

Istanbul & the Turquoise Coast



FEATURING
CAPPADOCIA AND A GULET CRUISE

SPONSORED BY

University of Illinois Alumni Association

EXPLORERS
ALUMNI TRAVEL PROGRAM

May 18-28, 2025

EXPLORERS

ALUMNI TRAVEL PROGRAM

Dear EXPLORERS and Friends,

Embark with us on a fascinating exploration of Turkey, featuring four nights in Istanbul, two nights in Cappadocia at a cave hotel and a three-night gulet yacht cruise! In Istanbul, tour remarkable Byzantine and Ottoman landmarks, dive into bustling bazaars and relish waterfront views along the Bosphorus Strait. In central Anatolia, marvel at Cappadocia's amazing fairy chimneys, rock-cut churches and cave houses. Then, round out your travels with a wonderful, laid-back cruise along the Turquoise Coast, filled with glorious scenery and free time for fun on the water.

On this small-group journey, you'll also take in must-see Ephesus and the cliffside tombs of Kaunos. Plus, you'll learn about Turkey's rich heritage during lunch in a private Cappadocia home and visits to a pottery workshop and a mountain village known for carpet weaving. And throughout your travels, knowledgeable guides and lecturers will share their expertise about Turkish history and culture.

When you factor in all these elements, along with a professional Travel Director and the included flights within Turkey, this meticulously planned program is an unbeatable travel value. Reserve your space today, and we'll see you in beautiful Turkey!

Sincerely,



David Bambrey
President

The EXPLORERS program is open to alumni of the University of Illinois, their families, and friends.

UNESCO World Heritage

1. Historic Areas of Istanbul
2. Göreme National Park and the Rock Sites of Cappadocia
3. Ephesus



House of the Virgin Mary, Ephesus



Süleymaniye Mosque, Istanbul



A World of Discovery



Venture off on an enriching journey that shines a bright light on fabulous Turkey! You'll delve into its exhilarating capital city that straddles Europe and Asia, wonder at Cappadocia's awe-inspiring natural grandeur and sail across the crystalline waters of its gorgeous coastline aboard a gulet yacht. Along the way, take in Turkey's architectural treasures and world-class ruins, plus indulge in its tantalizing cuisine with a fusion of flavors from many cultures!

*Top: View of the Sultan Ahmed (Blue) Mosque, Istanbul
Cover: Göreme National Park | Above: Cappadocia
Mail panel: Hagia Sophia Mosque, Istanbul | Gulet Boreas*

Inspiring Moments



- Be awed by the extraordinary Byzantine and Ottoman **mosques and palaces of Istanbul**.
- Study beautiful Byzantine frescoes inside the rock-cut churches and chapels of **Göreme National Park**.
- Behold **Cappadocia's astonishing landscape** of surreal rock formations spectacularly sculpted by nature.
- Descend into the **underground city of Ozkonak** to explore its fascinating labyrinth of passageways and rooms.
- Revel in picturesque port towns and secluded coves along the **breathtaking Turquoise Coast** aboard a small gulet.
- Step back in time at the **magnificent ruins of Ephesus**, one of the most important Greco-Roman cities in Asia.
- Experience three **UNESCO World Heritage sites**.



Cavusin

Day 1 | In Transit

Depart your gateway city for Istanbul, Turkey. 🌐

Day 2 | Istanbul, Turkey

Arrive and transfer 🔄 to the Barceló Istanbul Hotel. This evening, meet your fellow travelers at a Welcome Reception and Dinner.

Day 3 | Istanbul

Enrichment: *Istanbul, The Crossroads of the World.*

Istanbul: Part 1. Meander through the aromatic Spice Bazaar brimming with spices, teas and treats, and take a guided tour of the majestic, 16th-century Süleymaniye Mosque built by Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent. Finish with a pleasant cruise along the Bosphorus Strait.

Free Time: The rest of the day is yours to plan.

Day 4 | Istanbul

Istanbul: Part 2. Visit the ornately tiled Topkapı Palace, the imperial residence of the Ottoman sultans for almost four centuries, and view its dazzling, jewel-encrusted artifacts. See the Hippodrome of Constantinople, a former Roman arena where chariots raced, and go down into the atmospheric Basilica Cistern, an underground reservoir. You'll also tour two exquisite gems: the mammoth, Byzantine-era Hagia Sophia Grand Mosque and the Sultan Ahmed (Blue) Mosque. Conclude with a walk through the colorful, buzzing Grand Bazaar.

Day 5 | Istanbul | Kayseri | Göreme National Park | Cavusin | Ürgüp

Check out this morning and fly to Kayseri. Arrive and transfer to Cappadocia, celebrated for its astounding and otherworldly rocky landscape.

