

TURKEY UNCOVERED

UC SANTA BARBARA
Alumni

Istanbul - Gallipoli - Troy - Canakkale - Ayvalik - Pergamum -
Kusadasi - Ephesus

US departure date: **August 14, 2027** |
Istanbul land tour start date: **August 15, 2027** |
Istanbul return date: **August 22, 2027**

9 Days from: **\$2885**



START YOUR ADVENTURE

Dear Young Alumni and Friends!

Can you think of a better way to travel than with fellow UCSB Alumni?

UC Santa Barbara Young Alumni travel program, designed for recent grads in their 20s and 30s, offers you this opportunity by bringing you together with individuals in the same age range, with similar backgrounds and experiences, while enriching you on well-designed, hassle-free tours of the world.

These programs provide social, cultural, and recreational activities and many opportunities for learning, enrichment and enjoying a connection back to UCSB. Our journeys are of great quality and value, operated by a travel company with over 50 years of experience in the young travel market.

In this brochure you will find a detailed itinerary, travel dates and pricing.

If you have any questions about this tour, please contact our tour operator, AESU Alumni World Travel, by calling 800-638-7640 or email alumni@aesu.com.

To make an online booking, please visit our young alumni tour landing page www.aesu.com/ucsb and select this tour to be directed to the tour web site.

We are looking forward to traveling with you this coming season.

Sincerely,

Alumni Affairs Office
University of California, Santa Barbara

Travel insurance is compulsory. UCSB offers travel insurance through the link below.
<https://select.travelinsure.com/?pcode=32408>

WHAT'S INCLUDED

Get ready to dive into a journey where history, culture, and adventure collide — welcome to Turkey, a country that straddles two continents and feels like stepping into a living storybook. From the buzzing streets and rooftop bars of Istanbul to ancient cities straight out of myths like Troy and Ephesus, to lazy days cruising the turquoise Aegean, this trip blends iconic sights with unforgettable experiences. You'll sip Turkish coffee in centuries-old cafés, wander bazaars overflowing with colors and spices, and taste wine in hillside villages. This isn't just a trip — it's a mash-up of history, flavors, and epic memories waiting to happen.

9-DAY PACKAGE

Transportation and Lodging

- 7 nights in 3 and 4-star hotels, 2-share rooms with private bath/shower
 - Istanbul: 3 nights, Canakkale: 1 night, Kusadasi: 3 nights
- All ground transportation by private motor coach as per itinerary
- Domestic flight from Izmir to Istanbul in economy class, one-way
- Arrival airport transfers included with purchased AESU group airfare

Meals

- 7 breakfasts
- 2 dinners
- 4 lunches

Activities & Admissions

- Guided tour of Istanbul
- Sights include: Hagia Sophia, Blue Mosque, Grand Bazaar
- Kadıköy food walking tour
- Street skiing
- Discovery of Karakoy Artsy Neighborhood in Istanbul
- Legendary city of Troy
- Vinyard estate visit in Canakkale
- Wine tasting in the countryside
- Ancient city of Pergamom (Bergama)
- Tour of Ancient Ephesus, incl. Odean, the temple of Hadrian, library of Ephesus, Grand Theater and terrace houses
- Wine tasting in Sirince
- Kusadasi cruise on the Aegean Sea

Sights & Highlights

- Istanbul sights
- Gallipoli Peninsula
- Aegean coastline
- Picturesque town of Ayvalik
- Lively resort town of Kusadasi
- Charming hillside village of Sirince with stunning views

Optional Excursions (not included in land package price):

- Bosphorus dinner cruise in Istanbul

Also Included

A private tour director for the entire duration of the land tour. All service charges and local taxes are covered. Airfare is an additional cost.

EXPERIENCES

This trip has been carefully designed for young travelers and features fantastic inclusions and highlights. For a glossary of these key aspects, visit: www.aesu.com/experiences



ACTIVITY LEVEL: MODERATE

This tour requires standing and walking for some extended periods of time during city or nature tours, museum visits, and/or outdoor activities.



HOTELS

Hotels are centrally located and many offer great extra amenities such as pools, gyms or rooftop bars. All land package rates are based on two people sharing a room. If a single room is desired, a supplement of \$575 applies. If traveling solo and not wanting to pay the single supplement, AESU will attempt to arrange a share with a same-gender traveler. If a share cannot be arranged the single supplement will apply.

TOUR DIRECTORS

Our qualified tour directors and staff of local experts mean a trouble-free journey with the added security of group travel. Show your tour director and driver your appreciation with a tip. We suggest \$8-10 per person/per day for your tour director and \$4-5 per person/per day for your driver. To learn more visit www.aesu.com/tour-directors

ITINERARY

DAY 1 – FLIGHT TO TURKEY

We pack our bags, plug in our playlists, and board our flight — by tomorrow, we will be waking up where continents collide.

