

BEST OF TURKEY IN 13 DAYS

Mon, Sep 22, 2025 through Sat, Oct 04, 2025



DAY 1

Welcome to Turkey

Mon, Sep 22, 2025

We'll meet at 1 p.m. at our hotel in Istanbul's historic center. Shortly after, we'll take an orientation walk and visit the exquisite 400-year old Blue Mosque, named for its brightly colored tiles. Then we'll tour one of the world's great treasures: Hagia Sophia, for 1,000 years the grandest domed structure on Earth. We'll end our day getting acquainted with one another over dinner.

Moderate walking: 2–6 miles throughout the day with some hills and stairs. No bus. Sleep in Istanbul.

DAY 2

Exploring Istanbul

Tue, Sep 23, 2025

We'll explore Istanbul's more recent past and present today, beginning with the exotic and fragrant Egyptian Spice Market. Then we'll take to the water for a scenic cruise of the Bosphorus strait and its panorama of grand palaces, colorful neighborhoods, and bustling waterfront

activity. Next, we're off to the New District's pedestrian-friendly İstiklal Street — with its Art Nouveau facades, restaurants, and trendy boutiques. After free time for lunch, we'll cap off the day exploring Istanbul's legendary Grand Bazaar.

Strenuous walking: 2–8 miles throughout the day with lots of hills, stairs, and uneven terrain. No bus. Boat: 2 hours. Sleep in Istanbul.

DAY 3

Topkapı Palace and Ankara

Wed, Sep 24, 2025

This morning we'll focus on the era when the city was known as Constantinople with a tour of the opulent Ottoman Topkapı Palace. We'll see the sultans' riches at the Treasury and tour the inner world of the Harem. Afterward, we'll board our big, comfortable bus for the drive to Ankara, Turkey's bustling modern capital city.

Moderate walking: 2–6 miles throughout the day with some hills and stairs. Bus: 6 hours. Sleep in Ankara.

DAY 4

Anatolia and Cappadocia

Thu, Sep 25, 2025

After breakfast, we'll tour the world-class Anatolian Civilizations Museum and marvel at its collection of treasures from Turkey's pre-Roman civilizations. We'll pay our respects at the monumental Anıt Kabir, Atatürk's Mausoleum, where we'll learn about the revered founding father of modern Turkey. After lunch, we'll travel to what feels like another planet — the scenic and historic Cappadocia region — where we'll have dinner together.

Light walking: 2–4 miles throughout the day on mostly level terrain. Bus: 6 hours. Sleep in Mustafapaşa (group may be split between two B&Bs).

DAY 5

Ancient Churches of Göreme

Fri, Sep 26, 2025

Surrounded by Cappadocia's otherworldly "fairy-chimney" rock formations, we'll begin our day with a walking tour of our village of Mustafapaşa, followed by a drive to the nearby Göreme Open-Air Museum, where, in Byzantine times, cave-like churches and monasteries were carved in the cliffs. Some astonishing 1,000-year-old frescoes still remain. This afternoon we'll be treated to a home-prepared, Cappadocian-style lunch and learn about the centuries-old tradition and artistry of Turkish carpet weaving. We'll have dinner together back in Mustafapaşa tonight.

Moderate walking: 2–6 miles throughout the day with some hills and stairs. Bus: 2 hours. Sleep in Mustafapaşa.

DAY 6

Countryside Charms

Sat, Sep 27, 2025

Weather permitting, your guide will take interested hikers on a scenic walk through a Cappadocia valley. Nonhikers can spend the morning in Mustafapaşa, or ride with our bus driver to the colorful weekly market in the nearby village of Ürgüp. After lunch, we'll tour the ancient underground city of Kaymaklı — which once included churches, kitchens, metal shops, and stables — before returning to our village for a free evening.

Moderate walking: 2–6 miles throughout the day with some hills and stairs. Bus: 4 hours. Sleep in Mustafapaşa.

DAY 7

Mosque Visit and Mevlâna's Konya

Sun, Sep 28, 2025

This morning we'll travel to the village of Güzelyurt and meet with the local mosque's imam (counterpart to a minister