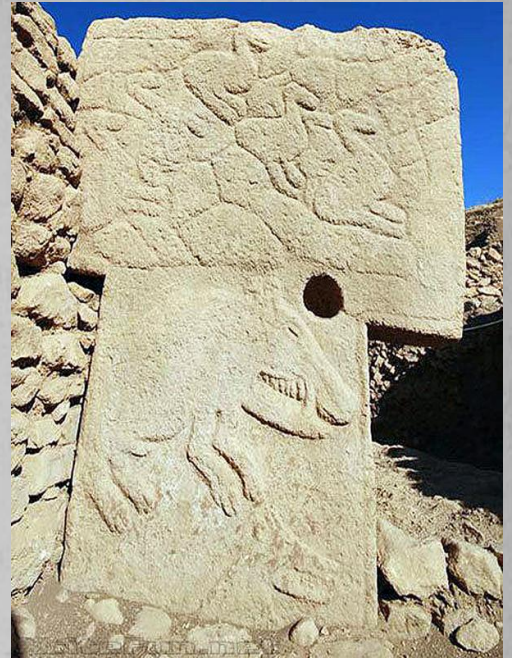


Turkey – Gobekli Tepe & the Treasures of South East Anatolia

Tour Code TT

1 – 8 November 2014

A comprehensive journey to the most historically rich and culturally varied region of Turkey. Our trip begins in *Gaziantep*; the culinary capital of South East Turkey and home to one of the best mosaic museums in the world. *Sanliurfa*, or ancient *Edessa*, is the spiritual centre of the region, and the perfect base to visit the fascinating and recently discovered site of *Gobekli Tepe*, creating huge media interest amongst archaeologists today. We continue to *Mount Nemrut*, a stunning location and famed burial place of Antiochus I. We end our journey in the dramatic and ancient town of *Mardin*, wonderfully located and home to some fine Arab-style architecture and wonderful souqs.



Ancient engraved pillar illustrating a wild boar, Gobekli Tepe © www.syderimages.com

ITINERARY

Day 1 Fly to Gaziantep via Istanbul

Late morning departure from Terminal 3 London Heathrow on Turkish Airlines via Istanbul international airport for connecting evening flight to Gaziantep. Transfer to the centrally located Tugcan hotel for two nights

Day 2 In Gaziantep

We spend the morning at the extraordinary Archaeological museum with its unrivalled collection of mosaics. This afternoon we visit some of the historical monuments of the city including the Kurtulus Camii Mosque once an Armenian church. Welcome dinner at a local restaurant (B,D)

Day 3 Visit Rumkale and Zeugma. Drive to Sanliurfa

This morning we take a boat trip to visit the enormous fort of Rumkale located on the Euphrates before visiting the Roman city of Zeugma, where many of its fine mosaics are now housed in the museum at Gaziantep. We continue to Sanliurfa, "the prophet's city", or *Edessa* in ancient times. where we visit the pool of Abraham set in a tranquil location beneath the great citadel of the city. Two nights at the Manici hotel with dinner (B,D)

Day 4 Visit Gobekli Tepe and Harran

Today we visit the unique archaeological site of Göbekli Tepe and take time to visit the site and learn about its incredible history. The site contains a vast array of circular structures and huge pillars, some with beautiful limestone carvings of lions, foxes, snakes and birds, believed to be gate keepers of the entrance to the next world. To date less than ten percent of the site has been excavated. We continue to the museum in Urfa which houses many artefacts found at Göbekli Tepe including the oldest life-size human statue in the world. This afternoon we drive the short distance to Harran to see its ancient citadel and unique beehive architecture. Dinner in a local restaurant (B,D)

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Göbekli Tepe, the oldest place of worship in the world, is an archaeological site without equal. Prior to its discovery in 1994 and its subsequent excavation it was widely believed by anthropologists that religion evolved as a result of living in large communities which was itself the result of the change from foraging to agriculture. However Göbekli Tepe has turned our theories of our own evolution on their head. The vast religious site dates from the hunter gatherer period and there is no evidence of any agriculture or even human habitation suggesting that it may have been the emergence of religion that lead us to civilisation and thus to agriculture. It is hard to overestimate the significance of this finding

Day 5 Drive to Kahta. Nemrut Dagı summit

A morning drive to Kahta with stop at the historical Roman bridge at Cendere. Late afternoon ascent to visit the giant heads of pre-Roman king, Antiochus I Theos of Commagene, and the various gods he believed to be his ancestors. The mountain is at its most dramatic at sunset and the views from the summit are sublime. Dinner at a local Kurdish family house. Overnight at the Zeus hotel, Kahta (B,D)

Day 6 Drive to Mardin. Visit Diyarbakir

We visit the ancient walls and historic centre of the caravan city of Diyarbakir before continuing to Mardin, home to the Syrian Orthodox community since the 5th century AD, outstanding Arab-style architecture and wonderful souqs. We visit the Saffron Monastery where the Aramaic language of Christ is still spoken. Two nights at the centrally located Zinciriye boutique hotel with dinner at a nearby local restaurant. (B,D)

Day 7 In Mardin. Visit Dara

We spend the morning in the historical and charming hilltop town of Mardin with its narrow streets and fascinating limestone architecture. The afternoon excursion is to the nearby Eastern Roman fortress of Dara, which featured prominently in the Roman-Persian conflicts of the 6th century, with the famous Battle of Dara taking place before its walls in 530 AD. A farewell dinner has been arranged in a smart local restaurant (B,D)

Day 8 Fly to the UK via Istanbul

Transfer to Diyarbakir airport for the mid-morning flight to Istanbul. Bus transfer to Istanbul old city for time at leisure before the return to the airport for an evening flight to Heathrow (B)

Cost £1495.00 per person in a twin room (excludes international flights)

Single supplement charge £175.00



Fascinating limestone architecture, Mardin
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Price includes –

- ▶ Escorted by Patrick Syder FRGS
- ▶ Accompanied throughout by specialist Turkish tour leader/guide, Dr Fatih Babaoglu, who is an Archaeologist with a PhD in the Hittite Civilisation
- ▶ Site Archaeologist at Gobekli Tepe
- ▶ All transportation - private a/c minibus
- ▶ Full sightseeing programme including entrance fees
- ▶ Quality boutique hotels in the south east of the country
- ▶ Half board basis meals with a la carte choice dinners at traditional restaurants
- ▶ Porter, hotel and restaurant staff gratuities
- ▶ Bottled water provided daily
- ▶ Group size strictly from 6 to 14 passengers

PLEASE NOTE – personal travel insurance, applicable visa fees, alcoholic drinks, guide and driver gratuities, Turkish Airline international and domestic flights are not included in the land tour cost (Turkish Airlines international flights start from £300.00 through Flight Centre UK) (Included meals denoted by B Breakfast, L Lunch, D Dinner)