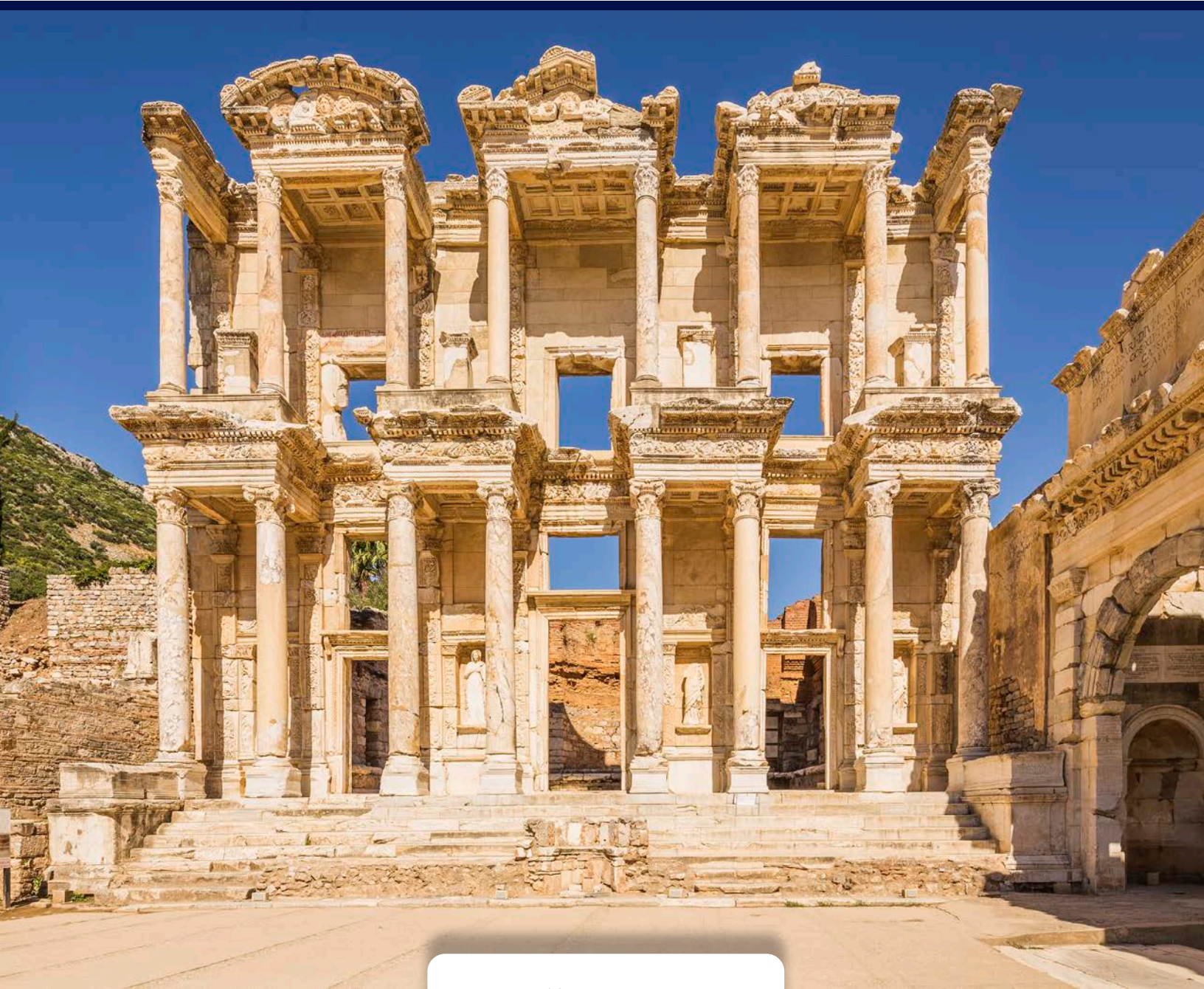


# Ancient Treasures of Turkey

*with Dr. Steven L. Tuck* (May)  
*or Dr. Hans-Friedrich Mueller* (October)

