

Istanbul to Athens

14 days | Istanbul to Athens



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

HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

Trip Highlights

- Istanbul - Marvel at the Old City, Blue Mosque, Hagia Sofia, Hippodrome, Underground Cistern and Topkapi Palace
- Gallipoli Peninsular - Explore ANZAC Cove, Lone Pine, Chunuk Bair, trenches and battlefields
- Troy - Turn back time and examine the Trojan horse replica, ancient ruins and the Aegean Coast
- Pergamum and Ephesus - Examine more Roman ruins and let your historical imagination run wild
- Pamukkale - Admire the hot springs, Roman Hierapolis and leather fashion house, dip into the lush thermal pools
- Marmaris - Stay on the Aegean Coast
- Rhodes - The largest of the Dodecanese Islands and admire medieval architecture like the Venetian Castle

- Santorini - Take in the blue and white villages that make up this beautiful volcanic island in the Cyclades
- Mykonos - Spend 2 days exploring the churches, beaches and nightlife on this picturesque Cyclades Island
- Athens - Get to know the capital of Greece with its Constitution Square, Houses of Parliament, Memorials, National Library, and Acropolis including the Propylaea, Temple of Aterios Nike and the Parthenon
- Acropolis - Enjoy ancient history at the Acropolis, including the Propylaea, Temple of Aterios Nike and the Parthenon

What's Included

- Breakfast daily and 4 hotel dinners
- 13 nights 4 star and special class hotels
- 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)
- Rhodes to Santorini - One way economy flight
- Marmaris to Rhodes and Santorini - Athens ferry tickets.
- One arrival transfer on day 1 and one departure transfer on day 14 included per booking

- All relevant transfers and transportation in private modern air-conditioned vehicles (days 1-6)
- Please Note: This tour is semi independent 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
- A hotel tax of €3.00 per room per night to be paid directly to the hotel at time of check in
- Tipping - an entirely personal gesture

COVID SAFE GUIDE

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. Spend the afternoon at leisure. **Overnight - Istanbul**

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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. 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 is 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 Dardanelles by ferry (offering panoramic views of the entire Gallipoli Peninsular) 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. Note that 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. This is easily 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. Under the Romans Ephesus was a vast city with a population nearing 250,000 and it became the Roman capital of Asia Minor. It revelled in its prosperity from commerce and visiting

pilgrims who came to see the 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.

We 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. We 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)**

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Day 7 : Rhodes

After an included breakfast we transfer to Marmaris Port for a ferry to the Greek island of Rhodes, the largest of the Dodecanese group. Meeting 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 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 and 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. Enjoy the beautiful views from your

ferry as you make your way through the turquoise waters of the Aegean sea. Upon arrival you'll have a transfer to take you 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, then 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. We are 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.

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 a 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 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.

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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 Ku#adas#'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. Diner 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.

Greece visa

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 provide you with hotel and ferry vouchers for the onward travel locally. 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

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 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

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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.

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 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.

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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.

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

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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

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 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

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 AUS 1300 855 684 aus-info@onthegotours.com
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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

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.

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.

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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