

## TURKEY: GROUP TRAVEL PROGRAMS - 3

### A JOURNEY THROUGH TURKEY

*14 nights: Arrive Istanbul, 4 nights; fly to Izmir, 2 nights; fly to Istanbul and Kayseri (Cappadocia), 3 nights; drive to Ankara, 1 night; fly to Van and drive to Dogubayazit, 1 night; drive to Van, 2 nights; fly to Istanbul, 1 night.*

#### **Day 1, Sunday: Arrive Istanbul**

Arrive Istanbul airport. Transfer to Swissotel The Bosphorus/Hyatt Regency Istanbul, both deluxe luxury hotels with first class facilities and service, very central. Take the rest of the day at leisure.

#### **Day 2, Monday: Istanbul**

Morning, take a driving tour of the European section of Istanbul city. Visit the spice markets and New Mosque, the grand Blue Mosque of Sultan Ahmet, a triumph of harmony, proportion and elegance; and the hippodrome and obelisk of Theodosius brought in from Egypt. In the afternoon, explore the underground Roman cisterns and Grand bazaar.

**B**

#### **Day 3, Tuesday: Istanbul**

Morning, take a boat cruise on the Bosphorus waterway that connects the Black and Marmara Seas, visiting en route the Beylerbeyi Palace, Goksu Pavilion and Rumeli Hisari fortress. Lunch at a restaurant in Ortakoy. Then, visit the Dolmabahce Palace, where elegance and grandeur are richly preserved.

**B, L**

#### **Day 4, Wednesday: Istanbul**

Morning, visit the magnificent Topkapi Palace, home to Ottoman sultans for nearly four centuries, including treasure rooms and harem room. Also see costumed palace guards and band performance. Afternoon, visit Hagia Sofia, an architectural marvel and most beautiful church-turned-mosque now museum, with some free time afterwards to explore the city on your own.

**B**

#### **Day 5, Thursday: Istanbul - Izmir**

Transfer to airport for a flight to Izmir, TK 320, 11 AM-12 Noon. Transfer to Izmir Palas hotel. Afternoon, visit the Roman agora, archaeological museum, ruins at Kadeifekale on Mount Pagos, Temple of Athena, and other ruins at Bayrakli (Tepekule).

**B**

#### **Day 6, Friday: Izmir - Ephesus - Izmir**

Full day excursion to Ephesus: Visit the ruin city of Ephesus, including Hadrian's Temple, library, agora and amphitheater. Visit the small but well displayed archaeological museum at Selcuk, followed by lunch in the ambience of a local restaurant. Then, visit St. John's Church and tomb, Temple of Artemis, and Mary's home and chapel. Also visit a carpet weaving center and pottery workshop. Return to Izmir.

**B, L**

#### **Day 7, Saturday: Izmir - Istanbul - Kayseri (Urgup, Cappadocia)**

Morning, visit St. Polycarp Church, the old Jewish Quarter at Asanor and historic elevator, and Ben Israel synagogue. Take a late afternoon flight to Istanbul, TK 325, 3-4 PM. Connect with flight to Kayseri, TK 264, 6:15-7:40 PM. Transfer to Urgup in Cappadocia and stay at Yunak Evleri hotel in picturesque rooms with windows, styled as rock caves.

**B**

#### **Day 8, Sunday: Urgup, Cappadocia**

Full day excursion: Visit Pigeon Valley, Kaymakli underground city, Ihlara Valley, and churches along the Melendiz River gorge to Belisirma (have lunch here) and Selime. Then, visit a caravan serai at Agzikarahan, fort at Nevsehir, and rock castle at Ortahisar before returning to Urgup.

**B, L**

**Day 9, Monday: Urgup, Cappadocia**

See nature's surreal fairy chimneys at Devrent and Pasabaglari, and then visit St. Simon's cave and church. Lunch at Avanos. Then, visit a winery and Uchisar rock castle. Finally, explore the amazing Goreme open air museum and church caves.

**B, L**

**Day 10, Tuesday: Urgup, Cappadocia - Ankara**

This morning, take a pleasant drive to Ankara and stay at the Ankara Hilton. Afternoon, visit the Temple of Augustus, citadel, museum of Anatolian Civilizations, Roman baths and column of Justinian.

**B**

**Day 11, Wednesday: Ankara - Van- Dogubayazit**

Morning at leisure. Take an early afternoon flight to Van, a picturesque town in eastern Turkey on the banks of Lake Van, TK 804, 12:35-2:15 PM. On arrival, take a pleasant drive to Dogubayazit via Muaradiye waterfalls. Stay at Isfahan hotel/Hotel Nuh.

**B**

**Day 12, Thursday: Dogubayazit - Van**

Morning, visit Mount Ararat and Noah's Ark National Park where it is believed that Noah's Ark rested after the flood. Also visit the Ishak Pasha Palace at Dogubayazit. Afternoon, drive to Van. Stay at the Merit Sahmaran hotel. Visit the archaeological museum, 8<sup>th</sup> Century Urartian citadel and 17<sup>th</sup> Century Hosap castle.

**B**

**Day 13, Friday: Van**

Drive along Lake Van to Gevas and take a boat cruise across the lake to Akdamar Island. Here, see the 10<sup>th</sup> Century Armenian Church of the Holy Cross with Biblical frescoes and a restored museum. Also visit Carpanak Island to see an inspiring medieval church.

**B**

**Day 14, Saturday: Van - Istanbul**

This morning, enjoy a traditional breakfast at a restaurant on the shores of Lake Van. Flight to Istanbul, TK 807, 11:10 AM-1:20 PM. Transfer to Swissotel The Bosphorus/Hyatt Regency Istanbul. Evening free time.

**B**

**Day 15, Sunday: Depart Istanbul**

Morning transfer to Istanbul airport for international departure.

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