May 24–June 1, 2026 | October 4–12, 2026

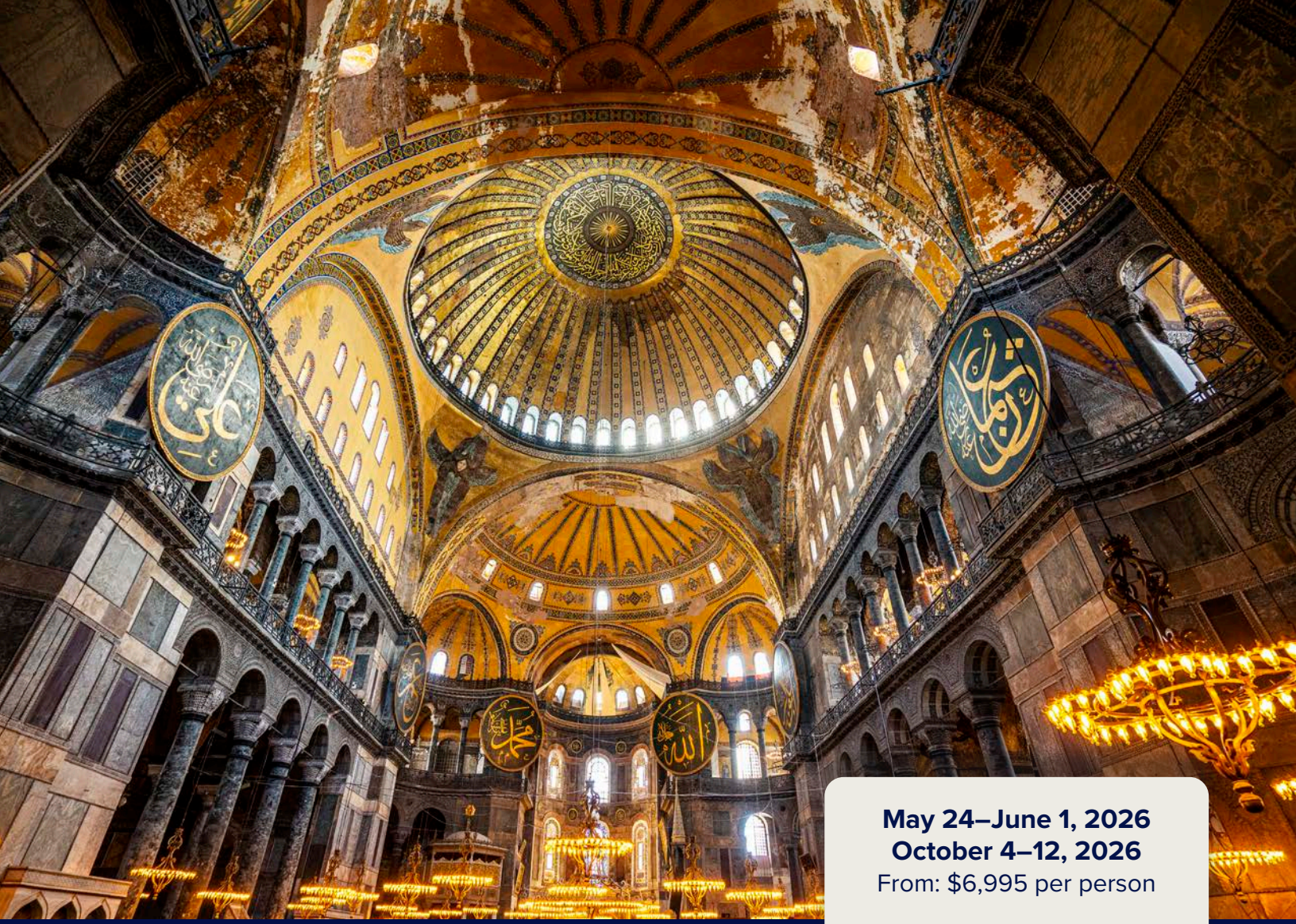


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**May 24–June 1, 2026**  
**October 4–12, 2026**  
From: \$6,995 per person



