



ANCIENT ORIGINS TURKEY 2024

12 days



Countries visited

Turkey

Tour Highlights

- Visit the enormous head statues at Mount Nemrut
- Ancient statues of Göbekli Tepe
- Discover the holy city of Urfa
- Ancient mud beehive homes of Harran
- Beautiful ancient architecture and frescoes
- Marvel at Cappadocia's fairy chimneys
- The world's first town, Çatalhöyük
- Sunset cruise on the Bosphorus

Places visited

Istanbul • Mount Nemrut • Adiyaman • Göbekli Tepe • Urfa • Harran • Karahan Tepe • Gordion • Ankara • Hattusa • Cappadocia • Konya • Çatalhöyük

What's included

- Transportation on comfortable A/C buses
- Specified museum entrance fees
- Meals specified in the itinerary
- Professional English-speaking guide throughout
- Expenses of guide and driver
- Domestic flights
- Airport transfers for all clients on arrival/departure day

What's not included

- Drinks during meals
- Visa fee
- Tips
- Items of a personal nature
- Any meals or services not explicitly mentioned

Notes

Airport Transfers

One group transfer will be provided for arrival and departure. Where flights arrive outside of these transfer times, a private transfer at extra cost will apply.



Environment

In order to reduce the environmental impact of our tour, no plastic water bottles will be provided on this trip. All travellers are encouraged to bring reusable bottles and water can be filled at the hotels they are staying at. Otherwise, they can buy water bottles locally should they still wish to. Water bottles with filters are also available (such as Water To Go) and can be bought online.

Your Itinerary Explained

Date	Place visited	Meals
	<p>The first part of the text in each day is the itinerary schedule and will explain what you will normally see/do during this day of your itinerary.</p> <p>---</p> <p><i>The part of the day's text in italics (and comes after the three dashes "---") is background information on the places or sites on that day of your itinerary. It is not part of your itinerary and may mention places that will not be visited on your itinerary. If you have any questions please ask us. Travel times where noted are only meant as a guideline.</i></p>	<p>B: Breakfast</p> <p>L: Lunch</p> <p>D: Dinner</p>

Tour Itinerary

Day 1	Arrival	Meals
	<p>Arrive directly in Istanbul. Pick up at the airport and shared transfer to the hotel. In the evening orientation by tour leaders.</p> <p><i>Overnight in Memento Golden Horn Hotel, Istanbul</i></p>	N/A
Istanbul		
Day 2	Istanbul	Meals
	<p>After breakfast the group will depart for the Hippodrome, after which the group will split into two: some can visit the Hagia Sophia and Blue Mosque, and others can visit the Basilica Cistern and the Archaeological Museum complex, including the Oriental Museum. Lunch will be at a local restaurant.</p> <p>After lunch visit Topkapi Palace including the Harem. Early evening you will depart for the Grand Bazaar, a fantastic place to see traders and do some shopping. Return to the hotel for dinner.</p> <p>---</p> <p><i>Sitting on the Bosphorus, Istanbul is one of the world's truly great cities - overflowing with culture and historical sites. World class attractions such as the exquisite Hagia Sofia and the Blue Mosque, excellent bars and restaurants, jaw-dropping architecture, vibrant markets and a history of epic proportions makes Istanbul a city par excellence.</i></p> <p><i>Overnight in Memento Golden Horn Hotel, Istanbul</i></p>	B L D
Istanbul		



Cendere Bridge

After breakfast in Istanbul, transfer to the airport to catch your flight to Adiyaman (11:05-12:40). Proceed to visit Karkus Timulus, Cendere Bridge and Arsemia. Finally you will visit Nemrut Dagi (Mount Nemrut). At the peak of this mountain (at over 2000m) sit enigmatic statues of a pre-Roman king, Antiochus I Theos of Commagene, and the various gods he believed to be his ancestors. The views from the summit are sublime. (NOTE it is a 20-30 minute walk up steps to reach the summit). You will then descend and drive to your hotel in Adiyaman.

B D

Note: a light lunch will be served on the flight

Cendere Bridge is one of the world's oldest bridges still in use, constructed during the empire of Septimus Severus (193-211). Composed of 92 stones, each weighing around 10 tons, it is thought to be the second largest Roman bridge still in existence, spanning an impressive 122 metres. The bridge today appears as a simple, unadorned arch, but was originally decorated by four Corinthian columns dedicated to Septimus Severus and his wife.

