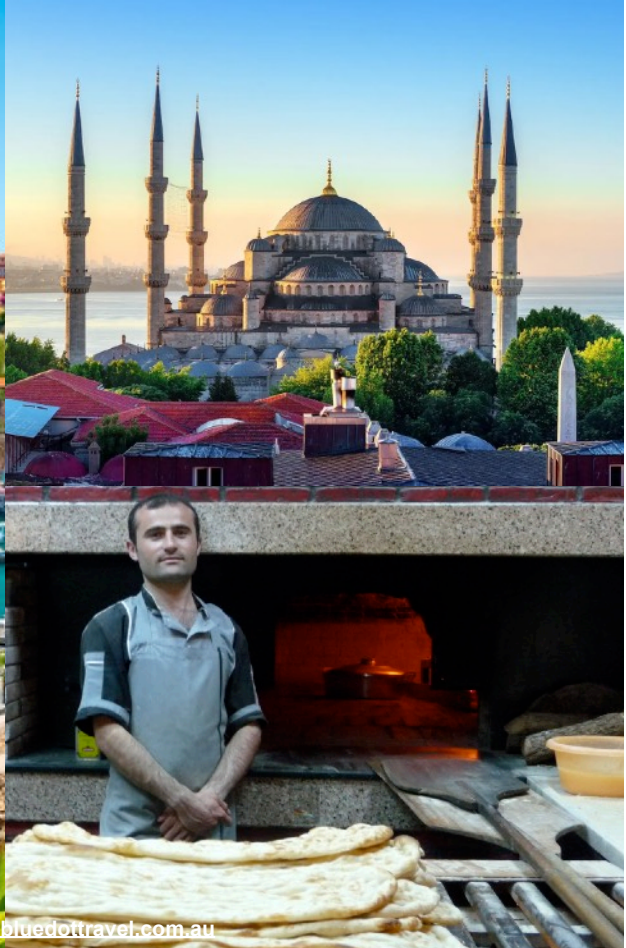


Türkiye A Cultural Gem

Departing
18th April 2026

Blue Dot Travel





TÜRKIYE- A CULTURAL GEM

Mention Türkiye to anyone who has travelled there, and more often than not, you'll get a very positive response. Türkiye has it all... history, unique culture, varied landscapes, architecture, food (with great tea and coffee) and a diverse group of friendly people. There is also a special kind of affinity between our two countries as a result of the history over the last 100 years and more.

Türkiye has a population of around 85 million and is considered one of the most progressive countries in the region. Its diversity is helped by the fact that eight countries border it. While most of the country is very cold in winter (especially in the mountainous regions), summers can be very hot. Much of the population lives on or near the water, with Theea to the south, the Agean to th Mediterranean to the west, and The Black Sea to the north. The Sea of Marmara, the famous Bosphorus and the Dardanelles (which together form the Turkish Straits) make the boundary between Europe and Asia.

Türkiye has a wonderful ancient cultural heritage. The Byzantine Empire was the Eastern Roman Empire of the Middle Ages (with no exact dates being identifiable). Today, we distinguish the Byzantines from the Romans via its Greek influence and Christianity. The country was once the centre of the Ottoman Empire (1299 – 1923), which, during its prime, covered three continents, including much of South Eastern Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. Its capital, Constantinople (now Istanbul), was the centre of commerce and politics between the East and West for hundreds of years.

A young military officer named Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was involved in establishing the modern Republic of Türkiye. Although he died in 1938, he is very highly regarded across the country even today, and you'll notice flags and posters bearing his image all over the country. Atatürk (meaning father of Turks) would be its first president. In short, he modernised Türkiye and helped it become the flourishing nation it is today. Even though the country is predominantly Muslim, Istanbul is a very modern city with a European flavour. On the streets, you'll see young people – men and women sipping coffee at the local café and shopping for Western brands. It has a population of around 12 million people, about three times that of Türkiye's capital Ankara.

Your Blue Dot Travel tour will take you to many of the must-sees (and some of the less known parts) of this wonderfully cultured country!



