

TURKEY AT ITS BESTSM

***SUGGESTED ITINERARY FOR
AMY BASSECHES CLIENTS
NOVEMBER 5 – NOVEMBER 13, 2024***



HIGHLIGHTS

- *Visit the world-famous sites of Istanbul, like the Hagia Sophia and the Blue Mosque*
- *Cruise on the Bosphorus in a private boat, sailing between Asia and Europe*
- *Visit underground cities and cave churches in Cappadocia*
- *Enjoy a hot-air balloon ride above the lunar-like landscape of Cappadocia*
- *Sample exquisite wines at a thousand-year-old monastery in Cappadocia*
- *Visit the UNESCO World Heritage Sites of Pergamum and Ephesus*
- *Be the dinner guests of a Turkish couple, in their 150-year-old stone house*

ITINERARY

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5: ARRIVAL IN ISTANBUL

You will be arriving at the new Istanbul Airport. You will need a Turkish Visa prior to entering Turkey, which can easily be obtained online, www.evisa.gov.tr. The cost is \$50 per person for US citizens

After going through Passport control and claiming your luggage, walk over to Exit # 8, where your local host will be waiting for you, holding a sign with your name, to transfer you to the *Amira or Sirkeci Konak*.

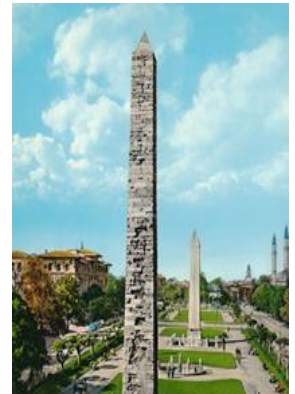
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 6: ISTANBUL



At 9:30 a.m. your guide will meet you at the lobby of your hotel and take you on a full-day tour to show you some of the highlights of this amazing city, starting with the historical center of Sultanahmet!

You will first visit the **Blue Mosque**, with its six graceful minarets and superb interior highlighted with more than 20,000 blue tiles.

Then, walk around the **Hippodrome**, a large square which was once the site of the ancient stadium, now decorated with monuments such as the ‘Serpent Column’, taken from Delphi in Greece, and the Egyptian Obelisk, taken from the Temple of Karnak in Egypt, as well as the ‘German Fountain’.

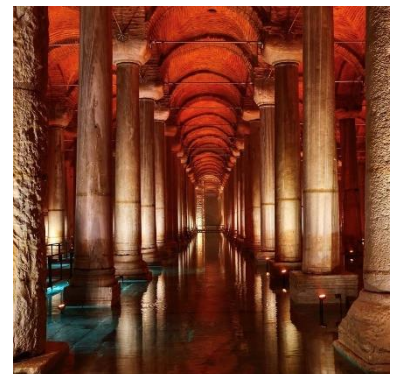


Walk over to **Hagia Sophia**, which was the largest church when it was built in the 6th Century and was later converted to a mosque, then to a museum and now back to a mosque. Its interior is elaborately decorated with beautiful mosaics and precious marbles, including some marble columns that were brought from the Temple of Artemis (which was once one of the ‘Seven Wonders of the World’) near Ephesus.



Bond movie “From Russia with Love”). The Cistern has just been opened after a lengthy restoration.

Also visit the **Underground Cistern**, the largest of several hundred ancient cisterns that lie beneath the city of Istanbul. The cistern was built in the 6th Century; it is supported by 336 Corinthian columns (featured in the James



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Also stop at the famous **Covered Bazaar** (also known as the Grand Bazaar), one of the oldest and biggest malls - with over 4000 shops under hundreds of domes. Today, the Grand Bazaar houses four fountains, two mosques, two hammams (*Turkish Baths*), and multiple restaurants and cafes. The sprawling complex consists of 12 major buildings and has 22 gates.



You will stop at **Noah's Ark Rug Store** to see some beautiful examples of Turkish carpets.

