

Cappadocia, Taurus & Mt Ararat 2012

ITINERARY

DAY 1 (July 14th) Depart UK flying to ISTANBUL

DAY 2 (15th) In ISTANBUL

DAY 3 (16th) Fly ISTANBUL - ANKARA

Meet at the airport and transfer to hotel.

DAY 4 (17th) In ANKARA

DAY 5 (18th) ANKARA - IHLARA Valley

We will depart by road for Cappadocia, about 4 hours drive. On the way we'll pass the Great Salt Lake of "Tuz Gölü" and stop to see the 13th century Seljuk caravanserai of Ağzıkarahan. Afternoon arriving at the beginning of the Ihlara canyon, in Selime village. Here we'll have opportunity to discover some ancient cave dwellings, before starting our 2 hours walk to Belisırma village. We'll spend our first night in Ihlara area. *Overnight regular camping BLD*

DAY 6 (19th) IHLARA Valley - Cappadocia

The Ihlara valley, due to its morphological formation, has proved to be a potential seclusion and worship area for monks and priests and to highdeaway and defence area for people. During our 4 hours walking, we'll have opportunity to visit several churches with good conserved frescoes. Our lunch-break is in Ihlara village. In the afternoon we join our bus and drive to the centre of Cappadocia, and walking through Pasabaglari, known as the valley of the Priests. Many of the chimneys here are only partially divided, showing us the continuous erosion process. Interestingly too there is a small minaret transformed from a church belfry indicating that this place was inhabited by Moslems after the Christians. This valley is also noted for the many caves in the fairy used by hermits for their retreats. A three capped chimney was the retreat to the monk Simeon, who unlike his counterpart in Syria, lived inside the pillar instead of on top of it! . at the end of the walking, arriving to the hotel in Goreme that located at the beginning of the White valley with wonderful panoramic view of Red valley. total 5-6 hrs walk. *Overnight regular camping BLD*

DAY 7 (20th) AKVADI - GÖREME

We trek through the Akvadi (White valley) eroded so perfectly by time, rain and wind during centuries. Lunch-break in a restaurant in Uçhisar village and visit of the densely settled citadel. A great panoramic view of the surrealist area is available from the top. Walking in the pigeon valley, we descend to Göreme village, where the fairy chimneys go hand in hand with houses. *night in regular camp with shower and WC. BLD. 5 h.*

DAY 8 (21st) CAPPADOCIA - TAURUS MOUNTAIN- Maden valley

This morning we leave the surrealistic cappadocian area and drive to Taurus range. En route visit of the fascinating Kaymakli underground city after visiting continue the transfer and arrive to Pınarbaşı village, the trailhead village, we will have our lunch here in Pınarbaşı village we begin our Trans-Taurus Trek with a 2 hours hike to Maden valley 1900 m. **Overnight camp with all meals. Ascent = 350m - Descent = 0 m.**

DAY 9 (22nd) Maden valley - Comce lake

Today we begin our trek through the Aladag mountains. We trek up the Maden George, possibly seeing nomads at the yayla or mountain pasture where we stop for lunch. After lunch we climb up away from the river to our camp at Karagöl lake, where the hardly can enjoy a well earned swim. Fritillaries and Grape hyacinths abound here in July. The energetic may like to continue up past the lake towards Sigirasan pass, for superb views of Dipsizgöl and the north face of Demirkazık peak. Overnight at camp. 2550m
Ascent = 650 m - Descent = 0. BLD

Day 10 (23rd) Comce lake - Yedigöller (seven lakes) Basin: 3000m. BLD

We have a beautiful walk to comce gölü (lake) and we continue through the Akçay valley summer pastures and walk up to Tekkekalesi pass 3200m then head south to our campsite at Yedigöller, or seven lakes, so called because of many lakes forming here in the beginning of summer from melt water flowing down from the surrounding mountains. Towers above the campsite and to our right we see the massive ridge of Mt.Narpuzbaşı at 3622 m, and Mt Direktas 3550 m front of lakes. While we're here we expect to meet a family of friendly nomads who inhabit this valley during the summer months and whose black goat-hair tents are usually pitched close to our camp. We may be invited to join them for some traditional "ayran" a refreshing yoghurt based drink. Night fire will be arranged. About 6-7 hours walking. **2 nights camping with all meals (3020 m). Ascent = 600 m - Descent = 180 m**