**Saturday 18th April
ARRIVE ISTANBUL**

We'll transfer to the hotel on arrival in Istanbul for a brief overnight stay. Flights will be determined closer to the time. Enquire about our optional, fully guided, 4-night Istanbul post-stay.



**Day 1, Sunday
19th April
ISTANBUL —
GALLIPOLI**

After breakfast, the group will transfer with a private guide from the hotel and drive along the Sea of

Marmara to the Gallipoli Peninsula on the Dardanelles Strait. (driving time is approximately 4 hrs.) Lunch will be included at Tekirdag region, where we'll try the famous meatball dish. In the afternoon, the group will continue the drive along the Aegean coast for our first visit to the ANZAC landing beaches. We'll visit Anzac Cove, Ari Burnu cemetery and Beach cemetery, where, among others, there is the grave of John Simpson Kirkpatrick "man with the donkey". Check in to the Bengodi Boutique Hotel (or similar) for three nights. *B/L/D*

**Day 2, Monday
20th April**

**GALLIPOLI
PENINSULA**

We begin today by driving up along the ridges to Lone Pine, the largest Anzac cemetery and further

on to Johnston's Jolly, Courtney and Steel's Post, Quinn's Post to The Nek, where the 3rd Australian Light Horse made its infamous bayonet attack. We also visit Walkers Ridge cemetery and take in the view down towards the Sphinx, North Beach and Ari Burnu. We then continue further up to Chunuk Bair. Final visit at Turkish Memorial. Subject to availability, the group will have a private tour by Professor Kenan Celik, who is generally regarded as the authority on the Allied attack on Gallipoli from the Turkish perspective. We'll then have an early dinner at Suvla Winery before returning to the hotel. *B/D*



**Day 3, Tuesday 21st April
GALLIPOLI PENINSULA**


After breakfast we cross the Dardanelle by local ferry. The first visit will be to legendary Troy. Controlling the passage to the Black Sea, a critical supplier of

materials used in the production of bronze, it held great power because of its location exploiting Nature's panoply of challenge and reward. But at the same time, it was a tempting target. Continue to Troya Museum, situated at the entrance of the Troy Ancient City in Tevfikiye village of Çanakkale. Following your exploration of Troy drive to Mount Ida. Set between the Çanakkale and Balıkesir provinces in Türkiye's northwest, the Ida Mountain (Kazdağları) is known as an "oxygen tent", a glorious woodland habitat for flora and fauna nourished by the iodised sea air. Ida Mountain offers a rich historical and cultural experience and natural adventure. The most well-known villages are Yeilyurt and Adatepe. Near Adatepe is the Altar of Zeus, allegedly set on the site where Zeus watched the Trojan War. Dinner and overnight at Ida Blue Adatepe Hotel (or similar). **B/L/D**

 **Day 4, Wednesday 22nd April**
CANAKKALE – TROY – IDA MOUNTAIN

After breakfast we cross the Dardanelle by local ferry. The first visit will be to legendary Troy. Controlling the passage to the Black Sea, a critical supplier of materials used in the production of bronze, it held great power because of its location, exploiting Nature's panoply of challenge and reward. But at the same time, it was a tempting target. Continue to Troya Museum, situated at the entrance of the Troy Ancient City in Tevfikiye village of Çanakkale. Following our exploration of Troy, we'll drive to Mount Ida. Set between the Çanakkale and Balıkesir provinces in Türkiye's northwest, the Ida Mountain (Kazdağları) is known as an "oxygen tent", a glorious woodland habitat for flora and fauna nourished by iodised sea air. Ida Mountain offers a rich historical and cultural experience and natural adventure. The most well-known villages are Yeilyurt and Adatepe. Near Adatepe is the Altar of Zeus, allegedly set on the site where Zeus watched the Trojan War. Dinner and overnight in Ida Blue Adatepe Hotel. **B/D**



