NAT HAB
CULTURAL JOURNEYS

Vibrant Traditions & Personal Connections



Turkey Revealed

Journey Through Time into the Treasures, Tastes & Traditions of Turkey

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Trip Details:

Days
10 Days / Apr–Jun, Sep–Oct

Price
From $11995 (+air)

Turkey Revealed

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At the crossroads of Europe and Asia, Turkey has long been a bridge between continents and a tapestry of cultures. Its layered history comes alive on our unique itinerary that is itself a bridge between the urban and contemporary, and the hidden, traditional ways of life that persist off the tourist track. From the monuments and markets of Istanbul, where one in five Turks lives, to the peaceful olive groves and vineyards surrounding the celebrated culinary region of Urla by the sea, Turkey is a study in contrasts. Across the Anatolian plateau, visit the pilgrimage site of Konya where the Sufi mystic and poet Rumi lived in the 13th century, and watch the whirling dervish ceremony, still practiced today, that grew from his teachings. Cappadocia is another sensory delight, with its volcanic fairy towers and dozens of hot air balloons drifting over the valley at sunrise. Join us as we reveal Turkey ancient and modern, iconic and intimate, on a captivating route of discovery.

Trip Highlights

Make Rich Connections with Local People

Through our long-cultivated relationships, meet renowned chefs, artisan farmers, vintners, spiritual teachers and traditional craftsmakers on private personal visits

Touch the Mystical Legacy of the Poet Rumi

In Konya, pay homage to the 13th-century Sufi poet who continues to inspire followers today, and witness a whirling dervish ceremony that grew from his teachings

Savor the Food & Wine of Anatolia & the Aegean

Discover Turkey's culinary delights through olive oil tastings, regional wines, foraged herbs, flatbread traditions, and lavish meze spreads at Michelin-starred restaurants



Turkey Revealed Itinerary

Journey Through Time into the Treasures, Tastes & Traditions of Turkey

Itinerary at a Glance

Day 1	Istanbul
Day 2	Konya
Day 3	Konya / Cappadocia
Day 4	Cappadocia
Day 5	Cappadocia
Day 6	Izmir / Claros / Ephesus / Urla
Day 7	Klazomenai / Barbaros Village
Day 8	Urla / Istanbul
Day 9	Istanbul
Day 10	Istanbul



Day 1

Istanbul

Arrive in Istanbul, where Turkey's history and living culture converge

- Check in to the Pera Palace Hotel, built in 1892 for Orient Express travelers
- Join your Expedition Leader for a welcome meal introducing Turkish cuisine

Arrive in Turkey's beguiling capital where you are met at the airport and transferred to the Pera Palace Hotel, opened in 1892 to host passengers arriving aboard the fabled *Orient Express.* The landmark hotel has lasted through the reigns of three Ottoman sultans, the fall of the Ottoman Empire, and the rise of the New Turkish Republic beginning in 1923. A paragon of Belle Epoque style, Pera Palace is defined by its Art Nouveau facade and architecture, and black-and-white portraits still hang beside marble staircases, recalling Istanbul's late-Ottoman era. Among the hotel's many notable guests are Agatha Christie, Ernest Hemingway, Emperor Franz Joseph and Queen Elizabeth II. Get a brief taste of Istanbul's character before a welcome dinner and orientation to our Turkish adventures ahead, knowing we will return to the evocative city later in our journey.

Day 2

Konya

Encounter Rumi's whirling dervish traditions in Konya

- Visit the Mevlana Museum, where Rumi's tomb lies beneath a turquoise-tiled dome
- Meet a contemporary member of the Mevlevi Order for insight into Rumi's teachings
- Witness a private whirling dervish ceremony of meditative prayer

Board a high-speed train to Konya this morning, heading southeast across the Anatolian Plateau. Little known on traditional Turkey tourist circuits, Konya is a spiritual center and pilgrimage destination for Sufis, focused on the tomb of 13th-century Persian poet, mystic and theologian Jelaleddin Rumi, founder of the Mevlevi Order. On arrival, we have lunch at a local restaurant before heading up to Alaeddin Hill, an important site in Konya's history. In the 11th century, Konya became the capital of the great Seljuk Empire, and the citadel erected here in the 1220s offers a panoramic view over the city.

