

Istanbul to Athens Explorer

Country(ies): Turkey , Greece

Tour type: Small Group

Transport: AC minibus/coach

Group size: Min: 4 | Max: 50

Days: 15 days

Start Location: Istanbul, Turkey

End Location: Athens, Greece

Meals: Breakfasts - 14, Lunches - 0, Dinners - 6

Highlights:

Istanbul Old City, Cappadocia scenery, Underground city, Pamukkale, Ephesus ruins, Acropolis & Parthenon in Athens, Epidaurus, birth place of the Olympics at Olympia, Temple of Apollo at Delphi, clifftop monasteries at Meteora



Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival in Istanbul

Your exciting two-week voyage begins in Istanbul. This famous city is located at the meeting point of two continents, Europe and Asia. As such, it abounds with captivating cultural, historical, and religious landmarks.

Grand old buildings contrast wonderfully with the cosmopolitan atmosphere. You arrive at the airport and are transferred to your hotel. The rest of the day is free for you to spend at your leisure.

OVERNIGHT: Istanbul 4-star hotel

MEALS: None

EXTRAS: Single room supplement (TUSGTG) Extra day in Istanbul - pre-tour

Day 2: Istanbul Old City Tour

Today we tour the older areas of Istanbul, known as the Old City. We stop at its most important landmarks, including the majestic Hagia Sophia, the famous Blue Mosque, the fascinating Topkapi palace, and the remarkable Hippodrome.

We also have the choice of enjoying a boat cruise on the Bosphorus, the river that separates Europe from Asia. The night is spent in Istanbul.

OVERNIGHT: Istanbul 4-star hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 3: Bosphorus Cruise. Fly to Cappadocia

This morning we'll take a 1 hour cruise along the Bosphorous River to take a view of the city from this narrow straight of water which separates Europe from Asia, along the way your guide will give you an overview of the historical sights as you pass by.

This afternoon we'll take a short flight to Kayseri and onwards by a short road transfer to Cappadocia. This magical place has emerged as one of the most popular destinations in Turkey. Its unique landscape is made up of hundreds of volcanic rock formations in strange and peculiar shapes.

OVERNIGHT: Cappadocia boutique hotel

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

EXTRAS:

Day 4: Cultural Sites and Carpet Weaving Village

Today we visit a series of unique cultural and archaeological landmarks. First, we tour the Goreme Open Air Museum, where numerous churches and monasteries have been built into the rocky mountainsides. Inside, many colourful frescoes and paintings have been beautifully preserved.

We then make our way to see the fairy chimneys of Pasabag and visit the impressive Uchisar Castle, before stopping off at a carpet village. The art of carpet weaving is historically significant in Turkey, and our visit provides us with a chance to see how the process works. Our day ends off with an optional folklore and belly dancing performance.

OVERNIGHT: Cappadocia boutique hotel

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

EXTRAS:

Day 5: Kaymakli, Sultan Hani Caravansary, Mevlana Museum

Today we visit and explore the Underground City of Kaymakli. We then travel in the footsteps of the travellers and traders of the past. Heading down the famous ancient Silk Road towards Konya, we stop off at the Sultan Hani Caravansary, one of the biggest caravansaries in the world.

Historically, this was a place where travellers would stop to rest during their travels, and we are able to imagine their experiences as we stop to do the same. We continue on our way to Konya, where we visit the Mevlana Museum. This is the resting place of Jalaluddin Rumi, one of the most celebrated poets in the world.

Our last stop today is the Aladdin Mosque, a 12th-century place of worship.

OVERNIGHT: Konya 4-star hotel

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

EXTRAS:

Day 6: Pamukkale, Hierapolis

Today we leave Konya and visit the travertines of Pamukkale. This remarkable natural site is made up of white calcium steps that are dotted with bright blue pools and hot springs, creating a magical contrasting landscape.

We then head to the ruins of the city of Hierapolis, which features many temples and other religious sites, earning it the name "The Sacred City". We see its impressive theatre, which is beautifully preserved, as well as the Necropolis, the enormous graveyard.

We continue to the Temple of Apollo. This was built in dedication to the famous Apollo, the Greek god of poetry, music, healing, and medicine. We can also see the beautiful leather goods that are handcrafted by the local people.

OVERNIGHT: Pamukkale 4-star hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 7: Laodicea

Our destination today is Kusadasi, one of Turkey's most popular beach resorts. On our way, we stop to explore the ancient city of Laodicea, which was once the main city of the Lycus River Valley region. Extremely well-preserved, this city was once known as The City of Zeus - Diospolis. In the afternoon we will continue our journey to Kusadasi, where you'll have time to relax by the Aegean sea.

