

# Hellespont: Gateway of Legends

## Dardanelles, Gallipoli, Troy, Ephesus and Istanbul

**Tour dates 24 Sept – 1 October 2023**

The Sea of Marmara divides Europe from Asia in a straight known as the Hellespont or Dardanelles, and is part of the only passage between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, making it the focus of military ambition since the Bronze Age. Immersing ourselves in this geographically pivotal region, explore the fascinating history of the cities surrounding the Sea of Marmara, from the classical legends of Troy to the straight's Byzantine importance as a source of revenue and defence for Constantinople, and in modern history, the disastrous Allied invasion of Gallipoli. The Trojan War, known in the ancient world for the epic struggle between the Achaeans and the people of the Hellespont, is the stuff of legend and literature and recent excavations at Troy help bring the site to life. At Gallipoli, discover the significance of the Dardanelles in WWI, sparking the Gallipoli landings and a battle masterminded by Churchill against Attaturk. The tour is bookended with a stay in Istanbul at the start – a reminder of the might of the Byzantines and Ottomans at Constantine's glittering capital, Constantinople, and with visits to the magnificent ancient cities of Pergamon and Ephesus at the end.

*Note: Please also note that in consultation with our trip scholar, Dr Sarris, we have substituted the originally planned visit to Iznik/Nicea for visits to Pergamon and Ephesus, which we believe will greatly enhance the itinerary.*

*The price of this tour has changed since it was originally advertised in the University of Cambridge's 'Unbound' Magazine and alumni website in July 2022. This is due to significant exchange rate fluctuations since publication. We have factored in future forecasted rate changes at this stage in order to try avoid the possibility of needing to surcharge next year, but can't absolutely guarantee there will be no future surcharges. As per our legal obligations would absorb the first 2% of any future exchange rate changes and clients have the right to cancel with a full refund if surcharges surpass 10% of the trip cost.*

### **Day 1: 24 September**

### **Tour starts in Istanbul**

The tour starts in Istanbul today. There is no scheduled sightseeing and the first time the group will meet is shortly before dinner, so guests may arrive at any time. Check-in at the hotel is likely to be available from 2pm. Those arriving earlier may store their bags at the hotel if they would like to explore independently. Our recommended flight is TK1980 from Heathrow to Istanbul (IST Airport) on 24 Sep 2023 (dep 11:25, arriving 17:15) although we can book Turkish Airlines from a number of UK airports (direct) if preferred. We can also book seats on BA (Heathrow) and Pegasus (Stansted). We have arranged a group transfer to meet those arriving on the recommended flight (or arriving around the same time) from Istanbul Airport (IST) to the hotel.

Meet the group, guide and lecturer for a welcome dinner at around 8:30pm local time.

Overnight: *Mavi Ev Hotel or similar* | Meals: *D*



**Day 2: 25 September**      **Sultanahmet**

After breakfast, we have an exciting day in Sultanahmet, first visiting Hagia Sophia, the magnificent Byzantine Church built by Constantine, converted into a mosque by the Ottomans, made into a museum by Ataturk, and now a mosque again under the current administration. Visit the Byzantine Hippodrome, an arena used for chariot racing throughout the Byzantine period. First built during the reign of Roman emperor Septimius Severus in the early 3rd century CE, the structure was made more grandiose by Emperor Constantine I in the 4th century CE. At one end of the arena stands the Obelisk of Theodosius, an Egyptian Obelisk from the 15th century BC which had been removed, along with one other obelisk, from the Karnak temple complex in Luxor by an earlier Roman emperor. Theodosius re-erected this one in Constantinople's Hippodrome with considerable technical difficulty – the other was destined for the Circus Maximus in Rome and is now found outside the Lateran Palace. Also found in the Hippodrome is the bronze Serpentine Column, a piece of an ancient Greek sacrificial tripod, originally erected in Delphi and relocated to Constantinople by Constantine the Great in 324, missing its serpent heads since the end of the 17th century.