We visit the Mevlana Museum, center of the religious order founded by followers of Rumi, whose poetry and teachings helped spread Sufi practice across the Islamic world. Rumi's mauseoleum lies beneath the museum's turquoise-tiled dome, while exhibits showcase an impressive collection of Rumi's personal belongings, manuscripts and artifacts. Continue to Hichane Lodge, a center for Sufi practice, for a private meeting with a contemporary member of the Mevlevi Order who offers insight into the spiritual traditions that grew from Rumi's teachings. Witness a private whirling dervish ceremony, where Sufi practitioners perform the *Sema,* an ecstatic dance where they spin continuously in a form of active meditation and prayer to achieve a state of spiritual union with God. Rumi believed that music, poetry and dance were pathways to the divine, and while this is a folkloric performance, the experience feels transcendent. This evening, convene for dinner at a special restaurant overlooking the Mevlana Museum, built in the style of traditional Konya houses.

Day 3

Konya / Cappadocia

Return to a private dervish lodge for devotional music

- Hear a private concert rooted in the spiritual traditions of Rumi and the Mevlevi Order
- Sample natural wines made from revived Anatolian grapes and aged in clay jars
- Visit Byzantine churches carved from and built with Cappadocia's volcanic stone

Return to Hichane Lodge for a Sufi concert this morning, then depart by road for Cappadocia, about three hours to the northeast. En route, lunch is served during our private visit to Gelveri, a small winery set in a 250-year-old rock-carved Greek house in Guzelyurt, one of the world's highest grape-growing regions at nearly 5,000 feet. Along with our meal, sample several wines, discovering why the owners have gained acclaim for their historic sustainable production methods. Among Turkey's 1,400 grape varieties, they are reviving ancient grapes to create 100% natural wines using only wild yeasts, with no added sulfites. Wines are aged in traditional Anatolian clay jars, a method that dates to the Roman era. Many of the jars, called *kups,* date from the 4th to 12th centuries and come from Byzantine monasteries in Cappadocia. Micro-producer Gelveri is renowned for its amber wines, crafted using indigenous and rare Anatolian white grapes with the skins left on.

After lunch, we visit two distinctive churches: The High Church, believed to have been a nunnery, includes rock-cut rooms, cisterns and retreats carved into towering rock faces. The Red Church is one of the oldest in Cappadocia, dating to the 5th or 6th century, the era of Byzantine Emperor Justinian. Unlike most of the famous cave churches, this striking structure capped with a dome is freestanding, built of local volcanic red stone. The Cappadocia region of Central Anatolia is replete with hundreds of churches and monasteries, evidence of its status as an important center of early Christian learning and practice. Its subterranean cities are also well known, dug to offer protection to Christians during periods of persecution. In addition to its rock-cut churches and ancient troglodyte cave complexes, Cappadocia is famous for its "fairy chimney" rock formations—volcanic hoodoos created by centuries of erosion, with portions protected as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Day 4

Cappadocia

Cook with a women's cooperative and explore Cappadocia's underground city

- Descend into Mazı Underground City to see its rock-cut chambers, wells and rolling stone doors
- Learn Anatolian family recipes during a hands-on cooking class at a women's cooperative
- Walk the Greek Orthodox lanes of Mustafapasa before a Michelin-starred meze dinner

There's no more iconic image of Cappadocia than the sight of dozens of bright hot air balloons floating over the fairy chimneys and volcanic valleys at sunrise, and those who wish will have an opportunity for that experience this morning (additional cost). Later, we head just outside Cappadocia to Mazı Underground City to discover what subterranean cave life was like in the early Roman and Byzantine periods. Known for its high level of craftsmanship, the city is carved into the steep slopes of a valley wall, which allowed for better natural drainage and multiple access points across the cliff face. It is especially famous for its massive stable located at the entrance. The architectural ingenuity of the early inhabitants is on full display here, with sophisticated ventilation shafts, water wells and heavy rolling stone doors that provided security during invasions. Deep inside lies a rock-cut church with multiple rooms used for monastic life, evidence that this was a thriving community where spiritual life continued in safety, deep within the earth.