Your guide will take you back to your hotel in the afternoon. (Breakfast)

Optional Activity:

After the tour, we can make a reservation for you at the **Hurrem Sultan Hamam** in the historic center, within walking distance to many of the hotels.

These baths were built by the famous architect Sinan for the wife of Suleyman the Magnificent. You can pay directly to the Hamam. (Prices might change without notice)



THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7: ISTANBUL

Turkey is the only country where Jews have lived in peace for over 500 years without persecution, since the days of the Ottoman Empire. 1992 witnessed the celebration of the 500th anniversary of the arrival of Sephardic Jews in this land. In this tour you will get the highlights of Jewish life in Istanbul:

First your guide will take you to the Pera neighborhood which used to be one of the Jewish Quarters of Istanbul.

Begin your tour of Jewish history at the Galata Quarter, a region which had been almost completely Jewish for more than 400 years. The Office of the Chief Rabbinate is also located in Galata.



Today, Galata is known throughout the world by its huge tower, built in 1303 by the Genoese.

Galata Tower, one of the largest towers in the world, originally built in the 6th Century by the Byzantines, then reconstructed by the Genoese in 1348, and constantly used thereafter by the Byzantines, the Ottomans, and now by Istanbul's inhabitants and visitors in the era of The Turkish Republic. Taking the elevator almost to the top of the tower, you can see one of the most wonderful vistas of Istanbul.

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Galata Tower is also the place from where Hezarfen Mehmet Efendi, the first person to fly with artificial wings, started his flight in the 17th Century. He flew over the Bosphorus Straits and landed on the Asiatic side of Istanbul!

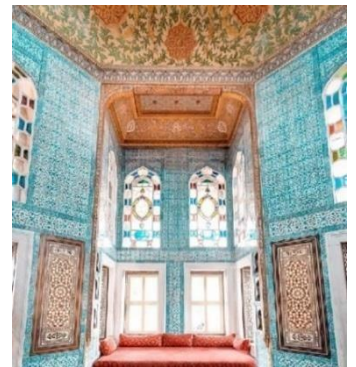
This area was the heart of Jewish life in Istanbul. Of the many synagogues in the city, **Neve Shalom Synagogue** is used for most of the community functions today. You will have an opportunity to visit the synagogue (barring any functions that might close it to non-members).



Also visit **The Quincentennial Foundation Museum of Turkish Jews** which was opened (in a different location in 1992), to commemorate the 500 years of Jewish presence in Turkey, following the Spanish Inquisition.



NOTE: For those who are not interested in the Synagogue and the Jewish Museum visits, they can visit the nearby Pera Museum, walk on the famous Istiklal Street where the only vehicle allowed is a nostalgic tram, cobblestone side streets with Art Nouveau buildings from the 18-19th Centuries, or have tea at the iconic Pera Palace Hotel built for the guests of Orient Express where Agatha Christie wrote her “Murder on the orient Express”.



Afterwards you will go back to the historic center to visit **Topkapi Palace**, home to Ottoman Sultans for many centuries. Located on the very cape of the peninsula where Constantinople was founded, Topkapi Palace was built as the center of administration of the Ottoman Empire after the city was conquered by Turks in 1453 AD. Topkapi Palace is famous for its Treasury, displaying among other treasures the famed “Topkapi Dagger” and the “Kasikci (or Spoonmaker’s) Diamond”, as well as for its China Collection.

There will be a stop for lunch. (*Lunch not included*)



Then visit the **Spice Bazaar** - which was built in the 17th Century and is also known as the Egyptian Bazaar; it is one of the oldest markets in the city and the second largest covered shopping complex after the Grand Bazaar.

The Spice Bazaar is housed in an “L”- shaped building, consisting of 88 vaulted rooms, almost all of which are now divided into an upper and a lower story. You will be fascinated with the aromas and colors of exotic spices and herbs, and delectables such as the famous Turkish

Delights.

