Below is the proposed itinerary for the trip. As is true on any adventure travel trip, plans for any specific day may be modified due to weather considerations, unforeseen circumstances, new opportunities, and group interests.

DAY 1

Arrive Istanbul, welcome dinner

Arrive Istanbul (IST) any time today. Our first official meeting will be at 5 p.m. when we meet in the lobby of our hotel. We'll introduce ourselves and start getting to know each other before going out for a welcome dinner. (D)

DAY 2

Tour of Istanbul

A walking tour is the best way to see Istanbul and today we'll combine traditional sites and an insider's view. We'll tour the must-see sites of Istanbul: the Topkapi Palace, the ancient residence of mighty Ottoman Sultans; the Hagia Sophia Church, one of the most extraordinary buildings in the history of architecture from the Golden Age of Byzantium; and the Blue Mosque, Istanbul's most prominent symbol of Islam. But we will get beyond the tourist sites; our guide will lead us to old vintage Istanbul with dark turnoffs, passageways full of character, and buildings marinated in history, showing us the local way of life. After some free time, we'll gather again for dinner and have time to pack for our adventure. (B, L, D)

DAY 3

Fly to Izmir, transfer to Sirince

This morning we'll visit the Spice Market (aka the Egyptian Market), once the largest spice trading venue of the medieval world, with its abundant stalls still featuring piles of edible exotics with its heady mix of spices and herbs. Once the largest spice trading market in the medieval world, it has not been unaffected by modern tourism. Nonetheless there are stalls run by families that have been there for decades and our guide will make sure we come away with an appreciation of its historic roots as well as its current delights. After that we're off to the domestic airport for a short flight to Izmir. We'll spend the next two nights in Sirince, close to Ephesus, and a delight in itself. It's one of the very few genuinely beautiful historic villages left in the western seaboard of Turkey, and almost all houses date from 19th Century or earlier. (B, L, D)

DAY 4

Tour of ancient city of Ephesus, time in Sirince

We'll spend the entire morning visiting the ancient city of Ephesus. First a Greek and later a Roman city, it is considered to be the commercial, religious and social center of antiquity. It is a vast site and not yet completely excavated; what is visible, such as the Temple of Artemis, gives some idea of its original splendor. It is also an important early Christian site: this is where St Paul wrote his letter to the Ephesians and the Virgin Mary is believed to have spent her last days here. After lunch we'll return to the Inn where we'll have a chance to relax before an optional and informal tour of Sirince, followed by dinner. We'll be back to the Inn in time to pack up for the next leg of our adventure. (B, L, D)

DAY 5

Transfer to Marmaris, board the gulet

Today we'll get our first taste of the Turkish countryside during our transport to Mamaris, about a 5-hour drive. There we'll greeted by our English guide and the co-

Today we'll get our first taste of the Turkish countryside during our transport to Marmaris, about a 5-hour drive. There we'll greeted by our English guide and the co-owner of the boat, Anne, and our captain, cook, and crew of East Meets West, a traditional wooden sailing yacht called a gulet (Note: the crew are two men who have ample experience with all-women's groups and are always welcoming). After settling into our cabins, we share a welcome tea (and biscuits) before enjoying our first dinner on board. A typical dinner might include fried sea bass, hot potato salad with dill, a salad with mint and herbs, fresh bread and strawberries for dessert - yum! (B, L, D)

DAY 6

Hike to caves of Nimara and point overlooking harbor, motor to next anchor spot 2 hours down the coast

This morning and every morning we start with a breakfast feast of fruit, tomatoes, cheese, bread, different jams and strong hot coffee. The mountains surrounding the bay, that we have so far only seen from the boat, beckon to us for our first short warm up hike. Following a broad track that climbs gradually with a steeper ascent at the end, we'll have plenty of opportunity to chat as we make our way to the caves of Nimara, where there's evidence of a Goddess worshipping site from around 20,000 BC. We'll take in stunning views of the Aegean as we reach a height of 470 feet.

Although the boat has sails, we use the engine for cruising, so we don't take all of our time getting between places. On this afternoon's cruise we'll pass islands and wooded inlets as we head out of Marmaris Bay before turning south and cruising the coastline for about two hours to our next mooring spot. There will be time for swimming before enjoying dinner, which might be barbecued fish, fresh salads, potatoes, and other vegetables with other options for vegetarians.

Hiking: 2 hours, 3.1 miles. Elevation: 470 feet gain and loss (B, L, D)

DAY 7

Boat taxi up Dalyan River, mud baths, hike to ruins of Caunos and up over ridge to boat meeting point

After another hearty breakfast we start the day with a boat taxi up the Dalyan River. We pass the colorful town of Dalyan and the ancient Lycian tombs built directly into the rock, the oldest remnant of Caunos. Our destination? Mud baths! Start by plastering yourself and each other (this may be the most fun getting plastered you've ever had), wash it off in a cold shower, and then proceed to a further dip in the hot pool. You might not look any younger at the end, but your skin will thank you.