Leaving the Hippodrome, visit the magnificent 17th century Blue Mosque, famous for its six minarets and the 25,000 pieces of Blue Iznik tiles which decorate the interior. After lunch, continue to Topkapi Palace, the former Imperial residence and the seat of the Empire for 600 years, now a museum. Originally built by Mehmet II in the late 1450's after taking Constantinople in 1453, successive sultans renovated and expanded the palace. The palace has vast gardens overlooking the Golden Horn and Bosphorus and includes the Ottoman imperial harem, the imperial treasury where the Spoonmaker's Diamond and Topkapi Dagger can be seen, as well as Ottoman clothing, weapons, armour, religious relics, and illustrated manuscripts. It also houses one of the finest Chinese and Japanese porcelain collections in the world. Round off this exciting day with a late afternoon boat trip on the Bosphorus, taking in the magnificent skyline of the Old City.

Dinner is at leisure this evening so group members can enjoy some time to explore independently – your guide will be pleased to make some excellent local suggestions, including pre-booking some of the more popular spots if desired. A favourite of the TW team is Giritli restaurant ([www.goritlirestoran.com](http://www.goritlirestoran.com)), run by a Turkish Cretan family, located in an old Ottoman house with a pretty courtyard and known for its outstanding array of mezze. It is a 20 minute walk or 5-8 minute taxi ride from central Sultanahmet. Pre-booking is essential, as is a big appetite.

Overnight: *Mavi Ev, Sultanahmet or similar* | Meals: *B, L*

**Day 3: 26 September**      **Istanbul to Çanakkale**

Drive along the Sea of Marmara to the Hellespont. The narrows here are the famous Hellespont of the Classical world, scene of the story of Hero and Leander, now overlooked by the Ottoman Fort of Killit ul Bahir. Cross on the ferry to Çanakkale on the Asiatic side. The Dardanelles, as they are now known, were also the scene of the Gallipoli Campaign in the First World War. There is now a new suspension bridge spanning the strait, opened in 2022 on the anniversary of the Battle of 18 March, a key Ottoman naval victory in the Dardanelles, named the 1915 Çanakkale Bridge. It is the longest suspension bridge in the world.

Overnight: *Artur Hotel, Canakkale or similar* | Meals: *B, L, D*

#### Day 4 27 September

#### ANZAC Battlefields

Full day visit to the ANZAC Battlefields of Gallipoli. The Dardanelles were the scene in 1915 of the infamous Gallipoli Campaign in the First World War, which ended in defeat and huge losses for the Allied forces. Masterminded by Winston Churchill, then Lord of the Admiralty, the opposition (the Ottoman Empire, allied with Germany) was commanded on the ground by Mustapha Kemal Ataturk. Turkey's victory here is seen as a pivotal moment in the country's history, and Ataturk's excellence as a front line commander was the beginning of his ascent to prominence. For Australia and New Zealand Gallipoli has huge significance as it marked the first major definition of each country as an independent nation capable of contributing internationally, and helped forge a national identity in both.

A poignant tour of the battlefields of Gallipoli includes Kabatepe War Museum, Anzac Cove, Beach Cemetery, Brighton Beach, Lone Pine Australian Memorial, Johnston Jolly, the Nek Cemetery and Chunuk Bair New Zealander Memorial.

Overnight: *Artur Hotel, Canakkale or similar* | Meals: *B, L, D*

#### Day 5 28 September

#### Troy

Take a short drive to the remains of ancient Troy, scene of the epics of Homer. The site was originally excavated by Schliemann over one hundred years ago. The city is a complicated inter-layering of nine different periods, from the beginning of the Bronze Age 3200 BC to the Roman Period. Alexander set up a shrine here on his first landfall in Asia. Its impressive defences indicate its strategic position, and the most recent excavations are adding greatly to our knowledge of the site.

Lunch at Troy before returning to the Artur Hotel.

