

## **Historic Turkey (4 Nights / 5 Days)** *İstanbul, İzmir (Ephesus)*

- Duration** : 4 Nights / 5 Days
- Hotels** : Crowne Plaza Old City Hotel  
İzmir Mövenpick  
İstanbul President Hotel  
İzmir BW Konak Otel
- Meal Plan** : 4 breakfast + 2 lunch and no dinner as mentioned in the below itinerary
- Domestic Flights** : İstanbul / İzmir domestic flight is needed. This is only 80 minute flight.
- Remarks** :
- Depending on the availability, similar 4 star hotels may be used.
  - The tour will be operated multilingual basis. In some cases the some guide speaks two languages and in some cases there may be two guides in the bus.
  - For all tour departures, guests will be picked up from their hotels and at the end of the program they will be dropped off back to their hotels.
  - Duration of each day is mentioned in below itinerary.
  - Beverages during the meals are not included.

### **Day 1 – Arrival in Istanbul**

Arrival in Istanbul and transfer to the hotel.  
The remaining of the day is at leisure.



### **Day 2 – Full Day Classical Istanbul Tour with lunch**



After breakfast, drive to old town and visit **Hippodrome Square**, the scene of Chariot races and the center of Byzantine civic life which was originally built by Roman Emperor Septimus in 203 AD. Then visit **Blue Mosque**, built in early 17<sup>th</sup> century and known as Blue Mosque because of its magnificent interior decoration with blue İznik tiles. It is also unique in the world to have 6 minarets.

Continue to **St. Sophia Museum**, built by Emperor Constantius in 360 AD. St. Sophia was for many centuries the world's largest church and today is the fourth largest one after St. Paul's in London, St. Peter's in Rome and Duomo in Milan.

Throughout its Byzantine history, St. Sophia served as the cathedral of the city where emperors were crowned and victories celebrated.

After his conquest of the city in 1453, Sultan Mehmet II ordered for the building to be converted into a mosque by the addition of Islamic elements such as a mihrab, a mimber, minarets etc.

After having served this time as a mosque for 481 years, the building became a museum in 1934 by the order of Atatürk, the founder of the Republic of Turkey.



After lunch visit **Topkapı Palace**, built by Sultan Mehmet II after the conquest of Istanbul in 15<sup>th</sup> century. The palace housed the sultans and their exotic entourage until mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The complex is a group of structures which incorporates works from successive periods of Ottoman reign. Today the museum displays priceless collections of the imperial treasury, numerous pieces of Chinese porcelain, traditional costumes of the sultans and their families and special section for the preservation of the relics of Prophet Mohammed.

Last stop will be at famous historical **Grand Bazaar**, the largest "souk" covered oriental shopping mall in the world, where you will find 4,400 shops under one roof where each trade has its own street. There is a wide selection of leather, jewelry, antiques, copperware, souvenirs, and famous hand-made Turkish carpets displayed in this historical shopping center.



Overnight in Istanbul

Duration : 08h00-18h00

Meal Plan : Breakfast & Lunch

St. Sophia: Closed on Monday

Grand Bazaar: Closed on Sunday

Topkapı Palace: Closed on Tuesday

### Day 3 – Free Day in İstanbul

Free day. Afternoon (or morning) flight to İzmir.

Overnight in İzmir

### Day 4 – Ephesus / Virgin Mary

Visit **Ephesus**, the Roman capital of Asia minor which remains to be the best preserved ancient city in the world. During the golden age of the Roman Empire (2<sup>nd</sup> century AD), Ephesus was an important commercial and cultural center. The protector of the city was Artemis, the



Goddess whose temple was one of the “Seven Wonders of the Ancient World”. The Ephesians still worshipped Artemis when St. Paul came to the city to win converts. St. John brought Virgin

Mary to Ephesus after the death of Jesus Christ and she lived until the age of 101 in a small house built for her on Mt. Koressos. Now, the popular place of pilgrimage for Catholics and Muslims, the house received the official sanction of the Vatican and a commemoration ceremony is held every year on August 15<sup>th</sup>. The third church council in 431 was held in the Basilica of Virgin Mary in Ephesus.



Continue to visit, the **House of the Virgin** where it's believed that she passed last years of her life and died. She came to Ephesus together with St. John and taken up to Panaghia Kapulu Mountain to survive the Roman persecutions. The House was destroyed by many earthquakes and not discovered until 1951 thanks to a German Nun Catherine Emmerich who saw its location in her visions. It is

recognized as a shrine by Vatican. Now the House of Virgin Mary is renovated by George Quatman Foundation from Ohio and serves as a small church which attracts many Christians as well as Muslims coming to pray for her.

Duration : 09h30-18h00  
Meal Plan : Breakfast, Lunch  
Overnight : İzmir

### Day 5 – Departure

Transfer to İzmir Airport.