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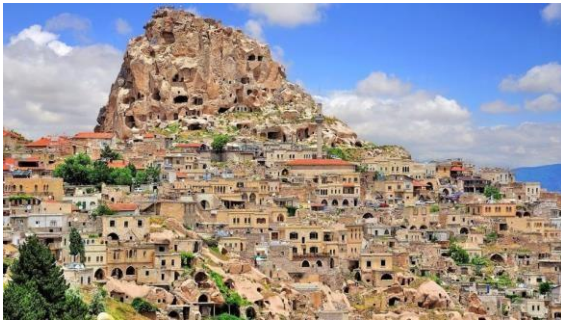
Your tour concludes with a **Bosphorus Cruise** aboard a private boat, sailing between the coasts of Asia and Europe. The famous Istanbul skyline, with its domes and minarets, is best viewed from the sea! You will have an opportunity to see wonderful Ottoman Palaces such as **Dolmabahce Palace** on the European coast, as well as old wooden mansions and modern villas, which are among the most expensive real estate in the world.

You will be sailing under the **Bosphorus Bridge** (its original name), one of the longest suspension bridges, as you sail by the quaint village of Ortakoy, which is also a center of night life nowadays, and finally by Rumelihisar, the Fortress that was built in the 1400's by Mehmet the Conqueror in just three months; he conquered Constantinople from the Byzantines and made the city, since called Istanbul, the capital of the Ottoman Empire.



At the end of the cruise your guide will take you back to your hotel. (Breakfast)

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 8: ISTANBUL / CAPPADOCIA



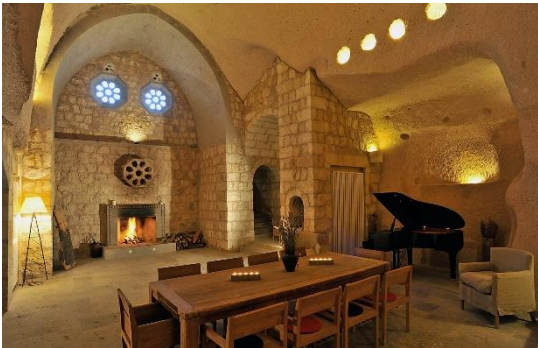
This morning you will be transferred from your hotel to Istanbul Airport for a Turkish Airlines Flight to Kayseri, one of the two gateways of Cappadocia. This ancient region, called Cappadocia, means “the Land of Beautiful Horses” in an old language. It is indeed a natural wonder that might be reminiscent of lunar landscapes due to unusual rock formations.

You find another world here, with underground cities, cave churches and cave living that people have created over millennia! When you arrive, you will be met at the Airport and transferred to your beautiful cave hotel, *Argos Cave Hotel*.



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At 5:30 p.m. you will have a special **wine tasting** in the 1000-year-old cellars of your hotel. For thousands of years the tunnels of the cellar were used to store wine for a monastery.



Some of the most popular grapes here are “Kalecik Karasi”, “Shiraz” and “Misket”, also grown right in the vineyards of the hotel.

You will experience this magical ambiance firsthand, as you taste various native wines of the region and learn about Anatolian winemaking, as well as Turkish

winemakers in general.

Afterwards, continue your gastronomic journey at the lovely *Seki Restaurant* (or similar), where all dishes are prepared with fresh local ingredients. (Dinner is not included.)

(Breakfast and Wine tasting)



SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9: CAPPADOCIA

One of the highlights of Cappadocia is the hot air balloon ride which takes about one hour over this very unique landscape.



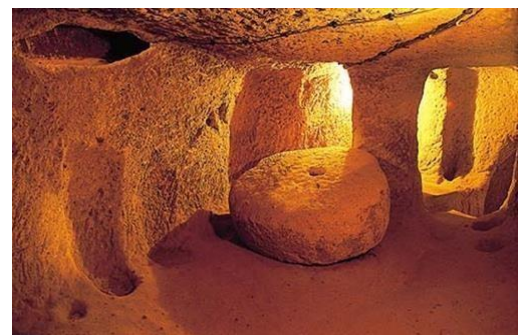
You will be advised the night before the exact time of pick up from your hotel for the **hot-air balloon ride** over this unusual landscape. You will be transferred to a central meeting area, where you can even have a light snack and you will be taken to the field where you will get on the balloons.