## Ancient Treasures of Turkey

*with Dr. Steven L. Tuck (May)*

*or Dr. Hans-Friedrich Mueller (October)*

**Embark on a captivating nine-day journey through Turkey, led by Dr. Steven Tuck, a renowned expert in ancient civilizations and archaeology and Great Courses Professor. With his extensive expertise, Professor Tuck will provide unique insights into the fascinating history and architecture of Turkey's most iconic and lesser-known sites.**

This tour takes you from the bustling streets of Istanbul, home to the architectural wonders of Hagia Sophia and the Blue Mosque, to the scenic Bosphorus waters that separate Europe and Asia, before venturing to the ancient ruins of Ephesus, Aphrodisias, and beyond. Explore the remarkable cities of Bergama, Bodrum, and the Aegean coast, where you'll uncover the hidden gems of ancient Greek and Roman life, from the Acropolis of Bergama to the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. Along the way, you'll immerse yourself in Turkey's rich culture, visit grand monuments, and experience local traditions, with Professor Tuck's expert guidance illuminating the fascinating past that shaped the region. Whether it's learning about ancient urban planning, exploring royal Ottoman treasures, or uncovering the ruins of forgotten cities, this journey will leave you with a deep understanding and appreciation for Turkey's ancient heritage.



# Your Journey Expert



**Dr. Steven L. Tuck** (*May*) is Professor of History and Classics at Miami University. Professor Tuck is an expert in the ancient Mediterranean world, with a particular interest in the art and architecture of this vast realm. He has conducted archaeological fieldwork and research in Italy, Greece, England, and Egypt, and has directed more than 20 study tours in Italy, concentrated on the city of Rome and the area around the Bay of Naples, including Pompeii, Herculaneum, and the Island of Capri. Professor Tuck received the 2013 E. Phillips Knox Teaching Award, Miami University's highest honor for innovative and effective undergraduate teaching. In addition, the Archaeological Institute of America, North America's oldest and largest organization devoted to archaeology, presented him with its Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching Award in 2014. He received his Ph.D. in Classical Art and Archaeology from the University of Michigan. Professor Tuck is the author of *A History of Roman Art* and has taught several Great Courses, including *Pompeii: Daily Life in an Ancient Roman City*, *Experiencing Rome: A Visual Exploration of Antiquity's Greatest Empire*, *The Mysterious Etruscans*, *The Architecture of Power: Great Palaces of the Ancient World*, and *Cities of the Ancient World*.

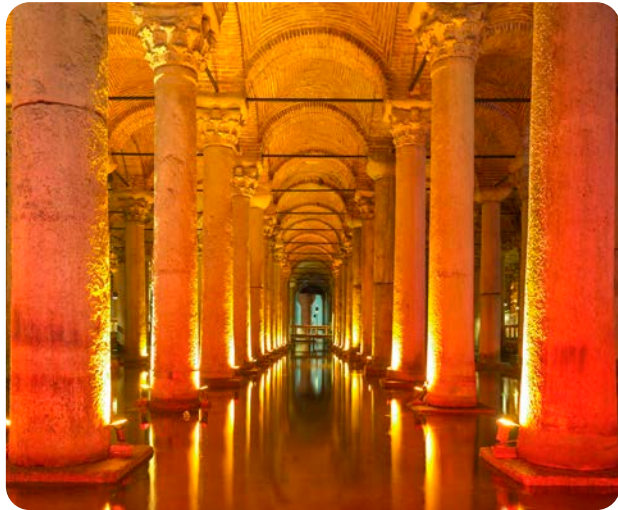


**Dr. Hans-Friedrich Mueller** (*October*) is the Chair of Classics and the Thomas B. Lamont Professor of Ancient and Modern Literature at Union College. Known for his broad expertise and enthusiastic teaching style, Professor Mueller has decades of experience teaching and leading tours. Professor Mueller won the American Philological Association's Award for Excellence in the Teaching of Classics at the College Level, as well as two awards for excellence in teaching at The Florida State University. At the University of Florida, he developed a graduate distance-learning program in classics for high school teachers. He earned his PhD in Classical Philology from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. In addition to writing numerous articles, Professor Mueller is the author of *Roman Religion in Valerius Maximus*, the editor of an abridged edition of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, and the translator of Andreas Mehl's *Roman Historiography: An Introduction to Its Basic Aspects and Development*. He has created three Great Courses: *Latin 101: Learning a Classical Language*, *Greek 101: Learning an Ancient Language*, and *The Pagan World: Ancient Religions Before Christianity*.

