

October 2010 Tour – Iran & Turkey

Iran & Turkey 15 days - Ancient sites of two Muslim neighbors

October 8 through October 22, 2010 - 14 nights/15 days

Price \$3,600 per person, double occupancy - Single supplement \$690

In Iran visit: Tehran, Kashan,, Esfahan, Shiraz and Persepolis.

In Turkey visit: Istanbul, Gallipoli, Troy, Dardanelles Strait and the magnificent Ephesus ancient city.



Iran segment itinerary & cost inclusions and exclusions

DAY 01: ARRIVAL-TEHRAN

Evening arrival in Tehran, transfer to hotel for overnight stay.

DAY 02: TEHRAN-SHIRAZ

Full-day visit to some of Tehran's major museums: Archaeological Museum, displaying an authenticated collection of pre-historic and ancient artifacts, with pottery dating back to 6-7 millennium B.C.; and Abguineh (Glass and Ceramics) with a wonderful and delicate collection of

ancient and Islamic glass and pottery, and the Carpet Museum; in the evening transfer to airport for flight to Shiraz, transfer to hotel for overnight stay.

DAY 03: SHIRAZ-EXC. PERSEPOLIS

Half-day excursion to Persepolis (site of the several palaces of Iran's great Achaemenid Kings Darius the Great, Xerxes and Artaxerxes); Naghsh-e-Rostam to visit the Kabe-e-Zardosht (fire temple/sanctuary), and Royal Tombs of Achaemenid kings, plus seven magnificent Sassanian rock-reliefs (including Shapur the First's victory over the Roman Emperor Valerian); return to Shiraz to visit some of the famous gardens of this city of "roses and nightingales", including the Eram Garden, the tomb of Iran's greatest lyric poet, Hafez; the pink tiled 19th-century Nasir-ol-Molk Mosque, and the Qajar-period Narenjestan Garden/House. Stay overnight in Shiraz

DAY 04: SHIRAZ-ESFAHAN

Drive to Esfahan, enroute visit Pasargadae, the site of the simple, but impressive, tomb and remains of the palaces of Cyrus the Great (the Founder of the Persian Empire); onto Esfahan, transfer to hotel for overnight stay.

DAY 05: ESFAHAN

Full-day city tour of the beautiful city of Esfahan, the 17th century capital of the Safavids, referred to as Nesf-e-Jahan (Half of the World) in Safavid sources, to visit the famous bridges of Shahrestan/Khajou/Sio-se-pol, the Armenian Quarter with several churches, including the important Cathedral of Vank; in the afternoon visit one of the world's grandest squares-the Maidan-e-Naghsh-e-Jahan with several sites (the Ali-Qapu Palace with its enchanting music rooms and balcony overlooking the Maidan, from where the Safavid Kings watched polo games, and two of Islamic world's greatest mosques – the Sheikh Lotfollah and the Shah (Imam) – with magnificent architecture and tile work), finishing with a visit to the Qeisarieh Bazaar with hundreds of shops displaying the art and handicrafts for which Esfahan is world-famous; stay overnight in Esfahan.

DAY 06: ESFAHAN

Full-day sightseeing of Esfahan to visit the magnificent Friday Mosque (with the famous Uljaitu Mihrab of the Il-Khanid period), the Harun-e-Velayat Shrine and the Ali Minaret, also visit Chehel-Sotun (Forty Columns) Palace and Hasht-Behesht (Eight Paradise) Palace, both set in beautiful gardens/parks, with further visit to the Maidan and shops. Stay overnight in Esfahan.

DAY 07: ESFAHAN-TEHRAN

Morning drive to Tehran, en-route stop over at the charming town of Natanz to visit a beautiful Islamic Complex (Friday Mosque/Monastery/Tomb of Sheikh Abdol Samad Esfahani), on to Kashan to visit the historical garden of Fin which was first planted during the Safavid period and kept alive with water from the nearby Sulaimanieh Spring. This beautiful garden was expanded by the Zand and Qajar monarchs, with many open pavilions added. You will also visit a fine example of a 19th century merchant residence known as Taba-Tabai House with its beautiful stucco dome and inlaid mirror work, with some of the best examples of existing "badgirs" (wind-catchers); continue to Tehran and drive by the Mausoleum of Imam Khomeini, transfer to hotel for overnight stay.