Overnight: *Artur Hotel, Canakkale or similar* | Meals: *B, L, D*

#### Day 6: 29 September

#### Assos and Bursa

Depart Canakkale today, and drive to the site of Alexandria Troas, once an important port founded by Antigonos I Monophthalmus – one of the generals of Alexander the Great. The site sprawls over an estimated 400 hectares (1,000 acres); among the few structures still extant today are a ruined bath and gymnasium complex and a recently uncovered stadium. Continue to Behramkale to visit Assos, opposite the Island of Lesbos, one of the highlights of the tour. Built in red andesite, the city has some of the best preserved walls in antiquity. On the acropolis is the only archaic Doric temple in Asia Minor, dating to the sixth century, and from whose partially reconstructed podium and peristyle spectacular vistas open across the Aegean. The main city has walls still standing 25 metres high, with doorways still intact. The whole setting is most evocative.

Afternoon drive to Ayvalik to check into our hotel for dinner and overnight.

Overnight: *Bacacan Hotel, Ayvalik or similar* | Meals: *B, L, D*

### Day 7 30 September

### Pergamon and Ephesus

Visit ancient Pergamon this morning, raised high on a 1000 foot hilltop overlooking the modern city of Bergama. An ancient city that once rivalled Alexandria and Ephesus in Greek culture and commerce, the remains here are impressive despite many pivotal finds including the magnificent 'Pergamon Altar' having been removed by the site's German excavators in the 1880s (they are now housed in the Pergamon Museum, Berlin). See the impressive 15,000-seat theater, set into the steep southwest slope of the hill, Temple of Athena, the colonnaded Trajaneum from the site's later Roman era, and the remains of Pergamum's famed library, one of the largest libraries in the ancient world until its 20,000 volumes were moved to Alexandria as a gift from Marc Anthony to Cleopatra.

Continue to Ephesus, one of the largest and most important port-cities of the ancient Mediterranean world, and today one of the most evocative archaeological sites in the world alongside Pompeii. Renowned in antiquity for its Temple of Artemis (one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World), the city was home to the apostle Paul from AD 52–54 it is thought he wrote the letter 1 Corinthians from Ephesus during a short period of imprisonment there. The temple is gone, but the other remains are remarkable, with well-preserved cobbled streets, the imposing Library of Celsus, which has been partially restored, magnificent Great Theatre and a complex of terraced houses, where excavations have revealed intricate mosaic floors and frescoed walls.

Continue to the charming village of Sirince, home to a large number of Orthodox Greeks who produced wine and grew olives here until the exchange of populations in 1923. Enjoy a final dinner together as a group this evening.

Overnight: *Kirkinca Houses, Sirince or similar* | Meals: *B, L, D*

### Day 8: 1 October

### Tour ends

After breakfast, the tour ends. Those taking our recommended flight with Turkish Airlines will be transferred to the airport at after breakfast, to catch an 11:55 service to London via Istanbul (TK2319 and TK1971) arriving 16:45 into Heathrow.

For those departing later or extending their stay in Turkey after the tour, check out of our hotel is at 10:00 but guests can leave their bags at the hotel while they sightsee. Those wishing to extend their stay in the city or further afield should contact our tailor-made travel team for a quote.

Meals: *B*

## Prices and Inclusions

Prices are in UK£, per person, based on double occupancy

Room Type	Price	Single Supplement	Turkish Airlines direct
Standard	£1,695	£320	Approx £350 return

### Inclusions

Twin or double bedded hotel room with ensuite bathroom (3-4\* boutique), daily breakfast, lunches on Days 2-7, dinners every evening except Day 2 and Day 8, all excursions with local guides including entrance fees, vehicles, expert leader. Also included are return group airport transfers if arriving/departing on Temple World's recommended flights.

**Single occupancy supplement for solo travellers in twin/double room £320**

### Exclusions

Transport to and from Turkey (see optional flights below), Turkish visa or evisa if required, dinner on day 2, meals on the arrival day except dinner, or on the departure day except breakfast, drinks, private airport transfers if required, travel insurance, tips to local guides/porters, items of a personal nature (ie souvenirs, snacks)

### Optional flights

Temple World can arrange flights to co-ordinate with this tour. As a guide the cost for return flights with Turkish Airlines is from £350 return from London, but airfares are subject to availability and pricing at the time of booking. Our preferred flights are TK1980 from Heathrow to Istanbul on 24 Sep 2020 (dep 11:25) and TK2319 and TK1971 from Izmir to Heathrow on 01 October (dep 11:55, connecting in Istanbul). We will arrange a group transfer for all travellers arriving/departing on these flights.

