



PETEN TRAVELS

TRAVEL BEYOND THE ORDINARY

CLASSICAL TURKEY
Archaeology and Mythology of Asia Minor
(14 Nights, 15 Days)



On this trip guests are guided through an in-depth examination of the Greco-Roman civilization in Western Asia Minor. The Aeolian and Ionian cities along the west coast of Anatolia were founded around 1000 B.C. while the Eastern Greek world made its first cultural gains at the beginning of the 7th century BC. We see first hand that Eastern Greek art and culture owe a considerable debt to their long-standing contact with the indigenous Lydian, Lycian and Carian cultures in Anatolia, not forgetting the Phrygians. The Ionian civilization was thus a product of the co-existence of Greeks with the natives of Asia Minor.

The voyage of Jason and the Argonauts, legend of the Hellespont, the Iliad of Homer, Alexander the Great's pilgrimage to Troy, Cleanthes of Assos, the Library of Pergamum, the legend of Asclepius, Coinage & Customs of the Lydians, the wealth of Croesus, the Temple of Diana, and the Oracle at Didyma will assist us in comprehending the creativity and inspiration of the period.

Day 1 Istanbul
Special category (4-star) hotel

Guests are met by the tour director at the Atatürk Airport and are then taken to the hotel and assisted through check-in. Group participants meet each other and staff with a welcome drink before sitting down to dinner.
(D)

Day 2 Istanbul

Special category (4-star) hotel

This morning we visit the **Istanbul Archaeology Museum** (main building). The facade of the building was inspired by the Alexander Sarcophagus and Sarcophagus of the Mourning Women, both housed inside the Museum. It is one of the prominent structures built in the neoclassical style in Istanbul.

The museum has a large collection of Turkish, Hellenistic and Roman artifacts. The most prominent artifacts exhibited in the museum include: Alexander Sarcophagus, Sarcophagus of the Crying Women, Sarcophagi of Tabnit and the Satrap, The Lycian tomb, Statues from ancient antiquity until the end of the Roman Era, from Aphrodisias, Ephesus and Miletus, Statue of an Ephebos, Statue of a lion, the only piece saved from the hands of British archaeologists in the Mausoleum of Maussollos, parts of statues from the Temple of Zeus found at Bergama, the Troy exhibit, The Siloam inscription is among the oldest extant records of its kind written in Hebrew using the Paleo-Hebrew alphabet and more... We only focus on the archaeological collections related to our tour programme. **(B, L)**

Day 3 Çanakkale

Kolin Hotel (5-star)

Traveling distance: 340 km~212 miles

Journey into the plain of Illium

This morning guests travel into the heart of **Thrace Chersonesus** with a spectacular drive down to the **Dardanelles Strait** via the **Gallipoli** peninsula. We cross the Dardanelles (Hellespont) by ferryboat, landing in Asia Minor (Anatolia). We first visit the **Çanakkale Archaeology Museum**. Here we see unique findings from Troy, the Dardanos tumulus such as jewelry, gold rings, diadems, candles, textiles, wooden items, the sculptured sarcophagus, and painted Persian sarcophagus. Our next stop is at the site of **Dardanos** where we visit the **Tumuli of Dardanos**. **(B, L, D)**

Day 4 Ayvacık / or Yeşilyurt village

Lila Hotel by the Aegean Sea or Manici Kasrı at the foot of Mt.Ida (special category)

Traveling distance: 98 km~62 miles

After breakfast we hike in the haunting **Plain of Illium**, cross the Scamander River, stop at the landing shore of the Achaean army and visit the Tumuli of Achilles, where Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, and Constantine the Great all came to offer sacrifices. We view the **Kum Tepe** (a site that precedes Troy) and the distant islands in the Aegean Sea. We then visit the city between legend and reality, **Troy**. After our unforgettable tour we continue to Mt. Ida or Ayvacık for a two night's stay. This is the mountain where the world's first beauty contest is said to have taken place, a contest between the goddesses, Hera, Aphrodite and Athena **(B, L, D)**

Day 5 Ayvacık / or Yeşilyurt village

Lila Hotel or Manici Kasrı at the foot of Mt.Ida (special category)