DAY 08: TEHRAN-DEPARTURE

In the morning transfer to the airport for departure flight

The price includes:

Accommodation in 4-5 star hotels, two meals a day at best available restaurants or hotels, airfare within Iran, all entrance fees to museums, all pickups, transfers, transportation in air conditioned coach, excellent English speaking national and local guides, tips for all included meals & visa approvals in Iran.

Not included:

Visa fee: \$140, International air, one meal per day, personal expenses, telephone calls, room service, internet, laundry, dry cleaning, travel insurance, etc



Turkey segment itinerary & cost inclusions and exclusions

Day 1 - Istanbul

Arrive in Istanbul. Based on time of arrival, sightseeing and dinner, or dinner only.
Overnight in Istanbul (3 nights).
Meals: Dinner

Days 2 & 3 - Istanbul

Istanbul is one of the world's greatest cities, a captivating blend of ancient and modern. Formerly known as Constantinople, capital of the Ottoman Empire. Istanbul is graced with beautiful mosques, vistas of the Bosphorus and the Sea of Marmara, and a grand bazaar.

We will walk through Sultanahmet, the old section of Istanbul and visit the Ottoman Blue Mosque, an elegant structure named for the blue tiles decorating its walls. We will visit the Topkapi Palace, the Byzantine Hippodrome, the Ayasofya Mosque or Hagia Sophia built in the mid 6th century and the amazing Underground Cistern, water source for Byzantine-era palaces. We will walk through the Grand Bazaar and Spice Market, taking time for shopping. We will take a cruise on the Bosphorus and the shores of two continents, Asia and Europe. Be prepared to taste some of the best food anywhere in the world.

Meals: Breakfast

Day 4 - Canakkale (Dardanelles)

In the morning we will drive to the Gallipoli peninsula, with the Aegean Sea to the west and Dardanelles strait to the east. On our way, we will see the beautiful coastline of the Sea of Marmara and see memorials of WWI battles that changed the course of history. In the afternoon, we will take a

ferry across the Dardanelles Straight and visit the ancient city of Troy, best known as the focus of the Trojan War. We will spend the night in Canakkale, a beautiful seaport city perched in Asia, looking across the Dardanelles to Europe.

Meals: breakfast, lunch

Day 5 – Pergamum

Our final destination today will be the Ephesus area. On our way there, we will visit the Acropolis of Pergamum, an ancient Greek city that sits on top of a mountain. After Athens lost its political importance in the second century BC, Pergamum and Alexandria became the two main centers of ancient civilization. Overnight Kusadasi (2 nights).

Meals: breakfast, lunch

Day 6 – Ephesus

We will visit the ancient city of Ephesus, one of the most extensive archeological sites in the world. We will be guided through the Temple of Artemis (one of the Seven Wonders of the World) and visit the House of Mary (believed to be the last residence of Mother Mary) and the Ephesus Museum. We will see ruins from the period of St. Paul, including the Odeon, monumental fountains, the brothel and much more.

Meals: breakfast

Day 7 – Istanbul

We will spend a pleasant morning in the mountain village of Sirince, one of the most beautiful villages of Aegean. We will witness village life, enjoy the local handicrafts and taste homemade olive oil and wine. Later in the day, we will head to the airport for a flight back to Istanbul.

Overnight in Istanbul

Meals: breakfast

Day 8 – tour ends

We will have breakfast and then end the tour together.

The price includes:

All sight seeing and museum admissions listed, a native English-speaking guide, all admissions for sites, all accommodations, all breakfasts, meals as indicated above, all transportation to execute the itinerary above, one domestic flight (from Izmir to Istanbul) and all taxes and fees.

Not Included:

International flights, beverages during meals, expenses of personal nature, free time sight-seeing (not listed in itinerary), travel insurance, etc.

Hotels will be small, charming, characteristic hotels as available. If they are not available, 3-4 star hotels will be used instead. All hotels will be centrally located.

Single supplement: \$690

Deposit and Final Payment:

Registration requires a \$500 non-refundable deposit. The balance is due sixty days prior to the departure date. You can pay by check or credit cards.

To register or for further information please call or send an email to abdi@solhtours.com