

# Anatolia Silk Road

Istanbul, Van, Erzurum, Trabzon, Urfa, Antakya, Cappadocia • Touring • 23 Days

*Explore stunningly scenic Eastern Anatolia with us as we trace the western most extension of the Silk Road to ancient Trebizond - Trabzon - and to Antioch - Antakya. We commence in Van, via Istanbul, and explore the ancient kingdom of Urartu - the biblical Ararat - as we wind our way through spectacular volcanic mountainscapes to Mt Ararat and beyond to historic Ayni. Our journey takes us to Trabzon on the Black sea, to the cliff hugging Sumela monastery and idyllic Ayder. In south east Anatolia we include Diyarbakir, the region's most historic centre, Urfa and the biblical village of Harran. No journey in Anatolia would be complete without a visit to ancient Antioch and the stunningly scenic Cappadocia. We complete our journey in Istanbul amongst the museums and monuments of this great cultural centre.*



## Anatolia Silk Road TRIP DETAILS

2010 Departures

### Escorted Small group

- 07th May - 29th May

Trip Price : NZD8600pp

### Private Departures

- April
- June
- September
- October

Trip Price : Price on application

Trip Length: 23 Days

Activity Type: Touring

Link from: Persian Trilogy

Link to: Mediterranean Anatolia

## WHATS INVOLVED IN THIS ITINERARY

### • ROUTE

**Itinerary includes Istanbul, Van, Kars, Ayni, Erzurum, Trabzon, Diyarbakir, Urfa, Mt Nemrut, Harran, Antakya, Cappadocia.**

This easy journey explores the western extent of the Silk Road from Van to Anyi, the Black sea and ancient Antakya near the Mediterranean coast. Along the way we will experience stunning scenic beauty, historic sites and ancient cityscapes. Come prepared to be surprised by the extent of wildflowers, the volcanic landscapes, the wide open spaces of far eastern Anatolia and its hospitable people. We include an excursion to Mt Nemrut and time to marvel at the landscapes of Cappadocia

### • GROUP SIZE and ESCORTS

The maximum group size is 12 people. SRA leaders accompany groups of 6 or more otherwise our groups are accompanied by local English speaking professional guides.

Private departures may either be fully or partially escorted by our local guides depending on your preference.

### • ACCOMMODATION

Comfortable tourist standard hotels and guesthouses (en suite) on twin share basis. Single room supplement NZ\$1070

### • INCLUSIONS

Our group departure prices are fully inclusive. Meals, local flights, road and rail transportation, entries and transfers are included. There are no hidden costs, no supplementary extras and no add-ons apply to any of the services associated with the advertised programme once it commences.

Meal plans for Private departures are flexible.

## Itinerary at a Glance :

### 7-May -10 Arrive in Istanbul

Arrive in Istanbul and transfer to the hotel in the Old city .

### 8-May-10 Istanbul – Fly to Van

Early morning flight to Van. After arrival visit Citadel, built in the 9th century by Sarduri, the Urartian King and picturesque 16th C Hosap Castle. We also plan to visit the ancient city of Cavustepe.

### 9-May-10 Excursion to Akdamar Island

Today we are off around the lake to the jetty for an excursion to Akdamar Island, and its outstanding Armenian church dating from AD921. On the return journey we can stop at a local carpet cooperative.

### 10-May-10 To Kars via Dogubayazit

This morning we head north around the lake towards Dogubayazit. The striking volcanic scenery along the way includes Mt Ararat and numerous other peaks. We visit Ishak Pasha Palace, one of the most splendid examples of 18th century Ottoman architecture and Muradiye Waterfall Fall.

### 11-May-10 Kars - Ani - Erzurum

Our itinerary today takes us to ancient city of Ani on the Armenian border. This important Silk Road city contains ruins of numerous medieval churches, mosques and city wall. PM drive to Erzurum for overnight.

### 12-May-10 To Ayder via Yusufeli

The Archaeological Museum is on our schedule this morning along with Yakutiye Madrasah and its collections of ethnographic works relating to the regional culture and art. PM drive to Yusufeli and explore 7<sup>th</sup> Century Georgian Ishan Church before continuing to Ayder.

