

# Overseas Adventure Travel®

THE LEADER IN CUSTOMIZED SMALL GROUP ADVENTURES SINCE 1978

Your O.A.T. Adventure Travel Planning Guide®



Turkey's Magical Hideaways  
2026

# Overseas Adventure Travel®

347 Congress Street, Boston, MA 02210

Dear Traveler,

I am thrilled that you are considering exploring the world with O.A.T. There are so many wonderful destinations to discover, and the itinerary described inside is a perfect way to fulfill a travel dream.

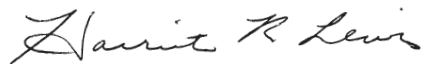
When you join us, you will slip seamlessly into local life as you explore off the beaten path in your small group. Like all our itineraries, this one is designed to give you an intimate understanding of your destination, not just a superficial view. You will get to know community leaders and try your hand at local trades during your *A Day in the Life* experience, share traditional fare and lively conversation during a Home-Hosted Visit, discuss the Controversial Topics impacting everyday life, and visit sites supported by Grand Circle Foundation. And if you choose to travel solo, you will enjoy all these cultural experiences at an unmatched value, with our FREE Single Supplements—just one of the reasons we continue to be the leader in solo travel.

To ensure you experience the true culture and feel supported every step of the way, we provide the services of a local Trip Experience Leader from the beginning of your adventure to the end. Along with introducing you to the history and culture of their homeland, these friendly experts will gladly help you out with any special requests to make your trip even more special. You can also rely on the seasoned team at our regional office, who are ready to help 24/7 in case any unexpected circumstances arise.

Plus, you can put your own personal stamp on your trip, like the **87% of our travelers who customize their experience**. Perhaps you will choose to see more of your destination by adding an optional trip extension to your itinerary. You can also arrive a few days early to explore independently and get acclimated, customize your air itinerary, and more.

I hope you find this Travel Planning Guide helpful. If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to contact one of our Travel Counselors at **1-800-955-1925**.

Warm regards,



Harriet R. Lewis  
Chair  
Overseas Adventure Travel

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Old Town, Antalya

## Turkey's Magical Hideaways

### Small Group Adventure

**Turkey:** Istanbul, Cappadocia, Konya, Antalya, Fethiye, 4-Night Turquoise Coast private *gulet* cruise, Marmaris, Kusadasi

Small groups of no more than 14 travelers, guaranteed

**17 days starting from \$5,195**

including international airfare

Single Supplement: **FREE**

For departure dates & prices, visit [www.oattravel.com/tmh2026pricing](http://www.oattravel.com/tmh2026pricing)

See the bazaars, palaces, and mosques of exotic Istanbul, where Occident meets Orient ... explore the underground cities of Cappadocia ... and walk in the footsteps of saints and legionnaires in Ephesus. Cruise for **4 nights aboard a private, 14-passenger gulet-style yacht**—a modern version of the traditional wooden-hulled vessels that once plied the Aegean—enabling you to witness Lycian tombs hewn into the cliffs and visit hidden bays and magical hideaways.

### IT'S INCLUDED

- 15 nights accommodation, including 4 nights aboard a privately chartered, 14-passenger Turkish *gulet*
- International airfare, airport transfers, government taxes, fees, and airline fuel surcharges unless you choose to make your own air arrangements
- All land transportation and internal flights
- 36 meals—15 breakfasts, 9 lunches, and 12 dinners (including 1 Home-Hosted Dinner)
- 17 guided tours and cultural experiences
- Gratuities for drivers, ship crew, and luggage porters
- 5% Frequent Traveler Credit toward your next trip

*Prices are accurate as of the date of this publishing and are subject to change.*



## WHAT TO EXPECT

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ Moderate

**Pacing:** 5 locations in 16 days with 4 nights aboard our private *gulet*

**Physical requirements:** Several hikes in the Cappadocia region are at steep inclines, with some 1-hour uphill hikes on loose gravel; you will also have the opportunity to participate in fairly rigorous daily hikes of 1-3 hours each during our *gulet* cruise

**Flight Time:** Travel time will be 10-17 hours and will most likely have one connection

View all physical requirements at [www.oattravel.com/tmh](http://www.oattravel.com/tmh)

## TURKEY: THE O.A.T. DIFFERENCE

**Unbeatable Value:** Travel at the lowest price and per diems in the industry.

**People-to-People Experiences:** Share a **Home-Hosted Dinner** with a family in Antalya and meet with artisans at a carpet-weaving workshop in Cappadocia to see what goes into creating the elaborate designs of this centuries-old Turkish craft. Plus, spend **A Day in the Life** of a Cappadocian village, meeting with farmers, helping out with some farm chores, and enjoying lunch with a local family.

**O.A.T. Exclusives:** Go beyond the tourist track when you spend four nights aboard a private Turkish *gulet*—a traditional 14-passenger wooden two-masted ship, the smallest ship in our fleet—and explore ancient ruins along the Turquoise Coast, meeting locals along the way and sitting beneath the stars on an open-air deck.

## ITINERARY SUMMARY

| DAYS  | DESTINATION                             |
|-------|-----------------------------------------|
| 1     | Depart U.S.                             |
| 2-4   | Istanbul, Turkey                        |
| 5-7   | Cappadocia                              |
| 8-10  | Antalya                                 |
| 11-14 | Embark ship • <i>Gulet</i> yacht cruise |
| 15-16 | Disembark ship • Kusadasi • Ephesus     |
| 17    | Return to U.S.                          |

## PERSONALIZE YOUR ADVENTURE

### OPTIONAL EXTENSIONS

Untouched Azerbaijan

**PRE-TRIP:** 6 nights from **\$2,995**

Northwest Turkey: Battlefields of Ancient Troy and Gallipoli & Istanbul

**POST-TRIP:** 6 nights from **\$1,495**

### ARRIVE EARLY

We recommend that you relax after a long flight or explore more in depth before your trip. Prices shown include accommodations and private airport transfer.

- Arrive early in **Baku** before your Azerbaijan pre-trip extension from **\$200** per room, per night
- Arrive early in **Istanbul** before your main adventure from **\$220** per room, per night

# Turkey's Magical Hideaways

## YOUR DETAILED ITINERARY

### BEGIN YOUR ADVENTURE WITH AN OPTIONAL PRE-TRIP EXTENSION

#### 6 nights in *Untouched Azerbaijan*

**Day 1** Depart U.S.

**Day 2** Arrive in Istanbul, Turkey • Fly to Baku, Azerbaijan

**Day 3** Arrive in Baku • Explore Baku

**Day 4** Excursion to Gobustan • Gobustan Museum visit

**Day 5** Overland to Guba • Krasnaya Sloboda village visit • Explore Guba

**Day 6** Khinalug village visit • **Home-Hosted Lunch**

**Day 7** Overland to Baku • Carpet Museum & Cultural Center visits

**Day 8** Martyr's Lane visit • Fly to Istanbul • Begin main trip

#### **Day 1** Fly to Istanbul, Turkey

**Afternoon/Evening:** Depart on an overnight flight to Istanbul, Turkey.

#### **Day 2** Arrive in Istanbul, Turkey

- Destination: Istanbul
- Accommodations: Armada Old City Hotel or similar

**Afternoon:** You'll likely arrive in Istanbul this afternoon or early this evening. At the hotel, you may meet some of your fellow travelers, including those who took our optional *Untouched Azerbaijan* extension and those who arrived early in Istanbul before the main adventure. The rest of the day is yours to rest in your room or stroll the nearby neighborhood.

**Dinner:** On your own. You can ask your Trip Experience Leader for local dining options.

**Evening:** You're free to seek out Istanbul's delights on your own.

#### **Day 3** Explore Istanbul's Grand Bazaar & Topkapi Palace

- Destination: Istanbul
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Armada Old City Hotel or similar

**Activity Note:** If either the Grand Bazaar or Topkapi Palace are closed today, our Trip Experience Leader will rearrange activities as needed to include these visits on a different day.

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Following a Welcome Briefing at our hotel, we'll set off on a full day minibus and walking tour of Istanbul, the historic city formerly known as Byzantium and Constantinople. Due to its strategic location

astride both Asia and Europe, Istanbul served as the capital of a series of empires since its founding back in the seventh century BC, and today boasts myriad treasures from its incredible history.

Our first stop is the Hippodrome of Constantinople, a lively central square that was the social heart of the city during the Byzantine era. We'll witness the square's defining features—two soaring obelisks—before continuing on to the Grand Bazaar. Home to more than 4,000 shops, this remarkable complex dates back more than 550 years.

**Lunch:** On your own. Grab a bite around the Grand Bazaar or walk to the main street of Old Town for a variety of food stands and restaurants.

**Afternoon:** Our next stop is Topkapi palace. The complex of grand pavilions and courtyards was built by Mehmet II in the middle of the 15th century (just after his conquest of Constantinople) and served as the residence of Ottoman sultans—along with their wives and concubines—for the next 400 years. Today, it is one of the world's richest museums, and we'll witness a staggering collection of arms, porcelain, and priceless treasures that include the jewel-studded dagger made famous by the Hollywood heist film, *Topkapi*. After our visit, you're free to return to the hotel with the group, or remain in the historic center to explore on your own. Perhaps you'd like to visit the Archaeological Museum, showcasing over a million artifacts from the Balkans, to Africa, and Afghanistan.

**Dinner:** Enjoy a Welcome Dinner at a local restaurant.

**Evening:** On your own. Perhaps you'll venture out to one of the city's popular rooftop nightspots, where you can enjoy a drink and striking views of the city.

## **Day 4 Explore Istanbul & Hagia Sophia • Spice Bazaar • Bosphorus Strait cruise**

- Destination: Istanbul
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Armada Old City Hotel or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Our city tour of Istanbul begins at Hagia Sophia—a true wonder of the Byzantine world. Completed under Emperor Justinian in AD 537, this massive building (known best for its resplendent dome) was a Christian church for nearly 1,000 years, until Mehmet the Conqueror claimed it for Islam. Kemal Atatürk, the revolutionary leader and founder of the Republic, proclaimed it as a museum in 1934—but it reverted back to a working mosque in 2020. Its interior was designed as an earthly mirror of heaven, and as we explore, our Trip Experience Leader will point out the stunning Byzantine mosaics and distinctive features that contributed to the success of this estimable goal.

Then, we'll drive over to Misir Carsisi, the Spice Bazaar—one of the largest bazaars in the city. After some time to wander through the bustling stalls, we'll take a short walk over to the pier, where we'll board a private boat and set off for a cruise along the Bosphorus Strait, the body of water that separates Europe and Asia. After our cruise, we'll drive back to Old Town.

**Lunch:** On your own. Perhaps let your Trip Experience Leader recommend a true Turkish experience: trying local street-food favorites such as *islak* (a type of hamburger), a *döner kebab*, or a delicious *simit* (a special bagel with sesame seeds).

**Afternoon:** The remainder of the afternoon is yours to explore on your own or just to relax in the hotel.

**Dinner:** On your own. You may want to ask your Trip Experience Leader where to find the best *manti* in town. This stuffed dumpling dish traditionally features a filling of ground meat and onion, served with yogurt and tomato sauce—but Istanbul has seen a rise in new filling options, among them fish or vegetables.

**Evening:** The evening is free for your own discoveries.

## **Day 5 Fly to Cappadocia • Underground city**

- Destination: Cappadocia
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Nujel'm Cappadocia Hotel or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We'll fly to Cappadocia this morning (flight times may vary, depending on flight schedules). Over millennia, rain and wind have shaped the soft white volcanic rock—called *tufa*—of the surrounding Anatolian plain into an otherworldly landscape of dripping cones, pillars, pinnacles, and fairy chimneys soaring more than a hundred feet into the sky.

**Lunch:** On your own. You may wish to grab something at the airport.

**Afternoon:** Our first stop in Cappadocia will be a visit to Ozkonak, one of the remarkable underground cities dotting the local landscape.

During the Hittite era, as successive armies swept across Asia Minor, these multi-leveled complexes were built as uniquely defensible communities—all had heavy millstones for doors that could be rolled in place to seal off the outside world. There are believed to be about three dozen of these underground cities in the region, but few have been excavated. In Ozkonak, we'll explore some of

the hundreds of rooms, which were designed to house thousands of people for up to three months. We'll wander the narrow, sloping passageways between kitchens with enameled food storage areas, water cisterns, stables, and living quarters at the deepest levels—all well-ventilated by giant air shafts. After our visit, we'll drive to our hotel.

**Dinner:** At the hotel.

**Evening:** On your own. You're free to enjoy a nightcap at the hotel bar or retire to your room.

## **Day 6 Visit Göreme open-air museum • Carpet Weaving Cooperative • Optional Ballooning Over Cappadocia tour**

- Destination: Cappadocia
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Nujel'm Cappadocia Hotel or similar

**Early Morning:** Early risers are welcome to join an optional hot-air balloon flight over Cappadocia, with the chance to view its surreal beauty from high above, illuminated by the rosy light of dawn. During this 2-hour excursion, we'll soar over the amber terrain and fairy chimneys—all the while savoring this unique panorama in remarkable fashion.

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We'll begin today with a 1-hour hike to enjoy unimpeded views of the sweeping valleys and landscapes of Cappadocia without any of the large tourist crowds to interrupt the serene beauty of this magical region. Then, we'll drive to Göreme to discover Cappadocia's geologic wonders and remarkable human history. People have inhabited the region since ancient times, using hand tools to hollow out thousands of the freestanding tufa formations. These cave-like rooms once sheltered Anatolia's early Christians from invaders, and vast underground cities in the area housed

thousands of people. There are also more than 600 Christian churches carved into the soft rock, some dating to the third century AD. A few Cappadocian caves also serve as homes for modern-day troglodytes, who stay quite cool here in the hot summer weather.

Göreme is a literal “open-air museum” of ancient rock-cut churches, chapels, and monasteries adorned with Byzantine frescoes dating from the tenth to the 13th centuries. We’ll explore this natural wonderland on foot before heading to our hotel. Over millennia, rain and wind have shaped the soft white volcanic rock—called tufa—of the surrounding Anatolian plain into an otherworldly landscape of dripping cones, pillars, pinnacles, and fairy chimneys soaring more than a hundred feet into the sky.

**Lunch:** At a local restaurant.

**Afternoon:** After lunch, we’ll visit a rug-weaving cooperative, where local artisans will help us learn about all aspects of this traditional Turkish craft, from silkworm cultivation to spinning, dyeing, and the traditional patterns and weaving techniques.

**Dinner:** At a local restaurant.

**Evening:** On your own. You’re free to enjoy a nightcap at the hotel bar or retire to your room.

### **Day 7 A Day in the Life of a Cappadocian village • Optional Whirling Dervishes tour**

- Destination: Cappadocia
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Nujel’m Cappadocia Hotel or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Today, we set out to experience *A Day in the Life* of a small town in Cappadocia. While much of the region has been transformed

by tourism, the village we visit has retained its authentic character. The economy here is agrarian, and the town’s residents still maintain their traditional customs and beliefs.

We’ll meet with a local villager who will introduce us to the everyday routines of village life. After some people-to-people exchanges, we’ll drive over to one of the farmlands to enjoy a hands-on experience, which will vary by season. Perhaps we’ll help to pick some of the fresh ingredients that will be used for our lunch.

**Lunch:** We’ll enjoy lunch in the home of a local family. As we dine on traditional, homemade dishes, our hosts will share what life is like in a traditional Turkish community, and we’ll ask any questions that we may have.

**Afternoon:** On our drive back to the hotel, we’ll stop at a few of the region’s most famous rock formations, such as the soaring Three Beauties or aptly named Camel Rock. Then, enjoy some free time or join our optional *Whirling Dervishes* tour to witness the legendary “Ritual of Sema,” a traditional religious dance wherein *dervishes* (Muslim religious figures akin to monks) whirl faster and faster to summon the divine.

**Dinner:** At the hotel.

**Evening:** On your own.

### **Day 8 Overland to Konya • Whirling Dervish monastery visit • Overland to Antalya**

- Destination: Antalya
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Aspen Hotel or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Journey across the Taurus Mountains toward the Mediterranean seaside town of Antalya. Along the way, we’ll stop in the city

of Konya, a bastion of Seljuk culture and home of the Mevlevi, or Whirling Dervish. We'll visit the Mevlana Muzesi (a museum dedicated to Mevlana Celalettin Rumi), as well as the former *tekke* (dervish hall) that now holds the tomb of Celaleddin Rumi. Later known as Mevlana, he was the founder of the Mevlevi order and became one of the greatest literary and spiritual figures of all time—more than a million and a half Turks come here to pray each year.

**Lunch:** At a local restaurant.

**Afternoon:** We'll reach our hotel in Antalya late this afternoon. Once an old fishing village, Antalya is now a sprawling seaside resort that combines unspoiled beaches and modern homes with a walled Old Town. The eclectic architectural styles on display reflect more than 2,000 years of history.