 **Day 5,**
Thursday
23rd April
ASSOS

After breakfast, the group will depart for the beautiful seaside village of Assos. Aristotle, the famous

philosopher of Antiquity, lived for a period in Assos and did important research on zoology, biology and botany. Many 4 km long walls surrounding the city still stand today. The Temple of Athena (Athena Tapınak), located in the Acropolis, is one of the oldest Doric temples in Anatolia, built in the Archaic Age. The bridge from the Ottoman period at the borders of Behramkale Village is completely standing and still in use. Lunch is available at one of the many seaside fish restaurants. Then, drive to Adatepe Village and visit the museum that depicts the venerable history of

olive oil, a substance as valuable today as it was in antiquity. Time permitting, we'll explore the villages around Mount Ida. Dinner tonight is at a local restaurant called Gordo, which specialises in traditional Turkish cuisine. **B/D**

 **Day 6, Friday**
24th April

AYVALIK –
PERMAGON –
SIRINCE VILLAGE

Check out late in the morning and drive to Ayvalık, famous for its diving, beaches, expansive national parks, and stunning architecture. There are gorgeous views from this quaint town. The group will visit Eytan Sofras (Devil's Feast) and enjoy a lovely local lunch at Bay Nihat at Cunda Island. Then, visit Pergamon - a hill that rises over 1000 feet straight up above lush plains. On the top was the Royal City, worthy of the prosperous Kingdom, adorned by wonderful monuments, a large theatre, temples, altars, palaces and the renowned library of 200,000 scrolls, commanding a spectacular panorama. Following your exploration of Pergamon with its Asclepion and Acropolis, continue to Kusadasi (approx. 2,5 hrs. driving). Arrive in Sirince Village. Dinner own arrangements. Overnight at the Nisanyan Houses (or similar) for three nights. **B/L**



 **Day 7, Saturday 25th April**
SIRINCE VILLAGE AND EPHEBUS

After breakfast, depart for the remarkable Greco-Roman archaeological site of Ancient Ephesus. Dating back to the 11th century BC, it has been painstakingly excavated and restored and is one of the world's most fascinating sites of antiquity. Ephesus flourished as a prominent city and seaport between 600 B.C. and 500 A.D. Lunch will be served at the famous Selçuk Koftçisi (local meatball restaurant). Dinner at the hotel. **B/L/D**

 **Day 8,**
Sunday 26th

April
SIRINCE

Depart the hotel after breakfast for the local food market in Selçuk, a delightful experience. The market brims with fresh produce, fragrant spices, and various local delicacies, offering a true taste of Turkish culture. Late afternoon, depart to Kusadasi to explore the town, followed by dinner at Kazim Usta Restaurant. Overnight at the Nisanyan Houses and İlyas Bey Cottages (or similar). **B/D**





Day 9, Monday 27th April
SIRINCE – BODRUM

Today, we depart for Bodrum. Until about fifty years ago, Bodrum remained pretty much unchanged for hundreds of years. It sits on a peninsula with remote fishing villages accessible from the sea where sponge diving and fishing were the main income of its people. Then, the locals discovered it and made it their first choice holiday spot in Turkey. Its unique architecture of two-storeyed whitewashed buildings with flat roofs is one of the main attractions. Bodrum is now an international luxury hotspot. Today, Bodrum is still adorned by the handsome castle of Crusaders in its picturesque harbour. The castle sits in the middle of the bustling centre of the town and houses a unique collection of underwater archaeology. Overnight at The Marmara Bodrum (or similar). **B/D**



Day 10, Tuesday
28th April
BODRUM BY
SAILBOAT

Weather permitting, the group will take a trip by private wooden gullet around the

peninsula, where you'll enjoy the region's lush green forests and deep blue Aegean waters. Explore the unique bays of Bodrum by wooden gullets. If this is not for you, you can explore Bodrum today on your own. **B/D** (picnic lunch provided for those on the boat).



Day 11, Wednesday 29th April
PAMAKKALE – STRATONIKEIA –
HIERAPOLIS

The group will check out of the hotel and, en route, visit the ancient Stratonikeia. This archaeological site is important for the Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, Beylik of Mentee, Ottoman and Republican periods, and new artifacts are unearthed every year. Likewise, the historical buildings in the city are also being restored. Pamukkale, one of Denizli's most important districts in terms of culture and tourism, is home to the Pamukkale travertines and the ancient city of Hierapolis, registered on the UNESCO World Heritage List as an archaeological site. Check in to the hotel for one night. **B/L/D**