Traveling distance: 60 km~38 miles

This morning we first visit the site of the 2nd century B.C. **Temple of Apollo Smintheus** (Apollo Lord of the Mice) at ancient **Chryse**. We then continue on to **Assos**, the city of great philosophers perched along a beautiful cove in the Aegean Sea. The city achieved its pinnacle in the 4th century B.C. under the eunuch Hermeias who was a former student of Plato. He welcomed a number of philosophers and scientists to his city. Aristotle and Theophrastus lived here and conducted some important studies in natural sciences. Assos is also the birthplace of Cleanthes, the Stoic philosopher who studied under Zeno. We visit the Temple of Athena from its perch 238m above sea level. The view from the temple is breathtaking, surely one of the

most beautiful in western Turkey. We also see the 3rd century B.C. Greek-style theatre, currently being excavated, and an arched gateway to the west of the agora leading to the site of a 2nd century B.C. gymnasium. The city had a magnificent 4th century wall built of carefully cut and fitted stone blocks that is one of the most impressive ancient fortifications in Anatolia. **(B, L, D)**

Day 6 Foça

Griffon Hotel or Bülbül Yuvası (special category deluxe hotel)

Traveling distance: 245 km~153 miles

Today we travel along a mountainous road leading to the small village of **Kozak** which is famous for its pine nuts. Then it is onto the royal city of **Pergamum** with its acropolis set dramatically above the valley of the river Caicus. From 282 B.C, the Attalid kings made this site one of the most beautiful and cultured cities of the Ancient World. One of its most important industrial and cultural developments was the large-scale production of pergamena, the writing material made from treated animal skins later known as parchment. Today we visit the buildings of the acropolis, the middle and then the lower city. The Temple of Athena was built in the Doric style; the city library had a capacity of 17,000 volumes, and the royal palaces with colonnaded court were feats of their time. The Trajaneum is one of the most magnificent buildings in Pergamum, a Hellenistic theatre that could sit 10,000. At the northern end of the theatre terrace are the ruins of an Ionic temple, the Temple of Dionysus. The Great Altar of Zeus was erected to commemorate Pergamum's victory over the Celts. The upper agora leads us into the bath complex, bath-gymnasium and odeum of the **Middle City**, and then we continue to the Temple of Demeter which occupied a terrace 100m long by 50m wide. We continue on to the shrine of Hera and then the gymnasia. **The Red Hall**, dedicated to Serapis, Isis and Harpocrates, dates from the 2nd century A.D. A church was later erected inside the building and dedicated to St. John the Evangelist. We are then allowed private access into the **Roman Villa** at the acropolis. We end our day at the **Asclepieum**, the healing center of the ancient world. Drinking and bathing in the water from the springs in the center of the courtyard, along with mud baths, herbal remedies, massage, dieting, exercise, and colonic irrigation were among the methods favored by the doctors. You can still see and drink this healing running water. **(B, L, D)**

Day 7 Kula

Anemon Hotel (special category)

Traveling distance: 268km~168 miles

This morning we enter the land of tumulus: **Bintepe'** (thousand hills) area with the tombs of the Lydian kings boasts some 155 tumuli that belonged to either Lydian kings or nobles. Like the Midas tumulus at the Phrygian capital, Gordion, some of these tumuli approach the size of the Egyptian pyramids. One of the largest tumuli is the tumulus where Alyattes (father of Croesus, the last Lydian king) is buried. The splendor of the Lydian tumuli at Bintepe, were legendary.

Following our breakfast we drive to **Sardis** in the valley of the gold bearing river, Pactolus. Sardis was the capital of the Lydian kingdom and home of Croesus, the legendarily wealthy Lydian king, long credited with the invention of coinage. We visit the impressive ancient remains that have been unearthed since 1958 by American archaeologists. Although the Lydians are credited with the invention of knucklebones and dice, their greatest contributions were the introduction and popularization of coinage and the concept of retail trading. We continue our journey and soon after Salihli the road abandons the valley of Gediz (ancient Hermes) and begins to climb steadily, bringing us to the strange, desolate stretch of country that was known to the ancients as Katakakeumene ('Parched Land'). **(B, L, D)**

Day 8 Pamukkale

Colossae Thermal Spa Hotel (5-star)

