



## EasternTurkeyTours

**Short Breaks Cappadocia: Where history breathes**  
**History - Culture - Ancient Cities - Cuisine - Legends - Luxury**



Exceed your expectations **Email: [info@easternturkeytour.org](mailto:info@easternturkeytour.org)**



## Why Go?

This part of central Turkey is famous for its bizarre rock formations produced over time by the elements in what is an ancient volcanic region. First seriously exploited by the ancient Hittites many of the weird rock formations were excavated and mined to produce homes, fortresses and even underground cities. Cappadocia, its name derived from its Persian description "Land of Beautiful Horses," once covered a large part of central Anatolia and was the eastern most part of the Roman province of Asia Minor. Now it refers to the area around Nevşehir and due to its extraordinary heritage of early Christian Churches, carved from the rocks and adorned by remarkable frescos, it was awarded the status of a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.



## When to Go?

You can visit Cappadocia any time of year but be advised that they do get snow in the winter. The best time is spring and autumn

## How to get there?

Daily flight services connect the region with Istanbul through both the regional airports at Kayseri and Nevşehir. There is also a superb intercity bus network.



## Best For History & Museums



The centre piece, and the major tourist draw, is the UNESCO World Heritage Site and open air museum at Göreme. However, the entire region can be considered to be an open air museum with numerous valleys containing rock cut churches, monasteries and houses many of which are easily accessible and free of the tourist throng.

The history of the Cappadocia region goes back to Neolithic times but major constructions become evident from the early Hittite period at around 1800 BC or slightly earlier. It is from this period that we see the development of the amazing rock cut castles and dwellings as well as the renowned underground cities and

this is the tradition that went on to produce churches and monasteries that dominate the region today.

There are numerous underground cities across Cappadocia- almost 200 in all, which were used as places of refuge. Six are easily accessible, the biggest of which are Kaymaklı (covering the largest area), Derinkuyu (the deepest) as well as Mazi, Özkanak, Tatların and Gaziemir. All of them give fascinating glimpses into our distant past.

Christianity plays an important part in the history of Cappadocia and Cappadocia played an important part in the philosophical development of the early church and even produced



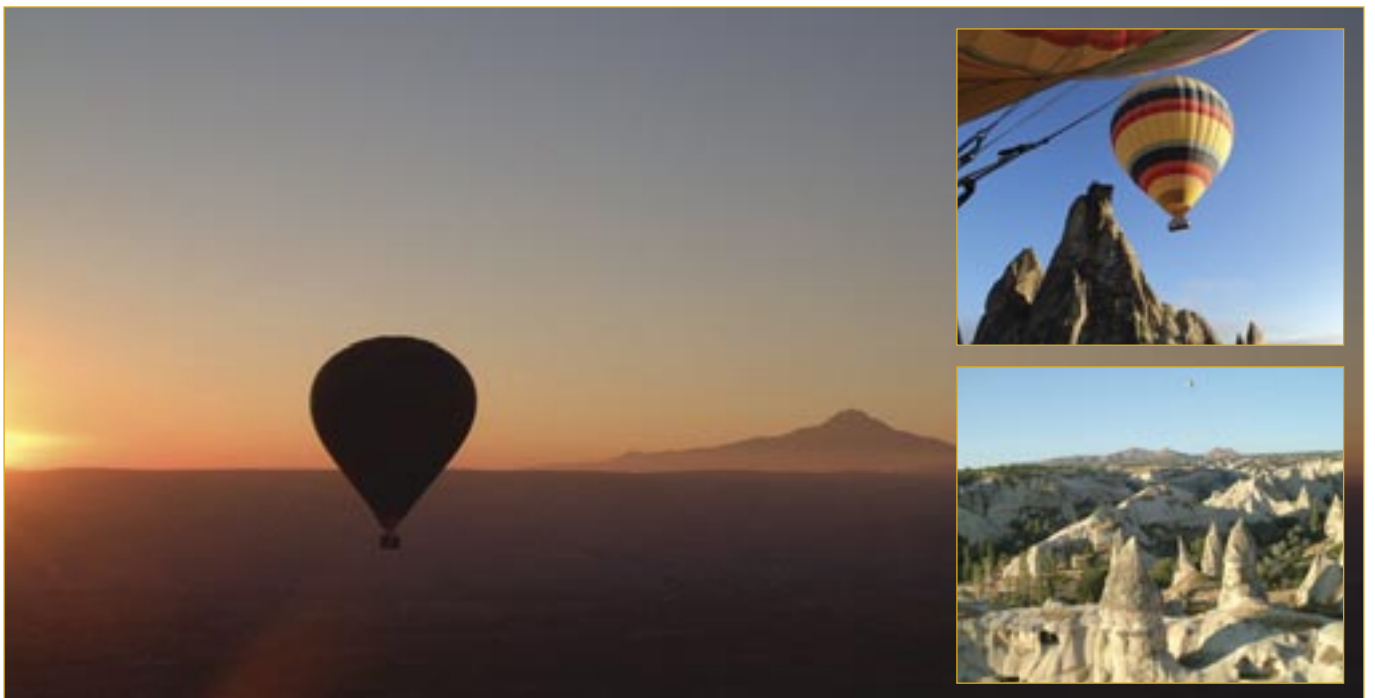
an important Orthodox Patriarch, John of Cappadocia who held the position between 517 and 520.

