check the <http://www.projectvisa.com/visainformation/Greece> website for more information.

South African Residents

Greece is part of the borderless region known as the Schengen Area and South African passport holders require a Schengen visa in order to enter Greece. A passport valid for at least three months from your departure is required and a visa will only be issued if blank pages are available.

Requirements for the procurement of a visa are subject to change but application requirements include round-trip travel itinerary specifying entry and exit dates from the Schengen state and proof of funds to support yourself during your stay, ask your bank for this, it should include your name too. R600 per person per day is required with a minimum of R3600

You'll need to contact the consulate general in Johannesburg directly for inquiries and questions regarding visa regulations and passport requirement at <http://www.mfa.gr/johannesburg>.

Greece Hotel Tax

From January 2018, a new "overnight stay" tax has been imposed by the Greek government. This tax amounts to €1.50 per room per night for 3 star hotels, €3.00 per room per night for 4 star hotels and €4.00 per room per night for 5 star. This tax cannot be included in our tour price and you will need to pay this upon check in at each hotel so please budget accordingly.

Airport Transfers

An arrival transfer is included on day 1 and a departure transfer on the final day of your tour. Please note that only one complimentary transfer is offered per booking so if you are on

Istanbul to Athens - 14 days

www.onthegotours.com
 UK 020 7371 1113 info@onthegotours.com
 AUS 1300 855 684 aus-info@onthegotours.com
 NZ 0800 44 77 69 CAN 1 866 890 7038
 USA 1 866 606 2960 SA 0800 990 311

This information has been compiled with care and good faith. They give an accurate illustration of the proposed arrangements for this holiday. Circumstances beyond our control such as changes in local conditions, inclement weather or other reasons could force us to make changes to this itinerary. Any costs shown are subject to change, though are an accurate reflection of costs at time of writing. Please also note that visa requirements are subject to change and are the responsibility of the traveller and not that of On The Go Tours.

Istanbul to Athens

different flights to your travelling companions a supplement will apply.

Climate

Summer in Greece

The climate in Greece is typical of the Mediterranean climate with two seasons - a warm and dry summer, and a mild and wet winter. Summer is a long season with temperatures climbing to a pleasant degree as early as late February. March and even April can be somewhat unpredictable months with the occasional rain shower and windy conditions though at this time of year the landscapes are decorated with beautiful wild flowers.

The shoulder months between May and June still offer lovely weather conditions but without the crowds. It's warm on the islands and the waters are nice enough for a swim. Peak tourist season doesn't start until mid-June and lasts until early September. During this time the islands are buzzing with people, both travellers and locals alike. If you're visiting during this time it's best to book hotels, flights and local ferries as far as in advance as possible to avoid disappointment and secure better prices.

Between September and mid-October the soft light and delicate colours are particularly suited to photography. The sea water retains the heat of the mid-summer months so swimming is definitely still on the cards.

Winter in Greece

By late-October many parts of Greece begin to experience stormy conditions with more frequent cloud cover and rain showers. The tourist season comes to an end and prices drop off considerably. Few international travellers visit the Greek islands between November and February so crowds are thin.

Time & Voltage

Greece lies in the Eastern European Time Zone, which is 2 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT +2).

During summer, daylight-saving is observed in Greece, where the time is shifted forward by 1 hour so it becomes 3 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT +3). After

summer the time in Greece is shifted back by 1 hour to Eastern European Time. In 2017, daylight savings takes place between 26th March and 29th October.

Standard voltage is 220-240 volts. Primary sockets generally require European plugs of the two round-pin variety. We recommend that you pack a universal travel adaptor. You will need a voltage converter and plug adaptor in order to use U.S. appliances.

Health Requirements

You should seek medical advice from your local health practitioner before travelling to Greece and ensure that you receive all of the appropriate vaccinations. Just make sure you're up to date for recommended vaccinations for your home country, including measles, mumps and polio. Other vaccines to consider are Tetanus and Tick-borne Encephalitis. Visit the NHS Fit to Travel page or the CDC Traveler's Health Page for more information.

Currency & Holiday Money

The official currency in Greece is the Euro. Check OANDA for latest exchange rates.

British Pounds, US Dollars and other major currencies can be easily exchanged locally in banks or bureau de change prior to departure. Credit cards such as Visa and Mastercard are widely accepted in most major hotels, restaurants and shops, but keep some cash on hand, especially on the islands and in smaller towns. Use of American Express is not as common.

Traveller's Cheques are not recommended as they're often difficult to exchange and incur high fees

Although Greece has become a hugely popular tourist destination in recent years, it remains relatively affordable. We recommend if you are on a budget that you avoid the often overpriced restaurants and cafes that line the main squares and chose places to eat a few streets back. A meal in an inexpensive restaurant with drinks will cost around USD \$12, and a pint of domestic beer costs about USD \$4.10, while a one way ticket on public

transport will only set you back about USD \$1.65.

Shopping

Greece is a cultural haven, and you will find a wide range of arts and crafts wherever you go. Locally hand-crafted ceramics, textiles, wood carvings, and jewellery make for wonderful souvenirs, especially from the Greek islands. Many destinations pride themselves on specific products – for instance, the monasteries at Meteora are famed for hand-painted religious icons. If you are shopping for antiques, do beware of fakes and stick to reputable traders.

In Athens, the ancient tradition of the agora (public forum) continues today in spaces such as the Monastiraki market, where you will find souvenirs for all tastes, ranging from tailor-made leather sandals to mass-produced Parthenon replicas. Another popular shopping option nearby is Ermou Street, which offers a wide selection of local and international brands. The island of Thessaloniki also caters to shoppers with its boutique-filled main square and a variety of malls near the city centre.

If you are looking to bring a taste of Greece home with you, olive oil from the Peloponnese, honey from Attica, and wines from Santorini are excellent products to look out for.