Meals: In-flight

DAY 2 – LAND TOUR START DAY: ISTANBUL

Merhaba, and welcome to Istanbul — the city where Europe and Asia meet. After check-in, take some free time to soak in our first taste of this city's magic. As evening falls, we gather with our crew for a welcome cocktail, clinking glasses as the call to prayer drifts through the skyline. Tonight is our first chance to dive into Istanbul's legendary nightlife — rooftop bars, underground clubs, or just wandering neon-lit streets.

Inclusions: Airport transfer included with purchased AESU group airfare | Welcome orientation | Welcome cocktail | Club hopping

DAY 3 – ISTANBUL

This morning, history takes the stage. We step into the Hagia Sophia, where soaring domes and mosaics have witnessed empires rise and fall. After crossing over to the Blue Mosque, glowing with thousands of İznik tiles, pause for a strong Turkish coffee — thick, sweet, and shared like locals have done for centuries. Wander the labyrinth of the Grand Bazaar, where spices, lanterns, and treasures spill from every stall. Tonight, join an optional dinner cruise along the Bosphorus, gliding past illuminated palaces and historic waterfronts and savor delicious Turkish cuisine, or venture to the vibrant Pera district, where cocktail bars, live music, and nonstop energy keep the city alive until dawn.

Inclusions: Guided tour of Istanbul, led by a local English-speaking expert | See the magnificent Hagia Sophia, Blue Mosque | Explore the Grand Bazaar

Meals: Breakfast

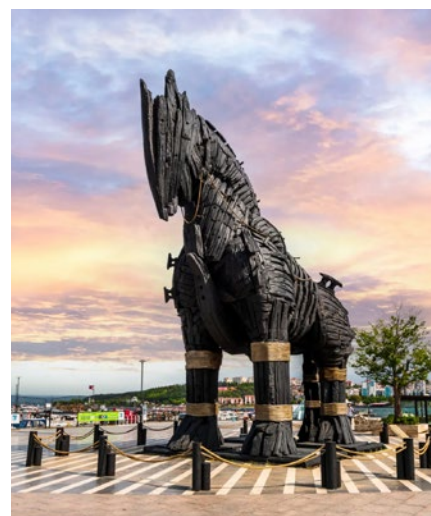
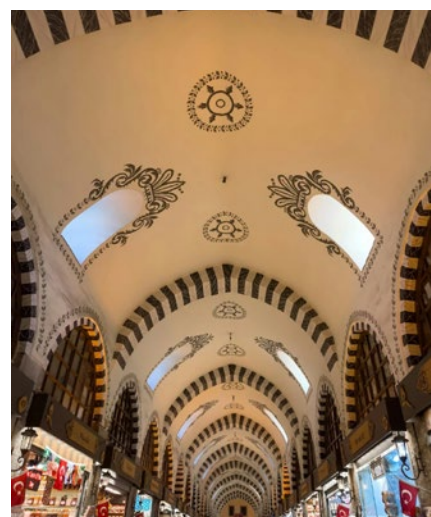
Optional activities: Cruise the Bosphorus under a starlit sky, drifting between two continents with live music, belly dancers, and a feast fit for sultans.

DAY 4 – ISTANBUL – GALLIPOLI – TROY

We leave the bustle of Istanbul behind and trace the scenic coastline toward the Gallipoli Peninsula. Here, quiet hills and windswept shores carry the echoes of World War I — memorials and cemeteries stand as solemn reminders of courage and sacrifice. From history to legend, the journey continues to Troy, where ancient ruins and a towering wooden horse bring Homer's epic tales to life. Imagine Achilles, Helen, and the clash of armies on this very ground. By afternoon, trade myths for flavors at a vineyard in Çanakkale. Walk among the vines, sip local wines, and soak in the golden light of the countryside. As evening falls, we gather for a farm-to-table dinner at a local restaurant in Çanakkale and savor regional specialties — from meze plates bursting with flavor to slow-cooked Aegean dishes — all crafted with fresh, seasonal ingredients. Enjoy a glass of local wine or raki, absorbing the relaxed, welcoming atmosphere of the Turkish table, and carry that sense of hospitality with us as we return to our hotel for the night.

Inclusions: Private motor coach from Istanbul to Canakkale | Local, English-speaking expert guide | Gallipoli Peninsula | Legendary city of Troy | Vineyard estate in Canakkale | Wine tasting

Meals: Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner



DAY 5 – CANAKKALE – AYVALIK – PERGAMUM - KUSADASI

Wake up in Çanakkale and get ready to chase history and seaside charm along the Aegean coast. Our first stop is Ayvalık, a picturesque town where cobblestone alleys twist between stone houses painted in soft pastels. Wander through local cafés with the smell of fresh simit (Turkish bagels) spilling out or climb up to Şeytan Sofrası — “Devil’s Feast” — for a panoramic view of the Aegean dotted with tiny islands. From here, we journey back in time to the ancient city of Pergamum (Bergama), once one of the most powerful centers of the Hellenistic world. Imagine scholars pacing the halls of its great library — second only to Alexandria — where parchment paper was first invented. Pausing for a hearty lunch at a local spot, taste Aegean flavors — think olive oil-rich mezzes, fresh seafood, and herbs straight from the hillsides. By late afternoon, we roll into Kuşadası, a lively resort town where the Aegean breeze is always in the air. Tonight, the evening is ours — strolling through markets, sipping cocktails by the harbor, or just enjoying the easy rhythm of coastal life.

