

ACTIVE TURKEY

Turquoise Coast & The Lycian Way

14 days

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Day 1 Arrival in Istanbul

Arrival at Ataturk International Airport - Welcome to Turkey!

New Rome, Byzantium, Constantinople, Istanbul; the legendary city has served as the capital of the legendary Roman, Byzantine, and Ottoman Empires. Though no longer a capital, Istanbul is the largest city and the cosmopolitan heart of Turkey, full of marvels and startling contrasts.

Overnight in Istanbul.

Included Meal(s): Dinner, if required.

Day 2 Istanbul Tour: Hippodrome, Agia Sophia & Grand Bazaar

We start our day with a panoramic drive around the Golden Horn and the great walls of Constantinople. The first recorded bridge over the Golden Horn was built during the reign of Justinian the Great in the 6th century at the western end of the city, and today we will pass the famous Galata Bridge and the Ataturk Bridge. As we drive along the Byzantine city gates and walls we will view the towering minarets of Suleyman's Mosque and the Galata Tower before arriving in Sultanahmet Square.

We'll begin the walking component of today's tour at the legendary Blue Mosque, built between 1609 and 1616 by Mehmet Aga. The inside is covered by more than 20,000 Iznik tiles. At the adjacent Hippodrome you will see the remains of the great sports stadium where chariot races were held in Roman and Byzantine times. We will also see an Egyptian obelisk, a giant needle of stone carved for the Pharaoh Tutmoses III around 1500 BC and brought to Constantinople by the Byzantine Emperor Theodosius in AD 390.

We continue to the church of Agia Sophia (St Sophia), built by the Emperor Justinian in 548 BC. It was the largest church in the Christian world for nearly 1,000 years. When the Ottoman Turks conquered the city in 1435 one of the first things they did was to convert St Sophia into a mosque. Today it is a museum featuring many beautiful Christian mosaics.

Outside Agia Sophia we descend underground to the gigantic Basilica Cisterns. These are the largest of several hundred ancient cisterns that lie beneath the city of Istanbul. Like most sites in Istanbul, the cistern has a colourful history. Constructed using columns, capitals and plinths from ruined buildings, the cistern's symmetry and sheer grandeur of conception are quite extraordinary. This immense underground water container was built during the reign of Emperor Justinian I in 532 to meet the water needs of the Great Palace. This marvelous piece of engineering only confirms yet again that those were the heydays of the Byzantine Empire.

At the end of our touring today your Tour Leader will lead you on a leisurely exploration of Istanbul's famous Grand Bazaar before setting you free for independent exploration.

Due to the linger effects of jetlag and our early start/full day tomorrow, we include lunch instead of dinner today.

Please note: As Istanbul is a logical place to begin any tour in Turkey, we include two nights here before we head south to where the bulk of our activities take place. Our sightseeing listed above include the "classic" elements of a standard one-day Istanbul tour; however, this city has much to offer the traveller, especially a first-time visitor. If you have not been before, we suggest considering an extra day or two on your own -- we can assist with extra nights should you so choose.

Overnight in Istanbul.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Lunch

Day 3 Istanbul - Fly to Dalaman - Fethiye: Roman & Lycian Tombs

This morning we transfer to Istanbul domestic airport and take the 45-minute flight to Dalaman. On arrival we are met and board our bus and

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drive to Fethiye on Turkey's beautiful Turquoise Coast.

Fethiye is surrounded by golden sands, forested mountains, and azure seascapes. The town itself is sizeable-yet-relaxed town with a friendly vibe and international atmosphere. In recent years Fethiye has grown from a modest trading port/fishing village and fertile tomato growing area to a rapidly expanding vibrant town and tourist destination. On arrival we check-in to our hotel with free time to arrange our own lunches.

In the afternoon we take a half-day walking tour of Fethiye (5k / 3miles. Easy). We amble through the center of traditional Fethiye and wind our way over cobbled streets to see the Roman and Lycian Tombs, then up to visit the old Muslim Cemetery on the hill. After our tour we return to the hotel.

Walk Summary: Half-day walking tour - Roman & Lycian Tombs (5k/3mi, easy to moderate).

