**Le Meteore - Istanbul e Cappadocia**

**The Meteora- Istanbul and Cappadocia**

**1° day Brindisi - Igoumenitsa – Ferry**

Depart from the respecting residence cities, start of the trip towards Brindisi, with arrival in the afternoon. Lunch not included (or in a conventional restaurant along the way or in a highway service area). Overnight on board of the ferry in a 2 or 4 bedded berths. Sailing at night.

**2° Day Igoumenitsa - Meteora – Thessaloniki**

Dismemberment in Greece and depart to Thessaloniki. We will traverse the mount range of Pindus, which maximum elevation is the Mount Smolikas, with 2.637 meters height. This mount was sacred to the God Apollo and The Muses. Traversing the continental part of Greece we will get to The Meteora located in Thessaly: where the nature has already made a spectacle, the human intervention made it a real masterpiece! It’s a landscape that occasionally becomes lunar-like formed by imposing pinnacles of smooth rock where here and there a museum stands. You’ll have a short tour of the monasteries and then depart to the Greek Macedonia. Lunch not included along the trip. Arrive in Thessaloniki in the evening, dinner and overnight in a hotel.

**Curiosity:** TheMeteora is an incredible area; the monasteries were built on big cliffs even hundreds of meters high. Once there were accessible only by rope stairs or mobile stairs, because the hermits arrived here in XI century, were seeking for spiritual isolation.
Visit of the monasteries: because of religious reasons, the women must wear long calf length skirts. You can find on a disposal for free by the entrance.

**3° Day Thessaloniki – Istanbul**

After the breakfast depart for Turkey. Along the trip, in great part flat in by the sea; we can admire the sea locations of Thrace, in the northeastern part of Greece, a big border area between Bulgaria and Turkey. Arrive at the border fulfillment of the customs formality and entrance to the Turkish territory. Proceed towards Istanbul, an enchanting city on the Bosporus on whose southern extremity is situated The Golden Horn. Dinner and overnight in a hotel, free for lunch or on request in a conventional restaurant along the way.

**4° Day Istanbul**

The entire day dedicated to the visit of the city, Istanbul, historically known as Byzantium, Constantinople or the New Rome. A crossroad and meeting point of two worlds, Istanbul is rich with history and civilization. The famous” Blue Mosque”, one of the world’s most beautiful mosques, decorated with over 21.000 glazed Turkish ceramic tiles. Cover your head and be prepared to walk without shoes on the red carpet that will expect you on the entrance. The grandiose Topkapi Palace, ancient residence of the Ottoman Sultans, nowadays a Museum with extreme richness, with treasuries with royal jewels and a beautiful Harem, originally intended for the approximately 1.000 sultan women.

Dinner and overnight are in a hotel. Lunch not included (or on a request in a conventional restaurant).

**Curiosity:** the saying “Smoking like a Turk”

Its origin is uncertain, the most probable dates back to the second half of the XVI century in which in Turkey ruled a Pasha who was very strict regarding the coffee and tobacco, which he consider were dangerous drugs. The coffee and tobacco consumers were harshly prosecuted (one of the expected punishments was cutting the nose…) and the coffe shops were destructed. Once the oppressor Pasha died, the Turks continued to drink coffee and to smoke, even excessively, as a reaction of the ban. Hence is the saying.

**5° Day Istanbul**

We have a day off. We suggest you to go to the Grand Bazaar, the most famous in the world with more than **200.000 m2 of small shops and stands. Colorful textiles and ceramic, handmade lamps and jewels with the most ancient techniques of the precious Turkish goldsmith.**

Lunch not included**, meeting in the evening in the hotel for dinner and overnight.**

**Curiosity**: to bargain as a good merchant, if you want to try to get a discount “***Indirim***” is the password.

**6° Day Istanbul – Ankara**

We will take off again toward east with the majestic Anatolian landmark we will traverse *Izmit*, *Duzce*, *Bolu.* Free for lunch along the way (or on a request in a conventional restaurant), arrive in the late afternoon to Ankara, which is in the heart of Turkey. Dinner and overnight are in a hotel.

On this travel day we will see an exceptional insight of the rural life in Turkey: hard workers engaged in the fields from dusk till dawn, in periphrasis, they really work “as Turks”.

