Ephesus / Istanbul / Laodicea / Pergamum (Pergamon) / Philadelphia / Sardis / Smyrna / Thyatira

Seven Churches Of The Revelatıon: Unveılıng Mysterıes Of The Bıble



Tour code: IB-TR-012

Duration: 3 days

From €899.00 / person

Starting point: İstanbul

Languages: English

Overview

A 3-day journey travelling back to some of the most important places for the early believers of the Christianity. Turkey has been the center of Christian history with all the biblical sites and churches mentioned in both Old and New Testaments. The two-thirds of New Testament's books were written either to or from churches in Turkey where the major Apostles St. Peter, St. Paul and St. John have either ministered or lived in.

Your itinerary

Day 1 IZMIR, SMYRNA, EPHESUS

Transfer to the airport for an early morning flight to Turkey's third-largest city, Izmir. It is proudly liberal and deeply cultured, more livable than Istanbul, less bureaucratic than Ankara.

Upon arrival in Izmir, you will be met by our guide and driver and set-off on your private tour following the traces of Epistles or Letters of John to the Christian communities in Asia Minor. It consists of visions, predicts future dramatic events, and uses a great deal of symbolic language. Interpretations of the Book of Revelation is a task that has kept biblical scholars busy for centuries. Seven Churches of Revelation tour will open your eyes as to how Christianity spread from the days of the apostles to the start of apostasy.

Begin with a visit to the remarkable, the Agora open-air museum of Smyrna located in the middle of Izmir's city center with many marble statues and columns, was once the commercial center of the city. The word Agora means gathering place, and it was used as a meeting and marketplace during the Greek and Roman times, you can see everything in Agora in just under an hour.

St. Polycarp Church was built in 1625 with the permission of longest-serving and most powerful of Ottoman Sultan, Suleyman the Magnificent and the request of Louis XIII. Polycarp is a Founding Father of the Church. Credited with compiling and publishing the New Testament, Polycarp’s legacy is immeasurable. At 85, as Bishop of Smyrna (modern-day Izmir), he was considered a dangerous nuisance. And as the legend goes, when the Romans burned him at the stake, a white dove appeared and disappeared into the sky. It is the oldest Christian house of worship in Izmir, decorated with frescoes depicting the life of Polycarp, made by the French architect Raymond Charles Péré who also designed Izmir’s Clock Tower. Look for a man with a moustache and bound hands within the fresco depicting St. Polycarp’s martyrdom in 155 AD—it’s Père’s cheeky self-portrait. It was about to collapse as a result of the 1922 Izmir Fire and was rebuilt in 1929. Overnight Kusadasi. (L, D)

Day 2 THE SEAT OF SATAN: PERGAMUM, THYATIRA, SARDES

Coastal drive with fantastic views of fishing villages, olive groves, apple and peach orchards to the modern town of Bergama - ancient Greek city in Mysia and the capital of the Kingdom of Pergamon, situated 125 miles further north from Ephesus. Once the residence of the royal families, aristocrats, scientists and philosophers. Kingdom of Pergamon was founded in the 3rd century BC by Philetarios, one of Alexander the Great’s generals. Julius Caesar himself once visited too, it was here that Caesar imprisoned and executed the very pirates who had kidnapped him in 75 BC after he hunted them down following his release. John warned the church here that they were living in a place of

“Satan’s throne” (Rev. 2:12–17).
Finest example of Turkey’s ties to Greco-Roman history, Acropolis is full of temples dedicated to the gods and goddesses of Greek and Roman Pantheon and other structures make up the historic site such as Temple of Trajan, the Temple of Athena (goddess of wisdom, war and the crafts), the Temple of Dionysos (god of wine, ecstasy, fertility, theatre and revelry), the Hellenistic Theater, the baths and the library of 200,000 volumes, second only to the great library of Alexandria, Egypt. Out of jealousy, the Egyptians banned the export of papyrus, inspiring the invention of the new writing material. Though you must work some to find the clues. In addition, visiting the Great Altar of Zeus with its richly decorated frieze, a masterpiece of Hellenistic art. A part of the altar and its surviving reliefs, restored and mounted, now controversially stands in the Pergamon Museum in Berlin.

Learn about the medical history at the Asklepion from your guide, which was the most famous hospital in the ancient world, dedicated to the god of health and medicine, Asclepios - where methods of treatment included blood transfusions, music therapy and meditation. But that isn't all, you will also have the chance to get to know the history of Galenos, who was the first private doctor for the emperor and was the father of all the pharmacists of the world. Perhaps the world’s first celebrity diet doctor before setting up clinic as physician to Pergamum’s gladiators.

