

SACRED TURKEY (and Greece)

October 26 - November 5, 2026

Day 1 – October 26, Monday

Eresin Hotel Sultanahmet hotel, lunch

9 am -12 pm Welcome Meeting and group past life regression

Topkapi Palace Tour

Afternoon tour of Topkapi Palace that unfolds like a page from history. Perched above the Bosphorus, this vast complex once served as the beating heart of the Ottoman Empire, and even today, it radiates a sense of imperial grandeur and mystery.

Entering through the Imperial Gate, the bustle of the city quickly fades into the tranquil courtyards of the palace. The main palace complex offers dazzling treasures — jewel-encrusted swords, elaborate robes, and relics revered by sultans. But it is the Harem that draws the curious heart deeper. Stepping into the Harem feels like crossing into a hidden world. Once off-limits to outsiders, this private sanctuary housed the sultan's family, concubines, and the powerful Queen Mother. The tilework alone is mesmerizing — intricate Iznik designs in sapphire and emerald hues cover walls and ceilings, creating a sense of intimate luxury.

After wandering the Harem's labyrinthine halls, the path leads to Aya Irini, tucked quietly within the palace grounds. Unlike the gilded opulence of the rest of Topkapi, Aya Irini exudes a haunting simplicity. As one of the oldest churches in Istanbul, untouched by conversion to a mosque, it holds an austere beauty — bare stone walls, lofty domes, and ancient acoustics that once carried sacred chants.



Day 2 - October 27, Tuesday

Eresin Hotel Sultanahmet hotel Breakfast, lunch

In the heart of Sultanahmet, your half-day tour reveals some of Istanbul's most iconic treasures — a compact yet unforgettable journey through faith, architecture, and ancient spectacle.



The morning begins at the **Blue Mosque** (Sultan Ahmet Camii), its six slender minarets piercing the skyline. As you step inside, your gaze is lifted by a cascade of domes and over 20,000 blue İznik tiles that shimmer in the soft light filtering through stained glass. Despite the footfalls of visitors, there's a palpable serenity here — a sacred rhythm of prayer and quiet awe.

From the mosque, it's a short walk across the square to the Hippodrome of Constantinople, once the grand arena of Roman and Byzantine

chariot races. Though only fragments remain, imagination brings the space to life. The Serpent Column, Obelisk of Theodosius, and the Walled Obelisk stand like sentinels of a forgotten roar — relics of imperial pageantry and political drama.

Just a few steps away lies the **Basilica Cistern**, an underground wonder built in the 6th century by Emperor Justinian. Descending into the cool, dim chamber, you're met by a forest of marble columns rising from shallow waters. The atmosphere is otherworldly — the sound of dripping water, the play of lights on ancient stone, and the eerie gaze of the Medusa heads hidden in the shadows. It's a quiet, almost mythical experience.



The final stop is the mighty **Hagia Sophia**, a monument that encapsulates Istanbul's soul.

Once a church, then a mosque, now a mosque again — its layered identity reflects centuries of transformation. Inside, golden mosaics and Islamic calligraphy coexist beneath a vast dome that seems to hover, impossibly, above the nave. It's a place that defies simple definition, and in its grandeur, reminds visitors of the spiritual and cultural fusion that defines the city.



We will return to the hotel for some rest and then at 7 pm, **Whirling Dervishes Ceremony**

In the heart of Istanbul's historic Sirkeci district, the Hodjapasha Culture Center offers an intimate and evocative experience of Sufi spirituality through its Whirling Dervish Ceremony. Housed in a beautifully restored 15th-century Ottoman hammam, the center's high-domed architecture and acoustics create a sacred ambiance that transports visitors into the mystical world of the Mevlevi Order.



The ceremony, known as Sema, is a form of active meditation where dervishes whirl in a symbolic journey of spiritual ascent. Dressed in traditional attire—white flowing robes representing the ego's shroud, tall hats symbolizing tombstones of the ego, and black cloaks representing the worldly life—the dervishes perform a ritual that embodies the soul's quest for divine love and truth.

Accompanied by live traditional music, including the haunting sounds of the ney (reed flute), the rhythm of the ceremony guides both participants and observers into a state of

transcendence. The whirling, performed in a circular motion, represents the movement of the planets around the sun, symbolizing the unity of all existence.