## Highlights

- Marvel at the stunning fusion of Christian and Islamic influences at the Hagia Sofia with its grand dome, breathtaking mosaics, and centuries of historical significance.
- Wander through well-preserved ruins, including the Library of Celsus and the Great Theater, experiencing the grandeur of one of the ancient world's most vibrant cities.
- Discover Aphrodisias, the UNESCO World Heritage Site dedicated to Aphrodite, where remarkable ruins like the Temple of Aphrodite and the Stadium showcase exquisite sculptures and monumental architecture.
- Step back in time at Ephesus, where ancient wonders come to life as you explore grand ruins and uncover the stories of a lost civilization.
- Stroll through the grid-planned streets of Priene, taking in panoramic views and visiting the Temple of Athena and the impressive theater.
- Witness the architectural brilliance of the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus, one of the Seven Wonders, with its intricate sculptures and immense historical significance.

# Ancient Treasures of Turkey Itinerary



## Day 1: Welcome to Istanbul

Arrive on overnight flights into Istanbul. Transfer to your hotel in the heart of the modern city. Early this afternoon, tour the Basilica Cistern, an ancient underground water reservoir, renowned for its striking columns and atmospheric lighting, which offers a glimpse into the city's rich Byzantine history. After time back at the hotel to freshen up, gather with fellow travelers and Professor Tuck for a welcome dinner at a local restaurant where you will be introduced to the rich flavors of Turkish cuisine such as hummus, baba ghanoush, dolma (stuffed grape leaves), and savory dumplings.

**Included Meal:** Dinner

**Accommodation:** Occidental Taksim

## Day 2: Museums, Palaces, and Treasures

Continue exploring Istanbul's rich history with a visit to some of its most iconic landmarks. Wander through the ancient Hippodrome, once the heart of Byzantine life, and see remnants of its vibrant past. Marvel at the majestic Hagia Sophia, a stunning fusion of Christian and Islamic influences. Explore the Blue Mosque, a masterpiece of Ottoman architecture, famous for its blue-tiled interior, and Topkapi Palace, a magnificent former Ottoman imperial residence, showcasing brilliant architecture, rich history, and priceless artifacts from the empire's golden age. Throughout your journey, expert Professor Tuck will provide invaluable insights, enriching your experience with his deep knowledge of history and culture. After lunch on your own (perhaps trying Istanbul's famous kebabs), stroll through the Grand Bazaar's maze of over 4,000 shops, offering everything from handmade carpets to leather goods. Finish your evening with free time to explore Istanbul's food scene, blending rich Ottoman traditions with diverse regional influences, offering everything from bustling food stalls to elegant fine dining.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

**Accommodation:** Occidental Taksim

## Day 3: Bergama's Hidden Gems

The scenic four-hour drive from Istanbul to Bergama offers stunning views of rolling hills, vast farmlands, picturesque villages, and olive groves. After arriving in this ancient city rich in archaeological wonders, enjoy lunch as a group. Explore the Acropolis and Asclepion, with ruins that showcase Hellenistic architecture and ancient medical practices. Your visit will be enhanced by Professor Tuck's examination of Bergama as a prime example of urban design that deviated from the Hippodamian grid plan, highlighting







its unique architectural features and urban planning. Continue to Izmir, Turkey's third-largest city known as the "pearl of the Aegean" is a vibrant coastal metropolis known for its rich history, waterfront promenade, and a blend of modern and ancient architecture. After hotel check-in, dine as a group.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner  
**Accommodation:** La Bella

