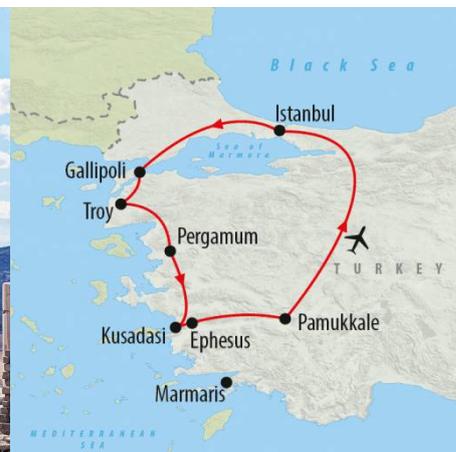


Aegean Explorer

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 and replica Trojan horse
- Stunning 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

- Economy class flight from Denizli (Pamukkale) to Istanbul
- Guided sightseeing - Istanbul, Gallipoli, Troy, Ruins of Ephesus and Pergamum, Pamukkale Terraces and Hierapolis
- Escorted by an English speaking, degree qualified Turkish tour guide
- Airport arrival transfer on day 1
- All relevant transfers and transportation 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
- International flights and visa
- 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 USD\$2 per day for your driver. Tipping your guide and driver is an entirely personal gesture

COVID SAFE GUIDE

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

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underground water tank - replete with carved and fluted Corinthian columns and a puzzling head of Medusa. Visitors walk on walkways 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)

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Day 7 : Istanbul



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

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.

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.



Iris Hotel

The Iris is a modern, low rise hotel with spacious, comfortable rooms and a good size swimming pool. The hotel provides free Wi-Fi connection and has an enviable beach front location. You can enjoy a delicious meal at the outdoor restaurant with views across the ocean.



Carina Hotel

With panoramic views across the turquoise waters of the Aegean sea, the Carina Hotel boasts bright, spacious room with a stylish antique decor. Within walking distance of the hotel are a number of beaches as well as the restaurant, bars and shops of Kusadasi. Enjoy a bite to eat at the restaurant or sip on a cocktail at the poolside bar.



Richmond Ephesus Resort Hotel

With a beautiful sandy beach lining the shore between the hotel and the sea, the Richmond Ephesus Hotel is a perfect place to relax. Take a dip in one of the two pools or enjoy a delicious dinner and drink at one of the three restaurants. Rooms are spacious and comfortable with air conditioning throughout the hotel.



Colossae Thermal Spa Hotel

Set in landscaped gardens, the Colossae Thermal Spa Hotel has an enviable location in Pamukkale. Guest rooms are spacious and tastefully decorated and offer a wonderful level of comfort, ensuring a good night's sleep. The on site thermal spa offers guests the chance to relax, revitalise and enjoy what this region is most famous for. Breakfast can be eaten outside on the terrace while dinner is often taken by the shimmering water of the pool.



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

Welcome to Turkey - Pre accom & arrival transfer

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 that includes an airport arrival transfer (as indicated in the 'What's Included' section of

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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

Upon arrival to Istanbul International Airport please proceed to the Arrival Hall. Upon entering the Arrival Hall turn LEFT. Here, you will need to look for your name on one of the electronic screens located in the arrivals hall. Our representative will be located near to the screen with your name on. Please present your tour voucher to our representative when you meet them.

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, for any reason you have trouble locating our representative (after waiting 20 minutes in the arrival hall) or your flight to Turkey is delayed, please call or send a text message (standard text message, not Messenger or WhatsApp) to the emergency contact number as stated on your Tour Voucher.

Entrance fees

On group tours, entrance fees to tourist sites are not included in our tour price. 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 (the amount is noted under exclusions on page 1 of this document) 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! 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.

Groups & time keeping

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.

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 transfer

We offer complimentary departure transfers to Istanbul Airport at 9am and 1pm on the final day of the following tours: Turkey Discovered, Turkey Unplugged, Turkey and Tutankhamun (day 7 for our Turkey & Tutankhamen tour).

Christmas Turkey: A departure transfer is offered on the final day of your tour at any time.

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

Turkey Country Guide

Visas and passports

Visa requirements are subject to change and 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 so that we can proceed to book all services. Please be advised visa requirements are subject to change, therefore it is essential that you check current visa requirements with the embassy before travel. For information about visas, head to www.onthegotours.com/Turkey/Visas

Turkey health requirements and water

You should seek medical advice before travelling to Turkey from your local health practitioner and ensure that you receive all the appropriate vaccinations. 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.

Essential packing

Please check local temperatures so you can pack accordingly. Visit www.worldclimate.com

- A small daypack for your day-to-day needs
- Tour Voucher and a copy of your travel insurance policy, spare passport photos and a photocopy of your passport
- Universal travel adaptor
- Spare camera batteries/memory card so you can go snap happy
- Take out some Turkish Lira from the ATM facilities at the airport upon arrival
- Buy a phrasebook and practice locally
- Keep a supply of small Turkish Lira notes for local transactions

It's not like home

Travelling to far-flung corners of the earth often involves encountering lifestyles and conditions that are very different from

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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.

Please visit www.onthegotours.com/Turkey/Travel-tips-and-useful-info for local customs, currency, WiFi and other helpful information to prepare you for an enjoyable holiday.

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 to Sat 0900 – 1900hrs (closed Sunday).

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.

In the tourism industry it's common practice for commission to be offered in exchange for

recommending particular shops or suppliers. This can become an issue when clients feel obliged to purchase. We do our best to avoid this by monitoring all shopping experiences offered.

All shopping experiences on your tour have been noted in the itinerary and they have been carefully selected based upon positive feedback from On The Go travellers. You are under no obligation to partake in a listed shopping experience and you are most welcome to wait inside or outside the premises.

Although we only visit reputable retailers, please note that we cannot explicitly guarantee the quality of their products. All purchases made whilst on holiday with us are at your own discretion. Please make sure that you are completely happy with your purchase. On The Go cannot be held responsible for any items that you buy if they fail to meet expectation, or any shipping arrangements. Proceed with caution.

What to expect and Ramadan

Ramazan dates: 13 April - 12 May 2021 (approx). 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.

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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
- All museums in Turkey will open at 1pm, on the 13th of May and 20th of July 2021
- The Spice Bazaar and Grand Bazaar are closed as follows:

2020: 1, 2, 3 Aug / 29 Oct

2021: 1 Jan / 13, 14, 15 May / 20, 21, 22, 23 Jul / 29 Oct

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.

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