Attending the Whirling Dervish Ceremony at Hodjapasha is not merely a cultural performance but a profound spiritual experience that offers a glimpse into the depths of Sufi philosophy and the pursuit of inner peace.

Day 3 – October 28, Wednesday

Nevali Hotel, Breakfast

Morning tour of bazaars. Fly to Sanliurfa

After breakfast, step into the Grand Bazaar, one of the world's oldest and largest covered markets, and you enter a labyrinth of over 4,000 shops brimming with handwoven carpets, glittering jewelry, antiques, ceramics, and colorful lanterns. It's a place where centuries-old traditions of craftsmanship and lively bargaining are still very much alive.

Just a short walk away, the Spice Bazaar envelops you in a cloud of aromas — saffron, sumac, rose, and countless blends of Turkish tea and exotic spices. Pyramids of dried fruits, nuts, and sweets line the stalls, offering an irresistible taste of Istanbul's rich culinary heritage.

Then we will drive to the airport for your flight to Sanliurfa.



Day 4 - October 29, Thursday

Nevali Hotel, Breakfast

Our first destination is **Gobekli Tepe**, the most significant archaeological site of our time, reshaping our understanding of early human history. This sacred site reveals the earliest-known religious structures, dating back an astonishing 11,000 to 13,000 years, predating pivotal human advancements like pottery, writing, Stonehenge, and even the Pyramids. Following this, we will visit the **Karaham Tepe, Haleplibahce Mosaic Museum, Kizilkoyun Nekropolis, and the Sanliurfa Archaeology Museum.**

The **Haleplibahçe Mosaic Museum** houses some of the most exquisite Roman-era mosaics in Turkey. The highlight is the stunning “Amazon Warrior Queens” mosaic—an extraordinary depiction of female warriors in vibrant detail, showcasing fine craftsmanship and dynamic storytelling. Dating back to the 3rd century, these mosaics offer a rare glimpse into ancient mythology, daily life, and the artistic richness of Roman Upper Mesopotamia.

Nestled in the Balıklıgöl Plateau of Şanlıurfa, the Kızılkoyun Necropolis is a remarkable archaeological site that offers a window into the funerary practices of the 2nd to 4th centuries AD. This ancient rock-cut burial complex, also known as the Edessa Necropolis, comprises over 100 tombs carved into the soft limestone of Tilfindır Hill.

The **Şanlıurfa Archaeology and Mosaic Museum**, inaugurated in 2015, stands as one of Turkey's most expansive museum complexes, encompassing 60,000 square meters near the historic Balıklıgöl site. It houses approximately 5,000 artifacts that chronicle human history from the Paleolithic era to the Islamic period.

A highlight of the museum is the "Urfa Man," a 9,500-year-old life-sized human statue, considered the oldest known of its kind. The museum also features artifacts from the UNESCO World Heritage sites of *Göbeklitepe* and *Karahantepe*, offering insights into early Neolithic civilizations. Exhibits are arranged chronologically, enhanced by visual reconstructions, allowing visitors to traverse through time.

Beyond its permanent collections, the museum hosts cultural events, including music performances, talks, and art exhibitions, contributing to Şanlıurfa's vibrant cultural scene. Since its opening, it has attracted over 1.3 million visitors, solidifying its status as a premier destination for history and culture enthusiasts.



We check into the hotel early evening.

Day 5 – October 30, Friday

Charisma Deluxe Hotel, Breakfast

Domestic flight to Izmir. Free afternoon

Direct flight from Sanliurfa to Izmir. The afternoon is spent at leisure.

Day 6 – October 31, Saturday

Charisma Deluxe Hotel, Breakfast



Ephesus & House of Virgin Mary

After breakfast, our first stop is the archaeological site of Ephesus, which is one of the most famous ancient cities in the world - located in western Turkey near the modern town of Selçuk. Once a major Greek and Roman city, it was home to the Temple of Artemis—one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. Visitors today can explore remarkably preserved ruins including the Library of Celsus, the Great Theatre, Roman baths, and grand streets lined with marble columns. The site offers a vivid glimpse into life in antiquity and reflects the cultural and architectural brilliance of the classical era.

