GIFT OF TURKEY

Itinerary: 09 Days/ 08 Nights

Program in Brief	
Day 01	ISTANBUL
Day 02	ISTANBUL / Byzantine Heritage Tour
Day 03	ISTANBUL / Intercontinental Bosphorus
Day 04	ISTANBUL - ANKARA - CAPPADOCIA
Day 05	CAPPADOCIA
Day 06	CAPPADOCIA - PAMUKKALE
Day 07	PAMUKKALE - EPHESUS - KUSADASI
Day 08	KUSADASI - BURSA - ISTANBUL
Day 09	ISTANBUL - RETURN

Itinerary day by day

Day 01: ISTANBUL

Arrival in Istanbul, reception at the airport by the local operator, and transfer to the hotel. The afternoon is free for personal activities. In the evening, we will visit the city center, where you can explore Istanbul's most famous street, "İstiklal Caddesi," also known in English as "The Independence Street." Here you will find the iconic Galata Tower, a remnant of the Genoese colony in Istanbul. The tower stands tall on the Galata Walls at the entrance to the Golden Horn. With its cylindrical structure, the tower dominates the city skyline and is one of Istanbul's most visited attractions.

In the same area, you will find boutiques, music stores, bookstores, art galleries, cinemas, theaters, libraries, cafés, pubs, restaurants, historic pastry shops, chocolatiers, and dining spots. We will enjoy free time exploring this vibrant area. Afterwards, we will return to the hotel for check-in and overnight accommodation.

Accommodation	ISTANBUL Hotel	Meal Plan: Dinner & Overnight

Day 02: ISTANBUL / Byzantine Heritage Tour

Breakfast at the hotel. We will spend the day exploring Istanbul's historic old town. The tour begins with a visit to the Forum of Constantine, one of the city's earliest landmarks, built during the founding of Byzantium. At its center, stands the Column of Constantine, known today as Çemberlitaş, erected in the 4th century and still visible today.

We then continue to the Basilica Cistern, an impressive underground reservoir from the 6th century, often called the Sunken Palace. Afterward, we will visit the Hagia Sophia, a masterpiece of Byzantine architecture built by Emperor Justinian. This iconic structure has served as a basilica, a mosque, a museum, and is now again a mosque, symbolizing the rich religious history of Istanbul.

Our tour continues to the Roman Hippodrome, built in 203 AD and later expanded by Constantine the Great. Once used for chariot races and public events, it now features ancient monuments and obelisks. Next, we visit the famous Blue Mosque, known for its six minarets and stunning interior decorated with over 20,000 blue tiles.

We will end our day at the Grand Bazaar, the largest covered market in the world, with around 4,000 shops spread over 30,000 square meters. After this immersive experience, we return to the hotel for overnight accommodation.

Accommodation	ISTANBUL Hotel	Meal Plan: Dinner & Overnight

Day 03: ISTANBUL / Intercontinental Bosporus

Breakfast at the hotel. The day begins with a visit to the iconic Süleymaniye Mosque, one of the most important Ottoman landmarks, perched on a hill overlooking the Golden Horn. Its grand dome and towering minarets are visible from across the city, making it a dominant feature of Istanbul's skyline.

We then cross to the Asian side to visit Çamlıca Hill, a peaceful spot known for offering the best panoramic views of Istanbul. At 285 meters above sea level, it's a perfect place to relax and take in the stunning views of the Bosphorus and the city.

Before lunch, we will stop at the Patriarchal Cathedral of St. George, the main Greek Orthodox cathedral in Istanbul and the seat of the Ecumenical Patriarchate since the 1600s, serving as a spiritual center for Orthodox Christians worldwide.

After enjoying a typical local lunch, we will embark on a scenic Bosphorus boat tour. As we sail between the continents, we will pass by elegant mosques, Ottoman palaces, charming wooden mansions, and impressive suspension bridges that connect Europe and Asia.

The day concludes with a visit to the Spice Bazaar, a 17th-century marketplace still buzzing with colors, aromas, and flavors. It's a paradise for lovers of international cuisine, offering everything from exotic spices to Turkish delights.
Return to the hotel for overnight.

Accommodation	ISTANBUL Hotel	Meal Plan: Dinner & Overnight

Day 04: ISTANBUL - ANKARA - CAPPADOCIA

After breakfast and check-out, we depart for Ankara, the capital of Turkey. Upon arrival, we visit the Mausoleum of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, founder of the modern Turkish Republic. A key figure in the country's transformation, Atatürk is honored here for his lasting legacy and leadership.

