

# Timeless TURKEY



**TRAVEL CLUB**  
*travel without judgement*

**17 DAYS | 16 NIGHTS**



## G&T'S 'TIMELESS TURKEY' IS A TRUE TREAT FOR YOUR SENSES.

We have designed this Premium Luxury Style 17-day itinerary to include many 2-night stops and even two 3-night stops so that you can really soak up all that this country has to offer. The focus goes beyond the UNESCO World heritage sites and encompasses the lifestyle elements as well. We will have time to delve into the local neighbourhoods and witness what makes Turkey such an adventurer's destination. Turkey also has a gastronomical UNESCO World Heritage scene second to none and for all you 'Foodies' you will be indulging your tastebuds for sure. The landscape and scenery will capture your artistic photographic skills as we move between the ancient cities, scenic countryside, relaxed coastal towns and historical sites. Colourful bazaars blend everything from the East and the West as a reminder of this old Silk Trade Route.

G&T Clubbers always appreciate the style of our chosen accommodation as it is in excellent locations, and each night offers a different experience that often gets a mention as a highlight!

If this is an adventure on your bucket list than we would love for you to join us and share an amazing experience!





## HOW WE DIFFER

The following are some of the considerations we made, while developing this Turkey programme.

1. G&T always develop an **exciting itinerary** with natural flow to maximise our time and experience. We choose our tour dates with regard for the best possible weather and less crowds. Importance for Turkey was given to the appreciation of the abundance of **UNESCO World Heritage Sites** but not forgetting the Culture & Lifestyle aspects.
2. G&T **handpicked superb accommodation** with the concept of **adding to your overall Turkish experience**. Several multi night stops have been added along with two 3-night stops. Our choices were made with consideration of location and proximity to the action, spectacular views, style, feel and facilities, not just a star-rating. We love to use experience accommodation.
3. G&T always make choices that allow easy access to **excellent food**. Whether it be our daily breakfast or the proximity to great restaurants and cafes nearby. We also like to check that the obvious dietary requirements can be catered for. We have included several experience dinners in Turkey to ensure that you don't miss out on the best.
4. **G&T always host every Club Tour**. This gives you something no one else can match. We will be with you the entire time, assisting with your needs and looking after you personally. On top of that we will always employ our own National Tour Guides along with localised city guides to better understand the local areas.
5. G&T most importantly make sure that the product is '**Great Value**'. Not necessarily the cheapest but well worth the few extra dollars to ensure an amazing experience! The value will be evident in our chosen hotels and diverse itinerary.
6. G&T always design a tour program with the Clubbers in mind. The concept of the Club remains the same and that is, our Club is **invite only and not open to the general public**. Clubbers are always encouraged to bring along their immediate family and or friends as we feel that they too will be a good fit for the G&T Travel Club. The Club attracts many well-travelled and fun guests.

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YouTube Channel, Facebook Page and Instagram



# Day 1 WELCOME TO TURKEY (TÜRKİYE)

## 'Hoş geldin' - WELCOME!

Arrive Istanbul International Airport and make your way to your start hotel.

**NB:** See notes regarding transfers on day 17.

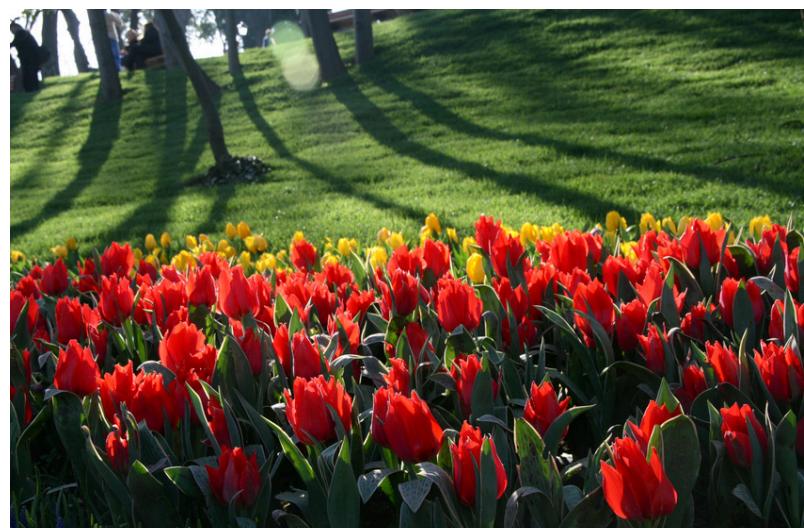
Once checked into your hotel you will have time to relax before we all meet up for our pre tour meeting late this afternoon, time TBA.