## Day 4: Coastal Charm and Ancient Wonders

Depart for Sardis, the ancient capital of Lydia, to immerse yourself in its influential history as a major center of commerce and culture, renowned for its wealth. Begin with a visit to the Temple of Artemis, the Roman gymnasium, and the Sardis Synagogue, and explore the city's multicultural heritage. After lunch on your own, head to Akhisar (ancient Thyatira), one of the Seven Churches of Revelation, to learn more about its biblical significance. Finish the day with a visit to a traditional leather tannery or textile workshop where you can observe the craftsmanship of these ancient trades. Continue to Kuşadası, a picturesque coastal town on Turkey's Aegean coast, known for its beautiful beaches, vibrant nightlife, and as a gateway to the ancient city of Ephesus.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner  
**Accommodations:** Grand Belish Resort Hotel and Spa

## Day 5: Ephesus: Time Travel to Rome

Today is devoted to the ancient city of Ephesus. Explore this remarkable archaeological site, marveling at grand monuments like the Library of Celsus and the Great Theater. Visit the beautifully restored Slope Houses, revealing the luxurious lifestyle of the Roman elite, and then the House of the Virgin Mary, a revered pilgrimage site that is believed to be her final residence. Return to your hotel for an afternoon at your leisure enjoying the tranquility of your surroundings or perhaps the thermal waters before dining as a group this evening.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner  
**Accommodation:** Grand Belish Resort Hotel and Spa

## Day 6: Aphrodisias: Sculptures & Secrets

Sojourn east to Aphrodisias, a less-known yet must-see UNESCO site dedicated to Aphrodite. Explore its well-preserved ruins, including the Temple of Aphrodite, the Stadium, the Theater, and the Tetrastion. Aphrodisias is renowned for its exceptional sculptures, many of which are among the finest examples of





ancient Roman art. Professor Tuck's research on ancient urban planning and monumental architecture sheds light on Aphrodisias' significance as a cultural and architectural marvel. Return to Kuşadası to enjoy a final night in this seaside town.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

**Accommodation:** Grand Belish Resort Hotel and Spa

## Day 7: Ancient Wonders of the Meander

Journey south through the Meander River Delta, rich in ancient history and memorable landscapes. First, visit Priene, an ancient Greek city known for its grid-planned streets and the Temple of Athena. Next, explore Miletus, a center of philosophy and trade, and Didyma, home to the impressive Temple of Apollo. After lunch, continue to Bodrum, a coastal town with a historic castle, lively marina, and charming whitewashed houses. Take some time to relax and enjoy the scenery before dining as a group at your hotel this evening.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**Accommodation:** Azka Otel

## Day 8: Bodrum's Legends

Begin your day by exploring Bodrum (the ancient city of Halicarnassus), home to the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. Visit the ruins of the mausoleum, then continue to Bodrum Castle, a medieval fortress with panoramic views and a fascinating Museum of Underwater Archaeology. Walk along the Hellenistic city walls and see the Myndos Gate, where Alexander the Great once battled to breach the city's defenses.

Enjoy an afternoon at leisure to further explore Bodrum or relax at your hotel's pool with stunning views of the Aegean Sea. Gather this evening for a farewell dinner as you toast the ancient treasures of Turkey.

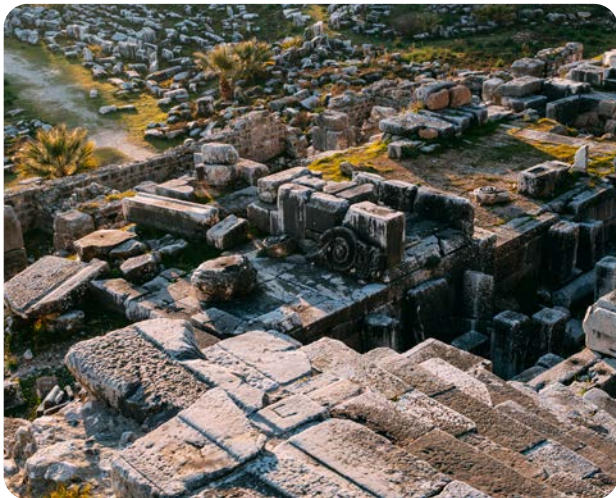
**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

**Accommodation:** Azka Otel

## Day 9: A Fond Farewell

Depart your hotel and transfer as a group to Bodrum Airport for individual flights home or onward.