Your ride ends with a taste of local sparkling wine, after which you will be taken back to your hotel for breakfast.

Your guide will then pick you up around 9:30 a.m. and take you on a tour to show more of Cappadocia.

You will start with a visit to the **underground city of Kaymakli**.

Archaeologists estimate that there are at least 30 such underground dwelling complexes, first started by the Hittites around 2,000 B.C.; some are interconnected by tunnels that have been built over the millennia. The underground city you will be visiting has 8 stories carved into the ground beneath the surface. It is interesting to see the living areas, dining quarters, kitchens, storage areas, churches, etc. The spaces are well lit, and there is good ventilation; but you will need to bend down in certain places where the ceiling is very low.



Afterwards, you will be taken to **Soğanlı Valley** to visit a small village where people make their living from farming and livestock. And local women make small dolls to earn extra income for their families. These dolls have the same dresses as the village women. If interested, you can learn how to make these dolls and buy some to support the villagers. These dolls are called “Soganli Dolls” after the name of the village.



Walk from Kizilcukur to **Cavusin** through **Rose Valley**. This valley holds different colors and types of rock formations.



Pause at the ridge where you can see both valleys before descending into Rose Valley and walking to the little village of **Cavusin**, where the people still live in rock-cut dwellings and stone houses.

After the tour, your guide will bring you back to your hotel. (Breakfast)



Then, at around 5:30 p.m. you will be picked up from your hotel and transferred to an interesting venue.

The performance of the Whirling Dervishes take place at the **Sarihan Caravanserai**, a roadside inn built by the Seljuk Turks in 1249. Seljuk Turks built many such constructions all along the Silk Road throughout Anatolia for the merchants carrying goods.



Here, at this authentic location, you will watch the performance of the Dervishes, a deep-rooted ceremony started by Mevlana, also known as “Rumi”.

The ambiance of this historic building, which is most likely used by the original Mevlevis, the natural lighting of the building, and the trance-like dances of the performers all help create a memorable experience.

The program lasts for one hour and you will be transferred back to your hotel.



SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 10: CAPPADOCIA

Your guide will pick you up around at 9:30 and take you on a tour to show more of Cappadocia.



First visit the **Goreme Valley, the open-air museum** with its many rock churches that are decorated with frescoes. Some of these churches still have beautiful frescoes that you can see.

Also stop at **Esentepe** to see a panoramic view of Goreme Valley, and also **Uchisar**, the tallest point in Cappadocia, best spots for photography.

Then you will drive by **Love Valley**, a hidden valley with scenic formations. According to a myth, is said that after the death of two lovers, God rained stones to punish the feuding villagers. These stones are to kill anyone who opposes the reunion of youth.



A more modern explanation for the name Love Valley can be due in part to the heart-shaped fairy chimneys that dot the landscape. It is now a place where every lover wants to go.

You will visit **Devrent Valley**, known for its lunar-like landscape, where different rock formations and Fairy Chimney formations which formed almost 30 million years ago can be seen.

It is also called **Imagination Valley**, as you can imagine what each shape would look like!



Next, visit **Pasabaglari or Monks' Valley** (the world-famous Fairy Chimneys), formerly known as 'Valley of the Priests' with its towering rock formations that are now the symbol of Cappadocia,

where you can find some of the most striking **Fairy Chimneys** in Cappadocia, with twin and even triple-rock caps, resembling those seen in the Hobbit and Smurfs



One of the three-headed fairy chimneys has a chapel built in the name of St. Simeon and a retreat cell. St. Simeon, who lived in the 5th century, took refuge first on a two-meter-high and later on a 15-meter-high column and lived there.