**Meals Included:** None

**Overnight:** Hagia Sofia Mansions,

Curio Collection by Hilton (2 nights)

**Style:** Modern Luxury Boutique Hotel



# Day 2 DISCOVER ISTANBUL

The city that famously connects the East to the West, Asia with Europe, once the capital of one of the greatest empires of all time, is again taking its place as one of the most beautiful and vibrant cities in the world. Home to many **UNESCO World Heritage** sites.

Aside from traditionally known culture and history, over the years she has turned into a well-known checkpoint of gastronomy, music, contemporary arts, fashion and entertainment. Istanbul deserves special care, expertise and a delicate effort to enjoy.

Our sightseeing today will include: The Hippodrome, The Blue Mosque, Hagia Sophia, The Underground Cistern and The Grand Bazaar.

You will have a chance today to **taste** some of the **traditional Turkish delights**.

**Meals Included:** Breakfast

**Overnight:** Hagia Sofia Mansions,

Curio Collection by Hilton (2 nights)

**Style:** Modern Luxury Boutique Hotel

(within easy walking distance to everything local)



## Day 3 ISTANBUL TO BURSA AND VISIT NICAEA (IZNIK) ENROUTE

**Ancient Nicaea** lies just near Lake Iznik. Originally an important Roman and Byzantine town, it fell to the Seljuks in 1078 and subsequently to the Ottomans in 1331. Still a small town, as it sits within its **original Roman walls**. The four gates that allowed access to the city still stand. In the town centre, the ruins of the **St. Sophia Cathedral**, the seat of the first Ecumenical Council of the Christian church, evoke images of convening bishops and clergy. In the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, Iznik was the centre of production of the exquisite ceramic wares that have made such an important decorative contribution to mosques and palaces throughout Turkey.

With an 8500-year history, **Bursa** has a thriving culture that leaves visitors in awe. It has grown to be **one of Turkey's most prominent cities** with a total of **8 UNESCO World Heritage** sites, thanks to its natural beauties, distinct culture, and architectural texture shaped by centuries of history. The International Organization of Turkish Culture has recognised its **cultural diversity**. In Bursa, many places such as parks, thermal springs, inns, and spas add to the significance of this **magnificent city**.

We then continue to **Koza Han**, one of the most important stops on the **Silk Road**. This historic inn located in the city of Bursa was built to meet the accommodation and trade needs of merchants who were selling silk. It was built in 1491 and is a beautiful example of **Ottoman architecture**. Today it is still conducting silk trade and oozes with both historical and **cultural essence**.

**Meals Included:** Breakfast

**Overnight:** Movenpick Hotel and Thermal Spa Bursa  
(1 night)

**Style:** Modern Luxury Hotel

## Day 4 BURSA TO KUSADASI AND VISIT SARDIS ENROUTE

The capital of the mighty Lydian Kingdom, **Sardis** dominated Aegean trade during the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC - 5<sup>th</sup> century BC. This was largely due to its innovation of minted coinage in the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC. **The site of the Mint has been found**, and you can see both it and the equipment used to melt and stamp the currency. **Sardis gold** came from the nearby Pactolus River, and it made King Croesus a legendary wealthy ruler.

The **Temple of Artemis** (Temple of Diana) is **larger than the Parthenon** and regarded as **one of the seven wonders of the ancient world**. An enormous and beautiful Synagogue with fine mosaics, built on the sites of the old baths and gymnasium, was restored by the Sardis-American Excavation Fund between 1965 and 1973.

**Kusadasi** is a resort town located on the **Aegean coast** and known for its lively atmosphere, and historical sites. It is the gateway to the ancient city of Ephesus, one of Turkey's most important archaeological sites. It is also great for handmade crafts, textiles, leather goods and more. Kusadasi boasts 300+ days of sunshine a year!

**Meals Included:** Breakfast

**Overnight:** Elite World Kusadasi Hotel (2 nights)

**Style:** Modern Luxury Hotel



## Day 5 KUSADASI AND EXPLORE EPHESUS

Today we **explore the remarkable** Greco-Roman archaeological site of **Ancient Ephesus**. Dating back to the 11<sup>th</sup> century BC, it has been painstakingly excavated and restored and is one of the **world's most fascinating sites** of antiquity. Ephesus flourished as a prominent city and seaport between 600 BC and 500 AD.

