



MEJDI TOURS

CHRISTIAN HISTORY MAG TOUR OF BIBLICAL TURKEY AND GREECE May 16 - 28, 2019

Itinerary:

Day 0: Thursday, May 16 – Night Flight Departure from US

Day 1: Friday, May 17 – Arrival into Istanbul

- Arrive in Istanbul and check into hotel. For those interested, a walking tour of the neighborhood may be offered.

Hotel: Arena hotel in Istanbul (Transfer, D included)

Day 2: Saturday, May 18 – Byzantine (Ancient Christian) Constantinople

- Visit the sites of Byzantine Constantinople, including the Hippodrome and Basilica Cistern. Take a tour of Hagia Sophia, a site important in the history of iconography for its role in the Great Schism between the Latin and Orthodox churches and for its Crusader history. At times an Orthodox church, a Catholic church, a mosque, and now a museum, the building has many stories to tell.
- Enjoy Home Hospitality Lunch at a local guides house.
- In the afternoon, experience the wonders of the ancient world at the Istanbul Archaeology Museum, which houses artifacts ranging from the Code of Hammurabi to a Hebrew inscription from the Pool of Siloam in Jerusalem.

Hotel: Arena hotel in Istanbul (B, L, D included)

Day 3: Sunday, May 19 – Constantinople in Conflict – Crusades and Conquest

- Open the day with a tour to the Church of the Pammakaristos to learn about the infamous Fourth Crusade, the Latin-Orthodox divide, and the decline of the Byzantine Empire. Serving as the seat of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate during the early Ottoman period, the church later became known as the “Conquest Mosque.”
- Then stop by the Ecumenical Patriarchate to meet with a member of the local Orthodox community and hear about Eastern Orthodox Christianity.
- Afterward, marvel at the golden mosaics and frescoes of the Chora Church.

Hotel: Arena hotel in Istanbul (B, L, D included)

Day 4: Monday, May 20 – Islamic Istanbul

- Explore the rich culture of Islamic Istanbul, starting with the Blue Mosque (Sultanahmet Mosque), whose intricate calligraphy and tile work elevate the eyes skyward to the soaring domes of the prayer hall. At the Blue Mosque, speak with a representative, perhaps one of the imams.
- Next, feel the gentle breezes of the seaside Topkapi Palace, home to the Ottoman sultan and his harem, before stopping by the historic Gulhane Park. End the day wandering the covered corridors of the bustling Grand Bazaar.

Hotel: Arena hotel in Istanbul (B, L, D included)

Day 5: Tuesday, May 21 – Ephesus

- Catch a morning flight from Istanbul to the coastal city of Izmir.
- Then travel a short distance to Ephesus. Enter through the Magnesia Gate and walk through the ruins of this Roman provincial capital, which includes ancient monuments such as the Celsus Library, the Temple of Hadrian, the Fountain of Trajan and the Great Theater, where Paul preached to the Ephesians.
- Later on, visit the Basilica of St. John, built by the Emperor Justinian over the tomb of St. John the Apostle.
- After the tour, meet with a local priest at the House of the Virgin Mary. End the day with a walk along the beach in scenic Kuşadası.

Hotel: Batihan beach and resort hotel in Kuşadası (B, L, D included)

Day 6: Wednesday, May 22 – Kuşadası

- Enjoy a break this day from the busyness of travel by taking in a refreshing day at the beach resort town of Kuşadası, the place where Turks love to unwind.
- Relaxing options this day may include hanging out at the beach, purchasing souvenirs in the many local shops, swimming, or experiencing a famed Turkish bath.
- End the day by watching a memorable sunset over the Mediterranean Sea.

Hotel: Batihan beach and resort hotel in Kuşadası (B, L, D included)

Day 7: Thursday, May 23 – Patmos

- Head to Kuşadası Port for a private charter to Patmos, Greece, an area of rare beauty. The island's harbor is dominated by the imposing Monastery of St. John on the hilltop.
- Drive to the picturesque village of Chora, with its white-washed homes overlooking the sapphire sea. There, tour the monastery, whose arches and chapels house intricately designed frescoes, medieval inscriptions, icons and religious paintings including an original El Greco.

- Continue the tour with a visit to the Grotto of St. John, another monastery built around the cave where St. John lived for two years while writing the book of Revelation.
- Afterward, return to the port for your voyage back to Kuşadası.

Hotel: Batihan beach and resort hotel in Kuşadası (B, L, D included)

Day 8: Friday, May 24 – Smyrna/Izmir and Athens

- Take a morning ride to St. Polycarp Church in Smyrna, home to one of the Seven Churches of Revelation and a thriving early Christian community.
- Then catch a flight from Izmir, Turkey to Athens, Greece.
- In Athens, get situated in your hotel before taking a stroll in the Plaka, the oldest part of Athens.
- Have a conversation during dinner with a local Greek Orthodox priest to learn about Christianity in Athens.

Hotel: Titania hotel in Athens (B, L, D included)

Day 9: Saturday, May 25 – Athens

- Proceed to Syntagma Square (the most central square of downtown Athens) to see the Parliament House.
- Visit the Church of Panagia Kapnikarea, one of the oldest churches in all of Athens, and take a walk through the agora. Then travel to the Parthenon, the temple dedicated to the goddess Athena 2,500 years ago.
- Also stop by Mars Hill, where the apostle Paul preached. Finally, learn how Christians are addressing the refugee crisis in modern Athens. Meet with a speaker to discuss this topic.

Hotel: Titania hotel in Athens (B, L, D included)

Day 10: Sunday, May 26 – Corinth

- Open the day by exploring the ruins of ancient Corinth, which was the addressee of Paul’s letters in the New Testament and was the home of a thriving early Christian community.
- Visit Roman bathhouses, ruined temples, a forum, and see the bema where the apostle Paul once stood in front of Roman judges.
- Afterward visit the museum of ancient artifacts in Corinth.

Hotel: Titania hotel in Athens (B, L, D included)

Day 11: Monday, May 27 – Delphi

- Travel back in time to the heart of ancient Greece, Delphi. Immerse yourself in this archaeological site, standing before the Temple of Apollo, strolling through the agora, and sitting in the ancient theatre overlooking impressive Mount Parnassus.

- In the nearby archaeological museum, view the many artifacts that have been unearthed in this amazing site before traveling back to Athens for a final meal celebrating all your memories in Turkey and Greece.

Hotel: Titania hotel in Athens (B, L, D included)

Day 12: Tuesday, May 28 - Departure

- Return to the US (B)