Arsemia was the summer capital of the Commagene Kingdom and burial place of Mithridates. It is home to the largest rock inscription found in Anatolia, which describes the political and religious beliefs of the inhabitants.

A mountain of around two thousand metres, **Mount Nemrut** is home to the tomb of the pre-Roman king, Antiochus I Theos of Commagene. Built by the king himself in about 62 BC as a shrine to his own remains, the site consists of two large statues of Antiochus which dwarf two statue pairs of eagles and lions, and various Iranian, Greek and Armenian Gods. The statues are now damaged and mostly appear beheaded. Scholars have largely attributed this to later attacks on iconoclasm, but the statues have since been returned to their original places. Behind the display of statues are some well-preserved slabs of stone which feature figures in relief carving and are originally thought to have formed a large frieze. Archaeologists interpret the figures as Antiochus' ancestors, which allegedly included Greeks and Persians. It is the perfect place to experience a sunset or sunrise as the views from the summit are sublime.

NOTE: it is a 20-30 minute walk up uneven steps to reach the summit.

Overnight in Dedeman Park, Adiyaman



Göbekli Tepe

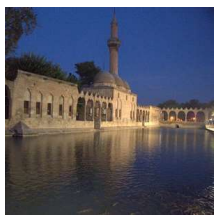
Today we drive to Urfa, which is the starting point to visit Gobekli Tepe and the Urfa Archaeological Museum. We will spend a couple of hours exploring Gobekli Tepe, the world's oldest stone temple complex, constructed nearly 12,000 years ago, making it the oldest megalithic site on the planet. See its extraordinary rings of T-shaped standing stones with carved reliefs of birds, animals and other abstract forms. Learn its history and place in the origins of civilisation. Afterwards we will go to the museum to see artefacts excavated from Gobekli Tepe. Dinner will be at the hotel.

B L D

***Göbekli Tepe**, the oldest place of worship in the world, is an archaeological site without equal. Prior to its discovery in 1994 and its subsequent excavation it was widely believed by anthropologists that religion evolved as a result of living in larger communities which was itself the result of the change from foraging to agriculture. However, Göbekli Tepe has turned our theories of our own evolution on their head. The vast religious site dates from the hunter gatherer period and there is no evidence of any agriculture or even human habitation, suggesting that it may have been the emergence of religion that lead us to civilisation and thus to agriculture. The site contains a vast array of circular structures and huge pillars, some with beautiful limestone carvings of lions, foxes, snakes and birds, believed to be gatekeepers of the entrance to the next world. To date, less than ten percent of the site has been excavated.*

*The **Urfa Museum** contains many of the archaeological finds from Göbekli Tepe including steles and sculptures. It also contains Hittite sculptures from Golpınar and pieces from Harran, Nevali Cori and Kabahaydar.*

Overnight in Hilton Garden Inn, Urfa

Day 5
Urfa - Harran - Karahan Tepe
Meals


Urfa

In the morning you will visit Harran and Karahan Tepe. In the afternoon you will visit the Pools of Abraham and have the rest of the day free to explore Urfa's charming centre. Dinner at the hotel.

B L D

Urfa (a.k.a. Sanliurfa, "the prophet's city", or Edessa in ancient times) is the most spiritual city in Eastern Turkey. It is a major centre for pilgrimage and its traditions are very much alive and well. The "Sanli-" part of its name (meaning "great" or "dignified") was awarded by the Turkish legislature in 1984 in recognition of the city's pivotal role in the Turkish war of Independence. Of particular note for visitors are Urfa Castle (the current walls were constructed by the Abbasids in 814AD), the Pool of Sacred Fish where Abraham was thrown in to the fire by Nimrod, the park of mosques, the market area and the Urfa museum.

Visit the ancient city of **Harran**, once the centre of Egypt's Hermetic tradition. See its ominous "Astrological Tower", citadel and local village and take in one of the most atmospheric sites anywhere in the world. Mentioned in the Book of Genesis, Harran is believed to have once been home to the Prophet Abraham. The site of the first Islamic university in Anatolia, Harran also boasts the remains of an 8th century mosque, a citadel and some 300 year old beehive mud homes which enjoy a constant temperature throughout the year, winter or summer.

Not far from Göbekli Tepe is another Pre-Pottery Neolithic site called **Karahan Tepe**, which dates to a similar age as Göbekli Tepe. Stone rows, T-shaped stone pillars, and other standing stones cover a hill but they have not been excavated so are still largely covered with soil though they stick. Some people believe it may prove to be even more important than Göbekli Tepe.

