

DISCOVER THE WONDERS
SPIEKERMANN
TRAVEL  SERVICE



**UNEXPLORED GEMS
OF TURKEY**

May 02 - 17, 2022

Led by Local Guide/Tour Manager

Can be combined with our South Caucasus tour (Armenia, Georgia & Azerbaijan) -
April 14 to May 01, 2022

Turkey has multiple identities, located on two continents between East and West. Although in some respects Western, Turkey retains its contradictions: mosques co-exist with churches, and Roman remnants crumble alongside ancient Hittite sites. It's a vast country and a great place to travel, not least because of the people, whose reputation for friendliness and hospitality is richly deserved. Turkey's abundance of history has left an indelible mark and is abound with historic sites and archaeological wonders set in a varied and beautiful landscape. The Mediterranean coastline is punctuated with well-preserved Greco-Roman cities, while the austere and rugged Anatolian plateau has cave churches hidden away in the improbable fairytale landscape of Cappadocia. Istanbul, still very much the pulse of the nation, has even more to offer, with Roman aqueducts, Byzantine churches and Ottoman mosques and palaces.

Ihab Zaki

Managing Director, Spiekermann Travel

Monday, May 2
Istanbul (Turkey)



Upon arrival, you will be met by our representative and transferred to your hotel for check-in. After a short rest you will meet your guide and the rest of the group for a tour briefing. Later, you'll walk to a local restaurant for a welcome dinner around 7:30 pm. Overnight at **Sultanhan 4* hotel or similar. (D)**

Tuesday, May 3
Istanbul



After breakfast, you'll explore the **Chora Museum**, which is filled with beautiful late Eastern Roman mosaics and frescoes. Next, you will continue on to the **walls of Constantinople** and visit **Tekfur Palace**, one of the few remaining standing palaces dating back to the Roman era. From here, you'll visit the **Ecumenical Patriarchate of Greek Orthodox** world. Later, a short drive will take you to the **Golden Horn**, where you'll enjoy a scenic ferry ride to **Kadikoy** (the Asian side of Istanbul). Here, you'll take a stroll through the local **fish markets, delicatessens and grocery stores** and stop for lunch at the famous **Ciya Restaurant**. After your exploration of Kadikoy, you'll catch another ferry back to Europe, then take a short walk back to **Sultanhan 4* hotel. (B,L,D)**

Wednesday, May 4
Istanbul - Bursa



After enjoying your breakfast, you will make your way to Bursa. The first capital of the Ottoman Empire, Bursa is home to many spectacular examples of early Ottoman architecture. Here, you will visit the **Ulu Mosque (Great Mosque)**, which was converted from a Christian church in the 7th century. Next, you'll see the **Green Tomb, the Green Mosque** and get a chance to wander the ancient **City Bazaar**. Later, you will drive to your hotel, where you can rest and relax at the thermal pools. Dinner will be served at the hotel. Overnight at **Kervensaray 4* hotel or similar. (B,L,D)**

Note: Driving time from Istanbul to Bursa is about 2 hours and covering a distance of 100 miles.

Thursday, May 5
Bursa – Cumalikizlik - Kutahya



After a late breakfast, you will explore one of the oldest Ottoman villages in Anatolia. You will wander the labyrinthine alleyways of the village (now a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**), taking in the local culture and beautiful **Ottoman-era houses**. Later, you'll drive to Kutahya, known for its unique tile designs. Here, you will learn about the **Iznik style of tiles** and meet artist **Mehmet Gursoy**, who was named one of **UNESCO's Living Human Treasures** in 2009. Overnight at **Hilton Garden Inn hotel or similar. (B,L,D)**

Note: Driving time from Bursa to Kutahya is about 2.5 hours and covering a distance of 120 miles.

Friday, May 6
Kutahya - Aizanoi - Ulugbey Canyon - Kula



Today, your first stop will be **Aizanoi**. This fantastic **ancient Roman city** is now known as the village of **Cavdarhisar**. Here, you will visit the **Temple of Zeus**, one of the most well-preserved temples of its kind, and see **the oldest stock exchange** in the world. Later, you will make your way to Ulugbey Canyon, considered to be one of the largest canyons on earth. After taking in the magnificent views of the canyon, you will continue on to **Strabo's Burnt Lands** (known today as Kula). Though the land has been burned from volcanic eruptions, its soil is perfect for vineyards. Later, on, you'll have a chance to sample the local wines that have been produced here since philosopher Strabo roamed the region nearly 2,000 years ago. Overnight at **Yanik Ulke 4* hotel or similar (B,L,D)**

Note: Driving time from Kutahya to Kula is about 3.5 hours and covering a distance of 160 miles.