**Dinner:** At the hotel.

**Evening:** On your own, with the freedom to seek out Antalya's delights independently.

## **Day 9 Explore Antalya • Home-Hosted Dinner**

- Destination: Antalya
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Aspen Hotel or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** An archaeologist will meet us at the hotel for a conversation about the ancient treasures at the Antalya *Muzesi*. Then, we'll head over to this renowned archaeological museum to explore artifacts from the Stone and Bronze Ages to Byzantium housed in the museum's many exhibition halls and open-air galleries. In 1988, the museum won the esteemed European Council Special Prize. Perhaps most impressive is its largest collection featuring sculptures dating back to Roman times from the ancient city of Perge.

Then, we'll enjoy a walking tour of Kaleici, Antalya's Old Town. Kaleici translates to "within the city walls," and among its myriad highlights is Hadrian's Gate, a triumphal arch built in the name of the Roman emperor who visited Antalya in AD 130. As we walk about, we'll have time to witness the neighborhood's shops, honey-hued stone walls, and narrow, winding streets.

**Lunch:** On your own. Given its coastal locale, Antalya's seafood is particularly popular, and this may be a great opportunity to sample the day's catch.

**Afternoon:** You're free to spend the afternoon as you wish. You may choose to unwind on one of Antalya's numerous beaches, or venture back into Kaleici for additional exploration.

**Dinner:** This evening, we'll head over to a residential neighborhood where local families will welcome us into their homes to share a meal together during a **Home-Hosted Dinner**.

**Evening:** You have the freedom to explore Antalya as you'd like tonight. You may want to ask your Trip Experience Leader to point you toward *kazandibi*, a milk pudding with a rich, caramelized sugar crunch.

## **Day 10 Antalya • Explore Perge and Aspendos**

- Destination: Antalya
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Aspen Hotel or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Today, we'll visit Perge and Aspendos, two ancient sites nestled along the coast near Antalya. Our first site, Perge, was originally settled by the Hittites around 1500 BC. Although it grew into a wealthy city, Perge was abandoned in the seventh century. Saint Paul visited Perge in 46 AD and preached his

first sermon here. Highlights of the excavated city ruins include marble reliefs carved on the ancient theatre and a lengthy colonnaded road lined with the remains of shops, public baths, a gymnasium, and more.

Then, we'll visit Aspendos, a city with roots dating back to the Hittite Empire (800 BC). Here, we'll behold the best preserved Roman theatre of the ancient world. Built in the second century AD during the reign of Emperor Marcus Aurelius, the theatre once hosted attractions for more than 10,000 people. Remarkably preserved and still with near-perfect acoustics, the space still hosts plays and operas today.

**Lunch:** On your own in Antalya.

**Afternoon:** The remainder of the afternoon is yours to relax or explore independently. Perhaps you'll choose to enjoy a traditional Turkish bath.

**Dinner:** On your own. You can ask your Trip Experience Leader for local dining suggestions.

**Evening:** You're free to spend your final evening in Antalya as you like.

## Day 11 Overland to Fethiye • Embark ship

- Destination: Turquoise Coast
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Turkish *gulet*

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Today, we journey south along Turkey's Mediterranean coast, a region dotted with turquoise waters and plunging cliffs.

**Lunch:** At a local restaurant in Demre.

**Afternoon:** As we continue our journey through this scenic coastal region until we reach the harbor of Fethiye, where we'll board our private *gulet*. Based on a centuries-old

design, *gulets* are elegant vessels that seem to blend naturally with the landscapes of the Turkish coast.

**Dinner:** Aboard the *gulet*. Barring poor weather, we'll enjoy most meals outdoors on deck.

**Evening:** You're free to enjoy the view from one of the observation decks this evening, or settle into your cabin for the night.

## Day 12 Cruise to Bay of Gemiler • Hike to Kayakoy

- Destination: Turquoise Coast
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Turkish *gulet*

**Activity Note:** Today's discoveries include several hikes that require agility and balance. Travelers who prefer not to participate in the hikes may choose to relax on our *gulet* instead.

**Breakfast:** Aboard the *gulet*.

**Morning:** With our ship anchored near Gemiler Beach, we'll take a short drive to Kayakoy, a Greek "ghost town." Anatolian Greeks once inhabited this city of about 600 homes, but in the 1920s, the entire population was relocated to Greece in the aftermath of the Turkish War of Independence. Upon our arrival at the UNESCO World Heritage Site, we'll behold an eerie and moving place, a tragic reminder of how politics can affect human lives. This abandoned town also served as the inspiration for *Birds Without Wings*, Louis de Bernières' popular novel about the waning years of the Ottoman Empire.

**Lunch:** Aboard the *gulet*.

**Afternoon:** Travelers can transfer to shore via dinghy to go for a quiet stroll along the beach, enjoy a dip in the turquoise waters, or take advantage of hiking opportunities in the area. Our *gulet* might also cruise to a different cove if travelers are looking for easier hiking options.

**Dinner:** Aboard the *gulet*.

**Evening:** On your own, with the freedom to settle into your cabin or linger with your fellow travelers.

### **Day 13 Hike on the Turquoise Coast**

- Destination: Turquoise Coast
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Turkish *gulet*

**Breakfast:** Aboard the *gulet*.

**Morning:** We'll drop anchor in one of the sheltered bays of the area, and transfer by dinghy to the shore. Then, we'll set off on a hike through forests, meadows, and coastal scenery.

**Lunch:** Aboard the *gulet*.

**Afternoon:** You have the freedom to do as you please this afternoon. You may wish to go for a swim, or simply relax on one of the *gulet's* observation decks and reflect on the natural beauty of our surroundings.

**Dinner:** Aboard the *gulet*.

**Evening:** On your own.

### **Day 14 Cruise to Ekincik Cove • Dalyan River boat ride • Explore Kaunos**

- Destination: Turquoise Coast
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Turkish *gulet*

**Breakfast:** Aboard the *gulet*.

**Morning:** We'll cruise to Ekincik Cove, and then take smaller boats up the Dalyan River. This tranquil waterway was named for *dalyans*, the fishing weirs that have supported locals for centuries. Depending on the season, we may see loggerhead sea turtles when our small riverboat brings us to the Dalyan's estuary. Turtles have nested here since the age of the dinosaurs.

Then, we'll visit Kaunos, an ancient seaport city with roots dating back to the ninth century BC. We'll view remains of a theatre, acropolis, Roman bath, and more. And since Kaunos bordered ancient Lycia—and took on aspects of its culture—we'll also see the remarkable Lycian-style tombs hewn into the cliffs. As we walk, we'll take in the colorful fruit trees that dot the ruins, from lemon orchards to pomegranate trees.

**Lunch:** Aboard the *gulet*.

**Afternoon:** The afternoon is yours.

**Dinner:** Aboard the *gulet*.

**Evening:** You're free to spend our final evening aboard the *gulet* as you'd wish.

### **Day 15 Disembark ship • Overland to Kusadasi**

- Destination: Kusadasi
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Charisma Hotel or similar

**Breakfast:** Aboard the *gulet*.

**Morning:** We'll disembark our *gulet* in Marmaris and journey north to Kusadasi.

**Lunch:** At a local restaurant en route to Kusadasi.

**Afternoon:** We'll arrive in Kusadasi, the popular seaside resort known as the gateway to ancient Ephesus, by mid-afternoon.

**Dinner:** At the hotel.

**Evening:** On your own.

## Day 16 Kusadasi • Explore Ephesus

- Destination: Kusadasi
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Charisma Hotel or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Today we visit one of the largest and best-preserved ancient cities in the world. The ancient Greco-Roman site of Ephesus—a UNESCO World Heritage Site—is a marvel of remarkably preserved wide marble streets, flanked by columns and temples. Ephesus was home to the Temple of Artemis, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. No longer standing, it was said to be one of the most colossal temples ever built.

We'll behold many of the city's highlights, including the Library of Celsus, a tiered façade adorned with exquisite statues; the Great Theater, which is where St. Paul preached to the Ephesians; and some of the city's well-preserved baths. And we may benefit from our small group size: When local restrictions allow, we may get to explore some of the lesser-excavated sections of this world-renowned site. We'll also visit the nearby

Ephesus Museum, a beautiful repository of marble and bronze statues, as well as many artifacts thought to have come from the Temple of Artemis.

**Lunch:** At a local restaurant.

**Afternoon:** The afternoon is yours, with the freedom to explore as you'd like.

**Dinner:** Enjoy a Farewell Dinner at a local restaurant.

**Evening:** On your own. You're free to retire to your room early to rest up for tomorrow's journey home.

## Day 17 Return to the U.S. or begin post-trip extension

- Included Meals: Breakfast

**Breakfast:** Coffee and snacks will be available in the hotel lobby.

**Early Morning:** Depart to the airport in Izmir for your international flight home, or to begin your post-trip extension in *Northwest Turkey: Battlefields of Ancient Troy and Gallipoli & Istanbul*.

## END YOUR ADVENTURE WITH AN OPTIONAL POST-TRIP EXTENSION

### 6 nights in Northwest Turkey: Battlefields of Ancient Troy and Gallipoli & Istanbul

**Day 1** Overland to Kazdaglari • Explore Pergamum

**Day 2** Village walk • Visit olive-oil museum

**Day 3** Overland to Canakkale • Explore ancient Troy

**Day 4** Visit Battlefields of Gallipoli • Overland to Istanbul

**Day 5** Visit Suleymaniye Mosque

**Day 6** Explore Dolmabahce Palace

**Day 7** Return to U.S.

## OPTIONAL TOURS

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During your trip you will be able to book optional tours directly with your Trip Experience Leader. He or she will ask you to confirm the payment for these tours by filling out a payment form. Optional tours can only be purchased with a credit or debit card. We accept Visa, MasterCard, and Discover credit cards. We also accept Visa and MasterCard debit cards, but it must be a debit card that allows you to sign for purchases.

In order to correctly process these charges, there can be a delay of 2–3 months from the date of your return for the charges to be posted to your account. Therefore we ask that you use a card that will not expire in the 2–3 months following your return.

**Please note:** Optional tour prices are listed in U.S. dollar estimates determined at the time of publication and are subject to change. Optional tours may vary.

### **Ballooning Over Cappadocia**

(Day 6 \$300 per person)

Cappadocia is one of Turkey's most fanciful and recognizable landscapes, and during this optional hot-air balloon flight, we'll soar over its amber terrain and fairy-tale chimneys, savoring a unique panorama in the quiet, rosy light of dawn.

*The cost of this tour cannot be refunded to passengers who cancel less than 24 hours prior to the flight.*

shrouds) whirl, their motions represent a spiritual journey. We cap our experience with a glass of sweet Turkish sherbet.

### **Whirling Dervishes**

(Day 7 \$40 per person)

On this tour, witness the "Ritual of Sema." The Semazens, the so-called Whirling Dervishes, believe that the fundamental condition of our existence is to revolve. From the smallest cell to the planets and the farthest stars, everything takes part in this revolving. Thus, the ones who whirl participate consciously in the shared revolution of all existence. As the Semazen (with their camel's-felt hats representing tombstones and wide white skirts symbolizing

## PRE-TRIP

### Untouched Azerbaijan

#### INCLUDED IN YOUR PRICE

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- |                                               |                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| » 6 nights accommodation                      | » Services of a local Trip Experience Leader                |
| » 14 meals—6 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 4 dinners | » Gratuities for local guides, drivers, and luggage porters |
| » 8 guided tours and cultural activities      | » All transfers                                             |

#### PRE-TRIP EXTENSION ITINERARY

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*Explore Azerbaijan and discover a mysterious land of mountains, mud volcanoes, and multiculturalism. Begin in the capital of Baku, a former Soviet city whose elegant medieval core contrasts with a trio of futuristic skyscrapers known as the Flame Towers. Then, journey to Guba, a gateway to remote mountain villages in the footsteps of the soaring Caucasus, before returning to Baku. Be the first to discover this destination long hidden from the outside world—and one where few Americans have ventured.*

##### Day 1 Depart U.S.

You depart today on your overnight flight from the U.S. to Baku, Azerbaijan, via Istanbul, Turkey.

##### Day 2 Arrive in Istanbul, Turkey • Fly to Baku, Azerbaijan

- Destination: Baku
- Accommodations: Park Inn by Radisson Baku Hotel or similar

**Evening:** Arrive in Istanbul and meet your connecting flight to Baku. Depending on your flight schedule, you'll arrive late tonight or very early on Day 3.

##### Day 3 Arrive in Baku • Explore Baku

- Destination: Baku
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Park Inn by Radisson Baku Hotel or similar

**Early Morning:** Upon arrival at your hotel in Baku, your morning is free to settle in, rest, and prepare for the day's discoveries.

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Late this morning, we'll gather as a small group for the first time, and meet with our Trip Experience Leader and travelers who arrived early in Baku before their pre-trip extension, for a Welcome Briefing at the hotel. Then, our Trip Experience Leader will take us on a walking tour of Baku's Old City, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This walled section of the city is filled with ancient caravanserais, *hammams* (bath-houses), and mosques. We'll also behold the twelfth-century monument

known as Maiden Tower. Widely considered a symbol of the city, this tower's history is laced with legend: The most popular story references a girl with fire-colored hair—born out of flames, she saved the Baku from enemy invaders, and the tower was built in her honor.

**Lunch:** At a local restaurant.

**Afternoon:** We'll continue our walking tour with a visit to the ancient city walls and the 15th-century Palace of the Shirvanshahs. This resplendent complex includes burial vaults, a mausoleum, bath ruins, and more. We'll also set the stage for the rest of our discoveries here in Azerbaijan with a visit to a local history museum.

**Dinner:** Enjoy a Welcome Dinner at a local restaurant.

**Evening:** On your own. You're free to rest up after your first full day in Baku, or ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations on where to venture for additional exploration.

#### **Day 4 Excursion to Gobustan • Gobustan Museum visit**

- Destination: Baku
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Park Inn by Radisson Baku Hotel or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Today, we'll journey south along the Caspian coast to Gobustan. This UNESCO World Heritage Site has been recognized for its mud volcanoes and ancient petroglyphs. Azerbaijan has about 300 of these active geological wonders, the most of any country in the world. After exploring the gurgling volcanoes, we'll visit the Gobustan Museum for a chance to see ancient human bones and tools dating back thousands of years. Then, we'll continue on

for a hiking tour during which we'll discover well-preserved petroglyphs—some date back 10,000 years.

**Lunch:** On your own. You're free to dine at the hotel if you'd like, or perhaps you'll ask your Trip Experience Leader for local restaurant recommendations.

**Afternoon:** You're free to explore as you'd like this afternoon. You may choose to ride a funicular up to the Flame Towers, three modern buildings that rise from the hillside to overlook the city—they offer a striking view of Baku and the sea.

**Dinner:** On your own. Your Trip Experience Leader is ready with recommendations on where to dine this evening, and you may wish to try *saj*, a dish of stir-fried meat, fried vegetables, and thin flatbread.

**Evening:** You have the freedom to spend the night as you'd wish—whether you continue your explorations, or enjoy the hotel amenities.

#### **Day 5 Overland to Guba • Krasnaya Sloboda village visit • Explore Guba**

- Destination: Guba
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Quba Palace Hotel or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We'll journey north along the coast toward Guba (or Quba), a riverside city with foothills in the Caucasus Mountains. Known for its religious tolerance, Guba is also home to the largest community of Mountain Jews in the region. Upon arrival, we'll visit a suburb of the city, stopping in the all-Jewish village of Krasnaya Sloboda.

**Lunch:** At a local restaurant near Krasnaya Sloboda.

**Afternoon:** After lunch, we'll visit the red-brick Sakina-Khanum Mosque, which was commissioned by the widow of scientist A. Bakikhanov to commemorate his work. During our visit, we may have the opportunity to speak with the *imam* if he is available.

**Dinner:** At a local restaurant.

**Evening:** You're free to spend tonight as you'd like, whether you'd prefer to stay on the hotel grounds this evening or venture out.

### **Day 6 Khinalug village visit • Home-Hosted Lunch**

- Destination: Guba
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Quba Palace Hotel or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Today, we'll travel south to Khinalug, a remote village hidden high up on a slope of the Caucasus Mountains. Upon our arrival, our Trip Experience Leader will introduce our small group to a village that has been isolated for centuries—and villagers who have managed to preserve their unique language, traditions, and cultures from generation to generation. As we witness daily life here, we'll be welcomed into the home of a local family. This is a unique opportunity to learn more about mountain village life, and share with our hosts a little information about who we are and how far we've traveled to meet them.

**Lunch:** Discover local culture and regional cuisine during a **Home-Hosted Lunch** with a local family.

**Afternoon:** We'll bid farewell to our hosts and ride back to Guba for some free time.

**Dinner:** At our hotel.

**Evening:** On your own. You're free to explore on your own, or ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations.

