
15-DAYS: A PILGRIMAGE TO TURKEY IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ST. PAUL & THE BOOK OF REVELATION

DAY 1: DEPART USA

We depart en route to Istanbul with complimentary meals and beverages served aloft.

DAY 2: ARRIVE ISTANBUL

Upon our arrival we are met by our Catholic guide and escorted to our private motor coach, which will transfer us to our hotel for the overnight. Dinner is served at our hotel. (D)

DAY 3: ISTANBUL

After breakfast we experience Istanbul's rich quilt of cultures, Eastern Orthodoxy and Islam the main fabrics. We begin at Santa Sofia, at one time the premier church in Christendom, later a mosque and now a museum. Nearby are the Hippodrome and the Ahmet Mosque (Blue Mosque). The underground cistern is otherworldly. This afternoon is at leisure. Dinner is at our hotel. (B, D)

DAY 4: ISTANBUL / KAYSERI / CAPPADOCIA AREA

We transfer to the airport for our early morning flight to Kayseri (Caesarea), and continue to Cappadocia area for dinner and overnight. Dinner is at our hotel. (B, D)

DAY 5: CAPPADOCIA AREA

Today we will enjoy touring through perhaps the most surreal and strange landscape on earth. Thousands of years of erosion of the earth have formed the so-called Fairy chimneys. Cappadocia saw the penetration of Christianity in Anatolia. Following the footsteps of St. Paul, the first Christians came to settle in the natural grottoes where they created rock carved churches and underground cities, painting the churches with important episodes from the Bible in brilliant colors. Today we experience the Goreme Valley, Zelve Valley, Uchisar Village, Cavusin Village, Avanos, Soganil Valley and the Underground city of Ozkonak. Dinner is at our hotel. (B, D)

DAY 6: CAPPADOCIA AREA / KONYA

We follow the route once used by caravans on our way to Konya. In antiquity, the city was known as Iconium. Iconium was a stop on Paul's first missionary journey, and a "site" of Acts of Paul and Thecla. We visit the Church of St. Paul, the archeological museum and Mevlana Museum, burial site of Rumi, famous Sufi poet and Whirling Dervish founder. Dinner is at our hotel. (B, D)

DAY 7: KONYA / YALVAC / ANTALYA

Yalvac (Antioch in Pisidia), an important stop in Paul's first journey (Acts 13), stands today as a beautiful archeological site (Roman colony). We continue to Antalya, following the route of Paul's journey, crossing the Taurus mountain range. We stop and visit the gorgeous theatre of Aspendos. Dinner is at our hotel. (B, D)

DAY 8: ANTALYA / PERGE / PAMUKKALE

Today we visit Perge, a reconstructed Hellenistic city, with a marvelous city plan, baths, temples and theater; a site of Paul's preaching. We drive via the Lycos Valley (Denizli, Laodicea, Hierapolis) and onto to Pamukkale, famous for its wonderful mineral baths. Dinner is at our hotel. (B, D)

DAY 9: PAMUKKALE / APHRODISIAS / MILETUS / KUSADASI

We stop at Aphrodisias, a city once dedicated to Aphrodite. Then we make our way to Miletus (location of Paul's farewell to Ephesian elders, Acts 20) and Didyma, the temple of Apollo. Our final destination is the port town of Kusadasi. Dinner is at our hotel. (B, D)

DAY 10: KUSADASI: Excursion to Ephesus

Our focus today is Ephesus. St. Paul founded the Church in Ephesus 53-56 AD. From here, he wrote letters to Galatia, Philippi, and Corinth. Our excursion visits the great theatre where St. Paul addressed the crowds (Acts 19:29); also, the site of the scene of the riot from which Paul escaped. A short walk from the theatre we will see the Council Church. Plus we see the Temple of Diana, one of the Seven Wonders of the World. This afternoon we see the Basilica of St. John and House of Mary before returning to Kusadasi. Dinner is at our hotel. (B, D)

DAY 11: KUSADASI / SARDIS / THYATIRA / BERGAMA AREA

In Sardis we visit the temple of Diana, Roman baths and Jewish Synagogue. Passing via Thyatira, we arrive in Bergama area and visit the Asclepion, the ancient healing temple of Apollo. Dinner is at our hotel. (B, D)

DAY 12: BERGAMA AREA / PERGAMUM / TROY / CANAKKALE

This morning we visit ancient Pergamum and see the Acropolis, including the theatre and the Zeus altar. We continue to Troy (Troas) settled as early as 3,000 BC. We will stop and visit Troy Assos and Alexander Troas. Homer's ILIAD relates the legendary story of the Trojan War (1200 BC). We continue to Canakkale for dinner & overnight. Dinner is at our hotel. (B, D)

DAY 13: CANAKKALE / GALLIPOLI / ISTANBUL

Today we cross the Dardanelles by ferry to European Turkey, with a brief stop in Gallipoli on the northern end of the Dardanelles. We drive to Istanbul (ancient Constantinople) for an orientation tour of the city. The rest of the afternoon is at leisure to enjoy the city referred to as "Earth's Pearl." Dinner is at our hotel. (B, D)

DAY 14: ISTANBUL: KARIYE MONASTERY

We begin with a visit to the Kariye Monastery and its beautiful mosaics and frescos. Then we devote the rest of our day to the opulent riches of the sultans in our tour of the Topkapi Palace. Later we can visit the famous covered bazaars to meander among the thousands (literally) of shops. Time to bargain (friendly, of course!). Tonight we enjoy a festive dinner at a local restaurant, followed by an elegant cruise on the Bosphorus. (B, D)



DAY 15: RETURN USA

We transfer to the airport for our return flight to the USA. (B)

NOTE: While no changes are anticipated, there might be occasions when certain alterations become necessary to this itinerary due to changes in airline schedules or for other reasons. All Masses are subject to final church schedules.