Also stop at the Zelve Open Air Museum which is one of the oldest settlements of Cappadocia and one of the three UNESCO sites in the park.



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Zelve became one of the important settlements and religious centers of Christians especially in the 9th and 13th centuries.

Afterwards, visit the village of **Avanos**, the center of pottery making in Cappadocia. If you like, you can try your hand on an old-fashioned potter's wheel to create your clay masterpiece using ancient Hittite techniques.

After the tour, your guide will bring you back to your hotel. (Breakfast)



MONDAY, NOVEMBER 11: CAPPADOCIA / IZMIR / PERGAMUM

Note: We do not have the schedule for this airline at this time. This morning flight operates only TWO times a week, so we may have to move the dates slightly.

At 6:00 a.m., you will be transferred to Kayseri Airport for your Sun Express Airlines Flight # 9039, departing at 8:25 a.m. for Izmir. Upon arrival Izmir Airport at 10:00 a.m., your local guide will meet you at the airport, and take you to **Pergamum**, one of the UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Turkey.



The visit to the Acropolis in Pergamum will offer a great view of the valley below, and impressive ruins such as a very steep theater, various temples (now restored), and the **Altar of Zeus** which was described as the “Throne of Satan” in the *Bible*.



(Most of the reliefs from this site are now housed in Berlin at the Pergamum Museum)

You will see the site of the famous Library that once held over 200,000 scrolls of books written on *parchment*, which was invented in Pergamum (hence the name).



You will also be visiting the **Aesculapion**, the ancient hospital where the famous physician Galen had practiced medicine over 1,800 years ago. [There was an inscription over the entrance of the hospital that read, “In the name of Gods, Death is forbidden to enter”]!



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Our tour will include the library and the theater of the ancient Hospital that had been used for occupational therapy at the time, as well as the Sacred Tunnel where patients had slept (and the adjoining temples where their dreams had been interpreted).



On the return to Izmir, there will be a stop at a small village for dinner at the 150-year-old, restored stone house of a Turkish couple.

The wife is a gourmet cook, and the husband is an expert on Turkish wines. Drive to Izmir for an overnight stay.
(Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner)



TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12: IZMIR / EPHEBUS

Your guide will meet you at your hotel at 9:00 a.m. and take you to **Ephesus**, one of the best-preserved cities of antiquity, which is also one of the largest open-air museums. One of the original ‘Seven Wonders of the Ancient World’, the Temple of Artemis (Diana), was also located in Ephesus.



Before you start your drive, stop. You can have a short **Jewish Tour** around Izmir. The historical heart of Izmir's Jewish life was in the synagogues of "La Judiera", the area of the bazaar where the synagogues are located and where some Jewish merchants still work.

After that short tour, drive to Ephesus which is about an hour drive.

Ephesus is also famous as the place visited by Apostle Paul (twice) and by John; it was mentioned in the *Book of Revelation*, as one of the Seven Churches, and in the *Acts of the Apostles*.

During this comprehensive tour, you will walk over the marble streets of ancient Ephesus, adorned on both sides with temples, theaters, fountains, and baths, as well as other ancient structures.



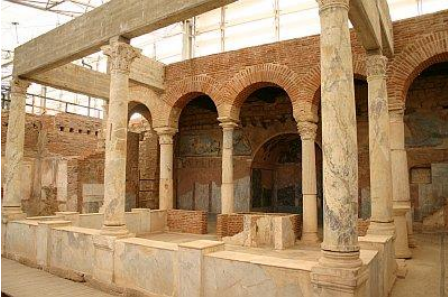
repute”!

You will have the opportunity to visit the **Grand Theater** (mentioned in the *Acts of the Apostles*) that accommodated over 24,000 people, the ancient marble public toilets, and the first advertisement - carved on the marble street, giving directions to the “house of ill-



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The highlight will be a tour inside the “**Terrace Houses**”, homes to the wealthy Romans that afford a rare look into everyday life of a family during the Roman period.



