

DAY/DATE	ITINERARY AND SERVICES INCLUDED	COMMENTS
DAY 01 March 25th, Thursday ISTANBUL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrive in Istanbul • Transfer to the Hotel • Blue Mosque • Dinner is included 	<p><u>Arrival</u> The group arrives on different flights. We will meet them at Meeting Point 1 to the left of the Information desk.</p> <p>Hotel This old Ottoman House beautifully refurbished is in walking distance to the “must see” sites of Istanbul. http://www.ayasofyahotel.com/index.html</p> <p>Dinner Considering that the group might be tired, we will visit the Blue Mosque and eat at the Blue House Restaurant. The chef is excellent. Both of these places are 10 minutes walking distance to our hotel.</p> <p>The Blue Mosque The Blue Mosque was completed in 7 years (1609 – 1616) The blue tiles of this mosque had impressed the Europeans of the 17th Century so much that the mosque is called “The Blue Mosque.” The building is a marvel of engineering with its half and quarter domes supporting its huge dome</p>
DAY 02 March 26th, Friday ISTANBUL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakfast in Hotel • Basilica Cistern • Byzantine Hippodrome • Lunch is included • Aya Sophia • Spice Market • Dinner at Beyoglu not included in program fee 	<p>Basilica Cistern The Basilica Cistern is most impressive when it is not crowded with other groups. To get the maximum pleasure out of this unique place, we want to be the first group entering the site. Consequently, we need to leave the hotel at 08:40 AM to be the first group to enter. A few minutes of solitude at the Cistern is worth this little ritual!</p> <p>The Basilica Cistern Is one of many cisterns in Istanbul built during the Byzantine era to give life to this grand city. For the Christian of Constantinople, the pagan temples of the city were nothing more than an architectural material for recycling for new constructions. When you walk down to the Basilica cistern, which is now under one of the busiest streets of Istanbul, you can see the breath taking pillars of former temples creating a mystical ambiance.</p> <p>The Byzantine Hippodrome When Constantinople became the capital of the Roman Empire, The Byzantine, trying to compete with the grandeur of the city of Rome, built this Hippodrome three times larger than the biggest stadium of Rome. The Hippodrome had a sitting capacity of one hundred thousand people. The obelisks lined up in the middle of this building were brought from Egypt and Greece representing</p>

		<p>the lands which were ruled from Constantinople</p> <p>Aya Sophia is a 1500 year old building which stands as a witness to the history of Constantinople and Christianity. The size of its dome remained to be the highest for one thousand years until the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral was built in the 16th Century. The synthesis of cultures can be traced in the building with the pillars from a Temple of a Mother Goddess, Hellenistic urns, Islamic-Ottoman calligraphy and Christian symbols all intermingle to create the grandeur that time could not defeat. Hagia Sophia, was dedicated in the name of Sacred Wisdom of Jesus. Known as St. Sophia, the Church was used as a church for 1000 years and as a Mosque for close to 500 years. It is a living record of the history of Christianity.</p> <p>Spice Market Since the 16th Century the European Merchants would come to the Spice Market to pick and choose the spices delivered to Istanbul on the Silk Road. Compared to the Grand Bazaar, the Spice Market has more of the authentic feel with thousands of Turkish people buying their spices or medicinal herbs at this market</p> <p>Transportation Today In Istanbul , the public transportation on rail works more efficiently than the traffic on the highway. We recommend that you can do the short trip to the Spice Market in the tram.</p> <p>Dinner in Beyoglu Beyoglu is one of the busy parts of Istanbul for night life. The fish restaurants cater to only the locals and are excellent.</p>
<p>Day 03 March 27th, Saturday Istanbul</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakfast in Hotel • Lunch included • Topkapi Palace • Boat Tour up the Bosphorus • Dinner at Borsa Restaurant is not included in the price 	<p>Topkapi Palace</p> <p>Was the first palace of the Ottomans built in Istanbul in late 1400s. The palace is a complex made up of four main courtyards and many smaller buildings. At the height of its existence as a royal residence, the palace was home to as many as 4,000 people, formerly covering a larger area with a long shoreline. The complex has been expanded over the centuries, with many renovations such as after the 1509 earthquake and 1665 fire. It now used as a museum to displays the treasury of the Ottomans. Built in 4 court yards, the palace also gives a good idea of the Ottoman architecture of the pre European architectural influence.</p> <p>Boat Tour up the Bosphorus</p> <p>The Bosphorus of Istanbul divides Asia from Europe. As we are cruising up towards the Black Sea, we will witness the beauty that has been an inspiration to many artists. The sea gulls will dance around our boat while we are admiring the houses lined around the shore. The two- three hundred year old wooden</p>

houses will cast their shadows on the dark blue waters of the

Black Sea and the Sea of Marmara rushing north and south trying to hug as if they have not seen each other for ages. The grand fortress on the shore will rise as a witness to the hardships that city had gone through for ages.

