Bursa / Istanbul

First Ottoman Capital Bursa & Surroundings



Tour code: IB-TR-013

Duration: 2 days

From €499.00 / person

Languages: English

Overview

Immerse in Bursa's charm, where the echoes of the Ottoman Empire resonate in every corner. And that's before we head to Bithynian city of Nicea or Iznik, seat of two ecumenical councils.

Your itinerary

DAY 1 BURSA, CUMALIKIZIK

First capital of the Ottoman Empire - inspired and sustained by Islam, and Islamic institutions. Came under Roman, then Byzantine rule before it became the first capital of the Ottoman Empire in 1326 after a 10 year-long siege. The city was awarded Unesco World Heritage status for being the

birthplace of the Ottoman Empire. Home of finest mosques, theological schools (medreses), humanitarian centers (imarets), and social services (hans, hamams, and public fountains).

Drive south of Istanbul across the Sea of Marmara to the lush-green imperial city of Bursa and begin our prefect introduction tour in the footsteps of the Ottoman Sultans. Ulu Cami, Bursa's most important mosque dates from 1399, when Sultan Beyazid also known as Beyazid the Thunderbolt promised that he would build 20 mosques if he would win the battle of Nicopolis in Macedonia. Eventually he won the war, returned but instead built the Grand Mosque with 20 domes. Many worshipers and visitors remain inside for long moments of meditation observing elegantly understated display of quotations from the Koran in fine calligraphy. Beyazid the Thunderbolt ruled from 1389 to 1402 and notable for his military campaigns and conquests. However, in a confrontation between Bayezid and Mongol Tamerlane, Bayezid was defeated; he died in captivity, triggering the Ottoman Interregnum from 1402 to 1413.

Bursa’s two great timeless monuments, side by side. Built for Mehmet I Celebi, Green Mosque is an architectural gem, completed in 1422. The building signals the dawn of a new Turkish architectural tradition, inspired stone carving, and spectacular blue and green tile work. On a level above the main doorway is the sultan's lodge, where the great man used to join the rituals. Behind the mosque to the south is the harmonious octagonal Green Mausoleum. Located in a cypress-trimmed park, the construction of the tomb was ordered by the tenant himself and final resting place of him. Mehmet I Celebi, during his short rule (1413–21), he reunited a fractured empire following the Mongol Tamerlane’s 1402 invasion at the Battle of Ankara. Short walk across the park will bring us to the colorful local Silk Market.

Dining is another Bursa specialty, roasted meat slices atop a bed of diced pita bread dressed with browned butter, savory tomato sauce and dollop of yogurt on the side; Iskender Kebap - one of Turkey’s national dishes, named for the chef who created the dish in 1867. A nice lunch will be served in a quaint local restaurant. Be sure to try geographically marked chestnut candy, grown on the foothills of Uludag.

Located in the city centre within Tophane Park at the summit of Bursa Citadel, Tombs of Osman and Orhan his son are buried here. Osman Gazi was the Ottoman sultan who founded the Ottoman Empire. According to Osman Gazi's wish to be "laid to rest beneath the silver dome of Bursa," his tomb was constructed on the chapel of St. Elie, the Byzantine monastery formerly on the site, from which some mosaics in the floor have survived. This structure was completely destroyed in the 1855 earthquake, and re-built by Sultan Abdulaziz in 1863. Some ramparts and walls still survive on the steep cliff. The six-storey Clock Tower, only surviving of a group of four, also served as fire alarms. There are excellent views across Bursa from the park it stands in. Because it is the oldest part of Bursa, it contains many fine old Ottoman-Bursa structures. Many important Ottoman buildings still

remain in Bursa.

You will also have the chance to see Irgandi Bridge, one of the most photographed sights made famous by instagram influencers. Finely restored Koza Han built in 1490, meaning ‘Silk-Cocoon Hall’ with its leafy inner courtyard filled with cafes, was the final stop on the Silk Road from China. Just 20 minutes from Bursa, where the rough cobblestone alleys, adobe brick and half-timbered houses and traditional village of Cumalikizik where life still follows a village rhythm. Overnight Bursa. (L, D)

DAY 2 ULUDAG, GOLYAZI

Doubtless, the most spectacular part of the journey is the 8.2km, world’s longest cable-car over 2543m-high Mount Uludag National Park aka Mount Olympos of Kingdom of Lydia(Iron Age). The Lydians were said to be the first who invented money in the shape of coins featuring the royal symbol, a lion - in 600 BC. Strabo from Amaseia states that the origin of the word ‘Mysia’ meant hornbeam (ornamental and timber trees) in Lydia. Strabo is best known for his work Geographica. It is known in mythology as the place where the gods watched the Trojan war and one of the Turkey's most popular ski resort.

Enjoy free time to explore Uludag Mountain range. Hop onboard a 4X4 jeep, buggy car or off-road ATV in summer – snowmobile, snowboard or ski in winter or just some fresh, cool air. Hike down into the woods for an up close experience with this fascinating landscape. You can embark on easy walks or difficult treks on marked trails – the list is almost endless. The choice is yours. Optional activities are a different way of seeing more of the region in a shorter time.

Stopping en-route to visit Golyazi - it sits on a tiny island joined to the mainland by a causeway and doesn’t even show up on many maps. The lake itself is exquisitely beautiful its shores surprisingly unspoilt, its waters still and quiet, making this a perfect place to come if you want to throw off the stresses of city life.

Continue on to Istanbul for the opportunity to finish up your sightseeing or get in some shopping at your own pace. Your tour then finishes with a drop-off at your Istanbul hotel in the evening. We are able to organise extra post-trip accommodation and day tours/activities if you wish to extend your stay. Happy travels! (B, L)

(B – Breakfast, L –Lunch, D –Dinner

Good to know

Bursa is a beautiful city where Ottoman history, cultural heritage, and natural beauty meet. Guests will enjoy exploring historic landmarks, traditional markets, charming Ottoman streets, and scenic

views of the city. Bursa offers a memorable experience combining history, culture, shopping, and nature.

Plan your journey

Contact our team for dates, availability and a personalised quote.

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