



Live Heal Travel and Altruvistas Present
**Cultural Encounters and Sacred
Sites of Turkey**
July 27 - Aug. 8, 2025
12 nights/13 days



Istanbul (4 nights)

Istanbul, a city bridging Europe and Asia, offers a unique blend of modernity and tradition. As we explore this vibrant metropolis situated on the Bosphorus Strait, we'll experience two continents in one captivating journey. With nearly 16 million inhabitants, Istanbul boasts colorful bazaars, stunning mosaics and frescoes, and a skyline adorned with mosques and palaces.

Day 1, 7/27/2025: Merhaba (Hello) Istanbul, Turkey

Arrive at Istanbul International Airport for a private transfer to your hotel. Unpack and relax before joining our LHT 'Get Acquainted' session in the evening, followed by a traditional Turkish Welcome Dinner. We'll handle group transport arrangements from the airport for your convenience. For individual arrivals, taxis are easily available and cost about \$20-40 USD for a 30-45 minute ride to the hotel.

Meals: D, Welcome Drink

Lodging: [Hotel Armada Istanbul](#)

Day 2, 7/28/2025: Blue Mosque / Hagia Sophia / Grand Bazaar

Following breakfast on the hotel's rooftop patio, we embark on a captivating day in Istanbul. Our journey includes visits to iconic landmarks such as the Blue Mosque, Hagia Sophia, and Hippodrome, delving into the city's rich cultural and religious heritage. After lunch at a local eatery, our walking tour continues through Sultanahmet, offering glimpses of Ayasofya, St. Savior in Chora Church, and the Haseki Sultan Hamami. Our highlight is the underground Basilica/Yerebatan Cistern. The tour concludes at the Grand Bazaar, a sprawling market with endless treasures. You can choose to return with the guide or explore the bazaar further. The evening is yours to unwind and savor local cuisine near the

hotel.

Meals: B, L

Lodging: [Hotel Armada Istanbul](#)

Day 3, 7/29/2025: Bosphorus Cruise / Istanbul Toy Museum

After breakfast, we embark on a delightful half-day Bosphorus cruise, strolling for about 25 minutes past historical sites to reach the waterfront. Our exploration continues on the Asian side of Istanbul, with a visit to the Kadikoy Market Area and lunch at the renowned Ciya Sofrasi, featured on Netflix's Chef's Table. In the afternoon, families will love the Istanbul Toy Museum, boasting a collection of 4000 pieces dating back to the 1860s, perfect for children aged 6 to 18 and history enthusiasts.

Dinner is your choice tonight, with optional cultural activities or a relaxing Turkish Bath experience. We'll provide local options for bookings, such as a full massage at Hurrem Sultan Hamami or at the hotel.

Meals: B, L

Lodging: [Hotel Armada Istanbul](#)

Day 4, 7/30/2025: Topkapi Palace & Harem

This morning begins with a guided tour of the Topkapi Palace, including its renowned Harem section. After lunch, we'll stop by a local Turkish Delight Shop en route back to the hotel.

The remainder of the afternoon and evening is yours to explore. You can opt for dinner at your leisure and engage in cultural activities or indulge in a Turkish Bath experience. We'll offer suggestions for local options that you can arrange in advance, such as a recommended massage at [Hurrem Sultan Hamami](#) (approximately \$150) or one at the hotel.

For tonight, there's an optional evening activity to experience the mesmerizing Fire of Anatolia Dance performance.

Meals: B, L

Lodging: [Hotel Armada Istanbul](#)

Cappadocia (3 nights)

Cappadocia is renowned for its extraordinary rock formations, vineyards, and breathtaking hot air balloon vistas, drawing visitors globally to its otherworldly landscapes. Formed by ancient seismic activity, this distinct terrain features "cotton castles" and "fairy chimneys," alongside an intriguing subterranean world with underground cities, tunnels, and caves. Our stay of 3 nights promises to immerse us in the beauty of this captivating destination.

Day 5, 7/31/2025: Traditional Pottery / Camel Safari

This morning, we'll depart from our hotel in Istanbul and fly to Cappadocia. After settling into our hotel, you can savor lunch at your leisure.

Upon arrival, we'll engage in a personal encounter with local villagers in Avanos, where we'll witness a traditional pottery demonstration. Later, we'll delve into the history of the Silk Road during a one-hour guided camel safari. In the evening, we'll relish dinner at a local villager's home, immersing ourselves in the authentic flavors and hospitality of the region.

Meals: B, D

Lodging: [Utopia Cave Cappadocia](#)

Day 6, 8/1/2025: Goreme / Kaymakli Underground City / Optional Hot Air Balloon Tour

Early risers have the option of embarking on a hot air balloon adventure (we'll arrange the Ultra Comfort Balloon flight, a 75-minute journey in a 16-passenger balloon).

Alternatively, you can enjoy some free time for extra rest or a scenic hike. Later in the morning, we'll reconvene at the hotel for breakfast and relaxation.

For lunch, we'll dine at a local restaurant where talented local women showcase their culinary skills. Then, we'll embark on a leisurely hike through the remarkable Goreme Open Air Museum, where 9th-century rock churches adorned with lapis lazuli frescoes await

exploration. Our afternoon concludes with a fascinating tour of the Kaymakli Underground City.

