



Amazing Catholic Journeys

...we create the experience that will transform you!



FOOTSTEPS OF ST. PAUL & THE BOOK OF REVELATION

A 17-day Pilgrimage to Turkey & Greece Including
3-Days Greek Isles Cruise & 3-Days Cappadocia
With Fr. Mark Del Rosario as Spiritual Director

TOUR OPTION 1: Turkey: June 25-July 03, 2025 (8 Days)

TOUR OPTION 2: Greece: July 03-11, 2025 (9 Days)

Istanbul | Izmir | Thyatira | Satris | Philadelphia | Pamukale | Hierapolis | Laodiceo |
Cappadocia | Collosae | Ephesus | House of the Virgin Mary | Kusadasi | Crete | Santorini |
Mykonos | Corinth | Athens | Delphi | Meteora Monastery | Vergina | Berea | Thessalonica |
Philippi | Kavala

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Turkey: June 25-July 03, 2025 (8 Days)

Day 1: June 25 - Departure from US

Today we embark on our Journey to the lands of ancient treasures and Christian history with an overnight flight to Istanbul. Prepare yourself for a life-changing experience. Get some rest on the flight.

TOUR OPTION 1 - TURKEY

Day 2: June 26 - Arrival Istanbul (Turkey)

Arrive in Istanbul where we meet the Tour Guide at airport and transfer to the old city for a half day tour. We begin our tour from the Sultanahmet district, the heart of old Istanbul at Hagia Sophia. It played a very important role in the Christian and Islamic World. Erected as far back as the 6th century, the Hagia Sophia, near the Blue Mosque, began as one of the biggest Christian basilicas in existence.

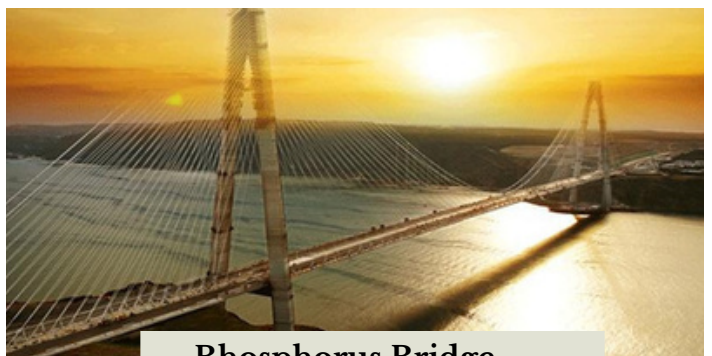
But after the Ottoman took over Istanbul, it was transformed into a mosque. Today, however, in post-Ottoman Turkey, it is one of the most stunning museums in the country, if not the continent. Admire the intricate mosaics and tile-work, as well as its fascinating history. Built by Emperor Justinian in the 6th century AD this church is one of the marvels of world architecture. Its massive dome dominates the skyline of old Istanbul. It is famed for its mosaics including glittering portraits of emperors and empresses. Then we will visit Hippodrome, the stadium of ancient Byzantium, which held 100,000 spectators and featured objects from all corners of the empire. After the tour, we will check-in to the hotel. Dinner and overnight. (D. Daily Mass)

Day 3: June 27 — Istanbul (Turkey)

Breakfast and full-day city tour of Istanbul. We drive by coach to the First Bosphorus Bridge and after join the cruise ferry leaving from Ortakoy dock then continue its 60-minute non-stop tour to the Second Bosphorus Bridge and back. Having free time in the colorful town of Ortakoy before driving back to the city. We will visit the Blue Mosque which owes its name to the exquisite tiles adorning its interior.



Blue Mosque, Istanbul



Bosphorus Bridge

Dating from the 17th century, it is the only imperial Mosque with six iconic minarets. It is one of the most important sights in Sultanahmet—as well as in the Islamic and Turkish worlds—the stately Blue Mosque. A large dome roof, makes it one of visitor's favorite photo backdrops, while culture lovers will also admire it for its prominence and reverence.