OVERNIGHT: Kusadasi boutique hotel

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

EXTRAS:

Day 8: Ephesus

Today we visit the ruins of Ephesus. The remains of this ancient city have been very well preserved, reconstructed, and restored. Visitors can therefore explore the city and experience it as its original residents might have done.

This is a unique and thrilling experience. Leaving Ephesus, we stop at another carpet weaving village, before we leave Turkey. We arrive in Athens, Greece.

OVERNIGHT: Athens 4-star hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 9: Free Day in Athens

Today is spent exploring Athens on your own. Greece's legendary capital is one of the most culturally and historically significant cities in the world. It was once the historical capital of Europe, and is bursting with religious, philosophical, and mythological sites and landmarks.

Keeping in mind the sites that will be included on the following day's tour, you are free to explore this intriguing city at your own pace.

OVERNIGHT: Athens 4-star hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 10: Athens City Tour

Today we get a taste of Athens. All the key landmarks are included on our tour: the iconic Acropolis, the Panathenaic Stadium, Hadrian's Arch, the Temple of Zeus, the Parthenon, and more.

You will feel as though you have stepped into the pages of a history book or mythology novel. Some of the more modern landmarks of Athens are also included on the tour: its University, National Library, Academy, and Syntagma (Constitution) Square.

OVERNIGHT: Athens 4-star hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 11: Corinth Canal and Mycenae

Today we make our way to the Pelopponese Peninsula via the Corinth Canal. This canal, one of the world's smallest, separates the mainland of Greece from the Peninsula. Once on the other side, we head towards Mycenae. This ancient city was the citadel of the Mycenaean civilization, one of the world's foremost ancient nations.

We are able to appreciate the famous and unique aspects of the city, including the Cyclopean walls, the iconic Lion Gate at the entrance, numerous royal tombs, and the burial site of Agamemnon, who was an eminent King of Mycenae. Our overnight destination is the scenic coastal town of Nafplio.

OVERNIGHT: Nafplion 4-star hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 12: Olympia

Today we visit the birthplace of the Olympic Games: the city of Olympia. Here we can see many interesting landmarks, including the Ancient Stadium, where the Games of old took place.

We also visit the Archaeological Museum of Olympia, which houses a very famous statue known as Hermes of Praxiteles. We then head to the city of Delphi via the Rio-Antirio Bridge, another famous landmark, although this one is much more recent!

OVERNIGHT: Delphi 4-star hotel

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

EXTRAS:

Day 13: Delphi

Today is spent touring Delphi. This was another key centre of ancient Greece. Its main attraction is the ruins of the Temple of Apollo, which is found on the slopes of a magnificent mountain.

We see the Sanctuary of Athena, who was one of the Oracles of Delphi, as well as the Castalian Spring, the waters of which were used for cleaning the temple and cleansing those who came to it. Our overnight destination is the city of Kalambaka, which is reached after a drive through several charming central Greek villages.

OVERNIGHT: Kalambaka 4-star hotel

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

EXTRAS:

Day 14: Meteora

We see another captivating natural and archeological spectacle today - the dramatic formations of Meteora which rise impressively into the sky. Old Christian monasteries sit atop and along the cliff faces of this UNESCO World

Heritage Site.

Leaving Meteora, we make our way back towards Athens via Trikala, Lamia, and Thermopylae. On the way, we stop to see the statue of King Leonidas, the celebrated Spartan king who is remembered for his heroic stand against Persian forces in the famous Battle of Thermopylae.

OVERNIGHT: Athens 4-star hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 15: End of tour

Our 15-day adventure comes to an end today. After breakfast in Athens, you will be transferred to the airport to board your flight home.

OVERNIGHT: N/A

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Included:

- All accommodation as stated in the itinerary in 4-star & boutique hotels
- All transport and transfers in AC vehicles
- 24-hour airport arrival & departure transfer service
- Domestic flight from Istanbul to Kayseri
- Services of local tour guide in Turkey and Greece
- Entrance fees to sites visited in Turkey
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary (14 breakfasts, 7 dinners)
- Tipping kitty

Excluded:

- International flights
- Visa fees (if required)
- International flight between Izmir (ADB) and Athens (ATH)
- Travel insurance (compulsory, available on request)
- Meals not indicated in the itinerary
- Entrance fees to sites visited in Greece (allow approx. EUR 79 (Apr-Oct) or EUR 45 (Nov-Mar))
- Greek hotel residence tax (allow EUR 10.50p/p for shared rooms, EUR 21 for single rooms, see Tour Notes)
- Drinks, snacks and other personal expenses (e.g. laundry)
- Tips for guide & driver
- Optional tours
- Any other items not mentioned above

Options

Our tours are designed to include all that you need to enjoy a really special time in the destination you're visiting. However, we do also offer some extra options to complement the tour and add some additional sightseeing or activities, or some extra time at either end of the tour.