## The Ancient Silk Road



Cappadocia was an important hub on the western part of the Ancient Silk road which is reflected by the fact that there are a number of important Caravanserais surviving from the Seljuk period. There are at least six well preserved Seljuk Caravanserais in the region including Sarihan in Avanos in the heart of the Cappadocia and the biggest and best preserved of all of Anatolia's Caravanserais, Sutanhan on the road to Kayseri.

## Best for Hot Air Ballooning



Cappadocia is one of the best places in the world to experience the exhilarating pleasure of hot air ballooning (please note balloon flights are optional and are not included). The weather is perfect through most of the year and even in winter balloon flights will go ahead. Flights last approximately an hour and as well as taking you to altitude to survey the entire region, pilots are able to bring the balloon down into the many canyons of the Urgup and Göreme to see, close up, the fairy chimneys and cave dwellings carved into the rock.

## Best for Food & Wine



Turkish cuisine, alongside French and Chinese, is considered to be one of the world's great cuisines. The Turkish kitchen represents fusion cooking at its best. It not only draws from the many, varied traditions of Anatolia but also cooking styles from Asia, Arabia, Europe and North Africa. At street level, this is fast food as you wish it could be at home! Of course, Cappadocia has its own specialties such as Testi, a rich beef or lamb casserole cooked in its own sealed clay pot, cracked open in front of you and served directly to the table. Added to Cappadocia's culinary tradition is an ancient heritage of viniculture. Apart from producing grapes for juice and for pekmez, a thick syrup produced from grapes, Cappadocia is home to some of

Turkey's best wineries.

There is a strong connection between Cappadocia and Georgia. St. Nino, one of the saints responsible for bringing the Christian faith to Georgia came from Cappadocia. She is also famous for her connection to the culture of wine and wine making. Her symbol, a grapevine cross, is the symbol of Georgian Christianity today. The method of producing wine in ancient Cappadocia by fermenting the grape juice in stone vats or clay pots sunk into the ground is still to be found in the Georgian method of using the "qvevri" clay fermentation vats which are sunk into the ground. This method can still be found in Urgup's Turasan Winery where caves are



flooded with grape juice for the fermentation process.

## Best for Outdoor Activities



Cappadocia is the perfect place for outdoor activities and you can explore the secret valleys on foot, on horseback or with quad bikes or you can take an off road jeep safari. In addition, for those who are looking for a tougher physical challenge, there are Cappadocia's three, now extinct, volcanoes: Erciyes (39120 m), Hasan (3260 m) and Melendiz (2960m).

## Best for Luxury



The region's hotels are quite extraordinary giving travellers the choice between small family boutique hotels and private cave hotels all the way up to the exclusive, stunning luxury of places like Uçhisar's Museum hotel - an artful restoration of buildings and caves - to Tafoni Evleri in nearby Ortahisar which is another collection of beautifully restored caves and dwellings making up a private and intimate hideaway.

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# A Sample 4 Night, 3 Day Itinerary

## Day 1

Arrive from Istanbul. Overnight Nevşehir, Göreme or Urgup.

## Day 2

Devrent Valley, Zelve Open Air Museum and Monk's Valley (Pasabağcı Vadesi) where you will see the famous "fairy chimneys." After lunch we carry on to the Goreme Open Air Museum with its monastic communities and churches carved from the soft volcanic rock. We will finish the day with a view of Pigeon Valley and the fortress of Uchisar which, like all the ancient buildings in this region, is carved in the most spectacular fashion from the living rock. At its summit are the (now empty) tombs of the ancient rulers of the region. Overnight in Nevşehir, Göreme or Urgup.

## Day 3

Visit the old Christian Village of Cavusin before continuing on to visit the underground cities of Kaymakli and Derinkuyu. These ancient cities, of which there are many, are a unique feature of the Cappadocian region. Derinkuyu, discovered only in the early 1960s is believed to predate even the Hittites and was expanded over time by the different peoples of the area to produce what we see today. Extensively developed in the late Roman and Byzantine periods the underground cities were a refuge in times of war which could be sealed from the world above and could accommodate in its 18-20 subterranean levels up to 2000 families. Many of these underground cities were connected by a lengthy tunnel system and it appears that Derinkuyu and Kaymakli, about 8 kilometres apart, were likewise connected by a tunnel. We

finish the day with a walk along the Ihlara Valley Canyon and a visit to the Selime Monastery. Once again, carved from the rock and commanding a prominent vantage point over the start of the Ihlara Valley, the Selime monastery complex boasts numerous dormitories and kitchens, a seminary, chapels and a cathedral. Overnight in Nevşehir, Göreme or Urgup.

## Day 4

Departure for Kayseri. In the afternoon, a tour of Kayseri which was an important Silk Road destination and a centre of Islamic learning where there are a number of historic Medreses (Islamic schools) from the Seljuk period. The Cifte Medrese was the first Seljuk school of anatomy and is today the Geyhir Nesibe Medical History Museum. It is among Turkey's most impressive buildings, not just for its architecture, but for its concept and function. Ecologically and technically advanced for its time, it housed a medical centre with a surgical operating theatre. Sound ducts conducted music into wards and sick rooms while a thick sod roof provided insulation, a rain barrier and a garden which produced medicinal herbs. Built in 1206 by the Seljuk Sultan Giyaseddin Keyhusrev I in memory of his sister Gevher Nesibe (whose tomb is here) it served the entire population of Kayseri- Muslim, Christian or Jewish- free of charge. Near the city's Bedesten –or market- the Citadel built by the Roman Emperor Justinian in the 6th century AD. Overnight Kayseri

## Day 5

Depart Kayseri

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