Inside, hundreds of stained glass windows illuminate the large main room, adorned with more than 20,000 Iznik-style tiles. After lunch break we continue our tour at Topkapi Palace which, from the 15th to 19th century, was the principle residence of the Ottoman Sultans. No palace in the world rivals Istanbul's Topkapi, the crown jewel of the Ottoman Empire. Not only is it the largest palace in the entire world., it is also the oldest Stroll the engrossing rooms, painted with detailed artwork. Snap a photo in the illustrious harem quarters and admire views from buildings looking out over the Golden Horn. Final visit will be to the Grand Bazaar which was the commercial heart of the old city and its 4,000 shops are full of treasures — including carpets and kilims, silks, jewelry, ceramics, icons and leather goods (BID, Daily Mass)

Day 4: June 28 — Istanbul / Pergamon / Thyatira / Izmir (Turkey)

After breakfast, we depart early in the morning to Istanbul port in order to take the fast ferry to Bandirma. After a 2-hour trip arrival to Bandirma and drive to three of the cities that received the letters of John:

(1) Thyatira (Revelation 2: 18-29), which was an important trade center in St. Paul's time, is now called Akrisar meaning White Castle. A letter to this Church was the longest of all the letters of the Apocalypse and the message it delivers is also among the toughest. As recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, Lydia of Thyatira was the Apostle Paul's first convert to Christianity in Europe. Her conversion came after hearing Paul's words in Philippi proclaiming the Gospel of Christ during his second mission journey. Thus, Lydia became the first person in Europe to become a follower of Christ. Then we continue to (2) Pergamum (Revelation 2: 12-17), now called Bergama, once a busy trading center and famous as a "seller of purple," was the most favored of the Seven Churches. The church of Pergamum was praised for its purple," was the most favored of the Seven Churches. The Pergamum church characterizes—the church from the time of Constantine (313-600 AD).



Thyatira Ruins



Pamukkale

At that time Christianity became the official religion of the Roman state. In this way, the church began to spread around the world. Lunch at a local restaurant. We then continue south to (3) Izmir the third largest city in Turkey and a long-time center for Jews and Christians. In Paul's day, Izmir was known as Smyrna and was another of the Seven Churches (Rev. 2:8-11). Overnight and dinner Izmir. (8/D, Daily Mass)

Day 5: June 29 — Izmir / Sardis / Philadelphia / Pamukkale (Turkey)

After Breakfast, we set off for a panoramic tour of Izmir (Revelation 2: 8-11), at the time it was called Smyrna, which means bitter. The origin of the word Smyrna derives from xmyrrh which was one of the components that served to embalm the dead (John 19:39). We will also visit the church of St. Polycarp and the ancient agora. Continue for the city of Sardis (Revelation 3: 1-5), whose ruins bear near the present village of Sarte and Philadelphia (Revelation 3: 7-13). There, we will visit their respective churches. Philadelphia lies in a valley at the foot of a mountain plateau. The location of the city is now occupied by a small Turkish village name Shehr Allah, meaning "city of God". Then we drive to Pamukkale, one of the most breathtaking places in the world, stunning for its white waterfalls and natural swimming pools, where will indulge in its beauty. The day will conclude with dinner and we will stay overnight. (BID, Daily Mass)

Day 6: June 30 — Pamukale / Laodicea Colossae / Izmir Airport / Cappadocia (Turkey)

After breakfast we drive to the ancient city of Hierapolis. We will continue to Laodicea (Revelation 3:14-22) that is located at the site of the modern city of Denizli, where we will visit one of the seven churches. The hot springs of Hierapolis, mentioned by Paul in his letter to the Colossians (Col 4:13), meaning "Holy City", a UNESCO world heritage site, classified for its hot springs and the ruins of the ancient capital of Phrygia, where Saint Philip is buried and Colossus (now known as the village of Honaz), whose church was mentioned in the Epistle to the Colossians. The hot springs of Hierapolis helped in the treatment of health problems, while the cold waters of Colossi were good to drink. Then we will drive to Izmir airport for our flight to Cappadocia. Arrive in Cappadocia and transfer to our hotel in Cappadocia. (B/D, Daily Mass)

Day 7: July 01 - Cappadocia (Turkey)

Cappadocia, an area in Central Anatolia in Turkey best known for its unique moon-like landscape, site of the largest underground cities, cave churches and houses carved in the rocks which dates back in the 4th century; Other notable sites include Bronze Age homes carved into valley walls by troglodytes (cave dwellers) and later used as refuges by early Christians. The 100m-deep Ihlara Canyon houses numerous rock-face churches.



