



Egyptian Bazaar in Istanbul

ISTANBUL & IZMIR (EPHESUS)

Istanbul, Izmir, Ephesus - 6 Days/ 5 Nights Itinerary

DAY 1: Arrival in Istanbul and transfer to the hotel. The remaining of the day is at leisure.

DAY 2: Start a leisurely day, drive to pier in Eminonu area for a short visit to historical Spice Market (Egyptian Bazaar). This bazaar was built in 1664 as a part of Yeni Mosque complex situated nearby and named Egyptian Bazaar because spices and herbs brought from or via Egypt were sold in it.

Then, board a private boat for the cruise along the Bosphorus, a narrow strait between the continents of Europe and Asia connecting Black Sea in the north to the Sea of Marmara in the South. In the Byzantine and early Ottoman days, there was little settlement on either sides of the Bosphorus but as of the 18th century, it became a favorite place for the sultans and their entourage where they built their kiosks and waterside residence. Meet with your guide at the lobby and drive to the Asian Side of Istanbul via trans-continental Bosphorus Bridge, unique in

the world connecting two continents Asia and Europe. The bridge was built in 1973, the 50th anniversary of the Republic of Turkey. It's length is 1.560 m (1,074 m over the sea) and height from the sea is 64 m. It is the fourth longest suspension bridge in the world.

Visit Beylerbeyi Palace, situated on the shore at the Asian end of the Bosphorus Bridge and built between 1861 and 1864 by Sul-tan Abdulaziz. The palace is a three-story structure set on terraced grounds planted with trees brought from the entire world. The interior was decorated in a style typical of the 19th century – Europe and the original furniture is still in display. The building itself, constructed in the French Baroque style, is made of stone and marble. It was used by the Ottoman sultans as a summer residence. Then, drive to Camlica Hill, highest one in Istanbul, to enjoy the panoramic view of the city. Overnight in Istanbul.

DAY 3: After breakfast, drive to old town and visit Hippodrome Square, the scene

of Chariot races and the center of Byzantine civic life which was originally built by Roman Emperor Septimus in 203 AD. Then visit Blue Mosque, built in early 17th century and known as Blue Mosque because of its magnificent interior decoration with blue Iznik tiles. It is also unique in the world to have 6 minarets.

Continue to St. Sophia Museum, built by Emperor Constantius in 360 AD. St. Sophia was for many centuries the world's largest church and today is the fourth largest one after St. Paul's in London, St. Peter's in Rome and Duomo in Milan. Throughout its Byzantine history, St. Sophia served as the cathedral of the city where emperors were crowned and victories celebrated. After his conquest of the city in 1453, Sultan Mehmet II ordered for the building to be converted into a mosque by the addition of Islamic elements such as a mihrab, a minbar, minarets etc. After having served this time as a mosque for 481 years, the building became a museum in 1934 by the order of Ataturk, the founder of the





House of the Virgin Mary, Ephesus, Turkey

Republic of Turkey.

After lunch visit Topkapi Palace, built by Sultan Mehmet II after the conquest of Istanbul in 15th century. The palace housed the sultans and their exotic entourage until mid 19th century. The complex is a group of structures which incorporates works from successive periods of Ottoman reign. Today the museum displays priceless collections of the imperial treasury, numerous pieces of Chinese porcelain, traditional costumes of the sultans and their families and special section for the preservation of the relics of Prophet Mohammed. Last stop will be at famous historical Grand Bazaar, the largest “souk” covered oriental shopping mall in the world, where you will find 4,400 shops under one roof where each trade has its own street. There is a wide selection of leather, jewelry, antiques, copperware, souvenirs, and famous hand-made Turkish carpets displayed in this historical shopping center. Overnight in Istanbul. **(B, L)**

DAY 4: After breakfast, transfer to domestic airport for your flight to Izmir.

Drive to visit Ephesus, the Roman capital of Asia Minor which remains to be the best preserved ancient city in the world. During the golden age of the Roman Empire (2nd century AD), Ephesus was an important commercial and cultural center. The protector of the city was Artemis, the Goddess whose temple was one of the “Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.” The Ephesians still worshipped Artemis when St. Paul came to the city to win converts. St. John brought Virgin Mary to Ephesus after the death of Jesus Christ and she lived until the age of 101 in a small house built for her on Mt. Korymbos. Now, the popular place of pilgrimage for Catholics and Muslims, the house received the official sanction of the Vatican and a commemoration ceremony is held every year on August 15th. The third church council in 431 was held in the Basilica of Virgin Mary in Ephesus. Continue to visit, the House of the Virgin where it’s believed that she passed last years of her life and died. She came to Ephesus together with St. John and taken up to Panaghia Kapulu Mountain to survive the Roman persecutions. The House was destroyed by many earthquakes and not discovered until 1951 thanks

to a German Nun Catherine Emmerich who saw its location in her visions. It is recognized as a shrine by Vatican. Now the House of Virgin Mary is renovated by George Quatman Foundation from Ohio and serves as a small church which attracts many Christians as well as Muslims coming to pray for her. Last stop will be the Basilica of St. John which was built in 6th century. The building was in the shape of a cross and was covered by 6 domes. Under the central dome was the tomb of St. John; that has a marble marker today. When Christianity became the state religion, the crowds who once flocked to the Temple of Diana turned their attention to this cathedral. Overnight in Izmir. **(B)**

Day 5: Free day in Izmir to enjoy the beautiful city or join one of the optional tours such as;

Izmir City Tour
Excursion to Pamukkale
Excursion to Pergamum

Day 6: After breakfast, transfer to Izmir Airport.