Laodicea ad Lycum

The rich historical heritage of **Laodicea**, the second biggest antique site of western Anatolia after Ephesus. It was founded by Antiochus II in the mid 3rd century BC and flourished into early Byzantine times. It was an important early Christian city and had a large Jewish population. The site covers 2.5 square km. Since 2000

a Turkish expedition led by Prof.Celal Şimşek of Pamukkale University has been excavating. Newly unearthed the Holy Cross Church from the fourth century A.D is one of the seven mentioned in the Bible. It is from the fourth century A.D. The baptistery within the church a large part of which still stands intact is considered as the oldest and most original baptistery in Christianity. The history of the partly unearthed antique site goes back 2500 years. The excavations carried out by Pamukkale University have brought to light a temple very important for the world of Christianity. The church was built between 312 and 320 A.D when the Emperor Constantine was in power. Right next to the holy church stands a pagan temple used in the same period. This is cited as proof of inter-religious tolerance dating back to ancient times.

After this extensive day of sightseeing, the thermal pool at our hotel is especially welcoming before we sit down to dinner. The sunset over the snow-like terraces is breathtaking! **(B, L, D)**

Day 9 Pamukkale Colossae Thermal Spa Hotel (5-star)

We spend the day at leisure in **Pamukkale**, site of the ancient city of **Hierapolis**, as well as home to the ‘cotton castle’ springs of mineral-laden water. The unique appearance and curative properties of Pamukkale’s springs have attracted settlers from early times. Hierapolis and its neighboring environs became part of the Roman Province of Asia in 129 B.C. Like nearby Laodicea and Colossae, Hierapolis adopted Christianity at an early date. The presence here of a sizeable Jewish community probably assisted the spread of the new faith. We then visit the ruins of the Temple of Apollo, Plutonium, (a 6th century house), the theatre, the Martyrion of the Apostle Philip, a triple arch, and the tomb of Flavius Zeuxis, the necropolis and the **museum**. **(B, D)**

Day 10 Şirince Village or Kuşadası Special category hotel

The road from Pamukkale to Aydın follows the upper reaches of the Meander River. We continue our journey through the most fertile land of Anatolia to visit the city of Aphrodite, **Aphrodisias**. This is one of the most beautiful and exciting archaeological sites in Turkey. Painstakingly excavated and lovingly restored by teams from New York University, our visit here leads us to understand why the young Augustus was moved to declare, ‘of all the cities in Asia, I choose this one for myself’. The stadium is the best preserved in Asia Minor, while the temple of Aphrodite, the tetrapylon and baths of Hadrian make Aphrodisias an unforgettable site. Most of the statues and architectural remains discovered by Professor Erim and his team are displayed in a well-organized **museum** at the site. **(B, L, D)**

Day 11 Şirince Village or Kuşadası Special category hotel

This morning drive through the traditional Aegean towns of Birgi, Ödemiş and Tire. We visit the Birgis’s most celebrated historical building is **Çakırağa Konak** – the konak- mansion - was built between 1761 and 1764 by a wealthy local merchant named Tahir Aga of the Cakir family and continue to **Ödemiş’s market** is reputed to be the *best* market in the Aegean. Old women still wear long white veils in this conservative town. Tradesmen practising trades such as lining vessels with tin will have you "stepping back in time"! Stop at the Tire’s last handmade shoemaker’s shop. A short ride takes us to Ayasuluk **Hill** in Seljuk provides the perfect perch to examine the topography of the ancient city of Ephesus. Our way up the hill takes us through the Gate of Persecution and past the principal building, the **Basilica of St. John**. The most important site in Seljuk is the **Temple of Artemis**, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. Because so little remains today, it requires a great effort of the imagination to picture the building which once so impressed Pliny and other ancient commentators. The road from the Magnesia Gate of Ephesus leads us to Mount Coressus to view the city walls of Lysimachus, which once totally encircled the city. Afterwards, we then visit **Panaya Kapulu**. According to an ancient tradition this was the house occupied by the Blessed Virgin during the last years of her life. Crowds of Catholic, Orthodox Christian and Muslims pilgrims flock here on August 15 to celebrate the Feast of the Assumption of Mary into Heaven. **(B, L, D)**