Ancient Hierapolis



Hot Air Balloon in Cappadocia

Cappadocia has become a popular tourist destination because of its rich history and uniquely stunning landscape. Our first real encounter with Cappadocia almost Martian landscape is in the Derwent valley. We visit Pasabag's "fairy chimneys", where the voice of the wind harmonizes with songs of the fairies. From here we pause at Avanos center of terracotta art. After lunch we visit the famous Gorerne Open Air Museum to see the best examples of Byzantine art in Cappadocia. We complete the tour with a visit to the underground ancient City of Derinkuyu, where early Christians lived in fear and faith. The houses in the village are constructed around the nearly one hundred tunnels of the underground city, which is one of the most interesting underground settlements in Cappadocia. Return to the hotel. (B/D, Daily Mass)

Day 8: July 02 - Cappadocia (Turkey)

After breakfast, depart our hotel to visit Red valley through Cavusin and explore the famous rock-cut churches and hike 2 km. Then visit Cavusin village. Old Cavusin was abandoned several decades ago due to avalanches. The current village of Cavusin is located on the road. Old Cavusin, with its rock-cut dwellings and stone houses, had several hermitages. After lunch drive to the Pigeon Valley and then to Uchisar to watch its castle. Our tour finishes with a visit to Mustafapasha (Sinassos), an old Greek town with its spectacular old Greek houses; very fine examples of late Greek settlement and architecture. Return to the hotel. (B/D, Daily Mass)

Day 9: July 03 - Last Day in Turkey, Cappadocia / Transfer to Kayseri airport to fly to Athens (Greece)

OPTIONAL: 1-Hour Sunrise Hot Air Balloon Ride- at 5:00-6:00 AM, pick-up time from our hotel at 4:30 AM. Hot air ballooning is one of the most unique and popular attractions in Cappadocia. Discover the stunning landscape of the Cappadocia region of Turkey from a hot-air balloon! Admire Cappadocia's beautiful scenery of tall, volcanic rock spires and soar over the unique fairy chimneys and rock cut churches and caves.

Breakfast at 8:00 AM then transfer to Kayseri airport for the flight to Athens, Greece, with a short lay-over in Istanbul. Bid farewell to your Turkish Tour Guide. Arrive in Athens airport, we will meet our Greek Tour Guide. Athens is one of the most glorious cities in the world and the cradle of western civilization as we know it today. Transfer to your hotel for dinner and overnight in Athens. (B/D, Daily Mass)

End of Tour Option 1 - Homebound on the next day if not joining the Greece Pilgrimage;



FOOTSTEPS OF ST. PAUL IN GREECE

**TOUR OPTION 2
JULY 03-11, 2025 (9 DAYS)**

Day 10- July 04: If not joining Tour Option 2 After breakfast depart from hotel and transfer to Athens airport for your US flight.

TOUR OPTION 2 - GREECE

Day 10 -July 04 - START OF GREECE TOUR in Athens / Piraeus (Cruise Embarkation) / Mykonos Greek Isle

After breakfast, we embark on the MS Celestyal Olympia Cruise ship for a wonderful 3-night cruise to the Greek Islands and Kusadasi. Breakfast, lunch and dinner are served daily while on board and an all-inclusive drinks package (unlimited alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks). Mykonos, the whitewashed jewel of the Cyclades Islands, is your first stop. This charming, 'mountainous island is known for the hundreds of tiny chapels, white-washed buildings and beautiful windmills that dot its landscape.

Don't miss taking a stroll down Mykonos Town, where mazes of narrow streets link the whitewashed buildings and traditional life continues amidst the bustling activity. Enjoy free time to explore this little paradise in the



Temple of Hadrian



Santorini

middle of the Aegean Sea. Note: In Mykonos, a free shuttle will be provided by the Cruise line. Then we walk to Mykonos town which is 5 min. walk from where the bus will drop us off. Close to the windmills is a nice Catholic Church dedicated to the Virgin Mary. (13/L/D,. Daily Mass)

Day 11: July 05 – Cruise to Kusadasi / Ephesus & House of Virgin Mary/Patmos (Greece)

This morning, our next stop is at the Turkish port of Kusadasi for an included excursion to the ruins of Ephesus where Paul the Apostle spent three years during his ministry and where its inhabitants were the recipients of Paul's famous epistle.