We will begin our **walking tour** along Royal Road also known as the **Arcadian Way**, a 4<sup>th</sup> century white marble chariot thoroughfare who's most striking sight is the two-story **Library of Celsus**. Uniquely beautiful, with its restored facade now the famed symbol of Ephesus, the Library once housed 12,000 scrolls of papyrus manuscripts, making it the 2nd largest in the ancient world after the library in Alexandria, Egypt.

Your walk along the **Royal Road** will also take you past the remains of some of the ancient city's major civic buildings as you move toward the **Ephesus Theatre**, from which **St. Paul** once preached to the Ephesians. The **amphitheatre**, which seats 25,000, has exceptional acoustics and is still in use today for concerts and theatrical performances.

In addition to the historic monuments, your tour will also include a visit to the **House of the Virgin Mary**, a lovely little chapel set in the hills behind Ephesus, believed to be the Virgin Mary's last home. Tonight, we will experience the **delicious food** scene by the sea.

**Meals Included:** Breakfast and Dinner at

Kazim Usta Restaurant

**Overnight:** Elite World Kusadasi Hotel (2 nights)

**Style:** Modern Luxury Hotel

## Day 6 KUSADASI TO BODRUM

There is nothing quite like the **Buzzing Harbor of Bodrum**. White-washed Aegean houses climbing the hills around two semi-circular ports which unite in an islet topped by a beautiful castle. A large ancient theatre dominates the landscape above hundreds of '**Gulets**' (**Turkish sailing boats**) that crowd the harbor below. There is unlimited energy flooding the streets of this **gorgeous seaside town**.

We will visit **Bodrum Castle** which was built by the Crusaders in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and which is also home to the fascinating **Underwater Archaeological Museum**. The seas around Bodrum (Halicarnassus) were notoriously treacherous and claimed **many shipwrecks**. As such, this is one of the world's largest collections of **ancient vessels and their cargos**. We will learn about the history of the ancient world through the historic cargo and trading patterns.

We will proceed to the **Bodrum Mausoleum** (The tomb of King Mausolus). The **magnificent tomb** that first defined the term "mausoleum" was built in Halicarnassus. Set on a massive podium, this was a monument of incredible grandeur, **45 meters tall** and with reliefs on each facade carved by some of the most famous Greek 4<sup>th</sup> century BC sculptors. It was toppled by earthquakes between 1100 - 1400 and until then it was also **one of the seven wonders of the ancient world**. Most of the marble blocks and polished stone became spolia for Bodrum Castle, but the mausoleum's original site is still a humbling place because of what it represents.

**Meals Included:** Breakfast

**Overnight:** The Marmara Bodrum Hotel (2 nights)

**Style:** Luxury Adult Only Retreat



# Day 7

## DAY AT LEISURE IN BODRUM

Today you can **explore Bodrum** at your own pace.

Here around the peninsula, lush green forests run down to the deep blue crystal-clear Aegean waters. There are many **hidden coves and lagoons** and small unnamed islands off the coast. You may wish to explore the unique bays of **Bodrum by boat** or simply **enjoy the street life** with the locals. Perhaps a café to sit and enjoy a **Turkish Coffee and Baklava** is on your list.

**OPTIONAL: Private Gulet Tour of Bodrum Bay.**  
**Explore the beautiful Bays of Bodrum**  
**(10.30am-4.30pm) Cost TBA**

**Meals Included:** Breakfast and Dinner at Mudavim Restaurant

**Overnight:** The Marmara Bodrum Hotel (2 nights)

**Style:** Luxury Adult Only Retreat



# Day 8

## BODRUM TO PAMUKKALE VISIT STRATONIKEIA ENROUTE

Today we will visit the ancient city of **Stratonikeia**, (on the tentative list for **UNESCO World Heritage** sites) and one of the **largest marble cities** in the world. Known as the 'City of Gladiators' or more affectionately as the 'City of Eternal Love'. The excavations started in 1977 and so far, have uncovered archaeological importance for the Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, Beylik of Mentesse, Ottoman and Republican periods. The city's **well-preserved ruins** and monuments provide a **captivating glimpse** into its rich history.