### **Day 7 Overland to Baku • Carpet Museum & Cultural Center visits**

- Destination: Baku
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Park Inn by Radisson Baku Hotel or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We'll drive back to Baku this morning. Upon arrival, we'll visit its Carpet Museum. Home to the world's largest collection of Azerbaijani carpets, this building is not just full of wonders—even its exterior was designed to resemble a rolled carpet. Inside, the collection also includes ceramics, metalwork, jewelry, and artwork—a concentrated collection of this nation's cultural work.

**Lunch:** At a local restaurant.

**Afternoon:** Visit the Heydar Aliyev Center, a wave-like building that is a symbol of modern Baku. Exhibitions here center on the cultural heritage and history of Azerbaijan.

**Dinner:** This evening, we'll gather for a Farewell Dinner at a local restaurant.

**Evening:** On your own.

### **Day 8 Martyr's Lane visit • Fly to Istanbul • Begin main trip**

- Destination: Istanbul
- Included Meals: Breakfast

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** On our way to the airport, we'll make one more stop in Baku—a visit to Martyr's Lane. This memorial is a moving tribute to the

people of Baku who were killed by the Soviet Army during Black January in 1990, considered the starting point of Azerbaijani independence.

**Lunch:** On your own—you may grab something to eat at the airport.

**Afternoon:** Fly to Istanbul to begin *Turkey's Magical Hideaways*.

## POST-TRIP

### Northwest Turkey: Battlefields of Ancient Troy and Gallipoli & Istanbul

#### INCLUDED IN YOUR PRICE

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- |                                               |                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| » 6 nights accommodation                      | » Services of a local Trip Experience Leader                |
| » 14 meals—6 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 4 dinners | » Gratuities for local guides, drivers, and luggage porters |
| » 6 guided tours and cultural activities      | » All transfers                                             |

#### POST-TRIP EXTENSION ITINERARY

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*Delve into some of Turkey's most legendary historic sites beginning with two nights by a sacred mountain where the gods are said to have witnessed the Trojan War. Then, spend a night in Canakkale, gateway to the ruins of ancient Troy and the historic battlefields of Gallipoli, followed by three nights in Istanbul to witness the splendor of Suleymaniye Mosque, Dolmabahce Palace, and more.*

##### **Day 1 Overland to Kazdaglari • Explore Pergamum**

- Destination: Kazdaglari
- Included Meals: Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Hunnap Han Hotel or similar

**Morning:** Today, we make our way to Kazdaglari, a mountainous region of idyllic villages in northwest Turkey that was known as Mount Ida in ancient times. Along the way, we'll stop at Pergamum, an ancient city that is home to a dramatic hilltop acropolis that once rivaled Athens. A UNESCO World Heritage Site and the ancient capital of Asia Minor, Pergamum was considered one of the most beautiful cities of the Hellenistic age. The city was home to the second largest library in the ancient world—surpassed only by the Library of Alexandria. The Pergamon Great Altar also

once resided here; the restored relics of the impressive altar and intricate reliefs are now housed at the Pergamum Museum in Berlin.

Our Trip Experience Leader will accompany us on a cable car ride to witness the ruins of the acropolis. To the west, you'll find the steepest theater of the ancient world on a nearby slope with a capacity of 10,000 seats.

**Lunch:** At a local restaurant in Pergamum.

**Afternoon:** After lunch, we'll continue our journey to Kazdaglari and enjoy the beauty of the pine forests along the road.

**Dinner:** At the hotel.

**Evening:** On your own.

## Day 2 Village walk • Visit olive-oil museum

- Destination: Kazdaglari
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Hunnap Han Hotel or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Begin the day with a walk through an old Greek village at the foothills of Mount Ida. Then, we'll set off on a hike through the pine forests of Mount Ida to see the what remains of the Altar of Zeus. Originally built on a terrace of the acropolis of Pergamum, this impressive feat of design was first built in the late second century BCE to commemorate the Greek gods in their battle against the giants, known in Greek mythology as the Gigantomachy. The altar's intricately sculpted frieze depicted Zeus, Athena, and other gods fighting for glory against the titans.

We'll wrap up our discoveries here when we return to the village square to enjoy a cup of tea. Then, we'll drive to nearby Küçukkuyu, where we'll visit a museum dedicated to olive oil production.

**Lunch:** At a local waterfront restaurant, where you'll have the opportunity to pick your own fish and have it cooked to your liking.

**Afternoon:** After returning to Kazdaglari, the remainder of the afternoon is free.

**Dinner:** At the hotel.

**Evening:** On your own. You're free to enjoy the hotel's on-site amenities, or begin packing for tomorrow's journey to Canakkale.

## Day 3 Overland to Canakkale • Explore ancient Troy

- Destination: Canakkale
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Cura Hotel or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** On our way to Canakkale, we'll stop for a visit to legendary Troy, the city Homer immortalized in his epic poem, the *Iliad*. Troy was thought to be a fictional place until 1870, when a German businessman Heinrich Schliemann began excavations in a location he deduced from his readings of the *Iliad*. The ruins found here are now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. One of the most complex archaeological digs in history, some nine distinct ancient cities have been uncovered here thus far, layered atop of each other. We'll also explore the Museum of Troy, which was established in 2018. You'll follow Troy through history, from the Bronze Age and Trojan War to the Eastern Roman and Ottoman period.

**Lunch:** At a local restaurant.

**Afternoon:** We'll arrive in Canakkale by mid-afternoon. This seaport city is set along the narrowest point of the Dardanelles Strait, the historic crossing point between Asia and Europe.

**Dinner:** At the hotel.

**Evening:** On your own. You may wish to head to Canakkale's *saat kulesi* (clock tower)—the ornate, five-story tower has stood guard over the city since 1897, and looks especially dramatic when it's illuminated at night.

## Day 4 Visit Battlefields of Gallipoli • Overland to Istanbul

- Destination: Istanbul
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Armada Old City Hotel or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We'll cross the Dardanelles en route to Gallipoli, the scene of famous—and often tragic—World War I battles in 1915 and 1916. Allied troops (mainly “ANZACS,” the Australia and New Zealand Army Corps) landed in April of 1915, and fierce fighting continued across the peninsula through January of 1916. When we arrive at Gallipoli National Park, our Trip Experience Leader will point out the war memorials, along with cemeteries. The natural beauty of this area, with green hills rolling down to sparkling blue waters, is a stark contrast to the tragic events that unfolded here more than a century ago.

**Lunch:** At a local restaurant on the way to Istanbul.

**Afternoon:** We'll arrive in Istanbul late this afternoon. After checking in, enjoy some free time to settle in.

**Dinner:** On your own.

**Evening:** You're free to explore Istanbul as you'd like.

## Day 5 Visit Suleymaniye Mosque

- Destination: Istanbul
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Armada Old City Hotel or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Visit Suleymaniye Mosque, perhaps the most beautiful of Istanbul's four imperial mosques, which was built in the middle of the 16th century at the behest of Suleyman the Magnificent. After admiring the four minarets and ten balconies of this mosque complex that crown one of the city's seven hills and overlooks the Golden Horn and Bosphorus, we'll visit the neighborhoods of Fener and Balat. A labyrinth of charming, narrow streets and historic homes, Fener is the historical Greek neighborhood and Balat is the old Jewish quarter, which endured through Byzantine and Ottoman rule as a symbol of religious coexistence in Istanbul.

**Lunch:** On your own.

**Afternoon:** The afternoon is yours to spend as you'd like in Istanbul. Or you may choose to join your Trip Experience Leader to explore Kadikoy, a residential neighborhood on Istanbul's Asian shore, renowned for its colorful food market where you will see the locals doing their shopping or enjoying a meal.

**Dinner:** On your own.

**Evening:** On your own, with the freedom to explore as you'd like.

## Day 6 Explore Dolmabahce Palace

- Destination: Istanbul
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Armada Old City Hotel or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Today begins with a visit to Dolmabahce Palace. Built in the mid-19th century, the façade of this lavish palace stretches for more than 1,200 feet on the European shores of the Bosphorus. Its vast reception salon, with 56 columns and a huge crystal chandelier—weighing four and a

half tons and lit by 750 lights—never fails to astonish. Then, we'll head to Ortakoy, an attractive neighborhood in the European side of Istanbul along the Bosphorus Strait. During the Ottoman era, Ortakoy was a fishing village and popular resort locale for dignitaries due to its prime location in the middle of the Strait (in Turkish, Ortakoy means “middle village”).

**Lunch:** On your own in Ortakoy.

**Afternoon:** You'll have some free time in Ortakoy before returning to our hotel. Then, you can relax or perhaps join your Trip Experience Leader to explore the city's Underground Cistern or one of its many fascinating museums.

**Dinner:** Enjoy a Farewell Dinner at a local restaurant.

**Evening:** On your own.

## **Day 7 Return to U.S.**

- Included Meals: Breakfast

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Head to the airport for your return flight home.

## TURKISH GULET

### Small Ship Adventures aboard a privately chartered 13-passenger traditional *gulet*

Spend four nights along the sublime waters of the Turquoise Coast aboard a Turkish *gulet*—a modern version of the traditional wooden-hulled sailing vessels that plied the Aegean for centuries—in a small group of 8-13 (average 12). These vessels are perfect for hugging the Turkish coastline in search of ancient Lycian ruins and hidden coves while tucking into idyllic bays to drop anchor for the night. There will be ample opportunities to disembark for elective hikes, relax on deck to take in the scenery, and swim in the glittering waters of the Aegean during our cruise. Most *gulets* are captained by the vessel's owner and all include a small and attentive Turkish crew to take care of all our needs.



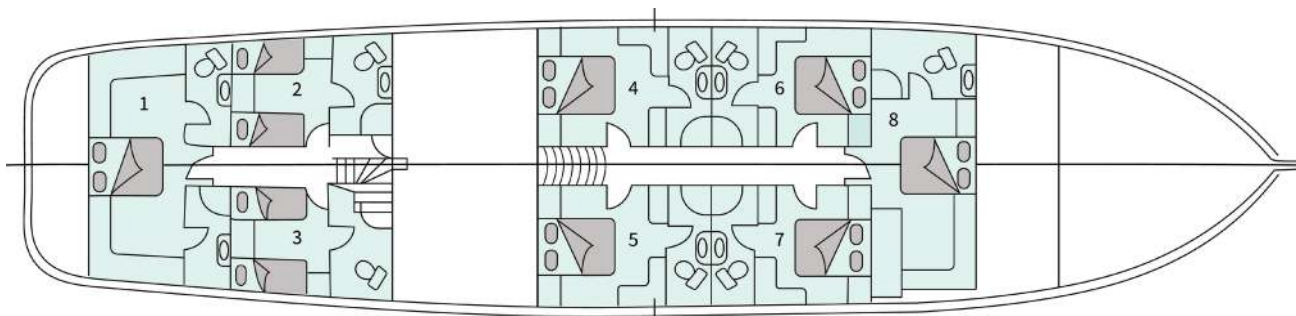
### SHIPBOARD FEATURES

- **Dining room:** Most meals are served on deck in an open seating arrangement. Tea and coffee are complimentary throughout the day, and wine, beer, and soft drinks are available for purchase
- **Outdoor common areas:** A spacious Sun Deck with comfortable seating offers panoramic views of the unfolding scenery along the Turquoise Coast
- **Other amenities:** Fishing and snorkeling gear may be available on select *gulets*
- **Internet access:** Not available while onboard

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## TURKISH GULET

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*Ship specifications and cabin features will vary by gulet.*

**Length:** 105 feet

**Beam:** 27.5 feet

**Registry:** Turkey

**Cabins:** 8 at 130-215 sq. ft. each

**Passenger capacity:** 13

**International crew:** 3-5

**Group Size:** 13 travelers maximum,  
with 1 Trip Experience Leader

**Elevator:** no

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## CABIN FEATURES

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- 8 cabins of approximately 130-215 sq. ft. each
- All cabins have portholes
- Two single beds or one double
- In-bathroom amenities: Private bath with standard amenities (no shampoo)



*Cabin with twin beds*

# TRAVEL DOCUMENTS & ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

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## Your Passport

- Must be in good condition
- Must be valid for at least 6 months after your scheduled return to the U.S.
- Must have the required number of blank pages (details below)
- The blank pages must be labeled “Visas” at the top. Pages labeled “Amendments and Endorsements” are not acceptable

## Need to Renew Your Passport?

Contact the National Passport Information Center (NPIC) at **1-877-487-2778**, or visit the U.S. Department of State’s official website at **www.travel.state.gov** for information on obtaining a new passport or renewing your existing passport. The U.S. Department of State allows for passport renewal by mail or, for applicable citizens, renewal online. We advise you review the process and requirements for online passport renewal on the official website.

You may also contact our recommended visa service company, PVS International, at **1-800-556-9990** for help with your passport.

*Please note: Your passport should be valid for at least 6 months to join this trip.*

## Recommended Blank Pages

Please confirm that your passport has enough blank pages for this adventure.

- **Main trip only:** You will need 2 blank passport pages for the main trip.
- **Azerbaijan pre-trip extension:** You will need 2 additional blank pages, for a total of 4 pages.
- **Northwest Turkey post-trip extension:** No additional pages are needed.
- **Both a pre- and a post-trip extension:** You will need a total of 4 blank pages.
- **Stopover in Istanbul:** No additional pages are needed.

## Visas Required

**We’ll be sending you a detailed Visa Packet with instructions, application forms, and fees about 100 days prior to your departure.** In the meantime, we’re providing the information below as a guideline on what to expect. This information is for U.S. citizens only. All visas and fees are subject to change.

- **Turkey (main trip and post-trip extension): No visa required.** For U.S. citizens, a visa is not required for entry into Turkey.

- **Azerbaijan (pre-trip extension): Visa required.** You must get your visa before you depart the U.S. Please be aware, if you have previously traveled to the contested Nagorno-Karabakh region via Armenia, you may not be eligible to travel to Azerbaijan.

### Traveling Without a U.S. Passport?

If you are not a U.S. citizen, or if your passport is from any country other than the U.S., it is your responsibility to check with your local consulate, embassy, or a visa services company about visa requirements. We recommend the services of PVS International, a national visa service located in Washington D.C.; they can be reached at **1-800-556-9990** or **[www.pvsinternational.org](http://www.pvsinternational.org)**.

### Traveling With a Minor?

Some governments may require certain documentation for minors to enter and depart the country or to obtain a visa (if applicable). For further detail on the required documentation, please contact your local embassy or consulate.

### Emergency Photocopies of Key Documents

We recommend you carry color photocopies of key documents including the photo page of your passport plus any applicable visas, air itinerary, credit cards (front and back), and an alternative form of ID. Add emergency phone numbers like your credit card company and the number for your travel protection plan. Store copies separate from the originals.

If you plan to email this information to yourself, please keep in mind that email is not always secure; consider using password protection or encryption. Also email is not always available worldwide. As an alternative, you could load these documents onto a flash drive instead, which can do double-duty as a place to backup photos during your trip.

### Overseas Taxes & Fees

This tour may have taxes and fees that cannot be included in your airline ticket price because you are required to pay them in person onsite. All taxes are subject to change without notice and can be paid in cash (either U.S. or local currency).

## RIGORS, VACCINES & GENERAL HEALTH

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### Is This Adventure Right for You?

**Please review the information below prior to departing on this adventure.** We reserve the right for our Trip Experience Leaders to modify participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home, if their condition would adversely affect the health, safety, or enjoyment of themselves or of other travelers.

#### PACING

- 5 locations in 16 days with 4 nights aboard our private *gulet*
- Some early mornings with 1 pre-dawn flight on certain departures

#### PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

- Not appropriate for travelers using wheelchairs, walkers, or other mobility aids
- You must be able to walk approximately 3 miles unassisted along very uneven surfaces and steep inclines on Day 12, and be comfortable participating in 6–8 hours of physical activities each day
- Agility and balance are required for boarding, disembarking, and walking on deck during our *gulet* cruise; transfers from the *gulet* to the shore will include embarking and disembarking a small dinghy
- We reserve the right for Trip Experience Leaders to restrict participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home, if their limitations impact the group's experience

#### CLIMATE

- Temperatures range from 25–100°F
- Prepare for temperatures from 80–100°F on the Turquoise Coast in the summer months, June–September

#### TERRAIN

- Several hikes in the Cappadocia region are at steep inclines, with some 1-hour uphill hikes on loose gravel
- You will have the opportunity to participate in daily hikes of 1–3 hours each during our *gulet* cruise; hikes on Day 12 feature uneven terrain, steep inclines, and jagged rocks that require advanced agility and balance

#### TRANSPORTATION

- Travel by bus/minibus, local tram, *gulet*-style yacht, and small boat

## ACCOMMODATIONS & FACILITIES

- 4 nights on a *gulet*-style yacht that has small cabins with private baths, limited public and luggage space, no air-conditioning, and no overnight electric power in cabins

## Steps to Take Before Your Trip

Before you leave on this adventure, we recommend the following:

- Check with the CDC for their recommendations for the countries you'll be visiting. You can contact them online at **[www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel)** or by phone at **1-800-232-4636**.
- Have a medical checkup with your doctor at least 6 weeks before your trip.
- Pick up any necessary medications, both prescription and over-the-counter.
- Have a dental and/or eye checkup. (Recommended, but less urgent)

## No Vaccines Required

### Recommended Vaccines

At the time of writing there were no required vaccines for this trip. The CDC recommends that all travelers be up to date on their routine vaccinations and on basic travel vaccines like Hepatitis A and Typhoid, but these are suggestions only. However, this could change in future so we encourage you to check with the CDC yourself before meeting with your doctor.

