Gallipoli / Istanbul

The Gallipoli Pilgrimage – A Journey of Remembrance



Tour code: IB-TR-02424

Duration: 1 day

From €36.00 / person

Starting point: Istanbul

Languages: English

Overview

Embark on a deeply moving historical journey through the Gallipoli Peninsula, where the legacy of World War I lives on. Explore ANZAC Cove, historic battlefields, Beach Cemetery, Lone Pine Australian Memorial, the Turkish 57th Infantry Regiment Cemetery, and Chunuk Bair New Zealand Memorial. Discover the stories of courage, sacrifice, and reconciliation while learning about Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and the enduring friendship between Türkiye, Australia, and New Zealand.

Your itinerary

The Gallipoli Pilgrimage – A Journey of Remembrance

Historical journey through the Gallipoli Naval (19 February–18 March 1915) and Land (25 April 1915 – 9 January 1916) Campaigns in modern-day Turkey, where the last ‘gentleman's war’ took place during World War I. Anglo-French operation against Ottoman Empire, intended to force the 38-mile- (61-km-) long Dardanelles channel and to occupy Constantinople. Many in Britain, notably the First Lord of the Admiralty, Winston Churchill, the campaign was conceived as a way to break the bloody stalemate on the Western Front, knock the Ottoman Empire out of the war, and open a sea line of communication to the Russian Empire. The invasion failed to achieve any of these goals and was instead blunted by determined Ottoman resistance under the leadership of Lieutenant Colonel Mustafa Kemal, taking a predominantly Australian and New Zealander point of view.

The battlefields cover an extensive area from Cape Helles at the southern tip of the peninsula north for over 35 km (22 miles) to the Anafartalar hills. Around 100,000 were killed and 400,000 wounded during the nine-month campaign (1915-1916). The World War I battlefields of Gallipoli are now a serene site. Here, we’ll embark upon a tour of the region, once the site of fierce fighting and today almost hauntingly beautiful, with its wooded landscape dotted with understated memorials to the war dead.

Our guided tour of the region will take in sights such as Beach Cemetery, also known as ‘Hell Spit’, where over 390 Commonwealth service men are now buried. The cemetery was very dangerous as it was within range of the Turkish gun called “Beachy Bill”. This gun was credited with causing over a thousand casualties. One km farther downhill is Brighton Beach, favourite swimming spot for Anzac troops and rumoured to be the first intended landing site. Then, we go to Anzac Cove where General Sir Ian Hamilton decided to make two landings, placing the British 29th Division at Cape Helles and the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) here in Anzac Cove, north of Kabatepe. The initial landing site on the ill-fated morning of 25 April 1915. At the water's edge lies an Australian engineer (Sapper Fred Reynolds attached to the 8th Battalion), the first to fall during the war.

Today, ANZAC Cove is quiet, with the occasional fishing boat passing along offshore. A grassy field at the foot of Plugge's Plateau has been designated as the ANZAC Cove Commemorative Site and Ariburnu Cemetery, with a parking lot for the buses that bring visitors here on ANZAC Day. A monument at the cove bears the words of Lieutenant Colonel Mustafa Kemal, was instrumental in the success of the Ottoman defense of Gallipoli:

"Those heroes that shed their blood and lost their lives... You are now lying on the soil of a friendly country. Therefore, rest in peace. There is no difference between the Johnnies and the Mehmets to us where they lie side by side here in this country of ours...

You, the mothers who sent their sons from faraway countries, wipe away your tears. Your sons are now lying in our bosom and are at peace. After having lost their lives on this land, they have become our sons as well."

Although the Allied troops won the crucial first night, they were unable to advance further into the mainland and hills except for the Lone Pine, where Turkish defenders managed to push troops to recapture the hill after a Turkish counter-attack.

Stunningly situated Lone Pine Australian Memorial is the most affecting of all the Anzac cemeteries, and the epitaphs on the tombstones are very moving. Savage hand-to-hand fighting took place on the battlefield where the cemetery was established—thousands were killed on both sides here in four days of fighting—and seven Victoria crosses, the highest award given by the British government for bravery and usually quite sparingly distributed, were awarded after the Battle of Lone Pine. Australians enter this cemetery with their heads held high, because Lone Pine embodies the spirit, character, and courage of their sons. Just up from Lone Pine is the Respect to Mehmetcik Statue dedicated to 'Mehmetcik' (Little Mehmet, the Turkish 'tommy' or 'digger'), who carried a Kiwi soldier to safety. Johnston's Jolly, where unidentified soldiers were buried after the Armistice and with the lines of Allied and Turkish trenches still clear on either side.

You will also have the chance to visit the Turkish 57th Infantry Regiment Cemetery, where lieutenant-colonel Mustafa Kemal told his poorly equipped troops: “I am not ordering you to attack, I am ordering you to die.” It also includes a statue of a Turkish Soldier, another of a grand-daughter with the oldest Turkish Gallipoli veteran, Huseyin Kacmaz, who died in 1994 aged 108. 300 meters more brings us to a road heading west to The Nek, where the Australian Light Horse Brigade suffered heavily in August offensives, this episode was immortalised in Peter Weir's 1981 film Gallipoli, starring Mel Gibson and Mark Lee. Before tour’s end, Chunuk Bair New Zealand Memorial. In August a new assault was launched north of Anzac Cove against the hills around Chunuk Bair.

Good to know

Experience a meaningful guided journey through Gallipoli’s historic battlefields and memorials. Comfortable walking shoes and respectful behaviour at cemeteries and commemorative sites are recommended.

Plan your journey

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

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