All accommodation based options (e.g. Single supplements, extra nights, cruise upgrades) should be booked and paid for in advance so that we can make the appropriate arrangements. Other options may either be booked and paid for in advance or while you are on the tour, though we recommend booking in advance to ensure there are no issues with availability.

Many options are priced the same throughout the year, but some may incur single or high season supplements - full details are given on the tour reservation form or on request.

Extra day in Istanbul - pre-tour

Min numbers: 1

This option adds an extra day to the start of your tour, staying in the same hotel as the main tour itself (subject to availability). On tours which includes airport transfers, these are still included on your extra day. Prices shown are per person and based on two people sharing.

Note: Single room and peak season supplements apply.

Single Room Supplement (TUSGIA)

Min numbers: 1

The tour price is based on 2 people sharing twin/double rooms. This option books a single room in all the accommodation throughout the tour. If you are a single traveller and would be happy to share a room, let us know and we will see if we can pair you up with another single traveller of the same sex. If a room share is not available when you book then we will add the single room supplement to your booking and it will be payable with your balance payment unless we have arranged a room share for you by then. If a room share is arranged after you have paid the supplement then we will refund it to you. Room shares are arranged in order of booking.

Note: Single supplement prices may vary seasonally.

Cappadocia Cooking Class

Min numbers: 1

Join an immersive cooking experience from 17:30 to 21:30 in a Turkish village house, where you'll learn to prepare a three-course meal primarily using the traditional 'Tandır' method. After the cooking session, you'll get to enjoy your delicious creations in a traditional village setting, truly immersing yourself in Turkish culinary traditions.

Tour includes Transportation in a fully air-conditioned, Pick up & drop off from/to your hotel, English speaking chef and cooking class.

Note: A minimum of 2 passenger are required for this option to operate.

Kusadasi Cooking Class

Min numbers: 1

Venture into the Turkish countryside and cook authentic dishes such as Sultan Köfte, Mantı, and Yaprak Sarma alongside a professional chef. Afterwards, savour your culinary creations with local wine in a tranquil village setting.

Tour includes Transportation in a fully air-conditioned, Pick up & drop off from/to your Kusadasi hotel, English speaking chef and cooking class.

Note: A minimum of 2 passenger are required for this option to operate.

Istanbul Cooking Class

Min numbers: 1

Uncover the secrets of traditional Turkish cuisine with a local chef in the hotel kitchen. You'll create, cook, and then enjoy your own Turkish meal, all while taking in a stunning rooftop view.

Tour includes Transportation in a fully air-conditioned, Pick up & drop off from/to your Istanbul hotel, English speaking chef and cooking class.

Note: A minimum of 2 passenger are required for this option to operate.

1. Accommodation

This tour uses a range of good quality hotels mainly at the local 4-star level but with some interesting boutique style hotels included too. Please check the Accommodation section for more information on the normal hotels used on this tour. This list is given as a guide though and hotels may change from time to time to others of a similar standard.

Accommodation levels and hotels may be slightly different in Turkey and Greece to general Western standards. We regularly inspect all the hotels we use to ensure that the service you receive is as close as possible to your expectations. Please check your hotel room when you first arrive (hot water, cleanliness etc.), so that your guide can assist with any problems if required.

We will contact you with your arrival hotel details normally a couple of weeks before departure. Further hotels through the tour are not advised in advance.

Check-in Times: Official hotel check-in times in Greece and Turkey are between 14.00 and 15.00. However, we do always try to ensure that if you arrive early, you can check into your room as soon as possible. We can nearly always get you into your hotel rooms by midday, but please understand that it is out of our control if the hotel is full and it takes a little longer. You will have full use of the hotel facilities while you wait if there is a short delay.

2. Transport including Izmir-Athens flight

Our Turkey & Greece tours use a mix of air conditioned minivans, minibuses and coaches depending on the size of the group.

The international flight between Izmir (ADB) and Athens (ATH) is not included in the price of the tour and should be booked separately. Good flight options are available with Turkish Airlines and some low cost airlines. You may be able to include this flight on your overall flight ticket if you fly with Turkish Airlines (eg. Home-Istanbul Izmir-Athens, Athens-Home).

Your airport transfers are included in Izmir and Athens regardless of the time of your flight. Please contact us if you have any questions about booking this flight.

3. Transfers

The tour includes a 24-hour airport arrival transfer service in either of Istanbul's two airports (IST or SAW), as well as a departure airport transfer in Athens (ATH). All other transfers throughout the tour including to the airport in Izmir are also included.

