

2020 Turkey

the Woman's Journey

October 6-17, 2020



Turkey is often cited as the ultimate convergence of east and west – traditional spice bazaars and ornately adorned mosques thrown together with high speed, cross-country trains and bustling cosmopolitan cities.

On this women's only expedition, you'll discover both the traditional and modern wonders of Turkey through the lives of the women who live here. From the ancient practices of an Ottoman-style hamam to the art of Turkish coffee fortune telling and even a visit to a Syrian refugee social enterprise, you'll meet many extraordinary local women and experience what life is like through their eyes.

Day 1 – October 6 - Tuesday - Welcome to Istanbul; the continent-straddling metropolis that the Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, and Ottomans have called home. Plan to arrive in the afternoon.

Our guide will meet us at the airport for the drive to the hotel. After check in and a little time to refresh, we will have dinner tonight at a local restaurant, a woman's initiative!

Overnight: The Haze Hotel, Istanbul – 3 nights (D)

Day 2 – October 7 – Wednesday - Breakfast at the hotel and then head to the Spice Bazaar, also known as the Egyptian Market, to meet a local spice merchant and learn about Turkey's best spice blends. You'll also get to satisfy your sweet tooth with a visit to a traditional Turkish Delight merchant. Next, you'll visit the magnificent Ottoman-built Suleymaniye



Cami (Suleymaniye Mosque), which sits high above the natural harbor of the Golden Horn. From here you'll explore the Grand Bazaar with some opportunities for shopping for local wares at this bustling hub.

After a break and light lunch, you'll jump on the tram and head to suburban Istanbul to meet a local mother and daughter in their home. Here you'll sample some homemade *borek* before the women teach you how to make the best cup of Turkish coffee. They'll also demonstrate the traditionally female art of fortune-telling from coffee grounds, which is passed down between generations in Anatolian culture. The evil eye is a very common talisman in this part of the world used to protect us from the envy of others, but what happens if we did not have our evil eye? Find out how we break these curses using the ancient process of *Kursun*. For generations, Turkish women have used this method to remove this bad luck from their homes and their families.

At night, you will have your dinner at your hotel, in the restaurant owned by a famous Turkish chef.

Overnight: The Haze Hotel (B, L, D)

Day 3 – October 8 – Thursday After breakfast at the hotel, this morning it's time to prove your hips don't lie, with a female only class in the art of *ciftetelli*, Turkish belly dancing. Ciftetelli goes by many names but is a traditional part of Turkish weddings for both men and women.

After class, you'll get a tram to an area of the city that has become home to many displaced Syrians. Zeytin Agci (The Olive Tree of Istanbul) is the community center of Small Projects Istanbul. Here you'll meet with local Syrian women who run a small social enterprise called **Drop Earrings Not Bombs**, where they handmade earrings. Join the women for lunch, learn about their stories and make your own pair of earrings.

Overnight: The Haze Hotel (B, L)



Day 4 – October 9 – Friday After breakfast at the hotel, we head to the airport for the one-hour flight to Dalaman on the Turkish Mediterranean coast and then make a two and a half journey to Kas. With its postcard-perfect harbor, bougainvillas and whitewashed walls, it's one of the most picturesque destinations on the Mediterranean coast. On arrival, take a walk around the town center or maybe go swimming before a relaxing sunset yoga class. If you feel like a walk in the evening, the local handicraft market is open till late and there are some spectacular pieces to choose from.

Overnight: Club Barbarossa (B)

Day 5 - October 10 – Saturday This morning you'll transfer to Ucaciz, a short 45 minutes by van. Declared off-limits to developers, Ucaciz is a quaint fishing and farming coastal village amid islands and peninsulas. Here you'll meet Sabahat a local fisherman's wife, who is as comfortable steering a traditional gulet (boat) as she is cooking a Turkish feast or embroidering one of her famous village scarves – which you will learn how to make. After a homemade lunch, Sabahat will take you by boat to visit the ruins of an ancient sunken Lycian city on the northern side of the island. There's also plenty of opportunities to swim in the crystal turquoise waters, before heading to your simple homestay accommodation.



Overnight: Local homestay (B, L, D)

Day 6 – - October 11 – Sunday After an early breakfast, you will have a private transfer to Antalya, often considered a highlight of the Turkish Mediterranean. Your hotel is located in the Old City and there'll be plenty of time to explore the streets and alleys that stretch out from Hadrian's Gate. Built in honor of the Roman emperor Hadrian, it's the only remaining entrance gate in the walls that surround the city and harbor. Weather permitting, you can head to the local **women's only beach, Sausu**. Another option is a day spa, complete with a traditional Turkish *hamam* as well as beauticians, boutiques and cafes all exclusively for women. Alternatively, spend the afternoon exploring more of the winding streets and hidden cafes of the Old City.

