

Gustavus Adolphus College Symphony Orchestra American Celebration of Music in Greece & Turkey

Custom Tour #1 (13 nights/15 days)

Day 1 Wednesday, January 20, 2016

Depart via scheduled air service to Athens

Day 2 Thursday, January 21 Athens (D)

Arrive in Athens

Meet your MCI Tour Manager, who will assist the group to awaiting chartered motorcoach for a transfer to the hotel via orientation tour of Athens' highlights en route, including Constitution Square and Kendriki Agora (Central Market)

Late afternoon hotel check-in

Evening Welcome Dinner and overnight

The stunning sight, the brilliant light, the beauty of the ancient monuments and the quality of the museums all contribute to the pleasure of visiting Athens, the city of Athena, the cradle of European civilization. During the 5th and 6th Centuries BC and especially during the Golden Age of Pericles, Athens became the center of art, learning, discourse, philosophy, teaching, architecture for the whole civilized world

Day 3 Friday, January 22 Athens (B,D)

Breakfast at the hotel

Participate in a tour of Athens, including a visit to the Acropolis (Parthenon). In spite of the destruction wrought by many centuries, most notably the devastating explosion in 1687, when a Venetian grenade blew up a Turkish powder magazine which had been housed in the Parthenon and made the 2,000-year-old temple a ruin, the surviving remains still convey something of the splendor of the age of Pericles

Lunch on own

*Concert as part of the American Celebration of Music in Greece**

Evening dinner and overnight

Day 4 Saturday, January 23 Athens / Larissa / Thessaloniki (B,D)

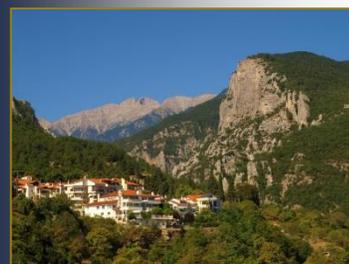
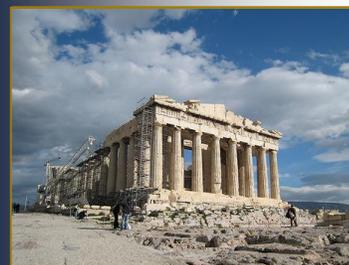
Breakfast at the hotel

Transfer to Thessaloniki via Larissa situated under the shadow of Mt. Olympus (home of the 12 Gods)

Lunch on own

Evening dinner and overnight

Thessaloniki was founded by King Kassandros in 315BC. The Romans made it capital of their province of Macedonia Prima in 146BC, and in AD 395 it became part of the Byzantine Empire. In 1430 it was captured by the Turks who held it until 1912. Today it is a cosmopolitan city with a flourishing cultural life and an array of splendid churches



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Day 5 Sunday, January 24 Thessaloniki (B,D)

Breakfast at the hotel

Enjoy a guided tour of Thessaloniki's highlights possibly including the White Tower, Palace of Galerius, Church of Agia Sofia, Aristotelous Square, Town Hall, Dioikitirio, Old City, Byzantine Walls, Rotonda, Arch of Galerius, etc.

Lunch on own

*Concert as part of the American Celebration of Music in Greece**

Evening dinner and overnight



Day 6 Monday, January 25 Thessaloniki / Canakkale (B,D)

Breakfast at the hotel

Transfer to Canakkale

Lunch on own

Evening dinner and overnight

With its large student population, sweeping waterfront promenade and close proximity to Galipolli and Troy, Çanakkale has rightfully grown in stature as a travel destination



Day 7 Tuesday, January 26 Canakkale / Troy / Pergamum / Izmir (B,D)

Breakfast at the hotel

Today we visit the ancient Troy, well known for its 3rd and 4th Century BC excavations. Don't forget to have your picture taken from the top of the Trojan horse

Lunch on own

Transfer to the glorious Pergamum. Here will take the cable-car up to the Pergamum Acropolis. The Acropolis of Pergamum (Pergamon) is certainly dramatic, perched atop a high, steep-sided hill to the northeast of the modern city center. The great temples and dramatic theater are visible from anywhere in the city, as they were meant to be. The most prominent building here is the Traianeum, or Temple of Trajan, a huge marble temple that has been partially reconstructed from ruins found on the site