**7° Day Ankara – Cappadocia**

After breakfast visit of the capital and its castle, the Ankara Kalesi,which is a fortress, consisting of double system of defense walls. The Kemal Ataturk Mausoleum, father of the Turkish Republic and a national hero, represents one of the highest examples of the modern Turkish architecture. After the lunch which is not included, depart for Cappadocia. The arrival in *Nevsehir* is expected for the evening*.* Dinner and overnight are in a hotel.

**8° Day Cappadocia**

Cappadocia has a unique geological landscape. It’s a place with a lunar landscape of incomparable charm, with underground cities, crypts and rocks shaped by the hands of the nature. Depart for an excursion in the surroundings of Nevsehir, visit in the morning of Goreme’s excavates, one of the most popular destinations that rises among the pinnacles of tuff of “the Hoodoos”. Visit in the afternoon of at least one of the majestic underground cities *Kaymakli* and *Derinkoyu.* The cities were excavated in the tufotra between the 6th and 10th centuries. Lunch not included. Dinner and overnight are in a hotel.

**9° Day Cappadocia - Pamukkale**

After breakfast, the longest leg of the journey. We will cross the Anatolian Peninsula from east or west. Along the way: *Aksaray*, *Konya*, *Aksehir*, *Isparta*,*Dinar.* Lunch not included during the trip. Arrive to Pamukkale (in Turkish means” a cotton castle”) in the evening, dinner and overnight in a hotel.

**Curiosity**: In Turkey were born important historical personalities, as the biblical character Abraham, the poet Homer, The Apostle Saint Paul, the fabulists Aesop and Herodotus, considered father of the history.

**10° Day Pamukkale – Izmir**

After breakfast visit the petrified cascades. Proceed along the valley of Menderes towards the archeological site Ephesus. Arrive to Izmir in the evening. Lunch not included, dinner and overnight in a hotel.

**Curiosity**: Pamukkale is the biggest “limestone flow” in the world with thermal origin; during the visit sunglasses are recommended, the whiteness given to the limestone reflection is blinding for some with naked eyes.

**11°Day Izmir - Troy – Chanakkale**

After the breakfast depart for Troy, which remained buried under the sand until the German archeologist Heinrich Schliemannon discovered it. Despite the unorthodox excavation method of the archeologist (there were countless damages done) the credit is his for discovering that Troy was made up of 9 other different cities that followed between ruins and rebirths. His demerit was to steal Priam's treasure and bring it to Germany. After the visit we leave for Chanakkale. Dinner and overnight in a hotel.

**Curiosity**: The Trojan horse was maybe a boat. This is what has recently been supported by the naval archaeologist Francesco Tiboni. The thousand-year-old misunderstanding would have arisen from an error in the translation of the texts following Homer, which inspired Virgil himself to compose the Aeneid. According to Tiboni, the artifact created by the Greeks to penetrate the walls of Troy was not literally a horse, in Greek hippos, but a type of Phoenician ship that was usually called "Hippos".

**12° Day Chanakkale – Thessaloniki**

After breakfast, cross the Dardanelle strait by ferry, the crossing takes just over 30 minutes, reaching the Turkish-Greek border. We will have a short detour along the route to make an orientation tour on the Chalcidice peninsula. Arrive in Thessaloniki in the late afternoon. Lunch is not included, dinner and overnight at the hotel.

**Curiosity:** On the Chalcidice Peninsula stands Mount Athos, a place of meditation, equipped with a special statute of self-government, the visit of which requires a special permit for men and, for religious reasons, prohibited to women.

**13° Day Thessaloniki- Itea**

Depart for Larisa and deviation to Delphi, traversing *Farsala* and *Lamia*. A short visit of the city of the most important and revered oracle and proceed towards Itea. Lunch is not included during the trip. Dinner and overnight arein a hotel.

**14° Day Itea – Patras**

We will have a short trip towards the port for embarkation. During the entire day the uncontaminated sea we will be constantly on our left side, we will make some stops and we will allow ourselves a bath or two. Embarkation in the evening in Patras, overnight on board.

**15° Day Patras – Brindisi**

**Brindisi,** disembarkation and return to the departure point. Lunch is not included during the trip, therefore: hugs and kisses, it won’t be easy to leave after this incredible journey.