

# The Seven Churches of Asia Minor

Istanbul - Pergamum -Thyatira – Smyrna – Sardis – Philadelphia – Laodicea - Ephesus

8 days



Hagia Sophia

## Included Highlights:

- See the sights of Istanbul, including the Church of St Saviour, St .Sophia Church and the impressive Blue Mosque
- Tour Troy, the renowned city of Homer’s “Iliad,” with its remains of nine levels dating back to the Roman period
- Explore Pergamum and take in the majestic Acropolis and its renowned alter of Zeus
- Visit the Temple of Artemis with the largest synagogue discovered in the Asia Minor
- Travel through Hierapolis, visiting its marvelous sites such as the Necropolis and St . Phillippe Martyrium
- Retrace the history of the Early Church where Constantinople authenticated Christianity in Europe
- Fully Escorted
- Meals as mentioned in itinerary

## YOUR DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY

### DAY 1: NEWYORK / ISTANBUL

Depart on an international overnight flight to Istanbul. Dinner and breakfast are served on board.

### DAY 2: ISTANBUL

Upon arrival in Istanbul, we'll be greeted by our tour escort, and next board our deluxe motorcoach for transfer to our hotel. Istanbul is the former Byzantium, the powerful capital of the Byzantine Empire, and the stronghold of Early Christianity. Dinner and overnight in Istanbul. (D)

### DAY 3: ISTANBUL

Today we explore the magical city of Istanbul connecting two continents, Europe and Asia. We visit the Hagia Sophia Mosque, built as a Christian church in the 6th century CE; the Hippodrome of Constantinople, the center of social life in the Byzantine Empire; the impressive Blue Mosque with its iconic six minarets; the Topkapi Palace, home of the Ottoman Sultans for 400 years; and the Grand Bazaar, one of the largest and the oldest covered markets in the world. Dinner and overnight in Istanbul. (B/D)

### DAY 4: ASSOS

Today we leave Istanbul and head to Canakkale via the Dardanelles. On the way we stop and visit a UNESCO World Heritage site, the city of Troy, one of the most famous cities in the ancient world and immortalized by Homer in “Iliad”. We continue to Canakkale, ancient Dardanellia. We stop to see the wooden horse from the 2004 movie “Troy” exhibited on the Canakkale waterfront. Dinner and overnight in Assos. (B/D)

### DAY 5: IZMIR

In the morning we drive to Alexandria Troas from where Paul, inspired by a dream, set sail to Neapolis in Macedonia on his second missionary



Blue Mosque interior

journey (Act of the Apostles: 16 .9). We continue to Assos where Paul rejoined his companions after more than 10 hours walk from Alexandria Troas (Acts: 20-13). Then on to Pergamon, one of the Seven Churches of Asia Minor addressed in Revelation. We see the majestic Acropolis with the remains of Temple of Zeus (The Great Altar of Pergamon associated with the temple and often referred to as "Satan's Altar" was moved in the 19th century to the Pergamon Museum in Berlin, Germany); the Asclepium dedicated to the god of healing; the Serapeum, the temple dedicated to Egyptian god of healing and worshipped in ancient Rome and Greece; the Temple of Trajan; and the Theater with its seating capacity of 10,000 people. Next, we drive to Izmir via Thyatira, home to one of the Seven Churches of Asia Minor. Dinner and overnight in Izmir. (B/D)

**DAY 6: PAMUKKALE**

After a short morning sightseeing tour of Izmir (ancient Smyrna and one of the Seven Churches of Asia Minor (Rev: 2-8)) we drive to Sardes (Rev: 3-1). We visit the Temple of Artemis dedicated to the goddess of the city; the Gymnasium - Bathhouse, the large complex housing bathhouse and exercise facilities; and the Synagogue of Sardis, the largest synagogue discovered in Asia Minor. We continue to Philadelphia (Rev: 3-7) and then to Laodicea (Rev: 3-14) to visit the next Seven Churches of Asia Minor. Drive to Pamukkale, famous for its unique stalactite formations and the beautiful natural pools of warm water. Dinner and overnight in Pamukkale. (B/D)

**DAY 7: IZMIR / SELCUK**

In the morning we visit Hierapolis (modern Pamukkale), a sacred and thriving Roman city was an important Christian center in the ancient world. We see its marvels such as the Necropolis, the Theater, the Temple of Apollo, the Byzantine Steet and Pluto's Gate, a site believed to be gateway to hell. Next, we drive to Ephesus, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Here (Acts: 17 and Rev. 2-1) we visit the Basilica of John, the last House of the Virgin Mary, and the site of the Temple of Artemis, one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Dinner and overnight in Selcuk (B/D)

**DAY 8: SELCUK / IZMIR / NEWYORK**

After breakfast we transfer to Izmir airport for our flight back home arriving the same day. (B)

\* (B,L,D) = Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Temple of Artemis



Ephesus