Day 12, Thursday 30th April
PUMAKKALE – SAGGALASSOS – KONYA

Our day starts with breakfast at the hotel before checking out and taking a long drive. First, the group will visit Sagalassos – an ancient city of approx. 3 hours drive from Pamukkale. Sagalassos was the most important city of the Pisidia region during the Roman Imperial period, and most of the buildings in the ancient city today are from that era. The most striking structures of the ancient mountaintop city are

the magnificent Antonine Fountain, which has flown for 2,000 years, and the extensive Roman bath complex, which has survived to the present day with its two floors preserved. Continue to Konya and check in to the hotel in time for dinner. Tonight, experience a special private showing of a Twirling Dervishes. **B/D**



Day 13, Friday 1st May
KONYA – CAPPADOCIA

This morning, the group will visit the Mevlana Museum, also known as the theological school of "Whirling Dervishes". The striking green-tiled mausoleum of Mevlana is Konya's most famous building. Attached to the mausoleum, the former dervish seminary now serves as a museum housing manuscripts of Mevlana's works and various artifacts related to the mysticism of the sect. Every year during the first half of December, the eb-i Arus ceremony is held in commemoration of Mevlana Celaledin-i Rumi, with the controlled, trance-like turning or sema of the white-robed men creating a fascinating performance for the viewer. Lunch will be served at Kofteci Ramiz Plus in Kulu on our way to Cappadocia. Own arrangements for dinner. We stay overnight at the Yunak Evleri in Cappadocia (or similar) for three nights. **B/L**



Day 14,
Saturday 2nd

May
CAPPADOCIA

If the wind is suitable, it will be an early bird departure from the hotel for a formidable "Balloon



Adventure" over the enchanting lunar landscape of Cappadocia to hail the slowly rising sun with a glass of champagne. The balloon ride over Cappadocia at sunrise is an experience of a lifetime. Then, we'll explore one of the most extraordinary treasures of sacred art, Goreme's rock-carved churches, now an 'open-air museum'. This museum hosts some of the finest examples of the ninth and tenth centuries. What survives at Goreme and other sites scattered about Cappadocia marks the region's rock-cut churches and chapels as one of the world's greatest museums of medieval art. Your visit will include a visit to the Dark Church- one beautifully restored inside to its former stunning glory. Then we're off to the Zelve Open Air Museum, where some ancient cave churches are from the 9th Century AD. On the way back to our cave hotel, we'll visit the Old Master of Pottery, built in the labyrinth-like caves of Avanos Village, located by the shores of the longest river in Turkey, Kizilirmak. The natural earth is soft and reddish, an ideal raw material for the area's traditional pottery-making business. The Old Master will show you how to use his kick-wheel if you want to produce your pottery item then and there. Dinner will be served at Dibek Traditional Restaurant. **B/D**



Day 15, Sunday 3rd May CAPPADOCIA

Departure from the Hotel to another marvel of the region: the 'Underground City' at Kaymakli. The enigmatic cellar villages, over 40 of which have been discovered empty, are among the wonders of Cappadocia. We'll proceed to Sinasos Village to walk through the delightful streets of the old Greek town Sinasos, present-day Mustafa Paa- well known for its traditional architecture, with a discussion on the Greek communities of Cappadocia under the Ottoman Empire. Lunch will be served at Old Greek House Restaurant. Today's final visit at Cavusin Village, an abandoned village with rock-cut dwellings and stone houses, has several hermitages and churches. The Basilica dedicated to St. John the Baptist (located on the cliff above the village) is one of the oldest rock-cut monuments of Cappadocia. Late in the afternoon, we'll take a sunset jeep safari before returning to the hotel, where you may have dinner at your leisure. *B/L*

Day 16, Monday 4th May HATTUSHA – YAZILIKAYA – ANKARA

Today, an early morning departure to Ankara, via Hattusha. According to Hittite written sources on UNESCO's "World Memory List", Hattusas became the capital of the Hittites when Hattusili I came to power (1665-1640 BCE). It is known that most buildings remain in the city and can be traced back to the 13th century BCE. In Büyükkale, where the royal buildings are located, ruins of a large palace have been revealed, with courtyards surrounded by masted tunnels, residences, warehouse buildings and a large reception room. The settlement in Hattusas continues during the Persian period. Hattusa also has traces of settlement and fortification in the Hellenistic period, Galatians, Rome and Byzantium. Then on to Yazilikaya, a most impressive holy site is the Open-Air Temple, located among high cliffs just outside the city. Used for New Year celebrations, this temple features rows of rock reliefs depicting important gods and goddesses. Overnight in Ankara for two nights. Dinner at a local restaurant. *B/D*