Then onto **Pamukkale** which means 'Cotton Castle' is also known as Hierapolis-Pamukkale. An ancient **thermal spa based on natural hot springs**. The area, which features striking white terraces with travertines formed from calcite-rich water, has been used for **healing therapies** since Hellenistic and Roman times. It became a popular tourist destination in the 1960s, especially after being declared a **UNESCO World Heritage** site in 1988.

**Meals Included:** Breakfast and Dinner in the Hotel

**Overnight:** Doga Thermal Health and Spa Hotel  
(1 night)

**Style:** Modern Luxury Spa Hotel



# Day 9

## PAMUKKALE TO KONYA

Today is a travel day!

Rather than a super long drive to Cappadocia today we will instead be stopping enroute and breaking the journey for a **delicious local lunch** and similarly we will enjoy the hospitality of Konya for dinner as we enjoy the **traditional local cuisine**.

Konya, home to the theological school of '**Whirling Dervishes**' (men clad completely in white and spinning as if in a trance) has a deep cultural heritage, tranquil atmosphere, and vibrant traditions, Konya offers a unique blend of history, spirituality, and fantastic **Turkish culture and cuisine**. Let's see if we can try the local dish of **Etli Ekmek Pide**.

**Meals Included:** Breakfast

**Overnight:** Hich Hotel Konya (1 night)

**Style:** Historic Charm Hotel



# Day 10

## KONYA TO CAPPADOCIA

Today we have a **lazy start** and after breakfast we make our way to Cappadocia for 3 nights. Upon arrival and after checking in to your **fabulous accommodation** your afternoon is at leisure.

The region of **Cappadocia** is a true wonder. **It's unique, and it's unusual!**

Millenia-long volcanic activity followed by an on-going process of erosion and contraction of the volcanic matter leaves behind a soft, porous stone named tuff. Together this has created a landscape 'more unique' than any other. The valleys of tuff filled with '**fairy chimneys**' became, at the hands of expert carvers, cave dwellings, monasteries and chapels, cellar villages and more.

During your stay you will discover this magical fairy land. **Cappadocia** is filled with plenty of **panoramic viewings**, several opportunities for hiking and ballooning, that will take you off the road into the very heart of the landscape. You will be guided through its fascinating **rock-carved churches** and **subterranean settlements**. You will marvel at the face created by the faithful and industrious people of the region.

You will witness the fascinating culture, art and creativity of their endeavours like the local **pottery and weavings**. We have 3 nights here so you will be able to really soak up the full enchanting atmosphere.

**Meals Included:** Breakfast

**Overnight:** Yunak Evleri Cave Hotel (3 nights)

**Style:** Luxury Cave Hotel





## Day 11 DISCOVER CAPPADOCIA

**OPTIONAL:** Early morning Hot Air Balloon adventure. This morning you may wish to soar above this fascinating landscape and appreciate the vast ancient scenery below. Cost TBA

**Avanos Town** is where you will have the chance to meet one of the most colourful local personalities of the Cappadocia region, the '**Old Master of Pottery**'. His primitive atelier, personally built in the labyrinth-like caves of **Avanos Village**. Located by the shores of the Kizilirmak river (the longest river in Turkey) the earth is soft and reddish in colour, an ideal raw material for the area's traditional pottery style.

Explore one of the most extraordinary treasures. The **Goreme Open Air Museum** is one of the Cultural Wonders of the World and has been included as one of the many **UNESCO World Heritage** listings. These early churches of Christianity display incredibly beautiful **frescoes** which adorn the inside walls of the rock caves.

**Pasabag Valley** (Monks Valley), is famous for its unique 'fairy chimneys' with multiple caps. These mushroom-shaped rock formations were shaped by volcanic activity and erosion over centuries. The valley was once **home to hermit monks**, including St. Simeon, who lived in rock-carved dwellings for solitude and devotion.

**Zelve open air museum** is also **UNESCO World Heritage** listed and was once a thriving rock-cut village, home to both Christians and Muslims until the 1950s. Zelve features ancient cave dwellings, churches, **tunnels**, and monasteries all spread across three **ancient valleys**.