On the way, we pass by Lake Tuz, Turkey's second-largest lake, known for its striking salt flats.
We then continue to Cappadocia, a historic region in Central Anatolia famous for its surreal landscapes and volcanic rock formations. Before reaching the hotel, we'll stop at a traditional pottery workshop to witness the region's artisan heritage.

Dinner and overnight in Cappadocia.

Optional: Early the next morning, you can join a hot air balloon ride (at an additional cost) to experience Cappadocia's breathtaking scenery at sunrise — one of the top three ballooning destinations in the world.

Accommodation	CAPPADOCIA Hotel	Meal Plan: Dinner & Overnight

Day 05: CAPPADOCIA

Breakfast at the hotel. We begin our day exploring the incredible landscapes of Cappadocia, shaped by lava flows from the Erciyes and Hasan volcanoes around 3 million years ago. The region, once called the "land of beautiful horses" by the Persians, is renowned for its surreal rock formations and rich history.

Our first stop is the Göreme Open-Air Museum, home to early Christian churches and chapels carved directly into the volcanic rock. We then continue to the Pasabag and Güvercinlik Valleys, both famous for their remarkable Fairy Chimneys — tall, mushroom-like rock formations sculpted by centuries of erosion. Later, we'll visit the Love Valley, known for its strikingly shaped natural rock pillars.

Before returning to the hotel, we'll stop at a local workshop to see how authentic Cappadocian stones are crafted into beautiful handmade pieces. Dinner and overnight at the hotel.

Accommodation	CAPPADOCIA Hotel	Meal Plan: Dinner & Overnight

Day 06: CAPPADOCIA - PAMUKKALE

Breakfast. Early departure to Pamukkale, passing by the largest caravanserai in Anatolia, known as Sultanhanı, built by Sultan Kaikubad I (1221-1237) to enhance and facilitate regional trade.

Later, we will pass through Konya, the largest city in Anatolia and the center of the Whirling Dervishes.

Upon arriving in the city of Denizli, we will visit Hierapolis and the Cotton Castle, a true natural wonder. This giant waterfall, along with the stalactites and natural pools, was formed over centuries by thermal waters rich in calcite deposits.

Return to the hotel. Dinner and overnight stay.

Accommodation	PAMUKKALE Hotel	Meal Plan: Dinner & Overnight

Day 07: PAMUKKALE - EPHESUS - KUSADASI

After breakfast, we depart for Ephesus, the best-preserved Greco-Roman city in Asia Minor, dating back to the 1st and 2nd centuries. Entering through the Magnesia Gate, we walk along marble streets lined with grand temples, fountains, and frescoed houses.

Highlights include the Library of Celsus — once the third-largest library in the ancient world — the Odeon, the Temple of Hadrian, the Trajan Fountain, and the Great Theatre, which could seat up to 25,000 spectators. Next, we visit the House of the Virgin Mary, believed to be her final home and a Catholic pilgrimage site. We then head to Kusadasi on the Aegean coast and visit a leather workshop. Dinner and overnight stay.
Note: Accommodation may be in Izmir or Kusadasi, depending on the season and availability.

Accommodation	KUSADASI Hotel	Meal Plan: Dinner & Overnight

Day 08: KUSADASI - BURSA - ISTANBUL

Breakfast. Departure to Bursa. Panoramic visit of this important city, which was the first capital of the Ottoman Empire. Visit to the Green Mosque, one of the main mosques in the city and considered one of the most beautiful in all of Turkey. We will also visit the Green Tomb, where one of the most important sultans, Mehmet I, is buried. You will have the opportunity to take a stroll through the Silk Market, where you can admire antiques, silks, perfumes, and pashminas.
Arrival at the hotel. Overnight stay.

Accommodation	ISTANBUL Hotel	Meal Plan: Dinner & Overnight

Day 09: ISTANBUL - RETURN

Breakfast and free time until the indicated time for personal activities. Transfer to the airport for your return.

End of Program

Price Included:

- 9 days / 8 nights
- Airport - Hotel - Airport transfers
- 5-star hotels
- 8 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 8 dinners
- 4 nights of accommodation in Istanbul
- 2 nights of accommodation in Cappadocia
- 1 night of accommodation in Pamukkale
- 1 night of accommodation in Kusadasi
- Professional English-speaking guides
- Tours included in Istanbul: Galata Tour / Intercontinental Bosphorus Tour
- Air-conditioned coach with Wi-Fi
- 2 bottles of water per day per passenger
- Taxes
- 24-hour assistance via WhatsApp

Price excluded:

- Optional excursions or personal expenses