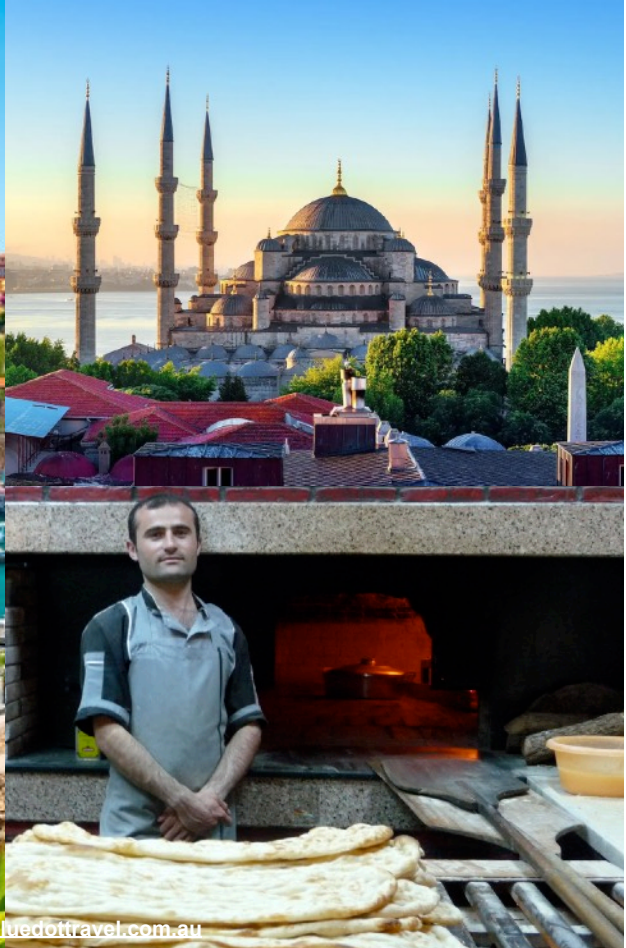


Türkiye A Cultural Gem

Departing
19th April 2026

Blue Dot Travel





\$16,890 pp

Twin-share, excludes
international flights

Single supp \$3,200

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 Aegean to the 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!



**Sunday 19th 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. There's a welcome dinner planned at the hotel. Enquire about our optional, fully guided, 4-night Istanbul extension post-stay. *D*



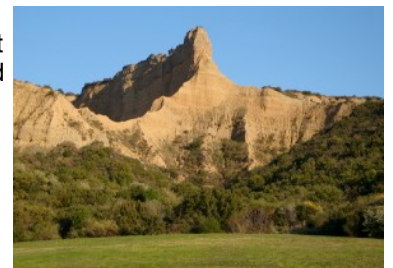
**Day 1, Monday
20th April
ISTANBUL –
GALLIPOLI**

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 two nights. Dinner is planned at Suvla Winery. *B/L/D*

**Day 2, Tuesday 21st 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 be joined 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 dinner in Canakkale at a local restaurant before returning to the hotel. *B/D*



**Day 3, Wednesday 22nd April
CANAKKALE – TROY – IDA MOUNTAINS**

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 Troy 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 Centmihan Hotel (or similar) for two nights. **B/D**



Day 4, Thursday 23rd April ASSOS

After breakfast departure to Assos, located at Behramkale Village of Ayvacık district. Aristotle, the famous philosopher of Antiquity, lived for a period in Assos and did important research on zoology, biology and botany. Many of the 4 km long walls surrounding the city are still standing today. The



Temple of Athena (Athena Tapınağı), located in the Acropolis, is one of the oldest Doric temples in Anatolia built in the Archaic Age. Among the ruins on the Acropolis, the Temple of Athena is the best place to watch

the magnificent view of Edremit Bay at sunset. A big portion of the theatre with a capacity of 4,000 spectators, has been preserved. The bridge from the Ottoman period at the borders of Behramkale Village is completely standing and still in use. Lunch own arrangements at Assos seaside fish restaurants. Proceed 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. While exploring the villages around Mount Ida, stop by the markets and bazaars selling local and regional products, including handicrafts and organic foods. Dinner at Gordo Restaurant at Güre. **B/D**



Day 5, 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 Pergamum - 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 Pergamum with its Asclepion and Acropolis, continue to Kusadasi (approx. 2.5 hrs. driving). Arrive in Sirince Village. Overnight at the Nisanyan Houses (or similar) for three nights. **B/L/D**



Day 6, Saturday 25th April EPHESUS

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. Dinner at Artemis Restaurant (or similar). **B/D**

Day 7, Sunday 26th April SIRINCE – KUSADASI

After breakfast, depart 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. Later, depart to Kusadasi to explore the town, followed by dinner at Kazim Usta Restaurant. **B/D**



Day 8, Monday 27th April

SIRINCE – PUMAKKALE – HIERAPOLIS

Check out from the Hotel and depart to Pamukkale. Pamukkale, one of Denizli's most important districts in terms of culture and tourism, is home to tourist attractions such as the Pamukkale travertines and the ancient city of Hierapolis, which are registered on the UNESCO World Heritage List as natural and archaeological sites. Lunch at your leisure and cost. Dinner will be served at Renes Seafood Restaurant Overnight at Doga Thermal Hotel in Pamukkale for one night. **B/D**



Day 9, Tuesday 28th 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 10, Wednesday 29th April 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 Celaleddin-i Rumi, with the controlled, trance-like turning or sema of the white-robed men creating a fascinating performance for the viewer. Lunch can be served at Kofteci Ramiz Plus in Kulu on our way to Cappadocia (at own cost). Dinner in the hotel. We stay overnight at the Yunak Evleri in Cappadocia (or similar) for three nights. **B/D**



Day 11, Thursday 30th April 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 12, Friday 1st 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 can be served at Old Greek House Restaurant (own expense). 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. We'll take a sunset jeep safari late in the afternoon before returning to the hotel, where you will have dinner. *B/D*



Day 13, Saturday 2nd 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. Stay in Ankara at the Divan Cukurhan Hotel for two nights. Dinner at the hotel. *B/D*



Day 14, Sunday 3rd 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 3,000 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 Anitkabir, 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/D*



Day 15, Monday 4th 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 Movenpick. *B/D*





Day 16, Tuesday 5th 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. Our accommodation is at Yotel Land Side, Istanbul Airport. **B/L**



Day 17, Wednesday 6th 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. If the flight is later in the day or evening, the group can arrange a day trip in town (own cost) via your tour leader. **B**

4 NIGHT ISTANBUL EXTENSION (post-Türkiye tour) Cost \$TBA

Day 1, Thursday 7th 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, Friday 8th 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, such as the Blue Mosque, form 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, Saturday 9th 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. It 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, Sunday 10th 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. Next, we'll visit Chora. The Chora Church, or Kariye Mosque, is a former church that has now been converted into a mosque. It is famous for its outstanding Late Byzantine mosaics and frescos. 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 with a visit to Beylerbeyi Palace. Return to the hotel late afternoon. Dinner at Firuze Restaurant, on top of the IKS building. **B/D**

Day 5, Monday 11th 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. (Flights 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.