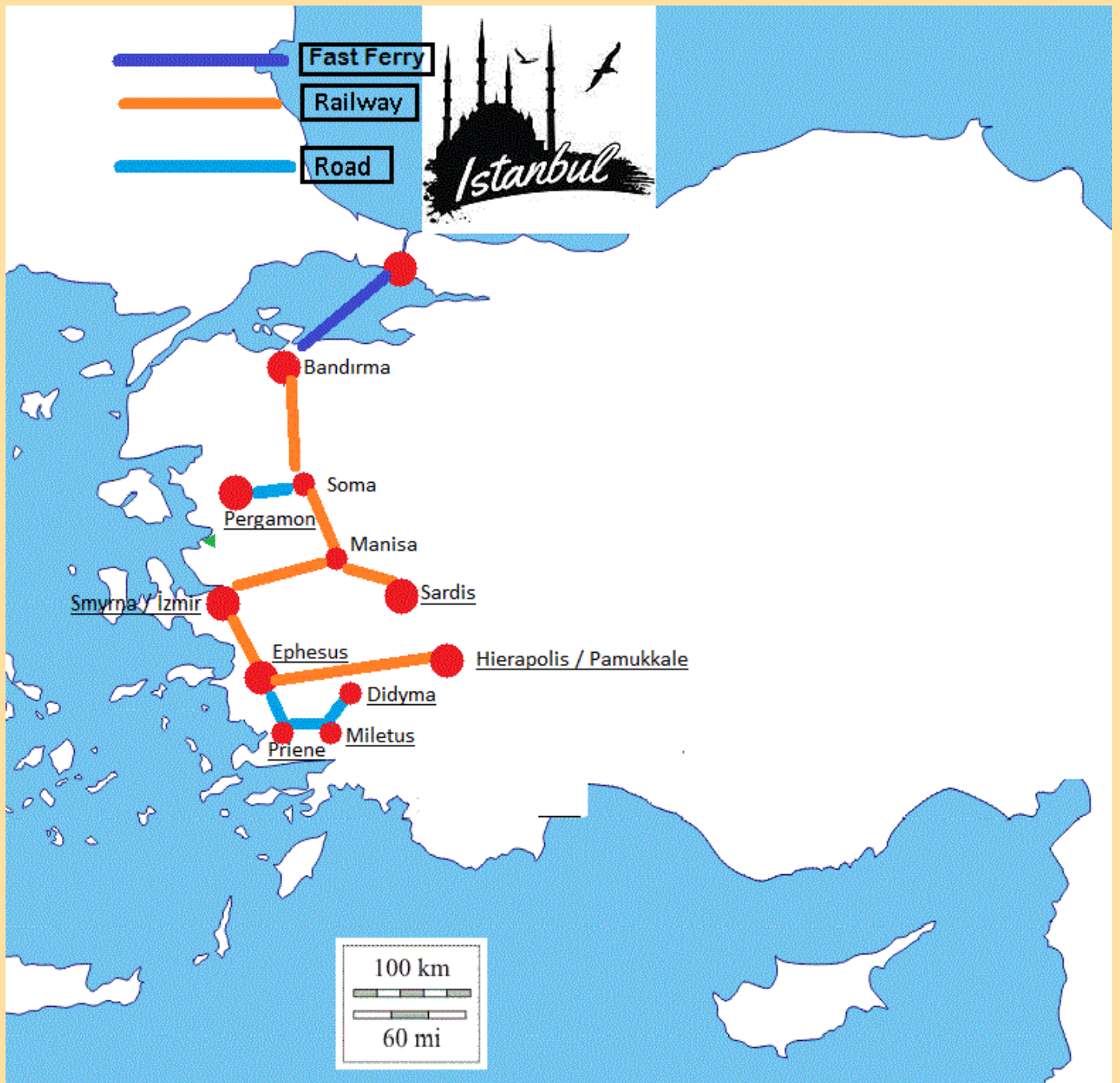


ambertravel

Western Turkey Ancient Sites. Fully guided tour.



Tour Programme:

Day 1. Private transfer from Istanbul Ataturk Airport to Turkoman Hotel BB (or similar)

You will be met at the airport and brought in a private vehicle to your hotel. Depending on your flight time you will be able to stroll around the ancient hippodrome, before dinner in one of the many excellent restaurants in the area.