The evening is yours to unwind and choose from various dining options at your leisure.

Meals: B, L

Lodging: [Utopia Cave Cappadocia](#)

Day 7, 8/2/2025: Hiking / Cooking Class / Whirling Dervish Ceremony

We kick off our day with a scenic walk in either the "Love Valley" or the "Pigeon Valley," immersing ourselves in stunning landscapes and breathtaking views.

For lunch, everyone can join a delightful cooking class hosted by a local family, offering a hands-on experience and a chance to learn some new culinary skills.

During the late afternoon, take some time to relax and enjoy snacks as dinner will be served later this evening.

In the evening, immerse yourself in a captivating Whirling Dervish Ceremony, a deeply spiritual experience. Afterward, dinner is at your leisure, giving you the freedom to choose your dining experience for the evening.

Meals: B, L

Lodging: [Utopia Cave Cappadocia](#)

Izmir/Selcuk (2 nights)

The Izmir/Selcuk region of Turkey is a captivating destination steeped in history and spirituality. It is home to renowned sacred sites such as the Ephesus Museum, the Temple of Artemis, St. John's Basilica, and the House of the Virgin Mary. The Ancient Site of Ephesus, recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage site, is a testament to its rich cultural heritage and significance in ancient times. This region offers a profound journey into the past, where visitors can explore centuries-old ruins and immerse themselves in the religious and historical legacy of Turkey.

Day 8, 8/3/2025: Cappadocia to Izmir / Ephesus

Today, we'll depart from Cappadocia and take a short 80-minute flight to Izmir. Our day holds a special treat as we explore the Ancient Site of Ephesus, recognized as one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World and designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Ephesus is also renowned among Christians for inspiring the book of Ephesians.

Meals: B, L

Lodging: [Charisma Deluxe, Kusadasi](#)

Day 9, 8/4/2025 A Day of Sacred Sites

We'll embark on a guided tour of the Ephesus Museum, the Temple of Artemis, St. John's Basilica, and the House of the Virgin Mary.

Legend suggests—and the pope has acknowledged—that the stone cottage atop a hill near Ephesus could be the final residence of the Virgin Mary. This site holds deep significance for pilgrims and believers, making it an important place of pilgrimage. To honor all mothers, we'll partake in a family ritual during our visit.

Meals: B, L

Lodging: [Charisma Deluxe, Kusadasi](#)

Fethiye (3 nights)

Fethiye is home to one of the most beautiful natural harbors in Turkey so we'll be enjoying lots of water in this coastal town— canals, beaches, and the Mediterranean Sea! We'll spend our last 4 nights here in what has been dubbed one of the best vacation spots in the world!

Day 10, 8/5/2025 : Ephesus to Fethiye

Today, we're off to the beaches! We'll start by checking out of our hotel in the morning for a relaxed drive to Fethiye, known for its stunning beaches and picturesque sunsets. Although the drive will take around 4 hours in total, we'll break it up along the way.

Our journey will take us through Caunos, the filming location of "African Queen." Here, we'll board a small boat to explore the canals and visit the 6th century BC hillside tombs dating back to Carian times. We'll pause for lunch in Caunos before continuing our journey.

In the late afternoon, we'll arrive at our hotel in Fethiye. Later in the evening, we'll take a leisurely stroll through the old bazaar and enjoy a delightful dinner at the renowned fish market.

Meals: B, L

Lodging: [Alesta Yacht, Fethiye](#)

Day 11, 8/6/2025: Day Boat Cruising in Fethiye Bay

After breakfast, we'll embark on a cruise adventure in Fethiye, a captivating port city nestled along Turkey's scenic Turquoise Coast. This coastal gem boasts a natural harbor, azure waters, and ancient rock tombs like the 4th-century B.C. Tomb of Amyntas, perched dramatically overlooking the city. Today, we'll spend our time floating in the tranquil Fethiye Bay and indulging in swims in the crystal-clear waters of the Blue Lagoon. Lunch, prepared by our onboard chef, will be a delightful treat enjoyed right on the boat.

During our 5-hour cruise, there's an opportunity for snorkeling, and kids can bring along games or books for added entertainment.

For dinner, we have the freedom to explore the enchanting ambiance of this charming town on our own.

Meals: B, L

Lodging: [Alesta Yacht, Fethiye](#)

Day 12, 8/7/2025: Oludeniz / Blue Lagoon

On our final day in Turkey, we'll begin by visiting and enjoying a swim at the iconic Blue Lagoon beach. Before that, we'll stop by a turtle sanctuary and hospital, where we'll learn about marine conservation efforts and the important work being done to protect these creatures.

In the afternoon, we'll return to Fethiye, allowing time for relaxation, packing, and reflecting on our journey. As the day draws to a close, we'll come together for our Farewell Dinner, celebrating the memorable experiences we've shared during our time in Turkey.

Meals: B, D

Lodging: [Alesta Yacht, Fethiye](#)

Day 13, 8/8/2025: Return Home

After breakfast, we'll arrange a transfer from the hotel to Dalaman International Airport for your flight home. (Please note that the tour concludes at Dalaman Airport.)

Meals: B

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