Istanbul, Cappadocia & Pamukkale: Türkiye

ISTANBUL · PAMUKKALE · CAPPADOCIA

9D 8N | 25–30 PAX | STARTS KUALA LUMPUR | INCLUDES RETURN TICKET

Experience Türkiye's three defining landscapes—imperial Istanbul, otherworldly Cappadocia and Pamukkale's white thermal terraces—over nine structured days. Travel through Ankara and the Anatolian plateau to Cappadocia for Uçhisar, Pigeon Valley, Derinkuyu's underground city and an optional dawn balloon flight. Continue to Pamukkale and ancient Hierapolis, then visit Bursa's Ottoman heritage before two full days in Istanbul covering the Blue Mosque, Hagia Sophia, Topkapi Palace, Grand Bazaar, Bosphorus cruise and Eyüp Sultan Mosque. Accommodation, daily breakfast and dinner, coach transport, airport transfers, entrances and bilingual guiding are included. With halal meals throughout, this route suits travellers who want Türkiye's essential history, geology and culture connected in one thoughtfully arranged journey.

DAY

01

BOLU · OVERNIGHT 1 OF 1

Depart Kuala Lumpur — arrive Istanbul, overnight Bolu

Emirates departs KLIA at 10:15 and arrives in Istanbul at 17:55. Your guide meets you at arrivals. Dinner in Istanbul before the coach heads east to Bolu — a 200km drive of approximately 2.5 hours through the forested hills of northwest Anatolia. Bolu is a staging point, not a destination; it exists on this itinerary to break the long journey east and let you rest before the drive to Ankara and Cappadocia tomorrow.

KLIA Departure — Check in at the Emirates counter at KLIA at least 3 hours before the 10:15 departure. Arrange your Turkish e-Visa independently before travel — it is not included in the tour price and must be obtained online prior to arrival.

Istanbul Arrival — Atatürk and Sabiha Gökçen airports serve Istanbul; your guide confirms the terminal on departure day. Immigration is generally efficient.

MEALS

Dinner

OVERNIGHT

Bolu

DAY

02

CAPPADOCIA · OVERNIGHT 1 OF 2

Bolu to Cappadocia — via Ankara and the Salt Lake

A long driving day with two significant stops before you arrive in Cappadocia by evening. The drive from Bolu to Ankara is 190km; from Ankara to Cappadocia a further 275km across the central Anatolian plateau. The landscape on the plateau is open, flat and surprisingly beautiful — especially the Salt Lake, which in summer turns white and pink as the water evaporates. Allow time to stop and walk the edge of it.

Anıtkabir, Ankara — The mausoleum of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, founder of the Turkish Republic, set on a hill above the capital. The processional avenue, flanked by stone lions, leads to a monumental hall housing the sarcophagus. The complex also contains a museum of the independence war. Respectful dress applies. Allow 60–90 minutes.

Salt Lake (Tuz Gölü) — One of the two largest lakes in Türkiye, shallow enough to walk across in summer when much of the surface dries to a white salt crust. A brief stop at the lake edge is included en route.

Cappadocia Underground City (Derinkuyu) — A multi-level underground city carved into volcanic tuff, used as a refuge by early Christian communities fleeing persecution. The tunnels descend 8 levels and once sheltered up to 20,000 people. Entrance included.

MEALS

Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

OVERNIGHT

Cappadocia

DAY

03

CAPPADOCIA · OVERNIGHT 2 OF 2

Cappadocia — fairy chimneys, valleys and volcanic rock

A full day in the region gives you the above-ground landscape properly. Cappadocia's fairy chimneys — the tall volcanic tuff columns — are most dramatic from the high ground of Uçhisar and the valley floors of Pigeon Valley.

Uçhisar Castle — The highest point in Cappadocia, a natural rock outcrop riddled with caves and tunnels that has been used as a fortress since antiquity. The view from the top takes in the full sweep of the Göreme valley and, on clear days, Mount Erciyes to the south.

Pigeon Valley — A valley connecting Uçhisar to Göreme, named for the thousands of pigeon houses carved into the cliff faces — the birds were kept for their droppings, used as fertiliser on the valley vineyards. The rock formations here include Camel Rock, one of the most photographed formations in the region.