Overnight in Hilton Garden Inn, Urfa

Day 6
Urfa - Ankara - Gordion
Meals

 Ankara
 Anatolian
 Civilisation
 Museum

Take the morning flight to the capital Ankara. On arrival we will drive (approx 2.5 hours) to Gordion, followed by the Anatolian Civilisation Museum of Ankara and then Ankara Fort. In the museum you can expect to see artefacts and reconstructions from various Neolithic sites such as Catalhoyuk. Return to hotel in Ankara.

B L D

 The **Ankara Anatolian Civilisation Museum** boasts many archaeological finds related to the excavations in Hattusa and Çatalhöyük, and will help you to gain a good understanding of these areas. The historical centre of Ankara sits overlooking the town on a hill and is littered with the remains of Hittite, Phrygian, Byzantine, Roman and Christian monuments and settlements. Of particular interest as a surviving example of ancient architecture is the Temple of Augustus. Often also referred to as 'Angora', Ankara is home to the Angora goat with its luxury wool and the unusual animal breeds of angora cats and rabbits.

Occupied since the Bronze Age, 4000 years ago, **Gordion** is one of the most important archaeological sites in the near east. The city enjoyed its golden age in the first millennium when it was the royal capital of the Iron Age Kingdom known as 'Phrygia' to the Greeks and 'Mushki' to the neighbouring Assyrian Empire. It is most famous for the story of the "**Gordion Knot**", where Alexander The Great solved the insoluble by slicing this particular knotty problem with his sword rather than unravel it - thus allowing him to conquer Asia.

Overnight in Hotel Tunali, Ankara

Day 7	Ankara - Hattusa - Cappadocia	Meals
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Hattusa

After an early breakfast we will set off from Ankara to the Hittite capital of Hattusa (approx 3 hours drive). Spend 2-3 hours exploring the site and after lunch proceed by road to Cappadocia (3 hours). Dinner on arrival at hotel in Goreme.

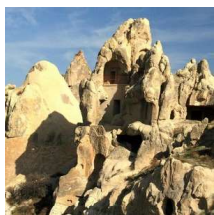
B L D

Note: this day will involve quite a lot of driving.

Hattusa was once the centre of the Hittite Empire, dating back to the late Bronze Age. Set in what were once rich agricultural fields and among scenic, rolling hills, the city has some fine examples of early ancient architecture. Originally the inner city was a vast array of temples and monuments, overlooked by the royal residence on the acropolis. An architectural masterpiece in its time, the city gateway was once adorned with reliefs of warriors, lions and sphinxes, framing four temples, each of which had their own courtyard. The city was destroyed, along with the Hittites themselves, in the 12th century BC. By the 20th century, the principal remains of Hittite inscriptions were found on over 10,000 tablets.

The archaeological site of Hattusha, former capital of the Hittite Empire, is notable for its urban organization, the types of construction that have been preserved (temples, royal residences, fortifications), the rich ornamentation of the Lions' Gate and the Royal Gate, and the ensemble of rock art at Yazilikaya. The city enjoyed considerable influence in Anatolia and northern Syria in the 2nd millennium B.C.

Overnight in The MDC Cave Hotel, Cappadocia

Day 8
Cappadocia
Meals


Cappadocia

After breakfast spend the day exploring some of Cappadocia's famous sights and dramatic landscapes. Sites will include: Goreme Open Air Museum, Devrent Valley, Pasabag and Monk's Valley. Time and energy-permitting, other sights can also be visited.

B L D

*The **Goreme Open-Air Museum** has been a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1984 and is a vast complex of monasteries, each of which has its own church. These churches are the finest of the rock-cut churches, boasting beautiful frescoes (wall paintings).*

***Devrent Valley** is home to the famous **Fairy Chimneys** near Goreme and is known as the imaginary valley or animal valley due to the animal shapes in rocks. While Fairy chimneys can be found in much of Cappadocia, these are the best formed and most densely clustered. The volcanic rock of this area has allowed erosion to form these chimneys as well as other landforms such as caves, clefts and folds in the rock, making this breathtaking landscape unique. A thick layer of tuff (consolidated volcanic ash) is covered by a thinner layer of basalt which is more resistant to erosion than the underlying rock. Cracks in the basalt enable erosion of the underlying rock. These fairy chimneys were formed where the resistant rock remains protecting the underlying rock directly beneath it from erosion. The mineral-rich volcanic soil is excellent for growing fruit and vegetables, making Cappadocia a rich agricultural region. It has always been one of Anatolia's prime grape-growing areas and still boasts many productive vineyards and wineries. The Bible's New Testament tells of Cappadocia, but in fact this part of central Anatolia has been important since Hittite times, long before the time of Jesus.*