Day 17, Tuesday 5th May ANKARA

After breakfast, we'll visit the Museum of Anatolian Civilisations, located southeast of Ankara

Citadel's outer walls. Here, an extensive and unique collection of stunning artefacts from Anatolia's significant archaeological sites can be seen. It has a unique collection installed in chronological order, starting with the Paleolithic era and continuing through the Neolithic, Early Bronze, Assyrian trading colonies, Hittite, Phrygian, Urartian, Greek,

Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, Seljuq and Ottoman periods. It is worth visiting the museum to see the 3000 years old writing table of King Midas, known for his ears of donkey, which was found in Ulu, the letter written by the Egyptian Queen to the Hittite King in 1235 BCE, the first map of the world, the drawing of Mountain Hasan and the world's oldest mirror made of Obsidian or Dragonglass, found on 6000 BCE. Continue to Anıtkabir, Antkabir, the mausoleum built as the final resting place of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic, is the expression of the great respect and appreciation of the Turkish Nation for Atatürk. Located on Rasattepe, Antkabir reflects the grandiosity of modern Turkish architecture. The Atatürk and Independence War Museum, which is on the premises of Antkabir, allows visitors to witness how a nation was born. Dinner is at a local restaurant. *B/L/D*



Day 18, Wednesday 6th May ANKARA – ESKISEHIR – BURSA

Odunpazar is the oldest settlement in Eskişehir, consisting of a series of historical houses dating back to the Ottoman Empire. With its beautiful, historic streets and brand-new Modern Museum, it now



composes the central region of the whole city. The Odunpazar Houses Survival Project helped renovate old houses around the district, and Eskişehir regained its historic fabric. Nowadays, these houses are listed as UNESCO World Heritage Sites. In addition to this set of houses, Alaeddin Mosque and Kurunlu Mosque are two important landmarks of the neighbourhood, open for visits except for the praying hours. If you want to experience this mysterious corner in the city centre, be ready to travel in time! Continue to Bursa. Dinner and overnight at the hotel. *B/D*



Day 19, Thursday 7th May BURSA – ISTANBUL

After breakfast, the group will depart for the Green Mosque. Located in the Yeil district, the mosque was built in 1419 by Çelebi Sultan Mehmed. Green Mosque, one of the "Inverted T" plan mosques, is one of the most beautiful historical buildings of Türkiye and Bursa. The architect is Hac Vaz Pasha. Continue to Koza Inn, built in 1492 by Bayezt II to generate income for its mosque and madrasah in Istanbul. It was established in a wide area between the Orhan Mosque and the Ulu Mosque. The Han, mostly built with ashlar masonry and sometimes brick, has two floors, and the rooms' front is a portico. The portico consists of 40 concrete domes. Koza Inn has 95 rooms, 50 on the upper and 45 on the lower floors. All the rooms on the upper floor are used as shops to sell silk and craft artefacts. Lunch will be served in Bursa

before returning to Istanbul. Accommodation at the Yotel Land Side, Istanbul Airport. **B/L**

Day 20, Friday 8th May

DEPARTURE

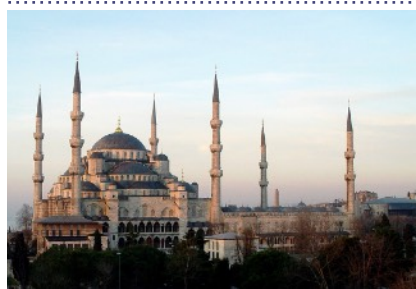
Today, check out of the airport hotel for your flight home or to your next destination. Travellers doing the Istanbul extension will be picked up via private transfer to the city centre. All flight schedules are to be advised. **B**