Göreme National Park. Within this captivating open-air museum, step inside small churches that were carved out of the rocks by a former monastic community and decorated with frescoes in the Byzantine period. Later, marvel at Love Valley's whimsical fairy chimneys and charming Cavusin, a village cut into the rocks. Check in to the Yunak Evleri Cave Hotel in Ürgüp. Tonight, gather for drinks and dinner, and watch a lovely sunset over Cappadocia.

Day 6 | Devrent Valley | Ozkonak | Avanos

🌐 **Elective | Cappadocia Hot Air Balloon Ride.** Float over the incredible, multicolored terrain on an unforgettable sunrise journey.

Devrent Valley. See formations that resemble animals and objects in this scenic region.

🌐 **AHI Connects | Lunch in a Cappadocia Home.** Be welcomed into a private home and enjoy authentic dishes prepared by your hosts.

Ozkonak Underground City. Take a guided tour of a subterranean network of chambers that sheltered thousands from enemy raids.

Basilica Cistern, Istanbul





Left: Library of Celsus, Ephesus | Above: Grand Theater, Ephesus

Avanos Pottery Workshop. Watch skilled potters shape pieces out of the local red clay and learn about their techniques and designs.

Day 7 | Ürgüp | Kayseri | Izmir | Ephesus | Bodrum | Embark gulet

Check out today and head to Kayseri for your flight to Izmir. Arrive and travel to Ephesus.

Ephesus. Appreciate the well-preserved ruins of this acclaimed ancient city, which was a major trading port for the Greeks and the Romans. During your guided tour, admire the impressive Great Theater that could seat 25,000 spectators, the grand, second-century Library of Celsus, the Terrace Houses adorned with mosaics, as well as other stately gems.

After lunch, visit the House of the Virgin Mary, a Catholic shrine, before embarking the Gulet Boreas in Bodrum. Savor dinner on board.

Sedir (Cleopatra) Island, Turquoise Coast

Day 8 | Cruising | Yaliciftlik | Etrim | Çati Bay

Relish the Turquoise Coast's picture-perfect coastal splendor as the yacht sails to Yaliciftlik. Disembark and travel by motor coach to Etrim.

Etrim. Stroll through this peaceful Anatolian mountain village and learn about enduring traditions like carpet and kilim weaving.

Free Time: Unwind this afternoon as the yacht cruises to Çati Bay, where it will overnight.

Day 9 | Cruising | Cleopatra Island | English Harbor

Cleopatra Island & English Harbor. Delight in these idyllic, tranquil spots where the yacht drops anchor and leisure time for swimming and other activities in the pristine waters.

Tonight, join your fellow travelers for a Farewell Reception and Dinner on the yacht.



Included Features



Accommodations (with baggage handling)

- **3 nights** in Istanbul, Turkey, at the first-class Barceló Istanbul Hotel.
- **2 nights** in Ürgüp (Cappadocia), at the first-class Yunak Evleri Cave Hotel.
- Cruise for **3 nights** aboard the **exclusively chartered**, first-class Gulet Boreas, a Turkish gulet yacht.
- **1 night** in Istanbul, Turkey, at the first-class Barceló Istanbul Hotel.




Transfers (with baggage handling)

- All transfers in the Land | Cruise Program: flights and deluxe motor coaches.

Extensive Meal Program

- 9 breakfasts, 8 lunches and 5 dinners, including Welcome and Farewell Dinners; tea or coffee with all meals, plus wine with dinner.

Your One-of-a-Kind Journey

- **Small group:** Sized just right at 24 guests.
- **Enrichment by expert speakers** enhances your insight into the region.
- **Engaging excursions** showcase the local culture, heritage and history.
-  **Electives** and free time to pursue your individual interests.
-  **AHI Connects | Local immersion.**
- Welcome and Farewell Receptions to mingle with fellow travelers.
- A personal VOX headset to hear your English-speaking guide clearly.
- Tipping of guides and drivers.
- Complimentary travel mementos.
-  **AHI Sustainability Promise:**
We strive to make a positive impact wherever we travel.

Local woman weaving





Day 10 | Karacasöğüt | Disembark gulet | Dalyan | Dalaman | Istanbul

After breakfast, disembark in Karacasöğüt and transfer to Dalyan, where you'll travel on a small boat along the Dalyan Strait to Kaunos.



Lycian Tombs of Kaunos. Gaze up at the striking, Grecian-inspired temple tombs cut high into the rugged cliffs during a guided tour of the archaeological ruins of this ancient city. Continue to Dalaman and fly to Istanbul. Upon arrival, check in to the Barceló Istanbul Hotel.


Free Time: Enjoy your final evening in Istanbul.

Day 11 | In Transit

After breakfast, transfer  to the airport for the return flight  to your gateway city.

Note: Itinerary may change due to local conditions.

 Flights and  transfers included for AHI FlexAir participants.