Saturday, May 7
Kula - Sardis – Denizli



After breakfast, you'll make your way to Sardis, the capital of ancient Lydia. Known as the birthplace of modern currency, Sardis was once an extremely rich city. Here, you will see the **wonderfully restored gymnasium**, one of the oldest **synagogues of Anatolia** (dating back to the 2nd century BC), and the 2,000-year-old **Temple of Artemis**. Later, you will drive to Denizli and overnight at **Park Dedeman 4* hotel or similar. (B,L,D)**

Note: Driving time from Kula to Denizli is about 3.5 hours and covering a distance of 150 miles.

Sunday, May 8
Denizli - Laodikeia – Salda Lake –Burdur



Your first stop today will be a visit to a viewpoint overlooking the famous white terraces of **Pamukkale**. Later, you'll drive to **Laodikeia**. An important ancient trading city, Laodikeia was known for its cultural life and fashion. The Trimata, a style of tunic that originated in this region, was sold all over Europe during the Roman era. You will explore the ruins of this old city, and then continue on to **Salda Lake**, a crater lake famous for its white sands and turquoise waters. Overnight at **Grand Ozeren 4* Hotel or similar. (B,L,D)**

Note: Driving time from Denizli to Burdur is about 3 hours and covering a distance of 130 miles.

Monday, May 9
Burdur - Sagalassos - Konya



Today, you'll discover **Sagalassos**, the city of lovers and emperors. The ancient town holds many wonderful examples of Roman architecture, including the **Antonine Nymphaeum**, which you can drink water from. From Sagalassos, you'll make your way to Konya, enjoying the scenic views along the drive. Konya was home to poet and mystic Mevlana Celaledin Rumi, and today is the center of the Mevlevi Order – more commonly known as the Whirling Dervishes. You'll have a chance to explore the treasures of the **Mevlana Museum** as well as **Mevlana's tomb** before checking into **Hilton Garden Inn 4* hotel**. Overnight in Konya. **(B,L,D)**

Note: Driving time from Burdur to Konya is about 4.5 hours and covering a distance of 275 miles.

Tuesday, May 10
Konya - Cappadocia



Your day will begin with a visit to **Sultanhan**. This ancient hotel was one of the many caravanserais that dotted the famous Silk Road for centuries. Throughout your drive, you'll be able to spot several more caravanserais along the road. Once you arrive in Cappadocia, you'll tour the fascinating **Kaymakli Underground City**, which was used as a refuge by Christians fleeing persecution between the 5th and 10th centuries. To date, more than 30 underground cities have been discovered in Cappadocia and the surrounding areas. These hidden shelters were able to protect thousands of people from their enemies for months. After exploring Kaymakli Underground City, you'll drive to **Maya Cave 4* hotel or similar** for check in. **(B,L,D)**

Note: Driving time from Konya to Cappadocia is about 3 hours and covering a distance of 145 miles.

Wednesday, May 11
Cappadocia



Early this morning, you'll have the opportunity to get a unique look at Cappadocia with a hot air balloon ride (subject of availability and to be paid separately). After breakfast, you'll begin to discover the city. You'll be amazed at the elaborate frescoes in the **cave churches** at the **Goreme Open Air Museum**, and learn about the lives of the first Christians of the region. Later, you'll visit **Pasabag**, the incredible **Uchisar Castle**, and make several stops along the way for some gorgeous panoramic views of the city. Overnight at **Maya Cave 4* hotel or similar**. **(B,L,D)**

Thursday, May 12
Cappadocia - Tarsus - Adana



Today, you'll cross the **Taurus Mountains** to **Cilicia**. Here, you'll explore the many sights of the historic city of Tarsus (said to be the birthplace of Paul the Apostle), including the **Church of St. Paul**, **St. Paul's Well**, and the centuries-old **Cleopatra's Gate**. Later, you will continue on to Adana. Overnight in Adana at **Divan 4* hotel or similar**. **(B,L,D)**

Note: Driving time from Cappadocia to Adana is about 3.5 hours and covering a distance of 183 miles.

Friday, May 13
Adana - Iskenderun - Antioch



After a late breakfast, you'll make your way to **Iskenderun** (old Alexandretta), which was founded by Alexander the Great. What this region lacks in historical sites it more than makes up for in delicious cuisine. Here, you'll join a cooking class, where you'll try your hand at preparing the local dishes, and then taste them yourself. Afterward, you'll drive to Antioch, where you'll spend the next two nights at **Museum 4* hotel or similar**. **(B,L,D)**

Note: Driving time from Adana to Antioch is about 3 hours and covering a distance of 128 miles.