Next, visit Mustafapasa, formerly called Sinasos, a sleepy village with a rich Greek Orthodox heritage—one of many such villages whose Greek identity thrived in harmony alongside Turks in the late Ottoman years before the Turkish War of Independence. Away from the hustle of mass tourism, old traditions and well-preserved Greek houses persist in Mustafapasa. In the surrounding hills, farmers grow apricots, walnuts, apples, wheat and grapes, with local grape molasses a special delicacy.

This afternoon, enjoy a hands-on cooking class at the Hereni Women's Cooperative, dedicated to preserving local traditions and supporting the economic growth of women. We'll learn to make authentic Anatolian family recipes that may include borek, Turkish dumplings, stuffed eggplant and baklava. The culinary adventures continue at dinner this evening, where we indulge in a lavish meze tasting menu with terroir-influenced wine pairings at Revithia, Cappadocia's first and only Michelin-starred restaurant.

Day 5

Cappadocia

Meet a sixth-generation master potter in Cappadocia

- Visit Chez Galip to see the techniques behind its intricate ceramics
- Taste traditional flatbread recognized by UNESCO for its cultural importance
- Hike from Cavusin to Meskendir through cave dwellings and narrow canyons

Another full day in Cappadocia begins with a private visit to the famous Chez Galip pottery workshop, where we meet the namesake ceramic master, a 6th-generation potter, and learn about the painstaking production process behind his intricate creations. Return to the Women's Cooperative where we learned Turkish cooking yesterday, for a traditional lunch featuring the region's classic flatbread. Turkey's cultural practice of making and sharing this simple unleavened bread was inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2016, recognizing its deep agricultural heritage and important social function in the countries of Central Asia. After lunch, we stretch our legs on a hike from Cavusin to Meskendir, a path tracing its way among ancient cave dwellings, narrow cliff passages and deep, shady canyons. Enjoy a picnic dinner in a lavender garden this evening.

Day 6

Izmir / Claros / Ephesus / Urla

Walk through Ephesus, once a great city of the ancient Mediterranean

- Explore the Temple and oracle of Apollo at Claros on the Ionian coast
- See the Library of Celsus, agora and 25,000-seat amphitheater at Ephesus
- Settle into a secluded vineyard retreat in the countryside near Urla

From Cappadocia, fly west to Izmir, a stunning coastal region of western Turkey. Formerly known as Smyrna, this ancient Turkish city at the end of the Silk Road was influenced by the Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman empires. Leaving the airport, we drive along the Izmir Peninsula, which juts into the Aegean Sea and is known for its resorts and gorgeous beaches fronting the turquoise ocean. Our first stop is Claros, an ancient Greek sanctuary on the coast of Ionia containing a temple and oracle of Apollo, a center of prophecy as important as the one in Delphi. History stretching back millennia comes to life as we wander among the evocative ruins, where archaeological evidence suggests structures were in existence as far back as the 10th century BC.

Continue to a local winery for lunch, then on to Ephesus, once the greatest city and trading center in the ancient Mediterranean world. The Greek metropolis came under the control of the Roman Republic in 129 B.C., and the reforms of Caesar Augustus brought Ephesus to its most prosperous era, which lasted until the 3rd century A.D. Walk through history among the well-preserved ruins, most of which were built or rebuilt during Augustus's reign, including the enormous amphitheater seating 25,000, the Library of Celsus, the agora (public square) and the aqueducts. Ephesus also became an important center for the growth of early Christianity in the 1st century. The Apostle Paul lived here from 52-54 A.D., and the biblical book of Ephesians is believed to be a letter from Paul to the Ephesian Christians.