Then, you are ready to enjoy a special lunch at a charming restaurant, featuring traditional dishes made with the local produce.

Afterwards, there will be a drive by the site of the **Temple of Artemis**, which was one of the ‘Seven Wonders of the Ancient World’, and the **Basilica of St. John** [believed to have been built over the grave of St. John, relatively well preserved and partially restored, where you can still see the baptismal pools].

The greatness and splendor of ancient Ephesus, then, shall come alive again at the **Archaeological Museum** in nearby Selcuk.

You will see two famous statues of the Ephesian Artemis, who was the mother goddess for whom one of the Seven Wonders of the World was built, a collection of ancient medical and cosmetic tools, and statues of famous doctors (as Ephesus had housed an important school of medicine), as well as a monument that bears an



inscription of customs regulations and tax collection rules – in short, providing an insight into how life was 2000 years ago!

If interested, you can also visit the **House of the Virgin Mary**, believed to be the last house of Mary, and now a place of pilgrimage for Catholics.

You will drive back to Izmir for an overnight stay. (Breakfast and Lunch)

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 13: DEPARTURE

In the morning, you will be transferred to Izmir Airport for your flight to Istanbul, to connect to your international flight. (Breakfast)

END OF SERVICES

Amy Perry Basseches
Lisa Perry Hellerstein (my sister, based in NYC)
Sarah Notton (a Toronto friend of mine)
Cassie Polhemus (a US friend of mine, based in Vermont)
Anette Metz?

SAMPLE HOTELS

ISTANBUL OPTIONS:

Hotel Amira Istanbul: November 5 – November 8
Confirmation # 9887

This hotel offers spaciouly designed 34 rooms at the center of a historic city, the Sultanahmet area. Hagia Sophia, Blue Mosque and the Grand Bazaar are just steps away. The hotel features a lounge terrace with sweeping Sea of Marmara views



Amira Hotel offers a rich buffet breakfast and tasty 5 O'clock tea treats and free wireless internet access.

The well-equipped fitness center is available 24 hours for in-house guests only.



Kucuk Ayasofya Mah. Mustafapasa Sok. No: 43
Sultanahmet 34122 Istanbul / Turkey
Phone: +90 212 516 16 40
<http://www.hotelamira.com/>

CAPPADOCIA

Argos in Cappadocia: November 8 – November 11
Confirmation # 18462650

Argos is located in the heart of Cappadocia, on the site of an ancient monastery in Uchisar Village. This boutique hotel complex is made up of a restored series of ruins in historic Uchisar, in an old, abandoned, neighborhood on the hillside facing Pigeon Valley. A series of traditional houses adjacent to one another were restored or re-constructed with traditional methods to re-create the texture of the neighborhood.



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Hotel Argos in Cappadocia opened in 2010, with 51 units of accommodation, each different from the other. Today, the hotel contributes to the social, cultural, and economic life of the village of Uchisar, with a unique under-ground tunnel, restaurant, wide terraces, gardens and vineyards, and a magnificent multipurpose hall created with the restoration of a 1500-year-old rock-carved monastery (Bezirhane) that can host a series of cultural events from concerts to symposia. The unique cave cellars hold thousands of bottles of great Cappadocia wine, which get top awards in international competitions. The views from the hotel are magical.

Uchisar 50240 Nevsehir

Phone: +90 (384) 219-3130

<http://www.argosincappadocia.com/EN/>



IZMIR

Swissotel Grand Efes Izmir: November 11 – November 13
Confirmation # 18462650

The 5-Star Swissotel Grand Efes is located in the heart of Izmir's commercial hub and overlooking at the spectacular Kordon Promenade, on Turkey's Aegean Sea. Adnan Menderes International Airport is less than 10 miles (15 km) and 20 minutes away. Swissotel Büyük Efes has 402 luxury rooms including 55 elegantly decorated suites.

