



Voyage: August 24, 2021 | 24 NIGHTS – Odessa to Haifa

Complimentary MAX Shore Program | IST506GV Hidden Treasures & Pamukkale Hot Springs

ISTANBUL, TURKEY

4 Days / 3 nights

- August 12 Ship arrives Istanbul @ 8 AM – Debark and drive to Manisa – Sardes - Izmir
- August 13 Izmir – Aphrodisias – Pamukkale
- August 14 Pamukkale – Hierapolis – Denizli – Salda Lake - Isparta
- August 15 Isparta - Sagalassos - Kepez to join ship

Duration: 4 days / 3 nights

Activity Level: Strenuous

Meals: Included as per itinerary below

Day 1

Disembark the ship in Istanbul and drive to Manisa where you will visit Sardes, once the flourishing capital of the ancient Lydian kingdom of the 7th century BCE. Strategically located on a spur of land at the foot of Mount Tmolus, it commanded the central plain of the Hermus Valley and was the western terminus of the Persian Royal Road. It was also the first city where gold and silver coins were minted. Following lunch, continue on with the scenic drive to Izmir where you will enjoy dinner and a panoramic tour of the area before retiring to your hotel for the night.

Day 2

Following breakfast in the hotel, depart Izmir for Aphrodisias, one of the most important ancient sites in Turkey after Ephesus. It was during the Roman period around 2BC that Aphrodisias was named after Aphrodite and kept gaining importance. One of the inscriptions on the theater's stage walls mentions a golden Eros statue gifted by Caesar to Aphrodite.

Located near a marble quarry, the marble from here was widely used during the Hellenistic and Roman periods, and Aphrodisias became famous in the Roman world for its marble statues. The city was favored by both Julius Caesar and Emperor Augustus who gave it

autonomy and tax-free status, stating it “the one city from all of Asia that I have selected to be my own.”

Following lunch at a local establishment, you will drive to Pamukkale where you will have dinner and overnight.

Day 3

Early risers have the **option to partake in a sunrise hot air balloon ride** over Pamukkale. Afterwards, enjoy breakfast and then it’s time to tour the Pamukkale hot springs and Hierapolis ruins.

Pamukkale literally translates to ‘Cotton Castle’ and the brilliant white terraces of petrified limestone certainly conjure up that image. Within the stepped terraces are warm pools of brilliant blue mineral-rich water that invite visitors to dip their toes in and where Romans once bathed. There is also the famous “Cleopatra Pool” that Marc Anthony had built and gifted to her. An earthquake toppled the structure over the pool, but today you can still swim amongst the submerged columns.

What adds to any visit to Pamukkale is the opportunity to also visit the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Hierapolis. Hierapolis also means the sacred city and remains here include the Necropolis, the Temple of Oktokonus, a theater that features reliefs depicting the mythology of Apollo and Artemis, the Apollo sacred site, Roman Baths and many other significant ruins.

Lunch will be served at an establishment in Denizli, after which there is a visit to Salda Lake before continuing on to Isparta (Egirdir) – nicknamed The City of Roses. Isparta is famous for its roses and rose products. The world’s largest producer of the Damascena rose, it exports rose oil around the world (including providing it to the grand mosque at Mecca) and also hosts a 2-day Rose Festival. After check-in at your hotel, enjoy dinner and a leisurely evening.

Day 4

Your day commences with an early morning breakfast at the hotel and departure for Sagalassos, one of the best-preserved ancient cities in Turkey that was once the most important city of ancient Pisidia. Conquered by Alexander the Great in 333 BC on his way to Persia, it flourished after joining the Roman Empire in 25 BC.

Following your visit, you will make the 90-minute drive to Kepez where you will rejoin the ship.

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