4 NIGHTS IN ISTANBUL (post-Türkiye tour)

Day 1, Friday 8th May

TRANSIT AND ARRIVAL TO ISTANBUL

Welcome to Istanbul, the city that famously connects the East to the West, Asia with Europe, once the capital of one of the greatest empires ever. Aside from traditionally known culture and history, Istanbul is famous today for gastronomy, music, contemporary arts, fashion and entertainment. Meet your representatives at the airport hotel. You'll be driven in a private escorted transfer to the city centre. (All flights to be determined). **D**



Day 2, Saturday 9th May ISTANBUL

After breakfast, your guide will meet you at the hotel reception for a cultural tour of

the old city. You'll visit Hippodrome Square, the Blue Mosque, and Hagia Sophia with a tea/coffee stop at Green House. An exclusive visit to Serefiye Cistern and a wonderful welcome dinner are planned for the evening. In Byzantine times, the Hippodrome, which sits next to the Blue Mosque, was a huge open-air sports stadium with banks of seats forming an elongated oval shape around a central arena. The original Hippodrome dates back to 203 and the reign of Emperor Septimius Severus. Standing on the side of the original Byzantine city, the district known as Sultanahmet is the heart of tourist Istanbul; with its soaring dome and six minarets, the Sultanahmet Mosque, better known to foreigners as the Blue Mosque, forms an unmissable feature of the Istanbul skyline. An early 17th-century architectural masterpiece, it's one of the great must-see attractions of the old city. However, it remains an important place of worship crammed to capacity for lunchtime prayer every Friday. The vast 6th-century church of Hagia Sophia (Divine Wisdom) that dominates the Istanbul skyline is one of the best-known and most visited sites of the historic peninsula, constantly busy with

visitors who come to admire its glittering mosaics and stupendous dome. **B/D**



Day 3, Sunday 10th May ISTANBUL

After breakfast, you'll head back to the old city, first visiting Topkapi Palace, the centre of the Ottoman Empire's Government Seat, ruling most of the Middle East and Eastern Europe from this palace for 500 years. This former residence of the Ottoman Sultans housed a fine exhibition of porcelain, jewellery, silverware, glassware, clocks and, Ottoman weaponry, royal treasures and was once the home to the world's largest Harem. Then, you'll transfer to the Istanbul Modern Museum – Türkiye's first modern and contemporary art museum. It is a wonderful place to spend an hour or so admiring its works. Grab some lunch before experiencing a 2-hour private tour of the Bosphorus with its majestic skyline of Istanbul – one of the world's great waterways. Dinner tonight is at Antiochia Restaurant. **B/D**



Day 4, Monday 11th May ISTANBUL

The first stop today is Suleymaniye Mosque. A masterpiece of Architect Sinan, standing proud on the Istanbul skyline, the 16th-century Süleymaniye Mosque is one of the city's largest and most beautiful mosque complexes, the burial place of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent and his wife Roxelana.

The next visit will be at Chora. What is now the Chora started as the Church of St, taking its name from the Greek word "chora" meaning "country". Today, there's precious little sign of any country-side here. Still, when the original church was built, it lay outside the Constantinian city walls, and somehow, the name stuck, even though the arrival of the Theodosian walls rendered it redundant. Continue to the Asian side of the city to visit Beylerbeyi Palace. Return to the hotel late in the afternoon. Dinner tonight is at Firuze Restaurant, on top of the IKS building. **B/D**

Day 5, Tuesday 12th May ISTANBUL AND DEPARTURE

Your last day in Istanbul is free to explore until it's time to be transferred to the airport for your flight home or to your next destination. (All flights are to be determined. Please check your separate flight schedule). **B**



Icon indicates a day where there is **moderate physical exertion**. A basic level of fitness is required: eg. A trek over 'mostly flat' terrain or climbing several flights of steps without the support of handrails or elevators.



Icon indicates a day where there is a **particularly active section**. A good level of fitness is required: eg. A longer trek over non-groomed, uneven terrain, or ascending to reach a panorama. May also include exposure to higher altitude. **An alternate activity may be offered if you choose to sit out an active section**. Please call - we are happy to discuss each tour in more detail.