Traditional Ceramic Factory — A working workshop demonstrating the onyx and hand-painted ceramic techniques specific to Cappadocia.

Carpet Weaving Demonstration & Leather Fashion Show — Both are included in the itinerary as cultural demonstrations.

Mount Erciyes — A 3,917-metre dormant volcano southeast of Cappadocia.

Optional activities (not included): hot air balloon at dawn (book via guide on arrival), ATV tour, horseback riding, jeep safari.

MEALS

Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

OVERNIGHT

Cappadocia

DAY

04

PAMUKKALE · OVERNIGHT 1 OF 1

Cappadocia to Pamukkale — via the Sultanhani Caravanserai

The drive west from Cappadocia to Pamukkale is approximately 617km and takes around 7.5 hours with a lunch and prayer stop. It is the longest driving day on the itinerary and worth knowing that in advance. The one significant stop breaks the journey well: the Sultanhani Caravanserai, one of the best-preserved Seljuk rest stations on the old Silk Road.

Sultanhani Caravanserai — Built in 1229 by the Seljuk Sultan Alaeddin Keykubad, this was the largest caravanserai in Anatolia — a fortified inn where merchants, animals and goods rested en route between Konya and Aksaray. The stone architecture is intact: a large courtyard, a covered winter hall, and a small mosque at the centre. Allow 30–40 minutes.

Pamukkale Arrival — Arrive in the late afternoon or evening. Pamukkale town is small and quiet; the terraces are illuminated at night and visible from the hotels on the hillside opposite.

MEALS

Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

OVERNIGHT

Pamukkale

DAY

05

PAMUKKALE · OVERNIGHT 1 OF 1

Pamukkale — the Cotton Castle terraces and ancient Hierapolis

Pamukkale means 'Cotton Castle' in Turkish, and the white travertine terraces do look, from a distance, like a hillside covered in cotton. Up close they are calcium carbonate deposits left by thermal spring water flowing continuously down the cliff face over thousands of years — each pool a slightly different temperature, each shelf slightly different in colour. You walk the terraces barefoot; shoes are not permitted on the white surface. Above the terraces sit the ruins of Hierapolis.

Pamukkale Travertine Terraces — The UNESCO-listed thermal terraces on the hillside above Pamukkale town. The walk up from the base takes 20–30 minutes barefoot. The pools are shallow — ankle to knee depth. Entrance included.

Hierapolis Ancient City — A Greco-Roman spa city founded in the 2nd century BC, built directly above the thermal springs. The site includes a theatre, a necropolis, the Plutonion (a sacred grotto emitting carbon dioxide), and the Antique Pool where you can swim among submerged Roman columns (entrance to the pool is not included). Allow 60–90 minutes.

Optional activities (not included): hot air balloon or paragliding over Pamukkale, buggy car ride at Hierapolis (TL 500 per person).

Transfer to Bursa — Approximately 390km, 5.5 hours northwest.

MEALS

Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

OVERNIGHT

Bursa

DAY

06

ISTANBUL · OVERNIGHT 1 OF 2

Bursa to Istanbul — the first Ottoman capital and the Bosphorus

Bursa was the first capital of the Ottoman Empire before the conquest of Constantinople in 1453 — and the city still carries that seniority quietly. The Grand Mosque is one of the great examples of early Ottoman religious architecture.

Bursa Grand Mosque (Ulu Cami) — Built between 1396 and 1399, the mosque has 20 domes and 212 windows. The interior calligraphy covers the walls in large-format Ottoman script — one of the most impressive Islamic interiors in Türkiye. Prayer time included.

Kozahan (Koza Han) — A 15th-century covered market built around a central courtyard, originally dedicated to the silk trade. Bursa silk is still sold here; the courtyard café is a good stop.

Leather Fashion Show, Istanbul — A presentation of traditional leather craftsmanship included as a cultural demonstration. A commercial presentation follows; there is no purchase obligation.

Bosphorus Strait Cruise — A boat circuit along the strait that separates Europe and Asia, passing the Dolmabahçe Palace waterfront, the Rumeli Fortress and the suspension bridges. Approximately 90 minutes. Included.

Spice Bazaar (Mısır Çarşısı) — The 17th-century covered market in Eminönü, selling spices, dried fruit, Turkish delight and tea. A short walk from the cruise landing.