DAY 11 (24th) - Yedigöller- Mt Embler

Trek to Mt. Embler and take advantage of the easy ascent to the summit 3723m. Splendid scenery opens up with the chance to see the whole Taurus range including Mt. Bolkar and other summits (Mt Hasan and Mt Erciyes). Ascent and descent takes about 4 h. Afternoon free to relax or visit the lakes and nomads. **Overnight camp with all meals at 3100 m. Ascent = 623 m - Descent = 623 m.**

Day 12 (25th) : Yedigöller- Sokullupınar

Walk in the morning, along the Yalak Deresi trail to a narrow canyon with spring water. Then cross the rugged Çelikbuyduran Pass (3450 m). Down to valley passing some bizarre sandy coloured rock formations on the way, to our 2000m. campsite at Sokullupınar. Its beautiful grassy setting provides a dramatic contrast to the rocky barren site at Yedigöller Camp. Total 5-6 hours walking.

Ascent = 430 m m - Descent = 1450 m

DAY 13 (26th) - Sokulupınar- Cimbar canyon

The day is to enjoy the spectacular scenery of the northern face of Mount Demirkazık (3756 m). More impressive scenery as we trek through the impressive Cimbar Canyon. We pause in the Demirkazık village (1550m) for a while to absorb the scenery and have lunch-break in a village house. We'll contact with the habitants of the village whose lifestyle hasn't change for centuries. It may be possible to observe some women spinning wool and working on their looms. We return to Sokulupınar camp site on a footpath. 5 hours walking. *Overnight camp with all meals* Ascent = Descent = 450 m

Day 14 (27th) Sokullupınar - Emli valley

Departing our campsite we ascend the Tulu Valley, before climbing up again to the high pastures of the Eznevit yaylası (2538 m). Depending on the time of year, we may encounter the semi nomads of this area grazing their flocks. After lunch we gradually descend to our campsite at Emli valley ,valley covered with firm and oak forests. About 5-6 hours walking. Overnight Camp at Emli valley 1850 m . . Ascent = 500 m - Descent = 650 m

Day 15 (28th) Alaca Valley- Emli Valley

Optional day walk from Emli Valley camp up to Alaca Plateau (altitude 2400m). 2.5 hour trek in the Southern slopes of the Taurus mountains gradually up to Mangirci valley and 2 hours across plateau (with picnic lunch near spring) and 1.5 hour descent to fixed camp - 6 hours total. 600m ascent and descent, camp at alt. 1750m. Overnight camp with all meals.

DAY 16 (29th) - Kayseri - Van

In the morning drive to Kayseri airport and fly to Van and drive to Dogubayazit... Overnight hotel BB

Day 17 (30th) —DOGUBAYAZIT

Rest day in Dogubayazit with chance to visit (at extra cost) 17th century Ishak Pasha Palace. Overnight at hotel in Dogubayazit. (D)

Day 18 (31st) — ELI VILLAGE / CAMP I

Drive up to Mt. Ararat by truck (approximately 2 hrs drive) to the start of the trek at 2,200m. After walking 4-5 hours you'll reach the base camp at 3,200m (10,500ft) and overnight. Ascend 700m. (B-L-D)

Day 19 (Aug. 1st) — ACCLIMATISATION DAY

Acclimatisation day up to 4,200m. Trekking up in the mountain for about 4-6 hours. Overnight in the same camp site at 3,200m. Ascend: 1,000m / Descend: 1,000m. (B-L-D)

Day 20 (2nd)— CAMP II

Trek up to the second camp site which will take 4-5 hours walking. Camping at the intermediary camping site at 4,200 meters (13,780 feet), just before the summit slope. Ascend 1,000m. (B-L-D)

Day 21 (3rd) — SUMMIT DAY

Weather permitting, very early ascend to the summit of Mt. Ararat (5,137 m - 16,853 ft) and walking on the glacier routes. From the summit, at sunrise you'll be able to see the summit of Mt. Elbruz and the little Ararat. Descend to Camp II for overnight. Total ascend and descending for 9-10 hours. Ascend: 937m. Descend: 937m. (B-L-D)

Day 22 (4th)— CAMP II / DOGUBAYAZIT

Descend down to Eli village via the first campsite, trekking about 4-5 hours. You'll meet the truck near the village and drive down to Dogubayazit. Time at leisure in the afternoon and overnight at hotel. Descend: 2,000 m. (B-L-D)

Day 23 (5th) — DOGUBAYAZIT / Depart VAN

Transfer to Van airport for your flight to Istanbul. Overnight in Hotel(B)

DAY 24 (6th) - Istanbul - Home

Transfer to Airport, fly home.