

12 Days: Culture Trip Eastern Turkey - Black Sea (Turkey)

The east of Turkey preserves an unimaginably rich and diverse cultural heritage that we get to know on our trip: the Kurdish population and Armenian history, the Antioch of the Apostles, Assyrian - Aramaic and Greek monasteries, Seljuk and Ottoman mosques, the oldest temples of mankind and the culture of Urartu, the Upper Mesopotamia, the legendary Lake Van, the biblical Mount Ararat and the Black Sea

Day 1: ARRIVAL

Flight from Germany – Istanbul Transfer to the hotel, which is located in the middle of the old town. Visits depending on flight time, the rest of the day is at leisure. Dinner and overnight stay (-/-/A)

Day 2 ISTANBUL

from our hotel we walk to the Blue Mosque and Hagia-Sophia, later to the Bosphorus, where we can enjoy the unique atmosphere while eating fish on the Bosphorus Bridge and collect many impressions, overnight stay in Istanbul

Day 3 VAN

Transfer to Istanbul Airport and Flight to Van. Transfer to the hotel, after check-in drive to the old town of Van and visit the castle rock of Tuschba, the capital of the Urartians, with the rock tombs of the kings and their cuneiform walls; dinner; Overnight in Van.

Day 4: VAN-SEE, AKDAMAR

We drive to the Armenian monastery island of Akdamar with the recently renovated Holy Cross Church, which became world famous especially for the unique biblical scenes on the outer walls; in Lake Van (about seven times larger than Lake Constance) with its special alkaline water quality, we also have the opportunity to swim. Afterwards we will look at a village near Van Yedi Kilise, which means seven churches. Here remains of once remained a total of 7 churches. Overnight stay in Van

Day 5: VAN, DOGUBAYAZIT

The Iron Age culture of Urartu (the "land of Ararat" of the Old Testament) is the focus today. Southeast of Van we drive to the ruins of Çavuştepe (8th century BC) and continue over the picturesque waterfalls of Muradiye through the bizarre lava landscape of the Tendürek volcano and reach the foot of the Ararat near the Iranian border. In the old Dogubayazit we admire the Ishak Pasha Palace (the "Neuschwanstein of Turkey") and see an originally 60 meter deep meteorite crater. Overnight in Dogubayazit

Day 6: ARARAT- ARCHE NOAH

The 5165 m high, snow-capped Great Ararat with its 3937 m little brother to the side majestically dominates the landscape in the border triangle Turkey-Iran-Armenia-Azerbaijan. Original and charming is the nearby presumed "Noah's Ark Landing Site," a natural terrain formation with ship-like structures masquerading as authentic in the local "Noah's Ark Museum." Afterwards, after a short drive, we will look at the north side of Ararat with ruins of an ancient Armenian settlement. Nothing is known about this place historically so far. Overnight in Dogubayazit

Day 7: DOGUBAYAZIT- KARS

We drive from Dogubayazit towards Kars. On the way we visit a salt mine. Kars is the setting of Orhan Pamuk's book "Snow". The high plateau creates excellent conditions for the production of yogurt, milk, cheese, honey and meat. It produces carpets and kilims, known for their special color combinations and unique designs. In Kars we first drive up to 1800 meters to the fortress hill with the citadel "Kars Kalesi", below which the Kars Cayi (river) meanders. From here you have a beautiful view over the city. Particularly striking is the Armenian Apostle Church, which today serves as a mosque and bears reliefs of the twelve Apostles. After these impressions we move into our hotel. Overnight stay in Kars

Day 8: ANI, KARS

drive to the wildly lonely ruins of the legendary medieval Armenian capital Ani, which everyone who travels the region must have seen. Once with a population of 100,000, the city is spread over a vast rocky plateau bordered on three sides by deep gorges. It is located directly on the Turkish-Armenian (formerly Soviet) border, a deep riverbed of the Aras (Armenian Acurian). Overnight in Kars.

Day 9: KARS- ERZURUM

Drive to Erzurum, the "Capital of the East", where magnificent mosque buildings from Seljuk and Ottoman times await us: Double Minaret - Mosque, Ulu Cami, Vizier Mosque. Overnight stay in Erzurum

Day 10: TRAPEZUNT, HAGIA SOPHIA

Drive through the Pontic Mountains to Trabzon, the capital of the Byzantine Empire of Trebizond. After checking into the hotel, we visit the cross-domed church Hagia Sophia from the 13th century with its well-preserved, brightly colored frescoes. Like its big sister in Istanbul, the Aya Sofya of Trabzon was converted into a mosque. Finally, an evening walk on the Black Sea. Overnight in Trabzon.

Day 11: SUMELA, TRAPEZUNT

Today we visit the Sumela Monastery (original name: "Saint Mary of the Black Mountain"), located like an eagle's nest on a rock face, the highlight of every Trabzon visit. In 385, the Greek hermits Barnabas and Sophronius, following a mystical instruction, are said to have recovered a Marian icon personally painted by the evangelist Luke, for which they built a sanctuary. It later became a well-known place of pilgrimage. The relics of the monastery, next to the icon a splinter of the Cross of Christ, are now in Greece, where a new Sumela monastery was built. The Greek Orthodox monastery became a national heritage in 1970.

Day 12: RETURN FLIGHT

Trabzon – Istanbul – Home

Services:

- ☒ German speaking tour guide
- ☒ all transfers according to the program
- ☒ nights in a hotel in a double room
- ☒ half board
- ☒ water during the entire tour
- ☒ all entrance fees and fees
- ☒ All flights on request

Services not included in the tour price

- ☒ Alcoholic beverages, soft drinks
- ☒ Tips
- ☒ Single room supplement
- ☒ Individual excursions and visits outside the program
- ☒ Personal expenses
- ☒ Insurance