About 2 hours of easy urban walking with little elevation gain/loss; terrain is mildly undulating on tarmac roads and short sections of crushed gravel.

Overnight in Fethiye.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 4 Fethiye: Full-day Kayaköy Walking Excursion

Today we board our bus, transfer to the day's trailhead, and begin our full-day Kayaköy walking excursion.

Kayaköy is a tiny Greek village south of Fethiye, which was depopulated in the 1920s. Following the Allied victory in World War I, the Greco-Turkish War of 1919-1922 led to the defeat of Greece, and the Treaty of Lausanne (1923). That treaty contained a protocol, the Population exchange between Greece and Turkey, which permanently barred the return of any Greek Orthodox refugees to their homes in Turkey. WWI and the Greco-Turkish war saw the rise of a virulent Turkish nationalism, which led to the brutal persecution of minorities within the Ottoman realm, including the massacre and deportation of many Greek towns. The Ottoman persecution and massacre of Christian and other minorities led to almost total depopulation of Kayaköy's 6,500 Greek inhabitants by 1918 CE. Bereaved of their properties and possessions, the former population became stateless refugees in Greece or died in Ottoman forced labour battalions. Today Kayaköy is a ghost town and has been preserved as the Kayakoy Museum Village consisting of hundreds of run-down but still mostly standing, Greek-style houses and churches.

Our walk also takes us through forest on a dramatic coastal path with scenic views of the turquoise Lagoon of Oludeniz, where there should be an opportunity for a swim before heading back to our base in Fethiye.

Walk Summary: Full-day Kayaköy walking tour, about 5 hours of easy urban, coastal, and valley-floor walking with elevation gain/loss 300/597m (urban section mostly flat) on an undulating route; overall distance walked today of about 5km (3mi); terrain urban tarmac, undulating natural coastal path, unmarked through open fields.

Overnight in Fethiye.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 5 From Fethiye: Lycian Way Walk, Turquoise Coast Boat Trip

Today we board our bus, transfer to the trailhead, and begin walking on one of the world's great trails -- Lycian Way, regularly featuring in top-10 lists for its unique combination of Mediterranean views, mountainous hinterland, Turkish culture, and ancient ruins. The route was researched, designed, and waymarked by British amateur historian Kate Clow in the late 1990s, who aimed to identify and protect Turkey's ancient byways. The full 540km waymarked footpath – typically a 29-day trek – follows the bulging outline of the Teke Peninsula between the towns of Fethiye and Antalya. Of course our journey features only some carefully-chosen sections of this route, which, for our purposes are more accessible, less rugged, and unbelievably stunning.

Our route starts at the village of Ovacik, where we depart on an old cobbled way, passing ancient water cisterns, medieval fields and dramatic views, to the traditional hamlet of Kozagaç a world away from modern Turkey. We walk the first 4km (2.5 miles) along a comfortable slightly climbing and flat path through a pine forest, but the trees disappear in favour of Mediterranean shrubland (the maquis) and the forest track will turn into a narrow footpath, sectionally cobbled but mostly covered with loose gravel. There are fantastic views of the Blue Lagoon and

Ölüdeniz Beach to the right. Often paragliders can be seen launching above the trail! We take time to enjoy the stunning panoramic views before returning to our bus.

We then drive back to Fethiye from where we depart on a half-day private Turquoise Coast boat trip to the Fethiye Islands, while enjoying a freshly-prepared Turkish lunch on board. We spend the afternoon with time to swim, explore, and soak up the sun around the pristine bays of the Fethiye Islands. After our boat trip we return to Fethiye and our hotel.

Walk Summary: Half-day Lycian Way, Ovacik (easy/mod - ascent/descent 300/597m)

About 3 hours of easy coastal path walking with elevation gain/loss 300/597m, overall distance walked today of about 8km (5mi); terrain gravel path and natural coastal path unmarked through open fields and over undulating ground.

Dinner on your own this evening.