Inspired by all we've learned, we'll continue on to explore the Thyatira, was once a busy trading center and famous in dyeing of purple clothes. Paul's sermons in the Philippi city of Macedonia mention Thyatira and the church there. He describes Thyatira as the hometown of a wealthy purple dye merchant named Lydia, who worshipped God. Thyatira is one of the Seven Churches mentioned in Revelations tolerated the false prophetess.

From one famous site to another! Sardis, the capital of the ancient Kingdom of Lydia. It is evident throughout the scriptures that Jesus knows the needs of each one of his sheep. For instance, as Head of the congregation, he was in a good position to give counsel. When Jesus had John write to the early century Christians in Sardis, it was to commend those who remained pure in their worship. He also urged others in the congregation to ‘wake up’ spiritually. Here coins were minted, and the dyeing of wood originated. We’ll visit the Roman era Synagogue and gymnasium. Overnight Sardis. (B, L)

Day 3 PHILEDELPHIA, HIERAPOLIS, PAMUKKALE, LAODECIA

Today’s journey begins with a visit to nearby Philadelphia which was referred to as the ‘New Jerusalem in the Book of Revelation. The only church that wasn’t censored. We will see the remains of a Byzantine basilica built of brick, with a high arch and 11th-century frescoes in the modern city of Alasehir. Christians here were a fine example for their endurance against worldly influences.

A nice lunch will be served in a quaint local restaurant before we pass through rural villages and fruit orchards to visit the ancient Greco-Roman city of Hierapolis. Don't miss the Roman Theatre, largest surviving Necropolis, the Agora, Martyrium of St Philip the Apostle and Temple of Apollo where people came to consult the temple's oracle. We gain a sense of the daily life during those times.

Just below the UNESCO World Heritage site of Hierapolis lies white calcium terraced pools of Pamukkale. Known locally as the Cotton Castles, they are a natural phenomena and gift of Mother Nature. It is a surreal natural wonder of rippling semi-circular, pure-white travertines that sit among green farming fields. This pure white hillside is one of Turkey's most photographed spots and famous natural tourist attraction. Made up of 17 hot water springs, mineral-rich volcanic spring water outpouring over basins and natural terraces, crystallizing into travertines. The hot springs at Pamukkale are believed to cure rheumatism, musculoskeletal system, heart and blood vessels and other ailments, ancient Greeks and Romans considered the thermal springs sacred.

Swimming in the Cleopatra’s Pool offers a separate pleasure with mineral water bubbling from its bottom at 35°C or 95°F, so a dip in the middle of Dec-Jan is not out of the question. Changing rooms are available, as are drinks and snacks. There is an additional entrance fee to swim in this pool, but it is well worth it. When visiting Pamukkale, remember to pack your bathing suit, towel and slippers.

Lastly we will visit the Hellenistic sacred-city of Laodicea. The city was first founded in the mid-3rd century BC by the Seleucid king Antiochus II who named the settlement after his wife, Laodice I. The site of Laodicea is laid on a grid (Hippodamic) system and covers 5 square km/2 square miles. It encompasses the largest stadium in Anatolia, two theaters, four baths, five agoras, five fountains (nymphaeums), long colonnaded streets, impressive temples, and a myriad of churches and basilicas. This is barely scratching the surface of the incredible amount of features visible at this site.

The church chastised for being lukewarm, "You are neither cold nor hot" (Rev. 3: 15), and for being too comfortable incorporating pagan and Christian beliefs. The massive church of Laodicea, discovered in 2010 is one of the most notable highlights of the archaeological site. Located just north of Syriac Street near the Church of Laodicea, Temple A was initially built in the 2nd century AD and dedicated to Apollo, Artemis, Aphrodite, and the imperial cult. Walk through the beautiful courtyard, and the vaulted subchamber has been covered with a modern glass and metal walkway so you can view its depth. There is also evidence that the theater would have also been used for water games. Walking out over this viewing point gives you a stunning view of the countryside on the northern edge of Laodicea.

Evening transfer to the airport and return flight back to Istanbul. Tour ends where we began with an airport to hotel transfer. Opportunity to finish up your sightseeing or get in some last minute shopping at your own pace. Our tour draws to a close and we say goodbye to our new friends.

Please note that check-out time from the hotel is normally noon, but luggage storage facilities are available. 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)

Smyrna Biblical Reference – Revelation: 2:8-11
Pergamon Biblical Reference – Revelation: 2:12-17
Thyatira Biblical Reference – Revelation: 2:18-29
Philadelphi Biblical Reference – Revelation: 3:7-13
Sardes Biblical Reference – Revelation: 3:1-6
Laodicea Biblical Reference – Revelation: 3:14-22
Hierapolis & Colossae – Colossians 1:7-8; Colossians 2:1; Colossians 4.12-13
Ephesus Biblical Reference – Revelation: 1:11:2:1-7 and Acts 18:19-28:19

Plan your journey

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

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