Ancient Ephesus was the Roman capital of Asia Minor and an important center for Christianity from AD 50s. During AD52-54 Saint Paul lived here working with the congregation and organizing his missionary activity and taught the Word of God (Acts 20:31) and this is where he wrote the Epistle to Corinthians I. Additionally this was one of the seven cities found in the Book of Revelation (Acts 2:1-7), indicating a strong church. We will then visit the house of Virgin Mary where she lived with John, on the hill behind the city. After this amazing experience we will have lunch and then visit the Basilica of St. John as well as the ruins of the famous Diana's temple with the Baths of Scholastica, the Library of Celsus, the Odeon, the Arch of Hercules, the Temple of Hadrian, the Agora and the Greco-Roman theater.

Continue our cruise to the island of Patmos, a beautiful and spiritual island where in 95 AD, St. John the Theologian - one of the twelve disciples of Jesus - was sent into exile. St. John remained on the island for eighteen months during which time he lived in a cave below the hilltop temple of Diana. In this cave exists a small hole in the rock wall, from which derived a series of oracular messages that Prochoros, a disciple of St. John, transcribed as the Biblical chapter of Revelations. During his time in the sacred cave, now known as the Holy Grotto of the Revelation, St. John also composed the Fourth Gospel. During our time there we will visit the Monastery of St. John the Theologian UNESCO World Heritage Site where we will see the Holy Grotto as well as priceless icons and manuscripts. Afterwards, we drive back to the port of Scala and enjoy some free time in this quaint and picturesque harbor. (B/L/D, Daily Mass)

Day 12: July 06 – Cruise to Heraklion (Crete) and Santorini (Greece)

In the morning the ship will dock at the port of Heraklion on the island of Crete. In Heraklion, Paul met the owner and captain of the ship, who warned him about continuing his journey to Rome. Crete is the largest and the most rugged of the Greek islands. Take an *optional* tour on your own to Heraklion (this is not included in our group package) and the fantastic ruins of the Palace of Knossos. Discovered in 1899 and



Athens



Corinth

partially reconstructed, the elaborate Palace is believed to be the mythical Labyrinth of King Minos and the seat of ancient Minoan culture.

This afternoon, we visit the island of Santorini which is the most *brehtaking* of all the Greek Islands, known as the “Black Pearl of the Aegean”. On this volcanic Santorini, we will enjoy the breathtaking Panoramic View.

Latest excavations have suggested that Santorini might be the lost sight of the Atlantis. You may choose to take an *optional* panoramic bus tour viewing some of the most spectacular scenery of the Aegean (This shore excursion is not included in our group package). Travel through countless villages and settlements with delicate architecture and beauties eventually arriving in Oia. During your time in Oia, visit the many narrow streets, open-air cafes and glittering boutiques. Upon returning to the ship, view the lace-like caldera, the little islands of Thirasia, Palea, & Nea Kameni. You must return to the ship for dinner and evening entertainment is provided on board. **(B/L/D, Daily Mass)**

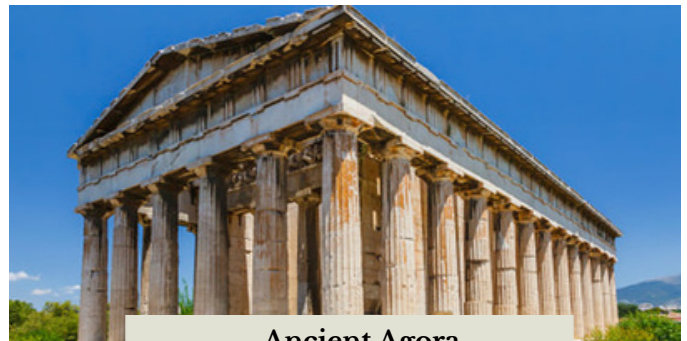
Day 13: July 07 - Disembark in Piraeus /Corinth / Cenchrea / Athens (Greece)

Breakfast on board and early arrival in Piraeus. After disembarking, we will head toward ancient Corinth (Acts 18.1-18). It was in ancient Corinth where Paul came and worked, established a thriving church and writing two of the epistles, which are now part of the New Testament. We will see all the sites that are associated with his

