Walking with Sightseeing in Istanbul and Cappadocia



Trip style:
Walking with sightseeing

Destination:
Turkey

Walking Grade
3

HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

From the Greeks to the Romans, Venetians to the Ottomans, some of the world's greatest civilisations shaped Istanbul. Straddling Europe and Asia across the Bosphorus, this historic city has long been a melting pot of cultures, making it a fascinating place to explore. Discover all the must-sees of this mesmerising metropolis on foot before travelling to otherworldly Cappadocia, where dramatic lunar-like landscapes are filled with fairy chimneys, and ancient subterranean cities lie deep underground. Along the way, visit exotic spice scented markets, sample traditional Turkish dishes, and admire some of this remarkable country's most epic scenery.

WHAT YOU'LL LOVE

- A walking tour around Istanbul's most famous landmark sites and a stop for Turkish Tea or Coffee in the Spice Market
- Visiting Istanbul's Basilica Cistern to discover an atmospheric marvel beneath the city
- Lunch at a Michelin-recognised women's cooperative serving traditional dishes
- Walking through Cappadocia's incredible landscapes including Love Valley

- Visiting a pottery atelier to try your hand with Cappadocia's famed red clay
- Exploring the ancient underground city of Derinkuyu

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Return flights from London Heathrow, including baggage and transfers
- Guided walks and sightseeing with local leaders
- HF Holidays Tour Manager
- 2 nights' accommodation in Istanbul and 5 nights in Cappadocia
- 7 breakfasts, 1 lunch & 7 dinners
- All in-destination transport

ITINERARY - ITINERARY

Day 1 **Arrival in Istanbul**

Arrive at Istanbul Airport and transfer to your hotel on the city's historic peninsula. This evening, meet your fellow guests over a welcome dinner at a local restaurant, where you can enjoy traditional Turkish cuisine and look forward to the week ahead.

Day 2 **Highlights of Istanbul**

Distance: 3–3.5 miles (5–6 km)

Terrain: Mostly flat, with gentle inclines, steps and cobbled streets

Today's guided walking tour introduces Istanbul's magnificent Old City. Discover the city's Byzantine and Ottoman heritage as we visit its landmark highlights.

Stop by Sultan Ahmed Mosque, where thousands of ornate, azure tiles give the building its Blue Mosque nickname. Next door, you'll find the Hagia Sofia, a UNESCO World Heritage site that was once the largest building in the world and a marvel of ancient engineering. And see both the German Fountain and Egyptian Obelisk in Hippodrome Park.

We'll also experience the colour and bustle of the Grand Bazaar and Spice Market. As we wander between stalls filled with spices, sweets and local produce, we'll pause for traditional Turkish tea or coffee accompanied by Turkish delight.

This evening, enjoy a three-course dinner in Istanbul's Sirkeci district.

Day 3 **Istanbul and Cappadocia**

We are joined by our local guide this morning who will lead us on a walk through the Old City to visit the Basilica Cistern. Built by order of Byzantine emperor Justinian I in the 6th century, it's the largest of several hundred ancient cisterns that lie beneath the city. Head underground to marvel at this remarkable piece of ancient engineering made up of 336 marble columns and a massive underground reservoir that once provided a reliable water supply for the Great Palace of Constantinople and surrounding buildings.

Later this afternoon, we travel to the airport for our flight to Cappadocia. On arrival, settle into the hotel and enjoy the atmosphere of this remarkable region before dinner.

Day 4 Ihlara Valley and Derinkuyu Underground City

Distance: 4 miles (6.5 km)

Ascent: 400 feet (120 m)

Descent: 550 feet (170 m)

Today's walk follows the Melendiz River through the green and fertile Ihlara Valley. Enclosed by a deep canyon, the route passes beneath poplar and willow trees, with sections shaded by riverside vegetation and the towering canyon walls.

Along the way, we'll see rock-cut churches, cave rooms and other traces of the communities that once lived and worshipped here. We'll pause in Belisırma, where you can enjoy lunch at one of the village's riverside restaurants.

This afternoon, we visit Derinkuyu Underground City. Descend through its cool tunnels to discover rooms, kitchens, chapels, storage areas and ventilation shafts once used by local communities seeking refuge during times of danger.

Day 5 Red and Meskendir Valleys

Distance: 4.5 miles (7 km)

Ascent: 600 feet (180 m)

Descent: 350 feet (110 m)

Walk through the colourful Red and Meskendir Valleys, where narrow canyons lead between rose-coloured rocks, cave dwellings, pigeon houses and fairy chimneys. Our route also passes small vineyards, orchards and hidden pathways enclosed by the valley walls.