By late afternoon, continue to our boutique hotel in the seaside town of Urla, known for its wine, clear waters and abundant fish. At KeyUrla, an exclusive Relais & Chateaux property, we are surrounded by nature in a rural landscape where agrotourism and gastronomy define the guest experience, and guests have their own private villa overlooking the vineyards.

Day 7

Klazomenai / Barbaros Village

Share in village life and olive-growing traditions near Urla

- Visit Klazomenai’s ancient olive press, then taste regional oils while learning about traditional production
- Meet maritime historians reconstructing ships with ancient Aegean methods
- Discover how Barbaros residents revived their village through a community-created scarecrow festival

Today we are immersed in the history and gastronomy of Urla, a Turkish mecca for food and wine aficionados. The day begins with a visit to the ancient site of Klazomenai, the oldest known settlement of the Aegean coastal region with human presence documented to the start of the Iron Age, around 4,000 B.C. It later became one of the 12 cities of the Ionian League in the 7th century B.C., and one of the first to issue silver coinage, adorned with the head of Apollo. It is also where we find some of the earliest evidence of olive oil extraction in Greece, with an ancient press unearthed that dates to the 6th century B.C.

Our next stop is 360 NGO, where maritime historians rebuild ships using ancient Aegean methods. Continue to Barbaros, a charming village once near collapse due to depopulation. In 2016, the town introduced a “scarecrow festival,” lining the streets with whimsical scarecrows and dressing up as scarecrows to reminder the populace of what is at stake without residents to work the fields. It has since seen a remarkable turnaround with an influx of visitors and new residents revitalizing the village.

Next, we visit Kostem Olive Oil Museum for a look at traditional pressing methods and a tasting of regional oils. It's a savory lead-up to this evening's dinner at Vino Locale, one of the culinary highlights of our trip. Surrounded by centuries-old olive trees, artichoke fields and vineyards, this 2-star Michelin restaurant is focused on sustainability, using local ingredients, reduced energy use, and a commitment to supporting of local farmers through various initiatives.

Day 8

Urla / Istanbul

Forage a wild Aegean lunch with a local chef

- Gather edible greens and herbs in Turkey’s only certified organic edible forest
- Sit down to an outdoor lunch prepared from the ingredients you collected
- Return to Istanbul for a rooftop dinner overlooking the Bosphorus

Spend the morning on a unique "forest to fork" culinary adventure, foraging in the private Hic Urla Forest with a local chef. Turkey’s only edible-certified organic forest, it covers 2,400 acres with 60,000 olive trees and more than 30 wild edible plant species, from Aegean wild greens to herbs for seasoning, tea and medicinal purposes. Once we've gathered all we need, guided by our chef, we move to picnic tables where he combines the fresh-picked seasonal bounty to create an ultra-fresh lunch served in a natural setting. Then it's time to head to the Izmir airport for our flight back to Istanbul. On arrival, we transfer to our hotel in the city's historic Sirkeci district, with close proximity to all of Istanbul's major monuments. Our dinner tonight is in a memorable location, in the hotel's open rooftop restaurant with fabulous views over the city skyline and the Bosphorus beyond.

Day 9

Istanbul

Cruise the Bosphorus between Europe and Asia

- Board a private boat for a cruise past Ottoman palaces and waterfront mansions
- Step beneath the vast dome of the Hagia Sophia, a Byzantine basilica turned Ottoman mosque
- Watch a master weaver hand-dye and knot wool carpets in a private workshop

Istanbul wakes early. Ferries cross the Bosphorus as the first call to prayer echoes over the water, and fishermen line the bridges with their morning catch. The Hagia Sophia, commissioned in the 6th century by the Byzantine Emperor Justinian I, rises above the old city, its vast dome suspended over marble columns, flanked by minarets added following the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453. Inside, light filters through high windows over fragments of mosaics, and worn stone floors are polished by the footsteps of centuries of visitors. Nearby in the old quarter of Istanbul known as Sultanahmet, spice stalls spill into covered market passages, tea glasses clink in dim cafes, and ferries whisk commuters between opposite sides of the city, linking East and West.