4. Group Size / Tour Leaders / Guides

We are committed to being a small group operator, as we feel this gives everyone in the group the best chance to get to know their fellow travellers and to hear and make the most of their guide. Instead, we set group departures on this tour to have a maximum of 20 travellers in Turkey and a minimum of 4. While in Greece, the tour is arranged differently on a 'seat in coach' basis with a maximum group size of 50.

In Turkey we provide a fully trained, local English-speaking guide to accompany you all the way from Istanbul to the end of the tour in Kusadasi. You are also transferred by the guide or one of our other representatives to the airport in Izmir for your departure to Greece.

In Greece a fully trained, local English-speaking guide accompanies you for all the sightseeing tours through Nafplion, Olympia, Delphi, Meteora and back to Athens.

At Encounters Travel we try to use local guides and reps as much as possible. We feel this gives you the best experience of the country and the sites you are seeing.

5. Entrance fees, Hotel fees & permits

Entrance fees to all sites visited in Turkey are included in the tour price.

However, due to a higher risk of changing prices, entrance fees to the tourist sites visited in Greece are not included and you will need to cover the cost of these as you go along. Current prices are shown below, though these are subject to change by the local authorities at any time. A 50% discount is currently available on some fees during the winter months of November to March. Not all of the entrance fees below apply to all tours - please check your itinerary and the inclusions/exclusions section for a budget for your trip.

Athens - Acropolis - Summer EUR 20, Winter EUR 10
Athens - Acropolis Museum - Summer EUR 5, Winter EUR 5
Athens - Hadrian's Arch - Free
Athens - Panathenaic Stadium - Free
Athens - Parthenon - Free
Athens - Propylaea - Free
Athens - Temple of Athena Nike - Free
Athens - Temple of Olympian Zeus - Free
Corinth Canal - Free
Delphi Ancient Site & Museum - Summer EUR 12, Winter EUR 6
Delphi - Temple of Apollo - Free
Delphi - Treasury of Athens - Free
Mycenae - Tomb of Agamemnon - Summer EUR 12, Winter EUR 6
Nafplio - Palamidi Fortress - EUR 8
Olympia Ancient Site & Museum - Summer EUR 12, Winter EUR 6
Olympia - Temple of Zeus - Free
 Meteora - 2 monasteries - Summer EUR 6, Winter EUR 6

Camera Fees: Photography may be restricted in various ways at different sites. Often flash photography is often forbidden to protect the exhibits and ancient pigments, and sometimes cameras are not allowed in at all. Please respect these rules as they are there partly for your benefit. Tickets are not generally required for normal cameras, but if you have a video camera, if its use is permitted there will sometimes be a charge.

Hotel Residence Fees: The Hellenic National Tourism Organization operates a residence fee which is applied on all hotel accommodation. The fees should be paid by guests directly to the hotel before the end of their stay and are not included in the tour price. Fees are per room per night (not per person) and have been set at EUR 1.50 for 3* hotels, EUR 3.00 for 4* hotels and EUR 4.00 for 5* hotels.

6. Tipping

Tipping is common practice in Greece, though not as extensive as in Turkey. In both countries, for basic restaurants, taxis and local markets, leave the loose change. For more up-market restaurants we suggest 5% to 10% of your bill.

We include a 'tipping kitty' in your tour price which your tour guide will use to tip a wide range of people along the way to help ensure the smooth running of the tour. This does not include your tour guide(s) or driver(s) though.

Drivers: You may have a range of private drivers on your trip. For those you see for at least several days and who are more involved with the group, a tip of around EUR 1-2 per person per day is generally appropriate.

Tour guides: If you think your tour guide and/or tour leader has worked hard and provided a good service then s/he will appreciate a tip of a few Euros. How much you tip is subject to your satisfaction with their service and your personal budget. You should not feel pressured to tip any particular amount. As a guideline, we can suggest that for good service, a tip of EUR 3-5 per person per day for local tour guides or local tour leaders would be fine.

7. What to Take

Luggage: Suitcases, rucksacks or fabric holdalls are all fine to bring with you on the tour. You should also bring a small daypack/bag to take out during the day. Your main luggage will normally be left in the hotel during your sightseeing trips. However, you do have lots of transfers on this tour, between hotels and several airports. So, please only bring as much as you are comfortable carrying yourself.

Luggage limits: There is no luggage limit for this tour. However, most airlines restrict you to between 20kg and 25kg for your hold luggage and between 5kg and 10kg for hand luggage. Please check with your airline before travelling to the airport.