MEALS

Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

OVERNIGHT

Istanbul

DAY

07

ISTANBUL · OVERNIGHT 2 OF 2

Istanbul — Sultanahmet, Topkapi and the Grand Bazaar

Explore Sultanahmet, where Byzantine and Ottoman landmarks sit within a compact historic district.

Blue Mosque — Built between 1609 and 1616, this is Türkiye's only mosque with six minarets. Its interior contains around 20,000 hand-painted Iznik tiles. Entry is free, modest dress is required, and access pauses during prayer times.

Hagia Sophia — Completed as a Byzantine cathedral in 537, converted to a mosque in 1453, a museum in 1934 and again a mosque in 2020. Its vast central dome made it the world's largest enclosed space for nearly a millennium. The €30 entrance fee outside prayer times is not included.

Hippodrome — Walk through the former Byzantine chariot-racing ground, where the Egyptian Obelisk, Serpent Column and Walled Obelisk remain along the original central line.

Topkapi Palace — Visit the palace exterior and first courtyard, once the administrative heart of the Ottoman Empire. Entry to the inner courts and Harem requires a separate ticket and is not included.

Grand Bazaar — End the day with independent time inside the 15th-century covered market, home to thousands of shops selling leather, ceramics, textiles, jewellery and spices.

MEALS

Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

OVERNIGHT

Istanbul

DAY

08

ISTANBUL

Istanbul — Eyüp Sultan, Pierre Loti Hill, then the airport

The final morning in Istanbul covers the older, quieter part of the city on the Golden Horn — away from the Sultanahmet tourist circuit. Eyüp Sultan is one of the holiest sites in Islam outside the Arabian Peninsula; Pierre Loti Hill above it gives you the best view over the Golden Horn and the European side of the city. Taksim is a brief stop on the way to the airport.

Eyüp Sultan Mosque & Cemetery — Built in 1458 over the tomb of Abu Ayyub al-Ansari, a companion of the Prophet who died during the Arab siege of Constantinople in 674. One of the most important pilgrimage sites in Türkiye. The surrounding cemetery on the hillside is one of the oldest in Istanbul. Respectful dress required.

Pierre Loti Hill — A hilltop café above the Eyüp cemetery, named for the French novelist who wrote about the Golden Horn from this spot in the 19th century. An optional cable car ascent is available.

Taksim Square — A brief stop at Istanbul's main modern public square and shopping street (İstiklal Caddesi) before the airport transfer.

Airport Transfer — Emirates flight departs Istanbul in the late evening. Your guide will confirm the exact departure time and transfer schedule.

MEALS

Breakfast Lunch

DAY

09

KUALA LUMPUR

Arrive Kuala Lumpur — tour ends on landing

The Emirates flight arrives at KLIA. The tour ends on arrival. Nine days, three cities, one underground city, one salt lake, one hillside of white terraces, and a dome that has been standing since 537 AD.

YOUR TRIP AT A GLANCE

What's Included

DEPARTS FROM	FLIGHTS	GROUP SIZE
Kuala Lumpur	**Includes return ticket**	**25–30 pax**

INCLUDED

- check 8 nights hotel accommodation (twin-sharing, 3–4 star)
- check Daily breakfast and dinner as per itinerary
- check Air-conditioned coach transfers throughout the tour
- check English and Malay-speaking tour guide for the full duration
- check Entrance fees to all listed attractions in the itinerary
- check Airport transfers (arrival and departure)
- check Bosphorus Strait cruise
- check Visit to Underground City in Cappadocia
- check Leather fashion show and carpet weaving demonstration
- check Porterage at hotels (one piece of luggage per person)

NOT INCLUDED

- Travel insurance (strongly recommended)
- Turkish e-Visa fees (to be arranged independently prior to departure)
- Hagia Sophia entrance fee (€30/person during non-prayer times)
- Optional activities: hot air balloon ride, ATV, horseback riding, jeep safari, paragliding, buggy car at Hierapolis
- Personal expenses (shopping, laundry, phone calls, etc.)
- Tips and gratuities for guide and driver
- Any meals not stated in the itinerary
- Single room supplement (available upon request at additional cost)