Overnight in Fethiye.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Lunch

Day 6 Fethiye: Full-day Lycian Way Walking - Faralya to Kabac, Butterfly Valley

Today we return to the Lycian Way at Faralya (where we ended up yesterday), and pick up our walk from Faralya to Kabac, under the steep rocky mountain of Baba Dag (1968m/6,460 ft). Our route takes us past a viewpoint over the Butterfly Valley, which lies directly below the cliffs at Faralya. Here we have an opportunity to capture the panoramic view before following the ancient path high above the coastline. We can descend to the local golden beach of Yuva for a swim and refreshments before returning to Kabac for the picturesque drive back to the hotel.

Walk Summary: Full-day Lycian Way: Faralya to Kabac (8k/5m. Easy/Mod), about 4 hours of actual walking time on easy-to-moderate coastal path walking with elevation gain/loss 420/525m, on gravel and natural coastal paths unmarked through open fields and over undulating ground.

Overnight in Fethiye.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 7 From Fethiye: Lycian Way Yakabag to Minare - Drive to Kas via Saklikent Gorge

Today we return to the Lycian Way at Yakabag, fairly close to where we left off yesterday. Today we spend the morning walking from Yakabag to Minare Village, via the ruins of Pinara, which we explore.

From Yakabag high in the dramatic mountains, we walk uphill through farmland and isolated houses to a ridge, before traversing along farm paths to several remote Lycian rock tombs, then on to the ancient city of Pinara, with its array of Lycian, Greek, and Roman remains. Pinara is a Lycian city with an acropolis perched high on a rocky promontory, the surrounding rock walls honey-combed with carved rock tombs. We explore the acropolis of this once important Lycian city and marvel at the ruins that date back to the 6th century BCE, including a Greek theatre.

After our visit, we continue our walk and descend to Minare Village with a break for lunch. We then rejoin our bus and drive to the impressive Saklikent Gorge, the second largest in Europe and one of the deepest in the world. Here we have the opportunity to visit the bottom of the gorge in all its glory. Here we take a short walk to a viewpoint over Saklikent Gorge. Next we drive to Kas, a charming Mediterranean seaside village with a well-preserved Greek theater, narrow cobblestoned streets, and white-washed houses festooned with colourful bougainvillea and wooden balconies. On arrival we check into our Kas hotel.

Walk Summary: Lycian Way Yakabag to Minare (5.6k / 3miles, Easy Asc/Des: 200/225m).

A total of around 3 hours (actual walking) of easy to moderate coastal path walking today, with elevation gain/loss 420/525m, on gravel and natural coastal paths unmarked through open fields and over undulating ground.

Overnight in Kas.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 8 From Kas: Drive Patara via Delikkemer Aqueduct Walk, visit Patara Ruins

Today we drive to Patara, via a walk up to the Roman Aqueduct at Delikkemer then explore the ruins at Patara.

We first drive from Kas to Delikkemer, arriving directly below the impressive Roman aqueduct. We then disembark and hike the winding route up to the top -- our route winds its way along the line of the old aqueduct to the ancient city of Patara. Here we have a break for lunch and then explore the ruins and visit the longest golden sandy beach in Turkey with a chance for a swim.

Return to Kas.

Walk Summary: Delikkemer Aqueduct Walk (10.2k/6mi easy-mod, Ascent/Descent 191/296m)

About 4+ hours of actual walking on easy/flat ground with insignificant elevation gain/loss on an undulating route today. Additional time on foot at the historic sites visited en route.

Overnight in Kas.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 9 Kas: At Leisure

Today is a well-earned, entirely free day in Kas, a quiet charming old town decorated with cobbled streets and Lycian rock tombs set against a mountain backdrop. There are many activities you can choose today, including exploring the town on foot -- built on the site of Antiphellos with its Greek theatre, tombs, shops and bars, Kas has a long history to explore. An alternative might be a walk to Limanagzi Beach or to catch the ferry to the Greek island of Castelloriso. Your Tour Leader can help you plan your day.

Overnight in Kas.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast

Day 10 From Kas: Full-day Lycian Way, Saribelen to Gokçeoren

Today we drive to pretty little village of Saribelen ('blue' or 'celestial' ruins), where we begin today's walk. As we leave Saribelen our route takes us further along the Lycian Way through pleasant woods and meadows high above the coast. Leaving the Elmali highway, our walk begins with a lovely moderately-climbing path past some enormous and hollow plane trees (*Platanus orientalis*) to an area of conglomerate rock worn and eroded into cotton ball shapes by the wind and rain.