Our day begins on the Bosphorus, boarding a private boat for a morning cruise on the strait that connects Europe and Asia, with Istanbul straddling both. Ottoman palaces and wooden waterfront mansions line the shores, while the domes and minarets of mosques rise on the skyline. Later, we have a private visit to a Turkish carpet workshop, where a master weaver demonstrates the traditional techniques that create exquisite hand-dyed wool carpets. After lunch, explore the Spice Bazaar, where vendors scoop saffron, sumac, dried mint and loose tea from heaped displays, and glass cases hold lokum, nuts and candied fruit. This evening, we head up to a rooftop restaurant for our farewell dinner, with a view of Istanbul's romantic skyline and the glittering Bosphorus below.

Day 10

Istanbul

Depart Istanbul after a final Turkish breakfast

- Linger over fresh yogurt, olives and other Turkish specialties
- Transfer to the airport for homeward flights

Our Turkey cultural journey comes to a close today. After a last Turkish breakfast this morning, knowing we'll never have yogurt this fresh or olives this savory at home, it's time to transfer to the airport for flights home, taking with us layers of memories as captivating as the many matchless experiences we have had during our time in Turkey.



Turkey Revealed Accommodations

Journey Through Time into the Treasures, Tastes & Traditions of Turkey



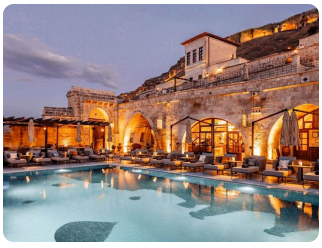
Pera Palace

Built for Orient Express passengers in 1895, Pera Palace remains one of Istanbul's grand historic hotels, known for its storied past, afternoon tea, Turkish hammam rituals and Golden Horn setting.



Hich Hotel

An intimate retreat beside the Mevlana Museum, this boutique hotel features restored 200-year-old homes, garden breakfasts and serene views of one of Turkey's most revered landmarks.



Kayakapi Premium Caves Hotel

Sleep inside a centuries-old cave dwelling overlooking Cappadocia's valleys, then unwind in a historic hammam, Michelin-starred restaurant and cliffside pool carved into the hillside.



KeyUrla

In Urla's wine country, contemporary villas sit among working vineyards, where estate wines, local ingredients, farm-to-table cooking, cellar tastings and vineyard-facing wellness, including a traditional hammam, deliver a luxurious stay.



Orient Occident Hotel

In Istanbul's historic Sirkeci district, this Autograph Collection hotel pairs dramatic emerald-green interiors and rooftop Bosphorus views with easy access to the city's grand bazaars, monuments and waterfront.

For detailed descriptions, visit nathab.com/cultural-journeys/turkey-cultural-tour/accommodations.

What Makes Cultural Journeys Different?

Turkey Revealed

You'll find plenty of tours to Turkey via a simple Internet search. But you won't readily find the kind of personal, carefully curated encounters with Turkey's living heritage that Nat Hab Cultural Journeys offers you. Of course, we include Turkey's top draws—but your travels will be inordinately richer with the unique, intimate, lesser-known experiences you won't find elsewhere.

1. **Encounters with Turkey's Living Culture**
   Watch a carpet master demonstrate pattern work in Istanbul, observe a UNESCO-recognized flatbread making tradition, enjoy a traditional raki dinner, and learn how felt is made by hand. Experience Turkey's living culture firsthand.