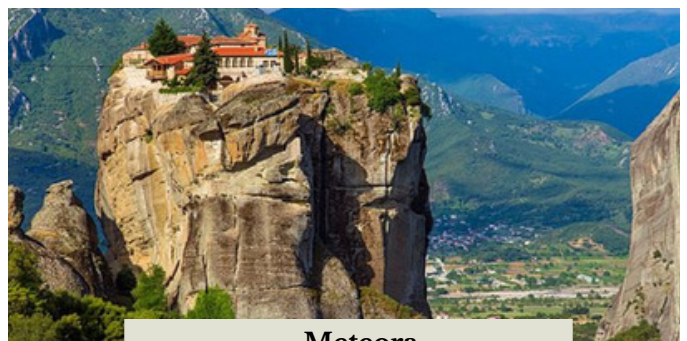
ministry: The Agora, the Temple of Apollo, the roman Odeon, the Bema and Gallio’s seat, the pillars, stairs, and the place of public worship, where Paul preached. All these visits will certainly enhance the understanding of Corinthians I and II. We will celebrate mass in the midst of the ruins of the church of Corinth and see the pillars, steps, and public worship place where Paul preached. The ruins of this important cultural center are fascinating as we walk along the stone path that the Apostle Paul walked.

The engineering skill and intellect of these people are evident in the water systems that still flow from ancient to modern day. Our guide will be sure to show you the room dedicated to the medical care of that period. After the visit to ancient Corinth we return to Athens, the foundation of democracy. We will visit the ancient Greek port of Cenchrea (Acts 18:18) where Paul was during his second missionary journey and the ruin of the early Christian 5th Century basilica. Next stop is Athens.

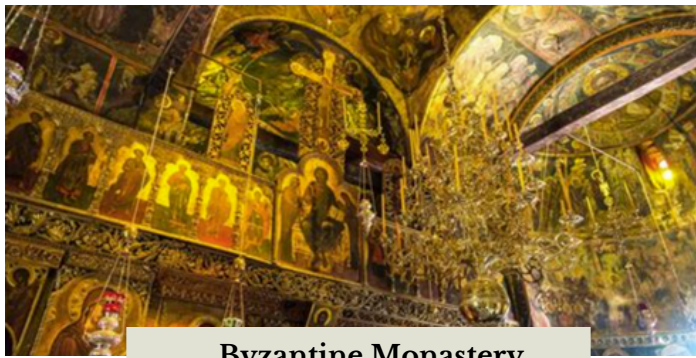
We visit the Acropolis, the Parthenon, and Areopagus where Paul preached the Truth to the nation (Acts 17:22). From atop Mars Hill we view the Agora below, the ancient marketplace and center of Athenian public life. Additional sites viewed during our panoramic bus tour are, the House of Parliament, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Olympic Stadium, and Presidential Palace. **(B/D, Daily Mass)**



Ancient Agora



Meteora



Byzantine Monastery

Day 14: July 08 – Athens/ Delphi/ Kalambaka (Greece)

Following breakfast, we depart Athens this morning to drive up to the spectacular Meteora, the UNESCO World Heritage Site, which is a mountainous region of stunning scenery. Stop at Delphi on the way. Prepare for a long drive, 6 hrs. to Kalambaka. Arrive Kalambaka in the afternoon and time on your own for a restful night. Overnight and dinner in Kalambaka. (B/D, Daily Mass)

Day 15: July 09– Kalambaka / Meteora / Thessalonica (Greece)

Following breakfast, we will visit the spectacular Meteora, the UNESCO World Heritage Site, which is a mountainous region of stunning scenery. You will see hundred-year-old Byzantine monasteries on top of huge rocks, during the Middle Ages, first built in the 14th century by monks seeking isolation and salvation.

We will visit the most famous of them, which is now a popular museum, the Great Meteoron, to admire superb icons, old manuscripts, unique mosaics and frescoes. Departure to Veria (Berea), another town evangelized by Paul (Acts 17.10-14). When Saint Paul visited this town in AD50, he came across a more “noble” Jewish community where he preached and created an important Church. This is where Paul met Sopatros, who would later become a valuable comrade who followed him on his return journey to Asia.

We will visit the ancient synagogue where we will see the Byzantine mosaic in the monument commemorating his preaching. According to tradition it was at this place where he preached. We will continue to Thessalonica, dinner and overnight. (B/D, Daily Mass)

Day 16: July 10 – Berea/Philippi / Kavala/ Thessalonica (Greece)

Departure to Veria (Berea), another town evangelized by Paul (Acts 17.10-14). When Saint Paul visited this

town in AD50, he came across a more “noble” Jewish community where he preached and created an important Church. This is where Paul met Sopatros, who would later become a valuable comrade who followed him on his return journey to Asia. We will visit the ancient synagogue where we will see the Byzantine mosaic in the monument commemorating his preaching. According to tradition it was at this place where he preached.