Day 12 Şirince Village or Kuşadası

Special category hotel

Ephesus was one of the wealthiest and most important cities of Asia Minor. The remains that survive, long buried under the silt of the river Meander, testify to the former grandeur of the city. In the afternoon we join a lead member of the Ephesus project for a private tour of the site to gain an insider's view of the excavations. She will take us into areas closed to the public, including the **Terrace Houses**, the magnificent villas of the wealthy, filled with colorful wall frescoes and intricate mosaic floors. Dinner is at an exclusive local restaurant. We end the day at the village of the last Ephesian residents, **Sirince**, where we taste the locally produced wine and enjoy our leisure time with the villagers, who sell fresh figs, peaches, cherries, pears, fresh almonds, and walnuts in the village market. **(B, L, D)**

Day 13 Bodrum

The Marmara Hotel (5-star)

Famous Ionian cities

Today we enjoy the opportunity to explore the Ionian cities. **Priene** is the most attractive of all the ancient sites on the west coast. Not only are the ruins comparatively well preserved and admirably excavated, but also the setting and layout convey an intimate sense of this ancient community normally not felt amongst historical ruins. Priene is small, and its extant buildings date, for the most part, from its early days of existence. In his book, *Aegean Turkey*, George E. Bean said that wandering around the public buildings, streets, and private houses of the Anatolian Aegean makes us feel as if we were in the days of Alexander. Our drive through the Meander Valley then takes us to the great **Temple of Apollo in Didyma**, a temple that is remarkable for its huge size and its unique plan. Here, half-hidden in a grove of olive trees, are the remains of one of the best-preserved temples in Turkey, the **Temple of Zeus**. **(B, Lunch, Dinner in a charming restaurant) (B, L, D)**

Day 14 Bodrum

The Marmara Hotel

Private tour of the Underwater Archaeology Museum

As a port city with a history spanning thousands of years of continuous inhabitation, charming Bodrum has an incredibly rich past. In ancient times it was known as Halicarnassus and the Tomb of King Mausolus is found here, being one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. Today this small city is home to Turkish artists and intellectuals as well as a robust boat building and yachting industry. We visit the 15th century **Castle of Saint Peter**, built by the Knights of Saint John as part of a network of fortresses to defend the south eastern Aegean. It now houses the **Bodrum Archaeology Museum**, renowned for its wide range of fascinating underwater findings, many of them thousands of years old and displayed throughout the Castle in a myriad of atmospheric halls and galleries. **Leisure afternoon (B, Farewell Dinner). Alternative approach-we can take the late evening flight back to Istanbul and stay at the Airport Hotel. We can make this arrangement after we know your return flight information.**

Day 15 Return flight

Morning flight to İstanbul Atatürk International Airport to meet their return connections. **(B)**

PLEASE NOTE: This itinerary involves a good deal of walking. Good comfortable footwear is therefore essential. It should be pointed out that the tour might not be suitable for passengers who require assistance or who have difficulties with mobility. Please make sure you enjoy hiking to remote archaeological sites, good local food and cultural interaction.

Trip is limited to a maximum of 10 participants.

Tour price

€6450 Euro per person based on double occupancy (twin / double bedded room)

€755 Euro single room supplement

What's included?

- Specialist leadership & the local tour manager
- Authentic, special category hotels with local architectural ambience
- Meals as indicated in itinerary (B=Breakfast, L= Lunch, D=Dinner).
- Bottled mineral water during transportation
- All ground transportation by a/c, Mercedes Sprinter including airport transfers
- All entrance fees to archaeological sites and museums in itinerary
- Meticulously prepared tour folder with maps and information to help participant get the most from the tour
- Parking fares, local taxes and tolled high-ways & bridges
- Domestic flight fare from Bodrum to Istanbul
- All gratuities to hotel staff and restaurant, all baggage handling

What's not?

- International airfare
- Insurance of any kind
- Discretionary gratuity to your guide and driver
- Excess baggage fees, airport taxes, cost of obtaining passport and visa
- Personal expenses such as beverages, laundry, room service, communication charges...

AN ISTANBUL EXTENSION TOUR TO PRECEDE THIS TOUR IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

Peten Travels reserves the right to change hotel accommodations if required. Please note that any changes are usually UPGRADES and are also at NO additional cost.

Also domestic flight and ferry times within Turkey are subject to change