We then visit the House of the Virgin Mary, located on Mount Koressos near Ephesus in Turkey, is believed to be the final home of

Mary, the mother of Jesus. This modest stone house is a revered pilgrimage site for both Christians and Muslims. Discovered in the 19th century following the visions of a German nun, the site has since attracted thousands of visitors annually. It offers a peaceful setting for prayer and reflection, with a wishing wall and sacred spring believed to have healing properties.

We transport you back to the hotel where the remainder of the afternoon is free.

Day 7 – November 1, Sunday

Charisma Deluxe Hotel, Breakfast



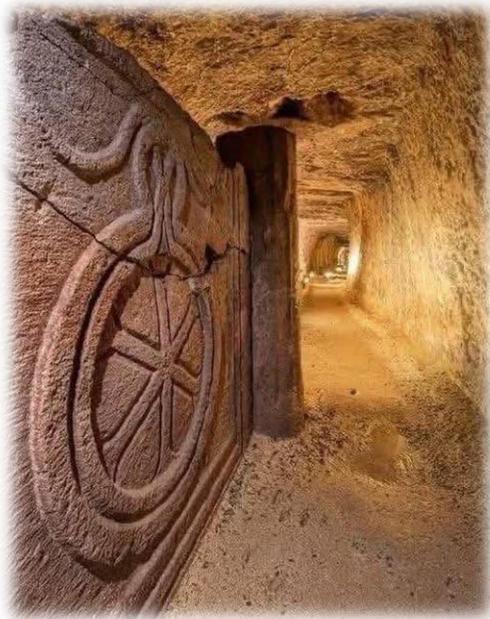
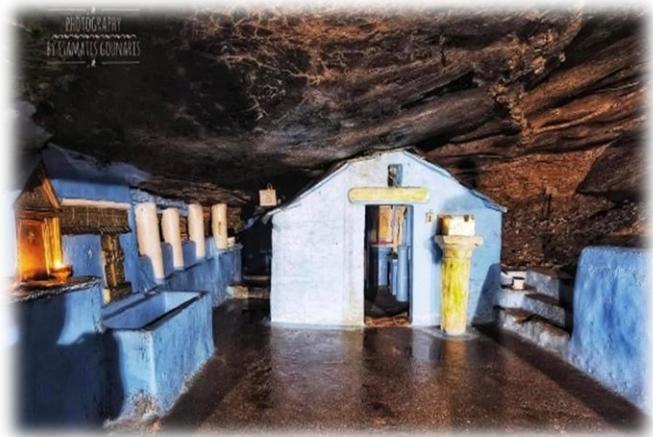
Day Trip to Samos - The church of Mother Mary and Eupalinos Tunnel and the town of Kokkari.

This morning, we take a ferry from Kusadasi to the island of Samos, a beautiful Greek island in the eastern Aegean Sea, just off the coast of Turkey. Known for its lush landscapes, vineyards, and clear waters, it has a rich history as the birthplace of the mathematician Pythagoras and the philosopher Epicurus. In ancient times,

Samos was a powerful maritime city-state and home to the impressive Heraion temple, dedicated to the goddess Hera.

Today, it's a charming destination combining archaeological treasures, traditional villages, and seaside relaxation.

Our first stop is the Cave Church of Mother Mary on Samos Island, located near the Monastery of Panagia Spiliani, is a small and sacred chapel nestled within a natural cave. Revered for its tranquil and mystical atmosphere, the cave has been a site of devotion for centuries, with pilgrims visiting to light candles and pray before the icon of the Virgin Mary. Its cool, shadowy interior contrasts beautifully with the bright Aegean landscape outside, offering a peaceful retreat and spiritual reflection point.



The next stop is the Tunnel of Eupalinos on Samos Island. An ancient engineering marvel, built in the 6th century BCE as an aqueduct to supply water to the city of Pythagorean. Remarkably, it was excavated from both ends and met in the middle—an extraordinary feat of ancient geometry and planning. Stretching over 1,000 meters through solid rock, it remains one of the greatest achievements of classical engineering and is now open to visitors.

This island is described as having a peaceful atmosphere, panoramic views of the Aegean Sea, and the spiritual ambiance of the cave chapel, which has long been a place of prayer and pilgrimage. We will then explore the town it's time to board the ferry.