Clothing: Turkey's climate changes drastically, with cold winters and hot summers. In western Turkey from late March to May, spring brings with it average temperatures of around 15C, though the weather does gradually warm up with sunny days interspersed with rain showers. From May to the end of October, the climate is hot and sunny, getting cooler as the year progresses. In Central Turkey around Cappadocia, the climate is cold with regular snowfalls from the end of November until late February. With spring the weather warms and the snow disappears altogether, though it still remains cold at night and first thing in the morning. Summer starts from May onwards, with temperature reaching around the mid 30's. The East of Turkey from late May has warmed up considerably, and stays hot until late September with sunny days, but the night time temperatures start to drop. By the end of October you can expect the first of the winter snows. So you must pack for cool and potentially wet conditions late in the year.

Modesty rates highly in some parts of Turkey, especially for women and in the East, so please ensure clothes are loose fitting and not too revealing. Loose shorts are OK in tourist sites, as are T-shirts, but these should not show too much bare flesh (your shoulders should remain covered). In Eastern Turkey villages, and any mosques throughout the country, legs and arms should be covered. Attitudes are more relaxed in the seaside resorts.

The weather in Greece is similar but a bit less extreme both in summer and winter and the dress code a bit more relaxed too.

Other items: We also recommend you bring a sun hat, sunscreen, sunglasses, a basic first aid kit, toiletries, money belt, small torch, camera & charger.

8. Dates & Prices

We run regular small-group departures on this tour approximately every 2 weeks through the year. All departures are guaranteed to run with a minimum of 4 travellers. Departure dates and prices are listed on our website and on a separate dates & prices sheet available on request.

9. Private & Tailor-made Tours

While our group departures offer a fantastic way to explore with like-minded travellers, we understand that some guests prefer a more exclusive experience. Most of our group tours can be booked on a private basis, allowing you to enjoy the same expert-led routes with your own dedicated party. The primary advantage of choosing a private arrangement is the flexibility it provides; we can easily customise the itinerary to include your preferred style of accommodation or adjust the pace to suit your needs. Private tours can be run on the same start days as our group tours, or on other dates. However, some activities within our trips are restricted to particular days of the week - we will advise you on anything like this that we need to work around. Pricing will be based on the number of travellers in your party, and any customisations you may like to make.

For those seeking something truly unique, our specialist sales team is available to collaborate with you on a completely tailor-made tour, designed from the ground up to match your specific interests, accommodation level and requirements.

To request a quotation for a private or tailor-made tour, please [contact us](#).

10. International Flights

We want to give you as much flexibility as possible when it comes to booking your holiday with us. So, to take account of people with varying travel plans, we don't include your international flights in the main tour price. We are however very happy to suggest flights to go with the tour. Please contact us with your preferred dates and departure airport and we'll give you a selection of airlines, times and fares to choose from.

Your airport arrival & departure transfers are included on the first and last days of the tour.

We do also sometimes advertise flight inclusive packages from selected airports. Where these are shown on our website, prices are correct at the time of quoting, but are subject to continued availability of the fare used. Prices will be reconfirmed at the time of booking, and we will also provide the flight times and airline details before tickets are issued.

Flight inclusive prices are based on the cheapest Economy ticket class available which is generally non-refundable and non-changeable unless the flight is cancelled for reasons such as Covid-19, in which case the airlines are more flexible. More flexible ticket options, as well as Premium Economy and Business Class tickets are available on request for an additional supplement. Any changes made to flight inclusive bookings will be subject to the airline rules on your ticket.

Flight CO2 Emissions:

Traveling by air is an amazing way to explore the world, but flights also contribute to carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions that impact the environment. By considering the airline's CO2 emissions when you choose your flight, you can help minimize your travel footprint.

When selecting your international flights and airline, we do therefore recommend that you try and also take into account the flight CO2 emissions. Some airlines and flight search websites (eg. Google Flights, Skyscanner) do publish this information, so you can compare between your flight options and make an informed decision. Thankfully, many airlines are working towards sustainability efforts, and choosing a greener option allows you to contribute to positive change while still enjoying your incredible adventure.

11. Passports and Visas

Passports should be valid for at least six months after your departure from the country. Please do not bring an almost full or almost expired passport. Visa arrangements are the responsibility of the traveller, and requirements are subject to change by the local authorities.

Most foreign nationals require a visa to enter Turkey, and need to obtain it in advance online through <http://www.evisa.gov.tr>. Applicants just need to log on to the following link, provide the requested information, (after the application is approved) make online payment and download their e-Visa. More information is available here <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/visa-information-for-foreigners.en.mfa>

From the 2nd March 2020 all UK nationals **will not** need to obtain a visa for Turkey (for visits of up to 90 days in each 180 day period). This will also apply to citizens of the Schengen area countries Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain and Poland.