## Medication Suggestions

- An antibiotic medication for gastrointestinal illness
- Prescription pain medication in the unlikely event of an injury in a remote location

## Traveling with Medications

- **Pack medications in your carry-on bag** to avoid loss and to have them handy.
- **Keep medicines in their original, labeled containers** for a quicker security screen at the airport and a better experience if you get stopped by customs while overseas.
- **Bring copies of your prescriptions**, written using the generic drug name rather than a brand name to be prepared for any unforeseen loss of your medications.

We recommend checking with the State Department for medication restrictions by country: **[travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov)** (Go to "Find International Travel Information", select "Country Information", then enter the country into the search bar; if you don't see any medications specifically mentioned under the "Health" section, then you can presume major U.S. brands should be OK).

## Staying Healthy on Your Trip

### Jet Lag Tips

- Start your trip well-rested.
- Begin a gradual transition to your new time zone before you leave or switch to your destination time zone when you get on the plane.
- Attempt to sleep and eat according to the new schedule.
- Avoid heavy eating and drinking caffeine or alcoholic beverages right before—and during—your flight.
- Drink plenty of water and/or fruit juice while flying
- Stretch your legs, neck, and back periodically while seated on the plane.
- After arrival, avoid the temptation to nap.
- Don't push yourself to see a lot on your first day.
- Try to stay awake your first day until after dinner.

## **Allergies**

If you have any serious allergies or dietary restrictions, we advise you to notify us at least 30 days prior to your departure. Please call our Travel Counselors at **1-800-221-0814**, and we will communicate them to our regional office. Every effort will be made to accommodate you.

## **Water**

- Although tap water in Turkey is safe to drink, we suggest drinking filtered or bottled water instead because it is processed differently than in the U.S. so it can still upset your stomach or feel “heavy”. It is OK to brush your teeth with tap water in Turkey.
- Tap water is not safe to drink in Azerbaijan.
- Bottled water is readily available for purchase in both countries. Note that bottled water is not included in the price of your tour, but there may be times when complimentary filtered water is available—to take advantage of this, bring a reusable water bottle with you.
- Inspect each bottle before you buy it to make sure the cap is sealed properly.
- Many hotels and high-end restaurants in Turkey will use filtered or bottled water to wash salads or make ice cubes, but water served in a carafe is usually tap water. When in doubt about the water, salads, or ice, just ask the restaurant or your Trip Experience Leader.

## **Food**

- We've carefully chosen the restaurants for your group meals.
- Your Trip Experience Leader can suggest restaurants for any of the meals you take on your own.
- Be very careful with food sold from vendors on the street, and with uncooked foods.

## Electricity Supply for Medical Devices

**A constant electricity supply cannot be guaranteed during overnight stays onboard the *gulet ship*.** Electricity is supplied by a generator and there is limited power in the cabins overnight. (There is a light in your cabin that will work at night, but the electric sockets will not have power.) Travelers who depend on electricity for medical devices (such as a CPAP) should consider a different adventure or ensure their apparatus has back-up battery power.

# MONEY MATTERS: LOCAL CURRENCY & TIPPING GUIDELINES

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## Top Three Tips

- **Carry a mix of different types of payments**, such as U.S. dollars, some local currency, an ATM card, and a credit card. Traveler's checks are not recommended as they can be difficult to exchange and are rarely accepted in shops and restaurants.
- **We recommend that you bring a moderate cash reserve with you.** ATMs are not always readily available in rural areas, so it makes sense to have a reserve that you can exchange as needed.
- **Many shops and restaurants in Turkey accept U.S. dollars.**

## Local Currency

For current exchange rates, please refer to an online converter tool like [www.xe.com/currencyconverter](http://www.xe.com/currencyconverter), your bank, or the financial section of your newspaper.

**Turkey:** Turkish lira (TL)

**Azerbaijan:** Azerbaijan Manat (AZN/₼)

## How to Exchange Money

There is no need to obtain local currency before you depart since many shops and restaurants accept U.S. dollars; in fact, your U.S. bank may not carry Turkish currency. On this trip, the easiest way to exchange money is to withdraw funds from a local ATM. The ATM will give you local money and your bank at home will convert that into U.S. dollars.

You can also exchange cash at some hotels, large post offices, and money exchange offices. To exchange cash, you'll usually need your passport and bills in good condition (not worn, torn, or dirty). New bills (post 2004) are best. Never exchange money on the street. All exchange methods involve fees, which may be built into the conversion rate; ask beforehand.

## ATMs

When using the ATM, keep in mind that it may only accept cards from local banks, and may not allow cash advances on credit cards; you might need to try more than one ATM or more than one card. Many banks will charge a set fee or a percentage fee each time you use a foreign ATM. We recommend that you check with your bank before you depart. Don't forget to memorize the actual digits of your card's PIN number (many keypads at foreign ATMs do not include letters on their keys—they only display numbers.)

In most countries, ATMs are widely available in major cities. If you are in a rural location, it will likely be harder to find an ATM. If you are visiting a country that has different expectation for ATMs, they will be listed below.

**Turkey:** ATMs are common throughout large cities and small towns in Turkey.

## Credit & Debit Cards

While traveling, most countries and major cities will accept credit cards. We suggest that you bring one or two, especially if you are planning a large purchase (artwork, jewelry). We also suggest that you bring more than one brand of card (i.e. Visa, MasterCard, American Express) if possible, as not all are accepted around the world. If you are visiting a country that does not commonly accept credit cards, they will be listed below.

**Turkey:** Credit cards are widely accepted in Turkey, but street vendors and small shops may require cash.

**Azerbaijan:** Major credit cards are accepted at larger establishments, such as big hotels and restaurants. However, the economy still relies heavily on cash, so be sure to ask before making a purchase and we strongly recommend keeping cash on hand.

## Notify Card Providers of Upcoming Travel

Many credit card companies and banks have fraud alert departments that will freeze your card if they see suspicious charges—such as charges or withdrawals from another country. To avoid an accidental security block, it is a good idea to notify your credit card company and/or bank you will be using your cards abroad. You can do this by calling their customer service number a week or two before your departure. Some banks or credit card companies will also let you do this online.

You should also double-check what phone number you could call if you have a problem with a card while you are abroad. Don't assume you can use the 1-800 number printed on the back of your card—most 1 800 numbers don't work outside of the U.S.!

## On Board Ship: Two Separate Bills Will be Issued

- **Shipboard account:** This bill is for any on board purchases (drinks, souvenirs, etc.) and must be paid in cash to the ship. Other forms of payment, such as checks and credit cards are not accepted.
- **Optional tour account:** This bill is for any optional tours taken during the trip and is calculated in U.S. dollars. The bill is paid with your Trip Experience Leader (they will have you fill out a form) by credit/debit card only; other forms of payments such as cash and checks are not accepted. For more information on optional tours—including which cards we accept for payment—see the “Preparing for Your Trip” chapter.

**Please note:** *Payments made by credit card may take up to three months to process. We ask that you use a credit card that will not expire until three months after your trip ends. Because our headquarters are in Boston, the charges may appear to be from Boston or might be labeled as “OPT Boston” (depending on your credit card company).*

## Tipping Guidelines

Of course, whether you tip, and how much, is always at your own discretion. But for those of you who have asked for tipping suggestions, we offer these guidelines:

- **O.A.T. Trip Experience Leader:** It is customary to express a personal “thank you” to your Trip Experience Leader at the end of your trip. As a guideline, many travelers give \$10–\$14 USD (or equivalent in local currency) per person for each day their Trip Experience Leader is with them. *Please note that these tips can only be in cash. If you are taking any of the optional extensions, your Trip Experience Leader during the extension(s) may not be the same as the one on your main trip.*
- **Housekeeping staff at hotels:** \$1–\$2 per room, per night
- **Waiters:** It is common practice in Turkey and Azerbaijan to tip wait staff about 10% of the bill. Tips are in cash only; you cannot tip on a credit card. Your Trip Experience Leader will tip waiters for included meals.
- **Taxi Drivers:** If you are taking a taxi on your own, tipping is not common practice, but often people will round up the fare and let the driver keep the change. In Turkey, there is a small pick-up charge and the meter will rise while waiting in traffic; but there is no additional charge for a late-night pick-up.
- **Included in Your Trip Price:** Gratuities are included for local guides, drivers, ship crew, and luggage porters on your main trip, extensions, and all optional tours.

We recommend you carry small-denomination banknotes, totaling about \$75–\$100 U.S., per person, to facilitate tipping to those people who perform small services for you during your trip. You may carry this money in local currency or in U.S. dollars. Tips are in cash only in this region. Please do not use personal or traveler’s checks for tips.

## AIR, OPTIONAL TOURS & STAYING IN TOUCH

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### Land Only Travelers & Customized Air

#### Quick Definitions

- **Land Only:** You will be booking your own international flights. Airport transfers are not included.
- **Air-Inclusive:** You booked international air with us. Airport transfers are included as long as you didn't customize your trip's dates (see next bullet).
- **Arrive Early or Stopover (select adventures only):** If you chose one of these Customization options and purchased air through O.A.T, accommodations and airport transfers are included. However, if you chose one of our Customization options, but did not purchase air through O.A.T., accommodations are included, but airport transfers are not. If you chose one of our customization options, and purchase air through O.A.T. but not the accommodations, the airport transfers are not included. We have included transfer options below.
- **Customization on Your Own:** If you have not purchased air through O.A.T. and decided to arrive early, stay longer, or stop in a connecting city on your own, you are responsible for airport transfers and accommodations. For your convenience, a preliminary list of your included hotels is available on your My Planner at [www.oattravel.com/myplanner](http://www.oattravel.com/myplanner) under "My Reservations" to help you with selecting a hotel for your additional time.

### Air Inclusive Travelers

If you have purchased international air with us, there are some points that may be helpful for you to know.

- **Flying with a Travel Companion:** If you're traveling with a companion from a different household, and both of you are beginning and ending your trip at the same airport on the same dates, let us know you'd like to travel together and we'll make every effort to arrange this (please note, however, that this is not always possible). If you request any changes to your flights, please be sure that both you and your companion tell us that you still want to fly together.
- **Selecting Your Seats:** If your airline allows pre-assigned seats, you will be able to select and view them directly from the airline's website after booking. Some airlines will not allow seat confirmation until your reservation is ticketed 45-30 days prior to departure, and/or they may charge a nominal fee. You may locate your itinerary on an airline's website utilizing the Record Locator Number found on the Air Itinerary in your My Planner.

### Airport Transfers Can Be Purchased

For eligible flights, airport transfers may be purchased separately as an optional add-on, subject to availability. To be eligible, your flight(s) must meet the following requirements:

- You must fly into or fly home from the same airport as O.A.T. travelers who purchased included airfare.
- Your flight(s) must arrive/depart on the same day that the group arrives or departs.
- If you are arriving early, you must have arranged the hotels through our Arrive Early personalization option

Airport transfers can be purchased up to 45 days prior to your departure; they are not available for purchase onsite. To learn more, or purchase airport transfers, please call our Travel Counselors at **1-800-221-0814**.

If you don't meet the requirements above, you'll need to make your own transfer arrangements. We suggest the Rome to Rio website as a handy resource: [www.rome2rio.com](http://www.rome2rio.com)

## Optional Tours

Optional tours are additional add-on tours that allow you to personalize your adventure by tailoring it to your tastes and needs. And if you decide not to join an optional tour? Then you'll have free time to relax or explore on your own—it's about options, not obligations.

## What You Need to Know

- All optional tours are subject to change and availability.
- Optional tours that are reserved with your Trip Experience Leader can be paid for using credit/debit cards only. We accept MasterCard, Visa, and Discover credit cards; we can also take MasterCard or Visa debit cards as long as the card allows you to sign for purchases. (You won't be able to enter a PIN.)
- To ensure that you are charged in U.S. dollars, your payment will be processed by our U.S. headquarters in Boston. This process can take up to three months, so we ask that you only use a card that will still be valid three months after your trip is over. The charge may appear on your credit card statement as being from Boston, MA or may be labeled as "OPT Boston".
- Your Trip Experience Leader will give you details on the optional tours while you're on the trip. But if you'd like to look over descriptions of them earlier, you can do so at any time by referring to your Day-to-Day Itinerary (available online by signing into My Planner at [www.oattravel.com/myplanner](http://www.oattravel.com/myplanner)).

## Communicating with Home from Abroad

### Cell Phones

If you want to use your cell phone on the trip, check with your phone provider to see if your phone and service will work outside of the U.S. It may turn out to be cheaper to rent an international phone or buy a SIM card onsite. If you want to use a local SIM, just make certain your phone can accept one.

## Calling Apps

Another option is to use a smartphone app like Skype or FaceTime. These services are usually less expensive than making a traditional call, but you'll need a Wi-Fi connection and the calls may count towards your phone plan's data allowance. Many smartphones—and some tablets or laptops—come with one of these apps pre-installed or you can download them for free from the appropriate apps store.

## Calling Cards and 1-800 Numbers

When calling the U.S. from a foreign country, a prepaid calling card can be useful because it circumvents unexpected charges from the hotel. Calling cards purchased locally are typically the best (less expensive, more likely to work with the local phones, etc.).

One reminder: Do not call U.S. 1-800 numbers outside the continental United States. This can result in costly long distance fees, since 1-800 numbers do not work outside the country.

## Internet

Most hotels in Turkey and Azerbaijan have Internet services available, some for free, some for an hourly charge. Many hotels will provide complimentary WiFi service in a common area, like the lobby or reception, but not in the guest rooms. Internet cafes are also available at different points throughout our adventure. So you can either bring your own device during the trip and use WiFi where it is available, or leave it at home and rely on places that provide computers, like hotels with a business center or Internet cafes. One place that Internet access is not available is on board the *gulet* ship.

## How to Call Overseas

When calling overseas from the U.S., dial 011 for international exchange, then the country code (indicated by a plus sign: +), and then the number. Note that foreign phone numbers may not have the same number of digits as U.S. numbers; even within a country the number of digits can vary depending on the city and if the phone is a land line or cell phone.

**Turkey:** +90

**Azerbaijan:** +994

## PACKING: WHAT TO BRING & LUGGAGE LIMITS

### Luggage Limits

| MAIN TRIP LIMITS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Pieces per person                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | One checked bag and one carry-on per person.                                                                                                    |
| Weight restrictions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Up to <b>44 lbs</b> for checked luggage and <b>17 lbs</b> for carry-on.                                                                         |
| Size Restrictions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Standard airline size: Checked luggage should not exceed 62 linear inches (length+width+depth) and carry-on should not exceed 45 linear inches. |
| Luggage Type                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | A sturdy, fabric-sided suitcase with built-in wheels and lockable zippers is recommended.                                                       |
| TRIP EXTENSION(S) LIMITS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                 |
| Same as the main trip.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                 |
| REMARKS/SUGGESTIONS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                 |
| <p><b>Luggage rules:</b> Luggage rules and limits are set by governmental and airline policy. Enforcement of the rules may include spot checks or may be inconsistent. However one thing is the same across the board: If you are found to have oversized or overweight luggage, you will be subject to additional fees, to be assessed by—and paid to—the airline in question.</p> |                                                                                                                                                 |

#### Don't Forget:

- **These luggage limits may change.** If the airline(s) notify us of any changes, we will include an update in your Final Documents booklet.
- It's a good idea to reconfirm baggage restrictions and fees directly with the airline a week or so prior to departure. For your convenience, we maintain a list of the toll-free numbers for the most common airlines on our website in the FAQ section.
- **Baggage fees are not included in your trip price;** they are payable directly to the airlines.
- The luggage limits above are based on your regional flights, which may be less than your international flights. Even if your international airline offers a larger weight limit, you will need to pack according to the lower restrictions.

## Your Luggage

- **Checked Luggage:** Consider a duffel bag or soft-sided suitcase. Look for one with heavy nylon fabric, wrap-around handles, built-in wheels, and a heavy duty lockable zipper. Due to space limitations on our motorcoaches, you are allowed one piece of checked luggage per person. Portage at airports and hotels is provided for **one** bag per person. All bags should have luggage tags.
- **Carry-on Bag:** You are allowed one carry-on bag per person. We suggest a tote or small backpack that can be used as both a carry-on bag for your flight and to carry your daily necessities—water bottle, camera, etc—during your daily activities.
- **Locks:** For flights that originate in the U.S., you can either use a TSA-approved lock or leave your luggage unlocked. Outside of the U.S. we strongly recommend locking your luggage as a theft-prevention measure.