Is bargaining acceptable in Greece?

Bargaining is generally not accepted in Greece - in most shops there will be a fixed price for goods on sale. In the flea markets and with street vendors, a bit of bargaining may be more appropriate.

Greek Cuisine

Greek food has a venerable history dating back to antiquity. Although the country's rocky terrain limits its agricultural output, cooking and cuisine are essential to its culture. Olives, cheese, and wheat are integral parts of the local diet, appearing in salads, stews, and breads. Seafood at restaurants – often squid, octopus, mussels, and fish - is likely to come fresh from the Mediterranean, especially on the Greek islands.

Istanbul to Athens - 14 days

www.onthegotours.com
 UK 020 7371 1113 info@onthegotours.com
 AUS 1300 855 684 aus-info@onthegotours.com
 NZ 0800 44 77 69 CAN 1 866 890 7038
 USA 1 866 606 2960 SA 0800 990 311

This information has been compiled with care and good faith. They give an accurate illustration of the proposed arrangements for this holiday. Circumstances beyond our control such as changes in local conditions, inclement weather or other reasons could force us to make changes to this itinerary. Any costs shown are subject to change, though are an accurate reflection of costs at time of writing. Please also note that visa requirements are subject to change and are the responsibility of the traveller and not that of On The Go Tours.

Istanbul to Athens

Greek cuisine is simple but incredibly varied. In terms of popular dishes, you will find moussaka (aubergine & lamb casserole), souvlaki (spit-roasted meat), and dolmades (vine leaves stuffed with meat & herbs) in many tavernas and restaurants, sometimes with regional variations. Meat-free options include briam (roasted vegetables in tomato sauce), and of course, Greek salad with olives & feta cheese. For indulging your sweet tooth, pastry shops serve delicacies such as Turkish-inspired baklava (filo pastry layered with honey and chopped nuts). Ice cream and honey with yogurt are also common sweet snacks.

Drinks are a major part of the traditional dining experience. Ouzo, an anise-flavoured spirit distilled from pressed grapes, is Greece's most popular alcohol, usually served as an aperitif with iced water and some small appetizers. Be careful not to drain your glass too quickly – it is a strong drink, meant to be enjoyed over a period of time.

Drinking Water

In the major cities, it's generally safe to drink water from taps and also from drinking fountains. However, it is strongly recommended to stick to bottled water on most islands and in rural areas.

Tipping

Tipping customs in Greece vary widely. Service charge may be included in the bill, but tipping remains a common practice, especially in popular tourist destinations. Your tip should reflect the service so if it was excellent, 10% is an added bonus. At some restaurants, a small mandatory 'cover charge' for bread & water is also included in the bill (usually about one Euro per person). Taxi drivers usually expect tips and it is also standard to tip hotel porters and local tour guides. If the concierge is particularly helpful, people often tip 1 to 2 Euros.

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 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.

Istanbul to Athens - 14 days

www.onthegotours.com
 UK 020 7371 1113 info@onthegotours.com
 AUS 1300 855 684 aus-info@onthegotours.com
 NZ 0800 44 77 69 CAN 1 866 890 7038
 USA 1 866 606 2960 SA 0800 990 311

This information has been compiled with care and good faith. They give an accurate illustration of the proposed arrangements for this holiday. Circumstances beyond our control such as changes in local conditions, inclement weather or other reasons could force us to make changes to this itinerary. Any costs shown are subject to change, though are an accurate reflection of costs at time of writing. Please also note that visa requirements are subject to change and are the responsibility of the traveller and not that of On The Go Tours.

Istanbul to Athens

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 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

Istanbul to Athens - 14 days

www.onthegotours.com
 UK 020 7371 1113 info@onthegotours.com
 AUS 1300 855 684 aus-info@onthegotours.com
 NZ 0800 44 77 69 CAN 1 866 890 7038
 USA 1 866 606 2960 SA 0800 990 311

This information has been compiled with care and good faith. They give an accurate illustration of the proposed arrangements for this holiday. Circumstances beyond our control such as changes in local conditions, inclement weather or other reasons could force us to make changes to this itinerary. Any costs shown are subject to change, though are an accurate reflection of costs at time of writing. Please also note that visa requirements are subject to change and are the responsibility of the traveller and not that of On The Go Tours.

Istanbul to Athens

- 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 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

Istanbul to Athens - 14 days

www.onthegotours.com

UK 020 7371 1113 info@onthegotours.com

AUS 1300 855 684 aus-info@onthegotours.com

NZ 0800 44 77 69 CAN 1 866 890 7038

USA 1 866 606 2960 SA 0800 990 311

This information has been compiled with care and good faith. They give an accurate illustration of the proposed arrangements for this holiday. Circumstances beyond our control such as changes in local conditions, inclement weather or other reasons could force us to make changes to this itinerary. Any costs shown are subject to change, though are an accurate reflection of costs at time of writing. Please also note that visa requirements are subject to change and are the responsibility of the traveller and not that of On The Go Tours.

Istanbul to Athens

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

Istanbul to Athens - 14 days

www.onthegotours.com

UK 020 7371 1113 info@onthegotours.com

AUS 1300 855 684 aus-info@onthegotours.com

NZ 0800 44 77 69 CAN 1 866 890 7038

USA 1 866 606 2960 SA 0800 990 311

updated on 22-10-2019 01:52:56

This information has been compiled with care and good faith. They give an accurate illustration of the proposed arrangements for this holiday. Circumstances beyond our control such as changes in local conditions, inclement weather or other reasons could force us to make changes to this itinerary. Any costs shown are subject to change, though are an accurate reflection of costs at time of writing. Please also note that visa requirements are subject to change and are the responsibility of the traveller and not that of On The Go Tours.