Overnight in The MDC Cave Hotel, Cappadocia

Day 9
Cappadocia
Meals


Red Valley

Spend the day visiting more of the fascinating sights around Cappadocia, including a gentle hike in the Red Valley passing through the village of Cavusin famous for its rock-cut churches. After lunch visit the impressive underground city of Kaymakli and then Pigeon Valley and Ortahisar chimney castle.

B L D

*The **Red Valley** and **Güllüdere Vadisi (Rose Valley)** are two spectacular valleys in the Cappadocia region, each with varying types of rock formations and colour. The red valley shelters a series of intriguing rock-cut cave churches, with beautiful frescoes and paintings. Nearby is the **Pigeon valley**, named after the pigeon-cotes carved on its walls. The village of **Old Cavusin** was abandoned several decades ago due to avalanches. The current village of **Cavusin** is located on the road and is the typical authentic village. Old Cavusin, with its rock-cut dwellings and stone houses is home to the oldest church in Cappadocia. Ortahisar is another Cappadocian village dominated by a fortress-like rock rising above winding roads.*

There are 36 underground cities in Cappadocia and the widest one is **Kaymakli Underground City**. These troglodyte cave-cities were excavated as early as Hittite times, and expanded over the centuries as various pillaging armies crossed Central Anatolia in search of captives and plunder. The Kaymakli Underground City has low, narrow and sloping passages and consists of 8 floors below ground, although only four of them are open to the public today. The number of the storage rooms in such a small area supports the idea that a great number of people resided here, archaeologists estimate figures of up to three thousand five hundred people. As well as chapels, stables and storage, an efficient man-made system of air shafts provided ventilation even at the deepest levels of the underground cities, meaning people could survive there for lengths of time when necessary. The people of Kaymakli village have constructed their houses above nearly one hundred tunnels of the underground city. The inhabitants of the region still use the most convenient places in the tunnels as cellars, storage areas and stables, which they access through their courtyards.

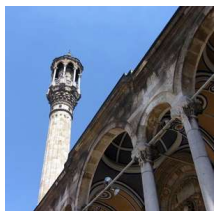
Amongst beautiful scenery, the **Valley of Pigeons** showcases some of the most interesting rock formations that Cappadocia has to offer. The soft rock of the valley allowed for farmers to carve numerous dovecotes into the rock cliffs, encouraging pigeons to nest and giving the area its name.

Overnight in The MDC Cave Hotel, Cappadocia

Day 10

Cappadocia - Konya - Çatalhöyük

Meals



Konya

Drive towards Konya. On the way, stop at Ashikli Hoyuk for a brief visit to this site, which is 10,000 years old. Stop for lunch. Visit Çatalhöyük, the world's oldest city, then return to Konya for a tour around its archaeological museum, with its spectacular Çatalhöyük exhibition. In the evening take in a Whirlish Dervish show.

B L D

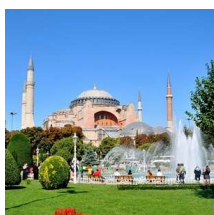
Konya is an affluent, mid-sized city in Central Turkey. It is the centre of all things Sufi and also strongly linked to Seljuk culture.

Çatalhöyük, widely believed to be the world's first town, is one of the best preserved examples of a Neolithic and Chalcolithic settlement. Built around two hills of the Anatolian plateau, the settlement was inhabited for two thousand years between 7500 BC and 5700 BC. Çatalhöyük began life as a village and, unusually, in a time when village settlements were abandoned and new land used to build cities, the buildings were adapted and urbanised to accommodate a growing population. With a particularly advanced culture for its time, Çatalhöyük boasts impressive early artworks: unusual artistic wall paintings, flint daggers with decorated bone handles and most notably, the clay and marble figurines found scattered around the site which archaeologists take as evidence of a female deity.

The housing designs are perhaps the most striking – all the houses were clustered together in a maze-like manner, but instead of streets or footpaths the roofs functioned as paths between the houses which were accessed through steps and ladders leading to the ceiling. With no windows either, these 'doorways' in the ceiling were also the only means of ventilation. Çatalhöyük also had unusual burial customs, burying their dead under the floorboards, painting skulls with ochre.