## Clothing Suggestions: Functional Tips

As you will experience a wide range of temperatures and weather conditions, we suggest several layers of clothing. If you like to hand-wash your clothes, look for fabrics that will dry out overnight. You can buy clothing designed especially for travel, with features like wrinkle-resistant fabric or built-in sun protection.

- **Outerwear:** Rainfall can occur any time of year, so don't forget a waterproof jacket, poncho, or folding umbrella. In early spring and winter, temperatures can be chilly, and in Cappadocia, snowfall can begin as early as the end of October. Bring some warm gear such as a fleece, sweater, or jacket for these times of year.
- **Footwear:** You'll be on your feet a lot during the trip, and walking over some rough and slippery surfaces. Shoes should be comfortable with good arch support and good traction. You'll want at least one pair of closed shoes for hiking (sandals are OK for in town or on the ship).

## Footwear Recommendations

Some travelers and many Trip Experience Leaders have strongly recommended light hiking boots for this adventure. Other types of shoes that would work in place of hiking boots are sturdy walking shoes, running shoes, or trekking shoes. In short, you'll need something that can protect your feet and be comfortable during athletic hikes and long walks in city centers. Tennis shoes are not recommended for hiking.

You'll also want a second pair of shoes for when you're on the gulet ship because "street shoes" are not allowed—they can damage the wooden deck. Boat shoes, sandals, sneakers, or any other type of non-skid shoe is fine; the ship just requests that it be a clean, new pair (a pair that hasn't be worn outside yet). Or you can go barefoot on ship—it's up to you. Tennis shoes would be OK on the ship only.

One cultural note—it is common practice to remove your shoes in mosques and local homes, so consider a pair you can get on/off without a struggle. (And perhaps some extra socks.)

### Dress Codes & Style Hints

- **Dress on this trip is functional and casual.** You may want to consider one “dressier” outfit for dining out, but you won’t need anything formal.
- **Shorts and sleeveless tops are OK in some places.** Shorts and sleeveless tops should be OK in big cities like Istanbul and on onboard the ship. However, do we recommend keeping shorts to about knee-length.
- **But in a small rural village, a more conservative look is best.** You’ll blend in better if you opt for long trousers or an ankle-length skirt instead of shorts or a knee-length skirt. (Local women do wear trousers, so female travelers are not required to wear skirts.) A short-sleeve top with a modest neckline is considered a more appropriate choice than sleeveless tops.
- **Mosques may have additional dress codes.** When visiting a mosque you may be handed a wrap and asked to drape it over you so that you are properly covered; this is common throughout the Muslim world. Female travelers may be asked to cover their hair. It is also common to remove your shoes in a mosque (or in a home); you may wish to bring a couple extra pairs of socks for these occasions.
- **Headscarves are not required, but a scarf may be useful on occasion.** Turkey and Azerbaijan’s governments are secular and many local women chose to go bareheaded. The only place a female traveler might be asked to wear a headscarf is in a mosque, where it is considered a sign of respect to cover your hair. If that happens, you can usually rent or borrow a scarf from the mosque. Or consider bringing a large scarf from home that can double as an accessory or a wrap for chilly evenings. (That way you’ll get more use out of it.)

### Recommended Packing Lists

We have included suggestions from Trip Experience Leaders and former travelers to help you pack. These packing lists are only jumping-off points—they offer recommendations based on experience, but not requirements. Each travelers packing list may be different depending on the climate you are used to. We recommend using [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com) and consulting the “Climate” chapter of this handbook.

And don’t forget a reusable water bottle—you’ll need it to take advantage of any refills we offer as we are working to eliminate single-use plastic bottles on all of our trips.

### Recommended Clothing

- ☐ Shirts: A mixture of short and long-sleeved shirts to layer
- ☐ Trousers, jeans, or skirts

- ☐ Comfortable walking shoes: You'll want at least one pair of closed shoes for hiking. Some types of shoes that would be good choices are light hiking boots, sturdy walking shoes, running shoes, or trekking shoes.
- ☐ Second pair of shoes for *gulet* ship: "Street shoes" are not allowed—they can damage the wooden deck. Boat shoes, sandals, sneakers, or any other type of non-skid shoe is fine; the ship just requests that it be a clean, new pair (a pair that hasn't be worn outside yet). Or you can go barefoot on ship—it's up to you.
- ☐ Light rain jacket/windbreaker with hood
- ☐ Sleepwear
- ☐ Socks and undergarments
- ☐ A jacket or sweater, depending on the time of year
- ☐ Wide-brim sun hat or visor
- ☐ Light cotton or wool sweater for cooler days. Even in summer, this can be useful as motor coach air conditioning can be cold.
- ☐ Swimsuit, for stay on ship, hotel pools, or Turkish baths

## Seasonal Clothing Checklist

### Summer Departures

- ☐ Walking shorts: knee-length shorts are OK for big cities and on board the ship. In more conservative areas of Turkey, trousers or a long skirt are preferable.
- ☐ Light materials that breathe—cotton, linen, etc. Summer can bring extreme heat waves to the region.

### October–April Departures

- ☐ Warm clothing: A warm jacket, hat and gloves are in order because temperatures can dip into the 40s and 30s, even on the coast. See the climate charts on the previous pages and pack accordingly.

### Essential Items

- ☐ Daily essentials: toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, hairbrush or comb, shaving items, deodorant, etc.
- ☐ Spare eyeglasses/contact lenses and your prescription

- ☐ Sunglasses
- ☐ Sunscreen, SPF 15 or stronger
- ☐ Travel money bag or money belt
- ☐ Moisturizer, lip balm
- ☐ Pocket-size tissues
- ☐ Moist towelettes and/or hand sanitizer
- ☐ Light folding umbrella
- ☐ Insect repellent with DEET (30%–35% strength)
- ☐ Folding hiking pole, sold in most camping stores
- ☐ Electrical transformer and plug adapter—see “Regional Electricity” section.

## Medicines

- ☐ Your own prescription medicines
- ☐ Travel First Aid Kit: Band-aids, pain relief, laxatives and anti-diarrhea tablets, something for upset stomach, cold remedies, moleskin foot pads, antibacterial cream, and allergy medication
- ☐ Antibiotic for gastrointestinal illness
- ☐ Optional: A strong prescription pain medication for rare emergency purposes
- ☐ Optional: Sea sickness medication

## Home-Hosted Visits

Many of our adventures feature a visit with a local family, often as part of the *A Day in the Life* experience. It is customary, though not necessary, to return your hosts' generosity with a small gift. If you do bring a gift, we recommend that you bring something the whole family can enjoy, or something that represents your region, state, or hometown. Get creative and keep it small—peach jelly from Georgia, maple sugar candy from New England, orange blossom soap from California; something that can be used or used up is best. When choosing a gift, be certain to consider the local culture as well. For example, we do not recommend alcohol in Muslim communities because it is forbidden in Islam, and your hosts may be religious. Not all O.A.T. adventures include a Home-Hosted Visit; please check your final itinerary before you depart.

## Electricity Abroad

When traveling overseas, the voltage is usually different and the plugs might not be the same shape.

### Voltage

Electricity in Turkey and Azerbaijan is 220 volts. In the U.S. it is 110 volts. Most of the things a traveler will want to plug in—battery chargers, smart phones, tablets or computers—can run off both 110 and 220–240. But you should check the item or the owner’s guide first to confirm this before you plug it in. Plugging a 110V U.S. appliance into 220/240V 50/60Hz service will ruin the motor. If you have something that needs 110 volts—like a shaver or a hairdryer—you can bring a transformer to change the current. (But transformers tend to burn out, so it might be better to leave whatever it is at home.)

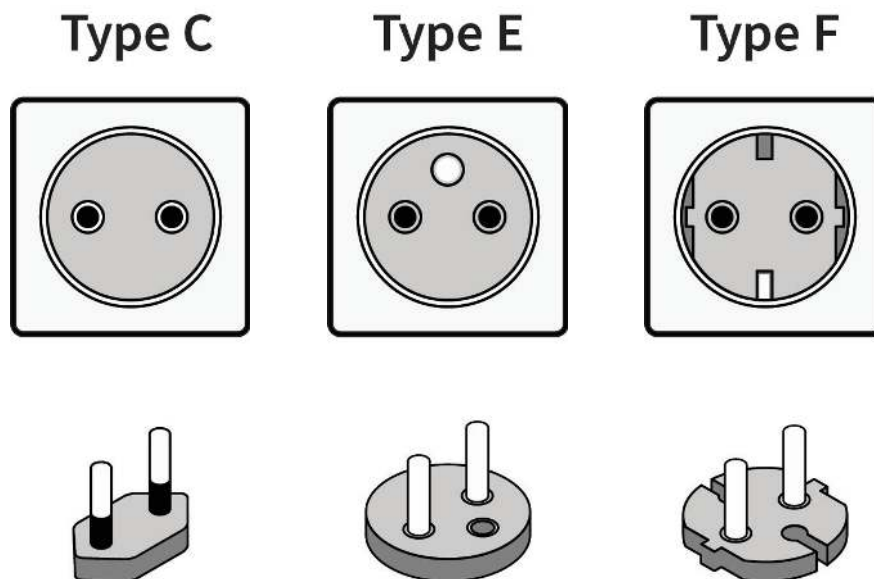
### Plugs

The shape of plugs will vary from country to country, and sometimes even within a country depending on when that building was built. To plug something from the U.S. into a local socket you’ll need an adapter that fits between the plug and the socket. Although you are only traveling in one country on this trip, it may be easier to purchase an all-in-one, universal adapter/converter combo. Versatile and lightweight, these can usually be found at your local electronics goods or hardware stores. Sometimes you can buy them at large retailers too, like Target or Walmart. If you forget to bring an adapter, you might also find them for sale at the airport when you arrive at your destination.

Different plug shapes are named by letters of the alphabet. Standard U.S. plugs are Type A and Type B. Here is the list of plugs for the countries on this trip:

**Turkey:** C and E (note that C plugs fit into E sockets)

**Azerbaijan:** C, E, and F



### Availability

**A constant electricity supply cannot be guaranteed during overnight stays.** This is particularly true onboard the *gulet* ship, where electricity is supplied by a generator and there is limited power in the cabins overnight. (There is a light in your cabin that will work at night, but the electric sockets will not have power.) Travelers dependent on electricity supply (as in the case of those with sleep apnea) should ensure their apparatus has back-up battery power. If you plan to bring a sleep apnea machine, we recommend informing your Trip Experience Leader in advance.

## CLIMATE & AVERAGE TEMPERATURES

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**Istanbul, Turkey:** Geographically, western Turkey, including Istanbul, is in Europe, while the rest of the country is in Anatolia and Asia Minor. As you move from the west to the east, the altitude goes up. Due to the varied geography, you will experience a wide range of temperatures and weather conditions in Turkey. Istanbul is cooler than most of the places you'll visit, but winters are mild and snow is rare.

**Cappadocia, Turkey:** In Cappadocia, the hilly terrain means that although the days may be warm, there can be a significant drop in temperature at night, and snow is possible in winter.

**Antalya, Turkey:** Antalya, which is the main gateway for the Turquoise Coast, is generally hot and humid, especially in the summer months. Winters are mild and rainy—snow is very rare. During the months of April, May, October and November you are most likely to experience good weather with pleasant average temperatures.

**Azerbaijan:** In Azerbaijan, you'll find cold winters with temperatures in the low 30s and hot, arid summers with highs in the mid-80s to low-90s. In the lowlands along the Caspian Sea, Baku experiences wind all year long, with particularly strong winds during the winter months. Though the lowlands remain relatively dry throughout the year, there are light and frequent showers in the fall and winter. Mountainous regions experience slightly colder temperatures and more rain throughout the year, resulting in lush green forests during the warmer months. Along the southern coast in the foothills of the Talysh Range, rain and heavy snowfalls are common.

### Climate Averages & Online Forecast

The following charts reflect the **average** climate as opposed to exact weather conditions. This means they serve only as general indicators of what can reasonably be expected. An extreme heat wave or cold snap could fall outside these ranges. As your departure approaches, we encourage you to use **[www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com)** for a more accurate forecast of the locations you visit.

## Average Daily High/Low Temperatures (°F), Humidity & Monthly Rainfall

| MONTH | ISTANBUL, TURKEY |                             |                           | KAYSERI, TURKEY |                             |                           |
|-------|------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
|       | Temp. High-Low   | % Relative Humidity (am-pm) | Monthly Rainfall (inches) | Temp. High-Low  | % Relative Humidity (am-pm) | Monthly Rainfall (inches) |
| JAN   | 46 to 37         | 82 to 71                    | 3.7                       | 36 to 20        | 82 to 71                    | 1.3                       |
| FEB   | 47 to 37         | 81 to 68                    | 2.8                       | 41 to 24        | 81 to 63                    | 1.3                       |
| MAR   | 51 to 40         | 83 to 65                    | 2.3                       | 51 to 30        | 79 to 52                    | 1.5                       |
| APR   | 60 to 47         | 81 to 61                    | 1.7                       | 62 to 40        | 77 to 46                    | 2.1                       |
| MAY   | 69 to 54         | 84 to 59                    | 1.2                       | 70 to 46        | 80 to 45                    | 1.9                       |
| JUN   | 78 to 62         | 83 to 55                    | 0.9                       | 78 to 51        | 77 to 39                    | 1.6                       |
| JUL   | 82 to 66         | 83 to 51                    | 0.7                       | 84 to 55        | 72 to 33                    | 0.3                       |
| AUG   | 82 to 67         | 84 to 52                    | 0.6                       | 85 to 54        | 71 to 31                    | 0.2                       |
| SEP   | 76 to 61         | 82 to 53                    | 1.1                       | 78 to 47        | 72 to 33                    | 0.5                       |
| OCT   | 67 to 55         | 83 to 61                    | 2.1                       | 68 to 40        | 76 to 41                    | 0.9                       |
| NOV   | 57 to 47         | 81 to 66                    | 3.5                       | 52 to 31        | 83 to 56                    | 1.3                       |
| DEC   | 50 to 42         | 81 to 71                    | 4.0                       | 41 to 25        | 84 to 69                    | 1.5                       |

| MONTH | ANTALYA, TURKEY |                             |                                 | BAKU, AZERBAIJAN |                             |                           |
|-------|-----------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
|       | Temp. High-Low  | % Relative Humidity (am-pm) | Average # of Days with Rainfall | Temp. High-Low   | % Relative Humidity (am-pm) | Monthly Rainfall (inches) |
| JAN   | 58 to 41        | 74 to 55                    | 11                              | 44 to 35         | --                          | 1.4                       |
| FEB   | 58 to 42        | 76 to 55                    | 10                              | 43 to 35         | --                          | 0.8                       |
| MAR   | 63 to 45        | 78 to 54                    | 9                               | 49 to 39         | --                          | 0.8                       |
| APR   | 70 to 51        | 79 to 56                    | 8                               | 61 to 47         | --                          | 0.8                       |
| MAY   | 77 to 58        | 79 to 55                    | 6                               | 71 to 57         | --                          | 0.5                       |
| JUN   | 86 to 66        | 71 to 50                    | 3                               | 81 to 66         | --                          | 0.3                       |
| JUL   | 92 to 71        | 65 to 46                    | 1                               | 86 to 71         | --                          | 0.1                       |
| AUG   | 92 to 71        | 68 to 47                    | 1                               | 85 to 72         | --                          | 0.3                       |
| SEP   | 88 to 65        | 68 to 45                    | 1                               | 78 to 66         | --                          | 0.8                       |
| OCT   | 79 to 57        | 70 to 46                    | 4                               | 67 to 55         | --                          | 1.3                       |
| NOV   | 68 to 50        | 75 to 53                    | 4                               | 68 to 47         | --                          | 1.2                       |
| DEC   | 60 to 44        | 77 to 57                    | 5                               | 49 to 40         | --                          | 1.3                       |

| MONTH | CANAKKALE, TURKEY |                             |                           |
|-------|-------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
|       | Temp. High-Low    | % Relative Humidity (am-pm) | Monthly Rainfall (inches) |
| JAN   | 48 to 38          | --                          | 4.2                       |
| FEB   | 49 to 40          | --                          | 2.7                       |
| MAR   | 53 to 42          | --                          | 2.7                       |
| APR   | 61 to 49          | --                          | 1.8                       |
| MAY   | 70 to 56          | --                          | 1.2                       |
| JUN   | 79 to 63          | --                          | 0.9                       |
| JUL   | 85 to 68          | --                          | 0.5                       |
| AUG   | 84 to 68          | --                          | 0.3                       |
| SEP   | 78 to 62          | --                          | 1.0                       |
| OCT   | 67 to 54          | --                          | 1.9                       |
| NOV   | 58 to 47          | --                          | 3.6                       |
| DEC   | 52 to 43          | --                          | 4.2                       |

## ABOARD YOUR SHIP: CABIN FEATURES, DINING & SERVICES ON BOARD

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### Turkish Gulet

During the course of our adventure, we'll spend several nights aboard a traditional wooden ship known as a *gulet*. Many of the ships are still built the old fashioned way—by hand, and without the aid of modern blueprints. As a result, each ship varies slightly from the next, but some generalizations can be made. Typically, the cabins are small, but do have a private bath. The public spaces are limited to an open-air top deck with seating, a table for dining, and an area to sunbathe.

