

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF SAINT PAUL

DAY 1 - DEPART U.S.A.

The pilgrimage begins as we depart for Istanbul.

DAY 2- ARRIVE ISTANBUL

Arrival in Istanbul the Cradle of Civilisations, the proud Capital of three Empires and the unique city bridging two continents, Europe and Asia.

Meeting at the airport, assistance and after breakfast start for full day city sightseeing encompassing Istanbul's Byzantine and Ottoman Heritage. The tour will start with a visit of **Hagia Sophia Museum** (the Byzantine Imperial Basilica of Holy Wisdom built by Emperor Justinian in the 6th century 532-537AD) which is known as one of the 7 wonders of the Ancient World.

The Mosque of Sultan Ahmet, also known as the **Blue Mosque** for its magnificent interior with blue Iznik tiles and its 6 slender minarets (built by Sultan Ahmet I between 1609-1616), the **Roman Hippodrome** built by the Roman Emperor Septimus Severus in 203 AD and housing the Egyptian Obelisk which was originally erected in the name of Thutmose III in front of the Amon Ra temple in Karnak in the 15th century BC and sent over from Egypt to Theodosius I in 390 AD, the Serpentine Column brought from Delphi by Emperor Constantine I in 4th century AD and the Constantine Column built originally during 4th or 5th century AD of stones and restored by Emperor Constantine VII during 10th century AD.

The tour will continue with a visit of Topkapi Palace, the residence of Ottoman Sultans Between the 15th and 19th centuries. The Palace is now a museum housing the dazzling Ottoman Imperial Treasury, European and Chinese Porcelain collections which are unique in the world, Imperial costumes, weapons and armory, a section housing holy relics brought in from Mecca and other items.

In the afternoon, the tour will continue with a visit of the Basilica Cistern which were built by Emperor Justinian in 542 AD. The cistern, 230 ft. Wide and 460 ft. Long was built as a water reservoir to the city and has 336 columns most of which are topped with Corinthian capitals. The last visit of the day will be to the Grand Covered Bazaar, built by Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror between 1455- 1461 in an attempt to enrich the economic life in the city. Later on, more space was needed for trade and more buildings were added adjacent and outside the original bedsteads, thus forming the present Grand Bazaar. Today, its Alleys and buildings house more than 4000 shops selling carpets, furniture, leather goods, copper goods, jewellery and touristic items. Dinner and overnight in Istanbul.

DAY 3 - ISTANBUL

In the morning embark a special boat for a cruise along the Bosphorus, the winding strait separating Europe and Asia. Along the shore notice the juxtaposition of past and present amid Grand splendor and simple beauty. In the sight of marble palaces, 15th century fortresses and small fishing villages alongside modern buildings and two stunning ultramodern suspension bridges uniting Europe and Asia. After disembarking visit the impressive 19th century Dolmabahce Palace with its unique "Bird Pavilion and 600 meters facade on the Bosphorus.

The next visit will be to Kariye Museum (Saint Savior in the Chora) is a Byzantine monastery complex dating back to 8th century AD. Only the church of Jesus Christ the Savior remains today and houses marvellous golden Byzantine mosaics and frescoes representing scenes drawn from the cycle of life of Virgin Mary and the Christ.

The last stop will be at the Imperial Suleymaniye Mosque which is considered to be the most beautiful and impressive mosque in Istanbul and the second masterpiece of famous Architect Sinan after the Selimiye Mosque in Edirne. It was built by Sultan Suleiman I The Magnificent between 1550-1557. Suleymaniye, rather than a mosque, is a huge complex with several buildings circling the mosque itself and housing religious schools, cuisines, eateries, libraries, infirmaries etc. Sultan Suleiman The Magnificent and Chief Architect Sinan are buried in their tombs in the Suleymaniye complex.

Dinner at Kervansaray Restaurant – Night club where you will enjoy belly dancers, Turkish regional folklore teams and songs in many languages plus dancing. Return to hotel for overnight.

