

ITINERARY

Day 1

Depart on flight from London Heathrow to Izmir via Istanbul. On arrival we transfer to Izmir (Smyrna) for dinner and overnight at the Blanca Hotel, Izmir

Day 2

We visit the Agora, Archaeological Museum, St.Polycarp Church and continue to Dikili, a seaside town where we check in at our seaside hotel, right on the beach. Dinner and overnight at the Halic Park Hotel, Dikili.

Day 3

Visit of (Pergamum), one of the most impressive classical sites in Turkey, a city which once rivalled Alexandria and Antioch as a centre for the arts and sciences. Of particular interest is the Asclepion, one of the foremost medical centres of the ancient world - a huge complex that includes temples, treatment rooms, pools, a sacred spring, a library and even a theatre for entertainment. Drive back to Dikili (20 km) for dinner and overnight at the Halic Park Hotel, Dikili. .

Day 4

In the morning, we travel to Akhisar (Thyatira) with its remains of a Basilica. Then proceed to Sart (Sardis), the ancient capital of the Kingdom of Lydia set in the crumbling mountains. We view the Temple of Artemis, with the largest Ionic columns in the Greek world, Lydian houses, a Byzantine church and a reconstructed synagogue. Continue to Alasehir (Philadelphia), with its numerous remains of early Christian churches. Then to Pamukkale, one of the most spectacular natural wonders of Turkey, where thermal spring waters have carved a dazzling white petrified cascade of basins, cataracts and stalactites. Dinner and overnight at the Adem Pira Hotel Pamukkale.

Day 5

We visit the Necropolis at Hierapolis, then drive to Laodicea on the south bank of the River Lyros, whose sights included temples, a fountain, a theatre, Odean gymnasium, aqueduct and sarcophagi. Continue to Kusadasi on the Aegean coast. Dinner and overnight at the Marina Htel, Kusadasi.

Day 6

This morning will be taken up with a visit to the outside sanctuary of Apollo at Didyma with its gigantic columns. Next, we visit the 15,000 - seat theatre of Miletus, with the ruins of a 15th century mosque close by, used now as a nesting place for storks. We then take the opportunity to visit the beautiful city of Priene, built on a lonely rock terrace, overlooked by Mount Mykale. The site gives a vivid impression of what life in a Hellenistic city must have been like. Here the League of Ionian Cities held its congresses and festivals around 200 BC. Dinner and overnight at the Halic Park Hotel, Dikili. .

Day 7

Travel by coach to Efes (Ephesus), visiting St John's church, the House of the Virgin Mary, Ephesus itself and the museum. Ephesus is one of the world's most impressive sites. Once the Roman capital of Asia, it was here that Mark Anthony and Cleopatra once rode in procession, St Paul came at the dawn of Christianity and the followers of Artemis rioted in protest. It is said that Mary, the mother of Jesus, spent her last days nearby.

Dinner and overnight at the Halic Park Hotel, Dikili. .

Day 8

Boat trip to Patmos including lunch and guide.

Dinner and overnight at the Halic Park Hotel, Dikili. .

Day 9

Free day in Kusadasi to explore the local market or relax on the coast.

Dinner and overnight at the Halic Park Hotel, Dikili. .

Day 10. Saturday - KUSADASI / ISTANBUL

We leave Kusadasi and transfer to Izmir airport for our flight to Istanbul. On arrival we visit the Grand Bazaar and the Spice Market. Dinner and overnight at the Taksim Gonen Hotel, Istanbul

Day 11. Sunday- ISTANBUL

Topkapi Palace, home of the treasures of the Ottoman Empire, Hagia Sophia, once a church, then a mosque and now a museum, the underground Justinian Cistern nearby and the architecturally magnificent Blue Mosque. Dinner and overnight at the Taksim Gonen Hotel, Istanbul

Day 12. Monday ISTANBUL Departure

We visit the Chora Church before we transfer to the airport in Istanbul for our return flight to London Heathrow.