- **Dining room:** Most meals are served on deck in an open seating arrangement. Tea and coffee are complimentary and available only at breakfast and before dinner, and wine, beer, and soft drinks are available for purchase.
- **Outdoor common areas:** A spacious sun deck with comfortable seating offers panoramic views of the unfolding scenery along the Turquoise Coast
- **Other amenities:** Fishing and snorkeling gear may be available on select *gulets*

*O.A.T. uses different gulets depending on the trip departure date. The information in this chapter is typical but ships may vary slightly in size and facilities.*

### Cabin Amenities

- 8 cabins of approximately 50–70 sq. ft. each
- All cabins have portholes
- Two single beds or one double
- In-bathroom amenities: Private bath with standard amenities (no shampoo)

### Cabin Assignments

You will receive confirmation of your cabin's bed type (i.e. one double, two twins, single) upfront in writing; it will be on your invoice and online in My Planner at [www.oattravel.com/myplanner](http://www.oattravel.com/myplanner). However, your cabin number will not be assigned until you arrive onboard the ship. (This is normal procedure for *gulets* as their exact layout can vary.) If there's no cabin number on your invoice or online, you can presume it will be assigned later and communicated to you when you board.

### Dining

All meals are served family-style on the aft deck around a large table (or indoors on rainy days). There is no room service on board. The food includes typical local dishes and Mediterranean-type cuisine. If you require a special diet please request this in advance by contacting one of our

Travel Counselors. However, please keep in mind that since all meals are served family-style, special meal requests can be guaranteed. That said, it is usually not an issue as each meal features multiple courses or side dishes, so there will be a variety for you to choose from according to your needs.

Dining times will vary according to the scheduled daily activities, and the dress code is casual, so there is no need to bring formal wear.

In addition to any included drinks, a selection of wine, beer, and other beverages will be available for purchase onboard. Wine prices will start at approximately \$17-\$29, but could vary according to vintage. Travelers are also welcome to bring a bottle of their own favorite wine or alcohol to enjoy with their meal. Should you care to avail yourself of this service, there will be a corkage fee of approximately \$8 per bottle.

### **Electricity**

You will find 220-volt outlets on board your ship, and sockets that will take European Type C plugs. Please note that the electricity is supplied by either the ship's motor or a generator. As the motor only runs in the daytime, and the generator puts out a limited supply of electricity, the ships do not have air-conditioning, and there's no electric power at night in the cabins. You may wish to bring a spare set of camera batteries to charge during the day.

### **Getting Ashore**

Gulets are boarded via a gangway, either to a dock or directly to the ground.

### **Internet**

Internet access is not available on the ship.

### **Laundry**

Laundry service is not available on board.

### **Telephone Service**

There are no telephones in the cabins, but some cell service may be available. Calls can also be made from land during shore excursions.

### **Smoking Policy**

Smoking is prohibited on board, with the exception of one outdoor deck area reserved for smokers.

### **Wheelchairs**

The ship is not built to accommodate wheelchairs.

## ABOUT YOUR DESTINATIONS: CULTURE, ETIQUETTE & MORE

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### O.A.T. Trip Experience Leaders: A World of Difference

During your adventure, you'll be accompanied by one of our local, Trip Experience Leaders. All are fluent in English and possess the skills, certification, and experience necessary to ensure an enriching adventure. As locals of the regions you'll explore with them, our Trip Experience Leaders provide the kind of firsthand knowledge and insight that make local history, culture, and wildlife come alive. Coupled with their unbridled enthusiasm, caring personalities, and ability to bring diverse groups of travelers together, our Trip Experience Leaders ensure that your experience with O.A.T. is one you'll remember for a lifetime.

### Turkish Culture

By its continent-straddling location and by conscious choice, Turkey is a true cultural crossroads. For centuries, its people have been exposed to both eastern and western traditions, and at the same time, they have aspired to define and maintain their unique national identity. It is a core concept known as *Kemalism*, named for the visionary first president of the Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who was elected in 1923.

*Kemalism* embodies the traits that Atatürk believed would transform 20th-century Turkey into a strong society. It was based on secularism, modernization and democracy, and was expressed in myriad ways such as the complete separation of religion and government; refinement of the Turkish language; replacement of the Arabic alphabet with the Latin one; the support of science and education; and a patriotism that celebrates all Turks as equal citizens. Despite a recent conservative shift in government, for the most part, the ideals of *Kemalism* are still widely held.

Most Turks have a very strong sense of national pride, and want the world to see their nation as tolerant and advanced. Remember that Islam notwithstanding, Turks are not Arabs and they take offense when outsiders confuse them as such.

Another core concept is generosity. This goes beyond the widespread tradition of alms giving and permeates daily interactions. For example, if you compliment a Turk on an object or personal belonging, they may feel compelled to give it to you. If you offer something once, a Turk may decline your offer out of modesty and politeness. But the rules of etiquette demand that you make a second offer, which may then be accepted. Deference to others is a key element in conversations, people are naturally helpful even to strangers, and elders enjoy special respect.

Finally, Turkish hospitality is another cultural pillar. If you are a guest in someone's home, you will likely be offered more food than you can possibly eat. Tea drinking is not just a way to slake thirst, it is a social ritual meant to signify good will, and you will be offered tea in many interactions. The belief is that any visitor is a "guest from God."

## Religion and Religious Observances

Turkey is a secular country with a majority Muslim population—about 99.8%. But this is not based on any government survey—when people are born, they are just automatically registered as Muslim unless their parents have otherwise registered them to one of the constitutionally recognized minority religions: Christianity (which includes some Catholic and Orthodox sects) and Judaism. Most Turks (80%) belong the Sunni tradition of Islam; though about 20% freely follow a uniquely Turkish form of Shi'a Islam called Alevi, though it is not a recognized minority religion.

When Kemal Ataturk established the modern Turkish state in 1923, he was adamant about secularism, believing that religion was an impediment to Turkey's modernization and democratization. For many years most Turks accepted the strict separation of Islam and public institutions, and fundamentalism was unpopular, but recently, there has been a shift. Under the government of religious conservative Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the teaching of Islam in schools is now compulsory.

Practicing Muslims pray five times daily: dawn, noon, afternoon, sunset and evening. The exact time is listed in the local newspaper each day. The Call to Prayer, called the *ezan*, is sung or broadcast from minaret towers to remind the faithful that it is time to pray, and devout people will stop whatever they are doing, wherever they are, to observe it. If you find yourself near someone who is praying, do not stand in front of them. They are supposed to face in the direction of Mecca. And out of respect, please stay silent for the duration of the Call. Friday is the Muslim Sabbath day, but businesses usually remain open.

The biggest religious holiday is Ramadan, a month-long celebration meant to teach restraint and charity. During Ramadan, Muslims fast from dawn to dusk. This means no eating, drinking alcohol, cigarette-smoking, or even gum-chewing. Visitors are not required to fast; however, alcohol may not be served in some establishments and some restaurants may be closed. The museums and archaeological sites remain open. Each night at sunset, families and friends gather together to celebrate *iftar*—the breaking of the fast. The festivities often continue well into the night. The mosques and some streets are decorated with lanterns, special meals are prepared for the breaking of the fast, and nighttime social events and festivals are planned.

Ramadan follows a lunar calendar, so its dates change from year to year. In 2021, it will run from April 13–May 12, and in 2022 it will run from April 2–May 1. If you're interested in checking what holidays fall during your trip, an online holiday calendar like [www.timeanddate.com/holidays](http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays) is a great resource.

## Religion in Azerbaijan

The people of Azerbaijan are predominantly Shi'a Muslims. But this is largely nominal: Religious observance is loose, the society is secular, and the Islamic identity tends to be based more on culture and ethnicity than religion. This is in large part due to the many years of Soviet rule, when an atheistic policy was in place.

## Visiting Mosques and Churches

When visiting a mosque, it is polite for both men and women to be modestly dressed (no bare shoulders, no shorts, no short skirts). You will be asked to remove your shoes before entering. Some but not all mosques require women to cover their hair. To be safe, bring a small head scarf. Typically a mosque that requires head coverings will have pieces to lend or rent. If you happen to be in the mosque during the Call to Prayer, please stand in the back of the building while the faithful line the rows to pray; and please remain silent for the duration.

## Language

The predominant (and official) language is Turkish, a Turkic language that is completely separate and distinct from Arabic, though some Arabic words have entered the lexicon. Until 1928, it was written using the Arabic alphabet, but Kemal Ataturk decreed that the Latin alphabet should be used and today that is the standard. Interestingly, today Turkish literacy rates are over 96%. The second most commonly spoken language is Kurdish, followed by Arabic and Zazaki (which is similar to Persian).

Only about 17% of Turks speak English as a second language, though the numbers are higher in major cities and among those who work in the travel and hospitality sector. The good news is that the friendliness of the Turkish people makes it easy to communicate even if you don't share a language. Any effort on your part to learn a few key words and phrases will be greatly appreciated.

In Azerbaijan, the primary and official language spoken here is Azerbaijani, also called Azeri. It is mutually intelligible with Turkish, whose linguistic roots it shares. Today it is written using the Latin alphabet, but prior to independence in 1991, the Cyrillic alphabet was imposed by the Soviet Union. The most commonly spoken second language is Russian. English is not widely spoken.

## Taking Photographs

The etiquette of photographing most people in these countries is about the same as it would be on the streets of your hometown. You need permission to take a close-up, but not for a crowd scene. Be especially polite if you want to photograph children or older women. If you want to shoot a great portrait, show interest in your subject and try to have a bit of social interaction first. Then use sign language to inquire if a picture is OK.

Please do not take photographs of military personnel, military compounds, or other official institutions/personnel (such as police). This may result in the confiscation of your camera.

In museums or at archaeological sites, there may be restrictions on using your flash. Please obey any signs or directions by staff; the no-flash rule protects the fragile artifacts and artwork from damage by repeated exposure to light. Occasionally, there may also be a small fee levied by the museum or site for the privilege of taking photos. Your Trip Experience Leader will advise you beforehand.

## Safety & Security

As you travel, exercise the same caution and awareness that you would in a large American city. Don't be overly nervous or suspicious, but keep your eyes open. If you are venturing out after dark, go with one or two other people.

Carry a one-day supply of cash in your pocket. Carry most of your money, and your passport, in a travel pouch or money belt under your shirt. Replenish your pocket supply when you are in a safe and quiet place, or in our vehicle. Don't leave valuables unattended in your hotel room. Most hotels will offer use of a hotel safe at the front desk or an electronic in-room safe (for which you can set your own personal number). Please utilize them.

Pickpockets may create a sudden distraction. In any sort of puzzling street situation, try to keep one hand on your wallet or money belt. If an encounter with a local turns out to be long and complicated and involves money or your valuables, be very careful. Con artists sometimes target travelers.

Pedestrians do not always have the right of way, so please be very careful when crossing the street. Always wait for a light, cross at a crosswalk, and look both ways beforehand. Even then, you'll need to be cautious.

## The Finer Points of Turkish Etiquette

Don't let the fine points of Turkish customs worry you; Turks know that visitors can't be expected to know every detail. Much of what is considered polite in Turkey is similar to what's polite in the U.S. But as a matter of interest, our regional office has put together a list of "finer points" that might surprise you:

- Body posture is important. Sprawling, pointing the soles of your feet at someone, or keeping your legs crossed when someone speaks to you are seen as impolite.
- Even after eating, your host might press you to take more. Perversely, while it is polite to accept a first helping, it is polite to decline a second helping...at least at first. (Eventually giving in and accepting more because the food is just too good to miss is perfectly acceptable.)
- Blowing your nose loudly and in public is frowned on.
- If a piece of bread is dropped, you may see a Turk pick it up, kiss it, and touch it to their forehead. This gesture is in remembrance that bread is the stuff of life and a gift from God.

## Toilets in Turkey

Although all our accommodations feature western-style toilets, some rest stops on the road and some public restrooms will have eastern-style squat toilets. For women travelers who are novices at using a squat toilet, a skirt might be easier to maneuver than trousers. (This does not mean you need to wear a skirt every day, just that it might be worthwhile to bring a skirt for days with long transfers through small villages. The other "trick" is to wear trousers, but roll up the legs.)

Public toilets may be hard to find; it is just not a common facility in this part of the world. And inevitably, when one is found it is out of toilet paper, or soap, or both. Carry a travel-sized roll of toilet paper or packets of tissues along something to clean your hands—like anti-bacterial gel or moist wipes—and you'll be prepared no matter what. Rest stops on the road will be widely spaced, and may be extremely basic. Despite their basic nature, there is often a small fee to use the restroom.

Because many buildings have older plumbing, with narrow pipes that easily clog, it is also common for public restrooms to offer a special trashcan inside the stall. Waste paper is put into the can instead of flushed. You may also see this arrangement when visiting a home.

### **Alcohol Consumption in Turkey**

Although alcohol is forbidden by Islam, attitudes towards alcohol are more relaxed in Turkey and Central Asia than in the Middle East. In Turkey, alcohol is readily available in city restaurants and cafes, and areas that cater to foreign guests. (It is, however, heavily taxed.) Markets may not sell alcohol between 10pm and 6am (but restaurants can). You may want to try one of the local specialties—raki in Turkey. Just don't bring alcohol as a gift for the locals—if someone is personally strict in adhering to Islam, they won't be able to enjoy it.

### **Taking Photographs**

When taking photos of people in most countries, be polite and ask permission to take a close-up. In many countries, you should not be taking photos of children or older women without permission. Do not take photographs of military personnel, military compounds, or other official institutions/personnel (such as police). This may result in the confiscation of your camera.

Please obey any signs regarding photos at museum or sites; the no-flash rule protects the fragile artifacts and artwork from damage by repeated exposure to light. Occasionally, there may also be a small fee levied by the museum or site for the privilege of taking photos.

### **Safety & Security**

As you travel, exercise the same caution and awareness that you would in a large American city. Carry a one-day supply of cash, and your passport, in a travel pouch. Don't leave valuables unattended in your hotel room – use a room safe as needed. In any sort of puzzling street situation, try to keep one hand on your wallet or money belt.

### **Turkish Cuisine**

Turkey's storied gastronomic tradition is often ranked as one of the world's top three cuisines (alongside French and Chinese). Aside from Turkey's own rich agricultural bounty, its crossroads location has meant that exotic ingredients from Persia, Central Asia, Africa, the Mediterranean and beyond have graced the local diet for centuries. Then there is the technical artistry of the legendary Ottoman and Seljuk palace chefs—chefs who were often sent abroad (or imported from far-flung imperial colonies) expressly for the purpose of inventing and refining new dishes. Prepare to be delighted by dishes like these:

- **Borek:** A breakfast pastry of flaky phyllo dough filled with meat or cheese
- **Menemen:** A breakfast dish where eggs are whisked into a pot of cooked vegetables with broth that is something like a cross between scrambled eggs and stew.
- **Sulu yemek:** A traditional stew that can include any combination of vegetables and may include meat, poultry, sausages, or seafood. It is recommend you try this dish at an **ev yemekleri**, which is typically run by women and serve up home-cooked meals.
- **Hamsili pilav:** A seafood dish of oven baked rice layered with fresh anchovies.
- **Midye dolma:** A seafood dish of mussels stuffed with aromatic rice, nuts, and spices such as raisins, pine nuts, saffron, black pepper, cinnamon, red pepper flakes, parsley, and dill. Often found at a **balik restoran**, a fish and seafood restaurant.
- **Kebabs:** The most popular and well-known street food, here are dozens of varieties of these grilled (and often skewered) delicacies made of seasoned beef, lamb, or chicken. (The one thing you won't find in Turkey is pork, as it is forbidden according to the Islamic halal tradition.)
- **Pide:** A popular street food, **pide** is a flatbread-style pizza topped with your choice of **kasarli** or **peynirli** cheese, **yumurtali** (egg), **sucuklu** (sausage) and more.
- **Yaprak sarma:** A vegetarian dish of grape leaves filled with rice and seasoned with onion, mint, currants, peppers and cinnamon.
- **Taze fasulye:** A vegetarian dish of green beans simmered with tomatoes and onions
- **Dondurma:** An out-of-this-world frozen dessert made from orchid flour and a sweet, fruity resin called mastic. It's like ice cream that you eat with a knife and fork
- **Baklava:** A dessert pastry of layered phyllo dough, honey, and pistachios that is perhaps the most famous confection to come out of Turkey's imperial kitchens. It comes in several shapes and varieties: **cevizli** is with chopped walnut stuffing; **fistikli** is with pistachio nuts; **kaymakli** is with clotted cream.