Overnight: Puding Hotel, Antalya (B)

Day 7 – - October 12 – Monday

Transfer to Antalya airport this morning for a mid-morning flight to Kayseri, located in the Cappadocia region. From here you'll take a one-hour drive to Goreme, the most recognizable part of Cappadocia. Goreme lies in a valley of cones, needles and columns, fashioned by nature from the soft volcanic tuff rock. It's honeycombed with caves scooped out to make churches and dwellings that are known as fairy



chimneys and castles. In times of peace, the people in this region lived on the land, but in times of war or persecution they took to living underground. When you arrive in Goreme, you can stretch your legs and take an orientation walk with your local leader. This afternoon you'll meet a local New Zealand woman who has lived in Goreme for the last 30 years making Turkish carpets. You'll finish the day with a guided walk around the valley at sunset with spectacular photo opportunities. This evening's dinner is a special one – you'll be meeting and dining with a well-known local woman named Nuray Abla, who cooks Turkish cuisine in her cave home.

Overnight: Hotel Heybe, Cappadocia – 2 nights (B, D)

Day 8 – - October 13 – Tuesday

Be prepared to wake up before sunrise to experience an unforgettable hot air balloon ride over the majestic Cappadocian landscape. (optional at around US \$200-250 per person).

Once your feet are firmly back on the ground, you'll head off to explore the region including, Pigeon valley and Pasabag (monks valley) and wander through the Soganli Valley on a soft hiking trip, taking in the arid surrounds and towering vistas. In the afternoon, you'll visit one of Cappadocia's most famous wine houses for a well-earned drink. Learn about the region's 4,000-year-old wine industry and take a stroll through the stunning Red Valley to watch the sun set, with a glass of local wine in hand, of course. For dinner, you may want to try the local regional specialty, testi kebab. Your leader will be able to recommend a restaurant dedicated to the perfection of this delicious claypot dish.



Overnight: Hotel Heybe, Cappadocia (B)

Day 9 -- October 14 – Wednesday

Today you will have a private transfer to Eskisehir that will take approximately 6 hours. You will not have any set plans for today. For dinner tonight, you might want to head to Adalar, a popular waterfront district with many cafes popular with the locals. Your guide will be able to give you some great recommendations.

Overnight: Senna City Hotel (B)

Day 10 – - October 15 – Thursday

Explore the Odunpazari district this morning. Traditional Anatolian architecture is well preserved in this neighborhood, with narrow cobbled roads and windy, dead-end streets, and it's now under protection as a historic district. Swing past the Glass Museum to check out the first of Turkey's glass art museums many of the exhibits here are used to encourage and display the work of young and upcoming artists. The museum is housed in three historic buildings so the venue is an architectural delight.

Today we have a special and unique lunch in Eskisehir as we join in a local "girl's day out" or (altın günü) known as Gold Day. What's a gold day, exactly? It's a day for Turkish women to come together, socialize and save some money for when it's needed. Banking is a relatively new concept in Turkey, traditionally people borrowed and lent money within a family or social circle and gold was considered a much more valuable commodity than cash. How do you plan a Gold Day? Together with the other people in your gold day group, you decide which person you will visit next it could be on a rotating basis or maybe someone in your group is in need of cash. They can happen weekly or monthly, and often includes between 10 - 50 women. Even some of the most modern of Turkish women still enjoy a Gold Day, and you get to join in a Turkish female tradition, meeting local women over good food and girl only talk. (Don't worry about the gift of gold we have that covered.)

After a big day out in Eskisehir enjoy a free evening or perhaps hang out with your new Turkish friends.

Overnight: Senna City Hotel (B, L)

Day 11 -- October 16 -- Friday

Following breakfast at the hotel this morning, you'll have a private transfer back to Istanbul, taking a ferry to the hotel. You'll finish your adventure with a **women's only hamam**, a Turkish bath. Initially the concept of hamams was for men only, but eventually women who were unwell or recovering from childbirth were permitted, until finally all women were allowed. Traditionally, many women considered a visit to the hamam more than an opportunity to bathe -- it was a release from the isolation of home and a place where older women could look for potential wives for their sons. Today this ritual is still a segregated retreat complete with baths, food, music and fun.

Later this evening you will have a last farewell dinner to celebrate breaking down cultural barriers and building bridges between women around the world.

Overnight: The Haze Hotel, Istanbul (B, D)

Day 12 -- October 17 -- Saturday Breakfast, checkout and then transfer to the airport, about 30-45 minutes drive.

Itinerary subject to change due to weather, road conditions, situations beyond our control.

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COST:

- \$2995 per person in double occupancy with 14 participants. (With 12: \$3095, with 10: \$3250, with 8: \$3550).
- Single \$495. Singles are very limited. They are either a smaller room or a double at single rate. Singles may not be available in the homestay.
- Minimum 8 to operate, maximum 14 participants.
- To confirm your spot, please complete the on-line reservation form.
- Deposit \$750 to hold space; final payment will due July 6, 2020.
- Cancellation policy -- up to 120 days prior to departure, \$250/person. 119-60 days, 25%. Inside 60-non-refundable

INCLUDED:

- Driver & transportation as listed by van or coach, depending on group size
- 2 local flights
- 11 nights hotel, lodge or home stay
- Bilingual guide through with local guides at sites
- Entry fees to sites listed
- Taxes
- Meals as listed
- Basic gratuities for meals, local guides & driver

NOT INCLUDED:

- International Airfare (to/from Istanbul)
- E-visa (around \$20 at time of printing)
- Bar bill
- Laundry
- Personal expenses
- **Mandatory Travel Insurance**
- Tips to main guide

*Suggested tipping for guide:

→ lead guide: \$8-15 per person/per day