We then return by boat partway down river for our 30-minute uphill walk to the ruins at Caunos. Caunos dates back to at least the 4th century BC and the ruins mark its long and varied history before becoming part of the Roman Empire. While still being actively excavated, it is particularly known for the Roman amphitheater that seated 5,000; the Byzantine Basilica, an ancient Doric temple; and well-preserved Roman baths. We'll enjoy our picnic lunch overlooking the sprawling ruins and have time to explore them before starting our hike back. Our path starts through the ruins, continues through a village, and then goes steeply up to a saddle where a Muslim cemetery is located. From here we descend on road and trail back to sea level.

We return to our gulet, moored at Ekincik, where another delicious dinner, possibly chicken or aubergine gratin, bulgur, more delicious salads, and locally grown fresh fruit, awaits us.

Hiking: 4.5 hours, 7 miles. Elevation: 650 gain and loss (B, L, D)

DAY 8

Hike from Gulf of Fethiye to Roman ruins, swim in Cleopatra's Baths

The wonderful thing about cruising on a boat is that you can skip the built-up places and head for the less crowded, which is what we'll do this morning as we pass Dalaman and head towards the Fethiye Gulf. Dropping anchor in a small bay, this morning's walk climbs above the water on a coastal path before turning inland on an old Roman mule track that we'll follow to the ruins of a Roman church and settlement at Lydae. Our path now skirts through woodlands along a gorge, ending in another

stunning view of the sea below. From here we descend to Manastir Bay and the ruins of Cleopatra's Baths. According to legend, Mark Anthony built these baths as a wedding gift to Cleopatra where they found a hot water spring in this part of the bay.

Our boat will be waiting for us in the bay and we can swim among the ruins before lunch. After lunch we'll enjoy ice cream from the ice cream boat (!) and relax on our gulet as it motors around to the next bay. Tonight, we'll moor in a small beautiful cove that is just a short distance away.

Hiking: 2.5 - 3 hours, 3 miles. Elevation: 520 feet gain and loss (B, L, D)

DAY 9

Hike from Fethiye Bay, visit town of Gocek

This is the perfect morning for a lazy start. Following ancient goat trails, our path takes us above the water and through woods, gaining a summit with clear views of the many islands that dot Fethiye Bay. We descend to another cove where our boat awaits us, with lunch and a relaxed afternoon. Our boat continues to the small yachting resort of Gocek where it takes on supplies while we wander the town or sit in one of the many outdoor cafes and drink coffee before enjoying a dinner of chicken or freshly caught fish and calamari.

Hiking: 2.5 hours, 3 miles. Elevation: 400 feet gain and loss (B, L, D)

DAY 10

Hike to ridge overlooking Fethiye Bay, relaxed afternoon

Today is our last hiking day and our longest hike of the week. Walking amongst lavender, rock rose bushes, and juniper, our path once again climbs to a ridge, with magnificent views this time overlooking the whole of Fethiye Bay and the famous Gocek islands. It's a fitting last walk as we can see many of the places we've walked previously. Returning to our boat we'll motor a short way before dropping anchor for the night.

Hiking: 5 hours, 7 miles. Elevation: 1,100 feet gain and loss (B, L, D)

DAY 11

Visit ruins of Tlos and ghost village of Kayakoy

Today we journey inland. We'll stop first at the Tlos ruins, which date from the Lycian period. Originally one of the six largest Lycian cities, it was first mentioned in 14th century BC records. Excavation of the site is limited but its location and size make it worth a stop because there's so much to explore.

We'll go on to visit the ghost village of Kayakoy. It was once inhabited by a Greek and Turkish community until it - and all Greek communities - were expelled by the Turks in the 1920s (and in turn Greeks expelled Turkish communities from Greece). When a massive earthquake later decimated Fethiye, residents removed windows, doors, and roofing materials to help rebuild their town. We'll have lunch here in a very authentic local restaurant located among the ruins. An optional pleasant downhill walk to the edge of Fethiye will help us work off lunch before we return to the gulet. Tonight is our final night on the boat and we'll share a final farewell feast, toasting Anne and the crew and all we've learned.

Hiking: 1 hour, 1.3 miles. Elevation: 400 feet loss (B, L, D)

DAY 12

Transfer from Dalaman to Istanbul

Our exact day will depend on the timing of our return flight to Istanbul. We may do some last-minute shopping or wandering the town, possibly even some last-minute chatting on the boat. Whatever we do, at some point we will transfer to Dalaman for our return flight to Istanbul and home. We'll let you know what time you can plan to depart from Istanbul 6 months before the trip.