



First Class 16 Day Tour/Cruise Package

Footsteps of Paul & John

Day 1: Departure from US

Today we embark on our Journey to the lands of ancient treasures and Christian history with an overnight flight to Turkey. Prepare yourself for a life-changing experience. Get some rest on the flight...Tomorrow you will be walking where the apostles walked!

Day 2: Arrival Istanbul

We transfer to our hotel in Istanbul, Turkey for the next two evenings.

Day 3: Bustling Istanbul, Archaeological Museum

The tour today will be an unusual combination of Greek Orthodox, Roman, Ottoman and modern day Islam including entrance into the famed Blue Mosque and St. Sophia Church. After lunch we visit the fascinating Topkapi Palace housing the many priceless treasures and colorful stories of Ottoman Sultans. This afternoon our guide will walk us through the wonderful exhibits at the Archaeological Museum. Treasures include the sarcophagus of Alexander the Great, mosaic remnants depicting the times of Nebuchadnezzar, tablets of the Treaty of Kadesh known to be between Ramses II and the Hittites during the 13th century BC and many other wonderful items. We return to our hotel for dinner and overnight.

Day 4: Sea of Marmara, Ancient Troy

Departing Istanbul, we travel west across "Trace," the European portion of Turkey. The summer homes along the Sea of Marmara will provide the scenery as we travel. Our bus boards a large ferry to cross the Dardanelles Strait giving us views of the bunkers on the hillside and the ocean going vessels. During our journey, we hear the commentary of the British major losses and World War I defeat in the Dardanelles Strait. Disembarking in Canakkale, we travel a short distance south to the area known as Troas, where Paul had a vision during his second missionary journey and was called to Macedonia (Acts 16:8-13). Paul later spent a week in Troas preaching here and Eutychus was resurrected (Acts 20:6-12). We will visit ancient Troy, which was excavated in 1873 by Heinrich Schliemann. Don't forget to have your picture taken from the top of the Trojan Horse. We travel to our nearby lodging for the evening.

Day 5: Pergamum, Thyatira & Izmir

Our first visit of the day is Pergamum. The church of Pergamum was praised for its forbearance; (Rev. 2:12-17) it was here that the first Christians were executed by Rome. We'll visit the fabled Acropolis, pass through the Royal Gates, view the foundations of the Altar of Zeus and visit the ruins of the library (which once held 200,000 volumes). Next we travel east to Thyatira viewing the ancient roadway and period columns. Thyatira was once a busy



Acropolis



Corinth Canal

trading center and famous as a "seller of purple," the most favored of the Seven Churches. We continue south to Izmir, which is the third largest city in Turkey and a long time center for Jews and Christians. In Paul's day, Izmir was known as Smyrna and was another of the Seven Churches (Rev. 2:8-11). Our lodging this evening will be in Izmir.

Day 6: Sardis, Philadelphia, Pamukkale

Departing our Hotel in Izmir, we'll see Polycarp's Church and visit the ancient roman agora. Then, we travel to Sardis, which was berated by John for its facade of strength when, in reality, it was weak (Rev. 3:1-6). Here coins were minted and the dyeing of wool originated. We'll visit the gymnasium and synagogue. Our next stop is nearby Philadelphia from where we are challenged to "hold fast" and look forward to the coming of the "new Jerusalem" (Rev. 3:7-13) in the Book of Revelation. Not much is left of the city except for the ancient wall and the remains of a Byzantine basilica in the modern city of Alasehir. Our lodging this evening will be in a lovely spa hotel in Pamukkale.

Day 7: Hierapolis, Laodicea & Colossae

Hierapolis, meaning "Sacred City," was an ancient center for pagan cults until it was transformed into a Christian center in the first century. According to tradition, the Apostle Philip lived and was martyred in Hierapolis. It was likely the hot springs of Hierapolis (in contrast to the cold mountain springs near Colossae) that combined to bring application to the "lukewarm" Laodiceans (Rev 3:14-22). This connection between the cities lies behind Paul's reference to Hierapolis and Laodicea in his epistle to the Colossians (Col 4:13). Laodicea contains many acres of ruins to visit including a stadium and remnants of a sophisticated water system. Nearby Colossae is well-known throughout Christian circles as the receiver of Paul's letter to the Colossians. Today, the town has fallen into obscurity and nothing remains. We spend the remainder of the day traveling through the Turkish countryside arriving in the port city of Kusadasi where we spend two nights. The day will not be complete without a visit to a local Turkish Rug cooperative.

Day 8: Ephesus

We travel to the nearby town of Selcuk for a visit of ancient Ephesus. Ephesus was once a thriving port town of 250,000 people. Today you can still see the spectacular excavations of the major streets in this ancient city. We view the Library, Agora, theatre, colorful mosaics in the aristocratic Terrace Houses, and a panoramic outlook of the surrounding ancient port area (including a wealth of church history and cultural insight). Then we continue with a visit to the Basilica Church of St. John, which houses an immersion baptismal and is believed to be resting place of John. From here we have an excellent overview of the Ephesus harbor, the Mosque of Jesus, and see the site of the Temple of Artemis, which is listed as one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

Day 9: Isle of Patmos

This morning, we embark our cruise ship and sail for a visit to the beautiful Isle of Patmos, which is under statutory protection as a

historic monument. Here we have a tour to see the fortified monastery of St. John and the cave claimed to be where John received the Revelation. Back on the ship, enjoy dinner before settling in to your cabin for the night.

