



Itinerary for “Mediterranean Delight” Tours

DAY: 1

Arrive into Istanbul Ataturk Airport early in the morning. You will be greeted by a representative of Turkey Moto Adventures and taken to Celal Sultan Hotel for overnight accommodation. On the first day we'll visit museums, mosques and the grand bazaar. The city's smells, sounds and vibrant atmosphere will awaken your senses for the enjoyable trip ahead!

DAY: 2

We start early in the morning. We catch the ferry across the Marmara Sea to Bandirma and continue all the way to Bergama. Along the way we pass Gönen, a small town solely created for the thermal springs of the area. But the picturesque hills around Gönen and the road that curls along the warm river fed by the thermal waters is beautiful. All the way to Bergama we ride nice curves and good quality tarmac roads and the view is a bonus. Bergama is a busy modern town with carpet-weaving, textiles and leather-working industries. Cotton, tobacco and vines flourish in the sub-tropical climate of the fertile surrounding area. The ancient city with the imposing ruins of its royal stronghold occupies a magnificently impressive location on the summit and along the terraced slopes of the hill which rises above Bergama to the east. To the east of the hill flows the Kestel Çayı (Ketios in antiquity) and to the west the Bergama Çayı (Selinus). Ancient Pergamum (or Pergamon) was renowned in Hellenic and Roman times for its great library and as the medical center where Galen laid the foundation for medical practice. Modern Bergama (BEHR-gah-mah, pop. 50,000) is a farming town, but there's lots to see: the ancient Acropolis with its dramatic hillside theater, a good archeological museum, the huge Red Basilica, and the many marble columns of the Asclepion (medical center). We spend the night in Bergama, at a lovely boutique hotel and have a nice relaxing evening

DAY:3&4

Our third day starts with a short ride and then the wonderful views of the Aegean Sea. We ride the next 150 kilometers along the Aegean Coast and cross the Boz Mountains. Most of the road is curvy and the hills we cross will give us great views of ancient ruins dotting the hilltops.

We end the day in Selçuk, Efes (Ephesus). We will arrive very early in the afternoon and have ample time to do some sightseeing. Ephesus is the best-preserved Roman city in the Mediterranean region, and Turkey's top sight after Istanbul. If you want to visit a place where you can really get a feel for what life was like 2000 years ago during the glory-days of Greece and Rome, Ephesus is the place. In terms of ruins, it's better than Rome itself.

St Paul's New Testament Letter to the Ephesians was written to the citizens of Ephesus. The Virgin Mary is believed to have spent her last days on earth here. St.John is believed to have written his Gospel here, and to have been buried in the St.John Basilica.

You can walk from Selçuk to the archeological site along a tree-shaded lane in about 25 or 30 minutes, but you may want to stop along the way and see the scant ruins of the famous Temple of Artemis (Artemision), one of the Seven Wonders of the World. (www.turkeytravelplanner.com)

DAY:3&4 cont'd

Also in Ephesus, we will visit the House of the Virgin Mary on Day 4. According to the oral tradition of local villagers of Sirince (descendants of the Christians at Ephesus), Mary finished out her days in this house after migrating to Asia Minor with St. John. The location was "discovered" in the 19th century by Sister Anna Catherina Emmerich, a German invalid who had never left home. During a dream she saw the house and from the dream she awoke with a stigmata. The site was later found as described and was visited by Popes Paul VI and John Paul II, who both verified its authenticity. The house is a church nowadays, with the main altar where the kitchen was situated; the right wing was the bedroom. The site, now a national park, is a requisite stop on the itineraries of Christians, Jews, and Muslims alike.

DAY:5&6

Today, we have another 3 hours of riding waiting for us. We ride along the valley of the Greater Menderes River. Following the river gives us a gentle curving road and lovely views along the banks. This lush valley has sheltered many important cities of past civilizations, the remains of which still preserve their splendor and distinction. The first stop is in Aydin. Aydin is a fast growing industrial town. Apart from the industry, figs, strawberries, olives and cotton are produced and exported.

The next town along the way is Denizli. Denizli is best known for its 'Denizli Rooster'. The symbol of Denizli is a domestic species which is well known all over Turkey with its color and physique, and its harmonious long and beautiful crowing. Apart from the Rooster, Denizli can claim great importance in the Turkish cotton and cotton weaving industry. Dating back to the Calcholithic age, it was the site of settlements of the earliest communities, and changed hands continuously, becoming the center of various civilizations at different times.

Denizli also offers a real wonder of nature. Pamukkale (meaning Cotton Castle in Turkish) is astonishingly beautiful, and unique in the world with its white travertine offering marvelous scenery. The calcium-oxide-rich thermal waters of Pamukkale flow down the south side of Çaldag and over thousands of years it built deposits of white travertine. When you look at it you will realize that it fully justifies the ancient name (Hierapolis – Holy City) and the modern day name (Pamukkale – Cotton Castle).