**OPTIONAL: Sunset Jeep Safari**  
Join an unforgettable adventure with a **Sunset Jeep Safari** in Cappadocia. Driving through stunning landscapes as the sun dips below the horizon, painting the sky in vibrant colours. Cost TBA

**Meals Included:** Breakfast  
**Overnight:** Yunak Evleri Cave Hotel (3 nights)  
**Style:** Luxury Cave Hotel



## Day 12

### DISCOVER CAPPADOCIA

**Kaymakli**, another marvel of the region is the 'underground city' at **Kaymakli**. This amazing network of tunnels, chambers and rooms all carved into the soft volcanic rock stretches 8 stories deep. About 10% of the village has been excavated so far and it is no wonder it also makes the **UNESCO World Heritage** listing. With your guide, you will follow a lighted visitor route and descend to 70 feet. The implicit purpose and the date of the construction of these 'underground cities' is a mystery still to this day.

**Mustafapasa Village**, also known as Sinasos in Greek, is a popular village to visit in Cappadocia, renowned for its excellent Ottoman and Greek architecture. The **stone mansions**, which have become icons from the past to the present, also create a fascinating atmosphere for visitors. Here, you will take an easy stroll to **explore the village**.

**Cavusin Village** is an abandoned village with rock-cut dwellings and stone houses. It has also several hermitages and churches. The Basilica dedicated to St. John the Baptist (located on the cliff above the village) is one of the **oldest rock-cut monuments** of Cappadocia. Tonight, you may wish to **experience the tradition** of the Whirling Dervishes before deciding on just where you wish to enjoy your dinner.

**OPTIONAL: The Whirling Dervishes Show - Pick up time from the hotel is around 18:00. For a Whirling Dervishes show that includes the lead dervish and 4 additional dervishes along with 4 musicians, we suggest for an authentic experience to see the show in Cappadocia at Saruhan Caravanserai, built in the 12th century. Cost TBA**

**Meals Included:** Breakfast

**Overnight:** Yunak Evleri Cave hotel (3 nights)

**Style:** Luxury Cave Hotel



## Day 13

### CAPPADOCIA TO GAZIANTEP VISIT TARSUS ENROUTE

**Tarsus** district of Mersin welcomes many visitors throughout the year. Standing out with its **6000-year historical heritage**, Tarsus is the centre of the Cilician civilization and is one of the oldest cities in the world with uninterrupted settlement since its foundation. We will visit the **St. Paul Memorial Church** (built between the 11th and 12th centuries) and the **St. Paul Well** (both on the **UNESCO World Heritage** tentative list). The 'Well' remains at **38 metres deep** year-round as Christian pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem used to drink from the well which was **considered sacred**.

We will also visit the **Roman Road and Roman Bath** and the historical **Kırkkaşık Bedesten** then continue to Gaziantep for another 3-night stay.

**Meals Included:** Breakfast and Lunch

**Overnight:** Tugcan Hotel (3 nights)

**Style:** Modern Luxury Hotel



# Day 14 DISCOVER GAZIANTEP

**Gaziantep** is an ancient city adorned with cultural, religious, and **gastronomic riches** and **6000 years** of history. It is **UNESCO World Heritage** listed for the food, and it is a true **foodie destination**. You may wish to try the Katmer or the Kunefe. Its location on trade routes and the crossing point of civilizations has made it popular and enriched in every period.

These lands, which hosted many important city-states, also welcomed numerous types of beliefs, from pagan cults to monotheistic religions. Each civilization added its own cultural heritage to the previous one, which resulted in a **wonderful historical taste**, just like the **layers of phyllo** that **make up baklava**. This amazing taste came to light through the mosaics, sculptures and reliefs of the craftsmen in the region.

**Zeugma** is an ancient city and was founded around the **3<sup>rd</sup> century BC** that later became part of the Roman Empire. Zeugma, well known for its **mosaics** was strategically placed on the banks of the Euphrates River, serving as an important military and trade hub. Situated along the historic trade routes, the city was a vital point connecting the East and West.



One of the most iconic mosaics is "**Gypsy Girl**", admired for its stunning craftsmanship and realistic portrayal. The museum provides an opportunity to view these ancient masterpieces up close.

**Gaziantep Castle** is a historic fortress that dates to the Roman period. The castle has undergone several reconstructions and expansions over the centuries, particularly during the Byzantine, Seljuk, and Ottoman periods. It stands atop a hill, providing a panoramic view of the city and surrounding areas.

The castle has a rich history, having been used for various military and defensive purposes. Its strategic location was crucial for controlling the region and protecting the city from invaders. It features large stone walls and several towers that once housed soldiers.