Turkish Airlines flies from London Heathrow, London Gatwick, Manchester, Birmingham, Stansted and Edinburgh to Istanbul IST airport direct. Flights are also available into Istanbul SAW airport (this is now the closest to the city) from London. Turkish Airlines flights from Izmir back to the UK will be via Istanbul.

Pegasus also flies direct from Manchester to Istanbul and from Izmir to Manchester or London Stansted direct.

Direct flights from Izmir to London are also available via some other low-cost airlines but unfortunately we can't book those for you.

We can quote and book just the one-way outbound flight with Turkish Airlines or BA to Istanbul if you wish to book your own inbound flight with a low-cost carrier.

If combining this tour with a private extension to Cappadocia we would arrange flights from Izmir to Cappadocia on 01 October and flights from Cappadocia back to the UK via Istanbul if you would like to include flights.

For beach extensions ending in Bodrum there are often direct flights from Bodrum to London so we would investigate those for you.

As a price guide the return cost for the main group flights shown from London Heathrow is about £350 return per person, but early booking may allow us to find cheaper fares.

Please contact us for assistance or advice regarding flights.

### **Booking your own travel**

Clients who would like to travel using airmiles as payment for the ticket/upgrades, or who wish to fly on a low-cost carrier are advised to book their own flights as we are not able to book these types of tickets on behalf of clients. If arriving/departing at a different time to the main group you will not be able to take part in the group transfer to/from the airports however we will be happy to arrange and quote for private transfers to meet any flight time if required.

**VERY IMPORTANT! Those making their own arrangements should check with us before making any binding or non-refundable flight arrangements, firstly because the tour departure is not guaranteed until we reach minimum numbers, and secondly to obtain advice that the proposed flights will work with start/finish times of the tour.**

## **Trip Scholar**

**Professor Peter Sarris, FHS, Oxon. Reader in late Roman, Medieval and Byzantine History, University of Cambridge**

Peter Sarris read Modern History at Balliol College, Oxford (1990-93), after which he was elected to a Prize Fellowship (by examination) at All Souls College, Oxford (where he was a Fellow from 1993 to 2006). He moved to Cambridge as a University Lecturer and Fellow of Trinity College in 2000, and has held Visiting Fellowships at Rice University, Texas, and the Dumbarton Oaks Research Library, Washington D.C. (Harvard University). Professor Sarris is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, a member of the Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies and Director of the Virtual Centre for Late Antiquity. He has published extensively on the social, economic and legal history of Late Antiquity, the Early Middle Ages and Byzantium, with a particular focus on the political economy of the East Roman Empire from the fourth to sixth centuries, the transmission of Roman economic and legal culture, and the background to the rise of Islam. His current research focuses on the development of Eurasian trading networks between Constantinople, Persia, Central Asia and China, and also on the emergent contours of the 'confessional state' in the age of Justinian. Professor Sarris is an engaging lecturer who has proved a popular trip scholar on previous Alumni tours.

## **Fitness Guideline**

We have graded the fitness level required for participation in this tour as **Moderate**.

This is a busy itinerary with a lot to see, most of which is on foot. There are no hikes but whilst sightseeing we might be 'on the go' for several hours at a time, without long breaks to sit down and rest. There will be some longer coach journeys at points during the tour.



It is important that everyone is able to keep up with the group during walking tours, as Istanbul's streets and sights are busy with locals and tourists, so we do need to stick together and keep to a certain pace to see everything as planned. Archaeological sites visited often don't have well-made paths and it can be uneven underfoot with loose gravel and various trip hazards from fallen blockwork. Most are not accessible for wheelchair users, and some are on hillsides.

As a general rule we would say that if you rely on a stick, frame or walker to get around your home or neighbourhood, this tour probably is not suitable unless you request a separate private guide for excursions. We can arrange this on request, at extra cost. Please contact us for advice if you are at all unsure if this tour is for you.