## Azerbaijani Cuisine

Thanks to Azerbaijan's versatile climate, fertile farms, and a location along the Caspian Sea, Azeri chefs have a rich larder of ingredients from which to create their culinary magic. They also have a trove of influences ranging from Persian palace cooking to Ottoman confections to Eastern European stalwarts. Prepare to be explore the multi-cultural wonder with dishes like these:

- **Plov:** The national dish of Azerbaijan, **plov** is a saffron-scented rice pilaf that can also include dried fruits, barberries, eggs, meat or poultry, chestnuts, and any variety of herbs and spices. Sometimes it is baked in a pan lined with **lavash** bread, which also forms the top crust. The entire thing is turned out on a platter like a rice-filled cake. Called **shah plov** or

**shah pilaf**, it is a popular treat at weddings and banquets. There is quite a bit of ceremony attached to any **plov**. It will be served with fanfare between the second and third courses, and the ingredients will be based on what comes before and after.

- **Dolmas:** A dish of stuffed grape or cabbage leaves. While common throughout the Caucasus region, the Azerbaijani version has a distinctive round shape, as opposed to the tubular ones enjoyed elsewhere. They are usually filled with chopped meat, onions, rice, salt, pepper, butter, and fresh herbs such as coriander, dill and mint. Sometimes, that filling goes into a stuffed tomato dish called **domates dolmasi**. Both are served with a tangy yogurt sauce.
- **Doygha:** A cold or hot soup is made with **gatigh**, a fermented milk product similar to yogurt, plus eggs, rice, spinach, herbs, and occasionally, meatballs. It is a staple at weddings and other special occasions, and a good palate cleanser.
- **Lavangi:** A whole chicken or fish stuffed with walnuts, onions and plum paste, and roasted in a clay pot.
- **Piti:** A slow-cooked stew of lamb, chestnuts, onions, potatoes, peas and garlic.
- **Gutab:** A quesadilla-like snack made from thinly rolled, unleavened dough filled with meat, cheese, herbs, pumpkin, pomegranate seeds, onions, and chestnuts. It gets cooked in a flat cast-iron pan, and you just roll it up and pop it into your mouth.
- **Badambura:** A flaky dessert pastry filled with almonds, sugar, and ground cardamom.
- **Yayma:** A traditional Azerbaijani dessert rice pudding flavored with saffron, and typically topped with butter, cinnamon, and honey.

## Istanbul in Brief

### City Layout

European Istanbul is divided by the Golden Horn, an estuary, into two principal regions: the Old City, which is southwest of the Golden Horn, and Beyoglu (BEHY-oh-loo), which is northeast of it and more modern. Two bridges span the Golden Horn—the Ataturk and the Galata—and serve as the major thoroughfares that connect these two different sections of town. Ferries also run between them, and are a primary transportation mode for locals who live on one side and work in the other.

The Old City was part of the site chosen by Constantine the Great for his capital, and contains most of the historic sight of Istanbul. Here you'll find the Blue Mosque, Sancta Sophia, Topkapi Palace, Hippodrome, and the Grand Bazaar. Istanbul University is also located in the Old City.

Modern Beyoglu is home to most of the city's luxury hotels, banks, hospitals, and consulates. This district's central hub is Taksim Square, from which many avenues branch off and lead to various sections of the new city. Cumhuriyet Caddesi, a wide, tree-lined road, offers sophisticated nightclubs and fancy restaurants. Istiklal Caddesi (Independence Avenue), the main street in

Beyoglu, is now a pedestrian mall. Leading off Istiklal Caddesi are numerous atmospheric side streets and alleys that are fascinating to explore. The 19th-century palace of Dolmabahce is situated at the edge of Beyoglu, on the shores of the Bosphorus.

## Local Transportation

**Metro:** Istanbul's ambitious plan to have a modern rapid-transit system is well under way. The system runs from about 6 am to a little past midnight. The fare is less than U.S.\$1.

The Tunnel was the first underground railway line opened in 1875. Still today this short line is important for urban transportation. Trains operate every 3.5 minutes and a trip takes about 3 minutes. The line runs from Karakoy to Tunel upper station and is linked to Taksim Square by a vintage tram.

The Light rail line was built in 1989, and runs from Aksaray towers in the western suburbs, to Yenibosna. It has a total length of 18 km with 16 stops. Aksaray, Emniyet, Ulubatli, Bayrampasa, Sagmacilar, Kartaltepe, Otogar, Esenler, Terazidere, Davutpasa, Merter, Zeytinburnu, Bakirkoy, Bahcelievler, Atakoy, Yeni Bosna.

The Modern tram line was built in 1990 and runs through the older parts of the city.

The Full metro line was built in 2000 and runs from Taksim to 4 Levent. It has a total length of 7 km with 6 stations. Taksim, Osmanbey, Sisli, Gayrettepe, Levent, 4 Levent. Recently a new line was opened which runs from Kabatas to Taksim Square or vice versa.

**Taxi:** Thousands of yellow taxis throng Istanbul's streets. Most are powered by clean-burning natural gas, and all have digital meters, which the drivers are required by law to run. That doesn't, however, mean they always do. If your driver doesn't start the taksimetre, or tries to haggle the start of the trip instead of running it, just point to the meter emphatically and say Taksimetre! (TAHK-see-MEHT-treh). This will ensure you are charged the correct price.

Turks don't tip taxi drivers, they round up the fare. If it ends up being U.S. \$4.75, a Turk will round it up to \$5. In many cases if the fare is US \$5.25, the driver will require only U.S. \$5, and not bother with the change. As a foreigner, your driver may assume you'll give a tip, but you needn't unless the driver provides some special service, such as helping with lots of heavy luggage.

## Cuisine: Specialties of Istanbul

In Istanbul, seafood is especially popular, and you'll find lots of small restaurants along the Bosphorus Strait and Galata Bridge that sell local favorites like *balık-ekmek* (fish sandwich), *barbunya* (red mullet), and *kilic baligi* (swordfish).

## Kusadasi in Brief

Located along Turkey's Aegean coast, Kusadasi is a popular beach resort town, known as a hot spot for European tourist and ex-patriots. The city relies heavily on tourism and is a common stop for Eastern Mediterranean cruise ships. After Istanbul, Kusadasi is the second busiest cruise port in Turkey.

Throughout history, Kusadasi has been used as a port town by the many civilizations that claimed the land, from the Leleges people in 3000BC, to the Romans in 200BC, to the Turks in 1922, and everyone in-between, Kusadasi exchanged many hands in its 5000 old years of inhabitation.

As the city center is small compared to other nearby cities, such as shoreline city of Izmir or the port city of Antalya, Kusadasi can be broken down to simple sections – the harbor, the baazars, and the residential area. The city center is made up mostly by the harbor and the baazars, where the majority of the tourist sites reside. Connected to the harbor by a man-made causeway is Guvencin Adasi, or Pigeon Island. The city's most popular beach, Ladies Beach, where most tourists find themselves on any sunny day, is a 30 minute walk from the city harbor, and frequently full to the brim with resort tourists.

Outside of the city, Kusadasi is surrounded by interesting sites. To the northeast of Kusadasi rests the ever popular ancient city of Ephesus, the site of the Temple of Artemis, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. To the north, following an hour drive, you can find Izmir, a sea-side city known for its Greek and Roman ruins. At the southern end of the city lies Dilek Peninsula National Park, as well as the ancient Greek cities of Priene and Miletus.

### Local Transportation

**Bus:** For transportation within the city and to nearby locations such as Selcuk, Izmir, or Ephesus, travelers can utilize the local *dolmus*, minibuses that transport passengers to every beach, hotel, neighborhood, or street in Kusadasi. Upon boarding, you simply need to tell the driver where you want to go on the *dolmus*'s designated route and pay the fee upfront. If you are unsure if you are on the right *dolmus*, tell the driver where you need to go and they can advise you as to the line needed and where you would have to get off. While there are stops at every corner, the *dolmus* does not stop unless someone is waiting, so you have to tell the driver when you want to get out. If there are no stops nearby and you need to board a *dolmus*, you can simply raise your hand. *Dolmus* run year-round but during the summer season, hours are extended from 7am to midnight, seven days a week.

**Taxis:** To summon a taxi, you will need to either go to one of Kusadasi's five taxi stations or call a taxi company. Each station operates 24/7, but all prices double between 12am and 6am.

**Ferry:** As a sea-side city, Kusadasi has ferries to other ports, including the nearby Greek island of Samos, which occurs daily, leaving first thing in the morning and returning in the late evening.

**On foot:** As Kusadasi has such a small city center, most sites can easily be walked to. From one end of the city to the other, the walk is estimated to be approximately 30 minutes each way.

### Shopping: What to Buy, Customs, Shipping & More

There may be scheduled visits to local shops during your adventure. There is no requirement to make a purchase during these stops, and any purchase made is a direct transaction with the shop in question, subject to the vendor's terms of purchase. O.A.T. is not responsible for purchases you make on your trip or for the shipment of your purchases.

## Returns

If you discover an issue with an item, you should contact the vendor directly and expect that any resolution will take longer than it would in the U.S. We recommend that you keep a copy of all your receipts, invoices, or contracts, along with the shop's contact information. Keep in mind, local practice may vary from U.S. standards, so don't assume that you have a certain number of days after the purchase to speak up or that you are guaranteed a refund.

## Crafts & Souvenirs

### Turkey

Traditional souvenirs include beautiful handmade rugs, tiles, pottery, gold jewelry, and products made of copper, silk, and leather.

**Bargaining:** In Turkey, some shops have fixed prices. In the open-air markets prices are usually flexible and negotiating is normal. The only rule is that if you make an offer, you should be prepared to buy at that price. Bring a mix of small bills so that you can pay in exact change.

*Tip: Street vendors have been known to be persistent, so if you really aren't interested, it is best not to start the bargaining process, or even make eye contact.*

**Antiques:** Items that are 100 years old or older are not allowed to leave Turkey. If someone offers you an antique item for sale, keep in mind that if it is truly more than 100 years old, they should not be selling it to you. They are either ignorant of the customs laws or the item is really not as old as they say it is.

### Azerbaijan

Traditional souvenirs include woven carpets, gold and silver jewelry, ceramics, oil paintings, woven products with the national pattern (Buta), copper cookware, and homemade jams in unique flavors, such as white cherry.

**Bargaining:** In Azerbaijan, prices are usually flexible and negotiating is normal. The only rule is that if you make an offer, you should be prepared to buy at that price. Bring a mix of small bills so that you can pay in exact change.

## U.S. Customs Regulations & Shipping Charges

For all things related to U.S. Customs, the ultimate authority is the U.S. Bureau of Customs & Border Protection. Their website, [www.cbp.gov](http://www.cbp.gov) has the answers to the most frequently asked questions. Or you can call them at **1-877-227-5511**.

The top three points to know are:

- At time of writing, your personal duty-free allowance is \$800 for items brought with you. Items totaling more than \$800 are subject to duty fees.

- **Items shipped home are always subject to duty when received in the U.S.** Even when the shop has offered to include shipping and duties in the price, this typically means shipping to the nearest customs facility and payment of the export duties—not door-to-door shipping or payment of the import duties. All additional duties or shipping charges would be your responsibility. Unless an item is small enough to send by parcel service (like FedEx), chances are you will need to arrange shipping or pick-up once the item is in the U.S. and will need to pay customs duties.
- It is illegal to import products made from endangered animal species. U.S. Customs & Border Protection will seize these items, as well as most furs, coral, tortoise shell, reptile skins, feathers, plants, and items made from animal skins.

## DEMOGRAPHICS & HISTORY

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### Turkey

#### Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 302,535 square miles
- **Capital:** Ankara (although Istanbul is the largest city)
- **Government:** Unitary Presidential Constitutional Republic
- **Languages:** Turkish is the dominant language in the Turkic language group, which also includes such lesser-known tongues as Kirghiz, Kazakh, and Azerbaijani.
- **Location:** Turkey occupies the Asian peninsula of Anatolia (Asia Minor) and a tiny corner of the European peninsula of Thrace. These two regions form a land bridge, which is interrupted by a narrow waterway called the Bosphorus. To the west, Turkey is bordered by the Aegean Sea, Greece, and Bulgaria; to the east, by Georgia, Armenia, and Iran; on the north, by the Black Sea; and to the south, by the Mediterranean Sea, Syria, and Iraq. While most of Turkey is in Asia, because of her membership in the Council of Europe she is regarded as a European country.
- **Geography:** Turkey is relatively big (larger than Texas) and has a varied geography. Many visitors come to Turkey expecting to find mostly dusty deserts, palm trees, and camel caravans, when in fact its diverse landscape also includes lots of craggy snowcapped mountains, gentle hills, broad lakes, cool pine forests, and miles of white beaches.
- **Population:** 84,680,273 (estimate)
- **Religion:** Muslim 99.8%, other 0.2%
- **Time Zone:** Turkey goes by Eastern European time: two hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time, or seven hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time. When it is noon in Turkey, it's 5 am in New York, and 2 am in Los Angeles.

#### National Holidays: Turkey

In addition to the holidays listed below,

#### Turkey: A Brief History

Long before recorded history, nomadic peoples inhabited Turkey. By 7000 BC, they'd ceased wandering and founded permanent settlements, including one of the world's oldest cities, Çatalhöyük (outside Konya). Turkey's first empire arose during the Bronze Age with the

Hittites. Rivals of Babylon and Egypt, they were eventually conquered by Assyrians and Greeks. Hellenic Turkey flourished in places like Troy, Lycia, and the Phrygia. After Alexander the Great “liberated” Anatolia from Persia, the Romans arrived in 129 BC, and made Ephesus their capital.

In 330 AD, the Roman Emperor Constantine converted to Christianity, renamed Byzantium Constantinople, and made it his capital. For the next seven centuries it was the heart of the Byzantine (Eastern Roman) empire. But by the 11th century AD, Byzantine power had declined, and the Seljuk Turks invaded from Central Asia, bringing Islam with them, and conquering Syria, Palestine, and parts of the waning Byzantine Empire. The rise of the Seljuks prompted Christian Europe to mount a series of bloody Crusades. The Seljuk’s demise came in the late 13th century when Mongols swept across Anatolia, splintering the Seljuk empire into small principalities called beyliks. One of these was led by Othman I, founder of the Ottoman dynasty.

The Ottoman empire grew based on an administrative and military model called the janissary system. It plucked the smartest and strongest boys from conquered subjects, and schooled them in Islam and war. For 300 years, this army pushed the empire from Anatolia to the Middle East, North Africa, and into Europe. In 1453, the Byzantine Empire received a deathblow when the Ottomans took the capital, Constantinople. Ottoman culture reached its zenith under Suleiman the Magnificent (1520–66), who codified Ottoman law, ensured tolerance of Christians and Jews, sponsored a flourishing of the arts, and expanded the borders. His likes were never seen again and after a succession of weak rulers and growing opposition from European states, by the late 17th century the empire began to decline. Its final gasp came with World War I.

Turkey’s next visionary leader arose just after the war, during the Greek occupation of Izmir in 1919. A commander called Mustafa Kemal led his armies to victory against the French, Italians, and Greeks, who were expelled in 1922. In 1923, Turkey became an independent republic, with Kemal as president. Given the title “Ataturk” (meaning “father of the Turks”), he initiated a program of modernization, democratization and radical westernization. Ataturk made sweeping reforms to ensure that the new republic would be secular, including a new legal code to supplant Islamic law, and the limitation of clerical power. Women were granted equal rights, the alphabet was changed from Arabic to Latin, and even western styles of dress were favored. Ataturk also instituted free and compulsory education, and industrialized the economy. Ataturk ruled until his death in 1938, but the pillars of his policy, known as Kemalism, are still revered.

After World War II, Turkey furthered relations with Western Europe by joining the United Nations, and increasing individual liberties. Turkish troops fought in Korea, and Turkey was made a member of NATO in 1952. However, economic difficulties led to a military coup in 1960, followed by nearly two decades in which Turkey alternated between civilian and military rule.

In 1982, a new constitution was adopted and Turkey resumed its western ties. During the Gulf War, it supported UN forces. In 2014, Recep Tayyip Erdogan became president, after having served as Prime Minister since 2003. A religious conservative, he has exerted authoritarian control, and criticism of his regime for suppression of dissent, human rights abuses, and attacks on journalists are some reasons why Turkey’s accession to the EU has been stalled since 2016.