Some foreign nationals require a visa to enter Greece, though many do not (including UK, EUR, US, CA, AU, NZ, SA). More information is available at [visas for foreigners](#).

12. Health and Vaccinations

You should ensure you are fully insured for medical emergencies including emergency evacuation and repatriation. UK travellers visiting European Union countries including Greece should also carry the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) as it entitles travellers to reduced cost, sometimes free, medical treatment in most European countries.

Recommended vaccinations and other health protection measures vary according to the country you are visiting and where you are travelling from. We recommend you contact your GP/medical practitioner or a travel clinic for current information on vaccinations needed for your destination.

You should ensure that you are up to date with vaccines and boosters recommended for your normal life at home, including for example, vaccines required for occupational risk of exposure, lifestyle risks and underlying medical conditions. In addition, additional courses or boosters normally recommended for Turkey are Hepatitis A and Tetanus. No additional courses or boosters are generally recommended for Greece.

More information is available here: [Turkey](#), [Greece](#)

[Malaria map](#) - there is low risk malaria in some south eastern regions of Turkey, not visited on our tours.

[Malaria map](#) - there is low to no risk of malaria in Greece, none in tourist areas.

Yellow fever certificates are not required for either country.

13. Time

Both Greece and Turkey's standard time is GMT plus 2 hours. Daylight saving adjustments of 1 hour are applied, starting at the end of March and finishing at the end of October. Exact dates vary from year to year.

14. Booking & Payment

If you would like to book a place on this tour, please complete the online reservation form on our website (via the Dates & Prices tab on the tour page). You may make a deposit or full payment online, or just hold a reservation if you prefer (full payments are due 8 weeks before departure). We will then contact you with more details about how to complete your booking. Payments may be made by debit or credit card (subject to a card processing fee), or by making a bank transfer, or posting us a cheque/bank draft. Full details will be provided in your booking confirmation email. Please [contact us](#) if you would like any more information or have any questions before making a booking.

15. Financial Security

We are a UK registered company and are committed to providing our customers with financial protection to provide peace of mind and to allow you to book with confidence.

We have therefore partnered with Trust My Travel Ltd., which provides financial protection services to over 2000 partners around the world. Funds paid to us by our customers are protected via an Insurance policy held by Trust My Travel. Each traveller and the description of services sold is declared against Trust My Travel's insurance policy directly against our financial failure. In the event of our insolvency, you will be refunded for any unfulfilled products and/or repatriation to the UK (where applicable). Please see [our website](#) or [booking conditions](#) for more information.

16. Responsible Tourism

It is impossible not to have an impact on the local environment, cultures and eco-systems when you travel. However, it is very possible to try and ensure that these impacts are as limited, or positive as possible. We are committed to ensuring that we try to leave our host countries in a better state than we found them and encourage and assist our travellers to help us with this.

The following are a few simple tips that require very little effort on your part but which will help ensure that any effect you have on the locations you visit is positive rather than negative.

- Don't prejudge: Things in different countries will almost certainly be different. That doesn't make them worse or inferior, just different.
- Communicate: Don't expect locals to speak your language. Take the trouble to learn a few words or phrases of the local language. Don't worry about sounding silly. Most locals are patient and

accommodating and appreciate you making the effort to communicate in their language.

- Conserve energy: Be careful not to waste valuable resources. Use local resources sparingly. Switch off lights, air-conditioning and fans when you leave the hotel room and don't waste water. Remove superfluous packaging. Many countries have far less efficient waste disposal systems than ours. Remove packaging from newly acquired items before leaving home.
- Don't litter: No matter how untidy or dirty the country you're travelling in may look to you, avoid littering, as there is no need to add to the environment's stress. Many of the countries we visit have a tough challenge dealing with rubbish and waste. Please consider taking home as much plastic waste as you can (e.g. water bottles).
- Choose environmentally friendly products: By using environmentally friendly (bio degradable) sun creams, shampoos and detergents you can help reduce pollution.
- Respect local customs and traditions: As you are a guest in these countries, you should also comply with the local customs. If you are friendly and well mannered, the locals will reciprocate and it will only enhance your experience. It's important to follow dress and behaviour guidelines especially when visiting religious or sacred sites (your tour leader will advise you how best to do this).
- If a client commits an illegal act the client may be excluded from the tour and Encounters Travel shall cease to have responsibility to/for them. No refund will be given for any unused services.

All porters are employed and equipped following guidelines set by the International Porter Protection Group (IPPG).