The colours of the rocks change with the light, while wild herbs, fruit trees and vines add to the character of the landscape. We'll also stop for tea at a simple valley café.

Lunch is included at Tık Tık Mantı, a Michelin-recognised women's cooperative specialising in mantı, traditional Turkish dumplings. Afterwards, visit Mr Galip's pottery atelier in Avanos to learn about the town's centuries-old tradition of working with red clay from the Kızılırmak River, and try your hand on the potter's wheel.

Day 6 Pigeon Valley, Love Valley and Uçhisar

Distance: 5 miles (8 km)

Ascent: 850 feet (260 m)

Descent: 400 feet (120 m)

Today's varied walk links several of Cappadocia's best-known valleys. Beginning in or near Göreme, we follow tracks through Pigeon Valley, named for the rock-cut pigeon houses once used by farmers to produce fertiliser for local vineyards and fields.

The route continues through White and Love Valleys, passing pale volcanic rocks, cave spaces, small gardens and some of the region's most distinctive formations.

We finish with a gradual climb to Uçhisar, Cappadocia's highest settlement. From the village, enjoy wide views across its valleys and fairy chimneys towards the surrounding volcanic mountains. There will also be an opportunity to visit Uçhisar Castle and climb to its panoramic viewpoint.

Day 7 Çavuşin, Paşabağ and Zelve

Distance: 4.5 miles (7.5 km)

Ascent: 700 feet (210 m)

Descent: 550 feet (170 m)

Our final walk begins near the old village of Çavuşin, once an important settlement filled with rock-cut homes, churches and cave structures.

From here, we cross open countryside to Paşabağ, also known as Monks Valley, where some of Cappadocia's most recognisable fairy chimneys rise from the volcanic landscape. The route passes old cave dwellings, vineyards and dry valleys, with wonderful views across the surrounding rock formations.

We finish at Zelve Open Air Museum, an abandoned settlement spread across three valleys. Its cave homes, churches, tunnels and communal spaces offer a fascinating glimpse into how people once lived within this extraordinary landscape.

This evening, gather at a local restaurant for a farewell dinner.

Day 8 Departure

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for your journey home.

DAILY WALK OPTIONS



Gentle walking grade 3

Slightly longer walks, mostly on well-trodden paths, with some gentle gradients plus stiles and steps possible. Typically, 5-6 miles (8-10km) with around 650ft (200m) of ascent.

ACCOMMODATION

Grand Sirkeci Hotel, Istanbul

Set in the heart of Istanbul's historic old quarter, this comfortable boutique-style hotel makes a convenient base for exploring the city. Modern, well-equipped rooms provide a relaxing place to unwind, while many of Istanbul's best-known sights are within easy reach.

Mihran Sultan Hotel, Cappadocia

Located in the historiv town of Avanos, this welcoming hotel blends modern comforts with Cappadocia's distinctive stone-built style. Facilities include a restaurant, outdoor swimming pool (open subject to season) and complimentary Wi-Fi. Its relaxed atmosphere and convenient location make it an ideal base for discovering the region's remarkable valleys and landscapes.

VACCINATIONS & HEALTH

Vaccinations & health information

Before booking, you should check with your doctor to see whether any health precautions are needed for your trip. Health advice and requirements can change, so we recommend doing this in good time before travel.

As a general rule, travellers should ensure they are up to date with routine UK vaccinations and boosters, including, for example, MMR and diphtheria, tetanus and polio. Some countries may require you to have specific vaccinations such as Malaria, Rabies and Yellow Fever. Please check with your GP if you are unsure.

Please note that the use or possession of some common prescription or over-the-counter medicines is restricted or banned in certain countries. If you will be carrying medication, you should check with the relevant embassy or consulate before travelling. As an extra precaution, we recommend keeping medication in its original packaging, carrying a copy of your prescription, and, where possible, asking your pharmacist to provide the medication name in the language of the country you are visiting.

For further country-specific health advice, visit www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk or www.traveldoctor.co.uk. If you are travelling from outside the UK, please consult your own doctor and check local entry requirements.

PASSPORTS & VISAS

Passport & Visa information

This information is for those travelling with a full 'British Citizen' passport; for all other nationalities or passport holders, please check with your local consulate for advice.

Passport Requirements

This information applies to travellers holding a full British Citizen passport. Entry requirements vary by destination and can change at short notice. For most EU and worldwide destinations, passports must be valid for the entire duration of your stay. Some countries also require a minimum period of validity remaining on your passport (often up to 6 months beyond your return date), even if you are not staying that long.
We strongly recommend ensuring your passport has at least six months' validity remaining at the time of travel to avoid any issues.

If you hold a different type of British passport or a passport issued by another country, you must check the requirements with the relevant embassy, consulate, or official government website.