DAY 4 – ISTANBUL & ISKENDERUN :

After breakfast at the hotel, walking tour of Taksim and surrounding area to visit the Saint Anthony Cathedral for mass. Visit also the Armenian Apostolic Church of Saint Trinity on İstiklal Avenue and the Latin Catholic Cathedral of Santa Maria.

On İstiklal Avenue you will pass by several Consulates that were Embassies during the Ottoman Era. You will also see the Imperial Galatasaray High School with its impressive Gate. Before embarking on a shopping spree in the modern shops on İstiklal Avenue you will visit Galata Tower that was built in year 528 by Byzantine Emperor Anastasius, it was destroyed in the 13th century by fire and rebuilt in 1348 by the Genoese and called "Tower of Jesus".

At 21:00 hours transfer to Istanbul Ataturk Airport for flight to Hatay (Antioch). Overnight stay in Antioch.

DAY 5 – ISKENDERUN (Alexandretta) and ANTAKYA

After breakfast, drive to Iskenderun, ancient Alexandretta to visit the hilltop Crusader Castles and the site of the Biblical City of Antioch (Acts of the Apostles 6:6; 19:30; 13:13, 15:1-2; and 22:25). Visit the Grotto of St. Peter, where St. Peter first celebrated mass and contemplate the Basa used by Barnabas, St. Peter and St. Paul while preaching. The word "Christian" was first used here in 40 AD and it was from Antioch that Christianity spread around the world. Also visit the Museum of Roman Mosaics to enjoy the unusually rich collection of mosaics from nearby ruins. Drive to Adana for dinner and overnight.

DAY 6 -TARSUS & CAPPADOCIA

After breakfast drive to Tarsus, the birthplace of St. Paul (Acts 9:11-30; 11:25; 21:39; 22:3; 25-27). The New Testament records that St. Paul actively tried to suppress the early Christian movement through persecution until he was converted to Christianity by a visionary encounter with the risen Jesus while on the road to Damascus in about 36 AD. Because of this Vision, St. Paul held that he too had met Jesus and was therefore qualified to be called an Apostle. After being instructed and receiving

Christian baptism in Damascus, St. Paul went to Arabia, then returned to Damascus for 3 years until he was driven out and back to Tarsus, probably in 40 AD. Several years later Barnabas brought St. Paul to Antioch, then in Syria, where they ministered together for years. St. Paul spent the following 10 years on 3 lengthy missionary journeys to Anatolia and Greece. The second journey included an 18-month stay in Corinth and the third, 2-3 years in Ephesus. The road from Tarsus to Cappadocia runs through the Boklar mountains via Pozanti and Niğde.

Arrive to Cappadocia during early afternoon and start the regional sightseeing from Uchisar where you will enjoy a panoramic view of the area. The unique lunar landscape of the region has been processed by nature, the soft volcanic rock eroding through wind and weather, has left behind pillars, cones and the famous "Fairy Chimneys". Following the visit of Uchisar, a visit "to Dilek's house" is arranged to witness the rural family housing in a rock-carved dwelling.

Depart Uchisar and continue to Göreme Valley Open air Museum which is the highlight of the Cappadocia region. These valley houses, rock churches and monasteries painted with colorful early Christian religious frescoes. Dinner and overnight at the hotel.

Day 7 – CAPPADOCIA and KONYA(Iconium)

In the morning, drive to Kaymaklı underground city which is a huge refuge carved by early Christians that served as a hideout from persecutors. After the underground city visit, the tour will continue to Pashabag, where the most impressive of the "fairy chimneys" can be found. Continue on to the charming town of Avanos on the banks of the Kızılırmak River, displays attractive vernacular architecture and is known for its handicrafts. At Çavuşin, you will find a triple apse church and the monastery of St. John the Baptist. In the town there are chapels and some of the rock houses are still inhabited. Lunch will be served en route.

Having thus concluded touring the Cappadocean Region, drive via Aksaray to Konya visiting en route the Seldjuk Caravanserais of Sultanhan and Agzikarahan. Caravanserais were camel caravan inns on the Silk Route.