Saturday, May 14
Antioch



One of the largest cities of antiquity, Antioch has played an important role in Christianity throughout the years. You'll begin your tour of Antioch with a visit to the stunning and ancient **St. Peter's Church**, which is built into a cave. Later, you'll visit the **Antakya Mosaic Museum**, one of the largest mosaic museums in the world, where you'll see ornate works of art dating back to the Roman and Byzantine eras. Afterward, you'll head to the old city and get a taste of the region as you stroll through the alleyways. You'll stop for lunch, and then make your way to an **Armenian village** just outside of Antioch, later visiting the 2,000-year-old **Vespasianus Titus Tunnel**. Then, you'll head back to your hotel. **(B,L,D)**

Sunday, May 15
Antioch - Halfeti - Gaziantep



After breakfast, you'll drive to Halfeti for a boat tour on the mighty **Euphrates River**, right at the border of Mesopotamia. On the tour, you'll spot some wonderful **Armenian castles**, as well as a sunken village (underwater due to the construction of the Birecik Dam). Later, you will continue on to Gaziantep and rest at **Sirehan 4* hotel** before dinner. **(B,L,D)**

Note: Driving time from Antioch to Gaziantep is about 5 hours and covering a distance of 252 miles.

Monday, May 16
Gaziantep - Istanbul



Today will begin with a visit to the Gaziantep Mosaic Museum. Another of the largest mosaic museums in the world, it holds a rich collection of art from the Roman city Zeugma. Here, you'll learn about the lifestyle and tastes of the Romans as you discover how they decorated their villas. Later, you'll drive to the old city and explore the old Gaziantep bazaars. In the late afternoon, you'll fly back to Istanbul. All transfers will be arranged. Overnight at **Sultanhan 4* hotel or similar**. **(B,L,D)**

Tuesday, May 17
Istanbul to US



Transfer to Istanbul airport for your international flight on Turkish Airlines to JFK, Boston, Chicago, Washington DC or Los Angeles, arriving the same day. **(B)**

"We reserve the right to change the order of activities or places visited due to unforeseen schedule conflicts or in order to make the itinerary run smoothly"



Tour Cost (LAND ONLY):

4-5 travelers: \$4,695.00

6-8 travelers: \$3,995.00

9-12 travelers: \$3,795.00

per person sharing in double occupancy

Single Supplement: \$ 850.00

Price based on group size minimum of 4 participants and maximum of 12 participants

Trip Grade: II

Lodging Level: *_******

Tour includes:

- Domestic flight Gaziantep to Istanbul
- Accommodation at Superior (4*) hotels.
- Local English-speaking licensed guide during the entire tour.
- Entrance fees to all mentioned sites as per the itinerary.
- All meals as mentioned in the itinerary (B: Breakfast, L: Lunch, D: Dinner).
- Transportation throughout the trip in an air-conditioned minivan/bus.
- Mineral Water during the tour.
- Transfers from/to airports with assistance.

Tour does not include:

- International air USA-Istanbul-USA.
- Turkey Visa (can be obtained online - Currently \$50.00).
- Trip surcharge to operate below required minimum participants.
- Expenses of personal nature: alcoholic beverages, camera fees, telephone, email, laundry bills, etc.
- Dayroom or extra hotel nights necessitated by airline flight schedule changes.
- Travel Insurance (**HIGHLY RECOMMENDED**).
- Tips to the local guide, driver and porters.

Trip Grade:

II Active – Some hikes, slightly more demanding walks at or to sites, few elevations, comfortable but busy schedule and some long rides and extensive drives.

Lodging Level:

***** Superior** – Lodges and hotels with additional amenities, refined service and comfort level acceptable to western standards. (3 or 4 stars)

Special Trip Remark: Moderately Vigorous Touring - You will be covering a lot during this journey. The roads are good and the bus very comfortable. Some driving days are long. There will be several restroom stops along the way. It is important to recognize the exhausting nature of some of the long sightseeing days as well as some of the site visits where you may have to climb on uneven terrain, steps, rocks and sand as well as up inclines and stairs. Some of the sites involve more strenuous walking (uphill on uneven ground) in order to view the sights. Not easily done if you are not in good physical condition. Be prepared with comfortable shoes. You do have the option of staying with the vehicle if some sites seem difficult for you.