Day 2. Walking tour with private guide, of sites of Istanbul. All mentioned entrance fees are included. Turkoman Hotel BB (or similar)

Starting straight from the hotel, you walk to the **Hippodrome**, centre of the sometimes gruesome history of Constantinople, where the chariot races which enthralled the population were held, and where Emperor Justinian's great general Bellisarius massacred the people during the Nika riots. The Hippodrome is decorated with obelisks from ancient Egypt brought by Constantine to decorate his new Rome.



Right on the hippodrome, you will visit the **Blue mosque**, one of the finest examples of Ottoman building skills, the last great mosque of the classical period decorated with the blue tiles that give it its colloquial name.

Continuing your tour of the great places of worship, cross the square to visit **Hagia Sophia**, the Byzantine church built in 576 AD, which dwarfed all other buildings in the world for hundreds of years.

You will complete your day with a visit to the atmospheric **Basilica Cisterns**, built to ensure the huge city of Constantinople had enough water stored to withstand a long siege. This ancient cistern was only discovered recently and still supports the modern buildings built above it on its hundreds of classical columns.

Day 3. Private guided tour of Topkapı Palace and Bosphorus cruise. All mentioned entrance fees and cruise charges are included. Turkoman Hotel BB (or similar)

Visit **Topkapı Palace**, the sumptuous, but tastefully un-extravagant home of the Ottoman Sultans, and their private quarters know as the **Harem**, subject of much erotic fascination in the west.

After lunch, take the tram down to Eminönü and look at **Sirkeci station**, the terminus of the **Orient Express** and board one of the cruise boats which ply the historical **Bosphorus**, where Europe meets Asia, and where the Mediterranean meets the Black sea, viewing wooden mansions, castles and Ottoman Palaces, as well as the military hospital where Florence Nightingale famously worked.



Day 4. Transfer to Yenikapı Fast Ferry docks. Cross Sea of Marmara and get on train to Bergama. Night in Anil hotel BB or similar. Entrance fees to Asklepion included.

Crossing the marble sea on the comfortable catamaran we arrive in the port town of Bandırma. We then board the train and head via Balıkesir to the mining town of Soma. In Soma we will go by road, the short distance to Bergama. You should have time this evening to wail the short distance to the site of the **Asklepion**, a mysterious ancient healing centre, based upon a sacred spring which still runs down the steps into a tunnel, which the patients would walk down on the way to the round, underground treatment rooms.

Day 5. Full tour of Pergamaon, including entrance fees to Cablecar, Acropolis, the Red Basilica, and the Pergamon Museum. Night in Lydia Thermal Hotel. BB.



On foot, we walk through the charming town of Bergama to the foot of the acropolis, here we board the cable car which takes us up to the top in grand style. At the **Bergama Acropolis**, there are spectacular views of the town below, in addition to the sights of the acropolis, modeled to rival the Acropolis in Athens. We will visit in detail, the main **theatre** - the steepest in the ancient world (**There are a total of 3 theatres, 1 amphitheatre and 1 stadium in Pergamon**); The magnificent **Temple of Trajan**, built painstakingly on a vaulted terrace; The **Library of Pergamon**, where the books were made from Parchment, a trade dominated by the Pergamenes. (The word Parchment is a corruption of the Latin 'pergamenum' and the French 'parchemin') During the building of the library here and the competing library of Alexandria, the demand for Papyrus became so high that papyrus became scarce, helping parchment production grow.

We descend and visit the massive brick edifice known as the **Red Basilica**, an Egyptian temple to Isis and Serapis. This structure was actually built above the river, and is placed on a double tunnel like bridge, 196 meters wide. There is a connection from the temple to the tunnel below.

After lunch we will visit the compact but **Bergama Archeology Museum**. Boasting a small but impressive collection of artifacts, Bergama's museum is well worth a visit. On exhibit are reliefs from the Acropolis, including a wonderful Roman-era relief from the Demeter Terrace, and a Hellenistic frieze and architrave from the Athena Terrace. Also impressive are the many statues from the Asklepieion and a mosaic floor featuring Medusa's head that was originally in the Lower Agora.

Early evening we depart by car, back to Soma Station. From there the train to Manisa, then change to the train for Salihli near Sardis. Spend night in Spa Hotel.

Day 6 Relaxing morning in Spa hotel, then short drive to Sardis. Visit The Lydian capital then take evening train to Izmir. Night in Aksan hotel or similar BB.