Inclusions: Private motor coach from Istanbul to Canakkale | Local, English-speaking expert guide | Picturesque town of Ayvalik | Ancient city of Pergamon (Bergama) | Lively resort town of Kusadasi

Meals: Breakfast | Lunch

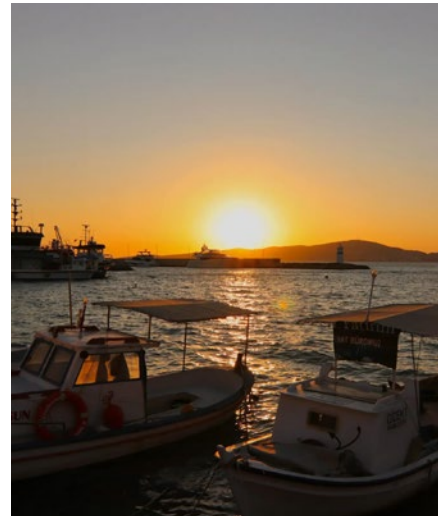


DAY 6 – KUSADASI - EPHEBUS

Today is all about Ephesus — one of the greatest cities of the ancient world. Walk through marble streets, step inside the Library of Celsus, and stand in the Grand Theater, where 24,000 people once gathered (and where Saint Paul himself spoke). Peek inside the Terrace Houses for a glimpse of Roman luxury — mosaic floors, frescoes, and ancient decadence. Later, we wind our way to Şirince, a hillside village of whitewashed houses and cobblestone lanes. Here, sip fruity local wines in a rustic wine house as we watch the sunset fade over the valley.

Inclusions: Private motor coach from Istanbul to Canakkale | Local, English-speaking expert guide | Ancient Ephesus | Odean | Stream baths of Scholastika | Temple of Hadrian | Library of Ephesus | Grand Theater | Terrace Houses

Meals: Breakfast | Lunch

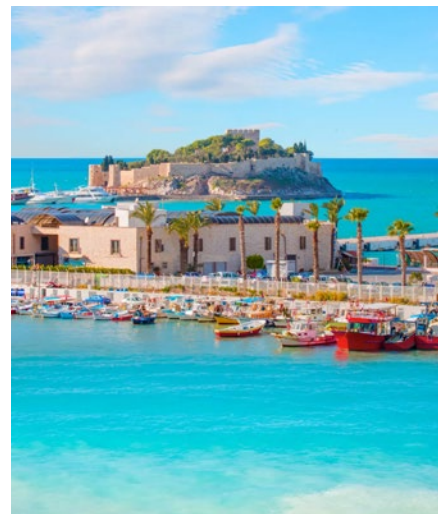


DAY 7 – KUSADASI

Time to slow down and let the Aegean set the rhythm. Step aboard our boat and cruise along the sparkling coastline, where hidden coves and golden beaches feel like our own secret paradise. Dive into crystal-clear waters, float under the sun, or simply lounge on deck with the salty breeze in our hair. Savor a fresh, local lunch onboard — think grilled seafood, and juicy seasonal fruits — all while turquoise waves shimmer around us. Stop at quiet islands for impromptu swims, capturing postcard-worthy photos, or just letting our playlist soundtrack the day. Swim, sun, repeat — today is pure Mediterranean freedom, a day to recharge, explore, and soak in the magic of the Aegean.

Inclusions: Boat tour from Kusadasi across the Aegean Sea | Golden beaches and scenic islands | Swim, sunbathe | Lunch onboard

Meals: Breakfast | Lunch



DAY 8 – KUSADASI – FLIGHT FROM IZMIR TO ISTANBUL

We fly back to Istanbul and dive into its flavors with a Kadıköy food walk — sampling flaky börek, dishes bursting with spice, and even legendary Turkish pickles. In the afternoon, try something unforgettable: urban street skiing — a playful twist that fuses sport and creativity. We cross the Bosphorus back to the European side and explore Karakoy, a hip neighborhood buzzing with street art, indie galleries, and cafés tucked into old warehouses. As night falls, gather for a farewell dinner, raising a glass to new friends and epic memories.

Inclusions: Airport transfer by private motor coach | One-way flight from Izmir to Istanbul | Kadıköy food walk | Urban street skiing | Karakoy exploration | Istanbul farewell dinner

Meals: Breakfast | Dinner

DAY 9 – TRAVEL HOME

We head home with stories of sultans and skylines, markets and mosaics, sunsets and new friendships — and a feeling that this was just the beginning of the story.

Inclusions: Airport transfer included with purchased AESU group airfare

Meals: Breakfast

TOUR MAP