Dinner will be at the most wonderful restaurant of Istanbul since 1927. The price of dinner is not included in the tour price, so individuals can order and eat a la carte

Day 04
March 28th,
Sunday
KUSADASI/IZ
MIR

- Breakfast in Hotel
- Transfer to the Air port
- Flight to Izmir
- Drive to Selcuk for Cooking Class and Lunch included
- Belly Dance Class
- Dinner included at the hotel

Flight

We will take 08:30 flight and arrive in Izmir air port at 09:30

Cooking class

<http://www.melitour.com/TURKISH COOKING CLASS/thefarmhistory.htm>

We will arrive at the farm which is 6 minutes away from Ephesus. We will have opportunity to learn how to cook 4 different [Turkish Meze](#)

We will also have a belly dance class. If any body in the group chooses not to attend these activities, we can give them a ride to the hotel.

Hotel <http://www.charismahotel.com/>

Day 05
March 29th,
Monday
EPHESUS

- Breakfast at Hotel
- Basilica of St John
- Lunch is included
- Virgin Mary's Home
- Ephesus
- Free time
- Dinner (on your own)

- Tour of Ephesus:
- Basilica of St John
- Lunch is included
- Virgin Mary's Home

<p>DAY 06</p> <p>March 30th, Tuesday</p> <p>PAMUKKALE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus to Pamukkale • Visit Aohrodisias • Visit thermal area and ancient city of Hierapolis • Lunch included • Dinner (on your own) 	<p>Drive to Pamukkale, an area with white terraces of calcium. Pamukkale is a thermal area and the ancient city of Hierapolis. www.pamukkale.gov.tr</p>
<p>DAY 07</p> <p>March 31th, Wednesday</p> <p>CAPPADOCIA vi KONYA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakfast in Hotel • Drive to Cappadocia via Konya • Lunch en route included • Check in the Hotel • Dinner not included • Whirling Dervish show 	<p>Cappadocia is a land where nature and man have competed with each other to create the most unusual and the most beautiful. We will walk to 10th and 11th century churches, monasteries, and houses carved in the rocks, and visit a family living in one of these rock dwellings. The moon-like terrain of Cappadocia with its endless artwork is a photographer's delight.</p> <p>Optional: Visit Whirling Dervish show that takes place at a caravansarai built in the 1235. Alpaslan, your guide is going to give a talk on Rumi and his philosophy before you attend the ceremony.</p>
<p>DAY 08</p> <p>April 1st, 2010 – Thursday</p> <p>CAPPADOCIA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optional Hot Air Balloon Ride • Breakfast in Hotel • Visit the Kaymakli Underground City • Lunch in Urgup Dimrit Restaurant • Visit Goreme • Introduction to the arts and crafts of Cappadocia and shopping • Dinner is included 	<p>Hotel Lalesaray http://www.lalesaray.com/index.php</p> <p>Cappadocia is a land where nature and man have competed with each other to create the most unusual and the most beautiful. We will walk to 10th and 11th century churches, monasteries, and houses carved in the rocks, and visit a family living in one of these rock dwellings. The moon-like terrain of Cappadocia with its endless artwork is a photographer's delight.</p> <p>Goreme Is one of many monasteries in Cappadocia. In the 11th and 12th Centuries, the monks used their church like cells to educate the locals. The church/cells are adorned with frescoes painted by artists from all over Christian world revealing their cultural differences in interpretation of the biblical images and stories</p> <p>Kaymakli Underground City Kaymakli is one of 39 underground cities excavated in Cappadocia. The 3 of 9 layers of the city which could accommodate 1500 people were carved 4000 years ago by the Hittites. The rest were carved and renovated by the Byzantines who were exposed to the Roman Persecution of the Christians.</p>

		<p>We will see their Churches, Wineries, homes, kitchens and air shafts</p> <p>Carpet demonstration Since Cappadocia is the carpet center of Turkey, we will schedule a demonstration at a cooperative where the art of carpet weaving by hand and dying with natural dyes is being kept alive.. The carpets in Turkey are very tempting and with the US\$ being strong for the time being , the value of the carpets are very affordable. If you think you might get tempted you better, just in case, have your measurements and colors in hand. Those who are not interested in purchasing carpets will be given a ride to the hotel immediately after the demonstration so that no one will feel pressured to purchase a carpet</p>
<p>Day 09 April 2nd, Friday ISTANBUL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakfast in Hotel • Visit the potters of Avanos • Transfer to Nevsehir air port • Flight to Istanbul • Grand Dinner 	<p>The Flights The flight is 12:00 noon arriving in Istanbul at 1:30 PM. Afternoon will be free for last minute shopping. The group will then meet for a grand farewell dinner</p>
<p>DAY 10 April 3rd, Saturday RETURN TO US</p>	<p>Breakfast in Hotel and Check out Transfer to the air port Flight back to US</p>	