Day 8 – November 2, Monday

Yunak Cave Hotel, Breakfast

Flight from Izmir to Cappadocia. Free afternoon

Transfer to Izmir Airport for your flight to Cappadocia. On arrival to Kayseri Airport, you will be met and driven to your hotel and the remainder of your day is free.

Day 9 – November 3, Tuesday

Yunak Cave Hotel, Breakfast

Goreme open-air museum



The first stop is Esentepe which is a popular panoramic viewpoint located near **Göreme**, offering breathtaking views of the region's unique rock formations, fairy chimneys, and sweeping valleys. It's especially famous for sunrise and sunset, when the sky fills with colorful hot air balloons drifting over the surreal landscape. Visitors often stop here for photos, a quick break, or to enjoy local refreshments sold by vendors.

Rising 60 meters from the surrounding landscape, it offers panoramic views of the region's distinctive fairy chimneys and valleys. Carved into a volcanic rock outcrop, the castle was historically used as a defensive stronghold, with its labyrinthine tunnels and chambers providing refuge for up to 1,000 inhabitants during times of conflict.

We also visit the **Uçhisar Castle** that stands as a testament to the ingenuity of ancient civilizations, attracting visitors with its unique architecture and breathtaking vistas. The site is part of the UNESCO-listed Göreme National Park and is easily accessible from nearby towns like Göreme, making it a must-visit destination for those exploring the wonders of Cappadocia.



The next stop is the **Göreme Open Air**

museum's origins trace back to the 4th century, influenced by the monastic reforms of St. Basil of Caesarea. Over time, the area evolved into a vibrant Christian center, with monks and nuns establishing communities in the region's soft volcanic tuff. These communities

carved out churches, chapels, and dwellings, many of which are adorned with exquisite frescoes depicting biblical scenes.



Last stop for the day, the Ortahisar Castle, the striking rock-hewn fortress in the heart of Cappadocia, Turkey. Rising approximately 86 meters above the town, it's carved from volcanic tuff and riddled with rooms and tunnels, serving as a refuge and stronghold throughout history .

Believed to date back to Byzantine times, it was part of a defensive network alongside Uçhisar and Başkale.

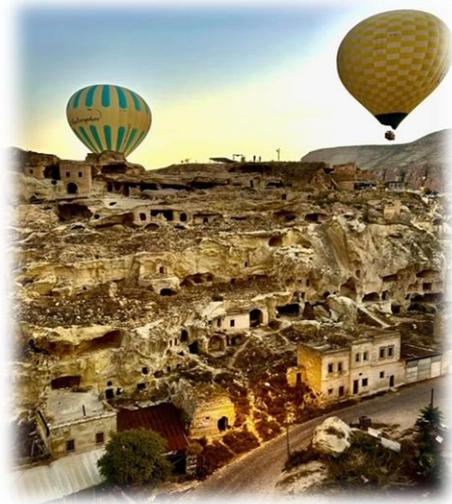
The castle offers panoramic views of Cappadocia's surreal landscape, including fairy chimneys and the distant Erciyes Mountain. Visitors can explore its chambers and tunnels, gaining insight into the region's rich cultural heritage.

We transfer you to the hotel late afternoon.

Day 10 – November 4, Wednesday
Derinkuyu Underground city, Cappadocia

Hampton Ortakoy hotel, breakfast

Domestic flight to Istanbul



Weather permitting, the hot air balloon ride (optional) is early morning for a glorious sunrise. It is absolutely exhilarating.

After an early breakfast, our first stop is the Derinkuyu Underground City, located in Cappadocia, Turkey, is an ancient subterranean complex that extends approximately 85 meters deep. Believed to have been constructed by the Phrygians in the 8th–7th century BC, it was later expanded by Byzantine Christians to provide refuge from invasions. The city could accommodate up to 20,000 people, along with their livestock and supplies, and features amenities such as stables, kitchens, wine and oil presses, chapels, and a religious school. A notable feature is a 55-meter ventilation shaft, which also served as a well.

Rediscovered in 1963 during a home renovation, Derinkuyu has been partially opened to the public and is part of the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Göreme National Park.

We also stop at the Pigeon Valley for a photo opportunity and then drive to airport for your flight back to Istanbul.



Your final evening in Istanbul is spent at leisure.

Day 11 – November 5, Thursday
Breakfast and departures