# Azerbaijan

## Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 33,436 square miles
- **Capital:** Baku
- **Government:** Presidential Republic
- **Languages:** The official language is Azerbaijani
- **Location:** Azerbaijan is located in southwestern Asia, bordering the Caspian Sea between Iran, Armenia, Georgia, and Russia.
- **Geography:** Azerbaijan is about the size of Maine and has a varied geography. Azerbaijan is surrounded by the Greater Caucasus mountain range along the northern Russian border and the Lesser Caucasus mountains along the Armenian border with sloping hills and mineral springs. There are eight large rivers which flow from the mountains through the lowlands into the Caspian Sea.
- **Population:** 9,961,396 (estimate)
- **Religion:** Muslim 96.9%, Christian 3%, other <0.1%, unaffiliated <0.1%
- **Time Zone:** Azerbaijan goes by Gulf Standard time: four hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time, or eight hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time. When it is noon in Azerbaijan, it's 4 am in New York, and 1 am in Los Angeles. Azerbaijan does not observe Daylight Savings time, so during the summer months Azerbaijan is an additional hour ahead of the U.S.

## National Holidays: Azerbaijan

In addition to the holidays listed below, Azerbaijan celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Ramadan and Feast of the Sacrifice. Some of these holidays may be observed on the following Monday if the holiday falls on a weekend day. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit [www.timeanddate.com/holidays](http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays).

01/01 New Year's Day

01/20 Martyr's Day

03/08 Women's Day

03/20 Nowruz/Spring Holiday

05/09 Victory Day over Fascism

05/28 Republic Day

06/15 The Day of National Salvation of the Azerbaijan People

06/26 Azerbaijan Armed Forces

11/09 State Flag Day

12/31 World Azerbaijan Solidarity Day

## Azerbaijan: A Brief History

Up until the end of the 20th century, Azerbaijan has enjoyed only brief periods of independence. It was part of Persia, overrun by Mongols, conquered by Ottoman Turks, disputed by Armenia, and annexed by Russia and later, the USSR. Its religion has changed several times, as has have its borders and its very name. In fact, no specifically Azerbaijani state existed before 1918.

The historic region now called Azerbaijan was known to the ancients as Caucasian Albania (unrelated to the modern Adriatic nation). It was closely linked to Persia, and from the 6th century BC, the Zoroastrian religion was dominant. Starting around 625 AD, the people began adopting Christianity, and came under the cultural influence of the Armenians. By the 7th century, Arabs began advancing into Caucasian Albania, consolidating power through local rulers called shahanshahs. Next came the Seljuks, who brought with them the Turkic language that is the basis of the modern Azeri (Azerbaijani) language spoken today. They also built impressive fortified cities, but they could not withstand the devastation wrought by the Mongol invasions that began with the start of the 13th century, and were complete by 1235.

Even during the Mongol era, one polity survived and that was the Shirvan Shah dynasty, which lasted from the mid-9th to the early 16th century. Originating from the Caspian region that presently includes the capital of Baku, the Shirvan dynasty fostered a golden age of art and culture. Modern Azerbaijanis identify with it as a forerunner to the Azerbaijani state.

By the 18th century, the region had fragmented into a collection of autonomous khanates. Fearful of a re-emerging Persia, they turned to imperial Russia for help, but got more than they asked for when Russia annexed them. To solidify their control, Russia began transplanting Christians from Russia, Armenia and even Germany, a move that set the stage for later ethnic conflicts. After the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, Russian Azerbaijan joined forces with Armenia and Georgia to form the anti-Bolshevik Transcaucasian Federation. It lasted less than a year and when Azerbaijan then proclaimed its own independence in 1920, the Red Army stepped in and made it a Soviet republic.

Over the next decades Azerbaijan's borders shifted, causing ongoing tension with neighboring Armenia. But it remained part of the USSR, and suffered greatly during the Stalinist purges that killed or imprisoned more than 100,000 Azeris. Throughout this period, there were enclaves of ethnic Armenians living in Azerbaijan, and vice versa. In the 1980s, disputes over the sovereignty and status of these minorities erupted into violence bordering on ethnic cleansing. After the Soviets intervened by sending the Red Army into Baku, killing dozens of civilians, the people of Azerbaijan declared (and won) independence in 1991.

That was not the end of the ethnic struggle. A large-scale conflict broke out between Armenia and Azerbaijan in 1992, and the Armenian side took over major areas of Azerbaijani territory. In 1994, a ceasefire was reached with Russian mediation. But still, a million Azeris were displaced. Money from Azerbaijan's oil boom helped to provide housing and services for some, but it came very late in the game. That oil wealth has also transformed the look of the capital, with its glittering modernist skyline, and is now invigorating regional cities across the country.

## RESOURCES

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### Suggested Reading

#### Turkey

***Birds Without Wings*** by Louis De Bernieres (2004, Fiction) A sweeping historical drama that weaves together the lives of an Anatolian family, the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, and the rise of Ataturk. Highly recommended.

***Fragments of Culture: The Everyday of Modern Turkey*** by Deniz Kandiyoti and Ayse Saktanber (2002, Sociology) This carefully curated collection of articles by leading scholars from various disciplines offers a detailed and vivid portrait of daily life in contemporary Turkey.

***The Bastard of Istanbul*** by Elif Shafak (2006, Fiction) Nineteen year-old Aysa is chafing to break free of the four headstrong women at the heart of her Istanbul family. But things change when her uncle's stepdaughter arrives from America. The two young women discover secrets that link their families to the 1915 Armenian genocide. The book caused a sensation in Turkey, where the author was put on trial for "insulting Turkishness."

***The Janissary Tree*** by Jason Goodwin (2006, Historical Mystery) Winner of the Edgar Award, this is the first in a series of novels featuring the eunuch detective Yashim. Here, he prowls the alleys, harems, salons and mosques of 1836 Istanbul to solve three cases related to the historical disbanding (and slaughter) of the elite Janissary troops.

***The Museum of Innocence*** (2008), ***The White Castle*** (1985), or ***My Name is Red*** (1998) by Orhan Pamuk (Historical Fiction) Three moving historical novels by the winner of the 2006 Nobel Prize in Literature. *The Museum of Innocence* is about a complicated love triangle in 1970s Istanbul; *The White Castle* tells of a seventeenth-century Italian scholar who becomes enslaved in the service of an astronomer; and *My Name is Red* describes the events surrounding the murder of a miniaturist during the height of the Ottoman Empire.

#### Azerbaijan

***Solar Plexus, A Baku Saga in Four Parts*** by Rustam Ibragimbekov (Fiction, 2012) This saga spans the years between 1940 and the 1990s to explore lives and loves of families and friends who all grew up around a certain courtyard in Baku.

***The Black Garden*** by Thomas de Wael (2013, Nonfiction) When first published in 2003, this was the definitive study of how Armenia and Azerbaijan were pulled into a conflict that helped deliver their independence and end the Soviet Union, but left a residue of suffering and simmering tension. This updated edition has new material covering events through 2011.

***Azerbaijan Diary: A Rogue Reporter's Adventures in an Oil-rich, War-torn, Post-Soviet Republic*** by Thomas Goltz (1998, History/Memoir) A first-person account of life in post-USSR Azerbaijan written by an American reporter.

***The Colonel's Mistake*** by Dan Mayland (2012, Fiction) The first of the Mark Sava spy novel series. It follows an ex-CIA station chief attempting to live a quiet life as a professor in Baku. But complications both political and personal draw him back to the world of high-stakes espionage.

***Ali and Nino*** by Kurban Said (1937, Fiction) A love story between a Muslim Azerbaijani boy and a Christian Georgian girl at the end of World War I. Although first written in the '30s, it is frequently reissued as it is considered a classic.

## Suggested Films & Videos

### Turkey

***Midnight Express*** (1978, Drama) Based on the real experiences of an American tourist who was imprisoned in Turkey for trying to smuggle hashish in the 1970s. With its gripping prison scenes and harsh portrayals of the Turkish police, the film was (and still is) controversial and unpopular in Turkey.

***Bliss*** (2007, Drama) A gorgeous and surprising look at a difficult subject. When a young woman in an extremely traditional village is suspected of sexual relations outside of marriage, one of her distant cousins is recruited to commit an “honor killing,” but ends up trying to protect his potential victim instead.

***A Touch of Spice*** (2003, Comedy/Drama). A favorite in Turkey, this heartwarming story follows a Greek boy growing up in Istanbul as he learns about food and life from his grandfather.

***Uzak*** (Distant) (2002, Drama) Some consider this Istanbul classic to be one of the best Turkish films ever made. It concerns a country bumpkin who becomes the unwelcome guest of his city photographer cousin.

***Kedi*** (2016, Documentary) A heartwarming documentary that follows some of Istanbul's *ked*i—street cats that are beloved and cared for by multiple humans as community pets. The felines are an institution in Istanbul, and are pretty much given free reign to roam wherever they want—they've been known to show up at fashion shows, concerts, and even inside places of worship.

### Azerbaijan

***Ali and Nino*** (2016, Drama) Based on a famous novel, this story depicts the forbidden love between a Muslim boy from Baku and a Christian girl from Georgia. Set during World War I, it is a vivid portrayal of life in Azerbaijan 100 years ago.

***Buta*** (2017, Drama) A seven year-old boy who has lost his mother is befriended by an old man, a soap merchant who once loved the boy's grandmother.

***Absurdistan*** (2008, Satire) Filmed in Azerbaijan (but set in an indeterminate country in the Caucasus), this comedy is about a forgotten village where the water supply is threatened by a broken pipeline. When the men of the town fail to address the issue, the women go on a sex strike to force some action. Young lovers Aya and Temelko are caught in the middle.

## Useful Websites

### **Overseas Adventure Travel Frequently Asked Questions**

[www.oattravel.com/faq](http://www.oattravel.com/faq)

### **International Health Information/CDC (Centers for Disease Control)**

[www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel)

### **Electricity & Plugs**

[www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/  
plugs-and-sockets](http://www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/plugs-and-sockets)

### **Foreign Exchange Rates**

[www.xe.com/currencyconverter](http://www.xe.com/currencyconverter)  
[www.oanda.com/converter/classic](http://www.oanda.com/converter/classic)

### **ATM Locators**

[www.mastercard.com/atm](http://www.mastercard.com/atm)  
[www.visa.com/atmlocator](http://www.visa.com/atmlocator)

### **World Weather**

[www.intellicast.com](http://www.intellicast.com)  
[www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com)  
[www.wunderground.com](http://www.wunderground.com)

### **Basic Travel Phrases (80 languages)**

[www.travlang.com/languages](http://www.travlang.com/languages)

### **Packing Tips**

[www.travelite.org](http://www.travelite.org)

### **U.S. Customs & Border Protection**

[www.cbp.gov/travel](http://www.cbp.gov/travel)

### **Transportation Security**

#### **Administration (TSA)**

[www.tsa.gov](http://www.tsa.gov)

### **National Passport Information Center**

[www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov)

### **Holidays Worldwide**

[www.timeanddate.com/holidays](http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays)

## Useful Apps

### **Flight Stats**

Track departures, arrivals, and flight status

### **LoungeBuddy**

Get access to premium airport lounges around the world

### **Timeshifter**

Personalized tips for avoiding jetlag, based on neuroscience and your own data

### **GoogleMaps or Maps.me**

Maps and directions anywhere in the world

### **Triposo**

City guides, walking maps, and more – and it works offline

### **Rome2rio**

Where to go, what to see, and what to do in more than 160 countries

### **Flush or Sit or Squat**

Find a clean toilet anywhere

### **Uber or Bolt or Grab**

Ride sharing around the world

### **Visa Plus and Mastercard Cirrus**

#### **ATM locations**

Shows the location of the nearest ATM in your network

### **TunnelBear**

Provides a secure VPN (virtual private network) that will encrypt your browsing data when you use a public WiFi network

### **What's App or Skype or Signal**

WiFi calling anywhere in the world

### **Duolingo or FLuentU or Babbel**

Learn dozens of foreign languages

### **Google Translate**

Fast and simple translations

### **XE**

Currency conversions

### **SizeGuide**

Clothing and shoe sizes in all countries

### **Best Units Converter**

Converts currency, mileage, weights, and many other units of measurement

### **Tourlina**

For women only, it connects you with other female travelers

### **Happy Cow**

Locate vegan and vegetarian eateries in 195 countries

### **Eatwith**

Dine with locals all over the world

### **Meetup**

Connects you with locals who share your interests

### **Skyview**

Identifies constellations and heavenly bodies

### **Travello**

Find travel friends on the road

### **ALIX for One**

Created by and for women, it identifies solo-friendly dining spots in major international cities

### **TripWhistle**

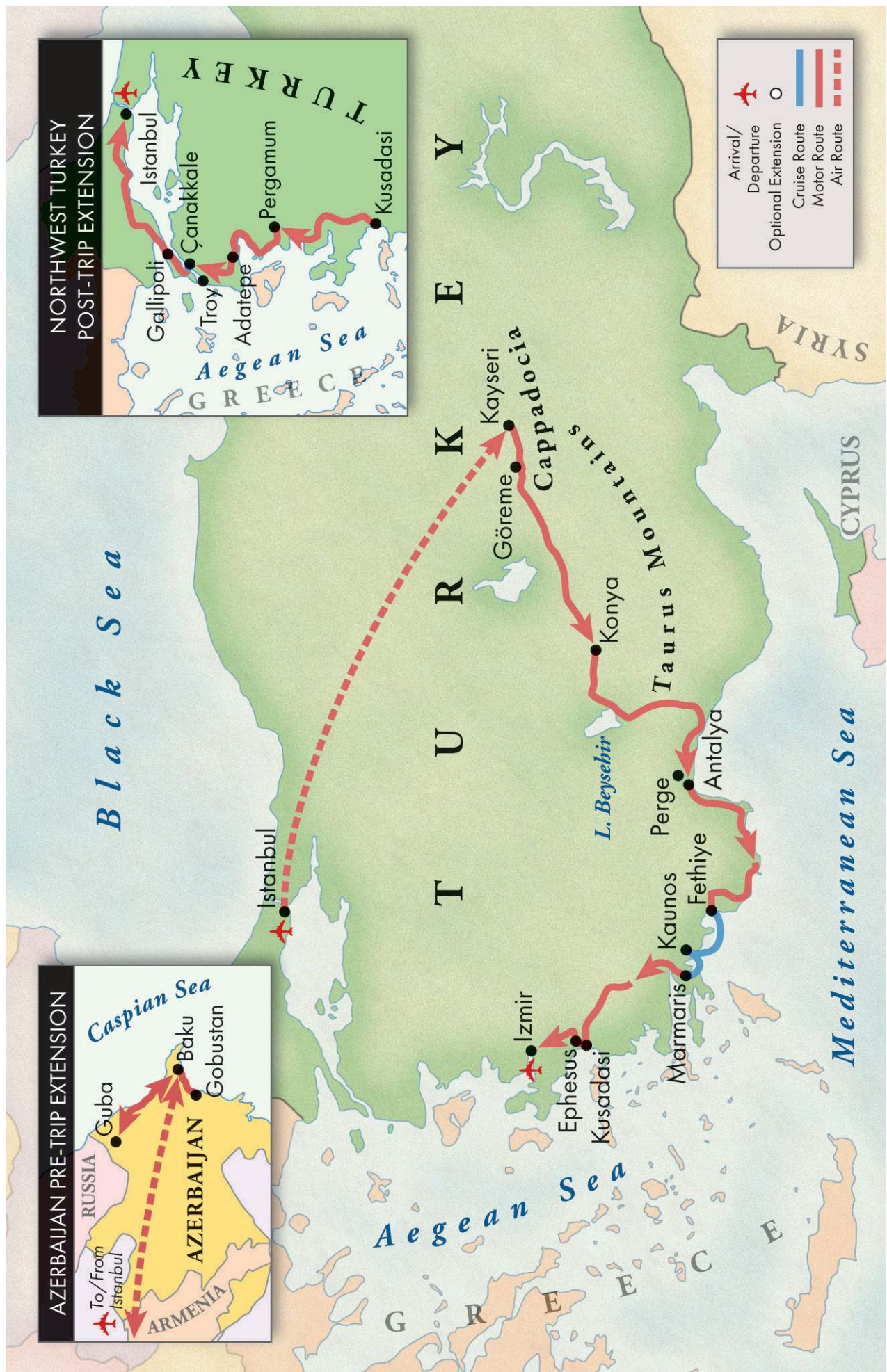
Maps your location and provides emergency numbers for police, medics, and more

### **GeoSure**

Safely navigate neighborhoods around the world

### **Chirpey**

For women only, connect with other women, find out what's safe, meet up, and more



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5-time traveler from Pinellas Park, FL



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30-time traveler from Woodbury, NY



Submitted by Paul Stark, 17-time traveler  
from Edina, MN



Submitted by David Fong, 16-time traveler  
from Foster City, CA



Submitted by Steven dos Remedios,  
23-time traveler from Oakland, CA



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