## Private extensions in Turkey

We have been arranging group tours and private journeys in Turkey for over two decades and there are no corners we don't know! Our tailor-made team would be delighted to quote a bespoke pre or post-tour extension of any length, whether it's for a privately guided side-trip to Cappadocia or simply a lovely beach hotel before or after the tour. The sea temperatures in late September/Early October are usually wonderfully warm for swimming, and with air temperatures in the high 20s and early 30s with blue skies, this means whether you'd like to explore or just relax by the sea this is the ideal time to go.

### Cappadocia



We highly recommend adding a 3 night private extension to Cappadocia after the tour if you have time to extend your trip. October is an ideal time to visit the region weather-wise (it is too hot in the summer months, and too cold in the winter months). There is a daily direct flight from Izmir to Kayseri, one of the two airports serving the Cappadocia area, so it's very easy to add this on after the tour.

A whimsical landscape of pink and white “fairy chimneys”, Cappadocia is the heart of Anatolia. It was the centre of a late Byzantine community and preserves some of the finest frescoes in Turkey – no fewer than 350 churches and monasteries hewn out of the tuff, painted in vibrant colours.

Suggested itinerary (we can arrange guiding for as much or as little time as you’d like during the stay- this is just an idea)

### **1 October**

Tour ends after breakfast. Transfer to Izmir Airport for direct flight to Kayseri, Cappadocia. Check into your hotel for a 3 night stay. Argos Hotel, Museum Hotel and Yunak Evleri Hotel are our recommended properties in this region.

### **2 October**

Visit the Göreme valley, with pink and white “fairy chimneys”, vast pinnacles of eroded volcanic ash. This whole area was the centre of a late Byzantine community and today preserves some of the finest Byzantine frescoes in Turkey, some virtually unaffected by the passage of time. A highlight is Uchisar Castle, with its maze of tunnels, passages and stairways connecting rooms which have been hollowed out of the rock.

### **3 October**

Visit the underground “cities” of Kaymaklı and Derinkuyu. These subterranean dwellings were built as a refuge against marauding hordes. Afternoon visit to the Church of John the Baptist and other churches at Çavusin and Zelve.

### **4 October**

Optional Hot Air Balloon excursion this morning – start your day with a pick-up at 5 am to be at the launch site for inflation of the balloons and take-off at 6:30am. Ascend 300 metres into the air for a simply staggering birds-eye, panoramic view over the valleys and rock formations. Balloons move by the wind and you will float wherever the wind takes you. After approximately 60 minutes in the air, a champagne reception greets you on landing.

Return to your hotel for breakfast and check out. Transfer to the airport for your onward travel (flights to London, Manchester, Birmingham and Edinburgh are available).

**Price:** This is a tailor-made extension so the price will depend on the accommodation you choose, how much guiding you would like to include, and whether you add the hot air balloon or not. We will be pleased to quote the cost based on a luxury or reasonably priced hotel to suit your budget.

### **Beach/relaxing extensions**

The closest area for good beaches to Izmir is the Ayvalik area, with stunning bays and sandy beaches. The best resort on this coastline is the **D-Resort Murat Reis**, set on a private sandy beach, and with high-end rooms, service and food. A 3-5 night stay in this area would be a wonderful way to relax in style at the end of the tour.

For something completely different, why not extend your stay near Ephesus at a hotel set among vineyards? The **Yedi Bilgeler (Seven Sages) Winery hotel** offers state-of-the-art winemaking facilities and airy, country-style rooms with views of the lavender gardens, vineyards and the lush valley.





You can taste wines produced at the property's winery, learn about wine making on site, and sample home-made jam, olive oil and herbs from the estate. There's an excellent 'farm-to-table' restaurant on site, a pool for relaxing and the site of Ephesus is only 5 miles away if you would like to visit it for a second time at your leisure.

Bodrum is just a two hour road transfer from Izmir, and is home to the most deluxe retreats on the whole southern coast, such as **Amanruya, Mandarin Oriental Bodrum, Six Senses Kaplankaya** and **The Bodrum EDITION**, all located in seclusion in the surrounding coastline away from the town. We also have hotel picks in central Bodrum too for those who would like to explore.



Please contact [alice@templeworld.com](mailto:alice@templeworld.com) in our tailormade team for advice or a quote on any private pre or post tour extensions.