17. Follow Us Online

You can stay in touch with us online by following us on Facebook and Twitter. We post updates on relevant travel news in our destination countries, special offers and discounts and other interesting travel related news and information.

www.facebook.com/encounterstravel

<https://x.com/encounterstravel> (yes, without the 'e')

18. Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory on all of our tours and needs to cover personal accident & liability, medical expenses and repatriation, travel delay & abandonment. We also strongly recommend that you take out cover against cancellation and lost/stolen baggage. Personal medical insurance does not normally provide sufficient cover and is generally not suitable for travel on our tours. You will not be able to join your tour if you have not provided us with details of your insurance or if you arrive without cover in place (no refunds will be due in this event).

Considering travel insurance for your trip? [World Nomads Travel Insurance](#) offers coverage for more than 150 adventure activities as well as emergency medical, lost luggage, trip cancellation and more.

If your tour includes car hire, or if you plan to arrange a hot air balloon flight locally or do some scuba diving during your tour, you should check the small print in your policy to make sure these are covered (these are covered in our policy). Please also check the maximum altitude that you will be reaching and that full cover including emergency evacuation is provided up to this altitude.

If you are taking expensive camera gear or other electronic equipment with you then please check the coverage and the fine print of your policy to ensure that you have sufficient cover.

IMPORTANT: We must have your travel insurance details (policy number and type of insurance) before you depart or you may not be allowed to join the tour. If you haven't told us already, please let us know the details when you can. You should take a paper copy of your insurance policy with you as you may be asked to show this at the start of the tour.

Covid-19

Before purchasing any travel insurance, please check the coverage provided for situations related to Covid-19, and for the rules about government travel advice. Your normal policy may not be suitable.

19. Before you travel

It is important when considering and preparing to travel anywhere in the world that you have a good understanding of the country you are visiting, its laws and customs, and the possible risks and situations that may occur. This includes specific risks related to your itinerary (eg. does it involve water & can you swim, are you fit enough for the activities included), as well as more general risks such as terrorism and natural disasters.

General details and links to more information about health risks, visa requirements, money, and travel insurance are given in these tour notes. We recommend that you re-read all these before your departure as well as the small print of your travel insurance policy so you know exactly what is covered and what is not.

You should take copies of your important travel documents with you and ideally also store them online securely as a backup. Make sure that you have given us your emergency contact details and told that person where and when you are travelling. Ensure you take enough money with you and that you have access to emergency funds.

Finally, you should read through and stay updated with the current [official government travel advice](#) for your destination. We are registered partners with the UK Foreign Office's ['Travel Aware' campaign](#) which provides further useful and invaluable information.



20. Reduce Plastic Waste with Water-to-Go Filter bottles

Traveling responsibly means minimizing plastic waste, but staying hydrated on the go is essential. At Encounters Travel we are committed to reducing single-use plastics, which is why we've partnered with Water-to-Go. Their portable filtration system removes over 99.9% of contaminants from any non-saltwater source, turning even questionable water sources into safe drinking water.

Given that tap water is un-safe to drink in many of the countries in which we operate, we recommend purchasing a Water-to-Go bottle prior to departure. This will help you avoid the use of single use plastic bottles and keep you hydrated on the go.

Save big! Get a huge 25% off your Water-to-Go bottle and other Water-to-Go products (such as filters, lids, and carriers). Use code **ENCOUNTERS25** at checkout (valid in the UK, USA and Canada).

How Water-to-Go Technology works:

- Their reusable, BPA free water bottles contain their own unique 3-in-1 filtration technology effectively providing clean safe drinking water from any non-salt water source around the world.
- Three different (1 traditional and 2 nano) technologies are combined in one filter cartridge to remove up to 99.9999% of microbiological contaminants in water.

The three technologies used in a Water-to-Go filter are:

- Mechanical filtration – A tiny pore size, so small contaminants can't fit through.
- Electrical – A positive charge reduces the pore size even further and attracts contaminants like a magnet, trapping them inside the filter.
- Activated Carbon – Unlike most carbon based filters, instead of using adhesives to glue the carbon particles together, (which vastly reduces the carbon's efficiency) it is contained within the membrane, helping to reduce contaminants whilst eliminating bad tastes and odours. Try filtering water from your tap at home and taste the difference!

Water-to-Go filter bottles deliver safe, healthy water worldwide

- Water-to-Go filters remove bacteria, viruses, waterborne disease, protozoa, heavy metals such as lead as well as harmful chemicals.
- Their filters remove Chlorine and Fluoride from tap water.
- The filter will eliminate harmful contaminants from the water but allow beneficial minerals such as sodium and magnesium to pass through leaving you with the healthiest water possible.
- Water-to-Go filters have been independently tested against internationally recognised standards by industry specialists including The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (UK), BCS Laboratories (USA), Bangalore Test House (India) and IMI (China).