Have a slow morning to enjoy the best of this spa hotel, after lunch we will drive the short distance to Sardis. Sardis is set below unusual red sandstone cliffs, on the banks of the Pactolus, where Mythical King Midas washed away the Midas touch. The stream was definitely generous in terms of gold, as evidenced by the gold working workshops beside the stream and the reputed wealth of Sardis in ancient times. The term 'rich as Croesus' was coined after the King of the Lydians who reigned here. It is known that the first coins were struck here, therefore Sardis can claim to be the birthplace of commerce. We will visit the impressive Temple of Artemis, before walking down to via the Gold workshops to the site of the synagogue, before we view the beautifully reconstructed Gymnasium.

After we have enjoyed the site we will head back to Salihli and then take the evening train to Izmir

Day 7. Morning visit to Smyrna Agora, take train to Selçuk Visit Ephesus. Night in Bella Hotel or similar BB.

After breakfast you will visit the site of the **Marketplace (Agora) of Smyrna**. Smyrna was an important port city then as it is now, and was one of the seven churches of Asia. (Others you will visit this week are Pergamon, Sardis, and Ephesus- If you like, an optional visit to Laodicea is also possible).

Mid morning we will get on the train to Selçuk, and from there visit the sites of Ephesus. Here in one of the worlds most visited ancient cities you will visit the newly excavated **Terrace Houses**, a complex of luxury Roman dwellings with mosaics and frescoes in situ. From here you will visit the **Library of Celcus**, then the impressively sized theatre. A look at the well preserved latrines gives you an insight into daily life.

Walking down the **Arcadian Way** towards the silted harbour, we can also look at the well preserved basilica with baptistery attached.

We will walk back to Selçuk via the site of Ephesus's **Temple of Artemis**. This temple which is largely lost was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. From here the last stop of the day will be the recently renovated Ephesus Museum, home of the famous statue of Artemis.



Day 8. By car, visit the Ionian cities of Priene Miletus and Didyma. Night in Bella Hotel or similar BB.

Going onto road today we will visit first **Priene**, known as the Pompeii of Asia Minor, this city is the prime example of town planning in the ancient world, with its perfect grid system behind well defended city walls. The city was abandoned suddenly without being used by subsequent civilisations, and for this reason there is little building after the original town was built, giving us a privileged view of the order of ancient towns in their prime.

Miletus was one of the richest Greek cities of the area and was thought to have as many as 30 trading colonies spread across the Mediterranean basin. A fine theatre and well preserved bathhouse welcome you to this site, which also housed a famous monument to Pompey the Great who cleaned the area of pirates, making life much easier for the trading peoples who lived here.

Heading along the coast we arrive at Didym, site of the Temple of Apollo, Didyma. This enormous temple was the sanctuary of Miletus, site of a sacred spring where the priestess of Apollo would give prophecy, and next to Delphi, was the most important oracular site in the ancient world. The Persians burned the Temple and it lay in ruins until Alexander the Great reinstated the oracle and building started in 300BC. The massive temple was still being completed in 300AD, 600 years later, when Christianity stopped the final completion.

If you wish, you could visit the Çamlık Railway Museum with its fine collection of steam locomotives.



Day 9. Train to Denizli, Transfer to Pamukkale. Night in HalTur Hotel BB.

Taking the morning train up the Meander valley, you will visit the unique UNESCO site of **Pamukkale/ Hieropolis**. Taking your shoes off, you will walk from your hotel up through the white pools and frozen waterfalls of this 'one in the world' natural phenomenon. The evaporation of thousands of years of mineral rich waters has left this gleaming white monument to nature's variety. You can bathe in the 'travertine' pools or in the deep sparkling waters of **Cleopatras Bath**. After this you will walk around the extensive site of Hierapolis, the Phrygian/ Roman city which was built above, and because of the spring waters here. The Ancient theatre is one of the finest in anywhere, the Necropolis is one of the largest and most varied (try to find the tomb of the engineer-inventor of the crank and rod mechanism). Enjoy your last evening in a restaurant overlooking the floodlit travertines.

Day 10: Transfer to Denizli, Train to Izmir (Adnan Menderes) airport.

Includes:

Full guiding for 8 days. All guides accommodation and other costs.

All entrance fees to sites mentioned.

9 Breakfasts, Train tickets, transfers.

All transfers & transportation with A/C Comfortable Vehicle with professional driver per itinerary
Accompany Professional English speaking tour guide

Price does not include:

International air ticket

Tip of guides & drivers

Extra Meals

Extra services that not included in above.

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