Overnight in Hilton Garden Inn, Konya

Day 11	Konya - Istanbul	Meals
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Istanbul

Take the morning flight back to Istanbul. End your trip with a delightful sunset cruise on the famous Bosphorus river, and enjoy a farewell dinner with your group and tour leaders.

*Joining the Black Sea with the smaller south-western Sea of Mamara, the 20 mile-long **Bosphorus** has always been a site of great strategic and commercial importance. The desirable traits of providing access to Asia and being particularly narrow has meant that The Bosphorus has a long history of conflict that dates back to the 5th century BC with the Persians. The Bosphorus' shoreline is densely populated and possesses a number of architectural features that demonstrate its rich historical past.*

Overnight in Momento Golden Horn Hotel, Istanbul

B L D

Day 12	Departure	Meals
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Flight

Depart from hotel to airport to catch flight back home or elsewhere.

** If you would like to extend your stay in Turkey or any of the neighbouring countries contact us for options. **

B

Accommodation

Istanbul : Momento Golden Horn Hotel (Hotel)

3 nights



With an excellent location in Istanbul's historic old town, the Momento Golden Horn Istanbul is the perfect base from which to explore the city. The hotel has 35 modern and stylishly decorated rooms, which all come equipped with a kettle and TV.

Phone : +90 212 653 50 50

Address : Arap Cami Mah. Tersane Cad. No: 24 Karakoy, Istanbul, Turkey

Website : www.momentohotelsistanbul.com/the-momento-golden-horn

Adiyaman : Dedeman Park (Hotel)

1 night

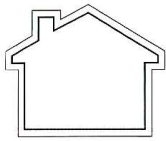


PHOTO COMING SOON

Phone : +90 416 2191000

Address : Siteler Mah. 20155 sok. No 1 Merkez Adiyaman Turkey

Urfa : Hilton Garden Inn (Hotel)

2 nights



Located in an area known as the "Fertile Crescent" where a great deal of traditional architecture has been preserved, the Hilton Garden Inn is within walking distance of the city center and Urfa's main historical sites. Comfortable en suite rooms feature AC, satellite TV, tea/coffee making facilities and a minibar.

Phone : +90 41 4318 5000

Address : 11 Nisan Fuar Cd, 63100 Sanliurfa

Website : www.hilton.com.tr/tr/Hilton-Garden-Inn-Urfa

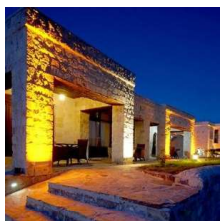
Ankara : Hotel Tunali (Hotel)**1 night**

Located within the business district of Ankara, Hotel Tunali is within walking distance of many of Ankara's main attractions. All rooms feature a minibar, air conditioning, plasma TV, safety deposit box and Wi-Fi access. The hotel also has an on-site restaurant.

Phone : +90 31 2467 4440

Address : 119 Tunali Hilmi Caddesi, Kavaklıdere, 06700

Website : www.hoteltunali.com.tr

Cappadocia : The MDC Cave Hotel (Hotel)**3 nights**

MDC HOTEL is located in Ürgüp, Cappadocia, a UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE. The name Cappadocia comes from Katpatuka, an ancient Persian word meaning "land of horses." The region is now largely agricultural and the spectacular landscape is dotted with distinct rock structures. The MDC HOTEL grounds cover 15,000 m2, ideally located between an old river valley and ancient Ürgüp. Room Facilities: Jacuzzi/Whirlpool, telephone, radio, LCD TV, tea/coffee maker, minibar and a safety deposit box.

Phone : +90 384 341 44 15

Address : Karangandere Mah. Karangandere Sk. No:20 50400 Urgup /Nevsehir Cappadocia

Website : www.mdchotel.com

Konya : Hilton Garden Inn (Hotel)**1 night**

Hilton Garden Inn in Konya is located close to Mevlana Tomb and Museum, Alaeddin Mosque, and Ince Minaret Medrese. All rooms offer complimentary WiFi, an adjustable Garden Sleep System bed™, minibar and a spacious work desk with ergonomic chair. Dining options include a restaurant, a coffee shop/café, and a bar/lounge. Additional amenities include a fitness facility, room service (during limited hours) and complimentary wireless internet.

Phone : +90 3322216000

Address : Kışlaönü Sk, Konya

Website : www.hilton.com.tr/tr/Hilton-Garden-Inn-Konya