Visa Requirements

Visa rules depend on your nationality, destination, length of stay, and purpose of travel, and they can change frequently. It is your responsibility to check whether you require a visa before travelling.
British passport holders should check the latest entry, passport validity and visa requirements for their destination on the UK government's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) website:
https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Packing list

It's best to be prepared for all weather conditions. To make it easier, here is a list of items you should consider packing.

Essentials

- Walking boots
- Waterproof jacket
- Waterproof trousers
- Insulated jacket/top
- Walking clothing
- Walking socks (plus spares)
- Sunhat
- Gloves/mitts and warm hat
- Water bottle (minimum 2 litre capacity)
- Headtorch
- High-factor sunscreen (minimum SPF 30)
- Swimcap (compulsory in Itialian resorts)
- Sunglasses with a dark lens
- Rucksack (15-30 litres)
- Mobile phone
- Personal first aid kit (containing your medication, blister plasters, etc.)
- Passport
- Visa (if applicable)
- Copy of your travel insurance policy
- UK Global Health Insurance Card (**formerly known as EHIC**)

Recommended

- Collapsible walking poles
- Swimwear and travel towel
- Snacks
- Dry bags

- Rubbish bags
- Insect repellent

Optional extras

- Camera
- Sit mat
- Flask for hot drinks
- Durable lunch box
- Gaiters
- GPS device (excluding Bhutan, Georgia and India)

JOINING INSTRUCTIONS (WITH FLIGHTS)

With flights

Book your holiday 'with flights' and you can choose to depart from selected UK airports* to your destination. For latest flight times and prices please call us on 0203-974-8865 or email reservations@hfholidays.co.uk

If you choose to book your flights with us, we automatically include return transfers between the destination airport and hotel.

JOINING INSTRUCTIONS (WITHOUT FLIGHTS)

Without flights

If you are booking on a land-only basis, you can join the group transfer at an additional cost. To do so, your arrival and departure times must be in line with the scheduled group flight timings. Guests travelling at different times will need to arrange their own transfers. Please contact us before booking to discuss the available options and costs.

USEFUL INFORMATION

Safety Information

Walking Safety

Walks may be changed for safety reasons and are subject to a maximum and minimum number of guests.

Leaders always consider the safety of the group as a whole and may need to alter or curtail the walk if the conditions dictate. Your leader may refuse to accept a guest where clothing, equipment or behaviour is unsuitable. In the event of a problem all leaders carry a mobile phone, first aid kit, group shelter, spare maps and a compass.

Please note: If you choose to leave the group your leader is no longer responsible for you.

In the event of a problem

If you become separated from your group, please stay where you are. Your leader will retrace their steps to find you.

All our walk leaders carry a mobile phone, group shelter, spare maps and a compass. In the unlikely event your leader is incapacitated, please use any emergency kit in their rucksack and call the emergency services (call 999 in the UK, or 112 overseas).

Please then try to call the hotel where you are staying to let them know there is a problem.

We advise you carry a copy of these trip notes or note down the contact phone number for your accommodation (details in the travel section) should you need them in case of emergency.

If you have any cause for complaints regarding accommodation, you should notify your leader who can then attempt to rectify the problem.

Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is a condition of booking. Therefore, if you have not already arranged insurance, it is imperative that you do so before you travel.

For more information about healthcare and its costs, please visit: https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/

Drinking Water

Drinking Water

Standards for drinking water vary widely around the world. In many destinations, tap water may not be safe to drink, brush your teeth with, or use for making ice. Where advised, you should drink only bottled or treated water and ensure that bottle seals are intact before use. If bottled water is unavailable, water should be boiled or filtered.

Staying well hydrated is particularly important in hot climates and during active holidays. Carry water with you and drink regularly.

If you are unsure about local water safety, check official country-specific health advice before travel, or ask your accommodation or local guides for guidance once you arrive.

Ticks information

Ticks are tiny creatures that live in vegetation and can attach themselves to passing animals or walkers and may carry a risk of Lyme Disease. Please refer to NHS advice and guidelines for information: https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/lyme-disease/

TRIPNOTE VALIDITY

TRIP NOTE VALIDITY These Trip Notes are valid based on the date printed at the bottom of the page. They will occasionally be updated post booking and pre-departure. We will send you the latest trip notes prior to departure through a link in your pre departure documents or we can send you a copy in the post if preferred. In booking this trip you should be confident in your ability to participate in all activities described in these Trip Notes. If you have any doubt about your suitability you should call HF Holidays and ask to speak to one of the team about this itinerary. The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; so please be prepared to be flexible where necessary. At times, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned due to weather conditions, political, physical or other factors. In these circumstances we will make the best possible alternative arrangements to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

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