We will spend 2 nights in Pamukkale where you will have a chance to try the therapeutic waters of the travertine pools and visit the nearby touristic and historic towns.

DAY:7

After a nice restful night, we leave early for Fethiye. The route takes us through the mountains and we pass Acipayam and Çameli. Both of these towns are small and unremarkable, but they are good agricultural communities and the land around the towns are tilled to perfection. The roadside villages and the farmlands are charming and productive.

We end the day in Fethiye, Ölüdeniz. Fethiye is one of the most popular resorts due to its extreme loveliness. Set on a wide bay, strewn with many islands, Fethiye is 135 kms southwest of Marmaris and has an outstanding and busy marina. The ancient name of the city is Telmessos and you will see a fortress on the hill overlooking the city which was built by the Knights of Rhodes. Fethiye is known for its rock tombs carved into the faces of the cliffs by the Lycians. These are elaborately carved and an especially remarkable one is the tomb of Amnytas dating from the 4th century BC built in Doric architectural style. It is worth well visiting. Other historical places in the city are the Sarcopaghi and the Fethiye Tower.

The Beach and the Sovalye Island are the real destinations for those who like to enjoy the most beautiful sea. (www.allaboutturkey.com)

DAY:8

This is a rest day. For those who would like to do some sightseeing and some more riding, we will have maps to show the way. Our guides will be more than happy to help you decide on what you might like to see and do. The beaches of this part of Turkey are the best and those who have been here once want to come back again. Besides the beach, visitors like the day-long 12-Island yacht cruise in the bay, especially the stop at Gemile Island, covered in un-restored Byzantine ruins.

DAY:9&10

We leave Fethiye behind and ride around the south-western corner of Turkey on the Mediterranean Coast. The road will follow the coastline and we will have magnificent views of rocky hills stretching into the sea like the fingers of a hand. The small bays and peninsulas will make you want to own one of them to preserve it from the onslaught of tourism.

All of the small towns we will pass through today are charming tourist attractions. Kemer, Kalkan, Kas, Kale, Finike, Kumluca and Altinyaka are all beautiful and you have probably come across a brochure in a travel agent with info or photos of them. They have all received their share of the ancient Roman and Greek settlements and have lots to show any visitor.

We end the day in Antalya. Antalya is a sprawling modern city with a small, charming historic center, a good archeology museum, long sunny beaches to the east and west, the Mediterranean Coast's busiest airport, good hotels, lots to see and do, and dramatic sea and mountain views. We will be staying in the old town, surrounded by the walls of the fortress that is now the historic center.

On Day 10 We'll visit Kemer, Kalkan, Kas, and Olympos.

DAY:11

Today we leave the Mediterranean Coast and turn towards the north. We are now on our way back to Istanbul. We shall reach Isparta around noon and move on towards Barla. We will have a late picnic lunch on Egridir Lake. This will be a treat because of the views and the lovely road that will follow the lunch break. We ride on the road that follows the lake shore and once over the mountains we will be crossing the western Anatolian Plateau.

The end of the day is at Afyon. The history of Afyon dates back to 3000 BC. It was home to Hittites, Phrygians, Lydians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Seljuks and Ottomans. The city is famous for its specific "Turkish Delight" and "Kaymak" (a kind of hard cream put on desserts), its "Sucuk" (special spicy sausages), its Opium fields (under strict supervision by the Government), its marble quarries, and for its various thermal baths. The name "Afyon" means opium in Turkish. We will be staying at a hotel on one of these thermal baths and have a chance to rest and have a nice massage.

DAY:12

Check into Gural Harlek Thermal Resort. Kutahya is a small province in the midst of hill country in Turkey, clustering about the walls of an impressive hilltop fortress. It is the hometown of the world famous Yagcibedir Carpets, and Kutahya tiles which you can see everywhere in the country. The tiles and the porcelain are especially famous for their cobalt blue on a milky white background.

DAY:13

Check into Camlik Hotel. Iznik is remarkable for the monuments belonging to the Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman Age. Most of the historical buildings are well preserved. Thus the region looks like an open-air museum. That's why Iznik is proclaimed as an historical urban place to be protected.

DAY:14

Check into Celal Sultan Hotel. We explore Istanbul a bit more, with a ferry cruise up the Bosphorus followed by perhaps a shopping expedition to the Grand Bazaar for those mandatory last-minute souvenirs and T-shirts for the family back home. Then we'll gather for a final farewell dinner in a local restaurant.

DAY:15

A representative from the Turkey Moto Adventures will drive you to Ataturk Airport for your flight back home.