Next, we will visit Philippi, the town where Paul delivered his first sermon in Europe, sowing the seeds of Christianity. “And from there (He went) to Philippi, which is the leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman Colony. We remained in this city some days...” (Acts 16:11-12). Paul arrived here with his disciples, Timothy, Silas and Luke on the winter of AD 49 to AD50. There the first Christian baptism was performed, of a woman named Lydia. Although they were prosecuted and arrested, they received God’s help to escape from prison (Acts 16: 25-26) where there was the conversion of the jailer (Acts 16: 31).

We will visit the Roman Theatre, probable site of the prison where Paul and Silas were arrested. We will continue towards the city of Kavala, the ancient city of Neapolis (Acts 16:11) where Paul landed with his disciples, Timothy and Silas. It was later renamed Christoupolis, meaning city of Christ, because it was the first European city to accept Christianity.

We will visit the Roman Aqueduct and the ruins of the Acropolis. We drive to Thessalonica and visit St. Demetrius Basilica, dedicated to a distinguished member of the Roman army and a martyred Christian convert, before returning to the hotel for our final night. Dinner and overnight in Thessalonica. (B/D, Daily Mass)

Day 17: July 11- Thessalonica/ Homeward Bound

After breakfast, we transfer to the airport for our flight back to the USA. (B)

NOTE: *For entry to Turkey, all US citizens are required to apply for an e-Visa online prior to departure. It is quick and easy, it takes only about 15 minutes and your e-Visa will be emailed to you*

17 - Day Pilgrimage to Turkey & Greece

INCLUSIONS

- 12 night's hotel accommodation in 4*/5* on half-board basis (Daily Breakfast & Dinner) including one dinner in Athens at a Local restaurant
- With 3 nights Cave Hotel in Cappadocia
- Flights from Izmir to Kayserri + 1 check-in luggage
- Flights from Kayserri to Athens + 1 check-in luggage
- Entrance fees include as per itinerary
- Whisper sets
- Porterage at hotels of 1 large suitcase per person (excluding on cruise)
- All transfer & tours with Deluxe fully equipped motor-coach with A/C
- Half Board (Breakfast & Dinner) as per program
- Istanbul-Bandırma Fast Ferry Ticket
- Bosphorous River Cruise in Istanbul
- Private Daily Masses

3-DAY GREEK ISLES CRUISE INCLUSIONS (MS CELESTYAL OLYMPIA)

- Cabin accommodations in Standard Inside
- Outside Cabin Upper Deck, XA Category, MS Celestyal Olympia with Add-on Option to Upgrade (at own expense)
- Full board (Breakfast — Lunch — Dinner) during the Cruise
- All-inclusive drinks package (unlimited alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks)
- Local guides used on cruise excursions
- Entertainment on board
- Port charges security and other services/tips (gratuities) included
- Two Shore excursions included (Heraklion & Kusadasi-Ephesus) OR Her-02: Knossos Palace: First European Civilization; Kus-01: The House of Virgin Mary and Ancient Ephesus OR St. John's Cave in Patmos; depending on the ship's offer at the time of booking

NOT INCLUDED

- International Flights
- Travel Insurance - Strongly recommended!
- Turkish entry visa
- Lunch Meals on the land tours; Cruise includes all meals
- Gratuities for tour guides, driver, hotel/room staff
- Love offering for priest; Church Donations
- Personal expenses
- Airport Trolleys
- Hot Air Balloon in Cappadocia (Optional) - \$270/pp
- Group Shirt
- Any other services not mentioned above

CAN BE OFFERED AS OPTIONAL TOURS:

- **TURKEY ONLY** - \$ Land only excl. Int'l Flights/ pp DBL Occ.
- **GREECE ONLY** - \$ Land + Cruise only, excl. Int'l Flights/pp DBL Occ.
- **BOTH TURKEY & GREECE** - \$ excl. Int'l Flights/pp DBL Occ.

Installment Payments are provided

For Inquiries & More Info



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