The path continues to rise until we reach the magnificent sea views, from where we can see all the way to Mt. Baba Dagi near Fethiye, past Patara beach, Kalkan, and the Greek islands of Ro and Castelorizzo, the easternmost part of Greece. We encounter some ancient remains, probably from the Archaic period, and a proto-arch tomb beside the forest road. Before the path starts to descend to Gokceoren, we come across the remains of a Roman Village, which we explore before continuing on to our destination for today, the traditional small village of Gokceoren. After our hike we return to Kas and our hotel.

Walk Summary: Full day walk Saribelen to Gokceoren (11k/6.5mi easy-mod), about 3+ hours of easy-moderate walking with 249/253m elevation gain/loss on an undulating route on gravel and natural paths unmarked through open fields.

Overnight in Kas.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

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Day 11 From Kas: Half-day Boat Trip - U agiz, Simena, Kekova Island - Drive Adrasan via Myra & Demre

Today we drive to the quiet beach resort of Adrasan via the village of U agiz, where we stop and embark on a ferry for our half-day Simena Island boat trip. We wail to the pristine Mediterranean village of Simena, where we can visit the ancient castle, before reembaring and visiting the sunken city off Kekova Island. After a break here for lunch, we re-board the bus and drive to Adrasan via Myra to see its Roman Theatre and visit Demre to see St Nicholas's Church, where the legend of Santa Claus was first invented. Myra itself has one of the world's most scenic ancient graveyards.

Adrasan is well-known for fishing; this evening we may have a chance to sample some local specialities.

Overnight in Adrasan.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 12 Adrasan Walking: Ulupinar to Chimeara

Today we drive to the rural village of Ulupinar, famous for its trout restaurants. From here we walk down the sweeping valley and across a pass to Upper and Lower Chimeara, where natural gas burns from the ground. About a dozen flames burn on the side of the mountain, fueled by methane gas coming through vents. The fires, called 'Yanarta' in Turkish, have been burning for at least 2,500 years. These flames, according to ancient literature, gave birth to the myth of the Chimera—a fire breathing mythical beast with the body and head of a lion, with the head of a goat arising from its back, and a tail that ended in a snake's head. We take a break for lunch at a local restaurant and continue to Cirali for the golden beach and a visit to the mystical ruins of Olympos City. After our tour we return to Adrasan for overnight and dinner on your own.

Walk Summary: Full-day walk Ulupinar to Chimeara (6.5k / 3mi easy, Asc/Des 191/421m)

About 2-3 hours of actual walking time, mostly flat and downhill with an elevation gain/loss of 191/421m on gravel and natural paths unmarked through open fields and over undulating ground.

Overnight in Adrasan.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Lunch

Day 13 Lycian Way, Cirali to Ku şuk Plaj - To Antalya & Ancient City of Phaselis

Today depart Adrasan to Antalya with our final walk along the Lycian Way en route, a dramatic coastal walk along an old miners' trail from Cirali to Ku uk Plaj and the abandoned chrome mine and bay. After our walk we re-board our bus and drive to Antalya, the end point of our journey, where we check into our hotel with a chance to arrange our own lunches.

Our final activity is a half-day sightseeing tour, which includes the excellent Antalya Archaeology Museum and a short walk to the ancient city of Phaselis. After our tour we assemble for our farewell evening meal served in a local restaurant.

With it's pleasant, relaxed seaside atmosphere, Antalya is a perfect place for some downtime before your long journey home. We can assist with extra accommodation should you choose to extend your journey and experience some things and places not included on our tour.

Walk Summary: Half-day walk: Cirali to Ku uk Plaj (6k / 4 miles easy. Ascent/Descent 890m).

About 2+ hour of easy coastal walking with little elevation gain/loss; distance of about 6km (4 mi) today; terrain is mildly undulating on crushed gravel and natural path with some unmarked path through open fields.

Overnight in Antalya.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 14 Departure

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Departure from Antalya.

IYI YOLCULUKLAR/BON VOYAGE!

Included Meal(s): Breakfast