Then it is off to Izmir for dinner and overnight

The grand port city of İzmir, Turkey's third-largest, is a proudly liberal, long-time centre of commerce that has emerged as a smart alternative base for travel in the west of the country. Formerly the famed Greek city of Smyrna, İzmir lives by its kordon (seafront) which, especially around leafy Alsancak, is as fetching and lively as any large seaside city in the world



Day 8 Wednesday, January 27 Izmir / Ephesus (B,D)

Breakfast at the hotel

Excursion to Ephesus where history and archaeology offer their majesty with incredible richness. Walk on the Marble Road that runs through the city. Temple of Hadrian is a unique beauty with its articulate facade while the Library of Celsus has all the expression of the grandeur of "good old days" of the Roman Period

Lunch on own

Return to Izmir

*Concert as part of the American Celebration of Music in Turkey**

Evening dinner and overnight



Day 9 Thursday, January 28 Izmir / Ankara (B,D)

Breakfast at the hotel
Transfer to Ankara
Lunch on own
Evening dinner and overnight

Day 10 Friday, January 29 Ankara (B,D)

Breakfast at the hotel
Morning tour of Ankara's highlights including Anit Kabir, Citadel, Gencilik Parki, Kocatepe Camii, Roman Ruins, etc.
Lunch on own
*Concert as part of the American Celebration of Music in Turkey**
Evening dinner and overnight

Day 11 Saturday, January 30 Ankara / Bursa (B,D)

Breakfast at the hotel
Transfer to Bursa, a town of culture and the old capital of the Ottoman Empire. The local university is one of the largest in Turkey and home of a fantastic conservatory
Lunch on own
*Concert as part of the American Celebration of Music in Turkey**
Evening dinner and overnight

Bursa, the first capital of the Ottoman Empire with a history dating back to 4000BC at the heart of the silk and spice trade, is Turkey's fourth largest and advanced city. The city which has been the capital of many civilizations and religions for centuries is the hub of many monuments and historical works nowadays. The city's skyline is comprised of historical landmarks varying from mosques to madrasas and from churches to baths

Day 12 Sunday, January 31 Bursa / Istanbul (B,D)

Breakfast at the hotel
Transfer to Istanbul
Lunch on own
Afternoon at leisure for sightseeing, shopping or other activities
Evening dinner and overnight

Istanbul's strategic location has attracted many a marauding army over the centuries. The Greeks, Persians, Romans and Venetians took turns ruling before the Ottomans stormed into town and decided to stay – physical reminders of their various tenures are found littered across the city. The magnificently decorated imperial mosques are architectural triumphs that together form one of the world's great skylines

Day 13 Monday, February 1 Istanbul (B,D)

Breakfast at the hotel
Today is spent in Istanbul viewing the Blue Mosque with its beautiful blue tiles, St. Sophia Church, a World Heritage site built by Constantine the Great and restored by Justinian in the century, Underground Cistern, The Roman Hippodrome Square, Spice market, etc.
Lunch on own
*Concert as part of the American Celebration of Music in Turkey**
Evening dinner and overnight



Day 14 Tuesday, February 2 Istanbul (B,D)

Breakfast at the hotel

Transfer to the pier for a relaxing boat ride along the Bosphorus

Today's sightseeing also includes Grand Bazaar, one of the largest covered markets in the world with 60 streets and close to 4,000 shops. It is well known for its jewelry, hand-painted ceramics, carpets, embroideries, spices and antique shops

Lunch on own

Time at leisure for shopping, sightseeing or other activities

Evening Farewell Dinner and overnight

Day 15 Wednesday, February 3 Depart for home (B)

Breakfast at the hotel

Transfer to Istanbul's International Airport for return flight

**Subject to confirmation*

This is a very flexible itinerary. Except for confirmed appointments and performances, the places of interest and the sequence of sightseeing might be changed if necessary or desirable. In the event of an unavoidable conflict in the performance and the sightseeing schedule, the concert schedule will prevail, and it may be necessary to exclude some sightseeing activities.

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