 Elective experiences available at an additional cost.

ACTIVE TRAVEL

This **Active Program** is designed for people who are in good health and can comfortably participate in a demanding daily schedule of physical activities. For more details, please call or visit our website.

Excursions on this program require:

- walking on cobblestones, unpaved paths and/or uneven and slippery surfaces
- getting on/off gulet yacht and motor coaches
- walking up steep inclines/declines and up and down stairs
- moving about a small yacht while it is in motion
- ducking and bending while navigating narrow, uneven tunnels in Ozkonak Underground City

Accommodations

Our travel experts have carefully selected these first-class properties for their prime locations. The elegant Barceló Istanbul Hotel offers exceptional comfort and convenience in the heart of the city's lively Beyoğlu district. At the Yunak Evleri Cave Hotel, feel immersed in enchanting Cappadocia within its cozy, village-like setting and private cave rooms.

 TripAdvisor



Barceló Istanbul Hotel | Istanbul



Yunak Evleri Cave Hotel | Ürgüp
(Cappadocia)



Gulet Boreas



Look forward to a relaxing voyage along the stunning Turkish Riviera aboard this sleek, 16-cabin gulet yacht! Settle into a cozy lounge chair or stretch out on a sunbathing cushion and bask in the unfolding scenery. Throughout your cruise, enjoy personalized service from the attentive gulet crew and delicious Turkish cuisine served in the dining salon. The stylish, comfortable guest cabins include private bathrooms and convenient amenities. The yacht is also equipped with gear for water sports.

Reserve your trip today!

To book your journey,
please call our AHI Travel Experts
at **844-414-0369** or
visit **<https://uiaa.org/explorers/>**.

Program Dates

Travel dates †

May 18-28, 2025

† Travel dates include any overnights required for international travel. These dates may vary depending on air schedules.

Tour dates*

May 19-28, 2025

* Tour dates begin on the scheduled arrival date at your destination and end on the scheduled departure date from your destination.

Cruise Program

Category	Full Price	Early Booking Special Price*
A-Master	\$7,640	\$6,890
B-Master Aft	\$7,440	\$6,690
C-Twin	\$6,940	\$6,190
D-Single	\$8,340	\$7,590
E-Single Forward	\$8,140	\$7,390

Early Booking Special Price includes \$750 special savings.

*Early Booking Special Price valid if booked by date on address panel and paid in full at booking. If you pay only your deposit by early booking date, you still save \$250 per person.

All cabins are located on the same deck. Single cabins have limited availability. VAT & Port Charges in the amount of \$395 per person is included in the above prices. All prices quoted are in USD, per person, based on double occupancy and do not include air transportation costs (unless otherwise stated). Special offers, promotions and discounts cannot be combined.

Please note: Program-specific terms and conditions are available at <https://il.ahitravel.com/destinations/1875A?schoold=69>. You can also request a copy from our travel experts. Any payment to AHI Travel constitutes your acceptance of the terms and conditions set out therein, including but not limited to the cancellation terms.



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Lycian Tombs of Kaunos



Devrent Valley, Cappadocia



Turkish pottery

AHI FlexAir

Let us arrange your flights

Our experts are ready to assist you in booking flights. Our personalized air program offers the following advantages:

- **price guarantee** to protect you from fuel surcharge increases after ticket purchase
- arrival and departure **transfers** on group dates
- **flexibility** to change or cancel your reservation before departure on most flights (Fees may apply.)
- **assistance** in the event of schedule changes or delays



Pottery demonstration

AHI Travel Expertise

From your reservation to your return home, we are here to ensure you have the adventure of a lifetime.

Before you go:

Travel Consultants stand ready to answer your questions as they guide you through the reservation process.

Travel & Air Coordinators each offer their personalized assistance with flights, electives and special requests.

Travel Information provides pre-departure details and enrichment about your destination.

Once you arrive:

Your Travel Director, a seasoned, multilingual professional, manages daily logistics so you enjoy a seamless experience.

Handpicked Expert Guides offer fascinating insights and share their passion for their country with you.

Knowledgeable Lecturers deepen your appreciation for the region and its history, culture and current events.



Topkapi Palace, Istanbul

EXPLORERS

ALUMNI TRAVEL PROGRAM

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**SMALL
GROUP**
Maximum of
24 Travelers

TURKEY25 77

844-414-0369

<https://uiaa.org/explorers/>



Beautiful Turkey beckons you on this exciting adventure!

AHI Travel's mission is to deliver inspirational, educational and cultural programs that delight travelers.

With AHI you can rely on:

- Experienced Travel Directors who attend to every detail of your journey.
- An exceptional travel value.
- Unique access to local sites.
- Flexibility and customization.
- Safety and security.



**Please call or refer to
our website for the
most current program
information, discounts
and pricing.**

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