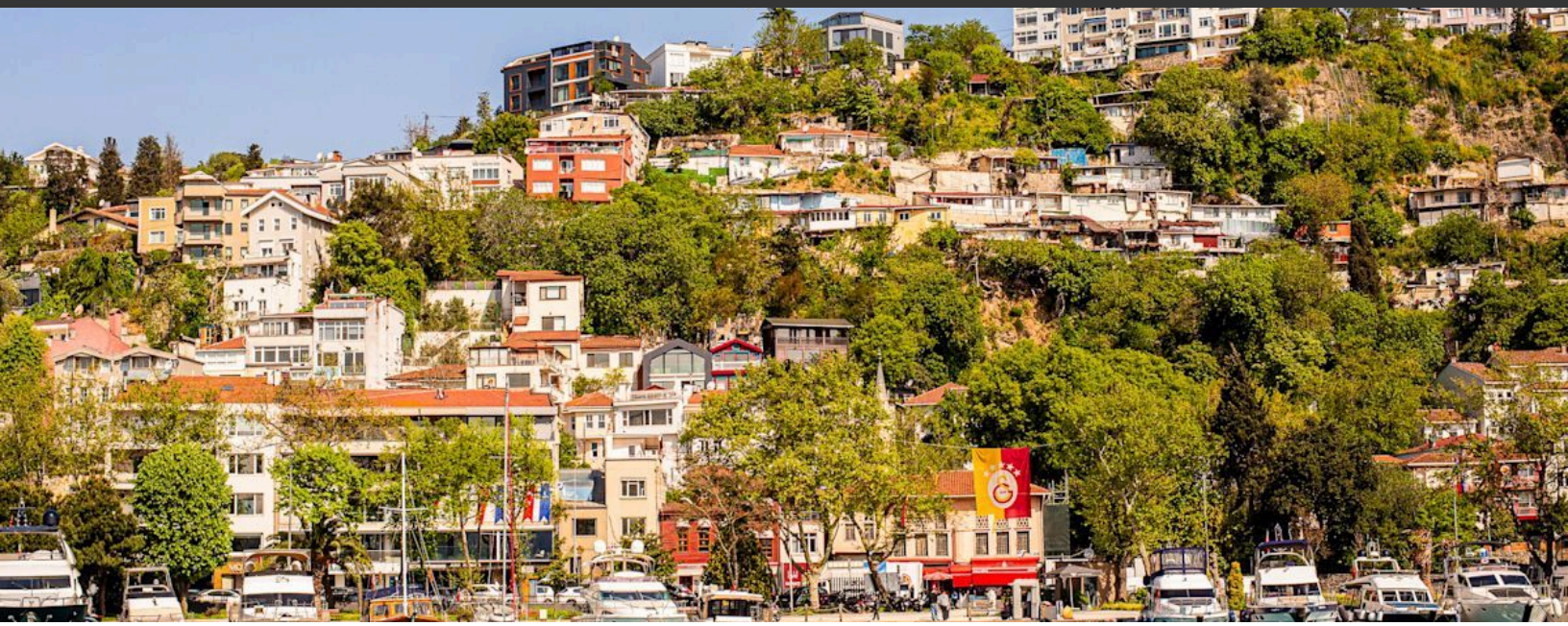
2. **Konya's Whirling Dervish Heritage**
   Visit the city where Rumi lived and his followers founded the Mevlevi Order. Experience the whirling dervish ceremony in its birthplace, a practice rooted in spiritual devotion, poetry and Sufi philosophy.

3. **Cappadocia Beyond the Viewpoints**
   The valleys of Cappadocia are famous for their fanciful rock formations and cave dwellings that have housed people over centuries—but we also spend time with the people who live here now—cooking with a women's cooperative and visiting Mustafapaşa, where carved stone houses preserve traces of the village's Greek past.

4. **Aegean Foodways, Close to the Source**
   Near Urla, olive groves, small farms and village kitchens are our focus. Taste local olive oil, cook with seasonal produce at Hiç Urla Forest, and sit down to a farewell lunch on the Izmir Peninsula before returning to Istanbul.