Use Water-to-Go products and you'll be healthier, wealthier and helping to make the world a better place!

- Depending on filter size, each Water-to-Go filter is able to replace 260 or 400 single-use plastic water bottles!
- They ensure you have access to safe water anywhere in the world without ever having to buy environmentally damaging bottled water.
- Their water bottles deliver safe, clean drinking water at just 5p per litre.
- The filter membrane is biodegradable and the shrouds are recyclable.
- The water bottles are used and approved by everyone from backpackers to commuters, gym users to expecting mums. Perfect for everyday, outdoor and travel.

21. Voltage

Sockets are two round pronged and 220 volts (Type C). Universal adaptors are available in most airport shops if you don't have one already. Standard European adapters will work fine, though sometimes they may feel a little loose in the sockets. All hotel rooms have electrical sockets where you can re-charge cameras, phones etc. Hair dryers are normally available on request from the hotel reception if not in your room already. If you have US appliances (110 volts) you will need a voltage converter as well as a plug adapter.

22. Money - Turkey

The Turkish lira was re-valued at the end of 2004 to become the 'New Turkish Lira'. The word 'New' has now been dropped, and we are back to 'Turkish Lira' again (TRY).

It is normally cheaper to convert money to Turkish Lira in Turkey than at home. Using an ATM or a credit card will often get you the best possible exchange rates; the post and telephone office (PTT) and banks offer very reasonable rates, too. Try to use ATM machines that are attached to banks while they are open, so that if your card is swallowed you can go into the bank and get it released back to you.

It is difficult for us to specify the money that you will spend per day, however, as a general rule USD 20-50 per day can provide you with additional meals, tipping, snacks & drinks. Should you wish to purchase many souvenirs or other luxuries, of which there is a diverse range, you will have to budget for these.

A mixture of cash and credit cards are the best forms of currency. Credit cards are accepted in most restaurants, bars and pubs. MasterCard and Visa are most welcomed; American Express cards work at some ATMs and AmEx offices. Credit cards are also useful for cash advances, which allow you to withdraw Lira instantly from associated banks and ATMs throughout Turkey. Cash cards and ATM's are widespread in most of Turkey including in Istanbul, Canakkale, Selcuk, Marmaris, Pamukkale, Fethiye, Kas, Cappadocia, and Ankara.

23. Language - Turkey

The official language of Turkey is Turkish. In addition, between 10 per cent and 15 per cent of the population speaks a different mother tongue, usually Kurdish or Arabic. Turkish words are spelled with an adapted Roman alphabet. The language is phonetic; each letter has only one sound that is always pronounced distinctly.

You'll find you won't have much of a problem with the language barrier. English is well communicated by many Turks. Below you will find some important phrases that will have you sounding like a Turk in no time!

Yes = Evet (eh-vet)	No = Hayir (hah-yuhr)
Maybe = Belki (behl-key)	Please = Lutfen (loot-fen)
Thank you = Tesekkur (tesh-eccur)	Pardon me = Pardon (phar-don)
Who = Kim (kim)	When = Ne zaman (neh zah-mahn)
Today = Bugun (boo-ghoon)	Yesterday = Dun (dhuen)
Tomorrow = Yarin (yar-in)	I'm sorry = Ozur dilerim (oz-oor del-eh-rim)
Help = Imdat (eem-daht)	Police = Polis (po-lis)
Hello = Merhaba (mehrhaba)	Goodbye = Hoscakal (hosh-cha-khal)
Good night = Iyi geceler (ee-yee geh-jeh-lehr)	How are you ? = Nasilsin ? (nah-sil-sihn)
Open = Acik (ach-oek)	Closed = Kapali (kap-ah-lee)
Bad = Kotu (koh-too)	Good = Iyi (eeh-yea)
Hot = Sicak (sijark)	Cold = Soguk (sooh-ook)
Bill, please = Hesap lutfen (hesarp, lewtfen)	My name is Paul = Ismim Paul (Eas-meem Paul)
I am a vegetarian = Vejeteryanim (vej-e-tar-ian-eam)	I need a doctor = Doktora ihtiyacim (dohk-tor-ah eeh-tee-yajum)
Do you speak English ? = Ingilizce biliyor musun (een-geal-je bee-leh-your-moe-sean)	
I don't speak Turkish. = Turkce bilmiyorum (Terkche-bil-me-you-room)	
I don't understand = Anlamiyorum (ahn-luh-mee-your-room)	

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Note: Please [download an up-to-date copy](#) of these tour notes shortly before you travel as itineraries and information does change from time to time.