With lush gardens and all the amenities that a deluxe hotel can offer, Swissotel Izmir is among the best in the city.



Celebrated Colombian artist,

Fernando Botero's sculpture, "Man on Horse", stands at the entrance of the hotel and leads guests into a living, breathing gallery of more than 800 artistic masterpieces from around the world. From emerging Turkish artists to established names such as Rabaroma, Lorenzo Quinn, Mike Berg and Anthony Gormley welcome the hotel guests.



Alsancak, Gazi Osman Paşa Blv. No:1, 35210

Konak/İzmir, Turkey

<https://www.swissotel.com/hotels/izmir/>

PRICING & PACKAGE DETAILS

NET RATE BASED ON FOUR GUESTS IN FOUR SINGLE ROOMS: \$5,660

NET RATE BASED ON FIVE GUESTS IN FIVE SINGLE ROOMS: \$5,385

PACKAGE INCLUDES

- All transfers per itinerary
- All tours with English-speaking licensed professional guides
- Air-conditioned chauffeur-driven vehicles
- All entrance fees
- All transportation, including ferry boats, tolls and parking
- Private cruise on the Bosphorus
- Wine tasting in Cappadocia
- Hot air balloon ride in Cappadocia
- Whirling Dervishes show
- Special dinner in a Turkish Village House
- Three-night accommodation in Istanbul at the Amira Hotel in deluxe rooms
- Three-night accommodation in Cappadocia at the Argos in Cappadocia in Standard rooms
- Two-night accommodation in Izmir at the Swissotel Grand Efes in Standard Garden view rooms
- Daily breakfast
- Two Lunches
- All taxes

PACKAGE DOES NOT INCLUDE

- Turkish Visa
- International flights
- Domestic Flights (You will need Istanbul-Cappadocia, Cappadocia-Izmir and Izmir-Istanbul flights)
- Whirling Dervishes Performance in Cappadocia
- Any item not specifically included in the Itinerary
- Items of a personal nature
- Alcoholic beverages, unless otherwise specified.
- Gratuities to guides and drivers
- Trip Cancellation Insurance

PAYMENTS AND PENALTIES

Deposit: \$500 per person is requested when services are confirmed.

Penalty: \$250 per person if cancelled before 30 days prior to the tour

Full payment is due 30 days prior to the start of the tour

Nonrefundable after full payment

Travel insurance is recommended

MAIN CONTACT INFORMATION IN TURKEY
FOR ANY CHANGES, QUESTIONS, CONCERNS, PROBLEMS
PLEASE CONTACT:

Mr. Caglar Akturk
Mobile Phone: +90 (531) 742-7727 / 90 (532) 420-6627
NEWPORT INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL, LTD.
Operations Department

MOST COMMUNICATIONS IN TURKEY ARE HANDLED BY WHATSAPP. IT IS FREE AND VERY EASY TO USE. WE HIGHLY RECOMMEND THAT YOU DOWNLOAD THAT APP ON YOUR MOBILE PHONE.

GUIDES:

Guide in Istanbul:
Ms. Melike Yazicioglu Taspinar
Mobile: (0532) 532-618-4243

Guide in Cappadocia:
Mr. Omer Karip
Mobile: (0532) 462-5714

Guide in Izmir:
Mr. Vitali Bega
Mobile: +90 507-215-6514

Note: Please note that sometimes, due to unforeseen circumstances, guides might change. As of this printing, the above-mentioned guides will be showing you Turkey. Please also note that the guides might change the order of the sites visited as circumstances may necessitate. These tours sometimes require walking on cobblestone streets and uneven surfaces.

HOT AIR BALLOON COMPANY

Royal Balloon Company
Phone: +90 384-271-3300
Mobile Phone: +90 549-271-3300

You will be getting a call from Royal Balloon the night before about your exact pick-up time from your hotel. Please note that balloons can be cancelled due to weather without notice. In this case, you would get a credit.