5. **A Continuous Journey with Expert Interpretation**
   Your Expedition Leader accompanies you throughout, providing overarching context that links history, archaeology, cuisine, craftsmanship and daily life—bringing continuity to a journey that spans millennia. Your experience is further enriched with local guides and hosts, who bring the intimate knowledge of a particular place that only a seasoned resident possesses.

6. **Built on Nat Hab's Expertise**
   Nat Hab Cultural Journeys honors the same experiential travel philosophy, operational rigor and leadership standards that have defined Natural Habitat Adventures since its founding in 1985. From small groups facilitating deep local engagement, to the selection and training of outstanding guides, and on-the-ground execution, this journey embodies a proven approach to immersive travel across diverse destinations worldwide.



Dates & Pricing Summary:

Price
From $11995 (+air)

Group Size
Limited to 12 Travelers

Turkey Revealed Dates, Pricing & Info

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2027 Departures

Departure – Return	Pricing	Notes
Apr 30 - May 9, 2027	**$12295** +internal air	
May 21 - May 30, 2027	**$11995** +internal air	
Jun 10 - Jun 19, 2027	**$11995** +internal air	
Sep 10 - Sep 19, 2027	**$12295** +internal air	
Sep 30 - Oct 9, 2027	**$12295** +internal air	
Oct 14 - Oct 23, 2027	**$12295** +internal air	

2028 Departures

Prices and dates not confirmed for 2028

Departure – Return	Pricing	Notes
Apr 27 - May 6, 2028	**From $12395** +internal air	
May 18 - May 27, 2028	**From $12395** +internal air	
Jun 8 - Jun 17, 2028	**From $12395** +internal air	
Sep 7 - Sep 16, 2028	**From $12395** +internal air	
Sep 28 - Oct 7, 2028	**From $12395** +internal air	
Oct 12 - Oct 21, 2028	**From $12395** +internal air	

See https://www.nathab.com/cultural-journeys/turkey-cultural-tour/dates-fees for the latest pricing details.

Included

Accommodations in luxury hotels, services of Nat Hab's professional Expedition Leader(s), local guides and staff, all meals from dinner on Day 1 through breakfast on the final day, some alcoholic beverages, some gratuities, train to Konya, airport transfers on Day 1 and final day, all activities and entrance fees, all taxes, permits and service fees.

Not Included

Travel to and from the start and end point of your trip, some alcoholic beverages, some gratuities, passport and visa fees (if any), optional activities (i.e. hot air balloon), items of a personal nature (phone calls, laundry, etc.), airline baggage fees, airport and departure taxes (if any), required medical evacuation insurance, optional travel protection insurance.

- **Internal air:** Scheduled flights from Cappadocia to Izmir and from Izmir to Istanbul (this will be listed separately on our invoicing).

Important Information About This Trip

Much of this journey takes place overland, including drives across the Anatolian plateau, through Cappadocia's volcanic landscapes and along the Aegean coast near Urla. While some travel days involve longer transfers, traveling by road allows access to villages, wineries and smaller communities that are difficult to reach by air or rail. The itinerary is designed to balance these longer travel days with multi-night stays in Istanbul, Cappadocia and Urla, allowing time to explore each region in greater depth.

Mandatory Insurance

Since the areas we travel to are remote and wild (that's why we go there!), we require that all guests have, at minimum, medical evacuation insurance for this program. This is for the safety of all guests. We require that your chosen independent insurance plan includes at least $250,000 in medical evacuation coverage.

To protect your investment and to provide peace of mind while you travel, we also strongly recommend purchasing comprehensive travel insurance. Plans may cover everything from medical treatment to trip cancellations and delays and lost luggage. Please contact our office if you would like more information about the medical evacuation and comprehensive travel insurance policies we offer by calling 800-543-8917.

Getting There & Getting Home

This trip begins and ends in Istanbul, Turkey. **You must arrive at Istanbul International Airport no later than 2:30 pm on Day 1** in order to arrive at your hotel in time to join the group for a welcome dinner.

You may depart from Istanbul at any time on the final day.

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CULTURAL JOURNEYS

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