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CAPPADOCIA'S CAVES AND VALLEYS

Trip Summary

HIGHLIGHTS

- Wandering among the fairy castles of Goreme
- Hiking through valleys that each have their own personality
- Experiencing an authentic "Whirling Dervish" ceremony
- Visiting Christian cave churches that date from times of Roman persecution
- Experiencing the hospitality of an old culture that has always welcomed visitors

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TRIP AT A GLANCE

Location:	Cappadocia, Turkey
Activities:	Hiking
Arrive:	Arrive anytime at our hotel in Istanbul, Turkey on Day 1
Depart:	anytime on Day 6

Trip Overview

Cappadocia is described as both a lunar landscape and a fairyland of bizarre geologic formations. Millions of years ago, extensive volcanic eruptions covered the land with a layer of soft volcanic ash, or tufa. Erosion in the form of wind and water then carved a myriad of formations, including mushroom shapes, pinnacles, caps, and cones, including the famous "fairy chimneys". This soft rock was easy to carve, and the area has been inhabited since prehistoric times by different populations that have scraped out caves and built underground cities. In particular it was a place of sanctuary for early Christians during the Roman era. This combination of unique beauty and interesting human history make Cappadocia a must see place on any trip to Turkey. Maximum group size: 12

Rating

This trip is designed for women who enjoy hiking and want to explore this area on foot. Hiking is generally 3 - 5 hours; the trails are rocky with both ups and downs that are sometimes steep and may have loose pebbles. We take our time, though, and make sure everyone has the support they need.

What's Included

- Experienced local guide (there will be an Adventures in Good Company guide if the group size is 6 or more)
- Five nights double occupancy accommodation
- All meals from breakfast on Day 2 through breakfast on Day 6 except for one lunch
- All activities on the itinerary including guided hikes and the Whirling Dervish ceremony
- Roundtrip internal flight from Istanbul to Kayseri
- Roundtrip transfers from the Kayseri airport to Goreme and from the domestic airport to the hotel
- Transportation within Cappadocia

Not included: alcoholic beverages, guide gratuities, trip insurance.

OUR ITINERARY

Below is the itinerary we have planned 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 anytime today. We'll arrange a shuttle to your hotel. There are no planned activities for today but Istanbul is an interesting and safe city to explore on foot.

DAY 2

Depending on airline schedules, we'll arrange a transfer to the airport for your 90 minute flight to Kayseri, where you'll be met by the local guide. From the Kayseri airport it is about about a 1 hour drive to our "cave hotel". There will be time to settle in and explore the town before going out for the first dinner in Goreme.

Goreme is a small village right in the center of Cappadocia. Its setting amidst towering fairy chimneys and majestic honeycomb cliffs, surrounded by the stunning Rose, Honey, and Pigeon Valleys, truly make it one of Turkey's unspoiled treasures. One of its remarkable qualities is the co-existence of a traditional way of life (farmers still work the fields among the fairy chimneys) with a modern tourism industry. Here you can see the old and new Turkey side by side as you wander past ancient cave houses still lived in by local families who have maintained their tradition of hospitality to visitors.

DAY 3

Today and the next two days we will go for hikes with our local guide. Our hike today introduces us to the traditional villages of Cappadocia. Our transfer takes us to rural Kavak, a farming town that sees few tourists. We walk from here to Bahceli, where a cup of tea at the local tea house gives us a chance to take a break and absorb the local culture. From here, we walk to Ayvali and lunch in a pension decorated with folk art. This is the only place in the region which offers organic food. Our route is mostly undulating with occasional steeper ups and downs. After lunch we'll visit the Kaymakli Underground city, one of the many underground cities for which Cappadocia is known. Probably originally started as caves, they were expanded over the centuries as Christian inhabitants sought refuge from successive invasions of Romans, Arabs, Mongols, and Ottoman Turks. This underground city is one of the best excavated and most sprawling, and provides a fascinating look into a little known aspect of Turkish history. We return to Goreme for dinner and the evening. Hiking: 4 hours, about 5 miles. B, L, D

DAY 4

Today we'll break away from the classical trekking routes in the area. Our bus picks us up at 8.30 in the morning and departs for Cavusin Village. We'll wander the village that is largely deserted because of continuous rock falls. On our path out, we'll visit the little known church of John the Baptist, the biggest cave church in Cappadocia. It was first built in the 5th century and houses unique paintings from the 6th - 8th century. Our path continues steeply up to the summit of Bozdag mountain, where a panoramic view of the entire region awaits, including Uchisar, Goreme, Cavusin, Avanos, Ortahisar and Zelve. Enchanted by spectacular views of Mount Erciyes, we follow a smooth path over the plateau and descend for lunch in a small family run restaurant in Red Valley. When we say family run, we mean that literally; we eat on their patio and our meal is likely to be served by the grandmother. We'll also visit the Grape church, built right in a fairy chimney. After lunch we'll visit the Goreme Open Air Museum. Containing the finest of the rock cut churches with beautiful frescoes, it is one of the must sees of Cappadocia. Depending on our time and energy, we might walk or take our bus back to hotel, where we'll have time for a shower before another trip highlight.