Konya was the Capital of Seldjuk Turks during the 12th and 13th centuries and flourished as a Center of culture. However, Konya is better known as the center of the Mevlevi movement. In the 13th Century, Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi, the mystic poet-philosopher founded the Mevlevi Movement, also known as Sufism or the Whirling Dervishes, preaching God's love to all creation. St. Paul visited Konya (Iconium) using its synagogue as his forum. In Konya, Mevlana's Mausoleum will be visited. After dinner in Konya, witness a ritualistic ceremony of Mevlevi or the Whirling Dervishes. Overnight stay in Konya.

DAY 8- PAMUKKALE via YALVAC (Pisidian Antioch) and APHRODISIAS

Drive to Pisidian Antioch (Yalvac) where, on his first missionary journey, St. Paul preached his first recorded Sermon (Acts 13:16) "Almost the whole city gathered to hear the words of God (Acts 13:44).

Before reaching Pamukkale visit Aphrodisias, the ancient city of sculpture and art dedicated after Aphrodite, the goddess of Love. Before reaching Pamukkale the "Cotton Castle" with thermal springs of calcium in water and white petrified lime

cascades falling from heights of 300 feet is a noted spa with dazzling white formations. The martyrrium of St. Philip, an octagonal chamber was recently discovered. Continue driving to the spectacular natural site of Hierapolis, which was also the home of Papias, an early Christian writer and Philip the Evangelist. Dinner and overnight in Pamukkale.

DAY 9- PAMUKKALE and EPHEBUS

Drive through the beautiful countryside to Laodicea, where St. Paul preached to the resident Christians expressing his concern (Col. 2:1) and who St. John scolded for being neither hot nor cold (Rev. 3:16).

Continue the Drive to visit the three great Ionian cities. OPTIONAL visit Priene, the favourite city of Alexander the Great, which commands a magnificent view of the Meander Valley. Continue to the ancient city of Miletus, with its well preserved Lion Harbor and theater, where St. Paul gave his emotional Good-bye message to the elders of Ephesus. After lunch, continue the drive to Didyma to visit the remarkably well preserved Apollo Temple and learn about the Ancient Oracle of Apollo. It is equally interesting to note that the two geniuses, the architects of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople were Isidorus of Miletus and Anthemius of Tralles, another famous Ionian city on the way to Ephesus. Dinner and overnight in Ephesus.

DAY 10 - EPHEBUS

After breakfast, visit the House of the Virgin Mary on Mount Nightingale. Mass in the chapel on Mt. Nightingale. The stigmatized German nun Anne Catherine Emmerich who had never been to Ephesus had a Vision of the House of the Virgin Mary and described it in detail to the German writer Clemens Brentano who later published a book about it. Catherine Emmerich died in 1884. In 1891, Paul, Superior of the Lazarists from Izmir read about her vision and found a little building which corresponded with Emmerich's descriptions. Archaeological evidence showed that the little house was from the 6th century AD but that the foundations were from the 1st Century AD. The site is officially declared a shrine of the Roman Catholic Church in 1896 and since it has become a popular place of pilgrimage. Both Pope Paul VI in 1967 and Pope John Paul II in 1979 have celebrated Mass here. It is also believed that the Virgin Mary was brought to Ephesus by John, the beloved Disciple of Jesus.

Continue your Daily tour and visit Ephesus Antique City, dedicated to Artemis. Ephesus is the best preserved Ancient city of Asia Minor with its majestic theater, marble road, Temple of Artemis, the Church of the Virgin Mary or the Double Church, the library of Celsus, the stadium, the lecture Hall or Tyrannus where St. Paul had daily discussions (Acts. 19:9). For two years St. Paul taught here from evening to evening during the hottest hours of the day when the Hall was empty. In the afternoon, visit the Basilica of St. John and his tomb in Selcuk and end the afternoon touring by a visit to the Ephesus Archaeological Museum. Dinner and overnight in Ephesus.

DAY 11 – RETURN TO ISTANBUL FOR HOMEBOUND FLIGHT :

In the morning transfer to Izmir airport for flight to Istanbul. At Istanbul airport transfer to international terminal for homebound transatlantic flight.