**Gaziantep Bazaar** is colourful display of all things Turkish and well worth taking the time to wander.

**Meals Included:** Breakfast and Dinner

**Overnight:** Tugcan Hotel (3 nights)

**Style:** Modern Luxury Hotel

# Day 15

## A DAY TRIP TO EXPLORE THE NEWEST DISCOVERIES OF THE 21ST CENTURY

A private sightseeing tour of Sanliurfa with visits to Göbekli Tepe, Karahan Tepe, Sanliurfa Archaeological Museum, The cave of Abraham, the Sacred Fish Pool and Mevlid Halil Mosque.

**Göbekli Tepe** is one of the most significant and mysterious archaeological discoveries of the 21st century. Dating back to around 9600 BC, Göbekli Tepe is the world's oldest known temple complex. The site consists of large stone circles, with massive pillars featuring intricate carvings of animals such as snakes, scorpions, lions, and birds. These carvings suggest a ritualistic or religious purpose, though the exact function of the site is still debated by researchers.

What makes Göbekli Tepe especially remarkable is that it predates Stonehenge by about 6,500 years, challenging previous ideas about the development of human civilization. Göbekli Tepe is believed to be deliberately buried around 8000 BC, and it remained hidden for thousands of years. It's now a UNESCO World Heritage Site and attracts visitors and researchers from all over the world due to its historical significance and the mysteries still surrounding it.

**Karahan Tepe** is a significant archaeological site for its prehistoric importance, as it is part of the broader Göbekli Tepe culture. Karahan Tepe is a key site for understanding the Neolithic period, particularly for its monumental structures, carvings, and ancient rituals.

The site has been excavated and studied in recent years. Karahan Tepe is believed to have been a ceremonial or ritual space, and it shares many features, such as large stone carvings, raised platforms, and enclosures.

**The Cave of Abraham** is a significant historical and religious site in Urfa. The cave is traditionally believed to be the birthplace of the Prophet Abraham, and it holds religious importance for Muslims, Jews, and Christians, as Abraham is a central figure in all three monotheistic religions. It is said that **Abraham was born in this cave** after his mother fled to escape the persecution of King Nimrod, who wanted to kill him.

The cave is situated in the city centre of Sanliurfa, and there is a large complex around it, including a beautiful garden and a pool known as the "**Pool of Sacred Fish**" where fish are believed to be sacred.

**Urfa Archaeological Museum** is one of the most important museums in the region. It showcases a rich collection of artifacts that reflect the long history and cultural heritage of the area, which is one of the world's oldest continuously inhabited regions. The museum is not only a place to view historical objects but also serves as an educational centre, offering insights into the cultural significance of the region throughout various periods of history.

**Meals Included:** Breakfast and Lunch and Dinner

**Overnight:** Tugcan Hotel (3 nights)

**Style:** Modern Luxury Hotel



# Day 16

## RETURN TO ISTANBUL

Transfer from Hotel to Gaziantep Airport for morning flight to Istanbul. On arrival we will transfer to our hotel and have the balance of the day at leisure.

There will be some time for last minute shopping or maybe arrange to take a scenic cruise along the Bosphorus River. You may just want to wander around the neighbourhood to take advantage of some great photographic opportunity.

**Tonight, we will enjoy our G&T Gala Farewell dinner.**

**Meals Included:** Breakfast and Dinner

**Overnight:** The Galata Istanbul Hotel, M Gallery  
(1 night)

**Style:** Modern Luxury Hotel



### NOTE:

*Private transfers in Istanbul are not great value as the driver cannot park and meet you without an assistant. The assistant's job is to meet and greet you at the arrivals hall and walk with you to where the driver and car are parked. This cost is much more than getting a taxi direct to the hotel.*

*Some of you have had transfers included in your International Airfare in the past (this may be a better option). Or simply ask your travel agent to see what transfer details they can arrange for you.*

**NB:** *If several people are arriving on the same flight (which often happens) the transfer cost can be shared between the group making it better value. So, once you know your flight details let us know and we can help manage connecting people for a group transfers.*

# Day 17

## DEPARTURE DAY

Sadly, today you are heading home but not without a great appreciation of this amazing country. We trust that Turkey will hold a fond spot in your heart for evermore!

Make your way from the hotel to the airport.

**Meals Included:** Breakfast

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW INTERACTIVE TOUR MAP ONLINE](#)