**Included Meal:** Breakfast



# Accommodations



## Taksim Occidental Istanbul

### *Istanbul*

Located in the heart of Istanbul, Taksim Occidental offers a sophisticated stay with modern amenities in its superior rooms. Enjoy easy access to the bustling Taksim Square, cultural landmarks, and vibrant nightlife. Each room is designed with comfort and style in mind, ensuring a relaxing atmosphere with contemporary decor, free Wi-Fi, and excellent service. **(2 nights)**



## La Bella, Bergama

### *Bergama*

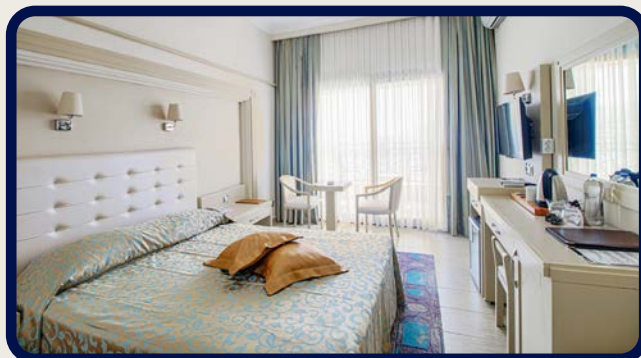
La Bella in Bergama offers a charming retreat with cozy rooms. Featuring traditional Turkish decor, the rooms provide a peaceful ambiance, perfect for relaxation after exploring the nearby ancient ruins of Pergamon. Guests can enjoy personalized service, a comfortable stay, and access to the town's rich historical heritage. A great choice for those seeking a blend of history and comfort. **(1 night)**



## Grand Belish Resort Hotel and Spa

### *Kuşadası*

The Grand Belish Resort Hotel and Spa offers a luxurious escape with stunning beachfront views and world-class amenities. Located in a serene setting, it features spacious rooms, a rejuvenating spa, and diverse dining options. Guests can enjoy a range of activities, from relaxing by the pool to indulging in wellness treatments. Perfect for both relaxation and adventure, the resort promises a memorable and rejuvenating experience. **(3 nights)**



## Azka Otel

### *Bodrum*

Azka Otel in Bodrum is a five star luxurious seaside retreat offering a perfect blend of relaxation and adventure. With stunning views of the Aegean Sea, the resort boasts spacious rooms, multiple dining options, and an array of leisure facilities, including a private beach and outdoor pool. Guests can indulge in spa treatments, enjoy water sports, or explore the vibrant local culture, making it an ideal destination for a memorable getaway. **(2 nights)**





## Pricing:

Departure	Double Occupancy	Single Occupancy	Deposit	
May 24–June 1, 2026	\$6,995	\$7,695	\$500	<a href="#">BOOK NOW</a>
October 4–12, 2026	\$7,195	\$7,945	\$500	<a href="#">BOOK NOW</a>

## What's Included:

- All accommodations for the duration of the tour
- Meals, as noted in the itinerary
- All sightseeing and visits as noted in each itinerary
- Expertise of The Great Courses Expert, travel director and local guides throughout the tour
- All gratuities for on-tour guides, drivers, hotel and restaurant staff as part of the group program
- All on-tour transportation, unless otherwise noted
- One group airport transfer upon departure
- Quietvox listening devices to facilitate audibility and social distancing on tour
- The assistance of an ATA professional travel team to assist with pre-trip questions, travel arrangements, including flights, extra hotel nights and other services
- Comprehensive pre-departure mailings and materials with information about the destination and what to expect on tour, including a suggested reading list
- Emergency evacuation insurance