

Day 1 – Touch down in **Athens**, home of the modern Olympics, and a city of striking contrasts. Upon arrival a representative of Rainbow Tours will meet and assist you with your transfer to the hotel. Rest of the day at leisure-rest, visit the **Plaka** and absorb the sights and sounds of **Greece**. Overnight in Athens.



Day 2 - This morning we visit **Athens** (*Acts 17:15*). We climb up to the marble-capped **Acropolis** and see the famous **Parthenon** and the **Erechtheion**. Once we have climbed down from the hillside, we walk to nearby **Mars Hill** (**Areopagus**) (*Acts 17:22*) where the Apostle Paul delivered his well-known sermon. Our tour continues with the highlights of modern Athens: we pass by the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Parliament House, Presidential Palace, Panathenian Stadium, Temple of Olympian Zeus, the Academy, the University and the National Library. Return to hotel at noon. Overnight in Athens.

Day 3 - Our morning excursion out of Athens takes us by the Saronic Gulf via the historic Corinthian Canal (short stop for photos) to ancient **Corinth** (*Acts 18:1-18*). It was to this megalopolis that the apostle Paul came and worked, established a thriving church, and subsequently sent from here two of his epistles, now part of the New Testament. We visit all of the sites associated with his ministry: the Agora, the Temple of Apollo, the Roman Odeon, the Bema and Gallio's Seat. The small archaeological museum here is an absolute must! On the way back to Athens we see the ruins of an early Christian 5th century basilica in **Cenchreae**. Overnight in Athens.

Day 4 - Early in the morning we depart from Athens and drive to **Thessalonica**. On our way we have a short stop in **Thermopylae**, where we see the **Statue of Leonidas** commemorating the location where he and his 300 Spartans stopped the powerful Persian army. We also see the hill where the weapons and remains of the warriors are buried. Then we continue on to **Berea**, where the Apostle Paul arrived, and according to his custom went to the synagogue where, to his pleasant surprise, he discovered that these Jews were "*more noble*" than those he had encountered in Thessalonica. We see the Byzantine mosaic in the monument commemorating his preaching. According to local tradition, it was at this place where he stood and delivered his sermons (*Acts 17:10-11*). Arrive in **Thessalonica** in late afternoon. Now the largest town of northern Greece, it is only in the museum that we really get a feel for the Biblical city. Overnight in Thessalonica.

Day 5 - Early in the morning we enjoy a picturesque drive to the city of **Philippi**, where Paul established the first church in Europe. We stop at the river where Lydia was baptized and view the ancient forum and jail where Paul and Silas were kept. From here we continue to the beautiful city of **Kavala (Neapolis)**. Overnight in Kavala.



Day 6 - Early in the morning our journey takes us to the Greek/ Turkish borders. We say goodbye to our Greek guide on the Greek side and meet our Turkish guide across the border as our Turkish tour portion begins. Overnight in Assos.



Day 7 - At **Assos (Behramkali)** Aristotle founded a school of philosophy in 340 BC. The Apostle Paul passed through the area on his third journey (*Acts 20:13-15*). Today it is a haven for artists and scholars. In **Alexander Troas (Oduniskelesi)** Paul received his Macedonia call (*Acts 16:6-10*). A short distance away is **Troy**, the ancient city immortalized in Homer's *Iliad*. This location, Turkey's most excavated site, yields nine strata dating from 4000 BC through AD 300. Here Paul revived Eutychus (*Acts 20:9-12*). From Troy we drive to **Pergamum (Bergama)**. Once the capital of the Roman province of Asia, it is one of Turkey's most dramatic sites. Overnight in Izmir.



Day 8 - The ruins of **Sardis** are one of the most picturesque of the seven churches. John challenged the church here, "be alert and strengthened what remains..." (*Revelation 3:2*), and warned "but if you are not alert, I will come like a thief... against you" (*Revelation 3:3*). The **Philadelphia** church escaped any negative reference by John. Today the most interesting remains in the city of brotherly love are part of a Byzantine basilica and some 11th century frescos. Paul mentions **Laodicea** as the center of Epaphras' ministry (*Colossians 12:13*), and John warned the church there of its lukewarm attitude (*Revelation 4:16*). He admonishes "anyone who has an ear should listen..." (*Revelation 4:22*). Overnight in Pamukkale.

Day 9 - Expect to be startled by the dazzling white hillside of **Hierapolis (Pamukkale)**, as well as the magnificent ruins of the ancient city. **Miletus**, established by the Minoans, and later the Mycenaeans, offers us a hiking opportunity to the top of the Greco-Roman theatre. Later we visit the Baths of Faustina. Overnight in Kusadasi.

Day 10 - **Ephesus**, site of the world's largest excavated ruins, will amaze you with how vividly you can imagine the ancient city. Close your eyes for a moment and realize here the Apostles once walked along streets lined with wonderful public buildings such as the Baths of

Scholastica, the Library of Celsus, the Temple of Hadrian, the Theater and the Temple of Artemis, one of the Seven Wonders. Later visit **St. John's Basilica** where the Apostle John is buried, and the **Ephesus Museum**, site of some of the best treasures of antiquity in this region. Overnight in Kusadasi.

Day 11 - Fly to Istanbul. Our day will include a tour of the old city as our guide leads us to the **Topkapi Palace**, the last official residence of the Ottoman rulers. It is situated on the hillside of the Golden Horn and reaches out to the Bosphorus. Around the corner we visit the **St. Sofia (Hagia or Aya Sophia)**, one of the world's greatest architectural wonders, the fourth largest church in the world and the capital of the Christian church for nearly 1,000 years. Across the way is the **Blue Mosque**—time to remove our shoes as we mix with Islamic worshippers. This magnificent edifice is easily identified by its six minarets, the only one in Turkey structured in such a way. On our walk we pass along the **Hippodrome** where once chariots raced, and end up at the **Yerebatan Sarayı (Underground Cisterns)**.

The underground cistern dates to the Byzantine period and scenes from the film "From Russia with Love" were shot here. Overnight in Istanbul.

Day 12 - On the **Bosphorus Cruise** we have a fantastic view of both sides of the city and its skyline. Oh, to have been a sultan and lived along the sea in one of the many palaces lining the straits or a modern day dweller in some of the lovely villas! In the afternoon we visit the **Church of St. Savior in Chora** (meaning in the country), evidence that originally it stood in a rural setting. The present church dates from the 11th century and houses some of the finest Byzantine mosaics and frescoes. We head to the **Grand Covered Bazaar**, a maze of streets and shops under an intricately painted, vaulted roof. It is unto itself abounding in the sights, aroma and sounds of old Turkey. Overnight in Istanbul.

Day 13 - Transfer to the airport for your return having walked with the ancient Christians, and awakened the desire to learn more of Paul's sojourns in this area, and John's prophecy. So long until the next time.