Tonight we'll attend a whirling dervish ceremony. This ceremony, called Sema, is the inspiration of Rumi (1207 - 1273) and symbolizes the different meanings of a mystic cycle to perfection. The Sema ceremony represents a mystical journey of man's spiritual ascent through love, finding the truth and arriving to the "Perfect". Then he returns from this spiritual journeys as a man of maturity and greater perfection, so as to love and to be of service to all creatures without discriminating in regard to belief, class, or race. No matter what you believe, it is an experience that stays with you. Our evening ends with another dinner at a nearby restaurant. Hiking: 4 hours, about 5 miles B, L, D

DAY 5

Although we have not included a hot air balloon ride in the itinerary because they are quite pricey (\$200 or more) and not everyone's cup of tea, they are incredibly popular here. If you have ever had the urge to take a hot air balloon ride, this would be the place and our hotel can easily arrange it for you. It's an early morning activity so you can do it and still be back in time for our hike. Our walk today will show you the hidden valleys of the area with their vineyards and orchards of walnut, quince, and apricot trees. Starting in Goreme we soon leave the paved road and start walking up the Pigeon Valley. This valley is known for small fields, lush vegetation, and somewhat phallic rock formations. The path takes us to Uchisar, home of the "Uchisar castle", a massive rock on top of a hill with many carved rooms and spectacular views from the top. After our buffet lunch, we head for White Valley, where the path, with occasional steep descents, offers spectacular views of the natural cliffs and the man-made caves, and passes through a few tunnels carved into the rock. Our path leads us back to Goreme where we'll have time to clean up and have dinner before transferring to our late flight back to Istanbul tonight. Hiking: 5 hours, 6 miles with 800 ft elevation gain to the top of Uchisar. B, L, D

DAY 6

If you're staying on for the Istanbul and Turkey's Coast trip, you have today to relax, wash clothes etc. Otherwise you are free to leave anytime. However, when planning your return flight, you should consider that you won't be getting back to Istanbul until quite late (e.g. midnight) the night before and you will need to leave the hotel 3 hours before your flight time. And if you have time, there is still lots more to see and do both in Turkey and the region. B

ADDITIONAL TRIP INFORMATION

Getting There

Sabiha Gocken airport is the domestic airport in Istanbul and IST is the international airport. Which airport we use to fly to Cappadocia and exactly when you need to be there will depend on airline schedules available 6 months before the trip, but will be in the afternoon.

IST is served by many major airlines.

If you would like assistance with airfare, we recommend contacting our AirDesk Partner, [Exito Travel](#). Start by submitting this [form](#). Just fill in your dates and destinations, including any additional notes about preferred carriers, class of service, possible stopovers, etc., and an agent will typically respond via email within a few hours. If you prefer to call, the number is 800-655-4053; be sure to tell them you are traveling with Adventures in Good Company.

Please note: Most of the international airlines are in-network for Exito, so they do not charge extra for their services (and often have access to discounted rates). When necessary, processing fees out-of-network carriers are minimal at around \$35-\$50 per ticket.

Accommodations

We will spend two nights in a tourist class Istanbul hotel and three nights at the Sultan Cave Suites or a similar "cave hotel" in Goreme. It's a very unique experience!

Travel Insurance

We recommend that you purchase a travel protection plan to help protect you and your travel investment against the unexpected. For your convenience, we offer travel protection through Travelex Insurance Services. For more information on the available plans or to enroll, visit www.travelexinsurance.com or call 1-800-228-9792 and reference location number 06-0331.

Travelex Insurance Services, Inc CA Agency License #0D10209. All products listed are underwritten by, Berkshire Hathaway Specialty Insurance Company, NAIC #22276.

CANCELLATION POLICY

Cancellation charges reflect the many expenses Adventures in Good Company cannot recover if you cancel, even if you must do so due to illness, injury, or personal emergencies. These fees are not meant to be punitive. The charges made reflect the expenses Adventures in Good Company has incurred in administering your reservation and planning for your participation. We recognize that the majority of those who cancel their reservations do so out of necessity. Please note that we do not make any refunds for any unused portion of your trip, not arriving, arriving late, or leaving the trip early.

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