### 17-May-10 Diyarbakir

We have a full day sightseeing in the city today. The Great Mosque, Archaeological Museum. Ancient House Museums and Hasan Pasa Hani Caravanserai are amongst the sites to visit

### 18-May-10 AM to Sanliurfa. PM sightseeing Sanliurfa

Today we are off to Sanliurfa—the Prophets City- to wonder at the stories behind the scenery at the Pools of Abraham and Urfa Citade.

### 19-May-10 AM excursion to Harran. PM at leisure in Sanliurfa

Our destination today is Harran, mentioned in the Old Testament as the place where Abraham lived before going to Canaan.

### 20-May-10 Sanli Urfa – Kahta

Fine weather and clear skys are high on our list of priorities today for the trip to the summit of Nemrut Dagi, - "The Throne of the Gods"- a 2000 year old memorial sanctuary for Antiochus I of Commagene, with huge stone statues of gods and kings. Tonight we stay on the mountain at Katha.

### 21-May-10 To Antakya via Gaziantep

Travelling west, we will break our journey in Gaziantep a city with a history that dates back 9000 years. The Archaeological Museum here exhibits mosaics excavated from the ancient city of Zeugma. .

### 22-May-10 Antakya sightseeing

Our programme today includes the Mosaic Museum with its impressive Roman and Byzantine mosaics from the 1st to 5th century AD and St. Peter Church known as the first church of Christianity.

### 23-May-10 To Goreme

We have a full day on the road today and some distance to cover on the journey to Cappadocia. Our route will take us to Ihlara Valley, famous for Byzantine cave chapels, decorated with exquisite biblical frescoes and Belisirma village. Late Pm we will arrive in stunningly picturesque Goreme

### 24-May-10 Goreme sightseeing

We devote the entire day to sightseeing in and around this fascinating region of spectacular landscapes and picturesque villages.

### 25-May-10 Goreme sightseeing

This morning we will conclude our sightseeing programme and take the afternoon at leisure in Goreme. Enjoy with Whirling Dervishes Ceremony tonight in a Seljuk Caravansary. Overnight in Goreme.

### 26-May-10 to Istanbul

Today we will fly to Istanbul where we will be free for the balance of the afternoon.



### 13-May-10 AM Ayder PM to Trabzon

We have free time this morning to enjoy the idyllic mountain scenery. In the afternoon it is a short drive to Trabzon for overnight.

### 14-May-10 AM excursion to Sumela monastery.

Today's included excursions are Sumela Monastery, known as Virgin Mary Monastery built in 412 AD and Hagia Sophia, a 13th century church subsequently converted into a mosque during the Ottoman period.

### 15-May-10 Trabzon – Gumushane - Erzincan

We have a full day on the road today for the drive to Erzincan on the Euphrates River. At Gumushane we will break the journey to visit Suleymaniye Ancient City, old Gumushane Houses and Karaca Cave.

### 16-May-10 Erzincan – Elazig - Diyarbakir

Our journey to Diyarbakir will take us first to Elazig to visit Harput Castle, built in the period of Urartu civilization, the Virgin Mary Church, constructed in 179 A.D and Great Mosque, monuments that are among the oldest structures in Anatolia. PM continue to Diyarbakir.

### 27-May-10 Istanbul

Today we are out and about on foot around Istanbul's cultural heart. We visit the Hippodrome and domed Basilica of St. Sophia, The magnificent Topkapi Palace once home to the great Sultans and Grand Covered Bazaar the largest bazaar in the world with over four thousand shops.

### 28-May-10 Istanbul

After breakfast visit Chora Church with its amazing frescos, the Rustem Pasha Mosque, an Ottoman mosque famous for its large quantities of exquisite Iznik tiles and the Spice Bazaar where the scent of hundreds of spices permeates the air. In the afternoon explore Underground Basilica Cistern, largest surviving Byzantium Cistern.

### 29-May-10 conclude - free day

Enjoy a morning at leisure before transfer to Istanbul Airport for International Flight.