



EasternTurkeyTours

Treasures of Eastern Turkey



Exceed your expectations **Email: info@easternturkeytour.org**



Nemrut

Day 1: CAPPADOCIA KAHTA (Nemrut)

We leave the Land of Beautiful Horses and weird rock formations and head out across Turkey's hinterland, along the ancient Silk Road via Kayseri and stopping at the great Karatay Han before proceeding to Adiyaman. Overnight near Nemrut

Day 2: KAHTA - URFA

Today we visit the magnificent funerary monument at the peak of Mt Nemrut which stands as a testament to an ancient king's ambition. From Nemrut we continue to the massive Ataturk Dam straddling the mighty river Euphrates, and on to Urfa, the ancient city of prophets. Ancient footprints truly mark this part of Turkey; Urfa was the birthplace of the biblical patriarch Abraham. We will visit the cave and shrine where tradition tells us Abraham was born. Nearby are the sacred pools of Abraham filled with sacred carp that are fed by the many pilgrims who visit this holy site. Overnight in Urfa.

Day 3: URFA DIYARBAKIR

We depart Urfa and proceed to the on-going archaeological dig at Gobekli Tepe. Although not widely known amongst the general public Gobekli Tepe is probably one of the most important archaeological sites in the world. From Gobekli Tepe, Hill of the Navel, this site represents a major shift in our understanding of man's early history. Here lie the remains of the earliest religious structures built by man yet to be discovered and at about 11000-13000 years old pre-dates pottery, writing, Stonehenge and the Pyramids. Comprising a series of stone walled enclosures with



The Pools of Abraham



One of the many carved megaliths forming the chambers



Saffron Monestary

massive stele carved to represent human beings and cult representations of animals, Gobekli Tepe is an enigmatic monument to the birth of culture and civilisation that is slowly revealing its secrets to us today. We continue to Diyarbakir and another ancient settlement; at 5000 years old is one of the oldest cities in the world. An overwhelmingly Kurdish city Diyarbakir is famed for its ancient city walls; constructed by the Romans, the current walls, built of massive black basalt blocks is, after the great wall of China, the longest continuous defensive wall in the world.. Overnight in Diyarbakir.



Hasankeyf on the Tigris

Day 4: DIYARBAKIR - MARDIN - TATVAN

Mardin: Located on a high hill overlooking the plains of southern Turkey and Syria. After breakfast, we will visit Deir-Al-Zafaran (the Saffron Monastery), centre of the Syrian Orthodox Patriarchy and still an active monastery. The site of the Saffron monastery has been a sacred place for thousands of years. The monastery is built over Sun Temple that is dated at about 1000BC and which is an integral part of the monastery's foundation. After lunch drive to Hasankeyf, situated by the Tigris River; soon to be submerged under the flood waters of a new dam on the Tigris, Hasankeyf has hundreds of caves, hidden waterways, tombs, a larger and smaller Palace, as well as ruins of the Great Mosque. After Hasankeyf we will drive to Tatvan. Dinner and overnight Tatvan.





Hosap Castle

Day 5: TATVAN - VAN

After breakfast drive to Van via Akdamar Island where we visit the beautifully restored 10th C Armenian Church of the Holy Cross, or Sourp Khach, built as a part of a palace and religious complex between 915 and 921 by the Armenian King Gagik Ardzruni.. From Akdamar we continue to the city of Van, where we will spend the night.

Day 6: VAN

From Van we travel south along a branch of the Silk Road (Ipek Yol). We visit Hosap Castle. The main castle structure of Hosap was built straddling the Silk Road and served as both a means of protecting the road and as a point of charging tolls on travellers. From Hosap we return to Van for lunch ,before ending the day with a visit to the Citadel of Van at sunset. On a large rock outcrop the 3000 year old Urartian castle, once the centre of Tushpa, the Urartian capital, commands wonderful panoramic views of the city of Van, Lake Van and Mt Süphan to the north- west and Mt Nemrut Crater to the west. Overnight Van



The Church of the Holy Cross on Akdamar



Ishak Pasha Saray

Day 7: VAN - DOGUBEYAZIT - ISHAKPASA PALACE - KARS

After breakfast, we leave for Dogubeyazit via Muradiye and the pretty Bendimaahi Falls. In Dogubeyazit, we visit the spectacular Ishak Pasha Palace 1685 – 1784 with unique fusion of architecture from Seljuk, Ottoman, Georgian, and Armenian – Persian styles. We continue our journey north skirting around the western edge of Mt Ararat. Mt. Ararat is one of the great natural spectacles of the world,



The falls at Muradiye



Ancient Ani

known in Turkish as “the Mountain of Pain” and in Kurdish as the “Mountain of Fire”. Armenians know it as Masis. Armenian mythology says that the mountain was named for the Armenian King Amasya, the great-grandson of the Armenian patriarch Hayk. The name Ararat derives from the Bible (Jeremiah 51:27) and is a transliteration of “Urartu” the name foreigners gave to this region and its inhabitants in Biblical times, although they called themselves Biainili. In Biblical and Koranic tradition Ararat is the resting place of Noah’s Ark and it was from here the world was repopulated after the flood (Sura 11 & 21 and Genesis Chapters 6-9), Ararat is also featured in the pre-biblical Sumerian flood story the “Epic of Gilgamesh” as Mt. Nisir. Overnight Kars

Day 8: KARS - ANI

From Kars we continue to Ani to spend the morning at the former capital of the great medieval Armenian Kingdom. The remains of the ruined city include several churches as well as the shell of the Cathedral of Ani, the citadel and a mosque along with an extensive and well preserved defensive wall. There are also some exciting remains of frescoes in the Church of St Gregory (Tigran Honentz) despite exposure to the elements for many centuries. The site is built inside a loop in the Arpacay river which is now the border with the Republic of Armenia. Overnight Kars

Day 9: KARS - ERZURUM (People will depart to Armenia and Georgia today)

Kars to Erzurum. We now follow the Aras river west through the First World War battlefield site of Sarıkamış, the Aladaglar mountains



The Church of the Redeemer, Ani



Sumela interior

and along the gorge of the river Aras via magical scenery of fields of gorse and fern, pristine river beds and deep ravines by the beautiful six-arched Çobandede bridge and into Erzurum. In Erzurum, the principal city of eastern Anatolia, we will visit the magnificent Seljuk Ulu Camii, with its wooden dome, and also the twin-minaret Çifte Minare Medrese. Overnight Erzurum.

Day 10: ERZURUM - SUMELA MONASTERY - TRABZON

From Erzurum to Trabzon. We drive north through the Pontic Alps, in the steps of Xenophon's Ten Thousand with spectacular views, along the Karasu, the northernmost branch of the Euphrates, to Askale, with its ruined Byzantine fortress. We continue over the 2390m Kopdagi Pass, the Black Sea watershed, into the Coruh valley, passing the huge fortress of Bayburt.

Sumela Monastery, Trabzon. To Sumela Monastery, dedicated to the Virgin Mary, this has been a monastic site since the 4th century AD. Perched high in a gorge of the Altindere Vadisi National Park, the present buildings date from 12th century on. The buildings were abandoned in 1923, but recently restored, the Monastery is not only one of the iconic sites of Turkey but is once again being used to celebrate religious festivals: on August the 15th 2010 Istanbul's Greek Orthodox Patriarch, Bartholomew held the first mass since 1923 on the occasion of the feast of the "Dormition of the Theotokos" which commemorates the "falling asleep" or ascension of the Virgin Mary into heaven. Overnight in Trabzon



The Virgin and Christ Child, Sumela



Sumela Monastery

Day 11: TRABZON - FLIGHT HOME



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