Day 10: Crete, Santorini

Crete is the largest and the most rugged of the Greek islands. Take a tour to Heraklion and the fantastic ruins of the Palace of Knossos. Discovered in 1899 and partially reconstructed, the elaborate Palace is believed to be the mythical Labyrinth of King Minos and the seat of ancient Minoan culture. This afternoon visit the island of Santorini which is perhaps the most breathtaking of all the Greek Islands. You may choose to take an optional panoramic bus tour viewing some of the most spectacular scenery of the Aegean. Travel through countless villages and settlements with delicate architecture and beauties eventually arriving in Oia. During your time in Oia, visit the many narrow streets, open-air cafes and glittering boutiques. Upon returning to the ship, we view the lace-like caldera, the little islands of Thirasia, Palea, & Nea Kameni. We arrive at the ship for dinner and evening entertainment.

Day 11: Disembark Cruise – Ancient Corinth & Cenchreae

We disembark the cruise this morning and travel west with a rest stop and photos at the Corinth Canal. Next, we visit ancient Corinth, the city that inspired many of Paul's most familiar letters and is a highlight for the New Testament scholar. See the Archaeological Museum, the Market Place, the Bema, and the Temples. To enjoy a devotional in the midst of the ruins of the church of

Corinth and see the pillars, steps, and public worship place where Paul preached will enhance your understanding and love for the Bible. The ruins of this important cultural center are fascinating as we walk along the stone path that the Apostle Paul walked. The engineering skill and intellect of these people are evident in the water systems that still flow from ancient to modern day. Our guide will be sure to show you the room dedicated to the medical care of that period. We travel on to the top of the nearby Acropolis where our guide will speak on the worship practices and point out the bird's eye view of what was a bustling city of around 800,000 during Paul's stay. Another important stop is a visit to Diolkos where we view the paved trackway which enabled boats to be moved overland across the Isthmus of Corinth and served as a life line for Corinth. This shortcut allowed ancient vessels to avoid the long and dangerous circumnavigation of the Peloponnese peninsula. Before returning to Athens, we will visit Cenchreae, the ancient port region of Corinth. Acts 18:18 states the Apostle Paul stopped at Cenchreae during his second missionary journey, where he had his hair cut to fulfill a vow.

Day 12: Athens

Following breakfast this morning we tour Athens, the foundation of democracy. We visit the Acropolis, the Parthenon, and Erechtheum before viewing Athens atop Mars Hill where Paul stood and preached the truth to the Gentile nation. From atop Mars Hill we view the Agora below, the ancient marketplace and center of Athenian public life. Additional sites viewed during our panoramic bus tour are, the House of Parliament, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Olympic Stadium, and Presidential Palace. An



Meteora Monastery

option later this afternoon is a visit to the famous Plaka with a multitude of shops and cafes.

Day 13: Meteora Monastery

From Athens, our tour travels northward past Thermopylae where we learn of the famous Spartan battle of 300. We continue through the mountains to Meteora. Here we see the world famous Byzantine monasteries that are perched precariously on summits of gray rock pinnacles of varied and beautiful shapes. Their history goes back to the 14th century when the monks sought refuge in the cliffside caves then fled higher to build the original wooden shelters, later transformed into monasteries. Our lodging this evening will be in Meteora.

Day 14: Vergina, Berea, Thessalonica

Traveling northward into Macedonia we visit King Phillip's (Alexander's father) tomb in Vergina, one of the most outstanding finds in all of Greece. A stop will be made in Berea to view the ancient synagogue where Paul spoke and the Bema surrounded by mosaics of Paul and the plaque of scripture regarding the "more noble" church. The New Testament books of I & II Thessalonians will come alive to us today as we arrive in the delightful harbor city of Thessalonica. En route to the hotel we will view the old city ramparts; the newly excavated Forum, St. George Church, an ancient Roman monument which was transformed into a church and the Galerius Arch which rises over the famous Via Egnatia. We spend two nights here.

Day 15: Thessalonica/Philippi/Kavala

We begin the day by following the massive battlement Byzantine wall to the citadel for a panoramic view of the city. Next, we will visit Philippi and Kavala. Kavala is Greece's prettiest mainland port with a most elegant harbor. Paul landed here with his disciples, Timothy and Silas. Luke, the Evangelist, also came here from Troas. This ancient city of Neapolis was later renamed Christoupolis because it was the first European city to accept Christianity. Imagine walking on the same sod as these men of the Bible! We will see the Roman Aqueduct and the ruins of the Acropolis in this beautifully located city, known since the 5th century as Kavala. Continue on to Philippi where Paul preached his first evangelical sermon and baptized the first Christians on European soil. We will view the baptismal site where Lydia surrendered her life to Christ and visit a crypt dating from the Roman period that is thought to have served as a prison for Paul. See the famous Acropolis, the Market Place, Basilica, and the Theatre. We return to Thessalonica and visit St. Demetrius Basilica, dedicated to a distinguished member of the Roman army and a martyred Christian convert, before returning to the hotel for our final night.

Day 16: Homeward Bound

We transfer to the Thessalonica airport for our flight home.

PRICE PER PERSON:

BASED ON DOUBLE OCCUPANCY

Please contact us at

800.322.0788

OR

mail@pilgrimtours.com



Crete



Ephesus



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